

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	126 Main Street	Proserpine
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	11RP835215	(E: 665517 N: 7743208)

Historical Context

The Proserpine district was first settled by European pastoralists in the 1870s. One property, Glen Isla, was set aside for a 3000 acre sugar plantation in 1882. Land was cleared by Pacific Islander and Chinese labour, and machinery and a mill was ordered for crushing. Despite these investments, the Crystal Brook Sugar Company Limited was not successful (due to the Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Act 1884, the depression and the poor seasons and sugar process). The land was subdivided under the auspices of the Crown Lands Act 1884 which provided for the resumption of larger pastoral runs and conversion to small selections.

In the 1890s, part of the Glen Isla property was included in the Proserpine township. A second sugar mill was opened in Proserpine in 1897, financed under the provisions of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act 1893. The mill crushed cane grown by independent farmers and was served by a tramway to a wharf on the Proserpine River. Proserpine township developed quickly after the establishment of the Proserpine Central Sugar Mill in 1897.

St Catherine's Roman Catholic Church has a long association with the Proserpine district. In 1904, the Catholic Church erected a small wooden church along Main Street on land donated by Joseph and Charles Busuttin. It was blessed and opened by Bishop Higgins of Rockhampton in 1905. St Catherine's School and Convent were established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1925. Proserpine Parish was founded in 1926.

The wooden church was removed during the 1950s when the parishioners decided to erect a new church. Tenders were advertised in 1954 at an estimated cost of £20,000 and the foundation stone was laid in 1955. The new church was constructed from red brick, terracotta tiles and render. The prominent building, with its significant street presence, reflects the influence of the Italian migrants who came to work in the sugar industry, particularly post World War II. Various internal features demonstrate this influence, including the Sacred Heart statue 1944 – attributed to Valmardre Family; the Mary statue 1950 - attributed to the Scaldero family and the stations of the cross (erected c.1957) - attributed to Joseph Sussini.

The new covered area in front of the Church was erected in July by Wayne Borellini. During a cyclone in 2011, the roof tiles were blown into a drain and the church sustained some water damage.

Physical Description

St Catherine's Catholic Church is located on the southern side of the eastern end of Main Street Proserpine.

The church is located in a broader church precinct adjacent halls to the west and south. At the rear of the church there is a timber entrance door covered by a tin awning. There is also a small brick skillion extension.

St Catherine's Catholic Church comprises a substantial 1950s red brick building. There is a small entrance portico which has been added to in order to allow for a front access driveway and cover for vehicles. To either side of the building there are covered walkways/arcades designed to increase airflow and provide shelter from rain. Internally the alter appears intact, and there have been a number of donations to church furniture and statues. The confessional room, which is accessed from inside the main church, appears to be an addition. There is a grotto and associated statue located externally at the north west elevation.

Integrity	Fair	Condition	Good
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	12/10/2010		

References

Historical information provided by Proserpine Historical Museum.
 David Scobie Architects, 2005. Proserpine Main Street Study & Datasheets.
 Townsville Daily Bulletin, Wednesday 30 June 1954, p.5.

Heritage Significance	
Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.</i>
Statement	St Catherine's Catholic Church demonstrates the important role of the Catholic Church in Proserpine and, more broadly, the region's development. Constructed on the site of the original church, the site is evidence of the strong migrant community (particularly Italian) that was part of the sugar industry following the opening of the Proserpine Mill in 1897 and which again expanded following World War II. The size and scale of the 1950s church is also evidence of the districts continued growth and prosperity.

H	<i>The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the region's history.</i>
Statement	Established in 1904, the site of St Catherines Catholic Church been in continuous use as a place of worship since this period and the current church is significant for its enduring association with the Catholic Church.

Location Map

