

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
FORMER BISHOP'S PALACE AND PRESBYTERY**



Google Street View, July 2023 (accessed 30 July 2024)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current 2GP CCB Reference No:	CC810
Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX124
Address	277 Rattray Street, Dunedin
Other Building Names	Rockmount House
Located within a Heritage Precinct	City Rise Residential Heritage Precinct
HNZPT List Reference & Description	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Residential
Condition of Property:	Not known to be at risk because of condition
Related Assessment:	BX123 – 295 Rattray Street

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Meets criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope
✓	External/ancillary elements	Stone boundary wall and gate at Rattray Street and Bishops Place boundary
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
	Excluded elements	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1871 for prominent Dunedin businessman and politician George Duncan, the former Bishop's Palace and Presbytery has historic and social significance for its association with Duncan and for its long association with the Catholic bishops and clergy through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It has design significance as a substantial nineteenth-century Italianate villa designed by its owner. The former Bishop's Palace and Presbytery has cultural significance for its demonstration of the way of life of the Bishops and clergy of the Catholic Church, sitting alongside the former Christian Brothers' Residence (CC818), St Joseph's Cathedral (C504i), and St Dominic's Priory (B586), St Joseph's Hall (B504ii), illustrating the way of life of the Catholic community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The former Bishop's Palace is comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type and period. When compared with other scheduled buildings, it meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Victorian (1838-1901) - original construction
Style	Italianate villa
Era/Date of Construction	1871 – original construction 1950s-1960s - additions
Architect/Designer/Builder	George Duncan – owner/designer
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	George Duncan Residence. Roman Catholic Bishop's Palace and Presbytery.
Primary Construction Materials	Stone, brick, slate roofing, steel and timber joinery (some aluminium window joinery).
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Gable and bay window, return verandah, elevated setting, quoins.

Previous site development

Section 78 Block XII Town of Dunedin was granted to miller John Duncan in 1863. John was the brother of George Duncan, the later owner of Rockmount House, built on this section in 1871. It is not known whether there were structures on this site prior to Rockmount House being built.¹

Design and construction



Rockmount House in 1871 (Auckland Libraries 1691/040)

Rockmount House was built in 1871 as residence of George Duncan. The *Otago Daily Times* described it as 'Italian style', built in blue stone with cemented brick facings, with entrances to Mount and Rattray Street. The entrance hall was 9 feet by 44 feet and L-shaped. On the right-hand side of the hall was the 26 ft by 18 ft dining room with a stained-glass door leading to the conservatory. Double doors led to the breakfast room. The drawing room was on the left of the hall (22 ft by 16 ft) with the library (13 ft by 14 ft) next to it. The servants' apartments included the kitchen, scullery, washhouse, storeroom, and pantry. Nine bedrooms and bathrooms were on the first floor. The doors were painted and grained in imitation walnut. The *Otago Daily Times* recorded that the building was planned by Mr Duncan and built under his supervision. Mr Gilchrist was responsible for the interior decoration.²

Typical for the period and style, the principal elevation is arranged around a central entry. A gable with projecting bay windows is offset by a porch and verandah on the opposite side of the entry. The two-storey building is substantial scale, and the use of stone and slate demonstrate the quality of the building. The roof comprises perpendicular gabled forms with valleys, the chimneys are still extant. The dwelling is located in a prominent and elevated setting above the intersection of Rattray, Smith Streets, and Bishops Place. A stone boundary wall and gate has been constructed along the Rattray Street, Bishops Place boundary. The rear of the building is visible from Bishops Road, however it is clear that the design of the building is orientated towards the north with service areas at the rear.

¹ Record of Title OT4/386.

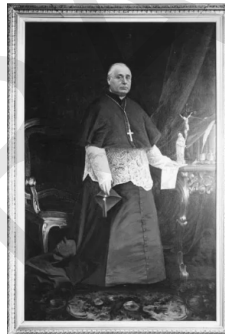
² *Otago Daily Times*, 31 August 1871, Page 2.



Aerial image from 1942 showing the dwelling above the intersection of Rattray and Smith Streets; Retrolens, https://files.interpret.co.nz/Retrolens/Imagery/SN223/Crown_223_512_33/High.jpg

Transfer to the Catholic Diocese

In April 1872, the Catholic diocese purchased Rockmount House as residence for the Roman Catholic Bishop and clergy of Dunedin. The purchase price was understood to be £3,200.³



Bishop Patrick Moran, first resident Bishop (Rory Sweetman, 'Catholic Church - Irish settler church', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/29280/bishop-patrick-moran> (accessed 30 July 2024)

Later history and development

The residence remained home to the Catholic Bishop and clergy until it was sold in 1899. The building has undergone alterations in the twentieth century, although the original form remains legible.

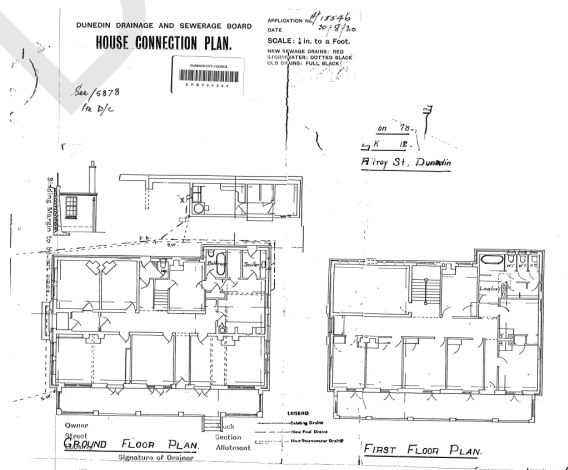
³ *Otago Daily Times*, 17 April 1872, Page 2.



Bishop's Palace with the then Christian Brothers' Residence to the right c.1875 (Hocken Collections, P155-002/1-011)

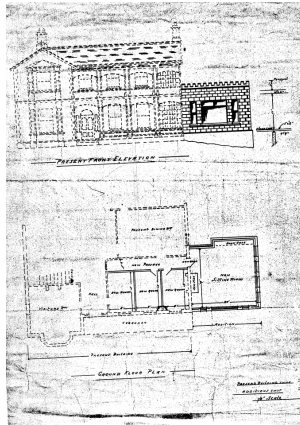


Bishop's Palace and the Catholic Cathedral c.1880s (Hocken Collections P1990-015/48-005)



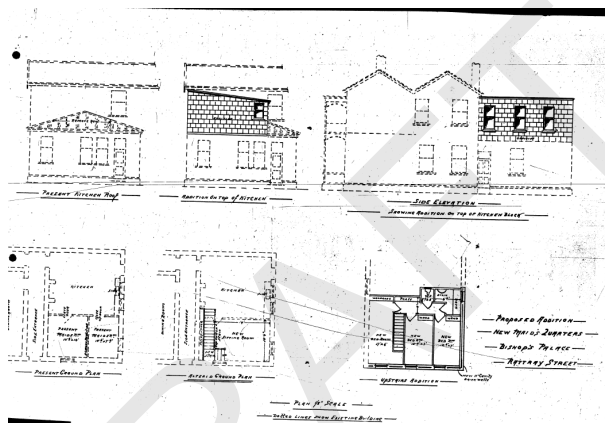
Floor Plan in 1920 (DCC Plans)

Two garages were erected in 1945.



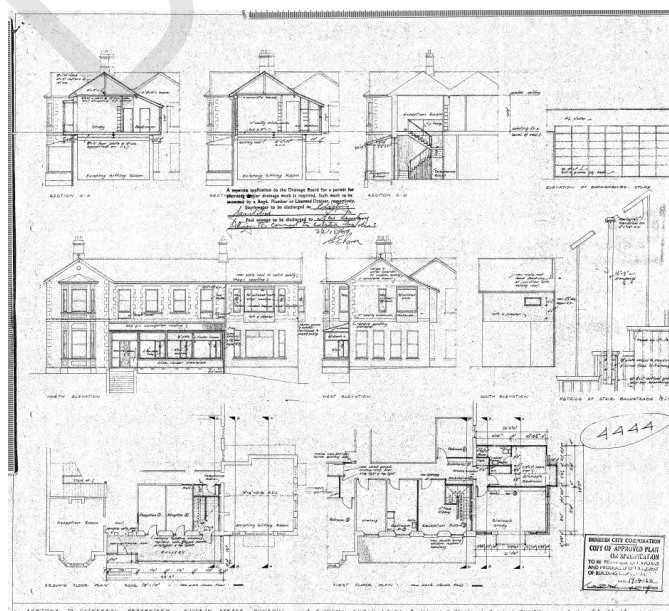
Add sitting room (Dunedin City Council Plans)

A sitting room was added to the north elevation in 1945.



Plans showing the addition of the maids' quarters in 1945 (DCC Plans)

Maids' quarters were added to the rear elevation in 1945.



1959 additions to the Bishops' Palace (Dunedin City Council Plans)

In 1959, further alterations were made, with the veranda closed in the glazing and an additional storey added to the earlier sitting room addition. The new rooms housed the Bishop's study and bedroom, with some interior reconfiguration to provide a reception room and an additional bedroom and oratory on the first floor. A further garage was erected in 1986.

The diocese sold the building in 1999. It was converted into a hostel. In 2004, the associated stable/gatehouse was upgraded to provide accommodation.

Notable people/Themes

Catholic Buildings in the Rattray Street area

This area, dominated by Catholic ecclesiastical buildings, dwellings, and later educational facilities has colloquially been referred to as the 'Vatican'. The subject dwelling is associated with the following heritage buildings

- St Joseph's Cathedral (B504i/ HNZPT Cat 1)
- St Dominic's Priory (B586/HNZPT Cat 1)
- St Joseph's Hall (B504ii/HNZPT Cat 2)
- The Christian Brothers Residence (CCB818).

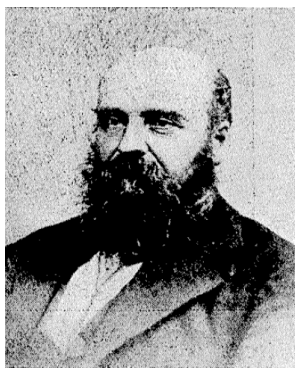
Bishops' Palace and Presbytery

The Bishop's Palace was the seat of religious administration and the locus of the spiritual, social, and political life of the Catholic community from 1872-1999. As a substantial residence, it represented the status and standing of the Bishop and clergy – both their power over and separation from the community. It is situated across the road from St Joseph's Cathedral and next to the former Christian Brothers' Residence, creating a complex of significant ecclesiastical buildings. As the Bishop's Palace and presbytery, the residence served the parish, with its priests providing pastoral care. Heritage New Zealand notes that such buildings were places where members of the parish and others met with the clergy at the presbytery for preparation for baptism, holy communion, confession/reconciliation, confirmation, and marriage.⁴

The resident Dunedin Bishops were Patrick Moran (1869–1895), Michael Verdon (1896–1918) James Whyte (1920-1957), John Patrick Kavanagh (1957–1985), and Leonard Anthony Boyle (1985–2004). All were significant figures in the Dunedin Catholic community.

⁴ [https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/2645/St%20Patrick's%20Presbytery%20\(Catholic\)](https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/2645/St%20Patrick's%20Presbytery%20(Catholic)) accessed 30 July 2024.

George Duncan



George Duncan (Otago Witness 20 April 1910 Page 44 (Supplement))

George Duncan (c.1827-1879) was among the early European immigrants to Dunedin, arriving aboard the *Mooltan* in December 1849. Duncan was prominent in business and political circles – he started the Water of Leith Flour Mills in 1859 and Wellpark Brewery in 1866, among other business concerns.⁵ He entered politics in 1860 as a member of the Town Board, and in 1863 was one of the members of the Provincial Council for North Harbour district. In that year he also became a member of the Executive, holding the office of Secretary for Public Works, overseeing the foundation of the Exhibition Building. In 1867 he was a member of the Council. He later held the position of Provincial Treasurer. In 1873, he left Otago for California, dying there in 1879.⁶

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The dwelling demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The former Bishop's Palace and presbytery has historical and social significance for its association with the Catholic bishops and priest's resident there and the Catholic community they served. It also has significance as the residence of George Duncan, an early Dunedin settler who made a notable contribution to the business and political life of the city from 1849 into the 1870s.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The dwelling demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The former Bishop's Palace and Presbytery has cultural significance for its demonstration of the way of life of the Bishops and clergy of the Catholic Church, sitting alongside the former Christian Brothers' Residence, St Joseph's Hall, St Joseph's Cathedral, and St Dominic's Priory, illustrating the way of life of the Catholic community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

DESIGN

The former Bishop's Palace demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. It has design significance as a substantial nineteenth-century Italianate villa designed by its owner, and for its architectural contribution to the complex of Catholic buildings on Rattray and Smith Streets.

⁵ *Otago Daily Times* 7 August 1866 Page 4.

⁶ *Otago Daily Times* 19 February 1879, Page 3.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

Otago Daily Times, 7 August 1866 Page 4; 31 August 1871, Page 2; 17 April 1872, Page 2.

Initial Research	March-April 2024	Author	HB
Date Assessment Completed	30 July 2024	Author	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	2 August 2024	Reviewer	MM
Date Confirmed Completed	2 August 2024		

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