Heritage Citation

Warnilla

Key details

Addresses	At 139 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101
Type of place	House
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Free Style
Lot plan	L4_RP46732
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — January 2011
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Face brick
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic

This is one of three identical brick houses adjacent to one another built circa 1910 by David Ballantine McCullough, a real estate agent and politician. He originally built four identical premises, as well as the building at 143-145 Melbourne Street, however only the rear of the fourth house still remains. The houses were built as investment rental homes for middle class tenants and formed what was called McCullough Estate. This building has since been modified for use as commercial premises in line with the commercial development of Melbourne Street from the late twentieth century.

History (previous revision)

McCullough acquired the land on which these houses were built through Deeds of Grant in 1880.[1] For many years he leased all of this land to the Queensland Timber Company Limited, which used it to store timber. An 1889 photograph clearly shows stacks of timber on this site.[2]

Melbourne Street at that stage was still a fairly quiet thoroughfare, with a few timber shops and a horse drawn tram line running up the centre. This changed after 1891 when the railway line was extended to Melbourne Street, bringing activity and development to the area. Development gradually occurred around the railway terminal at the corner of Melbourne and Grey Streets. This became a thriving commercial centre which rivalled the Stanley and Vulture Street intersection as the focal point of activity for the suburb. Development activity seemed to be slow in reaching the rest of Melbourne Street however. Perhaps this explains why McCullough felt the street was suited to residential buildings, and had his row of unusual rental housing built. Like the large homes of the well to do built earlier on Edmondstone Street nearby, this row of houses reflects the fact that this area was once a desirable address for the city's upper and middle classes.

At the time that he originally purchased this land, McCullough lived in Maryborough, Victoria. He later moved to South Brisbane and resided in Brighton Road. A Justice of the Peace and real estate agent, McCullough built this premises, which contained two separate tenancies around 1900. Soon after, in 1905, McCullough became an alderman in the South Brisbane Municipal Council and in 1908 was elected Mayor of South Brisbane. He went on to sit as an Alderman for the Council until January 1913.[3] As well as these properties, McCullough also had interests in hotel properties.

Each of the brick cottages was named on its completion and this one, 'Warnilla', was first occupied by Mrs Violet Maxwell. Following her, the house was let to a succession of residents, mainly women, presumably elderly, who were probably attracted by the convenient location of the residence.

The property was resumed in May 1925 by the Council of the City of South Brisbane under the Provisions of the City of South Brisbane Improvement Act of 1922. When Melbourne Street was widened to make way for a modern asphalt roadway part of the land fronting this part of the street was resumed.[4] Following the amalgamation of local Councils in 1925, the land was passed to the Brisbane City Council in March 1929. The Council continued to lease the cottages in 1925 charging £2/15 per week, and granted leases to approved tenants for a period of twelve months.[5]

By the 1940s, this area had fallen into disrepute. According to David Malouf it was "…too close to the derelict, half criminal life of Stanley Street where the abos [sic] were and to Musgrave Park with its swaggies and metho drinkers".[6]

However, in recent years this area, like other parts of South Brisbane and Highgate Hill, has undergone a process of gentrification. The building has been modified for use as a commercial premises, a use which is far better suited to Melbourne Street today.

Description (previous revision)

This low set brick building at 137 Melbourne Street is one of a group of three such buildings side by side on this portion of the Street. Originally there was a fourth building identical to the others that has since been replaced by a shop. They were originally built for residential purposes but all are currently used as offices. Apart from minor differences in colour scheme the buildings all remain virtually identical.

This building has a gambrel roof of corrugated iron with a gable roof projection facing the street on the left hand side behind a stepped parapet. The front verandah extends across the front beside the projecting front room and has its own roof below the main one. A gable roof is centred below the ridge line at the level of the verandah roof. The verandah roof is supported on 3 cast iron posts, one to either side of the gable ended roof and one at the corner of the verandah. Each cast iron post has a capital ¾ of the way up that support timber members with broad arched infill panels between columns. The lower portion of each post up to balustrade level is circular with a conical base and a square section at the level of the deep timber handrail. Below the handrail thin vertical steel members with regularly spaced circular openings span between horizontal members, one just below the balustrade and one just above the verandah level. Every fourth vertical member continues to meet the balustrade and the floor for support. The cast iron post at the left hand side of the entry gable overlaps with the brickwork so as to stand in front of the corner of the wall. Inside the gable end there are vertical timber strips with three thin bands between each regularly spaced broad band. The ventilator in the gambrel roof has a similarly spaced broad framework, behind which run horizontal louvres as a ventilator.

The projecting front room has a squared off bay window with three distinct bays. Bands of render in the form of mouldings run at the head and sill line of the three windows. The brickwork at the corners of the bay is covered in render between these bands and has a rectangular raised section at the front and to the side. Each of these has a raised ornamental moulding near its top. Another moulding runs along the line of the top of the bay, and between this and the head of the windows. The portion over the centre window is rendered in a fashion that visually extends the head of this window. Above this there is a brick triangular pediment in the classical manner supported by ornamental scroll like brackets. A fan like piece sits in the centre of the pediment. This portion of the building features banded brickwork above the floor level each band consisting of three courses of a different colour. The steps in the parapet relate to these bands and each is topped with its own moulded cornice. The parapet actually cantilevers out before this stepped section begins to cover the ends of the gutters on the gable roof. Where this happens ornate moulded brackets support the cantilevered brickwork. The base of the building has a stepped plinth line and the end bay window above floor level has expressed piers either side of the three narrow vertical windows.

The building has shuttered window openings down each side and painted heads and sills to each window. Off the verandah the main doorway centred below the gable is surrounded by glazed panels, while the larger opening further along the verandah has a pair of glazed French doors. A tall square chimney of banded brickwork rises from the rear of the building and has a tall opening at the top surmounted by a moulded cap. A rendered band also runs along the base of the plinth. From here a stair leads up from the bottom right hand side to a landing under the small gable on the verandah.

Each building is very long and narrow land only has a small space between it and its neighbour. At the rear the buildings are all similar with an end gable of stepped brickwork. The rear of the fourth building remains behind its modern brick shop frontage.

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 evidence of the development of Melbourne Street in the early twentieth century as a desirable middle class area.

Rarity
CRITERION B

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

as part of a row of three identical, substantial, brick residences built in the early twentieth century in South Brisbane.

Aesthetic
CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as part of a group of three identical buildings featuring banded brickwork and highly ornate classical detailing.

References

1. Titles Office Records
2. John Oxley Library Photographic Collection – Suburbs South Brisbane
3. *South Brisbane Municipal History*, 1925
4. *Ibid*
5. *Digest of Proceedings*, Brisbane City Council, 1925
6. David Malouf, *12 Edmondstone Street*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1985

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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 April 2024)

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