



Heritage Citation



Merkara

Key details

Addresses	At 11 Franklin Street, Highgate Hill, Queensland 4101
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Queen Anne
Lot plan	L43_RP11750
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — May 2006
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

'Merkara' is one of three identical two-storey homes constructed in Franklin Street in 1888 for the Honourable Hedley Strutt, Chief Clerk in the Office of the Civil Service. The houses were built as investment rental properties for respectable middle class tenants and together make a fine contribution to the streetscape.

History

Thomas Grenier obtained this land from the Crown in 1856 through a Deed of Grant and immediately began to subdivide it, selling the two roods and 16 perches comprising these three blocks to William Seagrave in 1876¹. The land had other subsequent owners, none of whom built upon it until the Honourable Hedley Strutt, Chief Clerk in the office of the civil service² acquired the land in 1888. He immediately had the three homes built and by the following year, had tenants occupying each one.

The first tenant of Merkara, which has been so named since it was built in 1888, was Captain A. Craven, a river pilot. A succession of tenants continued to live there but in 1892 the house was unoccupied, perhaps due to the financial hardship caused by the 1890s depression.

In 1897 Strutt sold Merkara, subdivision 43, to Leslie Shooter, a clerk with the Australian Mutual Provident Society. Shooter immediately moved into the house where he and his family remained until he died in July 1940. The property was then passed to his widow Harriet, who died ten years later in August 1950. Since then the residence has been transferred to a string of owners.

Description

Merkara should be regarded in the context of its neighbours 21 and 17 Franklin Street, as all three houses would have originally been virtually identical. Each has a two storey projection topped by a mansard roof on the left hand side facing the street, the lower level of which has a bay window with a curved roof. The longer section of the building parallel to the street also ends in a mansard roof but has a small gable dormer in the attic above the verandah. The end of this section at the upper level has a Juliet balcony with a curved awning supported on posts.

The verandah features a small gable roof beside the projecting rooms and over the entry. A row of steps leads directly up to this. The remaining verandah roof is curved and supported on paired verandah posts. Timber brackets appear under the barge boards at the end of each mansard roof. Merkara has been the best maintained of the three houses, and is mostly original apart from its colour scheme. All its timber lacework and bracketing seems intact and the broad arch under the entry gable remains.

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 it reflects the residential boom of the 1880s and the perceived desirability of South Brisbane for middle class tenants in the late nineteenth century.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as one of a group of three houses built in the 1880s as investment rental properties for middle class tenants.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

for its attractive design and aesthetic contribution to the streetscape especially when considered in conjunction with its identical neighbours at 17 and 21 Franklin Street.

References

1. Titles Office Records
2. Post Office Directories.

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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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