

PROPOSED LOCAL HERITAGE PLACE

358 Lillian Avenue, Salisbury (LOT PLAN: 1_RP71543)



SUMMARY

Surviving as a visually prominent house in the suburb of Salisbury, the house at 358 Lillian Avenue was built in 1952 as part of a private residential estate developed by Englishman Cecil Askey. The house is an uncommon example of an Old English style house built after the Second World War and provides evidence of Salisbury's expansion in the 1950s. The house also illustrates the influence that immigrants played in the residential development of Brisbane.

HISTORY

The early development of Salisbury

Salisbury remained a rural, sparsely populated farming district until the South Coast Railway Line opened in 1885. This line ran through Salisbury to Beenleigh. Like elsewhere in Brisbane, the railway's arrival spurred on development in the areas surrounding it. Several residential estates were developed between Rocklea and Coopers Plains, including Salisbury Station Estate (1886), Salisbury Park Estate (1888) and Salisbury Court Estate (1890). However, by 1911, the population of Salisbury was only 84. Salisbury's population continued to grow, however, and between 1920 and 1930, the number of residents listed in the *Post Office Directory* almost doubled, from 102 to 194. During this period, significant improvements were made to the local area's infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and drainage. To petition on behalf of residents for improvements to the growing suburb, the Salisbury Progress Association was formed in 1914. In the following year, the Salisbury Progress Association appealed for the building of a local primary school. A site on Lillian Avenue was eventually chosen for the school and Salisbury State School was officially opened on 30 May 1920.¹

Lillian Avenue was the first road to provide access into the early settlement of Salisbury. Arthur Blackwood's Salisbury Township Estate was located on the northern side of Lillian Avenue, and lots were sold from 1912 onwards.² This considerable development consisted of 442 lots, each measuring 32 perches and created Ness, Henson, Blackwood, Kellett, Myra and Tamblyn Roads. The suburb section closest to the railway line remained the most populated area for many decades. Gradually, settlement expanded to the east in the years before the Second World War.

The most significant development in Salisbury was the establishment of the Rocklea Munitions Works during the Second World War. These factories were built along both the northern and southern sides of Compo (now Evans) Road, with housing built for civilian war workers to the west and north of the Rocklea Munitions Works. A tram line was extended along the Compo (now Evans) Road to service the industrial area. Following the Second World War, many industrial buildings were adapted for new uses, and the surrounding area became a hub for industrial and commercial uses. This led to a demand for housing nearby for the large number of people who worked there, which in turn triggered further residential subdivision and construction. This growth continued into the 1950s and 1960s and resulted in a massive boost in Salisbury's population. However, public transport links to the industrial area in Rocklea continued to be described as 'poor' in the early years after the Second World War.³ By 1976, Salisbury's population stood at 6,537.

The post-war expansion of Salisbury

After the Second World War, several private and Queensland Housing Commission residential developments provided new homes in Salisbury. These residential developments emerged to deal with a shortage of housing in Brisbane after the Second World War. However, even by 1950, the area east of Ainsworth Street remained as large farm holdings. This included 32 and a half acres of land bordered by Lillian Avenue to the south and Ainsworth Street to the west. This land was surveyed as Portion 217 in the 1860s. Ebenezer Michael purchased this land from the Queensland Government in April 1864 for £43 17s 6d.

¹ 'Salisbury State School,' *The Telegraph*, 8 June 1920, p. 3.

² 'Advertising,' *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 July 1912, p. 9.

³ Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Queensland* (Brisbane, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 186.



Portion 217 was owned by several different people over the next 85 years but remained undeveloped until 1949, when Cecil Askey purchased the land. In September 1949, Askey announced plans to establish a private housing estate on the site, with clearing of the land by Thiess Brothers already underway.⁴

Askey arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom in 1948, as one of the many who emigrated to Australia in the aftermath of the Second World War. It is not clear what his previous experience was with property development, as he has no occupation listed on his immigration records and was recorded as a greyhound trainer on the 1939 England and Wales register. In 1945, the Commonwealth government established a Department of Immigration to plan, manage, and implement an ambitious immigration programme to Australia.⁵ The need for immigrants was driven by the popular idea of 'populate or perish.' The Australian government recognised that it needed to increase its population to help the country develop and defend itself. However, while immigration into Queensland did occur, immigrants were encouraged to settle in rural areas rather than Brisbane. The State government's 'restrictive immigration policy' also reinforced Queensland's 'ethnocentrism.'⁶ As such, between 1947 and 1961, the number of people born overseas residing in Queensland rose by only 58 per cent compared to 139 per cent for the whole of Australia.⁷ Nonetheless, several migrant communities contributed to Brisbane's urban development in the late 1940s and early 1950s, including constructing the so-called 'Dutch' and 'French' houses in Coopers Plains and Zillmere, respectively.

Over the next year, Askey subdivided and developed the land and created new roads. This included laying out Southey and Meynell Streets, as well as extending Henson Road to the east. The 57 lots of this new residential estate all measured approximately 32 perches (809sqm). The first lot sold in November 1950. Building application records suggest that rather than selling the vacant subdivided lots in his estate and allowing people to engage their own builders to construct a new house, Askey was overseeing the building of the houses and then selling them. In addition to houses, Askey had announced that the housing estate would include an amusement park, a swimming pool, and playgrounds.⁸ However, only the playgrounds were built.

By August 1951, 18 houses were completed or nearing completion in the estate. The same month, nine unsold vacant allotments along Meynell Street and Lillian Avenue were transferred into the ownership of Askey's newly established company, Askey Constructions Pty. Ltd. Askey and his wife, Ethel, retained subdivision two in the estate, on the corner of Lillian Avenue and Meynell Street and built themselves a new home there. They christened their house *Clovelly*, and this block would become 354 Lillian Avenue.

As evidenced by the location, design, size and presence of the houses, the most prestigious section of the estate appears to have been along Lillian Avenue between Southey and Portsdown Streets. Unlike the remainder of the estate, most of the houses in this stretch were built of rendered brick and their designs were elaborate and decorative, including houses built in the Spanish Mission and Old English styles. Given this, it is probable that houses were built to showcase the estate while also attracting wealthy buyers for these prominent properties.

⁴ 'House Block at Salisbury,' *The Courier Mail*, 9 September 1949, p. 4.

⁵ Anon, *A History of the Department of Immigration: Managing Migration to Australia*, revised edition (Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017), p. 26.

⁶ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s*, p. 187.

⁷ Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s*, p. 187.

⁸ 'House Block at Salisbury,' *The Courier Mail*, 9 September 1949, p. 4.

The construction of 358 Lillian Avenue

In August 1951, Brisbane City Council approved the construction of a new house on subdivision one in the estate, next door to the Askey house. This lot became 358 Lillian Avenue. Askey still owned this block at the time, and building records also note him as the builder. The house was completed by November 1952 and is an uncommon example of an Old English style house constructed after the Second World War.⁹ Its location on the main road through the suburb, and on one of the highest blocks of land in the estate gave it extra prominence.

During the years between the First and Second World War, Old English style houses became increasingly popular in Brisbane. The style, often derided as 'Mock Tudor' due to the use of imitation half-timbering, was one of several typologies that emerged during the economic and population booms of the 1920s that saw an increase in residential development in Brisbane. The style's roots can be traced to the Arts and Crafts movement in Victorian Britain. However, the cost of materials and the design of such properties meant such houses were often the preserve of the professional and business classes.

Some critics derided the style for encouraging nostalgic replicas for those with newly acquired wealth. Nevertheless, the Old English style appealed to a sense of loyalty and nostalgia for the United Kingdom. The style's predominant features include a picturesque aesthetic, asymmetrical massing with prominent gables, imitation half-timbering, texture, heeler or clinker brickwork, tiled roofs and rendered or face-brick exteriors.¹⁰ Interiors frequently featured timber joinery, beamed or decorative plaster ceilings, multi-paned or leadlight casement windows and fireplaces. Brisbane architects who designed houses and other buildings in this style include E.P. Trewern, Blackburn and Gzell, and Horace Driver.

While Old English style houses enjoyed popularity before 1939, this changed after the Second World War, and such designs became increasingly uncommon. The initial years after the Second World War saw a turn towards more modest housing designed to meet the needs of, for example, returned service personnel. Once Brisbane's housing shortages were dealt with, housing designs began to move towards more Modernist styles by the 1960s. Nonetheless, given the style's relationship with ideas such as loyalty to the United Kingdom, examples of Old English houses were still occasionally constructed after the Second World War, especially by those who emigrated to Australia after the Second World War, such as Askey.

In June 1952, the house was bought by Arthur Robertson. Born in London in 1907, Robertson emigrated to Australia in 1951 with his wife after visiting Australia in 1949. While described as a 'caterer' on his immigration record, by 1953, Robertson is listed as a builder. He expanded to become a wealthy building contractor and property developer. The Robertsons sold 358 Lillian Avenue in 1962. In 1964, Robertson purchased the well-known tourist attraction and koala conservation park, Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary at Fig Tree Pocket.¹¹ In 1988, Robertson was recorded as the Director of Robertson Corporation Pty. Ltd. When the company was liquidated. The company was previously known as Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary Properties Pty. Ltd.¹² In 1994, Arthur and Georgina were both awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community.¹³

⁹ Brisbane City Archives, Brisbane City Council Rates Ledger, 1942 - 1952.

¹⁰ Richard Apperley, Peter L. Reynolds, Robert Irving, and Solomon Mitchell, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the present*, revised edition (Pymble, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1994), pp. 204-5.

¹¹ 'About that page one bear,' *Good Neighbour*, 1 August 1965, p. 3.

¹² 'Companies (Queensland) Code Companies Form 24 Registered No. 64B00624N Regulation 28 – Notice of Resolution: Robertson Corporation Pty. Ltd.,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette – Business*, 26 July 1988, p. 2421.

¹³ 'Australia Day 1994 Honours,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette - Special*, 26 January 1994, p. 17.



The only record of changes made to the house during the Robertson's ownership was the addition of a 'sundeck,' which Brisbane City Council approved in 1957. The house at 358 Lillian Avenue in Salisbury remains a visually striking home.



DESCRIPTION

The house at 358 Lillian Avenue is located on the main road through the suburb. The house is a highly intact example of the Old English architectural style. The two-storey building's asymmetrical massing, gable roofs, contrasting render and clinker-style masonry, imitation half-timbering and leadlight casement windows make it a landmark in the streetscape. A balcony and porch have been added to the rear of the building. A low-height rendered masonry fence and thoughtfully located vegetation make the house highly visible from the street.

General description

The house exhibits many of the stylistic indicators of the Old English style despite its construction date. It has a medium pitch transverse gable roof and is tiled with Marseille tiles. Its two street-facing gables, one taller than the other, with decorative bargeboards and narrow, lined eaves, give the impression of picturesque asymmetry from the main elevation. A single gable to the rear of the building provides the same asymmetry.

The ground floor is constructed of undressed clinker-style masonry. It provides a visual base against which the rendered upper storey contrasts. White, textured render covers the upper levels' exterior masonry walls. Black imitation half-timbering is used extensively on all gable ends and facades. Terracotta brick vents are left unpainted and contrast against the stark white render. A rendered chimney with an undressed masonry crown protrudes from an inglenook fireplace on the western façade.

At the rear of the house, a masonry balcony (including masonry piers) extends from the gable's upper storey to create a covered patio beneath. The masonry is of a different style to the main structure and was added in 1957. Similarly, a small porch and skillion roof off the main living space and stairs leading down the garden area appear to be newer additions.

Timber-framed, diamond-patterned leadlight casement windows adorn the external walls. The windowsills are undressed soldier-coarse masonry that contrasts against the white textured render walls and visually ties the windows to the masonry base. All windows are framed by black painted half-timbering, providing cohesion to the different elements of each façade.

The timber front door has a small leadlight viewing window. It is recessed into a small entry porch framed by imitation half-timbering.

From published images viewed on 1 April 2021, the house's interior is relatively intact, though with cosmetic or stylistic changes. Of note is the main living or dining space. In this space, large, undressed timber posts and exposed beams support the upper level. A masonry inglenook fireplace complete with a deep timber lintel and narrow leadlight casement windows is a central feature of the room.

Also of note is the significantly intact upper-level bathroom. The bathroom features mottled pink wall tiles, mottled green skirting, pink coved terrazzo flooring and an original free-standing ceramic basin. A glazed tile soap holder complete with a face towel rail is inset into the tiled wall.

The house is set back from the streetscape. A low-height rendered masonry fence with undressed masonry capping separates the grounds from the public footpath. The render used on the fencing matches that applied to the house's iron gates' external walls with an arrangement of vertical and horizontal profiles provide access to the front door and driveway.

To the rear of the property, extensive vegetation and hardscaping have been planted and installed. This is not visible in 1970 aerials and is non-original.

Vegetation at the front of the property comprises a mixture of low-lying shrubs and medium trees that frame the two gables.

Unobstructed views to the main elevation from Lillian Avenue are significant.

Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance include:

- Original built form and composition, including:
 - Asymmetrical massing
 - Roof form including:
 - Transverse gable arrangement
 - Two gables facing Lillian Avenue
 - Single rear gable
 - Undressed clinker-style masonry ground floor contrasted against render upper level
 - Recessed front door and entry porch
 - Chimney and inglenook fireplace on western façade
- External casement window arrangements, including:
 - Diamond leadlight patterning
 - Timber framing
 - Surrounding imitation half-timbering
 - Undressed masonry sills
- Exterior design details, including:
 - Marseille-tiled roofing
 - Undressed clinker-style masonry ground floor walls
 - White, textured render covering upper-level masonry walls
 - Black painted imitation half-timbering on gable ends and all facades
 - Undressed terracotta brick vents
 - Rendered external walls of inglenook fireplace
 - Rendered chimney and undressed brick crown
 - Front door timber detailing and leadlight viewing window
- Interior elements and design details, including:
 - Main living and dining space, including:

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- Undressed timber posts and exposed beams
- Masonry inglenook fireplace, with deep timber lintel and leadlight casement windows
- Upper-level bathroom, including:
 - Pink coved terrazzo flooring
 - Mottled pink and green wall tiles
 - Mottled green skirting tiles
 - Original free-standing ceramic basin
 - Glazed tile soap holder with face towel rail
- Grounds and setting
 - Setback from streetscape
 - Low-height rendered masonry fence with undressed masonry capping
 - Iron gates with vertical and horizontal profile arrangements
 - Terracotta mailbox
- Views and Vistas
 - Views of the place from the streetscape

Non-significant features

Non-significant features include:

- Rear balcony, including brick piers
- Rear porch, including skillion roof and stairs leading to garden space
- Vegetation and hardscaping to the rear of the property

CURTILAGE

The curtilage captures all significant or original elements of the place as described and consists of the entirety of Lot 1 on RP71543.



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>Built in 1952, 358 Lillian Avenue is important in demonstrating the pattern of Salisbury's residential development after the Second World War. It is one of the first houses to be built as part of a new residential estate developed in the 1950s by Cecil Askey, a recent English immigrant. The housing estate is one of several developed by new Australian immigrants in response to Brisbane's housing shortage at the time. Built in the Old English style, the house illustrates the influence of immigrant developers in Brisbane's post-Second World War residential development.</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>Built in 1952, 358 Lillian Avenue is an uncommon example of the Old English style of house for the time in which it was constructed. Old English style houses were previously popular in Brisbane between the First and Second World Wars.</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>N/A</p>
<p>Criterion E Aesthetic</p> <p>The place is important because of its aesthetic significance</p>	<p>358 Lillian Avenue makes a prominent contribution to streetscape. Built in the Old English style the house is characterised by asymmetrical massing, gable roofs, contrasting render and clinker-style masonry, imitation half-timbering and leadlight casement windows. Notable design details include Marseille roof tiling, diamond leadlight</p>

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	patterning on casement windows, undressed masonry windowsills, and an inglenook fireplace and chimney. A low-height rendered masonry fence with undressed brick capping reflects the style and materials of the house, and further enhances the streetscape appeal of the place.
Criterion F Technical The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period.	N/A
Criterion G Social 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.	N/A
Criterion H Historical Association 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	N/A

REFERENCES

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