



## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MAITLAND

Maitland was also the cradle of Presbyterianism in the Hunter. In the 1840s a division occurred in the Church of Scotland, creating a new 'Free Church'. In West Maitland in the late 1840s, the zealous Reverend McIntyre built a Free Church in Free Church Street, then in 1855 a large building adjoining for a manse and high school. J & W Pender were the builders. A high school continued here until the 1870s.

It was unfortunate that the Catholic and the Free Church established so close to each other. McIntyre was hostile to Catholic values, which led, in 1860, to two violent disturbances near the churches involving over a thousand people each time. These rare events in Maitland's history have not been forgotten.

The factions of the Presbyterian Church later reunited and Reverend McIntyre moved away. The old school and manse building continued to be used for education and from 1884 to 1893, was Maitland Girls Public High School. Subsequently the edifice was converted to flats, later becoming vacant and neglected.

In the 1980s the Catholic Education Office purchased several properties in Free Church and Hunter Streets for the expansion of St Peter's school and grounds. An application for demolition of the former manse and school building was opposed by the community and heritage agencies.

A permanent conservation order was placed on the building. Instead of demolition, the historic structure was restored in the late 1980s and adaptively reused for modern education.



## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Congregational Church established in Maitland in the 1850s and in 1854 placed the foundation stone for a large church on the corner of High and James Streets. Following the 1955 floods, many people and institutions moved to more secure sites, including this church, which relocated to Rutherford in 1963. The church building then became the headquarters of the Maitland Repertory Society.

## METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church (now Uniting Church), built in 1858 to architect John Wright's design, stands on the corner of High Street and Ken Tubman Drive formerly Charles Street, which has been widened in recent years with the loss of the original corner buildings including the manse, but the large Sunday school hall remains behind the church.

**The Cathedral Street precinct, including Free Church, Hunter and High Streets, is a place of outstanding cultural significance because of historic, religious and educational connections with Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Congregational Church heritage.**

**All Maitland's churches had humble beginnings, with first services held in private homes. Provision of small timber chapels by the parishioners usually followed. The fine church buildings that enhance Maitland's streetscapes today were generally built in the mid-19th century.**

## ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Roman Catholic church of St John opened in Charles Street in 1846 after almost a decade of Catholic worship in a small chapel in nearby Horseshoe Bend. In this neighbourhood about a third of the people were Catholic, a higher proportion than elsewhere in NSW.

The tower was added to the church about 1860. In 1865, Maitland became a separate diocese and in 1866 the newly arrived Bishop Murray made St John's the Cathedral, a status that continued until 1933. During these years Charles Street was renamed Cathedral Street. In the early 1880s a 'Bishop's House' was built adjoining the Cathedral to a design by architect J W Pender. In 1922 a large Parish Hall was built near High Street.

A Catholic school was conducted in the first chapel building from the 1840s until 1856, and then moved to another site. Schooling returned to the St John's precinct in 1904, providing primary and secondary education. The present complex for years 7 to 10 students is called the St Peter's Campus of All Saints College and is a landmark institution.

## The Cathedral Street PRECINCT

**The Cathedral Street precinct is unique in having a fine collection of cultural heritage buildings and vibrant human stories to accompany them.**

# Churches of Maitland



Maitland Riverside

Walk • Maitland Riverside Walk • Maitland Riverside Walk

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