

Heritage Citation



Moortangi

Key details

Addresses	At 56 Crombie Street, Clayfield, Queensland 4011
Type of place	Villa
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Mediterranean
Lot plan	L1_RP153911
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — March 2005
Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Masonry - Render
People/associations	Atkinson, Powell and Conrad (Architect)

This prestigious villa was built in 1928 for Colonel John Edward Christoe and his wife Phoebe. The villa was designed by influential Brisbane architects Atkinson, Powell and Conrad and is a good example of Interwar Mediterranean style domestic architecture. This house is also a good example of the upper middle class architect-designed houses that were built in Clayfield during the interwar period, which contributed to the desirability and prestige of the area.

History

This stucco and tile residence was built for Colonel John Edward Christoe and his wife, Phoebe, in 1928. It was designed by Brisbane architects Atkinson, Powell and Conrad in the Mediterranean style.

Professor Leslie Wilkinson, the first Chair of Architecture at Sydney University in 1918 is generally credited with introducing the Mediterranean style to Australia. He noted the similarities in topography and climate between Sydney and the Mediterranean and developed a style that had elements of both Spanish and Georgian architecture and some classical detailing.

The Mediterranean style was less common in Brisbane, but like Spanish Mission residences, can be found in the prestigious suburbs of Clayfield and Ascot. Distinguishing features of the style, which was usually designed for affluent clients, include informal and asymmetrical massing, light coloured stucco or colour washed brickwork, arcaded loggias and medium to low pitched tiled roofs. Another good example in the area is a residence in Kent Street, Ascot, designed by Mervyn Rylance in 1938.

Moortangi is situated on land which was once part of the grounds of nearby *Beaufort Hill*, a large mansion constructed in 1902 for William Villiers Brown. Remnants of the original masonry fence and gateposts of *Beaufort Hill* are now part of the subject site. Immediately to the north of the original gates which are now used as the entrance to *Moortangi*, the remnants of the brick wall continue along the boundary of the adjacent lot (currently lot 2 on RP153911). These brick pillars, two of which are now being used as gateposts, are included in the listing curtilage.

Beaufort Hill was sold to bachelor Edward Hawkins in 1915. The grounds were subdivided in 1928 and Phoebe Lois Christoe purchased over 40 perches of *Beaufort Hill's* land facing Crombie Street. The Christoes later added to their holding by purchasing neighbouring lots in 1933 and 1937.

In the Interwar years, many of the large estates of earlier grand residences in Clayfield continued to be subdivided as the demand grew for more housing in this sought after area. Many of the houses in Clayfield during this era were built for Brisbane's wealthy professional and merchant classes who could afford to engage architects to design homes in the latest styles, such as Old English and Spanish Mission.

In 1928, the Christoes engaged the architectural firm of Atkinson, Powell and Conrad to design their new home in Crombie Street. The tender of builder, W.C. Kynaston was accepted and the house built for the substantial sum of £3700.

As a group and individually, Atkinson, Powell and Conrad were influential Brisbane architects who were noted for

their use of the closely related Mediterranean and Spanish Mission styles. Henry Wallace Atkinson established his practice in 1890. He formed a partnership with A. H. Conrad from 1918 to 1927, taking on Lange Powell as an additional partner from 1927 to 1931, the period during which *Moortangi* was built. Atkinson, Powell and Conrad also designed Tristams Factory at West End in a similar style in 1930. Before joining the partnership, Conrad designed Craigston Apartments on Wickham Terrace in 1926 in the Spanish Mission style.

In 1938, *Moortangi* was sold back to Edward Hawkins. At the same time, Phoebe Christoe purchased a block of over 70 perches immediately to the north of *Moortangi*, facing Crombie Street. A few years after the death of Edward Hawkins in 1963, both *Moortangi* and the adjacent block to the north were purchased by the present owners.

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

for the evidence it provides of the pattern of development in Clayfield during the interwar years when new subdivisions became available and were taken up by Brisbane's professional and merchant classes.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as one of the few examples of an Interwar Mediterranean style residence in Brisbane.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a good example of a Mediterranean style villa built in the 1920s.

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 house designed by influential Brisbane architects Atkinson, Powell and Conrad.

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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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