

## Heritage Citation



### Abbotsford

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 39 Abbotsford Road, Bowen Hills, Queensland 4006
<b>Type of place</b>	Flat building, House
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Free Gothic
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_SP287744
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — April 2015
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber
<b>People/associations</b>	Francis Beattie (Association)

Built circa 1879, this timber and tin house was an early house in Bowen Hills and was constructed for local identity Francis Beattie and his wife Janet. From the late 1860s to the early 1870s, Beattie served as an alderman in the Brisbane Municipal Council, was elected Superintendent of the City Volunteer Fire Brigade which he helped to form in 1868, and later MLA for Fortitude Valley. 'Abbotsford' became a landmark in the Bowen Hills area, and Abbotsford Road is named for this residence.

## History

The residential appeal of Bowen Hills was recognised early in Brisbane's settlement. The area was first known as O'Connell Town but was rechristened Bowen Hills in 1862 in honour of Queensland's inaugural governor. Land in the heights of Bowen Hills, which provided fine views and cooling breezes, was eagerly purchased by Brisbane's wealthier citizens. Substantial houses were built on the hilltop and surrounding slopes, including 'Cintra House' (1865), 'Folkstone' (1860s) and 'Montpelier' (1860s). Further subdivisions in the 1870s brought new settlers to the area, again primarily to the elevated sites known as Montpelier Hill or Bowen Hill Crest. Lower-lying land was flood prone and remained poorly developed in the nineteenth century, though some industry was opened along the banks of Breakfast Creek and the Brisbane River.

Amongst the wave of purchasers was Scottish born Francis Beattie, who began acquiring land in Bowen Hills in early 1877. Beattie had arrived in Brisbane in 1862. A hatter by trade, he set up a shop in Fortitude Valley and later one in Queen Street, which had a residence on the second level. He took an active interest in public matters, serving as an alderman in the Brisbane Municipal Council from 1868 to 1871 and 1873-74. In 1868 he was involved in the formation of the City Volunteer Fire Brigade and was elected Superintendent of the Brigade in 1870, a role he performed until 1882. The members of the Brigade unanimously voted to name a new fire engine the 'Francis Beattie' in his honour in 1875.

In late April and early May 1877 Beattie purchased subdivisions 14 to 25 of Portion 132 from Captain George Poynter Heath. Beattie, who leased the Commercial Wharf in addition to running his Hat and Cap Establishment, may have known Heath as they served on the Marine Board together. The site comprised six 20 perch allotments facing Cintra Road with three adjoining allotments extending back to Abbotsford Road. It was apparently undeveloped; Heath lived in 'Hanworth House' in East Brisbane and does not appear to have erected any dwellings on the Bowen Hills site.

Beattie's residence 'Abbotsford' was probably constructed in 1879. In July of that year he began advertising his Queen Street shop house for rent, suggesting his relocation. In 1880 'Abbotsford, Bowen Hills' was listed in local newspapers as a girls' school operated by Mrs JJ Martin. Abbotsford was said to occupy a 'charming situation in a quiet, healthy locality'. By 1881 Mrs Martin had moved her establishment to another property, and the Beatties appear to have taken up residence in Abbotsford. The house was one of the first to be built on this part of Bowen Hills, and the road it fronted was named Abbotsford Road around 1882.

Beattie's political career may have encouraged the purchase and construction of Abbotsford. He had ventured into politics of a higher order in 1874 when he was elected MLA for Fortitude Valley. He was re-elected around

the time when Abbotsford was finished, 1879 and served until his death in 1886.

In addition to providing a permanent home in the electorate for Beattie, Abbotsford proved a wise investment. Access to Bowen Hills improved dramatically over the late nineteenth century, with the opening of the Sandgate railway line in 1882. The first Bowen Hills station was not as close to the Beattie residence as it is today, being closer to Campbell Street than its current site, but a second station which opened in 1890 was located on Abbotsford Road. Land in the already popular Bowen Hills became even more appealing. In the short time Abbotsford had stood its value had increased significantly, enabling Mrs Beattie to mortgage the property for £1,550 in 1887. She gained title to the land after Beattie's death, and resided there until she sold the property in January 1888.

The house, according to an 1886 rental advertisement, had six rooms, kitchen, bathroom, storeroom, servant's room and several outbuildings, including stables, a coach-house and aviary. The surrounding land had fruit, vegetable and flower gardens and water tanks. The house was accessible from both Abbotsford and Cintra Roads.

The second owner of Abbotsford, Alfred E Harris, was a merchant and importer. Although he owned Abbotsford and some of the Harris children were born in the house, the family was not always resident there. Other occupants were listed there in the 1890s, suggesting that the property was rented from time to time. By the 1890s, Bowen Hills was quite densely settled and demand for rental properties in the inner-city suburb was high. In 1899 Abbotsford was advertised as a boarding house, close to the station and transport, but with 'home comforts'.

Harris also took out three large mortgages on the property, and in 1901 20 perches of the site were sold by a mortgagee. The house itself was also offered, though not sold. The site featured 'a variety of well-matured ornamental shrubs and fruit trees, notably some magnificent palm trees (40ft. high), and giant mango trees.'

In 1904 the Corrigan family moved in to Abbotsford, and in 1910 Ellen Corrigan became the owner of the property. This included just over one acre of land around the house. Mrs Corrigan had stables built on the property in 1911 for the family's horses, and a rental house was built on the Cintra Road frontage in 1913. The rental house at 22 Cintra Road still stands and is included on the BCC Heritage overlay.

In 1922 Ellen's son Bernard became the owner of Abbotsford, and began selling allotments from the landholding. According to FE Lord, reporting in 1932, Corrigan also had Abbotsford moved on its site to its present position in 1926. The house had previously been on the centre of the land, closer to Cintra Road. The relocation likely facilitated the subdivision and sale of small lots, allowing Corrigan to take advantage of the demand for property in Bowen Hills at this time. These sales gave the site its unusual T-shape.

Abbotsford was featured in FE Lord's 'Brisbane's Historic Homes' series in November 1932. The house plan, according to Lord:

...was built on one of the orthodox plans of earlier days and often mentioned – two rooms on one side of a hall extending through the house and one large room on the other, divided by a set of cedar folding doors. Extending right across the back of the house and the end of the veranda on its northern side – there is no veranda now on the southern side – is a long room, airy and bright, with many windows, formed out of a veranda widened by the Corrigans.

Lord also noted that the house had been altered from its original form in the relocation, with the removal of a side verandah and projecting music room. Abbotsford retained a number of its original features, however, including the unusually wide chamferboards, and had a kitchen, maid's room, bathroom, downstairs bedroom and long

room used as a dining room. A notable element of the house was the upper level. Three attic rooms each had gable windows and a gabled porch projected above the front verandah.

Bowen Hills became increasingly industrialised during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly those areas near what was then the suburb of Mayne. The Mayne Junction railway yards were opened and Bowen Hills became a distinctly mixed-use area. Abbotsford Road and the properties up Montpelier Road managed to retain their predominantly residential nature. Abbotsford was sold in 1939 and reverted to one of its earlier roles, as a boarding house. Its proximity to the Bowen Hills train station continued to be a major draw for the house

In 1951 Abbotsford was converted to tenements. This was not unusual for large nineteenth century houses. Multi-tenanted dwellings became more popular in Brisbane from the 1920s, as smaller family sizes made large residences less useful. Converting houses into multi-tenanted dwellings was more cost-effective than building new high density dwellings, and the income could also help pay for upkeep of the houses. Abbotsford's long use as a boarding house made its transition considerably easier. Abbotsford was sold several times in the second half of the twentieth century before it was transferred to its present owners in 1979.

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history as one of the earliest extant residences in Bowen Hills.

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#### 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 its association with local identity Francis Beattie, businessman and politician.

## References

1. Brisbane City Council aerial photographs, 1946, 2012
2. Brisbane City Council City Architecture and Heritage Team, citations
3. Brisbane City Council, Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans, 1927
4. Brisbane City Council, Properties on the Web, Building Cards
5. Department of Natural Resources, Certificates of Title
6. McKellar's Map, 1895
7. Queensland Women's Historical Association. *A Look Back in Time: A History of Bowen Hills - Newstead and 'The Creek'*. Breakfast Creek: QWHA, 1996.
8. *The Brisbane Courier, The Courier Mail, The Queenslander, The Sunday Mail*
9. Queensland Places: Bowen Hills (website)
10. Queensland Post Office Directories

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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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