

Local Heritage Register: The Paper Chain Building



The Building in 1988, Copyright Mackay Regional Council Library image 3297

Building Name:	The Paper Chain Building
Street Address:	8 Sydney Street
Property Description:	Lot 1 on RP700833
Land Area:	464m ²

Description

This building is a rare example of timber construction and may well be one of the oldest surviving buildings in the city.

There is little known of the construction and no records have been found regarding the builder or the exact build date.

History

In 1953 Philip Kirwan 'looked back' to Mackay at the turn of the century. He reminisced about Frank O'Rielly, the draper having his store next door to Tattersall's (Ambassador) Hotel. Mr O'Rielly was the proprietor of a 'Working Men's Store' and claimed to be one of the oldest in the district. Arriving around 1870, Frank O'Rielly was married twice, his second wife dying quite young in

1909. Mr O'Rielly left Mackay in around 1925. He died in 1931 in Barcaldine aged 82.

While his death notice on 8 October 1931, states that he built the building at 8 Sydney Street, this is unlikely to be true but could refer to a previous structure. In fact, advertisements from the Daily Mercury have Mr O'Rielly conducting a 're-moving' sale at Christmas 1910 due to the 'landlord building a new premises'.

Other evidence shows that the original lot on Sydney Street was subdivided around 1909 and the ownership is in the names of Croker and Walker.

Mr O'Rielly was later a witness in a theft case, and stated he was a draper occupying a store opposite Lamberts, Victoria Street on 24 September 1921.

The next occupier of 8 Sydney Street is Miss Gardiner's 'Paris House'. Miss Gardiner owned ladies fashion houses in Mackay, Townsville and Cairns and did extensive advertising between 1918 and 1926.

Therefore, the building dates from sometime between 1911 and 1918 and has almost certainly survived the 1918 cyclone.

Further tenants to the present were:

- 1930s – unclear
- 1940s – Mackay Cash and Carry (sth) and Neilsen & Co (nth)
- 1950s – Bruce Small cycle shop (sth) and either Neislen & Co or Dalgety (nth)
- 1960s - Peter Cominos' Tropic Fruit Shop (sth)
- Late 1960s to 1979 – Comino's Camping store
- 1980s – Sailboard shop
- 1990 – Paperchain

The Comino family previously lived above the shops for a time.

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The Building

The building has a pair of small shops, joined into one, and out-buildings of significant age in early Queenslander style. A two storey verandah over the footpath is divided into three equal bays. The four verandah posts on the ground floor are eight-inch concrete on small pedestals. The square timber posts, support a verandah plate and facade which forms the bottom of a corrugated galvanised iron skillion roof. The rear of the first floor is sheeted in corrugated iron. The upper

level features French doors and a window to rear. The two storey section is hip roofed and was once a residence.

The stairs are on the left from a door on the street. The shopfronts are rare examples of display windows in recessed doorways containing double timber doors and false floors. The ceiling over the entrance passage is cast plaster with stained leadlight glass features. The street facade is tiled in mottled rose-coloured tiles in a black border.



Paper Chain, 2004, Mackay Regional Council

Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
A: Historical significance	Does not meet this criterion.
B: All aspects of heritage significance	The building is a rare surviving two-storey 19th century timber building with verandah over the footpath. It is important in demonstrating the development of the Mackay CBD.
C: Scientific significance	Does not meet this criterion.
D: Architectural significance	Does not meet this criterion.
E: Aesthetic / architectural significance	The building maintains a strong landmark presence and makes a strong contribution to the Sydney Street streetscape.
F: Aesthetic or other significance	Does not meet this criterion.
G: Social significance	Does not meet this criterion.
H: Historical significance	Does not meet this criterion.

References:

- Butler, G & Associates, 1994, 'Mackay Region Heritage Pilot Study', p.149
- Daily Mercury, 15 December 1909, 24 September 1921, 8 October 1931, 26 November 1953, 10 February 1953
- Woods, R., 1995, 'Heritage Places Criteria', Mackay City Council
- Comino, Vassie., 2016, pers. communication

For more information phone strategic planning on 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529)