

Heritage Citation



Father Canali Memorial Catholic Church/St Peter & Paul's Catholic Church Presbytery and School

Key details

Addresses	At 235 Riding Road, Balmoral, Queensland 4171
Type of place	Church, School, Residence (singular)
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Romanesque
Lot plan	L1_SP105154
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — November 2010

People/associations

Edward Duhig (Builder);
Henry (Harry) James Marks - Catholic Church (Architect);
Thomas Ramsay Hall - Presbytery and School (Architect)

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social; (H) Historical association; (H) Historical association

This Catholic precinct was established in 1896 when Bulimba/Balmoral's first Catholic church was constructed on Riding Road. In 1916, it was joined by a school and presbytery, both designed by Thomas Ramsay Hall, but in 1926 it was replaced by the current brick Romanesque church as it was no longer able to support the rapidly expanding congregation. The current church originally opened as the Father Canali Memorial Church and is one of three similar churches designed by architect H.J. Marks; the other two located at Laidley and Coorparoo. In 1964, a parish hall was built next to the church, replacing the original timber hall which was later demolished. The current church, school and presbytery have continued to play an important role in the lives of the local Catholic community for more than 95 years.

History

Saints Peter and Paul's Catholic Church of Bulimba, also known as the Father Canali Memorial Church, is the third of three almost identical Catholic churches designed by Toowoomba architect, Henry James (Harry) Marks (1870-1939). The first of these was the church at Laidley, which opened in 1919. The second was St James' at Coorparoo, built in 1925. Saints Peter and Paul's Church was opened by Archbishop Duhig in 1926 during a period of expansion in the Catholic Church.

Land at Bulimba was first sold to free settlers in the 1840s, and subsequently subdivided from the 1860s onwards. Sharing in the building boom of the 1880s and spurred by the opening of the railway to Wynnum and Cleveland in 1889, by the early twentieth century the Bulimba district had developed into a diverse residential, industrial and farming community.

Early Catholics in the Bulimba area travelled by rowboat across the Brisbane River to attend mass at St Stephen's Catholic Church in the city or, after 1861, St Patrick's in Fortitude Valley. Mass was also celebrated on occasion in the home of Mr J Watson at Bulimba. In 1896, at a meeting of local Catholics attended by Archbishop Dunne, it was decided to begin raising funds to build a Catholic church in the district. Father W Lee, then the administrator of Rosalie, was appointed Chairman of the Building Committee. A parcel of land on the corner of Riding Road and Main Avenue Bulimba was given as a gift for the purposes of building a church by prominent local resident, the Hon. AJ Thynne, MLC who also donated the land for the Bulimba Methodist (now Uniting) Church. The site was described in the Brisbane Courier at the time as "the south-western corner of Thynne's Paddock, fronting Riding's road".

The first Saints Peter and Paul's Church, a Gothic timber structure designed by Brisbane architect, WA Caldwell, was opened by Archbishop Dunne on the 6 December 1896. Prior to becoming a parish in 1915, the church at Bulimba was administered by Father Lee of Rosalie, followed by Father J O'Leary of St Patrick's and then Father Canali, also of St Patrick's. These priests visited weekly to celebrate mass in the church. In 1910, only two

Catholic parishes existed on Brisbane's southside - St Mary's in South Brisbane and St Joseph's in Kangaroo Point, both established in 1892. The first parish priest to be appointed to Bulimba was Father AJ O'Keeffe, formerly of Ipswich.

The Bulimba district, while still predominantly rural, began to develop further as residential estates were offered for sale. Carlton Hill (1913) and Emerald Hill (1914) were subdivided and sold in the immediate vicinity of the church. The Catholic hierarchy and community saw the need for a Catholic school in the area and Saints Peter and Paul's Convent School, designed by Hall, was opened by Archbishop Duhig on 6 February 1916. A contingent of Good Samaritan Sisters arrived from Sydney in the same year to conduct the school. Several other school buildings have since been added. In 1916, a presbytery, also designed by Hall, was built by contractor, Edward Duhig.

The rapid population growth in the Bulimba area during the first decades of the twentieth century saw Cannon Hill created as a separate parish in 1921 and the need developed for a larger church to replace the existing building. At the same time, a memorial to Father Canali was being considered by the Catholic community of Brisbane. Fr O'Keeffe, whose "life's ambition" was to erect a church to the glory of God, approached the Catholic hierarchy and was granted permission to build the "Father Canali Memorial Church" at Bulimba. The Italian born Father Canali was also a civil engineer who migrated to Australia at the invitation of Brisbane's Bishop Quinn in connection with the building of St Stephen's Cathedral. Father Canali became a much loved and legendary figure among Brisbane's Catholic community for his tireless devotion to parishioners, particularly those who were sick or hospitalised. His death on 15 August 1915 was the result of an accident in which he was thrown from a tram at Teneriffe while returning from a sick call. Father Canali served the Bulimba Parish from 1904 until his death.

HJ Marks was engaged as the architect for the planned brick church and Mr D Gallogly was awarded the contract for its construction. The foundation stone was laid by Archbishop Duhig on 9 May 1926. At the ceremony, Fr O'Keeffe announced that over £1,000 had already been collected towards the building fund. On 12 December, in the presence of a huge crowd, many of whom were unable to enter the church, Archbishop Duhig blessed and opened "The Father Canali Memorial Church" and dedicated it to God under the patronage of Saints Peter and Paul. The total cost of the building was £11,000, with an additional £4,500 spent on extras. The remaining debt on the church at the time of its opening was £13,000, a large debt for a parish church. The size of the debt was unexpected as an anticipated legacy from a deceased estate did not eventuate. The struggle to pay the debt incurred from building the church continued through the Depression years of the 1930s.

Another problem arising in connection with the church was the fact that Wright and Alexandra Streets were originally to be continued through the church grounds. To provide access to Alexandra Street from Riding Road, land adjoining the church property was acquired from William Carroll, a parishioner, and transferred to the Brisbane City Council for gazettal.

In 1964, a brick parish hall was built. The old timber church, which was extended in 1928, served as a hall until it was demolished in 1965. Both the brick church and the original school building were renovated during this period. When blessing the new parish hall, Archbishop Duhig stressed the importance of the social role played by the church in the lives of the community.

In 2015 the church was renovated to reflect a new, central mode of conducting mass and to restore original internal and external finishes.

Description

The church and presbytery share a large L-shaped site that slopes gently down to Riding Road, the main thoroughfare of Bulimba. None of the early school buildings have survived as more recent school buildings and other structures that are not of cultural heritage significance have taken their place.

CHURCH

The church stands on high land well back from Riding Road to which it faces, overlooking a large grassed oval. It is in a Romanesque style with some Classical elements. The solid brown brick building has a shallowly-pitched corrugated metal-clad gable roof hidden behind parapets. It consists of a large nave with side aisles and an apsidal sanctuary with a vestry to each side. To the western end of the nave, an indented entry porch sits between two small rooms, one with a stair accessing an organ loft above. This entry porch is accessed externally by a raised walkway that extends along the entire front wall of the building, and is reached by a branching stair. The building can also be entered via stairs to a porch on each side of the nave.

Exterior

The nave's brick walls rise to a gable roof which is flanked on both sides by lower skillion roofs which extend over the aisles. The walls of the building feature darker brick architectural features, such as a plinth, arched window heads, sills, arches, quoins to the corners of the side entry walls, stringcourses and other horizontal bands. The clerestory and lower side walls of the nave are crowned with a darker brick horizontal band, stringcourse, coping and metal flashing. The clerestory walls are divided into bays by engaged piers. Each bay features a circular window with darker brick surround. The remaining parts of the building feature leadlight round arched hopper windows, whilst two lunette windows feature in the sanctuary and circular windows in the vestries.

The three tier front facade of the church comprises three central bays crowned with a triangular brick pediment and apex cross. To each side of these three central bays is a single wall bay with a lower sloping parapet and a single leadlight window. The upper tier of the facade sits above a darker brick stringcourse that extends across the whole width of the front facade. This upper tier features three circular windows set within slightly recessed arched bays. Below these, three arches form an arcade to the front porch. This arcading is repeated in the lower tier under the walkway, accessing a door to the building's undercroft. The steps and walkway have brick balustrading stiffened with piers, two of which support statues.

Interior

The face brick walls of the building's interior feature rendered architectural elements such as window surrounds, columns, clerestory wall pilasters, horizontal bands and various moulded decorative elements. Arcading along each sidewall of the nave defines the side aisles. The flat, sheets and battens ceiling of the nave extends the full length of the building, whilst the ceilings of the aisles are pitched. The nave's floor is raised in the sanctuary.

The building is intact. Minor later additions include the use of external metal awnings to shade the circular windows to the rear of the building.

PRESBYTERY

According to early photos, this dwelling was in its original form a highset interwar building with an open verandah and battening to its undercroft. It has undergone a number of changes over the years including the enclosure of the undercroft and verandah and the installation of aluminium windows and metal awnings.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a Catholic precinct that provides evidence of the rapid population growth in the local area in the early twentieth century and the strong presence of the Catholic community in the area at this time.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as a substantially intact example of an early twentieth century Catholic precinct comprising a presbytery, school and church.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

for its imposing symmetry, balanced proportions and commanding presence on an elevated site.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for

social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as a Catholic precinct which has provided a place of worship and education for successive generations of local residents since the early twentieth century.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a memorial to Father Canali, former parish priest at Bulimba and well-known and much loved member of Brisbane's Catholic community.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a school and presbytery designed by prominent Brisbane architect Thomas Ramsay Hall and as a church designed by prominent Toowoomba architect, Henry James Marks.

References

1. *Age* (Brisbane), 18 December 1926
2. *Brisbane Courier*, 6 July 1896; 7 December 1896 and 10 May 1926
3. Carlton Hill Estate Map, Balmoral, G.H. Blocksidge and Ferguson, 2 September 1913, JOL
4. *Catholic Leader*, 29 October 1964
5. Emerald Hill Estate Map, Balmoral, Isles, Love and Co, 22 August 1914, JOL, no.846
6. Ferrier, P. 1986, *The Golden Period of Catholic Progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1927*, B.Arch. thesis, University of Queensland
7. McDonnell 1976, *The Growth of the Catholic Community at Bulimba 1986-1976*, Jubilee Celebrations Committee, Brisbane
8. O'Leary, Rev J. 1919, *Catholic Progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919*, J. O'Leary, St James' Presbytery, Coorparoo

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Note: This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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