

Street Address	27 Roger Street, Birkdale
GPS/RPD	Lot 1 on RP143286
Place Type	Built



Red-e-map (RCC, 2016).



Birkdale House, Birkdale (RCC, 2012).

Condition	Good	Integrity	Good
Statutory Listings	Local Heritage Place		
Non-Statutory Listings	No current listing		
Inspection Date	20/02/2017		

Historical Context

Birkdale House was likely built around 1887-1887 by James Baron, an engineer at Gilbert Burnett’s nearby Wellington Point sawmill. Burnett was one of the first settlers in the Wellington Point area, taking over Louis Hope’s land in 1874, and later establishing Whepstead and Fernbourne.[1] He ran the Wellington Point sugar mill and sawmill in what was known as his Trafalgar Vale Estate, which reflects of the early development in the area with timber and sugar being important to European settlement.

The land (portion 30) had originally been owned by Charles Haly before it was transferred to Gilbert Burnett in 1882. After acquiring portion 30, Burnett transferred it to his engineer, Baron. Baron subdivided the land in 1887, retaining 7 ½ acres.[2] Although the construction date is unknown, Birkdale House was likely built by Baron soon after as he is reported as residing at the property in 1888, while the structure is reflective of the 1880s period. Likewise, he had access to local timber via the sawmill.

After Burnett’s sawmill went into liquidation, Baron began grape growing and wine making on this property and was listed as a vigneron until his death in 1907.[3] It has been suggested that Baron named the area Birkdale, with the name adopted when the railway was constructed in 1889.[4]

Victor Drury occupied this house from 1904-1907 and is understood to have named the property Birkdale House. During this period, he was Chairman of the Cleveland Divisional Board and Cleveland Shire councillor, having previously worked as a public servant.[5] His brother, banker Edward Robert Drury, took possession of Whepstead following Burnett’s auctioning of his family home, however, it did not remain in his possession for long. Victory Drury died in 1907.

Later owners continued to farm the property. Birkdale House is noted as the only residential troop occupation during World War I in the Redlands area. The property was transferred to Peter Airey in 1921, a councillor for the Cleveland Shire from June 1924 until May 1927. He was also an elected member to State Parliament. In 1960 the area around Birkdale was generally subdivided into 32 perch blocks. In 1974 the owners bought the adjoining lot and amalgamated the two into a larger lot.[6]

Physical Description

Birkdale House is a low set dwelling with vertical cross bracing and a short ridge hip roof over the core. It is set back from the street with a wide frontage. Before the area was developed it is likely that the house had views to the northeast toward the bay and Wellington Point. The house extends to the rear of the lot and a wing with a hip roof extends to the western side. The verandah has a stepped convex roof and returns around the sides. The walls are single skin wide timber boards with cross bracing. The stone stair up to the verandah and the front door are centred on the core of the house. There are French doors to the low level verandah and two brick chimneys. The low set wing to the north west of the main house has a single pyramid roof to the core, a stepped convex roof to the verandahs, single skin walls and cross bracing. The grounds include established gardens and mature trees.

Statement of Significance

Birkdale house is a locally significant building which demonstrates historical, representative and aesthetic values. The dwelling was established in 1887-1888 and represents the early settlement of the local area. The layout, setting and form of the house, and the established trees contribute to the amenity of the surrounding area. James Baron was notable in the early industry and development at Birkdale and had a strong association with Birkdale House.

Criteria A The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region’s history.

Birkdale House demonstrates the pattern of development in Birkdale and the surrounding suburbs through its association with timber getting, sugar plantations and grape growing. It is an intact example of a late nineteenth century timber dwelling, and was constructed with locally sawn timber.

Criteria E The place is important to the region because of its aesthetic significance.

The symmetrically arranged core of the house with the wings added to the west and north display an informal quality. The location of the house set back from the street behind mature trees, the wide street frontage, the exterior form and materials of the dwelling create a positive amenity.

Criteria H The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the region’s history.

Birkdale House has associations with several prominent local figures, particularly with James Baron, and his occupation of the sawmill and then with wine maker and Wellington Point public servant Victor Drury and Peter Airey. It is also associated with some of Gilbert Burnett’s early landholdings and its construction is associated with his sawmill.

Primary Themes

2.0 Exploiting, Utilising and Transforming the Land	2.04 Agricultural activities
6.0 Buildings, Settlements, Towns, Cities and Dwellings	6.04 Dwellings

References

[1] Mary Howells, ‘Wellington Point History’, Redland City Council Library, n.d., p. 1.
 [2] Mary Howells, ‘Living on the Edge: Along Tingalpa Creek, A History of Upper Tingalpa, Capalaba and Thorneside’, (Masters of Philosophy, 2001), p. 43.
 [3] Mary Howells, ‘Wellington Point History’, p. 3.
 [4] Mary Howells, ‘Living on the Edge:’, p. 43.
 [5] Firmin McKinnon, ‘The Halcyon Days of Cleveland’, *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* (1948, 4(1)), p. 113.
 [6] RCC Library, Historic Land Title for 27 Roger Street, Birkdale.