



Heritage Citation



Hansen's Rocklea Hotel

Key details

Addresses	At 1337 Ipswich Road, Rocklea, Queensland 4106
Type of place	Hotel (pub)
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Filigree
Lot plan	L1_RP105233
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — December 2010
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (G) Social

The Rocklea Hotel was constructed circa 1892. It replaced an earlier establishment, the Rocky Water Holes Hotel, which was first licensed in 1874 when Rocky Water Holes was a small rural settlement. The hotel changed its name to the Rocklea Hotel in 1885 following the naming of the new Rocklea railway station in 1884. The 1892 building was designed in the traditional late nineteenth century style of a two-storey hotel with decorative cast iron verandah balustrading (since removed). The Rocklea Hotel, along with the nearby Crown Hotel provided a social focal point for the community, particularly during the 1940s when the Rocklea School of Arts was dismantled and rebuilt at the rear of the hotel, forming a club room for the athletics group, the Rocklea Harriers. The hotel underwent various alterations in the 1950s, including the construction of shops along the Ipswich Road frontage. Further additions occurred in 1964 when a bottle shop was added and changes made to the public bar.

History

The settlement of Rocky Water Holes developed on high ground above where the then 'Logan Road' crossed Rocky Water Holes Creek on its way to the sparsely settled areas south of Brisbane and towards Ipswich. The first hotel constructed there, possibly in the late 1850s, was the Crown Inn. In 1862-63 its first publican was Fred Fletcher.

The settlement's second hotel, the Rocky Water Holes Hotel, was first licensed to Rowland Kelly in 1874. The *Queensland Post Office Directory* for that year lists Kelly as a storekeeper. Rocky Water Holes Hotel is clearly evident in a painting produced in 1875 by CGS Hirst of the intersection of Sherwood and Ipswich Roads.¹ This first hotel was constructed of timber weatherboards and featured two parallel gable roofs.

Although Kelly and other publicans were listed as licensees of the hotel, from 1861 John Graham held title for

the 25 acre 1 rood site at the corner of Sherwood and Ipswich Roads. Between 1874 and 1896 Graham is listed as licensee of four hotels in South Brisbane: the Bridge Hotel (1874-83), the South Brisbane Terminus Hotel (1883-84), the Brisbane Bridge Hotel (1884-88) and Graham's Family Hotel (1888-96).

The name Rocky Water Holes was changed officially to Rocklea, notification appearing in the *Queensland Government Gazette* on 9 July 1884. According to John Kerr in *Destination South Brisbane*, the new railway station nearby was named the shorter 'Rocklea' following a suggestion by the then Traffic Manager. In 1885 Rocky Water Holes Hotel changed its name to Rocklea Hotel.

The following year the original Crown Inn, the Rocklea Hotel's nearest competition, was replaced by a new and imposing two-storey brick and masonry structure designed by JB Nicholson. The new Crown Inn featured lace verandahs and elaborate parapet detail. No doubt this affected business at the single-storey weatherboard Rocklea Hotel.

In 1892 John Graham a mortgage of £11,000 was registered on the title for the Rocklea Hotel. This was a significant amount during a time of economic Depression. The hotel's mortgagees were James Robert Dickson, William Leworthy Goode Drew and Thomas Mulhall King. Sir James Robert Dickson was a member of Queensland parliament for two periods between 1873 and when he died in 1901. Between October 1898 and December 1899 he served as Queensland Premier. William L. G. Drew JP was appointed Auditor-General in 1887. He also served as chairman of the Immigration Board in the 1880s and the Civil Service Board in the 1890s. Thomas M. King JP was in 1892 the Collector of Customs. The mortgage was not released until 1900.

Such an amount certainly would have allowed for the construction of the new two-storey Rocklea Hotel featuring lace verandahs that overlooked Ipswich and Sherwood Roads. A photograph of the hotel from the turn of the century when Thomas Tabulo was licensee shows the hipped pyramid roof similar in design to other late 19th Century corner hotels. As it does today, the door of the public bar opened to the corner. The parlour and dining room were located along the Ipswich Road frontage. When the photograph was taken native staghorn fern (*Platynerium Superbum*) served as decoration on the first floor verandah columns. The architect for the Rocklea Hotel has yet to be determined.

In 1896 the title for the Rocklea Hotel site, along with its mortgage, passed to John Graham's daughter Kate Julia O'Connor. Born in Brisbane in April 1864, Catherine (Kate) Julia Graham had married James Denis O'Connor. From 1896 O'Connor was listed as the licensee of the Graham's Family Hotel in South Brisbane. Although Kate O'Connor owned the Rocklea Hotel, day-to-day running of the establishment was in the hands of a string of licensees. From 1895-96 until 1916 nineteen people are listed as leaseholders of the hotel site. In 1916 James O'Connor became trustee of the property.

The 25 acre 1 rood Rocklea Hotel site was subdivided in 1919. William James Hamilton purchased the corner subdivision on which the hotel building stood. This subdivision consisted of 1 rood 18.7 perches. A cross-country runner, Hamilton instigated the formation of the "Rocklea Harriers". In 1921 Hamilton sold the hotel to Bridget Mary Kelly. The following year Kelly purchased an additional subdivision of 1 rood 3.3 perches from Kate O'Connor. This new provided additional frontage along Ipswich Road immediately south and adjacent to the hotel.

Known in the district as 'Ma', Bridget Kelly ran the Rocklea Hotel until 1948 with the assistance of sons Matt (Matthew) and Tom. The Kelly family continued the hotel's support of community activities. The former Rocklea School of Arts building, which had been situated further south along Ipswich Road, was dismantled and rebuilt at the rear to form a club room for the "Rocklea Harriers".

In 1948, Christian and Olive Hansen purchased both the corner block on which the hotel stood and the Ipswich

Road frontage bought in 1922 by Kelly. In the late 1940s Rocklea's old-style retail businesses were subjected to greater competition the newer shops constructed in Ipswich Road near the Moorooka Railway Station and on Beaudesert Road at Moorvale.

Hansen Investments commenced alterations on the Rocklea Hotel from 1954. Three shops were constructed along the Ipswich Road frontage in 1955. Their second storey was linked to the original corner hotel. In 1964 changes were made to the public bar and a drive-in bottle shop constructed.

In the mid-1950s fire destroyed part of the nearby Crown Hotel. A new hotel establishment, the Highway Hotel was constructed on the site of the old Crown Hotel. Designed by architect Frank Cullen, this 1958 hotel was the first purpose-built hotel/motel in Queensland. The construction of such modern buildings, along with the construction of the new Brisbane Markets in Sherwood Road, heralded change for the old Rocklea. Gradually manufacturing and service industries replaced the area's original residential properties.

In steady decline, Rocklea lost its business centre following the land resumptions necessary to improve the flow of traffic over the intersection of Ipswich Road and Rocky Water Holes Creek. The road works were completed in September 1971.

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 hotel constructed in the late nineteenth century when Rocklea was developing as a semi-rural suburb.

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

as a focal point of the social life of the Rocklea community since the 1890s.

References

1. Due to a change of name the Sherwood Road of 1875 is today's Medway Street
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Clarke, Robyn and Tom Price. *Tapestry of time: A history of the Rocklea State School and the district*, Rocklea: Centenary Committee of the Rocklea State School, 1989
4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
5. Donnelly, John J. *Hotels of Brisbane*, thesis, 1964
6. Environmental Protection Agency
7. History of Queensland Hotels
8. Job, William. *The buildings of Brisbane: 1828-1940*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2002
9. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
10. Moorooka District Character Study. Heritage Unit, Dept of Development & Planning, BCC, May 1996
11. Brisbane History Group Sources No. 6, *Brisbane Hotels and Publicans Index 1842-1900*, Brisbane, Brisbane History Group, 1993
12. Queensland Pioneers Index
13. State Library of Queensland, Photographic collection, image number 189057
14. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
15. www.parliament.qld.gov.au

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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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