

# Woollahra 2004 heritage inventory

Based on the NSW Heritage Office State Heritage Inventory sheet

ITEM DETAILS			
Current name of proposed item	Wentworth Memorial Church		
Former name			
Item type	Archaeological, Built, Landscape, Movable/Collection, Area/Group/Complex Built		
Significant area or group	Name		
Address	Number 32B	Street Fitzwilliam Road	Suburb Vaucluse
Property description by Council	Lot 1		DP 871485
Original owner	Name Anglican Church Property Trust [Watson's Bay Parish]		Address
Use	Current Place of worship		Former Place of worship
Statement of significance	The Wentworth Memorial Church is the most architecturally distinguished church of the later 20 <sup>th</sup> century in NSW. The church has strong historic associations with the Wentworth Family and is the last built work on their Vaucluse House Estate. The church is strongly associated with the architect, Don Gazzard, who is an important Australian architect of the mid and late 20th century. The place is of some significance to groups who appreciate Australian architectural history, as evidenced by its inclusion on the RAIA Register of 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Buildings of Significance, and the wide range of publications which feature the building.		
Level of significance	State Yes - Moderate	Local Yes - High	
Heritage listings	<b>Woollahra Council LEP 1995 (as amended):</b> The grounds and native vegetation of the Wentworth Memorial Anglican Church are listed as a heritage item <b>State Heritage Register / Inventory:</b> No / No <b>Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) Register of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings of Significance:</b> Yes <b>National Trust of Australia (NSW):</b> No		
DESCRIPTION			
Designer	Architect (building and furniture): Clarke Gazzard and Partners [Don Gazzard] Silverware: Helge and Darani Larsen Wall hanging designer: Mona Hessing Engineer: Miller Milston and Ferris		
Builder	Monteith Constructions Furniture Maker: Fishers Modern Homes		
Construction years	1964		
Physical description	<b>No. of Storeys:</b> 1 <b>Roof:</b> Copper standing seam, 2 crosses - the western above the Bell Tower appears to be painted steel and the eastern, above the Chancel Skylight, appears to be copper. Flashings to eastern skylight, colourbond - recent. Perspex glazing to eastern skylight, exterior fixed - recent. <b>Walls:</b> Painted common brickwork in stretcher bond. The courtyard walls are coped in face bull-nose brick. Paint around the courtyard walls appears to be acrylic, but the evidence is that the original finish is cement wash. Fascia above the front door - 50 x 90mm horizontal hardwood boards, stained. Spandrel above vestry door - same. <b>Windows &amp; Doors:</b> Entry doors - timber framed glass, original. Exterior door to vestry - timber frame with horizontal boarding infill. Fixed glass transoms. Windows - timber framed with fixed glass beaded, face bull-nose brick sills. <b>Form &amp; Structure:</b> Load bearing masonry cavity construction. Roof construction steel trusses and		

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	<p>conventional minor framing. The form in plan for the building and the courtyard is an irregular polygon. The courtyard entry, church entry and aisle are on shifted axes.</p> <p>Floor - courtyard, lower level, common terracotta pavers (to match common brick), 6 radiating lines constructed of face select commons: stairs and upper courtyard and internal floor select face commons, or common bricks laid in stretcher bond.</p> <p><b>Other:</b> The southern side walkway to the vestry, pipe handrail, 50mm, welded mesh imposed over it - recent. In the courtyard 2 black painted steel handrails from the lower to the upper levels - recent. 2 white painted pipe handrails from the entrance onto the lower level - recent, but matching the original design.</p> <p><b>Interior:</b></p> <p>Ceiling: V-jointed tongue and groove boards appearing as 60mm width stained. 30 recessed black downlights.</p> <p>Walls: cream painted brick, 75 x 19 splayed hardwood skirting. Exposed concrete lintels to high windows and low windows.</p> <p>Nave floor, 50mm hardwood polished.</p> <p>Original furniture - hardwood pews to the design of Don Gazzard. Communion Rail Australian Cedar on metal legs: cedar Holy Table with silver book stand, instead of a reredos three sandstone shelves and silver cross behind the Holy Table, East wall tapestry; integral pulpit, marble font, cedar seat to the rear of the pulpit, lectern, prayer desk, the organ case and organ loft are original, faced in western red cedar. The organ is a gift of Mona Bracey. The choir pews shown in Gazzard's plan have been removed. The sanctuary furniture is a gift of the Wentworth family.</p> <p>The President's chair is American oak from the 1920s (not original).</p> <p>Other non-original fittings include the following: metal leg table, public address system, wall mounted heaters- 4no, and rolled down projection screen on east wall.</p> <p><b>Style or period:</b> Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style.</p> <p><b>Contribution to streetscape:</b> Whilst the building is only able to be glimpsed at the street, its high tower-like chancel form is seen from many parts of Vaucluse, Parsley Bay and the Harbour. It is one of the principal landmarks of the high lands facing the Harbour. The design allowed for the retention of a dramatic rock outcrop and associated Port Jackson fig ecology. This is seen in conjunction with the tower.</p> <p><b>Landscaping:</b> The site circulation was designed to preserve and build upon the existing access to the Wentworth Mausoleum. The white painted walls of the walled courtyard and church were originally visible from most parts of Vaucluse as well as the grounds of the Mausoleum. The Church design dramatically preserved the existing rock outcrop as had the Mausoleum nearly one hundred years before.</p> <p>The red brick 1950s house to the west is an incursion on the courtyard. It is not apparent that trees were specially planted as part of the design but the Port Jackson figs that have grown up now substantially hide the church. The design created a walled approach staircase from the lower car park, which is intact.</p>
Physical condition	The building is generally in good order. Don Gazzard has recently reviewed the fabric informally and is critical of the skylight alterations. The external paint appears to be kept up. Some introduced plant species are flourishing in the grounds.
Modification and dates	The building is in near original condition. Two new privies on the southern side have been constructed. The seat on the stepped ramp shown on Gazzard's drawing does not exist.
Archaeological potential	Due to the long period of European occupation of this site, the archaeological potential for Aboriginal cultural material is low. There is little potential for archaeological remains relating only to the mid-19th century development of the area due to disturbance caused by construction of the subject building.
Further comments	Designed for it at the same time were its furniture and liturgical furniture, fittings and plate; a wall hanging, organ case, memorial plaques to complete the enterprise. Many of these were gifted to the church by families associated with the parish, the Rector and the Wentworth family. At the same time as they gave the sanctuary furniture the Wentworth family commissioned Gazzard to repair the mausoleum. He added the copper hood above the door to the mausoleum and probably designed the path that connects it to the church and Fitzwilliam Street.

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	<p>At a time when many churches were built in Sydney the Wentworth Memorial Church, because of its dramatic siting, deep historic associations, progressive design and completeness of execution stands out. It is comparable to similar architectural adventures in the Polish Memorial Chapel at Marayong (Dysart), the Naval Chapel at Watsons Bay, St Pauls College Chapel at the University of Sydney, the church of St Therese of the Child Jesus, Beauty Point (Fowell Jarvis Mansfield and MacLurcan) and St Kevins Dee Why (Curtin).</p> <p>It is the best surviving early work of Don Gazzard, whose practice (initially Clarke and Gazzard from 1960 and later Clarke Gazzard and Yeomans) became an established Australian multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy of the 1960s and 1970s.</p> <p>The architect, Don Gazzard, recognises that the Wentworth Church is one of his most admired buildings, joking that he could have retired in 1960, and still be remembered as an architect, on the basis of the Wentworth Church. He said, "On the whole, it is the one building of mine people always come back to."</p> <p>In 2003, Gazzard wrote in a letter to the General Manager of Woollahra Council with regard to the parish's repairs to the skylight, saying "If this building is not already on your Heritage Register I think a case can be made that it should be added."</p>
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## HISTORY

Historical notes	<p>The construction of a Church of England on this site was the intention of the immediate family of William Charles Wentworth (c.1790 to 1872), whose trustees gave the land to the Church of England Diocese of Sydney Property Trust for that purpose in 1927.</p> <p>The parcel of land was shaped by a suburban subdivision of c1915. It was part of the Vaucluse Estate purchased by W.C. Wentworth in 1827, and as early as 1831 was planned to be eventually consecrated for the Wentworth Family Vault. The large boulder then visible from the verandah of Vaucluse house was the picturesque site designated by Wentworth himself. The Mausoleum and Vault were built for the interment of the remains of W.C. Wentworth on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1873, also the day of the consecration.</p> <p>At the transfer of land to the Property Trust it was a condition that a church, hall and rectory were to be erected by 1937. The Church Hall was built in 1933 (the foundation stone laid by Sir Phillip Game on 7<sup>th</sup> April) and was used for church services. The congregation was a branch of St Peter's Watsons Bay, but was called Wentworth Memorial.</p> <p>Under the incumbency of Rev. Neville Cyril Bathgate the architect Don Gazzard of Clarke Gazzard &amp; Partners was commissioned to design the new church to house a congregation of 350 (this being the minimum diocesan standard size of the time).</p> <p>The foundation stone to the Church found on the outside, immediately adjacent to the entry doors, is inscribed "To the glory of God, this stone was set by the most Reverend Hugh Roland Gough CMG OBE MA DD Archbishop of Sydney and primate on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1965, Churchwardens C.J. Sisley, G.H. Green, P.W. Grieve, Rector the Reverend N.C. Bathgate."</p> <p>The church was built as a memorial to the Second World War. It was dedicated for use by the Archbishop of Sydney on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1965 and consecrated on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1972.</p> <p><b>Don Gazzard</b> trained as an engineer and later qualified as an architect in England. Upon his return to Australia, he spent a number of years working with Harry Seidler. The firm of Clarke Gazzard &amp; Partners was formed in the early 1960s. Having lived in Paddington from the mid-1950s, Gazzard was a leading member of the Paddington Society, and contributed to the plan for the conservation of Paddington in the 1970s. Gazzard became well known not only for his architectural practice, but also in the area of town planning, making substantial contributions to the development of Martin Place. His works, not large in number but much published, include the TAA Terminal at Kingsford Smith Airport (heavily remodelled), his own house at Woollahra, the Mona Vale community Centre, and Goodwin village at Edgecliff. Gazzard was the editor of <i>Architecture In Australia</i> in the 1960s and collated and edited the influential "Australian Outrage" book and exhibition in 1966. (Interview with Don Gazzard, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2004, and Taylor, Jennifer, 1990, <i>Australian Architecture Since 1960</i>, Melbourne: Royal Australian Institute of Architects National Education Division, p. 46.)</p> <p>Don Gazzard has won one RAI Merit Award and one Wilkinson Award.</p>
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	<p>Don Gazzard's contribution is mainly due to his involvement with major urban design projects, particularly the pedestrianisation of large public spaces, frequently making use of Brutalist forms. Gazzard also designed a small number of acclaimed domestic scale buildings that possess a boldness of concept and an individual character. Gazzard persisted in the Functionalist design approach in the 1960s and 70s, in the face of the Post Modern movement.</p> <p>From the above it is reasonable to say that Don Gazzard is an important Australian architect of the mid and late 20th century.</p> <p>The Wentworth Memorial Church was widely published at the time of its completion and is included in architectural histories of Australian architecture to this day. The church is one example of Australian architecture included in <i>World Architecture 1900-2000: a critical mosaic</i>, where it is described as follows:</p> <p>"The church tower, atop a hill, is spectacularly visible from the surrounding suburbs. The tower has not the conventional identification of an ecclesiastical spire, but is a more mundane shape, like a theatre fly tower, but nonetheless a marker of spiritual speciality. From the roadway, pedestrians take a path which meanders around the hillside, past rock outcrops and remnant bush, all the while catching glimpses of the church from different oblique angles and vantage points, before arriving, via a lychgate, at a brick paved forecourt and then ultimately to the interior – natural finish timber floors and ceiling, white walls and from a discreet clerestory, daylight washes onto the sanctuary.</p> <p>The church is the epitome of an architectural experience – a distant prospect, gradually revealed in a journey through space, culminating in the contemplation, closely from the outside and then from within, of an interior enclosure suffused by dramatic light. The construction materials are conventional: white bagged brickwork, terra cotta tile, dark brown stained timber: the composition dynamic – simple skewed planes, and the total sensory experience of exploration and arrival is extraordinary." (Neville Quarry, 1990, <i>World Architecture 1900-2000: a critical mosaic</i> vol. 10, p. 19.)</p>
<b>HISTORICAL THEMES</b>	
State historical theme	Religion / Creative endeavour
Local historical theme	Places of worship / Contemporary buildings
<b>ASSESSMENT of HERITAGE CRITERIA</b>	
<p><b>Historical significance</b> SHR criterion (a)</p>	<p>An item is important in the course, or pattern, of Woollahra's cultural or natural history</p> <p>The Wentworth Memorial Church is the last built work closely associated with the Vacluse House Estate as developed by the Wentworth Family from 1827, which is now a historic landmark of Sydney. The consecration of the land and the erection of a church had been intended by the immediate family of William Charles Wentworth.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of high significance at a local level.</i></p> <p>The changes to the worship service brought about in numerous denominations by the New Liturgical Movement of the early 1960s, influenced by the publication of Edward Mills' <i>The Modern Church</i> in 1956, are reflected in the design of the church in the use of natural light and the proximity of sanctuary and congregation.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of low significance at a local level.</i></p>
<p><b>Historical association significance</b> SHR criterion (b)</p>	<p>An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Woollahra's cultural or natural history.</p> <p>The Wentworth Memorial Church is strongly associated with the Wentworth family, one of Australia's most celebrated pioneer families. The Wentworth Memorial Church is also a memorial to the Second World War.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of high significance at a local level.</i></p> <p>The place is strongly associated with its architect, Don Gazzard, who is an important Australian architect of the mid and late 20th century.</p> <p>The building is one of a group of works by Don Gazzard, and forms part of the architect's body of work.</p> <p><i>Each of the two attributes above, by themselves, is of some significance at a local level. When</i></p>

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	<p><i>considered with other aspects of significance in this assessment, the place should be considered to be of moderate significance at a state level.</i></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic significance</b> SHR criterion (c)</p>	<p>An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in Woollahra.</p> <p>Exhibiting dramatic siting, boldness of concept, landmark qualities, progressive spatial sequence from the road to the altar, effective use of natural light, radical plan form, non-traditional belltower, clerestory windows, and plain wall surfaces, the church is an outstanding exemplar of the Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style (Apperly et al., <i>Identifying Australian Architecture</i>, 1998), recognised internationally as "the epitome of an architectural experience" (Neville Quarry, 1999, <i>World Architecture 1900-2000: a critical mosaic</i> vol. 10, p. 19). The church is one of the finest churches of its time in Australia.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of moderate significance at a state level.</i></p>
<p><b>Social significance</b> SHR criterion (d)</p>	<p>An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in Woollahra for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.</p> <p>As evidenced by its inclusion in Jennifer Taylor's <i>Australian Architecture Since 1960</i>, where the church is described as "a most convincing example of Sydney's regional Architecture of the 1960s" (Taylor 1990), as well as Graham Jahn's <i>Guide to Sydney Architecture</i> and Apperly's <i>Identifying Australian Architecture</i>, the place is held in high regard by Australian architects and others interested in Australian architecture. The building was one of forty Australian buildings selected for publication in the book <i>World Architecture 1900-2000: a critical mosaic</i>, and concurrent International Union of Architects conference on the best buildings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>As evidenced by its inclusion on the RAI (NSW Chapter) <i>Register of 20th Century Buildings of Significance</i>, the place is held in high regard by NSW architects and others interested in Australian architecture.</p> <p>The Wentworth Memorial Church contains memorials to many local families of the Vaucluse area. As a place of continuing Anglican worship since 1933 it is important to the Anglican community of the parish of Watsons Bay and the wider Anglican community.</p> <p><i>Each of the three attributes above, by themselves, is of some significance at a local level. When considered with other aspects of significance in this assessment, the place should be considered to be of moderate significance at a state level.</i></p>
<p><b>Technical/research significance</b> SHR criterion (e)</p>	<p>An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding Woollahra's cultural or natural history.</p> <p>The archaeological potential of the place is low (see above).</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of low significance at a local level.</i></p> <p>The building is a resource for the understanding of the architectural detailing of the architect, Don Gazzard. <i>This attribute by itself is of low significance at a local level.</i></p>
<p><b>Rarity</b> SHR criterion (f)</p>	<p>An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Woollahra's cultural or natural history.</p> <p>The design concept, siting and approach from the foot of the hill, materials, form, and resolution of the interiors have led to international critical acclaim for the Wentworth Memorial Church. It demonstrates a design of exceptional interest.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of moderate significance at a state level.</i></p>
<p><b>Representativeness</b> SHR criterion (g)</p>	<p>An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Woollahra's cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments.</p> <p>As indicated above, the church is an outstanding exemplar of the Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical Style.</p> <p><i>This attribute by itself is of moderate significance at a local level.</i></p>

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Integrity	<p>The degree to which the item retains the aspects which make it significant under the criteria above.</p> <p>The church is highly intact including its furniture and fittings.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS				
Recommendations	<p>Encourage restoration of the form of the major skylight above the chancel. Encourage pruning of the vegetation which compromises the visibility of the church. Reorganise the arrangement of loose furniture.</p> <p>List on the Woollahra Council LEP. The boundary of the listing should be Lot 1 DP 871485.</p> <p>Nominate for listing on the State Heritage Register. (Or investigate the possibility of including the church building, grounds, and vegetation on the existing State Heritage Register listing of the Wentworth Mausoleum.)</p>			
INFORMATION SOURCES				
Type	Author/Client	Title	Year	Repository
Periodical		Wentworth Memorial Church	February 1966	<i>Architecture in Australia</i>
Written	Webber, G.P.	<i>The Design of Sydney: three decades of change in the city centre</i>	1988	Sydney: Law Book Co.
Written	Sowden, Harry	<i>Towards an Australian Architecture</i>	1968	Sydney: Ure Smith
Written	Richard Apperly	<i>444 Sydney Buildings</i>	1971	Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter
Written	Taylor, Jennifer	<i>Australian Architecture since 1960</i>	1990	Canberra: RAI Educational Division
Written		Yearbook of the Diocese of Sydney	1955	
Written	Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd	Wentworth Mausoleum Conservation Analysis and Conservation Guidelines	1991	Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd
Written	Don Gazzard	<i>The Australian Outrage: the decay of a visual environment</i>	1966	Sydney: Ure Smith
Interview	Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd	Interview with Don Gazzard	2004	Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd
Survey	CMPS&F Pty Ltd for Carrara Constructions Pty Ltd	Detail Survey, Wentworth Memorial Church	2000	Woollahra Council
Subdivision plan		Subdivision in relation to DA 150/95	1995	Woollahra Council
Written	Neville Quarry	'Wentworth Memorial Church' in Frampton et al (eds), <i>World Architecture 1900-2000: a critical mosaic</i> , Vol 10	1999	China Architecture & Building Press
Written	Don Gazzard	Letters, Statement of Environmental Effects, tender documents, scope of works in relation to proposed internal alterations and repair of leaking skylight	2003	Don Gazzard
Photograph	David Moore for Clarke Gazzard & Partners	Photographs of the Wentworth Memorial Church shortly after its completion	c1964	Don Gazzard

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## AUTHOR OF THIS REPORT

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2005

## IMAGES

Image caption

View of the church from the courtyard.



Image year

2004

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