



## Heritage Citation



### 678 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley

#### Key details

**Addresses** At 678 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006

**Type of place** Shop/s

**Period** Victorian 1860-1890

**Style** Free Classical

**Lot plan** L3\_SP193209; L1\_SP198092; L5\_SP198092; L4\_SP193209; L822\_SP192737; L2\_SP193207; L3\_SP193210; L813\_SP192741; L5\_SP193201; L6\_SP193211; L4\_SP193212; L106\_SP196993; L119\_SP196969; L811\_SP192742; L812\_SP192742; L1\_SP193199; L1\_SP193204; L101\_SP196984; L107\_SP196982; L108\_SP196982; L810\_SP192742; L120\_SP196969

**Key dates** Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000  
Date of Citation — July 2008

**Construction**

Walls: Face brick

**Criterion for listing**

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative

This pre-1878 masonry commercial building operated as a shop for a number of small businesses from the late nineteenth century. The building and its neighbour were jointly owned through their history and were possibly constructed as investment properties for James Swan, Mayor of Brisbane, in the 1870s. The building demonstrates the establishment of Ann Street as a commercial precinct in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and is a rare surviving building of its type. It forms part of an historic group of commercial buildings from this period.

## History

This commercial building in Ann Street dates from the 1870s when was leased by owner James Swan to tenants with small businesses. It is a long narrow single storey masonry building with a gable roof running perpendicularly to the street. An awning supported by posts projects over the footpath. A later addition has been built at the rear of the building.

This property and the adjoining property, now number 680, were owned together by a variety of eminent proprietors, including James Swan, who was Mayor of Brisbane during his time of ownership. Swan was also the owner during the time the shops are believed to have been constructed. Over the years the three shops within the buildings have hosted a variety of occupants, as traders and retailers attempted to take advantage of the Ann Street location and the gradual improvement of the Valley. Tenants have included a bootmaker, furniture dealers, grocers, dressmakers, a religious group, drapers and tailors. The property appears to have always been a multi-tenanted commercial establishment.

The Fortitude landed John Dunmore Lang's settlers in the wattle-scented valley in 1849. Disputes with the government over land grants meant the area was poorly settled, and Duncan's Hill, blocking the city from access, also restricted growth. In the early 1850s there were only 150 houses between Duncan's Hill and Breakfast Creek and limited commercial development: two hotels, one shop and a church. As the Fortitude Valley population increased throughout the 1860s, Ann Street slowly became the Valley's first commercial district. The 'Lamb Inn' and the 'Strangers Rest', soon renamed the 'Foresters Arms' marked the corners of Ann and Brunswick Streets. A primary school was opened in 1861, near the Foresters Arms, and businesses began to move into the western side of Ann Street, between Brunswick Street and the Waterloo Hotel on Bulimba Road.

Thomas Frederick Merry purchased sixteen and one quarter perches in Ann Street in 1863 and established the 'Valley Drapery Mart'. Merry partnered with Augustus Bush, renamed the drapery 'Merry and Bush' and moved to the corner of Ann and Warner Streets, the 'Valley Exchange' in September 1863, advertising the former business premises on Ann Street for let. Merry and Bush's business was purchased by Finney, Isles and Company in December 1864 and was to become one of the largest Valley businesses.

In 1865, Merry, now an Alderman in the Brisbane Municipal Council, proposed that Ann Street should be properly formed, with Duncan's Hill, opposite the Nunnery, being cut away. The first cutting was undertaken that year, beginning to open Fortitude Valley to the rest of the city. In the same year, Merry sold his Ann Street

properties to Charles Frederick Gerler, of German Station (now Nundah). Gerler acquired the previously undeveloped adjoining premises and mortgaged both for £800 shortly after purchase. Gerler's default on the mortgage in the 1870s led to the sale of the property and James Swan became the new owner in January 1872.

James Swan was one of John Dunmore Lang's sponsored immigrants, arriving in Australia from Scotland in the 1830s. As a child, Swan had witnessed the murder of his mother and gave evidence in the trial. After working in the newspaper business in Sydney, Swan moved to Brisbane in 1846 and purchased the Moreton Bay Courier two years later. Swan was an advocate of the separation of Queensland from New South Wales and, on achievement of this aim in 1859, retired from business. He was pressed back into public service in the 1870s, elected to represent the East Ward of Brisbane in September 1872. In 1873 he was elected Mayor, re-elected in the following year and finally called to the Upper House of Parliament in 1878. Swan also took an interest in the development of the Baptist church in Brisbane before his death in 1891 on a ship in the Mediterranean Sea.

The brick shops were probably built in the early 1870s during Swan's ownership. Substantial brick buildings began to replace older wooden ones from the 1870s, reflecting the growing sophistication, confidence and population in Fortitude Valley. The new brick buildings signified the permanence of the Valley settlement. At the same time, new and much needed services were established in the Valley, such as the telegraphic and post office, and large companies such as the Queensland National Bank demonstrated their faith in the Valley's future, constructing premises in the Valley in the late 1870s. However, businesses which set up in the Valley in the 1870s and 1880s had a limited pool of customers: poor transportation and Duncan's Hill, still imposing despite being cut away, restricted trade to residents of the Valley.

The premises were leased to Thomas Howard Greenhalgh in 1874, relocating from South Brisbane. Greenhalgh ran a combination grocery, drapery and ironmonger's shop. The premises were advertised for lease following his death in 1877 and 'The Misses Burke' a dressmaking and drapery business, moved into the premises shortly afterwards, having relocated from smaller premises two shops further down Ann Street. James Murray, a boot and shoe maker, was also operating from the premises from the 1870s. Murray's shop was reported to be the meeting place of a number of Irishmen, who met after work to discuss politics and news of Ireland.

In 1885 the property was sold to George Cowlshaw, with a thousand pound mortgage to James Swan.

Comprising three shops, which were in the occupation of Miss Burke, Murray and Greasley (a fruiterer and hop beer brewer), the lots were trumpeted as a good investment property, located in the best business part of the Valley, an area in which rapid strides were being made. Cowlshaw was an architect with brother James, though the latter is credited with most of the partnership's designs.

The properties were sold again in 1888 to Theodor Lenneberg. Tenants Miss Burke, Murray and Renshaw & Renshaw, furniture dealers, closed up their businesses or relocated to other shops in the Valley shortly before the property was transferred. Lenneberg suffered financial difficulties during his ownership, with a mortgage for twelve thousand pounds registered in December 1889. The properties were largely unoccupied during Lenneberg's ownership, with only a brief, failed drapery listed as trading from the shops between 1889 and 1891. Lenneberg's ownership ended in insolvency, and the properties were purchased by Johanna Maloney in December 1891, for £2250 cash.

This was the smaller of the buildings owned by the Maloneys, and was leased out to short-term tenants while the larger building on the adjoining property was occupied as a grocery shop by Maloney's husband Charles from 1892. Ann Street remained a commercial district as the Valley grew in the 1890s from a small town into a large commercial precinct by the end of the decade. Trams were extended into Ann and Warner Streets and the Fortitude Valley railway was completed in 1891. The floods which destroyed businesses lying close to the river did not affect Valley traders, and without this setback, their businesses surged ahead. The large traders focused

on the less established areas around Brunswick and Wickham Streets and drawing customers from all over Brisbane to the Valley Corner. Ann Street, as it had in the nineteenth century, continued to supply the local population of Fortitude Valley. It was dominated by small businesses, and the lessees of this building exemplified the mix of trades in the Valley in the early twentieth century, including hairdressers, tobacconists, stationers, electricians, dealers, including a curio dealer, produce merchants and fruiterers.

The Maloneys sold their properties to major retailer Chandlers Pty Ltd in 1956. Chandlers made some alterations to the awning and shop fronts before selling the properties in 1965. Since then both buildings have been used for a number of retail stores, including a second-hand goods shop, as well as a restaurant. The shops, along with Bragg's Bakery and the Apothecaries Hall, are currently owned by the Apostolos Family Trust.

This commercial property has been tenanted for almost 120 years and is representative of a style which has almost disappeared from the Valley.

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## Statement of significance

### Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as an 1870s commercial building that provides evidence of the establishment of Fortitude Valley as a permanent business centre in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

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#### Rarity

##### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as one of the few surviving 1870s masonry buildings of this type in Fortitude Valley.

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#### Representative

##### CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural

places

as an example of an 1870s masonry commercial building.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council (BCC) aerial photographs.
  2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
  3. Queensland Post Office Directories
  4. Queensland Land Titles Office Records
  5. *The Courier*, 1863
  6. *The Brisbane Courier*, 1865, 1885-6, 1888, 1891-4, 1896, 1907, 1910, 1912-3, 1915, 1925
  7. *The Sunday Mail*, 1938
  8. Queensland Places: Fortitude Valley (website)
  9. Clem Lack, A. A. Morrison, 'Swan, James (1811 - 1891)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 6, Melbourne University Press, 1976, pp 230-231
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**Note:** This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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