HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE

The religious ambience achieved by the execution of these buildings is valued by the community. (Criterion 1.1)

The Gothic Revival design of the church was sustained in sensitively interpreted successive additions. The temptation to adopt cheaper materials and building systems has been strenuously resisted. The result today leads to a satisfying visual unity. (Criterion 1.2)

The site and building were chosen for exposure to the suburban traveller, resulting in today's successful reminder of the religious and educational theme of the Town of Claremont. (Criterion 1.3)

Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont is an important component of a streetscape including a row of magnificent plane trees in Queenslea Drive bordering the Christ Church Grammar School, leading to the intersection at Stirling Highway. (Criterion 1.4)

At the Stirling Highway intersection, the combination of the imposing conifer and the Christ Church building herald the western edge of the Town of Claremont, thereby contributing to the Town's sense of place. (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Christ Church, was the first church built in the Claremont area in 1892 for a small but growing community. The construction of Christ Church and Rectory reflected to role of the Church of England within the colonial establishment of the 1890s. (Criterion 2.1)

Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont provided the base which enabled the Rector, Canon W McClemans (1907-1922), to participate in the initiation of three Public Schools in Western Australia. Scholars from these schools have contributed significantly to the cultural life of the State. (Criterion 2.2)

Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont is one of the early architectural commissions which helped to launch the career of J. Talbot Hobbs, a

prominent architect, businessman and distinguished soldier in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The people of Perth respond to the Gothic aesthetic chosen for *Christ Church Claremont*, as evidenced by the large congregations and the popularity of the church for weddings and christenings. (Criterion 4.1)

Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont provides a significant link with the genesis of three important Anglican Public Schools in Western Australia. The locality subsequently housed the main concentration of church schools in WA for the major part of the 20th century. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

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12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont has many of the characteristics of a typical Gothic Revival church as it evolved in Western Australia in the second half of the 19th Century. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Over more than a century the incumbents of *Christ Church and Rectory, Claremont* have demonstrated a vigorous and persistent program aimed at fulfilling the original intentions for the place. This has included extension, completion, replacement, updating and general maintenance of the fabric of the place. The building fabric of both buildings is in good condition in 1996 and further conservation work is planned.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The original design of the building anticipated the need for extensions as the catchment for the church grew in the environs of Claremont. The strength of the Gothic Revival theme in the successive development of the building has resulted in visual unity and immersion of the celebrant and the worshipper in the visual provenance of the Anglican faith. In that sense, the original intention for the place is intact.

The stewards of the place have, over a long period, demonstrated their ability to sustain and extend the fabric in a sympathetic manner.

Consistently in use as a home for the Rector and his family, the Rectory has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Successive alterations and additions have generally retained the theme and ambience of the Gothic revival format from the initial Victorian Academic Gothic beginnings through the Federation Gothic and Inter-War Gothic styles. The church retains a high degree of authenticity.

Despite the Rectory being extended and modified in the 1950s, and having undergone successive minor alterations, the building has a high level of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary and physical evidence has been compiled by J.A. Pidgeon and D. Kelsall, Architects.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

In the 1880s the congregation at Fresh Water Bay worshipped in the schoolhouse (the present Claremont Museum, then described as "a dilapidated building with whitewashed walls through which daylight appeared") for several years.

The Under-Secretary to the Commissioner of Railways, Alpin Thomson, a land holder in Claremont, at the second meeting of the Cathedral Vestry to discuss the provision of a church in Claremont, offered the proceeds from the sale of half an acre of his *Lucknow* estate to form the nucleus of a building fund for the new church. Thomson was born in Avranches, France, and had come to the Colony in 1877, later becoming the resident magistrate in York and the first warden in the Yilgarn goldfields before he joined the railways department.

One and a quarter acres of glebe land was sold to a Mr Horace Stirling, raising £150. In April, 1892, with this amount augmented by a loan of £200 from the Diocesan Trust Fund Loan, a meeting resolved to appoint J Talbot Hobbs to 'submit plans and specifications for a building to be used as a church now, and may eventually be the chancel of a future larger building, at a cost not exceeding £400'.

In June, the tender of £725 submitted by Boundy and Locke was accepted including the decorative and functional roof flèche, but deleting the Porch. A shingle roof was to be substituted for the proposed slate. A further saving resulted from Mr Thomson allowing stone from his property to be quarried free of charge.

The foundation stone was laid on 10 September 1892 by the Governor accompanied by the Premier and the Bishop. The official party travelled to Claremont by the railway, which had been opened in the previous year. At the time the local population numbered around 200 people.

The Church was completed in February 1893. It is suggested that subscriptions had raised money for a brass altar cross and the stained glass in the windows came from the Cathedral. There were many donors of the accoutrements of the church which was consecrated in April. The final cost of the building had risen to £810/5/3 including the furnishings, but not including the cost of the land and stone donated by Mr Thomson.

In 1897, the Rectory, a substantial limestone residence designed by Talbot Hobbs, was constructed adjacent to the church, again funded by the sale of glebe lands. At the time a rector, and his household, was expected to be heavily involved in the daily life of the community, and this was reflected in the close physical proximity of a church and rectory. The strong relationship between church and rectory has diminished in the second half of the twentieth century.

In 1898 a timber framed and clad vestry hall was also designed by Hobbs, and built by Ryan and Gloth soon after. In 1899, a stone font was presented to the church by Mrs Edwards.

In 1899, Canon McClemans, the Rector, pursued extension of the original church - by demolishing the western end and adding a further twenty feet of building, and by the addition of ten feet wide side aisles. Consecration of the extended church, designed by T W L Powell and built by Trenowith & Jordan, took place in 1902. The extensions cost £1,007, and the western end was timber framed and weatherboard clad to allow for future expansion.

In 1902, William Howitt, a well known wood carver in WA, was commissioned to work on the pulpit and matching lectern designed by Powell and paid for by Judge Burnside, a local parishioner.[1] Some years later, Howitt was again commissioned to build the matching choir stalls and prayer desk.

In 1909, the Rector William McClemans dedicated a bay which was added to the former structure of the Chancel, Nave and Aisles as far as the present(1993) second nave arch. The builders were E C Clarke & Son. An unsightly timber porch graced the west end.[2]

In 1905, the Vestry had agreed to put off the purchase of a pipe organ. As an interim measure a large American Organ was obtained and stood in the left hand corner of the Chancel; the Honour Roll was in a niche near the south east door, and the choir stalls were in the Chancel beyond what was described as a very beautiful timber rood screen.

In 1911, a white marble altar was presented. It has a curved top and over mantle, with three panels of recessed marble in the apron. Glass in the Chancel is signed by the Barnett Glass Company, a firm once specialising in church glass.

By 1926, a pipe organ was built by W L Roberts of Melbourne, and installed. To accommodate it, the rood screen had been removed from the extended Chancel and a floor recess was built for the console. Successive benefactors to the Church donated organ stops.

In June, 1938, to alleviate accommodation shortages and general defects, the contract for an extension designed by T W L Powell was let to the Builders Mottram & Sons of Claremont. The main thrust of this work was the addition of the Porch to the west end in masonry. At the consecration in November 1938 it was described as' a symbol of faith in God, the unashamedness of the Christian faith and a reminder, beside a busy highway, of eternal things'.

These additions included a Vestry, Porch and Tower at the west end. The font was moved to a new position, a rose window was added in the west wall, the south side of the roof, the clergy Vestry and the Apse was re-

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1 Judge Burnside lived in a house nearby, which is now part of the Methodist Ladies College campus.

2 Sharp, P. and O'Hara, L. *A Goodly Heritage, Christ Church, Claremont 1892-1992* (Claremont, the Anglican Parish of Claremont, 1992), p.39

roofed, the organ console was reconstructed and the roof on the north side was repaired.

The Wells system, an American system of fund raising introduced in the 1950s, enabled a programme of renovation to the Church, Hall and Rectory to take place in 1957.

By 1964, a new Annexe was built between the Rectory and the Church, to a design by Hargrave and Moran and built by L A and M J Don. The building, a contemporary combination of limestone, timber and glass, accommodated a Meeting Room, Kitchen, Youth Room, Choir Room and Store.

By 1969, the pipe organ 'needed urgent attention'. Mr J Dodd recommended a rebuild and addition of a number of new stops including two sets of trumpets. Gunstar Organ Works in Adelaide supplied the parts, and the installation was undertaken by Mr John Larner. The names of donors and past parishioners was inscribed on the organ case. The Choirmaster and Organist for the past 47 years, Joe Dean, resigned as a result of this interference with an instrument which he had maintained and used for so long.

A report was commissioned by the Vestry in 1975 into the fretting of internal masonry and cracking in the Tower and Sanctuary. Fremantle architect R McK Campbell reported general random movement throughout the fabric. Some underpinning was undertaken by the Builder Guy Weguelin, with Mr John Tarker as stone conserver. Windows and roof elements were repaired and restored and the main roof was re-covered with Canadian redwood shingles.

A bell was hung in the Tower in 1980 following an examination of the structure. In May 1984, Mr Laith Reynolds offered the gift of a peal of bells previously removed from the Church of St Paul, Canonbury, Islington, London N1. He had found them in the courtyard of Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The bells arrived in 1987 and were installed in the Tower and dedicated in December 1988.

Shortcomings of the Organ surfaced resulting from a report prepared in 1984. The report recommended short term corrective action to a number of faults as well as the relocation of the console and the choir stalls.

A contract was let to Bellsham Pipe Organs (Australia) Pty Ltd in 1991. The instrument was renewed as a three-manual draw stop console and an additional choir organ with attendant works to the exposed frame.

A number of personages have been associated with the building. The most prominent benefactor, Alpin Thomson was born in Avranches, France, and had come to the Colony in 1877, later to become the resident magistrate in York, the first warden in the Yilgarn goldfields before joining the railways and rising to the position of Under-Secretary to the Commissioner. After his retirement he continued his active support of *Christ Church, Claremont*.

Canon William J McClemans, Rector from 1907-1922, was a younger brother to the former Rector, Canon Thomas McClemans. William came from his native Ireland and was ordained in WA in 1899. In addition to

his parish duties he set about establishing Church of England boy's schools. This resulted in the Church taking over the private established secular school at Guildford owned by Mr Charles Harper with the subsequent establishment of Guildford Grammar School as a secondary school. He then set about to establish a junior school to feed it. In 1910, he opened Christ Church School in, it is thought, the Rectory at Christ Church. Eventually, a house was purchased opposite the church, the school growing from there to its present stature.

Similarly, he encouraged the Claremont High School for girls run by Miss Parnell, a school which eventually grew into the present St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls in Mosman Park. In 1916 he departed for the Front as an Army Chaplain and returned eighteen months later, a sick and broken man who struggled with his incumbency until he resigned five years later. One of the most prestigious annual awards for scholarship at the nearby Christchurch Grammar School today is dedicated to him.

Today, the locality and adjoining suburbs contain one of the denser concentrations of secular schools in Australia in some measure initiated by McClemans' dedication as an educator. (These include Christ Church Grammar School, Scotch College, Methodist Ladies College, Iona Presentation College, Presbyterian Ladies College and St Hilda's.)

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The site is on the south east corner of the intersection of Queenslea Drive and Stirling Highway in Claremont. Claremont was originally a resting point between Perth and Fremantle - today, traffic passing along Stirling Highway between the two cities is 'confined' between the Swan River and railway line at Claremont to pass this busy intersection.

Queenslea Drive in Claremont is lined on the west with a fine row of London plane trees *platanus hybrida* bordering the Christ Church Grammar School grounds. The intersection at Stirling Highway is marked on the south west by a magnificent conifer and on the south east by Christ Church in its garden setting. These elements provide a foil to the expanse of bitumen of the Stirling Highway. Plane trees forming the east element of the highly regarded avenue in Queenslea Drive were removed some years ago amid great public outcry, to permit their replacement with Jacaranda trees. The continuing pruning of these replacement trees on the east side to clear the power lines to a great extent detracts from the streetscape value potential of Queenslea Drive.

The Sanctuary and eastern four bays of the nave were constructed in limestone with imposed timber trusses and shingle roof covering, in the Victorian Gothic Revival style in 1892/3. The nave of the building was extended in 1901, aisles were added in 1909 and in 1938 a tower and porch were added in matching style, resulting in the typical debased basilica plan form today. There are no formal transepts on plan; only a roof gable on the south side.

A Bell Tower (without spire) and single storey Porch envelope the west end, with an Apse at the east end and Aisles flanking the Nave. There is a small Chapel on the south

The walls are of squared smooth flushed coursed sandstone with matching sand finish run detail including a scroll moulded plinth, sills, string course with bosses, ventilation openings and the like.

Buttressing is normal to the nave walls and angle to the Porch and Tower

The tower levels, originally the Baptistery, the Tower Room and the Belfry, are punctuated with openings and ventilators, and capped with crenellations, corner pinnacles and a central flagpole usually flying the flag of St George.

The saddleback shingled roof has a number of ventilating gablets and a flèche.

Coupled lancet headed windows with hood drip mouldings terminating in carved acanthus leaf motif provide the general theme for the openings. A coloured leadlight glazed rose window with simple tracery is positioned high in the west masonry wall of the Nave.

The original building design is from the Federation Gothic stream and contained the basic elements of Gothic architecture - the pointed arch, the ribbed vault and buttressing with wall membranes reduced to a minimum. Subsequent additions have embraced the same basic theme although the stepped gable over the entrance of last main Inter-War addition at the west end is a somewhat jarring theme.

The walls of the Porch are squared (black) pointed face stonework, part coursed with rendered reveals and linings. The ceiling is flat, faced with white painted fibrous plaster sheeting with plaster battened joints and a fluted moulded plaster cornice. The main light fitting is suspended from the centre of a rectangular plaster rose in an Art Deco design. The coupled lancet headed windows are steel framed with a surrounding strip of red glass and uncoloured obscure panes set in lattice leadlighting.

A lancet headed recess in the north wall houses a timber memorial plaque laid out in the form of a triptych with applied tracery in a Gothic design. The panel commemorates the lives from the community lost in the 1914-1918 War. The wall opposite houses a door leading to the Vestry. Access to the Vestry was not possible during the inspection

The floor is jarrah boarding.

The doors are stained oregon leaves in jarrah frames with bright brass door furniture internally and wrought iron externally.

The walls of the Nave are squared random stonework with fine grooved flushed joints, with rendered reveals and linings. The aisle walls are carried on seven pointed arches in turn sprung from six intermediate cast iron piers in the form of columns each with a curtailed stiff-leaf pattern capital and plain torus. The opening in the Chancel wall is a pointed arch with rendered intrados and returns.

The main roof is pitched from imposts over the piers and in the west and Chancel walls. Curved timber crucks[3] extend from the impost past the apex into the opposite rafter.

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[3] Crucks: pairs of large curved timbers that take the place of both posts and rafters.

The roof framing is standard with four intermediate purlins and wide tongued and grooved pine boarding extending to the ridge parallel to the rafters. The sole plate is wide and pierced with quatrefoils for ventilation.

The partly carpeted floor is of dressed 150mm wide jarrah boarding, running east-west.

The pulpit is a delicately carved timber element on the side of the Chancel steps.

The west wall contains a neat rose window comprising a red glazed centre panel and eight concentric leadlight glazed openings in the teardrop motif, with colours of the rainbow ranged to indigo at the perimeter.

Lighting is provided by enamel reflectors at the ceiling.

Access to the upper levels of the Bell Tower - the Tower Room and the Belfry of the Tower - was not possible at the time of the inspection. The Bell Tower has a corrugated zincalume roof and a peal of bells on the first floor (the Tower Floor). The Tower is accessed through an opening in the west wall of the Nave. The installation of the peal recently has resulted in the access to the first floor now being gained by means of a steel ladder through an aperture, the original jarrah staircase having been curtailed at first floor level. The walls of the Tower Room contain sound insulation measures. The ground floor (the Baptistery) ceiling is plasterboard with art deco type trim.

The two Aisles were added in 1909, with matching masonry outer walls having coupled lancet windows in bays provided by the cast iron piers. The roof is supported on trusses set out on the same centres. The trusses are timber with a single strut web member from the springing. The ceiling is wide boards of tongued and grooved pine.

The north Aisle contains a font inside the entrance. The fine sandstone font is set on a granolithic base with five round columns, the outer four being of marble with the stiff-leaf motif at the cap. A brass rimmed glass dish is suspended within the stone top. The organ is located in the east end of the Aisle.

The implied depth of the Chancel extends into the Nave past the organ, generally level with the pulpit and lectern base. This dimension is just short of the extant footings of the proemial building - indeed the origins of the Chancel floor would appear by its roughness to date, or even predate the 1892 construction. The Chancel wall is set one bay east of the Chancel steps and a wrought iron candelabra is suspended from the apex of the arch.

The east wall of the Chancel opens into the Apse with similar finishes, with leadlight glazed lancet windows. There is a small step up in the Chancel floor, and the Apse contains the white marble altar.

Doors in the south wall lead to a Sacristy now used as a Chapel. The ceiling is two pitched with diagonal pattern pine boarding on the rake. The walls are faced stonework as previously described, part painted, the floor is stepped down.

Talbot Hobbs, in his role of diocesan architect, designed a number of rectories to compliment the churches. The form and detail of Christchurch Rectory is typical of the smaller houses Hobbs designed in the Claremont-Peppermint Grove districts.

The Rectory originally comprised an entry lobby, two bedrooms, a study, interconnecting living room and dining room, kitchen , bathroom and outside laundry, with a verandah along the street elevation wrapping around to the entrance and to the northern facade.

Constructed from limestone blocks that have been tuck pointed with a dark mortar on the western (street) and southern (church facing) elevations, the Rectory is typical of well built houses constructed in the Federation period in Western Australia. The floor and roof structures are both timber framed. The roof is clad with terracotta tiles the run contiguously from the main roof over the verandah. A timber and stucco gable facing the street is incorporated into the roof.

The verandah is supported by timber columns that have chiselled detailing and stop- chamfering. The verandah has a painted timber board soffit lining on the rake, the boards running parallel to the guttering. The floor of the verandah is now concrete.

Windows to the living room and the study are full length double hung sashes opening onto the verandah. These windows have painted timber panelling on the lower sashes and above the window opening that terminate at the base of the original cornice.

Internally, the Rectory has Jarrah floorboards and these have been renewed in the kitchen. Generally, carpet has been laid over the timber boards. The door frames, architraves , skirtings and joinery is painted timber, The detail of the skirting is typical of a Federation Queen Anne style, as is the cornices in the entry lobby. These being the only remaining original cornices.

An arch with plaster mouldings is situated between the entry hall and the passage The plaster detailing is typical of the Federation Queen Anne style.

Most of the doors are original and retain their original hardware. The entry door has five panels, four being timber and the large central panel in an obscure glass. The fanlight and sidelight are plain glass. The original hardware is missing from this door.

A large pair of double leaf doors separating the living room and dining room have been removed, but the opening with architrave remains.

The Rectory was extended in the 1950s with the addition of two rooms, now bedrooms, an internal laundry and an open living area. This extension has an entrance opening out toward the church. A basement area with external access was created when the house was extended.

Generally, the original lathe and plaster ceilings have been replaced with plaster sheeting typical of the 1950s, and the cornices removed.

The kitchen was modified in the 1950s with a new ceiling, cornice and joinery raising the bench heights and consequently requiring the window sill to be raised. The original kitchen fireplace is evident.

All the fireplaces in the house have been modified. The fireplace in the study has the original timber mantle and under mantle, and the fireplace in the living room has the original timber mantle and timber side shelving.

A bathroom has been built between the two original bedrooms and the original bathroom has undergone several alterations. The most recent alteration was in 1994.

The northern verandah has been enclosed with brick walling and aluminium sliding windows. The western section of the verandah has since been reinstated.

The Annexe is a low key, linear, flat roofed, building, which is located between the Church and Rectory. The form of the building is so understated that the weathered blank limestone wall facing Queenslea Drive could almost be mistaken for a garden wall.

The building is presently undergoing a program of landscaping and walling. It is in very good condition, although a number of items such as the ceiling and lighting will require conservation in the future.

This assessment includes the Church building complete, including the bells, pews, choir stalls, font, altar, brasses, honour roll. The significance of the organ should be assessed separately at some future time.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Sharp, P., and O'Hara, L., *A Goodly Heritage, Christ Church, Claremont 1892-1992,* 1992, the Anglican Parish of Claremont (as a secondary source).

Christ Church - Maintenance and Restoration Contract, Correspondence, in the possession of the Church Council

The Anglican Messenger, March 1981

National Trust Assessment Exposition

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet