



**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)

- 8.5 Forming associations
- 8.6 Worshipping

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 406 Religion
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Redemptorist Monastery and Church, is an excellent, well-constructed and intact example of the Federation Gothic style comprising a three-storey limestone construction monastery and church complex, with a tiled roof, with elegant interiors and well detailed decorative features. (Criterion 1.1)

The Retreat House at the *Redemptorist Monastery and Church* constructed in clinker bricks, off form concrete, with a clay-tiled roof, in Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional style, is a good example of the style. (Criterion 1.1)

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is a landmark because it is a large and imposing structure in an open setting, set at the top of a formal drive on a slight rise above Vincent Street. However, it may be seen from a number of vantage points in the area and the City, and together with its mature trees is a landmark. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Redemptorist Monastery and Church symbolises the development of the Catholic Church in Western Australia and has been the base for Redemptorist activities in pastoral care and missionary work in Western Australia from the arrival of the first Redemptorist Fathers in 1899 until the present day. (Criterion 2.1)

Redemptorist Monastery and Church was designed by eminent local architects Michael and James Cavanagh, who carried out numerous commissions for the Roman Catholic Church in Western Australia, including the sanctuary and

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

sacristies of St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, and is an excellent example of their ecclesiastic work. (Criterion 2.3)

Funds for construction and later additions (Monastery in 1912 and Church in 1922) were raised by the local Catholic community, representing a concerted community endeavour. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is a well-used Church and the place is highly valued by Western Australia's Catholic community for its religious and spiritual associations, and for the site's long association with the Redemptorist Order. (Criterion 4.1)

Funds for construction and later additions (Monastery in 1912 and Church in 1922) were raised by the local Catholic community, representing a concerted community endeavour. (Criterion 4.1)

The place is also valued by the wider community as a landmark and contributes to the community's sense of place as a well-known religious complex, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Town of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is one of a small number of monasteries in Australia that continue to perform their original function in a cultural environment where the Australian religious orders are in decline so that the practice of living and working in monasteries is becoming increasingly rare. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is an excellent example of the Federation Gothic style applied to a monastery. (Criterion 6.1)

The *Redemptorist Monastery and Church* Retreat House is a good example of the Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional style applied to a Retreat House. (Criterion 6.1)

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is a fine representative and intact example of a substantial monastery and the only remaining purpose built Redemptorist monastery still in use for its intended purpose. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is a well-constructed building and the impact of maintenance is negligible. It would appear that building maintenance is attended to, with the exception of some stone pointing and repair. A number of ceilings on the upper floor have deflected, suggesting that water penetration may have contributed to the fracturing of keys on lath and plaster ceilings. Generally the place is in very good condition.

The Retreat House is, comparatively, a recently constructed building and is in fair condition. There is some deterioration of steelwork and staining to off form concrete work. Overall the Retreat House is in fair condition.

The grounds comprise a diverse mix of planting. The gardens are kept tidy and are well presented, but there is a need to manage the trees, with some trees requiring dead-wooding, and some requiring removal. Overall the grounds are in fair to good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The original intent of all parts of the *Redemptorist Monastery and Church* and Retreat House remains, with subtle variations in the arrangement of parts of the place to accommodate changing needs. The current uses are compatible with the place, though the level of usage of the place may in time mean that alternative uses will need to be sought. Alternative compatible uses may need to be sought at some future time. Overall the place retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Though there have been numerous minor changes to the *Redemptorist Monastery and Church*, including the introduction of a lift, changes to the kitchen and dining arrangements, the organization of the chapel, the use of the confessional and the like, the place retains most of its original fabric. The place therefore retains a high degree of authenticity. The Retreat House has undergone little change and remains authentic.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Philip Griffiths, Architect and Robin Chinnery, Historian in July 2003, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Redemptorist Monastery and Chapel was built in 1903 for the Redemptorist Order, which had been established in Western Australia in 1899 at the invitation of Bishop Gibney. The Monastery and Chapel were designed by Michael and James Cavanagh, who also designed the Monastery East Wing additions in 1911/12 and the Chapel addition completed in 1922. The adjacent Retreat House, designed by Kierath Waldron, was completed in 1967.

Founded by Italian Alphonsus Liguori¹, the Redemptorist Order was inaugurated in 1732 and swiftly grew in both numbers and reputation. Shortly before Alphonsus' death in 1787, there was a phenomenal spread of his work, with St Clement Hofbauer instituting the Congregation in his native Warsaw. From there, the Congregation spread to Belgium, Holland and the United States and was introduced in England in 1843, from where it came to Australia.²

The Redemptorists describe themselves as being 'called by God to follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, by preaching the word of God to the poor'.³

The Redemptorists were introduced to Australia by James Murray, the Bishop of Maitland, after hearing a Redemptorist preaching to a very large crowd in Limerick, Ireland. Six Redemptorists from Ireland and England returned to Australia with Murray in early 1882. The group initially settled in Singleton in the Hunter Valley, but transferred to Newcastle in 1887 and the following year, a second mission house was established in Ballarat, Victoria. The two communities carried out an enormous amount of mission work, including missions and retreats from Queensland to South Australia, as well as an annual visit to New Zealand.⁴

The Bishop of Perth, Matthew Gibney, first came across the Redemptorists while receiving the hospitality of Father Thomas O'Farrell in Ballarat while on a trip to Melbourne.⁵ Gibney was impressed with the work of the Redemptorists and requested that an order be established in Western Australia. In February 1898, Father William Plunkett (Major Superior of the Redemptorists in Australia) and Father O'Farrell set out for Perth to investigate the local situation. Gibney offered three possible sites for a foundation (Subiaco 'beside the station', Vincent Street, North Perth and Leederville).⁶

1 Liguori was working with Sister Maria Celeste Crostarosa, a nun from Scala, who founded the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer following revelations about an order of nuns who should devote themselves entirely to the following of Christ. After further revelations, Sister Maria convinced Liguori to establish an order of men to follow Christ in His preaching of the 'good new to those in need'. See S J Boland CSsR, *One Hundred Years On...The Redemptorists in Western Australia 1899-1999*, Perth, 1999, pp. 7-10.

2 *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

3 *ibid.*, p. 49.

4 *ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

5 As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 19.

6 *ibid.*, p. 19.

Despite the two fathers being hesitant about establishing a foundation in Western Australia, Father O'Farrell (by then Major Superior) returned to Perth in September 1899 to select a suitable site for the foundation. Although he was being offered a site in Guildford, Father O'Farrell argued for a more central site in Highgate Hill, asking that a couple of houses be rented until more suitable accommodation could be arranged. Two houses were rented and readied in time for the arrival of the Western Australia's founding Redemptorists.⁷

Father William Plunkett (Superior) and Brothers Pius Cleary and Brendan Hannigan took up residence in the two cottages (dedicated to Saints Joachim and Anne) on 6 October 1899. Father Cornelius Hunt and Father Patrick Clune completed the community.⁸ Fathers O'Farrell, Hunt and Clune gave the first Redemptorist mission in St Mary's Cathedral between 8 October and 5 November 1899. This began the Order's missionary work, which included 'some remarkable ones on the Goldfields in the early years' of their work in Western Australia.⁹ In addition to missionary work, the Highgate Hill community also provided retreats to Catholic clergy and cared for a small corrugated iron church close to their residence.¹⁰

In late 1899, the community turned its attention to the future and negotiated with Bishop Gibney regarding a permanent home. After reconsidering the site in Guildford, Bishop Gibney decided that the Redemptorists should have a Church-owned property in Vincent Street, North Perth, due to its accessibility.¹¹

However, the North Perth property was split by the undeveloped Chelmsford Road and had already been surveyed into housing allotments and the city sanitary dump adjoined the property. The authorities co-operated with the wishes of Bishop Gibney and the Vincent Street property was transferred to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as a single block. The City of Perth also resolved to relocate the sanitary dump and re-plan Chelmsford Road (extending from east to west) so as to leave the block intact.¹²

By February 1900, architects Michael and James Cavanagh had prepared plans for a church and monastery on behalf of the Redemptorists. Following Father Plunkett's untimely death by an accident while travelling to Sydney, Father Hunt took on the responsibility of overseeing construction.¹³

As both the Irish Provincial and Australian Superior General were required to approve the plans, it took some time before work commenced. A contract with builder W. Fairweather was finally signed on 4 October 1902 and Father O'Farrell laid the foundation stone at a private ceremony on 6 November in front of the community of Highgate Hill.¹⁴ The *W.A. Record* published an article calling for donations towards the buildings, emphasising that the Fathers needed their own house if they were to carry on their work.¹⁵

7 *The W.A. Record*, 9 November 1899, p. 8; Boland, op. cit., pp. 20-24.

8 *The W.A. Record*, 30 September 1899, p. 8.

9 *The W.A. Record*, 7 October 1899, p. 13; 4 November 1899, p. 8; 11 November 1899, p. 8; 'Centenary of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, 1846-1946', Perth, c. 1946, n.p.

10 Boland, op. cit., p. 30. During the week the Church served as a school for the Mission Sisters of Notre Dame, and there was good attendance at both weekday and twice daily Sunday Masses.

11 *ibid.*, pp. 33-34

12 *ibid.*, p. 35.

13 *ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

14 *ibid.*, p. 39.

15 *The W.A. Record*, 8 November 1902, p. 12.

A more public ceremony was held three days later on the 170th anniversary of the Order, when Bishop Gibney laid another foundation stone before a large crowd that included a number of Church and lay dignitaries. The authorities provided additional tram cars to bring people to the site. Father Keogh praised the commitment of the Redemptorist Fathers to their work in Western Australia, as evidenced

...in their laying the foundation stone of their monastery...The Fathers, in undertaking their foundation, meant it to provide them with the means of giving retreats to members of the clergy and the laity, and as a centre of spiritual comfort...This building would not only be the pride of the Catholic body, but of the whole city of Perth. It would be of intellectual and moral effect, an important factor in the development of West Australia.¹⁶

Mr R S Haynes, the Mayor of Perth, praised the plans for the monastery and church, stating that the local Town Hall 'was a trifle compared to that to be erected by the Redemptorist Fathers'.¹⁷

The article on the foundation ceremony went on to provide a full description of the proposed buildings:

When completed the church will contain a nave, transept and sanctuary, with sacristies adjoining. The portion of the church included in the contract extends as far as the first transept arch, giving a floor space 75ft in length by 35ft in width. The height of the walls from floor to eaves will be 32ft and from eaves to ridge of roof 24ft. The roof will be open timber with moulded timbers, and provision is made for filling in between the main timbers with tracery work. All the timbers are to be oregon, carefully selected, and will be varnished on completion. The walls are to be divided by horizontal moulded string courses and bands, and the spaces between the windows treated with canopied niches for statues of the saints. The lighting has received careful attention, and a handsome west window with five lights divided by mullions with upper portion filled with geometrical tracing will give a bold appearance to the front. The aisle windows are to be similarly treated in simpler fashion. Ample ventilation has been provided for. Attention has been paid to the entrances, and the church will be entered through a porch, with three doorways. The confessionals will be recessed in the walls along the side of the church, and the interior of the church will present an appearance equal to any in the State.

The monastery, which is to be attached to the church, will be three stories high. It will be entered through a hall, with reception rooms on either side. The rest of the ground floor will be devoted to the community room, refectories, cells, and kitchen, etc. The first floor will contain the monastery oratory, with windows opening into the church, and the remainder of this floor is given to a wide corridor running the whole length, with cells on either side, while the bathrooms and the staircase are to be on the top floor. The top floor is to be taken up by cells, with corridor between, and bathrooms and staircase leading to the lower floors. A verandah will run along the back elevation, and carry a balcony to the first floors. The lighting ventilation and sanitation have been well attended to. The foundations throughout will be in cement and concrete, and the external walls are to be built in two walls with a cavity between the outer wall of Cottesloe stone and the inner wall of 9in brick. Internally the walls will be all of brick. The timber principally used throughout will be jarrah. The length of the front elevation will be 188ft divided into three by the church projecting in front of the monastery, a central tower over the monastery entrance, and the east end of the monastery running out to correspond with the church end. In design the building will be late Gothic. The church elevations are to be treated with painted arches and buttresses, finishing in pinnacles above eaves at the corners, and the monastery with square ended openings and mullioned windows. The stonework will be rockfaced, and the dressings, mouldings, bands etc, will be in cement and the roof covered with red tiles, giving an elevation of very pleasing design. The buildings have been

¹⁶ *The W.A. Record*, 15 November 1902, p. 8.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

designed and will be carried out under the supervision of Messrs M R Cavanagh, FRIBA and J C Cavanagh. The contract has been let to Mr W Fairweather at £8,778. Mr J Colligan will act as clerk of works.¹⁸

This description is largely confirmed by contract plans held by the Redemptorist Fathers, drawn by Cavanagh and Cavanagh and signed by W Fairweather. The plans also show a circular staircase at the rear of the monastery, leading from the ground to the first floor. Designs for a marble altar were prepared by Americo di Martino Barsanti from Pietrasanta (Carrara), Italy.¹⁹ The murals to the sanctuary were not part of the scheme and were painted much later, in 1961, by Karl Matzek.

Dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, *Redemptorist Monastery and Church* was opened on Sunday, 13 September 1903, with the Bishop Gibney and Abbot Torres from New Norcia officiating. The Very Reverend Father Hunt, Superior of the Redemptorist Community gave thanks for assistance in building the church and monastery:

They (the fathers) had not undertaken to erect those buildings without having reason to believe that they would be helped to complete them...He would be helped to complete the buildings and would receive aid also to enlarge the church, and, if he was to judge by the congregation now present, it would not be long before the building was found too small. They (the fathers) were very grateful to Mr Cavanagh, the architect. The contractor, Mr Fairweather, had given them all possible satisfaction, as had also Mr Colligan, the clerk of works. He (Father Hunt) had likewise to thank those who had given assistance in decorating the church – and more especially the Sisters of Mercy at West Perth...The cost of the buildings had amounted to £11,000...They were indebted to Mr Ashton for painting their oratory, a part of the building on which they would extend all possible decoration. They had to thank Mr Rive for the installation of the electric lights, Mr Scanlon had given them a fine clock for the tower, and Dr Graber had presented them with some handsome engravings.²⁰

Father Hunt went on to name and thank those who donated money towards construction.²¹

New confessionals were installed in the Church c. 1907 and through the generosity of the people of Perth, a second wing was added to the Monastery in 1912. Michael and James Cavanagh were again responsible for the design.²²

Contractor T J Green completed additions to the Church, including a sanctuary and transept, in 1922. These additions were again designed by Cavanagh and Cavanagh.²³ The shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was erected in 1925 through a bequest from Mr Michael McArdle. The shrine of Little Flower, a gift from Mrs Snodgrass, was a later addition.²⁴ In 1946, the Catholic Church cited

18 ibid., p. 9.

19 'Monastery at North Perth' for the Redemptorist Fathers, M F Cavanagh and J C Cavanagh, 1902, held by the Redemptorist Fathers.

20 *The W.A. Record*, 19 September 1903, p. 9. This edition of the Record had a four page feature article on the opening of the Church and Monastery, including details of the ceremonies.

21 ibid.

22 Plans drawn by Cavanagh and Cavanagh, held by the Redemptorist Fathers. The plan archive held by the Redemptorist Fathers includes a number of schemes for additions to both the monastery and church prepared by Cavanagh and Cavanagh, indicating that the Fathers considered such plans long before they were implemented.

23 'The Redemptorist Church', Cavanagh and Cavanagh, stamped by Perth City Council 22 January 1922, plans held by Redemptorist Fathers.

24 Boland, op. cit., p. 41.

the Redemptorist Monastery Church as one of the principal churches of the diocese of Perth.²⁵

The Monastery was used for the annual retreat for clergy, including Archbishop Clune²⁶ who had a couple of rooms set aside 'for his convenience'.²⁷

During the earliest years, the missions were a novelty in Western Australia and the brothers regularly described adults taking their first confession and communion, highlighting the frontier work of the order in the early nineteenth century. By the 1920s and 1930s, missions were a regular part of the Redemptorists' pastoral work, and they had legislation that a mission was to be held in each parish every three years.²⁸

There was a gradual decline in missions following World War Two, with the Brothers having to adapt their pastoral care to new demands. In December 1956, rector Father Patrick Tatly organised a mass public mission in Forrest Place over a week, preaching to both Catholics and non-Catholics. Extensive missionary work was undertaken in the diocese of Geraldton in the early 1970s, and later that decade six Redemptorist missionaries travelled to Darwin, passing through the Pilbara region.²⁹

Though the Redemptorists are a distinct order within the Roman Catholic Church, their congregation is the broad Catholic Church. The Redemptorists have also provided retreats to clergy, religious and Catholic school children over the years. For example, the clergy of Perth and Bunbury came to the monastery each year, and the various institutes and schools of the Brothers and Sisters in Western Australia were all part of the regular ministry of the Fathers.³⁰

The chancel walls are decorated with two tiers of murals that were painted in 1961 and 1962 by Karl Matzek, an immigrant Croatian artist. The murals depict the lives and martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul.³¹

In the early 1960s, it was decided that a special retreat house be built in order to cater for more retreatants. Following a fund raising campaign amongst the parishes, the complex designed by Kierath Waldron was completed and blessed by Archbishop Prindiville on 19 March 1967.³² Over the years, accommodation has been made available to quite diverse groups (not only Catholic), which generally provide their own leaders. The house has had a number of notable visitors, including Mother Terese of Calcutta, who visited in October 1981.³³

The B. F. Prindiville Village Knights of the Southern Cross Independent Living development is located on a separate piece of land that was once part of the site.

25 'Centenary of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, 1846-1946', Perth, c. 1946, n.p. Other churches named were Sacred Heart, Highgate Hill (1900), St Mary's, Kalgoorlie (1895), St Patrick's, Bunbury (1862), St Patrick's, Fremantle (1850), St Patrick's, York (1852), St Mary's, Leederville (1919), Immaculate Conception, East Fremantle (1939), Star of the Sea, Cottesloe (1903), St Joseph's, Subiaco (1901), Holy Rosary, Nedlands (1931), Queen of Martyrs, Maylands (1893), St Columba's, South Perth (1919), All Hallows, Inglewood (1938) and St Brigid's, West Perth (1888).

26 Clune was appointed Bishop of Perth following Bishop Gibney's resignation in 1911 and two years later became the first Archbishop of Perth when the diocese achieved Metropolitan status.

27 Boland, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

28 ibid., pp. 54-55.

29 ibid., pp. 60-62.

30 ibid., pp. 64-65.

31 ibid., pp. 46-47.

32 'Redemptorist Retreat House', Kierath Waldron Architect, 13 April 1966, held by Redemptorist Fathers; *The West Australian*, 18 March 1967, p. 19; *Daily News*, 9 September 1969, p. 13.

33 Boland, op. cit., pp. 73-75.

The land was formerly part of the Redemptorist Monastery grounds, but was excised for the development and has no connection with the monastery.

In the 1990s, alterations were made to the ground floor monastery kitchen and the first and second floor bathrooms, and a new lift installed. The Retreat House was also refurbished in the mid-1990s.³⁴

In 2003, Redemptorist Monastery and Church continues in its original function. The Church is well attended both during the week and during the formal mass services on Sunday and the Monastery is the home of seven Redemptorist Fathers. The Retreat House continues to be well patronised by religious, school and lay groups.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Redemptorist Monastery and Church comprises a three storey Cottesloe limestone construction monastery and church complex, with a tiled roof designed in the Federation Gothic style completed in two stages (1903 and 1912) to designs by Michael and James Cavanagh, together with a Retreat House constructed in clinker bricks, off form concrete with a clay tiled roof in Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional style completed in 1969 to designs by Kierath Waldron architect and is located in a park-like setting.

Redemptorist Monastery and Church is located north of Perth in Vincent Street, bounded by Camelia, Claverton, and Alfonso Streets, and the open park-like setting and is one of a number of green spaces along the length of Vincent Street that include Lake Monger to the west, Leederville Oval, Beatty Park, Mick Michael Park, and Hyde Park. The immediate environment comprises residences, civic buildings, commercial buildings, and churches mainly built in the Gold Boom period. With the exception of Vincent Street, the surrounding roads are lightly trafficked and accommodate kerbside parking, two way carriageways, narrow verges, and footpaths. Vincent Street is a busy road with two lanes in each direction, providing one of the alternative east-west routes north of the City. It has concrete footpaths and irregular plantings of street trees, mostly Queensland Box Trees.

The buildings are sited on a high point in the local topography and an axial drive provides the main approach to the federation period buildings. The buildings are located almost on the centre of the north south axis of the site, and in the northern part of the southern half of the site, with a large area of car parking to the west, a formally laid out garden to the north, together with a series of work sheds, a glass house, and a laundry. On the eastern side or Camelia Street side of the site there is an access point and the retreat buildings are laid out in an informal plan. There is an open park-like space to the north stretching from Camelia Street, along Claverton Street to within a short distance of Alfonso Street. A part of the site on the corner of Claverton and Alphonso Streets has been excised for the B.F. Prindiville Village.

The site is separated from the streets by largely utilitarian fences, with the exception of the Vincent Street and part of the Alphonso Street frontages where there is a very fine quarry-faced limestone and stucco pier and panel fence, with a wrought iron palisade that employs a quatrefoil and fleur-de-lys pattern.

The setting

³⁴ Plans for alterations by John Flower, Architect, April 1994 and April 1998; Fr. Ahern, conversation on site, 29 July 2003.

The grounds fall into three classes of space, the predominant park-like setting around the site perimeter; roads and parking; and the more formal garden to the north of the *Redemptorist Monastery and Church*, separated from the remainder of the site by buildings, walls, and fences.

The open park areas are grassed, though not with manicured lawns, and plantings are more intense to the east of the main drive compared to the west, in part due to the large area occupied by the car parking west of the buildings. Apart from the formality of the garden bed to the east of the entry drive, the remaining plantings are arranged informally. The pines that remain in the north-east corner of the site were planted to a grid pattern, but so many have been removed that the grid is no longer apparent. There is a small number of formal street tree plantings and these are mostly Queensland Box Trees (*Lephostemon conferta*). Within the park areas there are plantings of Canary Island Palms (*Phoenix carnariensis*), Cotton Palms (*Washingtonia filifera*), Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*), Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle*), Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), River Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Spotted Gums (*Eucalyptus maculata*), Lemon Scented Gums (*Eucalyptus citriodora*), Red Flowering Gums (*Eucalyptus ficifolia*), New Zealand Christmas Trees (*Metrosideros excelsa*), Carob Trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*), Weeping Willows, Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*), Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), Bullich (*Eucalyptus megacarpa*), Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), Cape Lilac (*Melia azedarach*), Cypress (*Cyprinus spp.*), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena* sp "Lilly Pilly"), Banksias (*Banksia spp.*), Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolius*), and Olive Trees (*Olea europaea*). Shrubs include Roses (*Rosa spp.*), Poinsettia, Hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp.*), Bottle Brush (*Callistemon spp.*), Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp), Grevillea (*Grevillea banksii*), Tree Ferns (*Cyathea cooperi*), Brachychiton (*Brachychiton populneus*), Camelia (*Cameelia spp.*), Frangipani, Paper Bark, and Oleander (*Nerium oleander*), with other plantings that include Strelitzia (*Strelitzia nicholai*). There are some fruit bearing plantings, including Lemon Trees (*Citris limon*), Grape Vines (*Vitis vinifera*), and Loquat Trees (*Eriobotrya japonica*). Further there are many smaller plantings including Cannas (*Canna indica*), Mother in Law's tongue (*Sansevieria*), African Iris (*Dieties bicolour*), Agapanthus (*Agapanthus africanus*), Geranium (*Geranium spp.*), Pelargonium (*Pelargonium*), Spider plants (*Clorophytum carpense*) and the like. Many of these trees are mature specimens and some are carrying a good deal of dead wood. Out-buildings scattered in the park include two metal clad sheds east of the main drive, a framed glass house, and masonry construction toilets off the car park. The more mature and older trees include the Pines, Palms, and Olive Trees.

The roads and parking areas comprise the axial main entry road, a minor entry off Alfonso Street and two entries off Camelia Street, one for the monastery and one for the Retreat House. All of the road and parking surfaces are bituminised. The entry road is given some ceremonial emphasis by the inward sweep of the entry fence and piers, and the concrete bollard and chain treatment along the sides of the road as it proceeds along the axis between street and the main front door.

The final piece of the setting is a formal garden located on the north side of the monastery. It is divided into quadrants by paths, with the church extending into most of the area of the south-west quadrant, and the remaining quadrants laid out with well trimmed lawns, a small number of garden beds and several mature tree, the two focus trees being Canary Island Palms in the north-east and north-west quadrants. The western edge is defined by a stone wall and store and toilet

block with north by a fence, glass house, and sheds, with the eastern side having a fence and the laundry block.

Redemptorist Monastery and Church (1903)

External form

Redemptorist Monastery and Church comprises a three storey limestone construction monastery and church complex (1903 and 1922), with a tiled roof designed in the Federation Gothic style.³⁵ The limestone was quarried from Cottesloe, which together with Rottnest was considered to be a source of very good limestone. The whole composition of the south or main elevations is based on a centrally located entrance that is given emphasis by a two-pointed arch over the pair of front doors, the grouped columns, and tightly curled acanthus imposts. A deep label mould contains a decorative spandrel that makes use of enormous acanthus leaves in bas-relief. This richness continues with a spandrel panel of bas-relief rosettes, overlaid with a crest in a contrasting white painted finish. All of this detailing is generally in a stucco finish, which retains some evidence of having been coloured with a terracotta coloured tint. Engaged hexagonal piers that extend to the roof level and beyond flank the entry. The piers are made in quarry-faced Cottesloe limestone, with string courses at intervals, and once the piers break the roof line, they become towers with castellated or crenellated tops. The towers visually contain the tall gable that completes the entrance bay. The gable is richly decorated with bas-relief tracery and topped with a Latin cross that silhouettes against the sky. Each of the floors above the entry has a set of window set within simple masonry tracery, three window en-chain on the first floor and a pair on the second floor. Label moulds extend over both sets of windows and located over the upper storey label mould, there is a votive picture set behind glass in place of the clock indicated on early photographs. The principal doors all have slate steps.

Set either side of the entry, there are two identical bays of accommodation extending the full three storeys. There is a quarry-faced plinth at low level, stucco string, then a smooth ashlar stone course, then a pair of double hung sash windows with simple masonry tracery, label mould and then a spandrel of quarry faced stone with tuck pointed joints. The pattern is repeated at first floor level, except here the window heads are gently arched. At second floor level, the windows are proportioned down and set under a pediment, topped with an iron Latin cross and with a roundel set into each gable. These windows setting differs from the other floors in that they assume a dormer format, with the roof's gutter line at the level of the meeting rails of the double hung sash windows. The Marseilles pattern tiled roof then extends to a high ridge and the articulation of the roof is further enriched with substantial stucco finished flue.

The bays to the east and west break the symmetry. The church is at the western end of the building and is expressed differently to the main lounge and library at the eastern end of the 1903 building.

The church has a number of principal components including the entrance porch, the tracery window, buttresses, gable, and crocketed pinnacles. The church has the same plinth arrangement as the remainder of the building. The porch thrusts forward of the face of the nave, and it has two pointed gothic arches over the doors, grouped columns, and tightly curled acanthus imposts to each arch. The doors are framed and boarded with wrought strap hinges. The top of the porch is

³⁵ Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989. pp. 120-123.

crenellated and the doors flanked by pairs of buttresses and blind niches. Either side of the porch there are quatrefoil windows. A tall masonry traceried window with stained glass leadlights dominates the southern wall of the church. This window takes its design from the Geometrical form of Gothic design, culminating in a large rose window in the centre and a five bay set of mullions. A label mould extends around the top of the window and then the gable extends to the top of the roof. There is a decorative stucco bas-relief blind arcade in the gable and the top of the gable is completed with a Latin cross. Buttresses at each corner step back in the course of their rise to the top of the wall, at which point they become pinnacles, decorated with blind niches and crockets.

The east wing has a slightly narrower plan and although it employs the same design language as the church walls, the pinnacles are minor, and the windows follow a rectangular pattern similar to those in the cells previous described, though windows are arranged en-chain with five windows in a bay.

The western elevation is visually dominated by the church with its rhythm of three buttressed nave bays with geometric gothic windows, the transept (built in the second stage of the church's construction) gabled roofed bay also with a large geometric gothic window, and then the chancel with its much smaller bays and tall narrow geometric windows. The whole of this elevation is treated with quarry faced Cottesloe limestone laid in a random course pattern, with stucco strings, plinths, buttress caps, pinnacles and the like. A rich deep stone corbel under the eaves provides a strong contrasting design element at the top of the wall plane. Unlike the monastery, which is covered with autumn blend Marseilles pattern tiles, the church is roofed with a terracotta tile. The same treatments return around the north elevation of the church, however, the addition of sacristies to the eastern side of the chancel has masked a section of the original elevation at ground floor level and this section is given a contrasting treatment, with stucco wall finish, tracery windows and a crenellated parapet top.

The rear or north elevation of the monastery employs the same architectural language as the south elevation, but differs in a number of significant ways. At ground floor level, there are a number of doors required to provide access to a rear verandah, so that the regular rhythm of the south façade is broken by these doors, and a section of the verandah has been filled in with a fibro cement clad room. Ground and first floors have a timber framed verandah, with a cast iron panel balustrade and a skillion roof. Like the ground floor, the rhythm of the elevation treatment is broken from time to time to accommodate doors onto it. The second floor resumes the pattern and is completely regular. Awnings have been added to provide shade to the upper floor windows. The north wing to this section, located on the eastern side of the block is a very utilitarian piece, with painted stucco walls, square head double hung windows an autumn blend Marseilles pattern tiled roof.

Internal layout and details

The layout is centred on the entrance hall and main stair, together with a central corridor spine running east and west from the central axis. Cells are arranged on both sides of the corridor. The church is located at the west end of the corridor and a further stair and kitchen facilities at the eastern end. Some of the cells at ground floor level have been taken out of service and now perform the function of confessionals or counselling rooms. The church comprises an entry porch, nave and confessionals, working sacristy, transept, chapels, chancel, and sacristy.

The first floor level contains the chapel or oratory, cells, library, and toilets and the second floor repeats a similar pattern under a mansard profile roof.

A lift has been introduced at the expense of a cell on each floor to provide a service to all floors.

The general planning is generous and provides a series of elegantly proportions spaces, circulation and stairs.

Interior finishes include carpeted timber floor, plastered walls, lath and plaster ceilings, stained moulded timber joinery, marble surrounds and mantles to fireplaces, four panelled doors with hopper lights over them. The entrance hall has a timber and stained glass screen separating the hall from the stair. The screen is well detailed and features stained glass lead lighting. The staircases are very well detailed with turned timber newels, wreathed handrails, turned balusters, and tongue and grooved board lined soffits.

The chapel breaks away from the generally restrained detailing of the remainder of this stage of the monastery and makes use of cast plaster panels to enrich the ceiling.

The church is by far the largest space in the complex. It has a 10metre wide nave, some 22 metres long. The lower walls to the nave are plain plaster, interrupted only by confessionals in the east and west walls, and decorated with framed paintings of the stations of the cross. A deep sill sits over the lower wall and the upper wall plane is articulated with bas-relief decoration around blind canopied niches that were designed to receive statues of the saints, and the stained glass leadlight geometric gothic windows. The niches terminate with an impost off which the stained Oregon timber roof trusses rise. The ceiling is lined with tongue and groove boarding. There is a timber construction loft at the rear of the church with a timber construction stair up to it. The arch to the transept is a geometric gothic arch carried on group column shaft that use a type of Corinthian capital under the impost. There are simple niches in the lower walls and large geometric gothic windows above the wall plane. There are a small chapels built into the northern side of the transepts and the south side of the east transept. The chancel or sanctuary floor is raised above the nave floor and the altar is set near the centre of the chancel. The chancel walls are decorated with two tiers of murals that were painted in 1961 by Karl Matzek. The floors are generally timber except in the porch where the floor is terrazzo tiles.

Subsequent alterations.

The development of the sacristies was clearly incremental, as evidenced by the ad hoc nature of the interface between church, its completion, the insertion of the chapels, and sacristies. A section of the northern verandah has been filled in with framed construction to provide additional accommodation, and the kitchen has been upgraded, the cellar rendered inaccessible, and a dining room created in a space north of the kitchen. The verandah to the east of the kitchen has been filled in and a lift installed in the north side of the eastern wing. Bathrooms and toilets have been upgraded and generally floors have been covered with carpet. A small number of spaces have been divided to accommodate storage and the confessionals in the church are now used for storage, with the confessional function has been transferred to more informal spaces in former cells. The murals are a late addition. The chapel has been re-arranged on a number of occasions.

Condition

This section of the monastery is very well built and suffers from a comparatively small number of building maintenance problems, including some minor leaking, some damage to ceilings and damage to stone in a small number of locations.

Generally the building is in good condition. A spiral stair that was once positioned against the northern verandah has been removed. The septic tank that was documented was not located during the site inspection.

Additions to the Redemptorist Monastery and Church (1912)

External form

Compared to the original section, the addition is a minor element in terms of size, and was built to provide a dining hall and further cells. It is a three storey building also, but its design contrasts with the original section of the building. The south elevation in this case has a strongly articulated verandah finished in stucco, putting the wall plane in deep shadow. The verandah assumes heavy proportions, with paired bundles of four columns set over stout bases carrying an entablature, over which the upper verandah is carried with pairs of even stouter columns and a masonry balustrade, with stout balusters and heavy handrail. The wall plane follows a similar pattern to the original pattern of the monastery, but the window and doors are treated in a simpler fashion and the windows generally single panels rather than enchain. The second storey employs the dormer format once more, but on this occasion, more is made of the eaves treatment, with a gutter line that is elaborately bracketted of the wall.

This section of the monastery simply comprises an open verandah to the south and at ground floor level, a large dining room, now divided into two spaces. The two upper floors provide additional cells arranged the southern side of the north facing corridor and a room and sitting room that was traditional reserved for visiting bishops. The general pattern of finishes of the original section of the monastery has been extended through to the 1912 section.

Subsequent alterations

Enclosing part of the south verandah has created a store and the former dining room has been divided into a smaller dining room and meeting room by the introduction of a stud framed wall.

Condition

This section of the monastery is very well built and no particular issues were identified relating to condition. Generally the building is in good condition.

Other buildings and structures related to the monastery.

Minor buildings related to the monastery include a masonry construction laundry block north of the north wing, constructed in masonry, with a crenellated roof line and otherwise utilitarian features, a series of framed corrugated iron clad garden sheds and a garage to the north of the monastery garden, two lavatory blocks to the west of the garden and a simple masonry and steel campanile, located in the western car park.

Retreat House

External form

The Retreat House is constructed in clinker bricks, off form concrete with a clay tiled roof in Late Twentieth Century Perth Regional style.³⁶ It takes an irregular pattern rectilinear plan form of single and two storey structures and treats the elevations as long planes of over burnt or clinker bricks, with full height breaks in the length of the north and south elevations for brown painted door and timber window assemblies. At the ends of buildings, similar window assemblies

³⁶ Apperly, et al, op. cit. pp. 244-247

effectively split the gables into two skillions. The walls terminate at the eaves with a very narrow eaves overhang and a half round gutter. The roofs are clad with Swiss pattern terracotta tiles. The escape stairs at the ends of blocks provides a strong contrasting feature. These are designed in a scissor format and are constructed in off form concrete, with the form boards used to create a grained boarded pattern in the concrete.

The plan divides into sleeping accommodation in the south arranged in four two storey blocks, and a complex comprising chapel, library, and dining hall to the north. The bedrooms offer simple accommodations and bathrooms are communal. The internal finishes combine the use of face brick and plastered walls carpeted and tiled floors, timber skirtings and flush plasterboard ceilings.

Subsequent alterations

There would appear to have been few alterations made to the Retreat House.

Condition

There is some staining to the off form concrete work but otherwise the buildings appeared to be in fair to good condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The place

There are seven monasteries in the Heritage Council of Western Australia data base. Only *Pallottine Monastery* (1673) Tardun, built in 1938, a brick and iron construction in the Inter-War Californian style is on the Register of Heritage Places. The remaining six are on local municipal inventories and church inventories. They are:

- *Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* (2182) Highgate built in 1898 as part of the *Sacred Heart Convent and School* (2181) complex. The monastery is not on the Register of Heritage Places although the convent and school are.
- *Benedictine Monastery* (2916), New Norcia built in 1857 as part of the *Benedictine Monastery Precinct* (2622).
- *Carmelite Monastery* (4735) Dalkeith, built in 1935 it is a brick and tile construction in the Inter-war gothic style.
- *Bodhinyana Buddhist Monastery* (7196) Serpentine built in 1983 is not comparable in age or construction style although built of brick and tile.
- *Greek Orthodox Church* (10445) or the *Monastery of St John of the Mountain* in Forrestfield was built in 1980 of brick and tile.
- *Catholic Precinct Dardanup* (684) contains the Carmelite Monastery built in 1921.

The comparison to convents is a reasonable area to investigate as the building purpose is similar. There are five convents built in the Federation Gothic style. They are;

- *St Joseph's Convent* (190) Boulder, built in 1905 is a two storey brick and iron building.
- *Convent of Mercy Group (fmr)* (379) Bunbury, built in 1897 is a two storey brick and tile construction no longer used as a convent.

- *Convent of the Sacred Heart (fmr)* (1903) Northampton, built in 1919 is a stone, brick and iron construction.
- *St Brigid's Convent (fmr)* (1976) Northbridge, built in 1881 is a two storey rendered brick and iron construction designed by Michael Cavanagh.
- *St John of God Hospital Convent* (1318) Kalgoorlie, is a single storey brick and iron construction built in 1905.

It is worth noting the Roman Catholic Church building Group Precinct (4125) in Toodyay which includes a two storey convent building built between 1860 and 1884. Although of the Federation free classical style it has similarities of design and scale.

There are 106 churches on the Heritage Council database constructed between 1900 and 1910. Of these, 15 are included in the Register of Heritage Places. The majority of these are small churches located in rural and regional communities.

Redemptorist Monastery is one of the earliest and most substantial monastery buildings in Western Australia and the Church is a fine example of a large ecclesiastical building constructed in the early years of the twentieth century.

Nationally

There are relatively few monasteries entered in heritage registers from other States. Victoria has two heritage-registered monasteries, Cathedral College, Melbourne and Former Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged, Northcote, of which the latter was built as a Catholic convent and used in part as a Greek Orthodox monastery from the 1980s; South Australia lists two registered monasteries, Carmelite Monastery, Myrtle Bank, Adelaide, and Jesuit Monastery and Retreat House, Sevenhill, Clare Valley; Tasmania and Queensland each list one, The Monastery, Sandy Bay, Hobart, and Bishop's House, Cairns. New South Wales has no monasteries on its Register, but includes one Buddhist and seven Christian monasteries in its State heritage inventory, which includes information from local heritage lists. On the information available, it appears that the two Victorian places remain in use as monasteries, at least one of the New South Wales monasteries is now used for offices, and the current use of the remainder is unknown.³⁷

The place may be one of a small number of historic monasteries in Australia still operating for their original purpose.

The style

There are 54 places on the Heritage Council of Western Australia's database identified as being constructed in the Federation Gothic style. The majority are ecclesiastical buildings and 25 have been included in the Register of Heritage Places.

Comparative places to the Redemptorist Church included:

- Scots Presbyterian Church, Fremantle (1890; limestone & tile; designed by J J Talbot Hobbs)
- St Andrew's Church, St George's Terrace (1906; brick and slate; designed by James Hine)
- St Patrick's Basilica, Fremantle (1900; limestone; designed by Michael Cavanagh).

³⁷ Australian Heritage Places Inventory, <http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/index.html> as at 16 March 2004.

Redemptorist Church is a fine example of a Gothic church dating from the early twentieth century.

The Vincent Street and part of the Alphonso Street frontages features a limestone and stucco pier fence with wrought iron palisade that employs a quatrefoil and fleur-de-lys pattern. Cast iron panels were common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These were stock standard items available from catalogues. These fences are less common now but are still extant at residences in Fremantle. Most of the surviving fences comprise simple stanchions and rails, or a low panel set over a stone or brick wall. The fence at the Redemptorist Monastery is one of the most elaborate in Western Australia.³⁸

Redemptorist Monasteries in Australia

It was common for the Redemptorist monasteries to begin and even remain in large houses in Australia, in a similar fashion to the manner in which they began in Western Australia. However, the Redemptorists built three major monasteries in Australia, the first at Mayfield in Newcastle, the second in Wendouree in Ballarat and the third at North Perth. There is a decline in the role of the monastery in its traditional form, a decline that began in the 1960s and which continues to be the trend, and the need for large monasteries was reviewed in two states. The Mayfield monastery was sold within the last twelve months and is to be redeveloped and adapted as an aged persons facility. The Ballarat Monastery was sold two years ago and is currently being adapted. North Perth remains the only operational monastery of the three and is occupied by an average of seven community members.³⁹

The architects

Michael Cavanagh trained as an architect with the South Australian Public Works Department and studied in London before arriving in Western Australia to set up a branch of his South Australian architectural practice. He went on to become one of the State's best known architects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1900, his younger brother James joined him in partnership in Perth. The firm designed many buildings for the Catholic Church, as well as a range of commercial and residential properties.⁴⁰

Buildings designed by Cavanagh and Cavanagh include:

- Mercedes School House, Victoria Square, Perth (1896; recommended for RHP)
- Great Western Hotel (Brass Monkey), William Street, Perth (1896; RHP)
- P&O Building, High Street, Fremantle (1896; recommended for RHP)
- St Brigid's Convent, John Street, Northbridge (1897; RHP)
- St Kevin's Industrial School for Boys, Glendalough (1897)
- 20 houses for the Catholic Church, Highgate (1897)
- St Patrick's Church, Fremantle (1898; RHP)
- Central Fire Station, Murray Street, Perth (1900; RHP)

38 Correspondence between HCWA and Philip Griffiths 13/10/2003

39 Fr. Ahern, telephone conversation with Philip Griffiths 30 July 2003.

40 I P Kelly, 'Architectural Biography, 1890-1915', prepared as part of degree of Master of Architecture, University of Western Australia, 1991. See also Jane McKenzie 'Michael Cavanagh F.R.I.B.A. Western Australian Architect 1860-1941, His Life, His Philosophies and His Architecture', Architecture Minor Study 400, Curtin University, 1992.

- St Brigid's Church, Fitzgerald Street, Northbridge (1904; recommenced for RHP)
- Catholic Church, Bindoon (1909; recommend RHP)

Redemptorist Monastery and Chapel is a fine example of the firm's work.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

S J Boland CSsR, *One Hundred Years On...The Redemptorists in Western Australia 1899-1999*, Perth, 1999.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Other purpose built Redemptorist monasteries in Australia.

Other monasteries in Australia still in operation for their original purpose.