

## Heritage Citation



### Donaldson's Residence

#### Key details

**Addresses** At 34 Cricket Street, Petrie Terrace, Queensland 4000

**Type of place** House

**Period** Victorian 1860-1890

**Style** Queenslander

**Lot plan** L6\_RP10677

**Key dates** Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004  
Date of Citation — January 2010

**Construction** Roof: Corrugated iron;  
Walls: Timber

This house was built in 1875 for carrier/drayman John Donaldson. It is a rare because its one of the few surviving two-storey 1870s Petrie Terrace timber residences remaining in Brisbane. The history of the Donaldson's Residence reflects the changes over the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the status of Petrie Terrace, one of Brisbane's earliest suburbs.

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## History

The property at 34 Cricket Street started as a larger block of land that was first sold for freehold title in a land sale conducted on 16 September 1861. William Gray, of Brisbane, bought the block designated City of Brisbane Allotment No.297 for £184.6.8. Williams had obtained a substantial block in Petrie Terrace comprising 1 acre, 2 roods and 21 perches.

Brisbane had been opened for free settlement in 1842. By 1861, the suburb of Petrie Terrace had become a fashionable address due its proximity to Brisbane's slowly expanding commercial centre. The land bought by William Gray was therefore already designated for either housing or shops but for no other purpose (e.g. farming or grazing).

Like many property investors, Gray subdivided his large suburban block into smaller house allotments. He moved quickly so on 20 May 1863, the block that is now recognised as 34 Cricket Street was sold to Robert Filshie of Brisbane. Filshie had purchased a vacant block measuring 15.5 perches that was designated subdivision 6 of Lot 297. Filshie already at home elsewhere in Brisbane so it is thought that he bought the land for investment purposes only. On 15 June 1864, Filshie mortgaged the property to obtain a bank loan of £125 from the Queensland Building Society. Filshie sold the small block onto James Meaney, of Brisbane, on 8 April 1870. In 1863, Cricket Street had been defined as a private road. By 1870, it has become a public thoroughfare.

Meaney only held onto the block for two years before selling it to John Donaldson, of Brisbane. Donaldson purchased subdivision 6 of Lot 297 on 17 August 1872. In 2001, an advertising brochure for 'Brisbane City Aussie Way Backpackers' that occupies 34 Cricket Street stated that the building was constructed c1872. The property owners probably assume that the year that Donaldson purchased the block of land was also the same year that he had his residence built. This was not the case.

In the 1874 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories, John Donaldson, whose occupation was denoted as carrier, was still listed as living in a residence at Grey Street in Brisbane. The Queensland Post Office Directories were published annually on the basis of a street-by-street survey that was conducted in the previous year. Thus it is known that Donaldson was living in Grey Street and not Cricket Street in 1873.

John Donaldson first appears as a resident of Cricket Street in the 1876 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories. Therefore it assumed that the residence at 34 Cricket Street, Petrie Terrace was built in 1875. In 1876, Donaldson's occupation is listed as a drayman. A dray is a low-slung, usually two-wheeled cart drawn by one or two large draft horses. In Brisbane, they were used to carry and deliver to households medium-sized goods bought from commercial premises. They were open-sided to allow for ease of loading and unloading.

Drays could deliver grocery orders, stock feed, trunks and even items of furniture. They were the nineteenth century equivalent of the modern delivery van.

As drays were so important to the distribution of goods and services in Brisbane, then being a carrier or drayman was a profitable way to make a living. Donaldson's financial position is reflected in the home that he had built in Cricket Street. By the mid-1870s, the suburb of Petrie Terrace was almost fully developed. The grandest residences (e.g. 'Princess Row' built 1863) were constructed along the ridgeline of Petrie Terrace, which allowed scenic views of Brisbane's growing commercial heart, the Brisbane River and the surrounding suburbs. The steep streets (e.g. Cricket Street) that ran from Petrie Terrace down to Hale Street were occupied by less elegant homes. The vast majority were small, single-storey workers cottages that suited the local small suburban allotment. But Donaldson had a large two-storey residence complimented with two wrought-iron railed front verandahs constructed on his small block. The house was a testament to his success as a small businessman. He did not even need to mortgage the land to cover the cost of building his new home.

In 1891, an economic depression started to spread throughout Australia. In Queensland, the 1890s Depression lasted until 1897. The effects of this Depression may have caused Donaldson to take the sole mortgage on his house and land at 34 Cricket Street. On 25 March 1892, he borrowed £300 from Joseph and Harriete (a widow) Young. Donaldson remained a drayman and retained ownership of the property until his death on 17 August 1893 when the property became the responsibility of the Queensland colonial government's Queensland Trustees Limited. Such were the changes to the suburb of Petrie Terrace that when Donaldson had built his home in 1875, it was one of just 14 houses lining Cricket Street. By the time of his death in 1893, Donaldson's Residence was part of a busy street containing over 26 houses and intersected by a grid of public thoroughfares (Shannon, Avon, and Auburn & Menzies Streets).

For the next 18 years, the property at 34 Cricket Street remained under colonial and then (after 1901) Queensland state government control. By the turn of the century, Petrie Terrace had lost its allure as people moved further afield to live in newer suburbs that were serviced by a growing tram and train network. Petrie Terrace, as an old suburb, became run-down and offered cheap, rental accommodation close to the CBD. It is probable that from 1893 to 1911, the Queensland Trustees Limited offered the former Donaldson Residence as a rental property. This trend continued under the property's new owners with the 1940 edition of the Queensland Post Office Directories showing that Mrs. Harriot Flynn was living at 34 Cricket Street.

It next entered private ownership when John Joseph Clarke bought 34 Cricket Street on 28 February 1911. At that time Clarke was an acting sergeant in the Queensland Police Service and he resided with his wife Mary in King Street. Clarke used the former Donaldson's Residence as an investment and a rental property. On the day of purchase, Clarke mortgaged the property for £351 through the Independent Order of Oddfellows, a British-based benevolent society (formed c1700s). By 1921, Sergeant Clarke, his wife and his daughter Dorothy Irene were living at the Rosalie Police Station on Fernberg Road. J.J. Clarke died on 7 March 1928 and his property was transmitted to his wife. On 2 October 1946, the property was transferred to spinster Dorothy Irene Clarke.

After 46 years, the former Donaldson's Residence passed from the hands of the Clarke family. On 5 June 1957, Franseco Antonio Ciancio became the new owner. In 1957, Ciancio converted the house into flats. The conversion of Brisbane's old (including many 19th Century) houses into flats was a common development in the 1950s and 1960s as a means of coping with Brisbane's growing population. The increasing demand for inner-city flats rose as a result of young workers leaving home and following the trend towards independent living.

Council required that flats be registered so that they could meet proper health and safety standards. Ciancio registered the former Donaldson's Residence as flats on 7 June 1957, 13 August 1958 and 1 September 1960. To increase the number of flats for rent, Ciancio gained Brisbane City Council approval for additional rooms in

the building on 31 October 1957. By the 1960s, Petrie Terrace and nearby Spring Hill were considered undesirable locations, almost inner-city slums full of poorly maintained old housing. Cheap boarding houses contributed to this poor image. On 29 September 1961, Ciancio applied to have the flats at 34 Cricket Street converted into a boarding house. Each tenant could rent a single room allowing many more individuals to be put into the former Donaldson's Residence. On 8 October 1963, Council approved Ciancio's application to add further rooms to his boarding house. The cost of the approved additions was £1,500. In 1962, tragedy had struck Francesco and his wife Vincenza Maria Ciancio. On 12 July 1962, their son Guiseppe died in Brisbane.

During Brisbane's property boom of the 1980s, both Petrie Terrace and Spring Hill experienced a revival in fortune as people seeking an inner-city lifestyle restored many nineteenth century houses. As real estate prices rose, there was renewed interest in the Petrie Terrace property market. As a result, there was a rapid turnover of ownerships of 34 Cricket Street. Ciancio sold the former Donaldson's Residence to Helen Constance Hart on 2 August 1984. Helen Marie Pilling and Brian Norman Schellback obtained title on 12 February 1988. Christine Kay Rae followed them on 19 September of the same year. On 4 March 1992, Ms. Rae applied to have the boarding house converted into an inner-city backpacker hostel. Plans for the proposed backpackers' hostel were completed in March 1993. As part of its conversion into youth-orientated backpacker accommodation, a pool was dug into the rear courtyard of the former Donaldson's Residence. Other alterations include a community laundry, luggage storage facilities, security lockers and dormitory-style accommodation.

The heritage value of the former Donaldson's Residence has been utilised as a marketing tool by Brisbane City Aussie Way Backpackers Hostel. Its c2001 brochure, designed in particular to attract interstate or overseas backpackers, advertises the opportunity to: "Stay at one of Brisbane's inner city earliest colonial homes (circa 1872) situated in a quiet street." On 1 January 2004, the former Donaldson's Residence was recognised as a heritage place by the Brisbane City Council when it was entered onto the City Plan Heritage Register (CPHR).

The former Donaldson's Residence is a rare example of a 1870s two-storey private home. There are few 1870s houses on the CPHR as most of Brisbane's surviving nineteenth residences were constructed during Brisbane's economic and building boom of the 1880s or later.

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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

as the history of this residence reflects Petrie Terrace's evolving role over three centuries as a Brisbane suburb.

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## Rarity

### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as few two-storey, timber 1870s houses have survived in Brisbane.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Aussie Way Backpackers Hostel, *Aussie Way Hostel brochure* 2001
  2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards
  3. Brisbane City Council, 1946, 2001, 2005 & 2009 aerial photographs
  4. Brisbane City Council's Central Library, local history sheets
  5. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map, 7 February 1927
  6. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
  7. John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs – Estate Maps
  8. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
  9. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
  10. [http://www.ancestry.com.au/?o\\_iid=22129&o\\_lid=22129](http://www.ancestry.com.au/?o_iid=22129&o_lid=22129)
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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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