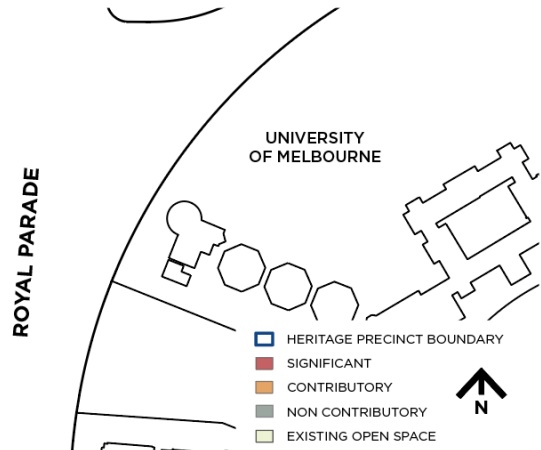
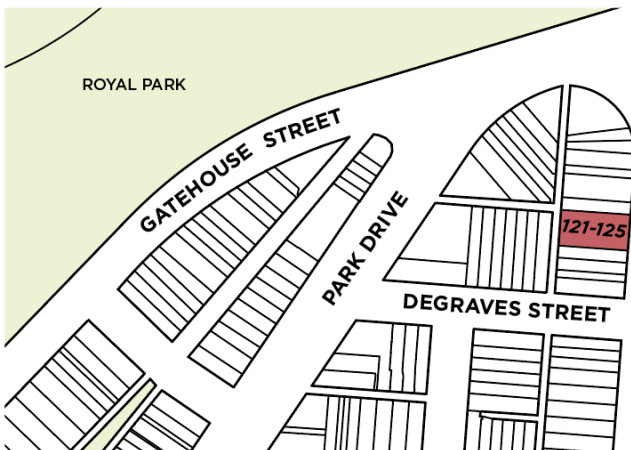


St Carthage's Catholic Church, 121-125 Royal Parade, Parkville Statement of Significance (GML Heritage, September 2025)

Heritage Place:	St Carthage's Catholic Church, 121-125 Royal Parade, Parkville	PS ref no:	HO1443
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What is significant?

St Carthage's Catholic Church at 121-125 Royal Parade, Parkville, built in 1934–35, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include the building's:

- original external form, materials and detailing; and
- high level of integrity to its original design; and

- design of the primary eastern elevation with its symmetrical design, decorative brickwork, ornamental detailing, including the moulding and window/door surrounds, and window glass; and
 - pattern and size of original fenestration; and
 - original interior layout, including timber ceilings, window surrounds and label moulding; and
 - altar; and
 - original 1885 Fincham pipe organ; and
- movable heritage collection, including artworks, sculptures, plaques and memorabilia
- More recent alterations and additions, including the metal exterior fence, accessibility ramp and exterior lighting, are not significant.

How is it significant?

St Carthage's Catholic Church at 121–125 Royal Parade, Parkville, is of local historical, representative, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

St Carthage's Catholic Church at 121-125 Royal Parade, Parkville, is of local historical significance as an example of a Catholic chapel of ease built in 1934–35 to serve the needs of the growing population of the Catholic Parish of St Mary's, West Melbourne. This was due in part to the growing number of Catholic students enrolled at the University of Melbourne and the establishment of Catholic residential colleges for men and women. St Carthage's is historically important as a product of the significant investment by the Catholic Church in building churches and schools in Melbourne under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Mannix, and in particular as a response to the growing Catholic student population at the university, which in turn stemmed from the expansion of Catholic secondary education under the leadership of Archbishop Mannix.

St Carthage's role as a chapel of ease continued until 1986, when it was consecrated as a parish church, reflecting the increased demand for Catholic pastoral care and church service in the Parkville area. The interior of the church is significant in demonstrating the changes in Catholic religious practice as a result of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, with the alteration of the sanctuary—including the removal of screens, the removal of the altar rail, and the relocation of the altar. The church also houses an individually significant Fincham pipe organ dating to 1884. (Criterion A)

St Carthage's Church forms part of a wider phase of expansion and church building in the interwar period. St Carthage's is one of a small number of churches in the City of Melbourne built in this style during this period. Its masonry construction, largely cruciform plan, and ornamentation are typical of the style and make it a representative example in the City of Melbourne. (Criterion D)

St Carthage's Catholic Church has aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne as a fine example of an Interwar Gothic Revival church that, with its zero street setback and modest scale, responds sensitively to its setting. The building is a striking example of the interwar style, with a strong verticality in its design, and its use of typical Gothic motifs. The building is highly intact externally and retains key Interwar Gothic Revival elements, such as the use of face brickwork with areas of decorative basketweave bond, Gothic arches to the window and door surrounds, lancet windows and towers, the use of cement render to imitate stone detailing, traditional label moulding, and stained-glass windows. The church is substantial, particularly one designed as a chapel of ease. Its grand proportions and vertical emphasis are reinforced by the use of twin towers on the primary elevation. The bold design of the eastern façade gives the building a high degree of landmark quality in its immediate setting, contributing greatly to the character of the streetscape. The interior of the church displays a good degree of integrity to its post-Vatican II refurbishment, retaining key original details such as the original timber ceiling, window surrounds and label moulding. The church retains a significant collection of movable heritage items, comprising religious art and statuary (including the altar and the relief carved timber Stations of the Cross), along with commemorative plaques. (Criterion E)

St Carthage's Catholic Church has been a place of Catholic worship since 1935 and has remained in continuous use since that time. The church continues to serve an active local Catholic community, including current and former university students and staff, and provides religious services and social activities for the parish community. St Carthage's has been important as a progressive Catholic church, which has probably made it popular with and more relevant to the educated university community. It has played an important part in many lives as the venue for many weddings and other Catholic sacraments over the decades, for not only the local community but for the wider community of former university students and staff. It is therefore of social significance to the Parkville area. (Criterion G)

Primary source

Parkville Heritage Review (GML Heritage, October 2023)