

1902 – O’Connell Memorial Church, Cahersiveen, Architect: G.C. Ashlin



Original Interior of Cahersiveen Church (Notice the Pulpit & Altar - now changed)

The Daniel O’Connell Memorial Church of the Holy Cross, a Gothic Revival-style Church designed by George C. Ashlin. East, West & South Elevations published in *The Architect* 1888. It was constructed of mass concrete with a fine granite facade between 1886 and 1892, and finally opened for mass in 1902. The 90 ft tall tower and 168ft tall spire illustrated were never completed.

According to *The Irish Builder*, July 1 1885: “The church is to accommodate about 2,000 people.... There will be a triforium, or passage, over the ceilings of the aisles, opened to the nave by a long arcade, to which access is gained by a staircase at each side of the west porch. These staircases will also lead to the roof gutters of nave. There will also be a staircase in on eof the turrets of tower, giving access to the various floors thereof to the base of the spire and to the gutters of chancel and transept roofs; this, since there will be access from the triforium to the aisles roofs, there is no part of the roofs which cannot be examined without ladders of scaffolding.

The organ gallery will be in the north transept, and will be reached by the nuns (to whose use it will be chiefly confined) by a staircase leading from the choir. There will be a recess for an altar in this transept. In the tower porch there will be two arched recesses opposite the entrance, in which it is proposed to put bas-reliefs representative of O’Connell’s love for religion, and in the pier between these arches the memorial stone presented by his Holiness Pope Leo XIII, will be set.

The materials throughout are selected with a view to the monumental, and, therefore, as nearly as possible, imperishable character of the work, and the construction is of the more substantial character. The foundations, which are already built, are of cement concrete, about 11ft. deep; the facing of the walls will be of Minard red stone, the dressing of Kerry white limestone, and the dark bands, of black limestone from Castleisland. The whole of the ceilings will be vaulted with concrete groined vaulting, the ribs and arches of stone, and the roofs of oak, covered with Valentia slates.

It is intended to use Irish marbles in the shafts, floors, to a considerable extent.

The style chosen for the building is Gothic of a very early type, – the round turrets and battlements, gables, and parapets giving an Irish character to the composition.”



The Cornerstone

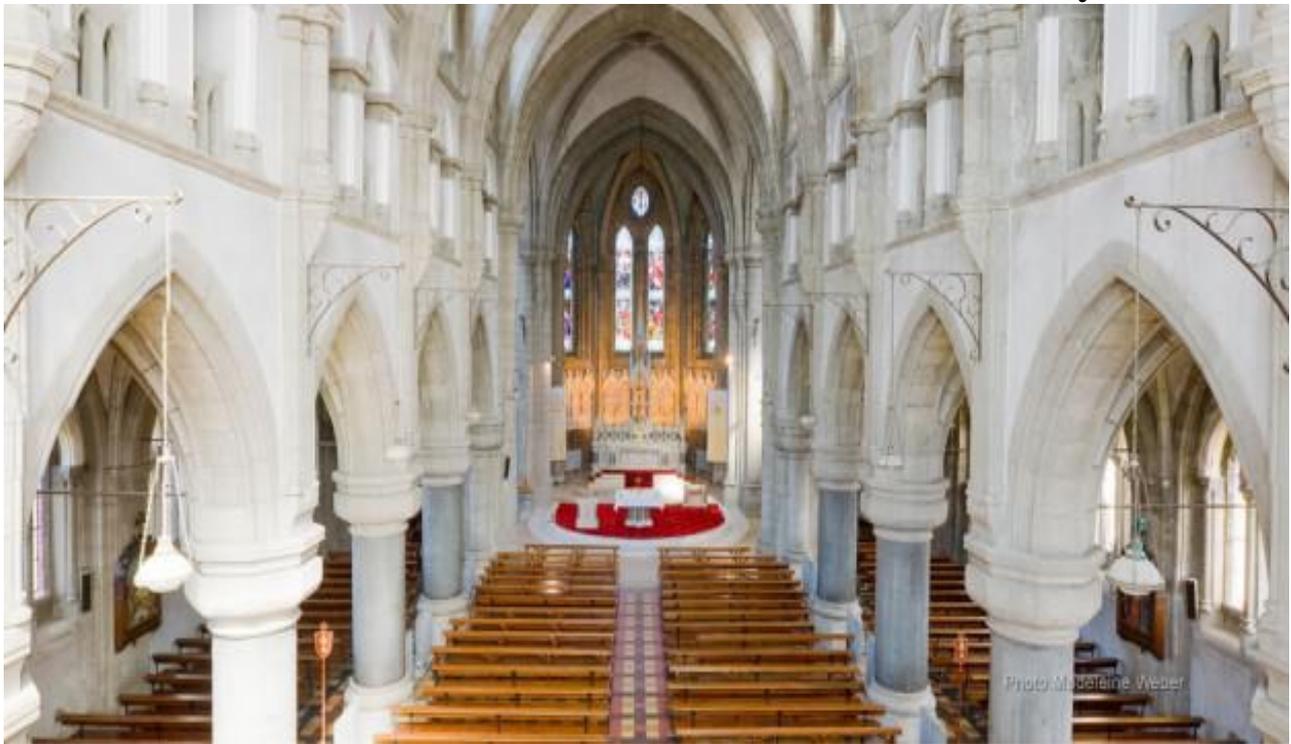
According to the Canon's own writings, the cornerstone is 'a fine block of Travertine weighing over 4 cwt. This stone stood for nearly 2000 years in the vaults of St. Clement's princely mansion which on his conversion, became most probably the first Christian temple of Rome.' The preservation of San Clemente by the late Fr. Joseph Molloy O.P. was praised with the Canon 'praying that it may outlive the Colosseum that stands grimly beside it. Pope Leo XIII also presented a Sidonian marble from the Catacombs of St. Domitilla inscribed with the words of the Papal Approval.

Canon Brosnan went to Rome in December 1883 with a letter of recommendation from his Bishop which stated that he was 'fully alive to the difficulties that lie before him, to Rome he goes to seek in the approval and blessing of Our Holy Father and in prayers at the grave where that great heart lies buried, (Daniel O'Connell's heart) the courage and strength he so much needs to bring his work to a happy issue.' The Canon was received in private audience by Pope Leo XIII on December 10th. He outlined his plans for the church and received approval. Pope Leo remarked that in 1846, in the British House of Commons, he saw O'Connell 'as I greatly desired to see so great a man, I fixed my eyes and lights upon him and he was great'.

The Papal Approval read ' We very much approve of the project of building a new temple in that place in which the strenuous vindicator of the Catholic religion, Daniel O'Connell, was born and we, willingly in the Lord, bestow the Apostolic benediction on you (the rev. petitioner) and all who have contributed their aid or assistance to it'. Leo XIII, Pope. The Cornerstone was laid by the Rev. Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel on August 1st, 1888.



Closer look at Current Altar/ church Sanctuary

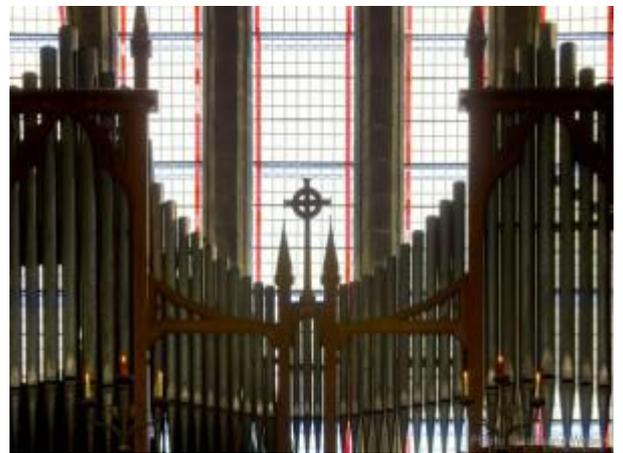




Sample of more windows



Sample dampness



The Magahy Pipe Organ



The Magahy Pipe Organ

Commissioned in 1902, with over 2000 pipes, it was built by Megahy's of Cork with £1000 donated by the Carnegie Trust. The first recital was given in 1907. It was restored in time for its centenary celebration in 2007.

The Organ in the Daniel O'Connell Memorial Church of the Holy Cross was built by Thomas Walter Magahy of 23 Lower George's Street in Cork City in 1902. A generous donation was provided for this by The Carnegie Trust. Andrew Carnegie was a patron of artistic, educational and cultural endeavours including the funding of almost 4,000 public libraries but rather less well known, was his patronage of the pipe organ. He helped fund the purchase of over 7,500 pipe organs, almost half of them in America.

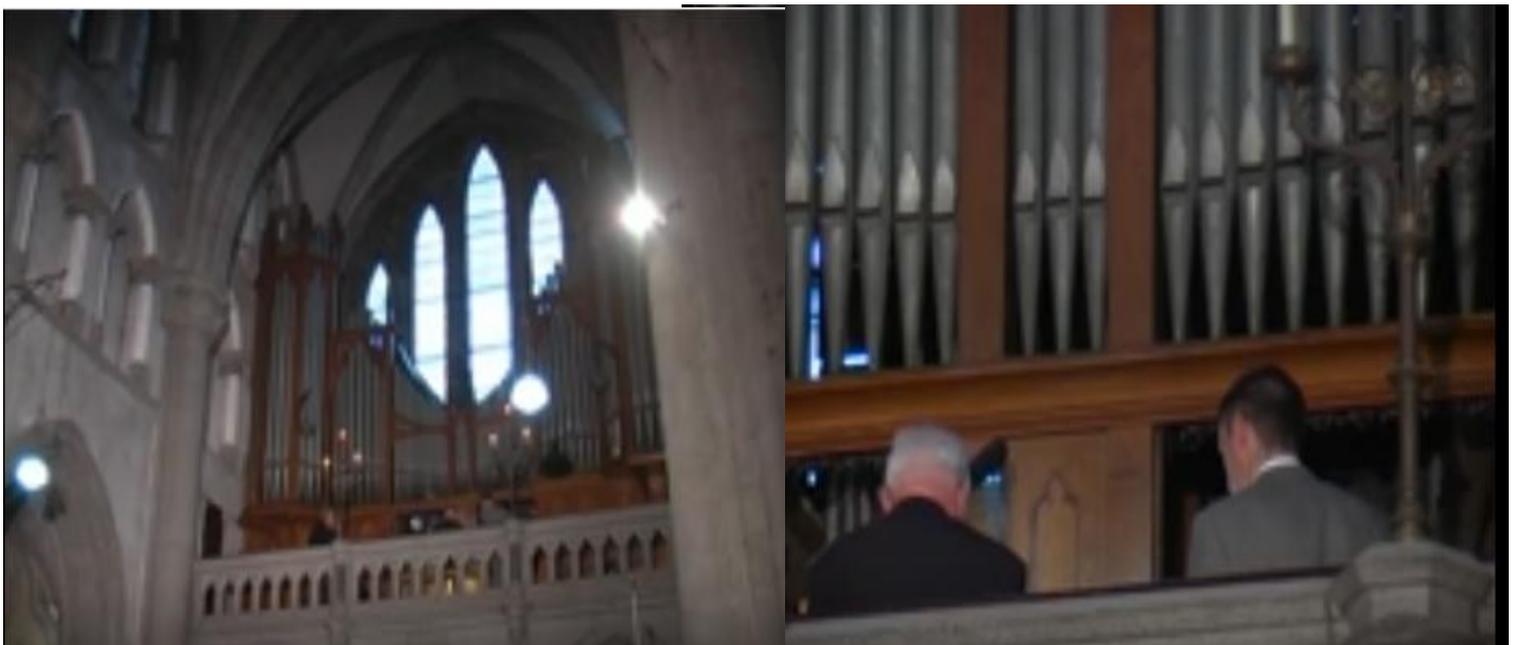
The company T.W. Magahy & Son was founded in Cork in 1875 and it was responsible for building organs for the Cathedrals, Cloyne, St. Finbar's and Roscarbery as well as a number of churches both Catholic and Protestant. The company also built organs for the Cork Exhibitions of 1883 and 1902 and the excellence of Magahy's work was widely recognised.

The organ comprises of over two thousand pipes and is one of the largest and most powerful in County Kerry and the only pipe organ in the Iveragh Peninsula. Some of its pipes measure 3 metres in height. Also, it has three manuals (keyboards). The most outstanding aspect of our organ is its unique acoustic relationship with the church's interior. The large granite and concrete vaulted ceiling, the first in Ireland after the Reformation creates an excellent marriage of sound in which the softer style colours of the organ effortlessly flood the cathedral like style interior. The full organ sounds majestic without being overwhelming.

When it is played, its tones can be clearly heard on the street, drawing people into the church to hear its unique sound. The organ's manual was converted to electric-pneumatic in 1953 and its pedal board in 1972. The drap stop action is electro-pneumatic throughout. Recently the organ was restored for use by Stephen Adams of Tullow, Co. Carlow. Stephen is a recognised expert in this field having worked both at home and abroad restoring, upgrading and tuning pipe organs. Unfortunately, our church organ is not in use at this time due to the extensive restoration work being carried out in the church.

The following link will open an extract from an organ recital in the O'Connell Memorial Church:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=inXojE9GQQY



A concert was held in the Daniel O'Connell Church, Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry, Ireland, on August 5th 2007, to celebrate the centenary of the Magahy organ. The organ was originally paid for by the Carnegie trust. The instrument has yet to be fully restored, but its unique acoustical relationship within the building can still be heard. Organist- Professor Gerard Gillen