

PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS CHURCH, 388 STIRLING ST, HIGHGATE



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Progressive Spiritualists Church
Other names	
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8748
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	388 Stirling St
Locality	Highgate
Survey	LOT: 55 D/P: 32
Vol/folio	528/89
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable</p> <p>Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2</p> <p>Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The Progressive Spiritualists Church is a good example of a church constructed in the Postwar Gothic/Austerity style, which is severe and contemplative in character.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of the City of Vincent in the mid 20th century by a diversity of migrants.</p> <p>The place has social value of its demonstration of the diversity of religious expression within the Vincent community.</p> <p>The place has social value as it is a place that has been the venue for a variety of social and spiritual events since the mid 20th century.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Current use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1956; 1964; 1980
Walls	Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Postwar Gothic / Austerity style
Physical description	<p>A simple, brick building with references to a stripped Gothic form in a contemporary idiom, with an unprepossessing entrance porch set in a prominent brick gable.</p> <p>The exterior is in red face brickwork and the steeply pitched roof is in cement tiles. The casement windows are timber framed and detailed with three horizontal panes. The orientation of each window is horizontal.</p> <p>Extensions to the rear constructed in 1964 and 1980 respectively have matching brickwork to the original with concrete flooring and asbestos roofing. Garden setting behind a low steel pipe and mesh fence.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The land on which the subject place stands was originally known as Shearer Street, which connected to Cecil Street and then to Stirling Street. Between 1915 and 1920 Shearer and Cecil streets were aligned with Stirling Street to become one single street. Stirling Street was named after Sir James Stirling (1791-1865), founder of the Swan River Colony and Governor from 1828-1839. It was built as a wide street, running through the centre of the newly designed township of Perth, with the intention of it being a main boulevard, running north-south. Subsequent development plus the construction of the railway and the placement of the two bridges erected on William and Beaufort streets were some of the reasons it did not gain the importance originally intended.

The land in this section of Stirling Street was subdivided in 1896 as suburban lots of around 10 acres each. This section north of Brisbane Street was known as the 'Stirling Street Extension'. Most of the land was gradually subdivided into smaller residential lots in the 1880s and 1890s but No. 388 was shown as an empty block on the circa 1897 PWD City of Perth & Suburbs sewerage plans. The Stirling Street Extension was listed in the 1920 edition of Wise's Post Office Directories but the northernmost number given was No. 384 and the same in 1930.

Spiritualism, the belief in the existence of the human personality after death, was an important concept in 19th Century Melbourne's intellectual circles. The Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, the first of its kind, was formed there in 1870. The Progressive Spiritualists Church was established in 1934.

The Highgate area was home to many of the migrant families and refugees who flocked to Western Australia in the post World War II period. Its attraction was cheap housing as the area had become run down. It became popular again as a residential area in the 1980s (particularly for young singles and married couples) because of its proximity to the CBD, the nightlife of Northbridge, the developing coffee and restaurant strip in nearby Beaufort Street and for those who worked in the City but did not want a long commute or to spend their weekends tending to a quarter-acre block.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Progressive Spiritualist Church in Stirling Street was constructed in 1956 on previously vacant ground by builder A. H. Hitch & Co. It is one of a number of church buildings constructed in the area by different religious groups.

In 1964, additions and alterations were made to the church, including a kitchen at the rear, which was constructed by the Groom Bros. There were additions in 1979 and a further room was added to the rear in 1980, which was undertaken by builder Noterangelo & Sons.

Approval was given for a patio addition in 1999 and a Conservation Plan was undertaken by Philip Griffiths Architects in 2007. Conservation and general refurbishment works followed. In 2008 the property was still owned and used by the Progressive Spiritualists Church Incorporated, and remains so as of 2024.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards show the aforementioned additions to the structure in the late 1970s and 1980s, as well as the patio additions in the 1990s. A new roof was installed on the church building circa 2009, and later the back room additions received a new roof around 2012. There have been no other visible changes to the subject site since that time.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Cultural Life: Religion Peopling WA: Demographic Development	
Associations	A. H. Hitch & Co. Groom Bros Noterangelo & Sons	Builder Builder Builder
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

