

Heritage Citation



Key details

Addresses	At 37 Edmondstone Street, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101
Type of place	House
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Mediterranean
Lot plan	L2_RP1440
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 November 2012 Date of Citation — January 2009
Construction	Roof: Terracotta tile; Walls: Masonry - Render
People/associations	George Kosma Freeleagus (Occupant)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

This interwar residence is an important reflection of the Greek influence in the South Brisbane/West End area in this period. Designed by its owner George Kosma Freeleagus and built by G. J. Hoare the house is an amalgamation of two interwar housing styles, the Queensland vernacular and the Mediterranean style and contributes to the historic streetscape of Edmondstone Street. The residence assists in demonstrating the pattern of development that this part of Brisbane underwent in this period due to an increase in Greek immigration to Brisbane.

History

The Greek community has played an important role in the history of Brisbane since the early twentieth century. The first Greek immigrant to be naturalised in Queensland was Christopher Arsenios in 1869, but it was not until the early nineteen-hundreds that a small wave of Greek immigrants made Brisbane their home. By 1915 there were fifty Greek immigrants living in Brisbane, and a total of 400 in Queensland. It was in this period that the Greek community in Brisbane formed the first "Greek Association of Queensland"; their headquarters were in Adelaide Street where the members ran a coffee shop in which they could meet and have discussions. With the commencement of the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 that involved Greece many sought refuge from the unrest in places such as North America and Australia. This was to be a pattern that occurred at various times in the twentieth century. The interwar era saw another wave of Greek immigration to Queensland due to the outbreak of war between Greece and Turkey in 1921.

George Kosma Freeleagus immigrated to Brisbane from Cerigo in Greece. In 1911 he applied for Australian naturalization which he was granted on the proviso that the "applicant is a person of good character and is not a coloured man", a strange sentiment to us now in our multi-cultural society but a reflection of the White Australia Policy that dominated Australian immigration laws in this period.

Prior to George Freeleagus' immigration to Australia several of his family had already arrived and established themselves in Brisbane society. The Freeleagus family were a very influential and important part of Brisbane's early Greek community. The first two Freeleagus brothers to settle in Brisbane were Christy Kosmas and Peter who arrived in Australia in 1901 from the Greek island of Kythera. Initially the two brothers established a restaurant in Brisbane, then began another, the 'Paris Café' on the corner of George and Queen Street and later established the 'Astoria Café', one of Brisbane's most successful eateries in this period.

With the success of his two brothers in Brisbane George Kosma Freeleagus decided to leave his family home in Kythera. He travelled to Brisbane with his other seven brothers and began his life in Brisbane working as a shop assistant in his brother's store in George Street. The business was a fresh produce store named the Fresh Food and Ice Company. In 1913, a year after the first store was in business another inner-city store was opened in Edward Street. This store had "marble-fitted windows that are kept cool by a constant stream of water down the glass... the walls and floors are tiled, the counters are of marble, and whole arrangements lend themselves to perfect cleanliness." (The Brisbane Courier, Thursday 17 July 1913, p4) Over the next decade the business was successful and in 1927 the business became a Limited Company. On Tuesday 6 December 1927 The Brisbane Courier reported, "Messrs Freeleagus Brothers, who have been established in Brisbane for some years, have formed a limited company under the name of Fresh Food and Ice Limited... The company is a private concern comprising only the brothers as follows: Peter Freeleagus, Anthony Freeleagus, James Freeleagus, George Freeleagus, Charles Freeleagus. All brothers are directors of the company." (The Brisbane Courier, Tuesday 6 December 1927, p14) The company continued to thrive and became one of Queensland's largest wholesale and retail chains. It was important to the Greek community as it provided hundreds of newly arrived Greek immigrants with employment.

As well as creating an impressive line of businesses the Freeleagus family played an integral role in establishing Greek cultural and social centres in Brisbane in this period including the first Greek Orthodox Church, St. George's, in Charlotte Street. Christy Kosmas Freeleagus, George's brother, was appointed consul-general for Greece in Queensland, the first to be appointed of that rank by any country to Queensland.

Due to the success of the business, by 1924 George Kosma and his brother Charles Kosma Freeleagus were able to purchase twenty-seven perches in South Brisbane to build a residence. Prior to the construction of 'Zapeion' in 1937 an earlier house had been built on the land. However, this residence burnt down in January 1936. In November 1936 the Registry of New Buildings recorded a new building approval for George Freeleagus of South Brisbane. The builder was G. J. Hoare. George Freeleagus was first listed at the Edmondstone Street address in 1937.

The design of 'Zapeion' was unusual in that it blended both the traditional 'Queenslander' and the fashionable Mediterranean style making a striking contribution to the Edmondstone Street streetscape. The residence was named "Zapeion", after the Athenian civic building designed by Danish architect Theophil Hansen in 1874. Situated in the National Gardens of Athens between the Palace Gardens and the ancient Temple of Zeus the imposing building has impressive columns and extensive colonnades and was officially opened in 1888. In naming his residence 'Zapeion', Freeleagus celebrated his Greek ancestry with the South Brisbane community.

The merging of two popular interwar housing styles, the traditional 'Queenslander' and the Mediterranean, is reflective of the cultural merge of the Greek community into the local area. The majority of the house was built in the Queensland vernacular with timber weatherboards. The imposing stucco façade, arched loggia over the front verandah and barley twist columns was designed to reflect the popular Mediterranean design in the interwar period.

37 Edmondstone Street, South Brisbane, plays a contributing role in the Greek influenced part of South Brisbane that also includes St. George's Greek Orthodox Church on the corner of Edmondstone and Besant Streets, the Greek Club on Edmondstone Street, The Hellenic Club in Besant St and the Greek Orthodox Youth Association House in Browning Street. 'Zapeion' is a striking reminder of the important contribution made to Brisbane by the Greek community.

Description

'Zapeion' is an interwar residence which merges a typical Queensland interwar design with a Mediterranean style facade. The house is high-set on stumps with a timber frame, clad with timber weatherboards and contains timber casement windows with window hoods. The steeply pitched terracotta roof is concealed behind the parapet of the stuccoed front façade. The elaborate facade features the name "Zapeion" and a series of arches atop barley-twist columns which form the front verandah. The arches are reflected on the lower level, forming a colonnade under the front of the house. A stuccoed front wall topped with wrought iron fencing is situated on the front boundary to the street. The building makes a vivid contribution to the streetscape and is reflective of the Greek influence in the area.

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 interwar residence named and designed to reflect Greek culture and built in an area of Brisbane that was popular with Greek immigrants in the early twentieth century; as an interwar residence that displays both traditional Queensland vernacular and Mediterranean style architecture that represents the amalgamation of Queensland and Greek cultures.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as an example of Mediterranean architecture that incorporates traditional character housing elements, 'Zapeion' holds a landmark position on a hill that includes the Greek Orthodox Church and Hellenic House.

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 residence owned and built by George Kosma Freeleagus, one of the Freeleagus brothers, who contributed greatly to the early Greek community in Brisbane; as a substantial home built in interwar Brisbane by an early Greek immigrant, with its style and name indicative of the owner's homeland, it is a reflection of the success and influence of the Greek community in South Brisbane/ West End and Brisbane.

References

1. Cultural Heritage Citation, "Saint Theodores Greek Orthodox Church", CHIMS, Department of Environment and Resource Management
2. Historic Titles, Department of Environment and Resource Management
3. Queensland Post Office Directories

4. Queensland Electoral Rolls
5. Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Survey Map
6. *Greek Orthodox Community of St. George*, www.gocstgeorge.com.au
7. *Application for Certificate of Naturalisation, 1911, George Kosmas Freeleagus*, National Archives
8. Brisbane City Council, *Registry of New Buildings*, 1936
9. *Brisbane Centenary Official Historical Souvenir*, "City of South Brisbane", Local Authorities of Queensland, 1924, p. 139-154
10. Lawson, Ronald *Brisbane in the 1890s: A Study of an Australian Urban Society*. St Lucia U of Q Press, 1973
11. Freeleagus, Christy Kosmas (1889-1957), Australian Dictionary of Biography
12. *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 30 June 1928, p25
13. *The Courier Mail*, Saturday 25 April 1936, p11
14. *The Brisbane Courier*, Tuesday 6 December 1927, p14
15. *The Brisbane Courier*, Thursday 17 July 1913, p4
16. *The Courier Mail*, Thursday 28 September 1939, p13
17. *The Courier Mail*, Tuesday 25 February 1937, p19
18. *The Courier Mail*, Thursday 28 March 1935, p17
19. *The Brisbane Courier*, Monday 20 July 1931, p9

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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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