

Heritage Citation



Magee's Drapery Emporium

Key details

Also known as	Magee's Drapery Emporium (former)
Addresses	At 588 Stanley Street, Woolloongabba, Queensland 4102
Type of place	Shop/s
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L11_RP44492
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — October 2011

Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Masonry
People/associations	Alexander Brown Wilson (Architect)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

Built in 1928 for Magee & Co, this building was one of a small number of new commercial premises constructed during the 1920s to revitalize the Woolloongabba shopping precinct. This construction complemented a South Brisbane Municipal Council program of new roadworks. Opened as Magee's Drapery Emporium, it had a prominent site, opposite the busy Annerley Road intersection and serviced by two tram routes. It reflects the shopping experience available to Brisbane suburbanites prior to the advent of shopping centres in 1969. By 2000, it was the well-known Ford's Music Store.

History

Stanley Street (or Stanley Quay as it was first known) was identified on Brisbane's first Town Plan in 1842. By the 1860's the street had been subdivided and gradually small shops and wooden hotels were constructed. The 1880s was a growth period for South Brisbane as Queensland experienced an economic boom. Thus Stanley Street developed into a major thoroughfare and retail centre, second only to Queen Street.

The construction of the South Brisbane graving dock in 1881 and the 1884 opening of the Woolloongabba Railway Station (on the northeastern corner of Stanley and Merton Road) brought suburban and country customers to Stanley Street. Commercial development flourished and Stanley Street became lined with the premises of grocers, ironmongers and bootmakers. Recognising the commercial potential of Stanley Street, prominent retailers such as Allan & Stark and J. & T. Heaslop established businesses there. The fire station and post and telegraph office were erected near the intersection of Stanley and Vulture Streets, making this region the civic centre of South Brisbane. Stanley Street became inadequate for the increasing volume of traffic and in 1883 the street, between Vulture Street and Annerley Road was widened. Stanley Street, between Annerley Road and Merton Road, was widened by the Woolloongabba Divisional Board in 1886.

During the 1890s, a period of economic depression, there was a decline in the economic activity in Stanley Street. The situation was aggravated by severe flooding in 1890 and 1893, which caused many retailers to move to higher ground on the north side of Brisbane. The construction of Melbourne Street station in 1891 also took customers away from Stanley Street and into the city. As the Queensland economy improved in the early twentieth century, development returned to Stanley Street.

By 1918 the condition of Stanley Street had deteriorated to the extent that the South Brisbane Council spent £2,000 remaking and metalling the street. Anxious to stimulate commerce, in 1920 this Council implemented a programme of reconstruction, allocating £56,000 to build permanent roadways in Stanley and Melbourne Streets. In 1927, the land on the northern or riverside of Stanley Street, from Annerley Road to Merton Road, was resumed and the existing shops were demolished. This section of Stanley Street was doubled in width and the tram tracks were re-aligned. New commercial premises were constructed at the completion of this work.

With the exception of those buildings mentioned earlier, the majority of buildings that comprise the Stanley Street streetscape are from this era or later. The typical late twenties, early thirties commercial architecture of this streetscape is best indicated by the former Magee's Drapery Emporium.

The business partnership of Murray and Magee, drapers, was operating on this site circa 1905, apparently from rented premises. The buildings on this site were demolished following the road resumption that happened in Stanley Street in 1927. The property was purchased by the Malouf family in September 1927 and sold to members of the Magee family in February 1928. In May 1928, Magee & Co applied to erect a brick shop on this site. The builder was M. Dwyer of Hendra and the architect was A. Wilson, presumably Alex B Wilson of the architect firm Alex B. and R. Martin Wilson. This may have been one of Wilson's last designs, as he retired during 1928. Magee's Drapery Emporium was erected shortly after and remained in family ownership until January 1945.

As with most regional commercial centres, the development trends in Stanley Street, reflect the statewide economic fluctuations. The last economic boom along Stanley Street had occurred in the 1920s and little growth took place after that decade. Postwar, the 'Magee's Drapery Emporium' building was occupied by Ford's Music. From the 1990s, it has contained an adult entertainment venue.

Description

The front of the building is of two-storey brick construction and is mostly intact above parapet level. The upper level has seven symmetrically arranged arched window openings. The central window is slightly wider than the others, which are grouped in threes to both sides. A decorative keystone, within the brick arch tops each arch opening. Above the windows and at the base of the parapet, a moulding runs as a band across the front of the building. The parapet is also symmetrical in arrangement and incorporates the building signage in raised lettering.

The central portion is higher than the two side sections and contains the word 'MAGEE'S', with the words 'Drapery' and 'Emporium' split to either side in the lower sections. These areas are separated by vertical elements, which have embossed urns in their upper region. Patterned rustication highlights these elements of the parapet. Ornamental scrolls sit to either side of the central raised section. Below the awning line the building is not especially intact with the addition of modern glass shop fronts, which have recently been coated in opaque paint. The majority of the building has been coated in this same paint finish. An awning is attached to the facade with metal rods offering further structural support. It provides shading for the footpath and entry level.

The building makes an important contribution to the streetscape of Stanley Street at Clarence Corner, opposite the junction with Annerley Road. The building's form and materials are part of the pattern within the street, relating to the commercial usage.

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
being part of the 1927 major re-development of Stanley Street.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places
that is interwar commercial premises in the South Brisbane area.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance
as a well composed, finely detailed commercial premises with the original business name emblazoned on the parapet and designed by architect A.B. Wilson.

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

for its association with the drapery firm of Magee's that serviced the local community for almost four decades.

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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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