



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)

- 8.5.3.1 Maintaining religious traditions and ceremonies
- 8.5.3.3 Making places for worship
- 8.6 Worshipping

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 406 Religion
- 408 Institutions

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The Church is a fine example of a building designed in the Inter War Gothic style. The pressed cement decorative elements, such as the tracery, are particularly refined and its aesthetic value is enhanced by its complementary setting, including the judicious siting of the Presbytery, the Parish Centre and the low brick boundary wall. (Criterion 1.1)

The Presbytery is a competent example of a hybrid style that could be described as Inter-War Old English, with elements of a stripped version of the earlier Federation styles, such as the wide verandahs on three of its sides. (Criterion 1.2)

The dominating tower and spire combined, with the openness of the site on both its south and east boundaries, give the Church landmark qualities. Situated close to St John of God's Hospital and the Subiaco Oval, the Church is one of a small group of prominent buildings in the area. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

St Joseph's Church and Presbytery is part of a large, loosely defined precinct of Roman Catholic institutions which developed in the locality after the establishment of the Benedictine monastery to the north in 1850. (Criterion 2.1)

* 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.

The Church is the third St Joseph's Church in the locality, reflecting the history of the growth and development of the local parish which it serves. Some changes within the interior of the Church reflect historic changes to liturgical practices as decreed by the Second Vatican Council in Rome. (Criterion 2.2)

The Church is a fine demonstration, if not the best remaining example, of the work of the architect Edgar Le Blond Henderson. (Criterion 2.3)

St Joseph's Church and Presbytery has had an enduring association with the local parish community. Of particular importance is the considerable fund raising efforts of the parishioners which enabled the Church to be built during the worst years of the Depression. (Criterion 2.3)

St Joseph's Church and Presbytery is also associated with a number of parish priests who brought a distinctive Irish sensibility to the district. This is reflected in the use of the Irish shamrock as a motif for some of the stained glass windows in the Church. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Church is a focus for the local Catholic community and has provided the parish of St Joseph's with a range of services appropriate to a large parish. The Church has also served as the venue for the celebration of significant religious and civic events such as the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Dioceses in Western Australia, and the 1996 Centenary of Local Government in Subiaco, and as the focus for many social gatherings of the parish and sporting clubs. (Criterion 4.1)

The Presbytery is significant for its role as the residential and administrative centre for the Parish of St Joseph's. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The Church is a good example of a building designed in the Inter War Gothic Style and is typical of a number built during the 1920s and 1930s in Perth. However, the quality of the overall design and detailing such as the pressed cement work raises it above the norm. The ceiling design is also unusual in that it is of plaster and not timber, and for the incorporation of acoustical panelling. (Criterion 5.1)

The Presbytery is one of a very limited number of two storey presbyteries in the Archdiocese of Perth. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Church is typical of a number of churches designed in the Inter War Gothic Style and built during the 1920s and 1930s in Perth, which illustrate that during this period the Gothic Style of architecture continued to be perceived as the style most suitable for religious buildings. (Criterion 6.1)

While the Presbytery is representative of larger presbyteries attached to parish churches, it also represents the end of an era, since the presbyteries

constructed after the Second World War tend to be smaller and more domestic in scale. (Criterion 6.1)

The Church building is linked strongly to the development of the area and represents the local parishioners' desire to give their community a sense of permanence. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Generally, the buildings are in good condition, apart from the cracking which has been identified as warranting urgent attention.

The lavatory block (1933/34) and the low brick wall (1934) have some significance for their association with the Church and the early development of the site. The significance of the lavatory block is enhanced because of its condition and high level of integrity and authenticity; while the low brick wall is significant for its own aesthetic value and from its value in uniting the elements within the site.

The Parish Centre and the Garage are of little cultural heritage significance, while the brick paving from 1981 in front of the Church's northern side (entrance side) is intrusive.

12.4 INTEGRITY

St Joseph's Church and Presbytery continue to be used for their original purpose and retain a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Apart from the changes initiated by the Second Vatican Council, few alterations have been made to the fabric of the Church, and those that have been made are mainly decorative and could easily be reversed. The Church has a high degree of authenticity.

While the Presbytery has undergone a few alterations, it has been subjected to a sizeable addition to the rear to adapt it to the changing requirements of the occupants. Being located at the rear of the building, the impact of the addition on the current presentation of the site is minimal. The Presbytery retains a moderate level of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the Supporting Evidence prepared by Naomi Lawrance Architecture & Heritage, 'St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan', for St Joseph's Church Parish, 1998.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Naomi Lawrance Architecture & Heritage, 'St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan', prepared for St Joseph's Church Parish, 1998.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Naomi Lawrance Architecture & Heritage, 'St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan', prepared for St Joseph's Church Parish, 1998.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the Comparative Information refer to Naomi Lawrance Architecture & Heritage, 'St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan', prepared for St Joseph's Church Parish, 1998.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

Naomi Lawrance Architecture & Heritage, 'St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan', prepared for St Joseph's Church Parish. 1998.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
