

CARANDINI, Victor Emmanuel (1861–1897)

Taken from the expanded edition of Don Watson & Judith McKay (1994) *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*

CARANDINI, Victor Emmanuel (1861–1897), architect and inventor, was born in Port Fairy, Victoria, the third son of the Marquis Jerome Carandini of Sarzano, an Italian musician and political exile. His English-born mother Marie Carandini (1826–1894), née Burgess, was Australia's first great prima donna. With his five sisters, also well-known singers, his mother formed the popular Carandini Concert Co. which toured from Adelaide to the Palmer River goldfield for years. Victor Carandini's brothers were also notable: Christie Palmerston, as he was known, was a North Queensland explorer and prospector, while Francis was a professional soldier who served in Queensland from 1885 and later in India. Victor, later to become an architect, was himself musical and inventive. In 1879, at the age of 18, he received an award at Melbourne's Juvenile Industrial Exhibition for a model of a suspension bridge he had designed. His architectural training, presumably in Melbourne, is unknown. By 1885 he had moved to Brisbane to join his sister Emma, the singer and music teacher Mrs Gilbert Wilson. In early 1885 he entered partnership with Alfred BANKS as BANKS & CARANDINI, lasting only until January 1887. Carandini then practised on his own as an architect and building surveyor in Brisbane, also undertaking work in regional towns, generally using local architects to supervise his buildings. An eligible bachelor, he attended Brisbane's most fashionable parties and balls and was involved in public entertainment enterprises, including the Switchback Railway Co. which in 1889 erected a model railway on the Town Hall Reserve.

In May 1887 Carandini won a competition for the Townsville Fire Station; his design for a timber building was eventually carried out in brick and documented and supervised by local architect WM EYRE. Later that year he visited Sydney and Melbourne, returning with illustrations of their "much admired" buildings which he reproduced in his advertisement in the Queensland Post Office Directory of 1888, suggesting he could emulate these. In September 1889 he won another competition, for laying out the grounds of the Queensport Aquarium, near Brisbane, to include sports facilities, animal houses, lakes and other attractions. During 1889 he made several trips to Maryborough to tout for work and inspect his buildings under construction. Keenly interested in sanitation, he advocated a modern sewerage system for Maryborough and was a shareholder of the Eureka Sanitary Co. which from 1889 held the contract for South Brisbane's nightsoil disposal. As the company's architect, he possibly designed its Annerley sanitary works where waste was incinerated. In 1890, he visited Rockhampton with a view to commencing practice there but didn't proceed. After becoming insolvent in March 1891 on the onset of an economic downturn, he departed for the south.

By 1893, Victor Carandini was an architect and patent agent in Melbourne where he patented "an improved portfolio advertising ticket, card or pass". In 1893–94 he entered partnership with the mining engineer Alfred James Hodgkinson (b 1857) as Hodgkinson & Carandini, engineers and architects of Melbourne. On 9 December 1897, at the age of 36, he died of liver cancer in London, having arrived recently via India to promote "a starting machine which it was proposed should be used on the English racecourses". His soldier brother was also in London, while his mother had died there in 1894.

References: AK Wentzel, entry for Marie Carandini, ADB, vol. 3; Telegraph (Brisbane), 19 Jan 1887, 4; Brisbane Courier, 18 Nov 1887, 8; Maryborough Chronicle, 31 May 1889, 2, and letter to editor by Carandini, 26 Nov 1889, 3; Queenslander, 21 Sept 1889, 533; COL/A, 1889/8535, 1889/10835, QSA; Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton), 28 June 1890, 5; liquidation file, SCT/CA, 807, QSA; BEJ, 16 Dec 1893, 242; North Queensland Register, 24 Feb 1897, 2; obituaries, British Australasian, 16 Dec 1897, 2319, and Brisbane Courier, 21 Dec 1897, 4.