

Heritage Citation



Second Church of Christ, Scientist Church, Sunday School & Reading Room

Key details

Addresses	At 21 Vine Street, Clayfield, Queensland 4011
Type of place	Church
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Functionalist
Lot plan	L67_RP53025
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Citation — October 2010

Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Face brick
People/associations	Baxter and Hargeaves (Builder); Lucas and Cummings (Architect)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (F) Technical; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

Designed by notable architects Lucas and Cummings in the modern functionalist style, the Second Church of Christ Scientist was opened in 1938. At that time Clayfield was experiencing rapid growth and development as professional and merchant classes made their homes there. The Second Church of Christ Scientist demonstrates the growth of this new religion in early twentieth century Brisbane.

History

The Church of Christ, Scientist was founded in America in April 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy to reintroduce spiritualism and healing into religious practices. In Australia, Christian Science became one of the largest new religions in the early twentieth century with membership growing from 217 in 1901 to 8,878 in 1933. Students of Christian Science began meeting in Brisbane in 1899 and formed the First Church of Christ Scientist in 1901. By 1917 it had purchased land in North Quay for a purpose-built church.

To meet the needs of the large number of followers in the Clayfield, Eagle Junction, and surrounding districts, the Second Church of Christ Scientist was formed and held its first service in the local School of Arts in March 1935. In July 1936 the church purchased 1 rood 24.8 perches of land on which this building was constructed.

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 time 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.

Similarly, the church engaged avant garde architects Bruce Lucas and Robert Percy Cummings who designed a modern church to fit the triangular block. Instead of an orthodox rectangular plan the building had an almost square auditorium with two splayed corners. The seating for 270 people was arranged to optimise viewing and hearing positions for testimony meetings, with great attention paid to the use of acoustic materials. Natural lighting was distributed from a concealed skylight while the exterior of the building was of two inch brick, laid with great skill and relieved by horizontal terrazzo courses.

The Second Church of Christ Scientist, erected at a cost of £4300 was opened, before the First purpose-built Church of Christ Scientist (also designed by Lucas & Cummings) on 3 July 1938. In 1949 a Sunday School was added and then extended in 1956. The church was extended in 1965.

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 development and population increase in Clayfield during the interwar years when new subdivisions were sold and taken up by Brisbane's professional and merchant classes who engaged architects to design homes in the latest styles.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as an interwar functionalist public building by F.B. Lucas and R.P. Cummings.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as an avant garde functionalist design with simple geometric shapes and an emphasis on the horizontal showing the influence of the European Modern Movement.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as an interwar functionalist building with simple geometric shapes and strong horizontal elements demonstrating

high quality workmanship and attention to detail.

Technical

CRITERION F

The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period

as an excellent example of an avant garde interwar functionalist building by F.B. Lucas and R.P. Cummings, it contrasts with the eclectic styles that were generally more popular.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as it was the first church purpose-built for the expanding congregation of Christian Scientists in Brisbane in the first half of the twentieth century.

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 rare public building with high quality workmanship designed by notable Modern architects, F.B. Lucas and R.P. Cummings.

References

1. 'Christian Science Church at Clayfield is pioneer of its kind', *The Telegraph* 1 July 1938
2. 'New Church at Clayfield. Christian Scientists.' *A & B Journal of Queensland*, July 1938
3. Australian Heritage Commission *Second Church of Christ Scientist*, Clayfield QLD. Register of National Estate Database 017460. <http://www.ahc.gov.au/cgi-bin/register/site.pl?017460> accessed 11/12/2002
4. F. Gardiner *Significant Twentieth Century Architecture*, RAlA study
5. Lawrence-Drew, Margaret. *Lucas and Cummings Architects*. Unpub Thesis 1986. Bachelor of

Copyright Brisbane City Council

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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised June 2022)



Dedicated to a better Brisbane