



## Heritage Citation



### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 222 Montague Road, West End, Queensland 4101
<b>Type of place</b>	Workshop
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Art Deco
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP54511; L2_RP54511; L18_RP10779; L17_RP10779
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 November 2012 Date of Citation — January 2009
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Masonry
<b>People/associations</b>	George Alexander Stronach (Builder)

Built in a period of economic prosperity in Brisbane, Stronach's Workshop represents the use of Art Deco inspired design for a utilitarian purpose. Prominent Brisbane builder George Alexander Stronach built the workshop in 1928 for his successful building and contracting business. The workshop contributes to the historic industrial streetscape on Montague Road and is a rare example of a substantial 1920s brick industrial building that adopted many elements of the era's Art Deco inspired design.

## History

The property on Montague Road was purchased by George Alexander Stronach in June 1926. The eastern end of Montague Road, South Brisbane, was at this time both industrial and residential with businesses such as Australian Iron and Steele Ltd and Australian Glass Manufacturers already established on the banks of the Brisbane River. In 1926 the plans for the construction of a large workshop on Montague Road were approved. The cost of the building was to be £350. The era in which the building was constructed was one of prosperity in Brisbane. A building boom was taking place throughout much of Brisbane, especially in the City and Fortitude Valley.

George Alexander Stronach was an important figure in the building industry in Queensland throughout the interwar period. As one of the leading master builders in this era he was responsible for the construction of many of Brisbane and Queensland's most important buildings. The Brisbane Courier wrote of Stronach in 1931:

To have successfully completed contracts the total value of which exceed £1,000,000 during the last seven and a half years is the proud record of Mr. George Alexander Stronach, one of Queensland's leading master builders. Many of the ornate buildings that adorn the centre of the city have been built by him and he also is proud that wherever possible he has employed Queensland workmen and used Queensland materials.<sup>1</sup>

With his own workshop on Montague Road, Stronach was able to employ local workers and use local materials for the majority of his building works. Stronach was successful in acquiring building contracts for the construction of buildings such as McWhirter's Building on the corner of Brunswick and Wickham Streets in Fortitude Valley, the Brisbane Masonic Temple in Ann Street, the AMP building (now known as MacArthur Chambers) on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets, the National Bank of Australia building on Queen Street. Other examples of his work outside Brisbane include The Southport School on the Gold Coast, the Pacific Hotel, Southport and the Royal Hotel in Stanthorpe. Stronach was a strong member of the Master Builders' Association in Queensland and served as president from 1932 to 1934.

Although a very successful builder in this period, Stronach was not spared from the economic hardship caused by the Great Depression. Throughout his time as president of the Master Builders' Association, Stronach was an advocate of reduced taxation for the building industry and believed "that as far as city building was concerned there was no doubt that the biggest drawback and preventative of any revival in the trade was caused by the extreme taxation"<sup>2</sup>. Four years after this Stronach was forced to declare bankruptcy, blaming his situation on

unfair sales tax on building materials. In 1929 and 1931 further additions were approved for the workshop. The Montague Road workshop changed ownership in 1939/40.

Stronach's Workshop is representative of an interwar industrial building that has been built to incorporate popular decorative elements from the time. The workshop is important as a reminder of the scale of building work carried out by Stronach and the contribution he made to the built form of Brisbane.

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## Description

Stronach's Workshop has a symmetrical brick façade with Art Deco influences, including stepped parapet walls and a glass block panel above the centrally located entrance. The brickwork façade has been painted. The parapet walls step down at each side and conceal the gabled roofs behind. There are three separate gable roof bays, with the central bay set higher than the two bays each side. The central roof has clerestory windows and is constructed with steel trusses, whereas the lower-height side bays have timber roof trusses. The front facade contains steel-framed windows with curved concrete window hoods above. Brick garden beds are located at each side of the central entry stairs.

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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 interwar brick industrial building constructed as a workshop by G. A. Stronach, prominent Brisbane builder, it is important in demonstrating the increase in industrial activity in South Brisbane at this time; Stronach's workshop was built as a result of the heightened building activity in Brisbane in the 1920s and Stronach's need for a centralized workshop for his successful building business.

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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

Stronach's Workshop is a rare example of a 1920s Art Deco inspired industrial building in Brisbane.

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## Aesthetic

### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

Stronach's Workshop plays an important role in the industrial landscape of Montague Road as a substantial interwar industrial building that incorporates Art Deco inspired features such as the imposing front parapet

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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 the workshop constructed by important Brisbane builder G. A. Stronach from where he ran his successful building and contracting business from 1928 to 1938.

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## References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 26 September 1931, p7
2. *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 4 March 1933, p14
3. Blake, Thom, "South Brisbane: An Historical Overview", *Queensland Division Technical Papers*, April, 1990, p.1 – 3
4. Lavery, John, "South Brisbane: The Making of a City" *Brisbane in 1888- The Historical Perspective*, Brisbane History Group, Papers No. 8, 1988, p. 61-69
5. *Brisbane Centenary Official Historical Souvenir*, "City of South Brisbane", Local Authorities of Queensland, 1924, p. 139-154
6. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press,

1973

7. EPA Cultural Heritage Citation, “McWhirters Marketplace”, CHIMS
8. Historic Titles, Department of Environment and Resource Management
9. Queensland Post Office Directories
10. Brisbane City Council New Building Register
11. *The Brisbane Courier*, Thursday 7 January 1937, p17
12. *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday, 6 December 1930, p18
13. Queensland Electoral Rolls

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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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