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# ODYSSEY HOUSE



Odyssey House

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## Location

28 Bonds Road LOWER PLENTY, Banyule City

## Municipality

BANYULE CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO95

## Heritage Listing

Banyule City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 24, 2005

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Odyssey House is of local historical and architectural significance.

Odyssey House is one of several Catholic Church seminary buildings erected principally in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne during the early to mid 20th century and now used for other purposes. Odyssey House is unusual for its rare Classical Revival style, reminiscent of institutional buildings from twenty years earlier than contemporary architectural movements of the 1950s. The building is substantially intact and, whilst conservative for the period, is a good example of the style. The building also gains distinction from its large scale, unusual for the period and in the municipality. Odyssey House is a local landmark, particularly in the adjoining municipality of

Manningham.

The garden is a mature institutional landscape associated with a prominent local building. The cemetery is significant for the unusual wall, and reflects small cemeteries usually associated with much older landscapes.

Other Names 28 Bonds Road, Lower Plenty,

Hermes Number 30820

Property Number

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## Usage/Former Usage

Original: Seminary

Current: Drug Rehabilitation Centre

## Physical Description 1

**BUILDING:** Odyssey House is a large institutional building constructed of cream brick, with hipped and gabled tiled roofs. E-shaped in plan, the classical revival style building is constructed on the highest part of the site commanding panoramic views of the surrounding area, with the Yarra River immediately to the south. The building comprises two-storey accommodation wings at each end and a double-height chapel in the central section.

On the entrance elevation the central gabled section of the building rises to three storeys. The gable end is pedimented and contains a Serlian window arrangement. An octagonal tower rises above the gabled roof and has tall, narrow, arched, louvered openings on four sides. The entrance is centrally located within a projecting single-storey porch, and the segmented-arched entrance doorway is flanked by low-relief cement rendered fluted pilasters. The remainder of the building is of plain cream brickwork, relieved only by a continuous cement rendered moulded string course dividing the two storeys. Windows are generally multi-paned double-hung sashes; those on the ground floor have rectangular highlights.

Internally, the classical revival style and institutional nature of the building is reinforced by traditional detailing such as panelled timber doors and moulded cornices. The rectangular, double-height chapel contains original fittings including timber pew seating, a raised dais at the north-end, and wall mounted fluorescent light fittings. Along the east and west walls are tall, segmented-arched lead lighted windows. The ceiling comprises a semi-elliptical plaster barrel vault, articulated by ribs at regular intervals. Behind the dais is an unusual baldacchino or canopy, also original to the building but in a more contemporary 1950s modernistic style, contrasting with the otherwise conservative interior. The canopy contains a catenary-arched recess formed in plaster and painted bright blue and yellow. The hood is cloud-shaped and painted white, fixed to which is a yellow painted crucifix. Flanking the canopy are two original painted murals featuring Australian flora and fauna, in the naive style.

The remainder of the interior was not inspected. **LANDSCAPE:** Typical of an institutional landscape, the grounds around Odyssey House consist largely of mature specimen trees set in an expanse of lawn. These trees include a row of four Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) along the central driveway median, in front of the main entrance, mature Ghost Maple (*Acer negundo*) and Desert Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa*) to the south east of the main building, as well as a mature Pinoak (*Quercus palustris*). A host of Eucalypts are planted throughout the site and include Lemon Scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) and Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*). Lining the driveway to the main entrance are an extensive planting of Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*), and the garden beds in front the main building feature various Roses (*Rosa CV*).

Located half way along the entry drive, on the southern side is a small cemetery. Entered via two iron gates, the cemetery is rectangular in shape, defined by a concrete path, with a broad path down the central axis. A low cream brick wall defines the area from the driveway. Surmounting the wall on each side of the gates in iron

lettering are the words "LET OUR RELIGIOUS PRAY FOR THE DEAD BRETHREN WHOSE NAMES SHOULD LIVE FOREVER IN THE SOCIETY" and "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE HE WHO EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD ENJOYS ETERNAL LIFE". This contributes significantly to the solemnity of the site. The graves are marked by bronze plaques.

## **Physical Conditions**

Good

## **Intactness**

Good 24/06/2005

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Odyssey House is one of the later buildings erected by the Roman Catholic Church in the period of consolidation and expansion initiated by Archbishop Daniel Mannix after World War One. It is one of a group of seminary buildings in the City of Banyule including the Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy, Loyola (Maharishi Vedic College) and Parade College.

*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/>*