

<b>Street Address</b>	50-60 Birkdale Road, Birkdale
<b>GPS/RPD</b>	Lot 29 on SP151524
<b>Place Type</b>	Built



*Red-e-map (RCC, 2016).*



*Somersby Grange, Birkdale (EHP, 2009).*

<b>Condition</b>	Good	<b>Integrity</b>	Good
<b>Statutory Listings</b>	Local Heritage Place		
<b>Non-Statutory Listings</b>	No current listing		
<b>Inspection Date</b>	02/12/2016		

**Historical Context**

Somersby Grange was established on its present site in about 1896. The house is believed to have been moved from South Brisbane by George Randall who had acquired the property the same year. The house is situated on expansive landscaped grounds that includes early plantings and landmark trees.

George Randall was a prominent citizen in Birkdale. He and his wife, Naomi Jackson, arrived in Brisbane in 1868 where they set themselves up in South Brisbane. Randall established a shop selling fruits, jams and pickles. Following the success of his business he returned to England and was approached by the Agent General for Queensland to publish his story in order to promote emigration to the colony. Although he initially declined, Randall travelled through villages in England delivering public lectures on the opportunities available in Queensland. As a result, he was later appointed Government Immigration Lecturer, undertaking four tours of England between 1881-1902. Randall’s lectures were said to have encouraged the migration of over 150,000 agricultural labourers to Queensland.

In 1896 Randall established Somersby Grange at Birkdale, which he named after Lord Tennyson’s birthplace in England. Along with his sons, George Randall Jnr and artist Richard John Randall, they experimented with pineapple farming. George Randall Jnr went on to become heavily involved in local agriculture and farming associations, working closely with James Pink, curator of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, in regional fruit propagation.

The Randall family’s success is evident in the grandeur of Somersby Grange. By 1906 the formal garden was created around the surrounding home with the timber fence and decorative entrance gates installed at the top of the gravelled drive. The drive opened to a circle, which was centred by a flagpole and lawn. Notable trees were planted along the fence, including pines, palms and figs, with the gardens boasting several varieties of mango trees.

Somersby Grange became the family home of George Randall Jnr, and his wife, Harriett, who extended the house in the early twentieth century. Randall was a prominent community member, acting at various times as a Justice of the Peace, Cleveland Shire Councillor and Shire Chairman. Following George Jnr and Harriett’s deaths in the mid-1920s, the property returned to George Snr, who bequeathed it to his eldest grandson.

The property remains today in the Randall family, with some alterations occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. It was subdivided in 2002, reducing the original size from 6ha to 1.3 ha, however the subdivision did not alter the original positioning and impact of the house and grounds.

Somersby Grange remains a notable landmark in the region’s development through its association with farming and the life and work of the Randall family.[1]

**Physical Description**

Somersby Grange is a large two storey timber framed residence located on the crest of a hill on the main road into Birkdale. The house is set back from the road with a gravelled circular driveway, decorative timber fence and gate on the front side, mature trees and a path through the front garden. The house and front garden are elevated with views over Moreton Bay. The house has a tiled pyramid roof with a short ridge and a front gable projecting to street elevation. A detailed bay window extends from the ground and first storey of the gable wing. The lower level bay window has French doors and the upper has tall sash windows. The lower level side windows have a continuous window hood of tin and curved timber brackets. The front steps are centred on the path through the front garden and lead up to the open verandah on the front and one side of the house. Parts of the verandahs on the other side and the rear are enclosed. The house is only partially observable from the road due to the trees.

The main levels retain their original layout with rooms either side of the central hallway leading from the front verandah. Another layer of rooms sits to the north, south and west of the core under the separate roof. The sub-floor has been enclosed in three stages. On the northern half are a kitchen, dining room and living area. Along the north eastern side is a later dining room and living room. The walls are lined with cement sheeting and the ceiling have exposed joists with stop chamfers. The southern sub-floor has recently been enclosed as a large bedroom and entertainment area.

**Statement of Significance**

Somersby Grange is a locally significant building which demonstrates historical and aesthetic values. Its use as an estate farm by the Randall family is notable, with associations with both George Randall Snr and George Randall Jnr, important community members over the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and artist Richard Randall.

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

Somersby Grange is important in demonstrating the pattern of development in Redlands through its use as the Randall family's small scale agricultural and fruit growing estate in the 1890s and throughout the twentieth century. The property remains in the Randall family.

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

Somersby Grange is a significant landmark in Birkdale. It consists of a house with picturesque exterior and landscaped grounds that retain their original position and setting. The form and scale of the 1890s house, its position and the formal approach and relationship to the garden elements including the gates and established trees contribute to the aesthetic quality of the place. The location of the house set back from the road in the established garden creates a scenic setting and is important to the locality of Birkdale.

**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.

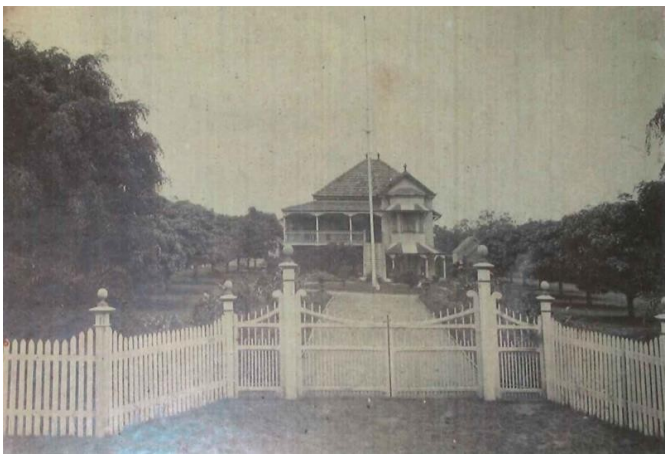
Somersby Grange and grounds has a strong association with the Randall family. George Randall Snr served as emigration lecturer, promoting Queensland as a place where agricultural labourers could prosper. George Randall Jnr was a prominent local resident and community member, serving at one time as a Cleveland Shire Councillor. His brother was well known artist, Richard Randall, who died at Somersby Grange in 1906.

**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] Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, (Place Report 602712), 2009.



Early photo, Somersby Grange (RPS, 2012).