



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

DRAFT – *Register Entry*

1. **DATA BASE No.** 13658
2. **NAME** Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands
FORMER NAME (or OTHER NAMES)
3. **LOCATION** 69 Webster Street, Nedlands
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**
 1. Lots 414, 415, 416, 420, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, and 441 on Plan 1747, being the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 1031 Folio 899.
 2. Lot 417 on Plan 1747 being the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 660 Folio 166.
 3. Lots 418 and 419 on Plan 1747 being the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 644 Folio 27.

5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** City of Nedlands

6. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**

- Register of Heritage Places: _____
- National Trust Classification: _____
- Local Planning Scheme – Heritage List: _____
- Local Heritage Survey: 23/10/2018

7. **ORDERS UNDER SECTION OF THE ACT**

8. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**

9. **STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

What is significant?

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands was constructed in two stages in 1931 and 1940 and comprises a substantial two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter- War Gothic style Convent School Building, Barry Park – an area of mature

native vegetation, Early Childhood and Library Building (c1970s), Performing Arts Centre (2011), Pre-kindergarten (late 20th century), Centenary Pavilion, (late 20th century), and various outdoor play areas.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The Convent School Building, constructed in two stages in 1930 and 1940.
- Internal elements of the Convent School Building including decorative pressed metal ceilings, ornate plasterwork ceilings, jarrah staircases, oriel windows, and leadlight window detailing to the primary entrance and entrance to the southern elevation.
- The setting, including Barry Park – an area of mature native vegetation.
- Limestone Grotto

The following elements, do not contribute to the significance of the place:

- Early Childhood and Library Building (c1970s)
- Performing Arts Centre (2011)
- Pre-kindergarten (late 20th century)
- Centenary Pavilion (late 20th century)
- Tennis and basketball courts, courtyard spaces, outdoor play areas
- Modern internal fitout to original convent building including services, contemporary joinery, toilets, kitchens/servery.

Intrusive elements

- External services and utilities

How is it significant?

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, and spiritual value and satisfies the following factors relevant to cultural heritage significance:

- A. importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history;
- B. importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage;
- C. potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;
- E. strong or special meaning it has for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;
- F. importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;
- G. special association it has with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;

Why is it significant?

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is of aesthetic value as a good example of a substantial, well composed two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter- War Gothic style Convent School Building, constructed in two stages in 1930 and 1940, featuring elements typical of the Inter-War Gothic style, including decorative oriel windows. (Factor F)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is of historic value as the first convent and school building purposely constructed for the Loreto Order in Western Australia in 1931, since their first arrival in the State in 1897, and illustrates the Order's commitment to the education of children in Western Australia. (Factor A)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands was the third Loreto School established in Western Australia following those at Adelaide Terrace (1897) and Claremont (1901). It was the only purpose-built school of the three and is the only Loreto School that remains extant in the State. (Factors A and B)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is of social and spiritual value for its role in the education of the Catholic community in the Nedlands area since it was first established in 1931 and is highly valued by the school community, including teachers and former students and their families, as demonstrated by the nearly 1300 signatures for a petition calling for the school to remain open after 2023. (Factor E)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is a landmark on Webster Street in Nedlands. Its pleasing composition of the Convent School Building, and mature trees and grounds contribute to the overall aesthetic qualities of the streetscape and to the community's sense of place. (Factor F)

The interior of the main Convent School Building has notable finely designed elements including, leadlight window detailing to the main front entrance, timber staircase, ornate plasterwork ceilings, and decorative pressed metal ceilings. (Factor F)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands has potential to yield information about the early operation of Catholic schooling in the State from the 1930's onwards, by way of potential sub surface deposits. (Factor C)



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PLEASE NOTE: This Assessment Documentation is intended to provide sufficient information to consider the place for inclusion in the State Register. It is not intended to provide a complete record of the history of the place or its physical presentation.

10. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in section 38 of the *Heritage Act 2018*. It is considered that the place warrants inclusion in the State Register against the following factors relevant to cultural heritage significance:

10(A) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history;

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands was the first Convent School Building purposely constructed for the Loreto Order in Western Australia in 1931, since their first arrival in the State in 1897, and illustrates the Order's commitment to the education of children in Western Australia. (historic value)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is associated with the development and growth of the Catholic Church in Nedlands during the Inter-War period. (historic value)

10(B) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage;

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands was the third Loreto School established in Western Australia following those at Adelaide Terrace (1897) and Claremont (1901). It was the only purpose-built school of the three and is the only Loreto School that remains extant in the State. (historic and rarity value)

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

There is some potential for sub-surface archaeological features or artefacts associated with the construction and the operation of the school to be present at *Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands*, which have the potential to yield information on the changes to Catholic schooling between the 1930s to early 2020s in Western Australia. (scientific value)

10(D) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands demonstrates the role of a religious order in the establishment of purpose-built Convent Schools to provide for both the Catholic education and spiritual life of children in Western Australia. (historic value)

The design of the Convent School Building in the Inter-War Gothic style demonstrates the popularity of this architectural style in the 1930s, and which was commonly applied to religious buildings during this period. (aesthetic value)

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

The place has been involved in the education of the Catholic community in the Nedlands area since it was first established in 1931 and is highly valued by the school community, including teachers, and former students and their families, as demonstrated by the petition of nearly 1300 signatures calling for the school to remain open after 2023. (social and spiritual value)

The place contributes to the local community's sense of place as an important element in the history of Nedlands from the Inter-War period to the present. (social value)

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

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is a good example of a substantial, well composed two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter- War Gothic style Convent School Building, constructed in two stages in 1930 and 1940, featuring elements typical of the Inter-War Gothic style, including decorative oriel windows. (aesthetic value)

The interior of the main Convent School Building has notable finely designed elements including, leadlight window detailing to the main front entrance, timber staircase and joinery, ornate plasterwork ceilings, and decorative pressed metal ceilings. (aesthetic value)

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is a landmark on Webster Street in Nedlands. The pleasing composition of the Convent School Building, mature trees and grounds contribute to the overall aesthetic qualities of the streetscape. (aesthetic value)

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.

10(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;

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is associated with the Loreto Sisters, a religious order that established schools in Western Australia from 1897. (historic value)

The Convent School Building was designed by architectural practice Henderson and Gamble. Edgar Le B Henderson, was responsible for the design of many buildings for the Catholic Church in the 1920s and 1930s. (historic value)

11. SITE PLAN

The following plan shows all of the elements included within the place.

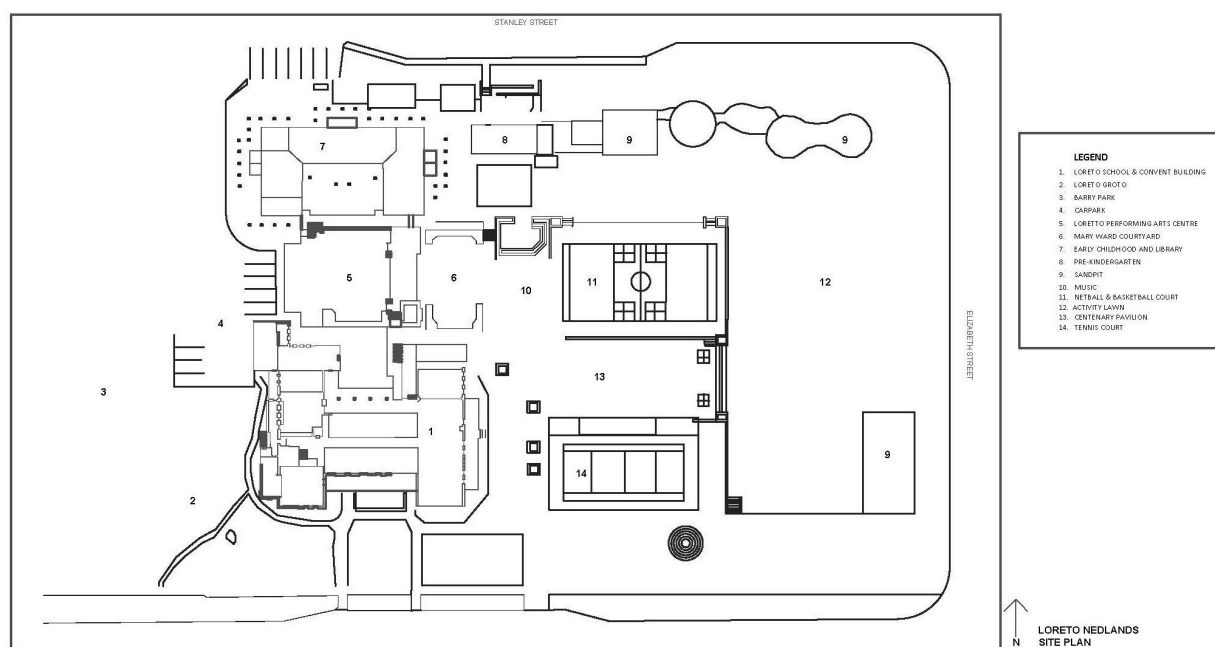


Figure 1. Site Plan

12. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, in November 2023, with amendments and/or additions by the Heritage Council and the Department.

12.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands, was constructed in two stages in 1931 and 1940 and comprises a substantial two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter-War Gothic style Convent School Building, Barry Park – an area of mature native vegetation, Early Childhood and Library Building (c1970s), Performing Arts Centre (2011), Pre-kindergarten (late 20th century), Centenary Pavilion, (late 20th century), and various outdoor play areas.

Heritage Council of Western Australia Theme (s)

This analysis is based on the Thematic History of Western Australia ^[1] (WA Thematic). The following theme/s, key events and phases are relevant to the history of the place:

Services – Education

- 1893 - Catholic religious orders establish many schools, especially in goldfields settlements; Mary MacKillop's Josephites dominate but also Mercy, Presentation and (from 1899) Dominican Sisters.
- 1895 - increase in number of Catholic schools to meet demand of increased population; linked to arrival of more religious orders to run the schools.

Cultural life – religion

- 1901 - census shows diversity brought by gold rush migrants: Church of England less than half for first time (41.1%); Catholic up to 22.8%.
- 1935 - Redmond Prendiville appointed Catholic Archbishop; serves to 1968, with particular support for lay religious, social and cultural activities, including lay Catholic organisations; number of religious orders in WA increase, especially post WWII.
- 1950 - 1950s post-WWII migration brings increasingly European ethnic diversity to Catholic communities, increases Catholic percentage of overall population.

Noongar Booja (Country) covers the entire southwestern portion of Western Australia, from Jurien Bay to Esperance. Noongar people living in the greater Perth area were known as the Whadjuk. The Whadjuk relied on the ocean, the Swan River and the freshwater lakes that once lay between the coast and the Darling scarp for food and moved seasonally across the country.² This way of life was disrupted by the arrival of colonists from 1829 onwards.

[1] 'A Thematic History of Western Australia' (incl. Framework Spreadsheet & Narratives). Prepared for the Heritage Council of WA by Clare Menck, Historian, June 2018.

2 Kaartdijin Noongar – Noongar Knowledge, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, available at <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/> [accessed on 18 September 2023]

Following the discovery of gold in Western Australia in the 1890s, suburbs close to Perth, such as Nedlands, experienced a dramatic increase in population due to the unprecedented rise in migration to the State. Development continued during the first decades of the Twentieth Century, with the extension of Perth's tram services through Subiaco, along Broadway to Nedlands Park and another tramline direct from Perth along Mounts Bay Road. Nedlands Park became a popular recreation area following the construction of the Nedlands Park Hotel in 1908, and the jetty and Crawley Baths.³

Further development of the Nedlands area stalled during World War I but recovered quickly post-war with many ex-servicemen and their families settling in the area with the aid of War Service Loan Schemes. This saw Nedlands gain the reputation as the 'bridal suburb'. Significant development occurred during the Inter-War period, with an increasing number of houses constructed, as well as recreational and sporting facilities, schools and churches. This period also saw an increase in motorised transportation, particularly along major routes such as the Perth to Fremantle Road, which was renamed Stirling Highway in 1930.⁴

Loreto Order in Perth

The origins of the Loreto Order date back to 1609, when Mary Ward, an English woman established the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the Loreto Sisters. Ward believed that women deserved an equal education to men, and that women should be free to actively work in their mission to educate girls, outside of the traditional cloister that placed them under the governance of men.⁵

The Loreto Sisters first arrived in Australia from Ireland in 1875, in response to a request by Dr O'Connor, the first Bishop of Ballarat to establish a school in the town. Loreto convent schools were later established in Melbourne (1889), and Sydney (1892).⁶

In 1895, the Bishop of Perth, Bishop Matthew Gibney, visited Mary's Mount in Ballarat to speak to Mother Gonzaga Barry about beginning a Loreto foundation in Perth. According to the Bishop, "the people are pouring in, and the gold is pouring out." In September 1896, Mother Gonzaga Barry and two fellow Sisters arrived in Perth to investigate the possibility of founding a convent and school.⁷ On their arrival, the Bishop showed the Sisters available land, and they decided to purchase blocks in the Claremont area, and engaged an architect to draw up plans for a new school. However, the project was met with financial issues and delays, and a house was rented in Adelaide Terrace, Perth as a temporary measure, on a six-month lease. The Perth school opened on 15 February 1897, and heralded Loreto's presence in Western Australia. When the lease expired, Loreto purchased another property in Adelaide Terrace, 'The Bracken', which served as the Loreto Convent and School until 1937.

³ *Nedlands Post Office (fmr)* (P4620) Heritage Assessment Documentation, Heritage Council of Western Australia, May 2013, p.1

⁴ Gregory, Jenny., 'Protecting Middle-Class Suburbia: An Ideal Space for the Citizens of Inter War Perth', in *Studies in Western Australian History*, No. 17 (1997), p79, 81

⁵ Loreto – Our Heritage available at: <https://www.loretotoorak.vic.edu.au/about-loreto/our-heritage>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <https://www.loreto.org.au/125-years-of-loreto-in-the-west/>

In 1901, the Loreto Sisters acquired another property, the Osborne Hotel, in Claremont, built by James Grave in 1894. The first pupils at the new school were boarders from Adelaide Terrace. The following year, day pupils were also enrolled at Claremont.

In 1928, the Loreto Order purchased land in Nedlands for approximately £3,000.⁸ The site was initially envisaged as the location for a residential hostel for Catholic girls attending the university, but a request to provide a school for girls located in the newly opened Nedlands Parish was seen as a greater need due to the increase in population in the area.⁹ Despite, this, the future school site was not developed for another two years, however, the schools at Adelaide Terrace and Claremont remained in operation.

The foundation stone for the Nedlands Loreto Convent and school was blessed and laid by Archbishop Clune on 21 November 1930. The Convent building was to be designed by architectural partners Henderson & Gamble. At the time Edgar Le Blond Henderson was best-known for his succession of Inter-War Gothic and Inter-War Romanesque style Catholic churches, convents and schools.¹⁰ The construction was to be undertaken in two stages. The first stage was completed for the beginning of the school year, with the school opening to its first nine students on 10 February 1931. In opening the building, Archbishop Clune said that the Roman Catholic parishioners of Nedlands were few, and many of them were beginning their married life. Having recently opened a church, they could not face the task of financing a school as well, so the Loreto nuns had come to the rescue.¹¹

The *Catholic Advocate* (Brisbane) reported on the opening of the school, with a description of the building:

The section completed is the right wing of what will eventually form a U-shaped plan. The ground floor of this wing comprises a room 88ft. 6in. by 28ft., which is divided by panelled folding doors to form five class rooms, four averaging 28ft. x 19ft., and one 28ft. x 12 ft. With the dividing partitions folded back, it will form an assembly room for examinations, etc. Adjoining is the stair hall and cloak room, and at the rear are three music rooms, 10ft. x 8ft. 10in. By using the fall in the level of the site, it has been possible to raise the floor level of the class room at one end to form a stage 28ft. x 18ft. 7in. when required.

On the first floor is the temporary chapel, 28ft. 9in. x 15ft. 5in., four single cubicles and three single cubicles, averaging 11ft. 8in. x 11ft., and 11ft. 8in. x 11ft. 8in. All open on to 10ft. Wide balconies. The bathrooms and lavatories are centrally situated off the stair hall.

A temporary dining room, 27ft. 3in. x 18ft., kitchen, and store have been built in the basement, and will later serve as cloak rooms in connection with the adjoining lavatories. A laundry and ironing room have been built a short distance from the main block.

Externally the Convent has been designed in a modified Tudor style, and executed in cut and struck brickwork, with cement dressings to quoins and tracery. By means of ample windows the building is well ventilated and lighted. The woodwork to verandahs

⁸ City of Nedlands Municipal Inventory

⁹ <https://www.loretoministries.org.au/our-schools/loreto-schools/loreto-college-nedlands/> [Accessed 18 September 2023]

¹⁰ [https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/ElleB%20Henderson%20for%20AIA%20\(WA\).pdf](https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/ElleB%20Henderson%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf)

¹¹ *West Australian*, Thursday 12 March 1931, page 7.

*and balconies has been treated to harmonise with the style of architecture, and the whole building is roofed with red terracotta tiles.*¹²

Due to the effects of the Great Depression, financial difficulties were experienced in furnishing the new building, with fruit packing cases utilised as shelving until furniture could be purchased. At this time, the Nedlands Catholic community was already financially stretched to fund the construction of their Holy Rosary Church and establish the nearby St Theresa's Parish School. Both schools struggled to stay viable due to the low growth in the number of school age children in the Parish of Nedlands. Student numbers were particularly low at Loreto, but numbers were boosted with the closure of the Loreto school on Adelaide Terrace in 1938, and the transfer of the Perth students to Nedlands.¹³ Funds for the Convent were later aided by bridge parties and annual balls run by the Loreto Ladies Society.¹⁴

In 1939 construction began on the second stage of the Loreto Convent, with works undertaken by W Ralph and Sons. The new additions were officially opened and blessed by Archbishop Prendiville on 25 February 1940. At a cost of approximately £8,500 pounds the additions included a chapel, art room, library, laboratory and kindergarten.

At his opening speech, Archbishop Prendiville noted that no work was more urgent than the convent extensions, as during the past few years the Loreto sisters had passed through many severe difficulties with the greatest patience. The *West Australian* reported him as saying:

*It was sometimes said that nuns were unable to keep abreast of the times; that their spiritual reading occupied them to the exclusion of necessary study of the latest developments in educational practice. This was a gross misrepresentation. The sisters were women of the highest culture who had studied seriously for their work and continued to keep in touch with the latest thought in education. Furthermore, in Goderich Street there was a teachers' training college and an up-to-date library for the members of religious orders. All the members of the faculty possessed degrees from the University of Western Australia. At this training college sisters of all the orders who had not a training college in the Eastern States were trained as secular teachers. He did not speak of this boastfully, but merely to show that the sisters were actually trained for the work they had to do.*¹⁵

Student numbers increased gradually at the school, peaking in the early to mid 1950s with few vacancies reported for the school year in 1955.¹⁶ Numbers stayed steady until the late 1960s, when low numbers for Years 11 and 12 resulted in students being transferred to Claremont to complete their leaving.¹⁷

In 1970, an ageing population in the Nedlands area led to declining numbers at both Loreto Nedlands, and St Theresa's Parish School, with the latter closing the same year. In 1971 following the withdrawal of the Jesuit Fathers from St Louis School for Boys in Claremont, consideration was given to the amalgamation of the

¹² Catholic Advocate (Brisbane, Qld): Thursday 19 March 1931, page 35. Available at <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/261178437?searchTerm=loreto%20nedlands>

¹³ Loreto Primary School and Convent Group, Nedlands in City of Nedlands Municipal Heritage Inventory, Final Draft Palassis Architects February 2014, p. 360.

¹⁴ *Sunday Times*, Sunday 3 May 1931, page 13.

¹⁵ *West Australian*, Nuns as Teachers, Study of Modern Trends. Monday 26 February 1940, page 10

¹⁶ *Daily News*, Perth, Saturday 6 November 1954, page 12

¹⁷ City of Nedlands Municipal Heritage Inventory 1999.

school with Loreto's Senior School in Claremont in order to present a broader choice of educational opportunities for students. By the end of 1976, the new John XXIII College had opened to students, catering for students from years 8 to 12.¹⁸

The closure and amalgamation of these schools left Loreto Nedlands as the only Catholic Primary School in the district. In order to stay viable as a primary school, a decision was made to allow for co-education until Year 7, which led to a substantial increase in the student population. A review of the school in 1974 noted that expectations for the school had increased and it was no longer under the threat of closure.¹⁹

In 2003, a decision by the Loreto Sisters to no longer reside in the Convent building provided an opportunity for the school to review the use of its facilities and prepare a masterplan for the school campus. Subsequently, the section of the main Convent building in former use by the Sisters was adapted for use for contemporary teaching spaces, and the existing Early Childhood Building was refurbished to provide linked, open plan teaching facilities.

In 2011 a Performing Arts Centre was built as part of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) initiative, providing the school with a state of the art facility.²⁰

In October 2022, the Loreto Ministries announced that a decision had been made to close the school citing financial reasons, and demographic changes in the schools catchment area, and that the school would no longer continue to operate beyond the end of the school term in December 2023.²¹

In November 2022, a petition was launched by the Loreto Nedlands community calling for the reversal of the decision by the Loreto Ministries to close Loreto Nedlands Primary School. In October 2023, the petition reached close to 1300 signatures, from both past and present families of students who have attended the school.²²

Current Use

The school closed after the final school term in December 2023. A new use for the buildings and site has yet to be determined.

12. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands, was constructed in two stages in 1931 and 1940 and comprises a substantial two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter- War Gothic style Convent School Building, Barry Park – an area of mature native vegetation, Early Childhood and Library Building (c1970s), Performing Arts Centre (2011), Pre-kindergarten (late 20th century), Centenary Pavilion, (late 20th century), and various outdoor play areas.

¹⁸ <https://www.johnxxiii.edu.au/view/our-history>

¹⁹ Loreto Primary School and Convent Group, Nedlands in City of Nedlands Municipal Heritage Inventory, Final Draft Palassis Architects February 2014, p. 360.

²⁰ <https://www.mcdfarchitects.com.au/copy-of-pmacs-library>

²¹ Business News 'Loreto Nedlands parents take action', 3 November 2022. Available at: <https://www.businessnews.com.au/article/Loreto-Nedlands-parents-take-action>

²² 'Save Nedlands Loreto Primary School' Change.org Available at: <https://www.change.org/p/save-loreto-nedlands-primary-school>

Siting and setting

The school site is situated on a block of eighteen original lots bounded by Webster Street (east), Elizabeth Street (north), Stanley Street (west), and Princess Road (south). The immediate neighbouring area is primarily comprised of residential dwellings dating from the early 20th century.

The school site can generally be defined as three zones; the Convent School and associated buildings, Barry Park, and the playing fields and grounds.

Barry Park is an area of mature vegetation located to the south of the main school building, facing Webster Street. It contains mature eucalyptus trees and other native species, and an area of maintained lawn. Many of these trees appear in 1930s photographs of the site. This area contributes to the overall setting of *Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands*.

The Webster Street elevation includes a limestone wall with recently installed high metal fence railings. There are new metal gates to the pathways leading to the two front entry points to the main Loreto Convent School Building.

The school grounds contain an activity lawn, pre-kindergarten playing areas including sand pits, paved courtyard areas, pavilions and tennis courts. These features are all later 20th century additions generally designed in brick and tile to be in keeping with the aesthetic of the original school. Plantings are a mix of mature trees both native and exotic.

To the south east of the Loreto Convent School Building is a limestone Grotto with a statue of the Holy Mary.



Figure 2. Barry Park – located to the south of the main Convent school building – fronting Webster Street. (Image: Urbis June 2023).



Figure 3. View north from the verandah on northern side of Loreto School and Convent Building showing netball court and mature vegetation along Webster Street to the right. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 4. Limestone Grotto – located to the south east of the Loreto Convent School Building (Image: Loreto Nedlands Instagram)

Loreto Convent School Building - External Form and Style

The Loreto Convent School Building is a substantial two-storey symmetrical brick and tile Inter-War Gothic building with masonry quoining detail; steeply pitched roofs with stepped gables; deep verandahs on the front elevation with masonry arched openings on the east elevation; and a restored two-storey verandah on the north elevation. Works undertaken to the verandah in 2021 include new steel posts and decorative brackets and valances.

The main Convent building was constructed in two stages in 1930 and 1940. The first stage comprises the northern (right) wing and north facing verandah with the second stage comprising the southern (left) wing, central connection and additional southern extension constructed in 1940 (fig 9).

The building is constructed of cavity brickwork with decorative concrete oriel windows. There are embedded steel elements forming lintels over the oriel window openings and the eastern verandah. To the rear of the building the original back verandah has been extended and incorporated into the connection with the adjoining Loreto Performing Arts Centre (2011). This extended verandah area includes modern timber stairs connecting the basement, ground and first floors.



Figure 5. Exterior Loreto Convent Building showing northern wing (1931) and southern wing (1940). Webster Street elevation. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 6. Exterior of the Loreto Convent Building, showing northern wing (1931) and recently restored verandah (2021) (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 7. Exterior detail of the original Loreto Convent Building (southern wing c1940). Webster Street elevation. (Image: Urbis June 2023)

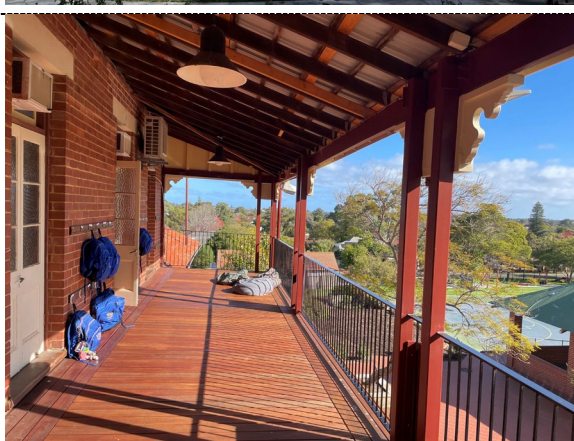


Figure 8. First floor verandah to northern wing (1931) showing repairs undertaken in 2021 including replacement steel posts and decorative brackets and valances. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 9. Southern elevation showing 1940 addition to the right (east) and to the left (west) is a later addition. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 10. Exterior door and window detail to ground floor. (Image: Urbis June 2023)

Internal layout and details

Internally, there is some distinction between the first phase of construction in 1931 and the second phase in 1940. Most notable is the different stylistic motifs employed in the two construction phases. The first phase (northern wing) has decorative organic styles typical of the art-nouveau period, depicted in the pressed metal ceilings and timber joinery. The ground floor to the northern wing incorporates a timber bi-fold partition with opaque glazed window elements originally intended for division of the classroom space. Other decorative elements throughout include leadlight details to the doors to the primary entrance and a central polished timber staircase providing access to the first floor.

In the c1940 wing of the building the pressed metal ceiling detailing is more geometric in style, and the joinery is less ornate typical of the Inter-War period. The door to the side entrance of the southern elevation has decorative leadlight detailing.

The interior of the building has been adapted over time to accommodate modern school requirements. This has included new toilets and kitchens located on the ground and first floors to the southern side of the building. These are contained within the original envelope of the building and do not protrude as accretions, with the majority of the current internal plan matching early descriptions.

A basement undercroft is also accessible via the lower ground floor. This space has been adapted to include a concrete slab to make it a dry space now utilised for storage.

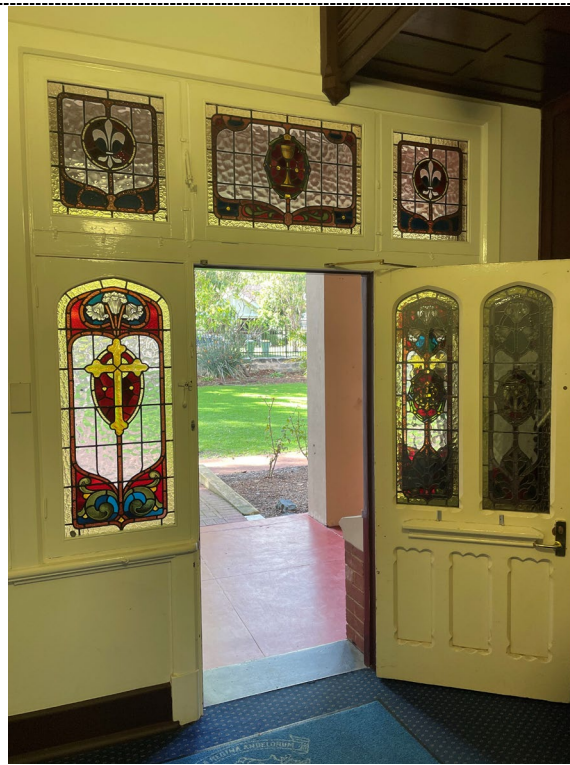


Figure 11. Leadlight detailing to the primary entrance - eastern elevation. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 12. Timber staircase providing access to the first floor, from main entrance (c.1931) (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 13. Oriel windows to first floor. Embedded steel elements forming lintels over the window openings show visible evidence of corrosion which is causing cracking in the surrounding concrete. (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 14. Example of decorative pressed metal ceilings (Image: Urbis June 2023)



Figure 15. Leadlight detailing to side entrance to southern wing (c1940). (Image: Urbis June 2023)

Associated School Buildings

The Early Childhood and library building is a c.1970's brick building with terracotta roof tiling. It faces west to Stanley Street, partially obscured from view by the presence of outdoor play spaces.

The Performing Arts Centre replaces an earlier building on the site and was built as part of the Building Education Revolution (BER) federal funding in 2011. It comprises a two-storey brick and tile building with an auditorium taking up much of the ground floor. It connects through to the rear of the ground floor of the Loreto Convent School building at the first-floor level.

Other buildings on the site include the covered Centenary pavilion and pre-kindergarten which are late 20th century additions.

Archaeology

The heritage assessment report prepared for *Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands* by Urbis in July 2023 on behalf of the Loreto Property Association notes that there is some potential for the sub surface archaeology to be present within the school building. Any sub-surface archaeological features or artefacts associated with the construction and the operation of the school would have the potential to yield information on the changes to Catholic schooling between the 1930s to early 2020s in Western Australia.

12.3 CONDITION

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is generally in good condition. However, there are some water ingress issues that remain unresolved in the original building and the Performing Arts Centre. The original Marseille tiled roof to the main Convent building has missing, broken and displaced tiles, and there is evidence of patch repairs that have failed to resolve water ingress issues. Many tiles are in poor condition and are brittle.

There is also evidence of 'concrete cancer' due to the corrosion of embedded steel reinforcements in the lintels over the oriel window openings and the eastern verandah, which has resulted in cracking of the surrounding concrete. There is evidence of salt penetration of brickwork particularly to the southern elevation.

12.4 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Comparative Analysis

Places associated with the Loreto Order in Western Australia

Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands is the only school associated with the Loreto Order that was purpose built in Western Australia. The following places are associated with the Loreto Order but do not retain extant buildings:

- P03003 Osbourne Hotel Site – the site of a former hotel that was later re-purposed for use as the Loreto Convent in Claremont.
- P13631 John XXIII College, Mt Claremont – the college was formed in 1976 following the amalgamation of Loreto Senior College, Claremont and St Louis School for Boys, and moved to its current site in 1986.

Inter-War Gothic style religious/educational buildings

The Historic heritage database has 59 places described as being designed in the Inter-War Gothic style, including 16 places that are on the State Register. Of these places, the following 3 places serve an educational use:

- P2396 *Administration Building and Chapel, Aquinas College* - The Administration Building (1937, 1967) is a substantial example of Inter-War Gothic style architecture, featuring a landmark central tower.
- P2181 *Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate* - The Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is an excellent example of a large, well composed convent school building featuring elements from the Federation Free and Inter-War Gothic styles, with Henderson responsible for the 1923, 1933 and 1937 additions to the Convent and School.
- P08709 *Aranmore Catholic College Group, Leederville* - Includes St Mary's Church (1923, 1937) - an excellent application of the Inter-War Gothic style while the former convent (1933), presbytery (1934), and teaching block represent a well-crafted application of the style in a very simple and decorative form.

Architect Edgar Le Blond Henderson

Edgar Le Blond Henderson is best-known for his succession of Inter-War Gothic and Inter-War Romanesque style Catholic churches, hospitals, convents and schools. As well as having been involved with the additions for P2181 *Sacred Heart Catholic Group, Highgate*, noted above, Henderson was the architect for the following place on the State Register:

- P3266 *St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco* (1933/34 & 1937) - brick and tile Church with prominent corner tower in the Inter-War Gothic style, together with a two storey brick and tile Presbytery. The Church is described as the largest and most sophisticated example of Henderson's work in the Roman Catholic Perth Archdiocese.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis indicates that *Loreto Primary School & Convent Group, Nedlands* is the only purpose-built school associated with the Loreto Order and the only one that remains extant in Western Australia. The Convent School building is a good example of the work of Edgar Le Blond Henderson undertaken for the Catholic church in the Inter-War period.

12. 5 KEY REFERENCES

Loreto Primary School and Convent Group Heritage Assessment, prepared by Urbis for Loreto Property Association Inc, 13 July 2023.

12. 6 FURTHER RESEARCH



HERITAGE
COUNCIL

HC LOCATION MAP

P13658 LORETO PRIMARY SCHOOL & CONVENT GROUP, NEDLANDS

MAP 1 OF 2 PREPARED BY S. JENKINS (GEOSPATIAL DATA CAPTURE OFFICER) 28/11/2023



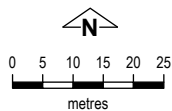


HERITAGE
COUNCIL

HC CURTILAGE MAP P13658

LORETO PRIMARY SCHOOL & CONVENT GROUP, NEDLANDS

MAP 2 OF 2 PREPARED BY S. JENKINS (GEOSPATIAL DATA CAPTURE OFFICER) 28/11/2023



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STANLEY STREET

ELIZABETH STREET

WEBSTER STREET

Legend

- Cadastre
- Curtilage