



## Heritage Citation



### Former Pius XII Seminary: St Paul's Domain

#### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Australian Catholic University
<b>Addresses</b>	At 1058 Nudgee Road, Banyo, Queensland 4014
<b>Type of place</b>	School, University, Defence site
<b>Period</b>	World War II 1939-1945
<b>Style</b>	Romanesque
<b>Lot plan</b>	L554_SL1601; L244_M31102; L4_RP173812; L243_M31102
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — April 2011

**Construction** Roof: Tile;  
Walls: Face brick

**People/associations** Hennessy, Hennessy and Co. (Architect)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social

The former Pope Pius XII Seminary was opened by Archbishop James Duhig in April 1941. The Interwar Romanesque cream brick building was constructed at a time of intense building construction by the Catholic Church in Brisbane under Archbishop Duhig. The design of the seminary is attributed to architectural firm Hennessy, Hennessy and Co. and includes the striking former seminary building, a former convent and staff quarters. During the Second World War the bell tower in the main building was used by the Australian Army as an observation tower. After training novice priests for 60 years, the seminary closed in 2001 due to a steep decline in enrolments. It was then refurbished and reopened in 2003 as part of the Australian Catholic University campus.

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## History

The Banyo area was first settled and farmed by Europeans in the 1840s but was known as Clapham Junction until it was officially named Banyo until 1898. The Sandgate railway line went through Banyo from 1885 but a platform was not established until 1912. The area remained semi-rural until World War II.

The period in which the seminary was constructed saw an unprecedented amount of property acquisition and building by the Catholic Church in Brisbane. Under the leadership of Archbishop Duhig (Archbishop of Brisbane 1917-1965) many new and important building schemes were undertaken. "Duhig the builder", a term of endearment used by his contemporaries, was renowned for his desire to obtain prime sites (often on the apex of hills) throughout Brisbane on behalf of the Catholic Church for the construction of new churches, schools and hospitals. His biography stated "He built in bricks and mortar on a scale unprecedented". Throughout his career Duhig was responsible for building over four hundred major buildings in Brisbane.

From as early as 1927, Archbishop Duhig expressed the desire for the establishment of a seminary in Queensland that would provide training for novice priests. The Catholic Church acquired 128 acres of the O'Quinn Estate in Banyo on a hill known locally as 'Beehive Farm' on which to construct the seminary. Construction commenced in November 1939.

The seminary, described as Interwar Romanesque in style, was designed by successful architectural firm, Hennessey, Hennessey and Co. The firm was responsible for the design of many important Brisbane buildings such as the University of Queensland St. Lucia Campus, and favoured by the Catholic Church, designing Corpus Christi Church, Nundah; the Redemptorist Monastery, Mitchelton; the Good Shepherd Home, Mitchelton; Villa Maria in Fortitude Valley and the never completed Holy Name Cathedral also in Fortitude Valley.

On 19 November 1939 the foundation stone was laid with the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Reverend John Panico giving the blessing. The Courier Mail reported:

Archbishop Duhig said yesterday that this would be the first seminary in Queensland and it would mean that candidates for the priesthood would not have to go South...The building which will be mainly of two storeys, will be constructed with cream bricks...Altogether the building is modern in layout and completely self-contained".<sup>1</sup>

The seminary incorporated traditional design elements for Catholic seminaries including dormitories, a chapel, cloister, educational facilities and a separate convent. The Sisters' role within the seminary was the management of the domestic duties carried out by a small staff. A house for the staff and a caretaker's cottage was also built on the site. The convent and staff quarters remain. However, the caretaker's cottage does not.

On 27 April 1941 Archbishop James Duhig officially opened the St Pius XII Seminary. The seminary was named in honour of the then current serving Pontiff. A crowd of 10,000 people attended the opening ceremony, including the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party Frank Forde, the State Minister for Health and Home Affairs Ned Hanlon, the archbishops of Sydney, Adelaide and Hobart and the Apostolic Delegate to Australia the Most Reverend John Panico. The new seminary cost approximately £80 000 and provided accommodation for 80 students.

An important feature of the seminary was the use of Benedict Stone for the main entrance dressings and several sculptures in the main building. Benedict Stone was a coloured concrete block manufactured in a process of mixing cement and crushed Brisbane tuff (porphyry stone). Duhig's company, Benedict Stone Queensland Pty Ltd, was established prior to the planned construction of the Holy Name Cathedral in Fortitude Valley. The latest technology in concrete block making machines was imported from the United States of America. The cathedral was never built. However, the concrete blocks were used for several building projects in Brisbane at this time, including the seminary.

During the Second World War, the seminary's tower was used as an observation platform, manned around the clock by the Australian Army. The outbreak of the Pacific War on 8 December 1941 meant that Brisbane could face aerial attack or seaborne raids. Japanese tactics in the Malayan Campaign had included infiltrating Allied defences by inserting Japanese troops by small boats or barges along isolated stretches of the coast or along river ways.

Built on Beehive Farm hill, the seminary had commanding views across to Moreton Bay. In 1942, permission was sought from Archbishop Duhig and the seminary's Rector (Head), Father Vincent Cleary, for the Australian Military Forces (AMF or militia) to establish an observation post in the seminary's bell tower. The army observation post had clear views of a section of Moreton Bay but more importantly to the entrance to nearby Schultz's Canal that fed into Downfall Creek and was connected by an army telephone line to the Headquarters of Brisbane Fortress Command located at St. Laurence's College, South Brisbane.

From 1959 to the late 1960s several extensions were made to the seminary building to cope with increased enrolments. A new wing was completed at a cost of \$600 000 and included further accommodation and a new library. The library was named 'The Father Owen Hayes Library' and was considered to be very modern for the time.

The seminary closed in 2001. During 2002, the building was refurbished as the centrepiece of the Australian Catholic University campus that opened on the site in March 2003.

# Statement of significance

## Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

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### Historical

#### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as the former Pope Pius XII Seminary was built at a time when the Catholic Church in Brisbane was constructing buildings throughout the city on an unprecedented scale under the leadership of Archbishop Duhig.

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### Representative

#### CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as a Roman Catholic seminary designed under the Catholic Church's specifications for seminaries, Pope Pius XII Seminary incorporates these elements such as a cloister, a chapel, accommodation and educational facilities and a separate convent.

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### Aesthetic

#### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a late interwar seminary designed in the Interwar Romanesque style, the substantial cream brick building holds a landmark position at the apex of a hill over-looking Moreton Bay.

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### Social

#### CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as Queensland's first Catholic seminary, the former Pope Pius XII Seminary was the centre for theological learning and training for novice priests in Queensland from 1941 until 2001 and as such has a strong association with Queensland's Catholic clergy.

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## References

1. *The Courier Mail*, Saturday 18 November 1939, p10
  2. Buchanan Architects. ACU Banyo Campus – Former Pius XII Seminary. Heritage Listing Citation. August 2003
  3. Lyneham, Megan, "Who was James Duhig?" The University of Queensland, University Archives, October, 2002
  4. Queensland Post Office Directories
  5. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
  6. Apperly, Richard, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. North Ryde: Angus & Robertson, 1989
  7. *The Courier Mail*, Monday 28 April 1941, p6
  8. *The Courier Mail*, Wednesday 31 May 1939, p3
  9. *The Courier Mail*, Monday 24 February 1941, p6
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**Note:** This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner,

before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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