

Heritage Citation



Automatic Bakeries (former)

Key details

Also known as	Judith Wright Centre
Addresses	At 420 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006; At 18 Robertson Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Shop/s, Factory
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Free Style
Lot plan	L60_SP139799

Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — August 1995
Construction	Walls: Brick - Painted
People/associations	Walter Carey Voller (Architect)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (H) Historical association

This building was constructed in 1913 for Automatic Bakeries Ltd and was designed by prominent Brisbane architect Walter Carey Voller. Automatic Bakeries formed around 1912, and by 1913 had established branches at Toowong, Paddington, West End and Fortitude Valley. In 1923 the company was taken over by Websters Bakeries Ltd who leased the ground floor of the building out to local business owners. Websters retained the building until 1958 when it was purchased by the tea company Bushells. The building is now known as the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts.

History

Automatic Bakeries Limited purchased two adjoining 26 perch sites on the corner of Brunswick and Berwick Streets from William Maher, and in January 1913 applied for Brisbane City Council approval for the construction of a brick building at Brunswick and Berwick (then John) Streets. Immediately after the company took out two mortgages totalling £3,225/-/-, probably to finance construction of this building.

The 1910s saw a continuation of the pattern of the Valley's industrial expansion that had begun in earnest in the 1890s. Access to river, rail and road transport, proximity to the city centre and a concentration of working class residents made the Valley an attractive location for industrialists.

The architect Walter Carey Voller was chosen by Automatic Bakeries to design its new premises. Voller served his articles with the architect FDG Stanley from 1882 to 1886 and later worked in Stanley's office. Voller was a prominent member of the Queensland Institute of Architects and served as its president in 1903-06, and vice president in 1913, 1919 and 1922. In his later years of practice he was responsible for a number of churches of all denominations. His elder son and grandson also became architects.

Automatic Bakeries was formed around 1912 and by the following year had established this bakery in Brunswick Street in addition to branches in Toowong, Paddington and West End. However the company was not to be a lasting enterprise. In 1923 it was taken over by Websters Bakeries Ltd. The Webster Cake and Biscuit Company was founded by David Webster in the 1880s. The company grew and by the turn of the century operated a bakery at Annerley, a bread bakery at Dutton Park and several restaurants in the city and Valley.

Following Websters' takeover, the company granted several leases of this building's ground floor shops. Long term lessees included Foxcroft Sign Company, which specialised in outdoor advertising, electric signs and general signwriting; Portrate and Roswell clothing manufacturers and the Farmers' Publishing Company. Websters held title to this building until 1958 when the property was sold to Bushells, the well known tea company.

It adjoins an earlier building facing Brunswick Street adjacent to J Morgan booksellers. A 1924 Detail Plan shows the building with an extra wing facing Berwick Street. This was probably a single storey wing. It was demolished to make way for the Bushells building facing Berwick Street which was constructed in the late 1950s following Bushells' acquisition of the site in 1958.

The building was originally face brick with rendered panels above and below the windows. Its striking corner tower serves as a land mark in this part of the Valley.

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 a reflection of the ongoing pattern of industrial expansion in Fortitude Valley in the 1910s.

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 a rare example of a commercial building designed by prominent architect Walter Carey Voller.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Register of New Buildings
 2. John Oxley Library photographic collection, Brisbane – suburbs – Fortitude Valley, 1937
 3. Post Office Directories.
 4. Titles Office Records
 5. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994
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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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