



Reflections **on the** *River*



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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Welcome

Brisbane City Council is creating more to see and do with heritage trails located across the city.

The Brisbane River has long been the defining feature of our city. Known as *Maiwar* to some Aboriginal people, the river has provided a backdrop to thousands of years of ecological and cultural history. It has also played a significant part in the industrial and commercial transformation of modern Brisbane. The river's rich history is still marked by heritage buildings and historical sites that characterise the Town Reach.

Aboriginal people lived close to the Brisbane River for thousands of years before European settlement, and established a complex network of camps, ceremonial sites and burial grounds. Movement of language groups through the region allowed for trade, and social and ceremonial interaction. Aboriginal people experienced significant changes to their way of life from 1825, following the establishment of a penal settlement at the location of the modern business district on the northern bank, a place they knew as Meanjin.



Pettigrew's Brisbane sawmill, 1861, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Neg No. 64896.



Deliberately isolated, the penal settlement received its supplies, mail and personnel by ship, making the river essential to its establishment and survival. After Moreton Bay opened to free settlement in 1842, the town of Brisbane emerged. From this time, disease, displacement and conflict took a serious toll on the lives of the Aboriginal population. The river became the conduit through which imports, exports and immigrants flowed. Fed by the profits of growing trade and spurred on by the economic boom of the mid-1880s, the temporary buildings of convict times gave way to a city built in stone. Brisbane emerged as a city characterised by Victorian energy and optimism.

The growth of the city through the Victorian era was punctuated by economic depression and natural disasters, though it continued to flourish into the 20th century. By the 1930s, the rise in motor car use and the need to create work for the unemployed in the Great Depression, prompted the construction of the Story Bridge, which permanently reshaped the character of the Town Reach.

The calamitous world wars of the 20th century are also part of the river's history. Brisbane was an important US and Allied naval base during World War II, with a military hospital established on the banks of the river at Yeronga.

From the 1950s, the naval port was steadily moved downstream and the wharves, warehouses and workshops made way for office blocks, eateries, residential apartments and recreational spaces.

Modern Brisbane is now a diverse, multicultural city that celebrates the river. The *Reflections on the River* trail highlights some of the stories of the people who built, traded, lived and worked along the river banks, and helped shape the Brisbane we know and love today.



Customs House

The Moreton Bay penal settlement closure in 1842 paved the way for commercial enterprise in the sparsely populated outpost of Brisbane. Shipping was crucial to Brisbane's development and the path to self-sufficiency; the city exported timber and wool and imported manufactured goods and foodstuffs. The colonial government, identifying a source of revenue, imposed taxes on the trade from 1846.

Customs House opened in 1889 and its impressive copper-domed roof reflected the growing prosperity of maritime trade. The building's grand facades, designed to demonstrate the economic strength and stability of the colony, face Queen Street and the Brisbane River.

With the removal of port facilities by the late 20th century, there was little need for river-based Customs headquarters. The building is now in the ownership of The University of Queensland and operates as a function centre and art gallery.



Customs House, Petrie Bight, circa 1920, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.97398.

Eagle Street Fountain and Brisbane fire fighters

This public drinking fountain was completed in 1880 as part of a beautification project jointly funded by the municipal council and public donations. This led to confusion around the original purpose of the fountain, as donations were also being sought at the same time for a memorial to New York-born James Mooney, a volunteer fireman who died fighting a fire in a Queen Street store in 1877. Mooney was fatally injured when a barrel of spirits exploded, making him the first Brisbane fire fighter to die in the line of duty.

An official memorial was erected above Mooney's grave in Toowong Cemetery, but the Eagle Street drinking fountain became linked with the young fireman. Another nine firemen were to lose their lives fighting fires during the 20th century. In 1988, Brisbane City Council gave official recognition to the connection, adding a tablet to the fountain, honouring Mooney and other firemen who died on duty.



Intersection of Queen and Eagle Streets, 1889, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, APO-002-0001-0006.

On the waterfront and the view of the Story Bridge

The Town Reach is the stretch of the river between Kangaroo Point and Gardens Point, and it plays a key role in the story of the city.

The shipping industry was vital to Queensland's development as it carried wealth into the state and Brisbane. Once the bustling centre of maritime trade, an array of shops, eateries and office spaces now stand in place of thriving wharves and warehouses.

Barques, brigantines, full-rigged ships, paddle steamers, tramp steamers, grain carriers and passenger ships all took their place beside the former wharves, discharging their cargo and loading more for return voyages. At busy times ships waited at anchor in the middle of the river for their turn in the hands of the stevedores.



View of almost completed Story Bridge, circa 1939, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 58518.

The Town Reach waterfront was once the naval heart of Queensland. The Naval Stores, the former headquarters of Queensland's colonial navy, are located across the river at Kangaroo Point. Built between 1886 and 1888 in response to military tensions between Britain and Russia, the stores received occasional visits from British warships during imperial fleet duties. Gunboats Gayundah and Paluma were also based at the Naval Stores.



The Town Reach continued to operate as a port into the 20th century, however as ships grew in size this section of the river could no longer accommodate them and wharf facilities were moved downstream to Teneriffe, Hamilton and beyond. The abandoned wharves were demolished to make way for commercial and residential buildings.

This iconic waterfront vista also takes in the Story Bridge as it traverses the river north to Fortitude Valley. Built in the 1930s to address future traffic needs and alleviate unemployment during the Great Depression, this famous piece of Brisbane architecture was then the seventh-largest bridge of its type in the world, and cost £1.6 million (more than \$127 million today), which was paid for by tolls over seven years.

Managed by Evans Deakin Hornibrook, the project employed an average of 320 workers annually across its five-year construction. The Story Bridge was a major feat of engineering, designed and built almost entirely from Australian materials. The undertaking of this project, large in scale and budget during a time of economic downturn, highlights the confidence held in the future of the growing city.

Naldham House

From 1888, Naldham House was home to the Australian United Steam Navigation Company. Flood markers on the side of the building document the record high water mark when the river flooded in 1893.

Naldham House acts as an entry point to a precinct between Elizabeth Street and the Brisbane River, boasting a variety of 19th century architecture, with buildings such as the Port Office and Naval Offices in Edward Street reflecting the importance of shipping to Brisbane's commercial heritage. Sometimes known as Frog's Hollow because of its original low geographic location and swampy nature, the area hosted warehouses, large engineering works, foundries, workshops, mercantile agencies, brothels, hotels, boarding houses and residences. Adjacent to these were the busy wharves, a ferry terminal and the City Botanic Gardens, one of the few developed recreational spaces at the time. A variety of classes and diverse cultural groups lived and worked nearby, giving it a cosmopolitan character.



Naldham House, circa 1935, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.168436.

Former Coal Board Building

In the late 1880s, Scottish-born Queensland politicians and squatters William Allan and William Graham built this warehouse as a speculative investment. Designed by prominent architect, Richard Gailey, the building housed businesses that distributed imported china, glass, produce, leather goods and hardware. The Queensland Government purchased the building in 1968, and it was used as office space by the Coal Board and other entities.

Former Spencers Building

Spencers Building was built as an investment by Frances Jones, wife of Reverend Thomas Jones, after she arrived in Brisbane in 1860 with the city's first Anglican Archbishop, EW Tufnell. Completed in early 1890, this warehouse was inundated by flooding in its first year and again in 1893. It remained largely empty until the turn of the century, when it was occupied by its first long term tenants. Leonard Spencer, coachbuilder and ironmonger, ran his business from the building until the 1920s, after which he built the warehouse next door. With its finely executed detailing, this building is an attractive contribution to the collection of Victorian warehouses at this end of Edward Street. The rear entry to the building was named Spencers Lane in 1910.



Edward Street during a flood in Brisbane, 1890, Spencers Building, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.11501.

Former R Martin and Co. Warehouse

Built in 1886, this riverfront warehouse was home to a string of merchants and shipping agents for nearly 80 years. The first tenants were R. Martin and Co. Ironmongers, prominent ship chandlers, riggers and sail makers.

Being located close to the waterfront was ideal for businesses when the maritime industry was booming. Nineteenth century ships needed constant maintenance, and from here Martin and Co. were able to deliver a range of supplies to keep them fit for the sea. The building served a number of other purposes through the 20th century, and was acquired by the Brisbane and Area Water Board in 1982. It is now a retail store.



Edward Street during March 1880 flood, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.22308.

Floods

Built on a flood plain, the city of Brisbane has felt the destruction of several devastating floods. This flood marker, erected in 1999, commemorates the successive floods that devastated the city.

In 1893, Brisbane was hit by three floods within a fortnight, two of these reaching the highest levels in recorded history. Torrential rain, brought by three consecutive cyclones, combined with storm surge caused severe flooding across Kangaroo Point, South Brisbane and the Central Business District. Lives were lost and many businesses, homes and livestock were destroyed. The financial cost of the floods was a setback to a city already struggling with a severe economic crisis. The river flooded on a number of occasions over the next 80 years, but none of these were as severe as the events of 1893.



Corner of Queen and Edward streets, Brisbane, during 1893 flood, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg No. 84899.

Brisbane suffered another disastrous flood in 1974. While not as high as the 1893 floods, it claimed 14 lives and damaged more than 6000 homes and businesses. The 1974 floods are remembered as a time when the citizens of Brisbane, unprepared for such a disaster, rallied together to provide coordinated assistance and relief to those affected. The flooding of 2011 similarly brought strangers together who formed a 'mud army' to coordinate recovery efforts.

Port Office Hotel

John Kelly erected the Shamrock Hotel on this site around 1864, and in 1876 it underwent substantial renovations, revealing the basic structure that can still be seen today. In 1888 the hotel was described as 'extremely commodious', as it featured public and private bars, an attractive clubroom, 15 bedrooms, a drawing room, two bathrooms, and four public rooms on the ground floor. In 1909 a new licensee renamed it the Port Office Hotel because of its proximity to the nearby Port Office building. Modernisation in 1955 led to the removal of all verandas, lacework, canopies and chimney stacks. Recent changes to the building have opted to restore the original features, including the verandas.



Port Office Hotel, circa 1929, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.1881.

Former Port Office

The end of Edward Street has long been associated with the regulation of shipping. The Port Office building was completed in 1880 at a cost of £8811 (more than \$1.1 million today). It provided offices for the harbourmaster, pilots and staff of both the Marine Board and the Shipping Office. The building was extended in 1885, with more additions in the 1920s. In 1988 the Queensland Government's Department of Harbours and Marine moved to a new location. The building has since been restored to its original configuration, with all post-1880 additions removed and the distinctive balconies reconstructed as per the original design. The former Port Office now forms part of the Stamford Plaza Hotel.



Port Office, circa 1889, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.100099.

Smellie and Co.

This attractive warehouse was constructed in 1895-96 for importers Smellie and Co. Beginning as an iron foundry and engineering business in the 1860s, Smellie and Co. undertook all aspects of heavy engineering and metal casting including the manufacture of cast iron posts and balustrading for buildings, heavy machinery, steamships and locomotives. On 30 March 1872, *The Queenslander* newspaper noted that Smellie and Co. had built the *Louisa*, “the first iron steamship to be constructed in this colony”. Following financial success, in the 1880s, Smellie and Co. moved into the business of importing machinery, tools and hardware leading to the construction or purchase of numerous warehouses. The building is notable for its red brick construction, not typical in Brisbane, and the large arched windows that give a sense of grandeur. This building is now used as premium office space.



Building of Smellie & Co. Ltd. Hardware, Brisbane, Queensland, circa 1920, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.111862.

Naval Offices

The Queensland Marine Defence Force (QMDF) was formed in 1884, a time when defence was the responsibility of individual colonial governments. Queensland commanded a small fleet including gunboats Gayundah and Paluma, torpedo boat Mosquito, piquet boat Midge, and the minelayer Miner. Naval defence of the colony also relied on part-time units of the Queensland Naval Brigade to man vessels and gun positions in times of war. The Naval Offices were constructed in 1900-01 as headquarters for the QMDF, and the building represented the Queensland Government's acknowledgment of its responsibility for naval defence. Although the Commonwealth administered the naval forces after federation, the Naval Offices were not handed over to the Federal Government until 1911, upon the official creation of the Royal Australian Navy.



Naval Office and adjacent Water Police Offices, circa 1946, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.17280.

Former Smellie and Co. Warehouse

Constructed in 1888 for Smellie and Co., this warehouse was originally only three storeys high with an additional two storeys added in 1895 to accommodate their booming business. At the time, it was one of the tallest buildings in the city and reflected the company's achievements. In 1945 the building was acquired by the Department of Works but has recently been adapted as residential apartments.



Building of Smellie & Co. Ltd. Hardware, Brisbane, Queensland, circa 1920, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No.111862.

Former Britannia Foundry

The two-storey Britannia Foundry was built for Harvey Sargeant and Co. in 1887, a time when the heavy engineering industry was burgeoning in Queensland. Much of the ironwork used during the Brisbane building boom of the 1880s was manufactured here. Most of the area within the boundaries of Edward, Alice, Margaret and Albert streets was taken up with engineering works and foundries at that time. Smellie and Co. took over the foundry in 1909 for use as a warehouse.



Sketch of the Britannia Foundry building on Alice Street, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 167316.

City Botanic Gardens

In 1828, 20 hectares of riverfront land were set aside as gardens to provide food crops for the penal settlement. Nearly three decades later, part of the site was proclaimed a botanic reserve with scientific research carried out on native plants, and agricultural experiments conducted to determine the viability of introduced species as successful commercial crops.

The Albert Street entrance gates were erected in 1865 and are the oldest formal gates to the gardens. They originally marked the official entrance to Queen's Park, a public park next to the gardens which was absorbed into the City Botanic Gardens in 1916. In the same year, the fence along the Alice Street boundary of the gardens was constructed from iron palisades from an earlier fence and convict-cut stone from the demolition of the Brisbane Goal on Petrie Terrace.

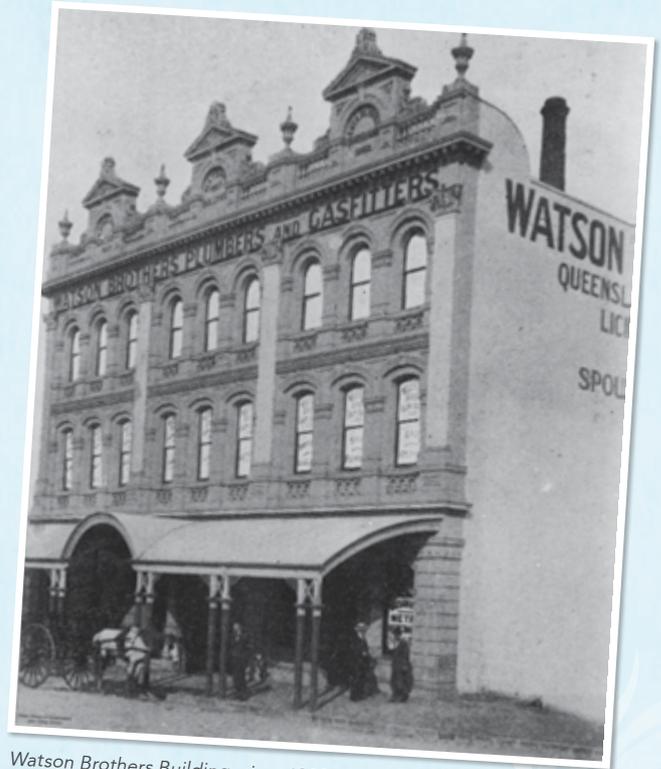


Botanic Gardens, circa 1896, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 203521.

Today the City Botanic Gardens, one of the largest green spaces in the city, is used primarily for recreation and includes Brisbane's most mature gardens, studded with rare and unusual plants.

Former Watson Brothers Building

In 1887, this building was constructed for the Watson Brothers who were plumbers, gasfitters and metal workers. The boom of the 1880s saw their business expand, leading to the construction of this £6000 warehouse, for which they also fabricated the ironwork. The Watsons chose the site for its proximity to the city centre and wharves, with a shed and stables built at the rear of the building, most of which still exist today as a car parking space. This site is an interesting example of a late 19th century commercial warehouse. The Watson Brothers' firm remained successful into the 20th century, carrying out military work during both World War I and II, before ceasing operation in 1961.



Watson Brothers Building, circa 1882, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 6538.

Former HB Sales Building

Marine engineers and metal workers Smith and Ball constructed their Acme Engineering Works at this site in 1913. Prior to World War I, the Queensland economy went through a major growth period and light industry continued to be a feature of the inner city. The building is distinctive for its eclectic mix of architectural styles. From 1930 it was used as a warehouse, and in 1958 chemical wholesaler HB Sales took ownership of the site.

The Brisbane Synagogue

Founded in 1865, the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation had gathered at a variety of locations until funds were raised to build a permanent place of worship. The synagogue design was determined by an architectural competition won by Arthur Morry, with construction lasting 18 months and completed in 1886. Few changes have been made; however, additional stained glass windows were added to the building before the congregation's centenary year. Many of these were memorials to family members who were victims of the World War II Holocaust.



The Brisbane Synagogue circa 1906, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 145942.

The Mansions and Dr Lilian Cooper

Former Queensland Premier Boyd Morehead, Treasurer William Pattison and their business associates financed the construction of this property in 1889. In the atmosphere of prosperity that characterised the late 1880s, property investment was common among the wealthy. Close to Government House, Parliament House and the Queensland Club, this property and others like it in George Street were shrewd investments.

Early residents of these terrace houses were mainly professionals, including Dr Lilian Cooper, Queensland's first female doctor and Australia's first female surgeon. Arriving from England in 1891, she immediately set up a medical practice in The Mansions. Despite a chilly reception from Brisbane's all-male medical profession, Dr Cooper's practice was very successful. She was particularly popular among Brisbane's socialites and the wives of the well-to-do. Dr Cooper paved the way for women to begin medical careers, and by 1907, almost a dozen female doctors were practising in Queensland, including four in Brisbane.

In 1954, the building was acquired by the Queensland Government and has been substantially refurbished.



The Mansions building, circa 1908, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 170619.



Dr Lilian Cooper, circa 1859, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 185958.

Harris Terrace

Harris Terrace is a reminder of a time when this part of the CBD was a prime residential area. Local businessman and parliamentarian George Harris built this row of attached houses in 1867, and his lessees included professionals and Members of Parliament. The property was originally leased as separate residences but by the mid-20th century tenants included a garage and a mix of businesses. In 1958 it was purchased by the Queensland Government for use as office space and was restored to its original appearance in 1985.



*Harris Terrace at the corner of George and Margaret streets, circa 1869,
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. APE-072-0001-0014.*

Former Immigration Depot

Immigration was recognised as an important factor in the economic development of the new colony. The Black Ball Line, a British shipping company, had an agreement with the Queensland government to bring out free, assisted and fare-paying passengers to the colony. In Britain, the Emigration Commissioners also chartered vessels to carry free and assisted immigrants to Queensland. Early voyages to and from Britain came around Africa's Cape of Good Hope via the trade wind belt. These voyages often took up to six months, however, one exception came in 1862 when the Black Ball clipper *Young Australia* made the trip to Moreton Bay in a record 82 days. Returning vessels were loaded with wool, timber, tallow, cotton, hides, bone and skins ready for British markets, making the transport of passengers to Queensland commercially viable.

Upon arrival, the Immigration Depot, built in 1865-66, provided migrants with a staging point from which to begin their new life in the colony. Passengers disembarked in Moreton Bay and



Immigration Depot at William Street, circa 1868, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

were transferred to local vessels to be brought into Brisbane. Migrants were temporarily housed at the depot until they were able to find work or accommodation. During the two years the depot was under construction, one shipping company alone carried more than 21,000 immigrants to Brisbane. In 1887 the depot was re-established at Yungaba at Kangaroo Point, and the William Street building was converted to government offices. It is now the headquarters of the National Trust of Queensland.

Commissariat Store

This building is one of only two convict-built structures remaining in Brisbane. The Commissariat Store was erected in 1829 to secure the settlement's food, clothing and tools. It remained in use as a government store building for 130 years, with a third floor added in 1913. The building was occupied from 1960 by a series of government departments, but is now home to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland as a headquarters and museum. The city's only other remaining convict-built structure is the Old Windmill, constructed on Wickham Terrace in 1828.



Former Commissariat building in Brisbane, circa 1928, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 103466.



Parliament House, circa 1875, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 143678.

Parliament House and Queensland Legislative Council

Following separation from New South Wales in 1859, Queensland had no seat of government, and the first parliament meeting took place in the former convict barracks on Queen Street. The new Queensland Parliament building was opened in 1864, three years after the laying of its foundation stone, but financial constraints at the time meant only the George Street frontage was erected. The colonnades were built in 1878, and it was not until 1887 that the Alice Street frontage was commenced. Designed and overseen by successive colonial architects, Parliament House was completed in 1889.

Despite being established under the Westminster system with an upper house Legislative Council and a lower house Legislative Assembly, the Queensland Parliament is unusual in that it no longer has an upper house. Members of the original Legislative Council were not elected by the population, but appointed for life by the Governor. As early as 1861,

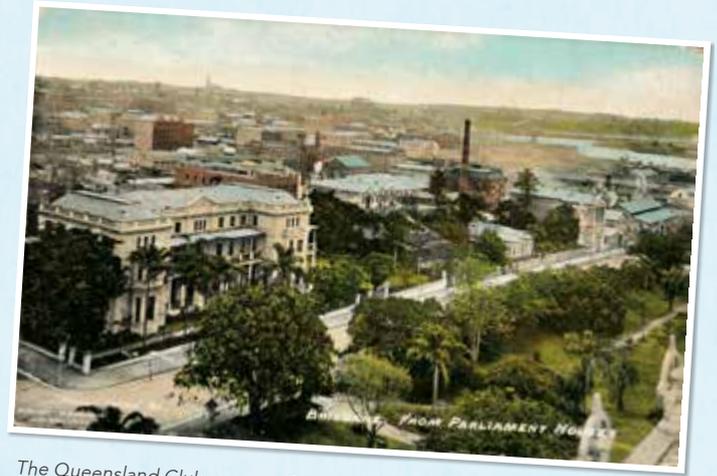


Alice Street ferry, circa 1898, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 108245.

The Moreton Bay Courier called for the upper house to be abolished as an unnecessary expense. Matters came to a head when the Legislative Council drastically amended or refused to pass some 800 bills proposed by Premier TJ Ryan's Labor Government elected in 1915. As a result, Ryan made several legislative attempts to abolish the Legislative Council which he argued was a relic of feudalism, but the Council rejected these bills. In 1917, Ryan's government held a referendum seeking to abolish the upper house but the Queensland public voted against the proposal. It was not until the Legislative Council had a majority of Labor members under Labor Premier, Edward 'Red Ted' Theodore that the Legislative Council voted itself out of existence in 1921. From 1922, Queensland only had a lower house to represent the interests of the public.

Queensland Club

The Queensland Club was established in 1859 for men of common interest and socio-economic backgrounds. Membership consisted of mostly landed gentry, politicians, and businessmen. The building was designed by prominent architect FDG Stanley and built by J Smith and Sons, with construction commencing in 1882 and the club opening in 1884. Designed to provide a recreational venue and accommodation for members, the Queensland Club originally contained 41 bedrooms, eight bathrooms, a clubroom, dining room, billiard room, smoking room and various kitchens and servants' rooms. Changes have since been made to the internal layout of the building, although it still functions as a 'home away from home' for its members.



*The Queensland Club, corner of George and Alice streets, circa 1912
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 187176.*

QUT Gardens Point Campus

Established in 1909, this was the first site of The University of Queensland until 1945 when a new campus was constructed at St Lucia. The site was then occupied by the Central Technical College which in 1965 became the Queensland Institute of Technology. It was recognised as a university in 1989, formally evolving into Queensland University of Technology. The imposing red brick building (A Block) immediately to the right of the campus entrance, is one of several original university buildings. It was constructed in 1915 with a third storey added circa 1924 to accommodate increasing enrolments.



Gardens Point Brisbane circa 1870, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg No 156882.

Old Government House

Following the establishment of the Moreton Bay colony in 1859, construction of a government residence commenced immediately. Completed in 1862, Government House was home to the first Governor, Sir George Bowen, and his family. Smaller than other government residences constructed around Australia at the time, the building was intended as a temporary residence which would be replaced later by a larger home outside the city. Architect Charles Tiffin put considerable thought into the design, adapting it for the Queensland climate. Successive Governors of Queensland resided here until 1910 when Fernberg at Bardon became the new Government House.



Old Government House, circa 1879, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. APU-049-0001-0005.

Loss of the Pearl

Brisbane's worst maritime disaster, the loss of the Pearl, occurred during flooding of the Brisbane River in January 1896. The Victoria Bridge was closed to traffic after being damaged by flood debris, and four small steam vessels, including the Pearl, were chartered to carry people across the river. Strong currents made the crossings difficult for vessels, and while trying to avoid the steamship Normanby the Pearl ran onto the anchor chain of the government ship Lucinda. The Pearl, almost cut in two, capsized and sank immediately. Thirty-four people were rescued and twenty-eight perished.



QGS Lucinda, circa 1890, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 51548.

South Brisbane Dry Dock and Queensland Maritime Museum

As Brisbane grew in prosperity and shipping traffic increased, a need arose for local ship repair facilities. Built between 1876 and 1881, the South Brisbane Dry Dock is one of the oldest in Australia. The original construction totalled more than £83,000 (\$16 million in today's currency), a measure of the importance maritime commerce held for Brisbane's future prosperity. The dock was extended in 1884 to service more vessels, and formed an important part of the Port of Brisbane well into the 20th century. The facility was used extensively during World War II, but following the war was unable to compete with the larger Cairncross Graving Dock downstream at Morningside.



Queensland fleet, Paluma and Gayundah at South Brisbane, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 43900.

In 1973, maintenance problems forced the closure of the dock. It is now used by the Queensland Maritime Museum to permanently house the retired Royal Australian Navy frigate *Diamantina* along with other maritime exhibits.

Coal Wharves

The foundations of steam cranes, a few timber posts and beams are all that remain of these old coal wharves which opened in 1883. Extensive mines at Ipswich provided much of the coal for the Port of Brisbane, and coal was transported by rail directly to the specialised handling facilities constructed here along the riverbanks. Prior to this, coal was loaded from drays onto the waiting ships. The new infrastructure allowed five steam cranes to load the coal from railway hoppers on the wharves into barges or other vessels berthed there.

The coal trade began a slow decline after World War II. The railway siding was removed in 1960, and the abandoned wharves were demolished after the closure of the Woolloongabba Branch railway in 1969.



Kangaroo Point Coal Wharves, circa 1900, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. No. 35227.



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