

Heritage Citation



180 Waterworks Road, Ashgrove

Key details

Addresses	At 180 Waterworks Road, Ashgrove, Queensland 4060
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Free Gothic
Lot plan	L24_RP55327
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — January 1997
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
People/associations	Robert Harrison Smith (Occupant)
Criterion for listing	(B) Rarity; (H) Historical association

This timber house was constructed in the late 1880s for barrister Alexander Smith and is a rare intact example of a residence built at a time when Ashgrove was evolving from a rural to residential area. It is also important for its association with notable politician Robert Harrison Smith who occupied the house from 1894 to 1897. Smith was a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for Bowen from 1888-1902 and Member of the Legislative Council from 1904 until his death in 1911.

History

Records suggest that this timber Carpenter Gothic house was built in the late 1880s for Alexander Smith, a Brisbane barrister.

The house is situated on a large block facing Waterworks Road. The site was once part of portion 664, an area of more than 3 acres between Waterworks Road and Ithaca Creek, which was granted to Christopher Henry Llewellyn in 1867. In 1878, portion 664 was purchased by commission agent Ebenezer Hooker of Hooker and Son. In April 1879, the land was transferred to his business partner, accountant John Edwin Elliott. An early plan for Ithaca Creek Estate shows the entire portion divided into 25 allotments, each of which adjoins the creek. The first allotments from this estate were not sold until 1881.

During this period the distance of the area from the centre of Brisbane and the lack of public transport meant that few residential allotments were sold. During the 1870s, Ashgrove was primarily farm land with several elite residences on large estates. Although Waterworks Road had been established as a thoroughfare early in the area's history with farmland at the Gap settled in the 1850s and the opening of Enoggera Reservoir in 1866, by 1890 there were only around a dozen residences on each side of Waterworks Road at Ashgrove. Apart from those individuals involved in local agriculture, most residents were white collar workers and skilled tradespeople. It was not until the extension of the Red Hill tramline to Ashgrove in 1924 that Ashgrove became a popular residential suburb.

Allotments 22 to 25 of the Ithaca Creek Estate were purchased by fuel merchant, William Miles in September 1881. The land changed hands again before being bought by Alexander Smith early in 1887. Alexander Smith was a barrister and judge's associate to Supreme Court Judge, the Hon. Charles Stuart Mein. At the time of purchasing the land, Smith mortgaged the property for £188. The following year, Smith placed a second mortgage on the property for £375. This was possibly to finance the construction of a house on the site. Alexander Smith is first listed as residing in Waterworks Road, Ashgrove from around 1889. After 1893, he is no longer listed at this address although he owns the land until 1913. However, evidence suggests that Robert Harrison Smith, possibly a relative, lived in the house from 1894 to 1897.

Robert Harrison Smith was an Irish born immigrant who arrived in Queensland in 1863, intending to grow cotton. He settled in Port Denison in North Queensland, and became a grazier and auctioneer. He was also a Captain in the Queensland Garrison Artillery. Robert Harrison Smith was the Member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for Bowen from 1888 - 1902. He is listed at this time as residing both in Bowen, and in Waterworks Road, Ashgrove. Smith was a Member of the Legislative Council from 1904 until his death in 1911.

Since 1913, the house has had several owners. It has heritage significance as a rare surviving example of the houses built in the area during the 1880s when Ashgrove was evolving from a farming district to a residential suburb.

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:

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a rare, surviving example of a residence built at Ashgrove in the 1880s when the area was being transformed from a rural district to a residential suburb.

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 the former residence of notable Queensland politician Robert Harrison Smith.

References

1. Brisbane History Group, *Brisbane By 1888: The Public Image*, Brisbane, Brisbane History Group, 1987
 2. JOL Estate Map collection
 3. Post Office Directories.
 4. Titles Office Records
 5. Waterson, D.B., *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament 1860-1929*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1972
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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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