

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	194 Bourbong Street	Bundaberg Central
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	21B158136	

Historical Context

Bundaberg was established in the late 1860s. The Burnett River was identified by John Charles Burnett (after which was it named) during his exploration of the Wide Bay and Burnett regions in 1847. Pastoral stations were established throughout the Wide Bay and Burnett in the late 1840s through to the 1860s, including stations such as Gin Gin, Walla, Bingera, Electra, Monduran and Tantitha. The stations were initially stocked with sheep, but progressively were replaced with cattle. When prices were low, or there was an oversupply of stock (particularly in the 1860s), the cattle were rendered to produce tallow. A boiling down works was established in Baffle Creek to render the stock from the stations. John and Gavin Steuart secured a contract to provide the works with timber for tallow casks. The Steuarts established a camp in North Bundaberg in 1866 and erected a sawmill in the following year. Interest in the settlement grew rapidly and a town was surveyed on the southern bank of the Burnett River in 1868 on the site of the present day city.

Timber was the industry that acted as a catalyst for the creation of a European settlement. However, it was sugar that came to define the history of Bundaberg and the surrounding region. Sugar cane was planted in the 1870s and the first commercial sugar mill, located at Millbank (west of the city on the southern bank of the Burnett), began operating in 1872. The industry was thriving by the 1880s, with major mills such as Millaquin and Fairymead processing cane juice from cane plantations and farms with their own juice mills and located throughout the region, but particularly in land formerly occupied by the Woongarra, Bingera and Gooburrum scrubs. From its early years, the industry relied on South Sea Islander labour (referred to as 'Kanakas' at the time) and later workers from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon). The importance of Bundaberg was further strengthened when it became the port for the Mount Perry copper mine, with a railway from Mount Perry to North Bundaberg constructed in 1884 (although a rudimentary road existed from the early 1870s). A rum distillery was established at Millaquin sugar mill in 1888, later known as the Bundaberg Rum Distillery. Bundaberg also developed a foundry and engineering industry to support the sugar and juice mills, and the copper mines at Mount Perry. The first local government, the Bundaberg Divisional Board, was gazetted in 1880.

Originally a school reserve, the first Bundaberg public school was opened on the site now occupied by Buss Park in 1875. After the school relocated, the site became a 'market reserve' for public use before the Bundaberg City Council named it Buss Park in the early 1930's. The park is named after the Buss family, in particular Frederic Buss. Frederic Buss was a prominent Bundaberg businessman who owned interests in a number of sugar and juice mills in the region as well as retail interests (most prominently Buss & Turner), often in partnership with other family members. He was a member of the Bundaberg Municipal Council in the 1890s and donated £500 to street planting in Bundaberg's central business district.

A significant feature in Buss Park is a 40 tonne Grecian altar memorial dedicated to Bundaberg aviation pioneer Bert Hinkler, which was unveiled by the then Governor of Australia Lord Gowrie in 1936. The memorial cost £1500 and over 3000 people attended its unveiling. The park also includes Australia's first Historic Engineering plaque, which celebrates the development of the world's first successful sugar cane harvesters by Toft Brothers and Massey Ferguson in Bundaberg in 1970.

Physical Description

Buss Park is located on the south-eastern corner of the intersection of Maryborough Street and Bourbong Street, one of Bundaberg's most prominent intersections. The lot is irregular in shape, with the Hinkler Memorial, shaped from granite quarried from the Gracemere quarries near Rockhampton in a Grecian altar form, located at the centre of the park. The memorial is inscribed with the words: 'A tribute to the memory of Squadron-Leader H.J.L – Bert – Hinkler. Erected by the citizens of Australia. Born at Bundaberg 8th December 1892, accidentally killed in the Prato Magno Alps Tuscany Italy Eighth January 1933 while flying to Australia'. To the rear, the memorial reads 'Principal Flights First solo flight from Great Britain to Australia First flight across South Atlantic Ocean from west to east'.

A brick pathway running from the south-east to the north-west of the park intersects with the paving around the memorial, with additional pathways extending from the memorial to the north and the north-west. All pathways, which are illuminated at night by light poles and paved in a basket weave pattern, are flanked by raised garden beds, with additional beds in other locations. Seating arrangements occur in the form of 5 iron benches, with a number oriented towards the road frontages, in addition to hexagonal timber seating arranged around tree plantings. Two water fountains and a sundial are also located within Buss Park. An Engineering Heritage Plaque is located in the north-eastern corner of the site, the plaque on top of an exposed aggregate concrete plinth reading:

'Historic Landmark of Agricultural Engineering
Australian farmers began developing machines for harvesting sugar cane around 1890. Commercial success was achieved in the 1960s and manufacturing centred on Bundaberg. By 1970 Toft Bros. and Massey Ferguson were the major manufacturers of cane harvesters worldwide and Bundaberg had become the acknowledged world centre of development and manufacture of Sugar Cane Harvesters thereby making a major contribution to Australian Industry.'

Heritage Significance	
Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.</i>
Statement	Buss Park, named in 1930, demonstrates the affluence of Bundaberg as the centre of a thriving sugar industry in the early twentieth century and the continuing commitment to civic landscaping and the provision of community facilities by the Bundaberg City Council.

C	<i>The place has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history.</i>
Statement	Buss Park has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history, in particular archaeological material associated with the use of the site prior to the establishment of the park, including the former school and market.

E	<i>The place is important to the region because of its aesthetic significance</i>
Statement	Buss Park is of aesthetic significance as a well maintained and established park located on one of Bundaberg's most prominent vehicular intersections. The park provides a focal point and entrance statement to the Bundaberg Central Business District from the west, transitioning to the built form further along Bourbong Street. The park is also of aesthetic significance due to some of Bundaberg's most recognised buildings providing a frame to the space, including the Anglican Church of Christ Church to the south of the park, the Art deco Park Vue building to the west and the Commercial Bank of Sydney (former) to the north across Bourbong Street.

H	<i>The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the region's history.</i>
Statement	Buss Park is significant for its association with the Buss Family, the prominent Bundaberg family after which it is named, members of which were dedicated to the beautification of Bundaberg including street plantings, the development of parks and playgrounds, bitumen roads and water services.



View to south from Bourbong Street.



General arrangement of park.



Bourbong Street frontage.

Dedicated by The Institution of Engineers, Australia August 1984'

A flagpole has been erected to the rear of the plaque, with a further 3 flagpoles located adjacent to a large circular garden bed in the site's south-east corner. A timber sign bearing the park name fronts Bourbong Street.

Integrity	Good	Condition	Good
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	12/7/2013		

References

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