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# Maryknoll Precinct



Maryknoll Precinct - Father  
Pooley s Grave

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## Location

Koolbirra Road MARYKNOLL, Cardinia Shire

## Municipality

CARDINIA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO55

## Heritage Listing

Cardinia Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Maryknoll Precinct, founded in 1949 by Father Wilfred Pooley of the West Footscray Presbytery, is of significance to Victoria as a rare example of a planned rural community based on Christian principles which involved Modernist concepts of town planning and architecture. This contrasts with other similar Catholic rural communities who opted, instead, for Medieval principles of worship and building construction<sup>1</sup>.

Town planners and architects were involved in planning the township and its buildings. With the church as its

focus, the plan is significant for its contoured street alignments and retention of bushland areas. The surviving near intact 1950s houses are also notable within the State as evocative of the latest design principles espoused by architects in that era and as a group of simple contemporary houses of a similar architectural concept set in rural surroundings.

The surviving buildings help express the ideals of Maryknoll which included the setting up of local industries controlled by the community, and a housing co-operative to finance house purchases. This obviated a lot of the financial problems of similar contemporary Catholic rural settlements, marking this settlement as, relatively, a highly successful one as shown by the scale and integrity of the structures erected by the co-operative.

### *State Significance*

Heritage Study/Consultant	Cardinia - Cardinia Shire Heritage Study 1996, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1996;
Construction dates	1950,
Other Names	Koolbirra Road, Maryknoll,
Hermes Number	30418
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

This generally 1950s precinct includes the architect-designed generally timber clad (once stained, some extensively altered) skillion (some gabled) roofed houses sited around the similarly clad Holy Family Church and Fr. Pooley's former residence, as the two most important structures in the complex. The surrounding houses are comparable with contemporary architect-designed houses and as a group are notable within the State.

The plan of the settlement is also of note with contoured street alignments and retention of bushland as characteristics which underscore the importance of the built elements.

Planting around Fr. Pooley's house includes two *Cupressus torulosa* (Bhutan cypress), old fruit trees, a camellia, and abelia, with some garden pathways edged with stone and gravel paved.

## **Physical Conditions**

The buildings are generally well-preserved but a minority has been reclad or rebuilt.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

### **Historical Themes**

7.7 Retreats (religious retreats, inebriate retreats, sanatoriums)

8.6 Maryknoll, a Christian community

## **Physical Description 2**

**Associations** - Pooley, Fr. Wilfred; Smith & Tracey

*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/>*