

Heritage Citation



Porphyry Retaining Wall

Key details

Addresses	Road Reserve Arch Lane, Brisbane City, Queensland 4000
Type of place	Retaining wall
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Geolocation	-27.46219 153.032951
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2009 Date of Citation — June 2006
Construction	Walls: Porphyry
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity

This nineteenth century porphyry retaining wall was constructed in 1883 as part of the development of the Brisbane Gas Company's site at Petrie Bight. The brick wall on top of the retaining wall was built in 1885. Arch Lane was established following the construction of shops on this site in the early 1920s and although the lane is not historically related to the retaining wall, its existence ensures that a portion of the porphyry and brick walls remain extant.

History

This retaining wall was constructed in 1883 and was an integral part of the continued development of the Brisbane Gas Company's gas works located on this site. It is important in demonstrating the significance of Petrie Bight for light industry and wharf facilities in this period and for its association with the Brisbane Gas Company.

The Brisbane Gas Company was established in 1863 and by 1865 the Company had established a gas works on the riverfront at Petrie Bight. The proximity to the river ensured coal, the primary ingredient in the gas production process, could be punted to the gas works from Ipswich. The Company manufactured and distributed gas for street lighting, commercial and domestic use.

As the population of the city expanded so too did public demand for gas. This necessitated the further development of the gas works site. The remainder of the site, however, was rocky and uneven and required significant modification to allow for the expansion of the gas works. In particular, excavation was necessary and it appears that the gas works site was progressively excavated and levelled in the early 1880s.

A retaining wall was required along the Boundary Street and Adelaide Street frontages of the Gas Company site as a result of the excavation. The wall was built in 1883 and was constructed from porphyry, or Brisbane tuff. It extended from the Brisbane Gas Company's office building, on the corner of Macrossan and Adelaide Streets, through to a point along Boundary Street just below the entrance to Ivory Street. A brick wall, at street level, was constructed on top of the wall in 1885.

The Brisbane Gas Company, despite their development of the site, relocated the gas works to a larger site at Newstead between 1885-87. This was probably due to an increase in demand for gas as the population of Brisbane almost trebled during the 1880s. The head office and depot remained at the Petrie Bight site, however, until the late 1890s. The Company sold the land to the City Council in 1901 and between 1913 and 1916 the Council constructed the Municipal Wharves along the river frontage of the site. Facilities for wool dumping and wool pressing were also constructed on the site adjacent to the wharf at this time.

The rest of the site remained undeveloped until 1924, at which time a series of buildings were constructed along the Adelaide Street frontage. These buildings were constructed for Charles Ernest Young, who at the time owned Fairymead Sugar Mill in Bundaberg, which eventually became the Bundaberg Sugar Mill. These buildings became known as 'Young's Buildings'. The construction of Arch Lane dates from this period of building activity. The lane provided rear access to the newly constructed buildings. The lane itself does not relate historically to the retaining wall, but it is because of the lane that a section of the wall remains intact.

The Arch Lane Retaining Wall is important as the only surviving marker of the original site of the Brisbane Gas Company. It illustrates the development and significance of Petrie Bight in Brisbane's history and is one of only

a few nineteenth century porphyry retaining walls still extant in Brisbane's Central Business District.

Description

This retaining wall is constructed of porphyry (Brisbane tuff) blocks held together by mortar. Two timber uprights are attached to the wall. A brick wall at the street level along Boundary Street also tops it.

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 the only surviving evidence of the Brisbane Gas Company's offices and plant that operated on this site from the mid 1800s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as an 1880s porphyry retaining wall.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
2. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 1913
3. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets.
4. Brisbane History Group, *Brisbane: mining, building, story bridge, the Windmill*, Brisbane History Group, Papers No. 10, 1991
5. Cole, John R. *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985*. Brisbane: William Brooks Queensland. 1984
6. G. Greenwood and J. Laverty. *Brisbane 1859-1959: A History of Local Government*. Brisbane: BCC, 1959.
7. Hacker, D. R. (ed), *Petries Bight: a slice of Brisbane History*, Queensland Women's Historical Association Inc., Bowen Hills, 1999
8. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
9. Mahlstedt & Son, City of Brisbane Detail Fire Survey, Map No. 28, 1951
10. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994

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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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