

Heritage Citation



Primitive Methodist Church (former)

Key details

Also known as	Primitive Methodist Church of Spring Hill
Addresses	At 48 Leichhardt Street, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000
Type of place	Church
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Free Gothic
Lot plan	L5_RP10378
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — January 2011

Construction Roof: Tile;
Walls: Brick - Painted

People/associations Richard Gailey (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (G) Social

The former Leichhardt Street Primitive Methodist Church was constructed in Spring Hill in 1873-74. Spring Hill was one of the first suburbs laid-out in Brisbane after the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement closed and the area opened to free settlers. This modest church building was established to meet the rising spiritual needs of the local community and is the oldest surviving church in Spring Hill.

History

The Moreton Bay Penal Settlement closed in 1842 and Brisbane was opened to free settlers. Free settlement led to an expansion of Brisbane's boundaries with Spring Hill developing as one of Brisbane's first suburbs as it filled with housing estates. German scientist and explorer Ludwig Leichhardt had led three expeditions from Brisbane during 1842-48. His 1848 expedition, comprising seven men, disappeared mysteriously in 1848 gaining him lasting fame. The track that followed one of Spring Hill's ridgelines was named Leichhardt Street to honour the dead explorer.

A local community of the Primitive Methodist Church, a branch of the Methodist Church was established in 1859. The Primitives were the second strongest branch of the Methodist Church in Queensland, only exceeded in congregation numbers by the Wesleyans.

The land containing 48 Leichhardt Street was part of a larger Suburban portion Number 208 (1 acre, 1 rood, 28 perches) that was first sold to George Byrne on 16 February 1857. In 1863, part of Lot 208 was sold to James Hope. On 6 January 1873, Joseph Buckle purchased subdivision 5 of Lot 208. This was a small block of 10 perches fronting Leichhardt Street. On 22 July of that same year, Buckle transferred ownership of the block to a group of trustees comprising himself and Thomas Harding, William Henry Paton, George Bedgood, John Batten and Charles Adsett.

The 1874 edition of the *Queensland Post Office Directories* that was surveyed and compiled in 1873 listed Joseph Buckle as a Minister of the Primitive Methodist Church residing in Bartley Street, Spring Hill. This was within a short walking distance from the Leichhardt Street church site. Buckle had been appointed the Minister of the Brisbane's second Primitive Methodist Church in Adelaide Street, Brisbane in the early 1860s. The first church was in Fortitude Valley.

The men mortgaged the land through the Queensland Insurance Company for \$400 on 24 October 1873. The money is presumed to have been used to fund the building of the Primitive Methodist Church building on the land. Prominent Brisbane architect Richard Gailey designed the brick and porphyry stone church and construction commenced in 1873. It was completed in 1874 with walls almost 30 centimetres thick. A separate, small public toilet (or water closet) was located at the rear of the site. The Leichhardt Street Church was one of six Primitive Methodist churches constructed in Brisbane by 1874, with the churches at West End, Indooroopilly

and The Gap constructed around the same period as the Leichhardt Street church.

The Primitive Methodist Church continued to operate as a separate branch throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. It published a quarterly journal *The Queensland Primitive Methodist* from 1875 until 1893 when, due to a rising readership, it became the monthly *The Christian Ensign*. In 1893, a conference of all the various Methodist Church branches saw an agreement for amalgamation into a single Methodist Church. The Methodist Union was approved at a meeting of the Primitive Methodist Church in March, 1895. Final approval of the Union was delayed by a number of factors including the need to raise \$400 for the Leichhardt Street Primitive Methodist Church to fund its circuit and other obligations. The raising of this money was viewed as “the better to consolidate union” and necessitated two Methodist ministers mortgaging their personal Life Insurance policies. All issues were resolved by 1906 and thereafter the Leichhardt Street place of worship was simply known as a Methodist Church (of Australasia).

The Methodist Church disposed of the site on 30 March 1978. It had been placed on sale as early as February 1977, with an asking price of \$40,000. Included in the sale were 12 solid timber church pews. In 1979, the Brisbane City Council approved alterations to the interior of the former church building so that it could be reutilised as commercial office space (initially for the advertising agency Market Force Pty Ltd) and then leased to a variety of businesses. In recent years, the former church building has been used as a tax agent’s office, a restaurant & coffee shop and as architects’ offices.

Of the six churches built throughout Spring Hill by 1900, only three remain. St. Paul’s Cathedral (built 1889) is a major ecclesiastical building meant as the second Anglican cathedral within the centre of Brisbane, while the City Tabernacle (built 1890) was built as the headquarters of the Baptist Church in Queensland. The only other church in Spring Hill is a twentieth century design, that is, the Brisbane Spiritual Church built in 1929. The smaller former Primitive Methodist Church is representative of the early spiritual development of the Spring Hill community when available resources allowed for churches of a modest scale.

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

built to service the Primitive Methodist free settlers in one of Brisbane's first suburbs.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as the earliest surviving nineteenth century church in Spring Hill.

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

operating for over a hundred years as Spring Hill's Methodist Church.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
2. Brisbane City Council, post-1946 Building Cards
3. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map 19, 28 October 1914
4. Brisbane City Council, 1946, 2001, 2005 & 2010 aerial photographs
5. Brisbane City Council, *Brisbane Images* photograph archive website
6. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets
7. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
8. Rev R.S.C. Dingle ed. *Annals of Achievement: A review of Queensland Methodism 1847-1947*, JOL
9. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs – newspaper clippings file on Spring Hill
10. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949 editions
11. *The Courier Mail*, 16 February 1977

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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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