

## Heritage Citation



### Auchenreoch

### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	The Retreat
<b>Addresses</b>	At 172 Butterfield Street, Herston, Queensland 4006
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Queenslander
<b>Lot plan</b>	L2_RP43323
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — February 2001
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

**People/associations** John Tait and family (Occupant)

**Criterion for listing** (A) Historical; (D) Representative; (H) Historical association

This substantial home is significant for the evidence it provides of the residential development in this area of Herston, where a number of middle-class families established homes on large properties in the late nineteenth century. It is also significant for its association with the Tait family, a well-known Brisbane family in the second half of the nineteenth century.

## History

Historical evidence indicates that 'Auchenreoch' was built circa 1884 for John Tait, the son of Scottish immigrants.

John Tait's father, David Tait, arrived in Australia with his family from Glasgow in 1863 aboard the immigrant ship, Saldanha. By the early 1870s, he had established a business at 56 Queen Street, Brisbane as a tailor, (D.Tait and Son). A second premises was opened in Tribune Street by the early 1880s. His interests included the ownership of trotting stallions, horse breeding and a large selection near Beaudesert. David Tait's obituary in the Brisbane Courier, 13 December 1898, described him as 'an old and well-known resident of Brisbane'. David Tait was survived by 5 sons and 7 daughters.

In 1881, John Tait, previously a resident of Sydney, acquired the Deed of Grant for 2 acres, 2 roods and 35? perches at Herston for the price of ?93. This parcel of land faced Butterfield Street (then a continuation of Aberleigh Road) along its northern border and was described in the Brisbane Courier as being situated 'between Victoria Park and Manure Depot (known as the Old Police Paddock)'. Tait's property was in close proximity to land owned by Robert Herbert (Queensland's first premier) and John Bramston (the first Attorney-General). Their residence 'Herston' was the origin of the naming of the suburb. On the western side of Tait's land was 'Clydesdale', the home of William Healion. This has since been demolished. Also nearby was 'Ballymore', the home of renowned builder, James Campbell. All of these homes were situated on substantial grounds. 'Auchenreoch' is one of the few early homes from this pocket to survive. From the names of these residents and their homes, this area appears to have been a Scottish enclave. Scottish motifs appear in the interior of 'Auchenreoch', along with those representing the rest of the British Isles.

John Tait mortgaged his property to the Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Company Limited for £600 in 1884. It is likely that this financed the construction of the present house on the property. Postal records for 1885-1886 show John Tait of "David Tait and Son" residing at "Auchenreoch, K.G." An earlier entry for 1883-84 gives the address of John Tait as "Kelvin Grove" so it is possible that he was living on the site as early as 1884. Tait named his new residence 'Auchenreoch' after an area near Dumfries, Scotland.

The first entry for a John Tait in postal records occurs in 1874. The entry reads 'John Taite [sic], saddler, Adelaide Street, B'Bane'. Like his father, John Tait had interests in the horseracing industry, owning several racehorses which he raced at Ipswich and

Melbourne in the 1860s. After establishing a saddlery business in Brisbane in the early 1880s, John soon joined his father's tailoring firm.

It appears that John Tait rented out 'Auchenreoch' for much of time he owned it and that his tenants included Allen Gray, commission agent, in the early 1890s, Arthur Payne (Secretary of the nearby General Hospital) from 1897, J.E.W. Townson in 1902, and S.H. Lemon from 1909. A 1912 estate sale map for Aberleigh Hill Estate shows the residence of S.H. Lemon in Aberleigh Road. Post Office Directories give the name of Lemon's residence in Aberleigh Road as 'The Retreat'.

Tait sold his home at Herston by mortgage to William James Wilson in 1913. Wilson subdivided the property, retaining 62<sup>2</sup>/<sub>100</sub> perches (sub 2). He sold this to Martin Murray in 1927. The Murray family kept the property until after the death of Francis Murray in 1972. It has since had several owners.

A 1946 aerial photograph of the area shows a small building, perhaps a shed, in front of the house, with a track leading from the road.

The house, which has many of its original features intact, has been restored. The current owners are committed to preserving this home, which is now over 115 years old. A large fig tree thought to predate the house is currently protected by a BCC Vegetation Protection Order.

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## Description

The residence is an example of a late 19th century Queensland Colonial house. Built in the 1880s, it is an elite residence with a U-shaped roof, encircling verandahs and a kitchen house. The U-shaped roof appears as a transverse hip at the front and becomes two parallel hipped roofs at the back, separated in the middle.

The curved verandah roof is separate from the main roof and supported by square timber posts with decorated timber verandah brackets. French doors and full length original double hung windows open onto the verandah. These windows seem to still retain some of the original hand-blown glass panes.

The exterior walls are clad with wide horizontal chamfer boards. The four-paneled front door has a low waist and coloured glass (red) sidelights and fanlights above. A name and year plate "Auchenreoch 1882" is mounted on the right side of the front door.

The house has a corrugated iron roof and is elevated from the ground. The kitchen house is located to the back left of the house with a separate gable roof and a chimneystack along its outer wall. Corrugated iron sunhoods, decorated with vertical timber battening, shade the windows to the kitchen. A spare room was later added behind the kitchen.

Most interior features of the house are fairly intact and include cedar joinery, marble and cast iron fireplaces, and ceiling roses located centrally in of the main rooms of the house. All of the ceiling roses have the same pattern, composed of one Irish shamrock, one English rose and two Scottish thistles, symbolising three countries of the British Isles.

The house presents to the street its large gated front garden with a very large fig tree, which makes an important contribution to the setting of the house and the streetscape of Butterfield Road.

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## 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:

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#### Historical

##### CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

for the evidence it provides of the residential development of this part of Herston in the second half of the nineteenth century when several middle-class families established substantial homes on large blocks.

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#### Representative

##### CRITERION D

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

as an intact example of a substantial 1880s middle-class residence.

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#### 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

for its association with John Tait, whose family were well-known in the business and racing communities of late nineteenth century Brisbane.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Maps
3. *Brisbane Courier*, 30 Mar 1881, 13 Dec 1898
4. Hacker, D.J., D.R. Hallam, & M. Spinaze. *Herston: Recollections and Reminiscences*. Brisbane: 1995
5. JOL Estate Map collection
6. McKellar's Map of Brisbane and Suburbs. Brisbane: Surveyor-General's Office, 1895
7. Queensland Certificates of Title
8. Queensland Post Office Directories
9. State Library of Queensland. History Research Service. 172 Butterfield Street, Herston report
10. Information kindly provided by current owners, Morag and Ian McGregor

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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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