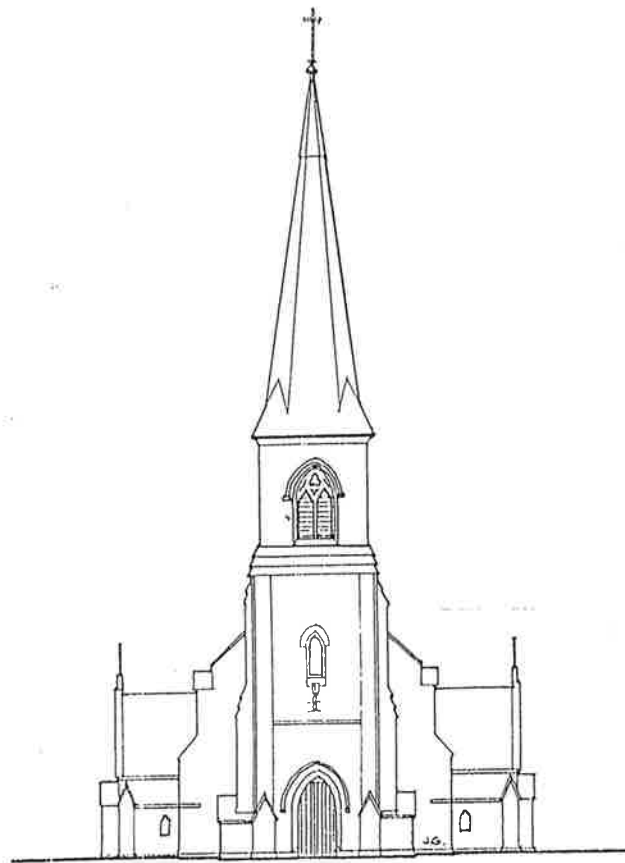


# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA



## A CONSERVATION PLAN

May 1984

John Goldsmith  
Architect

SHORT VERSION

UPDATED TO MARCH 1994

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, CANBERRA  
A CONSERVATION PLAN, MAY 1984  
SHORTENED & UPDATED REPORT, MARCH 1994

JOHN GOLDSMITH FRAIA - HONORARY ARCHITECT

---

In May 1984, I completed a Conservation Plan for St John's Church and Precinct. This was accepted by the Parish Council and endorsed by the ACT Heritage Committee. This plan has been the basis on which restoration work has proceeded.

Before commencing a conservation plan it is necessary to assess the significance of the place. Work had previously been done for this and the church and its precinct were classified by the National Trust and was entered in the Register of the National Estate on 27 August 1980.

A. **ROBERT CAMPBELL** built the first stage of Duntroon House in 1833. He did not live there permanently but he spent more time there as he grew older. He died in the grounds of Duntroon at the age of 76 in April 1846, just a year after St John's was consecrated. His interest in the furtherance of religion and education in the district is exemplified in the establishment of the first church and school in the Canberra region.

In 1840 he and Bishop Broughton, the first and only Bishop of Australia, toured the Campbell land to select a site for a church. They eventually chose the location where St John's stands today. Campbell did not conceive the church as his private chapel. It was to serve the needs of the wider community.

It was the custom of the Government in the early days to give land for a Church and a Glebe of about 40 acres. Robert Campbell bettered this by giving 100 acres for a Glebe and a further 20 acres later on for a parsonage. Three of his sons, John, Charles and George, continued this tradition and were responsible for major extensions to the nave, chancel, tower and spire over the period 1863 to 1878.

B. **THE CHURCH:** It is not known who designed the church, but perhaps Bishop Broughton sketched some ideas. The church was to be "stone construction with a shingle roof, a nave 56 feet long and 44'6" wide, Gothic in style with a square tower with entrance at the west end, and at the east end a door surmounted by a three light Gothic window." On the north and south walls respectively were to be a porch and a vestry.

Construction began in 1841 and on 11 May the foundation stone was laid. The Rev'd Edward Smith placed a bible, a prayer book and an inscribed plate under the stone. The location of the stone and articles is now not known. Due to troubled financial times the building was not completed until May 1844, and was consecrated in March 1845.

It was built with blue-grey volcanic tuff from the slopes between the site and Mt Pleasant. The buttresses, window frames, tracery and door mullions were built with sandstone from the open cut quarry on Black Mountain.

In 1851 the tower was struck by lightning and because of the damage

and later subsidence it was pulled down in 1864. During 1872 and 1873, the nave was extended and the chancel added to the design by A.D. Soares. He was the Rector at Queanbeyan and was also an engineer and an architect of note. He was the son of a Portugese merchant.

A search at the Mitchell Library found the drawings prepared by Soares and these clearly show his ideas for widening and lengthening the nave and the chancel addition. However, the widening of the nave indicated in the drawings did not go ahead. The location of the nave extension from the original is marked by a small wood plaque on the inside of the south wall.

Edmund T. Blackett was engaged as architect for the new tower and spire. Copies of his drawings were also obtained from the Mitchell Library. Work commenced in 1864 and, because of the affect of a serious drought on manpower and finance, the tower was not completed until 1870. The spire was not then built and a temporary roof covering was necessary.

The tower is of fine proportions, impressively solid, with heavy buttresses and a sensitive transition to the spire. The best use was made of sandstone of varying colours, light brown up to the level of the nave roof and reddish brown for the upper storey.

Work on the spire did not begin until 1876. It was assembled on the ground. No scaffolding was used for its erection and the timbers were raised and fixed from the inside, with shingling being fixed as the work proceeded. A steel cap, cross and lightning conductor were put in position by a sailor working from a stage extended out through an opening near the top. The shingled exterior covering conceals a complex narrowing of the timber frame strengthened with a network of battens. Frame and battens interlock at various levels as the spire tapers towards the top, imparting a strength that has enabled it to stand for more than a century with minimal interior maintenance.

Unfortunately, as the work progressed to the top, the timber ran short and the ascending rafters were warped into a bunch over which the stumpy tin cap was placed. In 1921, the spire was reshingled and increased in height almost to Blackett's designed height with the addition of a new metal cap, cross and lightning conductor. It was not possible to set these elements symetrically in position because of the warped humps of the rafters, hence the constant reminder today of the building defect which occurred more than a hundred years ago.

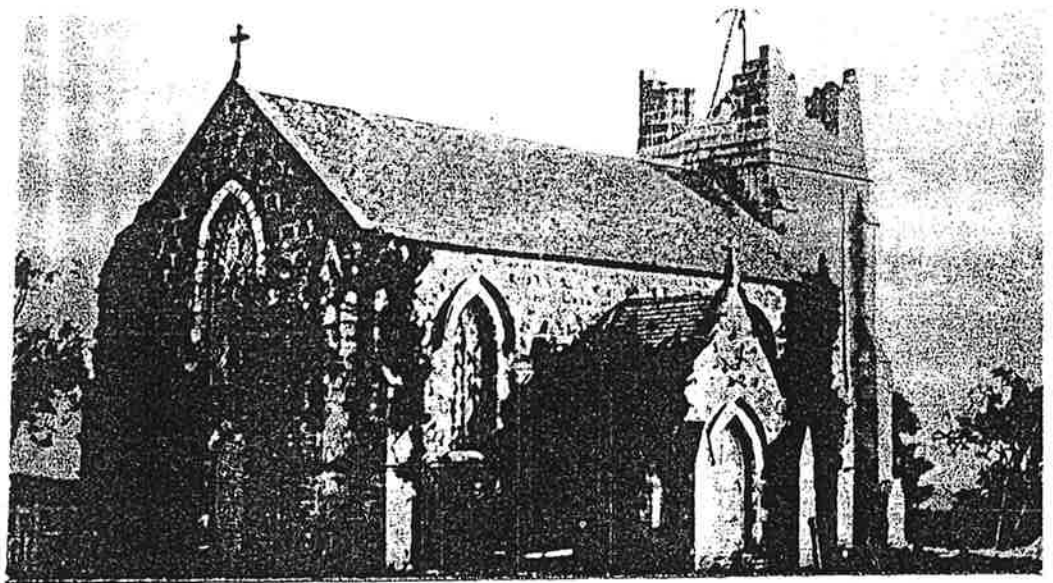
In the 1920s the church was showing signs of cracking and, following a report by a Melbourne architect, L. Williams, on his recommendation the church engaged a Canberra Architect, D. Limberg, to carry out the necessary remedial work, including partial underpinning of nave walls, the rebuilding of several buttresses and general repairs.

In 1932 the west lych gate was built in memory of Edward Crace and family, the stone for its construction came from the old stable that stood behind the old schoolhouse. The east lych gate was built in 1936 to the memory of Mrs Frederick Campbell. At the same time the Campbell family gave the altar in Hawkesbury sandstone in memory of Frederick Campbell. The fine lych gates and altar designs were the work of architect Kenneth Oliphant, father of the present rector.

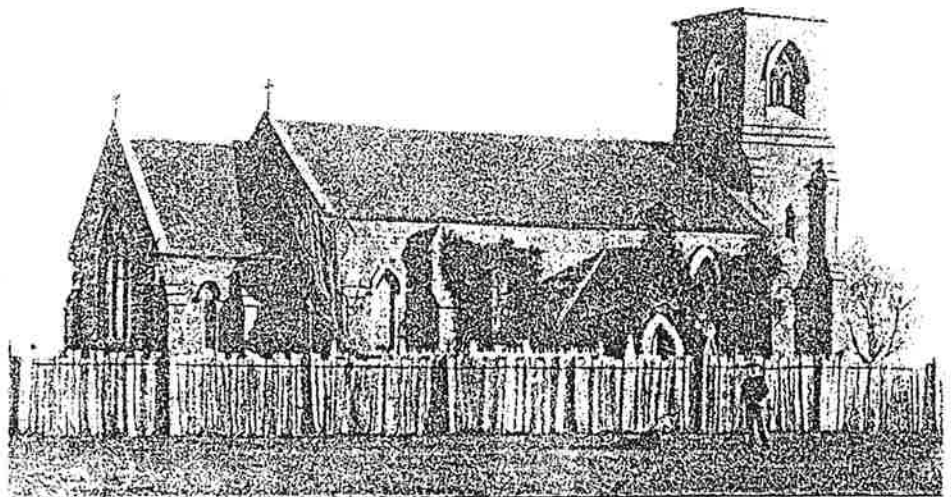
Constant problems of water penetration through the nave and chancel roof were being experienced and in 1959 the roof was redone using fibro cement shingles. This change corrected the water penetration problem but it leaves doubt in one's mind if the decision was the right one. However, over the years the cement shingles have weathered to a deep greyish colour which is in sympathy with the general



*Canberra in September 1862. From a watercolour painting by H. C. Lloyd showing the Church as originally built.*



*St. John's Church about 1865 showing the Blakett Tower under construction.*



*The Church in 1875 after the Tower, Nave extension & Chancel addition were completed.*

weathering of the walls and the spire.

In 1963, the Governor-General, Viscount De L'Isle offered to have a chime of bells installed in the tower in memory of his wife who died in Canberra during his term of office. Advice was obtained from Mr Ranald Clouston, who was the technical consultant on bells to the Council for the Care of Churches in England. Following his advice it was decided that a chime of eight fixed bells would be obtained. At the same time, the spire was resingled to ensure a waterproof covering for the bells.

A large radiata pine tree at the corner of the tower was leaning toward and touching the spire. Advice was obtained from the Forestry School. Because of the lean and also because it was a fire hazard it was felled. After felling, the stump was trimmed at about one meter high and a slice was taken off and stored. Dr Jacobs, head of the Forestry School, dated the tree as being planted in 1882 and had a brass plate made showing the important events which had occurred over the life of the tree related to its annual rings. After some years the stump rotted, so the brass plate was removed and fixed to the slice previously cut off. It is hung in the Schoolhouse Museum.

The bells were made in England by John Taylor & Co. in Loughborough and were installed and dedicated in 1964.

**C. ORGAN:** In 1974, the Church Council was concerned about the condition of the organ and its location. It was in the north transept. It was decided to obtain a new tracker-action organ and locate it in the gallery. Before this could be done the space had to be made larger. This was done by moving the balustrade into the nave by one metre. A steel framed floor was installed to take the weight of the organ and the floor was tiered. The two hexagonal timber posts on either side of the aisle were moved to each side wall. The Regimental Colours hanging from the balustrade were removed to the conservation section of the Canberra College of Advanced Education. These were later rehung in the church. The new organ was designed and installed by Ronald Sharp.

**D. MEMORIALS:** The tradition of the church is visibly expressed by its fittings, memorials and ornaments. Practically every item is either a memorial, a gift or both. They offer a microcosm of history. Inside and outside are items which commemorate early pioneers, men and women of stature, members of Parliament and men and women who fought and died in the wars.

**E. STAINED GLASS WINDOWS:** There are many beautiful windows in the church, and a detailed report was made by David Saunders, a noted stained glass artist from Sydney. This report highlighted the degrees of failure and priorities to apply when restoration takes place.

**F. STRUCTURE:** The engineering firm of Murray Northrop Pty Ltd provided a comprehensive study of building structure and proposed methods of stabilising to minimise the degree of failures that have occurred.

**G. OLD SCHOOLHOUSE:** The schoolhouse was completed shortly after the church and was possibly in use prior to 1847. The original building was built of blue-grey volcanic tuff similar to that used for the church. It consisted of a schoolroom and two other rooms. In 1864 it was severely damaged by fire and was repaired and extended about 1865. Three more rooms were added, one of which was a kitchen. The school was closed in 1880 when the Public School Act abolished State aid to denominational schools. Over the following years it had many uses, such as a scout hall, a kindergarten and a meeting place for the Young

significant in 1968. It was restored and opened in 1969 as a Church Museum.

**H. CHURCHYARD:** St John's churchyard follows the design pattern of past cemeteries with graves mostly in straight lines more or less on a grid pattern. Most graves have typical headstones, footstones and surrounds, but a lot have merely small wooden crosses. Some are fenced with wrought iron and some with timber surrounds.

The graves, through the names, occupations, dates, and epitaphs in the headstones, provide a social and economic record of the development of the district over a period of more than 150 years. Some deterioration has occurred in the form of broken headstones, subsidence, vandalism and weathering and many inscriptions have become difficult to read.

One of the many interesting tombstones is dedicated to Sarah Webb who died in 1845 and whose grave was possibly the first in the graveyard. It has become known as the "prophetic tombstone" because of the text, "For here we have no continuing city but seek one to come". (Hebrews, ch. 13, v. 14).

**I. LANDSCAPE:** The landscaping of St John's precinct generally follows the pattern of 19th century layouts with perimeter and intermediate trees of native and exotic species, interspersed with gravel paths now overgrown with weeds but kept mown. There is a wealth of trees and bushes consisting of examples of indigenous flora and fine old European specimens.

The longest serving rector, the Rev'd Pierce Galliard Smith (1855-1906) planted many of the trees in the precinct. The largest trees are well over 100 years old and of such species as radiata, stone and aleppo pines. A fine deodar tree exists alongside the path from the Parish Centre to the church. The avenue from the church to the west lych gate is lined with Arizona cypress, now over 70 years old.

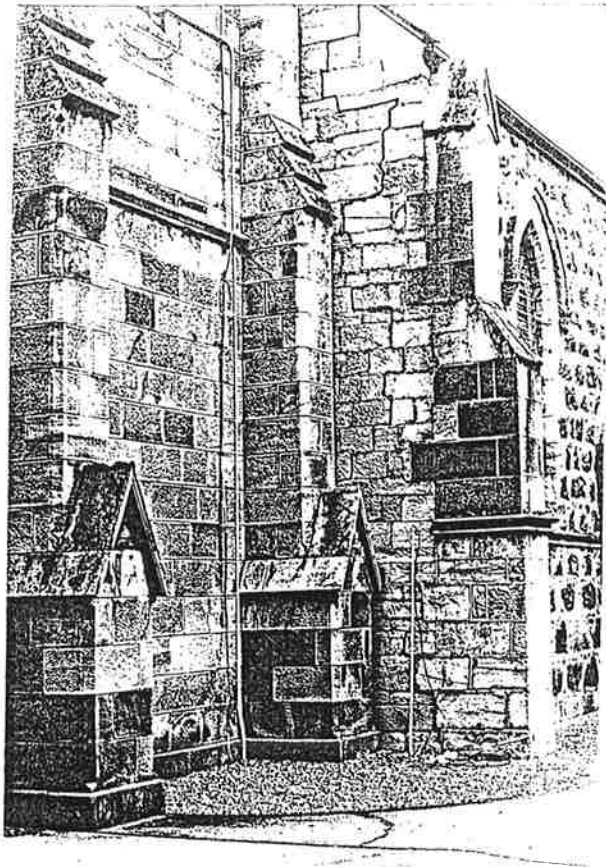
**J. THE CONSERVATION PLAN:** The Conservation Plan and its various reports go into more detail than covered above and carry on to provide a Statement of Significance, a Policy Statement, a List of Defects and Deficiencies, a List of Requirements and a Statement of Conservation Policy. It also includes measured drawings of the building as it existed at the time of the Conservation Plan.

**K. CONSERVATION WORKS COMPLETED TO MARCH 1994:** The following are the works completed to date in accordance with the Conservation Plan dated May 1984.

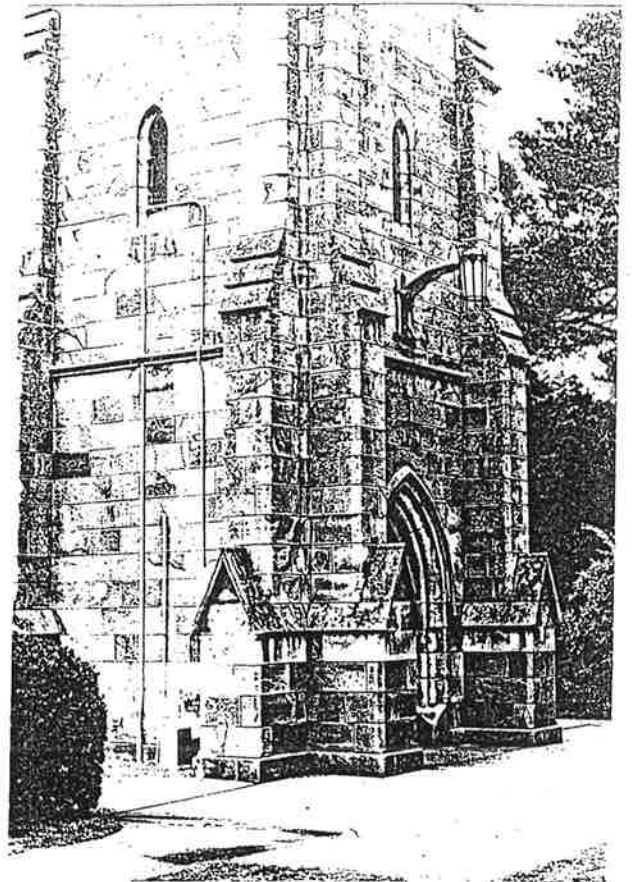
**K1. STABILISATION:** The report stressed that cracking movements had occurred over time in the stonework walls and the most significant of these were recorded. An evaluation of the soils was made by exploratory holes in the ground outside the church. In summary, these actions revealed that the soils encountered were moist, sandy and gravelly sandy clays which have a variable capacity for consolidation under the weight that the building imposes. These soils shrink and swell respectively with seasonal reductions and increases in ground moisture content.

It was decided that remedial work should be directed towards insulating the ground under and around the building from variations in moisture content which would result in stabilization of the soil conditions.

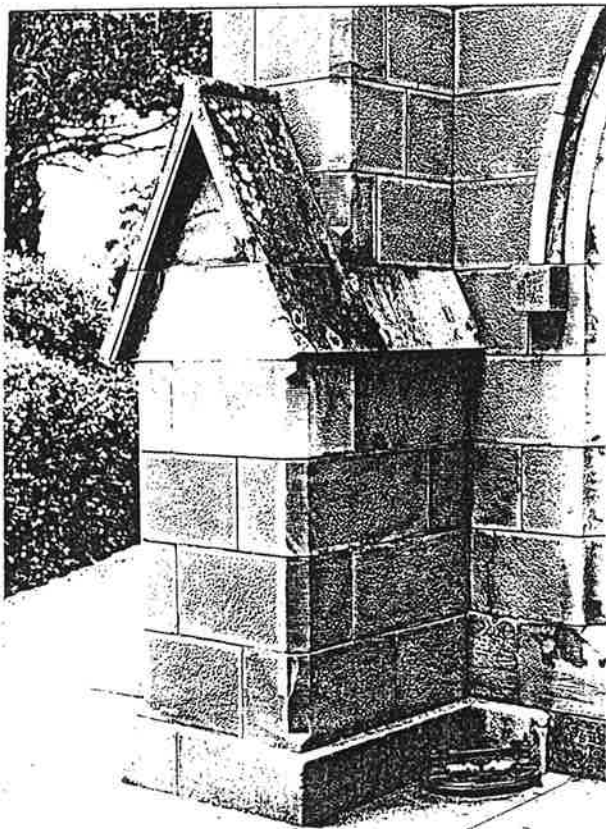
This action took the form of constructing an inground concrete wall about 1.5 metres (5 feet) deep and about 200mm (8 inches) wide all



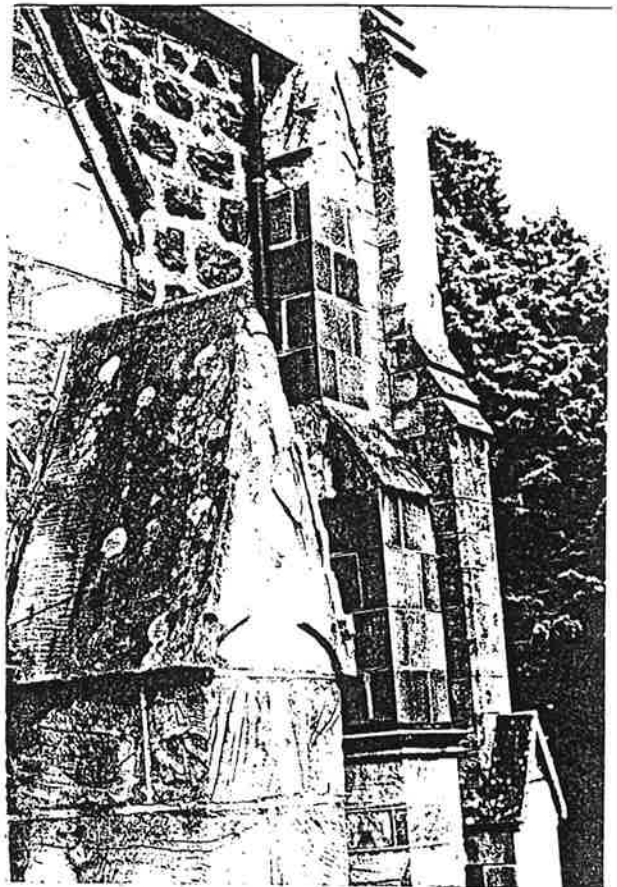
*Unightly surface conduits on south wall of tower.*



*Unightly surface conduits on north wall of tower.*

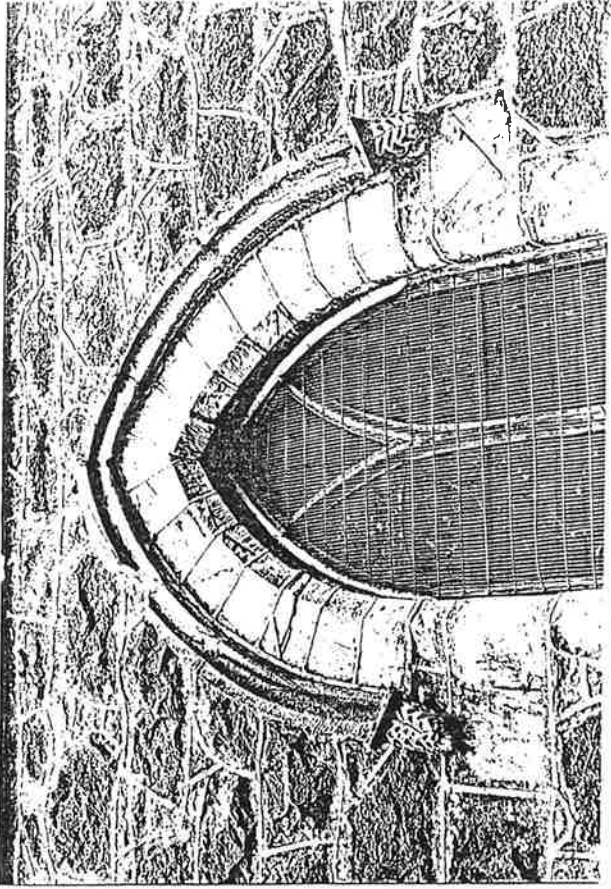


*Damage to buttress cap by West Porch door.*

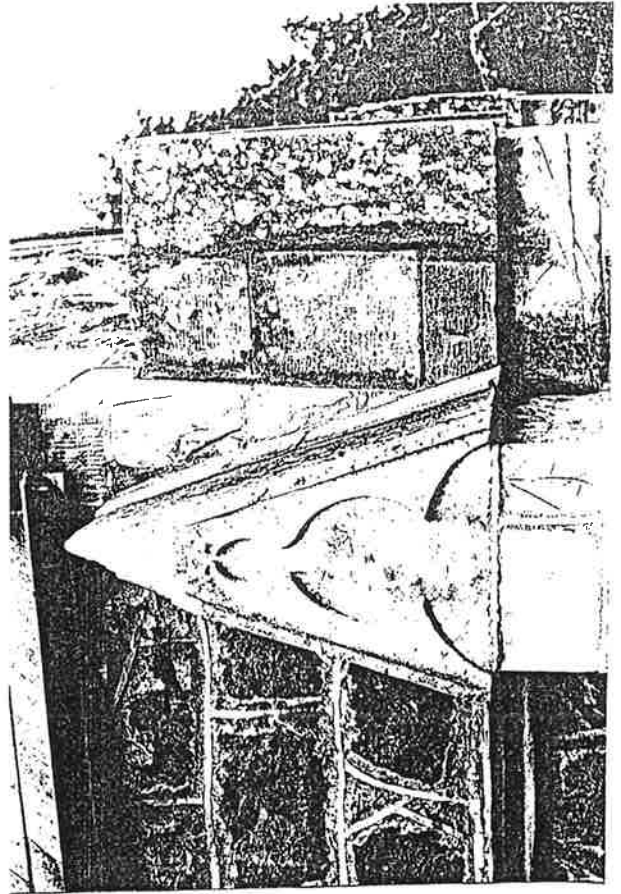


*Flaked & spalling to buttress caps.*

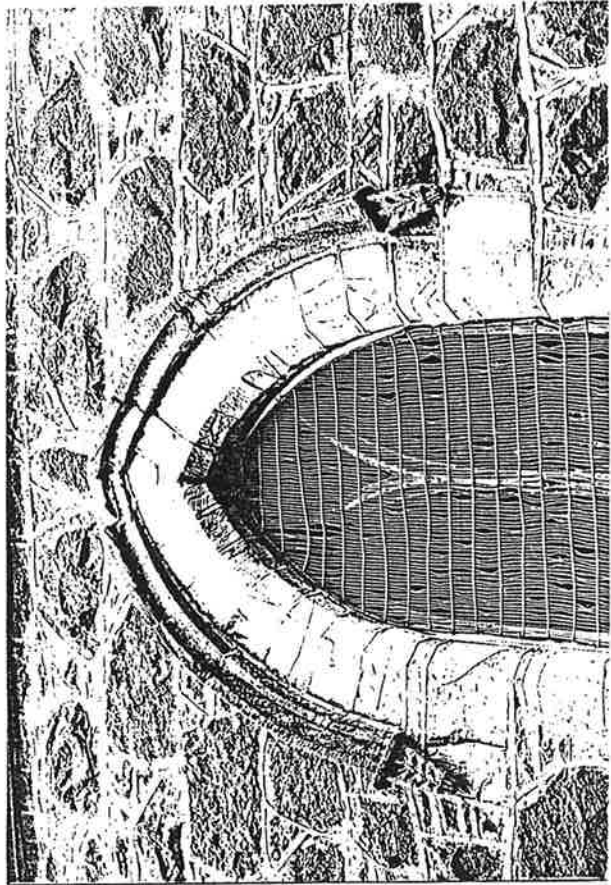
*Examples of Wall cracks & defects.*



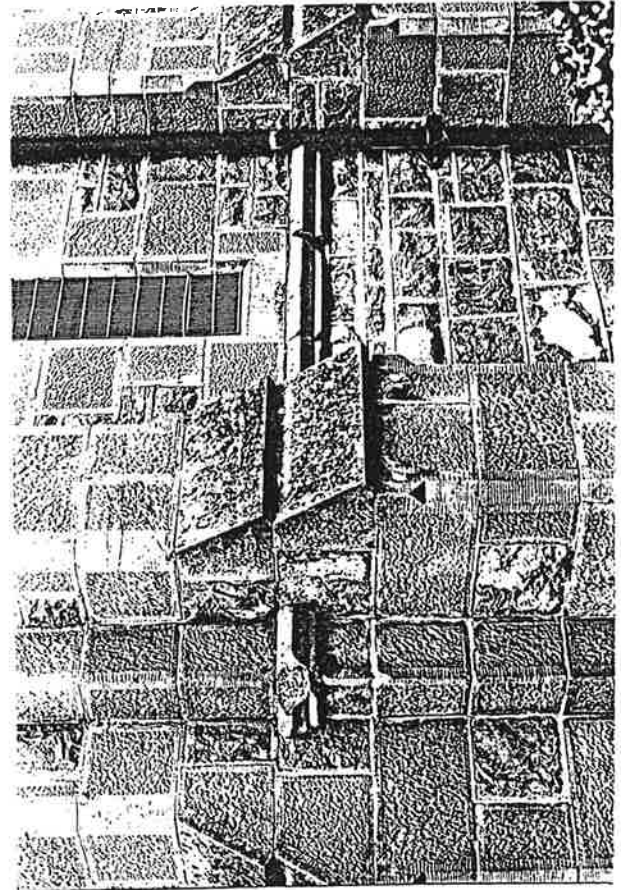
*Flaking & spalling to window W5.*



*Flaked & spalled buttress cap.*



*Flaking & spalling to weather moulding to window W2.*



*Cracking & chipping of string course.*

*Examples of wall cracks & defects*



around the building about two metres (6 feet 6 inches) out from the perimeter walls. Concrete slabs were laid from the Church walls out to the top of the inground walls, stormwater drainage was renewed and channelled away. the surface of the slabs was then paved with cobble stones.

**K2. SPIRE:** During 1987 it became evident that serious damage was being caused to the cedar shingles on the spire by flocks of cockatoos and galahs. They were chewing the soft cedar and dropping the pieces in piles all around the porch. A decision was taken to reshingle in hardwood shingles and a supply of these made from split Casurina Torulosa, commonly known as Forest Oak, was discovered in Northern N.S.W. These had been successful in reshingling such important buildings as the Hyde Park Barracks and Cadman Cottage in Sydney. The reshingling took place between May and August 1988. During the work and with the advantage of the scaffolding a careful examination of the cross was found to be in a very defective state with advanced stages of rust settled in.

During the dismantling of the cross a bullet was found lodged in the wooden inner material. This had penetrated the outer thin metal lining and accelerated the rusting process. Both the metal cap and the cross were replaced in new material, with the cross in square copper tubing.

The spire work was completed in August 1988 and it appears the birds have been fully discouraged.

**K3. LYCH GATES:** Also in 1987, both the east and west lych gate structures were restored by rebuilding parts of the stonework, replacing damaged timbers in the frames and reshingling. These were covered with cedar shingles because the cockatoos are too timid to descend to the lower level of the lych gate structures.

In 1991, the seats and ornamental gates were restored.

**K4. STAINED GLASS WINDOWS:** The fourth stage of restoration began in mid-1990. The report at the time stated, "There are seventeen windows in the church, of which eight are in varying stages of failure."

The windows needing restoration were in a considerable state of collapse as indicated by extensive distortion and slippage. There was also glass breakage, lead came crystallization, broken solder joints, loss of came cement, saddle bar decay and broken wires.

Mr David Beavis, a conservator and stained glass artisan of considerable experience, was engaged for the work. This involved photography, dismantling, boxing and removal to Mr Beavis' studio where the detailed and careful work of restoration was done. Temporary boarding was installed in the window openings to give protection from weather conditions during the absence of the windows.

After installation, clear polycarbonate sheeting was installed externally instead of the wire grills. This material is strong, durable and will withstand considerable impact such as hail stones and vandal activity. It allows excellent light penetration and enhances the beauty of the windows. It has U.V. value of about 14 times that of glass.

Windows completed to date are as follows:

- W2. Francis Campbell, wife of Frederick Campbell
- W6. Elizabeth Gibbes, wife of Colonel J.G.N. Gibbes,

- W5. George Campbell
- W6. Colonel J.G.N. Gibbes
- W7. Not dedicated
- W8. Robert Campbell (this is the East Window in the Sanctuary)
- W9. May Hayman, Nurse missionary martyred in Papua 1942
- W10. Dorothea Georgie Williams
- W11. Windows constructed from glass pieces collected from bombed churches in and around the Somme Battlefields in France during 1917
- W13. Good Shepherd window

In conjunction with this work, a special study of the micro-climate was made, to record the air temperature and relative humidity at the interior faces of the stained glass, interspace ventilation, the condensation effects and the air speed in the environmental factors and assessment of the combined factors of climatic stress, pollution and micro-biological contamination. The data recorded is presently being analyzed.

**K5. STONEWORK:** E. & J. Greaves, master stonemasons commenced work early in 1993. The external gable coping stones and those abutting the tower have been restored. This involved removing the sections, checking for soundness, drilling and pinning those stones considered to be sound and making new copings for replacement of those rejected. All coping stone work has now been completed to these locations.

The buttress capping stones in eight locations were removed, checked and a great deal of stone work discarded as being unsound. New stones were obtained and cut and shaped as replacement caps faithfully made to match the originals, and these have been fitted into position.

During the restoration of the East Window (W8) a great deal of deterioration of the stone frame and tracery was apparent. Defective stones, such as key stones, visours and so on were either repaired or replaced to ensure a sound frame for the reinstallation of the window panels.

**K6. ELECTRICAL REWIRING & LIGHTING:** The upgrading and renewing of the electric wiring throughout the Church including new light fittings was carried out in 1993. The light fittings chosen are compatible with the original lights installed in the Church in 1924.

New switch gear replaces the old system on the Bellingring floor and the unsightly conduits on the north wall of the tower have been removed. An intricate system of concealing the new wiring in the space between the tower and nave was evolved, together with drilling a 100mm (4") hole 1.2 metres long diagonally through the tower wall in which to run the cables into the switch gear location.

**K7. SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:** At the time of restoration works carried out in 1968-69 it was discovered that most floors were in a severe state of decay as a result of dry rot caused by the timbers resting on the ground surface. These were all removed, the ground underneath excavated about 500mm deep, sumps put in and drained to the external drainage lines. The floors were replaced with new materials. No sub floor ventilation existed at all, so a series of opening were cut into the walls and covered with a variety of grille vents.

Over the past several years severe cracks appeared in the walls, mostly at the east end. These were monitored and ground tests carried out. An evaluation was made which showed that similar conditions existed as were found under the Church (See K1 above). Stabilisation of the soils under and outside the Building was then done as for the Church. This was followed by restoration of plastering and painting. the makeshift previous vents were removed and replaced with

terracotta ones painted to match the walls.

#### L. CONSERVATION WORKS STILL TO BE DONE

L1. PEWS, HEATING, PLASTERING & PAINTING: All these items of work are grouped together as the times of their execution must coincide with the programmed Works Schedule. Contracts have been arranged with each of the contractors for the various items.

The church will be closed for use from Monday, 2 May to Friday, 29 July 1994 inclusive, to enable the critical timetable to be achieved.

L2. REMAINING WINDOW: There are six stained glass windows still to be restored. These are:

W1 & W4 - located at the west end of the nave each side of the Balcony;  
W14, W15, W16 & W17 - located in the Tower.

Following the completion of the Internal works referred to in L1 above, then work items will be programmed depending on availability of funds.

L3. REMAINING STONEWORK: This work includes:

Several more buttress caps; string course below windows all round; window and door head weather mouldings; replacement of some wall stones and renovation of portion of the chancel arch.

Following completion of the Internal works referred to in M1 above, the stonework items will be programmed depending on availability of funds.

M. GROUNDS, CHURCHYARD, ROADWAY: The heritage area of the Precinct includes some fine landscape and tree planting. Any remedial work must be in accordance with the 1984 conservation plan. Some of the pine trees, now over 100 years old, are showing signs of failure. The one between the Old Schoolhouse and the Parish Centre has had to be recently removed and will hopefully be replaced by propagation of seeds gathered from its cones.

Many graves and tomb stones have settled, tilted and broken, some by vandal action. These all have to be assessed and appropriate action taken.

These work items will be programmed at a later date when funds become available.

N. FUNDING: Over several years we have been fortunate indeed to obtain restoration funding from:

- . Canberra Community Grants Programme
- . Natural Estates Grants Programme
- . A.C.T. Heritage Grants Programme
- . Commonwealth Government Heritage Properties Restoration Programme

In addition the Operation Conservation Appeal Committee has continued to swell the funds available.

Other funds have come generously from several sources such as:

- . Friends of St John's
- . Gibbes Family (T. Zouch) for windows W3 and W6

- . St John's Colonial Fair
- . Book sales
- . Spec. Funds & Welcoming ministry catering
- . American Ambassador (Mr W. Lane)
- . Parish Funds
- . Various other sources

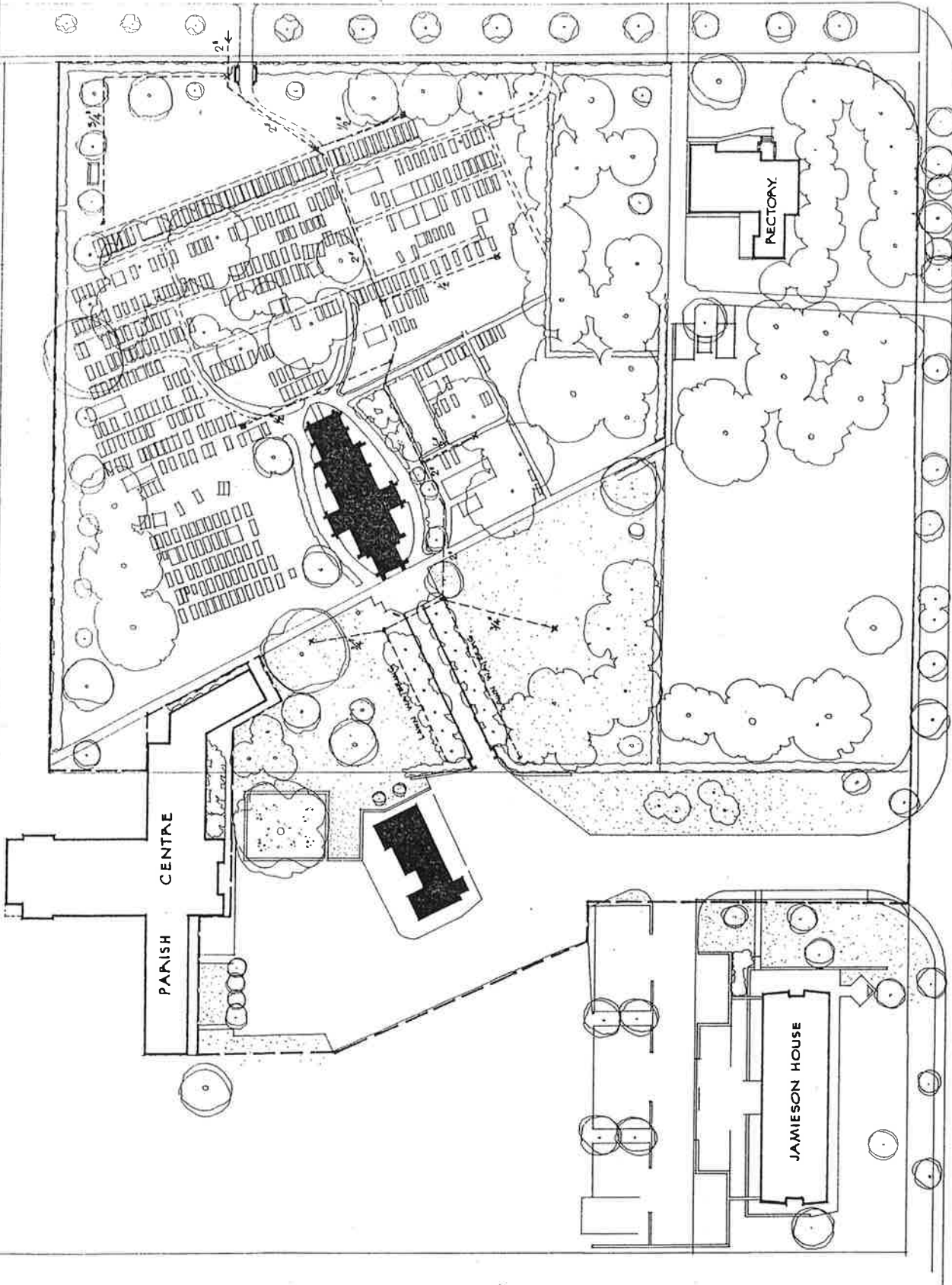
The Operation Conservation Appeal's Target is \$600,000-00. Of this about \$350,000 has been raised by the above sources and most has been spent on the works completed to date.

There is still a lot more money to be raised and the aim is to have all the work connected with the Church Building completed before 12 March 1995 which is the 150th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church in 1845 by the first and only Bishop of Australia, Bishop Broughton.

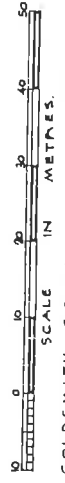
**O. CONCLUSION:** We are proud of our beautiful little church with its long history in the life of this area and of its great Heritage significance. We have gone a long way in achieving the aims of the Conservation Plan and with hope, God's help and yours, we will ensure that the Church will Still Stand Firm for the generations to come.

**JOHN GOLDSMITH - HONORARY ARCHITECT**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Goldsmith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.



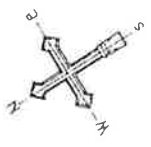
CONSTITUTION AVENUE.  
 ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA  
 SITE PLAN.



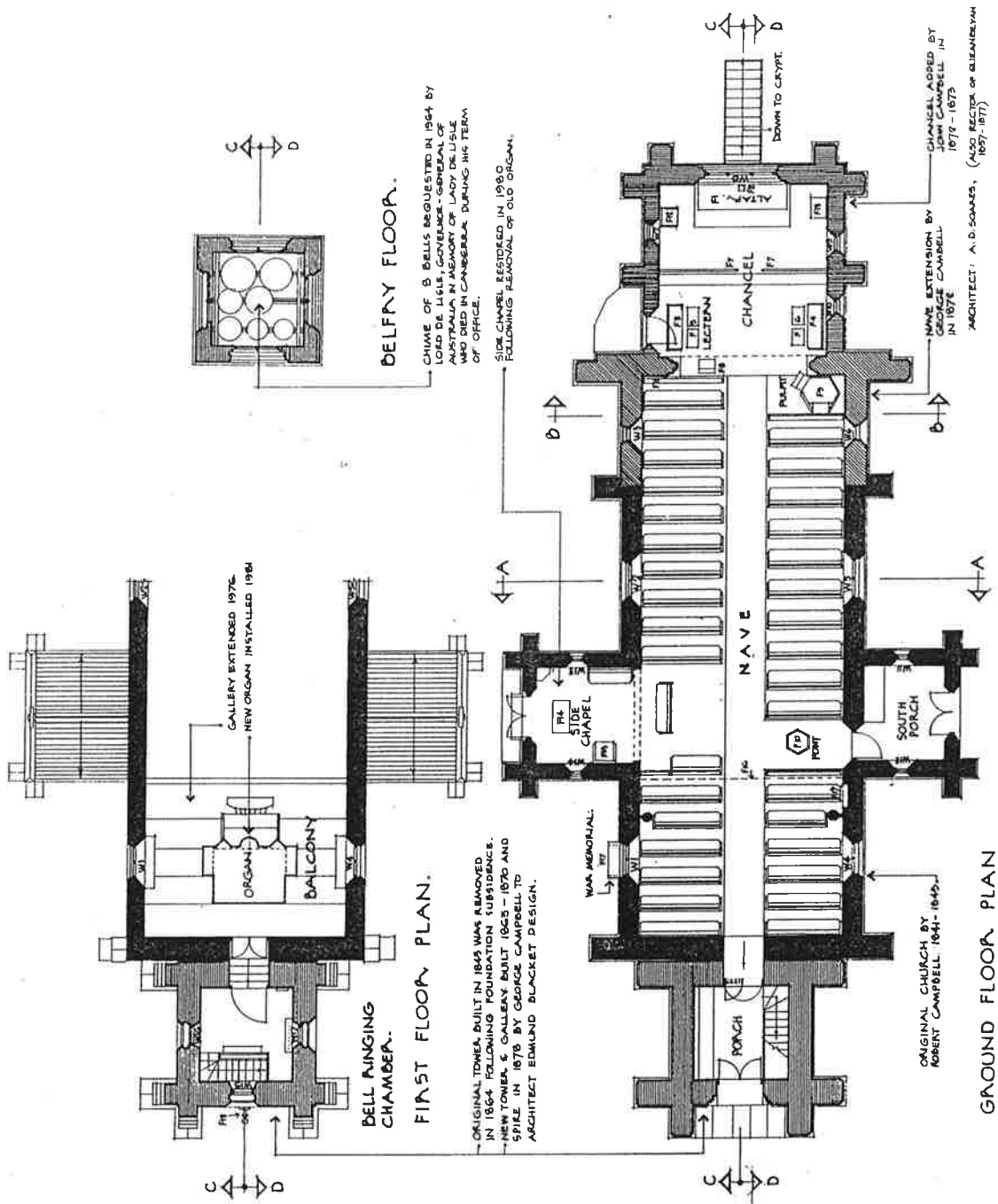
JOHN GOLDSMITH F.P.A.I.A. HONORARY ARCHITECT. MAY 1964.

--- SITE AREA COVERED BY CONSERVATION PLAN

GARDEN WATERING PLAN:  
 \* ALL LINES TO BE IN COPPER.  
 \* ALLOW FOR 1/2 IN. DIAMETER HOSE.  
 \* IN ADDITION TO THOSE SHOWN,  
 BY LATER DIRECTION. 3/15/64



B  
 10



CHIME OF 8 BELLS REQUESTED IN 1964 BY THE REV. G. J. B. SMITH, Rector of the Church, AUSTRALIA IN MEMORY OF LADY DE LUKE WHO DIED IN CANBERRA DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE.

SIDE CHAPEL RESTORED IN 1960 FOLLOWING REMOVAL OF OLD ORGAN.

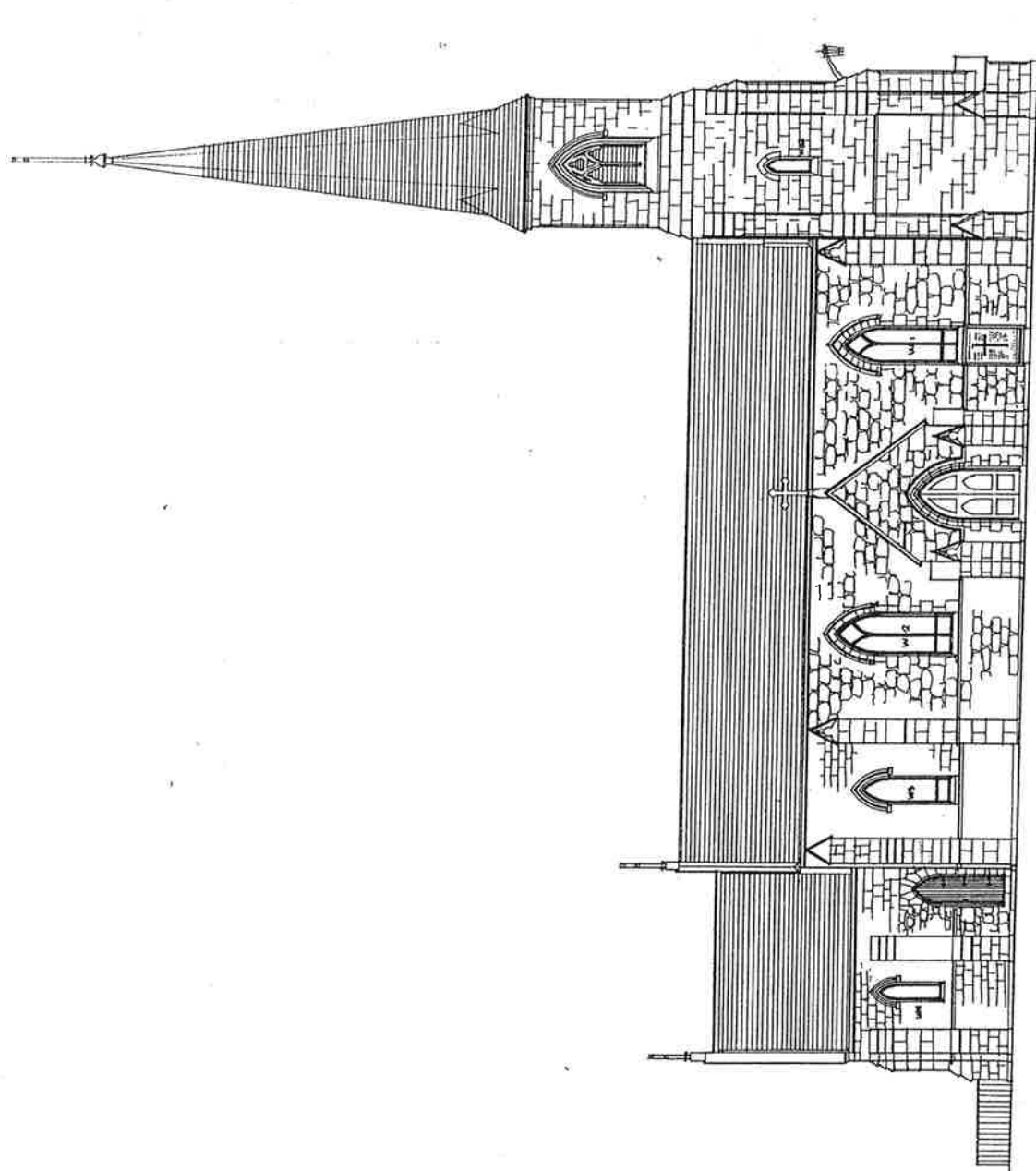
ORIGINAL TOWER BUILT IN 1849 WAS REMOVED IN 1864 FOLLOWING FOUNDATION SUBSIDENCE.  
NEW TOWER & GALLERY BUILT 1865-1870 AND SPIRE IN 1876 BY GEORGE CAMPBELL TO ARCHITECT EDMUND BLACKET DESIGN.

# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA

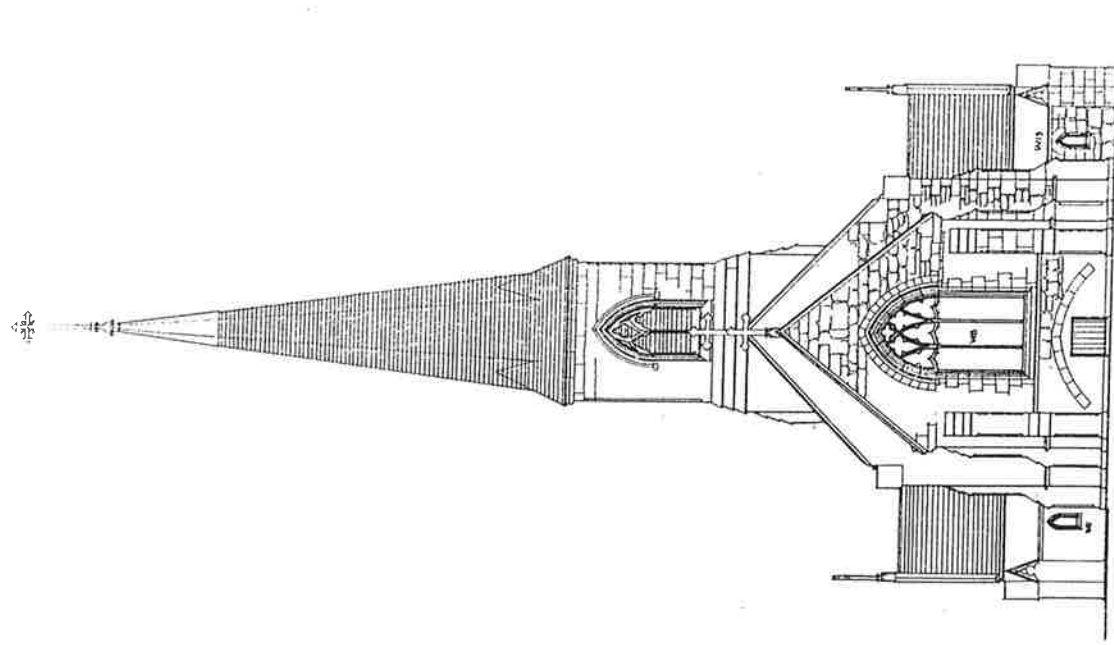
## MEASURED DRAWING

JOHN GOLDSMITH F.R.A.I.A. HONORARY ARCHITECT. MAY 1984.



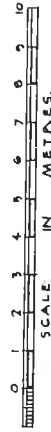


NORTH ELEVATION



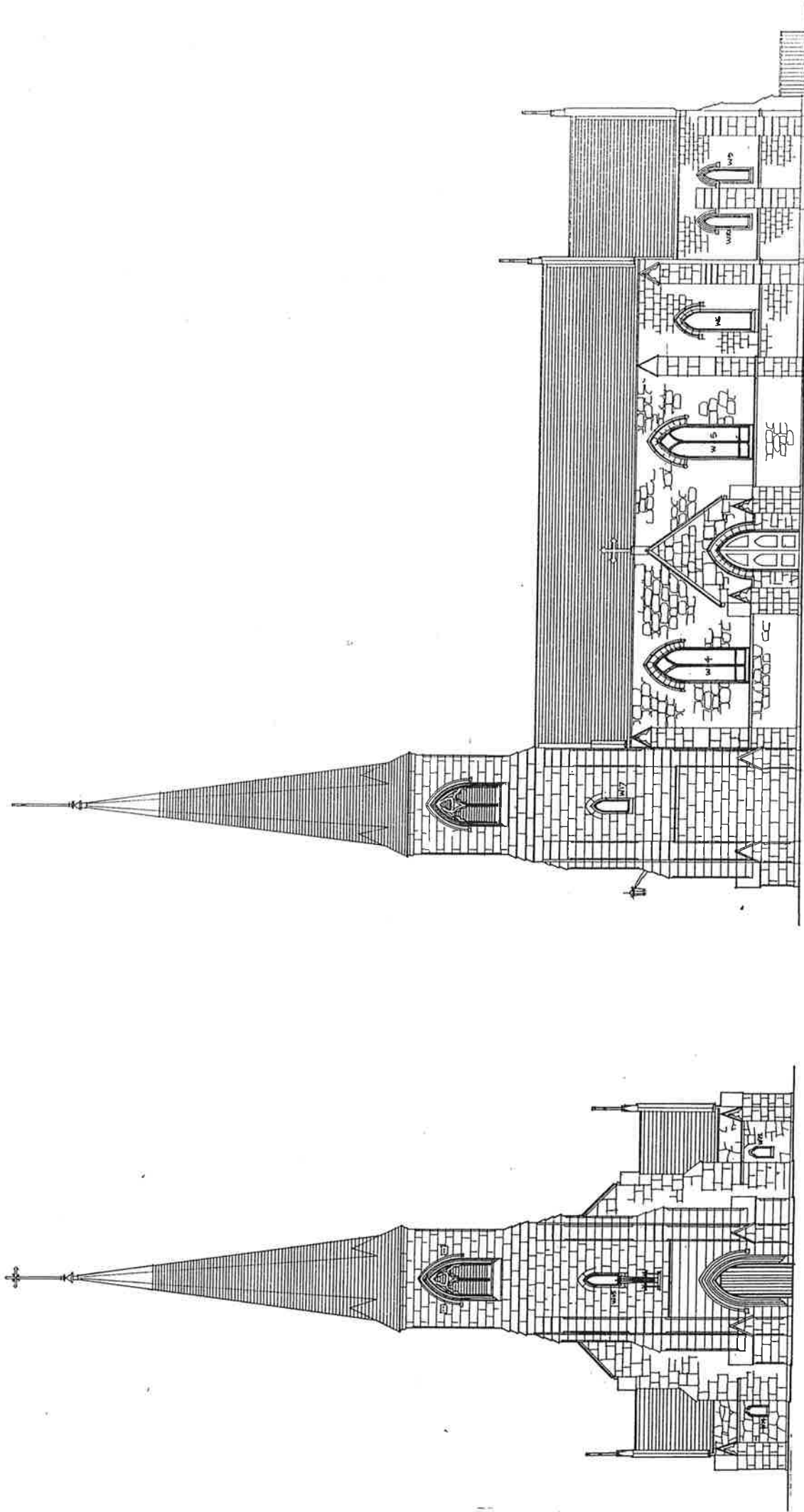
EAST ELEVATION

ANGELICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA  
MEASURED DRAWING



JOHN. GOLDSMITH F.R.A.I.A. HONORARY ARCHITECT. MAY 1904

JG



WEST ELEVATION

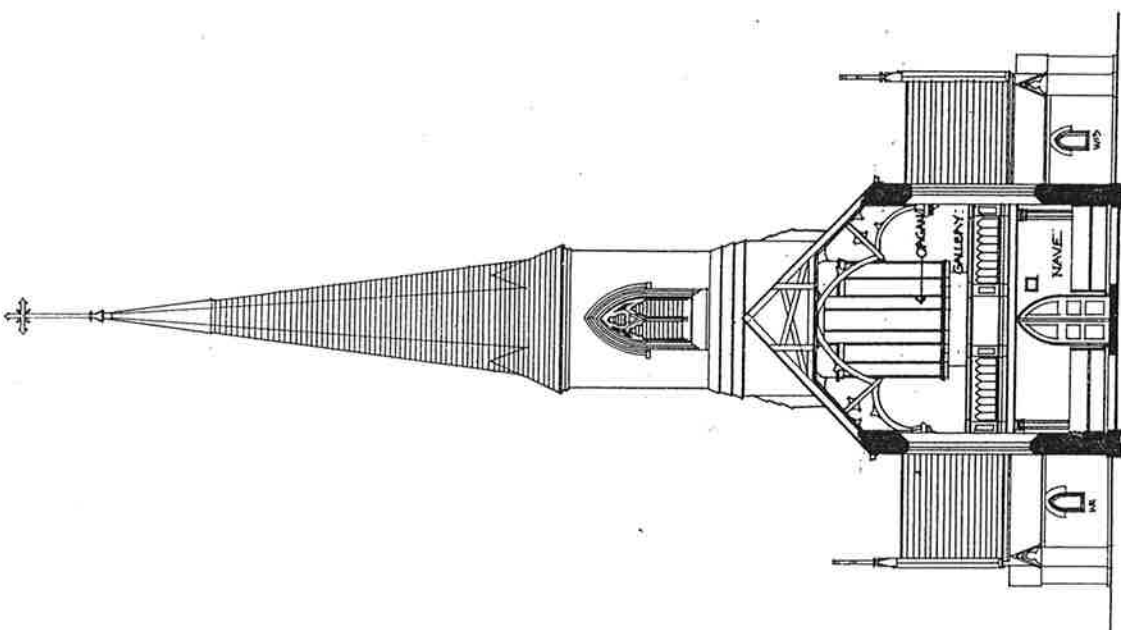
SOUTH ELEVATION

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA.  
 MEASURED DRAWING

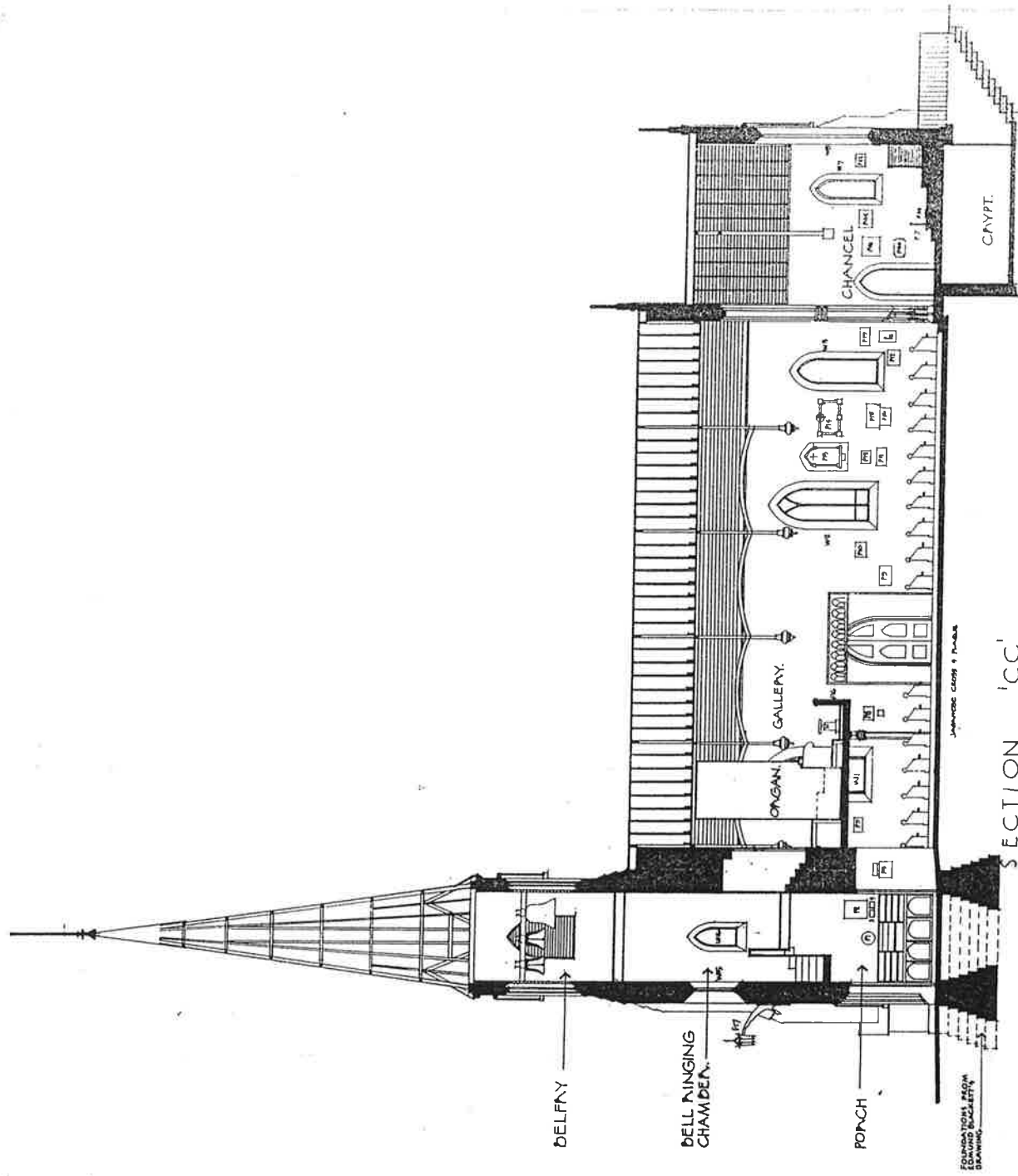
SCALE IN METRES  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JOHN GOLDSMITH F.R.A.I.A. HONORARY ARCHITECT. MAY 1984





SECTION 'AA'



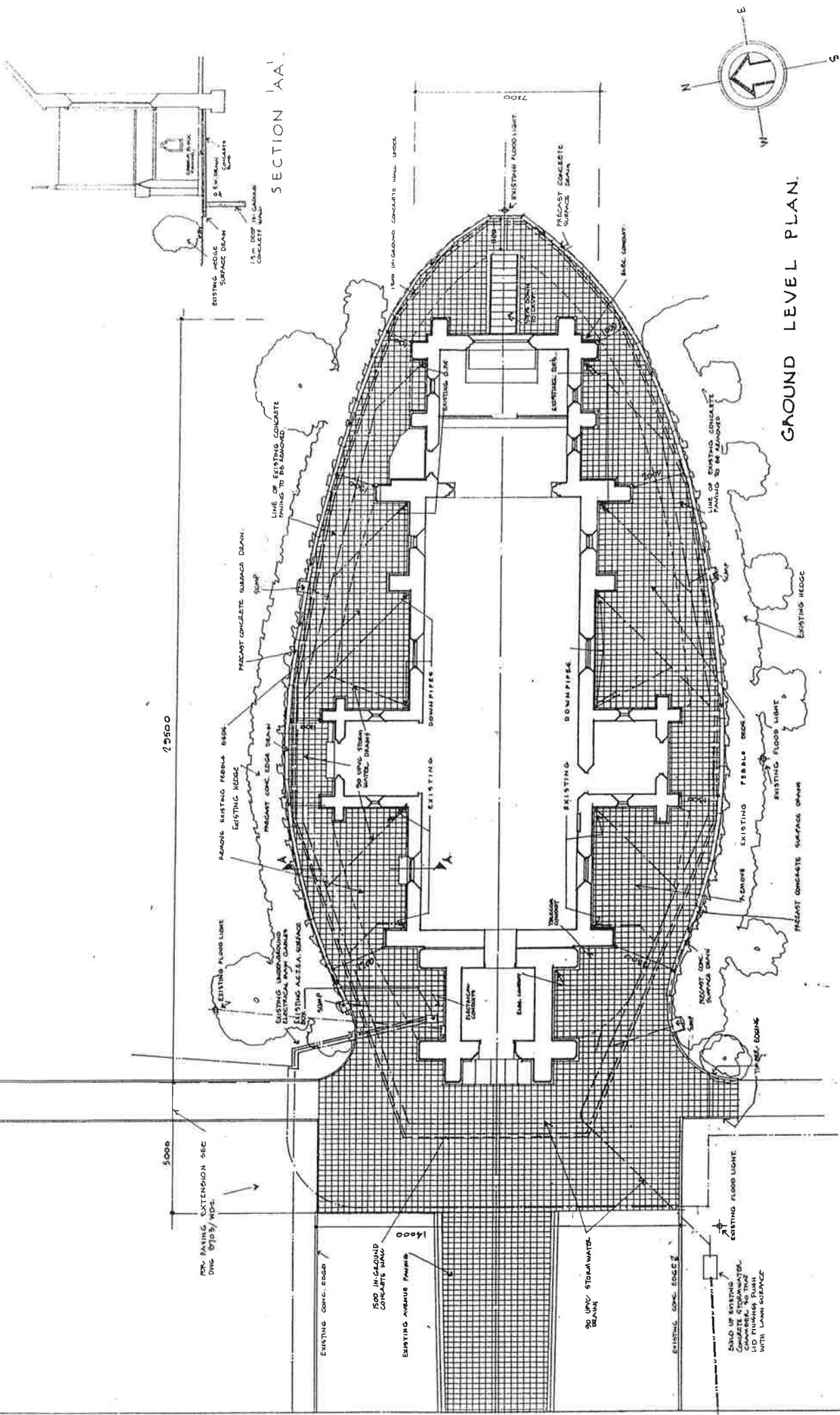
SECTION 'CC'



ANGELICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CANBERRA.  
MEASURED DRAWING



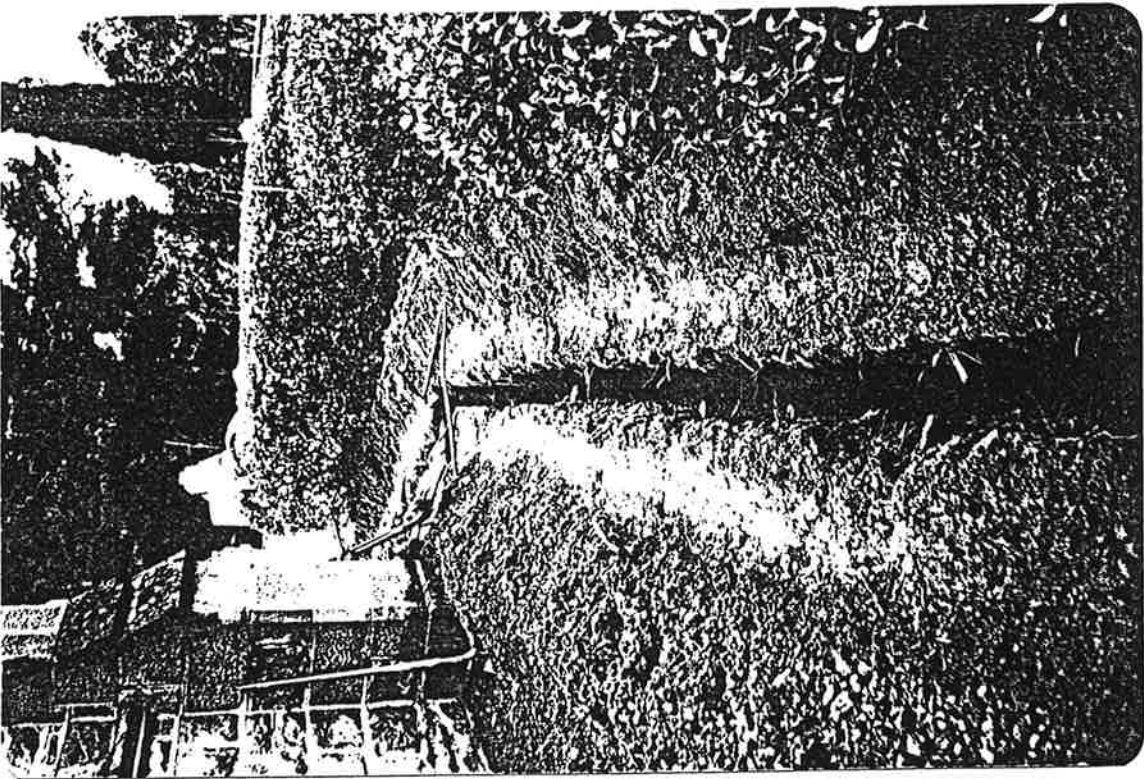
JOHN GOLDSMITH F.A.S.A. HONORARY ARCHITECT MAY 1904.



ANGELICAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, BLOCK 1, SECTION 33, REID, A.C.T.  
 RESTORATION PROGRAMME, STAGE ONE. SCALE 1:100

DRAWING NO:  
 8703/W/D 1  
 JULY 1987

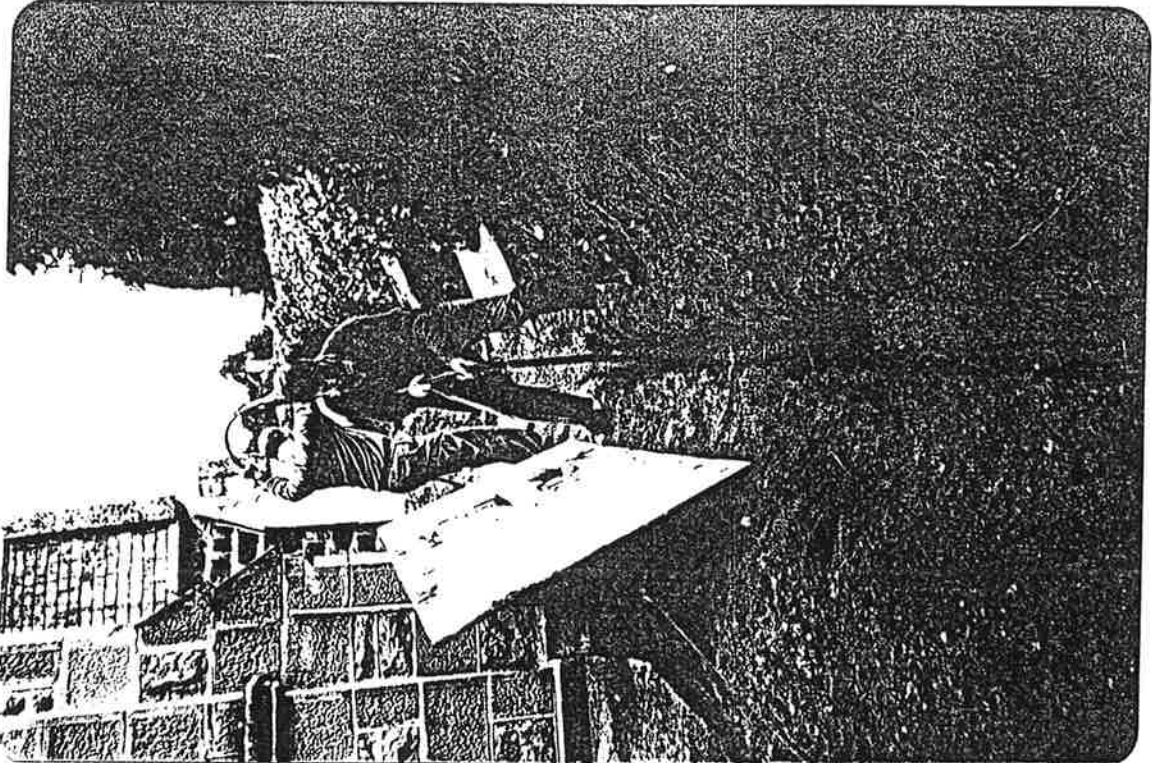
JOHN GOLDSMITH, F.N.A.I.A., HONORARY ARCHITECT, 27 GORNE CLOSE, HAWKEM, A.C.T., 2614,  
 HURRAY NORTHROP PTY. LTD, CONSULTING ENGINEERS, CINEMA CENTRE, BUNDA STABET, CAMDENRA, A.C.T., 2801,  
 TELEPHONE : 54 7849  
 TELEPHONE : 49 1900



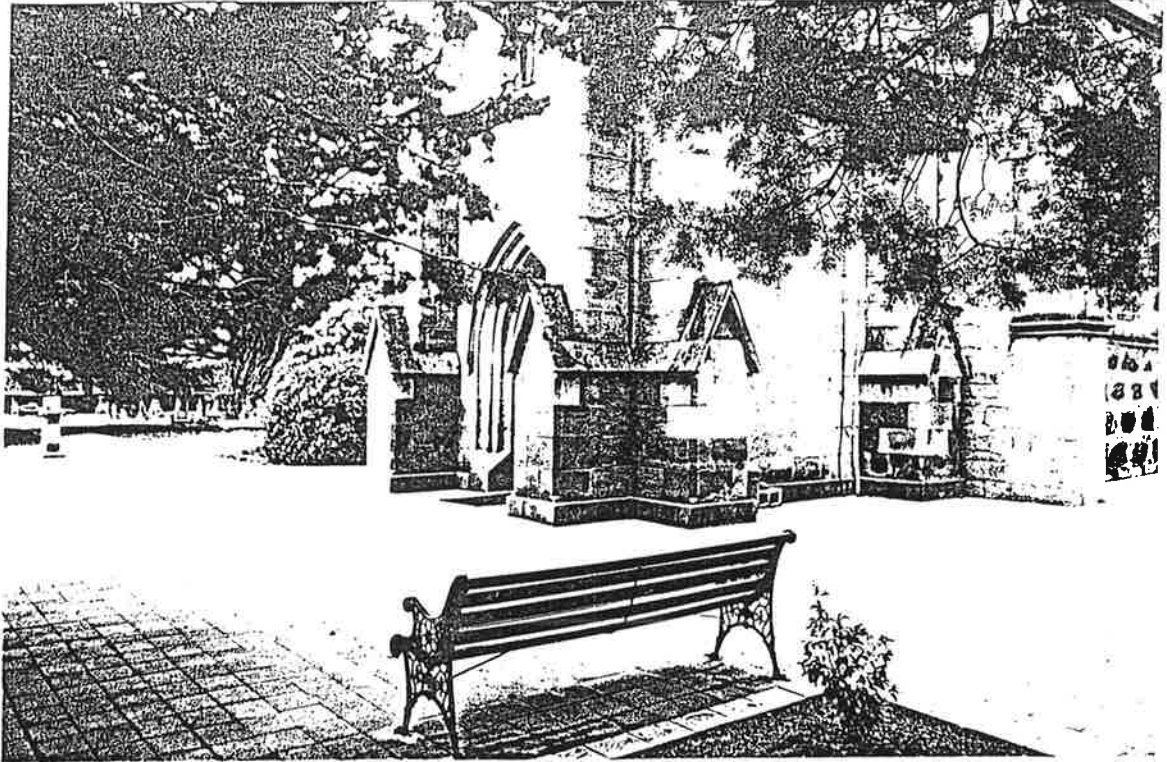
1.5 m. x 800 m excavation

Stabilisation work in progress

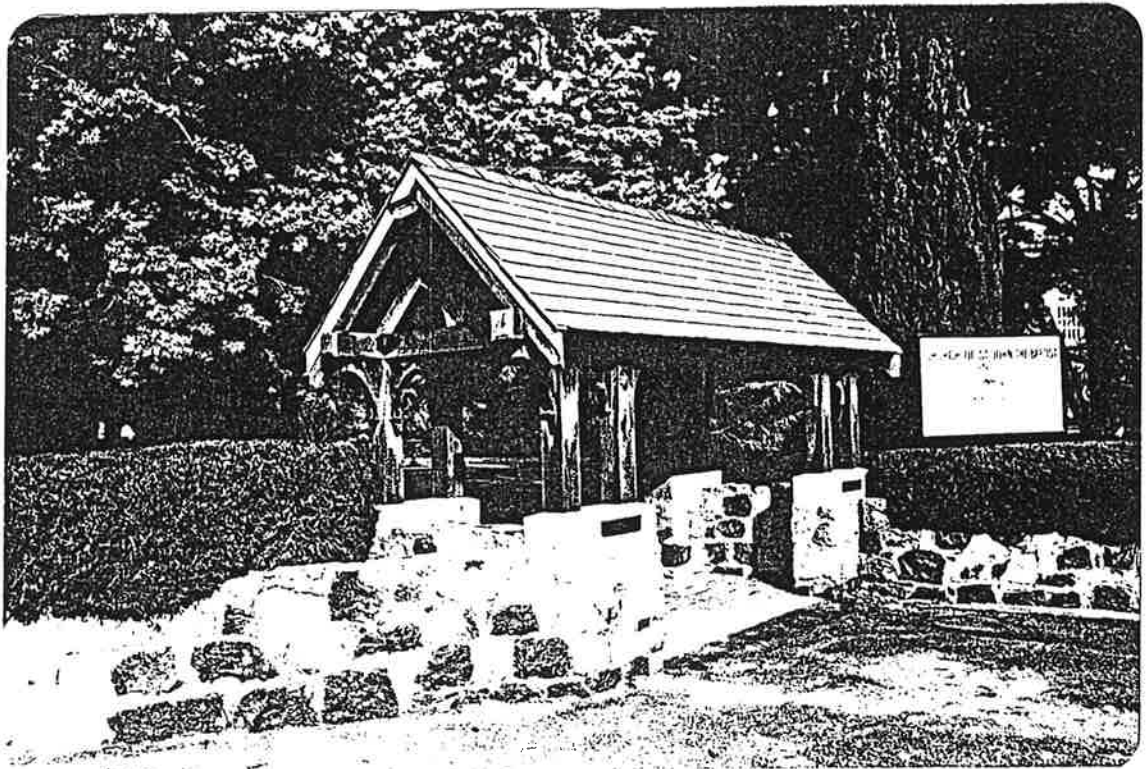
July - Sept 1987.



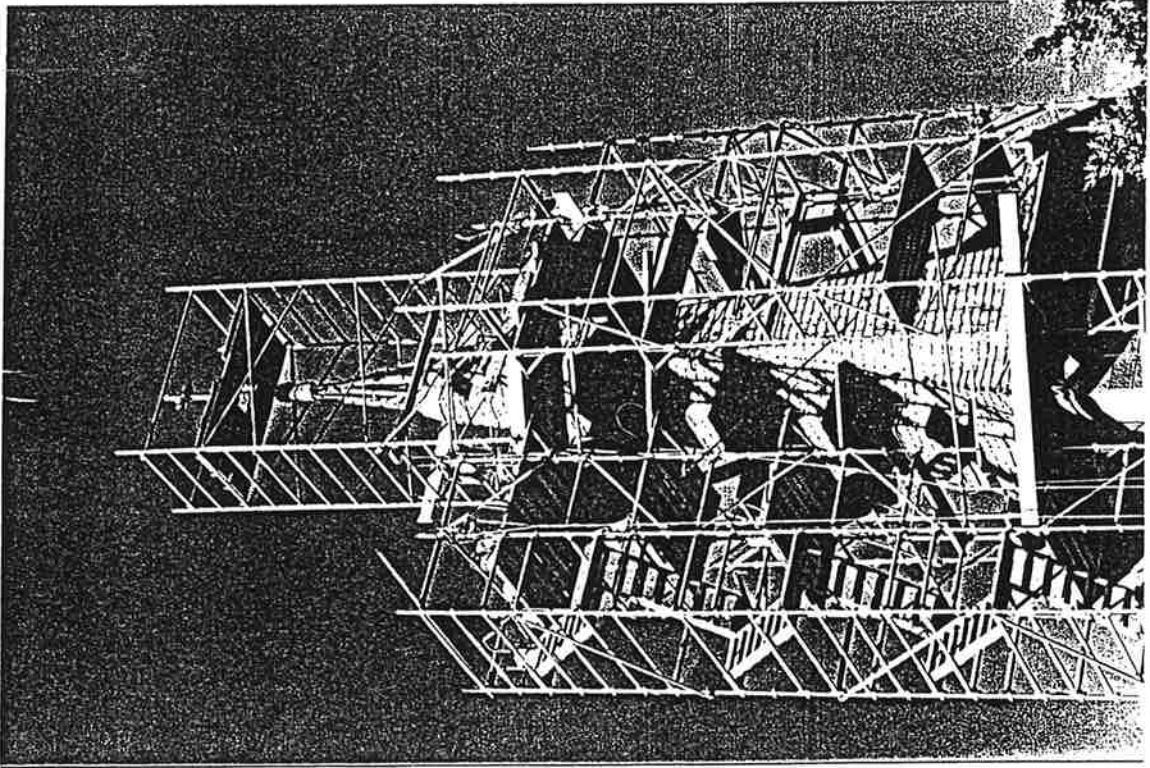
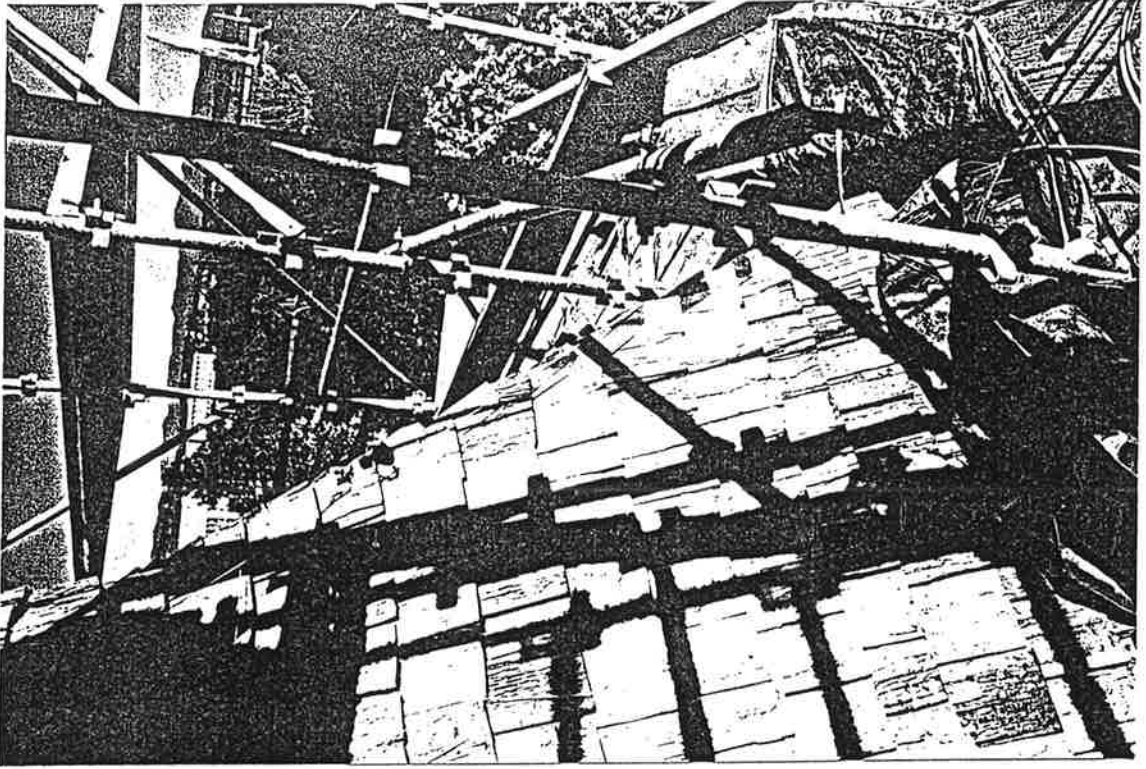
In ground concrete wall being poured



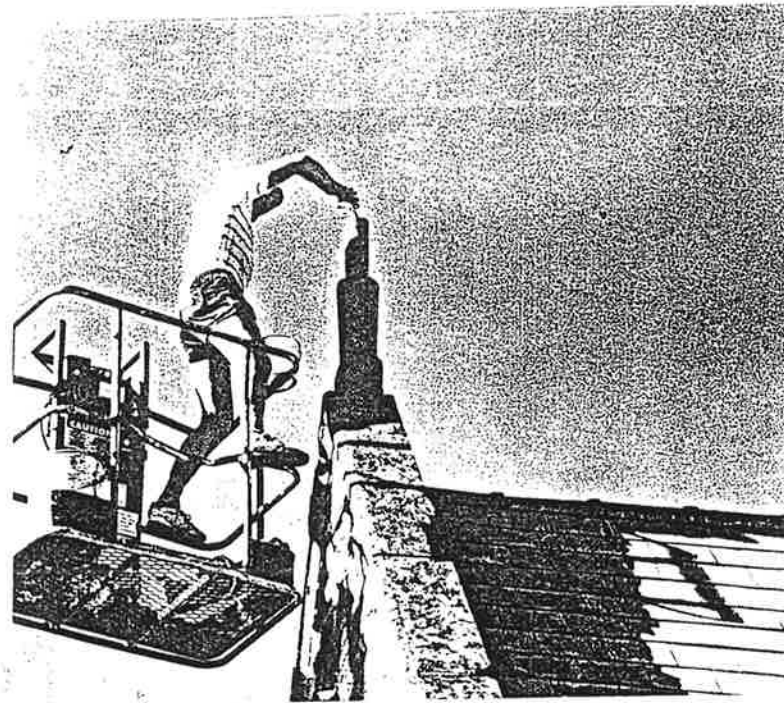
*Church stabilisation - In ground walls and surface slabs with finishing paving completed*



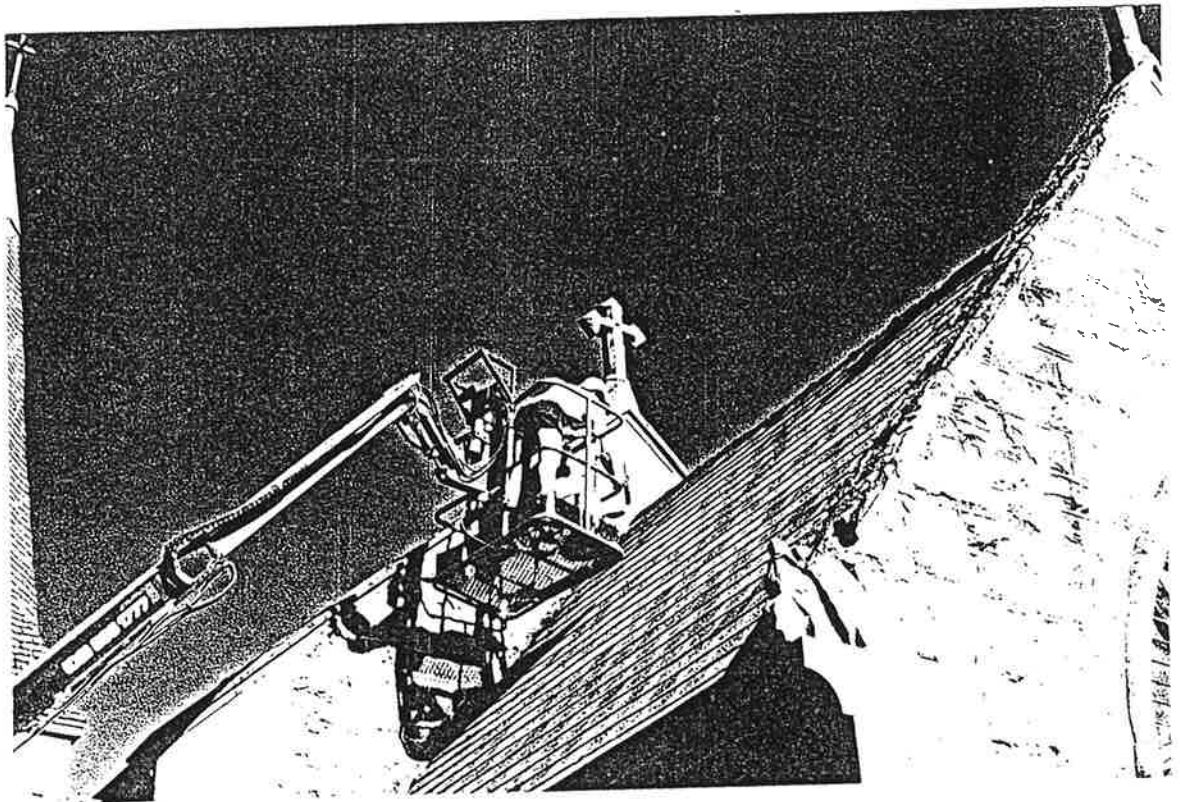
*Restoration of West hych gate*



Restoring of Spire. June - Sept 1988



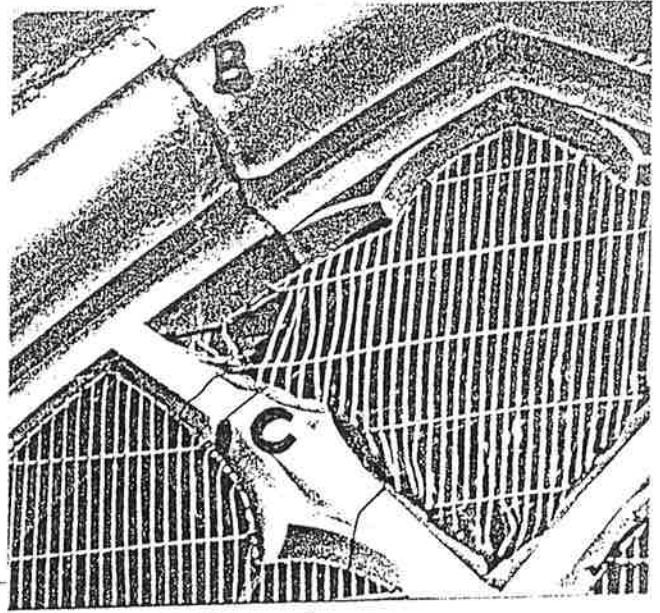
*Preparing to fix replacement Cross*



*Cross fixed.*

*Replacement of Cross to Chancel Gable  
after lightning strike.*

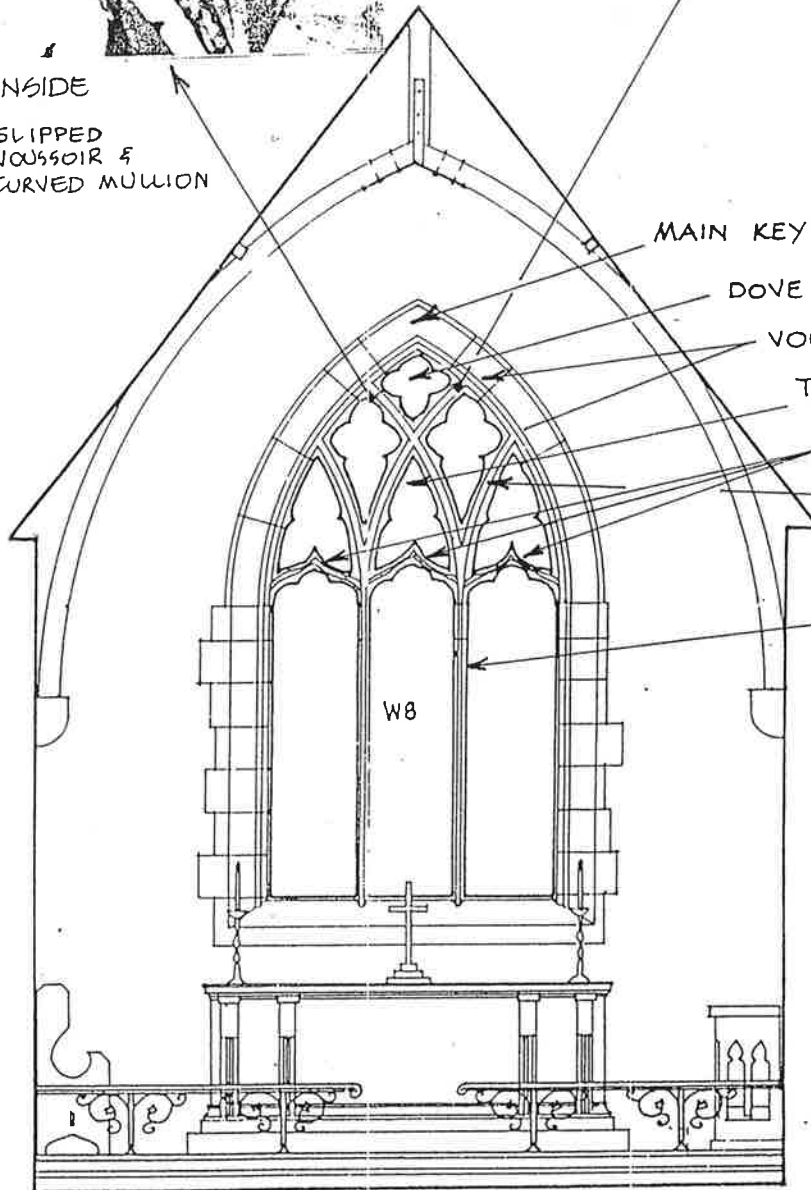
1930



INSIDE  
**A** SLIPPED  
 VOUSSOIR &  
 CURVED MULLION

OUTSIDE

**B** SLIPPED MAIN  
 KEYSTONE  
**C** CRACKED & SLIPPED  
 VOUSSOIR & CURVED  
 MULLION.



MAIN KEYSTONE.

DOVE WINDOW.

VOUSSOIRS.

TRACERY.

LANCET KEY STONES.

CURVED MULLIONS.

MULLIONS

W8

EAST WINDOW