

# Local Heritage Register: Obst Tailor's Building

|                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Building Name :</b>        | Obst Tailor's Building |
| <b>Street Address:</b>        | 81 Wood Street         |
| <b>Property Description :</b> | Lot 1 on RP732538      |
| <b>Land Area:</b>             | 944m <sup>2</sup>      |



81 Wood Street, January 2007

## Description

**This distinctive building provides visual attraction to the Wood Street streetscape and remains one of the oldest wooden business structures in the city.**

The building was occupied by two high-profile Mackay families until its sale in 2007.

### The Balaam Family

Originally built for the Balaam family, the premises was a piano sales and tuning store with a residence above. Prior to relocating to the building, the Balaam family operated from further south in Wood street opposite the Technical College.

Mr Herbert Joseph (Joe) Balaam was involved in a variety of trades, advertising "Balaam Blinds" from the premises in the late 1930s as well as piano dealing.

Their son, also H.J., was drafted into the A.I.F and left for Brisbane on 5 June 1941. 'Mum Biddy,' as Mrs Bridget Balaam was known, passed away in 1944 survived by her husband and four children.

### Obst Tailor

In 1939 the partnership of Robison and Obst opened a tailoring shop at the same address. The partnership did not last long, dissolving in 1941 when Jack Obst continued to trade under his own name.

The Obst family were well respected in the tailoring trade which they had been involved in from the Wood Street premises for at least fifty years with Jack passing the business to his son Stan. Jack's Aunt was a Mackay tailoress and his Uncle a Sarina tailor. The Wood Street area was the centre of tailoring activity in

the mid twentieth century. The Obst' store is the one remaining link to this past use within this precinct.

### The Building

The building is a two storey utilitarian structure, framed in timber and clad on the walls with small rib corrugated metal except for the street front which is weatherboard clad. Actual construction date is unclear, however local building identity William Guthrie completed some work in 1933 before the Ballam family moved in.

The roof is corrugated galvanised iron. The lower floor is shop and work space. A narrow door leads from the street. An awning spans the footpath supported on posts. Metal hoods shade the timber double hung windows in the side walls. The upper floor has a continuous row of casement

## Local Heritage Register: Obst Tailor's Building

windows facing the street. The building is representative of the practice of combining a home and business which was common at the time. Although it is difficult to trace the living arrangements, it appears that even though Jack Obst purchased the building around 1939, Joe Balaam continued to advertise that address into the early 1950s. When Stan Obst sold the building in 2007, it immediately

underwent extensive renovation and restoration in February by Dean Concept Builders and was completed some months later. It is also the only known remaining Mackay commercial outlet which is constructed with ripple iron walls. Ripple iron was a typical construction material at the time and is indicative of the availability of materials in the interwar period in Mackay.



Post-restoration late 2007, Mackay Regional Council

### Statement of Historical Significance

| Criteria   | Significance   |
|--|--|
| <b>A: Historical significance</b>                | Stan Obst's building was constructed by local builder, William Guthrie in 1933 and was initially a piano shop and residence for the Balaam family before purchase by Obst prior to World War 2.  |
| <b>B: All aspects of heritage significance</b>   | The Wood Street area was the centre of tailoring activity in the mid twentieth century. The Obst Store is the one remaining link to this past use within this precinct.  |
| <b>C: Scientific significance</b>                | Does not meet this criterion.  |
| <b>D: Architectural significance</b>             | The building is representative of the practice of combining a home and business, common at the time. It is also the only known remaining Mackay commercial outlet constructed with ripple iron walls; a typical construction material at the time and is indicative of the interwar availability of materials. |
| <b>E: Aesthetic / architectural significance</b> | Does not meet this criterion.  |
| <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 Obst family were well respected in the tailoring trade for at least 50 years. Stan Obst's father founded the business, his Aunt was a tailoress and his Uncle a Sarina tailor.   |

### References:

- Daily Mercury, 14 Aug. 1939, 5 Apr.1941, 7, 30 Sept. 1953, 13 Dec.1944
- Mackay Regional Council Records
- Woods, R., 1995, '*Heritage Places Criteria*', Mackay Regional Council
- Wright, B., Jacobs, A., 1996, Stan Obst's Building, Stage 1 Conservation Plan.

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