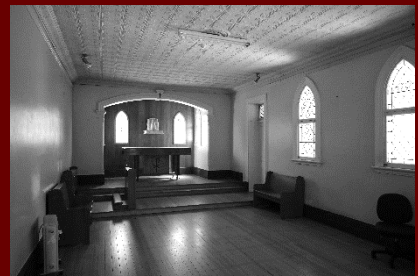
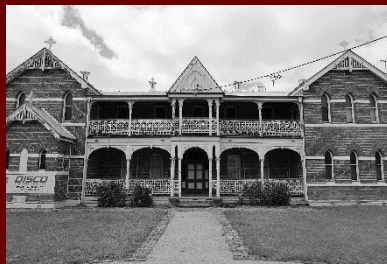
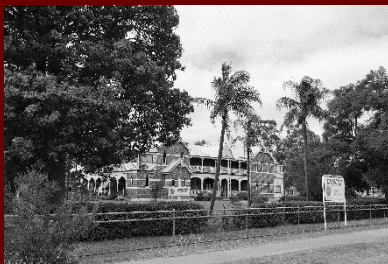


P R A E V I U S  
H E R I T A G E

---



C O N S E R V A T I O N  
M A N A G E M E N T P L A N

I O N A

( F O R M E R ) S T C O L U M B A ' S C O N V E N T

1 6 9 C U N N I N G H A M S T R E E T ,  
D A L B Y

QHR ID# 602761

Prepared for St Joseph's Parish Dalby

Cover Image (left): Iona from Cunningham Street  
Cover Image (middle): Front facade  
Cover Image (right): Chapel

*In the spirit of reconciliation, Praevius Heritage acknowledges the many Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise their strengths, and spiritual belonging as custodians of the oldest continuing cultures on the planet. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, skies and culture. We acknowledge their trials, hardships and losses, and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.*

© Praevius Heritage 2024

Revision history

Revision	Details	Issue date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Authorised for release by
A	Draft for client feedback	27/05/2024	NL		NL
B	Final	18/06/2024	NL	LC	NL

## Executive summary

### Background

---

In the 1880s the Sisters of Mercy were tasked with providing education services in the growing town of Dalby. A convent was to provide teaching to school students, as well as boarding facilities for those families who lived too far from the town. Originally located in the former Plough Inn, a purposed built grand two-storey brick building was constructed in 1913 on Cunningham Street, close by to St Joseph's Catholic Church. The building served the Sisters of Mercy until 1990 when St Joseph's Parish took over management of the building, initially providing inter-denominational boarding accommodation for all the schools in Dalby. In recent years, however, the building has been utilised as office and teaching rooms for youth services.

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was commissioned by St Joseph's Parish. The preparation of this CMP forms part of a commitment to long term management strategies and is a requirement for future applications to the QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) who oversee proposed works to State heritage listed places.

### The heritage place

---

The study area is located at 169 Cunningham Street, Dalby. This is a large property with a real property address described as Lot 41 on SP193330. The heritage place is a portion of this land parcel, located at the western corner of the greater site, at the corner of Cunningham and Edward Streets.

Iona was listed on the Queensland Heritage Register as 'St Columba's Convent' (ID 602761) with heritage significance relating to historical, characteristic and aesthetic values. The site is also identified in the Heritage Overlay map of the Western Downs Planning Scheme.

### The report

---

This conservation management plan was prepared in accordance with The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, 2013 (and its associated Practice Notes); The Conservation Plan: a guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European Cultural Significance; and the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) guidelines.

The report includes a history of Iona; a description and analysis of the site, setting and buildings; an assessment of significance; relevant legislation and obligations; constraints and opportunities for the heritage place; policies to guide the future management of the place; and a maintenance and repair plan.

### Conservation policies

---

Conservation policies have been developed to guide the management, maintenance and future development of Iona. The policies all have their roots in good conservation practice as laid out by the Burra Charter. The policies are based on an understanding of the heritage significance of the place and include policies pertaining to:

- Stakeholder coordination
- Conservation approaches
- Acknowledge, retain and conserve heritage values
- Future alterations and development
- Maintenance and repairs
- Facilitate ongoing use of the site

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction .....	1
1.2	Heritage status .....	1
1.3	The study area.....	2
1.4	Methodology.....	4
1.5	Limitations.....	4
1.6	Study team.....	4
1.7	Acknowledgements .....	4
1.8	Terminology .....	5
1.9	Abbreviations .....	5
<b>2.0</b>	<b>A brief history .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Traditional Custodians.....	7
2.2	Early contact.....	8
2.3	Expansion .....	9
2.4	Settlement .....	11
2.5	Catholicism in Queensland .....	12
2.6	A budding Catholic community.....	13
2.7	From Inn to Convent school .....	15
2.8	What’s in a Name? .....	17
2.9	Growth of Dalby .....	18
2.10	A new home (away from home) .....	19
2.11	Construction of the new convent .....	20
2.12	The opening ceremony .....	21
2.13	Life at St Columba’s Convent .....	22
2.14	From St Columba’s to St Joseph’s Hostel .....	24
2.15	The recent years.....	26
2.16	Timeline.....	28
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Physical evidence .....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	29
3.2	Locality and setting .....	29
3.3	Sightlines and views .....	30
3.4	The site elements .....	30
3.5	Iona – former St Columba’s Convent building.....	31
3.6	Annotated plans .....	34
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Heritage significance .....</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	37
4.2	Statement of Significance from the Queensland Heritage Register .....	37
4.3	Schedule of significance .....	38
4.3.1	Significance rating .....	38
4.3.2	Significant elements on the site.....	39
4.3.3	Examples of fabric and elements .....	41
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Legislation and obligations .....</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1	Western Downs Planning Scheme .....	45
5.2	<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i> .....	45
5.3	Development approval and exemption to approval .....	45
5.3.1	General exemption certificate .....	46
5.3.2	Heritage Exemption Certificate.....	46
5.3.3	Development Applications.....	48
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Constraints and opportunities.....</b>	<b>49</b>



6.1	Constraints due to significance .....	49
6.2	Development challenges .....	49
6.3	Opportunities .....	49
6.4	Future research / reports .....	50
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Conservation policies .....</b>	<b>51</b>
7.1	Stakeholder coordination .....	51
7.2	Review .....	51
	7.2.1 Review of this CMP .....	51
7.3	Conservation approach .....	51
	7.3.1 The Burra Charter .....	51
	7.3.2 The <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i> and the Queensland Heritage Register .....	52
	7.3.3 Western Downs Planning Scheme .....	53
	7.3.4 Qualified personnel .....	53
	7.3.5 Site induction .....	54
	7.3.6 Keeping records .....	55
7.4	Acknowledge, retain and enhance heritage values .....	55
	7.4.1 Retain the significance of the heritage place .....	55
	7.4.2 Ensure compatible and continued use .....	55
	7.4.3 Retain and conserve the layout .....	56
	7.4.4 Retain and conserve the significant elements .....	56
	7.4.5 Significant views .....	57
	7.4.6 Interpretation .....	57
7.5	Future alterations and development .....	58
	7.5.1 Requirement for approval for proposed works .....	58
	7.5.2 Future site development .....	58
	7.5.3 Future alterations and development of the elements .....	59
	7.5.4 Future alterations and development of the landscaping .....	60
	7.5.5 Fencing .....	61
	7.5.6 Shade sails .....	61
	7.5.7 Reinstatement of open verandahs .....	61
7.6	Maintenance and repairs .....	62
	7.6.1 Maintenance inspection .....	62
	7.6.2 Materials and methods of repair .....	62
	7.6.3 Fixtures and fittings .....	62
7.7	Facilitate ongoing use of the site .....	63
	7.7.1 Services .....	63
	7.7.2 Fire safety services .....	64
	7.7.3 Sustainability .....	64
	7.7.4 Paint / decorative schemes .....	65
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Implementation plan .....</b>	<b>66</b>
8.1	Purpose of implementation plan .....	66
8.2	Action Plan .....	66
8.3	Maintenance plan .....	67
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>70</b>
10.1	Queensland Heritage Register listing .....	70
10.2	Example induction notes for contractors .....	81

# 1.0 Background

## 1.1 Introduction

Iona is the current name of the former St Columba's Convent in Dalby. In the 1880s the Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic order from Ireland, were tasked with providing education services in the growing town of Dalby. The Dalby convent was to provide a home for the Sisters, teaching facilities for day students, and boarding facilities for those families who lived too far from town. Originally, the convent was located in the former Plough Inn, however in 1913 the Sisters moved to a purpose-built grand two storey brick building on Cunningham Street, close by to St Joseph's Catholic Church. The building served the Sisters of Mercy until 1990 when St Joseph's Parish took over management of the building, initially providing inter-denominational boarding accommodation for all the schools in Dalby. In recent years the building has been utilised as office and teaching rooms for youth services.

As the former St Columba's Convent, Iona is considered to have heritage significance and is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register (Place ID 602761) and the Western Downs Regional Council Planning Scheme.

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was commissioned by St Joseph's Parish Dalby. It documents the cultural heritage significance of the site and built elements, and gives guidance on future management and conservation of the heritage place. The preparation of this CMP forms part of a commitment to long term management strategies and is a requirement for future applications to the QLD Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI), who oversee proposed works to State heritage listed places.

## 1.2 Heritage status

St Columba's Convent was listed on the Queensland Heritage Register with ID 602761 in December 2010. It has identified heritage significance relating to historical, characteristic and aesthetic values.

The site is also identified in the Heritage Overlay map of the Western Downs Planning Scheme.

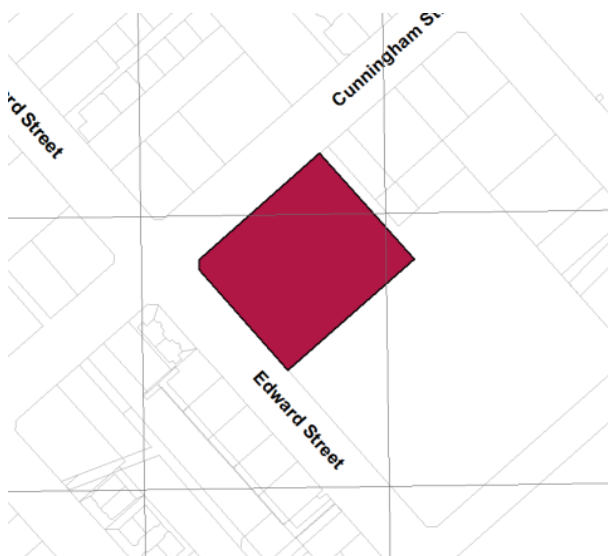


Figure 1: Heritage boundary defined in the QHR listing. (Source: QHR)

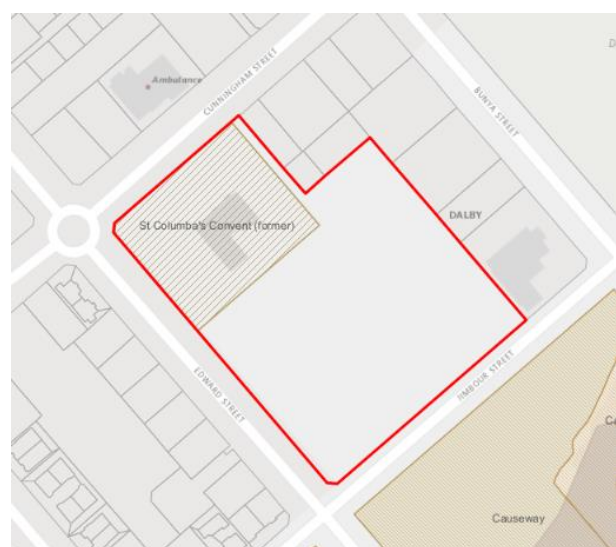


Figure 2: WDRC Heritage overlay mapping includes Iona as a Cultural Heritage site of State Significance (hatched) within the broader site boundary. (Source: Western Downs Planning Scheme Interactive Mapping)



### 1.3 The study area

---

The study area is located at 169 Cunningham Street, Dalby. This is a large property with a real property address described as Lot 41 on SP193330. The heritage place is a portion of this land parcel, located at the western corner of the greater site, at the corner of Cunningham and Edward Streets. An easement has been allowed for access to the rear of the greater site from Cunningham Street.



Figure 3: Location of Iona within Dalby. (Source: Nearmaps)



Figure 4: Aerial photograph showing the location of Iona within the township of Dalby. (Source: Nearmaps)





*Figure 5: The greater site (black dashed lines indicate the cadastral boundary) with the boundary of the heritage place indicated (red line). (Source: QGlobe)*

## 1.4 Methodology

---

This report was prepared in accordance with the following documents:

- *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (the *Burra Charter*);
- Its associated Practice Notes (in particular *Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance*); and
- *The Conservation Plan: a guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European Cultural Significance*.

The preparation of this report included the following investigations and tasks:

**Desktop research** – including searches of relevant heritage databases; Trove for documents related to the site; historic photographs in Local, State and National archives; and historical aerial photographs of the site.

**Site investigation** – including assessment of setting, fabric, integrity, and condition.

## 1.5 Limitations

---

This report addresses the post-colonisation cultural significance of the place. Although some Aboriginal associations may be considered, further research may add to the heritage values of the place.

All inspections of St Colomba's Convent were visual only, and only of the exposed surface of the fabric. No samples of materials were taken during site inspection. Structural inspection and assessment are excluded from the scope of this report, and as such no professional advice on the structural condition or adequacy of the built elements was provided during inspection, description, analysis or recommended action. Inspection of services (electrical, drainage, etc) was excluded.

The condition of the built elements reported below represents an opinion based on site inspections conducted between 13-15 March 2024 by Natalie List.

## 1.6 Study team

---

This report was prepared by Natalie List, Principal of Praevius Heritage. Natalie is a full member of ICOMOS. Assistance with the history was provided by Tash Turgoose.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs and drawings are by Praevius Heritage.

## 1.7 Acknowledgements

---

Thanks to Lesley Clapperton of the St Joseph's Parish Dalby for her knowledge of the site, and for coordinating the project. Thanks to Fr Jim Cronin and Geoff McIntyre for the warm welcome and assistance in understanding the site and future plans.

Thanks to Jean Town of the Dalby Family History Society for her invaluable help and access to archives.

Thanks to the Queensland State Archives for providing access to research files.

## 1.8 Terminology

---

Article 1 of the *Burra Charter* includes the following definitions of several terms used in this report.

**Place** means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions. (Place has a broad scope and includes natural and cultural features. Place can be large or small: for example, a memorial, a tree, an individual building or group of buildings...)

**Cultural significance** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for the past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, and related places and objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

**Fabric** means all the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents, and objects.

**Conservation** means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.

**Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of a place, and its setting. Maintenance is distinguished from repair which involves restoration or reconstruction.

**Preservation** means maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

**Restoration** means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

**Reconstruction** means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.

**Adaptation** means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

**Use** means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

**Compatible use** means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal impact on cultural significance.

**Setting** means the immediate and extended environment of a place that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.

**Related place** means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

**Associations** mean the connections that exist between people and a place.

**Meanings** denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

**Interpretation** means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

## 1.9 Abbreviations

---

CMP	Conservation Management Plan
DESI	Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (QLD)
DFHS	Dalby Family History Society
QHAItas	Queensland Heritage Altas
QHR	Queensland Heritage Register

QSA	Queensland State Archives
QLD Heritage Act	<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>
SARA	State Assessment and Referral Agency
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SLQ	State Library of Queensland
WDRC	Western Downs Regional Council

## 2.0 A brief history

### 2.1 Traditional Custodians



Figure 6: *Camp at Gladfield, Dec. 29th, 1851.* (Source: Mitchell Library, SLNSW)

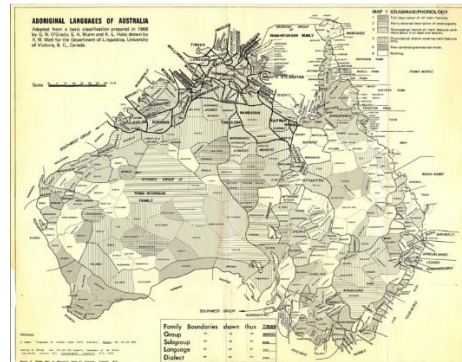


Figure 7: *1974 Map of traditional lands of Aboriginal peoples across Australia as surveyed by Norman B Tindale.* (Source: Tindale<sup>1</sup>)

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, Australia was home to First Nations Australians who lived on the continent for tens of thousands of years. These diverse Indigenous cultures had - and continue to have - deep connections to the land, developing unique languages, traditions, and social structures over millennia. The Western Downs Region was occupied by the Barunggam People. Their territory was vast, covering a region boundaried north by Charley Creek, south by modern-day Tara, east to the headwaters of the Condamine River, and west to Wongorgera and Woleebee; or, more simply, the 'red soils south and west of the Dividing Range'<sup>2</sup>.

A significant aspect of Indigenous life in the Darling Downs was the Bunya Nut Festival, which occurred every two to three years or when nuts were plentiful in the territory. Records show the festival drew tribes from various regions, representing at least 14 different Indigenous dialects. It served as a crucial gathering for southern Queensland tribes to engage in initiation ceremonies, corroborees, settle disputes, exchange knowledge, and enjoy the bounty of bunya nuts. This tradition persisted in the area until the 1870s<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://mnclibrary.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Maps-of-Aboriginal-country.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Tindale, 1974

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tr.qld.gov.au/our-region/history/indigenous-history/7870-indigenous-history>



## 2.2 Early contact



Figure 8: Portrait of Allan Cunningham. (Source: SLNSW<sup>4</sup>)



Figure 9: Detail of an 1829(?) sketch of the interior of NSW situated between Hunter's River and Moreton Bay by Allan Cunningham. (Source: SLNSW<sup>5</sup>)

In 1827 European exploration of the region began when Allan Cunningham led an expedition from the Hunter River to what is now known as Spicer's Gap. Cunningham's journey led him through the Great Dividing Range, where he encountered untamed wilderness and navigated through dense forests and steep valleys. Despite the hardships, Cunningham's keen observational skills and botanical expertise enabled him to document a wide array of plant species, many of which were previously unknown to science.

In June 1827, Cunningham reached the vast grassy plains of the Darling Downs, a region he described as "the garden of Australia". He saw this fertile expanse of rolling hills and rich soil as a significant discovery, offering immense potential for European-style agricultural development and settlement.

More than a decade after Cunningham's exploration of the Darling Downs, the region saw the arrival of the first wave of European settlers. This invasion signalled a turbulent era for the Indigenous Barunggam people inhabiting the area.

The arrival of European settlers introduced a host of diseases, to which the Barunggam people had no immunity. Infections such as smallpox, influenza and measles ravaged Indigenous communities, resulting in widespread illness and death. Furthermore, the European settlers viewed the Aboriginal tribes as obstacles to their ambitions of establishing new settlements and exploiting the land for agricultural and pastoral purposes. This perception fuelled conflicts and violent encounters between settlers and Indigenous peoples, as the former sought to assert their dominance over the land.

Despite the resistance put up by Indigenous groups, particularly during the tumultuous 1840s, the relentless pressure from European settlers and the devastating impact of introduced diseases took a heavy toll on the Barunggam population. By the dawn of the 1870s, the once-thriving Aboriginal communities of the Darling Downs had been decimated, with their numbers drastically reduced to near non-existence. This tragic chapter in the history of the Darling Downs serves as a sobering reminder of the devastating consequences of colonial expansion on Indigenous populations.

This land was never ceded.

<sup>4</sup> <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/YRIZ7wqn/kzrQzz8jpKRPZ>

<sup>5</sup> <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74Vv3mmWrqKb>

## 2.3 Expansion

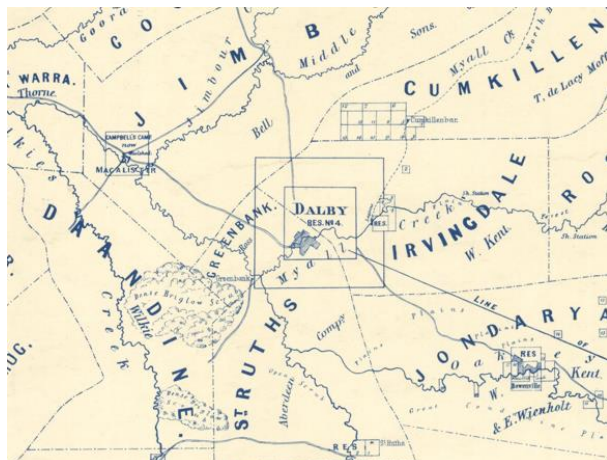


Figure 10: Detail of 1864 Squatting Map of the Darling Downs district showing townships, reserves and roads. (Source: QHAtlas<sup>6</sup>)



Figure 11: Southern portion of Queensland showing surveyed runs, 1872. (Source: QHAtlas<sup>7</sup>)

News of fertile pastures spread rapidly, triggering a land rush. Squatters moved through the area, bringing livestock with them, often settling in an area of good agricultural land. Established pastoralists saw significant profit potential, particularly for those with capital seeking new pastures for sheep farming, and would send out employees to scout for new land. Additionally, sons of wealthy aristocracy and gentry in England and Scotland were sent to initiate land claims. With political, economic and social influence in London, Sydney, and later Brisbane, these squatters had significant influence on local proceedings involving convict labour, the Native Police and new settlers<sup>8</sup>.

During the early stages of pastoral development in Queensland (then known as northern New South Wales), the Colonial Government devised a leasehold system that entailed the settlement of the state without the need of the government surveying or improving the countryside. This system allowed companies and individuals to open up the districts through the provision of Pastoral Leases. There was no restriction on the number of leases that a company or individual could have, and the leases were set for a finite number of years, but without restrictions as to areas or ownership. When these leases ran their courses, the land was broken up into grazing Selections. These Selections were for the exclusive use of the individuals, however there were limitations to the maximum area to be held. When these Selection leases ran their courses, they could be renewed, unless the Crown required them for closer settlement purposes (smaller farming units or townships).

At each of the lease renewals the leaseholder had to identify the land under their care. Thus, the government managed the opening up of pastoral Queensland without the need of surveying or improving the countryside.

In the Darling Downs area, large runs were taken up by a number of different people, including Richard Scougall and Charles Coxen who together sent Henry Dennis as an agent to seek new pastoral runs. At the time Dennis was a Superintendent for Richard Scougall, a Scotsman who had arrived in Australia in 1832, bringing with him the first “free” white servants to Australia. He had set up a property on the Liverpool

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.qhatlas.com.au/map/southern-portion-queensland-showing-surveyed-runs-1872>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qhatlas.com.au/map/southern-portion-queensland-showing-surveyed-runs-1872>

<sup>8</sup> <https://paulbuddhistory.com/convict-history-of-brisbane/squatters-take-possession-of-the-darling-downs/>

Plains known as Elderslie, and later applied for licenses to take up land “beyond the limits” as he was overstocked of sheep.

Charles Coxen had established himself in the 1830s at a property near Scone. He often would set out on expeditions, seeking specimens of birds and mammals in the Hunter region (and later founding the Queensland Museum in 1855). He was associated with a large number of pastoral properties across southern Queensland.

After travelling northwards, Dennis crossed into the Darling Downs and, in July 1841, claimed three pastoral runs in the district – Jimbour for Scougall, Jondaryan for Charles Coxen and Myall Creek (apparently) for himself. Scougall soon after sold Jimbour to Thomas Bell in 1843, and Dennis is noted as manager by 1846. The first timber hut constructed on the Darling Downs was at Jimbour.<sup>9</sup> Myall Creek was managed by Charles Coxen’s nephew, Henry W Coxen.<sup>10</sup>

The Myall Creek pastoral run straddled its namesake river and was the crossing point for teams travelling north and south. It was located near the junction of Jimbour, Jondaryan, Greenbank, Irvingdale and Cecil Plains pastoral runs.



Figure 12: 1846 – Map of Darling Downs showing the stations occupied by squatters including Dennis at Jimbour and Russel at Cecil Plains. Note no station at the Myall Creek crossing. (Source: SLNSW<sup>11</sup>)

<sup>9</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/188901436>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.anps.org.au/upload/ANPSDataReport6.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VvOW8PQVWy>



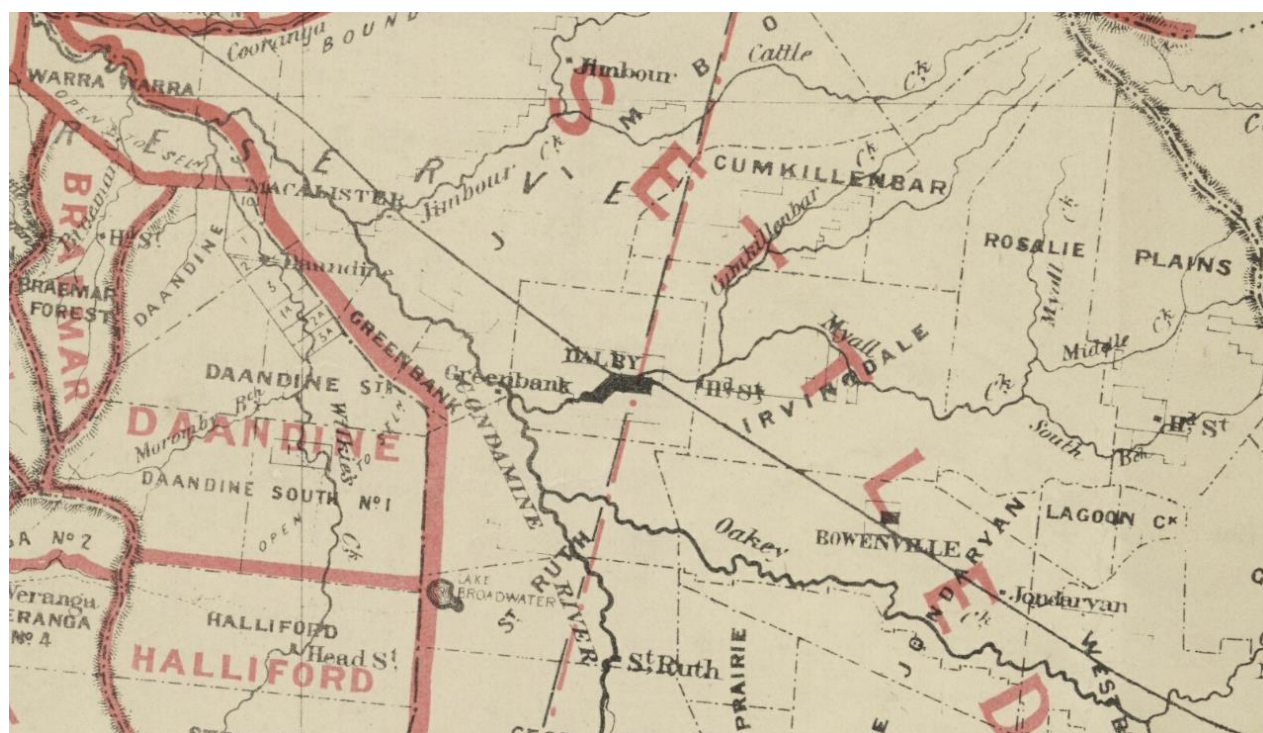


Figure 13: A detail of an 1883 map showing surveyed and unsurveyed runs. This later map shows the Myall Creek run boundary surrounding Dalby, although it was no longer named as such by this time. (Source: SLNSW<sup>12</sup>)

## 2.4 Settlement

### **“Pub” At The Crossing Of Myall Creek**

What is now the prosperous and important town of Dalby began with a small bush “pub”, erected on one of the banks of Myall Creek at a crossing-place on the track leading to the few pastoral holdings lying to the westward.

The building was erected about 1846 by Henry Stuart Russell, then the lessee of Cecil Plains, who did this as a kindly provision for Samuel Stewart, the latter having been his hut keeper on Cecil Plains.

All the teams and wagons on the way

Figure 14: 1938 newspaper article reminiscing about the first pub in Dalby. (Source: Trove<sup>13</sup>)

As the number of squatters in the area grew, so did the people who provided services for them. The ford of the Myall Creek where the track ran north-south was locally known as ‘The Crossing’ and it was here that the first building was constructed in 1846. Henry Russell of Cecil Plains constructed a small slab and bark hut that was used as a travellers’ inn. This was managed by Russell’s hut keeper, Samuel Stewart and his family. The inn was located on the south bank of the river (in the vicinity of the corner of Myall and Bunya Streets today). From this time onwards more buildings were constructed and a small settlement grew over the next few years.

After the residents of this new settlement approached the NSW Government, a surveyor was sent in 1852 to draft a town plan of one square mile at Myall Creek. Unfortunately, Surveyor EO Moriaty erred in the flood levels, and as a result the plan was rejected. The following year Assistant Surveyor General Samuel Augustus Perry was dispatched to resurvey the site. He laid out the nucleus of the township in a grid, and renamed the town ‘Dalby’. In August 1854 the NSW Government officially proclaimed Dalby a township.

<sup>12</sup> <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VvV4lQZjGO>

<sup>13</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18907487>

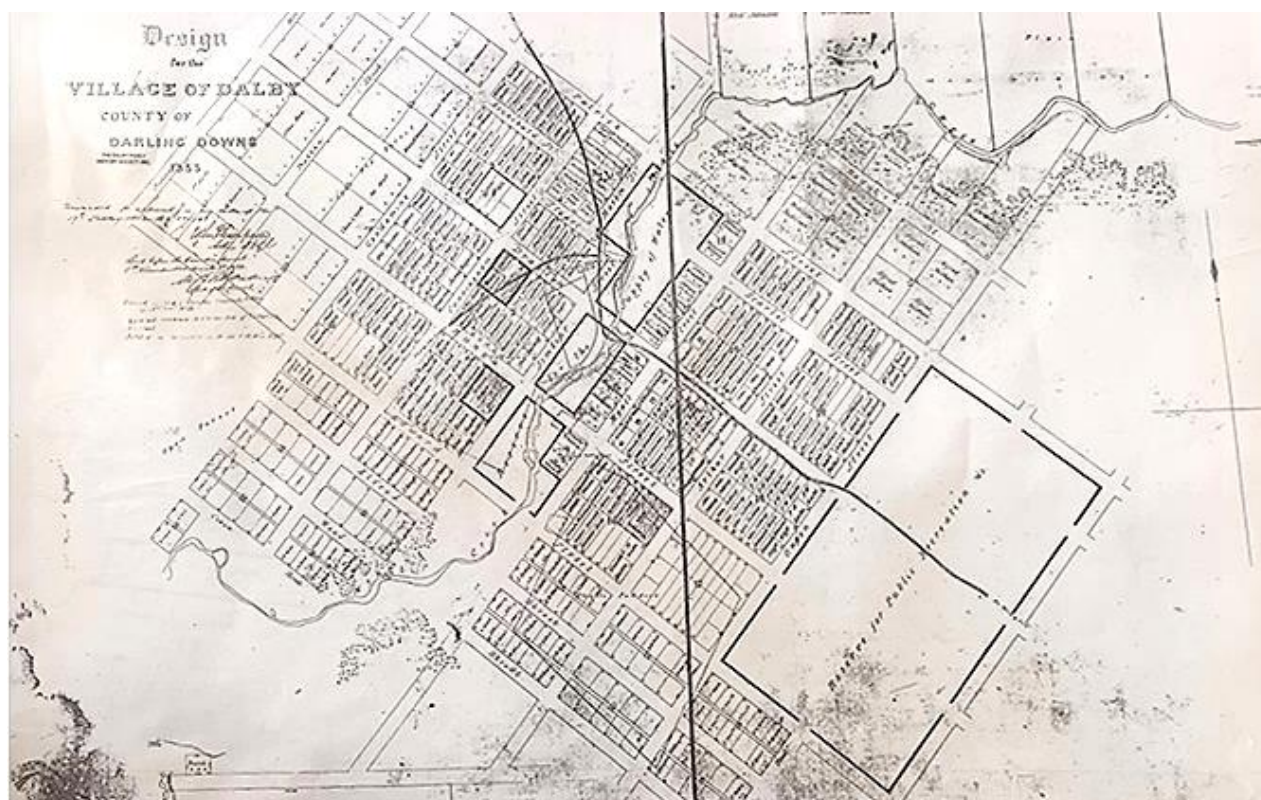


Figure 15: The 'Design for the Village of Dalby, County of Darling Downs. 1853' map showing the layout of the new township. (Source: DFHS archives)

After its establishment, Dalby soon acquired a variety of government services. These included the opening of a post office in August 1854, the formal declaration of the Dalby Police District in 1855, and the establishment of a National School in 1859. The first land sales commenced in 1857, and Dalby was officially gazetted as a municipality on 29 August 1863. A local newspaper, the Dalby Herald, began publication in 1865<sup>14</sup>. The expansion of the western railway line from Toowoomba to Dalby in 1868 sparked a period of significant growth and prosperity for the town<sup>15</sup>. However, this boom tapered off with the further extension of the railway line westward in 1877<sup>16</sup>, though the town remained an important rail hub, with branches eventually being built to Bell (1906), Tara (1911), and Jandowae (1914).

When Samuel Stewart died tragically at the age of 29 in 1851, the management of his hotel was transferred to Josiah Milstead. In 1863 Milstead constructed a grand new inn across the road from the original rough inn, which he called the Plough Inn. This was the first two storey building in Dalby and became the up-market hotel in the town at the time<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.5 Catholicism in Queensland

The history of Catholicism in Queensland is intertwined with the broader history of European settlement and colonisation in Australia. Catholicism arrived in Queensland with the arrival of European explorers and settlers in the 19th century. One of the earliest recorded Catholic masses in Queensland took place in 1824, celebrated by Father Jeremiah O'Flynn, a priest who accompanied the explorer John Oxley on his expedition to explore the Moreton Bay area.

<sup>14</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/217529643>

<sup>15</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/dalby/a-history-of-business-in-dalby/news-story/f4403965728728176bd1ceccfd97e858>

<sup>17</sup> Dalby Herald, 26/7/2016. DFHS



In the early years of European settlement, Catholicism faced challenges due to the predominantly Protestant demographic of the settlers, and government policies that favoured Protestantism. However, Catholicism gradually gained a foothold in Queensland as the Catholic population grew with the influx of Irish, Scottish, and German immigrants, many of whom were fleeing poverty, persecution, or seeking opportunities in the new colony.

The establishment of religious orders and congregations played a crucial role in the expansion of Catholicism in Queensland. Orders such as the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of St Joseph, and the Marist Brothers established schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other social welfare institutions throughout Queensland, providing education, healthcare, and support to communities across the state.

The Catholic Church also played a significant role in advocating for social justice and human rights in Queensland. Catholic leaders such as Archbishop James Duhig and Archbishop Francis Rush were outspoken advocates for workers' rights, Indigenous rights, and social reform.

Today, Catholicism remains one of the largest Christian denominations in Queensland, with a network of churches, schools, hospitals, and social welfare organisations serving communities across the state. The history of Catholicism in Queensland reflects the broader social, cultural, and political developments in Australian history and continues to shape the identity and values of Queenslanders today.

## 2.6 A budding Catholic community

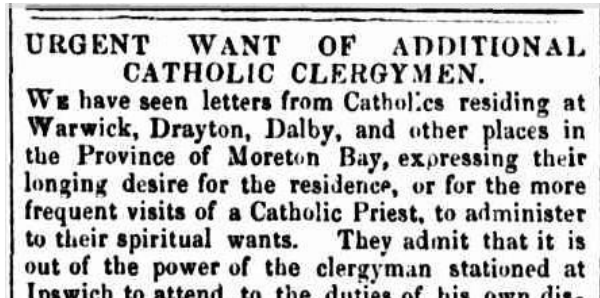


Figure 16: 1857 article calling for more pastoral care in the Darling Downs district. (Source: Trove<sup>18</sup>)



Figure 17: 'Attendant groom – awaiting the arrive of Father Denis Byrne in preparation for a visit to parishioners in out-lying areas' (Source: Mercy Memoirs, 1977. DFHS)

In the 1850s the Queensland population was widely scattered and often itinerant, and pastoral care across the state was sporadic. Visiting priests travelled long distances from Ipswich to conduct Mass in local establishments such as court rooms, town halls and inns. This included the first Mass in Dalby in the home of Samuel Stewart in 1851, six years after he settled at 'The Crossing' to manage the small pub on the bank of the Myall Creek.

In the 1850s Catholic people of the Darling Downs region were encouraged to donate funds towards the education and travel expenses of ecclesiastical students who would be able to take up positions to serve the community.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/115564381>

<sup>19</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/115564381>

A newspaper article in 1861 described the ministrations by travelling clergy –

*The arrival of the Rev. Mr. Renehan, Roman Catholic Clergyman, in this place, has given to the followers of that church especially, the very highest degree of satisfaction. The rev. gentleman has officiated here for the last two Sabbaths, devoting the whole of the intervening time to visiting the stations in the district, affording that consolation such as he alone can give. Indeed, I cannot help remarking the plain unassuming manners and courtesy of this gentleman, which is not only calculated to endear him to the members of this church, but to all with whom he may come in contact. The Right Rev. Dr. Quin (the Bishop), who is on a tour, arrived here on Monday last. I trust, and doubt not, that the visits of these sacred divines will be productive of much good, and only hope the day is not far distant when we shall see one of them settled amongst us.*<sup>20</sup>

When Dr James Quinn was appointed as the inaugural Bishop of Brisbane in 1861, the recently formed Colony of Queensland had a population of 30,059, with Catholics comprising 7,696 (39%) of the total. In the primary towns of the Darling Downs, the Catholic population was: 18% in Warwick, 22% in Toowoomba, 28% in Dalby, and 32% in Drayton<sup>21</sup>.



Figure 18: St Joseph's Catholic Church, 1895.  
(Source: Picture Western Downs<sup>22</sup>)

In 1865 the construction of a small brick church at Dalby commenced, however before the walls were completed a cyclone hit the area and demolish the structure. Nevertheless, the building was reconstructed and finished and in 1866 Bishop James Quinn opened St Joseph's Catholic Church<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, no resident priest was able to minister to the Dalby congregation, with a number of priests officiating temporarily from their own parishes.

Not long after the opening, consideration was given to providing a school adjacent to the church.

<sup>20</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/77433499>

<sup>21</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

<sup>22</sup> <https://westerndowns.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/WPAC/ALLENQ/16135986/4481052,67?FMT=IMG>

<sup>23</sup> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article215449114>

## 2.7 From Inn to Convent school



Figure 19: Mother Catherine McAuley. (Source: Mercy Memoirs)



Figure 20: Mother Mary Rose. (Source: Mercy Memoirs<sup>24</sup>)

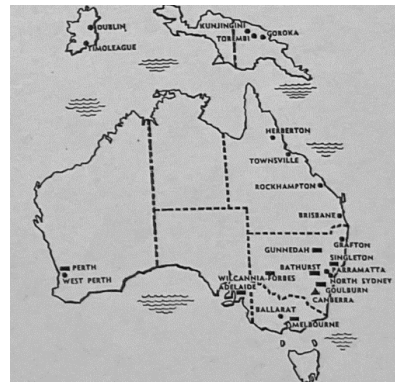


Figure 21: Congregations of the Sisters of Mercy, Australia. (Source: QSA)

The Order of the Sisters of Mercy was founded by Catherine McAuley in Dublin Ireland in 1831, with a focus on providing educational, religious and social services for women and children. The first Sisters came to Australia in 1846, establishing a foundation in Perth. By 1861 a contingent of Sisters of Mercy from Ireland arrived in Brisbane, having travelled with Bishop James Quinn.

Over the next few decades, the Order helped to establish a number of convent schools, including the Mercy Convent in Toowoomba in 1873.

In the late 1880s Bishop Quinn received numerous delegations for a convent school to be opened in the Dalby area to allow for the education of students from the region. In fact, finding their own pastor, Father Byrne, unenthused and lacking urgency on the matter, locals had sent a delegation to Brisbane to ask Bishop Quinn to send Sisters to teach their children. Their cries were heard and the Bishop sent the Sisters of Mercy to establish a convent at Dalby. The Sisters were aided in their purpose with a fund of £400 allocated to the area by those at the All Hallows Convent in Brisbane<sup>25</sup>. A property was sought in which to establish the new Convent.

The Plough Inn Hotel was now being sold as part of the estate of CC Macdonald, a local pastoralist who owned the property at the time. Bishop Quinn was able to acquire half of this property - noted as Lots 14, 15 and 16 (originally lots 2, 3, and 4) of Section 16<sup>26</sup>, including the two storey inn building itself.

Mother Mary Rose, who had pioneered Toowoomba's Convent, was tasked with the establishing this new convent<sup>27</sup>, along with Sisters Mary Beatrice, Mary Francis, Mary Ligouri, Mary Audeon, and M Ethnea<sup>28</sup>. The task was not an easy one, as the nuns set out to transform an inn into a convent. Under their guidance, the former Plough Inn became St Columba's - the Sisters of Mercy's eleventh school in Queensland.

One issue with the site, however, was the location of the new convent from the small church, located on the opposite side of the creek. To help the Sisters cross from one side to the other, a large log was used to span the creek, later to be replaced by a small bridge.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Mercy Memoirs, 1977. DFHS

<sup>25</sup> Mercy Memoirs, 1977. DFHS

<sup>26</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

<sup>27</sup> Beyond Our Dreams: A Century of the Works of Mercy in Queensland, Sister M Xaverius O'Donoghue, p.136

<sup>28</sup> Mercy Memoirs, 1977. DFHS

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/dalby/early-days-behind-dalbys-first-convent/news->





Figure 22: *St Columba's, Dalby 1877, in the former Plough Inn. (Source: History Pin<sup>30</sup>)*

passed a motion to authorise the withdrawal of all financial assistance to government schools from 1881. In response to this, Bishop Quinn demanded that all salaries paid to the teachers of schools in his diocese were to be pooled into a central fund, in the hopes of securing the future of the Catholic Education System. Parish priest Father Denis Byrne, strongly resented this motion as the pooled funds were not enough to cover costs, and felt strained at the thought of having to impose school fees on parents experiencing sweeping economic depression as a result of successive droughts in the region – a sentiment echoed by the Sisters of the convent.



Figure 23: *Dr Dunne, soon to be the first Archbishop of Queensland. (Source: Mercy Memoirs<sup>32</sup>)*

Despite Fr Byrne's protestations, the Sisters were not allowed to use a penny of their salaries, nor were they permitted to run fundraising events. This led to very challenging conditions for the Sisters, who were noted as being too proud and 'holy' to admit severe hunger. This issue was highlighted by Fr Byrne to his close friend Dr Dunne (who would lead the Episcopal See of Brisbane), who noted that more Sisters met their end in Dalby than, proportionately, at any other centre. In response to this, Dunne sent the 'wizard of finance' - Mother Vincent - to Dalby, to aid the Sisters, and some burden was lifted<sup>33</sup>.

Despite 1884 proving to be a tough year for the convent (the area was hit by another severe drought, and a violent storm tore the roof from the convent), the year also saw the confirmation of 99 candidates, and the succession of a 'brilliant, scholarship-winning' head teacher, Sister M Cataldus<sup>34</sup>.

For many years, the school remained small - in 1894, only 4 staff and 83 children were registered at the school.

story/b67664488d5cdefef4ef7bfad1e0d2bb

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.historypin.org/en/person/108936/explore/geo/26.074874,14.723631,8/bounds/23.698186,13.094908,28.404284,16.352354/paging/1/pin/1152772>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/dalby/early-days-behind-dalbys-first-convent/news-story/b67664488d5cdefef4ef7bfad1e0d2bb>

<sup>32</sup> Mercy Memoirs, 1977. DFHS

<sup>33</sup> Beyond Our Dreams: A Century of the Works of Mercy in Queensland, Sister M Xavierius O'Donoghue, p.137

<sup>34</sup> QHR archives

## 2.8 What's in a Name?

---



*Figure 24: St Columba of Iona.  
(Source: SCCC<sup>35</sup>)*

St Columba, also known as Colum Cille, was an Irish missionary born in 521AD in County Donegal, Ireland. He is revered as one of the most important figures in early Christianity in the United Kingdom.

St Columba founded several monasteries in Ireland, including one at Derry, before setting out on a missionary journey in 563 AD. His primary focus was to spread Christianity among the Picts, a tribal group living in the northeastern areas of the British Isles (now Scotland).

St Columba and his followers landed on the island of Iona, located off the west coast of Scotland, and established a monastery there. Iona became one of the most significant religious centres in Western Europe during the early Middle Ages.

This monastery served as a beacon of learning, spirituality, and missionary activity. From Iona, St Columba and his monks embarked on missions throughout Scotland, converting many to Christianity and establishing further monastic communities. The monastery also became a centre for the production of illuminated manuscripts,

contributing to the preservation and distribution of knowledge during this period.

St Columba played a pivotal role in the conversion of the Picts and the consolidation of Christianity in Scotland, but he is also credited with spreading Christianity to parts of northern England and may have influenced the establishment of the famous monastery at Lindisfarne. His legacy endured long after his death in 597 AD. The monastery at Iona continued to thrive, attracting pilgrims and scholars from across Europe. The island became the burial place of many Scottish kings, and its monastery remained a centre of religious and cultural significance for centuries.

Today, Iona remains a place of pilgrimage and spiritual retreat, known for its stunning natural beauty and rich history. The influence of St Columba and the monastery he founded continues to be felt in the religious and cultural landscape of Scotland and beyond, making him a revered figure in both Irish and Scottish history.

---

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.stcolumbasculloden.org/who-was-st-columba.html>

## 2.9 Growth of Dalby



Figure 25: Dalby in the early 1900s.

(Source: SLQ<sup>36</sup>)



Figure 26: Businesses in Cunningham Street, 1915.

(Source: Picture Western Downs<sup>37</sup>)

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century became the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dalby experienced a significant boost driven by a government focus on the development of rural areas. Such initiatives included policies promoting the subdivision of larger land holdings into smaller parcels, which encouraged greater participation in agriculture and land ownership. Additionally, the construction of new railway lines played a crucial role in connecting Dalby to broader markets and facilitating the transportation of goods. The opening of the Dalby to Bell railway line in 1906 and the Tara line in 1908 enhanced accessibility and stimulated economic activity in the region<sup>38</sup>.

Amidst these developments, key agricultural sectors such as dairying and wheat cultivation witnessed considerable expansion. The establishment of a butter factory and a flour mill in Dalby in 1906 further supported the growth of these industries, providing local farmers with essential processing facilities and creating employment opportunities within the community. Moreover, despite the challenges posed by the Federation drought, which reached its peak in 1902, the agricultural sector demonstrated resilience and adaptation. The market for cattle experienced improvement during the 1910s, while the price of wool more than doubled between 1900 and 1915, contributing to the overall stability and prosperity of the rural economy in the Dalby area<sup>39</sup>.

These developments underscored Dalby's emergence as a thriving agricultural hub, with a diversified economy supported by multiple industries. While the wool industry continued to play a significant role in sustaining the rural economy, the expansion of dairying, wheat cultivation, and other agricultural pursuits diversified the region's economic base and provided avenues for continued growth and prosperity. The combination of legislative reforms, infrastructure development, and agricultural innovation laid the foundation for Dalby's enduring economic success and resilience in the face of changing environmental and market conditions.

This regional growth, along with the expanding network of boarding schools, led to the planning of a new, purpose-built Catholic convent for Dalby<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://collections.slq.qld.gov.au/viewer/IE3030127>

<sup>37</sup> <https://westerndowns.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/WPAC/ALLENQ/16135909/4481071,26?FMT=IMG>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.queenslandplaces.com.au/dalby>

<sup>39</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

<sup>40</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

## 2.10 A new home (away from home)

After 36 years in their makeshift convent, the Sisters of Mercy were going to have a new, purpose-built home. In 1910, a 3.5 acre corner block in southwest Dalby was transferred to the Catholic Church for use as school premises.<sup>41</sup> The block sat on Edward Street, between Cunningham and Jimbour Streets, and was the location of the St Joseph's Hall (which was relocated to adjacent St Joseph's Church in 1913 to make way for the new convent<sup>42</sup>).

The new convent building was to be a substantial two-storey brick building, designed by George Bernard Roskell. Roskell was an architect who had gained experience in the Gothic Revival ecclesiastical buildings in Dublin, Ireland. He migrated to Australia in 1881 and worked on numerous churches in Sydney. Roskell moved to Dalby in 1909, having been employed by the Queensland Department of Public Works two years prior. In Dalby he was responsible for the design of the Dalby National Bank (1910), the Dalby Hospital (1914) and the Wambo Shire Council offices (1916).

Roskell was tasked with designing a convent that provided a Chapel and rooms for the Sisters, as well as boarding room accommodation. This accommodation included dorms, recreation rooms, dining room and kitchen – a home away from home for the students.



Figure 27: Foundation stone of the new convent.

In November 1910, Reverend Dr James Duhig, Bishop of Rockhampton, laid the foundation stone for the new convent.

The blessing attracted a substantial number of visitors from neighbouring towns, clearly demonstrating the event's regional significance. Notably, special trains were organised from Toowoomba, Roma, and Bell to accommodate the influx of attendees, totalling upwards of 800 people<sup>43</sup>.

The highlight of the day was, of course, the ceremonial blessing and laying of the foundation stone for the new convent. Approximately 3000

people gathered to witness this historic moment. The Bishop was joined by Reverend Fathers Heggarty, Nolan, and O'Keefe, as well as Brother Walsh. Bishop Duhig conducted the blessing of the stone, signifying the commencement of the construction project, and declared it duly and effectively laid.

After the foundation stone was laid, Father Nolan announced that the total cost of the building was to be £7,434, for which there was still a debt of £2,800. This inspired the community, and a collection was taken up following the address, which reached an impressive £1,600. The principal contributors were recorded as: architect G. B. Roskell with £100, Father Nolan himself donated £50, Father O'Keefe gave £25, and past pupils pooled £110<sup>44</sup>.

Additionally, and specifically in relation to the foundation stone blessing event, Father Heggarty announced that he had donated a sum of £50 along with Mr J. J. Cormack, Mr Thos Connolly, Mr T Winkle, Mr J M Hanly, Rev Father Heggarty, and the beneficiaries in the estate of the late Jas. Conroy. A sum of £150 was donated from the estate of the late James Martin. A collection had also been taken up on the ground during the event, bringing this total to £900.

<sup>41</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

<sup>42</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/19897040>

<sup>43</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/19655214>

<sup>44</sup> Catholic progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919, J. O'Leary, p.134



Of this incredible community effort, Reverend O'Leary wrote in 1919 <sup>45</sup>—

*... no Parish in the Diocese is more remarkable for its new Catholic buildings than Dalby. The new Convent, for instance, is a building that would grace a town ten times that size. And the fact which shows at once the splendid generosity of the parishioners and the zeal of the Clergy is that the building was erected in eighteen months and opened practically free of debt.*

After the celebration, a banquet was held in honour of the occasion at the adjacent Hibernian Hall, with approximately 800 attendees<sup>46</sup>. This day marked a significant milestone for the community and the Catholic Church in Dalby.

## 2.11 Construction of the new convent

In November 1911, Roskell initiated the process of tendering for the construction of the new St Columba's Convent.

Mr Draney was awarded the contract, with Mr Michael Kelly overseeing the works<sup>47</sup>. The convent, designed in the domestic Gothic style, was to be built on solid foundations constructed of 4 feet of cement concrete and embedded rolled joints. A newspaper announcing the impending opening of St Columba's reported the specifics<sup>48</sup> —

*The joints are all bolted together, and are under all walls, forming one solid frame. The brickwork is 14 inches thick on the ground floor and 9 inches on the first floor, except the exposed walls, which are 16-inch hollow walls. All walls are plastered inside, and the ceilings are lined with stamped metal.*

The main entrance to the convent, which opened onto Cunningham Street, was originally designed with a tower, but this was modified into a central gable instead.. An Altar, which unfortunately no longer remains, was created by Brisbane's F. Tritton, was donated by Rev. Mother Patrick of All Hallows<sup>49</sup>.

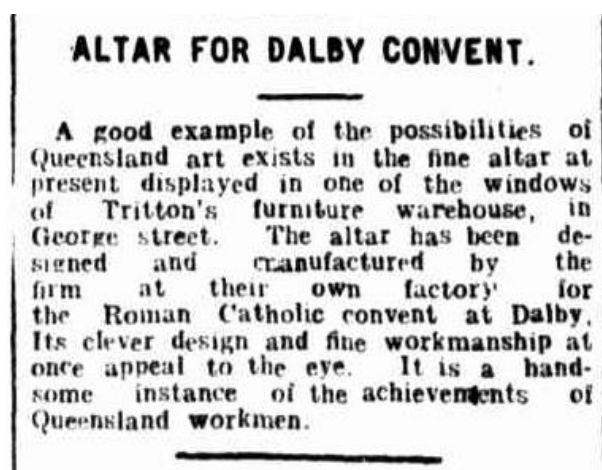


Figure 28: Newspaper article about the convent altar.  
(Source: Trove<sup>50</sup>)

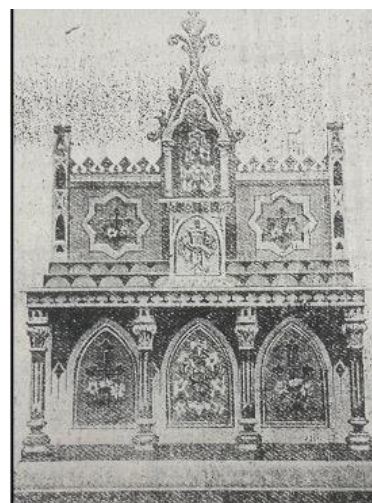


Figure 29: The Altar of St Columba's Convent.  
(Source: QSA<sup>51</sup>)

<sup>45</sup> <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/3091845>

<sup>46</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/19655214>

<sup>47</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/258134343>

<sup>48</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/187354566>

<sup>49</sup> Catholic progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919, J. O'Leary, p.134

<sup>50</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/176112174>

<sup>51</sup> QHR research file

Mr Jack Cahill, whose father was engaged to erect the new building, recalls the builder's difficulty in procuring corrugated iron during the First World War and, as such, the water tanks were built from the roofing iron of the old Plough Inn<sup>52</sup>.

## 2.12 The opening ceremony



*Figure 30: Opening ceremony mass was presided over by Archbishop Duhig. (Source: St Joseph's Catholic Church archives)*



*Figure 31: The opening of the convent building pomp and ceremony - following the Altar Boys was Fr (later Monsignor) Nolan escorting Archbishop Duhig with flanking priests. Convent boarders formed a guard of honour wearing their 'Sunday best hats' and 'smart boaters'. (Source: DFHS)*

On the 8 June 1913, a grand opening ceremony was held in celebration of Dalby's exciting new addition. This date was significant for being the eve of the Feast Day of St Columba of Iona.

The grand blessing and opening ceremony of the newly constructed St Columba's Convent received widespread attention, attracting the largest gathering ever witnessed in Dalby. Special train services were arranged from Toowoomba, Miles, and Bell, transporting over 300 enthusiastic attendees from Toowoomba alone. The ceremony commenced with a solemn mass celebrated by His Grace Archbishop Duhig at St Joseph's Church, where 31 children received their first communion, overseen by the Sisters of Mercy.

Following the mass, a banquet was held at the re-erected and expanded St Joseph's Hall, where Father Nolan, the parish priest, presided over the proceedings. The banquet, attended by approximately 400 guests, featured heartfelt toasts honouring Archbishop Duhig and expressions of appreciation for the new convent and the Sisters of Mercy<sup>53</sup>.

Archbishop Duhig, in his address, commended the dedication and generosity of Father Nolan, the Catholic community, and the citizens of Dalby in realising the magnificent convent. He emphasised the building's significance as a testament to the faith and future of the region, expressing pride in its architectural splendour and its role in fostering educational and charitable endeavours<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Mercy Memoirs: Through the Golden Years - 1877-1977 - p13

<sup>53</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/258134343>

<sup>54</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/19870339>

## 2.13 Life at St Columba's Convent



*Figure 32: Sister M Antonia, music teacher at St Columba's. (Source: QSA)*



*Figure 33: Sheila Brosnan, Sister Mary Imelda, who taught music and speech in 1929. (Source: QSA)*



*Figure 34: Musicians of St Columba's, 1907. (Source: QSA)*

### A walk through the Convent in the early years (based on Mercy Memories)

If you were to walk into St Columba's Convent in 1913, you would first enter through ornamental iron gates adorned with crosses, bearing the name St Columba's Convent in brass. Passing through the gates, you would walk upon a gravel path to a gabled porch, simple in style and bearing the name of the convent.

The entry doors opened into a hall with reception rooms on either side, and passageways leading to both wings. To the right, a boarders' study was separated by 9-foot-high folding doors from a boarders' refectory, with three French doors leading to the western verandah housing four music rooms. Adjacent to a nearby staircase leading up to the boarders' dormitory, the nuns' refectory featured a fireplace and mantle. On the left side of the entrance lobby, a grand timber staircase ascended to the upper floor, while the chapel was located beyond. The sanctuary, illuminated by arched stained glass windows, featured the altar donated by Mother Patrick of All Hallows in Brisbane.

The first-floor boarders' dormitory, occupying the entire western wing, boasted 16-foot-high coved ceilings and opened onto front, rear, and side verandahs. A corridor led to an infirmary for smaller children, while six nuns' cells painted in French grey were also located in this area. The upper floor of the eastern wing housed three more cells, a large community room, nun's bathrooms and toilets, and a linen room. Water was supplied from a bore and from four 2,000-gallon tanks and three smaller rainwater tanks, with the convent being one of the earliest buildings in Dalby to have a septic system, installed by local firm Downs Plumbing and Manufacturing. Pressed metal ceilings throughout were provided by Extons.



*Figure 35: St Columba's in 1930. (Source: SLQ sourced from Wikipedia)*



### An expanding school

Former student, Mr Pat Flynn, recalled watching with excitement as sections of the ground floor of the 'Plough Hill' site were removed, and taken to the rear of the new site to serve as classrooms<sup>55</sup>. The remainder of the Plough Inn was demolished, and the timber – sturdy Bunya Mountains cedar, noted to be just as good as when it was cut 53 years earlier – was used in construction of the new school<sup>56</sup>. This reduced the cost of building the school by £1,100 and allowed it to open debt free<sup>57</sup>.

This new school building was located at the corner of Jimbour and Bunya Streets, at the rear of the site.



*Figure 36: The first building for the new school was constructed using the timber from the former Plough Inn building. (Source: DFHS)*

Additional buildings continued to be added to the site over the next decades, eventually extending across the full Jimbour Street frontage.



*Figure 37: The expanding school in 1961. (Source: QImagery)*



*Figure 38: St Columba's School at the rear of the site had expanded to the full Jimbour Street frontage by 1981. (Source: QImagery)*

### The later years for the Sisters of Mercy

The expansion of the school in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the changes to schooling in Dalby broadly. In 1963 St Mary's Christian Brothers College was established, educating boys in Years 5-10. This had an impact on St Columba's, and in 1980 St Mary's became a co-educational high school and St Columba's a co-educational primary school.

<sup>55</sup> Mercy Memoirs: Through the Golden Years - 1877-1977 – p30

<sup>56</sup> Mercy Memoirs: Through the Golden Years - 1877-1977 – p10

<sup>57</sup> Catholic progress: Archdiocese of Brisbane 1912-1919, J. O'Leary, p.134



At the same time of these changes there was a trend towards co-educational schools being staffed by lay teachers and managed through Diocesan Education Offices, rather than Orders.

At St Columba's boarding was phased out in the 1960s.



*Figure 39: Memorial for the time that the Sisters of Mercy served the Dalby community.*

The 1877 establishment of St Columba's Convent by the Sisters of Mercy had marked a milestone in the development of Catholic education and religious life in Dalby. The convent served as both a religious institution and a school, providing education and spiritual guidance to generations of children in the area. However, after almost 113 years of service, and through significant shifts in education, the Sisters of Mercy could no longer maintain the convent and school.

In 1990 the Sisters of Mercy moved out of the convent.

## 2.14 From St Columba's to St Joseph's Hostel



*Figure 40: Changes to the front gates indicated the new hostel. (Source: DFHS)*



*Figure 41: Boarders were looked after by live-in staff. (Source: DFHS)*

In 1990 the Dalby Parish Finance Committee acquired the convent for the St Joseph's Parish, and the convent was decommissioned as an educational facility. Renovations were undertaken to convert the building back to a boarding house for use as a non-denominational rural student hostel, known as St Joseph's. A total of \$300,000 was spent on the refurbishment of the building, which would provide accommodation for 16 boys, 16 girls, house parents, and dormitory supervisors. The improvements were funded by a Federal Government grant of \$250,000, and a \$50,000 provision from St Joseph's parish<sup>58</sup>. Students moved in at the beginning of 1992. The intention of the hostel was to support rural families with children in Years 1-12 at any of the Dalby schools who could not afford the expense of larger city boarding schools, with the advantage that students could return home on the weekends<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Refurbished Hostel Opening, Dalby Herald, December 17, 1991

<sup>59</sup> DFHS archives

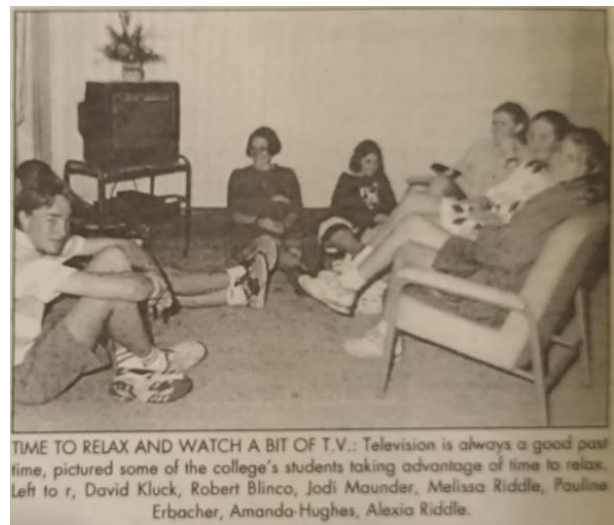
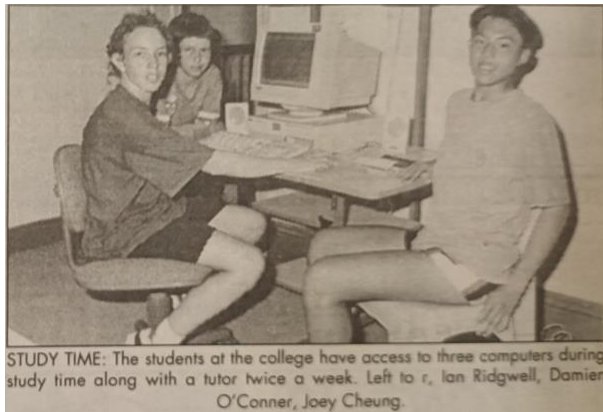


Figure 42: Dalby Herald article about St Joseph's Hostel, early 1990s. (Source: DFHS)

**NON-DENOMINATIONAL  
RURAL STUDENT HOSTEL**

**HOME AWAY FROM HOME  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**  
Full Week Boarding an option  
**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**  
Schools available in Dalby .....  
**ST COLUMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ST MARY'S COLLEGE  
DALBY STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
DALBY CENTRAL & SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
• Excellent Boarding Facilities  
• Study Supervision. Tutor and Computers Provided  
• Sporting Equipment i.e. Gym, Basketball & Volleyball  
• Work Experience and Holiday Care Available  
*Inquiries welcome.*  
**St Joseph's Student Hostel, Dalby**  
169 Cunningham Street, Dalby  
Student Hostel – Phone/Fax (076) 622 733  
Parish Office (076) 624 011  
*Advertising sponsored by Department of Employment, Education and Training.*

Figure 43: 1996 newspaper article advertising for the hostel.  
(Source: DFHS)



Unfortunately, a fire broke out in the adjacent St Columba's Primary School in 1998, requiring the demolition of some of the buildings, and prompting the relocation of the school to Nicholson Street where flooding was less of a threat.



Figure 44: 1999 demolition of the Convent School building after fire destroyed the building. (Source: Picture Western Downs<sup>60</sup>)

## 2.15 The recent years

In 1999 St Joseph's Hostel closed due to a decline in the region's rural prosperity. By 2002 the school buildings were sold off to make way for a planned aged care facility.

With this change, the former convent was renamed Iona and was made available for use by various community and educational groups. In May 2006, the Myall Youth and Community Network Centre (MYCNC) relocated to the former convent, albeit temporarily, pending the completion of purpose-built facilities in Diplock Park opposite Dalby High School by mid-2010<sup>61</sup>.

In 2010 Iona was in poor repair, with serious cracking to the walls due to ground movement. A structural inspection was undertaken, which resulted in the underpinning of sections of the building and the repair of some of the internal plasterwork.

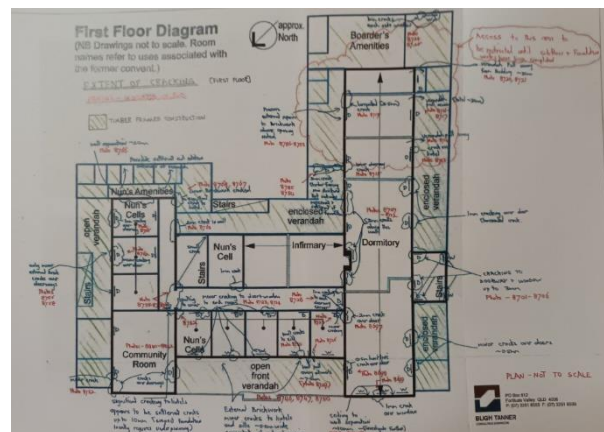
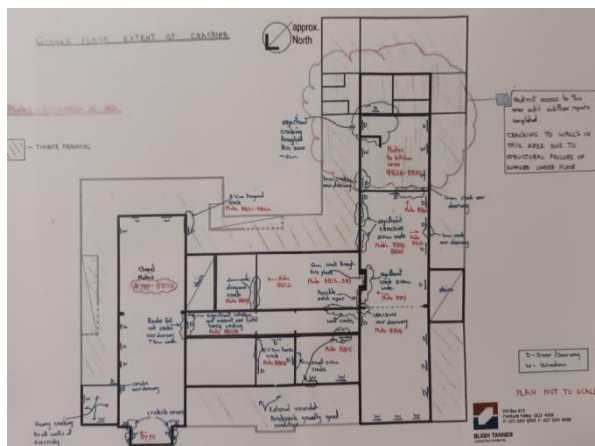


Figure 45: Bligh Tanner structural condition report was undertaken in 2010. (Source: St Joseph Parish archives/)

At present, the building is occupied by The Downs Industry Schools Co-Op (DISCO) who provide support services to regional and remote young people to help them with career choices and develop work skills to

<sup>60</sup> <https://westerndowns.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/WPAC/ALLENQ/16135784/4481035,72?FMT=IMG>

<sup>61</sup> <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>



contribute to further education or employment opportunities. The Co-op uses a number of the rooms on the ground floor, however the first floor level is unoccupied.



Figure 46: DISCO advertising (Source: <https://www.disco.org.au/>)

## 2.16 Timeline

---

1877	Sisters of Mercy arrive in Dalby Former Plough Inn purchased by Catholic Church Sisters of Mercy move in to former Plough Inn and establish education and boarding facilities
1910	Land in Cunningham Street transferred for use as a school, St Joseph's Hall relocated
1910	Local architect, George Roskell, commissioned for design of new convent
1910	Foundation stone laid by Bishop Duhig
1911	Tenders called for construction of new 2 storey convent
1913	Convent opened by Bishop Duhig on the eve of the feast day of St Columba of Iona (8 June)
1916 onwards	Additional school buildings constructed behind the convent
1960s	Boarding phased out
1990	Sisters of Mercy depart Dalby
1991	Management of the convent transferred to Dalby Parish Finance Committee who established a non-denominational rural student hostel, 'St Josephs Hostel'
1998	Adjacent school damaged by fire and relocated to Nicholson Street
?	Extension to southwest wing for bathroom and extra room
2006	MYCNA lease building for youth services
2010	Underpinning of portions of building
2020s	DISCO lease rooms for youth services

## 3.0 Physical evidence

### 3.1 Introduction

---

This chapter focuses on the fabric of the heritage place itself and, in particular, on identifying original and otherwise significant fabric, as well as changes to the original fabric. Iona was surveyed between 17-19 October 2023 and included a survey of the locality, setting, site and built elements.

### 3.2 Locality and setting

---



*Figure 47: Iona is located within a predominantly residential area.*



*Figure 48: The Dalby Ambulance Station is located directly opposite Iona.*



*Figure 49: St Joseph's Catholic Church is located further along Cunningham Street.*



*Figure 50: Iona is located on the corner of Cunningham and Edward Streets, setback from both boundaries.*



*Figure 51: The open grassed space to the rear of the heritage place which was formerly the St Columba's Primary School*

Iona is located on Cunningham Street to the northern side of Myall Creek, with the CBD to the northeast on the other side of Drayton Street (Warrego Highway). The heritage place extends to Edward Street, with the building located towards the rear of the boundary, creating a large setback from both streets. The land is relatively low and flat, with a gentle slope to towards the Myall Creek.

In the vicinity are residences, the Ambulance Station, St Joseph's Catholic Church and the Dalby State School.

Iona is currently set within a large open space which is grassed and dotted with trees. This land was previously developed, with school buildings for St Columba's Primary School, however these have since been relocated/demolished, with only one building retained in the opposite corner.



### 3.3 Sightlines and views



Figure 52: The original entrance pavilion just visible from entry to Anzac Park.



Figure 53: Sightline of modern aquatic centre from carpark.



Figure 54: Sightline from Southeast boundary of Olympic pool and grandstand.

Although Iona is a relatively large building on Cunningham Street, the building is set back from the front boundary, and as a result, does not have long views along this street. Additionally, the building is barely seen from St Joseph Church, and there is no sightline between these two buildings.

The open space beside and behind Iona allow the building to be observed from both directions of Edward Street.

### 3.4 The site elements



Figure 55: Iona (former Convent building).



Figure 56: Pavilion.



Figure 57: Grotto.



Figure 58: Garage.



Figure 59: Carport



Figure 60: Formal gardens to front.



Figure 61: Front fence and gates.



Figure 62: Side and rear vehicular access.

The heritage place comprises the following built elements –

- Iona – the original convent building
- Pavilion
- Grotto
- Garage and carport
- Formal front garden

The site retains a high degree of integrity and intactness.

### 3.5 Iona – former St Columba's Convent building



*Figure 63: Front façade facing Cunningham St including central gable and verandahs.*



*Figure 64: Side façade facing Edward Street.*



*Figure 65: Rear courtyard.*



*Figure 66: Entry foyer.*



*Figure 67: Chapel*



*Figure 68: Bedroom*

#### Description

Iona is a grand two storey brick and timber building facing Cunningham Street, on a relatively flat block of land that falls to the rear of the site.

The building is generally u-shaped in plan, with a central section flanked by two wings. The central section has a double-loaded corridor and housed the offices and student dormitories. The northeastern wing housed the Sisters of Mercy, including Chapel and dormitory cells. The southwestern wing provided the recreation, learning and dining facilities for the students.

The front (Cunningham Street) façade is largely symmetrical, with a projecting central gable over the verandah appearing to form a portico. This portico is supported on double posts and surmounted by a solid pediment with timber moulding forming pointed gothic arches. Each of the flanking gables have lancet windows with coloured glass. The northern gable has a projecting bay on the ground floor for the chancel of the chapel, and the central window has been infilled. A sacristy adjacent the chapel forms a solid end to the southeast verandah.

The side and rear facades feature verandahs, some of which have been infilled. Additionally, recent staircases have been constructed on the verandahs to provide access between the levels.



The roof is gabled and clad with corrugated metal sheeting. The gable ends are decorated with moulded bargeboards and partial timber batten infill. The central porch gable is filled with VJ boards and decorative moulded arches. The verandah roofs are broken-backed from the main gables. There are a number of early roof vents located on the ridge lines. Decorative Celtic crosses are located on the ridge of each gable, as well as the separate Chapel roof. Some original ogee profile gutters still remain, as well as octagonal rainwater heads.

The walls are constructed of red bricks laid in English bond with white rendered stringer courses at window sill and springer heights of the main façade. The window and doors openings have arched brick lintels. The original cast iron vents are still in place.

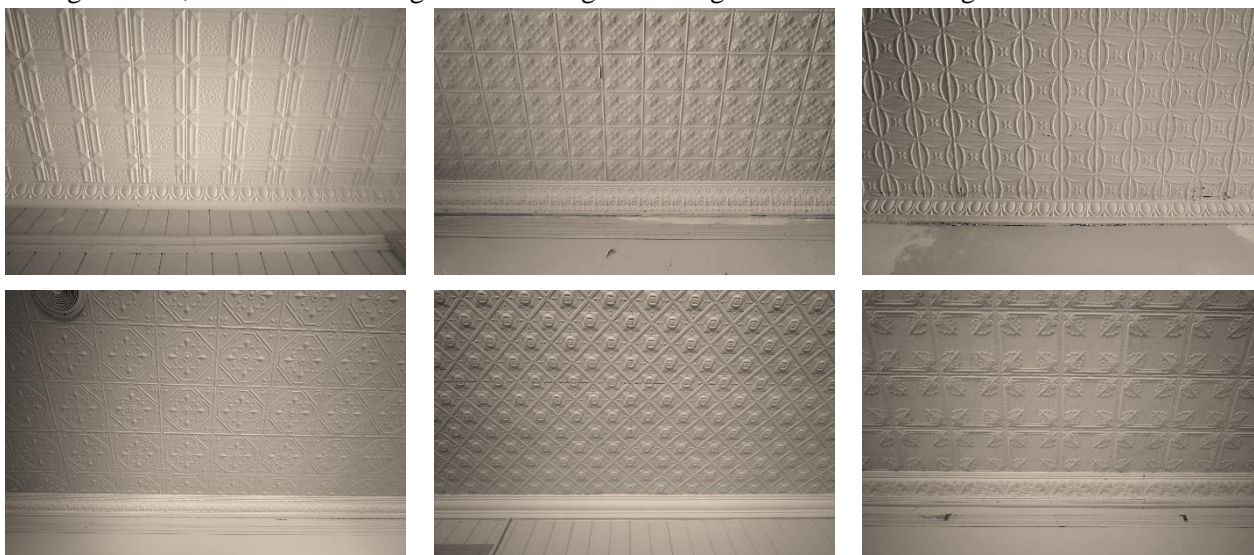
The verandahs are timber framed. The posts are decoratively detailed with chamfered posts, capitals, astragals and brackets. The front (Cunningham Street) verandah has the original cast iron balustrade. Some of the solid timber batten valances remain in a number of areas, particularly on the southeast (Edward Street) façade. The ground floor soffits are lined with ripple iron sheets, and the first floor soffits are lined with VJ boards. The floors of the verandahs have a mix of tongue-and-groove and shot-edge timber boards.

The original timber panelled doors have fanlights. Typically, French doors open onto the verandahs, while single leaf doors access the hallways. Some doors appear to have been relocated within the building.

At the rear of the building the wings form a courtyard. The southwest wing was extended (presumably after 1990) and a recent shadesail was installed in this space. An early tank stand remains at the rear of the building, however no tank is extant, while an early bell is located on the central verandah.

Internally the building is largely intact. The front entrance has a small foyer with reception rooms to either side. The front door is elaborate, with coloured side and top lights set into the arched opening. The foyer also features a timber hallway arch with a pointed arch and quatrefoils. Two doors have been installed into this arch.

The ceilings are typically lined with pressed metal, with a hierarchy of size from the public areas, to hallways, to bedrooms. Likewise, the cornices and ceiling roses also reflect this hierarchy. No original light fittings remain, with fluorescent lights and ceiling fans being located at the ceiling roses.



*Figure 69: Examples of the different pressed metal ceilings.*

All masonry walls are plastered and painted, and most rooms have a timber picture rails. The timber floors are typically lined with modern carpet. The timber skirting boards are wide.



Internally the first floor is accessed by two original stairs, located in each of the flanking wings. These feature clear finished timber joinery.

### **Condition**

Iona is in fair condition, with some evidence of structural issues due to ground movement.

Externally the joinery requires repainting. A relatively small area of brickwork needs repointing at the sacristy. The roof has been recently repainted, except for the small central gable roof. The verandah timber flooring will require replacement in the future.

Internally the building shows some structural damage in areas of the brick walls. Previous underpinning has not resolved the issues, and there are some cracks running through previously patched render. Typically, the joinery is in sound condition.

### **Analysis / Integrity**

The building maintains a high degree of integrity, and is easily recognisable as an institutional convent and boarding school. Over time it has undergone modifications/additions.

These modifications/additions include:

- Infilled verandahs
- Modified/removed timber astragals and capitals to verandah posts for insertion of later verandah infill
- Insertion of stairs within verandahs
- Addition of later stairs and ramps to access verandahs
- Extension of rear wing for additional bathroom facilities on first floor and room on ground floor
- Removed wall to current kitchen on ground floor.
- Mantle surrounds and pieces painted over clear finish surfaces
- Removed original altar
- Infill of central window to chancel, and later wall linings to chancel wall
- Reswinging of original front door leaves for egress compliance
- Later door leaves installed to joinery hallway arch
- Removal of water tank from stand
- Construction of wall and door at top of main staircase
- Later figured glass to some windows
- Some infilled French doors to first floor

### 3.6 Annotated plans

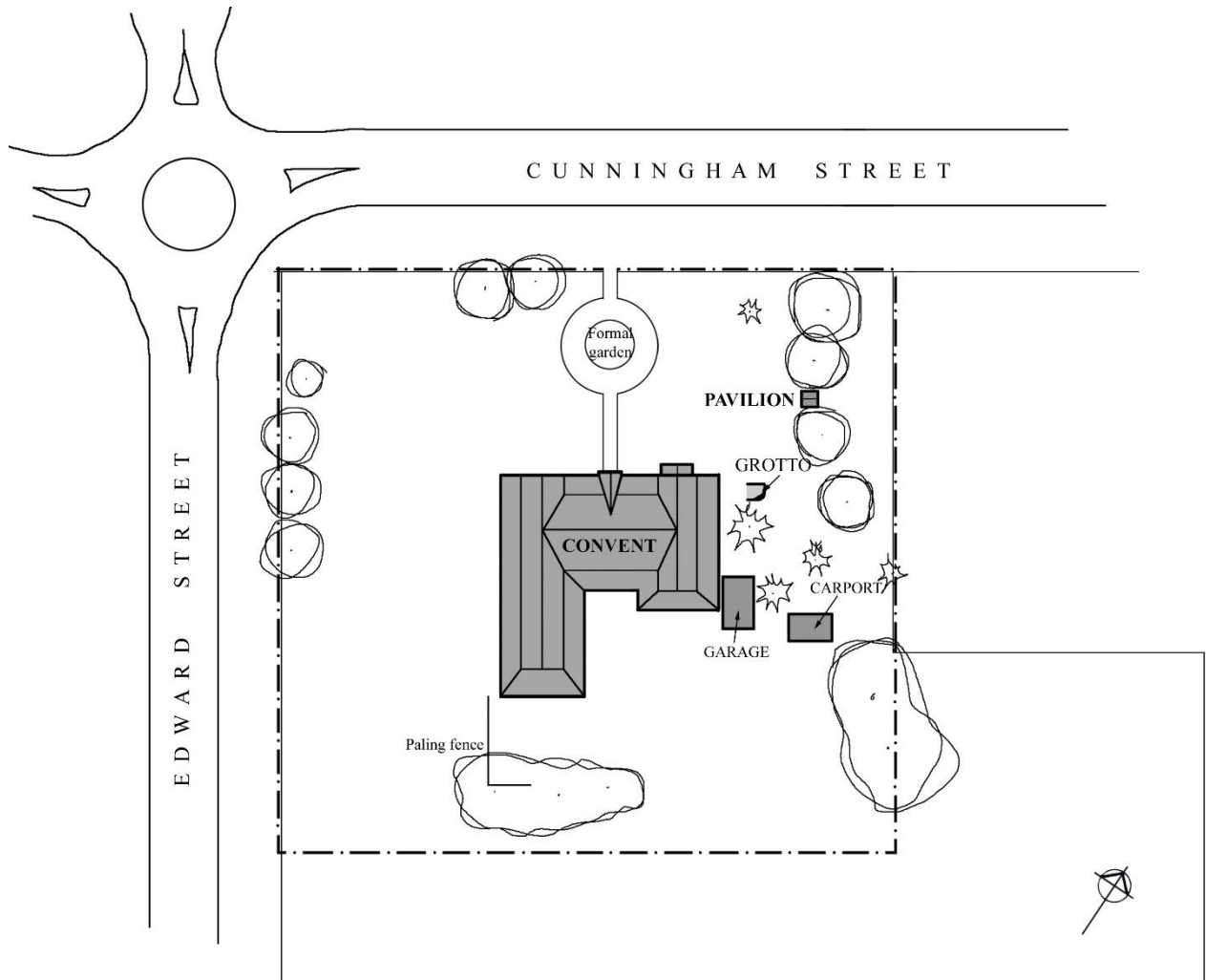


Figure 70: Site plan showing the elements within the heritage boundary.

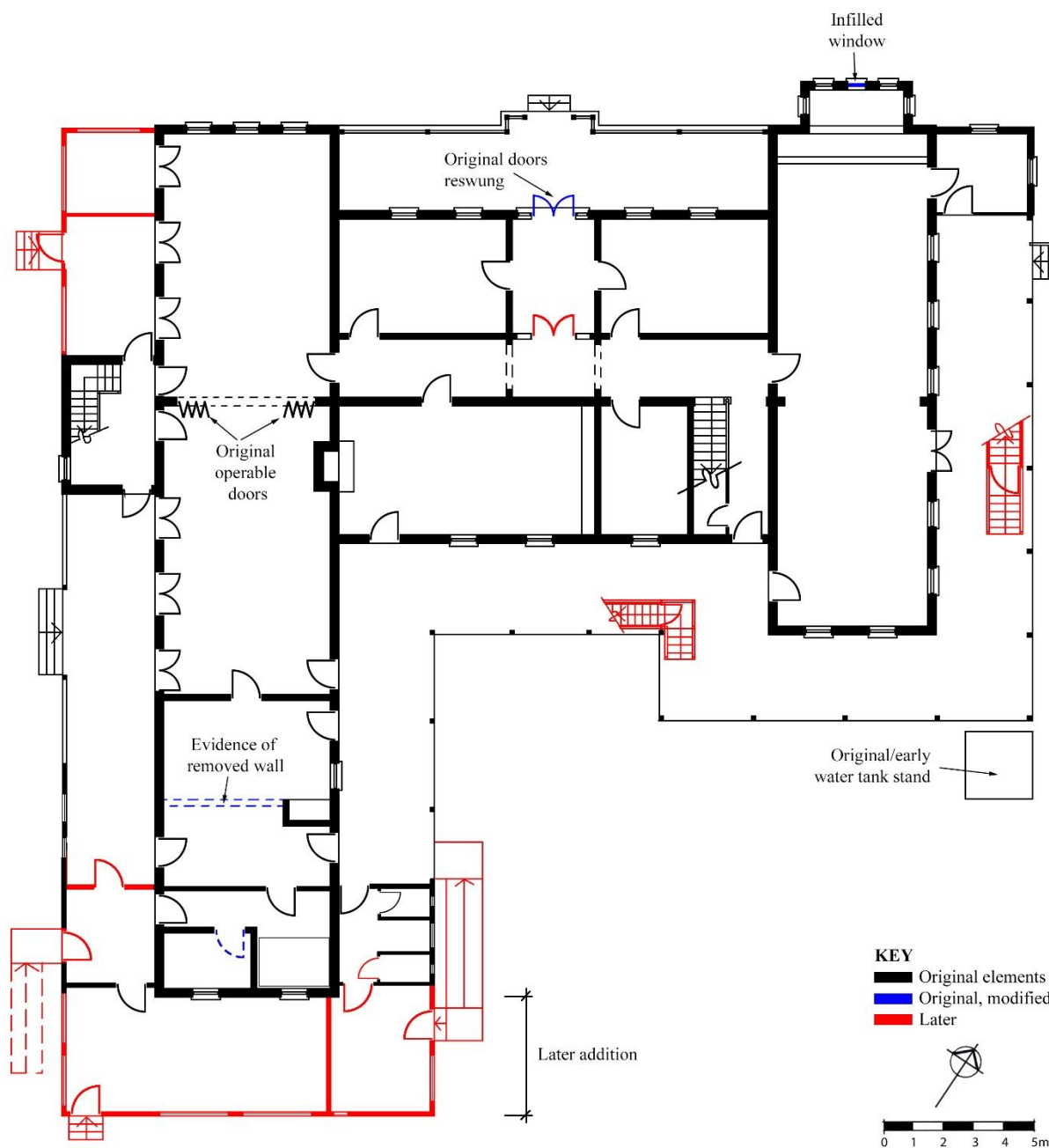


Figure 71: Ground floor plan.



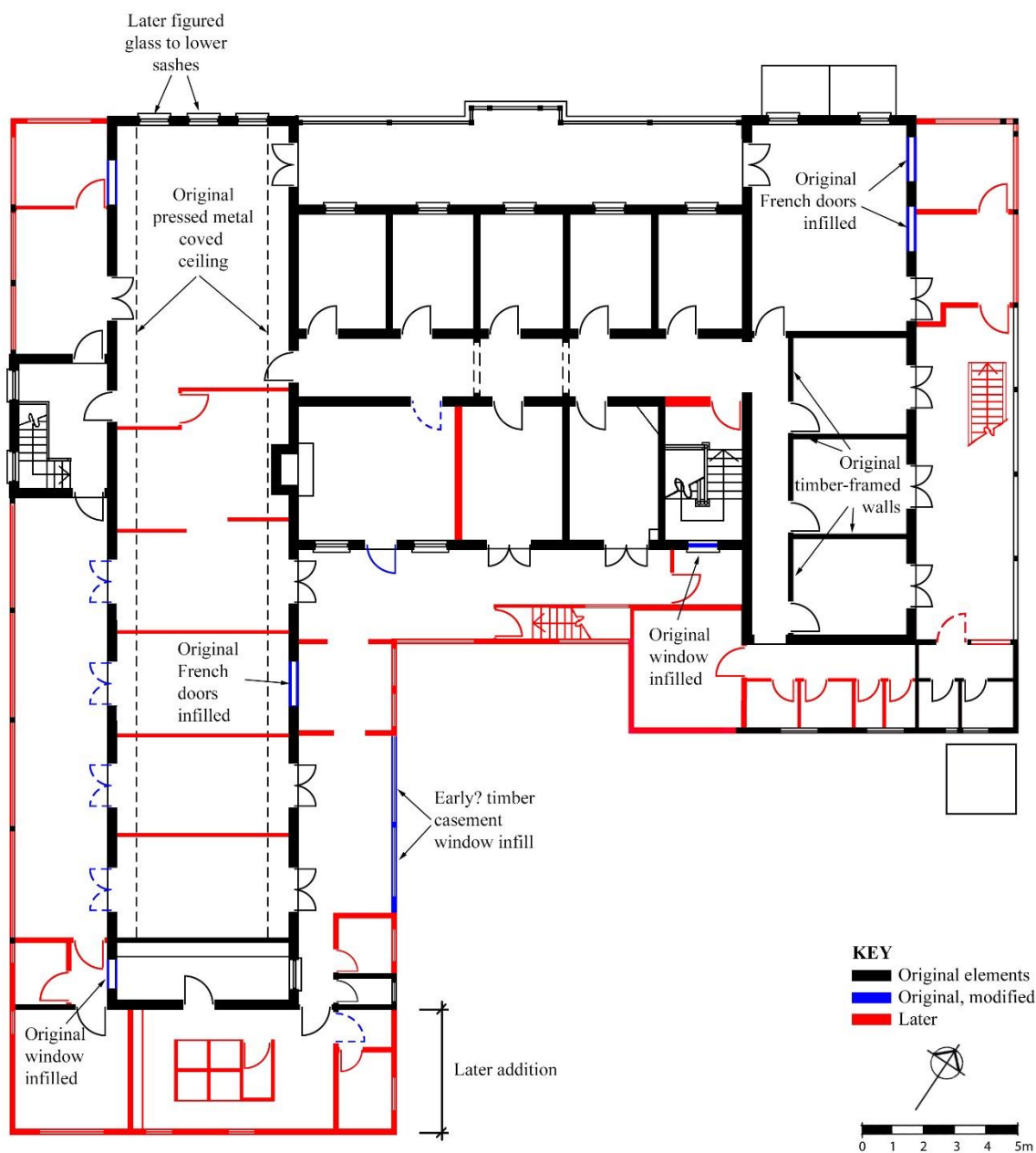


Figure 72: First floor plan.

## 4.0 Heritage significance

### 4.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the Statements of Significance provided in the various different heritage listings for St Columba's Convent.

Statements of Significance are used to describe the heritage cultural values of a place. These values may include aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual values for past, present and future generations.

The heritage values may be attributed to the –

- fabric, form and function of a place;
- setting and relationship with other items;
- historical records that allow an understanding of the contemporary context; and
- response of people who value the item.

Determining the heritage values of a place provides the basis for present and future planning. It allows for informed decisions to be made that ensure the heritage values are retained, conserved and (possibly) enhanced. Where this is not possible, any impact is to be mitigated and managed.

### 4.2 Statement of Significance from the Queensland Heritage Register

Iona appears on the Queensland Heritage Register under 'St Columba's Convent (former)' with ID 602761.

The following statement of significance is taken from the citation

CRITERIA	STATEMENT
<p>Criterion A</p> <p><b>Historical significance</b></p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.</p>	<p><i>St Columba's Convent (former), a substantial brick and timber building constructed and opened in 1913 almost debt-free because of the donations made by parishioners, strikingly demonstrates the prosperity generated through pastoralism and agriculture on the Darling Downs, one of the most productive rural areas in Queensland.</i></p> <p><i>St Columba's, designed by local architect George Bernard Roskell and constructed for the Sisters of Mercy, demonstrates the spread of the Catholic Church in regional Queensland, and in particular the significant contribution played by this order of nuns in the spiritual and educational development of the state through its establishment of convents, schools and boarding accommodation. The order served the Dalby parish for 113 years, occupying St Columba's for 77 of these until 1990.</i></p>
<p>Criterion D</p> <p><b>Characteristic significance</b></p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.</p>	<p><i>St Columba's Convent (former) is an outstanding and highly intact example of a Sisters of Mercy convent and boarding facility built to serve the prosperous Darling Downs town of Dalby. On Cunningham Street the former convent retains its commanding presence, while its exterior displays further principal characteristics of a building of this type: triple-gabled street façade employing Gothic motifs and a perimeter of timber verandahs. In terms of layout and interior finishes, the former convent is also highly intact and therefore strongly illustrative of this type of cultural place: including ground floor chapel and sacristy, stained glass and leadlight windows, decorative timberwork, refectory and reception rooms and first floor nun's cells and boarders' dormitory with a coved, pressed metal ceiling.</i></p>

CRITERIA	STATEMENT
<p>Criterion E</p> <p><b>Aesthetic significance</b></p> <p>The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.</p>	<p><i>The former St Columba's Convent is an elegant architectural composition with great aesthetic merit, with its triple-gabled front façade, walls of face brick with cement rendered bands, and a perimeter of timber verandahs. The cohesive design and scale realised in the convent gives it a commanding visual presence on the south-western end of Cunningham Street, Dalby's main thoroughfare, a quality that it shares with two other ecclesiastical buildings in the block to the north-east - St Joseph's Catholic Church and St John's Church of England (QHR 602399).</i></p>

## 4.3 Schedule of significance

### 4.3.1 Significance rating

The statements of significance set out in broad terms the nature and level of the significance of a heritage place. Implicit in this statement is the notion that cultural significance is embodied in the physical fabric of the place. Different elements, however, vary in their relative significance and may either contribute to the heritage values of the site or negatively impact on these values.

The table below sets out the definitions used to rate the various built elements that make up the heritage place.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	UNDERSTANDING	COMMENTS
<b>High significance</b>	<p>Considered essential to the understanding, appreciation and cultural value of the place.</p> <p>Fabric or elements should be retained and conserved.</p>	<p>Typically, these elements are associated with the original 1913 elements including the building and site.</p> <p>These elements should be retained and conserved; intervention should be minimised; and new development should help maintain or enhance the significance.</p> <p>Elements of high significance that require removal due to severe poor condition should be reconstructed like-for-like.</p>
<b>Some significance</b>	<p>Considered somewhat important to the understanding, appreciation and cultural value of the place.</p> <p>Fabric or elements may be altered if doing so enhances the site significance.</p>	<p>This includes elements related to later works.</p> <p>These elements could be retained, however alteration (both major and minor) may occur providing no nearby areas of higher cultural significance are compromised. Removal may be considered, provided impacts are assessed and mitigated.</p>
<b>Neutral</b>	Fabric or elements can be retained, altered or removed.	These elements do not need to be conserved. Intervention or new work is acceptable, providing no nearby areas of higher cultural significance are compromised.
<b>Intrusive</b>	Fabric or elements that adversely affect the significance of the site and ideally should be removed.	These elements should be removed. Where possible, the original form should be reconstructed, or new compatible interpretation or adaptation made.



#### 4.3.2 Significant elements on the site

The following diagram indicates the levels of significance for the built elements on the site considered to have heritage significance.

BUILT AND LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS	SIGNIFICANCE RATING	ELEMENTS AND FABRIC WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE
Views and sightlines	High	<b>Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View of front of building from Cunningham Street.</li> <li>View of building from corner of Cunningham and Edward Street.</li> </ul>
Convent	High	<b>Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original form, massing, layout, and footprint, including central core with flanking wings, open verandahs.</li> <li>Spatiality of rooms including high ceilings, large chapel with chancel, large refectory dining room with operable wall.</li> <li>Roof and rainwater goods form and materiality. Roof vents and gothic crosses. (Note the current fabric is not significant and can be replaced as long as form and materiality are maintained.)</li> <li>Verandahs – including timber framing, decorative posts and brackets, timber/cast iron balustrades, timber flooring, timber valances.</li> <li>Early verandah infills (timber weatherboards and casement windows)</li> <li>Masonry walls with rendered stringer courses and original cast iron subfloor vents.</li> <li>Chimneys – including external features such as cowls, internal features such as chimney breasts, mantelpieces, mantle surrounds, fireplaces, and hearths.</li> <li>Timber doors and windows, including original door/window furniture (handles, lifts, hinges, etc).</li> <li>Plaster walls with timber skirtings.</li> <li>Ceilings with pressed metal, cornices, ceiling roses.</li> <li>Internal joinery including original staircases, foyer hallway arch.</li> <li>School bell.</li> </ul> <b>Not contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Later verandah infills and stairs. Modifications to timber brackets, capitals and astragals.</li> <li>Rear extension.</li> <li>Kitchen and bathroom fitouts.</li> <li>Bedroom fitouts.</li> <li>Later partition walls.</li> <li>Later light fittings and ceiling fans.</li> </ul>

<b>BUILT AND LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE RATING</b>	<b>ELEMENTS AND FABRIC WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE</b>
Pavilion	<b>High</b>	<b>Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original form, massing, layout, and footprint.</li> <li>• Roof and rainwater goods form and materiality. (Note the current fabric is not significant and can be replaced as long as form and materiality are maintained.)</li> <li>• Brickwork.</li> <li>• Statue.</li> </ul>
Grotto	<b>Some</b>	<b>Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original form and footprint</li> <li>• Stonework.</li> <li>• Statue.</li> </ul>
Garage	<b>Intrusive</b>	
Carport	<b>Neutral</b>	
Shade sails	<b>Intrusive</b>	
Landscaping	<b>Some</b>	<b>Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature trees.</li> <li>• Formal front garden. Note the current plants are not significant.</li> <li>• Front fence and gates.</li> </ul>

### 4.3.3 Examples of fabric and elements

#### ELEMENTS OF HIGH SIGNIFICANCE



Front façade with central portico, timber verandah, cast iron balustrade and timber valance.



Decorative gable details, lancet windows, rendered stringer courses.



Red brickwork and corrugated metal roofing. Early timber weatherboard verandah infill. Chimneys, crosses and roof vents.



Open verandahs with timber balustrade and pointed arch valences.



Verandah posts with decorative chamfers, astragals, capitals and brackets.



Original timber front door with coloured side and top lights



Original timber doors and windows. Original door/window furniture.



Verandah soffits including ripple iron and timber VJ boards.



Foundation stone and memorial plaques.



School bell



Plaster walls and timber floors.

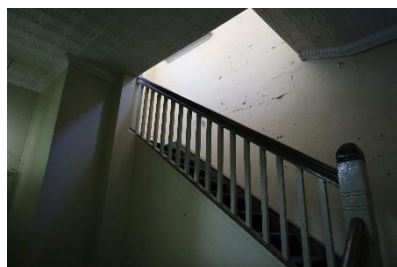


Hallway arch. Note the installed later doors are not significant.





*Large volume rooms.*



*Original timber internal stairs.*

*Chancel to chapel.*



*Pressed metal ceilings, ceiling roses and cornices.*

*Coved ceiling.*



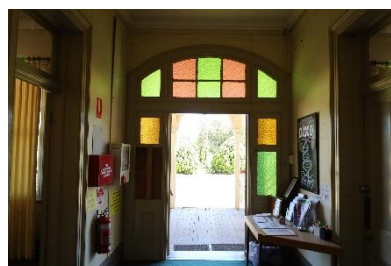
*Fireplaces including chimney breasts, mantle surrounds and mantle pieces. Openings and hearths.*



*Timber skirtings. Note the later conduit is not significant.*



*Original operable doors.*



*Coloured figured glass.*



*Original joinery cupboards.*

#### ELEMENTS OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE



*Formal garden to front.*



*Front fence and gates.*



*Mature trees and shrubs.*



*Early weatherboard verandah infill.*



*Evidence of infilled openings.*



## NEUTRAL ELEMENTS



*Side and boundary fences (except front fence).*



*Later paving. Applied signage.*



*Applied elements such as aerials and external security lights.*



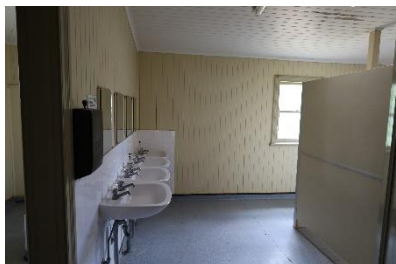
*Later stumps.*



*Driveways.*

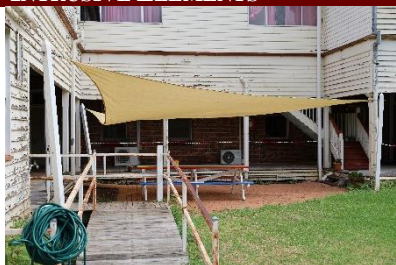


*Kitchen fitouts.*



*Bathroom fitouts.*

## INTRUSIVE ELEMENTS



*Shade sails*



*Verandah staircases.*



*Later stairs and ramps.*



*Wall and verandah mounted services such as air conditioners.*



*Painted finish to facebricks.*



*Louvre windows inserted in fanlights.*



*Security grilles to fanlights and windows.*



*Modern light fittings and ceiling fans unsympathetically covering ceiling roses.*



*Recent student bedroom fitouts.*



## 5.0 Legislation and obligations

In Queensland, there are two forms of statutory protections for heritage places, local and State.

Iona is subject to both legislations.

### 5.1 Western Downs Planning Scheme

---

Heritage places within the Western Downs Regional Council (WDRC) boundary are subject to the Western Downs Planning Scheme (WDPS). These heritage places are identified on the Cultural Heritage Overlay Map (OM-005) as having either local or State heritage significance. Under the WDPS locally significant places are subject to the Heritage Overlay Code (Section 8.2.5).

However, heritage places with State heritage significance require a different approvals pathway. On 5 December 2016, the QLD Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (now the QLD Department of Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning [DSDILGP]) made an amendment to the *Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009* in relation to the assessment of development to sites which are identified as both a local and State significant heritage place. This amendment requires Queensland heritage places (identified on the Queensland Heritage Register) to be assessed under the State development assessment provisions.

Typically, a Development Application will be lodged with WDRC, who will refer the application on to the Department of Environment and Science (DESI) for assessment of any impacts to the heritage values of the place. WDRC will assess the application against all other areas of the Western Downs Planning Scheme.

### 5.2 Queensland Heritage Act 1992

---

In Queensland, State heritage places are protected under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (Heritage Act) which is administered by the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI). As part of the requirements of the Heritage Act, DESI is responsible for implementing, investigating and enforcing legislation that relates to places of State significance. This includes places, buildings, works, relics (including archaeology), moveable objects and precincts. DESI maintains the Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) that lists the places that have been identified as having particular importance to the people of Queensland.

Any place that is entered on the QHR is subject to protection under the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. As a result, owners, lessors, managers, contractors and people who use these places are legally required to protect and ensure that these heritage place survive into the future.

### 5.3 Development approval and exemption to approval

---

Since St Columba's Convent is entered on the QHR, any modifications to the site that may impact on the heritage values will require approval from the Heritage section of DESI. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required to assess any impacts of proposed works on the heritage values of the place, using this CMP as a basis for determination.

In some cases, the works may not require a Development Application. This is generally for works which are either minor (General Exemption Certificate), such as maintenance, or only have minimal impact on the heritage values of the site (Heritage Exemption Certificate).

The following information regarding General and Heritage exemption certificates is taken from the QLD Government DESI website – *Changing or developing heritage places*.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/development>

### 5.3.1 General exemption certificate

See the QLD Government website for the General Exemption Certificate document -

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/development/exemptions>

The following is quoted from the website:

*General Exemption Certificates provide upfront approval for ongoing maintenance and minor work necessary to keep heritage places in the Queensland Heritage Register in active use, good repair and optimal operational condition.*

*Strict limitations and conditions apply to the type and scope of work approved and to how it is carried out. Only development specified in a General Exemption Certificate and carried out in accordance with the conditions of the certificate is permitted.*

*No application is required for work carried out in accordance with the General Exemption Certificate.*

*The General Exemption Certificate: Queensland Heritage Places assists owners, managers and contractors to carry out maintenance and minor work to places in the Queensland Heritage Register without the need to lodge an application with the department.*

The General Exemption Certificate applies to such actions as maintenance, cleaning, repainting in the same colour, minor repairs (replacement of fabric up to 20% over 3 years), repair/upgrade of existing services, and temporary works.

It is important that any maintenance/minor works are carefully considered and that the conditions of the General Exemption Certificate is fully understood and adhered to. Regular referral to the GEC information is recommended prior to any works.

### 5.3.2 Heritage Exemption Certificate

See the QLD Government website for the Heritage Exemption Certificate forms -

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/development/certificate>

The following is quoted from the website:

*A Heritage Exemption Certificate gives approval for low-impact development, conservation work and simple projects that only affect the heritage values of a place in a minor way.*

*You need to apply for an Exemption Certificate if your proposed development:*

- *will have no more than a minor detrimental impact on the significance of the heritage place*
- *is permitted under a heritage agreement. A heritage agreement is a legal agreement between the owner (or another person with an interest in the place and acting with the owner's consent) and us that sets out provisions for future work, conservation action or use of the heritage place.*

#### ***Application requirements***

*When completing your application you need to supply information that:*

- *describes if and how the development changes the place*

- *describes if and how the proposal directly affects or alters significant heritage features*
- *provides a detailed description of your proposal (site plan, photographs)*
- *provides supporting information such as plans, relevant reports or agreements relating to the place.*

*To avoid delays associated with making incorrect or incomplete applications, you are encouraged to discuss your proposal with us [DESI] prior to making an application. Request a pre-lodgement meeting or discussion with us [DESI] by emailing palm@des.qld.gov.au with summary information about the development you are planning and identifying the Queensland heritage place involved. Seeking advice from a professional or tradesperson with experience in heritage conservation is also recommended.*

*We [DESI] assess the impact of each application on the heritage values of the affected place and may ask you for more information to complete the assessment. If you are given an Exemption Certificate, you must comply with the conditions outlined in the Certificate.*

***What type of work does an Exemption Certificate cover?***

*An Exemption Certificate is not intended to deal with changes or complex developments that have more than a minor detrimental impact on the place. It covers work such as painting in a compatible or historic colour scheme, replacing non-significant fittings or fixtures or refurbishing less important parts of a building or place.*

*A development may be suitable for an Exemption Certificate if it:*

- *only involves minor changes to significant features*
- *alters only recent interiors or interiors that have previously been modified and are not significant as reconstructions*
- *retains or restores the appearance of a significant building or garden*
- *involves the disturbance of known or potential archaeological artefacts in accordance with a management approach agreed to by us [DESI]*
- *requires only building work that is shown to have little impact on the values of the place or involves removal of features that are intrusive*
- *retains the existing use of the place or restores a previous significant use*
- *is for conservation works such as maintenance and repairs using traditional materials and techniques, such as re-roofing.*

***What an Exemption Certificate does not cover***

*If the proposed development will have more than a minor detrimental impact on cultural heritage significance, an application for a development approval should be made to the State Assessment and Referral Agency [SARA].*

*Examples of the types of development that an Exemption Certificate does not cover include:*

- *changes to significant features that alter their appearance*
- *not altering historic or original interiors in line with heritage conservation practice*
- *changing the appearance of a significant building or garden*

- *extensive building work to increase the gross floor area of a place*
- *changing the existing use of a place that will require extensive physical change to its fabric.*

*Check with your local government or building certifier for more information regarding other relevant laws and regulations that might apply to the development you are planning to undertake.*

### 5.3.3 Development Applications

Broadly speaking, applications for major development to the site will be made to the Western Downs Regional Council who will refer the application to DESI. Development under the *QLD Heritage Act* is defined by the *Sustainable Planning Act 2016* (Schedule 2) for works to heritage places and is defined as:

- (a) *carrying out—*
  - (i) *building work; or*
  - (ii) *plumbing or drainage work; or*
  - (iii) *operational work; or*
- (b) *reconfiguring a lot; or*
- (c) *making a material change of use of premises.*

Building work for a Queensland heritage place include –

- (i) *altering, repairing, maintaining or moving a built, natural or landscape feature on the place; and*
- (ii) *excavating, filling or other disturbances to premises that damage, expose or move archaeological artefacts, as defined under the Heritage Act, on the place; and*
- (iii) *altering, repairing or removing artefacts that contribute to the place's cultural heritage significance (furniture or fittings, for example); and*
- (iv) *altering, repairing or removing building finishes that contribute to the place's cultural heritage significance (paint, wallpaper or plaster, for example)*



## 6.0 Constraints and opportunities

### 6.1 Constraints due to significance

---

The fundamental constraint to future works and development of Iona stems from the State level identified heritage values of the site. Conservation of the original layout, fabric, features and setting of the place is necessary to ensure that the heritage values are maintained into the future.

### 6.2 Development challenges

---

- Ensuring that people working on the heritage place in the future have relevant information from this CMP, including a copy of the *Burra Charter* and specific recommendations regarding the works
- The regional nature of Dalby, while relatively close to Brisbane, makes the commissioning of skilled practitioners and contractors/trade people more difficult. This includes heritage architects/consultants for advice, guidance and design of future works; and experienced contractors/tradespeople who have an appropriate level of experience working on heritage places and are knowledgeable in traditional construction methods and materials.
- Finding an on-going compatible use will ensure the building is maintained into the future, however, finding a tenant who can utilize such a large building is a challenge in the light of the regional nature of Dalby, compliance issues and the heritage setting.
- Heritage places require a sensitive adaption of the building to incorporate current building code compliances.
- Depending on the extent of any proposed development, achieving the minimum energy efficiency rating is difficult in heritage buildings and will require an environmental/sustainability engineer involved to navigate the process involved when developing the site.
- Recent changes to the flooding mapping may impact on any development of the heritage place.
- As Iona is located within a greater site any development of the former school site at the rear will have an impact on the setting of the heritage place. Fortunately, the heritage boundary provides an appropriate curtilage to the building.
- Current understanding of heritage places, usually relating to the perceived cost and bureaucratic processes, can hinder the perceived opportunities of the site and limit the number of interested parties.
- The stigma from institutional trauma may limit interested local parties.

### 6.3 Opportunities

---

- **Redevelopment of rear of site** – there is an opportunity to redevelop the former school site. This is beyond the heritage boundary, however the development needs to be sympathetic to the setting of Iona, with an appropriate scale that retains the grandness of the former Convent.
- **Sale of former school site at the rear** – this is one consideration for the funding of the conservation and possible adaptive re-use or development of Iona. This will require consideration of the current zoning of the site, and may include education or community services. Other potential

developments may require re-zoning by Council, and potential buyers will need to understand how any new development may impact on the setting of the heritage place.

- **Relocate garage** – currently the garage is located in very close proximity to the former convent building. There is an opportunity in future site development to relocate this building to a more appropriate location on the site.
- **Reinstate room volumes** – within Iona there is the opportunity to reinstate the large volumes of the rooms which have currently been infilled with boarding facilities (including partition walls and desks).
- **Reinstate open verandahs** – currently most of the verandahs have been infilled and there is an opportunity to reinstate the open verandahs, reinstating the passive environmental design features including shaded verandahs and cross ventilation.
- **Remove verandah stairs** – the inserted verandah stairs are intrusive and should be removed when the building is developed in the future.
- **Reinstate verandah details** – many of the brackets, capitals and astragals on the verandah posts were either removed or modified when the verandahs were infilled (in some cases only the outside surface of the details remain). These modifications impact on the aesthetics of the building (this is part of the State heritage values) and do not do justice to the grandness of the building.
- **Remove paint to facebrick walls** – there are a number of areas of the verandahs where the face brickwork has been painted. Removal of this paint should be considered in future development works. Not only will this reinstate a finish that contributes to the aesthetics of the building, the removal of the paint will help with retained water within the brickwork which may lead to cracking, fluorescence and deterioration of the walls.
- **Reinstall water tank** – currently the water tank stand is located at the rear of the building and does not feature a tank. In the future consideration could be given to reinstalling a galvanised water tank for use by the building.

## 6.4 Future research / reports

---

The following are recommended for consideration:

- **Condition assessment** – this report is required to understand the current cracking to walls and requirements for stabilisation. This assessment should also understand the failure of previous stabilisation works.
- **Site masterplan** – a masterplan of the greater site (including the heritage place and the former school site to the rear) should be undertaken to investigate opportunities for both Iona and the rear school site that work in tandem and do not limit each site. This report should include a feasibility review of different proposed uses for both Iona and the greater site.
- **Colour study** – a colour study should be undertaken for Iona to record the original colour scheme of the heritage building, which can then be used to inform a future, contemporary colour scheme for the building.
- **Cyclical maintenance plan** – in the future a cyclical maintenance plan may be undertaken to assist with the maintenance of the building and future budgeting for cyclical works.

## 7.0 Conservation policies

This section outlines conservation policies developed to guide the future management of Iona. The policies all have their roots in good conservation practice as laid out by the *Burra Charter* which should be read in conjunction with this section. The policies are based on an understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place (as outlined in Section 4.0).

### 7.1 Stakeholder coordination

Iona is owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba and is managed by St Joseph’s Parish Dalby. The Ground Floor is currently leased by DISCO. In the future the heritage place may be leased to additional or new entities. As a result, the maintenance for Iona is shared between the Parish and the lessees and it is important that this document, which outlines the process of conservation management, is understood by all stakeholders to ensure the future management of the heritage place has a coordinated approach.

Policy 1 Stakeholder coordination	This Conservation Management Plan should be read and adopted by all stakeholders involved to guide the future maintenance, conservation and/or development of Iona.
--------------------------------------	---

### 7.2 Review

#### 7.2.1 Review of this CMP

Over time, the heritage significance of Iona may change. Changes may be due to the impact of the environment, unearthing of additional history, accident or a broadening of the understanding of the statement of significance.

At the same time, the desired outcomes for the site may change due to changes in ownership, additional financial aid or proposed changes of use.

Policy 2 Review of this report	<p>This report should be reviewed every ten years, or sooner if a substantial change has occurred or is planned.</p> <p>A digital copy of this report should be lodged with the Western Downs Regional Council and DESI. A digital and hardcopy should be lodged with Dalby Library.</p>
-----------------------------------	--

### 7.3 Conservation approach

#### 7.3.1 The Burra Charter

In Australia, the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance* is the widely accepted and adopted standard for heritage conservation practice. The Charter, known as the *Burra Charter*, was prepared by the national organization, Australia ICOMOS (the Australia National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites). The Charter sets out the principles and processes of conservation, with an emphasis on a logical and disciplined approach to the conservation of places. (The full Charter can be viewed at <https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/>)

The overarching premise of the *Burra Charter* is summed up as –

*Do as much as necessary, as little as possible.*

People involved in heritage places, including Iona, should understand and follow the following principles:

**Understand the place**

- Understand the history of the place and the cultural significance it holds (including its meaning to people) before making decisions about its future.

**Understand its significance**

- Protect the place's cultural significance and other significant attributes (including setting, site, views, fabric and intangible qualities). Significance should guide decisions.

**Provide an appropriate use**

- Ensure that the place meets the needs of the present and future while respecting the history and significance. Provide security for the place. Provide interpretation.

**Changes**

- Use available expertise. Keep records of any changes.

This conservation management plan is part of the process, and the above principles should form the basis for the ongoing management of the place.

---

Policy 3	The conservation and management of Iona, including the site, built elements and setting, should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i> and its associated Guidelines and Practice Notes.
The Burra Charter	

---

### 7.3.2 The *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* and the Queensland Heritage Register

The *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* contains certain procedures relating to the development of a heritage place that goes beyond local planning requirements and is administered by the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI). DESI maintains the Queensland Heritage Register (QHR), a register of heritage places that have cultural significance at a State level. Iona is listed on the QHR ('Former St Columba's Convent', Place ID 602761) and is covered by the *QLD Heritage Act*.

Broadly speaking, applications for major development to the site will be made to the Western Downs Regional Council who will refer the application to DESI. Development under the *QLD Heritage Act* is defined by the *Sustainable Planning Act 2016* (Schedule 2) for works to heritage places and is defined as:

- (d) *carrying out—*
  - (iv) *building work; or*
  - (v) *plumbing or drainage work; or*
  - (vi) *operational work; or*
- (e) *reconfiguring a lot; or*
- (f) *making a material change of use of premises.*



Building work for a Queensland heritage place include –

- (v) *altering, repairing, maintaining or moving a built, natural or landscape feature on the place; and*
- (vi) *excavating, filling or other disturbances to premises that damage, expose or move archaeological artefacts, as defined under the Heritage Act, on the place; and*
- (vii) *altering, repairing or removing artefacts that contribute to the place's cultural heritage significance (furniture or fittings, for example); and*
- (viii) *altering, repairing or removing building finishes that contribute to the place's cultural heritage significance (paint, wallpaper or plaster, for example)*

Policy 4 QLD <i>Heritage Act 1992</i>	Any works associated with the conservation and management of Iona (including the built elements, site, setting and landscape elements) are to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i> .  Approval must be obtained under the <i>QLD Heritage Act</i> through the <i>Sustainable Planning Act 2016</i> before carrying out any development to Iona.
--	---

### 7.3.3 Western Downs Planning Scheme

The Iona is identified on the Western Downs Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay map as a place of state heritage significance.

Policy 5 Western Downs Planning Scheme	All heritage assessment is by State heritage (DESI/SARA).  Any other aspects of an application that involve assessable work under the Western Downs Planning Scheme (i.e. change of use, etc) will be assessed by the Western Downs Regional Council.
---	---

### 7.3.4 Qualified personnel

The repair of, and works to, significant fabric frequently demands specialist skills and experience. Inappropriate advice and/or work to fabric may not only result in irreversible damage, but also create greater problems in the long term. Equally important, the design of new elements requires special skills to ensure compatibility and that they are distinct from earlier fabric. While finding suitably qualified personnel in regional / remote locations can be difficult, it is important to find specialists who have appropriate skills for the task.

All future proposed works are to be guided by a heritage architect/consultant who can ensure that the works are undertaken following the principles of the *Burra Charter*. Preference should be given to professionals who are full international members of ICOMOS.

Likewise, only contractors and tradespeople who have experience with heritage places and understand traditional building methods and materials should be selected. This experience may be verified through a portfolio of work (preferably with a minimum of 10 years' experience) and should be endorsed by the heritage architect/consultant overseeing the work.

Policy 6 Qualified personnel – professional advice	Any works that may impact on the heritage values of Iona should be undertaken with the guidance of a heritage architect/consultant.  The design of contemporary elements should also be undertaken by a person of appropriate professional heritage experience to ensure the Burra Charter principles are followed.
---	---

Policy 7 Qualified personnel – contractors and tradespeople	Work undertaken involving significant fabric should be done by persons with relevant training and experience.
--	---

### 7.3.5 Site induction

When contractors enter the site, they should be provided with an appropriate induction to understand the heritage values of the site. Depending on the level of works to be undertaken this may include a copy of this report, the *Burra Charter*, and/or a site induction sheet that explains the heritage significance of the place and the legislative requirements and guidelines that apply to work on a heritage place. The site induction should include:

- A brief history of the place.
- The cultural significance of the place, and why it is on the QLD Heritage Register.
- The principles of the *Burra Charter*.
- The legislative requirements set out by the Heritage Act.
- An understanding of the joint responsibility of all Parties in protecting the heritage place.

Where appropriate, the relevant CMP policies should also be provided.

An example of a site induction is provided in the Appendix 13.2 and should be regularly evaluated and updated as necessary.

Policy 8 Site induction	<p>All contractors and sub-contractors are to be provided with a Site Induction that includes an understanding of the significance of the place, the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i> and the joint responsibilities of all Parties in protecting the heritage place.</p> <p>Where substantial work is to be done, or where significant fabric is to be impacted, it is recommended that the full CMP be provided to the head contractor. Head contractors should include details of the heritage significance of the built elements/landscape element/areas/fabric to all people working on the site within a daily 'toolbox talk'.</p> <p>Where the works are relatively minor, or for subcontractors, an induction sheet may be distributed for an overview understanding of the significance of the heritage place.</p>
----------------------------	---

### 7.3.6 Keeping records

Maintaining a register/inventory of works (dates, contractors, summary of works etc) is a valuable means of tracking works over time, particularly with change of ownership and/or systems.

Policy 9 Keeping records	<p>Any new material coming to light relevant to the history of Iona should be catalogued and provided to the Western Downs Library and/or Dalby Family Historical Society for inclusion within their files.</p> <p>Any approved demolition of significant fabric should be preceded by a complete archival recording in accordance with DESI guidelines.</p> <p>Any demolition / removal / replacement work should be well documented by photos of significant fabric revealed and a record held on file.</p>
-----------------------------	---

## 7.4 Acknowledge, retain and enhance heritage values

### 7.4.1 Retain the significance of the heritage place

Iona is considered to have high heritage significance relating to historical, characteristic and aesthetic values.

Policy 10 Retain the significance of the place	<p>Management of Iona is to be based on an understanding of the importance of the heritage place within the history of Dalby and the development of Queensland.</p> <p>The significance of Iona should be retained and enhanced by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the landmark qualities of the heritage place within Dalby are celebrated.</li> <li>b) the fabric, site and setting, including those elements itemised in the Schedule of Significant Elements are conserved in accordance with the Burra Charter. (In general terms, elements identified as of high significance should be retained and conserved, while elements of lesser significance may, as appropriate, be altered. Elements that are intrusive should be removed and where applicable replaced with more appropriate elements based on research.)</li> <li>c) any development or changes to the place needs to be compatible with retaining, and where possible, enhancing the significance of the place.</li> <li>d) any modifications will require a very careful and considered approach to minimise impacts on the heritage values of the place.</li> </ul>
---	--

### 7.4.2 Ensure compatible and continued use

Heritage places require a continuity of use to ensure that they are maintained and do not fall into disrepair.

Currently only a portion of the site is occupied, with the majority of the building being unused. As a result, the building is at a high risk of falling into a worse condition.

In the future, alternative and compatible uses may be investigated for Iona, however this must be undertaken with a full understanding of the significance of the site, and any impacts that may occur to the heritage values of the place.

Policy 11 Compatible and continued use	Continue to ensure tenants use the building. Investigate the possibility of occupation of the whole of the building.  Alternative new compatible uses should be investigated to ensure the continued use of the heritage place.  Any new compatible use will require a considered approach and be based on an understanding of the significance of the heritage place.
---	--

### 7.4.3 Retain and conserve the layout

The original planning of the convent is intact and easily legible. Later verandah infills and partitioning have impacted on the internal spaces, while inserted staircases have impacted on the verandahs.

Policy 12 Retain and conserve the layout	Retain the historic planning of the former convent, including the current form and layout.  Retain the hierarchy of detailing, including pressed metal ceilings, skirtings and joinery details.  Retain the former convent and pavilion.  Retain a formalised garden to the front (note the current form and detailing may be modified so long as the access path from the front gate to the entrance verandah is retained on axis).
---	--

### 7.4.4 Retain and conserve the significant elements

Iona has a high level of integrity and is considered to be significant at a State level. In line with Burra Charter principles, where heritage values are identified it is important to not only acknowledge that the place is significant, but also that action should be taken to maintain and where appropriate reinforce that significance.

The significant elements on the site pertain to the original 1913 convent building.

The different elements which contribute to the significance of the heritage place are identified in the Schedule of Significance in Section 4.3.

Policy 13 Retain and conserve the significant elements	Retain, repair and conserve the former convent building and pavilion based on available evidence. Retain in-situ.  Reuse significant fabric where possible. Replace and restore damaged and missing significant fabric like-for-like where practical and feasible.
---	--



### 7.4.5 Significant views

Although Iona is located on Cunningham Street, the landmark qualities of the site are somewhat hidden from longer views up the street, and cannot be seen from St Joseph's.

The important views of the heritage place include views of the front facade from Cunningham Street, and views to the western corner and side facade from Edward Street. Within the site, the sightline between the former convent and the pavilion is significant.

Policy 14 Significant views	Retain and where possible enhance the views identified as significant, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View of the front facade from Cunningham Street.</li> <li>• View of the western corner and side facade from Edward Street.</li> <li>• Sightline between the former convent and the pavilion.</li> </ul>
--------------------------------	--

### 7.4.6 Interpretation

Interpretation is an important part of good conservation management practice and can take a variety of forms. The most important interpretative tool is the place itself and the history it represents.

In the case of Iona, the interpretation strategies may be instigated in the future to help visitors appreciate the impact the Sisters of Mercy had on Dalby education, why the convent was constructed, how the building was used, the hierarchy of detailing in the convent and the different zones for Sisters/students.

Currently the building has a number of plaques commemorating the history of the building. However, additional signage and interpretation strategies may be undertaken.

Policy 15 Interpretation plan	An interpretation plan may be developed for the site, and should consider ways to celebrate and educate about – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The historical connections to the Sisters of Mercy</li> <li>• The importance of boarding education to the region</li> <li>• The township and architectural qualities of the building</li> <li>• The uses of the rooms within the building.</li> </ul>
----------------------------------	--

Policy 16 Interpretation signage	Interpretation signage should be considered as a whole to ensure a consistency.  Any interpretation signage is to be informed by an interpretation plan considering themes and audiences, and follow Burra Charter principles. Signage is to be sensitive to the heritage values of the site pertaining to significant views and understanding of the hierarchy on the site.  Any new interpretation signage shall be discrete, and well curated by historian and graphic designer.
-------------------------------------	---

## 7.5 Future alterations and development

### 7.5.1 Requirement for approval for proposed works

Proposed works to heritage places on the QLD Heritage Register will require approval from DESI/SARA (unless covered by the General Exemption Certificate) to ensure the heritage values of the place are retained. In addition to heritage approval, some proposals may require Development Approval under the Western Downs Planning Scheme and Building Approval under the Building Regulation.

Any proposed work to the site and built elements will need to demonstrate that it is being carried out in accordance with best heritage practice.

#### Policy 17

#### Approval for works

Any proposed works beyond those exempted by DESI will require approval prior to commencement.

The retention and reinforcement of setting, sightlines and streetscape values should be demonstrated as part of any new development (through a heritage impact report process).

### 7.5.2 Future site development

Iona sits within a boundary that provides appropriate curtilage to the building. The wide setbacks from Cunningham and Edward Streets are appropriate to the grand aesthetics of the building, enhancing the landmark qualities of the site and substantially contributing to the townscape within this area of Dalby.

The other setbacks from the rear and side boundaries are not as generous, however are appropriate for the residential nature of the building and respectful of the hierarchy of detailing.

As a result, where it is necessary to construct new elements on the site, these would ideally be located to the rear of the site, maintaining the significant views of the front and western corner of the building.

Areas of possible future development are indicated below -

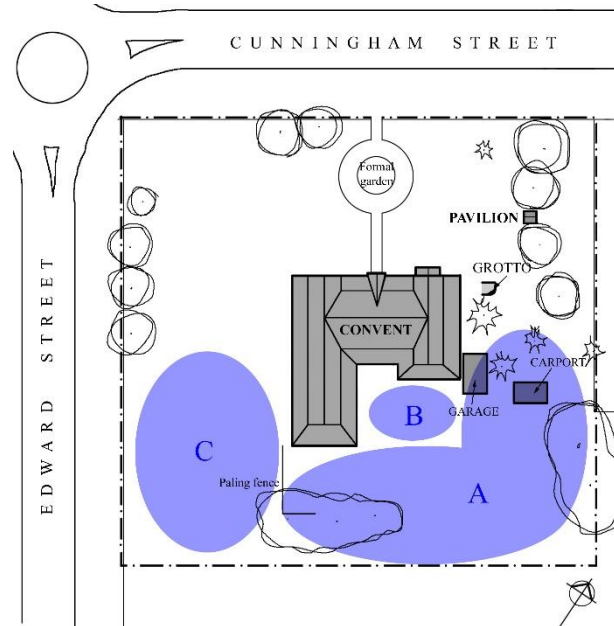


Figure 73: Areas of possible future development.

**Area A** – this area is set at the rear of the site and does not impact on any of the significant views or sightlines. Any future development would need to respond to the scale of the former convent building, ensuring that the landmark qualities of the building are retained. This development should not appear higher than the convent ridgeline, and retain views of the rear and side facades.

**Area B** – this area sits closer to the rear of the building and would need to strongly respond to the scale of the former convent. This development should be low in scale and retain the verandahs.

**Area C** – development of this area would require a considered approach to the side facade of Iona, ensuring that the significant views of the building are retained and the scale of the development respects the landmark qualities of the site. Preference should be given to low-scale development.

Policy 18 Future development – general principles	<p>Any new development or modifications to Iona and the site will require a considered approach to ensure the impacts to the heritage values of the place are mitigated and managed.</p> <p>Any new development is to respond to the landmark qualities of the former convent.</p> <p>Any new buildings/development within the heritage place should –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to and reduce impacts to the significant elements, setting, sightlines and views</li> <li>• Be carefully sited with consideration to the relationships of the existing elements and the new development</li> <li>• Be carefully scaled and massed to respond to the character of the heritage place</li> <li>• Be identifiable as contemporary</li> <li>• Not employ faux heritage decorative elements</li> <li>• Be of a quality of design, workmanship and fabric commensurate with the high quality of Iona.</li> </ul>
--	--

### 7.5.3 Future alterations and development of the elements

Policy 19 Future alteration and development – Iona (former convent building)	<p>Alterations to Iona may occur so long as there is no impact to the overall form, height or materiality of the building. Future modification may consider reinstating original internal walls however this is not necessary.</p> <p>Any new alteration or modification is to be in keeping with the original materiality of the building.</p> <p>Any new alteration, modification or adaptive reuse of the building should be undertaken following <i>Burra Charter</i> principles, in particular to be reversible and minimise the loss of significant fabric.</p>
Policy 20 Future alteration and development – Pavilion	<p>Alterations to the pavilion may occur so long as there is no impact to the overall form, height or materiality of the building.</p> <p>Any new alteration, modification or adaptive reuse of the building should be undertaken following <i>Burra Charter</i> principles, in particular to be reversible and minimise the loss of significant fabric.</p>
Policy 21 Future alteration and development – Grotto	<p>Alterations to the grotto may occur so long as there is no impact to the setting and heritage values of Iona.</p> <p>Any new alteration, modification or adaptive reuse of the grotto should be undertaken following <i>Burra Charter</i> principles, in particular to be reversible and minimise the loss of significant fabric.</p>



Policy 22

Future alteration and development –  
Garage and carport

Alterations to the garage and carport may occur so long as there is no further visual impact on the setting of the site.

Consideration may be given to replacement of this building with a new development, so long as the new development -

- Mitigates the visual impact of the new development on the setting of the site.
- Be carefully scaled and detailed to respond to the scale of the buildings and landscape.

While the Garage is considered Intrusive, any new alteration, modification or change in use of the building should be undertaken following Burra Charter principles in regards to setting.

#### 7.5.4 Future alterations and development of the landscaping



Early photographic evidence shows that little landscaping was provided at the opening of the convent.

The earliest aerial photograph (1958) shows the front yard had the circular path, and trees were planted to the perimeter.

These trees have matured and contribute to the setting of the heritage place.

Figure 74: 1958 aerial photograph showing the landscaping on the site. (Source: QImagery)

Policy 23

Future alteration and development –  
landscaping

Retain and where appropriate make more legible what remains of the historic landscape planning of the site including:

- Historic specimen trees to the boundaries
- Historic palms and bottle trees
- Front formal garden and paths

The mature trees should be regularly checked by an arborist and trimmed as needed to maintain the safety and amenity of the site. Where the condition of significant trees requires their removal, they should ideally be replaced with a tree of the same species or based on appropriate scheme as per Landscape Master Plan.

Other landscape elements, including more recent plantings, whilst adding considerable amenity to the site do not have heritage values. Ideally, they should be retained and enhanced, but from a heritage perspective can be changed as required.

Ensure all vegetation is kept well away from the building and does not pose a risk of damage – either from fallen branches, root penetration or fire hazards (ie gutters).

Policy 24 Landscape master plan	<p>A Landscape Master Plan should be developed for the heritage place. This may form part of a master plan for the greater site. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views to and from Cunningham Street of the front facade</li> <li>• Views to and from Edward Street from the side facade</li> <li>• The original front access from the street</li> <li>• Historic specimen trees</li> </ul>
------------------------------------	--

### 7.5.5 Fencing

Originally the site was bounded by a white picket fence. Currently the site has a decorative chain-wire fence at the front with brick entrance piers, while the Edward Street fence is a contemporary metal mesh which extends the full length of the greater site.

Policy 25 Fencing	<p>Consideration may be given to new fencing to the Edward Street frontage, ensuring that the proposed fencing is low in height and subservient to the front fence.</p> <p>When necessary, a fence on the rear boundary of the heritage place should be appropriately scaled and detailed.</p> <p>The current timber paling fence to the side and rear of the building is not significant and may be removed.</p>
----------------------	---

### 7.5.6 Shade sails

Currently, shade sails have been erected at the rear of the site. These have been constructed without anchor points to the building, and as a result do not impact the fabric of the building. However, the shade sails impact the views of the rear facade. The shade sails are at the end of their lifecycle and will require replacement in the future.

Policy 26 Shade sails	<p>The shade sails may be replaced.</p> <p>Consideration could be given to an alternate shaded structure that does not impact the setting of this area of the building.</p>
--------------------------	---

### 7.5.7 Reinstatement of open verandahs

Currently the majority of the verandahs have been infilled. This has primarily occurred in the recent past, with aluminium sliding or louvre windows which detract from the aesthetics of the building. Future development should consider reinstating the open verandahs.

Additionally, the modified/removed brackets, capitals and astragals should be reinstated.

Policy 27 Reinstatement of open verandahs	<p>Consideration may be given to reinstating the open verandahs.</p> <p>Consideration may be given to reinstating the timber detailing.</p>
--	---

## 7.6 Maintenance and repairs

### 7.6.1 Maintenance inspection

The importance of regular maintenance to the building should not be underestimated. A lack of maintenance and attention to potential threats can quickly result in deterioration of the fabric. Rising damp, reactive soil movement, timber deterioration, poor sub-floor ventilation, water penetration and termite infestation are potential threats to heritage buildings and places. Regular maintenance and inspection of the site and built elements should continue to be a priority to protect the integrity of the fabric. Records should be kept for all maintenance and repair works including details of the date, location and nature of the work undertaken (ideally in the form of a building log).

Policy 28	A regular inspection and maintenance program should be developed and implemented.
Maintenance inspections	<p>This should include annual building inspections (including roof, interior and exterior of the elements of significance).</p> <p>Key potential issues of water ingress, termite infestation and weathering of exterior fabric should be a primary focus during these inspections.</p>

### 7.6.2 Materials and methods of repair

In the repair of building fabric, the use of appropriate materials is important to retain the significance of the place and is also often cost-effective in the long term. The use of inappropriate materials and incorrect methods of repair can result in irreversible damage to fabric and additional expense. Wherever possible, existing fabric should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement of significant fabric is required, the replacement should be in keeping with the original element (in a like-for-like manner).

Policy 29	Repairs to significant fabric are to be localised and kept to the minimum necessary for the integrity of the element. Carefully splice in new sections.
Materials and methods of repair	<p>All repairs are to be undertaken like-for-like, matching the significant materials and detail. If the same material is no longer available (or unsuitable), replace with the most appropriate compatible material.</p> <p>All introduced elements must match the composition, detailing, profile, size, position, finish and fixing method of the damaged or deteriorated element.</p> <p>Where chemical injection is undertaken as part of any rising damp remediation, ensure fill holes are as unobtrusive as possible.</p> <p>Where replacement of a timber element is required, install new element with matching profile and species. Where species is no longer available select a high quality, well-seasoned timber which closely matches the line, grain (number of growth rings) and density of the original timber.</p> <p>Ensure compatibility of metals to prevent corrosion from differential metals and inert catchment.</p>

### 7.6.3 Fixtures and fittings

The removal of significant fixtures and fittings may be necessary for several reasons. The situation may arise where the replacement or repair of a damaged item of heritage value is not immediately possible. An

option is the removal of the item and the insertion of a temporary replacement. The existing item should be stored and properly catalogued.

Policy 30	Where possible and appropriate, retain original fittings and fixtures.
Fixtures and fittings	<p>When significant fixtures and fittings are removed, they should be stored in a secure location preferably on site and catalogued.</p> <p>Inappropriate fittings could be removed and appropriate fittings reinstated based on careful research.</p> <p>New fixtures and fittings should be chosen appropriately to ensure compatibility with the significance of the place and in keeping with <i>Burra Charter</i> principles.</p>

## 7.7 Facilitate ongoing use of the site

### 7.7.1 Services

Existing services on the site include electrical, lighting, plumbing, filtration systems etc. Upgrading of services and installation of future technologies is likely to be required. Sub-floor and ceiling spaces are preferable for running new services within buildings.

Regular inspection of the power reticulation by a qualified electrician is prudent to ensure the safety of the buildings and their occupants.

Policy 31	Future work and upgrades should be overseen by a heritage specialist to advise on location and methods of installation to minimise damage to heritage fabric and visual impact.
Services	<p>New services should be located with minimal visual impact externally and internally, and minimal impact to significant fabric. Use of sub-floor and ceiling spaces should be investigated as a priority within the buildings.</p> <p>Power reticulation services should be inspected by a suitably qualified electrician.</p> <p>Implications of providing air-conditioning should be considered with care and be appropriately managed. Co-ordination between a heritage architect / consultant and specialist mechanical / environmental engineer is essential.</p> <p>Air-conditioning requires a considered approach with advice from consultants familiar with heritage buildings. Air-conditioning ideally would be split system units with condensers located away from the building or in discrete locations. Careful planning and installation are required to limit the visual impact of the fan coil units and to ensure the protection of the heritage fabric. Consideration could be given to fan coil units in floor mounted joinery cabinets.</p> <p>Fire detection and firefighting equipment should comply with current code requirements and be maintained as such.</p> <p>Ensure that wall and ceiling cavities remain vermin-proof.</p> <p>Where deemed-to-satisfy solutions conflict with heritage significance, determine whether Alternative Solutions or Performance Solutions permitted under the National Construction Code (NCC) resolves the conflict. This would need to be undertaken by specialist consultant/s.</p>



### 7.7.2 Fire safety services

The upgrading of fire safety services within heritage places can be a challenge to ensure both the safety of occupants as well as the protection of the heritage fabric of the place. Often, typical systems which are considered 'deemed-to-satisfy' with compliance requirements can significantly impact the heritage building both during installation and activation. As a result, a suitably qualified person with an understanding of heritage issues should provide advice on fire engineered solutions appropriate for the buildings.

Where required, an assessment of the emergency escape provisions and a fire safety plan should be provided by a suitably qualified person that meets current compliance requirements.

Policy 32 Fire safety	Where necessary, install and/or upgrade fire protections services and equipment based on NCC requirements.  A fire engineered solution may be required to provide an alternative approach where a deemed-to-satisfy system is considered inappropriate for the heritage building.  Where deemed-to-satisfy solutions conflict with heritage significance, determine whether Alternative Solutions or Performance Solutions permitted under National Construction Code (NCC) resolves the conflict. This would need to be undertaken by a specialist consultant.
Policy 33 Escape and egress compliance	An assessment of the provisions for escape should be undertaken to ensure that the buildings are compliant in the event of an emergency.

### 7.7.3 Sustainability

Iona is primarily built of bricks—a sustainable resource which, when well maintained, has the ability to endure for centuries. The building demonstrates this durability, as well as utilising low-embodied energy timber within the framing, mouldings, windows and doors.

The building also employ a number of climate-responsive elements, designed for thermal comfort and natural lighting. The masonry construction provided protection against the elements, while generous windows provided light and ventilation. The tall internal volumes and fireplaces assisted with thermal comfort.

Policy 34 Passive ventilation and daylighting	The passive natural ventilation and daylighting techniques embedded in the architecture of Iona are key design intent elements and should be retained and conserved. The passive techniques (including cross ventilation and fully operable windows) should not be compromised.
Policy 35 Sustainable materials	New materials and finishes should be selected based on sustainable sources, durability, longevity of detailing and low toxicity.  Preference should be given to removing polyurethane finishes from the floor and resurfacing with an appropriate waxed finish. This will ensure the longevity of the original floorboards, protecting them from the subsequent loss of material during the sanding stages. This loss of material will eventuate in the necessary replacement of the timber boards, resulting in the loss of original fabric.

Policy 36 Solar panels	<p>Preference should be given to the installation of solar panels on any new/existing buildings or frames within the greater national park site beyond the heritage boundary.</p> <p>However, where this is not feasible, consideration may be given to installation of solar panels on the Garage, so long as they do not substantially impact on the views towards the lighthouse and residences.</p>
---------------------------	---

#### 7.7.4 Paint / decorative schemes

Early black and white photographs (even if faded) can give an indication of tonal variations (i.e. light and dark colours) between paint colours of different elements and can be used in conjunction with site evidence to develop an appropriately sensitive colour scheme for future painting. A good quality photograph from the opening of the building gives information on the original colour scheme.

Policy 37 Paint / decorative colour schemes	<p>Where a new paint colour scheme is considered for the previously painted elements, an updated Colour Study should be undertaken to advise on paint colours for the interiors and exteriors of the significant buildings based on the evidence of original / early schemes. This updated Colour Study should be undertaken by an experienced heritage architect / consultant.</p> <p>A new colour scheme may be selected based the original design intent (i.e., dark elements should be painted dark, light elements should be painted light).</p> <p>Where possible, retain layers of paint insitu as evidence of past colour schemes.</p>
Policy 38 Paint / decorative works	<p>Only previously painted elements may be repainted. No unpainted brick elements are to be painted.</p> <p>All surfaces are to be appropriately prepared and primed in relation to the substrate prior to painting.</p> <p>Where possible, retain layers of paint insitu as evidence of past colour schemes.</p>
Policy 39 Paint removal - generally	<p>The removal of lead-based paints is becoming more common. A hazardous materials specialist can assist with complete or partial removals through the preparation of risk analysis. Lead paint removal is to be undertaken by a qualified specialist.</p> <p>Where a large area of paint is to be removed a Colour Study must be undertaken prior to paint removal. This Colour Study should be undertaken by a suitably qualified heritage consultant with experience in heritage colour schemes.</p>
Policy 40 Paint removal – face brickwork	<p>Consideration should be given to removing the paint from the face brickwork to the verandahs.</p> <p>This should be undertaken by a specialist in paint removal from heritage buildings, with spot checks done to ensure that there are no impacts to the original bricks.</p>

## 8.0 Implementation plan

### 8.1 Purpose of implementation plan

This CMP has been prepared to provide guidelines for the on-going use, maintenance and conservation of Iona and site, and to ensure that the heritage values of the place are maintained.

The implementation plan consists of two plans – Action and Maintenance. The Action Plan sets out the recommended actions identified in this CMP including protocols, compliance and areas of further investigation. The Maintenance Plan provides guidance on the recommended maintenance tasks that should occur at regular intervals.

A basic summary of planning requirements is provided for each task, but any proposal for work not covered by the General Exemption Certificate will generally require further planning prior to application to DESI.

### 8.2 Action Plan

Actions identified in this plan are organised according to priority. Each level of priority is identified by a time frame in which the action should ideally be completed. The time frame is based on a period of ten years.

<b>HIGH</b>	within 1–2 years
<b>MEDIUM</b>	within 3–5 years
<b>LOW</b>	within 5–10 years

Note that all **HIGH** priority work ideally should be undertaken as part of a single, coordinated program. This will enable an efficient and logical approach to urgent conservation matters and reduce the number of applications made to DESI, thereby saving time and cost.

ELEMENT	ACTION REQUIRED	PRIORITY	COMMENTS
General	Secure endorsement of CMP and supply a copy to all relevant parties.	High	Appoint delegate to provide feedback and review of CMP for finalisation.
Training & Compliance	Ensure people working on the buildings have relevant information from this CMP, including a copy of the <i>Burra Charter</i> and specific recommendations regarding individual buildings and site.	High	All on-site personnel working on the site to undergo induction for heritage matters.
General	Undertake works based on priority and funding	High	To be prioritised as funds permit.
Compliance	Assessment and compliance of fire safety services.	High	To be prioritised as funds permit.
Planning	Master plan for greater site	Medium	A master plan should be commissioned to assess the feasibility of different options for the heritage place and the greater site. The master plan should provide guidance to suitable development on the heritage place.
Planning	Landscape master plan.	Medium	A landscape master plan should be commissioned from a suitably qualified heritage landscape architect/consultant.

General	Keeping records.	High	To be undertaken by Owner.
---------	------------------	------	----------------------------

### 8.3 Maintenance plan

The following maintenance plan provides guidance on the necessary regular works that are required to ensure the heritage place is maintained into the future.

MAINTENANCE FREQUENCY	ITEM FOR MAINTENANCE	INSPECTION SCOPE AND ADDITIONAL NOTES
Event based response – As required	Overflowing / blocked / broken item required for smooth functioning of building	Parish representative to respond in a timely fashion to emergency maintenance items.
	Repainting Re-roofing Repairs/replacement – like-for-like joinery and cladding etc.	Check to see if works can proceed under the General Exemption Certificate.
Half yearly	Termite and pest inspection	Look for evidence of infestation, insect or vermin attack in or around the building.
	Drainage	Check that drains are clear and that water is discharging from downpipes if possible.  Check during rain periods for any overflowing gutters or sumps. Clear any leaves and blockages.  Check for any ponding of water at the ground level during rain periods.  Check for leaking drains or pipes, unexpected wetness of the ground, settling of ground around the church.
	Foundations and walls	Check for movement or differential settlement – look for cracks in walls, particularly near corners and going diagonally. Check at windows and door openings. Check internally and externally. Look for sections of joinery pulling apart, doors/windows sticking or locks not aligned with strike plates.
	Walls	Check to see if walls appear to lean or bulge.
	Walls	Check for degraded mortar between bricks (including missing mortar, powdery mortar or mortar deposits on the ground).  Check for evidence of water ingress including changes to brick colours, salty fluorescence.  Check for fretting brickwork (hard surface of brick missing and softer interior of brick is exposed).
	Roof sheeting	Check for rusted, shifted or missing roof sheets.
	Gutters and downpipes	Check for appearance of rust.  Check for sagging and lost fixings.  Look for rust stains.
	Roof overflashings	Check that they remain intact, in place in walls and flush with tiles.



Annually	Windows	<p>Check over external and internal surfaces of windows.</p> <p>Check for rust to metal elements.</p> <p>Check for cracks in glazing. Check over lead joints.</p> <p>Check over windows and make sure they are operable. Make sure they seal correctly to ensure no water ingress.</p>
	Windows – stained glass	<p>Check over external and internal surfaces of windows.</p> <p>Look for bulging which may be a sign of frame movement.</p> <p>Check for cracks or corroded glass. Check for weak leadwork.</p> <p>Check over protective mesh to ensure no rust and that fixings to brickwork are not causing damage.</p>
	Doors	<p>Check over timber doors, looking for loose elements and/or widening joints.</p> <p>Check over framing.</p> <p>Check over decorative parliament hinges, locks and handles.</p> <p>Check alignment of locks and weather sealing of doors (possible indicators of structural problems).</p> <p>Check over thresholds to ensure no spalling or trip hazards.</p>
	Floors	<p>Check for settling of floor.</p> <p>Check for springiness (possible termite damage).</p>
	Internal roof	<p>Check over trusses for evidence of movement – separating joints, sagging or misalignment.</p> <p>Check over ceiling lining.</p>
	Paintwork and finishes	<p>Check over timber elements to ensure paint/finish is providing protection to the substrate timber. Look for paint that is peeling, bubbling, chipping or chalking.</p>
	Metal wall vents	<p>Check over vents to ensure internal side operable.</p> <p>Check over external mesh for integrity.</p>
	Staircases	<p>Check over staircases.</p> <p>Check for springiness (possible termite damage).</p>
	Soil level against building	<p>Ensure that garden beds have not been built up against the walls.</p> <p>Ensure that the ground slopes away from the building.</p>
	Damp proof course	<p>Check over damp proof course for evidence of failure.</p>
	Vegetation in masonry and gutters	<p>Check for any plants growing from brickwork or within gutters.</p> <p>Where this is the case, carefully remove and assess water ingress (brickwork) or ponding (gutters).</p>
	Lighting and power	<p>Check over all lights and power outlets are functioning.</p>
	Plumbing	<p>Check over plumbing fixtures to ensure they are maintained (including vestry cabinet sink).</p>
	Site	<p>Check condition of paths and steps.</p> <p>Check condition of pavilion and grotto.</p> <p>Check condition of plaques.</p> <p>Check condition of trees.</p>

## 9.0 Resources

### The Burra Charter

- Australia ICOMOS. *Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance*, 2013

Can be accessed from [Burra Charter 2013 \(Adopted 31.10.2013\) \(icomos.org\)](https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf)  
(<https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>)

- The Burra Charter practice notes can be accessed from [Burra Charter & Practice Notes | Australia ICOMOS](https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/) (<https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/>)

### Other resources

- General Exemption Certificate: Queensland Heritage Places

Can be accessed from [General Exemption Certificate: Queensland Heritage Places \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/66212/genex_certificate.pdf)  
([https://www.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/66212/genex\\_certificate.pdf](https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/66212/genex_certificate.pdf))

## 10.0 Appendix

### 10.1 Queensland Heritage Register listing

---

2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government



---

[Queensland Government home](#) > [For Queenslanders](#) > [Environment, land and water](#) > [Land, housing and property](#) > [Heritage places](#) > [Queensland Heritage Register](#) > [Search the register](#) > [St Columba's Convent \(former\)](#)

## St Columba's Convent (former)

- Place ID: 602761
- 169 Cunningham Street, Dalby

### General



2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government



[More images...](#)

Also known as

Iona; St Columbas Catholic Convent (former)

Classification

State Heritage

Register status

Entered

Date entered

9 December 2010

Types

Education, Research, Scientific Facility: School - private (denominational)

Religion/worship: Convent/nunnery

Theme

8.1 Creating social and cultural institutions: Worshipping and religious institutions

Architect

Roskell, George Bernard

<https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

2/10

2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

**Builder**

Draney, John

**Construction period**

1913, St Columba's Convent (former) (1913)

**Historical period**

1900–1914 Early 20th century

**Style**

Gothic

**Location**

**Address**

169 Cunningham Street, Dalby

**LGA**

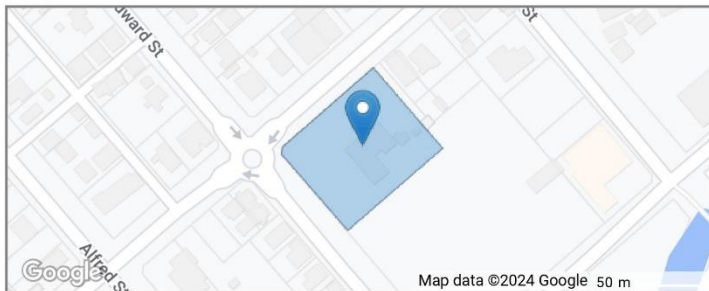
Western Downs Regional Council

**Coordinates**

-27.18633998, 151.26068478

**Map**

- [Enlarge map](#)



**Street view**



Photography is provided by Google Street View and may include third-party images. Images show the vicinity of the heritage place which may not be visible.

**Request a boundary map**

A printable boundary map report can be emailed to you.

<https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602761>

3/10

2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

Email

## Significance

### Criterion A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.

St Columba's Convent (former), a substantial brick and timber building constructed and opened in 1913 almost debt-free because of the donations made by parishioners, strikingly demonstrates the prosperity generated through pastoralism and agriculture on the Darling Downs, one of the most productive rural areas in Queensland.

St Columba's, designed by local architect George Bernard Roskell and constructed for the Sisters of Mercy, demonstrates the spread of the Catholic Church in regional Queensland, and in particular the significant contribution played by this order of nuns in the spiritual and educational development of the state through its establishment of convents, schools and boarding accommodation. The order served the Dalby parish for 113 years, occupying St Columba's for 77 of these until 1990.

### Criterion D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

St Columba's Convent (former) is an outstanding and highly intact example of a Sisters of Mercy convent and boarding facility built to serve the prosperous Darling Downs town of Dalby. On Cunningham Street the former convent retains its commanding presence, while its exterior displays further principal characteristics of a building of this type: triple-gabled street façade employing Gothic motifs and a perimeter of timber verandahs. In terms of layout and interior finishes, the former convent is also highly intact and therefore strongly illustrative of this type of cultural place: including ground floor chapel and sacristy, stained glass and leadlight windows, decorative timberwork, refectory and reception rooms and first floor nun's cells and boarders' dormitory with a coved, pressed metal ceiling.

### Criterion E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.

The former St Columba's Convent is an elegant architectural composition with great aesthetic merit, with its triple-gabled front façade, walls of face brick with cement rendered bands, and a perimeter of timber verandahs. The cohesive design and scale realised in the convent gives it a commanding visual presence on the south-western end of Cunningham Street, Dalby's main thoroughfare, a quality that it shares with two other ecclesiastical buildings in the block to the north-east - St Joseph's Catholic Church and St John's Church of England (QHR 602399).

## History

The former St Columba's Convent was built in 1913 for the Sisters of Mercy from a design by local architect George Bernard Roskell, to provide accommodation for the nuns and the boarding students in their care. At that time, the town of Dalby and its surrounding rural districts were experiencing economic growth. The Sisters of Mercy occupied the convent until 1990, after which it was purchased by the Dalby parish and used as a student hostel, before being leased as a youth and community centre.



2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

Dalby evolved as part of the expansion of one of the most significant pastoral regions in Queensland, the Darling Downs. The township was first laid out by Surveyor EO Moriaty in 1852. Due to an error in flood levels, Captain Perry, the Deputy Surveyor General of NSW resurveyed the township in 1853, naming it Dalby after a location on the Isle of Man. The Town Reserve was declared in the New South Wales Government Gazette in August 1855. Dalby soon had a range of government services, including a post office in August 1854, the declaration of the Dalby Police District in 1855, and the establishment of a National School in 1859. The first urban land sales were held in 1857 and the town gazetted as a municipality on 29 August 1863. The extension of the western railway line from Toowoomba to Dalby in 1868 led to a boom in the town which only diminished when the line was extended further west in 1877.

At the time of the appointment of James Quinn as the first Bishop of Brisbane in 1861, the population of the Colony of Queensland was 30,059, of whom 7,696 (39%) were Catholics. The proportion of Catholics in the main towns of the Darling Downs was: 18% in Warwick, 22% in Toowoomba, 28% in Dalby and 32% in Drayton. Initially Catholic pastoral care in Dalby was irregular; visiting priests had to celebrate mass in local hotels like Josiah Milstead's Plough Inn Hotel from 1855. The first Catholic school in Dalby was established in 1864.

Dalby's first Catholic church, St Joseph's was opened by Bishop Quinn in August 1866. In 1876 Quinn instructed Father Denis Byrne, curate of Dalby, to establish a convent in the town, using £400 that the Sisters of Mercy of All Hallows Convent in Brisbane had allocated for the purpose. The Sisters of Mercy, having initially travelled to Queensland with Bishop Quinn in 1860, were integral to the expansion of Catholic schools across the state.

A new commodious version of the Plough Inn Hotel, built in 1863, was sold as part of the estate of pastoralist CC Macdonald. A half share of the property - lots 14, 15 and 16 (originally lots 2, 3, and 4) of section 16 - was transferred to Bishop Quinn in 1876. A small group of Sisters of Mercy arrived in Dalby on 8 August the following year, from the Toowoomba convent established in 1873; and this new Plough Inn became the order's eleventh school in Queensland known as St Columba's. A new timber church designed by Toowoomba architect James Marks was opened in September 1886. By that time, Catholics comprised one third of the population of the Darling Downs.

Dalby's regional prosperity was spurred by a number of legislative processes aimed at rural development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the creation of smaller land holdings and the construction of new railways. The Dalby-to-Bell line opened in 1906, followed by the Tara line in 1908. Dairying and wheat cultivation expanded. A butter factory and a flour mill were established in Dalby in 1906, while the wool industry continued to underpin the rural economy of the area. Despite the dramatic effects of the Federation drought which peaked in 1902, the market for cattle improved in the 1910s, while the price of wool more than doubled between 1900 and 1915.

The growth of the area and the general expansion of the network of boarding schools led to the planning of a new, purpose-built Catholic convent for Dalby. In 1910, 3½ acres (1.4 ha) on the corner of Cunningham and Edward Streets were transferred to the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Rockhampton, James Duhig came in November 1910 to lay the foundation stone of the convent there. In November 1911 local architect George Bernard Roskell called for tenders for its construction. Born in India, Roskell migrated to Sydney in 1881, having previously been articled to EW Pugin in Dublin. (Pugin and his father AW Pugin were responsible for the design of a large number of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical buildings in Britain and Western Europe.) In Sydney, Roskell worked in partnership with John Bede Barlow between 1885 and 1891. (The 1887 Church of St Canice in Rushcutters Bay and the 1889 St Francis of Assisi Church in Paddington, designed by the practice are both on the Sydney Local Heritage Register.) Roskell then went to New Zealand, working for two firms known for their ecclesiastical projects. He relocated to Queensland as an employee of the Department of Public Works in 1907. Living in Dalby from 1909, he worked as clerk of the Dalby Town Council and also ran an architectural practice responsible for the Dalby National Bank (1910), the Dalby Hospital (1914) and the Wambo Shire Council offices (1916).

St Columba's Convent was opened by the recently appointed coadjutor, His Grace Archbishop Duhig on 8 June 1913, the eve of the feast day of St Columba of Iona. (St Columba had been exiled to this island off Scotland in 563



2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

and later established his ministry there.) A crowd of around 500 visitors attended the ceremony. Father Nolan, the Parish Priest indicated that the convent had cost £7,267 and he needed a further £2,600 to clear the debt. A collection was then taken up, which yielded around £1,600. Speakers praised the efforts of the builder, John Draney and the Clerk of Works, Michael Kelly, as well as the fund raising efforts of the ladies committee. It was expected that subsequent fund raising would focus on building a new church and presbytery for Father Nolan. Michael Kelly departed Dalby the following week to take up the position of Clerk of Works for St Brigid's Church at Red Hill (QHR 600284).

The Dalby Herald described the new convent as Gothic in style, standing on a large site, on solid foundations four feet deep, reinforced with rolled joists, bolted together under all the walls of the structure, creating a singular solid frame. Entry to the property was through ornamental iron gates composed of crosses with the name St Columba's Convent emblazoned on them in brass. A gravelled path led to the central main entrance, which had a simple gabled portico again lettered with the name of St Columba's. The front verandah featured sections of cast iron balustrade and all were ten feet wide. Flooring throughout was crows ash.

The convent's entry doors opened to a hall, flanked on each side by reception rooms, with passageways leading to both wings. To the right was a boarders' study which was separated by 9' (2.7 m) high folding doors from a boarders' refectory. Three French doors led to the western verandah, along which were located four music rooms. A nearby staircase led up to the boarders' dormitory. Directly behind the entrance lobby was the nuns' refectory, which included a fireplace and mantle. To the left of the entrance lobby, a grand timber staircase with turned silky oak balustrade ascended to the upper floor. Beyond the staircase was the 63' by 14' (19.2 by 4.3 m) chapel. The sanctuary was lit by arched stained glass windows illuminating the altar. A soft shade of green was used in the glass and in the interior paint scheme. The altar, which no longer remains, was designed and built by Trittons Furniture in Brisbane, donated by Mother Patrick of All Hallows in Brisbane and made as a copy of its altar.

The first floor boarders' dormitory occupied the entire western wing and had 16' (1.8 m) high coved ceilings. A lavatory and bathroom, with enamelled baths and showers adjoined the dormitory at the rear of the building. The dormitory opened onto front, rear and side verandahs. A corridor led from the boarders' dormitory to an infirmary for smaller children, which had a fireplace. Six nuns' cells 12' by 8' (3.6 by 2.4 m), painted in French grey were also located here. The upper floor of the eastern wing housed three more cells and a large community room, the nun's bathrooms and toilets, and linen room. Water was supplied from a bore and from four 2 000 gallon tanks and three smaller rainwater tanks. The convent was one of the earliest buildings in Dalby to have a septic system, the local firm Downs Plumbing and Manufacturing supplying and executing all the plumbing work. Pressed metal ceilings were by Extons.

Ongoing development of Catholic facilities in Dalby included a locally-designed school (1916) to the rear of the convent towards Jimbour Street, and a new church (1921) a block to the north-east on Cunningham Street and an adjacent presbytery (1930), both designed by Sydney architects Hennessey and Hennessey. Also in Cunningham Street, St John's Church of England, designed by Toowoomba architect Harry Marks, opened in 1935 (QHR 602399).

Father Nolan was honoured by the Pope in November 1930 and invested as a Monsignor in St Joseph's Church, when he was praised for the beautiful church buildings erected in Dalby - the convent, church and school. Within the Parish of Dalby, Nolan was responsible for the construction of new churches in Bell (1912), Warra (1913) and Jandowie (1917), Catholic communities which all would have sent children to school in Dalby. In 1930 and 1932 two further churches - at Cecil Plains and Kaimkillenbun respectively - were opened, both under his direction. The well-respected Nolan remained in the parish until his death in 1950. His church building scheme formed part of Duhig's overall program, which produced over 400 buildings in Queensland, including religious, educational and charitable institutions and hospitals.

2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

The chief towns of the Darling Downs - namely Toowoomba, Warwick and Stanthorpe - became, along with Dalby, centres of education with the establishment of a number of day and boarding schools by different Christian denominations. With regards Catholic convents predating St Columba's, of the four built only the Sisters of Mercy Convent of the Assumption built in 1893-94 in Warwick is extant (QHR 600953 - Cloisters). Around the time of the construction of the convent at Dalby, other Christian boarding schools were established in Toowoomba and Warwick but were not overseen by an order of nuns or brothers. These generally remain in operation with early buildings often having become part of co-educational colleges formed through a process of school amalgamation, such as in Warwick where the Presbyterian Ladies College (1918) and Scots College for boys (1919) merged in 1970 and now operate as Scots PCG College over two campuses. A brick and timber convent built in Goondiwindi in 1911 and similar in scale to that at Dalby has been demolished. A number of smaller convents and schools were established on the Downs after 1913, including at Allora, Clifton, Crows Nest, Oakey, Miles, Chinchilla and Yarraman. Of these only the Sisters of the Good Samaritan convents at Clifton (1917) and Yarraman (1946) are known to remain, while a number of the schools continue in operation.

Boarding was phased out at St Columba's during the 1960s, while the school continued to expand on land behind the convent along Jimbour Street. In 1963 St Mary's Christian Brothers College was established in Nicholson Street, near the Dalby airport, to educate boys from grades 5 to 10. St Mary's College became co-educational for grades 8 to 10 in 1980, with St Columba's operating as the co-educational primary school. In October 1990, the Sisters of Mercy departed Dalby, as part of the trend towards co-educational colleges staffed by lay teachers and managed through Diocesan Education Offices. In 1991, the Dalby Parish Finance Committee purchased the convent from the Sisters, upgraded its facilities and established a non-denominational rural student hostel, known as St Joseph's, servicing the regional community. St Columba's school to the rear of the convent was extensively fire damaged in 1998 and the decision made to begin a process of relocation to Nicholson Street. The last of the significant school buildings remaining on the site was moved elsewhere. St Columba's and St Mary's formally merged in 2008 to form Our Lady of the Southern Cross College based at the Nicholson Street campus.

A decline in the Dalby region's rural prosperity led to the closure of St Joseph's Hostel in 1999. The former convent became known as Iona after the relocation of the school. It was then used by a number of community and educational groups. In May 2006 the Myall Youth and Community Network Centre (MYCNC) moved into the former convent, however in mid-2010 it was awaiting completion of purpose-built facilities in Diplock Park opposite Dalby High School.

## Description

St Columba's Convent (former) occupies a corner block in the south-western part of Dalby, 80 kilometres north-west of Toowoomba on the Darling Downs. Addressing Cunningham Street to the north-west and Edward Street to the south-west, the two storey brick and timber building has a commanding presence on the street. Opposite it along Cunningham Street are the Dalby Ambulance Station and several residences; whilst further to the north-east are St Joseph's Catholic Church and the adjacent Presbytery (not original). The flat allotment covers approximately 2.7 hectares, with the proposed heritage boundary encompassing only its north-western part.

The former convent's plan is H-shaped with a south-western wing extended further to the rear than the north-eastern one. The two storey building stands on concrete footings with various brick piers and timber stumps supporting the verandahs; its core made from reddish bricks laid in English bond, with white render bands at sill and head height decorating the main façade. The brick lintels over the windows and external doors are arched, with either two or three rowlock courses. Throughout the building extensive cracking in the masonry walls is visible both on the exterior and interior.

Some of the building's timber verandahs were originally enclosed with weatherboarding, while others have been more recently enclosed with flat sheeting or chamferboards. Original timber verandah decoration, including stop



2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

chamfered posts, decorative post capitals and brackets, and solid timber valances, remains in many parts of the building, particularly on the façade addressing Cunningham Street. The ground floor verandah ceilings are lined with ripple iron sheeting, whilst those on the first floor are raked and have v-jointed timber board linings. Areas of unenclosed verandah have exposed timber floors. An early timber tank stand remains at the rear of the north-eastern wing.

Original timber doors are either single-leaf or French with rectangular fanlights. The former are low-waisted with four solid panels, while the latter are low-waisted with single solid panels at the bottom and two rectangular panes divided by a narrow glazing bar at the top. Some doors appear to have been relocated within the building.

The main roof, clad in corrugated iron sheeting, consists of two parallel long gables over the north-eastern and south-western wings connected by another gabled section over the central building range. The gable ends are decorated with moulded bargeboards and partial timber batten infill. The roofs over the verandahs are broken-backed. Two brick chimneys, painted white, are located above the inner face of the south-western wing, and several metal vents pierce the roof ridges. Celtic crosses adorn the ends of the main gables.

The Cunningham Street façade is largely symmetrical, with a central portico formed in timber and verandahs running behind it between the brick walls of the two main gabled wings. The verandahs here have original cast iron balustrades, painted white, set into timber top and bottom rails. The portico is supported on double posts and topped by a pediment with ornamentation forming a gothic pointed arch. The western gable end has three lancet windows on each floor, with pink and green patterned glass; while the eastern gable end is slightly narrower, with two lancet windows on the upper floor and a projecting bay on the ground with three lancet windows (one filled with sheeting). It has a corrugated iron gable roof and timber gable ornamentation. Under the adjacent verandah a sacristy is formed in brick with lancet windows.

The north-eastern façade retains many of its open verandah areas. A recent timber staircase provides access to the first floor verandah, the southern end of which is clad in weatherboards. At the northern end of this floor the first two bays of the verandah are enclosed with chamferboards and banks of louvered windows. On the south-western façade only a small portion of the ground floor verandah remains unenclosed. A double storey brick section with three original windows divides the façade and houses an original internal staircase. Various window types feature including three-light casements, aluminium sliders and louvers.

The rear façade is dominated by the two projecting wings forming a courtyard. The areas of enclosed verandah are variously clad in weatherboards or chamferboards. A multitude of window types feature, including original timber-framed double-hung sashes, four-light timber casements, and aluminium-framed sliders. There is an original external timber staircase in the verandah area of the central building range. The brick gable ends of both wings feature small ventilation openings.

The interior fabric of the building is largely intact. Unless noted, all internal ceilings are lined with pressed metal, in a variety of patterns, including ceiling roses and cornices, although modern fluorescent lights and ceiling fans have often been fitted over the roses. All interior masonry walls are plastered and painted; and most rooms and corridors have a timber picture rail positioned either in line with the top of the fanlights or just below ceiling level (rooms without picture rails include the former nuns' cells and the kitchen). Wide timber skirtings line the base of most walls, and timber floors are largely carpeted.

The ground floor layout of the former St Columba's Convent remains substantially intact, with only one interior wall removed (in the kitchen). Entry is from Cunningham Street, off the verandah and into a small lobby with reception rooms either side. The elaborate front door is timber-framed and set into an arched opening; with patterned glass lights (green, red and yellow) surrounding the central, low-waisted double door. Some original door hardware remains. On the far side of the entrance lobby is an elaborate doorway into the central corridor. Topped by an open

2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

timber-framed fanlight containing the top of a pointed arch and two timber quatrefoils, the doorway has two fixed and two opening leaves, each glazed with five arctic glass lights.

Beyond this a central hallway runs parallel to the main façade, linking the north-eastern and south-western wings. This has a carpeted floor and stop-chamfered edges around openings. Rooms on the southern side of the corridor are the former nun's refectory, a small office (formerly work room) and the main staircase. This features a polished silky oak balustrade. At the south-western end of the former nun's refectory is a fireplace with a carved silky oak mantelpiece. The north-eastern wing houses the chapel, with adjacent brick sacristy. The sanctuary is located in the bay projection at the northern end, separated from the main space by an arched opening and two steps. The stained glass of the sanctuary features flowers and symbols such as alpha and omega, whilst all other windows contain leadlighting in various shades of green. A door leads into the small sacristy and the one connecting to the central corridor has a flashed glass border. The Stations of the Cross are in timber frames surmounted by a small cross.

The south-western wing contains two large rooms at the northern end, with original bi-fold timber doors made of eight panels, approximately 2.7 metres high, dividing the former boarder's study from the refectory. At the southern end is a kitchen, with an adjacent cold room and pantry inserted where the music rooms were. The kitchen is recently fitted out; however an original stove alcove remains. The floor is covered with linoleum. These rooms contain original doors, windows, timber-lined walls and a corridor leading to the western verandah. The amenities area on the eastern side of the enclosed verandah contains some original fabric, such as doors and board lined walls. The brick enclosed staircase in the north-western corner of this wing has a simple, painted timber balustrade, carpeted stairs and pressed metal on the underside of the upper landing.

On the first floor, the core of the former convent on either side of the central corridor consists of six small rooms, formerly nun's cells, and a large room (former infirmary) currently divided in two. Five of the cells run along the northern side of the corridor, with the sixth adjacent to the main staircase. The enclosed verandah to the rear of these rooms contains a kitchen, dining area and bathroom. The timber floor here is lined with linoleum and the exterior brick walls are unpainted. The north-eastern wing houses a meeting room at the front of the building, three former nun's cells and amenities at the southern end. The south-western wing was formerly a single long dormitory room but is now divided into five rooms by plasterboard-lined partitions and areas of ceiling. The original coved ceiling runs the entire length of the former dormitory and is visible in three of the five rooms, with low plasterboard ceilings in two of the rooms. The former boarder amenities are located in the verandah at the southern end of this wing. Rooms here, which include a large amenities room, retain some original doors, windows and board-lined walls and ceiling. Floors have been lined with linoleum and modern bathroom fixtures installed.

In the former nuns cells there are sections of likely recent wallpaper remaining on the walls. A fireplace with timber mantelpiece identical to the one on the ground floor features in the largest room. The rear external staircase has been enclosed on this level. The meeting room at the front of the north-east wing has two filled doorways on the north-east wall. The three former nun's cells are divided from each other and from the corridor by timber walls lined with vertically-jointed, tongue and groove boards. They each have a recent double door opening on to the north-east verandah. The amenities and store room at the southern end of this wing have recent fixtures and linings.

Though largely open lawn, a variety of trees and shrubs are planted along the edges of the St Columba's property and throughout its grounds. Some mature trees as remnants of early planting schemes are significance, such as several mature bottle trees (*Brachychiton rupestris*) in the front and north-east lawn areas. There is an informal parking area at the rear of the building. The main feature of the front fence is a gateway marked by two original brick pillars. Two later brick pillars flanking the original gateway are not of significance, neither are the garden beds laid out in front of the building, edged in orange brick and arranged around a central circular garden feature.

Other features not considered to be of significance are a small fenced enclosure at the rear, south-west side of the building and a small garage and carport near the south-east corner. Near the north-east boundary is a brick pavilion, housing a crucifix statue on a raised platform. It has a gabled, tiled roof and round arches spanning between the



2/7/24, 2:07 PM

St Columba's Convent (former) | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government

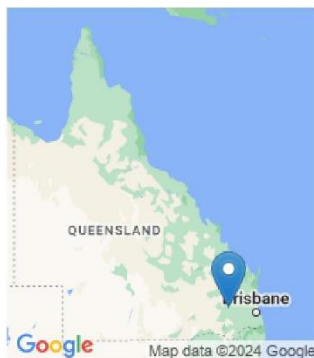
corner pillars, some of which are topped by a small cross. Larger crosses sit at the gable peaks and the flat ceiling is lined with pressed metal. On the north-east side of the building, near the sacristy, is a grotto made from stone with a garden in the centre. A statue of the Virgin Mary stands in an alcove in the rear wall and a marble plaque, dedicated to a Sister Mary Agatha who apparently died in 1917, is attached to a sandstone block. The pavilion and grotto are both considered to be significant.

A brass plaque in the front garden area commemorates 113 years of the Sisters of Mercy in Dalby. A marble plaque is attached to the northern corner of the main façade commemorating the laying of the foundation stone but is unlikely to be original. Next to the main door is a large brass plaque, commemorating the blessing and reopening of the building as St Joseph's Parish Hostel in 1991.

## Image gallery



## Location



 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Last reviewed 1 July 2022

Last updated 20 February 2022

Copyright (<https://www.qld.gov.au/legal/copyright/>)

Disclaimer (<https://www.qld.gov.au/legal/disclaimer/>)

Privacy (<https://www.qld.gov.au/legal/privacy/>)

Right to information (<https://www.qld.gov.au/right-to-information/>)

© The State of Queensland 1995–2024

Queensland Government (<https://www.qld.gov.au/>)

## 10.2 Example induction notes for contractors

---

Where substantial work is to be done, or where significant fabric is to be affected, it is recommended that the full CMP be provided to the head contractor.

Where the works are relatively minor, or for subcontractors, this induction sheet may be distributed for an introductory understanding of the significance of the heritage place.

If this induction sheet is utilised, ensure that it remains up-to-date.

# IONA

## (fmr St Columba's Convent) Cunningham Street, Dalby

### Introduction

When undertaking works to Queensland Heritage Places, there is a potential to impact the heritage values of that place. Queensland Heritage Places are considered a cultural resource, and the responsibility for the care of these places falls to all the people who interact with that place, whether they are owners, visitors or contractors. To avoid accidental damage, it is important for all contractors working at heritage places to be aware of the place's heritage values, and what procedures and obligations are required.

Iona is a former convent and is considered to have high heritage significance. It is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register and, as a result, the site is protected by the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*, administered through the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI).

### Before undertaking site works

It is important to understand the significance of the heritage place, and how any works may have a detrimental impact on the heritage values of the former convent.

Depending on the scale of works, it is advisable for head contractors to read the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for a fuller understanding of the history and significance of the heritage place, including policies that relate to the relevant work.

Head contractors should include details of the heritage significance of the built elements/landscape element/areas/fabric to all people working on the site within a daily 'toolbox talk'.

### Heritage principles

In Australia, the *Burra Charter* is the nationally accepted standard for heritage conservation practice. The *Burra Charter* sets out a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance,



including owners, managers, custodians and contractors.

The *Burra Charter* advocates a cautious approach to change – do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable (in some cases adaptive reuse is necessary), but otherwise change it as little as possible within this context so that its cultural significance is retained.

The basic principles of the *Burra Charter* are:

#### Understand the place

Understand the history of the place and the cultural significance it holds (including its meaning to people), before making decisions about its future.

#### Understand its significance

Care for its cultural significance and other significant attributes (including setting, site, views, fabric and intangible qualities). Significance should guide decisions.

#### Provide an appropriate use

Ensure that the place meets the needs of the present and future while respecting the history and significance. Provide security for the place. Provide interpretation.

#### Changes

Use available expertise, and keep records of any changes.

#### Brief history

Iona is the name of the former St Columba's Convent.

In the 1880s the Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic order from Ireland, were tasked with providing education services in the growing town of Dalby. The Dalby convent was to provide teaching to school students, as well as provide boarding facilities for those families who lived too far from the town. Originally located in the former Plough Inn, a purposed built grand two-storey brick building was constructed in



1913 on Cunningham Street, close by to St Joseph's Catholic Church. The building served the Sisters of Mercy until 1990 when St Joseph's Parish took over management of the building, initially providing inter-denominational boarding accommodation for all the schools in Dalby. In recent years, however, the building has been utilised as office and teaching rooms for youth services.

### **How to recognise heritage elements and fabric**

Heritage fabric and elements include all original or early materials used for the construction of the former St Columba's Convent. Typically, the heritage fabric comprises of all the necessary building material used in the construction of the building including the brickwork, timber elements (structural and decorative), internal linings, doors and windows.

The images in the schedule below will help to identify typical significant elements.



*Face brickwork with rendered stringer courses.*



*Timber verandahs with cast iron or timber balustrades.*



*Original doors and double hung windows (some with stained glass)*



*Pressed metal ceilings, cornices and ceiling roses.*



*Timber stairs*

### **Mitigation methods**

Protection measures must be established prior to and for the duration of works around significant building fabric or any other identified site elements within the vicinity of the works. Careful movement of contractors, equipment and new materials is required to ensure the protection of the significant fabric.

It may be necessary to protect adjacent building fabric, provide no-go zones or temporary hoarding during any works.



## Repairs to significant fabric

In the repair of the built elements, the use of appropriate materials is important to retain the significance of the place and is also often cost-effective in the long term for the client. The use of inappropriate materials and incorrect methods of repair can result in irreversible damage to fabric and additional expense. Wherever possible, existing fabric should be repaired rather than being replaced. If replacement of significant fabric is required, the replacement should be in keeping with the original element (in a like-for-like manner).

Where the fabric may be in poor condition and requires repair or replacement beyond what was stated in the approved works, a variation should be discussed with the appropriate supervisor (contractor's Site Supervisor /owner /engaged heritage consultant) to understand if this requires a statutory variation to the works, notification to consent authorities, and/or further heritage advice.

## Archaeological finds protocol

Archaeological finds may include structural remains of buildings, drains, wells or other structures on the site, or associated cultural deposits, such as various fills or archaeological artefacts. Archaeological artefacts include any relic or remains that relate to past human behaviour. They can be found above, on, or below the land surface, or in State waters. Archaeological artefacts are valuable because they provide evidence about Queensland's history, often complementing and supplementing written or oral historical records.

If you discover an archaeological artefact that you think may be important in relation to Queensland's non-Indigenous history you must:

- contact DESI immediately by email (Archaeology@des.qld.gov.au) or phone (13 QGOV (13 74 68)) and provide details about the find;
- submit the form *Notification of a discovery* (<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/archaeology/discoveries>);
- not disturb the site of the find for 20 working days unless DESI give you written permission.

If you discover an archaeological artefact that you think may be important in relation to Queensland's non-Indigenous history you must:

- contact the Department of Senior, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP). To report this type of discovery email DSDSATSIP's Cultural Heritage unit via phone (1300 378 401) or email ([cultural.heritage@dldsatsip.qld.gov.au](mailto:cultural.heritage@dldsatsip.qld.gov.au)).

## Human remains

If you discover human remains when carrying out development work or similar activities you must notify Queensland Police immediately. It is an offence to interfere with human remains, buried or not. Queensland Police will determine if the remains are related to a criminal investigation. If the remains are historical you must also report them to DESI.

This induction sheet has been produced by Praevius Heritage for Iona (fmr St Columba's Convent).

© Praevius Heritage 2024

---

**Praevius Heritage**

[www.praevius.com.au](http://www.praevius.com.au)