

Heritage Citation



Hurlton

Key details

Also known as	W. R. Black Children's Home
Addresses	At 7 Laurel Avenue, Chelmer, Queensland 4068
Type of place	House, Welfare home
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Italianate
Lot plan	L47_RP18369; L48_RP18369; L49_RP18369; L1_RP900681; L2_RP900681; L3_RP900681
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2011 Date of Citation — January 2009

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Masonry

People/associations Oakden, Addison and Kemp (Architect);
W. R. Black (Association)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

The property known as "Hurlton" was originally built in 1889 as a stylish residence for John Sutton and his family. Designed by respected Brisbane architectural firm Oakden, Addison and Kemp the two-storey residence consists of a masonry ground floor and timber first floor. In the 1920s the property was purchased by W. R. Black, successful Queensland coal mine owner and philanthropist, and donated to the Presbyterian Church as a disabled children's home. Much of the original exterior timber fretwork has been removed due to termite damage and the first floor rebuilt, however the ground floor remains intact. The property has been restored and returned to a family residence.

History

The area from Chelmer to Corinda was known as "Boyland's Pocket" in the 1850s, Captain Boyland having leased the area in 1851. In 1860 the new Queensland Government opened up the district for selection, at a price of 1 pound per acre, resulting in the establishment of a number of farms ranging anywhere between 25 and 70 acres in size. Attempts were made by pioneer selectors during the 1860s and 1870s to produce maize, potatoes, bananas, cotton, sugar cane, and arrowroot. Settlers of the Sherwood area in the 1860s included Arthur Francis, William Gray, Alexander Boyd, William Dart, Charles Martindale, John Dunlop, Thomas Berry and John Donaldson.

In 1876, the completion of the Ipswich to Brisbane railway line as well as opening of a railway bridge at Indooroopilly reduced the isolation of the area, and allowed for increased subdivision. The first main building wave occurred in the 1880s, a boom period for Brisbane. However, many of the allotments sold at this time remained vacant for years, and continued to be used for small farming operations.

The move to the Sherwood Shire was gradual, thus the rural feel of the area was retained for some time. The houses built in this period were predominantly timber. The designs of the houses encompassed the ideals of healthy suburban living with sunlit open rooms, verandahs, green gardens.

During this period in Chelmer a pattern of residential development began to emerge. The railway line facilitated a social dichotomy of blue collar and white collar areas in the suburb. Those residing on the west of the line toward the Brisbane River tended to build more substantial and prominent residences, this was due to the higher levels of wealth of those settling on this side of the lines. On the eastern side of the line the allotments and houses were less substantial, the residents mainly blue collar working families.

The land on which the property now resides was originally owned by large landowner, John Frederick McDougall in 1860. By 1881 Thomas Berry, an Irish immigrant and pioneer of the Sherwood/Graceville area had purchased approximately forty acres. He, his wife Margaret and their seven children arrived in Brisbane in 1863 and settled

in the Sherwood/Graceville area. As one of the first farmers in the area, Thomas had several successful years of cultivating sugar and built several sugar mills in the immediate area. The Berry family's house was situated south of Laurel Avenue in which Thomas and Margaret lived for the remainder of their lives.

The Berry farmland was slowly subdivided and sold in the late nineteenth century. In 1889 John Sutton and his wife Mary purchased the portion of land at the end of Laurel Avenue. John Sutton was a successful marine engineer and had two branches of his business, one in the city on Eagle Street, the other in Kangaroo Point. The Chelmer property was situated in an ideal location, on a rise that sloped down to the Brisbane River affording views of the river and surrounding ranges with the ability to catch the river breezes. These attributes were the very same that attracted the wealthier Brisbane citizens to buy in this area during this period.

In 1889-90 a substantial home was built on the site, with frontage to Laurel Avenue. The house was designed by the successful Brisbane based architectural firm Oakden, Addison and Kemp. From 1887 to 1895 the firm undertook the design and building of some of Australasia's major building works as clients included large corporate clients and banking corporations. Their existing Brisbane work includes The Mansions on George Street, Albert Street Wesleyan Church, and Cumboquepa in South Brisbane (Somerville House).

In 1890 the Sutton's took out a substantial mortgage of ?300, this may have been for the construction of the house. John Sutton named the house 'Hurlton', a merging of his wife's maiden name, Hurley and his, Sutton. The Sutton's were first listed in the *Post Office Directories* as living in Chelmer in 1892.

Sutton was an active member of the community and from 1900-1901 served as Chairman of the Sherwood Divisional Board. By the mid-1920s the Sutton's had subdivided the large two and a half acre property and sold the land at the base of the slope on river frontage. After the death of Mary Sutton in 1926 the property was sold to William Robert Black who donated the estate to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

William Robert Black was a Northern Ireland born immigrant to Queensland, arriving in 1880. He worked his way up from humble coal delivery in Brisbane to owning his own coal delivery business from 1885, and he soon had a fleet of twenty-six vessels transporting coal on the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers. By purchasing large tracts of land west of Ipswich, Black established several collieries. He used the very latest technology available in that period to extract the maximum amount of coal in a minimum amount of time. Black retired from his lucrative business ventures in 1920. As a devout Presbyterian he began to donate much of his accumulated wealth to the church and played a role in the church community.

W.R. Black's first generous donation to the Presbyterian Church was twenty-two acre 'Dorrington Park' at Ashgrove. This property was sold in 1923 and another at Oxley was purchased. In May the 'Blackheath Home for Children' was opened. In 1926-27 Black purchased the house and land at Chelmer at a cost of ?4835 to also be used as a children's home. The W.R. Black Home was opened in November, 1928. The W.R Black Home became a home for disabled girls and Blackheath Home at Oxley, a home for disabled boys. In 1932 there were 39 girls living in the Chelmer Home. The Queensland Presbyterian Annals comment "The Homes have done much to reduce the handicap under which most of the boys and girls began the race of life", the W. R. Black Home played an important role in the lives of the children that grew up within its walls. Without the Home many of the disabled children would have been institutionalised in hospitals.

From 1949 to 1954 internal additions and upgrades were made to the home to assist in the care of the residence. These additions were designed by respected Brisbane architect R. M. Wilson. Ronald Martin Wilson was a Brisbane born architect and son of eminent Federation period architect A. B. Wilson. Ronald became chief architectural assistant at his father's firm in 1908 after completing his tertiary education studying Engineering at the University of Queensland. After working for the British Ministry of Munitions during the First World War, he

studied Town Planning in London and returned to Brisbane in 1919. He established a firm with his father in 1920 and continued the business subsequent to his father's retirement in 1928. His work includes the Cliffside Flats at Kangaroo Point, Birt & Co. Wharves at Newstead, and the St. Lucia and Ithaca Presbyterian Churches.

The house was returned to a family residence in 1996 and restored. Due to termite damage the first floor was replaced, losing the intricate, original exterior fretwork. The ground floor however, is intact. The home's original features include a tessellated-tile entry floor, kauri floor boards, seven-panel cedar doors, gas lights, 38cm brick walls, black marble fire places, and leadlight windows flanking the front door depicting nasturtium and passionfruit vines.

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 an early stately residence built in the 1880s it reflects the growth of prosperity in the Chelmer area.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance as a substantial brick and timber residence located on extensive grounds with river views, Hurlton contributes to the areas aesthetic beauty and streetscape value.

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 W. R. Black Home for disabled girls, established in the 1920s, the Home played an important role in the

lives of its residents, their families and the Chelmer community.

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 a stylish residence designed by important Brisbane architectural firm Oakden, Addison and Kemp.

References

1. Bardon, Richard, *The Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, 1849-1949*, W.R.Smith and Paterson Pty Ltd, 1949
 2. *Immigration, Youth and Culture*, Ed. Ralph Fones, Oxley-Chelmer History Group, p. 13
 3. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994
 4. Brier-Mills, Margery, 'Black, William Robert (1859-1930)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (online edition)
 5. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
 6. Queensland Post Office Directories
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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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