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## Maryknoll Residential & Civic Prec.



Maryknoll Residential &  
Civic Precinct - Residence



Maryknoll Residential &  
Civic Precinct 2

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### Location

Koolbirra Road MARYKNOLL, Cardinia Shire

### Municipality

CARDINIA SHIRE

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO54

HO55

### Heritage Listing

Cardinia Shire

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 24, 2006

What is significant?

The township of Maryknoll, its layout, roads, road names, lanes, walking tracks, pedestrian lanes and reserves, early community and civic buildings and landscaped spaces and their settings, created from the establishment phase (1949) to 1963 (Archbishop Mannix's death). The Church and presbytery, and the first buildings

constructed at Maryknoll, and the early Smith and Tracey designed buildings in their 'natural', domestic and remnant functional landscape settings and the predominantly soft-edged native landscape character of the township overall, the plaques commemorating original former buildings and important founding members, and the strong sense of community and civic pride, peace and quiet, gentle pace and ambience, are of primary significance. Building and landscaping works, and changes made up until Father Pooley's death and to the end of the administration of Maryknoll by a Co-operative society are of contributory significance. The close associations of Maryknoll with Archbishop Mannix and Father Pooley are of primary significance.

How is it significant? The town layout, subdivision and pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns, and the landscape character created by the predominantly soft-edged landscaping, high proportion of native vegetation, retention of reserves, buildings and areas of public open space and private gardens created between 1949 and 1963 are of primary local (and potentially State) historic, aesthetic and social significance.

Although a formal social significance assessment has not been undertaken, there is likely to be evidence for social significance for the local community and for past members of the community, through the strong sense of community and civic pride physically expressed throughout the town.

The peace and quiet, gentle pace and ambience are also highly valued by members of the current community.

The associations of Maryknoll with Archbishop Mannix is of State significance and with Father Pooley, of local historic significance (associative).

Why is it significant? The town layout, subdivision and pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns are unique and significant as a substantially intact township unified by a harmonious and intentionally consistent landscape character and architectural style which was created by a single firm of architects and planners from Melbourne, Smith and Tracey. (RNE criteria A.3, A.4 and B.2). Maryknoll is important as the product of a Christian community operated as a Co-operative and based on Christian ideals of absolute unity, characteristic of post-war decentralised and often largely self-sufficient rural communities for families. (RNE criteria B.2 and D.2).

Maryknoll is significant for its blessing, support and close association with Archbishop Mannix, and at a local level, Father Pooley, whose vision it was to create the rural Catholic community of St Mary's, known from 1955 as Maryknoll (RNE criterion H.1).

Although a formal social significance assessment has not been undertaken, it is likely that there would be evidence for high social significance for the local community and for past members of the community, through a strong sense of community and civic pride physically expressed throughout the town. The peace and quiet, gentle pace and ambience are also highly valued by members of the current community. (RNE criteria E.1 and G.1)

Heritage Study/Consultant Cardinia - Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review, Context P/L, 2007;

Construction dates 1949,

Other Names Koolbirra Road,

Hermes Number 30412

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Maryknoll is situated on the top of a hill, north of the Princes Highway. In 2006, the overall character of Maryknoll suggests a design intention for the township of sympathetically integrating built and landscape elements into the natural landform and vegetation. The subdivision and circulation patterns are laid out across the top of a hill, with

roads generally following the contours, and a large proportion of vegetation through out the town comprises native species retained as reserves, or used to line streets, within and surrounding the public open spaces, and within the residential lots. The majority of the streets within the township are unsealed, with soft edges and no kerbing. The roads within the township were named by Father Pooley, using indigenous names. The more regular grid pattern of roads which define the edges of the Maryknoll precinct have more standard western European names (Fogarty, Wheeler, Mortimer and Snell); most likely using names of settlers in the district.

Contributing to the strongly natural character of the landscape are the c5km of walking tracks and internal reserves or lanes that provide pedestrian linkages throughout the township and between streets, and the large number of public reserves: Maryknoll Reserve, Koala Reserve (E 377426, N 5789963), Wirragulla Reserve, Roche's Reserve, Casuarina Reserve, St Joseph's Wildflower Reserve, and Sr. Chanel Reserve. Also contributing to the natural character are areas of bushland on some private properties, some of which are unfenced and appear to be reserves, or merge seamlessly with adjacent reserves.

Street plantings are mostly mature introduced natives '*Pittosporum undulatum*' (including a variegated form common along roadsides throughout the district), on Koolbirra Road between St Joseph's Square and the Maryknoll Lawn Cemetery.

Other plantings that characterise the township include the gardens in general, but especially those within the large residential lots of the original Smith and Tracey houses which are generally set behind low transparent fencing or hedge plantings, and combine areas of bushland and native plantings with exotics species characteristic of interwar to 1950s gardens such as camellias, hedge plantings of *Photinia*, bed and specimen plantings of deciduous exotic trees in lawns, as well as functional plants like fruit trees with lawn underplantings. Driveways are generally serpentine or gently curved and unsealed.

The Church and Presbytery, Sr Chanel Reserve, St Joseph's Square and the 1974 general store and post-office occupy the centre of the town.

St Joseph's Square and the adjacent Sr Chanel Reserve provide a soft-edged central meeting space characterised by predominantly native plantings with little understorey planting, with denser areas of landscaping around the perimeter and roundabout. It also includes the Father Pooley Memorial Park, created in 1969 with trees planted by each of the Maryknoll families, in honour of Fr.

Pooley who had died that year. In 2000, a section of St Joseph's Square on the northern side of the post-office/general store carpark was landscaped and decorated with pavers created by the community.

The Church (E 377298, N 5789580) and Presbytery (E 377266, N 5789512) A formal entrance to the otherwise undefined boundary of the Church grounds is provided by two Bhutan Cypress trees (*Cupressus torulosa*) and symmetrical beds planted with shrubs. The Church (1950, 1953) is set back from St Joseph's Square and adjacent to Wirragulla Road, within an expanse of lawn with mature native trees as specimen plantings.

The Church is clad in vertical boards, with gable-ends and casement windows along the north side.

A verandah is built on the eastern side (n.d.). An enclosed porch is located at the western end (this formerly housed the school library), flanked by two Mediterranean Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*). The doors to the Church are horizontally boarded. The six stain glass windows in the apse were installed in the early 1990s.

The interior walls and ceiling are fibro-lined with early interior light fittings (n.d.). The pews within the Church were hand made by the local Co-operative factory.

The Angelus Bell, presented to the community in March 1950, originally located in the Presbytery garden, was relocated to the Church above the eastern entrance.

The Presbytery was the first permanent building on the site, and the residence of Father Pooley for the duration of his time with the Parish. Built in c1949, it is a small weatherboard cottage, with a skillion roof, gabled front porch. It is set behind a low timber picket fence, partially collapsed at one end, within a garden typical of the period of construction, containing mature fruit trees, camellia and abelia, with some garden pathways edged with stone and gravel paved. The cottage and garden appear to have been little altered.

To the south of the Church is a plaque commemorating the site of a former shelter shed, which was the last remaining 'temp' - one of an original group of seven simple weatherboard structures which housed the first occupants of the settlement, prior to the township's construction.

Across Wirragulla Road from the Church is the Father Pooley Memorial Hall (E 377302, N 5789614). Constructed in c1966 of cinder blocks, it has a low pitched gable roof and large timberframed windows, this building housed the local school until its closure in 1970. It is now used as a community hall.

Built in 1974, the locally run general store and post office is situated on the lower slope to the north of St Joseph's Square. It has a face brick facade with three arched openings, small-paned timber windows behind and pyramidal roof. The site of the original general store and post office, east of the Father Pooley Hall on Wirragulla Road, is commemorated by a plaque set in granite.

Located at the bend at 61 Koolbirra Road, the Maryknoll Lawn Cemetery and Father Pooley Grave is a part open grassed and part native bushland allotment. Currently only the open grassed area contains memorials and graves.

The cemetery is entered by a wrought-iron asymmetrical gateway, defined by a chevron pattern pair of gates and segmental-arched portal bearing the name of the cemetery, 'Maryknoll Lawn Cemetery', and a recent weathered-timber post and rail fence.

A timber-framed gabled shelter and paved area has been dedicated to the founder of the settlement, the Rev. WA Pooley (d.1969), while other graves are marked with bronze plates set in the lawn; some plain and others ornamental.

The residential buildings within the precinct predominantly represent modest 1950s architecture in character and style, nestled within a landscaped bushland setting.

The original Smith and Tracey residential buildings were single storey weatherboard, with shallow pitched gable roofs and timber framed windows. The original houses were stained timber.

Remaining original residential buildings are located at: - 19 Koolbirra Road (painted weatherboard) - 20 Koolbirra Road (painted weatherboard) - 45 Koolbirra Road (painted weatherboard) - 49(?) Koolbirra Road (original stained weatherboard) - 51 Koolbirra Road (T-shaped in plan, painted weatherboard) - 23 Girrahween Road - constructed in 1955 as Convent of Our Lady of the Hills. It is currently used as a private residence (painted weatherboard).

The remaining original 1950s houses in their 'natural' and domestic residential landscape settings, in spite of some modifications, strongly retain an expression of the architectural style of the period and are comparable with contemporary architect-designed houses. As a group, they are notable within the State.

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

Five retirement cottages constructed as part of the Cottage Scheme for the Aged are located at 41 Koolbirra Road (E 377343, N 5789717), set behind a Photinia hedge. The five cottages are oriented towards a central teardrop shaped drive that encircles a small area of lawn with deciduous exotic trees planted as specimens. The cottages are surrounded by a modest garden setting comprising lawn, mature deciduous trees and simple bed plantings.

The township of Maryknoll, its roads, lanes, walking tracks and reserves, the cemetery, Church, presbytery and other early community and residential buildings and landscaped spaces and their settings are generally well maintained with a small number modified, reclad, or rebuilt.

## **Physical Conditions**

Good

## **Integrity**

Substantially intact

## **Physical Description 2**

Key elements - Buildings, Cemetery, Group of Buildings, Landscape, Natural Vegetation, Plantings, Setting, Site Layout, Subdivision

## **Historical Australian Themes**

### **National Themes**

4. Building settlements, towns and cities

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

8.6 Worshipping

*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/>*