

Heritage Citation



Paddington Community Crèche & Kindergarten

Key details

Also known as	Paddington Parent Resource and Toy Library
Addresses	At 18 Charlotte Street, Paddington, Queensland 4064
Type of place	Preschool
Period	World War I 1914-1918
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L335_B3554
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — February 2001

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (G) Social

Constructed in 1916, the Paddington Kindergarten and Crèche was the first purpose-built facility for the Crèche and Kindergarten Association in Queensland, a non-profit group which began as a welfare organisation. The site contains two adjacent timber and tin buildings, the first built in 1916 and the second in 1917, that demonstrate the Crèche and Kindergarten Association's long term commitment towards the health and mental development of Queensland children. Based upon Froebelian principles, the Paddington kindergarten is a physical reminder of the rapid growth of the kindergarten movement in the state during the early decades of the twentieth century.

History

By this period, Paddington was well established as an residential suburb of Brisbane. La Trobe and Given Terraces developed in the late 19th century as the major thoroughfare of the district, and were home to many of the shops, churches, community buildings and other services. The hilly terrain of Paddington saw the familiar Brisbane pattern of development emerge – substantial homes for the wealthy on the ridges and rows of small workers' dwellings in the lower side streets. As a suburb with a large working class population, demand for childcare was likely to be in greater demand than in more affluent areas where mothers could afford to stay at home. Paddington was named after the London suburb which derived its name from the Poeddings, a Saxon tribe from the mouth of the Elbe River Valley and their town ("ton").

The kindergarten movement had its origins in the late 19th century educational theories of Pestalozzi and the German educator Friedrich Froebel as well as the reforming zeal of the middle-classes (especially women) who wished to "rescue" working class children from slum housing and "unfit" parents. From 1897, Queensland younger than 6 were excluded from school entry. This age was lowered to 5 by 1930. The introduction to Queensland of "kindergarten" teaching based on the Froebel's theories filled the gap of education for children below school age.

The man who began the kindergarten movement in Queensland was the Reverend Loyal Lincoln Wirt, an American minister of the Congregational church. During his daily visitations between the Manse and the city church (then on Wharf street), he observed groups of children at play on the streets who after dark became 'prowling predatory gangs'. In what was locally known as "Poverty Valley", many women had to provide for families when menfolk had lost employment.

Inspired, Wirt saw the need for a place to house the Institute of Social Services, as well as a crèche and kindergarten. A disused tobacco factory at the corner of Brunswick and Ivory Street was the perfect location. After arranging to meet the Sydney owners, he feared that if a lease were granted it would be beyond what the church could afford.

However the owners were interested in Wirt 's social experiment, and the generous offer of rental at 'one peppercorn per year' was offered.

Other notable citizens had become attracted to Wirt's ideas. Miss Celia Cooper, daughter of Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir Pope Cooper, invited the wives and daughters of prominent professionals to Hawstead in New Farm. There by voluntary action originated the idea of establishing a crèche and kindergarten for Brisbane. Early patrons of the kindergarten movement in Brisbane were Lady Gowrie, Lady Cilento and Lady Forster. Crèches were named after these women in St. Paul's Terrace, the RNA Showgrounds and Paddington, respectively.

In 1907 the Brisbane Crèche and Kindergarten and Social Institute opened its doors, containing a crèche or day nursery, where mothers working in nearby factories could leave their babies. It included a kindergarten, reading room, gymnasium, swimming pool, evening classes, roof garden and a playground.

After three years, a disagreement over finances saw the two organisations split once the Rev Wirt returned to America in 1909. The organisation was not short of helpers or enthusiasm, and renamed itself the Crèche and Kindergarten Association. Support came from the Presbyterian Church, and the kindergarten found a home in the Warner Street School building belonging to the Valley Presbyterian Church.

A promise of a Government Grant of £150 per annum for every crèche established by the Association was looked upon as its salvation and signalled a period of expansion and development for the movement in Queensland after 1910. By 1910 the organisation was promoting kindergarten teaching as a career, and while early tuition was expensive and could be afforded only by the wealthy, families saw in it a means of impressing womanly virtues upon young women and providing a solid grounding in the nurturing aspects of all that was fine and good in motherhood.

The Crèche and Kindergarten Association's aims were stated in the Constitution, devised by the Reverend James Gibson, Minister of the Park Presbyterian Church. Its aims were;

To establish and maintain Day Nurseries and Free Kindergarten Schools for the children of the poor; To train teachers in the theory and practice of the kindergarten system, and to maintain an approved standard of work; and to create and foster an interest in kindergarten work.

The Brisbane Kindergarten Training College was established in 1911 by the Crèche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland (incorporated) and was the first formal institution to prepare teachers for any sector of teaching in Queensland. On completion of the course, students were awarded with the title; Diploma, Kindergarten Training College. Elements included infant feeding and nurture, practical toy making, activities, child study and a course in hygiene.

In January 1914, a grant was made available through the Lands Department of half an acre in Paddington on the site of the old Baptist cemetery in Beatrice Street (as Charlotte Street was then named). This enabled the Association to proceed with plans for the Paddington kindergarten and crèche. An adjoining parcel of land was also set aside as a children's playground.

The first purpose designed kindergarten in Queensland was officially opened by Lady Goold-Adams in September 1916. The wife of the Governor and the Association's Patroness, she stated that the crèche section should be built as soon as funds became available. Through generous donations the Paddington crèche was opened in August the following year, the Ithaca Shire Council providing the surrounding garden. Both structures first appear in the 1917-18 post office records under the single listing Crèche for small children.

During the Spanish Influenza outbreak in 1919, the Paddington kindergarten remained open 24 hours a day to

care for children whose parents were ill with influenza, as patients and their immediate families had to be segregated. The first case had occurred in May, with 830 deaths occurring in Queensland alone from the virus.

In 1921 Beatrice Street was renamed Charlotte Street. That same year fire destroyed part of the Paddington building. Through generous donations it was quickly rebuilt, with the addition of a bath for staff and a hot water geyser for the children's bathroom in 1923. In 1925 the death of Mrs George Marchant, Chairman of the Paddington Branch and a member of the Executive was noted with deep regret. In memory of his wife, Mr Marchant arranged for additions to the Paddington Crèche building to the value of £500. By 1929 the verandahs were enclosed and front entrance doors installed. Funds for this project were raised by mothers of the kindergarten in memory of Miss Clark, a former director.

In February 1942 all kindergartens within a two-mile radius of the GPO were ordered to close due to the possibility of air raids. By December of the same year, after a plea from the Association to the Minister for Education, Cabinet decided they could reopen.

In 2001, the 1916 structure is still serving the Paddington community as a kindergarten, while the building to the left is a toy library.

Description

The kindergarten consists of two almost identical adjacent buildings facing Charlotte Street. Both buildings are raised above ground level on stumps and have a corrugated metal roof cladding.

The buildings are clad with timber boards and have six-paned casement windows.

The earlier building (approx 1916) sits on the corner of Charlotte St and Moreton St. This building has a timber boards street-facing gable and a separate hip-ended front awning, presently enclosed and used as the entry foyer to the school.

The other adjacent building (approx 1917) has a similar street-facing gable but with a separate verandah roof encircling its four sides.

The large established trees in the school precinct make an important contribution to the Charlotte Street streetscape.

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

for the evidence it provides of the development of Paddington, the development of early childhood care, and the need for a purpose designed facility to provide care for young families in the area in the early twentieth century; and, as the first purpose-built kindergarten in Queensland that has operated for more than 90 years.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a rare example of an early purpose-built kindergarten.

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 kindergarten and crèche that has provided childcare to generations of local residents.

References

1. Banf, Peggy and Ross, Norma. *"The Peppercorn Trail" The Story of the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland and its People 1907-1997*, Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, Brisbane, 1997
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Byrnes, Matthew, *Stephens District Historical Overview*, (Brisbane: Matthew Byrnes, 1995), p.7
4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
5. McBride, Frank and Helen Taylor. *Brisbane 100 Stories*. Brisbane: BCC. 1997
6. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895

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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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