

Copy done by Randwick
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NOTES
ON

**THE FOUNDATION
OF
THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
[LORETO]
IN SYDNEY, RANDWICK, 1892**

**Anne Anderson, I.B.V.M.
1992**

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These notes are an attempt to clarify and order the material we have on the early days of the I.B.V.M. in Sydney.

Although canonically inaccurate, I have used the term "nuns" throughout these notes. This was how the members of the I.B.V.M. were known in 1892, and, indeed, up till very recently. It carries overtones of familiarity and even of affection for hundreds of Loreto past students, when referring to those who educated and cared for them in their school years.

SOURCES

[M. M. Aloysius Macken, I.B.V.M.] *Diary, Wednesday, 13 January – Thursday 26 January* [1892].

M. M. Dorothea [Frizelle], I.B.V.M. [*Letter to M. Gonzaga Barry*], 30 March, 1892.

M. M. Bernard, I.B.V.M. [*Letter to M. Gonzaga Barry*], 13 April, 1892.

M. M. Bernard, I.B.V.M. [*Letter to M. Gonzaga Barry*], *Corpus Chrsiti*, [1892].

M. M. Agnes Finn, I.B.V.M. *Kirribilli Notes*, [1972].

Board of Works Map, [Randwick and Coogee area], 1890.

Sands Directory, 1890, 1892.

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Randwick and District Historical Society, [Unnamed document, beginning "Time Table..."] in Bowen Library, Maroubra, N.S.W.

Randwick and District Historical Society, Photo of *Stratheden*.

Finn, Agnes. *Golden Jubilee of the Misionaries of the Sacred Heart: memories of Randwick*. [Sydney], Pelligrini, 1935.

McMahon, J. F. *Randwick Catholic Church Centenary*. Kensington, Chevalier, 1985.

**A SUMMARY OF
THE EARLY DAYS OF THE L.B.V.M. IN SYDNEY**

TIME LINE

1892	Jan 13	Arrived and stayed with the Walshe family at <i>Avonmore</i> , 26 – 42 The Avenue, Randwick.
	Jan 18	Moved into <i>Selbourne</i> , Alison Road, Randwick.
	After Corpus Christi	Moved into <i>Aston Hall</i> ("Lodge"), corner of Avoca and Stanley Streets, Randwick.
	July	Ready for boarders.
1894		Accepted responsibility for the Randwick Parish primary school for girls
	? ?	[Some?] of the day scholars moved to a house in St. Mark's Road, but returned to Aston Hall after boarders moved to Normanhurst.
1896	Nov?	Site at south Hornsby purchased.
1897	Feb.	Foundation stone laid at Normanhurst.
	Oct.	Boarders moved to Hornsby.
1901	Aug 25 (Mon) Sept 4 (Wed)	Finalized tenancy of <i>Kanimbla</i> in Fitzroy Street, North Sydney. Moved to Kanimbla.
1902	Feb	First Mass offered at <i>Fernhill</i> , 57 Pitt Street (now "Upper Pitt Street").
1907	Nov 16 Dec 11	Took possession of <i>Elamang</i> Moved to <i>Elamang</i> .

**A PRECIS OF
THE DIARY OF MOTHER ALOYSIUS MACKEN
13 January to 26 January, 1892**

Wednesday, 13 January, 1892.

The founding group, led by Mother Gonzaga Barry and including Mother Dorothea Frizelle (Superior), Mother Aloysius Macken, arrived in Sydney on Wednesday, 13th January 1892 and were met by Dr. O'Haran, [Secretary? to Cardinal Moran], Dr. Higgins [later the Bishop of Ballarat], Mrs Walshe and Father Ryan (S. J.).

They were driven, in Cardinal Moran's carriage, to the Walshe's home, *Avonmore*. Later that day the nuns were driven to see *Selbourne*, the house which was to be their future home.

Thursday, 14 January

The following morning, the nuns were driven by the Walshes to St. Vincent's where they went 'to beg' for bonnets and cloaks, and were warmly received by Rev. Mother, M.de Sales and M. Ursula. Next, they went to Anthony Hordens, where they spent "two hours getting beds and bedsteads, chairs etc." They were evidently regarded with suspicion until M. Aloysius told the man the things would be paid for on delivery! They returned to *Avonmore* for dinner at 2.30 p.m., and in the afternoon, went to look over *Selbourne* 'to see it well, inside and out'.

Saturday, 16 January

There was a new experience for the nuns in Australian weather when heavy Sydney summer rain began at 10 a.m. after an 'oppressive night'! Father Treand, M.S.C. and Fr. Merg, M.S.C. called to enquire about Mass for the nuns. [See Sunday] After dinner, the nuns drove to *Selbourne* where they saw to the furniture etc. They met Mr and Mrs Wall [presumably the owners of *Selbourne*] who were 'exceedingly nice and kind', Mrs Wall wanting to send her sons over to be of use to them. Mr. Wall, who was a Custom's Agent, had gone after luggage which had been lying on the platform [at Central?] since the Thursday, and which had attracted his attention because of the "Selbourne" address on it. (M. Aloysius' views of the efficiency of Permewan & Co. – who should have attended to this matter – were somewhat scathing!).

Father Morrogh, S.J., also called, full of desire to help and promising to come again on Tuesday and to try to persuade Fr. Ryan to give a cow to the nuns. However, Mrs. Walshe had already given them one – 'a real grand one' in fact! It rained again in the afternoon on the return journey in a 'handsome' back to *Avonmore*, with thunder and lightning; the horse jibbed on 'the second hill' [presumably between St. Mark's Road and Avoca Street], and they had to get out and walk the rest of the way to *Avonmore*.

Sunday, 17 January

By rising at 5.00 a.m., the nuns were able to walk to the chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor in time for Mass at 6.15 a.m. The Little Sisters had a cup of coffee ready for them before the walk back to *Avonmore*. They spent the rest of the day at *Selbourne*; Mrs Curtain and her three children spent the day with them. They returned to *Avonmore* for tea.

Monday, 18 January

On Monday 18 January, the rest of the party arrived in Sydney on the *Austral*. Mr and Mrs Walshe, Mrs Fallon and Dr. O'Haran went to meet them. The new-comers arrived about 2.30 p.m. After dinner, they all walked to view the Randwick Church. M. Aloysius was particularly struck by the idea of incorporating the donor's name into the stained glass etc. – "a good plan, these kind memories!"

INSTALLATION AT SELBOURNE, THE FIRST SYDNEY LORETO

After tea, they walked in procession, two by two, 'as pilgrims' to take possession of their new home, joined by the Walshe family and other friends. Apparently the procession caused a quite a sensation!

In the meantime, the luggage that had been sent from Ballarat was delivered to *Selbourne*, but, because there was no one there to receive and pay for it, it was taken away again!

Tuesday, 19 January

On the first day in the new Loreto, the community rose at 7.00 a.m. and spent the morning arranging beds etc. 'as only "galloping girls" can' [a reference to Mary Ward; significant in a period when all reference to her was forbidden]. The Angelus was rung at noon; the afternoon was spent in unpacking china, washing glass etc.

The Ballarat boxes were finally delivered by Permewans and cost 3.17.00. As M. Aloysius pointedly noted in the diary, the luggage could have come by the *Austral* for nothing and still would have arrived in time! She warned her readers – the nuns in Ballarat – to remember these matters in any future dealings with Permewans!

The place must have been a hive of activity on that first day with many callers – May Campbell's sister delivered a note from her mother to say she had six to come to school, one a cripple; Maggie had to go to town [i.e. Randwick village] for food as Mrs Curtain's promised parcel had not arrived; Mrs Riorty, Lena Ryan, T. Fallon, Nellie Walshe, Mrs. Riorty, Fr. Morrogh, all visited! a note came from Mrs Wall to know if they wanted anything, and so on!

In terms of the school to be opened on the Thursday, at that stage they had an empty room, a white-topped table, seven chairs, pen, ink. and paper! It looked as if they were going to

give the students 'drill and calisthenics' for some time to come! They would have given anything for a piano!

Wednesday, 20 January

'Lovely shade and sea breezes!' Breakfast at 7.45 a.m. Mrs Curtin's parcel finally arrived – a side of bacon, a chest of (best) tea and a piece of linen for the altar. Mr Wall's man came to help with anything that was needed. There was much activity in preparing for the Cardinal's Mass on the following day. The altar frame was carried up stairs, and a white antependium with silver lamb and gold braid was made for it. A priedieu was constructed for the Cardinal's use out of the stuffed cushions from the 'chair bed' with a chair in front of them! The arrangements were completed 'at a late hour' – what has changed?!

Thursday, 21 January

There was much tidying prior breakfast at 7.00 a.m. as all the rooms were to be blessed. Unfortunately, Mother Gonzaga was ill and could not attend the Mass. At 8.00 a.m. the Cardinal, attended by Dr. O'Haran, arrived, with the Walshe family lining one side of the hall and the Community the other. The Cardinal beamed and said, "I am so glad to see Loreto established here". M. Aloysius led him up stairs and he walked over and knelt straight down on his 'priedieu' without hesitation. The Walshe family knelt inside the chapel and the community outside. Fathers. Treand and Merg were also present – 'both so nice and friendly'. Breakfast followed: The Cardinal, Mr and Mrs Walshe, Dr.O'Haran, and the Fathers sat at the table – the children were sent home for breakfast, but were to return later to help fill the school room. After breakfast, the Cardinal inspected everything, liked the grounds, said he would come again on Saturday to see Mother Gonzaga, arranged for the M.S.C.'s to provide morning Mass and for Fr. Treand to be the confessor, and said (twice!) that the nuns could take boarders.

OPENING OF THE SCHOOL

The school opened at 10.30 a.m. with four students – 'Mabel, Dolly, Miss Farrelly and Miss Riley'. As Mabel and Dolly Walshe were to return to Mary's Mount as boarders, there were really only two! But there were a number of visitors and enquirers that same day – Minnie McCallum, Miss Kidd (Mrs Wall's sister) and Mrs Grant (an old Loretto pupil), Miss Dwyer, niece of M. M. Ursula and educated at St. Stephen's Green about 1850, who was delighted to see Loretto nuns again!

Friday 22 January

Fr Treand, 'our new friend' came for Mass at 7.00 a.m. and brought with him a large framed picture of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and four smaller ones as a present. Mother Gonzaga had recovered. Hens and roosters were sent by Mr Walshe together with

a man to set up the wiring for their run, plus provision for the cow for a couple of months. The students increased to five, and more were expected on the following Monday.

Saturday 23 January

Feast of the Espousals of the B.V.M. Dr. O'Haran came for Mass at 7.30 a.m. At about 3.00 p.m. while the parlour was full of guests, the Cardinal's carriage drew up. The guests gathered their chairs and moved into the next – unfurnished – room while the Cardinal was ushered into the parlour!

M. Aloysius noted many of the natural attractions of the property – the laughing jackesses' nest, the cuckoo – first bird to be heard every morning – together with a 'bird that squeaks like a little pig, not at all melodious'; the 'most lovely' trees, – bottle, hybiscus, with large scarlet flower the size of a breakfast cup, lemon, fig, banana – and a fernery which will be very nice after it has been 'arranged'.

Sunday 24 January

Mass at 7.45 a.m. from Father Tierney, M.S.C. Notice of the opening of the school was given out in the Randwick church at all the Masses. A Mrs Raynor came to settle for two children; Mrs Curtin for Sara, Dollie and their little brother "as they are doing nothing all day long!"; Mrs McSweeney and several others settled for children to come the next day. This must have been the first time the nuns had a moment to themselves, as the diary notes they took a ramble around their grounds, including a visit to Lady Carrington (the cow) and made further discovery of new and interesting trees and shrubs.

Monday 25 January

Father Merg, M.S.C., came for Mass. Evidently he wished for meat for breakfast, but M. Bernard had to explain there was no meat in the house! Preparation for the school room was first item on the agenda. Two small white wooden tables, carried from the refectory, arranged lengthways and covered with a piece of green leather made a presentable desk for the students. There were only ten chairs, six of which were carried daily to chapel, dining room, recreation and to their bedrooms at night. Fortunately the carpenter turned in at 10.30 a.m. and brought two batten benches, which was just as well, as thirteen pupils arrived for school that day! A piano and a violin were sorely needed. A Mrs Heyton paid a visit, but regretted she had only boys!

Tuesday 26 January

No school – [Australia Day holiday]. M. Benedicta and M. Patricia spent the day covering benches with leather and varnishing tables, etc.

Dr Higgins came to Mass at 8.00 a.m. He told the nuns how it came about that they had been invited to Sydney: He (Dr. Higgins) had asked the Cardinal if he had ever thought of inviting the Loretto nuns to Sydney. The Cardinal said "No" and Dr. Higgins said "I'm sure they would come if you invited them". The Cardinal said "You write and invite them".

There was another thunder storm in the afternoon which evidently put an end to the pleasant day being had by the 'crowds of people coming back from Coogee where they have been since early morning'.

END OF THE DIARY

THE FIRST COMMUNITY

The first Randwick community consisted of at least the following:

M. M. Dorothea Frizelle, M. M. Aloysius Macken, M. M. Bernard, M. M. Benedicta [Fallon?], M. Patricia.

THE LOCATIONS

Avonmore, where the nuns spent their first few days with the Walshe family, stands at 26 – 42 The Avenue, Randwick, and the name is still visible on the tower. It consists of nine Victorian terrace houses, with the main dwelling, slightly larger than the others, in the centre. This part of the terrace was, presumably, the Walshe's own residence. The whole group of buildings was built by J. Walshe and known at one time as *Walshe's Terrac.e*. Minton tiles are on the ground floor. The building is now on the registers of the National Trust and National Heritage.

The Chapel to which the nuns went for Mass on their first Sunday in Randwick was that belonging to the Little Sisters of the Poor, who were – and still are – located on the block between Avoca, Market and what was then Orange Street, [now part of Clovelly Road]. The former building used to house the aged poor on this site has been replaced by a complex of modern buildings used for the same purpose.

Selbourne: In Sands Directory of 1890 this house was listed as belonging to H. C. Doyle, J. P., and in a 1895 map it is shown as belonging to a Mr Wall, so that Wall must have acquired it between 1890 and the Loretto nuns' arrival in January 1892. The house, now demolished, was mid-way between Carrington Rd and Melody Street, on the south side of

Alison Road, facing, at a slight angle, towards the north-east. The property consisted of 8 acres. There is a slight rise here, and, without the modern buildings that were erected subsequently, it would have commanded a pleasant view of Coogee Bay. A Mr and Mrs Wall feature in the nuns' diary, and presumably these are the same family.

SEARCH FOR A NEW LOCATION

Because *Selbourne* was a considerable distance from both the steam tram from Sydney and the electric tram from Waverley and also from the village of Randwick itself, a new residence was considered necessary, if students were to reach the school easily. A number of large houses in the Randwick area were investigated, but lack of finance was a limiting factor. Amongst the houses considered were *Astolat* and *Stratheden*.

Astolat, located at the corner of Frenchmans Road and Avoca Street, was owned by Mr Valentine Heaton. When it became known that Mr. Heaton, would only rent if the tenant were prepared to purchase the property during, or at the end of, five years, the nuns had reluctantly to dismiss *Astolat* as a possibility.

Stratheden: The property in which they were particularly interested, however, was *Stratheden*. A beautiful stone house, owned by T. Bolton/Boulton, J. P., was centrally located on the corner of Belmore Road and High Street. close to both tram routes and only three minutes' walk to the Church. It had only one and a half acres. most of which was front lawn, but this 'could be fenced'. Again, it could only be bought (at 6,000), not rented, and, although there was much discussion on this subject, e.g. investigating whether they could get a loan through friends, etc., it also had to be dismissed. [Later it was demolished to make way for the Odeon Theatre.]

Aston Hall: This left the nuns with *Aston Hall* – or *Lodge* – where they finally went after the feast of Corpus Christi, 1892. John Leo Watkins bought the land in 1862, and had the house built in 1865. The architect of this colonial Georgian-style house was Edmund Blackett who did many buildings in Randwick, including the Destitute Children's Asylum. Walter Bradley (Randwick Mayor in 1870 – 72, 1882) occupied the house at some period prior to 1892. The property consists of 11 acres. In the main section of the house, there are two large reception rooms either side of the front hall: upstairs, there are four large bedrooms. The west wing housed the kitchen and food storage areas downstairs, and bathrooms upstairs. Domestic servants were housed in the wing at the back of the house. The tiled verandah on the east and north sides of the house has a concave iron roof, and flat iron lace columns and valence. There are shuttered windows and French doors opening from the main rooms on the north side to the verandah.

John Leo Watkins who built Aston Hall was a merchant, but the Mr. Watkins mentioned in the nuns' documents was a barrister (and a Catholic) and "about forty" in 1892, and his brother, Aston Watkins, is mentioned as a parishoner in the Randwick Church history – he is also referred to in the nuns' letters. Mr Watkins had his office in Sydney, but himself lived at Hunters Hill. It seems reasonable to assume that these two may have been sons of John Leo, or at least members of that next generation in the family. On 30 March 1892, the nuns received a letter from Mr. Watkins in which he indicated that he was prepared to

make a reduction of 50 in the first year's rent and that he would pay rates and taxes including assessed water rate. The lease was to be for not less than 2 or more than 4 years, with or without option to purchase as arranged. Evidently the house needed repairs, as mention was made of a new fence to be put up and the kitchen premises to be put in order. The agreed rent was 300 a year and considered to be very reasonable. There was some hesitation as to whether to move in immediately (1 May) when the then present tenant – Miss Hales – vacated the premises, or to wait until all was in order. It would appear that they waited.

Aston Hall's position overlooking Centennial Park, with a view of the city and of the distant Blue Mountains certainly reinforced the description of the premises as 'salubrious'. Although the school was still some distance from the Sydney tram, the Waverley tram went along Frenchmans Road, only a block away along Avoca Street.

For the next nine years, the community ran a secondary school here for both day and boarding students, and also a primary school, but at this point I am unclear whether there were two primary schools, i.e. a 'Loreto' school plus the parish primary school after 1894.

In 1897, the boarders were moved to a site proposed by Mr Coffee at south Hornsby, where a new school was built at what is now Normanhurst. At one stage, [some? of] the day scholars are said to have been housed in a house in St. Mark's Road, Randwick, but, to date, nothing can be found about this.

In 1901, the Little Sister of the Poor bought *Aston Hall* from Mr Watkins, and one month's notice was given for the Loreto nuns' departure. As no other house large enough was available in Randwick, the Loreto nuns had to look elsewhere for a place for their day scholars, and thus the day school (with a handful of weekly boarders) moved into the North Sydney area. Their first residence there was at *Kanimbla* in Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli, to which they moved on Wednesday, 4 September, 1901; then to *Fernhill* at 57 Pitt Street (now Upper Pitt Street, where a block of home units, *St. Charles*, is presently sited), and finally to *Elamang* at 85 – 87 Carabella Street in 1907.

[*Aston Hall/Lodge* still stands, and is in excellent condition, probably the result of its being in the hands of religious orders! It has been in the possession of the Little Sisters of the Poor for use as a Noviceship from 1901 until 1982 when it was bought by the Emmanuel School. The site is once again being used for education, and the present administration graciously allowed me to take photos of the premises.]

LORETO AND THE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RANDWICK

The Randwick Catholic primary school was served by the Poor Clares who came over each day from Waverley until Cardinal Moran took a rather strict line about the observance of the cloister, and a lay teacher, Miss Shevlon, took over the school. When

she resigned at the end of 1885, by arrangement with Fr. Hanrahan, O.F.M. and Fr. Tierney M.S.C., the Misses Agnes and Emily Finn took over the school which was [re]-opened on 13 January, 1886.

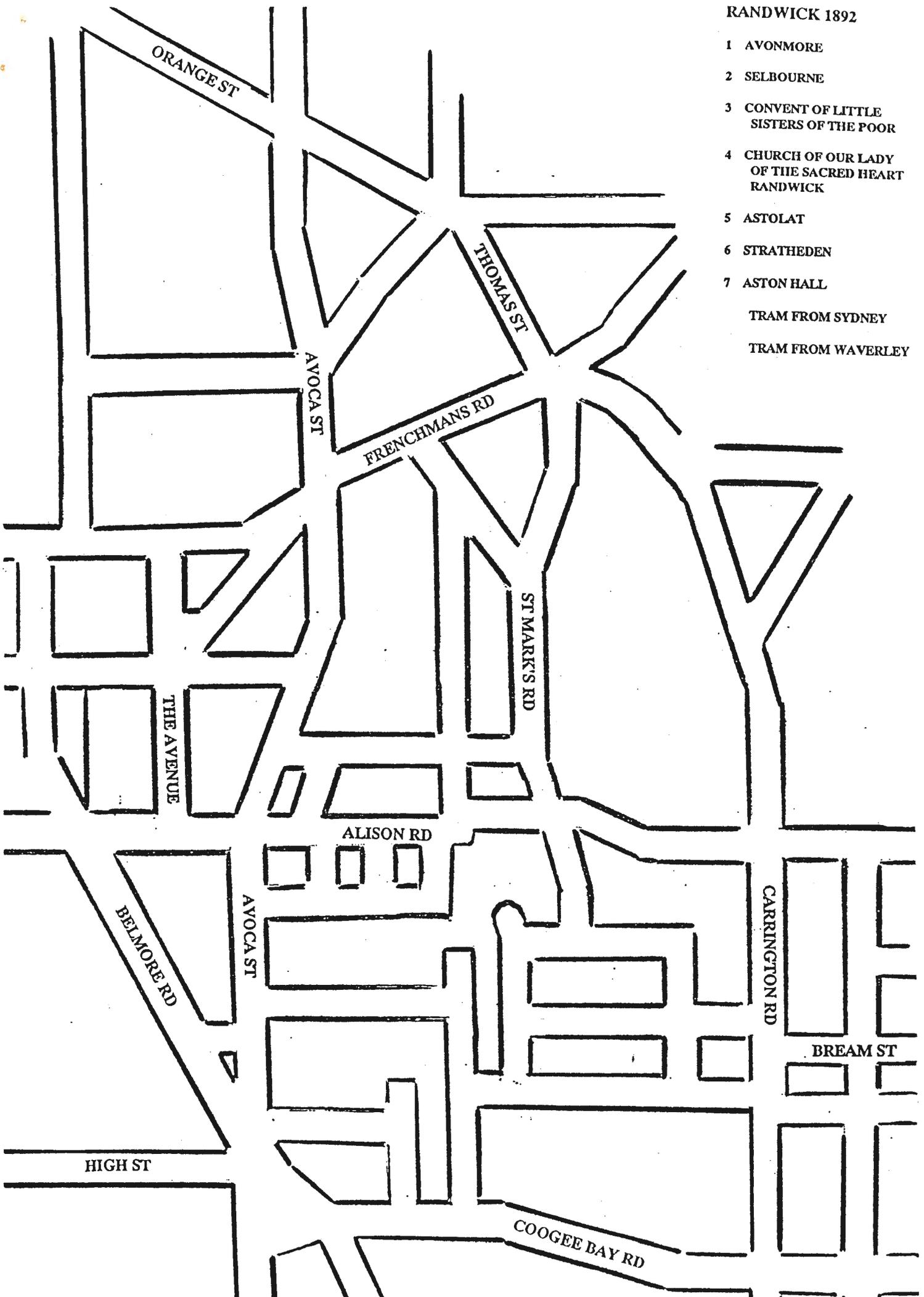
According to Mother Angela Finn, I.B.V.M., the Finn family returned from Victoria to N.S.W., living first at Manly and then at Bishopscourt (between Waverley and Randwick). The [non-resident] priest of Randwick [probably Fr. Tierney, M.S.C.] called on the family and asked Mrs Finn, a fervent convert, if she would allow Agnes to take over the parish school, as they could not get a teacher because they could not pay one. It was about a mile and a half walk both ways, and, as there was no sign of a teacher, Mrs Finn decided to move to Randwick. The Finn family taught there for nine and a half years.

In June 1894 the Loreto nuns were asked to take over the primary girls' school, a wooden building having been erected in the grounds of *Aston Hall* for that purpose. The school was blessed and opened by Cardinal Moran, who was accompanied by Archbishop Redwood, Bishop Grimes (New Zealand) and Bishop Higgins. This enabled the old school-church in Avoca Street to be used as a boys' school.

However, this charge of the girls' school was relinquished by Loreto in August, 1898 when it was re-opened in the old school-church by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The wooden building in which it had been housed in *Aston Hall's* grounds was eventually transported to Normanhurst, where many past students will remember it as the old hall.

RANDWICK 1892

- 1 AVONMORE
- 2 SELBOURNE
- 3 CONVENT OF LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR
- 4 CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART RANDWICK
- 5 ASTOLAT
- 6 STRATHEDEN
- 7 ASTON HALL
- TRAM FROM SYDNEY
- TRAM FROM WAVERLEY





COPY BY Javelle

"STRATHEDEN" BELMORE ROAD, RANDWICK.
RESIDENCE of A.T. BOULTON, ESQ. c.1924 down.
THIS HOUSE WAS DEMOLISHED TO BUILD THE ODEON THEATRE.

015700
EMANUEL SCHOOL
LIBRARY

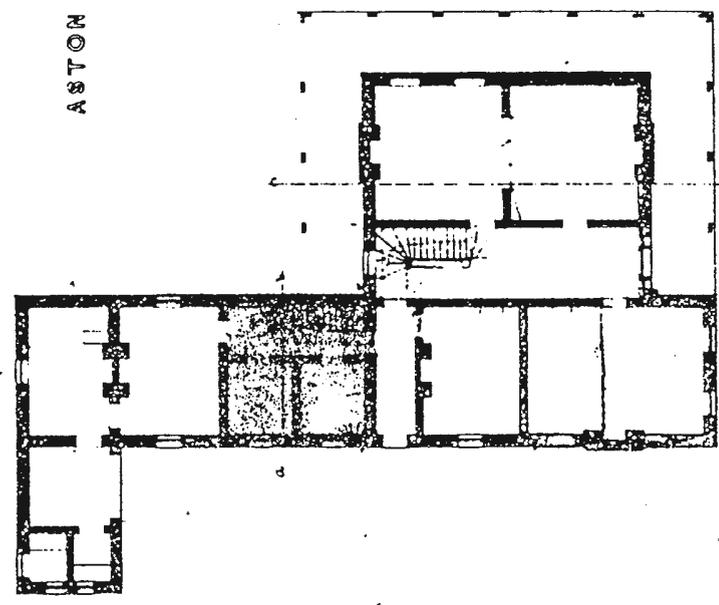
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Edmund Blacket Plan of "Aston Lodge" 1865
M. & W. Library

20

ASTON LODGE.

Scale 1/4 in = 1 ft.



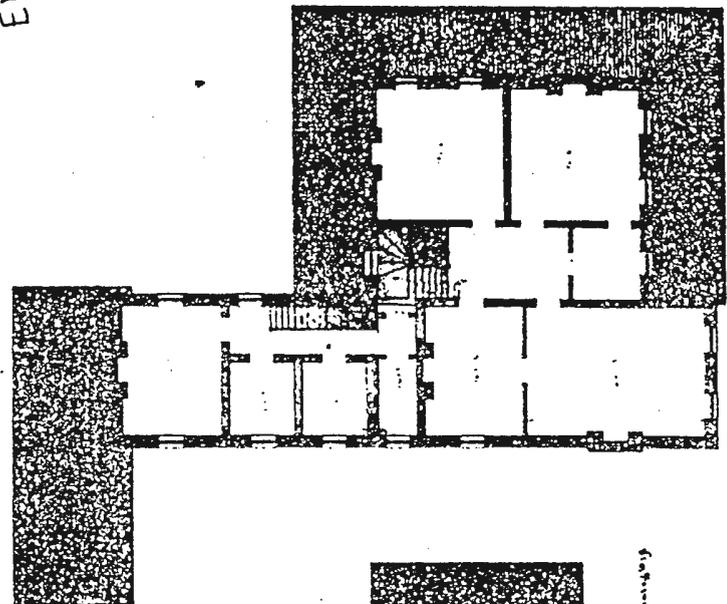
PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR

Ground Floor



PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR

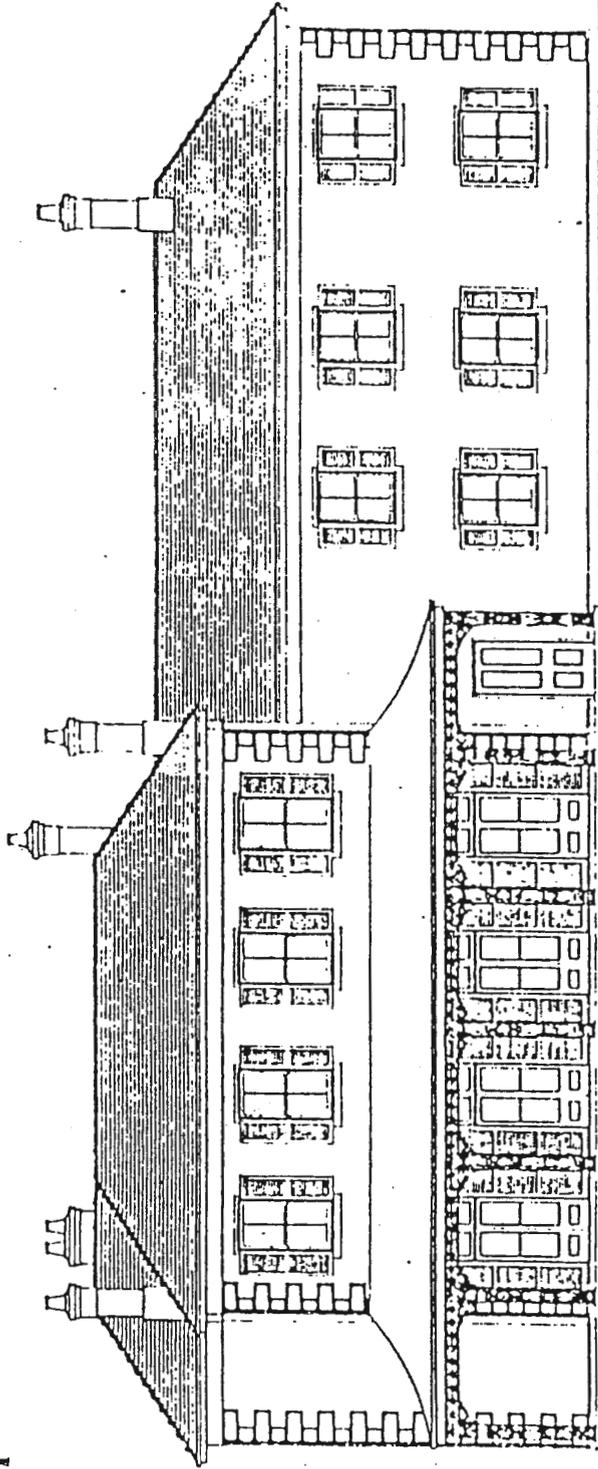
First Floor



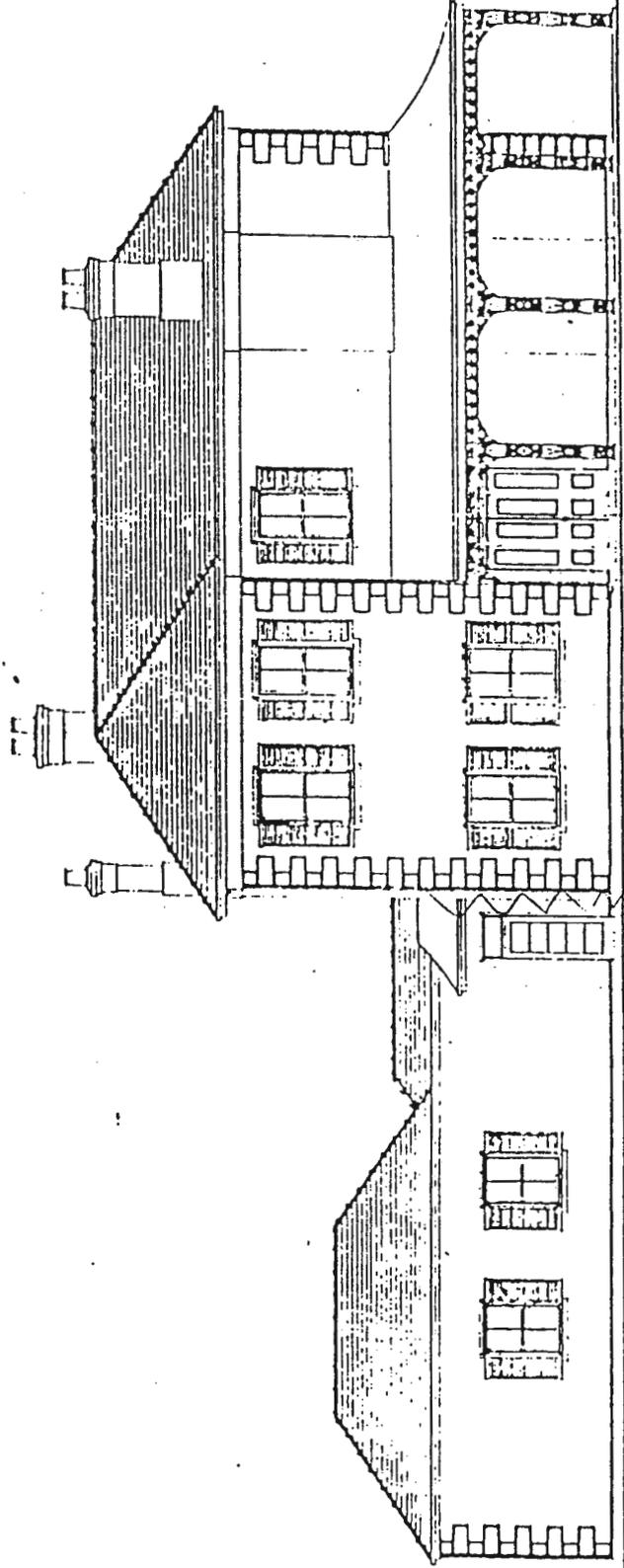
PLAN OF ROOF

SCHOOL
LIBRARY
015700

VE
EMA



north elevation



east elevation

FRANK FOLDS & PARTNERS
ARCHITECTS
100 N. 10th Street
ASTON, N.S.W.

ASTON LODGE
RANDWICK, N.S.W.
Edmund Blacket, ARCHT.

ELEVATIONS

SCALE OF FEET AND INCHES
1" = 10'-0"

Loretto Convent, Randwick.

BOARDING & DAY SCHOOL,

BRANCH OF LORETTO CONVENT, MARY'S MOUNT, BALLARAT.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP.

THE Religious of this community have taken the hand some Mansion and Grounds (11 acres) known as Aston Hall, Randwick. Early in July they will be prepared to receive a limited number of Young Lady Boarders, to whom they offer the advantage of a superior Education.

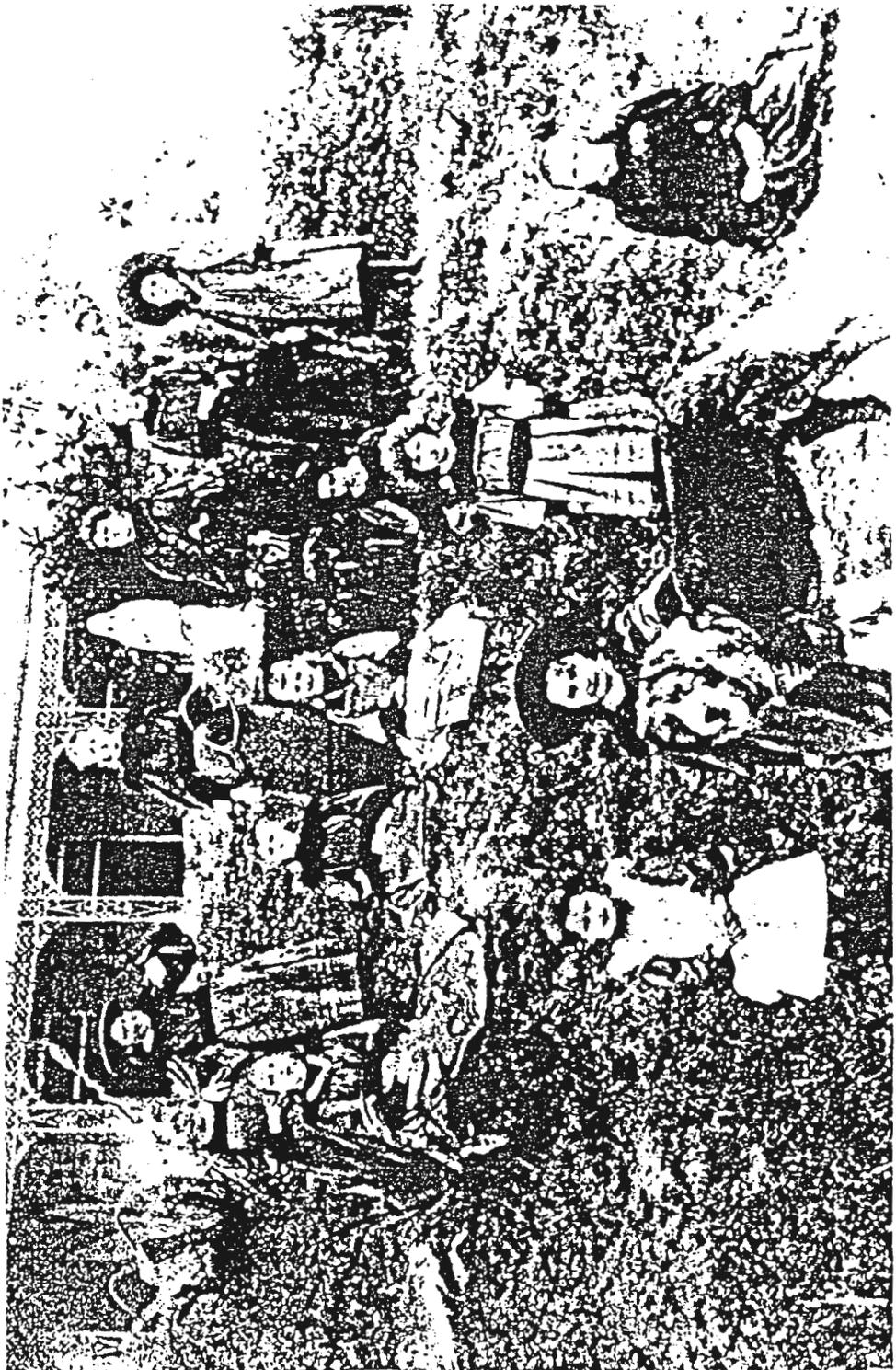
In both Schools, particular attention is paid to Ladylike Deportment and Calisthenics. The pupils are prepared, when it is desired, for Matriculation and for Senior and Junior Public Examinations.

The Kindergarten system is adopted with the younger children.

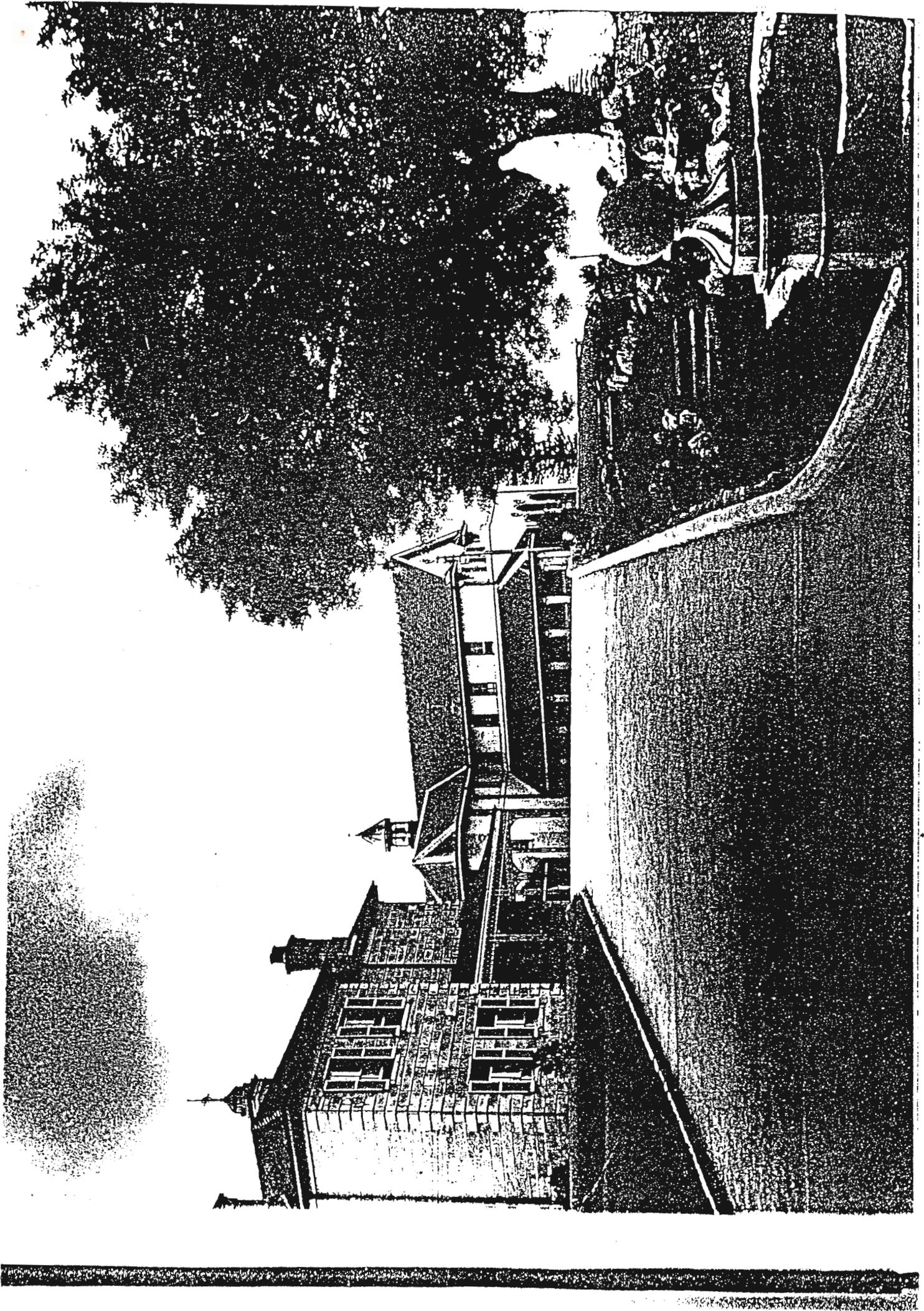
The situation of the Convent is most salubrious. The house is large and stands on an elevation in its own extensive and well-wooded grounds, close to and overlooking the Centennial Park.

The City Tram stops within a few minutes' walk, and the Randwick and Waverley extension Tram passes near the gate, at the top of Avoca Street.

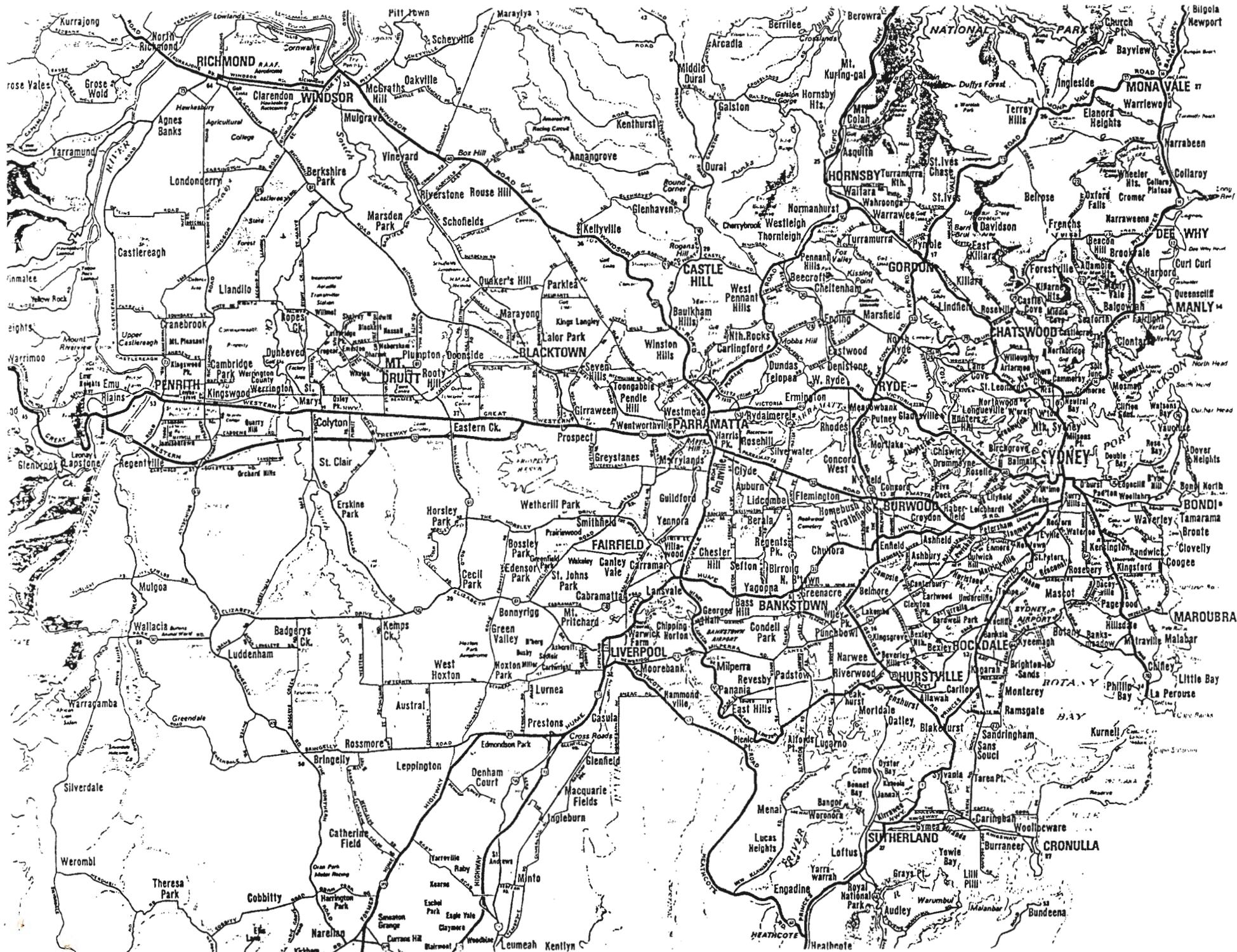
Prospectuses may be had on application to the Superiress.



Group of Randwick pupils with Barry



... ..



OCEAN

PACIFIC

SOUTH