

Heritage Citation



Highgate Hill Park

Key details

Also known as	Highgate Hill Reserve
Addresses	At 94 Hampstead Road, Highgate Hill, Queensland 4101
Type of place	Park
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queen Anne
Lot plan	L9_RP11732; L21_RP11732; L13_RP11732; L12_RP11732; L10_RP11732; L11_RP11732; L14_RP11732
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — December 2000

Highgate Hill Park was already a popular lookout and recreation spot prior to its purchase and designation as a park by the South Brisbane City Council in 1903. In the disastrous 1890 and 1893 floods, local residents used the site to view the effects of the floods and operate a flood relief centre. The park contains a band rotunda, constructed circa 1910, and four cast-iron ornamental bollards, possibly from the same era. The park remains substantially intact and has not been considerably altered since the early twentieth century.

History

Steep and densely wooded at the time of European settlement of Brisbane, the land at Highgate Hill, was, as a result, left undeveloped for many years. By the 1860's, the hill's summit, being the highest point in the area, was a popular lookout spot from which to view the expanding settlement of South Brisbane. But the land at the summit, where Dornoch Terrace and Hampstead Road met, was not public land but, in fact, was owned by James Wilson.

During the 1890 and 1893 floods that ravaged South Brisbane, the hill was frequented by sightseers viewing the devastation. It was also used by the residents of 'Sailors Gully', that is, the area bounded roughly by Boundary, Brighton and Hampstead Roads, and Dornoch Terrace, to help with flood relief operations. In any case, the land continued to gain the feel of 'public property' as far as the local residents were concerned. So on 14 February 1903, the South Brisbane City Council met to formally acquire the property as a park, despite the apparently high price of \$1250 being demanded by James Wilson. His property was purchased at the same time as Mowbray Park, and was an obvious attempt by the South Brisbane City Council to increase its stock of parkland.

A photograph of the park taken circa 1910 shows that the band rotunda had been erected and a simple bench seat was also contained within the park. Around that time the Queen Palms and Moreton Bay Fig trees were planted. The park also experienced a number of name changes, being known at various times as Highgate Hill Reserve, Highgate Hill Lookout and then Highgate Hill Park.

It would appear that while Brisbane City Council maintained the park, it made few changes to the site until 1961. Around this time, porphyry edged garden beds were placed in the park. An oleander garden bed facing Hampstead Road was removed because of residents concerns that it was shielding various criminal activities within the park. Few other changes have occurred to Highgate Hill Park despite a number of proposals, including one in May 1986 to playground equipment and a park sign placed on the site. Thus Highgate Hill Park remains largely as it was at the time of its acquisition.

Description

The Highgate Hill Park is one of the highest landmarks within the area and provides extensive views towards the city, making it a valuable vantage point. The park is on the corner of Dornoch Terrace and Hampstead Road, on

a site that slopes down the side of a hill. A large, shady Moreton Bay Fig occupies the corner, while other significant trees that are prominent within the park are Weeping Figs, Hoop Pines, Silky Oaks and Queen Palms. A hedge runs along the Dornoch Terrace edge of the park and timber framing acts as a fence down along Hampstead Road. At the corner of the two streets, porphyry stone retaining walls edge the park boundary, to create a corner entry to the park and terrace up the slope to the foot of the Queen Palms. Three pathways run through and across the park. The two on the steeper slope are concrete, while the other has been maintained with a gravel surface.

A landmark of the site and surrounding area is the band rotunda, which has a corrugated iron roof, moulded timber posts, arching timber sweeps with vertical battening infill and battened timber balustrades. It is noticeable from each boundary of the park. It has been painted in the “heritage colours” of white and deep green. The rotunda opens to both Dornoch Terrace and onto the opposite side to the park, with timber stairs accessing these openings. A timber board ceiling and bench seating articulate the internal space of the rotunda, along with a directional dial in the centre of the space. Various park benches and a picnic table under the fig provide further facilities for the park.

Along the Dornoch Terrace edge of the park are four cast iron ornamental bollards. As with the rotunda these are painted a “heritage colour” deep green that reflects the past and blends into the park vegetation.

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 evidence of the acquisition and dedication of parkland by Municipal Councils for enjoyment by local communities in the early twentieth century.

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 dedicated community parkland for more than 100 years.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
2. Bourboulas, Manuel, *Preliminary survey of Highgate Hill Park*, QUT: Urban & Regional Planning assignment, 1992
3. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
4. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
5. Lawson, Ronald. *Brisbane in the 1890s: a study of an Australian urban society* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1973)
6. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895

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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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