

SORELL HERITAGE SURVEY

Address: 22 Arthur Street Sorell 7172		UPI: 2902896	PID: 5932034
Name: ST THOMAS CATHOLIC CHURCH			
Feature Type: Church Lavatory	Structure Type	Dating:	1830 - 1890 1864
	Site Feature Type	Access Restrictions:	Not available
		Inspection Date:	October 96 P Davies
		Style:	Victorian Gothic
		Grid ref:	5426 545700 5262800
Indication of Significance: High probable significance		Theme: Worship	
Material:	Stone Corrugated iron	Listings: National Trust SMC Schedule 3 AHC	
Condition:	Good Fair		
Integrity:	Intact		
National Estate Criteria:	A4 B4 D2 E1 F1 G1 H1	Photograph Index:	1: 8-10
Risk:	Excavation: ☐	Development: ☐	Maintenance: ☒ Vandalism: ☐

SITE DESCRIPTION:

A typical medium sized country church building of coursed rubble stone with gabled ends, a small side entry porch and a vestry wing. The windows are a combination of leaded and stained glass and all are covered with galvanised wire guards. A small stone lavatory building of recent construction is at the rear of the site and copies the form of the church. The interior has not been inspected.

The grounds are grassed and maintained.

The building is in overall reasonable condition but requires some maintenance of the stonework, particularly pointing to parapets, replacement of parapet stones (some have been done with poor quality stone) and the removal of cement pointing and replacement with lime pointing.

The west wall containing the bell turret is falling away from the building and has pulled away from roofing and flashings allowing water into the building. Structural investigation is required to determine the risk and problem.

HISTORY:

The Catholic community began to establish itself in Sorell from the late 1840's and first requested the government for an allotment on which to build a church in 1850. Hobart's Bishop Willson requested four lots for a minister's house, a school and other church purposes as well as a burial ground in 1854. An initial four acre grant was subsequently reduced to three acres, although a contemporary newspaper account also notes that Andrew Counsel donated land for the church. The church was designed by the noted architect, Henry Hunter, and its construction overseen by the priest for Richmond, Father William Dunne. Work began in 1863 and was completed the following year, enabling the church to be opened by Bishop Willson amid great fanfare in January 1865. In reporting its inauguration, the Mercury made the following report.

The church is a neat structure of the Gothic order, in its simplest and most unpretending style. It consists of a nave 38ft. in length, by 19ft. in width, a chancel, 14ft. by 17ft., a sacristy 12ft. by 10ft. and porch 9ft. by 7ft., and is capable of accommodating 120 persons. The material of which the walls are composed is freestone which is very neatly worked. The architect of the building is Mr. H. Hunter. The contractors, Messrs Molloy and Rigby, and the contract price £700. The stone was, by permission, quarried gratuitously from land belonging to Mrs. Lord of Richmond, and the land upon which the church is built is a gift from Mr Andrew Counsel, who also gave a contribution of £200 towards the funds.

BOUNDARY:

The listing boundary is formed by the title boundary of the property.

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COMMENTS:

The church is one of a group of fine stone ecclesiastical buildings in Sorell that form an excellent group and which are part of the townscape which gives the place its character. The building is a fine example of ecclesiastical gothic, well detailed and related to important local figures.

It meets Criteria A4, B2, D2, E1, F1, G1 and H1 for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate.

It should continue to be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and the Register of the National Estate and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

CSO 24/253/10088

SOUTHERWOOD, W.T. 1977. Planting a Faith in Tasmania: the country parishes. Opus Books.

The Mercury January 13, 1865, p2

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