

# AR DEE, Tugun

LHR0083

## Place details

Address/location	16 San Michele Street, Tugun
Title details	21RP2010
Principle period(s)	1956 - present
City of Gold Coast division	14
Other known names	
Area for protection	Lot on Plan
Place components	Exterior design and form including roof pitch; front entrance, porch and balustrade, and steps; mezzanine floor addition; internal layout; louvre type windows; external doors; floor coverings; corner basins to bedrooms, and original fittings; overhead cupboards to bedroom basins and to kitchen.
Place category	Building
Context	In situ
Other listings	
Register entry date	5 June 2018

## Statement of heritage significance

AR DEE is a place of local heritage significance for its historic importance, rarity, potential to yield information and class characteristics as evidenced by, but not exclusive to, the following statement of heritage significance, based on criteria (a), (b), (c), and (d) of the Gold Coast Local Heritage Register.

### Criterion (a) Historic importance

AR DEE is important in demonstrating a significant phase in the evolution of beach house development on the Gold Coast. Before World War II, holiday homes on the Gold Coast included substantial brick designs, timber and tin Queenslanders and simple beach shacks. By the 1950s, in the wake of building restrictions, a new style of beach holiday home emerged. AR DEE is representative of the design and style of post-World War II, owner-builder, fibro beach house construction. These types of beach house made an influential contribution to establishing the Gold Coast's identity as a holiday destination. The place reflects the rising affluence of Queensland families during the 1950s, with many able to afford a holiday residence and car to access seaside locations. This movement spawned a subdivision boom along the coast with suburbs, such as Tugun, rapidly expanding.

The modernist design style, because of its simplicity, proved very popular on the Gold Coast. It suited the growing mood at the time to see the city as modern and future-focussed. However modernist ideas were interpreted rather loosely and, as a whole, houses like AR DEE exhibit a high degree of inventiveness and diversity as people experimented with the idiom to suit their budgets, tastes and needs.

### Criterion (b) Rarity

AR DEE is an example of building design and material use that was once common in Gold Coast beachside townships. It has not undergone significant modification or renovation since the addition of the mezzanine area and laundry in the early 1960s. The retention of the original layout, early fittings, fixtures and architectural detailing

makes AR DEE an exceptional representation of 1950s beach houses. Well conserved places like AR DEE are becoming increasingly uncommon on the Gold Coast as places are renovated and extended to suit modern requirements and tastes or simply demolished and replaced with modern structures.

### **Criterion (c) Potential information**

AR DEE has the potential to provide information that will contribute to our understanding of the evolution of beach house design on the Gold Coast. The form, use of materials, decorative finishes, original fittings and documented use of the place as well as popular post-war construction techniques and land use on small coastal lots provides the potential to reveal more about 1950s beach houses.

The intact and relatively unmodified nature of AR DEE, including its finishes and fittings, means that it is an exemplar in the comparative analysis of beach houses on the Gold Coast and their development through time.

### **Criterion (d) Class Characteristics**

AR DEE is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a typical 1950s fibro beach house. It displays the defining features of a simple, low maintenance design with asbestos fibro cladding, sloping flat roof, slanted balcony columns, wrought iron balustrading, and steel awnings. Beach houses attempted to make the most of outlook and climate and were not as constrained as the permanent suburban home which divided space into living, sleeping and working areas. AR DEE was designed as a low-maintenance holiday home with an open plan which reflected the laid-back, temporary use of the place.

In coastal townships, such as Tugun, beach houses created a distinct community identity while the limited choice of materials added to the character and scale of these houses.

## **Image**



AR DEE, 2018. Image courtesy of City of Gold Coast.

## History

AR DEE is a practical, low-maintenance two-storey asbestos fibro clad beach house situated on the lower eastern slopes of Tugun Hill with views across Tugun Village and out to the Coral Sea. Built during the latter half of the 1950s, AR DEE is representative of a period of strong tourism and residential growth in the seaside suburb of Tugun. This period saw the growth of the suburb westward away from the town centre, the last remaining farmlands subdivided and utilisation of the slopes of Tugun Hill for residential purposes. The beach house genre is still prevalent within Tugun and contributes to the suburb's distinct character.

In 1945, the State Government introduced new legislation, the *Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act 1945*, which regulated the distribution of building materials following World War II and addressed the chronic shortage of materials and labour at a time when there was a grave shortage of housing in Queensland.<sup>1</sup> A maximum expenditure of £100 (approximately \$6,935 today) per financial year on materials and labour was permitted, but owner-builder labour was unlimited.<sup>2</sup> A result of this Act people wanting a home or holiday house became owner-builders. By the time these building restrictions were lifted in 1952 the practice of owner-built dwelling-houses was firmly established. Many owner-builders preferred fibro as it was cheap, easy to transport, durable, easy to cut to size and, as it was not affected by sea salt and water damage, it was an excellent beach house building material.

While designs for beach houses varied, popular styles included mono-pitched roof and wide eaves, low set and were timber framed with fibrous asbestos cladding. Weekenders/holiday houses were usually simpler constructions than their permanent suburban counterparts and by the 1950s holiday houses appeared with a skillion or butterfly roof, fibro cladding, painted window joinery, wide eaves, elevated living rooms and decks and decorative steel columns. AR DEE exhibits many of the common traits of beach houses of the era including skillion roof, timber framing and external asbestos fibro cladding.

AR DEE is located on Lot 21 Registered Plan 2010 (21RP2010), County of Ward, Parish of Tallebudgera containing an area of 405 m<sup>2</sup> (16 perches). The lot was originally part of a larger 8093 m<sup>2</sup> (two acre) lot purchased by John Lanham after auction for the sum of £12 sterling from the State with Deed of Grant registered 31 August 1916 following Town Lot survey proclamation during 1910.<sup>3</sup>

The lot<sup>4</sup> passed into the ownership of Harriet Pamela Smith on 13 July 1925<sup>5</sup>, along with four other adjoining lots, and then subsequently passed into the ownership of Eliza Smith on 5 September 1925.<sup>6</sup> Ownership of the lot then passed into the ownership of Eric Orrick Hackett Handy on 15 March 1954.<sup>7</sup>

On 17 August 1954 Richard John Drummond became the registered owner of the property.<sup>8</sup> Although there had been a number of owners prior to 1954 no structures had been built on the site and the property passed into the ownership of Richard Drummond as a vacant site.

Although Richard Drummond was the owner of the land and the name AR DEE is derived from his initials<sup>9</sup>, the selection of the site, design and building of the house was a family exercise. The three Drummond siblings, Richard, Celia and Peter ('Jack'), along with Celia's husband, George Lewis, decided to build a beach house on the site at Tugun. Initially they contemplated a site further up Tugun Hill, however, they decided on the San Michele block as it was cheaper, easier to build on and offered coastal views and good cross ventilation.<sup>10</sup>

At this time there were a few other houses in San Michele Street and most of the other houses nearby were those of permanent Tugun residences.<sup>11</sup> The beach was a seven minute walk away and between the property and the shops at Tugun Village there were sand mining operations.<sup>12</sup> When the property was purchased, San Michele Street was a dead-end street off Toolona Street.<sup>13</sup>

The area was relatively undeveloped farmland and there were still a number of trees and scrub around.<sup>14</sup> In aerial imagery from 1956 two banana plantations can be observed on the northern slopes of Tugun Hill close to AR DEE, and local creeks and streams, the latter almost all culverted today, still followed their natural open courses to the sea.<sup>15</sup>

The Council rates ledger shows that the land was connected to the water supply by 8 March 1955 and cleansing charges started in May the same year.<sup>16</sup> The specifications and plan for a two-storey dwelling, prepared by R. Wood of Bay Terrace, Wynnum Central, was approved in the same year.<sup>17</sup>

Work on AR DEE commenced during the 1955-56 Christmas-New Year holidays but as with many weekenders and beach houses, it was built intermittently and took several years of weekend and holiday work to be completed.<sup>18</sup> The erection of the house was a family effort. Richard, a plumber by trade, and George, a public servant and accomplished cabinet maker, did most of the work and they were assisted by Jack and his son, also named Peter.<sup>19</sup> Laying of the ground floor vinyl tiles was also a family effort.<sup>20</sup>

The Drummond's had a holiday/weekend camp at Burleigh Heads while the Lewis' had a similar camp at Bilinga and they were regularly used by each family.<sup>21</sup> Once building work started on AR DEE all camping was done on site during the several years it took to bring it to a standard that it could be inhabited.<sup>22</sup> Richard Drummond had a car but his brother Jack did not so they would travel down together while the rest of the family would travel by train from Brisbane to the Tugun railway station located at the bottom of Tugun Hill.<sup>23</sup>

Material for the house mainly came from Trees Hardware at Palm Beach. An order would be phoned through and a delivery made on the Friday in preparation for a weekend of work.<sup>24</sup> Some items, such as the internal stairs, were made in Brisbane and transported to Tugun for assembly while George Lewis pre-fabricated items such as the kitchen cupboards and server as well as the overhead cupboards for the upstairs sinks and then assembled them at Tugun. George also made the built-in beds, which have since been removed.<sup>25</sup> Mixing of the concrete for the foundations and floor was done by hand on site.<sup>26</sup>

The view was an important aspect of the design and AR DEE's two-storey construction with an entrance porch on the lower level and balcony along the front of the second level took advantage of this. Because the balcony faces due north-east a sunshade covering the second level balcony added. The balcony, however, proved too hot to be comfortable during the summer and the lower level area was more commonly used during those months.<sup>27</sup>

The second level includes two bedrooms and a long room that could be used for relaxing during the day and, at night, curtains could be drawn closed to provide additional sleeping spaces. When used by the Drummonds the parents and other adults would sleep in the bedrooms while the children, Peter junior and his sister, and any additional visitors would sleep in the long room with the sub-dividing curtains pulled. Second hand beds and stretchers were used for visitors and children.<sup>28</sup>

Richard Drummond included basins in the bedroom design for convenience as the bathroom was located on the lower level of the house.<sup>29</sup> During the early 1960s a mezzanine area was built above the garage to provide additional storage.<sup>30</sup> One of the final rooms to be built was the laundry, added during the early 1960s, and adjoining the rear of the kitchen.<sup>31</sup> The addition of the laundry added to the symmetry of the rear of the house.

When the family first started staying at AR DEE there was no connected sewerage, just earth closets and later, septic tanks. Nor did they have electricity, lighting was by kerosene lights and a primus was used for cooking.<sup>32</sup> These services were progressively added over time.

AR DEE was finished unpainted and the paste colour scheme was not introduced until 1999.<sup>33</sup>

Like many beach houses AR DEE had no fences or garden. The open areas outside could be used to play games or as parking for visitors and the gum and ironbark trees, which were part of the original scrub at the back of the lot remain today and appear in family photos of the undeveloped site from the 1950s and are visible on aerial imagery from 1956.<sup>34</sup>

Once AR DEE was completed the house was regularly used during the year with the two families having their own regular times to stay. Peter Drummond junior recalls that their family used to stay after Christmas and that this arrangement continued after he was married and he and his wife, Caroline, had their own children. George and Celia Lewis stayed at Easter and, after Richard's death, used the house over the Christmas – New Year period.<sup>35</sup> In later years, Celia and her cousin, Peggy Williams, used to holiday at AR DEE for about three weeks each year.<sup>36</sup>

Following the death of Richard Drummond in 1965 the property went to his sister Celia and, after Celia's death in 1997 Peter Drummond junior took over ownership.<sup>37</sup> Throughout this period the family continued to regularly occupy and use AR DEE until the property was eventually sold to in 1998 to a private buyer outside of the family.<sup>38</sup>

## Description

AR DEE is a two-storey fibro beach house on the lower slopes of Tugun Hill overlooking the seaside village of Tugun. It has concrete foundations and base, timber framing and is externally clad with fibro sheeting and internally lined with Masonite. The house has a 10% pitch skillion roof<sup>39</sup> with wide, pastel painted eaves. Typical of a beach house it is a comfortable low-maintenance house with plenty of space for relaxing.

External elevations are generally symmetrical with the exception of the ground floor bathroom and toilet at the rear which extend beyond the rectangular footprint of the house. The front has a garage with double doors surmounted by windows on one side and a small projecting concrete terrace with steps and pair of ten-light French doors leading into the house on the other side. The balcony above is supported by both metal posts and decorative inverted triangular fins. Both the terrace and steps have wrought iron balustrading and a similar style but modern replacement is used for the second level balcony.

AR DEE is a solid construction with specifications noting the foundation wall of 6 inch (152 mm) thick concrete with ½ inch (13mm) MS rod on 18 inch x 9 inch (467 mm x 229 mm) concrete footing set 2 feet (610 mm) into the ground, concrete 9 inch x 9 inch (229 mm x 229 mm) stumps set with ½ inch (13mm) MS rod no less than 2 feet (610 mm) into the ground and 4 inch (102 mm) wire mesh reinforced concrete floors.<sup>40</sup>

Structural timbers were specified to be of merchantable quality with an added note that no scrub timbers were to be used.<sup>41</sup> Floorboards are 4 inch x 1 inch (102 mm x 25 mm) tongue and groove supported by herringbone braced 4 inch x 2 inch (102 mm x 51 mm) floor joists. 4 inch x 2 inch (102 mm x 51 mm) studs were used with noggins each foot.<sup>42</sup>

To accommodate the hill slope the open plan living room/kitchen is raised but the earth floored garage, which runs parallel to the living room and kitchen, is not. The living room/kitchen runs the depth of the house while the garage stops short by 1.8 metres. Above the garage is a mezzanine area which was used for storage and nowadays as an office. Behind the garage is a passage giving access from the kitchen area at the rear to the toilet and bathroom.

Stairs lead from the garage into the kitchen and living room. This long open space has the kitchen delineated from the living area by a serving bench. The décor of this kitchen and living room is typical of the 1950s and includes brightly coloured asbestos floor tiles, cupboard doors painted different colours and shelves for holding and displaying items. A three hopper window above the sink provides natural light and a back door provides access to the skillion roofed laundry.

A built-in cupboard is located under the internal stairs. These stairs are near the front door in the living area and lead to the second level. The long room on the second level has French doors to the balcony and bedrooms and a rear solid door. Along the side of this room are two sets of louvre windows, both of which have two panes of clear glass at eye level with translucent glass for the remaining louvres.

Both bedrooms have built-in robes and a corner wash basin with splash area surmounted by a cupboard. The front bedroom has a two pairs of French doors, one to the balcony and the other to the long room and a louvre window on the side wall. The second bedroom has a pair of French doors connecting it to the long room and louvre windows with two panes of clear glass at eye level on the side and rear wall. A panel high on the connecting wall between the bedrooms shows that there was once a breezeway to provide for additional cross ventilation for this back bedroom.

The front of the property has no formal plantings, instead the presentation to the street is enhanced by the use of pastel colours for balcony supports, sun hoods, eaves and fascia. The colour scheme was added during 1999 and is based on colours from the period of construction of AR DEE.

## References

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- 1 *Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act 1945* (Qld).
- 2 ss 6, 10(2) *Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act 1945* (Qld).
- 3 *Deed of Grant of Land* No. 105665, Vol. 1345 Fol. 175 (Qld).
- 4 Until 2 September, 1985, Lot 21 RP 2010 legal description was identified as Sub 22 of Allot 8 of Sec 11 RP 2010.
- 5 *Certificate of Title* No. 298201, Vol. 1631 Fol. 191 (Qld).
- 6 *Certificate of Title* No. 298956, Vol. 1634 Fol. 196 (Qld).
- 7 *Certificate of Title* No. 571409, Vol. 2817 Fol. 149 (Qld).
- 8 Memo of Transfer note on *Certificate of Title* No. 571409, Vol. 2817 Fol. 149 (Qld).
- 9 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 1.
- 10 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research., pp.1-2.
- 11 Aerial imagery Film QAP572 Frame 1 Run 4 Flying Date 1 April, 1956 (Source QImagery/Queensland Government) shows five other houses in San Michele Street. Most housing in the vicinity of *AR DEE* was along Toolona Street. The village of Tugun did not extend any further west than Bilby and Marion Streets, one block over from *AR DEE*.
- 12 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history, Unpublished research, p. 2.  
Film QAP572 Frame 1 Run 4 Flying Date 1 April, 1956 (Source QImagery/Queensland Government) shows evidence of at least three operating sand mines as well possible evidence of two earlier operations.
- 13 Film QAP572 Frame 1 Run 4 Flying Date 1 April, 1956. Source QImagery/Queensland Government.
- 14 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 15 Film QAP572 Frame 1 Run 4 Flying Date 1 April, 1956. Source QImagery/Queensland Government.
- 16 Copy of 'Rates Ledger for 16 San Michel [sp.] Street'. City of Gold Coast file series PN1065/1181(P1).
- 17 Copy of 'Building Plans for 16 San Michel [sp.] Street', South Coast Town Council Approval 1157. City of Gold Coast file series PN1065/1181(P1).
- 18 Drummond, Peter. Personal communication. 16 December, 2017. Email.  
nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 1.
- 19 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. pp. 1, 2.
- 20 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p.2.
- 21 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. pp. 1, 2.
- 22 Drummond, Peter. Personal communication. 16 December, 2017. Email.
- 23 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p.
- 24 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 25 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 26 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 27 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 28 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 29 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 30 Drummond, Peter. Personal communication. 16 December, 2017. Email.
- 31 Drummond, Peter. Personal communication. 16 December, 2017. Email.
- 32 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.
- 33 Pers. Comm. Owner, 16 San Michele Street, Tugun. 8 February, 2018.
- 34 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.  
See also Drummond Family Photo Collection (privately held). Film QAP572 Frame 1 Run 4 Flying Date 1 April, 1956, Source QImagery/Queensland Government. 2002. 'Contour and Detail Survey over Lot 21 on RP 2010, San Michelle [sp.] Street, Tugun', Stewart McIntyre and Associates, Palm Beach, Qld.

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35 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.

36 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 1

37 nd. 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 1.

38 *Queensland Land Registry Transfer* document 702614094.

39 Copy of 'Building Plans for 16 San Michel [sp.] Street', South Coast Town Council Approval 1157. City of Gold Coast file series PN1065/1181(P1).

40 nd. 'Specifications of work and materials required in the erection and completion of residence at San Michel [sp.] Street, Tugun, for R.J. Drummond Esq., according to this specification and the accompanying drawings'.

41 nd. 'Specifications of work and materials required in the erection and completion of residence at San Michel [sp.] Street, Tugun, for R.J. Drummond Esq., according to this specification and the accompanying drawings'.

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nd, 'Ar-Dee, a Tugun beach house' an oral history. Unpublished research. p. 2.