

Heritage Citation



Tram Shelter

Key details

Addresses	Opposite 178 Merthyr Road, New Farm, Queensland 4005
Type of place	Tram / bus shelter
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Arts and Crafts
Geolocation	-27.463108 153.050279
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — January 1994
Construction	Roof: Tile; Structure: Timber
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic; (F) Technical

This hipped roof pavilion shelter, standing on a grassed footpath to the corner of Merthyr Road and Gray Street, is no longer associated with a bus stop. Two horned finials stand to each end of the main ridge. The posts stand within metal brackets clear of the grassed footpath. One post stands within the adjacent garden. An early metal electricity connection pole stands adjacent to the shelter.

History

In 1884 the privately owned Metropolitan Tramway and Investment Company laid Brisbane's first tram tracks.

These covered six and a half miles from Woolloongabba to Breakfast Creek, with branches to the Exhibition Building and New Farm. Eventually horse-drawn trams ran on rails from the city to Exhibition, Breakfast Creek, Bulimba Ferry, New Farm, Logan Road and West End.

The first electric trams were introduced in Brisbane in 1897. By this time, although industrial uses were beginning to occur in the Newstead/Teneriffe area, significant residential development was also attracted to the area.

Wealthy merchants and professionals built their homes on the heights of Teneriffe Hill, taking advantage of the views and cooling breezes. Worker's cottages filled the slopes and river flats, within walking distance of employment.

In the following decades, Brisbane's tramway system experienced rapid expansion in response to the growth of the city itself. The number of cars operating increased from 20 in 1897 to 172 in 1916. In the period before the dominance of private motor vehicles, the electric tram provided mass transportation for Brisbane residents. The line was extended to this part of New Farm in 1914. Their immense popularity is illustrated by the fact that by the 1950s Brisbane had one of the highest levels of public transport usage in Australia at that time.

At the end of the First World War, it was clear that the tramway system had become a necessity for mass transport of the people and it was generally felt that it should be owned and operated by a public body rather than by a private company. Thus in 1922 the Brisbane Tramway Trust was formed by Act of Parliament. The Trust took over ownership and control on 1 January 1923. The private company had allowed the system to fall behind in catering for the demands of Brisbane's growing population. The Trust therefore had a considerable task ahead of it. It arranged for the duplication of tracks, additional tramcars and the construction of more adequate repair workshops and car depots. Remote control of points was introduced at busy city intersections to improve safety. Other innovations introduced by the Trust were passenger shelter sheds such as this one, advertising in trams and a suggestions board scheme.

The construction of this tram waiting shed was approved by the Trust in 1924, and it was probably constructed in 1925. At this stage this area still had a considerable residential population. From the 1920s, however, the use of the New Farm Wharf line began to decline as industry encroached on the previously residential area.

The trust only held office for three years and in December 1925 the newly formed Greater Brisbane City Council took over control and administration of the tramways system. After the Second World War the increasing reliance on the private motor car and the growth of Council's bus fleet gradually reduced the number of tram passengers. In 1969, after 72 years as the basic means of public transport in Brisbane, the use of trams was officially discontinued. The tram shed has remained, providing evidence of a way of life that no longer exists.

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 evidence of the expansion of the tramway system to cater for the population growth of New Farm, Teneriffe and Newstead in the early decades of the 20th century.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage for its association with trams, a mode of transport no longer used.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance for its contribution to the streetscape of Merthyr Road.

Technical

CRITERION F

The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period as evidence of the innovation of the Brisbane Tramways Trust to promote the use of this system of public transport.

References

1. Lawson, R, *Brisbane in the 1890s*, UQP, 1973, p 11

2. Morwood, J E, "History of Electric Tramways in Brisbane", Institution of Engineers Australia, *Queensland Division Technical Papers*, 1970
 3. Brisbane Tramway Trust, *Second Annual Report*, 1924, p 13
 4. Clark, Howard & Keenan, David. *Brisbane Tramways: the last decade*, Transit Press, Sydney, 1977
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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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