
NAZARETH HOUSE



Cornell Street, 16
NAZARETH HOUSE (main
building)



Cornell Street, 16
NAZARETH HOUSE
(Chapel)

Location

16 Cornell Street CAMBERWELL, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO715

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 30, 2019

What is Significant?

The Nazareth House complex at 16 Cornell Street, Camberwell, is significant. It comprises the main building, constructed in 1933-35 and 1952-54, the Chapel, of 1952-54, and landscaped grounds including auxiliary built elements.

Early landscape elements, such as the mature Canary Island Palms, Norfolk Island Pine and remnant Cypress hedge, the front gates and associated fencing, gatehouse, grotto and basalt retaining walls, all located in the northern setback, contribute to the significance of the place. The c1940s timber house is also a contributory element of the site.

How is it significant?

Nazareth House, Chapel and grounds are of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Nazareth House complex demonstrates the influential presence of religious orders in the City of Boroondara, continuing from the 19th century well into the 20th century, and how most were integrally intertwined with community facilities founded and maintained by these orders, such as schools, hospitals and welfare facilities as at Nazareth House. Nazareth House is also for its association with the history of post-war child migration to Australia and the welfare facilities set up to accommodate this. The second wing of the main building was constructed in 1952-54 expressly to house up to 138 child migrants from Ireland and Great Britain, to reside with and be cared for by 12 nuns. From 1958 to 1975 Nazareth House also housed children from Victoria, so it demonstrates more generally with the theme of children's homes. The site is of social significance for the associations that former child residents hold. (Criteria A & G)

The Nazareth House main building is significant for demonstrating the principal characteristics of 19th and early 20th-century religious order buildings, particularly the very long facade of the main building expressed with a multi-storey verandah with heavy masonry arcading, and the references to the Gothic Revival style in the use of depressed pointed arches and the Norman Gothic central tower. It is a large and well preserved adaptation of this traditional form, using a contemporary palette of cladding materials. The Chapel is a representative example of the conservative approach to church design seen in mid-20th century, in which traditional Gothic forms - such as the pier-buttress form seen here - were simplified and abstracted to bring them into line with the post-war aesthetic. (Criterion D)

The Nazareth House complex is of aesthetic significance for its intact complex of buildings, which have a dominant streetscape presence in this low-scale residential area, and are set in a notable planned landscape of the interwar and early postwar period, set on a generous site. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 2 Camberwell, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1933, 1948, 1952,
Architect/Designer	Conolly, W.P.,
Hermes Number	202226
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Nazareth House and grounds is located on a very large lot on the south side of Cornell Street, stretching the entire length of the block. The land slopes away to the south, so the row of modest interwar houses on the north side of the street overlook the site. The main buildings - Nazareth House and its Chapel - face Cornell Street behind a generous front garden setback.

Up until at least September 2015, there was a remnant Leyland Cypress hedge along almost the entire northern boundary, which also visible in the 1945 aerial photo. The close spacing of the individual cypresses indicates that they were planted as a hedge, but since then grown into trees. As of 2017, only the mature cypresses west of the entrance gates survive. The cast-iron entrance gates are flanked by short lengths iron palisade fencing on a clinker brick plinth with tall brick piers. The gate posts retain lanterns on top. Beside the gates is a small clinker brick gatehouse; a simple building with a tiled gable roof. Beyond it there is a low timber and woven wire fence which dates from the interwar period.

The entrance drive turns eastward to the circular drive in front of the main building (the roadway much enlarged since 1945). Standing in front of the main building are two mature Canary Island Palms (and another just to the west) and a mature Norfolk Island Pine.

Other trees around the site are smaller and were planted sometime after 1945 (as shown by the aerial photos). At the front boundary, just east of the main building, is a large free-standing grotto constructed of volcanic fieldstones, which holds a small statue, presumably of the Virgin Mary. It is positioned to be viewed from the main building, with its back turned toward the street. Just past the grotto, the land drops to a former tennis court at the north-east corner of the site. The level change is made by L-shaped basalt retaining.

The third building visible from Cornell Street is a modest weatherboard house of c1940s situated west of the gatehouse, just behind the front fence. It has a tiled hipped roof with a projecting hipped-roof bay to one side of the facade, and a flat curved hood serving as the front porch (a typical Moderne stylistic feature seen from the 1930s through to the 1950s). It is not clear if this house was present in the 1945 aerial photo, and it is not shown on any other building permit plans held by the City of Boroondara.

The main building, constructed in 1933-35 and 1952-54, is three storeys in height at the front, and four at the rear due to the sloping side. It is roughly E-shaped in plan, with three rear wings, and the long front facade is bracketed by projecting bays at either end. The centre of the composition is marked by a four storey tower. Walls are primarily of red face brick with cement render dressings and clinker brick accents, particularly to the central tower. The hipped roof is covered in terracotta tiles.

Typical of 19th and early 20th century convents, most of the front facade is articulated by arcaded verandahs with a nominal Gothic flavour. The ground floor is trabeated (square arches), the first floor has low ox-bow (segmental) arches, and the low second floor has very simple square openings to its continuous verandah.

Ornament is concentrated on the central tower and the north faces of the two projecting end bays. The central tower takes its inspiration from Norman Gothic church architecture, with depressed lancet windows, and hexagonal pinnacles framing the steep pyramidal roof clad in terracotta shingles. The lower three storeys are framed by multiple attached buttresses in clinker brick

The projecting end bays each have a shallow parapeted breakfront with depressed lancet arches above the second floor windows and applied render ornament. The walls of these end bays are largely of clinker brick with bands of red brick between the floors.

The Chapel of 1952-54 stands to the west of the main building, set at an angle to it. Its walls are of clinker brick and the gabled roof is clad in terracotta tiles. The facade, facing north-west, is an abstracted version of the traditional pier-buttressed form with a rose window. The side of the nave faces north, with a simple campanile tower at the east end. The nave and side aisles have rectangular windows, with a lancet form expressed in the glazing. The sacristy and entrance porch, on either side of the tower, have both been extended in kind.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

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