Place Details

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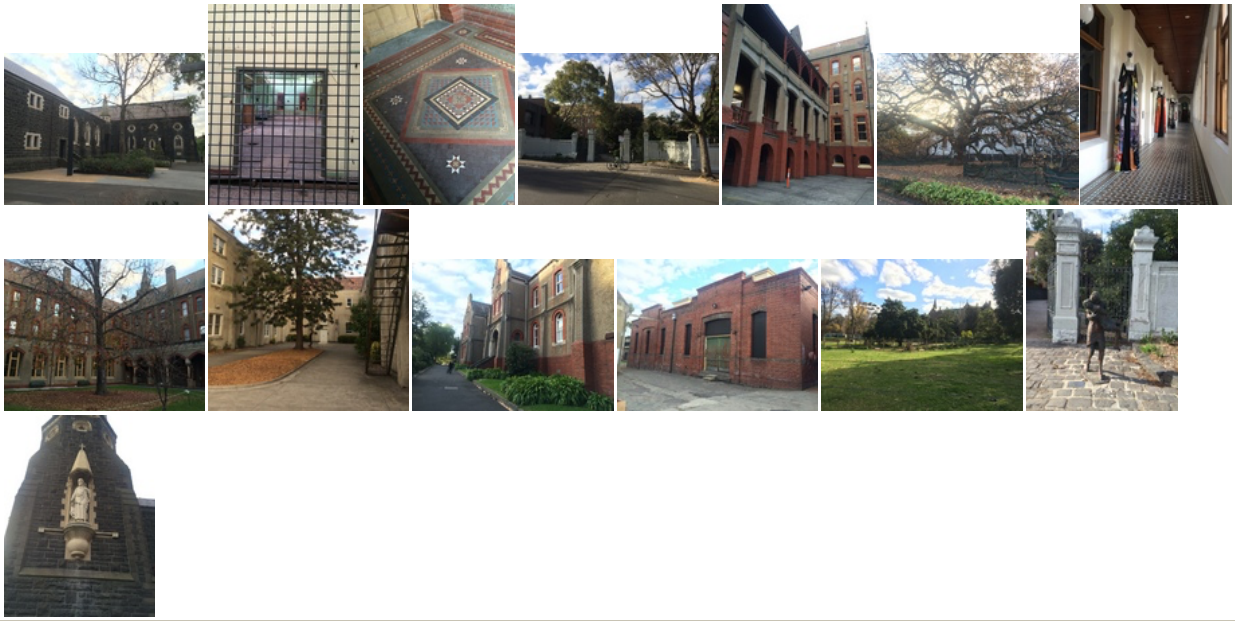
Abbotsford Convent, 1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford, VIC, Australia

Photographs



List	National Heritage List
Class	Historic
Legal Status	Listed place (31/08/2017)
Place ID	106040
Place File No	2/11/012/0006

Summary Statement of Significance

The former Convent of the Good Shepherd complex, including a rare laundry, is an outstanding example of a place which demonstrates Australia's social and welfare history, especially in regards to the rol charitable institutions in this history over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Convent's variety of programs and facilities in their institutional and ecclesiastical context are significant aspect strengthens its historic value.

Operating over more than one hundred years from 1863 to 1974, through the social traumas caused by the great Depression, two World Wars and other social upheavals, the Convent provided shelter, food work for tens of thousands of women and children who were variously impacted by poverty, neglect, disadvantage or other forms of social exclusion or insecurity. The Convent also formed part of Victoria' justice system.

The former Convent place has retained buildings and spaces demonstrating a range of former institutional and ecclesiastical functions including the residential and training mother house of a major religi a women's refuge, a reformatory for young offenders, an industrial school complex for neglected and disadvantaged children, a catholic day school, a working farm and large industrial laundry. The remna buildings are rare in Australia.

The place demonstrates models of care implemented by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the historic course and pattern of these models through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Institutionali this period was eventually abandoned as a care model throughout Australia by the 1960s and 70s. The Apology to the Forgotten Australians in 2009 highlighted the trauma experienced by children in insti Australia. The Forgotten Australians connection with this place is part of its significance.

Abbotsford Convent has outstanding heritage significance to Australia because of its very high capacity to demonstrate the welfare history and patterns of social change associated with institutionalisation understanding of Australia's welfare history and the social changes which shaped the distinctive models of care evident within the Convent over more than 100 years.

The impact on large numbers of people who were admitted to benevolent institutions continues today. As a result Abbotsford Convent is a valuable physical record which can explain the personal histories is also a valuable record for on-going generations who are seeking to understand the past which has impacted on their family. In particular Abbotsford Convent is able to inform the stories and experiences children.

The overall lack of surviving material culture relating to the residential care of Forgotten Australians also increases the heritage value of the laundry buildings. Given the intactness of the laundry within its setting, its significance as a marker of conditions associated with the Forgotten Australians and its rarity at least nationally, the laundry complex is considered to be of high significance.

Official Values

Criterion A Events, Processes

The Abbotsford Convent place has outstanding historic value because of the site's strong capacity to demonstrate the course and pattern of welfare provision in Australia from the mid - nineteenth ce twentieth century.

The history of welfare provision in Australia mirrors the course and pattern of social change in Australia. These changes inform our understanding of ourselves as Australians in the communities and live in. The development of social institutions in Australia also has a defining impact on Australian life and reflects the collective effort made by Australians to support each other in our communities

The significant role and influence of religious institutions in the development of Australia's welfare system is particularly evident at Abbotsford Convent. The models of care demonstrated at the Abb mostly reflect patterns of welfare provision developed prior to the establishment of a secular, government system of defined benefits. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, secular or r were a primary way of delivering services to people facing poverty or other forms of difficulty or disadvantage. Compared with modern standards and from a contemporary perspective, conditions in institutions were harsh and cruel. Care institutions were also used to house Indigenous children involuntarily removed from their families by government policies.

Abbotsford Convent, established in one of the then poorest districts of Melbourne, initially offered a refuge for women, responding in part to a noticeable increase in social and community stress whi families and women in particular. An orphanage was also established. Over time the Convent expanded to include an early industrial school, a reformatory school for young offenders, a women's refu school. These places were all located within the wider ecclesiastical setting made up of the Convent 'mother' house, the Chapel and the garden with its recreation and contemplative areas. These facili

and operated by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Order; an order established to help women and girls facing social hardship and exclusion.

The Convent's working farm and large commercial laundry provided the Convent with an important source of revenue for its operation and institutional activities. Work in the farm and laundry form rehabilitation, training and reform programs at the Convent. The construction of programs like these and the consequential treatment of girls and young children reflect the values of the time. In the women's lives were largely restricted to the home with little outside opportunities for work. Women's behaviour was also subject to strict and gendered codes of conduct. The particular needs of youn poorly understood. Over the course of the twentieth century practices changed from those characterised by control to a system based on children's rights. Benefits began to be provided by governmer forms of assistance. By the 1960s and 1970s institutionalisation was abandoned and replaced by a community based system of service delivery.

Residential care institutions impacted on a significant number of Australians. Their experiences were acknowledged in the national Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008 and to the Forg and Former Child Migrants in 2009. The harm of institutionalisation and the trauma often experienced by residents is acknowledged as being part of the heritage of this place.

Features expressing the overall national significance of the Abbotsford Convent include but are not limited to the whole Convent complex within the place boundary. All of the existing buildings and the Convent's closure in the 1970s are significant. The Convent gardens, courtyards and former Convent farm are also significant.

Features expressing specific aspects of the national significance of Abbotsford Convent include but are not limited to the following items:

In relation to the Convent Chapel, the Chapel's location near to the former Convent building, its function as a place of worship and the features demonstrating the management and control of girls in Management and control measures include but are not limited to the evidence of separation of girls in the seating layout of the chapel and the separate entrances to the Chapel.

In relation to the former Convent building, features demonstrating the residential use and operation of this building as a convent and centre of care institution management are significant. The archi building reflecting its 'French order' heritage is significant. Items of particular significance in relation to the Convent building include but are not limited to the Provincial Superior's room, the Bisho its interior fireplace and distinctive interior room decoration, the Breakfast Parlour, the Salon with decorative frieze and other rooms reflecting the use of the building for the housing of resident novi (cells, dormitories, dining, recreation and work spaces) and other supportive functions including the kitchen. The significance of these additional items reside in their ability to demonstrate the funct and the living conditions and or experiences of residents in the Convent.

In relation to the remaining asylum buildings the built structures, internal rooms and outdoor spaces demonstrating the function of the asylum and the way of life and lived experiences of those resi during the nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century are significant. Buildings of particular significance include but are not limited to Sacred Heart, the industrial school, the laundry (n stables, Rosina, St Mary's, St Euphrasia, Providence, Mercator and St Anne's. Items which demonstrate confinement and segregation of classes of residents like gates, window bars, the remnant origi fences and paths are significant. Places used for 'overseeing' residents and the features, like windows, which made this possible are also significant. The layout and size of interior rooms which reflect working conditions of residents is significant. The 'front' gate entrance to the Convent off Clarke Street is also significant as the former formal entry point to the institution. The enclosed and gated S courtyard is also significant as a place demonstrating confinement.

Some specific interior rooms are also significance because they demonstrate the working and living conditions of residents of the Convent asylum. These rooms include but are not limited to the Ros theatre, the Rosina visiting parlour room, the Oratory, 'Granary' and the Sacred Heart infirmary.

In relation to the 'Monastic' gardens, their ability to demonstrate the living conditions and experiences of the sisters and girls in care is significant. Items of particular significance include but are not convent courtyard garden to the north of the Convent building (and enclosed by the Convent building) and the informal garden to the south of the convent, Rosina and Sacred Heart.

In relation to the 'Monastic' farm surrounding the former Convent complex the maintenance of a wide, open space reflecting the former use of the river frontage area for the production of food (inclu cows) for the Convent is significant.

In relation to the laundry buildings, built features demonstrating the size and function of the laundry are significant.

Criterion B Rarity

Criterion (b)

The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural his

The Abbotsford Convent laundry is a rare surviving example of its type within Australia. The laundry's intact institutional and ecclesiastical setting is also outstanding because this setting informs th and purpose of the laundry. All of the laundry buildings are significant for their ability to demonstrate the nature of work and conditions in the laundry. The laundry reflects the social attitudes of the reference point in the evolution of child welfare and juvenile justice practices in Australia. The Convent laundry buildings are an important physical record for those Australians and their families kn the Forgotten Australians.

Features expressing this significance include all of the laundry buildings within the Convent complex and their layout and relationship with the other benevolent care facilities. The features which ca institutional setting and supporting functions associated with these laundries are those items defined in the values statement for criterion (a).

Description

The Convent site is on a natural peninsula in a bend of the Yarra River approximately 5 kilometres north east of the central city of Melbourne in the suburb of Abbotsford.

The cultural landscape of the Convent is a miniature township or village that reflects the diverse and changing activities that enabled the Convent community to be self-sufficient. The site is dominated by buildings constructed between 1868 and 1908 that include picturesque ecclesiastical, residential, educational and utility buildings of two or three storeys constructed in brick in a Gothic Revival style, set a landscaped grounds. The buildings and other features reflect the various domestic, industrial, educational and religious activities of Convent life and include a chapel, commercial laundries, kitchens, an a asylum, infirmaries, granaries, stables, workshops, an industrial school, dormitories, a large dining hall, library and theatre.

The physical layout of the site reflects a belief central to the Sisters model of care; that of the necessary separation of different classes of women and children in their care to prevent 'moral contamination'. the buildings and delineation of discrete functional areas ensured that each of the three groups generally never knew of each other's existence.

The main building on the site is the Convent building and annexe containing the former kitchens constructed from 1900-1903 during the major redevelopment phase of the early twentieth century. Other include the Chapel (1871), the two storey brick Industrial School for neglected children (1868); the Asylum (or Sacred Heart) (by the architect Thomas Kelly, 1877); St Euphrasia's school (1879); Mercator, building (1885-1964); the North Laundry (c1885-1925) and the South Laundry (1907); Providence (1887, 1905), built as school accommodation; and St Anne's (1906), which completed the enclosure of th courtyard; Rosina, the former Sacred Heart Class (1908); and St Mary's Preservation Class (1911). Many notable interior features survive. Part of the original 1860s boundary wall survives.

Additional background information is provided below to support the understanding of the place.

Industrial and reformatory schools

"Technically, an industrial school was to provide training to 'neglected' children, while a reformatory was an institution for 'criminal' children. However the lines were often blurred, as the name of Victori welfare legislation, 'The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864' makes clear. Industrial schools were eventually abolished altogether in the 1880s." (Find and Connect).

"Destitute or orphaned children were sent as wards of the state to industrial schools to learn a trade in the belief that this may then provide them with the skills necessary (once they were old enough), to p themselves. Generally, boys were expected to learn a trade while girls were expected to handle menial tasks such as washing clothes, cleaning floors and to assist with cooking." (Sunbury Industrial School

A review of the literature shows that conditions in these schools were very poor. A report of conditions at the Sunbury Industrial School in Victoria is illustrative:

"The school consisted of ten large, unheated, bluestone buildings arranged in two rows of five. Located on the side of Jackson's Hill, they were called the Hill Wards. The open and exposed position of the frequent illness and constant poor health of the children. The children were given rancid food that they ate in their own rooms and that by the time they received it, was cold. The children were given only bedding, save for a blanket and many affected by Ophthalmia went untreated, resulting in blindness. It was estimated that around 10 percent of children died within the first year of operation. This fact al gaining the nickname of the Sunbury Slaughterhouse. Eventually, after public outcry, and after numerous Royal Commissions into the Industrial School System, by 1879 the Sunbury Industrial School wa Industrial School).

Magdalene laundries

Magdalene laundries, were institutions from the eighteenth to the late twentieth century ostensibly to house "fallen women", a term used to imply promiscuity or work in prostitution. Asylums operated th and North America for much of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, the last one closing in 1996.

The first Magdalene institution was founded in late 1758 in Whitechapel, England, which led to the establishment of a similar institution in Ireland by 1767. The first Magdalene asylum in the United State Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1800; other North American cities, including New York, Boston, Chicago, and Toronto, quickly followed suit. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Magdalene a common in several countries. By 1900 there were more than 300 such asylums in England and more than 20 in Scotland.

Magdalene laundries in Australia
"From the early 1890s to the 1960s, most Australian state capitals had a large convent which contained a commercial laundry where the work was done by mostly teenage girls who were placed in the conv involuntarily, for reasons such as being destitute, uncontrollable, or picked up by the police. According to James Franklin, the girls came from a variety of backgrounds, some from very vulnerable and ins These places were initially established as refuges, with the residents free to leave. In the early 1900s, they reluctantly began to accept court referrals. As a result secure confinement was imposed in these a degrees. Laundries were variable in their management.

Laundry work was regarded as suitable as it did not require much training nor substantial capital expense. Memories of conditions in the convent laundries by former inmates are consistently negative, de abuse, and very hard work. Dangers included diseases and workplace accidents. Conditions of manual work were harsh everywhere. The state-run Parramatta Girls Home, which also had a laundry, had si conditions.

Conditions for women in the nineteenth century in Australia
The constraints and social pressures of the time on women and girls provide some context to the stories about their experiences in benevolent institutions. The lives of most women mainly revolved aroun and domestic work. Women's unpaid labour also provided many of the social services now provided by government in the fields of health care and family support for example.

Government, the professions and commerce were usually the preserve of men. For those women entering the workforce domestic service was common and wages low. Many children left school by the age as young as eight were working in a number of trades. Children's wages were very low and they were vulnerable to exploitation. Women's access to education was also limited. Property was usually held in father or husband. Divorce was difficult to obtain and an abused wife had little legal protection. It wasn't until 1902 that women (then excluding Aboriginal women) were able to vote in the first Commonw right to vote in most state elections soon followed. From the late nineteenth century women increasingly participated in paid employment in the public sphere. Opportunities for women to enter the profe especially as women began to be admitted into universities and other forms of tertiary education. (AHC. 2002).

Child rescue movement (1880 – 1910)
"The child rescue movement was an outgrowth of the evangelical revival in England; it captured the imagination of many Australian philanthropists during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, leavi on state child welfare services. It argued that the existing orphanages and statutory organisations were too passive in their approach to children at risk. Identifying inner-city slums as breeding grounds of child rescuers argued that society's future depended on children being removed from such environments. Positing the parent as the enemy of the child, they sought to have total control, reconstructing res honest workers." (Find and Connect. 2016).

History

Indigenous history
The land on which the Convent stands has an association with the Wurundjeri, the Bunurong and the Boon Wurrung Aboriginal people who claim traditional and/or familial links to the area. The nearby j River, known to the Wurundjeri as Birrarung or river of mists, and Merri Creek was an important meeting place for the Wurundjeri and the neighbouring Boonerwrung of the Kulin Nation. A rich oral hist corroborrees and other traditional celebrations.

Benevolent care institutions like orphanages, industrial schools and refuges admitted children and young people from a variety of circumstances. Abbotsford Convent therefore may have received a numb children in the course of its history. The history associated with the removal of Aboriginal children from their families has been outlined below because of its potential relevance to the history of the Abbot Convent.

The following Victorian Government policies impacted on the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and these approaches may be relevant and inform the history of the Abbotsford Convent.

Segregation – 1835-1886
The *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* established the Aborigines Protection Board and set the pattern for subsequent laws applying to Indigenous people in Victoria. Regulations allowed for the removal of under 14 years and girls up to 18 years considered neglected by its parents or left unprotected, to a mission, a government station or an industrial or reformatory school. The Act and its regulations gave th power to make arrangements about the 'care, custody and education' of Aboriginal children. Subsequent regulations allowed government policies for the highly regimented treatment of Indigenous childr without the scrutiny of the Victorian parliament.

'Merging' and 'dispersing' – 1886-1957
From the early 1880s, limited funding of the Aborigines Protection Board meant the focus was the care of 'full bloods' and merging 'half-castes' into the non-Indigenous community. The *Aborigines Protec* commenced the forcible removal of 'half-caste' Aboriginal people from missions and reserves. Thirteen year old 'half-caste' boys were apprenticed or sent to work on farms and girls to work as servants. O children were transferred to the care of the Department for Neglected Children or an institution for neglected children.

The *Aborigines Act 1890* linked the government's mainstream child welfare system and the systematic removal of Aboriginal children, allowing the Board to transfer guardianship to the state children's de the need to go to court. As a result Victoria did not develop a separate institutional system for Aboriginal children as other colonies with larger surviving Aboriginal populations did. All 'part-Aborigines' a had to leave government stations and their families although they remained under the control of the Board until 1893 when the estimated Victorian Indigenous population was 833, with 233 classed as 'ha 160 children (Australian Government). Subsequent regulations extended the Board's removal powers to allow it to send children of mixed descent, whether orphaned or not, to the Department for Neglect Department of Reformatory Schools for their 'better care and custody'. Although the Board had power over Indigenous children the closure and removal of people from the four other Victorian governme Tyres, meant it became the focus of the Board's attention and funding. Ironically, from 1919 if a mother was 'destitute' she could seek financial assistance to maintain her children at home, but the process to court. During the 1940s and 1950s humanitarian and religious groups made repeated representations to the government about the inactivity of the Board.

Assimilation – 1957-1970
In the first half of the twentieth century, institutional care re-emerged as a preferred method of out-of-home care over boarding out (Australian Institute of Family Studies). Between 1887 and 1954 agenci to apprehend children they suspected were neglected or had been removed by the police and assume guardianship in privately-run institutions or in other forms of care. The 1955 McLean review of Indige conditions recommended changes to policies although the *Child Welfare Act 1954* was considered adequate to deal with the welfare of Aboriginal children. The *Aborigines Act 1957* established the Aborigi 'to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of aborigines ... with a view to their assimilation in the general community' (Australian Government).

Although the Aborigines Welfare Board did not have the power to remove children it could notify the police to initiate forced removal if concerned about a particular child. This police power was in place u limited use for Indigenous children prior to the 1950's. The Board examined placement options including 'home release' with children returned and monitored in their homes. Prior to the *Aborigines Act 1* child welfare assistance was principally provided by non-government welfare agencies and private individuals. By 1961 six government institutions were opened to cope with the increasing numbers of chil until then had been referred to non-government agencies.

The *Victorian Adoption Act 1928* allowed anyone to arrange an adoption with the emphasis on 'secrecy, safety and stability' (Commonwealth of Australia). The lack of welfare regulation and the informalit placements with non-government agencies or individuals meant that offers of temporary assistance accepted by Indigenous families could result in an irreversible removal process. This and the lack of enf registration of houses in which Indigenous children up to five years old were 'privately placed', made it very difficult for removed children to discover how they had been taken.

Adoptions became more regulated under the *Adoption Act 1964 –1967*, with the Aborigines Welfare Board one of the approved 'private' agencies. However many adoption procedures remain unclear: som returned children they no longer wanted; some Indigenous parents found out that they had unknowingly agreed to relinquish children when believing they were placing them in temporary care; and other locate children who had been fostered or adopted by the agency. The low level of government funding for institutional care meant agencies were keen to find permanent homes for these children as quickly Indigenous parents responded to emotional public appeals to take unwanted Aboriginal children whose only alternative was a lifetime in an institution (Commonwealth of Australia).

The *Aboriginal Affairs Act 1967* gave the newly appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs broad powers including the 'coordination of voluntary organisations concerned with the welfare and interest of ab also made provision for regulations concerning the entry, residency, and training of Aboriginal people on government stations. Their first Annual Report (1968) expressed concern about 'unauthorised fos arrangements of Aboriginal children' with 300 Aboriginal children known to have been informally separated from their parents, with possibly many more unknown. At that time the Aboriginal population estimated to be about 5,000 (Australian Government).

Self-management
Real change occurred in the 1970s with the establishment of Indigenous community-based services such as the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Cooperative Ltd (VALS) (Australian Institute of Family S VALS reported on the high number of Aboriginal children in institutions, the number of 'adoption' breakdowns and that 90% of its clients in criminal matters had been removed from their families as chil (Commonwealth of Australia).

The efforts of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Placement Agency (1976), later renamed the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and other Aboriginal organisations resulted in a 40% reduction i Aboriginal children in children's homes in Victoria by 1979. Two hundred and seventy Aboriginal juveniles were wards of the State, comprising 6.5% of the total ward population.

In 1979 the Victorian Social Welfare Department adopted policy guidelines on Aboriginal adoption and foster care. In 1989 the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle was incorporated into the Children an Act.

Abbotsford Convent
The area was first surveyed by Europeans in 1803 when Charles Grimes, New South Wales surveyor general, explored the Yarra River by boat as far as Dights Falls to the north of the Convent site making t early Aboriginal and European contact site. Land at the bend of the river has been used for farming since the first formal land sales occurred in 1838 making it the earliest continually farmed lands in Vict the farm helped the Convent to be self-sufficient. The additional 'rehabilitation' benefits of hard physical labour and working outdoors also provided a rationale for the continued use of these areas as farm

The pastoralist Edward Curr, who had previously worked and lived in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), built his villa and farming estate, *St Heliers*, on the site in 1842. Curr was widely known as an orches separation of New South Wales from Victoria and in 1862 an oak tree commemorating the formal separation of the states was planted in front of the St Heliers house (the Separation Tree). The tree still st Convent grounds. In 1843 Samuel Orr, a pastoral pioneer, built the grand Abbotsford House onsite, after which the surrounding suburb was named, near what is now the western edge of the Convent site.

In 1851 gold was discovered in Victoria resulting in a massive influx of people to the colony and Orr subdivided land along the Yarra on the north side of the St Heliers estate. Extensive additions to St Heli undertaken during this time.

The establishment of the Convent of the Good Shepherd 1863 - 1900
Four Irish women from the French order of nuns, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Tours, France arrived in Australia in 1863 specifically to care for the many fallen women of the new colony. They wer Shepherd Sisters to build the largest Catholic institutional complex in Victoria. A number of different care facilities operated on the site at Abbotsford including an industrial school, reformatory, orphanag refuge. A local Catholic primary school was also located within the Convent. At its peak, the site accommodated more than 1,000 people. The Sisters ceased providing 'care' at this site in 1971.

The Sisters purchased Abbotsford House which opened as a Convent in 1863, the inaugural home of the Order in Australasia. In late 1864 they purchased the adjacent St Heliers property and immediately the existing buildings to accommodate the functions of the Convent as a reformatory and laundry. The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act of 1864 allowed government funding for private organisations industrial school or reformatory accommodation. Similar legislation was also passed in the colonies of New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania.

The orphanage known as St Joseph's opened in 1865. The Sisters commissioned the construction of a large brick Industrial School near St Heliers house that opened in 1868, one of a network of Industrial but one of only three private Industrial Schools. The Abbotsford House complex continued to expand with workrooms, dormitories and a bake house, culminating with the completion of St Joseph's, an in school, in 1874 in the northwest corner of the site (since demolished). St Josephs housed over 200 government wards.

Construction of the first stage of the Convent Chapel was completed by 1872 under the direction of architect Thomas Kelly. St Heliers house was demolished and constructed in its place was the refuge (no Heart) also designed by Thomas Kelly, completed in 1877 and contained laundries, mangling rooms and an infirmary. By then the Order had established the key commercial, farming, educational, reform functions that would sustain it for the next century.

The method of care the Good Shepherd nuns brought with them, and imposed on all the institutions overseen from the Abbotsford Mother House, was distinctively French and was referred to by them as ' vestimentary codes used to identify and segregate the different classes of women and girls in their care - penitents, reformatory and industrial children - were also distinctively French. Such was the rigour system was imposed that the three classes of girls remained ignorant of each other's existence. The architectural segregation of the site is still very much in evidence today.

St Euphrasia's day school (Building 16) designed by Thomas Kelly, opened in 1879 to provide a Catholic education as an alternative to the secular schools established following *the Education Act of 1872* th religious instruction from the classroom. The two-storey brick school building was the only building on the Convent site to face directly onto the street, allowing access to the first floor for day students an upstairs for resident girls of the Industrial School. In 1872 the Stawell Royal Commission recommended that the residential Industrial School system be replaced by foster care. In response, the Sisters init St Joseph's Industrial School children with preservites, a voluntary residential care program providing an alternative to foster parenting.

Between 1880 and 1900 the Convent continued to expand, creating new laundry facilities and constructing further buildings including Providence in 1888 to provide dormitories and class rooms for volun residents: the weatherboard Children's hospital adjacent to St Euphrasia's, the large Mercator Laundry and a complex of farm buildings. By 1887 the Convent occupied 27 acres. During this period the Ord Australasian expansion with the opening of a second Good Shepherd Convent in Oakleigh, Victoria (demolished) in 1883 and a third in Christchurch, New Zealand established in 1886. In 1892, the Conve Shepherd opened nearby in Albert Park to receive women from the overcrowded women's refuge in Abbotsford. It first accommodated females aged from 15, but in later years also housed younger girls. In Good Shepherd opened.

Re-development of the Abbotsford site 1900 - 1911
In 1900 the Sisters of the Good Shepherd embarked on the construction of the largest building on the Convent site, the massive purpose built Convent building and Annexe the adjoining kitchen designed Smart and Tappin in a distinctive style reminiscent of French Medieval architecture (reflecting the French origins of the Order). Internally the grand size, finish and form of the spaces reflected the wealth Convent and the Order at this time. The Convent building was completed in 1903.

In 1909 construction of the Sacred Heart building (now known as Rosina) commenced to provide accommodation and classrooms for increasing numbers of female adult penitents wishing to enter the Co have also been designed to Reed, Smart and Tappin and built on the grand scale of the Convent building but in a less distinctly French style that was more closely aligned with Baroque revival, Sacred Hea rooms, dormitories, a refectory, internal courtyard and theatre. Throughout this period the industrial and commercial activities of the Convent and in particular the laundries continued to expand with the laundry and associated boiler house and south laundry constructed by 1907.

By 1911 the Convent site had taken on the form and layout recognisable today with the construction of St Marys in 1910 to provide classrooms and dormitories for the preservites or voluntary admissions. stylistically similar to Sacred Heart and probably was also designed by Reed, Smart and Tappin.

The twentieth century
In the twentieth century the convent continued as a residential centre for teenage girls until 1974 when the trend since the 1960s toward community rather than institutional care resulted in the closure of Convent's then residential care centre. Although by 1911 all the major buildings that exist on the site today had been completed, several were extended over the course of the twentieth century and their int evolved with the needs of the Convent. In the 1920s a separate boiler house was constructed with a large chimney stack and the boiler removed from the north laundry. The Fernery in the Convent courtya in 1926.

In 1972 the Sisters undertook a review of the work of the Order and the future of their large institutional complexes. At its peak in the early twentieth century the Abbotsford Convent was caring for over 1 children but by the 1970s this number had declined to 139. The review found maintenance costs at Abbotsford would impact on the future viability of the complex. The institutional approach to welfare the had been replaced by one of de-institutional care but the buildings represented this past social welfare provision and were unable to be modified to serve changed requirements. In 1974 the Sisters approac Government regarding purchase of the property.

The Convent since 1975
The surviving complex of buildings were almost all constructed by World War I and changed little up until 1975 when the site was sold to the State Government, becoming Crown Land. In 1976 the site wa campus to Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences and the School of Early Childhood Development. The Order retained the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the former St Joseph's (1874-5) was den for the construction of the Good Shepherd Nursing Home.

Other significant changes to the site since 1975 include the creation of the Collingwood Children's Farm in 1979 on the former farmland of Convent and the demolition of the former Children's Hospital in remaining laundries had all of the fittings removed and the laundry buildings remained empty and had little, if any maintenance. Externally the other buildings on the site, the gardens and landscape rema changed.

From 1989 ownership of the remaining site transferred to Latrobe University which in 1997 agreed to sell the Convent for conversion into residential apartments. The proposed redevelopment of the site l community-based heritage battle in 2004 which resulted in the transfer of the Convent site south of St Heliers Street to the Abbotsford Convent Foundation to become the now thriving community arts, cu precinct. It now receives over 700,000 visitors annually.

There are only 80 nuns of the Good Shepherd order alive today and some of them still live in the Good Shepherd Nursing Home located next door to the Abbotsford Convent on the site of the former orpha

Condition and Integrity

Generally the Convent complex including the chapel and former farm is in good condition and is able to demonstrate effectively the proposed National Heritage values of the place.

Individual spaces and buildings are variable in their condition. The chapel is in very good condition. The convent's various buildings are variable in condition depending on their current use. Most are in fa condition. Some laundry buildings, not currently in use, while stabilised are currently in a poor condition. The Abbotsford Convent Foundation is managing the site and its maintenance on a priority basis period been successful in improving the condition of the property under their control.

The gardens are in fair – good condition. The farm area is in good condition under the management of the Collingwood Children's Farm. The Convent's former orchards and vegetable gardens have largely more contemporary farm use.

Location

Approximately 14.5ha, corner of St Heliers Street and Clarke Street, Abbotsford, being an area bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of the southern alignment of the eastern road reserve bou Street with the northern bank of the Yarra River (approximate MGA point Zone 55 324075mE 5814033mN), then northerly via that alignment and the eastern road reserve boundary of Clarke Street to its the southern boundary of Land Parcel 1/PS735404 (approximate MGA point 324097mE 5814210mN), then easterly and northerly via the southern and eastern boundaries of Land Parcel 1/PS735404 to t MGA northing 5814243mN (approximate MGA point 324148mE 5814243mN), then via the following MGA points consecutively: 324146mE 5814243mN, 324147mE 5814255mN, 324138mE 5814255mN, 5814262mN and 324134mE 5814262mN, then northerly directly to the intersection of the southern road reserve boundary of St Heliers Street with MGA easting 324138mE (approximate MGA point 324 5814299mN), then south easterly via the southern road reserve boundary of St Heliers Street to its intersection with MGA easting 324285mE (approximate MGA point 324285mE 5814245mN), then nort south eastern corner of Land Parcel Crown Allotment 2330//2796 (approximate MGA point 324289mE 5814259mN), then north easterly and north westerly via the eastern and north eastern boundaries 2330//2796 to the intersection with the southern boundary of Land Parcel Crown Allotment 2467//2796 (approximate MGA point 324303mE 5814328mN), then easterly and north easterly via the south boundaries of Crown Allotment 2467//2796 and north easterly via the north eastern alignment of the eastern boundary of Crown Allotment 2467//2796 to its intersection with the south western bank of t (approximate MGA point 324333mE 5814360mN), then south easterly, south westerly and north westerly via the south western, north western and northern bank of the Yarra River to the commencemen

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