


Heritage Inventory Sheet

Recommended Name	St John of God Catholic Church and St John's Catholic Primary School		
Site Image			
Address	73-77; 82-84 Queen Street; 2 Alice Street, Auburn NSW 2144		
Lot/Section/DP	1	-	86602
	1	-	782389
	1		995332
	100	-	1248428
Heritage Study ID	HS27		
LEP ID	Not currently included on the Cumberland LEP		
Heritage Conservation Area	Not included		
Date Updated	January 2021		
Significance Level	LOCAL		
Site Type	Level 1	Built	
	Level 2	Education, Religion	

Curtilage Map



Statement of Significance

St John of God Catholic Church and St John's Catholic Primary School are of local significance for their historic, associative, aesthetic, social and representative values. Historically, St John's Catholic Primary School was established in 1892 by the Sisters of Charity in the grounds of Duncraggan Hall. The Alphonsus Memorial Building was constructed in 1930 and replacing an earlier Church and School building. St John of God Church was constructed in 1915 for the Catholic congregation in Auburn. The Church and School provide evidence for the development of the Auburn Catholic community and is linked to the influx of Irish Catholic railway workers to Clyde. Both the School and the Church are associated with St Joseph's Hospital (former Duncraggan Hall) and the Sisters of Charity who were instrumental in the establishment of both the St John of God Church and the St John's Catholic Primary School.

The item has social significance as a School and Church that has remained a continuous focal point of religious activity for the Catholic community in Auburn from 1892 onwards. The Church building is aesthetically significant and intact as a Federation style Church. The Church appears to retain much of its original character and fabric and including stained glass windows and rendered string courses. The Alphonsus Memorial building at St John's Primary School has aesthetic significance as a highly intact Inter-War School building that retains much of its original character and remains prominent within the streetscape. The buildings present well together as a group. Both the School and the Church remain highly intact examples of an Inter-War period Catholic School building and a Federation style Church in the local area.

Criteria Assessment

a) Historic	Historically, St John's Catholic Primary School was established in 1892 by the Sisters of Charity in the grounds of Duncraggan Hall. The Alphonsus Memorial Building was constructed in 1930 and replacing an earlier Church and School building. St John of God Church was constructed in 1915 for the Catholic congregation in Auburn. The Church and School provide evidence for the development of the Auburn Catholic community and is linked to the influx of Irish Catholic railway workers to Clyde.
b) Associative	St John of God Church and St John's Catholic School are both associated with St Joseph's Hospital (former Duncraggan Hall) and the Sisters of Charity who were instrumental in the establishment of both the St John of God Church and St John's Catholic School.
c) Aesthetic/Technical	St John of God Church is aesthetically significant as Federation style Church. The Church appears to retain much of its original character and fabric including stained glass windows and rendered string courses. The Alphonsus Memorial building at St John's Catholic Primary School has aesthetic significance as a highly intact Inter-War School building that retains much of its original character and remains prominent within the streetscape. Together, the buildings present well as a group.
d) Social	The item has social significance as a Church and School that has remained a continuous focal point of religious activity for the Catholic community in Auburn from 1892 onwards.
e) Scientific	The item does not meet this criterion.
f) Rarity	The item does not meet this criterion.
g) Representativeness	Together, both the School and Church building remain highly intact examples of a Federation period Church and an Inter-War School building within the Auburn area.

Physical Description

St John of God Catholic Church

The St John of God Church is a Federation style Church constructed from face-brick. The street façade is laid in English bond with rendered string courses. The brickwork on the side elevations is laid in stretcher bond with buttresses in English bond. The roof is a simple steep pitched gable clad in Marseilles tiles with broad, exposed eaves visible on the sides of the Church. A tall, moulded cross is situated at the apex of the gable. The building features several brick buttresses with rendered string courses and capping. The main façade of the Church features a prominent horizontal parapet, with engaged piers. Visible at high level on the façade are four metal anchor plates connected to structural tie rods in the upper gable. Brick cross reveals are inset into the brick piers on either side of the lower area of the façade. In the gable above the centralised pointed arched door is a stained-glass window opening with a stepped brick pointed arch. The side elevations feature narrow windows with pointed arches and cement rendered sills. The windows are located between the engaged piers of the main side walls of the Church.

The rear façade of the Church also has a large, gable-ended, oversized façade element with a prominent parapet and engaged piers. In the centre of the gable above the rear entrance is a window opening with large pointed arch. The original window within the arched opening has been replaced with a four metal-framed windowpanes. There is a small weatherboard extension attached to main Church from which a modern glass and metal entrance porch with steeply pitched gable extends.

To the rear of the Church is St John's Presbytery which is an asymmetrical single-storey building constructed of face brick with a hipped roof clad in Marseilles tiles. To the east of the Church is another related building constructed of face brick with a gabled roof clad corrugated iron and with a verandah at the rear.

The Church is surrounded by a garden landscape with a number of plantings including eucalyptus, palm trees and hedging. The Church is bound by a metal palisade fence and has a concrete sign at the front which reads 'ST JOHN OF GOD CATHOLIC CHURCH'.

St John's Catholic Primary School

St John's Catholic Primary School consists of several School buildings with a central main building constructed in the Inter-War period. The main building known as the 'Alphonsus Memorial Building' is a two-storey face brick School building constructed of polychromatic face brick with details to the building rendered in yellow. The building has a gabled main roof with projecting transverse wings with gabled roofs on all elevations except for the south-eastern elevation. Each end of the main roof features a moulded cross which is atop a brick pier. The façade along Queen Street is double fronted and features a bullseye opening infilled with decorative timber tracery on the main parapet and a moulded niche with a statue of Mary on the projecting wing. Below the niche is a metal sign which reads 'ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'. The main building has timber framed double-hung sash windows with multi-panelled glazed glass and brick sills. The ground floor sash windows along the Alice street elevation also features upper arched segmented glass window. Two entrance doors are located on the elevations to Alice Street on each projecting wing. Each entrance consists of a portico with rendered columns with a timber framed and panelled double door with multi panelled glass in the upper section and transom lights. Above the portico inset into the building wall is a plaque which reads 'LABORARE ET ORARE' (To work is to pray).

Other buildings within the School grounds include two long School buildings to the north east of the main building and another to the north west of the main building along Alice Street. There is another small square building in the centre of the grounds. Each are constructed of face brick and have a hipped roof which is clad in Marseilles tiles. To the south-east of the main building is a modern single-storey building with walls clad in naturally finished timber with a flat roof sheeted in corrugated iron and large single fixed paned windows. A carpark is located in front of this building and a large verandah to the rear.

The School has a neat garden landscape with contemporary playground. The School grounds are enclosed along Alice Street and South Parade by a high face brick boundary wall laid in English garden wall bond. Along Queen Street the boundary fence consists of a low face brick wall topped with a palisade metal fence.

Both the Church and the School buildings have been well-maintained and are considered to be in a good condition. There is some broken brickwork to the top of the brick piers on the side elevation of the Church along Alice Street.

Condition	Good	Fair	Poor
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Alterations and Additions

Church

- New rear entrance
- Metal supports on façade wall of Church
- Presbytery – built c.1970s

School

- Contemporary playground
- Window to main building replaced with glazing but retains multi-panels
- c.1950s School addition at northern end of lot demolished c.2000s and replaced with basketball courts.
- c.1960s addition located along Alice Street
- c.1980s addition located north-east of main building
- c. 2019 carpark and building to the south-east
- Contemporary fence atop brick

- Carpark

Overall, the church and School buildings are highly intact and still retain the majority of their original fabric. Any additional buildings are sympathetic to the aesthetic value of the buildings. They are considered to be of high integrity.

Integrity	High	Moderate	Low
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** element detracts from the overall cultural significance of the place*

Historical Notes

Construction years	Church: 1915; School: Established 1893 (original building demolished), Main building: 1930
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Auburn

The land which forms part of the modern suburb of Auburn was first developed the 1790s when a track from Sydney to Parramatta was first developed and early land grants were given to free settlers and ex-convicts in the area. Most early land grants were small, measuring between 30-100 acres and were awarded to people such as Edward Gould, Henry Marr, Thomas Bates and John O'Donnell. Larger grants were given to established merchants and officials, such as James Chisholm, a merchant, who received a 600-acre grant, and Joseph Hyde Potts, who was given 410 acres.

In 1855, the first railway line from Sydney to Parramatta Junction allowed for suburban development around the area. The suburb of Auburn developed in the 1860s-80s from the subdivisions by John Yelverton Mills near the railway station. Mills named the suburb after the village in Oliver Goldsmith's poem 'The Deserted Village'. During this period, several main roads were built through the area and by 1880 it was reported that there were about 40 residences and a population of 200 people living in Auburn. By 1912-13, Auburn had established itself as suburb with the 11th largest number of new buildings in the metropolitan area for that year, with 268 approvals.

From the 1870s, industrial development had a significant impact on the Auburn's development. This process began in the 1860s when the New South Wales government began buying small lots of railway rolling stock locally. Some notable industries that came to Auburn include Henry Vale & Co. who built locomotives around Auburn, car and tractor maker Caldwell Vale, and Purcell Engineering. As the area was known for its clay-based soil, pottery and brickmakers flourished in the area, such as the Auburn Brick, Tile & Pottery Company who took over Duck River Brickworks.

Both the St John of God Church and St John's Catholic School are situated on part of land that was granted to Thomas Bates. John Yelverton Mills purchased Bates' adjoining 80 acre grant for £60 per acre and Thomas Turner's adjoining 80 acre grant to the east for £15 per acre from William McMillan in October 1876. He then laid out a subdivision with the current Auburn Road along the line of the boundary dividing the two grants. The Auburn Township was laid out on a traditional north south grid with back-to-back allotments with 40 ft frontages (12.192 m) as was the norm of the day although the streets were a generous 66 feet (20.117 m) wide.

The first auction of the Auburn Township was made on 1 June 1878 and although sales were successful development was slow and this did not include the land along South Parade. A second auction in 1884 when Mills and Pile offered 329 allotments of Bates' grant between South Parade, Helena Street, Alice Street and Auburn Road. This was known as Auburn West and covered sections 1 to 11 of the township subdivision. St John of God Church was located in Section 5 of this subdivision and St John's Catholic School is in Section 2.

St. John's Catholic School

St. John's Catholic School began in 1892 by the Sisters of Charity following requests by Irish railway workers camped at Clyde. At the opening of St. Joseph's Hospital in 1892 these workers requested for education for their children from the Sisters of Charity. The Sisters immediately started teaching the children within the grounds of the Hospital at Duncraggan Hall. A modest brick church was erected in 1893 at 77 Queen Street, Auburn and was the foundation of the School. The building was able to

function as a church on Sunday and a School during the week. Sister Patricia Murray was the founding Principal with Sister Alphonsus as Infant Mistress. Both sisters took up residence with their nursing sisters at Duncraggan Hall. The School was known as the Convent School in the Parish/County of St John's.

The School developed rapidly and by 1900 had about 170 pupils, in Infants' and Primary classes. By 1930 there were 500 pupils and the School had extended to Third Year secondary (Intermediate). Due to increased enrolments the original School/Church building of 1893 was demolished and the current main building known as the Alphonsus Memorial Building was constructed. In 1930, on 26th January, Archbishop Kelly blessed and opened the two-story School building for girls. From 1942 the older primary boys moved to the Marist Brothers' School which was established in that year.

In 1962, following increasing enrolments and the need to implement the more complex Wyndham reforms in secondary education, the primary section of the School was moved to a new building at 12 Alice Street, Auburn and by 1964 was known as St John's Regional Primary School. The secondary section was now called St John's Regional Girls' High School.

The Sisters of Charity maintained their leadership of the School until 1974 when lay Principalship was organised by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. In 1995 as part of a major reorganisation of Catholic Schools in the district St John's Girls' High School was closed and St John's Catholic Primary returned to its original site on the corner of Queen and Alice Streets. In 2011, through the Building Education Revolution of the Federal Government, (BER) a new school hall, Year One and Year Two Open learning spaces was opened.

The School continues to function as a Catholic Primary School.

St. John of God Church

The earliest Catholic services in Auburn were held at St Joseph's Hospital and later in the Convent School (now St John's Catholic Primary School). In March 1915, Father Woulfe held a meeting of the senior men from Auburn in front of St Joseph's Hospital where it was decided to accept the Bishop's charter to form the Catholic Parish of Auburn under the patronage of St John of God. When the parish separated from Rookwood in 1915, a Church was built along with a presbytery. A foundation stone for the Church was laid on 9 April 1916. A new hall was built in c.1960s.

At present, the building still functions as a Catholic Church.

Recommendations					
Heritage Management		Existing Built and Landscape Elements		Future Development and Planning	
1. Include this item as a new heritage listing on the LEP.	X	6. Original fabric is highly significant and should be maintained.	X	12. Alterations and additions should respond to the existing pattern of development, with careful consideration of the setting (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	X
2. Include this item's listing as part of or as a Heritage Conservation Area.		7. Unsympathetic alterations that detract from the cultural significance of the item should be removed.		13. New alterations and additions should respect the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X

3. Consider additional research to nominate this item for the State Heritage Register.		8. Maintain heritage landscape elements and schemes.	X	14. Future uses for this item should be compatible with its historical functions/ associations.	X
4. The heritage curtilage for this item should be revised/reduced.		9. Maintain the existing setting of the heritage item, informed by the historic pattern of neighbouring development (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	X		
5. Not recommended for inclusion on the LEP.		10. Maintain the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X		
		11. The condition of this item is poor. Condition and maintenance should be monitored.			

Other recommendations and/or comments:

- None.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number
Heritage Act – State Heritage Register	N/A	-
Local Environmental Plan	N/A	-
Cumberland Heritage Study	St John of God Catholic Church and St John's Catholic Primary School	HS27
National Trust Australia Register	N/A	-

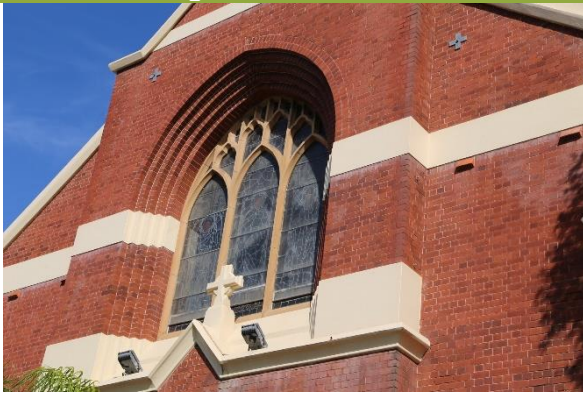
Other References

- Kass, T 1996, Auburn Heritage Study Draft Final Report. Volume 2 Historical Context Report. Sydney: Auburn Council.
- Kass, T 2008, Auburn, retrieved 27 March 2019, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/auburn>
- Jervis, J 1933, The story of Parramatta and district, Sydney.
- St John's Catholic Primary School Auburn 2016, 'About Us', accessed May 2020, <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/stjpsauburn/about-us>

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage items was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not assessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. Unless additional research was required, historical research for all heritage items was based on existing information in the Cumberland Heritage Study Stage 1 2019 prepared by Extent Heritage.

Additional Images



Detail of Church and arched window.



Side of Church.



Rear of Church.



View to building to rear of Church.



Rear of Church.



Overview of School.



View to extension and carpark along side of main School building.



Extension and carpark at School.