

FRASER COAST BUILDING STYLES

BOARDING HOUSES, FLATS & MOTELS

Approximate years

1910s – 1980s

Descriptions

Holiday accommodation in Hervey Bay began with hotels and boarding houses. Hotels located at Pialba, Scarness, Torquay and Urangan were large, tin and timber buildings consisting of a dining hall on the ground floor and accommodation on the first floor. Boarding houses assumed a variety of designs including one and two storey buildings.

As the popularity of the seaside resort grew, flats became more common. Initially, flats were most likely to refer to a single dwelling house let for accommodation. They could also be duplexes, a style common up until the mid-20th century and still visible today, especially along the Esplanade. Duplexes spanned architectural types common from the early 1900s through to the 1960s. Flats were typically built on a single residential block, just like boarding houses.

Flats became more substantial from the 1950s onward, a trend common in the seaside resorts in Queensland (including the Gold and Sunshine Coasts). Although the term ‘apartment’ is the commonly used term for this type of accommodation today, in Hervey Bay they were universally referred to as flats in the period. The buildings were rectangular or staggered, positioned across the front of block or perpendicular to the street. They tended to have flat or skillion roofs, reflecting the popular beach house. They were all two storeys.

The other form of holiday accommodation architecture that appeared around this time is the motel. A contraction of ‘motor’ and ‘hotel’, the style – derived from an American trend – became popular in Queensland resorts, most notably the Gold Coast. The perfect distillation of the car’s impact on postwar life, motels tended to be single storey and set perpendicular to the road to facilitate car access. Guests could park their cars directly outside their unit. They were built in a distinctly Postwar Modern idiom, including skillion roofs, bright colours and angled posts (including fins, in the case of the Reef Motel in Torquay). Some later, two storey flats were also called motels, presumably because they provided parking outside units.

Flats/motels continued to evolve in the 1970s and 80s, assuming an increasingly kitsch influence popular at the time, including themed buildings with distinct Mediterranean elements. They also started to get bigger, occupying more than a single allotment, foreshadowing the modern holiday apartment. The first ‘high rise’ holiday apartment in Hervey Bay, the Riviera Resort, was built in 1993.

Elements

Tended to reflect common architectural design trends at the time of construction i.e. Federation, Interwar, Postwar Conventional and Modern.

Occupy a single residential block, which differentiates them from the larger, modern apartment resort.

Can be single or multiple dwelling. Includes duplexes. Larger examples tend to include swimming pools, generally at the front of the complex.

Postwar flats tend to be two storeys. Motels can be one or two storeys. Flats often arranged perpendicular to the street for car access and/or to maximise unit numbers.

From the 1970s began to incorporate coastal kitsch elements such as themes (e.g. Tower Court).



