

# Local Heritage Register: McGuires Hotel



The original Barney McGuire's 'Belmore Arms' hotel approximately 1935 prior to demolition

<b>Building Name:</b>	McGuires Hotel
<b>Street Address:</b>	15 Wood Street
<b>Property Description:</b>	Lot 1 & 2 on RP700831 and Lot 2 on RP718052
<b>Land Area:</b>	1559m <sup>2</sup>

## Description

**This impressive two-storey Spanish Mission style building was the 'Ritz of the North' at the time of its construction.**

McGuires Hotel was constructed by McDonalds Pty Ltd and completed in 1938, replacing the wooden Belmore Arms Hotel. The buildings to the north which formed the accommodation were already built in 1930.

## History

The original hotel was opened by Barney McGuire Senior in November 1882 and remained in the McGuire family for more than 80 years. Originally named the 'Belmore Arms', it was operated

as such until being rebuilt and renamed by Barney Junior in 1938.

A zoo operated at the rear of the hotel along with McGuire's collection of stuffed animals and birds, shells, Aboriginal and Papua-New Guinean weapons and artefacts. These are now housed at James Cook University.

The American Red Cross were billeted in the hotel during WW2.

The hotel was the venue for the first Labor-in-Politics cabinet meeting in 1956.

## The Buildings

The McGuire estate originally included the hotel and the group of 4 shops to the north, however

only two of the shops remain part of the hotel. Those buildings were the hotel accommodation rooms in the early years.

In 1961, the two northern shops were subdivided off the estate and sold in 1965 to R.A. & J.N.L. Andrew who likely renamed the buildings to the "Andrews Buildings" at that time.

The current hotel was constructed to a design by prominent Mackay architect, Harold Vivian Marsh Brown. The shops were constructed by The Guthrie brothers in 1930 and the hotel by McDonalds Pty Ltd later that decade.

The Hotel veranda is built in heavy construction to the kerb line with a concrete floor. The front is divided into 3 nearly equal parts. The centre has paired pillars at each corner joining at veranda level then rising to the pediment. The coping has curved corners and rises to an apex.

The lower storey is opened to

the footpath. The upper storey is walled, pierced by a triple archway with two round columns, leading to a recurred balcony projecting over the street, having a wrought iron balustrade of lyre shaped pickets. The balcony ceiling is vaulted over the central section. Each side section is similar, the whole composition being symmetrical.

A horizontal diamond-shaped grillage of masonry admits ventilation. The ceiling is flat. The south elevation runs along 7th Lane with a solid wall and a wide timber rubbing strip.

A balcony is cantilevered over the lane on masonry brackets. The balustrade is alternately solid and timber paling infill between the posts. The roof is supported on scrolled masonry brackets to match the floor ones.

The balcony roof is super-six corrugated asbestos cement tiles. The place is important for its association with the development of the region and in demonstrating the building boom of the interwar period.

## Out Buildings

Behind the hotel, accessed via 7th lane is a building dating from the 1940's. It is two storey, mostly of iron construction and is believed to have housed staff in the upper level. The ground level was used to store the significant amounts of wares transported by travelling sales-people and merchants of the time.



Artist impression of the new hotel, 11 November 1938, Daily Mercury.

## The McGuire Family

Bernard (Barney) James McGuire opened the Belmore Arms Hotel in 1882 with his wife and young son, born in Mackay in 1880.

Barney Senior died shortly after, but Mrs McGuire kept the pub, remarrying and running it as Mrs E.M. Keneally.

In 1922 Barney Junior took over the running of the hotel from his mother and in 1924 he married Winifred. They both lived in the hotel for their entire married life.

Barney and Winifred had one son, also Barney (Bernard Francis) who married in 1954.

Barney McGuire Junior died of a heart attack on 26 October 1953. Winifred ran the hotel in later years with her nephew, Peter Dempsey.

## McGuires Hotel

After Barney's death, the hotel was eventually sold, leaving the McGuire hands on 5 December 1965 after 83 years in the family. While Mrs J Roger was the licensee, the hotel sale to Hugh and Anne Reilly and Fred Storey did not proceed until 1967. The two shops to the north had already been sold in 1965.



Staff quarters building at the rear of the hotel, 2016, Mackay Regional Council Collection.

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## Barney and the Zoo

Barney Jnr was a keen naturalist, horse trainer and member of the Agricultural Society. Over the years he travelled extensively and built up an impressive collection

of naturalist items including whalebones and shells.

In addition, he operated a zoo at the rear of the hotel for over 30 years until his death. In 1954 the zoo was closed, the collection was dispersed with much of the

naturalist collection donated to James Cook University.

Barney's antics and animals were often the source of articles in the newspaper. The zoo included snakes, kangaroos and a crocodile pool!

## Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
<b>A: Historical significance</b>	The original hotel was opened by Barney McGuire Senior in November 1882 and remained in the McGuire family for more than 70 years. The current Hotel was constructed in 1938 to a design by H.V.M. Brown. The building and the zoo, established to the rear of the Hotel, was widely used by US servicemen during WW2. The place is important for its association with the development of the region and the building is important in demonstrating building boom of the interwar period.
<b>B: All aspects of heritage significance</b>	Does not meet this criterion.
<b>C: Scientific significance</b>	Does not meet this criterion.
<b>D: Architectural significance</b>	It is important in demonstrating principal characteristics of a substantial two storey interwar masonry hotel in the Spanish Mission style. It retains a high degree of intactness, functioning as a hotel for over 80 years.
<b>E: Aesthetic / architectural significance</b>	Andrews and McGuires buildings have aesthetic value, demonstrating an eclectic mix of Classical, Mediterranean and Spanish Mission architecture which make a valuable contribution to the Wood Street streetscape.
<b>F: Aesthetic or other significance</b>	Does not meet this criterion.
<b>G: Social significance</b>	Does not meet this criterion.
<b>H: Historical significance</b>	The hotel has a special association with the McGuire family who retained the place until the 1960s, for Mackay architect, H.V.M. Brown, and the community, as part of the social fabric of Mackay since the 1880s.

## References:

- Wood, R., 1995, 'Heritage Places Criteria', ID 25, Mackay City Council
- Mackay Regional Council, Heritage Walks Brochure
- Land Title and transfer documents
- Mackay Daily Mercury, 11 November 1938, 4 December 1965, 18 August 1954, 27 October 1953
- Wright, B., 2016 pers. comm

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