

Heritage Citation



Albion Public Hall (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 344 Sandgate Road, Albion, Queensland 4010
Type of place	Cinema, Hall
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L11_RP98499; L12_RP98499
Geolocation	-27.42901 153.042323
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — August 2008
Construction	Walls: Masonry - Render

People/associations	Victor Emmanuel Carandini (Architect)
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association
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Constructed circa 1887, this former public hall was designed by Brisbane architect Victor Emmanuel Carandini at a time when Albion was fast becoming a prosperous suburban centre. Throughout the 1890s, the hall served as a venue for dances and meetings but by 1918 was functioning predominantly as a picture hall, with a number of small retail shops surrounding it. After 1966, when the picture hall is believed to have closed, the building was converted and is now in use as an office block and shops.

History

By the late 1880s and early 1890s Albion was one of a number of prosperous suburban centres that had arisen in response to the expansion of Brisbane from its former small city core. While Albion had initially been a semi-rural area dotted with grand houses, the coming of the railway in 1882 saw the urbanisation of the area and Albion fast become a popular suburb. By 1892 Albion was served by 29 daily trains to the city and in 1899 a tramline linking Albion with Clayfield and the city opened, increasing the through traffic in Albion and rendering the shops and other services more accessible for residents in neighbouring suburbs.

The former Albion Public Hall was built in 1887-88 to the design of architect Victor Emmanuel Carandini for the Albion Public Hall Company Limited. A photograph taken in 1909 shows the date 1887 on both pediments of the building. Additions were made in 1890, also to Carandini's design. Although based in Brisbane, Carandini's designs appear throughout many parts of Queensland. Some of his most notable works include the Townsville Fire Station (1887-88), Centennial Hall in South Brisbane (1887-88) and the Post Office Hotel in Maryborough (1889-90).

During the 1890s, Albion Hall was a popular venue for dances. These are said to have been attended by 'nice people', unlike many of the other suburban and city dances where the amusement was reputed to be of a more boisterous and working-class nature. Other, more sober, events were also held here. The local Presbyterians are said to have met here from when the hall was first completed and the local Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows Lodge Chapter, The Royal Prince Albert Victor, No. 39 also met here during most of the 1890s.

In 1893 the Albion Public Hall Company raised a £1000 mortgage over the property but only four years later the mortgagee, Queensland National Bank, obtained title of the property, presumably as a result of a default on payments. Numerous transfers followed; some sales, another due to insolvency, and others due to the deaths of owners.

By around 1918 a picture hall was operating from the building, in addition to several shops on the street level including newsagents, tailors, boot makers and cafes. The building remained in continuous use as a cinema for almost the next five decades, known from the mid 1920s as the 'Empire Picture Theatre', and from the mid 1930s until after 1949 as the 'Capitol'. For several years during the late 1920s a billiard saloon also operated on the premises, possibly in the part of the building previously occupied by the hall which disappeared from the Queensland Post Office Directory in the mid 1920s.

In 1929, the Albion Hall was in danger of being closed as, according to the Sunday Mail, it had 'become inadequate for the recreational needs of the district' and the Greater Brisbane Council had given its approval for the construction of a new £20,000 picture theatre and block of shops. However, the building remained in place and continued to operate as a theatre until around 1966 when the building was converted into shops and offices.

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:

Historical

CRITERION A

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

as a former public hall that provides evidence of the changing trends in public entertainment throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as a former early twentieth century picture theatre that operated for around fifty years from the mid 1910s until the 1960s.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a late nineteenth century building designed by Brisbane architect Victor Emmanuel Carandini.

Supporting images



Photographer unknown,
'Shops in Albion, Brisbane, 1909',
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

References

1. Kerr, John 1988, *Brunswick Street, Bowen Hills and Beyond: The Railways of the Northern Suburbs of Brisbane*, Australian Railway Historical Society
2. Lawson, Ronald 1973, *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia
3. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1887-1949
4. *Sunday Mail*, 10 March 1929, p. 21
5. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay 1994, *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia

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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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