

Heritage Citation



Edelweiss

Key details

Also known as	The Palms
Addresses	At 20 Castle Street, Fairfield, Queensland 4103
Type of place	House
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queen Anne
Lot plan	L1_SP231879; L2_SP231879
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — November 2011

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (C) Scientific; (E) Aesthetic

Julius and Annie Wellauer, acquired this property in Victoria St, Fairfield in May 1900. By 1901, they had constructed a fine Federation-style house on the land and gave it the name of "Edelweiss". They ran a dairy on their 8 acres, 22 perches, at a time when Fairfield was a semi-rural district of sugar, arrowroot and dairy farms. After Julius's death in 1916, the dairy was subdivided into house lots and sold-off. By 1946, Fairfield was urbanised with "Edelweiss" surrounded by housing built on its former farmland. The post-war demand for housing saw "Edelweiss" converted into flats in 1951.

History

This property was originally part of a larger block of freehold land sold for the first time on 11 May 1854. Brisbane resident John Williams purchased 80 undeveloped acres, described as Portion 4 at Yeerongpilly, for £200. Williams subdivided the land into small farm allotments for sale. The district began with cotton farms but with the American Civil War's end in 1865, sugar and arrowroot crops replaced cotton. Dairy farms also dotted the area. Boggo District resident John Gaynor bought Subdivisions 66-69 in 1869 and Subdivisions 57-64 in 1880. This totalled 8 acres and 22 perches of farmland that Charles J. Porter acquired during 1884-85. Porter heavily mortgaged this purchase, obtaining three loans totalling £1,400 in 1884, 1888 and 1890.

Julius Theodor Wellauer and his wife Annie Elizabeth Wellauer obtained the Subdivisions 57-64 and 66-69 on 11 May 1900. The combined effects of the 1893 Flood and the 1890s Depression may have damaged Porter's finances, as this property transfer was not conducted by him but by his 1890 mortgagee and creditor the Corporation of the Synod of the (Anglican) Diocese of Brisbane. On the day of purchase, the Wellauers obtained a mortgage of £425 also through the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane. But the couple managed to repay their loan by 1906.

Julius and Annie Wellauer built their house circa 1901, soon after their land purchase. The early 1900s were a period of positive expectations brought on by the end of the 1890s Depression and Federation in 1901. In the history of the district school Boggo, Yeronga and Beyond, the era is described as "a period concerned with self-identity and was characterised by a willingness to innovate, and a desire to acquire the best in all aspects of life."¹

The Wellauer's new home reflected these traits.

The Wellauers had a Federation-style house built. It featured an Australian 'Rising Sun' motif in the pediment above the front doorway entrance to the home. Open verandahs covered most of the three sides of the house. The verandahs had timber dowel balustrading below the handrails. The verandah posts' cast iron lace work was placed underneath the roof guttering. There was a large front verandah staircase (without railings), plus a smaller set of rear stairs and side stairs (with railings). The house also featured French doors opening onto the three verandahs plus a brick fireplace and chimney in the rear kitchen. While their new house proudly carried the 'rising sun' symbol of the new Commonwealth of Australia, they had not abandoned their Germanic origins and their home was named "Edelweiss".³

Julius and Annie Wellauer ran a dairy on their 8 acres and 22 perch farm. "Edelweiss" was also the centre of a number of local social events. The Wellauers celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary with 200 guests at "Edelweiss" on 25 March 1911. The couple were toasted by Mr. P. O'Sullivan who specifically praised "Edelweiss" as "a peaceful home – at the commencement a wilderness and now one of the finest residences within the suburbs of Brisbane."⁴ On 11 January 1912, Julius and Annie's daughter Elizabeth Caroline Wellauer married August Henry Dittman at the Fairfield Baptist Church, with the reception held at "Edelweiss". A large copy of the new Australian flag (adopted 3 September 1901) flew from an impromptu flagpole erected in the front yard. By that date, four large palm trees had grown at the front of the house, becoming local landmarks for the Wellauer's dairy.

Julius Wellauer's address was first listed as Victoria Street, Fairfield. This was possibly the nearest formed road from where he could collect mail. In 1906, nearby Newcastle Street became the Wellauer family's postal address. In the 1914-15 Edition, Ashby Street at the base of their farm had been formed and became their new address. Newcastle and Ashby Streets were listed as being in Annerley but in 1916, Ashby Street was redesignated a part of Fairfield. That year, a relative Jonathon Wellauer was also listed as working the dairy. Julius Wellauer died on 5 February 1916. An undated photograph from the John Oxley Library Collection shows Annie Wellauer standing outside a house at 111 Ashby Street. This was the second house built on the farm. It may have housed Jonathon Wellauer or his mother may have moved there after her husband's death. Either way, the Wellauer's tenure at 111 Ashby Street was brief as they sold the house and land in 1920. That the Wellauer family had no need to mortgage the farm to finance the building of "Edelweiss" or 111 Ashby Street would indicate that they were financially secure and successful.

By 1920, much of the Stephens Divisional Board area had electricity connections so attracting new residents. The area was rapidly urbanising. It reached a population of 12,403 in 1923.⁵ During the 1920s Economic Boom, widow Annie Wellauer had much success in selling her resubdivisions as house lots. She sold 2 roods and 29.3 perches to Robert MacDonald on 24 March 1920. The remaining farmland (3 acres, 1 rood. 10.7 perches) was again resubdivided. A new title issued to Annie on 23 November 1922. Annie is last shown as living on the Ashby Street land in the 1921-22 Edition, when Joseph C. Wellauer is also listed there. During 1926, she disposed of two 24 perch allotments plus a 3.4 perch sliver of former farmland. In 1927, three more 24 perch house blocks were sold. In 1929, Annie married Herman Vieceitz.

Castle Street was identified for the first time as a postal address in the 1929-30 Edition. It indicated that 20 Castle Street was a rental property as no Wellauer was listed in the new street. The family retained links to the district through Jonathon J. Wellauer who lived at Hyde Road, Yeronga during 1918-22 and again 1934-36 and Julius T. Wellauer who is listed as living at Ashby Street, Fairfield from 1938. He was not living at "Edelweiss" though, as he was never listed as a resident of Castle Street.

Description

It is a Federation-era pyramid roofed timber residence. Situated on a rise at the top of Palm Avenue, this imposing dwelling makes a significant contribution to the streetscape. It features two flat-topped chimneys in polychrome brick, faceted bay windows capped by small, separate turret roofs, cast-iron valence and balustrading.

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 former farmhouse and substantial residence, built in the early 1900s and as evidence of when Fairfield was a semi-rural district.

Scientific

CRITERION C

The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history

as a former farmhouse that remains in-situ on the site of a prominent local dairy.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a good example of the Queen Anne style of Federation architecture applied to a farm setting.

References

1. Gillespie, Ros, *Boggo, Yeronga and Beyond – Leaving Footprints – Making Pathways*, (Brisbane: Yeronga State School P & C, 1996)
 2. John Oxley Library, photographic collection, negatives 117343 & 117348
 3. “A Silver Wedding At Fairfield”, *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 April 1911, p.7
 4. Byrnes, Matthew, *Stephens District Historical Overview*, (Brisbane: Matthew Byrnes, 1995), p.7
 5. Brisbane City Council, 1946, 2001 & 2009 aerial photographs
 6. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
 7. Brisbane City Council, post-1946 Building Cards
 8. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Plan No.1603, 1949
 9. Heritage Unit, *Stephens District: Character and Heritage Study*, Heritage Unit, Brisbane City Council, 1995
 10. “A Silver Wedding At Fairfield”, *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 April 1911
 11. Byrnes, Matthew, *Stephens District: Historical Overview*, 1995
 12. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
 13. John Oxley Library Photograph Collection
 14. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
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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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