

MAITLAND CITY ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

Interpretation Strategy



RKH
ROMEY.KNAGGS HERITAGE

MAITLAND CITY ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

Interpretation Strategy

MARY KNAGGS ARCHITECT MICOMOS

DIRECTOR

+ 61 427 502 042

mknaggs@rkheritage.com

PO Box 1 Pearl Beach NSW 2256 Australia

www.rkheritage.com

RKH Job Code 19.002

Issue Preliminary Outline Draft for Comment 21/03/2019

Final Draft Submission 02/04/2019

Final Report 02/04/2019

Cover Image: Maitland Town Hall c1890. Source Newcastle Herald

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	The Brief	1
1.2	The City of Maitland and Heritage Interpretation	1
1.3	Objectives	2
1.4	The Proposed Development.....	3
1.5	Specific Area Covered	4
1.6	Site Context	5
2	INTERPRETATION CONTEXT	8
2.1	Existing Council Policies & Plans.....	8
	Open Museums Open Minds 2018	8
	Activating Laneways Policy, 2017.....	10
	Cultural Plan 2016 - 2019.....	10
	Maitland Place Activation Strategy, 2016.....	11
	Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan, 2014	11
	High Street Master Plan and Laneways Action Plan, 2013	14
	Maitland+ 10: Community Strategic Plan, 2013	15
	Maitland Public Art Policy 2010	17
2.2	The Audience	17
	The Maitland Community	17
	Visitors to Maitland	17
2.3	Aboriginal History & Heritage	21
	Aboriginal Cultural Significance.....	22
2.4	The City of Maitland LGA	24

2.5	Central Maitland	26
2.6	Maitland Town Hall	28
	Town Hall Heritage Significance	28
	Social Value	30
	Town Hall Archives Memorials and Artefacts	33
2.7	The Town Hall Café	35
3	INTERPRETATION THEMES	38
3.1	Aboriginal Heritage	38
3.2	Central Maitland Generally	39
3.3	West Maitland Commercial/Civic Area	40
	Journeys & Communication:	40
	Poverty and Prosperity	40
	Civic and Cultural Life	41
3.4	The City Administration Centre Site	42
	Civic & Cultural Life	42
	The Town Hall Café Story	44
	The Pryor Plasterworks	45
4	INTERPRETATION ACTIONS	46
4.1	Maitland Interpretation Generally	46
	Recommendations	46
4.2	Off Site Actions	47
	O1 Website/s	47
	O2 Digital Archives	47
	O3 Publications & Educational Material	47
	O5 Commissioning Interpretive Films	48

O6 Managing Council’s Archives and Movable Heritage	50
Recommendations	50
4.3 Surrounding Interpretation Actions	51
C1 The Levee	52
C2. High Street	52
C3. Station to Town Hall & Gallery Walk	52
C4. Horseshoe Bend	53
C5. The Maitland Regional Gallery & Sculpture Garden	53
C6. Sun Street Art Installation	54
C7. Coffin Lane Art Installation	54
C8. Sportsground Interpretation.....	54
Recommendations	55
4.4 On-Site Interpretation Actions.....	55
4.4.1 Maitland City Administration Centre Project	55
E1 The Flagpoles & The Coat of Arms.....	57
E2 TH Café Wall Projection	59
E3 Wayfinding Nodes.....	62
I1 Public Artwork for the Foyer	63
I2 Foyer Display	64
I3 TH Foyer/s Exhibition Space.....	66
Recommendations	66
4.5 Future Civic Precinct Public Domain.....	67
E4 Town Hall History Sign	67
Recommendations	70
5 THE STRATEGY.....	71

5.1	Generally	71
	Relevant existing Council policies, strategies & projects	71
	Know the audience	71
	Aboriginal consultation	71
5.2	Interpretation & the Current City Administration Centre Proposal 72	
	Wayfinding	72
	Flagpoles.....	72
	Ability to display artefacts.....	72
	Display / exhibition space	73
	Public artwork	73
	Town Hall Café wall video projection	73
	Town Hall interpretation sign.....	73
5.3	Future Considerations	74
	Council archives & movable heritage	74
	Development of video art for the Town Hall Café wall	74
	Further research for future publication.....	74
	Future interpretation in the wider precinct.....	75
6	REFERENCES.....	76
7	APPENDIX A: TIME LINES.....	78
7.1	Maitland City Council.....	78
7.2	Mayors of Maitland	79
7.3	Maitland Town Hall	82
8	APPENDIX B: SELECTED IMAGES & STORIES	86

8.1	The River	86
8.2	Wallis Plains	87
8.3	West Maitland	88
8.4	The Town Hall	91
8.5	Melba comes to the Maitland 1909	93
8.6	The Site during the 1955 Flood	97

This page is left blank for double sided printing.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Brief

This Interpretation Strategy has been developed to inform heritage interpretation actions related to the proposed new Maitland City Administration Centre.

RK Heritage have been engaged by Maitland City Council to:

- Determine interpretation themes that are appropriate for the project;
- Suggest potential interpretation works opportunities that could be further developed during the future detailed design and construction documentation phases of the project; and
- Provide an Interpretation Strategy report to accompany the Development Application (DA) submission for the project.

It is noted that this document is a Strategy for interpretation only and does not go into the detailed content and design of possible interpretation actions.

1.2 The City of Maitland and Heritage Interpretation

Maitland City Council has positioned itself as one of the most active and creative local government bodies in NSW when it comes to the conservation, interpretation and promotion of its cultural heritage.

This is evidenced in the range of excellent policy and strategic documents that it has prepared, adopted and commenced implementation of the last two decades. Some of the policies and strategies are discussed at Section 2.1 of this Report.

This means that unlike many other Interpretation Strategies for new developments, there is already an active Council team focussed on place activation and heritage interpretation who have contributed to the recommendations in this Report and who do their best to implement them.

1.3 Objectives

This report relies heavily on information in the Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan (CMIP) developed in March 2014 by Sue Hodges Productions. Maitland City Council state¹:

The Plan positions Maitland at the forefront of innovative, creative and contemporary heritage interpretation and uses this **interpretation as a way to build Maitland's reputation as a City.**

In terms of objectives for interpretation in Maitland the CMIP states²:

... interpretation must be active and engaging to make a difference. Geoff Mulgan makes a compelling case that initiatives that bring people together and actively engage them **in 'doing' art or heritage, or involve them in running arts or heritage organisations,** do more for civil renewal than initiatives that engage people individually or cast them in the roles of **'viewer' or 'listener'.** **It needs to involve members of the community** in forms that they understand across the city and its spaces, and involve imaginative and accessible concepts, rather than be confined to the interpretation of grand civic buildings and spaces. It must be active, engaging and challenging.

If heritage interpretation in Maitland is to be inclusive and create a sense of belonging and social inclusion, then, it must encompass a wide range of historic themes and sites, and use

¹ MCC (2019) Artist's Brief "Coffin Lane 'Poverty' Installation"

² SHP (2014) CMIP.

all possible interpretive media, to ensure it meets the needs not only of educated residents and visitors but also the marginalised, disenfranchised and less skilled and educated members of the community. It must aim to involve members of the community actively, either by enabling them to interact with **the town's heritage through physical or digital media, or by** becoming involved in co-creating the interpretation. This will contribute to a sense of place and belonging and reinvigorate Central Maitland.

The City Administration Centre, including the Town Hall, is particularly suited for site-based interpretation of the heritage theme of “Civic and Cultural Life” as identified in the CMIP.

While the CMIP has generally explained the audience for heritage interpretation in Central Maitland (Section 1.6.3 below); for each of the interpretation actions identified in this Strategy a more detailed consideration of the audience is required. This consideration is further discussed in the Section 5. The Strategy.

1.4 The Proposed Development

The 2019 Maitland City Administration Centre project includes:

- Provision of a new Maitland City Administration Centre building to the east of the Maitland Town Hall and the Town Hall Café.
- Connections from the foyers of the new building to the Town Hall improving front of house experience for the Town Hall.
- Retention of the Town Hall Café and its integration into the new Town Hall Foyer.
- Reconstruction of level 2 of the eastern 1930s annex to provide a public link from the admin building to the existing Level 2 Town Hall Council Chambers.

- New ground floor public amenities in the 1930s Town Hall annex.
- Reconstruction of the 1930s kitchen and back of house facilities to the rear of the Town Hall Supper Room.
- Reconstruction of the existing Town Hall stage change rooms and the construction of a new stage scene door adjacent to the existing stage.
- Retention of the existing three storey administration building on the corner of High and Albert Streets (a reuse strategy for this building is being prepared).
- Retention of the existing single storey public hall, known as the Senior Citizens Centre on Grant Street.
- The existing at grade carpark on the corner of Grant and Albert **Street's is retained and reconfigured with improved landscaping.**
- The widening of Devonshire Street.

1.5 Specific Area Covered

The focus of this Interpretation Strategy is on the Maitland City Administration Centre project outlined above and which includes the proposed new Administration Building, the Town Hall and the new carpark to the rear of the new building as outlined above (Figure 1). The street address for the site is 263-283 High Street.

A "public domain improvements plan", is also being prepared focusing on High Street from Devonshire Street to Albert Street including the road carriageway and footpaths on both sides of the street. This will consider a number of public domain improvements in the vicinity of the City Administration Centre including improved pedestrian amenity, street paving finishes, undergrounding of high voltage power lines, new street lighting, soft landscaping, signage and furniture. However these future improvements High Street improvements will be subject to future

stakeholder consultation and statutory approvals are not part of the current Development Application.

1.6 Site Context

The site has strong civic and geographical links to the surrounding businesses, the Art Gallery and the Repertory Theatre across High Street; the sports grounds the levee along Hunter River; the adjacent schools; and on to the Maitland Station.

Historically this area of High Street is associated with the Hunter River because it grew as a commercial hub for the first river transport to West Maitland (then known as Wallis Plains). This gives the site poignancy in the context of both the misappropriation of land from the local Aboriginal people; and the seeds of the establishment of the commercial and civic elements of the City of Maitland. The site remains a commercial and government centre to this day. This broader context for the site is shown in Figure 2.

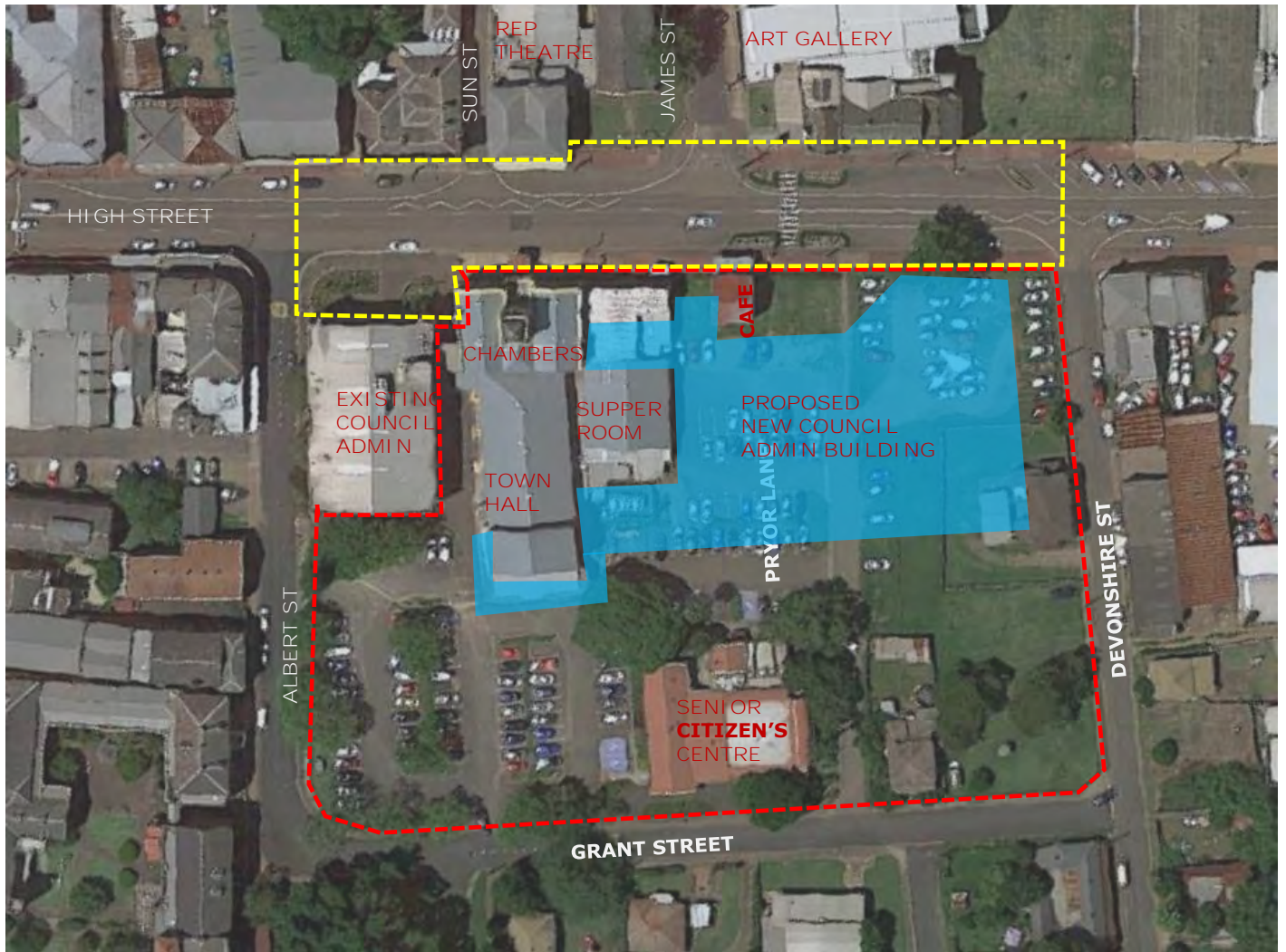


Figure 1: The City Administration Centre which is the focus of this report is outlined in red. The approximate area of the proposed new administration building is shaded blue. The approximate extent of the concurrent "Public Domain Improvements Plan" is outlined in yellow. It focuses on High Street from Devonshire Street to Albert Street and includes the road carriageway and footpaths on both sides of the street.





Figure 2: The area which is the focus of this report is outlined in red.

In addition it is noted that the Central Maitland Structure Plan 2009 (CMSP) identifies an “East Central Precinct” which incorporates the Maitland Town Hall and surroundings (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The “East Central Precinct” from the Central Maitland Structure Plan 2009. The area which is the focus of this report is shaded in red.

2 INTERPRETATION CONTEXT

2.1 Existing Council Policies & Plans

Relevant existing Council Policies and Plans have been outlined in the recent Council document 'Open Museums Open Minds'. This section outlines the 'Open Museums Open Minds' document and relevant earlier documents.

Open Museums Open Minds 2018

Status: Under Council Consideration

In their October 2018 report to Council, Council staff summarise the 'Open Minds Open Museums' (OMOM) Report as follows:

The OMOM report offers a series of recommendations, along with the strategies and projects, that would facilitate the realisation of these recommendations. They are wide ranging and include both opportunities for quick wins and longer term, sustainable initiatives.

Part 1 of the OMOM report includes four principal recommendations:

1. Council policies

Integration of Maitland's collections into Council policies and plans.

2. Collections

Greater recognition of and support for Maitland's collections.

3. Museum experiences

Greater recognition of, and support for, the museum experiences initiated and implemented by Maitland's collecting organisations.

4. New strategies and projects

Creation of, and support for, innovative new strategies and projects that **engage with Maitland's collections to enable their stories and experiences** to be presented and experienced in a variety of ways.

Part 2 identifies the series of projects and strategies including:

- Council assets

Considers the opportunities and challenges facing Council assets and how these might be addressed.

- Collaboration

Suggests establishing an Open Museums, Open Minds Working Party, to be established under the auspices of Council as a regular means to share resources, ideas and expertise.

- Maitland Collects

Addresses the need to establish sustainable collections, documented collections, ways to enhance collections as well as storage and conservation including the establishment of a Maitland Storehouse.

- Maitland on Show

Examines ways to enhance current exhibitions, talks about Thinking on the Edge (contemporary practice) and On the Streets (ways of taking the experience to the people).

- Gateways

Virtual (online portal and digital resources), portable gateways (brochures, booklets, apps) and a fixed gateway (physical starting point for the city's museum experiences – suggested as utilising the current Visitor Information Centre).

Activating Laneways Policy, 2017³

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/governance-and-transparency/policies>

Status: Adopted and progressively implemented

The policy provides a rationale and guidelines for encouraging the use of laneways as a means of access across and through Maitland, and to do so through cultural activities and other forms of laneway activation.

Cultural Plan 2016 - 2019⁴

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/play-explore/arts-and-culture/cultural-plan>

Status: Adopted

The plan identifies the range and variety of cultural activities across the local government area including those relating to history and heritage. Through a community consultation process, the Cultural Plan identified key issues in relation to those cultural activities, and established priorities **for action. Of particular relevance ... are the following priorities:**

- improving cultural facilities and venues;
- communication, promotion and marketing;
- maintaining cultural heritage;
- a new cultural institution;
- making culture central to urban renewal;
- encouraging cultural entrepreneurship; and

³ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

⁴ Stet

- maximising community resources.

Maitland Place Activation Strategy, 2016⁵

<https://WNw.maitland.nsw.gov.au/plav-explore/arts-and-culture/place-activation>

Status: Adopted

The Place Activation Strategy focuses on innovative and engaging processes to attract people to, and enhance the use of, different public spaces across the city. Among the themes that emerged from the community engagement process and are of particular relevance to the ... are (p33):

- the desire for greater connections to the river,
- creation of a stronger Maitland identity,
- opportunities to learn and share Maitland's history, and
- activations specifically for children and their parents.

Four broad types of place activation are identified, namely: Street art, After dark, Interpretation, Repurpose.

Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan, 2014

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/publications-plans-and-strategies/central-maitland-interpretation-plan>

Status: Adopted and progressive implementation

⁵ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

The value of innovative and varied forms of heritage interpretation are at the core of this plan that focuses on history and heritage as vital elements in the revitalisation of Central Maitland. Underpinned by an analysis of the visitor economy and audience profiles, the plan identifies key themes in Maitland's history and proposes different interpretation media to engage visitors and residents with these themes and with Maitland as a destination and/or place of residence⁶.

As previously stated, this report relies heavily on information in the Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan (CMIP) developed in March 2014 by Sue Hodges Productions.

Vision

The Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan has the following Vision:

*Interpretation will help revitalize Central Maitland. It will evoke key themes and stories associated with **Maitland's heritage and, in doing so, provide new ways for residents to understand the special nature of their town.** It will be closely integrated with the Central Maitland Structure Plan and will provide a series of designs, ideas and structures for urban, recreational and rural spaces. It will also act as a driver for the visitor economy that will help revitalize the town.*

The CMIP also notes that

... interpretation must be active and engaging to make a difference. Geoff Mulgan makes a compelling case that initiatives that bring **people together and actively engage them in 'doing' art or heritage,** or involve them in running arts or heritage organisations, do more for civil renewal than initiatives that engage people individually or **cast them in the roles of 'viewer' or 'listener'.** It needs to involve members of the community in forms that they understand across the

⁶ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

city and its spaces, and involve imaginative and accessible concepts, rather than be confined to the interpretation of grand civic buildings and spaces. It must be active, engaging and challenging.

If heritage interpretation in Maitland is to be inclusive and create a sense of belonging and social inclusion, then, it must encompass a wide range of historic themes and sites, and use all possible interpretive media, to ensure it meets the needs not only of educated residents and visitors but also the marginalised, disenfranchised and less skilled and educated members of the community. It must aim to involve members of the community actively, either by **enabling them to interact with the town's heritage** through physical or digital media, or by becoming involved in co-creating the interpretation. This will contribute to a sense of place and belonging and reinvigorate Central Maitland.

The Town Hall Node

The Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan (CMIP) completed in March 2014 (CMIP) identifies three nodes for Interpretation in Central Maitland:

- Central High Street
- Town Hall Node
- Train Station Node.

These nodes are similar to the three nodes identified in the Central Maitland Structure Plan of November 2009(CMSP)⁷.

The Town Hall Node is described in the CMIP as follows:

This part of High Street incorporates Cathedral Street, Victoria Street, Bent Street and James Street and has a civic character. It includes

⁷ CMSP Section 4.4 Strengthen Three Distinct Nodes p.54.

key civic and cultural institutions such as the Town Hall, Art Gallery and the former Maitland Mercury building and has been the focus of public life in Maitland for over a century. The location of the Town Hall node corresponds to a point on High Street where the Hunter River once came very close to the street. The key elements for interpretation here are the link between the city and the Hunter River, the history of civic life in Central Maitland and the ongoing function of the area as the centre of artistic, cultural and public life.

High Street Master Plan and Laneways Action Plan, 2013⁸

(Adopted)

This Plan follows on from the 2009 Central Maitland Structure Plan and focuses on the revitalisation of High Street and specific laneways in the Central Maitland area.

As with the Structure Plan, the incorporation of public art and the improvement of views to historic buildings are important parts of the suggested improvements and enhancements.

This High Street Master Plan and Laneways Action Plan and the Structure Plan offer holistic visions and plans, and provide frameworks, contexts and ideas for developing forms of engagement across the city of Maitland, especially Central Maitland.

⁸ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

Maitland+ 10: Community Strategic Plan, 2013⁹

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/long-term-planning/maitland-10-community-strategic-Ofili>

Status: Adopted and progressive implementation

Drawing on community engagement feedback, the plan is the Council's visions for the future of the city and outlines strategies designed to see **those visions become realities. Themes of particular relevance ... include** emphasis on valuing, sustaining and developing:

- Proud people, great lifestyle: 'our sense of place and pride in our city whilst accommodating diversity and change';
- Our built space: 'our unique built heritage ... coupled with sustainable new developments';
- Our natural environment: including 'local rivers and floodplains';
- A prosperous and vibrant city: with 'Central Maitland (as) the vibrant heart of our city'.
- Connected and collaborative community leaders.

Among the strategies identified to achieve these aims, the following are **of particular relevance ...:**

- welcoming new people and developing programs to 'foster community appreciation and pride in the city's appearance, rich heritage and future potential';
- ensuring Central Maitland and our built heritage remain 'integral to the distinct character of our city', and that the CBD reclaims

⁹ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

'its place as the heart of the city, through changes to the built form and streetscapes, along with active partnerships';

- identifying 'ways to become better connected with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their history and culture';
- valuing 'all community members, including children and young people, the elderly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds';
- embracing 'arts and cultural activities ... for their role in sustaining creative and connected communities';
- delivering 'innovative programs and services' for life - long learning;
- celebrating and utilising the Hunter River, and ensuring that 'the Hunter River will no longer be at the back door of Central Maitland';
- staging an annual program of events, festivals, sporting and cultural activities;
- growing the city's capacity for tourism;
- exploring and promoting 'adaptive and creative uses for heritage sites and buildings across the city'; and
- implementing 'sustainability and environmental education programmes ... across the city'.

Maitland Public Art Policy 2010¹⁰

<https://vt/ww.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/governance-andtransoarency/policies>

(Under review)

The policy provides a definition of public art, highlights the ways in which it can benefit Maitland and its community, and establishes guidelines for the assessment, funding, commissioning, management, conservation and maintenance of public artworks.

2.2 The Audience

The Maitland Community

The Maitland Town Hall has a full range of events that appeal to Maitland citizens of all ages and from diverse backgrounds. The types of events in the auditorium or supper room include: touring international and national inspirational speakers, theatre and music productions; local speakers, theatre and music; school events such as speech days; life event such as weddings and memorial services; and council functions such as Anzac Day and Australia Day.

Citizens of Maitland might also at a Council meeting or a workshop in the Council Chambers or one of the meeting rooms.

The Maitland City Administration Centre will attract a diverse variety of mainly adult citizens conducting business with the Council.

Visitors to Maitland

It is also likely that visitors to Maitland may be drawn into the Town Hall for events, or to the public counter seeking information. The presence of

¹⁰ Information from MCC (2018) "Open Minds Open Museums"

the Regional Art Gallery, playhouse theatre and sportsgrounds in the vicinity; and the attraction of a new striking building will ensure that the site is activated.

The CMIP (page 46) identifies the target visitor markets for Central Maitland and the detailed analysis will not be repeated here. The summaries and recommendation for the audience groups are:

Visiting Friends and Relatives

Summary:

This market would benefit from community based activities rather than high-end cultural tourism activities. Activities for this market will be similar to activities favoured by the Maitland community. Therefore, tourism expenditure for this market should increase community expenditure on heritage-related activities.

Recommendations:

- **Develop low-key** products and tours (e.g. morning tea at the Gallery, a self-guided walking tour).
- **Market Central Maitland's heritage** interpretation to the local community.
- **Provide a vehicle for** community stories to become part of Central **Maitland's** interpretation. This could be through a website that mirrors the proposed '**Heroes Wall**' and **allows residents to** contribute their own heroic stories. A competition could then be held to choose **a local 'hero' to become part of the Heroes Wall', so that this is an** evolving form of interpretation.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Summary

This market is sophisticated and would benefit from 'elite' heritage tourism, such as historic house interpretation, as well as more general interpretation.

Recommendations

- **Link interpretation with exhibitions, public programs and events** run by the Maitland Regional Art Gallery and also to the proposed public art installations.
- **Develop heritage tours linking Maitland's key heritage sites** (Maitland Gaol, Grossman House and the River walk) with the Maitland hospitality industry.

Mature Age Visitors in Australia

Summary

This market would benefit from generic interpretation (signs, brochures) as well as web-based information, apps featuring pre-and-post visit orientation activities and information and tailored **heritage-based tours that feature Maitland's key heritage attractions.**

Recommendations

- **Develop digital media interpretive products, such as apps and mobile websites, which are integrated with other tourism, retail and food and wine offerings**
- **Develop generic interpretive products such as signs, maps and brochures**
- **Develop themed heritage tours linked to the Maitland hospitality industry** (based on the four proposed tours in this Interpretation Plan).

Food and Wine Tourism

Summary

Heritage activities that could appeal to this market include themed heritage tours based around the Maitland hospitality industry.

Recommendations

- **Develop heritage tours based around Maitland's hospitality industry** (e.g. beginning at the Gallery with morning tea, taking a themed heritage tour, visiting a farm in the area to sample produce and ending at Grossman House with a food and wine event)
- Link food and wine tourism to heritage attractions in the Central Maitland area.

The Domestic Education Market

Recommendations

Develop a series of educational products, such as an Education Kit, tours and online activities, about Central Maitland and linked with the new Australian history curriculum.

This Strategy also notes that there are significant opportunities for tertiary and adult education experiences in Central Maitland including:

- Aboriginal history and culture centred on the River
- Australian regional history (commerce, culture and town development)
- Heritage Studies
- Art history and contemporary art (the Gallery and Public Art)

2.3 Aboriginal History & Heritage

As this project involves the City Administration Centre (including a hub for cultural life) across the Maitland LGA, then the cultural values of all Aboriginal people identifying with the LGA have to be considered. The Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Maitland area are the Wonnarua people. The Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation contains information on culture and history of the Aboriginal people of the Hunter Valley.

<https://www.wonnarua.org.au/>

In January 2019 Eureka Heritage completed an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – Preliminary Archaeological Assessment for the Proposed Council Administration Building. The Eureka report concludes:

The immense ground disturbance across the study area from European development and use since the 1820s, in addition to regular inundation and disturbance by flooding since well before European disturbance, is a major contributing factor in the assessment of the potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be impacted by the proposed project.

In the absence of any identified Aboriginal sites or objects at site survey, and in the absence of the identification of areas of potential archaeological deposits, in addition to no known or recognised social significance gained through rigorous desktop study and literature review, the study area is not considered significant for its Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the likelihood for impact upon items of significance to the Aboriginal community is negligible.

This Strategy does not provide a detailed Aboriginal interpretation context as this is a component that would need to be considered and developed by the local Aboriginal community. However recommendations are made in Section 5. for this to happen in the future.

Aboriginal Cultural Significance

it is noted that the preliminary advice from Eureka Consultants is that there is negligible likelihood of the site containing artefacts of significance to the Aboriginal Community¹¹.

However the City Administration Centre pertains to all residents living in the Maitland LGA, and the cultural values of the wider Aboriginal community need to be given consideration in this Interpretation Strategy.

The Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation contains information on culture and history of the Aboriginal people of the Hunter Valley.

<https://www.wonnarua.org.au/>

The Eureka Aboriginal archaeology assessment also notes¹²:

The study area is located within the Central Lowlands subregion of the Hunter Valley and sits on the alluvial flats of the Hunter River floodplain (Story et al, 1963: 36; Galloway, 1963). It is part of the Hunter Land System (unit 3) and the Rivermead Soil Landscape. This landscape unit is characterised by moderately broad to extensive, level to gently undulating alluvial terraces, comprised of immature (Quaternary or Tertiary-aged) alluvium (sand, silt and clay). The underlying geology is relatively weak sedimentary bedrock (Permian sandstone) (Galloway, 1963: 92).

....

Being located within the Hunter River floodplain, the study area is prone to periodic, localised and sometimes severe flooding (and associated erosion). It is also prone to seasonal waterlogging, compounded by poor drainage. Since European settlement, more than 200 floods have been recorded on the

¹¹ Eureka Consultants (2019) p.41

¹² Eureka Consultants (2019) p.42

Hunter River, thirteen of which have peaked at levels above the major flood level of 10.7 metres. The largest flood to have inundated Maitland occurred in 1955, with a peak of 12.10 metres (WMA Water, 2015; MCC, 2018b).

There are no sources of fresh water located within the study area. The nearest water source being Lynes Canal, 400 metres to the east, which flows into Wallis Creek, followed by the Hunter River, approximately 500 metres to the north. Swamp Creek (part of the Wentworth Swamp ecosystem) is located 1.2 km to the southwest, and Telarah Lagoon, 1.5 km to the west.

The ethnographic literature indicates that prior to the European occupation of Maitland, the banks adjacent to the Hunter River **were covered in 'luxuriant' rainforest, vine thickets and 'impenetrable' scrub several miles deep. Thus, the habitat and landscape of the study area was presumably significantly different to what it is today, and this would have had implications for pre-historic resource availability and the ease with which people could traverse the terrain. However, it is also noted that several open camp sites have been recorded within 150 metres of the Hunter River at Bolwarra to the north (Brayshaw, 1984 & 1995), indicating that sufficiently open terrain flanked the Hunter at least in certain sections.**

This Strategy does not provide a detailed Aboriginal interpretation context as this is a component that would need to be considered and developed jointly with the local Aboriginal community. However recommendations are made for this to happen in the future in Section 5.

2.4 The City of Maitland LGA

The Maitland City Administration centre is to serve to whole of the Maitland Local Government Area (LGA).

In 1944 West Maitland, East Maitland and Morpeth were merged as the City of Maitland. There are numerous histories of the LGA, and the information is not repeated here.

Today's City of Maitland Local Government Area (LGA) covers an area of 396km² in the Lower Hunter region of New South Wales (Figure 4).

According to Remplan Community Profiles¹³:

Maitland is the focus of a diversity of economic activities including agriculture, tourism, mining, manufacturing, transport and **construction industries. Arguably Maitland's greatest asset is its** location on the rich alluvial flats of the Hunter and Paterson Rivers. It is one of the most highly productive areas in NSW and a service centre for a rich agricultural hinterland. With access to two national highways, a 90 minute freeway drive to Sydney, 30 minutes to the vineyards, Newcastle and Port Stephens, close proximity to airports, **shipping terminals and freight rail access, you won't find a better** base than Maitland.

Maitland has an excellent standard of health services, schools, residential housing and retail shopping centres. It is a safe and healthy city, with a quality lifestyle, a vibrant and sustainable future, and a proud and involved community.

¹³ Remplan Economy <https://www.communityprofile.com.au/maitland> accessed 30/03/2019.



Figure 4: The area covered by the Maitland Local Government Area. Source: <http://mapbuilder.remplan.com.au/?link=8cc720a2-868b-4993-92c1-2ece207b9b74>

Remplan Economy¹⁴ goes on to say:

Maitland (map) is a dynamic and growing city offering green field industrial land, commercial investment and tourism opportunities, conveniently situated at the junction of major transport routes in the lower Hunter.

Maitland is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia with a growth rate consistently above 2% per annum. With a population of

¹⁴ Remplan Economy <https://www.economyprofile.com.au/maitland/> accessed 30/03/2019.

79,340 in 2016, Maitland is expected to have over 90,000 residents by 2023. With the city growing at the rate of one family per day, the population includes a healthy combination of skills across all major sectors.

Extensive land releases for residential, industrial, commercial and retail developments are fueling a strong construction industry, which are supported by a series of strategic planning documents including the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and the Maitland Development Control Plan.

Greenfield residential developments are planned at Farley, Thornton North, Anambah, Gillieston Heights, Greta, Aberglasslyn and Louth Park in the next five years, complemented by infill developments in already established suburbs. Fast growing industrial and commercial areas at Thornton and Rutherford are attracting a diverse range of industries and industry support businesses for the broader Hunter region.

Maitland also offers a variety of independent and mainstream retail options along with an evolving visitor economy, with a particular focus on high quality events.

2.5 Central Maitland

Detailed histories of Central Maitland are outlined in numerous studies and is not repeated here. The CMIP provides a good summary of the thematic history of Central Maitland:

Early days

High Street began as a meandering track for bullock teams and formed the spine of the early settlement. Bullock teams dominated the street until the Great Northern Railway reached Singleton in 1863. The street was smelly, dirty and dusty until the early 20th century.

Transport

Horse-drawn buses or coaches first appeared in the town in the 1840s. In 1848, twelve of these vehicles were licensed to operate through High Street. Each could carry 18 passengers. A shrill trumpet blast **announced the arrival of one of Reeves's** coaches.

A colourful past

High Street was a place of both religion and debauchery in its early **days. Maitland's first inn, Molly Morgan's Angel Inn, was** licensed in High Street in 1827 and by 1831 Maitland had a public house every 100 yards. The burgeoning town was full of colourful characters and wild scenes, which inevitably caused problems with the Church. In 1833 Canon CPN Wilson of the Church of England was reluctant to allow a reputable young **woman to accept work in 'so depraved a place as Maitland'**.

Commerce

Commerce grew in the street from the 1820s onwards. In 1824, Newcastle merchants Frederick Boucher and William Powditch opened a store in West Maitland and also began a boat service linking West Maitland with Newcastle, carrying essentials such as carts and ploughs. The route ended as a wharf in a river channel at the eastern **end of today's High Street. Maitland grew** rapidly and became prosperous, which resulted in the many substantial and ornate Victorian facades and buildings that adorn the street today.

One of the finest towns in New South Wales

In 1858, the local branch of the Bank of NSW held deposits of £96,000 - only Sydney and Melbourne held more. Five years later, East and West Maitland were second only to Sydney in size and importance.

2.6 Maitland Town Hall

There are several studies of the Maitland Town Hall which outline its architectural history.

A detailed chronology of the Maitland Town Hall with references was included in the Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Jean Rice for proposed changes to the Town Hall in 2015. This information is included in this report as Appendix 7.3.

Selected historical images of the Town Hall are included in Appendix 8.4.

Town Hall Heritage Significance

The Statement of Significance from the State Heritage Register listing notes that:

Maitland Town Hall is significant within New South Wales as a representative of nineteenth century civic centres with grand **architectural forms. This town hall's Victorian Architecture** is impressive in its High Street streetscape and intact state. The tower makes the town hall a local landmark and reinforces the role of High Street as the dominant thoroughfare of the town. The town hall is the best example of its type within the Upper Hunter region, and comparable to other regional town halls of the 1880s Boom period. It is of regional significance for demonstrating the growth, prosperity and regional importance of West Maitland from the 1880s. The continuation of the original council chamber functions provides evidence for the civic stability of Maitland and has associations with key events and **people in Maitland's municipal history. The town hall** has important associations with the cultural life of West Maitland and wider region as a venue for performers and focal point for community events.

The Statement of Significance in the 2012 CMP review is from the 2003 CMP by Jyoti Somerville Pty Ltd:

Maitland Town Hall is significant within the state as a quintessential representative example of late 19th century Town Hall as a functional, civic and architectural entity. [sic] More specifically, the original (1890s) building is a good example of late Victorian Neo-Classical/Italianate Town Hall, a competently handled and visually impressive exercise in this characteristic and eclectic style enhanced by the intactness of original character and fabric.

It is the best example of this building type and style within its regional setting and comparable to (though not more significant than) Town Halls of similar period and style within Sydney and other large regional centres. The Town Hall is of high local and regional significance for the evidence it provides of the growth, prosperity and regional prominence of West Maitland from the mid-19th to early 20th century, a period in which its role as a principal town of the district was confirmed. It provides evidence of the role of West Maitland in the civic governance of the local area, enhanced by its retention of original Council Chamber functions, and has important associations with key events and people in the municipal history of the area.

The Town Hall provides evidence of, and physically reinforces, the role of High Street as the dominant functional and organisational thoroughfare of the town, the organizing spine around which the major part **of Maitland's infrastructure has been erected. It is a** notable local landmark in both its immediate setting and wider views, the tower particularly serving as physical marker and identifier of civic functions.

The Town Hall Supper Room when completed in 1934 was claimed to have been finished to a high standard, including light fittings not before seen in Australia.

Social Value

Jack and Sommerville (1999) give the following outline of the Social history of the Town Hall:

The main hall of Maitland Town Hall had been intended from the start for public entertainment. In November 1889 Council had empowered Scobie the architect to 'make provision for a Drop Scene and side scenes and dressing rooms' in the Hall.⁸⁸ In April 1890 the Council wrote to the Colonial Secretary seeking to have the Hall licensed for public entertainment and proceeded to get the architects Lee and Scobie to erect a proper stage.⁸⁹ Once the stage was finally complete in 1891, the leasing of the main hall for a wide range of cultural and social events made it a focal point for West Maitland and its hinterland, as well as a useful income-earner for the Council.

Already in the 1880s West Maitland had a Philharmonic Society which was seeking to practice in the Town Hall in 1890 if the fee of a guinea (\$2.20) a night could be reduced. The Maitland Town Band and the Musical Union under the presidency of Robert Hyndes, the former Mayor who had sold the Town Hall site to the government in 1885, were also flourishing in the 1880s.

The principal musical events in the Maitland area took place in the Town Hall, but the grandest was the visit of Dame Nellie Melba. Melba sang in the Town Hall on 18 June 1909 during a country tour that took her to Forbes, Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Tamworth.

.... [see Appendix 8.3]

There were, of course, other great performers: Paderewski on the piano, probably his own also, or Nellie Stewart, who in 1911 played Nell Gwyn in Sweet Nell of Old Dart)', the play she had

made so famous in Britain, but none had quite the resonances of the greatest of all Australia's prima donnas.

There were many evenings dedicated to less high art. In 1908, for example, The Great Volteen slid down a rope from the back wall of the Hall to the stage holding a leather strap in his teeth after the civic fathers had banned him from performing the act from the Town Hall tower across High Street to the Royal Hotel. Even boxing was reluctantly allowed in the 1930s.

The stage was sought after for dramatic productions and the Council was quite businesslike. In 1914, for example, a New Zealand theatre company was told that it was Council policy not to put the Town Hall out to tender during Show Week, as the company had requested, but that the council was 'bound to let the Hall to the best company at the best price'. The Wellington company was informed pointedly that in April 1913 the hall had commanded a fee of five pounds a night for the week of the Show.

When the Maitland Repertory Society was formed in 1947 it performed its early plays in the main hall up to 1951 and again in 1956 and 1959.⁹⁸ Young John Bell, when still a schoolboy, first acted there 'in a thrilling play about the rajah's ruby'.⁹⁹ The local Gilbert and Sullivan Society has used the Town Hall for very many years and stores scenery and costumes under the stage today.

After 1934, when the Supper Hall was built, the scope for entertainment had become even broader. The first comprehensive scale of charges which survives in the Council minutes is for 1935 and is very revealing of the range of anticipated activities:

balls, using the main hall, Supper Room, kitchen, stage and cloak-room

dances, using the main hall and cloak-room

concerts, vaudevilles or stage productions, using the main hall, stage, dressing rooms and cloak-room

community singing, using the stage only

rehearsals, using the stage only

bazaars and flower-shows, using the main hall and stage and/or the Supper Room

public meetings, using the main hall and stage

religious meetings by local church organisations, using the main hall and stage.

By 1938 the Supper Room was being more extensively utilised: for dances, smoke concerts, luncheons, bazaars, flower-shows, exhibitions, public meetings and religious meetings. It had been intended from the planning stage that the Supper Room might also be used as a regular cinema, but this plan was dropped after opposition from existing exhibitors. Films nonetheless seem to have been shown from time to time.

Meetings of all sorts were held in the Town Hall from the very beginning. In November 1890 700 townsfolk met there to protest against the Council's introduction of pan toilets. A thousand people gathered in the Town Hall in 1898 to hear Edmund Barton, member for the Hunter, argue the case for the new Commonwealth constitution and he spoke again in the Town Hall in 1901, the year in which he was appointed the first Prime Minister of Australia.

Polio vaccinations created long queues from the foyer to the Supper Room in the 1950s. Meals on Wheels operated out of the Town Hall kitchen for a quarter of a century, from 1971 until 1996.

The Town Hall is still a significant venue. In the last financial year, 1998 to 1999, the hall was booked for 166 functions. Schools, church organizations, sporting clubs, commercial concerns, the local Youth Orchestra, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, numerous dance groups and major balls all occupied the hall that year, bringing in a sizable revenue to the City Council and remaining a focus for Maitland activities.

The Town Hall has been the premier social space for Maitland and its hinterland for over a century. From The Great Volteen's magnificent jaw to Melba's incomparable vocal delivery, from the blood-lust of the boxing-ring to the elegance of the annual balls, from the fledgling John Bell strutting the stage to the full-blown stardom of Nellie Stewart as Charles II's most famous mistress, there has always been something for everyone at Maitland Town Hall.

Documentation and analysis of the range of activities held in the Town Hall over the past century would be a valuable contribution to the social history of Maitland. The people of Maitland and its Hunter Valley hinterland have shared social and cultural experiences in the main hall and Supper Room and there must be many memories of what the Hall has meant to individual people coming to enjoy music, drama, general entertainment or the romantic pleasures of a glittering ball. The Town Hall has been the focus for Maitland's political life since 1890 but it has been and still is so much more than a home for local government. The Town Hall has not been static and its history reflects the dynamic of twentieth-century leisure and culture as well as public life.

Town Hall Archives Memorials and Artefacts

A list of Movable Heritage associated with Maitland Town Hall was prepared as an Appendix B to the 2012 Review of the Town Hall CMP by

Heritas¹⁵. The items covered are mainly memorials, furniture, fittings and paintings on display in the Town Hall at the time of the report.

Currently many items on display in the Town Hall have no or little information as to the provenance or significance.

The Report notes there were extensive items stored in the first floor rooms of the Council Annex. The relevant page is reproduced below. In addition to these **“Archival material and historical records, including photographs, maps and plans, rate books and other early Council documents”** there are likely to be other artefacts in the Council collection that would be of interest to the Maitland LGA community.

More artefacts may also emerge as part of the excavations for the proposed new Administration Building.

There is a need to review all of Council’s Movable Heritage Collection (including Town Hall and Administration Centre plaques, photographs, artworks etc.) to establish significance and condition and to determine an appropriate storage location. This work should be carried out in the **context of Maitland’s** Local Studies Collection and will provide the future ability to mount relevant themed curated temporary exhibitions in the public areas of the City Administration Centre.

¹⁵ Heritas (2012) Maitland Town Hall Conservation Management Plan Review


Movable Heritage Item	Council Records	Inventory No. MH.20	sheet 1 of 1
		Photograph 2012 (Heritas) 	
Description	Archival material and historical records, including photographs, maps and plans, rate books and other early Council documents. The extent and location of items is not documented.		
Current Location	TBC, although some records are stored in first floor rooms of Council Annexe (FA.01 and FA.03).		
Condition	Varying.		
Historical Notes	Provenance unknown.		
Summary of Significance	Early records are of exceptional significance to not only the Town Hall building, but to greater Maitland as a township. Their correct storage to ensure long term survival should be a priority.		
Grading of Significance	Variable, depending on item		
Management Objectives	Conserve, with the aid of archivists where necessary.		
Recommendations	1. Seek the assistance of an archivist in documenting and storing relevant materials for long term retention.		

Figure 5: Sample page from Heritas (2012) Maitland Town Hall Conservation Management Plan Review Appendix B Movable Heritage Items.

2.7 The Town Hall Café

The Town Hall Café building at 273 High Street Maitland is likely to qualify as an item of local heritage significance. It was constructed in the mid-1800s soon after an original 1837 land grant was subdivided into commercial allotments fronting Hunter Street. Recent information indicates that the two storey building may have been constructed c1860 replacing a former simple timber structure.

The building is a typical 19th century “shop-**terrace**” with a Victorian shopfront reconstructed in 1993. The upper floor would have originally been used as a residence, but the interior has been extensively altered and only the floor structure and some floor boards remain intact. The single storey verandah was a late 19th century addition and the current version is also a 1993 reconstruction.

The building was used for various shophouse uses starting with an

John Carr has prepared the following Summary Statement of Significance for the Town Hall Café¹⁶:

The building at 273 High Street Maitland is of High to Exceptional cultural significance to the City of Maitland as a rare surviving building from the 1840s as West Maitland began to grow as the preferred centre as opposed to the government planned area of East Maitland.

The building is a shop with the style keys associated with the Victorian Georgian architectural style and may have been either specifically designed for this site or taken in part from a British pattern book.

This commercial building on High Street is a rare survivor offering some insight into the gradual growth of the town in the 1840s from largely single storey buildings to two storey commercial building with ground floor shops with an upstairs residence.

¹⁶ John Carr Heritage Design “Town Hall Café 273 High Street, Maitland: Heritage Assessment”. Prepared for MCC in May 2018.



Figure 6: The Town Hall Café is the two storey building in the centre of the image of High Street West Maitland from 1868. Source National Library of Australia.



Figure 7: The Town Hall Café building in 2019 (to the left). Source: Google Streetview 2019.

3 INTERPRETATION THEMES

Maitland has a rich heritage and it is not feasible or appropriate to tell every story at every community and tourist activity node. As previously stated, this report is focused on the new City Administration Centre, however some of the themes already identified for Central Maitland are noted.

3.1 Aboriginal Heritage

The area that is now Maitland may have been a meeting place for various tribes. The development of the City Administration Centre is an appropriate time to recognise this fact including the alienation of Aboriginal land by European colonisation. More research is required into this aspect of this area of West Maitland. However some early colonial paintings clearly show Aboriginal corroborees in the Maitland area.

Aboriginal traditional land use, including making use of the vegetation and wildlife that existed prior to European colonisation, continued at least until c1860. Aboriginal cultural connections to the Maitland landscape continue to this day. More research is required into this aspect of this area of West Maitland. It may be appropriate to include this theme along the river rather than inside the City Administration project subject to community consultation.

As outlined in the Aboriginal archaeological assessment for this project by Eureka Heritage:

Aboriginal cultural heritage consists of places and items that are of significance to Aboriginal people because of their traditions, observances, lore, customs, beliefs and history. It provides evidence of the lives and existence of Aboriginal people before European settlement through to the present.

It is a dynamic principle and may comprise physical (tangible) or non-physical (intangible) elements. It includes things made and used in traditional societies, such as stone tools, art sites and ceremonial or burial grounds. It also includes more contemporary and/or historical elements such as old mission buildings, massacre sites and cemeteries. Tangible heritage is situated in a broader cultural landscape and needs to be considered in that context and in a holistic manner.

Aboriginal cultural heritage also relates to the connection and sense of belonging that people have with the landscape and with each other. For Aboriginal people, cultural heritage and cultural practices are part of both the past and the present and that cultural heritage is kept alive and strong by being part of everyday life.

This heritage is not confined to sites. It also includes peoples' memories, story-lines, ceremonies, language and 'ways of doing things' that continue to enrich local knowledge about the cultural landscape. It involves teaching and educating younger generations. It is also about learning and looking after cultural traditions and places, and passing on knowledge. It is enduring but also changing. It is ancient but also new.

Aboriginal cultural heritage provides crucial links between the past and present and therefore represents an essential part of the identities of both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal Australians.

3.2 Central Maitland Generally

The Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan identifies the following four major heritage interpretation themes for Central Maitland:

- **'The River Speaks'**
- Poverty and Prosperity
- Heroes and Villains

- Architecture

These themes form the basis for a series of town walks recommended in the CMIP.

3.3 West Maitland Commercial/Civic Area

Based on the background information for this project, this document recommends the following interpretation themes for the West Maitland Commercial and Civic Area generally:

Journeys & Communication:

- Aboriginal astronomy, journeys and communication
- Travel on the River to Newcastle or Morpeth.
- The Wallis Creek to Morpeth Track and Bridge
- The post office (in this area from 1834)
- The West Maitland to Lorn punt.
- The Railway

Poverty and Prosperity

- The River as a resource
- Stores, inns and sly grog shops
- West Maitland, being a private town and centre of commerce, had a head start on Newcastle town. In the 1841 census the Maitland area had a population of 3355, including convicts, three times that of Newcastle¹⁷.
- **The story of Maitland's** Molly Morgan (1762-1835). Born Mary Jones, Morgan was the daughter of an English rat catcher. She

¹⁷ Early Architects of the Hunter

became a convict, was transported to Australia twice, married three times, was a bigamist. By 1828, she was one of the largest landholders on the Hunter River and was later given the **unofficial title of 'Queen of the Valley'**¹⁸.

- Industries: Including cedar getting, tanning, mills, tobacco, breweries). The Pryor Plasterworks.

Civic and Cultural Life

- Aboriginal heritage and contested space (including that the area may have been a meeting place for various tribes; that Aboriginal traditional land use continued at least until c1860; and Aboriginal cultural connections continue to this day)
- First small grants – the Wallis Plains Settlement.
- Organic town form. West Maitland has an organic town form especially when compared with the formal grid of the **"Government Town" of East Maitland.**
- Local Government and civic life (including responding to wars and floods; and witnessing the community life cycles)
- Controlling the River (levees and removing the Horseshoe Bend)
- Education (both School and technical education)
- Sport
- Spirituality (including Aboriginal dreaming, Scotch Kirk (1832), Scots Church in Free Church Street 1847 etc.)
- The Arts (including architecture, theatre, fine art, cinema and literature)

¹⁸ Newcastle Herald 14 July 2018.

3.4 The City Administration Centre Site

This Strategy identifies that the Civic and Cultural Life Theme is most appropriate to this Project.

Because of the presence of the Town Hall Café and the site of the former Plasterworks the theme of Poverty and Prosperity is also relevant.

Within these major themes the following subthemes are appropriate:

Civic & Cultural Life

The major theme for this site is understandably the evolution and application of local government in Maitland, and the role of local government in fostering a strong community identity.

The presence of the Town Hall auditorium and supper room, in addition to the Council Chambers and administration functions, ensures that the site has a rich diversity of historic and contemporary events important to the whole Maitland community, and sometimes also important at a regional, state and national level.

Civic and cultural themes include:

- The changing face of the LGA geographically, socially, economically and politically
- The principles democratic representation through the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries
- Our changing norms and standards about community behaviour (noting changing Council by-laws – some of which seem absurd today)
- The role of the Lord Mayor and the changing personalities who have been in this role and their achievements
- The role of local government over time and in the community today

- Changes in what is considered good public architecture
- The changing face of community entertainment over time
- Responding to wars and floods
- Witnessing the community life cycles
- Significant events on the site including:
- Edmund Barton's speech on 17 January 1901 Barton where his campaign was opened with a speech at West Maitland Town Hall. With this speech he set out the policies and tasks ahead for the first Commonwealth parliament.
<http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/barton/elections.aspx>
- Nellie Melba's performance in 1909

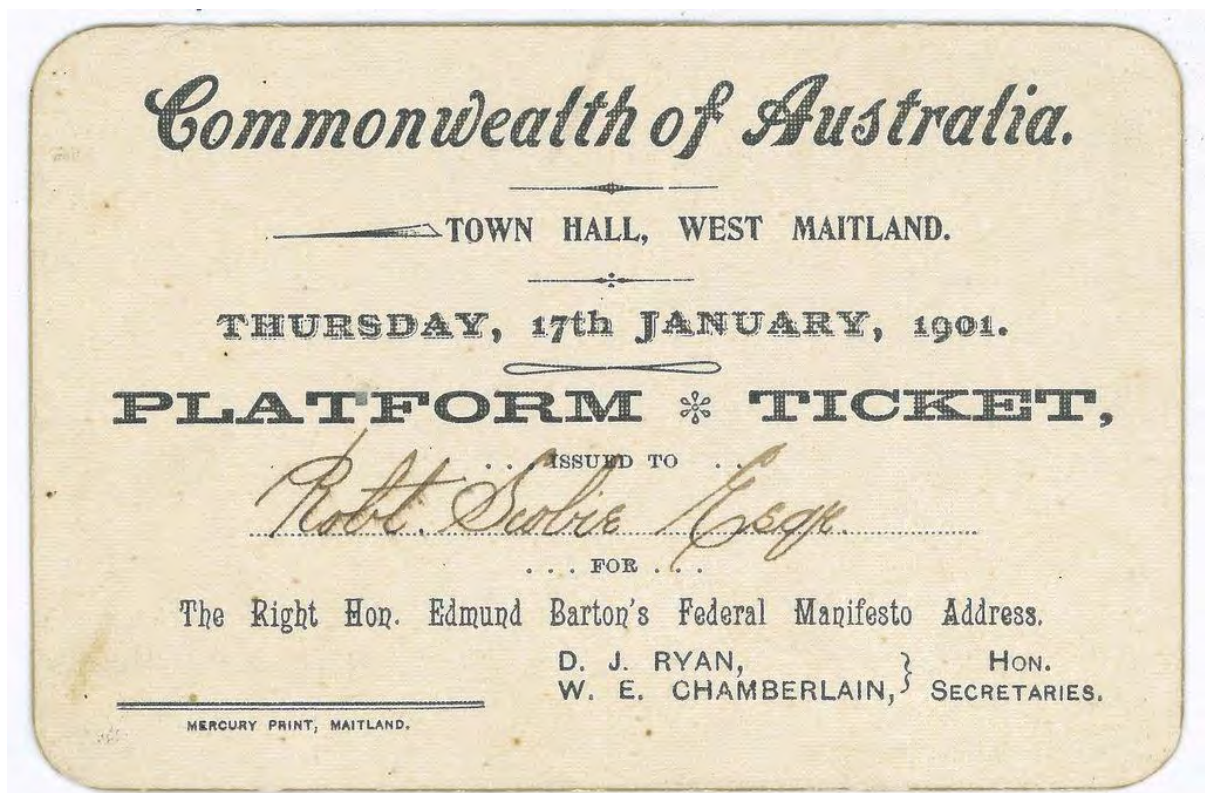


Figure 8: Ticket issued to Robert Scobie to hear Barton's "Federal Manifesto Address" at Maitland Town Hall in 1901. Source: Maitland City Library via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/98887654@N05/37735189592>



Figure 9: Cast of a performance of the Maitland Operatic and Musical Society ca. 1928. Source: Maitland City Library and the Sharkey Collection via Flickr. Image by Cameron, Maitland.

The Town Hall Café Story

The building constructed in the mid-19th century is a good vehicle to tell **the story of the commercial boom and bust of West Maitland's High Street**. When constructed the two-storey masonry shop building stood out amongst the earlier single storey commercial buildings.

By 1870 the building housed a baker and a printer and about that time it acquired the simple posted timber verandah that has today been reconstructed. Ownership of the building changed hands about 13 times over the next 100 years for various small businesses.

Maitland City Council purchased the site in 1983 with a view to creating a Maitland city administration centre. In 1990 Council supported a group of volunteers who restored the building reinforcing its place in the rich history of Maitland. In recent years the building has been used by Council for office space, however currently the building is disused.

The Pryor Plasterworks

Pryor's Plasterworks were located behind the Maitland Town Hall since the end of World War I. By 1939 it was noted that B Pryor & Son had 'executed most of the big jobs in Maitland'¹⁹. It is possible they were responsible for plasterworks during the 1930s remodeling of the Town Hall including the Supper Room.

The plasterworks survived until 1984 when it was demolished to make way for a carpark.

Future interpretation of the plasterworks site is an opportunity to celebrate the story of small business enterprises in Maitland and the **importance of traditional trades to Maitland's built heritage.**

¹⁹ Maitland Daily Mercury 26 June 1939

4 INTERPRETATION ACTIONS

Heritage Interpretation can cover a wide range of tools to tell the cultural history of a place and to contribute to its current activation.

This section of the report explores the range of possible Interpretation Actions that might be suitable for this site. **The final “Strategy” section** prioritizes those Actions considered to be most appropriate.

4.1 Maitland Interpretation Generally

The Maitland City Council is already implementing many of the recommendations in the 2014 CMIP including: the promotion of the Levee Walk; public domain improvements; school visit education programs; and the commissioning of interpretive public artworks (the Laneways Project).

It is important that heritage interpretation in Central Maitland continue to be inspired by the CMIP and other strategies and that there be informed prioritisation and coordination of heritage interpretation actions.

Recommendations

- Interpretive research and actions in relation to the new Maitland City Administration Centre should take into account all the existing relevant adopted Council Policies and Interpretation and Place Activation Projects already in train.
- Care should be taken not to overload the City Administration Centre Project and its associated public domain with interpretive information given the number of excellent initiatives for place activation, interpretive public artworks and walking tours already underway in the vicinity.

- During the development of each of the interpretation actions discussed more detailed consideration should be given to the likely audience for the interpretive works or exhibitions.
- Interpretation actions at the site now or in the future may need to be produced in consultation with the local Aboriginal community.

4.2 Off Site Actions

O1 Website/s

Maitland City Council are already committed to the communication of heritage and culture of the region and the Town Hall site via their various websites. For example see

<https://www.maitlandlibrary.com.au/discover/local-history/buildings-and-bridges/buildings/maitland-town-hall>.

Elsewhere in this document the production of interpretive videos is recommended that should be made available via the website in addition to being shown on site.

O2 Digital Archives

It is important that MCC continue to provide access to electronic archival material on the history and cultural heritage of the Maitland LGA to inform current and future understanding of heritage values and to provide for future research and interpretation projects.

O3 Publications & Educational Material

As new heritage research and documentation is produced relevant to the history of Maitland it should be published electronically and made available via the relevant website/s.

A Published History of Maitland's Civic Life

There is potential for a glossy publication on the history and heritage of Maitland's civic precinct centred on the Town Hall and the Administration Centre. The publication could utilise some of the outstanding archival material of the Town Hall and its surroundings, including performances and flooding over the years. The social significance of the site should take equal precedence to other aspects of heritage significance.

Education Resources

Maitland City Council has already developed free resources in consultation with education specialists **"to guide the discovery of Maitland's** extraordinary history and places. Experiences and information are offered using a range of digital and site based tools including an iBook, app, brochure guides and signage"²⁰. The two resource areas currently developed are:

- The Walka Water Works
- Early Settlers of the Wallis Plains

Further History and Heritage Educational Kits could be developed for schools utilising themes appropriate to NSW Key Learning Areas and encouraging excursions that use the proposed Central Maitland walking trails and other cultural activities.

Resources could also be developed for adult cultural excursions.

05 Commissioning Interpretive Films

There are some existing themes and stories and archival images and films that pertain to the rich cultural heritage of Maitland.

²⁰ <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/education-programs/heritage-education-programs>

These can be edited to create some exciting films around key themes. In addition to the usual narration, such films should include voice over first person stories and where appropriate interpretive animations (video art). See for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UToptGN4990> and <https://vimeo.com/160024074>

A more graphic video art animation with strong contrasting visuals may be more suitable for an external projection (such as on the wall of the **Town Hall Café**). See for example the **Todd Fuller video creation "How to Raise a Siren"** <https://www.mayspace.com.au/work-enlarge/todd-fuller/how-raise-siren-hand-drawn-film> .

Such video films could interpret for example:

- the importance of the River and its Floods to Maitland
- the performance history of the Town Hall with its key historical events (including Nellie Melba)
- the Town Hall as a centre of community response to war and disaster.

The films could be made available:

- On the website
- Projected on the east elevation of the Town Hall Cafe
- In the proposed Town Hall Supper Room History Theatre.
- On flat screen TVs in the foyer and waiting areas.

Further research would be necessary to bring out the authentic stories, for example about Molly Morgan.

Commissioning of such short interpretive videos could be via a competition during the Heritage Festival.

O6 Managing Council's Movable Heritage

A list of Movable Heritage associated with Maitland Town Hall was prepared as an Appendix B to the 2012 Review of the Town Hall CMP by Heritas²¹. The items covered are mainly memorials, furniture, fittings and paintings on display at the time of the report. The Report also notes that there were extensive items stored in the first floor rooms of the Council Annex. In addition to these **"Archival material and historical records, including photographs, maps and plans, rate books and other early Council documents"** there are likely to be other movable heritage items in the Council collection, but not listed in the Heritas report that would be of interest to the Maitland LGA community.

More artefacts may also emerge as part of the excavations for the proposed new Administration Building.

Recommendations

- Attention needs to be paid to the conservation management of **Council's archives and moveable heritage collections.**
- **There is a need to review all of Council's Movable Heritage Collection** (including Town Hall and Administration Centre plaques, photographs, artworks etc.) **in the context of Council's Local Studies Strategy** to establish significance and condition and to determine an appropriate storage location. This work greatly assist future curated temporary displays and exhibitions within the new City Administration Centre (including the Town Hall public foyers).
- A review of the historical narrative of the City Administration site is required to bring together the many areas of research relating to its history. This review should be seen as a catalyst

²¹ Heritas (2012) Maitland Town Hall Conservation Management Plan Review

for on-line and hard copy publications about the history of the site.

- Future research is recommended into the characters and achievements of the various mayors and pertinent events during their term of office. This would begin as a web based information but may also inform a future publication on the History of Maitland City Council.
- A brief for at least one video art project for projection on the south wall of the Town Hall Café should be prepared and the project funded and completed within the next two years.

4.3 Surrounding Interpretation Actions

The following analysis represents some of the interpretation actions that are already existing or under consideration in the surrounding area. The number of actions already under consideration demonstrates that it is prudent to be careful not to overburden the public buildings and spaces of this area of Maitland with too many initiatives.



Figure 10: Approximate locations of some of the likely off site interpretation actions.

LEGEND

- | | |
|---|--|
| C1. The Levee Walk | C5 Gallery & Sculpture Garden |
| C2. High Street Walk | C6. Sun Street "Prosperity" Art Installation |
| C3. Station to Town Hall & Gallery Walk | C7. Coffin Lane "Poverty" Art Installation |
| C4. Horseshoe Bend | C8. Sportsground Interpretation |

C1 The Levee

The development of the Levee area further to the west along Hunter Street as an interpretation and visitor experience node is promoted in the **CMIP and elsewhere. With the completion of the "Link" building between Hunter Street and the Levee the investment in this project is being realised with increased activity on the Levee.**

It can now be confidently predicted that this activity can be encouraged to continue along the Levee through landscaping, wayfinding and **interpretation to connect a "walk" for visitors and locals from the shopping precinct of Central Maitland to the civic precinct around the Town Hall via the Levee and possibly incorporating an interpretive experience at Horseshoe Bend and the Maitland sportsfields along the way.**

C2. High Street

With appropriate continuation of street improvements including landscaping, wayfinding and interpretive installations and markers the High Street has great potential to be revitalized as a pedestrian route or heritage trail for visitors and locals, making a loop with the Levee walk.

C3. Station to Town Hall & Gallery Walk

There is potential to encourage regional visitation to Maitland via train.

Developing a landscaped walk between the Station and the Town Hall and Art Gallery would facilitate travel to Maitland via train for events and cultural exploration.

C4. Horseshoe Bend

Maitland City Library is developing a Horseshoe Bend “app” drawing on content from a **“Look Who’s Talking” Maitland** local history event²².

With appropriate low-key civil works and indigenous landscaping the more urban walk along the levee could continue as longer recreational trail along what was once the bends of the Hunter River.

Such a trail will also provide great opportunities for interpretation of Local Aboriginal culture and the early days of river transport.

C5. The Maitland Regional Gallery & Sculpture Garden

The Gallery is already a major visitor and community destination and meeting place. The landscaping, street furniture and signage in this area of Hunter Street should strengthen the pedestrian connection between the Gallery, the Town Hall, the City Administration Building and (in future) the surrounding transport, civic, recreational and cultural nodes such as the Sportsground, Horseshoe Bend and the Railway Station.

The Sculpture Garden to the east to the Gallery has not been fully realized. It is likely that at least some future sculptures will have heritage interpretative content relevant to Maitland. The fencing along Hunter Street needs to be altered so that the sculpture garden is a welcome public space.

²² Personal comment Clare James, Heritage Officer Maitland City Council 27/03/2019.

The Maitland Regional Art Gallery has an Art and Heritage audio tour of “the art and history that make the Art Gallery a unique cultural site”. The **content draws on artists’ voices, oral histories**, historical documents, and old and new photographs. Available at reception desk, and as a free app²³.

C6. Sun Street Art Installation

The proposed “Prosperity” art installation in Sun Street is directly across the road from the Town Hall and will hopefully provide increased activation of the street.

C7. Coffin Lane Art Installation

The proposed “Poverty” art installation in Coffin Lane is remote from the subject site but is mentioned here because it is thematically relevant to the “Poverty and Prosperity” theme, balancing the “Prosperity” theme of the proposed installation at Sun Street above. It is intended that the two art installations be connected by a walking tour.

C8. Sportsground Interpretation

There is a rich history of local sport that can be told at the Sportsground in addition to the stories connected with the taming of the Hunter River at this point by the removal of the Horseshoe Bend creating the green areas of where the sportsgrounds are situated.

There have been previous recommendations for interpretive works at the Sportsground and these should be reconsidered during any new major works in the Sportsground precinct.

²³ Maitland Regional Gallery Website <http://mrag.org.au/whats-on/art-and-heritage-tour/2018-12-20/> accessed 28/03/2019.

Recommendations

- Interpretive research and actions in relation to the new Maitland City Administration Centre should take into account all the existing relevant adopted Council Policies and Interpretation and Place Activation Projects already in train.
- Care should be taken not to overload the City Administration Centre Project with interpretive information given the number of excellent initiatives for place activation, interpretive public artworks and walking tours already underway in the vicinity.

4.4 On-Site Interpretation Actions

4.4.1 Maitland City Administration Centre Project

After consultation with the client and consultant team for the Maitland City Administration Centre it was decided to limit on site interpretation to the following Interpretation Actions.

LEGEND

EXTERNALLY

- E1. The Flagpoles
- E2. TH Café Wall Projection
- E3. Wayfinding Nodes Indicative Positions
- E4. Town Hall History Sign

INTERNALLY

- I1 Foyer Display Wall
- I2 Foyer Artwork
- I3 TH Foyer/s Exhibition Spaces

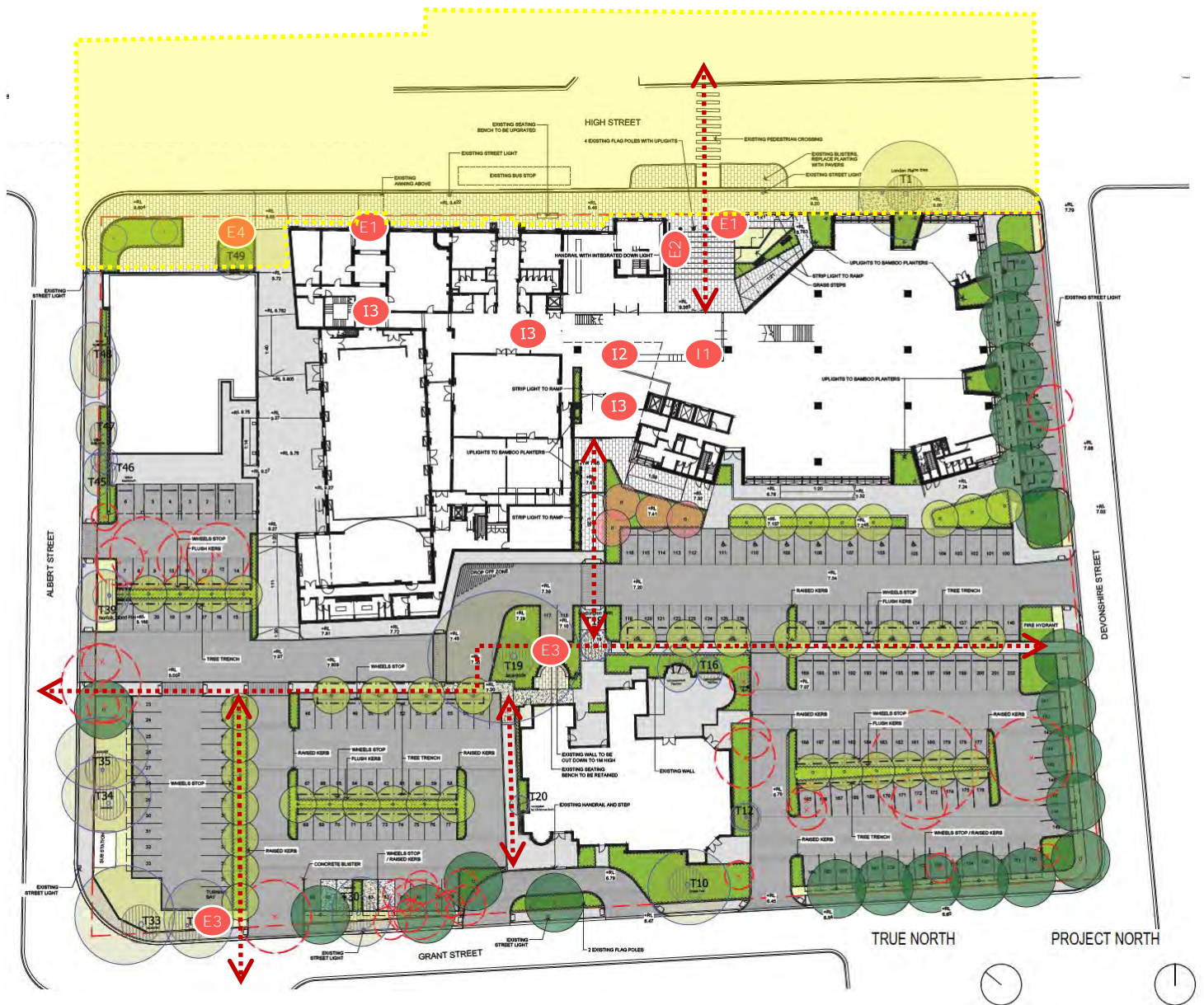


Figure 11: Ground Floor and surrounding public domain of the City Administration Centre showing approximate locations for Interpretive Actions. The separate “High Street Public Domain Improvement Project” is shaded yellow. Source: BVN Architects.



Figure 12: First Floor of the City Administration Centre showing approximate locations for Interpretive Actions. Source: BVN Architects.

E1 The Flagpoles & The Coat of Arms

The Flagpoles proposed for the front entrance of the new Administration Building are a good indication that this is a public building and a centre of civic life. The types of flags flown, and their positions are indications of civic milestones.

There will be 4 flagpoles outside the new Administration Centre and existing flagpoles on the 1890s Town Hall Building. The Maitland City

Flag (current version dated 2018) is flown on the pole accessed from the terrace above the main entrance of the 1890s Town Hall.

Maitland City Council has a “Flying of Flags” Policy²⁴ dated 2018 which may need review following the completion of the new administration centre. However the presence of the flags means that there is no need to further load the site with symbols of Government and the City Council.

The existing flagpoles outside the old administration centre on the corner with Albert Street will be removed.

The symbolism of the Maitland Flag features the Maitland Coat of Arms which is described as follows²⁵:

The Maitland Coat of Arms has a white field, with a wavy blue fess containing a golden hunter's bow (representing the Hunter River). Above the fess are two golden sheaves (agriculture), below a gold bee (industry). There is a green border with six open books (schools and colleges) with white pages and golden borders (wealth). The supporters are two egrets (birds of the wetlands around the city) with mural crowns on their necks, standing on a compartment of brown alluvial soil (from those wetlands) with a ribbon bearing the motto. **The Maitland City Council’s official motto is “Justitia et Fortitudo Invincibilia Sunt”, broadly interpreted as “Justice and Fortitude are Invincible”.**

The presence of the Flags is included in this report as they are a form of civic interpretation that should be considered to ensure that the site is not overloaded with commemorative and interpretive actions.

²⁴ <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/governance-and-transparency/policies>

²⁵ <https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/heraldrywiki/index.php?title=Maitland>



Figure 13: The position for the Flag for the City of Maitland on the Town Hall.



Figure 14: The current design of the flag for the City of Maitland. Source: MCC



Figure 15: The Maitland Coat of Arms. Source: MCC

E2 TH Café Wall Projection

The east facing wall of the Town Hall Café is rendered masonry and has been used in the past for temporary murals. This area is a great place to **realise some of the Council's ideas about place based** activation through short animated interpretive video artworks projected onto this blank wall of the Café.

The running of such interpretive videos could be interspersed with projections that advertise events related to the City Administration Centre **(including what's on in the Town Hall)**.

For such video material to work as daytime projections there would have to be a high degree of contrast in the video or still projections. **See for example the Todd Fuller video creation "How to Raise a Siren"** <https://www.mayspace.com.au/work-enlarge/todd-fuller/how-raise-siren-hand-drawn-film>

It is understood the adjacent landscaping will include some informal landscape areas from which a short animated projection could be watched.

Such short animated video films could interpret for example:

- the importance of the River and its Floods to Maitland
- the performance history of the Town Hall with its key historical events (including Nellie Melba)
- the Town Hall as a centre of community response to war and disaster.

It has been suggested for example that a dynamic video and soundscape could show the rising of the river water up the wall to the levels of all the different significant flood events. Black and white animations could show the hardships and resilience of the community during the floods based on archival material. The video could begin with the pre-colonisation appearance of the River and its Aboriginal cultural connections (Figure 16).



Figure 16: A preliminary sketch of the Maitland Council Administration Centre project looking west down Hunter Street. The image shows the prominence of the eastern side wall of the Town Hall Café building at the main entrance to the new Administration Building. Source: BVN Architects 2019.



Figure 17: Image from the MCC Laneway Project demonstrating the how short animated projections can activate the public realm at night. Source: MCC 2018.

E3 Wayfinding Nodes

The City Administration Centre is at the hub of various transport and pedestrian routes in West Maitland. It appropriate that the landscape design consider wayfinding nodes that may incorporating both maps and other signage. Such wayfinding has been successfully used in the commercial area of Maitland near the new **“Link” Building**.

There is an opportunity to incorporate way finding signage within the project site. Such wayfinding signage may also incorporate interpretive **information about the history of the larger site such as Pryor’s Plasterworks** and other historical uses.

Indicative locations only have been shown on Figure 9. Positioning, content and design of such signage will be subject to detailed landscape design and construction documentation for the project following DA approval.



Figure 18: Example of a wayfinding signage pillar that may also incorporate some heritage interpretation either below the precinct map or on the reverse of the sign.

Source:

<http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/wayfinding/>

I1 Public Artwork for the Foyer

It is appropriate that the main foyer of the proposed new City Administration Building have a public art installation that celebrates the character of Maitland.

Maitland Council's Public Art Policy provides the following guidelines for public art:

Council will identify and give priority to new projects and programs which demonstrate consistency with the stated objectives of this policy. In addition to the policy objectives, the criteria below form the basis by which all public art proposals will be assessed.

Council will consider new public art proposals that:

- **Contribute to the revitalisation of Maitland as a vibrant, interesting place to live, work and visit;**
- **Increase the education and appreciation of the arts** for residents and visitors;
- **Contribute to the diversity of art forms and explore ideas and issues** relevant to Maitland and its community;
- **Demonstrate thoughtful site selection and responds positively** to the site and its context;
- **Through** innovative design, reflect the historic, cultural and social character of Maitland and represent the aspirations of the community;
- **Celebrate the influence that the local indigenous and multi-cultural communities have in shaping Maitland's identity;**
- **Seek** opportunities to integrate permanent or temporary public artworks through Council and community projects and programs, such as the annual events and festivals; and

- Provide opportunities for regional artists to work in partnership with private, public and community stakeholders.

It has been suggested that an artwork in the floor of the main entrance may be appropriate to interpret the overall context of the LGA today and its Aboriginal and European history. For example see Figure 18.

Recommendation:

- A public art installation should be commissioned for the foyer of the proposed new City Administration Centre that celebrates the unique character of Maitland.



Figure 19: The Great Map on the main floor of History Colorado Center. The 12 x 24 metre terrazzo tile map of Colorado was created by artist Steven Weitzman and serves as both a work of art and an interpretive experience. Source: Photo By Hyoung Chang/The Denver Post via Getty Images.

12 Foyer Display

BVN architects have nominated a display area in the main entrance foyer off Hunter Street where there could be a changing display of artefacts. In particular the display would at times include artefacts and memorabilia from the MCC Movable Heritage Collection.



Figure 20: Totu Otago Settlers Museum Dunedin. Source Open Minds Open Museums 2019.



Figure 21: This display case shows how architecturally designed cabinets can be created to have a range of changing object displays. Damien Hirst from "A Collection of Vessels from the Wreck of the "Unbelievable"". Source: American Journal of Archaeology © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd.

13 TH Foyer/s Exhibition Space

The new City Administration Building and the existing Town Hall foyer areas can be utilised for changing exhibitions of historic images or artworks. At times the curated exhibition would include images and artworks from the MCC movable collection and archives. At other times it could include exhibitions associated with life in contemporary Maitland or the results of Council run art competitions.

This recommendation means that many of the artefacts that have been displayed in the past would need to be researched, catalogued and stored to free up wall space for such changing exhibitions and to enable those artefacts to be more meaningfully displayed in temporary exhibitions in the future.

Recommendations

Recommendations:

- Positioning, content and design of wayfinding signage will be subject to detailed landscape design and construction documentation for the project following DA approval. Such signage may include some interpretive content about the history of the **site such as the former Pryor's Plasterworks.**
- The presence of the flags flying outside of the Maitland Town Hall be considered when assessing the amount of interpretive actions being considered for the site.
- Information on the design of the flag and coat of arms for the City of Maitland should continue to be made readily available **on the Council's website.**
- A brief for a public artwork associated with the main foyer of the Town Hall should be developed and the project funded within the next two years.

- The ability to project onto the wall of the café needs to be incorporated into the detailed design of the proposed new City Administration Building.
- The interior design of the Foyer of the New Administration Centre should include a facility for changing curated displays **of the Council’s moveable heritage collection.**
- Should any archaeological artefacts be approved for excavation and conservation during the City Administration Project such artefacts may be the subject of one of the first exhibitions in the facility.
- All the public circulation areas of the City Administration Project (both new building and the Town Hall) should be considered as a venue for changing curated displays of the **Council’s art collection and other exhibitions relevant to the work of the Council.**
- **A review of the cataloguing and storage of the Council’s** moveable heritage collection is required to meet current best practice and to facilitate future changing curated exhibitions.

4.5 Future Public Domain Improvements

The following actions are noted for future consideration as part of the “High Street public domain improvements plan” **which is under** development. These possible actions will be considered as part of that development.

E4 Town Hall history sign

The west façade of the 1890s Town Hall building faces a small plaza that is likely to be re-landscaped in the **associated “Public Domain Improvements Project” for High Street** currently in development.

This location is marked as E4 on Figure 9 above.

This is an appropriate place for graphic signage that tells the story of the Town Hall building and why it is important to the City of Maitland. The sign would have links to website leading to more information and walking tours etc.

A cabinet for posters stating “What’s On at the Town Hall” would also be appropriate in this location and could be incorporated into the signage structure.



Figure 22: The current view to the side of the Town Hall when approached along Hunter Street. The current landscaping in front of the existing Council administration building is being revised in the **“Public Domain Improvements Project currently in development**. A sign interpreting the heritage value of the Town Hall would be appropriate as approximately indicated by the red shape. Source: Google Streetview 2019.



Figure 23: Interpretation sign at the Sagrada Família in Barcelona Spain. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/189010515581640923/> Image by Amanda Cooley.

Recommendations

- The interpretation strategies in this report should inform the integration of heritage interpretation actions across the surrounding precincts.
- **The “Public Domain Improvements Project”** currently in development for High Street adjacent to the Town Hall and the Art Gallery should allow for signage interpreting the heritage value of the Town Hall in the plaza area to the west of the Town Hall (Figure 22).

5 THE STRATEGY

This final section of the report contains the recommended strategic approach to heritage interpretation associated with the Maitland City Administration Centre and the wider West Maitland civic precinct.

5.1 Generally

Relevant existing Council policies, strategies & projects

1. Interpretive research and actions in relation to the new Maitland City Administration Centre Project should consider all the existing relevant adopted Council Policies and Interpretation and Place Activation Projects already in train.
2. Care should be taken not to overload the City Administration Centre project area with interpretive information given the number of excellent initiatives for place activation, interpretive public artworks and walking tours already underway in the vicinity of the Centre and surrounding precinct.

Know the audience

3. During the development of each of the interpretation actions discussed more detailed consideration should be given to the likely audience for the interpretive works or exhibitions.

Aboriginal consultation

4. Interpretation actions at the site now or in the future may need to be produced in consultation with the local Aboriginal community.

5.2 Interpretation & the Current City Administration Centre Proposal

The following interpretation actions should be incorporated into the detailed design of the Maitland City Centre Project, including architectural, landscape and interior design:

Wayfinding

5. The positioning, content and design of wayfinding signage within the project area will be subject to detailed landscape design and construction documentation for the project following DA approval. Consideration should be given to such signage may including some interpretive content about the **history of the site such as the former Pryor's Plasterworks.**

Flagpoles

6. The presence of the flags flying outside of the Maitland Town Hall be considered when assessing the amount of interpretive actions being considered for the site.
7. Information on the design of the flag and coat of arms for the City of Maitland should continue to be made readily available **on the Council's website.**

Ability to display artefacts

8. The interior design of the Foyer of the New Administration Centre should include a facility for changing curated displays **of the Council's moveable heritage collection.**

9. Should any archaeological artefacts be approved for excavation and conservation during the City Administration Project such artefacts may be the subject of one of the first exhibitions in the facility.

Display / exhibition space

10. All the public circulation areas of the City Administration Project (both new building and the Town Hall) should be considered as a venue for changing curated displays of the **Council's art collection** and other exhibitions relevant to the work of the Council.
11. A review of the cataloguing and storage of the **Council's** movable heritage collection is required to meet current best practice and to facilitate future changing curated exhibitions.

Public artwork

12. A brief for a public artwork associated with the main foyer of the Town Hall should be developed and the project funded within the next two years.

Town Hall Café wall video projection

13. The ability to project onto the wall of the café needs to be incorporated into the detailed design of the proposed new City Administration Building.

Town Hall interpretation sign

14. A brief should be developed for the design of an interpretation sign for the plaza to the west of the Town Hall containing key information about the significance of the building and illustrated with historic images. As this plaza is

likely to be redesigned as part of the **associated “public domain improvements” project**, the Town Hall interpretation sign should be funded and realised as part of those works.

5.3 Future Considerations

Council archives & movable heritage

15. Resources need to be applied to the conservation **management of Council’s** historic archives and moveable heritage collections found within the Town Hall, current Administration Centre building and elsewhere. This will greatly assist future curated temporary displays and exhibitions within the new City Administration Centre (including the Town Hall public foyers).

Development of video art for the Town Hall Café wall

16. A brief for at least one video art project for projection on the south wall of the Town Hall Café should be prepared and the project funded and completed within the next two years.

Further research for future publication

This report has identified some areas for further research for eventual **publication on the Council’s website, and possibly in the future** informing a hard copy publication on the history of the Council and the Town Hall:

17. A review of the historical narrative of the whole City Administration site is required to bring together the many areas of research relating to its history.

18. Future research is recommended into the characters and achievements of the various mayors and pertinent events during their term of office. This would begin as a web based information but may also inform a future publication on the History of Maitland City Council.

Future interpretation in the wider precinct

19. The interpretation strategies in this report should inform the integration of heritage interpretation actions across the surrounding public domain.

6 REFERENCES

AMAC (2018) Historical Research 273 High Street Maitland (TH Café) for John Carr Architect.

Artscape (December 2016) "Maitland Place Activation Strategy"

British Pathé (Published on 13 Apr 2014) Selected originals (offcuts, selected scenes, out-takes, rushes) for story "Australia's Flood Havoc" - 55/20.

Eureka Heritage (January 2019) Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – Preliminary Archaeological Assessment Proposed Council Administration Building. Prepared for Maitland City Council.

Eureka Heritage (February 2019) Heritage and Archaeological Assessment Proposed Council Administration Building. Prepared for Maitland City Council.

Eureka Heritage & Caste Studio (2014) Central Maitland Archaeological Management Plan: Volume 1: Study Report.

Heritas (2012) Maitland Town Hall CMP Review.

Hunter, C. (2008) "Hearths and Homes Maitland Architecture - 19 Decades of Residential Design".

Jack, I. and Sommerville, J. (1999) Maitland Town Hall Historical Study.

Jean Rice Architect (2015) Statement of Heritage Impact: Maitland Town Hall.

John Carr Heritage Design "Town Hall Café 273 High Street, Maitland: Heritage Assessment". Prepared for MCC in May 2018.

Maitland City Council (2018) "Open Museums Open Minds Final Study"

Maitland City Council (Dec 2016) Place Activation Strategy

Maitland City Council (2009) Central Maitland Structure Plan (CMSP).

Maitland City Council (2010) Public Art Policy

Maitland City Council (nd) Previous Mayors [of Maitland].

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/about-council/councillors/previous-mayors>

Nolan, M (2019) Written Research Document Project 2 “Melba in Maitland” unpublished document prepared for the Natural History course at the University of Newcastle.

Reedman, L. (2008) *Early Architects of the Hunter Region: 100 Years to 1940*. Reedman and Walker NSW

Remplan Community Profiles (2019)

Remplan Economic Profiles (2019)

Sue Hodges Productions (SHP) (March 2014) “Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan” completed for MCC (CMIP).

Willets, J. The Free Settler or Felon database accessed 30/03/2019.

https://www.jenwilletts.com/newcastle_in_1826.htm

7 APPENDIX A: TIME LINES

7.1 Maitland City Council

1820	West Maitland began as a private town.	
1844	The District Council in 1844 debated the issue of education and proposed that a non-sectarian public school system be adopted. Instead, by 1848 four denominational schools were reported in West Maitland, namely: Church of England, Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist and Roman Catholic.	Maitland Mercury, 1 November 1848, p. 4.
1860s	The local council stipulated minimum widths for all streets and footpaths	Hunter, Horseshoe Bend Maitland, p. 17
1860s	Council provided public swimming facilities with separate hours for men and women; fines applied to those who swam at the wrong time.	
1861	West Maitland had a population of 5,694.	Hunter, 'Nos 338 and 340 High St', p. 4.
1863	The West Maitland Municipal Council was formed, and in that same year the railhead at Singleton began to reduce the flow of traffic through the High St.	Turner, The Rise of High Street, p. 12.
1864	Major Flood	
1865	Morpeth Municipality proclaimed.	Illustrated Sydney News Supplement, 7th September 1878.
1867	Major Flood	
1870	Major Flood. Wallis Creek Floodgates fail.	
1870s	The Council invested in flood boats and volunteer training and a Maitland Water Brigade was formed with a boat shed at the end of Odd St.	Hunter, Central Maitland Riverside Precinct, p. 61 & Hunter, Horseshoe Bend Maitland, pp. 23-24 & p. 27. After the river changed course new boat sheds were built at the end of Owen St.
1870s	'Floating baths' were built at the foot of Odd St. The 'old sandy point bathing place' was also referred to south of Carrington (then Government) St.	
1878	"The present population of the police district of Maitland is estimated at 17,000 souls. Of these over 2,200 reside at East Maitland, and about 7,000 live in the town of West Maitland."	Illustrated Sydney News Supplement, 7th September 1878.
1878	"twenty-six places of worship, and there are two railway stations"	Illustrated Sydney News Supplement, 7th September 1878.
1885	The name, Maitland, was reported in 1885 to have had its name taken 'from Sir George Maitland, ... Under Secretary for the	

	Colonies, and M.P. for the Borough of Whitchurch, in Hampshire, England'	
1890	The Town Hall opened.	Sydney mail 26 April 1890
1893	Major Flood	
1901	Improvements to the Town Hall completed including new stage area.	
1934	New Supper Room and TH Annex (Administration Block) finished to Town Hall	
1944	Municipality of Maitland incorporated.	
1945	City of Maitland proclaimed. The city's boundaries have since been increased by incorporating parts of other local government areas (most notably Kearsley Shire which from 1946 to 1949 was the only local government area in Australia's history to have a Communist majority of councilors).	
1955	Major Flood	
1963	City of Maitland Coat of Arms registered.	
1965	Additional storey added to TH annex	
1984	Pryor Plasterworks demolished for carparking.	

7.2 Mayors of Maitland

In 1944 West Maitland, East Maitland and Morpeth were merged as the City of Maitland. For this information from the Maitland City Council website²⁶, it is unclear if the mayors of the previous council areas of Morpeth and East Maitland are included.

A recommendation of this report is for future research into the characters and achievements of the various mayors and pertinent events during their term of office. This would begin as a web based information but may also inform a future publication on the History of Maitland City Council.

DATES	MAYOR
1863 - 1866	W H Mullen
1867	W H Mullen & John Lee
1868	John Lee
1869	W H Mullen

²⁶ MCC <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/about-council/councillors/previous-mayors>

DATES	MAYOR
1870 – 1871	W H Smith
1870 – 1873	W H Mullen
1874 – 1875	W H Smith
1876	H S Badgery
1877	J Wolstenholme
1878	John Lee
1879	Alderman James
1880 – 1881	J Fullford
1882	J J Riley
1883	James Pritchard
1884	Alex Wilkinson
1885 – 1886	Robert Hyndes
1887	Robert Hyndes & Alex Wilkinson
1888	Dr R J Pierce
1889 – 1890	John Gillies
1891 – 1893	R J Young
1894 – 1897	Henry Crothers
1898 – 1899	Alex Wilkinson
1900 – 1901	T J Ribee
1902 – 1903	Dr Frank Liddell
1904	Colonel Wilkinson
1905	W Mc Laughlin
1906	W J Enright
1907 - 1910	Major Walter Cracknell
1911	F W Thursby
1912 - 1913	W Mc Laughlin
1914 - 1916	C J Mannall
1917 - 1918	J B Thompson
1919	Major Walter Cracknell
1920 - 1923	H W Fry
1924	H W Fry & J H F Waller
1925 - 1926	J H F Waller
1929 - 1930	R L Pender
1927 - 1928	H W Fry
1931 - 1935	A S McDonald
1936	H W Fry

DATES	MAYOR
1937	E Morris
1938 - 1939	A S Mc Donald
1940	E C Scarlett & A S Mc Donald
1941 - 1944	J V Kenedy
5.7.1944	Municipality of Maitland Incorporated
1945	A S McDonald
7.12.1945	City of Maitland Proclaimed
1946 - 1947	H T Skilton
1948 - 1949	F O Fahey
1950	A S McDonald
1951 - 1952	J Harvey
1953	M J Clyde
1954	F O Fahey
1955 - 1956	A S McDonald OBE
1957 - 1965	H T Skilton
1966 - 1967	W J Harvey
1968	J G Wolstenholme
1969	W J Harvey
1970 - 1972	W R Walsh
1973 - 1978	Cr Noel Unicomb
1979 - 1983	Cr W R (Ron) Walsh
1984 - 1985	Cr K W Guy
1986	Cr P J Hughes
1986 - 1990	Cr Peter Blackmore
1990	Cr Ray Fairweather
1991	Cr Graham Dunkley
1992 - 1993	Cr R C (Bob) Gee
1994 - Sept 1997	Cr John Martin
September 1997 - November 1997	Cr Henry Meskauskas
September 1999 - March 2004	Cr Peter Blackmore
March 2004 - September 2008	Cr Peter Blackmore
2008 - 2012	Cr Peter Blackmore
2012 - 2017	Cr Peter Blackmore OAM
2017 -	Cr Loretta Baker

7.3 Maitland Town Hall

This Chronology of Events for Maitland Town Hall was included in the Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Jean Rice for proposed changes to the Maitland Town Hall in 2015.

Date	Event	Source
1822	Survey of the area by Henry Dangar	Jack & Somerville p1
1823	Seven year lease to Patrick Maloney. Extent of buildings unknown	Jack & Somerville p1
1830	Erection of the Maitland Inn	Jack & Somerville p2
1878	Justice Hotel opened	Jack & Somerville p2
1855	Justice Hotel purchased, intended as site for new Courthouse	Jack & Somerville p3
1885	ARTHUR C. LEE, ARCHITECT, Formerly of London, and late of the Public School Department, WILL SHORTLY COMMENCE PRACTICE, Office OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS, High-street.	Maitland Mercury 6 June 1885
26 January 1888	The foundation stone of the West Maitland Town Hall is to be laid during the centennial week.	Queanbeyan Age, 18 Jan 1888 Maitland Mercury 24 Jan 1888
August 1888	Grant from State Government	Jack & Somerville p4
July 1888	Lee and Scobie enter into partnership as architects	Maitland Mercury 7 July 1888
July 1888	Delay in obtaining title for the land promised by Government	Evening News 4 July 1888
October 1888	Local architects, Lee and Scobie of West Maitland, win design competition for Town Hall. Second Prize J W Pender	Newcastle Herald 30 October 1888
March 1889	Corner Stone Laid	Maitland Mercury 26 Feb 1889
March 1890	Town Hall opened	Sydney Mail 26 April 1890 & Clarence & Richmond Examiner, 8 March 1890
June 1890	Tender called for Stage & Dressing Rooms, Lee & Scobie, Architects Construction recorded in Scobie's Day Book	Maitland Mercury, 28 June 1890
July 1891	Partnership between Arthur Lee and J Warren Scobie expired	Maitland Mercury 4 July 1891
c. 1891	View of High Street, Maitland showing original configuration of the roof lantern	ML
1893	Maitland Town Hall had two feet of water in it.	The Australasian, 18 March 1893
May 1893	Tenders called for painting and alterations, West Maitland Town Hall, by J Warren Scobie, Architect	Maitland Mercury, 28 June 1890
October 1893	Tenders to repair flood damage to Town Hall	Maitland Mercury, 19 October 1893
September 1897	Tenders for Painters Work, West Maitland Town Hall, architect J Warren Scobie	Maitland Mercury, 18 September 1897
June 1901	Improvements to Maitland Town Hall. Alterations to Proscenium & Stage by architects Pender & Silk (J W Pender Archive)	Newcastle Morning Herald & Schedule of Works by Pender Practice held by University of Newcastle
August 1901	Recent alterations to stage mentioned	Maitland Mercury, 3 August 1901

1905	Explosion at Maitland Town Hall Gasometer to cinematograph exploded Damage to hall, gas sunights &c	Singleton Argus 18 July 1905 Port Macquarie News 22 July 1905 Richmond River Advertiser 28 July 1905
1909	Anderson Dramatic Company fined under theatres & public halls act. People standing in main passage. Hall too small, needs dress circle.	Newcastle Morning Herald 28 September 1909
1909	Competition for remodelling West Maitland Town Hall. Won by architects Eaton & Bates	SMH 5 October 1909
1909	Tenterfield to write to Maitland to ask about fire box in town hall (for cinematograph shows)	Tenterfield Intercolonial, 17 September 1909

Date	Event	Source
1909	Earth filling at side of Town Hall, to be asphalted. Renovate Council Chambers. Outer side of doors and windows to sides and rear of hall to be painted. Fire plug box on stage	Newcastle Morning Herald 11 Dec 1909
By 1909	Vesta Gaslight Co. Patent system of duplicated pilots. Worked from stage. Maitland Town Hall and the Municipality of Glebe	SMH 26 August 1909
1911	Proposal to alter Maitland Town Hall. Plan by architects Eaton and Bates. For new stage, fly tower, dressing room and dress circle	Newcastle Morning Herald 30 August 1911
1913	Homeless people camped in Maitland Town Hall	Richmond River Express, 20 May 1913
July 1917	Tenders for painting work, West Maitland Town Hall	Maitland Mercury, 12 July 1917
1919	Extensive Repairs to the Roof of the Town Hall, W H Pender	JW Pender Archive. Schedule of Works by Pender Practice, University of Newcastle
1919	Roofing Town Hall, Maitland, Tenders Close 15 December 1919	As above
1920	Extensive Repairs to the Roof of the Town Hall, W H Pender	As above
1922	New Exit Doors, Maitland Town Hall W H Pender	As above
1922	Sale of Scobie Chambers, estate of Robert Scobie. Architectural firm continues until 1945. JW Scobie purchases?	Maitland Mercury 14 July 1922
1922 - 1959	Inspections of Theatres & Public Halls	NSW State Records Series 490
By 1923	Scobie & Son, JW Scobie & his son Frank Maitland Scobie	Les Reedman, Early Architects of the Hunter Region
1926	Town Hall committee to call for reports from architect re modernising the town hall	The Newcastle Sun, 22 August 1928
1927	Town Hall repainted, W H Pender	JW Pender Archive Schedule of Works by Pender Practice, University of Newcastle

1927-28	Brick Ambulance Station by W H Pender to be built next to Town Hall	As above
1930	Flood	
1932	Permission to be sought to raise £10,000 loan	Maitland Daily Mercury, 31 August 1932
1932	Frank Scobie advised to give up architecture, his place in the firm is taken by his brother Edward Boyd Scobie	Les Reedman, Early Architects of the Hunter Region
February 1933	Letter from Unemployed Relief Council. 3% interest proposed for full amount. Council wrote back, requesting half grant and half loan	Maitland Daily Mercury, 15 February 1933
April 1933	Working Drawings and Specifications approved by the Town Hall Improvement Committee	Maitland Daily Mercury, 27 April 1933
May 1933	Mr Scobie & Son call tenders for Additions & Alterations to Maitland Town Hall	Maitland Daily Mercury, 16 May 1933
July 1933	Tender had been accepted but not proceeded with, new plans drawn up	Maitland Daily Mercury, 10 July 1933
July 1933	Location of supper room altered	Maitland Daily Mercury, 19 July 1933
September 1933	Tenders close on September 11 for extensive alterations and additions to the West Maitland Town Hall. They are being called by J.W. Scobie and Son, of West Maitland, and in Sydney information on the matter is being provided by A.W. Cozens	SMH 5 September 1933

Date	Event	Source
October 1933	Description of alterations. Convert existing admin into committee rooms. New supper hall with servery &c	Newcastle Morning Advocate, 12 October 1933
1933-1979	Theatres & Public Halls licence file - Maitland Town Hall	SRNSW Series I5813 No. 729 Town Hall, Maitland
Jan 1934	Schedule of Furniture. Brickwork of stage practically completed. Accepted tender for fire curtain. Application to Unemployed Relief Council	Maitland Daily Mercury, 31 Jan 1934
Feb 1934	Progress of Remodelling	Maitland Daily Mercury, 5 Feb 1934
Feb 1934	Stage to be removed. Hall to be lengthened by about 30 ft. Supper Room / Small Dance Hall	Maitland Daily Mercury, 27 Feb 1934
March 1934	Quotes for floor coverings	Newcastle Sun, 15 March 1934
April 1934	Remodelling progress report Roof works	Maitland Daily Mercury, 9 April 1934
May 1934	Supper Room finished	Maitland Daily Mercury, 5 May 1934
Sept 1934	Four tenders for provision of equipment for the supper room	Maitland Daily Mercury, 5 Sept 1934
Sept 1934	Additional funds from Unemployed Relief Council	Maitland Daily Mercury, 20 Sept 1934
November 1934	Official opening Administration Block and Additions & Alterations to West Maitland Town Hall.	Maitland Daily Mercury, 1 November 1934
November 1934	Official opening included architect, E B Scobie and builder M Audet.	Newcastle Morning Herald, 2 November 1934

December 1936	New Clock, Maitland Town Hall	Maitland Daily Mercury, 19 December 1936
1937	Maker and Installer of four dialled electric clock Mr A L Franklin visits West Maitland. Monthly inspection of clock	Maitland Daily Mercury, 28 January 1937
1937-1963	Theatres & Public Halls licence file - Supper Room	SRNSW Series I5813 No. 354 Supper Room, Town Hall, Maitland
1937	Repainting Maitland Town Hall, W H Pender	JW Pender Archive Schedule of Works by Pender Practice, University of Newcastle
1938	Scobie and Son, new male toilet block and changes to the kitchen	Town Hall Committee minutes, 15 April 1935, quoted in Jack & Somerville p22
1942	Dancing in blackout in Maitland Town Hall, all but wall lights extinguished	Newcastle Morning Herald, 12 Feb 1942
1942	New Office Fittings Maitland Town Hall W H Pender	JW Pender Archive Schedule of Works by Pender Practice, University of Newcastle
By 1944	E B Scobie working on detailed designs for the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust on the Rocklea Hostel, Brisbane	Brisbane Courier Mail, 22 May 1944
1945	Retirement of Mr [JW] Scobie, Architect aged 82. Major work was Maitland Town Hall	Newcastle Morning Herald, 3 November 1945
1946	New owners of the Scobie's architectural practice (Paul Thelander) discarded the contents of the drawing store	Les Reedman, Early Architects of the Hunter Region
1952	Archive storage, ceiling in loft of annex [since removed]	Town Hall Committee minutes, 15 April 1935, quoted in Jack & Somerville p23
1955	Flood ruins linoleum. Almost all had to be replaced	Jack & Somerville p23
1962	Flood headquarters at Maitland Town Hall	Canberra Times, 12 May 1962
1965	Additional storey added to the annex. Architect not identified	Jack & Somerville p24

Date	Event	Source
1967	Foyers reworked, B A Krohn	Jack & Somerville p24
1983	Well in yard filled in, location unknown	Jack & Somerville p25
1984	Demolition of Pryor's Plasterworks by Council	AIA hold photo of building prior to demolition
Post 1999	Gates previously removed in 1969 were returned to original location	
Recent	Ducted air conditioning to the Hall New colour scheme	

8 APPENDIX B: SELECTED IMAGES & STORIES

There are innumerable stories and images that can be used in heritage interpretation for this site.

There are in particular excellent digital resources relating to the Hunter Valley and to Maitland including:

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/>

The author of this Report has included a selection of images and stories from various sources here that might inspire future interpretation at the site.

8.1 The River

Relevant stories include:

"The river's lagoons were thick with fish, yams, roots of ferns, black swans and wild ducks, providing plentiful food for the Wonnarua, the first inhabitants of the Coquun (Hunter Valley), with the Worimi to the north-eastern shores and the Awabakal to the south eastern shores. **Today's** rich Aboriginal culture was shaped by these three tribes. They trod a path along an ancient trade route between Sydney and the Hunter Valley to exchange goods and perform ceremonies at various sites along the way. This route would take some years for Europeans to find.²⁷"

"The river is the lifeblood of Maitland; a source of prosperity and great joy as much as of tragedy and economic ruin. Its story weaves

²⁷ SHP (2014) CMIP p.50

through the fortunes of the emerging town. Today, the city turns its back on the river.²⁸

“Up to 1831 only sailing ships plied between Maitland, Morpeth and Sydney, the smaller vessels only from Maitland. The one way journey to Sydney could take several days depending on wind and tide. Even **the navigation of the river would often wait upon the tide.**”²⁹

“Originally the river route between Morpeth and West Maitland was 26 kilometres (16 mi), today after various floods and river course changes this has reduced to just 9 kilometres (5.6 mi).”

8.2 Wallis Plains

In 1826 the Monitor published a series of letters by a man who possessed land in the vicinity of Wallis Plains, and who made a voyage from Sydney to Newcastle. He described his arrival in Wallis Plains as follows³⁰:

From Nelson's Plains, we proceeded early in the morning to Wallis's Plains, and there breakfasted. The navigation of Hunter's River may be said to terminate at this place, which provincially is called " the Settlement at the Banks." It consists of a cluster of detached cottages, which may be designated a hamlet. You would suppose the inhabitants were only tenants at will, who did not care to build on other people's ground. It's a sorry sight to see bad buildings any where, and its very grating to an Englishman when he leaves the dusty streets to take a turn amongst the rural virtues of a village life, there to find nothing of the sort.

At this distance from Sydney I indulged a hope of growing quite poetical, and seeing Pan and the sylvan deities, dryads and

²⁸ SHP (2014) CMIP p.51

²⁹ Early Architects of the Hunter

³⁰ The Free Settler or Felon database accessed 30/03/2019.

https://www.jenwilletts.com/newcastle_in_1826.htm

hamadryads - but there was no such thing perhaps it is, that they are like the kangaroos, frightened at the approach of settlers or their manners.

As this place is the centre of a populous neighbourhood, it is in contemplation to beautify it with a church, and let the good folks have some excuse for saying their prayers. They in general appear a very hardy race, with a great capacity for being industrious, cleanly, honest, and obliging--all special virtues in a peasantry. I put up at the Angel Inn, which has every accommodation for travellers; a quarter of a pipe of wine on draft, plenty to eat, and good beds. A young man (a native), told me he wished to rent it of the landlord, and had offered him £100 per annum; but he asked £200 per annum! --for an obscure pot-house; only think of that.

8.3 West Maitland

Some key historic images are included here.



Figure 24: View of West Maitland for the Hunter by F. Terry (1853) taken from 'The Hunter Valley' by Cox, Tanner and Walker.

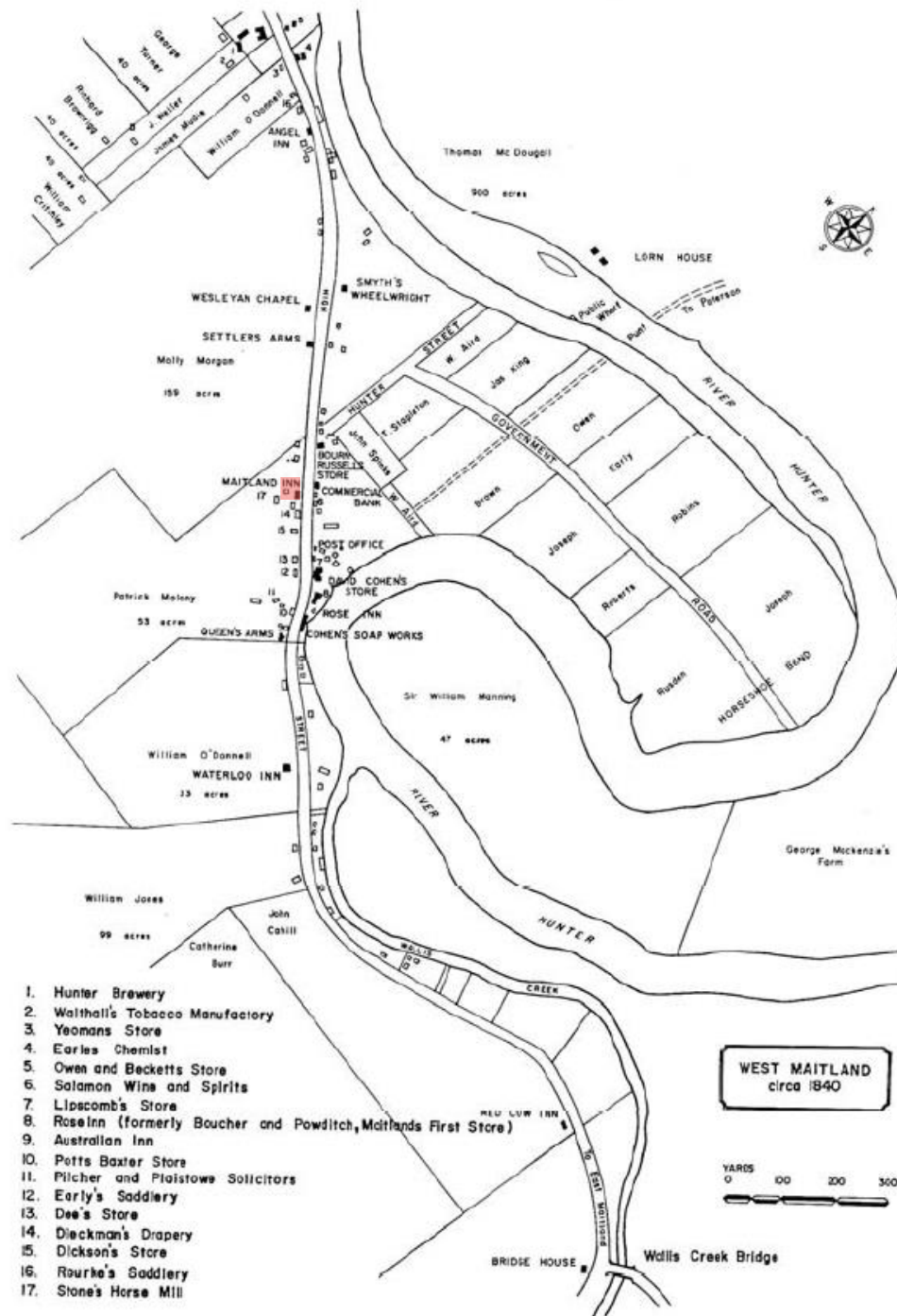


Figure 25: Plan of West Maitland c1840 taken from "The Rise of the High Street" by John Turner.



Figure 26: Illustrated Sydney News Supplement, 7th September 1878.



Figure 27: Detail from Image 25 showing approximate position of the Maitland City Administration Centre site.

8.4 The Town Hall

“... for Lee & Scobie’s winning entry out of 35 for Maitland Town Hall the choice was suitably articulated by Mr. Hennessy, City of Sydney Architect:

‘The sky outline is good, the grouping is well arranged as regards mass and light and shade. The design is dignified and monumental in character, as a public edifice should be, being free from petty or meretricious treatment and detail, as is characteristic of many of the designs sent in.’³¹

It was said of prominent Maitland Architect, John W. Pender, at his **death, in 1917, that ‘he** knew Maitland in the days when it was the Emporium of the north, in the roaring days when bullock teams from the north and north-west brought **wool-laden wagons to Morpeth... He saw the decline of Maitland’s great commercial centre following the extension of the Great Northern Line.’³²**



Figure 28: The winning design for Maitland Town Hall.
Source MCC.

³¹ Architects

³² Reedman, L. Early Architects of the Hunter Region: 100 Years to 1940. Reedman and Walker NSW



Figure 29: Maitland Town Hall.
Source Newcastle Museum F
A Cadell Collection.



Figure 30: Members of the Amphibious Corps relaxing in the Maitland Town Hall after carrying out Flood rescue works in 1952.
Source Newcastle Morning Herald.

8.5 Melba comes to the Maitland 1909

Jack and Sommerville (1999) record the 1909 Melba performance at the Town Hall as follows:

The principal musical events in the Maitland area took place in the Town Hall, but the grandest was the visit of Dame Nellie Melba. Melba sang in the Town Hall on 18 June 1909 during a country tour that took her to Forbes, Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Tamworth.

The Town Hall had special seating installed to accommodate the crowd of 800 on 18 June, when 'the greatest star that has ever appeared, or is likely to appear here' sang to a fashionable audience from all over the Hunter Valley.

The extra seating involved the creation of what was probably a temporary 'gallery', raised seating in the rear of the hall against the north wall. The newspaper advertisement shows that there were three areas in the hall for reserved tickets, all at the very high price of 10s 6d: ...

... The wives of the three local bank managers decorated the stage with pot plants, foliage and draperies.

Melba, accompanied by Harold Whittle on her own Broadwood grand (which travelled around on the train with the diva), sang initially

Arditi's 'Se saran rose'

Landon Ronald's 'Down in the forest' from his song-cycle, 'A Cycle of Life'

Tosti's 'Good-bye', and, as first-half encore,

'Comin' thro' the rye'

In the second half Melba, with a flute obbligato, performed the mad scene from Lucia di Lammermoor and, as encore, 'Home, sweet home' with Melba herself at the piano. The concert lasted two hours because there were piano and flute solos and seven Victorian ballads sung by a young Irish baritone, but it was Melba's night. This was one of the great occasions in the Town Hall's history, still part of communal memory in Maitland. A program for the concert is still treasured by a lady whose aunt and uncle attended in 1909 and oral tradition insists that the 'slight attack of neuralgia' noted in Melba by the Mercury reporter was in fact a moderate attack of inebriation.

Michelle Nolan, a Natural History student at the University of Newcastle, has also prepared an essay on Melba's visit which includes the following summary:

Dame Nellie Melba, as she came to be known, was born Helen Porter Mitchell in Melbourne, Australia in 1861 and later in her life took on the name Melba in honour of her birthplace (Davidson 1986). Melba was an international celebrity at the time of her performance in Maitland in 1909. In 1884 she had made her debut as a singer in a concert at the Melbourne Town Hall and, in 1887, made her debut as an opera singer in Brussels, followed by Paris in 1889 (Davidson 1986). Melba undertook a tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1902 and her 1909 sentimental tour of country Australia was the tour that brought her to Maitland.

Interestingly, Melba was not yet a "Dame" when she came to Maitland as she was awarded Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1918 and Knight/Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire in 1927. Melba's passing in 1931 was mourned on a grand scale. Dame Nellie Melba is such an iconic figure in Australian history that her portrait features on the Australian one hundred-dollar note and the expression "doing a Melba", referring to her numerous "farewell" concerts, became part of the Australian vernacular (Davidson 1986).

On the tour of 1909, covering some 10,000 miles (Davidson 1986), **Melba travelled with “an entourage consisting of her manager, a maid and a valet, together with two baby grand pianos” (Davidson 1986)** Her arrival at the railway station in Maitland was an important civic occasion and was reported as such in the local newspaper, The Maitland Mercury:

A large gathering of citizens, mostly composed of ladies, assembled at the West Maitland Railway station this afternoon to witness the arrival of Madame Melba and the welcome extended to her by the mayor (Major Cracknell) on behalf of the **townspeople. (‘Madame Melba’ Maitland Mercury, 1909)**

The much-anticipated evening concert in the Maitland Town Hall was attended by over 800 people including those who had travelled from Newcastle, Raymond Terrace, Clarence Town, Patterson, Dungog, Cessnock, Singleton, Gresford, Muswellbrook and Denman. (Maitland Mercury, June 19, 1909). The report of the concert, in The Maitland Mercury the following day, described the magical and thrilling nature of the event. Melba had arrived just before 8pm in Mr Mackay’s **“beautiful motor car” to cheers** from the crowd, the Town Hall was overflowing inside and out and **the performance by the “Queen of Song” did not disappoint her audience (Melba Concert 1909)**. The local bank manager’s wives had adorned the stage with **“plants, foliage and draperies” (Melba Concert 1909)** and Melba, attired in jewels and finery, on stage with her own piano, inspired the reporter to write that she, **“presented a picture of unrivalled grace and beauty” (Melba Concert 1909)**. On her singing, the newspaper report enthused:

Every note was particularly clear and pure the melody, sympathy **and power that she called to her aid,** all held the audience spellbound and emphasized **her claim as one of the world’s most**

accomplished artistes. ('Melba Concert', The Maitland Mercury, June 19, 1909)

There are several Melba recordings on You Tube. The following is c1910 and is one of the clearest.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB3gTiwl7p4>



Figure 31: Melba in her later years. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB3gTiwl7p4>

8.6 The Site during the 1955 Flood

A British Pathé newsreel recorded the Flood. The Town Hall Café followed by the Town Hall appears at 7.32 mins on the left of Hunter Street. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SKdIK511iQ>

Some stills from the newsreel are below.



Figure 32: The Town Hall Café during the 1955 Flood. Source: British Pathé Newsreel via Hunter Heritage website.



Figure 33: The Town Hall Café during the 1955 Flood. Source: British pathed Newsreel via Hunter Heritage webwide.



Figure 34: The Town Hall during the 1955 Flood.
Source: British Pathé Newsreel via Hunter Heritage website.



Figure 35: The Town Hall during the 1955 Flood.
Source: British Pathé Newsreel via Hunter Heritage website.