



Heritage Citation



Meridian

Key details

Also known as	Meridian Flats
Addresses	At 130 Flinders Parade, Sandgate, Queensland 4017
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Filigree
Lot plan	L4_RP895182
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — August 2013
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

'Meridian' was built in 1885 for prominent publican Peter Murphy. It was intended to be a hotel for visitors arriving on the new Sandgate rail line. This proposal was rejected by the local council and the building was completed as a large home. It was leased as a private residence until 1907, when Edward and Margaret Dyer converted it into a boarding house. Named 'Meridian' in 1919, it catered for holidaymakers and, later, long-term residents. It remained in the hands of the Dyer family until 1990, when the new owners restored it to a residence.

History

The land on which 'Meridian' was built was originally part of three separate vacant allotments that were included in an 1882 Sandgate land sale. On 21 October 1882, lots 2, 3 and 4 of section 5A were sold. Patrick Luttrell paid £80 for Lot 2 (1 rood, 4 perches). Peter Murphy paid £250 for Lot 3 (1 rood, 10 perches). William Stevens paid £200 for Lot 4 (1 rood, 10 perches).

Peter Murphy was a prominent Brisbane publican and businessman. He had a major influence on the development of the George Street shopping precinct in Brisbane City. Murphy, an Irish Catholic migrant, arrived in Brisbane in 1871. By 1879 he had become the licensee of the Burgundy Hotel in Roma Street. Murphy acquired land near the corner of George and Roma Streets where he erected the Transcontinental Hotel in 1884. He financed the creation of the McDonnell & East store in George Street in 1901 and was one of that company's founding managing directors. From 1904-22, he was a Member of the Queensland Legislative Council.

As part of his early business interests, Murphy had a two-storey building constructed on Lot 3 of Section 5A at Sandgate. The site was ideally situated, being located across the road (then called Lower Esplanade) from the main Sandgate public bathing area. The property had scenic views of Moreton Bay and it benefited from the sea breezes coming off the Bay. The opening of the Sandgate Railway line to Brisbane on 10 May 1882 presented new business opportunities to serve the people who caught the train to the seaside. Initially, Murphy planned to turn his new Sandgate building into a hotel and he applied for a publican's licence while the structure was still under construction in March 1885. His application for a licence proved unsuccessful, as it was opposed by the Sandgate Municipal Council. The Council felt overwhelmingly that there were already sufficient public houses and inns in Sandgate in 1885.

Murphy was left with a half-finished building, which he chose to complete as a residence. It was suitable for this purpose, as, in his publican's licence application, Murphy described the structure as a "house and appurtenances" that contained "the number of rooms required by the [Publicans'] Act".¹ When introduced in 1824, this Act had specified a minimum of two bedrooms and two sitting rooms for public accommodation. This Act was changed the Licencing Act in 1885. On 15 October 1888, James Stodart took out a two-year lease on lot 3 that was backdated to 1 September 1888. Stodart again leased the property for two years, commencing on 1 September 1890. Stodart was a merchant, who ran his Stodart & Co business from Edward Street in the City. The 1889 Edition of the *Queensland Post Office Directories* lists Stodart's home address in Aston Street, Toowong. It is presumed that Stodart leased the Sandgate house from Murphy as a beachside holiday home, as he did not have his mail delivered to Sandgate.

Between 1885 and 1892, lots 2 and 4 underwent a number of ownership changes, while lot 3 remained in Murphy's hands. In 1910-11, Edward Dyer purchased Murphy's lot 3 and parts of lots 2 and 4 to create the existing property.

Edward (nicknamed 'Tom') Dyer was a painter by profession. He was born in 1864 in Pinner, Middlesex, Britain. He migrated to Brisbane, arriving by ship on 8 February 1885. Edward Dyer was a long-term resident of Sandgate, having married Margaret English there on 14 August 1886. They had lived in Wakefield Street since 1896. He moved to Flinders Parade in 1907. It is likely that he rented the residence at 130 Flinders Parade for three years, prior to purchasing the property from Murphy in 1910. Dyer's wife, Margaret had run this property as a boarding house since 1908. The house is first listed under the name 'Meridian' in the 1919 edition of the *Australian Electoral Rolls*. Lower Esplanade had changed its name to Flinders Parade in 1917. During the 1920s, Fred Dyer further subdivided some of his land and transferred some of it to his first-born and only daughter, the spinster Doris N.V. Dyer.

'Meridian', the boarding house, was first listed under the name 'Meridian Flats' in the 1928-29 Edition of the *Queensland Post Office Directories*. While 'Meridian' offered rental accommodation particularly for holidaymakers, its facilities were utilised throughout the year by the wider Sandgate community. When the Sandgate Ladies Bowls Club was formed in 1935, its members found that the existing facilities at the Sandgate Bowls Club were fully booked by the male bowlers. The women players approached the Dyer family, and gained permission to conduct bowls tournaments on the private bowls green that had been established beside 'Meridian' and fronting both The Esplanade and Moreton Bay. This green had been laid c1919. Other facilities offered by Proprietress Mrs Dyer were telephone access (Ph. Sandgate 24), fine in-house dining plus its immediate proximity to the Bramble Bay beach and the boating and fishing facilities on Moreton Bay.

Edward Dyer died on 24 February 1938. His estate was transmitted to his last-born and youngest son, Frederick Dyer. Frederick Dyer was, like his father Edward, a Sandgate-based painter. He formally acquired the title of all of lot 3 and the remaining parts (resubdivisions 2 and 3 of subdivision 2) of both lots 2 and 4 on 22 May 1939. This gave him a total area of land containing 2 roods and 5.2 perches that contained 'Meridian'.

After World War II, 'Meridian' continued to be offer rental accommodation. As private car ownership increased, holidaymakers travelled further along the road to the developing Gold and Sunshine Coasts. This led to a decline in the tourist trade in the old seaside suburbs such as Sandgate and Wynnum. Thus 'Meridian' was accommodating long-term residents who worked in the local region, rather than families on holidays. The establishment was managed by Doris Dyer, who sometimes co-owned the property with Fred Dyer. As the manager, Doris applied to the Brisbane City Council for the renewal of a tenement licence for 'Meridian' in 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955. In 1972, \$800 worth of alterations, including an additional bathroom and toilet were approved for the flats.

This large block, located close to the centre of Sandgate, was open for further subdivision to meet Sandgate's post-war urban expansion. In 1950, lot 3 and resubdivision 2 of subdivision 2 of lots 2 and 4 was further subdivided into three new blocks, with a tiny section (.31 perches) lost to a road dedication. He also further subdivided resubdivision 3 of subdivision 2 of lots 2 and 4 into two new blocks. In 1952, Fred Dyer transferred a total of 24 perches (subdivision 1 of resubdivision 3 of subdivision 2 of lots 2 and 4 plus subdivision 1 of lot 3 and resubdivision 2 of subdivision 2 of lots 2 and 4) to Doris Dyer. These post-war subdivisions left 'Meridian' on 29.3 perch corner block defined as subdivision 2 of lot 3. On 30 October 1958, Fred Dyer transferred this corner block into the joint ownership of Doris Dyer and himself. When Doris died on 19 June 1974, 'Meridian' passed back to Fred Dyer. After Fred's death in c1983, 'Meridian' was transmitted, on 24 August 1983, to the representatives of his estate, Thomas E. Dyer, Margaret M. Collie and Dulcie D. Dyer.

On 1 October 1990, Leigh H. and Victoria G. Sampson became the new owners of Subdivision 2 of Lot 3 and 'Meridian'. This ended the Dyer family's 83-year association with 130 Flinders Parade. The Sampsons also obtained an adjoining L-shaped block that had been part of the original 'Meridian' site. Ownership of this 31.4 perch block that bordered Sixth Avenue was shared between various members of the Dyer family, until the Sampsons bought it in October 1990. These two blocks were redesignated as Lot 4 on RP895182 in 1996.

In 1990, 'Meridian' was identified as a place of heritage significance by the Brisbane History Group and it was featured as Stop No.37 in its book *The Sandgate/Shorncliffe Heritage Trail*. In 1994-95, it was identified as heritage place by the Brisbane City Council in its *Sandgate Local Area Plan*. In 1995, 'Meridian' was the featured house in a *Northside Chronicle* article about the restoration and preservation historic homes in the Sandgate/Shorncliffe areas. The newspaper reported that the 'Meridian' owners [the Sampsons] were:

“..engaged in restoring their home back to its original form. Formerly a boarding residence with up to 10 tenants, the home is being stripped back and restored to bring out the features of its original era. These include heritage colours painted throughout, timber staircase, marble-encased fireplace, heavy oak wooden doors, polished floors and open veranda”.²

In 1998, the Brisbane City Council also identified 'Meridian' as being of heritage significance when it was entered as Stop No.12 in the local heritage trail booklet *Sandgate by the Sea*. 'Meridian' was entered onto Council's City Plan Heritage Register on 1 January 2004.

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 it was built in the nineteenth century for hotel use but was converted into a private residence, then reconverted after the turn of the century into a boarding house, before becoming interwar 'Meridian' holiday rooms, then post-war flats and finally returning to a private home.

Scientific

CRITERION C

The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history

having occupied the same site since 1885, while undergoing a variety of usage changes.

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 early twentieth century beachfront flats that catered for Sandgate's pre-World War II tourist trade.

Supporting images



Unknown photographer,
'Mrs Dyer's boarding house, Meridian, in Lower Esplanade, Sandgate, Brisbane', undated,
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

References

1. "Publicans' Licences (Notices)", *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 March 1885

2. "Baysiders take pride in restoration", *Northside Chronicle – Property Scene*, 29 March 1995
3. Brisbane City Council aerial photographs 1946, 2011
4. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
5. Brisbane City Council, post-1946 building register cards
6. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map No.S37, December 1953
7. Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit, *Sandgate by the Sea*, Heritage Trail Series 12, Sandgate Heritage Trail
8. "Sandgate Municipal Council", *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 March 1885
9. Brisbane History Group, *Sandgate/Shorncliffe Heritage Tour*, (Brisbane: B.H.G., 1990)
10. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
11. Donnelly, J.J. *Hotels of Brisbane*, B. Arch thesis, University of Queensland, 1967
12. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
13. "Baysiders take ride in restoration", *Northside Chronicle*, 29 March 1995
14. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949 editions
15. Sandgate & Districts Historical Society, photographic collection
16. Ancestry.com.au, Electoral Rolls and Edward Dyer's family tree

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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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