

# FENNESCEY HOUSE

21-33 Wakefield Street

Fennescey House was built as an education office for the Catholic Church and highlights the endeavours of such religious organisations to maintain an education system apart from that provided by the state.

Mary and John Fennescey ' . . . the greatest benefactors the Archdiocese of Adelaide has ever known', donated £20 000 to the Catholic Church which enabled the construction of Fennescey House. The Fennescey family first settled on Yorke Peninsula before the end of the nineteenth century successfully working the land. John and Mary Fennescey became associated with the Catholic Church in Adelaide only when they retired from the land and settled in Glenelg during the 1920s.

The Catholic Church had wanted to buy the properties adjoining St Francis Xavier cathedral for some time, and this donation made it possible to buy the land and build a centre for Catholic education. Provision was made in the plans for Catholic teachers' conferences, a chapter room for conferences of the clergy, and offices for Catholic action works.

Concern for Catholic education was first given priority by Mother Mary MacKillop and Father Julian E. Tenison Woods in the early 1860s who did much to bring their shared vision of religious education to fruition. However, central organisation and implementation of a uniform religious education was not brought about until a 1936 Catholic Education Congress and the construction of this education centre in Wakefield Street in 1940.

Fennescey House was built by F. Fricker Ltd to the design of H. Jory. It is constructed of tuck pointed dimensioned bluestone with dressed limestone to string courses, parapets and surrounds to openings. The building is a late example of the mason's craft, with high quality construction. Appropriately it has the appearance of parish ecclesiastical Gothic Revival. The symmetry of the composition, emphasised by the central gablet and the high parapet, gives this building a distinctive appearance which suggests a much earlier construction date than 1940. It is well related by style and materials to the neighbouring cathedral and has been sympathetically acknowledged in the construction of the new office accommodation to the east.

ACA, BSO, index and file No. 92, *Digest of Proceedings*, 19 August 1940; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 339), *Southern Cross*, 18 April 1941, 11 June 1948, Catholic Education Congress 1936.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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*The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.*

*Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.*

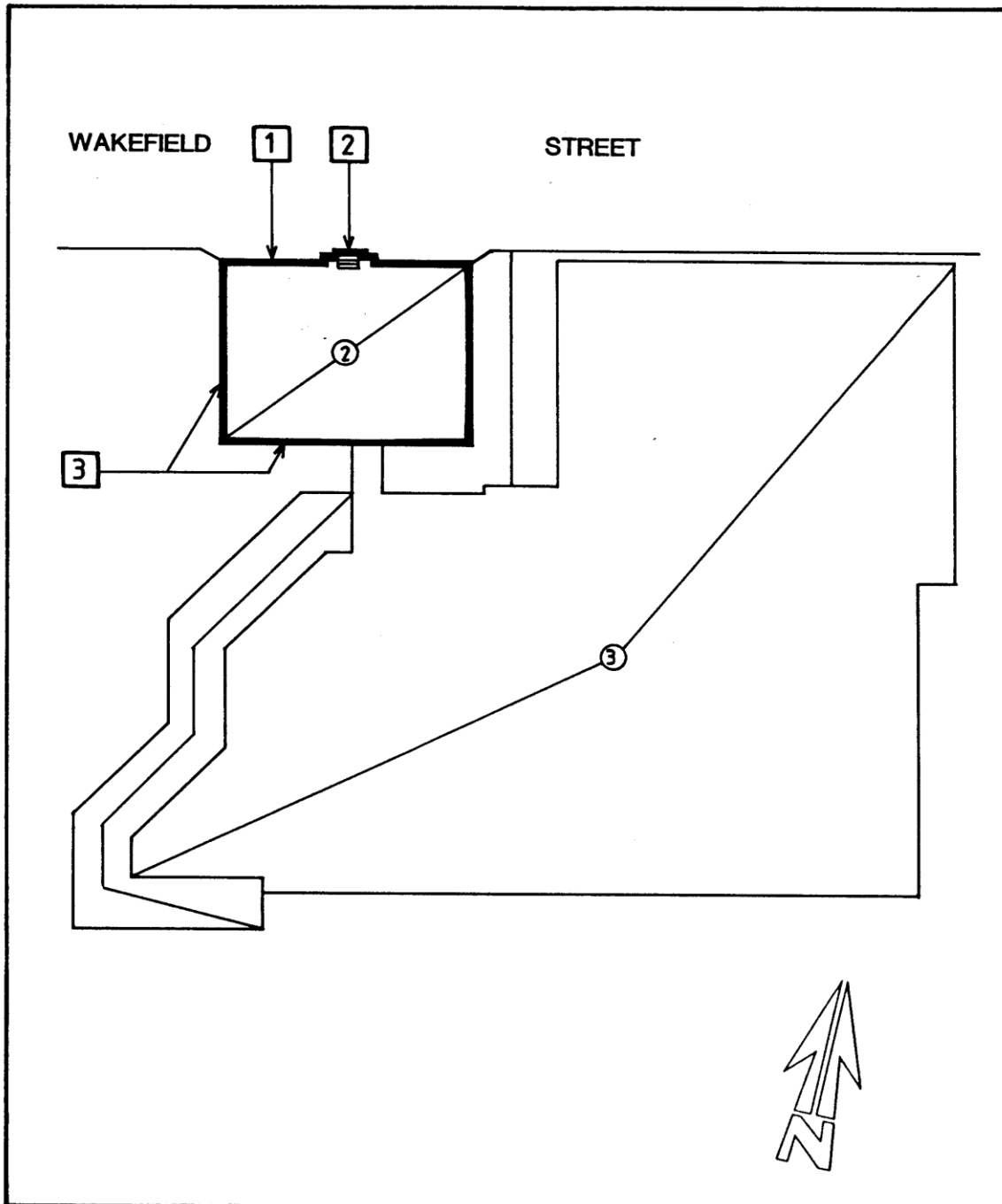


# CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

## The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICES (FENNESCEY HOUSE)	Building No 11/2003.3
Address	21-33 Wakefield Street	CT 4271/892



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NOTES:

1. Squared bluestone with tuck pointing and sandstone detailing aluminium frames to windows.
2. Note Gable with slate roof.
3. Brick (English Bond) with sandstone detailing.