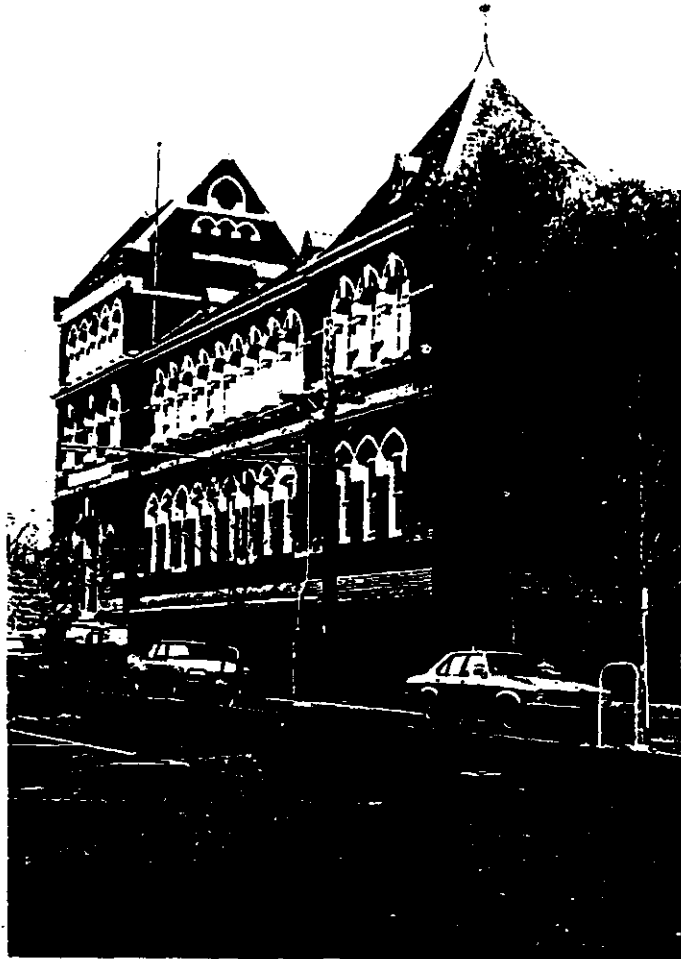


Building:

Cambridge Street School No. 1895



Allotment Reference: 52
National Trust Register: -
National Estate Register: Recommended
Register of Government Buildings: Recommended
Location within Precinct: Collingwood Slope
Photograph Date: 12.6.87

Grantee: S.A. Donaldson
Original Owner: Minister for Education
Present Owner: Minister for Education
Original Use: Primary and Secondary Education
Present Use: Language Centre, Special School Annexe,
Special Education Unit, Primary School.
Construction Date: 1877
Architect: Henry Bastow, State Schools Division,
P.W.D.
Builder: Thomas Wright

Description:

A substantial generally two storeyed polychrome brick State School in the Gothic style typical of the work of the Department's architects in the 1870's period. At the Cambridge Street/Mason Street corner, a three storeyed gable roofed tower forms the centre piece of the design and is flanked by pyramidal roofed pavillions at the street facade terminations, although the Mason Street roof has been replaced with a flat deck.

The remaining original roof sections are slated and relieved with projecting ventilators. Each level is defined by cream brick stringcoursing, the black body bricks being further relieved with a frieze course, and cream brick banding at the sill levels. The window heads are both round and segmentally arched with red voussoirs providing a lancet arched profile accentuated with cream bricks. A substantial bluestone plinth is pierced by the original front door onto Cambridge Street with "State School No. 1895" in low relief on a stuccoed panel above.

Inside, the small entrance is approached by steep bluestone steps and is enclosed by an encircling stair case with timber balustrade rising to a classroom which forms the upper room of the corner "tower". The roll of honour board is located in the lobby in memory of "Scholars of the Cambridge Street State School who served the Empire in the Great War". One classroom has a cast iron bracket system supporting the ceiling over.

Condition:

Good

Integrity:

Good, the removal of the roof to the Mason Street facade detracts significantly. Inside, the main rooms are substantially intact.

History:

In November, 1873, the Ministry of Education purchased freeholds in this closely settled area and accepted Thomas Wright's tender of 6,400 pounds to build the Fife (now Oxford) St School. This school replaced 205 Collingwood, 282 Collingwood and 474 Collingwood. The first Head Teacher Jonas Horsfall, opened the school on 1st of September 1877. Five days later 1360 children had enrolled. Both day and evening classes were organised, and a rural training school for teaching practice conducted until 1886. Sloyd and cookery centres and a cadet corps were also established. In 1905 twelve cottages facing the lane to the North of the school were bought for 27 pounds ten shillings each and demolished to enlarge the playing area. In the early 1920's, after the Government had been pressed to give the school HES status, the Department agreed to rename SS1895 as the Cambridge Street Central School. In 1922 enrolments were: primary, 509 and central, 108; by 1925 these figures had fallen to 392 and 104 respectively. Attendances continued to fall until in February 1933 the central classes were discontinued and the sewing centre was closed.

Since 1952 other Departmental activities have been accommodated within this building in addition to its traditional teaching activities.

Significance:

Important at the State level as the largest school in the colony for a period and as a substantially intact example of the work of Henry Bastow. It is a major example of the Department's work during the 1870's and is comparable with the Golden Point School, Castlemaine (1874) Faraday Street School, Carlton (1877) and Coburg School No. 484 (1874).

It is of local importance for its role in the district and as a visually key building within the precinct.

Recommendations:

Recommended for inclusion on the Historic Buildings Council Register, National Estate Register and for Planning Scheme Protection.

References:

Education Department of Victoria, Vision and Realisation, vol. 3, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1973.

Burchell, L., Victorian Schools, Melbourne, 1980.

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