

GARDEN CITY ESTATE GUIDELINES

(Formerly known as, and referenced in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme as the Design & Development Guidelines for the Conservation of Garden City)

THESE ARE ADVISORY GUIDELINES TO ASSIST RESIDENTS IN RENOVATING AND MAINTAINING THEIR HOUSES



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**Prepared by the City of Port Phillip in association with Heritage Advisers
Trevor Westmore and Helen Lardner. 1997
Update by the City of Port Phillip 2010**

PART ONE:
BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

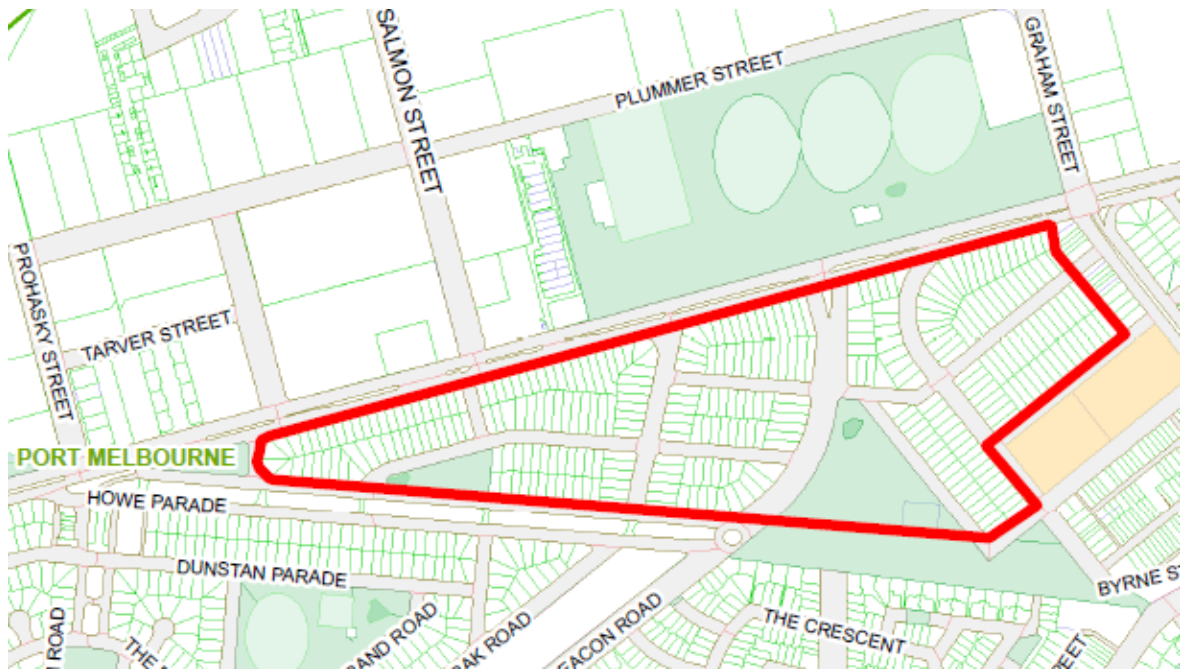
The Bank House Estate at Port Melbourne, commonly known as Garden City, is bounded by the lane west of Graham Street, Williamstown Road, Howe Parade, Poolman Street and Walter Street (see Figure 1). The area contains 322 dwellings, which were constructed for the State Savings Bank of Victoria by WA Henderson of Henderson and Haddow Architects between 1926 and 1948. The dwellings are built in pairs to six standard designs. Garden City includes three recreational reserves, however the small commercial precinct on Graham Street was not constructed along with the development of Garden City (despite it initially being designed as a part of the Estate).

The Bank House Estate was a unique experiment in mass housing, quite unlike anything else in Australia. Initiated by the State government through the State Savings Bank, it was Victoria's first attempt to provide low-cost housing on a single estate. Garden City was influential on later State public housing policies as implemented through the Housing Commission of Victoria and the construction of many other public housing estates around the State.

The estate was designed according to the Garden City town planning philosophy popular in England earlier this century. The housing style within the estate and the general layout of the estate were extremely innovative for their time and were very different from the typical housing developments of the 1920s and 1930s.

Garden City is a significant heritage place. It is essential that the City of Port Phillip and its residents maintain and enhance its unique character. It is also important that the needs of individual property owners are recognised. These guidelines are designed to strike a balance between these objectives. They describe the features that make Garden City Estate significant and offer practical suggestions to help property owners maintain its significance, whilst allowing for renovations and development to occur.

Figure 1: Garden City



Garden City, Port Melbourne

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GARDEN CITY

Garden City was originally recognised as an area of special heritage significance in the *Port Melbourne Conservation Study* (1979) commissioned by the former Port Melbourne City Council and the Australian Heritage Commission. Garden City was also classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) in 1987. In 1995 Port Phillip City Council reaffirmed the significance of the Estate through the Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review (1995) and in 2000 recognised the estate as Significant on the Heritage Policy Map within the Port Phillip Planning Scheme

Both the conservation study review and the National Trust classification report conclude that Garden City is an area of State (and probably national) significance due to its:

- Contribution to the development of public housing policies and practices in Australia;
- Integrity and uniqueness as a residential environment
- Relationship to the Garden City movement in Britain (see Appendices A and B).

The estate is also significant as an example of experimental building technology, residential planning and streetscape design.

Garden City owes its special character to the unusual combination of social, administrative, planning and architectural factors that influenced its development over more than two decades. The consistent application of a single development philosophy over such a long period is unusual in itself. The layout of the sites and the design and orientation of the dwellings express the vision policy-makers had of working-class housing during the inter-war years. They also tell us much about the tastes and lifestyles of the time.

The Statement of Significance for Port Melbourne – The Garden City Housing Estates (HO2), is contained within the Port Phillip Heritage Review.

3. IMPORTANT FEATURES

The most important feature of the Bank House Estate is the uniform character of the streetscape. A streetscape is made up of all those aspects of the built and natural environment, which are visible from the street. It includes both public areas (the road reserve and street trees) and private areas (the visible parts of people's houses and gardens).

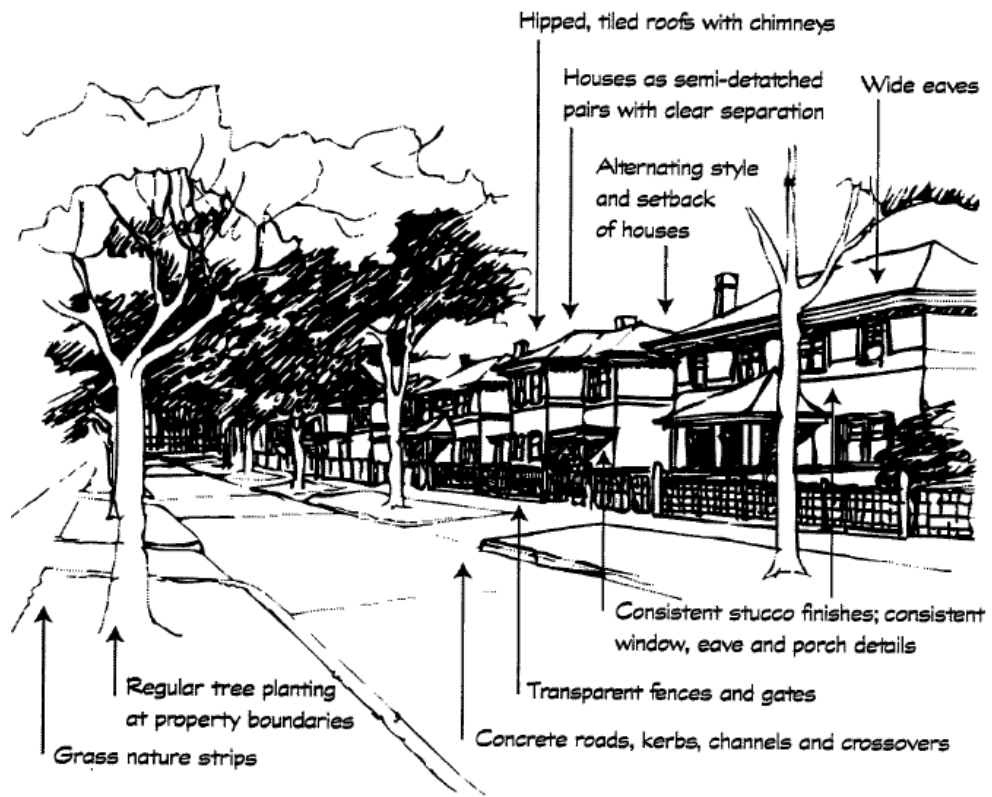
In Garden City, the main streetscape elements are the dwellings, which are all two storey, attached houses on sites with a similar front and side setback. The consistent and prominent use of features like unglazed terracotta roof tiles, stucco walls (both rough-cast and smooth), woven wire fences and multi-paned windows contribute to the area's distinctive streetscape character.

The use of concrete for paving roads, footpaths and garden paths is another unifying aspect of the streetscape, as is the regular planting of only a few selected species of vegetation.

Most residential areas combine many different (and sometimes incompatible) approaches to design. In the case of Garden City, faithful adherence to a single design theme has produced an unusually harmonious and integrated urban environment – this is the key to the area's architectural and aesthetic significance. Figure 2 shows the important key features of the Garden City streetscape.

All these features make Garden City a residential environment which is unique in Australia.

Figure 2: Important features of the Garden City streetscape



4. CONDITION OF THE ESTATE, MAY 1997

These guidelines were initially produced in 1997. At that time the description of the Estate was detailed below. Much of this is still relevant today (2010)

The layout of the Bank House Estate and the architectural form of most buildings has not changed greatly since the 1940s; the area looks much the same from the street as it did two generations ago.

However, numerous small changes have occurred, and these are now starting to erode Garden City's special streetscape character. Front fences have been replaced, original street trees have been removed, and visually obtrusive alterations and additions have been made to houses, including bay windows, window shutters, planter boxes, pergolas, balconies and garages in the front garden. Front porches have been enclosed and stucco surfaces have been painted. Unsympathetic modifications like these are slowly but surely undermining the integrity of the area. Figure 3 provides a pictorial description of the six standard housing designs found within Garden City.

The major concern for Garden City is that piecemeal change will destroy or seriously diminish the special character which makes it such an attractive place and such an important part of Australia's heritage.

Figure 3: The six standard house designs

Type 1



Type 2



Type 3



Type 4



Type 5



Type 6



5. THE NEED FOR GUIDELINES

The population of Garden City remained relatively stable for many years after the estate was completed in 1948. However, during the 1990s this began to change due to an aging population and the attraction of a new demographic to the area. Large-scale residential developments nearby (such as Beacon Cove) have also drawn attention to the area.

With the demographics of the population within the estate changing, the demand to renovate and extend houses has increased. In the absence of detailed guidelines, there is a real danger that these alterations would be inappropriate.

Since December 1998, Garden City has been subject to new planning provisions in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme, including policy, heritage, amenity and design and development provisions. The heritage provisions are as follows:

Clauses 21 and 22 – Local Planning Policy Framework

The Municipal Strategic Statement (Clause 21.05-5) and the Port Phillip heritage policy (Clause 22.04) outline objectives, strategies and policies that apply to all land within a heritage overlay. These aim to conserve identified significant heritage places and manage new development so that it respects the heritage significance of an area.

Clause 43.01 - Heritage Overlay

In a heritage overlay, a planning permit is required to:

- Subdivide or consolidate land.
- Demolish or remove a building.
- Construct a building.
- Externally alter a building.
- Construct or carry out works.
- Externally paint a building.

Note: No planning permit is required for internal alterations to a dwelling in Garden City.

Before deciding on an application in a heritage overlay, the responsible authority must consider various specified matters, including the Port Phillip heritage policy and the Port Phillip heritage review.

Clause 81 - Port Phillip Heritage Review

The heritage review contains a statement of significance for the garden city neighbourhood and its various estates.

Clause 81 - City of Port Phillip Heritage Policy Map

The heritage policy map identifies all of the buildings and open spaces in Garden City as significant heritage places.

The heritage overlay is a standard Victorian Planning Provision. While it offers general protection of heritage places, it does not provide specific guidance on the implementation of its objectives. In particular, highly consistent areas such as Garden City, require definition and interpretation of the heritage overlay objectives in order to respond to their particular significance and built form. Similarly, the Port Phillip heritage policy offers general policies and performance measures for all heritage overlay areas and does not provide specific guidance for highly consistent heritage overlay areas.

These guidelines assist the assessment of planning permit applications in the Garden City area. An applicant is encouraged to use these guidelines when preparing a development application for a property in the area.

A development proposal in Garden City:

- should satisfy the heritage objectives in the Port Phillip planning scheme as well as the objectives of the guidelines; and
- should respond to the guidelines where appropriate.

PART TWO: THE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply to the area bounded by the lane to the west of Graham Street, Williamstown Road, Howe Parade, Poolman Street and Walter Street, which is included in the Garden City Estate. (see Figure 1).

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

- To protect the unique residential and architectural character of Garden City, which is recognised as being of State and national heritage importance.
- To help the residents of Garden City protect the character of the area.
- To recognise the changing needs of people living in the Garden City estate and the potential to make alterations and additions to houses that do not adversely affect the character of the area.
- To increase community awareness about the special qualities and significance of Garden City.
- To provide a clear and consistent basis for the assessment of planning permit applications having regard to the heritage overlay and heritage policy provisions in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme that applies to the area.

7. WORKS WITHIN THE ROAD RESERVE

- Works within the road reservation should be designed to be consistent with the form and materials of the original works and kept within the original design and street layout, but to modern-day standards. This applies to:
 - Roads and road surfaces
 - Kerbs and channels, footpaths and crossovers
 - Nature strips
 - Any new works which are not part of the original design (such as kerb extensions) should match the form and materials of comparable existing works within the estate.
 - Speed humps should be constructed from asphalt.
 - Roundabouts should not alter any original kerb lines.

8. EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS

8.1 SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS

Single-storey extensions may be permitted at the side of the house if:

- They are more than 600mm back from the front of the house;
- They match the house's original form, materials and character (with a cement render or similar textured finish, and a flat or pitched roof with terracotta tiles).
- Single-storey extensions at the side of houses with two street frontages (corner blocks) may be permitted provided the extended boundary wall is rendered consistent with the finish of the original house.
- Single-storey extensions will generally not be permitted in other areas, including the front of the house.

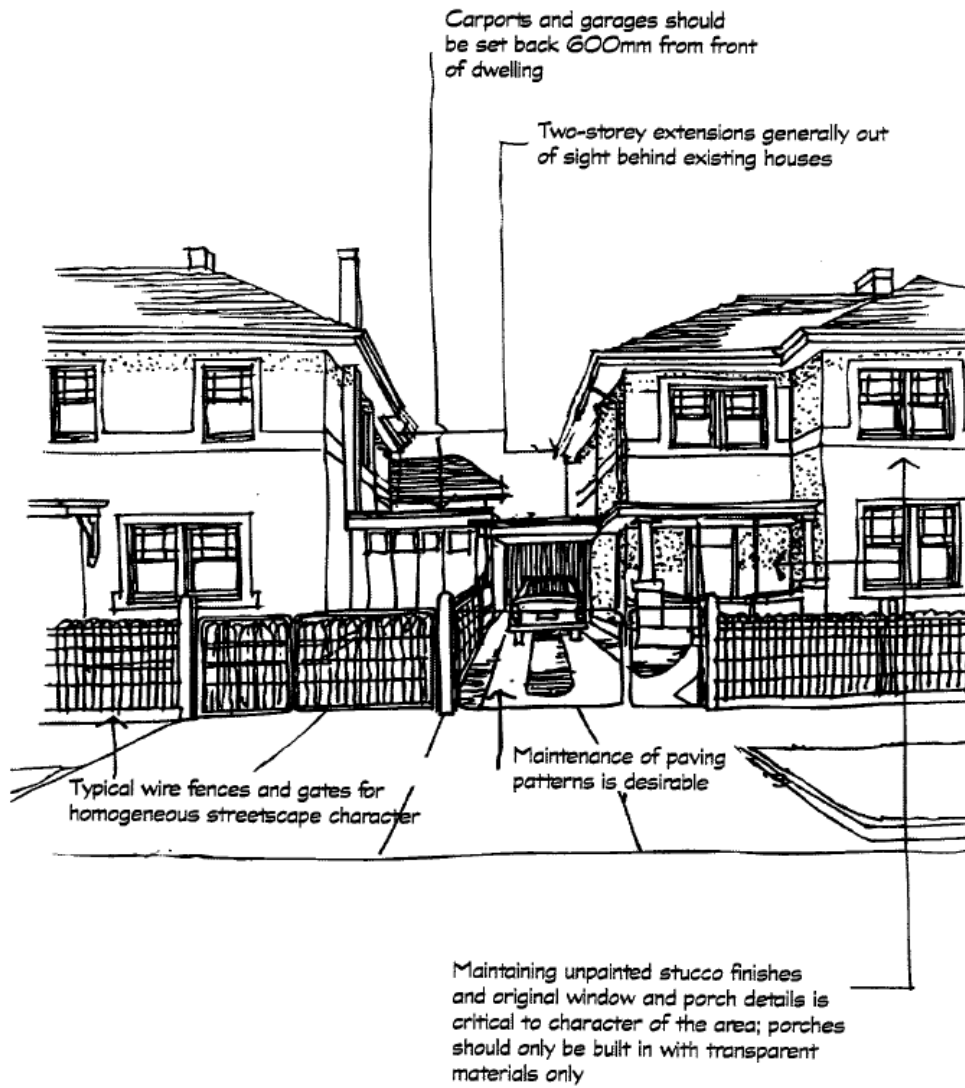
8.2 TWO-STOREY EXTENSIONS

Two-storey extensions may be permitted at the back of the house if:

- The roof of the extension is no higher than the roof of the original dwelling
- The walls of the extension are no higher than the walls of the original dwelling
- The extension matches the house's original form, materials and character (with a cement render or similar textured finish, and a flat or pitched roof with terracotta tiles).
- Two-storey extensions will generally not be permitted in other areas, including the front of the house and the side of the house.

Figure 4 shows a range of acceptable options for alterations and additions to a building in Garden City.

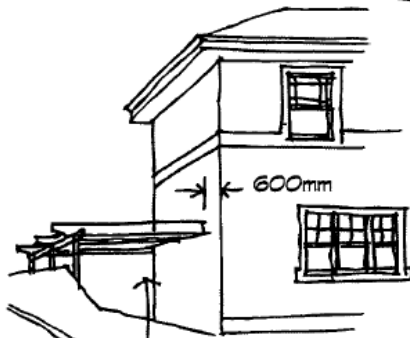
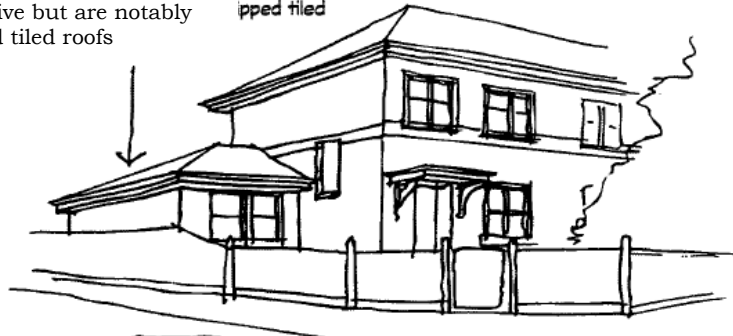
Figure 4: Acceptable alterations and additions





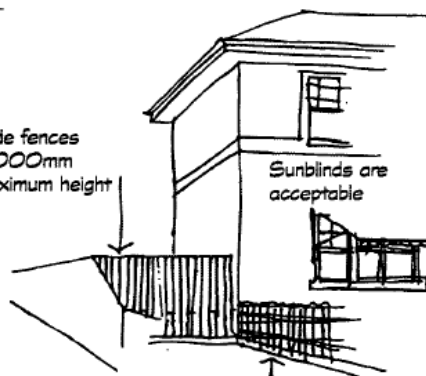
Single storey extensions should be set back 600mm from front of dwelling: parapet walls at corners are not highly intrusive but are notably less sympathetic than hipped tiled roofs

intrusive
hipped tiled



Open carports within 600mm of the front of the house are not intrusive

Side fences 2,000mm maximum height



Sunblinds are acceptable

Front fences 1,500mm maximum height

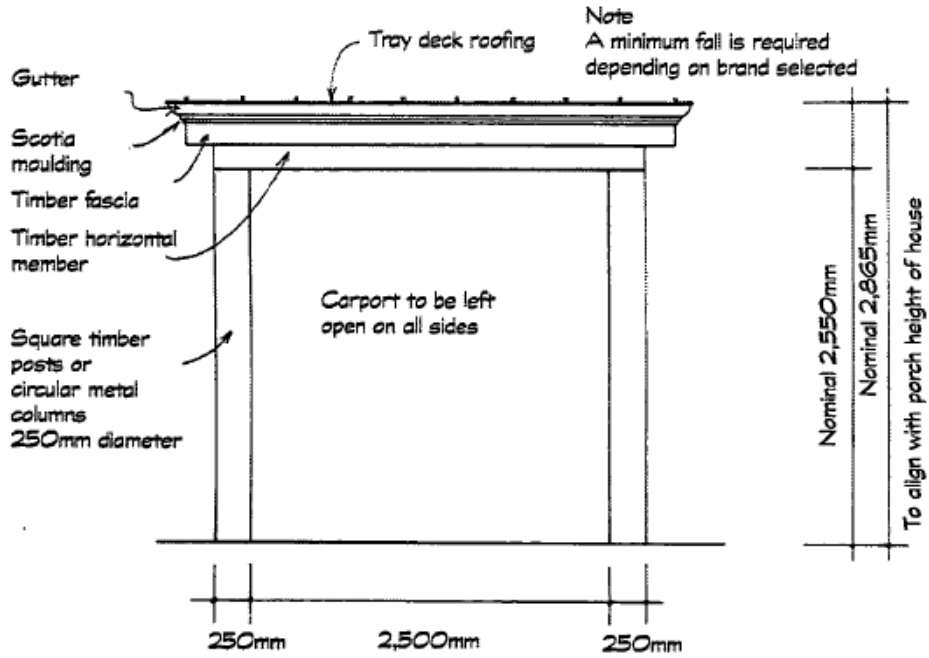
9. GARAGES AND CARPORTS

- New garages and carports should be built at the side of the house and be consistent with the house's original form, materials and character (with a cement render or similar textured finish, and a flat or hipped roof with terracotta tiles).
- The front wall of a new garage or carport should not extend beyond the front wall of the house. Where a new garage or carport has eaves, the eaves should not extend beyond the front wall of the house; and
- New garages and carports should be positioned to retain the original staggered line of houses along the street, but in no circumstance should they extend beyond the front of the porch.

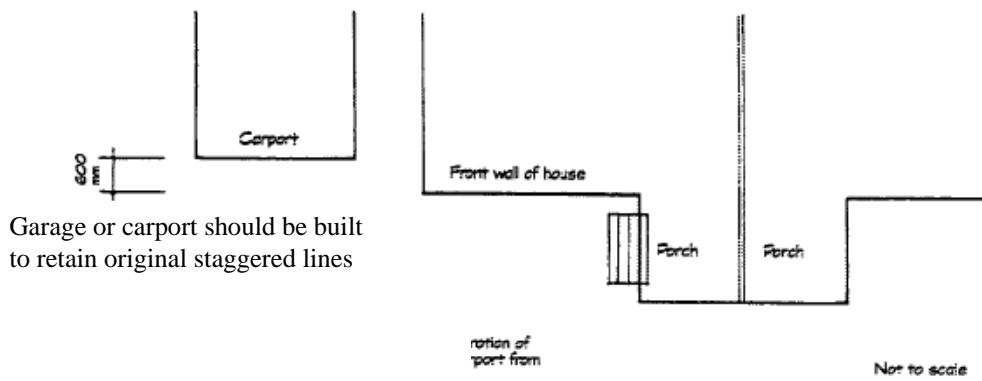
Acceptable garage and carport types are shown at Figure 5.

Figure 5: Acceptable garages and carports

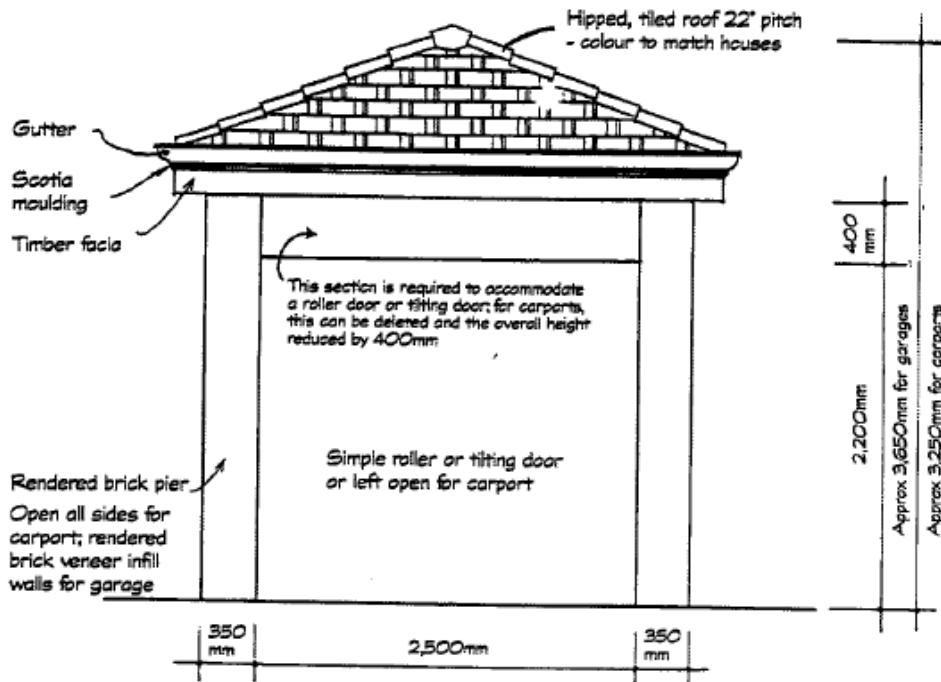
Carport with flat roof



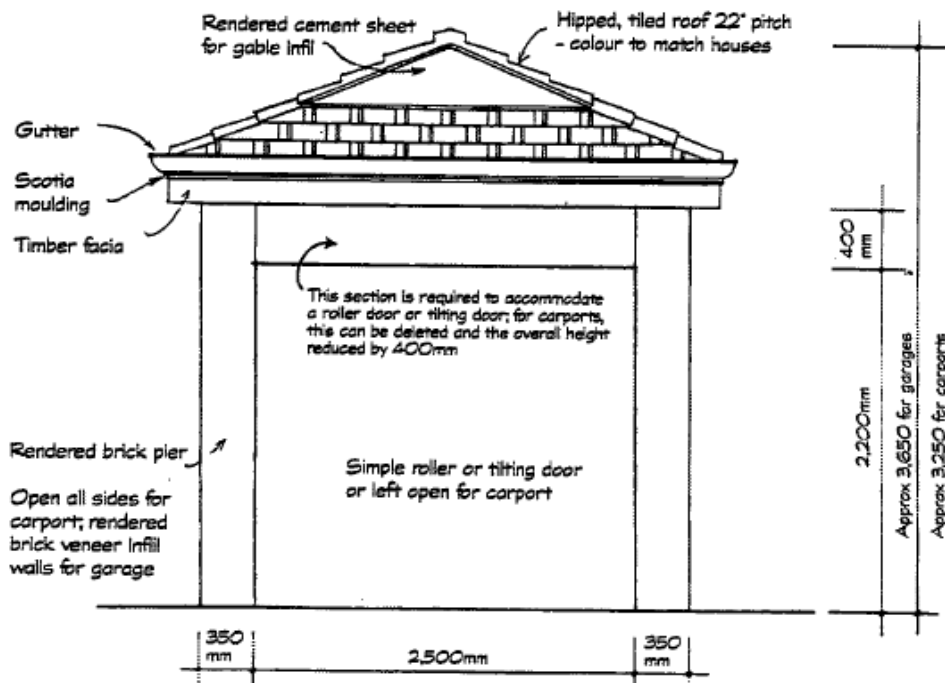
Site plan for garage or carport



Garage or carport with hipped roof



Garage or carport with hipped and gabled roof



10. FENCES

Front fences and side fences from the front boundary to where the house starts should be:

- no more than 1000 mm high
- 75% transparent
- made from appropriate materials
- Some examples of acceptable fence types are shown in Figure 6.
- The requirement for 75 percent transparency does not apply to picket fences; however, picket fences may not exceed 900mm in height.
- Residents seeking more visual privacy are encouraged to use a combination of acceptable fencing and screen plantings such as hedges or bushes.

Back fences and side fences from where the house starts to the back boundary should be:

- No more than 2 metres high
- Made from timber palings or other suitable materials as agreed between the neighbours.

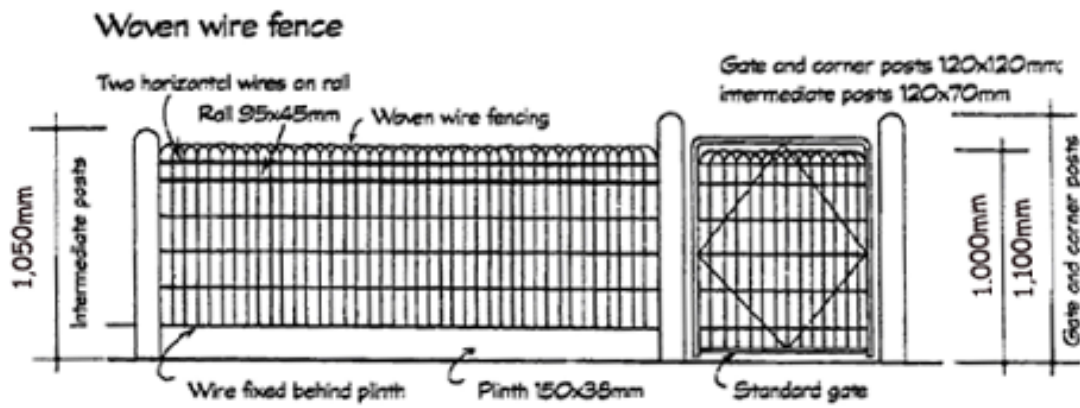
This applies to all properties, including corner blocks.

- Council may use its discretion when considering front fence height and fence materials on any designated secondary or main road. This discretion shall only be applied in order to provide adequate acoustic protection to residential properties abutting any designated secondary or main road, to the satisfaction of Council.

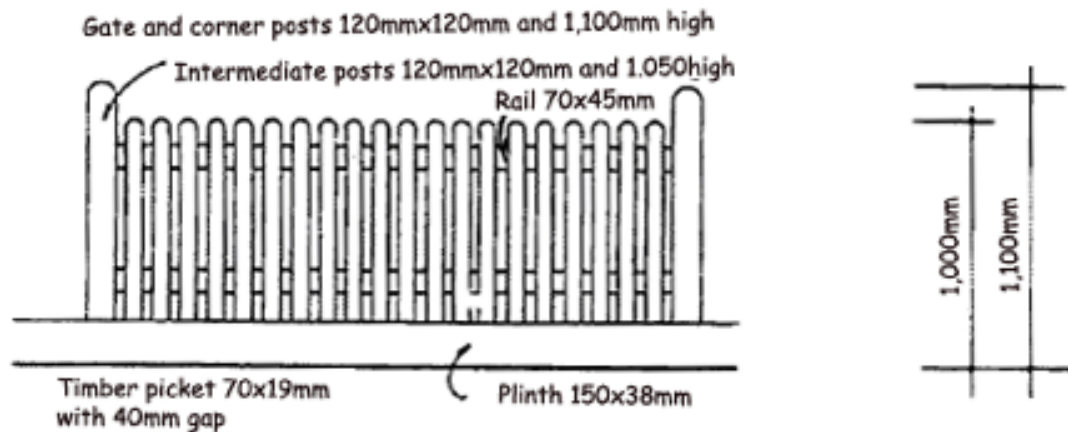
Acceptable fence designs are shown at Figure 6.

Figure 6: Acceptable Front fence designs
Front fence:

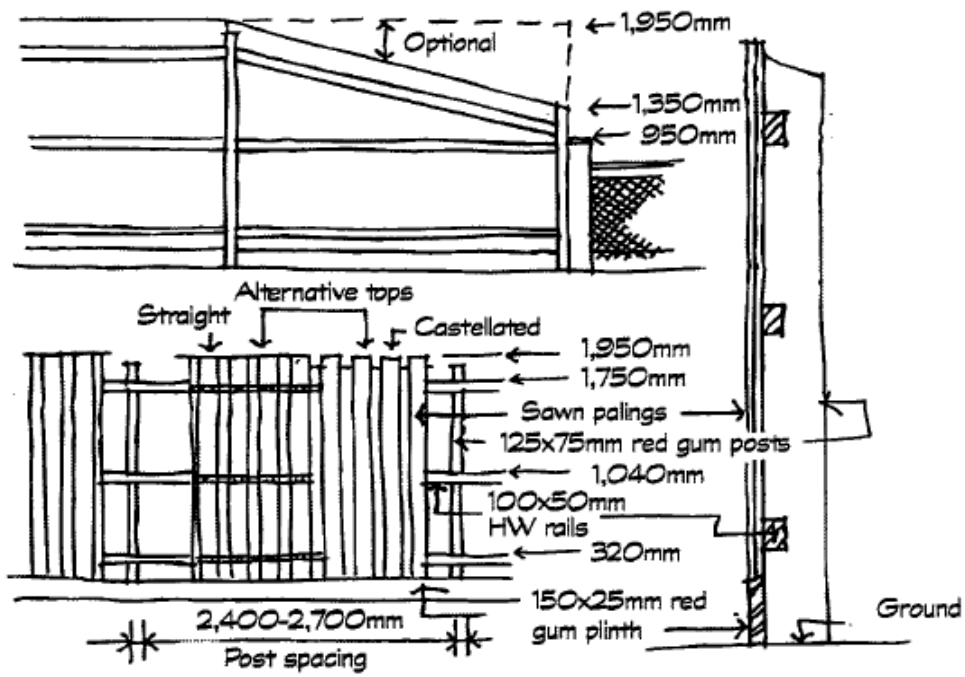
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Timber fence 1,000mm high



Side and rear fences: (all areas, unless other suitable materials are agreed by neighbours):



11. ROOFS

- The original roof form and materials should be retained and, if necessary, restored all the way along the front and side of the house.

Chimneys

- Original chimneys should be retained.

Downpipes

- Downpipes at the front of the house should be kept or returned to their original location where practical.
- Consideration will be given to removal or concealment of downpipes.

12. EXTERNAL WALLS AND RENDERED SURFACES

- External walls which are visible from the street should be kept in their original form, with the original materials and finishes.
- Rendered surfaces should be restored by cleaning with an appropriate solution or by applying a cement-and-sand wash of the same colour and texture. The work should be undertaken by a qualified tradesperson.
- Repairs to rendered surfaces should match the colour, texture and composition of the original render.
- Rendered surfaces which have not been painted can be left unpainted or painted in colour matching the original render or cement.
- Rendered surface which have been painted should be restored where possible. Paint should be removed by an approved method (not sandblasting) and the surface should be treated with a cement-and-sand wash in the original colour (at least three different render colours were used on the estate).

13. WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Any of the original window designs used on the estate may be applied to any house. If a window must be replaced, the new one should match the form and materials of the original.
- New or enlarged window and door openings will not be permitted at the front of the house.
- New window openings may be permitted at the side of the house. They should be set as far back from the front of the house as possible and should match the existing windows in form and materials.
- Double glazing of windows is encouraged and does not require approval from the Council.
- Original windows and doors should be retained and, where possible, the reinstatement of windows and doors in the original form is encouraged.

Repairing cracked lintels

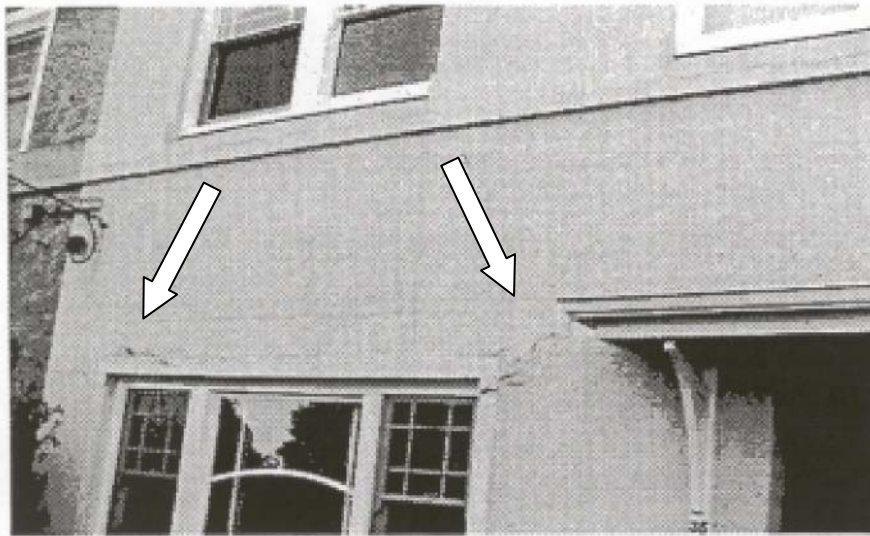
The lintels above many windows in Garden City are badly cracked (see Figure 7). The cracking is usually caused by moisture seeping through the external skin of the building and corroding the steel reinforcing rods inside the lintel. It is worst on windows that face the weather (south and west). Windows on north and east facing walls and upper-storey windows protected by eaves are less likely to be affected.

The best way to tackle severe cracking is to replace the lintel with a new one manufactured using dense concrete (at least 50Mpa). There should be at least 40mm of cover over the new lintel's steel reinforcing rods.

Less seriously damaged lintels can be repaired using one of several patching systems. These involve removing the external concrete to expose the corroded reinforcing rods, treating the rods, concreting over them again, and restoring the external finish. This may seem like a cheaper option, but it is important to remember that patches typically last only about five years – replacing the lintel may be more economical in the long term.

For more information about replacing lintels, it is recommended that you talk to a builder experienced in this field.

Figure 7: A cracked lintel



Air Conditioners

- Air conditioners should not be visible from the street.

Porches and entries

- Porches and entries may be enclosed with transparent screens that are at least 75 percent transparent or with plain glazing with the minimum of framing and glazing bars.
- New porches should not be located at the front of a house, or where it is visible from the street.

Sunblinds and awnings

- Sunblinds and awnings (temporary and permanent) should complement the character of the house.

Shutters

- Security screens may be installed:
 - At the back of the house
 - At the side of the house (as long as they are more than halfway back from the front of the house)
 - Inside the windows at the front of the house
- External screens and timber shutters over front windows are discouraged.

Front doors

- Doors and screen doors at the front of the house should be painted in a suitable colour.

14. LANDSCAPING

- Residents are encouraged to retain early, established plantings in good condition (including trees, hedges and specimen plants) and to plant new, historically appropriate plant species.
- Residents are encouraged to select drought tolerant trees and plantings, and to utilise water sensitive urban design measures where possible.
- The space in front of a dwelling should be retained as lawn or garden and not used as a space to park vehicles.
- The original uniformity of street trees should be retained.

15. DECORATION AND PAINTING

- Window and door frames, fences and gutters should be painted in the original colours, or a colour scheme typical of the area or the period. The original colours can usually be determined by scraping back to the wood one layer at a time. Figure 9 shows a range of possible colour schemes, although other schemes will be considered.
- Neighbours are encouraged to agree on one colour scheme for both houses in each pair.

An appropriate colour scheme is shown at Figure 8

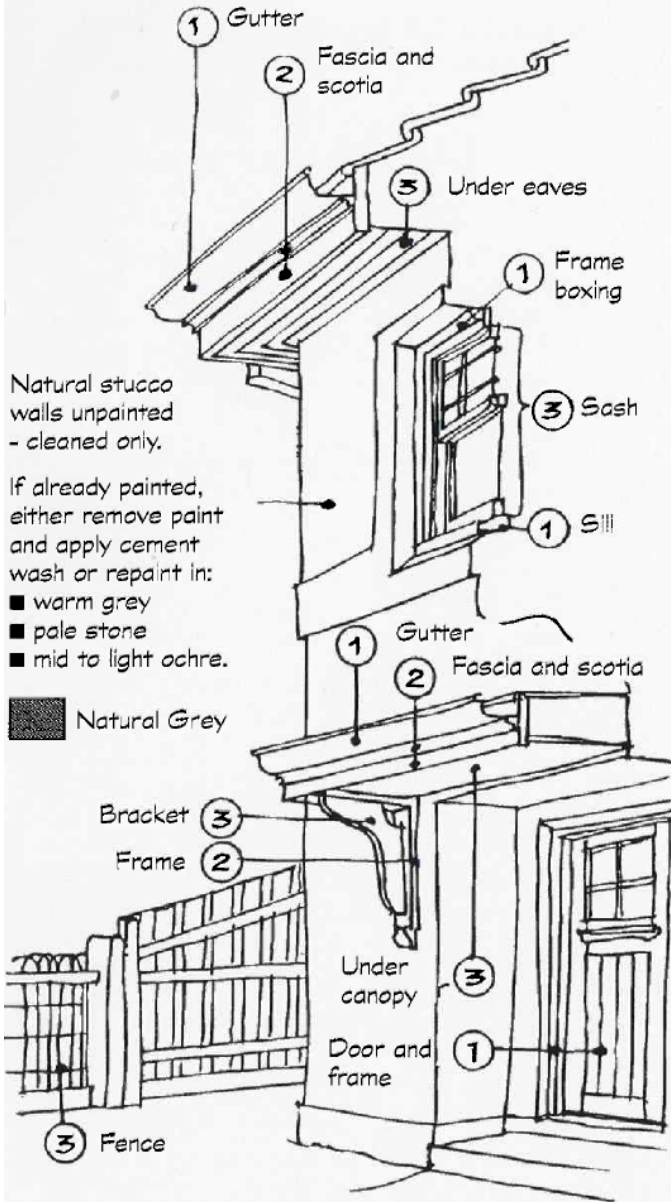
Figure 8: External colour schemes

An article in The Herald of 6 July 1927 loosely describes the colours used as:

- green and buff
- deep orange and buff
- yellow and buff.

No physical investigation of the colours used has been made to date, but the following options would be appropriate; many other combinations may also be appropriate.

The colours follow a common scheme, which can be clearly seen in the early photographs and which is typical of the period.



Natural stucco walls unpainted - cleaned only.

If already painted, either remove paint and apply cement wash or repaint in:

- warm grey
- pale stone
- mid to light ochre.

■ Natural Grey

Colour options

- ① Is a dark trim
- ② Is a mid-range colour
- ③ Is a light trim

- 1 Mid Brunswick Green
- 2 Biscuit
- 3 Off White

- 1 Leaf Brown
- 2 Biscuit
- 3 Off White

- 1 Deep Brunswick Green
- 2 Deep Buff
- 3 Cream

- 1 Deep Indian Red
- 2 Deep Buff
- 3 Manilla

Typical colour system

16. DEMOLITION

- Demolition of an entire dwelling will not be permitted.
- Demolition of the rear section of some dwellings may be permitted where it will not affect the heritage significance of the building, subject to any new addition being sympathetic to the scale and form of the original building and respecting the character of the area.
- Demolition of outbuildings may be permitted.
- Any decision regarding demolition will be assessed against the provisions of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme, particularly Clause 22.04 Heritage Policy

17. MULTI-UNIT DEVELOPMENT

- Multi-unit development (more than one residential dwelling per lot) will not be permitted as this is contrary to the significance of the estate.
- Subdivision of original lots will not be permitted.
- Single-storey granny flats located at the rear of the property may be permitted.
- Any proposed granny flat must be in sympathy and consistent with these guidelines.

Appendix A

Extract From

Port Melbourne Conservation Study Review

Statement of Significance

4.2.5 Garden City Precinct (UC1)

History

Until 1926, most of Fisherman's Bend, including the Garden City area, was open sandy wasteland. In the nineteenth century, small areas of the Bend have been used sporadically for a range of activities, for example, by the 1860's, a manure depot and slaughter yards had been located there, and the foreshore area was dotted with small fishermen's huts.¹³ A great deal of sand mining was also undertaken at the Bend. By the early twentieth century, however, the potential use and development of such a large tract of land so close to Melbourne had become the subject of widespread discussion. In 1925, the report of the Melbourne Town Planning Commission proposed that the area be redeveloped following the principles of the Garden City movement in England. The proposed redevelopment was to incorporate 340 acres for residential development, 420 acres for industry and 80 acres of open space and playing fields.¹⁴

Though this specific scheme did not eventuate, the findings of the Commission paved the way for the partial redevelopment of land at the Bend for housing undertaken by the State Savings Bank of Victoria in 1926 – 7. The bank had long been involved in the provision of housing to ordinary Victorians. As early as 1894, it had established a system through which long term loans could be provided at low interest on the security of freehold land. In the period following World War 1, after the passing of the Housing and Reclamation Act and in the wider context of a widespread housing shortage in Victoria, the Bank's housing activities were concentrated in the provision of assistance to returned servicemen and low income earners.¹⁵ The Bank established a housing department under chief architect G Burrige Leith. A variety of standard house designs were developed, simply as a means of providing housing more economically, and these were adapted and revised over time. The houses themselves were built by private contractors. Unlike the later Housing Commission of Victoria houses, which remained in public ownership and were rented to their occupiers, the State Bank houses were purchased outright. The system was intended to encourage home ownership, an important element in the conservative political culture of the 1920's.¹⁶

The Bank purchased 10 acres of reclaimed land at Fishermen's Bend in 1926, another 20 in 1927 and a further 14 in 1928. With its radial network of intersection roads, the layout of the subsequent development accorded to a degree with that proposed by the Town Planning Commission in 1925, which in turn appears to have been inspired by the ideas of the originator of the "Garden City" movement, Ebenezer Howard.¹⁷ Indeed, generally speaking, the form of the Garden City estate owed much to similar developments in Britain. In 1925, the General Manager of the Bank, G.E Emery, had visited England to examine the low income housing schemes there. The subdivision layout of the Garden City estate also incorporated a range of ideas from the broader new town planning movement, including a curvilinear hierarchy of concrete roads, reservations for shops and landscaped open space, and the replacement of the usual rear service lanes by grassed nature strips in front of the houses. The first houses were constructed in 1927 in Walter and Poolman Streets and in Tucker and Crichton Avenues. Further houses were also constructed in Beacon and Williamstown Roads. One hundred and fifty four houses were complete by 1929.¹⁸

Statement of Significance

Both the road layout and most of the houses at Garden City were designed by W A Henderson of Henderson and Haddon, architects, under contract to the Bank.¹⁹ Although the Bank's Chief Architect G Burridge Leith, was later to claim that the planning of Garden City was not influenced by the English or European Garden City movement, but rather emerged from functional and economic necessity²⁰, the houses are very similar to post World War 1 council housing in Britain, and have little in common with typical residential architecture in Australia at the time. Their design appears to have been influenced directly by the British Local Government Board's Manual on the *Preparation of State-Aided Housing Schemes*, published in 1919, as well as by observation of Council housing estates in England and Scotland by Emery, in 1925 – 1926.²¹ Emery appears to have been particularly impressed with the semi-detached houses at the Kelvin Dale estate, Glasgow, and argued in favour of two-storey houses of this form to economise on land-use, to maximise open space and to minimise the expense of constructing foundations. In addition, two-storey houses would have a "fine imposing appearance" and it was argued that upper storey bedrooms were more healthy.²²

Possibly because the house designs were so radically different from the Australian norm of individual single storey houses, considerable opposition to the houses was expressed in 1926 by some groups, notably Trades Hall Council and Port Melbourne City Council, on the grounds that they were "dog boxes" unfit for human habitation. Ironically, in Britain the early post War council housing standards, on which the Garden City houses appear to have been modelled, were by the mid-1920's considered to be over-generous and too costly and subsequent council housing was constructed to significantly smaller spatial standards.²³

The State Savings Bank Garden City housing project at Fisherman's Bend marked not only the first large-scale intensive development at the Bend, it also marked a significant shift in government housing policies, and a partial undertaking on the part of the State to provide low-cost housing. The particular manner in which the scheme was set up, however, meant that houses in the Garden City estate were never particularly affordable. David Harris has remarked, "because of the high cost of land and the absence of any government subsidy to cover the costs, houses at Garden City were often more expensive than other available houses."²⁴ None of the houses were intended for the low income rental market, and the deposit and fee requirements of the deal effectively excluded many working class people. Robert Freestone has noted that the development came too late to substantially influence the operations of private builders and local government authorities in Melbourne, and that it was 'too small and perhaps too expensive to satisfy the demand for good housing near the waterfront'. Freestone also comments, however, that the development provided a model for local supporters of the Garden City movement.²⁵

Statement of Significance

Description

Garden City, a broadly triangular area bounded by Graham Street, Williamstown Rd, Howe Parade, Poolman Street and Walter Street, contains 322 dwellings constructed in pairs by the State Savings Bank of Victoria. The row of shops facing Graham Street, although included in the original State Savings Bank plan, was developed privately and was not included in the then Urban Conservation area. The area includes three recreational reserves, including the small reserve at the corner of Williamstown Road and Howe Parade. The street layout, based on the 1925 Metropolitan Town Planning Commission's masterplan for the Fisherman's Bend area, adopted many features current in 'garden suburb' planning in Britain in the 1920's, including curvilinear roads of different widths according to traffic usage, generous provision of wide 'nature strips' planted with trees, and reservation of specific areas for shops and recreation.²⁶

All of the dwellings were constructed as semi-detached two-storey pairs in similar style using roughcast rendered walls (originally unpainted), hipped roofs with wide overhanging eaves and sash windows with multi-paned upper sashes. Because of difficult ground conditions on the reclaimed land at Fisherman's Bend, the houses were built on deep piled concrete foundations. The external walls were constructed from "Cindcrete" concrete blocks, chosen for their lightness, to minimise foundation costs. Roofs were covered with terracotta Marseilles pattern tiles.

Six basic house types were designed initially and continued to be used, with minor variations, throughout the twenty-two year construction period from 1926 – 1948.

All of the houses are rectangular in form without projecting wings except to the rear and to the front of Type 4 houses. Variations between the different types including locating front doors to the centre or the outer corners of the facades, provision of ground floor bay windows in Type 1 houses, various forms of entrance canopies or porches, with generous flat roofed porches to Type 4 houses and hipped roofed front porches to Type 6 houses. Roof forms are varied subtly, with gambrelled hips to Type 1 and small gablets to Type 5. While visual continuity throughout the estate was ensured by use of this limited range of design types, monotony was avoided by random distribution of the different types, varying set backs of the houses from the street and use of different coloured renders.

While most of the houses remain largely intact to the extent of the basic external form of their front elevations, the integrity and visual coherence of the estate has been significantly eroded by numerous, often small, alterations. Many houses have been extended to the rear, usually with relatively little impact as viewed from the street. Probably the most common alterations have been to front fences and windows. Many of the original Cyclone woven wire fences have been replaced by a variety of masonry walls and picket and other types of fencing. In a few houses the original timber-framed sash windows have been replaced using other materials including aluminium. In many more houses, while timber sashes remain, the original distinctive margin glazing bars have been removed. The roughcast render on many houses has been painted, and most joinery has been painted white instead of the original dark green and other colours.

Statement of Significance

Among other changes that have occurred is the replacement of the original rainwater goods, with distinctive curved offsets to the down pipes, with standard modern gutters and down pipes with angled offsets.

Among the more intact houses are 42-4 Edwards Ave (Type 1), 396 Williamstown Rd (Type 2) (the windows of the adjoining house at 394 have been replaced), 17-9 Edwards Ave (Type 3), 13-5 Crichton Ave (Type 4), 2-4 Page Ave (Type 5) and 49-51 and 62-4 Edwards Ave (Type 6). 62-4 Edwards Ave in particular appears to retain the original joinery paint colours and front fence. Interiors have not been inspected as part of the conservation study, and the extent to which intact interiors survive is not known.

Garden City has a distinctive landscape quality deriving from the relatively dense planting of street trees along the nature strips and the landscaping of the reserves and private gardens. The landscape has been analysed in detail and conservation policies formulated by John Hawker.²⁷ Street planting comprises a number of native and exotic species, including predominantly *fraxinus* (Ash) and specimens of *Lophostemon* (Brush (Queensland) Box), *Malaleuca* (Paperbark), *Populus x camadesis* "A urea" (Golden Poplar), *Platanus x acerifolia* (London Plane) and various *Eucalyptus* species. Hawker notes in particular an outstanding avenue of *Acmena Smithii* (Lillipilli) in Crichton Ave between Page St and Beacon Rd, and comments that much of the recent replacement of original trees is with inappropriate species which detract from the uniformity of the original planting. The reserves contain a variety of specimen trees, including recent planting of native species. The private gardens are diverse in character, typically with lawns and flower beds to the front and separated from the street by shrubbery or hedges.

Statement of Significance

Garden City is of state significance. Construction of the estate from 1926 was the first experiment in Victoria in mass provision of housing on a single estate by the State Savings Bank of Victoria, acting as a public agency on behalf of the Victorian Government. It marked the beginning of a progressively increasing direct involvement by the Victorian Government in provision of housing, culminating in the formation of the Housing Commission in 1938 and the construction of large housing estates at Fisherman's Bend and other areas in the 1940's and the following decades. Garden City contrasted with the State Savings Bank's more general role in the 1920's and '30 in provision of housing through cheap loans for constructions of individual houses on suburban sites to the Bank's own standard designs.

The layout of the estate was one of a number of manifestations of interest in Victoria in garden city planning principles in the 1920's, seen also in some speculative suburban estates involving cul-de-sacs and crescents constructed at the time, but was largest in scale and the most publicly prominent of such developments in Victoria. The uniform design of the semi-detached two-storey houses, based closely on post World War I government-funded council housing in Great Britain, contrasted strongly in style and planning with the Australian norm of individual single storey detached houses, reinforcing the unique character of the estate. Conversely, the policy adopted from the outset of sale, rather than rental of the houses, and the absence of subsidies contrasted with the British policy of subsidised council houses for rental.

Appendix B

Citation of Significance from National Trust of Australia

Garden City, Port Melbourne

The significance of the Garden City area, Port Melbourne, is that it represents a unique experiment in the provision of low cost housing utilising the physical aspects (rather than social aspects) of the British Garden City movement: it occurred on the initiative of a statutory authority; it was based on the development of a total housing estate, including dwellings; it was a subdivision based on the English Garden City suburb concept; its two-storeyed housing was based on current (in the 1920's) English "working mans" cottages and it involved experimentation with building technology. Garden City was influential on later State public housing policies as implemented through the Housing Commission of Victoria.

Description

The Garden City Fisherman's Bend Area, is all that area bounded by Graham St, Williamstown Rd, Howe Pde, Poolman St and Walter St, Port Melbourne as shown on the accompanying map.

The area includes the 322 dwellings, constructed in pairs, which were erected by the State Savings Bank of Victoria between the years 1926 and 1948. It also includes the three recreation reserves which have a total area of approximately four acres, and the commercial zone on Graham St which, although developed privately, was designated as shop sites in the original scheme.

There are six designs of housing on the estate. All housing is built in two storey semi-detached pairs. Dwellings have terracotta-tiled roofs. The external walls are of cindcrete unit blocks, which are cement rendered. Because the land was reclaimed, foundations consist of reinforced concrete piers resting on concrete rafts at a depth of five feet and spanned by reinforced concrete beams at ground level. House allotments have a 33 feet frontage, and houses are set back 35 feet from the frontage, with each alternate pair of houses set back 30 feet. Each house is separated by a minimum of 18 feet from the neighbouring dwelling on one side. The variation in design, setback, and colour of cement render allowed the house pairs to be specially grouped to avoid monotony.

Some houses retain their original cement render, and there are also a number of original wood and woven wire fences remaining on the estate.

Historical Evolution

Many schemes have been proposed for Fisherman's Bend over the years, including a shipping channel (1851), a plantation (1879), and a storm water drain (1883).¹ By the 1920's it lay undeveloped however – an extensive sand quarry excavated to a depth of three to six feet.

As Melbourne's suburban development gradually resumed in the new century, the incongruously fallow expanse at the Bend attracted increasing attention. Being in Crown ownership and close to the city, the land seemed to provide an opportunity to relieve the great problem of slum housing. In 1912 the Port Melbourne Council asked the Government to make provision for the reclamation, subdivision and development of the land.² Also in that year it suggested that Municipalities be empowered to provide workingmen's housing.³ At the 1913 Royal Commission into metropolitan housing various witnesses expressed the increasingly popular idea that any housing development at the Bend should be preceded by 'proper planning to include street layout, parks and playing fields'⁴ and one prominent public figure envisaged a "small garden suburb" there.⁵ Although another government enquiry authorised the commencement of reclamation in 1913, hopes were thwarted when in that same year the Harbour Trust claimed that the land was required for its own purposes and had it withdrawn from sale.⁶

Interest in urban issues, particularly housing and town planning, revived after the War. By the mid 1920's the idea was emerging that some large-scale development was necessary to redress the slum housing problem. Newspapers considered the merits of grand projects being undertaken elsewhere, in particularly Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities, Britain's massive municipal housing schemes, and the "thousand homes" project at Adelaide's Colonel Light Gardens.⁷ The unions efforts to provide workingmen's housing by a co-operative guild had failed⁸ and even the Port Melbourne Council found itself unequal to the task of developing the small parcels of land which had been reclaimed at the Bend by 1923.⁹

In 1925 several events occurred which spurred the development of "Garden City". Unemployment was rife, which favoured the persistent efforts of advocates for the scheme.¹⁰ The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission released a report which proposed an industrial garden suburb at Fishermen's Bend, with 340 acres for residential development, 420 acres for industry, and 80 acres of open space and playing fields.¹¹ Mr Emery, General Manager of the State Savings Bank of Victoria conducted a tour of Britain intended to ascertain more economical methods of providing low-income housing, and returned an advocate of "mass construction".¹² Since 1920, the Bank had been designing houses, and occasionally assembling land packages, for people of small means¹³ and the task of developing Melbourne's "dream city of Fisherman's Bend"¹⁴ consequently fell to it.

The Bank purchased 10 acres of reclaimed land in 1926, 20 acres in 1927, and a further 14 acres in 1928.¹⁵ The streets on this land were laid out as far as possible to accord with the Town Planning Commission's comprehensive plan for the Bend. This layout, a radical web of residential road circumscribed firstly by open space and then Ebenezer Howard's influential Garden Cities of Tomorrow (1900). All semblance of this coherent design was foregone however when in 1929 the Lands Department continued to sell sand from a further 119 acres which the Bank had been negotiating to buy, rendering this extension economically prohibitive.¹⁶

Nevertheless the estate did incorporate many progressive features of the town planning movement, such as curvilinear hierarchical roads constructed in concrete, a reservation for shops, no rear service lanes, nature strips, and the contemporary fashion for "garden suburbs"¹⁷ these features were sufficient for the estate to assume the popular title "Garden City".¹⁸

The houses built were semi-detached two storey pairs. They were designed under the influence of the Manual on the Preparation of State-Aided Housing Schemes (1919) distributed by the British Local Government Board.^{18B} Houses being built at Kelvin Dale, near Glasgow, which Mr Emery considered to be of a better appearance than the multi-unit terraces¹⁹ observed in other parts of Britain, inspired the adoption of this standard. The newspapers agreed with his assessment that tenements were inappropriate for Australia, and that houses here should be owned rather than leased.²⁰ Double storey was necessary to economise on land (the building frontages were reduced to 33 feet), to maximise open space, and to minimise the expense of constructing foundations on the silt.²¹ Two storey dwellings would have a “fine imposing appearance” argued Mr Emery, adding that “the health of the occupants will be improved by having bedrooms on the upper floors”²² At that time the Bank was experimenting with concrete as a means of providing cheap and durable housing and it was decided “cindercrete” (cinder concrete) walls would be lighter and better suited to the elaborate foundations which were required at the Bend.²³

Despite its distinctiveness, the two storey semi-detached housing represented a compromise of the single storey detached cottage, which was the Australian ideal.²⁴ The Bank recognised this from the beginning²⁵ and attempted to avoid the appearance of dull similarity by providing six variations of designs for the pairs, by alternating setbacks 30 and 35 feet from the street, and by providing variation in the colour of the cement render.²⁶ Nevertheless there arose a great opposition, primarily from the Trades Hall Council and Port Melbourne Council, to the erection of the houses on the grounds that they were “dog boxes” unfit for human habitation.²⁷ Agitation focused upon the ceiling height being eight, rather than ten feet high. A compromise of nine feet was eventually reached²⁸ and after some diplomatic leadership from local MLA and long-time advocate of the scheme, Mr Murphy, the development was able to proceed, and was officially opened on 9th March 1927.²⁹

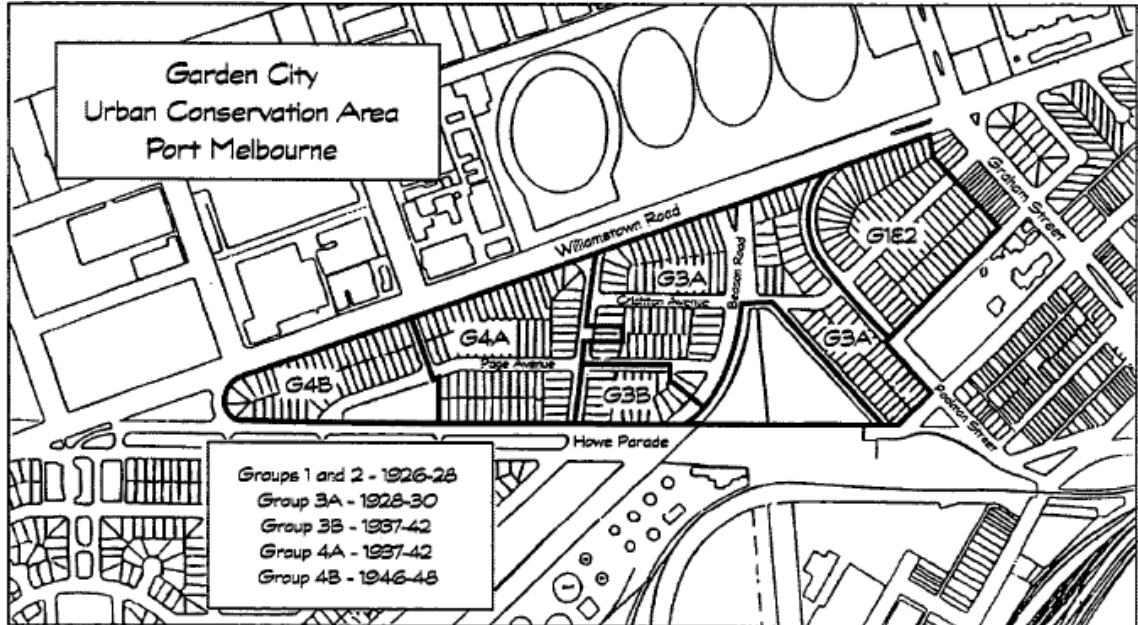
To counter the lingering prejudice the Bank planted trees, encouraged owners to keep neat gardens, planned community facilities, and sponsored the formation of the “Garden City Progress Association”³⁰

The houses were constructed in groups.³¹ The first two groups, of 72 dwellings (36 pairs), were built 1926-8 between Walter St, Crichton Avenue, Williamstown Rd and Poolman St, with allotments along Graham St left as shop sites. A further 112 dwellings were erected in the vicinity of Beacon Rd before the depression halted construction in 1930. Between recommencement of building in May 1937 and cessation in June 1942 due to wartime restrictions, a further 94 dwellings were built. The final 44 dwellings were constructed in 1946-8, bringing the total number of houses built by the Bank at Garden City to 322 (161 pairs). In 1937 the Bank proposed six new designs (Types 9-14) which incorporated contemporary façade elements, but these were never built. Some minor alterations were incorporated into the standard designs, including rearrangement of stoves, back porches and upstairs bedrooms, and the deletion of upstairs fireplaces (eg Type 7 & 8). However, retention of the six basic façade designs over the twenty-year construction span preserved the visual continuity of the estate.

“Garden City” represented a distinctive stage in the development of welfare housing in Victoria. Previously it was considered that control of subdivision and building and the improvement of transport to the outer suburbs would improve housing conditions³² but in the 1920’s the role of Government became more positive. The Victorian Government eschewed the grand schemes being undertaken elsewhere and opted for minimal intervention through the agency of the State Bank. Housing would be made more accessible to low income people by making finance more liberally available (according to the provisions of the 1920 Housing and Reclamation Act)³³ and by reducing the cost of housing. Thus the Bank produced its own house designs, experimented with cheap building materials (especially concrete),³⁴ attempted to assemble land at low prices,³⁵ and finally, as in the Fisherman’s Bend case, constructed group housing en masse in the quest for economies of scale.

The high price of land (£5 per foot), the lack of any subsidy, and the requirement that housing be purchased rather than rented, meant that the cost of housing at “Garden City” was comparable to, and often more expensive than, other available housing.³⁶ Many people could not raise the deposit or the weekly repayments. It was not until the Depression of the 1930’s that “welfare” housing was introduced in the form of the Housing Commission of Victoria.

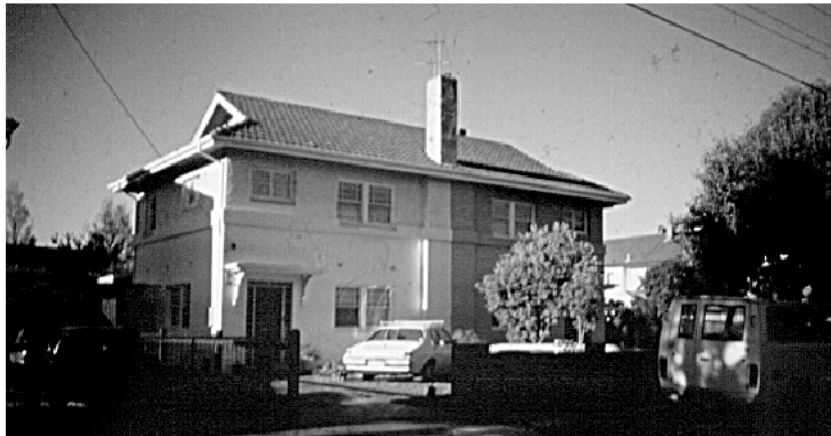
Stages in the Development of Garden City



Type 1



Type 2



Type 3



Type 4



Type 5



Type 6



Character & Significance

The estate of two storey semi-detached houses represents a unique reproduction of British Council Housing. It was linked more closely to the European State housing schemes of the early 20th century than to the norm of the detached cottage which prevailed in the Australian urban expansion of the 1920's.

The imposing and uniform nature of the architecture, the regular siting of houses in relation to one another, the narrow concrete roads, wide nature strips and spacious parks all contribute to the unique feel of this distinctive precinct.

Many of the latest town planning and "garden suburb" features were incorporated in this scheme. These include the curvilinear roads of different width according to traffic usage, the reservation of a specific precinct for shops, the deletion of rear service lanes, provision of nature strips with tree plantation, and generous public reserves. Physical services were inclusive in the development, and provision was made for a community hall and recreational facilities.

For social activists, Garden City marked the beginning of the fulfilment of long held hopes for Fisherman's Bend. By virtue of its "garden suburb" features, its status as Victoria's first major state housing scheme, and of the prestige associated with the misnomer "Garden City", the estate became a showplace of the Welfare State's latest projects. In 1936, the Public Works Department built 44 houses to the immediate northeast of the estate along Southward, Griffin Crescent, Graham St and Williamstown Rd as an experiment.³⁷ In 1938, the Housing Commission extended the garden suburb concept by creating its first "model settlement" in the area to the south-west of the Bank's estate.³⁸

The post-war community development was particularly active in establishing neighbourhood facilities and groups at Fisherman's Bend.
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Management

To ensure that the character and significant of Garden City is conserved and enhanced, the following management recommendations are made.

Statutory Protection

The existing designation of Garden City as an area of special significance in the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme should be maintained.

Demolition and Removal of Original Elements

The demolition of buildings or works is currently subject to the grant of a planning permit by the Responsible Authority.

The demolition of any of the State Savings Bank houses, or the removal of original external elements (such as fences) or detailing, should not be permitted.

Alterations

Proposals to alter the appearance of the State Savings Bank houses, particularly where they involve changes to the fabric of building, should not generally be permitted.

New Buildings & Works

It is important that the bulk, location and external appearance (including colours and materials) of the new buildings and works (including garages and carports) is in harmony with the character and appearance of the houses and the general area.

Owners should be encouraged to locate new buildings or works so that they are not visible from the street (including garages and carports).

Public Works

Local government and State government instrumentalities when undertaking those activities for which they responsible (e.g. road and drainage works, traffic improvements; tree planting etc) must be sympathetic to the characteristics and qualities of Garden City.

Much of the character and significance of Garden City derives from the width and proportions of nature strips, footpaths and roadways, and the general layout of the streets. Extreme care should be taken by public authorities undertaking roadworks, traffic improvements etc, which might alter the characteristics of these elements.

Assistance and Advice

Every effort should be made to assist and encourage homeowners who wish to remove unsympathetic additions or alterations, or to restore original features (such as fences) which are missing.

This could be partly achieved through the preparation of detailed guidelines. Detailed guidelines should address issues such as the siting and design of new additions and works (eg. garages); the restoration of the existing building stock and other elements (eg. fences); and landscaping of private and public open space.

There are a number of publications which may provide assistance to property owners undertaking new works or restoration. A small collection of these publications could be obtained and held by the Council and/or the Port Melbourne Library for the use of the community.

Footnotes

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- ¹ Jacobs Lewis Vines Port Melbourne Conservation Study pp71-2; The Age, 12 March 1982
 - ² U'Ren Turnbull A History of Port Melbourne, p227
 - ³ Ibid, p229
 - ⁴ Ibid; p231
 - ⁵ Freestone "Garden Suburbs of Melbourne" in RHSV p32
 - ⁶ U'Ren Turnbull op.cit. pp227,230
 - ⁷ E.g. The Herald 5/11/25, 29/12/25, 11/5/26, 15/7/26; The Age 21/12/26, 26/1/26, 29/1/26, The Argus 21/12/25
 - ⁸ The Age 29/1/26
 - ⁹ The Age 10/3/27; U'Ren Turnbull op.cit. p233
 - ¹⁰ The Age 10/3/27
 - ¹¹ Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, Plan of General Development 1929, p254
 - ¹² Emery G. General Manager's report to the Commissioners of the State Savings Bank of Victoria on his visit to Great Britain to enquire into Housing, Dec 1925, p4, F.N 563.1 Series 746; Route D. "Creating the Classing Home: The Role of the SSB Housing Scheme" SAHANZ Conference, May 1986, p7
 - ¹³ SSB Archives, Statements & Returns, Series 327-2-2 Annual Reports 1920-1 931; Cooch, The SSB of Victoria, pp102-7; Craddock Cavena, 125 Years: The Story of the SSB of Victoria 1842 – 1966, pp22-3
 - ¹⁴ The Herald 2/2/26,11/5/26
 - ¹⁵ Cooch op.cit. p 109
 - ¹⁶ MTPC op.cit pp 256-7; U'Ren Turnbull op.cit p241
 - ¹⁷ See eg. Freestone's articles on the garden city/garden suburb idea in Australia, and Burke's paper on the garden suburb idea in NSW.
 - ¹⁸ Before the first sod was turned, newspaper reports conferring this title eg, The Herald 30/12/25, 3/3/26, 11/5/26, The Argus 18/2/26; a 1928 broadsheet advertised a meeting to form the "Garden City Progress Association", S.S.B F.N.440.26
 - ^{18B} Tibbits G. "The Garden City Idea in Australia" SAHANZ Conference, 1986 p6
 - ¹⁹ Emery G. Report to Commissioners op.cit p3
 - ²⁰ Eg; The Herald 29/12/25, The Age 10/3/27
 - ²¹ "Memo DC Webb (architect) to General Manager" 27 1/26, S.S.B F.N 566.121, Series 746; MTPC op.cit p249
 - ²² Report from General Manager re proposal to build at Fisherman's Bend Port Melbourne 2/2/26, SSB FN 566.121, Series 746
 - ²³ Memo Webb to General Manager, op.cit.
 - ²⁴ Eg MTPC op.cit. pp248, 250-1
 - ²⁵ Memo Webb to General Manager, op.cit
 - ²⁶ SSB Fisherman's Bend Housing Scheme Group No 3, Specification Contract No H5554, Series 438-4-1; The Age 26/10/26; Teng Ooi Chi "Development of Garden City in Port Melbourne" Melbourne University, 1965, p10
 - ²⁷ Various newspaper reports: May, June 1026; Also Mercury (Hobart) 8/7/26, The Sun 21/1/27, The Age 21,1,27
 - ²⁸ The Herald 16/6/26
 - ²⁹ The Age 10/3/27
 - ³⁰ The Age 21/1/27; SSB FN 440.26, 566.104
 - ³¹ Info. In this para. From SSB Archives Series 746; FN 566.121 Misc. notes & documents inc. Memo GB Leith to Gen Manager 20/4/37; Sec. To Gen Manager 12/5/38; Gen. Manager to GB Leith 4/10/46; GB Leith to Gen Manager 7/5/47; FN 566.123 Miscellaneous file notes; FN 566.101 final amendment map 13/4/39; Cooch op.cit. p101- 3; U'Ren Turnbull op.cit p236; Tend et al op.cit p.12
 - ³² Freestone "The Condition of Cities & the Response...." In Burnley Forest Living in Cities p20; Tibbits G. "he Garden City Idea in Victoria" op.cit pp2,3; Burke S. "he Evolution of the Garden City Idea in NSW before WWI" op.cit pp2,4
 - ³³ Cooch op.cit p95-1 12; Craddock Cavenagh op.cit p5

³⁴ The Herald 26/1/26; The Age 3/3/26

³⁵ General Managers Report to Commissioners 1925, op.cit p5

³⁶ Eg; SSB Annual Statements & Returns 1929, pp12-13; The Herald 15/7/26; The Sun 27/10/26; Labour Call 15/4/26; The Argus 26/7/26, 11/1/27; The Age 26/10/26

³⁷ U'Ren Turnbull op.cit p246-8; Tibbits op.cit p6

³⁸ U'Ren Turnbull op.cit p249; Tibbits op.cit p7; Butler, Heidelberg Conservation Study pp1870-2

³⁹ Maunders "An Historical Look at Community Centres in Australia" paper, passim; Allport "Women & Suburban Housing; Post War Planning in Sydney, 1943-61" passim.