

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
CHURCH OF THE HOLY NAME AT 400 GREAT KING STREET**



Photo: Origin Consultants

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX113
Address:	400 Great King Street, Dunedin North, Dunedin 9016
Located within a Heritage Precinct	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Church
Condition of Property:	Not known to be at risk because of condition

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Meets criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope
✓	External/ancillary elements	Forecourt brick walls
✓	Internal elements and/or rooms	Entry lobby and nave. Owner may choose to nominate to include ancillary spaces for protection.
	Excluded elements	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Church of the Holy Name at 400 Great King Street has historic, spiritual, and design significance. The church is associated with great changes in the Catholic Church after the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), reflecting the changes in liturgy and practice in its architecture. Its history also reflects the changing demographic of Dunedin North and the expansion of the University of Otago. It is also an expression of change within the Catholic Church and expanding cities, in particular the growth of the University of Otago and its impact on the local demographic. Spiritually, it has been the place of worship for its congregation since its opening in 1974. Holy Name has design significance as an award-winning design from Murray Cockburn Partnership reflecting the post-war move away from traditional ecclesiastical architecture in New Zealand. The building retains a high degree of authenticity and integrity.

The Church of the Holy Name is not comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin because this period is underrepresented on the schedule. It compares on a regional level with recognised heritage places of similar type and function. The church is not comparable to other notable Dunedin churches, the uniqueness of the church enhances its heritage significance.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Modern (1955-1975)
Style	Modernist/Free Form
Era/Date of Construction	1971 - 1974
Architect/Designer/Builder	Murray Cockburn (architect) Thomas Ferguson & Sons Ltd (contractors)
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Catholic Church
Primary Construction Materials	Brick, Steel, Concrete, Butynol, Timber
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Brutalist features, curved brick walls, sweeping roofs, lighting, raw brick and concrete, alternating solid walls with glazing

Previous site development

Sections 16 and 17, Block XXIX had various owners throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The sections were divided into small plots with various dwellings across the site by 1905.¹ Pt Section 15, Block XXIX was occupied by The Great King Street Independent Church, better known as the Congregational Church. The large wooden church was built in 1880, designed by architect R A Lawson opposite the Otago Museum. In 1931, the North Dunedin Congregational congregation relocated to a new building on Albany Street.

The Bishop purchased land for a church-school and convent in North Dunedin in 1930 – the site was close to the University and George Street School (bounded by Castle and Cumberland Street). The flat central site provided good access for those parishioners who found the hilly site of the cathedral difficult to reach. Dunedin North had an influx of young families and no Catholic church in the area.²

They sold their old church to the Catholic Diocese of Dunedin, which had long wanted a presence in North Dunedin.³ The church became The Church of the Holy Name (also known as Holy Name Church). Dunedin North was officially recognised as a parish on 12 March 1950. The large parish extended from the Bullock Track to Wakari Road, over to Pacific Street including part of Māori Hill and out to St Leonards.⁴

The proximity of the University of Otago to the Holy Name parish influenced the Catholic Diocese of Dunedin to secure land quickly in the 1940s and 50s as the University made plans to expand. Properties surrounding the existing Holy Name Church were purchased to provide grounds for a new school and replacement of the church.⁵ Properties purchased by 1955 included eight on George Street and ten on Great King Street.⁶ These properties were tenanted while plans were made, and funds were secured for a new church building. At least sixteen houses were removed from the site between 1962 and 1970.⁷

Design and construction

In 1969, a national architectural competition was held to design a new church for the Catholic Diocese of Dunedin. Architect K D Marshall (of the Christchurch architectural practice Trengrove, Trengrove, and Marshall) was the professional advisor in the proposed competition. JR Blake Kelly was the architectural member of the Jury of Award and His Lordship Bishop Kavanagh completed the panel.⁸

¹ DCC Archives. City of Dunedin Drainage Plan, 1905.

² MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 3.

³ Croot, C; Watson White, H (Ed.). (1999). *Dunedin Churches: Past and Present*. Page 111.

⁴ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 16.

⁵ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 28.

⁶ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 29.

⁷ Retrolens, Aerial photographs. (1962, 1970).

Accessed: <https://retrolens.co.nz/map/#/1406311.5208659968/4917624.364455681/1407066.9336847002/4918135.537082408/2193/13>

⁸ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 30.

The general concept was for a church building with furnishings. The brief read:

The area is in one of the older parts of the city. Across from the church is the museum. Many old residences have gone but the university population has increased and there are a growing number of motels in the area. The congregation is from many walks of life. We want the atmosphere of a parish church for a cosmopolitan and, in part, transient congregation. We picture a church that, looking like a church, giving the feeling of strength in its own right, equipped to do its own work, standing almost literally between the university and the city, will be an inspiration to those who use it, a pleasure to the university and a pride to the city of Dunedin.⁹

In May 1970, the design of Murray J. Cockburn of Architects, Engineers Partnership's was chosen as the winning design from 26 entries. The NZIA journal commented on the design, emphasising the strict cost controls that had pruned some aspects of the scheme. The article considered that 'When the church is complete with furniture and furnishings, that rather than the over-simplified internal character as at present delineated, the muted daylight playing across textured curving walls with their occasional symbolic decorations, will create an identifiable religious atmosphere quite at ease in this building of contemporary design.¹⁰

Cockburn's design was in the modern ecclesiastical style with curved brick walls and sweeping shingled roofs. The building was to be constructed of reinforced concrete floors, brown brick exterior walls and light steel truss roof structure. The \$177,740.65 contract (less furnishings) was awarded to builders Thomas Ferguson & Sons Ltd.¹¹ The church had seating for 500 worshippers.

Late twentieth-century ecclesiastical designs moved away from traditional styles such as Gothic 'towards freer forms of expression'. Architectural historians, Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, write that there was a 'natural desire' to 'ensure that a church was both "distinctive" and at the same time an integral part of the community it served.' They considered "distinctiveness" came from 'what were sometimes rather contorted manipulations of shape and space to create drama, with an almost Baroque play of light from unseen or unexpected sources to create a special mood. Integration of the church into its community was expressed by the use of familiar materials such as brick and timber, with details that were not too different from those found in domestic architecture.'¹²

Cockburn has stated that he used sixteenth- and eighteenth-century church floor plans as a base while using modern materials to create a contemporary and spiritually uplifting space.¹³ The new church's design represents a departure from traditional ecclesiastical architecture. Holy Name was the first Catholic Church in the Dunedin area designed for the fundamentally altered liturgical requirements of the Second Vatican

⁹ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 31.

¹⁰ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 30-31.

¹¹ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 31.

¹² Richard Apperly, Robert Irving, Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, first published 1989, p.230.

¹³ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 34.

Council (1962-1965; Vatican II).¹⁴ The changes to Catholic liturgy and church practice allowed for exploring new forms and spatial arrangements.

Inside, brickwork and timber panelling give a simple finish to the building's curving geometry. In section, the building is stepped to the highest point over the sanctuary where the roof soars to a large skylight. Outwardly curving interior walls, combined with light falling on the altar from above, behind and beside emphasise the altar as the focal point.¹⁵ The design was described in a NZIA (New Zealand Institute of Architects) journal dated 20 August 1970, that the "muted daylight playing across textured curving walls with their occasional symbolic decorations, will create an identifiable religious atmosphere quite at ease in this building of contemporary design."¹⁶ In section, the building is stepped to the highest point over the sanctuary where the roof soars to a skylight. Outwardly curving interior walls, combined with light falling on the altar from above, behind and beside emphasise the altar as the focal point.

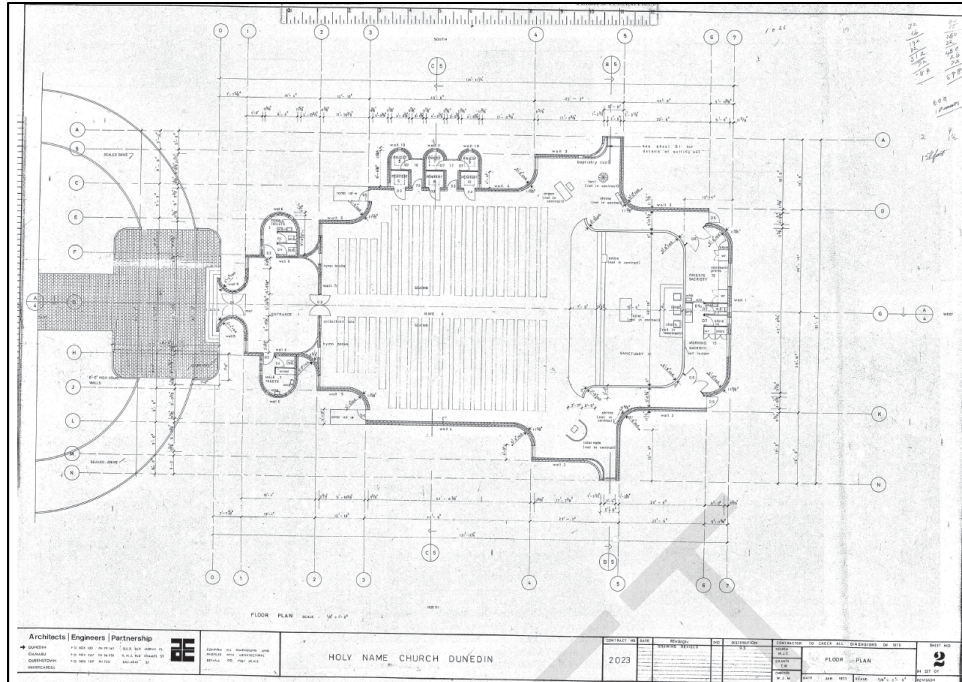


The church during construction (MacCormick p. 32.)

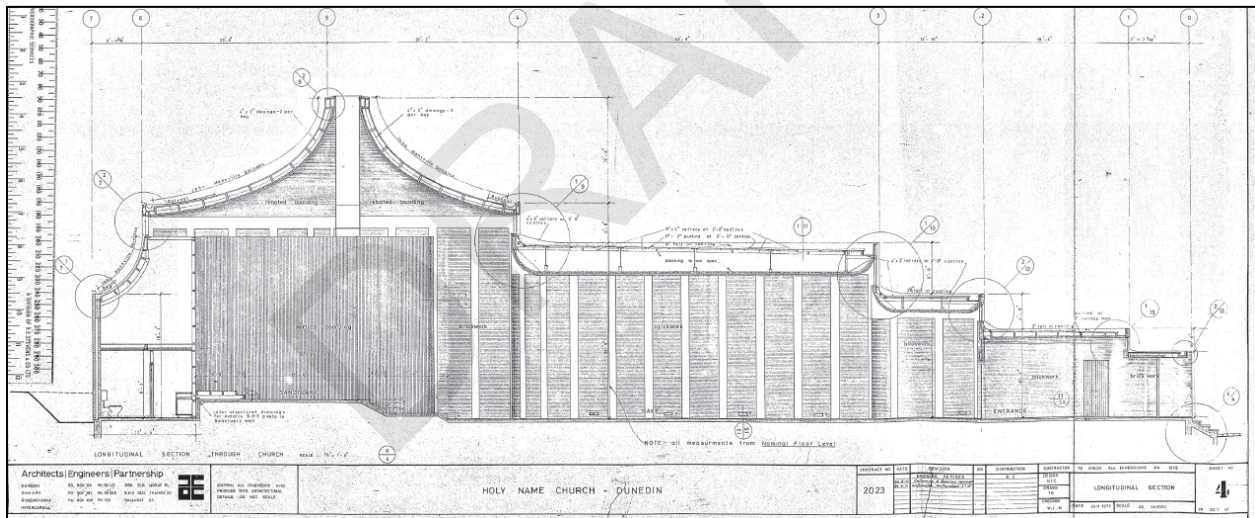
¹⁴ Croot, C; Watson White, H (Ed.). (1999). *Dunedin Churches: Past and Present*. Page 111.

¹⁵ Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects Website. Accessed: 27/06/2024.
<https://www.nzia.co.nz/explore/articles-and-essays/the-story-up-to-now/>; McKay, p. 41.

¹⁶ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 31.



Plan, designed by M. Cockburn of Architects, Engineers Partnership, 1971 (DCC Property Files)



Plan, designed by M. Cockburn of Architects, Engineers Partnership, 1971 (DCC Property Files)

Later Development

There were ongoing maintenance issues with the original roof. In 1980, a new roof replaced the original.¹⁷ This is likely when the John Mansville Shingles were removed and replaced by the existing membrane roofing. Weather porches were added to the side doors.¹⁸

¹⁷ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 34.

¹⁸ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 34.

During 1987, surplus land to the George Street edge of the site was subdivided and sold to reduce debt and help fund a new Parish Centre. Designed by Hamish Wixon and built in 1989 on the site of the old church, the new Parish Centre provided accommodation, offices, and a meeting room. The building was intended to complement the exterior appearance of the church to create a coherent group of buildings.¹⁹

In 2003, Cockburn received an award for Enduring Architecture at the New Zealand Institute of Architects' Resene Local Awards for Architecture for the design of the Church of the Holy Name.²⁰ The citation reads:

Amongst Dunedin's wonderful stock of heritage architecture in the city centre lies a seventies brown brick, curved wall building retreated back from the northern highway. At a time when church design was likened to 'regional shopping centres, supermarkets', this building is something special in Dunedin's collection of ecclesiastical architecture. The Holy Name Parish follows the traditional symmetry of church planning. From the nave, the ceiling soars skyward when meeting the apse. This effect of height provides a focus towards the altar which is made even more poignant and uplifting with the incorporation of coloured glass skylights over this area, continuing down each transept and essentially framing the altar.'

Cockburn on winning the award, said 'Good architecture needs to know where its past was, and who it is building for now and into the future. Architecture is not a monument to the architects, it is a touchstone for the times.'²¹

Notable People/Themes

Catholic Church, Vatican II

The Catholic Church has a long history in Dunedin with a small group of Catholics accompanying the major denominations to Dunedin in the 1840s. The Church grew to 6,000 by the early 1870s.²² The design of churches is greatly influenced by the attitudes of the society for which they are built. Desires and changes in the attitude of the Catholic Church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries culminated in the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Church designs reflected changes to Catholic liturgy and church practice. The most overt change was the moving of the altar so that the priest could face the congregation, rather than facing the liturgical east. Seating was also rearranged to bring people closer to the altar, as services were to be conducted in a language the congregation understood, rather than in Latin.²³ These changes allowed for new forms and spatial arrangements to be explored. These new places of worship reflected a move to better integrate with the modern world and focus the space on the community gathered within, rather than the distraction of art or ornamentation.²⁴

¹⁹ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 40-42.

²⁰ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 32, 34.

²¹ MacCormick, M. (2004). *Church of the Holy Name*. Page 34.

²² Finlay, M. 2009. *Dunedin Contextual Thematic History, Theme 3*. Page 61.

²³ McKay, B. (2015). *Worship: A history of New Zealand Church Design*. Page 41.

²⁴ Wilson, C. 2012. *Spiritual Sanctuary: Proposing a Catholic Church in New Zealand in the Post Vatican II Era*.

Alongside this, a rise in liberalist thinking and expanding cities in New Zealand was reflected through a functional, minimalist architectural style: modernism. The force of modernism, along with ecumenism, and a drive for progress saw churches experiment with new forms and arrangements.²⁵

Modernism

Bill McKay writes that Modernism was a powerful force shaping post-war architecture in New Zealand, including church architecture that saw experiments with new forms and arrangements. The idea of social and cultural progress was important, dovetailing, in the case of the Church of the Holy Name, with changes in liturgy and practice that came with Vatican II. McKay writes that ‘the promotion of more congregational involvement also aligned with post-war theological thinking about immanence – the notion that the divine manifests in the material world or within oneself, as opposed to transcendence, which sees God as out of this world. Rethinking of these concepts leads to subtle changes in the role of light, glass and art in architecture: we see more of an acceptance of the abstract, or plain panels of glass; and churches acquiring more of an internal luminosity rather than being illuminated, in the manner of Gothic cathedrals, by awe-inspiring God-rays from above striking the dim interior.’

Murray Cockburn²⁶

Oamaru-born architect Murray Cockburn was trained at the Auckland School of Architecture. He began practising in the 1960s. His first commission was Hampden Tavern for the Oamaru Licensing Trust, for whom he also designed the Golden Fleece Tavern (which won a design excellence award). He designed several other commercial and residential buildings in Oamaru. He established Murray Cockburn Partnership in 1971 with offices in Fiji and Queenstown. Cockburn was 29 years old when his design for Holy Name was selected. Among his other architectural work was Millbrook Resort in Arrowtown.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The church demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Church of the Holy Name has historical significance for its association with, and architectural expression of, the great changes in the Catholic Church after the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1963-65). Holy Name also has historical value for its association with modernist church design as an expression of social change. The location and design of the church reflect the growth of the University of Otago and the church’s efforts to adapt to the changing demographic of the community.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The church demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Church of the Holy Name has spiritual significance as a place of worship for the Dunedin North’s Catholic community over 50 years. It remains in use by the congregation.

²⁵ McKay, B. (2015). *Worship: A history of New Zealand Church Design*. Page 41.

²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/murraycockburnpartnership/>

DESIGN

The church demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Church of the Holy Name has design significance as an award-winning design from Murray Cockburn Partnerships that reflected the post-war move away from traditional ecclesiastical architecture towards a free form exploration of form and arrangement. The Church of the Holy Name is unique when compared to other notable Dunedin churches which enhances its design significance. The building retains a high degree of authenticity and integrity.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

- Croot, C; Watson White, H (Ed.). 1999. *Dunedin Churches: Past and Present*. Otago Settlers Association.
- Finlay, M. 2009. *Dunedin Contextual Thematic History*.
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- Otago Daily Times*, 7 Oct 1971, p.14. – architect’s perspective view - illustration
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