

---

# NOVITIATE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY



NOVITIATE OF THE  
SISTERS OF MERCY

---

## Location

206-230 Rosanna Road ROSANNA, BANYULE CITY

## Municipality

BANYULE CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO53

## Heritage Listing

Banyule City

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 9, 2005

The Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy is of local architectural and historical significance.

The large scale of the building reflects the status of the Catholic Church during a period of expansion initiated under Archbishop Daniel Mannix after World War One. It is one of a group of seminary buildings in the City of Banyule including the former Loyola College, Odyssey House and Parade College.

The building is representative of the conservative inter-War Gothic Revival style, used for institutional buildings at

this time, and is notable for its large scale. The building is further enhanced by its mature Landscaped setting. The Novitiate commands expansive views across the Yarra Valley, and is a landmark in the local vicinity.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Banyule - Banyule Heritage Study, Allum Lovell & Associates, 1999; Banyule - Heidelberg Conservation Study, Graeme Butler and Associates, 1985;
Construction dates	1928,
Hermes Number	31414
Property Number	

---

## Historical Australian Themes

The Australasian headquarters of most Catholic religious orders were based in Melbourne in the early 20th century in a period of consolidation and expansion under Archbishop Mannix. The Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy is a substantially intact example of a building constructed for this purpose. It is one of the group of seminaries erected by the Roman Catholic Church from the 1920s to the 1930s, others are Loyola College; and later, Odyssey House and Parade College.

## Usage/Former Usage

Novitiate (Original)

Novitiate/Nursing Home (current)

## Physical Conditions

Good

## Physical Description 1

**BUILDINGS:** The Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy is a large, three storey Gothic Revival style building located on a 25 acre site. The building is roughcast rendered with smooth rendered window dressings, and has a distinct institutional character, reinforced by its symmetrical entrance elevation with gabled bays at each end, and repetitive fenestration at the side and rear. Gabled bays flank the central pointed arched entrance, with statues contained within niches in the gable ends. The three-storey loggias have pointed and segmented arched openings between stepped buttresses, and a diaper patterned parapet frieze. Windows are pointed-arched double-hung sashes. A small chapel exists on the south side of the building, and has a semi-octagonal apse with pointed arched windows with rendered quoining. **LANDSCAPE:** The bulk of the remnant landscape around the old Novitiate of the Mercy Sisters is located on the Rosanna Road (western) frontage. Four rows of Golden Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Aurea') dominate the site. The central row appears to follow the line of an old driveway, which was probably a service entrance to the property. It is currently a car park. The main driveway is entered via a pair of iron gates set on rendered pillars, the same material as on the main building. Parts of the drive are edged in rock, which suggests the edge of old garden beds, or basalt with a basalt gutter. The timber and cyclone wire mesh front fence appears to be mainly original.

Among the mature vegetation on the site are a number of Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*) and Common Oak (*Quercus robur*), Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) and Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*). The planting in front of the main building is quite symmetrical. Another row of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), which appears to be an overgrown hedge, is located to the north of the site. A row of Bhutan Cypress (*Cupressus torulosa*) is another notable feature. Smaller plantings include Mature Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) and old fruit trees to the east of the site. Overgrown Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) are scattered throughout the site, and are probably remnants of old garden walks.

The garden is significant for the large numbers of mature trees and shrubs, which reflect the landscape of the early history of the building, and the early layout of the garden, which is still discernible from the Place:ment of this plant material.

## **Intactness**

Good

## **Physical Description 2**

St James Park Estate

*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.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*