

## Heritage Citation



### Crouch Cottage

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 40 Oxford Street, Bulimba, Queensland 4171
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Queenslander
<b>Lot plan</b>	L224_RP12589
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — January 2014
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

This house was built circa 1888 for fisherman James Crouch and his wife Mary. They were part of a Bulimba pioneering family, who had arrived in the district in 1865. The Crouch family were prominent in establishing a fishing industry in Brisbane. The ownership of this property was retained by the Crouch family for 102 years, before it was finally sold to new owners in 1977. Crouch Cottage, which retains nineteenth century features, including an exterior well, is the earliest remaining link to the Crouch family in Bulimba.

---

## History

The land adjoining the southern bank of the Bulimba Reach of the Brisbane River had the Aboriginal name of Tugulawah (now spelled Toowoolawah), meaning 'heart-shaped', in reference to the bend in the river. This fertile, flood-plain area was opened to free settlers by the New South Wales colonial government in 1849. On 5 February 1850, David C McConnel purchased suburban allotment 8 in the newly-named parish of Bulimba. McConnel grew maize, corn and oats on his land and built a residence, which he named 'Bulimba House'. On 6 February 1874, John W Hurley, a Brisbane resident, purchased subdivisions 16 and 30 of section 8 of allotment 8, giving him a total of two roods of farmland.

On 31 March 1875, James Crouch, aged 22, bought half of Hurley's property. Crouch, according to title deeds, was already a Bulimba resident before his 1875 purchase of subdivision 16 (one rood). Crouch was a fisherman, the son of Edward Crouch. Edward and his brothers George and Thomas Crouch were fishermen, who were listed as living at Bulimba in the 1874 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories. The Crouch family were Bulimba pioneers, having arrived at Bulimba from Botany Bay in 1865. They were probably attracted to the area because of its close proximity to the rich fishing grounds located around the sandbanks of the Hamilton Reach of the river. These fishing grounds had been identified after observation of the local Aboriginal people. Two of the Crouch family's children, Emily and Arthur, were amongst the first Bulimba School enrolments in 1866.

On 21 August 1875, nearly six months after James Crouch bought his Bulimba land, he married Mary Elizabeth Harvey in Brisbane. James Crouch is first listed as a Ferry Road (later renamed Oxford Street) resident in the 1889 Queensland Post Office Directories, indicating that the house was built circa 1888-9. The house's location would have been ideal for a fisherman, as the property was only a short walking distance from the Brisbane River. It was also close to the Bulimba Ferry that had commenced operations in 1864. James and his wife Mary had a steep-pitched, gable roofed, four-room cottage built on their land. The front bedroom, the living room, a second bedroom and the rear kitchen were accessed via a central passageway running to the front door. An open front verandah provided a relaxation area that gained the breezes coming off the Brisbane River. A brick chimney and fireplace serviced the living room. A well was dug at the rear of the cottage to provide fresh water.

Ferry Road was renamed Oxford Street in 1891. The Crouch family expanded their fishing business down to the mouth of the Brisbane River and out into Moreton Bay. By 1891, they were operating a fishing fleet of five wooden boats that had a crew of four or five men. The boats went out into Moreton Bay as far as Stradbroke Island.

On 25 February 1895, James Crouch died, aged just 42, and 40 Oxford Street passed to his widow Mary who was registered in the titles under the name of Elizabeth Mary Crouch. In 1918, the Historical Society of Queensland noted that the Crouch family were early settlers of the district and therefore prominent members of the Bulimba community. An article published in its journal in 1918 stated:

Early in 1865 Crouch Brothers, the fishermen, arrived from Botany Bay, and bought allotments along the river bank, where a number of their descendants still live.

According to the 1919 Commonwealth Electoral Roll, there were eleven adult Crouch family descendants living at Bulimba. These included Mary, her daughter Ethel May and John Crouch. John had been an oysterman, who had acquired a trade as a mariner. Ethel was born on 13 December 1891, after the house at 40 Oxford Street had been built. Her older brother Herbert was born in 1885, before the house's construction.

Mary (Elizabeth M.) Crouch lived in the house until her death on 15 October 1943. On 16 May 1945, the property was transmitted to Herbert John Weedon (also spelled Weadon) Crouch and his sister Ethel May Crouch. Herbert was a labourer, while Ethel was a spinster. Herbert became the sole owner of 40 Oxford Street on 20 August 1964, exactly two years after the death of his sister Ethel on 20 August 1962. Unfortunately during this period, Herbert had died in 12 June 1962 and so the property subsequently passed to his widow Agnes. Agnes gained title on 3 September 1964. Herbert had married Agnes (nee Lewis) on 5 June 1918.

The widow Agnes Crouch died in 9 August 1975, and the family home was inherited by her son Herbert Harold Crouch. Herbert, also known as Herbie, only retained ownership until 1977. On 4 March 1977, Herbie sold the property to Dawn J Taylor. This ended the 102 year association of the Crouch family with the property at 40 Oxford Street.

By the 1970s, Bulimba had become an unattractive, run-down suburb situated beside the muddy banks of the Brisbane River. The suburb's poor image was reflected in the rapid turnover of ownership of the former Crouch residence that saw the property change hands three times in the short period over four years. Commencing in the late 1980s, Bulimba began to be revitalised and rediscovered as a riverside suburb. This suburban renewal was centred, in particular, on the shopping and cinema precinct in Oxford Street, close to the former Crouch residence.

The house located at 40 Oxford Street is the earliest surviving example of a Bulimba residence associated with the pioneering Crouch family. An unsourced newspaper article, possibly published in 1936, described them as one of Brisbane's Old-Time families, whose contribution to the district included a role on the adjoining, cross-river Hamilton Town Council and involvement in the Bulimba Primitive Methodist Church. The Crouch family had built Bulimba Methodist Church in Oxford Street in 1866. The family, including James, represented their district in the Bulimba 'Moretons' team in the late nineteenth century Brisbane cricket competition. In 1950, the Courier Mail reported that the Crouch family had 'pioneered the fishing industry, selling to hawkers 35lb of fish for 3/.' Fisherman James Crouch, of 40 Oxford Street, had contributed to this legacy.

---

## Description

This property retains a well (pictured) for drawing fresh water that is located at the rear of the house.

---

## 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 a cottage built in 1888, it is one of the earliest houses in the district, representing the early residential development of Bulimba.

---

#### Rarity

##### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as a nineteenth century cottage, which includes a well that was dug behind the house.

---

#### Scientific

##### CRITERION C

The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history

as its 1880s well could contain artefacts that could shed light on the lifestyles of the previous owners.

---

#### 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 102 year association with early Bulimba pioneers the Crouch family.

---

## References

1. Ancestry.com.au, [http://search.ancestry.com.au/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=35&rank=1&new=1&so=3&MSAV=0&msT=1&gss=ms\\_f-35&gsfn=geoffrey&gsln=edyveanwalker&msrpn\\_\\_ftp=Tarragindi%2C+Queensland%2C+Australia&msrpn=100747|0|1652397|0|5027|0|30096|0|0|100747|0|&sbo=0&uidh=nd5&\\_83004003-n\\_xcl=f](http://search.ancestry.com.au/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=35&rank=1&new=1&so=3&MSAV=0&msT=1&gss=ms_f-35&gsfn=geoffrey&gsln=edyveanwalker&msrpn__ftp=Tarragindi%2C+Queensland%2C+Australia&msrpn=100747|0|1652397|0|5027|0|30096|0|0|100747|0|&sbo=0&uidh=nd5&_83004003-n_xcl=f)
2. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs, 1946, 2008 & 2011
3. Brisbane City Council, Drainage Plan, 40 Oxford St, Bulimba, 29 August 1961
4. Brisbane City Council, Heritage Unit, *Short History of Bulimba LAP – first draft* (Brisbane: BCC Heritage Unit, 1996)
5. Brisbane City Council, Bulimba Heritage Trail (2013)
6. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Detail Plan No. 1228
7. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website
8. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
9. Herbie Crouch, private photograph collection
10. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
11. Hughes, J David & Turner, R (editors), *Bulimba 1983 – local Anglican church history* (Bulimba: self-published, 1983)
12. John Oxley Library, Picture Queensland website, photographic collection: negative no. 63932
13. John Oxley Library, suburban history file – Bulimba
14. Johnston, William, 'Old Bulimba' in *The Historical Society of Queensland Journal Vol.1 No.5* (Brisbane: The Historical Society of Queensland, October 1918)
15. McDonald, Ivan, *Masterplan Report for David and Robyn Hudson – 40 Oxford St Bulimba* (Brisbane: Ivan McDonald Architects, March 2004)
16. "Natives frightened housewives in the 70s", *The Courier Mail*, 23 September 1950
17. "Old-Time Families" in unidentified newspaper, 19 May 1936
18. *The Queensland Methodist Times*, 11 June 1936

---

## Copyright Brisbane City Council

**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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*