

## Heritage Citation



**Mitchelton Infants School (former)**

### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Mitchelton State School
<b>Addresses</b>	At 671 Samford Road, Mitchelton, Queensland 4053
<b>Type of place</b>	Preschool, State school
<b>Period</b>	World War I 1914-1918
<b>Style</b>	Bungalow
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP18834
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — October 2010
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

<b>People/associations</b>	Thomas Pye (Architect)
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social

After a number of requests from local residents for the construction of a new school, the Grovely State School was finally opened here in 1916 with an initial enrolment of 93 students. Considerable population growth in the local area saw the school extended around 1924 and another room added in 1928. Further growth during the World War II and postwar eras saw the school unable to cope with demand and a new larger site was chosen on Glen Retreat Road for the construction of Mitchelton State School. In 1952 the former Grovely School became the Mitchelton Infants School with 447 students of Grades 1 to 3. The school operated until 1985 and the buildings have since been used for a range of education, training and community purposes.

## History

In October 1913 residents of the Grovely district requested the establishment of a state school, owing to the increase of population expected from recent land sales, and the danger posed to children by cattle travelling from the Enoggera saleyards. However, these arguments were not supported by the District Inspector of the time. Inspector Harrap doubted both the danger said to be posed by the cattle and the suitability of the area to support a larger population (“no-one but a new chum or a fool” would build on the portion that was “low ti-tree country” and “broken by gullies”). Although he conceded that the district would “leap ahead” when the railway was extended to Samford, in his judgement that eventuality was far enough in the future to not warrant immediate establishment of a school.

A further meeting of local residents on 4 October 1914 resolved to request the establishment of a school at Grovely, “having heard that the Enoggera School is about to be removed”. The department of Public Instruction approved this request, and in September 1915 bought the school site from Mrs Keylar for £50. The school inspector recommended a school be built to accommodate 120 pupils, as construction of the Terror’s Creek (Dayboro) railway was to commence soon, increasing the number of pupils in the area.

Several different sets of plans were drawn up under the auspices of long serving Deputy Government Architect Thomas Pye, and the chosen design was built at a final cost of £940.

Rockhampton head teacher Ernest Krebs took up the appointment and opened the Grovely State School on 9 October 1916, enrolling 93 children immediately and ending the year with a total enrolment of 112. The school was named after ‘Grovely Lodge’, the home John and Mary Nicholson had built on a hill further west in 1867. Following the extension of the railway from Enoggera station to Mitchelton and Grovely in 1918 the local population soon grew. By 1920 the Grovely School Committee was requesting that the school be extended to accommodate the 160 or so students of the time. Mitchelton became the school’s official name in 1923 and extensions were built in 1924-5, doubling the classroom capacity of the school with the addition of a further two classrooms. Another room was added in 1928.

During the same period the use of land in the Enoggera / Mitchelton area for military purposes became more established. The Commonwealth originally acquired approximately 500 hectares for the training of defence unit

and a rifle range in 1908. With the advent of World War One (1914-18) Enoggera became a recruit training area as well as a staging camp. Military personnel and their families contributed to the population growth in the adjoining suburbs. This trend continued with the commencement of World War Two and again there was “an influx of army families in suburbs close to the barracks”.

In the postwar period there was a rapid increase in enrolments at Mitchelton State School. It was decided that the site was not large enough to provide adequate accommodation for the increased numbers of students. A new site on Glen Retreat Road was found for the State School and the new Mitchelton State School opened on 29 January 1952 with 7 classes of about 60 pupils, 7 teachers and a Head Teacher. In February 1952, 430 pupils were enrolled at the school. Nearby, Grovely State School and Mitchelton High School opened in January 1956.

With the opening of the Mitchelton State School in 1952, this building became the Mitchelton Infants' State School under the direction of Ann Carroll. At the end of its first quarter the Infants' School had 447 students. As the surrounding population continued to grow a classroom was built to the north of the original building and the toilet block was upgraded. Student numbers peaked in the 1960s and in 1980 an amphitheatre was built at the base of the sloping hill which leads to the main buildings. Drama activities, general creative play and the annual Christmas Concerts were held here. As the demography of the area changed over time and numbers at the primary schools reduced to the extent that the schools were reunited. Grades One and Two moved to Glen Retreat Road and the Mitchelton Infants' School closed in December 1985.

As new teaching practices and computer technology began to be used more extensively from the early 1980s a number of vacant schools became home to new facilities in which in-service training was provided to classroom teachers. In 1984 the Infants' School site became the base for the director of Centre 2000 and in 1986 a Maths Development Centre was established there. Also in the 1980s the role of the parent school liaison officer began. The cottage in the grounds of Centre 200 was identified as an ideal first site for the new service. A Learner Assistance Program was also introduced to enable willing parents to provide extra support for selected students. Unfortunately termite damage fostered by the cottage's proximity to a camphor laurel tree resulted in its demolition in January 1994.

From 1992 the Mount Coot-tha School Support Centre (originally planned to be located in the Mt Coot-tha precinct) was established to provide a co-ordinated range of services to eighteen schools in the The Gap and Ferny Grove areas. It operated in these buildings and provided a range of services in the areas of curriculum, special needs, leadership and management support to promote educational excellence in school communities.

In 1998 the school was identified as surplus to Education Queensland's requirements. The property was sold to Youth with a Mission (Brisbane) Incorporated in January 1999. The group continues to use the buildings for training and community purposes.

---

## 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 school complex established in 1916, extended in 1924 and 1928, and re-designated in 1952, highlighting significant population growth in the area from the interwar to postwar periods.

---

## Representative

### CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as a group of substantially intact federation and interwar era timber state school buildings.

---

## 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 a locus of educational, social and recreational activities for local children since 1916.

---

## References

1. Detail plan 1586, 14 September 1955
2. Education Department History Unit, Reference Files: Mitchelton Infants School, Mitchelton State School, Grovely State School, Mitchelton High school
3. Hausler, E *80 years: one building, five faces ...* Mt Coot-tha School Support Centre, Mitchelton, 1996
4. QSA EDU/Z 1167, Education Department, Grovely State School file, 916-22
5. QSA EDU/Z 1788, Education Department, Mitchelton State School file, 1922-47
6. QSA A/16661 Ga-Gu, Education Department, New schools, 1908-44
7. QSA EDU/AB 188, Education Department, Mitchelton Infants School statistical returns, 1952-67
8. Donald Watson & Judith McKay, *Queensland architects of the nineteenth century*, Queensland Museum,

## Copyright Brisbane City Council

**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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised June 2022)



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*