

## Heritage Citation



### Cremorne

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 154 Flinders Parade, Sandgate, Queensland 4017
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Free Style
<b>Lot plan</b>	L604_S277; L605_S277
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — September 2015
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

**People/associations** John McCallum (Occupant);  
Lange L Powell (Architect)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

This unusual house is most likely a 1922 amalgamation of two houses built for John McCallum. The houses were already on site when McCallum purchased the two properties in April and December 1921. At that time architect Lange L Powell was engaged to design extensive alterations. The altered house was named 'Cremorne' after McCallum's well-known theatre in Stanley Street, South Brisbane. The house was host to famous theatrical figures and other prominent people, as McCallum and his wife entertained frequently and had friends come to stay with them at the seaside resort of Sandgate. McCallum also became involved in Sandgate's social and civic affairs, and served as the inaugural president of the Sandgate Progress Association. In 1925 Cremorne was sold to the Carrick family, who hosted garden parties and fetes at the property. Subsequent owners leased the residence to tenants and Cremorne was converted to flats in the 1930s.

## History

Sandgate began as a small seaside village but closer development was sparked by the completion of the railway line to Sandgate in 1882. Brisbane residents took advantage of the improved access between the city centre and distant seaside Sandgate and built permanent or holiday homes along the esplanade. In the 1890s Post Office Directories estimated that a fluctuating population of about 500 joined the approximately 1,700 permanent Sandgate residents in the holiday season.

This site, allotments 4 and 5 of section 6A in the town of Sandgate, was part of the former police paddock reserve. In October 1882 it was purchased by Thomas Roderick Gray, co-owner of a boot shop in George Street. Sometime after his purchase, Gray had a holiday cottage constructed on allotment 5. Although the precise construction date is unclear, the house appears to have been standing by 1900. Gray died in 1911 and his 'comfortable and convenient cottage' was offered for sale in 1913. Retained by Gray's family, it was leased to tenants through the 1910s.

Gray had not developed allotment 4, which was a corner site with frontage to Seventh Avenue (then called Tully Street) and Flinders Parade, and it was sold separately from the house on allotment 5. During the 1910s it was owned by some of Brisbane's successful merchants, including indent agent Alexander Stirling, who built a house called 'Tangaluma' on the site around 1913, and Marie and William Hobart Overell of the eponymous drapery business in Fortitude Valley. The Overells offered the 'charming seaside residence, right on the beach' for sale in 1920. The house, renamed 'Elanora', included drawing and dining rooms, four bedrooms, a breakfast room with coloured glass windows, maid's room, verandahs on three sides and a smaller side verandah.

Elanora attracted the attention of theatre proprietor John McCallum, who operated the Cremorne Theatre in South Brisbane. The Cremorne was established in 1911 and became one of Brisbane's most popular live theatre venues. Over the course of his management in the 1910s and 1920s, McCallum engaged performers from around Australia for the 1,800 seat theatre.

Sandgate appealed to McCallum as a pleasant suburb to raise his growing family, and for the relaxing drive to the bayside from the theatre. The McCallum family took up residence in Elanora in January 1921, and renamed the house 'Cremorne'. Title to the property did not pass to McCallum until December of that year, but in the interim he purchased the adjacent allotment 4, on which Thomas Gray's holiday cottage still stood. In December, he engaged successful and popular architect Lange L Powell to design extensive alterations to these properties.

Powell practised as an architect in Queensland from 1912 until his death in 1938. When designing McCallum's alterations he was practising as a solo architect, but had been partnered with Claude Chambers from 1912 to 1915, and later partnered with Powell and Hutton (1922-5), Atkinson, Powell and Conrad (1927-31) and George Rae (1931-1933). Powell contributed greatly to the development of the architecture profession in Queensland, and was appointed a fellow of the Queensland Institute of Architects in 1918. In addition to a large number of commercial buildings and churches, Powell designed houses and additions or alterations to houses for well-to-do Brisbane residents, including 'Kurrowah' in Dutton Park [QHR 602827]; two houses in Eldernell Terrace, Hamilton; and 'Fingal' in Moreton Street, New Farm. His residential designs featured a number of elements visible in Cremorne, including solid brickwork, tall chimneys, casement windows, broad entry stairs leading to a timber verandah, and timber shingles used as wall cladding.

Powell's alterations for McCallum produced an unusual house. There is no indication that Powell removed the houses already standing on the sites. The main part of the structure is likely to be the residence Elanora, while the portion to one side is possibly the remnants of Gray's cottage or Powell's own design. Powell is likely to have added the octagonal music room and the boundary fence with brick entrance archway, though no plans of the alterations have been uncovered.

The McCallum family moved out of Cremorne while work was in progress. McCallum put his Bowen Terrace, New Farm residence on the market, as well as the 'almost new and up-to-date furnishings of his Sandgate Residence'.<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. McCallum selected [the furniture] only 12 months ago...', advertisements noted, 'but owing to his not having room to store the furniture while his home is being remodelled [he] has decided to dispense with the lot at auction.'<sup>2</sup> After the alterations were completed, the McCallum family divided their time between Sandgate, Sydney and Europe. McCallum's son, his namesake and future actor John McCallum, recalled Sandgate life with his younger brothers as featuring 'tricycles under the house, a large garden, bulldog and a Persian cat, and a wonderful old couple who had retired from the theatre.'<sup>3</sup> McCallum senior took an interest in Sandgate's progress, establishing and chairing a Sandgate Improvement Association which held its inaugural meeting at Cremorne. Even after he left Cremorne, McCallum became patron of the new Progress Association and returned to the area to promote the possibility of developing Sandgate as a 'garden city'.

In 1925 McCallum advertised the house for sale to move to his newly-built Sydney residence, though he retained management of Cremorne Theatre. The house was offered to purchasers for £5,000. It featured a twenty feet (6m) long entrance hall, with lounge and dining rooms at either end. It also included four bedrooms, nursery, maid's room, sleeping-out verandah, kitchen and music room, while ten feet (3m) wide verandahs provided views of the 'delightful laws and gardens'. A double garage opened onto the Tully Street frontage.<sup>4</sup> Newspaper advertisements included a series of photographs of the property, which were also featured in later sales notices.

Douglas and Caroline Carrick purchased Cremorne in August 1925 and moved in shortly after. Carrick, a prominent contractor and master builder, was engaged in the construction of Brisbane City Hall [QHR60065] while he lived at Cremorne. Despite this time-consuming project, Carrick took an active interest in the Sandgate community, building stalls for the Anglican church fete and joining the Sandgate Bowls Club. He was also one of the 'prominent citizens of Sandgate' appointed as a trustee of the Sandgate Band in 1927<sup>5</sup>. He offered Cremorne for sale after Caroline died in 1927, but retained it until his own death in 1934. In the interim,

Cremorne was leased to tenants, including William Overell's brother John.

Cremorne became a centre for social and fundraising events in Sandgate in the 1920s and 1930s. The large garden made it a useful venue for fetes, which were held for the Presbyterian Church, Country Women's Association and Town Band. Illustrious visitors included the governor's wife Lady Wilson, who attended the CWA parties.

The property was offered for sale in 1936. Advertisements emphasised the house's social aspects, including its billiard room, smoking room, card room, breakfast room, bathers' bathroom and dressing room. Externally the property featured lawns, fernery, flagpole, statuary (some still extant), an ornate brick fence and 'exceptional view of bay and islands'<sup>6</sup>. The 1935 auction of the 'fashionable residence' was attended by 150 people but the house was passed in.

In 1937 new owners Oliver Bull and Catherine Ferguson engaged architect Sydney Prior to convert the property into flats. The growing acceptance of flat residences and the popularity of Sandgate made the conversion a viable option. The alterations, reported in the newspaper, converted the property into 'six modern flats, equipped with such conveniences as refrigeration and a hot water system' and, as the house was large, each flat was to have 'two bedrooms, lounge, sleep-out, kitchen and all over services.' Builder AA Newell constructed the alterations.

Cremorne became a popular holiday residence after its conversion and the flats' proximity to the RAAF Station in Brighton proved a boon during WWII. Parents and wives of pilots training at nearby Eventide took up residence in the flats. A doctor also ran a practice there from 1946 to around 1949.

Cremorne Flats were sold several times in the late twentieth century with some alterations made in the 1970s.

In 2016 the property remains as flats and makes a striking contribution to the Sandgate esplanade townscape.

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## Description

Cremorne is a large high-set timber-framed and -clad residence converted to flats standing in an extensive yard on a prominent corner site on the foreshore in Sandgate. The frontage to Flinders Parade, a principal thoroughfare and esplanade, has a low facebrick fence with an eye-catching archway entrance featuring the letters 'CREMORNE'. The fence originally had a timber palisade, which has since been removed. The front boundary is densely planted with a mature hedge of *Acalypha wilkesiana*, a plant that is characteristic of the 1920s – 1960s and is complimentary to the colour scheme of the fence. A concrete path with diamond-shaped decorative treatment (a signature treatment by Powell) leads from the archway to the front stairs. This path was sheltered by a pergola now removed.

The house is composed of two obvious parts, which likely relates to the merger of the two earlier houses. A large hipped-roofed section stands to the south eastern side (toward the street corner), which is probably the reworked Tangaluma (c1913) and a small gable-roofed section attached to the northwestern side, is possibly heavily altered Grey's cottage (c1900). The front of the smaller portion has another signature Powell element – a prominent facebrick chimney featuring a diamond pattern adjacent to the entry stairs. This is a very high-quality and intact element that features an inglenook with casement windows and has a distinctive silhouette. The broad

entry stairs lead to a timber verandah that unifies the composition of the two sections as it wraps around the house. The bricks of the chimney, the stair, and the front fence are the same and form a strong, distinguishing entry sequence.

The house is designed in a mix of an Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau styles, which may indicate that Tangaluma was in an Art Nouveau style when Powell, who was known for his Arts and Crafts style, made his 1922 alterations. The larger portion of the house has Art Nouveau elements including a corner octagonal room with a cupola and stained glass leadlight casements, timber shingles used as wall cladding, and sweeping organic verandah post brackets. The smaller portion and projecting gable rooms at the rear have Arts and Crafts elements including heavy, bowed timber brackets on the verandah, sheets and battens cladding to approximate half-timbering, plain small-paned casement windows, wide eaves with slatted ventilation, and heavy, prominent chimney breast with tall tapering chimney. Cremorne's roof is clad with corrugated metal sheets with the cupola clad with flat metal sheets. The cupola has lost its original finial.

The understorey of the house is enclosed along its perimeter by timber shingles with lattice ventilation panels in decorative diamond patterns. Early metal hoods survive and some areas of the verandah have been enclosed with later windows that are not of cultural heritage significance. As the genesis of the house is complicated, a forensic examination of the house could reveal further important aspects.

A gable-roofed, timber-framed and -clad double garage stands to the side behind the house opening onto Seventh Avenue. This garage has detailing that matches the main house and appears to be contemporary with the house's 1922 transformation. The garage is typical of those built during the 1920s, with its simple form and construction, location relative to the main house, and function.

The house has outstanding views across its broad front lawn to the foreshore and to Moreton Bay beyond. Statuary and large planter urns believed to date to the McCallum's brief ownership stand in the yard.

Although there have been some post-1946 alterations, including small side extensions, these are minor and reversible and Cremorne remains highly-intact in its 1922 arrangement and on its original allotment.

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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

as a residence developed in the early decades of the twentieth century, Cremorne demonstrates the growing

popularity of Sandgate in the 1920s and 1930s as a fashionable recreational destination.

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## Aesthetic

### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a striking and theatrical residence standing in an extensive garden on a prominent corner site on the esplanade in Sandgate. Designed by notable architect Lange Powell, the house has strong visual appeal brought about by its picturesque massing and highly-decorative treatments displaying high-quality craftsmanship and composition. It has outstanding water views to the foreshore and Moreton Bay beyond.

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## Social

### CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

to the Sandgate community in its role as an important place for past community social events, prominent on the Sandgate esplanade.

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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 for and occupied by the McCallum family, renowned Brisbane thespians.

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## References

1. *Brisbane Courier*, 7 February 1922 p12
2. *Telegraph*, 7 February 1922 p12
3. Brian McFarlane, *Double Act: The Remarkable Lives and Careers of Googie Withers and John McCallum*, 2015

4. *Brisbane Courier*, 24 June 1925 p12
  5. *Brisbane Courier*, 24 August 1927 p3
  6. *Courier Mail*, 7 November 1936
  7. *Courier Mail*, 9 February 1937 p18
  8. Brisbane City Council, Properties on the Web, Building Cards
  9. Brisbane City Council Archives, Building Register, 1937
  10. McFarlane, Brian, Double-act: *The remarkable lives and careers of Googie Withers and John McCallum*, 2015
  11. National Trust publication
  12. Brisbane City Council, Detail Plan, 1954
  13. Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Entries on the Queensland Heritage Register, Kurrowah [602827] and Cremorne, Hamilton [600218]
  14. Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland WWII Historic Places (website)
  15. Department of Natural Resources. Queensland Certificates of Title
  16. National Library of Australia, Trove newspapers, *Telegraph*, *Courier*, *Brisbane Courier*, *Moreton Bay Courier*, *The Queenslander*, *The Week*
  17. Brisbane History Group, Sandgate Shorncliffe Heritage Tour, 1990
  18. John Oxley Library records
  19. Queensland Electoral Rolls
  20. Queensland Performing Arts Museum, *Treading the Boards: Discovering the history of Brisbane's theatre buildings, 1847-1998*
  21. Queensland Post Office Directories
  22. State Library of Queensland, Picture Queensland
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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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