

CITY OF SOUTH PERTH LOCAL HERITAGE INVENTORY

Management
Category

A+, B

PLACE RECORD FORM

Prepared by *Heritage Today*, March 2000

Most recent update by City of South Perth, November 2015

Place No: SPt 1 Aquinas College



*Aquinas College main building completed 1938.
(Heritage Today, 1998)*

LOCATION

Name of Place	<i>Aquinas College</i>
Other / former names	
Address	58 Mount Henry Road
Suburb	Salter Point
Local Government Authority	City of South Perth
Scope of listing	This heritage listing applies to the entire site. The Category A+ classification only applies to the Administration Building and the Chapel. Management Category 'A' will continue to apply to all other buildings on the site until they have been assessed and an appropriate classification has been allocated to each.

LISTINGS BY OTHER BODIES

Name of Body	Reference No.	Grade of Listing	Date
Heritage Council of Western Australia	2396	Permanent	17 December 2010
Heritage Council of Western Australia	19541	Data base only – not listed	-
Art Deco Society		Completed	30 June 1994

LAND DESCRIPTION

Reserve No.	Lot	Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio
	2, Pt 4, 9, 18	Canning 37	3383	1550 / 176
	Pt 5	Canning 37	3383	1548 / 513

PERIOD	Inter-War
Design Style	Inter-War Gothic
Construction Date	1938
Source / Details	City of South Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory (No.1) 1994.

USE(S) OF PLACE

Original	Catholic boys' school
Present	Catholic independent, day and boarding school for boys
Other / Former	

HISTORICAL NOTES

(Taken from Historical Notes provided by Aquinas College.)

On 31 January 1894, the Christian Brothers opened their first school in Western Australia at the corner of Saint George's Terrace and Victoria Avenue in Perth. They had come to the new colony at the invitation of Bishop Gibney who knew of the work of the Brothers in the other Australian States and in England and Ireland.

Initially only day pupils were enrolled, but with the expansion of Western Australia during the gold rush period, pressure was put on the school to accept boarders. In June 1896, the first residential students were enrolled. However, the site and style of accommodation were very limited, and as early as 1917 the Headmaster, Br Michael Paul Nunan, saw the necessity of acquiring a suitable property away from the city centre to resite the whole school.

The Brothers entered into negotiations for the purchase of 20 acres (8 hectares) at Point Heathcote on the Swan River but later, in 1928, they proceeded to purchase 234 acres (95 hectares) on the Canning River just east of the Riverton Bridge. They called the property Clune Park. However plans for development were delayed with the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 1936, at the instigation of Br Paul Keaney, 165 acres (62 hectares) were purchased from the Manning family at Mount Henry, also on the Canning River. The site has a three kilometre frontage to Canning River, including the Mount Henry feature, an area of significant and environmentally sensitive bushland which was gazetted as a 'Bush Forever' site in the Western Australian Planning Commission's State Planning Policy 2.8 'Bushland Policy for the Perth Metropolitan Region', on 22 June 2010.

HISTORICAL NOTES (cont'd)

Early in 1937, the work of clearing this ground was taken up vigorously with squads of boys from the old college playing a major role. The foundation stone was laid on 11 July 1937.

Aquinas College was blessed by Archbishop Prendiville and was opened by the Governor, Sir James Mitchell, on 28 February 1938. The new school was named after Tommaso d'Aquino (Thomas Aquinas) (1225 – 1274), an Italian Dominican friar and Catholic priest who was an immensely influential teacher, philosopher, theologian and Western medieval legal scholar and jurist of his day. Thomas is honoured as a saint by the Catholic Church.¹

The first enrolments included 160 boarders and 55 day pupils, and the first headmaster was Brother C P Foley, who remained at Aquinas for one year. The second headmaster was Brother W V Green, in 1939. When the College was first established, all teaching staff were Christian Brothers. However, gradually the Brothers were joined and eventually replaced by lay teaching staff, and in 2000, the first lay headmaster was appointed.

Although the original main wing was brick, a large number of subsequent buildings were erected using wood frames and corrugated iron. In 1946, the College purchased two large ex-army huts, which were located as temporary buildings next to the Administration Building. One of these was used as a dining hall for 200; and the other was converted to a junior dormitory for 30 and a hospital block. These structures remained until the mid-1970s. These were useful in coping with the growing number of students.

The College was established in an area that was largely unsettled, virgin bushland. By the 1950s, residential development in Manning had increased significantly, and the provision of public transport in the area resulted in the number of day students outnumbering boarders. The type of students also changed, with most being from 'middle-class' homes, rather than from poorer families whom the Christian Brothers had been founded to educate.²

In 1951, land in front of the Administration Building was dedicated as a Memorial Oval, in memory of the loss of life during World War II.

In 1955, the first major classroom block, the Murphy Wing (named after Headmaster, Brother V I Murphy 1951 – 1956), was opened, followed by the Science Wing in 1962, the Junior School in 1963, the Chapel in 1966, additions to the Administration Building including the main boarding wing in 1967, and the Library in 1976. Further expansion in the 1980s occurred with the increasing pressure of enrolments. This involved a new senior classroom block with 12 classrooms, the Manual Arts building, the Art centre, gymnasium and then in 1986-87 new Boarding Houses. The new Houses were named after Bishop Matthew **Gibney** (who had invited the Christian Brothers to Western Australia in the 1890s), Alaric **Pinder Boor** (former student and Rhodes Scholar), and Brother Michael Paul **Nunan** (former Headmaster of the Perth CBC for 20 years).

Aquinas College is proud of the achievement of one of its former students, Herb Elliott, who won a gold medal at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. He was one of the world's greatest middle distance runners. In the 1,500 metres race at the Rome Olympics, Elliott won the gold medal and bettered his own world record with a time of 3 minutes 35.6 seconds, an achievement he consistently met over a number of years.³

In 1979, the Parents' Council was formed. The parents requested a wider curriculum to better prepare the students for work in trades as well as for entry to university.

¹ Source: Wikipedia article – 'Thomas Aquinas' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas).

² Source: Heritage Council assessment document, 17 December 2010.

³ Source: Wikipedia article – 'Herb Elliott' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herb_Elliott)

HISTORICAL NOTES (cont'd)

In 2004, the Aquinas College Foundation was established for the purpose of raising funds to operate, maintain and expand the school. The Foundation operates independently of the Board.

In 2007, the Christian Brothers established the Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) as a separate entity to govern all of their educational functions throughout Australia. Hence, the operation of Aquinas College falls within the jurisdiction of EREA. EREA is named after Edmund Rice (1762 – 1844), a wealthy Roman Catholic businessman from the city of Waterford in Ireland, who, at the age of 40, abandoned his business in order to dedicate himself to improving the lives of poor people by providing education to underprivileged Irish boys. As his movement grew, it formed into the religious community now known as the Christian Brothers.

In 2010, two of the College's buildings were included in the State Register of Heritage Places:

- Administration Building (1937) – designed by Michael Cavanagh, of the firm Cavanagh and Cavanagh; and
- Chapel (1966) – designed by the architectural firm Henderson and Thompson.

The Old Aquinians' Association or 'Old Boys' is an organisation of former students of *Aquinas College*. The association provides support in the provision of scholarships and financial assistance to sons or grandsons of Old Boys' families in need. The bi-annual *Fish Magazine* is the Old Boys' newsletter.

Following a number of attacks, drug dealing, thefts, vandals and various other intrusions into the College grounds and buildings, in 2013 *Aquinas College* built a 2.4 metre high spike-tipped black grille fence around the 3 kilometre perimeter of the campus as a means of protecting the students. With no other comparable public open space in the area, this decision was strongly criticized by many local residents, who, until that time, had enjoyed free access to, and use of, the *Aquinas College* playing fields, and who objected to being barred from a site they looked upon as an important part of their local environment.

In 2012, as a result of a review of its land requirements, *Aquinas College* excised two areas of land from the school site: a lot of 2 hectares at the southern end of Redmond Street containing the teachers' housing, and a second lot of 1.6 hectares at the corner of Redmond Street and Roebuck Drive for further subdivision into single house lots for sale on the open market. The latter site had contained remnant bushland of reasonable quality which was to be removed at the time of the development of the land. This decision was also unpopular with the local community, many of whom valued the bushland as part of their local environment.

Aquinas College continues to attract a large number of students, many from a wide range of countries. A continuing program of maintenance and construction keeps *Aquinas College* relevant for the changing needs of its students.

DESCRIPTION

Sited on a 62.4 hectare property with a three kilometre water frontage to the Canning River and in an elevated position, *Aquinas College* is considered to have one of the most beautiful school environments in Australia. Although several ovals have been carved out of the virgin bush, much of the property is still thickly wooded. The main building is three storeys high, built from red brick with a tiled roof. It has many characteristics that make it a fine example of Inter-War Gothic architecture. These features include asymmetry, a medium to steeply pitched roof, a castellated tower, vertical elements on the skyline, crenellations⁴ and arched loggias or porches.

⁴ Square indentations in the top of parapets, as typically used on the ramparts of some castles.

DESCRIPTION (cont'd)

The architecture of the remaining school campus shows a history of the architectural styles that have influenced Western Australia since World War II. The Chapel is of particular note, reflecting the Late Twentieth Century Organic style with a large stone wall and a low scale curved building that does not dominate the landscape.

ASSOCIATIONS**ASSOCIATION TYPE**

Brother C P Foley	First Headmaster (1938)
Brother W V Green	Second Headmaster (1939 – 1945)
Brother Garvey	Headmaster (1945 – 1951)
Brother Vincent I Murphy	Headmaster (1951 – 1956)
Brother Walter Godfrey Hall	Headmaster (1957 – 1962)
Brother Woodruff	Headmaster (1963 – 1968)
Brother L B Hassam	Headmaster (1969 – 1974)
Brother D F Drake	Headmaster (1974 – 1978)
Brother Terrence X Hann	Headmaster (1979 – 1986)
Brother John Carrigg	Headmaster (1987 – 1993)
Brother Kevin J Paul	Headmaster (1993 – 1999)
Mr Robert White	First lay headmaster (1999 - 2007)
Mr Mark Sawle	Headmaster (2007 -)
Herb Elliott	Former student, Olympic gold medal runner 1960
Cavanagh and Cavanagh , Architects (Michael Cavanagh)	Designers of the Administration Building (1937)
Henderson and Thompson, Architects (Edgar le Blond Henderson and George Pruett Thompson, Jim Thompson)	Designers of the Chapel (1966) and additions to the Administration Building (1967)

HISTORIC THEME / Sub-theme**CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Community Efforts/ <i>Education</i>	Aesthetic
	Historic
	Social
	Representative
	Rarity

RATING AND ASSESSMENT**High****Low**

Aesthetic value (streetscape, setting)	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Architectural merit (design features)	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Rarity value	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Value as part of a group/precinct	1	2	3 ✓	4	5
Condition	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Integrity	1 ✓	2	3	4	5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aquinas College has aesthetic, historic, social, representative and rarity cultural heritage significance. It has played an important role in Catholic education since its establishment in 1938. The main building, completed in 1938, is a fine representative of Inter-War Gothic architecture. The rest of the *Aquinas College* campus, which is set in well-manicured landscaped grounds, reflects a history of the architectural styles that have influenced Western Australia since World War II.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Administration Building and Chapel

Management Category A+ : Exceptional significance – Registered

Conservation essential. Essential to the heritage of the locality. Rare or outstanding example. Registered by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. Demolition or significant alteration to a place in Management Category A+ of the Heritage List is not permitted. Any alterations or additions are to be guided by a Conservation Plan, if any, and reinforce the heritage values of the place.

Remainder of Aquinas College site

Management Category B : Considerable significance

Conservation essential. Reflects the highest level of local cultural heritage significance. Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity and authenticity. Demolition or significant alteration to a place in Management Category B of the Heritage List is not permitted. Any alterations or additions are to be guided by a Conservation Plan, if any, and reinforce the heritage values of the place.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION / BIBLIOGRAPHY

- City of South Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory (No.1) 1994.
- Reviews of Municipal Heritage Inventory by *Heritage Today* in 2000 and 2006.
- Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus and Robertson NSW, 1989.
- Aquinas College Brochure, Published by Aquinas College c1990s.

For further information on Aquinas

- Massam, K., *On High Ground: Images of 100 years of Aquinas College*, UWA Press, WA, 1998.

HISTORY OF HERITAGE LISTING BY CITY OF SOUTH PERTH

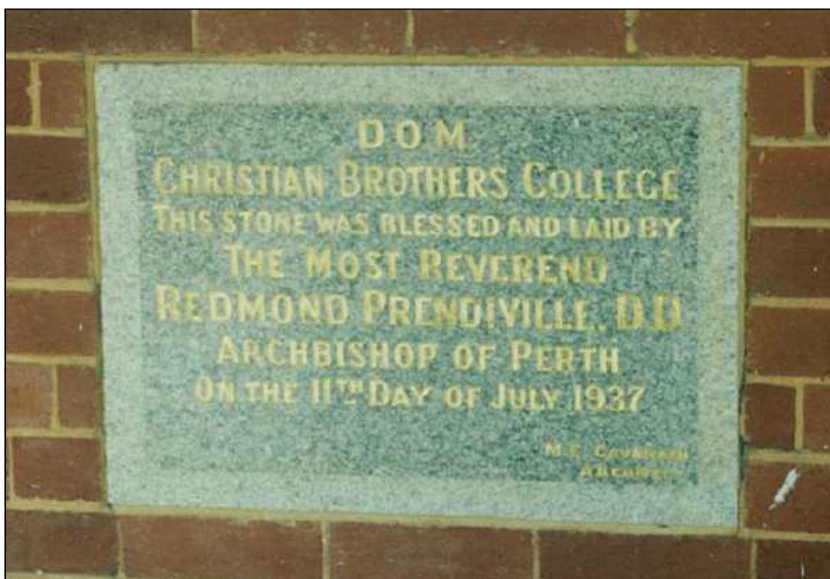
	Date Adopted by Council
Town Planning Scheme No. 5 – Schedule G	Gazetted 25 September 1986
Initial listing in MHI	December 1994
Update of MHI	February 1996
Update of MHI	December 1996
Update of MHI	December 1997
Review of MHI by <i>Heritage Today</i>	June 2000
Update of MHI	June 2002
Update of MHI	March 2003
Review of MHI by <i>Heritage Today</i>	February 2006
Interim Heritage List – Policy P313 ‘Local Heritage Listing’	April 2013
Updated in renamed LHI	November 2015



*Aquinas College classrooms.
(Heritage Today, 1998)*



*Aquinas College classrooms.
(Heritage Today, 1998)*



*The foundation stone on the
main building of Aquinas
College.
(Heritage Today, 1998)*

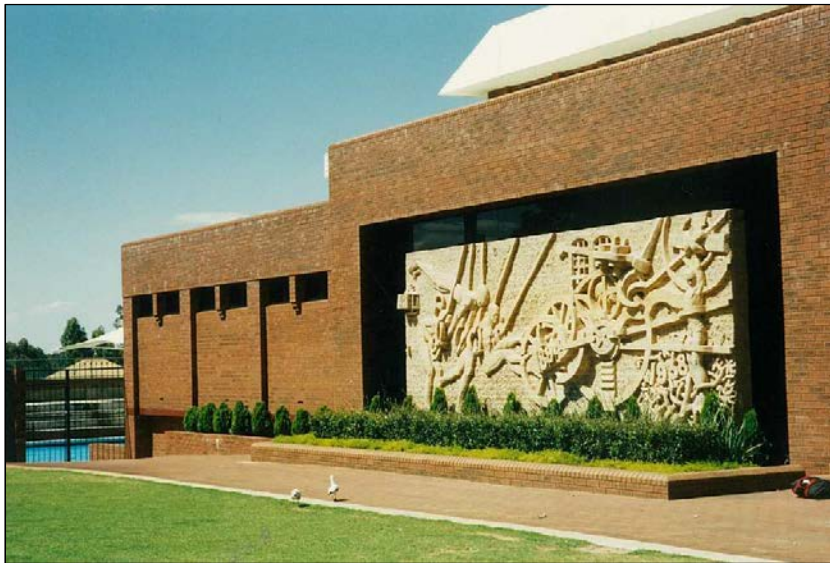


The original cross from the church spire transferred from Christian Brothers College in Saint Georges Terrace, Perth, following the demolition of the CBC in 1965. The Perth site had been relinquished to the Perth City Council in 1961.
(*Heritage Today*, 1998)



Two views of Aquinas Chapel, built 1967.
(*Heritage Today*, 1998)





Decorative frieze on a wall of the gymnasium, built 1982.
(*Heritage Today*, 1998)



ABOVE: Aquinas College former boarding house, part of the original 1938 building.
(*Heritage Today*, 1998)



ABOVE RIGHT: Bushland on Mount Henry, including the nest of a local Osprey (*Pandion cristatus*live).
(*Lola Chapman, City of South Perth, October 2006*)

BOTTOM RIGHT: Osprey nesting on a nesting pole at Mount Henry peninsula,
(*Photograph courtesy of Sue Harper, September 2014*)



LOCATION MAP

(Digital Cadastral Data supplied by Landgate, WA. P295)