

Local Heritage Register: The Ambassador Hotel



Ambassador Hotel in the 1940s

Building Name:	Ambassador Hotel
Street Address:	2 Sydney Street
Property Description:	Lot 2 on RP708629
Land Area:	994m ²

Description

This imposing three-storey building with roof garden was built for Mrs Mary Azar in 1937 and remains the only roof garden in the city.

The Ambassador Hotel opened on 3 September 1937 and is another fine example of the city's Art Deco collection. The hotel was built by the Guthrie brothers to a design from Townsville architect, Joseph Gabriel Rooney.

The Ambassador Hotel is a good, representative and intact example of an interwar functionalist style hotel with Art Deco detailing.

While the building has undergone some alterations in recent years including addition of a third storey

(partial enclosure), removal of parapet and alterations to first floor balustrading, it retains key features of the style including:

- symmetrical design with stepped skyline;
- ornament concentrated on upper section;
- parallel line motif (threes);
- long, horizontal balconies;
- vertical fins and horizontal bands; and
- bold and stylised lettering.

History

The opening of the hotel was celebrated with a roof-top dance and music from a visiting orchestra on a Friday evening. However, the city would not have acquired such a fine building



Daily Mercury, Friday 3 September, 1937

were it not for an unfortunate fire. The Ambassador stands on the site of the former Tattersalls Hotel, owned by Mr. F. Hayward. Mrs. Mary Azar had agreed to purchase the hotel in July 1936 and awaited the lease expiry on 20 September. However, the hotel burned down on 29 August, 1936!

Fortunately, the hotel was insured for the sum of £3,000 and the sale proceeded.

Local Heritage Register: The Ambassador Hotel

The Building

The layout of the building remains very similar to its original intent with ground level bars, and the first floor occupied 20 rooms. The top level was a roof garden in the original design, and has been partially enclosed over time. The first floor opens to a verandah with french doors off each room. This verandah forms an awning across the footpath, on twin square columns. The columns

continue past the first to the top floor where they become posts in the balustrading. The central bay of the front contains an elaborate spandrel, triangular in shape, from the verandah plate to above the roof, moulded with geometric designs, including a lozenge featuring "Ambassador" vertically and the date "1937". "Hotel" is set in a horizontal spandrel: it's top at railing height on the first floor.



The Ambassador Hotel, Art Deco detailing, 2016, Mackay Regional Council

Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
A: Historical significance	The Ambassador Hotel was built by the Guthrie Brothers in 1937, to a design by Townsville architect, Joseph Gabriel Rooney. The hotel is important in demonstrating the interwar Art Deco building boom in Mackay.
B: All aspects of heritage significance	Does not meet this criterion.
C: Scientific significance	Does not meet this criterion.
D: Architectural significance	The Ambassador Hotel is a good, representative and intact example of an interwar Functionalist-style hotel with Art Deco detailing. While the building has undergone some alterations including addition of a third storey, removal of parapet and alterations to first floor balustrading, it retains key features of the style
E: Aesthetic / architectural significance	While it has undergone a degree of alteration, 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.148, Mackay City Council,
- Daily Mercury, 1 Sept., 1936; 31 Oct., 1936; and 3 Sept., 1937
- Woods, R., 1995, 'Heritage Places Criteria', ID 13, Mackay City Council,

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