

## Heritage Citation



### Brisbane Travelodge (former)

#### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Olims Apartments
<b>Addresses</b>	At 355 Main Street, Kangaroo Point, Queensland 4169; At 29 Pixley Street, Kangaroo Point, Queensland 4169
<b>Type of place</b>	Hotel (accommodation)
<b>Period</b>	Late 20th Century 1960-1999

**Lot plan** L1\_BUP12038; L2\_BUP12038; L3\_BUP12038; L4\_BUP12038; L5\_BUP12038; L6\_BUP12038; L7\_BUP12038; L8\_BUP12038; L9\_BUP12038; L10\_BUP12038; L11\_BUP12038; L12\_BUP12038; L13\_BUP12038; L14\_BUP12038; L15\_BUP12038; L16\_BUP12038; L17\_BUP12038; L18\_BUP12038; L19\_BUP12038; L20\_BUP12038; L21\_BUP12038; L22\_BUP12038; L23\_BUP12038; L24\_BUP12038; L25\_BUP12038; L26\_BUP12038; L27\_BUP12038; L28\_BUP12038; L29\_BUP12038; L30\_BUP12038; L31\_BUP12038; L32\_BUP12038; L33\_BUP12038; L34\_BUP12038; L35\_BUP12038; L36\_BUP12038; L37\_BUP12038; L38\_BUP12038; L39\_BUP12038; L40\_BUP12038; L41\_BUP12038; L42\_BUP12038; L43\_BUP12038; L44\_BUP12038; L45\_BUP12038; L46\_BUP12038; L47\_BUP12038; L48\_BUP12038; L49\_BUP12038; L50\_BUP12038; L51\_BUP12038; L52\_BUP12038; L53\_BUP12038; L54\_BUP12038; L55\_BUP12038; L56\_BUP12038; L57\_BUP12038; L58\_BUP12038; L59\_BUP12038; L60\_BUP12038; L61\_BUP12038; L62\_BUP12038; L63\_BUP12038; L64\_BUP12038; L65\_BUP12038; L66\_BUP12038; L67\_BUP12038; L68\_BUP12038; L69\_BUP12038; L70\_BUP12038; L71\_BUP12038; L72\_BUP12038; L73\_BUP12038; L74\_BUP12038; L75\_BUP12038; L76\_BUP12038; L77\_BUP12038; L78\_BUP12038; L79\_BUP12038; L80\_BUP12038; L81\_BUP12038; L82\_BUP12038; L83\_BUP12038; L84\_BUP12038; L85\_BUP12038; L86\_BUP12038; L87\_BUP12038; L88\_BUP12038; L89\_BUP12038; L90\_BUP12038; L91\_BUP12038; L92\_BUP12038; L93\_BUP12038; L94\_BUP12038; Common property\_BUP12038; Common property\_

**Geolocation** -27.472438 153.034559

**Key dates** Significant Development — 1961 (5 storey building)  
Local Heritage Place Since — 28 February 2020  
Date of Citation — June 2019

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic

The Brisbane Travelodge began life as a small, single-storey building and was subsequently extended after its purchase by Motels of Australia Ltd. This included the addition of a five-storey mid-rise motel in 1961, making it the largest motel in Queensland at that time. The American influence on motel design and standards of accommodation during the boom period for motel construction in Australia remains evident in the modern architectural design of the building. It is also seen in the inclusion of revolutionary and luxurious concepts for the time, such as individual kitchens, private bathrooms, spacious car park, a swimming pool and the former rooftop restaurant. As such, it also reflects the transition of Australian tourists away from traditional holiday accommodation such as guest/boarding houses and hotels, toward self-contained apartments.

The former motel building now contains strata titled units, however the exteriors of the building and the grounds are still largely intact. The riverside elevation of the 1961 building remains a striking landmark.

The heritage curtilage relates to the 1961 period of development of the site with only the exterior of the 1961 building, the pool, sundeck and other communal areas of the 1961 building being significant. The interiors of the private units are excluded from the requirements of the heritage overlay, as it is unlikely that any remain in original condition.

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## History

Up until the 1950s, people on holidays basically had three options for accommodation: camping, guest houses or traditional hotels. Traditional hotels were different to those of today; they were usually a private bedroom with shared bathroom facilities and a dining room where meals were provided.

In the 1950s, car ownership became much more affordable, which triggered the popularity of motoring holidays. This led to Australia starting to adopt the American style concept of motoring hotels or “motels”. The first examples in Australia were in the southern states, but they soon spread along the major tourist routes. The Gold Coast in particular quickly adopted the concept. The mid-twentieth century became a boom period for motel construction which revolutionised the accommodation industry. Motels introduced self-contained units with separate external entries, car parking at the door, individual kitchens and private bathrooms. They were also designed in ultra-modern architectural styles and incorporated the latest luxuries, such as air conditioning, telephones, televisions and swimming pools. Staying at motels was casual and convenient, which also appealed to travellers. Despite all these features, they were cheap in comparison to other accommodation.

Motels of Australia Ltd. was one of the companies that contributed to the motel boom. The company was established in January 1960 and began by purchasing existing motels, as well as erecting new ones. In May 1960, they purchased the Adelaide Travelodge and thus expanded their portfolio to contain motels in the five major capital cities. They then proceeded to establish a chain of Travelodge motels all over Australia.

In May 1958, an application by J. Miller to build a motel at 355 Main Street Kangaroo Point was refused by Brisbane City Council. This may have reflected a lack of planning legislation to cover this new type of accommodation, as the application was re-submitted and the building was subsequently approved as a “tenement” in July. The following month the property was officially transferred to Miller and Co Pty. Ltd and by October 1959, the building was completed. This earlier building was a single level, with approximately thirteen units. By the end of March 1960, Miller & Co had applied for, and been granted, approval to extend the motel. Before the expansion work could commence, Motels of Australia Ltd. purchased the large lot of land and existing small block of units in May 1960. It was a strategic choice of location, as after the construction of the Story Bridge, Main Street had become a major north-south arterial road. Approval was issued in October the same year for the construction of a multiple dwelling building and by December preparations were underway on the site for the construction of the new building.

On 29 August 1961, the new, ultra-modern, five-storey building on the Brisbane River was opened as the Brisbane Travelodge. This new development had all the popular motel luxuries, including a roof top restaurant, sun deck and swimming pool, in addition to twenty eight ultra-modern rooms. This brought the total number of rooms to forty, making it the largest motel in Queensland at the time. It was also one of the first high-rises at Kangaroo Point. This building was most likely designed and built by the Canberra building firm, T. H. O'Connor Pty. Ltd., which was merged with Motels of Australia in March 1960 in anticipation of the firm building future motels, as well as completing those already under construction.

By 30 June 1967, Brisbane Travelodge had become part of T. H. Motels – a partnership between Motels of Australia Ltd. and Trust Houses Ltd. Motels of Australia Ltd. also continued to build and run motels independently however and in October 1967, the company name was changed to Travelodge Australia Ltd., to allow for easier identification of the company with its trading name, and possibly in anticipation of the imminent

overseas expansion of the chain.

In 1967-68, the Brisbane Travelodge at Kangaroo Point was again expanded, with the construction of a nine-storey building on the site. This involved the demolition of the single-storey motel buildings originally built by J. Miller and the connecting walkway to the riverfront building. The new building added an extra 51 units to the Travelodge motel, some of which must have been suites with multiple verandahs, unlike the studio apartments of the riverfront building. The new building was connected to the top storey of the 1961 building, providing direct access to the restaurant, which was known as “The Polynesian Room” by this date.

In 1986 the buildings and site were sold by Travelodge Australia. The property subsequently became private residences and strata title ownership was introduced in 1992. The site is now managed as Olims Apartments.

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## Description

The former Travelodge motel is located on a large allotment at Kangaroo Point, bordered by Main Street to the west and the Brisbane River to the east. The site consists of two high-rise buildings, car parking areas, gardens, a sun deck and a swimming pool.

The 1961 building is on the western (river) side of the lot. It is five-storeys and is constructed of brick and concrete. The “zigzag” roofline is a striking feature of the building. The top floor originally housed the motel restaurant. Although this space has since been converted into an additional apartment, the majority of the floor to ceiling glazing designed to provide panoramic views, still remains. The other four floors contain seven units each. Each unit has its own balcony, which is separated from its neighbour by a brick dividing wall. The balcony balustrades are metal and the glazed walls of the units opening onto the balconies are constructed from timber framed glass windows and a single timber framed door.

The eastern elevation of the riverfront building has verandahs running the full length of each level, with the same metal balustrades as the riverside elevation. Concrete stairs run between all levels at either end of the building. Access to the units is through a single door along the verandah, with timber framed glass windows adjacent each door. The remainder of the walls are of brick with timber framed glass panels running above, just under the ceiling. There is a covered walkway joining the top level of the western building to the eastern building that fronts Main Street.

The area between the 1961 building and the river is terraced, with grass on the upper level just below the first storey of units, the sun deck on the next level down, the pool on the third level down and a paved entertainment area on the lowest level. The retaining walls and foundations bounding all of these terraces are constructed from concrete. The metal balustrade around the edge of the grassed level and sun deck level matches that of the balconies to the 1961 building. A metal post with timber directional signs for the pool deck and sun deck is located adjacent the concrete stairs running between the terraces on the southern side of the recreation area.

The second high-rise building on the site, the nine-storey 1968 later addition, sits on the eastern side, fronting Main Street. It is also constructed from brick and concrete, but is a different style to that of the earlier building. The 1968 building does not form part of the cultural heritage significance of the site.

# 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 early example of a mid-rise motel building. It is also an early example of the transition from low-level residences to higher density accommodation on the Kangaroo Point Peninsula. It also reflects the transition of Australian tourists away from traditional holiday accommodation such as guest/boarding houses and hotels, towards self-contained apartments.

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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 a largely intact example of the exterior of an early 1960s mid-rise motel building, which are uncommon in Brisbane.

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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 post-war Modernist motel architecture in Brisbane. It demonstrates the influence of American motel architectural styles and standards of contemporary accommodation and design, self-contained units, balconies, pool, sundeck and former rooftop restaurant.

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## Aesthetic

### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a largely intact example of post-war Modernist high-rise architecture in Brisbane. It is also an example of the American-style concept of eye-catching, contemporary motel architecture. The 1961 building is a striking landmark when viewed from the opposite side of the Brisbane River and from the river itself.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
2. Brisbane City Council Detail Plans
3. Brisbane City Council, sewerage plans
4. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
5. Digitised newspapers and other records. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
6. Motels of Australia, *Annual Reports*, 1960-61, 1962 and 1967, National Library of Australia
7. Queensland Heritage Council, "Multi-Storey Lottery and Gold Coast Motels" in *Time and Place*, Issue No. 14, 2006
8. Queensland Post Office Directories
9. Reeves, Simon, "Australia's Early Motel Boom, Parts 1 and 2", in *The Australian Motel Owners Journal*, Vol 10, No. 2 (21 Dec 2009) and Vol 11, No. 1 (9 July 2010)
10. Travelodge Australia Ltd. *Annual Report 1968*, National Library of Australia

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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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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