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# ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



15 Raglan Place East,  
Axedale. St Mary's Catholic  
Church



196895\_Axedale\_Raglan  
Street\_015\_img02



196895\_Axedale\_Raglan  
Street\_015\_img03



196895\_Axedale\_Raglan  
Street\_015\_img04



196895\_Axedale\_Raglan  
Street\_015\_img08

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## Location

15 RAGLAN PLACE EAST, AXEDALE - PROPERTY NUMBER 196895, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO58

## Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 24, 2023

### What is significant?

St Mary's Catholic Church to the extent of all the 1902 fabric is significant. The setting comprising a number of palm trees, fencing and gates, a bell tower and memorial of 2002 is also of significance.

### How is it significant?

St Mary's Catholic Church is of local historic, aesthetic and social significance for the City of Greater Bendigo.

### Why is it significant?

St Mary's Catholic Church is of historical significance for its association with the former Bishop of Sandhurst the Most Rev. Dr Reville. The site is historically significant as the same site as the demolished church designed by Vahland and Getzchmann and built on land donated by the Rev. Dr Backhaus. St Mary's is of historical significance as one of the three remaining churches in Axedale, demonstrating the sectarian divide between Catholics and Protestants. St Mary's is tangible evidence of the presence of the Irish Catholics as one of the dominant immigrant groups in the Axedale district. *Criterion A*

St Mary's Church is aesthetically significant for its unusual design in the French manner incorporating a polygonal apse. The interior is of note with painted stencilling to the walls and fine quality timber lining to the ceiling. St Mary's is architecturally significant as a late work of architects Heffernan and Keogh. *Criterion B*  
The site is aesthetically significant for the large number of palm trees. *Criterion B*

St Mary's is socially significant for the Axedale community as a place of continuous worship for over 140 years. *Criterion G*

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Bendigo - Former Shires of Mclvor and Strathfieldsaye Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2008;
Construction dates	1902,
Architect/Designer	Heffernan & Keogh,
Other Names	St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church,
Hermes Number	32592
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The current St Mary's Church replaced an earlier building erected in 1862. It was demolished and some of the stone used to construct the current church.[1] St Mary's is the most sophisticated of the three churches in Axedale. It is designed in the French style by architects Heffernan and Keogh, and built in 1902. Whilst the history suggests that the first plans were rejected, a set of architectural drawings signed by Heffernan and Keogh hang on the wall of the church. These are very close to the design as executed and it is assumed that these architects were responsible for the design. French church designs were often favoured more by the Roman Catholics who borrowed freely from the sources available. The most dominant element of the French style was the use of a polygonal apse and the rose window. St Mary's has a five sided apse and the rose window has reduced in scale to a small round window or oculus. The church has a complex form with a large vestry intersecting the apse and nave. Built from the local basalt, St Mary's has stucco dressings around the pointed arch window and door openings and forming the parapet cappings. The coursed stone is laid with fine jointing

and the blocks are cut in regular shaped block indicating a higher quality of masonry work was employed in the building of this church.

The church is surrounded by a grove of tall palm trees that contribute to the setting . Although palm trees are a feature of many places in the Bendigo district, there are not others with the large number of palm trees planted around a building. The tall palms form an avenue from the pedestrian gate. The fence of concrete pillars and woven wire panels and gates appears to be contemporary with the church. Other elements of the site include a steel framed, free-standing bell tower containing a bell, and a stone memorial commemorating 100 years of worship.

The interior has painted stencilling on the walls, has encaustic tiles to the porch floor and contains pine pews of an unusual design. The roof structure has scissor trusses and the ceiling is timber lined with the timber at different angles that gives a dynamic appearance to the ceiling. The sacristy has an elegant ceiling form and is also timber lined.

[1] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 10.

## **Physical Conditions**

Good

## **Integrity**

High

## **Historical Australian Themes**

8 Building Community Life

8.1 Maintaining Spiritual Life

*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/>*