St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, Tasmania

Brian Andrews

Introduction

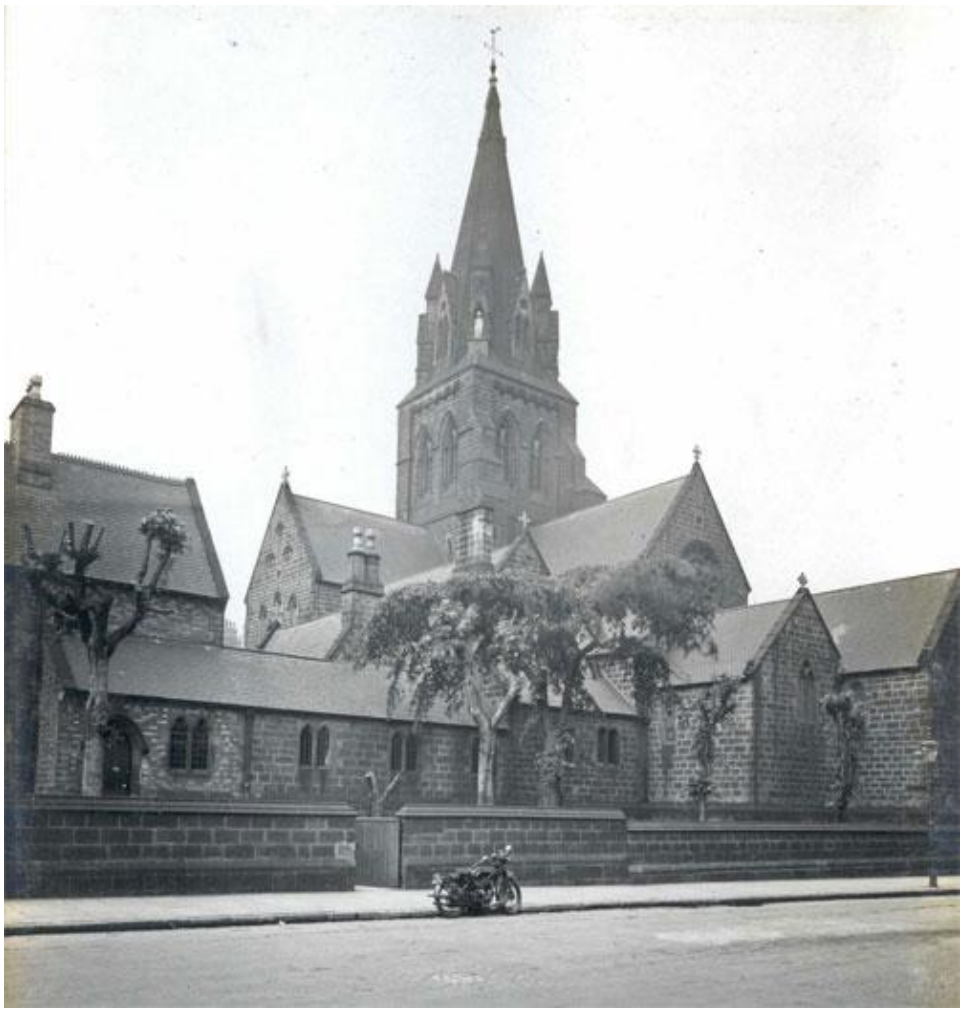
St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, is a building the stylistic and planning roots of which can be traced to the ideals and impact of the Englishman Robert William Willson (1794–1866), first Catholic Bishop of Hobart Town, and of the great early-Victorian English architect, designer and theorist Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–52).

St Patrick's Church from the south west, September 2009 (Image: Brian Andrews)

Bishop Willson brought to Van Diemen's Land (later re-named Tasmania) in 1844 a passionately held belief in the moral and spiritual efficacy of that nineteenth-century movement, known as the Gothic Revival, which brought about a return to the building style and technology of the High Middle Ages. His father was a Lincoln builder and his architect elder brother Edward had been deeply involved in the writing of text for a series of pattern books.[1] Amongst the most important and influential of such pattern books were those for which Edward Willson had provided the text. They were by the emigré French artist and architectural illustrator Augustus Charles Pugin (1769–1832), some of the plates for which were prepared by his precocious only child

[1] Pattern books were publications containing large-scale, accurate, measured drawings of medieval buildings and their various details. They made available for the first time a substantial and comprehensive resource upon which practising architects could draw in designing accurate and convincing structures based on a particular medieval period.

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.[2] Through this family connection, Father (later Bishop) Willson came to become a very close friend of the younger Pugin and, indeed, when as priest in charge of the Nottingham mission he decided to build a new church, it was his friend Pugin who provided the design for St Barnabas' Church (later Cathedral) which, when opened in 1844, was the largest Catholic church built in England since the Reformation.



St Barnabas' Cathedral, early 1930s (Image: courtesy Diocese of Nottingham Archives)

Pugin passionately believed that there was a strong correlation between the perfection of style and religious faith; restore the architecture, with its concomitant liturgical plan forms and furnishings, and you will help rekindle that faith with which it was once associated. The underpinning vision for his works was a religious—and hence social—not an aesthetic one:

> Architecture is the barometer of faith; it is not the arch, the pinnacle, the pillar, that profiteth, but the spirit which produces them; and the revival or decline of true Ecclesiastical architecture is commensurate with that of the

[2] A. Pugin and A.W. Pugin, *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, 3 vols, Henry G. Bohn, London, 1838–40.

> true faith. It is for these reasons that we labour for its restoration and not as a mere abstract question of art.[3]

That vision encompassed nothing less than the full revivification of the religious, social and architectural fabric of medieval English society. It followed that if Pugin's beliefs were to be translated into reality he must revive all the medieval crafts. For in order to revive the full liturgical, sacramental and theological life of the medieval church, the design and manufacture of vestments, liturgical metalwork, tombstones, memorial brasses, stained glass, book illustrations and so on, were just as essential to his vision as was the design of churches themselves.

Bishop Willson fully shared these views with Pugin. Indeed, of all the clergy with whom Pugin collaborated, Willson was arguably the one who most comprehensively subscribed to the Pugin vision and endeavoured to make it a reality. Pugin had spelled out that vision in great detail with regard to Catholic church architecture, liturgical planning and furnishing in two articles that appeared during 1841 and 1842 in the *Dublin Review*. In the first of them he set out what he 'regarded as forming a complete Catholic parish church for the due celebration of the divine office and administration of the sacraments, both as regards architectural arrangement and furniture.'[4] Bishop Willson brought this key text to Hobart in 1844.

Bishop Willson (Image: Archdiocese of Hobart Archives)

[3] A. Welby Pugin, 'Catholic Church Architecture', letter to the *Tablet*, vol. IX, no. 435, 2 September 1848, p. 563.
[4] [A. Welby Pugin], 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', *Dublin Review*, vol. X, May 1841, p. 312.

When Willson was nominated as first Bishop of Hobart Town in 1842, his friend Pugin designed for him—at no cost—everything he would need to set up a new diocese, including episcopal regalia, vestments, altar vessels, three churches plus exemplar stonework for them, church furnishings and even tombstones. These were manufactured by key Pugin collaborators in England—principally the Birmingham firm of John Hardman & Co. and the builder George Myers—and brought out to Van Diemen's Land by Willson on the *Bella Marina* in 1844, the only coherent collection of Pugin designs outside Britain and Ireland.[5] In the case of the three church designs, they were produced by Myers' men as detailed models for replication, evidently because of a notion that the skills would not be available in Van Diemen's Land for constructing buildings from conventional architectural drawings.[6]

The advent of Willson at the antipodes therefore saw the most explicit, detailed and accurate implantation of Pugin's architectural and religious ideals to occur in Australian history by one who passionately and comprehensively agreed with and propagated them.

Background to the design

Pugin's approach to the design of three churches for Bishop Willson in 1843 was circumscribed by three factors. Firstly, the poverty of the Catholics in Van Diemen's Land, over half of whom were convicts, precluded elaborate and expensive works simply because they would have been unaffordable. This was a not uncommon issue that Pugin had to face on a number of occasions in England, although many of his English churches—being funded fully or partly by wealthy patrons—were not so constrained.

Secondly, because he would not be able to supervise the construction, as he did so comprehensively with his English churches, Pugin had to create designs that would, hopefully, not be compromised through being erected on an unknown site by an unknown architect. And finally, because of the perceived lack of craft and interpretive skills in Van Diemen's Land, the designs would have to be realised not in drawings but as detailed models, with minimal complex mouldings, carvings, etc. Where some more detailed carved work was called for—gable crosses, holy water stoups, piscinas—its proper execution was to be ensured through the provision of full-size stone exemplars for local copying.

All this added up to the need to design 'simple buildings that can be easily erected',[7] as Pugin described them in a letter to his friend and munificent patron John Talbot, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury, just before Willson's departure from England for the antipodes, adding: 'It is quite delightful to start in the good style at the antipodes. It is quite an honour.'[8]

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[5] See Andrews, *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2002, exhibition catalogue.

[6] It is likely that the dark view of Van Diemen's Land originated with Willson's friend and clerical colleague Father (later Bishop) William Bernard Ullathorne OSB. Ullathorne had been on the Australian mission between 1833 and 1836, and again in 1839–40. The first period included several visits to Van Diemen's Land. Ullathorne was not impressed.

[7] Pugin to Lord Shrewsbury, 30 January 1844, Victoria & Albert Museum, L.525-1965/20, in Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, vol. 2: 1843–1845, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 161.

[8] ibid.

That only models were sent out with Bishop Willson is attested to in three separate pieces of documentary evidence. In the abovementioned letter, Pugin spoke to Shrewsbury of '*3 models of small churches* [Pugin's emphasis] all to take to pieces with the roofs &c framed'.[9] Willson himself, in summarising the extent and significance of Pugin's assistance to the embryonic diocese during an October 1844 address to his clergy 'on the state of church temporalities', mentioned 'models of churches constructed on proper scales'.[10] And again, a London newspaper report of 3 February 1844 about Willson's imminent departure mentioned 'models of churches of the most simple form' as being amongst the cargo of the *Bella Marina*.[11]

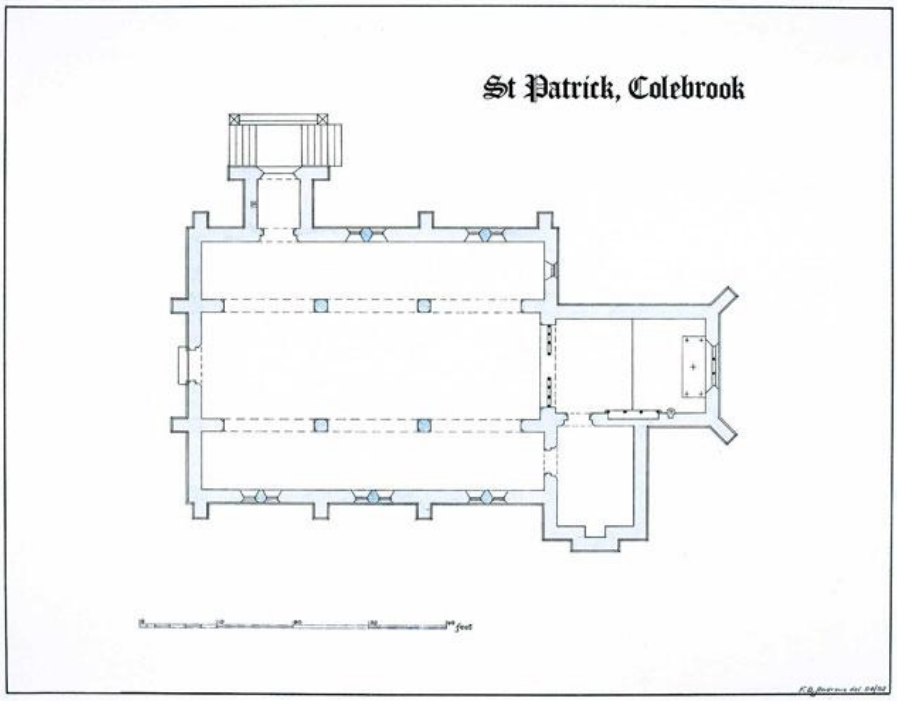
The work of carving the exemplar stonework and constructing the church models was carried out by craftsmen in the employ of Pugin's favoured builder George Myers. The models must have been particularly well constructed and detailed because Myers' records reveal a total of 48 days' work for 'Making 3 churches'.[12] At a skilled wage rate of 5/- per day, and with Myers' 10% margin, the total cost of the models was £13-4-0.[13]

The design

The model used for St Patrick's, Colebrook, was—like the other two—a scholarly and completely convincing, yet totally original, evocation of a small English medieval village church. The vocabulary of its elements establishes that it accurately reflected construction that would have originally been in vogue around the year 1320. In its plan form, composition and furnishings it conformed with Pugin's exposition of what constituted 'a complete Catholic parish church for the due celebration of the divine office and administration of the sacraments, both as regards architectural arrangement and furniture'.[14]

It comprised an aisled three-bay nave with antipodean north porch,[15] a relatively deep separately expressed chancel,[16] with a rood screen across the chancel arch, and a sacristy in the angle between the south aisle east wall and the chancel south wall.

[9] ibid.
[10] Draft of a speech by Bishop Willson, Hobart, 23 October 1844, Archdiocese of Hobart Museum and Archives, Willson Papers, CA.6/WIL.12.
[11] *Tablet*, vol. V, no. 195, 3 February 1844, p. 69, c. 2.
[12] The information is contained on a loose sheet, amongst the Myers Family Trust papers, headed 'Dr Willson / things / for Hobart / Town / Vandemansland [sic]', being an incomplete listing of items actually manufactured by Myers for Willson, along with their costs. Information kindly provided by Patricia Spencer-Silver.
[13] These rates and other details such as Myers' margin are also set out in the sheet cited at footnote 6.
[14] [Pugin], 'Present State', loc. cit.
[15] In medieval English churches the porch—the congregational entrance—was normally located on the south side of the nave, that is, the sheltered, warmer side facing the sun. English designers of Australian churches, logically applying the same reasons, placed their porches on the north side.
[16] Although not as deep as most chancels of English medieval churches of this size, it was substantially more so than had been the practice generally in Catholic churches since the reforming Council of Trent (1545–1563).



Measured ground plan (Brian Andrews)

There was a west door for ceremonial usage, such as processions or the visit of a bishop, and the chancel, one step above the nave, was fitted with sedilia and a piscina in the south wall and—more than likely—an Easter sepulchre in the north wall opposite the sedilia.[17] It was thus liturgically furnished for the Use of Sarum, an English variant in non-essentials—one of a host of such variants—of the Roman Rite that prevailed throughout late medieval Western Christendom.

Except where specifically prevented from so doing, Pugin normally designed and furnished his churches for the Use of Sarum, a logical consequence of his passionately held belief that the social, moral and spiritual improvement of the English nation—and, by extension, its colonial possessions—was to be achieved by the resuscitation in its entirety of English medieval life, including liturgical practice. This was a view shared by a handful of people,[18] including Bishop Willson and Pugin's and his mutual friend Dr Daniel Rock, priest, antiquary and liturgical scholar.[19]

[17] Evidence for this may lie beneath the plaster, but this too may have been obliterated by damage to the chancel north wall, and its subsequent rebuilding, as a result of the fall of the bellcote during a violent tornado on 8 September 1895 (*The Monitor*, vol. 2, no. 25, Friday, 20 September 1895, Supplement, n.p., c.2–3). St Paul's, Oatlands, built from the smallest of the three models, had an Easter Sepulchre, filled in at some indeterminate date. It was revealed when that church was ignorantly stripped of its plaster in 1959.

[18] A view that did not prevail. Pugin's Sarum-furnished churches were never used for that liturgy, only ever for the Tridentine Rite, the version of the Roman Rite approved and promulgated throughout Catholic Christendom by the Council of Trent. The Roman Rite has no use for sedilia or Easter sepulchres.

[19] As evidenced by the Sarum Use arrangements in St George's Church, Buckland, Berkshire, built on the edge of their estate by the Throckmortons to an 1846 design by the Pugin follower Charles Francis Hansom. Rock was the Throckmorton's chaplain at the time. He wrote *The Church of Our Fathers*, 3 vols, 1849–53, a scholarly work on the English Church, including the first description and analysis of the Use of Sarum. Bishop Willson possessed a copy.

The nave measured 44 ft (13.4 m) in length by 14 ft (4.3 m) wide,[20] with aisles 44 ft 9 in. (13.6 m) long and 7 ft 6 in. (2.3 m) wide.[21] These were comparable dimensions to those of small medieval churches like Ayston Church, Rutlandshire,[22] and Duddington Church, Northamptonshire.[23] The chancel was 19 ft 6 in. (5.9 m) long by 12 ft 4 in. (3.8 m) wide.

Pugin's imperative to provide Willson with 'simple buildings that can be easily erected' was realised in this design in its composition and detail. This building would be the most astringent, pared-back church he was ever to create, relying for the harmony of its interior on superb composition combined with pure line and form.[24]

The church had a clerestory with paired quatrefoil lights, of an external and internal form to be found singly—not in pairs—in Great Milton Church, Oxfordshire (1320), and the nave aisles were lit by paired trefoil-headed lights.

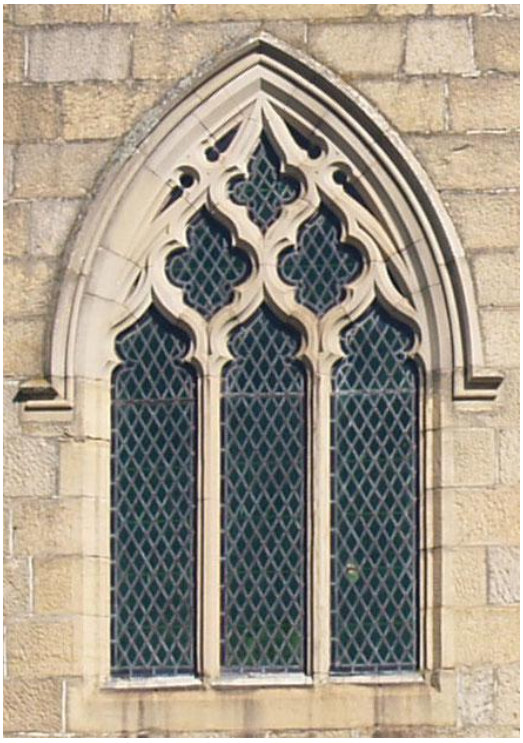
Paired quatrefoil clerestory lights (Image: Brian Andrews)

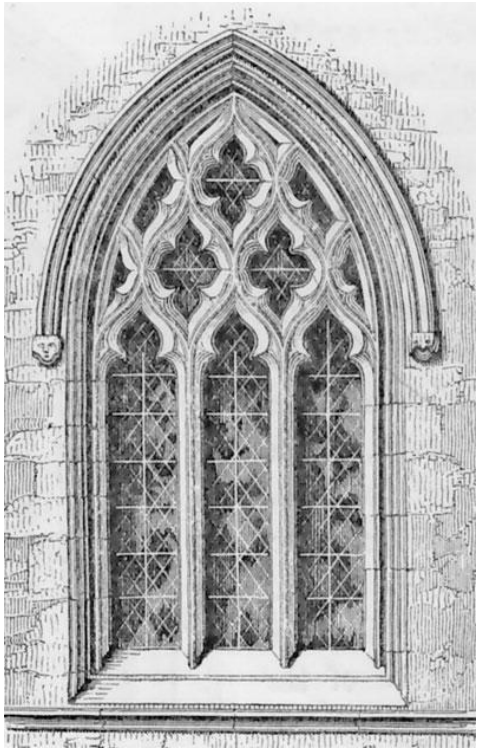
Like the west door and the other windows, with the exception of that in the chancel east wall,[25] their moulding consisted of just a plain chamfer. The three-light Flowing Decorated window in the chancel east wall was the most elaborately developed element in the building's structure, and that for reasons of propriety. In *True Principles* Pugin had defined propriety as an essential attribute of a building, whereby

[20] Dimensions are given according to the closest nominal value in Imperial measurement that would have pertained to the model, based on measured values on the building, as the metric figures in that respect are of little obvious meaning.
[21] Widths are to column edges not column centres.
[22] Now part of Leicestershire.
[23] See Raphael and J. Arthur Brandon, *Parish Churches* (2 vols), W. Kent & Co., London, 1858, vol. 1, pp. 11–14.
[24] Exactly as Pugin did in his 1847 inexpensive chalice design for Willson, and for the same reasons. See Brian Andrews, *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, pp. 108–9.
[25] In this account the church is described as if it were oriented, that is, the altar (and chancel end wall) was at the east end of the building. In fact, because of the difficult sloping nature of the site, the 'east' end of the church in fact faces more south-easterly.

'*the external and internal appearance of an edifice should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is destined*'.[26] For churches this meant that the chancel should be the most highly elaborated part of the building because it was, in Pugin's view, the most solemn and sacred part of the edifice.

The chancel east window had reticulated—or net-like—tracery, a type much admired and very widely used in churches built around 1320. Despite the elegance of such windows there was always an awkward junction between the net cells and the edge of the window, resulting in a number of part cells, as in the accompanying illustration of a north aisle window in Great Milton Church, Oxfordshire. Pugin most elegantly solved the problem in this design by slightly distorting the net cells and setting them under what was effectively an ogee sub-arch, then filling the space between the 'sub-arch' and the window edge with pairs of mouchettes, or dagger tracery, elements.





Chancel east window (Image: Brian Andrews); *Nave north aisle window, Great Milton Church, Oxfordshire* (Source: John Henry Parker, *ABC of Gothic Architecture*, 8th edn, James Parker & Co., London, 1894, p. 139).

The nave east gable was surmounted by a tall elegant triple bellcote, a structure that by its size and position was the key element in completing the impressive balance and harmony of the building's simple external composition. In his 1841 *Dublin Review* article Pugin had described how: 'In very small churches, of exceedingly simple design, we occasionally find belfreys [sic], in the form of perforated gables, or turreted projections, carved up at the end walls, and surmounted by stone crosses.'[27] These took the place of the bell towers that were a part of larger churches. Pugin

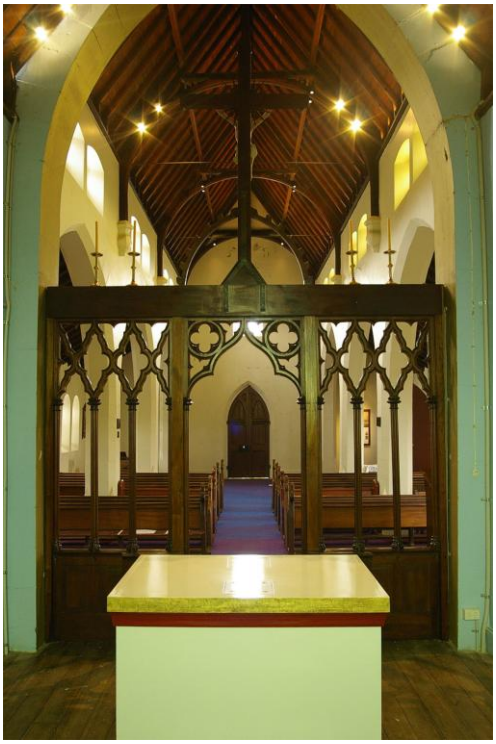
[26] Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, John Weale, London, 1841, p. 50.
[27] [Pugin], 'Present State', op. cit., p. 319.

generally placed them on the nave west gable,[28] his handful of east gable essays being listed in the following Table.

Pugin's nave east gable bellcote designs

Date	Place	Openings	Notes
1838	St Anne's, Keighley	3	Bellcote fell, 1839
1841	Jesus Chapel, Ackworth Grange	1	Chapel demolished
1841	St Austin's, Kenilworth	1	In situ
1843	Model church for Bishop Willson	3	Built at Colebrook

The nave roof was supported by arch-braced collar tie and king post trusses, their wall posts resting on moulded corbels. Undoubtedly the most radical aspect of the pared down astringency of the interior was the nave arcade. This consisted of square columns with neither capitals nor bases, the plain chamfer to their corners continuing up as the moulding to the arches.[29] Two feet (61 cm) from the floor the chamfers ended in a pyramidal stop.



Nave arcade and roof (Image: Brian Andrews)

[28] At least sixteen of Pugin's designs had a nave west gable bellcote, including: St James', Reading; St Marie's on the Sands, Southport; St John's Hospital Chapel, Alton; Our Lady & St Wilfrid's, Warwick Bridge; St Francis Xavier's, Berrima; St Stephen's, Brisbane; St Paul's, Oatlands; St Lawrence's, Tubney; St Augustine's, Solihull; the Assumption, Bree; Our Blessed Lady & St Thomas of Canterbury's, Dudley; St Andrew's, Cambridge; St Winefride's, Shepshed; St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde; St Alphonsus', Barntown; St Peter's College Chapel, Wexford.

[29] Needless to say, no colonial architect in his earnest efforts to design a Gothic church would have ever contemplated columns without capitals or bases. Pugin was well aware of such a precedent in European late medieval churches. And they were not unknown in Great Britain, for example, Tenby Church, Wales. Early in his career Pugin designed such an arcade for the nave of St Mary's, Derby (1837).

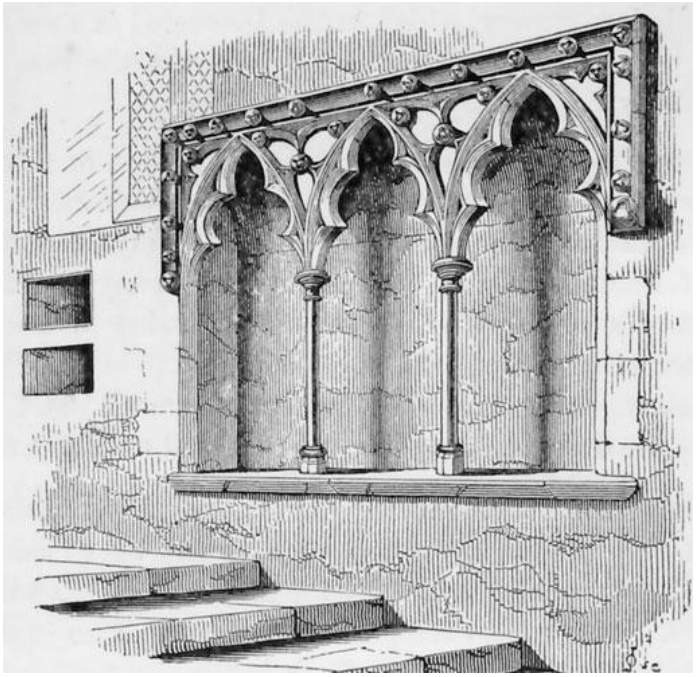
The Flowing Decorated tracery in the rood screen that separated the nave from the chancel was of novel reticulated form, echoing that in the chancel east window.

Rood screen (Image: Brian Andrews)

It is possible that the chancel roof was supported by simple scissor trusses, a form frequently used by Pugin in his more modest churches.[30] However the chancel roof was destroyed in the September 1895 tornado that brought down the bellcote, and any trusses were not reinstated. On the other hand, it may have only ever had the present rafters, as is the case for St Austin's, Kenilworth.

The sedilia in the chancel south wall were simple in form, with cinquefoil arches and trefoiled spandrels, of a type typical of the period around 1320, and able to be easily constructed in wood. Indeed, their design was similar to the c.1320 carved stone set in Chesterton Church, Oxfordshire. Medieval English sedilia were either stepped or level (as in the case of Colebrook), the priest always occupying the easternmost seat with the deacon and sub-deacon to his west, according to the Use of Sarum. In the Roman Rite the priest occupied the central seat, requiring sedilia to be level so that the priest would not be seated lower than the deacon. Pugin designed both stepped and level sedilia. In his Australian church designs, however, the sedilia were always level, their ambiguity making them suitable for either the Roman Rite or the Use of Sarum.

[30] For example: St Marie's on the Sands, Southport; St Wilfrid's, Hulme; St Mary's, Uttoxeter; and probably St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, but here the trusses are covered by a modern ceiling.



Colebrook Sedilia (Image: Brian Andrews); *Sedilia of c.1320 in Chesterton Church, Oxfordshire* (John Henry Parker, *ABC of Gothic Architecture*, 8th edn, James Parker & Co., London, 1894, p. 165).

The piscina, shown on the model to the east of the sedilia, was to be made by copying one of the two stone exemplars that had been brought out to Tasmania on the *Bella Marina* by Bishop Willson in 1844. These had been carved by craftsmen in the employ of George Myers, Pugin's favoured builder.

Piscina (Image: Brian Andrews)

Likewise, the holy water stoup in the porch west wall of the model was also intended to be copied from one of the two stoup exemplars brought out by Willson. Being

situated in the porch and thus outside the church proper it also conformed to Pugin's 1841 *Dublin Review* exposition on Catholic church architecture and furnishings. In this respect he had stated:

> Holy water stoups were generally hollowed out of the porch walls, and frequently built in niches on either side of the external arch, as at Bury St. Edmund's; all stoups for hallowed water should be placed *outside* [Pugin's emphasis] the building.[31]

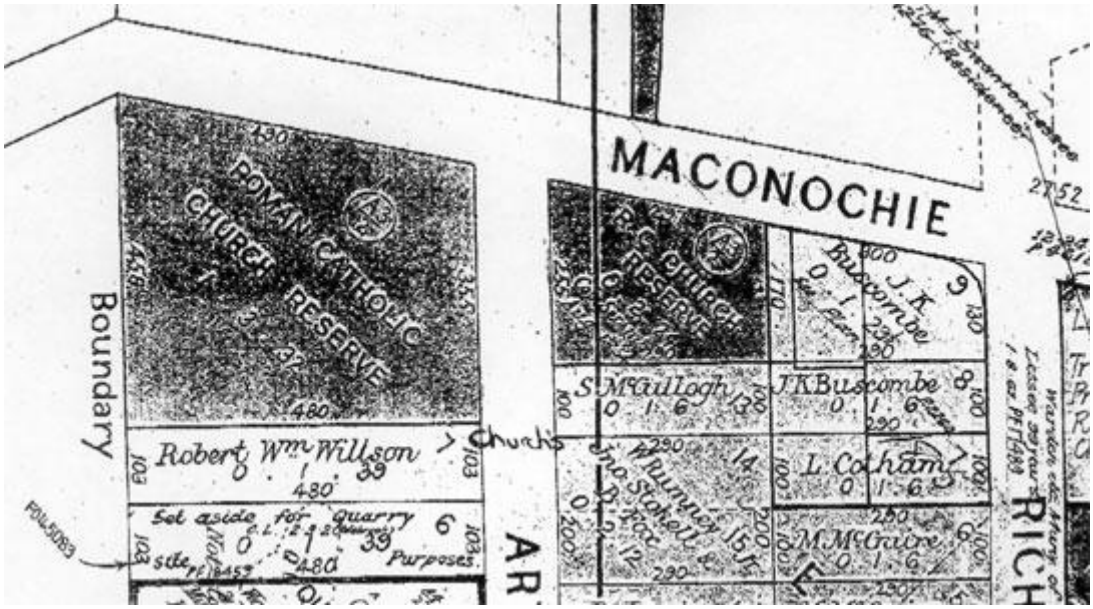
The following Table demonstrates the close conformity of the Colebrook design to Pugin's published views on what constitutes 'a complete Catholic parish church for the due celebration of the divine office and administration of the sacraments, both as regards architectural arrangement and furniture'.[32]

Element	Conforms	Notes
Bellcote as alternative to steeple	Yes	On nave east gable
West door as ceremonial entrance	Yes	
South porch as congregational entrance	Yes, but see note	On antipodean north side
Holy water stoup(s) in porch wall, not inside nave	Yes	One in porch west wall
Doom painting on nave east wall	Indeterminate	
Rood screen, without a loft, across chancel arch	Yes	
Separately expressed chancel	Yes	
Sedilia in chancel south wall	Yes	
Sacrarium, or piscina, in chancel south wall east end	Yes	
Easter sepulchre in chancel north wall	Probable	Any evidence destroyed by fall of bellcote in 1895
Sacristy against chancel south wall	Yes	
Chancel at least one step above nave	Yes	One step
Altar three steps above chancel floor	Possible	Only one step constructed

Construction

In the 1840s the village of Jerusalem (now Colebrook), situated on one of two roads linking Hobart with Launceston, seemed destined to become an important centre in southern Van Diemen's Land. Catholics within the district were served by the priest resident in Richmond some twenty-seven kilometres to the south. In the early 1850s Bishop Willson moved to make permanent provision for the local Catholics, acquiring two parcels of land for a church reserve on the south side of Maconochie Street (now Yarlington Road) and situated on either side of Arthur Street.[33] On the larger, more westerly, of the two parcels—7,891 m^2 in area—he determined to erect a church and cemetery. Willson himself purchased the adjacent 1,998 m^2 parcel on Arthur Street.

[31] [Pugin], 'Present State', op. cit., p. 320.
[32] ibid., pp. 312–42.
[33] The parcel on which the church is situated is: Title Reference 4481/69, Property ID 5894832. The other parcel was sold by the Trustees of the Property of the Roman Catholic Church in Tasmania late in the twentieth century.



The Colebrook land grant

The Pugin model chosen by Willson for erection in Jerusalem was the middle-sized of the three, but nonetheless of imposing appearance to suit the growing importance of the settlement.[34] And it would gain added presence by virtue of the church site dominating the slope on the western edge of the village.

The task of converting the model into working drawings and supervising the erection of the church was given by Willson to Hobart architect Frederick Thomas (1817–1885). Thomas had been sentenced to transportation to New South Wales in 1834 for swindling. He was further sentenced in 1842 to fifteen years in a penal settlement for stealing and arrived in Hobart Town in February 1843. While still on probation he was assigned as an unqualified draftsman and clerk to the Public Works Department on 1 July 1847, then was later promoted to Senior Draftsman and eventually Clerk of Works.[35] He had right no to private practice and was the subject of an enquiry into abuses in the Public Works Department in 1856 on account of his 'moonlighting'.[36]

The selected builder was Patrick John Lynch (1804–1889) who had arrived in Tasmania as an assisted migrant from Ireland in 1854. He set himself up in the building trade, undertaking government work in Jerusalem and Oatlands.[37] Lynch was a skilled cabinetmaker who had been engaged on the wooden furnishings of Pugin's and John Gregory Crace's decorative program at Lismore Castle, County Waterford, for the Duke of Devonshire.[38] By the time of his engagement on the Jerusalem church he had already (1854) carved the pews and rood screen in St Paul's, Oatlands, the first Tasmanian church to be built from a Pugin model.

[34] The smallest model had been used for St Paul's, Oatlands (1850–51) and elements from the largest model would be used as a basis for 1858 additions to St John the Evangelist's, Richmond.
[35] Thomas' biographical details are largely drawn from E. Graeme Robertson, *Early Buildings of Southern Tasmania*, 2 vols, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1970, vol. 1, p. 19.
[36] *Colonial Times*, 4 February 1856, p. 2; 13 February 1856, p. 2; 12 March 1856, pp. 2–3.
[37] Vera Fisher, *St Paul's: A Time to Remember, 1850–2000*, Oatlands, 2000, p. 8.
[38] Executed after Pugin's death.

Work on the church started in early 1855 after Willson's return from a visit to England. It was a difficult site because of its sloping nature, the ground level falling over four metres from the south-west to the north-east corner of the land. The building was therefore not oriented but laid out with its main axis generally along the contour line. Even so, there is a 1.94 metre fall from the liturgical south-west corner of the south aisle to the north-east corner of the chancel, and the church is oriented more or less geographically south-east. This necessitated the construction of a substantial sub-floor structure of random rubble to level the church, the sandstone for which was material salvaged from the former convict probation station boundary wall in Jerusalem. Poor Pugin had encountered similar problems in England, exclaiming in his exasperation over the sloping site for a church he was designing at Woodchester, Gloucestershire,[39] 'I am the most unfortunate man in existence for scites [sic] of ground'.[40]

Sandstone for the church was quarried locally from a site some 750 metres away to the east north-east on the far side of the village.[41] It was laid in 12 inch (30 cm) regular squared rubble courses, bedded in site soil,[42] the joints flushed up with lime mortar. The windows were glazed with crown glass diamond quarries,[43] and the interior was plastered, as was the case for almost all of Pugin's churches.[44] Shingles for the roof were split locally, and the rood screen, sedilia, pews and sacristy press were constructed and carved from Colonial Cedar by Patrick Lynch.[45] A bell was hung in the top opening of the triple bellcote.

Bishop Willson supplied a Pugin-designed figure of Christ for the cross atop the rood screen. Carved in White Pine (Pinus Strobus), coated in gesso, rubbed back and then polychromed, it had been made in 1847 by craftsmen in the employ of George Myers, Pugin's favoured builder.[46]

St Patrick's Church was opened on 21 January 1857. Its beauty captivated the correspondent who covered the event for the *Tasmanian Daily News*, sentiments already expressed by the church's first pastor, Fr William Dunne, who had written to a priestly colleague during its construction, declaring, 'it will be the most beautiful church in the Island, and cost over £1500 cash. The style is Gothic—real Middle Age—and the site is admirably chosen'.[47]

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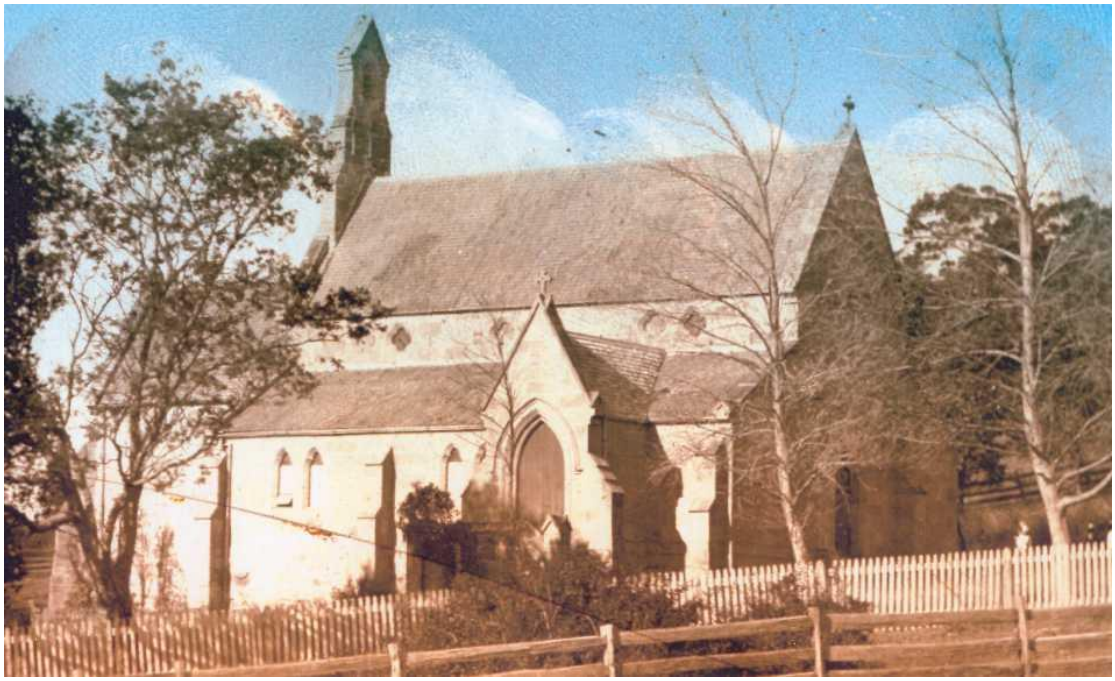
[39] Pugin lost the job and the church was erected to a design by Charles Francis Hansom.
[40] Pugin to William Leigh, n.d. [1846], in 'Letters of A. Welby Pugin', *Aylesford Review*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Summer 1956), p. 59.
[41] The disused quarry is on a local farm property.
[42] Site soil is literally that, a not uncommon practice in Tasmanian colonial building construction. Information from structural engineer Peter Spratt.
[43] I am grateful to stained glass conservation Gerry Cummins for identifying the glass.
[44] Notable exceptions are St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, and Pugin's own Church of St Augustine, Ramsgate, Kent.
[45] I am grateful to Hobart antique furniture conservator Tony Colman for identifying the wood type.
[46] Willson had acquired at least fourteen such figures when in England in 1847. They varied in size from around 33 cm from head to toe to over 130 cm. They were intended inter alia for use on rood screens and at least six of them were, in churches by Pugin and Willson's architect protégé Henry Hunter.
[47] Dunne to McEncroe, c.1855, quoted in Cullen, 'The Late Very Rev. W.J. Dunne', *Catholic Standard*, vol. VII, no. 78, 2 April 1883.

North east view early 1890s (Image: Archdiocese of Hobart Archives)



North west view early 1890s (Image: Archdiocese of Hobart Archives)

Subsequent history

At a few minutes past 11 am on Sunday 8 September 1895 a violent mini tornado, tore through the outskirts of Jerusalem. St Patrick's Church was directly in its path. The bellcote was thrown down onto the chancel roof, destroying it, the falling stonework and roof timbers damaging the chancel north wall, the floor and the altar, as well as destroying two statues and breaking much of the glass in the chancel window. Due to the direction in which it fell no damage was caused to the sedilia and

the chancel arch remained intact, protecting the rood screen beneath it.[48] Mercifully there was no loss of life, for, as the local correspondent reporting the event noted: 'It was a providential thing that it was not our Mass Sunday, else the priest and the altar boys would have been killed.'[49]

Fragments of a Virgin and Child statue destroyed in the fall of the bellcote and recovered from beneath the chancel floor in 2006 (Image: Brian Andrews)

When the damage to the church was repaired the bellcote was—prudently one feels—not reinstated, the nave east wall being simply carried back up to a plain gable and surmounted by a copy of the cross atop the nave west gable. The roof was rebuilt, new glass inserted in the chancel window and the chancel walls 'nicely coloured'.[50]

Although the repair work was completed by early winter 1896, the church was not re-opened until 4 April 1897.[51] Conceivably, the roof was covered in corrugated iron at the time of the repair work.[52] It was certainly in place by November 1903, as a photograph in a contemporary newspaper shows.[53]

[48] A detailed account of the event is given in *The Monitor*, vol. 2, no. 25, Friday, 20 September 1895, Supplement, n.p., c.2–3.
[49] ibid.
[50] *The Monitor*, vol. IV, no. 2, Friday, 9 April 1897, pp. 15–16.
[51] ibid.
[52] The shingles may still be under all roofs but the chancel. This has not yet been investigated, but it was common to leave the shingles in place when re-roofing in corrugated iron.
[53] *Tasmanian Mail*, 21 November 1903, p. 22.

South west view early 2007, showing the church without its bellcote (Image: Brian Andrews)

In the 1970s the rood screen was moved to the west end of the nave, minus its top beam and crucifix. The crucifix was crudely cut from the beam and suspended from the chancel arch. Later the screen was returned to the proper position, however the top beam was not reinstated and the crucifix was thus left hanging from the chancel arch. During 2006 the Pugin Foundation fully restored the rood screen. It also conserved the chancel furnishings, including a 1920s altar, and installed a new forward altar east of the screen. This latter is based on painted and gilded wooden altars designed by the Tasmanian architect Henry Hunter (1832–92), a protegé of Bishop Willson. All the evidence points to the original altar in St Patrick's having been designed by Hunter.[54] The decorative repertoire of the new altar is derived from that on the tabernacle door of his St Mary Star of the Sea, Swansea, altar of 1866, itself a near-literal lifting of designs found in Pugin's 1844 *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume*.[55]

[54] Replaced in 1883. Hunter designed the altar in Pugin's St Paul's, Oatlands, as well inter alia as those in his own churches at Franklin, Campbell Town, Glenorchy, Sorell, Dover, Cygnet, Pontville, Westbury, Ouse and Swansea.

[55] A. Welby Pugin, *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume*, Henry G. Bohn, London, 1844. There is evidence of Hunter utilising designs from the *Glossary* in his sole remaining altar, formerly in Holy Trinity Church, Westbury.

Forward altar, 2006 (Image: Brian Andrews)

Further significant work was undertaken by the Foundation in 2007 when it reinstated the triple bellcote atop the nave east gable, equipping it with Pugin's intended complement of three bells.[56] Conservation of the building is ongoing.[57]

Significance

Because of its unique position within Pugin's oeuvre—and given his status as the pre-eminent designer of the era—St Patrick's, Colebrook, designed in 1843 and constructed 1855–56, is a building of international significance. This is for the following principal reasons:

1. The building as constructed was typologically unique amongst Pugin's churches. It was the only one with both an aisled clerestoried nave and a bellcote on the nave east gable.[58]
2. It is one of only two Pugin churches constructed from a scale model and exemplar stonework.

[56] The reinstated bellcote has internal stainless steel reinforcing to prevent a re-occurrence of the 1895 disaster.

[57] As at March 2008.

[58] Of his three other churches with a nave east bellcote—all typologically different from Colebrook—St Anne's, Keighley, West Yorkshire, was reversed in orientation and greatly enlarged in 1907, losing its bellcote at that time; Jesus Chapel, attached to the Tempest family seat of Ackworth Grange, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, was demolished in 1966; St Austin's, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, had its nave extended to the west and a north aisle added by architect Gilbert Blount in 1851–52. The bellcote is intact.

3. On the continuum of Pugin's churches in terms of structural and decorative elaboration, St Giles, Cheadle, arguably England's finest nineteenth-century church, occupies one extreme and St Patrick's, Colebrook, the other.

These reasons will now be examined in more detail.

1. Typological uniqueness

Pugin only designed one other church with a clerestoried nave, pent-roof aisles and no steeple, namely, Our Blessed Lady & St Thomas of Canterbury's, Dudley, that design dating from 1839. The proportions and composition of this church are decidedly inferior to St Patrick's, a key factor being the size and position of the bellcote. The bellcote on the Dudley church is on its nave west gable. Taking all the building's constituent elements and—critically—their placement, St Patrick's is literally unique amongst Pugin's more than seventy-six designs for churches, chapels and cathedrals.

2. Construction from a scale model and exemplar stonework

Only two of Pugin's church designs were ever constructed from a scale model, with complex carved details being copied from exemplar stonework, the other being St Paul's, Oatlands (1850–51). However, as it stands, St Paul's integrity is severely compromised through the 1930s enclosure of the nave west end by a stone addition to house the church choir and by the removal of the plaster from its interior in 1959. In its construction St Patrick's demonstrates Pugin's unique solution to a perceived lack of craft and interpretive skills in Tasmania, and also the at times ungainly interpretation by the local supervising architect of details too small on the model for accurate reproduction.[59]

3. Colebrook's position in Pugin's church œuvre

St Giles', Cheadle, Staffordshire (1840–46), is Pugin's most structurally and decoratively elaborated church. It is a veritable paradigm of an English fourteen-century parish church, probably more perfect and comprehensive in its furnishings and decoration than any church of that era to which it is such a brilliant homage. Its spire is widely regarded as the most beautiful of the nineteenth century, and the building as a whole is accepted by many to be England's finest nineteenth century church.[60] It represents one pole of Pugin's design genius. At the other extreme, where detail and decoration are pared down to the absolute minimum and the building relies for its design brilliance on pure line and form, is St Patrick's, Colebrook, representing the opposite—but one would argue, comparably significant—pole of that design genius. Given the position of Colebrook at one extreme of the continuum of his church designs it occupies a key position in the comprehensive understanding of Pugin as the greatest designer of the early-Victorian age.

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[59] Frederick Thomas lacked the requisite knowledge of Gothic to be able to 'read' the small details correctly.

[60] Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, Penguin Books, London, 1999, gives its top rating to just eighteen churches. Seventeen of them are medieval; the other is St Giles', Cheadle.