

Case information

Case ID	300017639
File Reference	HGH/B/SL/288
Name of Site	St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, excluding later extensions to south and presbytery, 1350 Gallowgate, Glasgow

Local Authority	City of Glasgow Council		
National Grid Reference	NS 62390 64236		
Designation No. (if any)	N/A		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Designation		

Received/Start Date	23/11/2015
Decision Date	04/05/2016

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, St Michael's RC Church is considered to meet the criteria for listing at category C. The building has been designated (listed).

Current Statutory Address	N/A
New Statutory address	St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, excluding later extensions to south and presbytery, 1350 Gallowgate, Glasgow

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Glasgow Wards 27-30 in which this building is situated was resurveyed in 1992.

This building is situated within Parkhead Cross Conservation Area.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

St Michael's RC Church and Presbytery were visited on 10/12/2015.

The exterior and interior of the church were visited but only the exterior of the presbytery was seen.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The church building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out. See **Annex A**.

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, excluding later extensions to south and presbytery, 1350 Gallowgate, Glasgow

1. Description

The church was designed by Alexander McAnally and built from 1965-69. It is an 11-bay, approximately rectangular plan stripped modern Gothic aisleless church with canted apse and large narthex, located at the east end of Glasgow in a street which largely consists of tenement houses above shops. In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: the later extensions to the south and the presbytery.

The exterior is built of Nori rustic red/brown facing brick with buff sandstone dressings. There are mainly triangular headed window and door openings and plain pier buttresses and an eaves course. The tall tapering brick buttress with concrete facing on the east flank is surmounted by a massive sculptural figure of St Michael and the dragon, cast in synthetic stone (designed by the Jack Mortimer Company). There is distinctive circular-patterned glass used in mainly fixed-light metal windows. There is 'Lockroll' aluminium roofing.

The interior which was seen in 2015 has many 1960s fittings in place including ceiling lights, pews, and doors with distinctive diagonally-patterned timberwork and circular-patterned glazed lights. There are cream coloured bricks to the interior walls and a cedarwood ceiling. The distinctive triangular headed shape of the exterior openings is repeated at the chancel arch, in the apse, the communion rail, the high altar and the niches and tabernacle on the rear wall of the sanctuary. Extensive use of marble in the sanctuary on the floor, communion rail and high altar where three different marbles are used.

The rectangular plan plain presbytery which is not included in this listing is linked at the north west of the church.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75

Criteria for determining whether a building is of 'special architectural or historic interest' for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents]

To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.

2.1 Age and Rarity

St Michael's Roman Catholic Church was built between 1965 and 1969, the first mass taking place on 24 December 1969, although the church was not yet complete at that date. The formal opening took place on 21 May 1970. The external appearance of the church from the street is largely unchanged when compared to the original plans drawn up by Alexander McAnally. At the rear a number of a small scale extensions have been made to the south west of the confessionals.

This church is one of a number of substantial churches built in Glasgow in the post-war period. Many were built to serve new housing areas such as Knightswood, Mosspark and Riddrie. However St Michael's was built in a much older area of Glasgow at Parkhead, close to the Parkhead Forge which had been established in 1837, later becoming the steelworks of William Beardmore and Co. St Michael's replaced an earlier church of the same name which stood in Salamanca Street. This was built in 1901 by the Glasgow architect Joseph Cowan who designed a number of Roman Catholic churches in the area. It was a mission church from St Mary's, Camlachie and had been intended only as a temporary structure. The site for the new church was acquired in 1921 and in 1934 Reginald Fairlie was commissioned to draw up plans for a massive church with twin western towers. However there were long delays because of difficulties with the city's education authority regarding the site. Also the provision of churches for new housing areas took priority over the replacement for the temporary structure. In the end it served until the new church in Gallowgate opened in 1970.

The 20th Century Society database of churches records nearly 90 new churches built in Glasgow after the Second World War. Many of these are designed in brick and some were highly innovative in design and layout. However in contrast St Michael's is Traditionalist in its concept and design. Although it post-dates the changes in church layout instigated by the Second Vatican Council from 1960-1965, it retains the traditional separation of clergy and congregation. McAnally's church work reflects an interest in earlier Italian and particularly Scandinavian church design of the 1920s and '30s (see below). Two other Roman Catholic churches designed by McAnally of the post-war period are listed, both at category B: St Pius Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery, 4 Bayfield Terrace, Glasgow and St Teresa's Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery, 86-90 Saracen Street, Glasgow.

Because of its relatively recent date and the number of other post-war churches in the Glasgow district this church cannot be said to be rare for its building type. However it remains a good example of a church built in this period along traditional lines which includes high quality interior fixtures and fittings, has a landmark sculpture on the exterior and is consistently applies a stylised Gothic design throughout.

The presbytery and buildings to the rear of the church are not considered to be of special interest in listing terms.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

Much of the interior detailing and furnishings dating from the late 1960s survive. The most significant change to the interior is the screening off of the narthex from the main part of the church.

The interior is of interest as the design detailing is very consistent throughout, in particular the triangular pointed arch motif used in the doors, windows, chancel arch and lower arch in the apse, the arch above the gallery as well as in the details of the altar, reredos and communion rail.

The consistency of the design throughout the interior and its survival distinguish this church from many of its contemporaries.

Plan form

The plan is a standard basilican plan with raised chancel in keeping with its Traditionalist design and is based on historical precedents. In some respects it is similar to other churches designed by McAnally for example the overall basilican plan and the position of the main group of confessionals on the south side of the nave is similar to St Teresa of Lisieux designed by McAnally in the late 1950s. Other churches by McAnally are much less conservative in plan and have been designed to follow Vatican II principles, for example the St James Crookston (1965-68) where the nave was circular. The reason for this variation likely relates to the wishes of the client. The complex background to the building of St Michael's may also account for its traditional plan.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

Alexander McAnally (1907-1978) was one of the foremost church architects in Glasgow in the post-war years, working almost exclusively for the Roman Catholic Church. The most significant and prolific architects producing extraordinary church buildings during the post-war period were working mainly for the Roman Catholic Church: Thomas Cordiner, Reginald Fairlie, A R Conlon, Jack Coia, Isi Metzstein and Andy MacMillan. McAnally himself designed more than twenty churches in the period between 1950 and 1970 and produced imaginative designs where the whims of his clients and the budget would allow this.

This church is among a small group of Traditionalist church designs in Glasgow built during the post-war period, which is also similar to the ideals and work of Reginald Fairlie, consciously fusing a traditional basilican plan with modern design motifs and high quality materials which resulted in a modern Gothic or Romanesque style. It also took inspiration from the contemporary interest in modern Scandinavian architecture but in particular shows similarities with earlier Danish church designs of the 1920s and '30s, with intricate brickwork and simplified steeples. The most well-known example is P V Jensen's Klint's Grundtvigs Church in Copenhagen but a number of smaller regional churches – as at Aarhus – bear a striking resemblance to McAnally's Glasgow churches. The church work of architect, Francis Johnson in Yorkshire, is also contemporary with McAnally's, and in particular, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Scarborough of 1958-60 (listed grade II) is directly comparable and shows a similar debt to interwar Scandinavian church design.

McAnally stated that the principal feature was the figure of St Michael on the top of the buttress at the northeast corner of the church. The statue which is cast in artificial stone is 12 feet high and weighs 8 tons. In 1970 it was considered to be the largest freestanding piece of sculpture in the west of Scotland created during the previous 50 years. It must have been designed by the sculptor Jack Mortimer for the previous church which was proposed in the 1930s as Jack Mortimer died in 1961, almost ten years before the church was opened. His practice was closed at this time; the moulds for the figure of St Michael would likely have been cut sometime prior to his death and cast when the new church was being built.

Jack Mortimer worked in partnership with Andrew Willison (died about 1944) and Edward Graham (born 1914). They were architectural carvers. The firm have a distinguished list of jobs including sculpture for the Empire Exhibition in 1938 and the completion of the sculpture on John Burnet's 200 St Vincent Street in 1953. Mortimer was the major contributor at St Columbkille's, Rutherglen (1940) St Kevin's, Bargeddie (1950); St Simon's, Partick (1956) and St Paul's, Shettleston (1958). He also executed the St Aloysius College War Memorial, Glasgow (1948) and the relief portrait on the memorial to the Very Rev John White, South Leith Parish Church, Lothian (1952).

Setting

St Michael's is situated at Parkhead at the east end of Glasgow. This part of Gallowgate largely consists of late 19th tenement houses above shops and other 20th century commercial premises. It is located just south east of the Eastern Necropolis. The building is a landmark in Gallowgate which is largely commercial and domestic in character.

The church lies within the Parkhead Conservation Area.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

None known at present.

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (SHEP 2011, p76)

In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. special value within building types*
- b. contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing St Michael's RC Church has particular interest under a and d

a. St Michael's is a good example of a Traditionalist church, in a stylised Gothic design, using good quality modern materials. The large cast statue of St Michael is a distinguishing feature. Relatively few churches of the late 1960s have similar architectural sculpture.

d. The elevation of the church toward the street and most parts of the interior are largely unaltered.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, designed by the Glasgow Catholic architect Alexander McAnally and built between 1966 and 1969, is a good little altered example of a Roman Catholic church conceived on traditional lines but designed with a modern Gothic style and taking inspiration from modern Scandinavian church design. Its distinctive features are the repeated use of the triangular headed arched openings and the tall buttress carrying the massive statue of St Michael designed by the sculptor Jack Mortimer. The church is a landmark in the streetscape of Gallowgate.

In our current state of knowledge it is considered to meet the criteria for listing.

The presbytery and buildings to the rear of the church are not considered to meet the criteria for listing.

5. Category of Listing

Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing

Category C denotes buildings of local importance, lesser examples of any period, style, or building type, as originally constructed or moderately altered, and simple, traditional buildings that group well with other listed buildings. In listing terms the interest of St Michael's RC Church is considered to be of local importance. Therefore category C is the most appropriate category of listing.

6. Other Information

Demographically Parkhead was largely a working class area being close to the site of Parkhead Forge which was the largest steelworks in Scotland in the 1890s and required a huge workforce, the number of workers reaching a peak of over 20,000 during the First World War. It finally closed in 1976. It is within the area covered by The GEAR (Glasgow East Area Renewal) scheme, founded in 1976, which at that time was Europe's largest urban regeneration project of its kind, to provide 'core areas with development potential' in the east end of Glasgow.

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 163829

Printed sources

Higgs, M., Riches, A., Williamson, E. (1990) *The Buildings of Scotland: Glasgow*. London: Penguin Books.

Scottish Catholic Observer 2 May 1970, p.5

Solemn Opening on 21 May 1970 of the new church of St Michael's, p.17 [per Mary McHugh, Glasgow Catholic Archives]

Online sources

Glasgow City of Sculpture database

http://www.glasgowsculpture.com/pg_biography.php?sub=mortimer_w-g [accessed 08/02/2016]

Dictionary of Scottish Architects

http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=202611 [accessed 08/02/2016]

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

** A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Environment Scotland list a building' at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist