

Heritage Citation



Wagner Farmhouse

Key details

Addresses	At 95 Hows Road, Nundah, Queensland 4012
Type of place	Farm house
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Lot plan	L1_RP96894
Geolocation	-27.407498 153.066220
Key dates	Significant Development — Circa 1888 Local Heritage Place Since — 28 February 2020 Date of Citation — April 2018
People/associations	Johann Gottfried Wagner
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (H) Historical association

95 Hows Road, Nundah was constructed circa 1888 for Johann Gottfried Wagner, one of the pioneering Zion Hill

missionaries in the area. After establishing a farm in the 1860s, Wagner and his family resided on the farm for over a century. It is unclear where the earliest house was situated on the property, however by 1888 Wagner had built the subject house on Hows Road where he lived until his death in 1893. His wife Margaret continued to reside in the house until her death in 1928. The property remained in the Wagner family until the 1980s. As the farmhouse of early Queensland settler, Johann Gottfried Wagner, 95 Hows Street is a significant part of Nundah's history and urban development.

History

Nundah is one of Brisbane's most historic suburbs. Long before the arrival of Europeans in the early 19th Century, this area was a main thoroughfare for the Aboriginal people. As a convergence point of major paths in the Moreton Bay region, it was an important meeting place. The decision to establish a mission in what is now known as Nundah was directly due to this activity. In 1838 when the Moreton Bay convict settlement (established in 1824) was coming to a close, a small group of German Lutherans were given permission to build the mission along a freshwater creek. The intention was to bring Christianity to the Aboriginal people.

By the late 1840s it became clear that the mission on Zion Hill was a failure. The German missionaries had not managed to convert even one Aboriginal person to Christianity. The perceived value of the missionary's land became increasingly noticed by the colonial government and settlers wishing to establish farms in the area, and the government had also tired of assisting the missionaries with vital provisions. This led to the closure of the mission, the surveying of the land and its subsequent sale by 1848. The missionaries either moved to other missions around the country or purchased parcels of the newly available land to establish their own farms. The Zillman, Franz, Gerler, Rode, Hartenstein and Wagner families were some of those who remained in the area.

After the failure of the mission, Johann Wagner initially moved to New South Wales where he studied to be a minister with the Presbyterian Church. He was ordained in 1850 and in the same year married his first wife, Anna. The Wagners moved back to Nundah but unfortunately Anna Wagner died in 1859.

In the 1860s Johann Gottfried Wagner purchased several acres of land in the proximity of the area once known as Zion Hill. A farm was established where various crops were grown. Over the years a dairy was also established.

In 1860 Johann Wagner married Margaret Brown. At the time of Wagner's death in 1893, he had six sons and three daughters. After his death, one of his sons, Andrew, took over the farm, which was by that time mainly a dairy. Andrew had married Alicia Helen French in 1889 and was first listed in the Post Office Directories as a farmer at Nundah in 1888.

According to newspaper records, the original Wagner house was situated on another part of the property. By 1888, however, John Godfrey (Johann Gottfried) Wagner was listed on Hows Road in the Post Office Directories. In the 1936 aerial photograph, the Wagner's property consisted of the house at 95 Hows Road, farmland, the dairy buildings and another house facing Cemetery Road (now Hedley Avenue). It is not clear whether this house was the original Wagner farmhouse or was constructed for Andrew and Alicia Wagner following their marriage in 1889. By 1891, however, Andrew Wagner was listed on Cemetery Road and in 1901, was recorded in the Electoral Rolls at that address.

It is important to differentiate between the two houses as 95 Hows Road was built circa 1888 for Johann Gottfried Wagner and his wife Margaret and is significant as their home. It is the only surviving building from the Wagner farm. Johann Wagner died in his house in 1893 at the age of eighty-four. He was described as an “old and respected colonist” (Telegraph, Thursday 28 September 1893). His wife, Margaret, continued to reside in the house until her death in 1928 at the age of ninety-one.

The house remained in the Wagner family throughout the twentieth century. In 1955 Godfred Watson Wagner, the son of Andrew and Alicia Wagner, applied to shift the house slightly on the lot to its current position. It was also at this time when much of the original farmland was subdivided into small lots for residential development. In 1984 the Wagners sold the house.

Description

Wagner Farmhouse is a timber and tin colonial residence located in a residential street of Nundah. The house features a pyramidal hipped roof, separate skillion verandah roof, painted brick chimney, ornate timber detailing and gabled frontispiece over the verandah entry.

Nundah is a suburb located eight kilometres northeast of the Brisbane city centre. It has a largely residential character with a compact commercial centre. Hows Road is a residential street of primarily interwar residences with later infill and multi-residential developments to the eastern portion of the street, which includes the subject residence. The eastern portion of the street is narrower and the subject residence is approximately aligned with Hedley Street opposite. A traffic island with established vegetation provides relief to the front of the property.

Set on a gently sloping block, falling away from the street, the main level of the house is elevated from the street. The house addresses the street to the north at an angle, running parallel to the western side boundary, maintaining a generous front setback, consistent with surrounding residences. The long, narrow, slightly tapered site is heavily vegetated with a number of large canopy trees to the rear and street frontage. A large grassed backyard is surrounded with generous border gardens, lushly planted amongst the established trees. The front yard is an open lawn with a central concrete path, narrow planted border gardens with stone edging. A concrete strip driveway runs along the eastern boundary providing access to the car accommodation located under the eastern side of the house where an additional level continues under through to the rear. An open lightweight metal panel fence lines the north and eastern boundaries of the property, with double gates to the driveway and a central pedestrian gate access. There is a tall timber batten fence to the western and southern boundaries.

Wagner Farmhouse has an original square core with kitchen to the rear and wrap around verandahs to the north and east. The roof core is pyramidal in shape, with a hipped roof to the rear kitchen wing, and separate skillion roof to the verandahs. The eaves are narrow throughout. Each of the roofs is clad in later sheet metal. An early rear verandah may have been removed to allow for the low skillion roofed living room addition at the rear. A lower level hipped roof also to the rear, covers a paved outdoor entertainment area. A painted brick chimney with contrast banding is located over the rear kitchen wing.

The external walls are clad in timber chamferboard with vertical-jointed timber and exposed framing to the front verandah. There are timber-framed windows throughout including original double hung, and later clear glazed casements and hoppers to later works. There are separate timber and tin window awnings with battened

brackets to all external windows. The front verandah features double chamfered posts with ornate timber brackets, a three-rail dowel timber balustrade, ornate lattice timber double gates and painted timber decking. The heavily panelled timber entrance door with decorative leadlight sidelights and fanlights has similar leadlight French doors adjacent. The verandah is accessed via a short run of timber stairs with gabled frontispiece with decorative bargeboards and filigree infill over.

Open concrete breezeblocks enclose the front subfloor area, between the square concrete stumps. The lower floor additions include both solid blockwork infill and retaining with timber chamferboard to the rear and portions of the western elevation.

The interior of the building has not been inspected. Publicly available photography, including floor plans, have been reviewed. The interior includes wide polished pine floorboards, vertical-jointed timber walls, high ceilings to inner core of the building and detailed timber trims throughout. Detailed plaster ceilings feature in the lounge room with v-jointed timber ceilings to the remaining high ceilings, and suspended fans and light fittings generally. Tapered height ceilings to surrounding rooms are generally flush-lined with the larger rear living room addition having a v-groove sheet ceiling. Timber panelled doors with detailed breezeways over and timber framed double-hung windows feature with timber framed hopper windows to the later enclosed areas. A cast iron fireplace to the lounge room is surrounded by a timber and mirrored detailed mantel with ceramic tile insets to fireplace and hearth. The kitchen contains a face brick chimney backing onto the lounge room fireplace.

The residence appears well maintained and in excellent condition. There have been some alterations and additions to the original residence including enclosing underneath to provide car accommodation, storage, utility, and additional accommodation. There has also been a partial enclosure of the verandah at the front, as well as the additional skillion roofed family room to the rear, connecting to the lower floor. A hipped roof covered terrace to the rear has also been added.

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 the former 1880s farmhouse which remains from the once largely rural nature of Nundah to the interwar period and the increased residential suburban character that has developed since that 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

as the farmhouse built for Johann Gottfried Wagner, Zion Hill missionary and early pioneer of the Nundah area.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
2. Brisbane City Council Surveyors Notebooks
3. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
4. Brisbane Courier, Wednesday 11 April, 1928, p14
5. Courier Mail, Friday 13 December 1946, p1
6. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
7. Langbridge, C., Sloan, R. and Ganter, R. Zion Hill Mission (1838-1848) German Missionaries in Australia [undated, online], Griffith University, viewed 27 April 2018, [http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/qld-mission/zion-hill-mission-1838-1848#Johann%20Gottfried%20Wagner%20\(1809-1893\)](http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/qld-mission/zion-hill-mission-1838-1848#Johann%20Gottfried%20Wagner%20(1809-1893)).
8. Nundah and Districts Historical Society, *Pioneers' Pathway: Nundah Historical Cemetery*, 2003
9. Queensland Electoral Rolls
10. Queensland Historic Births Deaths and Marriages
11. Queensland Post Office Directories
12. *95 Hows Road, Nundah, Qld 4012*, Realestate.com.au, 2017 viewed 27 April 2018, <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-qld-nundah-126496606>
13. Telegraph, Thursday 28 September 1893

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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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