

Heritage Citation



Inglis Tea Merchants building (former)

Key details

Addresses At 510 Adelaide Street, Brisbane City, Queensland 4000

Type of place Warehouse

Period Interwar 1919-1939

Style Chicagoesque

Lot plan L9_RP1137; L10_RP1137

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2009
Date of Citation — June 2006

Construction Walls: Masonry - Render

People/associations A. Anderson (Builder);
Chambers and Powell (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (H) Historical association

This five-storey masonry warehouse and office building was constructed in 1919 for prominent tea merchants Inglis Ltd. It was one of several warehouses built in the upper section of Adelaide Street during the early decades of the twentieth century due to its proximity to the wharves at Petrie Bight. The building was occupied by Inglis Ltd. until 1957 and has since been used for a variety of commercial, retail and residential purposes.

History

From the mid-nineteenth century, a number of wharves were constructed along the Town Reach of the river between Petrie Bight and Alice Street, in proximity to Customs House. These included wharves built by private shipping companies such as William Collins and Howard Smith and Sons, the colonial government and the Brisbane Municipal Council, who leased their wharves near Howard Street to private shipping companies. Between 1900 and 1912, new wharves were constructed at the end of Boundary Street by the Brisbane Wharf Company, primarily for William Collins and Howard Smith. These were resumed in the 1930s and replaced by the new Brisbane Central Wharves. After the opening of the Story Bridge in 1940, larger vessels tended to dock at the Hamilton wharves and shipping activity began to decline at Petrie Bight. From the 1960s, the mouth of the River became the centre of Brisbane's port activity.

Numerous warehouses and related offices were constructed during the early twentieth century in the upper Adelaide precinct to take advantage of the proximity of the Petrie Bight (or Town Reach) wharves. In 1910, Collins & Co. built their office building on the corner of Adelaide and Macrossan Streets with a bonded store between the office and Howard Street. Both buildings have been demolished. In 1920, a warehouse for tea merchant, John P. Wilson, was erected on the adjacent site to the Inglis Building in Adelaide Street. In 1924, this building was purchased by confectionary company, Cadbury-Fry and Pascall and became known as Claremont House. On the opposite side of Adelaide Street, eight adjoining brick warehouses were constructed in 1924 by Charles Ernest Young, a sugar baron and investor. These warehouses, which initially housed primarily motor vehicles and foodstuffs, were collectively known as Centenary House. A fourth building with close connections to the nearby wharves was the Seaman's Mission Hall, built in 1924-25, with two stories dedicated to the comfort and recreation of sailors and the lower level designed as a warehouse or workshop. The area's links with the maritime industry continued into the 1950s with the construction of the Waterside Workers' Club and Offices on the site of the old Collins and Co. building on the south east corner of Macrossan and Adelaide Streets.

The wave of development in upper Adelaide Street in the 1920s was facilitated by road improvements carried out by the Brisbane City Council such as the widening of Adelaide Street between 1923 and 1928 and the further deepening of a cutting through the hill below St John's Cathedral which improved access to Petrie Bight. The building boom of the 1920s was also an important stimulus to the construction of new commercial premises in the Central Business District (CBD) and adjoining localities such as Petrie Bight.

The building constructed by Inglis Ltd in 1919 is situated on land, which was part of a large parcel between Ann

Street and the river purchased by the Brisbane Gas Company in 1873. Some 75 perches of this parcel, bounded by Ann, Macrossan, Boundary and Adelaide Streets eventually passed to Brisbane ironmonger, William Perry in 1885. After Perry's death in 1891, his trustees offered the site for public auction in 1913, as "10 Splendid City Warehouse Sites".¹ By this time, Diddams Lane had been constructed between Boundary and Macrossan Streets.

The first sale of Perry's land did not occur until 1918 when Inglis Ltd purchased just over 40 perches of this land at the northern end of the block. The site fronted Boundary Street to the north and Macrossan Street to the east, with Diddams Lane providing rear access.

Inglis Ltd was established by a Scot, James Inglis, who immigrated to Australia in 1877. Appointed as an Indian representative to the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81, Inglis introduced Australia to Indian tea, using the tradename "Billy Tea". By 1893, his company was selling over 270 tonnes of tea in Australia annually. With the acquisition of the rights to Banjo Paterson's poem, *Waltzing Matilda* in 1902, Inglis cleverly marketed his tea using the iconic poem and an image of a swagman boiling a billy in the packaging and advertisements. During the nineteenth century, "J. Inglis and Co." operated from premises in the Temple Buildings, George Street, before moving to Charlotte Street.

Inglis Ltd engaged architect Lange Powell to design their new warehouse, which also served as their Queensland headquarters. From 1911 to 1920, Powell was a partner in the prominent Brisbane firm of Chambers and Powell. This firm was also responsible for the design of State heritage listed Perry House (1910). Significant buildings designed by Powell include St Martin's Hospital (1919) and the Masonic Lodge in Ann Street (1928-39, Atkinson, Powell and Conrad). The builder contracted for the Inglis Ltd building was A. Anderson. As the home of Inglis Ltd for several decades, the new building became associated with Inglis' well-known brands of tea including Goldenia Tea and Billy Tea.

In 1957, Inglis Ltd sold their building to Eagers Retail Pty Ltd. This was in keeping with the changing nature of the Upper Adelaide precinct, which from the 1920s became increasingly associated with the motor vehicle industry. Austral Motors built their show room and service station opposite the Inglis Building in Boundary Street in the mid-1920s and the nearby warehouses were tenanted by associated businesses such as automotive electricians, spare parts suppliers, parking stations. Eagers only owned the site until 1959 and it has since had several owners. Since 1994, the property has been owned by Brisbane architect, Robert Riddell, and used for commercial and residential purposes. It has become well known as the home of E'cco restaurant and fashion designers Easton Pearson, as well as the architectural office of Robert Riddell and his residence above

Changes to the building over time have included two large neon signs on the roof from the time of Inglis Ltd. Council approval was granted for alterations made by Eagers in 1957 and by a subsequent owner in 1967. From 1995, alterations were carried out for Ecco, Plan X, Easton Pearson and Robert Riddell Architect's office and residence. The building was featured in the *Courier Mail* in 2003 as an example of the adaptive re-use of historic buildings.²

Description

This three-storey plus ground/base, interwar masonry warehouse is located on sloping ground in a prominent corner location. Its street elevations present elements of the Free and Stripped Classical style with a restrained use of decorative details, attenuated pilasters and a strong cornice with projecting dentils to the base of the

parapet.

The building is constructed to the street boundary and has a ground floor delivery bay, and a rear service lane. The main elevation to Boundary Street is symmetrical with its main entrance approached by a small flight of stairs. The Boundary street elevation comprises five bays of large windows to the upper storeys and large fixed glass shopfront openings with distinctive steeply bevelled sills to the street level.

Some internal alterations, mostly for tenancies fit outs, have been carried out.

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 1920s warehouse that was part of an interwar maritime precinct of warehouses and offices associated with the nearby wharves at Petrie Bight.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a good example of a five-storey masonry interwar warehouse.

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 building designed by notable architectural firm, Chambers and Powell.

References

1. Quoted in Environmental Protection Agency, Entry on the Queensland Heritage Register for Howard Smith Wharves. File no. 601781
2. Amanda Horswill, "City Vibe: Heritage buildings are being reborn as modern apartments", *The Courier Mail*, November 15, 2003, n.p.
3. BCC building cards
4. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
5. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 1913
6. Davies, Elizabeth, *City Fringe Heritage: Petrie Bight's Adelaide Street Precinct*, Applied History Studies No. 4, 2000
7. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
8. Environmental Protection Agency, Entry on the Queensland Heritage Register for Howard Smith Wharves, File No. 601781
9. Environmental Protection Agency, Draft Entry on the Queensland Heritage Register for Adelaide Street Warehouses, Petrie Bight, File No. 602438
10. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
11. Kerr, Margaret F., "Lange L. Powell, architect", Thesis (B. Arch), University of Queensland, 1957
12. Mahlstedt & Son, City of Brisbane Detail Fire Survey, Map No. 27, 1951
13. National Library of Australia website, accessed 27 October 2006, http://www.nla.gov.au/epubs/waltzingmatilda/2-Vers-Billy_Tea.html
14. *Queensland Post Office Directories, 1868-1949*
15. Tea Industry Forum website, accessed 24 January 2006, www.tea.org.au/cuppa/sub2.html
16. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
17. Additional information kindly provided by present owner, Robert Riddell

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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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