

terra-cotta and brickwork offering a strong colour contrast to the green backdrop. The form (Greek-cross plan), massing, wall-arching and dome resemble Byzantine churches in Greece and Italy for example: Katholikon, Daphni (9th cent.) and St. Mark's, Venice (1042-)¹.

The following description appeared in the *Advocate* December 1939:

The new convent and secondary school just completed in Riversdale Road, East Camberwell, opposite the Dominican Church and Priory, will be blessed and opened by His Grace the Most Rev. D. Mannix, D.D. on Sunday, December 27, at 3 p.m.

Although in the Lombardic Byzantine style, it gives evidence of much original thought, with very pleasing results, and brings something new in design and planning for a building of the monastic type.

Much interest has been shown in the brickwork, all external face bricks being finished with deep sunken joints, giving the impression of shadow. The moulded brickwork carried by the stone columns, with their varied capitals, is as striking as it is beautiful. The Glen Iris Brick Co. supplied all bricks for the building.

It is designed around an internal quadrangle, enclosed on every side by arched cloisters, two of which terminate at the main doors of the chapel. The fountain in the centre of the quadrangle reflects the turquoise blue of the dome, being lined with identical tiles.

Opening off the cloisters, on the ground floor, are the service and living rooms, classrooms, music rooms, staff room and parlours. In design, the chapel is that of a Greek Cross. Wunderlich Ltd., of Melbourne, are responsible for the terra cotta work of this really beautiful chapel.

The crest of His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix is incorporated in one of the capitals at the entrance to the building. The carving of all the capitals is unique, being of the never starting, never finishing design.

The circular staircase is a distinctive feature of the building, being of true helicoidal shape, and thus balancing the domes of the chapel.

Comparative Examples

The Byzantine revival nature of the design is unusual in any period of religious architecture although the church (stuccoed) at 146 Canterbury Road (1928) is another example and there is another, the Presbyterian Church, Glenferrie Road Hawthorn (1892). These and the First Church of Christ Scientist (stuccoed), St Kilda Road (c1924), provide a very small group of buildings in the state for which this style has been used.

External Integrity

Generally original.

Streetscape

The complex adjoins a Bungalow-era residential precinct (21) and came to the area at the same time as many of the houses but is unrelated in visual terms.

Significance

Architecturally, the combination of brick and the Byzantine form is unmatched anywhere else in the state for any building type of the same scale. The cloister arcade, dome and glowing terra-cotta work provide a strong sense of Italy which in turn coincides with the increasing Italian influence on the Catholic Church's in this country²: of regional importance.

Historically, of interest for its link with the Dominican Order and for the modern interpretation of monastic style and form in the design. It is a distinctive building in the suburban landscape of Camberwell and differs from other building complexes created for the teaching orders in Melbourne, after the First War: of local importance.

Holyrood, later St. Dominic's Priory, 816 Riversdale Road, Camberwell



Study Grading: A

Precinct: 6.00

Construction Date: 1891

First Owner: Colonial Investment & Agency Co.

Architect: Reed Smart & Tappin

Builder: Fly, W

¹ see *World Architecture* p. 178f

² see Butler, Whitlands Catholic Settlement, MU Archt. School History Report 1970

History

Contemporary reports cited the Colonial Investment & Agency Company as the first owners of this 'handsome and commodious residence' when completed in 1891¹. Charles Hetherington and George Cornell were the secretary and manager, respectively, of this Queen Street investment company². Historian, Michael Cannon wrote of the Colonial Investment Company as having been formed by Prahran councillor, Matthew Davies and been active in land speculation. That company was criticized by a liquidator after the 1890s crash as '...helping to ruin and bringing misery to hundreds of persons and many families...' ³. The architects were Reed Smart & Tappin, then of Elizabeth Street, Melbourne and the builder, W. Fly of Annandale (NSW)⁴.

The next owner appears to have been Anglesea Highett, a solicitor, who purchased the one acre allotment 3 of, what was termed in 1891 as the 'second Toorak', by 1895 ⁵. The rate books of 1900-1 describe the dwelling as brick and of eleven rooms on one acre⁶. Anglesea Highett by this time gives his occupation as gentleman⁷. By 1905 John Michael Higgins, a metallurgist, had become the owner-occupier of Holyrood⁸. Holyrood became St. Dominic's Priory under the ownership of the Roman Catholic Church by 1925⁹.

Sir John Michael Higgins was born in 1862 and was educated at Bendigo High School and the Bendigo School of Mines. He was a metallurgist by profession, and on his retirement from active professional work he became a pastoralist. He was the metallurgical adviser to the Commonwealth during World War 1 and Chairman of, and Government nominee, on the Commonwealth Central Wool Committee. He was awarded a Knight of the Cross of St. Michael and St. George in 1918 for his honorary services in Australia during the War, especially in his administration of the scheme for the purchase of Australian wool by the Imperial Government, and for his efforts in founding the Australian Metals Exchange during the War. Higgins was chairman of the British Australian Wool Realization Association Limited 1921-26, Liquidator 1926-32 and local director of the Bank of New Zealand. He married Frances Anna Maegraith in 1889¹⁰.

Description

One contemporary description told of the main rooms of the house, morning, dining and drawing rooms, and a 'splendid' hall with heavy ceiling beams, kauri and red pine paneling both on the ceiling and the dado. This was besides the many service rooms at ground level. The stairs were claimed a totally new concept in Victorian house planning because of the unusual layout which had the stair penetrating a wall, after a few rises, and disappearing between the walls to ascend to the next level¹¹. Upstairs there were six bedrooms, dressing room and servants' bedrooms. Stables, coach house, man's room etc. were at the rear.

The building's style was termed 'English domestic' carried out in red bricks with stone and black brick trim. The roof was of terra-cotta French pattern tiles and the gables half-timbered¹².

The house presents a picturesque Queen Anne style two-storey brick villa with intersecting gabled roof forms and a distinctive observation tower over the entrance hall. Queen Anne cement detailing is in the form of the pediment over the entry, while the cited 'English domestic' Tudor era is reflected in the half-timbering and two-level casement window bays in the front wing. Chimneys are ribbed: the whole taking on the look of Shaw, Webb and Nesfield's English houses of the mid 19th century¹³, or as reinterpreted by American architects. The shingled tower and general form resembles the work of Oakden Addison & Kemp (Woodlands, Essendon, 1888), Beverley Ussher (Mellor house[q.v.], 150 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury, 1898-9) and Ussher & Kemp (Dalswraith, Kew, 1900). Reed Smart & Tappin had aided in the popularization of this type of architecture, specifically with Catholic presbyteries and, in a French domestic mode, the Good Shepherd convent at Abbotsford.

Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell sites may be compared with this site (also see above).

- 35, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1881
- 630, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1882
- 2, BERWICK STREET, 1885
- 53, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1886-7
- 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1886
- 3, FERMANACH ROAD, 1887
- 57, SEYMOUR GROVE, 1887

- 1 ABCN 24.10.1891 p.331
- 2 D1890
- 3 Cannon, *The Land Boomers* p.157
- 4 ABCN loc. cit.
- 5 RB 1894-95; RB 1895-96, 338
- 6 RB1900-1, 339
- 7 ibid
- 8 RB 1905-6, 335; D1905
- 9 D1925; RB 1925-26, 14018
- 10 WWA 1935, p.234
- 11 ABCN loc. cit.
- 12 ibid.
- 13 ie. Nesfield's Stowford Cottages, Crewe Hall, Cheshire 1865

33, ALMA ROAD, 1888
 19, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1888
 46, PARLINGTON STREET, 1888
 635, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1888
 89, UNION ROAD, 1888
 2, PEPPIN STREET, 1889 (?)
 25, ALMA ROAD, 1889 (?)
 54, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889-9
 36, ALMA ROAD, 1889
 208, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1889
 15, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889
 21, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889
 43, KENT ROAD, 1889
 2, MOLESWORTH STREET, 1889
 137, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889
 32, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1889
 10, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1889
 26A, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889
 50, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889
 42, WARRICAL ROAD, 1889
 322-394 CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1890-1,
 262, UNION ROAD, 1890/1900
 15, ALMA ROAD, 1890
 544, BURKE ROAD, 1890
 27, INGLESBY ROAD, 1890
 7, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890
 13, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890
 57, YARRBAT AVENUE, 1890c?
 7A, ALMA ROAD, 1891-2
 13, BALWYN ROAD, 1891-4
 73-79 BALWYN ROAD, 1891,
 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1892
 622, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1892
 6, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1892
 125, WATTLE VALLEY ROAD, 1892
 136, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1893
 668-670 BURKE ROAD, 1895,
 680, BURKE ROAD, 1895
 816-822, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1895
 30, HOWARD STREET, 1895c
 29, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1897
 52, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1897
 15, KASOUKA ROAD, 1898
 150, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1899
 26, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1899

External Integrity

Generally original.

Streetscape Contribution

Prominent and evidently of an earlier period than the surrounding Holyrood Estate and St. Dominic's Church, indicating historical development of area.

Significance

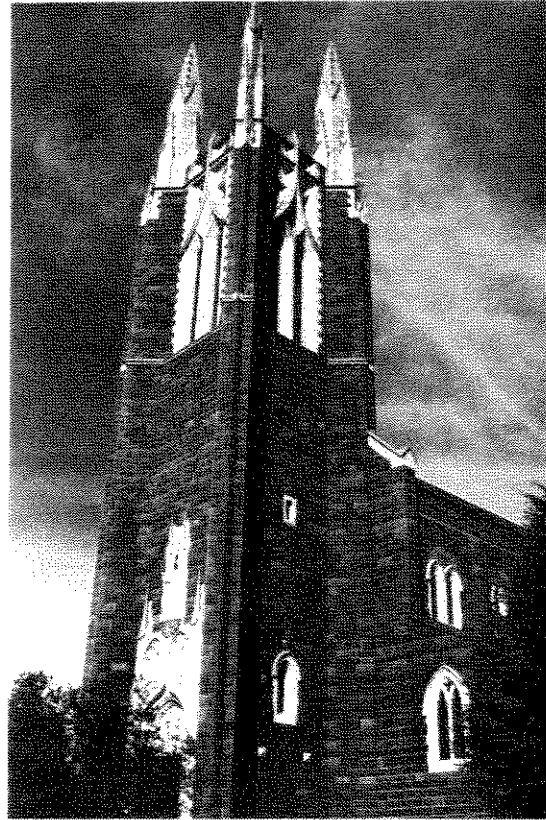
Architecturally, an outstanding, complete and early example of the English domestic or Queen Anne revival style which was soon to become one of Camberwell's most popular Edwardian styles: of State importance.

Historically, important resident, John Michael Higgins, significant figure in war-time administration and in a range of applied scientific work in the public sphere. The house also expresses the previous subdivision by its design, siting and scale and connections with the Dominican Order are also distinctive. Most

Catholic parishes were not staffed by religious orders and hence a priory such as this is unusual in suburban Melbourne: of State importance.

The Dominican church itself is a major landmark and departs to an extent from contemporary Catholic parish church design.

St Dominic's Catholic Church, 822 Riversdale Road, Camberwell



Study Grading: B

Precinct: 6.00

Construction Date: 1936-59

First Owner: Catholic Church

History

(refer Siena Convent, and St Dominic's Priory)

The church had established at the Holyrood property around the time of the adjoining Holyrood Estate (c1923-4). In 1926 celebration of the Feast of St Dominic (founder of the Order of Preachers) was celebrated at a church on this site¹.

The architect's design for the first stage of this church was pictured in an architectural journal and noted as under construction early 1936. The builders were Lodge Brothers, the architect W P

¹ Advocate 12.8.1926 p.16