

Heritage Citation



Russian Orthodox Church (former)

Key details

Also known as Blessed Virgin of Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church

Addresses At 14A Douglas Road, Rocklea, Queensland 4106

Type of place Church

Period Postwar 1945-1960

Style Queenslander

Lot plan L1_RP120353

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005
Date of Citation — June 2004

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

This church hall was originally opened as the Blessed Virgin of Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church in 1956 and was the third Russian Orthodox Church in Brisbane. It was built on land owned by Russian immigrant Yefim Shishkoff who had the church constructed as a sign of his gratitude for his new life in Australia, free of the political upheaval he had experienced in Russia in the early twentieth century. The building operated as a church until the late 1980s when a new brick church was built adjacent. It has since been in use as a church hall.

History

The portion of land within which this church hall was constructed was included in a number of purchases made by Dr Frederick James Barton in the late 1850s. Barton was the resident surgeon in the Brisbane Hospital from 1850 to his death in August

1863 at the age of thirty. From 1851 he was Surgeon Superintendent. He also operated a pharmacy store in Queen Street from which an extensive range of drugs, perfumes and other items usually imported from London were sold.

Title for Portions 60 to 70, a total of 246 acres 1 rood 27 perches south of Stable Swamp Creek which Dr Barton had owned, was transferred in 1905 to two of his daughters, Florence Barton (born 1857) and Amy Symes Norton (born 1859). Amy Barton had married the member for Port Curtis, Albert Norton MLC. Portions 60 to 70 were leased in 1910 to Kathleen Sellars. Upon transfer of all of the land in 1914 to W Siemon and Sons Ltd, produce merchants of Roma Street, Brisbane, Sellars surrendered the lease.

Niels Christian and Ane Lisbeth Jorgenson purchased 12 acres 3 roods 8.6 perches from W Siemon and Sons Ltd circa 1916. This subdivision was transferred to William Cameron Marshall in 1920. Marshall appears to have been the first owner of the land who resided there. In May 1920 a mortgage to the War Services Commissioner was registered on the Certificate of Title. At the time this area was considered part of Salisbury. In post office directories WC Marshall is listed as a resident of Salisbury for the first time in 1922-23. His house is today 132 Marshall Road, Rocklea.

To meet the requirements of increased air traffic during the Second World War, the nearby Archerfield Aerodrome was expanded beyond its prewar northern fence line at Boundary Road. With the necessary closure of this east-west arterial, the Queensland Main Roads Commission constructed a new road connecting Ipswich Road and Beaudesert Road, on that effectively dissected Marshall's property. Originally known as Cameron Road, it is known today as Granard Road.

In November 1942 Marshall's land was transferred to the Commonwealth and a new Deed of Grant was issued for 11 acres 1 rood 7.8 perches, that part of his property not dedicated for road purposes. Following Marshall's death on 4 July 1945 title for the land was transferred to Cecil D Marshall. The 9 acres 1 rood 5.1 perches of land north of Granard Road sold in 1947 and again in 1951. Circa 1952 subdivision commenced. Thirty-four house allotments facing Marshall Road, Douglas Road, Granard Road and Balham Road were available of sale, along with the central 3 acres 3 roods 23.2 perches these blocks encompassed.

In October 1954 the central block of land with road access on its eastern and western boundaries was

transferred to Yefim (also known as Ephim) and Paraskeva Shishkoff. Indications are the purchase had been made in 1952 as according to Council Building Records the Shishkoffs received permits to construct a garage and dwelling there during the latter part of 1952.

The Shishkoffs were part of a wave of Russian migration that occurred during the 1950s. During this decade the population of Russian Orthodox people in Brisbane centred around two churches in Woolloongabba—St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Vulture Street, Woolloongabba, established in 1935-36 and St Seraphim Russian Orthodox Church in Hawthorne Street, Woolloongabba, established in 1952.

Migration from Russia to Queensland commenced in the middle of the 19th century. The years when immigrant numbers increased coinciding with political upheaval in Russia. A large increase in numbers occurred as a consequence of Tsarist repression between 1911 and 1914 and again in the 1920s when White Russian emigrés escaped the country's civil war.

In May 1954 Yefim Shishkoff applied to construct a church hall on his land at Rocklea. Shishkoff undertook the actual work of construction. A mortgage was registered over title to the land in March 1955. At the completion of building Shishkoff is reported as saying, 'When I reached Australia, I felt that I owed God a tremendous debt of gratitude for allowing me to escape the Communists. I built the church as a repayment and also so that my people here could have the opportunity to worship in a proper Christian manner.'¹

The Church was consecrated by Bishop Sava Raevsky, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand, on 26 August 1956 and given the name of the Blessed Virgin of Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church. Yefim Shishkoff died in January 1957.

In September 1964 the 3 acres 3 roods 23.2 perches the Shishkoffs had purchased at Rocklea, including the church hall and dwelling, were transferred to Dimitry Nikolai Obuhoff. Father Obuhoff had been appointed the priest at Rocklea in 1963. In May 1971 Paraskeva Shishkoff and the Blessed Virgin of Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church of Rocklea produced a caveat to restrain Father Obuhoff from dealing in the property. In a case heard in the Supreme Court in June 1973, Paraskeva Shishkoff stated she had sold the land to Father Obuhoff for \$6,500 on the verbal understanding that he would not dispose of the land. In 1966 he had transferred 1 acre 2 roods 29.3 perches to the Russian Benevolent Association for Homes for the Aged. The subsequently constructed Pine Lodge Home for the Aged opened in 1969.

In December 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that ownership of the eastern section of the land facing Douglas Road, Lots 1 and 2, RP120353, be vested in the Blessed Virgin of Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church of Rocklea. The church Shishkoff built is located on Lot 1. A new brick Russian Orthodox Church was constructed on Lot 2 in the late 1980s.

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 the third Russian Orthodox church established in Brisbane, demonstrating the continued presence of the Russian Orthodox faith community in Brisbane from the mid-twentieth century.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as one of very few surviving original churches in Rocklea.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a timber church constructed with Russian vernacular interpretation.

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 place of worship from the mid-1950s until the late 1980s for the Russian Orthodox faith community.

References

1. *Courier-Mail*, 23 August 1956
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Brandle, Maximilian and Steve Karas (eds). *Multicultural Queensland. The people and communities of*

Queensland: A bicentennial publication. No publication details

4. Clarke, Robyn and Tom Price. *Tapestry of time: A history of the Rocklea State School and the district*, Rocklea: Centenary Committee of the Rocklea State School, 1989
5. *Courier-Mail*, 23 August 1956, n.p.
6. *Courier-Mail*, 13 June 1973, p. 16.
7. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
8. Environmental Protection Agency
9. Johnston, W. Ross. *Brisbane: The first thirty years*. Bowen Hills: Boolarong Publications, 1988
10. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
11. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
12. NAA QLD; BP243/2; K293; Archerfield RAAF – Extension to landing area N & W sides – Additional funds for extension
13. Queensland Pioneers Index
14. Zakrjevsky, Galina. *History of St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Brisbane, 1923-93*. Brisbane: Merino Litho, 1997
15. <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~amborodin/oldchurch.htm>
16. <http://www.medicalpioneers.com/search.htm>
17. http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Parlib/Parl_Information/Historical/membregisterHB.pdf

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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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