

Local Heritage Register: The Daily Mercury Building



The Daily Mercury Building in 1988, shortly after the move to Wellington Street. Copyright Mackay Regional Council, image 03189

Building Name :	The Daily Mercury Building
Street Address:	36 Wood Street
Property Description :	Lot 2 on RP700793
Area:	1012m ²

Description

This address is integral to the history of the city, housing the first and continuing newspaper for 110 years.

The first edition of the Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser was April 4, 1866. The Daily Mercury was the settlement's first newspaper and of the six newspapers that subsequently served Mackay during its first century, is the only survivor today.

History

The paper operated out of a timber building dating from 1875 on this site, and was known as The Mackay Mercury from 1887 and The Daily Mercury from 1906. In 2015 the 'The' was

dropped from the masthead.

The paper stayed at this address until 1985 when it was deemed to have outgrown the building. The paper moved to 42 Wellington Street which remains 'Mercury House' despite the paper having moved again in 2013 as the print media transitions to a new era less reliant on daily printed media.

The Building

The Daily Mercury Building was constructed as a purpose-built newspaper office in 1922 by local builder, William Guthrie to a design by architect, Frederic Herbert Faircloth. The building is a good example of interwar Free Classical architecture. An extension was made in 1959

(see image above). The 1959 extension has since been modified to resemble the original building.

This two-storey building is constructed of brick, with a stucco finish along each side grooved into an ashlar pattern including mock lintels over windows. The facade to 7th Lane is plain with rectangular windows at two levels, the lower ones barred with horizontal flat metal bars.

The street facade was a combination of tuck pointed brick and stucco mouldings. The facade design of Palladian details consists of a central classical motif with two paired pilasters each side supporting the entablature with triglyphs and a broken pediment above.

The ledges are wide with substantial projections. Between the pilasters is an arched window with a feature keystone at its head. The outer sections contain a window with heavily

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moulded architraves around and a pediment over the head. The corners are formed of a wide pilaster two storeys high extending above the coping to form the newel of a balustrade parapet. This has been sheeted over. At ground floor level central pilaster divides the front into four sections with arched windows.

The left hand one of these is the building entrance.

Windows and doors are all modern. The awkwardly attached cantilever awning is clad in a high-profile metal sheet. The roof sheeting is new and modern. The building has a single storey extension at the rear.



The Daily Mercury Building, 2016, Mackay Regional Council

Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
A: Historical significance	The Daily Mercury is an integral part of the history of the Mackay region. It was the settlement's first newspaper and of the six newspapers that subsequently served Mackay during its first century, is the only survivor today. The building was purpose-built in 1922 by William Guthrie to a design by architect, F. H. Faircloth. A northern extension was made in 1959. The building had continuous use for over 60 years.
B: All aspects of heritage significance	Does not meet this criterion.
C: Scientific significance	Does not meet this criterion.
D: Architectural significance	Does not meet this criterion. When constructed, it was a good example of interwar free-classical architecture, but has since been subject to alterations diminishing architectural values.
E: Aesthetic / architectural significance	Does not meet this criterion.
F: Aesthetic or other significance	Does not meet this criterion.
G: Social significance	Does not meet this criterion.
H: Historical significance	The building has a special association with the Daily Mercury who used it for over 60 years, as well as the community of Mackay and surrounding area and those who have been, and continue to be, part of the Daily Mercury, including the editors, reporters and administration staff, past and present.

References:

- Butler, G. & Associates, 1994, 'Mackay Region Heritage Pilot Study', p.148
- Daily Mercury, 2015, '150 Years of News', Mackay printing and Publishing Co.
- Woods, R., 1995, 'Heritage Places Criteria', Mackay City Council

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