

Place name	Notre Dame de Sion	Survey Date:	4/07/2004
Other name	Our Lady of Sion Convent	Id:	1180
Street	341 to 369 York Street	Last Update	4/10/2004
Locality	Sale	Postcode	
Official Locality		Property No	
Local Government Area	Wellington Shire	Property Info	
Precinct:	Not in precinct		
Easting		Northing	
Map			
Workshop number		Workshop votes	
Field survey number		Community priority	
Designer	Reed, Smart and Tappin.	Builder	
Ownership		Built Date	1892-1901
		Change Date	

Description This spectacular three storey Victorian Gothic convent and chapel is sited prominently on the corner of York and Raglan Streets. Obscured from view on the Raglan Street side by new buildings, the original convent and chapel are still a striking landmark from the street corner. Along York Street, the main facade is complimented by an intact turn of the century garden with gravel paths with curved brick borders to lawns and flower gardens with a grotto located in the south-east corner. The building is constructed in redbrick with Waurn Ponds freestone dressings. The main gable roof has projecting gable wings at each end, echoed by a series of dormer windows projecting to the front and rear from a slate roof.

The central focus of the facade is a stone porch entrance with ornate chamfered arch and jamb. On the second storey this is crowned with a stone statue alcove and wide stone arch window frame. The porch contains decorative stained glass high lights above a heavy pair of Neo-Gothic timber doors. The windows along the facade are double hung and set in pairs, except between the buttresses surrounding the porch. The lower storey fenestration has shallow arched stone lintels and pointed arches in the upper storey with dimpled highlight window throughout. The stone capping on the parapets and buttresses matches the continuous courses in the eaves and between the two floors. Dark brown brick criss-cross patterns in the upper second storey reflect Venetian Gothic influences popular in ecclesiastical architecture in Australia late last century.

At the Raglan Street end of the building a round tower with crenellated cap forms a striking silhouette adjacent to the chapel with its simplified rose window. These elements were later additions and the clustering of different architectural forms and features such as the elongated chimney suggest the more eclectic design influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, which is more often associated with domestic architecture. From the rear of the building, a three storey classroom wing, built slightly later, projects from the southern end of the building. The truncated gable end has a castellated parapet. On the southern wall of this wing a new fire stair with rounded red brick wall has been added in sympathy with the original design. A detached building of Queen Anne style is located to the south of the convent building and appears intact. Several other school buildings have been erected on the north west side of the building.

Comparable examples of Victorian Gothic convent design are Loreto Convent, Ballarat, and the Sisters of Mercy convent in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy.

Condition & Integrity: The convent and chapel are in excellent condition, with a majority of the original architectural details intact. The chapel, built at a later date, is distinguished by a different design approach, as is the south western three storey classroom. Additions such as the fire stair are sympathetic in scale and materials but distinctly contemporary in design.

Place type: Church

Condition

Integrity

History The Notre Dame de Sion Convent was built on land alienated from the Crown by H. Stern between 1865 and 1866, who purchased the entire Crown Allotment.(1) In September 1891, the Sisters purchased 8 acres fronting York

Street, known then as Tracy's Paddock.(4) In 1889, the Sion Mother House in Paris had agreed to Bishop Corbett's request to send nuns to Victoria, to establish a school in the Gippsland Diocese.(4) The Sisters of Sion arrived in Sale in 1890(2). They were led by Mother Raphaela (Louise Cramoisy, 1859-1902), a young nun of 30, who was also a talented artist. She had not been in Sale long before the symptoms of her paralysing illness became evident and caused her death in 1902. The Sisters of Sion have been the longest serving of the Catholic orders in Sale, sharing their work in education and the community with the Sisters of St Joseph and the Brigidines. Several of the sisters of the order of Sion have been buried at the Sale cemetery under a Yew tree.

The building was commenced in 1892 and the chapel completed in 1901. The architects were the well known Melbourne firm, Reed, Smart and Tappin and the builder, Wynn and Bragg.(3) The convent design is said to have been laid out by Mother Raphaela based on the orders of the Mother House in France.(3)

The statue of Our Lady of Sion in the niche over the front door, came from Paris in 1896.(5) The convent was extended with the construction of a rear wing containing an assembly hall and dormitory in 1938. In 1953 a residential wing was added.(3) The large classroom block fronting Raglan Street was added in 1967.

After a century of educating girls, Sion has now become a campus of the Sale Catholic College, housing the junior school.

Heritage Protections	Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
	National Trust Register	B3319		Listed
	Planning Scheme	HO94		Listed
	Register of the National Estate	004779		Listed
	Victorian Heritage Register	607618		File only

National Estate

Research Required

Recommendations

Fieldwork priority?

Stage 1 Ranking Assessed & protected **Stage 2 priority** No Action: Already include

Final Ranking State significance **Final Recommendation** Amendment C26

Statement of significance The Notre Dame de Sion College is a significant part of the heritage of Sale for reasons pertaining to its aesthetic, design and historical importance in the region.

As a landmark, the Sion Convent and chapel dominate the corner site which marks the traditional gateway into Sale from the north. The building's size and style are evocative of a past era and symbolise the importance of the Catholic Convent in the early development of Sale.(F.1, A.4)

The buildings have design importance as an outstanding example of a convent in Gippsland, exhibiting high architectural achievement. It is important as an example of the work of prominent Victorian architectural firm Reed, Smart and Tappin, and of local builders Wynn and Bragg. Comparable to Loreto Convent, Ballarat and Sisters of Mercy Convent, Fitzroy, it provides an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic convent design.(F.1, H.1)

The former convent and chapel have additional significance as evidence of the important role of the Sisters of Sion to the Catholic community, the largest serving of Catholic orders in Sale.(H.1, G.1)

Extent of designation

Informant

Notes

Follow up

Bibliography Sale Heritage Study

- (1) Town of Sale Plan, 1910.
 - (2) 'Gippsland Times', 24/11/75.
 - (3) National Trust File No.3319.
 - (4) 'Reverend Mother Marie Raphaela', Gippsland Heritage Journal, No. 2, 1987, p.50.
 - (5) 'Sisters of Our Lady of Sion Centenary 1890-1990', p.15.
- Context Pty Ltd, (2004), Wellington Heritage Study: Sale Review

York Street 0341, ID 1180 v.jpg

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1/01/1994



York Street 0341, ID 1180 i.jpg

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Kristy Crawford

20/02/2007



York Street 0314, ID 1180 vii.jpg

Esma Allan

1/01/1985



CONVENT OF NOTRE
DAME de SION

BUILT in York Street in 1893, it is a striking example of Norman-Gothic architecture, and is probably the most beautiful building of the period still remaining in Sale. Photograph taken in 1970 after the new fence replaced the high iron one.