

HERITAGE: Conservation architect Stephen Booker oversaw restoration work at St Mary's Church.

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Care taken to restore beauty of old church

OLIVIA COLLINGS

The difficulty in matching historic stone has not stopped St Mary's Anglican Church in Maitland from having a beauty treatment.

The State heritage-listed building has had some repairs in recent weeks with the final touches on the base of the steeple completed on Friday.

Rector of the Maitland Parish Father

Chris Butterworth said the steeple was constructed in 1880 and the repairs were important in making it waterproof.

"We are relieved we have been able to make it safer within conservation practices," he said.

Architect Stephen Booker said the restorations and repairs were part of the conservation management plan for the church.

The builders had to use products sim-

ilar to those used in Venice and Pisa on historic buildings because of the rare stone used on the original steeple.

"The stone used was very rare, so we had to work on the basis of not being able to find that stone," Mr Booker said.

The money for the renovations of the church tower were made available through the Department of the Environment and Water Resources as part of the Federal Government's

National Heritage Investment Initiative.

The height of the steeple was another obstacle for building company Australian Heritage Restorations.

There is still more work to be done on the church, which has rising damp, but for now the church's administration is happy to see the tower complete.

The St Mary's Anglican Church was built in 1860 and designed by architect Edmond Blackett.