

Heritage Citation



Abbotsleigh

Key details

Addresses	At 11 Abbotsford Road, Bowen Hills, Queensland 4006
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Free Gothic
Lot plan	L9_RP10086; L10_RP10086
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — June 2013
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Masonry; Walls: Timber

This two storey timber house was built for George Keen, a carrier, and his family. It is situated on the western side of Bowen Hills, opposite the railway line (to Shorncliffe) which opened in 1882. 'Abbotsleigh' replaced an earlier shingled cottage on the property and is set amongst mature vegetation including a large and significant Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*) near the front boundary on Abbotsford Road. It appears that the original brick kitchen at the rear has been retained.

History

'Abbotsleigh' is a substantial two storey timber home built circa the 1880s for George Keen. It is situated at the rear of two twenty perch allotments which face the railway line at Bowen Hills. Keen was a carrier by occupation and is also believed to have had a connection with Henderson's sawmill.

Buckinghamshire-born George Keen erected a small shingled cottage on this property soon after he purchased it in November 1877. He later demolished this cottage and constructed the present house.

According to F.E. Lord's article in the *Queenslander* of 3 November 1932, the Keens' new home, 'Abbotsleigh', originally consisted of a basement, ground floor surrounded by verandahs on three sides, front and back balconies and two attic rooms. The house featured "ornate iron palisading round the balcony and round the little projections from the ends of the two attic rooms" suggesting that the upper storey has since been altered. Built on elevated land in Bowen Hills, 'Abbotsleigh' had commanding views to Eildon Hill in Windsor, Albion, Mayne and the D'Aguilar Range as well as to the city from the western verandah. A brick kitchen adjoining the rear, northern corner of the house appears to have been retained.

'Abbotsleigh' was home to George, his wife Mary and their ten children until George's death in 1926. His widow Mary survived him by only three years but the property remained in the ownership of the Keen family until 1955. Keen evidently shared in Brisbane's 1880s economic boom when increasing numbers of migrants made their home in the township and businesses expanded. Bowen Hills was by then established as a residential suburb close to the city and the Sandgate railway line which opened in 1882. With the lower areas populated by workers in modest dwellings, the hills were the preserve of those of better means who built more substantial residences like 'Abbotsford' and 'Miegunyah'. This elegant two-storey timber home, in what is now an inner suburb with a significant amount of commerce and light industry is evidence of that period of the city's and Bowen Hills' history.

In 1949, the Keen family was granted Council approval to move and alter the house. A comparison of 1946 and 2011 aerial photographs indicates that the house was moved only a short distance towards Abbotsford Road. It was possibly at this time that the upper storey was altered as in 1955, approval was given to convert 'Abbotsleigh' to a 'tenement'. The following year, an application to enclose the verandah was also approved.

Description

'Abbotsleigh' is a two-storey, timber house in the Victorian Filigree style set at the rear of a narrow 40 perch (506m²) parcel of land. It has a ridge to ridge metal roof with a dormer window and a separate roof over the verandah which encircles the core of the house. The upper front verandah is supported by simple posts and has decorative iron brackets, fringe and balustrading.

The front façade is symmetrical with a central door flanked by two large windows. The front door has a rectangular fanlight.

Photographic evidence suggests that the original brick kitchen at the rear, northern corner of the house has been retained.

Several mature trees, including a large, significant Weeping Fig tree, provide some visual protection for the house from the busy traffic of Abbotsford Road.

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 intensification of residential development in inner suburbs of Brisbane the 1880s. It also provides evidence of the particular social stratification of hillsides which was displayed in late nineteenth century patterns of residential development in Brisbane.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a two-storey nineteenth-century timber residence with established vegetation including a large fig tree in the front yard.

References

1. Certificates of Title.
 2. Post Office Directories.
 3. Queensland Women's Historical Association. *A Look Back in Time: A History of Bowen Hills - Newstead and 'The Creek'*. Breakfast Creek: QWHA, 1996.
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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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