

Heritage Citation



Catholic Leader Building (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 545 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Workplace
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L12_RP8530; L11_RP8530
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2011 Date of Citation — January 2009
Construction	Walls: Masonry
People/associations	Cavanagh and Cavanagh (Architect)

The former Catholic Leader Building is a two-storey brick building situated on the corner of Ann Street and Antrim Lane in Fortitude Valley. Built specifically for the printing of Catholic newspapers, the printery was built in 1927 by Archbishop Duhig and is located beside the dominant All Hallows Convent and School. Designed by respected architects Cavanagh and Cavanagh, the printery is a continuation of the strong Catholic presence that has been on Duncan's Hill since the 1860s.

History

The Catholic Leader Building was built at the base of Duncans Hill, adjacent to the dominant All Hallows Convent and School. The period in which the building was constructed saw an unprecedented amount of property acquisition and building by the Catholic Church in Brisbane. Under the leadership of Archbishop Duhig (Archbishop of Brisbane 1917-1965) many new and important building schemes were undertaken. "Duhig the builder", a term of endearment used by his contemporaries, was renowned for his desire to obtain prime sites (often on the apex of hills) throughout Brisbane on behalf of the Catholic Church for the construction of new churches, schools and hospitals. His biography stated "He built well in the twenties. He built in bricks and mortar on a scale unprecedented". Throughout his career Duhig was responsible for building over four hundred major buildings in Brisbane.

It was in the late 1920s that Duhig embarked on his most ambitious building project, a Catholic Cathedral, the Cathedral of the Holy Name. Importantly, the site for the project was on Ann Street on the other side of the road to All Hallows. In 1928 the ceremony for the Laying of the Foundation Stone took place with over 35,000 Brisbane residents attending. Unfortunately, as the Great Depression took hold of the Queensland economy the project failed. Significantly, it was as the cathedral project was in its early stages that the site for the Catholic Leader Building was purchased by Duhig. If the cathedral had been built the entrance to Fortitude Valley out of the city would have been dominated by a conspicuous display of Roman Catholic wealth and influence, with All Hallows on the top of Duncans Hill, the Catholic Leader Building at the base and the Cathedral of the Holy Name on the opposite side of Ann Street.

Prior to the 1920s Ann Street, originally named High Road, had a history of being cut down, from what was a road running over a gentle hill to a straight road from the City to Fortitude Valley. Initially in 1865 it was lowered fifteen feet, with three more cuts occurring in 1876, 1886 and finally in 1927.

The land on which 545 Ann Street now sits was vacant prior to 1927. From 1908 to 1927 the Council of the City of Brisbane held the land (from 1925 to 1927 it was held by the Brisbane City Council). In 1927 Archbishop Duhig on behalf of the Archdiocese of Brisbane purchased sixteen perches of land on lot 11 and 12 of allotment 5A. By June of 1927 a tender was accepted by architects Cavanagh and Cavanagh for the construction of a brick premises, the successful contractor was F. J. Corbett. By December of 1927 the *Register of New Buildings* listed the building as 'Printery Office Hall' in Ann Street. The printery is first listed in the *Post Office Directories* in 1929 as "The Age" Hall.

The architectural firm, Cavanagh and Cavanagh, established themselves as successful architects initially in

Perth. From 1919 they were commissioned primarily by the Catholic Church to design several churches, convents, schools and presbyteries. The two brothers, Michael and James Charles were also responsible for the design of many important buildings in and around Perth including the Perth No.1 Fire Station. In 1920 the firm established an office in Queen Street, Brisbane. From this office they designed many commercial, residential and ecclesiastic structures for Brisbane and Queensland. Amongst their achievements were the Hibernian Hall in Roma, and the renovations to St. Mary's Church, South Brisbane. Their residential designs utilised the popular 'Bungalow' and 'Mediterranean' styles.

The printery produced two Catholic newspapers in this period, *The Age* and *Our Australian Sunday Visitor*. *The Age* had been established in 1892 as a Catholic newspaper but was in financial difficulty by 1926. *Our Australian Sunday Visitor* was also in financial trouble in 1926. Duhig recognised the advantage of owning and running his own media and so in 1926 took over the two newspapers. He wished to have some control over forming public opinion from a Catholic perspective. By 1928 both weekly papers were being published from the newly built Ann Street printery with *The Age* being declared the official diocesan organ. In 1929 *The Age* was renamed *The Catholic Leader*.

Description

This is a two-storey brick building with frontage to Ann Street and a rear frontage to Dodge Lane. The hipped roof is clad in corrugated metal sheeting and has an original timber and glass skylight with separate pyramid roof and original windows. The Ann Street frontage has a hung awning, a stepped masonry parapet with decorative elements, arched front door and Juliette balcony with original decorative iron work. There is a series of original decorative windows on the first floor. The Antrim Street side of the building is face brick with a series of original windows on both the first and second floors. The Dodge Lane rear frontage is also face brick with several original windows. The building has its original downpipes and the interior of the building retains many original interwar features.

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 part of the Catholic prominence on Duncans Hill and as an important media avenue for Queensland's Catholic community.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as the official diocesan organ in Brisbane which is an important media centre for the Brisbane Catholic community.

References

1. Boland, T.P. *James Duhig*. St Lucia: U of Q Press, 1986
2. Lyneham, Megan, "Who was James Duhig?" The University of Queensland, University Archives, October, 2002
3. *Historic Titles*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
4. Queensland Post Office Directories
5. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
6. *Detail Fire Survey: City of Brisbane*, 1951, Mahlstedt's: Consulting Fire Engineers and Surveyors, Melbourne
7. *Metropolitan Water and Sewage Survey Maps*, 1914
8. Tender Notices, *The A & B Journal of Queensland*, June 10, 1927

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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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