

Heritage Citation

7 Herbert Street, Toowong

Key details

Addresses	At 7 Herbert Street, Toowong, Queensland 4066
Type of place	House
Period	Postwar 1945-1960
Style	Brisbane Regional
Lot plan	L2_RP92706
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 November 2012 Date of Citation — June 2011
Construction	Walls: Masonry
People/associations	Vitaly A. Gzell (Architect)
Criterion for listing	(B) Rarity; (F) Technical; (H) Historical association

7 Herbert Street, Toowong is a brick house constructed in 1957 and is an excellent example of an innovative house of the 1950s. Designed by significant and influential Brisbane architect Vitaly Gzell, it represents a radical departure from traditional Queensland housing styles and materials using simple stylistic elements and new 'modern' materials while responding to the dictates of climate and site.

History

In Queensland in the 1950s and 1960s, the restrictions and shortages of wartime austerity slowly gave way to affluence and a sense of optimism. Architects, influenced by modern international styles, benefited from the rapidly developing urban sprawl during the postwar period as immigration and a baby boom contributed to increased demand for housing. Much of the new development consisted of 'fibro' and timber bungalows as the traditional verandahed Queenslander fell victim to shortages of building materials and a perception of being 'old

fashioned'. Architects, adopting international and interstate trends, developed a new awareness of the importance of taking account of climate and landscape in the design of new buildings. Queensland architects, like Hayes and Scott, were searching for *“an architecture with an identifiable Queensland flavour” and incorporated “traditional devices, such as roof ventilation, screening and verandahs ... but did not ... imitate the forms of the traditional house.”*¹

7 Herbert St was built following an application by the owner, James Archibald Tait in February 1958. It is a fine example of the new Modern International /Regional Style of architecture that embraced “the more advanced way of building and the cleaner details” developed in the ‘forties to develop a “new, free creative approach to the problems of design.”² The one central concern for Brisbane architects, such as Heathwood, Dalton, (Hayes and Scott,) training during the ‘fifties and ‘sixties, was “designing for the Queensland climate”.³ Architects of this era wanted to produce “architecture with a distinctly Queensland flavour” and “adapted elements [of the traditional Queensland house] to temper the Queensland climate and used them in a non-derivative way, incorporating them into the prevailing international language of the time.”⁴

In the post-war period Vitaly Gzell was attributed to designing some of Brisbane’s most fashionable homes. Gzell had been a successful architect with his partnership in the firm Blackburne and Gzell, recognized for designing some of Brisbane’s finest interwar houses. In the post-war era Gzell established his own firm. Once again, Gzell designed architecturally innovative homes in Queensland by adopting modernist design. 7 Herbert St is a representation, not only of Gzell’s innovative architecture, but also of the post-war fashion to build architect designed homes that were a shift from the traditional Queensland housing stock.

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 as an excellent example of an innovative 1950s house designed by V. Gzell in Toowong it is uncommon.

Technical

CRITERION F

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

period

the house was built following a post-war innovative design that localized modernist architecture to suit the Brisbane climate.

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 post-war house designed by prominent Brisbane architect Vitaly Gzell in Toowong.

References

1. Avery, P., Dennis P., Whitman P., eds. *Cool: The 60s Brisbane House*, QUT Brisbane, 2004, p41
2. Robin Boyd in Dennis p.19
3. P. Dennis "*Innovative Architecture for Living: Brisbane architect-designed houses of the 1960s*" B.Arch thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 1999, p.33
4. P. Dennis "*Innovative Architecture for Living: Brisbane architect-designed houses of the 1960s*" B.Arch thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 1999, pp.59-60
5. Dennis, Peta, *Innovative Architecture for Living: Brisbane architect-designed houses of the 1960s*, Queensland University of Technology, Thesis, 1999
6. F. Gardiner "Significant Twentieth Century Architecture of Queensland" B.Arch thesis, University of Queensland, 1988
7. Avery, P., Dennis P., Whitman P., eds. *Cool: The 60s Brisbane House*, QUT Brisbane, 2004
8. Historic Titles, Department of Environment and Resource Management
9. *Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Survey Maps*
10. Richard Apperly (et al), *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian architecture* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1989

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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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