

Heritage Citation



Carrington

Key details

Addresses	At 445 Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000
Type of place	Flat building
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Spanish Mission
Lot plan	L1_BUP11986; L2_BUP11986; L3_BUP11986
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018 Date of Citation — May 2014
Construction	Roof: Terracotta tile; Walls: Masonry - Render

People/associations George Rae (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic

'Carrington' flats are a set of architect designed, interwar flats situated on the peak of the hill on Gregory Terrace, overlooking Victoria Park. Built for Brisbane financier, Egdar MacArthur, the flats were designed by prominent Brisbane architect, George Rae who was influenced by the then modern 'Spanish Mission' style. 'Carrington' flats are important in demonstrating Brisbane's development pattern in the interwar period, in particular in Spring Hill, and the way in which ideas about acceptable forms of housing were changing.

History

As the Great Depression progressed in the late 1920s and into the 1930s a marked deficit of housing in Brisbane emerged. This was the period in which the multi-unit dwelling began to emerge as an alternative to the traditional Brisbane house and yard. Prior to this in larger Australian cities such as Sydney and Melbourne this style of 'modern' living, in blocks of flats, had become a stylish alternative to living in the traditional house.

In the early 1930s to cater for the housing shortage as well as to generate income many home owners in the inner-city suburbs converted houses into tenements, where tenants would share bathrooms, toilets and kitchens. This led to community concerns of overcrowding and increased hygiene problems. A fashionable and more sophisticated alternative to this form of accommodation was the purpose built block of self-contained flats. Marketed mainly at single people and childless couples the earliest self-contained flats in Brisbane were generally conveniently situated close to trams, trains and shopping facilities in inner-city suburbs such as Spring Hill, New Farm and Fortitude Valley.

The Brisbane City Council, in 1930, defined the flat as "a fully self-contained dwelling, with private kitchen, bathroom and water closet". The flat was designed to be an independently functioning dwelling. Although seen as a sophisticated lifestyle, flat living was fairly uncommon in Brisbane in this period, with only 8.4% of Brisbane residents living in flats. This low percentage may be due to the economic constraints of the time as well as the perceived novelty of this style of living. Most interwar flats in Brisbane were architecturally designed and constructed from good quality brick and timber.

In 1933 Edgar MacArthur, a financier, purchased twenty-two perches of land along Gregory Terrace. The vacant land had recently been subdivided from a larger block that contained a large house, No. 441 (no longer extant). MacArthur commissioned prominent Brisbane architect, George Rae to design a set of six flats for the site.

As one of Brisbane's most successful architects in the interwar period, George Rae had first established his own architectural firm in 1933. Prior to this he had been employed at the larger Brisbane firm of Atkinson, Conrad and Powell. Rae was renowned for designing modern buildings in Brisbane in the interwar period such as multi-unit residential buildings that were a very new idea in this period.

In March 1933, a Tender notice was placed in the *A&B Journal of Queensland* for the erection of the Gregory Terrace flats. The successful contractor was TC Clarke. In August that same year the Brisbane City Council

approved the plans and this was recorded in the Register of New Buildings, “New Building...Gregory Terrace and Warry Street...Flats...E MacArthy, Queen Street...TC Clarke [contractor]...G Rae [architect]”. The set of six flats were to cost £3000.

In June 1933 the modern design was featured in an article in the *Brisbane Courier* that stated:

“The building, which is to be brick and concrete construction, will be three stories in height, and, designed in the Spanish style, will contain six flats. Each flat will contain living and dining rooms, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, and smoke lounge”.¹

Following this article, another in the *Brisbane Courier* from August of that year highlighted the important reinvigoration of the building industry as it struggled out of the Great Depression; it stated, “Two new blocks of flats, each costing £3000, were passed. One is to be erected at Gregory Terrace, and will be a three-story brick structure, containing six flats. The architect is Mr G Rae and the builder is Mr TC Clarke” (The Brisbane Courier, 11 August 1933, p7). By 1935 the flats had been completed and were named ‘Carrington’, with two being leased to tenants at this time. One of the flats became Edgar MacArthur’s home until the 1950s.

‘Carrington’ flats are important in demonstrating Brisbane’s development pattern in the interwar period, in particular in Spring Hill, and the way in which ideas about acceptable forms of housing were changing.

Description

Carrington Chambers is a three- storey, rendered masonry apartment building fronting Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill and side frontage to Warry Street. It has a terracotta tiled hipped roof. The street frontages are highly attractive with decorative architectural features including barley twist columns, faux Juliette balconies and are skilfully composed. The front entrance has a gabled projecting bay with the apartment name and original flaming sconces. There is a secondary entrance at the side also featuring the apartment name. The building has a face brick boundary fence with decorative iron palisade.

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:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

for the evidence it provides of the pattern of construction of purpose built flats in Spring Hill during the 1930s and as a reflection of the growth in popularity of the multi-unit dwelling in Brisbane.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a set of architect-designed brick flats situated on the rise of the hill overlooking Victoria Park forming part of the distinctive and highly-attractive interwar character of Gregory Terrace.

References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, 11 August 1933, p7
2. *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, March 1936 and editorial, 1938
3. Brisbane City Council Minutes, 1935-36, p.764 & 918 and 1938, p.605
4. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
5. Brisbane City Council Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Detail Plans
6. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Environment and Resource Management
7. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
8. Queensland Post Office Directories
9. Queensland Electoral Rolls
10. Brisbane City Council, *Register of New Buildings*, August 1933
11. *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 June 1933, p4
12. *A&B Journal of Queensland*, 10 August 1933
13. Bennett, Helen, "Being Modern: Living in Flats in Interwar Brisbane", *Queensland Review*, v.13, no.2, 2006, p35-48

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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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