

Heritage Citation



Torwood Police Station

Key details

Addresses	At 341 Milton Road, Auchenflower, Queensland 4066
Type of place	House, Work residence, Police station / building
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L1301_B3844
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — October 2010
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

People/associations Harold James Parr (Architect)

Criterion for listing (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (H) Historical association

The former Torwood Police Station is significant as one of only a few surviving examples of a timber and tin, purpose-built police station and residence constructed during the interwar period in the north western suburbs. It also provides evidence of the changes in community policing methods during the twentieth century.

History

The former Torwood Police Station opened in July 1935 and was designed by the Department of Public Works under the supervision of Assistant Chief Architect H.J. Parr. It is an elevated timber building that was originally comprised of an office and residential accommodation on the upper level with a laundry below.

During the first years of settlement in what was later to become the State of Queensland the police system was executed through the duties of a Police Magistrate. However, this proved to be inadequate and following the appointment of the first Governor of Queensland, Governor Bowen in 1859, an organised force was established by appointing an Inspector General to be in charge of both ordinary and native police. In 1863 and 1864, the police system again changed form, following the appointment of the first Commissioner of Police, David Thompson Seymour. He introduced a new system based on the Victorian model comprising Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Sergeants, Constables and a Detective Force. In ensuing years, the structure of the Force underwent a number of additional modifications and by 1924 Queensland had the highest State ratio of policemen to residents in Australia, with one policeman to every 725 persons.

The Torwood Police Station began operations in c1890 in a rented residence in Macintosh Street. In 1906, the service was relocated to new rental premises comprising five rooms, a bathroom and a store. The office, which was manned by one police officer, was located on the front verandah.

The 1930s brought several changes for police in Brisbane including another restructure of the Queensland Police Force in 1935 and the introduction of a fingerprinting system in 1936. The 1930s Depression saw Queensland police take on an additional role – that of distributing relief payments and rations to unemployed workers.

In 1933, the Landlord, Mrs Annie Cossart enquired as to whether the Police Department would continue their lease if the repairs they had requested were undertaken. It is apparent that the Police Department declined to extend their lease, as in July of the same year, Ministerial approval was given to acquire land on Milton Road for the purpose of erecting a new Police Station.

The estimate for a new standard Type Number 3 Station was \$975 which included residential accommodation, comprising three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, bathroom, WC, dining verandah, and front and side verandahs; an office with a porch, and a public WC and wash house beneath. Constructed primarily of pine and hardwood with a galvanised corrugated iron roof, it opened in July 1935 at a final cost of \$1 123. The effects of the 1930s Depression are reflected in the specification which states that "...unless otherwise approved, only

materials of Queensland origin and manufacture [were] to be used” and that there was a preference for workers who had resided in Queensland for at least six months prior to commencement of work.

The Torwood Division included from the Brisbane River in the south to Birdwood Terrace-Heussler Terrace in the north, and from Boomerang Street, Milton to Patrick Lane, Dixon Street and Munro Street in the west. In addition to the Station Sergeant, who lived with his family in the residence behind the office, the Station was served by a more junior constable who lived elsewhere. Three generations of “police children” grew up in the Station on Milton Road.

In September 1938, alterations to the Station occurred at the request of the resident Sergeant. These included enclosing the front and side verandahs using casement windows, and the extension of the roof line over the rear porch to make the residence more weatherproof and private. Other alterations included the repainting of the exterior in 1948. Unusually for a Police Station of this period, which were usually oiled externally, the exterior of the Torwood Station was originally painted brown. The interior of both the office and the residence were also painted at this stage. As with other timber stations of this period, the walls and ceiling were originally of unpainted pine.

From 1948 to 1965, Constable (later Inspector) Weise served as the resident Constable, working alternate shifts with one day off per week until 1958 when more police were appointed to the district. During this time, the Police had a good rapport with the residents of the district, knowing most by name. There were few incidents, with no more than eight arrests in any one year. Constable Weise recalls the style of local policing during the post-war era:

The Milton-Rosalie-Torwood-Auchenflower region was always law-abiding: and settled by honest working-class folk. I knew every household in the Division – and the Police were welcomed with cooperation and often a smile as we made enquiries and went about our business. The incidents we attended were disorderly conduct, motor vehicle accidents, several suicides and occasional larrikin behaviour. Only one murder (in Baroona Road) occurred in the eighteen years that I served there; and we made no more than five to eight arrests in any one-year.

By the 1970s however, the local area had altered with a rise in population due to an increase in flats in the area. As in other suburbs, police services were stretched, resulting in an increase in petty crime and the “isolation of the police from their constituents”.

In 1980, the division of Torwood serviced an area of 4 square kilometres inhabited by a permanent population of 8 989. However, by the early 1990s, each of the six stations in the inner western suburbs was occupied by individual specialist divisions such as the Juvenile Aid Bureau or the CIB. The Torwood Police Station became an office of the Traffic Support Branch for the District of Red Hill. This restructure was due to changes in the way in which the Police Force operated, including a reduction in services traditionally provided from Police Stations. Due to these changes and problems associated with requirements under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, the Police Department decided to centralise all sections of the Force in one building, currently under construction at Indooroopilly, resulting in the closure and subsequent sale of the Torwood Police Station in 1997.

The former Torwood Police Station is now in private ownership and is in use as residential premises.

The cultural significance of this former police station is enhanced by the fact that several suburban police stations have been demolished or removed from the local area in the last decade, including the former police stations of Red Hill, Bardon and Toowong. Surviving pre-World War II police stations elsewhere in the northern suburbs include: the Mitchelton Police Station (1935, arch: Harold Parr, timber); Newmarket Police Station (1906-7, arch: Thomas Pye, timber); Fortitude Valley (1935, Raymond Nowland, brick), the Water Police Station in

Boundary Street, Brisbane (late 1920s, T.R. Gladwin, concrete/stucco), New Farm Police Station (1940, brick and timber); Hamilton Police Station (c 1938, Harold Parr, timber), Windsor (1901, brick and timber) and the Kelvin Grove Police Station (1914, timber, arch: Thomas Pye).

Description

The Former Torwood Police Station is now in private ownership and is rented as residential premises. It is a simple timber building, elevated on concrete stumps with a corrugated iron roof, featuring multiple gables. A concrete retaining wall surmounted by a timber framed wire fence is located at the front of the site. The site has a variety of plantings at the front and a large open space for car parking at the rear. A metal tilt door provides access to car parking beneath the building which has been enclosed with concrete blocks and metal sheeting.

The building is residential in appearance, apart from the two sets of timber stairs at the front, one of which leads to the former residence, and the other to the former office.

Internally, the building comprises the former residence and the former office. The residential component forms the larger portion of the building, comprising a central hall with two bedrooms and a bathroom alcove opening from it. At the end of the hall is a living room, with a third bedroom adjacent. A kitchen with a stove recess and store, and a dining verandah are located at the rear of the building. The front and north-eastern side of the building is enveloped by an enclosed verandah.

The former office is located at the south-western end of the verandah. In front of this is a more recently enclosed space, formerly the porch, which still contains the police service counter. The former office is accessible both from the residential verandah and the external set of stairs.

All doors are high waisted with two vertical panels below and one large above. Pivoting glass paned fanlights are located above each door and walls and ceilings are of painted tongue and groove pine, with simple scotia and quad mouldings for cornices and skirtings. The enclosed porch is lined with fibrous cement sheeting.

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:

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a rare, surviving example of a purpose-built police station in the inner north-western suburbs of Brisbane dating from the Interwar period.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as an example of a purpose-built, timber and tin police station and residence from the Interwar period.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

for the evidence it provides of the work of the police in the Auchenflower/Milton area from 1935 to 1997 and the changes in policing in Brisbane this century.

References

1. Environmental Protection Agency. Site report. File 602008
2. Johnston, W.R. *The Long Blue Line: A History of the Queensland Police Force*. Bowen Hills: Boolarong, 1992
3. Pearn, John. *Auchenflower: The Suburb and the Name*. Brisbane: Amphion Press, 1997
4. Pullar, Margaret. Historical Reports on Ambulance, Fire and Police buildings throughout Metropolitan Brisbane, A Report for the Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit. 1995

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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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