

Heritage Citation



Housing Commission Duplex

Key details

Addresses	At 58 Moncrief Road, Cannon Hill, Queensland 4170
Type of place	Duplex, House
Period	Postwar 1945-1960
Style	California Bungalow
Lot plan	L403_RP12883; L404_RP12883
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 November 2012 Date of Citation — August 2011
Construction	Walls: Face brick
People/associations	Queensland Housing Commission (Architect)

58 Montcrief Road is one of three brick duplexes built by the Queensland Housing Commission (QHC) in 1948 as a response to the severe post-war housing shortage. The majority of housing stock constructed by the QHC in the late 1940s and early 1950s were single unit dwellings. The design of the three duplexes in Cannon Hill represents an unusual divergence from this as the QHC experimented with housing design to combat the housing shortage in the immediate post-war period.

History

In the late nineteenth century the suburb of Cannon Hill was a rural outpost, with large farms and limited transportation into and out of the area. With the coming of the railway line to Cleveland in 1889, Cannon Hill became more accessible and suburban development escalated with increased land subdivision and sale. However, it was after 1913 that Cannon Hill's development intensified due to the construction of the Swift Company Meatworks beside the river. Many of the employees moved to Cannon Hill and as a result a small village community developed.

At the close of Second World War Australia experienced a major housing shortage. In Queensland the shortage reached its peak in 1947 with over 4218 families living in temporary accommodation including housing camps comprised of disused army barracks, calico and canvas tents, and even bark huts. The role of the newly established Queensland Housing Commission (est. 1945) was to provide affordable housing or rental homes for those Queenslanders without.

Post-war shortages in the supply of timber and roofing iron encouraged the use of alternative building materials. Bricks, fibro cement, terra-cotta and concrete were used. Initially brick was used before less traditional materials. It was not long however before bricks became scarce as increased demand outstripped even the increased output made possible by mechanisation and industry expansion.

While acceding to Commonwealth Government recommendations in many regards, the Queensland Housing Commission also developed a measure of independence in the matter of the styles of housing it provided. The Housing Minister (Mr Bruce) was reluctant to follow the New South Wales example of erecting blocks of flats, commenting early in 1946 that Queenslanders preferred individual houses on blocks of land where they could engage in gardening. Thus, while adopting the common standards laid down by the Commonwealth in relation to maximum floor standards, Queensland authorities resisted the pressure for uniformity and 'uttermost economy'.

In 1948 the Brisbane City Council approved the construction of a two unit dwelling at 58 Montcrief Road, Cannon Hill. The applicant, the Queensland Housing Commission, had purchased the land in 1947. The material to be used for the construction of the duplex was recorded as brick. The floors were recorded as hardwood. The area in which the duplex was constructed saw a large number of housing commission dwellings built. Situated close to the industries in the area that could provide adequate employment as well as beside the railway station, the majority of QHC dwellings constructed in this part of Cannon Hill in the late 1940s and early 1950s were single units with individual yards.

58 Montcrief Road was built as a two unit dwelling, an unusual design for the QHC in this period. In the same

year two other brick duplexes were constructed in the vicinity. The three duplex buildings that exist in Gatling and Montcrief Roads follow the same layout and all were constructed of masonry. It is probable that the duplexes were intended to be rented by single or childless couples who were employed in the nearby industries, not for families. Evidence of the unusualness of these duplexes can be found in the QHC's publications on house designs. The booklet from the late 1940s includes only single unit dwellings in both timber and brick construction. The absence of the duplex is significant as it suggests that it did not follow the standard QHC housing designs. In a time of governmental restrictions on new building sizes the duplex provides evidence of the QHC's attempts to construct multi-unit dwellings. It also demonstrates the QHC's wish to avoid construction of high rise intensive housing solutions that were being constructed in Melbourne and Sydney in the same period.

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 one of three brick duplexes constructed in Cannon Hill by the Queensland Housing Commission in 1948 to address the critical housing shortage in the post-war era.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as an exceptional example of multi-unit construction by the QHC in the immediate post-war housing crises it is uncommon.

References

1. Historic Titles, Department of Environment and Resource Management

2. Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Survey Map
3. Apperley, Richard and Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guild to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Sydney, 1989
4. University of Queensland, 'Queensland Places: Cannon Hill'
5. Cannon Hill School of Arts: 75th Anniversary 1923-1998, Cannon Hill Community Association, 1998
6. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
7. Hollander, Robyn, *Housing Under Labour: The Queensland Housing Commission, 1945-57*, Phd Thesis, Griffith University, 1996.
8. Queensland Government, Department of Housing, *Building Communities: Celebrating the Achievements of the Queensland Housing Commission 1945-2003*
9. Queensland Housing Commission, *Home Designs 1945-*, Brisbane: Government Printer, 1945

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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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