

Heritage Assessment

40 Cowper Street, Byron Bay.



November 2020

Prepared By Clarence Heritage
For Byron Shire Council

1. Background

A request has been made to Byron Shire Council by the owner of 40 Cowper Street, Byron Bay for the proposed inclusion of the property on the Byron LEP 2014 heritage schedule. This report considers the potential significance of the item against the heritage criteria. A site inspection including the interior was made on 23 October 2020 by Deborah Wray Heritage Advisor to BSC and Nancy Tarlao, Senior Planner BSC.

2. Heritage Assessment Criteria.

There are seven criteria under which a place can be assessed in the context of State or Local heritage themes as outlined in the NSW Heritage Management System, Assessing Heritage Significance (NSW Heritage Office 2001). It will be considered to be of State or Local significance if it meets one or more of the following criteria.

Criterion a) Historical significance: *an item is important in the course, or pattern of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area.)*

Criterion b) Historical (Social /Associative) significance; *an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person or a group of persons of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

Criteria c) Aesthetic significance: *an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).*

Criteria d) Social significance; *an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

Criteria e) Research potential: *an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area). Significance under this criterion must have the potential to yield new or further substantial information.*

Criteria f) Rarity: *an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (for the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

Criteria g) Representativeness: *an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics or a class of NSW's (or local area's) Cultural or natural places or Cultural or natural environments.*

3. Location and Description

The property at 40 Cowper Street, Lot B DP 338529, lies within the Kingsley Street Heritage Conservation Area. Each end of this section of the street is marked by a heritage listed item; 'Palm Court' to the north and Arcadia Guesthouse to the south. The subject cottage forms one of a pair of historic workers timber cottages of hipped roof, symmetrical form, with front verandahs which are aligned close to the road frontage on narrow allotments. It is not known why the cottages were not identified during the 2004 Byron Bay Community Based Heritage Study but it may have been that external fibro cladding that obscured the originality and historic era of the buildings.

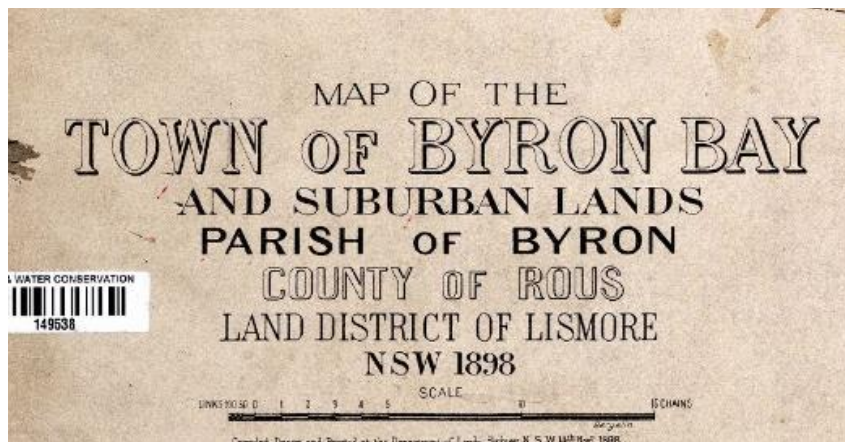


Site location and heritage items and heritage conservation area hatching.

Map Extract <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer>

4. History

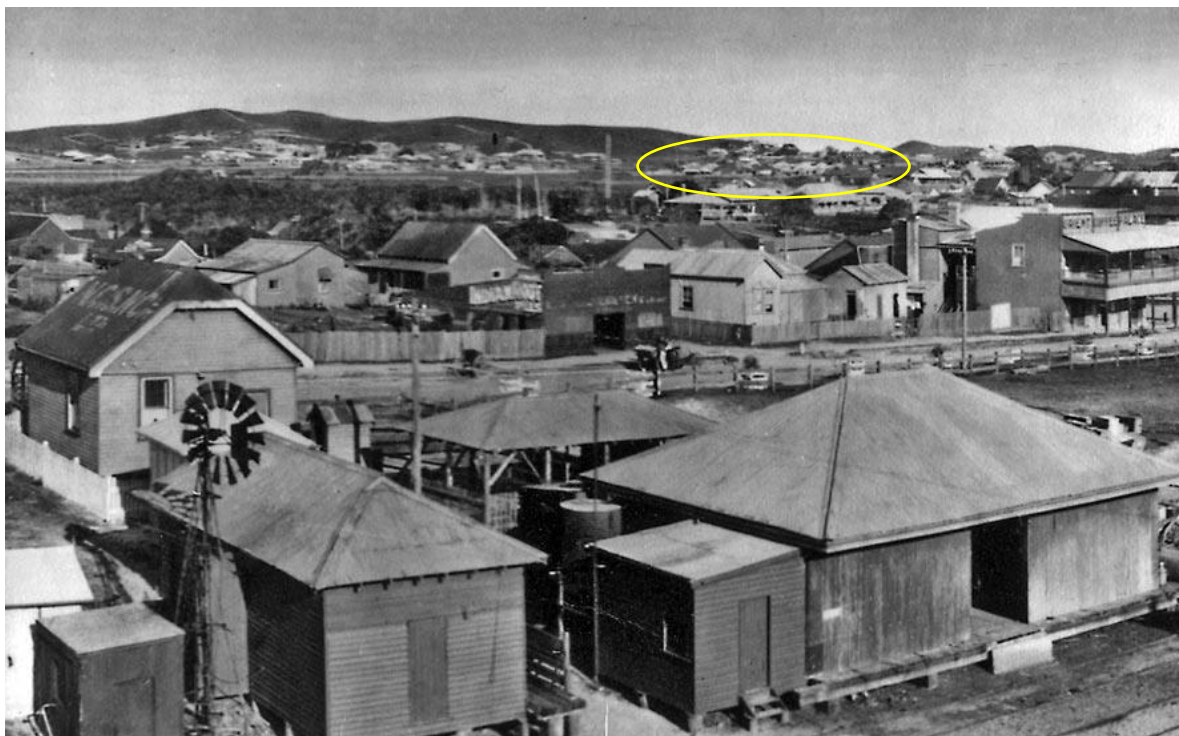
The Byron Town Map dated 1898 shows the property in the ownership of D. J. Allen.



As outlined by Byron Bay Historical Society 'In 1884 the village of Cavanba was laid out behind Main Beach, within the Reserve. The boundaries of the village and of the surrounding townlands were gazetted on 19 December 1885. All of the 40 town lots of half an acre each offered for sale in July 1886 were purchased including several by David Jarman. Cavanba was proclaimed a village in 1890. However few of the lots were built on initially. It was not until the completion of the railway to the town in 1894 that a critical mass was reached and Cavanba was renamed Byron Bay that year. It was declared a town on 28 August 1896'

Enquiries have been made to Byron Bay Historical Society but no specific information is available about this property. Early Council records and rate books were destroyed by a fire. Brian Parkes, long term resident, recalls that the cottages were lived in by railway fitters; workers who maintained the tracks.

This pair of timber cottages with steep pyramidal hipped roof form and vertical timber board and batten walls are typically Victorian in design and are likely to be around this early period of the town's development.



This 1920s image shows elevated land behind Jonson Street and the cottages would be in the background. (The Great Northern hotel is on the right hand side of the photo). Source; Byron Bay Historical Society.

5. Observations

40 Cowper Street (left) and cottage at 42 Cowper Street (right).



Front elevation with enclosed verandah. Roofed in a light grey colorbond.



View from south along front elevation showing proximity to the front boundary.



Inside the enclosed verandah Vertical board and batten timber construction.

Double hung sash windows either side of central entry.

Southern side.



Central entry and hallway within enclosed verandah.

Transom light above (non original) entry flush panel door



Window and wall to northern side.



Four Panel
original doors to
interior rooms
and original
milled brass
door hardware.



Original
floorboards
possibly Teak.



Timber lined
ceilings.



Fibre lined
walls.



Fibre cement lined ceiling and walls to living room.



4 panel original door and hardware.



Sash windows and moulded architraves viewed from exterior Southern elevation.



Rear bedroom within skillion roofed rear section. Timber floors throughout original part of house.



Skillion roof section. Fibre cement lined and timber sash window.



Rear living area in lean to addition.



Rear elevation.
Lean to addition
under against
rear verandah.



Southern
elevation and
side boundary
timber fence.



Relationship to
Palm Court
buildings on
adjacent site.



Northern
elevation.



Rear garden including Mango tree typical of early gardens.



Adjoining dwelling at 42 Cowper Street in separate ownership. The two cottages form a historic pair.



6. Assessment of Significance

Criterion a) Historical significance: *an item is important in the course, or pattern of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area.)*

40 Cowper Street demonstrates historical significance to the Byron Shire as a late 19th century Victorian style worker's cottage illustrating the early development of the township, possibly linked with the coming of the railway.

Criterion b Historical (Social /Associative) significance; *an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person or a group of persons of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

There is no known Historical Associative significance the property.

Criteria c) Aesthetic significance: *an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).*

The cottage demonstrates aesthetic significance for its historic scale, form and materials, traditional layout and siting close to the road frontage. It contributes to the character of the streetscape and setting of nearby heritage items. Internally it retains considerable amount of internal fabric worthy of conservation including original 4 panel doors and joinery, teak flooring, and timber lined ceilings. Although modified by external cladding and verandah enclosure, these alterations could be removed.

Criteria d) Social significance; *an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

The property does not meet this criterion.

Criteria e) Research potential: *an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area). Significance under this criterion must have the potential to yield new or further substantial information.*

The property is not likely to yield information of a nature which would meet this criteria.

Criteria f) Rarity: *an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (for the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

40 Cowper Street is assessed as having rarity locally as there are few remaining buildings of this era in the township due to the growth and increasing density of settlement of the town. (Much of this occurred prior to the heritage study and formal listings being in place in 2014).

Criteria g) Representativeness: *an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics or a class of NSW's (or local area's) Cultural or natural places or Cultural or natural environments.*

40 Cowper Street is representative of a late Victorian cottage in terms of scale, form and fabric.

Comparative Examples

There are no board and batten vertical timber buildings on the heritage schedule. The only Victorian era cottage on the heritage schedule in Byron is 5 Middleton Lane, a cottage which with a similar hipped form roof and traditional timber lined interior but horizontally weatherboard exterior walls. This has been substantially extended but photos from recent real estate listing show similar floor and traditional central hallway layout. The heritage items that sit to each end of this part of Cowper Street are the Arcadia Guesthouse 1910 and Palm Court –circa 1900, more elaborate and substantial dwellings.

Statement of Significance

This timber workers cottage of vertical board and batten construction demonstrates historical and aesthetic significance and rarity at a local level. Despite the external later cladding, which is removable, the property still retains a reasonably high level of intactness with original joinery and windows, floor and ceiling linings. The cottage forms one of a pair of historic cottages, positioned close to the road frontage which are rare remaining late 19th century era dwellings in Byron Bay.

Recommendation

It is recommended to be included on Schedule 5 of Byron LEP 2014 as a heritage item and its future conservation is strongly supported. The inclusion of No 42 is also supported and consultation with the owner is also recommended.

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