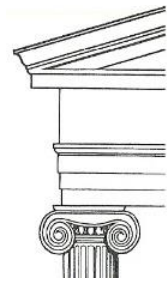




AUSTRALIAN DECORATIVE
& FINE ARTS SOCIETIES



ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

**WOLLAR
NEW SOUTH WALES**

CHURCH STUDY:

“An historical and architectural summary”

September 2017

COMPILED BY MEMBERS OF ADFAS MUDGEE INC

Introduction: “An historical and architectural summary”

St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church at Wollar, near Mudgee, NSW, is a charming yet relatively unadorned small rural church. Opened in 1905, the architect was Harold Hardwick of Mudgee who designed numerous local churches. Once a populated and prosperous agricultural district, Wollar is now dominated by coal mining.

Now deconsecrated, ownership of the church has passed to Peabody Energy, proprietors of the adjoining Wilpinjong coal mine. Despite changing demographics and its closure, the church retains strong links to many of its former parishioners.

This Church Study aims to document:

- a brief chronology of the settlement at Wollar and of the Catholic church at Wollar
- the changing parish administration in which the church was located at various times
- the construction of the church
- the architect and builder of the church
- the exterior and interior of the church
- the former contents of the church

in order to have a permanent record of an item which is a significant “heritage item” on the Local Environment Plan for the Mid-Western Regional Council, based in Mudgee.

Location of the church:

St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church is located on the western outskirts of the village of Wollar, some 54 kilometres to the north-east of Mudgee in the Central West region of New South Wales. The village of Wollar is located in the Parish of Wollar in the County of Phillip, now within the boundaries of the Mid-Western Regional Council local government area. In 1873 the Bathurst diocese of the Catholic Church had acquired Allotments 6, 7 and 8 of Section 4 of the village of Wollar to house a church and presbytery. The precise location is in Phillip Street, just west of its junction with Fitzgerald and Maitland Streets.

It should be noted that the Bathurst diocese of the Catholic Church also acquired Allotments 2 and 3 of the neighbouring Section 5 on the eastern side of Fitzgerald Street.



Fig. 1 Map showing the location of the church in Wollar on the western approach from Mudgee (Google maps)

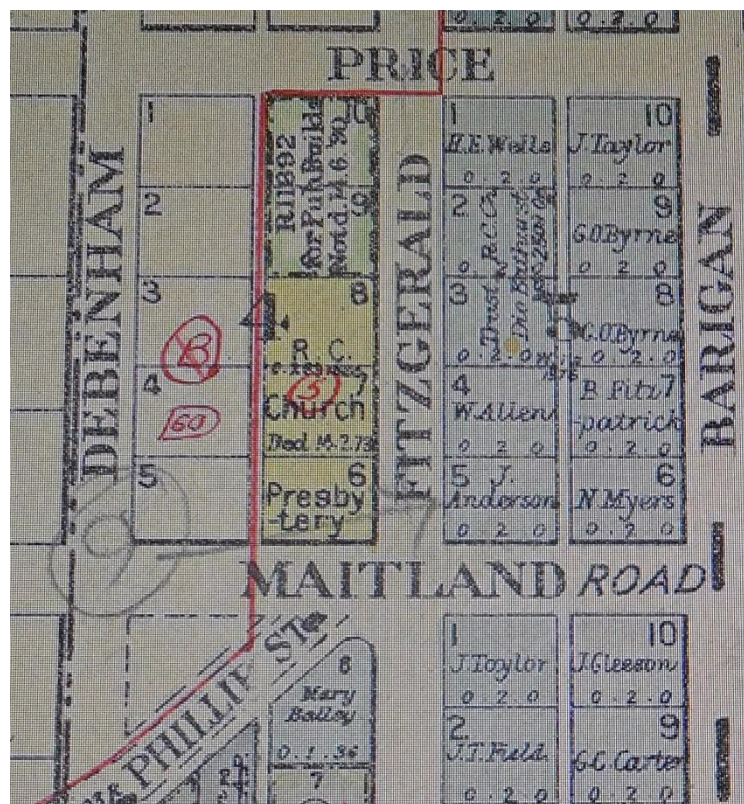


Fig. 2 Portion of map of the Parish of Wollar in the County of Phillip, showing the location of the church (NSW Land and Property Information)

Church chronology:

In Pre-European times the indigenous Wiradjuri used the Goulburn River near Wollar as a route from the coast to the inland, with about 15 sacred sites in this area. In the early days, grazing (cattle and sheep) were prominent in the district, with substantial labour forces particularly while properties were unfenced. Gradually farming became less labour reliant with the advent of mechanisation and the use of machinery. The Wollar district reached its apogee in population and wealth in the period just prior to the First World War which saw the construction of two substantial stone churches in the village to serve the population of the district.

The Sandy Hollow to Maryvale rail link was expected to bring some development and benefits to Wollar and neighbouring districts, but the link did not materialise until some seventy years after the line was surveyed. During the Second World War kerosene shale mining occurred at Barrigan, due to petrol rationing, but this did not survive the end of the war.

In the late 1900s district properties experienced two transformations:

- the subdivision of some larger properties into 25 acre hobby farms, with many absentee owners and intermittent occupation
- the acquisition of several major properties to form an aggregation under the ownership of the Reid family known as the Minnamurra Pastoral Company. Currently this aggregation includes: Cortina, Wollara Downs, Springvale, Tralee, Wandoona, Barigan and Tichular, covering some 11,000 hectares. This enterprise was operated with minimal manual labour.

The late 1900s generally saw less reliance on agriculture in the district as a whole, a gradual decline in the Wollar district's population, and a decline in the numbers attending services at both the Catholic and Anglican churches in Wollar. Improved roads and transportation saw more children being transported to schools in Mudgee at the expense of Wollar school.

| | |
|------|--|
| 1813 | Blue Mountains traversed by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth |
| 1815 | First road over the Blue Mountains completed and a settlement at Bathurst established |
| 1822 | November – William Lawson explored Goulburn River in the vicinity of Wollar |
| 1823 | First European settlers arrive in the Wollar district |
| 1861 | Bushranger Thunderbolt (Fred Ward) inhabitant of the Munghorn area between Wollar and Mudgee |
| 1867 | An inn and store already exist at Wollar (Willoughby's) |
| 1867 | Wollar village site surveyed and mapped |
| 1873 | Wollar Provisional School in operation |
| 1873 | Site for the Catholic church dedicated in February |
| 1874 | Post Office established at Wollar |
| 1874 | Oldest known burial (Loy) at the Catholic section of Wollar cemetery |
| 1875 | Wooden Catholic Church built on same site as present church. A wooden Church of England was also established about this time |
| 1875 | Police station established |
| 1885 | Wollar declared a village |
| 1893 | Dairy factory at in operation at Wollar |
| 1900 | Governor brothers, Jimmy and Joe, murder Mrs O'Brien and her son, and Kieran Fitzpatrick. Manhunt afterwards, with fugitives at large for 103 days |
| 1900 | A telegraph line is established at Post Office |
| 1903 | A new school building is erected |
| 1905 | Opening of new stone Wollar RC church, replacing 1875 wooden building |
| 1912 | Route for Sandy Hollow to Maryvale (between Gulgong and Wellington) railway line surveyed |
| 1915 | Opening of new Anglican stone church at Wollar, replacing previous wooden building |
| 1927 | Telephone switchboard opened |
| 1937 | Earthworks finally begin on the Sandy Hollow to Maryvale railway line |
| 1951 | After slow progress, work on the Sandy Hollow to Maryvale railway line is abandoned |

St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church, Wollar, New South Wales

| | |
|------|--|
| 1955 | New memorial hall built |
| 1958 | Main electricity connected |
| 1960 | Wollar Hotel burnt down |
| 1974 | First subdivisions of larger landholdings into 25 acre blocks |
| 1974 | Establishment of the Minnamurra Pastoral Company at Wollar by businessman Bruce Reid |
| 1982 | Goulburn River National Park gazetted |
| 1982 | New Wollar store opened |
| 1982 | Ulan to Sandy Hollow railway line finally opened for transporting coal only |
| 1985 | Wollar Post Office and Exchange closed |
| 1996 | Road from Mudgee to Wollar sealed with bitumen |
| 2003 | Proposal for Wilpinjong Open Cut Coal Mine – land resumption in affected areas begins |
| 2005 | Centenary Mass celebrated at St Laurence's Church Wollar Sunday 3rd April 2005 by Rev. Fr. Garry McKeown |
| 2006 | Last mass held at Wollar in October |
| 2006 | Ground work commenced in preparation for mining at Wilpinjong |
| 2009 | Closure of St. Luke's Anglican Church at Wollar |
| 20.. | St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church deconsecrated |
| 22.. | St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church sold to Peabody Energy |

Parish Administration

Until 1875 Wollar was in the Catholic diocese of Maitland. From 1875 until 1888 Wollar was administered by Mudgee Catholic parish in the Bathurst diocese. From 1888 until 1969 Wollar was administered by Gulgong Catholic parish in the Bathurst diocese. In 1969 Wollar reverted to Mudgee Catholic parish, still in the Bathurst diocese.

Construction of the church

Early masses were held at the home of Thomas and Margaret Flanagan, who lived at Spring Creek. In 1868 Dean O'Donovan of Mudgee rode out to Crowie on the Goulburn River to perform three marriages in the Lennox family. He recalled that first time he rode out to Wollar that there was only one house and Willoughby's Inn.

The site for the Catholic Church was dedicated as early as February 1873. In Thomas Lennox of Crowie cut slabs and James Hogan carted them, then shingles were made and finally, in 1875, the first Catholic Church was built. This slab church served the Wollar community for nearly thirty years. It was on the same block as the present one, but built further back from the Maitland Road, with a hitching rail at the back to which people tied their horses.

Bishop Quinn from Maitland diocese came to the opening then handed the deeds to Monsignor O'Donovan and to the Parish of Mudgee. According to the *Mudgee Times* on the 1st December 1877: "The under-mentioned gentleman have been appointed trustees of land in the village of Wollar, County of Philip, Parish Wollar, designated as sites for Roman Catholic Church and presbytery viz. Rev Matthew Quinn, DD, Rev. John O'Donovan, Messrs Patrick Tierney, James Carroll and Patrick Mara." In the absence of a priest it invariably fell the duty of Mr Carroll to read the burial service at local Catholic funerals. The priest on his next circuit to the village would then bless the grave.

In late 1901 it was planned to build a stone church, as the old wooden church had outlived its usefulness and a subscription fund was begun. There was a controversy at the time over the site for the new Church – a site near Wynbah was put forward, as there were more Catholics up that way. The present site was eventually chosen.

In May 1904 Harold Hardwick, architect of Mudgee, drew up plans for a 75' x 50' sandstone building with a vestry at the side. The quarry-faced sandstone for the new church was cut from the first shelf of Willoughby's Knob, at the back of the church. It was loaded onto a dray and pulled down to the site. The wheel tracks made by the dray arc still at the site. The ceiling was of Wunderlich panels of tin-plate with an embossed pattern. Mr Nutt from Merriwa was the builder. Messrs Hardwick and Nutt were also associated with the Havilah Anglican church, completed in 1905.

The cornerstone was laid and then blessed by Rev. Father McGee on 9th October 1904 and the sum of £81 was laid on the stone with donations from all sections of the community. Also in attendance were Rev. Fathers Long and O'Donnell.



Fig. 3 Foundation stone (John Broadley)

St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church, Wollar, New South Wales

By November 1904 the walls were completed and the new Church was blessed and opened on 26th March 1905 by Monsignor O'Donovan. It was named for early Irish Bishop, St. Laurence O'Toole. A photograph was taken to commemorate the occasion. The cost of work, including furnishings was £700. The local people themselves raised the money to build the new sandstone church by having picnic races on Carroll's (now part of Minnamurra Pastoral Co on the Bylong Road) and charging for lunches. Each person paid 2/6d a year for their pew and they maintained their own.

Harold Hardwick. Architect:

Harold Robert Hardwick (A.I.A.) was born in 1866 at Rylstone, sixth child and fifth son of John William Hardwick and Rebecca, nee White. John William Hardwick, from Yorkshire, had emigrated to Australia in 1852 and settled in Rylstone, east of Mudgee, where he established a general store.

After qualifying as an architect, Harold practised initially in Moss Vale and Hay, then in 1895 he moved to Mudgee where he was based for the remainder of his life. In 1898 he married Adele Florence Wells, born in Mudgee in 1878, daughter of Henry Edward Alexander Wells and Laura, nee Richards. Harold and Adele had five children, all born in Mudgee: Effie (1899), George (1901), William (1903), Adele (1906) and Charles (born and died in 1908). According to his grandson, the Reverend Alfred Robert Hardwick, Harold was a strict Methodist who went to church every Sunday and he was one of the first to have a car in Mudgee. Harold died in Mudgee in 1935 and Adele died in Mudgee in 1943.



Fig. 4 Harold Hardwick and his family early 1900s

As the sole architect practising in Mudgee from 1895 until 1935, he was responsible for the bulk of residential, commercial, industrial and ecclesiastical briefs in Mudgee town and district which were built in that time frame; bank briefs were usually deigned by the bank's Sydney-based architects. While many of Harold Hardwick's architectural briefs in the district are well-known, there are also many buildings which may be attributed to him on stylistic grounds.

Harold Hardwick is particularly remembered today for the many ecclesiastical briefs in the greater Mudgee district:

- Catholic church, Botobolar (1900) – used occasionally
- Anglican church, Gilgandra (1902) – demolished 1921
- Catholic church, Wollar (1904) – decommissioned
- Anglican church, Havilah, Mudgee (1904) – used occasionally
- Catholic church, Coolah (1906) – converted to a play centre
- Methodist church, Wallerawang (1907) – now a Uniting church
- Anglican church, Grattai (1909) – now at Hargraves school
- Catholic church, Moree (1912) – modified extensively

St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church, Wollar, New South Wales

- Anglican church, Wollar (1914) – closed and empty
- Anglican church, Mendooran (1915) – destroyed in a storm 1950
- Anglican church, Leadville (1916) – now a community centre
- Anglican church, Kandos (1921) – in use by Rylstone parish
- Presbyterian Union church, Binnaway (19..) – status unknown
- Presbyterian church, Mendooran (1923) – now believed to be a dwelling
- Catholic church, Lue (1934) – converted to a dwelling

Harold Hardwick also undertook numerous briefs in the Central West beyond the Mudgee district, including his home town of Rylstone.

John Nutt. Builder:

Little is known of John Nutt other than what is revealed in his obituary (see below).

The son of John and Margaret Nutt, he married (Isa)bella Patridge in Muswellbrook in 1893 and by her had at least six children: Ivy (1895), Harold (1897), Victor (1899), Mary (1904), Francis (1907) and Florence (1909). He lived and worked in Muswellbrook, Merriwa and Mudgee, before settling in the Blue Mountains. He worked on three churches with Harold Hardwick: the Catholic churches at Wollar and Coolah and the Anglican church at Havilah, all in the period from 1904 to 1906.

“The death occurred at Leura this week of Mr. J. Nutt, a building contractor well known in Mudgee. Coming to this district before the war, he had charge of building operations in connection with the Havilah, Wollar, and Coolah churches, and later completed additions to the business premises of Jas. Loneragan (Mudgee) Co. He heard the call to arms, and served three years with the A.I.F. abroad. Returning to Australia he received an appointment as inspector under the War Service Homes Building Commission, which position he relinquished to take up contracting operations at Leura. He was a son in law of Mrs. M. Ruhan, a well-known Mudgee resident.” (*Mudgee Guardian*, Thursday, 21st June 1928, p. 27)



Fig. 5 The opening of St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church on 26th March 1905
(Lynne Robinson and Gai McDermott)

Opening of the Church:

The following article appeared in the *Mudgee Guardian* on Monday, 27th March 1905:

WOLLAR ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH – The new Roman Catholic Church at Wollar was yesterday blessed and opened by Rt. Rev. Monsignor O'Donovan. There was a large attendance to witness the ceremony and the collection exceeded £50. A sum of £14 was taken at a luncheon and a competition to guess the weight of a sheep given by Mr. Mara brought in £2/10/0, making a total of about £70 for the day. Mr. Tom Gleeson was the winner of the weight guessing competition and the sheep, a crossbred ewe going 89lb. Mr. C. A. Sibert of Mudgee was in attendance and took several views of the Church and groups of the gathering. These photos will be on sale at the modest price of 1s. each and will be available in a few days from Mr. J. J. Carroll of Wollar or Mr. P. Lynch of Botobolar. As Mr. Siebert takes excellent photos, his product should have a ready sale as an interesting memento. A full report appears on Thursday.

The following article appeared in the *Mudgee Guardian* on Monday, 30th March 1905:

CHURCH OF ST. LAURENCE WOLLAR – A large crowd gathered at Wollar on Sunday to witness the opening of the new Roman Catholic Church at Wollar by Rt. Rev. Mons. O'Donovan. The building was designed by Mr. Harold Hardwick, A.I.A., of Mudgee and is exceedingly handsome in its construction of freestone in broken rubble. Mr. John Nutt of Merriwa was the contractor and the work reflects the quality, a credit to him. Mr. Hardwick is also to be warmly congratulated on the excellence of his design and his attention to details. The cost of the work including furnishings was about £700. The ceremony of the blessing of the Church was performed by the Rt. Rev. Mons. O'Donovan. Prior to 11 o'clock, Mass was celebrated by Fr. O'Donnell, the Parish Priest. Prior to the sermon being preached, Rev. Fr. O'Donnell said that he was asked to apologise for the absence of the bishop who was unable to be present. They had however present, the next dignitary in the diocese in the person

of Rt. Rev. Mons. O'Donovan who had been in their midst for 40 years and who had done good work and who was held in the highest esteem by the bishop, priests and people throughout the diocese of Bathurst. He then sincerely thanked the Monsignor for coming at great inconvenience to bless the church and preach the opening sermon. (Report of the sermon which was about the patron saint, St. Laurence O'Toole, who was for about 25 years Abbot of Glendalough, and later Archbishop of Dublin, then believed to be one of the Irish Archbishops to attend the Lateran Council. He died about 1180). At the conclusion a subscription was taken.

£2: Rev. Mons. O'Donovan and Fr. O'Donnell

£3/3/0: James Carroll, H. Hardwick, Roger Gleeson, William Egan

£2/2/0: Mrs. W. Egan, James Power

£1/1/0: T. H. Marks & Co

£1/0/0: Mrs. James Mara, J. P. Flanagan, Thomas Hughes, Maurice Flanagan, Mrs. Devitt, John Lane, William McDermott, John Halpin, Peter Mara, James J Carroll, A. G. Rheinberger

10/6d: Thomas P. Carroll, Miss M. Flynn; 10/0s: Anthony Dwyer, Michael Quinlan, John Quinlan, John Meaney, J. D. Young, John Hyland, Mrs. J. J. Carroll, Mrs. James Carroll, James Lynch, Mrs. Flanagan, John Riley, John Fitzpatrick, Mrs. John Lane, Thomas Gleeson, James Egan, Mrs. Susan Mara, Thomas Lane, George Robinson;

7/6d: Dan Gleeson

6/6d: Mrs. E. Hyland

6/0s: Michael Fitzpatrick

5/6d: John Egan

5/0s: Tim Fitzpatrick, P. Power, Mrs. Smith, James Hogan, William Gleeson, Peter Lynch, Mrs. Lynch, Mr. Donnellan, Thomas Meaney, Mrs. John Hyland, Frank McDermott, James Mara, Mrs. Field, Patrick Halpin, Mrs. Martin, William Lennox, William Riley, Patrick Gleeson, Mrs. E. J. Gamgee, Joseph Gleeson, Miss M. Egan, E. Gallagher, Mrs. T. Riley, Adolphus Barton, George Robinson Jnr, Patrick Curran, Miss K. Kane, widow Mahon, Miss Maggie Egan, Miss E. Egan, Mrs. Hyland, James Robinson, Mrs. James Robinson, Mrs. Marskell, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Berryman, Mrs. Albert King, Mrs. Clarke, Miss A. Friel

4/6d: John Smith, Mrs. Halpin

4/0s: James Willoughby, P. Gallagher

3/6d: James Hogan, Jnr

3/0s: Miss K. Meaney, M. Connelly

2/6d: Miss O'Hare, Miss E. Egan, William McDermott, Miss M. Kennedy, Miss Willoughby, Miss F. Lynch, Mary Halpin, Miss M. Mara, Miss Kathleen Egan, Michael McDermott, Charles Robinson, Archie King, Mrs. James Hogan, Patrick Flanagan, Mrs. Quinlan, Miss Bridget O'Connor, Mrs. Dan Riley, Thomas Robinson, John Hair

2/0s: John Mara, Miss Bridget Halpin, Miss Rose Egan, Allan Mara, James Martin

six 1/0s. Subscriptions.

Total £58/2/6

THE LUNCHEON – After Mass an adjournment was made to the Mechanics Institute where a splendid dinner awaited the company. Father O'Donnell presided, having on his right hand, Mons. O'Donovan. The chairman read a letter of apology from Mr. J. W. Duesbury, managing partner of T. H. Marks & Co., to regret he could not accept, enclosing his cheque for £1. Alderman Cameron, the Mayor of Mudgee, regretted, saying he would assist in any entertainment to aid church funds. Fr. O'Donnell proposed the health of Mons. When he asked the Monsignor to bless the Church he said he would do so willingly. He felt that the Monsignor was paying a compliment to Wollar when he had laboured back as far as 35 years ago and where he was known for his great and good works and where he had sown the seeds of a great faith which was now bearing fruit by the erection of the church. The Monsignor was one of the pioneer priests of Australia and was held in highest respect by the bishop, priest and people of the diocese. He felt the honour of his presence and drank to his health with the hope that he be spared for many more years to do great work for God and his Church. The Monsignor, on rising to the toast, received applause and thanked Fr. O'Donnell for his very generously worded speech and the company for the manner in which the toast had been received. It was always a very great pleasure for him to go to Wollar, for he liked the people and the scenery along the road. The proceedings that day were a credit to both Fr. O'Donnell

and themselves. When he had come to Wollar in 1868 there was only one house in it and Mass used to celebrate at Mr. Flanagan's some way out. If he remembered right there was then a hotel or accommodation kept by a man named Willoughby whose wife was one of their Church. Well after a time the movement for a church took definite form and the late Thomas Lennox of Crowie, always a generous man, cut the slabs and another generous supporter James Hogan, who was with them that day brought the slabs in, then the shingles were provided and finally the old slab church which did duty for so many years, was erected. At that time, Wollar was in the diocese of Maitland and when the late Bishop Quinn came up to the opening of the church he showed his Lordship the statement of accounts and he handed Wollar to his (the speaker's) care. It afterwards fell into the diocese of Bathurst. He was always pleased to come to Wollar and called to mind how he and other priests were always warmly welcomed by Mr. J. J. Carroll who sat on his right that day. It was all plain sailing in those days and he was glad to see it was the same today. The Church was a credit to them and he congratulated the architect Harold Hardwick. It was a great pleasure for him to meet the old hands and the young ones who were growing up and he thanked them heartily for the toast. Mr. J. J. Carroll, JP, proposed the health of the architect H. Hardwick. H. Hardwick replied, and thanked the Monsignor. He had seen St. Mary's Church, Mudgee, built of stone at the cost of £14,000 and this gave him great experience as to the value of each work and they could rely upon what he said and could assure them that they could not find a better example of rubble work in the whole state. He had much to thank the contractor, for Mr. Nutt's motto was evidently "If anything's worth doing, it's worth doing well", and great credit was due to him for the way he had done his work. Mr. E. J. Gamgee proposed toasts "Prosperity to Wollar and district." (more toasts to Guardian reporter, etc.)

Exterior

The church, in a restrained Gothic style of roughly-hewn stone sourced from nearby, is essentially placed on a north-south axis, with a central double door entry on the southern facade. A gable roof covers the body of the church, with a sacristy projecting from the north-western corner, adjacent to the sanctuary; the sacristy is also covered by a gable roof. The peaks of all three gables are capped by a simple stone cross, while the north and south gables feature a small trefoil window which houses slatted timber vents. Each of the gables feature a bulky projecting gable end. Three small lucarnes, or *chatières* (air vents) are located on the eastern and western slopes of the gable roof of the body of the church. Buttresses on the eastern and western facades and a substantial pillar at the junction of the main body of the church and the sacristy lend support to the bulk of the building.



Fig. 6 Southern facade (John Broadley)



Fig. 7 Western facade (John Broadley)



Fig. 8 Northern facade (John Broadley)



Fig. 9 Eastern facade (John Broadley)

All windows and the entry door feature Gothic arches, while the door opening into the sacristy features a squared head. All windows are single lancets, except for the northern window in the sanctuary which is a double lancet with a quatrefoil tracery top. The corners, windows and doors all feature projecting undressed quoin work and stone arch trims and sills. Projecting quoin work is also a feature of the gables, while projecting banding is an additional decorative feature. In reality, what appears to be a simple rustic structure is actually quite a sophisticated design. Having stood now for 113 years, the building is a testament to the skill of its builders.

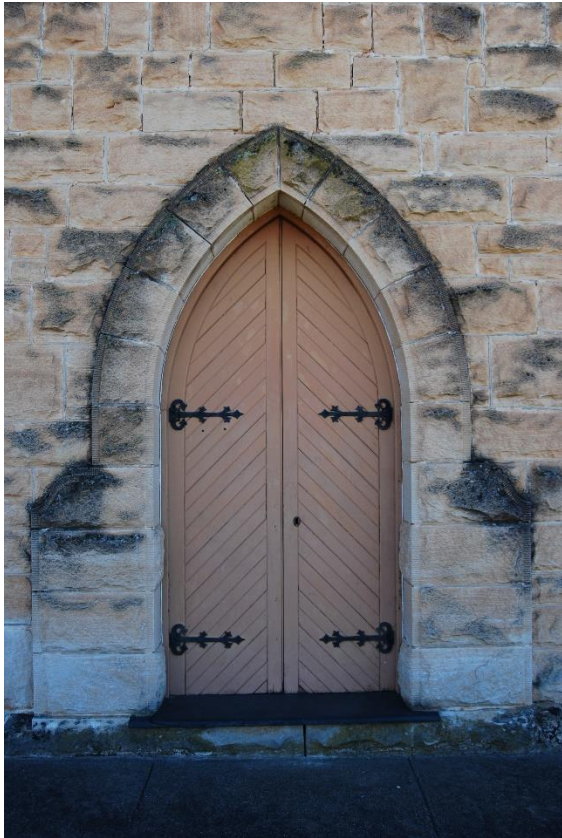


Fig. 10

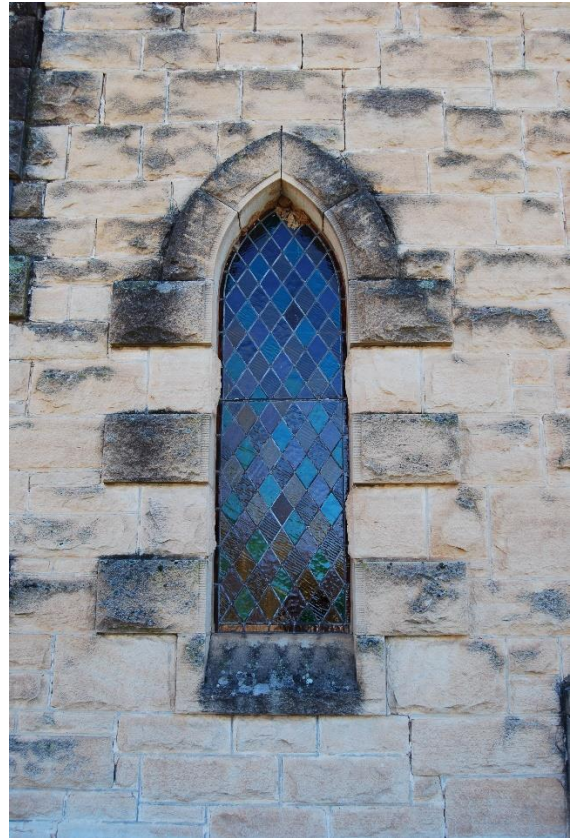


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

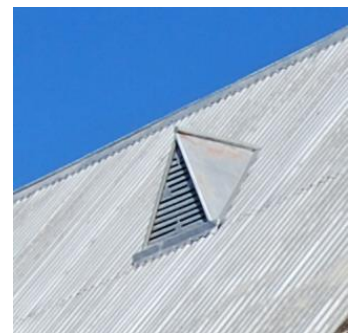


Fig. 14

Fig. 10 Entry on the southern facade (John Broadley)

Fig. 11 Standard lancet window (John Broadley)

Fig. 12 Trefoil ventilator in the north and south gable ends (John Broadley)

Fig. 13 Double lancet window with quatrefoil top (John Broadley)

Fig. 14 Lucarne or chatière (roof ventilator) (John Broadley)

Floor plan of the church:

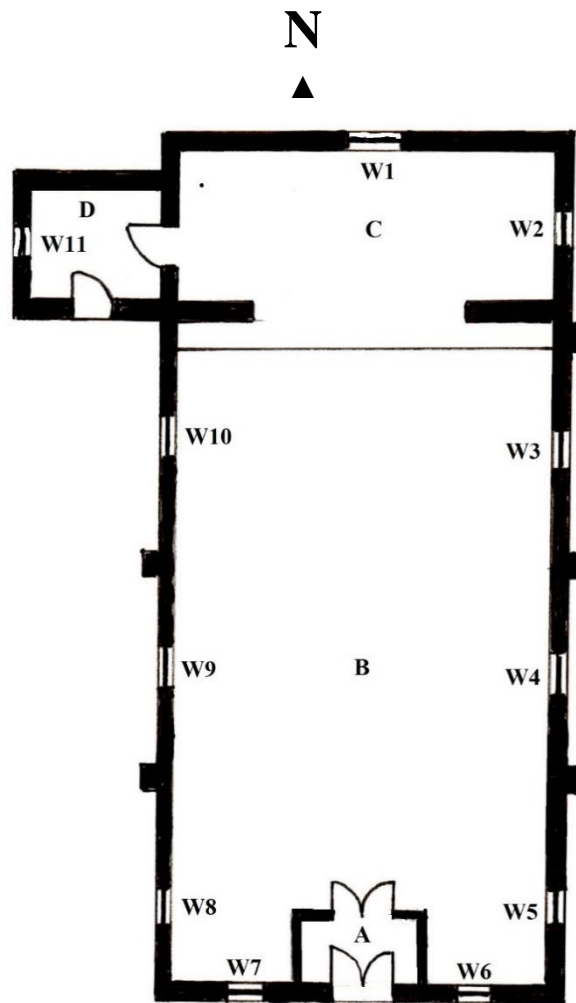


Fig. 15 Floor plan of St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic church, Wollar – not to scale
(John Broadley)

- A - Vestibule**
- B - Nave**
- C - Sanctuary**
- D - Sacristy**

The interior – nave:

The double entry doors on the southern front open into a small vestibule (A) which featured a small brass holy water font on the left hand side (**Fig. 22**) A second set of double doors open into the nave (B). Pews were located on either side of the central aisle as far as the sanctuary (C), which is one step up from the nave; previously there were brass and timber altar rails in situ. All the windows (W1 → W11) have identical glazing: coloured diamond panes in various shades of green, rose pink, brown and yellow. A door on the western side of the sanctuary opens into the sacristy (D) which also has a door in the southern wall which accesses the exterior.

The confessional consisted of two small booths which were located on the left side of the vestibule as you entered. The booth were removed some years ago.

The organ – from the Estey Organ Co. of Brattleboro, Vermont, USA – was placed on the eastern wall at the rear of the church. The Estey Organ Co., operative from 1846 to 1955, was one of the most prominent organ manufacturers in the United States.

The small stations of the cross were relatively recent, replacing a larger timber-framed set which were stored at the rear of the church and were in a poor state of repair.



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

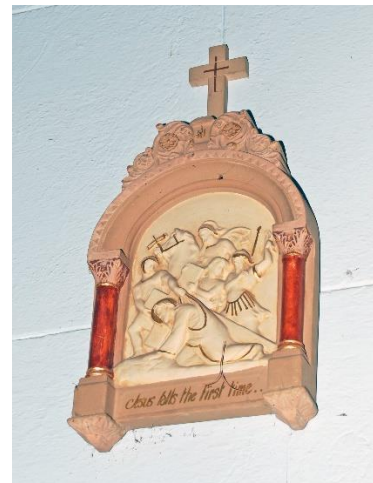


Fig. 19

Fig. 16 Vestibule on the southern wall (John Broadley)

Fig. 17 Estey organ on the eastern wall at the rear of the church (John Broadley)

Fig. 18 Keyboard of the Estey organ (John Broadley)

Fig. 19 One of the stations of the cross (John Broadley)

The floor is unpolished timber boards, with a carpeted aisle and chancel area; the sanctuary is carpeted. Nineteen large kauri pine pews (nine on the eastern side and ten on the western side) were housed in the nave.



Fig. 20 Pews and carpet (John Broadley)

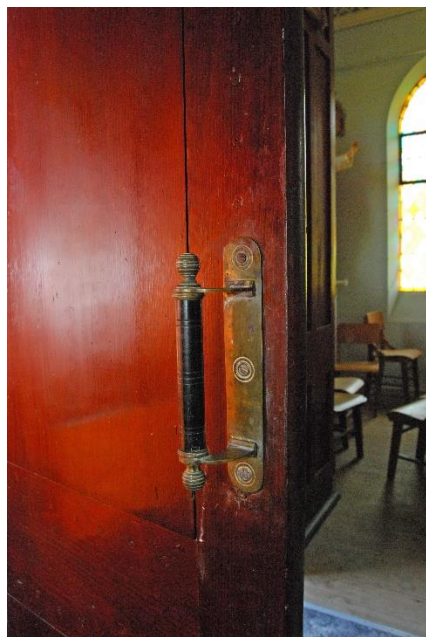


Fig. 21



Fig. 22

Fig. 21 Ornate handle on vestibule door (John Broadley)

Fig. 22 Holy water font (John Broadley)

Memorial donations to the church:

Items of Church furnishings, some with inscription plates are:

- Ciborium: donated to Wollar Church in memory of William and Margaret Egan in 1939
- Chalice: donated by Phulipi Schneider (not Wollar /Bylong Schneider – Mudgee Schneider?)
- Baptismal font: in memory of our parents Patrick (died 24/7/1925) and Bridget (died 13/10/1930) Connelly, and our brother John (died 18/12/1889)
- Altar bell: in memory of Mary and John Hyland, donated by their children in 1953
- Brass crucifix: Patrick Gleeson (died 11/1/1937)
- Tall candlesticks: Mr. and Mrs. R. Robinson, in memory of their parents in 1962
- Tall candlesticks: A Robinson and family in memory of Ellen Robinson 1962
- Tall candlesticks: Casey Family in memory of Cornelius Casey 1962
- Vestments cabinet (in sacristy): made and erected by Father Harry Brown
- Altar linen: Worked and donated by Patty Quinlan.
- Latin missal: donated by Mrs. Carroll in memory of her husband.
- St. Therese statue: donated by children of James and Elizabeth Halpin.
- Sacred Heart statue: presented by Mrs. Egan in memory of her parents James Mara and Margaret Mara.
- St. Laurence statue: given by the Lennox Family in memory of Lawrence and Ellen Lennox.
- Altar (old): pray for the soul of James Carroll in whose memory this altar was erected by his loving wife and sons in 1920.
- Altar (new): made and donated by Barry and Mary Rheinberger, circa 1978
- Memorial plaque: James McDermott, born 25 May 1880, died 15 January 1945
- Memorial plaque: Margaret Lennox, born 29 September 1869, died 15 December 1945
- Memorial plaque: In loving memory of Olive Jane Whittard who in 1989 bequeathed a generous donation to this church which enabled much needed renovations to be carried out. Remembered always by Muriel, Newton, Denis and Marjorie Daniel and their family
- Carpet: from Olive Whittard's bequest
- Stations of the Cross: organised by Sister Catherine Dykes from convent of Our Lady Help of Christians, Sydney, circa 1995.
- New Fence: bequest from Sid Smith's estate and some local donations in 2004

Statues in nave:

N → S, eastern wall of nave:

- St. Joseph and infant
- St. Therese (Halpin), formerly in the sanctuary
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

N → S, western wall of nave:

- St. Patrick
- St. Laurence O'Toole (Lennox), formerly in the sanctuary
- Jesus, sacred heart (Egan)



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26

Fig. 23 Sacred Heart statue, given by Mrs. Egan in memory of her Mara parents (John Broadley)

Fig. 24 Our Lady of the Sacred Heart statue (John Broadley)

Fig. 25 St. Laurence O' Toole statue, given by the Lennox family (John Broadley)

Fig. 26 St. Therese statue, donated by Halpin family (John Broadley)



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

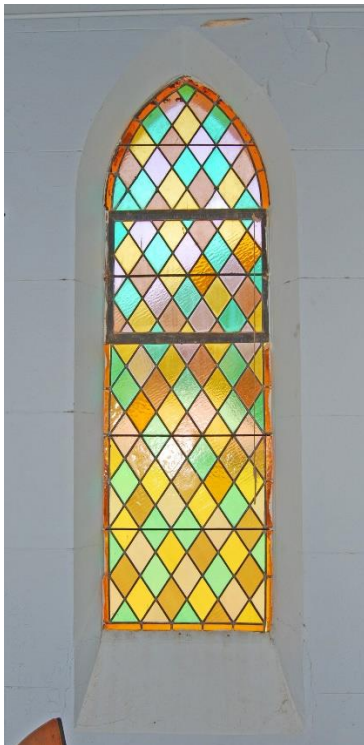


Fig. 29



Fig. 30

- Fig. 27** St. Patrick statue (John Broadley)
Fig. 28 St. Joseph and child statue (John Broadley)
Fig. 29 Standard lancet window (John Broadley)
Fig. 30 Sanctuary lamp (John Broadley)

Since construction the ceiling has been vaulted and lined with Wunderlich pressed metal – the newspaper article published on the opening of the church in 1905 incorrectly listed the ceiling as ‘Brunderlich’.



Fig. 31 Looking north along the nave towards the sanctuary (John Broadley)



Fig. 32 Looking south along the nave from the sanctuary towards the vestibule (John Broadley)

The sanctuary:

Located on the northern end of the church, the sanctuary is demarked by one step up; formerly an altar rail in brass and timber was in situ. A marble altar and tabernacle were located under the sanctuary window, while a new altar closer to the congregation was made by Barry Rheinberger in the 1980s. Also located in the sanctuary was an ornate brass lectern. Archival photos reveal that two of the statues which were more recently in the nave were once located in the sanctuary on either side of the old marble altar.



Fig. 33



Fig. 34



Fig. 35

Fig. 33 Old marble altar (John Broadley)

Fig. 34 Brass lectern (John Broadley)

Fig. 35 New altar, made by Barry Rheinberger (John Broadley)

The font

The baptismal font was donated by the Connolly family in memory of their parents Patrick (died 24/7/1925) and Bridget (died 13/10/1930), Connolly, and their brother John (died 18/12/1889). In a light stone, it features a round basin with a domed cover mounted by a cross, standing on a pillar with a corbelled base.



Fig. 36



Fig. 37

Fig. 36 Stone baptismal font (Lynne Robinson/Gai McDermott)

Fig. 37 Baptism of Brett Rheinberger (Lynne Robinson/Gai McDermott)

The Sacristy

The sacristy, where the priest prepares for a service and where vestments and articles of worship are kept, is adjacent to the sanctuary on the western side. The sacristy accesses the sanctuary via a door in its eastern wall; it also features a window in its western wall and a door to the exterior in the southern wall. A major piece of furniture was a built-in vestment cabinet, made by Father Harry Brown.



Fig. 37 Vestments cabinet (John Broadley)

The grounds

Off the north-western corner of the church is a small corrugated-iron hipped roof cement cottage with a skillion verandah on the eastern front, familiarly called 'The Vatican' by parishioners, which was built in the 1950s. Jack Sheehan had a cement block mould and a working bee was held at the Wollar Creek and sand from there was used to make the blocks. Jack Sheehan also helped to build the cottage.

As the priest would also service Bylong, he would stay overnight in this cottage and meals would be supplied by parishioners.

Behind the cottage are two toilets, under a skillion. These toilets were previously located at Wollar school and it was intended to put in a septic system, but that never eventuated.



Fig. 38 Cottage and toilets (John Broadley)

The church bell was located directly west of the church, off the north-western corner.



Fig. 39 Church bell (John Broadley)

Acknowledgements:

Assistance

Considerable thanks are due to Lynne Robinson, formerly of Wollar, and Gai McDermott of Wollar, for making available their extensive research on St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church at Wollar for this Church Study. As members of the congregation of that church for many years, their intimate knowledge of the place and its people has been invaluable.

Project Team

John Broadley

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- *Mudgee Guardian*

Printed Material:

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Websites:

- http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps
- <http://google.com.au/maps>

Contributing ADFAS members:

- John Broadley

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