



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)

- 8.6.1 Worshipping together
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 6.2 Establishing Schools
- 9.6.2 Looking after the infirm and the aged

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 406 Religion
- 402 Education and science

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

St Columba's Church is a pleasing example of a 1930s church designed in the Inter-War Romanesque style with Spanish Mission influences. Its smooth rendered facades, elegant proportions, and fine interior detailing are highly valued by the community. (Criterion 1.1)

The buildings of St Joseph's Convent are set within expansive and scenic gardens featuring a variety of mature trees, set within informal garden beds and areas of lawn. (Criterion 1.1)

Dennehy House is a well-resolved and pleasing example of the Federation Queen Anne style, featuring a picturesque asymmetrical form, warm face-brickwork contrasted against ornate timber detailing and Donnybrook stone, and accents on the roofline which once included tall masonry chimneys (no longer extant) and a belvedere. (Criterion 1.1)

The Mary MacKillop Centre is an attractive two-storey face-brick and tile building with a spreading roof form, and features a distinctive two-storey timber verandah with paired timber columns, a timber lattice valance and timber balustrade to three elevations. (Criterion 1.1)

The Chapel features an impressive interior with smooth-rendered walls, vaulted ceilings, and brightly coloured stained glass windows. The columns, the floor of

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Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

the sanctuary, the reredos, the tabernacle and the altar are all constructed of various types of marble and are a distinct feature of the Chapel. (Criterion 1.1)

St Columba's Church has aesthetic value for its significant collection of stained glass windows, in particular the Rose Window located in the northern gable above the choir. The windows, made in Dublin by the firm of Harry Clarke Ltd, exhibit excellent craftsmanship and contribute to the splendour of the interior space. These intense and deep colours designed especially to suit Western Australian sunlight. (Criterion 1.2)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is set within attractive landscaped grounds in a prominent position on Forrest and York Streets, overlooking the Swan River and the City of Perth. Because of the prominence of the site and its context, the church, the presbytery, Church Centre, school and convent buildings collectively form a regional landmark. (Criterion 1.3)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth forms an historic Catholic group including St Columba's Church (1937), the Presbytery (1938), Church Centre (1986), St Columba's Catholic Primary School (1908, 1919, 1949, 1985, 1990, 2002), Dennehy House (1908), the Mary MacKillop Centre (1927) and the Chapel (1939). (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth demonstrates the rapid expansion of the Catholic Church in Western Australia during the time of Bishop Mathew Gibney (1887-1910), Archbishop Patrick Clune (1911-1935) and Archbishop Redmond Prendiville (1935-1968). The original church-school was built in 1908, Dennehy House was occupied from the end of 1914, and St Columba's Church from 1937 and the Presbytery from 1938. (Criterion 2.2)

The original St Columba's church-school (1908) demonstrates the way that a Catholic church and a school were combined in one building, allowing the efficient use of limited resources in a district that would not otherwise be able to separately support either. (Criterion 2.2)

St Columba's Church demonstrates, as a 'memorial church', the role played by Irish Religious in the establishment of Roman Catholicism in Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Criterion 2.2)

Although the physical fabric of the place is of little significance, the Convent (1957) is important for its provision of nursing home facilities in South Perth from 1959-60, and its provision of retirement facilities for senior Sisters from 1971-72. (Criterion 2.2)

The original St Columba's church-school (1908, 1914) and Dennehy House (1908) are associated with the visit of the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cattaneo, in 1920. (Criterion 2.3)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is associated with prominent Catholic Religious in Western Australia, including the Rev. Dr John Thomas McMahon, Archbishop Patrick Clune, Archbishop Redmond Prendiville, the Sisters of Mercy, and the Sisters of St Joseph. (Criterion 2.3)

St Joseph's Convent is intrinsically linked to the Sisters of St Joseph, who, after the establishment of the place as the Province Administration Centre in South Perth in 1917, used it as accommodation for sisters engaged in administration, home duties, caring for boarders, and as a respite for sisters working in the Eastern Goldfields. (Criterion 2.3)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is associated with Richard John Dennehy, well-known Western Australian architect and prominent Catholic layman, who designed the first church-school on the site in 1908, and its extension in 1919, as well as his own 1908 York Street home, which was purchased by the Sisters of St Joseph for a convent in 1914. (Criterion 2.3)

St Columba's Church demonstrates, in its design, an early attempt to build ecclesiastical structures that were appropriate for the climatic and cultural conditions of southern Western Australia. (Criterion 2.4)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is highly valued by the local Catholic community as an important focus of their religious life. (Criterion 4.1)

St Joseph's Convent is highly valued by Catholic Religious and laypersons for its spiritual associations with the Blessed Mary MacKillop. (Criterion 4.1)

St Joseph's Convent is highly valued by Catholic Religious and laypersons as the site of a memorial rose garden commemorating Irene McCormack, a Josephite Sister killed on 21 May 1991 by anti-government rebels, while serving the local community in Peru. (Criterion 4.1)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is important in contributing to the sense of place for people in South Perth, as well as to the sense of place of the wider community of Perth, due to the prominence of the site. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

St Columba's Church is representative of the Inter-War Romanesque style of architecture with Spanish Mission influences, and demonstrates in its design, an early attempt to build ecclesiastical structures that were appropriate to the climatic and cultural conditions of southern Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is representative of a combined church, convent and school complex, established as a religious and educational institution by one of a variety of Religious orders of the Catholic Church. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally, *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth* is in very good condition and continues to be well maintained. The Presbytery and the Church Centre were not available for internal inspection.

12.4 INTEGRITY

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth has a high degree of integrity. Dennehy House, the Mary MacKillop Centre and the Chapel at St Joseph's Convent continue to be used by the Sisters of St Joseph, although Dennehy House (formerly a residence) is now the Province administrative centre and the Mary MacKillop Centre (formerly the Boarding School) is currently used as an education and social centre. St Columba's Church and the Church Centre continue to be used by the local Catholic community as a place of worship and for parish meetings, and the Presbytery continues to function as the priest's residence.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth generally has a high degree of authenticity, although various modifications have taken place to each of the buildings. The Presbytery and the Church Centre were not available for internal inspections.

Dennehy House (1908) has a high degree of authenticity. Changes to the fabric include the extension to the western end of the ground floor Dining Room, and subsequent creation of a first floor side balcony (which connects to the eastern end of the Mary MacKillop Centre). The rear (north) balcony has been enclosed and a cloister has been added to the eastern end of the building to connect with the Chapel. The belvedere was added to the roof of the 'Flat' or attic, in 1969.

The Mary MacKillop Centre (1927) has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. Changes to the fabric include the enclosure of the first floor balconies on three sides of the building (1981), the subdivision of the first floor room at the eastern end of the building to create three smaller rooms, and the expansion of the first floor room at the western end of the building to create a large meeting room. Partitioned cubicles have been built within the enclosed verandahs on the first floor. In 2001, two double doors were added to the south wall of the ground floor Dining Room in the location of a former window, although the change is barely distinguishable.

The Chapel (1939) of the Sisters of St Joseph has a high degree of authenticity. Changes to the fabric include the extension of the Chapel porch in 1970-71, the addition of the existing Chapel unit in 1972-74. The removal of a number of the timber pews in the nave in preference for lightweight chairs happened during the 1990s.

St Columba's Catholic Primary School has a moderate degree of authenticity. Changes to the fabric includes the conversion of the apse in the parish hall to a kitchen, and the closing of the large openings between the hall and the classrooms either side. An extension has been added to the north of the Year 2 classroom, directly abutting the hall, and the verandah along the north elevation is also a fairly recent addition (probably 1990 when the administration wing was added). The Parish hall, and the Year 1, 2 and 3 classrooms have all been re-roofed. The Year 3 classroom was most likely added to the west of the Year 2 classroom in 1949, at the same time that the new 1949 Classroom Block was built (both buildings have the same window types). Similarly, the Library (1985) was extended in 2002 to accommodate the Pre-Primary School.

St Columba's Church (1937) has a high degree of authenticity. Various modifications and repairs have been carried out to the place, but are generally sympathetic to the fabric. The Rose Window was repaired in 1945 after being damaged while buried during the Second World War. In 1950 stained glass replaced the coloured leadlight glass in the sanctuary windows, and in the 1960's

the lead in all the church windows was renewed. In 1965 a new Hammond organ was installed for the choir. In 1968 the roof tiles were repaired and some replaced after an electrical storm, and in 1969 skylights were installed above the altar. More recently, in the 1980s, a new lectern, credence table and baptismal font were crafted from the old marble communion rails.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Wayne Moredout, Historian, and Palassis Architects, in August 2003, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth comprises:

St Columba's Church Group: St Columba's Church (1937), Presbytery (1938), Church Centre (1986), St Columba's Catholic Primary School (1908, 1919, 1949, 1985, 1990, 2002)

St Joseph's Convent: Dennehy House (1908), Mary MacKillop Centre (1927), Chapel (1939), Convent (1957, 1974), Irene Villa (1959/60, 1982), and MacKillop Court (1971).

The history of organized Catholicism in Western Australia began in 1841, when layman and school teacher Robert D'Arcy, on behalf of local Catholics, asked Church authorities in Sydney to send a priest to the Swan River Colony. Subsequently, three clergy arrived in Fremantle in 1843. These were Fr John Brady (later, first Bishop of Perth), a Belgian priest, Fr John Joostens, and a Catechist, Patrick O'Reilly. Brady stayed only two months in Perth before setting off for Europe, but during that time the colonial Government had granted the Church land on Victoria Avenue. There, he commenced the building of a small church that became the colony's first Catholic cathedral, St John's. Father Joostens stayed on, however, and conducted a school in this building.¹

Meanwhile, Church authorities in Rome mistakenly believed that there were 3000 Catholics and two million Aborigines in the Swan River Colony. To cater for these two groups, three years after his departure from Perth, Brady returned as bishop, accompanied by 24 missionaries. So it was that in January 1846 a diverse group of Benedictines, Sisters of Mercy, Heart of Mary priests and brothers, diocesan priests, catechists and laymen, arrived in Fremantle from Spain, Ireland, Italy, France and England.²

The Mercy Sisters immediately set about providing educational services, while the Benedictines set off for New Norcia to work with the Aboriginal people there. The 1855 arrival of St Joseph of the Apparition Sisters added to Catholic educational efforts in Perth and Fremantle. Increasing numbers of Benedictines arriving in Perth also enabled a start to be made on the present Cathedral Presbytery (in 1855) and the present Cathedral (in 1863), both in Perth. By 1854, Catholics had expanded to 18 percent of the Western Australian population due to the arrival of free settlers, a number of Irish among the newly-arrived convicts, and young Irish women sponsored by the government.³

Gold discoveries from the mid-1880s brought change to Western Australia, and to the Catholic Church, by attracting an influx of lay Catholics from the eastern states of Australia. This increase in the Catholic population prompted the Bishop to seek more members of Religious orders to serve them. In the

1 The information in this section has been derived from an official Catholic Church (Perth) Web Site at <http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/html/history.html>.

2 <http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/html/history.html>.

3 <http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/html/history.html>.

south of the State, Bishop Gibney brought in members of Religious orders such as the St John of God Sisters, Christian Brothers, Oblates, Our Lady of the Mission Sisters, Loreto Sisters, and Good Shepherd Sisters, while Mary MacKillop's Australian Josephite Sisters also expanded to the State from New South Wales and South Australia.⁴

The growth of South Perth was slow until the 1880s, by which time communication with Perth was improved with the introduction of ferry services and construction of bridges across the Swan and Canning Rivers. The discovery of gold in Western Australia from 1885 led to an increase in population, with land facing Perth Water progressively sub-divided between 1886 and 1904. It was during this period that much of the infrastructure of South Perth was developed.⁵

After the mid-1890s, a speculative element entered into the sale of South Perth suburban land. Some of the larger sections were bought for the purpose of quick sub-division and sale to take advantage of rising prosperity and the prospect of improved ferry services, or a rail link, to Perth. In 1892, the South Perth Roads Board District was formed, and in 1902 the suburb became a municipality. By the turn of the century there were four jetties at South Perth, the Zoological Gardens had opened (in 1898), and a school and postal facilities were established.⁶ By 1903, all the area between Suburban Road (now Mill Point Road) and Angelo Street, in which is located *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*, had been subdivided for housing.⁷

St Columba's Church Group

On 11 October 1882, Mathew Gibney, the Catholic Vicar General of Perth (later Catholic Bishop of Perth, 1886-1910), purchased Lot 344 in South Perth for the amount of £166, for the future expansion of the Catholic Church. On 20 August 1886, Martin Griver, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth (from 1862-1886), purchased Lot 99 for £216. These two lots, the former fronting York Street and the latter Hopetoun Street, were shown as subdivided into eight and six residential lots respectively. These parcels of land, together with the area of land between them (Lot 101, facing Forrest Street and earmarked for parish building, which was purchased some time after 1893) comprise the present site of St Columba's Church, St Columba's Catholic Primary School, the Presbytery and the Parish Office.⁸

Tenders were called in 1907 for the erection of a (Catholic) school, church and hall on the corner of York and Forrest Streets, South Perth.⁹ According to the priest responsible for the South Perth school-church, Father Bernard Fagan, he had selected the corner lot so that future priests would be able to sell other subdivisions of the entire parcel of land.¹⁰

Until this time, the spiritual needs of the small number of Catholics in South Perth were met by nuns and priests (known as 'Religious') travelling from Victoria Park to private homes in the South Perth area to celebrate Mass, and to teach and

4 <http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/html/history.html>.

5 Cecil Florey, *Peninsula City: A Social History of South Perth, Western Australia*, City of South Perth, 1995, pp. 40-72.

6 F.K. Crowley, *The History of South Perth*, Rigby, Perth, 1962, pp. 42-54.

7 'Plan of South Perth: 1903', compiled by G.A. Harris, Battye Maps, 1/18/SOU.

8 John T. McMahon, *Barney's Hill: St Columba's and South Perth*, Perth, 1971, p. 5; John T. Mc Mahon, *Parish and Pastor*, Perth, 1979, pp. 8-9.

9 *W.A. Record*, 23 November 1907.

10 McMahon, *Parish and Priest*, p. 10.

prepare children for the sacraments. By 28 March 1908, a new school-church was completed on the York Street site, run by the Victoria Park-based Sisters of Mercy, with an initial enrolment of about 35 pupils.¹¹ The establishment was then known as the St Columba Roman Catholic School.¹²

The modest red brick and tile building had been designed by Western Australian architect, Richard Joseph Dennehy. Born in County Cork in 1859. Dennehy had come to Victoria from Ireland with his parents as a child and received his education at the Jesuit College in Melbourne. At the age of sixteen, he was articled to an architect, and after two years of practice, joined the firm of Tappin and Gilbert. He subsequently became a partner in the firm, which changed its name to Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy, and afterwards, Tappin, Dennehy and Smart.¹³

The firm carried on business at Sydney, Melbourne and Ballarat with notable commissions in Melbourne including St Paul's Cathedral, the Melbourne Gas Company's offices, the Art Gallery, the Hibernian Hall, the Convent of the Good Shepherd at Abbotsford, and Xavier College in Kew. Other works involving the firm included, the Catholic Cathedral in Bendigo, the Anglican Cathedral in Ballarat, a Catholic Church in Manly, and St Ignatius at Riverview in Sydney.¹⁴

With the expiry of the deed of partnership for the firm after fifteen years, Dennehy decided to relocate to Western Australia to take advantage of the economic prosperity that resulted from the discovery of gold in the State. Within a short time of his arrival in Western Australia in 1896 Dennehy had established a thriving architectural practice in Menzies, on the Eastern Goldfields. By 1899, however, he had established his practice in St Georges Terrace, Perth, with his private residence in Helena Vale. By 1905, Dennehy's business was located in Barrack Street, Perth, while his residence was in Bennett Street, Perth.¹⁵ Buildings designed by Dennehy in Perth included the Church of the Sacred Heart at Highgate, the St John of God Hospital in Subiaco, the Convent of the Good Shepherd in West Leederville and several commercial buildings in Hay Street.¹⁶

By the beginning of 1915, the Sisters of St Joseph had taken over the operation of South Perth school from the Sisters of Mercy, who moved to the newly-opened St Anne's Church-School in Hehir Street, Belmont.¹⁷ The South Perth convent operated as a boarding school and was known as 'Mount St Joseph's'. Mount St Joseph's was the high school while the adjacent St Columba's was the primary school.

In October 1917, Father Denis Maloney, Administrator of the Perth Cathedral, declared the existence of the new Parish of South Perth. On the same day, Maltese-born Father Raphael L. Pace, who had earned double doctorates in theology and philosophy in Rome, became the first Parish Priest of the South Perth community.¹⁸ In 1919, Fr Pace engaged Richard Dennehy to organize the

11 W.A. Record, 28 March 1908.

12 Post Office Directories, 1909-1910.

13 J.S. Battye, ed., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 1, 1912, Hesperian Press Facsimile Edition, 2000, p. 632.

14 Geraldine Byrne, *Built on a Hilltop: A History of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Western Australia, 1902-2002*, Perth, 2002, p. 23.

15 Battye, ed., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, p. 632; Post Office Directories, 1893-1908.

16 Byrne, *Built on a Hilltop*, p. 23.

17 Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephites Go West: The Sisters of St Joseph in Western Australia 1887-1920*, University of Notre Dame, Perth, 1995, pp. 131-132.

18 W.A. Record, 27 October 1917.

building of two new class room wings, so as to leave the existing school-church hall as a Kindergarten during the week and a Mass centre on Sundays.¹⁹

In 1919, Father Pace organized a 'Baby Bazaar' to raise funds for the development of the South Perth Church. Afterwards, Father Pace thanked all his 'Perth and Suburban friends' for having provided 'pecuniary Lactogen to the Baby Parish'.²⁰ During the 1920 visit of the the Apostolic Delegate to the neighbouring Mount St Joseph's School and Convent in 1920, Father Pace again described the South Perth Parish as the 'Baby' of the metropolitan area, because it was the newest as well as the smallest. Responding in a similar vein, Archbishop Cattaneo expressed himself as being charmed with the 'Baby' Parish, which, although it was 'young and little', was 'certainly lofty in appearance and promise'. Furthermore, according to the Apostolic Delegate, 'it was a pity we could not always be as children, pure and innocent'. The church-school hall was decorated in yellow and white in honour of the occasion, while the Papal Coat of Arms was displayed prominently inside, and above the entrance, on the outside of the building.²¹

Father Pace remained at South Perth until 1926, when he moved on to serve other parishes in the State. He was succeeded at South Perth by Dean D.A. Brennan, an Irish-born priest ordained in 1899, who remained at South Perth until 1932, when he was transferred to Victoria Park and later West Perth.²² Dean Brennan remained living in the South Perth Presbytery for some months after his transfer to Victoria Park, obliging the incoming parish priest, Reverend Doctor John Thomas McMahon, to reside at the Hurlingham Hotel, nearby on Canning Highway.²³

John T. McMahon was born in Ennis, Ireland, in 1893 and was ordained a priest at All Hallows College in Dublin in 1919. This institution, founded in 1842 by a young priest, Rev. John Hand, was devoted to the preparation of priests for missions in English-speaking countries. It was the aim of All Hallows to form missionaries of a 'practical type', men who would throw themselves with 'sympathy and zeal' into the 'advancing civilization of the New World'. In an academic course of seven years three were devoted to physics, mental philosophy, languages, and English literature; the remaining four years to Sacred Scripture, history, liturgy, canon law, sacred eloquence, and the science of theology. From twenty to thirty students were ordained priests each year (as at 1905) and sent to various parts of the English-speaking world. For instance, in 1905, thirteen were ordained for the Australian mission, one for New Zealand, two for South Africa, seven for different dioceses of the United States, three for Canada, and one for England. By 1905, All Hallows had sent about fifteen hundred priests to minister to the Irish 'of the dispersion' in different parts of the 'New World'.²⁴

McMahon had graduated in Arts at University College, Dublin, in 1915, was awarded the Higher Diploma of Education (Honours) in 1917, and a Masters of Education (Honours) degree in 1920. McMahon had met Archbishop Clune

19 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 7.

20 *W.A. Record*, 8 November 1919.

21 *W.A. Record*, 1 May 1920.

22 *Record*, 7 May 1932; Phillip Pental, *'A Thing of Beauty...': St Columba's, South Perth, Western Australia*, Perth, 1986, n.p.

23 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 10.

24 John T. McMahon, *College, Campus, Cloister*, UWA Press, Perth, 1969, pp. 61, 212-213.

of Perth at the former's family home in 1913 and it was Clune who had supported the young man's enrolment at All Hallows College in September of that year. The Archbishop was a second cousin of McMahon's mother. The association of Archbishop Clune and Father McMahon continued in 1920, when McMahon was Secretary to Clune, when the latter acted as a negotiator in Dublin between Irish nationalist leaders and the British Government.²⁵

Fr McMahon had arrived in Perth from Europe on 17 February 1921, as part of a group including the Archbishop of Adelaide, the Bishop of Armidale, the Archbishop of Perth, and the Abbot of New Norcia. The following year, Archbishop Clune appointed Fr McMahon as his Diocesan Inspector of Catholic Schools. The latter soon discovered that many children in isolated parts of the State had no opportunity for religious instruction. Taking a lead from the State Education Department, which had introduced correspondence lessons from 1918, McMahon introduced a similar scheme for religious education from February 1923. This was supplemented, from December 1925, by residential summer schools in Busselton, Bridgetown, Manjimup, Coolgardie, and other country towns with boarding facilities.

In 1925, McMahon established the Newman Society at the University of Western Australia in order to facilitate the ongoing religious development of Catholic Graduates and Undergraduates.²⁶ In addition to these activities, Fr McMahon was appointed editor of the Catholic weekly newspaper, the *Record*, from 1928 to 1932. In 1926, Archbishop Clune sent McMahon to study in the Post-Graduate School of Education at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. In 1928, he was awarded a Doctorate for his thesis on 'Modern Methods of Teaching Religion', later published as *Some Methods of Teaching Religion*. In 1934, Dr McMahon became a member of the University of Western Australia Senate, a position he held for twenty-seven years.²⁷

On Sunday 24 April 1932, Archbishop Clune inducted the Fr McMahon as Parish Priest of South Perth. At that time, the Archbishop urged the parishioners to co-operate with their new priest to build a church on their 'unrivalled site'. This land on Forrest Street faced the (Victoria Avenue) Cathedral across the river and, being 70 feet higher than the land on which the Cathedral was situated, commanded one of the most prominent positions in Perth. The site demanded then, according to Clune, 'a church worthy of such a view'.

On the same day, members of the St Columba's Church committee met, and were unanimous in their decision to make the construction of a church the objective of all efforts in the Parish. As part of a reorganisation of the South Perth Parish, Dr McMahon formed an Altar Society for women, to raise funds for the requisites of worship in the planned church. He also asked for, and received, permission to renovate the original Presbytery at 5 Alexandra Street,

25 John T. McMahon, *College, Campus, Cloister*, pp. 61, 212-213. McMahon had a scar on his forehead that he claimed had been inflicted by the 'Black and Tans'. Conversation with Sisters on site, February 2004.

26 D.F. Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, Archdiocese of Perth, 1979, pp. 202-203.

27 McMahon, *College, Campus, Cloister*, pp. 143-150.

South Perth.²⁸ The work was subsequently carried out by builder Horace Costello.²⁹

The Parish Committee that the new priest inherited was not to his liking, as he felt that they were not sufficiently dynamic to organize the building of a new church. On the advice of Archbishop Clune, Dr McMahon invited all the parishioners to become members of the Parish Committee, thus diluting the power of the existing group. Through vigorous fundraising activity in the district, the Parish was able to collect £12,000 by the end of 1937.³⁰

Although the arrival of Dr McMahon in South Perth in 1932 provided added impetus for the construction of St Columba's Church, initially the new Priest and his parishioners had to deal with the existing debt of the Parish. By 1935, the Parish overdraft had been sufficiently reduced for the community to begin planning for a new Church. During the later 1920s, on a visit to a priest-friend in Hollywood who had been a fellow student at All Hallows, Father Peter Corcoran, McMahon had been impressed by the 'Mission Style' architecture that was very fashionable in the warmer parts of California.³¹ The origin of the 'Mission Style' was described in the *Record*. It was the type of building favoured by Father Junipero Serra for the 21 missions he had established along the Californian coast in the second half of the eighteenth century, and was noted as the 'inspiration which has flowered into the full bloom of the mission style that delights the eye of every tourist to that sunny coast'.³²

As well as being influenced by the 'Mission Style', Los Angeles architect Thomas F. Power, commissioned to draw up the plans for the Hollywood Church, chose a largely Italian-Byzantine style, modeling the building and its decorations after St. Sophia Basilica in Istanbul and St. Mark Cathedral in Venice.³³ Supplied with photographs and blueprints of the Hollywood Church of Christ the King, Dr McMahon returned to Western Australia, eager to have the South Perth church built in a similar style. Some time later, Perth architect E. Le B. Henderson modified the plans to suit the local situation, resulting in a style that Dr McMahon described as 'an adaptation of the Mission treatment of Byzanto-Romanesque'.³⁴

In April 1936, Archbishop of Perth, Redmond Prendiville (Archbishop 1935-1968), and two members of the newly-appointed Committee on Sites and Buildings, selected the exact site for the planned St Columba's Church in South Perth, in Forrest Street, on the highest point of land in the area.³⁵ In September 1936, tenders were called for the construction of St Columba's Church. At the same time, parishioners began a series of 'busy-bees' to clear the site in preparation for construction. According to contemporary accounts;

28 *Record*, 30 April 1932.

29 *Record*, 21 May 1932.

30 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 8.

31 Pental, *A Thing of Beauty*, n.p.

32 *Record*, 26 September 1936.

33 Father Corcoran had arrived in Los Angeles in the same year that McMahon arrived in Perth (1921) and, like McMahon, was appointed to supervise Catholic education in his own Diocese. After being appointed Parish Priest for the newly-created Christ the King Parish in Hollywood, Corcoran obtained land at the corner of Rossmore and Melrose Avenues in Hollywood. The building project was begun at once, and the new Church was dedicated in November 1927. Information from the official Catholic Church web-site of the Los Angeles area (www.newadvent.org).

34 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 17

35 *Record*, 28 March, 4 April 1936.

the tower of the Church would 'arrest the attention of many who cross [the River] daily on the ferries'. Furthermore, the Church was sited so that 'no future developments in parochial building [would] ever break the unbroken line of the Church from across the water'. St Columba's was to be a 'memorial church' in which 'the memory of the spiritual sons and daughters of St Patrick who have preached and fought, and lived the faith in Western Australia, [would] be kept alive'.³⁶

Later, in September 1936, the contract for construction of St Columba's Church was let to William Fairweather and Son, whose tender of £6,686 was the lowest of the eight received. The Church was to provide comfortable seating on seasoned jarrah pews for 450 people, while the mezzanine organ gallery was to hold an extra 200 people. There were to be two side chapels, which would provide extra room for especially large gatherings. The length of the building from sanctuary to porch was 125 feet, with a breadth of 69 feet, while the nave was 90 feet long. The tower was to be 60 feet in height, with a golden dome, topped with a gilt cross 6 feet 6 inches in height, to be illuminated at night.³⁷

There was to be an 'unusually large' priests' sacristy provided, which would lend itself to meetings. There was also a boys' sacristy and a working sacristy included in the plan. The side altars were to be built out to create a 'shrine effect'. The one in the 'Gospel side' (east), the 'Lady Chapel', was to be spacious enough to act as a tribune for the local community of the Sisters of St Joseph. The chapel on the 'Epistle side' (west) was to be furnished at a later time. A pulpit was to be built into the arch of the Sanctuary, while opposite the pulpit was a niche for a 'Sacred Heart' statue. The two Confessionals were situated under the organ gallery for greater privacy and quietness. The Bapistry was to be under the tower, as was the staircase to the organ gallery.³⁸ The tower was on the north west side of the nave, and was square for about half of its height, then carried up as an octagonal form, with long windows on four sides. At the upper part of the tower was the belfry, which was also octagonal, was to be in two storeys, having in the lower one four circular headed openings filled with pierced stone panels to allow the sound of a bell to be heard.³⁹

Electric lighting for the interior of the Church was to be indirect, with provision for flood-lighting the Sanctuary and the side altars. As there were to be no pillars, the altar would be in full view from all parts of the interior of the Church. In addition, the side altars were situated outside the Sanctuary so that there would be nothing to distract worshippers from focusing their attention on the main altar. There was to be generous window space, with eight large windows in the nave and four in the Sanctuary. The Church was to be built of brick, covered in cream-coloured cement. The inside walls were to be painted in a colour with 'the richness of thick cream', with the windows to be 'tinted accordingly'.⁴⁰

36 *Record*, 5 September 1936.

37 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

38 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

39 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 18.

40 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

According to Dr McMahon, in commenting on the architecture of the Church,⁴¹ Perth already enjoyed 'an exquisite example of mission style in the University buildings at Crawley'.⁴² Furthermore,

St Columba's Church open[ed] a new chapter in ecclesiastic architecture in the diocese. It [was] a welcome change from the everlasting Gothic and it [was] to be hoped a more suitable building for our sunny climate than the product of the old lands. Anyone who has been to California readily appreciates the mission style in church, school and homes.⁴³

Although McMahon's claim that St Columba's Church was the first in Perth to be built in a 'Mediterranean' style was probably correct, there were, in fact, earlier examples of churches in this style in other parts of Western Australia. For example, architect-priest Father John Cyril Hawes had in 1932 designed, and later built, the Church of the Holy Cross in Morawa in a Romanesque style, in the manner of Tuscan churches of the thirteenth century in and around Sienna⁴⁴ and in 1936 St Joseph's Church in Southern Cross was built in a 'Modern Spanish style' under the direction of Perth architects, Cavanagh, Cavanagh and Tracy.⁴⁵

In early October 1936, the first bricks were laid for the walls of the South Perth Church, and it was planned that the new building would be opened in April of the following year.⁴⁶ The foundation stone for the new Church was laid by Archbishop Prendiville on Sunday 13 December 1936, which was also the 43rd birthday of Dr McMahon.⁴⁷ On 11 April 1937, St Columba's Church was officially opened by the Archbishop. In Dr McMahon's opening day speech he praised the contribution of the architect and the builder for the success of the project:

That the foundations have been so well and truly laid and that the building has arisen solid and sound, is due to Mr W. Fairweather and Son. In life, a little Scotch adds considerably to anything else, and I can heartily recommend the combination of a Scotch highball of Fairweather and Henderson to all prospective builders.⁴⁸

An account of the Church that appeared immediately after the official opening described the various building materials used in the construction. The tiles used to roof the Church were 'carefully selected to harmonize with the architecture'. The tile chosen ('Cordova' by Wunderlich Ltd) was burned to create a speckled effect of red and black which 'blend[ed] faithfully with the simple, impressive lines of the church'. The flooring for the Church was supplied by Carpetol, who installed a seamless floor that was 'waterproof, hygienic and resilient underfoot'. Carpetol flooring was a new product at the time, composed of magnesite and soft fillers laid over concrete. The flooring was installed in two tones, being black edging alongside a green base. The terrazzo flooring used in the porches and the marble in the Sanctuary were laid by Markuro Marble and Terrazzo. The

41 In general, according to Apperly, Christian churches of the 1920s and 1930s in Australia usually adopted some form of 'well-worn' medieval revivalism. More often than not, the Gothic language of pointed arch and steeply pitched roof continued to be employed to provide an instantly recognizable sign of a building's use for religious purposes. But when an architect wished to avoid this stereotype and perhaps move cautiously towards the uncluttered simplicity of mass and detail favoured by the modernists, an 'essay' in the Romanesque might be undertaken. Apperly, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, p. 194.

42 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 17.

43 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

44 John J. Taylor, *Between Devotion and Design: The Architecture of John Cyril Hawes 1876-1956*, UWA Press, 2000, pp. 131-133.

45 *Record*, 5 October 1935, features front and side elevations of this church.

46 *Record*, 10, 31 October 1936.

47 *Record*, 19 December 1936.

48 *Record*, 24 April 1937.

round tower-shaped tabernacle of the Church was made of bronze, with an ornamental embossed door. It stood two and a half feet from the table of the altar in 'splendid isolation ... the liturgical separation of the tabernacle from the throne [was] artistically preserved'. The tabernacle was supplied by Harris, Scarfe and Sandovers Ltd.⁴⁹

Other features of the interior of the Church included ceilings of jarrah planks supported by beams of Oregon, imported from Washington State. In the centre of each beam was a decorative plaster element, made to appear as carved wood. In addition, on each side of the nave of the Church were Opus Sectile Mosaic artworks representing the fourteen Stations of the Cross.⁵⁰ These pieces, designed and made in Melbourne by two young craftsmen, Mathieson and Gibson, were each 85 by 60 centimetres in size, around two and a half centimeters thick, and set on to a framework of slate, which was embedded into niches in the walls.⁵¹

Probably the most artistically significant feature of St Columba's Church was, however, the stained glass of the Rose Window above the choir loft. This window was made in Dublin, Ireland, by the firm of Harry Clarke Ltd, which produced high quality commissions for churches throughout the world. The intense and deep colours of the glass sections were especially made for the strong Western Australian sun. The artist was enthused at the opportunity to 'use extravagantly his richest and deepest colourings, [for] in the old lands, the dull skies limit the artist's range'.⁵²

The stained glass artist later claimed that the windows would be his 'finest effort' and the 'best advertisement' for his work.⁵³ The high quality of the windows, in fact, created 'a stir' at the Spring Show in Dublin, where they were exhibited before being shipped to Perth.⁵⁴

The Rose Window consisted of three large circles, shaped in a shamrock formation, with an image of St Patrick in the crowning leaf, and St Brigid and St Columba in the supporting leaves.⁵⁵ Between these were smaller circles, 'each a gem of Irish interlacing', with a different design in each one; the patterns copied from the Book of Kells.⁵⁶ St Columba is depicted as a young man, with a determined chin, aristocratic nose and alert eye. In his left hand is an abbot's crozier around which his long-tapering fingers cluster. His left hand caresses a church, an accurate miniature of King Cormac's Chapel in Cashel. Perched almost on St Columba's right shoulder is a dove with out-stretched wings. His face looks to the west, allowing the twin peaks of his mitre to be seen.⁵⁷

St Brigid looks down with 'winsome appeal'. Large eyes, full lips and rounded chin 'justify' the dark flesh colouring. Her hands are 'exquisite, full of breeding'. A dark blue cloak drapes her shoulders, open at front to show a kirtle of sea-

49 *Record*, 24 April 1937.

50 McMahan had been inspired by the beauty of the Stations of the Cross on the walls of the memorial church at Spindle, County Galway, Ireland, and had wanted similar works for St Columba's, South Perth. McMahan, *Parish and Pastor*, p. 20.

51 Mc Mahon, *Parish and Pastor*, p. 21.

52 *Record*, 5 September 1936.

53 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

54 *Record*, 12 September 1936.

55 These were the three 'wonder-working' saints of Ireland depicted in the University Chapel of Cork University. Harry Clarke had produced these windows in 1915, to wide acclaim. John T. McMahan, *Windows Into Heaven*, Perth, 1978, p. 37.

56 *Record*, 5, 12 September 1936.

57 McMahan, *Windows Into Heaven*, pp. 39-40.

green, patterned with embroidery. An oak-leaf, the symbol of her church and school at Kildare, is on her left. In her hands, she cradles a cross of reeds, the Cross of St Brigid.⁵⁸ In the glass, St Patrick is depicted as

[a] man of prayer and fasting, an ascetic, his eyes glowing with the zeal of the missionary. He holds in his left hand the shamrock; three fingers uplifted on his right hand demonstrated the three in One, and the One in three, of the Blessed Trinity, as he did in 432 AD before the High King of Erin and his court, assembled on the green sward of Tara. There was a low crowned mitre on his head; leaning against his left side rested a crozier of Celtic design, with an Irish Wolf Dog's head as the crook. Rich vestments draped his sparse figure. Three strings of tassels fell from his mitre. Around his head was a dazzling halo of rainbow hues.⁵⁹

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Dr McMahon buried the stained glass windows in crates in the grounds of the Church, in order to protect these unique works from possible enemy bombing raids on Perth. When the crates were dug up at the end of the War, it was discovered that some of the bronze wire in the windows was damaged, and that the piece of glass containing the name of St Brigid was broken. This was replaced by a piece of blue glass, noticeably different from the original. When the window was returned to its position St Columba was placed at the top.⁶⁰

Not long after the opening of St Columba's Church in early 1937, plans for a new Presbytery on the Forrest Street site were drawn up. In December 1938, the new quarters, designed and built by Horace Costello to be low maintenance, were completed. The Presbytery was built in the 'Spanish Villa style' to complement the 'Spanish Mission church'. From the portico of the Presbytery there was an uninterrupted view of the Swan River, a view 'even more fascinating by night' because of the neon illumination on the city skyline.⁶¹

Before the building of the new Presbytery in 1938, there was a disagreement between the Parish Priest, Dr McMahon, and Archbishop Prendiville. At this time, when the Parish debt had been reduced to £2,454, the Archbishop thought that the Parish of South Perth should pay £1,000 for the land on which the new Presbytery would be built. McMahon disputed this, and the Archbishop agreed to take over the ownership of the old Presbytery in Alexandra Street, instead. This was later sold for £1,200, in final settlement of the matter. The Parish of South Perth now owned all the land on which was situated St Columba's Church, the school and the new Presbytery.⁶²

An enlarged immigration programme after World War II led to the rapid expansion of parishes and schools in Western Australia, especially in country areas. To cope with this expansion of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, St Charles' Seminary was opened in Guildford in 1942 to provide additional priests to join those still coming from Ireland in large numbers, with some priests also arriving from Italy, Poland and Malta.⁶³ With the growth of the South Perth Parish in the post-War period, it became necessary to build a substantial new school building immediately to the north west of the original school.

In January 1948, the foundations for the new school (designed by architects, Henderson and Thompson), comprising three class rooms 26' x 24', a rest room for the Sisters, and a cloakroom with a verandah 10' wide. Construction was by

58 McMahon, *Windows Into Heaven*, pp. 40-41.

59 *Record*, 19 September 1936.

60 Information provided by St Columba's Presbytery in a letter to the HCWA dated 28 August 2004.

61 *Record*, 8, 15, 22 December 1938.

62 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 61-62.

63 <http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/html/history.html>.

Berry Brothers, at a cost of £4,142. In addition, the grounds were bituminised by Thomas Murphy for £390.⁶⁴ In February 1949, the new brick and tiled building was blessed and opened by Archbishop Prendiville, the long construction time due to a post-War shortage of building materials.⁶⁵

Also in 1950, four stained glass windows were installed in the Sanctuary of the Church, to replace the existing windows of the coloured leadlight glass. These finely detailed new windows were the work of Dublin craftsman and artist, Richard King, who trained in stained glass work in the studio of Harry Clarke. They depicted the 'Holy Family' (Joseph, Mary and Jesus), the 'Queen of Heaven' (Mary, with Gabriel and the Holy Spirit), the 'Infant of Prague' (Jesus as Holy Child), and St Anne (Grandmother of Jesus).⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the new windows so darkened the Sanctuary that extra artificial lighting was required. Later, in 1969, skylights were installed above the altar, doing away with the necessity of extra lighting in the daytime.⁶⁷

From 1950 to 1955, three new parishes were split off from the original South Perth Parish: Kensington in 1950, Manning in 1953, and Como in 1955. These developments reduced considerably the size of the congregation of St Columba's Church.⁶⁸

In the three years from 1960, various improvements were made to St Columba's. A well was sunk near the old presbytery on Alexandra Street and reticulation was installed throughout the site. This work was carried out by W.A. Baker at a cost of £1,100. In addition, the classrooms and the outside of the Presbytery were painted by Michael O'Brien at a cost of £394. Additional accommodation in the Presbytery for the priests' housekeeper was designed and built by Horace Costello. This consisted of a sitting room, bedroom, bathroom, and laundry, and cost £1,942. A garage for the assistant priest⁶⁹ was also added to the original one. The lead in the church windows was renewed by Barnett Brothers for a cost of £71.⁷⁰

The Rev. Dr McMahon was honoured by the University of Western Australia with an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters in 1961. The following year, he was made a Fellow of the Australian College of Education in Melbourne.⁷¹

In the period following the annual meetings in the Vatican of the Council Fathers from 1962 to 1965, "Vatican II", for the purpose of *aggiornamento* (updating, modernizing or renewing), major liturgical and doctrinal changes were introduced throughout the Roman Catholic world. These changes had implications for the physical layout of churches, and affected both St Columba's Church and the St Joseph's Convent Chapel, as they did all other Catholic institutions. In the renovation of church interiors which followed from this changed perspective, the primary focus was to be on the altar, on the ambo or lectern, on the chair of the presiding priest, then on the baptismal font and the tabernacle.⁷²

64 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 35-36.

65 *Record*, 10 February 1949.

66 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 26-30.

67 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 36.

68 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 35-36.

69 A list of the nineteen assistant priests at St Columba's Church between 1938 and 1979 is found in McMahon, *Parish and Priest*, pp. 38-39.

70 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 35-36.

71 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 48.

72 From, Naomi Lawrance, *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Perth: Heritage Inventory*, 1998, pp. 31-32.

Practically, this meant that the altar table was to be separated from the *reredos*, or architectural frame behind the altar, and brought forward away from the wall, and then made into a free-standing altar table. The lectern was set up as a place for readings and sermons in the assembly. The tabernacle was left in a point of central focus in the centre of the Sanctuary wall. The communion rails were dismantled as a symbol of doing away with the distinction between priests and laity. There was not to be one single area of 'holy space', for the whole church was to be 'holy space'.⁷³

On Sunday 27 June 1965, the 11am Mass at St Columba's Church was broadcast by A.B.C. Television, with the celebrant facing the congregation for the first time. In the same year, a new Hammond organ was installed by Musgroves at a cost of £1,250. Around this time, the outside walls of the Church were cleaned and renewed by W.F. Broderick, for £2,558. Also in 1965, a bell was blessed and installed in the tower of St Columba's Church. The bell had been cast by the Mathew O'Byrne Bell Foundry of Dublin and, with insurance and shipping, cost £2,000.⁷⁴

The Requiem for Sir Shane Paltridge, Federal Minister for Defence, took place at St Columba's Church on 25 January 1966. Present was the Governor-General, Lord Casey, the Governor of Western Australia, Sir Douglas Kendrew, retiring Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, Prime Minister Elect Harold Holt, and ten members of the Federal Cabinet. While Shane Paltridge and his family had attended church at St Columba's for ten years or so, it was only on 20 December 1965 that he was officially received into the Catholic faith, at St Columba's Church, in South Perth.⁷⁵

In 1967, parish buildings at St Columba's were painted by Michael O'Brien for \$1,800. In this year, a row of 35 year old pine trees on Forrest Street was removed by the Church, as they were liable to fall over or break because of their poor health. Forrest Street residents objected strongly to this plan, as the trees provided them with afternoon shade, but the Church authorities prevailed. Also in 1967, Assistant Priest Fr Kenneth Keating made various organisational changes at St Columba's to bring the Church more fully into line with the reforms that resulted from Vatican II.⁷⁶

The following year, a lightning storm struck the tower of St Columba's Church, on 6 March 1968. It made a large hole in the dome of the tower, which did not have a lightening conductor, broke off fittings from the bell, and tore about 200 tiles from the roof. In addition, the electrical wiring and light fittings in the Church were destroyed. As Mass had finished by the time of the storm (7.45am) no one was around to be injured. The original tiles could not be replaced, as this type was no longer made, but a similar type of tile was used instead. Repairs were carried out by W.F. Broderick for \$1,015, which Catholic Insurance paid.⁷⁷

St Columba's Church was not damaged in the earthquake in October of that year. Improvements to the Church and grounds in this year were the covering of the kneelers in the Church with rubber and red vinyl (for \$1,070), and the sealing of a new parking area, with a new entrance from Alexandra Street (\$1,689).⁷⁸

73 Lawrance, *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Perth: Heritage Inventory*, pp. 31-32.

74 McMahan, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 49-50.

75 McMahan, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 50-53.

76 McMahan, *Barney's Hill*, p. 54.

77 McMahan, *Barney's Hill*, p. 55.

78 McMahan, *Barney's Hill*, pp. 56-57.

Improvements to the St Columba's site in 1970 included the erection of a rest room (60' x 25') for the tennis courts, which was later converted to a shelter shed with a built-in tuckshop for the school. Construction was by F. W. and J. J. Cocks of South Perth, at a cost of \$5,800. Also, the former children's cloakroom at the school was converted to a library at this time. During this year, vandals pried loose the statue of Mary from the Lourdes Shrine on the outside of the Church, and abandoned it, broken, further down the hill.⁷⁹

In 1979, Rev Dr J.T. McMahon retired as the Parish Priest of St Columba's Church, after forty-seven years of service to the Catholic community of South Perth.⁸⁰ His successor was Irish-born Father Michael Casey, who had also received his clerical training at All Hallows College in Dublin. After ordination in 1954, Fr Casey came to Western Australia and served at Mosman Park until 1956, at Nedlands until 1966, and at Merredin until 1979, where he was Dean. It was under the direction of Fr Casey that important physical changes took place at St Columba's Church.⁸¹

In 1977, E. G. Gowers and A. S. Brown restored the Rose Window. They advised that the outer plate glass, which had been placed there because of damage due to leakage, should be removed. As a consequence of not being removed earlier, excessive heat build up had caused buckling and deterioration.

During the early 1980s, a new lectern, credence table, and baptismal font were crafted from the old marble communion rails, which had been removed following Vatican II. In 1985, a new wing was added to the school, containing a library and an extra classroom. At this time, the principal of the school passed to a lay head, ending seventy years of involvement in Catholic education in the South Perth Parish by the Order of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.⁸²

In 1986, a large new Church Centre was constructed on the St Columba's Church site. This building was opened and blessed on Sunday 14 December 1986, the 50th Anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Stone for St Columba's Church. The Church Centre was designed by A.J. O'Hara, Architect, and constructed by K.R. Stewart, Builder.⁸³

In 1993, the Rose Window was restored. Between February 1999 and November 2001 nineteen coloured leadlight windows were re-lead and repaired.⁸⁴

In January 2000, the school removed the original tiled roof from the school building and replaced it with Colorbond. The former shelter shed and tuck shop was demolished to allow new school classrooms to be built.

St Joseph's Convent

In 1908, around the same time as St Columba Roman Catholic School was built in York Street, Richard Dennehy constructed an imposing two-storey residence a few hundred metres to the west of the church-school, along York Street, where

79 McMahon, *Barney's Hill*, p. 59.

80 Dr McMahon passed away on 19 January 1989, after 68 years in Australia. During this time, he wrote 7 historical works, 9 'spiritual', 5 catechetical, 11 liturgical, and 12 devotional texts. He also published 3 collections of essays and an autobiography. His text-book, *Pray the Mass*, became a national text that ran into 13 editions, and sold over 160,000 copies. McMahon, *College, Campus, Cloister*, p. 77.

81 Pental, *A Thing of Beauty*, n.p.

82 Pental, *A Thing of Beauty*, n.p.

83 Information from the Foundation Stone for the Church Centre.

84 Information provided by St Columba's Presbytery, letter to HCWA dated 28 August 2004.

he lived with his three daughters as a widower, his wife having died in 1903.⁸⁵ There, Dennehy found 'health and recreation in the cultivation of choice blooms', through his hobby of gardening.⁸⁶

In 1914, the Mother Superior of the Josephite Sisters wrote to Archbishop Clune (Archbishop of Perth, 1910-1935) requesting help in securing a 'foundation' in Perth or Fremantle to provide accommodation for Sisters arriving in the West, or those who had to attend to business in the Capital. In addition, with thirty Sisters in five widely separated houses in the Western Australian country, in locations with sometimes trying conditions, the order needed a place for its Religious to recuperate periodically in a more benign environment.⁸⁷

Archbishop Clune assured Mother Baptista that he had been on the lookout for a suitable location for the order, but had been unsuccessful so far, as there were so few places where a new school was required. Clune also wanted to find a 'healthy' site for the Josephites, and where they would not encroach on other Religious orders. By March 1914, Clune had decided on a site in Belmont for the Sisters of St Joseph. For some reason, however, this plan did not go ahead, with the Sisters of Mercy moving instead to the newly-opened Belmont school, while the Sisters of St Joseph took over the operation of South Perth school.⁸⁸

In December 1914, the Sisters of St Joseph purchased the Dennehy residence for use as a convent, at a cost of £3000. Dennehy had offered the house to the Sisters on 18 June of that year.⁸⁹ Dennehy claimed that the property was a bargain at the price agreed, as 'the house alone would cost more than that amount to build, to say nothing of the grounds and improvements'.⁹⁰

In Dennehy's letter of 18 June 1914 he elaborately described his York Street property:

The site is an excellent one, being one of the highest in South Perth, which is rapidly becoming the leading suburb and is similar to Mosman and Neutral Bay in Sydney. The house is between two Ferries and within ten minutes of either, affording access to the city within 20 minutes from the house or within 10 minutes of the General Post Office by Motor Car.

The land is about an acre and a half in extent and has a frontage of 287 feet. There is a street on each side as well as in front, the one on the East side separating the block from the Church site on which is the School Church.

The ground is laid out with a Buffalo grass lawn in front and a couch grass lawn 112' x 50' on the East side intended for recreation, Tennis or Croquet. The West side is planted with fruit trees and vegetables are grown in season. There is a large fowl run subdivided.

The city water supply is laid on to the house and to all parts of the ground, in addition to which there are tanks for rain water for domestic use.

Hedges are planted along the front and two sides and along the Tennis lawn. In all, there is about 700 feet run of hedging.

The house is built of the best red Machine made bricks on a foundation of cement concrete. The Window heads and window sills and water tables of chimneys etc. are of

85 Post Office Directories, 1905-1910; Byrne, *Built on a Hilltop*, p. 29-30.

86 Battye, ed., *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, p. 632.

87 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, p. 129.

88 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, pp. 130-131.

89 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, pp. 131-132.

90 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, p. 132.

white Donnybrook stone. The roof is covered with best Marseilles tiles ...⁹¹

Dennehy continued with a description of the various parts of the building. On the ground floor was the Entrance Hall, which was 20' x 16', with a grand staircase, telephone enclosure and Lavatory and 'handsome' leadlights throughout; the Drawing Room, 19' x 15.5', with Bay window, Electric light to Piano on all walls, in addition to a ceiling light, and leadlights in five fanlights of windows; a Dining Room, 25' x 16', with metal ceiling and leadlights in the fanlights of all the windows; the Morning Room, 15' x 12.5', with leadlights in the fanlights of both windows; the Kitchen, 13 x 12.5 with range and hot water service, electric light on the stove and daylight at the back, movable shelves fitted, and cement dado all around; and a Cellar, 12' x 8', specially well lighted and ventilated, always dry and 'sweet', fitted with shelving and easily accessible by stairs without a trap door. In addition, the house had a Scullery, a Pantry (8' x 8', with shelving), a front verandah (8' wide and tiles), a recessed verandah (at side, 8' wide and paved), a back verandah (8.5' wide and 50' long), and a Wash House.⁹²

Dennehy's house also had an upper floor which included, an Upper Hall, with leadlights; No. 1 Bedroom (17' x 15.5'); No. 2 Bedroom (16' x 15', with a leadlight window of the Sacred Heart); No. 3 Bedroom (15' x 12.5'); No. 4 Bedroom 13' x 12.5', with recess); No. 5 Bedroom (11' x 10'); a Bathroom (8' x 8', with tiled floor and walls, full-sized enamel bath and lavatory, all with nickel fittings); a Linen Room (with shelving), and a W.C. (connected to septic system). In addition, there was a front balcony (11.5' wide), a recessed side balcony (11' wide), a back balcony (10' wide x 50' long), and a Flat on the roof. The latter feature (25' x 23') was reached by a stairway, was partially enclosed, suitable for sleeping out, and from which there was extensive views of Perth and the Swan and Canning Rivers.⁹³

In addition, fireplaces in all the rooms were so arranged that they did not encroach on the space of the rooms, electric light and electric bells were fitted throughout, and all windows were glazed with plate glass. According to Dennehy, all the fittings were 'very superior' and the door, mantle-pieces etc were 'specially made'. The timber flooring throughout was of 'special quality' and was polished so that carpets were 'unnecessary'.⁹⁴

A general description of the building which housed the Mount St Joseph Convent was provided by the *W.A. Record* around the time that the final purchase arrangements were completed in December 1914,

[Dennehy's house was] perhaps the finest home in the peninsula suburb; it holds a commanding position upon a splendid healthy site overlooking the river and the city of Perth. From its balcony, one may gaze down the winding bay until water, sky, and land melt into azure beyond the dim edge of the beautiful Kings Park. The community is to be most heartily congratulated upon its beautiful selection ...⁹⁵

While Archbishop Clune had requested the Sisters of St Joseph to provide five Sisters for the South Perth school, by the opening on 3 February 1915, there were only three in residence at the Dennehy house convent, from Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand, although the Provincial was to follow later. In fact, it was not until late 1917 that Julia Donnelly, former superior of St Gertrude's at New Norcia, was appointed to the position of provincial superior in Western

91 Letter from R.J. Dennehy to the Reverend Mother, Sisters of St Joseph, Boulder City, 18 June 1914. Original letter in the Sisters of St Joseph (WA) Archive, York Street, South Perth.

92 Letter from R.J. Dennehy to the Reverend Mother, Sisters of St Joseph, Boulder City, 18 June 1914.

93 Letter from R.J. Dennehy to the Reverend Mother, Sisters of St Joseph, Boulder City, 18 June 1914.

94 Letter from R.J. Dennehy to the Reverend Mother, Sisters of St Joseph, Boulder City, 18 June 1914.

95 *W.A. Record*, 26 December 1914.

Australia, and not until the following year that she moved to the South Perth house.⁹⁶

The South Perth convent was advertised by the Josephite Sisters as 'Mount St Joseph's' (or as Mount St Joseph Roman Catholic School⁹⁷), a secondary boarding school 'in one of the most attractive and healthy suburbs of Perth' with 'a delightful view of the Swan River'.⁹⁸ At the start of the 1915 school year, there were three boarders enrolled (one from Boulder and two from New Norcia) and by April, there were twelve borders at Mount St Joseph's. By the end of 1915, there were 88 children, including the boarders, enrolled at Mount St Joseph's.⁹⁹ By the end of 1916, the pupils of Mount St Joseph's, described in *The Record* as 'a newly established and most successful academy', held the first of a series of annual concerts in the Hibernian Hall in Perth.¹⁰⁰

The course of study at Mount St Joseph's included 'all the branches of a thorough English Education', as well as modern languages, mathematics, elocution, physical culture, drawing, painting, music and needlework. Special facilities were also available for students who wanted to pursue courses in stenography, typewriting and book-keeping. Pupils were also prepared for 'University, Commercial and Music Examinations'. In addition, for 'delightful situation, beautiful scenery and healthy climate', Mount St Joseph's '[stood] unrivalled'.¹⁰¹

After selling his York Street house to the Sisters of St Joseph in 1914, Dennehy had moved to Hay Street, Subiaco. By 1918, he had moved back to York Street, South Perth, across the road from the Mount St Joseph's School.¹⁰²

In 1920, the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cattaneo, visited Mount St Joseph's School and Convent.¹⁰³ Archbishop Cattaneo was shown through the Convent building by the Sisters of St Joseph where, from the roof 'look-out', a 'magnificent panorama of the River and surroundings was obtained'.¹⁰⁴

In 1927, a large two storey extension was constructed in similar materials to the original Dennehy house immediately to the west of the Convent of the Sisters of St Joseph, to house boarding students of the Mount St Joseph Convent School. The work on the extension, built at a cost of £6,719, was carried out by Berry Brothers, builders, to a design by Richard Dennehy. Also in 1926, the Sisters of Joseph acquired Lots 72 and 73, King Edward Street, South Perth, blocks adjoining the Convent property.¹⁰⁵

From the mid-1930s, during Archbishop Prendiville's term, a substantial amount of building took place for the Roman Catholic Church in Western Australia, to accommodate the increased numbers of Religious congregations the Archbishop introduced to Western Australia.¹⁰⁶

96 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, pp. 132-133, 135.

97 Post Office Directories, 1915-1941.

98 *W.A. Record*, 26 December 1914, 23 January 1915, 30 January 1915..

99 Foale, *The Josephites Go West*, p. 134.

100 *W.A. Record*, 4 December 1915.

101 *W.A. Record*, 22 July 1919.

102 Post Office Directories, 1915-1920.

103 *W.A. Record*, 1 May 1920.

104 *W.A. Record*, 1 May 1920.

105 Sister Joan Luff and Christine Cresswell, 'The History of the Acquisition and Development of the Dennehy House', an unpublished compilation of archival material, Sisters of St Joseph, South Perth, 2003, p. 2.

106 Bourke, *History of the Catholic Church*, pp. 251, 259.

In 1938, following the construction of St Columba's Church, it was considered appropriate that both the primary school and the secondary school operate under the same name, to recognise that they were both associated with the parish. Mount St Joseph's was subsequently renamed St Columba's.¹⁰⁷

In 1939, a two story building to house the chapel for the Sisters of St Joseph was built to the east of the original Dennehy house by A.T. Brine and Sons, builders. The plans were developed by architects Hennessy and Hennessy. The major work on the Chapel was completed for a cost of around £6,554, while the marble work for the altar and reredos (the work carried out by P. Clohesy, using White Sicilian, Wombeyan and Cudgegong marbles), and the Tabernacle (by D. Flynn), the seating (by Aherns) and the plumbing (by O'Connor) cost £1,009. Other building work carried out at this time included additions to the kitchen and laundry, and a new bathroom and lavatory. In 1940, a new brick fence was built along the York Street boundary by A.T Brine at a cost of £374.¹⁰⁸

The secondary school stopped taking boarders in 1947. The school on the convent site ceased in 1949.¹⁰⁹

In 1950, new frames and windows were installed in the Chapel of the Sisters of St Joseph by W.F. Broderick, at a cost of £335. The following year, a verandah at the Convent was enclosed for a 'sleep-out' by A. and L. Power at a cost of £151. In 1955, parts of the Convent were painted by Michael O'Brien for £1,636, while, in 1957, a new single storey wing, including a kitchen and lunch room, was built at the back of the existing boarding wing.¹¹⁰

In 1959-1960, an 'infirmary' (a 13-bed 'C' Class hospital - St Joseph's Nursing Home) was built for the Sisters of St Joseph by J. Bianchini, behind the Chapel and the original Dennehy House. Works were carried out to the Chapel, Laundry and Community Room at this time. The cost of this work was around £12,000.¹¹¹ In 1961, an old well on the Convent site was filled in, a new well was built and an irrigation system installed. This work was carried out by W.A. Brady for a cost of £892.¹¹²

Around 1964-65, the original dining room of the 1908 Convent building was extended to the west, greatly increasing the available space. This work was carried out by J, Bianchini for a cost of £1,813.¹¹³

Changes were made at St Joseph's Convent Chapel in the 1960s to accommodate liturgical and doctrinal changes arising from Vatican II. In 1966, Bianchini carried out work on the Chapel building for a cost of £2,431, other work around the grounds for £2,695 and renovations on the Priest's Room for £3,517. Additional work on the garden water supply was completed by W.A. Brady for a cost of £673. In 1967, additions to the garage and laundry were completed by Berry Brothers, builders, for £4,351. Berry Brothers also carried out work on the laundry, kitchen and dining room in 1968 (£6,716); and renovations to the attic (\$3,425). The builder, Bianchini, also carried out further work on St Joseph's Nursing Home in 1969, for a cost of \$11,492, and enclosed a verandah (\$218).¹¹⁴

107 Sister Joan Luff, phone conversation with Clare Schulz, 24 October 2005.

108 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', pp. 3-4.

109 Sister Clare Ahern, letter to HCWA, 18 October 2005, on HCWA file P2383.

110 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 4.

111 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 4.

112 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 5.

113 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', pp. 5-6.

114 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', pp. 5-6.

Also in 1970, work carried out at the Sisters of St Joseph Convent included providing an awning to the Nursing Home verandah (Bianchini, \$1,523), and construction of a Seminar Room and bathroom (\$9,803) and cubicle and toilet alterations (\$6,075). The latter work was carried out by E.T. Russell, builder. In 1970-71, Bianchini carried out work on the Chapel porch (\$3,125), while the Marble and Granite Co. provided material for a new altar (\$1,373).¹¹⁵

Between 1970 and 1972, the Sisters of St Joseph received a subsidy of \$81,269 to build an aged person's home. This building, named MacKillop Court, was situated behind the Nursing Home. In 1971, renovations and painting was carried out by J.W. Nicholls for \$5,299. In 1973-74, chaplain's quarters adjoining the Chapel were built by Bianchini for \$3,133 to a design by Henderson and Thompson, architects. The same builder and architect were also responsible for the construction of a second storey on the 1957 Our Lady's Wing. The cost of this project was \$111,074. In 1975, a swimming pool was built to the rear of the Convent land by Pacific Pools, at a cost of \$5,885. Painting was carried out by M.G. O'Brien in 1975 (\$4,104) and 1976 (\$6,108).¹¹⁶

In 1978-79, extensions and additions to the Sisters of St Joseph Nursing Home were carried out by Bianchini for around \$60,760. In 1980, M.G. O'Brien carried out painting and repair work at a cost of \$10,720, and, in 1981, various renovations were carried out by Bianchini for \$5,687. In 1981-82, extensions to the Nursing Home, including Matron's quarters, a toilet, shower block and bathroom, were carried out by Bianchini at a cost of \$35,264. In 1985, Bianchini painted Mackillop Court (\$7,673), and, in 1987, Beerkens painted the second storey of the Our Lady's Wing (\$10,890).¹¹⁷

In 1985, the Order of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart ceased their direct involvement with the adjacent parish school, St Columba's, with the appointment of the first lay principal for the school.¹¹⁸

In 1992, a Memorial was established in the Convent grounds to Irene McCormack, a Josephite Sister killed by anti-government rebels in Peru on 21 May 1991 while serving the local Peruvian community.

In 1994-95, renovations were carried out to the original 1908 Convent building. Tuckpointing to the brickwork was renewed and worn timber replaced. Architectural services were provided by Mathew Broderick.¹¹⁹

In 2002, extensive landscaping was carried out to the York Street frontage of *St Joseph's Convent*. Also in 2002, 16 bedrooms of Mackillop Court were converted to 8 bedrooms. These works were completed by architect Michael Broderick and builder Jim Bianchini.

In 2003 a memorial stone was erected and a garden established to Sister Irene McCormack.¹²⁰

In 2005, *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth* continues in its original purpose. St Columba's Church is the main place of worship for the Catholic community of South Perth, with the Presbytery providing accommodation for parish clergy and the Parish Office used for administration and for meetings. St Columba's Catholic Primary School provides a primary

115 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', pp. 6-7.

116 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 7.

117 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 8.

118 Pental, *'A Thing of Beauty*, n.p.

119 Luff and Cresswell, 'Dennehy House', p. 9.

120 Information provided by Sisters of St Joseph, letter to HCWA dated 13 July 2004.

education. The original 1908 school building is now the parish hall. *St Joseph's Convent* providing living and administrative space for the Order.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth comprises:

St Columba's Church Group: St Columba's Church (1937), Presbytery (1938), Church Centre (1986), St Columba's Catholic Primary School (1908, 1919, 1949, 1985, 1990, 2002)

St Joseph's Convent: Dennehy House (1908), Mary MacKillop Centre (1927), Chapel (1939), Convent (1957, 1974), Irene Villa (1959/60, 1982), and MacKillop Court (1971).

St Columba's Church (1937), Presbytery (1938) and Church Centre (1986)

St Columba's Church is located on the west side of Forrest Street, set in landscaped grounds on the rise of the hill bounded by Hopetoun Street, Alexandra Street, and York Street. Forrest Street runs in a north-south direction and is intersected by Mill Point Road at its northernmost end, and South Terrace at its southern end. A low wall defines the Forrest Street boundary, with a paved stair and path providing pedestrian access to the grounds. Vehicle access to the church is also off Forrest Street. Two entry driveways give access to the north, east and south elevations, forming large expanses of brick paving around the church. Landscaped gardens surround the church, comprising semi-mature olive trees, conifers, plane trees and grassed areas. A shrine is located on the western side of the church, alongside the tower. St Columba's Church is set back approximately 10 metres from Forrest Street and is surrounded by a number of associated buildings, including the Presbytery to the west of the church, and the Church Centre, to the south.

The Presbytery comprises a single-storey rendered brick and terracotta tile building, constructed in 1938 in the Inter-War Spanish Mission style, and featuring distinct arched entry porches on the north, east and west elevations and smooth-rendered light-coloured walling to complement the design of the nearby church. To the south of the Presbytery is a private courtyard, and attached to the south of that, the garage and the Church Centre. The interior of the Presbytery was unavailable for inspection.

The Church Centre comprises a single-storey rendered brick and tile building, constructed in 1986 and featuring a hipped roof, terminating in a gable on the east elevation, and a wide colonnaded entry porch on the north elevation. The building is simple in design and is used as a meeting place for the parish. The interior of the Church Centre was unavailable for inspection.

St Columba's Church comprises a free-standing smooth rendered brick church with a medium pitched gable tile roof, featuring a vertical tower on the northwest corner, and projecting apse on the north. Asymmetrical massing, restrained ornamentation, and strong, clearly expressed forms characterize the church. Masonry buttresses mark structural bays, which feature vertically proportioned, round-headed arch windows with coloured leadlight glass along the east and west elevations. External sunshades are fixed over all the windows, except those on the north and south elevations: the windows above the sanctuary, the rose window above the choir, and the upper tower windows. The use of sunshades over windows, and the light tones and colours of the walls, allows an exploitation of sunlight and shade that is evident both internally and externally.

The church has an orthogonal plan, with a projecting front entry porch, two secondary chapels on both the gospel and epistle sides of the nave, and a priest's vestry, alter server's vestry and a working sacristy, and flower room either side of the sanctuary. Another small entry porch is located on the western side of

the church. The front projecting entry porch is located on the north elevation and features a parapet gable with machicolation motif and blind semi-circular arch. The foundation stone, dated December 13th 1936, is located on the north wall of the porch. Entry is from either side of the gable wall through round-headed archways with timber double doors, set on a raised brick platform. These doors lead to a small vestibule and then into the nave via timber-framed glazed double doors. These doors feature the Greek Alpha and Omega (Α and Ω) inscribed in leadlight. Three-bay confessionals with timber doors are located either side of the entry with the choir loft located directly above. Only the eastern confessional is still in use for the rite of reconciliation, as the western confessional is used for storage. A timber stair is located west of the confessional and provides access to both the choir and the bell tower. The tower is three-storeys high, tapering towards the top and terminating in a domed belvedere. The belvedere is adorned with a simple Latin cross, matching the slightly larger cross that appears over the main southern gable. The tower also features vertically proportioned stained glass windows with round-headed arches, consistent with the design of the rest of the fenestrations.

The choir is of timber construction and occupies one structural bay's width directly above the nave. It has a stepped timber floor, fixed timber pews facing the sanctuary, and a solid timber balustrade. Positioned directly over the choir, in the upper north wall, is the circular Rose Window, a trefoil arrangement featuring vibrant and colourful representations of St Columba, St Brigid and St Patrick.

The main body of the church (the nave) is approximately 25m long and 11m wide and comprises a central aisle, flanked on either side by timber pews, leading to the sanctuary. The nave has cream coloured rendered walls with a jarrah timber ceiling and exposed oregon roof trusses, aligned with the structural bays formed by the external buttresses. The trusses are ornately carved and have a Latin cross incorporated as the king post. They also feature plaster corbels and ornamentation to the underside of the trusses, coloured to match the oregon timber. A simple plaster architrave outlines the round-headed shapes of the stained glass windows along the top of the east and west walls, accentuating the simple Romanesque detailing. Mosaic artworks representing the twelve Stations of the Cross are also found along the east and west walls, embedded into niches.

The sanctuary comprises the apse, the vaulted polygonal projection behind the altar, and the bema, the open space separating the nave and the apse. The apse comprises cream coloured rendered walls in a half-octagonal plan, a raised marble floor, and two pairs of round-headed arch windows with stained glass facing the altar. The apse has a jarrah lined vaulted ceiling with exposed roof beams and a wrought iron structural tie. The tabernacle and marble reredos (the marble screen which formerly framed the altar table) are located on the far northern wall of the apse, directly aligned with the marble altar. A small stair on the east side of the apse provides access to the pulpit. The bema is the area in front of the apse, defined by a change in floor level and material. A marble lectern and a baptismal font are positioned on the bema, either side of the altar table.

Located on the gospel (east) side of the nave near the sanctuary is the Lady Chapel. The Lady Chapel comprises a single pew facing a small statue of the Virgin Mary and rows of offering candles. The Lady Chapel contains a small round-headed arch window (north wall) and round-headed arch doorway (east wall) with timber double doors leading to the outside. Like the nave, the Lady Chapel has cream coloured rendered walls and carpeted floors, but also features a plastered ceiling with simple architraves lining the vault. Directly opposite the Lady Chapel, on the epistle (west) side of the nave, is another small chapel used

as an entry vestibule from the porch on the western side of the church. The epistle chapel also comprises a single pew for private prayer but is typically used as a transition space between the western porch and the nave, containing a small round-headed arch window (north wall) and a double timber door to the porch (west wall).

The priest's vestry is located south of the epistle chapel and is accessed directly from the sanctuary (to the east) and the alter server's vestry (to the north). The priest's vestry is rectangular in plan, with two small round-headed arch windows in the south wall. A timber door on the north wall connects the priest's vestry to the alter server's vestry, a much smaller room containing two small round-headed arch windows on the west wall. As with the chapels, both rooms have cream coloured rendered walls, carpeted floors and plastered ceiling. The priest's vestry also contains in-built timber cabinetry along the south wall, and a wall-mounted vanity basin on the northern wall. The priest's vestry, alter server's vestry, epistle chapel and western porch form a single storey, projecting wing with gable roof, west of the sanctuary.

Opposite the priest's vestry (east of the sanctuary and south of the Lady Chapel), is the working sacristy, a space directly connected to the sanctuary, with a small round-headed arch window on its east wall and a timber door providing external access on its south wall. The working sacristy and Lady Chapel form a single storey, projecting wing with gable tile roof, east of the sanctuary.

St Columba's Catholic Primary School (1908, 1919, 1949, 1985, 1990, 2002, 2004)

St Columba's Catholic Primary School is located to the south of St Columba's Church and comprises a complex of single-storey face-brick and iron buildings, and rendered brick and tile buildings set within modest-sized grounds. A large playing field is located to the north of the school buildings, west of the Presbytery and St Columba's Church. A tennis court is located in the southwest corner of the site, and numerous playgrounds are located along Forrest Street and Alexandra Street.

Entry to the school is provided on York Street where a small car park is located to the southeast of the Administration wing. The southernmost gate to St Columba's Church also allows access to a large parking area immediately north of the school buildings, presumably used by the church for overflow parking but also functioning as a hard playing court.

The earliest school building, which is the earliest building of *St Columba's Church Group*, is the 1908 Parish Hall, located on York Street and comprises a single-storey face-brick building with a steeply-pitched Colorbond roof and entry on the south elevation. Internally, the Parish Hall has a large hall space as well as a kitchen, store room and secondary entry vestibule, located at the northern end in the former location of the apse. The main hall has painted brick walls and polished timber floors and a number of original features such as exposed steel roof trusses, timber-lined ceilings and timber-framed coloured glass windows. The kitchen has linoleum floors, plastered walls and a hatch window that opens into the main hall.

Classroom wings have been added to the east and west sides of the Parish Hall: a classroom for Year 1's is located to the east (1919), and classrooms for Year 2's (1919) and Year 3's (c. 1949), as well as the Administration wing (1990) are located to the west. Large openings which once connected the Parish Hall to the Year 1 and Year 2 rooms are visible internally on the east and west walls of the

Hall, and also on the corresponding classroom walls¹²¹. The Year 1, 2 and 3 classrooms typically comprise original plastered masonry walls, simple timber joinery and large timber-framed windows facing south. Entry to the classrooms is from the north, off the wide steel-framed verandahs that are a feature of each of the school buildings within the complex. Timber bag racks and benches run the length of the verandah.

To the north of the Year 1 classroom, and connected by a verandah, is the Kindergarten (1990) and further north, the Pre-Primary School (1985, 2002). Both the Kindergarten and the easternmost end of the Pre-Primary School are constructed of red face brick with horizontal cream-brick banding and Colorbond hipped roofs and verandahs. The westernmost end of the Pre-Primary School is part of the original Library building (1985), which comprises a rendered brick and tile building with a prominent gable roof and a wide brick and timber verandah on two sides. A plaque commemorating the blessing and the opening of the building (1st December 1985) is located on the west elevation, near the entry to the library. A large paved courtyard sheltered by shade sails is located on the south side of the Library and enclosed to the east by the Kindergarten and to the south by the Year 1 classroom and the Parish Hall. A fenced playground and courtyard is also located on the eastern side of the Kindergarten.

The 1949 Classroom Block is located to the west of the Library and comprises a single-storey rendered brick and tile building with a distinct splayed gable to the east and west elevations and a wide brick and timber verandah along the north elevation. There are three classrooms (accommodating Years 4-6) in the 1949 Classroom Block as well as the boys' and girls' toilets, located at the eastern end. Internally, the classrooms typically comprise plastered and painted walls and ceilings, carpet floors, solid timber doors, large timber-framed windows to the south, and smaller aluminium-framed windows to the north. Timber bag racks are located along the length of the verandah and a foundation stone, dated 6th February 1949, is located on the north wall near the door to the Year 5 classroom.

Located to the west of the 1949 Classroom Block and attached to the Undercover Assembly Area and the Canteen is the Year 7 classroom (c. 1990). The classroom building and the canteen are constructed of red face-brick with horizontal cream-brick banding and Colorbond hipped roofs and verandahs. The Undercover Assembly Area comprises a bituminized area with a Colorbond hipped roof over, and face-brick walls on all sides, featuring large roller-shuttered openings. Combined with the 1949 Classroom Block, and the Library, the Year 7 classroom, canteen and Undercover Assembly Area enclose the central multi-purpose playing court.

A small brick and tile building, a former shelter shed and tuck-shop that has been enclosed, is located to the southeast of the Year 7 classroom, parallel with the 1949 Classroom Block.

St Joseph's Convent

St Joseph's Convent comprises a complex of one and two-storey brick and tile buildings, including Dennehy House (1908), the Mary MacKillop Centre (1927), Chapel (1939), the Convent (1957, 1974), Irene Villa (1959-60, 1982), and MacKillop Court (1971), set amongst expansive scenic gardens on York Street in South Perth. The gardens feature a number of mature trees set within informal garden beds and areas of lawn. A low brick fence bounds the site along York

121 It is unclear whether or not these openings were original or a more recent modification that has been reversed.

Street and Alexandra Street (dating from 1940) with a more recent masonry fence along King Edward Street. A series of informal curved paths connect the various buildings of the site and landscape features, including a memorial rose garden dedicated to Sister Irene McCormack.

Dennehy House (1908)

Dennehy House was the earliest building on the site and comprises a two-storey brick and tile building in the Federation Queen Anne style, featuring a picturesque asymmetrical form, warm face-brickwork contrasted against ornate timber detailing and Donnybrook stone, and accents on the roofline including a belvedere (1969) and tall masonry chimneys. Entry to Dennehy House is from York Street, via the large timber verandah on the south elevation. This verandah has paired timber columns supporting the first floor balcony, and features a decorative tiled floor and a timber lattice valance (not an original detail). The first floor balcony also has paired timber columns, as well as ornate timber floor joists and filigreed metal balustrades.

The interior of Dennehy House comprises a roughly square plan with rooms positioned around a formal entrance hall, a passage, and a central timber staircase. To the east, west and northeast of the entrance hall are three formal rooms, the former Drawing Room, the former Dining Room and the former Morning Room, typically comprising original plastered and painted masonry walls with elaborate timber joinery and large timber-framed windows, coved ceilings, carpeted floors and original tiled fireplaces with timber mantles. The Dining Room has been extended, as evidenced by the notched remnant wall and the addition of new doors and windows (although these have been carefully fashioned to match the originals). Various service rooms are located to the rear of the house on the ground floor, namely the former Kitchen, Scullery and Pantry, all currently used as office and storage space. A telephone enclosure is also located underneath the stair and a nearby door provides access to the side verandah. Similarly a door from the Morning Room connects to the side verandah, providing access to the Cloisters and the Chapel.

Upstairs, the first floor comprises a number of former bedrooms, typically featuring plastered and painted masonry walls with elaborate timber joinery, coved ceilings, carpeted floors and large timber-framed windows. Bedroom 2, located on the southwest corner of the building also features a beautifully crafted leadlight window of the Sacred Heart on its western wall. A large leadlight window is also located on the east wall of the stair hall, apparently depicting two of Dennehy's daughters. A bathroom, linen room and toilet are also located on the first floor, and a passage opens onto the rear verandah and also onto the side (east) verandah, both of which have been enclosed.

Positioned centrally over the building, and accessed by the main stair is the attic space, or belvedere (also referred to as 'Mount Carmel'). This extension was added in 1969 and comprises a simple pyramidal roof and glazed walls on all sides, which was built over the former 'Flat', described as an external roof area, partially enclosed and suitable for sleeping out. This space has carpeted floors, plastered walls and ceilings, and timber-framed windows overlooking the grounds.

Mary MacKillop Centre (1927)

Located to the west of Dennehy House and connected to both the ground and first floor verandahs is the Mary MacKillop Centre, constructed in 1927 as the Convent boarding school. The Mary MacKillop Centre comprises a two-storey red face-brick and tile building with a spreading hipped roof and a distinctive two-

storey timber-framed verandah across its south (York Street) elevation. Another verandah extends along the rear (north) and side (east) elevations, although parts have been infilled. The verandahs typically have paired timber columns (except in front of the entry off York Street) supporting the first floor balcony and feature a timber lattice valance and timber balustrade, designed to match the materials and aesthetic of Dennehy House.

The ground floor of the Mary MacKillop Centre comprises a central entry hall, flanked by offices on either side, which opens into a large stair hall containing a timber staircase. To the east of the stair hall is a large Dining Room and to the west, a room accommodating a unique collection of life-size dioramas depicting the life of Mary MacKillop. These rooms typically comprise plastered and painted walls with ornate timber joinery, plasterboard ceilings, carpeted floors, vertically-proportioned timber-framed windows, and timber-framed glazed double-doors. To the north of the diorama room is the archives room, located in the westernmost part of the enclosed north verandah. The rest of the north verandah is used as a circulation corridor between the Mary MacKillop Centre and Dennehy House. A timber stair, also located in the enclosed verandah (north of the Dining Room) provides access to the first floor balcony.

The first floor of the Mary MacKillop Centre has a similar configuration to the ground floor, comprising a central stair hall with two large rooms either side, and offices to the south. The room to the east has been subdivided, creating a sewing room, a private lounge for the Sisters, and an office. The room to the west is used as a meeting room and has been extended to incorporate sections of the north and south verandahs. Both the north and south verandahs on the first floor are enclosed and have been partitioned to create a number of small rooms. A wall has also been added to the north verandah to partition off the bathroom wing, which extends beyond the line of the verandah on both floors.

The Chapel (1939)

The Chapel is located to the east of Dennehy House and comprises a single storey ecclesiastical building constructed of red face-brick with a steeply-pitched tiled roof, a projecting porch on the south elevation (added in 1970), a chapel unit to the northeast (altered and extended in 1972-74), buttresses along the east and west elevations and vertically-proportioned arched windows. Primary entry to the Chapel is from the west, directly into the nave via an enclosed brick cloister that connects directly to Dennehy House, or from the south, via the porch.

The interior of the Chapel comprises smooth rendered walls with evenly spaced piers extending beyond the height of the wall to the underside of the truncated ceiling and joining with the opposite pier at the ridge. The face of the piers is decorated with an insignia incorporating three J's (Jesus, Joseph and John the Baptist) and the initials A and M (Ave Maria). This insignia is also found in the design of the wall vents and in the ironwork of the boundary fence.

A projecting polygonal apse is located at the northern end of the nave, and features a semi-circular colonnade supporting an impressive vaulted ceiling. The columns, the floor of the sanctuary, the reredos, the tabernacle and the altar are all constructed of various types of marble and are a distinct feature of the Chapel. The Chapel also features arched stained glass windows, stone relief carvings depicting the Twelve Stations of the Cross, and a number of original timber pews, although the majority of the timber pews in the nave have been replaced with lightweight chairs. A choir gallery is located at the southern end of the chapel, elevated above the nave.

Other Buildings

The Convent (1957, 1974) is the main accommodation wing of the complex and comprises a two-storey face-brick and tile building located immediately north of the Mary MacKillop Centre. The ground floor comprises the main kitchen, dining room and laundry, while the first floor, also known as 'Our Lady's', comprises six residential units. The Our Lady's Wing with nine units is located at the northern end of the building.

Irene Villa (1959-60, 1982), formerly known as St Joseph's Nursing Home, comprises a single-storey brick and tile residential building, basically rectangular in plan, located north of Dennehy House.

MacKillop Court (1971) comprises a one and two-storey brick and tile residential building located north of Irene Villa, and connected to St Joseph's Convent by way of a multi-storey link known as the Garden Room (1995). MacKillop Court has eight units for retired/senior Sisters, and a flat and guest room at the eastern end for the Province Leader.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The buildings comprising *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*, including St Columba's Church (1937), Presbytery (1938), Church Centre (1986), St Columba's Catholic Primary School (1908, 1919, 1949, 1985, 1990, 2002) and St Joseph's Convent (1908, 1927, 1939, 1957, 1959-60, 1971, 1974, 1982), may be compared to a number of other places on the HCWA database which have been identified as church, convent and school groups.

02879 Convent of Mercy and School (fmr), York, comprises a complex of buildings established by the Sisters of Mercy from c. 1872 and consists of two main buildings; a former convent constructed in the Victorian Georgian style, and a former school, a single-storey stone and brick building constructed in the Victorian Tudor style. Other buildings associated with the Convent of Mercy and School (fmr) includes St Patrick's Church, presbytery and parish hall located nearby. Convent of Mercy and School (fmr) is in a poorer condition than *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*, and has lesser degrees of both integrity and authenticity. Convent of Mercy and School (fmr) is listed on the State Register of Heritage Places, classified by the National Trust, nominated for the Register of the National Estate, and included on the Town of York's Municipal Inventory.

00379 Convent of Mercy Group (fmr), Bunbury, comprises a two-storey rendered brick and iron convent and chapel complex in the Federation Gothic style, established by the Sisters of the Convent of Mercy in 1897 and formerly including St Joseph's Convent School (demolished in 1982). Convent and Mercy Group (fmr) is in a poorer condition than *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*, and has a lesser degree of integrity and authenticity. The place is listed on the State Register of Heritage Places, classified by the National Trust, included on the City of Bunbury's Municipal Inventory, and formerly listed on the Register of the National Estate.

02181 Sacred Heart Convent and School, Highgate, comprising the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (1899; 1923; 1933; 1937), Sacred Heart Primary School (1914), gardens, shelters, playing fields and boundary walls, combined with the adjacent Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church (1906), forms an important precinct of Federation Free Classical style ecclesiastical buildings. Sacred Heart Convent and School is similar to *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent* in terms of condition, integrity and authenticity. Also, the

architect, Richard Dennehy (responsible for the Parish Hall, Dennehy House and the Mary MacKillop Centre *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*) designed both the church and the parish school at Sacred Heart Convent and School. The place is listed on the State Register of Heritage Places and included on the Town of Vincent's Municipal Inventory.

St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth is representative of a combined church, convent and school complex, established as a religious and educational institution by one of a variety of Religious orders of the Catholic Church, in this case, the Western Australian Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Individually, St Columba's Church (within *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*) may be compared to other buildings of similar architectural style, detailing and function, in particular, 02225 St Peter's Church & Memorial Hall (1935 to 1954), Victoria Park, and the Chapel (1940-41; 1972; 1974-78) at 02401 Clontarf, South Perth.

02225 St Peter's Church & Memorial Hall in Victoria Park is a reinforced concrete and terracotta tile Inter-War Romanesque style church with Spanish Mission details. The church features similar architectural detailing to St Columba's Church, such as a prominent gable parapet decorated with machicolation motifs, smooth rendered facades, and round-headed arch openings. St Columba's Church is similar to St Peter's Anglican Church in terms of condition, integrity and authenticity.

The Chapel at Clontarf, South Perth, is an Inter-War Romanesque style rendered brick and tile ecclesiastical building, featuring a narrow tower with arcaded belfry and a projecting apse. The Chapel features similar architectural detailing to St Columba's Church, including round-headed arched openings, the machicolation motif, stained glass windows and a large rose window on the primary gable. St Columba's Church is similar to the Chapel in terms of condition, integrity and authenticity.

St Columba's Church is representative of the Inter-War Romanesque style of architecture. The place has value for being a pleasing example of this style, in very good condition, and for existing in its original context as part of an historic Catholic precinct, *St Columba's Church Group & St Joseph's Convent, South Perth*.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

McMahon, John Thomas, *Barney's Hill: St Columba's and South Perth*, Perth, 1971.

Mc Mahon, John Thomas, *Parish and Pastor*, Perth, 1979.

Pendal, Phillip, 'A Thing of Beauty...', *St Columba's, South Perth, Western Australia*, Perth, 1986.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
