

Heritage Citation



Aspley State School, A block

Key details

Also known as	Cabbage Tree Creek School
Addresses	At 316 Maundrell Terrace, Aspley, Queensland 4034
Type of place	State school
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Bungalow
Lot plan	L609_SP132122
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — May 2008
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

People/associations	George Lightbody Thomson and James Campbell Thomson (Builder)
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity
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Built in 1890, this timber and tin school building was the first to be built in the district and is the oldest in Brisbane's outer northern suburbs. Funded by money raised from local farming families, the school became a focal point for the local community and hosted dances, picnics, teacher training, and various other activities. The building now forms part of Aspley State School as 'A' Block.

History

The first sale of crown land in Aspley, for settlement and farming, occurred on 27 February 1857, when William John Ward of Shoalhaven purchased more than 350 acres in an area between Zillmere and Roghan Roads. Further land sales in 1860, 1861-62, 1864 and 1865 saw the disposal of most of the surveyed land in the district. Many of the purchasers, such as John and Eleanor Morris, bought the land to farm and build a home upon. The Morris family named their farm 'Aspley Grove' after Aspley Hall, a town near Nottingham, in Britain. It was in Nottingham that John and Eleanor were married. Initially, the district was not known as Aspley but was named after the nearest source of water – Little Cabbage Tree Creek.

In 1866, the last of the crown land, being an area bordered by Maundrell Terrace and Gympie and Webster Roads, was released for sale. By 1867, nearly all of the land in the area had been taken over by large farms. During 1870-1880s, the population of the area grew as the children of the original landowners married and had families. Such was the population growth that a horse-drawn bus service to Wooloowin railway station was established in the district in 1886. In the 1890s, some of the larger estates were subdivided into small farms, to service the J.C. Hutton smallgoods factory at Zillmere. The children from the Aspley farms had to travel to Albany Creek, Bald Hills or Zillmere to attend school.

In March 1889, John Morris, William Brown and William Wallin contacted the Queensland colonial government's Department of Public Instruction to request a school for their district. As a result, a local committee comprising Morris, Brown, Wallin with Robert Graham and Thomas Ridley, was formed. They issued a formal, written request that detailed four possible school sites on 20 March. John Shirley, a school inspector, visited these sites and presented his official report on 15 April. Shirley rejected all four sites, as they were too close to existing schools. He recommended that a more central location be found for the proposed school before the matter could be reconsidered.

The local residents responded by writing to the Minister of Public Instruction on 7 May 1889, offering a new school site near the corner of Gympie and Albany Creek Roads on land owned by William Brown. At the same time, another local, Sam Maundrell was offering two blocks of his land as possible school sites. While the residents were able to meet the government's stipulation of providing one-fifth of the school's building costs, they were unable to agree on where the school should be built. Maundrell and Wallin wrote to the Moreton Mail on 30 August 1889, urging the government to take up Maundrell's offer. A public meeting held at Wallin's 'Royal Exchange' (the site of the current Aspley Hotel) Hotel on 2 September, saw the licensee proclaim both free

drinks and his support for the school to be built on Maundrell's land. Brown and his supporters, including Robert Graham, retaliated by having a letter of support for Brown's offer printed in The Telegraph on 6 September. Cool heads finally prevailed, for at the end of September, both Maundrell and Brown withdrew their competing offers of land for the new school.

The Department of Public Instruction had already chosen a school site on Portion 454 along Maundrell Terrace on 13 July 1889 but the department did not want to act until the locals had resolved their differences. Tenders were called on 10 October 1889. The contract was awarded to builders George Lightbody Thomson and James Campbell Thomson of Sandgate and it was signed on 28 January 1890. They were paid £788.10s to erect a school building and a teacher's residence, while the purchase of land cost a further £100. The local community had already raised £157.14s.0d as their contribution. The government wanted to call it the Downfall Creek School but the locals rejected this name, as Downfall Creek was two miles away from the school site. They wanted the name Little Cabbage Tree Creek School so Wallin met with the Public Instruction officials on 28 June and successfully lobbied for a change of name for the school.

Meanwhile, the construction of the school and adjacent house proceeded but not without a few problems. On 18 June 1890, the residents' building committee decided that they needed a 38 feet by 28 feet playground to complete the school's facilities. Tenders were called on 10 July and the contract was awarded to Mr Barratt of Nundah. The school had been meant to open on 7 July but when its first teacher, Archibald Robert Wing had inspected the site around 30 June 1890, he reported to his superiors that neither his residence nor school were ready for use. An inspection of the site on 28 July, by the Superintendent of School Buildings, recommended that handrails be placed on both the school and house's steps. The school building committee provided 18s.7d to the cost of this work.

Finally, on 6 August, Little Cabbage Tree Creek School opened with an initial enrolment of 40 pupils. By 13 August, enrolments had increased to 56 and Wing requested another staff member. Patrick O'Shaughnessy was appointed as a pupil teacher and together with Wing, offered history, geography, writing, grammar, derivation, composition, arithmetic, needlework, vocal music, domestic economy, written home exercises, object lessons and mechanics subjects to their students. In 1896, the school's first woman teacher – Mildred Marion Crofts, succeeded O'Shaughnessy.

The school building committee continued to operate and it decided in December 1890 to have fencing placed around the school grounds. Tenders were called on 26 February 1891, with the contract awarded to Chas Poultney. The school toilets comprised holes in the ground over which was erected a closet. They remained a community health concern until 29 March 1895 when they were replaced with a pan system. In 1897, discussions were held within the local community about a change of name for the district. The school itself had a dual identity as it was often referred to as Cabbage Tree Creek School rather than Little Cabbage Tree Creek School. After the residents had petitioned the Postmaster General to change Little Cabbage Tree post office to Aspley post office, the school committee asked for a matching name change for their school. A letter making this request was sent to the Department of Public Instruction on 14 September 1897 and permission was granted soon after.

The school became a focal point for community activities. Breaking-up days at the end of the year "were really big events for the district and almost the whole population took part". The children celebrated by wearing their best clothes and enjoying the sandwiches and cakes that had been supplied by their parents. The annual school picnic to Woody Point was another community event. Parents and children would ride the Kedron Omnibus double-decker, horse-drawn bus to Petrie Bight and then board then Lucinda and sail down to Woody Point. Arbor Day, an annual tree-planting festival declared in August 1890, was a special event, as was Wattle Day

(introduced in 1917) and Anzac Day and Remembrance Day after World War I. The school was also used for weekend dances that were organised by the school committee. These popular dances continued at the school until 24 August 1918, when the dances were transferred to the new Aspley Assembly Hall.

Aspley State School also contributed to the vocational training of local residents. On 24 June 1896, the first headmaster, Archibald Wing, had recommended to the Department of Public Instruction, that Sam Maundrell's son, Arthur and William Wallin's son, Alfred, be employed as pupil-teachers (assistant teachers) at the school. Arthur Maundrell was to become the school's first Australian-born teacher, when he was appointed as pupil-teacher in July 1896. The school's third headmaster, Ernest Bilbrough had applied, on 12 July 1915, for his son Arthur who was a pupil at Aspley School, to be employed as a pupil-teacher. Bilbrough would conduct swimming lessons for the boys in Cabbage Tree Creek. For a short time, from October to November 1901, adult evening classes were held at the school but these proved unsuccessful and so were discontinued. The school had its first Scholarship Class (to pass the Scholarship Public Examination) in 1932. Alice Harris was the first Aspley School student to pass the Scholarship in 1933. To encourage interest in the rural industries that were the backbone of the Aspley district, the school formed a Poultry Club in 1936 as part of its extracurricular activities.

For its first forty years, few changes were made to the layout of the school. The original school trees comprising silky oaks, bunya pines, figs, camphor laurels and South African box had grown larger, while the thorny cather apple hedge along Maundrell Terrace had gotten thicker. The separate girls and boys toilets were partly covered by flowering buddleia bushes. Around 1926, a new tennis court was laid behind the teacher's garage and storeroom that faced Horn Road. In 1928, the playshed had galvanised iron walls added onto its western and southern sides, at a cost of ?19.10s.0d.

When the school's fifth head teacher, Joseph Rice, took charge on 1 April 1931, he had an enrolment of 124 pupils and conditions within the single classroom were cramped. Rice complained to the Department of Public Instruction about the state of Aspley School. As result, approval was given for the adding of a 21 feet by 18 feet room to the front of the school, the erection of offices at the northern end of the front verandah and the lining of the classroom. These extensions were completed by Arbor Day in July 1932 when they were officially opened by the Minister and the Director-General of Public Instruction. Later, a washhouse containing a shower bath and pump were added to the schoolhouse. The Aspley district was connected to electricity during the 1930s and in March 1938, the school received its first wireless radio set plus a power point and electrical connection.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought a number of changes to the school. Air raid drills were held and zigzag air raid trenches were dug in the grounds. A Victory Garden for vegetable growing was dug in front of the teacher's residence. In 1942, Chermside School was closed for a time and about 10-12 students were transferred to Aspley. First Aid was introduced into the school curriculum and the girls knitted clothing for the Comforts Fund, just as their predecessors had done in World War I.

By 1948, the school had an enrolment of 145. The 1890 building, which had been divided into three classrooms, was inadequate for such numbers. A fourth classroom was added to the Maundrell Terrace side of the building in 1949. With the first subdivision of Aspley farmland into housing estates in 1952, the population of the area grew rapidly. This continued into the 1960s and 1970s when new classrooms, a library and a tuckshop were added to the school. The original teacher's residence was demolished in 1973 to make way for a new library and administration block. Other schools opened in the district with Aspley East School, and St Dymphna School opening in 1963, and Craigslea School opening in 1972. Invariably these new schools drew some enrolments away from the district's first school. By 1990 when Aspley School celebrated its centenary, it had 28 staff overseeing 545 pupils.

The expansion of Brisbane's urban sprawl into Aspley has had some negative effects as most of community

buildings from the pre-1946 Aspley Township have disappeared. The Aspley Assembly Hall, the Post Office, Bunkum's Store, Scott's Garage, the original St Dymphna's Church, St Mathias's Anglican Church and the 1932 Methodist Church are all gone. All that remains of the township buildings are the Aspley Hotel and the Aspley School.

Description

From an early photo (dated c.1895) the original school building appears rectangular in plan and raised off the ground on wooden stumps.

The timber building presented large north and south facing gables and had a corrugated iron roof. The roof, with eaves overhangs all around, extended beyond the external walls on the eastern side to provide a front verandah.

The front verandah ran the length of the east face with steps placed centrally at right angle to the building. A skillion sunhood, visible at one gable end provided weather protection to the wide timber window below.

The original verandah was later enclosed. The facade now presents an asymmetric elevation, due to the additions made to both the front and to the side entrance. This is represented by a gable projecting from the front verandah, and to the south, by a covered walkway to the side entrance. Nevertheless, the current school building has retained most of its original features and general appearance.

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 one of Brisbane's earliest rural schools, funded by money raised from local farming families.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as the oldest surviving school in Brisbane's outer northern suburbs; and as one of only two community buildings left from the pre-1946 Aspley Township.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
 2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
 3. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, Local History files – *Zillmere – Geebung – Aspley – Bald Hills*.
 4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
 5. John Oxley Library, *Parish of Nundah, County of Stanley, L.A.D. of Brisbane map*, (1899 land grant map).
 6. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
 7. Simpson Betty, Warrick, Nola, and Hawkins, Ann, *Centenary History of the Aspley State School*, (Brisbane: Aspley State School, 1990)
 8. Teague, D.R., *The History of Aspley*, (Brisbane: Colonial Press, 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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