

Heritage Citation



Tyrrell House

Key details

Addresses	At 697 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Office building, Shop/s
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Stripped Classical
Lot plan	L1_RP69240
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2010 Date of Citation — January 2009
Construction	Walls: Face brick

People/associations Eric Percival Trewern (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic

Tyrrell House was built in 1924-25 and designed by respected Brisbane architect E. P. Trewern. Built as a commercial premise at a time of prosperity in the Valley, it adjoins the Shannon's Building built in the same period and designed by the same architect. In the mid-twentieth century it became headquarters of the Queensland Grand Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalo, and then as the Queensland branch of the Australian Builders Labourers Federation, an important trade union group in Australia throughout the twentieth century. As well as contributing to the aesthetic landscape of Ann Street, Tyrrell House has special associations with important organisations in Brisbane's history.

History

Tyrrell House is a substantial two-storey brick commercial building constructed in 1924-25. Designed by prominent Brisbane architect, E. P. Trewern, its high, decorative front façade is a commanding feature on Ann Street. Adjoining is the Shannon's Building, also a Trewern designed commercial building from the same era. The two buildings are important as intact examples of inter-war, architecturally designed commercial buildings that reflect the prosperity of the era.

From the 1860s the population of the Valley grew, having over 1000 residents by this time. The commercial nature of the Valley was also beginning to emerge. Most commercial activity in this period was centred between Ann, Brunswick and Wickham Streets. The improvement of access from the city centre to the Valley due to the levelling of Duncan's Hill between the two areas in the 1870s assisted the growth of this part of Brisbane

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century the population of the Valley increased even more, and with this the commercial nature of the Valley centre grew with relatively large scale construction in the area. As this occurred those living within the centre began to move to more suburban areas such as New Farm and Bowen Hills. By the turn of the century the valley heart was commercially dominated and the buildings were of a more substantial nature.

The success of the Valley commercial area at the turn of the century saw large traders such as TC Beirne, McWhirters and Overells department stores encourage shoppers to the Valley. Efficient public transport systems such as electric trams and trains to and through the Valley contributed to the commercial success of the area.

The 1920s was a decade of further growth in Fortitude Valley, with its success as a commercial and industrial hub. In this decade the cutting on Duncan's Hill for Ann Street was widened, opening the Valley even further to the rest of Brisbane, allowing a greater volume of traffic into the area.

In 1921 John Amess Coleman and his wife Inga purchased the property. Previously the site was occupied by a coach builder. Coleman realised the commercial potential of the property and in 1923 had plans approved for the construction of a set of brick shops. The building would cost ?3500 and be designed by renowned Brisbane architect E. P. Trewern.

Victorian trained Eric Percival Trewern established his Brisbane architectural practice in 1920 at an address in Queen Street, Brisbane. The practice continued until Trewern's death in 1959. The height of his design success occurred in the interwar period and he is renowned for his innovative designs incorporating the Spanish Mission and the Old English/Tudor revival style in residential and commercial architecture. Amongst his finest residential designs is the New Farm house "Santa Barbara" that is considered the best example of the Spanish Mission style in Brisbane. Trewern designed many commercial buildings in central Brisbane many of which no longer exist. One important extant building is the Inchcolm Professional Chambers on Wickham Terrace. Trewern was an active member of many prestigious architectural societies in the pursuit of improving professional architectural standards in Queensland.

In 1925 Coleman took out a mortgage to finance the new building. The design incorporated three ground floor shops and a large first floor with access from Ann Street as well as the rear. Importantly the contractor was Reuben Shannon, also responsible for the adjoining Shannon's Building, thus establishing a clear relationship between the two buildings. From 1927 the premises is listed as being occupied by Star Rubber and Vulcanizing Works, owned by R. D. Lonergan.

In 1933 Tyrrell House became the Queensland Grand Lodge for the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalo (R.A.O.B). Initially the group leased the first floor but by 1946 owned all of Tyrrell House. Established in England in the early nineteenth century, the exclusively male organisation was (and is) a philanthropic society that assists its members and their dependants. The group adopted ritual and ceremony from influences such as the Freemasons to create an identity and culture for themselves.

As a Grand Lodge Tyrrell House was an important centre for this group and played a significant role in the lives of its members. The ground floor shops continued to be leased to various businesses and the first floor was used exclusively by the Buffaloes.

Ten years later the premises was purchased by the Australian Builders Labourers Federation (A.B.L.F), Queensland Branch, who owned the premises for the next twenty years. The A.B.L.F was a trade union organisation first established in 1911. The Federation played an active role in worker's rights up to the 1980s when it was permanently deregistered due to corruption charges. Nevertheless, members of the Queensland branch of the Federation during the twentieth century have strong associations with Tyrrell House.

Today Tyrrell House continues the tradition of retail premises on the ground floor and the first floor is a nightclub.

Description

The building is a two-storied, brick construction, with brick pilasters dividing the façade into three bays. The middle pilasters have stack-bonded brick quoins terminating in a moulded rendered cornice with decorative motifs to the pilaster capitals. The square headed windows have rendered sills and were originally double-hung with multi-paned upper sashes. The parapet has a wide projecting rendered bank, blank name panel, and moulded cappings. The awning is suspended. Alterations have occurred to the upper floor windows, and installation of air-conditioning units.

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 an intact example of a substantial brick commercial building, designed and built in the 1920s at a time when Fortitude Valley was increasingly becoming a successful retail centre in Brisbane.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance the building is significant as an intact example of 1920s commercial architecture and, in conjunction with the adjoining Shannon's Building, for its contribution to the streetscape of Ann Street.

References

1. Queensland Post Office Directories
2. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
3. *Detail Fire Survey: City of Brisbane, 1951*, Mahlstedt's: Consulting Fire Engineers and Surveyors, Melbourne
4. *Metropolitan Water and Sewage Survey Maps, 1914*
5. *North Brisbane Electoral Rolls, 1898 and 1900*
6. Wikipedia, *Builders Labourers Federation*
7. *Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes*, <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/buffaloes.html>

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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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