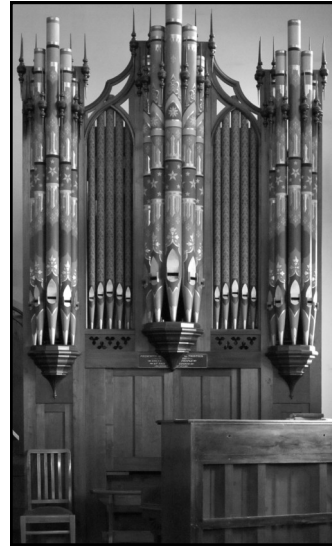


Until the 1960s, the church also had a harmonium that was at the front of the worship space on the side opposite the organ. The harmonium would have been used in the hall for Sunday School and may have been used prior to the purchase of the pipe organ. However, congregations that could not afford a harmonium, or like the Gaelic Presbyterian Church in Carlton didn't approve of their use, often had a precentor who led the congregation in the singing.



The George Fincham organ.

Heritage listing

The church has been recognised by three bodies interested in preserving Victoria's heritage:

- The Heritage Council of Victoria (a Victorian Government body) registered the organ and the church building on 21 December 2008 to contribute to the conservation of the historical instrument.
- The Melbourne City Council recognises all our buildings on its register. For the church it says: "This building is significant as a low cost church, designed for a growing congregation in a developing suburb. The design, by noted Melbourne architect Joseph Reed, incorporates Romanesque influences and is notable for the skill in which the upper gallery is integrated with the total design."
- The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) recognises the church and organ as follows: "The Church of All Nations has historical significance for its association with immigration to Victoria in the post-World War II period and with the assimilation of migrants into Victorian society. In the 1950s and 1960s Carlton was a focus for recently arrived immigrants and in the 1960s particularly the church demonstrated innovation in worship and migrant services that was at the forefront of such services in Victoria.

The Church of All Nations has historical [significance] for the pipe organ built by George Fincham in 1877....

The Church of All Nations has historical and social significance as an important place of worship and of community assistance for local residents and newly arrive migrants since the nineteenth century.

The Church of All Nations has architectural significance as a fine example of the Norman Romanesque style in Victoria, and of the work of the architect Joseph Reed, Melbourne's most prominent architect at this time, who designed almost every major church in Carlton."

Changes and furnishing along the way

The Construction of the Church of All Nations
150th Anniversary Celebrations



Subsequent changes to the church

It is a testament to the craftsmen who made subsequent changes to the church, that many of them are not immediately obvious to the untrained observer. However, there has been significant work on the church since 1870 and those changes have left marks on the building. As the timeline lists most of them, only two are mentioned here.

On rejecting the semi-circular apse, the congregation asked Reed and Barnes to design two vestries in its place at the northern end of the church. These were built in 1882. The slight difference, in the projecting stones under the eaves, between the nave (body) of the church and these vestries bears testimony to this addition.

The most dramatic work occurred in 1913 when the roof was removed and the long walls dismantled down to the ledges at the bottom of the clerestory (upper) windows. This was necessitated by the upper part of the walls being pushed outward by the weight of the roof with its slate, and lath and plaster ceiling. At this time the tie-rods were installed to prevent the walls splaying out again and the ceiling was made lighter by using timber. The slightly pink mortar in the upper wall reveals this major work. The debt arising from this work also encouraged the Methodist Conference to decide to sell the church and manse. However, Rev George Dyson persuaded the church hierarchy that the congregation could extinguish the debt, which it did in 1929.



The timber ceiling and wall tie rods installed in 1913 when the east and west walls were splaying outwards. The roof, ceiling and top part of the walls were replaced. Timber was used for lining the ceiling because it is lighter than the original lath and plaster.

The gallery mystery

While Joseph Reed's galleries were not built in 1870, Mr Pigdon did build the stone foundations, under the floor, some 4 m in from three walls to accommodate them in the future. These foundations were used when the current rear galley was built. There is no record of when the gallery was built, and there is conflicting evidence.

Extensive improvements to the church were completed and the church re-opened on Sunday 13th March 1887. The architects were the renowned firm of Terry and Oakden, but however there is no record. Was the rear gallery built at that time? When the gallery was built, stairs were erected on each side under the gallery. This necessitated removing the original side doorways off the portico and opening the current central door.

There is a tradition that the organ was originally in the gallery, but there is no reference to that and no reference to any significant work between the dates when the church was built (1871) and the extensive improvements of 1887, other than the building of the vestries in 1882. If the organ were in the gallery, and the gallery was built in 1887, then the organ must have been elsewhere in its first decade.

There was believed to be an old photograph, lost in the 1965 fire, which showed the pews once faced the opposite direction – towards the south. However there is no evidence in the cut-outs in the timber pew ends attached to the walls. It is unlikely that the seats faced the other way when the church was opened as the portico was obviously intended as the main entrance. This alternative seating arrangement would only have been possible until the gallery was built, and would have been unlikely after the vestries were built in 1882 as the entrance to the church would have been along the narrow corridors off Drummond and Neill Street. The pews were probably moved out during the roof repairs. The mixed up pew numbering shows they have been moved, but this is likely to be after 1937 because of the need to preserve numbering for pew rentals that applied until then. There is a record of reversible pews being bought for the hall in the 20th Century.

The gallery design

The Corinthian style of the steel columns used to support the gallery is the same as that shown on the Reed and Barnes drawings, but those drawings do not show any details for the balustrade. It is interesting that the Joseph Reed designed St Michaels' church, in Collins Street, has



The main entrance to the church shows the signs of having been added to the church after the original construction. Whereas the side windows, which were the two entrances in 1870 are set back from the face of the stonework and the corners are bevelled, the current wooden doorway is set forward of the stone and the stone edge is rougher than on the windows.



The rear gallery of the church was probably built in 1887 as part of the extensive improvements designed and supervised by the architects Terry and Oakden. Gold tinted Corinthian Capitals surmounting the iron pillars, as shown on Joseph Reed's 1869 drawing, were used to support the front of the gallery.

galleries of the same design as those built in Carlton (except that St Michael's galleries are curved), despite the rest of the church being a completely different design (polychrome brick Lombardic Romanesque with a square floor plan).

As mentioned above, the Reed drawings show the stairs to the gallery inside the tower and room at each end of the portico, but those built were actually placed in the nave of the church.

Furnishings

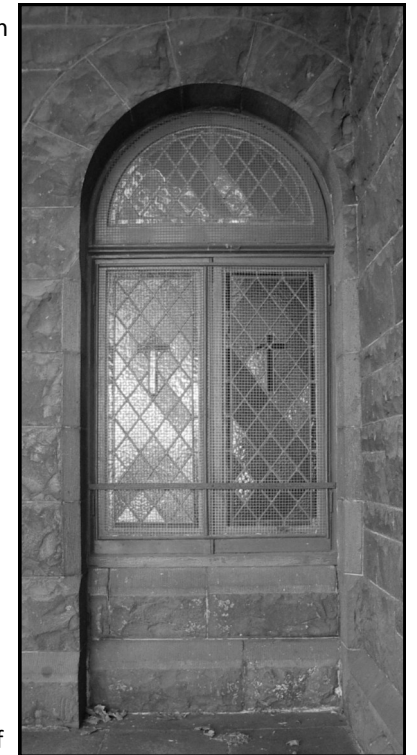
When the church was opened it contained a desk that cost £5. Presumably, this was a lectern or simple pulpit.

At a later date the congregation purchased a set of furnishings that included pulpit, communion table, communion rail and baptismal font. The pulpit and the communion rail, modified, remain at the front of the current worship space, while the early communion table is used in the Fullerton Chapel. The communion table currently used at the front of the church came from the North Carlton Presbyterian Church on the corner of Nicholson and Princes Streets, when that congregation joined with the Methodists in 1965, twelve years before the Uniting Church was formed. The style of the baptismal font differs from the other original furnishings, but its origin or what happened to the original font is unknown. There is a stone, under the carpet, to the west of the pulpit, on which the original baptismal font stood.

With changes in worship practice, the pulpit has been used infrequently since the 1980s. Ministers and liturgists now use the lectern at the front of the church. Another, lighter lectern that matched the other furnishings was made by in the 1990s. This was found to be too small and is now used in the Ruth Sugden Room of the mission building next to the church.

The organs

The pipe organ built by George Fincham in 1876-77, is described in another booklet.



The Reed and Barnes drawings show two side doors entering the church from the portico, and no central door. The pews came right to this back wall. The stonework below the window shows signs that it was done later, indicating that the doorway was closed to become a window, possibly in 1887. The doorway is different from the windows: It is set forward from the masonry, there is no bevel on the edge of the entrance and smaller stones have been used in places around the opening.