

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church

PLACE NO.: 26521

ADDRESS: Karna Country

286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

CT 5710/844, CT 5726/535, CT 5385/507, CT 5824/99, CT 5840/399;
F117834 A52, D333 A72, D3333 A4, F117831 A49, D3332 A5 Hundred of
Yatala

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church demonstrates an important aspect of the evolution of the State's history, namely post-war migration to support the Playford government's industrialisation strategy for South Australia. The construction of St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is a direct result of the suburban growth that occurred due to industrial expansion in Adelaide's north-western suburbs that attracted large numbers of migrants to settle in the Croydon parish and in particular, Italian and Polish Catholics, who swelled the congregation. The church has particularly strong and direct associations with the high concentration of migrant settlement the church supported and supports still.

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is an outstanding example of a post-war church retaining a high level of integrity and intactness and incorporating a wide range of characteristics typical of the class, including a radical plan form created as a response to the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (1962-1965) (Vatican II) and seamless integration of bespoke ecclesiastical art. The church is also an outstanding example of late twentieth-century ecclesiastical Modern Movement architecture in South Australia, featuring a fan-shaped plan and innovative gable roof, unbroken straight lines emphasising verticality, clerestory windows, inverted V-shapes, the use of domestic materials, and plain unadorned surfaces.

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church has significant associations with the life and work of the critically-acclaimed ecclesiastical and surrealist South Australian émigré artist Voitre Marek. As artistic consultant for St Margaret Mary's, Marek designed all and created many of the church's original sacred artworks and liturgical fixtures. Marek's

body of work at St Margaret Mary's was created at the height of his creative achievements in the late 1960s and is seamlessly integrated with the design of the church.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The construction of St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is a direct result of the suburban growth that occurred due to the concentration of new and expansion of existing industries in the north-western suburbs of metropolitan Adelaide. The Croydon Parish was encircled by a number of industries including Forwood, Johns & Waygood Ltd (engineering); John Shearer & Sons Ltd (farm equipment); Australian Glass Manufacturers (AGM) (glass products); Simpson Pope (electrical and whitegoods), the Islington Railway Workshops; British Tube Mills (pipes); and Actil Ltd (manchester). To supply workers to these industries, large numbers of migrants were encouraged to settle in the Croydon parish, including people from the Ukraine, Lithuania, Croatia, Serbia, and in particular, Italy and Poland. Many were practicing Catholics, swelling the congregation at St Margaret Mary's and resulting in the construction of a new church.

While post-war migration expanded many Catholic congregations in the years after the Second World War, and sometimes resulted in the construction of new churches, St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church has particularly strong and direct associations with the theme due to the high concentration of industry and the extensive and diverse migrant communities the church supported and supports still.

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of place of cultural significance

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is an outstanding example of the class of place known as post-war churches.

The construction of new churches after the Second World War is associated with post-war population growth resulting from migration and the baby boom, suburban and regional development, and the evolving role of churches in community life due to liturgical change. As a result, over 650 churches were built between 1945 and 1990 in South Australia. Churches constructed during this time played a prominent role in South Australia's physical, cultural and spiritual development.

The principal attributes of the class of place 'post-war church' are comprised of a range of physical elements that relate to the setting and exterior form of the building; materials; and the layout, furnishing and decoration of the interior spaces. Outstanding representatives of the class of place will possess a range of both exterior and interior attributes that define the class.

St Margaret Mary's is an outstanding example of a post-war church as it retains a high degree of integrity and intactness and displays many of the principal characteristics of the class at a higher quality than many other examples. St Margaret Mary's demonstrates many of the principal characteristics of the class in a way that allows the class to be readily understood and appreciated, including:

- a plan responsive to liturgical change, in this case integrating sanctuary and nave into a single-volume worship space, with pews arranged in a fanned configuration, to bring as many people as close to the sanctuary as possible and foster a sense of community,
- a distinctive roof form, employed to set the church apart from secular buildings,
- adoption of commonplace materials with domestic connotations, employed to integrate the church into community, such as face-brick, clear-finished timber, and terracotta tile,
- adoption of newly-available materials, processes and technologies, including sound reproduction technology,
- expression in a late twentieth-century ecclesiastical style,
- provision of community facilities or amenities, in this instance by siting within a school campus, as part of a larger master plan,
- considered engagement with site and context, in this instance by setting the church well back from the road, and allowing circulation space in front of the church for gathering and around the church for procession,
- the presence of bespoke sacred artworks created as an integral part of the church's design, in this case many sacred art works designed by Voitre Marek concurrently with the design and construction of the church.

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is an outstanding example of late twentieth-century ecclesiastical Modern Movement architecture in South Australia. The church was constructed during a period of radical experimentation in the plan and form of Catholic places of worship following the conclusion of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (1962-1965) (Vatican II) but prior to the publication of the new Catholic Mass in 1970. St Margaret Mary's was also one of the first South Australian Catholic churches specifically designed to accommodate the new Catholic Mass and rite of Baptism.

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church finely articulates many key attributes of late-twentieth century ecclesiastical architecture, namely,

- a radical plan-shape responding to liturgical change, designed to facilitate active participation in worship by bringing people as close as possible to the

altar, in this instance by wrapping the pews in a fanned configuration around the peninsula-like sanctuary,

- unbroken straight lines emphasising verticality, notably in the lines of the vertically-proportioned window openings on all sides of the church, extending from ground to eaves with emphasised mullions,
- clerestory windows, flooding the sanctuary with daylight,
- inverted V shapes reminiscent of Gothic pointed arches, notably in the main and clerestory gables,
- an element reminiscent of a Gothic flèche, pointing 'heavenward,' in this case a slender, metal-clad spire over the sanctuary,
- plain wall surfaces of unpainted, unplastered face-brick,
- architectural 'distinctiveness' employed to denote the purpose of the building as a place of worship, achieved through adoption of an innovative wide gable roof shape with exaggerated eaves, a clerestory gable over the sanctuary, surmounted by a slender sheet-metal spire bearing a cross,
- community integration achieved through the use of familiar, 'humble' materials with connotations of domesticity, in this instance face-brick, unpainted concrete, clear-finished timber, terracotta tile and Stramit board,
- adoption of new structural materials facilitating dramatic shapes, in this case, a steel and reinforced concrete frame allowing the expansive ceiling and clerestory roof to float above the sanctuary without vertical column supports.

In addition, the seamless integration and considered placement of sacred art into the interior represents an outstanding degree of aesthetic accomplishment, particularly evidenced by the restrained palette of materials used to make the works and the use of a unifying design element, namely a stylised trumpeting angel motif, across the collection of works.

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is highly intact. Minor modifications to the original design, such as the addition of an access ramp on the front elevation, installation of air conditioning, and substitution of light fittings in the nave, have not diminished the building's ability to illustrate the main attributes of late twentieth-century ecclesiastical architecture.

(g) it has special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance

St Margaret Mary's has significant associations with the life, work and Catholic faith of notable South Australian émigré artist Voitre Marek, who served as artistic consultant

during construction and designed all and created many of the church's original sacred artworks and liturgical fixtures.

With his brother Dušan, Voitre Marek 'set in motion a surge of new ideas and controversies that challenged the conventions of Australian art.' He was South Australia's best-known and most prolific religious artist practising between 1948 and the late 1970s.

Marek's contribution to religious art was recognised by the Holy Roman Catholic Church in 1997, when Pope John Paul II honoured him with a papal blessing 'for his outstanding contribution to religious art in Australia.' The influence of Voitre Marek's art has been critically recognised by the arts fraternity, and in particular, the Art Gallery of South Australia, which presented *Dušan and Voitre Marek: Surrealists at Sea* (June-September 2021), the first major and critical survey of the brothers' work.

The St Margaret Mary's commission represented one of only a few instances where Voitre Marek was able to offer a complete artistic service. Marek collaborated closely with the architects and clergy during the design and construction of the new church, and in particular, Marek's involvement in the design process helped determine the layout, form, fittings and materials of the sanctuary, the focal point of the church interior.

At St Margaret Mary's, Marek employed a limited palette of materials, namely rough-hewn marble and oxidised cupreous (copper or copper-carrying) metals, specifically beaten copper and cast bronze. The result is an exceptionally well integrated suite of ecclesiastical artworks, which are in turn seamlessly and coherently integrated into the design of the church itself.

Marek's body of work at St Margaret Mary's Church represents extensive tangible evidence of the quality and scale of his artistic output at the height of his creative achievements during the late 1960s.

The sacred art at St Margaret Mary's is highly intact. The fixed works (the vast majority of the works created for the church) remain in their original positions, and besides alterations to the Perspex font cover, appear undisturbed since their installation in 1968. The moveable works, such as the candle holders, also still remain within the church, while three maquettes for the larger works are housed in the parish office.

SITE PLAN

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church, 286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park (CT 5710/844, CT



5726/535, CT 5385/507, CT 5824/99, CT 5840/399; F117834 A52, D333 A72, D3333 A4, F117831 A49, D3332 A5 Hundred of Yatala)

Elements of Significance:




- gable-roofed church, original ramps and retaining walls, terrazzo steps, original exterior and interior material finishes and fittings, fixed pews in present configuration, and all liturgical furniture and sacred artwork by Voitre Marek.
- open space between church and road facilitating procession and gathering.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance:

- parish presbytery and school buildings.

N ↑

LEGEND

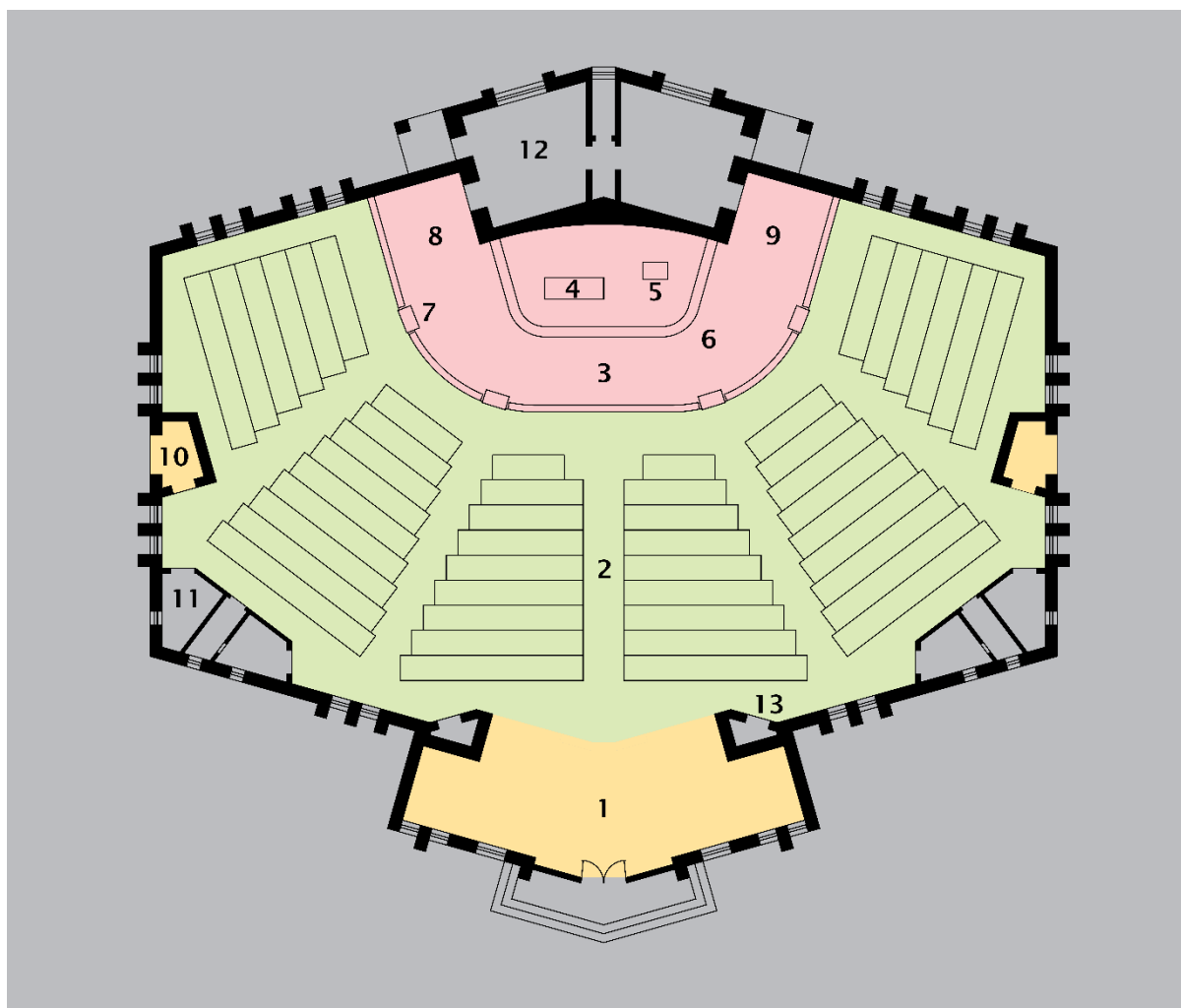
-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Existing State Heritage Place(s)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26521 6 of 32
Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 17 February 2022
Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 18 August 2022

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Physical Description



St Margaret Mary's Church indicative floorplan, based on architect's sketch.¹

Source: Chris Burns, *Postwar churches in Adelaide's western suburbs*, talk to the Port Adelaide Historical Society, 2 December 2020

LEGEND

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Narthex (yellow) | 8 Position of tabernacle |
| 2 Nave (green) | 9 Position of font |
| 3 Sanctuary (red) | 10 Side porch or narthex (yellow) |
| 4 Altar | 11 Confessional |
| 5 Presidential chair | 12 Sacristies |
| 6 Position of lectern | 13 Store rooms |
| 7 Communion tables (4) | |

Site and Setting

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26521 7 of 32

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St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is sited on Torrens Road at Croydon Park, within the campus of St Margaret Mary's School. The church is set back from Torrens Road, with a lawn area and curved concrete driveway and features a low fence fronting Torrens Road constructed from the same brick as the church.

Exterior

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church is a single-storey brick church with a tiled gable roof and flattened hexagonal plan. Steel columns hidden inside brick (external, part of curtain wall) or concrete piers (internal, between worship space and narthex) support the structure, while a series of parallel steel joists or web trusses span the roof.

The exterior walls are biscuit-coloured and chocolate face-brick. A large, wide window opening on the front elevation contains the main entrance doors, while other tall, narrow window openings are positioned around the envelope of the church. All windows to the narthex (foyer) and worship space contain coloured glass.

The church exterior displays the following additional features:

- roof bounded by a thick bargeboard or fascia, with prominent eaves,
- clerestory gable on ridge-line of main roof, surmounted by a copper-clad spire carrying a cross,
- anodised aluminium frames to all windows,
- white terrazzo steps approaching main entrance,
- main entrance doors with bronze-anodised cast-aluminium door handles with sculptural relief on the front surface,
- concrete paving surrounding church on all sides,
- large pebbles embedded in concrete between front elevation and paving,
- side entrances flanked by original concrete ramps, retained by low face-brick walls,
- rear porches with white terrazzo doorsteps and external concrete steps.

Interior

The worship space features a narthex (foyer) located to the south, confessional booths and storerooms either side of the narthex, priest's and work or servers' sacristies to the north, and small porches to the east and west.

The main worship space is the focus of the interior and is comprised of nave and sanctuary in a single unified space. The sanctuary occupies a semi-circular peninsula. Fixed clear-finished timber pews are arranged in a fanned configuration around the sanctuary. A large timber-and-glass triptych screen divides the interior between worship space and narthex, with three sets of double-doors below. The interior contains numerous artworks by Voitre Marek (identified in the next section).

The worship space displays the following additional features:

- biscuit-coloured and chocolate face-brick walls,

- nave ceiling comprised of timber (western red cedar) battens nailed over jute cloth,
- sanctuary clerestory ceiling coated in acoustic vermiculite with a central timber fin feature,
- roof joists are boxed-out and vermiculite-coated,
- white vinyl floor to nave,
- raised parquetry floor to sanctuary,
- operable awning windows in clerestory
- hollow-core doors to storerooms and sacristies, with fluted front surfaces comprised of oak battens, contiguous with spandrels above,
- original integrated speakers inset in walls and nave ceiling,
- original speaker box, organ chests and associated pipes above entrance doors,
- Stations of the Cross marked by wooden crosses on nave walls,
- organ pit on eastern side of nave.

The narthex displays the following features:

- walls and main ceiling as per worship space,
- suspended ceiling comprised of Stramit panels in a timber frame, supported on a steel armature,
- glass pendent light fittings suspended from main ceiling,
- marble consecration stones set into piers,
- white terrazzo floor.

The sacristies display the following key features:

- original parquetry floor,
- original cabinetry including built-in cupboards, drawers, and sinks with original fittings.

Liturgical fittings and sacred artworks

The interior contains many original liturgical fittings and artworks, all of which were designed and mostly made by Voitre Marek. Specifically, the liturgical fittings and artworks are:

- table-form main altar and four communion tables (hewn marble with oxidised beaten copper details),
- presidential chair (hewn marble with oxidised beaten copper details and green fitted cushions),
- lectern (hewn marble with oxidised beaten copper details and oxidised cast bronze sides),
- tabernacle stand (hewn marble with oxidised beaten copper details),
- octagonal tabernacle with pyramidal top, decorated with Christ and the worshipping faithful (oxidised beaten copper with inset opals),

- baldachin (canopy) over the tabernacle, comprised of three rings suspended between metal columns (oxidised beaten copper),
- font (hewn marble with acrylic lid and oxidised beaten copper details),
- *Risen Christ* mounted on the sanctuary wall (oxidised beaten copper),
- *Mary, Mother of the Church*, mounted above the baptistery between two metal columns (oxidised beaten copper with enamelled details),
- six candle holders with cast bronze bases and beaten copper sconces,
- processional cross base (cast bronze), decorated with trumpeting angels and screwed to the sanctuary floor,
- processional cross (oxidised cast bronze figure, timber staff, enamelled metal handgrips),
- sanctuary lamp (oxidised cast bronze),
- holy water stoups (cast bronze),
- ambry cover (beaten enamelled copper),
- dedication plaque (oxidised beaten copper),
- offering box front (oxidised beaten copper).

Many of the artworks are decorated with a stylised trumpeting angel motif. Most are located in the worship space, except the dedication plaque and offering box which are in the narthex.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Church building,
- Visibility of church from Torrens Road, in particular the façade, gable, clerestory and spire,
- Original exterior and interior material finishes, including face-brick walls, tiled roof, anodised aluminium finishes, pebble paving, clear-finished ceiling and joinery, terrazzo and parquet floors, Stramit panels, anodised aluminium window frames and coloured glass,
- Original fittings, including door hardware and handles, organ chests and pipes, wall and ceiling-integrated speakers and large speaker box, original lights in narthex, and original lights in and outside confessionals,
- Original fixed furniture, including pews and rails and configuration of pews and rails,
- All liturgical furniture and sacred artworks by Voitre Marek.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Recent air-conditioning installation
- Replacement light fittings in nave
- Vertical blinds in nave
- Data projectors and screens

- Curtain fittings on sanctuary wall
- Carved timber artworks associated with Stations of the Cross
- New niches with devotional statues in original confessional doorways
- Parish office and garage block
- Landscaping

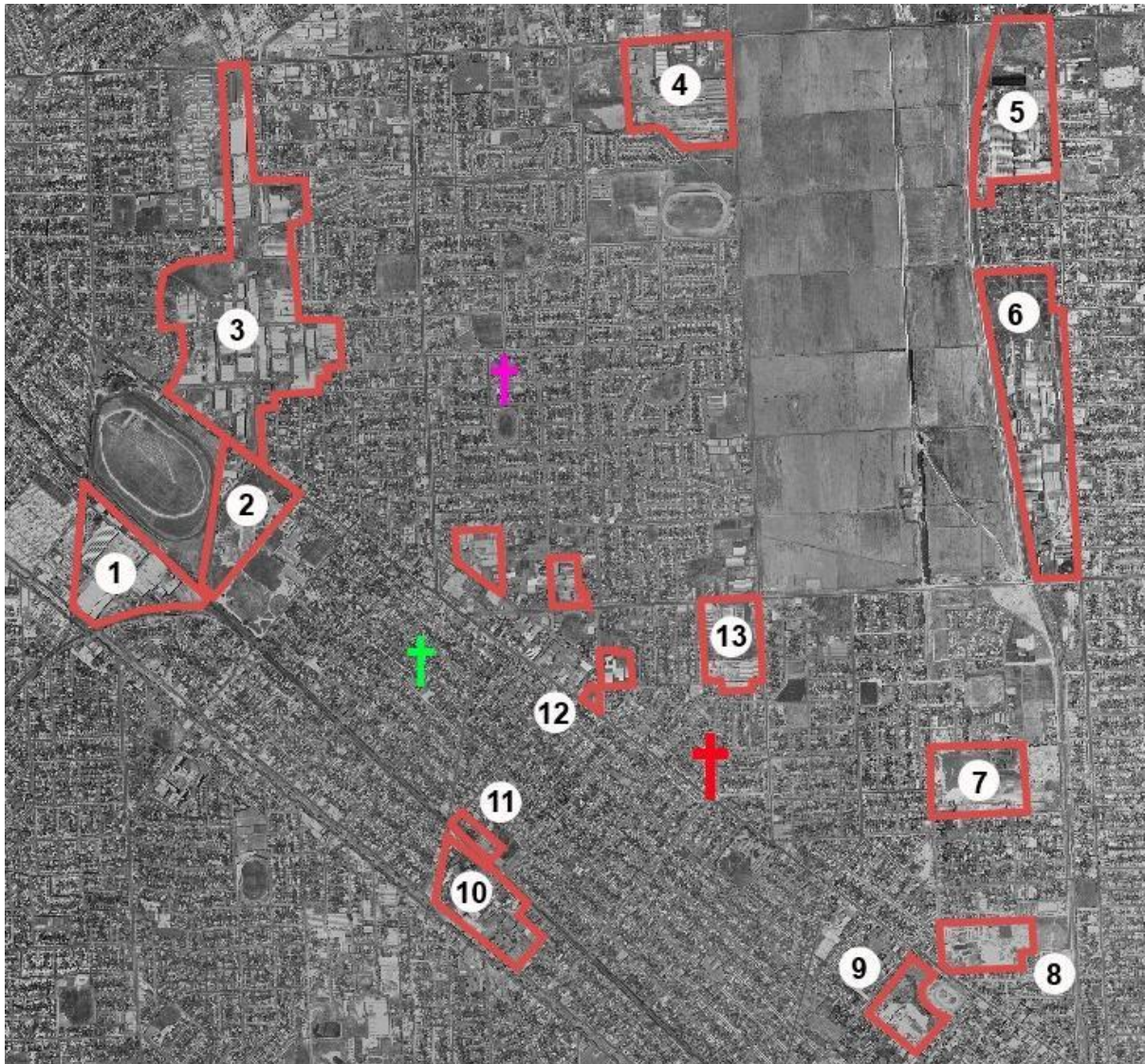
History of the Place

Please refer to the Assessment Report for the full history.

In the mid-1920s Catholics living in Croydon and Kilkenny worshiped in the Kilkenny Buffalo Hall.² In January 1929, the church-school of St Margaret Mary was opened.³ Population growth in the Croydon area led to the establishment of the new parish of Croydon, under the ministry of Fr Thomas Daly, in 1946.⁴

In 1947, building restrictions prevented the construction of a new church at Croydon. Instead, Fr Daly organised the purchase, dismantling and relocation of a weatherboard army surplus building, which was then repurposed into what was acknowledged to be a temporary church on Torrens Road. It opened on 3 August 1947.

In 1949 land to the north of the church site towards Grand Junction Road and east towards the North railway line was sparsely populated. By the time the new church opened in 1968, the landscape had been completely transformed, and Croydon Parish could be characterised as a large tract of suburbia, comprising Croydon Park, Dudley Park, Woodville Gardens, Ferryden Park and Mansfield Park, encircled by significant industries along its fringes (see diagram p. 44).



Selected industries surrounding Croydon Parish in 1968.

Source: <https://mapping.portenf.sa.gov.au/history/>

- | | |
|---|--|
| † St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church | 7) Simpson Pope |
| ‡ Mater Dei Catholic Church (Woodville Parish) | 8) PGH Ceramics (SA) Pty Ltd |
| † St Philomena's Catholic Church (Croydon Parish) | 9) Rocla Stoneware Pipes |
| 1) General Motors Holden | 10) Australian Glass Manufacturers / John Shearer & Sons Ltd |
| 2) Actil Ltd | 11) Forwood, Johns & Waygood Ltd |
| 3) Former Finsbury Munitions Complex | 12) Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd |
| 4) Electricity Trust of South Australia | 13) Ready Mix Concrete / Forwood Johns Waygood Ltd |
| 5) British Tube Mills | |
| 6) SAR Islington Workshops | |

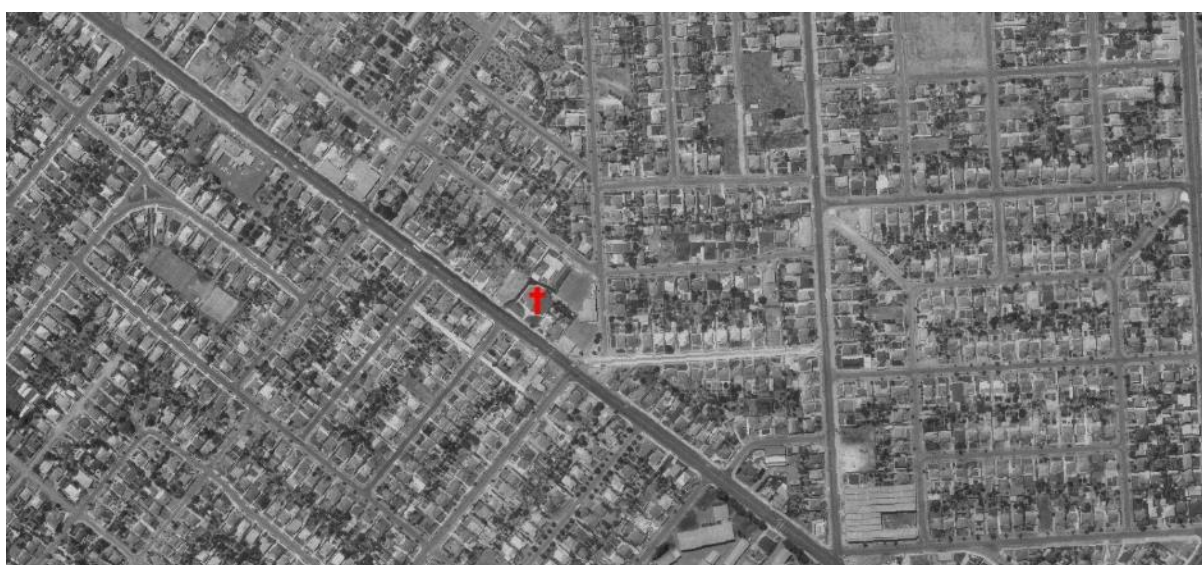
This local industry attracted large numbers of migrants to settle in the Croydon parish, including Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Croatian, Serbian,⁵ and in particular Italian and Polish people, who were typically Catholics, and who formed a large proportion of the Croydon Park congregation.⁶

Irish-born priest Fr Michael Moling Murphy arrived in South Australia in 1945 and was appointed Croydon parish priest in 1958.⁷ Upon his arrival Fr Murphy embarked on a building program, which included a new church (1962) and classroom (1964) at Woodville;⁸ a Convent for the Sisters of St Joseph at Croydon (now part of St Margaret Mary's School) (1967);⁹ and culminated in construction of the new St Margaret Mary's Church and presbytery (1968).



Area surrounding site of St Margaret Mary's church (marked) in 1949

Source: <https://mapping.portenf.sa.gov.au/history/>



Area surrounding St Margaret Mary's church (marked) in 1968, showing suburban development since 1949

Source: <https://mapping.portenf.sa.gov.au/history/>

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26521 13 of 32

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Design and construction

St Margaret Mary's was designed by Adelaide architects Brian Taylor and Lithuanian émigré Algi Navakas (Taylor & Navakas) after Vatican II, and reflects the freedom that church architects enjoyed following the closure of the Council, but prior to the codification of the new Catholic Mass in 1970.

St Margaret Mary's front elevation is similar to Taylor and Navakas' earlier Church of the Resurrection on King William Road at Unley,¹⁰ opened in 1964, which also carries a wide gable roof with narrow, vertical windows flanking a large central window and entrance. It is likely this earlier church served as a model for St Margaret Mary's, however, the later church successfully develops its architectural theme by emphasising and exaggerating the roof with a thick fascia and deeper eaves; by centring the clerestory and spire over the sanctuary; by evolving the floor plan further towards an implied post-Vatican II ideal, from a long wedge to a wide flattened hexagon; and by integrating sacristies and service rooms under the main gable, instead of under a separate, flat roof as at Unley.

In Britain, one of the first churches to have a font placed near the sanctuary was St Michael's Catholic Church in Wolverhampton, opened in 1968.¹¹ British architectural historian Robert Proctor considers this unusual for its time. Thus the placement of the font in the sanctuary of St Margaret Mary's Church in 1968 may be considered innovative from an international perspective. It was not until the following year that the new Catholic rite of baptism was published, requiring the font to be 'in clear view of the faithful'¹² which was typically interpreted to mean in or adjacent to the sanctuary.

Liturgical furniture was carefully positioned around the sanctuary. The altar was deliberately placed off-centre, balanced by the presidential chair, lectern and Marek's *Risen Christ*. The spatial relationship between altar, lectern and chair in particular signalled a new emphasis on the word of God in Catholic worship, associated with the lectern and previously overshadowed by the Eucharist, associated with the altar. The position of the chair signified the priest's unifying role in the liturgy.

The layout of the sanctuary also reflected the new importance of ceremonial movement around the sanctuary between the focal points of altar, chair and lectern.¹³

Four communion tables are positioned around the sanctuary implying a boundary between nave and sanctuary without imposing separation. In a notable break with tradition, the tables enable communicants to receive communion while standing, and are a 'symbolic declaration of our willingness to follow Christ wherever He may lead us.'¹⁴

In the nave, pews able to seat 600 parishioners are arranged in a fanned configuration. This enabled sightlines across the sanctuary and nave, and brought people as close to the altar as possible by observing 'natural laws of grouping when people spontaneously gather around to hear someone speak or look at something.'¹⁵

Procession¹⁶ through the church was enabled through the positioning of sacristy doors either side of the sanctuary and the careful placement of aisles. In addition, cement paths implied a processional circuit around the exterior of the freestanding church.

Unlike some other post-war Catholic churches, St Margaret Mary's Church was not designed with a 'crying room'. In the post-war period, glass-fronted, soundproofed crying rooms equipped with PA systems eliminated disruption from young children while enabling their parents to participate in the Mass. This discrepancy is explained by a former curate of Croydon parish, who states Fr Murphy had an 'easy and warm relationship'¹⁷ with his parishioners, and was unflustered by 'crying babies'¹⁸ and likely felt such a room unnecessary.

The church was built by E. F. Marshall & Sons Pty Ltd, Welland, at a cost of \$100,000¹⁹ and opened on 8 December 1968.²⁰ The opening Mass featured preaching in Italian and Polish,²¹ and in subsequent years Fr Murphy organised regular Italian and Polish language masses at St Margaret Mary's Church.²²

Liturgical furniture and sacred art

All of the church's new liturgical furniture and sacred art was created by Voitre Marek, who served as artistic consultant throughout the planning and building of the Church. These works all embody complex meanings that are intrinsically connected to the liturgical and devotional functions of the church.

Consistent with international trends of the time, the elements of liturgical furniture at St Margaret Mary's Church were designed 'as objects for human use and particular purpose,' with an emphasis on simple 'outline forms.'²³ For example, the 'table form' altar reflects its scriptural origins in the table of the Last Supper, in contrast with 'heavy decorative altars' of traditional Catholicism.²⁴ The liturgical furniture is designed on a modest, human scale, and the candle holders are low and unobtrusive.²⁵

The design and placement of Marek's sculptural works within the church reflect a post-Vatican II emphasis on liturgy over devotion. Marek's sculptures of *Christ* and *Mary* are placed at height, establishing a sense of distance, however do not appear aloof.²⁶ In a booklet produced to accompany the opening of the church, Fr Anthony Lowes described *Mary* as 'alive with ... suppressed joy,'²⁷ reflecting a post-Vatican II emphasis on decorous emotional restraint in Catholic worship.²⁸ Despite the emphasis on liturgy, a symbol reminiscent of the Sacred Heart on the chest of the *Risen Christ* nevertheless signals the sculpture's specific function as an object of devotion.²⁹

The *Risen Christ* was one of Marek's largest works, too big to fit in his suburban backyard workshop. Marek's son Ivan recalls work on the sculpture spilling outside,

with neighbours enlisted to help shape the beaten copper panels.³⁰ The completed sculpture was hoisted into position by rope, piece by piece, with assistance from parish volunteers.³¹

Art historian Dr Ralph Body has observed that Marek's copper sculptures

...simultaneously suggest simplicity and magnificence, attained by the gestalt effect of swathing his figures in voluminous drapery, which largely conceals their bodily form while creating a bold shape. The face and hands are thus emphasised through their contrast with the mass of fabric.³²

Marek deliberately limited himself to a restricted palette of two main materials, namely white rough-hewn marble and oxidised cupreous (copper-bearing) metals, including beaten copper and cast bronze. Coloured enamel and semi-precious stones were used sparingly. Common formal design elements and the use of a limited palette of materials unifies the liturgical furniture.

Marek's works created for the church carried other special meanings, for example:

- the tent-shape of the tabernacle references its scriptural origins in the large tent, known as the tabernacle, which served as a portable place of worship for the Israelites and shelter for the Ark of the Covenant, described in the Book of Exodus,
- the front of the tabernacle depicts ordinary people worshipping Christ,
- three rings over the tabernacle not only symbolise the Trinity, but also echo the pillar of cloud and fire that dwelt over the scriptural tabernacle and led the Israelites through the wilderness, as described in Exodus 13:21-22,
- the font, originally in two hemispheres, formed a rough sphere representing the world,
- *Mary, Mother of the Church* was positioned over the font, and depicted with both 'gentle gaze bent on the font-world' and 'solicitous hands stretched outward and downward,' and was associated with the font as 'a mother-figure who brings all ... to salvation and nurtures their life in Christ'³³ through baptism.
- Fr Lowes characterised the *Risen Christ's* robes as a 'priestly garment,' the folds of which 'grow subtly into the stylized branches of the vine', a reference to Jesus' statement in John 15:5: 'I am the vine, you are the branches' and intended to remind parishioners that 'this mystery of the resurrection is something in which we all share,'³⁴
- a motif of 'trumpeting and adoring' angels as stylised figures appears on all the main structures of the sanctuary ensemble and also elsewhere in the church. Such angels are intertwined on the sides and back of the tabernacle and on the rings above the tabernacle; are repeated on friezes encircling the legs of the altar and chair, and the pedestals of the font, tabernacle and lectern; and herald the dedication plaque and adorn the offering box cover.

Fr Lowes argued that 'for too long' the Catholic Church had been 'obsessed' with the suffering and death of Christ, 'to the exclusion of its counterpart in the resurrection.'³⁵ At St Margaret Mary's Church, this shift in emphasis is demonstrated by the absence of a true Crucifix, the absence of Stations of the Cross, the presence of Marek's *Risen Christ* positioned over the sanctuary, and a smaller version of the *Risen Christ* mounted on the processional cross.

At the back of the nave, facing the *Risen Christ*, a large timber cross was deliberately incorporated into the wood and glass screen between narthex and nave, to remind the departing faithful that '[they] must go out into the world to live out [their] passion and death with Christ ... the only road to Christ's risen glory.'³⁶

The baptismal font cover was replaced when it proved too heavy for regular use.³⁷ The new cover is believed to have been designed by Voitre Marek, reusing the handle from the original cover.

Chronology

Year Event

- 1836 First Catholics arrive in South Australia.
- 1919 30 May, Voitre Marek born in Bitouchov, Czech Republic.
- 1920s Catholics living in Croydon and Kilkenny celebrate Sunday Mass in Kilkenny Buffalo Hall.
- 1929 January, St Margaret Mary's school-church opens on Torrens Road.
- 1945 Fr Michael Moling Murphy arrives in South Australia.
- 1946 Parish of Croydon established under Fr Thomas Daly.**
- 1947 Commencement of Commonwealth Mass Resettlement Scheme for Displaced Persons.
Fr Thomas Daly organises purchase and relocation of surplus army hut to serve as church at Croydon.
3 August, new St Margaret Mary's Church opens.
- 1948 Voitre and Dušan Marek emigrate to Australia.
- 1949 Voitre and Dušan Marek exhibit works in Adelaide.
- 1951 Large-scale post-war migration from Italy begins.
- 1953 January 31, post-war building restrictions end in South Australia, marking beginning of church-building boom.
- 1956 Voitre Marek begins working in lighthouses on Kangaroo Island, leading to his religious epiphany.**
- 1958 Fr Michael Moling Murphy appointed parish priest at Croydon.**
- 1960 Voitre Marek returns from Kangaroo Island to Adelaide.

Voitre Marek holds solo RSASA exhibition.

- 1962 11 October, Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (Vatican II) opens in Rome.
- 1963 4 December, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is promulgated by Pope Paul VI.
- 1964 16 October, *Instruction on the Liturgy* published by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
- 1965 8 December, Vatican II Council closes in Rome.
- 1966 Voitre Marek exhibits at the Adelaide Festival.

**1968 St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church designed by Taylor and Navakas.
8 December, St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church opened.**

- 1969 New Catholic rite of baptism is published.
- 1970 Marek travels through Africa, Europe and the United States over four months visiting churches and liturgical, historical and contemporary art, accompanied by Fr Patrick Kelly.
New Catholic Mass of Paul VI published.
- 1973 Voitre Marek is badly injured in a car accident, curtailing his artistic output.
- 1997 Voitre Marek receives a papal blessing from Pope John Paul II for 'outstanding contribution to religious art in Australia'.
- 1999 27 December, Voitre Marek dies in Adelaide.
- 2021 June-September, Art Gallery of South Australia exhibits *Dušan and Voitre Marek: Surrealists at sea*, the first major survey of the brothers' work.

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SITE DETAILS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Single-storey, gable-roofed, brick church.
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1968
REGISTER STATUS:	Identified 13 August 2020 Provisionally entered 17 February 2022 Confirmed 18 August 2022
CURRENT USE:	Catholic place of worship 1968 - present
ARCHITECT:	Taylor and Navakas 1968
BUILDER:	E. F. Marshall & Sons Pty Ltd, Welland 1968
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Port Adelaide Enfield
LOCATION:	Street No.: 286 Street Name: Torrens Road Town/Suburb: Croydon Park Post Code: 5008
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Reference: CT 5710/844; CT 5726/535; CT 5385/507; CT 5824/99; CT 5840/399 Lot No.: A52; A72; A49; A4; A5 Plan No.: F117834; D3333; F118831 Hundred: Yatala

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church

PLACE NO.: 26521

286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

All images in this section are from DEW Files and were taken during the site visit 15 November 2021, unless otherwise indicated.

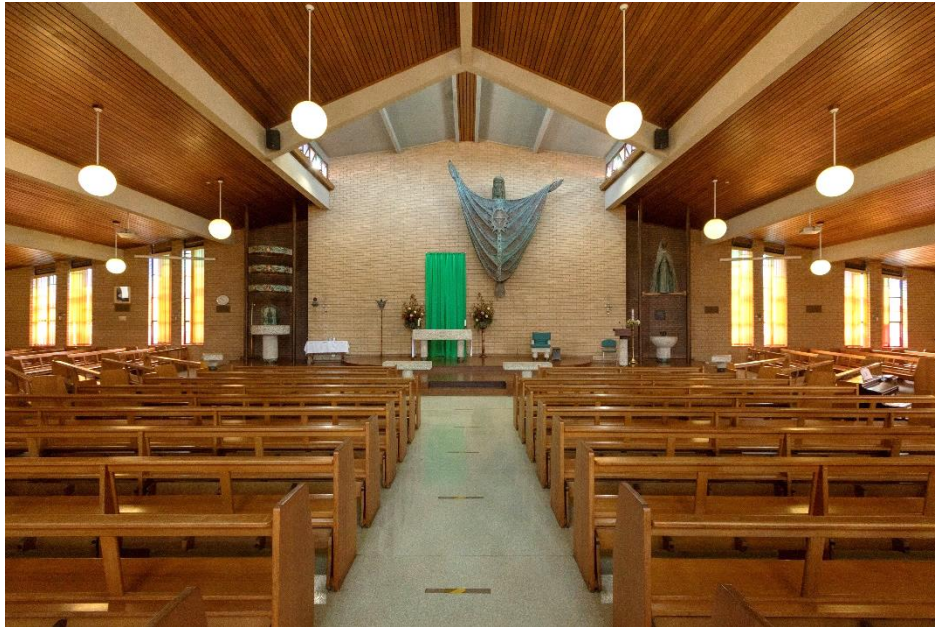


St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church

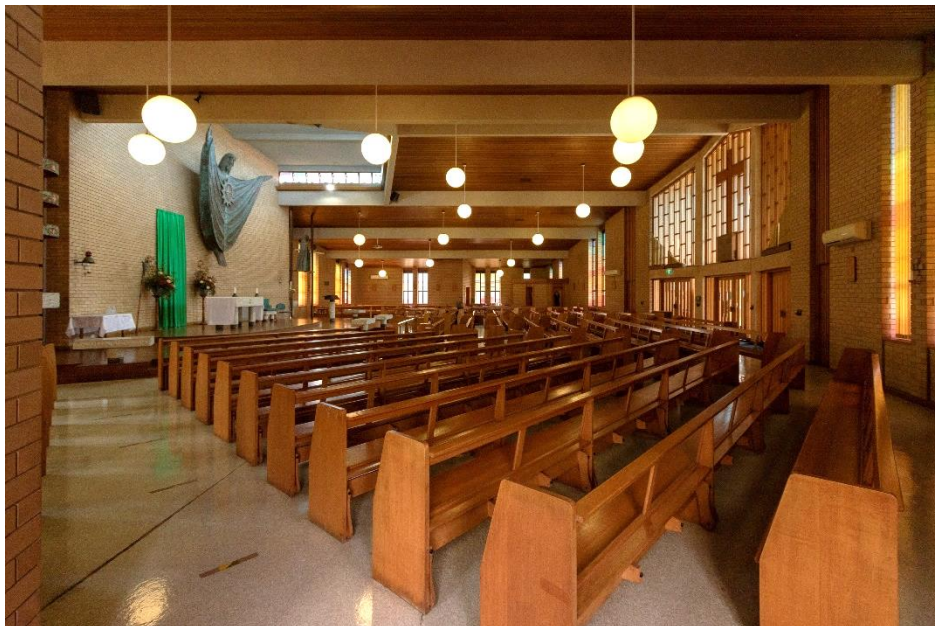
PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



View of nave, towards sanctuary



View of nave, towards sanctuary, note parallel roof beams

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



View of nave, towards narthex, with tabernacle on left



View from sanctuary towards narthex

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



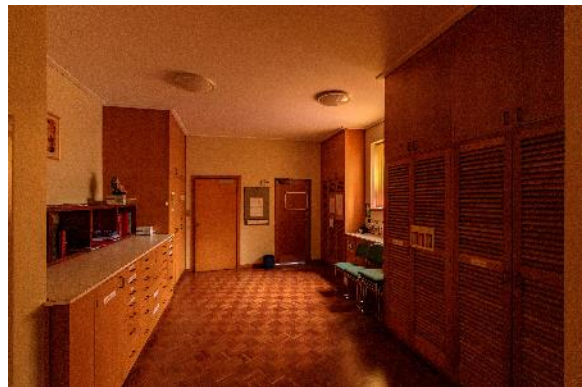
View of narthex



View of narthex, note suspended ceiling and original pendant light fitting above



View of priest's sacristy, showing original parquet floor and cabinetry



View of work sacristy, showing original parquet floor and cabinetry



Dedication plaque above doors to nave

Source: <https://www.voitremarek.com/>



Donation box cover in narthex

Source: <https://www.voitremarek.com/>

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



Sanctuary lamp by Voitre Marek



Candle holder (one of six) by Voitre Marek



Table-form altar by Voitre Marek



Beaten copper ring with trumpeting angel motif on foot of communion table



Aumbry door by Voitre Marek



Holy water stoup by Voitre Marek

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



Risen Christ by Voitre Marek



Mary, Mother of the Church by Voitre Marek



Celebrant's seat by Voitre Marek



Lectern by Voitre Marek

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



Tabernacle by Voitre Marek, note angel motif on side



tabernacle, tabernacle stand and ciborium (canopy) by Voitre Marek



Processional cross by Voitre Marek



Processional Cross fixed base by Voitre Marek

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



Baptismal font by Voitre Marek



Risen Christ by Voitre Marek (detail)



Typical door handle



Original speaker in wall

PHOTOS

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Church
286 Torrens Road, Croydon Park

PLACE NO.: 26521



Original glass pendant light fitting in narthex



Pebbles in concrete between front elevation and footpath



Front elevation window over entrance



White terrazzo steps

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- ¹¹ Robert Proctor, *Building the modern church: Roman Catholic Church architecture in Britain, 1955 to 1975* (2016) Routledge p. 207
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- ¹³ Robert Proctor, *Building the modern church* p. 205
- ¹⁴ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon, Opening, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1968* (1968) Croydon Park SA: St Margaret Mary's Church
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- ²⁰ The dedication plaque by Voitre Marek displays the date 5 December 1968, presumably in error.
- ²¹ "Centre for building souls" in *Southern Cross*
- ²² Jenny Brinkworth, "Building a Church and Community at Croydon Park"
- ²³ Robert Proctor, *Building the modern church* p. 193
- ²⁴ Robert Proctor, *Building the modern church* p. 193
- ²⁵ Aldo di Santo, "The Changing Face of Worship" p. 54
- ²⁶ Ralph Body, "To serve the creator: the ecclesiastical architecture of Voitre Marek" in Elle Freak (ed) *Dušan and Voitre Marek: surrealists at sea* (2021) Adelaide SA: Art Gallery of South Australia p. 152
- ²⁷ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
- ²⁸ Robert Proctor, *Building the modern church* p. 193
- ²⁹ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
- ³⁰ Ivan Marek, pers. comm. 22 October 2021
- ³¹ Jenny Brinkworth, "Building a Church and Community at Croydon Park"
- ³² Ralph Body, "To serve the creator" p. 152
- ³³ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
- ³⁴ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
- ³⁵ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
- ³⁶ Fr Anthony Lowes, *St Margaret Mary's Croydon*
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