

## Heritage Citation

### Ship Inn

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 447 Stanley Street, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101
<b>Type of place</b>	Hotel (pub)
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Filigree
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP1371; L777_SL12481; L8_SP172807
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — April 2014
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Masonry - Render
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical

The hotel that became the Ship Inn was built in 1866. After a chequered start it was licensed in 1879 and called the Ship Inn. It continued to do well until the relocation of the South Brisbane wharves and the cessation of wartime activity at the nearby dry dock. The hotel deteriorated from the 1960s and closed in 1979. The Inn was boarded up and became home to squatters and vandals. In 1984 when the site of Expo '88 was announced, there were fears that the historic Ship Inn would be demolished with other old buildings on the south bank of the river. The Expo Authority announced it would be restored, and the substantially rebuilt and extended hotel became a popular 24-hour party venue during Expo '88.

#### History

The hotel that became the Ship Inn was built by Daniel Donovan in 1866. It failed to prosper and was a boarding house until 1879 when licensed as the Ship Inn. It was advertised as “the only first class brick hotel in South

Brisbane". This coincided with a boom in the local economy and the growth of the shipping industry nearby. Between 1880 and 1900, South Brisbane experienced a substantial economic boom, due directly to the construction of a suburban rail line to the southern suburbs and the linking of the western line to Ipswich in 1884. A dry dock, coal wharves and other industries were established at this time.

In 1892, the then owner Margaret Gaffney, added a large extension to the south side containing a new dining room and kitchen on the ground floor and more bedrooms upstairs. The shingle roof was replaced with a steeper, galvanised iron roof with a large gable facing the river bearing the name 'Ship Inn'. The floods of February 1893, while causing devastation on the north and south sides of the river, barely covered the Ship Inn's floor.

In 1903 South Brisbane was declared a city with a population of 28,000 people. The Ship Inn continued as a successful family business frequented by sailors and workers from the nearby shipyards and industrial areas. The amalgamation of nearby shires and towns into Greater Brisbane in 1925 had little impact on the prosperity of the Ship Inn. The publican and lessee ignored demands from the licensing authority to upgrade facilities and to stop selling liquor after hours. However from 1938, overseas shipping facilities started to be transferred to Hamilton and Newstead because the proposed Story Bridge would be too low for ocean-going ships. At first this had little impact as during World War Two (1939-45) the nearby dry dock and American servicemen stationed at the Town Hall, Somerville House and St Laurence's College provided the Ship Inn with regular customers.

The Ship Inn changed hands a number of times in the postwar period. The Degiovanni family undertook renovations providing a second bar in 1950. During the 1950s and '60s, South Brisbane's wharves slowly closed down; the rail-line was removed in 1960 and the locomotive depot closed in 1967. Although frequented by painters and dockers, the owners at the time recalled that it was "no rougher than any other pub". In 1969 the South Brisbane Dry Dock closed, the trams ceased running along Stanley Street and the remaining riverfront wharves were demolished to create Clem Jones Park. Local employment and the Ship Inn's clientele rapidly diminished. A Licensing Commission inspection found problems of poor sanitation, the lack of an accommodation register, and a long list of cleaning, painting and repair work needing completion. The hotel deteriorated during the 1960s and '70s with numerous complaints being made about its clientele and condition. The Licensing Commission ordered its closure in 1979. The Inn was boarded up and became home to squatters and vandals.

In 1984 when the site of Expo '88 on the south bank of the Brisbane River was announced, the then owners Carlton and United Breweries saw an opportunity. The Brisbane Exposition and South Bank Development Authority resumed the site. The Ship Inn became the focus of a major heritage controversy. Amidst fears of its imminent demolition, the hotel was listed by the National Trust and the Australian Heritage Commission.

The Expo Authority announced its restoration as part of a historic precinct and applied for a 24 hour liquor license. Architect Robin Gibson oversaw the restoration and the renovated and enlarged Ship Inn was reopened in December 1987. The Ship Inn is one of five nineteenth century buildings retained and restored for Expo to evoke the grandness of old South Brisbane. It is "believed to be the longest continuously occupied hotel site in Queensland." Located opposite the South Brisbane Dry Dock, the Ship Inn remains an important part of an historic precinct that includes the Dry Dock, South Brisbane Memorial Park, the South Brisbane library, South Brisbane Town Hall and 'Cumbooquepa'.

During Expo '88 its 24-hour license allowed patrons to 'dance until the early hours of the morning and stay on for breakfast'. The Ship Inn and the Plough Inn became the party venues during the year-long party that was Expo '88. While the Ship Inn was removed from State and National heritage lists in 1993-4 as having been too altered

to retain heritage value, its restored verandahs and ultra-modern equipment are not inconsistent with current heritage practice. Despite extensive alterations also for Expo, the Plough Inn remains on the Queensland Heritage Register. Griffith University purchased the site in 2000 and in 2003 announced the removal of “the Expo and subsequent additions” giving it “a new lease of life ... [as a] new and exciting cultural hub for the city” near the new Postgraduate Studies Centre. Whilst little remains of the original hotel, the Ship Inn retains its external envelope and overall form and detailing.

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## Description

The Ship Inn is a two storey masonry building on the corner of Stanley Street and Sidon Street, South Brisbane formerly one of the main thoroughfares of the area. The building has a timber wrap-around verandah on the first floor large and a hipped roof punctuated by a large streetfacing gable, clad with metal sheeting. The gable features distinctive timber framing.

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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 one of the few venues remaining from the 24-hour celebrations associated with Expo '88, it has an important place in the memories of the Brisbane community and is an important reminder of an event that represented a shift in lifestyle for Brisbane's residents and put Queensland on the international tourist map. It was also retained on the South Brisbane site due to a concerted campaign to save the local area's heritage prior to Expo '88.

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## References

1. The history in this citation is largely based on a paper prepared by W. Metcalfe “The Ship Inn Hotel: a

Story of South Brisbane and Southbank”

2. Brisbane City Council. Building Cards. 447 Stanley St, South Brisbane
3. Digitised newspapers and other records. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
4. National Trust Queensland. Ship Inn citation. File ref No: BNE 1/548. March 1984

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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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