

Heritage Citation



Kelly's Duplex

Key details

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| Addresses | At 46 Birley Street, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000 |
| Type of place | Duplex |
| Period | Victorian 1860-1890 |
| Style | Georgian |
| Lot plan | L1_RP10243 |
| Key dates | Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018 Date of Citation — May 2014 |
| Construction | Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber |

This modest duplex is a rare example of a nineteenth-century timber duplex in Brisbane. It was built in the early 1870s for grocer, Daniel Kelly and remained with the Kelly family until the 1950s. Built as both a family home and a rental property, the duplex reflects the way in which the lower slopes of the hills in Spring Hill became home to the working classes of early Brisbane.

History

This rare timber duplex was constructed circa the early 1870s for grocer, Daniel Kelly. It is located on a small allotment of only 9.7 perches on the eastern side of Birley Street which slopes from Leichardt Street down to the bottom of what was once called Hanly's Hollow before rising to the ridge of Wickham Terrace.

This part of Spring Hill, one of Brisbane's first residential suburbs, was subdivided by the Crown for private sale from 1856. In 1860, Patrick Byrne was granted just over one and three quarters of an acre stretching from Leichardt Street to Wickham Terrace. Birley Road was added but reached only as far as Lilley Street until the mid-1890s.

Byrne soon subdivided the land on either side of Birley Street into allotments of just over 19 perches. Some were further subdivided into smaller lots of only 9.7 perches such as the one purchased by Daniel Kelly. Most of the allotments in Birley Street were sold prior to 1865 and by the census of 1871, 58 people were residing in the street. As was the case with most of the low lying streets of Spring Hill, these houses were often tenanted by working class residents such as labourers, mariners and bootmakers or others on modest incomes such as widows.

Birley Street provides an example of the typical pattern of residential development in Spring Hill prior to the 1885 Undue Subdivision of Land Act which prohibited the subdivision of land into allotments smaller than 16 perches. The Act, which also required a minimum street frontage of 30 feet (around 10 metres), reflected contemporary concerns that the building of terraces and tiny cottages on small parcels of land would lead to the proliferation of slums, increasing the risks of disease and fire. The duplex at 46 Birley Street, like many other nineteenth-century buildings at Spring Hill has retained the size of its original allotment.

Surviving duplexes and terrace houses from the nineteenth century are rare in Brisbane; Spring Hill, however, has retained several. They range from fine 1860s masonry buildings such as 'Callender House' (now the Theosophical Society) and 'Athol Place' along the elevated ridge of Wickham Terrace to more middle class dwellings built on the slopes of Spring Hill such as the 1860s stone duplex at 19 Gloucester Street and the 1870s brick semi-detached Moody's cottages in Victoria Street. Humble timber duplexes built in the hollows of Spring Hill for the working classes included this one in Birley Street and a slightly larger one on the corner of Gloucester and Thornbury Streets. Duplexes at Spring Hill that have been demolished include two at the western end of Gregory Terrace.

The Birley Street duplex was initially occupied by Daniel Kelly. By the early 1880s, records show Kelly in the northern half and Frederick Hann, a labourer, residing in the southern part of the building. Over the subsequent

decades, both sides are occupied by a frequently changing number of tenants, including another grocer. This pattern of cheaper housing in the hollows and valleys reflects the geographical stratification of classes in Spring Hill and other inner city suburbs such as Red Hill and Paddington.

In 1911, Daniel Kelly's property in Birley Street was transferred to Julia Kelly, a spinster. After her death in 1914, the land passed to other members of the Kelly family who retained the property until it was sold in 1951. A 1911 plan of the building shows that both sides of the duplex had rear external stairs to the backyard which contained a pair of adjoining "earth closets" and a bath house. During the 1950s, the duplex was used as flats. It has since been converted to a single dwelling.

This humble timber building provides significant evidence of the mid-nineteenth century development of Spring Hill as an early dormitory suburb, particularly as rental housing for working class tenants.

Description

Kelly's Duplex is a small, timber framed low set duplex with a gabled roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting fronting Birley Street, Spring Hill. A narrow timber framed skillion roofed verandah spans the front. The building retains early timber framed sash windows.

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 it provides evidence of the pattern of residential development of Spring Hill in the late nineteenth century.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an example of a small, single-storey, timber duplex in Brisbane.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a good example of a nineteenth-century, single-storey, timber duplex in Brisbane.

References

1. BCC building cards
2. Brisbane City Council Detail Plan no. 16, 1914
3. BCA Surveyor's Field Book, 46 Birley St, Spring Hill – C12-114 16 Nov 1911
4. Environment and Heritage Protection. Entries for Queensland Heritage Register: 'Athol Place' (600167), Moody's Cottages (600314), 'Theosophical Society Building' (600169), McWhinney's Brick Cottage (602248)
5. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
6. Queensland Certificates of Title
7. Queensland Post Office Directories

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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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