

## Heritage Citation



**Melrose Villa (former)**

### Key details

**Addresses** At 490 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006

**Type of place** Terrace house

**Period** Victorian 1860-1890

**Style** Italianate

**Lot plan** L88\_RP8955

**Key dates** Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000  
Date of Citation — May 2006

**Construction** Roof: Corrugated iron;  
Walls: Face brick

This two-storey, 1870s masonry terrace house is a rare surviving example of its type in Brisbane. It was constructed circa 1875 for builder and contractor Henry Collett who lived in one half of the house with his family and rented the other half out to various tenants. After the Collett's sold the house in 1926, the property was used solely for rental accommodation until the 1980s when it was converted into an art gallery.

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## History

A reference to Henry Polletts, carpenter at this address in the 1876 Post Office Directory suggests that the building was constructed at this time.

At the time of its construction this was the only building along this block of Brunswick Street, but by the end of the decade there were at least two shops and four households living there reflecting the growth in the valley's population during this period.

The 1870s marked the growing sophistication, confidence and population in Fortitude Valley. This was assisted by the first cutting down of the formidable Duncan's Hill which extended from the All Hallow's site as far as Wickham Street, making the Valley more accessible to the town centre.

Confidence in the Valley is reflected in the fact that several substantial buildings were constructed there in the 1870s, including the Holy Trinity Church in 1871 and the grand Queensland National bank (now demolished) in 1877. Many modest buildings were also constructed in this decade. Dwellings were built to house the area's growing permanent population and shops were built to service them.

By the mid 1880s the Valley housed a large proportion of Brisbane's residents. It was a heterogenous area, and it was not uncommon for houses to have motor garages, factories, churches and even hotels as neighbours. Houses occupied many of the streets away from the main commercial sector centred on Brunswick, Ann and Wickham Streets. Most of these houses have been lost to redevelopment during this century.

Intense pressure for housing in the late 1870s and early 1880s prompted greedy landholders to create tiny allotments on narrow streets in Brisbane's inner core of suburbs. It was this trend that prompted the colonial government in 1885 to pass the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act which dictated a minimum allotment size of 16 perches and forbade the sale of individual units of terrace houses. This was crucial in the development of Brisbane's built form, as it discouraged the construction of attached and semi-detached housing, a common form of housing in the southern states of Australia.

The Collett family occupied one half of this Brunswick Street terrace, and various tenants are recorded as occupying the half closest to Arthur Street, including Michael Alexander, an auctioneer and commission agent in the mid 1880s. Although working class residents were predominant in the Valley, Brunswick Street appears to have been a more middle class address. In the 1890s post office directories record the name of the building as "Melrose Villa".

Following Henry's death in 1899 the land passed to trustees including his widow, Emma, George Arthur Collet and George Stevens. Emma Collet continued to live here until her death in 1924, and in 1926 the property

passed to Louisa Mary Tritton, wife of Joseph Walter Tritton and the building became used for rental accommodation. The present owners purchased it in 1984 and have converted it into an art gallery/studio.

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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 evidence of the pattern of residential growth in Fortitude Valley in the 1870s.

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#### Rarity

##### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as one of few 1870s buildings remaining in Brisbane; and, as a rare example of a late nineteenth century two-storey masonry terrace house.

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## References

1. Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Architects report on 16 Church Street, Fortitude Valley
2. Brisbane City Council Sewerage Detail Plan, 1924
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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