



Wentworth Memorial Church

Address 32b Fitzwilliam Road, Vaucluse, NSW, 2030

Practice Clarke, Gazzard & Partners

Designed 1964 Completed 1965

History & Description The site was bequeathed to the Church of England in 1873, after the death of William Charles Wentworth, however, it was not until 1928 that it was transferred & plans were prepared. Due to the constraints of the Depression a hall was built instead of a church. By 1961 Rev. N. C. Bathgate had begun to lobby his parishioners for the construction of the Wentworth Memorial Church on the prominent hill site bounded by Chapel & Fitzwilliam Roads.



Approach view. Source: H. Snowden.

Whereas the building can only be glimpsed from the street, its tall Chancel form is a landmark seen from many parts of Vaucluse & the Harbour, symbolising the integral part of the community it serves. The approach to the church from the road is from the northeast up a path & steps set in an established garden & nearby to the east side of the church which leads on to a wide paved forecourt at the northwest side of the site. To retain a rock outcrop & adjacent Port Jackson Fig tree the irregular polygon plan of the church was based on a northwest & southeast axis. The plan form resulted in a sculptured appearance of white painted brick walls that are in turn cut at altering angles at their abutment with the copper-clad various-angled skillion-roofs. The composition is a carefully contrived massing reflecting both the landform & the response in plan to the liturgical changes of the time; away from the earlier symbolic rituals followed by the Anglican church. The prominent central bell tower directs the parishioners to the entry porch & exhibits a vernacular reference, possibly recalling a Greek village church. The domestic scale glazed front doors are approached up four broad steps adjacent to the bell tower, & are set in a wall of glass with close-spaced timber-mullions. Internally, natural light floods down from the clerestory glazing on to the painted brick walls & paved flooring. Clear finished timber is used for the joinery & V-jointed, tongue & groove lined ceiling. The building is highly intact.



NW forecourt & entry. Source: P. Bingham-Hall

The partner in charge of the project was Donald Gazzard.

(Adapted from Woollahra Council Inventory)



North view. Source: State Library of Victoria

Statement of Significance The Wentworth Memorial Church is an excellent example of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional style of architecture with its asymmetrical massing, varied sloping skillion roofs with clerestory windows & the use of natural materials including timber lined ceiling, traditional load-bearing white painted brickwork. It is a rare example of this style in an ecclesiastical building. The massing reflects its ecclesiastical function & its setting on a hill-top site above the harbour.

Criteria Applicable **N1.** Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design **N3.** Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement



Chancel form is a landmark in its suburban setting. Source: G Trickett



Interior. Source: www.sydneorgan.com