

Heritage Citation



Lahey's Corinda Sawmill

Key details

Addresses	At 25 Lahey Close, Sherwood, Queensland 4075
Type of place	Factory
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Lot plan	L1_SP289400; L2_SP289400; L3_SP289400
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2011 Date of Citation — August 2010
People/associations	David Lahey (Builder)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association

David Lahey built the Corinda sawmill in 1910. Situated between the railway line and Oxley Creek, the sawmill was in an ideal location to receive and dispatch timber. The Lahey family were early pioneers in Queensland who played an important role in the growth of industry in the state. The Corinda sawmill is a rare surviving example of early industry in this area.

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. The opening of a railway bridge at Indooroopilly in 1876 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. Later waves of building, occurring after each of the World Wars, gradually reduced the amount of farmland, and new housing continues to envelop those gracious older houses which once stood on acreage, surrounded by gardens.

As Irish immigrants the Laheys established themselves with a succession of successful timber, arrowroot and sugar mills in the Pimpama, Beaudesert, Waterford, Canungra areas in the late nineteenth century. David Lahey, one of the eleven Lahey children, after establishing himself in his own right as a successful saw miller and timber merchant, decided to found his own saw milling business as a legacy for his own eleven children. In the early twentieth century David purchased land in Corinda, beside Oxley Creek. It was deemed advantageous to have a site with water access that not only provided an efficient mode of timber distribution, but also an opportunity to establish boat building as part of the business. The land also sat adjacent to the railway line, providing yet another convenient means of transporting timber.

In 1910 the sawmill at Corinda was built after an intensive land clearing operation carried out by several members of the Lahey family. By 1911 the mill was operating. The business was known as Brisbane Timbers Ltd. Projects such as the construction of many of Brisbane’s trams, as well as providing Brisbane with high quality timber, ensured the success of the Corinda sawmill.

One important aspect of the Corinda mill was the means with which energy was produced, by steam. Boilers for the generation of steam were fired up by the large quantities of sawdust left from the milling process. This process was carried out in a separate building from the sawmill, the sawdust separator building. The steam produced by the burning of sawdust was used to work the mill’s machinery. This is an important reminder of the Lahey family’s contribution to the Corinda area.

Initially David Lahey and his family lived in various stately homes in Yeronga, Indooroopilly and Toowong when they first relocated to Brisbane. However in 1912 David Lahey built a large house on the Corinda property, known as Wonga Wallen, no longer existent on the site. As the family and the business grew David had three other houses constructed around the Corinda mill property from 1919 to 1925. The last of these houses was 103 Martindale Street, and was built for Percival Lahey and his family.

By the mid 1920s the Corinda mill had expanded with another mill constructed for the cutting of softwood, the

original would be used exclusively for hard wood. The Lahey family at Corinda were aware of the importance of timber as a renewable resource and as such were committed to reserving a portion of their land for the planting of pine trees. As the 1920s drew to a close so too did the prosperity generated from the Corinda mill. In 1931 the mill went into receivership. However, by 1934 it was back in business, albeit operating at a smaller scale. The Lahey sawmill continued to work under the Lahey name until the 1950s when it was sold to Carricks.

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 surviving remnant of the Lahey's Corinda sawmill illustrating the way in which industry contributed to the growth of the Corinda/Sherwood area.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as a rare surviving remnant of early twentieth century industrial activity in the Corinda locale.

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

for its association with the Lahey family.

References

1. *Lahey, Shirley, The Laheys: Pioneer Settler and Sawmiller*, Brisbane, 2003
 2. Lahey, Shirley, "Lahey's Corinda Connections", Places, Patriachs and Pastimes, Oxley-Chelmer History Group Papers: I 1996-1997
 3. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
 4. Queensland Post Office Directories
 5. *Metropolitan Water and Sewage Survey Maps*, 1949
 6. *Oxley Creek Times*, 'Industry', Brisbane-stories.powerup.com.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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