

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Eastern Cemetery Chapel

Project File No: 1101

Address: 141 Ormond Road East Geelong 3219

Approx. Date: 1903

Integrity: High

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 07.03

Survey Date: March 2002



History

The decision to erect a new Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel at the Eastern Cemetery was taken at a public meeting held in St. Mary's schoolroom on 22 June 1903. There were two reasons for this decision. Firstly, a new chapel was seen as a fitting memorial to honour the life and work of Archdeacon P.J. Slattery D.D.V.G., who died on 21 June 1903. Secondly, a new chapel was needed to replace the existing chapel built in 1860, which was regarded as beyond repair. The earlier chapel was built of bricks on a bluestone foundation, over a vault dug 7 to 8 feet underground. The building was roofed with slate. Part of the door panelling was left open, the opening secured with brass rods, allowing a view of the interior of the building. The vault housed 4 uncovered coffins, which would not have met health regulations by 1903, with 3 other covered coffins adjacent.

A sketch plan of the proposed new chapel, submitted to the public meeting on 22 June 1903 had been drawn by the Geelong architect, W.A. Tombs, of Tombs and Durran. The chapel was sited near an existing large cross, in what is now the Old Catholic section of the cemetery, with a view uphill. The building was designed to be 30 feet long by 20 feet wide, the estimated cost to be just over 500 pounds, paid by public subscriptions, the total hopefully raised before the anticipated completion of the project within 12 months. The contract was in fact fulfilled in time for the official blessing of the new chapel on 21 June

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

1904. The new chapel was of brick, and was described by the Geelong Advertiser on 22 June as "larger and more pretentious than the old building". At the dedication ceremony, the remains of Archdeacon Slattery, which had been lying in the vault of the old chapel since his death, were carried to his permanent burial place near the new chapel. The inscription on a tablet above the main entrance to the building reads "Erected to the Memory of the Venerable Archdeacon, P.J. Slattery D.D.V.G. Born in Nenagh, Tipperary, 17 March, 1830, Died in Geelong 21 June, 1903. R.I.P".

Stone monuments in a semicircle at the rear of the chapel mark the burial places of 18 prelates, including Archdeacon Slattery and the seven whose remains were previously interred in the old chapel. They were -

Rev. Michael O'Brien, d. 21/8/1859, aged 34 years
Rev. Donald Rankin, d. 14/2/1863, aged 64 years
Rev. Eugene McCarthy, d. 7/11/1865, aged 34 years
Rev. B.H. Power O.P., d. 10/8/1869, aged 42 years
Archdeacon Downing, d. 4/12/1870, aged 57 years
Rev. Thomas Barrett, d. 27/10/1881, aged 74 years
Rev. Richard P. Collins, d. 25/12/1895, aged 40 years.

William Allen Tombs was born in 1866 at Christchurch, New Zealand, the son of George Tombs who was a partner of Whitecombe and Tombs, a well-known architectural firm. Tombs served his articles with the notable New Zealand architect T.S. Lambert before coming to Victoria and working for some time with the Melbourne architect, Charles D'Ebro. In 1899, he began practicing along in Geelong, and in the early 1890s he entered into partnership with E.M. Blake who was also recently arrived from New Zealand. However in 1895, Tombs joined the partnership of Watts and Durran, becoming Watts Tombs and Durran and later Tombs and Durran.

Tombs and Durran gained a number of commissions throughout the late 1890s and early 1900s. Until the beginning of the 20th century, most of their work constituted domestic Federation and Edwardian styled buildings. In addition to their projects in Geelong, an important component of their work was in the Western District, which eventually resulted in the establishment of a branch office in the area. The partnership came to an abrupt end in 1912 when James Durran died in a car accident, and William Tombs could not manage without his business partner's support.

Description

The Eastern Cemetery Chapel, 141 Ormond Road, East Geelong, is set within the early Roman Catholic section of the Eastern Cemetery. The rear of the building is surrounded by a semi-circular configuration of stone monuments

The symmetrical, single storey, unpainted red brick, Federation Eclectic Neo-Romanesque and Gothic styled Eastern Cemetery Chapel is characterised by a simple steeply pitched roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel, together with parapeted gabled ends surmounted by cement rendered Celtic crosses and flanked by domed hexagonal pinnacles with blind cement rendered arcades and crowning finials. Other early features include the unpainted brick buttresses with cement rendered copings, pointed windows (including the windows in the gable ends) with cement rendered drip moulds above, scrolled cement rendered coping in the gable ends, and the cement rendered and pointed door opening with rectangular label moulds and double vertical boarded timber doors. Above the main entrance is a rectangular stone tablet that reads: "Erected to the Memory of the Venerable Archdeacon, P.J. Slattery D.D.V.G. Born in Nenagh, Tipperary, 17 March, 1830, Died in Geelong 21 June, 1903. R.I.P."

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Other early decorative features of the design include the quoinwork about the gable end windows and doorway, rendered bands and rectangular ventilators high in the gable ends and the projecting brick plinths at the base walls.

Another Church building of similar design and construction is St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brook Street, Sunbury, designed by H.W. and F.B. Tompkins in 1904.

Statement of Cultural Significance

The Eastern Cemetery Chapel, 114 Ormond Road, East Geelong, has significance as an important legacy of the Roman Catholic Church section of the Eastern Cemetery, as a memorial to the Venerable Archdeacon, P.J. Slattery who died in 1903. The chapel also has significance as an intact example of an unusual Federation Eclectic Neo-Romanesque and Gothic style. Built in 1903 to a design by the Geelong architect W.A. Tombs, the chapel appears to be in good condition and of high integrity.

The Eastern Cemetery Chapel at 114 Ormond Road is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities of an unusual Federation Eclectic Neo-Romanesque and Gothic style. These qualities include the simple steeply pitched roof form, together with the parapeted gabled ends surmounted by cement rendered Celtic crosses and flanked by domed hexagonal pinnacles with blind cement rendered arcades and crowning finials. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the unpainted red brick wall construction, cement rendered dressing, galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, single storey height, symmetrical composition, unpainted brick buttresses with cement rendered copings, pointed windows (including the windows in the gable ends) with cement rendered drip moulds above, scrolled cement rendered coping in the gable ends, cement rendered and pointed door opening with rectangular label moulds and double vertical boarded timber doors, quoinwork about the gable end windows and doorway, rendered bands and rectangular ventilators high in the gable ends, projecting brick plinths at the base walls, and the rectangular stone tablet with the memorial inscription to Archdeacon P.J. Slattery. The 18 monumentas forming a semi-circle nearby and representing other prelates also contribute to the significance of the place.

The Eastern Cemetery Chapel at 114 Ormond Road is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the Roman Catholic section of the Eastern Cemetery, and particularly with Archdeacon P.J. Slattery, who died in 1903. The chapel is a memorial to Archdeacon Slattery, having been built soon after his death in 1903 to a design by W.A. Tombs, Geelong architect.

The Eastern Cemetery Chapel at 114 Ormond Road is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is recognised and highly valued by sections of the Geelong community for religious reasons.

Overall, the Eastern Cemetery Chapel at 114 Ormond Road is of LOCAL significance.

References

The Geelong Advertiser, 23 June 1903, 29 June 1903, 22 June, 1904, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

The Eastern Cemetery, Classification Report, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), c. 1997.

Helen Lardner Conservation & Design, 'Eastern Cemetery Geelong Conservation Management Plan'.

The Pivot Tree, Magazine of the Geelong Family History Group, No.66, July 2000.

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

M. Lewis (ed.), Victorian Churches: their origins, their storey and their architecture', National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Melbourne, 1991.

D. Rowe, 'Architecture of Geelong 1860-1900', B. Arch thesis, Deakin University, 1991.