

Heritage Citation



St Joseph's Christian Brothers College

Key details

Also known as	St Joseph's College, Terrace
Addresses	At 309 Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000
Type of place	Private school
Period	Victorian 1860-1890, Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Gothic
Lot plan	L1_RP882965
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — March 2011
Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Stone

People/associations	Andrea Giovanni Stumbuco - 1877 to 1887 constructions (Architect); Cullen & Egan - 1938 three-storey block of classrooms (Architect); Hall & Prentice - 1919 science hall (Architect)
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (C) Scientific; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social
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St Joseph's College's origins began with the first Christian Brother's school opened in Elizabeth Street in 1875. In 1877, the school began operating from Gregory Terrace and developed into one of Brisbane's prestigious GPS schools. At its core are four architect-designed masonry buildings built in 1877-87, 1880, 1919 and 1938 surrounded by a porphyry retaining wall (1887). These buildings distinguish 'Terrace' from the small timber schools erected during the same period for the Queensland colonial and later state public school system.

History

The Catholic order of the Christian Brothers (founded 1802) established its first Brisbane school in the old St Stephen's Church at 249 Elizabeth Street in the City on 5 July 1875. By November, there were 55 pupils and the small, 28-year old church building soon became too cramped for the expanding enrolments of boys.

The Catholic Church had purchased a block of vacant Spring Hill land comprising 1 acre and 19 perches, for ?30 in 1861. The land was located on Gregory Terrace across from the large expanse of Victoria Park. The Church passed the property onto the Christian Brothers for ten shillings on 14 September 1875. On 19 September 1876, the visiting Bishop of Hobart, Daniel Murphy laid the foundation stone for the new school. The initial three-storey, porphyry stone building's design was a combination of classrooms with a residence. The stone came from the Spring Hill Quarry in Leichhardt Street (later St. Paul's Terrace). The ground floor held a classroom, a kitchen and a storeroom. The first floor had a three classrooms (2 large & 1 small) and Dining Room. The top floor was a bedroom and a chapel. The building was designed by architect Andrea Stombuco and constructed by the builder John O'Keefe. It was completed within a year and opened as St Joseph's School and Monastery on 8 September 1877. The Christian Brothers continued to operate St. Stephens School in Elizabeth Street.

Brisbane Bishop James Quinn opened the second building erected on the Spring Hill site on 18 January 1880. A two-storey porphyry stone schoolroom building was constructed along the alignment with Rogers Street. Again the architect was Stombuco and the builder was O'Keefe. The Brisbane Courier described it as:

"...a substantial stone building....It is 90ft long by 260ft wide, with a height of 20ft including foundations. It has an open timbered roof covered with slates, and has moveable partitions dividing the building into two schoolrooms and one classroom.with the partitions removed, it formed a very spacious apartment, well ventilated..."¹

The additional building gave the School the opportunity to expand its educational services. On 20 April 1881, the two Ring boys were the first boarders accepted by St. Joseph's School or indeed by the Christian Brothers Order anywhere in Queensland. Soon the number of boarders increased to 21 and accommodation facilities at the Spring Hill site could not meet the demands of both day students and boarders. The last boarders were sent back to their rural homes by September 1883.

By 1886, the School was reconsidering the boarding issue due to concerns over the 'brain-drain' of rural Queensland boys having to seek education and boarding facilities in Sydney and over the continued viability of the Gregory Terrace site. A booming Queensland economy in the 1880s meant that the rural sector had both the demand and the funds to board their sons in Brisbane. The School began to advertise nationally its intention to receive boarders in November 1886. But specific accommodation had to be built before boarding could recommence. Stombuco designed a West Wing addition to his original 1877 building. Joseph Ede was the contractor and the additions cost £2,000. The new wing comprised a new dining room on the ground floor and dormitories, bathrooms and toilets on the first and top floors. Brisbane Archbishop Robert Dunne opened the West Wing on 5 August 1887. Included in the building work were a playground and retaining wall that were added to the School at an added cost of £800. The West Wing could house 50 boarders.

During 1887-90, the number of boarders rose to 89. Again, the number of boarders caused accommodation problems at St. Joseph's School at Gregory Terrace. Bishop Quinn had bequeathed some land at Nudgee to the Christian Brothers. But this land was flat and flood-prone and the Brothers preferred a hill site on Sandgate Road. They bought this site and had Stombuco design a St. Joseph's School branch campus at Nudgee. Initially only the boarders from the junior school were to be sent to Nudgee, where they were enrolled on 26 January 1891. In 1892, the senior school boarders, then the senior teaching staff and the day students preparing to sit the public examinations, followed them. St. Joseph's at Spring Hill ceased to be a boarding school for the second and final time and so enrolments declined. On 2 October 1893, St. Joseph's took responsibility for maintaining the viability of St. James School in Boundary Street. This became a financial drain that was worsened by Queensland's 1890s economic depression.

In 1909, only eight years after Federation, St. Joseph's Gregory Terrace had its first Australian-born headmaster, Brother Tevlin. In 1914, the Queensland Government ended the sectarian discrimination that prevented Catholic school students from applying for senior scholarships. As a result, St. Joseph's Gregory Terrace re-established its senior school in 1916. On 13 January 1917, an 'Old Boy' of the school, James Duhig, became the Archbishop of Brisbane. As proof of its status as a modern, premiere educational institution, a Science Hall was added to St. Joseph's Gregory Terrace in 1919. Built at a cost £8,000 and fronting Billet Street, the school's new physics and chemistry laboratories were blessed and opened by Duhig. The architectural firm of Hall & Prentice designed it. Due to the lack of open space on the school grounds, a small handball court was built by the Billet Street wall in 1909, a single concrete cricket pitch was laid c.1914; and the Brothers and their boys excavated a Rugby Union oval in Victoria Park in 1919.

Funds were raised by 1925 to allow some alterations to existing buildings. The ground floor of the Science Hall was enclosed and converted into two classrooms. An exterior staircase with balconies was added to the original 1877 building. In 1927, Chambers & Ford architects designed the 20 yards x 10 yards school pool that is named after the building fund (£400) donor Dr. Harry Windsor. The advent of the Great Depression in 1929 saw a severe curtailment of funds both state and private. It was not until 1938 that money was available to assist the school to deal with expanding enrolments. On 14 August 1938, Duhig officiated at the opening of a new three-storey block of classrooms. Costing £6,000, the classrooms were designed by the architectural firm of Cullen & Egan and built by F. Corbett & Sons. The classrooms with two separate laboratories were located in a new brick

building that was added to the rear of the original 1877 building. By 1938, the school was called St. Joseph's College and was referred to in the newspapers as 'Terrace'. In 1939, all-sports dressing rooms were built beneath the Windsor Pool.

The World War II period (1939-45) and the scarcity of building materials in the immediate post-war period meant St. Joseph's College didn't restart a building program until the mid-1950s. In 1955, the Science Hall was extended at a cost of £18,185 to provide an additional nine classrooms with the new classrooms blessed by Duhig on 29 May. A rowing shed was built on riverfront land at New Farm in 1958. At Tennyson, 39 acres of a former cow paddock were purchased on 17 November 1961. This was converted to sporting ovals with dressing sheds added in 1964. 'Terrace' reportedly constructed a tunnel from the school that ran underneath Gregory Terrace with an outlet at Victoria Park to allow its boys safe passage to the park's training fields and tennis courts.²

At the Gregory Terrace site, the increasing enrolments from the 'Baby Boomer' generation were causing overcrowding on the block purchased in the previous century. By the early 1960's, the situation was acute and 'Terrace' slowly began to purchase surrounding suburban blocks in Spring Hill. By December 1963, enough blocks had been bought that the existing houses and flats were demolished and replaced with a senior school block comprising nine classrooms, Science and Demonstrations rooms, offices and a senior library. This block was designed by F. Cullen & Partners and built by F.C. Upton at a cost of £152,000. Coadjutor Archbishop P.M. O'Donnell, watched by a frail Duhig sitting in a car, opened it on 24 May 1964. From 1964 to 1976, 'Terrace' purchased the remaining private properties in the block bounded by Billet/Rogers Streets, Water Street, Victoria Street and Gregory Terrace. Not only did this enable the College to have uninterrupted access to the Senior Block but it provided the site for a Centenary Building that contained a library, four science rooms, two science preparation rooms, a language laboratory, a geometrical drawing room, two general purpose classrooms, a staffroom, offices and a gymnasium. The Centenary Building was opened prior to Easter 1976. But this project had led to the demolition of 26 (mainly nineteenth century) houses and flats. The expansion of St. Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace altered the physical layout of Spring Hill as Lister Street was resumed and completely lost to this building program.

In 1993, the Brisbane History Group in their publication *Spring Hill Heritage Tour – St. Pauls to Gregory Tce* identified St. Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace as a heritage site. 'Terrace' was entered onto the Brisbane City Council's City Plan Heritage Register on 1 January 2004.

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 school established in 1877 which expanded and subsequently altered the physical layout of Spring Hill, particularly in the period 1964-76.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as a nineteenth century private school complex.

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

with buildings and school grounds dating back to 1877.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a group of fine stone and brick institutional buildings presenting an intact historical streetscapes to Gregory Terrace and Rogers Street.

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 first purpose-built Christian Brothers school in Brisbane and instrumental in the founding of Nudgee

References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 January 1880, p.3.
2. Mizzi, Lorraine, "The Gregory Terrace Foundation' in *An Update of City Survivors 1924-1988*, (Brisbane: Watson Ferguson, 1988)
3. T.P. Boland, *Gentlemen of Terrace*, (Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 2000)
4. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards
5. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Plan, 31 October 1914
6. Brisbane History Group, *Spring Hill Heritage Tour: St Pauls to Gregory Terrace*, Brisbane: BHG, 1993
7. Paul Ferrier, "*The Golden Period of Catholic Progress – Archdioceses of Brisbane 1912-1927*", B.Arch Thesis, Sept 1986
8. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
9. *The Australian*, 27 November 1886
10. *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 July 1875
11. *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 January 1880
12. *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 January 1880
13. *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 May 1887
14. *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 August 1887
15. *The Catholic Leader*, 19 June 1938
16. *The Catholic Leader*, 11 August 1938
17. *The Catholic Leader*, 18 August 1938
18. *The Catholic Leader*, 2 June 1955
19. *The Courier Mail*, 13 August 1938
20. *The Courier Mail*, 15 August 1938
21. *The Courier Mail*, 30 May 1955

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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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