

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	Cnr Woongarra & Maryborough Streets	Bundaberg Central
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	14B158136, 15B158136, 16B158136, 17B158136, 18B158136	

Historical Context

Bundaberg was established in the late 1860s. The Burnett River was identified by John Charles Burnett (after which was it named) during his exploration of the Wide Bay and Burnett regions in 1847. Pastoral stations were established throughout the Wide Bay and Burnett in the late 1840s through to the 1860s, including stations such as Gin Gin, Walla, Bingera, Electra, Monduran and Tantitha. The stations were initially stocked with sheep, but progressively were replaced with cattle. When prices were low, or there was an oversupply of stock (particularly in the 1860s), the cattle were rendered to produce tallow. A boiling down works was established in Baffle Creek to render the stock from the stations. John and Gavin Steuart secured a contract to provide the works with timber for tallow casks. The Steuarts established a camp in North Bundaberg in 1866 and erected a sawmill in the following year. Interest in the settlement grew rapidly and a town was surveyed on the southern bank of the Burnett River in 1868 on the site of the present day city.

Timber was the industry that acted as a catalyst for the creation of a European settlement. However, it was sugar that came to define the history of Bundaberg and the surrounding region. Sugar cane was planted in the 1870s and the first commercial sugar mill, located at Millbank (west of the city on the southern bank of the Burnett), began operating in 1872. The industry was thriving by the 1880s, with major mills such as Millaquin and Fairymead processing cane juice from cane plantations and farms with their own juice mills located throughout the region, but particularly in land formerly occupied by the Woongarra, Bingera and Gooburrum scrubs. From its early years, the industry relied on South Sea Islander labour (referred to as 'Kanakas' at the time) and later workers from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon). The importance of Bundaberg was further strengthened when it became the port for the Mount Perry copper mine, with a railway from Mount Perry to North Bundaberg constructed in 1884 (although a rudimentary road existed from the early 1870s). A rum distillery was established at Millaquin sugar mill in 1888, later known as the Bundaberg Rum Distillery. Bundaberg also developed a foundry and engineering industry to support the sugar and juice mills, and the copper mines at Mount Perry. The first local government, the Bundaberg Divisional Board, was gazetted in 1880.

The first Anglican Church in Bundaberg was erected in Quay Street in 1876. The building was moved to a site near the current Christ Church in 1899. The plans for Christ Church were prepared by JH Buckeridge in the 1890s; Buckeridge practiced as the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane architect from 1887 through to 1902 and he designed Christ Church in this period. However, construction of the church did not begin until the 1920s, and it was opened in February 1927. The construction of the church was initially supervised by the prominent Bundaberg architect, Frederic Herbert Faircloth, but he died during construction and the Diocesan architects, Atkinson and Conrad, completed the building. The church reflects an English Gothic design.

A thanksgiving was held in the church for the safe arrival of the famous Bundaberg aviator, Bert Hinkler, following his solo plane flight from Britain to Australia (first Darwin, then finishing in Bundaberg) on the 4th of March 1928. It was an unusual ceremony directed specifically at Hinkler. Several pieces of masonry from Westminster Abbey and York Minster were incorporated into the church and unveiled in 1929, apparently the first time such material was used in a church in Australia. A lynch gate was also erected and dedicated in 1935.

Physical Description

Christ Church occupies the prominent corner block of Woongarra and Maryborough Streets in the Bundaberg CBD and together with the adjacent parish office and hall forms the Anglican Parish precinct, encompassing nine lots. A large mature tree is situated on the northwest corner. A fence consisting of stone and capped with terracotta tiles runs along the street frontages. On the southwest corner is a sandstone wayside cross flanked by lights mounted onto stone columns on either side. The main entrance is via a lynch gate from Woongarra Street.

The church consists of a large red brick building with tiled gable roof. It is designed in English Gothic style and it displays the characteristic features of pointed arched arcades and architraves, narrow lancet windows, buttresses and vaulted ceiling. The church is set parallel to Woongarra Street and comprises a nave with a north and south wing, separated by arcades and seven arches, a tower with spire over a porch on the south-western elevation, an apse spanning the full width of the eastern side, a semicircular baptistery on the western elevation, a rear entry with gable on the northwest corner and a porch with double gable at the northeast corner. The door and window openings feature decorative mouldings, the windows also show quoining as an aesthetic feature. The interior of the church features stained glass windows, a marble floor and altar in the sanctuary, vaulted timber ceiling, decorated gothic timber panelling, pulpit and reredos as well as a pipe organ.

Heritage Significance	
Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.</i>
Statement	Christ Church, Bundaberg is important in demonstrating the pattern of the region's history, particularly the establishment of religious institutions and church buildings. It also demonstrates the evolution of the city, as the size and grandeur of the church reflects the growing population and importance of Bundaberg, in particular the Anglican community, when the project was conceived and eventually constructed.

E	<i>The place is important to the region because of its aesthetic significance</i>
Statement	Christ Church, Bundaberg is important to the region because of its aesthetic significance. The church building is particularly large and visually dominant in its corner location; its size is clearly intended to reflect the importance of the Anglican faith and community in Bundaberg. The employment of the distinctive English Gothic architectural design reflects aesthetic ideals associated with rural English towns, which is consistent with the agricultural significance of Bundaberg at the time and throughout its later history.

G	<i>The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons important to the region.</i>
Statement	Christ Church, Bundaberg, has a special association with Bundaberg's Anglican community.

Location Map



View from corner Woongarra & Maryborough Streets.



View to semicircular baptistery.



Interior view. Source: Bundaberg Anglican Parish: Christ Church.

Integrity	Good	Condition	Good
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	21/10/2014		

References

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection provided research material.

Janette Nolan, Bundaberg: History and people, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1978.

John Kerr, Southern Sugar Saga: A history of the sugar industry in the Bundaberg district, Bundaberg, Bundaberg Sugar Company Limited, 1983.

JY Walker, History of Bundaberg: Typical Queensland agricultural settlement, Bundaberg, WC Aiken, 1890.

Neville Rackemann, Bundaberg: From pioneers to prosperity, Bundaberg, Bundaberg City Council, 1992.