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## Property

### Iconic QLD backpackers pub and resort site listed for sale

An iconic Queensland backpackers pub and resort site, which once had links to a notorious businessman and fugitive, has been listed for the first time in 37 years in a highly unusual sale.

Samantha Healy

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#### Property

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Australia's record breaking suburbs of 2021

An iconic Queensland backpackers pub and resort site once linked to a notorious businessman and fugitive has been listed for the first time in 37 years in a highly unusual sale.

The 1.73ha site, which is home to Magnums Hotel and the Magnums Hostel, has been listed for sale by tender, with the “air space” above the renowned hotel included in the sale.

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Magnums Backpackers and Nightclub Airlie Beach is a magnet for partying backpackers

Place Projects agent Bruce Goddard said the site, as well as the marina area now known as the Port of Airlie, had been owned by Christopher Skase in the early 1980s, before the current owners, Australian Adventure Tourism Group (AAT Group), purchased the holding.

“Anyone who has ever been to Airlie has probably had a beer there (at Magnums Hotel, which operated by ALH Group,” Mr Goddard said.







While the iconic pub is not for sale, the “air space” above it is, and could soon be home to a resort

In a recent letter to the Australian Stock Exchange announcing the sale, AAT Group said the company had “developed and facilitated others to develop much of the original site with a major local hotel, a shopping centre, a very successful Woolworths supermarket, and contributed land to facilitate the construction of the Waterson Way loop road, which opened up the hillside overlooking the Airlie Beach township and Coral Sea for premium residential accommodation”.

“The remaining Magnums properties, comprising approximately 1.73ha, makes up a significant proportion of the established Town Centre of Airlie Beach and is within 100 metres proximity to the foreshore of Airlie Bay and Coral Sea waterways,” the announcement said.

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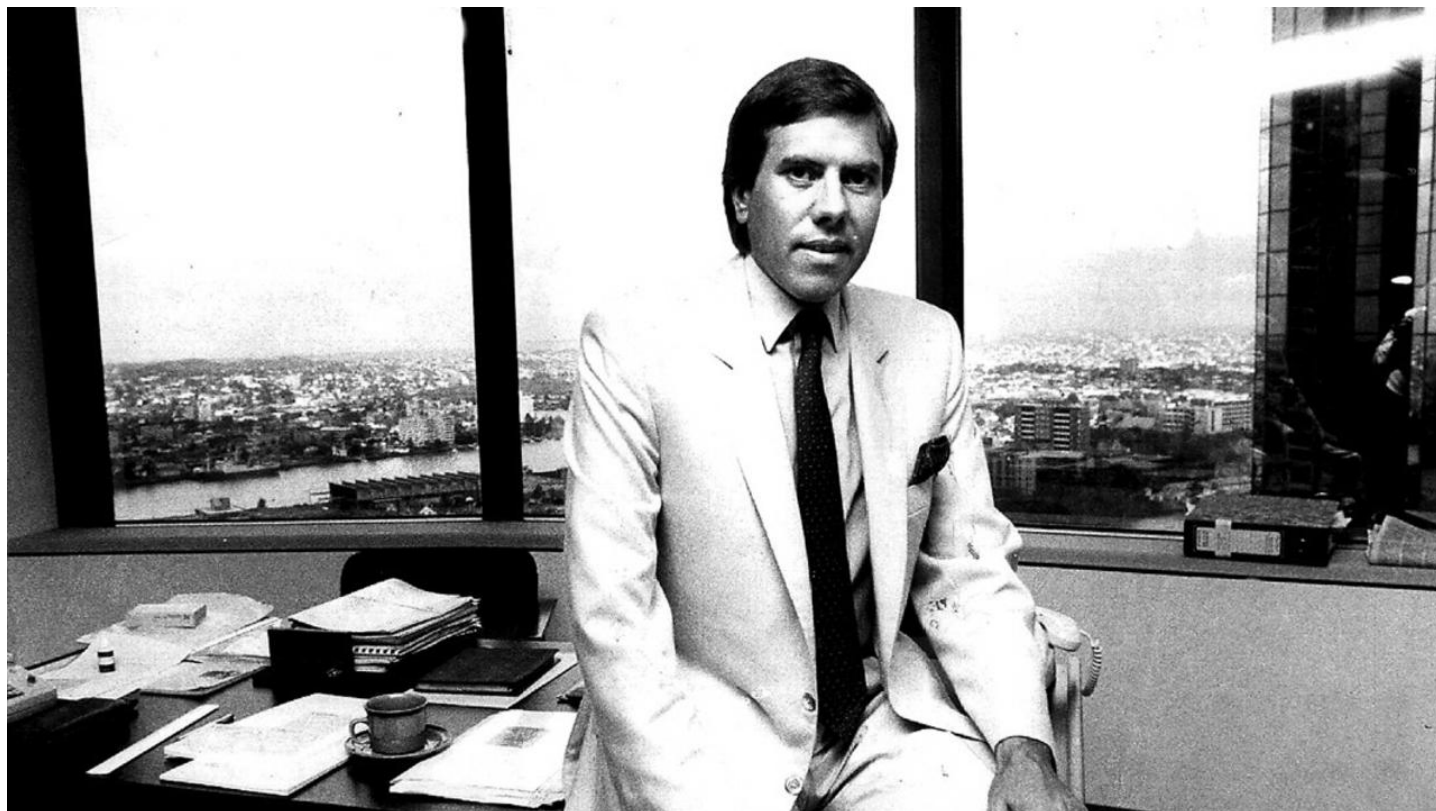
Aerial view of Airlie Beach Image: Tourism Whitsundays

The 1.73ha holding is partially vacant and partially made up of the existing accommodation buildings.

Potential land uses include 39 terrace homes to replace the existing resort, a service station and other outlets (subject to DA approval) and a four-star hotel above the famed pub.

“The planned height is for three levels of accommodation to be constructed above the Magnums Hotel,” according to the memorandum for potential buyers.

The existing pub – which was famous for its wild foam parties – will continue to be operated by ALH Group.



The site was once owned by Aussie businessman Christopher Skase, who became of the nation’s most wanted fugitives after his empire crashed and he fled to Spain.

Mr Goddard said there was also scope to remove the existing accommodation buildings and amenities, and make way for 39 terrace homes.

“The original use for the Magnums Properties, when the first stages were constructed around

1980, was as predominantly low density, cabin style accommodation for the Australian

domestic honeymoon and couples’ market,” the memorandum states.

“By late 1988 ... the Magnums Property had been refocused to become the leading Airlie Beach facility to accommodate and entertain the burgeoning and lucrative backpacker

market.

“While significant developed components of the property, such as the Magnums Hotel,



the Woolworths Supermarket and the Whitsunday Village Shopping Centre have been progressively developed and sold to investors.

“This is the first time in approximately 37 years that the main operating properties have been offered for sale in one line.”



The site for sale

Mr Goddard said there had already been some interest in the property.

“I think Airlie Beach is primed to have a big few years,” he said.

“It is doing very well, even with international borders closed, and once they open up again, I reckon it will be off.

“It’s the boating and yachting mecca of Australia and just an amazing part of the world.”

Originally published as [Iconic QLD backpackers pub and resort site listed for sale](#)

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