

**ST. LIBORIUS CHURCH
CHURCH
PANTON STREET, EAGLEHAWK**

SURVEY DATE: 1991-2

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (CLASS/REC.): C

STUDY GRADING: B

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1868

FIRST OWNER : CATHOLIC CHURCH



CITATION:

History

'Bendigo's pioneer Roman Catholic Priest, Rev. Dr. Henry Backhaus, laid the foundation stone on 5 July, 1868. This simple German Gothic-style church, built of red brick, was completed in 1869. It is named after St. Liborius, the

**BENDIGO & EAGLEHAWK HERITAGE STUDY-SIGNIFICANT SITES
GRAEME BUTLER & ASSOCIATES**

patron Saint of Paderborn, Germany, where Dr. Backhaus was born. Following a successful fund-raising bazaar about the turn of the century, renovations were undertaken. These included the erection of a new sacristy and sanctuary, the replacement of the roof and alteration to the windows¹.

Description

Gothic Revival, in the Regency or Commissioner's Gothic manner, this brick and stucco church was also reputedly based on German precedents. Distinguished by the finely detailed bell tower and spire which sits over the entry, the same detailing skill also extends to the mannered treatment of the tapered piers and label moulds which surround the main north window. The tracery in this window is notable, following the Decorated phase of Gothic by its intricate cusping and large glass area. The hilltop siting of the church, the centralized simple symmetry promoted by the spire provides for a most effective elevation for the site, given the near axial placement on Panton Street.

The interior is simply treated with ceilings in Kauri pine, trusses exposed and the walls in painted stucco with recent reproduction stenciling and dado painting enhancing its period expression. The beaded glass appears to be of this century, as indicated by the rough-cast stucco surrounds of the side windows which reduces the original width. The apse provides a suitably scaled housing for the altar, but it is the treatment of the gallery or choir over the north end of the church which suggests its early date.

External Integrity

Bricks have been painted, but otherwise generally original.

An unrelated rear gabled addition interferes with the external elevation of the apse and other incidental basalt planters are unconnected with the church's original concept.

Context

The church is bordered on the east by an extensive mainly Edwardian red brick school and hall complex, which would be potentially more visually related if the church's bricks were revealed. Other more recent and generally unrelated buildings have been added, facing Reserve Street. The nearby gold-era cottage on Lot 4 is the closest in period to the church, but it is its siting, aligned with Panton Street, which expresses the church's early construction date.

Significance

As an early and architecturally sophisticated church on an important gold field, St. Liborius takes on both the historical significance from its context and gives back significance in the form of its architecture and the axial siting to Panton Street. It also forms part of a public building sub-precinct, shared by a former National School and the attached Catholic school on its site.

1 Butcher & Flanders p.128; NTA FN2349 cites 'Bendigo Advertiser' 6.7.1868