

Heritage Citation



Chelmer School of Arts (former)

Key details

Also known as	Chelmer Public Hall
Addresses	At 15 Queenscroft Street, Chelmer, Queensland 4068
Type of place	Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Lot plan	L359_SL8357
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — December 2003
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social

After years of lobbying by the local community, the Chelmer School of Arts was finally opened in May 1923

through community-raised funds and a donation of land by the Sherwood Council. This multi-purpose building, which comprises a large hall, a stage and two committee rooms, was used to host concerts, dances, club meetings, church services, library services and the local annual show. By 1946, membership had fallen to five, which was in line with trends all over Brisbane and in the 1960s the building was declared a public hall. This building has continued to serve the local community's cultural and recreational needs for more than 85 years.

History

School of Arts buildings in Queensland were a sign that the town or suburb that possessed them had reached a certain point in their development as a community. Whilst seen as status symbols, Schools of Art were also highly functional, multi-purpose buildings, simultaneously serving as libraries, lecture theatres, political meeting rooms, theatres, dance-halls, fund-raising centres, and venues for sporting and religious groups. As such, they acted as a focal point, or glue, for the community; at least until modern transport, city and state-provided education and library systems, and the centralisation of political administration, reduced their relevance.

The Chelmer School of Arts was opened in May 1923, with A. C. Eliphinstone MLA performing the ceremony. According to the Brisbane Courier at the time, the land had been granted by the Sherwood Shire Council (1891-1924), after concerted efforts by locals that extended back to 1914; yet in 1915 the Governor in Council had declared a reserve for a School of Arts, Chelmer, with J.K. Cannan, Daniel Wienholt, R.D. Neilson, W.J. Morley and R.D.A Frew as trustees. The original building, consisting of a large hall, stage and two committee rooms, was built thanks to the subscription of 800 pounds by local residents. Although the building has since been altered in its appearance, the original structure remains obvious and intact.

Over the years the building was the site of the local annual show, and was used as a library (1741 volumes in June 1934), for church services, Masonic Clubs, concerts and dances. However, reflecting the trend for other Schools of Art, Membership had dropped to 5 in 1946. In 1968, the Governor in Council declared a reserve for a Recreation and Public Hall, Chelmer, and community use of the building has continued, with the current trustee being the Centenary Theatre Group Inc.

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 a symbol of Chelmer's status as a well developed residential and community-based area by the early 1920s.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places
as a purpose-built, 1920s School of Arts building.

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
as a public hall and former School of Arts building that has provided a venue for social, educational, spiritual and community-based events since 1923.

References

1. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
2. *Walter Taylor South Character and Heritage Study*, BCC Heritage Unit, 1997
3. *Chelmer Through the Years 1860-1973*, Cyril Bodes
4. *Statistics of Queensland, 1933-1934*
5. *Brisbane Courier*, 16 May 1923
6. *Queensland Government Gazette*, 1915, No 244, Vol CV, p.2183, and 1968, Vol 1, p.296

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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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