



Heritage Information

Please contact us for more information about this place:
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1191 Beenleigh Road, Runcorn

Key details

Addresses	At 1191 Beenleigh Road, Runcorn, Queensland 4113
Type of place	House, Tree/s

Period	World War I 1914-1918
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L2_SP231563
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Information — December 2014
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity

This house, built circa 1915 for William and Anne Arthy, provides evidence of the development of the semi-rural Runcorn district. Originally part of the Brisbane Agricultural Reserve, this fifteen-acre allotment was purchased by orchard farmer Thomas Shaw in 1884. Shaw's allotment was a subdivision of a parcel of land that he and others had held since the 1860s. Shaw cultivated most of the land with fruit and vegetables. After passing through a number of owners, the property was purchased by local resident Cedric Stombuco in 1932. The Stombucos had had a connection with the area since the 1890s, when Cedric's uncle Giovanni, son of renowned architect Andre Stombuco, moved to the area. The Stombuco family owned the property from 1932 until 2014.

History

Now situated in Runcorn, the house and site was formerly considered part of Kuraby. The areas of Kuraby, Runcorn and Eight Mile Plains experienced similar development as predominately agricultural areas with limited residential settlement until the late twentieth century.

The Kuraby, Runcorn and Eight Mile Plains district had been known as 'Spring Creek', and the later suburb name 'Kuraby' means 'place of springs' or 'small creek'. In 1861 the district was included as part of the Brisbane Agricultural Reserve, which was soon extended and renamed the Eight Mile Plains Agricultural Reserve. The area's fertile soil and numerous waterholes made it ideal for tree plantings and crop growing. Allotments in the reserve were offered for sale, and in 1862 orchard farmer Thomas Shaw and two others purchased Portion 18 of the Agricultural Reserve. The landholders subdivided the 47 acre portion in 1884, when just over an acre of the property was resumed for a new railway line. Shaw became the owner of this fifteen-acre allotment, cultivating most of the land with fruit and vegetables.

Progress in the district was slow. Eight Miles Plains was so called for its distance from the One Mile Swamp (now Woolloongabba), and this was too far from Brisbane city to encourage rapid development. Access to the city was improved by the completion of the Beenleigh Rail Line in 1885 and in 1886 a bone mill supplying fertiliser was opened. Services followed, including a post office (1887) and school (1901) at Runcorn. However, the area's distance from central Brisbane remained a significant factor. Train services were supplied only as far as Sunnybank well into the 1910s, and this discouraged settlement. By 1900 the population of the district was only around 160 people, mostly farmers and timber-getters. Small crops dominated the developed allotments, alongside some dairy farms. The area was also ideal for plant nurseries. These were established in the area in

the early twentieth century, taking advantage of the 'deep, sandy, loamy soils' which encouraged root growth.

Although Thomas Shaw was listed in the Post Office Directories as a resident of the area through the 1890s and early twentieth century, it is unknown whether he built a residence on the site. Ownership of the property had passed to George Shaw in 1887, who does not appear to have resided in the area.

The Shaw family briefly lost title to the property in the early 1890s but regained it in 1896, after the interim owner defaulted on a three thousand pound mortgage. In 1912 title to the property passed to Georgina and Thomas Macdonald. Like Thomas Shaw, the Macdonalds were listed as residents of the area. Thomas was a fruit grower, and offered strawberry crops for sale in 1913 from Kuraby. However it is not known whether the Macdonalds constructed a residence on this allotment, or if they resided elsewhere in the district.

The Macdonalds owned the property for only three years, with title passing to William and Anne Arthy in 1915. The Arthys had a similarly short tenancy, but it appears that the house was constructed during their time as owners. Their 'beautiful New House' was mentioned in advertising offering the property for sale in February 1916. The 'Splendid Compact Farm' named 'Roseville' was only half a mile from Kuraby railway station, and featured 'all crops, all stock' and implements. The property also had seventy fruit trees. The district was by this time well known for its fruit growth, particularly tropical fruit which was found to 'thrive remarkably well' in the area. By the mid-1920s it had developed a reputation as the 'fruit bowl of Brisbane', a title which survived to the 1970s.

Despite the property's apparent advantages, the Arthys struggled to sell, finally disposing of the property in 1920. Some growth did occur in the area in the 1910s and 1920s, with agitation for more train services, the formation of a local Progress Association in 1924 and a school at Kuraby in 1928. However, Kuraby and Runcorn remained sparsely populated, and the Arthys' was one of very few houses in the area. Vacant land was still available closer to central Brisbane, which was much more appealing to those who did not intend to farm.

The property was once again sold in 1932 and was purchased by Cedric Stombuco. The Stombuco family had lived in the area since the 1890s, when the wife and family of renowned architect Andrea Stombuco moved to the district. Mrs Stombuco served as post mistress at Eight Mile Plains until her death in 1916. She was replaced by her son Giovanni, who was active in the local community, engaging in agitation for additional railway services, serving as Councillor for the area and helping form the Cooper's Plains Progress Association. Giovanni's nephew Cedric had been raised in Kuraby, which may have been a factor in his purchase. His daughter and later owner of the property Venetia Stombuco was also one of the first pupils enrolled at Kuraby State School in 1928.

The Stombuco family retained ownership of the property through the twentieth century. The property also includes a garden of mature trees and a circa 1965 house but this house is not significant.

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 an early twentieth century house surrounded by mature trees on land that was formerly part of Brisbane Agricultural Reserve.

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 twentieth century house constructed in the Runcorn and Kuraby areas.

References

1. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Environment and Resource Management
2. *The Brisbane Courier, The Courier Mail, The Queenslander*.
3. Brisbane City Council, 1946 & 2009 aerial photographs
4. Brisbane City Council Properties on the Web
5. Queensland Post Office Directories
6. Piero P. Giorgio, Stombuco: *the Building of Brisbane in the 19th Century*, Minerva E & S, St Lucia: 1998
7. Brisbane City Council. Kuraby District Local Area Plan Character Study. July 1996
8. Queensland Places, Kuraby, Runcorn (website)
9. BRISbites, Kuraby History (2002), Runcorn History (2000), Acacia Ridge History (Lesley Jenkins, 2000)
10. Australian Electoral Rolls 1903-1954
11. Correspondence from former owner Venetia Stombuco, 1996

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Note: This information 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 information 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.

Information prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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