

Heritage Citation



Bank of New South Wales (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 101 Brighton Road, Sandgate, Queensland 4017
Type of place	Bank
Period	Late 20th Century 1960-1999
Style	Late Modern
Lot plan	L2_RP49089
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 29 November 2022 Date of Citation — November 2022
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic

Designed by noted Brisbane-based architects Theo Thynne and Associates and constructed in 1961, the former Bank of New South Wales building demonstrates the evolution of commercial building development along

Sandgate's main commercial street, Brighton Road. The building's two-storey facade is a well-executed design reflecting mid-century Modernist purpose-built bank architecture. The design illustrates expressive attributes of strength and stability in the simplicity of built form, minimalist detailing, and use of materials.

History

A history of Sandgate

Sandgate, including the suburb of Shorncliffe, is located 17 kilometres from central Brisbane. The first land sales in the Sandgate area occurred during the 1850s and much of the early development centred on the area now known as Shorncliffe. On 29 April 1880, Sandgate was declared a constituted municipality. During the 1880s, the area around Pier Avenue and Yundah Street became the town's communal and civic centre. The first Town Hall, constructed in 1882, the Court House, and the first two police stations were located in this area.

From the 1880s onwards, Sandgate became increasingly popular as a residential and seaside resort town. The opening of the train line to Brisbane in 1882 (extended to Shorncliffe in 1897) and the construction of the Sandgate Pier boosted the development of Sandgate. The train line to Sandgate was the first suburban line built solely for passengers in the Brisbane area. The train line provided a quick and efficient service for the growing number of residents commuting to Brisbane, and holidaymakers and day-trippers. Numerous attractions catering for visitors were also developed around this time. For example, separate bathing areas, dressing sheds, a caretaker's cottage, office and licensed area were built close to the already established Sandgate Pier. In the 1930s, an enclosed area protected by railway lines, a shark net and stone wall was constructed as a shark-proof swimming enclosure lit at night. Additionally, Flinders Parade (then known as Brighton Esplanade), between First Avenue and Gladstone Street (now Twelfth Avenue), was dotted with cafes, refreshment rooms, flats and boarding houses. Attractions on the foreshores included sand-garden competitions, donkey, goat and gig rides, canoe hire and a miniature railway.

In 1910, a fire destroyed the original Sandgate Town Hall. Subsequently, a new Town Hall opened on Deagon Street (now Brighton Road) in 1912. This opening of the new Town Hall, alongside the relocation of Sandgate Rail Station to its current site in 1911, marked a shift in the location of Sandgate's town centre away from the Shorncliffe area to the vicinity of the present-day Rainbow Street, Brighton Road and Bowser Parade. This area proved to be more accessible for neighbouring Deagon and Brighton residents.

The 1920s saw another period of prosperity for Sandgate. In 1925, Sandgate became a founding ward of the newly created Greater Brisbane City Council. While Shorncliffe continued to be a popular destination, the Sandgate and Brighton foreshores also drew crowds of holidaymakers. However, the building of the Hornibrook Highway Bridge in 1935 brought mixed blessings for Sandgate. This was because while the highway brought more passing trade to the area, it also enabled visitors to travel further north, typically by public transport, to the Redcliffe Peninsula for holidays rather than vacationing in Sandgate as had traditionally been the case. After the Second World War, increased car ownership also led to a further decline in the area's popularity as people were able to travel further beyond Brisbane's city limits for a holiday. Car ownership also brought the expansion of

Brighton, Deagon and Nashville as outer suburbs became more attractive.

The development of the Bank of New South Wales in the 1950s and 1960s

Westpac, the oldest bank in Australia, was created in 1982 by the merger of the Bank of New South Wales and the Commercial Bank of Australia. This was described as the 'biggest[merger] in Australian history at that time.' The history of Westpac can be traced back to 1817 when, to stabilise the supply of money in the colony of New South Wales, Governor Lachlan Macquarie authorised the establishment of the Bank of New South Wales.

The 1950s and 1960s marked a period of change and growth for the Bank of New South Wales due to changes in Australia's demographics after the Second World War. These changes included an increasing population and the move of this populace from rural areas to suburbia. In early 1956, to adapt to these changes and continue to create growth for the Bank of New South Wales, the Bank established a savings bank as a separate corporation. Before this point, the Bank of New South Wales had solely been a commercial bank. This change created competition and led to a growth in deposits at the Bank of New South Wales.

One result of the Bank of New South Wales's growth in the 1950s was the Bank's increased landholdings. The number of Bank of New South Wales branches grew from 831 in Australia in 1950 to 1,102 in Australia and New Zealand in September 1960. From September 1955 to 1960, 119 new branches were opened. Importantly, and illustrative of Australia's increasing suburban character in the 1950s, the Bank of New South Wales opened 94 of these new branches in urban areas. Despite this growth in the 1950s, the Bank of New South Wales created plans in 1960 to open a further 161 branches during the forthcoming decade. The former Bank of New South Wales in Sandgate was an early example of this continuing expansion policy.

The construction of Bank of New South Wales (former) at 101 Brighton Road, Sandgate

The former Bank of New South Wales is located on the section of Brighton Road between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. During the 1920s, while Sandgate enjoyed a boom as a seaside resort, Brighton Road developed to become the town's commercial area. Shops, such as a butcher, grocers, fruiterers, newsagent, chemist, and confectioner, developed along Brighton Road. Before this period, Brighton Road, then called Deagon Street, was less developed, with only a few stores present. Notable buildings built on Brighton Road before the Second World War included Nugent's Building on the corner of Fourth Avenue, and the Decker Building. However, several buildings, including the former Bank of New South Wales and the former ANZ Bank, were built in the 1960s and broke up the street's traditional built character.

In late-1960, Brisbane City Council received an application from the noted Brisbane-based architectural firm of Theo Thynne and Associates to 'erect a building' on behalf of the Bank of New South Wales. This building was to be built on subdivision two of resubdivision two of subdivision 50 of portion 71. The Bank of New South Wales purchased this land in 1960 from its previous owner. Before the erection of the new bank building, 'wood shops' existed on the site, including an electricians and grocers.

The former Bank of New South Wales in Sandgate is illustrative of the changes that occurred in the design of bank buildings in Australia after the Second World War. Up to the Second World War, bank buildings were

designed to convey a 'sense of confidence' in their services. A sense of scale and solidity were the ideas that underpinned the design of bank buildings, as illustrated in the use of classical columns. While examples of Art Deco and Functionalist style bank buildings were found in Brisbane before 1945, the predominant architectural styles for banks tended towards Gothic and Beaux-Arts styles. These designs helped convey a sense of confidence and permanency through their design elements. The predominance of these latter styles is best illustrated by the Bank of New South Wales building at 33 Queen Street in central Brisbane, a Beaux-Arts style building.

After the Second World War, however, there was a move towards 'openness and transparency' in the design of bank buildings. This was partly driven by economic changes in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s that led to a growth in personal wealth and disposable income. At the same time, many banks opened a savings bank subsidiary to help facilitate growth and access for customers and build new branches. These new bank branches, including those in the suburbs, began to incorporate Modernist design elements to help express the idea of openness and transparency. For example, the use of off-centre window openings in the former Bank of New South Wales in Sandgate provided a sense of openness by allowing the public to view the bank's interior. These design elements stood in contrast to earlier designs that sought to conceal a bank's daily operations. However, while these Modernist designs helped open banks up to the public during the 1960s, 'open and friendly' branch designs were often blamed for increasing armed hold-ups.

Theo Thynne and Associates, a practice noted for its Modernist designs, formed in 1952 when Thynne and Hitch's practice renamed itself when John Winsen joined the firm. Winsen left the practice in 1960 to establish his own company. Thynne registered as an architect in 1929, and between 1929 and 1930, he worked in Sydney. After service in the Royal Australian Navy during the Second World War, Thynne partnered with English architect John Hitch. Thynne's practice was particularly noted for recruiting prominent architects and talented students, such as Robin Gibson, John Dalton, and Michael Bryce. Thynne died in 1981.

Thynne's practice has been described as one of the 'most energetic firms during the 1950s' in Brisbane and was known for fully exploiting the 'rigours of modernism' in their designs. The other firm was that of Hayes and Scott. Both practices had been located in the Colonial Mutual Building and influenced each other. The practice was also heavily influenced by notable international architects, such as Walter Gropius and Marcel Bruer. However, unlike Hayes and Scott, this international influence appears to have been European in character rather than American.

The practice's residential and commercial work comprised elements of a Modernist minimalist approach and aspects of the international style of architecture while also responding to Queensland climate, elements of which can be seen in the former Bank of New South Wales. The design of buildings that responded to Queensland climate was a result of the influence of Dr Karl Langer. Theo Thynne and Associates attitudes towards designing projects have been likened to an 'academic studio' where a cooperative approach was used throughout the design process. At the same time, new ideas were often first tested on residential designs and then transposed to larger commercial projects.

Description

The former Bank of New South Wales at 101 Brighton Road fronts Brighton Road is an intact example of mid-century Modernist bank architecture. The built form and composition of the building include a three-storey, split-level form, a formal façade on Brighton Road, a concealed roof, glazed shop frontages, and a suspended footpath awning. Notable design details include overpainted extruded, horizontal banding along the top of the facade, a formal window composition, a decorative breeze block screen, Carrara marble cladding, and a grey marble terrazzo threshold to the building entry. The building stands out as a striking, architecturally stylised building along the main commercial street, and is highly visible in the streetscape.

General description

Constructed of unpainted, pale orange, expressed brick, the former bank is a three-storey split-level building built to the north, south and west boundaries of the site with a concrete paved rear yard to the west. Comprising a conventional two-storey built form fronting Brighton Road, the building form steps down to two-storeys at the rear in line with the site's natural topography. The Brighton Road section of the building incorporates a suspended awning over the footpath. A shallow-pitch gable roof is concealed by the Brighton Road façade, whereas the rear section incorporates a low-pitch skillion roof that drains towards a box gutter along the rear elevation.

The Brighton Road façade has a formal composition of off-centre window openings, incorporating a decorative painted breeze block screen above the awning. Carrara marble-clad pilasters extend the height of, and frame, part of the Brighton Road façade. The same marble cladding, laid in a vertical bond, extends across the remainder of the wall surface to the right of the original entrance, accentuating the vertical emphasis of the façade's composition. An entablature of painted, recessed, and extruded horizontal banding along the top of the façade completes the design.

At the ground floor level, the original natural-anodised aluminium framed shopfront windows with grey marble terrazzo threshold remain in part. The windows are concealed behind the decorative breeze block screen at first-floor level.

Alterations to the building are minor in nature, so that the integrity of the building remains intact. To the façade, the original bank deposit drop and letterbox has been infilled with contemporary sheeting to match the adjacent marble cladding. The original configuration of the glazed entry has also been altered; however the narrow shopfront and top light over the existing front door remain. The larger shopfront to the left is a later addition and has seen the originally larger recessed-entry enclosed as internal floor area.

At first-floor level, the overpainting of the entablature and awning fascia in a single colour has concealed the original colour scheme of dark recessed banding framed by light, raised banding. To the underside of the awning, while a suspended illuminated sign formed part of the original design, this was centred on the original recessed-entry of the shopfront, with the current signage being a later addition. Likewise, different masonry construction and window arrangement suggests the building's rear section incorporating the undercover car park is a later addition.

The interior of the building was not inspected.

As one of the more architecturally stylised buildings on Brighton Road, the grounds, and settings of the former Bank of New South Wales contributes significantly to the streetscape.

There are significant views to the place from Brighton Road.

Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance include:

- Original form and composition, including:
 - Three storey, split level composition that steps down to the rear of the site
 - Brighton road facade, including breeze block screen, Carrara marble pilasters and formal window arrangement
 - Suspended awning over footpath
 - Concealed gable roof behind facade
 - Arrangement of original glazed entry.
- Exterior design details, including:
 - Decorative breeze block screen
 - Carrara marble cladding
 - Entablature of horizontal banding
 - Grey marble terrazzo threshold
 - Original top light over existing front door.
- Setting of the place, including:
 - The surrounding commercial setting.
- Views to the place, including:
 - From Brighton Road.

Non-significant features

Non-significant features include:

- Non-original material infill to the former deposit drop box
- Large contemporary shopfront to left
- Non-original signage
- Rear undercover car park.

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

Constructed in 1961, the former Bank of New South Wales building demonstrates the evolutionary pattern of commercial building development along the main shopping street in Sandgate.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

Designed by well-known Brisbane based architects, Theo Thynne and Associates, for the Bank of New South Wales, the two-storey facade is a well-executed design reflecting modern 1960s purpose-built bank architecture. The design illustrates expressive attributes of strength and stability, in the simplicity of built form, minimalist detailing, use of marble cladding, breeze block screening, and a slimline cantilevered awning.

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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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