

Heritage Citation



Hazelwood Court

Key details

Also known as	Shirley-Dean apartments
Addresses	At 1 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Flat building, Shop/s
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Art Deco
Lot plan	L8_BUP11956; L5_BUP11956; L7_BUP11956; L1_BUP11956; L6_BUP11956; L2_BUP11956; L3_BUP11956; L4_BUP11956
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — July 2010

Construction	Roof: Terracotta tile; Walls: Face brick
People/associations	John Russell Figgis (Builder)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic

The apartments and shop at 1 Brunswick Street and 461 Gregory Terrace, Fortitude Valley, were constructed in two stages, 1928 and 1930. They were erected by the owner, John Russell Figgis, a speculative builder. The site, on the corner of Gregory Terrace and Brunswick Street, was formerly part of the Raff Estate and apartments reflect the development of former large family estates on the fringes of Fortitude Valley in the interwar era, as the Valley became a more desirable residential area. They also demonstrate the increasing popularity of higher density accommodation, such as apartments, in the inner-city suburbs in the 1920s and 1930s.

History

Gregory Terrace had been the original dwelling-place of the Fortitude immigrants who arrived in Moreton Bay in 1849. Guarantees that they could settle in the Valley had been overturned, and while the settlers were allowed to erect dwellings, they were forbidden from cultivating the land. Gradually settlement spread into the rest of the Valley, and from the 1860s, Gregory Terrace became home to eminent Brisbane families, including the Ruffs, the Petries, and Queensland's first Surveyor-General, Sir A.C. Gregory. All had commissioned large and stately residences to be built along Gregory Terrace in the 1860s and 1870s.

The land enclosed by Brunswick Street and Gregory Terrace was part of the Raff's 'Grange Hill' estate, the oldest of the residences in the area. Stately residence 'Grange Hill' [601668] was the only building between Warry Street and Brunswick Street on Gregory Terrace prior to the 1920s.

Development of this area, on the fringe of Fortitude Valley, was slow and restrained. The area was quiet and prestigious, with the Acclimatisation Society's Bowen Park reserve, Victoria Park and the large estates locking up land and preventing large amounts of construction. The Inter-colonial Exhibition had occupied land across the road from 'Grange Hill' from 1876, and the elegant Queensland Museum Building was constructed in 1891, but the area around the Gregory Terrace and Brunswick Street intersection, reaching down to Water-street, was otherwise unoccupied before the 1920s.

In 1920, James Raff offered most of the five and a half acre Grange Hill estate for sale, and the area rapidly began to develop. Residences appeared on 'upper' Brunswick-street, as well as the Ellendene Private Hospital which opened in June 1926. Further towards the centre of the Valley, around Water and Warry Streets, businesses including Jackson's Bond Stores, Bell Brothers furniture factory, Wunderlich factory and store were moving in or expanding.

The development of the former Raff estate coincided with the interwar popularity of flats. Brisbane's response to schemes of flats had not been overwhelmingly positive. While flats became fashionable in London, Brisbane newspapers were emphasising the 'demoralising influence of the flat,' opining that the flat could never feel like

home; that flat-dwellers could not be good citizens; and that flats would cause trades to suffer, although with attached restaurants, flats did obviate the need for servants. Circumstances changed, however, and as cities faced the increasing value of inner-city property, suburbanisation and changing residential patterns in the interwar period, higher density living became more common. The large houses of now-deceased wealthy and prominent citizens were turned into boarding homes, as their new owners sought ways to pay for their upkeep. The first purpose-built flats in Brisbane were constructed in the very late 1910s and early 1920s in inner-city suburbs including New Farm, Fortitude Valley, Spring Hill, Petrie Terrace, Kangaroo Point and South Brisbane. The newly formed Brisbane City Council announced a series of new building ordinances in 1926, including a large section regulating the construction of flats and tenement buildings. By 1929, the citizens of Brisbane were 'slowly but surely developing into flat-dwellers,' as the *Brisbane Courier* put it.¹ In the early 1930s, demand for flats had increased to such a level that Brisbane was part of a flat building boom as the Great Depression began to ebb.

John Russell Figgis had been amongst the pioneers in the construction of flat buildings, as well as an early residence of a flat. Born in 1892 to parents who had arrived in Queensland six years earlier, Figgis had commenced his career in 1913, taking over the building business of his late father Charles. The First World War interrupted the business, as Figgis joined the 9th Battalion in the Australian forces. Returning home wounded, he recommenced his former business in 1923, converting the residence 'River View' into flats, to the design by Alfred Hill. Figgis moved into one of the River View flats on Vulture Street, remaining there until shortly before his death in 1939. Expanding into investment properties, Figgis constructed several houses and a block of flats in the Windsor and Ashgrove areas during the 1920s. In April 1928, Figgis had plans for brick flats and shops on the corner of Gregory Terrace and Brunswick Street approved by the Brisbane City Council.

The location of Figgis' proposed flats could not have been more ideal. Fortitude Valley, in contrast to its quiet beginnings as a small, isolated town, was a booming commercial and industrial area in the 1920s. It was also, increasingly, an appealing residential area for city workers. The Gregory Terrace houses, 'Beerwah', the Petrie residence; Sir Gregory's 'Mornington', the Raff's 'Grange Hill' and 'Kent House', had all been converted into boarding or multi-dwelling houses.

Figgis's purpose-built flats would be convenient to the city and public transport, the Valley's bustling shopping and entertainment precinct, as well as Victoria Park and its golf club, and overlooking the beautiful Museum building and Exhibition grounds. The site's location on a corner would also allow the flats to be well-lit and well-ventilated, making them even more appealing to tenants. Additionally, Figgis's design included a corner shop on the Brunswick-street side of the block, a popular incorporation in the interwar period which would take advantage of the building's position on the corner of a major intersection. As an investment for Figgis – as many purpose-built blocks of flats in the interwar period were investment properties – the new flats would be invaluable.

Figgis finished construction of the £3,500 building before his purchase of the land was registered in January 1929. The completed block included five flats on the Gregory Terrace side, known as 'Shirley-Dene' or 'Shirley-Dean', and the Brunswick-street shop. The shop was to act as a supermarket for the apartment's residents as well as attract customers from surrounding streets. The heritage-listed 'Drayton Court' apartments at 31 Hardgrave Road, West End is another example of this design.

'Shirley Dene, Brisbane's newly-erected modern brick flats' were advertised in January 1929, and the first tenants in its five flats were Dr Ethel A. Orchard, a medical practitioner, Walter H. Bick, Paul E. Kelsey, Hal Sewell and T.F. Egan. The shop opened as a confectionary store run by Miss T.H. Sullivan.

Figgis registered plans for an addition to the building in 1932 and another 'nearly completed' flat was advertised in September, just before the advent of the flat construction boom in 1933. By this time Figgis was a successful

'speculative builder', owning not only 'Shirley-Dean' but also the Riverview flats which he had helped construct and former Petrie residence 'Beerwah'. He was also manager of the Queensland yachting team.

Mrs Margaret Horn took over the Sullivan confectionery shop in 1934. In 1940, when the Brisbane Post Office Directories ceased listing domestic residences, Edward R. Soderholm converted the shop into a general store. Figgis sold the apartments to Henry Edward Hollins on 24 April 1941. On 21 May 1948, Hollins sold the property to Frank Antoni, whose family retained ownership of the flats until 1989. The property, now known as 'Hazelwood Court', is presently owned as eight individual lots.

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

as a block of flats with an integrated shop built in the late 1920s and extended in 1930 'Shirley-Dene' is tangible evidence of the changing pattern of residential development in Brisbane during the interwar years.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as early purpose-built flats built in a then prestigious residential area these flats demonstrate changing community attitudes to new forms of housing.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a stylish and attractive landmark building at the corner of a major intersection.

References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 July 1929 p16
 2. Queensland Post Office Directories
 3. Queensland State Archives, 'Index to Registers of Immigrant Ships' Arrivals 1848-1912'
 4. Brisbane City Council Register of New Buildings, 1926, 1928
 5. *The Brisbane Courier* 1903, 1917, 1923, 1926-31
 6. DERM, Queensland Heritage Register Entry, Greystaines [602551] and Victoria Flats [601888]
 7. *The Queenslander* 1931
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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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