

Heritage Citation



Lawless Grocery Store (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 49 James Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Shop/s, Shophouse
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Filigree
Lot plan	L1_RP46992
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — March 2014
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association

This two-storey Vernacular style shop and residence was built circa 1876 for Thomas Lawless who operated a French polishing and cabinet-making business from the lower storey and lived with his family on the top floor. By the early 1880s he had changed his business to a general produce store. By this time, a lot of the area surrounding the property was vacant and only a few shops and residences were located in this part of James Street. Lawless operated his business here until the mid-1910s since which time it has continued to be used for various commercial purposes.

History

Thomas Lawless, cabinet maker and grocer, was born in Ireland in 1837 but spent much of his childhood in Scotland. After leaving school he served his apprenticeship in cabinet making. He migrated to South Australia in 1857 and moved to Brisbane in 1862, joining his parents who had immigrated to Queensland. Lawless became a prominent citizen of Brisbane. He was active in the formation of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society in Queensland and served as a Justice of the peace. He married in Brisbane and had six children who attended local schools.

Lawless began business in Queen Street as a cabinet maker. In 1876 he inherited a large parcel of land at the corner of James and Jane (now Robertson) Streets. That year Thomas Lawless, french polisher is recorded as receiving mail there, suggesting that he had built this two storey timber shop and residence on the site. By the early 1880s he had changed his business from french polishing and cabinet making to dealing in general produce. By this time there were only two properties listed on the south side of James Street between Ann and Robertson Streets – the rest was vacant land. A few scattered houses and shops had been built along the street towards New Farm, but there was still much vacant land in the area.

The delay in development of much of this area may have been due to the fact that it was low-lying and swampy. In 1893 flood waters lapped at the door of Lawless's shop, but it appears to have been spared from flooding completely.

The Lawless family continued to operate its business from this building until the mid 1910s. It continued to be used for various commercial purposes, although in 1952 it was registered flats. Two shops were established in 1954 and the building as it appears in the 1946 aerial photo has been extended.

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 timber shop residence built in the 1870s when this area was sparsely developed prior to Brisbane's economic boom of the late 1880s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as a two-storey timber shop-residence dating from circa 1876, although extended post 1946.

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

for its association with Thomas Lawless, a prominent citizen of early Brisbane.

Supporting images



Photographer unknown,

'James Street, Fortitude Valley, during the 1893
Brisbane flood',
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

References

1. John Oxley Library photographic collection, Brisbane – suburbs – Fortitude Valley, 1893
 2. Morrisson. W. Frederick F., *The Aldine History of Queensland, Illustrated, Volume 2*, (Sydney: The Aldine Publishing Company, 1888)
 3. Post Office Directories.
 4. Titles Office Records
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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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