

Heritage Citation



State Canning Works (former)

Key details

Also known as	Victoria Cross Jam Manufacturers (from 1930)
Addresses	At 139 Commercial Road, Teneriffe, Queensland 4005
Type of place	Factory
Period	Interwar 1919-1939

Lot plan

L182_SP101390; L184_SP101390; L185_SP101390; L187_SP101390;
L188_SP101390; L189_SP101390; L191_SP101390; L192_SP101390;
L204_SP101390; L205_SP101390; L195_SP101390; L196_SP101390;
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L31_SP127070; L172_SP127070; L32_SP101390; L61_SP101390;
L134_SP101390; L136_SP101390; L153_SP101390; L161_SP101390;
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L37_SP101390; L186_SP101390; L167_SP101390; L198_SP101390;
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L177_SP101390; L178_SP101390; L180_SP101390; L181_SP101390;
L109_SP101390; L78_SP101390; L40_SP101390; L124_SP127070;
L69_SP110605; L10_SP101390; L22_SP101390; L116_SP101390;
L166_SP101390; L79_SP101390; L112_SP101390; L130_SP101390;
L129_SP127070

Key dates

Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000
Date of Citation — June 2015

Construction

Walls: Face brick

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (H) Historical association

Built in 1919 as the Queensland State Canning Works, this building provides a rare extant example of a state government enterprise initiated by the Ryan/Theodore Labor administrations. The building was constructed for the state government to manufacture jam and preserve fruit and reflects the importance of primary produce of manufacturing industries in this era. The railway track, now partly covered, is a remnant of the railway siding which ran in front of the factory and is a reminder of the importance railway facilities once had for the vital industries in this area.

History

When the Labor Government was elected in Queensland in 1915, one of its major platforms was to establish state enterprises. By competing with private companies, the enterprises were intended to reduce industry prices and stamp out war profiteering. The Ryan and subsequently the Theodore Governments embarked upon an extensive program between 1915 and 1925 to institute a vast range of state-run businesses, including an insurance office, a public curator, state butcher shops, cattle stations, sawmills, coalmines, arsenic mines, gem mines, a hotel, a fishery and trawler, cold stores, a produce agency, batteries, treatment works, plant nurseries and a state lottery. The enterprises focused strongly on agriculture, reflecting the belief that Queensland's development and progress would be dependent upon agricultural development. This belief was also evident in the policies of many Queensland Government administrations.

Among the enterprises was a State Cannery. The cannery was opened in conjunction with a soldier settlement scheme, established at Beerburrum in 1916. The scheme set aside land for returned soldiers to clear and grow pineapples. With Queensland's pineapple market already well supplied, the cannery would provide the guaranteed purchase of the soldiers' pineapples.

Hints about the factory's location had been dropped in the local newspapers throughout 1917. A proposal to build the cannery at Beerburrum was rejected after two government commissioners undertook an extensive tour of Australia, Honolulu and California. In December 1917 a one acre block near the Brisbane River, portion 359 in North Brisbane, was selected.

The proposed cannery site was variously considered part of Teneriffe, Newstead and Bulimba. It was located within a low-lying waterfront precinct which was occupied by woolstores from the late nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century the availability of rail and river transport attracted other primary product-based industries to the locality. Many had private rail sidings constructed to provide direct access to other markets. Manufacturing industries in Queensland remained focused on primary produce well into the 1920s, which is reflected in the still extant Colonial Sugar Refinery factory and woolstores on Arthur and Macquarie Streets, Commercial Road and Vernon Terrace. The cannery site, surrounded by Vernon Terrace, Dath Street and Commercial Road, was

already occupied by houses, stores, a timber yard and sheds belonging to sawmillers Dath, Henderson and Co. This company challenged the government's acquisition of the land but was unsuccessful.

In 1918, with the Labor government re-elected and the State Enterprises Act passed, planning for the site began. Government architects AB Brady and Thomas Pye prepared plans for the two-storey brick factory in May 1918. The design, a brick and timber structure, included the factory itself, a fresh fruit store, canned goods storage, boiler house, engineer's workshop, offices and dressing room on the ground floor. The upper floor housed the canning room, girls' dining room, dressing room and facilities. A railway siding was added in November 1919.

The cannery, like many of the other State Enterprises, was not an inexpensive undertaking. £19,522 was spent to purchase and install machinery and £16,648 on construction. It was completed by July 1919, too late for the 1919 pineapple season, and it was proposed that the factory's operations be extended to jam, preserve and pickle manufacturing. This, in turn, extended the potential benefit of the cannery, enabling other farmers to send their produce to the factory for a guaranteed price.

The State Cannery began operations on 8 January 1920. Despite positive media reports, the cannery was unprepared for the volume of pineapples supplied. In its first production season the cannery prepared 23,000 cases, and ordered new machinery from Hawaii to process the larger than expected crops. In the off season, jams and tomato sauce were produced under the new 'Q.S' brand. The jams supplied the railway refreshment rooms – another state enterprise – and the cannery's managers appealed to the public in 1921:

All well-wishers of the STATE'S DEVELOPMENT and PROGRESS should lose no opportunity of encouraging the sale of the Packings of the Queensland STATE CANNERY. The Products are of unsurpassed quality and represent the last work in the skilled preparation and treatment of selected LOCALLY GROWN FRUIT... Ask Your Storekeeper for "Q.S." Brand Only. (*Worker, Thursday 20 January 1921 p20*)

The jam and preserves manufacture, however, was too small to provide full employment, and pulp had to be imported to complete the jams. The success of the pineapple canning, on the other hand, created a glut of pineapples and the cannery managers had to look for other markets. In 1924 the government began to export canned pineapples to Canada. Four managers left within four years, and the cannery suffered significant financial losses. Despite these shortcomings, IXL chief Sir Henry Jones offered to buy the factory as a going concern in 1926, in a bid to eliminate his company's competition. The Government retained the cannery, but only for a further three years.

The cannery's financial losses were not as great as other State Enterprises, but the total of £112,695 was a significant loss, and contributed to the perception of the overall failure of the state enterprise scheme. After a change in government the cannery was sold to the Victoria Cross Manufacturing Co, in September 1929 for a reported £31,690. The Victoria Cross Manufacturing Company, a private company established in the 1890s, operated a jam manufacturing factory in South Brisbane. The company registered the QS brand and ran the Teneriffe cannery under the State Cannery name.

In 1938, under a new Labor administration, the company came to an agreement with the Committee of Direction for Fruit Marketing (COD), a grower-controlled organisation which controlled all aspects of fruit marketing except canning. Each organisation took a half share in the cannery and operated it as Queensland Canneries. The cannery, land, railway siding and plant were valued as part of the transaction, at £64,733.

During World War II, the cannery continued to operate as many other factories and business were shut down. Pineapples were canned to send to the men serving overseas, with women encouraged to work in the cannery

through advertisements.

However, workers held strikes over wages and holiday conditions. Italian prisoners of war were brought in to replace the striking workers.

Industrial action continued after the war, and a tinsplate shortage caused the factory to be shut down in 1948. With the COD building its own cannery at Northgate (1947), focus shifted away from the Vernon Terrace cannery. The cannery was transferred to the Queensland Canneries Pty Ltd in 1959 and then to Henry Jones Ltd in 1975, 49 years after Sir Henry Jones' original offer to purchase the cannery. In 1990 the railway line to Teneriffe closed, and the area began to undergo urban renewal. In 1997 the cannery was sold to the Cannery Development Trust and converted to an apartment complex known as 'The Cannery'. Apartments in 'The Cannery' were sold individually from 1998. Original features retained from the cannery include the brick and weatherboard structure fronting Dath Street, and the fibro-cement sheeting clad building on Dath Street.

Description

The warehouse type buildings on this site are of varying ages and demonstrate changing function and organisation on the site.

The oldest buildings comprise three parallel ridged warehouse running parallel to Dath Street from the Vernon Terrace covered railway siding frontage. The Dath Street frontage is red brick in an English bond with interwar style concrete lintels and sills to its two storey double hung windows. There is a pitched corrugated roof with eaves overhanging the footpath and ventilators along the ridge. The next two ridges of similar length have two lanterns to light their internal spaces. The external wall lining to this building from the back of Dath Street façade is weatherboard.

Proceeding down Dath Street the façade changes to a later brick, a concrete block and finally to a building clad in fibro-cement Super six wall sheeting. This later building exhibits a 1950s corner entry segment. Later concrete block warehouse-type buildings and an office building on Vernon Terrace/Commercial Road corner, complete this site. There are also some mature trees on the Dath Street/Vernon Terrace corner of the site which are worthy of retention.

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 a factory with its own railway siding built in 1919 as part of the State Enterprises schemes of the interwar Labor governments. It also illustrates the importance of primary produce to the economy in the 1920s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as the only State owned canning works in Queensland.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a 1910s/1920s two-storey brick canning factory.

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 radical interwar Ryan/Theodore Labor governments and the state enterprises policy.

Supporting images



Unknown photographer,
'State canning factory in Newstead, ca. 1913',
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

At this time Bulimba straddled both sides of the river. The area is now known as Newstead. The track in the foreground is the Newstead branch railway, which served the canning factory, the sugar refinery, the woolstores and the New Farm Powerhouse. (Description supplied with photograph)

References

1. Brisbane City Council aerial photographs, 1946, 2012
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5. Brisbane City Council, *Teneriffe Woolstores Heritage Study*, 1992
6. Department of Natural Resources, Certificates of Title
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8. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Picture Queensland
9. Lack, Clem, *Three Decades of Queensland Political History*, 1962: Government printer
10. Murphy, DJ; Joyce, RB and Hughes, C (eds) *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Governments in Queensland 1915-57*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1988
11. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
12. National Library of Australia's Trove website, *The Brisbane Courier*, *The Telegraph*, *The Queenslander*,

The Courier Mail, The Sunday Mail

13. Queensland Places: Newstead, Teneriffe, Northgate (website)
 14. Queensland Post Office Directories, 1868-1940
 15. Queensland State Archives, Sketch plans of the ground and first floors, State Cannery factory, Bulimba, 15 May 1918
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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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