

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC GROUP, HIGHGATE



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate
Other names	Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Sacred Heart Primary School Sacred Heart College
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	2182, 2183, 23930
State Heritage Register:	28 August 2001
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	40 - 42 Mary St
Locality	Highgate
Survey	LOT: 64 D/P: 42775 LOT: 24 D/P: 26565
Vol/folio	2598/632 2794/497
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	Exceptional Essential to the heritage of the area. Rare or outstanding example. Consider for nomination for State Register of Heritage Places if not already included.
Management category	Category 1 The place should be retained and conserved. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place and be in accordance with a Conservation Plan if one is in place.
Statement of significance	<p>The buildings, grounds and boundary walls of the place collectively form an important precinct of ecclesiastical buildings dating from the turn of the twentieth century.</p> <p>The place housed the Order of Our Lady of the Missions' first Australian branch and school, established at the site in 1897, and illustrates the Order's commitment to the education of children in Western Australia and to other forms of pastoral care.</p> <p>The place was founded as a result of efforts from the late 1890s by local Catholics to establish a Catholic Church and School in the area as the State's population boomed, and is representative of the development of Catholic Education in Western Australia.</p> <p>The Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is an excellent example of a large, well composed convent school building featuring elements from the Federation Free and Inter-War Gothic styles;</p> <p>Sacred Heart Catholic Church is an excellent example of a substantial stone church in the Federation Gothic style.</p> <p>The place, including the simple, formally planned garden entry to the convent and Moreton Bay figs in the Mary Street forecourt of the Church, is a significant streetscape element on Mary and Harold Streets in Highgate.</p>

SIGNIFICANCE	
Statement of significance	<p>The place is representative of a convent and school built c. 1900 and illustrates the principal characteristics and planning of this type of ecclesiastical complex.</p>
	<p>Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Sacred Heart Primary School were designed by prominent architect Richard Dennehy, the original Convent and School buildings were designed by Edgar Henderson, and the 1923, 1933 and 1937 additions to the Convent and School, the 1954 extensions to the Church, and the 1938 Hall were designed by his son Edgar Le B Henderson.</p>
	<p>The Sacred Heart Primary School (1914) is the only known example in the State of a parish owned school located in the inner city, which dates from the early twentieth century and still functions for its intended purpose.</p>
	<p>Constructed in 1923, the Chapel was the first in Australia dedicated to the 'Little Flower', the venerable Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus.</p>
	<p>The place is highly valued by the school community, past and present students and teachers, and the Sacred Heart parish.</p>
	<p>Sacred Heart Catholic Church was one of the first Catholic churches in the State to implement changes resulting from liturgical practices recommended by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) including modifying the sanctuary to accommodate liturgical changes.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Religious: Church Hall Educational: Combined School
Current use	Religious: Other Educational Primary school
Other use	
CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1914; 1938
Walls	Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile Corrugated Metal sheeting
Architectural Style	Federation Free Federation Gothic Inter War Gothic
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

The Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate comprises the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Sacred Heart Church Hall, the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Primary School, forecourt and Moreton Bay figs to the Church, gardens, shelters and boundary walls.

The Sacred Heart Church and the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (fmr) have been described in separate place record from; Sacred Heart Church (23930) and the Monastery (2182). The following description is for the site and the two remaining buildings which have been identified of heritage value. The Sacred Heart Primary School and the Sacred Heart Church Hall. The description is drawn from the documentation prepared for the inclusion of the place on the State Register of Heritage Places in 2011 with reference to a visual inspection in 2024.

Physical description

There are no clearly defined boundaries separating the various institutions, and shared buildings still have interconnecting doors. A high brick wall encloses the former monastery and the 1914 school. This boundary wall, plus the interconnectedness and arrangement of the buildings, gives the former monastery and school the appearance of a single complex. The high brick wall to the school and former monastery is an important feature in both Mary and Harold Streets.

The school and former monastery buildings are of a much larger and more urban scale than the rest of Mary street and, combined with the high enclosing wall and Church, form an important aesthetic landmark. Harold Street is more open and modern in character than Mary Street. The street trees in Harold Street are Melaleucas, but do not form an important aesthetic element as does the avenue in Mary Street. The wall bounding the school and former monastery on Harold Street is a plain face brick wall.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

The formal entrance to the grounds of the Sacred Heart Catholic Group is the Entry Courtyard on Mary Street. It is an almost square, formally planned garden that is enclosed on three sides by buildings and on the fourth side by the high brick wall fronting Mary Street. A concrete path leads from the front gate across this courtyard to the formal entry door of the Main Block. The wrought iron front gate has the title 'Our Lady of the Missions' within the arch head. In the centre of the courtyard is a statue of Jesus with the motto 'Sacred Heart of Jesus I Place My Trust in Thee' on the plinth. The courtyard is planted with lawn and has an edge of garden beds with perennials, annuals and shrubs. On either side of the statue are heart shaped garden beds planted with roses. The courtyard garden beds are defined by a hard edge of bricks laid on the diagonal.

Physical description

In the southwest corner of the site is the Marian Grotto, an outdoor shrine. The grotto is constructed from blocks of rusticated limestone and contains a niche with a statue of the Virgin Mary. Most of the grotto structure is covered with Ivy and it has been planted with ferns and succulents. On the lawn in front of the grotto is a statue of St. Bernadette kneeling in contemplation.

The single-storey 1914 School is located to the east of the Main Block. On the Mary Street elevation of the 1914 School is a driveway and car parking area. A hardstand and grass playground area is located immediately north of the 1914 School. Beyond the playgrounds, at a lower level, is an open grassed playing field that extends north to the Harold Street boundary of the site. There are cricket nets at the eastern end. Adjacent to the eastern site boundary, fronting Harold Street, is residential development.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Sacred Heart Primary School

This free standing, single-storey classroom block is situated approximately 20 metres east of the Classroom Wing (1899; 1923) of the Main Block. It has a roughly 'U' shaped plan with the axis of the longer central wing orientated east west and the two smaller wings orientated north-south. The main car park entry gates to the school are located at Mary Street. The building contains pre-primary to the three central rooms, kindergarten to the east wing and year one classroom to the west wing.

The Sacred Heart Primary School (1914 school building) has black tuck pointed, stretcher bond brickwork with a slightly projecting plinth with a chamfered sill detail. Elements such as sills and lintels are finished with render. The steeply pitched pre-painted corrugated steel sheeting roof of this building has gables to the north-south orientated wings and also to the slightly projecting bay set in the centre of the south façade.

On the southern façade, a bagged render has been applied to the central bay and the words 'Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me' has been formed in the render in the gable together with a bas relief image of the Virgin Mary. This bay also has a foundation stone bearing the date 1914. The aluminium framed awning windows are a recent addition.

On the north side of the building, the space enclosed by the 'U' of the building is covered by a steel pipe construction verandah. This verandah has been partly enclosed by the construction of two toilet blocks. The verandah has been extended to the north by the addition of a 2.5 metre wide, steel framed, curved fabric shade structure. The verandah has a concrete slab floor. The openings of the doorways that lead on to the rear verandah have been altered to create a lower head height. The original fanlights have been removed and they have been replaced by a panel of rendered brick.

Physical description

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Sacred Heart Church Hall

The Church Hall, constructed in 1938, is a rectangular building with an entrance porch and is located immediately behind the church and addresses Harold Street.

Works to the church hall for adaptation to The Archive of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Perth were undertaken c.2007.

The church hall is constructed of rendered and painted brick walls and a tiled half gabled roof. The hall exhibits some basic features from the Inter War period of architecture. The entrance to the building is from Harold Street through an entrance porch. There is a face brick plinth to the Harold Street elevation and four brick steps to the entrance.

Physical description

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate comprises the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Sacred Heart Church Hall, the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Primary School, forecourt and Moreton Bay figs to the Church, gardens, shelters and boundary walls.

The Sacred Heart Church and the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (fmr) have been described in separate place record forms; Sacred Heart Church (23930) and the Monastery (2182). The following history relates to the two remaining buildings which have been identified of heritage value. The Sacred Heart Primary School and the Sacred Heart Church Hall.

Sacred Heart Primary School

The establishment of a Roman Catholic presence in Highgate Hill dates from 1891 when Bishop Matthew Gibney supervised the subdivision of the Church's land known as 'Mount Heart Estate'. Located on a prominent rise, the estate comprised of a number of residential lots and was bounded by Mary and Margaret (now Harold) Streets, and Beaufort and Lincoln (now William) Streets. Bishop Gibney identified approximately two acres at the centre of the estate for use as a church and school to serve the growing Catholic population of the developing suburb. The two acres were called 'Alacoque Square' after the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St Margaret Mary Alacoque.

In July 1897, Superior General Mother Mary of the Holy Rosary of the Congregation of Our Lady of Missions visited 'Alacoque Square' where a temporary Church of the Sacred Heart had been erected. The original church building, a timber-framed iron-clad structure always considered temporary, was improved and ornamented by the local Catholic community. When leaving the colony several days later, Mother Mary of the Holy Rosary intimated that she would be accepting the Bishop's proposal to establish a school at the Highgate Hill site.

Five Sisters were chosen from the Order of Our Lady of the Missions at Christchurch, and they opened the Sacred Heart School on 25 October 1897. The branch at Highgate Hill was to be the first established by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions in Australia.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

On 22 January 1899, Sacred Heart School and Convent (Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) was opened with the Vicar General officiating over the ceremony and blessing of the building. Prior to this the school had operated from a corrugated iron shed.

The area of Highgate Hill continued to flourish and overcrowding at the school became an ongoing problem. Temporary pavilion classrooms were constructed in an attempt to provide a solution and classes were often held outside. By 1912, there were approximately 400 students at the school, 300 of these enrolled at Primary School level.

Parish Priest Father Thomas Crowley and the Sisters of the Order realised that a permanent building would solve the problem of overcrowding. Father Crowley had just finished clearing the debt for the parish church constructed in 1906 and was unconcerned about incurring the cost for a new parish school building. The original timber church built in 1897 was providing additional classroom space for the school.

On 24 May 1914, the foundation stone for the Parish School was laid in a ceremony officiated by Archbishop Clune. The cost of construction of the brick building was £2,500. Mr. Dennehy was the architect for the school and Mr. Fairweather the builder. The School was officially opened on 20 October 1914 and classes commenced the next day. There was accommodation for five classes in the building. There were two main classrooms and two smaller rooms. An entrance hall led through to a wide verandah at the rear of the building. The motto 'Suffer Little Children to come unto me' was rendered over the entrance hall.

Over the following decades the original school building was supplemented by new additions and alterations. Rooms within the Monastery were used by the school for a classrooms and other functions, particularly when the school offered high school education.

In 1980, the WA Chapter of the Sisters of Our lady of the Missions decided to cease its secondary school operations at Highgate and at Fremantle. The high school at Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate closed at the end of the school year in 1980. At this time Sacred Heart Primary School was the only parish primary school in the inner city that dated from the turn of the century and still functioned in its original purpose.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Sacred Heart Church Hall

By the 1930s, the 1897 church which was used as the church hall was in a poor condition, although still in use as a parish hall, including use by the Highgate Catholic Boy Scouts. Fundraising in 1937 raised money for a replacement hall, designed by Edgar Le B. Henderson.

Builders for the project included Emmett McGann, a local resident. Tenders were called in June 1938, and the 1897 church was demolished soon afterwards. The new hall was opened on 23 October 1938. It quickly became one of the most popular Catholic venues in Perth, used for school and parish events, and by Catholic Tennis Association, Catholic Women’s League, Young Catholic Workers and the Irish Club. During World War Two, the hall was used for many dances run by the League of Catholic Youth.

The hall was used for that function until in recent years it was converted for use as the office of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Perth.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic development	
	Cultural Life: Domestic Life	
	Social Services: Education	
	Cultural Life: Recreation - Arts, Culture and Entertainment	
Associations	Casella Edgar & Wade	Architect
	Richard Joseph Dennehy	Architect
	Edgar Le B Henderson	Architect
	Edgar Henderson, Henderson & Jefferies	Architect
Sources	P2181 Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate Assessment Documentation, DPLH, 2001.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Sacred Heart Primary School



Sacred Heart Primary School

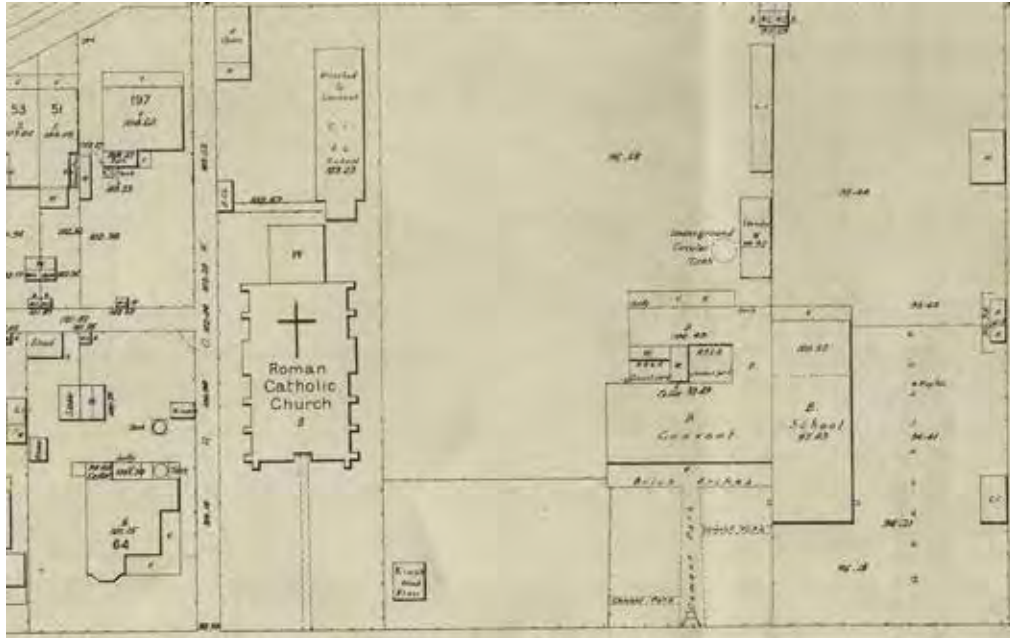


Sacred Heart Church Hall



Sacred Heart Church Hall

ARCHIVAL IMAGES



Sacred Heart Group Sewerage Plan, 1912. Courtesy SROWA cons 4156 item 095.