

**Item name:** Housie Building and Former Ambulance Shed**Location:** Banner Park Mullumbimbi Street Brunswick Heads 2483

Byron

**Address:** Banner Park Mullumbimbi Street**Planning:** Northern**Suburb/nearest town:** Brunswick Heads 2483**Local govt area:** Byron**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:****Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:** Arakwal**Curtilage/boundary:** The parkland setting of the items.**Item type:** Built**Group:** Recreation and Entertainment**Category:** Other - Recreation & Entertainment**Owner:** State Government**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** Picnic Shelter and vacant former Ambulance Building**Former uses:** Housie Building and Ambulance Building**Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:** Local

**Statement of significance:** The former Housie and Ambulance buildings demonstrate historical, aesthetic and social significance. They provide evidence of the public use and development of Banner Park for recreational use and hold social connections and links to many cherished memories of holiday makers over generations which have visited Brunswick Heads. They are example of simple vernacular architecture and lightweight timber and iron structures in a parkland setting. Although modified by removal of the walls, the Housie Building retains its overall form and continues in its role for public use on the reserve. The Former Ambulance building is currently disused and has potential future restoration and adaptive re-use.

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**Historical notes** Local Background

**of provenance:** Brunswick Heads is a significant Aboriginal place and part of lands of the Bundjalung people and the place of the earliest European settlement in Byron Shire. The precinct is historically significant for its evolution as a settlement in response to historical, social, economic and transportation factors, having connection to early cedar getting, the fishing industry and a historical use for recreation and holiday destination.

Prior to European settlement, Brunswick Heads was part of the territory of the original inhabitants of the area, the Bundjalung people. As Europeans moved to the district, Brunswick Heads became one of the earliest ports in what is now Byron Shire, and by the 1850's, some raw materials (timber, tallow, whale oil) were being shipped to state (Sydney), national and international markets, and many new settlers, foodstuffs and necessities found their way into the district via Brunswick Heads. Dairying provided the greatest impetus to the settlement by Europeans of the region, and in the 1890's, when Brunswick Heads was bypassed by the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line, the town as a major port was eclipsed by the port of Byron Bay. By the 1920's, the major industries were fishing (with a well established local fishing fleet) and tourism, with a local river transport system (drogher lighters) supporting the upriver dairy industry.

The expansion of Brunswick Heads was affected by flooding, swampland to the west and the course of the river itself. The Pacific Highway was routed through the town for more than 50 years, but now bypasses the town which has left a township with a substantially intact architectural heritage, and with an atmosphere and charm unique in the Shire.

**This Item**

The housie shed was a community led development which attracted mixed views about its impact on the waterfront reserve.

From Page 27 of 1948-68 book: Glowing tributes to the work of Mr Eric Harding in the interests of the Mullum RSL, were made on 11Mar49. Mr Harding was the originator of the housie scheme, which has resulted over a period of years in the Mullumbimby Sub-Branch becoming one of the most financial on the North Coast..., and making a motza at the Brunswick Heads housie tent at Christmas. Mr Harding said that, as treasurer during the depression years, he recalled a time when the sub-branch did not have the 3/8d relief for a digger "on the track." ... (Mullum RSL part of Bruns Joint Carnival Committee)

12Oct51: The Joint Carnival Committee comprising representatives from Mullumbimby and Brunswick sub-branches of the RSSAILA and Brunswick Heads Progress Association at a meeting last night agreed to make application to the Chief Secretary for a housie permit.... Misunderstandings which had existed between the bodies concerned were smoothed out and the treasurer, Mr F. Tandy, presented the balance sheet covering last season's activities.

11Jan1952: Mr Fred Wakely, a local business man and secretary of the Brunswick Heads Progress Association, said the crowd was bigger than for some years. Sales of newspapers always a good indication of population, had shown a remarkable increase over the holidays. The Combined Carnival Committee and the Lismore Ambulance reported bigger business than usual at their housie tents, although it was noticeable that individual players appeared to have less money to spare for entertainment.... Councillor T. Mott said it was one of the largest crowds he had seen at Brunswick....

8 Oct 1954: Volunteer workers of the Brunswick Heads Progress Association and Returned Soldiers' League have made good progress with the erection of their new shelter shed and entertainment hall on the carnival ground.... Mr A. Lofts, who is in charge of operations, said yesterday (7 Oct 54) that the building would be ready for the Christmas Holiday season.... fibro roof. 72ft long x 30ft wide... The building will be completed entirely by voluntary labour and is expected to cost less than 500 quid. Mullumbimby Star.

8Jul1955: Proposal for new Bruns RSL clubhouse at Memorial Park. Cr D.D. Harrison said it was heartbreaking to find the general encroachment on waterfront reserves at Brunswick Heads. He said he had been the mover of a motion that the Brunswick Heads RSL build a new club room, but he was opposed to the alienation of any portion of reserves. ... 22 residents had also signed a petition protesting.

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Acknowledgment to Susan Tsicalas BVHS.

**Themes:** National theme

State theme

Local theme

**Designer:**

**Builder:**

**Year started:** 1954

**Year completed:** 1954

**Circa:** No

**Physical description:** This vernacular timber structure constructed in 1954 by volunteer workers, comprised a gabled roofed shelter building of 72 feet (24m) by 30ft (10m) wide, has been a shelter and shade pavilion and hosted community events for over 50 years. Reroofed in colorbond and concrete floor. Although modified by the removal of timber walls in 2021, the building retains its overall form and location and continues to be well used by the community for its shade and shelter and a picnic shelter. The housie tradition is still hosted in a large marquee each summer in Banner Park. The exposed timber trusses and unlined roof are an aesthetically appealing part of the interior.

The former Ambulance building comprises a vernacular timber and iron hipped roof building with weatherboard cladding set on concrete piers. Lined fibro eaves. Concrete steps still in situ. The door opening to the reserve has been changed to metal roller doors. The guttering (non original square form ) is rusted and detached in places.

**Physical condition level:**

**Physical condition:** The housie building is in good condition .

The former Ambulance building is in need of critical maintenance. The building sits below a raised earth embankment to the south and trees are close to the roof filling guttering with leaves. The walls are covered in graffiti.

**Archaeological potential level:**

**Archaeological potential Detail:**

**Modification dates:** The side walls of the Housie building were removed by Reflections Holiday Parks in 2021 (Reserve Managers) to address anti-social uses of the building. It was not under any form of heritage protection at the time.

**Recommended management:**

**Management:** Management category

Management name

**Further comments:**

**Criteria a):** Brunswick Heads is a significant Aboriginal place and part of lands of the Bundjalung people and the place of the earliest European settlement in Byron Shire. The precinct is historically significant for its evolution as a settlement in response to historical, social, economic and transportation factors, having connection to early cedar getting, the fishing industry and a historical use for recreation and holiday destination. The Housie Building and Former Ambulance Shed are buildings which demonstrate the historical development of the village as a recreational and holiday destination and provide evidence of circa 1950s public buildings built by volunteers.

**Criteria b):** The buildings have historical associative significance with the Brunswick Heads Progress Association and Returned Soldiers' League.

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**Criteria c):** Both buildings illustrate the vernacular timber and iron character of the region and are set in a parkland setting of aesthetic significance on the banks of Simpsons Creek with established plantings.  
[Aesthetic/ Technical significance]

**Criteria d):** The buildings are socially significant to the community and hold historical ties to multiple generations who have holidayed and enjoyed the foreshores of Brunswick Heads.  
[Social/Cultural significance]

**Criteria e):**  
[Research significance]

**Criteria f):** The buildings are rare locally as public buildings on the reserve.  
[Rarity]

**Criteria g):** The buildings are representative examples of simple vernacular structures of the mid 20th century built for purpose.  
[Representative]

**Intactness/Integrity:** Moderate.

References:	Author	Title	Year
		Pers Comm and historical references of news articles	Susan Tsi 2021
		Pers Comm Gae Laverty former Resident Brunswick Heads	2021
		The Brunswick- Another River and its People. 1988. ISBN 0 71	1988

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Donald Ellsmore and Ian	Byron Shire Community Based Heritage Study		2005
	Clarence Heritage	Historic Heritage Assessment Brunswick Heads		2021

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
	LOT	408		DP	728643

**Latitude:**

**Longitude:**

**Location validity:**

**Spatial accuracy:**

**Map name:**

**Map scale:**

**AMG zone:**

**Easting:**

**Northing:**

**Listing: Name**

**Title**  
Potential Heritage Item

**Number**

**ListingDate**

**Data entry:** Data first entered: 21/01/2022

Data updated: 21/01/2022

Status: Basic

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**Image:**



**Caption:** Housie Building Banner Park

**Copy right:**

**Image by:** D. Wray

**Image date:** 13/05/2021

**Image number:**

**Image url:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345771d4b5cb05841dbbde2f21f29bc1e87.jpg>

**Thumbnail url:** [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/T\\_humb\\_test345771d4b5cb05841dbbde2f21f29bc1e87.jpg](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/T_humb_test345771d4b5cb05841dbbde2f21f29bc1e87.jpg)

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**Caption:** Housie Building Banner Park interior trusses before removal of walls.

**Copy right:**

**Image by:** D. Wray

**Image date:** 20/06/2020

**Image number:**

**Image url:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3459ab69a4924234667b0eaacdf11d24.JPG>

**Thumbnail url:** [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Tumb\\_test3459ab69a4924234667b0eaacdf11d24.JPG](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Tumb_test3459ab69a4924234667b0eaacdf11d24.JPG)

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