

Heritage Citation



Dunalister

Key details

Also known as	Sherwood Private Hospital
Addresses	At 36 Lilly Street, Sherwood, Queensland 4075
Type of place	Guest residence, House, Hospital
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L6_RP45325
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — January 2009
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

This fine Federation era residence was built circa 1899 for surgeon Henry Alexander Francis and his wife Lillian. Henry was the son of early pioneers of the local district and the brother of baby Clement who is buried in God's Acre Reserve and after whom the 'Francis Lookout' is named. In 1901 the house was sold to one of Henry's colleagues, Dr. William Robertson. While owned by Robertson, 'Dunalister' was converted to the Sherwood Private Hospital. In 1927 the large block was subdivided and the house and over four acres of land were transferred to Agnes and Katherine McKeon who were already managing the hospital. In the 1940s, the property was converted again, this time for use as a guesthouse. In 1989, the house was rotated 90 degrees to face Lilly Street and was restored as a private residence.

History

The area from Chelmer to Corinda was known as "Boyland's Pocket" in the 1850s, as it was leased by Captain Boyland from 1851. In 1860 the new Queensland government opened up the district for selection, at a price of one pound per acre, resulting in the establishment of a number of farms ranging anywhere between 25 and 70 acres in size. Attempts were made by pioneer selectors during the 1860s and 1870s to produce maize, potatoes, bananas, cotton, sugar cane, and arrowroot. The opening of a railway bridge at Indooroopilly in 1876 reduced the isolation of the area, and allowed for increased subdivision. The first main wave occurred in the 1880s, a boom period for Brisbane. However, many of the allotments sold at this time remained vacant for years, and continued to be used for small farming operations. Later waves of building, occurring after each of the World Wars, gradually reduced the amount of farmland, and new housing continues to envelop those gracious older houses which once stood on acreage, surrounded by gardens.

In October 1899 Dr Henry Alexander Francis purchased one acre, three roods and 34.3 perches of land from James Honeyman. Henry Alexander Francis was the son of Arthur Francis, an early pioneer in the district. The Francis family arrived at the western side of Corinda in 1862, purchasing 21 acres of portion 120, along with 33 acres of portion 98 on the Oxley Creek side of Corinda. They also co-owned portions 119 and 117, and built the third sugar mill in the district, on Oxley Creek. When Arthur Francis's baby son, Clement, died in 1863, the Francis family buried him on an acre of land on portion 120 which was known as 'God's Acre'. Several other members of the Francis family are buried in the reserve, now known as 'Francis Lookout' which was resumed by the Brisbane City Council in 1934. The family's eldest son, Richard, studied at Balliol College, Oxford, and returned to teach at Brisbane Grammar, but Dick died of pneumonia after the 1893 floods, having saved several locals from the water.

Henry Alexander Francis, (known as Alex), studied at Brisbane Normal School, before studying medicine at Cambridge. He returned in 1890 and set up practice as an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist. He also spent time in Ipswich, Barcaldine and Dalby. In the 1897-1899 POD he is listed at Wickham Tce, but in the 1900 POD he is listed as a surgeon in Sherwood. Alex and his second wife, Lillian, had moved into the house that year. In his book "Then and Now- The Story of a Queenslander", Alex noted that *"Our new house was...strangely different in architecture from English houses. It had a twelve foot veranda on its north and east sides to get the sea breeze, which invariably sprang up between three and four in the afternoon, and very large airy rooms; while it had a blind side in the west as protection against the west winds in winter..."*

He added that “Curiously, it was almost on the spot where stood the giant “stringy bark” tree around which, when we were small children, there was a clearing in the dense forest, which provided us with our first playground”.

In 1901 he sold the house and land, which fronted Sherwood Rd, to Dr William N. Robertson. William had entered into a partnership with Alex, and continued the practice while Alex visited England. In 1906 the large property and the house ‘Dunalister’ was the venue for a rally of the latest models in cars. Robertson was also a founding member of the Oxley Sailing Club, and was the Chancellor of the University of Queensland from 1926-1938.

In 1927 subdivision of the land began, the house and one rood, 27.16 perches was transferred to Agnes McKeon and Katherine McKeon, who had already been running the house as Sherwood Private Hospital. From 1940 to 1945 ‘Dunalister’ was leased to Annie McGarrigal, who then, along with Gladys Gersekowski, purchased it in 1945. The old home then served as a guesthouse, Sherwood House. In 1989, due to the fact that its original Sherwood Rd orientation was impractical due to newer housing, ‘Dunalister’ was rotated 90 degrees to front Lilly St, and restored as a residence.

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 an elite, late nineteenth century residence built by one of Sherwood's pioneering families which after the 1920s served for many decades as a local hospital and guesthouse .

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a fine example of a grand, federation era residence.

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. Queensland Post Office Directories
4. *Brisbane's Suburban Beauties*, Brisbane Courier, 1906
5. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
6. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
7. *Francis Outlook Conservation Study*, Ivan McDonald Architects
8. *The Streets of Olde Sherwood*, Ralph Fones 1995
9. *Sherwood-Corinda Walkabout*, Ralph Fones, 1995

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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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