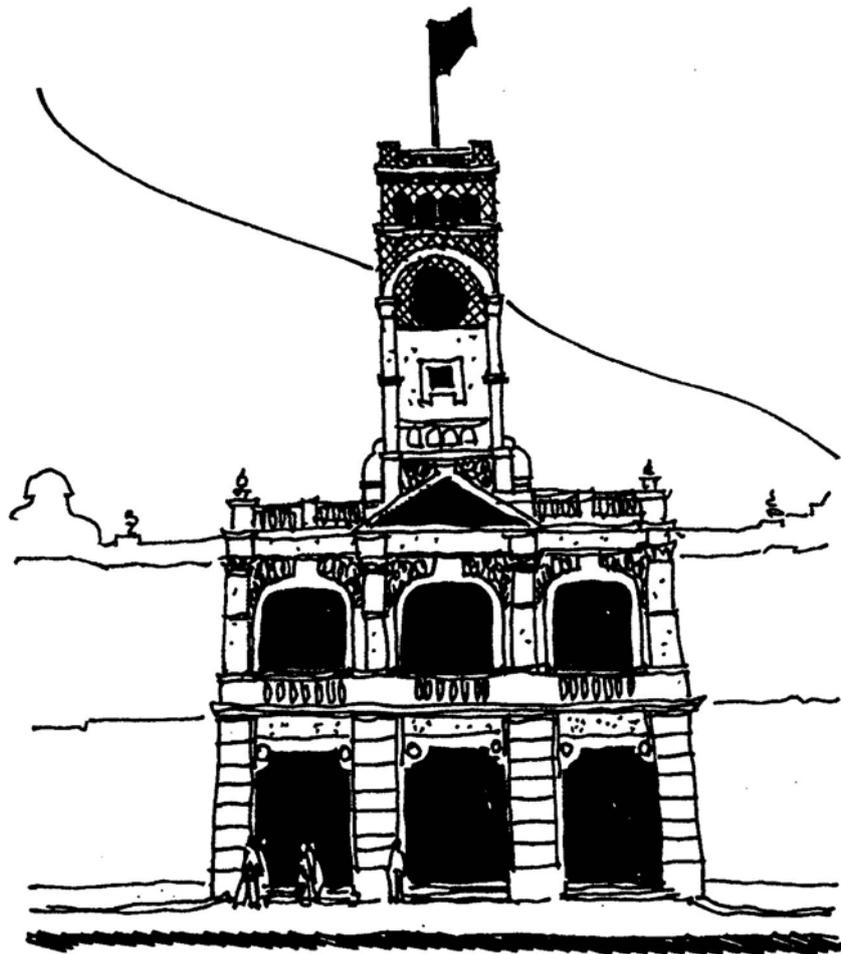


# TOOWOOMBA CITY CENTRE HERITAGE STUDY

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Volume 1

Report



Ivan  
McDonald  
Architects

# TOOWOOMBA CITY CENTRE HERITAGE STUDY

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## Volume 1

## Report

PREPARED FOR THE  
TOOWOOMBA CITY COUNCIL

BY  
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
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# *1. Introduction*

## **BACKGROUND**

In the past 6 years, Toowoomba City Council has commissioned a number of heritage studies. In 1994, an historical survey of Russell Street's buildings and the street itself was prepared. In 1995 and 1996, the Toowoomba Inner Residential Area Heritage Study and the Toowoomba 1996 Heritage Inventory respectively were completed. Both of the latter studies surveyed the inner residential area surrounding, but not including, the City Centre. Apart from the Russell Street Study, Council has undertaken no other heritage studies in the City Centre. Council recognises that this is a deficiency in its overall planning for and conservation of places of heritage significance and is now seeking to redress this by undertaking a heritage survey of the City Centre.

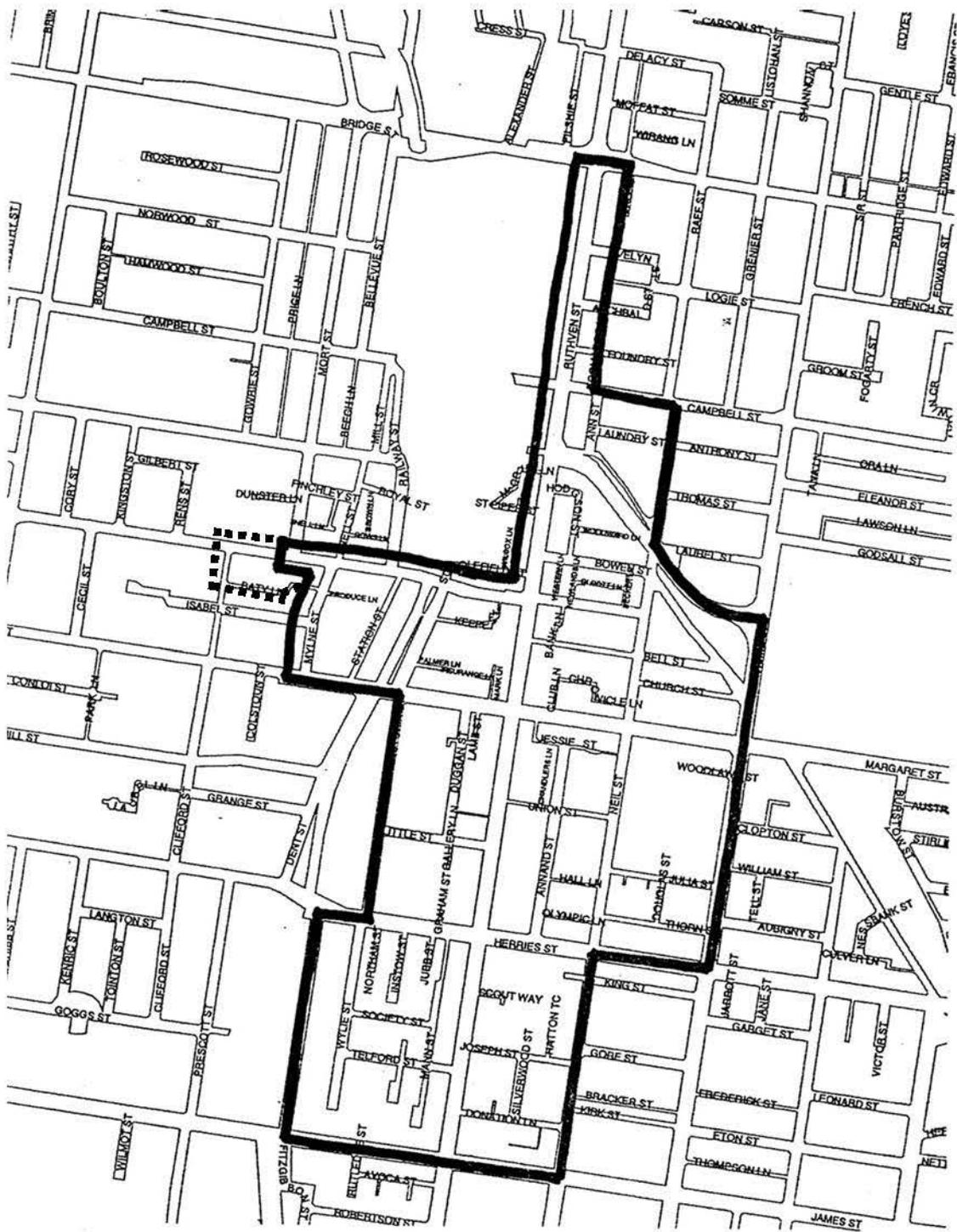
This study provides the necessary input to the new Planning Scheme (compliant with the Integrated Planning Act 1997) for Toowoomba, the preparation of which is well under way. One component of the Scheme will be provisions for the future planning and development of the Inner City Area. While the draft provisions include some guidelines for historic buildings, a detailed assessment of, and provisions for, the conservation and protection of significant buildings and places is missing.

With assistance from a heritage grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, this study provides a survey of significant buildings and places in the City Centre, along with provisions to be included in the new Planning Scheme to ensure their protection and conservation.

The outcomes of this study are:

- A cultural heritage study of the City Centre (as shown on the attached map) that identifies significant places and valuable features in a format that can be updated and used by other organisations and interested parties; and
- Provisions for inclusion in the Planning Scheme to ensure the development of and around identified places is sympathetic.

# Area for City Centre Heritage Study



Revised 1.9.2003

## SCOPE

To identify and manage Toowoomba's heritage places, a wide range of information is necessary. This includes understanding the history and current features of the study area, knowing what places have already been identified by other heritage authorities, respecting local knowledge and ideas about what is important to keep, and understanding the forces and mechanisms of change that threaten important places. The scope of this study is therefore broad and seeks to include as many sources of information as possible.

There is no comprehensive, local history written of the city of Toowoomba. Three volumes of documented history of the Darling Downs frontier to 1860 by French, other regional histories to 1893 by Waterson and a co-authored pictorial publication by them have provided a sound overview of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Darling Downs region. This information has been supplemented by a small amount of focussed primary research mainly drawing on Toowoomba City Council archives.

The scope of the study is further limited by currently-available resources. This has meant that historical research of individual places does not generally form part of this study nor does individual statements of significance. Where places have been previously assessed by other heritage agencies, this has been utilised, and, for some places, the Toowoomba Historical Society has provided background historical information. Thus, the use of the term "potential" heritage significance refers to the need for further detailed research and assessment of places to be carried out as part of the conservation management process. All community liaison and consultation with respect to this study has been undertaken by Toowoomba City Council.

Because of the highly-urbanised nature of Toowoomba's city centre, the extent of natural environment heritage features is negligible. The study deals almost exclusively with issues of European cultural heritage focussing on the built environment.

Due to their highly-specialised nature, Aboriginal heritage issues are not dealt with in this study but that is not to say that there are not issues of Aboriginal cultural heritage to be addressed in Toowoomba.

Generally, no attempt was made to gain access to privately-owned sites for the inspection of building interiors.

## METHODOLOGY

A 4-stage methodology has been adopted. Firstly, the historical context of the study area was established to identify the principal events and themes characterising its physical development.

Secondly, a comprehensive field survey, using standardised inventory forms, was carried out which identified surviving physical evidence of the study area's historical themes as well as identifying important architectural, aesthetic, technological and social qualities such as individual buildings and places, related groups and precincts, and visually-cohesive streetscapes.

Thirdly, historical and visual survey information was analysed and an assessment made of which places ought to be conserved. The extents of these areas are defined on maps.

Fourthly, issues concerning the conservation of these places were considered and recommendations made to conserve the cultural significance of the study area.

## ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE

The cultural significance of a place can arise from any one or a combination of a number of factors. In general, these factors fall into the five broad categories of significance defined in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) as aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

In central business districts, heritage significance is principally derived from:

- surviving evidence of important historical themes
- the buildings (either individually or collectively)
- the structure and setting of the area (especially street patterns, streetscapes, views, vistas or townscape prominence)

It is often the combination of buildings and other physical features – assessed for their quality and consistency – that generates cultural significance.

Every place has a history, an aesthetic value or a social meaning to some members of a community. Most places therefore meet some of the criteria prescribed above. It is, however, neither possible nor desirable to conserve every building or streetscape. Some measures must be applied to these board criteria in order to determine the degree of significance. The degree to which an

area is significant will determine the appropriate forms of management for the place.

In the context of this study, *local* heritage significance (as opposed to state, national or international significance) is the appropriate threshold. Areas of local significance are those that are of particular importance to the local community or part of a community which, in this study, is defined as the community of Toowoomba.

While the assessment of cultural significance is done objectively and by drawing on available factual data, judgement and a holistic view of the study area must also be exercised. The values upon which judgements of cultural significance are made are set out below. The list of cultural values has primarily been derived from the Burra Charter. Two additional values (architectural and technological) have been added to reflect the emphasis on the built environment inherent in this study and to be more consistent with the assessment criteria in the Queensland Heritage Act.

### **Historical Value**

Historical value encompasses the history of aesthetics, science and society and to a large extent underlies all of the other cultural significance values. A place may have historical value because:

- it is important for its association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the occupation, evolution or pattern of development of the community
- it is an example of rare, endangered or uncommon aspects of the cultural heritage of the community
- it has a strong association with the life or work of a person or group of people of significance to the community
- it is an important representative of the range of places which make up the cultural heritage of a community
- it has been influenced by an event, phase or activity that was important in local history
- it was the site of an event that was important in local history.

### **Architectural Value**

Architectural value relates to visual characteristics or to particular stylistic qualities or innovations of construction, details or materials present in buildings. A place may have architectural value because:

- it is a good representative example of a particular architectural style or design innovation
- it is extremely old or rare, or represents a style of building that was characteristic of a specific theme or era
- it utilises materials in a rare or unusual manner
- it is representative of the work of an important local designer or architect.

### **Aesthetic Value**

Aesthetic value takes into account the community's perception of the form, scale, colour, texture and material, smells and sounds of a place and its use. Places of aesthetic value would:

- demonstrate a high degree of creative accomplishment
- demonstrate important design or visual qualities
- be attractively-linked by means of age, scale, materials or architectural style.

### **Technological Value**

Technological value relates to particular technical innovations or rare or unusual technical processes or uses. A place may have technological value because:

- it demonstrates a high degree of technical innovation or accomplishment for its time
- it contains machinery or equipment that demonstrates uses or processes that are rare, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest to the community.

### **Social Value**

Social value embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, or other local cultural sentiment to a majority or minority group. A place may have social value because:

- it is highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations
- it is recognised by the community as having public value or is held in high esteem for its associations with the whole or part of the community whose history or culture is interwoven with the history of the place
- it demonstrates a distinctive way of life or custom that is no longer in use or is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest.

## **TEAM**

The study team consisted of:

**Toowoomba City Council**  
Study Co-ordination and Management  
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**Ivan McDonald Architects**  
Conservation Architecture and Urban Design  
Ivan McDonald  
Kathleen Miller

**Mark Baker Town Planning Consultant Pty Ltd**  
Social and Town Planning  
Mark Baker

**Margaret Pullar Historian**  
Historical Consultant  
Margaret Cook

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Local History Library Staff

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Bill Kitson