

## Heritage Citation



**Brasch's Service Station (former)**

### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Pirie Grey Fegan's service station, U.S. Navy Service Station
<b>Addresses</b>	At 108 Breakfast Creek Road, Newstead, Queensland 4006
<b>Type of place</b>	Service station
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Spanish Mission
<b>Lot plan</b>	L2_RP192253
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — January 2017
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Masonry - Render
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity

This was one of Brisbane's earliest service stations. It was built in 1928 by Quick Service Stations Ltd and

offered modern driveway facilities to Brisbane motorists, in direct competition to existing motor vehicle garages which sold fuel as a secondary operation. During World War Two, when it was Brasch's Service Station, the site was requisitioned for use by the U.S. Navy's New Farm submarine base. The station became the U.S. Navy's principal 'gas station' which fuelled and serviced a variety of U.S. Navy vehicles. The site remained a service station until the end of the twentieth century.

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## History

The property was originally part of a larger block of land, designated Suburban Portion 140, which was sold to developer George Raff on 17 September 1856. Raff paid £55.15.4 for 4 acres, 1 rood and 21 perches of land fronting Ann Street. Raff subdivided the land and William Perry bought subdivision 8 and 9 (2 roods, 22 perches) in 1876. His widow Annie inherited the land after his death on 11 June 1891. The state government's Queensland Trustees Limited became the trustees of Annie Perry's estate in 1911. The land was resubdivided and it sold resubdivisions 30 and 31 of subdivision 8 to Gustav Gottlieb Miller and Arthur William Woofrey in 1914.

Miller and Woofrey had bought a corner block, containing 33.5 perches, located in a prime commercial location at the intersection of Breakfast Creek Road with Jordan Street (later renamed Jordan Terrace). It also backed onto Cintra Road. The site was adjacent the Breakfast Creek Road tramline. In March 1927, they were issued with a new title after the property was reduced to 32.59 perches.

Quick Service Stations (Queensland) Limited purchased the site on 21 December 1927. The Melbourne-based Quick Service Stations Ltd began a Queensland branch in 1927, with its prospectus advertised in The Brisbane Courier on 22 February. Directors Arthur Edwin Goldsmith, Arthur William Beauchamp and Karl Millbrook advised potential investors that it was estimated the net profit per station per month would be in the vicinity of £100.<sup>1</sup> The company planned a chain of "service stations to be built at various vantage points throughout the city and suburbs" that were "especially equipped to give rapid and efficient service to motorists."<sup>2</sup> It was meant to be a direct contrast to existing Brisbane fuel stops that were motor repair garages which had a couple of fuel pumps installed outside the garage building. Their income was derived from motor vehicle sales and repairs, with fuel and other oil sales being a secondary consideration. The *ad-hoc* facilities provided to Brisbane motorists in the 1920s was the focus of various campaigns by the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (formed 1905). A particular point of contention was that these garages often employed unqualified workers to undertake the vehicle repairs.

In March 1927 Quick Service Ltd announced its intention to construct a chain of stations with the following sites selected for 10 service stations:-

1. Brisbane Cricket Ground corner, Woolloongabba;
2. Corner of Barry Pde and Leichhardt St;
3. Corner of Jordan Tce and Breakfast Creek Rd;
4. Albion, near new bridge;
5. River Rd, Toowong, near Regatta Hotel;
6. Corner of Hamilton Rd and Racecourse Rd;
7. Corner of Grey St and Russell St, near Melbourne St Station;

8. Gregory Tce, near Normanby Hotel;
9. Stone's Corner, at bridge;
10. Corner Ekibin St and Ipswich Rd, near Junction Hotel.

The Quick Service Stations were to be laid out on a plan "which permits the motorist to drive easily in along its open driveways. The ideal site for a station is along an arterial road at the corner of another wide street, which ... permits driveways to be constructed from one street to another."<sup>3</sup>

The service station at 108 Breakfast Creek Road was completed by 1928. The small service station office with exterior twin petrol pumps faced Breakfast Creek Road providing the driveway service that was the company's hallmark. A larger, garage shed faced Jordan Street, as did a timber residence built for a residence for the on-site manager. Both the office and adjacent garage were of concrete construction. A small, decorative concrete and lattice timber wall, featuring two globe electric lights atop concrete pillars and built to separate the Breakfast Creek Road entrance from the Jordan Street exit, completed the site. The building design was in the Georgian Revival style that was already featured in the company's Melbourne service stations. This style was to be employed in a planned chain of service stations to be spread across Brisbane's suburbs thus enabling public recognition of this particular brand of petrol shop.

Quick Service Stations (Queensland) Limited brought the concept of a fuel stop which provided immediate drive-through service, that is a modern service station, to Brisbane. While motorists could still put their vehicles into the site's garage for repairs, its main purpose was to sell fuel and related products to the public. The media reported:

"The company will be in a position to cater in every respect for the needs and wants of all motorists. Motorists will be assured of being able to procure all brands of petrol, oils, greases, etc. .... will also carry a complete stock of accessories to properly cater for the needs of motorists. Conveniences, such as ladies' and gentlemen's lavatories, washing basins and clean towels, will be installed at each station for the use of the motorist."<sup>4</sup>

Other modern facilities installed at these service stations were battery charging equipment suitable for both vehicle and home wireless use; and a car wash provided by air mist washing machines.

Unfortunately the advent of the Great Depression in 1929, stymied the company's expansion in Queensland. Only three service stations were built. The first was at the Fiveways Woolloongabba. The second was this station at 108 Breakfast Creek Road, and the third was at the junction of Ekibin St and Ipswich Rd. Quick Service Stations (Queensland) Ltd recorded a loss of £1289 in its first year of trading and the company went into liquidation after a meeting of creditors on 23 April 1931. The Newstead service station was sold to Hedley Richard Vickers on 11 May 1933 and was operated by P.G. Fegan around 1935.

In January 1936, the service station was sold to Desmond Patrick Eagers, with Vickers lending the money to Eagers via a mortgage. Des Eagers was a member of E.G. Eagers & Son, a major Brisbane motor dealership that had been established in 1913 by Fred and Edward Eagers. In 1922, Eagers opened the first motor vehicle assembly factory in Brisbane. In 1930, the firm achieved a major commercial coup by acquiring the General Motors Holden (US) sale franchise for Queensland. Eagers had its showroom beside Breakfast Creek Road, Newstead so the purchase of the nearby service station added to its local service facilities. Eagers only held onto the site for a year before selling it to Gilbert Osbert Wilkinson, the proprietor of the 108 Breakfast Creek Road service station in September 1937. From 1933 to 1938, the site continued to trade under the name Quick Service Station.

On 21 December 1937, Andrew and Francis Mervyn (Merv) Brasch purchased the property. Andrew and Merv became the station proprietors and the site was renamed Brasch's Service Station. Andrew did not live in the site's house in Jordan Street, but instead resided at Roche Avenue, Newstead. The Brasch family retained ownership of the service station site for 50 years, until it was sold to Philip C. Jeremy in 1987.

This continuity of proprietorship was only interrupted for three years during World War II. On 15 April 1942, the US submarine tender *Griffin* and six old S-class submarines sailed up the Brisbane River to establish a US Navy (USN) base at New Farm wharf. As Brasch's Service Station was close to the New Farm US submarine base and it contained modern facilities, it was requisitioned by the Australian Army Hirings Service for the use of the US Navy Supply Depot (NSD) from 22 May 1942 to 4 October 1944. During its occupation by the USN, where it was known as a 'gas station' by the Americans, an oil storage locker and repair shop were added to this, USN service station. It was the principal USN gas station, refueling and servicing a variety of military and requisitioned civilian vehicles. These included sedans, pick-up trucks, jeeps, a command car, weapons carriers, 4WD trucks and buses, as well as some of the heavy construction equipment belonging to two Seabee battalions. On 7 February 1945, the Australian Department of the Navy approved paying £339.14.9 compensation to Brasch for damages caused to his service station by the USN.

In 1947, the property transferred to the sole ownership of Andrew Brasch. He leased part of the site to Phillips Oil Products Ltd in 1962. In 1983, the site was subdivided into Lots 1 and 2, with the smaller Lot 1 resumed by the Brisbane City Council for road works. Ownership was transferred to Catherine Emily Brasch. By 2000, the service station had closed and the petrol pumps with their fuel bunkers removed. Due to its strategic corner location, along Breakfast Creek Road and close to Fortitude Valley and the CBD, the property remained commercially viable. Rent-a-car companies, including Abel Rent-a-Car leased the site.

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## Description

The former Brasch's Service station is small, domestic-scaled interwar service station built in the Georgian Revival style.

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## 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:

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## Historical

### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as an early purpose-built service station:- Built in 1928 to support the increase in private car ownership in the inter-war period;- Different in purpose and character to the existing Brisbane motor garages; and- a service station that was requisitioned during World War II to become the principal U.S. Navy petrol supply site for the New Farm submarine base.

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## Rarity

### CRITERION B

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

being a surviving example of an early refuelling stop and suburban service station in Brisbane.

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## Supporting images



Unidentified photographer,  
'View of Pirie Grey Fegan's service station in Newstead,  
Queensland, ca. 1935',  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

P.G. Fegan's Service Station was opposite  
Booroodabin Bowls Club in Breakfast Creek Rd,  
Newstead. Advertisements for motor oils are displayed.  
(Description supplied with photograph)



Unidentified photographer,  
'Pirie Grey Fegan's service station in Newstead,  
Queensland, ca. 1935',  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

P.G. Fegan's Service Station was opposite  
Booroodabin Bowls Club in Breakfast Creek Rd,  
Newstead. Advertisements for motor oils are displayed.  
(Description supplied with photograph)



Unidentified photographer,  
'Pirie Grey Fegan's service station on Breakfast Creek  
Road in Newstead, Queensland, ca. 1935',  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

P.G. Fegan's Service Station was opposite  
Booroodabin Bowls Club in Breakfast Creek Rd,  
Newstead. Mr Fegan can be seen walking away from  
the motorcycle. Advertisements for motor oils are  
displayed. (Description supplied with photograph)

## References

1. "Abridged Prospectus of Quick Service Stations (Queensland) limited" *The Brisbane Courier* 22 February 1927, p.8
2. "Modern and Beautiful Service Station", *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 March 1927, p. 8
3. "Chain of Modern Service Stations for Brisbane. Quick Service Stations. Good Investment for Motorists", *The Brisbane Courier* 23 March 1927, p.8
4. "Quick Service Stations – New Enterprise for Brisbane", *The Brisbane Courier*, 16 March 1927, p.8
5. Brisbane City Council Properties on the Web
6. Brisbane City Council, 1946 & 2009 aerial photographs
7. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, post-1946 building approval cards
8. Brisbane City Council, Plan of House Drain, 5 February 1928
9. "Quick Service Stations (Q'land) Ltd", *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1927
10. "Quick Service Stations – New Enterprise for Brisbane", *The Brisbane Courier*, 16 March 1927
11. "Modern and Beautiful Service Station", *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 March 1927
12. "Quick Service Stations", *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 April 1927
13. "Meeting of Creditors - Quick Service Stations Pty Ltd", *The Brisbane Courier*, 24 April 1931
14. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
15. John Oxley Library (J.O.L.), photographic collection, Negative No.122945
16. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
17. "Fight for rights", *The Road Ahead*, (Brisbane: R.A.C.Q., April/May 2005)
18. USN Bureau of Yards and Docks Section, *US Naval Base, Navy 134, Brisbane, General Defense Aid – Reciprocal and Review Board Report*, 1946

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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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