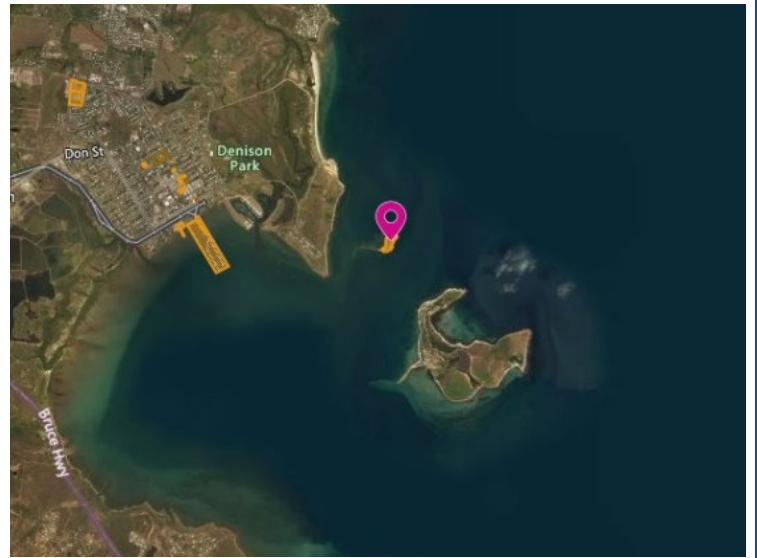


NORTH HEAD LIGHTHOUSE COMPLEX

Address	North Head Island
Lot Plan	2SP112947
Coordinates	148.27483, -20.020344
Integrity	Fair
Condition	Poor
Statutory Listings	Nil
Non-Statutory Listings	Nil
References	<p>Department of Harbours and Marine Queensland, 1986, Harbours & Marine: port and harbour development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985.</p> <p>DERM, 2010. Bowen Jetty, cultural heritage management database report.</p> <p>Picture Queensland www.unc.edu/~rowlett/lighthouse/qld.htm</p>

Street View

Location Map

Physical Description

The North Head Lighthouse Complex is located on North Head Island, a short distance east of Bowen. The island was solely used for lighthouse purposes and features hilly terrain characterised by stony ground with grassed areas and some native shrubs and trees.

The complex consists of the lighthouse, a cylinder shed, tramway tracks and the remains of a cottage and tank stand. The lighthouse is located on the highest point of the island and consists of a tapered hexagonal timber tower with a curved extension at the top section, as well as a gallery and lantern room with a dome roof. The timber structure is covered with tin sheeting secured by lead flashing and weatherboard cladding remains intact underneath.

It is not clear when the tin sheeting was installed and may be original also with the weatherboards.

The lighthouse is accessed via a timber door set into a projecting architrave with arched top. There is evidence of sash windows and frames which have been sheeted over with tin. The gallery is protected by a railing consisting of metal water pipe fencing rails. The original is located on the ground near the lighthouse in damaged condition.

The lantern room is stripped of any windows and equipment. The original Fresnel lens is currently displayed at the Bowen Historical Society and Museum.

The lighthouse is secured to the ground by steel cables fastened to the upper part of the tower.

The cylinder shed is located on the lower part of the island and consists of a timber structure with a skillion roof. The walls and the roof are clad with corrugated iron sheeting. The shed contains some gas cylinders and connection lines which run up to the lighthouse.

Remains of a timber tramway and winch for hauling equipment up the steep slope to the lighthouse survive running northeast from the cylinder shed to the lighthouse. The remnants of a cottage include concrete stumps for the house and water tank and remnant corrugated iron sheeting and flashings exists to the immediate southeast of the cylinder shed.

Historical Context

The North Head Lighthouse Complex is located in Bowen, in what was originally known as Port Denison.

Port Denison was the first port established in North Queensland and the settlement of Bowen, located on its shore, was officially proclaimed on 11 April 1861 (named after Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen). The township of Bowen quickly grew to support the northern pastoral industry as a strategically placed supply centre. Bowen became a major administrative and commercial centre and was declared a municipality on 17 March 1863, although its value as a port was rapidly eclipsed by Townsville. Nonetheless, the port was active until the late twentieth century, servicing the hinterland and in particular the sugar industry (based around Proserpine) and coal (Collinsville and Scottville).

The colony of Queensland was responsible for all lights along its coastline and within its harbours after separation from New South Wales in 1859. The colonial government quickly set about constructing lighthouses along the coast and harbours.

Tenders were called for the North Head lighthouse in April 1866 and it was operational by November that year. The interior walls were clad with heavy galvanised iron; wire stays – still extant – anchored the structure to the ground and the exterior of the structure was painted in white, with a red-coloured dome. The light was fueled by kerosene. Some of the timber for the structure was manufactured in Maryborough, Queensland, where two similarly designed lighthouses were erected in the same year on Woody Island.

The lighthouse was maintained by the pilot boat's crew, stationed at Dalrymple Point. A severe cyclone prevented the crew from reaching the lighthouse in 1867, ensuring there was no light. However, due to the relatively light shipping traffic in the port, a lightkeeper was not stationed on the island to maintain the light.

There is no further documentary evidence that a lightkeeper was stationed on the island; however, an historical photo dating from c1908 clearly indicates what appears to be a domestic structure on the island. It is believed that the house was removed from the island and relocated to Bowen.

The lighthouse continued in use until 1985 and the original lens is now located at the Bowen Historical Society and Museum.

In April 2016, the Whitsunday Regional Council undertook a \$100,000 restoration project on the lighthouse for its 150th anniversary. The restoration was completed August 2017.

Historical Significance

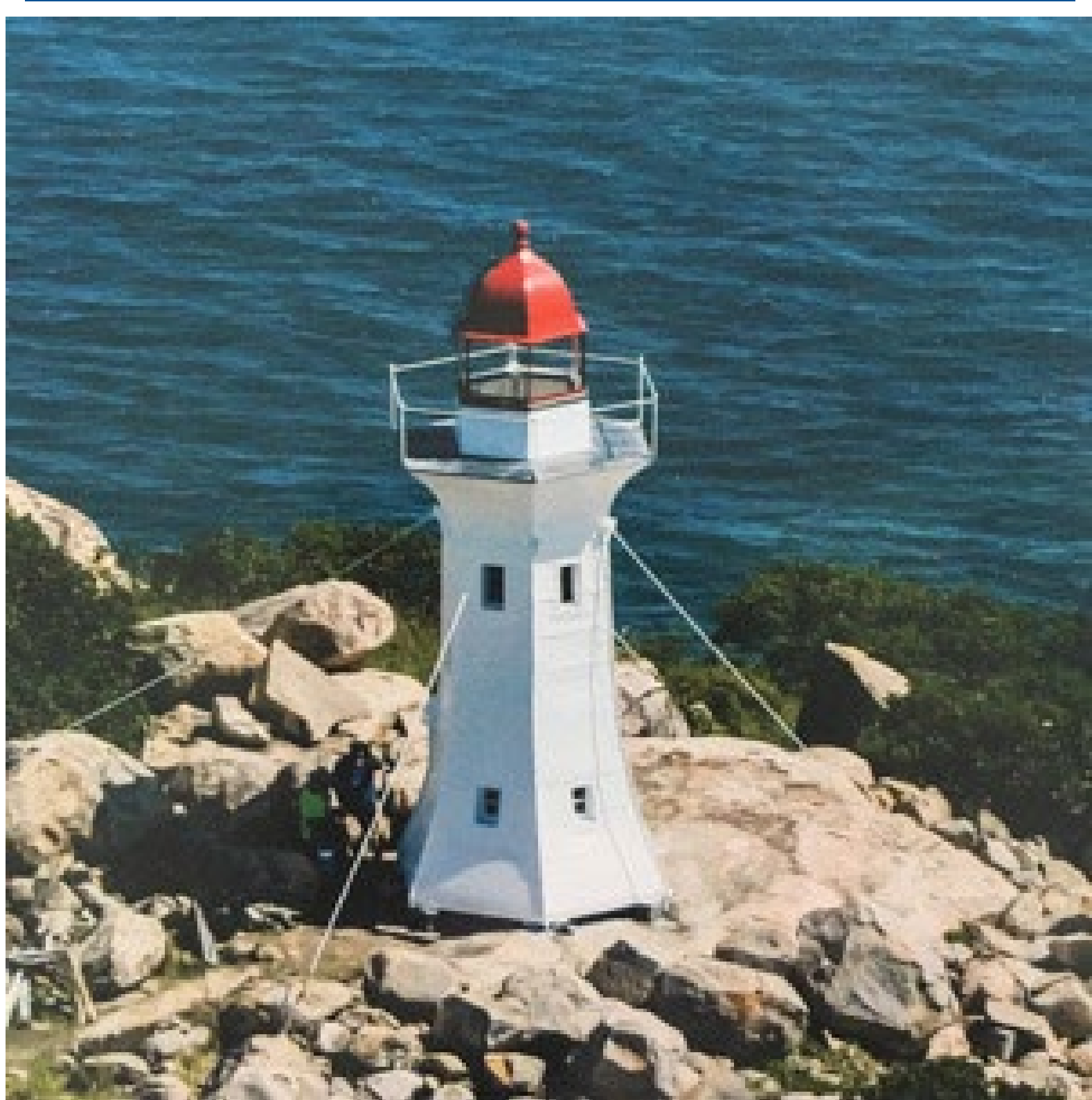
Criteria A - *the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history*

The North Head Lighthouse Complex is important in demonstrating the evolution of the region's history, particularly the establishment of port facilities to serve the region's hinterland in an early period of its history. It also continues to reinforce that Bowen was a port since the 1860s.

Criteria C - *the place has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history*

The North Head Lighthouse Complex has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history, particularly the design, methods of construction, layout and use of the lighthouse complex and North Head Island more generally (including archaeological potential) over a period of over 150 years.

<p>Criteria D - <i>the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places</i></p>	<p>The North Head Lighthouse Complex is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a lighthouse constructed by the colony of Queensland in the 1860s, and the ongoing maintenance of the site over time, including the physical infrastructure installed to facilitate the use of gas cylinders that replaced the original kerosene fuel for the light.</p>
<p>Criteria E - <i>the place is important because of its aesthetic significance</i></p>	<p>The North Head Lighthouse Complex is important to the region because of its aesthetic significance. The lighthouse is clearly visible from various vantage points in Bowen and the characteristic white and red-domed structure reflects an earlier, more romantic period of shipping and its associated dangers.</p>





North Head Lighthouse in Bowen Harbour, 1876

