

## Heritage Citation



**Mimosa**

### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 33 Balfour Street, New Farm, Queensland 4005
<b>Type of place</b>	Flat building, House
<b>Period</b>	Federation 1890-1914
<b>Style</b>	Bungalow
<b>Lot plan</b>	L6_RP8625
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — August 2010
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

**People/associations** Robert Smith (Robin) Dods (Architect)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (H) Historical association

'Mimosa' was constructed circa 1907 for the Richards family who contracted prominent Brisbane architect Robin Dods to design the timber Bungalow style house. Around 1934, the house was converted into flats, a common trend in Brisbane's inner suburbs. New Farm was a popular area for renters for its proximity to the city, and as a number of large construction projects, such as the Story Bridge, were going on in the area. The house has since been restored as a single dwelling.

## History

Known as 'Mimosa' (perhaps after the silver wattle plant *Mimosa Argente*), this residence was constructed for A.E Richards in c1907. Information to hand indicates that Richards was of independent means as no mortgage is recorded on the certificate of title.

The property was transferred into Richards' wife's name, Mrs Ada May Richards, in June 1915. Much of the later alterations for flat use appear to be made under her directions. The dwelling was constructed for a cost of £690/-/-, which places it in the mid-range of Dods designed residences.

New Zealand born and Scottish trained architect Robin Dods together with his partner Richard Hall, have been credited with "achieving 'an architectural revolution in Brisbane.'"<sup>1</sup> Of Dods, Riddel states:

The arts and crafts based philosophy which Dods, as well as his mentors adopted, well fitted a regional approach. Dods' use of vernacular elements and materials peculiar to a region, but mixed with a variety of period sources, was a common aspiration among British trained architects of the time, at least in domestic work. Dods was perhaps the most accomplished exponent of the so called 'Edwardian free style' to be seen in Australia. His work had equivalents in New Zealand, South Africa and India as British trained professionals grappled with assimilation of the local forms into mainly house design.<sup>2</sup>

Research undertaken by Riddel discloses that the greatest number of Dods's houses in Brisbane were concentrated in two suburbs, New Farm and Clayfield. In total of the twenty-five houses listed for tender by the firm Hall and Dods at New Farm, between 1896 and 1913, only seven still exist. Dods resided at New Farm.

Council records disclose that the residence was converted into flats around 1934. The BCC Building Registers of January 1934 list an application for conversion of a dwelling into flats in Balfour Street, New Farm for an estimated cost of £300/-/-. While the application was not in the owner's name it is likely it was for this Balfour Street property. It is recorded that only part fees as a tenement building were payable during 1934. It is therefore presumed that the residence was converted to flats and registered during that year.

During the interwar period, especially the 1930s, a substantial number of older residences were converted into flats in the inner city area. This was in addition to the purpose designed and constructed flat blocks being built

during this period. Accommodation was particularly in demand at New Farm, not only for its close proximity to the city, but also as a result of the influx of construction workers labouring on such projects as the Story Bridge.

'Mimosa' continued to be altered to suit its new operating circumstances and facilitate increased return as a tenement property. An application was made by A.M.Richards, now residing at Toowong, in July 1940 to the Brisbane City Council for additions to flats. Cost of the work was estimated at £1000/-/-. It is likely this was the additional building located to the north of 'Mimosa' known as 'Tara'.<sup>3</sup>

In 1944 the Department of Health through their inspector noted the additional building and advised the Deputy Chief the building "should be treated as a separate premises and Mrs Richards should be called on to make application for Registration for that portion known as 'Tara' . At this time it was noted that 'Mimosa' comprised of 22 registered rooms. Again in 1947 it was recorded that two rooms which were previously registered were being used as a storerooms. Consequently in 1948 Health Department registration for the building was for 9 persons consisting of 20 registrable rooms.

In 1957 Mrs Ada Richards realised the asset, disposing of the property in two parcels. The portion with Mimosa located upon it, some twenty-nine perches in size, was acquired by Camlio Coppo. The other portion, to the north of Mimosa, was of sixteen and half perches in size. The former residence currently operates as a boarding house with six flatettes.

The residence is representative of the evolution of many large well-built and architect designed houses in Brisbane's inner suburbs to boarding house/flats during the early decades of the twentieth century.

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## Description

This structure presents as a large weatherboard residence of early twentieth century origins that is currently arranged as six flatettes. The roof is of galvanised iron and is high pitched. Two intact chimneys, which service two fireplaces, protrude from the central-eastern side of the residence. The central hallway and rear stair location remains as was designed by Dods.

The Balfour Street front and eastern side of the residence was bounded by a verandah. This has been enclosed to provide additional accommodation space. A small extension was added onto the north-west rear, most likely soon after construction.

The residence contains many of the design characteristics of Dods. These include his use of timber construction, verandahs and dominant roof space.

The residence was converted into tenement flats during the interwar period. A comparison with Dods's original drawings reveal how relatively intact the structure is, with subsequent changes able to be reversed. While the original bay window has been removed the building still retains its central hallway and basic layout, two large wooden paneled fireplaces and the original entry door designed by Dods.

# 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 an architect designed early twentieth century residence built at a time when New Farm was a fashionable middle to upper class suburb.

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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

as a residence designed by important and influential Queensland and Brisbane architect Robin Dods.

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## References

1. Watson & McKay, *Queensland Architects of the 19th century: A Biographical Dictionary*. Quote from architect A.E.Brooks reproduced at p.55
2. Robert Riddel, *The Significance of MIMOSA. The house built for A.E Richards: 33 Balfour Street New Farm*. (Commissioned Report for BCC. April 2005). p.3
3. Inspector T Collins. Report for Dept of Health BCC Dated 5 January 1944
4. Brisbane City Council Building Registers & Building Cards
5. Brisbane City Council File Records
6. Certificates of Title.

7. Electoral Records
  8. 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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