

Heritage Citation



Holdgate's Cottage

Key details

Addresses	At 544 Boundary Street, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Georgian
Lot plan	L9_RP10397
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018 Date of Citation — April 2014
Construction	Walls: Masonry

This nineteenth-century brick cottage was built for Robert Holdgate, master mariner, between 1864 and 1874 in close proximity to the wharves which were situated at the east end of Boundary Street. The modest dwelling reflects Spring Hill's pattern of development in the mid to late nineteenth century when the lower slopes of the suburb became home to the working classes. The brick cottage also reflects the once intense residential nature of Boundary Street in the late nineteenth century.

History

The convict settlement was closed in 1839 and in 1842 Moreton Bay was officially opened for free settlement as part of the colony of New South Wales. At this time the area now known as Spring Hill was Crown Land and by 1856 the government had begun to subdivide the land and sell to private investors. Initially the land on top of the hills was bought by wealthy Brisbane residents who established large houses overlooking the town. Smaller and less expensive lots were bought by those of slighter means on which modest workers' cottages were erected. Spring Hill quickly became one of Brisbane's earliest dormitory suburbs, where most of its inhabitants went to jobs every day in other areas.

By the 1870s, following further subdivision of land in the Spring Hill area, the lower slopes of the hills were becoming increasingly crowded. In 1885 the Queensland Government introduced the *Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act 1885*. The government began to have concerns with over-population in inner-city areas from as early as the 1870s. The construction of small tenements and tiny cottages on very small parcels of land increased the risk of disease and fire throughout the inner-city suburbs. With the passing of the 1885 legislation it became illegal to subdivide land into lots of less than sixteen perches (405m²). Many of these small cottages on tiny lots remain in Spring Hill and not only give Spring Hill its character, but also represent this important era in Brisbane's history. By the 1890s, Spring Hill had become Brisbane's most crowded suburb.

In 1864, well before this legislation was passed, Robert Holdgate purchased 15.75 perches of land along Boundary Street. The town limit was denoted by Boundary Street at this time and a law forbidding Aboriginal people from being within the town limits after 4pm every day and all day Sunday was enforced by the local police. Despite this, working class residential development flourished along the street.

Robert Holdgate was first listed in the *Post Office Directories* residing in Boundary Street in 1874, confirming that the brick cottage was constructed between 1864, when the land was first subdivided into a small lot and Holdgate purchasing the property, and Holdgate being documented as living in the house in 1874. Holdgate was recorded as a master mariner and the cottage's close proximity to the wharves which were situated at the eastern end of Boundary Street, may have been a factor in Holdgate building in this location. To demonstrate the working class nature of Boundary Street at this time, the occupations of those living in the block bounded by Bradley and Milne Streets in 1885 included two mariners, a labourer, a railway porter and a shipping clerk.

By 1883, Holdgate was residing in a house on Fortescue Street, Spring Hill and his cottage on Boundary Street had become a rental property. Between Milne Street and Bradley Street from the 1870s to 1895, the inconsistent house numbers and high number of tenants along this stretch of Boundary Street make it difficult to

identify those residing in 544 Boundary Street throughout this time. However, in 1895, George Blake, an engineer, purchased the property and lived in the house for the next three years, before moving to Coorparoo in 1898. Blake sold the house to John Healy, who never resided in Boundary Street; the cottage once again becoming a rental property.

In 1911, Winiefred Anna O'Mara purchased the cottage and in the same year her husband, John O'Mara, was listed in 544 Boundary Street. To confirm that the house numbers listed in the Post Office Directories are consistent with today's, the 1914 *Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board Detail Plan No. 20* records the subject site as 544 Boundary Street. It can be confirmed, therefore, that the O'Mara family were residing there as they are listed in the *Post Office Directories* at the address. This is further confirmed by the 1913 *Electoral Rolls* that list John and Winiefred O'Mara living at 544 Boundary Street. John O'Mara's profession was a tailor and he resided in the house until his death in 1921. After this date, Winiefrid O'Mara continued to live in the house with her family until she died in 1938. The house stayed in the O'Mara family until 1947.

'Holdgate's Cottage' is a rare surviving nineteenth-century brick cottage which represents the early development of Spring Hill, one of Brisbane's oldest suburbs. Built right up to the front property border, its location along Boundary Street is significant as the majority of the early houses along the street no longer exist.

Description

Holdgate's Cottage is a modest one-storey, rendered masonry cottage with a steep hipped roof clad with corrugated metal sheeting, fronting Boundary Street, Spring Hill. The building retains original timber framed sash windows and two masonry chimneys. The well composed symmetrical front stands behind a small front garden with rendered masonry fence with iron palisade.

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 provides evidence of the early pattern of residential development of Spring Hill in the 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 nineteenth-century brick cottage in Spring Hill.

References

1. 1914 *Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board Detail Plan No. 20*
 2. Post Office Directories.
 3. Certificates of Titles, Department of Natural Resources and Mines
 4. Queensland Electoral Rolls
 5. Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle, *The Character of Residential Areas, Brisbane*, A Study for the Brisbane City Council, 1994
 6. Brisbane History Group, *Housing, Health, the River and the Arts*, Papers No. 3, 1985
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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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