

Heritage Citation



Holy Spirit Centre

Key details

Also known as	Holy Spirit Convent
Addresses	At 736 Beams Road, Carseldine, Queensland 4034
Type of place	Residence (group), House, Care facility
Period	World War I 1914-1918
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L149_RP214968
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — March 2008

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (G) Social

Built near the end of World War I, this former Carseldine farmhouse was acquired at the close of World War II by the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters. The nuns used it as a recuperation centre for their ex-New Guinea missionaries who had survived internment by the Japanese. It was the first facility established by this Catholic Order in Australia. Post-war, the 'Holy Spirit Centre' developed into a rural retreat, a convent, an aged care facility and a guidance centre.

History

On 26 April 1865, William Carseldine acquired 22 acres and 20 perches of land in the Aspley area. He paid ?28.15s.3d for Portion 149 that bordered the government road that would become Gympie Road. Carseldine, originally from Coppingfield in Huntingdonshire, England, arrived in Queensland in August 1854. He initially gained employment as a farm labourer before undertaking work as a fencing contractor that brought him into the Aspley district.

On 6 March 1885, Henry Wheeler gained title to the property. Wheeler and Walter Jones operated a grocery store on Sandgate Road at Albion, with Wheeler residing there. In 1900, Wheeler is listed in the Queensland Post Office Directories at Park Street, Albion and remained there until his death in 1913. The vacant farmland was leased by Wheeler to Ambrose Peter Rode for ten years, commencing on 15 May 1908. After Henry Wheeler's death on 24 July 1913, his estate passed to Robert Arthur Wheeler, Arthur Joseph Oliver and William Thomas Atthow. No mortgages were registered in the title deeds suggesting that the Wheelers did not construct a house on this land.

Ambrose Rode's lease on Portion 149 expired in 1918 and on 5 February 1918, James Raff gained title to the land. Raff was subsequently listed as residing in the Aspley district in the 1918-19 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories. So it appears likely that the farmhouse at 1686 Gympie Road was built sometime around 1918. Raff held title for 27 years, until 25 May 1945. Then the Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane obtained the property. On 8 August 1945, the Archdiocese transferred the farmhouse and land to the Catholic Order of the Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Ghost. (more commonly known as the Sisters of the Holy Spirit)

Founded in 1889 in Steyl, Holland by a German priest Arnold Janssen and fellow Germans Hendrina Stenmanns and Helena Stollenwek, the Order conducted missionary work, sending four nuns from Germany to German New Guinea in 1899. After the First World War, New Guinea became a League of Nations mandated territory ceded to Australia and all German nationals were deported. During this period, Australian, American and other European nuns also joined the order.

With the advent of the Second World War in the Pacific region in December 1941, the Australian government evacuated most of the expatriate women and children. The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters were given the option

to leave but all preferred to stay. The invading Japanese captured them. Missionaries, from the East Sepik region of New Guinea, were the first among 62 prisoners to be executed on the Japanese destroyer Akikaze on 17 March 1943, while en route from Kavieng to Rabaul. Among this group were 18 members of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters. On 6 February 1944, the Japanese ship Yorishime Maru was carrying prisoners between Madang and Wewak when American aircraft strafed the ship. Another 37 members of Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters died in this attack. The surviving nuns and other missionaries were later rescued by American soldiers near Hollandia, in Dutch New Guinea, in May 1944 and were evacuated to Australia. Of the 92 Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters stationed in New Guinea, 54 died during the war.

Following their evacuation, some of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters recuperated at the quiet rural retreat that they had recently purchased at Aspley. In 1946, the Order purchased the old Lister Private Hospital on Wickham Terrace and established the Holy Spirit Hospital. At Aspley, the Order gained Brisbane City Council approval to add a class and dining room to the site. The letters S.Sp.S. after a sister's name stand for the Latin "SERVA SPIRITUS SANCTI" meaning Servant of 'The Holy Spirit'. Their logo (the dove) depicts the Spirit of God and appears on their buildings.

In 1961-62, the Holy Spirit Home for the Aged was built on some of the land at 1686 Gympie Road. It was blessed and opened on 3 June 1962 with 80 hostel rooms and a 25-bed infirmary. The Raff farmhouse, then known as the 'Holy Spirit Convent' was retained and used for various purposes. After building approval was gained in 1969, a chapel was added to the Home, together with an extension to the "Staff Quarters" which had become the new Holy Spirit Convent. With a few exceptions, the Home was fully staffed by the nuns.

On 29 November 1972, a new title deed was issued for Portion 149, which showed that the site had increased in size to a total of 22 acres, 2 roods and 12 perches. Due to roadworks, associated with the widening of Gympie and Beams Roads, a small portion of this land, designated as Lot 1, was resumed by the Queensland Government in 1988. In 1996, the Raff farmhouse became a place of hospitality and spiritual guidance and received its present name of the 'Holy Spirit Centre'.

In 2001, the Holy Spirit Home comprised of 55 Independent Villas, 100 Hostel Units, 20 Serviced Apartments, a 45 bed Nursing Home and a 5 bed Palliative Care Hospice. There are approximately 260 residents on the property, including a community of active nuns involved in various ministries around Brisbane. Chief Executive Officer, Mr Shane Fracchia and Director of Care Services, Mrs Pam Fielding, now administer the Home. They oversee 145 full or part-time staff. About 170 volunteers also help out in various capacities.

Located in a rural setting on Beams Road Aspley, the Holy Spirit Home today serves as a convent for Catholic nuns and a home for aged residents. But at the highest point overlooking the entire site, remains the 1918 former Raff farmhouse, now the 'Holy Spirit Centre'. Guidance Centre.

Description

The building, originally a farmhouse, is sited on a vast area of land bounded between Gympie Rd and Beams Rd in Carseldine.

The high-set building is a timber structure with timber boarded external walls and a short-ridge, almost

pyramidal, corrugated iron roof. A lower verandah roof covers the wrap-around verandah currently enclosed by horizontal timber boards to balustrade height with windows above.

The sub-floor, also enclosed at a later date and partially glazed, provides additional space.

A couple of smaller buildings, including a shed with corrugated iron gable roof, are situated to one side of the house.

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 remnant farmhouse that displays Carseldine's transition from a rural community into a modern residential 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 the first Convent for the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in Australia, which has served the Brisbane community for over 55 years.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website

2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
3. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, Local History files – *Zillmere – Geebung – Aspley – Bald Hills*.
4. Holy Spirit Sisters, *Holy Spirit Home Online*, (www.holyspirit.com.au/sisters.htm)
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
6. John Oxley Library, *Parish of Nundah, County of Stanley, L.A.D. of Brisbane map*, (1899 land grant map).
7. Matbob, Patrick. *Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in New Guinea*, (www.catholicpng.org.pg/Orders/SSpS%20history.html)
8. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
9. Randle, Brian, *A Guide to the History of the Bracken Ridge Area*, (Brisbane: Brian Randle, 1999)
10. Teague, D.R., *The History of Aspley*, (Brisbane: Colonial Press, 1972).

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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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