

Heritage Citation



Gowarra

Key details

Addresses	At 15 Quinton Street, Kangaroo Point, Queensland 4169
Type of place	House
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L42_SP246748
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — August 2012
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
People/associations	John Male (Builder)

The site was formerly a 26-perch lot, part of a four-rood holding owned by John Male from 1857. It comprised two houses: one two-storeyed timber dwelling and one single level bungalow. This house at no. 15, 'Gowarra', is dated between 1889 and 1893 and was built by Male a well-known storekeeper and carpenter in Kangaroo Point. It represents an unusual example of an early two storeyed weatherboard residence.

After 1901 Captain Arthur Neill purchased the site and added a single storey timber bungalow. The property remained in the Neill family until 1979, when both houses were purchased. In 2011 the purchasers subdivided the property so that the houses are now contained in separate lots.

History

For centuries, the southern bank of Brisbane was the traditional homeland of the Aboriginal people of the Coorparoo clan. While it is considered unlikely that tribes lived on the peninsula, due to susceptible flooding patterns of the Brisbane River, the neighbouring area of Woolloongabba was a renowned meeting place.

During early settlement, the area was a feeding ground for a proliferation of kangaroos that fed on the grasslands. As the land was cleared and subdivided in 1843-4, the residential and industrial potential of the area was realised. Kangaroo Point developed swiftly in the 1840s, not only as one of Brisbane's earliest suburbs but also as a centre of industry, hosting boiling down works, slaughter and salting houses, and wharves. Major thoroughfares were quickly established and all available land was snapped up by 1854. One of the new landowners was Joseph Thompson, Esquire, who acquired four acres in 1854, though he transferred his estate to William Goodwin Geddes in 1856. A little over a year later, Geddes sold four roods and thirty perches fronting the 'High Road' (later Main Street) to John Male for £47.

Male was a carpenter who had arrived in Brisbane with his wife Jane in 1854. Initially settling in Charlotte Street, the Males soon joined the rush towards Kangaroo Point. By November 1859 he was advertising a 'neat and convenient cottage, pleasantly situated' for rent in Kangaroo Point, soon known as 'Male's Cottage' or 'Male's Terraces', and a 'comfortable' house with a shop on Clifton Terrace in 1862. Male had also constructed a dwelling for his family, and by 1862 it was a landmark in the area. Advertisements of sale of lots on the 'High Road' or the 'Main Ipswich Road' at Kangaroo Point used Male's residence as a reference point.

Kangaroo Point began to develop as a self-sufficient town in the 1860s and 1870s. It became an independent ward in 1865 and soon had its own school, churches, hotels and businesses, all located along Main Street. In 1875 Male added to the commercial character of Main Street, setting up a grocery store next to the family residence, underneath shade trees he had planted on the site in the early 1870s. From 1880 the store hosted the post and receiving office, and later the telegraph and telephone as well. It was also the application point for tenders in 1879 for the development of the 'Kangaroo Point' Cemetery, now Balmoral, as Male was one of the trustees of the site.

The economic boom of the 1880s encouraged further progress in Kangaroo Point, with the construction of new residential and commercial properties as well as renovations and extensions to existing premises. Main Street was a particular focus, which saw updated premises for the Logan and Pineapple Hotels, as well as the

immigration depot, Yungaba and a new fire station. The population of Kangaroo Point leapt from just under 2,000 residents in 1881 to just over 3,000 in 1886, as residences large and small were added to the landscape. Around Male's grocery store, the dwellings 'Jericho Cottage', 'Ormonde' and 'Bunya House' were built.

Male had by this time become a person of some note in Kangaroo Point. He was a trustee of the Kangaroo Point cemetery until 1883, nominated for election to the Bulimba Board in 1885, elected to a committee for the erection of a bridge between the city and Kangaroo Point in 1888, and nominated to represent the ward in 1889 (although he lost to Thomas Burke). He was also involved in the construction of the School of Arts in Kangaroo Point, being a committee member, trustee for the land and vice-president of the School after it was eventually opened in March 1892, on a site opposite Male's property.

Although Male's land ran back to a line with Quinton Street, its only frontage was to Main Street. Quinton Street did not exist until the late 1880s and then only as a small cul-de-sac coming off George Street. The name 'Quinton' seems to have emerged in the early 1880s, when Julius Holland's 3 acre block of land, adjoining Male's property, was offered for sale in January 1882 as the 'Quinton Estate'. Quinton Street was also known as 'Quinlan' Street, although nobody of either name appears to have had any connection with the area. By 1890 there were four residences on the street, owned by builders and members of the shipping industry. The Kangaroo Point wharves were a significant part of Brisbane's nineteenth century shipping industry, and a large proportion of the area's residents were mariners. Quinton Street was a well-located residential address.

Centrally located off Main Street between Shafston Road (as it was then called) and George Street (now Pearson), it was conveniently close to St Mary's Anglican Church, the Kangaroo Point School, Male's grocery store, the Pineapple Hotel and one of the suburb's three ferry services to the northern Brisbane districts. It was also close to the wharves, while far enough from the main thoroughfares to remain a quiet street.

Kangaroo Point continued to develop throughout the 1890s, with the establishment of Birley Brothers' Steam Saw Mill, boatbuilding, general stores, butchers and grocers intermixed with residential usage along Main Street. Natural disasters, such as the 1892 cyclone which damaged St Mary's, and the 1893 floods which left Kangaroo Point underwater to Cairns Street, had not diminished the area's appeal as a residential neighbourhood. Still dominated by industry and shipping, it was an ideal location for workers and their families, and rental properties were particularly useful for the transient mariners.

Male acquired an additional portion of land in 1887 from the Quinton Estate. The holding was less than a perch, and its size, location and shape suggest that it was to be used for a laneway running beside Male's properties, connecting with Quinton Street at the rear and granting access to the back of the lots. It was around the same time that Male constructed additional rental properties on his land. In 1891 'Mildura', situated next to the store, was first advertised with vacancies for gentlemen borders. 'Quinton House', just behind the store, was built on the property around 1896 and 'Gowarra' is first mentioned in 1893, although the Post Office Directory listings suggest it may have been constructed earlier, around 1889 or 1890, when mariner Bream Tindall and his family were listed on the street.

'Gowarra', a name apparently meaning 'rainbow' in one Aboriginal dialect, was a two-storey dwelling which was leased to tenants, mostly on a short-term basis. Its first tenant was an engineer, William J. Dick, though interestingly, many of the Males' tenants were women in difficult situations. Julia Marienthal leased 'Mildura' shortly after her husband died in 1891, leaving her with two young children. Several births were reported at 'Quinton House' in the late 1890s, to mothers whose husbands resided on remote properties. From around 1894 'Gowarra' was leased to Elizabeth Evelyn Robson, whose husband had died in 1891, leaving her with small children to support.

Jane Male had also died in 1891 and in 1895 John Male remarried and retired from the store, handing control

over to his son Walter Wensely. Walter and his family moved into 'Mildura', while the Males relocated to 'Quinton House' in the late 1890s. By this time the Kangaroo Point holding was only one of several of Male's properties, which included significant portions of land at Bulimba, Southport, Mt Tambourine, Macleay Island and Caloundra.

Following John Male's death in 1900, his assets, including 'Gowarra', 'Mildura', 'Quinton House', the post office/grocery store and the land, were transferred to the Queensland Trustee Limited, and auctioned on 25 March 1901. The Kangaroo Point land was re-subdivided and Quinton Street was extended to Main Street, running through part of the allotment and removing an old cottage on the site.

Re-subdivision 4, a 26.91 perch lot which contained the large two-storied 'Gowarra', was transferred to Captain Arthur Neill in July 1901. Captain Neill, formerly harbour-master of Bundaberg, was a popular navigator and one of Queensland's oldest identities. He took up residence in 'Gowarra' with his family of three sons and four daughters. It appears to be while under the ownership of Captain Neill that the second house on the site was built. This single-storey timber bungalow was occasionally referred to as 'Woondooma', which was a plantation and is a street in Bundaberg, where the Neills were from. The house, which had five to seven rooms, was advertised for let throughout the 1910s and its inhabitants included mariners (such as Captain Arthur Gray and Richard Rowe) as well as some of Neill's married children and their families.

Neill passed away in the house in October 1911, aged 72. His body was interred at Bundaberg and laid to rest alongside his wife Agnes. On his death, the property was transferred by vesting order to the Queensland Trustees in 1912, although his children continued to live in 'Gowarra' and 'Woondooma'. Miss Elspeth Neill was the last surviving family member, remaining in 'Gowarra' and leasing 'Woondooma' until her death in the 1970s.

After being registered with the Queensland Trustees since 1912, the property was transferred in 1979. Many years later in 2011, as land values soared and residential development, particularly in Kangaroo Point intensified, the new owners subdivided the land so the houses were located on separate lots.

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 one of a pair of houses in Kangaroo Point which were constructed around the turn of the twentieth century.

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

Gowarra', as a house constructed as a rental property, demonstrating the popularity of Kangaroo Point as a residential area in the 1890s, particularly for those in the shipping industry or working-class families.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

Gowarra', as a quality two-storey weatherboard residential house.

References

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3. *Heritage Study*, June 1997
4. Brisbane City Council Estate Maps
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6. Queensland Post Office Directories
7. Department of Environment and Resource Management, Land Titles Office
8. Department of Justice and Attorney-General, BDM Queensland Index Search 1854-1964
9. Queensland State Archives, Index to Registers of Immigrant Ships' Arrivals 1848-1912
10. The Queensland Women's Historical Association, *From Kangaroos to Cargo Ships – A Short History of Peninsula Kangaroo Point*, 1997
11. Department of Environment and Resource Management, Entry in the Queensland Heritage Register, 'Yungaba Immigration Depot' [600245]
12. *Moreton Bay Courier* 1859-62
13. *The Courier* 1862-3
14. *The Brisbane Courier*, 1865, 1872, 1874, 1876, 1881, 1886, 1888, 1893, 1898, 1900-5, 1910, 1915-6, 1923, 1927-8, 1930-1

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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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