

Heritage Citation



Turrawan Private Hospital (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 641 Sandgate Road, Clayfield, Queensland 4011
Type of place	Hospital
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Georgian Revival
Lot plan	L2_RP44863; L1_RP44863; L3_RP49517; L2_RP62556
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — October 2010
Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Face brick

People/associations Eric Percival Trewern (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

Turrawan Private Hospital was constructed in 1932 for Matron Amy Olive Aitkin. A two storey masonry building, it was designed in the Interwar Georgian Revival style by prominent local architect Eric Percival Trewern. Trewern also designed 1935 extensions to the hospital. In the 1930s and 1940s more than 100 private hospitals in Brisbane were shut down due to increasing standards in private healthcare. However, Turrawan remained open as it continued to deliver a high level of care with the latest facilities. In 1960, a neighbouring property with an interwar timber home, built for Dr. Errol Meyers and his wife Myrtle in the late 1920s, was purchased by the hospital for use as nurses' quarters. Aitkin sold the hospital in 1971, however it continued to operate until 2003 when it was sold to nearby Clayfield College. The hospital is located close to the main commercial area of Clayfield which was once the tram terminus.

History

Private hospitals have played an important role in the delivery of health services throughout Queensland. After the turn of the twentieth century private hospitals became a major feature of Queensland health practices, demand stimulated by the medical profession's desire for surgical facilities. It was not uncommon for successful general practitioners to finance the establishment of private hospitals, often in partnership with one or more trained nurses. These hospitals were lucrative undertakings, run for the convenience of doctors and their patients alike, where there was no break in the continuity of the patient-doctor relationships.

Queensland saw numerous private hospitals constructed during the first half of the twentieth century, some by churches, and others conducted for profit by private individuals and organisations. Turrawan was one such for-profit hospital. However, it was not typical of the doctor-run private hospital of the twentieth century. Many other private hospitals had a life expectancy tied to the professional career (and eventual retirement) of the owner. Facilities were often poor and large capital investments were rare.

In 1929 a group of local residents had petitioned against the approval of a private hospital on the corner of London and Liverpool Streets, designed by E. Ryan and building tender awarded to Charters & Ryan.. The grounds for the objection were not recorded in the Council Minutes, but the petition was unsuccessful.

Amy Olive Aitkin bought a little over one-quarter of an acre on "New Sandgate Road" in June 1932. She raised a mortgage against the land in November 1932, evidently to fund the building of Turrawan. Aitkin had already been running the "Turrawin" Private hospital on the northern corner of Sandgate and London Roads for approximately four years.

Architect Eric P. Trewern designed a new brick hospital for Matron Aitkin in October 1932. The hospital, described in Brisbane City Council Minutes as "a handsome brick structure of two stories with tiled roof, and a semi-detached block at rear for staff ... an exceptionally fine hospital" was approved in November 1932. The hospital building was to cost £3,000. Less than three years later Trewern designed additions to this main

building. A wing was added to the northeastern wall, to provide additional operating theatres and other rooms, and another bedroom was added to the first floor nurse's quarters at the rear. A further mortgage was raised against the property at this time.

This section of Sandgate Road housed a number of medical practitioners' surgeries from the 1920s, including three on this side of the road between Adelaide Street and London Road.

From January 1937 responsibility for supervising private hospitals passed from Local Authorities to the Queensland Department of Health. With increasing sophistication of surgery and anaesthesia many of the smaller hospitals which had previously met the required standards began to fall short of the requirements imposed by the Government. By the end of the Second World War well over one hundred private hospitals had closed. Turrawan, however, was one of the few independent private hospitals which continued to offer more highly-developed facilities, thus ensuring its viability for a further four decades or so.

In 1960 Aitkin purchased the subdivision immediately to the south of the hospital, the premises of Dr Errol S. Meyers since the late 1920s. Meyers' wife Myrtle had purchased the land in 1928 and Dr Meyers appeared in the Post Office Directories soon afterwards. It appears likely that the timber building which housed Meyers' practice facing Sandgate Road was shifted to a position close to the rear boundary of the consolidated Turrawan block, to form nurses' quarters.

Matron Aitkin retained ownership of the property until its 1971 sale to Aitkin Properties Ltd. Turrawan was offered for sale by the owners in 1998, when it was purchased by Uniting Health Care. It continued to operate as a hospital for several more years, before its closure and 2003 sale to Clayfield College.

Description

The original hospital building is a large, face brick, well-built structure fronting Sandgate Road. The building, with its medium-to-low pitch tiled roof, informal massing and window shutters is designed in the Interwar Georgian Revival style with Classical elements in the projecting pediment, columns and detailing of the front entry on Sandgate Road.

This is a two-storey L-shaped building with gables to the roof ends and orderly symmetric rows of windows at both levels. A smaller lower gabled structure projecting provides articulation and interest to its south-western elevation which is also visible from the street. The double storey porch, located at the opposite returning corner has now glazed openings.

The building, which has had only minor alterations, appears to be both externally and internally in fairly original condition as well as well-maintained.

The nurses' quarters comprise a high-set timber building relocated from Sandgate Road to the rear of the consolidated Turrawan block.

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 evidence of Clayfield's continuing development as a prosperous suburb during the interwar period.

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history for the evidence it provides of the provision of health care services in Brisbane in 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 a 1930s purpose-built hospital.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance as a fine example of an Interwar Georgian Revival style building with careful massing and visual prominence that makes a strong contribution to the streetscape of Sandgate Road.

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

as a private hospital designed by renowned Brisbane architect Eric Percival Trewern.

Supporting images



Unidentified photographer,
'Turrawan Hospital, Clayfield, 1948',
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

Front view of the former Turrawan Hospital on Sandgate Road, now a Clayfield College boarding house, with 3 nurses in uniform standing on the front steps of the building. (Information supplied with image)

References

1. Brisbane City Council Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Detail Plans
2. *Courier Mail*, 4 July 2003

3. Department of Natural Resources. Queensland Certificates of Title
 4. John Oxley Library photographs & clippings files
 5. Leggett, C.A.C., "The organisations and development of the Queensland hospitals in the twentieth century", MA thesis, UQ, 1976
 6. McKellar's Estate Maps of Brisbane, 1895
 7. Nundah & District Historical Society files
 8. Presentation Sisters, *Clayfield Annals*, n.d.
 9. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1887-1949
 10. Watson, Donald & Judith McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, UQ Library, 1984
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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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