

<b>Area:</b> Mullewa	<b>Place Number:</b> 5	<b>Category:</b> 1
<b>Assessment Date:</b> 10/02/1995	<b>Last Revision Date:</b> 03/11/2011	
<b>HCWA Number:</b> 1656 & 511	<b>Asset ID:</b> MCH126865	

### PLACE DETAILS

<b>Name:</b>	Presentation Convent Fmr
<b>Other Names:</b>	School Admin Office
<b>Type of Place:</b>	School Administration Office
<b>Address:</b>	Doney Street
<b>Suburb:</b>	Mullewa

### LOCATION

<b>Map</b>	Mullewa	<b>GPS</b>	6842196.77	<b>GPS</b>	354941.220
<b>Reference:</b>	Townsite	<b>Northing:</b>	0000	<b>Easting:</b>	000



#### Photo Description:

20/09/2011

T. Henkel

Front (north) elevation of the former Convent building.

## SITE DETAILS

<b>Lot No.:</b>	Lot 14 & 15	<b>Assess No.:</b>	1467
<b>Reserv No.:</b>	43181	<b>Vol/Fol:</b>	1397/97
<b>Dia/Plan:</b>	886		

## USE OF PLACE

<b>Original Use:</b>	Convent		
<b>Current Use:</b>	Office		
<b>Ownership:</b>	Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton		
<b>Public Access:</b>	No	<b>Occupied:</b>	Occupied

## DESCRIPTION

<b>Walls:</b>	Stone	<b>Roof:</b>	CGI
<b>Condition:</b>	Good	<b>Integrity:</b>	
<b>Original fabric:</b>			
<b>Modifications:</b>	Internal Modifications		

The Presentation Convent Fmr is located immediately to the west of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The building is set back from Doney Street, with access via a gate in a picket fence to a paved pathway leading through a small garden to the front door. Designed in the Federation Bungalow style, the single storey square building is of local stone (weathered granite) construction with a steeply pitched corrugated iron gambrel roof. The roof extends broken back to cover surrounding verandahs which are supported on pairs of stop chamfered timber verandah posts, with three at the corners, mounted on rendered masonry piers to approximately one metre in height. A small gable to the north facing verandah enhances the main entrance to the building. A tall rendered corbelled chimney punctuates the roofscape to the south east corner. The building frontage is symmetrical, featuring large timber framed windows either side of a central doorway which has side light windows. Windows to the side elevations feature stucco rendered quoining. The west elevation includes the apsidal chapel which extends beyond the line of the verandah and has a separate gable roof. In the centre of the west wall the foundation stone is set just above window sill level and is carved out of Carrera marble. It reads: "To the Glory of God, this stone was laid by the Right Rev. W.B. Kelly, DD, Bishop of Geraldton 1915." The rear (south) wall has been rendered, a legacy of it having had an addition along its length. Internally a central corridor runs the full length of the building with rooms to each side of it, including the chapel in the north-west corner of the building. During 2009-10 considerable stone

repairs were carried out to alleviate the impact of rising damp and erosion.

## HISTORY

**Construction Date:** 1915                      **Source:** HCWA RHP  
Documentation  
**Architect:** J. Walsh-Smith & C. Smith  
**Builder:** Bracken Bros

Monthly Catholic services were first conducted in the developing town of Mullewa from early 1910. In 1912 the first Catholic church, a small hall-like structure, was constructed at the corner of Gray and Thomas Streets. By 1914, the population of Mullewa had grown to the extent that it could support a school. In August 1914, two Presentation Sisters from Geraldton, Mothers Leila Russell and Brigid Kenny, visited Mullewa to ascertain the possibility of establishing a branch house and concluded it would be a viable proposition. Subsequently in early 1915, Mother Leila Russell and Brigid Kenny together with Sister Baptist Grogan arrived in Mullewa to found the branch house. The Sisters found the accommodation to be 'poor and uncomfortable', but commenced school classes in February in the church hall, with 50 pupils enrolled. Fund raising towards building a convent in Mullewa commenced almost immediately. In 1915, Mother Brigid Denny, who was in charge at Mullewa, is believed to have drawn plans for a six room convent to provide residential accommodation for the Sisters and classroom facilities for their school. Bishop Kelly was to have laid the foundation stone for the convent, and it was inscribed accordingly. However, in his absence, on 10 October 1915, it was laid by Dean Graber. Constructed by Bracken Bros., the convent was completed shortly thereafter following which the Sisters took up occupation of the place. Following the appointment of Father John Cyril Hawes as Parish Priest at Mullewa in 1916, Hawes painted a crucifixion scene on the wall of the convent chapel behind the altar, and also painted religious figures on the glass windows at either side. Unfortunately, over time the works on the windows were adversely affected by sunlight and faded while the crucifixion scene was re-painted at some point in time, with the original colours altered. On 7 May 1950, the Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic School was opened in new purpose built buildings comprising three classrooms and an office. Meanwhile the Convent continued in residential use for the Sisters, however the cost of its upkeep was proving expensive with ongoing termite damage and fretting of the stone walls causing problems. In 1970 a temporary convent was established in a pre-fabricated building on the opposite side of the street. Meanwhile the old convent building was used as an annexe to the school, with some of the rooms reorganised to provide accommodation for television education, a library and storage. In the early to mid-1970s, the school continued to

grow, with an additional classroom added in 1973, and two further rooms built in 1975. A new brick convent was built at the corner of Bowes and Maitland Streets and it was blessed and opened by Bishop Hickey in February 1987. However, with the Presentation Congregation dwindling as serving members reached retirement and replacements declined, it was

soon apparent that alternative arrangements would need to be addressed. In 1989, 75 years of service by the Presentation Sisters to the Parish of Mullewa was commemorated with a plaque at the former convent, which was unveiled by the Parish Priest, Father O'Flaherty, on 14 September 1989. In the 1990s, a lay principle replaced the religious principle and on 8 December 1995, Our Lady of Mt Carmel School farewelled Sisters Dolores and Veronica, the last of the Presentation Sisters to serve there. In the late 1990s considerable internal renovations were undertaken on the old Convent building to facilitate its use as a school administration office – a function which continues to the present day.

### HISTORIC THEMES

<b>HCWA:</b>	402 Education & Science 406 Religion
<b>AHC:</b>	6.2 Establishing schools 6.5 Educating people in remote places 8.6.1 Worshipping together

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Presentation Convent Fmr has considerable historic significance for its long term association with the Catholic Church, the Presentation Sisters and the delivery of educational services in the district. The building forms an integral part of the Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church and School Precinct and makes an important contribution to the built fabric of Mullewa. The building has high aesthetic value for its use of local stone, decorative detailing and visual linkages to the adjacent church. The place is held in high esteem by the local community and continues to fulfil an important function in the town.

### MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

<b>Management Category:</b>	1
<b>Level of Significance:</b>	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
<b>Management</b>	

Recommendation:

Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.

### **OTHER LISTINGS**

Heritage Council of WA - Register, 25/11/1994

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

HCWA RHP Documentation (P1656); James, R.M., "From Cork to Capricorn: A History of the Presentation Sisters in Western Australia, 1891-1991" Perth: The Congregation of the Presentation Sisters, 1996; James, R.M., "The Call and the Vision: The Presentation Sisters: 100 Years in Western Australia 1891-1991", Perth: The Congregation of the Presentation Sisters, 1991; Keeffe, B., "Eastward Ho: To Mullewa and The Murchsion", Mullewa Shire Council, 1995.

### **OTHER PHOTOS**



**Photo Description:**  
20/09/2011  
T. Henkel  
Side (east) elevation.



**Photo Description:**  
20/09/2011  
T. Henkel  
Main entrance enhanced by feature gable.