



**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.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 5.6 Working in the home
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 8.6 Worshipping

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 306 Domestic activities
- 402 Education and science
- 406 Religion

11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history

'The Ship' was constructed in the 1860s as a home for Toodyay's Resident Medical Officer, Colonial Surgeon Dr Arthur Edward Growse, and is believed to have been used as a residence for subsequent Medical Officers through the remainder of the nineteenth century as the settlement of Toodyay (then named Newcastle) became firmly established.

The rapid take-up of places at the former Sisters of Mercy Convent School, after it opened in 1902 as a girl's boarding facility, is indicative of the expanding rural population of the State in the first decade of the twentieth century following the gold boom.

The construction of additional boarding facilities in the 1920s (St Aloysius House in 1921 and O'Connor House in 1928) demonstrates the further rural population expansion that occurred in the State in this period, as well as the increasing value placed on secondary education for girls at this time.

The expansion of the school population during World War II as city residents sent their children to the country for schooling demonstrates the genuine fear of attack or invasion that was felt in the State during the war years.

The modest design of *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay* and austere interior detailing demonstrates the financial limitations of the Sisters of Mercy in Western Australia in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the Order's ethos of putting minimal funds towards domestic comfort.

11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage

At the time of its construction (1963) the covered walkway connecting Mercy House to a private chapel area within the newly constructed St John the Baptist Church set aside for exclusive use of the Sisters was considered innovative and unique.

11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;

Due to the lengthy occupation of the site, the place has the potential to provide archaeological material that may provide valuable information about life at the place, and its function as a school, as well as former structures (WCs).

11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay, is an excellent representative example of a purpose built complex of religious buildings incorporating a convent school, and associated buildings including an original residence adapted for the religious order's use, and individual buildings used as their residences and places of service provision.

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay includes good representative examples of the Victorian Georgian ('The Ship') and Federation Queen Anne (Mercy House) styles of architecture.

St John the Baptist Church is a representative example of emerging Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style of architecture in Western Australian.

O'Connor house is a simple representative example of the extensive work for the Catholic Church undertaken by architect Edgar Le B Henderson.

11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay is valued by the Toodyay and the wider community as an historical landmark and a long-term religious and educational institution, as a place of prayer and spiritual guidance for parishioners, and by generations of former boarders and their families.

11(f)¹ Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay includes good examples of two-storey Victorian Georgian ('The Ship') and Federation Queen Anne (Mercy House), and modest examples of Federation Arts and Crafts (St Aloysius House), Inter war Georgian Revival (O'Connor House), and Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical (St John the Baptist Church) styles of architecture.

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay, is a landmark group on the main street of Toodyay, due to the strong architectural presence of St Aloysius Building near to the road and the finely designed front elevation of Mercy House set further back from the street.

The individual elements of *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay* being 'The Ship', Mercy House and outbuildings, St Aloysius House, O'Connor House, and St John the Baptist Church together form a cohesive religious cultural environment.

11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;

The place is associated with the Sisters of Mercy, Australia's first religious order dedicated to teaching, and the first religious order of any sort in Western Australia, who occupied the place from 1902 to 1983 as their convent residence, place of worship and school, and after the 1972 closure of the school as a base for religious education programs and school camps.

The work of the Sisters of Mercy in Toodyay and the costs of establishing the St John the Baptist Church was substantially financed by the local Connor family, after whom O'Connor House is named, who had been major land holders in the area from the 1860s beginning with Daniel Connor and as Connor-Quinlan, were also important property investors in Perth and wider regions.

Prominent architect Edgar Jerome Henderson designed Mercy House in 1903 in partnership with Harry Jefferis, and O'Connor House was designed in 1928 by his son Edgar Le B. Henderson, who designed many fine buildings for the Catholic Church. St John the Baptist Church was designed by Perth architect Geoffrey Summerhayes, who became one of Perth's prominent modern architects.

11(h) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;

¹ For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

At the time of the buildings' construction, in the 1920s, the use of concertina doors in St Aloysius House and O'Connor House to create flexible interior spaces that could become large halls was considered innovative.

- 11(i) Any other characteristic it may have that in the opinion of the Council is relevant to the assessment of cultural heritage significance.**

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 CONDITION

Generally the place is in fair to good condition.

'The Ship' is in fair condition, although the replacement verandahs are in good condition. Mercy House is in fair condition. Although the walls and the interiors in the main part of the buildings are in good condition the cellar, verandahs and interiors of enclosed sections of the verandahs are in poor condition. The roof has been replaced with red Colourbond sheeting.

The Kitchen is in fair to good condition. The Laundry is in poor condition. The Boiler Room is in poor to fair condition. St Aloysius House is in fair to good condition. In 2013/14 repairs were undertaken to the verandahs. O'Connor House is in fair to good condition, the roof has been replaced with red Colourbond sheeting, and internal renovations have been undertaken.

St John the Baptist Church is in good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The place has high integrity. Most of the original fabric remains and changes have mostly been made to facilitate ongoing use of the buildings by the Catholic Church.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has high authenticity. The function of the convent school is readily discernible and its later use in part as a monastery was a complimentary continuation of occupation by a religious order. The outbuildings generally continue to be used for their original functions. St John the Baptist Church continues its function as a place of worship.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence for the former Sisters of Mercy Convent buildings refer to 'Conservation Plan: Avondown Centre, Toodyay', prepared by Gavan Reilly and Helen Burgess for the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate in May 2003. A brief summary of the history of the place prior to the post-war period is provided here.

In 1861, Newcastle Lot 44 was granted to William Tregoning and Lots 45 and 46 were granted to Colonial Surgeon Dr Arthur Growse, who built a house referred to as 'The Ship.' The lots passed through a number of hands and in 1902 all three were purchased by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth, Matthew Gibney for use as a Convent School by the Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters then utilised 'The Ship' for dormitories and classrooms.²

The Sisters of Mercy, especially prior to the 1960s Second Vatican Council, lived out of an ethos committed to lives of self-sacrifice in service of the poor and needy. This generally led them to expend little of their limited resources on domestic comforts, often resulting in austere or sparsely fitted-out convents that in some cases were so overcrowded and under-resourced as to be detrimental to the Sisters' own health. Similarly, their boarding facilities were established to provide for all basic health and education needs of residents, but out of both an ethos of no-frills living and practical financial limitations were rarely able to offer more than a simple level of comfort.³

In 1903, the Convent Building, known as Mercy House, was completed and consecrated by Bishop Gibney, however both buildings were soon full. A boy's combined school and dormitory building, St Aloysius House, was constructed in 1921. This was followed in 1929 by the construction of a girl's dormitory, O'Connor House. During the Second World War, children sent to the safety of the country were boarded at *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*.⁴

Due to falling numbers of students, the convent school was closed in 1972, and for the next decade the place operated as a bush camp for religious education. The school buildings closed in 1983 and were transferred to the management of the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, who repaired the buildings and continued their use for social and educational activities until 1995.⁵

From 1997 to 2017, Avondown was home to a small number of Franciscan friars, known as the Franciscans of the Immaculate, a Pontifical Institute within the Roman Catholic Church who re-named the convent 'Marian Friary of our Lady Help of Christians', after the official Patroness of Australia.⁶ The Friars led a life of prayer and pastoral work, and held morning mass for Catholic parishioners in the chapel of St. Pio, located in the former O'Conner house. Sunday Mass is offered in the St. John the Baptist Church. The Friars were self-sufficient undertaking all domestic

2 Reilly, G, Burgess, H, Conservation Plan: Avondown Centre, Toodyay, Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 2003, pp. 9-13

3 Menck, Clare, 'Sisters of Mercy in Australia: Responses to Health, Illness and Disease by a Women's Religious Order', research essay submitted for the degree of Bachelor Arts (Theology), May 2008.

4 Reilly, G, Burgess, H, op cit., pp. 15-22

5 Reilly, G, Burgess, H, op cit., pp. 15-22

6 'Departing friars end 100-year tradition', Toodyay Herald, February 2017

duties and general maintenance work.

Various functions such as conferences and large Masses occasionally took place in some of the buildings, and spiritual retreats were frequently run by the Friars or held independently.

In recent years the Friars undertook repairs and conservation works to the place. O'Connor House, now known as St Pio's House, has had significant repair work undertaken. The ceiling in the main hall was replaced, and the entire roof replaced as part of a re-roofing project. There has also been re-stumping, and new floorboards, matching the old, and window replacement along the enclosed back verandah. The roof to the Friary (Mercy House) has been replaced, and the tiles of St Aloysius House have been cleaned and repaired. The internal roof structures of the buildings were found to be in good order. A new chapel was installed in St Pio's House where the former lounge had been. An attractive wooden altar and tabernacle was made by one of the Friars, and wooden pews made by friends of the Friary.⁷

St John the Baptist Church (1963)

Before the present church was completed in 1963, members of the Roman Catholic parish attended services in the former St John the Baptist church (1863-64) across the road. This church, the second to be built by the parish, still stands today but is in private ownership. This former church had been built by Canon Raphael Martelli following the relocation of the town from present day West Toodyay. The old townsite had been subject to periodic flooding and the decision was made to shift the town upstream to where a convict depot had been established in 1852. The new town was called Newcastle (gazetted 1860) then renamed Toodyay in 1910. The former church was apparently named Santa Maria (the name of the earlier 1858 church in West Toodyay) until 1871 when it was renamed St John the Baptist Church.⁸

In March 1958, Father John Chokolich was appointed the Parish Priest at Toodyay with a domain that covered the areas of Jennacubbine, Baker's Hill and Wundowie. He found the old church in such a poor state he sought the advice of friend and architect Geoffrey Summerhayes who advised him it would be cheaper to build a new church.⁹ A site was selected on the other side of the road on a portion of Lot 46 where the Convent of Mercy (1903) was situated. This location was convenient for the nuns who could use the church for their daily Mass and prayers.

It would take over five years for the parishioners to raise the funds to build the church. According to an account given by Father Chokolich, there was considerable assistance provided free of charge by the Shire and local businesses to help get the church grounds ready for the big opening.¹⁰ The new church broke with the traditional styles reflected in the other buildings on site. It was designed in the late

⁷ Discussions with Father Sharbel, Marian Friary, 7 March 2012.

⁸ 'History of the Parish of Toodyay, 1853-2003'. Transcript of speech given by Father John Chokolich, Roman Catholic Archives (no reference number). Contrary to Father Chokolich's history, the 1858 Santa Maria Church was not washed away in the floods. The building was subsequently used as the Toodyay Valley Public School until 1898 when it was closed because of low student numbers.

⁹ A railway line had been constructed in the 1880s that runs close to the back of the church. As the church would continue to be affected by vibrations if it was felt there would be no point restoring it.

¹⁰ 'History of the Parish of Toodyay – 1853 – 2003' [p. 5].

Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style by the architectural firm Summerhayes & Associates. The building firm was J & L Bianchini. Plans reveal at least one modification to what could be the original design. The elimination of a front entrance porch may have been necessary to reduce costs.¹¹

The building has been described as austere. 'The church seems to have been reduced in its execution through budgetary restrictions and its only luxury is the sparing use of wood in the sanctuary.'¹² In its simplicity, the church is compared with a chapel by Geoffrey Summerhayes, the 1957 St Louis Jesuit School Chapel in Claremont, and various residences designed by the architect during the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹³ Father Chokolich 'was quite a modern thinker',¹⁴ and his friendship with the architect may have accounted for the choice of design, an unusual feature of which is a covered brick passageway that links the Convent to the Nuns Chapel on the left hand side of the Sanctuary. The church, with its unadorned structural form and light coloured variegated bricks, stands in stark contrast to the other buildings in the precinct, and most of the buildings in the historic town of Toodyay.¹⁵

On 17 November 1963, the church was officially opened and blessed by the Most Reverend M. McKeon DD, Auxilliary Bishop of Perth.¹⁶ Prior to this an early Mass and Communion were celebrated in the old St John the Baptist Church. The estimated attendance at the Blessing of the new church varies between 550 and 700,¹⁷ with many attendees having to sit on pews brought over from the old church and set up under the trees.

Inside the entrance of the church is an undated plaque indicating the church was a memorial to the servicemen who gave their lives for freedom, and the pioneers 'who sowed the seed of faith in this parish.'¹⁸ Some items within the Nuns Chapel, such as the tabernacle, came from the former chapel in the convent,¹⁹ while the statues of Joseph and Mary in the main body of the church came from the former church.²⁰ The small altar of Toodyay stone in the Nun's Chapel was made by local parishioners.²¹ The brass plaque to Teresa Quinlan (1863-1904) came from the former St John the Baptist Church. Teresa was the wife of Timothy Quinlan (former MLA for Toodyay) and daughter of Daniel Connor (1832-1898).²² Connor was a former convict transported from Ireland. After being awarded his conditional pardon

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- 11 Plan drawing reproduced in Geoffrey Summerhayes. Architectural Projects, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, UWA, 1993. Exhibition catalogue, p. 52.
- 12 Geoffrey Summerhayes. Architectural Projects. Short essay by Michael Markham, p. 52.
- 13 Geoffrey Summerhayes, p. 52.
- 14 Discussion with Veronica, and Peter Dymond, former Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, 1 May 2012.
- 15 The bricks were specially made by Clackline Brickworks, a manufacturer of wood-fired fire bricks. The wood-firing contributed to the colour variation of the bricks. Discussion with Peter Dymond (retired engineer) 1 May 2012.
- 16 Wall plaque attached to the front wall of the church.
- 17 Northam Advertiser, 22 November 1963, p. 11. Parish history estimates 700.
- 18 The plaque is attached to the inside front wall. If a building is also a memorial it is apparently exempt from Sales Tax. Discussion with Peter Dymond, 1 March 2012.
- 19 Discussion with parishioner Joy Cruickshank, 24 February 2012.
- 20 The large Crucifixion behind the altar is said to have been bought for the new church, and recently repainted. A memorial plaque attached to the base refers to Mary Jane Waters who died in 1923 (or 1925).
- 21 Discussion with Veronica and Peter Dymond, 1 March 2012.
- 22 A story about Teresa Quinlan is provided below the plaque.

in 1855, he settled in Toodyay and became a licensed hawker. He acquired properties, built Connor's Mill in Newcastle (Toodyay), lent money to farmers, foreclosed on mortgages and gradually amassed a personal fortune. Together with his son-in-law, he was able to capitalise on the gold boom becoming one of the biggest property owners in central Perth.²³ The estate from these two men would become known as the Connor-Quinlan Estate. The Connor-Quinlan families were strong supporters of the Sisters of Mercy and their benefaction was instrumental in the Sisters being able to establish the convent and boarding school. They also assisted with the establishment of the Presbytery (1923) and the new St John the Baptist Church.

In November 1970, a new altar and tabernacle were erected by descendants of the Connor family as a memorial to Daniel Connor and his wife. It is believed the altar replaced the one from the original church, and was erected following the Vatican II changes to church liturgy.²⁴ Around this time, the baptismal font was also moved to the front of the church and a platform built for the priest's chair, also part of the new liturgy.²⁵

A substantial memorial is the stained glass window set into the wall of the former Nuns Chapel.²⁶ Designed and made by local artist Rosemary Brebner, the window was commissioned by the Parish Pastoral Council of 1996, and funded by donations from past and present parishioners. The window depicts the Avon River winding through the Toodyay hills with emblems of agricultural produce. A remnant wall of the Clackline Brickworks is also shown as a tribute to the source for the bricks.²⁷ On the opposite wall is a smaller stained glass window depicting a Heavenly Christ, which was donated by Father Chokolich in 1996.²⁸

There appears to have been no structural changes to the church since its construction. Internally, minor changes include a partition across the back section of the church, (1995), with the creation of a meeting room where the former baptistry and font were located. An area within this also functions as the Confessional, replacing the original located within the Sacristy.²⁹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Due to the number of elements located on the site, the physical evidence for the *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*, is described under the following sections:

Site and context
St John the Baptist Church
Mercy House
St Aloysius House

²³ Erickson, R., (ed), *The Brand on his Coat*, Hesperian Press, 2009, pp. 239-245.

²⁴ Discussion with Veronica and Peter Dymond, 1 March 2012.

²⁵ 'History of the Parish of Toodyay, 1853-2003'. Transcript of speech given by Father John Chokolich.

²⁶ The Nuns Chapel would have ceased functioning as such when the four remaining nuns left the Convent site in the mid 1980s.

²⁷ Wall plaque situated next to the stained glass window.

²⁸ Discussion with Veronica Dymond and wall plaque next to the stained glass window. The date of the donation is not provided.

²⁹ Discussion with Peter Dymond who undertook these changes, 1 March 2012. As the number of parishioners diminished, it was decided to partition off the back section and make use of the space for meetings, and a new area for confessions.

O'Connor House
'The Ship'
Outbuildings and structures

Site and context

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay, is located at the eastern entry to the Toodyay townsite. The site is on the northeast side of Stirling Terrace and extends to the banks of the Avon River. The southeast boundary is located on the corner of Stirling Terrace and Goomalling-Toodyay Road and the northwest boundary is adjacent to residential development.

The centre of the Toodyay townsite is approximately 500 metres to the northwest of *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*. The entry to the site is from Stirling Terrace with the main vehicular and pedestrian access at the south-west of the site. Opposite the site across Stirling Terrace are private residences and the railway.

The high point of the site is at the west corner, adjacent to the location of St John the Baptist Church. The landform slopes northeast towards the river and also to the southeast towards the Goomalling-Toodyay Road. To the rear of the place the landform slopes to a large, open and relatively flat area that extends to the edge of the river bank.

A low, steel framed and chain wire mesh infill fence is located along Stirling Terrace to a point aligning with the northwest elevation of 'The Ship'. The fence height increases to over two metres to the boundary of 'The Ship'. The former Presbytery (which does not form part of *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*) has a Toodyay stone fence to Stirling Terrace and the fence returns along the Goomalling-Toodyay Road. There is no boundary fencing to the river.

The site contains six main buildings with associated outbuildings and structures. Three of the buildings are clearly visible from Stirling Terrace. They are St John the Baptist Church, Mercy House and St Aloysius House. The other two buildings, and O'Connor House and 'The Ship', are sited behind the other buildings or behind a screen of trees, with glimpses of these buildings possible from the street. Outbuildings are located to the rear of Mercy House.

The overall landscaping to the site is an open parkland setting. The internal roadways are compacted earth with pea gravel. Pathways throughout the site are generally informal in style and constructed of compacted earth. There are more formal concrete pathways linking the various outbuildings to the rear of Mercy House. A feature of the site is the myriad of stone and concrete retaining walls. These walls define pathways and former garden beds.

Southwest of St Aloysius House, facing Stirling Terrace, is a masonry bordered raised bed with brick and gravel inserts forming a cross. There are two adjacent circular raised beds, one with two tone gravel forming a geometric shape.

Within the site are various statues and memorials. To the southwest of O'Connor House is a stone memorial that records the blessing and opening of the Avondown Centre for Catholic Education on 11 October 1987. Adjacent to the memorial is a statue on a Toodyay stone ledge that is supported by squat classical columns on a circular plinth. Adjacent to the front boundary and next to St Aloysius House is a stone plinth with a curved stone top housing a statue.

The planting to the site is generally informal. Forward of the building line to Stirling Terrace is an open landscape with mature eucalypts and shrubs. The driveway that leads directly to Mercy House is bordered by trees and shrubs. The plantings, including a number of jacarandas, frame a strong vista to the central projecting bay of Mercy House. Other plantings on site include pine and palm trees. Many trees have been coppiced. There is a domestic style garden to the north of Mercy House.

St John the Baptist Church

St John the Baptist Church, located in the west corner of the site, is designed in the Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical architectural style. This style has the broad characteristics of the traditional rectangular plan shape, but radical variations indicate a response to liturgical changes. Vertically proportioned fenestration and familiar materials are used such as timber and brick. The style is representative of the requirement for smaller churches as a result of reduced budgets and shrinking congregations.

The entry to the Church is from the southeast side. There are two concrete steps from ground level to Priest's Sacristy. A covered link to Mercy House extends from the northeast elevation of the Church to the northwest elevation of Mercy House.

The construction of St John the Baptist Church is concrete slab, brick walls, steel truss and concrete tiled gable roof. The southwest elevation that addresses Stirling Terrace features distinctive brickwork, and a bell tower at the gable end of the tile roof. The bell tower, with bell intact, sits forward of the elevation. The face bricks are laid in stretcher bond and comprise a variety of colour tones with the base brick being a light ochre colour. The effect of the different tones is a distinctive mottled or speckled composition. There is a centrally located full height window adjacent to the bell tower. The façade has a wall mounted cross, dedication plaque and notice board. The plaque records the blessing and opening of the Church on 17 November 1963.

The southeast elevation is divided into brickwork bays defined by full height vertical glazing. The Sacristy extends at the northern end with a steel framed glazed door and glazing above, extending full height. There are terracotta wall vents. The entry has double timber entry doors with a curved steel canopy over. There is a painted concrete threshold to the entry door.

The northwest elevation mirrors the southeast elevation with brick bays separated by vertical full height windows. The Nun's Chapel extends to the northwest and to the southeast elevation is a stained glass full height picture window. The covered link to Mercy House extends from the northeast elevation of the Church. The brickwork matches the Church and there are sections of ventilation along the length of the link. The ventilation is formed by a pattern of staggered single brick openings in the wall. The link has a flat metal deck roof.

The northeast elevation is the end wall of the gable roof. The gable roof extends to the southeast and northwest over the Sacristy and Nun's Chapel. Lighting to the Sanctuary is provided by full height windows to the southeast and northwest.

St John the Baptist Church has a traditional cruciform floor plan. The nave, entry, confessional, choir loft and bell tower form the main section of the Church. The transept contains the Nun's Chapel to the northwest and the Priest's and Working Sacristies to the southeast. The elevated sanctuary is side lit from the southeast and northwest.

Timber panelled double doors to the entry lead to the narthex. The narthex is located under the choir loft with acoustic partitioning extending into the nave. The choir loft is supported on steel (60x50mm) posts and a 90mm deep steel beam. The single run stairs to the choir loft are adjacent the southwest wall and have a steel frame, steel balustrading, steel handrail and open timber treads. The choir loft is accessed from stairs adjacent to the entry. The stairs have a steel gate halfway up the single flight. The choir loft has 100mm timber board floors and a timber framed balustrade. There is a timber step up adjacent to the balustrade and there are two rows of timber pews.

The confessional is an enclosed space under the choir loft that extends into the nave. The partition walls are acoustic panels with a compressed fibre cement flat sheet ceiling. Within the space are a confessional screen and storage. A door to the bell tower is accessed from the confessional. The narrow tower contains a steel cable pulley and a handle connected to the bell.

The nave is rectangular and narrows at the altar with brick nib walls. The nib walls conceal the entry to the Nun's Chapel and Sacristy.

The walls to the interior of St John the Baptist Church are face brick with the nave divided into four distinct bays through the use of full height vertical steel windows. Six exposed steel trusses are centrally located within each brick bay and are angled to form the pitch of the roof and support the timber roof beams. The windows are divided into three sections. The two top sections have obscure glass and the bottom section is half glazed with a fixed base panel. The bottom section has a top hinged pivot window. There are timber pews ten to the east side of the nave and nine to the west.

Painted plaster Stations of the Cross are featured on the southeast and northwest walls and two Statues, one of Mary and, one of Joseph and Jesus, are located adjacent to the sanctuary. Both statues stand on painted cantilevered concrete podiums. Beneath the statue of Joseph and Jesus to the northwest of the nave is a stone octagonal baptismal font. There are various paintings, plaques and religious iconography on the walls of the nave. The lighting throughout comprises modern fittings suspended from the ceiling in the nave as well as spotlight fittings to the sanctuary.

The Nun's Chapel is accessed from the sanctuary and also from a steel door to the covered link on the northeast wall. The chapel has six timber pews that face west. There are two stained glass windows. The single window to the northeast features religious iconography and an adjacent panel records that the window was donated by Fr. John Chokolich, Parish Priest when the church was built in 1963. The stained glass window to the southwest is a full height picture window with three panes. The panes depict scenes related to the rural region and references include trees, hills, crops, rail, bridge and a windmill. There is a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus located on a cantilevered concrete podium. A plaster sculpture of St John the Baptist and a small Toodyay stone altar is at the northwest end of the chapel. The eternal flame (tabernacle light) is suspended in gap between the Nun's Chapel and the altar.

The altar is three steps up from the nave and is constructed of a Toodyay stone base and a marble top. The tabernacle inset is located in the northeast wall. There is a large cross of Jesus' crucifixion located centrally in the north wall as a focal point of the altar.

The priest's and working sacristies are internally accessed from the sanctuary and externally accessed from a steel door on the southwest side of the transept. The partition wall and door facing the altar is timber framed with a timber veneer finish. The wall extends two-thirds height. The floors are tiled and a store is located to the priest's sacristy.

Mercy House

Mercy House is located to the north of the site adjacent to the northwest boundary. Mercy House is designed in the Federation Queen Anne architectural style. The characteristics of this style are picturesque, asymmetrical form, a dominant roof with bargeboard gables and tall chimneys and verandahs on more than one side. Walls are typically red brickwork with tuckpointing to street facades and double hung windows. Regional variations include corrugated iron roofs. Mercy House displays many of these characteristics.

Mercy House is set back from Stirling Terrace and this view is framed by St John the Baptist Church and St Aloysius House. The entry to Mercy House is located on the southwest elevation and trees line the driveway that leads to the entry porch. The high pitched roof form, gables and chimneys are visible from the street with mature trees and adjacent buildings obscuring a clear view of Mercy House from Stirling Terrace.

Mercy House is a two storey red face brick building with a corrugated steel hipped main roof. The front façade faces southwest and features tuck pointed brickwork, symmetrical triple gabled projecting bays and cement rendered string courses. Entry to the building is via the central, smaller bay, under a flat metal deck canopy structure through a five panel timber entry door. The entry structure is supported on steel posts on a concrete slab with a simple iron balustrade. The gable ends feature roughcast, timber battening and timber finials. The tall brick chimneys have rendered bases and stepped brick detailing above. There are string courses at window head height to the ground and first floor as well as at the floor level to the first floor. There is a rendered plinth to the base of the building. Windows are timber double hung with rendered sills and there is decorative rendered moulding above the windows to the projecting bays. A foundation stone adjacent to the entry records the date of building as 2 July 1903.

There is a deep verandah at the ground floor level along the northeast elevation, and long the northwest, northeast and southeast elevations of the first floor. The verandahs have a timber framed structure, timber posts, timber boards and compressed fibre cement flat sheet infill to timber balustrades. The verandah roof has a separate pitch to the main roof and is clad with corrugated steel. The covered brick link to the Church is connected at the northwest elevation. There are stairs to a cellar from the ground floor verandah on the northeast elevation. Along the ground floor verandah is a timber stair to the first floor verandah. The ground floor verandah to the northwest, southeast and a portion of the northeast elevations has been enclosed with compressed fibre cement flat sheeting and timber windows.

Mercy House has a rectangular floor plan. The ground floor has six main rooms that are located either side of a central entry and central staircase. There are two corridors with one to either side of the central entry providing access to the main rooms.

The entry has a timber framed glazed screen that separates the entry from the staircase. The screen has timber double doors and the screen extends full height to the ceiling. The timber staircase is a return stair with two landings and two main flights. The stair features decorative timber balusters, moulded handrail, decorative newel posts and timber treads and risers.

The northwest side of the central entry has two main rooms, the library and dining room. The enclosure of the verandahs has created the kitchen and a store to the western side of the building. The southeast side of the central entry has four rooms comprising office and meeting rooms. There is a store and toilets to the enclosed verandah.

Generally, the ground floor materials and finishes are timber floors, moulded timber 250mm high skirtings, painted plaster walls, no cornices and lath and plaster ceilings. The windows are timber double hung and the doors are timber four panel. There are fluorescent and pendant light fittings throughout.

The first floor has a central corridor that extends southeast and northwest from the central stair. There is a chapel at the northwest end that extends the full width of the building. There are six bedrooms, a sacristy, a linen store and a bathroom.

The chapel has 100mm timber floor boards. The walls are painted plaster on masonry and the ceiling is lath and plaster with no cornice. The windows are timber double hung with 65mm moulded timber architraves. Doors are four-panel timber with mortice locks with modern security locks above. The door architraves are 120mm moulded timber. The chapel has timber pews and a timber altar to the south side of the room.

The central corridor has timber floor boards with the same skirting as the chapel. There is evidence of a former dado line to the plaster walls and the plaster ceiling and coved cornice appear to have been replaced. All timber doors to rooms are four panel with moulded architraves.

Many of the doors, such as the sacristy door, retain original hardware. A typical bedroom has a plaster board ceiling with cover battens and a flat timber and decorative plaster cornice. The walls are painted plaster with evidence of a former dado. Extant fireplaces are covered. There is a small cross and holy water fitting located on the wall. The bathroom has been upgraded with two toilets, two showers and two hand basins.

St Aloysius House

St. Aloysius House is located near the centre of the site and addresses Stirling Terrace. St. Aloysius House is designed in the Federation Queen Anne architectural style. The characteristics of this style are picturesque, asymmetrical form, a dominant roof with bargeboard gables, tall chimneys and verandahs on more than one side. Walls are typically red brickwork with tuckpointing to street facades, windows are double hung and regional variations include corrugated iron roofs. St. Aloysius House displays many of these characteristics.

St. Aloysius House along with St John the Baptist Church frames the view to Mercy House. The long axis of the building is orientated northeast-southwest. The entry to St. Aloysius House is located on the southwest elevation through an entry porch. The building's two storey form, expansive roof, striking two storey verandah and

siting close to Stirling Terrace ensure that the building is a dominant feature in the Stirling Terrace streetscape.

St. Aloysius House is a two storey brick and tiled symmetrical building with a half hipped roof. The building has a rectangular floor plan with small projecting bays to the northeast end. The roof is terracotta tiled with terracotta cresting to the ridge. The roof is pitched separately over the verandah in a broken back form. There are tall, face brick chimneys with terracotta chimney pots and a crucifix finial. Verandahs extend along the southeast and northwest elevations to the ground and first floors. The verandahs adjoin the projecting bays at the northeast end, while remaining open at the southwest end. Verandahs are timber framed and feature exposed rafters, timber posts with timber brackets. Timber geometric patterned balustrading is to the first floor and timber lattice is to the underside of the first floor verandah.

The walls are red brick laid with stretcher bond coursing to the northeast and southwest elevations and English bond to the southeast and northwest elevations. There is a rendered string course to the ground floor to the long elevations. The street elevation features two rendered string courses, to the ground and first floor, as well as a rendered band above the three centrally located first floor windows. The majority of windows are timber double hung and a strong design feature is the ground and first floor timber French doors. The French doors have ten panes per door and there are double highlight windows above. Doors have timber thresholds and windows have rendered sills and lintels.

St. Aloysius House has a simple floor plan to the ground and first floors. Access between the floors is provided via two timber stairs located at the northeast and southwest of the building. Both stairs have two flights, turned timber balustrades and decorative timber newel posts. There is timber panelling to the side of stair, enclosing the space under the stair.

The ground floor contains a large hall and stage, stairwells, kitchen and a bedroom. There is a high ceiling, approximately four metres, with a dado, 2200mm high timber concertina six panel doors to the stage and halfway along the hall. These doors have obscure textured glass to the top two panels. Internal doors are high waisted panel in style and some retain original door furniture such as beehive handles. The kitchen has a modern fitout.

The first floor has a chapel, central corridor with four bedrooms to either side and shower and toilets to the northern projecting bays. The floor to the first floor is polished timber boards. The bedrooms have stud walls, with modern door furniture and hardware. The French doors to each of the bedrooms accessing the verandah have casement fastener door furniture and bottom hinged windows above. The southern stair has a stained glass window to the landing to the west elevation.

O'Connor House

O'Connor House is located near the centre of the site southeast of Mercy House and northeast of St. Aloysius House. O'Connor House is designed in the Inter war Georgian Revival architectural style. The characteristics of this style are: simplicity, reasonable proportions, restrained and simplified classicism. Walls are typically plain with face brickwork and roofs usually have a simple configuration. O'Connor House displays many of these characteristics.

O'Connor House is a single storey brick building with verandahs to the northeast and southeast facades. A prominent, projecting entry bay is located centrally to the southwest facade with the main entry through the bay's northwest side. The bay has a rendered parapet gable with a crowning crucifix finial, decorative rendered moulding and a small corrugated steel canopy over the double doors. The main entry is elevated and access is through double timber doors.

O'Connor House has a simple, pre painted corrugated steel, long sheet, hipped gabled main roof with narrow eaves and exposed timber rafters. Both verandahs are enclosed. The majority of the northeast verandah is enclosed with vertical timber boarding, timber louvre and glass above. The southeast verandah and part of the northeast verandah are enclosed with compressed fibre cement flat sheeting, timber and aluminium windows. There is a brick chimney to the southeast end.

The walls are red stretcher bond brickwork with two rendered string courses, one at sill height and one at window head height. Some repointing has been undertaken to the southwest elevation. The windows are timber double hung with six panes per sash. There are brick and concrete steps to the northeast elevation. These steps are partly demolished.

O'Connor House is a rectangular planned building featuring two main rooms, being a hall and chapel, an entry foyer, a sacristy, two bedrooms, a bathroom, toilets and storage.

The main hall is accessed from the entry foyer and from the northeast enclosed verandah. The ceiling consists of fibrous plaster sheets with painted timber cover battens. The fibrous plaster sheets rake up from the perimeter brick walls, following the pitch of the roof, to the level of the raised ceiling. Steel tie rods extend from the northeast to the southwest perimeter walls. There are timber concertina doors to the southeast end of the room. There are double timber panel doors to the northeast and southwest of the hall. The doors have obscure glass to the top panel and a four pane highlight window. The walls are painted render with a dado line and a timber picture rail.

The northeast verandah has 110mm timber floor boards and a line of timber posts supporting a timber beam. The brick walls and string course are painted. At the southeast end of the verandah are a series of store and work rooms that are clad in painted weatherboard.

The chapel adjoins the hall and is accessed from the northeast verandah. The main feature of the chapel is a decorative timber altar along the southwest wall. There is a brick fireplace, polished timber floor boards and a timber picture rail. There are timber pews and a central walkway to the altar. The enclosed southeast verandah contains the sacristy with access to the chapel and the northeast verandah. The northwest verandah enclosure contains two bedrooms and a bathroom and is accessed from the main hall, the northeast verandah and one bedroom is accessed externally from the northwest.

'The Ship'

'The Ship' is located in the southern portion of the site. The immediate site is flat with a low stone retaining wall to the northwest. It is orientated northeast southwest and addresses Stirling Terrace. 'The Ship' is designed in the Victorian Georgian architectural style. This style featured symmetrical facades, gentleness of scale and a rectangular form.

'The Ship' is a two storey face brick and rendered building with a hipped corrugated iron roof. The building has verandahs to all elevations with a bull nosed roof to the first floor. The rectangular building form, simple roof and encircling verandah combine to present a strong symmetrical composition. There are two face brick, simply detailed chimneys to the northeast elevation.

The facades are constructed in tuck pointed brickwork with painted cement render to window and door labels and also to the corners. The southwest façade is constructed in Flemish bond brickwork with stretcher bond to other facades. Walls are rendered from the base to 1430mm.

Timber double hung windows feature six panes per sliding sash at ground floor and four per sash at the first floor level. Window sills are timber. Timber French doors have a solid panel to the base and two glass panes above. The timber front door has six panels and a timber threshold. Highlight windows feature above all doors.

The verandah is supported on 120mm square timber posts to the ground floor, and 95mm to the first floor, and is timber framed. The ground floor verandah is brick paved. The first floor verandah has timber floor boards and the balustrade has timber top and bottom rails with timber lattice infill panels. A recent external timber stair is located on the northeast side of the building, with a door to the landing to restrict access to the first floor verandah.

'The Ship' is a simply planned building with centrally located entries to the northeast and southwest elevations. There are two main rooms per floor with a central room at each level that allows for accessing the spiral stair, bathroom and main rooms. The floors at both levels are of timber construction and both have a bathroom built into the central room to its northeast end.

The ground floor has a kitchen and sitting room to either side of the central room. The kitchen has 80mm timber polished boards, timber skirting and a timber picture rail. The walls are painted set plaster and the ceiling appears to be lath and plaster. The fireplace has a timber mantle supported by decorative timber brackets, timber surround and a concrete hearth. The fireplace is still operational.

The central room has a steel spiral stair and a bathroom. The bathroom has a contemporary fitout with a WC, shower and hand basin. The sitting room has carpet on the timber floor and painted timber skirting boards. There is a simple cove cornice and a French door to the southwest elevation. The French door has a top hinged, two paned highlight window. A timber altar is located in front of a fireplace with a timber surround.

The two main rooms to the first floor have been subdivided through the use of framed lightweight construction. The four rooms are used as bedrooms. Doors are hollow core with modern door furniture. The timber floors are carpet covered. The walls have timber moulded picture rails and the double hung windows have 100mm timber architraves. The fireplace to Bedroom 1 has been infilled with the timber mantle and surrounds are still visible. The fireplace to Bedroom 3 has been infilled with the line of the curved head of the fireplace opening visible. There are ceiling fans to three of the bedrooms, and the bathroom has a contemporary fitout with a WC, shower and hand basin.

Kitchen

The Kitchen outbuilding is a single storey stretcher bond brick, one room building with a steeply pitched, short sheet corrugated iron, half gabled roof with louvred vents and exposed rafter ends. There are verandahs to the southeast and southwest facades that are roofed by a separately pitched corrugated iron roof and supported by square section timber posts, and adjoins Mercy House. An attached lean-to, timber framed, compressed fibre cement clad extension is built to the northeast side of the building and has recently been used as a bedroom. The lean-to has three external concrete steps on the northeast elevation.

The southeast and northwest facades are symmetrical with each having a central six pane sash double hung timber window, brick buttressing and terracotta vents. The windows have cement rendered sills and lintels. A brick chimney is on the northeast side of the building. There is a circular corrugated iron water tank and a timber tank stand on the northwest side of the Kitchen.

The Kitchen interior is a rectangular floor plan that has a timber floor with large ceramic floor tiles, laid in a diagonal pattern. The walls are painted plaster with a dado line run in the plaster. The ceiling is flat plasterboard with a simple coved cornice and two square plaster ceiling vents set out symmetrically along the length of the room. The timber double hung windows have timber architraves and sill. The door to the southwest elevation is a high waisted timber door with a highlight window.

The interior retains a fireplace that is now tiled with ovens and cook tops within the fireplace recess. Cupboards and benches are located to the perimeter of the room. The room to the northeast has painted brickwork and compressed fibre cement to the walls.

Laundry

The Laundry is a single storey brick building featuring a hip roof with exposed rafters ends to the eaves. The external walls have a cement render finish. The hipped roof is clad with painted short sheet corrugated iron.

The northeast and southwest sections of the roof have skylights. Two timber framed four pane windows with fixed glazing are symmetrically arranged in the southwest facade. There are three doors to this building. The door to the southeast is a timber panelled door with the top panel originally designed for fixed glazing. The northwest door is a timber ledged and braced door and the doorway on the northeast face is a double ledged and braced set of doors. These double doors align with a set of double doors to the adjacent boiler room. There is a circular corrugated iron rainwater tank to the north of the building.

The building is in poor condition with evidence of cracking above openings, deterioration to the timber windows, evidence of rising damp to the walls, failing render, fretting brickwork and deteriorated roof gutters.

The building has a rectangular floor plan consisting of the one room. The interior has a concrete floor slab, painted brick walls and an exposed roof structure. Evidence of former use is extant in metal conduits and redundant services. The room is still used for laundry purposes, as well as storage.

Boiler Room

The Boiler Room is a single storey timber framed building with a corrugated iron gable roof and exposed rafter ends. It has a timber splayed weatherboard dado to

its four facades with unpainted compressed fibre cement clad flat sheet wall lining and cover battens to the upper section of the walls. There are timber ledged and braced double doors. The gabled roof to the building is long sheet corrugated iron with timber barge boards and finials. The building is in poor condition with deterioration to the weatherboards and guttering.

The Boiler Room has a rectangular floor plan consisting of the one room. The interior has unlined timber stud framed walls and exposed roof structure. The floor is a concrete slab and the walls and roof structure are unpainted. The room is used for storage.

Garage

The garage is a single storey timber framed building with a corrugated, unpainted, compressed fibre cement gable roof with exposed rafter ends. The garage has a rectangular floor plan consisting of one room. The interior has unlined timber stud framed walls and exposed roof structure. The floor is a concrete slab and the walls are unpainted. No doors are extant.

The tank stand is steel framed and braced, has a fixed ladder and there is no water tank extant.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information for the Sisters of Mercy Convent buildings, refer to Conservation Plan: Avondown Centre, Toodyay', prepared by Gavan Reilly and Helen Burgess for the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate in May 2003.

There are 406 places in the HCWA database noted as including Victorian Georgian style architecture, of which four are convents or monasteries. These four are:

- P00001 St Joseph's Convent (fmr), Albany, a two storey brick and iron building with wrap-around verandahs, constructed in 1881, which is a much grander building than 'The Ship' at *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay* ;
- P00461 St Mary Star of the Sea Group, Carnarvon, which includes the single storey brick and iron 1910 Presbytery that demonstrates influences of the older Victorian Georgian style but is primarily vernacular;
- P02879 Convent of Mercy and School (fmr), York, a single storey 1890 brick and iron building constructed for the Sisters of Mercy, that is part of a complex including a school and chapel; and,
- P02622 Benedictine Monastery Precinct, New Norcia, a unique monastery town established from 1846 that had a long life as a boarding school, in which a wide variety of architectural styles are evident, with the earliest buildings generally less ornate and showing evidence of Victorian Georgian style.

The first three of these places are on the Register of Heritage Places. The latter has been assessed and is being considered for entry onto the Register.

In all, 168 places noted as Victorian Georgian in style are on the Register. Seventeen of these are noted as including a two-storey residence. Most of these (14) are outside the Metropolitan area. Nine are constructed at least in part of brick.

Some of these 17 places are much larger and more decorative than 'The Ship'. Two that appear very similar in scale and design are:

- P01083 House, 15 Weld Street, Gingin, an 1870 single storey residence with 1886 double storey addition, constructed of brick and shingles with a wrap-around double-storey verandah; and,
- P03839 Clayton Farm, Helena Valley, a two storey 1861 brick and iron residence with wrap-around single storey verandah.

'The Ship' is a good example of a two-storey Victorian Georgian residence adapted for use as a convent.

There are 389 places in the HCWA database noted as including Federation Queen Anne style architecture, of which four are convents or monasteries. These three are:

- P00386 Villa Carlotta, Busselton, a single storey brick and tile residence constructed in 1897 and converted for use as a convent and school between 1904 and 1951;
- P02030 St Brigid's Group, North Perth, a complex of convent school buildings constructed for the Sisters of Mercy from 1888, including the two-storey 1902 brick presbytery, which has been extensively altered;
- P02383 St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth, a complex of church and convent school buildings built around the 1908 Dennehy House, a two storey Federation Queen Anne style residence featuring ornate decorative timber, later converted for use as a convent school.
- P00684 Catholic Precinct Dardanup, which includes the two-storey brick and iron former convent building, featuring front bays at ground and first floor, and a two-storey verandah to three sides.

The first three of these places are on the Register of Heritage Places. The latter is included in the assessment program but is yet to be assessed. Mercy House at *Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*, appears to be larger than these comparative examples. It is a good example of a convent school building in the Federation Queen Anne style, with its three projecting bays in the front elevation, each capped with decorative projecting timber gables.

The main feature of St Aloysius House is its two-storey decorative timber verandahs, which show influences of the Federation Arts and Crafts style. Aside from these verandahs, it is a simply designed building. Many of the 59 Federation Arts and Crafts style buildings on the Register are better examples of the style, although there are no other convents or monasteries in the database currently noted as being designed in this style.

O'Connor House is a simple example of the Inter war Georgian Revival. As it was designed to support a second storey, which was never built, the style is not fully articulated in the single storey section that is extant. Enclosure of the rear verandahs also detracts from the overall architectural style of the place.

There are 41 places in the HCWA database noted as including Inter war Georgian Revival style architecture, of which twelve are Registered. None are convents or monasteries. The most similar to O'Connor House is:

- P03463 1915 Block, Albany Primary School, a single storey brick and iron classroom and administration block designed by the Public Works Department under Hillson Beasley.

There are 68 convents or monasteries noted in the HCWA database, of which 20 are Registered. Only one dates from prior to 1870, P02622 Benedictine Monastery Precinct, New Norcia (described above). Twelve date earlier than 1890. A further eight date from between then and 1902, when the Sisters of Mercy took over 'The Ship' and began establishing the Sisters of Mercy Convent School in Toodyay, and another 13 between then and the start of World War One. Comparisons of dates are difficult to make, as it was common for religious orders to utilise an existing building when starting a convent or monastery. Hence, places that may only have been a convent/ monastery for a short amount of time can have an early construction date listed.

Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay is an excellent representative example of a complex of buildings designed and used for various religious purposes including: as a convent school, with a collection of purpose-built elements complementing an original residence adapted for the religious order's use; the establishment of the place dating from the Federation era, when the number of convents and monasteries in the State began to increase; and the introduction of a new post World War II aesthetic in ecclesiastical buildings with the addition of St John the Baptist Church.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

Conservation Plan: Avondown Centre, Toodyay', prepared by Gavan Reilly and Helen Burgess for the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate in May 2003.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
