

## Heritage Citation



**Boondall State School's Arbor Day trees**

### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 2210 Sandgate Road, Boondall, Queensland 4034
<b>Type of place</b>	Tree/s
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Lot plan</b>	L298_SP147189
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2003 Date of Citation — October 2012
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social

The first Boondall State School opened on 6 April 1925. August 1 was designated as Arbor Day in the

Queensland schools' calendar in 1890. The first trees were planted at Boondall School in 1925. A bushfire destroyed a tree in 1930. By 1936, playground shade was provided by 32 Arbor Day trees. The original school building burnt down in 1966. The Arbor Day trees are the only remnant of the first Boondall School.

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## History

Boondall State School was built in early 1925. It opened for its first enrolments on 6 April 1925. In August 1921, the site for the school had been cleared of lantana and trees by local volunteers to allow for building construction and the creation of an open space playground for the children.

The Queensland Government's Department of Public Instruction (renamed the Department of Education in 1957) actively encouraged the beautification of state school grounds. Prizes were awarded to schools with the best-maintained playgrounds and school gardens. As well, the planting of shade trees or flowering shrubs was organised by making the celebration of Arbor Day part of the annual school calendar. In 1890, the Department of Public Instruction had declared 1 August as the first school Arbor Day. As this was near the end of Queensland's winter, some parts of Queensland found this date unsuitable for the successful plantings. In 1891, the Department changed the date to Friday 1 May. A total of 9,655 trees were planted on the first Arbor Day in 1890.<sup>1</sup>

But the annual Arbor Day celebration became arbitrary among different schools so that it was lodged on a school calendar anytime between the May and August, with the only common denominator being that it must be held on a Friday. This changed in 1930, when the Department declared the first Friday in May as the official school date for Arbor Day. This regulation took effect from the 1932 school year. It was not a school holiday, with the lessons during the day to be linked to Arbor Day. By 1930, a total of 30,000 trees had been planted at Queensland schools.<sup>2</sup>

Arbor Day tree plantings were designed to provide pupils with horticultural lessons. Each tree was meant to be provided with an attached label that identified the tree species, with these labels having a Department-specified measurement and print-lettering. Not only was the school Arbor Day meant to instil a love of trees in the children, but it was also meant to encourage the wider community to follow their local school and create attractive home gardens and yards. The tree and shrub plantings were part of the overall school garden environment that provided "a total syllabus experience, incorporating mathematics and science, and inducing creative endeavour."<sup>3</sup>

The plant seedlings were obtained by the Brisbane schools from the Curator of the Brisbane Botanical Garden in the City.

Arbor Day was celebrated at the Boondall School from its year of opening in 1925. The ceremony comprised a talk about the significance of Arbor Day that delivered by a teacher to all pupils in the morning. Then the students, their parents and neighbours were invited to plant the chosen trees in allotted spots around the school grounds. The school day was completed by an afternoon of games and sports.

The trees were planted along the fence line bordering both Roscommon Road and Sandgate Road. An adjoining school garden was planted around the same time. From 1929 and during the early years of the Great Depression, the garden became neglected. By 1935, reflecting a rise in community confidence, the Boondall School garden was again productive. One of the early Arbor Day trees was lost in 1930, when a bushfire came close to the solitary classroom building. For Arbor Day in May 1933, five non-native Camphor Laurel trees were

planted. The total number of Arbor Day trees at Boondall School had risen to thirty-two by 1936. Among the different species of trees that were planted by the pupils, was a palm tree placed by Eva Mounfield on the left hand side of the original school entrance near the intersection of Roscommon and Sandgate Roads. Due to a resumption of school land in 1996 for a new bikeway, Eva's palm tree is located just outside the school fence on the public footpath.

Both a 1938 photograph of the Sandgate Road side of Boondall School and a 1946 aerial photograph of the entire school site reveals that the Arbor Day trees were clustered along Sandgate Road near the intersection corner and then spread, more evenly, along Roscommon Road to either side of the school's rear entrance off that road. The other four sides of the school boundary, that is, beside the property at 2316 Sandgate Road and running beside the current school oval to Keppel Street, contained trees that were not planted for Arbor Day. Rather, these trees were part of the surrounding native bushland.

The original 1925 school building was destroyed by a fire on 18 August 1966. Some Arbor Day trees have died or have been removed. The surviving Arbor Day trees along Roscommon and Sandgate Roads are a remnant of Boondall's first school. They are indicative of the local community's involvement in the physical lay-out of the school site. The surviving Arbor Day trees are identified on the 2009 aerial photograph shown on in the supporting images of this citation.

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history as the Arbor Day trees are the surviving remnant of the first Boondall School.

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#### Representative

##### CRITERION D

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

as individual Arbor Day trees of different species that represent the then popular garden plants from differing

decades, commencing in the 1920s.

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## Aesthetic

### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as the large trees provide attractive shade cover and act as a natural noise barrier beside busy Sandgate and Roscommon Roads.

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## Social

### CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

being planted by local schoolchildren for a Queensland government environmental policy dating from the nineteenth century.

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## Supporting images



2009 aerial photograph

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## References

1. "Arbor Day in Queensland", *The Brisbane Courier*, 29 April 1891.
2. "School Arbor Day", *The Brisbane Courier*, 12 May 1930.
3. "Building the Queenslander", *Queensland Review, Vol.3, No.1, Special Issue – Young in a warm climate*, (1996).
4. Brisbane City Council (BCC) aerial photographs.
5. Bow, Barbara, *Welcome to Boondall*, (Sandgate: Sandgate & Districts Historical Society, 1995)
6. Barbara Bow, *A Comprehensive History of Boondall State School – From Slates to Websites*, (Brisbane: B. Bow, 2000).

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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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