

## Heritage Citation



### Leswell

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 35 Hanlan Street, Chelmer, Queensland 4068
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Queenslander
<b>Lot plan</b>	L5_SP281931; L3_SP281931; L4_SP281931
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — May 2016
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
<b>People/associations</b>	Oakden, Addison and Kemp (Architect)

This fine house was built in 1889, on land John Kersey Cannan had purchased in 1885, within the 'Riverton' estate. J. K. Cannan had a successful career with the Bank of New South Wales and Queensland National Bank, prior to being appointed Assistant Manager of the Royal Bank of Queensland in 1888 and Acting Manager in 1889. At this time he had this house designed by Oakden, Addison and Kemp and lived in Chelmer. In 1892 he became Manager and Inspector of Branches. During the period from 1895 he was also a partner in the Queensland Canning Company and a director of the Manchester-Queensland Produce Company. In 1904 the property was transferred to his married daughter, Mona Robertson, but John K. Cannan and his wife, Elizabeth lived in the house until John's death in 1925. The house 'Leswell' remained in family hands until it was sold in 1929.

## History

This house is built on land that was marketed as the township of Riverton, known as Oxley Point in 1884. By that time the rail line across the river was a well-used route to Brisbane and the site's proximity to the Albert Siding was an important selling point. The sites were described as fully cleared, each ready for a gentleman's residence. The land had recently been farming land so that 'carrots and parsnips a yard long' were a promise in store.<sup>1</sup>

Three roods (3035.1m<sup>2</sup>) comprising six twenty perch (505.9m<sup>2</sup>) allotments of this estate were purchased by James Bennett Hickie in August 1885. Evidently an investment, the property was sold one month later to John Kearsy Cannan. Cannan mortgaged the land for £1,000 in January 1886, and for £2500 in 1890; quite likely to fund investments. Cannan also mortgaged the property to the Queensland Deposit Bank and Building Society for £1,300 in 1887. This mortgage is likely to have been used to fund the construction of this house.

In 1889 notable nineteenth century Queensland architects Oakden, Addison and Kemp designed a house for J.K. Cannan at Riverton, Chelmer. Oakden Addison and Kemp was a talented architectural firm which produced notable and attractive buildings such as Cumbooquepa in South Brisbane, Ralahyne and Stanley Hall in Clayfield and the Albert Street Wesleyan (now Uniting) Church in Brisbane city.<sup>2</sup>

Son of one of the first medical practitioners in the State of Queensland, Dr Kearsy Cannan, John Kearsy Cannan was born in 1845 and was the manager of the Roma branch of the Bank of New South Wales when he married in 1868. Cannan became manager of the Royal Bank of Queensland in 1892 after his successful appointment as assistant manager in 1888. In Brisbane, apart from his banking career, Cannan was involved in a number of enterprises and community organisations. In 1895 J.K. Cannan was one of the directors of the Manchester-Queensland Produce Distribution Company Ltd formed to establish depots in Britain for the sale and distribution of Queensland produce.<sup>3</sup> From 1895 Cannan was also a partner with Robert Dyason in the Queensland Canning Company. This jam and preserves manufacturing partnership dissolved in 1900 but it was announced that Cannan and the company would continue and pay all debts received. In 1904 the company was wound up with any unpaid creditors directed to contact the Trustee TM Hall. By this time J.K. Cannan was nearly 60 and his sons had careers in law and business.<sup>4</sup>

John K Cannan and his wife, Elizabeth Christian Cannan, who he married in 1868, had six children, three daughters and three sons. One son was killed at Gallipoli, another son went on to attain the rank of Brigadier General and became manager of an insurance company, while John Kearsley Cannan junior pursued a career in law, forming the partnership of Cannan and Peterson. Two daughters married well, with one becoming Mrs W. T. Robertson; another Mrs Talbot Stanley, with an unmarried daughter Miss Katie Cannan caring for her mother before her death in 1927.

In 1904 title to the house and land was transferred to the daughter Mona Siddins Robertson, wife of Walker Thomas Robertson. Mona Cannan had married Robertson in 1893 and lived in Longpocket Rd, Indooroopilly. Walker Thomas Robertson played an important part in the foundation of the Red Cross movement in Queensland, receiving the Order of the British Empire for his services.<sup>5</sup> John Kearsley Cannan and his wife appear to have continued living at their home 'Leswell' in Chelmer until J.K. Cannan's death in 1925, aged 80. Afterwards Mrs Cannan moved to Auchenflower to live with her daughter, Katie.

The property was offered for sale for removal in October 1926 with "buildings for removal ... comprising a large modern residence with roof of iron, 10 rooms, with wide verandas all round, three rooms under house, also Stables HWWB and iron roof, measuring 13x13, and fowlhouses." The household furniture was also offered for auction on the premises and included a Strohmenger piano, bedroom suite and bedsteads of wire, kapok, and fibre mattresses, marble top washstand, handsomely carved hall table, good Rex stove, GI bath, mangle, wheelbarrow, and sundries.<sup>6</sup> Evidently the auction was not successful and the property was rented, with James Proud an occupant until 1932.

Title was transferred to Rubena Hicks, wife of Richard Joseph Hicks in 1929. While Rubena and Richard Hicks enrolled to vote and lived in 'Cricklewood' in Dan Street Graceville in 1925, they occupied this house, in what was then River Terrace, from at least 1934. It was during the Hicks' ownership that the house was named 'Kawarra' and had a tennis court in the front yard. Richard Joseph Hicks was the district engineer attached to the Main Roads Commission.<sup>7</sup> The property was sold in 1940.

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## Description

Kawarra (1889) is a generous highset, timber framed and clad house standing on the highest part of a large suburban property (1507m<sup>2</sup>). The house has a hipped roofed core surrounded by a wide concave roofed verandah, reached by broad front timber stairs. The roofs are clad with corrugated metal sheets and a ventilated ridge cap is retained. Symmetrically composed and facing west to Longman Terrace and over this to the river, the house is traditionally arranged with a central hall accessing rooms either side. It features characteristic decorative treatments and material use such as cast metal filigree balustrade, moulded timber verandah posts, a semi-circular pediment over the entry with timber fretwork, eaves brackets, moulded joinery, and a timber lattice enclosed understorey.

The house yard includes mature trees, including the overhanging canopy of very substantial trees from next door residence 'Pontresina' (c1890). A long rock faced retaining wall divides the front yard in half to form an upper and lower terrace. The upper terrace has a tall flagpole and the lower terrace accommodates a tennis court (built by 1938).

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a large architect-designed nineteenth century residence built on a generous lot during the early phase of Chelmer's suburbanisation by Brisbane's elite.

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#### Aesthetic

##### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

with a graceful domestic character engendered in its fine proportions, symmetry, high quality materials and craftsmanship, with a generous garden setting and elevated position affording expansive views to and from a prominent corner position.

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#### 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 an elite family house built for John Kearsey Cannan whose family played a significant role in the development of the local community.

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## References

1. State Library Queensland History Research Service "Chelhaven". Copy on BCC file
2. Watson & Mackay *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century Queensland Museum*, 199?, p.135
3. Manchester-Queensland Produce Company *Darling Downs Gazette* 27 July 1895 p8
4. Obituaries *The Telegraph* 5 Nov 1925,p12; *The Daily Mail* 6 Nov 1925, p13
5. Death of Mr W T Robertson *Courier-Mail* 19 May 1938, p3
6. Auction Sale *The Telegraph* 2 Oct 1926, p20
7. Mount Nebo Explosion *Brisbane Courier* 14 March 1931, p14
8. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay 1994, *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia
9. *Title deeds*, Department of Natural Resources and Mines
10. *Walter Taylor South Character and Heritage Study*, BCC Heritage Unit, 1997
11. Queensland Post Office Directories
12. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
13. *Brisbane Courier*, Wednesday 16 May, 1923
14. *Chelmer Through the Years 1860-1973*, Cyril Bodes

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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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