

Heritage Citation



Ambeena & Maroomba

Key details

Addresses	At 143 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101
Type of place	Duplex
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Free Style
Lot plan	L2_RP46732; L1_RP46732
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — January 2011
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Masonry - Stucco
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic

Originally single storey, this building was constructed around 1900 by David Ballantine McCullough, a real estate agent and politician. The houses were built as investment rental homes for middle class tenants and formed what was called McCullough Estate. McCullough himself lived in 'Ambeena'. The building has since been modified for use as commercial premises in line with the commercial development of Melbourne Street from the late twentieth century.

History (previous revision)

This building was constructed around 1900 and was originally a single storey building. The 36 perch site on which it was built was acquired through a Deed of Grant by David Ballantine McCullough, a real estate agent and politician, for £225 in January 1880.¹ The land was sold to McCullough under the provisions of the Victoria Bridge Lands Sales Act of 1879.

McCullough also owned the allotments on which the buildings numbering 137, 139 and 141 Melbourne Street now stand and for many years he leased all of this land to the Queensland Timber Company Limited, which used it to store timber. An 1889 photograph clearly shows stacks of timber on this site.²

Melbourne Street at that stage was still a fairly quiet thoroughfare, with a few timber shops and a horse drawn tram line running up the centre. This changed after 1891 when the railway line was extended to Melbourne Street, bringing activity and development to the area. Development gradually occurred around the railway terminal at the corner of Melbourne and Grey Streets. This became a thriving commercial centre which rivalled the Stanley and Vulture Street intersection as the focal point of activity for the suburb. Development activity seemed to be slow in reaching the rest of Melbourne Street however. Perhaps this explains why McCullough felt the street was suited to residential buildings, and had his row of unusual rental housing built. Like the large homes of the well to do built earlier on Edmondstone Street nearby, this row of houses reflects the fact that this area was once a desirable address for the city's upper and middle classes.

At the time that he originally purchased this land, McCullough lived in Maryborough, Victoria. He later moved to South Brisbane and resided in Brighton Road. A Justice of the Peace and real estate agent, McCullough built these premises, which contained two separate tenancies around 1900. Soon after, in 1905, McCullough became an alderman in the South Brisbane Municipal Council and in 1908 was elected Mayor of South Brisbane. He went on to sit as an Alderman for the Council until January 1913.³ As well as these properties, McCullough also had interests in hotel properties.

Almost immediately after the building was completed, McCullough moved into one of the tenancies named 'Ambeena' and let the other side on the corner, 'Maroomba', to various tenants. Relatively long term residents included Mrs A. Moore, from 1929 to 1933, and Colin McDougall, who purchased the property in 1929 and occupied it from 1934 to 1940.

The property was resumed by the Council of the City of South Brisbane in May 1925 under the Provisions of the City of South Brisbane Improvement Act of 1922. Following the amalgamation of local Councils in 1925, the land was passed to the Brisbane City Council in March 1929.

When Melbourne Street was widened to make way for a modern asphalt roadway part of the land fronting this part of the street was resumed. A total of just over nine perches was resumed from the front of this building's original allotment. A 1925 photograph clearly shows that in that year, it was still only one storey. It is difficult to establish when the extra storey was added to one side of the building⁴, although previous tenants have suggested around 1941. By the 1940s, this area had fallen into disrepute. According to David Malouf it was

“...too close to the derelict, half criminal life of Stanley Street where the abos [sic] were and to Musgrave Park with its swaggies and metho drinkers”.⁵

However, in recent years this area, like other parts of South Brisbane and Highgate Hill, has undergone a process of gentrification. The building has been modified for use as a commercial premises, a use which is far better suited to Melbourne Street today.

Description (previous revision)

This building has always featured a split tenancy but instead of being all on a single level as it was originally, the left hand tenancy has been raised a level in a relatively sympathetic manner. The original hipped roof has thus been split into two sections one raised above the other, separated by a parapet. The original symmetry of the building as seen from Melbourne Street has been disturbed. Gable roofs stem from each end of the now split hipped roof and the gable end treatment of both are similar except for the change in level.

Pilasters flank the windows centred in these gable ends and support a moulded entablature above the window head. Each pilaster appears to be supported on moulded brackets below sill level. The moulding immediately above the head of the window has a small rosette located centrally. The upper portion of the entablature below the cornice has a row of moulded dentils. Above this on the right hand gable end (and as the left would originally have been) is an open topped curved pediment moulding around a circular ventilator above which is a complete curved moulded pediment. A ball-topped finial is at the peak of each gable end. The brickwork below the lower level windowsills is unrendered as is that between the gable ends across the verandah. The roof glazing and handrail of this portion are all seemingly modern additions. Below this the plinth of the building is painted blockwork. The left hand side of the building facing Manning Street features sun hoods which were probably not on the original design. The other side of the building is unrendered brickwork but a tall chimney of rendered brick appears half way along this elevation.

At the rear of the building, gable ended projections extend in position behind those at the front, the one behind the two level portions extending further to the back of the block than the other, which does not extend quite as far as those on the neighbouring buildings.

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 evidence of the development of Melbourne Street in the early twentieth century as a desirable middle class area.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as part of a group of buildings featuring banded brickwork and highly ornate classical detailing.

References

1. Titles Office Records
 2. John Oxley Library Photographic Collection – Suburbs South Brisbane
 3. *South Brisbane Municipal History*, 1925
 4. *Ibid*
 5. David Malouf, *12 Edmondstone Street*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1985
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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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