

## Heritage



### Key details

<b>Also known as</b>	Blue Waters
<b>Addresses</b>	At 22 Park Parade, Shorncliffe, Queensland 4017
<b>Type of place</b>	House
<b>Period</b>	Victorian 1860-1890
<b>Style</b>	Free Style
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP4524; L2_RP4524
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2005 Date of Information — April 2011
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

## People/associations

Alexander Brown Wilson (Architect);  
Hubert George Thomas - additions (Architect)

Built in 1889 as an investment property for the well-known land agent John W. Todd, *Howrah* demonstrates the growing popularity of Shorncliffe as a residential area and seaside resort in the late 19th Century. This large residence was designed by the highly regarded Brisbane-based architect Alexander Brown Wilson. Extensive additions and alterations, designed by architect Hubert O.G. Thomas, were made to *Howrah* in 1898 after it was sold to ironmonger George Bond.

## History

Shorncliffe and nearby Sandgate are located 17 kilometres from central Brisbane. The first land sales in the Sandgate area occurred during the 1850s, and much of the early development centred on the area now known as Shorncliffe. On 29 April 1880, Sandgate was declared a constituted municipality. During the 1880s, the area around Pier Avenue and Yundah Street became the town's communal and civic centre. The first Town Hall, constructed in 1882, the Court House, and the first two police stations were located in this area.

From the 1880s onwards, the Sandgate area became increasingly popular as a residential and seaside resort town. The high area overlooking the sea was favoured by well-to-do residents of Brisbane wishing to escape the summer heat and later became known as Shorncliffe.

By the 1880s, there were at least five hotels in Shorncliffe, including the grand Seaview Hotel. The opening of the train line to Brisbane in 1882 (extended to Shorncliffe in 1897) and the construction of the Sandgate Pier boosted the development of the area. The train line to Sandgate was the first line built solely for passengers in the Brisbane area. The train line provided a quick and efficient service for the growing number of residents commuting to Brisbane, and holidaymakers and day-trippers. What is now known as Shorncliffe Station was previously called Sandgate Station and was the 'end of the line' destination for residents and visitors.

Numerous attractions catering to visitors were also developed around this time. For example, separate bathing areas for men and women, dressing sheds, a caretaker's cottage, office and licensed area were built close to the already established Sandgate Pier. In the 1930s, an enclosed area protected by railway lines, a shark net and stone wall was constructed as a shark-proof swimming enclosure lit at night. Additionally, Flinders Parade, between First Avenue and Gladstone Street (now Twelfth Avenue), was dotted with cafes, refreshment rooms, flats and boarding houses. Attractions on the foreshores included sand-garden competitions, donkey, goat and gig rides, canoe hire and a miniature railway.

However, the building of the Hornibrook Highway Bridge in 1935 brought mixed blessings for Shorncliffe, Sandgate and Brighton. This was because while the highway brought more passing trade to the area, it also enabled visitors to travel further north, typically by public transport, to the Redcliffe Peninsula for holidays rather than vacationing in Sandgate as had traditionally been the case. After the Second World War, increased car ownership also led to a further decline in the area's popularity as people were able to travel further beyond Brisbane's city limits for a holiday. Car ownership also brought the expansion of Brighton, Deagon and Nashville as outer suburbs became more attractive.

## The development of *Howrah*

*Howrah* was originally designed by well-known architect Alexander Brown Wilson and constructed in 1889 as an investment property for the well-known land agent John W. Todd. Born in Scotland, Todd began his business in Brisbane in the 1870s and worked right up till his death in 1905. He was 'largely connected with the development of Brisbane in sales of land' in the 1890s. When *Howrah* was constructed, Todd was living in Toowong in his residence called *Grosvenor*, his home, until he died. Designed to take in sea views and breezes, *Howrah* is an ornate timber house featuring a multi-faceted roof line, complex windows and twin barley-twisted chimney. It demonstrates the growing popularity of Shorncliffe as a residential area and seaside resort in the late 19th Century.

Glasgow-born Alexander Brown Wilson was a noted Brisbane-based architect. He served as a junior, and later senior, draftsman under Colonial Architect (and fellow Scotsman) F.D.G. Stanley. In 1881 Stanley commenced private practice in Brisbane and Wilson joined him soon afterwards in March 1882 to become his 'principal' draftsman. After an overseas study tour in 1883, Wilson returned to Brisbane and, by August 1884, had opened his private practice. He soon became Brisbane's leading residential architect. He also undertook numerous non-residential projects, including churches, warehouses, offices, and factories. Wilson was an active member of the Brisbane architecture profession and in 1888, Wilson was appointed a foundation Fellow of the Queensland Institute of Architects. He served the institute for decades in various capacities including as President on four occasions between 1899 and 1922. Wilson also lectured at the Central Technical College and was the honorary architect to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

As well as *Howrah*, Wilson is credited with the design of many significant large upper-class villas in and around Brisbane, including *Kingauld*, at 116 Dornoch Terrace, Highgate Hill (1888), *Leckhampton*, at 69 Shafston Avenue, Kangaroo Point (1889), *Como*, at 88 Kadumba Street, Yeronga (1889), *Verona*, at 342 Cavendish Road, Coorparoo (1895), *Home*, at 9 Leopard Street, Kangaroo Point (1903), and *Eulamere*, 87 Mowbray Terrace, East Brisbane (1911). These are carefully considered designs that often-adapted English styles, such as Queen Ann and Arts and Crafts, to the cultural and climatic context of Queensland. The style evolution of Wilson's residential architecture reflects a shift from 'houses built much on the models of those left in the old country' to a climate-responsive design philosophy. Wilson discussed his design philosophy in a 1918 paper presented at the Second Australian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition in Brisbane, entitled, 'Domestic Architecture for Tropical and Subtropical Australia.'

From 1890 onwards, Todd attempted to sell *Howrah* while also offering it out for rent. In 1896, *Howrah* was described as having 'eleven rooms, gas and every convenience.' In 1898 *Howrah* was transferred to ironmonger George Bond. Despite being a large home already, Bond undertook extensive additions to *Howrah*, designed and managed by Welsh-born architecture Hubert G. O. Thomas. Thomas migrated to Brisbane in 1883 after training as an architect in the United Kingdom, establishing a successful private practice in 1885. After his marriage to Elizabeth Lee in 1898, he moved to Sandgate. He also temporarily moved his practice to Sandgate, though he moved back to Brisbane in 1903. He was an active member of the architectural profession being made a member of the British Society of Architects in 1904. In 1910, he was made a Fellow of the Queensland Institute of Architects. Amongst his notable works was the bandstand in Moora Park, Sandgate (1897).

By 1912, *Howrah* was owned by William and Adeline Quinn. The Quinn family were held in high esteem in the local community. The family were involved in several social clubs with Adeline serving as President of the Sandgate Croquet Club, William in the role of President of the Sandgate Golf Club and their daughter Adeline Ida a generous supporter of the Queensland Country Women's Association. Following the death of William in 1923 and Adeline in 1942, the house was later sold out of the family. *Howrah* was subsequently renamed *Blue Waters* by later owners.

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**Note:** This information 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 information 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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