

Heritage Citation



St Arvans

Key details

Addresses	At 3 Moggill Road, Toowong, Queensland 4066
Type of place	House, Villa
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Regency
Lot plan	L1_RP19822
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — June 2000
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Masonry

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic

This unusual house executed in the Victorian Regency style was constructed circa 1890 for customs clerk William Courtney and his wife Julia. William had worked with the Colonial Treasurer's Department since 1884 but resigned around the time the house was built. During the 1860s and 1870s, it was common for wealthy residents of Toowong to erect villa style houses on large estates to reflect their status and high standard of living. 'St. Arvans' appears to be a late nineteenth century continuation of that theme. Although Julia Courtney remained in the house after it was built, William appears to have moved away shortly after its construction. Julia sold the house in 1894 and it has since had a number of owners.

History

Julia Courtenay, wife of William Edward Courtenay, purchased this particular allotment from Ann Drew, widow of Richard Langler Drew (who has been described as the father of Toowong), in March 1889. The property was one rood in size and was part of a larger holding which was over 29 acres in size owned by Ann Drew.

The Post Office Directories (PODs) provide an indication of the construction period of the house. The house was erected by c.1891. Prior to this date the Courtenay's appear to have resided at Roberts Street, Toowong. In 1890 the PODs state that a house along Moggill Road Toowong (before Union Street), was in the 'course of erection'. The following year the POD lists a 'Court(e)n(a)ey, Mrs, St Arvans' in the same position as the 'house in course of erection' notation of the previous year.

Of the house Fewings in his memoirs of Toowong, (1890s) stated:

The prettiest dwellings on the slopes of this ridge are Dr Hammon's, Mr Henry Pears', Highfields, [?], Mrs Court(e)ne(a)y's, Miss Larks' Kensington House School...¹

Clearly Fewings gave recognition to the house's visual contribution to the area as it was part of an impressive group of residences located on the ridge.

Reputedly during the 1860s and 1870s some of the prominent members of Brisbane society resided at Toowong. There developed what has been termed, 'the villa concept', where, 'estates were sufficiently large to accommodate the accoutrements of gracious living'.² This house appears to be a late c19th extension of that theme.

Courtney commenced as a clerk with Customs (Colonial Treasurer's Dept) in 1884 on a wage of ?150/-/- p.a. By the time the house was starting to be erected his salary had increased to ?200/-/- p.a. The salary range for clerks at this time within this Department was ?50/-/- to ?250/-/-, thus this would place Courtenay in a senior position but not in the high earning capacity (around ?300 to ?400/-/- p.a) of a public servant).

A number of sources indicate that William Courtenay only lived in the house for a short period, and that his wife took charge of the property. Courtenay resigned from the Queensland State Public Service position in June 1890, about or just soon after the house was completed. Further, Fewings talks of the house as being Mrs

Courtney's and not as would be the custom of the day 'the residence of Mr Courtenay, Customs Official (or clerk).' This is underlined by the POD entry from 1891. (There is no death registered at this time for a William Edward Courtenay).

At this stage it appears shortly after the construction of the house the Mr Courtenay moved away or retired. Certainly by the size, type and construction material used, (brick and masonry) the house could be considered larger or beyond the means of a 'customs clerk'. At the time of construction no mortgage on the property was taken out (however a mortgage was later taken out in 1893 for £350/-/- so it is possible the family had independent wealth.

The house was erected at a time of recession within Brisbane, when the 'building boom', which included speculative land sales, of the 1880s yielded to the recession in the 1890s. This recession extended from the late 1880s and lasted through to the mid 1890s. It deeply affected the economy of Brisbane and Queensland. To have such a substantial dwelling of brick (a comparatively expensive material for the period) erected during this period (that is still existent) is uncommon and reflects the resources of the owners who had it commissioned.

Julia Courtenay owned the property until October 1894 and then transferred it into the name of Benjamin Britton Smith. The property remained in the Smith family until 1909 when it was sold to Alan Foot. The Foots owned the property until 1927. The house has since had a number of owners.

Description

This building is a two-storey residence consisting of a painted brick core with a pyramidal corrugated iron roof and a single-storey hipped veranda to one side, The main roof overhangs and window hoods are supported by brackets off the walls, and original gateposts mark the entry. The front veranda features a central pediment, timber posts and brackets, and cast balustrading, and may be a recent reconstruction.

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 an 1890s residence that emulated the villa theme that was prominent in the 1860s and 1870s among Toowong's elite residents.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a rare example of a 19th century villa built in the Victorian Regency style.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance for its simplicity of form, symmetry and classically restrained detailing.

References

1. J.B. Fewings. *Arcadian Simplicity: J.B. Fewings Memoirs of Toowong*. Ed Helen Gregory. (Brisbane: Library Board of Qld. 1990). p.119
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29
3. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
4. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
5. Environmental Protection Agency
6. Fewings. *J.B. Arcadian Simplicity: J.B. Fewings Memoirs of Toowong*. Ed Helen Gregory. (Brisbane: Library Board of Qld. 1990)
7. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press, 1973
8. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
9. *Queensland Votes & Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly 1885, 1887, 1889, 1890*. (Blue Books)
10. Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the Nineteenth Century*, South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994

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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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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