

Heritage Citation



Braemar

Key details

Addresses	At 12 Swinburne Street, Lutwyche, Queensland 4030
Type of place	House
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Bungalow
Lot plan	L1_RP82497
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 November 2012 Date of Citation — September 2011
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls

People/associations Thomas Prentice (Occupant)

Criterion for listing (B) Rarity; (F) Technical; (H) Historical association

'Braemar' at 12 Swinburne Street, is an unusual interwar house constructed from concrete blocks. The house was built in 1933 by Thomas Prentice, the owner of the Ideal Concrete Block Company, once situated on the corner of Lutwyche Road and Swinburne Street. Built as a residence for Prentice and his family, it is a rare example of an interwar concrete block house. The adjoining house at number 14 is an earlier example of concrete block house construction from the early interwar years. Together the houses are important and rare as they demonstrate the early use of concrete blocks in Brisbane.

History

From the 1870s, Lutwyche, along with Windsor, was Brisbane's principal brick making district. For this reason, the area has a higher percentage of brick cottages than most other suburbs. In the early 1880s, Fuller Street was known as William Street after William Williams, a brick-maker who purchased nine hectares of land in the vicinity in 1874 and owned four brickworks. The area also had a large proportion of workers associated with the brick making industry during the 1880s.

In 1912 Thomas Prentice and his wife Louisa Kate purchased three roods and fourteen and a half perches of land fronting Lutwyche Road. It was on this Lutwyche Road frontage that Thomas established his concrete block business in 1914, The Ideal Concrete Block Company, and beside the business was his residence. The business manufactured and sold the concrete building blocks on the premises.

Thomas Prentice established his concrete block manufacturing company on Lutwyche Road in 1914. As mentioned earlier, the Lutwyche area had several brick making businesses operating in this period. Thomas Prentice envisaged the potential for a concrete building block business in Brisbane. The first machine for the manufacture of concrete building blocks was invented in the United States of America by Harmon. S. Palmer in 1900. From around 1905 up until 1930 the concrete block became a popular building material in the United States. The technology used for this was quickly adopted in Australia as the concrete blocks provided an alternative to more traditional building materials such as timber, brick and stone and proved to be considerably cheaper. They were extremely durable and strong as well as being aesthetically pleasing. The Ideal Concrete Block Company was a very early concrete block manufactory in Brisbane, subsequently the few existing houses constructed from the concrete blocks are important as representatives of this form of building construction in Brisbane.

Thomas Prentice was an important member of the local community. As Alderman in the Windsor Town Council from 1919 to 1924 he contributed to the improvement of the local area. After the amalgamation of councils in 1925 and the creation of the Greater Brisbane City Council, Prentice served as an Alderman from 1925-1928, as well as being involved on several Council committees such as the Transit, Electric Light and Power Committee and the Parks, Recreation, Town Planning and Housing Committee. In an article in *The Brisbane Courier* dated Thursday 8 January 1925, Thomas Prentice was described as having:

Had a fairly long and varied experience of local authority work, and was always a keen advocate for the development of the Greater Brisbane area by the co-ordinations of the various authorities. He has been keenly interested in the welfare of Windsor, and had done much for its advancement...his experience should prove a great help at the deliberations of the council in the development of the Brisbane of the future.¹

In 1933 the Register of New Buildings listed Thomas Prentice as applying for the construction of a new building in Bruce Street (now known as Swinburne Street). It was to be built with concrete blocks and slabs and constructed at a cost of £650. The contractor was recorded as being the Ideal Concrete Block Company, Prentice's business. In 1936 Prentice was first listed at the Bruce Street address, suggesting that the house was built between 1933 and 1936. Prentice and his family resided at 'Braemar' until the mid-1950s. Thomas Prentice died in 1956.

The house at number 14, 'Colwyn', built earlier in 1920 was also constructed from the Ideal Concrete Block Company's blocks. As a pair, the houses make a very important contribution to the streetscape in Swinburne Street, as well as reflecting the history of this area.

Description

The residence features gable roofs with a projecting smaller gable to the front over a bay window. The front verandah has a separate low roof supported by smooth faced concrete piers. The verandah balustrades are also smooth faced concrete blocks set in a decorative pattern with timber lattice screens above. The main walls of the house are a combination of rough faced and smooth concrete blocks supported on concrete piers. The bay window contains leadlight windows with timber weatherboards below; whereas other windows are double hung timber sashes. Internally, the walls are single width concrete block with suspended timber floors. The front boundary wall is constructed of rough faced concrete 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:

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

the use of concrete blocks for residential buildings in Brisbane in the interwar period was unusual.

Technical

CRITERION F

The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period

as an early example of concrete block construction in Brisbane using the newly developed concrete block manufacturing machines from the United States of America.

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 residence of Thomas Prentice from 1936 until the mid-1950s, important local Alderman and founder of the Ideal Concrete Block Company in Brisbane.

References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, 'Greater Brisbane: Windsor Candidate', Thursday 8 January 1925
2. Simpson, Pamela. H., "Cheap, Quick and Easy: The Early History of Rockfaced Concrete Block Building", *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 3 (1989), p. 108-118
3. *Historic Titles*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
4. Queensland Post Office Directories
5. *Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Survey Maps*

6. Queensland Electoral Rolls
 7. Judy Gale Rechner, *Brisbane House Styles 1880 to 1940: a guide to the affordable house*, Brisbane: Brisbane History Group Studies No. 2, 1998
 8. McCallum, Beres, *Walking a Changing Windsor: Explore 150 years of the Lutwyche Road Corridor*, Windsor and Districts Historical Society, 2009
 9. Teague, D. R, *Windsor Town Council Chambers 1897-1997: A Brief History of the Chambers Building: Windsor Town Council (1887-1903): Windsor Town Council (1904-1925)*, Windsor and Districts Historical Society, 1997
 10. *The Brisbane Courier*, 'Advertisement', Saturday 15 January 1916
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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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