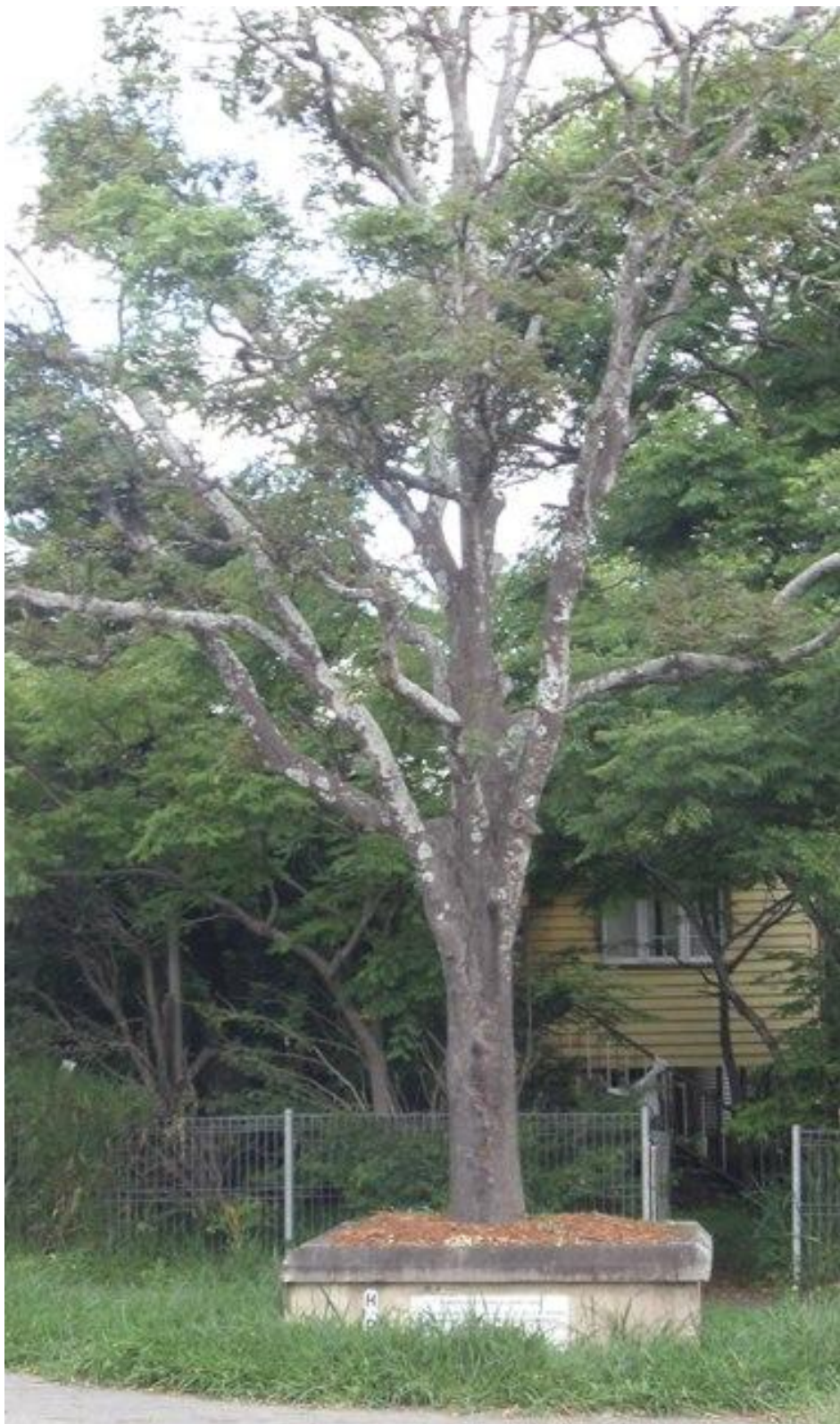




Local
Heritage
Places

Heritage Citation



Memorial Crows Ash

Key details

Addresses	At 143A Sylvan Road, Toowong, Queensland 4066
Type of place	Monument / memorial, Tree/s
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Lot plan	L50_RP160556
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — October 2006
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

Planted in September 1924 by the Mayor of Toowong, the Crows Ash symbolises two important events in Brisbane's history. Through an interpretive plaque, it commemorates the centenary of the landing of Lieutenant John Oxley and a later inscription commemorates forty years of local government by the Toowong Town Council, it ceasing to function on the inauguration of the (Greater) Brisbane City Council on 1st October 1925.

History

Planted in September 1924 and located at the corner of Milton and Sylvan Roads Toowong, Crows Ash (*Flindersia Australis*) are native to the continent and were common prior to white settlement. Achieving a life expectancy of 200 years in a natural setting, they were a popular hardwood and many older houses in the city boast Crows Ash floors.

A marble plaque located on the sandstone planter box records two separate events. The first inscription reads:

Flindersia Australis (Crows Ash)

This Tree Was Planted On Sept 1924 By The Mayor Of Toowong To Commemorate The Centenary
Of The Landing Of Lieutenant John Oxley

Alderman

A. Watson (Mayor) MD Davies

I Ham WH Booth

RJ Burnett EA Keefer

J Barker
L Degrant

G Rose
WE Stock

The Surveyor General of New South Wales, Oxley had been sent by Governor Brisbane to explore the Moreton Bay locality. Overcrowding of the penal colonies in Sydney and Port Macquarie were causing problems and Oxley's exploration resulted in a prison camp being established at Moreton Bay (later Redcliffe) in September 1824. This site was found to be unsuitable, and in 1825 a permanent settlement was established 32 kilometres upstream on the Brisbane River, the site of the present day CBD.

Located beneath is a separate inscription in a different font. It reads:

The Toowong Town Council after forty years of Local Government ceased to function on the inauguration of the (Greater) Brisbane City Council 1st October 1925.

With the introduction of the Greater Brisbane scheme in 1925, Brisbane, South Brisbane plus six adjoining towns and councils joined into one municipal unit. The only city council in Australia that covered the entire metropolitan region, the new Brisbane City Council's area of authority was approximately 970 square kilometres. Containing selected members of the superseded municipalities, 20 aldermen were elected under adult franchise and a new Mayor elected by the city as a whole. The first Mayor of the new Greater Brisbane Council was William Alfred Jolly, an alderman of the Windsor Town Council for thirteen years and Mayor of Windsor for five years.. The combination of the councils proved to be a success, with many important works being carried out in the area of roads, bridge building, sewerage and lighting. William Jolly would serve six years in office before retiring in 1931.

Surprisingly, even the Lord Mayor himself had reservations on the scheme at the time:

I had no say in the formation of the scheme. At the time, I had some grave doubts as to the wisdom of embarking upon such an ambitious scheme which covered a radius of ten miles. I must admit, however, after the experience of the actual working of the scheme, that there is a good deal to be said in favour of the larger area, particularly in a growing and expanding city like Brisbane, as it enabled those in charge to plan the future developments of the City in the best interest of the Community as a whole.

Jolly went on to identify one aspect that he felt was missing from the merger:

One of the disadvantages of the Greater City control, is that it tends to destroy local civic pride. There existed a friendly rivalry between the various old Councils, which helped to stimulate a healthy interest in the local affairs. Under the new Order, there is nobody to give a lead in this direction.

This physical reference to the inauguration of the Greater Brisbane City Council is one of the few known public acknowledgments of the occurrence.

Description

This specimen appears to be stunted for a tree of 75 years, probably due to the restrictive nature of the stone planter box. There is currently a BCC Vegetation Protection Order on the tree only.

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 the Crows Ash, plaque and planter box commemorate three things; the centenary of the landing by Oxley, the formation of the Greater Brisbane City Council and the Crows Ash itself - an Australian native plant which was once prolific around Toowong and Brisbane's hills prior to white settlement.

Rarity

CRITERION B

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

as a rare and unusual example of an early council memorial dedicated to one of Brisbane's pioneers.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as the Crows Ash makes an important contribution to the visual appeal of the Sylvan Road Streetscape. Its location not only softens, but adds a unique character to what would otherwise be an ordinary corner.

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 record of the Toowong Town Council and its cessation upon being absorbed into the Greater Brisbane City Council.

References

1. 1824 – 1974 Sesqui – Centenary of Brisbane, Brisbane City Council, 1974
2. Fitzgerald, Ross. *From 1915 To The Early 1980's: A History of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984
3. Johnston, W Ross. *Brisbane The First 30 Years*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988

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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.

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



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