

## Heritage Citation



### 147 Dornoch Terrace, Highgate Hill

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 147 Dornoch Terrace, Highgate Hill, Queensland 4101
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Old English
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP12103; L2_RP12103
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — September 2011
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Terracotta tile; Walls: Face brick
<b>People/associations</b>	Mervyn Hamilton Rylance (Architect)

This residence was built between 1939-40 for accountant George Giles of accountancy firm Giles & Grant. It was designed by prominent Brisbane architect Mervyn Rylance who created some of his most influential designs in the 1930s. Rylance won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Qld) 'Small Homes Competition' in 1935. Completed in 1940, it was one of the few private homes built and completed during World War Two. A matching brick garage was added to the Giles' family home in 1947.

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## History

In December 1860, Nehemiah Bartley purchased 14 acres, 3 roods and 30 perches of Crown land along the Brisbane River at South Brisbane. Bartley was an important land developer in this part of Brisbane and he would purchase and subdivide land on both sides of Dornoch Terrace during the 1860s and 1870s. Thomas Blacket Stephens purchased the land from Bartley in August 1864. In May 1868, Stephens sold the land to Edmund Sheppard, who eventually subdivided the entire purchase into allotments, with, what is now, 147 Dornoch Terrace comprising Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The first of these subdivisions to be sold by Sheppard was Lot 3, which went to Frederick Christian Petersen in November 1886. Lot 4 was next, sold together with most of the adjoining allotments to Robert Alfred Skinner in October 1887. That same month, Skinner sold his holdings to Alfred John Barker, who quickly sold Lot 4 to Hugh Stirrat. Sheppard sold the allotments at the corner of Dornoch Terrace and Dauphin Terrace, Lots 1 and 2, to Ebenezer Thorne in October 1887. Then in June 1891, Thorne sold his land to Hugh Stirrat. Stirrat now had Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4, which he passed around to his family members. David Stirrat received Lots 1 and 2 in March 1895, while Salome Stirrat was granted Lots 3 and 4 in September 1903. But within a few years, 147 Dornoch Terrace would pass out of the hands of the Stirrats, with David Stirrat selling his land to Thomas Edmonds in May 1905. Then in August 1906, Salome Stirrat sold her two allotments to Clara Fletcher.

The four allotments continued to have separate owners for the next 66 years. In November 1918, Edmonds sold Lots 1 and 2 to James Walter Chew, who in turn, sold them to Patrick Alban O'Sullivan in July 1920. In July 1925, Charles Edward Sligo purchased these allotments before reselling them to Saville J. Hodge Sheard in July 1936. Then in September 1939, the Giles family purchased Lots 1 and 2 at 147 Dornoch Terrace. Next door was 149 Dornoch Terrace [Lots 3 and 4]. When Clara Fletcher died on 17 June 1935, 149 Dornoch Terrace passed to Charles Reginald Nunn. He gave the land to Brenda Alberta Nunn in December 1937.

The existing house was designed by architect Mervyn Rylance, with the builder being H.W. Stephens. It was built in late 1939 for George Peter Hardie Giles of the 154 Queen Street accountancy firm of Giles & Grant. At the time of home's construction, G. P. Giles was living at 38 Ernest Street in South Brisbane with his wife Maggie Strachan Giles and two other family members, Dulcie May and Mary Ann Violet Giles. The Giles moved into their new home in 1940 after the outbreak of World War Two. The subsequent drain of the civilian workforce into the armed forces, caused greater employment opportunities for women. Thus Dulcie Giles was promoted from shop assistant to manager, while Mary, who had been unemployed in 1939, had also risen to a manager position by 1941. Such fortuitous opportunities would have enabled the Giles family to cover the cost of Rylance's services.

Mervyn Hamilton Rylance (1906-1983) was a prominent Brisbane-born architect who designed a number of residential and commercial buildings in the city from the 1930s through to the 1970s. Architect and architectural historian Michael Kennedy, described Rylance as "the most important architect of the (interwar) period to design in the Mediterranean style in Brisbane". Rylance's designs were influenced by the Mediterranean style that had developed in Sydney under Professor Leslie Wilkinson and F. Gynn Gilling. Gilling had employed Rylance, before he returned to Brisbane to establish a practice in 1933. In 1935, he an award winner in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Qld) 'Small Homes Competition', which was "the most important competition in domestic architecture" at that time. Rylance's best work is considered to be from the 1930's, the period in which this Dornoch Terrace house was designed.

Prior to the 1939 construction of this home, Rylance had designed Benson house (1936) at Markwell Street, Hamilton and Wolfe house (1938) at Windermere Road, Hamilton. These are substantial dwellings designed for particularly wealthy clients, whereas 147 Dornoch Terrace is a modest design as befitted its middle-class owners. Rylance worked on only three houses in Highgate Hill, with the home at 147 Dornoch Terrace being designed in the interwar 'Old English' style.

This residence was completed just prior to the cessation of private home construction in Brisbane caused by the wartime shortage of building materials and tradesmen. A brick garage with a tiled roof, matching the style of the house was erected in 1947. The Giles's family purchased the adjoining block at 149 Dornoch Terrace in June 1972, when they bought the land from Brenda Nunn's estate. This block of land appears to have remained vacant.

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## Description

Designed by the architect Mervyn Rylance, this residence was of a contemporary European architectural style, at the time went it was constructed. It has a red tiled gable roof with a second gable over the entry and two pyramid roof projections on the Dauphin Terrace side of the house. A verandah space wraps around the corner of the house towards the views of Mt Coot-tha. The white painted casement windows and a white band at floor level encircling the building in contrast the red/brown bricks of the house. The bay windows at the front and right side of the house have tiled hoods with geometric timber brackets. Entry is via the verandah, which is accessed via several masonry steps.

The house is situated on a high and prominent part of Dornoch Terrace with a blue stone wall and generous amount of foliage partially hiding the residence for view from the street. Several pine trees within the garden also

compliment the house.

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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

being one of the last homes in Highgate Hill completed during the early years of World War Two. In the early 1940s wartime measures caused a hiatus in house construction.

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#### Rarity

##### CRITERION B

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

as an example of an interwar 'Old English' style and one of only three Mervyn Rylance houses built in Highgate Hill.

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#### Technical

##### CRITERION F

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

as an interwar house of a modest scale designed in response to the financial constraints of the 1930s. It contrasts with other examples of Rylance houses at Hamilton and Ascot.

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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

being designed by the prominent 1930s Brisbane architect Mervyn Rylance.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Cock, John, *A Question of Style: The life and work of Mervyn Hamilton Rylance*, Architect, Queensland University of Technology, B.Arch. thesis, 1995
4. Commonwealth Electoral Rolls for Queensland 1939-1941
5. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
6. Fisher, Rod & Crozier, Brian. *The Queensland House: A Roof Over Our Heads*. (Brisbane: Queensland. 1994)
7. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
8. Kennedy, Michael Owen. *Domestic Architecture in Queensland Between the Wars*. Unpub Thesis. Master of Built Environment. 1989
9. 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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