

## Heritage Citation



### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 172 Edward Street, Brisbane City, Queensland 4000
<b>Type of place</b>	Warehouse
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Stripped Classical
<b>Lot plan</b>	L2_RP591; L3_RP591
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2009 Date of Citation — January 2008
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Face brick

**People/associations** Atkinson and Conrad (Architect);  
Walter Taylor (Builder)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (H) Historical association

Invicta House was constructed in 1923 for Hooper & Harrison (Queensland) Ltd, a major Sydney-based woollen merchant company. Like its neighbour, Pioneer House, Invicta House was designed by the significant architectural firm of Atkinson & Conrad, and built by Walter Taylor. Invicta House was built at the beginning of the 1920s CBD building boom and contributed to the further expansion of this principal warehouse precinct. Prominent tenants have included Hooper & Harrison woollen merchants, the Australian Labor Party and the popular radio station, 4KQ.

## History

Hooper & Harrison Ltd, woollen merchants, based in Sydney, operated from Elizabeth Street premises from 1895. The company was one of a number of woollen merchants operating in the city at this time. Initially, an agent represented the company. In 1919, however, the company opened a Queensland office and was thereafter known as Hooper & Harrison (Queensland) Ltd Woollen Merchants. By 1914, Queensland was the largest supplier of wool in Australia and Brisbane the principal centre for wool sales in the state, providing a reasonable explanation for the establishment of a Queensland office by the company in the CBD.<sup>1</sup>

The company progressively purchased a parcel of land on the corner of Elizabeth and Edward Streets between 1919 and 1922, after which work was begun on the construction of a purpose-built warehouse building with office space. The building was completed in 1923 and was given the name of 'Invicta House' after the 'Famous Invicta' brand of clothing of which Hooper & Harrison was the sole proprietor in Brisbane.

The construction of the building contributed to the further development of the CBD's principal warehouse precinct. The eastern portion of the CBD, roughly bounded by Elizabeth, Edward, Alice and George Streets, developed as a warehouse and light industry precinct in the late nineteenth century. This section of the city was once known as Frogs Hollow because it was a low-lying, marshy area prone to flooding. In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the area was largely filled with small residences, boarding houses, and small businesses. From the 1880s, warehouses and small factories that were attracted to the area (as it was close to the wharf facilities located along the Town Reach of the river) progressively replaced many of these earlier buildings. This process reached its apogee in the 1920s.

Brisbane's CBD also experienced a substantial building boom during the 1920s. According to the editor of The Architecture & Building Journal of Queensland, 1923 was the year that "The Building Boom" was manifestly apparent. The article stated: "Among the architects' offices a very fine assortment of work is to be found either actually commenced or on the board" with Invicta House being one of the examples mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The construction of Invicta House was considered integral to the beginning of the CBD building boom.

Following the construction of Invicta House The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland published an article drawing particular attention to the fact that the building was fireproof, serviced by a lift and particularly well

lit, even in the basement. The qualities of the interior were thus described:

The reinforced concrete stairs are rendered to the first floor level in Terrazzo with wrought iron palisading and maple handrails. The entrance hall has a panelled dado in Queensland maple wax...The offices and mouldings to doors are similarly treated and give a most pleasing effect.<sup>3</sup>

In February 1924, it was reported that Invicta House was a “handsome warehouse, occupying one of our most promising business centres.”<sup>4</sup> The cost of the building was given as approximately £25,000. With its modern appearance, the building made a distinctive contribution to the warehouse precinct in the eastern part of the CBD.

The architectural firm of Atkinson & Conrad designed the building. This firm (1918-37) was one of the more prominent architectural firms operating in Brisbane in this period and was responsible for a number of significant buildings in Brisbane, including the Masonic Temple in Ann Street (1930), Brisbane Boy’s College (1931) and the Courier-Mail Building in Queen Street (1937). Atkinson & Conrad also designed Pioneer House, the building adjacent to Invicta House. Walter Taylor, who is best known for construction of the Walter Taylor Bridge in Indooroopilly, constructed the building. The use of reinforced concrete in the construction of Invicta House was a hallmark of Taylor’s construction method in this period.

Hooper & Harrison continued to operate from the first floor of Invicta House until at least the 1950s, while the other floors were leased by a variety of different tenants. The most prominent kind of business activity was warehousing, consonant with the building’s original design. By the 1940s, however, an accountant and the real estate agent, Ray White had offices there.

Ownership of the building passed to Labor Enterprises Pty Ltd, the commercial arm of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), in 1961, though they occupied the building from 1958. The then Labor-owned radio station, 4KQ, also operated from Invicta House from the late 1950s. Invicta House was, until 1972, the state ALP headquarters. Political conditions for the ALP were mixed during their period of occupancy of Invicta House. On the one hand, the federal and state branches of the Party had fallen into disarray following a split in Labor ranks in the 1950s. This split effectively stymied ALP re-election both federally and in Queensland in this period. At local government level, however, the situation was much different. A Labor administration, headed by Clem Jones, was elected in 1961. The Jones era of municipal government (1961-75) in Brisbane is historically significant. According to one historian: “Clem Jones will be remembered very much for bringing Brisbane into the modern era”.<sup>5</sup> As Lord Mayor of a Labor administration, this legacy reflects the broader significance of the ALP and its state headquarters in Brisbane.

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## Description

This Inter-War Stripped Classical style, five- storey warehouse building is located in a prominent corner in the heart of the city and with the adjacent Pioneer House building forms a strong presence in that corner.

This darkish face brick building takes advantage of its two frontages with symmetrical facades of similar design incorporating attenuated pilasters dividing the building in the vertical bays typical of the style. A decorative cornice and vestigial pediment above the door mark the Edward Street entrance. The windows have vertical

proportions.

Exterior changes have been minimal except for the street level where the external walls have been painted cream and roller doors have been introduced.

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## 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 a substantial warehouse building constructed during the CBD building boom of the 1920s.

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#### 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 building designed by one of Brisbane's most significant architectural firms, Atkinson and Conrad, and constructed by prominent builder Walter Taylor.

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## Supporting images



Elizabeth Street, looking towards William Street.

Melton & Co. (photographer),  
'Elizabeth Street, looking towards William Street,  
Brisbane, 1924',  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

This image of Elizabeth Street was photographed near the corner of Edward Street and shows the Ulster Hotel at left. (Description from *Souvenir of picturesque Brisbane and suburbs*, Queensland Book Depot. Description supplied with photograph.) The buildings shown include Invicta House and Perry Bros. Ltd. Various forms of transport are shown, including horse-drawn vehicles, bicycle, motor car and pedestrian. (Description supplied with photograph)

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, post-1946 building approval cards
2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
3. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 1913
4. Brisbane History Group, *Brisbane's Commercial Heritage 1900-1940: Three walking tours of the CBD*, Brisbane History Group Inc., 2002
5. Cole, J. R., *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985*, Brisbane, William Brooks Queensland, 1985
6. Coutts, J.V.D. (ed.), *The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland, 1923-24*
7. De Gruchy, Graham. *Architecture in Brisbane*. Brisbane: Boolarong, 1988

8. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
  9. Fitzgerald, Ross, *A History of Queensland from 1915 to the Early 1980s*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1982
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  12. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
  13. John Oxley Library, newspaper clippings files
  14. Johnston, W. R., *A Documentary History of Queensland*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1988
  15. Mahlstedt & Son City of Brisbane Detail Fire Survey, Map No. 16, 1951
  16. Murray, Robert, *The Confident Years: Australia in the Twenties*, Ringwood, Victoria, Allen Lane, 1978
  17. *Queensland Post Office Directories, 1868-1949*
  18. Ward, Ian 'The Early Use of Radio for Political Communication in Australia and Canada: John Henry Austral, Mr Sage and the Man from Mars' Journal article; *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 45, 1999.  
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  19. W. R. Johnston, *The Call of the Land: A History of Queensland to the Present Day*, Brisbane, The Jacaranda Press, 1982, p. 144
  20. *The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland*, 8 January 1923, p.8
  21. *The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland*, 7 July 1923, p.64
  22. *The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland*, 7 February 1924, p.8
  23. John R. Cole, *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985*, Brisbane, William Brooks Queensland, 1985, p. 286
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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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