

Heritage Citation



Dixon & Sons building (former)

Key details

Also known as	Brisbane Institute of Social Service, D.H.A. Pty Ltd
Addresses	At 381 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Factory
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Warehouse
Lot plan	L469_SL3996
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — February 2014
Construction	Walls: Masonry

This building was constructed as Dixon and Sons tobacco factory in 1890. During this period tobacco use was becoming more common and local production of cigarettes was increasing. Following an amalgamation the building was leased, then owned by the Brisbane Institute of Social Service. The chimney was removed and the building was substantially altered internally to accommodate a gymnasium, crèche, kindergarten and rooftop garden. The building proved expensive to maintain and it was sold to a drug manufacturing company in 1917. What became Drug Houses of Australia occupied and owned the site until 1960. Since 1961 the building has been owned by the State Government.

History

Fortitude Valley was named for the ship Fortitude that was leased by J.D. Lang to bring hard-working Protestants to the new colony. From 1849 the immigrants established farms and dairies in the area just outside the environs of the old penal settlement. Development continued as more settlers arrived and the population grew. By the 1880s a booming local economy led to close residential development which was further encouraged by the extension of the train line from Brisbane Town proper. From the 1890s major department stores, such as T.C. Beirne, McWhirter's and Overells built substantial stores in the Valley and these were joined by major manufacturing businesses.

In 1890, when Dixon and Sons built this factory, it became the second tobacco manufacturer on this side of Brunswick St, joining a hotel, grocers, boot manufacturers and the Oddfellows' Hall, Reading Room and Free Library. Cameron Bros. & Co. tobacco manufacturers built their warehouse in the next block on the corner of Martin and Brunswick Sts in the same year.

In 1889 Robert Dixon of Melbourne purchased 32 perches on the corner of Ivory and Brunswick Streets. Within days a new title was issued to Dixon and Sons Ltd. The Dixon family had a well-established tobacco manufacturing and importation firm in Sydney and Robert Dixon was Minister for Education in the South Australia.¹

In April 1890 the Dixon and Sons Ltd factory on the corner of Brunswick and Ivory Streets was reported as being amongst the many fine buildings recently erected in Brisbane. The four storey building was constructed of ornamentally treated brick work with the dressings picked out in red and white brick. The tobacco factory fitout included hydrants all over the factory and ventilation "as far as the manufacturing of tobacco will allow". The basement contained sixteen pressing machines, drying cupboards, and a sweating room.² The building was designed by notable Queensland architectural firm John Hall and Son. John Hall and Son, and later Hall and Dods (FR Hall & RS Dods) are responsible for some of the finest buildings in Brisbane. In 1890, as well as Dixon's Building, John Hall and Son designed Burke's Hotel in South Brisbane, the Town Hall also at South Brisbane, Toombul Shire Hall and a number of villas in the suburbs.³ At this time, Francis Richard Hall was principal of the firm and, although "not regarded as a distinguished designer," was a "capable manager" and attracted talented, skilled assistants to the firm.

Dixon and Sons was reported to be "the oldest established and largest tobacco manufacturers in Australia" and

that their popular brands are made with imported American leaf tobacco, but manufactured in Australia, thereby being equal to imported brands, but providing employment for labour in Queensland.⁴ By 1896 the Dixon Factory was claimed to be improving the locally grown tobacco by insisting that local producers take every care to ensure that their product is equal to imported leaf.⁵

In 1902 all of the businesses of Dixon and Sons. Ltd, and Robert Dixon and Co. tobacco manufacturers were amalgamated. They traded as Dixon Tobacco Company Limited with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Fremantle.⁶ By this time, the Brisbane company had moved out of their building in Brunswick Street and relocated their operations to 173 Elizabeth Street. The building stood empty and was purchased by William Shaw, the Managing Director of British Australasian Tobacco Company, Limited, Sydney in 1905.

In May 1906, the Brisbane Institute of Social Service leased the building for an initial term of five years. The Brisbane Institute of Social Service was inaugurated in 1907 by Rev. L. L. Wirt, the head of the Wharf Street Congregational Church to provide a venue for young people to spend time that would encourage physical and intellectual improvement.⁷ The objects of the Institute were reported as “the Formation, not reformation; humanitarian, not sectarian; To give a right start in life with the children of the poor up to school age. To provide an ennobling social and educational centre for working boys and girls. To institute and maintain a place of wholesome amusement and clean recreation as a counter to the influence of the street.” The work of this benevolent organisation was, Rev. Wirth asserted, founded in the “faith in God” and the generosity of the City of Brisbane and its people who earnestly “believed in the brotherhood of man”.⁸

Approval was given by the owners of the Dixon Factory in October 1906 for “radical alterations to the fabric of the building” to make it better suited to the work of the institute and the “needs of the industrial classes”.⁹ L.G. Corrie was the honorary architect who transformed the building from a tobacco factory to a place of space and light. The ground floor was opened up as a main hall containing the gymnasium which was founded by the sons of a Mr. Campbell and named in his honour. On the first floor were a kindergarten and a crèche to care for the children and babies of “hard-working women.”¹⁰ This was Brisbane’s first nursery-kindergarten. A Young Men’s Club and the Wilson clubrooms for Girls occupied the second floor.¹¹ These facilities were ‘crowned’ by “the roof garden, light and airy”. Harry Doggett was the builder who supervised the construction work.¹² The chimney associated with the Dixon Tobacco Factory was removed in this conversion.

The work of the Brisbane Institute of Social Service flourished in this building and it was formally purchased by the Institute in 1912. Unfortunately, as reported by Mr. J. R. Taylor (president) in 1932, the “upkeep of these premises ... [was] found to be greater than could be maintained by the revenue available”.¹³ By 1917 the Brisbane Institute of Social Service Buildings were occupied by a broom manufacturer and motor garage on the ground floor, shop fitters and signwriters on the second, with the top floor occupied by the caretaker. That year the former Dixon Factory was transferred to Taylor and Colledge Limited.

Taylor and Colledge were a drug manufacturing company which also sold medical instruments and personal grooming and hygiene accessories. It became Taylors and Elliotts in 1926 and merged with the Australian Drug Co. Pty. Ltd to become Taylors, Elliotts and Australian Drug Co. Pty. Ltd. in 1932. Like Dixons Tobacco Factory, Taylors and Elliotts proudly proclaimed that “the large number of drugs and pharmaceutical preparations distributed by the .. company are manufactured solely in Australia” whereas previously many medicines were imported. In 1931 the company produced “Addis toothbrushes, Busistos’ eucalyptus oil, Clements’ tonic, hypol emulsion, kotex, Kruse’s magnesia, cherro malto, pino mentho pastilles, Abe’s volatile rub, exhepos (a palatable concentrated extract of mammalian liver for pernicious anaemia), and lubarol (the new palatable laxative emulsion, which is recognised as one of the latest discoveries in modern science).” At the Ipswich Show that year, Taylors and Elliotts also displayed “Queen” perfumes and toilet articles, which were manufactured in

Queensland.¹⁴ In 1933 the company opened a new veterinary department in Edward Street featuring veterinary instruments and remedies.¹⁵ By that time the company's land holding and operations had almost doubled to its current size, bounded by Brunswick, Ivory and McLachlan Streets.

World War Two created a large demand for drugs. By 1941, although the Commonwealth had "bought large quantities early in the war", drugs obtained from herbs imported from China and France were in short supply. The proposed solution was for "patriotic home gardeners to grow their own plots of medicinal herbs". Gardeners here could follow the lead of "thousands of members of gardening clubs in the United States" who were growing important herbs for atropine and hyoseyamine, heart ailments and a variety of ointments. Brisbane drug manufacturers were prepared to purchase herbs from backyard growers only if they were grown under proper conditions with special seed. Mr L.A. Poole, the director of Taylors Elliotts and Australian Drug Pty Ltd said the government would have to supervise herb growers and the farmers would need to be encouraged to take up large-scale production. In 1941 Taylors, Elliotts and Australian Drug Pty Ltd manufacturing chemists had two stores in Brisbane (in Charlotte St & Brunswick St), as well as a bulk store in Montague Road West End. They also has offices in Quay Street Rockhampton, and Sturt St, Townsville. In 1942 Taylors and Elliotts Brisbane was providing advice as to whether native quinine samples could be used as substitutes for medicinal quinine.¹⁶

In 1954 it was announced that, "in the interests of greater co-ordination of the wholesale druggists, importing chemists and merchants throughout the Commonwealth," Taylors and Elliotts firm was to be changed to Drug Houses of Australia Ltd, known as D.H.A. (Queensland) Pty Ltd.¹⁷

In 1960 the land was transferred to South Queensland Mines (Pty) Ltd and a Deed of Grant issued with specific reservations excluding mining, petroleum extraction and quarrying on the site.¹⁸ The following year on 4 December 1961 the land was transferred to the State. Since that time, the State of Queensland, represented by various government departments, have controlled to site.

Description

The building is four storeyed, of red brick construction, consisting of a main corner block with five bays fronting Brunswick Street and three bays to Ivory Street, with a smaller extension to Ivory Street. The windows are arranged in vertical banks between brick pilasters with semi circular arches to the top floor and segmental arches to the first and second floor windows. Windows to the Ivory Street frontage are narrow with flat arches to the top and first floor and segmental arches to the second floor.

A rendered band defines the second floor level with string courses at third floor level and the springing line of the upper arches, continuing across the frontage of the Alice Street portion. Further string courses above the tops of the arches are surmounted by a solid parapet with a stepped top and continuation of the projecting pilasters.

Alterations to the building have included the installation of modern glazed shopfronts to the ground floor, removal of a cantilevered balcony and construction of a suspended awning, replacement of original windows, painting of parapet, arches and window spandrels, and removal of signage.

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 tobacco factory built in the late nineteenth century it demonstrates the transformation of Fortitude Valley to a commercial and industrial area during this period.

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 site of the Brisbane Institute of Social Service which became the primary provider of welfare in Brisbane in the interwar period.

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 the first headquarters of the Brisbane Institute of Social Service and site of the first formal provision of child care for working mothers.

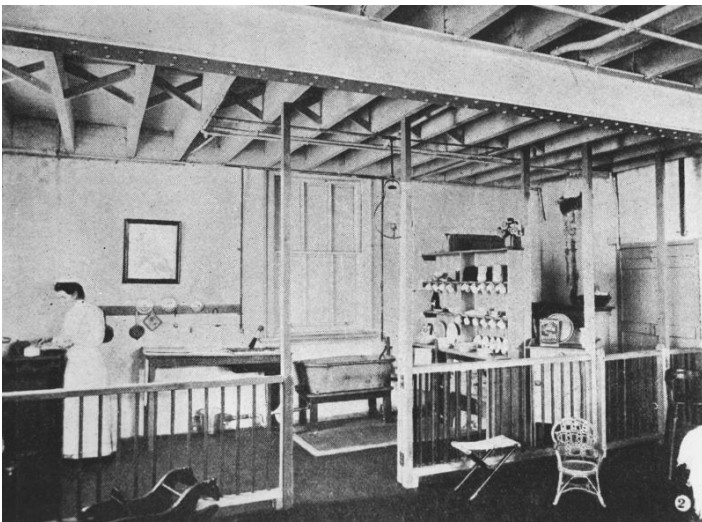
Supporting images



The Queenslander (Brisbane, Qld. : 1866-1939),
 'Interior view of the Brisbane Institute of Social Service,
 1907', August 1907,
 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

The building was situated on the corner of Brunswick and Ivory Streets, Fortitude Valley. This old tobacco factory became Brisbane's first nursery-kindergarten in March 1907. The president was Lady Chelmsford. It was not until 1910 that the Creche and Kindergarten Association became a body separate from the Institute of Social Service.

(Description supplied with photograph)



The Queenslander (Brisbane, Qld. : 1866-1939),
 'Creche at the Brisbane Institute of Social Service,
 1907',
 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

A part of the creche department of the Brisbane Institute of Social Service, 1907. The Institute was situated at the corner of Brunswick Street and Ivory Street, Fortitude Valley.
(Information taken from *The Queenslander*, 10 August 1907, p.28)

References

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2. 'Robert Dixon's and Co.'s Tobacco Factory'. *Brisbane Courier* 26 April 1890. Copy in file
3. John Hall died in January 1883 just after taking his son, Francis Richard Hall into the practice. D. Watson & J. McKay *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century* Queensland Museum: Brisbane, 1994, pp.84, 87, 91
4. 'Tobacco Manufacturing' *The Queenslander* 28 March 1896, pp.28,29. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article20446479>
5. 'Dixon's Factory' *The Queenslander* 26 December 1896. p.1241; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article20767836>
6. 'Business Amalgamation' *The Brisbane Courier* 29 October 1902, p.4; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article19190520>
7. 'Useful Work' *The Brisbane Courier* 2 June 1932, p.11 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article21955819>
8. 'Social Service' *The Brisbane Courier* 18 April 1907, p.5; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article19499623>
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11. Notation on SLQ image 36632 'Children of the rooftop of BISS, 1907' The Creche & Kindergarten Association became separate from the Institute of Social Service in 1910
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16. 'Correspondents Answered' *Queensland Country Life* 18 June 1942, p.10; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article97076429>
17. 'Change of Name' *Cairns Post* 6 July 1954, p.3; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article42831400>
18. South Queensland Mines were involved with the gold mine at Kingston in the postwar period. 'Kingston's

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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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