

Heritage Citation



Aspley Hotel

Key details

Also known as	Royal Exchange Hotel
Addresses	At 1241 Gympie Road, Aspley, Queensland 4034
Type of place	Hotel (accommodation), Hotel (pub)
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Mediterranean
Lot plan	L2_RP75647; L1_RP75647
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — May 2008

Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Masonry - Stucco
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People/associations	G.H.M. Addison and Son and H.S. Macdonald (Architect); S.S. Carrick (Builder)
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association
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This hotel, designed by architects Addison and Macdonald, was built in 1934, replacing the old Royal Exchange Hotel that had been on the site since 1875. The new hotel, which also took the former's name, was constructed to service the increasing motor traffic using the recently upgraded Gympie Road. The hotel quickly became a Brisbane landmark as Gympie Road was the main artery for traffic heading north so the hotel marked the northern outskirts of Brisbane for many motorists. It became known as the Aspley Hotel from around 1958.

History

This property was part of a purchase of crown land made by David James Forrest, of Brisbane, on 23 January 1864. Forrest bought two allotments – Portions 428 and 429 in the Parish of Kedron. He paid £17.1s.9d for the 12 acres, 2 roods and 25 perches in Portion 428 plus £20.16s.8d for the 12 acres, 2 roods and 20 perches in Portion 429. Portion 429 was the more valuable land because it contained a good spring. Subsequently, it was discovered in 1913 that Forrest's original deed of grant for Portion 429 was erroneous. This block of land was actually larger than first described, being in reality a total of 13 acres, 1 rood and 18 perches. Forrest's land was in the area of Brisbane then known as Downfall Creek, while the district on the other (western) side of Gympie Road was known as Little Cabbage Tree Creek.

The discovery of gold at Gympie in December 1867, impacted upon Forrest's property, for Gympie Road that ran past the front of Forrest's land, became the main route out of Brisbane for those seeking their fortunes on the goldfields. On 4 July 1874, both portions 428 and 429 were transferred into the hands of William Wallin, of Brisbane. Wallin had been born in Birmingham, England. He came to Australia to join his brother, James Wallin, who was a squatter at Four-Mile Creek, North Pine and later a Strathpine publican. William Wallin initially lived in a bark tent while he cleared his newly acquired land in the Downfall Creek district.

By 1875, Wallin had built a long, low blocked building with a shingle roof on a site that is on the southern side of the existing 'Aspley Hotel'. He named his premises the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' where he ran both a publican's trade and a general store to service the passing traffic on Gympie Road. Drinks, newspapers, flour, plus other provisions and even sewing machines were sold at the 'Royal Exchange'. Overnight accommodation could be arranged at the hotel, meals were cooked in the detached kitchen area, and there was even a ten-pin bowling area out on the hotel's back verandah. By the late 1870s, the hotel became a pick-up point for Cobb and Co.'s stagecoaches but was not used by that company for overnight accommodation for drivers and passengers. When the J.C. Hutton smallgoods factory on Zillmere Road commenced operations in 1888, it became the supplier of ice to Wallin's hotel.

By the time, in 1897, that the local residents had petitioned to have their district's name changed from Little

Cabbage Tree Creek to Aspley, the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' had become the social hub of the area. Farmers from outlying areas such as Petrie and Dayboro, would stay overnight at the hotel before taking their produce, by German wagon, to the markets in Brisbane. At Christmas, the locals would gather at the hotel to feast on a bullock that was roasting on an outdoor spit. Wallin would also offer card contests with a dressed duck as the prize. For New Year celebrations at the hotel, there would be a dance, games, a huge bonfire followed by Chinese fireworks. When the local community split over the proposed site of the district's first school, Wallin had organised a public meeting to discuss the matter at the 'Royal Exchange Hotel'. At this meeting, held on 2 September 1889, Wallin even offered free drinks as an inducement for people to support his choice of school site.

The 'Royal Exchange Hotel' operated partly as a general store until 1890, when Selina Bunkum opened the first Aspley General Store on Gympie Road. Apart from being a publican, William Wallin was a major landowner in the area. He was listed as a farmer in the 1884 Post Office Directory as he maintained a large herd of dairy cattle. He was married three times, having five children with his second wife Harriet and five more children with his third wife Mary. Mary did not approve of living in the hotel and so Wallin had a house, he named 'Wallinton', built for her on the hill at the back of the 'Royal Exchange Hotel'.

Wallin's oldest son from his second marriage, William jnr, ran the hotel for 18 years after his father retired. In 1912, Wallin subdivided Portion 429, retaining Subdivision 1, encompassing 1 acre and 37 perches of land, for the hotel site. On 14 June 1918, Wallin issued a 7-year lease on the hotel to Arthur Charles Laverack, for which Laverack agreed to pay Wallin £162.3s.6d per week. The 'Royal Exchange Hotel' was obviously a profitable business if Laverack was willing to pay such a high rent for the lease. Laverack introduced free biscuits and bacon (the forerunner of bowls of peanuts) into the bar to enhance the thirst of his customers. It was around this time that Castlemaine Perkins Fourx beer became the main brew on tap at the hotel. An attempted hold-up of the hotel failed when Laverack, thinking that the bandit was a prankster, ordered the man to 'get-out' and the thief turned and fled. During the 1920s Laverack would use the money he made from running the hotel to build a general store at the corner of Albany Creek and Gympie Roads.

On 6 December 1919, William Wallin died and his estate passed into the hands of the Queensland Trustees Limited. It took nearly a year to sort out Wallin's estate and in the interim Laverack transferred the hotel's lease to John Robert Moore on 12 June 1920. That day, Moore passed the lease onto William Warfield, who only held onto it until 6 November, when the lease went to Ernest Theodore Leseberg. Leseberg kept the lease for just nine months. According to local historian David Teague, the licensees of the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' after Laverack left, were a Zimitat and Barrett, and so it is possible that these individuals ran the hotel on behalf of the numerous leaseholders during this period.

On 12 July 1921, a widow, Hannah Redmond, took over the lease from Leseberg. The same day, she also took out a mortgage on her interest in the lease from Leseberg. With the money from this mortgage and the profits from her hotel business, Hannah and her spinster sister Elizabeth Foley bought the hotel site on 11 October 1924. By November 1924, they had also obtained Portion 421 that was the adjacent block on the northern side of the hotel. For ten years the two sisters built up their business using their increasingly outmoded 1875 hotel building. By 1934, the Queensland Public Works Department was in the process of turning the state's localised road system into a series of connecting highways. As Brisbane's northern gateway, Gympie Road had been widened and strengthened during the 1920s while the first section of the new Bruce Highway from Redcliffe to Eumundi, was due to be officially opened on 15 December 1934. Hannah and Elizabeth saw the need to modernise their hotel operation to meet the increasing trade that was coming from tourists and trucks driving along Gympie Road.

On 30 August 1934, the sisters had financed the proposed new building by mortgaging both of their Aspley

properties to Castlemaine Perkins Limited thereby cementing their hotel's link with that company and its Fourx brand. Builder S.S. Carrick of Logan Road, South Brisbane, won the contract to erect a new hotel on the northern side of the existing 'Royal Exchange Hotel' at a cost of £6,500. The architects G.H.M Addison and H.S. McDonald designed the building, which incorporated three arches of colonnaded loggia as its main feature. The building held a main bar, lounge and parlour room, dining room and a kitchen on the ground floor, while overnight accommodation for travellers was provided through the bedrooms on the upper floor. Construction of the new 'Royal Exchange Hotel' commenced in August 1934. The new hotel was completed by the end of the year and Wallin's old hotel was demolished soon after.

The new 'Royal Exchange Hotel' soon became a Brisbane landmark. As the most significant and modern building along the Aspley stretch of Gympie Road, it represented to many weary drivers the point where they had finally reached the outskirts of the city. Hannah and Elizabeth, or the "Old Maids" as they were called wouldn't take any nonsense from the customers and ran a good hotel". But during its first decade of operations, one incident occurred that gave the new hotel a slight hint of notoriety. During the 1930's, an old man took a gun and committed suicide in one of the back rooms of the hotel.

The two sisters began reorganising their property holdings in the mid-1930s. On 30 November 1936, they surrendered the deed of grant to Portion 421 to the government so that a new deed could be issued. The new title, issued on 11 January 1937, noted that Portion 121 had increased in size by 29 perches to become a total land area of 5 acres, 2 roods and 35 perches. Hannah's daughter, Norah Agnes Redmond, was given an equal share of the hotel's block, that is subdivision 1 of Portion 429, on 29 August 1950. During the 1950s, housing estates began to replace the farmland of Chermside, Chermside West and Aspley. As a result, the Hannah and Norah Redmond and Elizabeth Foley decided to sell-off the large blocks of land that surrounded the hotel site. In a land sale held on 31 March 1952, they disposed of the 4 acres, 3 roods and 20.3 perches of land comprising subdivision 4 of Portion 421 plus the 3.5 perches of land belonging to resubdivision 4 of subdivision 1 of Portion 429 to Roy Cecil Dickfos. At the same time, Cecilia Winifred Nipe obtained 27.8 perches from subdivision 2 of Portion 421 and a further 13.5 perches from resubdivision 2 of subdivision 1 of Portion 429. This left the Hannah, Norah and Elizabeth with resubdivision 1 of subdivision 1 of Portion 429, which was the 1.2 perch block containing the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' together with the larger resubdivision 3 block of 3 roods, 18.1 perches. But their two blocks were not connected as Nipe's newly acquired resubdivision 2 lay between the land owned the three women.

During 1958 a number of significant changes began to occur to the operation of the 'Royal Exchange Hotel'. Due to failing health, Elizabeth Foley and Hannah Redmond delivered their share of the block of land containing the hotel to Norah Redmond on 1 August 1958. Then on 1 September 1958, the company Aspley Hotel Pty Ltd took up a ten-year lease on the hotel site. It was probably the company that renamed the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' as the 'Aspley Hotel', in an effort to have the hotel identify with the rapidly expanding suburb of Aspley and also to avoid confusion with the popular 'Royal Exchange Hotel' at Toowong.

Elizabeth Foley died on 4 May 1959 and Hannah Redmond died on 4 December 1965. With their deaths, the last links with the old country pub the 'Royal Exchange Hotel' ended. On 5 November 1971, Aspley Hotel Pty Ltd purchased the hotel site. Previously, on 6 September 1971, the company had purchased subdivision 3 that belonged to Norah Redmond. By 1972, the 'Aspley Hotel' had become a member of the Whitehouse hotel chain. Finally, on 14 October 1973, the Aspley Hotel Pty Ltd obtained the title to the middle block, subdivision 2, that had been in the possession of the Nipe family thereby reuniting the three blocks of land that had been part of the hotel site in 1952. On 3 August 1982, the three blocks of land that included the hotel, adjoining car park and the house at 1239 Gympie Road were transferred to the ownership of Carlton Hotel Pty Ltd.

By the late-1980s, the construction of the Gateway Arterial Road and the expansion of Brisbane's urban sprawl to Carseldine meant that the hotel had lost its claim to being the marker of the city's northern outskirts. The growth of licenced sporting clubs and restaurants throughout the district also diminished the hotel's status as the social centre of the Aspley area. Currently owned by the Leda Hotel Group, the 'Aspley Hotel' was refurbished in the mid-1990s and officially re-opened on 24 June 1997 by the Member for Aspley, John Goss MLA. The next year, further extensions were made to the interior to allow for the installation of poker machines that had become major revenue raisers for Brisbane's suburban hotels.

The expansion of Brisbane's urban sprawl into Aspley has had some negative effects as most of community buildings from the pre-1946 Aspley township have disappeared. The Aspley Assembly Hall, the Post Office, Bunkum's Store, Scott's Garage, the original St Dymphna's Church, St Mathias's Anglican Church and the 1932 Methodist Church have all gone. All that remains of the township buildings are the Aspley School and the 'Aspley Hotel'.

Description

NOTE: The rear motel units situated at the rear of the Aspley Hotel are of no heritage significance. (Inserted at the request of the property owners).

Sited above the main road the building is in a prominent location on the corner of Gympie Road and Nevin Street in Aspley. The original 1934 structure, although added to and adapted over time, has not lost its basic integrity. The hotel presents itself as a cluster of predominantly two storeyed buildings with low pitched pyramidal style tiled roofs with wide eaves. The buildings are rendered masonry with timber framed windows.

The main building has a two-storey front facade with a later deep awning front supported by posts over the hotel liquor drive-through area. Post-war, a two-storey timber and asbestos clad structure, containing motel units, was added to the rear of the hotel building. A fire ramp between the hotel and motel units was added later to fulfil safety regulations.

The hotel's exterior has had some alterations from the original 1934 building design. The front colonnaded loggia have been infilled and converted into a cold room and toilets. The front entrance steps have been removed and the front façade replaced with a drive-through bottle shop. The bar window and other windows on the ground floor have been removed and two grilled windows repositioned on the left side of the original loggia. A dado has been added to the external walls. Enough of the 1934 building's exterior remains for the hotel to be recognisable as having an interwar Mediterranean architectural style.

The hotel's original main hotel lounge and parlour have been converted into a bar area that features timber panelling in the walls and a new entrance. The kitchen has been extended and converted into a poker machine room. Many of the 1934 internal walls were removed during these changes, as were the original external kitchen wall and kitchen roof. Still the hotel's interior retains some of its original 1934 features and fixtures such as the original pressed metal ceilings, decorative plaster fretworks, Mother of Pearl light shades and metal ventilation grills in the walls. Historical photos of the district are displayed inside. While the interior stairway has now been removed, there is evidence of its existence in what is now the main bar area.

'The Aspley Hotel' sign is painted on a board mounted on the building front above the awning, marking its

presence to the busy main road.

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 Brisbane landmark that, until the late 1980s, marked the northern entrance to Brisbane.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage
as one of only two community buildings left from the pre-1946 Aspley township.

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 hotel designed by prominent Brisbane architect Addison and Macdonald.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
3. Brisbane City Council Archives, *New Buildings Register, April 1932 to August 1934*
4. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, Local History files – *Zillmere – Geebung – Aspley – Bald Hills*.
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
6. Donnelly, John J., *Hotels of Brisbane*, (thesis, 1963)
7. John Oxley Library, *Parish of Nundah, County of Stanley, L.A.D. of Brisbane map*, (1899 land grant map).
8. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
9. Teague, D.R., *The History of Aspley*, (Brisbane: Colonial Press, 1972).

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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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