

October 2012

Number 73

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Welcome to the seventy-third Friends Newsletter.

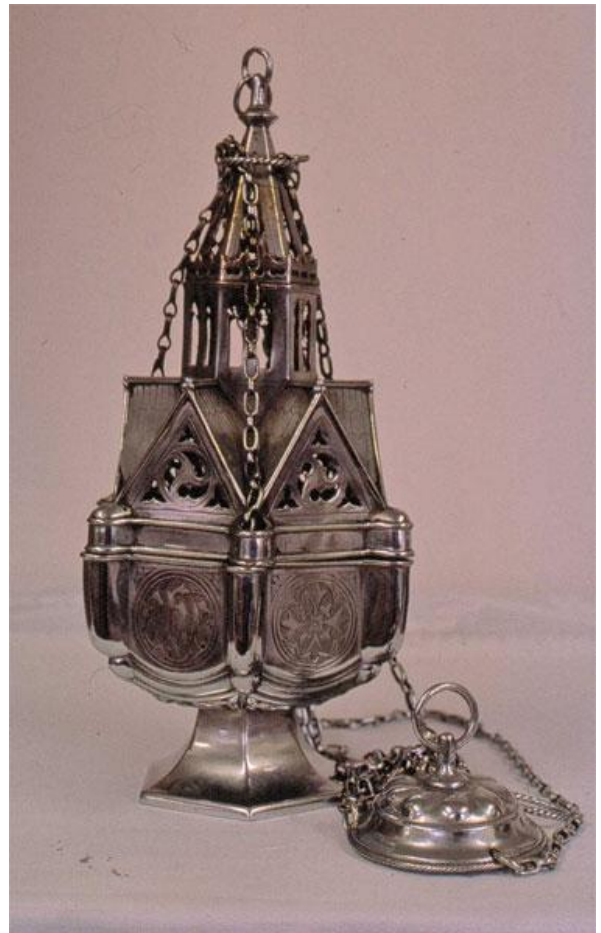
In our July Newsletter we told you the exciting news of the discovery in Queensland of Pugin plans for a house for Bishop Willson and, so we understood, plans for the completion of the spire on old St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. The Sydney provenance was a guess by the owner of both sets of drawings, retired Brisbane architecture academic Peter Cheney.

We arranged to have a professional copy made of the 'spire' drawing and to our utter astonishment found that it was in fact the surviving sheet of a church design for Bishop Willson, dated 1847 like the house plans. Both sets of plans had been sent to Willson before he left England after his 1847 visit there and were accompanied by an explanatory letter from Pugin which has survived with the drawings. Peter had not realised that the two sets were connected, having acquired them from different sources, that for the church being from a Brisbane antique print and map seller in the 1970s. Miraculously, they had come back together again under his roof.

In this issue we are delighted to bring you the first instalment of a series on the Hobart church design, and will provide a series on Willson's house in due course.

With kind regards,

Jude Andrews  
Administrative Officer



*The Pugin-designed thurible belonging to his Church of Our Blessed Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury, Dudley, West Midlands (Image: Brian Andrews)*






## *Alton in the Spring*



We are grateful to Nick Callinan for this lovely April 2004 glimpse of Alton Castle framed by trees and the corner of the Chapel of the Hospital of St John the Baptist.







# *St Mary's, Hobart*

## *(Part 1)*

### **Introduction**

In 1852 Bishop William Willson announced his intention to erect a second church in Hobart and to that end summoned a meeting in St Joseph's Church to inaugurate an appeal for funds. An announcement to that effect was read out at both Masses on Sunday 29 August 1852.

At this 'numerous and respectable meeting' his Vicar-General read out an address from the Bishop in which he pointed out that St Joseph's was quite inadequate and at Sunday Masses was 'crowded in every part, even within the sanctuary', with numbers remaining outside. The last census had recorded 4,535 Catholics in the Hobart Town district yet St Joseph's 'even when filled to suffocating compressure will only hold six hundred persons'.<sup>1</sup> Willson 'proposed to erect part of a plain substantial church as soon as means can be relied upon', adding that the 'celebrated architect Mr Pugin has most kindly prepared with his own hands a plan for the church and a complete set of working drawings *free of cost*<sup>2</sup> [our emphasis].

We would point out that only small sums were recorded from the date when collectors were appointed, 21 August 1853, until August 1854 after which no further entries were made in the appeal volume and the project lapsed. We would further note that the proposed church was not to be built from one of the two remaining unused church models which Willson had brought out to Hobart Town in 1844 because these were for 'small churches'.<sup>3</sup>

The identity and details of the Pugin design have remained unsolved until the beginning of this month although its existence was confirmed in a letter from Pugin to Willson of late 1847, as will be revealed. Towards the end of the Bishop's return visit to England in 1847 he had visited Pugin in Ramsgate. As a result of this Pugin had written to his good friend and industrial colleague John Hardman of Birmingham on 14 November, urging him to do all possible to assist the Bishop's efforts in Tasmania:


Bishop Willson is here & is much delighted with all here. I am very anxious about his Diocese—he is so anxious to do all right—I have arranged for him take out a quantity of casts—& also 2 or 3 *tracery windows* worked as patterns—2 sorts of benches &c. specimens of paneling. in fact models by which he will be able to produce work on the spot. it has occurred to me that Early must have a great quantity of stencils & if we were to transfer the patterns on sheets of paper they would be exceedingly useful—so pray see to this. give to him 1<sup>st</sup> stencils of various patterns 2. Rubbings of our brasses which they could imitate in incised stones [Then follow items to be sold to Willson] The Bishop tells me he got our plain Candlesticks Cast in Hobart Town. could he not do the same with our plain processional cross. pray think if there is anything else we could help him with. It appears to me one of the most important things to accomplish to introduce the true form of sacred things in the new world. rely on it as it begins it must go on for having so few models people will naturally follow what they see. I am going to give him all the drawings unused cartoons &c. that I can. I am getting 12 sorts of headstones for him. I want M<sup>rs</sup>. Powell to have a set of silk & gold apparels of any colour got ready for him ... I am very anxious to establish a regular correspondence with Bishop Willson—so as

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<sup>1</sup> Church Building Committee records 1852–1854, Archdiocese of Hobart Archives, CA.6/WIL.536.

<sup>2</sup> *idem*.

<sup>3</sup> Pugin to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 30 January 1844, in Margaret Belcher (ed.), *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, OUP, Oxford, 2003, vol. 2, 1843-1845, p. 161. By 1852 when Willson launched his appeal the smallest of the church models had been used for St Paul's, Oatlands (1850–51).



to keep him supplied with such things as he may require.<sup>4</sup>

This lengthy excerpt conveys something of the zeal and generosity with which Pugin was supporting Willson. Note the reference to ‘2 or 3 *tracery windows* worked as patterns’,<sup>5</sup> the meaning of which will become clear as we examine the church design. It is now also clear that based on three years’ experience of the realities of Tasmanian craft and other skills Willson was able to reveal to Pugin on this visit that conventional architectural drawings could be read and used there. Sets of drawings for two buildings for Willson—a house and a church—their design ‘free of cost’, were dispatched to him late in 1847 before his departure from England, accompanied by the following previously unpublished letter.<sup>6</sup> The contents are so remarkable that we reproduce it here in full:

My dear Lord Bishop

I send you the working drawings of the house & church.

I think you will find it perfectly convenient & suitable for your purpose. I have kept tracings of the drawings so as to be able to send you the fixtures for doors locks hinges &c.

I am very anxious to have this sort of church adopted which I send you. it will be very useful & not costly. & as your Lordship takes out parts worked by Myers of my Patern. I fully expect it will be easily erected. I have referred to the different parts worked by writing on the drawing.

- Mr. Hardman will send up the stained glass window & I have introduced it in the oratory in the house – there will be folding

doors opening into it from the upper corridor so many persons would have access there if necessary I have also made a door opening from your Lordships bed Room into the oratory. which will be both a comfort & convenience. I hope and trust to get up to town & see your Lordship before you sail. & I would explain everything more perfectly but the drawings are very clear & I have taken great pains with them.

will your lordship be so good as to pay the £8.10. I owe Mr. Denny for Head stones | to Mr. Myers. to save trouble

- I am very anxious about your chasubles the crosses on them spoil them altogether I cannot express how grieved I am your Lordship did not consult me about them that man at Manchester is as ignorant as a Cow - & not an humble man either. I hope if Mr Heptonstall has any made he will let me regulate the pattern. they cannot hang well unless the cross is properly placed. & the shape of the bottom more pointed. It has fretted me ever since I have seen them. if I was better off I would given your Lordship a real set but I am too poor at present.

I hope you have got the apparels for the albs.

I have sent up a roll of Cartoon Drawings for you

ever with great respect

your Lordships devoted respectful

Sert

+ A Welby Pugin

Since writing this I have received the accompanying letter from Denny which shows me the cost of the stones is £9.10<sup>7</sup>

There is much of interest in this letter, including references to vestments and headstones, which we

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<sup>4</sup> Pugin to Hardman, 16 November 1847, in Margaret Belcher (ed.), *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, OUP, Oxford, 2009, vol. 3, 1846–1848, pp. 310–11. Thomas Earley (1819–1893), habitually misspelt ‘Early’ by Pugin, was a Hardman employee who executed much of Pugin’s painted flat decorative work.

<sup>5</sup> By ‘pattern’ Pugin means a full-size piece of carved stonework to be copied, a technique used by him when supplying his three small church designs for Willson in 1843.

<sup>6</sup> We will publish a comprehensive article on the house design at a later date.

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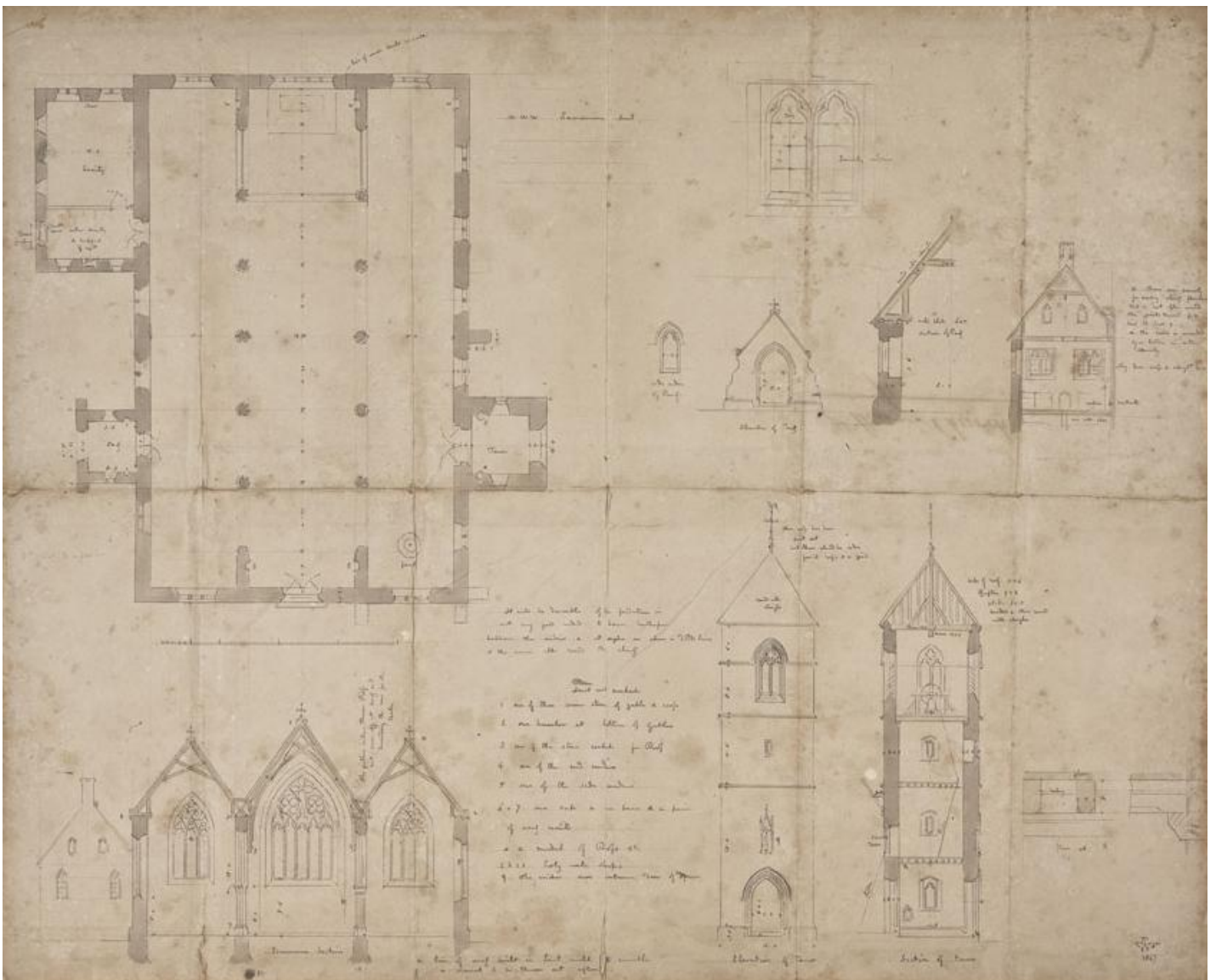
<sup>7</sup> Pugin to Willson, late 1847, copy courtesy Peter Cheney.

will address in later articles. Perhaps just a brief aside that the ‘Cow’ in Manchester to which Pugin refers was Thomas Brown from whom Willson purchased vestments which we previously thought had occurred during the 1854 Willson visit to England.<sup>8</sup>

As for the church, note that Pugin refers to pattern stonework which Willson will be taking back to Tasmania and also that he has annotated the drawings with notes about its location. One sheet of the church plans has been re-discovered and is reproduced below.<sup>9</sup>

Before considering the design in detail we note that it has many points of similarity with a drawing documented in Alexandra Wedgwood’s admirable 1977 catalogue of Pugin family works in the drawings collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects.<sup>10</sup> This latter drawing now appears to have possibly been a preliminary scheme which was worked up into the complete set of working drawings sent to Willson.

*The surviving sheet of the working drawings for St Mary’s, Hobart (Courtesy: Peter Cheney)*



<sup>8</sup> See Brian Andrews, *Creating A Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2002, pp. 120–2.

<sup>9</sup> There would likely have been three sheets of drawings in all, the other two having the principal elevations, a longitudinal section, plus details of windows, doors, mouldings and so on.

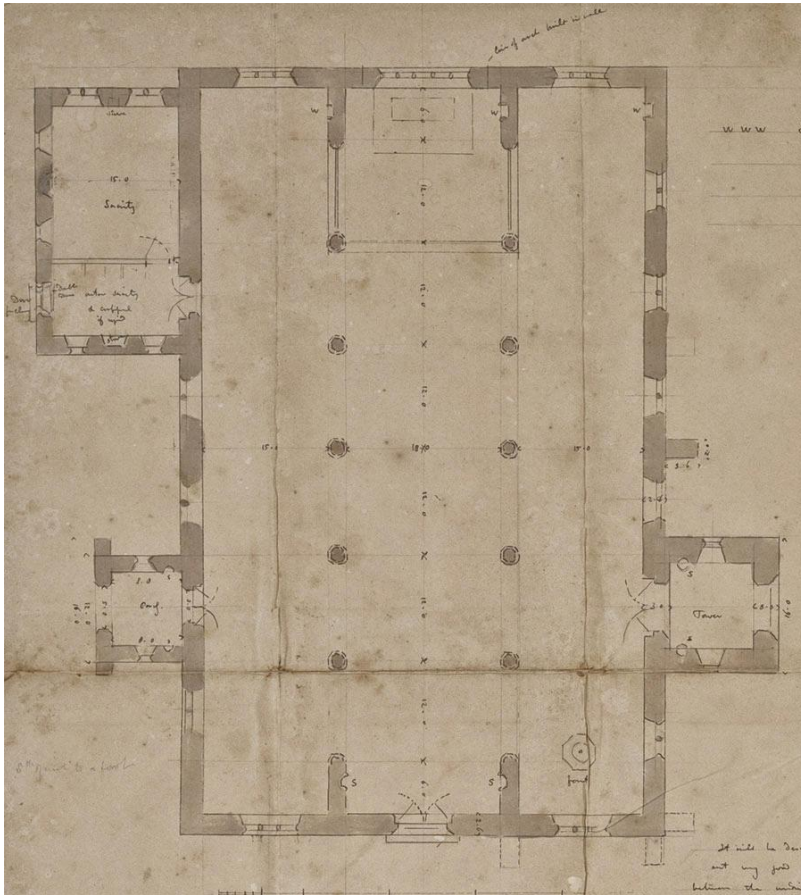
<sup>10</sup> Alexandra Wedgwood, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects: The Pugin Family*, Gregg International, Farnborough, 1977, p. 59. The drawing is reproduced and described in Andrews, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–9.





### Ground plan

We will reproduce each element of the drawings at a larger size as we discuss it in order to show the details more clearly.



The overall plan form is the familiar triple-gabled type which Pugin employed for St Mary's Newcastle upon Tyne (1841), St Benedict's, Broadway (1842), St Joseph & St Mary's, St Peter Port (1845) and St Thomas of Canterbury's, Fulham (1847). However, in this case he has annotated the drawing to indicate that it is not complete, reflecting Bishop Willson's aforementioned remarks of it being 'part of a plain substantial church'. A note accompanying lines drawn across the chancel east wall on either side of the window reads 'line of arch built in wall'. A more detailed explanation is given for the same lines as they appear in the form of an arch marked with the letter 'K' around the chancel east window in the sectional elevation looking east: 'K line of arch built in East wall to enable a chancel to be thrown out after.' Thus, the relatively short—for Pugin—one and a half bay chancel, 18ft long,

could be extended to perhaps double its initial length, making it more in proportion to the 66ft nave and giving it an easterly aspect closer to that of his St George's, Southwark, albeit vastly simpler.

The nave, 18ft wide between the arcade columns, comprises five and a half bays 12ft in length which, with the chancel *pro tem*, gives an overall internal length of 84ft. A baptistery occupies the westernmost bay of the south aisle and the eastern ends of both aisles are intended for chapels. Pugin has marked sacrarium recesses in their south walls, as for the chancel, with the letter 'w', and an adjacent note on the plan reads 'w w w Sacrariums sent'. This would refer to pattern stonework for two different sacrariums which accompanied Willson to Hobart Town in 1844 and which would in due course be copied for his model church buildings in Oatlands and Colebrook. We reproduce below images of further copies of these sacrariums in St Thomas', Sorell (1863–65), by Henry Hunter and in St Mary's Cathedral, Hobart, the first section of which was opened in 1866 and whose construction was supervised by Hunter.



*A pattern sacrarium copy in St Thomas', Sorell (Image: Brian Andrews)*





*Another pattern sacarium copy in St Mary's Cathedral, Hobart (Image: Brian Andrews)*

We will note further examples of Hunter's use of Pugin's pattern stonework, and not just from the 1844 batch, as we examine further details of the design.

The church has a sacristy abutting the north-east chapel and the easternmost bay of the north aisle. It will be described later when addressing the separate details of it on the plan, likewise for the north porch. The church has Pugin's usual west door for ceremonial purposes such as processions, and a south porch built into the base of a tower.

We note that the thickness of the church walls is 2ft 6in and of the tower 3ft. Clearly, Pugin expects that this will provide adequate structural strength for the building without resorting to buttresses, as was the case in a number of his Irish churches, most notably, St Alphonsus', Barntown, but this aspect of the design is not proto-High Victorianism, as is clearly revealed by a note on the drawing along with several details on the ground plan. The note reads: 'It would be desirable if the foundation is not very good worked to have buttresses between the windows & at angles as shown in ditto lines & the same all round the

church.' On the plan he has drawn one sample buttress with the dimensions of 2ft thick and 3ft 6in deep and several dotted ones as per his note. In the absence of foreknowledge of the soil and other conditions on site this is a prudent 'engineering' provision.

In the east and west walls of the two porches and of the westernmost half-bay of the nave are drawn holy water stoups, each marked with an 's'. This is an opportune point to reproduce the list of pattern stonework on the drawing, within which the 's' is included. The numbers on the list are marked on the ground plan and on the sectional elevation looking east, identifying the locations of stonework copied from pattern stone.

Sent out worked

- 1 one of the crown stones of gable and cross
- 2 one kneeler at bottom of Gables
- 3 one of the stone corbels for Roof
- 4 one of the end windows
- 5 one of the side windows
- 6 & 7 one cap & one base & a piece of arch mould
- & a model of Roofs &c.
- s s s s holy water stoups
9. the niche over entrance door of Tower

Of this remarkable list only the stoups are from the pattern stonework sent out in 1844, the remainder belonging to the cargo accompanying Willson back to Hobart in 1848. In essence, Pugin is supplying pattern stone for most of the dressed stonework on the building and is supplementing it, as for his 1843 church models for Willson, with 'a model of Roofs &c.'. Two pattern stoups were sent out in 1844 and it is interesting to note that again Hunter was copying pattern stonework for his stoups in the north porch of St Thomas', Sorell.



*A pattern stoup copy in St Thomas', Sorell (Image: Brian Andrews)*

Before leaving our consideration of the ground plan we note that the aisle bays are 15ft wide, giving an overall internal width for the church of 52ft, and that they are lit by two-light windows. The octagonal font shown in the baptistery on the plan would have been for copying from the pattern font which came out in 1844. **To be continued.**



*The pattern font in St John's, Richmond (Image: Brian Andrews)*

## *New Friends of Pugin*

We welcome:

Ms Margaret Aperloo *West Hobart, Tasmania*

## *Bi-centenary Organ Appeal*

We thank Cardinal George Pell for a generous donation.

## *Donations*

Our thanks to the following for their kind donations:

Mr Peter Bennison  
Mr Nicholas Beveridge  
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Mr Allan and Mrs Maria Myers  
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Mr Ken Sheahan  
Mr Michael and Mrs Penny Wadsley  
Lady Alexandra Wedgwood  
Mr Leighton Wraith

