

Heritage Citation



J. Kitchen and Sons

Key details

Addresses	At 60 Edmondstone Road, Bowen Hills, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Office building
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Queen Anne, Stripped Classical
Lot plan	L1_RP181402
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018 Date of Citation — April 2016
Construction	Walls: Face brick

This interwar brick building, situated on the corner of Edmondstone Road and Wickham Grove, was built in 1939 as the offices for soap and candle manufactory, J.Kitchen and Sons Pty. Ltd.. There had been another soap and candle factory on the site prior to this known as the Ross Soap Company which had been established in Newstead by Peter Ross in 1883. The office building is the only remaining building from this large industry and demonstrates the industrial history of Newstead.

History

Breakfast Creek was initially bridged in the late 1830s. Two more bridges were built across the creek before the current one was constructed in the 1950s. A horse-drawn tram service began transporting passengers to Breakfast Creek in 1885. With its proximity to the Brisbane River and the railway line, Newstead became increasingly industrial in the late nineteenth century, and this continued well into the twentieth. Parts of the area were subject to flooding, discouraging residential development. The main industry was the Newstead gas works and the construction of a branch railway line from Bowen Hills to New Farm in 1897 and the close proximity to wharves along the river, ensured the industrial nature of Newstead continued.

In the early 1880s Peter Ross moved his soap manufacturing business from Kangaroo Point to a flood susceptible site beside Breakfast Creek in Newstead. He had established his business in the 1850s and once located in Newstead, was known as Ross Soap Company. In an advertisement in the Post Office Directories, the company was described as “the sole manufacturers of the Original and Genuine Kerosene Soap and celebrated Barilla Soap ... Caledonian Soap and Soda Crystal Works”¹. Ross continued to run his factory until his death in 1908.

On the other side of the Brisbane River at Bulimba, the Apollo Candle Company were manufacturing candles and soap and in 1885 merged with an interstate soap company, J. Kitchen and Sons, to create J. Kitchen and Sons and Apollo Company. By 1901 the company was known as J. Kitchen and Sons. This company became one of the largest soap and candle making companies in the country with works in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville and Adelaide.

In 1908, manager of the Bulimba plant, Mr J.C. Donaldson, purchased the Ross Soap Company, “soapworks at Newstead were offered at auction ... an offer was received ... the property changed hands, the purchaser being Mr J.C. Donaldson, of Messrs Kitchen and Sons”². For the next eight years, Donaldson ran the Ross Soap Company. In 1916 he sold the factory to J. Kitchen and Son.

By the early 1920s the large four acre site at Newstead, which included the former Ross Soap Company site, had become the preliminary factory for J.Kitchen and Sons in Queensland. The 1928 Water and Sewerage Maps show the extent of the factory which consisted of a very large soap works, a smaller candle works and an office building situated at the corner of Edmondstone Road and Wickham Grove. When the 1946 aerial photographs were taken, the layout of the factory remained the same with the exception of the office building.

In 1939 J.Kitchen and Sons had plans approved for the construction of a new brick office building. It is unclear

whether an architect was commissioned for the design. At the time of the building's construction other industrial sites in Newstead were constructing attractive front office buildings and this was highlighted in an article in the Courier Mail, "Though its locality is yet far from ideal, there are signs that it will yet become a place of dignity and beauty. Builders of factory premises are setting a new standard ... the new spirit in industrial buildings is maintained well in the Breakfast Creek industries, which contribute to the good appearance of the district".³

On its completion, the new office block displayed interwar design elements including 'Functionalist' features which were fashionable at the time. Although not a new industry in Newstead, J.Kitchen and Sons' new office block was prominently situated at the front of the factory on the corner of Edmondstone Road and Wickham Grove and portrayed a sense of quality, confidence and success.

From 1957, after an amalgamation, Unilever took over the company. By the late 1950s, the Newstead factory had closed.

Description

60 Edmondstone Street, Bowen Hills is a brick, one-storey interwar building situated on the corner of Edmondstone Road and Wickham Grove. The building has a red tiled hipped roof, with two wings on either side. Masonry detailing reflects the 'Functionalist' style which was fashionable at the time of its construction. There is a front vestibule with two flag poles on either side of the front stairs. Many of the original interwar details remain, including original windows, front stairs and fittings. There is also an original brick fence which spans the front and both sides of the building. There has been a later extension to the rear of the building and this is not significant.

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 an important remnant of the heavy industry that characterised Newstead from the 1880s to the 1960s.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a 1930s brick office building associated with heavy industry which displays interwar stylistic elements.

References

1. *1915 Post Office Directories*, Trades Directory, p673
2. *Telegraph*, 15 December 1908, p7
3. *Courier Mail*, 20 December 1938, p8
4. Brisbane City Council Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Detail Plans
5. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
6. Queensland State Government Aerial Photographs, 1936
7. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Environment and Resource Management
8. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
9. Queensland Post Office Directories
10. Queensland Electoral Rolls
11. Brisbane City Council, *Register of New Buildings*, 1939
12. *Brisbane Courier*, 26 December 1924, p4
13. *Brisbane Courier*, 5 August 1930, p32
14. *Week*, 27 March 1908, p30
15. 'John Kitchen and Sons', *Citation*, Australian National University Archives
16. Kitchen, Colin, 'John Kitchen, Chemical Industry Pioneer', *Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol.64, No.1, April 1993
17. 'John Ambrose Kitchen', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

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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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