History of your house

Brief guide 27 | Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives holds records which may assist researchers in identifying and dating homes. This brief guide outlines the main series including architectural and block plans, maps, electoral rolls, council, land title office and Lands Department records, and records of public authorities responsible for providing financial assistance to applicants for the purposes of erecting dwelling houses. The following series of records can be found in ArchivesSearch (the Queensland State Archives' catalogue).

Architectural style and design records

Queensland Housing Commission

- **Architectural Drawings**
  Circa 1/1/1959–31/8/1974
  Series ID 19591

- **Drainage Construction Sketches**
  18/11/1941–6/2/1964
  Series ID 19574

Queensland Government Savings Bank

- **Workers' Dwelling Loan Registers**
  14/3/1910–19/2/1955
  Series ID 3962

- **Housing for Servicemen Loan Register**
  17/7/1944–7/12/1945
  Series ID 3956

State Advances Corporation

- **Building Revival Scheme Loan Applications Registers**
  1/8/1932–19/5/1958
  Series ID 3959

Workers' Dwellings Board

- **Workers' Homes Plan Books**
  Circa 1/1/1911–Circa 31/12/1928
  Series ID 19561
Electoral rolls and Post Office directories

Queensland State Archives holds electoral rolls from 1860 onwards. Rolls provide names and addresses. It is possible to use electoral rolls to date occupancy and construction of a house.

The Post Office directories are also useful for researching trades and professions. The Post Office directories from 1868 to 1949 are available on the computers in the Public Search Room at Queensland State Archives and at the State Library of Queensland.

Local government records

Local authority records include rate books, valuation registers, registers of ratepayers, and sanitary rate books which are useful for approximating dates of the construction and occupation of a house.

Search ArchivesSearch to find records for Councils, Shires or Boards for the locality of the property you are searching. Over time, a locality may have several changes to local governance, with consequent name changes. This will be shown in the Agency information.

A small sample of the variety of council records is:

**Purga Divisional Board**

- **Index to Ratepayers**
  Circa 1/1/1900–31/12/1903  
  Series ID 17120  
  This index records each ratepayer's name, rate book number, area, situation and rateable value of his or her land, total rates due and, amount paid.

- **Rate Books**
  Circa 1/1/1893–31/12/1917  
  Series ID 6156  
  Rate books may include number, name of person rated, name of owner of property, description and situation of rateable property, rateable value and particulars of rates received.

**Cairns City Council**

- **Valuation Rolls**
  Circa 1/1/1954–31/12/1965  
  Series ID 5883  
  The valuation rolls include owner's name, address, dimensions of the land, unimproved value, water/sewerage, date of valuation and the date the valuation takes effect.

**Cloncurry Shire Council**

- **Sanitary Rate Books**
  1/1/1920 - 31/12/1948  
  Series ID 5024
Each entry includes occupier/owner’s names and rate book number, arrears from previous year, payments by month for a one year period, amount due, total paid and yearly balance.

Lands Department records

When Crown land has been purchased, or alienated from the Crown, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Titles Registry Office. Generally, research of subsequent transfers of ownership is done by the Titles Registry, for a fee. However, the following Queensland State Archives records may be useful in tracking deed and lease information.

**Index to Non Current Lessees**
Circa 1/8/1885–Circa 31/12/1993
Series ID 14000
This index records persons who held Crown leasehold including selections, occupation licenses, pastoral and special leases, non-competitive leases, road leases, perpetual leases. Details name and address of lessee or selector, selection or lease number, land agents district, form of tenure. Note: Current Crown leases are held by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

**Sales of Crown Land and Special Leases**
19/12/1859–Circa 31/12/1962
Series ID 14026
This series records the sale of Crown land at auction. Information may include the date and place of sale; the date of proclamation for later sales; a description of the land, etc.

**Indexes to Land Purchases**
Circa 1/1/1860–31/12/1921
Series ID 10397
This index records town and country land purchases. References to the survey plan numbers are also sometimes provided.

**Registers of Perpetual Leases**
Circa 1/1/1915–31/12/1981
Series ID 13800
These registers record transactions on perpetual leases including number of lease; land agent district; lessee; dates when lease was authorised, requisitioned, passed and issued; lot number; etc.

**Journal of Dealings**
28/1/1916 - 17/8/1926
Series ID 14020
Journal of dealings for perpetual town and suburban leases include number of dealing; date of receipt; registration fee paid; number of perpetual lease; nature of dealing - mortgage, transfer, transmission release, record of death or marriage, correction of name, sublease; transferred from and transferred to; date of registration and subsequent dealings.

**Auction Perpetual Lease Files**
Circa 1/1/1915–31/12/1992
Series ID 17961
Files may include reports on land, transfers, mortgages, rents, improvements, valuation; Government Gazette notices, survey plans; leases; issue of deeds of grant, etc.

More information in Brief guide 29: Land Agents records and Brief guide 5: Land tenure records.
Maps and block plans

Parish and cadastral or property maps are useful for researching surveyed land and structures such as windmills. Maps can be searched in ArchivesSearch using keyword searches on place names including name of town, parish, county, shire or pastoral district. For more information, view Brief guide 1: Maps for genealogical and local history research, and Search procedure 2: Maps for genealogical and local history research available in the Public Search Room.

Town maps and block plans are useful for showing the location of buildings. There are a range of block plans for towns and cities. The plans vary in the amount of detail provided but may include construction materials of buildings, names of proprietors of businesses and details of property usage. Use the word ‘block’ and the name of the town or city in the online catalogue ArchivesSearch.

Survey Office

Town Maps  
Circa 1/1/1867 - Circa 31/12/1990  
Series ID 17610

Estate Maps  
Circa 1/1/1891 - Circa 31/12/1977  
Series ID 5738  
These maps advertised land offered for sale or lease as town and suburban allotments

Other series of records

Titles Registration Office records at Queensland State Archives

The journals of encumbrances and conveyances provide an avenue for researching transfers of land ownership. To begin, researchers must have an approximate date of sale/purchase and the name of either the buyer (encumbrancee) or the seller. Similarly, approximate dates and names are needed to trace subsequent transfers. The journals are arranged chronologically, and then by name. Details include where land situated (local authority area, particularly areas of Brisbane), nature of deed, journal volume and folio number.

Titles Registration Office

Indexes to journals of encumbrances  
Circa 1/1/1890 - Circa 31/7/1921  
Series 16244

Indexes to Journals of Conveyances  
Circa 1/1/1890 – Circa 31/7/1921  
Series ID 16245

Indexes of Journals of Encumbrances and of Conveyances  
Circa 1/2/1862 - Circa 31/12/1889  
Series ID 16276

Journals of Conveyances  
1/8/1865- 1/10/1923  
Series ID 16266
Trace the history of your house

Journal of Encumbrances
1/8/1865 - 31/10/1923
Series ID 16277

Letterbooks, Certificates of Title
Circa 1/10/1864 - Circa 30/11/1893
Series ID 16253

Transmission books
Circa 1/5/1897 - Circa 31/7/1928
Series ID 16258

Register of the Intra-Office Transmission of Documents
14/3/1924 - 4/7/1946
Series ID 16259

Justice and Attorney General's Department

Register of Appeals Against Shire Valuations
11/8/1909
Series ID 16305

Land Court, Townsville

Urban Valuation Register
[undated]
Series ID 6846
Details include subdivision, allotment and section numbers, area, valuation, appeal number, name and address of appellant, agent and determination of the court.

Valuer-General's Department

Valuation Rolls
Undated
Series ID 10218
Records are arranged by valuation district, by shire council, city or town, then by parish, or division in case of city. Details given in this series include valuation district, valuation division and valuation number, name and address of owner, reference number, county, parish, town, street, side of street, house name or number, whether water and sewerage are provided, date on which values take effect in valuation rolls, description of land, area, unimproved value, date valuation notice issued, value and type of improvement.

Valuer-General's Department, Brisbane Valuation District

Notifications of Change of Property Ownership (VG1), Brisbane
Circa 1/1/1946 - Circa 31/12/1973
Series ID 17911
Includes names and addresses of vendors and purchasers, selling prices, description of the property, date of agreement, terms of sale, improvements names and addresses of purchasers, the total sale price of the property, and the date of sale.
Photographs of houses

Photographs of houses are not contained in any single series of records. A variety of photographs of houses taken by various public agencies are at Queensland State Archives. Many have been digitised, and are searchable in Image Queensland. The example featured below is of a state rental house in Carina, Brisbane, circa 1954.

![State rental house in Carina, Brisbane, circa 1954](Queensland State Archives, Digital Image ID 10447)

Alternative sources of information

The Brisbane City Council Archives (also known as the Brisbane City Archives) hold a unique collection of resources including the following:

- original surveyor’s field books from 1911 to 1973, with the plan to sewer Brisbane including details of existing buildings and other permanent fixtures
- rate registers for all parishes within the Brisbane City Council from 1940 to 1974
- first road layout maps for the City centre; land grants and streets in the years 1874, 1904, 1948 and 1956
- street name records from the first edition in 1926.


For further assistance, please contact:

Brisbane City Archives  
Skyline Business Centre  
15/107-123 Muriel Avenue, Moorooka  

Telephone: (07) 3403 8888 or (07) 3403 1711  
Email: CARCH@brisbane.qld.gov.au

There is an online image database titled Brisbane Images which is also searchable on Trove at [https://www.flickr.com/groups/pictureaustralia_ppe/](https://www.flickr.com/groups/pictureaustralia_ppe/). This includes Queensland workers’ weatherboard homes from 1900 to 1950.
Further research can be conducted at the John Oxley Library, Heritage Collections and Picture Queensland at State Library of Queensland and the Fryer Library's Queensland Architectural Archive at the University of Queensland.