

Heritage Citation



St Brendan's Catholic Church

Key details

Addresses	At 27 Hawtree Street, Moorooka, Queensland 4105
Type of place	Church, Residence (group), Residence (singular), Private school
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Gothic
Lot plan	L181_RP37845; L180_RP37845; L179_RP37845; L178_RP37845; L177_RP37845; L184_RP37845; L183_RP37845; L187_RP37845; L186_RP37845; L185_RP37845; L182_RP37845
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2009 Date of Citation — June 2004
Construction	Walls: Face brick

People/associations George Trotter junr - Church (Architect);
John Patrick (Jack) Donoghue - Convent (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social

A group of ecclesiastic buildings constructed for the Catholic Church over the period 1919-1935 comprising a Church (1919) Convent (1932) and Presbytery (1932-35) built to serve the expanding suburb of Moorooka, and its growing Catholic community. It is also an example of the vision of Archbishop Duhig in providing a comprehensive range of such facilities in Brisbane's growing suburbs.

History

Early settlement of this area occurred around the place where Ipswich Road crossed Rocky Water Holes Creek. With the arrival of the railway in 1885 that first group of houses and shops, originally Rocky Water Holes, was renamed Rocklea. Another railway station, Moorooka, was established nearby in 1886. As a consequence of this improved means of transport, subdivision of land and closer settlement commenced.

The depression of the 1890s and its subsequent effect on the economy led to many allotments remaining unsold. By 1900 the number of households in the suburb of Moorooka still was less than fifty. By 1910-11 that number had increased only to eighty. Steady growth commenced after the First World War as more residential blocks were sold.

The land on which the St Brendan's Parish Presbytery, Church & Convent are situated was part of a land purchase of just over 119 acres between Ipswich and Beaudesert Roads made by Frances Henry Tamm in the early 1860s. In 1864 James Francis Garrick and James Cowlshaw, the latter a member of the Legislative Council and for a short time proprietor of the Brisbane Courier, purchased the land from Tamm.

As land speculation increased with planning for the South Coast Railway, the land passed through a number of owners, eventually into the hands of John Lloyd Bale. At this point in time (April 1884) the South Coast Railway was under construction and a station platform, completed in 1886, was proposed for Moorooka. From the opening of the line in 1885 it was possible to travel into and out of the city conveniently each day. Surveyors Hamilton and Raff surveyed the 119 acres into residential allotments. Advertised as the 'Rocklea Township Estate', a sale by auction was held on 13 September 1884. At the time many other estates were also available to buyers and overall sales were slow.

A number of investors purchased allotments between Brier and Hawtree Streets between 1884 and 1892, notably James Sinnamon of the pioneering family from Seventeen Mile Rocks Road. In 1897 Sinnamon transferred his allotments to his wife, Elizabeth Mary Sinnamon. In 1898 they were sold to Michael Joseph Nolan. Post Office Directories list a telegraph inspector named Michael Nolan as a resident of Moorooka from 1895-96 to 1902. In 1906 the combined allotments were transferred to Martha Elizabeth Buchanan Fowler, wife of William Fowler. Neither is recorded as a resident of Moorooka.

The 1979 publication, *Faith of our fathers: A history of the parish of St Brendan's*, records that the proposed site for the church was Smith's Dairy and that 'due to Mr Smith's opinion of the Catholic Church, it was considered

unwise for His Grace [Archbishop Duhig] to make an approach about purchasing the property. So Jim Curley acted as his agent in all matters regarding the purchase of the land° Smith's Dairy would appear to have operated on land either leased or rented from Michael Nolan and/or Martha Fowler. Robert Smith is recorded as a Moorooka resident from 1903, his occupation listed initially as fuel merchant.

Around 1914 Smith undertook a contract for the delivery of letters throughout Moorooka, Yeerongpilly and Tennyson. He died in 1915 and the delivery service was taken over by his wife, Mary Smith, and family. From 1913 Mary Smith had owned 16 perches of land near the Moorooka Railway Station. Here she had established a confectionery store. In 1916 Mary Smith's store became a non-official post office and Mary Smith the postmistress. The Smith family resided in Hawtree Street, most likely in a house previously owned and occupied by Michael Nolan.

By 1918 the households in Moorooka numbered 115. With the nearest Catholic Church at Annerley, a committee was formed that year to establish a closer place of worship for the suburb's Roman Catholic residents. Notable committee members were surveyor James Freney, and Jim Curley. Following preliminary discussions which included Archbishop James Duhig, 1 acre 3 roods 35.5 perches of land was transferred from Martha Fowler to James Duhig on 3 May 1918. The foundation stone for the Catholic community of Moorooka's Church was laid by Archbishop Duhig on 15 December 1918. He subsequently opened the new timber St Brendan's Church in March 1919. Some of the Church's equipment came from a previous church built by Thomas Freney in the 1880s at Coopers Plains.

Archbishop James Duhig was born in Ireland in 1871. His immigrant family arrived in Brisbane when he was aged fourteen. After attending school locally, Duhig completed training for the priesthood in Italy, becoming ordained as a priest in September 1896. Duhig was appointed Bishop of Rockhampton in 1905 and Archbishop of Brisbane on 13 January 1917 occupying that position until 1965. During his years of service the Archbishop developed his well-known passion for building and the acquisition of properties on behalf of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. The presence of Catholic churches built on elevated sites during the period Duhig served as Archbishop is a feature of the Brisbane landscape.

St Brendan's was designed by local architect George Trotter jnr. Born at Rocklea in 1866, Trotter was by 1899 operating an architect's office in the nearby suburb of Sherwood. Between 1901 and 1907 he ran a store in Sherwood before returning to architecture from 1908 to 1911. At various times between 1909 and 1938 Trotter occupied offices in Ipswich Road, Annerley and at Corinda. His design for the St Brendan's Church allowed for it to be used as both church and school. Building contractor CR Schriver was responsible for its construction. Total cost, including purchase of the land, reputedly amounted to £2,850.

The following decade, with the opening of the nearby Moorooka State School planned for the beginning of the 1929 academic year, it was decided to enclose the verandahs of the Church to create rooms for a school. Students arrived for the school's first classes on 28 January 1929. The sisters who taught in the school were accommodated in local residences until the Convent was opened in March 1932. Of weatherboard construction, this building was designed by JP Donoghue.

Architect John Patrick (Jack) Donoghue was born in Tenterfield, NSW, circa 1895. He commenced his architectural training circa 1912 and by 1925 was listed as a Brisbane partner of Hennessy, Hennessy, Keesing & Co. and JP Donahue. Between 1926 and 1937 he worked as an independent architect.

Tenders for construction of the Convent were advertised in September 1931. According to the A & B Journal of

Queensland the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, FA Pidgeon. The Brisbane City Council Building Register shows the building contractor to have been L Casey of Ekibin and the cost £1,345.

During the early 1930s Father Patrick James Flanagan was Parish Priest at Moorooka. The problem of finding accommodation for Flanagan in what were difficult economic times was solved by the construction of a Presbytery financed with the assistance of the State Advances Corporation. In November 1931 Re-subdivisions 178 to 180 inclusive, amounting to 1 rood 12.5 perches, were transferred into the name of Patrick James Flanagan. A mortgage to the State Advances Corporation was registered the following April. Extensions to the Presbytery, adding housekeepers' quarters, garage and laundry, were undertaken in 1935. To facilitate this, in January Re-subdivision 177 of 17.4 perches was transferred to Father Flanagan. A mortgage to the State Advances Corporation was registered on the title for Resub. 177 in July 1935. Both mortgages were released in 1957.

As a consequence of the establishment of the Rocklea Munitions Works in Evans Road in 1941, and the enlargement other associated infrastructure sites such as Clapham Junction railway yards and the Archerfield Aerodrome, Moorooka experience considerable population growth during and after the Second World War. Changes were made to the St Brendan's complex to accommodate that growth. In 1940 a new school building to the west of the Church (since removed) was constructed. Additional adjoining land facing Brier Street was acquired in 1949. A new two-storey school to the north of the Convent was opened in 1960. Additions and extensions were made to the Convent in 1950 and 1960. The interior of the Church was lined and plastered in 1953, along with some extensions being carried out in brick. At a cost of over \$30,000, builders Pearce and Fox Pty Ltd, undertook more significant design alterations in 1968, including covering the exterior of the Church in brick.

In October 2006 the church suffered a fire causing \$500,000 of damage. The principal damage was to the body of the church, leaving the hall beneath only water damaged.

Description

The 1919 church originally constructed as a timber frame with weatherboarding under an asbestos tile roof, in the Federation style, it was later re-faced in brick (1968). Two storey with a church to the first floor and hall to the lower level.

The 1932 convent is a timber framed and weatherboarded modest domestic scale building in the interwar style with multiple gables.

The 1932-35 Presbytery is a timber framed, weatherboarded and stucco modest domestic scale building in the interwar style with multiple gables.

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 building designed for the growth of the Roman Catholic community in Moorooka that was used as both church and school.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a grouping of buildings which contributes significantly to the Hawtree Street streetscape.

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 gathering place for worship and the space used for school classrooms between 1929 and 1940.

References

1. *ABJQ*, July to November 1931
2. Moorooka District Character Study. Heritage Unit, Dept of Development & Planning, BCC, May 1996
3. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
4. BCC Building register, January to March 1932

5. Clarke, Robyn and Pam Thomason, *Moorooka State School Jubilee: 1929-1979: A history of the district and the school*. Moorooka: Moorooka State School Jubilee Committee, 1979
6. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
7. *Faith of our fathers: A history of the Parish of St Brendan's*. Moorooka: St Brendan's Parish, 1979
8. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
9. O'Leary, Rev J. 1919, *Catholic Progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919*, J. O'Leary, St James' Presbytery, Coorparoo
10. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, UQ Library, 1984

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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.

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