

SACRED HEART CHURCH, HIGHGATE



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Sacred Heart Church
Other names	Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	23930, 2181
State Heritage Register:	28 August 2001
Other Listing:	Catholic Church Inventory Adopted 01 Jul 1998

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	42 Mary St
Locality	Highgate
Survey	LOT: 26565
Vol/folio	2794/497
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Exceptional</p> <p>Essential to the heritage of the area. Rare or outstanding example. Consider for nomination for State Register of Heritage Places if not already included.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 1</p> <p>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.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The Church is an excellent example of a substantial stone church in the Federation Gothic style. The finely designed interior of the church is notable particularly the timber truss ceiling.</p> <p>Together with the associated buildings, grounds and boundary walls the church contributes substantially to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and form a significant streetscape element on Mary and Harold Streets in Highgate, as well as being an important precinct of ecclesiastical buildings that date from c.1900.</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>

SIGNIFICANCE	
Statement of significance	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.
	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.
	The church is highly valued by the school community, past and present students and teachers, and the Sacred Heart parish.

PLACE USE	
Original use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Current use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1906; 1928; 1954; 1957; 1960s; 1972; 2001
Walls	Stone
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Federation Gothic
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Physical description	A large, tiled gable, forms the Nave of the Sacred Heart Church, and a stone cross is located at either end, atop the gable's apex. The façade is a rusticated ashlar masonry and lining the longer external walls are Gothic arched windows separated by stonework buttresses.
	On the Mary Street facing gabled end is a centred Gothic arched door headed by three elongated arched windows. The property is scattered with vegetation of varying maturity and a carpark to the west of the church.
	The church is one element of the complex of buildings that forms the State Registered Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Although the question of establishing a permanent church had been raised as early as mid-1899, it was not until 1904 that plans for a new church were formally undertaken, with Richard Dennehy as architect. Dennehy arrived in Western Australia from Victoria in the 1860s and by the turn of the twentieth century had established himself as a successful architect in Perth, designing a number of prominent buildings including the Home of the Good Shepherd in Leederville (now the Catholic Education Office).</p>

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In March 1905, it was publicly announced that a new church was to be built, and the contract for construction was let in May of that year. The new church was officially opened by Bishop Gibney at a large ceremony on 24 February 1906. The place was described in The Record at the time as follows:

The foundations are of cement concrete, while the base course consists of solid stone blocks one yard high. A large carving of the Sacred Heart in solid stone stands over the entrance door. The complete design provides for a building cruciform in shape, to include nave, transepts, chancel and sacristy, but the portion at present erected comprises the nave only, which is 72 ft long by 35 ft wide, exclusive of a temporary chancel and sacristy. Electric light is installed throughout. Special attention has been given to ventilation in addition to that provided for in the roof and at the eaves. All the windows open for their full length. The original contract was for £3,000, but during the progress of the work it was decided to add a temporary chancel and sacristy outside the stone building; also to erect the organ gallery. The additional works, together with the new seating etc. bring the expenditure up to about £4,000. The contractors, Messrs Ellis and Pitman, have given every satisfaction in carrying out the work for which Mr. R.J. Dennehy was the architect.

For the next eight years, the finances of the parish were restricted as the community worked to pay off the debt incurred by the church's construction. The only changes to the building during this time were to add a stained glass window on the eastern side depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The earlier church remained on the site and was used for social events, worship and education. It held approximately 200 people, a capacity too small for many parish events. In 1919, lightning struck and destroyed the cross above the entrance to the church. Members of the parish moved quickly to repair the building.

In 1928, the Church was extended according to original plans from 1906. Richard Dennehy was again involved as supervising architect for the project. A permanent chancel and sacristies replaced the temporary 1905-06 elements. The extensions close to doubled the size of the building, and were opened in July 1928. A portion of the 1897 church was demolished to accommodate the extensions. Stained glass windows for the new sanctuary were donated by local resident Susan McCafferty. Additional stained glass windows were added throughout the church over the next twenty years, although specific details of their installation have not been located.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

By 1937, the 1897 church was by this time 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.

The 1950s were a period in which devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary enjoyed a particular prominence, and in response the Highgate parish fundraised for the addition of a new Lady Chapel at the western side of the Church. The Chapel was opened on 25 March 1954, at which time it was noted as being a fine stone addition featuring a timbered ceiling and a six foot six inch wide relief sculpted Virgin and Child by artist Mr. Edward Kohler. Edgar Le B. Henderson was again the architect for the project, with local residents F & C Russell employed as builders and Jack Guelfi as stonemason. Other changes to the Church in the 1950s and 1960s were the construction of an inner porch in 1957 and the addition of a pipe organ in 1965. In response to decisions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the sanctuary was modified to accommodate liturgical changes. Sacred Heart was one of the first Catholic churches in the State to make changes in response to the Second Vatican Council.

In 1972, the original timber choir loft of the church was found to be in dangerous condition and was replaced with a concrete loft in 1972.

Further modifications to the sanctuary of the Church were completed in September 2001. These included the relocation of the tabernacle to a niche east of the altar, replacing a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, and construction of steps below this niche.

The church continues to be used by the local community and the Sacred Heart school.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION		
Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic development Cultural Life: Religion Social Services: Education	
Associations	Richard Dennehy	Architect
	Ellis and Pitman	Building contractors
	Susan McCafferty	Donor of stained glass windows
	Edgar Le B. Henderson	Architect Building contractor
	Emmett McGann	Sculptor
	Edward Frederick Kohler	Stone Mason
	Jack Guelfi	
	F & C Russell	Building contractors
Sources	P2181 Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate Assessment Documentation, DPLH, 2001.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



ARCHIVAL IMAGES



First Sacred Heart Church, 1900s. Courtesy City of Vincent Local History Collection, image 10432 PH00328