

## PROPOSED LOCAL HERITAGE PLACE

12 Medina Street, Moorooka (LOT PLAN: 23\_RP54363)



### SUMMARY

Built for an accountant on the Coniston Park Estate in Moorooka, 12 Medina Street is an excellent example of an interwar Functionalist house built in the early post-Second World War period. The house has distinctive features, such as its generally unornamented surfaces and asymmetry in its horizontal and vertical elements. This Functionalist house's aesthetic value is supported by its garden setting and views to the surrounding suburbs and the northern and western mountain ranges on Brisbane's outskirts.

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## HISTORY

### The early development of Moorooka

Moorooka, located around seven kilometres from central Brisbane, has been described as a post-Second World War suburb.<sup>1</sup> Early settlement of Moorooka began in the 1860s when the land was sold off and used for agricultural purposes. The arrival of the railways in the 1880s saw the development of residential estates in Moorooka, such as the Moorooka Railway Station Estate. However, such land speculation overestimated the desire to live in the suburbs and commute into central Brisbane. In 1911, the population of Moorooka stood at just 350 residents.

Moorooka continued to grow between the First and Second World Wars and slowly developed from a rural area into a residential suburb. The population of Moorooka, including Salisbury and Rocklea, rose to 8,364 residents by 1947 due to the increased suburbanisation of Brisbane. Suburbanisation in Brisbane was driven by factors such as economic issues, infrastructure developments, population increase, and the role of government. For example, between the First and Second World Wars, developments in Moorooka's transport infrastructure included replacing horse-drawn transport with the trains, trams and eventually the motor car.

Moorooka's transport infrastructure changes encouraged further residential developments in the area as these modes of transport provided better links to central Brisbane. During the 1930s, the local population in Moorooka actively sought the extension of the Ipswich Road tram system down the Beaudesert Road. *The Courier-Mail* recorded in 1934 that it was 'considered that the extension of the tramline was imperative for the progress of [Moorooka].'<sup>2</sup> This local activism clearly illustrated the link between transport infrastructure developments and Brisbane's continued suburbanisation during the period.<sup>3</sup> The tram line's extension into Moorooka proper opened in May 1937 and cost £18,000 to construct.<sup>4</sup>

### The emergence of the Coniston Park Estate

As the population of Moorooka increased between the First and Second World Wars, so did the need for housing. Residential developments that appeared in Moorooka during the interwar years included, for example, the Clifton Hill War Service Homes Estate that the War Service Homes Commission purchased in 1919. While 12 Medina Street was built after the Second World War, the Coniston Park Estate in Moorooka Heights on which it was located, was one such interwar residential development.

The subdivision on which 12 Medina Street resides can be traced back to John Robertson of Sydney's land purchase in 1864. This land, described as Portion 198 in the parish of Yeerongpilly, measured 20 acres and two roods. The land was purchased for £90 and 4 shillings and was subsequently transferred to a William Begg and Albert Harding French in 1886. In 1891, the land was split between French, Begg, and a John Ford. French took ownership of subdivision four of portion 198, which measured 14 acres, 31 perches and six-tenths of a perch.

<sup>1</sup> 'Moorooka,' *Queensland Places* (Centre for the Government of Queensland, University of Queensland, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> 'Ipswich Road Tram: Extension Sought,' *The Courier Mail*, 16 July 1934, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ipswich Road Tram: Extension Sought,' *The Courier Mail*, 16 July 1934, p. 9; 'Ipswich Road Tram: Extension Sought,' *The Telegraph*, 17 July 1934, p. 13; 'Ipswich Road Tram Extension: Transport Proposals,' *The Courier Mail*, 8 July 1936, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> 'Opening on May 8: Ipswich Road-Moorooka Tram Extension,' *The Telegraph*, 30 April 1937, p. 7; 'Cost £18,000: Moorooka Tram Extension,' *Truth*, 9 May 1937, p. 12; 'Tram Service to Moorooka: Extension Now in Operation,' *The Courier Mail*, 10 May 1937, p. 22.

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In late 1891, French transferred the whole of his land to a George Bwinnel and Francis James Paterson, then subsequently transferred to a William Fielding in late 1892. By 1898, Fielding's land was known as resubdivision one of subdivision four of portion 198. At this point, the land measured 12 acres, one rood, 35 perches and three-tenth of a perch. It remained this size until 1930 when two acres, 22 perches and one-tenth of a perch became known as subdivisions one to 18 of resubdivision one of subdivision four of portion 198. At this time, the land was owned by a Margaret Kelly.

In 1937, Kelly's transferred all her land to Frank Reimoro. From 1937 onwards, allotments from Reimoro's land began to be sold off as part of the Coniston Park Estate.<sup>5</sup> This residential development was representative of the continuing growth of Moorooka as a residential suburb in the 1930s. When the first phase of the Coniston Park Estate was advertised for sale in 1937 by noted real estate firm, F.G. Pearce, it consisted of 92 plots, including the site that became 12 Medina Street. At this time, Medina Street was known initially as Margaret Street. Initial estate maps for the Coniston Park Estate stressed features such as the 'extensive views' from the Estate that are still in evidence today. These views, essential amenities, and infrastructure, such as the Estate's proximity to the local tram service and being in the vicinity of Moorooka State School, were used to advertise the desirability of the Coniston Park Estate to potential buyers.<sup>6</sup> Moorooka State School, located on the corner of Beaudesert Road and Sherley Street, opened in 1929.

However, it took time for allotments on the Coniston Park Estate to be sold. By 1941, adverts for land on the Coniston Park Estate recorded that there was still '[s]ome choice blocks for sale from £50 each.'<sup>7</sup> At this time, Ernest Curley Boyland, an accountant, purchased subdivision seven and resubdivision one of subdivision eight of resubdivision one of subdivision four of portion 198. After the Second World War, significant further developments in Moorooka included the emergence of the Moorvale shopping area on the Beaudesert Road in the 1950s.

### The house at 12 Medina Street

When Boyland, who married Ms Emily Jones in 1942, purchased his subdivision, it measured 30 perches and three-tenth of a perch.<sup>8</sup> This was some ten perches larger than the original plots being sold off as part of the Coniston Park Estate when it was initially advertised in the late-1930s. Although Boyland purchased the land in 1941, no site development took place until he lodged a building application with Brisbane City Council for a new building and garage in August 1948. The house was constructed by the building company of Brandenburg and Maddock. C.J. Brandenburg and Russell Maddock owned this company. Brandenburg had been rugby league player and referee in his youth.<sup>9</sup> Maddock, a noted jockey, was described as a 'trail blazer for Australian jockeys in the United Kingdom and France' when he died in 2014.<sup>10</sup>

12 Medina Street, initially known as 48 Medina Street, was built to an interwar Functionalist style with the house being constructed c. 1951.<sup>11</sup> As a subset of the global Modernist movement that initially emerged in Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Functionalist architecture started to appear in

<sup>5</sup> 'Advertising,' *The Courier-Mail*, 26 June 1937, p 24.

<sup>6</sup> SLQ, Allan, J. Stanley., and F.G. Pearce Ltd. *Coniston Park Estate, Moorooka Heights F.G. Pearce Ltd., Auctioneers; J. Stanley Allan, Surveyor*. Brisbane, Qld.: H.T. James [lithographers]], 1937; 'Advertising,' *The Courier-Mail*, 26 June 1937, p 24.

<sup>7</sup> 'Advertising,' *Sunday Mail*, 23 February 1941, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> 'Uniforms at Weddings,' *The Courier Mail*, 18 April 1942, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> 'Misses £1,000 on Coin Toss,' *Sunday Mail*, 6 March 1949, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> '[Champion Queensland jockey Russell Maddock dies, aged 96.](#)' *ABC News*, 9 June 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Apperly, Robert Irving, and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (Sydney, NSW: Angus and Roberston, 1989), pp. 184-7.



Brisbane in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> As with other aspects of the Modernist movement, Functionalism represented a break from traditional vernacular architecture. It was influenced by modern architects, such as Le Corbusier, Eric Mendelssohn, and Willem Dudok.<sup>13</sup> However, 'Australians [had been] slow to accept the [...] movement [...] towards unadorned and honestly functional architecture' between the First and Second World Wars.<sup>14</sup>

In particular, the Functionalism had 'limited impact on [Brisbane's] suburban housing stock' between the First and Second World Wars.<sup>15</sup> A 1937 article in *The Courier-Mail* describing *Chateau Nous* noted that:

From time to time, doubt has been expressed by architectural authorities in Brisbane whether an architectural expression of Continental Europe could successfully be transferred to a Brisbane suburb. Admittedly the problem is one that requires careful study.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, Functionalist residences such as *Chateau Nous* have been described as 'ultra modern' for Brisbane. The house at 12 Medina Street incorporates several design cues seen on *Chateau Nous*, such as the curved projection at the house's front. This feature is also present on properties such *Wilbar* in Woolloongabba.

In the early years after the Second World War, interwar Functionalism continued to be used despite the gradual move towards what is broadly defined as mid-Century Modernism. One reason for continuing to accept 'no-nonsense functionalism' related to the availability and cost of traditional building materials is because of the restrictions placed on resources, such as timber during the Second World War that was not lifted until the early 1950s.<sup>17</sup> Thus, plain, and unornamented Functionalist designs, such as 12 Medina Street, though rare, were prominent in some streetscapes. Moreover, Functionalism allowed architects and builders to 'distil the house to its very essence.'<sup>18</sup> However, by the mid-1950s, 'tenets of functionalism' was being reassessed in Australia.<sup>19</sup>

Since the construction of 12 Medina Street, several sympathetic additions have been made to the property. Brandenburg and Maddock were responsible for subsequent additions to the house in 1953. In 1970, a carport was recorded as being added, while in 1972, a pool was added to the rear of the site. These two additions were made after the Boyland's sold 12 Medina Street in 1964.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Home and Building,' *The Courier-Mail*, 16 June 1936, p. 5; 'A Real Example of Modernism,' *The Courier-Mail*, 7 June 1938, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Apperly et al, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, p. 187.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Cuffley, *Australian House of the Twenties and Thirties* (Knoxfield, VIC: The Five Mile Press, 1993 [1989]), p. 132.

<sup>15</sup> Helen Bennett, 'The Queensland House in the Interwar Period: The Brisbane Suburban Context,' Interwar House and Suburb Seminar, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), 27 March 1998, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> 'A Real Example of Modernism,' *The Courier-Mail*, 7 June 1938, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the Forties and Fifties* (Knoxfield, VIC: The Five Mile Press, 1993), p. 73.

<sup>18</sup> Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the Forties and Fifties*, p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> Harry Margalit, 'Modernism Sundered: Intellectual Currents in Architecture in 1950s Sydney,' *Architectural Theory Review* 8, no. 2 (2003), p. 116.



## DESCRIPTION

12 Medina Street is an excellent example of a two-storey interwar Functionalist house built in the early post-Second World War period. The house has a strong composition of architectural elements and garden setting.

### General description

The house is primarily of masonry construction. It has a fragmented design where front and rear spaces step up to a taller, more prominent core. Skillion roofs and guttering are hidden behind parapets. It is faced with textured cement render and painted timber battening. The house has plain, largely unornamented surfaces and asymmetry in its use of horizontal and vertical elements.

Verticality is primarily expressed by the increased height of the core relative to the curved Medina Street projection, its tall narrow windows bays on the north elevation of the first floor and south elevation of the ground floor, and the projected chimney-like extrusion. Verticality is also highlighted by wide mullions expressed against continuous arrays of deeply recessed casement windows on the ground and the first floor of the curved projection.

Whilst primarily defined by the parapet's thin lines, horizontality is most strongly expressed using sleek and continuous window and door hoods, casement window arrays, and thin sills of painted brickwork. More subtle horizontal and material expressions include the application of linear timber battening to the core's first floor only and brick detailing atop the chimney-like extrusion that is now covered by flashing.

The design employs two material hierarchies that demonstrate the significance of the house's architectural elements. First, the curved projection's plain cement render is contrasted against the horizontal timber battening of the taller core behind. This contrast provides visual legibility to the place's composition from the street. Second, the plain and unembellished material treatment to the core's ground floor is juxtaposed against the first floor's horizontal timber battening. This gives the perception of a relatively heavy base or foundation and draws the eye upwards.

Surrounded by more traditional residential typologies, the house is placed atop a hill with panoramic views of Moorooka, surrounding suburbs, the mountain ranges beyond and the city skyline. It is unobscured from the street frontage, has no fencing to the street, and has a starkly contrasted presence within the streetscape.

The most prominent hardscape features are two brick terraced garden bed edges, comprising a single soldier course atop running bond bases.

Two planter boxes flank the pathway leading to the front door.

The house is afforded panoramic views over Moorooka, Brisbane's northern, western, and south mountain ranges the city skyline.

### Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance include:

- Original built form and composition, including:
  - Original, stepped form of the house
  - Complex roof form, including parapets.

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- Composition of horizontal elements, including :
  - Roof parapets
  - Cantilevered hoods above windows and doors
  - Continuous arrays of casement windows
  - Stepped brick detail atop chimney-like extrusion.
- Composition of vertical elements, including :
  - Height of the core, relative to the curved Medina Street projection and rear spaces
  - Tall, narrow window bays on the north and south elevations of the first floor
  - Projected chimney-like extrusion
  - Mullions between casement windows.
- Materiality, including:
  - Plain concrete render applied to the curved projection and ground floor of the core of building.
  - External timber battening.
  - Unfinished brick sills
- Setting and landscaping, including:
  - Terraced brick garden bed edges
  - Planter boxes
  - Set-back from the street frontage
  - Lack of fencing along street frontage
- Views, including:
  - Framed views out over Moorooka
  - Panoramic views, including:
    - Northern, western, and southern mountain ranges
    - Brisbane City's skyline

## CURTILAGE

The curtilage captures all significant or original elements of the place as described and consists of Lot 23 RP45363.



Source: Brisbane City Plan Online Mapping

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## STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<p><b>Criterion A</b> <b>Historical</b></p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Criterion B</b> <b>Rarity</b></p> <p>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage.</p>	<p>12 Medina Street is a rare example of a highly intact interwar Functionalist house in the early post-Second World War period that incorporates a purposeful composition of building forms, design elements, and planned landscape setting.</p>
<p><b>Criterion C</b> <b>Scientific</b></p> <p>The place has the potential to provide information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Criterion D</b> <b>Representative</b></p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places.</p>	<p>12 Medina Street is an excellent example of a highly-intact interwar Functionalist house built in the Second World War period that incorporates a purposeful composition of building forms, design elements, and planned landscape setting.</p>
<p><b>Criterion E</b> <b>Aesthetic</b></p> <p>The place is important because of its aesthetic significance</p>	<p>12 Medina Street is an excellent example of an interwar Functionalist house built in the early post-Second World War period that comprises a distinctive built form and planned garden setting. Composed of horizontal and vertical elements, the building consists of a prominent projecting curved front and asymmetrically positioned contrasting square form building core. The house is highly intact and retains significant design features, including a vertically prominent masonry chimney-like extrusion and horizontally arrayed window bays across the extent of the curved façade. Tall, curved window bays project from the side elevations of the square building core. High parapets</p>

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	<p>conceal skillion roofs, and horizontal timber cladding to the building core contrasts with the plain textured render on the curved projection. Design details include prominent, contrasting painted brick sills that wrap the curved projection. The garden layout and elements respond directly to the form and materials used to construct the house. The house and its garden, including brick-edged garden terracing, and brick-edged and rendered planter boxes beside the entry path to the house make a strong visual contribution to the surrounding streetscape.</p>
<p><b>Criterion F Technical</b></p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Criterion G Social</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Criterion H Historical Association</b></p> <p>The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the city's or local area's history</p>	<p>N/A</p>

## REFERENCES

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