

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

St Agatha's Catholic Church (former), constructed 1928-29, located at 150-156 South Gippsland Highway, Cranbourne is significant.

Features which contribute to the significance of the place include the row of eight Bhutan Cypress Trees (located at 150-156 and part of 158 South Gippsland Highway).

Features which do not contribute to the significance of the place include the non-original alterations and additions to the church, new buildings, hard landscaping, carparking and fencing.

How is it Significant?

St Agatha's Catholic Church (former) is of local historical and aesthetic to the City of Casey.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, St Agatha's Catholic Church (former), including the row of Bhutan Cypress (former boundary planting for the church site) is significant as tangible evidence of the importance of the Catholic church to Cranbourne and district in the interwar period. The district experienced a population boom in the post-war period of the 1920s, predominantly created by improvement of roads and the settlement of returned soldiers and British migrants on small farms within the area. St Agatha's was established to service the growing Catholic community as the original timber church of 1861 was no longer able to accommodate the congregation. The row of eight Bhutan Cypress trees, which are believed to date from approximately c1913, are also of historical importance as they define the original extent of the church land, which extended to Brunt Street. (Criterion A)

St Agatha's Catholic Church (former) is of aesthetic significance for the substantial size and relative sophistication of the 1929 church's architectural design when compared to other churches of this period within the municipality. The style, which is simple Italian Gothic Revival, expresses more architectural pretensions than other similar local examples of this period, including gabled entrance porches, buttresses and lancet windows with decorative glazing. The row of Bhutan Cypress enhances the aesthetic impact of the site and the trees are bold as a design feature of the site compared to other landscaping applications for religious buildings within the municipality. The Bhutan Cypress row contributes to the setting of the church, and is an important landmark within the Cranbourne town centre. While the church building has undergone a large amount of change in its conversion to a restaurant, the changes are largely reversible. (Criterion E)