

Heritage Citation



St Ambrose's Catholic Precinct

Key details

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| Also known as | Corinthia, St. Ambrose's Presbytery |
| Addresses | At 23 Davidson Street, Newmarket, Queensland 4051 |
| Type of place | Church, Residence (group), Residence (singular), House |
| Period | Federation 1890-1914 |
| Style | Queenslander |
| Lot plan | L3_RP44067 |
| Key dates | Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — October 2010 |
| Construction | Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber |
| Criterion for listing | (A) Historical; (G) Social |

Constructed in 1901, this building started life as a large, Federation style, middle class residence built for Frederick J. Brown. At the turn of the century Newmarket was emerging as a popular suburb among Brisbane's middle classes. Brown retained the residence until 1928 when it was purchased by Archbishop Duhig on behalf of the Catholic Church in Queensland. Since then the house has served as a temporary church, a presbytery, and a convent, giving the house a deep and longstanding connection with the Catholic Community in Newmarket.

History

The timber building presently used as St. Ambrose's Community Kindergarten and Pre-School was constructed circa 1901 for Frederick J. Brown. The house was named *Corinthia*. It has since served as a Catholic Church, presbytery and convent, and as a pre-school.

The building is situated on land which was granted to Robert Davidson in 1859. The 61 acres purchased by Davidson were subdivided during the 1880s. It changed hands several times before being bought by Archbishop Duhig in 1928.

At the turn of the century, Newmarket was established as a residential suburb with mostly middleclass residents. However, the areas of vacant land retained a semi-rural character in the district. As the route to the saleyards at Newmarket and the northern towns of Gympie and Kilcoy, Enoggera Road was a busy thoroughfare for both people and stock, and by the 1890s boasted a Wesleyan church, a hotel and several businesses including a wheelwright, blacksmith and butcher. The tramline was constructed along Enoggera Road at Kelvin Grove in 1901 and extended to Newmarket in 1903, encouraging further residential development.

Frederick Brown's house, *Corinthia*, was purchased for \$4 100 by Archbishop Duhig in 1928. It was used as a temporary church for the newly created parish of Kelvin Grove, later St. Ambrose's Parish. The first parish priest was Fr. Brian Bolton, previously secretary to Archbishop Duhig. The first mass in the new parish was celebrated by Fr. Bolton on 10 March 1928 in the presence of some 30 people. Within twelve months, the house and verandah had become too small to accommodate the growing congregation and plans were made for the erection of a church-school.

When a new church designed by Hall and Prentice was opened on the site by Duhig on 8 July 1929, the former house became the presbytery. That church has since been demolished and replaced by a modern church which was opened by Archbishop Rush on 19 August 1973. The iron gates used for the new church were previously the gates to "Dara" the residence of Brisbane's Catholic Archbishops which was demolished to make way for the planned Holy Name Cathedral.

In 1936, Fr. Bolton moved from the presbytery to a recently purchased residence adjacent to the church facing Enoggera Rd. This house was formerly the home of Police Inspector, Jim O'Brien and is thought to have been constructed around 1899. On 5 July 1936, Archbishop Duhig performed the blessing of the new presbytery and the blessing and opening of a newly constructed timber and brick school designed by Frank Cullen.

In 1936 five Sisters of the Good Samaritan arrived to teach at the newly opened St. Ambrose's School. The first Reverend Mother was Sister Ignatius, a sister of Archbishop Duhig. The former presbytery then became the convent. The convent was substantially renovated and extended in 1961. In 1975, lay teachers took over the school, with two Sisters remaining on the staff until 1977. Soon after, the pre-school moved into the vacant

convent. From 1994, the kindergarten/pre-School was managed by the Creche and Kindy Association.

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 it is evidence of the development of Newmarket as a residential suburb popular with middle class residents in the early 1900s. It is also illustrative of the growth of the Catholic community in the area.

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

for its connections with generations of Newmarket residents who have been associated with St. Ambrose's Parish since the late 1920s.

References

1. *Catholic Advocate*, 11 April 1929
2. *Catholic Leader*, 9 July 1936; 6 July 1961; 2 July 1978
3. Hinkler, Father Stephen. "History of St. Ambrose Parish - 1928-1996", typed manuscript, nd
4. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press, 1973
5. Post Office Directories.

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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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