

Heritage Citation



Castlemaine Perkins Brewery

Key details

Also known as	Castlemaine Brewery, Milton Brewery
Addresses	At 185 Milton Road, Milton, Queensland 4064
Type of place	Factory
Period	Interwar 1919-1939, Postwar 1945-1960
Style	Functionalist
Lot plan	L35_SL805565
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — May 2011

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Face brick

People/associations G.F. Addison and H.S. Macdonald (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social; (H) Historical association; (H) Historical association

This site facing Milton Road has been associated with the industries of distilling and brewing for over 130 years and with the famous Castlemaine tradename for over 120 years. It contains a substantial masonry industrial complex with considerable landmark and iconic values. The Milton brewery includes two highly visible neon signs ('XXXX' and 'Mr Fourex') and dominates the townscape of Milton and the surrounding area. The iconic value of these elements is reinforced by the depiction of the present Milton Road buildings on the labels of the brewery's products and in their advertising. The business and location are firmly linked to perceptions of the city's and state's identity. The building containing the brewing tower, designed by architects, Addison and Macdonald, has architectural significance as a good example of the Interwar Functionalist style.

The extent of the listing boundary includes the building envelope of the 1940s brick building on Milton Road and the adjacent 1950s brick building extending to the western boundary, the 1919 flywheel and the XXXX and Mr Fourex neon signs.

History

This site on Milton Road has been connected to the industries of distilling and brewing for over 130 years. During this period, many changes in the brewing process have occurred but the brewery has remained as an integral and highly visible part of the suburb. The business and location have become firmly linked to perceptions of the city's and state's identity and are strongly associated with the suburb of Milton.

In 1870, the 'Queensland Distillery' was established on high land in the inner city Brisbane suburb of Milton. Built by W. Samwell, this early venture was hampered by failures in sugar crops in the early 1870s. This forced Samwell to take on a partner, James Hardy Medhurst. However this partnership was short-lived, and Robert Forsyth bought Samwell out. In 1872, Forsyth bought out the entire operation and renamed the site Forsyth's Distillery, producing rum and acting as an agent for the sale of wine. The distillery was not a success, and in September 1877 the business and surrounding land were bought by Fitzgerald Quinlan and Co, with the intention of building a brewery.

While the Quinlan family were involved in business as shipping agents, the Fitzgerald partnership consisted of two brothers with a background in brewing. Nicholas and Edward were the sons of Francis Fitzgerald, a well-known Irish brewer. After arriving in Australia in the 1850s, they established the Castlemaine Brewery in Castlemaine, Victoria. Their venture had been a success, and they had decided to extend their activities to Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane.

Brewed to the same formula as in southern states, the first product from the new Milton Brewery was produced

in September 1878, entitled 'Castlemaine XXX Sparkling Ale'. Since medieval times when brewing was confined mainly to monasteries, X (the sign of the cross) had been a standard symbol of purity for alcoholic beverages, being used to indicate the potency of ales and wines. By 1887, it was decided to form a limited liability company called the Castlemaine Brewery and Quinlan Gray and Company Brisbane.

In 1916, 'Castlemaine XXXX Sparkling Ale' was first produced, with quality improved by adopting the Continental method. By 1920, the Directors decided that a new beer should be brewed with the Queensland palate in mind and a new German brewer, Mr Bill Leitner, decided that a lighter, German style lager would be more acceptable to the Queensland drinker.

In February 1924, Castlemaine first introduced their XXXX Bitter Ale, a product that is still sold today. Later that same year, the 'Mr Fourex' character first appeared in advertising. According to the family of Ian Gall, the Courier Mail cartoonist created 'Mr Fourex' in the early 1920s, possibly styling him on Paddy Fitzgerald, General Manager of the Castlemaine Perkins Brewery during the 1920s. It was also during 1924 that bottle labels first appeared featuring an illustration of the brewery buildings facing Milton Road.

In 1928, negotiations were completed with Perkins and Company Ltd. for the purchase of the company's Brisbane and Toowoomba breweries. The deal also included the purchase of a number of freehold and leasehold hotels. Perkins and company had a history almost as old as the Castlemaine Brewery partnership. Formed in 1881, they had been one of the most prosperous breweries in Queensland but had encountered difficult business conditions due to fierce competition from Castlemaine. Perkins attempted to regain a place in the market by producing a XXXXX beer, but this hastened their demise. By October 1928, the merger was complete and the company became Castlemaine Perkins Ltd.

The company continued to expand and develop, and, in 1940, it was announced a new administration building and brewing tower were to be constructed. Construction began in April 1941 but was halted in December due to Japan's entry into the war. Even after 1945, material shortages resulted in the administration building and brewing tower being not totally completed until 1951. However, 1946 aerial photographs of the site clearly show the brewing tower and surrounding building was externally complete. This is supported by the fact that the earliest brewing kettle in the building is thought to date from 1945.

The main administration building and brewing tower represent the first stage of a development period in which the brewery began to dominate the local townscape. Substantially built during the 1940s, the building is in the Interwar Functionalist Style as influenced by a branch of the Modernist movement. Typical Functionalist characteristics of the building include its asymmetrical massing, use of glass bricks and the Art Deco lettering inscribed on the tower.

Architects Addison and Macdonald who called for tenders in April 1941 designed the main building and brewing tower. Builder, K.D. Morris, was awarded the contract. Addison and Macdonald specialised in buildings for Castlemaine Perkins and the Queensland Brewing Company, designing hotels and brewery buildings throughout the 1930s period. By the time the partnership was dissolved in 1947, the firm had both major breweries, Castlemaine and Queensland, as their clients.

Other examples of buildings in the Inter-war Functionalist style include the Credit Union Australia Building, built between 1940 and 1942 for the Queensland Brewery Company. The building contained administrative offices as well as areas dedicated to cellaring, cooperage, storage, goods handling and loading. This building, now entered on the Queensland Heritage Register, was also designed by H.S. Macdonald of Addison and McDonald, who played a significant role in the introduction of the Functionalist style to Queensland. George Frederick Addison was the son of prominent architect, George Henry Male Addison. He designed the Marist Brothers monastery at

Rosalie in 1928 as his first project with professional business partner, G.F. Macdonald.

Workshops, stores and cold cellars were also constructed in the period 1951-53. These additional structures facing Milton Road incorporate similar elements to the main building but are more austere. As a result of the extensions on either side of the main building along Milton Road during the 1950s and after, an almost continuous brick façade now dominates the streetscape.

The 1945 copper kettle, other kettles and equipment from the 1950s to 1970s have been kept in situ in the brewing tower building, including a row of taps used during the “mashing” process and some machinery in the tower proper. This equipment is no longer in use but provides valuable evidence about the brewing process of the mid twentieth century. The brewing tower building also contains coloured internal wall tiling that appears to be original.

It is possible that remnants of brick cold stores thought to date from the 1900s or 1910s exist in the present cold stores situated behind the brewing tower. The footprint of the cold stores shown in the 1951 site plan appears to be similar to that of two of the present stores on the site. A notation in the 1951 plan refers to “reconstruction of extg. cold cellars: building application to be made in 1955”. It is possible that this planned reconstruction did not take place. A fire damaged one of the existing cold stores behind the brewing tower in the 1970s.

During 1959-60, a neon sky-sign comprised of the four Xs was built by Claude Neon and positioned on the brewery tower to maximise its visibility from a distance. The XXXX sign is now significant as a rare survivor of a once popular form of advertising employing the use of large-scale neon tubes.

In 1989, the sign was repaired by Claude Neon as the structure had begun to rust. The ‘Mr Fourex’ sign facing towards the outbound lane of Milton Road was erected by Claude Neon in 1989. This, too, has become a well-known icon associated with the Milton brewery.

The large flywheel and associated machinery on the footpath of Milton Road was originally part of the refrigeration compressor installed in 1919. Located behind the glass windows of the engine room, it has been on display at the front of the site since 1972 when the engine room was demolished.

The historical and iconic importance of the brewery at Milton has been well recognised by Castlemaine Perkins in their continuation of the tradition of representing the brewery buildings on beer labels, signage and their letterhead, the retention of remnants of the brewing process such as the flywheel and copper kettles and by the provision of guided tours for school students and others who are interested in the history of brewing. An interpretative plaque situated near the flywheel acknowledges the public interest in the history of the site.

There are few remnants of the early brewing industry surviving in Brisbane. They include the aforementioned Queensland Brewery building at 501 Anne Street, Fortitude Valley and the frontage of the former Carlton Uniting Brewery in Brunswick Street (1906) which has been retained in a later development. Remnants of the Perkins Brewery in Mary Street are limited to a circa 1901 building purchased by Perkins & Co. in 1899 at 138 Mary Street and the former Perkins stables at 124 Mary Street. Both are entered on the Queensland Heritage Register.

Although a brewery has been located on this site since the 1870s the earliest surviving structures remaining are the former brewing tower building and brick cold stores which possibly predate the 1920s. Today, the main masonry buildings and signage along Milton Road provide a dominant visual statement of the significance of the Milton brewery in the history and townscape of Brisbane and the place of XXXX beer as an icon of Brisbane’s popular culture.

Description

This large site has been developed as a brewery at subsequent times starting from the 1870s with the existing buildings facing Milton Road dating from 1941 onwards.

Although the building's asymmetric mass is the result of its growth in time, the built complex, with its face brick external walls and simple volumes to the property boundary on Milton Rd achieves an imposing balanced form.

The older section of the Milton Rd frontage has simple geometric shapes with contrasting narrow projecting vertical element and long horizontal ribbons, created by fixed weather protection devices to the windows. The building with its mixture of Deco and Functionalist elements is a good example of the Inter-War Functionalist style architecture. This, a radical and progressive style of building for its time, conveys an image of the brewery as a dynamic, non-conformist, commercial enterprise. The tower appears in the 1946 aerial photo.

The tall vertical element projecting from its facade is better known as "the brewing tower". It comprises three continuous narrow vertical glass bricks strips, with two solid masonry vertical strips in-between.

This tower rising above the rest of the frontage is a strong dominant feature, visible from a distance and a landmark. Its top section housing the words 'Milton Brewery' in Art Deco lettering within the top band at the street frontage and the famous 'XXXX' sky-sign at the top. Four large brackets with Deco decorative motifs gracing its lower end complete the design of the facade.

The tower and surrounding building are remarkably intact and still retain the original machinery and fixtures, including a 1945 copper kettle, and tiled internal wall finishes. These consist of cream tiles with two decorative bands of green tiles at the top and the lower band accentuated by a bright red narrow tile strip immediately above and below.

Sections of the cold stores retain timber trusses incorporating some impressive, very large timber tie beams. These structures because of the size of the timber appear to predate the other structures although at this stage their age has not been clearly identified.

The original flywheel of the refrigeration compressor, installed in 1919 and preserved after the demolition of the old engine room, now sits outside on the Milton Road frontage.

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 working brewery which has operated on the site since the 1870s. It provides evidence of the development of the brewing industry in Brisbane, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as the 1940s brewing tower building provides the only example in Brisbane of a purpose built brewery from the mid twentieth century.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as the brick brewing tower building and adjacent extension facing Milton provide an example of a purpose built, masonry brewery built in Brisbane in the 1940s and 1950s.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a good example of the Inter-war Functionalist style and because of its sculptural form, proportions and finishes. In addition, this substantial masonry industrial complex with considerable landmark and iconic values, which includes the highly visible neon 'XXXX' sky-sign, dominates the townscape of Milton and the surrounding area.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as the current buildings on the site are highly valued by the residents of Brisbane (and the state of Queensland) as providing the icon of a famous beer which is firmly linked to perceptions of the city's identity. This is reinforced by the depiction of the present Milton Road buildings on the labels of the brewery's products and in related signage.

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

because it has had a long and close association of some 130 years with the Castlemaine (now Castlemaine Perkins) company name, a famous and prominent player in the brewing industry in Brisbane.

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 fine example of the work of G.F. Addison and H.S. Macdonald who were instrumental in introducing the Inter-War Functionalist style to Queensland.

References

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3. Castlemaine Perkins Limited, *History of the Castlemaine Perkins Brewery 1877-1996*, compiled by the Public Affairs Department
4. *Credit Union Australia Building, 501 Ann Street, Brisbane Conservation Plan*. Prepared for FAI Property

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5. *Courier Mail*, various years, 1920s; Thurs 22 February 2001, p.8.
 6. McBride, Frank and Helen Taylor. *Brisbane 100 Stories*. Brisbane: BCC. 1997
 7. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
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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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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