

Heritage Citation



Garth House fence

Key details

Also known as	Holy Spirit Hospital
Addresses	At 255 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Lot plan	L49_RP231249
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — June 2008
Construction	Fence: Masonry
Criterion for listing	(B) Rarity; (B) Rarity

'Garth House' was built circa 1864 and operated as a grand home, then a school, and later, as flats. From 1947, 'Garth House' and neighbouring 'Erneton' (built in 1887) were converted into Brisbane's first Holy Spirit Hospital and later, another neighbouring nineteenth century residence, 'Abbotsleigh,' was added to the hospital. From 1965, these houses were gradually demolished to make way for a new hospital and this fence is the only remnant of this trio of substantial nineteenth century Wickham Terrace residences.

History

On 21 December 1864, William John Munce purchased 2 roods and 39 perches of land, described as Portion 169 that fronted Wickham Terrace, in Spring Hill. He had constructed on the site, a stone residence that he named 'Garth House'. This fence is a remnant of the property boundary for 'Garth House'. The building of Munce's residence may have been funded through a mortgage that he took out on the property on 26 December 1866. The mortgage was for the considerable sum of £2,500, with the money being provided by John Frazer and William Hanson.

'Garth House' was designed by prominent Brisbane architect James Cowlshaw. Cowlshaw operated his architecture business from 1860 until 1885. Unfortunately, only a few of his buildings survive but other Brisbane buildings that were designed by James Cowlshaw include the William Cairncross Building and 'Harris Terrace' in the City, 'Eldernel' at Hamilton, the Brisbane Grammar School at Spring Hill, 'Glen Lyon' at Ashgrove and 'Nyrambla' at Ascot. 'Garth House' was a grand home set in large, expansive grounds. Wickham Terrace soon developed into a very fashionable address as it was built along a ridgeline that provided views of the City and the Brisbane River. Most of these large, grand homes (eg. 'Innisfail') have been demolished as business premises replaced residences along Wickham Terrace.

This residence underwent a number of ownership changes. Munce sold the property to draper Alexander Stewart on 29 May 1871. Being a Scottish migrant, Stewart was renowned for having his coachman wear full highland dress while blowing his bagpipes, on special occasions designated by Stewart.¹

Dr. Richard Renelle (also spelt Rendle) became the new owner on 8 December 1879. While he did live at "Garth House", the doctor also used it as an investment property. On the date of purchase, he mortgaged the property through Alexander Stewart for three separate sums of £200, £450 and £1,150. This mortgage was transferred to the new Queensland National Bank on 25 May 1880. Another mortgage, for £1,000, was taken out by the doctor, but through the Bank of New South Wales, on 2 December 1891. A widow, Alexandrina Edmonstone obtained 'Garth House' on 21 December 1885, though by this time the property had been reduced to two roods and 36 perches. The new property description was Subdivision A of suburban Portion 169.

Edmonstone was to be followed by John Alfred Buchanan on 30 September 1886. When Buchanan died the next month (October 1886), the property was passed to the trustees of Buchanan's estate, William Henry Miskin and George Edwin Marshall. Their handling of Buchanan's estate was verified again in 1892. Miss Eliza Ann Fewings' School for Girls was established in 'Garth House' c1903. The school operated from 'Garth House' until 1906, when due to increasing enrolments, it moved next door to the larger residence 'Erneton'(269 Wickham Terrace), where it became Brisbane High School for Girls. This was the forerunner of Somerville House, which was founded after Miss Fewings' moved to South Brisbane in 1918.

On 6 March 1906, 'Garth House' returned to the Buchanan family, as Charles Pakinham Buchanan and Joseph David Buchanan replaced Marshall as trustees of John Alfred Buchanan's estate. On 11 April 1912, Charles and Joseph Buchanan signed a five-year lease of the property with spinsters Constance Elizabeth Harker and Marjorie Kate Jarrett. The lease commenced on 1 July 1912, with the rent being £300 per month. On 1 September 1914, the trustees of John Alfred Buchanan's estate, changed yet again, with the new trustees being Buchanan's widow, Jesse Jane Buchanan, though Joseph David Buchanan remained as a trustee. But Joseph died the next year, on 21 December 1915 and the widow Buchanan became the sole trustee of her late husband's estate. On 15 July 1917, Miss Harker and Miss Jarrett renewed her lease of 'Garth House' for another two years and the rent remained the same. Miss Harker and Miss Jarrett must have encountered some legal problems as a caveat was placed on their lease on 26 January 1918 and it was renewed on 25 April 1918.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane purchased 'Garth House' on 8 June 1920. While the property title was initially registered in the name of Archbishop James Duhig, a few months later (26 July 1920) it was administered by a group of trustees: Duhig, James Fouhey, Mathew Ryan, William Lee, James Byrne and Michael Potter. Fouhey died on 13 October 1925. Lee died on 1 April 1935. Byrne died on 11 February 1938 and Potter died on 1 February 1944. The Catholic Church used 'Garth House' as an investment property and rented it as a private residence. By 1930, because of its closeness to the CBD, the decision was made to convert 'Garth House' into flats, a fate that befell many other nineteenth century Spring Hill residences in the interwar period, due to their age and their size.

On 24 July 1947, the Archdiocese of Brisbane transferred 'Garth House' to the Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Holy Spirit nuns). Founded in 1889 in Steyl, Holland by a German priest Arnold Janssen and fellow Germans Hendrina Stenmanns and Helena Stollenwek, this Order conducted missionary work, sending four nuns from Germany to German New Guinea in 1899. After the First World War, New Guinea became a League of Nations mandated territory ceded to Australia and all German nationals were deported. During this period, Australian, American and other European nuns also joined the order.

With the advent of World War II in the Pacific in December 1941, the Australian government evacuated most of the expatriate women and children. The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters were given the option to leave but all preferred to stay. The invading Japanese captured them. Missionaries, from the East Sepik region of New Guinea, were the first among 62 prisoners to be executed on the Japanese destroyer Akikaze on 17 March 1943, while en route from Kavieng to Rabaul. Among this group were 18 members of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters. On 6 February 1944, the Japanese ship *Yorishime Maru* was carrying prisoners between Madang and Wewak when American aircraft strafed the ship. Another 37 members of Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters died in this attack. The surviving nuns and other missionaries were later rescued by American soldiers near Hollandia, in Dutch New Guinea, in May 1944 and were evacuated to Australia. Of the 92 Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters stationed in New Guinea, 54 died during the war. Following their evacuation, some of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters recuperated at the quiet rural retreat (former Raff farmhouse) that they had purchased at Carseldine.

The Roman Catholic Church already owned the two neighbouring properties at 269 and 279 Wickham Terrace. The nineteenth century residence 'Abbotsleigh' had been purchased by the Church and later opened as a male residential quarters for University of Queensland students, named St. Leo's College, on 30 September 1917, while another residence 'Erneton' (built 1887) had been purchased by the Church in 1919 and used as an extension of St Leo's College before it was converted into the Lister Private Hospital c1941.

Thus with two neighbouring nineteenth century residences already altered for multiple occupancies, the Holy Spirit sisters converted 'Garth House' into their Holy Spirit Hospital. Initially only 'Erneton' and 'Garth House' were the two main buildings comprising the Holy Spirit Hospital but after a new St. Leos College was built on

College Road at the University of Queensland's St. Lucia campus, the nuns added 'Abbotsleigh' to their hospital complex. Commencing in 1965, the three nineteenth century houses were gradually demolished to make way for a modern Holy Spirit Hospital. This fence remnant was all that was retained after the three nineteenth century grand residences were demolished.

In 1997, the Brisbane History Group, in their publication *Spring Hill Heritage Tour – Wickham Terrace*, identified the fence remnant as a local heritage site. While this book identifies the fence remnant as belonging to 'Erneton', photographic evidence indicates that this is a remnant from the earliest residence of the trio of nineteenth century buildings acquired along Wickham Terrace by the Catholic Church, that is, 'Garth House'.

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:

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as the only remnant from three nineteenth century, Wickham Terrace residences that would later become the first Holy Spirit Hospital.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an 1860's fence remnant that is a reminder of Wickham Terrace's prominence as a nineteenth century address.

References

1. Brisbane History Group, *Spring Hill Heritage Tour – Wickham Terrace*, (Brisbane: Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland, 1997) Stop No. 24

2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, pre-1946 building registers
3. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, post-1946 building approval cards
4. Brisbane City Council, 1946, 2001 & 2005 aerial photographs
5. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 8 September 1914
6. Brisbane History Group, Spring Hill Heritage Tour – Wickham Terrace, (Brisbane: Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland, 1997)
7. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
8. Holy Spirit Sisters, *Holy Spirit Home Online*, (www.holyspirit.com.au/sisters.htm)
9. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
10. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay 1994, *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia

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