

Heritage and Character Housing Information Guide

THE TOWNSVILLE HOUSE






Townsville





Index

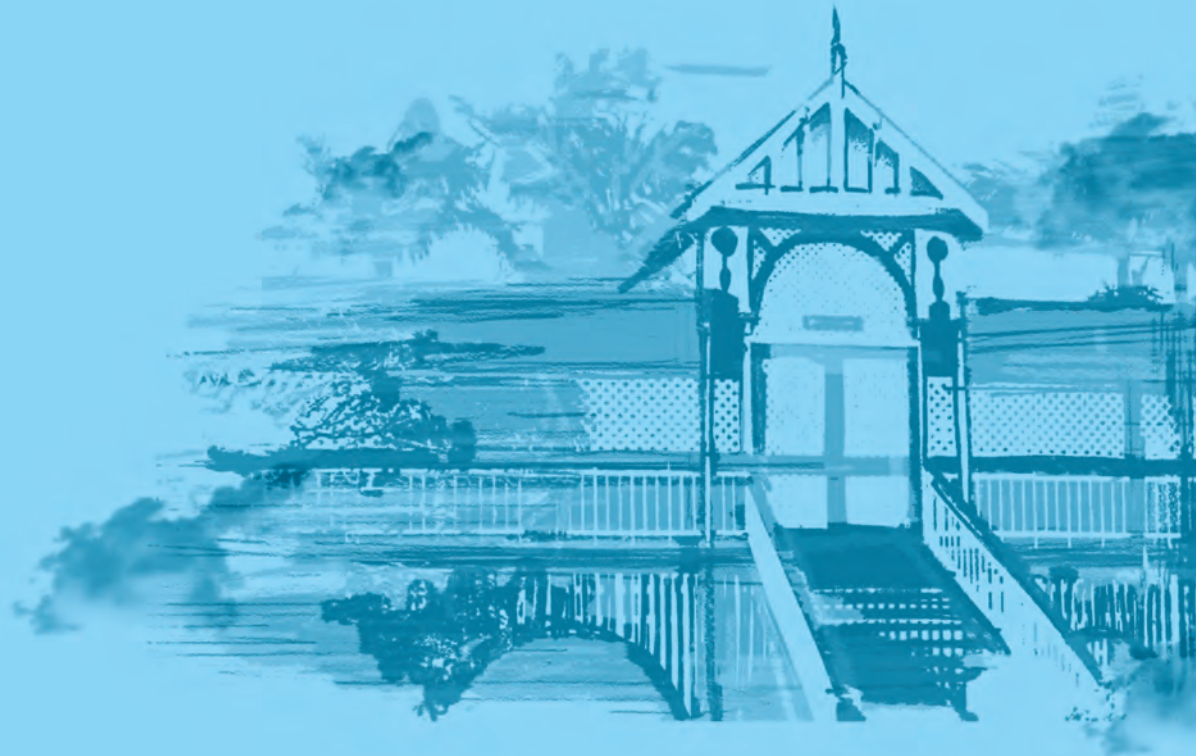
	Part 1: Conserving the Townsville house	3
	Part 2: Tracing the history of your house	11
	Part 3: Townsville fences	19
	Part 4: Townsville gardens	25
	Part 5: Townsville verandahs	33
	Part 6: Alterations to your house	39
	Part 7: Additions to your house	47

This guide provides conservation and renovation information primarily for owners of buildings that are listed in the Townsville City Council, Local Heritage Database. The information will also be useful to owners or renovators of Townsville houses of particular periods who want to retain their house's significant character and heritage.

The Local Heritage Database is a searchable database that can be accessed online at the Townsville City Council website.

Part 1: Conserving the Townsville house

This part provides general information about some principles of conservation and how you can apply these to enhance the significant features of your house.



Townsville's historic character

The history of a city or town can be told through its houses. Townsville is one of those fortunate areas in Australia that has retained many of its traditional houses, be they small workers cottages or large verandahed residences. They all have a story to tell of Townsville life, in days past. Such places make a major contribution to the character of the city and its amenity for residents. The commercial buildings, public buildings, churches and schools, the parks and gardens, also contribute to the character of areas of traditional houses.

Townsville's houses are special. Much of the decoration found on houses in this city is not found elsewhere; therefore it is important to retain or reinstate these elements so Townsville's houses remain special. The 'importing' of styles from a book on Brisbane housing, for instance, should be avoided.

Townsville is also in the enviable position of having more historic houses in its suburbs than were actually built there. This is due to people moving to the city from declining mining towns in the early 20th century and either bringing their own house with them or purchasing one and relocating it – the ultimate in 'moving house'.

If you are the owner of a Townsville house, don't think of it as an old house which should be just spruced up to make it more appealing; instead, think of it as an important part of the history and development of Townsville. As the current owner, consider yourself to be the 'temporary custodian' of a part of our city's heritage which has so far passed through a number of generations, and should be

allowed to pass through many more, in an appropriate condition. Those who come after you will be able to enjoy a properly conserved house and you will become an important part of its fascinating history, and be appreciated for your efforts.

What is conservation?

Conservation is the term for properly caring for buildings and places of historical significance. Retaining or reinstating those parts of a building which contribute to it being a part of Townsville's history is conservation. Conservation of old houses should be guided by the philosophies contained in the Burra Charter. The Burra Charter defines several aspects of conservation:

Maintenance

Is the continuous protective care of a place. It includes maintaining the current form and materials, and protecting against decay or deterioration. It involves activities like clearing guttering and painting walls. If your house is basically intact, maintaining it in good condition may be the simplest (and certainly the cheapest) method of caring for it. Maintenance is always good conservation.

Restoration

Is returning the existing physical material (fabric) to a known earlier state by removing changes and additions; for example, removing fibro sheeting from a verandah. Restoration includes reassembling existing components without the introduction of



The hills of Townsville provide good opportunities for photography – in this series, taken from 1888 to 1909, Carter Street develops from a sandy track to a formed road. Note the building at the end of, and facing, Carter Street transforms from a small cottage, believed to be the home of the first Catholic Bishop, to a grand two-storey presbytery. The development of your house may be seen in similar photo series. (JOL)

new material. For example, reinstating the French doors you found in the back shed, into their previous location, is restoration.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction is returning a place, as near as possible, to a known earlier state using new or old materials. For example reinstating a missing verandah balustrade and mouldings, using evidence from old photographs and paint impressions found on your verandah posts, is reconstruction.

Adaptation

Adaptation is modifying a place to suit a proposed compatible use, without changing the significant parts of the place. Intended changes should be substantially reversible or result in minimal impact. For example, using an old house as an office or simply

adding new kitchen benches, are adaptations. Few people want to live in a time capsule; therefore new facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens may be required. Any new work should take account of existing character and room forms, and not require major changes to the structure. Likewise, extra rooms may be required to meet today's lifestyle expectations. New living space should preferably be positioned to the rear, thereby retaining the street presentation of the house. Carports or garages, if to be beside the house, should be kept well back from the front wall or verandah line for the same reason.

To maintain an old house in its early form, or to return one to an earlier form, is satisfying and rewarding. It can also be beneficial when it comes time to move on. Houses which have been properly conserved are usually easier to sell, and at the right price, than those that have been substantially altered or modernised. The principle 'as little as possible, as much as necessary' is one which



Left: House in West End - in need of some restoration and maintenance only (RPA)

Right: Family photographs maybe available from descendants and give clear details of the exterior (JOL)

Far Right: 'Wandela', c1891. Not as highly decorated as usual, some houses bore a wonderful simplicity (JOL)

should guide your conservation work. Conservation need not be expensive, as it should involve only the least work necessary to achieve the goal.

Conserving your house

Where to start?

Perhaps the best advice is: do not rush into your conservation works. Firstly, follow the steps below to gain an appreciation of what you already have.

Look

Appreciating the special character of the house and its setting is very important before getting under way. Live in it, appreciate the angles at which the sun and breezes come in, experience the summer storms and downpours and it may become apparent why former owners changed certain aspects of the house.

Record

Record the present condition of the house and the yard by drawing a floor plan and site plan. Rough as they may be, nevertheless they will be one of the most valuable tools for your conservation work. Mark on the plans all of your observations – timber decay, water entry, suspect structure (whether it be from termites, rotted stumps, failed joints etc), roof and guttering conditions, details which seem inappropriate or wrong, mature trees and shrubs in the garden, paths (which may lead to the location of an earlier stair) and so on. Photograph the house from all directions and close up – studying photographs may reveal details and conditions not readily evident from wandering around and looking.

Research

Undertake a research program for the house, collecting as much information as you can find. Reference the section 'Tracing the history of your house' in this booklet, it will provide a thorough guide for sources of information. Visit libraries, museums and other places to



view their historic photograph collections – they are wonderful and inspiring and you will also learn more about Townsville's past – you may even find your house there.

Talk to elderly residents nearby recording important points about your house. See if they know of any surviving previous owners or their descendants. Ask questions about previous colour schemes, dates of construction, reasons for extensions or changes, how the garden was laid out, and so on. They will be pleased to know someone is properly caring for a house with which they had a close association. Ask if anyone has old photographs of the house – a family portrait on the front verandah will give an incredible amount of information of the verandah itself, and usually the gardens and fence. Even a photo of the family pet on the front steps may provide the stair detail, the balustrade, the battening under the verandah and any verandah gates.

Compare

For added inspiration look for other houses which have been properly conserved, or are in original condition and have been



well maintained. Drive around suburbs such as North Ward, West End, South Townsville, Railway Estate and Hermit Park. Compare properly conserved houses with those that have only been renovated. Be wary of elaborate additions and extensions or unsympathetic alterations such as a place being raised too high. Consider how out of place some changes can appear.

Stop and chat with people along the way on how they conserved their house – sources of information, materials, skilled tradesmen and so on. They may even be looking for suggestions for their houses – you may be able to guide them in the right direction or between you, find a correct solution to a problem.

Suitably enthused from your observations, return home and think about it all. Don't rush into the work – good conservation takes planning, a deal of research, some solid decision-making and time.

Things to avoid

'Renovation' – while maintenance, restoration or reconstruction may be applied to all old houses, significant renovations require more consideration. Renovations often substantially alter a house, and affect its cultural significance.

'Modernising' is a process with inherent problems – what is modern today will not be modern in years to come. For example the fibro sheeting applied to houses in the 1960s and 1970s, to 'modernise' them, is today being removed.

To 'over-decorate' or 'over-improve' an old house should be resisted as it will turn it into something it never was. For example, installing imitation lacework onto a verandah should be avoided as it detracts from its historical significance rather than enhances it, as you may overuse timber features and fretwork.

Try to avoid cladding a house with siding or fibro planking as this can not only spoil its appearance and lessen its value, but also provide dark wall cavities ideally suited to termite infestation. Consider retaining the original features and form of an old house as they are evidence of the architecture of Townsville at an era in the city's history. Also consider retaining any extensions made to the house that suit its original style; this is all part of the history and evolution of the house.

Resist the temptation to cut openings through internal walls to 'open up' the interior. Not only does this detract from the original form of the floor plan of the house, but it may substantially weaken the



'Wolverton', Stagpole Street, West End – a properly conserved house (RPA)

structure. The success and longevity of Queenslanders is due to the walls being tied together to form a good structure (although constructed of small section timbers). It has also been found that the wall boarding itself contributed significantly to the bracing process of the houses.

The temptation to raise an old house to gain extra living space should be avoided for the harm it can do to the streetscape, and to the visual amenity of the area. If your house is low-set, investigate its history; sometimes a low-set house was one of the first in an area and therefore may be of a particular historical importance. Consider, rather, extending onto the rear. If enclosing the lower level of an existing high-set house is contemplated, consider battening, or similar, located at the line of the main core of the house, to retain the

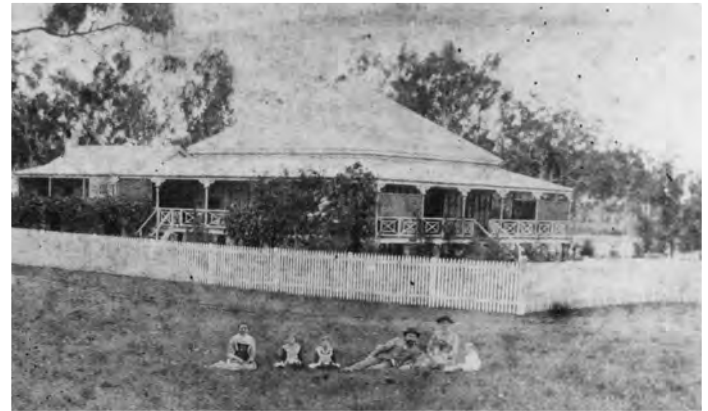


Family photographs can provide detail, not only of the house and garden in question, but also of the property next door and even the local hotel across the road. (JOL)

form of the verandahs and the deep shading below them.

Getting help with your conservation project

Owners of certain houses in Townsville can take advantage of the council's architectural advisory service for extensions, or work on old houses generally. Contact should be made with Townsville City Council. Even if your house does not fall into this category, the heritage staff will try to assist wherever possible with your conservation process. Consider using some of your budget to obtain professional advice from a conservation architect or designer. Their experienced guidance from the outset may save you money in the long term.



'Ballachmore' in the 1880s (JOL)



Views of 'Ballachmore' in the 1880s providing an large amount of information for conservation. (JOL)

Prepare a master plan

When you have sufficient information, prepare a 'master plan' setting out all the work that you identify needs to be done, whether it be maintenance, restoration, reconstruction and even adaptation. Sort the work into a schedule starting with urgent works. It would be unwise, for example, to launch into reinstating missing doors or windows, or reconstructing balustrades before the floor is levelled and the stumps put right. It would be dangerous to pass over repairs which could be a safety hazard, in favour of work of less urgency. When you have your priorities listed and the master plan is complete, only then should you set about conserving your Townsville house.



Murgatroyd Residence, 1920s. Even a blurred family snapshot is an excellent starting point. (JOL)

Part 2: Tracing the history of your house

This part provides general guidelines to help you research the history of your house. If you own or occupy an older house you may be curious to know its history. With a little bit of research you may find out the date the building was constructed and the types of changes made to your house over the years.

Research will help you to understand the unique history and characteristics of your house. Any work you then undertake on your house can be designed to help protect and enhance the property's unique values.



Place the house in its historical context

Understand the setting

The first step is to assess your property and try to understand how it fits into the surrounding landscape. Climate and the natural environment strongly influenced early settlement patterns and house designs in north Queensland. Did these factors influence your house's design and location?

As in most Queensland towns, many early houses in Townsville were constructed of timber and corrugated iron. Verandahs were added to provide shade and houses were raised on timber stumps to provide ventilation.

Local history

There are several local histories that outline the early settlement and development of Townsville. Look for information on settlement patterns such as: where were early farms located? When were they subdivided for present-day suburbs? Which suburbs and streets were developed first? Published diaries of pioneering settlers and visitors to Townsville, may describe the locations of farms and homesteads. If you are able, relate this information back to your own property.

Record the fabric

The next step is to inspect and record the physical elements of your property. Some suggestions for this process are as follows:

Property plan

Draw a sketch of your property showing the location of the house, all of its outbuildings, and features including gardens and fences. Are there any old trees, paths or garden edges in the yard? They may form part of an earlier garden design, or maybe the remains of an old orchard.

Floor plan

Next draw a plan of the house showing all rooms, walls, doors and windows. Keep one copy of the floor plan as a master and make a series of copies to make notes on as your research progresses. A previous owner may be able to tell you the location of a former doorway that was filled in. Don't forget to label your floor plan. Include a key for features, and show the direction of north.

Examine the house

The house itself can tell you a lot about past alterations and additions. Carefully examine structural elements and joinery to give you clues to past works on the house. For example, floor framing may indicate an extension to a verandah – include this information in your plans.

Take photographs

Using the property plan as a guide, take photographs of the property from various angles. On your plans note where you were standing when you took the photographs and the direction you were facing.

Research

Title deeds

Once you have placed your house in its historical context you can search for more detailed information about the owners of the land on which your house is built. The Title Office holds *Certificates of Title* for all transfers of land. The type of information recorded in title deeds includes the size of the land, subdivisions, easements, transfers, mortgages and leases.

To obtain title deeds for your land visit customer services at Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM).

When you contact DERM, inform them that you are doing a historic title search and that you want image copies. They will ask you for a Real Property Description (RPD), also called a Lot on Plan, of the property you are interested in.

DERM will convert the RPD to volume and folio numbers. These numbers are the reference that the Titles Office has allocated to each title. They appear on the face of the title deed in abbreviated form (eg. Vol. 9621 Fol. 665). Once you have the reference numbers DERM should be able to print out a copy of the corresponding *Certificate of Title*. There is a fee for this service.

Somewhere on the current title you will find a reference to a parent title. For example, it may say: derived from Vol. 1234 Fol. 123. For an additional fee, you can also obtain a copy of this title. That title may also make reference to a parent title and so on. You can continue requesting

previous titles going back as early as you can. The first land sales and grants for Townsville were in 1865.

You can also work forward from the original title as it will refer forward to titles derived from it; however it is safer to work backwards.

How to 'read' the title deeds

There is a large amount of information on the back of each title, including details of changes in ownership and references to mortgages. A mortgage indicates that the owner has borrowed money on the security of the property, perhaps this money was used to build a house on the land. If the householder died and the property passed to a family member after probate, that is also recorded on the title.

Directories and almanacs

The Post Office Directory is the equivalent of the modern day Yellow and White Pages. The directory lists the occupants of a house; these may be different from the owners. Directories are only an approximate guide because the information was always one year out of date, and often old information persisted. They also specify the occupant's trade or profession. Consider that the street names and numbering of vacant blocks and subdivisions may have changed, so research a group of houses in your street together. Also keep in mind that yours may not be the original building on that site.

If the house was originally built for sale or rent the directory won't provide

the year of construction, only the name of the occupier. The Post Office Directories were produced at irregular intervals between 1868 and 1949. Almanacs include Pugh's Queensland Almanac (1859-1927) and Willmetts's North Queensland Almanac. They contain trade directories and advertisements which may help you find out more about the trade or profession of previous occupants. The Post Office Directory and the almanacs are available on microfiche at the James Cook University Library.

Council records

The council rates books have been indexed by the Family History Association of North Queensland and can be accessed for information. Townsville City Council sewerage plans starting from the 1930s show the position of buildings, including outhouses and sheds. The plans are accurately dated and may prove useful. Contact council for more information.

Birth, death and marriage certificates

By using the resources above, you will discover the names of the previous occupants of your house. You may wish to find out more about these people and what sort of lives they led.

A death certificate will reveal all sorts of information about past occupants. It details a person's full name, occupation, marriages and the ages of surviving children. Using this information, you can obtain the occupant's marriage certificate and birth certificates of any children. By examining multiple birth certificates you will begin to build up a picture of the main events in the life of the family who lived in your house. You may even have enough information to attempt to contact

living descendants to enable you to find out more about the family history.

The Family History Association of North Queensland holds indexes to the Registrar General's birth, death and marriage records. They also hold cemetery records, books and other material which may help with your research. Also the James Cook University Library holds selected microform indexes to births, deaths and marriages and have produced a booklet titled Family History a Select Guide to Sources.

Other records

Magazines and newspapers may contain interesting pieces of information about your house and occupants, or your street and suburb. CityLibraries have copies of the Townsville Herald and the North Queensland Herald on microfilm. The James Cook University Library also holds publications on microfilm. Be aware though, searching magazines and newspapers, although interesting, can be very time consuming and you may not uncover information relevant to your search.

If your house was occupied, designed or built by a prominent person in the community, there may be personal papers, diaries or oral records at CityLibraries or the James Cook University Library.

Maps

The Townsville City Council has a series of 'Historical Plans' for sale. These maps and plans sometimes show homesteads, farm buildings, houses, fences and footpaths that existed at the time when the subdivision plan was drawn up. Thumbnail images of the maps can be viewed on the council website.

Dating the year of construction

Dating a house from its appearance can be difficult. Changes in housing styles usually happen slowly over many years, although it may be possible to use housing style to date a house as belonging to a particular era.

Several classifications of house styles have been proposed for Townsville ranging from simple workers dwellings, to contemporary styles. There will always be houses that don't fit neatly into any classification scheme.

The difficulties in dating your house may depend on the builder, the architect and the renovations over the years. Some builders kept to the same basic design throughout their working lives, regardless of the house styles of the era. Sometimes there are good examples of particular architectural styles, but some houses have been deliberately built with a mixture of new and traditional features. In addition, extensions and renovations over the years can completely disguise or obscure the original features.

Additionally, relocated houses can cause dating problems. As with other northern towns, many people moved to Townsville following the decline of mining in outlying centres. Houses fitting an earlier construction type may not have arrived in Townsville until after World War I.

Common Townsville house styles



Simple Workers Dwelling Gabled Roof (mid 1860s - mid 1910s)



Contemporary Style (1950s - mid 1970s) Yarrawonga Drive, Yarrawonga.

Common Townsville house styles



'Currajong'. A Queensland Bungalow (1880s - late 1920s) Castling Street, West End



Simple Workers Dwelling hipped roof (late 1860s-1910s)



Simple Workers Dwelling (1880s - 1920s) Shaw Street, West End



Villa residence "David House" (1880s-1910s)



Larger villa "Warringa" (mid 1890s - 1930s)



Asymmetrical villa (1880s - 1910s) Victoria Street



Workers Bungalow (mid 1910s-mid 1940s)



Californian Bungalow (early 1920s - late 1950s) Rose Street, North Ward



Modern Movement (1930s - 1950s) Nelson Street, South Townsville



Post War Austerity (mid 1940s - mid 1950s) Lancaster Street, Garbutt



Double and Triple Fronted (mid 1930s - mid 1960s) Woolcock Street, Hyde Park



Ranch Style (mid 1950s - mid 1970s) Landsborough Street, North Ward

Part 3: Townsville fences

This part will guide the reconstruction or restoration of an integral part of the Townsville House, the fence. Prior to starting on the conservation of your fence, you should read parts one and two of this booklet. A later part will assist with garden reconstruction and the restoration of substantially intact original gardens.



Why have a fence?

Houses have fences for a variety of reasons such as to define the owner's property, to keep children in, and nuisances out. In Townsville's past, they served to exclude wandering herds of feral goats from the yard, thereby preventing damage to vegetable patches and flower gardens.

Although houses had a variety of appearances, the fences served to present a unified streetscape, often as simple timber pickets painted a light colour. As a general rule, decorative fences were only provided to the footpaths, the other boundaries of the allotment were fenced with less expensive wire mesh.

Form and appearance

Townsville fences took a variety of forms. Fences in the worker's suburbs were commonly timber post and rail with timber pickets. Timber gate-posts and corner posts were sometimes large timber sections with decorative tops, while the remainder of the posts had a top matching the shape of the picket tops.

The height of the fence was in the range of 110-120cm, or occasionally higher. The line of the tops could be straight, concave, convex, or inclining from the posts for two or three pickets and then level.

Affluent residents, such as those on Melton and Stanton Hills, chose cast iron palisade fencing. Palisade fencing comprises flat metal rails spanning rendered brick piers. Metal rods with spearhead or fleur-de-lis tops (finials) pass through the rails forming the palisade. Usually, rendered brick plinths were built between the piers at the



An early view of North Ward – even though houses varied in form and size, all had picket fences which collectively tied the streetscape together (JCU)

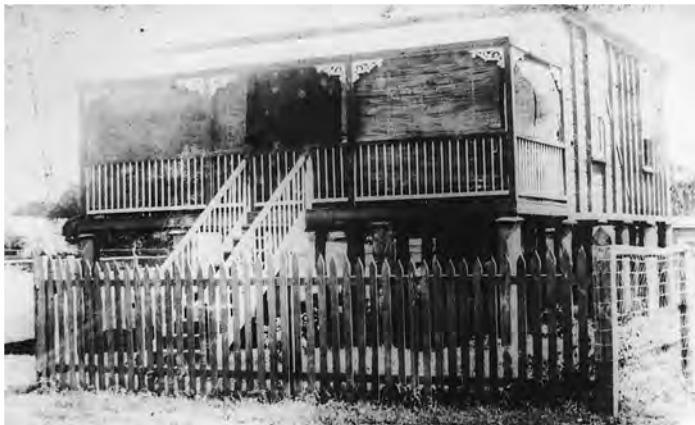
base of the fence. There were also examples of wrought or cast iron panels between the piers.

Gates usually matched the fences in material and general form. Timber picket fences usually had timber framed gates, with the picket details reproduced in the gates. In palisade fencing, the gates would usually reflect the details of the fence metalwork.

The tops of timber pickets came in a variety of shapes. Common shapes included pointed, curved each side and pointed (usually referred to as 'gothic') with the tops rounded off on some, curved each side with a scallop added at the edges (sometimes called 'spearhead'), double curved each side with rounded tops and just plain square cut.

Development over the years

The fences of Townsville underwent a renaissance of form in the early



Even modest dwellings had fencing - note the diamond shaped post tops and the side fence of bush poles and K-wire mesh (JCU)

part of the 20th Century. Many were changed from standard picket fences to having pre-cast concrete posts and concrete bases with a variety of infill panels.

Infill panels ranged from timber pickets (which were sometimes earlier pickets cut down and reused), through to wrought iron with iron or mesh infills, and simple pipe frames with mesh or chainwire within the frames.

Gates generally matched the fence panels when the panels were metal. When the fence panels were timber pickets, the gates seemed to have been either pipe framed with decorative wrought iron and mesh, or wrought iron only.

The reason for this development in fence designs is unclear. It is known that prior to flood mitigation work, the suburbs of South Townsville and



This grand Townsville residence only had a fence of timber pickets, rather than the expected brick with iron panels (JOL)

Railway Estate, suffered severe flooding. It is also known that many original picket fences fell victim to flooding when water dammed up behind the fences, pushing them over and washing them away.

Perhaps flooding, and the deterioration of timber fences through dry rot and termite attack, enticed owners to adopt more durable materials such as concrete, when rebuilding their fences.

There was a proliferation of the concrete fence form throughout the city, even in suburbs where flooding would be unlikely.

Later still, possibly in the 1940s and 1950s came the plain 'cyclone' fencing of full pipe framing and chainwire mesh. While they were very economical, such fences did little, by their transparent appearance, to retain the continuity of the streetscape provided by more solid fences.

Conservation of the Fence

Research

If you have researched the history of your house, you may have been fortunate enough to find early photographs. Photographic evidence of fence type, height and components will be invaluable for the faithful reconstruction of your fence.

However, it is still important to investigate later fence forms that may have existed. Neighbours or previous owners may be able to provide valuable information about changes made to your fence over time.

If you want to reconstruct an elaborate fence that once existed, it is wise to seek the assistance of a conservation consultant who can prepare drawings and specifications for the work.

Physical investigation

If the fence is missing, and there is little above ground physical evidence, there may be evidence below ground that could assist in conservation.

Careful excavation along the alignment of the property may produce the remains of the original fence posts. Usually the posts were spaced at approximately 240cm centres which may provide a starting point when measured from the side of a surviving path.

If the existing fence is original but has become dilapidated over time, record the fence before it is taken apart for conservation. Make a sketch noting heights, the line of the top of the pickets and take measurements. Take photographs, both close-up and at a distance, to provide a record for later work.

If your fence has concrete posts and bases, and most of the fences in the street are similar, it would be appropriate to retain that type of fence. Conversely, picket fences could be chosen if that type is typical in the vicinity, or if most of the earlier fences are missing.

It is important that the fence provided suits the era of the house; for example, a Victorian fence would not suit a 1930s house just as a 1930s fence could look totally out of place in front of a Victorian residence.

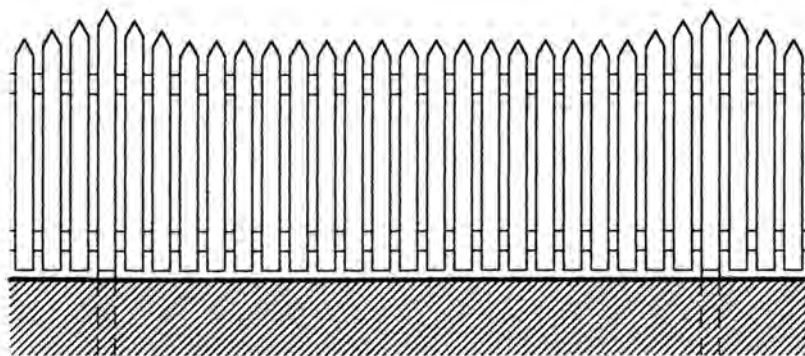
It is also important that the fence is not too elaborate or fancy for the house or for character of the area. For example, the workers who lived in the suburbs could not afford iron fencing. This type of fence would be an inappropriate addition to such a house.

The fence should not be too high – 120cm should be the maximum – so that it is in scale and allows the house to still be appreciated. If privacy is required for the rear yard, consider a higher screen fence in line with the main core section of the house.

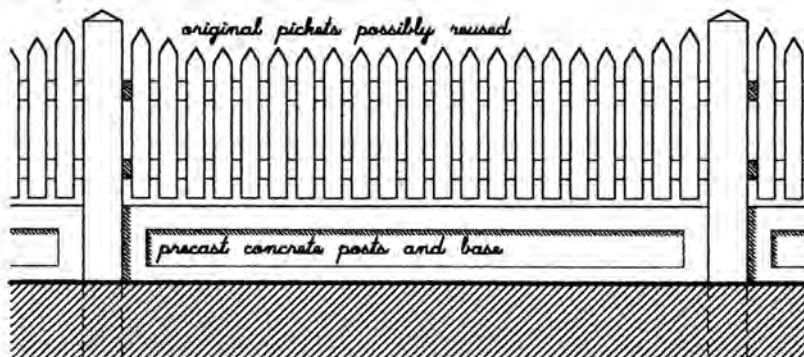
Materials

Fence reconstruction or repair should involve using similar types and sizes of materials to those that already exist.

When the fence is missing, then the wood type for reconstruction of a timber fence should be hardwood of appropriate durability. If hardwood pickets are not available, good quality treated pine pickets could be used. Ensure they are painted as soon as possible to protect them from the weather. Metal components in a fence may have corroded, but if the metal is sound, the corrosion can be



An original picket fence such as this \triangle
 may now look like this ∇



treated with rust converters.

If brick or concrete piers are unstable, or if rusted reinforcing has fractured concrete components (spalling), repairs should be done by a professional tradesman.

Right: Finial styles (TCC)

Below: A well preserved Townsville fence – the fence pickets, the valance battening beneath the house and the stair balusters, all in white, present a unified tropical appearance (RPA)



straight



curved



gothic /
spearhead



diamond /
point



Part 4: Townsville gardens

This part will assist you to restore or renovate your Townsville garden to an appropriate and respectful character.

Protecting Townsville's historic inner-city garden heritage is vitally important, not only to support the unique identity of the houses and the streetscape character, but also to maintain distinct local garden traditions and features.

The front gardens in Townsville's older suburbs generally retain much of the original structure and appearance, though with the loss of the more fragile plants. Gardens can very easily be retained or restored in the appropriate traditional character. The side and rear gardens are frequently altered to suit a contemporary lifestyle, the desire to view a pleasant garden from the house, and to use the garden for outdoor living and entertainment. With the garden restored in the appropriate traditional character, each house and the whole street will be enhanced in presentation, amenity and value.





Mr W Aird's garden in Walker Street, 1907. The garden included coconut palms, cycads, massed shrubs and flowerbeds and specimen trees in the lawn (JOL).

Understanding our garden heritage

Widespread clearing

The original vegetation of Townsville was substantially cleared in early settlement. Trees were primarily cut for firewood. By the 1880s, photos of Townsville show only a few trees left amongst the houses. Though areas of original vegetation remained, the tree clearing and the dry rocky hillsides led to a stark appearance for the town.

Goats

If properties had not been fenced it would have been difficult to establish gardens near Castle Hill, due to the wild, roaming goats.

Harsh climate and water shortages

The efforts of gardener's were limited by the hot summer climate, poor soils, the availability of only precious tank water, or bore water for the

wealthy. The seasonal shortage of water restricted the scope of Townsville gardens until the construction of the Ross Dam in the 1970s.

In the first twenty or so years of settlement, roads were not sealed and dust blew over the gardens from the dry streets. In fact, all roads in Townsville were not fully sealed until the 1990s. Extensive gardens were restricted to the wealthy due to the need for labourers to assist with watering and other maintenance tasks.

Availability of suitable plants

Many of the plants available outside of Queensland in the first 40 years of settlement were unsuitable for the Townsville climate. However, by the 1920s and 30s, suitable tropical plants were grown in local nurseries. Poinciana's, rain trees, terminalia, calophyllums (beauty leaf), umbrella trees and fig trees were common in streets and gardens, and crotons and acahyphas were popular garden shrubs.



Far Left: 'Rosebank' c1892. Gravel paths along the front and sides of the house and open lawns with a circular feature bed (JOL).

Left: A cottage garden with white painted concrete edges to the gravel paths. Plants at the verandah include a cordyline and a strap leaved plant such as agapanthus (JCU).

Early influences

Ben Gulliver had established the Acacia Vale Nursery in the 1880s and cultivated a large variety of fruit and decorative trees. His nursery would have been an invaluable source of plants for Townsville gardeners. He had over 60 varieties of roses, many crotons, ferns and orchids, and numerous fruit and shade trees – including the best varieties of mangoes.

In 1880, the Botanic Gardens had about 10 acres laid out as garden with walks and flower beds. The bush house was a major feature of the gardens with a large collection of crotons, dracaenas, ferns and orchids.

From the early 1880s, many wealthy residents established 'villa' residences with fine gardens in the suburbs along Charters Towers Road. Closer to the city centre, fine examples included the large scale Stanton Hill garden of P. Armati with his large caladium collection, and the Bartels at German Gardens had a large pleasure garden for strolling and teas.

Garden styles

The photographic evidence of more spacious Townsville gardens around the turn of the century indicates a partly geometrical, gardenesque style mixed with English romantic. Victorian era influences were present in the use of bold and unusual trees such as pines, bamboo clumps, and mass plantings of tropical foliage plants. Smaller gardens generally followed the traditions of the English cottage garden style. The entry path through the centre of the front lawn, with beds along the edge of the house and the fenced borders of the lot completed the 'squared' garden. This style remains in evidence today throughout most of the older suburbs.

The bush house was a popular addition to Townsville gardens from the 1880s, even in small gardens of the inner suburbs. In the difficult climate, the shade allowed more participation in gardening. Ferns and orchids were popular during the Victorian era. They were brought from the bush house to decorate the house and verandahs.



Far Left: Dense planting to garden areas serves to hide the house and may cut off breezes.

Left: The old frangipani of the original garden has been retained. New plants – palms and ixoras do not fully screen the house

The Edwardian garden style of the 1920s and 1930s enriched the garden for more outdoor pursuits, tennis, teas and garden parties, with structures such as trellises, screens, arbours and pavilions and the contrast of softer planting to structured paths. These garden styles are all present in gardens today.

Indigenous plants were not common in gardens before the 1970s. Trees included Leichhardt trees, the black bean, Moreton Bay fig, silky oak, flame trees, and hoop and bunya pines.

Recent designs

The contemporary wish for shade in the garden and reduced lawn mowing has brought denser planting closer to the house. The traditional garden design was more open than this. Rather than screen the house, consider having the front garden in a traditional open semi shaded style, with fuller planting to the side and rear gardens.

Guidelines for garden restoration

The garden should be planned and laid out after an assessment of the age and style of the house. Use photographs of your garden, or similar gardens in conjunction with remaining paths, edges, trees, shrubs and features to guide you. In the typical front garden, shrub planting will generally edge the house and fences, a simple concrete or gravel path will divide a lawn, and one or two trees, such as a frangipani, black bean or calophyllum, will frame the view of the house and shade part of the garden and path.

Paths

The traditional front path should be of simple design, clear to the visitor. For the typical workers cottage the path is frequently in a direct line from the front gate to the stairs. The path can be offset, curving or staggered where the slope of the land, trees, or a larger size garden lead to this option.



Left: The bare bones of this garden remain in the frangipani tree at the entry and the terminalia over the rear yard. A new fence and front path and garden beds alongside the front and sides of the house are nearly all such a cottage requires.

Middle: The entry path was often red concrete with a raised edge such as this. It should be retained in the garden restoration.

Right: Saw tooth brick edging and a few plants are a remnant of the old garden to be discovered and restored. Sword fern has crowded the nandina and strap leaved plants - hippeastrums or belladonna lilies.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, garden paths were often compacted gravel. The plain or occasionally coloured concrete path has since become the customary entry path. Paths through mass planted gardens along the side of the house or in the rear could be in compacted granite gravel. 'Stepping stone' paths, in stone or simulated stone cement paving slabs, are suitable for less frequently used routes and within beds.

Edges

A constructed edge in the garden defines spaces, separates grass from garden beds and can add a decorative line. The edge can be concealed or expressed.

Materials include concrete, which can be a raised edge along a path or garden, or flush with the grass, brick, laid on edge or tilted to form a 'saw tooth' edge, and river stone raised above the lawn. Untreated timber is unsuitable; however, treated timber may be used as a

concealed edge. Extruded bricks or bricks with contemporary textures or colours, and half or round log edges are not the traditional character.

Furniture and decorative items

The furniture and decorative additions bring the garden alive and distinctly link it to the house and owners.

Items could include a seat, a bird bath, a small statue used to accent a planted garden, or a vine covered arbour at the garden entrance, the start of a side path, or as a destination at the rear. Large shells were sometimes paired at the side of the front stairs.

The bush house

The bush house (fernery or shade house) should be constructed of preservative treated timber, or metal in fine sizes. Clear roofing, if

desired, can be part concealed with battens to maintain a traditional character. Shade cloth, if used, should be black as it is less obtrusive than the green. The fernery can be painted white for a 1920s or 1930s Edwardian style house and garden.

Stone garden walls

On the foothills of Castle Hill, gardens generally had to be terraced with stairs and winding paths. The local pink granite was used extensively. These stone constructions should be retained, and the same stone used for renovations or new work.

Fruit trees

The mango tree was the most successful fruit tree for early Townsville, as can be seen by a review of backyards today. Every effort should be made to retain the mangoes, not only for their traditional character, but for their shade and beauty. A wide range of fruit trees were available late last century and any of the tropical fruits, including jack fruit, lychee, loquat, banana or pawpaw, would be appropriate.

Vegetable garden

The vegetable garden was an important part of the Townsville garden from the 1880s until after World War II. A vegetable garden at the rear would be most appropriate, in keeping with this era, even if it has more herbs than were grown in the past, and fewer, or different vegetables.

The flower garden

Flowers popular in southern and English gardens were grown in Townsville's early days. Photos of gardens up to the 1950s or 1960s illustrate this persistent tradition with the small, central bed of flowers, while the remainder of the traditional garden form was adapted with hardy tropical shrubs such as crotons and acahyphas. Colourful leaves were often used in vases instead of flowers.

Today, small shrubs can be substituted for annuals. Gardenia radicans, dwarf ixora and liriopse will be a simpler display, yet not detract from the traditional character.

Planting

In Townsville today, there is a much increased range of plants available than in earlier times. There are more native plants, more species, and new varieties of the exotic plants once used. Some of the plants used up to the 1930s may be difficult to obtain as their popularity has waned.

This makes the selection of plants sometimes difficult. A faithful reconstruction should use the historical plants; however the garden renovation could incorporate some of the beautiful new varieties and native plants if the traditional layout and character is respected. The traditional layout and plant selection is generally more important for the front and side gardens, particularly if the rear of the house is altered with extensions.

Traditional plants

The following plant lists are a guide for your garden renovation which respects traditional character or heritage.

Front and rear garden

Trees and palms

- » alexandra palm - *Archontophoenix sp.*
- » black bean - *Castanospermum australe*
- » bottle tree - *Brachychiton rupestris*
- » cabbage tree palm - *Livistona sp.*
- » Canary Island date palm - *Phoenix canariensis*
- » frangipani - *Plumeria spp.*
- » poinciana - *Delonix regia* - now uncommon due to a soil fungus
- » queen palm - *Syagrus romanzoffiana*
- » rain tree - *Samanea saman*
- » tamarind - *Tamarindus indica*
- » terminalia tree
- » fruit trees (commonly at rear of garden) jackfruit, mango, paw paw

Shrubs

- » *Acalypha hispida* and *Acalypha sp.*
- » aralia, azalea, coleus
- » yesterday-today-and-tomorrow - *Brunfelsia latifolia*
- » *Cordyline terminalis* and *C. australis*
- » crotons (often along front of house)

- » gardenia, hydrangea, ixora
- » malphigia, pavetta, plumbago
- » poinsettia, roses, stenolobium

Clumping plants, features and perennials

- » agave, canna, gerberas, geranium, hippeastrum, day lillies
- » periwinkle, lavender, russellia, cestrum
- » agapanthus - *Agapanthus africanus*
- » cycad - *Cycas spp.*
- » shell ginger - *Alpinia zerumbet*
- » shrimp plant - *Justicia brandegeana*

Side garden or boundary planting

- » acalypha - used as a hedge, often two colours alternated
- » hibiscus - *rosa sinensis*
- » sacred bamboo - *Nandina domestica*

Shaded areas – e.g. under mango trees

- » bush house ferns
- » anthuriums
- » marantas
- » begonias
- » allocasias
- » diffenbachias
- » fruit salad plant - *Monstera deliciosa*
- » native violet - *Viola hederacea*
- » orchid - *Dendrobium sp.*

Vines

- » pyrostegia, bougainvillea
- » coral vine - *Antigonon leptopus*
- » climbing roses - *Rosea sp.*
- » jasmine - *Jasminum sp.*
- » purple wreath - *Petrea volubilis*
- » trumpet flower - *Beaumontia grandiflora*

Contemporary additions

The following plants, now generally available, may suit a garden designed in the traditional style.

Trees and palms

- » beauty leaf - *Calophyllum inophyllum*
- » red beech - *Dillenia alata*
- » euodia - *Melicope elleryana*
- » native holly - *Graptophyllum spinigerum*
- » grevillea (tree) - *Grevillea baileyana*
- » ivory curl - *Buckinghamia celsissima*
- » Illawarra flame tree - *Brachychiton acerifolius*
- » lilly pilly - *Syzygium leuhmanii*
- » brown gardenia - *Atractocarpus fitzalanii*
- » native daphne - *Pittosporum undulatum*
- » black tea tree - *Melaleuca bracteata*
- » broad leaved paperbark - *Melaleuca viridiflora*
- » tuckeroo - *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*

Shrubs

- » lilly pilly - *Syzygium sp.*
- » Qld myrtle - *Thaleropia queenslandica*
- » mock orange - *Murraya paniculata*

Clumping plants and features

- » Cordyline stricta
- » Cape York lily - *Curcuma australasica*
- » matt rush - *Lomandra multiflora*
- » blue flax lily - *Dianella caerulea*
- » narrow leaf ginger - *Alpinia modesta*
- » bird of paradise - *Strelitzia reginae*
- » tree fern - *Cyathea cooperi*

Vines

- » *Paristolochia deltantha* - butterfly host
- » bougainvillea - new varieties
- » bower of beauty - *Pandorea jasminoides*
- » guinea flower - *Hibbertia scandens*



Tropical foliage plants under the trees, small shrubs along the front of the house and a carpet grass lawn make an appropriate garden character



This side garden has the traditional form and plants – a palm and frangipani in the front corner, ferns and hippeastrums along the house, bougainvillea, ixora and allamanda along the street fences.

Part 5: Townsville verandahs

This part will assist you to understand, and faithfully conserve or restore your verandah. It should be read in conjunction with parts one to four.





This modest workers dwelling was individualised by its verandah balustrade, brackets, mouldings and gate at the top of the stairs. These, and the stair taper, are important details to be reconstructed (JOL).

Why do our houses have verandahs?

When the British colonised Australia, they brought with them the Georgian architectural style that was popular in Britain at the time.

In the cold British climate, the Georgian style had narrow eaves without verandahs, allowing the sun to warm walls and light to penetrate the house's interior.

The early settlers progressively abandoned this style, realising the need to shield their houses from the summer sun – just as a broad-brimmed hat protects the head.

The Townsville verandah

Form and appearance

As settlement spread northwards, with it came the verandah. While verandahs of the early settlement were simple and austere, by the time Townsville was settled in the 1860s they had become more decorative.

Whether by intention or simply because it was normal repetitive practice, verandahs achieved a human scale. The roof was brought down enough to provide the maximum shading for the house, while the roof height at the edge of the verandah was sufficient for the tallest of people to stand comfortably.

The extent of the verandah probably reflected the means of the owner. Small workers dwellings usually had one to the front, protecting the front door and the front room windows, and often a rear verandah.

The narrow 16 perch (400sqm) allotment, common in some parts of early Townsville, usually meant that there was no room beside the house for side verandahs.

Houses on bigger blocks had front, rear and side verandahs. The side verandah, was generally located to give the best protection from the western sun. Wealthier residents built houses with verandahs on all four sides to provide the maximum amount of shade and sheltered outdoor space.

Irrespective of size, all verandahs were usually of similar form and

structure, and were often embellished with simple and decorative, detail to give the house the personal touch of the owners.

Development over the years

While a house was home to a single man or couple, verandahs remained open to the elements with only an occasional blind or lattice panel inserted to provide extra sun protection.

When the children arrived, and ten or twelve in a family was not uncommon, more sleeping area was required. The most economical method to achieve this was to progressively enclose the verandahs.

In addition, to improve the security of a home, the decision might be taken to enclose the front verandah. This was usually done by either changing the balustrade to a half-height wall, with wooden louvres or casement windows in the openings over the wall, or by retaining the balustrade and adding wooden louvres above it. The latter method permitted the airflow through the balustrade to be maintained.

While wooden louvres reduce the view from the interior, and the amount of light penetrating the inner rooms, they are a very good controller of sun and rain. Also, if they are in good working condition, they are said to be protection against cyclones as they supposedly automatically close on the windward side and open on the leeward side, equalising the air pressure within the house. In addition, they provide a physical barrier to flying debris in a storm.

From the early 20th century until the early 1940s, housing styles



Obviously the home of a well-to-do family, the verandah decoration was, nevertheless, quite understated.

evolved from symmetrical forms to asymmetrical with one or more projecting gables to the front. Through this period, all houses had at least one verandah. The size of the verandahs progressively decreased, probably due to increased costs, but the desire for an outdoor sitting area endured.

Due to materials shortages after World War II, verandahs became a luxury, and few houses had them.

Conservation of the verandah

Research

Before proceeding with the 'restoration' project, it is wise to carry out research and investigation into the early form of the verandah, rather than making assumptions about its appearance. Talk to neighbours and older residents in the street as they may have valuable memories to share.

Visit the research agencies listed in part two of this guide, and peruse their photographic collections – you might just find your house there.

If you are fortunate enough to locate a series of photographs of your house through the years, look at them closely to determine to which era you are going to restore your verandahs.

If the verandahs are enclosed, it may be for a very good reason. Experience the seasonal weather conditions as they may have influenced some of the earlier enclosures. Prematurely removing them may make you regret the action when you realise the reason for their installation.

Physical investigation

If you cannot locate any old photographs of the house, there are other ways to investigate what might have been there. Look on the verandah posts and plates and on the floor for paint marks, mortises, screw holes, stop chamfering and so on. These can tell many stories – for example:

» paint marks on the verandah plate can tell the length of the brackets

- » paint marks towards the top of the verandah posts can be used to tell the vertical size of the brackets, and if there were any post mouldings around the posts below the brackets
- » mortises on the side of the verandah posts are evidence of the number of rails in the balustrade and their heights, and paint marks may provide the shapes of the rails
- » stop chamfering on the posts is proof that the verandah had a balustrade originally as opposed to a solid half-height wall
- » small notches or holes at regular intervals in the verandah nosing boards would suggest that there was originally a cast iron lacework balustrade.

Some houses were 'modernised' in the mid-20th century by applying fibro to the faces of the balustrades. In such cases, removal of the fibro may reveal an intact balustrade. ***Seek professional advice before the removal of any fibro to ensure it is not, or does not, contain asbestos.***

If enough clear evidence cannot be found, don't abandon your research and just install anything. If all else fails, go back to the historic photograph collections and try to find houses that are generally of similar age and appearance as yours. Use these as a pattern for the 'restoration' of your verandah. Remember, try not to mix details from different eras as it will inevitably show up in the end result and will not look right.

Structural matters

Before starting on the repair or reconstruction of the balustrades and other decorative work, it is imperative to carefully assess the condition of the structural timbers and to ensure that the floor is level and the posts are plumb. Structural timbers should also be checked for dry rot

and termite damage and repaired or replaced if necessary.

Materials

Unenclosed verandahs are exposed to the weather, so it is important to give consideration to the type of materials used. Wherever possible, use good quality hardwood timber of a suitable durability class. If there is no alternative to using pine for items such as balustrade dowels, ensure that the pine is given a good preservative treatment.

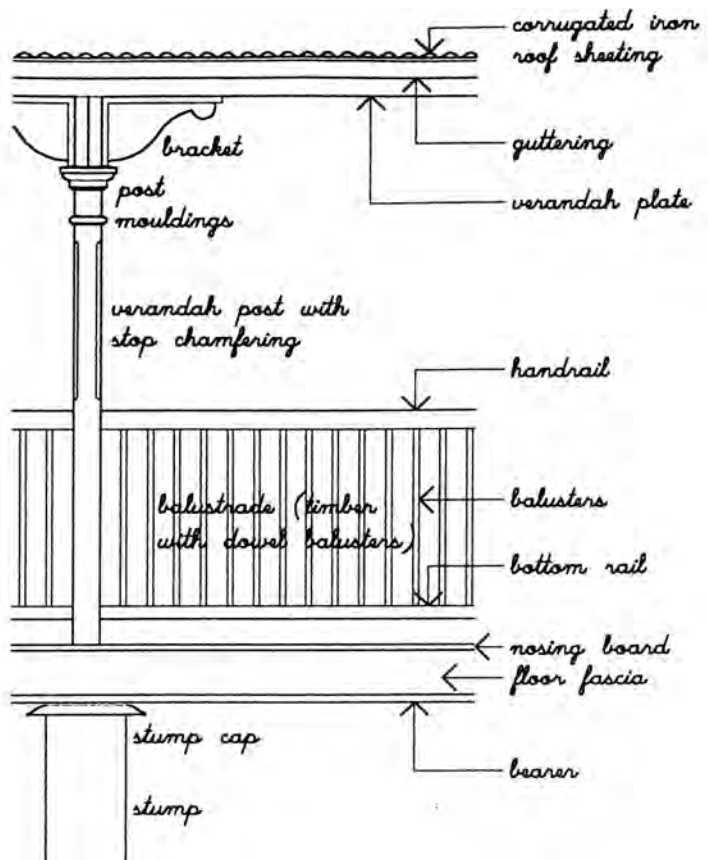
All iron and steel fixings such as nails, screws and bolts should be galvanised. It is very frustrating to finish the job only to have rust marks stain the paint within a couple of years.

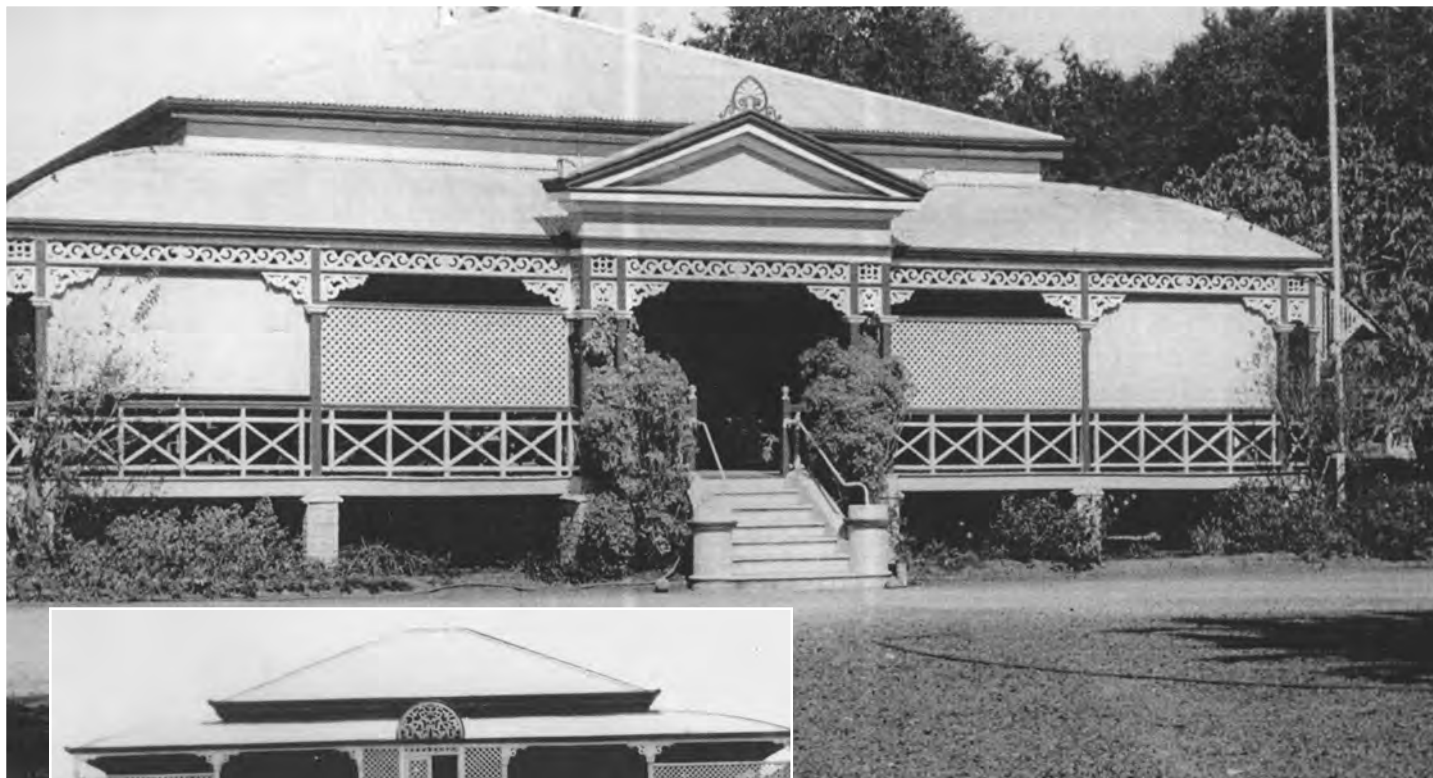
If the original verandah had timber battening below the edge of the verandah, try to retain or reconstruct the battening as it adds to the appearance of the verandah.

Do not be tempted to fully enclose the space between the stumps unless your research indicates that it was enclosed from an early date. Keeping the space open enhances the deep shading effect below the verandah. Even when the space was completely battened, it was usual to finish the battening in a dark colour, possibly similar to creosote, to achieve a similar appearance.

If stairs have been rebuilt with modern steel stringers, or if the original stairs have survived and require reconstruction, consider matching the original details so that the house can retain a detailed cohesive appearance. If photographic evidence of the original stair balustrade cannot be located, matching to the verandah balustrade is always a safe option.

Verandah Terminology





Above: Another grand Townsville residence, probably dating from the 1880s (JOL)

Left: Possibly the epitome of the symmetrical Townsville dwelling of the early 20th century. Note how the larger lattice panels stop at the line of the post mouldings - this provided sufficient height for privacy whilst still showing the shape of the brackets and allowing cool breeze to enter and hot air to escape – the reasons are still valid today (JCU).

Part 6: Alterations to your house

This part provides general information on some of the requirements for doing building alterations to your heritage house. Topics covered include restumping, flooring, re-roofing, walls, doors, windows, electrical work and kitchen and bathroom alterations.





Restored House, Mysterton (TCC)

Starting out

Before you start making plans you should first check the heritage listings for your house. Only a handful of houses are on the Queensland Heritage Register, but those listed require approval for most development from the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). This is a part of the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) that is used to assess development.

Council's Local Heritage Database lists the houses protected by the Planning Scheme. Council offers assistance and advice to owners of properties on this database. Refer to part one of this guide for coverage of conservation principles, processes and practices; and part two for tracing the building and landscape history of your Townsville House.

Restumping

If you wish to raise the house, please consult with an architect first, as raising can often destroy the proportions of the house and its setting in the streetscape. Most traditional, timber Townsville houses are supported by timber or concrete stumps, and occasionally brick piers.

The stump ensured dry conditions within the house during flooding and tropical downpours. It also gave the occupants a feeling of protection against intrusion by snakes and other animals, and allowed air to circulate, producing cooler conditions in the house. The galvanised iron ant cap formed an effective deterrent to termites.

Older houses were quite low to the ground but gradually the height above ground increased until the space became useable for storage,

a laundry and eventually as a garage space for vehicles.

Many older houses have been restumped using square or round concrete stumps, and more recently steel posts.

Timber stumps should be inspected for rot or termite damage and concrete stumps should be inspected for 'concrete cancer', the result of reinforcing bars rusting and expanding, causing the concrete to crack away. Ant caps should also be inspected for their intactness. Breaching by termites is evident from mud galleries around the caps.

If new stumps are required, try to match the material and size to the originals; for example round durability Class 1 hardwood to replace round timber stumps, or reinforced square concrete to replace square concrete posts. Reinstate or replace ant caps, anchor bolt tie down brackets and any cross bracing, timber screens or battens between stumps as required.

Floors

Structural floor framing consists of hardwood bearers and joists. Internal floorboards were hardwood tongue and groove with shot edged hardwood boards used on verandahs. Internally, older houses commonly have six inch hoop pine tongue and groove boards. Verandah joists slope slightly to the outside, allowing drainage.

Usually, floors were only lightly sanded, covered with several layers of newspaper underlay, and topped with carpet or patterned 'lino'. Some floors were sanded smooth and finished with a clear copal varnish. Often carpet or lino squares were used and a one-foot wide

edge border was left, that was painted with a black Japan stain. Verandah boards were usually left unfinished.

Inspect the structural timbers and floorboards for damage. Unsound structural timbers should be wholly replaced. Floorboards can be patched by removing the damaged section and replacing with new or second hand timber to match the existing.

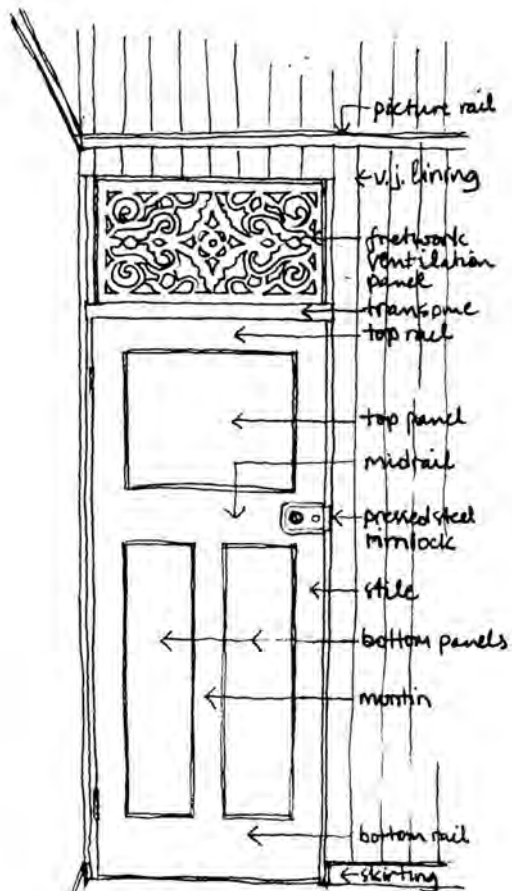
Removing floor coverings and treating boards, including verandahs, with a clear polyurethane finish is now popular. Be cautious, as the heavy sanding required for these finishes could expose the tongues of the tongue and groove boards or worse still, expose borer or termite damage. Think to the future; new finishes can quickly become worn, and a re-finish will require more heavy sanding to remove the polyurethane. A three-quarter inch thick floor board which has been heavily sanded twice could have up to a quarter inch of wood removed.

Consider re-laying floor coverings over previously covered areas, or repolish the floors using a commercially available oil based floor varnish. To prolong the life of polished floors, try placing traditional rugs or carpets in heavy wear areas to maintain the attractiveness of newly polished timber.

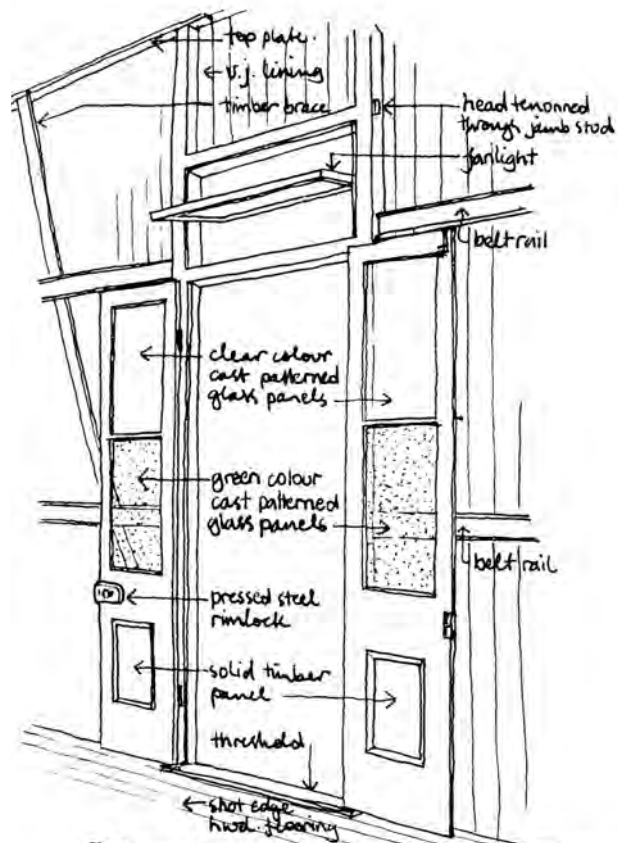
Walls, doors and windows

Most timber walled Townsville houses have a hardwood frame, while some early 1900s houses have a silky oak frame.

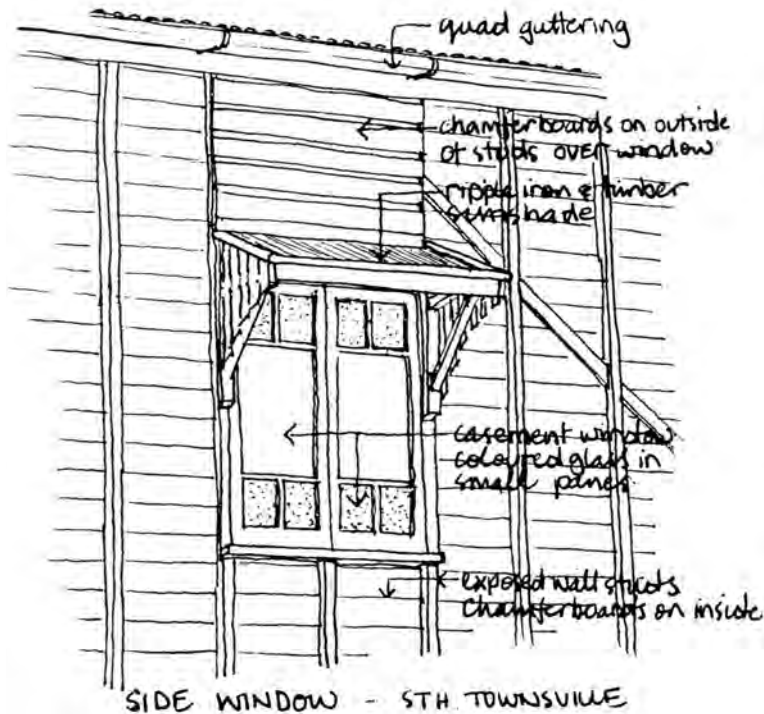
Wall studs were tenoned into mortised top plates and floor bearers,



INTERNAL DOOR - STH TOWNSVILLE



FRENCH DOORS ON VERANDAH - STH. TOWNSVILLE



and then nailed. External wall cladding was hardwood weatherboard or chamfer-board. Internal lining was horizontally laid, beaded tongue and groove boards. To save money the external cladding was sometimes left off, except over external windows and doors where it was required for weatherproofing. Internally, non-load bearing stud framed walls were constructed on top of the floor boards. After about

1910, internal walls and walls exposed on the inside of open verandahs, were constructed using the post and belt rail system and lined with vee-jointed (vj) tongue and groove softwood boards. These were laid vertically, and twice nailed onto the sides of top plates and floor bearers, and to the belt rails. Skirting boards were uncommon except in the grander houses.

Doors and windows were fitted on the job, using standard components produced in a joinery workshop. Doors were either panelled or boarded. Early panelled doors usually have four panels. Three panelled doors are more common in houses built after 1918. Boarded doors with ledged and braced frames were used on the more austere houses. External doors usually have a boarded bottom section with either glass panels or timber louvres in the top section. Doors leading from the main rooms onto the verandahs are usually French door pairs, with a timber panelled bottom section, and patterned cast glass panels above. Above some doors are opening fanlights and fretwork ventilation panels are common above internal doorways.

There are many types of windows, however double hung sashes, casements, and adjustable silky oak louvres are the most common. Glazing is usually thin small sheets of float or patterned cast glass fixed with metal sprigs and putty. Unprotected windows are usually covered by a sunshade, either timber framed and ripple iron sheeted or fabricated galvanised iron hoods in a variety of designs.

You should retain the existing doors and windows, including any accompanying hardware and iron-mongery. If any of these are damaged beyond repair, it may be possible to obtain matching items cheaply from a demolition yard. It does not matter if the match is

exact. New doors and windows can be made to match existing using suitable substitute joinery timbers.

Roofs

A variety of roof shapes and forms top the typical Townsville house, including steeply pitched, hipped or gabled roofs, or a combination of these. In older houses the verandah roofs are usually separate from the main roof and at a flatter pitch. Some are curved or bull-nosed. Other houses have the verandahs under the main roof. Sometimes kitchens or bathrooms at the back and sides of houses, were separately roofed.

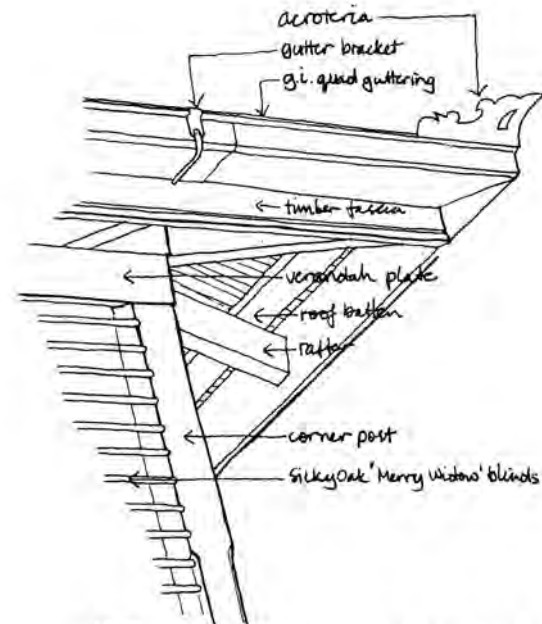
Roof framing consists of hardwood beams, rafters, battens and ceiling joists nailed together. Roofs were originally sheeted using short lengths of corrugated galvanised iron, which were lapped down the roof and fixed with lead head galvanised nails. Spring head galvanised nails are used on later roofs. Nowadays many of the original roofs have been resheeted using corrugated zinc coated steel sheets in single lengths from ridge to gutter.

Ridge cappings, hip flashings, barge flashings and valley flashings bridge the gap at the change in direction of the roof sheets. They are generally galvanised iron sheet, bent and scribed to fit into the corrugations of the roof sheeting. Gutters are generally ogee or quad types held on with spike brackets. Downpipes are three inch galvanised iron round pipes, fixed using strap brackets with the folded seam hidden. Other rainwater goods found on some Townsville houses include gable rolls, roof ventilators, finials, acroteria and other ornate crestings.

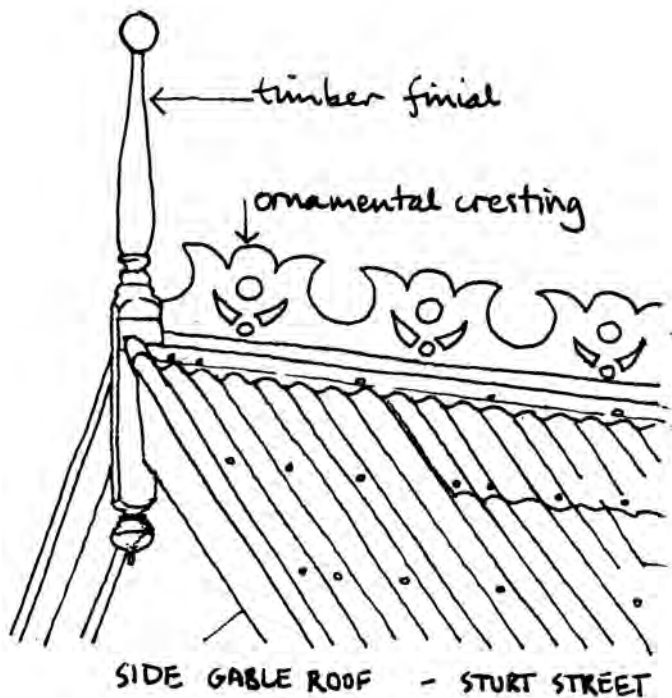
If repairing roof components is not feasible, a roof replacement may

be necessary. With the roof sheeting off, there is an opportunity to upgrade the strength of the roof framing to the current building code standard; and improve the comfort level within the house by installing insulation.

If a partial replacement is taking place, be aware of the corrosive problems of dissimilar metals. Corrosion can also occur if water



ROOF CORNER DETAIL - STH TOWNSVILLE



discharges off new zinc coated roof sheeting into galvanised iron gutters and downpipes.

Kitchens and bathrooms

There is nothing wrong with making the kitchen and bathroom areas more efficient and liveable, to satisfy the needs of today's lifestyle. However, don't discard original cupboards, fixtures and fittings

without investigating their worth, or their potential reuse in your plans. Be careful during planning to ensure that new kitchens or bathrooms won't adversely affect the structure or fabric of the house. For example, if you desire a larger kitchen it may be better to relocate the kitchen to a larger room rather than pulling down walls to enlarge existing rooms.

Painting and decorating

The traditional timber Townsville house was generally painted throughout, all except the roof sheeting and the underside of the exposed floor framing. Painting preserves timber and most houses have been repainted a number of times. Many older houses were painted using solvent borne linseed oil paint, made with lead based pigments. Other paints contained a red oxide base. Red lead was used to prime bare timber and galvanised iron. Today's paints are either oil based solvent borne (enamels) or water based latex (acrylics), with colours obtained by adding tints to a dark or light base, at various levels of gloss.

Many things influence a choice of colour scheme; including personal taste, fashion, and price. There are no rules and it is not necessary to paint your house using only so called 'heritage colours'. However, trends are identifiable by looking at houses from different periods. One choice is the original colour scheme, potentially available in old photographs, or from matching paint scrapings against a paint manufacturer's colour system. Even old black and white photographs enable you to distinguish dark coloured elements of the house, from elements that were light or medium tones. It is important to get this tonal balance right.

Repaint your house, inside and out, about every ten years. Surface preparation, that is washing down, stripping back, sanding and filling, is as important as the painting itself. Be careful when preparing surfaces which may have lead based paint applied to them as the dust (sanding) and fumes (burning off) are toxic. If the lead paint is stable it is better to leave it and repaint over it. If it requires removal then chemical stripping is the recommended method. Paint companies produce detailed data sheets with recommendations on preparation and repainting over existing surfaces, including the number and types of priming (undercoats) and finishing coats.

Decorating room interiors can be challenging as it includes painting doors, walls and ceilings. As well as matching the floor coverings, joinery, cupboards, benches, plumbing, light fittings, curtains, blinds and furniture. Townsville sun and glare is intense so don't be afraid to use dark colours in the rooms of the house. You will quickly become accustomed to the feeling of relaxation and coolness that darker colours can create.

Electrical work

The traditional timber house has small switchboards with little safety protection, rubber coated wiring and few power and lighting points. If this is the case, you should consider rewiring. Rewiring needs to be carried out by a licensed electrician, who is required to provide certification of the electrical services undertaken.

The switchboard should be modernised and should include circuit breakers, not fuses, and a residual current device. You should also install smoke detectors throughout the house, preferably hardwired back to the switchboard.

Timber houses usually have single-skin wall linings so exposed wiring is sometimes unavoidable. Carefully plan the route of new wiring with your electrician to minimise exposed wiring and avoid cutting new holes through walls, floors and ceilings. In secondary rooms surface mount wiring on the back side of the wall. Pine channel mouldings are available to cover any exposed wiring. Try to run wiring vertically on the face of posts and studs, either up from under the floor, or down from the ceiling. Avoid running horizontally across walls. Try to mount new light switches and power outlets in adjacent rooms back to back to share one mounting block and one cover moulding. Reuse any interesting early fittings, especially ornate glass light fittings. You can often find early light shades in antique shops to suit the period of your house. Old bakelite light switches and power outlets are probably not suitable for reuse. Electrical manufacturers have a range of reproduction heritage fittings which could be considered; however, the use of modern fittings is not necessarily wrong.

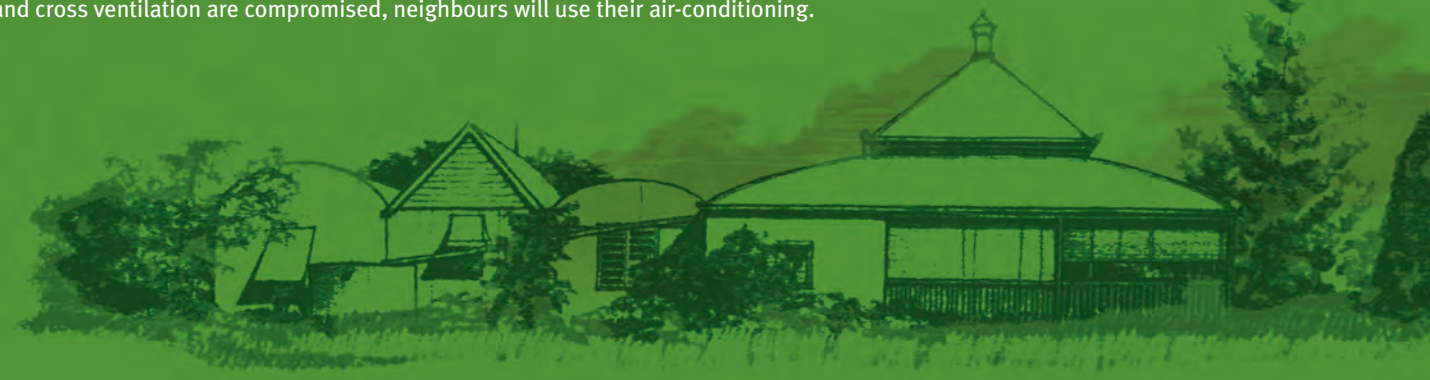
Part 7: Additions to your house

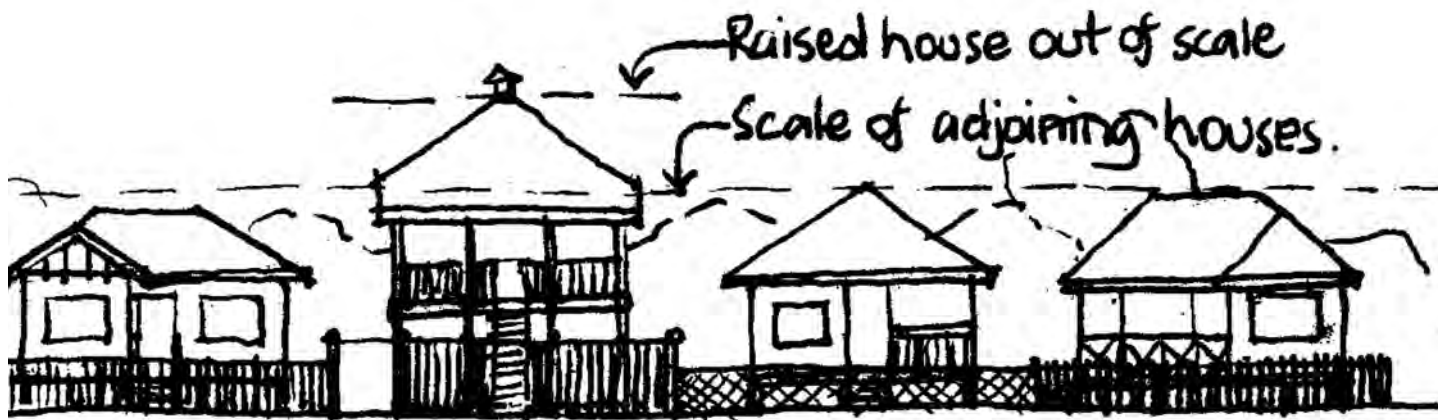
This part of the guide presents ways to maintain the character and appearance of your home if you are considering major building changes.

When required, extensions can include additional new living and bedroom spaces, updated kitchens and bathrooms, or built-on decks and carports.

If a large amount of additional space is required it may be more economical to buy a larger house, or consider building the extension as a separate structure linked to the house. Avoid large additions which change the scale of the original house. The scale of an extension can be reduced by designing it in smaller parts, reducing its bulk.

Consider how the internal house spaces relate to the outdoor spaces on your property, on adjoining properties, and to the streetscape. Avoid building close to boundaries so that neighbours don't feel a lack of privacy. Townsville's timber houses work better with space around them to catch breezes. If privacy and cross ventilation are compromised, neighbours will use their air-conditioning.





Raised smaller houses on narrow blocks can often look ugly and out of scale

Regulations

Any additions will require properly drafted working drawings to be prepared for your building certifier, and fees will apply. These plans will need to comply with the Queensland Building Act and the Building Code of Australia – Volume 2. Part six of this guide also contains other regulatory information which might apply.

You could consider employing an architect experienced in residential conservation work, to provide design advice and to prepare the plans.

Building work must be carried out either by a registered builder or

yourself as an owner builder by obtaining a permit from the Queensland Building Services Authority (BSA).

Once you have engaged a builder, there are statutory requirements to be attended to such as, BSA insurances, plumbing and drainage approvals and portable long service leave levies – each requiring a fee. These are usually included in the builder's or subcontractor's quotation for the works.

As Townsville is in a cyclonic region, any timber additions will have to be designed and constructed in accordance with Australian Standard AS 1684.3 Residential Timber-framed Construction – Cyclonic Areas.



Modern simple addition to a 1950s Townsville house, raised and built in under, incorporating an internal stair and using the support columns to create spaces (SDJ).

Left: A concrete masonry box propping up a traditional timber house can appear unappealing

Building in under the house

If your house is highset, one way to gain extra rooms is to enclose the space under the core of the house. For aesthetic and practical reasons it is best to keep the external walls of the enclosure back one row of stumps from the external walls or verandahs of the upper level.

Habitable rooms require at least 2.4 metres ceiling height, while laundries, kitchens, bathrooms, and garages require 2.1 metres minimum.

If further house raising is necessary to provide liveable headroom, be

aware that raising too high can change the appearance and scale of the house.

Raised larger houses on wide blocks of land are more likely to maintain a compatible scale with adjacent houses than raised small houses on narrow blocks. Avoid turning a lowset house into a highset.

Raising the house will include the design and installation of new structures, bearers and extensions to electrical, plumbing and other utilities. Building in under the house can allow termites to penetrate the house, and may also affect the drainage on sloping sites. The installation of a concrete slab and termite prevention measures

should be carefully considered.

Use lightweight materials that are compatible. Partial screening using timber battens and timber framed walls set back, will maintain the lightweight look, enhanced by light and shadow on the new enclosure.

Building on the house

While your house may look large with plenty of verandah space, it may only have a few rooms, usually in the centre or rear of the house. It is often better to add an extension, rather than altering the character of the original interior by removing walls, enlarging rooms or by building in under the house.

Many houses have been added onto, providing additional bedrooms as a family's needs changed, or as the bathroom, toilet and laundry were moved indoors. This was achieved by enclosing verandahs and adding structures to the sides and rear.

The simple dominant roof forms of the timber framed house should not be spoilt by additions which significantly alter the roof's shape and character. The roof pitch should match the original. Adding large skillions or dormer windows can disrupt the traditional form. Also, avoid installing box gutters at the joints of new and original roofing.

The relationship between the new and existing roof is the key to a well designed addition. Typical worker's dwellings have a hipped roof that is truncated on one or both sides of the house. If your block has sufficient space, extra floor area can be achieved by completing the hip form. The width of the extension is governed by the springing

point for the rafters, and the height at this point should be constant around the edge of the roof. Likewise, gabled roofs can be extended by incorporating additional gable extensions.

Separate additions

A good way of providing larger additions is to construct a separate building linked to the main house. Replicating the original style is unnecessary. A simple modern design using compatible materials, often looks better adjacent to an historic house. Proportion and detail is more important than style and decoration.

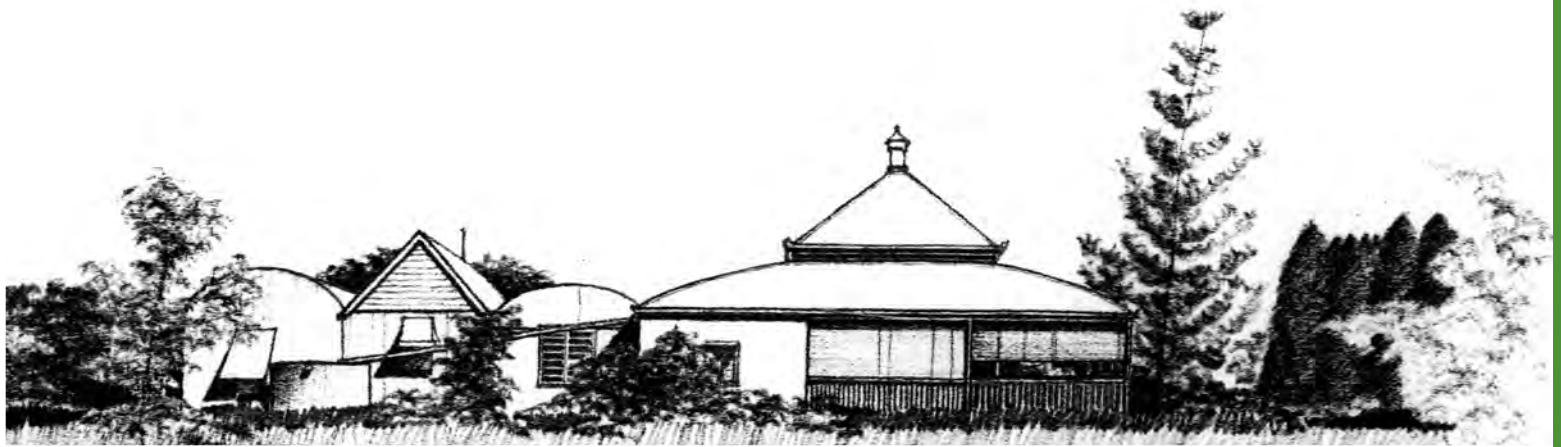
Additions are usually better at the rear of the house thereby maintaining your street frontage. These new spaces are best used for casual living in conjunction with outdoor living areas in the backyard.

Always employ these design principles:

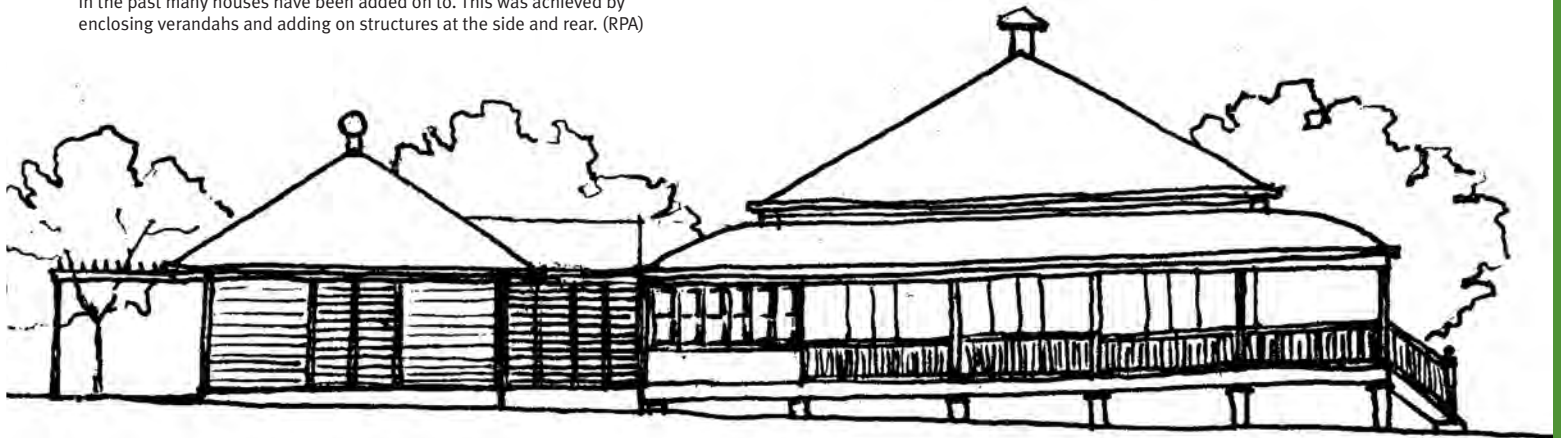
- » accommodate activities in appropriately varying degrees of enclosure
- » integrate the inside with the outside, and landscape the spaces
- » exclude sun and promote ventilation
- » build 'post and beam' and pitch your roof
- » select materials that are energy efficient and ecologically sustainable.

Decks and carports

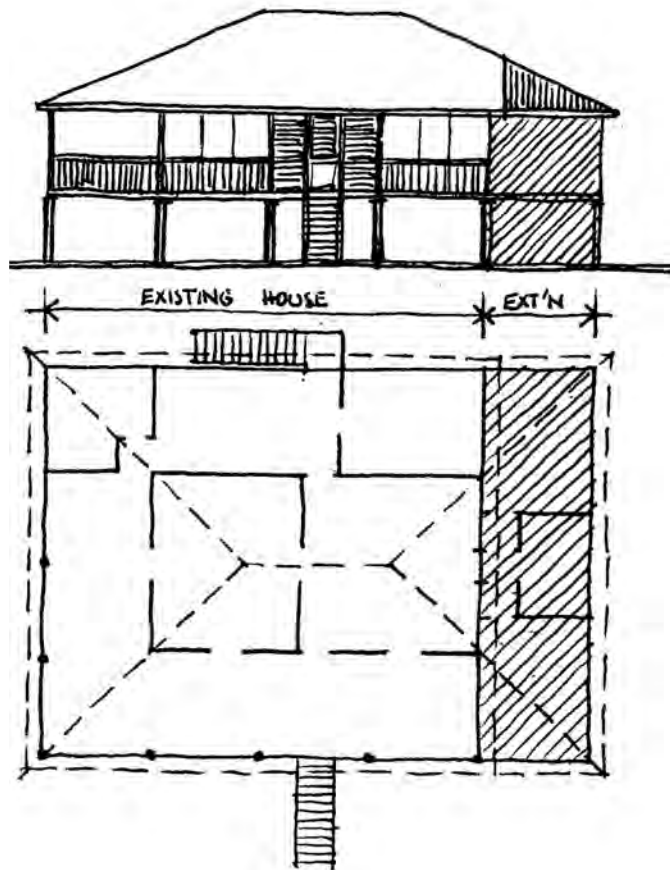
Over time many smaller cottages and worker's dwellings have lost their outdoor verandah spaces to enclosure. Rather than reinstating



In the past many houses have been added on to. This was achieved by enclosing verandahs and adding on structures at the side and rear. (RPA)



A good simple modern addition, smaller than the main house and linked to it.



Where houses are truncated it is a simple matter of completing the hip form of the roof to achieve extra floor area under.

the verandah, the tendency for new owners is to build on a 'deck'. This is often the first alteration along with modernising the kitchen or bathroom.

Decks can be either roofed or unroofed. The solution for a compatible roof design can be difficult, and is often dependant on the main roof and how the connection is made. Townsville's older houses were built before families owned a car and as a result many carports were added to the front or side, or a garage was constructed in the backyard.

Decks, carports and garages should complement the original house design. They are best located at the side or rear of the house and not in front, thereby preserving street views of the house. Normally the roof form and pitch should match the main roof, although sometimes other shapes can fit.

Over-decoration

Any work should be preceded by research to find out what your place originally looked like and how it has evolved over time. Parts one and two will assist you with this information.

All kinds of reproduction fixtures and fittings from roof ventilators to iron lacework, are available from restoration shops and hardware stores.

However, unless the fixtures and fittings were part of the original house, don't be tempted to attach decorative pieces to the addition, or the original house. Similarly, attaching front porticos, pediments or elaborate staircases could be excessive change. Turning a simple

worker's bungalow into a grand villa might look out of place in an architecturally uniform streetscape.

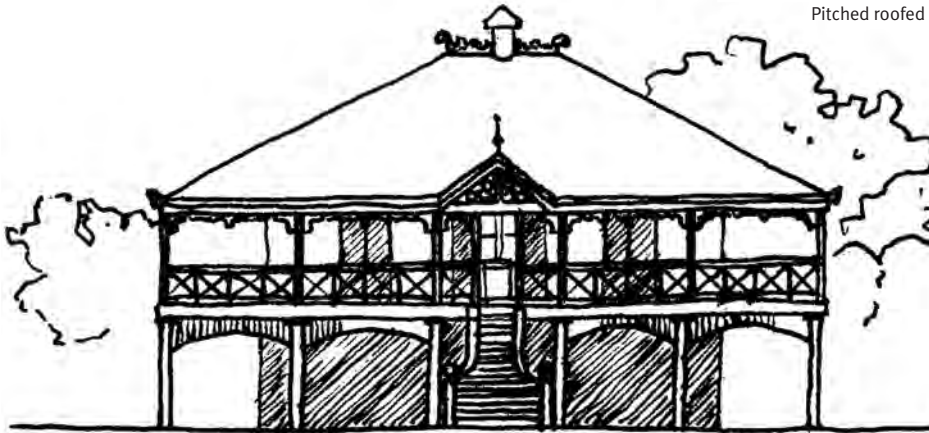
When our older houses were built, materials were what they were. More recently, our materials are likely to be manufactured. Punched metal is made to look like timber lattice, plywood sheeting is made to look like timber vj boarding and fibre cement and vinyl cladding is made to look like timber. Be true to good conservation principles and use authentic materials when you can.



Skillion roofed carport out of character.



Pitched roofed carport matches house.



The portico, concrete staircase, cross balustrading and iron lacework additions, decorate an otherwise simple worker's bungalow.

Credits, references and further reading

This guide is based on previous works prepared for Townsville City Council by the following authors:

Ralph Power Associates Pty Ltd (parts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Natural Resource Assessments Pty Ltd (part 2)

Geoff Morton Cultural Heritage Consultant (parts 3, 5)

Catherine Brouwer Landscape Architects (part 4)

Picture Credits

JCU – James Cook University - North Queensland Collection

JOL – John Oxley Library Collection

RPA – Ralph Power and Associates Pty Ltd

SDJ – Stephen de Jersey, Architect

TCC – Townsville City Council

References and further reading

BELL, P 1984, *Timber and Iron: Houses in North Queensland Mining Settlements, 1861-1920*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia. (Part 2).

BRAYSHAW, H 1990 *Well Beaten Paths*, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville. (Part 2).

BROUWER C. 1994 *The Garden in The Queensland House*, R Fisher, Brian Crozier Eds, Queensland Museum. (Part 4).

EVANS I, 1979 *Restoring Old Houses*, The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd. (Parts 3, 5).

EVANS I, 1983 *The Australian Home*, The Flannel Flower Press. (Parts 3, 5, 6).

EVANS I, C LUCAS and I STAPLETON 1984 *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses*, The Flannel Flower Press. (Part 6).

FISHER, R and B CROZIER, 1994, *The Queensland House*, a roof over our heads, Queensland Museum, Brisbane. (Part 2, 7).

GIBSON-WILDE, D M 1984, *Gateway to a Golden Land: Townsville to 1884*, History Department James Cook University, Townsville. (Part 2).

GIBSON-WILDE, D M and B C GIBSON-WILDE, 1988, *A Pattern of Pubs: Hotels of Townsville 1864 to 1914*, History Department James Cook University, Townsville. (Part 2).

GIBSON-WILDE, D M and B J DALTON, 1989, *Townsville 1888*, History Department James Cook University, Townsville. (Part 2).

HAMMOND, M (ed) 1988, *The Townsville and District Pioneer and Biographical Register*, Townsville. (Part 2).

HOGAN, J 1978, *Building Queensland's Heritage*, Richmond Hill Press Pty Ltd, Richmond. (Part 2).

HOULDSWORTH, M 1996, *The Morning Side of the Hill*, James Cook University, Townsville. (Part 2).

MARQUIS-KYLE, P and M. WALKER 2004 *The Illustrated Burra Charter Australia ICOMOS*, Burwood, Victoria. (Part 1).

MATHEW, J 1995, *Highways and Byways: The origins of Townsville Street Names*, Townsville Library Service, Townsville. (Part 2).

NATIONAL TRUST OF QUEENSLAND, 1994-1996, *Conserving the Queensland House (the series)*, National Trust of Queensland, Brisbane. (Part 2, 4).

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA), 1988 *Fences & Gates C.1840-1925*, Australian Council of National Trusts. (Parts 3, 5).

N.S.W. Department of Planning, *Getting the Details Right - Restoring Australian Houses 1890s-1920s*, The Flannel Flower Press, 1989. (Part 3, 5).

SAINI B and R. JOYCE ,1982 *The Australian House - Homes of the Tropical North*, Lansdowne Press. (Part 3, 5, 6, 7).

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL 1996, *The Character of Townsville: a community photograph book*, Townsville City Council, Townsville. (Part 2).

The North Queensland Resister Christmas Number, 1939. (has photographs of early Townsville street scenes). (Part 2).

The Townsville Bulletin, Jubilee Souvenir, Wednesday, August 27, 1913, (copy located at Townsville Museum). (Part 2).

WATSON, D and J MACKAY, 1985, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, Queensland Museum, Brisbane. (Part 2).

WATSON, D and J MACKAY, 1994, *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century*, Queensland Museum, Brisbane. (Part 2).

WOODS BAGOT and D M GIBSON-WILDE, 1993, *Urban Conservation Study of South Townsville and the Residential D Suburbs of Townsville*, (Vols 1-10) unpublished report for Townsville City Council, Brisbane. (Parts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Other resources

James Cook University Library

The James Cook University Library maintains the North Queensland Collection, which includes archives. The archive is a collection of the significant regional records of organisations and individuals, and includes old street maps. The North Queensland Collection is indexed and listed in the library's catalogue and can be searched remotely via the Internet. Members of the public may use the resources of the library subject to demand by members of the university community. The Photographic Collection and Oral History Collection may be accessed from the library.

CityLibraries

Aitkenvale Branch

(A) 4 Petunia Street, Aitkenvale

(P) (07) 4727 8310

Flinders Street Branch

(A) Level 1 Northtown, 280 Flinders Street, Townsville

(P) (07) 4727 9666

Thuringowa Central Branch

(A) 86 Thuringowa Drive, Thuringowa Central QLD 4817

(P) (07) 4773 8811

National Trust of Queensland

(A) Castling Street Heritage Centre, 5 Castling Street, West End

(P) 4771 5873

Family History Association of North Queensland

(A) 5 Baker St, Hermit Park, Qld 4812

(P) 47282833

Townsville Museum

(A) 231 Hugh Street, Currajong

(P) 4775 7838





Planning Section
Townsville City Council
Administration Building
103-141 Walker Street, Townsville
☎ 13 48 10
✉ enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au
💻 townsville.qld.gov.au