

Heritage Citation



Bald Hills School of Arts and Memorial Hall, and World War II Memorial Wall and Arch

Key details

Also known as	Bald Hills School of Arts
Addresses	At 2126 Gympie Road, Bald Hills, Queensland 4036
Type of place	Monument / memorial, Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939, Postwar 1945-1960
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L236_SL844326
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — January 2015

Construction	Memorial: Cast iron; Memorial: Face brick; Walls: Timber
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social
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This hall was built in 1920 as a memorial to the men of the Bald Hills farming district who fought and those who lost their lives in World War I. The building was to be the new Bald Hills School of Arts and Memorial Hall, replacing a school of arts that had operated in a discarded school classroom since 1913. A memorial wall was added to the site after 1945, to commemorate those locals who had served in World War II. The hall has acted as a hub of community activities in Bald Hills for more than 90 years.

History

The Bald Hills township had developed from a nineteenth century Cobb & Co stop and was centred around the Railway Hotel located at the corner of Gympie Road and Griffiths Street. At the start of World War I on 14 August 1914, Bald Hills was a farming district located on the outskirts of Brisbane and administered by the Kedron Shire Council.

The movement to establish Schools of Arts in Queensland began in Brisbane in 1849 with the residents of newly formed towns and suburbs eager to establish Schools of Arts to 'promote moral, social and intellectual growth for their community'. The government encouraged this by reserving land for that purpose, and granting funds to subsidise building costs and book purchases. Later legislation slowly eroded the role Schools of Arts played in the community. In 1908 the State government took sole responsibility for providing technical education, initially in larger centres such as Brisbane, Ipswich, Gympie and towns further afield.

In Bald Hills the Progress Association decided in 1906 to establish a local School of Arts. No action was taken until 1908 when they applied for a portion of the Bald Hills school paddock to be reserved for a school of arts building. An area 53.3 perches was proclaimed as a School of Arts reserve, under the control of trustees A.W. Carseldine, W.J. Hawkins and A. McPherson in November 1911; once the survey fee had been paid. In September 1913, with the completion of the new Bald Hills State School, the Department of Public Instruction offered the old school building for a School of Arts. The 1866 building was re-sited and altered to make it suitable as a public hall and the Bald Hills School of Arts opened in September 1914.

The hall was used for numerous largely patronised patriotic functions during the years of World War One. However it became clear that the building was "inadequate" and "unsuitable" as a public hall and in 1918 steps were taken for a new hall. Plans were prepared and tenders called; but those submitted were excessive and the matter was dropped.

World War I ended on 11 November 1918. Apart from the local returning servicemen, another group of war veterans joined the local community. These came from the Commonwealth Government's Soldier Settlement Scheme which offered small farming blocks at Deep Water Bend in Bald Hills to returning servicemen. The Soldier Settlement locality within Bald Hills was known as 'Wympa', that was thought to be the Aboriginal word

for the district.

The community sought to honour the sacrifice of those who had fought in the War. In 1919, a pine tree was planted in public reserve (now John Stewart Memorial Park) off Fairway Street in memory of the first district soldier who died in the fighting, Ernest George Feuerriegal. The Progress Association decided to take decisive action about the hall and throughout 1919 about £400 was raised in donations and promises.

A further £400 was raised by bank overdraft. With £800 available the committee “decided to erect the hall by day labour and to use timber and iron from the old building as far as possible” to reduce costs. At the opening on 21 August 1920, it was noted that the original school building that was a school for 47 years, then a School of Arts building and a hall, was likely to last another 50 years in the Memorial Hall. [This forecast has been well-exceeded.]

The Bald Hills Memorial Hall was not complete on its opening day, but was expected to be finished soon. The community had been looking forward to the opening of the hall and many had worked day and night towards the opening which was performed by the Minister for Public Instruction Mr. J. Huxham, M.L.A. Mr A.D. Stewart (secretary of the committee) reported on the history of the hall noting that the erection was originally started under the oversight of Mr V.D. Carseldine. However this was tragically cut short by a drowning accident at Easter. The district member Mr. H.E. Sizer M.L.A. delivered the dedication address and Australian Army Brigadier-General Spencer-Browne unveiled a memorial tablet. The hall’s opening was a festive occasion with the community staffing a number of foods and craft stalls.

Officially known as the Bald Hills School of Arts and Memorial Hall, the building was most often referred to as the Memorial Hall. As a community building it was managed by a Board of Trustees. The hall became the centre of community events, hosting the School of Arts Committee annual show, dances, the Bald Hills School committee, debutant balls, social gatherings, wedding receptions, polling booths, public lectures and numerous club meetings. Among the clubs to regularly use the hall during the Interwar period were the North Coast Cricket Association, the Sandgate Ambulance sub-branch, the Sandgate Mutual Aid Society, the Pine Rivers Methodist Circuit, the Bald Hills Presbyterian Guild, the Pine Rivers Fellowship, the local branch of the United Australia Party, the Workers Political Organisation and the Australian Labor Party, the Bald Hills Foresters, the Women’s Temperance Union and various tennis clubs.

To commemorate the service of those members of the local community who served during World War II, a memorial wall was added to the front of the hall post-1945. Built of brick, it features a cast-iron entrance archway inscribed with the words “LEST WE FORGET”. In 1954 a kindergarten was established on the site. In the late 1950s the Bald Hills Progress Association gained permission to show films in the hall and in 1958 and 1960 permission was given for additions to the then “WEA” [Workers Educational Association] building.

The Bald Hills Memorial Hall continues to be utilised as a community asset. For example, in 2012, it is used as a meeting room and music venue for the Northern Suburbs Country Music Club. On 23 June 1976, ownership of the Bald Hills Memorial Hall was passed from the Queensland Government to the Trustees with the rent being the usual token amount of one peppercorn forever. A fire in November 2015 damaged the rear extension but the building appears to have survived.

Most of Bald Hill’s World War I projects have disappeared. The ‘Wympa’ Soldier Settlement failed, as the war veterans, many without any farming experience, were given small, uneconomical blocks on flood-prone land. A machine-gun memorial has also disappeared. Only the Feuerriegal memorial pine tree in John Stewart Memorial Park and this Memorial Hall survive. The Bald Hills School of Arts and Memorial Hall remains as a building constructed by the local community to honour the war service of its members.

Description

The building is a fairly standard timber hall with a gable roof and small gabled portico with decorative detailing to the roof fascia. Most likely a symmetrical building when constructed, the southeast extension was added prior to 1946.

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 the second Bald Hills School of Arts built as a World War One memorial that continued the educational role of schools of arts from when the area was a farming district and later as a Workers Educational Association building when it developed into a modern suburb.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as an intact example of a simple, symmetrical timber-clad community hall with decorative detailing and a large open internal space.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for

social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as a hall well-used by the local community since built for educational, religious, political and community functions - by the school of arts and Workers Educational Association, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic and other religious groups, by local political candidates and community sporting clubs as well as by local residents for family functions.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *City Assets Study – John Stewart Memorial Park*, Bald Hill conservation management plan, (Brisbane: Brisbane City Council, September 2002)
 2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web* website including Building Records
 3. Shaw, B. (comp.), *Bald Hills Heritage Tour* (Brisbane: Brisbane History Group, 1993)
 4. "Memorial Hall; Bald Hills School of Arts; Opening Ceremony" *The Telegraph* 23 August 1920, p.3
 5. "Bald Hills Memorial Hall", *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 August 1920
 6. "Crowning ceremony in the Bald Hills Memorial Hall on 7 July, when the Queen Competition of the Pine River Methodist Circuit was concluded.", *The Brisbane Courier* 12 July 1932
 7. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
 8. Ford, Dr. Jonathan (Jack), *Marching to the Trains – the Chermside Army Camp Remembered*, (Brisbane: Jack Ford, 2005)
 9. National Library of Australia, Trove newspapers, *Brisbane Courier*, *Courier Mail*, *Truth*, *Telegraph*, *The Week*
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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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