

Heritage Citation



Flamingo House

Key details

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Also known as | Stranville |
| Addresses | At 22 Dornoch Terrace, West End, Queensland 4101 |
| Type of place | House, Hall |
| Period | Federation 1890-1914 |
| Style | Queenslander |
| Lot plan | L25_RP11236; L24_RP11236; L23_RP11236 |
| Key dates | Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — May 2013 |

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

People/associations

Anna Bligh (Occupant);
Di Fingelton (Occupant)

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

This 1901 Federation house (former 'Stranville') was owned and occupied from 1921 to 1976 by prominent Brisbane dentist Thomas Tarran Ferguson. After Ferguson's death, it was became student rental accommodation. As such, it was the home of some future prominent Queenslanders such as Premier Anna Bligh and the state's Chief Stipendiary magistrate Di Fingelton. 'Flamingo House' was also a centre for youth-based arts, crafts, political and cultural activities, involving at various times, seven different community groups. 'Flamingo House' became synonymous with the unique character of West End, and was featured in an ABC documentary about David Malouf's literary interpretation of Brisbane life.

History

This property was part of a purchase of 6 acres, 2 roods and 16 perches of crown land made by John George Cribb of Brisbane in October 1855. Cribb eventually subdivided the land and in July 1884, he sold subdivisions, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 in Dornoch Terrace together with the adjoining subdivisions 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62 in Loch Street to Joseph Berry.

Having already acquired 3 roods and 30.8 perches, Berry increased his holding in September 1884 when he bought subdivisions 25 and 57, comprising 34.21 perches. In 1889, Berry transferred subdivisions 25 and 57 to his daughter-in-law Justice Sarah Berry, then subdivisions 20-24 and 58-62 in June 1896. By the time, West End had been opened up for residential development through the 1890 land sale of the Dornoch Terrace Estate.

Justice Berry sold off part of her land, that is, subdivisions 20, 21, 22, 60, 61 and 62, to Emma Hood in October 1898. Then in May 1899, Berry disposed of the remainder of her land to Eleanor Mary Mayes, the wife of William Robert Mayes. Eleanor Mayes obtained a mortgage at the time for £200 to Justice Berry. In December 1900, Eleanor Mayes took out a second mortgage, for £600, from the Australian Mutual Providential Society. This money was probably used to fund the building of a residence on lots 23, 24 and 25. This impressive house, which the Mayes called 'Stranville' was completed by 1901.

The Mayes spent just over a decade in their house until they sold the property to Julie Hill and Harry Athelstane Webster in September 1912. They in turn held onto the property for only a short time before selling it to Mary Elizabeth McConnel, the wife of James Henry McConnel in March 1914. Within three months, the McConnells had sold the property to Mary Ann Hamilton. She sold 'Stranville' to Thomas Tarran Ferguson, in July 1921, providing a mortgage for £1,350 to him.

Thomas Tarran Ferguson became the longest resident-owner of 'Stranville', living there for 31 years. A prominent Business dentist, Ferguson operated his dental surgery at 135 Queen Street. In April 1952, he began

converting 'Stranville' into registered flats. From 1952 until 1955, Ferguson registered the property as flats to accommodate 10 persons. In October 1955, Ferguson disposed of the land at the rear of 'Stranville' that led down to Loch Street. Such was the value of West End residential land that Ferguson had no problems in finding buyers for his three back allotments and this sale reduced the 'Stranville' property to its existing size.

After Thomas Ferguson's death of 7 September 1976, his estate was transmitted to Hugh Clifford Stephens and Marjorie Elwyn Wilson, the wife of Harry Gilmore Wilson. In December 1979, Macgrath Nominees Pty Ltd bought the site. They sold it to Cromus Vanderbilt International Pty Ltd in September 1981. Dawlin Pty Ltd obtained the property in May 1983 but quickly passed it onto the Chol Corporation Number 3 in June of that year. During this period, Stanville became a rental property, most often leased by students attending the University of Queensland.

The post-war influx of migrants, particularly Greek and Italians into West End had given the area a more cosmopolitan atmosphere than the rest of Brisbane. The influx of Vietnamese refugees into the area after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, added further to this atmosphere. This multicultural community, combined with the cheap housing available in this part of Brisbane, attracted university students to the area. This in turn resulted in West End becoming a Bohemian enclave in Queensland during the ultra-conservative, Joh Bjelke Petersen-era of the 1970s and 1980s. Among the student residents of 'Stranville' during the 1980's who later became community leaders were the Honourable Anna Bligh, member for South Brisbane, Queensland Government Minister from 1998, Deputy Premier from 2005 and Premier from 2009-2012, plus Queensland's Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Di Fingelton. Anna Bligh offered this assessment of the significance of 'Flamingo House':

"an important place in the culture of West End. Most residents would be familiar with it and it is a quintessential example of the style of Queensland architecture that forms West End's inner-urban aesthetic... On both aesthetic and cultural levels Flamingo House has a special place in the hearts of local residents, and it is extremely important that it be preserved for the enjoyment and education of future generations."

By the 1990's, 22 Dornoch Terrace was used as a private hostel but fire regulations forced its closure. It was then utilised as a share house and centre for various local community youth groups. By then it had acquired the name of 'Flamingo House' and developed into a cultural landmark within the West End community. Among the many organisations that utilised 'Flamingo House' were Vulcana Women's Circus, West End Activists and Volunteers Etc (WEAVE), Friends of the Earth, 'Connect' youth action group, the Starving Artists Collective, Self-Employment and Enterprise Development Scheme (SEEDS), Nature's Children Organic Food Buying Group, Yoghurt youth culture magazine plus a variety of music, film and specialist library events.

The use of 'Flamingo House' by these various groups cemented the property's status as a place of significance with the West End community. In 1996, 'Flamingo House' was chosen by the Australian Broadcasting Commission as the house most representative of West End for a documentary about author David Malouf's writing about West End/Highgate Hill. This documentary, *An Imaginary Life* was screened on the ABC's *Inside Story* program on 9 September 1997. In April 2000, the National Trust of Queensland described 'Flamingo House' as "a cultural landmark, which has local significance as an informal community centre that has made a contribution to fostering the arts in Brisbane" and placed this property on the NTQ Heritage Register.

Description

This residence is a Federation-style of timber construction with a hipped, corrugated iron roof. It is raised on stumps and has wide front and side verandahs that are decorated with cast iron balustrading. The front entrance comprises a gabled porch with triangular fretwork panel as its feature. This leads to the front door containing glass sidelights and a fanlight. The door is flanked by the large bay windows of the two front rooms. While the rear verandah was originally open, it has since been enclosed to create extra rooms.

The interior retains some of the original 1901 features of 'Stranville'. There are manual gas light fittings situated in a room on the western-side of the house. A double fireplace is a feature in both the former drawing room and former dining room. The elegant mantelpiece of the dining room fireplace is completed in varnished timber. The drawing room fireplace has decorative marble panels with tiled hearth. These types of impressive fireplaces have been repeatedly removed in recent years but only an internal site inspection would be able to confirm this. The entry hallway may have been remodelled in the 1920's. It features cedar panelling and an arched fanlight above two French doors all of which hold diamond paned, crosshatch leadlight glass.

The front garden contains three Cocos palms that would have been planted around the time of the construction of 'Stranville'. The existence of the stump of a fourth Cocos palm would indicate that these trees were a main component of the original garden, flanking as they did, each side of the property. There is also old concrete edging from the original narrow garden beds. The large weeping fig in the corner is another major component of the garden and it is covered by a Brisbane City Council Vegetation Protection order.

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

particularly West End's residential history from Federation through to the area's rise as postwar Brisbane's most prominent bohemian suburb in the postwar period.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance
as a fine example of a Federation-style house.

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
of seven separate West End community groups for social, cultural and political reasons.

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
with its links to the lives of Anna Bligh and Di Fingelton, who became prominent leaders of the West End and later the Queensland community.

References

1. BCC building cards
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Bligh, Anna, letter to Dr Jack Ford, Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit, 16 March 2001
4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
5. JOL Estate Map Collection and photographic collection
6. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
7. National Trust of Queensland Citation – File Reference Number BNE 1/883

Copyright Brisbane City Council

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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



Dedicated to a better Brisbane