



Heritage Citation



The Moorings

Key details

Addresses At 26 Rogers Street, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000

Type of place House

Period Victorian 1860-1890

Style Italianate

Lot plan L28_RP228238

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018
Date of Citation — November 2014

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

'The Moorings' is a two-storey, timber house situated at the southern end of Rogers Street, just below the ridge of Leichhardt Street. It was built circa 1870 by Allen Ravenscroft Wettenhall, an accountant in the civil service and the son of a Cornish naval officer. It later became the family home of Henry Imrie, an accountant with the Bank of Australasia. The house illustrates the pattern of development in Spring Hill in the mid-nineteenth century which saw wealthy residents build grand homes along the ridges while the mercantile and artisan classes settled on the slopes in more modest dwellings.

History

This two-storey, timber house was built circa 1870 for Allen Ravenscroft Wettenhall, a civil servant. It is located on 15 perches of land in Rogers Street, the same allotment that was subdivided for residential development in the 1860s.

In the 1860s, Spring Hill was developing as the first suburb of the growing township of Brisbane. As historian, Ronald Lawson, notes Brisbane's population in 1861 of around 6 000 was concentrated in the city area and surrounding hills. By 1871, the population had reached 18,000 and the hollows of Spring Hill were filling with workers' dwellings. In the mid-nineteenth century, residential lots in Spring Hill were as small as four perches enabling as many cottages as possible to be built in a small area of land. As a result, community fears of the development of slums led to the 1885 Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act which set a minimum lot size of 16 perches.

'The Moorings' is situated at the upper end of Rogers Street, just below the elevated ridge of Leichhardt Street and St Paul's Presbyterian Church. The occupations of those living in Rogers Street in the nineteenth century reflected the pattern of socio-economic stratification that was a particular feature of Brisbane's early suburbs. Those with the means to own the highest land with cooling breezes and expansive views built residences along the ridges, while the middle classes of shopkeepers, clerks and artisans lived on the slopes. Unskilled workers such as labourers occupied the lowest, flood prone areas of the valleys or "hollows", often in rented accommodation.

Allen Ravenscroft Wettenhall, the son of a British naval officer, immigrated as a child to Tasmania in 1835. He moved to Brisbane where he was appointed to the civil service as an accountant in 1861 and purchased the allotment in Rogers Street in 1865. Records indicate that Wettenhall constructed a dwelling on the site and rented it to tenants, including Robert Cox, a stonemason, and Samuel McIntyre, a labourer. By the early 1870s, there were six houses on this side of Rogers Street between Leichhardt Street and the junction with Victoria Street. The occupants of these houses included a clerk, a miner, a drayman and a grocer.

In 1886, the property (then numbered 7 Rogers Street) was transferred to Henry Martin Imrie, a newly married accountant who moved from Tasmania in the 1860s after marrying Allen Wettenhall's wife, Marie Frances Wettenhall. Postal records suggest that Henry Imrie's father, John Jennings Imrie, a postmaster, lived in the Wettenhall's Rogers Street house in the late 1870s.

Henry Martin Imrie resided at 'The Moorings' with his wife and two daughters until he died at home in 1890. His widow, Marie, continued to live in Rogers Street, becoming a well known resident of Brisbane. A 1915 Brisbane City Council surveyor's plan of the site reveals that at that time, 'Moorings' was a two-storey structure with an "L" shaped verandah along the front and northern elevations. A flight of external steps led onto the rear of the side verandah. The front of the house featured a generous bay window onto the east facing verandah. Behind the house were two adjoining rooms while an outside toilet, shed and 'fowl house' were situated along the rear boundary.

Mrs Imrie died in 1927 at the age of 97, at 'The Moorings', which by then was in the ownership of her daughter, Mrs Ida Ellis. Mrs Imrie's obituary in the *Queenslander* of 2 June 1927 reported that "despite her advanced age, Mrs Imrie, practically up to the day of her death, took a keen interest in the general affairs of the State and was an authority on events in the early days." Mrs Imrie was born in Cornwall in 1830 and emigrated with to Tasmania with her family in 1835 before moving to Brisbane in the early 1860s. 'The Moorings' remained in the Imrie family until 1940. It was described by the *Queenslander* in 1927 as "a place where sympathy and assistance were given in the old pioneer spirit".

The house has been extended since 1995, including the addition of an ensuite and extension to the western verandah, additions to the rear of the house, a pool and a garage on the western boundary in 2006.

Description

The Moorings is a two-storey, timber framed residence with hipped roof clad with corrugated metal sheeting. An L-shaped verandah wraps the front and side and has decorative features. The house retains original hexagonal bay window at the front and other original timber framed sash windows. The house retains its original masonry chimney and pressed metal window hoods.

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 a substantial, two-storey 1870s house which demonstrates the residential pattern in Spring Hill.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an example of an 1870s two-storey timber house in Spring Hill.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as a highly attractive, two-storey timber house which is an integral part of the nineteenth-century streetscape of Rogers Street.

References

1. *Queensland Electoral Rolls* and other records. <http://www.findmypast.com.au/>
2. Brisbane City Council Aerial Photographs
3. Brisbane City Council Detail Plan, no. 146
4. *BCA Surveyor's Field Book*. 18 Sept 1913
5. Queensland Certificates of Title
6. Queensland Post Office Directories
7. Digitised newspapers and other records. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
8. *Commonwealth Electoral Rolls, Births, Marriages and Deaths*, and other records. <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>
9. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press, 1973

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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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