



Heritage Citation



Swift's Shophouse

Key details

Addresses At 63 Wellington Street, Petrie Terrace, Queensland 4000

Type of place House, Shop/s

Period Victorian 1860-1890

Style Queenslander

Lot plan L20_RP10688

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004
Date of Citation — June 2015

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

This property was built in circa 1888 for Bernard Swift, a railway labourer. It is typical of a number of shop/houses built around Brisbane during the nineteenth century, with the ground floor used for retail or trade purposes while the owner lived on the floor above. Swift's sister ran the grocery shop on the lower level while the Swift family resided upstairs.

History

This site originally was part of a purchase of crown land made by the Right Reverend James Quinn of Brisbane on 16 September 1861. Quinn had been appointed Brisbane's first Catholic Bishop in 1859. He paid £550.5s for the one-acre and 22 perches of Allotment 307 that fronted Petrie Terrace. On 27 June 1865, Quinn enlarged his property holdings to seven acres and 9 perches by buying the adjacent Allotment 306. Quinn subdivided his land into small town allotments suitable for housing and immediately began selling the lots. The first buyer was William Stevens on 28 June 1865. This part of Petrie Terrace soon became known as Bishop's Hill. The Bishop's Hill streets (Wellington Parade, Mountjoy Place, St James Crescent, Belgrave, Sackville and Rutland Streets) were named after the streets in the fashionable St James district of London.

Ellen Brown, wife of Thomas Brown, purchased the ten-perch allotment, subdivision two of section two, in 1866. The site fronted Wellington Parade (now Street), with rear access via Wellington Lane. The steep slope of Bishop's Hill made house construction difficult as sites had to be dug-out to be made level and retaining walls often had to be built to combat the effects of heavy rain and soil slippage. Nevertheless a small cottage was erected on the site and probably leased to tenants. The small size of the allotment was not unusual for Petrie Terrace, although in 1885 legislation prevented the creation of allotments under sixteen perches. The area's proximity to the central business district made it an appealing residential area from the 1860s. Shops, hotels and residences for wealthier owners were constructed along the ridge of Petrie Terrace, while working class cottages sprang up along the slopes towards Hale Street and the former cemetery.

Wellington Street was slower to develop than Petrie Terrace, and Ellen was one of the street's first residents. She died in 1876 and the property passed to her eldest son William. In the 1880s residents began constructing houses on the surrounding lots, but according to the Post Office Directories, Ellen Brown's site was unoccupied after her death. The site was sold to Bernard Swift in November 1887.

In December 1887 land agent JS Johnston called for tenders for the construction of a shop and dwelling in Wellington Street. This was probably built for Swift. A store was standing on site in 1889, according to advertisements. Further, Swift took out a £210 mortgage on the property in February 1888, which probably funded the construction of the shop/house. Wellington Street was a hive of building activity in the 1880s, but the properties being constructed were houses and cottages. Swift's is the only shop mentioned in the street throughout the 1890s.

Although this was the only shop/house in the street, the two-storey combined residence and shop was not unusual for Petrie Terrace. Landowners maximised their landholdings in inner city areas with multi-storey, multi-use buildings like this one. A similar property, Udale's shop/residence, was built in Clifton Street in 1877 and is

included in the Brisbane City Council's heritage overlay. Accommodation in Swift's shop/house was provided upstairs in the shape of a worker's cottage. The lower floor shop extended only part of the length of the residential area, as it was restricted by the site's slope.

The shop, run by some of Bernard Swift's female relatives, served Wellington Street's mostly working-class occupants. From the 1890s, Post Office Directories listed Wellington Street residents as carpenters, labourers, railway porters and dressmakers. Advertisements for Wellington Street properties targeted railwaymen and engine drivers, who worked at the nearby Roma Street railway station and Countess Street powerhouse. Bernard Swift himself was a railway labourer.

In 1896 Swift offered the property for sale for £220. The 'splendid Two-story Dwelling, with Shop' had dining and sitting rooms, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, veranda and balcony. The downstairs shop included fixtures, a counter and a double window. Despite the small size of the allotment the property also had a small garden of fruit trees. Swift struggled to sell the property, advertising it for three years before neighbours James and Norah O'Connor purchased the property in March 1899. O'Connor, a wharf labourer, ran a store from c.1907. In 1912 the lease of a 'cheap furnished bedroom' was listed from 'O'Conner's Shop, Wellington street', but whether this was a room in O'Connor's house or another property is not known. O'Connor leased the house and shop to tenants from circa 1915.

The property changed hands several times in the twentieth century. Sales notices throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century testify to the transitory nature of Petrie Terrace, as well as its declining appeal. In the second half of the twentieth century pasta was sold from the downstairs shop. It was later converted to a residence. The internal staircase was added in the late twentieth century. Extensions, additions and a garage were approved in 2002. The house has been held by its present owners since 1993.

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 shop/residence built off Petrie Terrace in the 1880s when development in Brisbane was booming.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an 1880s two-storey timber shop/residence.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a timber shop/residence that demonstrates the incorporation of a worker's cottage and shop into a single structure.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
2. Brisbane City Council aerial photographs, 1946, 2012
3. Brisbane City Council, City Architecture & Heritage Team, heritage citations
4. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
5. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
6. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Picture Queensland
7. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
8. National Library of Australia's Trove website, *The Brisbane Courier*, *The Telegraph*, *The Queenslander*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Sunday Mail*
9. Queensland Places: Petrie Terrace (website)
10. Queensland Post Office Directories
11. Woodcock, Steve & Fisher, Rod, *Petrie Terrace Brisbane 1858-1988*, (Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 1988)

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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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