

Heritage Citation



Christ the King Roman Catholic Church

Key details

Also known as	St. Michael and the Holy Souls
Addresses	At 12 Churchill Street, Graceville, Queensland 4075
Type of place	Church
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Carpenter Gothic
Lot plan	L255_RP29388; L254_RP29388; L253_RP29388
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — February 2007

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

People/associations Hunter and Son (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social; (H) Historical association; (H) Historical association; (H) Historical association

The Church of Christ the King was opened by Archbishop Duhig in 1930 after it was transported from its former site at Toowong. The timber Carpenter Gothic styled church was originally built in 1893 and was known as the church of St Michael and the Holy Souls. The architectural firm responsible for the design of the church was Hunter and Son of Queen Street, Brisbane. By the 1920s, Graceville had become a well-established residential suburb and there was an increased need for permanent Catholic worship facilities in the area. Through the efforts of local parishioners and Archbishop Duhig, the timber church at Toowong was purchased and moved to the site where it was repainted, refurnished and extended. Additional growth in the 1950s necessitated further additions and extensions to the church, which has continued to serve the local Catholic community into the twenty-first century.

History

The Church of Christ the King was opened by Archbishop Duhig in 1930, after it was transported from its former site at Toowong. The timber, Gothic styled church, built in 1893, was formerly known as the Church of St Michael and the Holy Souls. The firm responsible for the design of the church was Hunter and Son, Queen Street, Brisbane.

A devout Catholic, Henry Hunter was a prominent architect in Hobart from 1855 until 1888, when he moved to Brisbane. From 1888 to 1892, Hunter was in partnership with his former pupil, L.G. Corrie and his son, Walter. Hunter and Corrie were responsible for additions to All Hallows Convent in 1890-92, and Eulalia, now included in Earlystreet Historical Village. Henry Hunter was in partnership with his son from March 1892 until his death later that year, before the church was constructed.

From the 1860s to the advent of the railway, the Chelmer/Graceville area consisted mostly of small crop farms. Following the opening of the railway from Ipswich to Sherwood in February 1875, which dramatically reduced the isolation of the area, farmland in the area was subdivided and sold as residential estates. Further residential development took place after World War I with the establishment of war service homes in the area. By the 1920s, Graceville was well established as a residential suburb noted for its gardens and neat homes. As the population grew, schools and churches were constructed to meet the needs of the local community. In 1928, the Graceville State School opened with around 300 pupils. Christ the King was one of two churches to open at Graceville in 1930. The Methodist church (now Graceville Uniting), designed by Walter Taylor, also opened in that year.

In the early years of this century, the Catholic community at Graceville celebrated mass in the homes of local families, including the Careys of Sherwood, and the McLaughlins at Corinda. Later mass was celebrated in the

Corinda School of Arts until St Joseph's Church was built at Corinda in 1912. In 1928, Archbishop Duhig met with the parish priest of Corinda and several Graceville residents to arrange the purchase of land for the purposes of constructing a church. No money was available at the time, but despite the depressed economic conditions, arrangements were made to purchase the site of the present church. Father Wheeler was appointed to the Chelmer/Graceville district in early 1930 and mass was celebrated in the Chelmer School of Arts and, later, the Graceville Scout Hall. Negotiations were made to purchase the Church of St Michael and the Holy Souls at Toowong for £500.

The Church of St Michael and the Holy Souls was constructed in 1893 at a cost of approximately £1,400 in Holland Street, Toowong. It served the Catholic community there for almost forty years before it became too small to accommodate the rapidly expanding population of the Toowong area. In 1930, the new church of St Ignatius Layola was opened on Toowong Ridge and the old church was dismantled and moved to Graceville at a cost of £435. It was transported through Taringa and across the Brisbane River at Indooroopilly by ferry. After the church was assembled on the new site at Graceville, it was repainted and refurnished, and a new room built at the rear of the church.

The opening and blessing of the renovated church took place on 19 October 1930. The name of Christ the King was suggested by Duhig, who returned to celebrate Mass on the feast of Christ the King one week after opening the church. The feast was instituted a few years previously by Pope Pius XI, and the Graceville Church was the first in Australia to receive this patronage. Duhig emphasised in his address at the opening that it was the church's duty to provide facilities which enabled people to worship in their own district, particularly in suburbs such as Graceville where some residents lived two miles from a train station. He urged the congregation to agitate for a bridge at Indooroopilly to alleviate this problem.

The congregation of Graceville had overcome considerable financial hurdles to obtain a local church. They commenced moves to purchase land for a church before any funds were available in a time of severe economic depression, and by the time of the church's opening some two years later, had reduced the debt on the land from £196/16/11 to £16/5/10. The total cost of purchasing, transporting and refurbishing the church increased the debt to £1,286. A sum of £120 was collected at the opening ceremony but due to the impact of the Depression on local families, some promises of donations of furniture were not able to be honoured. Dances at the Scout Hall were held to raise money to fence the church, but funds raised were used to pay outstanding debts on altar requisites. Various fundraising ventures, including fetes, tennis parties, balls and bridge and euchre evenings, were held throughout the 1930s and 1940s to clear the debt. These functions also fulfilled a social role in the local community.

Several improvements have been made to the site since the opening of the church. In 1934, land adjacent to the church was purchased and a house erected under the State Advances Corporation to serve as a presbytery. This building, which remains on the site, was handed to the Presentation Sisters in 1937 when they arrived to take charge of the newly opened parish school. Once again, Father Wheeler lived in the vestry of the church or with parishioners until a presbytery was purchased in 1950. Rapid growth in the parish during the 1950s necessitated additions and renovations to the church. The new additions were blessed and opened by Duhig on 5 September 1954. The increase in population in the area also saw the original school building become inadequate. It was demolished and replaced by a modern complex in 1966, and opened by Archbishop O'Donnell.

The Church of Christ the King is significant as the centre of the Catholic community at Graceville since 1930, continuing a tradition of Catholic worship in the Chelmer/Graceville area which dates from the turn of the century when mass was held in private homes. It also represents the determination of the local community to erect a church, and subsequently a school, in their district, and the support of the Catholic hierarchy, particularly

Description

This simple, Gothic style timber church, set on concrete stumps, has a steeply pitched gable roof clad in corrugated iron and walls clad in chamfer boards. Addressing Churchill Street, the building shares a medium sized site with school buildings. The 1934 presbytery located on a neighbouring site is very intact. Additions and alterations to the church in the 1950s have considerably changed the building from its original form although its major stylistic features remain.

The current building consists of a central nave, front entry porch, sanctuary and vestries. The building's original nave has been widened, incorporating vestries, and the front entry porch has been enclosed and access changed. A fernery has also been added to the rear of the sanctuary. The nave can be entered via the front entry porch or through a door to each side. One is accessible by a ramp.

Exterior

According to old photographs, the gable roof of the nave once featured three vents to each face and a small ridge line bell tower. Although these have been removed, the roof still extends to its originally eaves line where the skillion roofs of the side wings extend to the current outer walls. To each end of the nave's roof are decorative bargeboards, a tie beam and king post. The smaller gable wall of the porch is identically detailed. Each gable is crowned with an apex cross. A lower gable roof also extends over the sanctuary where it terminates with a simpler bargeboard.

The side walls of the nave originally comprised seven structural bays, each containing a single lancet window or door. These walls have largely been removed except for the first bay which still contains its original leadlight casement window. The newer walls of the building contain simple hopper and casement windows.

The front facade of the building is its most distinctive feature. Comprising the two decorative bargeboards of the nave and porch it also features two original apex vents and two clerestory lancet windows. The porch originally comprised open decorative timber framing and was accessed by steps to each side. Now enclosed with chamfer boards and opaque glass windows, it is accessed from the front through a triangular arched opening.

Interior

A pair of doors with diagonally laid tongue and groove timber boards, access the nave. The walls of a vestibule area under the choir gallery, are lined with diagonal boards to dado level with vertical boards above. Two circular posts with scrolled brackets provide support to the front of the gallery. The timber floor of the building is carpeted throughout and raised in the sanctuary area. This area is framed by three semi-circular arches. The middle one is twice the size of the outer two, and crowned with a sculpture of Christ. In the back wall of the sanctuary is a circular leadlight window. Below this window, four aluminium, glass sliding doors provide access and view of the fernery.

The sanctuary's truncated gable ceiling is lined with composite board. The higher truncated ceiling of the nave is lined with a combination of diagonal and horizontally laid tongue and groove boards. Timber trusses spring from

posts which now line the original location of the nave's side walls. The ceiling and walls of the side wings are lined with composite sheeting above a vertically boarded dado.

The front facade, gable bargeboards, internal roof structure and gallery remain the most intact elements of the building. The original form of the building can easily be recognised when viewed from the interior or exterior.

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 for the evidence it provides of the growth and development of the Graceville area in the 1930s.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

As an example of a small, Federation Carpenter Gothic style, timber church built in the 1890s

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 evidence of the determination of local parishioners, despite the severe economic stringency of the times, to have a local church and as evidence of the growth of the local 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

For its association with Archbishop Duhig whose influence produced a great increase in the number of Catholic Churches, and as an example of a church by Hunter and Son, who did other work for the Catholic Church in partnership with L.G. Corrie. Henry Hunter, who was the leading architect in Hobart from 1850s-1880s, may have designed the church before he died

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 an early (1893) church which was relocated from Toowong in 1930 to serve a new parish

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 part of a Catholic precinct that includes an early Presbytery.

References

1. *Architectural and Building Journal*, 10 April 1926
2. Brisbane Centenary Celebrations Committee 1924, *Brisbane Centenary Official Historical Souvenir*, Brisbane
3. Brisbane Suburban History Series: Graceville, 1972 John Oxley Library
4. *Catholic Leader*, 23 October 1930

5. *Christ the King Parish, Graceville: Golden Jubilee, 1930-1980* 1980, Church of Christ the King, Graceville
 6. O'Leary, Rev J. 1914, *A Catholic Miscellany: Containing Items of Interest to Queenslanders, Irishmen and Irish Australians*, J. O'Leary, St James' Presbytery, Coorparoo
 7. *Telegraph*, 25 September 1980
 8. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century: A Biographical Dictionary*. Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994
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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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