

PROPOSED LOCAL HERITAGE PLACE

Dalton Residence (former), 305 Fig Tree Pocket Road, Fig Tree Pocket (LOT PLAN: 1_RP136453)



SUMMARY

Designed by John Dalton in 1959 at a time when he moved into private practice, the former Dalton Residence was constructed as his family home. Designed by one of Brisbane's most significant residential architects of the mid-to-late 20th Century, the former Dalton Residence is a seminal example of a mid-Century Modernist domestic residence that responds to Brisbane's climate. The house is widely acknowledged as influential due to innovations such as setting the house on raised timber floors over an excavated subfloor to aid circulation. In conjunction with the floor, other elements of the house's design, such as the orientation of the building and the ventilated clerestory, were all designed to encourage the circulation of cool air around the property.

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HISTORY

A history of Fig Tree Pocket

Bounded by the Brisbane River and Cubberla Creek, Fig Tree Pocket is a riverside suburb located around nine kilometres southwest of central Brisbane. In particular, the suburb is named after one particularly large example of the Moreton Bay fig tree (*Ficus macrophylla*) that grows in the area. This tree was so large that it could shelter a herd of cattle. A reserve of 1.6 hectares was created around the fig tree, which eventually died. The reserve is now used for recreational purposes.

Fig Tree Pocket is approximately 14 kilometres from central Brisbane by road. This meant that until after the Second World War, the area was rural in character and sparsely populated. In earlier days of European settlement, the area was dense with vine forests which yielded black beans and wild figs and provided a home for many birds and animals. The logs in the Fig Tree Pocket area were removed by timber getters who used the Brisbane River to transport them downstream to the sawmills. By the 1860s, Fig Tree Pocket was opened to farming when, in 1862, the Surveyor-General of Queensland instructed that the area be surveyed for farms of between 15 and 30 acres. Bananas, grapes, corn, potatoes, maize, and arrowroot were grown in the area. Sugar cane was tried but proved unsuccessful due to heavy frost in 1870.

During this period, the primary means of transportation was on the Brisbane River, though trips to the Farmers Wharf at Ann Street took six hours. Nevertheless, during the 1860s, Fig Tree Pocket Road developed. It followed a route roughly analogous to that it does today from the Moggill Road at Chapel Hill to the tip of the pocket. However, the community had expanded by this time, and a public school was opened in 1871.¹ Nonetheless, by 1911, the population of Fig Tree Pocket was only 121 residents.

The most significant development in Fig Tree Pocket before the Second World War was the opening of the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary in 1927. Conservationist Claude Reid and his family opened Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. They were pioneers in raising awareness and developing new understandings about koala habitats. The sanctuary is dedicated to preserving Australian wildlife and has continued growing and developing as a centre of education, breeding, and animal conservation. Lone Pine remains the first and largest sanctuary in the world and has been a favourite tourist destination for children and adults for much of the 20th Century.

Until the 1920s, public transport largely bypassed Fig Tree Pocket. Most people reached central Brisbane by crossing the river to Sherwood and catching public transport. However, in 1930, Brisbane City Council granted permission to Christian Ferdinand Berndt to operate a twice-daily service to central Brisbane.² In the 1930s, Hayles Cruises established regular ferry services to Lone Pine Sanctuary and the Mandalay Tea Gardens owned by the company.

From the 1940s onwards, Fig Tree Pocket became the location for transmitters linked to Brisbane's growing network of radio stations. Radio Station 4BC was first to build a transmitter in the area.³ Unfortunately, this transmitter was damaged in a fire in 1950, though it continued to operate.⁴ Then, in 1952, 4BK built a transmitter on Old River Road that was claimed to reach half of the population of Queensland.⁵

¹ 'Fig Tree Pocket School,' *The Queenslander*, 10 September 1931, p. 8.

² 'City Council,' *The Brisbane Courier*, 25 February 1930, p. 13.

³ '4BC: New Wireless Station,' *The Brisbane Courier*, 18 August 1930, p. 12.

⁴ '£300 Fire at Radio Station,' *Brisbane Telegraph*, 11 July 1950, p. 16; 'Radio station fire,' *The Courier-Mail*, 12 July 1950, p. 9; 'Set new standards,' *Brisbane Telegraph*, 18 August 1954, p. 27.

⁵ 'Station covers half of State,' *Sunday Mail*, 31 August 1952, p. 15.

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The growth of Fig Tree Pocket was limited until the 1950s when significant subdivisions occurred, and the population increased. Between 1954 and 1981, the population of Fig Tree Pocket grew from 242 residents to 1,928. Better roads and greater vehicle ownership made access to the suburb easier and encouraged development. In due course, the suburb became a highly desirable one. The most significant transportation development in the area was the opening of the Centenary Bridge in 1964. The Bridge connected Jindalee to Kenmore and ran along Fig Tree Pocket's western boundary. Unfortunately, the Centenary Bridge was damaged in the 1974 floods and had to be rebuilt after a vessel became wedged under the bridge. Indeed, the 1974 floods retarded residential development in the suburb until the opening of the Wivenhoe Dam in 1984 reduced the risk of flooding. In 1989, the Brisbane Montessori School opened in Fig Tree Pocket.

From the vernacular Queenslander to mid-century Modernism

While now widely recognised as 'valued character housing' and an inherent part of Queensland's cultural identity, the traditional vernacular Queenslander style bungalow originally emerged in the late-19th Century and evolved during the early 20th Century to take account of changing requirements.⁶ A range of styles of Queenslanders emerged during this period though they all shared 'common characteristics' such as being high-set, 'lightly framed' houses typically of timber construction.⁷ Other common characteristics included 'tin' roofs and verandahs. Several of these common characteristics emerged in response to Queensland's environmental context. For example, the high-set character of many Queenslanders was a response to the State's climate and the need to 'fever-proof' houses and placed them 'beyond the reach of disease-inducing miasmas.'⁸

After the Second World War, however, with improvements in construction materials and changing tastes and styles, the traditional Queenslander became increasingly unpopular as a form of housing. As well as changes in tastes and styles, Queenslanders were also criticised for being unsuitable due to their physical and mental effect on their occupiers. For example, an unpublished 1943 'Report on Tropical Housing' by the Queensland Government influenced a widely read article by Professor Douglas H.K. Lee, the Chair of Physiology at The University of Queensland, on the 'Physiological Principles for Tropical Housing with Especial Reference to Queensland.'⁹ In particular, Lee, who had worked on the 1943 report, argued in his 1944 article that fatigue was a significant issue of concern.¹⁰ Lee's article drew on research by Sir Raphael Cilento, who, in 1925, had argued that climate was a significant concern for those living in tropical and sub-tropical climates.¹¹ As Queensland Government's Director-General of Health, Cilento also worked on the 1943 report.

Noted Austrian born architect Karl Langer, who moved to Brisbane in 1939, made similar arguments in his seminal 1944 University of Queensland report, *Subtropical Housing*, drawing on Lee and Cilento's ideas.¹² Langer's report marked an essential step towards the popularisation of mid-Century Modernism in Queensland, even though he made little attempt to discuss the aesthetic

⁶ Stuart King, 'Queenslanders' in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 579; Judy Rechner, *Brisbane House Styles, 1880 to 1940: A Guide to the Affordable House* (Kelvin Grove, QLD: Brisbane History Group, 1998), p. 4

⁷ Rechner, *Brisbane House Styles, 1880 to 1940*, p. 2.

⁸ Stuart King, 'Queenslanders' in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 579.

⁹ Deborah van der Plaats, Andrew Wilson and Elizabeth Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing: Framing Climate, Culture and Civilisation in Post-War Queensland' in John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaats, Janina Gosseye, and Andrew Wilson (eds.), *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture, 1945-1975* (London: Artifice Books, 2015), pp. 77-8.

¹⁰ Plaats, Wilson and Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing,' p. 80.

¹¹ Plaats, Wilson and Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing,' pp. 80-1.

¹² Karl Langer, 'Sub-tropical Housing,' *Papers of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Queensland* 1, no. 7 (1944), pp. 2-12; Plaats, Wilson and Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing,' p. 81.

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elements of architectural design in his report.¹³ Indeed, Langer's report focused on pragmatic issues such as materials, climate, and other forces that he believed should shape the design of houses.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Langer's designs, which influenced a generation of Queensland architects, rejected the traditional Queenslanders' 'reliance on the veranda' and likened that house style to a cave.¹⁵ Instead, Langer advocated a climate-based response to design based on the 'employment of the modern architectural idiom,' especially the increased use of glass, new construction techniques, and open plan living based on scientifically derived methods.¹⁶

Modernism, which arrived late in Australia and Brisbane in particular, emerged as a response to the 'historic or conventional stylistics detail' of earlier design movements.¹⁷ While Modernism covered social, cultural, and artistic endeavours, architecturally, the movement saw an attempt to respond to the challenges of the 20th Century scientifically. Designs sought to encourage 'free movement' at the expense of 'formality and symmetry.'¹⁸ The emergence of Modernism in Australia was influenced by several factors; travel, professional networks, and emigration to Australia.¹⁹ For example, in the years between the First and Second World War, Australian architects travelled to overseas and were exposed to new architectural ideas, such as Modernism.²⁰ Also, as illustrated by the example of Langer in Queensland, numerous European architects emigrated to Australia between the 1930s and 1950s.²¹ These architects had a notable influence on the local architecture scene.

In Queensland, as evidenced by the works of Langer and other notable architects, such as the practice of Hayes and Scott and Brisbane City Council's Architect, James Birrell, Modernism sought to adapt designs to suit the local climate.²² Notably, Hayes and Scott prolifically designed domestic architecture during this period. Hayes and Scott's residential designs of the period have been described as espousing 'Modernist ideas about housing and domesticity' and working within the post-Second World War context of 'scarcity and austerity.'²³ The latter were crucial issues for Modernist architects, as they sought to introduce a new idiom to Queensland architecture at a time of shortages in materials for housing construction. Problems with material shortages improved as the 1950s moved into the 1960s. At the same time, Brisbane saw the construction of more expressive examples of Modernist residential architecture tempered to its subtropical climate as architects sought to search for an 'architecture with an identifiable Queensland flavour.'²⁴ As well as Langer, Birrell, Hayes and Scott, other notable architects associated with Modernism in Queensland would come to include John Dalton, Maurice Hurst, Stephen Trotter, and Robin Gibson.

While International and mid-Century Modernist designs in Australia, such as Langer's, were an attempt to respond scientifically to Queensland's subtropical climate, by the mid-to-late-1960s, some architects became critical of their formality, uniformity, and impersonality and began to experiment with other styles. These architects sought to develop architectural styles that expressed 'regional' influences. New schools of theory and design emerged in response, including, for

¹³ Langer, 'Sub-tropical Housing,' p. 12.

¹⁴ Langer, 'Sub-tropical Housing,' pp. 2-12.

¹⁵ Laat, Wilson and Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing,' p. 82, 85-8; Elizabeth Musgrave, "'Hot" and "Cool": Perceptions of Subtropical Modernism in Post-war Queensland,' *Fabrications* 27, no. 2 (2017), p. 209.

¹⁶ Laat, Wilson and Musgrave, 'Twentieth Century (Sub) Tropical Housing,' p. 82.

¹⁷ Philip Goad, 'Modernism' in Goad and Willis (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p. 464.

¹⁸ Goad, 'Modernism,' p. 464.

¹⁹ Goad, 'Modernism,' p. 464-7.

²⁰ Goad, 'Modernism,' p. 465.

²¹ Goad, 'Modernism,' p. 466.

²² Robert Irving (compiler), *The History and Design of the Australian House* (Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 149.

²³ Joanna Besley, 'Hayes and Scott and the Modest House' in Andrew Wilson (ed.), *Hayes and Scott: Post-War Houses* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2005), p. 76.

²⁴ Tracey Avery, Peta Dennis and Paula Whitman (eds.), *Cool: The 60s Brisbane House* (Brisbane, QLD: School of Design and Built Environment, QUT, 2004), p. 41.

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example, the 'Sydney School,' an informal collective of Sydney based architects who were influenced by the qualities of the building site, preferring sloping, rocky, well-treed sites with distant views of natural features.²⁵

John Dalton and the design of the Dalton Residence (former)

Born in 1927 in Yorkshire in the United Kingdom, Dalton emigrated to Australia in 1950 after finishing his national service in the Royal Air Force.²⁶ After arriving in Melbourne, Dalton moved to Brisbane. Dalton was initially employed as an architectural draughtsperson by Brisbane City Council. While working for Council, he met Sheila Harvey, whom he married in 1951. In 1956, Dalton graduated with a Diploma in Architecture from The University of Queensland.²⁷ At this time, the diploma consisted of an initial three years of full-time study at the Brisbane Central Technical College before completing their studies part-time at The University of Queensland.²⁸ While undertaking his studies, Dalton gained further professional experience working for several architects, including the practices of Hayle and Scott, and Theo Thynne and Associates. Both practices were regarded as the most 'progressive' two practices in Brisbane.²⁹ Dalton considered working at Hayes and Scott as particularly influential on his professional development.³⁰ As well as exposing Dalton to the professional world of architecture, he developed his professional network as he worked alongside other emerging architects. Finally, Dalton designed his first residence in Indooroopilly while undertaking his studies.

In 1957, after Peter Heathwood's 'Exhibition House' won the competition held by the Queensland Plywood Board, Dalton and Heathwood entered a short but successful partnership. The 'Exhibition House' has been described as being a 'marriage of 'white-box' domestic modernism and tropical openness' and, with improvement, formed the basis of many of their subsequent designs.³¹ Dalton and Heathwood were also noted for 'bringing back [...] modern custom built houses [with] the poetic and soft quality of the best early Australian architecture.'³² The partnership ended in 1959, and Dalton and Heathwood established their own successful private architectural practices. It was at this time that Dalton began designing his second residence. In August 1959, Dalton purchased resubdivision nine of subdivision one of portion 206 in Fig Tree Pocket on which to build the house. The land measured two acres, two roods and 14 and five-tenths of a perch (10,471m²). While elements of earlier designs, such as the Speare Residence designed by Heathwood, can be seen in the final design of the former Dalton Residence, the new house has been described as being 'etched into history' as a seminal example of 'climatically responsive modern Queensland architecture.'³³

While acknowledging the influence of Modernists, such as Sydney Ancher and Arne Jacobsen, as with many of Dalton's designs, the primary consideration in designing the former Dalton Residence

²⁵ Philip Goad and Julie Willis, 'Marking Place: An Outline History of Australian Architecture' in Goad and Willis (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; Jacqueline Urford, 'The Sydney School' in Goad and Willis (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, pp. 674-6.

²⁶ Peta Dennis, 'Dalton, John' in Goad and Willis, *The Australian Encyclopedia of Architecture*, p. 189.

²⁷ 'Four Houses by Dalton and Heathwood, Architects,' *Architecture and Arts* (1959), p. 58.

²⁸ Ian Sinnamon and Michael Keniger, *Ideas into Practice: Queensland University's Department of Architecture, 1937-1987* (St Lucia, QLD: Department of Architecture, University of Queensland, 1987), p. 7.

²⁹ Avery, Dennis and Whitman (eds.), *Cool*, p. 14.

³⁰ Avery, Dennis and Whitman (eds.), *Cool*, p. 14.

³¹ Judith O'Callaghan and Charles Pickett, *Designer Suburbs: Architects and Affordable Homes in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2012), p. 57.

³² 'The Emergence of a Tradition,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 7, no. 75 (1960), p. 29.

³³ 'Four Houses by Dalton and Heathwood, Architects,' p. 61; John Dalton, 'Houses in the Hot Humid Zones,' *Architecture in Australia* 51, no. 1 (1963), p. 75; Elizabeth Musgrave, 'Art and Environment: John Dalton and a Pursuit of a Modern Architecture for Queensland' (PhD Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2019), p. 47.

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was how the house responded effectively to Queensland's subtropical climate.³⁴ In this respect, Dalton's work reflected a need to link elements of regional idioms to Modernist designs. This idea was highlighted in a piece published by Dalton in *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* in 1960 entitled 'Queensland's Pragmatic Poetry.'³⁵ In this piece, Dalton suggested that the:

[f]amiliar appearance of Queensland's domestic architecture is changing. The characteristic qualities, however, remain.³⁶

For Dalton, those characteristics were how the 'form and function' of modern houses responded to the 'ever present sunlight animating the simple [design] details.'³⁷ Importantly, this article appeared alongside a description of the former Dalton Residence in the same journal.³⁸ Dalton was involved in editing this description of the house.³⁹ Moreover, throughout his career, Dalton became an advocate for climate-responsive designs and is perhaps best known for coining the phrase, 'Sun + Life + Useful Form = Architectural magic.'⁴⁰ This phrase encapsulated Dalton's views, which he later expounded on in publications throughout his career.⁴¹

Elements such as the former Dalton Residence' orientation to the north-west, the use of an innovative elevated floor over an excavated subfloor, and a raised clerestory located over the centrally located kitchen have been highlighted as examples of Dalton's adoption of the 'best climate design practice' of the period.⁴² In conjunction with other design features, these elements encouraged cross-ventilation throughout the house while maintaining access at the ground level.⁴³ Most significantly:

[The former Dalton Residence] solved the question of whether a house should be: raised off the ground on stumps to allow air circulation; or built slab-on-ground to enable direct access from living spaces to the exterior as proposed by Karl Langer.⁴⁴

Even though it has never received any awards, the former Dalton Residence has been widely recognised for its significance and influence as a seminal design. Since its construction, the house has appeared in numerous publications, highlighting its significance.⁴⁵ Notably, just after the house was constructed, the former Dalton Residence appeared in *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts'* list of top ten residential designs for 1959-1960.⁴⁶ While Dalton did not win the award, the

³⁴ Irving, *The History and Design of the Australian House*, p. 149.

³⁵ John Dalton, 'Queensland's Pragmatic Poetry,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 7, no. 82 (1960), p. 32.

³⁶ Dalton, 'Queensland's Pragmatic Poetry,' p. 32.

³⁷ Dalton, 'Queensland's Pragmatic Poetry,' p. 32.

³⁸ 'Dalton's Residence,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 7, no. 82 (1960), p. 33-5.

³⁹ Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' pp. 118-9.

⁴⁰ 'Flats at Toowong,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 8, no. 94 (1961), p. 46; Musgrave, "'Hot" and "Cool",' p. 214.

⁴¹ Dalton, 'Houses in the Hot Humid Zones,' pp. 73-80.

⁴² Fryer Library, The University of Queensland, UQFL499, John Dalton Papers, Elevation Drawings of the Dalton Residence at Fig Tree Pocket, c. 1959; Musgrave, "'Hot" and "Cool",' p. 213.

⁴³ Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' p. 213.

⁴⁴ Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' p. 118.

⁴⁵ 'Post-War Domestic Architecture,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 8, no. 92 (1961), p. 45; Graham de Gruchy, *Architecture in Brisbane* (Brisbane, QLD: Boolarong Books, 1988), p. 30; Charles Pickett, *The Fibro Frontier: A Different History of Australian Architecture* (Sydney, NSW: Powerhouse Publishing, 1997), p. 99; Avery, Dennis and Whitman (eds.), *Cool*, p. 27; Peta Dennis, 'Dalton, John,' p. 190; Musgrave, "'Hot" and "Cool",' p. 213; Elizabeth Musgrave, 'A Golden Anniversary: 50 years of the split skillion roof in Queensland' in AnnMarie Brennan and Philip Goad (eds), *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 33, Gold* (Melbourne, VIC: SAHANZ, 2016), pp. 528-37; Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' pp. 117-20.

⁴⁶ 'The Ten Best Houses for 1959-60,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 7, no. 83 (1960), p. 35.

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journal editors wrote that the houses included in the list 'represented [Australia's] best indigenous contemporary architecture to date.'⁴⁷ The editors also recorded that:

The design principles involved in each house show a straightforward approach to the problem of providing relaxation, comfort and dignity in houses designed for different and varied needs and conditions. But each house has a local expression and reveals an approaching architectural maturity.⁴⁸

The list was drawn from the houses that appeared within the pages of the journal. For example, the former Dalton Residence appeared in the August 1960 edition of *The Journal of Australian Architecture and Arts*, which recorded that:

The house illustrated revealed [Dalton's] concern for a regional expression which enjoys the advantages of new techniques and material.⁴⁹

Similarly, in 1961, the former Dalton Residence appeared in a review of 'Post-War Domestic Architecture' published in *The Journal of Australian Architecture and Arts*.⁵⁰ More recently, in 2010, the former Dalton Residence was highlighted by the Australian Institute of Architects as a nationally significant example of 20th Century architecture because it:

[i]s an early and influential example of Queensland modern architecture demonstrating principles of design for climate. It reveals Dalton's interest in the relationship between plan and roof articulation for the purposes of achieving cross ventilation and his willingness to experiment with new materials and techniques.

As well as the former Dalton Residence, many of Dalton's designs appeared in professional publications of the period.⁵¹ While Dalton is typically associated with mid-Century Modernism, his work evolved to take account of changing architectural tastes. For example, after designing the former Dalton Residence and the subsequent 'linear house' designs, from the mid-1960s, Dalton's designs began to incorporate a split skillion roof and increasingly became associated with his work.⁵² These became the archetypal 'Dalton Houses' recognised by many. Examples of Dalton's work received peer recognition, with multiple designs winning awards. For instance, in 1964, a house designed for P.G. Wilson in Mount Coot-tha won the Residence of the Year Award from the Queensland Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.⁵³ In the 2000s, the Australian Institute of Architects instituted the John Dalton Award for Building of the Year in Dalton's honour. The award forms part of the Australian Institute of Architects' Brisbane Regional Architecture Award scheme.

⁴⁷ 'The Ten Best Houses for 1959-60,' p. 27.

⁴⁸ 'The Ten Best Houses for 1959-60,' p. 27.

⁴⁹ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁵⁰ 'Post-War Domestic Architecture,' p. 45.

⁵¹ 'House at Ferny Grove,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts*, no. 44 (1957), p. 20; 'Flats at Toowong,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 8, no. 94 (1961), pp. 46-7; 'House at Buderim Mountain, Queensland,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 11, no. 4 (1963), pp. 40-1; 'House at Aspley, Brisbane,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 11, no. 4 (1963), p. 42; 'House at Moggill, Brisbane,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 11, no. 4 (1963), p. 43; 'House at Brisbane, Queensland,' *Architecture in Australia* 55, no. 4 (1966), p. 149; 'House, Woodfield Road, Kenmore, Brisbane,' *Architecture in Australia* (1966), p. 86; 'State Review – Queensland,' *Architecture in Australia* (1974), p. 87.

⁵² Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' pp. 128-48.

⁵³ 'This Month's Plan – Architect John Dalton's RAI Award Winning Design is an Ideal One for our Climate,' *Architecture, Building, Engineering* (1964), p. 22; 'House at Mount Coot-tha,' *Architecture in Australia* 53, no. 4 (1964), p. 101-2.

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While primarily known for his architectural work, Dalton also played an essential role within the architecture profession as a regular contributor to professional publications.⁵⁴ In his writing, Dalton was opinionated and outspoken, as highlighted by a 1961 letter to *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* in which he wrote that:

It is becoming increasingly evident that we architects are a group of people without a sense of direction. In retrospect, the last decade has been a period of adjustment, and as a consequence a general lack of connection is creeping into our architectural statements.⁵⁵

As well as writing for journals, Dalton worked as the Queensland contributor to *Architecture in Australia*, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects journal.⁵⁶

While Dalton moved out of the former Dalton Residence in the early 1970s after he remarried in 1972, the house remained in the ownership of Sheila Dalton until 2015 when she died. Dalton officially retired in 1979 though he completed his final design in 1986. Dalton died in 2007.

⁵⁴ John Dalton 'Letter – A Point of View,' *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts* 8, no. 91 (1961), p. 29; Dalton, 'Houses in the Hot Humid Zones,' pp. 73-80; John Dalton, 'The Verandah,' *Architecture in Australia* (1964), p. 99.

⁵⁵ Dalton 'Letter – A Point of View,' p. 29.

⁵⁶ Dennis, 'Dalton, John,' p. 190.



DESCRIPTION

The former Dalton Residence is an example of a mid-Century Modernist residential architecture designed by John Dalton. The house, set back from the main road and orientated to the north, is positioned on a block sloping away from the road with surrounding mature vegetation. The house, primarily constructed of fibre-cement sheeting, was designed to respond to Brisbane's subtropical climate. Located at 305 Fig Tree Pocket Road, the house is partially visible from the road.

General description

Built in 1960, the former Dalton Residence is a low-set single storey open plan mid-Century Modernist house. Set on a block that slopes away from the main road, the house is rectangular in plan, with a flat roof. The house, set back from Fig Tree Pocket Road, was designed to respond to Brisbane's subtropical climate and is orientated to the north-east to capture breezes and enhance internal ventilation of the house. The house is dug into the sloped of the site to create privacy from the road with entry to the house via the south elevation of the property.

The house illustrates Dalton's belief in the principles of climate design as the basis of good architecture, along with his readiness to consider and use new materials in a coherent and efficient design. The flat roof, clad in strips of ribbed galvanised steel measuring 12m in length, is rectangular in plan with a raised roof with ventilated clerestory at the centre of the house.⁵⁷ The roof has a tray profile to allow for the shedding of water during Brisbane's often intense rain events. The underside of the roof is insulated with reflective aluminium foil. With openings on its north and south face, the clerestory was incorporated to improve cross-ventilation, allow for the entry of light at the centre of the house, and permit hot air to escape from the building. The clerestory is covered in fibreglass bitumen.⁵⁸ This bitumen is painted white to reflect light and deflect heat. The roof's eaves, extending a metre over the house's edge, consist of a continuous aluminium grille and provide shade to the building. The aluminium grille runs the entire length of the house and is designed to aid ventilation.⁵⁹ In addition, Dalton installed a sprinkler system on the roof for cooling and bushfire protection.

The house was set 150mm above the ground on timber floors over an excavated subfloor. This feature provides subfloor ventilation for the house by providing cool airflow under the building.⁶⁰ Using this design, it was unnecessary to raise the house on stumps to provide adequate ventilation, unlike vernacular Queenslanders. Importantly, Dalton was able to maintain a connection between the interior space of the house and ground.

The house's external walls are fibre cement sheeting on aluminium frames.⁶¹ The walls of the eastern and western elevations are insulated with reflective aluminium foil, used to mitigate the effect of heat during the summer months. A pebble paved sun court (courtyard), built to provide a private garden area, is located south of the house, and is framed by the south elevation of the house and the carport.⁶² The covered carport to the south is joined to the house by a covered walkway linked to the main entrance to the house via the laundry. The bathroom, located on the south elevation of the house, has opaque horizontal louvred window openings.

⁵⁷ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁵⁸ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁵⁹ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁶⁰ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁶¹ 'Dalton's Residence,' p. 35.

⁶² Musgrave, 'Art and Environment,' p. 118.



The north elevation of the house consists of three large window openings. These windows consist of frameless sliding plate glass on an aluminium track. Below the sill, sliding opaque glass panels provide both privacy and ventilation. The north elevation originally used horizontal louvres, hung from the eaves, to provide additional shading. Similar window openings are apparent on the east elevation of the house. The bedroom facing the north elevation includes a door that opens to the house's grounds. The north face of the house also has a recessed verandah (patio). Two doors from the open plan kitchen area provide entry to the recessed verandah. A pair of folding doors also provides entry to the verandah from the dining area. The verandah is recessed to exclude summer sun and allow in the sun in the winter.

The house is framed by an informal garden setting with mature native and informal subtropical plantings. An informal grassy area is located on the north face of the property in front of the verandah. A non-original timber fence frames the grounds.

Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance include:

- Views to and from the house
- The original form, location, set back and orientation of the house
- Relationship and setting of the building with the topography
- Fibre-cement sheeted external walls and aluminium frames
- Roof form, including eaves, and their relationship to the scale of the house
- Strips of ribbed galvanised steel roofing and tray form profile
- Corrugated aluminium eaves
- Original raised ventilated clerestory and openings
- Evidence of original sprinkler system
- Raised timber floor and area of excavated subfloor under
- Location, size, materials and arrangement of original door and window openings
- Recessed verandah (patio)
- Pebble paved sun court (courtyard) and covered carport
- Location and layout of the driveway
- Location and layout of mature exotic and native plantings and trees
- The original external colour scheme of the house
- Internal room layouts and openings where original

Non-significant features

Non-significant features include:

- Non-original timber fence

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- Non-original plantings

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CURTILAGE

The curtilage captures all significant or original elements of the place as described and consists of Lot 1 RP136453.



Source: Brisbane City Plan Online Mapping

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STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<p>Criterion A Historical</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>Criterion B Rarity</p> <p>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Criterion C Scientific</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>Criterion D Representative</p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places.</p>	<p>As a seminal example of John Dalton's mid-Century Modernist residential architecture built in 1960, the former Dalton Residence demonstrates the principal design ideas and features associated with the Modernist movement in Brisbane. As expressed in the citation's description, the Dalton Residence's architectural elements include the linear rectangular plan of the house, a flat roof and large areas of glazing shaded by projecting eaves.</p>
<p>Criterion E Aesthetic</p> <p>The place is important because of its aesthetic significance</p>	<p>As an excellent example of a mid-Century Modernist house designed to respond to Brisbane's climate, the former Dalton Residence has aesthetic importance for its architectural qualities. Set within an informal garden setting with mature vegetation and trees, the former Dalton Residence is characterised by the arrangement of key elements associated with mid-Century Modernist architecture, including the flat roof and its relationship to the scale of the house, and the connection between the interior and exterior spaces provided by the use of timber floors built over and excavated subfloor. As expressed in the citation's description, notable design details include</p>

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	<p>features that respond to Brisbane’s climate, such as the extensive use of glazing and openings to provide light in the house, a centrally located ventilated clerestory to draw in light and aid in ventilation.</p>
<p>Criterion F Technical</p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period.</p>	<p>The former Dalton Residence is significant for its high degree of architectural innovation as a seminal example of a mid-Century Modernist residence designed in response to Brisbane’s climate. The house demonstrates Dalton’s willingness to experiment with new techniques and ideas to improve cross ventilation of Modernist designed houses and builds on features, such as the ventilated clerestory, seen in buildings designed in conjunction with former partner Peter Heathwood. Significant in this house is the use of timber floors built over an excavated subfloor to aid circulation by drawing cool air underneath the building. Before this, houses were typically either constructed on a concrete slab as advocated by Karl Langer or built on stumps. As expressed in the citation’s history, Dalton’s peers have acknowledged the house as influential for its technical achievements through extensive professional and academic publications coverage.</p>
<p>Criterion G Social</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>Criterion H Historical Association</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>The former Dalton Residence has a special association with noted Brisbane-based architect John Dalton as his family home and as one his first designs built after establishing his own independent private architectural practice. After graduating from The University of Queensland and being in practice with architect Peter Heathwood, Dalton commenced private practice in 1959. Dalton is recognised as being one of Brisbane’s most innovative architects of the mid-20th Century. A proponent of Modernist style adapted to Brisbane’s climate, Dalton has been widely recognised for his contribution to the architectural profession, including being awarded the Bronze Medal for meritorious architecture by the Queensland Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects on five occasions.</p>



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