



## Heritage Citation



**Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Show Ring**

## Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 1644 Logan Road, Mount Gravatt, Queensland 4122
<b>Type of place</b>	Sportsground
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Bungalow
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP140827
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — October 2010
<b>People/associations</b>	Arthur Scurr (Association)
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

Although the first Mt. Gravatt Agricultural Show was held in 1915, the annual two week exposition did not have a permanent home until 1919 when Robert Grieve Jnr transferred a portion of his land to the trustees of the Mt. Gravatt Agricultural, Horticultural, Industrial and Progress Society. In 1970, the Brisbane City Council, who purchased the site in 1938, announced their decision to sell the land for redevelopment. Despite protests from local residents, all buildings on the site, including two 1880s buildings, were demolished in 1974. A campaign led by local businessman Arthur Scurr saw the protest taken to the Privy Council in London who prevented the Council from selling the site for redevelopment. By 1979 the Mt. Gravatt Show was once again being held at the site. During the 1990s, buildings from the Cannon Hill Saleyards and Evans Deakins Engineering Works at Rocklea were moved onto the site.

## History

The site now occupied by the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds was originally part of two separate crown land purchases that were made in 1866 when the area was first opened up for settlement. By the turn of the century, Creek Road had been constructed and the site was owned by Robert Grieve, part of a holding of over 20 acres.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Mt Gravatt was a thriving farming district with a small village running along Logan Road. Like other farming districts, the highlight of the social calendar was the holding of the Agricultural Exposition or Show, organised by the Mt Gravatt Agricultural, Horticultural, Industrial and Progress Society.

The first Mt Gravatt Agricultural Show was held in 1915 in James Paddock that was located at the rear of the Mt Gravatt Hotel. The Mt Gravatt Show then moved to Robert Grieve's subdivisions 2 and 3 in 1918. The use of a farmer's spare paddocks as a site for the local agricultural show was common practice throughout Queensland.

In order to formalise the use of Grieve's paddock, Robert (junior) transferred ownership of subdivision 1 to a group of trustees representing the Mt Gravatt Agricultural, Horticultural, Industrial and Progress Society. Thus on 4 December 1919, the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds gained a permanent home.

The first trustees of the showgrounds site were Andrew Harry Glindemann, John Trim and William Henry Clarke. On 23 August 1920, the three men mortgaged the land through the Bank of New South Wales, possibly using the money raised to pay for the erection of some facilities on the site.

While the Brisbane Exhibition, held each August, remained the most important event on the local show circuit, the smaller shows held in Brisbane's rural districts, retained their importance as a focal point for the celebration of the specific identity of each of these local communities. Thus agricultural shows flourished in areas such as Zillmere, Nundah, Brookfield and Rocklea. In Mt Gravatt, the show's sense of local identity was further enhanced when the original Mt Gravatt School building (built 1884) was shifted to the showgrounds site in 1931. The building was relocated because a new, larger building containing three classrooms was erected in the school grounds at 1263 Logan Road in 1931.

On 9 November 1938, the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds site was transferred from the two trustees to the Brisbane City Council. The Council maintained the site as a recreational reserve with the site leased to the Mt Gravatt Agricultural, Horticultural, Industrial and Progress Society for two weeks every July for the purposes of holding the annual show.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 had no immediate impact upon the annual show. They continued to be held until 1942, when, with the influx of United States servicemen into Brisbane, the various showgrounds sites were converted into military camps. In 1942, the U.S. Army applied to Council to lease the showgrounds site for the establishment of a Field Motor Vehicle Repair Shop. But the Mt Gravatt District Historical Association has claimed that the showgrounds were occupied by the Australian Army until 1945. During that time, U.S. Army personnel removed the original 1880s shelter shed at the Mt Gravatt lookout and relocated it onto the showgrounds site. The 1946 aerial photograph of the site shows that it contained four buildings placed near the show ring and a gatehouse located at the site entrance on Logan Road. Also during the war, subdivision 1 had changed owners. Ada and Arthur Tovey took over the 10 acres, 3 roods and 19 perch block of land on 2 October 1942.

The annual Mt Gravatt Show revived after the war. With the extension of the Logan Road tramline to Mt Gravatt in 1951, the area began to change from a farming district into a modern suburb, largely due to housing estates created along Logan Road by local developer George Chester. The Queensland Housing Commission also added to the change in land usage by creating war service homes and housing commission estates along the northern side of Creek Road. Arthur and Ada Tovey followed suit by resubdividing subdivision 1 and then selling off the land as 24 perch house blocks. As a result, the Brisbane City Council became the owner of resubdivision 28 of subdivision 1 of Portion 332 on 13 October 1952. Council had acquired the balance of the Tovey's unsold land covering an area of 6 acres, 2 roods and 28 perches. In 1958, a Girl Guides hut was added to the site.

By the 1960s, the land south of Creek Road was still covered in paddocks and bushland and this rural setting helped maintain the Mt Gravatt Show's appeal as a traditional agricultural exhibition. In 1963, a major building program occurred at the site with a dress shed, toilets and meeting room added to the showgrounds.

By the early 1970s though, the pressure for development saw the urban sprawl spread around the showground site. As a result, on 30 May 1970, the Brisbane City Council made the controversial announcement decision to sell off the showgrounds site for redevelopment as a Myers shopping centre. As a result a community protest group was formed to fight the sale and redevelopment of the showgrounds site. Seven hundred people attended

the first protest group meeting held only four days after Council's announcement. The dispute grew bitter and Council demolished all of the buildings on the site in 1974. To further prepare the site for a land sale, Council subdivided the property into Lots 1 and 2 on 11 April 1974. The showgrounds site that encompassed the land acquired by the Council in 1938 and the land acquired from the Toveys in 1952 was finally amalgamated into one block on 9 August 1974. On that day, the showgrounds site, covering an area of 5.258 hectares was declared as Lot 1 on registered Plan 140827.

As a result of Council's actions, the Mt Gravatt Show Society was forced to hold its annual event elsewhere, including at sites at Broadwater Road and Gardiner Road and even as far away as Kuraby. Further community protests followed. Numerous legal actions, largely funded through prominent local businessman Arthur Scurr mortgaging his own home, ended in an appeal to the Privy Court in London in 1978. The Privy Council's verdict was in favour of the protestors and Council was unable to dispose of the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds site. This was a significant win for people power, for although the showgrounds buildings had been destroyed, the showgrounds site had been saved. This was one of the first public campaigns to save a piece of Brisbane's heritage, a political issue that would come to the fore with the midnight demolition of the Bellvue Hotel by the state government in 1979.

In 1979, the Mt Gravatt Show returned to its Logan Road site. In 1988, control of the site was transferred to a Board of Trustees operating under the state government's Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988. This was formalised on 17 December 1990, when the title deeds to the property were transferred to the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust. Further community action saw the Stock & Station Agent's Office, a smaller office and a gatehouse from the Cannon Hill Saleyards moved to the showgrounds site in 1994 after the closure of the saleyards. In 1997, with the closure of the Evans Deakins Engineering Works at Rocklea, the Evans Deakins Engineers Office was also moved out to the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds site.

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a remnant of Mt. Gravatt's rural heritage and as an annual tradition that has continued since the early twentieth century.

## Rarity

### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as one of only three small rural showground sites remaining in Brisbane.

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## 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 the headquarters of the Mt Gravatt Agricultural, Horticultural, Industrial and Progress Society (later the Mt Gravatt Show Society); and, for its association with prominent local businessman Arthur Scurr who helped saved the site from redevelopment.

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## 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 a site that has provided enjoyment and a sense of community and tradition for local residents since 1919; and, as evidenced by the strong resistance to the site's redevelopment in the 1970s.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards
2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
3. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets
4. Brisbane City Council, Minutes 1941-1942, (Brisbane, Brisbane City Council, 1942)
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
6. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs – Estate Maps
7. Mt Gravatt District Historical Association, *Jump on the Bus – brief history and commentary of Mt Gravatt District Heritage Tour*, Brisbane: Mt Gravatt District Historical Association, 1997

8. Mt Gravatt State School, *Mt Gravatt State School 1874-1974 Centenary Booklet*, Brisbane: Mt Gravatt State School, 1974
  9. Robinson, Gwen, *Mt Gravatt – Bush to Suburb*, (Brisbane: Gwen Robinson, 1988)
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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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