

Heritage Citation



Valhalla

Key details

Addresses	At 30 Rosemount Terrace, Windsor, Queensland 4030
Type of place	House
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L5_RP57012
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — November 1999
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
People/associations	Thor Hjelm Jensen (Occupant)

This gracious timber home was constructed for Thor Hjelm Jensen and his family circa 1910. Jensen, who was a founding member of the Queensland Institute of Surveyors, played an important role in the development of Brisbane's suburbs over a fifty year period and is regarded as one of the pioneers of modern surveying in Queensland. Jensen lived in this house until his death in the early 1970s.

History

Born in Copenhagen in 1885, Jensen immigrated to Australia with his parents in 1887. The family settled on the land at Caboolture. After training in Queensland and New South Wales as a surveyor, Jensen registered as a Land Surveyor in Queensland, where he worked for a time for the Lands Department. In 1926, he qualified as a local government engineer.

Postal records first list Thor Jensen as living in Rosemount Terrace in 1912. By this time, Windsor was well established as a residential district. Windsor was elevated from a shire to a town in 1904. The establishment of the railway line through Windsor at the turn of the century encouraged denser residential development in the area. Valhalla was one of the first half-dozen houses to be built in Rosemount Terrace which is only a stone's throw from Windsor railway station. Jensen reportedly built *Valhalla* with £500 he earned surveying for the Government in Western Queensland.

Jensen purchased the surveying firm of Mr. Authorised Surveyor Matthews in 1908 and set up practice in Queen Street. With his partner, Jack Bowers (originally his cadet) and Frank Walters, an engineer, Jensen was responsible for surveying many of Brisbane's developing suburbs, including the Cribbs Island Estate in 1916 (since resumed to make way for the airport), Cannon Hill Estate in 1912 and the Great Blue Estate at Oxley circa 1917. The firm also surveyed the Surfers Paradise Estate in 1917 which Jensen had purchased in partnership with Mr Arthur Blackwood. According to the Jensen family, Thor Jensen coined the phrase 'surfers' paradise' while walking across the dunes with Arthur Blackwood. By the early 1950s, the firm had relocated to the Post Office Branch of the Bank of New South Wales building at 260 Queen Street. Jensen served as a consulting engineer to several local authorities, including the Southport Town Council in the 1930s.

Jensen's commitment to the development of the surveying profession in Queensland is reflected in his involvement with the Queensland Institute of Surveyors. A councillor for many years, he was elected president in 1916 and represented the Institute on the Queensland Surveyors' Board from 1931-1935. Jensen was also a real estate developer in partnership with Harold Blackwood.

Jensen died in the early 1970s after his retirement. The firm continues today as the Jensen Bowers Group and is believed to be the oldest surviving surveying firm in Queensland.

Since the death of Thor Jensen, *Valhalla* has been leased to various tenants, including Frank Walters, his business partner. *Valhalla* is significant as the home of a prominent Brisbane surveyor who made a significant contribution to the development of Brisbane. The house also provides evidence of the consolidation of Windsor as a residential district early in the twentieth century.

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 the consolidation of Windsor as a residential suburb in the early twentieth century.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance
as an excellent example of a Federation period timber and tin residence which displays aesthetic merit.

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 house constructed for Thor Hjelm Jensen, a significant leader in the development of the surveying profession in Brisbane.

References

1. *Australian Surveyor*, June 1962, p.99-100
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans

3. Queensland Post Office Directories
 4. Phone interview with Steven Bowers, Managing Director, Jensen Bowers Group, 7 August 1997
 5. Information provided by Miss Thoreen Jensen, 30 November 1999
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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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