

Heritage Citation



Wai-ita

Key details

Also known as	Ac-Land
Addresses	At 1 Sutherland Avenue, Hamilton, Queensland 4007
Type of place	House, Work residence
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Arts and Crafts
Lot plan	L47_RP33675; L48_RP33675; L49_RP33675; L50_RP33675
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — January 2005
Construction	Roof: Tile; Walls: Face brick

People/associations	Colonel C.B. Evans (Occupant); Thomas W. McCawley (Occupant)
----------------------------	---

Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association
------------------------------	---

Wai-ita was built in Hamilton circa 1910 at a time when the suburb was changing from an area of grand estates to one of fine suburban homes on large parcels of land. A fine example of a substantial Federation style brick residence, Wai-ita has been home to influential and significant figures in Queensland's history such as Colonel Charles Evans, Commissioner for Railways, Chief Justice Thomas McCawley, and numerous State Managers of the National Bank of Australia. This attractive residence continues to make a fine contribution to the streetscape.

History

Like many houses at Hamilton built during the early decades of the 20th century, *Wai-ita* was constructed on land subdivided from a much larger nineteenth century estate. It is situated on land that was part of just over 17 acres acquired by pastoralist James Sutherland in 1855.

In the nineteenth century Hamilton was a ward of the Toombul Divisional Board, before being made a separate local authority in 1890 and proclaimed a town from 1904. From the time of the economic boom in Brisbane in the 1880s Hamilton continued to be an area favoured by wealthy settlers. Large estates began to be subdivided and Hamilton was described as the "show suburb" which would allay new arrivals' disappointment with Brisbane after the uninspiring journey up the first part of the river.

In 1906 Hamilton was pronounced by the Brisbane Courier to be "one of the richest and most picturesque" places in Brisbane with the "mansions and villas of many of Brisbane's commercial men crown(ing) every green knoll". Unlike some estates divided in the 1880s, this part of Sutherland's land wasn't subdivided until 1907. The blocks sold slowly, with most being 40-120 perches in area, although over 3 acres was transferred to Sutherland's daughter, Ruth Appel in October 1910. Windermere, an 1880s mansion in Sutherland Avenue was the home of Ruth and John Appel.

Elizabeth Dawson Muir, wife of Matthew Muir, purchased subdivisions 47 to 50 & 66 totalling 2 roods and 27.2 perches in December 1909. That month, a mortgage for £2000 was taken out. This is likely to have financed the construction of the Muir's new home on the site. Matthew Muir had married Elizabeth Dawson McWhirter in September 1905. During 1908 they arrived in Hamilton receiving mail in nearby Beatrice Terrace during 1908-9 and then being registered for the 1909 election in Riverview Terrace. During this time they may have been renting but from 1910 postal records indicate they were living on this site on the corner of Sutherland Avenue and Windermere Road.

At this time Brisbane and its suburbs was undergoing a period of unsurpassed building activity and prosperity. The Building journal reported an upsurge in new residences with much improved architecture, being “modern, ornamental and picturesque”. Hamilton was well established as an elite residential suburb. Matthew Muir was evidently a successful merchant who had marital connection to the McWhirter family who had an expanding department store in Fortitude Valley. In the

immediate vicinity of Wai-ita are a number of outstanding homes. Windermere, in Sutherland Avenue, was the home of the Honourable J B Appel MLA who was a member of the Hamilton Council 1890-1908, being twice chairman and twice mayor before entering State Parliament as an MLA from 1909-1915. Nearby is Bayuda, built in the 1880s for Charles Lilley, a lawyer and son of Queensland Premier Charles Lilley. Ruhamah in Killara Avenue was built circa 1901 for Thomas Morrow whose biscuit firm became Arnott’s.

Matthew and Elizabeth Muir sold their house in 1917 and it became home to a succession of prominent men. Barnard Charles Evans bought the house from the Muirs. Colonel C P Evans CMG, the Commissioner of Railways, lived in the house which he called “Ac-land” until about 1920. Colonel Charles Evans was Railways Commissioner from 1911 until 1918. Evans, as Commissioner, oversaw the introduction of the policy of decentralisation of administration for Queensland Railways from 1914, as well as being the Commissioner who led Queensland Railways into one of its more intense periods of construction and technical development in the period 1911-1920. In his term as Commissioner, Evans’ policies saw new rolling stock being designed and constructed for use on the railways, including high passenger capacity carriages on suburban trains, which were named after him. Larger locomotives were also introduced to haul increased loads on the network. Evans was also a supporter of the concept of a standard gauge to be used throughout Australia, and was an advocate of an efficient and modern railway network not only in Queensland, but throughout Australia.

The Honourable Thomas William McCawley was the next owner. In 1920 McCawley had just been confirmed as a judge of the Supreme Court in Queensland after a protracted legal battle that ended when the Privy Council in England overturned the Australian Courts’ decisions to uphold objections lodged by the legal profession against his appointment. Thomas McCawley was a Crown Solicitor who was appointed President of the newly formed Court of Industrial Arbitration in Queensland in 1917 before being appointed to the Supreme Court in the same year. The Privy Court judgement is argued to have “delivered unrestricted political power to the Queensland Parliament” in an era that is renowned for the radical legislation introduced by reformist Labor Governments. In 1922 McCawley was appointed Chief Justice by the government of Edward Theodore (“Red Ted”). McCawley died suddenly in April 1925 and the house was sold that year to David William Gaukrodger.

David W Gaukrodger is recorded on the title as a grazier. In 1924-5 he was the manager of Alice Downs Station, Blackall. He sold subdivision 66, the allotment in Sutherland Avenue, in 1929 to Daphne Ross Gallagher, wife of Ernest Gallagher. After the death of David Gaukrodger his widow Marguerite lived there for a time and then the house was occupied by Thomas Cleveland from 1936. Daphne Gallagher bought the property in 1945.

Wa-ita was sold early in 1948 to the National Bank of Australia. From that time, until its sale in 1990, it was the home of the Queensland State Managers of the National Bank.

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 it demonstrates the historical pattern of the construction of fine, architect-designed homes in the Hamilton/Ascot area during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a fine example of a substantial federation era brick residence.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

for its urbane, reserved detailing and proportioning.

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 the former home of Colonel C B Evans, CMG, Commissioner for Railways, the Honourable Thomas W McCawley, Chief Justice, and State Managers of the National Australia Bank for 50 years

References

1. Australian Heritage Commission. Register of the National Estate. Place Report for *Killara*, Database No. 017453. 21 Sept 2001
2. *Building*, 12 October 1911; Sydney: Building Proprietary
3. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
4. Brisbane City Council Aerial Photos, 1946, 2000
5. Brisbane City Council Water Supply & Sewerage Detail Plans
6. Brisbane City Council Heritage Trail. Hamilton
7. Commonwealth Electoral Rolls, 1909 & 1912 Division Oxley, Subdivision Toombul
8. Department of Natural Resources, Certificates of Title
9. Environmental Protection Agency. *Entry in the Queensland Heritage Register 600048 Windermere*
10. JOL Estate Map - *Hamilton Estate*
11. Gardiner, Fiona, *Register of significant twentieth century architecture* (Australian Heritage Commission, 1988)
12. Information on Co. Charles Evans from Greg Hallam, Heritage Projects Officer, Queensland Rail, Jan 2005
13. McKellar's Map. 3 Hamilton 1895
14. O'Dwyer LLB, T M *Amici Curiae* – The Role of the Lawyers in the McCawley Case, MA Dissertation, Griffith University, 1994
15. Queensland Digital Library. Aerial view of Ascot, Brisbane, ca. 1925. State Library of Queensland
16. *Queensland Federation Index 1890 – 1914*
17. *Queensland Government Gazette*. Jan-Jun 1878
18. *Queensland Post Office Directories*. 1908-1939

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