



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

### Register Entry

1. **DATA BASE No.** 4125
2. **NAME** Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay  
Sisters of Mercy Convent School (fmr), Toodyay (1860s, 1903, 1921, 1928-29, 1939, 1986-87)  
  
**OTHER NAMES** Avondown Centre for Catholic Education; Roman Catholic Group; St Aloysius Convent of Mercy; Dr Growse's House (fmr); Ave Maria Franciscans of the Immaculate Marian Friary Our Lady Help of Christians Monastery; Convent of the Immaculate Conception; St John the Baptist Church.
3. **LOCATION** 34 Stirling Terrace, Toodyay
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**  
Portion of Lots 44, 45 and 46 on Deposited Plan 223152 being part of the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 1729 Folio 310 as shown on HC Curtilage Map 4125-B.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** Shire of Toodyay
6. **OWNER AT REGISTRATION**  
The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
  - Register of Heritage Places: Interim Registration 07/12/2018  
Registered Under 26/08/2019  
Heritage Act of 2018
  - National Trust Classification: Classified 08/06/2015
  - Town Planning Scheme: -----
  - Municipal Inventory: Adopted 27/08/1998
  - Register of the National Estate: -----
  - Aboriginal Sites Register: -----
8. **CONSERVATION ORDER**  
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9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**

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## 10. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

*Roman Catholic Church Group, Toodyay*, comprising 'The Ship' (fmr Residence, c.1860s, 1902, 1986-87), a two storey Victorian Georgian style brick and shingle (covered with corrugated iron) building; Mercy House Convent School (1903), a two storey Federation Queen Anne style brick and tile building with associated outbuildings, (construction dates unknown), including a Kitchen, Laundry, and Boiler Room; St Aloysius House (1921), a two storey Federation Arts and Crafts style building; O'Connor House (1928-29, 1939), a single storey Inter war Georgian Revival style brick and corrugated iron building; and St John the Baptist Church (1963), a Late Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical brick and tile church; all set in an open site adjacent to the Avon River, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place is an excellent representative example of a purpose built complex of religious buildings, which during its operation included a church, convent school and separate boy's and girl's dormitories:

Mercy House Convent School with its modest design and austere interior detailing demonstrates the austerity and financial limitations of religious orders in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the present;

the place, and adjacent 1863 St John the Baptist Church (fmr), contributes to the sense of a religious institution that has continued to operate in the town from the 1860s to the present;

the place is a landmark on the main street of Toodyay, due to the strong architectural presence of its fine and substantial two-storey buildings, particularly St Aloysius House and Mercy House, which together with individual elements create a cohesive religious cultural environment;

the place was used from 1902 to 1983 for educational purposes by the Sisters of Mercy, Australia's first religious order dedicated to teaching and the first religious order of any sort in Western Australia;

the rapid increase of boarders at the place 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 work of the Sisters of Mercy at the place was substantially supported by the local Connor family, who had been major land holders in the area from the 1860s, and beginning with Daniel Connor and later as the Connor-Quinlan Estate, were also important property investors in Perth and wider regions;

the St John the Baptist Church (1963) stands as a memorial to the soldiers who lost their lives in war, and the Toodyay Catholic parishioners past and present.

The grotto and statue in the front garden, and the garage are of little significance.