



St Aidan's new look a leap in design faith

By FRAN VOSS

CONTEMPORARY additions to the historic St Aidan's Church at East Launceston have won a 2008 Tasmanian architects award.

Designed by Architects Workshop in Launceston (now called mj architecture) the addition won the Heritage Commendation award in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Tasmania) 2008 Architecture Awards. The principal building contractor was Innis Tasmania.

St Aidan's was designed by colonial architect Alexander North and dates back to 1893.

The new addition is a multi-function centre incorporating toilet and baby-changing facilities, kitchen, sunny north-facing terrace, meeting room, and a safe outdoor play area for children.

Glass folding doors can open the room into the body of the church.

A second smaller addition has also been built in the same style on the southern side of the church.

Mj architecture director Michael Jirku said the challenge was to design an addition that was sensitive to people's strong emotional and sentimental ties with the original building while also portraying a fresh, vibrant and contemporary image of the broader Anglican Church.

The vertical laminated timber columns echo the strong verticality of church buildings and the large expanses of glass allow the existing church walls to remain visible, Mr Jirku said.

The extensions were officially opened by the Rev. Robert Harrower on April 20.

Church warden and architectural historian Anne Neale said the additions were designed to make the church more visible and more accessible, particularly for older parishioners.

She said the work involved sound architectural conservation policy.

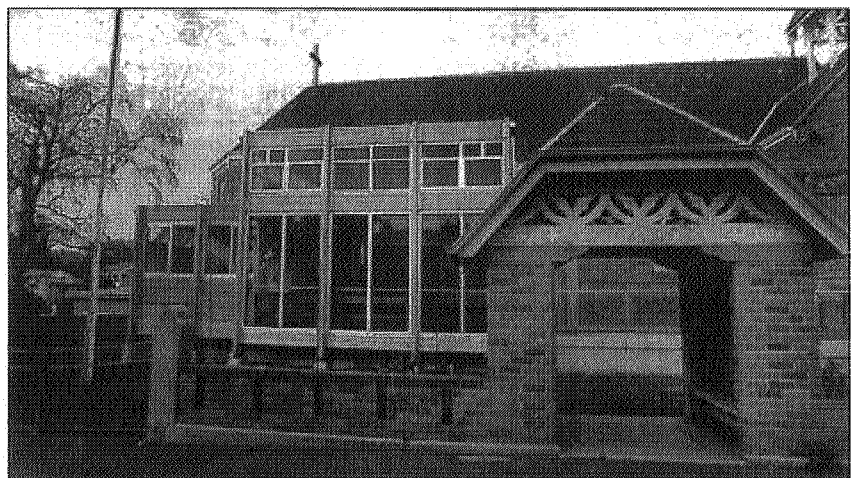
"The additions had to be clearly distinguishable from the earlier work and with no alterations to the early construction. These additions can even be removed in the future if required," Dr Neale said.

The roof over the entrance was also repaired and the Alexander North-designed leadlight windows are being refurbished.

The renovations and additions were made possible by bequests from the Norman Findlay and Gee estates.



Architectural historian and church warden Anne Neale said the additions to St Aidan's were designed to make the church more visible.



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