

Heritage Citation



The Wilderness

Key details

Addresses	At 12 Tarragindi Road, Tarragindi, Queensland 4121
Type of place	House
Period	Victorian 1860-1890
Lot plan	L1_RP75457
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 29 November 2019 Date of Citation — May 2016
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

This substantial timber home featuring wide verandahs with cast iron decorative balustrading was built circa 1888 for Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, a successful Brisbane ironmonger. It was originally situated within 138 acres owned by Robert and then Benjamin Cribb from 1864 which gave the house its name - 'The Wilderness'. The Wilson family, who held early church services in a separate building on the property, played a significant role in

the development of the Annerley/Tarragindi district.

Parts of 'The Wilderness' were subdivided from 1915 by the Wilsons, including the Cracknell Road frontage. In 1925, Wilson sold the house and a surrounding acre of land to Eric Petrie. Developers purchased the remaining land and subdivided it for sale, advertising the benefits of the area's views and proximity to public transport.

History

'The Wilderness' was built for Benjamin Gilmore Wilson in 1888 on land which was part of 138 acres granted to Robert Cribb in 1864. In 1867, this land was transferred to Robert Cribb's brother, Benjamin.

Robert and Benjamin Cribb were established bankers and merchants in London when they decided to immigrate to the Colony of New South Wales. They arrived in Brisbane aboard the *Chasely* in 1849. Benjamin established a retail business in Ipswich and, in 1853, married Clarissa Foote the sister of his store manager, John Clarke Foote. In 1854, Cribb and Foote went into partnership and opened a successful department store on the corner of Bell and Brisbane Streets in Ipswich.

Benjamin Cribb was a Member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1858. After the separation of Queensland in 1859, he served as a Queensland MLA from 1861 to 1867. Queensland Legislative Council. Cribb died in 1874 at his Ipswich home and his land at Tarragindi passed to his widow, Clarissa.

In 1888, the Cribb's daughter, Esther, married Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, reportedly an employee of her late father. Their society wedding at Ipswich was reported in detail in the *Queensland Figaro* and *Punch* journal. Records indicate that Benjamin and Esther Wilson were residing on the property from their wedding, some years before the transfer of titles was formalised in 1896.

This area within the Division of Stephens (created in 1886) was known at this time by several names including Ekibin (an Aboriginal word), Boggo Junction, Annerley and Tarragindi. Thomas Blackett Stephens established a wool scour and fellmongery at Ekibin Creek in 1862 before going on to become a successful politician.

During the late nineteenth century, the locality was sprinkled with the homes of several prominent residents including 'Ingleside', the home of Digby Denham, and 'Tarragindi', the home of William Grimes, yet another local MLA. Another grand home was 'Huntingtower', built for Mr L. Cusack. The economic boom of the 1880s and the advent of the tram along Ipswich Road in 1899 contributed to residential development in the area. The prestige of the suburb was perhaps demonstrated by the construction of the very imposing Chardon Hotel in 1892 on the corner of Ipswich and Cracknell Roads.

Benjamin Gilmore Wilson was born in Queensland in 1861, the son of the Reverend Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, who immigrated with his wife, Mary Anne, to Brisbane in the 1850s. The Rev Wilson one of the first Baptist ministers in Brisbane and also a homeopathic medical practitioner. His son, Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, established a successful ironmongery business in Queen Street in partnership with JS Southerdon in the 1880s. By 1897, BG Wilson and Co was the largest hardware store in Brisbane with additional stores in the Valley and George Street and, reportedly, its own brass money tokens that were given to customers to encourage spending in the stores.

The Wilderness was a well-known home to local residents. It originally faced Cracknell Road across extensive

gardens which included a tennis court and was approached by a circular drive. A bush track led from the property to the Annerley Junction School which began in 1883 in a cottage before moving to a new site at the junction of Annerley Road and Ipswich Road in 1891. Esther Wilson and her neighbour, Mrs Grimes, taught Sunday school in the Wilson and Grimes family homes and played a role in establishing the Congregational Church in Cracknell Road (now Annerley Uniting Church). An old building on the southern end of The Wilderness property was used for church services prior to being moved to the rear of the Congregational Memorial Hall in Cracknell Road.

From 1915, (when the tramline was extended to Cracknell Road) some of The Wilderness, including the Cracknell Road frontage and tennis court on the eastern side of the house was subdivided for housing. The elevated position of the land with views towards the city and the proximity to tram and bus routes made these sites attractive to well to do residents. 'The Wilderness' was further subdivided in 1925 into 312 housing lots, leaving an acre of land around the family home.

Benjamin Wilson sold his Queen Street business in 1920 and then, in 1925, sold The Wilderness to Eric Petrie before moving to a property named 'Bremner View' on the outskirts of Ipswich.

The Wilderness continued to play a role in community life throughout the interwar years, hosting CWA meetings, fundraisers and other social events. An article in the Telegraph on 13 November 1937 noted that the "heat of the afternoon was minimised by the coolness of the trees and the green lawns and an attractive setting was ready for the garden party organised by the Women's Guild of the St Luke's Church of England". The Petrie family later converted the house to two flats and sold the property in 1957 to the Hoskens. The new owners returned The Wilderness to a single residence and reportedly reinstated the timber entrance gates that once stood in Cracknell Road to their present location in Tarragindi Road.

The construction of The Wilderness - a fine house built with quality materials on ten acres of elevated land - reflected the social status of families such as the Cribbs and the Wilsons, who were members of Brisbane's wealthy merchant class in the late nineteenth century.

Description

The Wilderness is a substantial timber house with a roof of corrugated metal sheets and a masonry chimney. It features wide verandahs on three sides with separate roofs and decorative cast iron balustrading. (The pattern of the cast iron detail was featured in an undated catalogue of ironwork specimens produced by the firm of John Crase and Co.) The verandah posts have ornate cast iron brackets.

The front entrance faces south towards Cracknell Road and is centrally located on the front verandah. It features a timber door with side panels beneath a decorative, semi-circular, timber parapet. At the front, the house is slightly raised and the entrance reached by a short flight of timber stairs. The front wall is single skin framed timber with large double hung windows.

At the sides of the house, the ground falls away slightly and the undercroft is enclosed with timber palings. The eastern side of the house features a bay window onto the verandah.

The western boundary of the property (facing the entrance on Tarragindi Road) is enclosed by a timber fence and double timber gates with restrained timber panels.

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 is an early and representative residence which demonstrates the pattern of European settlement in the Tarragindi/Annerley area in the late nineteenth century when the area was a rural outpost with fine homes on estates established by influential Brisbane residents, including Benjamin Cribb MLA, Digby Denham MLA and Samuel Grimes MLA.

Representative

CRITERION D

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

as a fine and relatively intact example of a late nineteenth century, high status, single storied verandahed house on a large allotment. Its characteristics include wide verandahs with separate roofs on three sides, spacious rooms with high quality detailing and lofty ceilings, a bay window and ornate iron verandah balustrading and brackets.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

as an attractive and relatively intact residence with generous proportions and decorative features, set on a large

allotment with mature vegetation and attractive timber entrance gates. The house and its setting evoke the traditional architecture and elite lifestyle in Brisbane of the period.

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 the home for over thirty years of Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, a very successful Brisbane ironmonger in Queen Street, and his wife, Esther. Esther Wilson (the daughter of wealthy Ipswich merchant and local landowner, Robert Cribb) was active in the local community and helped establish the Annerley Congregational Church.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Surveyors Notebooks
2. Brisbane City Council Aerial Photographs
3. Picture Queensland. "Cracknell Road Estate, Annerley"
4. Kerr, John (ed) *The Annals of Annerley: Proceedings of the Annerley Conference*. (Brisbane, Royal Historical Society of Qld.1997).
5. Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
6. Queensland Post Office Directories
7. Queensland Figaro and Punch. 1 Sept 1888
8. Realestatecom.au. Information on 12 Tarragindi Road, Tarragindi. Retrieved April 2016.
9. Queensland Electoral Rolls, 1895, 1900. Find My Past website. Retrieved 10 Mar 2016.
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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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