



**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)**

- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 6.5 Educating people in remote places
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 104 Land allocation & subdivision
- 107 Settlements
- 402 Education & science

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

St Francis Xavier Church is a fine example of a Catholic Church in the Inter-War Romanesque style situated in a country town. The presbytery built in the 1954, is a modest domestic scaled buildings that complement the design of the church. The concrete block and brick wall along the McLennan Street frontage of the former convent contributes to the overall aesthetic quality of the place. (Criterion 1.1)

St Francis Xavier Church is a fine example of a modest church designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style by prominent ecclesiastical architect Edgar le B. Henderson, and built by T. Snook and Son in 1936. (Criterion 1.2)

St Francis Xavier Church is visually dominant and provides a landmark on the intersection of McLennan and Heggerty Streets. (Criterion 1.3)

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\* 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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* comprising St Francis Xavier Church and presbytery contributes to the streetscape quality of the north-western part of the country town of Quairading. (Criterion 1.4)

## **11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is indicative of the growth of the Catholic population of rural Western Australia during the Inter-War and Post-World War Two years. (Criterion 2.1)

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is indicative of the Catholic Church's intensive building programs, initiated by Archbishop Redmond Prendiville, of the mid-1930s and 1950s, which sought to meet the growing worship requirements of the State's Catholic population. (Criterion 2.2)

St Francis Xavier Church is a fine example of the design work of well known ecclesiastical architect Edgar Le. B. Henderson. (Criterion 2.4)

## **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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## **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is highly valued by the community of Quairading for religious, spiritual, and aesthetic reasons, and is included in the Shire's Municipal Inventory. (Criterion 4.1)

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* contributes to the community's sense of place and St Francis Xavier Church is a notable landmark in this country town. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

St Francis Xavier Church is one of a small number of churches in Western Australia designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style, most of which were designed by Fr. John Cyril Hawes, and as such is a rare example of architect Edgar Le. B. Henderson's work in this style. (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is a representative example of a group of church buildings, which were constructed over a number of years, to suit the needs of the local population. The erection of the church in the Inter-War period, followed by the presbytery in the Post-World War Two period, demonstrates the growth of the Catholic population in rural West Australian in those respective periods. (Criteria 6.1 & 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The buildings that comprise *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* are in good condition generally.

St Francis Xavier Church is in excellent condition as a result of ongoing care by the local parish.

The presbytery is also in good condition.

#### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* has high integrity.

The church and presbytery continue to be used for religious purposes.

#### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* has high authenticity.

The buildings all remain largely as originally constructed. A minor alteration has adapted the side porch of the church for use as a confessional. A framed addition has been added to the presbytery.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentation for this place based on a heritage assessment completed by Robin Chinnery, Historian, and Rosemary Rosario, Architectural Heritage Consultant of Heritage and Conservation Professionals, in August 2010.

Amendments and/or additions have been carried out by State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading*, comprises a Catholic church designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style (1936) and a modest red brick and tile Presbytery (1954).

Following the opening of the district for settlement in the early 1900s, the area of Quairading was quick to develop with the townsite being gazetted on 7 August 1907,<sup>1</sup> and the arrival of the railway in 1908. The townsite was laid out parallel to the railway line, which by 1909 comprised two banks, a hotel, a general store, a blacksmith, a baker and a carpenter.<sup>2</sup>

From 1907 until 1952 Quairading fell under the Parish of Beverley, with the parish priest travelling the great distance from Beverley to conduct mass for the Catholics of Quairading. Services were first held in a private residence, but were later moved to several different locations, including the Dangin Hall, the dining room of the Quairading Hotel, a timber hall in McLennan Street, and the Agricultural Hall also in McLennan Street. By the mid-1930s, Quairading was still without a Catholic church, and mass was being held once a month, with the Presentation Sisters from Beverley accompanying the parish priest to give religious instruction to the Catholic children.<sup>3</sup>

In 1933, as the country emerged from the Great Depression, the Census of Commonwealth Australia recorded the total population of Western Australia to be

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<sup>1</sup> Eaton, Frances, *The Golden Grain and the Silver Fleece: A History of Quairading from 1859-1930* (Wescolour Press, 1979), p. 81-94.

<sup>2</sup> Townsite of Quairading Avon District, SROWA.

<sup>3</sup> Marchant James, Ruth., *Cork to Capricorn: A History of the Presentation Sisters in Western Australia 1891-1991* (The Congregation of the Presentation Sisters of Western Australia, 1996), p.523-524.

438,852 of whom 80,237 were registered as Catholics.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the Catholic church's cautious building policy during the depression years, by the mid-1930s the Catholic church, under Archbishop Redmond Prendiville, initiated a significant building program that saw 24 new churches and 36 schools built in the period 1935-40,<sup>5</sup> one of which was St Francis Xavier Church in Quairading.

Fund raising for the design and construction of a new church was the responsibility of the parishioners, and it was noted that there was a generous response to the appeal for funds towards the building of the Church.<sup>6</sup> In 1935, well known architect Edgar le B. Henderson was appointed to prepare plans for a church in the Inter-War Romanesque style for Fr. O'Callaghan. It was to be of brick construction with the exterior walls cement rendered.

Edgar le B. Henderson, was the son of Architect Edgar J Henderson who was responsible for buildings such as *Sacred Heart Convent and School* (1899, 1914) in Highgate. After completing his articles at his father's firm, Henderson established his own practice in 1914, and was responsible for a number ecclesiastical, educational and commercial buildings in Perth and regional Western Australia,<sup>7</sup> including *St Joseph's Church and Presbytery* (1933) in Subiaco, Christian Brothers High School (fmr) (1936) in Highgate, and Convent of Mercy (1925) in Victoria Park.

By June 1936, Henderson awarded the contract to erect St Francis Xavier Church to builders T. Snook and Son, of Perth, at a cost of £1,329,<sup>8</sup> which was completed by December 1936, and official opened by Archbishop Prendiville. The Archbishop congratulated Fr. O'Callaghan and the local people for their initiative.

Following the end of World War Two, the population of Western Australia grew rapidly due to the so-called 'baby boom' and post-war immigration. As war-time building regulations were eased, Archbishop Prendiville once again urged his priests to commence building church facilities in order to provide for the spiritual needs of the rapidly growing Catholic population. It was at this time that it was recognised that the Catholic population of Quairading was large enough to justify it becoming its own parish.

In 1952, after 45 years of the Beverley parish priests serving St Francis Xavier Church, Quairading became a separate Parish, and Fr. Michael Ryan was appointed as the first Parish Priest. Just two years later, in 1954, a single-storey

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4 'Population at Census Date Western Australia 1848-1979', sourced from Census of Colony of Western Australia & Census of Commonwealth of Australia, and reproduced in Bourke, D. F., *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia 1829-1979* (Vanguard Service Print, 1979).

5 Bourke, D.F., *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia 1829-1979* (Archdiocese of Perth, 1979), p. 211.

6 Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia 1829-1979* (1979), p. 253., and *The Record* 2 Jan. 1937, p. 2.

7 'Men of the Moment – the Building Trade – Mr E le B Henderson', in *Building & Construction*, 9 May 1930, p. 17., cited in Naomi Lawrance Architecture and Heritage, *St Joseph's Church and Presbytery, Subiaco: Conservation Plan* (1998), p. 46.

8 *Building and Construction* 19 & 26 June, & 3 July 1936, p. 10, p. 8 & p. 3 respectively; Edgar Le. B. Henderson 'Proposed New R. C. Church to be erected at Quairading for Rev. Fr. G. O'Callaghan', SROWA Cons. 5094 Item 455, 1935; & Apperly, Richard, Irving, Robert, Reynolds, Peter A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989, pp. 176-179.

brick presbytery was completed at *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading*, and Fr. Ryan took up residence.

In 1955, a Catholic convent and school were built adjacent to *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading*. The convent and school are not included as part of this assessment.

In the early 1970s, many farmers experienced financial difficulty during the economic downturn. Numerous local families departed the Quairading district.

In 1996, *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* was included in the Municipal Heritage Inventory for the Shire of Quairading. In 1998, the place was included in the Catholic Church Inventory.

In 2012, St Francis Xavier Church continues in its original use. As there is no longer a resident Parish Priest the presbytery is not fully occupied as a residence.

### **13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

*St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading*, comprises a Catholic church designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style (1936) and a modest red brick and tile Presbytery (1954), is designed to face south-west to address Heggerty Street. The church is located on the corner of McLennan Street and the presbytery is located on the north-western side of it.

The ground around the church and presbytery is covered with red pea gravel. There is a brick paved apron in front of the church. Brick paving continues around the south-eastern side of the building to the eastern porch. There is a metal framed garage and a w.c. located between the church and the presbytery. A row of mature eucalypts lines the gravel driveway behind the buildings. A mature palm tree is located in front of the church, on its western side. The church and presbytery are both set back from the road with landscaping of small trees and shrubs along the street frontage.

#### **St Francis Xavier Church**

St Francis Xavier Church is a modest rectangular masonry building with a gabled roof concealed behind a parapet walled front façade featuring a triangular pediment flanked by two piers. The façade features a narrow entry porch with a pediment roof supported on two classically proportioned circular columns. The façade also features circular arched motifs in the Romanesque tradition including three arched windows over the entrance representing the traditional Christian symbolism of the Holy Trinity. The main entrance comprises a pair of timber panelled doors, and on the wall at the eastern side of it is the plaque commemorating the opening, which reads 'This Church was blessed and opened by His Grace the Most Rev. R. Prendiville D.D Archbishop of Perth, 27-12-36.'

The side elevations of the church feature rounded arched windows and on the eastern side there is a gabled roof porch with an external door. At the north-eastern end of the building the roof is dropped over the sanctuary, creating a more intimate internal space in this area of the building.

The external masonry walls are smooth rendered and painted white. Joinery, gutters and the Cross on the front of the church are painted bright blue, giving the building a very fresh appearance. The roof is short sheets of corrugated galvanised iron.

Internally the church comprises the nave with rows of timber pews facing the sanctuary at the front. The walls are plastered and there is a vaulted plaster ceiling over the nave. The floor is jarrah tongued and grooved boards with a blue carpet along the central aisle. The sanctuary is carpeted and a contemporary altar facing the congregation replaces the original pre-Vatican II altar that would have been located at the back of the sanctuary. Statues of Mary the mother of Christ and of Jesus with the burning heart are located at the entrance to the sanctuary. A crucifix on the back wall of the sanctuary hangs above the tabernacle.

The sacristy on the eastern side of church has been altered and is used as the confessional.

St Francis Xavier Church is in very good condition. It has very high authenticity, the only changes being the liturgical changes that resulted from Vatican II and the use of the eastern porch as the confessional. The latter change has not resulted in significant alteration to the building.

### **Presbytery**

The presbytery, constructed in 1954, is a modest brick and tile dwelling with a gabled roof. The walls are of red face brick and the autumn blend clay tiled roof has gables on each side with fibrous cement battened panels. There is one simple brick chimney. The front door leads from the front porch to the living room. This room features a brick fireplace into which a gas stove has been fitted. From the living room a central passage leads to the kitchen, two bedrooms and the bathroom.

A large timber framed fibrous cement clad meeting room has been added at the back of the presbytery. This addition approximately doubles the floor area of the building.

The presbytery remains largely as constructed with the addition of the meeting room. Aluminium window frames are probably not original. There is a plaque at the front of the building noting that it was blessed and opened by Rev. L.J. Goody D.D., D.Ph., Bishop of Abydos, on 21 November 1954.

## **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

### **The Catholic Church in Western Australia & its Building Programs**

In Western Australia, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and first sixty years of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Catholic Church established churches and associated buildings in order to meet the worship requirements of the growing Catholic population. Wherever possible sufficient land was acquired by grant, or purchased, for co-location of the church and additional associated buildings, such as a presbytery for the resident Parish Priest. Consequently church groups, such as *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading*, were established in both metropolitan and rural areas of the State, to serve to nearby population.

It should be noted, however, that it was often not feasible, or desirable, to build all elements of a Catholic group (church, presbytery etc.) at one time due to low population and monetary constraints. For this reason, the construction of multiple Catholic buildings at one location was often staggered, and a new building was only added once the requirement presented itself.

From the mid-1930s following the State's emergence from the Great Depression, the Catholic Church under Archbishop Redmond Prendiville initiated an intensive building program which saw the construction of 24 new churches between the period of 1935 to 1940. The construction of St Francis Xavier Church in Quairading in 1936 was part of this program. Other churches which are entered in to the State Heritage database which were constructed at this time, and are likely to have also been part of this program are:

- P473 *Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church & fmr Convent* (1938) in Nanson;
- P1936 *St Joseph's Church, Perenjori* (1937);
- P2801 *Our Lady of Montserrat, Southern Cross* (1936);
- P1054 *Church of St Lawrence the Matryr* (1937) at Bluff Point; and,
- P2461 *St Mary's Church* (1936) in Guildford.

The Quairading Catholic presbytery was constructed in the 1954 as part of the church's post-war building program, which aimed to provide for the spiritual needs of the growing Catholic population of Western Australia. At Quairading, the construction of the presbytery allowed for Quairading to become a separate parish and house its own rector.

Other Catholic buildings constructed during the 1950s period, which are likely to have been part of this same building program are:

- P10670 *St Mary's Catholic Church Precinct, Bruce Rock* – inclusive of St Mary's Catholic Church, Presbytery, Presentation Sister's Residence (fmr), Convent (fmr) and school (demolished) (1954-1964);
- P8292 *Catholic Church Precinct, Corrigin* – Church, Presbytery and School (1956-62);
- P13096 *St Vincent's Catholic Church* and P13157 *St Vincent's Catholic Presbytery, Medina* (1956); and,
- P10488 *Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church & Nun's Home, Pickering Brook* (1955).

None of these other similar places has been identified as warranting assessment for the State Register

### **Catholic Church Groups**

Due to the fact that Catholic groups, such as the one found at Quairading, were constructed over a number of years, to suit to changing needs of the local population, it is difficult to determine other comparable groups which were built as a consequence of the same building programs.

In addition, not all Catholic groups were constructed in the same order, or consisted of the same components, as the one found at Quairading. For example, some of the other Catholic Church Groups entered on to the State Register include additional components, such as halls, parish centres, residences and school buildings. Additionally, some were constructed over a much longer time period. Examples include:

- P2181 *Sacred Heart Catholic Group*, Highgate – comprising convent (1899), church (1906), school (1914), and hall (1934);
- P2383 *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth* – comprising school (1908), church (1937), presbytery (1938), chapel (1938), church centre (1986), and several residences (1908, 1959, 1971).
- P2378 *St Patrick's Catholic Church, Presbytery & Hall* – hall/original church (1859), church (1875), and presbytery (1877).
- P8709 *Aranmore Catholic College Group* – church (1923), hall (1929), convent (1933), presbytery (1934), school (1954), and additional school blocks (1979, 1982).

### **Edgar Le. B. Henderson**

In addition to the design of St Francis Xavier Church in Quairading, the architect Edgar Le. B. Henderson was responsible for a number of other ecclesiastical buildings, few of which were designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style. Henderson's Inter-War Romanesque style designs include:

- Church of St Columba (1937) at South Perth, which has been entered on the State Register of Heritage Places as P2383 *St Columba's Church Group and St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*;
- P3086 St Patrick's Catholic Church in Waroona (1941) ; and,
- Home of the Good Shepherd (c.1938) (part of P8880 Ruislip Street Catholic Precinct) in Leederville, which is on the Assessment Program.

Other examples of Henderson's ecclesiastical architecture are:

- P3266 *St Joseph's Church and Presbytery* (1933) in Subiaco;
- P2179 Christian Brothers High School (fmr) (1936) in Highgate; and,
- P15000 Convent of Mercy (1925) in Victoria Park.

### **Inter-War Romanesque style churches**

A search of the State Heritage Office database reveals just 31 churches as being constructed in the Inter-War Romanesque style, fifteen of which are entered on to the State Register of Heritage Places. The majority (9) of those Inter-War Romanesque churches entered on the State Register were designed by Fr. John Cyril Hawes, whose architectural design work in the style became renowned. Hawes' Inter-War Romanesque ecclesiastical works includes:

- P473 *Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church & fmr Convent* in Nanson (1938);
- P1936 *St Joseph's Church, Perenjori* (1937);
- P1904 *St Mary's in Ara Coeli Church* in Northampton (1936);
- P1656 *Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Holy Apostles St Peter and St Paul, Priesthouse & Presentation Convent* in Mullewa (church 1921-27 & priesthouse 1927-29); and,
- P461 *Church of St Mary Star of the Sea Group* in Carnarvon (1910).

Other architects who experimented in this style are Herbert Parry and Marshall Clifton (P2225 *St Peter's Anglican* in Victoria Park); and Charles Oldham, Harold Boas and Ednie-Brown (P4641 *Cathedral of St Constantine & St Helene* in Northbridge).

### **Conclusion**

The above analysis suggests that *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is a good representative example of the Catholic Church's intensive building programs of the mid-1930s and 1950s, which sought to meet the growing worshipping requirements of the State's Catholic population. As the buildings within *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* were constructed in both program phases, it can be seen to be intrinsically linked to the Church's efforts to disseminate Catholicism to rural Western Australia in both the Inter-War and Post-World War Two periods.

As Catholic Church groups of this period vary so much in terms of when elements were constructed, and in their composition, it is difficult to determine whether *St Francis Xavier Church & Presbytery, Quairading* is rare as a collection of these particular elements.

*St Francis Xavier Church* is not only a fine example of an Inter-War Romanesque church, built to the designs of Edgar le B. Henderson, but is also a rare example of his design work in this style.

### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

No key references.

### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may reveal additional information about the place, including the architect/designer of the presbytery, and the date at which the large meeting room was added to its rear.