

Heritage Information

Please contact us for more information about this place:
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Hamlin's Nursery Residence

Key details

Addresses	At 35 Odonnell Street, Wavell Heights, Queensland 4012
Type of place	House, Farm
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L41_RP25129; L42_RP25129
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2003 Date of Information — December 2002
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
People/associations	Frederick Hamlin (Occupant)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association

This residence was constructed circa 1928 for Frederick Hamlin, a First A.I.F. veteran who funded his home and land purchase through a War Service Homes Scheme loan. The house was unusual in that it was larger in size than a standard War Service Home residence and was built in the 'Queenslander' style rather than the more modern styles employed during the interwar period. Hamlin established a nursery business at 35 O'Donnell Street and it grew to become one of the largest nurseries in Wavell Heights in the postwar period. The Hamlin family maintained their links to this property until 1978 and the following year it was sold to the present owners.

History

The land, on which this house sits, was part of 91 acres of crown land that was purchased by David Thomas Stewart on 14 July 1869. Stewart, a resident of Brisbane Town, paid ?12.10s. for this land described as Portion 589 in the Parish of Kedron. The land was bounded on one side by a government road that would become Cocks (later renamed Rode) Road. The area of Stewart's land purchase was originally known as German Station and it was named after the German missionaries who had established a mission for Aborigines at Zion's Hill (now Toombul) in 1838. This mission closed in 1849 but many German families established farms on the surrounding land, thereby opening up the area for further development.

Stewart held onto Portion 589 until 1881. In that year, he subdivided the land, disposing of 13 acres, 2 roods and 28.25 perches to Ferdinand Gohdes. Then on 16 October 1882, Stewart sold 74 acres, 1 rood and 39.12 perches to Joseph Spence of Gympie. With the opening of the rail line to Sandgate in 1885, German Station changed its name to Nundah. As a result, the area around Cocks Road became known as West Nundah. It was a hilly area used principally for grazing for the local slaughteryards operated by people such as Tom Cocks. Spence used his land for investment purposes. He mortgaged his property for ?900 on 12 November 1882 with the lender being Anna Bush.

On 11 January 1890, Spence transferred ownership of the land to Charles Howard Gardner, a resident of Brisbane. That same day, Gardner obtained a mortgage of ?1,500 on the land from Joseph Spence. Gardner was a partner in the firm of Carew, Gardner and Billington. At the time of purchase, Gardner lived at Rose (now Thistle) Street, Thoroldtown (now Gordon Park). In 1892, Gardner moved residence to Buckland Road at Nundah. He was still living there when he transferred ownership of his West Nundah land back to Joseph Spence on 21 February 1895. Spence had moved to Randwick in New South Wales and he retained the land along Rode Road as an investment property. There is no evidence that Spence relocated to Queensland before his death on 6 May 1909.

Spence's estate passed to his trustees Herbert Spence and George Iredale Bourne. But on 11 February 1911, the State Government, in the name of King George the Fifth, resumed 13 acres, 3 roods, 8 perches of Spence's land under Section 8 of "The Land Act of 1910". The land was subdivided into four small farm allotments stretching Bilsen Road to Spence Road. Bourne and Herbert Spence were issued with a new title for this land on 17 May 1911. George and Charlotte Gall purchased all four subdivisions during a period from 20 May 1911 to 1 July 1914. That day, they obtained a mortgage of ?575 on the land from Andrew Robert Scott. The Galls then resubdivided the small farm lots into 16 perch house blocks.

West Nundah was considered suitable for redevelopment and the Gall's housing subdivisions may have been one of the first examples of the type of housing estate that would change the area and create the suburb of Wavell Heights. The Gall's estate created O'Donnell Street, as well as Charlotte, Taabinga and George (now Duff) Streets. The nearby Rode Heights Estate would create Barker and Palomar Streets in the 1920s. The first blocks to be sold by the Galls were subdivisions 41 and 42 in O'Donnell Street. Andrew Lonie and his wife Agnes Ellen Lonie purchased these two blocks on 6 December 1915. They obtained a mortgage of ?286 from the state government's Workers' Dwelling Board on 11 April 1916. But a check of the *Queensland Post Office Directories* indicates that Andrew and Agnes Lonie never built their Workers' Dwelling Scheme home at 35 O'Donnell Street. Agnes Lonie expanded their holdings by purchasing the neighbouring subdivision 40 on 5 November 1919.

On 8 October 1920, a World War One veteran, Frederick John Hamlin, became the new owner of the O'Donnell

Street property. Hamlin had served in the 4th Machine Gun Battalion of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF). He enlisted on 4 November 1916 and returned to Australia on 25 March 1919. Hamlin funded the purchase through a mortgage supplied by the War Service Homes Commission. He also purchased subdivision 40 off the Galls. Hamlin did not immediately build on his blocks of land and they remained vacant for a number of years.

Hamlin's name appears in the *Queensland Post Office Directories* for the first time in the 1929-30 edition. As the address survey for each edition was conducted in the year prior to publication then it can be assumed that Hamlin had built his residence in O'Donnell Street by 1928. The style of the house was more in keeping with pre-World War One "Queenslander" houses than with the new styles utilised in the interwar period. It was also quite an unusually large house for a War Service Home. Its size may have been influenced by the needs of Hamlin's growing family. Hamlin ran a nursery business at 35 O'Donnell Street for many years. His business suited the semi-rural nature of West Nundah, which, until the 1950's, was mainly a dairy and pineapple-growing district.

During World War Two, West Nundah was marked for major changes. In 1941, with the war entered its third year, plans were made by the Brisbane City Council to turn West Nundah into the ideal new suburb for the postwar period. Modern Queensland Housing Commission homes were planned for wide streets that would meander along the hills of West Nundah. These homes would have views of the expanding city and modern amenities such as a new school and hospital were planned for the suburb. Initially it was proposed to change the name of West Nundah to Beverly Hills but due to the war situation, a more morale-boosting name was chosen. This was Wavell Heights and it was named after General Sir Archibald Wavell who, in 1940-41, had been commander of all allied forces in the Middle East. He was a popular hero of the time as he had led the forces, including Australian troops, that had defeated the Italians in Libya and East Africa and he overseen the defeat of the Vichy French forces in Syria. On 9 October 1941, a patriotic concert at the Imperial Theatre, Nundah, attended by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Brisbane, was held to inaugurate the new suburb. Proceeds from this concert went to the Patriotic Fund.

The end of the war saw a postwar housing boom in Wavell Heights. By 1946, Hamlin had built a long greenhouse at the back of his home. Houses had sprung up along new thoroughfares such as Highlands and Rilatt Streets as well as along Rode Road. Operating under the name of "Hamlyn's Wavell Heights Nursery", Hamlin's business was centrally located so as to benefit from the housing boom, as a decorative front garden became a feature of postwar Australian homes. It is possible that many of the large non-native trees, shrubs and flowers that can be seen around homes in Wavell Heights, came from Hamlin's Nursery. By 1950, his nursery had expanded onto subdivision 40 (now Numbers 23,27 and 29 O'Donnell Street). He erected a large storage shed, three small garden sheds and a house, possibly for one of his sons, on this land. Hamlin finally paid off his War Service Homes loan on 9 August 1951.

When Hamlin died on 6 April 1958, his estate passed to his widow Hauora. She received Council permission to add carport to the site on 6 June 1959. Hauora Hamlin died on 14 March 1961 and 35 O'Donnell Street was inherited by her children – Edwin John Hamlin and Walter Davis Hamlin. On 9 April 1962, Edwin transferred his share of the property to Walter. When Walter died on 25 November 1978, the house and land in O'Donnell Street passed out of the hands of the Hamlin family. The Public Trustee took control of the property and sold it to the current owners, Andrew Ernest Ladlay and Linda Margaret Clayton on 25 October 1979.

The residence at 35 O'Donnell Street remains as a reminder of a time when Wavell Heights, then known as West Nundah, was an area of scattered farms and other semi-rural businesses.

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 War Service Home built in 1928 and used both pre and post-World War II as part of a large local nursery.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a substantial War Service Home built to a pre-1914 style.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as the former residence of Frederick Hamlin, a World War I veteran and founder of one of West Nundah/Wavell Heights' largest nurseries.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards

2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
 3. Brisbane City Council Sewerage Maps
 4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
 5. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs clippings files – Wavell Heights
 6. National Archives, World War One Service Records
 7. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
 8. Refidex Directory Maps, *Greater Brisbane Area*, (Brisbane: Refidex, 1924)
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Note: This information 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 information 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.

Information prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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