

Heritage Citation



Roles Hill Reservoirs

Key details

Addresses	At 30 Preston Road, Manly West, Queensland 4179
Type of place	Dam / reservoir
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Lot plan	L1_RP44294
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — June 2001
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic; (E) Aesthetic; (F) Technical

The Roles Hill Reservoirs form a collection of working facilities that demonstrates changing water storage technology since 1928. The towers of the Manly No. 1 and 2 Reservoirs are prominent district landmarks, while the turncock's cottage and the in-ground Roles Hill No.1 reservoir, with its unusual porphyry steps and "Roles

Hill" sign, contribute to the streetscape of Preston Road.

History

The first Roles Hill reservoir at Manly was brought into service in December 1928. A severe storm during 1929 caused damage to the earth walls surrounding the reservoir, and they were rebuilt and planted with grass to help stabilisation.

As part of a scheme to aid reticulation in the Wynnum-Manly area, Brisbane City Council embarked on a program to construct a water pipeline from Tingalpa to Manly, and an elevated tank at Roles Hill during 1948/49. The contractors for the Roles Hill were unable to obtain supplies of the required steel plate from Australian sources during 1949, and approval was granted to obtain the steel from overseas, ultimately delaying the project.

Construction of the concrete foundations and pillars for the elevated storage tank at Roles Hill, Manly, was commenced by the contractors in 1951, while templates for the curved sections of the tank were being prepared. Construction of the elevated steel storage was completed by contractors and commissioned in June 1953.

The tank was erected at a height of approximately 29 metres above ground level.

The pumping plant at this location, which was used temporarily as a booster on the reticulation system pending construction of the elevated tank, was connected with the tank upon completion and the previously boosted area was reticulated from the tank.

Construction of the Roles Hill Pumping Station, to pump from the Manly Reservoir to the Roles Hill Elevated Tank, situated in the grounds of the Elevated Tank, was completed in 1966.

Description

The Roles Hill Reservoir comprises four water storage structures and associated facilities located on a wedge of land bounded by Daisy and Preston Roads. The reservoir grounds are publicly accessible to pedestrians and vehicles. All of the reservoirs are functioning at the time of this report, however Brisbane Water are investigating the feasibility of continuing to operate the oldest reservoir on site, Roles Hill No. 1.

Roles Hill No. 1 Reservoir & pumping station

Roles Hill No. 1 is an in-ground, reinforced concrete reservoir. Most of the structure is above natural ground level but concealed by stepped, landscaped embankments on all sides. On top of the structure is a flat lawn, almost square in plan and punctured by four vent pipes. Only the top edges of the side walls are visible and on the north east (Preston Road) and north west sides, these edges are concealed in part by porphyry retaining walls. The embankments to Preston Road incorporate a narrow porphyry stair and, although the embankment planting appears somewhat neglected, it provides evidence of a quite formal landscape arrangement.

That this embankment was intended to be a landscape feature is highlighted by the unusual "Roles Hill" sign in porphyry lettering along the top edge of the reservoir. It is now partially obscured by vegetation.

Two steel mesh platforms cantilever over the reservoir's top edges at its northern and western corners. The western corner also supports a small concrete hut. At the base of the north west embankment are a disused brick pumping station and two concrete huts. One was formerly used for chlorination. The other houses telemetry equipment that relays information about water levels to Brisbane Water.

Roles Hill No. 2 Reservoir & pumping station.

This is a large circular concrete above-ground tank. The pumping station is a flat roofed brick building.

Manly No. 1 Reservoir.

This elevated steel plate storage tank has a capacity of 1.1 million litres and is approximately 28 metres high. The tank is supported on six steel legs braced halfway up by horizontal steel struts and steel cable cross bracing to every "facet" of the hexagonal plan. The structure incorporates an access ladder and a walkway around the base of the tank. The curved base of the tank falls to a vertical mains pipe, which carries water away from the elevated tank.

Manly No. 2 Reservoir.

This is the tallest structure on the site and, together with the Manly No. 1 Reservoir, forms a local landmark. Unlike the squat Roles Hill No. 2, Manly No. 1 Reservoir is a tall circular concrete structure, its height emphasised by the vertical panelling formed by eight pilasters. The pilasters continue past the top edge of the reservoir creating a crenellated effect. The top of the reservoir is also marked by a series of shallow arches spanning between each pilaster and forming an opening into the reservoir itself.

The reservoir is used by a number of telephone companies as a communications tower. The companies also have a number of structures at the base of the reservoir, between it and the Roles Hill No. 1 Reservoir.

Turncock's cottage

This high-set weatherboard cottage faces Preston Rd, between the Roles Hill No.1 and No.2 Reservoirs. Except for the enclosure of the front with translucent louvres, the house appears to be in original condition externally. The corrugated iron roof features a small Dutch gable. The house has a small weatherboard garage in its back yard.

The house is currently let by the Council to private tenants.

A brief visual inspection of the Roles Hill site reveals a range of structures in various states of repair. (Note: the reservoirs and other structures were not inspected on the inside). Of the major structures, the four reservoirs, only Roles Hill No. 1 appears to be in need of attention. This is a matter of landscaping rather than a comment on the structure itself. The present state of the embankments and poor state of the Roles Hill stone sign deprives Preston Road of what is otherwise a landmark of considerable interest.

The whole site is significant, with exemption of the Roles Hill No.2 and Manly No. 2 Reservoirs, and the pumping stations.

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 collection of working reservoirs exhibiting changes in water storage technology.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an elevated spherical steel tank.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance as a landscape feature comprising unusual features such as the porphyry steps and, 'Roles Hill,' sign.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance as an elevated structure in a prominent position.

Technical

CRITERION F

The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period

as a rare steel elevated tank.

References

1. Brisbane City Council - City Assets Branch *Conservation Management Study* Stage 1 Report. November 2002
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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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