

Heritage Citation

Henry Roberts Building

Key details

Also known as	264 Warry Street
Addresses	At 264A Water Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Factory
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L6_RP41858
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — October 2006
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Masonry
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

History

This single storey commercial building was built circa 1932 for owner Henry Roberts.

Henry Roberts, a valuator and investment broker went into partnership with Frederick Grove to purchase the vacant block of land in 1925. David Elder's small blacksmith shop operated from the site between 1926 and 1929.

By 1930, Henry Roberts had built the adjacent building at 292 Water Street for use by his company Brunswick Home Furnishings. By 1933, Roberts had built the current building located at 264a Water Street and he leased

the new building to Malleys Ltd, which manufactured washing machines and other household goods. At this site Malleys manufactured 'the new super-efficient "Sunrise" roof ventilator'.¹

Malleys Ltd was a well-known Australian brand of whitegoods. The company was founded by Francis Malley, ironworker and his wife, Clara Ellen, nee Merritt in 1884 in Sydney. Malleys was a manufacturer of household metal products that grew to be a leading manufacturer of household white goods until the 1980s. Malleys Ltd were the manufacturers of the first cooler sold under the trade mark Esky in 1952.

This building on the corner of Water and Warry Streets was part of a home furnishing precinct including Water Street that included the Bell Brothers (furniture manufacturers) Building at 47 Brunswick Street that had been built in 1923. Rhoades and Co Furniture Warehousemen whose retail outlets were located at 116 Wickham Street, Gympie and Warwick had their furniture factory further along Water Street in Spring Hill.

During World War II Malleys Ltd appears to have ceased operating from this site. It was not until June 1946 that Henry Roberts again leased the building – to Thomas Edward Earner for three years. Post-war businesses included the Victory Press, a picture frame maker, sign writers and Oswald-Sealy (Q) Pty Ltd, merchants.

Until the 1960s Fortitude Valley was a major retail centre but thereafter population and businesses declined. The building was sold in 1960 by Henry Roberts and again in 1987. Thereafter the building was leased by Robert Barrow Insurance Broking Group, who was the Brisbane agents for Lloyd's of London. Thus a December 1989 heritage survey of Fortitude Valley mislabelled this site as the 'Lloyds of London Building'. A resurgence of inner-city living during the 1990s rejuvenated interest in the Fortitude Valley as a residential and commercial location. In 2003 the building was again sold.

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 example of a factory built in the home furnishing precinct that developed in Fortitude Valley during the 1920s and 1930s.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a purpose-built factory building which was designed to take advantage of its prominent corner position.

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 site of the manufacture of roof ventilators by the well-known Australian company Malleys Ltd.

References

1. *Architecture and Building Journal of Queensland*, Volume 12, 1933
2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
3. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
4. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
6. John Oxley Library, *Parish of Nundah, County of Stanley, L.A.D. of Brisbane map*, (1899 land grant map)
7. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs – Estate Maps
8. Queensland Government, *Queensland Pioneers Index 1829-1889*, (Brisbane: Department of Justice and Attorney General, 2000)
9. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
10. www.superbrands-brands.com/volll/brand_esky.htm, accessed 2 October 2006
11. www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150344b.htm, accessed 2 October 2006
12. www.workers.labor.net.au/129/c_historicafeature_esky.html, accessed 2 October 2006
13. www.alliedappliance.com.au, accessed 2 October 2006

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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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