

Other Names	Biggenden Courthouse (former)	
Street Address	8 Edward Street	Biggenden
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	5CK3511	

Historical Context

The town of Biggenden, located in a corner of the former Degilbo pastoral station (established in the late 1840s), was settled following the extension of the railway from Maryborough to the district in 1891. The town supported the various industries in the region, including agriculture, dairying and timber. The town was particularly well-known for the state experimental farm established on the outskirts of town in 1898, the Biggenden Mine and the butter factory. The town also includes a substantial sale yard and show grounds.

The Biggenden Museum building was originally the top floor of the Paradise Court House. The town of Paradise owed its existence to a gold reef on the eastern bank of the Burnett River, extending from Paradise Creek to Finney's Creek. The discovery of the gold deposit by the brothers James and Thomas Allen in 1889 led to the proclamation of the Paradise Goldfield in November 1890 and caused a gold rush that attracted around 700 people. The town was surveyed in 1891 and it consisted of a range of businesses and services, including hotels, shops, industrial workshops, a post office and court house. The population of the town peaked at approximately 2000 people. The field was very rich in gold, but the mineral was difficult to extract. Yields declined rapidly in the late 1890s and the town ceased to exist from the early twentieth century, with most of the buildings removed to other settlements in the surrounding district, including Biggenden, Mount Shamrock and Mount Perry. The remaining physical evidence of the town was submerged under the Paradise Dam in 2005.

The Biggenden Museum building functioned as the Biggenden Courthouse until the latter half of the twentieth century. The Biggenden Historical Society was formed in June 1980 and the former courthouse building was donated to the Society by the Queensland Department of Works and Housing on the 5th of August, 1980, in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Biggenden (formerly Degilbo) Shire.

Physical Description

The Biggenden Museum building is located at the southern end of Edward Street in the centre of Biggenden on a levelled grassed site and forms part of the Biggenden Historical Museum complex. The block borders onto a sports green in the northwest, the railway line in the southwest, Edward Street in the northeast and bushland in the southeast and is secured by a high metal post and chain-wire fence with added barbed-wire support on top. The large lowset single-storey timber structure on stumps shows a corrugated iron clad hipped roof and exposed framework. Access is via a set of stairs from the front onto the wrap-around verandah which is incorporated under the main roof and features a two-rail balustrade. Located on the north western side is a ramp. There are a number of doors leading into the building as well as several windows. Adjacent to the main building at the rear is a small square building with a pyramid roof. A number of ancillary buildings and structures are located to the southeast of the main building.

Integrity	Fair	Condition	Good
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	30/07/2012		

References

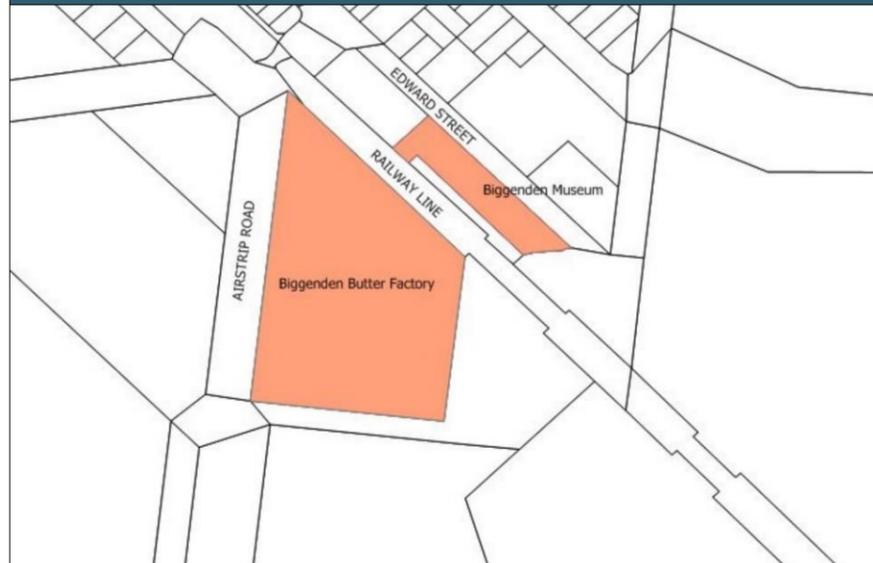
Biggenden Historical Society, 1988, *The Biggenden Story*, Biggenden Historical Society.
 Pragnell, J., Cheshire, L., Quirk, K., *Paradise: Life on a Queensland Goldfield*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Archaeological Services Unit, 2005.

Heritage Significance	
Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.</i>
Statement	The Biggenden Museum building is important in demonstrating the pattern of the region's history, particularly the ephemeral nature of mining settlements and the relocation and reuse of buildings from abandoned towns in the region, and the emergence of historical societies in the Burnett region in the second half of the twentieth century.

B	<i>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the region's cultural heritage.</i>
Statement	The Biggenden Museum building demonstrates a rare aspect of the region's cultural heritage as a surviving structure from the former town of Paradise.

G	<i>The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons important to the region.</i>
Statement	The Biggenden Museum building has a special association with the Biggenden Historical Society, as it was donated to the historical Society shortly after its inception in 1980 and it has housed the Society's museum collection since that time.

Location Map



Source: Biggenden Historical Society Inc. and Museum.



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