

## Heritage



**Shell House (former)**

### Key details

**Addresses** At 301 Ann Street, Brisbane City, Queensland 4000

**Type of place** Office building

<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Art Deco
<b>Lot plan</b>	L601_SP111240; L602_SP111240; L605_SP111240; L606_SP111240; L608_SP111240; L4_SP111240; L101_SP111240; L102_SP111240; L105_SP111240; L107_SP111240; L108_SP111240; L201_SP111240; L203_SP111240; L303_SP111240; L403_SP111240; L506_SP111240; L206_SP111240; L207_SP111240; L208_SP111240; L301_SP111240; L302_SP111240; L304_SP111240; L306_SP111240; L307_SP111240; L308_SP111240; L309_SP111240; L402_SP111240; L405_SP111240; L408_SP111240; L1_SP111240; L3_SP111240; L6_SP111240; L7_SP111240; L502_SP111240; L504_SP111240; L505_SP111240; L508_SP111240; L11_SP111240; L2_SP111240; L204_SP111240; L404_SP111240; L609_SP111240; L509_SP111240; L603_SP111240; L106_SP111240; L607_SP111240; L406_SP111240; L407_SP111240; L604_SP111240; L103_SP111240; L209_SP111240; L205_SP111240; L104_SP111240; L507_SP111240; L305_SP111240; L501_SP111240; L503_SP111240; L202_SP111240; L5_SP111240; L401_SP111240; L8_SP111240; L409_SP111240
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Information — March 2011
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Stone
<b>People/associations</b>	Hall and Phillips (Architect); Stuart Bros (Builder)

Shell House was designed for the Shell Company by prominent architectural firm Hall and Phillips and was opened in June 1933. Its construction, which occurred during a worldwide depression, demonstrates the growth of the petroleum industry in the early twentieth century, as motor vehicles played an increasingly important role in Australian society. As well as business premises, Shell House hosted a variety of charitable events and groups from the 1930s onward, before it was converted into a hotel and apartment building in the late 1990s. The seven-storey building, faced in locally manufactured red granite and Benedict stone, is a rare surviving example of a Brisbane art deco commercial building.

## History

Shell House was built in 1931-3 as the new business premises for the Shell Company of Australia Ltd. Plans for this seven storey building, with a frontage of 100 feet and a depth of 140 feet, were designed by architects T.R. Hall and L.B. Phillips in 1930. Despite the depression it was estimated that £1 million would be spent throughout Australia by Shell Co. Tenders for construction were called in March 1931. Stuart Brothers won the contract and building commenced in September that year.

The steel structure was faced with locally manufactured Benedict stone, initially intended for the abandoned Holy Name Cathedral, Fortitude Valley. Internally, the building's decoration combined marble, tiles, terrazzo, plaster and timber, employing the Art Deco style popular in the late 1920s and 1930s. It was later boasted that 95

percent of the internal fittings were of Queensland origin. The building included three passenger lifts, constructed from Queensland maple, installed at a cost of 10,000 and is believed to be the first automatic system of its type in Queensland. The windows were specially designed for Brisbane's subtropical climate, admitting the maximum amount of air.

Shell House was opened by the deputy premier (P. Pearse) in a ceremony on 16 June 1933. It was announced that the ornate building had cost the Shell Company £90,000, a reflection of the growth of the motor car industry and the corresponding need for petroleum. While many businesses faltered following the 1929 stock market crash and subsequent depression, Shell's Queensland staff numbers had increased tenfold from 1924-1934, and the company was praised for employing 150 builders for 12 months on the construction of Shell House.

As well as business, the building hosted a number of charitable groups and events from the 1930s onwards, including as a supply facility in World War 2. A theatrette was installed in the building in the 1940s, showing educational movies, documentaries and propaganda. An aerial beacon was also installed on top of the building in 1935, as a warning to pilots (the building was 214 ft above sea level).

In 1985, after purchase by C.P.S. Credit Union Ltd, the building was restored by architect, Noel Robinson, reviving the art deco style while retaining the original stain glass lift doors and marble walls. Subsequently it was converted into apartments and run as a hotel.

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**Note:** This information 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 information 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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