

Heritage Citation

Wyllie's Buildings (Shops)

Key details

Addresses	At 299 Sandgate Road, Albion, Queensland 4010
Type of place	Shop/s
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L51_SP176945
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — December 2010
Construction	Walls: Face brick
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

Built circa 1910, this fine brick building survives as a tangible reminder of the very successful hardware retailer J.R. Wyllie & Sons which was first established in Brisbane circa 1900. It was at this time that Albion was developing into a thriving commercial precinct and had emerged as a prosperous suburban centre, an optimal location for new businesses. Throughout the twentieth century, J.R. Wyllie and Sons expanded their business throughout Queensland an even up to the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea. Wyllie, apart from being a successful businessman, also served as an alderman on the Windsor Shire Council from 1913-1924. The business continued to operate from the building until it was sold in 1981.

History

This brick commercial building was constructed circa 1910 for successful hardware retailing firm, JR Wyllie and Sons.

By the late 1880s and early 1890s Albion was one of a number of prosperous suburban centres that had arisen in response to the expansion of Brisbane from its former small city core. While in the nineteenth century, Albion was a semi-rural area dotted with grand houses, the coming of the railway in 1882 saw the urbanisation of the area and Albion evolved into a popular suburb. By 1892 Albion was served by 29 daily trains to the city and in 1899 a tramline linking Albion with Clayfield and the city opened, increasing the through traffic in Albion and rendering the shops and other services more accessible for residents in neighbouring suburbs.

James Wyllie first began trading as a plumber in Brisbane circa 1900. The business grew to become a large retailer and manufacturer of plumbing supplies and air conditioners, and was well-known to generations of Albion residents and those who travelled past the distinctive building on Sandgate Road. Wyllie appears to have started trading in 1901 from Kearon Street at Lutwyche before moving the following year to Station Road at Albion where he continued to trade for the next eight years.

In 1910, Wyllie purchased this block of land at 299 Sandgate Road and by 1911 'Wyllie's Building' was constructed. The following year the business began trading as 'Wyllie and Sons'. Wyllie took out subsequent mortgages on the Sandgate Road property in 1914, 1919 and 1923, perhaps to expand the business or to make alterations/additions to the building. By the late 1930s Wyllie & Sons had expanded their business from purely plumbing supplies and had added light fittings and electrical goods to their range. Goods were delivered daily throughout Brisbane from their retail outlet and nearby plumbing and air conditioning factory.

Apart from being a successful businessman, James R. Wyllie also served as an Alderman for the Windsor Town Council from 1913 to 1924 prior to the inception of Greater Brisbane. He was also a member of the Works, Lighting and Parks Committees for most of that decade.

J.R. Wyllie and Sons grew into a significant local and state-wide business throughout the next five decades to become one of, if not the, largest hardware and household supply shop in Brisbane's northern suburbs. They had agents in provincial cities such as Ipswich, Mackay, Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns, and also supplied goods to the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea.

'Wyllies Buildings' was occupied by J.R. Wyllie and Sons until 1981 when various tenants took over leases on the first floor and basement of the building, some for up to nine years. The locally well-known building makes a fine contribution to the Albion streetscape and continues to be used as commercial premises by a variety of traders.

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 an integral part of the Albion shopping centre which retains examples of the principal phases of commercial development from the late nineteenth century and the 1930s.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

for its attractive design, use of contrasting materials and visually prominent lettering which make an important contribution to this historic streetscape in Albion.

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

as the Brisbane business premises of successful hardware retailer and local councillor, J.R. Wyllie & Sons.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Registers & Building Cards
2. Brisbane City Council Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Detail Plans
3. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
4. Brisbane City Council Minutes of Proceedings
5. Kerr, John 1988, *Brunswick Street, Bowen Hills and Beyond: The Railways of the Northern Suburbs of Brisbane*, Australian Railway Historical Society
6. John Oxley Library, newspaper clippings files
7. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press, 1973

8. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
9. Nundah & District Historical Society files
10. Queensland Pioneers Index 1829-1889, Qld Registrar-General, March 2000
11. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1887-1949
12. Waterson, D.B., *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament 1860-1929*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1972
13. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994

Copyright Brisbane City Council

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 June 2022)



Dedicated to a better Brisbane