

Heritage Citation



Sacred Heart Catholic Church Precinct

Key details

Addresses At 92 Brighton Road, Sandgate, Queensland 4017

Type of place Church, School

Period Victorian 1860-1890

Style Academic Gothic

Lot plan L402_S311453

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004
Date of Citation — April 2011

Construction Roof: Slate;
Walls: Face brick

People/associations Andrea Giovanni Stombuco - Original Church (Architect);
Archbishop Duhig (Association);
Cardinal Moran (Association);
William Alfred Caldwell (Architect)

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

The Sacred Heart Catholic Church was opened in 1892. Executed in the Gothic style, it was designed by prominent architect and Sandgate resident, William Caldwell. Constructed in response to Sandgate's growing population, the Sacred Heart Church replaced the earlier church (still extant), which had become too small for the congregation. While the former church was used as a school building, further enrolments prompted the construction of a new purpose-built school in 1920. The Church was extended in 1935 with the addition of a permanent vestry and sanctuary.

History

The present Sacred Heart Church at Sandgate was opened by Cardinal Moran of Sydney on 25 September 1892, exactly eleven years after the first church on the site was opened. This Federation Gothic brick church was designed by prominent architect, William Caldwell, a resident of the Sandgate area from around 1886. Although an Anglican, Caldwell was commissioned to build several ecclesiastical buildings for the Catholic Church in the 1890s. These included timber churches at Rosalie and Bulimba which have since been replaced.

By the 1890s, Sandgate had developed from a small settlement to a booming seaside township. The opening of the railway to Sandgate from Brisbane in 1882 was the key factor in encouraging development in the centre of Sandgate. By the end of the 1880s, Sandgate boasted numerous shops and businesses, a School of Arts, town hall, state school, police station, post office, and a gas works which provided heating and lighting facilities for the area. The rapidly growing residential population led to a desire to establish churches in the area, particularly because of the distance from the city of Brisbane.

The first mass at Sandgate was celebrated in a private home in Eagle Terrace by Father Patrick Dunne in 1865. During the 1870s, Sandgate was attended by a German priest, Father Kerschner, who continued to serve the area until a resident priest, Rev J.P.M. Connolly, was appointed in 1880. In 1877, two acres of land "on a rise above the lagoon and looking out to the bay" was purchased by Mr John Hammer for £10. The land was officially transferred to the Trustees of the Catholic Church in 1881 and a small Gothic brick church, designed by renowned architect Andrea Stombuco and constructed by J. O'Keefe for £460, was opened on 25 September 1881. The original plan to build a timber church due to financial constraints was changed because of Bishop Quinn's decree to build only brick churches after fire destroyed a wooden church at Toowoomba or because Mr John Ward offered to donate all the bricks for the church. The church was opened and blessed by Dr Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst and brother of the late Brisbane bishop, James O'Quinn. It was anticipated that a second larger church would be constructed when the congregation outgrew the new church, at which time it would be used as a school.

As predicted, the growing Catholic population of Sandgate, swollen periodically by seasonal visitors, was soon too large to be accommodated in the existing church. On 26 January 1890, Archbishop Dunne addressed the congregation and proposed the erection of a new church and a presbytery. Father Connolly donated his existing home towards the cost of building these new structures. The sale of this property contributed £700. A further sum of £883/8/0 was subscribed by the congregation. Additional donations from Father Connolly, who had invested in gold mining in Northern Queensland, included £100 for the marble altar, £100 for stained glass windows, £100 which he laid on the foundation stone, and at a later stage, £250 to clear the remaining debt on the church.

W.A. Caldwell was engaged as the architect for the new church and W. Street, also a resident of Sandgate, contracted to build it for £1,675. By the time the foundation stone was laid by Archbishop Dunne on 1 May 1892, a total amount of £1,808/2/0 had been subscribed or promised. This financial commitment by parishioners in a time of severe economic depression testifies to the importance placed on religious worship in the late nineteenth century Catholic community. The Catholic hierarchy was also conscious of the employment provided by large building projects in times of economic hardship. It was noted by Cardinal Moran at the opening ceremony that "it was very creditable not only to the Catholics at Sandgate but to those all over Australia, that they gave work to hundreds of men, irrespective entirely of creed, at a time when even the Governments were stopping work".

The blessing and opening of the new church was a significant event in the history of the Catholic Church in Sandgate. It was Cardinal Moran's third visit to Brisbane. The official party of Cardinal Moran and several other members of the Catholic hierarchy arrived by train, and were met by a welcoming committee. After the ceremony, the visitors and almost 100 guests attended a luncheon in the old church. "Prominent laymen" at the ceremony noted in a contemporary report included T.J. Byrnes, (Solicitor-General and later a Premier of Queensland), who officially welcomed Cardinal Moran, George Wilkie Gray and his father-in-law, Patrick Perkins, M.L.A., whose brewing firm later developed into Castlemaine-Perkins Ltd, and George Agnew M.L.A., Alderman for Sandgate and an active member of the parish. A further £295/2/6 was collected at the service, leaving a debt of only £455 on the new church and presbytery.

When the church was opened in 1892, a permanent nave was constructed while the vestry and sanctuary were temporary. This situation was rectified in 1935, when Archbishop Duhig blessed and opened extensions to the church. Once again, the influx of summer visitors had meant that the existing church was too small to comfortably accommodate the congregation. Again, the building occurred during a time of economic depression, signifying the dedication of the Catholic hierarchy and community to continuing to provide adequate facilities for worship. The plans for the extensions were prepared by Brisbane architect T.R. Hall of the firm Hall and Phillips (formerly Hall and Prentice), and built at a cost of £5,500. The bulk of the cost was met by the bequest of £1,000 by Mr John Hayes.

The site of Sacred Heart Church now includes the former church which became a school after the construction of the new church, a modern brick convent which replaced the 1894 convent, the school building which opened in 1920, and a new school building constructed in 1964. These buildings are significant because of their impact on the lives of generations of Catholics who have worshipped and been educated in this parish, and their association with many significant members of the Catholic Church and prominent members of the Sandgate community.

Description

This brick Federation Gothic style church with a series of steep gable roofs, occupies a prominent position on Brighton Road, Sandgate. Other buildings on the large site include a former church now used for education facilities, presbytery, convent and other school and classroom facilities.

The building is cruciform in plan, incorporating an enclosed entry porch, nave, transepts and apsidal sanctuary. Later additions include roofed side verandahs along both sides of nave and a sacristy attached to the north western side of the sanctuary.

End walls to nave, transepts, entry porch and sanctuary all project above roof line to form parapeted gables. Apart from the parapeted gables to the transepts, all are rendered. Stepped buttresses provide stiffening to the high walls.

Buttresses at the front and transept parapet gable ends extend above roof line and terminate with pinnacles mounted on top.

The symmetrical eastern front incorporates a number of design elements including stained glass rose window, two finely proportioned light metal framed stained glass clerestory windows with Gothic tracing, coping mould at clerestory sill level and pinnacled stepped buttresses.

The width has been enlarged by the addition of face brick walls on either side, forming ends to the verandah extensions. These walls are flanked by face brick buttresses which project above the parapet line and are capped with triangulated capping pieces. Framed tongue and groove vertical joint double doors with rendered and painted lintels provide access through these walls to the verandah areas.

The enclosed entry porch projects forward from the front gable and is flanked by corner buttresses which terminate above the roof level with triangulated capping pieces. The front wall extends above the roof level to form a parapeted gable with a repeated trefoil motif recessed into the apex. The entrance is lined with jamb and arch mouldings and consists of a pair of framed tongue and groove vertical joint doors with a pointed arch panel containing a sacred heart motif above the transom.

The steeply pitched roofs are sheeted with painted corrugated Deep 6 asbestos cement roof sheeting. It is assumed that this roofing replaces an earlier roofing material.

The side walls to the nave incorporate a series of door panels centred between buttresses. Each panel consists of a pair of framed tongue and groove vertical joint doors and two banks of adjustable glass louvre above transom level. A fanlight above the louvres consists of a traceried pointed arch and a quatrefoil motif.

The side extensions to the nave generally consist of open verandahs with the centre portions enclosed to form small rooms on either side of the nave.

The open sections consist of face brick columns, honeycomb brick balustrading and terra cotta tile flooring.

The external wall of the enclosed section is rendered and taken up above roof level to form a parapeted gable with pilaster ends terminated at the top with triangulated capping. The otherwise blank elevation is penetrated by three small aluminium framed opaque glass hopper windows.

The extensions are accessed by way of a concrete ramp on the north side and a small flight of concrete steps on the south.

The parapeted gables to the transepts incorporate similar design elements to the eastern gable, including stained glass rose window, two finely detailed three light, metal framed stained glass windows with Gothic tracery, coping mould at sill level, rendered apex above rose window containing an elongated roundel window, pinnacled stepped buttresses at corners and half height mstepped buttresses between traceried windows. All windows incorporate a hoodmould in their design.

Side windows to transepts are stained glass metal framed twin lancets with Gothic tracery and incorporate a hood mould in the pointed arch top.

The sacristy extension attached to the north western side of the sanctuary is constructed in face birchwood rising from a rendered brick base. Stepped buttresses at corners are similar to buttresses incorporated elsewhere.

Due to the sloping of the site the sacristy floor level is approximately two metres above ground and is accessed by a flight of concrete steps.

Doors and windows are framed with a rendered band highlighting the opening.

Windows are leadlight metal framed hoppers with pointed arch fanlight. Doorway to sacristy is a framed tongue and groove vertical joint door with a pointed arch leadlight fanlight above.

External doorway to south transept is a framed tongue and groove vertical joint double door with two light leadlight traceried windows above. Jamb and arch lining are highlighted with a rendered border and capped with a hood mould.

Interior

The ceiling is lined with dark stained tongue and groove boarding laid diagonally and fixed on top of beams on exposed hinge post type trusses with arched ribs which extend down wall and seated on moulded impost blocks protruding from the plastered birch walls.

The light coloured plastered walls contrast strongly with the dark coloured roof trusses and ceiling boarding.

A dark stained quatrefoil motif timber cornice provides a neat finish to the boarded ceiling.

The arched ceiling to the sanctuary is lined with pressed metal sheeting. The sanctuary apse is framed with jamb and arch moulding and is flanked on either side.

The flooring to the nave is timber boarding with carpet runners to the aisles and walkways. The entrance porch floor is sheeted with ceramic tiles. The raised floors to the sanctuary and chancel are covered with marble sheeting.

Narrow timber framed steps on the southern side of the porch entry lead to a choir at the eastern end of the nave.

Two slender cast iron columns provide support to the front section of the choir. A timber balustrade provides protection to the choir area.

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 development of the Sandgate-Shorncliffe area in the late nineteenth century. With the church and permanent nave built at the height of the 1890s Depression and the sanctuary and vestry built as the 1930s Depression waned, the Sacred Heart Catholic Church also reflects the social and economic impact of these periods of great economic stringency in the city.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a surviving example of a small, Gothic style, brick church, built in the 1880s, and a medium sized, Gothic style brick church, built in the 1890s with extensions built in the 1930s.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as both churches are fine and highly attractive examples of nineteenth century brick churches executed in the Gothic style, featuring buttresses, a parapeted gable, and steeply pitched roofs and detailing in contrasting materials. The churches enhance the local streetscape and are important local landmarks.

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 the centre of a large Catholic precinct which originated with the construction of the original Church in 1881, the site also provides evidence of the determination of the Catholic hierarchy and the local Catholic community to construct facilities appropriate to the needs of the local community. The willingness of parishioners to assume considerable financial burdens attests to the importance attached to religious observance and religious education by the Catholic community in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

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

for its connection with an important part of the lives of the successive generations who worshipped there in the church built in 1881 or who attended school in the purpose-built school building (1919).

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 the 1880s church is an example of the work of the prominent Brisbane architect A.G. Stombuco, and as the 1890s church is an example of the work of architect William Caldwell, a local resident from circa 1886, and for its association with prominent personalities in the Australian Catholic hierarchy, Cardinal Moran and Archbishop Duhig.

References

1. Brisbane Centenary Celebrations Committee 1924, *Brisbane Centenary Official Historical Souvenir*, Brisbane
2. *Catholic Leader*, 26 December 1935
3. Martin, Father Denis. *The Sacred Heart Parish Sandgate 1880-1980*. Sandgate: Sacred Heart Parish,

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4. 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
 5. Sandgate Parish File, Catholic Archives
 6. 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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