



Heritage Citation



11 Clay Street, New Farm

Key details

Addresses	At 11 Clay Street, New Farm, Queensland 4005
Type of place	Cottage, House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L8_RP9051
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Citation — March 2016
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Brick - Painted
People/associations	George Borrows (Builder)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative

This brick cottage was built between 1863 and 1874 by George Borrows, a builder living in nearby Terrace Street and is an excellent illustration of New Farm's early suburban development between Brunswick and James streets. This gentle valley developed to include narrow streets, small allotments and houses for the working class interspersed with small industries and shops. The brick construction of this small cottage in Clay Street also reflects the pottery and brick manufactory that operated in this area from 1856 to 1874.

History

New Farm is named for the convict-era farm that occupied an area now part of New Farm Park. New Farm's 'open undulating forest' was surveyed, subdivided and offered for sale in 1844, a few years after the former penal colony was opened for free settlement. By the early 1850s the European population of New Farm was around fifty people, who resided in a small number of farms dotted around the area. In 1853 investor Michael O'Neill purchased more than thirteen acres (5.26ha) in New Farm. O'Neill began selling allotments from this land a year later with new streets created to access them. The sales sparked development in the area, which became the centre of New Farm's early growth.

In addition to a small residential community which sprang up from 1854, the area became home to industry. Local landowner and potter Robert Scott took advantage of the clay deposits in the area and opened the Brisbane Pottery on Kent Street in 1856. The pottery sat in a slight depression stretching back to what is now Clay and Lime Streets. Scott's pottery facilitated the construction of brick residences in the area. It was common

for brick buildings to be constructed in close proximity to brickyards as the heavy cost of transporting the material was removed. Scott's Kent Street pottery was renowned for its tiles but bricks were also manufactured there and used in the construction of local houses. In 1857 the Moreton Bay Courier opined Scott's tile and brick manufactory 'ought to exercise a considerable influence in bringing into a use a more substantial style of building than that which generally prevails, and one more adapted to our warm climate than the ordinary wooden dwelling'¹. A number of brick cottages were built in streets near the pottery in the 1860s and 1870s, though few remain.

In addition to running his pottery, Scott invested in land, acquiring one acre (4046m²) of O'Neill's land. In late 1862, Scott subdivided this into suburban allotments, which he then sold. In January 1863 labourer George Borrows, a recent arrival to Queensland, purchased 35.6 perches (900m²) of Scott's land. Borrows, sometimes referred to in newspapers and postal records as 'Burrows', built a timber house fronting nearby Terrace Street as his own residence. He also purchased the sites adjacent to his Terrace Street property, which were offered for sale in the 1860s and 1870s. He constructed rental houses, though most of these were timber rather than brick. The popularity of the area made his investments safe. Scott's pottery closed in 1874, reducing local employment opportunities but improving residential development.

Borrows built the brick cottage at 11 Clay Street at some time between his purchase of the site in 1863 and 1874. The lack of records makes it difficult to be certain of the precise construction date, however, it was standing by 1874 when Borrows' son (also named George) died there.

Borrows died on 22 March 1883 and his estate, including the Clay Street cottage, passed to his widow Mary. Architect Richard Gailey was appointed as trustee over her property in December 1886, though Mary Borrows advertised for tenants herself under her new name, Mary Wallace.

By the 1880s the area, formerly on the outskirts of Brisbane Town, was considered inner-city, further increasing its residential appeal. Working class tenants were drawn to the Clay Street cottage, including mariners, waterside workers, tram drivers, lightermen and firemen. The house was relatively cheap to rent, and its brick construction provided it some protection against fire, a risk in narrow Clay Street. An 1884 fire destroyed a house on the corner of Clay and Terrace streets, though Borrows' properties were spared damage.

Mary Wallace transferred ownership of the Clay Street cottage and surrounding properties to Richard Gailey and all were offered for sale in August 1900. The Clay Street property was 11.8 perches (298.5m²), small compared to the 16 perch (404.7m²) allotments on offer in Brisbane's newer suburbs. The cottage was also small, even by the standards of the area. The property featured stables and a 300 gallon water tank but attracted the lowest rent of Gailey's properties, suggesting that later timber extensions had not yet been built.

Tenant Lewis Henry Spiro purchased the cottage in 1900 and lived there until 1904, after which he leased the property to various tenants. It is likely that he made the first timber addition to the rear of the cottage between 1900 and 1904 although it was definitely in place by 1912. The low rent advertised in 1900 was likely an incentive for Spiro to improve the property; one of Borrows' Terrace Street properties, also owned by the Spiro family, attracted more than double the rent of the Clay Street cottage. New Farm continued to draw working class residents in 1900, but with ample rental properties on offer in the Clay Street area, additions to the tiny brick cottage helped improve its rental appeal. Despite the increased fire risk, the additions were built in timber, as bricks were no longer easily obtainable in New Farm. A timber shed was built in the back yard between 1925 and 1946, replacing earlier sheds.

Spiro retained the cottage until his death in 1929. In 1930 the property was sold to Frances Halliday, who lived in the house until 1953. A second timber extension to the rear was built after 1946. Subsequent owners also lived in the cottage, though it was occasionally leased to tenants. In 2016 the cottage is highly-intact in its early twentieth century form and stands on its original allotment.

Description

Borrows' brick cottage at 11 Clay Street, New Farm is a very small, one-storey, low-set brick cottage standing in a 298m² yard. The house is at the front of the site and has a transverse gable roof clad with corrugated metal sheets. The bricks have been painted externally but would have originally been exposed. A central entrance stair leads to a narrow timber framed verandah with a lean-to roof that runs along the front. A central door leads directly into the interior comprising two rooms divided by a v-jointed timber partition. Evidence of a former chimney breast survives on the side wall of the larger (main) room. The smaller room has a timber framed double hung window. Both rooms have narrow timber doors onto the front verandah although these appear more recent. From the main room a door leads to the rear additions which are skillion-roofed and timber framed and clad.

A timber framed and clad laundry shed stands near the house in the back yard, which is not of cultural heritage significance.

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 excellent example of an early workers' dwelling on a small allotment fronting a narrow street, representative of the distinctive housing that developed between James and Brunswick Streets in the mid to late nineteenth century. As a brick cottage built between 1863 and 1874 on Clay Street it is a rare illustration of the early establishment of the pottery and brick manufacturing in the area prior to the expansion of more homogenous suburban residential development.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a very modest worker's cottage built between 1863 and 1874. The principal characteristics include: diminutively-scaled house in a small yard; low-set form with transverse gable; honest use of readily-available materials; simple, condensed interior layout; and a plain, straightforward domestic character.

References

1. *Moreton Bay Courier*, 5 January 1857 p2
2. Brisbane City Council Properties on the Web
3. Brisbane City Council aerial photographs, 1946, 2012
4. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Maps, Detail Plan No 200, 2 Dec 1924
5. Brisbane City Council, Surveyor's Notebook, 27 April 1912, updated 10 Nov 1924
6. Musgrave, Elizabeth and Kaylee Wilson, *New Farm and Teneriffe Hill Heritage and Character Study*, Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit, Oct 1995
7. Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit, historical report, 11 Clay Street, New Farm
8. *Certificates of Title*, Department of Environment and Resource Management
9. McKellar's Map, 1895
10. National Library of Australia, Trove newspapers, *Telegraph, Courier, Brisbane Courier, Moreton Bay Courier, The Queenslander, The Week*
11. Queensland Post Office Directories
12. Bennett, H, 'New Farm from quality street to mixed assortment', *Brisbane Houses, Gardens, Suburbs and Congregations*, Papers No 22 Brisbane History Group, 2010, p152
13. Benjamin, G & Grant, G *Reflections on New Farm*, New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc, New Farm, 2008, p169
14. Dedman, Roseanne (ed), *Tales from New Farm*, 1999
15. Schiavo, John, *New Farm: A Study of Land Use and Settlement to 1999*. (Brisbane: Schiavo, 1999)

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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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