

Heritage Citation



Isleworth

Key details

Addresses	At 28 Ashton Street, Camp Hill, Queensland 4152
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L15_RP13102; L16_RP13102
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — November 2010
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

'Isleworth' was constructed some time between 1888 and 1900 for German developer Joseph Francis Oberthur. It was one of the first homes in the Camp Hill area and was built at a time when Camp Hill was predominantly dairy farms and vineyards. The house appears to have been one of the grander homes in the area and displays some pleasant architectural features including metal ridge decoration on the roof and an attic with dormer windows. In 1955, the house was converted to flats.

History

The land on which "Isleworth" is situated was part of a large portion of land originally granted to Andrew Holder by Sir William Denison KCB, Governor of New South Wales in 1958.¹

In 1888, the land was presumably subdivided and subdivisions 14-17 were sold to Joseph Francis Oberthur. The whole surrounding area was known as the "Oberthur Estate" as late as 1923², so he may have owned further property. Local oral history says that the Camp Hill area was settled by German migrants³ and Joseph Oberthur may well have been one of these or a descendant.

We do know that he was one of a group of people who, in 1888, petitioned to, and were successful in breaking away from the Shire of Bulimba to form the Shire of Coorparoo because they considered the Bulimba Shire administration to be too distant to properly consider their concerns.⁴

We have not yet been able to discover further information about him although our research is continuing and we will forward any additional facts that come to light.

We have also been unable to ascertain exactly when the house was built. The Post Office Directory of 1888⁵ shows that J.F. Oberthur lived in Ashton House, Ashton Street, but it is not clear whether this is the same house. The title deed shows the next owner of subdivisions 14-17 to be Elizabeth Regina Macintosh, "a married woman", surely one of few married women to own property in 1890. The Post Office Directory of 1892-93 lists Elizabeth McIntosh in the Oberthur Estate.⁶

The first reference to the house as "Isleworth" and the first conclusive proof of its existence is in the Post Office Directory of 1901⁷, which list the next owner, Alfred Everett, in Ashton St, Oberthur Estate.

Although the exact date of construction cannot be determined, it appears that "Isleworth" was built between 1888 and 1900 since it displays the architectural features of this Late Victorian Period. It has a hip roof with a separate section over the verandah which runs along three sides. The roof has a flat square piece on the very top with a decorative pressed metal ridge.

"Isleworth" was one of the first houses in the Camp Hill district. The Camp Hill State School's Golden Jubilee edition of their magazine "Mirrabooka" (1976) mentions that until the First World War the Camp Hill area belonged entirely to the vineyards and dairy farms (p4). As late as 1901 there were only six residences other than "Isleworth" listed in the Post Office Directory for Ashton St.

A former local resident, Mr James Forster, has said that it was a magnificent home. As can be seen from the

Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Department Detail Plan no. 899, it was then the largest house in the street and one of a very few in the area to be named. It was obviously therefore one of the grander homes of the district, as well as one of the oldest.

The house has a basically square plan, with what was probably the kitchen at the rear. The fact that it is on very low stumps may indicate that it was built early in the period since this was the custom until perching houses on high stilts was developed as a solution to termite infestations. There were other outbuildings, perhaps stables, but these are no longer in existence.

According to local history, the area was settled by German migrants of whose number, or a descendant of whom, the original owner, J.F. Oberthur, may well have been. See Section 1 for further historical details.

“Isleworth” appears to have been built in the last years of the 19th century. It therefore displays an architectural style of which there are not many examples in the south eastern suburbs, since most of the houses were built at a later date. The Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Department Detail Plan no. 899 shows one other home in Ashton St which appears to be of a similar style. This house has long since disappeared.

The house has certain characteristics which indicate that it was built in the period named:

- modified pyramid roof with flat section on top
- metal ridge decoration on roof
- basic square plan
- verandah on three sides

It has other features which distinguish it from the majority of these houses:

- a kitchen at the rear with a chimney
- an attic with two dormer windows

There are very few houses in Camp Hill with one of these features, let alone both. See Section 1 for further architectural explanation.

Judy Rechner of the Coorparoo and Districts Heritage Group commented that there were no ordinary houses in the south eastern suburbs listed on the Queensland Heritage Register. The local community stands to lose this potentially attractive house and this example of an architectural style that is somewhat rare in the district.

National Trust of Queensland historian, Ray Sumner, in *More Historic Homes of Brisbane* (1982) mentions attics with dormer windows as a feature of cottages built before 1880. “Isleworth” has two dormer windows. She also describes a house at Eight Mile Plains (“Hughesville”), which, while on a somewhat grander scale, shares many architectural features with “Isleworth”. “Hughesville” was built in the late 1880s.

Description

“Isleworth” has at some stage been converted into four flats. The verandahs have been closed in with fibro and hopper windows on the sides and the front has been partly closed in with bricks, although the front entrance and nameplate are still visible. The outbuildings are no longer in existence.

The property is in a state of disrepair and only one flat is occupied. A development application has been

submitted to the Brisbane City Council for construction of an eight unit apartment building, so the house is in danger of demolition or, at best, removal from the site. Sensitive restoration of the house would benefit the whole surrounding area and restore some of Camp Hill's sense of heritage. In the process of our research we have come to realise that very little is known by individuals or organisations such as school and local history societies, about the history of this particular local area.

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 late nineteenth century house built when Camp Hill was mostly vineyards and dairy farms; and, as one of the first houses to be built in Camp Hill.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as the house displays an architectural style that is uncommon in the local area; and, as one of the first houses in Camp Hill.

References

1. Certificate of Title No. 107537, Register Book Vol. 697 Folio 27
2. Advertisement for auction of allotments in the Oberthur Estate, 1923 (John Oxley Library)
3. Information Supplied by Brisbane City Council

4. Information supplied by the Brisbane City Council from “The Sun” 16 March 1988, and from “Coorparoo and Stones Corner Centenary – 1856-1956” (Stones Corner Brisbane City Council Library)
 5. Queensland Post Office Directory entries 1888 Alphabetical Directory fiche 5 of 9
 6. Queensland Post Office Directories 1892-93 Alphabetical Directory fiche 6 of 10
 7. Queensland Post Office Directories 1901 South Brisbane Directory fiche 3 of 4
 8. Certificate of Title No. 431546, Register Book Vol. 2237 Folio 36
 9. Queensland Post Office Directories 1892 Coorparoo Street Directory fiche 3 of 11
 10. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Department Detail Plan no. 899 (from mid- 19302)
 11. Coorparoo and District Historical Society Richard Jeffries
 12. Coorparoo and District Historical Society Ron Baker
 13. Coorparoo and Districts Heritage Group Judy Rechner
 14. Former Local Resident James Forster
 15. Freeland, J.M., *Architecture in Australia – A History*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia, 1972
 16. Archer, John, *Building a Nation – A History of the Australian House*, Collins, Sydney, Australia, 1987
 17. Saini, Balwant, *The Australian House – Homes of the Tropical North*, Landsdowne Press, Sydney, Australia, 1982
 18. Summer, Ray, *More Historic Homes of Brisbane*, National Trust of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 1982
 19. *Mirrabooka*, Camp Hill State School Magazine, 1976
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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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