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# ST LAURENCE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Laurence's Catholic Church (2020)



St Laurence's Catholic Church (2000)



St. Laurence's Presbytery



St. Laurence's Catholic Church



St. Laurence's Catholic Convent



St. Laurence's Catholic Primary School

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## Location

27 OGILVY STREET, LEONGATHA, SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Municipality

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Listing

South Gippsland Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 19, 2022

**What is significant?**

St. Laurence's Catholic Church complex comprising the church, presbytery, school and convent, at 27-37 Ogilvy Street, Leongatha, is significant.

St. Laurence's Church, designed by Charles I. Rice and opened on 16 November 1913, is a rendered brick Spanish baroque-styled building with a gabled terracotta roof. The church is a simple gable with no aisles, and the nave is lit by semi-circular arched windows with tracery in each bay, which is defined externally by piers with capitals. Other contributory features include:

- Symmetrical front facade, split into three parts with half-round capped outer piers and inner piers with scrolls against the raised pediment, which is capped with a cross mounted on a projecting pedestal.
- Segmental three part central window with wide architrave and heavy hood moulding and brackets, which is flanked by oculi windows.
- The tall louvred lantern surmounted by a cupola on the ridge.
- The memorial to Dean Coyne within the forecourt.
- Original cast iron fencing surrounding the building with rendered piers, basalt base and wrought iron gates
- Internally, there a segmental barrel vault ceiling, panelled with strong arches at the caps of pilasters defining each window bay. The piers have ionic capitals below a string course defining a wide blocking course with a Baroque capital bearing a shield and flanked by elaborate scrolls. Across the south end of the nave, one bay deep is a balcony carried on a pair of cast iron columns, which has an ogee balustrade. The whole is decorated with elaborate painted cast plaster decoration including swags, scrolls and shields

The Presbytery, constructed in 1904, is a Federation brick bungalow constructed of red brick with glazed terracotta tiled hipped roof that extends to form a three-sided verandah. This building has an original projecting hip with a larger hip added in the late Interwar/early Post-war period, single double hung windows and rendered string courses, that are now painted. The presbytery also has symmetrically arranged chimneys with double moulded caps and tabs and turned verandah posts with neckmoulds and front scroll brackets supporting bracketed eaves, standing on low brick pads.

The convent, designed and constructed by F.W. Morris in 1914, is a timber Federation Bungalow with a hip roof that extends to form the contiguous return verandah, and a minor projecting side gable. This building has a jettied and bracketed half-timbered side gable, one rear chimney with corbelled cap and turned verandah posts with fret brackets. The main panelled door is set into a wide central case with multi-pane sidelights and highlights and the building has symmetrical paired double hung windows to the front elevation, single windows in other elevations and paired tall windows to the side gable.

The school, constructed by Swanson Brothers and opened in March 1957, is a postwar building constructed of red brick with a hipped glazed tile roof that extends forward to create a low front wall with a band of multi-pane timber windows punctuated by flat rendered pilasters, and is terminated by the rendered parapeted section that defines the entry. This has a capped parapet with a fluted band and there is a tower element at the west end, which stands proud of the wall, and has a stepped and pointed pediment surmounted by a cross, and an inset pointed arch panel above a narrow six-pane fluted glass window with a semi-circular hood and the foundation stone below. Beside this are two banks of six pane windows, set into the walls with panels below, and 'Saint Laurence's Memorial School' in raised letters above. At the side is a small flat roofed porch.

Non-original alterations and additions and other buildings on the site are not of heritage significance.

#### **How is it significant?**

St. Laurence's Catholic Church complex is of local historic, aesthetic and social significance to South Gippsland Shire.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Historically, the complex demonstrates the development of St. Laurence's after it was elevated to a Parish in 1901 under the leadership of Dean Coyne, who is commemorated by the memorial at the front of the church. This scale of this complex demonstrates the status of Leongatha as a regional hub within South Gippsland. (Criterion A)

It is significant as a representative Catholic Parish centre based around a place of worship, with an associated residence, convent and school. The convent and school demonstrate the importance of education to the Catholic Church and the expansion of catholic education in the early to mid-twentieth century. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the church is significant for the unusual blend of Romanesque and Anglo-Dutch/Spanish Baroque architectural detailing, and for elaborate plaster decorated interior, which is of an exceptional standard and of a scale that is rare within the Shire. It is complemented by the finely detailed front fence and memorial. The presbytery and convent are fine examples of Federation bungalows with characteristic form and detailing including the dominant hipped roofs extending to form return verandahs with original details. The finely chimneys to the presbytery are also of note. The school has distinctive form and detailing including the stepped tower feature and the fluted band to the parapet, while the dominant tiled hip roof visually related to the adjoining presbytery and convent. Collectively, the four buildings form a distinctive landmark grouping. (Criterion E)

St. Laurence's has social value for its strong and enduring associations with the local community through its use as a church, school and parish centre, which has been a focal point of the local congregations for over 100 years. (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant	South Gippsland - South Gippsland Heritage Study, David Helms with Trevor Westmore, 2004;
Construction dates	1913, 1904, 1913, 1914, 1957, 1904, 1913, 1914, 1957,
Architect/Designer	Rice, Charles, Payne, TA, PW Morris,
Other Names	Leongatha Catholic Church,
Hermes Number	30844
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

St Laurence's Catholic Church at Leongatha is a rendered brick structure with a gabled terra cotta shingle roof. It has a notable Spanish Baroque south front with a matching porch now under reconstruction in an extended form. Centrally on the ridge stands a tall louvred lantern capped by a cupola. The church is a simple gable with no aisles and the nave is lit by semi-circular arched windows with arched tracery in each bay which is defined externally by piers with capitals.

At the front and side boundaries, the original cast iron fence with rendered (formerly brick) piers, basalt base and wrought iron gates remains. A steel belfry behind the fence to the east has been removed.

The building was originally in brick, with only the mouldings rendered, in which form it approaches the Romanesque "blood and bandages" style, but the south front is closer in form to a Dutch colonial or Spanish Baroque in form. In rendered form it has a strong impression of Spanish Mission style. The omitted belfry may have given further clues.

The front facade is symmetrical with a full width projecting porch. It steps through two major levels, each defined by intersecting piers and scrolls. It is divided into three parts by piers at the side and piers flanking a central segmental three part window. The side piers have half round caps while the inner piers have scrolls against the raised pediment. The pediment is capped with a cross mounted on a projecting pedestal. The central window has a wide architrave and heavy hood mould with brackets above it. To either side are oculi windows. The porch front is divided into three parts with half round capped piers, the central panel containing the arched entry door and a triangular parapet with a central rendered arched panel containing a cross. The side panels have arched windows and semi-circular pediments.

The interior has a segmental barrel vault ceiling, panelled with strong arches at the caps of pilasters defining each window bay. The piers have ionic capitals below a string course defining a wide blocking course with a Baroque capital bearing a shield and flanked by elaborate scrolls. In the cove above, below the segmental arch, are further plaster decorations around a shell motif focused on the pilasters. Cast plaster stations of the cross are hung on either side of the pilasters.

Across the south end of the nave, one bay deep is a balcony carried on a pair of cast iron columns on either side of the central aisle. This has a bulging ogee balustrade decorated with elaborate plaster swags, scrolls and shields and has a central projection over the aisle. The architrave below the balustrade is decorated with swags meeting at plaques with full relief babies faces.

The ceiling panels have large suspended circular plaster panels concealing vents in each structural bay. The balance of the bay is decorated with scroll panels with a central motif and arched ends against the cove.

The whole of the plaster decorations are picked out in elaborate paint work.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*