



Heritage Citation



Bragg's Bakery (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 694 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Shop/s, Shophouse
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Free Classical

Lot plan L1_SP193207; L5_SP198092; L4_SP193209; L822_SP192737; L2_SP193207; L3_SP193210; L813_SP192741; L5_SP193201; L6_SP193211; L4_SP193212; L106_SP196993; L119_SP196969; L811_SP192742; L812_SP192742; L1_SP193199; L1_SP193204; L101_SP196984; L107_SP196982; L108_SP196982; L810_SP192742; L120_SP196969

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000
Date of Citation — July 2010

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Masonry

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association; (H) Historical association

The former Bragg's Bakery on Ann Street, constructed in 1885 to the design of George Campbell Wilson, is one of the oldest surviving buildings of its type in Brisbane which still retains much of its original historic character.

The building, a replacement of a bakery which had operated on the site from the early 1860s, also illustrates Fortitude Valley's development as a commercial and retail centre from the early 1860s. It is a good example of a family-run business that operated on site for nearly 50 years. The Bragg family operated their bakery business from their Ann Street premises from early mid 1860s, with Kate Bragg taking over from husband Joseph 1883, and continuing until 1910. Their children continued the business from another site into the 1920s. Mrs Bragg, who advertised herself as a 'pastrycook', established a successful business, despite her husband's earlier financial difficulties.

History

The former Bragg's Bakery was designed by George Campbell Wilson in 1885 for Mrs Catherine Mary Bragg. Her father-in-law, Charles Bragg, had established a bakery business in Brisbane as early as 1859. Members of the Bragg family ran a bakery from this site for around 50 years.

Dorset-born immigrant Charles Bragg arrived in Queensland with his family in 1855 and purchased the Ann street property from land selector Thomas Smith in 1861. He appears to have leased the property to Charles Baker, a grocer, from approximately time of purchase until late 1864. Bragg's son Joseph had been apprenticed as a baker and was importing numerous bags of flour as early as 1860, indicating that he was probably working as a baker at that time, although where is unknown. In 1864 Bragg married Catherine Mary Fitzgibbon, who had immigrated to Queensland as a child with her family in 1853. The Ann Street bakery was established by 1865, with Joseph Bragg advertising for bread and biscuit makers in late 1864 and informing the public of the price rise of bread from his Ann Street bakery in late 1865. He was listed in Pugh's Almanac in 1865 and in 1866 had become a 'fancy bread & biscuit baker', seeking a baker who understood small goods. The bakery was located 'near Ward, Chemist, Fortitude Valley'. Ward's building, the Apothecaries' Hall, is next door to the bakery and is also heritage listed.

Fortitude Valley in the 1860s was a small residential area, sparsely populated and cut off from the central district of Brisbane by Duncan's Hill. Yet Bragg was not the only baker in Fortitude Valley: at least two other bakeries were located in the Valley's main commercial district, Ann Street, in 1863. Perhaps in part due to this competition, Bragg suffered financial difficulties trying to run his bakery business. He pursued two customers in the Small Debt Court in 1864 and was awarded judgement. He also placed notices in the Brisbane Courier advising customers that if all overdue accounts were not paid immediately then they would be placed in the hands of a solicitor for recovery.

By 1866 Bragg was listed as 'Under Distress For Rent' with a Brisbane Courier auction notice that all his household furniture and stock-in-trade as a baker, including horses, spring vans, shop and fixtures would be auctioned 'unless the above distress be previously satisfied'. On 3 December 1866 he was declared insolvent. In 1872 his bakery business was advertised for sale, including his horse, cart and lease of the premises 'in the very best position in Fortitude Valley'. The wooden house and shop had been valued in 1869 by the Municipal Assessment Revision Court at £30 per annum, down from original £50. However, Joseph appears to have resumed his bakery business, as in 1875 he was advertising for a first-class bread baker and gave his address as Ann Street, Valley.

Bragg's troubled financial situation was reflected in his behaviour. He was charged with assaulting the police on duty in 1867. In 1873 he was charged in the Central Police Court with drunkenness, disorderly conduct, assaulting the police and tearing a police uniform. The initial report suggested that his wife was part of the dispute, though wife Catherine, or Kate, had a letter published in the paper denying her presence. He was sentenced to a month's hard labour and ordered to pay for the destroyed uniform. 1882 was a particularly bad year for Bragg, as he was twice fined for using obscene language in a public street and pleaded guilty to a charge of assault on his wife. She stated that he had frequently assaulted her before and she wished him to be bound over to keep the peace. Bragg also took another customer to court for non-payment for goods sold, and was successful in this instance.

Although Joseph ran the bakery, Charles Bragg retained ownership of the Ann Street land until April 1883, when Charles gifted twelve and a half perches of the property to Joseph. However, Joseph did not have long to enjoy his new property: he died shortly afterwards in August 1883.

Following Joseph's death, his widow Kate announced her intention to carry on the business. The property was held in trust for her, and in 1885 a new shop was designed by George W. Campbell Wilson for the trustees of Mrs Bragg. Wilson was a London immigrant who began working as an assistant to architect William Coote in 1863 shortly after his arrival in Brisbane. He took over Coote's architectural business in 1876 and was the designer of buildings including the Sandgate School of Arts (1887-8), the Brunswick Hotel (1889) and the Beaudesert Technical Hall (1905). His son George Thornhill Campbell-Wilson also became an architect.

The 1880s was a decade of economic boom, and as the population increased, Fortitude Valley residents and investors wanted to see new permanent buildings replacing the Valley's crude timber premises. Work on the Valley Post Office had commenced in 1882, and the Apothecaries Hall, next to Bragg's, was rebuilt in the same year. The new bakery for Mrs Bragg seems to have been designed to match the Apothecaries Hall next door, although it had been designed by another architect, Alfred Hubbard.

The new bakery was constructed between April and June by Isodore Danglede, who absconded shortly after the building was finished and was later charged with – though acquitted of – insolvent fraudulence. Nathaniel Corrigan, one of Mrs Bragg's neighbours, had advanced her the money, paying £400 for the construction, although a mortgage of £1,200 was registered over the property in May 1885 to Nathaniel Corrigan. Part of the

new premises was leased to tailor Frederick Karrasch, including workrooms on the upper floor. The buildings at the rear of the bakery, including stables and the bakehouse, could be accessed by a small service lane which ran beside the bakery and the Apothecaries Hall.

With new premises, and more than 7,000 people now residing in Fortitude Valley, Mrs Bragg built up the business to produce 700 loaves per day by 1888. Assisted by five employees, Mrs Bragg also conducted a catering business and sold fancy and small goods. She was described by a contemporary as 'an energetic lady, possessed of a more than average amount of business aptitude'.

Despite Mrs Bragg's success as a baker, financial difficulties hit once again. The property was mortgaged in 1885, possibly to pay for the new building, and again in 1891, coinciding with the 1890s depression. By 1891 she had reduced her business to three employees, noting that there was not enough work to justify a fourth. In 1898 her creditors resolved to liquidate her estate, with liabilities in excess of £3000. The causes of her insolvency were 'heavy payments of interest on mortgages of real estate; dullness in trade; competition in the baking trade; inability to let properties'. Karrasch had ceased renting the premises in 1896 and Mrs Bragg had advertised the rental of her large brick shop, with or without workrooms upstairs, evidently without success. However, the estate was liquidated by arrangement rather than in insolvency. Daughter Nellie Bragg was allowed to buy the furniture for 10s., and the bakery was not sold, although the total assets were only valued at £674.

Mrs Bragg's Bakery was also one of the premises visited in the 1891 Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the conditions under which work is done in the shops, factories and workshops in the colony of Queensland. The inspector noted that the bakehouse was in the backyard and was very small and dirty, with three horses stabled nearby. One of the workers slept in the room above, accessible by 'a very steep and very dirty staircase'. The drainage was defective, and yard accommodation limited. Frederick Karrasch's workshop, on the upper floor of the main building, was well lighted with three glass windows and had about 200 cubic foot of space for each of the fifteen workers, but the floors and stairs were very dirty.

Regardless of these setbacks, Mrs Bragg managed to retain control and continue her business from the Ann Street premises as a pastrycook until 1910, frequently advertising for gentlemen boarders, who were beginning to regard Fortitude Valley as a viable residential area. By 1891 she was one of the city's Master Bakers, supporting her fellow Master Bakers who had not conceded to the Journeyman Bakers' Union's demand for an eight hour workday, although she herself had agreed to the demand. She also successfully tendered to supply government institutions with bread throughout 1904 and frequently donated baked goods to various charitable fundraisers. In August 1909, Mrs Bragg was one of living pioneer colonists featured in a special of the *Queenslander* who had been in Queensland for over fifty years. The problem of the small and dirty bakehouse was rectified in 1906. Mrs Bragg had plans for a new brick bakehouse approved in January, and applied for a carpenter and improver in March.

John Fitzgibbon Bragg and William Bragg bought the bakery business from their mother in 1910, who was credited with having been in business for fifty years. The Braggs left the Ann street property, instead expanding to a café in Brunswick Street and later a factory in Warner Street. 'To the regret of a wide circle of friends,' announced the *Brisbane Courier*, Mrs Bragg died in October 1916. The bakery which her husband had commenced was one of few businesses that lasted through the Valley's evolution from small settlement in the 1860s to its coming of age in the early twentieth century, when it became one of the most popular shopping and entertainment destinations in Brisbane.

From 1909, the old bakery was leased to various shop holders. Mary Tressa Maloney, who had owned the Apothecaries Hall next door from 1911, purchased the site in 1921. As did the Apothecaries Hall, it passed

through various leaseholders and owners to its current owners. At present its tenants include a hairdressing salon.

Description

The building is two storeys of rendered masonry construction with a cantilevered upper floor balcony with a slightly convex galvanised iron roof supported on four square timber posts. The timber balustrade infill to each bay consists of a top handrail with vertical balusters providing a subdivision into three equal panels, each with diagonal struts and further subdivision into smaller square panels. Three pairs of french doors and fanlights open on to the balcony.

Above a balcony roof a corbelled string course and bolder corbelled cornice are surmounted by a solid masonry parapet with four projecting piers with a stepped capping. A plain segmented arch pediment between the central piers is capped by a decorative acroterion.

The ground floor consists of three masonry columns infilled with modern glazed shopfronts. A curved hood over the ground floor shopfronts is a recent addition.

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 it was built as a two-storey bakery, workrooms and residence, it reflects the early residential and commercial nature of Fortitude Valley, the early pattern of subdivision of Fortitude Valley into small narrow fronted lots and service lanes and the construction of sturdy, permanent buildings to replace early buildings in the Valley in the 1880s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

As relatively intact 1880s commercial building in Fortitude Valley and a rare example of a relatively intact 'shop top' masonry house.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

As a largely intact two-storey masonry commercial building in Fortitude Valley, and for its contribution to the streetscape, in conjunction with Apothecaries Hall.

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

For its long association with a family of bakers, particularly Kate Bragg, for whom the building was constructed and who built up the bakery business and contributed to its success for nearly fifty years.

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

For its association with designer George W. Campbell Wilson, an early Brisbane architect who designed the bakery in harmony with the Apothecaries Hall.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit Citation May 1991
2. Pugh's Almanac and Queensland Directory, Brisbane, The Proprietors, 1862-5
3. Queensland Land Titles Office Records
4. Queensland Parliamentary Votes and Proceedings, 1891, Volume 2, Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into and Report upon the Conditions under which work is done in the Shops, Factories and Workshops in the Colony of Queensland
5. Queensland Post Office Directories 1868, 1876, 1885-6, 1895-6, 1900-1910
6. Queensland State Archives, Index to Registers of Immigrant Ships' Arrivals 1848-1912
7. W.F. Morrison, The Aldine History of Queensland, Sydney, The Aldine Publishing Company, 1888, p.172
8. *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 1860
9. *The Courier*, 1862, 1864
10. *The Brisbane Courier*, 1864, 1866-7, 1869, 1872-3, 1875, 1882-3, 1887, 1891, 1896, 1898, 1901, 1903, 1910
11. Brisbane Municipal Council Register of New Buildings, 1906

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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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