

## Heritage Citation



### Brisbane Fruit & Produce Exchange (former)

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 71 Turbot Street, Brisbane City, Queensland 4000
<b>Type of place</b>	Market
<b>Period</b>	Federation 1890-1914
<b>Style</b>	Free Classical
<b>Lot plan</b>	L77_B118224; L76_B118224; L15_SL11335; L14_SL11335
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2009 Date of Citation — June 2006
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Masonry - Render

**People/associations** Henry Wallace Atkinson (Architect);  
J. and E. L. Rees (Builder)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative

The construction of the Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange in 1906 marked the extension of the 1884 Roma Street Markets into Turbot Street. The building was operated by tenants/traders who formed a company to run the Exchange as a privately owned component of the Municipal Markets. Allied businesses erected buildings nearby, thus forming a market precinct bounded by Ann, George, Roma, Little Roma and Turbot Streets. After the Municipal Markets moved to Rocklea in 1964, most of the precinct was demolished. Only the former Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange building survives as a reminder of the Central Business District's (CBD) important produce markets.

## History

The Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange was constructed in 1906. This was an extension of the Roma Street markets, which were established in 1884.

The New South Wales colonial surveyor James Warner planned the first town market for Brisbane in 1849. He allocated a market reserve of 1 acre and 20 perches on a CBD site bounded by Charlotte, Eagle and Market Streets. It was not until 1867 that a market building was erected on that site. The facilities however, proved to be of such a poor standard that the first Brisbane Market ceased selling fruit and vegetables by 1881.

In 1884, the Brisbane Municipal Corporation (Council) was offered a £6,000 loan and a grant of land by Queensland's colonial government for the purposes of erecting a new wholesale market in Roma Street. The choice of site was dictated by its proximity to Roma Street Railway Station. This station, Brisbane's first, opened in 1873 and the transportation of produce by rail into Brisbane soon became preferable to bringing it up the Brisbane River. The first Roma Street Market comprised a 300 x 100 foot shed containing a double set of rail lines running between two platforms, with a 100 x 25 foot meat cooling room and sale and pound yards.

Within a year, a larger market building was required due to the demands of Brisbane's rapidly growing population. A new market building, costing £1,300 and comprising seven sections was built in Roma Street on the site of the sale and pound yards. Produce auction sales were held at the Markets on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and the growth in the produce business led to the Markets expanding to a frontage in Turbot Street. The Markets attracted agricultural businesses, such as J. C. Hutton's ham and bacon supplier and the Silverwood Dairy Factory, as well as seedsmen, produce merchants and produce auctioneers to the adjacent block bounded by Roma, Turbot and George Streets that was serviced by Little Roma Street. This created a markets precinct in the CBD.

Market stallholders were charged a rental fee by the Brisbane Municipal Council for space within the Roma Street Markets complex. By the early 1900s, there was growing resentment amongst some of the stallholders over the cost of the leases. As a result, thirty fruit and vegetable agents met and formed a company called The Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange Ltd (also known as the Brisbane Fruit & Produce Company) as a means

of better protecting their business interests. On 19 January 1906, this company purchased 1 rood and 32 perches of land fronting Turbot Street in the block between Roma and George Streets. Around the same time, the company purchased an adjoining block of land in Ann Street. Financing of the Turbot Street purchase came via a mortgage provided through the English, Scottish and Australian (E. S. & A.) Bank Ltd. The E. S. & A. Bank already had existing interests in the Markets precinct, as it constructed its own building at the corner of Roma and George Streets in 1900.

The Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange Ltd demolished the small cottages on its Turbot Street land and contracted architect Henry Wallace Atkinson to design a market building for the site. Atkinson had previously designed Brisbane's main fire station in Ann Street (1889); the Coorparoo Shire Council Chambers (1892) and the Queensland Mutual Insurance building (1894) in Eagle Street. On 30 September 1906, the Brisbane Fruit & Produce Company sought Brisbane Municipal Council approval for the erection of a new brick market building in Turbot Street. A separate application for brick extensions to the building was lodged on the same day. The company's application stated that builder T. Andrew of Langshaw Street, New Farm was to construct the building but it would appear that the prominent building firm of J. & E. L. Rees erected this building.

Completed in 1906, the new building was named the Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange. By 1913, the building had been extended through to Ann Street and wagon access was available from two entrances in Ann Street and another two entrances in Turbot Street. The Turbot Street entrance that was nearest to George Street, had by the 1920-21 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories (POD), become labelled the "No.1 entrance to markets", while the Turbot Street entrance nearest to Roma Street was labelled the "No.2 entrance to markets".

The Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange did not operate separately to the Municipal Market in Roma Street, rather the two premises operated as one large produce market. To distinguish between the two sites for customers, the Turbot Street building was often referred to as the Fruit Exchange, while the Roma Street complex was called the Fruit Market. The Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange was also called the "Bottom Market" while the "Top Market" was in Roma Street. In the 1941 edition of the POD, the building was referred to as the Brisbane Municipal Markets Numbers 1 and 2. However, it was most commonly known as the Turbot Street Markets.

The building was divided into a right-hand side and a left-hand side market. Multiple or individual stall numbers were available for allotment to traders or companies. Stallholders were trader tenants who gained an allotted space at the Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange by buying shares in Brisbane Fruit & Produce Company. All were fruit and produce merchants or wholesale merchants and they shared the building with auctioneers Davis & Co and William Johnston. The market also contained refreshment rooms for the buyers and sellers. Following its construction, many prominent produce merchants moved to or commenced their operations at the Turbot Street Markets, including the Comino Brothers and Stan and Wally Carter (now the Carter & Spencer Group).

By 1935, the growth in Brisbane's population was impacting upon the markets precinct. The increasing volume of produce that had to be handled through the markets caused space problems in both the Turbot Street and Roma Street sites. As well, cars and trucks had replaced horse-drawn vehicles and the resultant traffic congestion around the precinct had a flow-on effect on the movement of morning traffic through the CBD. Thus calls were made to have the markets move out of the CBD, but the planning for the move was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1941, the Queensland Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries Cooperative (Union of Employees) Ltd was formed to provide a representative body for all those involved in the markets industry. With the arrival of the American forces in Brisbane in 1942, a Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing (the COD) was based at the Turbot Street Markets in order to oversee the sale of produce.

A Markets' Investigation Committee was formed in 1958 to examine the relocation of the Roma and Turbot Street Markets away from the CBD. The committee recommended that the Queensland government oversee the creation of a new market via a Brisbane Market Trust. The City of Brisbane Marketing Act that came into force on 15 March 1960 regulated the organisation of a new market. That same year, a new organisation, the Brisbane Markets Trust, took over the running of the Brisbane Fruit & Produce Exchange. On 31 August 1964, the new Brisbane Market opened at Rocklea and the Roma Street and Turbot Street Markets were eventually closed.

The Roma Street Markets complex was demolished soon after its closure in 1964. The other buildings within the markets precinct, that is those contained in the triangular block that was serviced by Little Roma Street, were demolished around 1986 for a development that never eventuated. For nearly twenty years, this part of the CBD remained an eyesore with the remnants of these buildings utilised as an open car park. In 2005, a new Magistrates Court was completed on the site.

In 1962, ownership of the Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange was transferred to the state government's Southern Electric Authority of Queensland (SEAQ now Energex). SEAQ passed the property to the Public Trustee of Queensland in 1988 and the building is currently under the control of the Department of Public Works. The Ann Street extension to the Turbot Street Markets was demolished prior to the construction of the Department of Primary Industries building in 1989. Thereafter the original 1906 building was used as a car park for the Department of Primary Industries.

The former Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange has also reverted to limited public usage when it is part of the host venue for the "Battle City" competition. This youth-orientated, breakdance competition commenced in 2001 and is combined with afterwards with a Turbot Street Party that celebrates the hip-hop culture. Commenting on the location, a 22-year old breakdancer said:

"It's an absolutely amazing venue and a natural amphitheatre that brings back the old 1970s hip-hop culture where it all started.....In the Bronx in New York, they'd have block parties and dance outside and people would just come down and dance and have fun."<sup>1</sup>

Most of the commercial premises within the CBD have undergone numerous internal changes over the years to accommodate the requirements of their different tenants. But the Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange building is unusual in that it remains largely intact as can be seen from the following two photographs that were taken in 1920 and then in 2004.

The building comprised many small temporary offices belonging to stall holders and these offices were invariably altered on a regular basis. The Brisbane City Council also approved internal alterations to the building in 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1959, 1964 and 1965. The decorative central pediment above the parapet of the building's exterior was demolished around 1972, when the Turbot Street overpass was being constructed. The original façade of the "No.2 entrance to markets" has also been removed. Nonetheless, the former Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange building remains the only surviving link to the important Roma Street Markets precinct that dominated this part of the CBD for eighty years.

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## Description

The two-storey rendered masonry frontage of this building has elements of the Federation Free Classical style

with simplified classical forms, imbedded decorated piers, decorative entablature, projecting cornice, balustraded skyline with accents and arched sash windows on the upper floor.

Internally the building is a timber and tin lightweight structure typical of the produce markets all over Australia. This structure, including the original high lantern roof is largely intact.

External changes comprise demolition of the decorative central pediment on the parapet and removal of the original façade of No. 2 entrance.

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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 evidence of the expansion of the Brisbane Municipal Markets, which operated in the Roma Street area from 1884 to 1964, and as the first privately-owned component of those markets.

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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

as the only remaining building left from the CBD Markets precinct.

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#### Representative

##### CRITERION D

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

as a purpose-built, early twentieth century market featuring large, open, internal spaces and a Free-Classical inspired façade.

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## Supporting images



William Higlett (photographer),  
'Fruit market on Turbot Street in Brisbane, September 1907',  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



Unidentified artist,  
'Brisbane Fruit and Produce Exchange',  
Queensland Country Life (Qld. : 1900 - 1954), 1 June 1910, p. 13



Unidentified photographer,  
'Turbot Street', 1969,  
Brisbane City Council Library Services, Brisbane City  
Council

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## References

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3. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
4. Brisbane City Council, Archives photographic collection
5. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 1913
6. Brisbane Markets Ltd, *Fresh Source* – newsletter, Issue 1, February 2004
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8. City of Brisbane, *Register of New Buildings*, 1906
9. *The Courier Mail*, "Hunting the big breaks", 27 July 2007
10. Coutts, J.V.D. (ed.), *The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland*, 1928.
11. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
12. McBride, Frank and Helen Taylor. *Brisbane 100 Stories*. Brisbane: BCC. 1997
13. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
14. John Oxley Library, newspaper clippings files
15. Mahlstedt & Son, City of Brisbane Detail Fire Survey, Map No.10, 1951

16. McClurg, John. H.C. *Historical Sketches of Brisbane*. (Brisbane, Library Board of Qld & Royal Historical Society of Qld.1975)
17. *Queensland Post Office Directories, 1868-1949*
18. Queensland Theatre Company, *A Brisbane Story –Road to the She Devil's Salon, a guide to the play by Sven Svenson*, Brisbane, Queensland Theatre Company, 2003
19. Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Qld), *Buildings of Queensland*, Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1959
20. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994
21. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, UQ Library, 1984
22. [www.brismark.com.au/history.html](http://www.brismark.com.au/history.html), *History of the Brisbane Market*, accessed February 2006

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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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