

Heritage Citation



Clayfield Memorial School of Arts

Key details

Addresses	At 32 Wagner Road, Clayfield, Queensland 4011
Type of place	Monument / memorial, Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Georgian Revival
Lot plan	L2_RP86841
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — March 2011
Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Face brick

People/associations J.H. McLean (Builder);
Sidney William Prior (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social

In late 1924 the School of Arts committee at Clayfield completed its arrangements to erect a purpose built hall.

History

Brisbane had been able to support its first School of Arts in 1849. The Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Art movement flourished in the later parts of the nineteenth century, aided by subscription and suitable injections of government funding. In Britain, free municipal libraries were taking over the business of lending books, however local authorities in Australia were reluctant to bear the cost of public libraries, seemingly content to sporadically support existing institutions. Even though local government authorities in Queensland were enabled by act of parliament to develop municipal libraries from 1878, none did so. In the half-century or so before World War I many city suburbs and country towns organised their own Mechanics' Institute or School of Arts, which usually provided free or subsidised library service and meeting hall facilities for the community.

The Clayfield School of Arts Committee, which had been formed in February 1915, had raised sufficient funds for their own building and commissioned young Brisbane architect Sidney Prior to design the structure. Prior produced plans for the building which were approved by the committee in November 1924. The two story building was to have a frontage of 50 feet and a depth of 30 feet. A library and committee room would take up the ground floor while a meeting room and a dance floor room would occupy the upper floor. Memorial windows were to commemorate inhabitants of the districts who were killed in World War I. Tenders for the erection of the building closed on 10 December 1924.

The contractor selected for the building work was JH McLean. The foundation stone of the Clayfield Memorial School of Arts was laid by Queensland Governor, Sir Matthew Nathan on 7 March 1925. The building was completed and handed over to the committee by the architect on 23 May of the same year. It was officially opened by the local MLA, JF Maxwell, on 5 June 1925.

The A&B Journal of Queensland, of May 7, 1925 provided the following description of the building:

The building is one of two stories and lends itself to a varied treatment; the façade is set off by a portico of the Roman Doric order and is surrounded by the Acroterium decorated with the Antehmion ornament, the whole being carried out in neat cement, being a very creditable piece of workmanship. The lower portion of the building has been treated with facing bricks, and the portion above is rough casted with a stringing course below. The gables to the facades are treated in a plain but effective manner and are set off by a red terra cotta roof. Internally the treatment is simple, the walls being white plaster and the entire finishings stained and polished in dark oak; the ceilings are panelled out with Wunderlich metal. The dancing floor and lodge room on the top floor has been floored with crow's ash waxed and polished, and will no doubt be a comfortable apartment for the

accommodation of such functions as it has been designed to suit. The front entrance doors are of silky oak polished, and are set off with two stained glass windows emblematically designed to the memory of our heroic dead who passed yonder during the Great War.

The building has been continually used by the community since 1925, and remains in the ownership of a School of Arts Management Committee.

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 evidence of the post-World War I development of the suburb of Clayfield.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places as a community centre which has been in constant use since its construction in 1925.

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 for its value as a recreational venue for diverse community groups.

References

1. *The A&B Journal of Queensland*, May 7, 1925
 2. *Brisbane Courier*, 1921-1930
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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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