

Historic Trails



1. grassy hill

As you drive up to Grassy Hill, note the stone gutters in town. Captain Cook climbed this feature to find a way north, and a radar station was located here during WWII.

2. galvanised iron house

At the end of Green Street is an example of a building from the 1880's. This house was built by Mr. Pascoe, who built the original stone gutters in town.

3. fire station

As now, the original fire station was located on top of this hill. This allowed the hand drawn fire appliance to be pulled to a fire anywhere in town.

4. old school site

Cook Shire Council now occupies the site of the original school, which was established in 1875 and divided into an Infants' & Girls' School and a Boys' School. Across the street was the Catholic Church and convent.

5. old hospital

Cooktown's original hospital was located on the Hope Street site of the current hospital, however the original building was moved to May Street and beautifully restored. It now serves as Kingdom Hall.

6. rail motor

At the end of Hogg Street you will find the remains of the last rail motor to use the Cooktown to Laura rail line, and the remains of a wood/coal tender for a B13 steam locomotive.

7. railway station

The site of the original Railway Station. The rebuilt station was relocated to Charlotte Street in 1962. Note the stone guttering.

8. chinese quarter

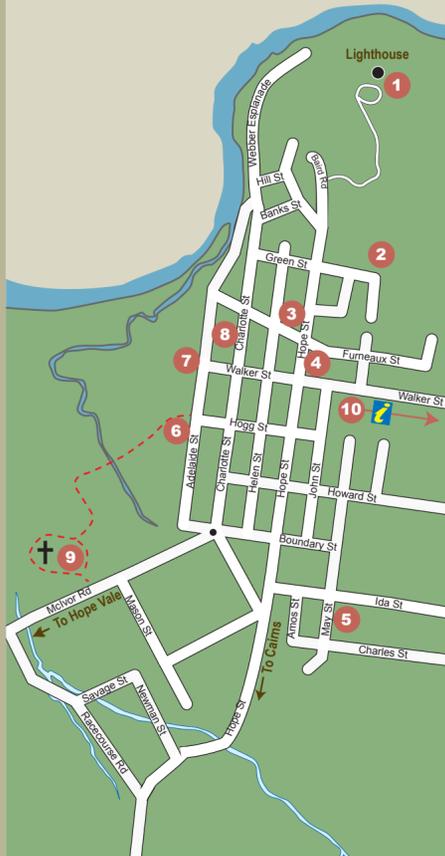
The eastern area at the bottom of Walker Street (intersecting Adelaide Street) was the Chinese Quarter of town, containing many small shops, gambling dens and eating houses, as well as accommodation.

9. cemetery & chinese shrine

The oldest grave dates back to 1874 and is a reminder of Cooktown's rich pioneering past, while the striking Chinese Shrine represents the important part played by the Chinese in the early days of settlement.

10. botanic gardens

Established in 1878, Cooktown's Botanic Gardens are among the oldest in Australia. Original features include rock pools and stone-pitched walls. Also the location of Nature's Powerhouse & Accredited Visitor Information Centre.



Charlotte Street

17. pilots' jetty

Little now remains, but see the interpretive signage.

16. the wharf area

Of the four wharves that once serviced Cooktown, only the Railway Wharf remains. While it has changed over the years, it has remained in constant use since its construction in around 1883. The remains of the 'International' wharf can be seen further along the foreshore. Nothing remains of the other two wharves.

14. the 20 pounder cannon

This field piece was sent to Cooktown as training aid for the Garrison Battery, a militia unit of the Queensland Defence Force.

13. the town well

Constructed in around 1890 to supply water to the overseas ships using the harbour.

10. the rsl memorial club

This was built in 1885 originally as the Daintree Divisional Hall. 'Divisions' were forerunners to our present shires. In 1919 the Hann and Daintree Divisions were amalgamated to form the Cook Shire. When the town council in Cooktown ceased to exist in 1934, the Cook Shire office took over that building. In 1949 the Shire Council gifted this building to the Cooktown Sub Branch of the RSSAILA (RSL now) and they have owned the building ever since.

9. the post office

Built in 1889, after the amalgamation of the post and the telegraph departments, it has remained the Cooktown post office ever since.

8. old council chambers

Initially the building was built for the Post & Telegraph Department in 1877. Within 10 years a new post office was required and this building reverted to an accommodation building for the post office staff.

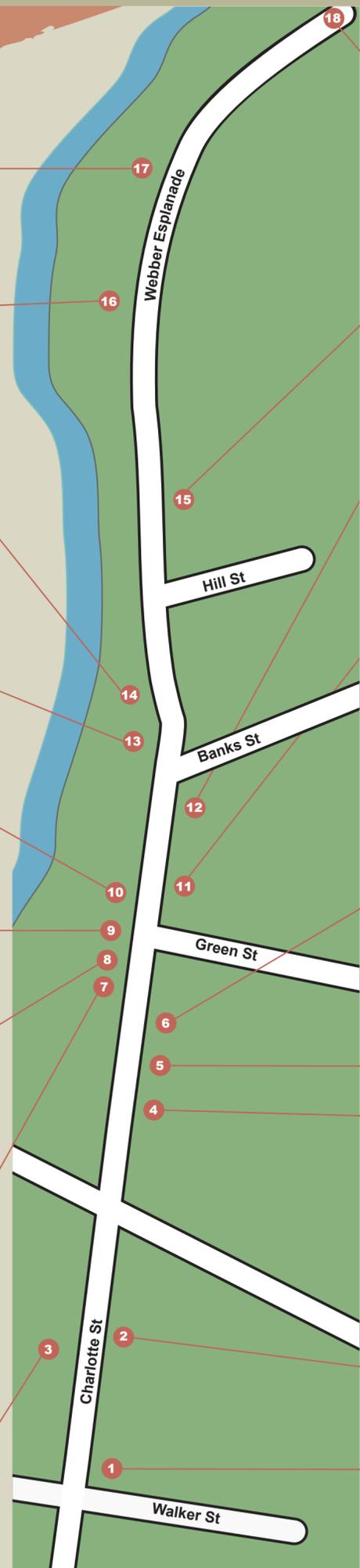
In 1892 the Cooktown Municipal Council hall and office burnt down and that council applied to operate out of the old Post & Telegraph building. The Cook Shire Council moved into this building in 1934 and remained there until 2007.

7. mrs watson's monument

Built in 1886, this drinking fountain was dedicated to the memory of Mary Beatrice Watson and her baby son Ferrier, who died tragically near Lizard Island.

3. the old railway station

This building was built in 1949, from the remains of the original railway station on Adelaide Street, which was demolished by a cyclone that year.



18. powder magazine

This is possibly the oldest structure still standing in Cooktown. It was built in 1874 by Henry Meldrum. It has recently been restored by the National Trust.



15. the courthouse

This is the third courthouse built in Cooktown. This one resembles the first one in many ways. The second, a far larger one was built behind the current building, and the original reverted to accommodation for the gaoler. The current building was constructed in the 1940's.



12. jacksy jacksy's

Until relatively recently this building was used as a hardware shop, owned by J. Newman and called the London Emporium. Later it was used as a gun shop, operated by Newman's son-in-law.



11. rsl welfare centre

The RSL Welfare Centre is in fact the first story of one of Cooktown's early hotels, showing how small many of the original 50 hotels really were. Decapitated in the 1949 'blow', it was not rebuilt save from putting a roof on what was left.



6. the bank of north queensland

Built in 1891, it operated for only a short time, closing its doors in 1908. Like Seagren's building next door, it has had a variety of uses over the years, including a supermarket, a motel and a real-estate office.



5. seagren's

Built by the Seagren family as a furniture showroom and factory. Piers Seagren was a manufacturer of fine furniture, renowned throughout the north in his time. The building has recently been used as a restaurant and an accommodation facility.



4. queensland national bank

Replacing a single story wooden building, this remained a bank until 2000. In the 1930's the Bank of New South Wales acquired the building, selling it eventually at public auction.



2. west coast hotel

Although this pub also dates from 1874, it has been much changed over the years and does not resemble the original to any great degree, but the basic structure remains.



1. the 'top pub'

Officially named the Cooktown Hotel, this was the original site of the White Horse Inn, which commenced trading in 1874.

James Cook

"This afternoon I went upon one of the highest hills over the harbour from which I had a perfect view of the inlet or river and adjacent country which afforded a very indifferent prospect, the low lands near the river is all over run with mangroves among which the salt water flows every tide, and the high land appeared to be barren and stony."

-- James Cook
(observations from Grassy Hill)



1. wharf

Begin your tour at "Restaurant 1770" or "Cook's Landing Kiosk" and treat yourself to a hot or cold drink, sit back and take in the surroundings. Directly behind where you sit is Grassy Hill, which Cook climbed the first day they landed.

2. the cairn

The place where the Endeavour was careened is today marked by the tall stone cairn at the water's edge.

3. sign boards

Learn more about HMB Endeavour and the dramatic events that brought the ship to "Cook's Town".

4. james cook statue

This sculpture by Stanley Hammond MBE marks the site of the Re-enactment of Cook's Landing, which takes place every year during the Queen's birthday weekend.

5. james cook monument

This monument commemorates Cook's landing on 17 June 1770.

6. reconciliation rocks

It is believed these rocks at the mangroves' edge are the site of a reconciliation that took place after an altercation between the Aboriginals and members of HMB Endeavour.

7. the boathouse

A good display of Cook and Guugu Yimithirr articles, including the costumes and paraphernalia associated with the re-enactment of Cook's landing that takes place in Cooktown in June each year.

8. james cook museum

The magnificent and historic James Cook Museum houses the town's most precious Cook relics. See Endeavour's enormous anchor and one of the ship's original cannons, both rescued from the sea at Endeavour Reef in 1969.

9. nature's powerhouse & solander's garden

Explore "Solander's Garden" - named for HMB Endeavour botanist Daniel Solander, and visit the gallery which houses a collection of original Parkinson botanical prints.

