



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)

- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 8.5.3.2 Founding Australian religious institutions

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 402 Education and science
- 406 Religion

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Reidy House is a fine eclectic example of Inter-War Romanesque style brick, stucco, and corrugated iron roof architecture. With its pavilion ends and arcaded link it is a fine piece of restrained ecclesiastical architecture. The front of the building employs a wide range of architectural devices, especially on the two storey arcade section. These elements range across a number of styles in their detail and application. The remaining elements of the landscape, such as the Canary Island Palms, complement the main building and make it a distinctive large scale element in comparison to the low scale residential context. (Criterion 1.1)

Reidy House is a fine example of the Inter-War Romanesque style, although it could not be regarded as being a building of the highest order of innovation. It is a highly competent and visually satisfying building. The later elements do not in any way measure up to the original building in a creative or visual sense. (Criterion 1.2)

Reidy House and the mature plantings in its setting, make up an important part of Katanning's collection of fine architectural pieces. It cannot be readily connected to being part of a precinct of distinction, but does contribute to its local context in a positive manner in a visual sense. (Criterion 1.4)

Reidy House has a local landmark quality in its own right by virtue of its location in an otherwise small scale built environment. (Criterion 1.4)

The elements that were built subsequent to the completion of St Rita's School to achieve the completion of the present *Reidy House* were basic and utilitarian

* 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.

in conception and execution. In general they detract from the fine aesthetic qualities of *Reidy House*, although their impact does not prevent the reading of the original design concept.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Reidy House, built as St Rita's Boarding School, is significant in the occupation of Katanning and the surrounding district, as a further phase in the establishment of religious facilities by the Catholic Church, and in particular, the establishment of educational facilities by the institution of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. The conversion of the place to provide hostel facilities for youth as an alternative to other institutions is significant in the evolution of care by the Department of Community Welfare in Western Australia, as it was the first of its kind. (Criterion 2.1)

Reidy House was built in the Interwar period, following the construction of St Patricks's School, when the town of Katanning was expanding as a rural centre, to meet the demand by Catholic families of the district for boarding facilities for the education of their children. (Criterion 2.2)

Reidy House was designed by well known architect Michael Cavanagh, and built by well known local builders, Thomson and Keenan. The place is closely associated with the Institution of Our Lady of the Missions, for whom it was constructed as a boarding school in 1929-30, and converted to their Convent in 1958-59; and in particular with the members of the Congregation who worked and lived at the place, including Mother Mary of Jesus, Superior at the time of construction. The place is closely associated also with Father Michael Reidy, Parish Priest at Katanning (1908-1935), after whom the place is named. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Reidy House has social, educational and spiritual value as the former boarding school of St Rita's, which provided facilities for Catholic boarders (1930-1957), and for the Bushies School in the same period. The place has similar values for its period of use as the Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, 1959-1973. The place is highly valued by the community of Katanning and the surrounding district, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Municipal Inventory, and by those in the wider community of Western Australia who formerly resided at the place, and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. (Criterion 4.1)

From 1976, as Kartanup Hostel, Kartanup Working Boys Hostel, and as *Reidy House* the place has accommodated community facilities, for which the place is valued by the community. (Criterion 4.1)

Reidy House contributes to the community's sense of place as an integral part of the educational facilities developed at Katanning by the Institution of Our Lady of the Missions from 1926, and of the Catholic facilities in the town, which were developed in that area of Katanning from the mid 1920s, and as a landmark in the town. (Criterion 4.2)

Since the 1970s, the place has accommodated community facilities as Kartanup Hostel, Kartanup Working Boys Hostel and as *Reidy House*, which have further contributed to the community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Reidy House was one of a number of regional Catholic convent schools for the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, which commenced in 1897 with the opening of St Mary's school in Highgate and the first rural school opening in Busselton in 1902. Others followed in steady progression, particularly in the Eastern Goldfields where the population was growing steadily. Schools in the region included those at Narrogin, Wagin and further south at Albany. With the passage of time, changing trends in education and affluence, these secondary schools have reduced in number, although most of the buildings survive and have been adapted for re-use. Many of these were designed by Cavanagh and St Rita's was one of the last to be redeveloped. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Reidy House is a significant for its capacity to demonstrate, with the assistance of interpretation, the accommodation and use of a typical regional Catholic secondary education boarding school. The symbolic value is rather more accessible than literal representativeness at present, taking into account the present division of spaces and uses. The building represents work that was typical of the oeuvre of Michael Cavanagh. (Criterion 6.2)

Reidy House is a fine representative, albeit eclectic, example of Inter-War Romanesque architecture. (Criterion 6.2)

The works subsequent to the completion of the original building are utilitarian in design, poor in execution and are representative of a more expedient approach to the satisfaction of accommodation requirements. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The setting of the place has been allowed to deteriorate. There are many fine trees, shrubs, garden edges and the like, but the general upkeep of the gardens and grounds is in fair to poor condition.

The later buildings, especially the laundry, are in poor condition. What appears to be the original water closet is in very poor condition. Much of the timber garage building is also in very poor condition.

The exterior and most of the interiors of *Reidy House* appear to be in fair to good condition. Elements which are deteriorating and will require attention include some of the more exposed joinery, rainwater goods, local areas of brickwork, and in the longer term, the corrugated iron roof.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Reidy House has ceased to be used for its intended purpose. Subsequent uses have brought about internal change, but allowed the original intent of some of the major spaces to remain legible. The present use retains the connection to families and children. The present uses have the capacity to retain and conserve the remaining physical evidence of St Rita's school functions and its fabric. The ongoing conservation of the remaining significant fabric is capable of being undertaken. The integrity of the place is moderate.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

By and large, the changes to the original School building itself have been quite minor in terms of the building exterior. Most changes have taken place by way of additions to the place and the division of the larger spaces into much smaller spaces. The interior is much altered in a variety of ways, making the legibility of the original interior spaces difficult, with the exceptions being the fine main staircase and stained glass leadlights in the front entrance hall.

The degree of authenticity of the exterior is high and that of the interior, in an overall sense, is moderate.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Attached are key sections of the supporting evidence prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, with Robin Chinnery, Historian, 'Reidy House, Katanning Conservation Plan' for CAMS on behalf of Family and Children's Services in March 2000.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, with Robin Chinnery, Historian, 'Reidy House, Katanning Conservation Plan' for CAMS on behalf of Family and Children's Services in March 2000.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, with Robin Chinnery, Historian, 'Reidy House, Katanning Conservation Plan' for CAMS on behalf of Family and Children's Services in March 2000.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a Comparative Analysis refer to Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, with Robin Chinnery, Historian, 'Reidy House, Katanning Conservation Plan' for CAMS on behalf of Family and Children's Services in March 2000.

13. 4 REFERENCES

Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd, with Robin Chinnery, Historian, 'Reidy House, Katanning Conservation Plan' for CAMS on behalf of Family and Children's Services in March 2000.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
