

## Heritage Citation



### Nudgee Cemetery

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 491 St Vincents Road, Nudgee, Queensland 4014
<b>Type of place</b>	Cemetery
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Carpenter Gothic
<b>Lot plan</b>	L235_RP216992; L234_RP231669
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2003 Date of Citation — January 2003
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (C) Scientific; (D) Representative; (G) Social

Opened in 1867, Nudgee Cemetery was Brisbane's first Catholic-operated burial ground. Thousands of Brisbane residents have been buried in the cemetery over the last 150 years, including notable Brisbane locals such as T.C. Beirne, George Wilkie Gray and Vince Gair. It is also the final resting place of many of Brisbane's Catholic clergy, including nuns belonging to the Order of the Sisters of Mercy. Nudgee Cemetery remains Brisbane's only private cemetery to this day.

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## History

The Roman Catholic Church became the largest single landowner within the Nudgee District when the area was surveyed and put up for sale in 1862. The Church's holdings extended all the way to Moreton Bay at what is now the suburb of Nudgee Beach. Under the sponsorship of Archbishop James Quinn (also known as O'Quinn), the Order of the Sisters of Mercy established St Vincents Orphanage on 3,500 acres of land fronting Queens Road. As a result of the Orphanage's opening, a need arose for a site to bury any of the Orphanage's residents or staff. The Nudgee area also had a growing population of farmer families such as the Childs who established Toombul Vineyards in the district in 1866. Thus the need arose for a community cemetery.

The land, that is the site of the Nudgee Cemetery, was bought by James Keatinge, of Brisbane, on 8 September 1863. Keatinge paid ?18 for 18 acres of former crown land described as Portion 236 in the Parish of Toombul. On the same day he paid the same price for the 18 acres contained in Portion 235 and ?19.16s. for the 18 acres in Portion 234. It is presumed that Keatinge was acting on behalf of the Catholic Church, for he transferred ownership of all of this land to Archbishop Quinn, on 2 October 1863.

The 54-acre site though covering three subdivisions of farmland, was unsuitable for any purpose other than grazing, as it was subject to flooding from the nearby Nudgee Waterholes. This site, was situated down the hill from the Orphanage was allotted as a cemetery site by the Catholic Church, with the Archbishop acting as trustee of property. Thus in 1867, Bernard McHugh became the first person to be interred in the new Nudgee Cemetery. While the cemetery was owned and run by the Catholic Church, persons from any denomination were permitted to be buried on the site.

Nudgee Cemetery, as the first Catholic cemetery in Brisbane, became the chosen burial for many people, especially Irish immigrants who lived outside the district. Access to the cemetery was facilitated by the opening of the Sandgate railway on 11 May 1882. The rail line lead to the erection of a station and goods shed which not only allowed local produce to be sent to Brisbane's markets but also allowed coffins to be transported out to Nudgee. Such was the popularity of Nudgee Cemetery as a burial site that Irish stonemason Timothy Wrafter moved to the farming district and established a monumental masons works there in the 1890s. Many of the surviving early gravestones in the cemetery were made by the firm of Wrafter and Sons.

When Archbishop Quinn died on 18 August 1881, the cemetery site passed to the trustees of his will, James Murray and Mathew Quinn. On 22 February 1897, the cemetery came under the control of Archbishop Robert Dunne. He leased the site, probably for grazing purposes, to local farmers Henry Walton Robinson and Joseph Kruetzer on 13 May 1898. The lease not only brought in income of ?30 per year to the Catholic Church but also would have provided a means to control the growth of grass and weeds within the cemetery. The lease was extended on 25 June 1904 with the rental being ?36 per annum.

When Archbishop Dunne died on 13 January 1917, the property passed into the hands his replacement James Duhig. Duhig acted as trustee of the cemetery in partnership with Denis Fouhy, Andrew Joseph Thynne and George Wilkie Gray. They continued to lease the cemetery land with Joseph Kruetzer obtaining a 10-year lease (at ?30 p.a.) on 4 May 1921. The 1946 aerial photograph of Nudgee shows that the cemetery had its main entrance leading from the gates off St Vincents Road. The entrance road lead to the graveyard that had spread across the top end of Portions 234 and 235. Two side entrances to the graveyard can be seen coming off Childs Road. A house (since demolished) situated at the tope end of Portion 236, off St Vincents Road, acted as the sextant's residence. The majority of the remainder of the site contained thick bushland.

When James Duhig died on 10 April 1965, the cemetery passed to his successor Vincent Francis Cleary, who acted as trustee with Mary O'Donnell. When Archbishop Cleary died on 8 August 1975, the cemetery became the responsibility of Archbishop Francis Rush. He acted as trustee along with John Joseph Gerry. By the 1980s, Nudgee Cemetery was maintained by funeral directors K.M. Smith, who acted on behalf of the Catholic Church. The cemetery is currently run by the Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Among the notable citizens of Brisbane who are buried at Nudgee Cemetery are the department store owner and philanthropist T.C. Beirne, the former managing director of Castlemaine Perkins, George Wilkie Gray and the controversial Premier of Queensland and founder of the Democratic Labor Party, Vince Gair. In the last decade, Nudgee Cemetery has become a focal burial site for members of Brisbane's Italian and Lithuanian communities.

When in 1930, the Brisbane City Council took control of all the cemeteries within its boundaries. Nudgee Cemetery was the only burial site to remain outside of Council's control.

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## Description

The main entrance on St Vincents Road is marked by a set of sandstone pillars that hold iron gates. Lot 234 contains much of the older components of the cemetery. These are gravestone areas designated as Portion A1, Portion A (in two distinct parts), Portion B, Portion J, Portion H, Portion F, Portion G (in two distinct parts) and one section of Portion D. There is also a timber Mourners' Shelter Shed and a hedge with a portico within this part of the cemetery. As well, there are a number of more recent grave sections marked as Portion 10A and the Lithuanian Section, together with a lawn cemetery marked 'A'.

Lot 235 contains the remainder of the older components of the cemetery. These are gravestone areas designated as Portion B1, Portion A, Portion B2, Portion C, Portion C1 and the other Portion D. The other sections, Portions A2, A3, A4, 5A and 6A contain post-1946 graves.

Lot 236 contains a modern brick site office off St Vincents Road. All of the graves in this section of the cemetery, designated as Portions 7A, 8A and 9A, together with a lawn cemetery and a wall of vaults/chapels, were

constructed after 1966.

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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 cemetery that has serviced Nudgee and surrounding districts since 1867.

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#### Rarity

##### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as Brisbane's only privately-run cemetery.

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#### 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 as a cemetery containing graves that date back to the nineteenth century.

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#### Representative

##### CRITERION D

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

places

as a mid nineteenth century privately-run cemetery.

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## 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 the final resting place of many of Brisbane's Catholic clergy, in particular the nuns belonging to the Order of the Sisters of Mercy.

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## References

1. Bangee Festival, *Banyo Nudgee Heritage Trail*, (Brisbane: Bangee, 2000)
2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards
3. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
4. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
6. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs – clippings files – Nudgee Cemetery
7. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949

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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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