

## Heritage Citation



### Nugent's Buildings

#### Key details

**Addresses** At 85 Brighton Road, Sandgate, Queensland 4017

**Type of place** Shop/s

**Period** Interwar 1919-1939

**Lot plan** L1\_RP29176

**Key dates** Local Heritage Place Since — 29 November 2022  
Date of Citation — November 2022

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic

Constructed by 1929 and designed by the noted architectural practice of Cavanagh and Cavanagh, Nugent's Buildings demonstrates the commercial development of Brighton Road as the main shopping street in Sandgate. A 1940 addition by the same architects for the same owner, William Nugent, demonstrates the continued success of Nugent's Buildings as part of the Brighton Road shopping street. The building is an elegant, well-designed

example of an interwar block of shops and associated upper-level dwellings designed between the First and Second World Wars. The building, designed to address the long street edge as well as the corner location, steps down to the side street, features the use of domestic residential detail applied above the commercial component and a decorative parapet with stylistic detailing and pediment reliefs that sets up a rhythm of bays to delineate the multiple tenancies. Collectively, the 1929 building and 1940 addition make a positive contribution to the Brighton Road streetscape.

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## History

### A history of Sandgate

Sandgate, including the suburb of Shorncliffe, is located 17 kilometres from central Brisbane. The first land sales in the Sandgate area occurred during the 1850s and much of the early development centred on the area now known as Shorncliffe. On 29 April 1880, Sandgate was declared a constituted municipality. During the 1880s, the area around Pier Avenue and Yundah Street became the town's communal and civic centre. The first Town Hall, constructed in 1882, the Court House, and the first two police stations were in this area.

From the 1880s onwards, Sandgate became increasingly popular as a residential and seaside resort town. The opening of the train line to Brisbane in 1882 (extended to Shorncliffe in 1897), and the construction of the Sandgate Pier boosted the development of Sandgate. The train line to Sandgate was the first suburban line built solely for passengers in the Brisbane area. The train line provided a quick and efficient service for the growing number of residents commuting to Brisbane, and holidaymakers and day-trippers. Numerous attractions catering for visitors were also developed around this time. For example, separate bathing areas, dressing sheds, a caretaker's cottage, office, and licensed area were built close to the already established Sandgate Pier. In the 1930s, an enclosed area protected by railway lines, shark net and stone wall was constructed as a shark-proof swimming enclosure, which was lit at night. Additionally, Flinders Parade (then known as Brighton Esplanade), between First Avenue and Gladstone Street (now Twelfth Avenue), was dotted with cafes, refreshment rooms, flats, and boarding houses. Attractions on the foreshores included sand-garden competitions, donkey, goat and gig rides, canoe hire and a miniature railway.

In 1910, a fire destroyed the original Sandgate Town Hall. Subsequently, a new Town Hall opened on Deagon Street (now Brighton Road) in 1912. This opening of the new Town Hall, alongside the relocation of Sandgate Rail Station to its current site in 1911, marked a shift in the location of Sandgate's town centre away from the Shorncliffe area to the vicinity of the present-day Rainbow Street, Brighton Road and Bowser Parade. This area proved to be more accessible for residents of neighbouring Deagon and Brighton.

The 1920s saw another period of prosperity for Sandgate. In 1925, Sandgate became a founding ward of the newly created Greater Brisbane City Council. While Shorncliffe continued to be a popular destination, the Sandgate and Brighton foreshores also drew crowds of holidaymakers. However, the building of the Hornibrook Highway Bridge in 1935 brought mixed blessings for Sandgate. This was because while the highway brought more passing trade to the area, it also enabled visitors to travel further north, typically by public transport, to the Redcliffe Peninsula for holidays rather than vacationing in Sandgate as had traditionally been the case. After the Second World War, increased car ownership also led to a further decline in the area's popularity as people were able to travel further beyond Brisbane's city limits for a holiday. Car ownership also brought the expansion of Brighton, Deagon and Nashville as outer suburbs became more attractive.

## The development of Brighton Road, Sandgate

During the 1920s, while Sandgate enjoyed another period of prosperity as a seaside resort, Brighton Road developed to become the town's leading commercial and shopping area. In 1920, the Post Office Directory recorded that Deagon Street, as Brighton Road was then known, had, for example, around six stores, a café, a fruiterer, a bootmaker, a confectioner, a plumber, and two butchers. In comparison, in 1930, the year after Nugent's Building opened, the Post Office Directory recorded that Brighton Road had around 35 businesses of various types operating along the street. In addition to Decker's auction mart, these included, for example, two fruiterers, two butchers, two cafes, a draper, a plumber, two grocers, two dentists and a music store. Several notable buildings, such as the former Bank of New South Wales, were built on the Brighton Road in the 1960s. These buildings broke up Brighton Road's traditional streetscape.

## The Construction of Nugent's Buildings, 85 Brighton Road

The 1920s were a period of prosperity for Sandgate, seeing holidaymakers return to Sandgate, and leading to a need for increased commercial space along the suburb's main shopping area, Brighton Road. During this period, by 1925, William James Nugent, a local businessperson and commission agent, was recorded in the *Post Office Directory* as operating his business out of an office on Brighton Road between Third and Fourth Avenue. In 1924, Nugent purchased land at the corner of Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue (resubdivisions one and two of subdivisions 17 and 18 of portion 72). In 1928, Nugent contracted the architectural practice of Cavanagh and Cavanagh to design a commercial building on this land. Cavanagh and Cavanagh put out a tender for the construction of a 'business block' of 'timber and concrete' in July 1928. A tender from builder E. Keegan was accepted in August 1928 to construct the building.

Nugent's Buildings opened in 1929, and the block of shops appeared in *The Daily Mail* where it was described as a set of 'Modern Sandgate Shops.' When Nugent's Building opened, several businesses, including a dentist on the corner, leased the building's various shops. By the late-1930s, Nugent recognised that there was a need to expand the building and in 1940, Nugent re-employed Cavanagh and Cavanagh to design a further 'three shops and residence' adjacent to the original 1929 building. As evident from a 1935 aerial of Sandgate, the construction of these new shops and dwelling included raising a cottage already present on the lot. While the new shops and dwelling was designed in sympathy with the original 1929 building, differences in details exist. For example, the 1929 building has a cantilevered awning. In comparison, the awning on the 1940 addition includes square-set timber posts.

Cavanagh and Cavanagh were an Australian-based practice with offices in Perth, Western Australia, and Brisbane. By 1891, Michael Cavanagh, having previously worked as Chief Draughtsman for the South Australian government, had begun his own private practice in Adelaide. In 1895, he opened an office in Perth to 'capitalise on the opportunities' that emerged due to the 1890s gold rush in Western Australia. In the same year, Michael was joined in practice by his younger brother, James. James eventually pointed Michael in Perth and the practice became well known in Western Australia as 'one of the most prolific and versatile firms' of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

In 1918, James Cavanagh moved to Queensland, and in 1920, he opened the Brisbane office of Cavanagh and Cavanagh. During his time in Brisbane, James Cavanagh was well known within the architectural community and served as the Vice-President of the Queensland Institute of Architects in 1930 and between 1932 and 1934. He also served as President of the Town Planning Association of Queensland between 1936 and 1939. Cavanagh and Cavanagh designed many commercial, residential, and ecclesiastic structures in Brisbane and Queensland from their Brisbane office. Notable amongst their work were the Hiberian Hall in Roma, and the renovations to St. Mary's Church, South Brisbane. A notable example of another retail building designed by Cavanagh and Cavanagh that is located on a corner lot is Carroll's Corner in Fortitude Valley, built in 1925.

After Nugent died in 1950, in 1953, ownership of the building and the site was transferred to his wife, Susan and Queensland Trustees Limited. Nugent's Buildings has been in continuous use as a commercial shopping building since it opened in 1929. For example, the Survey Field Book from 1954 recorded that the building housed an optometrist, two clothing shops, a fruit store, hairdressers, butchers, and a hardware store. These Field Books, associated with the survey of Brisbane undertaken by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and its successors from 1911 onwards, show the detail of existing buildings and other permanent fixtures at the time the relevant survey was conducted.

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## Description

Possessing dual frontages to Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue, Nugent's Buildings due to its orientation toward the street corner and concealed decorative features, are prominent within a streetscape of similarly scaled buildings. Consistency of built form and the varied architectural language of the building embodies the transition of built character in this part of Brighton Road.

### General description

The building comprises a masonry ground floor and timber-framed first floor level, with later additions; constructed in two stages between 1928 and 1940.

The 1929 ground floor comprises a painted, cement render masonry, stepped parapet façade with over-painted face brick accent details. The façade is of consistent design, extending the length of the building's Brighton Road frontage. The façade consists of seven bays, divided by pilasters extending above parapet level, incorporating square-set and angled pediments that place emphasis on the splayed façade to address the Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue intersection and the north-west view corridor along Brighton Road. Each bay comprises a non-original glazed shopfront. On the side elevation to Fourth Avenue, the original fenestration pattern and original double-hung window joinery remains unchanged. On the rear (north-east elevation), the building retains early chamferboard wall linings and window fenestration details, including window joinery and sun awnings. Along the street frontages, a cantilevered awning suspended by steel tie rods from the upper level of the façade with a sheet and batten lined soffit, extends the length of the Brighton Road frontage, with a small return along the Fourth Avenue frontage of the property; is an original feature.

At the first-floor level, the 1929 building comprises a projecting gable roof with external walls constructed of sheet and timber battened linings with decorative cross-bracing elements to the Brighton Road elevation. A tripartite (three bay) casement window is concealed by a later timber slat screen, above which is a centrally located original timber vent. The roof is clad with corrugated sheet metal. The side (north-east) elevation retains the original fenestration pattern and associated multi-paned casement windows which has subsequently been concealed by later sheeting and is no longer visible.

The 1940 masonry facade, comprising two bays fronting Brighton Road, continues the same pilaster details and façade articulation of the 1929 building without the same architectural embellishment. A verandah with square-set timber posts continues the basic details, including the sheet and batten soffit of the suspended awning to the 1929 building. At the first-floor level, an early cottage has been raised into position and constructed underneath; the cottage existing on site by 1935. The first floor is partially concealed behind a later timber slat screen.

The former cottage comprises a traditional corrugated-sheet metal clad hipped roof form with a projecting gable wing to the façade, and front and rear verandah incorporated beneath the same runs as the main roof. The side

(south-east) elevations are clad with timber chamferboard cladding, and the front (south-west) and remaining side (north-west) elevations are lined with later fibre-cement sheet and batten linings. On the façade, the fenestration pattern to the projecting gable remains evident, retaining a timber-framed sun awning, while the verandah has been infilled with timber-framed bi-fold windows. The north-west (side) elevation retains the original fenestration pattern and associated timber double-hung, multi-pane sash windows.

The interior of the building was not inspected.

Nugent's Buildings is one of the more prominent buildings along the commercial main street of Brighton Road. The surrounding commercial setting and the building's contribution to that setting, is significant to the place.

There are significant views to the place from Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue.

## Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance include:

- Original building form and composition, including:
  - Single-storey masonry facade, fronting Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue, including all rendered cement and expressed brick details, extending to parapet level
  - Concealed skillion roof behind ground floor parapet
  - Prominent gable and hipped roofs at first floor level
  - Chamferboard wall linings, at ground floor level, and fibre-cement sheet and batten wall linings, at first-floor level of the 1929 section of the building
  - Original window fenestrations and associated joinery (window sashes, window hoods) on side (south-east) and rear (north-east) elevations.
- Awning and verandah details, including:
  - Suspended awning, including all original tie rods and fascia and soffit linings, extending along the Fourth Avenue and Brighton Road frontages of the property
  - Verandah, including all original timber posts and fascia and soffit linings, extending along the Brighton Road frontage of the property
  - Truncated corner to the awnings at the Brighton Road and Fourth Avenue intersection.
- Exterior design details, including:
  - Stepped parapet, consisting of pilasters and pediments
  - Expressed brick detail, now overpainted, including windowsills, and soldier course stack bond details to the parapet and pilasters respectively.
- Views to and from the place

## Non-significant features

Non-significant features include:

- Aluminium-framed glazing of shopfronts
- Paint and render finishes over original expressed brick details
- Timber privacy screens, at first-floor level, to the Brighton Road facade.

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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

Constructed by 1929 to an architect design stylistic of the period and considered modern for the time, Nugent's Buildings was a block of shops and associated dwellings, and demonstrates the continued commercial development of Brighton Road as the main shopping street in Sandgate, providing for multiple shopfront tenancies. An extension in the 1940s by the same architects for the same owner demonstrates the continued success of Nugent's Buildings as part of the Brighton Road shopping street, it too including a dwelling.

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### Aesthetic

#### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

Designed by Cavanagh and Cavanagh architects in the 1920s, Nugent's Buildings is an elegant, well-designed example of an interwar block of shops and associated dwellings, featuring expressive use of domestic residential detail applied above the commercial component. Designed to address the long street edge as well as the corner location that then steps down to the side street, the building features a decorative parapet with stylistic detailing and pediment reliefs that sets up a well-proportioned rhythm of bays to delineate the multiple tenancies. The rendered walls with expressive brickwork on the piers and string courses reinforce the design. The continuous awning is also well considered. The later extension constructed in 1940 was also designed by the same architects and is complementary in form. Collectively, the building and extension make a positive contribution to the Brighton Road streetscape.

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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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