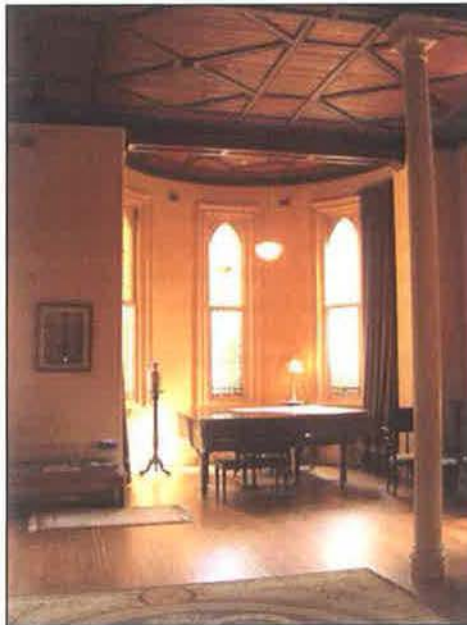


CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Loreto Normanhurst Nos. 91-93 Pennant Hills Road, Normanhurst

July 2008

Executive Summary

This Conservation Management Plan has been prepared to assess the cultural significance of the buildings and features currently occupying Loreto Normanhurst and to guide future works, to ensure that the heritage value of the place is maintained and enhanced.

The Loreto Convent was constructed on the southern side of Pennant Hills Road in 1897 as a Boarding School for girls. Established by members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the School soon accepted day students from the local community including a number of boys. The Convent originally comprised of the 1897 building, a three storey face brick building constructed in the Federation Gothic style with gabled roof and dormers clad in slates, and attached two storey kitchen wing. A number of detached sheds and structures also supported the main building which was setback from the street frontage and original sandstone and wrought iron entry gates. At this time the main building visually dominated the surrounding area which had largely been cleared and cultivated by orchardists by this time. Some remnant bushland also remained, including in the southern portion of the School site, where the nuns established a cemetery in c.1899.

By the 1920s the Convent was surrounded by well established gardens and a farm and School grounds had been increased by the purchase of additional land along Mt Pleasant Avenue. The increase in student numbers had also resulted in the construction of a number of timber buildings and finally the construction of a new wing – the Holy Angels Wing. Further additions and new buildings followed in the decades since that time, with many new facilities also added and improvements and maintenance works also undertaken to the site.

Loreto Normanhurst is not recognised on the State Heritage Inventory. The Loreto Convent group, grounds, gates and cemetery are, however, listed as a heritage item in the Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994 (LEP). The Loreto Convent (the original section and gate) and Loreto Convent Cemetery are also classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

This assessment has found that Loreto Normanhurst is of local cultural significance as an early Convent School in local area. Review and analysis of the history of the site and assessment of significance has highlighted that the School has traditionally grown and developed in alignment with the growth and development of the local area. The site and buildings have undergone alterations and additions, traditionally to cater for ongoing use, evolving educational standards and current requirements. The changes to the local area include the subdivision and construction of many homes and other Schools in the immediate context in addition to the widening of Pennant Hills Road and construction of the overhead pedestrian footbridge. These changes have all impacted both physically and on the presentation and perception of the School and its grounds. However, despite these changes the fundamental features of the site, and a presence on Pennant Hills Road remains as reminders of the early Convent School, pioneering members of the IBVM and their desire to establish a high quality School for girls.

As such the fundamental and highly significant features of the site that represents the early Convent School, namely the original entry gates, 1897 building and visual connection with the entry gates and Pennant Hills Road and associated garden to the north and north east of the building, the cemetery and surrounding bushland in the southern portion of the site should be conserved.

Loreto Normanhurst is a valuable asset in the local area and provision of high quality education and facilities, including Boarding School should continue and be supported. Retention of the original features of the School in recognition of the cultural significance and contribution to the local area is recommended. On-going alterations and additions to the buildings and site are, however, permissible given that the grounds and School have traditionally evolved and have been successively altered and modified, provided that these are carefully considered and that there is no adverse impact on the highly significant features of the site.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context of the report

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) has been prepared on behalf of Loreto Normanhurst to assess the cultural significance of the buildings and features currently occupying the site and to guide future works, alterations and additions to the School located at Nos. 91-93 Pennant Hills Road, Normanhurst (the site).

1.2 Heritage listing status & objectives of the report

The site is not covered by any instruments under the *NSW Heritage Act* (1977) or recognised on the State Heritage Inventory.

The Loreto Convent group, grounds, gates and cemetery are, however, listed as a heritage item in the *Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994* (LEP). The Loreto Convent (the original section and gate) and Loreto Convent Cemetery are also classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

The bushland located in the southern portion of the site also contains an area classified as a Blue Gum High Forest and endangered ecological community under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and *NSW Threatened Species Act 1995*. As such this section of the site must be managed in accordance with the relevant Act.

The objective of this report is to assess and identify the significant components particularly of the Loreto "Convent group" and "grounds" to assist and guide future decisions about the place. The School buildings and grounds have typically evolved and grown since the original listing.

This CMP has been prepared following discussions with Hornsby Shire Council and follows a Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact report prepared for the School in early 2008. It aims to clarify the extent of the significant buildings and grounds to assist Council in their assessment of future proposed works.

1.3 Methodology & structure

This CMP has been prepared in accordance with guidelines outlined in *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999*, known as *The Burra Charter*; the principles outlined in James Semple Kerr's, *The Conservation Plan* (sixth edition) 2004 and Heritage Manual produced by the NSW Heritage Office.

The initial sections of the report provide an analysis of the site and buildings, based on available documentary and physical evidence. This analysis includes a historical summary together with descriptive analysis of site components and buildings in order to develop an understanding of the significance and development of the place. The historical summary is based on information sourced from the Hornsby Local Studies and Mitchell Libraries and Department of Lands. Enquiries were also made at Hornsby Shire Council and Sydney Water.

The following sections comprise an assessment of significance of the site using standard NSW Heritage Office guidelines and SHR criteria. A grading of significant buildings and elements has been provided to identify their differing levels of contribution to the significance of the site. The final sections address various management issues, and the role and objectives of the relevant heritage authorities. They provide the framework for the identification of opportunities and constraints and conservation philosophy, policies and guidelines.

1.4 Site identification

The School is located on the southern side of Pennant Hills Road and is also bounded by Mount Pleasant Avenue to the east and Osborn Road to the west. The real property description is Lot 1 DP 734965.

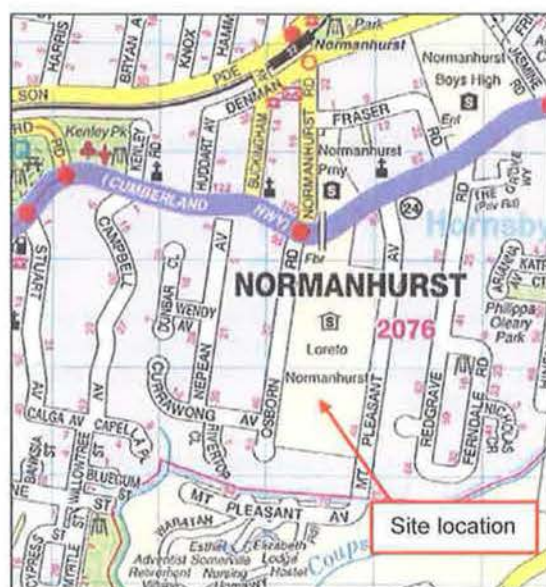


Figure 1.1 Location plan.

1.5 Documentary & photographic sources

Architectural plans of the site have been supplied by the School. The historical outline is primarily sourced from the centenary publication, *Loreto Normanhurst 1897-1997 A Century Memories*. All additional research has been undertaken at the Mitchell Library, NSW Land and Property Information Office and Hornsby Local Studies library. Information has also been sourced from Hornsby Shire Council.

Contemporary photographs included in this report, unless otherwise stated, were taken by Luisa Alessi of Perumal Murphy Alessi, Heritage Consultants, in November 2007, specifically for the preparation of an heritage assessment of the School.

1.6 Limitations

This report concentrates on the European use and development of the site and specifically the development of the landscape and built environment. It was not possible to include the full history of the school as part of this project, as it was not possible to view all School and Council records. As such there may be some gaps and some assumptions, based on the available documentary sources and physical evidence, have also been made.

The social and general history of the school has been well presented in the centenary publication, *Loreto Normanhurst 1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, which has provided the basis of the historical outline.

This report does not contain a structural or BCA analysis of the buildings or economic and financial study of the site.

1.7 Historical Chronology & Summary

The following chronology has been provided as a summary of the historical development of the site and buildings. However, as noted above, may not be a complete picture and is based on the available documentary sources and physical evidence.

1831	The School site is part of a 320 acres grant to Samuel Horne.
By 1860s	Horne's grant was subdivided, cleared and orchards had been established in the area.
1875	Part of the School site, Lots 4 & 5 of the Horne Estate, was purchased by Oliver Osborn, a farmer.
1895	Opening up of South Hornsby Railway Station (renamed Normanhurst in 1900).
1896	Members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) purchased over 22 acres of land on the southern side of Pennant Hills Road from Mary Ann Osborn for the purposes of a Roman Catholic Convent and Convent School to be known and called "The Loreto Convent".
1897	The Convent was constructed to a design of JF Hennessy and occupied in October by four nuns and 15 boarders. The Convent comprised of main, two storey building with high 16 feet ceilings on the ground floor and 15 feet ceilings to the first floor dorms and chapel, and kitchen wing, with nuns' refectory and dorm. The Convent also featured sandstone entry gates and a number of sheds, stable and a piggery.
1898	The Convent, which was surrounded by bush and paddocks, was formally opened and blessed by Cardinal Moran.
1899	The cemetery was established.
1906	Land to the immediate east of the School site was subdivided, into 67 residential sized allotments divided by a road, now Mt Pleasant Avenue.
By 1911	A flowering garden had been established about the "avenue" extending from the School gates.
1917	Katherine Mary Frizelle, Mary Ochiltree and Barbara Mulhall from Ballarat and Anastasia Mornane, Annie Fallon, and Christina Fagon of Normanhurst purchased over 2 acres of land (Lots 18-24 DP 6612) along the Mt Pleasant Avenue street frontage. The land bounded the eastern boundary of the school and had been part of Lot 4 of the Hornsby Estate subdivided in c. 1906.
1918	The adjacent lots comprising of over three acres (Lots 25-35) were also purchased by the nuns.
By 1920s	A number of timber buildings had been constructed on the site to accommodate the growing number of students comprising 65 boarders and 12 day pupils ranging from Kindergarten to Leaving Certificate.
1920	The architectural firm of Hennessy & Hennessy were commissioned and contract signed for the construction of a new building – the Holy Angels Wing and Chapel.

1928	The original kitchen wing and refectory was converted to a Science Room by this time and a new wing was constructed to the south of the 1897 building (Mary Ward Wing).
1920s	Relocation of timber and lightweight buildings to Normanhurst from the original Loreto School in Randwick. Establishment of tennis courts, basketball field, hockey ground and cricket pitch. Establishment of the Grotto with statue of Mary. Modifications to Holy Angels Chapel.
1930s-1940s	A number of small buildings added to the School grounds. Construction of Nuns' accommodation and detached houses on land purchased in 1917/18 along Mt Pleasant Avenue.
1947	Golden Jubilee of the School. Construction of two new classrooms to accommodate Juniors. The School population was on the rise with 100 boarders and 35 day girls.
1949	Parent's and Friends Association (P&F) formed. Works to the Sports fields undertaken by fathers aided by funds raised by the P&F.
1952	Additions to existing buildings and commencement of construction of the "verandah" classrooms.
1953	The new classrooms were opened and foundation stone for the new Chapel was laid.
1954	The Chapel was opened and new Novitiate was under construction.
1956	Loreto Novitiate was moved from Loreto Abbey in Ballarat to Normanhurst. 225 students in the School including 120 boarders, with 18 teaching staff comprising 15 nuns and 3 lay staff.
1963	A new Junior School (Barry Wing), Science theatre, Canteen and Quadrangle was built, blessed and opened.
1964-1965	Demolition of a number of older buildings transported from Loreto Randwick and construction of the Kendall Wing (now Deirdre Rofe Centre). Conversion of Novitiate to Mary Ward Wing and Senior School and expansion of the Loreto Art Department.
1960s	Further works to the Oval undertaken by the P&F.
1973	The new Resource Centre opened with "state-of-the-art" library, science laboratories, lecture theatre and studio.

1980	The new Oval opened.
1982	Closure of the Junior School and approval of new Gymnasium. Construction and works to the Birrane Wing.
1983	The new Gymnasium was opened.
1989/1990	Vandals desecrate two Loreto Nun graves.
1991	Construction of the Mornane Wing.
1992	Additions to the Birrane Wing, including construction of the entry canopy and construction of the adjacent car park in the north western section of the School.
1994	First lay Principal was appointed. Removal of one of the clay tennis courts located to the east of the 1897 building. By this time car parks had also been provided in the north eastern section of the site and adjacent to the former Barry Wing (now Teresa Ball Centre).
c. 1995	Principal's Residence constructed on the Mt Pleasant Avenue frontage in the south eastern section of the School.
1997	Masterplan of the site developed and applications for additions to the Resource Centre and general purpose learning areas, alterations and additions to the existing Gymnasium and erection of a Swimming Pool complex in accordance with the plan were submitted and approved by Council. Establishment of Grounds and Maintenance area located in the north western section of the School.
1999	Construction of the Swimming Pool complex and major additions to the 1973 Resource Centre.
1990s	Widening of Pennant Hills Road, assumed construction of brick and palisade fencing along the frontage and relocation of original sandstone entry gates and fence.
2000	The Swimming Centre and additions to the learning Centre including Curran Theatre, five new classrooms and prayer room were opened.
2000s	Drainage and clearing works to the southern portion of the site undertaken in association with the construction of a new Staff car park located to the west of the Oval. Additions to the Barry Wing and creations of the Teresa Ball Centre (opened 2006). Addition of new fence and boom gate to existing car park adjacent to the Teresa Ball Centre. Refurbishment of the Kendall Wing and creation of the Deirdre Rofe Centre.

1.8 Authorship

This report has been prepared by Luisa Alessi of Perumal Murphy Alessi, Heritage Consultants.

Luisa is a graduate architect with twelve years experience in the heritage field. She has prepared a number of Heritage Assessments, Statement of Heritage Impact reports, Conservation Plans and Conservation Management Plans for both the private and public sector.

2.0 Documentary evidence

2.1 Background development of the area

The original owners of the Hornsby Shire were the Aboriginal people of the Dharug, Ku-ring-gai/Gameraigal and Darkinjung language groups. European settlement in the Hornsby Shire did not occur until the early nineteenth century, approximately twenty years after the arrival of the first fleet.¹

Initially the more accessible lands along the Parramatta and Hawkesbury Rivers were the preferred settlement areas, as access to the wider area was virtually impossible for the European explorers due to a lack of facilities for road transport and the heavily timbered land. However, it was the early timber getters who explored, harvested and cleared the area and opened it up for farming and cultivation, in particular for the establishment of orchards.

The suburb of Normanhurst grew from three early land grants given to James Milson (347 acres in 1830), Samuel Horne (320 acres in 1831) and Frederick Unwin (640 acres in 1841).² The town of Hornsby, from which the shire gets its name, was named after Horne. Police Constables Thorn and Horne were rewarded with grants of land for the capture of a bushranger John McNamara. Both men never actually lived on their grants. Constable Thorn's grant of 620 acres later became known as the suburb of Thornleigh whilst a village sprang up on Constable Horne's land which until the 1890s was known as the village of Hornsby. There was considerable confusion for a number of years as the railway station was named Hornsby Junction and there was the village of Hornsby to the south. Eventually the village was renamed Normanhurst after honored civil engineer, Norman Selfe, who resided on a property where the Normanhurst Boys High School now stands from c. 1894 until his death in 1911.³

Orange orchards were established in the Hornsby Shire as early as 1820. By 1829 these were also established in Thornleigh and Pennant Hills. The original large grants of land were subdivided into smaller parcels of land and farms. Thorn's 640 acre estate was sold and subdivided from the 1850s. Horne's grant was also subdivided and provided land for orchardists.⁴ By the 1860s much of the land had been cleared and was farmed.⁵

It was the coming of the railway that dramatically altered the course of the area's development. The line from Homebush to Waratah (Newcastle) was completed in 1886. Hornsby, Epping, Beecroft and Thornleigh Railway Stations were opened in September 1886. South Hornsby Station (renamed Normanhurst Station in 1900) opened in November 1895. At first the railway provided better access to markets for local growers, however, the area also became a popular location for rural retreats for the well-to-do. Eventually, however, the railway brought surveyors, subdividers, speculators and buildings which drew the area into Sydney's suburban orbit.⁶

Early development followed the railway lines and ridge tops. Grand country homes and suburban residences slowly replaced the local orchards along the main routes. Agents for the emerging subdivisions advertised that the suburb was well elevated and had "crisp mountain air and best soil" and room for a tennis court on every site.⁷

¹ Hornsby Shire Council Website – History of Hornsby Shire.

² Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 84.

³ Hornsby Shire Council Website – History of Hornsby Shire, Pollon F. (ed) *The Book of Sydney Suburbs*, (1988), p. 187-188, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Selfe, Norman (1839-1911). Selfe was an active and innovative engineer who designed and was involved in the construction of major installations for the Australasian Mineral Oil Co., Western Kerosene Oil Co., and the Australian Gaslight Company. He built the first concrete quay wall in Sydney Harbour, designed the first ice-making machines and introduced the first lifts in Sydney in addition to a number of other projects, teaching and training pursuits.

⁴ Perumal Murphy Wu with Terry Kass, *Hornsby Shire Heritage Study* (1993), *Final Report*, p. 5 & *Thematic History*, p. 12.

⁵ Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 84.

⁶ Perumal Murphy Wu with Terry Kass, *Hornsby Shire Heritage Study* (1993), *Final Report*, p. 5 & Hornsby Shire Council Website – History of Hornsby Shire.

⁷ Perumal Murphy Wu with Terry Kass, *Hornsby Shire Heritage Study* (1993), *Final Report*, p. 6 & Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 85.

It is in this context that the nuns of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, possibly attracted by the surrounding bushland and established orchards, selected a site to establish a school for boarders. But development at Normanhurst continued to be slow until after the First World War.

From the time the Shire was incorporated in 1906, the area took on a new identity. Increasingly the population was a suburban one, serviced by a commercial core and railway junction at Hornsby and some light industry areas. Local population growth was matched by road and home building which proceeded in parallel and addition and expansion of utilities, services and infrastructure including Post Offices, Hospitals, Churches and Schools.⁸

The electrification of the Hornsby-Strathfield Railway line in 1929 resulted in cheaper fares which also encouraged closer suburban subdivision. The introduction and eventual dominance of the motor car from the 1920s also allowed urban growth in areas not serviced by the railway.⁹

The effects of the Depression and Second World War curtailed the surge of building of the 1920s, however, by 1945 the area was ready for further expansion which has generally continued to today. In the post-war explosion Normanhurst Boys High School was built and opened in 1958, when land to the west of the railway line was subdivided into smaller lots. Pennant Hills Road was subsequently widened to cater for growth and today remains a major arterial road and spine in the area.¹⁰

2.2 Early development of the site

The School site is part of 320 acres officially granted to Samuel Henry Horne in 1831.¹¹ Horne did not occupy or develop the land which was a roughly triangular shaped parcel starting at Pearce's Corner (Figure 2.1). The land was subdivided into blocks in 1857 and 1864.¹²



Figure 2.1 Parish Map showing Horne's land.

(Source: Department of Lands Parish Map South Colah MN05 14034201)

⁸ Perumal Murphy Wu with Terry Kass, *Hornsby Shire Heritage Study* (1993), *Final Report*, p. 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6 & Hornsby Shire Council Website – History of Hornsby Shire.

¹⁰ Perumal Murphy Wu with Terry Kass, *Hornsby Shire Heritage Study* (1993), *Thematic History*, p. 28 & Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 85.

¹¹ Department of Lands, Primary Application 59554.

¹² Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 84.

By 1888 Horne's original grant comprised of a number of smaller parcels. The school grounds are part of what was Lots 4 and 5 of the estate (**Figure 2.2**).¹³

In 1861 part of Lots 4 and 5 were conveyed to CW Curtis. Part of this land, the western portion of Lot 4, was purchased by Oliver Osborn, a farmer in 1875. In the same year Osborn also purchased Lot 5 from Curtis, taking out a mortgage to the Bank of New South Wales. It is assumed that Osborn farmed the land until his death in 1890, when it was reconveyed to his wife, Mary Anne. The Osborn estate was subsequently subdivided and part sold to pay off the family debts. In an indenture dated 3 November 1896 Katherine Mary Frizelle, Sarah Burke and Mary Ochiltree (Trustees for Church purposes and members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) purchased Lots 1 to 6 of Section C and part of Lot 7, an area comprising 22 acres 1 rood and 4 perches, from Mary Anne Osborn.¹⁴

The Old System title notes that the land was "for the purposes of a Roman Catholic Convent and Convent School to be known and called 'The Loreto Convent'". A plan on the title (**Figure 2.3**) shows the land purchased by the school trustees and also indicates that the site straddled the subdivision line between Lots 4 and 5 (shown dotted). A roadway is shown along western boundary of the site. It is assumed that this is Osborn Road which remains today and recalls the former owners of the land. Lots 1-3 are located along the Pennant Hills Road frontage and bound an area designated as a "Public School". Lots 4-7 make up the remainder of the area illustrated and extend south, along the length of the roadway.¹⁵

By the end of 1897, a substantial building had been constructed on the land and Loreto Normanhurst was ready to accept its first pupils. The new building was set on a hillside surrounded by cleared land and dominated the area for years.¹⁶

It was not until 1906, that the remainder of Lot 4, to the east of the school site, was subdivided and sold. The land was purchased by William Mutch, a builder, who subdivided the land into 67 residential sized allotments divided by a roadway, now known as Mt Pleasant Avenue. Eight of the allotments also featured frontage to Pennant Hills Road. It would appear that the Public School site, shown on the Old System title remained to this time.¹⁷



Figure 2.2 Subdivision of Horne's land c. 1888.

(Source: Department of Lands
DP 976504)

¹³ Department of Lands, DP 976504.

¹⁴ Department of Lands, Old Systems, Book 589 No. 128.

¹⁵ Department of Lands, Old Systems, Book 589 No. 128.

¹⁶ Metzke, M., *Pictorial History of Hornsby Shire*, (2004), p. 84-85.

¹⁷ Department of Lands, Primary Application No. 14432 and DP 6612.

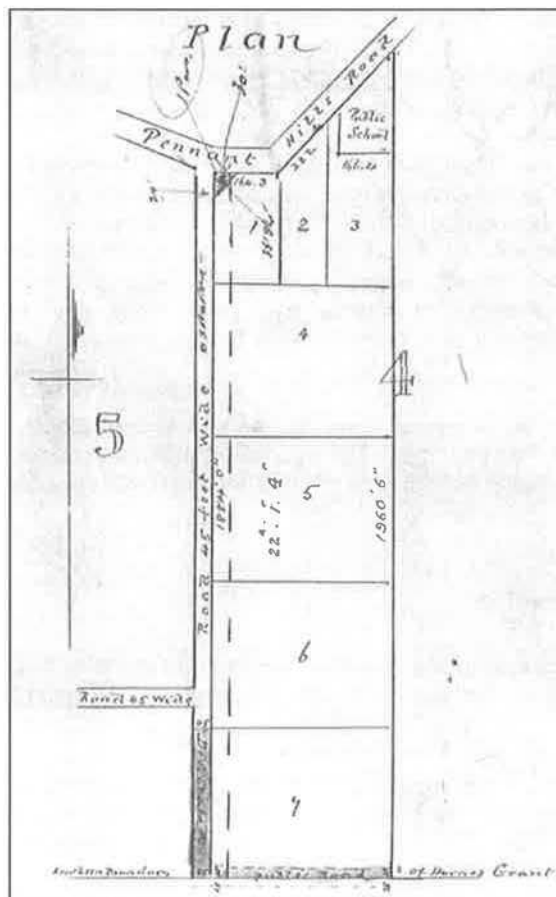


Figure 2.3 Subdivision of part of Osborn's land c. 1890. The school site occupies Lots 1-6 and part of Lot 7, formerly part of Lots 4 and 5 which is also indicated.

(Source: Department of Lands Old Systems Book 589 No. 128)

2.2.1 Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) is a global network which looks to Mary Ward (1585-1645) for their inspiration. Mary's work was inspired by the efforts of Jesuits in Europe to educate the sons of English families in the Catholic tradition and provided the model she adopted to educate women. It seemed she fought a losing battle and she experienced imprisonment as a heretic, betrayal and destruction of her schools and ministries. However, her teachings held and after her death the Bar Convent in York continued her work.

The teachings and traditions subsequently spread to Ireland. The first "Loreto" School was established there in 1821 under the direction of Frances Teresa Ball, who was a former student of the Bar Convent. The name "Loreto" was derived from the town on the eastern coast of Italy and favourite pilgrimage location of Mary Ward who made a number of visits to a shrine around what was claimed to be a relic of the holy house of Nazareth, transported to Italy. It was an Irish contingent led by MM Gonzaga Barry who travelled to Ballarat in response to a request from Bishop O'Connor of Ballarat and one of the richest gold finds in modern times to establish a "sensible school for girls". The IBVM formed its first Australian community at Mary's Mount in Ballarat in 1875, which became the benchmark for all Loreto schools.¹⁸

¹⁸ Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 *A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 1-3.

The Institute spread rapidly throughout mainland Australia and in 1892 the first Loreto day and boarding school in Sydney was opened in Randwick. In 1897 a separate boarding school was opened in Normanhurst, and in 1901 the day school was transferred to Milsons Point to a house in Fitzroy Street. It moved to its present site in Carabella Street in 1907.¹⁹

Historically, education in schools has been the most significant work in which Loreto sisters have engaged. Loreto is now known for its schools in the capital cities, including Loreto College Coorparoo, Brisbane, Loreto Mandeville Hall, Melbourne, Loreto College Marryatville, Adelaide, Loreto Nedlands, Perth, in addition to Normanhurst and Kirribilli in Sydney and Ballarat. Associated schools also include John XXII in Perth and Bayview College Portland in Victoria. St Mary's residential college in Melbourne University is another work traditionally in Loreto sisters' care and Loreto also has long involvement and in higher and tertiary education and training teachers.²⁰

In recent years the leadership at the schools has changed, however, the Loreto traditions and teachings are still integral to the education of their students. The Institute continues to support each of the schools with members also on every School Council and involved with ancillary roles within each of the schools.²¹

2.3 The development of Loreto Normanhurst

In July 1892 MM Gonzaga Barry, an Irish pioneer of the Institute, brought the IBVM to NSW when after some lobbying of the Sydney Catholic Archbishop, Cardinal Moran, she established the first Sydney Loreto in Randwick.²²

Loreto Randwick taught day students and was home to 30 boarders under the charge of MM Dorothea Frizelle. Within 5 years the nuns were looking for larger premises and wanted to build a school for the boarders. In June 1896 Mr Frank Coffee of Wahroonga sent a message to M Gonzaga about land for sale a short distance from his home. He met her and her companion M Dorothea at Wahroonga Station and drove then a short distance to inspect the property. It had been raining, however, as the nuns arrived at the site the sun burst through and created a rainbow, which the nuns took to be a positive sign.²³

John Francis (Frank) Coffee was a variously described as an, "insurance director, writer and nurseryman" also a "merchant" and "publisher". He was the proprietor of Wahroonga's *Universal Nursery* which grew some of the best examples of fruit seen in NSW from imported and local stock. He had strong links with the Catholic Church. As a publisher, he published Cardinal Moran's *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia* in 1896. It is through this association that it is assumed that he became involved and drew attention to the site at Normanhurst, apparently beating Henry Plume who had selected the site for the planned move of Barker College from Springwood.²⁴

On the 14 June, M Gonzaga wrote to Cardinal Moran about the good land at Hornsby which was "about ten minutes drive from the station at Wahroonga, four minutes by train from Hornsby" and how to proceed to procure the £2500 to buy the land, "lest someone else should think of purchasing it". M Gonzaga and M Dorothea subsequently approved plans for a new building prepared by the architect JF Hennessy, whose two daughters were day students at Randwick. The design was for a three storey neo-Gothic building with north facing, two storey semicircular window. The building was costed at about £4000.

¹⁹ Loreto Kirribilli Website – History.

²⁰ Loreto Sisters Australia website, www.loreto.org.au – Works and Education.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 *A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. ix.

²³ Ibid. p. ix.

²⁴ Ramage, I.A., *One Hundred Years Ago Life on Sydney's Upper North Shore*, (1996), p. 95 & *We Still Call Wahroonga Our Home*, (2003), p. 89.

The foundation stone for the building was laid by Cardinal Moran on Sunday, 28 February 1897. The NSW Government Railways put on a special train from Milsons Point to transport guests to the ceremony which included local families, the local Member of the Legislative Council and clergy to support the nuns and their efforts to establish a high quality boarding school for young ladies.²⁵

2.3.1 Construction of the 1897 building

Construction of the building progressed slowly. MM Dorothea and three other nuns moved into the unfinished Convent on 11 October 1897. It was decided that this may have hurried the workmen, who put doors on the building to ensure their safety. A "big" plasterer also slept in the small dairy for their protection, as the site at this time was relatively isolated and "all around there was only bush".²⁶

The nuns camped on the floor and urged the workmen to finish the Chapel first and then St Aloysius dormitory which would house their students.²⁷ In late October, 15 students moved from Randwick to Hornsby as boarders. At this time the nearest railway station was South Hornsby, which was later named Normanhurst, after Norman Selfe who lived near the convent. Classes were initially held in a bush house to escape the noise of hammering as the workmen finished the building.²⁸

In April 1898, Cardinal Moran blessed and formally opened the Convent and presided at a concert given by 35 pupils. At this time the Convent dominated the hill on which it was built and was surrounded by bush and paddocks. The view from the top floor of the building was "unsurpassed" and extended to Parramatta and the mountains over the orchards and orangeries of the area.²⁹

The ground floor of the original building was described as being 16 feet high and contained a large school room, now used as the Reception Room, the children's refectory and the junior classroom. The first floor, with its 15 feet high ceilings, held a dormitory, chapel, community room and sacristy. The second or top floor was used for dressing rooms and dormitory. A kitchen wing, connected to the main building by a covered way contained the nun's refectory, kitchen, scullery, dairy and pantries on the ground floor and a large dormitory on the first floor. An early account described the living conditions;

"Water pipes were put in to the road outside just as the building commenced...There was no electricity. The only means of getting light was by using kerosene.

The children's pantry was outside the back door. Their baths, three of them, were in the top dressing room on the second floor, screened off from each other by strong curtains. Hot water came in from a water heater in the third bathroom which was lit by chips. The tank for these baths was so heavy that the builders had to put the two iron pillars in to the Reception Room to support the roof.

In the little two-storey building at the end of the main building... some choir nuns slept upstairs. MM Dorothea and SM Ignatius Tobin had the two cells. In the room outside, other nuns slept...One nun was in the children's St Aloysius dormitory, another up in the top dormitory where the juniors slept. The nun's had a small room near the laundry for their refectory. The chapel was upstairs over the children's refectory, the sacristy the other side of the corridor...

²⁵ Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 A Century of Memories, (1987), p. x.

²⁶ Ibid., p. x-xi.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁸ Ibid., p. xi.

²⁹ Ibid., p. xi.

*The senior study had large, single desks made at Hordern's with a chair for each desk. The Junior School sat in two rooms with folding door between, which is now a meeting room.*³⁰

It stands to reason that a covered shed, to store vegetables was also located just outside the kitchen. There were also fowl houses and a cow house for milking, stable and piggery.³¹ The community was always made up of nuns who did the teaching, who were called Mother, and nuns who looked after the kitchen, laundry, and in this case, the farm. These nuns were called Sister.³² A small cemetery was also established for the repose of nuns associated with the school in the bushland at the southern section of the site. The first burial dates from 1899.

An account of a visit to the school dated 1911 notes the climb up "a fairly steep hill" from the station to the school gates and "avenue" (driveway) which was bounded by perfumed flowering plants and white blooms including azaleas, and quantities of "graceful spirea and stately watsonias." A "long study hall" was noted looking through the windows of the verandah. The first floor dormitories were described as being "spacious and airy, with white curtained beds" and with far reaching views over "hill and dale" and the Blue Mountains. The view from the southern end of the house showed a "well-cared farm-yard, orchard, and vegetable plot" and "plantation of tall arum lilies". Beyond the orchard lay stretches of "sombre gum forest".³³

The School's early record keeping was erratic. Day pupils' names do not always appear in class roll lists, but references confirm that there were day students and even some boys as early as 1913.³⁴

Pupil numbers grew rapidly over the first two decades from just 15 boarders in 1897 there were 50 boarders and eight day pupils in 1917.³⁵

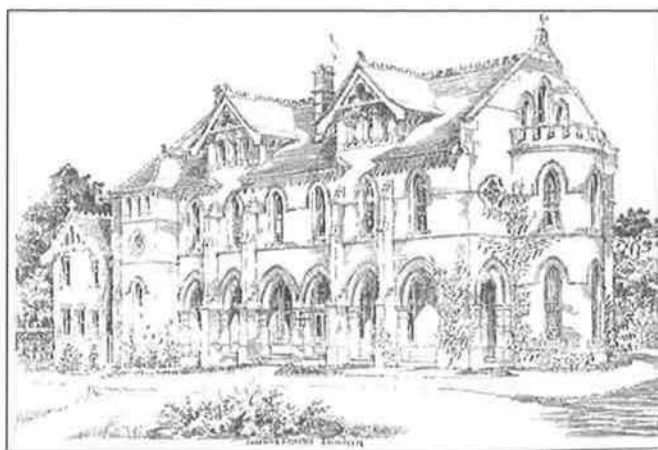


Figure 2.4 Rendering of the original building.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

³⁰ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 9-10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³³ Loreto Normanhurst website, Our Heritage, Carter, OM., "A Visit to Loreto Normanhurst, Sydney" 1911.

³⁴ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

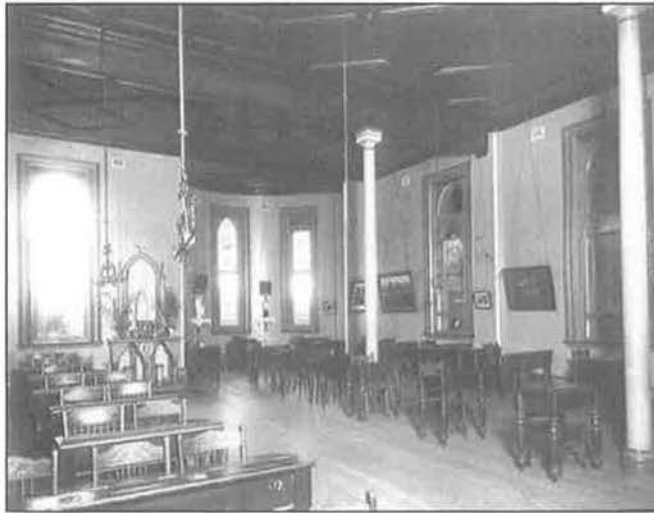


Figure 2.5 The senior study on the ground floor, now the Reception Room, taken prior to 1920. Note the cast iron columns added to support the tanks and baths on the upper floor.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.6 St Aloysius Dormitory occupied the first floor with the chapel. Photograph taken between 1897 and 1910.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

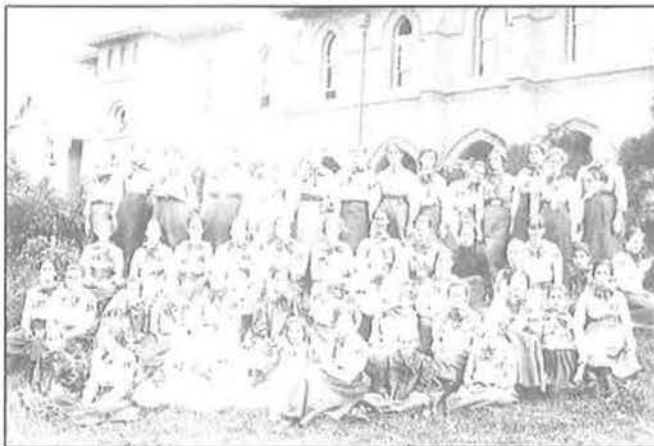


Figure 2.7 View of part of the eastern façade and students, 1901.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

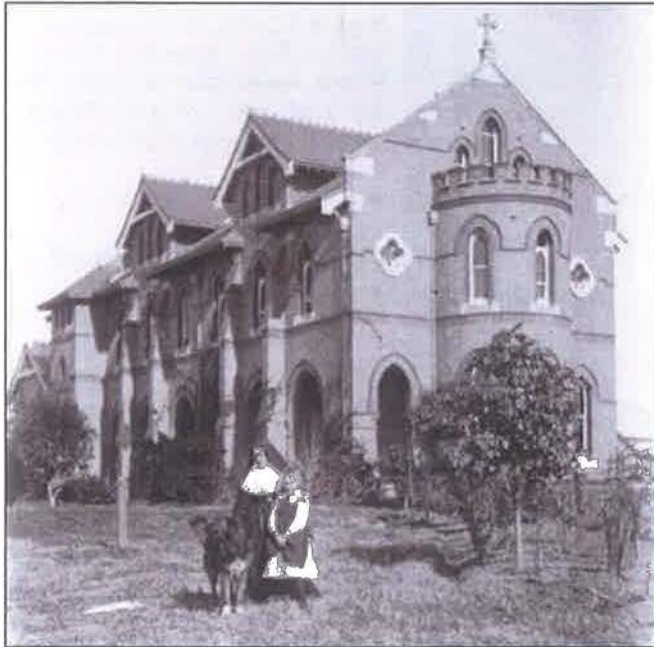


Figure 2.8 View of the building early 1900s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

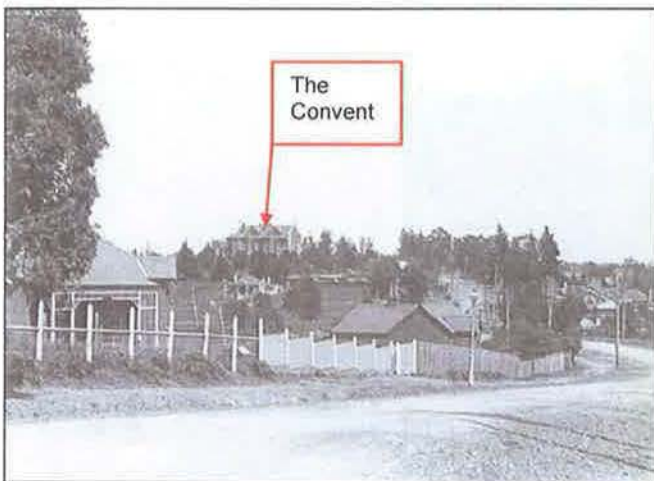


Figure 2.9 The Convent was a prominent feature of Pennant Hills Road for many years. View some time between 1897 and 1920s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

In 1917 Katherine Mary Frizelle, Mary Ochiltree and Barbara Mulhall from Ballarat and Anastasia Mornane, Annie Fallon, and Christina Fagon of Normanhurst purchased over 2 acres of land (Lots 18-24 DP 6612) along the Mt Pleasant Avenue street frontage. The land bounded the eastern boundary of the school and had been part of Lot 4 of the Hornsby Estate subdivided in c. 1906. In the following year the adjacent lots comprising of over three acres (Lots 25-35) were also purchased by the nuns.³⁶ It is not clear if the growing numbers of students prompted the purchase by the representatives of the IBVM, however, it was clear that by the 1920s the School had grown considerably and more accommodation was needed.

³⁶ Department of Lands, Certificate of Titles, Volume 2839 Folio 205, Volume 1760 Folio 29 & Volume 2727 Folio 111.

2.3.2 Early additions - 1920s

The 1920s were growth years for the school which began the decade with 65 boarders and 12 day pupils ranging in school age from Kindergarten to the Leaving Certificate. By the 1920s photographs (**Figures 2.10 & 2.11**) show that a number of timber buildings had been constructed around the convent building to accommodate the growing number of students and activities. It has been noted that one of these structures, a fine kauri pine structure, designed by architect Richard Dennehy was one such building, later moved from the site and used as a hall in Normanhurst.³⁷

The first major extension, however, was in 1920, when the architectural firm of Hennessy & Hennessy were commissioned and contract signed for the construction of a new building.³⁸

Construction began on the 2 August 1920 to provide new classrooms on the ground floor (now Staffrooms 2 & 3) and the Holy Angel's Chapel upstairs. In April 1921 the *Catholic Press* announced that "the additions to the Loreto Convent are on an extensive scale and make it one of the most modern and up to date scholastic edifices in the state. The improvements include new study halls, a new chapel and wide balconies."³⁹

By 1928 the original refectory had been converted into a Science room and a block of music cells had also been built. At the same time the senior's cubicled dormitory became the hall, and a raised stage was added to the space. Some lightweight and weatherboard structures were also transported from Loreto Randwick, after it was sold to the Little Sisters of the Poor. A new wing was also constructed in the late 1920s. Opened in February 1928, it accommodated boarder's cubicles and some new bathrooms above, and on the ground floor the boarder's dining room and shower block.⁴⁰

During this period, broader changes also occurred to the area, with the introduction of new roads, electricity, water and sewerage. Changes in education also resulted in the introduction of the three term academic period, introduced to the School in 1920. The School prided itself with a wide range of subjects and curricula for the pupils which also included physical activities and pursuits such as tennis, cricket and basketball. It would appear that a number of tennis courts were added to the eastern portion of the site during this period.

A photograph dating from the 1920s also indicates that a Grotto, with a statue of Mary, was also added to the gardens to the east of the main building.⁴¹ The structure appears to be a prefabricated element with stone flagged garden bed formed around (**Figure 2.20**). The Grotto remains today, however, a cement rendered structure now surrounds the statue of Mary, with stone flagged paving around.

A later photograph of the Holy Angels Chapel also indicates some modifications and changes including the painting of the ceiling and addition of columns and arches, however, it is not clear when these changes occurred.

³⁷ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23-32.

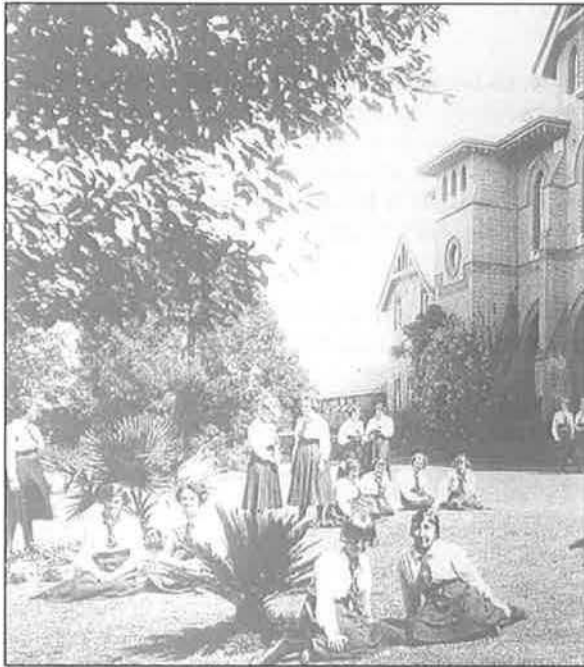


Figure 2.10 Timber buildings (refer mid shot) were added to supplement the original convent prior to the 1921 additions.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.11 View of the convent from Osborn Road. The early timber buildings are visible at right.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.12 View of the building and garden in the early 1920s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.13 The 1921 additions (Holy Angels Wing).

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.14 The Junior study constructed in 1921.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.15 Holy Angels' Chapel 1921.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.16 View of the 1920s dormitory.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.17 View of the building during the 1920s, after works to the original refectory (at the far end of the 1897 building).

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.18 View of the building and gardens during the 1920s. Note the Holy Angels wing to the right of the 1897 building.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

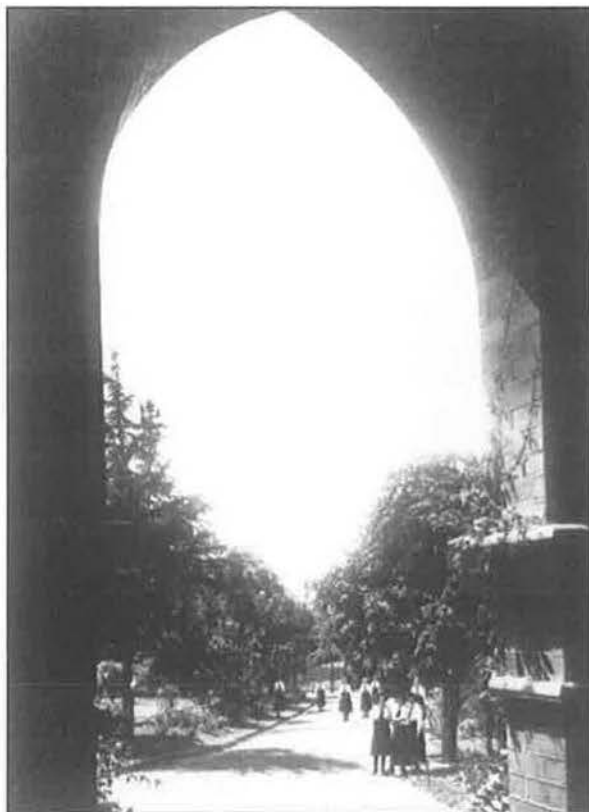


Figure 2.19 View looking down the main driveway and to the gardens during the 1920s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.20 View of the Grotto in the 1920s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.21 View of the farm and orchards behind the building during the 1920s.

The old Sanitarium Hospital is visible in the distance at left.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.22 The 1928 dining room.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.23 A later view of Holy Angels' Chapel. The ceiling has been painted and the area around the altar modified with the addition of columns and decorative arches.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

2.3.2.1 JF Hennessy, Hennessy & Hennessy

John Francis Hennessy (1853-1924) was born on 21 April 1853 probably in Ireland. The family moved to Yorkshire, where he grew up. After passing the Oxford senior local examination in 1868, he was articled to William Perkin & Son, architects and surveyors of Leeds. He completed his training with a number of well known British firms and architects, including noted Gothic Revival architect, William Burges. He completed his apprenticeship in 1875 and was awarded several prizes for his early work.

After six months study in Spain, Hennessy worked in leading architectural offices in New York and Boston, United States of America, and spent two years in Los Angeles as junior partner in Kysor & Hennessy. Believing that Australia offered more opportunity, he arrived in Sydney in October 1880. In the following year he became a draughtsman under the city architect. His ability was soon recognized and he was appointed assistant city architect and designed the Frazer Fountain in Hyde Park (1881) and the Centennial Hall extension of Sydney Town Hall (1883). He resigned in 1884 but in 1887 became consulting architect for the completion of the Centennial Hall. He was also an instructor in architecture at Sydney Technical College. On 25 February 1884 he married Matilda Silk (d.1898) of Delegate.

Hennessy became friends with Joseph Sheerin who became his partner in 1884. Both were devout Catholics, active in Church charities, and friends of Archbishop (Cardinal) Moran. Their designs, a blend of neo-Gothic and Romanesque styles, for St Patrick's College, Manly, and the near-by Episcopal residence were awarded a medal at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London.

Sheerin & Hennessy designed many other Catholic buildings in Sydney and New South Wales country areas, including St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill (1884-94), Santa Sabina College, Strathfield (1894), St Vincent's College, Potts Point (1886), and the Cathedral of St Mary and St Joseph, Armidale (1910-11). These were in addition to numerous commercial premises and the construction of many large suburban residences built to their plans.

Sheerin left the firm in 1912 when Hennessy's son, Jack, joined the company. Hennessy & Hennessy were responsible for completing WW Wardell's plans for St Mary's Cathedral, and designed the crypt. With Sir John Sulman, Hennessy also designed the model garden suburb of Daceyville in 1912. He retired in 1923.

Hennessy lived in Burwood for many years and designed the council chambers (1887) there. He was also an alderman on the local council from 1890 to 1895 and mayor in 1892-93. Registration of Architects began during his presidency of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales in 1911-12. He helped to establish the chair of architecture at the University of Sydney and to secure the recognition of public competition for public buildings. Hennessy was appointed Knight of the Order of St Sylvester by Pope Benedict XV in 1920 for his work in the development of church architecture in Australia. He died of heart disease at his Burwood home on 1 November 1924.

John Francis (Jack) Hennessy junior continued the firm after also spending time overseas training. The firm became Hennessy, Hennessy & Co in 1925, from which time it continued to design a wide variety of buildings, but predominantly ecclesiastical and commercial buildings. Jack died in 1955, as a leading figure in the architectural scene of Australia.⁴²

2.3.3 1930s -1940s

The 1930s were characterised by the effects of the Depression and lead up to the Second World War. The School entered the decade self-sufficient and well prepared for the Depression with its established orchards, vegetable gardens and various live stock. However, the pupil numbers fell, dropping from a high point of 91 boarders in 1928 to 65 in 1931 and down to a low 45 in 1933. A prospectus during this period offered a well devised system of education aimed at the "*mental, moral and physical culture*" of its pupils in addition to consideration of their health and comfort. The document described a well-equipped, modern school that contained within its forty acres, the Convent and grounds comprising golf links, tennis courts, a basketball field, a hockey ground in addition to ample opportunities for long "*rambles*" through beautiful bushland.⁴³

A photograph dating from this time (**Figure 2.24**) shows the entry to the School, from Pennant Hills Road. The construction of the convent also included elegant sandstone posts supporting high wrought iron gates and framed by small sections of low sandstone fence with wrought iron palisade fencing. The adjoining fences along the Pennant Hills frontage appear to be timber paling. An asphalted driveway extends from the frontage and unsealed crossover. There is no kerbing along the roadway at this time.

⁴² Australian Dictionary of Biography – Hennessy, John Francis (1853-1924), RAI NSW Architects Biographical Information, John Francis Hennessy FIANSW, Jack (John Francis) Hennessy Junior FRAIA.

⁴³ Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 A Century of Memories, (1987), p. 39-40.



Figure 2.24 View of the front of the school during the 1930s. The original gates bounded by timber paling fences.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.25 View of the buildings and gardens during the 1930s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

It would appear that the gardens and trees around the 1897 building and additions were well established by this time. The geographical centre of the school was the Green Passage, leading as it did to the dormitories, the Chapel, the Refectory, the nun's quarters, the shower block, the shoe room and into the Hall. During this period it was used for staged concerts and recitals. On St Patrick's Day the orchestra would gather here and play Irish songs before breakfast. The day was usually marked with a celebrated trip to the Roseville Baths in the morning, followed by a cricket match in the afternoon and evening concert. Part of the Green Passage has survived today as the Mary Ward passage.⁴⁴

By the end of the decade student numbers again began to rise, however, not to the pre-Depression high. The decade of the 1940s was clouded by war which affected all aspects of school life from the redesign of the school uniform (concertina pleats, were considered too extravagant for wartime conditions and were replaced with more conservative box pleats) to the addition of brown paper to the inside the nun's refectory windows and piling of sandbags outside.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987)p. 43 & 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

An aerial photograph of the School grounds dated 1943 (**Figure 2.26**) indicates the growth and development of the site to this time. The original 1897 building is shown, now almost dwarfed by the subsequent additions and wings added to the site. Smaller outbuildings and open field are also clearly visible, as are a total of six tennis courts. The Pennant Hills and side boundaries are clearly defined by rows of mature trees. The original eastern site boundary is delineated by rows of well established trees. The land purchased in 1917/1918, along the Mt Pleasant Avenue frontage is also clear. Several tennis courts occupy the northern section of the land. By this time several small, detached buildings had also been constructed on the land. The northern building, closest to the tennis courts, is now part of the Barry Wing and Teresa Ball Centre. The southern most building also now remains and is occupied by Loreto nuns. The north eastern section of the school site also bounds a number of private residential lots and dwellings, which also generally remain today. The surrounding development along Osborn Road and Mt Pleasant Avenue is also clear with a number of houses occupying the residential sized allotments, however, a number of housing lots also remain vacant.

In 1947 the School celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Its 50th year was marked with a number of celebrations including a special Mass and celebration in October. Two new classrooms were also added during this year to accommodate Juniors.⁴⁶ The School population was again on the rise with 35 day girls and approximately 100 boarders. More buildings were again needed.

2.3.4 Further expansion - 1950s

The 1950s were characterised by post-war prosperity and optimism that also resulted in a number of changes to the school. Boarders had traditionally outnumbered day pupils, but in 1958 day pupils numbered 135 whilst there were 120 boarders.⁴⁷

Building operations were the main activity in the early years of the decade. In 1952 an old camphor laurel tree was removed to make way for further additions⁴⁸ and in the same year construction of the "verandah" classrooms commenced.⁴⁹ The new classrooms were opened in 1953 when the foundation stone was laid for a new Chapel.⁵⁰ The *Catholic Weekly* in May 1953 stated that, "The new chapel will be large enough to accommodate the community of nuns and the boarders whose growing numbers have required pruning because of the lack of space in recent years...For the senior girls their present chapel will provide more pleasant cubicles which are a feature of all Loreto boarding schools."⁵¹ The new Chapel (**Figure 2.27**) was opened in 1954.⁵²

During this time a new Novitiate was also being constructed at the school by builders JG Pettigrew. The new building (**Figure 2.28**) was completed in 1956 when the Loreto Novitiate was moved from Loreto Abbey, Mary's Mount, to Normanhurst. This was a time when young women were flocking to novitiates all around the country. At its peak, the novitiate at Normanhurst had 32 novices and postulants. This move resulted in extraordinary growth of the school during the 1960s. An increase of student numbers also occurred in this period gradually catered by an increasing number of lay staff. In 1956 there were 225 students in the school, including 120 boarders. The teaching staff numbered 18, 15 nuns and 3 lay staff. In 1972 there were 700 students, including 138 boarders with 15 members of the IBVM listed as staff nuns together with 14 full-time and 15 part-time teachers in the secondary part of the school and 5 full-time and 2 part-time teachers in the primary.⁵³

⁴⁶ Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 71-72.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁹ Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987) p. 81.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 78.

⁵² Ibid., p. 81.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 5-6 & 80.

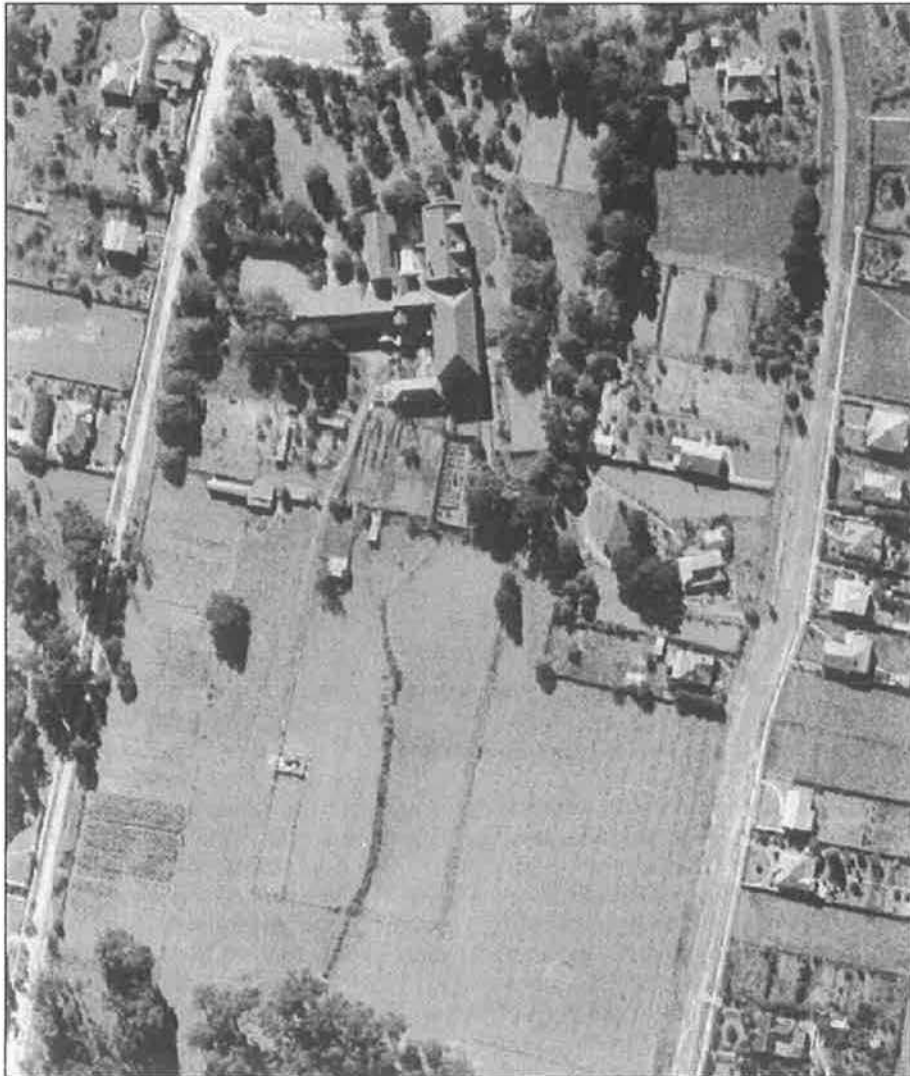


Figure 2.26 1943 aerial photograph of the site. (Source: Department of Lands)



Figure 2.27 The new Chapel, 1953. Note the 1897 building and Holy Angels wing at top right. A single storey building is also visible at right.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.28 New Novitiate and convent, 1956. The photograph also shows that the Grotto, (at left), which had been added to the site by the 1920s.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

A Parents and Friends' Association had been formed in 1949 and was helping to physically build and assist the funding for building projects. Works on the sports field were completed by the fathers, aided by the fund collected by the P&F to this period. The McEvoy Library, donated by a student's (Mary McEvoy) parents, was built by enclosing an inner verandah off the study in 1959. By the end of the decade art classes had extended into a shed constructed over part of the paddock and donated kiln and due to the increased numbers of day students, a tuckshop also commenced operation in 1958. By 1960 there were over 280 students and over half were day pupils. The boarding school remained largely unchanged and the novitiate was flourishing. The school was therefore set for further growth and expansion.⁵⁴

2.3.5 Social and other changes: 1960s – 1970s

The 1960s brought considerable social changes to the world, which were also reflected at the school. It was during this period that some of the religious rituals began fading out and education underwent huge upheaval with the implementation of the Wyndham Scheme between 1965 and 1967. Some of the nuns relinquished their full habits and the day to day schedule of masses, wearing veils for chapel and end of Latin masses were just some of the changes.⁵⁵

Concurrently, the school expanded physically with a new building program. New plans for a much larger Junior School had been discussed for some time. The School had spacious grounds. To the east of the Novitiate lay a detached tract of land occupied by a Mrs and Mrs Hollie which was considered ideal location for the Junior School, with its separate address and entry from Mt Pleasant Avenue. When this house became vacant, steps were taken to realise the school's plans and on completion of the business transactions the new building was commenced. The Hollie's home was incorporated into the new building which as planned, had new entrance from the side street.⁵⁶ The plans for the new Junior School (Barry Wing), Science Theatre, Canteen and Quadrangle were approved by Hornsby Council in October 1962.⁵⁷ The buildings were built, blessed and opened in 1963.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 81 & 85 & Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 89-90.

⁵⁶ Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 14.

⁵⁷ Hornsby Council, 166/82.

⁵⁸ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), 94.

The introduction of the Wyndham System led to further discussions and over the next two years it was deemed necessary that a new Senior School equipped with Science Labs, classrooms, hall and Library must be erected.⁵⁹ A number of older buildings, some of which had been transported to the site from Loreto Randwick, were demolished to make way for new buildings.

Additions to the school were approved by Hornsby Council in May and June 1964.⁶⁰ Work was undertaken during the Christmas break of 1964, with new building (the Kendall Wing) completed in 1965. The Novitiate that had been opened for novices and postulants in 1956, became the Mary Ward Wing and was converted into classrooms and accommodation for senior girls, who were all given a room to themselves. The novitiate moved to Melbourne in 1969.⁶¹ The various school departments also expanded. The expansion of the Loreto Art Department culminated with the donation of two paintings from John Coburn, whose daughter attended the school, and a work by artist Reinis Zuster.⁶²



Figure 2.29 Some of the old buildings which had come from Loreto Randwick were demolished to make way for the new buildings completed in 1965.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.30 The 1956 Novitiate became the Mary Ward Wing with senior accommodation and classrooms in 1969.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

By the end of the 1970s the school was more relaxed with less emphasis on outdated religious conventions and division between the day students and boarders. The boarders continued to be a close-knit group, however, life in the dormitories, especially the Mary Ward Wing was now a home away from home with telephones, televisions, common rooms and kitchen facilities. The boarders did not have to attend Mass every morning and eventually they could have a bagged lunch so they could eat with the day students.

⁵⁹ Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Hornsby Council, 841/64 and 1142/64.

⁶¹ Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 *A Century of Memories*, (1987), 94 & Loreto Normanhurst 1967 Annual, p. 14.

⁶² Loreto Normanhurst, 1897-1997 *A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 89-97.

The numbers of day students had more than doubled the numbers of boarders and there was a new, easier relationship between the two groups. By this time the School was extended to Year 12 and more physical changes included the construction of the three storey new Resource Centre (Figure 2.31), opened in 1973. The “state-of-the-art” building included a new library, science laboratories, lecture theatre and studio.⁶³



Figure 2.31 The Resource Centre opened in 1973.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.32 The Resource Centre opened in 1973.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

2.3.6 1980s – 1990s

In April 1980 the new oval opened. This was a more ambitious scheme and built upon the works of the P&F in the 1960s. The money for the oval had been raised through the Outreach Appeal that had started some three years earlier. This work was followed by a new Gymnasium. The new building, designed by Kevin J Curtin & Partners, also included change rooms and canteen and was approved by Council in June 1982.⁶⁴ The new gymnasium, completed in 1983, provided a wider range of facilities and catered for a wide range of sports, in all weather, on site. As the school has grown, celebrations of Mass have moved from the Chapel to the Hall to the Gym.⁶⁵

Perhaps the most notable change to the school during this period came in 1982 with the closure of the Junior School.

⁶³ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 108.

⁶⁴ Hornsby Council 166/82.

⁶⁵ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. 126-127 & p. xiii.

The Junior School had traditionally been an important part of the school. At its peak in the 1960s and 1970s it accommodated about 220 students. Its closure in 1982 also marked the final year of the Junior boarders.⁶⁶

In 1991 many buildings were damaged by the storm that hit the North Shore in January. Many buildings were damaged beyond repair by the storm and fallen trees and branches. Some of the older, compressed fibrous cement buildings were removed. One, Babthorpe, was replaced by a car park.⁶⁷ The Gymnasium also underwent some refurbishment during the 1990s. The Mornane Wing was constructed in 1991 and in the following year additions to the Birrane Wing, which was constructed in c. 1982, and car park at the entry of the school, including entrance canopy were also completed.



Figure 2.33 The Oval in 1980.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)



Figure 2.34 The Gymnasium opened in 1983.

(Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

The physical changes that had occurred by this time are illustrated by an aerial photograph included in the 1994 School Annual (**Figure 2.35**). The varying roof and building forms indicate the growth and development of the site and incorporation of earlier buildings. The original boundary lines are also blurred by the alteration of the landscape features, trees, gardens and plantings.

In 1995 Howard Tanner and Associates completed a report on the heritage items. The study found that the 1897 building and surrounding landscape is the most significant feature of the landscape at Loreto Normanhurst. Specifically:

⁶⁶ Loreto Normanhurst, *1897-1997 A Century of Memories*, (1987), p. xii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

*"The original 1897 building and its landscape setting sit on a knoll which dominates this section of Pennant Hills Road. The site was obviously chosen for its landscape prominence, with distant views to the south and west. The historic gates, drive and parkland, with a glimpse of the 1897 building provide a key visual impression, in particular for vehicles heading west towards Thomleigh."*⁶⁸

A number of recommended policies for the management of these items were included in the report which also highlighted the band of indigenous forest and burial ground in the southern portion of the site, which was regarded as being of regional or state significance.

Council records also indicate that the School continued to be diligent in the management of the grounds and planting, and had high regard for the remnant native bushland occupying the southern portion of the site. A letter from the School's Grounds Supervisor dated August 1997 refers to the approved removal of some trees and proposed replacement plan. In addition the letter refers to implementation of a bush management strategy developed in association with the National Trust.⁶⁹ It is not known when the plan was first established, however, it is assumed that the bushland management was considered to be of some importance to the Trust, particularly as the cemetery, which was classified by the Trust in 1981, is located within the bushland area. It is assumed that the fencing along the south eastern and south western portions of the site were added as part of the strategy and possibly as a result of an act of vandalism which occurred at the cemetery in late 1989/ early 1990, when two grave sites were desecrated.⁷⁰

In the lead up to the school's centenary in 1997 a Master Plan was developed for the site in anticipation of future growth and development. One of the aims was to continue to provide seven-day-a-week benefits for the School boarders from the existing facilities and development of new resources and housing to be built for them under the Masterplan. Howard Tanner and Associates were engaged to design new buildings and adapt old ones to give the school a balance between the future educational needs and facilities. Part of this plan was to provide a classroom where a variety of learning styles are conducted simultaneously.⁷¹

In 1997 Howard Tanner and Associates Pty Ltd submitted a Development Application to Hornsby Council for the addition a new information resource centre and general purpose learning areas to the existing School. In the same year in accordance with the Masterplan, an application for the erection of a swimming pool complex and alteration and additions to the existing Gymnasium was proposed and consent given by Council.⁷²

The first lay Principal was appointed in 1994 and other changes undertaken during this period include the construction of the Principal's Residence in the south eastern section of the site (some time after 1995) and addition of car parks, landscaping and upgrade of some fencing along the Mt Pleasant Avenue and frontage. One of the clay tennis courts was also removed c.1994 and the Grounds and Maintenance area located in the north western section of the School was created in 1997 (refer to aerial photographs **Figure 2.35** and **Figure 2.36**).

It is assumed that works undertaken during this period include the relocation of the original stone entry gates and fence and construction of the brick and palisade fencing along the School frontage as result of the widening of Pennant Hills Road. The addition of the pedestrian footbridge over Pennant Hills Road also may have required some landscaping works to the north western section of the site.⁷³

⁶⁸ Loreto Normanhurst Draft Landscape Masterplan Report (28 September 1999), p. 3.

⁶⁹ Hornsby Shore Council, File No. SC 0059 Part Number 2.

⁷⁰ Hornsby Local Studies, Loreto Normanhurst file, Northern District Times article, *Ghouls desecrate grave: nun's skull stolen*, 10/1/1990, p. 1.

⁷¹ Hornsby Local Studies, Loreto Normanhurst File, Northern Herald, (16/5/1996), *"Traditions form solid ground"*, p. 28.

⁷² Hornsby Council, File No. SC 0059 Part 2, 455/97 and 456/97.

⁷³ Relocation of gates noted by Loreto Normanhurst staff. The exact dates for these works, however, could not be verified.



Figure 2.35 Aerial photograph of the site from the 1994 School Annual.

2.3.7 2000- present

The school has continued to evolve to the present. The Swimming Pool complex and major additions to the 1970s Resource Centre were undertaken during 1999. The Swimming Centre, which contains an eight lane, 25 metre pool with tiered seating for about 150 spectators and glazed lobby, and major additions to the Learning Centre, which includes the Curran Theatre, five new classrooms and a prayer room were opened together by Governor General Sir William Deane in February 2000.⁷⁴ The Swimming Centre which cost about \$5 million, replaced the existing grounds and maintenance sheds located in this area seen in the 1994 aerial photograph (Figure 2.36).

Since that time a number of drainage and clearing works have been undertaken in the southern portion of the site. Further works were undertaken to the Oval area, including the addition of a staff car park along the Osborn Road frontage, next to the Oval. Additions to the Barry Wing and creation of the Teresa Ball Centre, which also incorporates the former Hollie house, were officially opened in June 2006. Concern for the safety of school students has also resulted in the recent addition of new fencing and boom gate to the carpark adjacent to the building. Other works include refurbishment of the 1960s Kendall Wing and creation of the Deirdre Rofe Centre. The interior of the Deirdre Rofe centre was recently refurbished to provide open learning areas, in line with current educational philosophies and the principles of the Masterplan developed for the school in 1997.

⁷⁴ Hornsby Local Studies, Loreto Normanhurst File, newspaper article, "Aquatic Centre Opened".



Figure 2.36 A more recent aerial photograph of the site (c. late 2005) indicates the present configuration and layout of the school and additions. (Source: Department of Lands)

3.0 Physical evidence

The aim of this chapter is to describe the site and buildings in detail in order to gain an understanding of the existing place. The place itself is a good source of information on the number of changes that have been carried during its lifetime. This chapter builds on the documentary evidence and where possible will note the physical changes that have taken place over time.

3.1 The context

The site is located on the southern side of Pennant Hills Road, Normanhurst, in the block bounded by Mount Pleasant Avenue to the east and Osborn Road to the west. Pennant Hills Road is a busy, arterial road and wide dual carriageway that extends along the original ridge and high point in the area and is characterised by high fences, buffer planting, trees and gardens and a variety of residential, institutional and commercial buildings along its length. A concrete and steel pedestrian footbridge has been constructed over the road in front of the school. Normanhurst Primary and Normanhurst Boys High School are located on the northern side of the road, opposite and to the north east of the site.

In contrast, Mt Pleasant Avenue and Osborn Road are relatively quiet, residential streets characterised by one and two storey residential development generally dating from the twentieth century. The buildings are generally setback from the street frontage with gardens and planting in the area between. The built context in both streets is enhanced by dense bushland and green setting.

The school site occupies most of the block bounded by Pennant Hills Road, Mt Pleasant Avenue and Osborn Road. Residential development bounds the southern portion of the site and several substantial residential homes are bounded by the north eastern section of the site, at north western end of Mt Pleasant Avenue.



Figure 3.1 Pennant Hills Road is a busy arterial road that is characterised by palisade fences on brick bases, trees and planting that provide a buffer and enhance the varied built environment along its length.

A concrete and steel pedestrian footbridge is suspended over the road at the north western corner of the school.



Figure 3.2 View from the original gates of the school across Pennant Hills Road. The northern side of the street is also bounded by mature and dense green belt.



Figure 3.3 Detail of the footbridge over Pennant Hills Road in front of the school.



Figure 3.4 In contrast to Pennant Hills Road, Mt Pleasant Avenue is a relatively quiet dual carriageway, with one and two storey residences dating from the 20th century lining the north western and eastern side of the street, opposite the school.



Figure 3.5 The western side of Osborn Road, opposite the school also features a mix of one and two storey residential buildings. The street features traffic lights at its intersection with Pennant Hills Road and provides the only access and egress for a number of connecting streets.



Figure 3.6 The school grounds and built development on the western side of Osborn Road are enhanced by a number of mature native trees and bushland setting. Number of cultural plantings have also been planted along the street frontages

3.2 Loreto Normanhurst

3.2.1 The site

The school site is a long, irregularly shaped site which extends south from Pennant Hills Road. The Pennant Hills Road frontage follows the curve of the road and is reduced by private properties addressing the north western side of Mt Pleasant Avenue. The remainder of the site extends between Osborn Road and Mt Pleasant Avenue which continues past the south eastern corner of the site and accesses a number of private residential properties which are located along the southern site boundary.

The site generally falls away from the Pennant Hills Road frontage. The northern section of the site is elevated above the Pennant Hills Road street level.

The bulk of the school buildings and elements are located in the higher, northern portion of the site. Remnant bushland which envelopes the Loreto Cemetery is located along the southern site boundary. The Principal's Residence is also located in south eastern section of the site. Open grassed area, the Oval, which was formalised in the 1980s, and a staff car park occupy the area between and remainder of the southern half of the site.

Several paths and walking tracks traverse the remnant bushland which occupies a considerable portion of the southern section of the site. Trees and planting generally continue along the Osborn Road boundary and part of the Mt Pleasant Avenue frontage.

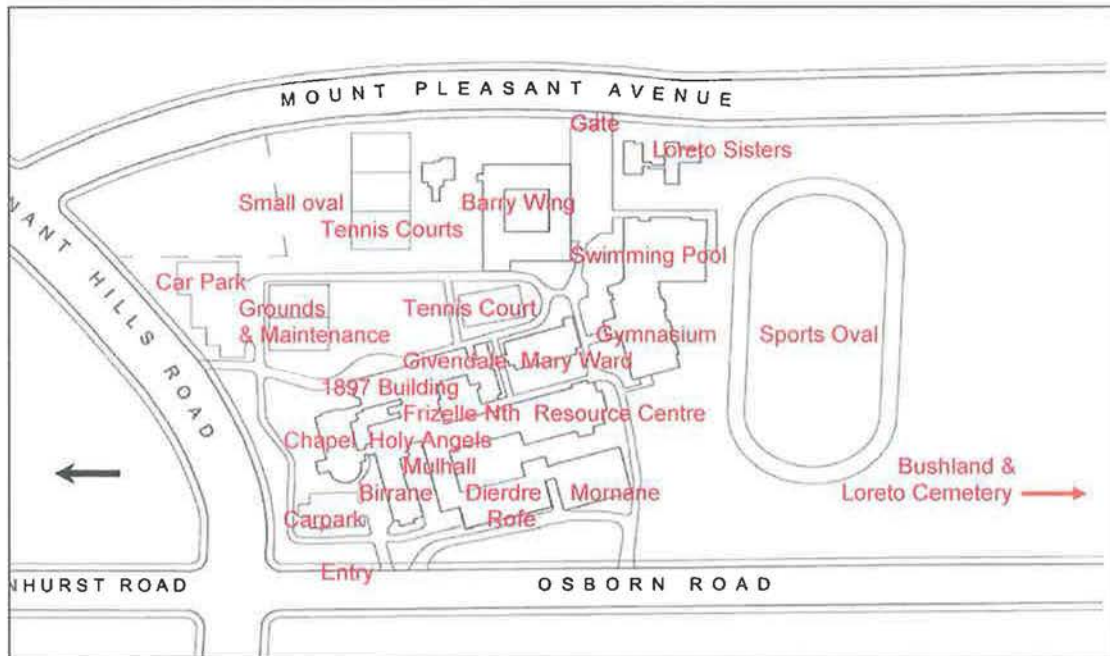


Figure 3.7 Site plan. (Source: Loreto Normanhurst)

3.2.1.1 Street frontages, fences, gates & entries

The Pennant Hills Road frontage is setback from the street kerb and features the original sandstone posts and surround with wrought iron gates. The gates are flanked by palisade fencing on face brick base which date from a later period and were constructed in at least two stages. The Pennant Hills Road frontage is also defined by mature and dense plantings and trees that provide a buffer from the busy roadway.

The original gates and associated sandstone fence curve around and frame a concrete and paved crossover which extends from the Pennant Hills Road kerb to an asphalted driveway. The driveway extends to the 1897 building and also provides access to a car park and maintenance depot located in the north eastern corner of site.

The north western section of the Pennant Hills Road frontage also features a pedestrian access and landscaped access to the footbridge. The north western corner has no fencing and is defined by a planting and high rock ledge.



Figure 3.8 The original sandstone gateway located on the Pennant Hills Road frontage. The gates are setback from street kerb and retain what it assumed to be the original wrought iron palisade fencing and gates.



Figure 3.9 An asphalted driveway extends from the gates to the original main building. The driveway is flanked by two sandstone piers with gothic styled carved details and capping. The piers support the driveway wrought iron gates and separate pedestrian gate (at left). The posts and gates are framed by a wrought iron palisade fence on a sandstone base which also features decorative mouldings and religious motifs.



Figure 3.10 Detail of one of the wrought iron gates which features religious motifs and detailing.



Figure 3.11 The eastern section of the original gateway and fence.



Figure 3.12 Detail of the stone fence.



Figure 3.13 Detail of one of the posts. The capping appears to be original with a patina of age. The shaft and base may have been replaced and differ in colour. The piers appear to be sound, however, some of the decorative detail is missing and some of the stone on the capping has been chipped and is fretting.

The shaft features the original name plate with "Loreto Convent IBVM".



Figure 3.14 The western section of the original gateway and fence. The stone appears to be sound, however, some damage, chipping, fretting and discolouration is evident along its length.



Figure 3.15 The junction of the eastern sandstone fence and later brick and palisade fence. The newer palisade fencing, which sits on a low, brown brick base connects to what is assumed to be the original wrought iron work.



Figure 3.16 The junction of the original sandstone fence and more recently constructed fence extending along the western section of the Pennant Hills Road boundary. The blond brick base of the fence forms a retaining wall along this section of the site.

Early photographs indicate that timber paling fences previously flanked the original sandstone entry.

In addition to the private entries to the Nuns' and Principal's residences, there is only one major access point and vehicular entry along the Mt Pleasant Avenue boundary. This is now defined by a modern boom gate and palisade fence on face brick base, which was recently added to the site. The gate accesses a sealed car park.

The fence along the Mt Pleasant Avenue frontage varies, with of steel post and mesh on concrete retaining wall/base, located along the northern section of the boundary. Other fencing types along this frontage includes steel pipe (no mesh) on low face brick base and simple star picket with some timber posts and wire along the central section and southern part of the fence line. The fencing appears to have been in place for some time and is in varying condition with some repairs and maintenance visible.

The Osborn Road boundary now features a number of vehicular driveways which generally access visitor and staff car parking areas and service areas. The main vehicular entry is located at the northern end, near the intersection of Osborn and Pennant Hills Roads. This provides access to the front visitor and staff car park and front office. Further south are two service entries. A new driveway has also recently been constructed further south along the Osborn Road frontage to access a new sealed car park located adjacent to the Oval.

The northern section of the Osborn Road boundary is generally delineated by landscaping, stone flagging and planting and some low steel mesh fencing. Steel pipe and mesh fencing of various heights and ages generally extends from the service entries. This fencing is in varying condition, some damage and vandalism is evident to some of the fence at the south western end of the fence line, bounding the bushland.



Figure 3.17 The fencing and retaining wall located along the north eastern section of the site.



Figure 3.18 The steel pipe fence on brick base along the central section of the Mt Pleasant Avenue boundary.



Figure 3.19 The modern palisade on face brick fence adjacent to the only vehicular entry on the Mt Pleasant Avenue frontage.



Figure 3.20 Part of the fencing along the south eastern section of the site.



Figure 3.21 The main vehicular driveway and entry from Osborn Road, located close to the intersection with Pennant Hills Road.



Figure 3.22 One of the service entries also located along the north western boundary which is delineated by a mixture of stone flagging and planting and low fencing.



Figure 3.23 Planting and steel pipe and mesh fence are located along the south western boundary along Osborn Road. The concrete driveway accessing the new car park adjacent to the Oval is just visible at right.



Figure 3.24 Typical fencing along the south western boundary along Osborn Road.



Figure 3.25 Some of the fencing located along the south western Osborn Road boundary has been vandalised.

3.2.1.2 Landscaping, trees and site elements

The character of the site and landscape varies from end to end. The northern section of the site, which contains most of the school buildings has typically been modified, developed and continually upgraded to suit the growing requirements of the school. The northern section features landscaping and planting associated with various phases of the site's development and the construction and use of the buildings with cultural plantings and landscape elements dominating, as opposed to the southern end which features remnant bushland and native trees and more "natural" environment.

The site landscaping includes gardens and "playground" areas, including elements such as tennis courts and the Oval, to infrastructure including driveways, roads and car parks. A network of paths and access ways in addition to quadrangles and passages that have been formed between the buildings are significant features of the site.

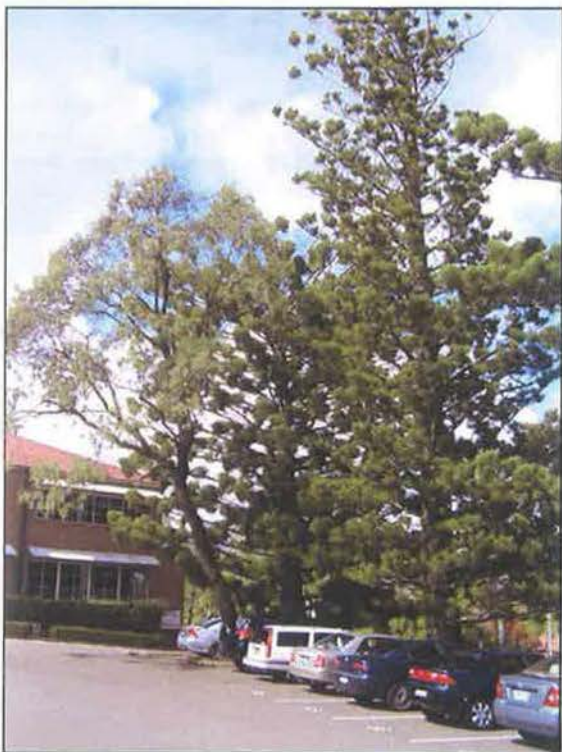


Figure 3.26 A number of mature pines and specimen trees bound the visitor and staff car park in the north western section of the site.



Figure 3.27 The garden in the north western corner of the site comprises of more recently planted shrubs and flowering plants amongst the mature trees that generally camouflage the access to the footbridge over Pennant Hills Road.



Figure 3.28 The original access driveway from Pennant Hills Road is flanked by concrete kerbing and gardens which feature a dense cover of trees and shrubs dating from all phases of the site's development.

The driveway forks and accesses the maintenance area located in the north eastern section of the site.



Figure 3.29 The "front" gardens and landscape generally features cultural plantings and trees associated with the construction of the buildings and later development of the site.

Period planting includes mature Brush Box, Canary Island Pines, Bunya Pine, Norfolk Island Pine, Hoop Pines, Butia Palm, Pencil Pines and Camphor Laurels.



Figure 3.30 A number of the mature trees relate to the initial construction of the building or early additions.



Figure 3.31 The “front” garden is traversed by paved and asphalted paths and steps and also includes a rose garden around the Chapel.



Figure 3.32 Lawn and mature trees to the north “in front” of the 1897 building.



Figure 3.33 The driveway extending from the Pennant Hills Road frontage accesses a car park located to the east of the 1897 building. This section appears to have been recently resealed.

A Grotto is also located east of the building and just beyond this car park.



Figure 3.34 The Grotto located to the immediate east of the original building features a statue of Mary and stone flagging. It has been part of the site for some time – it is visible in a photograph dating from the 1920s.



Figure 3.35 Gardens and landscaping, including early clay tennis court, located in the north eastern section of the site. The Grounds and Maintenance area was created in 1997.



Figure 3.36 The gardens and landscaping in the north eastern section of the site also include a number of mature specimen trees and planting including several pines. The tennis courts added later in the site's development are just visible mid shot.



Figure 3.37 An open lawn (small oval) is located in the area bounding the private residences addressing the north western section of Mt Pleasant Avenue. This area is in turn bounded by concrete paths and gardens around the tennis courts.



Figure 3.38 The later tennis Courts located adjacent to the Mount Pleasant Avenue street frontage.



Figure 3.39 The sealed car park accessed from Mt Pleasant Avenue.



Figure 3.40 View looking south across the central open area and Oval.



Figure 3.41 View of the Oval looking south from the school buildings.



Figure 3.42 A new car park has recently been added adjacent to the Oval.

A number of stabilisation works have been undertaken around the Oval and southern section of the car park including the addition of a wetland drain.



Figure 3.43 A number of landscaped passages and quadrangles with planting, seating and even statues are also located between the buildings.

3.2.1.3 The Cemetery and associated bushland setting

The Cemetery, which dates from the 1890s, is located in the remnant bushland in the southern section of the site. Its location is approximately equidistant from the two side boundaries and is about 11 metres long by about 10 metres wide. A clearing surrounds the space which is enclosed by an ashlar sandstone wall ranging from approximately 1 to 1.5 metres high. A stone path divides the cemetery and is flanked by two rows of cast iron Celtic crosses. A niche at the southern end retains the remnants of another cross. A number of walking tracks have been formed through the surrounding bushland which contains significant eucalypts and native trees. The cemetery is not visible from the surrounding streets or school site.



Figure 3.44 The cemetery is nestled in the native bushland located at the southern section of the site. A number of walking tracks traverse the area and have been formed to access the cemetery.



Figure 3.45 A sandstone flagged path divides the cemetery into two, with each section featuring two rows of cast iron Celtic crosses. Three marble tablets also remain, identifying the resting place of three of the pioneer IBVM nuns. The earliest burial is 1899. A niche in the southern wall contains the remains of another cross.



Figure 3.46 The eastern section of the cemetery.