



## Heritage Citation



**Repton**

## Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 600 Lower Bowen Terrace, New Farm, Queensland 4005; At 600A Lower Bowen Terrace, New Farm, Queensland 4005
<b>Type of place</b>	Flat building
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Art Deco
<b>Lot plan</b>	Common property_SP237366; L1_SP237366; L2_SP237366; L3_SP237366; L4_SP237366; L5_SP237366; L6_SP237366; L7_SP237366; L1_RP58985
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 29 November 2019 Date of Citation — December 2017
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (D) Representative;

This building is one of a pair of masonry flats constructed in 1935 for Albert George Silvester, whose occupation was given in contemporary sources as “company director”. At this time, purpose built, “modern” flats were becoming a popular new form of accommodation in New Farm and other inner city suburbs.

‘Repton’ is a three storey, face brick and stucco building with an additional lower storey at the rear. It has a tiled roof and a brick and stucco front fence. ‘Repton’ features symmetrical, multipaned casement windows, Art Deco decorative plaster ceilings and extensive timber joinery including the central staircase, window seats, plate rails and doors.

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## History

‘Repton’ is a three storey, masonry and stucco block of flats in Lower Bowen Terrace, New Farm. It is one of a pair of flat buildings constructed by Albert George Silvester, a company director and former photographer.

‘Repton’ and its neighbour, Osmaston, were built at a time when purpose built flats were becoming a common and fashionable feature of New Farm. Contributing factors to this wave of a new type of development included a growth in Brisbane’s population, a housing shortage which increased demand for accommodation and changing attitudes to different types of housing. The conversion of large houses into flats had already emerged in Brisbane and other Australian cities during the 1910s, amid concerns about morality, the rise of slums and the suitability of flat living for families. However, there was growing recognition that flats of high quality could provide an answer to Brisbane’s need for increased accommodation, particular for “bachelors” and single, working women. For those with the necessary skills and finances, the construction of purpose built flats could be a lucrative

investment.

New Farm was divided by the Crown into large portions of land and sold during the early days of free settlement in the 1840s. Much of the land was purchased by investors and those wealthy residents with the means to establish fine homes on large estates. From the 1880s, another wave of development saw these estates gradually carved up for housing developments – usually “villas” on generous allotments. A third wave of residential development occurred in New Farm during the interwar years as further subdivisions occurred and fashionable, high quality homes and blocks of flats were built.

The area of New Farm to the south of the major thoroughfare of Brunswick Street was a prestigious locality (formerly home to ‘Merthyr’, the estate of successful politician, Sir Charles Griffiths) with tree lined streets and elegant houses. In 1907, Gustave Gottlieb Muller acquired seven allotments (measuring over 120 perches) between Brunswick Street and Lower Bowen Terrace. Three of these were later transferred to Albert George Silvester in November 1934. No evidence has been found to date of any buildings on the site at this time. The land is shown as vacant in a 1925 Brisbane City Council plan although most of Lower Bowen Terrace was occupied by substantial houses with generous grounds.

Silvester, a former photographer, subdivided the property in half in May 1935 and constructed two masonry blocks of flats – ‘Repton’ at 600 Lower Bowen Terrace and ‘Osmaston’ at 598 Lower Bowen Terrace. Electoral rolls indicate that Silvester was living in ‘Repton’ by 1936. He retained ownership of ‘Repton’ until 1943 when the title was transferred to Charles Freeleagus. While the two buildings are of similar scale and type and share a common front boundary wall of rendered and face brick, they differ in their use of materials, details and number of storeys and flats. Both buildings have exterior staircases at the rear.

It is likely that a building of this quality was architect designed. No conclusive evidence has been found of an architect for ‘Repton’, however a tender notice for Brisbane architect, C.E. Plant for two flat buildings at New Farm in 1935 suggest Silvester may have commissioned Plant to design both ‘Repton’ and ‘Osmaston’.

Both ‘Repton’ and the neighbouring ‘Osmaston’ were similar to many of the fashionable, purpose built flats being built in New Farm and other inner city suburbs such as West End and Ascot/Clayfield during the interwar period. These buildings were usually masonry, (or a combination of masonry, timber and fibrous cement) single blocks of six to eight flats on two or three stories. They were often architect designed in the latest styles such as Spanish Mission, Art Deco, and Mediterranean and featured ornate interiors with leadlight windows, decorative plaster ceilings and extensive timber joinery such as plate rails, doors and window seats. The latest flats also usually featured modern conveniences such as incinerators, built in kitchens and bathrooms, garbage chutes, garages, telephones and hot water systems.

‘Repton’ changed hands several times in the decades following World War II and has more recently been strata titled.

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## Description

‘Repton’ is a three storey block of Art Deco style flats located in Lower Bowen Terrace, a leafy, residential street in New Farm. The street is a mixture of substantial timber houses from the Federation and Interwar eras, Interwar flats and more recent homes and units. The building faces south-east and adjoins the New Farm Bowling Club green at the rear.

This restrained Art Deco building is of brick masonry construction, with a symmetrical front façade. It features a central red face brick portion flanked on either side by stepped, stuccoed sections. The face brick walls have horizontal, stucco banding which continues around the building. 'Repton' has a hipped tiled roof with wide eaves and exposed purlin detailing. A small, hipped roof extends over the central entrance way.

A brick pathway leads through the stucco and brick front fence to the multi-paned, timber entrance doors. A cantilevered awning, with corbel supports, shelters the entrance. The building is clearly identified with "REPTON" in bold relief lettering to the entrance awning. This central portion of the front façade has double, multi-paned, leadlight casement windows. The flanking, stucco sections have banks of similar windows. All windows have face brick window sills.

The site slopes downwards from the street allowing a fourth storey at ground level at the rear. The rear of the building has an external fire escape staircase with small central landing for each flat. The landing on the top floor has been enclosed. A circular vertical pipe on the rear wall is likely to be the building's garbage chute. The upper two floors at the rear are face brick with a horizontal stucco band and the lower two storeys are stuccoed. There is also a brick chimney at the rear of the building in the northern corner. The rear wall of the building has timber framed, multi-paned sliding windows.

The interior of the flats has not been inspected, however, available photographs reveal typical features of Interwar flats of this type, including timber floors, built in timber window seats and picture rails in the front bedroom, plate rails in some rooms, decorative plaster ceilings with an Art Deco geometric motif and extensive timber joinery. The foyer has a terrazzo floor and inbuilt timber mail niches.

A large, covered carport occupies much of the rear of the site. This is not considered to be of cultural significance.

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a flat building built in 1935 which provide evidence of the intensive period of flat construction in New Farm and other inner city suburbs of Brisbane during the 1930s.

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## Representative

### CRITERION D

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

as a high quality and intact interwar masonry, purpose built block of flats. It features characteristics including (but not limited to) a central entry and staircase, tiled roof, leadlight casement windows, rear external stairs, extensive interior timber joinery and geometric patterned plaster ceilings.

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due to its elegant, symmetrical design, attractive use of contrasting materials and interiors which feature fine timber joinery and Art Deco plaster ceilings. The building makes an important contribution to the historic streetscapes of New Farm.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
2. Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Certificates of Title
3. Queensland Post Office Directories
4. Digitised newspapers and other records. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
5. Bennett, Helen, *Interpreting the Modern: flatland in Brisbane 1920-1941*, PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2011
6. EHP. Queensland Heritage Register. Entry for Julius Street Flats, 601895. Retrieved 11 Dec 2017

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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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