

St Gregory's Church



St Gregory's in 1910, showing at right its western extension and reconstructed façade with new doorway, and at left the school bell tower
Source: Errol Lea-Scarlett Collection.

St Gregory's is the oldest standing church in Queanbeyan. The building was designed in Victorian Gothic style by Sydney architect, John Bell, in 1847. Its design was clearly influenced by the leading light of Gothic Revival architecture in Victorian England, Augustus Pugin. On 12 March 1849, the Archbishop of Sydney, John Bede Polding, laid the foundation stone, naming the church in honour of the early Medieval Pope, St Gregory the Great. The name reflected Polding's English Benedictine affiliation as he had previously spent twenty years at the Basilica of St Gregory the Great in Somerset, England.

Construction of the rubblestone church was overseen by the priest, Father Michael Kavanagh, with builder Daniel McCloskey completing it in 1850. The church also served as the town's Catholic school from 1852 until 1857 when a school building – now demolished – was erected in the church grounds. A century later, the church inaugurated services in their own languages for parishioners from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 1957, St Gregory's was superseded by St Raphael's as Queanbeyan's parish church.

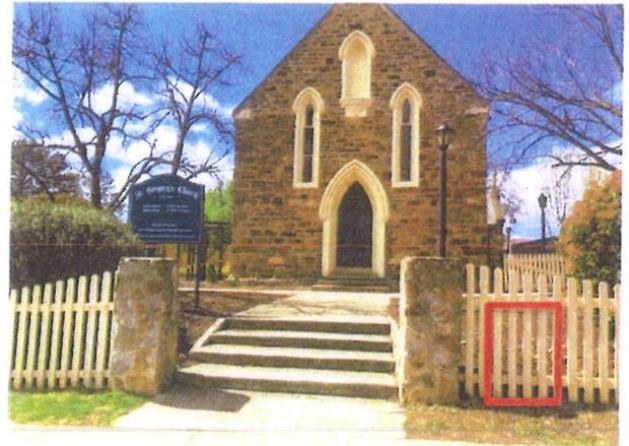


A sketch of St Gregory's by cartographer George Briand in 1862, showing it in its original form before the front was extended in 1878 to double its size to accommodate a growing congregation.

(Source: National Library of Australia, MAP nla.obj:230743602)



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Historical Signage at St Gregory's Church,

Council's Heritage Committee in conjunction with the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council has recommended that interpretive signage be placed throughout the city detailing the history of a number of local heritage listed buildings. Our church has been selected. This signage is located outside of the church grounds near the front fence.