

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE BUILDING, MOUNT LAWLEY



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Catholic Women's League Building
Other names	La Mascotte Mayer Residence Downey House
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8751
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	49A - 49B Vincent St
Locality	Mount Lawley
Survey	LOT: 1 - 2 STR: 65257
Vol/folio	2815/789 2815/788
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.
Management category	Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.
Statement of significance	<p>The place has aesthetic value as a fine and intact example of the Federation Queen Anne style which is a landmark on this prominent corner site and its irregular lot configuration.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of the vicinity by the Catholic Church.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the Catholic Women's League which provides services and support to the community.</p> <p>The place has social value for the many members of community who have been assisted by the Catholic Women's League since it was purchased by the Catholic Church in 1972.</p> <p>This place is valued by the community for the continuity of its presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p>

PLACE USE

Original use	Religious: Housing or Quarters
Current use	Religious: Office or Administration Building
Other use	Residential: Single Storey Residence

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Construction date	1897
Walls	Painted Brick
Roof	Corrugated Metal Sheeting
Architectural Style	Federation Queen Anne
Physical description	This single storey building has a long principal façade set parallel to the long street frontage. The façade has a prominent bay window, marked by a gablet, an eastern glazed entry door with leadlight sidelights and fanlights. The western corner and main entrance is truncated and marked by a diagonal gablet. The roof is hipped with a ridge gambrel marking the junction with the roof to the rear wing. Original chimneys are located on the outer east and west walls. The house has a bullnose verandah along the entire front which returns, with a diagonal corner, onto the west facade. Short garden setback behind a low limestone wall.
Condition	Good
Integrity	Moderate
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 1892, land in Highgate Hill was acquired by Catholic Bishop Matthew Gibney and subdivided as the Mount Heart Estate. A two-acre site for church and school, known as Alacoque Square, after the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St Margaret Mary Alacoque, was set aside in the centre of the subdivision. In 1897, Bishop Gibney engaged the architect Michael Cavanagh to design 20 houses for the Highgate subdivision.

The residence at No. 49 Vincent Street was first named 'La Mascotte' and it was numbered 47 Vincent Street until 1917. It was constructed on Lot N149 about 1902 and its original owner was Alfred Benjamin Mayer. Mayer was believed to have arrived from Switzerland during the 1890s gold rush. He taught French and German from his home where he resided with Mrs C. Mayer, possibly until his death in 1917. In addition, Mayer had a tobacconist shop in Hay Street Perth where he also ran a hairdressing business and in 1907 a wig and costume hire business. Alfred Mayer, who died on 31 July 1917, was buried in the Jewish Orthodox section of Karrakatta Cemetery and it is believed the house was then rented out.

In the 1926 edition of Wise's Post Office Directories Jacob Meyer was listed as the occupant; in 1937 it was Miss Angelina Langdon and in 1949 Mrs Mary Kenney. The City of Perth building licence cards indicated S. Burnes was the owner between at least 1965 and 1970 when applications were received for a brick laundry (1965) and a garage (1970). Another resident was Mrs Carmel Downey and it was she that recommended it to the Catholic Women's League. The house was purchased by the Catholic Women's League in 1972 with the help of a loan from the Archbishop of Perth and personal loans from members.

It was named Downey House after Mrs Downey, who was both a State and National President. The League was founded in England in 1906 by Margaret Fletcher. The first meeting of this non-political association in Australia was held in Adelaide in 1914. It was established in WA in 1937 by Archbishop Prendiville and its first president was Mrs J. P. Maxwell.

In 2008, the two sections were used as a residential unit and an office/meeting room with associated facilities. In 2010 the property was subdivided resulting in the excision of the western portion of the property.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

As of 2024, The League has its office on the premises of Sacred Heart Primary School and Catholic Church, at No. 40a Mary Street, Highgate.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards show very few changes to the subject place until 2008 when part of the roofing was replaced, and 2011 when the rest of the surrounding roofing was also replaced. The aforementioned subdivision was built upon in 2014. There are no visually notable structural changes to the subject place since then.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic development Cultural Life: Religion Cultural Life: Domestic Life Social Services: General Social Services	
Associations	Matthew Gibney Michael Cavanaugh Alfred Benjamin Mayer Jacob Meyer Mary Kenney S. Burnes Carmel Downey Margaret Fletcher Archbishop Prendiville	Catholic Bishop of Perth Architect First owner and occupant Owner and occupant Occupant Occupant Occupant Founder of the Catholic Women's League Catholic Bishop of Perth
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

