

BROWN'S MART

Updated: 4th March, 2002

Architect JG Knight designed new premises for VL Solomon and Co in 1885 that became known as Solomon's Emporium. Using Chinese labour the building (80ft x 30ft x 17ft) was constructed and was said to be the finest stone store built in Darwin (then Palmerston) up to that date.

During the period 1887-1910 the building was known as the Mining Exchange where the Port Darwin mercantile agency, run by J.A.V. Brown and H.H. Adcock, operated as importers, customs and shipping agencies. It continued as a shipping agency and auctioneering premises until it was leased by the Bank of New South Wales in 1937 while their own building was constructed.

During a cyclone in 1897 the building suffered substantial damage. Later, during WWII, structural alterations were made to the building to enable it to be used as a torpedo workshop. Following the end of the war it was used by the Navy as part of their headquarters until about 1952. After this time, the building housed the Police force, the Crown Law Office and the Motor Vehicle Registry.

After Cyclone Tracy the building was repaired and has been used as a community theatre ever since.

The Brown's Mart building is of historical significance owing to its association with the development of commercial enterprises in Darwin during the 1880's and subsequent economic development of the town.



View of Brown's Mart Theatre from Smith Street, Darwin

It is also important as it is one of a small group of 1880's porcellanite stone buildings which have survived ravages by cyclones and is an example of an early building form in Darwin.

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