

Heritage Citation



New England Motor Company (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 110 Gotha Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Garage
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L52_RP47036; L51_RP47036
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — May 2006
Construction	Walls: Face brick
People/associations	DF Roberts (Builder); Roy Ashley Shaw (Architect)

This building was constructed in 1929 as a motor bus garage for the New England Motor Company. The New South Wales-based company was established in 1909 and began operating services in Brisbane in 1924. It purchased buses from the Brisbane City Council and operated a route from the Grange to the Valley, as well as running services between Brisbane and New South Wales. After Barry Parade was created in 1927, the company procured a site on the corner of Gotha Street and Barry Parade from which to operate a service station (on Barry Parade) and motor bus garage (on Gotha Street). Architect Roy Ashley Shaw and contractor DF Roberts were engaged to design and construct both buildings. From around the 1950s bus passengers were picked up from the Gotha Street depot. The New England Motor Company was taken over by Kirklands in 1970 and continued to be used as a bus depot well into the twentieth century.

History

As Brisbane's development expanded from its small central city area through the nineteenth century, bus services proved useful in the geographically large city. Private operators ran bus services from the 1860s, taking tourists to seaside areas like Shorncliffe, or city workers to their homes in areas like Ipswich Road. Train, ferry services, and trams also provided accessibility but buses were essential in providing links between these other forms of transport and serving otherwise inaccessible suburbs.

Initially buses, cabs and omnibuses were horse-drawn carriages, but in the twentieth century motorised buses began to gain popularity. The first motor bus service in Brisbane began in 1910, running between Bowen Hills to South Brisbane railway station, with Sunday services to Sandgate.¹ 'The motor 'bus has arrived, and is likely to stay,' reported the Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette. 'The riding is pleasant and the speed smart enough to be invigorating.'² Motor buses dominated from the 1920s, (The motor buses required a new type of mechanical knowledge to operate, shifting the service providers.../... introducing a new (generation) of service providers with mechanical knowledge.

The provision of bus services was often coordinated through local councils, who regulated the industry by licencing. Service provision was inconsistent, subject to availability and coordination between different operators, including the Brisbane Tramway Trust) In 1925, the newly-created Brisbane City Council took over responsibility for bus services. It provided services to some areas with its own staff and buses, and issued licences to private companies for other routes.

Amongst those submitting tenders for bus routes was a New South Wales based business, the New England Motor Company. The NEM Company was established in Lismore in 1909, and provided passenger and mail services around the New England region of New South Wales. The company expanded to Brisbane in 1924, conducting long-distance services between Brisbane and northern New South Wales, as well as tourist services from Brisbane to Mt Coot-tha, Mt Tamborine and the bayside suburbs. In 1927 it purchased seven motor buses from the Brisbane City Council on the condition that it would run the bus service from the Grange to the Valley.

The company could not park the seven motor buses at its headquarters in Adelaide Street, so another site was sought. The selected site was an oddly-shaped 35.14 perch (889m²) allotment on the corner of Barry Parade

and Gotha Street. The site was created after the construction of Barry Parade in 1926-7. Large swathes of land in Fortitude Valley had been resumed for the project by the Brisbane City Council, and the leftover allotments were offered for sale from 1927. The allotments were small, ranging from four to thirteen perches, and unusually shaped thanks to the road layout, but the Valley's booming popularity caused considerable commercial interest in the area. The nascent motor industry was particularly attracted to the area, with tyre manufacturing businesses, garages and taxi company buildings constructed in the formerly residential area.

NEM Co engaged architect Roy Ashley Shaw to design a new bus garage for the company in 1929. Shaw was born in Rockhampton and served in World War I before working as an architect in Sydney and Wagga Wagga. After a period of overseas travel, he established himself as an architect in Brisbane in 1927. In 1938, he formed a partnership with H. J. Carlyle. Shaw specialised in the Old English style of architecture and was responsible for the design of 'Cotswold' in Clayfield.

Architect and master builder D.F. Roberts successfully tendered to construct the motor garage. Shaw and Roberts were also engaged to design and build a service station for NEM Co manager GA Robinson on the adjacent site, but this building is no longer extant.

The NEM Co motor garage was completed by 1930, when it was visible in a panoramic photograph taken from McWhirter's building. The single storey brick building appears to have featured two large entrance for buses on its Gotha Street façade, both of which have now been converted into windows. The company's name was displayed on both Gotha Street and Barry Parade, with the former sign surviving.

Although the company used the building, the Brisbane City Council owned the site until 1939, when title to the property was transferred to George Robinson.

Later it served as the bus terminal, after the company stopped using Adelaide Street as its passenger terminal.

The New England Motor Company was taken over by Kirklands in 1970. The Gotha Street garage continued to be used as a bus depot and passenger terminal. However, with competing services

until long distance services were transferred to the Roma Street transit centre in 1986.

Calls for a new bus terminal began in the 1950s. Competing bus services dropped passengers off at their own depots, causing problems for those using Brisbane as a transit point. The Roma Street transit centre was opened in 1986, and long distance bus services were transferred there.

The company operated a service station from Barry Parade and this building, a bus depot, from Gotha Street.

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 bus garage built in the 1920s, when motor transportation was rising to prominence.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a 1920s purpose-built bus garage.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places as purpose-built motor bus garage.

References

1. *Brisbane Courier*, 29 September 1910 p5 & 27 October 1910 p7
2. *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette*, 3 November 1910 p6
3. Beryl Roberts, 'Oh for a Brisbane Omnibus! The influences of horse-drawn buses on the development of Brisbane 1860s to 1920s' (thesis, 1994)
4. Queensland Post Office Directories
5. National Library of Australia, Trove newspapers, *The Queenslander*, 4 December 1930
6. Brisbane's Development of Transport, Storage and Wharves (study; undated)

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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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