

## Heritage Citation



**Eldernell**

### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Bishopsbourne
<b>Addresses</b>	At 39 Eldernell Terrace, Hamilton, Queensland 4007
<b>Type of place</b>	Mansion
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Rustic Gothic
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP98597
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — January 2006

**Construction**

Roof: Tile;  
Walls: Stone

**People/associations**

A.H. Conrad and T.B.F Gargett (Architect);  
James Cowlshaw (Architect);  
Sir Philip Nigel Warrington Strong (Occupant)

**Criterion for listing**

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

This substantial residence is significant because of the evidence it provides of the early pattern of development in the Hamilton area. It is also a fine example of a mid-Victorian stone dwelling, which is unusual in Brisbane. Designed by prominent Brisbane architect James Cowlshaw, this house was the residence of the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, Sir Philip Nigel Warrington Strong, from 1964 to 2006. It is further significant due to the inclusion on the site of an architect-designed chapel built at the entrance to the grounds. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was designed by the architectural firm Conrad and Gargett, and has strong aesthetic qualities. The chapel highlights the use of the site as a prominent home for Anglican archbishops for over forty years.

## History

Eldernell was built in 1869 for William Hemmant, a partner in the Drapery firm of Stewart and Hemmant, and was designed by the prominent Brisbane architect James Cowlshaw. Both Hemmant and his wife Lucy originated from Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire, England near which the town of "Eldernell" is located. It is likely that Hemmant named the property in Hamilton 'Eldernell' in memory of the original English location.

Cowlshaw trained as an architect in Sydney before arriving in Brisbane in 1860. He soon established himself as one of the town's most successful private architects and was also a land speculator, newspaper director and Conservative MLC in the Queensland parliament. Cowlshaw designed bank buildings throughout Queensland in addition to many residences, churches and business premises in Brisbane and elsewhere. His obituary described his architectural legacy as "banks and business premises and the better-class residences".<sup>1</sup>

Built on the crest of a hill, the house overlooks the rest of Hamilton and has panoramic views of the city. It was built at a time when Hamilton was sparsely populated and semi rural in character, with only a handful of very fine homes on large estates. Until 1899, the only public transport was horse drawn tram. Hemmant's estate originally occupied more than four acres of hillside land and stretched from Windemere Rd to what is now Kingsford Smith Drive.

Though substantially reduced from its original size, the estate has remained almost intact since 1939 and is a large land portion to this day. It is one of few remaining examples in the area of the large estates that were subdivided in the 1920's, and a significant reminder of the elite status the suburb of Hamilton once held.

Enclosed within the property are significantly large trees and gardens that contribute to the landmark property's aesthetic appearance and its visual setting.

The house was renamed Bishopsbourne in 1964 when it became the new home of the Anglican Archbishop of

Brisbane, Archbishop Phillip Strong. The previous Bishop's residence was the original Bishopsbourne at Milton. The original name (Eldernell) is now preserved in the name of the street on which it is located - Eldernell Tce. Following the purchase, the Anglican Church constructed a new chapel at the entrance to the grounds. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was designed by architectural firm Conrad and Gargett and constructed in 1964. It is reminiscent of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and is a significant aesthetic addition to the site. The presence of the chapel highlights the use of the site as a prominent home for Anglican archbishops for over forty years.

---

## Description

'Eldernell' is a single-story stone mansion designed by James Cowlshaw and constructed in 1869. It is set in the Victorian style, with a steep pitched gable roof and tall medieval chimneys evoking a church-like appearance. This is continued in the gabled porch and Gothic archway. The setting of the house on the crest of a hill, with scenic views and extensive grounds adds to the aesthetic quality of the landmark home.

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is a modest sized timber and stone building, with an overhanging pitched roof, built at the entrance to the grounds of the property. The tapering plan and glazing bars set in the glass windows at the end of the church focus attention on the altar, while horizontal windows running the length of the chapel on each side allow sunlight into the main area of the chapel.

---

## 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 it demonstrates the pattern of development in the Ascot/Hamilton area of large estates built by the elite on hilltops above the Brisbane River during the mid to late nineteenth century.

---

## Rarity

### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as a rare example of an 1860s stone residence in the local and Brisbane area.

---

## Representative

### CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places as an example of a rare mid-Victorian stone mansion.

---

## Aesthetic

### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance as a prominent example of the work of architect James Cowlshaw, and as a significant and visible landmark in the Hamilton area.

---

## 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 as a house designed by prominent Brisbane architect James Cowlshaw and as the former residence of Sir Philip Nigel Warrington Strong, who was the Archbishop of Brisbane from 1963-1970.

---

## Supporting images



Photographer unknown,  
'Part of a panorama of the house and garden of  
Eldernell, Hamilton, Brisbane', undated,  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



Photographer unknown,  
'Back of Eldernell, residence in Hamilton, Queensland',  
undated,  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



Photographer unknown,  
'Gardens of Eldernell in Hamilton, Brisbane', undated,  
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

---

## References

1. Quoted in Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century: A Biographical Dictionary* (Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994), p. 45
  2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
  3. BCC Heritage Trail – Hamilton. 3rd edition. Nd
  4. Department of Natural Resources, Certificates of Title
  5. Queensland Post Office Directories
  6. *The Queenslander*, March 27, 1930
- 

## 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 May 2021)



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*