

Heritage Citation



Air Raid Shelter

Key details

Addresses	At 41 Kirkland Avenue, Coorparoo, Queensland 4151
Type of place	Air raid shelter
Period	World War II 1939-1945
Lot plan	Common property_SP184008; L1_SP184008; L2_SP184008; L3_SP184008; L4_SP184008; L5_SP184008; L6_SP184008
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 29 November 2019 Date of Citation — March 2017
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (H) Historical association

This privately built concrete air raid shelter was constructed during World War Two as a precaution against Japanese air attacks. Over 200 air raid shelters were constructed by the Brisbane City Council during the war but many residents took their own precautions by building shelters on their own property. This is one of only a few dozen surviving examples of a privately-built air-raid shelter situated in the yard of a residence. It was retained when the unit development was constructed in 2000.

History

This small concrete structure was built as an air-raid shelter built in the back yard of a house during World War Two as a protection against expected air raids by Japanese forces.

Fear of a military threat from the Japanese in the form of air attack or invasion increased dramatically after the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. Although Australians had been at war since 3 September 1939 and regarded Japan with suspicion, it was not until the entry of Japan into the war that Australians felt their homes and personal safety were seriously under threat, particularly so after the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin in February 1942.

In Queensland, civil authorities, voluntary organisations and the general population prepared for the worst with evacuations, air raid drills, the closure of schools, and the digging of trenches. On 23 December 1941, "The Protection of Persons and Property Order No. 1" was issued by the Queensland Government. This stated that the owners of all buildings in Brisbane where more than 30 people were usually congregated were required to construct air raid shelters. More than 200 public shelters were constructed by the Brisbane City Council, many in parks or near railway stations. Only a few dozen of these survive. Many residents built shelters in their yards in readiness for an attack. In May 1942, over 20,000 civil defence personnel took part in Brisbane's first full scale air raid practice. The threat lasted for another year before in June 1943 Prime Minister Curtin announced that the danger of invasion had passed.

A variety of methods and materials were used in the construction of air raid shelters, including poured concrete and masonry. Those air raid shelters privately built by residents were likely to range from simple covered trenches to more sophisticated shelters, such as this one in Kirkland Avenue, depending on the availability of materials and the owner's proficiency in building techniques.

The air raid shelter was possibly built when the house for G. Ebling was constructed in 1940. However, it may have been built for Maud Mary Burgess Mark, spinster when she owned the property from 1942 until she passed away in 1953.

In 1999 the house was sold and an application was made to Council for the construction of units. Council was advised an air raid shelter was on the site and it was found to be in reasonably good condition and of cultural heritage significance. Discussions with the developer revealed that the shelter was positioned in such a way that it could be accommodated under the building.

The units were constructed in 2000 and the air raid shelter retained on the site. This air raid shelter is significant as a rare surviving example of a private shelter built in the yard of a residence. It provides evidence of a period in Brisbane's history when citizens keenly felt the threat of invasion or attack from the Japanese.

Description

The air raid shelter is a brick masonry and concrete structure partially embedded below ground and located below a contemporary block of units.

The subject site is located in a residential street of Coorparoo with mostly two to three storey multi-dwellings buildings. The site is rectangular and contains a two-storey block of units with a subfloor level which contains the air-raid shelter. The subject structure is located at the subfloor level at the rear of the building.

The subject structure is rectangular in shape and protrudes approximately one metre above the surrounding concrete slab. The walls are face brick masonry with a cast concrete slab above with chamfered edges.

At one end, a concrete stair case with simple steel balustrade leads to the small door way in to the shelter. A small opening with a concrete lintel is noted at the opposite end and is covered by a perforated steel plate.

The shelter appears to be in good condition but shows some sign of damage near the stair case where a corner has been partially demolished, some bricks and part of the concrete top have been removed.

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

history as it is evidence of the precautions taken by Brisbane residents against the threat of air raids by the Japanese during World War Two.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

it is one of only a few remaining privately-built air raid shelters in Brisbane.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

class or classes of cultural places as an example of a privately-built Brisbane domestic air raid shelter of the type constructed in Brisbane during the Second World War.

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 a potential place of refuge during the war the shelters have a special association with the lives of those who lived through World War Two for cultural and social reasons.

References

1. Brisbane City Council. Development records.
2. Queensland. Certificates of Title
3. Queensland. Post Office Directories
4. Digitised newspapers and other records. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

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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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