

Heritage Citation



Bond's Sweet Factory (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 164 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101
Type of place	House, Factory
Period	Postwar 1945-1960
Style	Art Deco
Lot plan	L3_RP1430; L2_RP1430; L1_RP1430
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — May 2011
Construction	Walls: Masonry
People/associations	Oliver Coleman (Architect)

This building was constructed in 1951 by H Sandham and Son for Bonds Sweets Ltd. Designed by architect and engineer Oliver Coleman, it was intended as a confectionery manufacturing factory with a penthouse residence for the company founder, Robert Bond. Bond's death in July 1951 meant the factory was never used for Bond Sweets, but was sold to a machinery manufacturing company later in the year and Universal Pictures in 1954. From 1989-1991 the building hosted the Museum of Contemporary Arts. The three storey former factory, featuring a circular corner entry piece, is a relatively late and rare example of an Art Deco factory in South Brisbane.

History

The former Bond's Sweet Factory was constructed in 1951 as a factory for Robert Bond, founder of Bonds Sweets, to a design by architect and engineer Oliver Coleman. Bond, a Greek immigrant, had established Bond Sweets in the mid 1930s, as a sweet and cake shop. Registered as a public company in 1942, the business expanded rapidly, branching into manufacturing in the mid 1940s. By then Bond had amassed a good deal of wealth, and purchased a large landmark residence in Hamilton in 1949 which he intended to modernise and convert to a reception venue. He also purchased two blocks of land on the corner of Melbourne and Manning Streets in South Brisbane in 1947, for a confectionary manufacturing plant.

South Brisbane in the post-war period had past its heyday. Land sales had first taken place in the 1840s, with the area growing to become an industrial, residential and commercial district rivalling the northern side of the river by the 1880s. After WWI the focus of South Brisbane became more heavily industrial, and factories and residences began competing for space.

Melbourne Street had been slower to develop, with very few buildings in the block between Manning and Edmondstone Streets before the 1920s. Pressures on housing and business forced greater development in inner-city suburbs, encouraging the construction of a number of shops and residences on the block. The area was a multicultural one, existing as a small Chinese precinct in the 1910s and later hosting Lebanese-born Salem Malouf's residence and fruit shop, a variety of Chinese fruit shops and residences and a Japanese laundry. The corner allotment of Melbourne and Manning Street was owned by Greek-born Nicholas Andronicos and John Katahanas from 1936, who leased the shops on the site to a variety of businesses, including plumbers, dressmakers, and second hand dealers. By this time the block was also home to furniture manufacturers, battery services, a welding company and motor mechanics, and, a reflection of the hardship of the Depression era, the South Brisbane soup kitchen.

By the 1940s, the shift of the wharves to Hamilton and the opening of the Story Bridge had diverted a significant amount of economic activity away from South Brisbane. Conversely, the post-war decline of South Brisbane had left land slightly more affordable, bringing southern investors and European migrants who chose to settle in the area in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Robert Bond acquired title to an extremely small nine perch block of land, just removed from the corner of Melbourne and Manning Street, in May 1947. By November his company had purchased the adjacent 25 perch

site on the corner, and had commissioned architect Oliver Coleman to design its new factory. Coleman, an English born Queensland architect, had begun practising in Brisbane in 1939. He had had experience with factory buildings, having been employed as branch manager for the James Bell Machinery Company and designing the replacement building of the Woodford Butter Factory. Coleman began calling for tenders for the Bonds Sweet building in August 1947 and in 1948 a permit had been granted for Bond's £12,000 modern factory, to be constructed by successful tenders H Sandham and Son. The factory was not completed until late 1951, by which time the building's cost had ballooned out to £40,000. The completed factory was an unusual Art Deco design, following the style of the late 1930s and stylistically similar to the Credit Union building in Ann Street. It was a striking addition to the Melbourne Street corner, designed with some of the latest building materials, including glass bricks in its prominent circular corner piece. Three storeys high, it included a penthouse residence for the owner.

The factory, however, was never used by Bonds Sweets. Robert Bond had died in July 1951, before he could see the completed building. Bonds Sweets quickly sold the new factory to Demco Machinery Company, an Australian manufacturing business which was expanding into Brisbane. It was sold again to the Associated Distributors Company in 1954, and used by Universal Pictures as a film store. In August 1955 permission was granted for the construction of an additional building on the site for a film store "with only part of the building in two storeys." In July 1987 the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) opened its galleries in this building, but vacated it in 1991. New tenants have subsequently altered the building, removing the centrally operated lever windows and the Art Deco front doors.

Description

The building is situated on an important South Brisbane corner between Melbourne Street and Manning Street. Its prominent entry addresses the corner and organises the form of the building. It is two storeys high to the parapet and has a residence above this as a third level. The building uses many Art Deco stylistic devices especially in its circular corner entry piece. This portion of the building originally used glass bricks at its first floor level between unusual pilasters which extend to the top of the building and curve over the parapet. The glass brick walls have been replaced by panels of aluminium framed glazing. The entry below is truncated across the corner and originally incorporated a pair of doors with solid leaves and paired diagonal chromium door handles. These solid leaves were surrounded by glazed panels separated into squares by fine mullions.

The more regular portions of the building extend parallel to each street away from the entry. These had rectangular window openings originally with glazing bars organised so as to provide square panes down each side and three sets of rectangular panels across between them. All the glazing on the building is now aluminium framed. Two such bays occur across the Manning Street façade and three across the Melbourne Street area. All these windows are protected by cantilevered sun hoods that run continuously along each street elevation above the window heads. These portions of the building have plain flat parapets above the first floor window hoods. Exposed rainwater heads and downpipes flank the corner entry and the downpipes run through the ends of the sun hoods on both levels. Above the parapet line exists a separate residence with a hipped roof. The boundary wall on the end of this façade has a stepped parapet line. At the base of the two street facades were originally protective steel railings which stopped at the entry. Three steps lead up from the footpath to the new glass entry doors. Another entry has been made to Boundary Street by extending one of the windows to footpath level.

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 decorative factory built in the postwar period when South Brisbane was developing as a manufacturing and industrial hub.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as a factory designed by an architect in the Art Deco style which included a penthouse apartment for the owner.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as a decorative architect-designed Art Deco factory building.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a well-composed building which is an excellent example of the use of Art Deco stylistic elements in a commercial setting that addresses the corner of a prominent site.

References

1. Richard Irving, Conservation Study of the former Credit Union Building, 1991
2. Graham De Gruchy, Architecture in Brisbane, Bowen Hills: Boolarong, 1988, p.119
3. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, Fryer Memorial Library Occasional Publication No. 2, 1984, p.55
4. *The Architectural and Building Journal*, December 1936, p.23
5. *The Courier Mail* 1947-1952
6. *Queensland Post Office Directories* 1900-1954
7. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Environment and Resource Management
8. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs, 1946, 2005, 2009
9. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
10. Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board Detail Plan, 1925
11. Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit, 'South Brisbane Area Heritage Study Part A: Project Report'
12. Centre for the Government of Queensland, 'Queensland Places: West End' and 'South Brisbane', 2011 (website)

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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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