

## Heritage Citation



### Windsor Brass Foundry (former)

#### Key details

Also known as	David Green's Foundry
Addresses	At 8 Atkins Street, Red Hill, Queensland 4059
Type of place	Factory
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Lot plan	L15_RP20382; L16_RP20382
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — June 2014
Construction	Structure: Corrugated iron

This early foundry was established in Red Hill by the David Green in 1882. The brass foundry was operated by the Green family as the Windsor Road Brass Foundry until 1973. In 1987 it was purchased by Geoffrey John Underwood and is the site where Underwood's 'Artbusters' created and manufactured the well-known Expo 'Human Factor' series of statues as well as the iconic statue of football legend Wally Lewis. Currently leased by tradesmen, the site has retained a small scale industrial use in a suburban environment for over 130 years.

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## History

This property was originally part of a large freehold land purchase made by Brisbane resident George Bowser on 31 January 1866. Bowser paid a total of £31.17.9 for 3 acres 32 perches of undeveloped land identified as Portions 528 and 529 in the Enoggera Parish. The property had another three owners before being sold to James Voller, of Brisbane, in 1873. Voller subdivided the land and began selling small allotments in 1874.

During the 1860s and 1870s, Red Hill remained largely undeveloped. There were no roads running through its forest-covered slopes, with only a handful of residents living beyond Petrie Terrace. In 1877, David Green purchased subdivisions 17 and 18 of Portion 529 owned by Voller.

Green was a brass-finisher, who lived and worked in Little Edward Street, on the outskirts of Brisbane Town. David and Joseph Green established a brass foundry on his Red Hill land and it is first listed in the 1878 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories. The Brisbane Courier later identified David Green as an early settler of this part of Brisbane. He was involved in the area's early community development:

*"Windsor road was at that time [1882] a nameless track.... It was in the shop of Mr David Green sen. That a meeting of residents—about a dozen strong—came to call the thoroughfare Windsor road."*<sup>1</sup>

The firm eventually became commonly known as the Windsor Brass Foundry and first appeared under the name of the Windsor Road Foundry in the 1888 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories.

In 1881, David Green acquired the block adjoining his 1877 purchase, giving him almost 62 perches of land with a dual street frontage. Subdivisions 17 and 18 allowed direct access to what became Windsor Road, while subdivision 16 fronted a side road that was later named Mary Street and Short Street before being renamed Atkins Street.

In 1882, David Green transferred subdivision 16 to Joseph Green. Joseph then purchased subdivision 15 in 1883. This created the existing property of 8 Atkins Street, comprising 47.6 perches of land. The Green family home, 'Violet Cottage' was built in the side-street, with Mary Street, Red Hill first listed in the 1883-84 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories. Mary Street changed name to Short Street in 1891.

The Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plan of May 1927 shows 'Violet Cottage' fronting Short (now Atkins) Street with a large factory building and terraces at the rear. A number of smaller buildings, possibly the 1870s shop and foundry, are shown on the adjoining lot facing Windsor Road. The 1946 aerial photograph shows the factory building comprised twin foundry bays, and other smaller buildings on the block on the corner of Windsor Road

and Short St. The current industrial building is the building shown in the 1946 aerial and corresponds with the factory outline drawn in 1927. The brass foundry was involved in the recycling of old brass, such as brass name plates. A purchase price of three to four pence per pound of scrap brass was offered to Brisbane residents.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Green died on 18 August 1938. In 1939, his foundry and residence passed to Maurice E. Green, who also worked at the brass works. By 1950, the foundry was operated by David Green and the corner block was offered for sale as an “old established foundry”. When it failed to sell, it was reported to be 67 years old and “one of the oldest foundries in Brisbane”.<sup>3</sup> When Maurice Green died on 15 June 1957, the foundry remained in family hands, with his estate transmitted to Edward J. and Arthur M. Green in 1958. According to the *Queensland Places* website, the Windsor Brass Foundry closed in 1973. Arthur Green died on 29 April 1978 and his share of 8 Atkins Street passed to Mona F. Green. When Arthur Green died on 28 September 1978, the property was vested in the sole ownership of the widow Mona Green. She held onto 8 Atkins Street for another four years before selling it to Country Investments Pty Ltd in 1982. It was sold to the current owners Geoffrey J. Underwood and Judith A. B. Underwood on 5 February 1987.

Geoffrey John Underwood is a prominent artist/fabricator, who was the sculptor for Brisbane’s popular Expo ’88 ‘Human Factor’ statues. Under the direction of the Expo ’88 Creative Director, the Academy Award winning designer John Truscott, John Underwood and his company, the ‘Artbusters’ group of artists created 88 fibreglass, human sculptures to meet Truscott’s vision of the ‘Human Factor’ to be scattered throughout the Expo’s Southbank site. Underwood was required to produce amusing sculptures to be positioned in unlikely spots around Southbank. Underwood was tasked with making unique sculptures, where:

*“Each white-wash figure is caught in freeze frame, performing an endearing natural movement or task... Truscott describes the contrast between the human factor and his more serious works of art as the “eclectic juxtaposition.”*<sup>4</sup>

These sculptures were extremely popular with the crowds attending Expo ’88. After Expo ’88 closed on 30 October 1988, the ‘Human Factor’ sculptures were put up for auction. The popular sculpture *Around the Campfire* remains on public display in Brisbane City. Apart from the ‘Human Factor’ series, other notable John Underwood sculptures are *The World War II Nurses Memorial* (1992) in Anzac Square of Brisbane City, *The Emperor of Lang Park* (1992) and *‘Buck: the bronco’* at Milton, and the *Speakers Corner* (1992) figures of Emma Millar, Sir Charles Lilley and Steele Rudd. Geoffrey and Judy Underwood moved to Phuket, Thailand, where they have an interior design business, the Underwood Art Factory.

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## Description

The former foundry is a large, metal-sheeted double-gabled building with vented roofs and metal-framed windows. Beneath the building is sand-filled room accessed via trapdoor.

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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 foundry established in 1878 and operating as the Windsor Road Brass Foundry until 1973, and then operated by the Underwoods until the late twentieth century. The foundry building, including the chimney, demonstrates the coexistence of industrial and residential development in Red Hill in the late nineteenth century.

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### Rarity

#### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as a rare and uncommon example of early industrial development surrounded by residential development.

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### Scientific

#### CRITERION C

The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history

as the site of a brass foundry established in the late nineteenth century and operating for more than 130 years.

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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 workplace of Expo '88 artist John Underwood and the workshop of his 'Artbusters' group which created many popular Brisbane sculptures.

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## References

1. "From Bush Roads to City Streets – Red Hill in the Early 'Eighties", *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 June 1930
2. "ANSWERS", *The Courier Mail*, 15 December 1938
3. Advertisement *The Courier Mail* 28 April 1950 p.15. "No sale for shops, home" *The Courier Mail* 3 May 1950 p.9.
4. Cowell, Andrew (ed.), *World Expo 88 – The Official Souvenir Program*, (Brisbane: Richard Walsh, 1988), p.4
5. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs 1946 & 2009
6. Brisbane City Council, post-1946 Building Cards
7. Brisbane City Council Sewerage Map No.732, 14 May 1927
8. Cowell, Andrew (ed.), *World Expo 88 – The Official Souvenir Program*, (Brisbane: Richard Walsh, 1988)
9. Coutts, J.V.D., "Brisbane's Old Buildings –II – Many Suburbs Named For Pioneers' Homes", (undated newspaper cutting)
10. "Do You Know Brisbane – Red Hill – Picturesque Residential Area", *The Sunday Mail*, 21 April 1929
11. Around Brisbane – Good Old Red Hill", Brisbane City Update, (Brisbane: Brisbane City Council, 1983).
12. "The Making of Brisbane", *The Courier Mail*, 11 March 1985
13. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland. Certificates of Title and other records
14. John Oxley Library, suburban history files – Red Hill
15. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
16. *Expo 88 Human Factor series* "The Drovers" by John Underwood,  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b3sQjFynYo>
17. <http://underwood-phuket.com/>

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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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