

Heritage Citation



Mairita

Key details

Addresses	At 203 Cavendish Road, Coorparoo, Queensland 4151
Type of place	House
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Bungalow
Lot plan	L1_RP42321; L17_RP13059
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — July 2010
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

People/associations Douglas Francis Woodcraft Roberts (Architect);
Queensland Building and Construction Company (Builder)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (H) Historical association

This house was designed in 1932 by prominent Brisbane architect Douglas Roberts and is a fine example of his domestic designs. Built for Mr and Mrs Henry Roberts, this residence makes a strong contribution to the Cavendish Road streetscape and demonstrates the residential growth of Coorparoo in the interwar period.

History

The initial settlement of the area now known as Coorparoo was relatively slow. Coorparoo land sales occurred from 1856, and development gradually occurred as purchasers, mainly farmers and land speculators, bought land at these early sales. By 1888, the locality had a population in excess of 2,000 people, residing in over 550 homes. The population growth in the area saw ribbon development along the main transport arteries of Logan Road and Old Cleveland Road, while there was pocket development in areas such as Stones Corner. Wealthier residents lived on the hill tops, especially along the Cavendish Road ridgeline.

From the mid-1870s the population of Brisbane increased markedly, with a corresponding rise in residential settlement. Brisbane's population had grown to 47,000 by 1881. It was during the 1880s that the greatest changes to the residential settlement patterns occurred. An expanding economy, expansion of infrastructure including extended tram and train services, improved communication systems, and an increase in immigration to Brisbane, had all assisted this change. By 1891 Brisbane's population had increased to over 100,000.

By the 1890s, the Stones Corner and Coorparoo area included a socio-economic mix that ranged from farmers to politicians. These included Frederick Brentnall M.L.C., James Stodart M.L.A. and Walter Henry Barnes M.L.A., business men such as Nathaniel Lade, James Hipwood and Reuben Nicklin and important public servants such as Edward Deshon C.M.G., Reginald Mulholland King, James Evan Burstall and T.W. Connah. Coorparoo, while not distant from the city, was a semi-rural area until the 1910s. But with the extension of the tramline to Stones Corner in 1915, the population began to increase rapidly.

Cavendish Road, with its plethora of hilltops, was one of the important Coorparoo roads. This road developed into an elite address for a small number of wealthy local residents. By the 1890s, there were six such families living along Cavendish Road between Old Cleveland and Chatsworth Roads and in 1914 this number had increased to ten. They built their large houses on acreage sites, employed domestic staff and had such amenities as kitchen gardens, orchards, fowl houses and tennis courts.

The interwar period heralded a period both of residential expansion and developmental consolidation in Brisbane. With the extension of tramlines, suburbs such as Greenslopes, Camp Hill and Coorparoo experienced major increases in residential development throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

The lot on which the house at 203 Cavendish Road was built was originally part of Brentnall's 23 acre estate in which he had purchased in 1884. After Brentnall's death in 1925, the land was subdivided and sold. This 26.6 perch lot was sold twice before Henry Roberts bought it in June 1928. By 1930 the Roberts family was residing

in a house on the property known as 'Dalesford'.

Henry Roberts and Alice Rebecca Rollinson had married in 1899 and produced three children: Fanny Rollinson, James Everard Christie and Alice Rita Mercer. The Roberts moved in well-to-do society, with their son's 1930 wedding featured in the Brisbane Courier.

In November 1932, Roberts had plans for a new tiled residence on Cavendish Road, constructed by the Queensland Building and Construction Company, approved. It was to cost £950 and was designed by Douglas F.W. Roberts who, despite sharing a surname, does not appear to be related to the owner.

Douglas Francis Woodcraft Roberts was a local architect, the son of a master builder of the same name. He had worked as a draftsman in his father's office from 1922-1929. Although registered as a Queensland architect in 1930, Roberts worked in Sydney and travelled overseas before becoming one of a group of young Interwar architects designing buildings in Brisbane in contemporary styles, such as Old English and the more modern Functionalist. This house is one of the earliest examples of his work. Other examples of his domestic work in Brisbane include Kent House in Oriel Road, Clayfield (1938), the Rhoades' home in Samford Road, Enoggera (1939), the MacMillan home in Bonney Avenue, Clayfield (1938) and the State Heritage listed Chateau Nous, Rupert Tce, Ascot, built in the Functionalist style in 1938. In poor health, Roberts transferred his business to Conrad and Gargett and died in 1941, aged 35.

A mortgage was registered over the property in February 1933, and it is likely that this funded the completion of the house. The house, named 'Mairita', was inherited by Alice Rita Roberts in 1963 following the death of her father Henry. She retained ownership until her death in 1980, when the house was sold.

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 the house was built in 1932/3 in a period of suburban growth in the Coorparoo area when the area was experiencing major residential expansion.

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 fine example of the domestic work of Brisbane architect Douglas Roberts.

References

1. *Historic Titles*, Department of Natural Resources and Water
 2. Queensland Post Office Directories
 3. *Metropolitan Water and Sewage Survey Maps*, 1949
 4. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
 5. Coorparoo, Stones Corner Centenary, 1856 – 1956, Printed by *The Courier Mail*, 1956
 6. *The Brisbane Courier*, 12 Aug 1930 p26
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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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