



Heritage Citation



Mrs Long's Cottage

Key details

Addresses At 116 Isaac Street, Spring Hill, Queensland 4000

Type of place House

Period Victorian 1860-1890

Style Georgian

Lot plan L2_RP10519

Key dates Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018
Date of Citation — May 2014

Construction Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

116 Isaac Street is a modest timber cottage constructed in 1884 on four perches of land (101m²) following the subdivision of a thirteen perch block into two smaller lots. The cottage that was subsequently built on the four perch lot was for Mrs Elizabeth Long who then resided in the house for over thirty five years. Constructed just prior to the introduction of the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act in 1885 which prohibited the subdivision of land into lots less than sixteen perches (405m²), the tiny cottage is one of the best examples in Brisbane of the acute land subdivisions that led to crowded conditions in these early suburbs.

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. The town limit was denoted by Boundary Street at this time. By the 1870s, following further subdivision of land in the Spring Hill area, the lower slopes of the hills were becoming increasingly crowded.

In 1875 John and Ellen Battern purchased a thirteen perch block of land on Isaac Street. They constructed a house on the lot (now 118 Isaac Street, house no longer extant). The Batterns lived in the house for only a year and then rented it to tenants. In 1880 John McDonald, a compositor, purchased the property and was first listed at the address in the Post Office Directories in 1883. In 1884 McDonald subdivided his land into two lots – a nine perch block and a four perch block. The larger block contained the already existing house (No. 118 Isaac Street); the smaller, vacant four perch block (116 Isaac Street) was sold in 1885 to Thomas Long.

Long was recorded as a clerk with the General Post Office, residing in James Street, Fortitude Valley. In the same year as he purchased the land, the small cottage was constructed, and in the same year Mrs Long was listed in the *Post Office Directories* at the address.

Mrs Elizabeth Long was Thomas's mother. In 1883, her husband, John Long, deserted her leaving her with nothing. At a time before social security, there was no government support if the husband and sole earner left. In April 1883, however, John Long appeared before the police magistrate charged with desertion of his wife and "*leaving her without the means of support, was ordered to pay 10s. per week for a period of twelve months for his wife's maintenance*"¹. It seems, then, that her son, Thomas, built her the cottage to live in after her marriage had ended.

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). It also regulated the width of new roads and lanes and the distance between new houses and the road.

In a February 1886 article in the *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, Spring Hill's overcrowded conditions were commented on:

Some steps should be taken in order to put a stop to the manner in which buildings are huddled together in the suburbs of Brisbane. One has only to visit, say, Spring Hill, and he will see three or four dwellings on a small allotment of ground barely sufficient for one decent dwelling house ... fever and other diseases will be breaking out which will spread like a plague, and the cry then will be "I always said it would end badly"².

By the 1890s, Spring Hill had become Brisbane's most crowded suburb.

Mrs Long was first recorded in the house in 1885 and continued to reside there until her death in 1920.

The small timber cottage situated on a four perch block of land is important as it represents the intense subdivisions of land that occurred in Spring Hill prior to the 1885 legislation was passed. It reflects the increasingly crowded conditions that the division of lots caused in the inner-city suburb and the subsequent need for government legislation to control it.

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 a very small timber cottage built in 1884 on a four perch block of land, it demonstrates the intense subdivisions of land in Spring Hill causing over-crowded conditions that led to the introduction of the Undue Subdivision of Land Preventions Act 1885.

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 timber cottage situated on a four perch parcel of land, it is rare in Brisbane due to the introduction of the Undue Subdivision of Land Preventions Act 1885 that prevented the subdivision of lots less than sixteen perches.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as a very small nineteenth century cottage built on a four perch block of land.

References

1. *The Brisbane Courier*, 11 April 1883, p5
2. *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 13 February 1886, p15
3. Post Office Directories.
4. Certificates of Titles, Department of Natural Resources and Mines
5. Queensland Electoral Rolls
6. *Australian Death Index 1923*
7. *Australian Birth Index 1858*
8. Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle, *The Character of Residential Areas, Brisbane*, A Study for the Brisbane City Council, 1994
9. Brisbane History Group, *Housing, Health, the River and the Arts*, Papers No. 3, 1985
10. *The Brisbane Courier*, 30 September 1885, p4

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 June 2022)



Dedicated to a better Brisbane