Leading Lights

The promotion of
Garden Suburb Plans and Planners
in Interwar Australia

by

David Nichols, B.A. (Hons)
Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University
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I certify that the thesis entitled: **Leading Lights: the promotion of garden suburbs plans and planners in interwar Australia**

submitted for the degree of: **Doctor of Philosophy**

is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis in whole or in part has not been accepted for an award, including a higher degree, to any other university or institution.

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Abstract

This thesis explores interwar town planning in Australia, focusing on the period of large-scale urban expansion in the 1920s. It problematises aspects of Australia’s urban planning history, particularly the 1920s ‘garden suburb’. It also investigates the question of the use of international planning ideas in Australia, and the assertion or creation of authority by the Australian planning movement. The thesis additionally investigates the use of authoritative planning rhetoric for commercial or creative advantage.

The thesis argues that the majority of innovative planning projects in the interwar years took place in the formation and foundation of the garden suburb. It shows that the garden suburb – assumed in much planning history to be an inferior form of Ebenezer Howard’s ‘garden city’ ideal – has, in fact, a number of precedents in 19th century Australian suburbia, some of which were retained in 20th century commercial estate design. Much of the Australian town planner’s authority at this time required recognition and awareness of the interests and needs of the general public, as negotiated through land vendors. As Australians looked to the future, and to the US for guidance, they were invited to invest in speculative real estate development modelled on this vision.

The thesis concentrates primarily on the lives, careers and work of the British-Australian architect-planner Sir John Sulman; the Chicagoan architect-planners Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin; and the Australian surveyor-planner Saxil Tuxen. These individuals were among the most prominent planners in Australia in the interwar years. All designed Australian garden suburbs, and combined advocacy with practice in private and public spheres.

The thesis examines images and personae, both generic and individual, of the planner and the vendor. It shows that the formulation of the garden suburb and design practices, and the incorporation of international elements into Australian planning, are important in the creation of planning practice and forms. It also outlines the way these continue to have significant impact, in diverse and important ways, on both the contemporary built environment and planning history itself.
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<td>HIASA</td>
<td>Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition (Board) (Victoria)</td>
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<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Authority</td>
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<td>MSC</td>
<td>Melbourne Subdivisions Company: short-lived development company run by C. J. De Garis</td>
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<td>MTPC</td>
<td>(Melbourne) Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (1923-29)</td>
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<td>NCDC</td>
<td>National Capital Development Corporation (Canberra)</td>
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Introduction

Leading Lights casts town planning, the 'garden city', the 'garden suburb' and urban planners in Australia between the wars differently to other representations. It does not strive to add to the heroic narratives of the 'great men of planning history' and nor does it attempt to forge a narrative of linear progress for the planning movement. Instead, it identifies and examines notable examples of the town planner 'persona' in Australian planning, as an illustration of the process by which figures of authority are created within a new movement, and ways in which power, once gained, is utilised.

The thesis seeks to challenge and problematise conventional viewpoints on interwar town planning theory and practice. In doing so it posits that the history of town planning, the garden city movement and garden suburbs in Australia, while linked inseparably from international developments, cannot always be directly linked to the unquestioning assimilation of international ideas. Rather, it suggests the possibility that, in an Australian context, those seeking authority must utilise international examples to strengthen arguments and propositions for new directions. It argues for recognition of many of Australia's 20th century town planners as professionals with their own distinctive methods and styles, rather than simply followers of British leaders in the field such as Howard, Unwin and Geddes, or of American planners of comparable prominence. Town planning in Australia can be seen as a play for authority and recognition of leadership amongst individual planners and would-be planners.

As well as the above, the thesis shows that Australians had already, by the early 20th century, developed a unique suburban lifestyle which was to prove much less of a contrast to the garden suburb than it was for urbanites in other developed countries. Given this, the challenge for prominent interwar planners was not to adopt the garden suburb following international example, but to adapt it from pre-existing forms to gain control of both this form and the related planning ethos.

There will be a demonstration, by use of documents and approaches that have not previously been utilised by historians, of the way in which four
particular individuals created status for themselves as leading lights of town planning in Australia, to pursue their chosen approaches in planning. The individuals under examination are, firstly, John Sulman (1849-1933), an English architect who settled in Sydney in 1885. Sulman is often portrayed as a formative figure in Australian planning, whose advocacy of urban planning pre-dated the Garden City ideal. Secondly, architect, designer and architectural draftsman Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) and thirdly, her husband, architect and ‘land-planner’ Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937); the Griffins were a Chicagoan couple who arrived in Australia in 1914 after winning the Australian Federal Capital Design Competition. The final of the four figures is Saxil Tuxen (1885-1975), a Melbourne-born surveyor, designer and advocate of garden suburbs, and social reformer (Fig. 1).

This thesis does not attempt to make a case for the elevation of any of these individuals’ reputation above any other on the basis of their genius or originality of thought. Rather, it outlines a case for the contextualisation of interwar planners who worked, debated and otherwise interacted with each other and the wider world, including both the commercial and the government sectors. While the intended focus of the thesis is a re-evaluation of the development of urban planning in Australia, it might also be seen as an argument against the creation of ‘genius’ figures in specific professional fields, inasmuch as the ‘genius’ is often depicted as apart from his or her peers and exercising only one-directional influence. It is contended here that new ideas and developments in planning – as in many other fields – emerge not from individuals acting in isolation, but from conflict, competition and also cooperation with each other and with clients, and the need to assert and justify ideals and ideas by rhetoric and discussion.

Traditionally, discussion of planning issues has ignored the influence of the commercial sponsor – the land vendor and speculator – in the realisation of planning projects. As an issue related to the recognition of a social context for planners there will also be a case made herein for recognition of a number of early commercial planning projects as valid extensions or workings of contemporary planning concepts. Such projects have usually been depicted by historians as based on cynical or fantastic designs created to enable land
Fig I. Clockwise from left: John Sulman in 1928; Marion Mahony Griffin, circa 1905; Saxil Tuxen in 1927; Walter Burley Griffin, circa 1912.
vendors and speculators to coax money from a gullible public. Saxil Tuxen’s design of the large-scale Merrilands estate in Melbourne’s northern suburbs for T. M. Burke, one of Australia’s most prominent land developers of the interwar years, is used in different contexts in discussions of this and other facets of interwar planning. Evidence suggests that urban planners in Australia between the wars were able to use the land boom of the 1920s to experiment and innovate in ways that had previously been unthinkable, and that this was to some degree formative in both the development of government planning after World War II and in the nature of that development. This conceptualisation of town planning is not intended as an unproblematic defense of the methods or intentions of the land ‘boomer’ and speculator. However, as will be shown, the size of commercial subdivision estates in the interwar period, and their radical design, was a major factor in the development of new planning ideas in Australia.

The first chapter, ‘A “Pale Apology?”’ discusses and describes the different ways terms such as ‘garden suburb’, ‘garden city’ and ‘planner’ have been used in planning history. These different uses show both a changing understanding of the rationale behind planning and its appropriate uses, as well as the variety of understandings of the history of planning within different countries and cultures. As well as this, there is a discussion of the assumption shared by many writers on this subject that the garden suburb is an inferior imitation – a ‘pale apology’ – for the social reformist garden city. In discussion of these points, the use of the heroic narrative in planning history is discussed and dismissed.

The second chapter, ‘Fresh Air, a Pleasant View and a Shady Garden’ argues that there is a consistent thread running through suburban development in Australia in the 1880s and into the garden suburbs of the 1920s. The subdivision of Grace Park, for instance, which was established just before the 1890s depression, included a number of radical features which were later used in garden suburbs of the interwar years. There is no doubt that the garden city movement’s influence was felt in suburban development in Australia at this time; however, the garden suburb was nevertheless an established form in Australia used by, rather than created by, reformers.
The third chapter, 'Very inadequate textbooks', explores further another element of interwar planning in Australia touched on in the first chapter. Much of the discussion here focuses on the large Merrillands subdivision, planned by Saxil Tuxen in 1919. Analysis of Merrillands shows it to be influenced by the Griffins' plan for Canberra, but also by a number of other, diverse, planning projects, from a nearby cemetery to the work of John Sulman as well as being simply in part a response to the terrain itself. This is the assumption made by many planning historians of international influence being the prime motivating force in planning in Australia at this time.

Chapter Four, 'Congestion, Beauty, Efficiency, Prosperity' is concerned with the subject of American influence, particularly on Tuxen but also on the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, of which he was a member. As well as this, the possibility is introduced that American planning was used not merely as a template but also as an example to reinforce authority, and the MTPC's attitude to the lay public is examined. This chapter concentrates heavily on Tuxen as a figure responding to and working with international influences.

The fifth chapter, 'I Dreamed in a Dream I Saw a City Invincible' discusses the methods by which the garden suburb and other suburban forms were sold to Australians in the interwar years. It focuses on the significant figures prominent at this time amongst land vendors, singling out for study T. M. Burke, Mildura businessman C. J. De Garis and Sydney surveyor and vendor Henry F. Halloran. Burke's use of the rhetoric of expansion and development, De Garis' paternalistic munificence and Halloran's use of town planning to attract the public to his new 'cities' all represent different aspects of real estate at this time. The careers and public personas of these men, their use of designers and designs, and their projections of future development in Australian suburbia, are all analysed.

Chapter Six, 'The Battle for the Garden Suburb', locates conflicts within the planning movement of the interwar years. The Griffins' battle, for instance, with the town planning fraternity of Sydney – notably the Taylors, publishers of Building magazine – which is shown to have stemmed at least in part from the Taylors' resentment towards the Griffins over the USA's reluctance to enter the Great War. This example shows the way in which the rhetoric of planning could
be brought into other debates. In tandem with this is the related series of contentious claims made by peers of the Griffins to have 'discovered' or 'approved' the site for Canberra. Following this is a broader narrative concerning the change in the planner's representation from individual visionary to team member. Tuxen was an advocate of this change, which was effected in the years leading up to the second world war with bodies such as the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board.

Chapter Seven, 'Maybe I Have Lived More Intensely than Most of Us', is an overview and analysis of the three memoirs produced by Sulman, Marion Griffin, and Tuxen. It posits the use, by Sulman and Marion Griffin particularly, of biography as a publicity tool or a statement of the relevance of one's work, and provides evidence of the detailing of 'logical' uses of planning, in these narratives. By contrast Tuxen's memoir is in no way self-aggrandising; nor does it demonstrate a deeply held belief in the worth of his own planning work. Instead, it outlines certain incidents from his early career and, more importantly, details an epiphany that he underwent during the Depression. This experience changed his focus from environmental determinism in planning to the more specialised approach of the social justice and slum clearance movements of the Depression years. This chapter demonstrates the perceived necessity, amongst planners, to outline their approaches and justify their actions and activities.

The final chapter, 'Planning Heroes' is a review of both the persona of the interwar planner as perceived in the present day – specifically, the rehabilitation of the Griffins in histories and other texts since the 1960s – and the way that present-day planners regard the planning work of the interwar years as a pre-modernist ideal. In effect, it is about both heroes of planning, and the planning of (planning) heroes. It also reflects, as an extension of the present-day understanding of early planning's heritage, on the present-day state of Merrilands, Saxil Tuxen's 1919 garden suburb estate.

*More than 'important conduits'?*

Originally, this thesis was to be a critical biography of John Sulman alone. My interest in Sulman as a planning figure was aroused during my time as an
undergraduate at the University of Sydney, when I was introduced to his work
and writings by the historian for the City of Sydney, Dr. Shirley Fitzgerald.
Sulman was at the forefront of urban planning in Sydney from 1890 until his
death in 1933, and seemed to be the perfect figure to elaborate on the process
by which a planning authority might create him- or herself. Sulman had written
personal memoirs about his time in town planning: these particularly intrigued
me, as I was very interested in the presentation of self in autobiography, and the
blurring between apparently impersonal text, memoir, and propaganda — as per
Sylvia Lawson’s study *The Archibald Paradox*. This work shows J. S.
Archibald’s magazine, *The Bulletin* to serve in some respects as an
autobiographical work in which Archibald’s own prejudices and beliefs were pre-
eminent. I was also interested in the use of personal life stories to promote ideas
and gain authority, this process itself being under-researched.

However, after I began researching Sulman, I encountered problems in
both the way I might interpret his story, and the way he used his story himself.
One problem was that Sulman’s own planning — his indisputable wide influence
on his peers notwithstanding — and social outlook was far from typical of the
interwar period. Certainly I did not agree with the prevalent attitude to Sulman as
typified by John McIntyre’s estimation that he was merely ‘an important conduit
for ideas transmitted to Australia from the cultural centres of the northern
hemisphere’. Indeed, I believed that Sulman’s conservatism and patriarchal
attitude coloured any ideas for which he might have served as a ‘conduit’ so as
to rework them in the light of his own prejudices, as well as his own talents. His
work reflected an admiration not of contemporary ‘ideas… from the cultural
centres’ of Europe or America, but of an admiration inspired early in his career
for Haussmann’s replanning of Paris, and the erection of monumental edifices
and symbolic, holistically realised streetscapes. While, in many ways, he fits the
mould of the American ‘City Beautiful’ advocate, he eschewed this term,
preferring to present his ideas as original and based on logic, rather than align

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himself with the American movement. For Sulman, a central tenet of planning was the civilising influence of major buildings, and the resultant ‘civic pride’ which for him formed ‘the basis of all civic progress’.  

All of these attributes of Sulman’s are in themselves interesting areas for study, perhaps even more so in view of the fact that Sulman’s preferences in this regard ultimately seem to have had so little effect on the built form of Sydney. However it was more interesting to me that Sulman so embraced town planning as the appropriate province of the architect, and that he effected to create a position of power for himself within the movement. I decided that the time that Sulman was most likely to be thrown into relief was when he came into conflict with other planners – his role here is largely though not solely to serve as a valuable contrast to the others.

I began looking for conflicts within town planning, and found many. One conflict uncovered early in my research was a debate which took place in early 1914 when Sulman, his daughter Florence and the publishers of Building magazine entered a drawn-out public debate with Walter and Marion Griffin. This debate was ostensibly about the introduction of what Marion called ‘democracy’ to the newly-established Women’s Section of the Town Planning Association of NSW. It is clear in Marion’s account of this debate that both sides were hoping – through labyrinthine politicking – to capture, or at least increase their control of, the right to direct Australian planning at this time; most particularly the progress of the building of Canberra. Sulman and the Griffins were to lock horns again in the 1920s, when Griffin claimed Sulman had betrayed him by agreeing to chair the new Federal Capital Advisory Committee, of which Griffin had refused on principle to become a member. Sulman in turn decided that Griffin was a ‘crank’. Here, it became clear, was an opportunity to contrast two very different planning philosophies, and to draw out facts about each.

An interesting aspect for me of the prevalent viewpoint of the Griffins was a personality cult that had grown posthumously around them, based in part on the reminiscences of their contemporaries. Commentators on the Griffins’ work

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3 John Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1921, p. 80
have tended to idolise them, rather than analyse them in considered terms, particularly when it came to considering their work in an Australian context. Commentators on the Griffins' work tended to cast Walter as a genius whose work was misunderstood in Australia. Such work, in this view, could only be properly recognised in relation to those of the 'Prairie School' architects. Indeed, the Griffins' relationship with Frank Lloyd Wright is often given a high profile in such portrayals, and this in itself has meant that the Griffins' architectural work has gained prominence over other aspects of their careers. The Prairie School and Wright connections have meant that there has been little acknowledgement that Walter Burley Griffin's name was applied to a professional firm which ran a successful business in Australia between 1914 and Griffin's death in 1937, and continuing as Griffin and Nicholls long after this time. It has been widely understood that from the moment the Griffins arrived in Australia their architectural and town planning work was, to them, a reflection of the Australian landscape. However, few writers see this as indicating that their Australian work can or should be considered as different in many respects from that which they executed in North America. The Griffins' genuine attempts to develop a holistic planning and architectural ethos empathic with the Australian bush – a campaign in which few of their professional peers showed any interest – seems, more than any other feature, to locate them as innovators in Australian planning in the interwar period. Given all these factors, the Griffins were a valuable addition to this study.

Exploration of the work of Sulman, a British expatriate, and the Griffins, two Americans who never became naturalised Australians, as formative figures in Australian planning seemed to work against my attempts to locate a distinctively Australian strain of planning. I considered the ideology of planning between the wars to be far more complex than merely a demonstration of the 'tendency for a colonial society to follow whatever intellectual fashions emerged in the major centres of the English-speaking world', as Martin Auster has put it.4

4 Martin Auster, 'Origins of the Australian Regional and Metropolitan Planning Movement, 1900-1940' Journal of Australian Studies No. 21 Nov. 1987, pp. 29-39, p. 29. Although Auster is writing about Australia after Federation, he refers to the Commonwealth as a 'colonial society', a contentious description.
Tuxen, the only Australian of the four planners examined herein, is an essential figure in an argument for an Australian planning which was more problematic than merely a series of imported concepts. Tuxen’s importance to Australian interwar planning is undeniable. He was at the forefront of the movement in Melbourne, having attended and, to differing extents, participated in the two national and one Victorian town planning conferences as well as having been an active member of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (MTPC) of 1923-30. Perhaps most importantly, he planned a large number of commercially successful suburban developments in the first half of the 20th century. In Tuxen, I discovered a figure whose extensive activities have not previously been documented in detail, and who provides a thread of enquiry hitherto largely ignored.

Being particularly interested in autobiography and the use of memoir, it was of great importance to me that Sulman, Marion Griffin and Tuxen had all written memoirs. Sulman wrote two short, chronological biographical sketches which highlighted his work in planning; he also assembled a number of personal papers, possibly for the benefit of a future biographer.

Marion Griffin’s is a massive, dense text called *The Magic of America*. Composed in the late 1940s, it is not only a testament to her life with Walter Griffin, but also, by my analysis, an attempt to reinforce a claim to genius on Walter’s behalf.

Tuxen’s memoir is a very different work. Titled *Footsteps*, it is a twenty-page reflection on his life which he apparently began writing shortly before he died in 1975. Tuxen had deeply-felt religious beliefs and this, as well as career disappointments, apparently caused him to regard his town planning work of the 1920s as vainglorious. His text nevertheless casts a light on a number of otherwise unrecorded aspects of his planning works, and his forays into social change movements in the 1930s.

Thus, while this work is by no means a biographical study of any of its four subjects, it does involve an examination of their own use of biography, as a construction.
Methodology

This thesis relies largely on original documents and sources; it only departs from these in a significant way when engaging with the uses planning historians have previously made of such documents in constructing planning history. These are used in tandem with the planners' own use of memoir, rhetoric and notions of authority to promote themselves and their own planning ideas.

Planning history in Australia has not always been a valued or respected field of enquiry, and many sources I had expected to access have proved unavailable, presumed destroyed. These have included: the papers of T. M. Burke and Co., which was absorbed by L. J. Hooker in the 1960s – the company has no knowledge of the whereabouts of any papers relating to Burke. The business papers of Saxil Tuxen’s office are also lost, presumed destroyed, after amalgamation with K. A. Reed, Pty Ltd, in 1967. Only a small selection of papers relating to property developer and salesman C. J. De Garis are known to exist – these are at the State Library of Victoria – but papers relating to De Garis’ Melbourne Subdivisions Company are not amongst them. The papers of subdivider Henry Halloran’s company Realty Realizations, at the State Library of New South Wales, are unavailable to the public until 2023, on instruction of his son Warren. Many designs and other documents lent to Peter Harrison by Walter Griffin’s partner E. M. Nicholls, which for a time formed a part of Peter Harrison’s papers at the Australian National Library, have been returned to the Nicholls family and are presently unavailable to academic researchers.

Happily, however, many important sources have been available to me. Original sources used have included the personal papers of John Sulman, held in the Mitchell Library. Sulman’s papers – collected by the late J. M. Freeland of the University of NSW in the 1970s, apparently with a view to writing a biography, which did not eventuate – have been utilised by a number of planning historians, and provide the basis for much of the knowledge of Sulman and his work. The comprehensive archive of the Melbourne Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, held in the Public Records Office of Victoria, has been used by a number of previous researchers, though there has been comparatively little written about this important organisation itself. Other sources have not, to my
knowledge, been used in the preparation of a planning history: these include Charles Cerutty’s collection of papers relating to the Greater Sydney Development Association, and the Coghill and Haughton papers, held in the Melbourne University Archives; papers in the Harrison, D. L. Johnson, King O’Malley, Walter Scott Griffiths and Edgar Deans collections, National Library of Australia, Canberra; and private papers and unpublished manuscripts in the possession of Miss Joan Tuxen and Mrs. Patricia Tuxen.

I have undertaken considerable newspaper research in exploration of this topic, concentrating particularly but by no means exclusively on the Melbourne newspaper the *Evening Sun*, because of its wide coverage of real estate matters as it chased advertising revenue in that market, and the Melbourne *Argus, Herald* and *Age*. Only one set of the Evening Sun exists, at the State Library of Victoria, and it has often been overlooked by researchers due to its brief existence. There has also been some use made of the Sydney *Telegraph, Observer*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Magazines of the 1920s such as *Land and Transport, Building* and *Home Beautiful* have also been extensively researched.

In addition to the above, the preparation of this work has seen me visit numerous garden suburb sites and sites which were, at one stage, proposed garden suburb sites. This work has included comprehensive examination of the Preston/Reservoir area, Macleod, Eaglemont, Hartlands, Mount Eliza, Keilor, Port Melbourne, Coburg, Brunswick, Tullamarine, Maidstone and Altona, in Melbourne’s greater metropolitan area; Castlecrag and environs, Haberfield, Rosebery, and Daceyville in Sydney; Tanilba Bay near Newcastle, and many others. Few previous studies have made comparison between interwar garden suburbs as proposed, and their present day condition, and fewer have outlined the changes attitudes to planning, and suburbs themselves, have made in Australian suburbia. These visits were integral to an understanding of site, space and intended practical uses which could not have been gleaned from maps alone.

The designers of Australia’s garden cities, their work and their approach have been maligned without regard to the context in which they worked, and yet at the same time some of these same designers – most notably, Walter Griffin –
have been glorified, once again without regard to the commercial and social context in which they lived. This thesis is an attempt to redress this balance by concentrating on the work, its context and its creators’ contexts, and the process of construction of authority – all of which are necessary for a rounded understanding of interwar planning in Australia.
Chapter One

A ‘Pale Apology’? Planning History Reflects on Australia’s Interwar

Planning and Garden Suburbs

Planners in Australia in the interwar period

This thesis specifically investigates garden suburb and town planning work as it relates to four practitioner advocates of the interwar years. These planners are the British-Australian Sir John Sulman; Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin; Americans who lived in Australia between 1914 and the mid-1930s, and the Australian Saxil Tuxen.

These individuals have been chosen for this study primarily because they were amongst the most prominent planners at this time in what were then, and remain today, Australia’s two largest cities. They came from pre-existing relevant professional backgrounds and combined advocacy, through lecturing and publishing on planning issues, with practice. Sulman, retired from architecture but working as a planner, the Griffins’ office and Tuxen’s were each responsible for large scale and significant ‘town planning’-style projects in these years.

Tuxen’s pre-existing status as a surveyor, Marion Griffin and Sulman’s as architects, and Walter Griffin’s as landscape architect, set them apart from other prominent planners or planning advocates of the times. Charles Reade, a journalist before he became a planner and planning advocate, and W. E. Bold, the town clerk of Perth, a public servant prior to and during his advocacy and promotion of planning, arguably have equal prominence with Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen, both through their publications, influence and innovation. Reade has recently been the subject of a major study by Christine Garnaut and this, in addition to his non-professional background and the limited period of time he was
resident in Australia,\(^1\) is the reason for his exclusion from this study. Bold, and other public servants in his position, were advocates, but not planners. Another significant player at this time, the surveyor Carl Klem of Perth, was an advocate and a planner, but left little written record of his advocacy or planning principles; the same is true of surveyor Walter Scott Griffiths, of Sydney and later Adelaide.

The pre-existing professional status of the Griffins, Sulman and Tuxen is important to the analysis of their creation or exploration of the comparatively new field of planning as a tool of social engineering. Additionally, at least three of the four have a presence in particular town planning developments or major projects which are central to the study of town planning at this time. These include the Griffins and Sulman at Canberra, and the Griffins and Tuxen were also at the forefront of the creation of the form of progressive garden suburb development in Melbourne in the 1920s, and Tuxen was a member of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission in Melbourne between 1922 and 1930.

Most published work on Australian town planning relegates garden suburb planning and the suburban subdivisional work of Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen to a minor role in the history of ‘town planning’. Sulman is generally seen as a key figure in the adoption of town planning ideas, but as unimaginative, both in his own planning projects and in the nature of the planning modes he advocated. The Griffins, in texts which consider them as a couple or which, more commonly, ascribe their work only to Walter, are primarily credited for their architectural work. While their plan for Canberra is seen by many as an important milestone in Australian planning, and the community established and houses designed at Castlecrag in Sydney are growing in prominence,\(^2\) these have until recently been

\(^1\) Reade toured Australia lecturing on town planning in 1914; originally employed as advisor to the South Australian government on planning, he became Government Town Planner of South Australia in 1917, a position he retained until 1921. Christine Garnaut, \textit{Colonel Light Gardens: Model Garden Suburb}, Crossing Press, Sydney, 1999.

\(^2\) In 1994 the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated published \textit{Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag}, a largely empirical account firstly of the Castlecrag scheme and the Griffin-designed houses on the Castlecrag estate. The book was created to ‘encourage a reappraisal of the Griffins and their work... and to engender a love of the Castlecrag estates and the individual “Griffin” houses’ Meredith Walker and Adrienne Kabos, Foreword to Meredith Walker, Adrienne Kabos and James Weirick (eds.) \textit{Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag}, Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, 1994, p. 5
regarded as secondary to their buildings, and their other Australian subdivision work almost entirely ignored. There is, of course, a significant body of work on the development of Canberra itself – as a strategically and intensively planned city – though as the Griffins were only involved in Canberra in the first five years, they commonly and appropriately feature only briefly in such studies. Tuxen has almost been written out of planning history. Yet I contend that the work of all these planners is rich and inventive, as well as demonstrating the validity of town planning work for private vendors before the Second World War.

The choice of the Griffins, Sulman and Tuxen allows for other comparisons to be made. As so much of the present-day discussion on planning between the wars is based on debates on the origin or nature of planning practice in Australia – often focused on the origin of its central tenets – contrasting the approaches of British, American and Australian planners is entirely appropriate. It is also important to contextualise the Griffins’ work with that of their Australian peers.

John Sulman’s presence in texts on Australian town planning is justified by his work as a planning advocate. However few writers have taken Sulman as a subject in himself or examined his work or approach in any great detail. Robert Freestone has constructed an empirical overview of Sulman’s work; John McIntyre recently undertook a short study of Sulman relating almost entirely to his testimony given to the 1909 investigation into civic improvement in Sydney.³ Both Freestone and McIntyre reflect Sandercock’s low opinion of Sulman, as a conservative and unimaginative conduit of British ideas.⁴ Other writers – for instance J. M. Freeland – have investigated the political machinations of Sulman’s involvement in the architectural profession in the late 19th century.⁵ No writer has yet investigated Sulman’s life or his writings with any great depth aside

³ John McIntyre, ‘Sulman and the City Beautiful in Sydney’, p. 570
from Freestone who portrays him in *Model Communities* as an important figure of his time but ‘no radical’.\(^6\)

Marion Mahony (b. 1871) and Walter Griffin (b. 1876) were Illinois architects who met through their work with Frank Lloyd Wright. Their importance in a work on Australian planning, however, derives from the twenty year period in which they lived and worked in Australia, designing not only the Australian capital – they won the Australian government's international Federal Capital Design Competition in 1914 – but also preparing plans for a number of cities and suburban developments around Melbourne and Sydney. The Griffins have been subjects of a number of exhibitions and publications, increasing greatly in number over the last decade. The majority of these works examine Walter Griffin alone as though his ‘Prairie School’ beginnings were his prime influence and subsequent influences were from far outside contemporary planning practice. These ‘external’ influences, such as religion and environment, allow historians and biographers to consider the Griffins as outside the sphere of their contemporaries in the Australian planning field. Of writers of major works on the Griffins only planner and planning historian Peter Harrison, who, John Overall has written, saw ‘much of planning history symbolised by his great hero, Walter Burley Griffin’\(^7\) has seriously considered the idea that Walter Burley Griffin’s chief motivating influence was to be found somewhere other than in the formative days of the ‘Prairie School’. This was, remarkably, at a time when only two studies of Walter Griffin had been published, Mark Peisch’s in the USA\(^8\) and James Birrell’s in Australia.\(^9\) However, Harrison did not consider that Walter Griffin was subject to any other type of contemporary influence, preferring to see Griffin as a lone figure. He wrote:

\(^6\) Robert Freestone, *Model Communities*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1989, p. 73


\(^9\) James Birrell, *Walter Burley Griffin*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1964
it is very doubtful whether Griffin gained any stimulus at all from Wright or anyone else during his twenty two years of chosen exile in Australia… From [1905] his inspiration was almost entirely self-generated.\textsuperscript{10}

It is, of course, quite unlikely that even the most creative individual might be able to ’self-generate’ work; there is nevertheless ample evidence of the Griffins’ interaction with other professionals in Australia and, of course, with clients. These are matters which only arguably lead to ’inspiration’ but which indicate that the Griffins were subject to particular demands and criticisms which cannot have failed to shape their work.

Recent Australian works have sought to minimise the ’Prairie School’ aspect of the Griffins’ career in preference to their mature architectural triumphs in Australia. These later works have tended to place Marion Griffin in equal place with her husband in the working relationship, though they do also demonstrate a fascination with any clues which might allow historians to separate their tasks or skills in this regard. Such works include Peter Y. Navaretti and Jeff Turnbull’s \textit{The Griffins in Australia and India},\textsuperscript{11} the bulk of which is a catalogue raisonné of known built and unbuilt projects which emerged from the Griffins’ office after 1914. The thoroughness and accuracy of this resource is irrefutable. Ann Watson’s \textit{Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin} is a collection of essays by notable Griffin experts on aspects of their work which, as the title clearly states, embraces their holistic approach to environmental design.\textsuperscript{12} Harrison’s aforementioned highly influential MA thesis, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin: Landscape Architect}, was published posthumously in an edition edited by Freestone in 1995.\textsuperscript{13} Harrison’s research on the Griffins was clearly highly valuable to other writers such as architectural historians Birrell and Johnson. He was, however, overly generous with his information: their inferior (though still

\textsuperscript{10} Peter Harrison, ’Walter Burley Griffin’ (Review of James Birrell’s \textit{Walter Burley Griffin}), \textit{Australian Planning Institute Journal}, October 1963, pp. 215-216
\textsuperscript{11} Jeff Turnbull and Peter Y. Navaretti, \textit{The Griffins in Australia and India}, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1998
\textsuperscript{12} Ann Watson (ed.) \textit{Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin} Powerhouse, Haymarket, 1998
important) works dominated the small market on this subject in the 1960s and 70s. Harrison believed his own text was 'infinitely better than Birrell’s attempt.'

The Griffins, as Tim Bonyhady recently pointed out, ‘have been the subject of at least one exhibition catalogue or book every year since 1993… this burgeoning Griffin literature has exceeded that surrounding any other Australian cultural, political or business figure through the 1990s.’ What none of these works have attempted to do in detail is place the Griffins in the appropriate Australian context, to uncover the ways or the extent to which their work was generated for a particular client base or market, or to discuss the process by which they sought to promote their planning work in mainstream Australia. The treatment of the Griffins in the 1990s, in creating a justification for the appreciation and preservation of their work, has perpetuated a heroic narrative which commentators such as Leonie Sandercock have justifiably criticised. Sandercock suggests present-day planning history often presents a scenario in which ‘planning itself is the real hero, battling foes from left and right, slaying the dragons of greed and irrationality and, if not always triumphing, at least always noble, on the side of the angels.’

The Griffins were professionals who established and continued what was to all appearances a successful and lucrative practice. They are, however, consistently and mistakenly typified as being above considerations of commerce. Their interaction with creative Australian professionals and advocates has also been largely ignored.

Saxil Tuxen is a figure whose work has received little attention from planning commentators: of all of those who do mention his name, only Freestone, once again, discusses his oeuvre at any length. Freestone typifies Tuxen as one of a number of ‘[s]o called “town planning surveyors” who were

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14 Harrison to Donald L. Johnson 31 March 1970, in Harrison papers, Box 9 Series 6 MS 8347, National Library of Australia.
'sympathetic' to reform.¹⁷ Max Grubb, who has written on a number of aspects of town planning in Melbourne in the 1920s, concentrating specifically on the MTPC, has made little comment on Tuxen but does concede his 'practical experience and extensive knowledge of town planning matters'.¹⁸ Others, such as Sandercock once again, while discussing in detail bodies Tuxen was involved with in the 1920s and 30s in her important work Cities for Sale, does not mention him by name. Yet Tuxen is an important figure in a study such as this one. His life and work as a private practitioner and as a planning advocate provide ample scope for comparison with the work of Sulman and both the Griffins. The influence the Griffins clearly had on his own work – particularly in the years between 1915-1925 – is important for a study which aims in part to consider innovations in public and private town planning. His status as an Australian-born practitioner is also valuable in the wider sense to understand the extent to which Australians in the planning movement could portray themselves as innovators and experts and to which they could better be described as conduits of international ideas. In addition to these considerations Tuxen's commercial success was, in the field of private subdivision/land development, impressive. The number of subdivision projects containing garden suburb or 'town-planned' elements which his firm undertook and which were to a great extent carried to completion in the time period under consideration far exceeds those of Sulman or the Griffins.¹⁹ That Tuxen combined this success with considerable advocacy and concern for social improvement suggests that commercial town planning was not seen as exclusive from commercial subdivision and garden suburb design within private practice.

Australian planning and planners from the early 20th century are often seen by historians as locatable within one of two streams of influence linked to international planning practice: British and to a lesser extent American. Australian planning is usually typified, therefore, as either predominantly British, or –

¹⁷ Freestone, Model Communities, p. 75
¹⁹ See Appendix.
particularly in Melbourne – British with an American influence emerging in the 1920s. The terminology of town planning history since its emergence in Australia in the 1960s has acquired, for many commentators and historians, individual interpretations which have not been given considered definitions. Such definitions must be imperfectly gleaned from context, and for this reason, any discussion of the ‘garden suburb’ must begin with an examination of the phrase itself and its associated terminology.

These terms must also be defined within the context of a traditional ambivalence, in most planning history, towards ‘interference’ in planning, which is often typified as an impartial and scientific – even heroic – pursuit, particularly when it is carried out under the aegis of government. The assumption has typically been that if the market is allowed to have an influence on planning, private interests, seeking to maximise their own profits, will do so at the expense of citizens’ rights. The use of planning rhetoric in the promotion of land is therefore often portrayed as simply dishonest. This portrayal is to be found in the majority of British, American and Australian planning histories, and is revelatory of the attitude amongst the majority of planning historians on the appropriate use of planning, and the appropriate control of planning practice.

*Foundation stones: British and American views of planning history*

The common assumption, particularly though not exclusively amongst British writers, is that present-day planning in Britain has emerged from the original writings and advocacy of Ebenezer Howard. The garden city, as it is most commonly understood in planning terms, was a product of Howard’s imagination, inspired in part by Edward Bellamy’s utopian novel *Looking Backward*. Howard envisaged a synthesis of the urban and rural, strictly controlled to blend the best of each without the drawbacks of either. Philanthropic syndicates could create a
garden city, economically and with freedom from exploitation by speculators, through a process involving the secret purchase of rural land. These syndicates would then lease land back to prospective residents in exchange for what amounted to mortgage payments, the land ultimately to be owned co-operatively by residents and, once paid off, the continuing, minimal ‘rent’ to be used for civic improvement and the greater good.

Writing alone or in conjunction with others, Peter Hall has been the most ardent champion of the importance of Howard’s work in his time. Hall labels Howard’s garden city concept ‘the most important single influence on the philosophy of the British planning movement’ – and insists on its relevance in the present day, at which time, he says, ‘Howard’s century-old prescription remains extraordinarily useful.’ Howard’s outline of his concept, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, is similarly cast by Hall as ‘the most significant’ of the ‘foundation stones’ of the planning movement in modern times. Hall sees Howard’s ‘prescription’ arising from the conditions he observed in industrialised Britain: a ‘physical evil, with a physical solution’. He has also, writing in tandem with Colin Ward, acknowledged that Howard may have been in part inspired by his observations during an ill-fated attempt to emigrate to the American mid-west in the 1880s, at which time he may have been exposed to the possibilities of a rural-urban domicile, or even to the ‘garden suburb’ work of Frederick Law Olmsted and others.

Hall and Ward, in the book Sociable Cities; Frank Jackson, writing on British planner and advocate Raymond Unwin; and Dennis Hardy, in From Garden Cities to New Towns, all suggest that there is a point at which an

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20 Howard may have been flexible, or changed his mind, on the issue of funding for garden cities. Hall and Ward relate that, in 1918, Howard was amongst a group of prominent ‘Garden City purists’ who argued that the State should fund the construction of a hundred garden cities in Britain. Peter Hall and Colin Ward, Sociable Cities: the Legacy of Ebenezer Howard, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1998 p. 42
22 Hall and Ward, Sociable Cities, p. 209
23 Peter Hall, "A Telegram from the Queen": The Centenary of Modern Planning’ in Freestone (ed.) The Twentieth Century Planning Experience, pp. 318-322, p. 318
24 Clawson and Hall, Planning and Urban Growth, p. 33
25 Hall and Ward, Sociable Cities, p. 5
ideological rift can be divined between the 'garden city' and the 'garden suburb'. Hall and Ward see this as personified by Unwin, who 'offended the Garden City purists' when he left the Letchworth project – the first attempt to create a true garden city – in 1907 to design Hampstead Garden Suburb.\textsuperscript{26} Jackson suggests that Henrietta Barnett, the sponsor of Hampstead, was not interested in 'the theory of the Garden City'. She did, however, have a philanthropic motivation, 'her desire to replace slums with a village environment', suggesting a conception of the garden suburb parallel to the garden city which also aimed to fill the role of social lever.\textsuperscript{27} Hardy traces the split between garden cities and garden suburbs from 1909, when the British Garden City Association changed its name to the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, pledging itself to the promotion of not only garden cities but also garden suburbs and 'garden villages'.\textsuperscript{28}

Similar to the 'purists' Hardy shows as polarised by this 1909 decision, few writers on urban and suburban planning history have been comfortable with establishing a direct connection or similitude between the intentions of planners of garden suburbs and those advocating the garden city model. Instead, they have tended to see the former as an inherently cynical or exploitative distortion of the latter. A most succinct example of this comes from British sociologist David Thorns who, in the early 1970s, termed the garden suburb the 'pale apology of the garden city'.\textsuperscript{29}

Following from understandings such as Thorns', the term 'garden suburb' is commonly used with derision. The assumption is held, particularly amongst British commentators, that the garden suburb is an imitation of the form of the garden city created for profit rather than – and in a spirit contrary to – social reform.

Few, however, would argue that garden cities genuinely exist in the true form as envisaged by Howard. Like Hall, Frank Schaffer, in his 1972 study of

\textsuperscript{26} Hall and Ward, \textit{Sociable Cities}, p. 41
\textsuperscript{27} Frank Jackson, \textit{Sir Raymond Unwin: Architect, Planner and Visionary}, A. Zwemmer, London, 1985 p. 84
\textsuperscript{29} David Thorns, \textit{Suburbia}, Paladin, St Albans Herts, 1973, p. 17
British New Towns mounts a case for Howard as 'the father of New Towns'.\textsuperscript{30} However, to accept Schaffer's contention, that strong connections can be established between this post-war British government innovation and Howard's Garden City, significant features of the original model must be overlooked, for instance Howard's overriding interest in the destruction of existing cities.

The British understanding of 20th century planning as stemming from Howard's social reformism provides a contrast with the understanding of the planning phenomenon in America. The American planning historian can legitimately take a number of different positions on the progress of American planning; like all historians associated with planning, this may further be altered by the influence of disciplines from which individuals have come to planning history.

American writers on planning history have differed in their understanding of the appropriate point at which to start a narrative on the development of planning in America. Many writers consider Olmsted an appropriate 'father' of the planning movement, particularly because of his innovative Riverside development of 1869. William H. Wilson describes Olmsted as following a philosophy of 'nature subdued but not civilised',\textsuperscript{31} and this indicates the importance of aesthetics in the American garden suburb, as opposed to the more pragmatic social engineering elements that have always been a part of the British version.

Some writers have linked practitioners such as Olmsted into the City Beautiful movement, though the City Beautiful is, as Wilson points out, also often typified as beginning with the Columbian Exposition of 1893.\textsuperscript{32} Others reject these attempts to ascribe town planning's origins to one individual, or to tie it to one single event, preferring to see the genesis of this new conception of the

\textsuperscript{32} Wilson, 'The Ideology, Aesthetics and Politics of the City Beautiful Movement' in Sutcliffe (ed.) The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, p. 165. The Columbian Exposition is also cited as a formative influence in Walter Griffin's life, for instance in Watson (ed.) Beyond Architecture, p. 4
physical streetscape of the planned environment in other sources, such as 18th
century parks, 19th century cemetery paths and the 'rural cemetery' movement.
These features, and Olmsted's legacy, are far more easily associated with
environmental modification for aesthetic reasons, rather than for direct social
improvement. Broadly speaking, however, this has not prevented many American
planning historians from seeking to locate social improvement movements in 19th
century American planning. Kenneth W. Jackson, in his seminal work The
Crabgrass Frontier, discusses the 1869 Long Island suburban development
Garden City, an 'impressive failure', the 'garden component' of which was a
series of parks distributed throughout its grid plan, suggesting that this
development was moving towards a garden suburb ideal.\textsuperscript{33}

The fact that 'Garden City', as a recognisably delineative nomenclature,
and that the 'garden suburb' as a concept, existed prior to Howard's publication
of his radical ideas for city reform, has made little impact on British or American
narratives concerning Howard or the consequence of his ideas and the
movement that grew around them. Additionally, the different narratives of
planning development in Britain and America are rarely combined to
countenance the possibility of Howard's experiences in Chicago contributing to
his creation of a Garden City ideal which was then, in some respects, imported
back to the US. The reason for this reluctance amongst many planning historians
to create a shared narrative between British and American planning may be
simply that each nation has its own heroes of planning, as well as varying
systems of planning in the present. It may be that it is only in less prominent and
populous western countries such as Australia and Canada that have remained
aware of, and responsive to, developments in both regions, that a coherent
synthesis of the two histories is possible.

Some American commentators – for instance, Roy Lubove in his book The
Progressives and the Slums – have been sympathetic to the garden suburb as a
pragmatic modification of Howard's vision. Lubove sees the garden suburb as

\textsuperscript{33} Kenneth T. Jackson, The Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the U.S., Oxford
University Press, New York, 1985, pp. 81-86
the work of ‘housing reformers’ through whom it became ‘less ambitious in scope and thus... better suited for immediate application.’\textsuperscript{34} For Lubove, the garden suburb is an English development, of which the earliest substantial manifestation was that created by the Ealing Tenants Ltd. Association in 1901.

Lubove’s benign representation of this transition from garden city to garden suburb is rare amongst the American commentators who have followed him, and who are as likely as their British counterparts to regard the private developer as conniving. Ervin Y. Galantay, for instance, in his study of ‘New Towns’, writes that “the term “new town” has become ambiguous, since it is often misleadingly employed to advertise suburban tract development.”\textsuperscript{35} Barbara M. Kelly’s explanation for William Levitt’s assessment of his Levittown development in 1949 as ‘A Garden Community’ is similar. She claims that this description ‘served to identify Levittown with a long series of planned model communities that had been developed in America since the inception of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities program in England.’\textsuperscript{36} The inference being that, in doing so, Levitt was appropriating rhetoric he had no right to. Errol Haarhoff equates both the garden suburb and garden city as arms of the same, betrayed, ethos when he claims that in New Zealand ‘the Garden City and the Garden Suburb became reduced to a marketing slogan’.\textsuperscript{37} J. C. Docherty, in his history of Newcastle, NSW, suggests that land developers ‘liked’ Howard’s ideas, adopting ‘the phrase “garden suburb” as a first-rate selling term redolent of pleasant rural associations in an urban environment’.\textsuperscript{38} Phillip Langdon, in his study of what he sees as the failure of suburban estate planning in the second half of the 20th century in the US, describes a scenario in which architects and planners are subservient to


\textsuperscript{36} Barbara M. Kelly, \textit{Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown}, SUNY Press, Albany NY 1993, p. 35

\textsuperscript{37} Errol Haarhoff, ‘Modernisation in the Colonies: the Garden City Movement in New Zealand’ in Freestone (ed.), \textit{The 20th Century Urban Planning Experience}, pp. 312-317

\textsuperscript{38} J. C. Docherty, \textit{Newcastle: The Making of an Australian City}, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney 1983, p. 84
marketing interests in a typical real estate or development firm, in which sales and marketing executives are responsible for:

- deciding which designer to hire, setting the objectives the designer is to fulfill, and demanding changes if the designer’s work deviates from the marketing concept... At the root of what’s wrong with the suburbs is an overreliance on business and moneymaking. 39

Clearly, a large number of planning historians across all national boundaries agree with Langdon, and many would go further, to suggest that the interference of private interests in those of urban dwellers have always been ‘what’s wrong with the suburbs’.

For most of the second half of the twentieth century, the majority of planning historians have regarded Howard’s original, idealistic scheme favourably. Few British or American planning historians would express as strong a negative opinion as that put forward by Jane Jacobs in her 1962 work *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*. Jacobs here suggests that unthinking adherence to Howard’s ideal caused untold damage to the fabric of American cities in the first sixty years of the 20th century; nevertheless, she does not suggest the garden city is identical to any type of American suburb. Instead, she posits the ‘model company town’ – for instance, Pullman – as the closest American form to the garden city. Jacobs writes that the defining feature of this kind of development is its paternalistic outlook, suggesting that she sees all planned communities as rigid and overtly structured, rather than simply as a style of urban development. 40 Few Australian writers on planning have been as hostile to Howard’s ideas as Jacobs; it would not be correct, however, to typify them as toeing a British ‘line’ on the origins, purposes, or underpinnings of urban planning in the past or present, as will be seen.

In the 1990s and beyond, more radical approaches have been taken in establishing new approaches to urban or planning history. Mary Corbin Sies has recently argued for a re-examination of ‘the scholarly orthodoxies of urban and

suburban historians'.\textsuperscript{41} Sies' own challenge to orthodoxy is a hypothesis which sees the upper-middle class American suburb of the years before the First World War as an aspirational ideal for the remainder of American urban residents throughout the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{42} Similar in their (in this case, implied) call for a more diverse methodology in studying urban development, Richard Harris and Robert Lewis suggest that the similarities, rather than the differences, between close-knit inner-city residential and ‘prosperous’ suburbs in North America in the first half of the twentieth century, are ‘minor’ and ‘dwarfed by variations within the city and among the suburbs’.\textsuperscript{43} As with most branches of historical study, urban history is continually challenging not only prior outcomes but prior methodologies, so as to ensure that it will continue to present a ‘global literature’ that Robert Freestone and Stephen Hamnett label ‘voluminous, variegated and interdisciplinary’.\textsuperscript{44}

A ‘bastard ideal’ - the Australian view of planning history

Australian planning history, like Australian planning itself, has received imported assumptions and influences from international professionals. This fact has no doubt influenced the depiction of Australian planning – most recently, by Steven V. Ward – as demonstrating ‘deference to innovative external planning traditions’.\textsuperscript{45} Nevertheless, planning history has attracted many original and inventive writers. Sandercock, Freestone and Hugh Stretton are among the most important Australian commentators on urban planning history issues. Stretton’s Ideas for Australian Cities (1969), Sandercock’s Cities for Sale (1975) and Freestone’s Model Communities (1989) are milestones in Australian planning

\textsuperscript{42} Sies, ibid., p. 357
\textsuperscript{44} Robert Freestone and Stephen Hamnett, ‘Introduction’, in Hamnett and Freestone (eds) The Australian Metropolis: A Planning History, pp 1-10
history, and have exercised enormous influence over other works in this area of study. The first two are critiques of contemporary housing and urban land use policy, within an historical framework. Unsurprisingly, given the time at which they were published, the critique is often of the 'heroic narrative' style which Sandercock has dismissed in later works. *Ideas for Australian Cities* celebrates, for instance, through heroic narrative, a man with the courage of his own convictions, in the person of Walter Burley Griffin. *Cities for Sale* is an exposé, through historical examples, of the misuse of planning in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Freestone’s work is an empirical history of planning in Australia, beginning with international movements, moving into aspects of Australian planning practice with use of biographical sketches and detail on specific estate plans, concentrating largely on garden suburb-style planning.

All three books are related: Sandercock’s acknowledges Stretton, who taught her as an undergraduate, and who, she says, first ‘aroused’ her ‘interest in urban problems’. Freestone’s is based on a Ph.D. thesis which was supervised in its latter stages by Sandercock. Similar attitudes are carried, particularly through the Sandercock and Freestone works, wherein the aspirations and promises of planning advocates are cast as hollow, victims either of governmental cowardice, private enterprise or economic fluctuations. Freestone is in agreement with Sandercock when he assumes throughout *Model Communities* that the original ideas of the ‘town planning movement’ were quickly ‘diluted’ and ‘degraded’, as they were co-opted into mainstream commerce. Indeed, this is an entirely appropriate understanding of the progress of governmental or metropolitan planning in the 20th century, and Freestone certainly does not allow it to diminish the importance placed on analysis of individual projects as representations of contemporary practice, as fantastic as some of them may be. The importance placed on the social reform aspect of

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47 Sandercock, *Cities for Sale*, p. ix
48 Freestone, *Model Communities*, p. vii
49 Freestone, *Model Communities*, p. 4
planning, as seen in the casting of garden suburbs as environmental determinist mechanisms, or potential examples thereof, nevertheless demonstrates a particular idealistic strand running through both writers' works, involving an understanding of planning as essentially a reform tool. Since writing the abovementioned works Sandercock and Freestone have developed approaches which embrace a more ambivalent attitude to the possibilities of urban planning.

As in American and British planning history, it is unusual to discover an Australian commentator who, while locating a transition between the 'garden city' and 'garden suburb', does not regard this as an unfortunate progression. An exception is B. Y. Harper, writing in the journal *Australian Planner* of Charles Reade's design for Colonel Light Gardens, a garden suburb of Adelaide produced under the aegis of the South Australian state government:

In translating 'garden city' ideas to 'suburbs', neither Unwin nor Reade seemed to have any appreciation of the change in scale, from city to suburb, in the demand for, and viability of, the multiplicity of non-residential buildings their designs suggested.\(^{50}\)

Harper's assumption here is that garden suburbs are intended by their creators to be the suburban version of the garden city model, but that the only requirement of converting one to the other is careful consideration of the requirements of 'scale'. Freestone, in his extensive discussion of 'town planning on garden city lines' in *Model Communities* suggests that suburban planning on such 'lines' should produce a planned community which is 'preferably a distinct physical and social entity'.\(^{51}\) Freestone is far more stringent in his definitions of types of planned community, as is appropriate in a work which remains the most important account of Australian garden suburb history. However here he concurs, to a degree, with Harper in this understanding of the extent to which garden city and suburb may be similar in many features, the greatest difference being one of scale.

Christine Garnaut, who has written extensively on Charles Reade and his

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\(^{50}\) B. Y. Harper, 'Colonel Light Gardens – Seventy Years of a Garden Suburb' *Australian Planner* Vol. 29, No. 2 1991, p. 65

\(^{51}\) Freestone, *Model Communities* p. 87
design for Colonel Light Gardens, similarly takes a benign attitude to private
development and the garden suburb. She writes that ‘the state as well as
corporations, companies and private investors in every Australian state
established residential environments “on garden city lines”. 52

It may be no more appropriate to typify Australians’ ‘attitudes’ to urban
planning or to urbanism than it would be to generalise on comparable attitudes in
Britain or America. It is nevertheless broadly true that Australian society has
entertained a remarkably ambivalent attitude to Australian cities for well over a
century. Recently, Australian historian Lionel Frost, in his ‘outsider’s view’ of
urban America, suggests that Australian cities – in part, through planning
decisions made during the early 20th century – could serve as a template for
future development in their American counterparts. 53 Such praise for the form of
Australian cities would be sure to receive a cool reception from the majority of the
critics of urban Australia. The implication that the ‘garden suburb’ is merely a
commercial imitation of the ‘garden city’ is not the only objection many Australian
writers or intellectuals may have to the idea of the ‘garden suburb’, as the word
‘suburb’ itself is decidedly not neutral or free from value in Australian social
discourse. Chris Healy writes:

Like ‘culture’, the terms ‘suburb’ and ‘suburbia’ have functioned as
imagined spaces on to which a vast array of fears, desires,
insecurities, obsessions and yearnings have been projected and
displaced. 54

While the majority of Australians have lived in and around its capital cities since
white settlement, the demonising of the suburbs by Australian writers has been
an ongoing process since the 1890s if not long before. Laurel Porcari and Peter
Zellner, in an essay entitled ‘The Lucky Country: Myth, Image and the Australian
Suburb’ cite the development, by Australian writers Henry Lawson and A. B.

52 Christine Garnaut, ‘Town Planning and the Garden City Idea’ in Hamnett and Freestone (eds.), The Australian Metropolis, pp. 46-64, p. 60
'Banjo' Patterson, of a 'national character contrary to... suburban development'\textsuperscript{55} in the early 20th century. The attitude of many Australians, particularly but not exclusively Australian intellectuals – notably since the publication in the 1950s of the critical writings of Melbourne architect Robin Boyd – has traditionally been antipathetic to suburban life.\textsuperscript{56} This has been reflected in much Australian literature of the second half of the 20th century, most notably the comedy of an associate of Boyd's in the Melbourne of the 1950s, Barry Humphries. Humphries has condemned, celebrated and romanticised his reading of the 'oppressive dreariness of [Melbourne's] suburbia'\textsuperscript{57} particularly in the characters of suburbanites Edna Everage and Sandy Stone.

Within a few years of Humphries' early comedic successes, however, and the publications of other formative anti-suburban works – decrying the 'rotten dreary suburban sameness' of middle-class suburban conformity – the most famous of which is George Johnson's novel My Brother Jack\textsuperscript{58}, Hugh Stretton was promoting a different notion of suburbia. Ideas for Australian Cities may be the single most important book to come to the 'rescue' of Australian suburbia, though the debate is, of course, still ongoing. Stretton wrote of the 'urban intellectual's stereotype of suburban non-life' depicting 'dreary dormitories where life shrivels, festers, taps its foot in family prisons'. However, he reasons,

Plenty of dreary lives are indeed lived in the suburbs. But most of them might be worse in other surroundings: duller in country towns, more desperate in high-rise apartments. Intelligent critics don't blame the suburbs for empty aspirations: the aspirations are what corrupts the suburbs.\textsuperscript{59}

Like Stretton, Graeme Davison sees the creation of verdant, rambling and semi-rural suburbs as an indication of Australians' willingness to 'equate suburbanism


\textsuperscript{57} Barry Humphries, The Life and Death of Sandy Stone, ed. C. O'Brien, Macmillan, Chippendale, 1990, p. xxxviii

\textsuperscript{58} George Johnson, My Brother Jack, Collins, Melbourne, 1964, p. 264

\textsuperscript{59} Stretton, Ideas for Australian Cities, p. 10
with the good life’. He sees this taking place from the late 19th century onwards, at which point the suburb ‘was, in essence, a mirror image of the slum’ — that is, calculated to be its exact opposite in every detail. Australian cities’ slum areas were small compared to Britain or the US, and were limited largely to parts of the city that pre-dated rail transport. For Davison, the ‘suburban idea’ was strengthened for the colonial Australian by ‘four great contemporary ideologies – Evangelicalism, Romanticism, Sanitarianism and Capitalism’. That none of these ideologies were considered exclusive of any other is indicative of a value system amongst 19th century Australians conducive to the development of the commercial garden suburb which could still lay claim to benefits in both moral and physical terms.

Large-scale suburbanisation was facilitated in Australia by the construction of railways, beginning in Melbourne in 1854 and Sydney the following year, but not reaching high levels of expansion until the 1870s. Max Nankervis suggests that it was ‘cheap mass urban transport’ which caused Australian suburbs to become, ‘by default… urbs in rus’. Davison creates a case for Australia as the birthplace of the garden suburb. He makes little distinction, however, between the variety of garden suburbs established in Australia in the late 19th century, the interwar garden suburb and other forms. Davison describes Australian suburbanism not as a form created by default but as ‘the soul’s defense against the metropolis’. While he sees the template for suburbanism as derived from the ‘national Home across the seas’, the new form was a ‘bastard ideal’ which translated English rural themes to the fringes of the metropolis. Kerreen M. Reiger’s description of the 19th century Australian suburb concurs with Davison’s portrayal:

The availability of land meant that the suburban detached house was already the common pattern by 1900. Its virtues, proclaimed to

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61 Davison, ‘The Past and Future of the Australian Suburb’, p. 63
62 Davison, ‘The Past and Future of the Australian Suburb’, p. 65
64 Davison, ‘The Past and Future of the Australian Suburb’, p. 65
be privacy, fresh air and a garden, were regularly promoted by land development companies.65

In this regard, it might be said that the 19th century Australian suburb pre-empted Howard’s ideal to some degree. As the suburban areas of major Australian cities first began their ‘sprawl’ into rural areas, their inhabitants adopted semi-rural lifestyles compatible to Howard’s vision. As Freestone66 and others have shown, Howard used an Australian city – Adelaide – to demonstrate a working example of the green ‘ring’ around new cities.67

The Victorian conception of the ‘garden suburb’ still finds expression today as a description of a 19th century ‘leafy’ suburb with no post-Howard planning modes in evidence. A good example is the Melbourne suburb of Malvern, which cast itself as a ‘progressive garden suburb’ throughout the 1920s and 30s by dint of its expansive areas of parkland and large building lots. Most of Malvern’s street plan does not fit the interwar period’s typical ‘garden suburb’ style; the majority of its land was subdivided in the 19th century. Its status as a ‘garden suburb’ was nevertheless self-consciously contrived and defended in the interwar years68 by local government, with programs such as widespread tree and flower planting.69

Such a use of the term ‘garden suburb’ has a companion in the planning-neutral use of the term ‘garden city’. Melbourne has often claimed the title of ‘the garden city’ for itself70, and Victoria has also been termed ‘the garden state’,

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66 Freestone, Model Communities, p. 57
67 Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, p.46
68 This is evidenced by the objection made by Malvern’s Councilor Matthews to the use of a slide in a Town Planning Lecture in 1923 which purported to show a ‘Slum Area in Malvern’: ‘Ordinary Business’ in Minutes for 21 May 1923, in Malvern Council Minutes, 19 June 1922 to 28 November 1923, p. 646. Public Records Office, Victoria.
69 J B Cooper, The History of Malvern, from its First Settlement to a City, The Specialty Press, Melbourne, 1935, p. 168
70 There have been a number of attempts to relate the two definitions. In 1976, botanist T. C. Chambers gave one of two public lectures, arranged by the City Council, entitled ‘Melbourne: The Garden City’. Chambers told his audience that the origin of the term ‘Garden city’ came from Howard’s intention to limit urban growth and increase decentralisation, and suggested that ‘while agreeing with the spirit we are not adopting the concept of Howard.’ (T. C. Chambers, ‘The Address by Professor Chambers’ in Melbourne City Council, Melbourne, The Garden City, Melbourne City Council, Melbourne, 1976, p. 4)
even in the 1980s, on vehicle number plates.

Its connection to a 19th century suburban ideal notwithstanding, the Australian garden suburb as discussed in this thesis has certain unique forms and features. These set the garden suburb apart from other residential subdivisions, as well as from non-residential urban areas; some of these features also set the Australian garden suburb aside in minor ways from international garden suburbs.

Space, health and morality are central tenets to the form and intention of garden suburb developments of the 1920s; health rhetoric was particularly commonplace in the interwar years, with advice such as ‘It will do you good just to stand on Piedmont Hill’\textsuperscript{71} appearing regularly in promotional literature.

Most important of the built features of the Australian garden suburb is a street layout distinct from the ‘grid’ pattern. Such a layout might be curvilinear or may focus on certain vision lines or endpoints. The garden suburb plan adhered to, blended with or was at least partially shaped by the terrain for which it was designed. This style of plan was not a feature of Howard’s garden city style – which was not a style at all, but an economic and social configuration and scheme.

Secondary to this, but almost always apparent in garden suburbs, is the provision of readily accessible open space within the planned suburb itself; such space usually took the form of numerous parks, either within the suburban blocks or in key points around an estate. The provision of lots – often, lots half the size of residential lots – and perhaps even specially designed local streetscape features, both particularly geared towards the creation of a local retail area can often be found in garden suburbs. This facet of the garden suburb may be seen as an attempt to create a focal point for the suburban unit so as to aid the development of community.

\footnote{‘Old Piedmont Hill Subdivision’ pamphlet dated 9 November 1929, Box 6, Coghil and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives. The Coghill and Haughton Papers at the Melbourne University Archives are only loosely sorted into boxes most of which are designated by suburb name. At time of preparation of this thesis they had not been extensively catalogued.}
One example of this is Saxil Tuxen’s 1919 design for Merrilands (Fig. VIII), in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, which will be discussed in detail in this text. Merrilands features hierarchical roads, suggested land uses which might be regarded as a forerunner to district zoning – and which, where possible, have been incorporated into the integrity of the design. It also contained numerous park reserves and other open space areas.

For the purposes of this thesis then, the terms ‘garden suburb’ and ‘garden city’ must necessarily be regarded as only incidentally connected in practical terms. As has been shown, the ‘garden suburb’ is a form which has its origins not in the rhetoric of the garden city or Howard’s writings, but in suburban forms created in the 19th century. This fact does not negate the importance of the understanding, in the period since the publication of Howard’s garden city ideas, of the garden city concept as connected to the garden suburb. Indeed, the similarities of form between the two are undeniable, though the garden city’s self-contained nature is perhaps the most noticeable difference. However any history of the garden suburb must necessarily show that the Australian garden suburb is not inherently a corruption of the garden city in terms of its historical genesis. The Australian suburb was already a distinct (if not unique) form, developing towards what would become the garden suburb, by the 1880s. This was due in part to that decade’s boom conditions and the desire – and ability – of many middle-class Australian suburbanites to live in spacious and green surrounds, far from the city itself but accessible by public transport. While this development did not have any directly reformist applications or principles, it nevertheless set Australian urban life on a path which did not have its origins in Howard’s ideas, and yet which was not out of line with garden suburb design as it was to form in the interwar years. Part of the reason for this was undoubtedly – as Davison has suggested – that Australian suburbanites and Ebenezer Howard were responding to the British slums.

‘Town planning’, a term long associated with the garden city and garden suburb, is applicable to discussion of both of these forms, as each requires careful consideration of ground plans for new urban areas. The term is also
applicable to the re-planning of existing cities to aid efficiency, health and in many conceptualisations of the town planners' role, the redress of social inequality. As with the tension between the garden suburb and garden city created by writers of the second half of the 20th century throughout Britain, the US and Australia, however, 'town planning' has usually come to be used only in reference to government-sponsored town planning projects.

The creation of an idea of 'town planning' in Australia unites a number of related strands. Concerned individuals in capital cities of each Australian state established their own 'Town Planning Association' in the wake of a 1914 lecture tour conducted by New Zealand-born, British-based, journalist Charles Reade and English surveyor William Davidge.\textsuperscript{72} Such Associations, consisting of volunteers and continuing a tradition of progressive movements in Australia, are often seen as marking the beginning of a town planning movement in Australia. They involved professionally interested parties such as architects, surveyors and representatives of municipal government, with other civic and social reformers.

The rise of the town planning movement must also be seen, however, in the context of the changing face of Australian cities in the early years of the interwar period. Experiments in government-sponsored land development, for instance soldier settlement projects, were for the most part limited and small-scale when urban expansion increased rapidly in the post-war years; the vast majority of the land subdivided for new suburban populations passed through the conventional system of private real estate sales.\textsuperscript{73}

A large part of town planning in the immediate post-war period was concerned with the aesthetic aspect of the creation of new streetscapes, rather than the social or physical needs, desires or requirements of future inhabitants. While this may appear related to the American City Beautiful movement, it may also be connected to the initial consideration of the development of the Australian garden suburb – the creation of visually pleasing middle-class suburbs – thus,

\textsuperscript{72} Freestone, \textit{Model Communities}, pp. 66-67
effectively pre-dating the City Beautiful. Perhaps more importantly, it links to one of the primary purposes of garden suburb design in the interwar period: the creation of attractive estate layouts to attract private buyers of middle class status or those aspiring to such status.

The majority of those working in garden suburb design in the interwar years: the Griffins in Melbourne and later Sydney, John Sulman in Sydney and Newcastle, Charles Reade in South Australia, the firm of Hope and Klem in Perth, and W. Scott Griffiths in Sydney and later Adelaide, all combined work initiated by state government agencies with work for private entrepreneurs. The majority of planners in the interwar years readily accepted employment in the private sector, and rarely acknowledged a difference of form or intention between projects executed under the aegis of land vendors and those for government.

Interwar planning has, itself, attracted little attention from planning historians. But those that have addressed this field of study in the second half of the 20th century have tended to ignore the role of private development in garden suburb or town planning projects, largely because the ways in which the planner was regarded changed so dramatically after the Second World War. Michael Simpson writes in his examination of the work of Thomas Adams, that:

> Within a decade or so of his death, Adams's contribution to planning was little remembered by a new generation whose approach to planning was substantially more sophisticated, fragmented and anonymous than that of the pioneers.\(^{74}\)

The planning profession's memory of the interwar planners would suffer the same fate in the years after the Second World War. By the 1950s, major projects such as Elizabeth, initiated and controlled by the South Australian Housing Trust, came to be understood as the concern of government agencies, usually in tandem with private enterprise. While Elizabeth – described in the title of at least

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one work as ‘The Garden City’ – and the towns or suburbs which have followed it did not supplant the concerns of private developers in the initiation of new suburban spheres, the prominence they have been given has altered the common conception of urban planning. Indeed, the term ‘planning’ itself has come to embrace a much more far-ranging process of civic administration than advocates of ‘town planning’ in the 1920s could have imagined.

It was from this perspective, during the 1950s to the 1980s, that the majority of commentators on Australian planning’s history have written, and for this reason the work of the early Australian ‘town planners’, particularly that within private enterprise is often either misunderstood or represented as a ‘pale apology.’ As a discipline in its early stages, with little apparent power or influence, it does not fit with the mould of post-1940s planning activity or discourse. R. S. Parker and P. N. Troy’s The Politics of Urban Growth, published in 1972, collects essays which use the commanding role of government in planning as a starting point; herein, Peter Harrison describes planning as ‘originally... one of the responsibilities of a metropolitan government’ and Parker describes planning as an administrative procedure used by government to limit and shape urban development. In 1986, Brian McLoughlin and Margo Huxley published Urban Planning in Australia: Critical Readings in which McLoughlin himself expressed the opinion that ‘planning in Australia has not been particularly significant... or visible.’ Both Parker and McLoughlin are assuming a stringent definition of the term ‘planning’ to embrace only the organisation or replanning of cities, and the formulation of policy and administration for same. Similarly, Ian Alexander writes of ‘efforts... made to generate metropolitan planning [in Australian cities] from 1900 onwards, but it is

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75 Margaret Galbreath and Gillian Pearson, Elizabeth: The Garden City, City of Elizabeth, Hawthorndene 1982
77 R. S. Parker, ‘Planning and Politics’ in Parker and Troy (eds), The Politics of Urban Growth, pp. 24-36
78 Brian McLoughlin, ‘Urban Planning in Australia’ in McLoughlin and Huxley (eds.), Urban Planning in Australia: Critical Readings, pp. 3-12, p. 4
only in the past forty years [to 1986] that any tangible progress has been made.\textsuperscript{79}

One writer who has taken a broader view on what ‘planning’ has encompassed in Australia and, latterly, internationally is Sandercock, an astute commentator on facets of the process. In this respect, Sandercock’s work can be divided into two phases. She has, in the past, been highly critical of town planning – or the lack of it – in Australia not only in the first half of the 20th century but also in the years up to 1975, the date of publication of her \textit{Cities for Sale}. The reason for her antithetical stance to planning is that it had rarely addressed issues of inequality of wealth, and did not seek directly to challenge the power of landlords and other exploitative capitalists.\textsuperscript{80} Despite her broader definition of procedures or processes which might come under the ‘planning’ umbrella, nevertheless Sandercock was, at this time, of the same opinion as authors such as McLoughlin: that there has been limited application – certainly nowhere near an acceptable amount – of ‘planning’ in Australia throughout the 20th century. Thus, Australian cities are less healthy, more congested, and less equitable – to name but three issues that most urban planning advocates of the 20th century have considered pressing – than they should be, or need to be. In her second phase, Sandercock – while not rejecting the conclusions of \textit{Cities for Sale} outright – has instead turned her attentions to related historiographical problems. These include the lack of representation of women in planning history, for instance, and conventional narratives of such histories which tend to approach planning itself as an unproblematic and positive force.

In concentrating on subdivisions and the influence town planning had on their development in the early 20th century, it is necessary to contextualise such phenomena with the general development of subdivisional land sales in Australia. Subdivision of land proliferated in Australian cities in the early 20th century despite the fact that, as Sandercock notes, a large area of land subdivided in the boom era before the 1890s depression existed between the

\textsuperscript{79} Ian Alexander, ‘Land Use and Transport Planning in Australian Cities: Capital Takes All?’ in McLoughlin and Huxley (eds.), \textit{Urban Planning in Australia: Critical Readings}, p. 113-130, p. 113

\textsuperscript{80} Sandercock, \textit{Cities for Sale}, p. 27
existing city and newly subdivided land which was yet to be built on. Because of this, Sandercock writes in *Cities for Sale*, town planning effectively bypassed Australia until after World War II. Her definition of ‘town planning’ in *Cities for Sale* – where it is seen as necessarily large-scale, encompassing the entire city and legislative in nature – is somewhat different to the broader one I have adopted for this work. Her argument ignores, however, the fact that, in the affluent 1920s, town planners and developers leapfrogged the 1880s land and created new subdivisions outside its limits. A number of areas subdivided in the 1880s, for instance, parts of Camberwell in Melbourne or Chatswood/Roseville in Sydney, might not have become closely settled until the 1940s; many 1920s subdivisions did not become built-up suburban areas until the 1950s or 60s, and in some cases even later. Neither this nor their status as small commercial developments negates their importance as projected future communities, as influential examples to contemporary and subsequent generations, or as indications of the mindset of urban populations, land developers and planners of the time.

Town planners often sought to include financial justification for the application of planning to the city: Sandercock claims in *Cities for Sale* that this manifested itself more commonly in right-wing members of the movement. When town planners rode in tandem with the advocates of slum clearance, the possible benefits (and profits) became obvious to land speculators.

*Cities for Sale* is an examination of only three Australian cities: Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Even with these self-imposed boundaries, it claims to be primarily concerned with Australian town planning. Yet the book makes no direct reference to the planned city of Canberra; it contains only one mention of Walter Burley Griffin – as the designer of Castlecrag, and none of Marion Griffin. Nor does Sandercock consider the Griffins' two decades in Australia as an influence on planning.

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81 Leonie Sandercock, *The Land Racket: The Real Costs of Property Speculation*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, pp. 10-11
82 Sandercock, *Cities for Sale*, p. 24
Speaking from a present-day, American perspective, Campbell and Fainstein utilise a looser definition of planning altogether. In the course of exploring the ambiguities of both urban planning and its theoretical base, they suggest that:

The boundary between planners and related professionals (such as real estate developers, architects, city council members) is not mutually exclusive; planners don’t just plan, and nonplanners also plan.\(^{63}\)

This free definition of ‘planning’ is, perhaps, too far from the spirit of Australia’s interwar planners to be useful in this thesis, but it does nevertheless demonstrate the extremities of the scope of possible definitions in the writing of planning history. For the purposes of this thesis, the interwar ‘planner’ will be assumed to have come from a professional background, the most common being architecture or surveying; to be active within the town planning movement either as campaigner or commentator, and recognised by his or her peers.

The connection between all forms of urban planning and federal, state/colonial and local governments has a long history in Australia, as old in some respects as white settlement. The creation of connections between the state and the post-Howard town planning movement is a more recent creation, and not one likely to have occurred to a planning advocate of the 1920s. While this does not negate the construction of such a connection, it may serve to explain to some degree the attitude of planners in private practice towards their own work and the role of government.

All historians of Australian planning to date have attempted to uncover or delineate a starting point which captures what are seen as the essential features of town planning practice as they are introduced to Australia. These traditionally begin either in 1889, with a paper read at the inaugural Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, by Sulman; or with the arousal of widespread – albeit, at an early stage, specialised – interest in town planning by Reade and Davidge in 1914.
As previously mentioned, some historians see town planning as essentially a tool of control wielded by the middle and upper classes over the poor. A concern for public health – or one’s own health, if one was a member of the middle classes fearful of catching diseases from the slums – initiated calls for local government-sponsored town planning in Australian cities. Paul Ashton sees the bubonic plague outbreak in Sydney in 1900 as a turning point for new approaches and attitudes not only to city living but to municipal interest in living conditions, particularly of the poor. Davison has written that planning in Australia began in response to ‘fears of contagion’. Alan Mayne suggests that to 19th century reformers, who were almost invariably middle-class, ‘the elimination of unhealthiness and poverty from the city was to be achieved through brick, mortar and stone rather than by social and sanitary reform, philanthropy and education’. This concentration on public health and the rebuilding of the city to achieve sanitary conditions provides explanation for some commentators for the creation of a legal or bureaucratic infrastructure in which town planning played an important part. Associated with this is the rise of bodies like Melbourne’s Metropolitan Board of Works, typified by McLoughlin as ‘opaque quangos’. Certainly John Sulman, as a leading town planning advocate of the interwar period, constructed for his students at Sydney University a scenario beginning with poor environment and ending with the ruination of morality. Reiger writes of this movement, towards the application of science and the intrusion of middle-class morality into the working class home:

The leaders of these changes in the late nineteenth century tended to be religious, moral reformers – philanthropists with a general

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84 Paul Ashton, The Accidental City: Planning Sydney Since 1788, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, p. 31
86 Alan Mayne Fever, Squalor and Vice, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1982, p. 213
88 Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 40
humanitarian intent. By the turn of the century and in subsequent years, they worked in alliance with an emerging group of professionals: experts in public health, housing and the management of the household and family.\(^{89}\)

There has also been speculation that much town planning advocacy stemmed from a concurrent middle and upper-class fear of political insurrection amongst the working class. Freestone, for instance, cites writings from the immediate post-First World War period in which ‘the garden suburb’ is advocated for its uses in ‘preserving social stability’.\(^{90}\) For Andrew Brown-May, the town planning ethos served to ‘systematise and codify the suppression of nuisance and noises, the regulation of space through building and health codes.’\(^{91}\) Margo Huxley critiques urban zoning as a ‘Benthamite’ system under which ‘the working classes could see and be seen. They would be reformed by example and by strategies of normalisation that could not be applied to them while they inhabited the “rookeries” of the unplanned city.’\(^{92}\)

International writers have traced similarly Benthamite intentions: M. Christine Boyer sees such re-planning as an attempt to impose order on the ‘working and dangerous classes’; her example is early 19th century Paris, where, at the threat of ‘unreason’, ‘(a)tempts were made to rout out this dangerous disease by piercing large boulevards through the slum’.\(^{93}\) Richard Sennett has written of 19th century planning that it ‘aimed to create a crowd of freely moving individuals, and to discourage the movement of organized groups through the city.’\(^{94}\)

There were, however, other factors at work which were to have an effect on the planning movement. Few Australian writers apart from Davison and

\(^{89}\) K. Reiger, *The Disenchantment of the Home*, p. 33

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Brown-May countenance the fact that, by the 1920s in Australia, there was already growing recognition of the increasingly prominent role the private automobile would play in society. By the end of the 1920s the country was ranked, alongside Canada and New Zealand, behind only one nation, the US, in car ownership. The advent of the private motor vehicle was particularly influential on Australian town planning in the 1920s, in terms of choice of sites for new developments, plans, and the nature of clientele.

Australia has (proportionately) one of largest urban populations in the world, a situation which has existed for over a century. Chris Maher establishes three features of the development of the Australian urban character: the origins of cities as commercial centres, the relationship between population growth and transport technology, and attitudes of the urban population to space and housing. In addition to this, attitudes to housing and space among the general population are possibly even more important to Maher's 'urban character'. Middle-class Australians, like their counterparts in most western societies, had already long been staunch supporters of the ideal of a separate house and garden in a comfortable and private suburb. The advent of new transport modes simply made easier that which Jackson has described, in an American context, the 'centrifugal movement of the middle class' to suburbia. Janet McCalman writes, that the middle class 'occupied the central and dominating place in the culture' in the between-the-wars period. If this is, as it seems, true, then it is readily understandable that this enthusiasm for middle and outer suburban living would spread to lower income earners in urban Australia as land became more readily available.

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95 A. Brown-May, *Melbourne Street Life*, p. 62
98 Jackson, *The Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 77
A more recent work which concentrates on only one, but perhaps the most
important, Australian town planning development of the early 20th century is
John W. Reps' *Canberra 1912*. Reps not only provides background to the
Federal Capital Design Competition but also portrays, largely through the use of
original documents, the state of planning, both in Australia and internationally, at
this stage. Reps' book is designed partly as an analytical history, but more as a
reprint of original documentation, most notably the plans entered for the
Competition.

International influence on Australian planning has long been assumed to
be an indisputable fact by writers and historians across numerous disciplines.
Establishing the Reade and Davidge lecture tour of 1914-15 as the formative
force in Australian town planning fits the assumption that British town planning
was the single most important influence on Australian practice, and that
Australian practice was driven by and beholden to British methodology. Sandercock's *Cities for Sale* takes the view that town planning was imported to
an Australia besotted by British ideas and willing to embrace them without
question: she writes that 'Australian thinking... about our cities and their
problems' were derived from Britain. Mark Peel writes that 'it is a
commonplace that Australian town planning was largely borrowed from Britain,
with a few glances at the United States as well.' Ward, opining that
'internationalism has remained a powerful theme in urban planning', suggests
that during Australia's first decades as a nation it, and other 'Dominions of the
British Empire... had relatively small populations, underdeveloped reform
movements and limited professional resources', leading to an 'uncritical
admiration' for ideas from both Britain and America.

American ideas have also played an important part in the historiography of

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101 Mark Peel, *Good Times Hard Times: The Past and Future in Elizabeth*, Melbourne University
Press, Carlton, 1995, p. 32
102 Sandercock, *Cities for Sale*, p. 11
103 Peel, p. 14
104 Ward, 'Re-examining the ,of Planning', in Freestone (ed.) *Urban Planning in a Changing
World*, p. 49
Australian planning. Max Grubb’s work has come to embrace the idea of a strong American influence in Melbourne planning – particularly under the aegis of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (MTPC) in the 1920s but also through its successors.\(^\text{105}\) Similarly, Mark Rolfe cites housing styles such as the Californian bungalow and his contentious opinion that Walter Burley Griffin was ‘greatly influenced’ by ‘the Chicago Prairie School and Frank Lloyd Wright’\(^\text{106}\) as evidence of an Australian suburbia dominated by American influence.\(^\text{107}\) In his *Shaping Melbourne’s Future?*, J. B. McLoughlin tells us that the ‘overwhelmingly intellectual (or professional) influence on [the MTPC] was US planning practice.’\(^\text{108}\)

There is one exception to the assumptions made by writers on this dominant international influence on Australian planning. Some commentators have eschewed ideological/aesthetic influence and instead located the birth of Australian planning in the legal infrastructure already in place in Australian cities before the rise of town planning as a doctrine. In such a reading planning is derived from moves in the late 19th century, toward provision of a basic urban services network, including sewerage, transport and energy. Grubb exemplifies this outlook when he typifies town planning in Victoria before the formation of the MTPC as a development which ‘must be viewed as a logical extension of [a] general movement of government assuming wider community responsibilities.’\(^\text{109}\)

Other writers have allowed for a particularly Australian strain in town planning or garden suburb design. In his *Model Communities*, Freestone

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\(^{106}\) This statement is contentious largely because the work generated under what was later termed the ‘Prairie School’ was not the sole work of Wright. Others, such as Marion Mahony, Walter Griffin and Barry Byrne, to name three, contributed to this body of work and – though Wright was later to typify their involvement as that of apprentices – were involved in creating the Prairie School’s works.

\(^{107}\) Mark Rolfe, ‘Suburbia’ in Philip Bell and Roger Bell (eds.), *Americanization and Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1998, pp. 66-67


acknowledges a branch of archetypal Australian town planning which he terms ‘fuzzy’, that is, difficult to define; in a later work of Freestone’s, representations of the form are said to be ‘unmistakable, with gum trees rather than elms, detached rather than group housing’. Freestone’s Model Communities also contains a ‘Summary Chronology of Selected Garden City and Planning Events, Australia and Britain 1890-1980’ and the choice of the two nations chronicled is telling in itself. Freestone sees the establishment of Port Sunlight and Bournville in Britain, and the 1889 papers penned by Keily and Sulman, as amongst the first planning initiatives in the two countries. Reps sees this 1889/90 discussion as essentially a debate between architects on one side and surveyors and engineers on the other, over which profession should have control over city planning.

Most planning historians’ approaches to the origins of Australian urban planning as an international import formed from a version of Howard’s garden city has long been seen as unproblematic. Yet it can also be seen as a part of the long-running debate within Australian society on the quality and nature of Australian art, writing and other cultural forms. The Australian literary and cultural critic John Docker, writing in his influential 1984 work In a Critical Condition, constructs an approach to this debate which I will adapt for the purposes of this work. Docker writes:

I acknowledge... that Australia is only physically an island and that its history is enclosed within a larger, western history – so that the examination of the cultural specificity of our narratives is not in any way an argument for their uniqueness but rather for a kind of Australian accent which is audible and distinctive when placed in relation to that of other English speakers.

I will contend in this thesis that many Australian garden suburbs of the between

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111 Freestone, Model Communities, pp. 6-7
112 Reps, Canberra 1912 pp. 46-7
113 John Docker, In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature Penguin, Ringwood, 1984, p. 8
the wars period, most specifically those created by the Griffins and Tuxen, are
distinctively Australian in form and style. This may simply be, as Freestone
suggests, a matter of depiction in advertising rhetoric, and the provision of large
blocks containing free-standing housing. In other cases, particularly those such
as Castlecrag (Fig. XXV) and Eaglemont (Fig. VI) and to a lesser extent at
Milleara (Fig. XXXI) and Ringwood (Figs. XXVII, XXVIII) the Griffins created
plans that incorporated natural features into suburbia. This reflected their own
conservation interests. Tuxen, to a lesser extent, similarly created designs which
focused on natural features, for instance his incorporation of the distant
Dandenong Mountains into the endpoints of the streets in his Leslie Estate (Fig.
XII). These features, though subtle, indicate recognition not only of the pre-
existing form of Australian suburbia of the necessity of tailoring the garden
suburb to a populace – and a market – with some sophistication about the uses
of subdivisional planning to maximise site potential.

Conclusion: Pale Apology Accepted

Any discussion of the terms ‘garden suburb’ and ‘garden city’ reveals that the
similarity between the two phrases is deceptive. While there is a convincing case
– often embraced by historians – for certain aspects of the former being
influenced by the model of the latter, there is nevertheless no universal
agreement on the scope, intention or limits of either. There is even profound
disagreement about the value of ideals such as Howard’s, and on the value of
planning itself.

It is clear, however, that the establishment of a garden suburb is in itself a
denial of one of the central precepts of Howard’s plan. A garden suburb is
dependent on an existing city large enough to support suburban development –
that is, it is calculated to complement and even reify a city of the type that
Howard’s model sought to make redundant. However it is undeniable that at the
crux of much of the planning history written in Australia and in other English-
speaking countries is the assumption that the chief and proper use of urban
planning is the social reform or betterment of the disadvantaged, under the aegis of government.

In confluence with this is another assumption: that the involvement of commercial interests in urban expansion is likely to intrude on the integrity of a plan.

However, as will become clear in subsequent chapters, for a historian in this field of study to ignore 'garden suburb' planning projects contrived to appeal to the middle-class buyer or land speculator/investor necessitates the dismissal of a rich seam of planning history. As well as this, it is the area in which the work of formative Australian planners was largely concentrated. Peel lists Sydney's Daceyville, Melbourne's Garden City, Brisbane's Darra and Adelaide's Colonel Light Gardens as the only examples of interwar planning because they are the only examples of interwar planning to have been sponsored by governments. Yet even within the terms that suggest these are the only kinds of planned areas that truly deserve the term, it is worth noting that many 'garden suburb' planners – most notably, Saxil Tuxen – went on to work extensively in the field of urban reform. Tuxen contributed to the use of urban planning in social reform matters, features which make him a figure of note in the social reform field of the 'early' town planning landscape.

The assumption, therefore, that the only valid type of 'town planning' – 'valid' in its worth as a subject for study - is that which concerns itself with the betterment of the population is false in its basic premise. This is also a form of the kind of heroic narrative of planning history which Sandercock – herself at one time a writer of such histories – now correctly rejects. There is no reason that a planning history must move towards an end which tallies with a traditional modernist notion of social progress, or must seek to prove that particular examples of planning, or planning itself, is a 'good' or a 'bad' thing.

Given this relaxation of the placing of value judgements on certain modes of past planning practice, it might seem now to be appropriate to liberate the 'garden suburb' from the categorisation given it by commentators such as

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114 M. Peel, Good Times, Hard Times, p.17
Thorns. There can be little doubt that the garden suburb was by no means inherently a social lever, a haven of equality, health or efficiency that the garden city concept was formulated to be. Nor was the garden suburb inherently the lifeless, shallow and paternalistic community of Jacobs’ attack on the garden city (‘really very nice... if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your time amongst others with no plans of their own’). 115

The garden suburb did not owe its existence purely to Howard or to a town planning movement. The lush, green dormitory suburb accessible to the workplace by train, tram or omnibus was emerging in the Australian cities in the 1880s; suburbs like Grace Park, in Hawthorn, even included a curvilinear streetscape, incentive for building and an unusual lease agreement for land. Grace Park does not show that the garden suburb is a uniquely Australian invention, or that the interwar garden suburb would have emerged without Howard’s influence. What it, and developments like Appian Way, Haberfield, and others do show is that Australian city dwellers would have known precedents for the garden suburb. This may have eased its acceptance amongst homebuyers and might, in fact, have given them reassurance: a lifestyle they already preferred or aspired to was, in fact, one ‘experts’ now believed to be ideal.

The intrusion of commerce into the suburban landscape is one which Australians have not found unacceptable. With such a high value placed on widespread home ownership in urban areas, there would appear to be a place for this commercial presence at many levels. Nevertheless, there has undeniably been a history of corruption and manipulation of land division, ownership and planning procedure by commercial enterprise throughout the history of Australia throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

I have no intention in this thesis of arguing a case for the rights of private enterprise to control, have input into, or otherwise influence government urban planning. In fact, I believe private enterprise should only have the opportunity to exercise such influence in circumstances which also involve systems of cooperation, community consultation, and transparency. Rather, this thesis

115 J. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, p.27
presents a case for the consideration of garden suburb work, executed by town planning advocates and practitioners under the aegis of private land developers, as a valid and important aspect of the development of what has come to be known as urban planning in Australia. As will be seen, much of this work – particularly that conceived by Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen - in itself provides valuable and important detail into the growth and nature of planning in Australia in the 20th century.
'Fresh air, a pleasant view and a shady garden': the origin and progress of the garden suburb in Australia

Garden suburbs before the garden city, 1880-1910

As previously mentioned, most historians of planning throughout the 20th century have assumed that, as Howard's conception of the garden city took root around the world, the inferior or corrupt garden suburb followed in its wake.

In fact, a number of deceptive similarities between the garden city and the garden suburb have kept commentators from considering points of origin for garden suburbs which precede the work of Howard. These, while not matching the garden suburb precisely, nevertheless suggest that the built environment in western society, and Australian society in particular, was developing in a 'garden suburb' direction prior to the publication of Howard's utopian vision of the 'garden city'.

Though the garden suburb of the 1920s was a reaction against the conventional grid – that which the Griffins termed 'crowded suburban chessboards'¹ – many planners of this time located positive values in aspects of the planned Australian cities of the 19th century. Town planners of the 1920s often depicted themselves to the general public as operating in a landscape in which cities had always been planned – inasmuch as almost all Australian cities, Sydney being the exception, were constructed on an ordered grid with wide streets. John Sulman wrote in his Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia that 'the prevalent type' of Australian 'city planning' was 'rectangular,

¹ Castlecrag Homes, n.d. pamphlet in Deans Papers, MS 2019, National Library of Australia, p. 2. Though there is no author named on this pamphlet, certain features of the text – particularly the positive descriptions of the flat roofs of houses on the estate – make it almost certain that one or both of the Griffins composed its text. A film with the same title was made with full co-operation of the Griffins and, as it is not mentioned anywhere in the Greater Sydney Development Association ('Cerutty') papers, perhaps funded by the Griffins as well.
without diagonals'. Like Howard, he singled out Adelaide with its ‘belt of parklands’ and ‘radial thoroughfares’ as a foundation which could make it ‘the best planned of all existing Australian cities’.3

Tuxen wrote diplomatically of the original 19th century ‘plan’ of central Melbourne in 1926 as he attempted to forge a link between Melbourne’s original designers, the most important of which was assumed to be the surveyor Robert Hoddle, and Tuxen’s own contemporaries in the planning field. ‘The original planners [of Melbourne] did their work well’, he wrote, adding that they allowed ‘[g]enerous provision of park-land; ample streets; excellent situation by a waterway that comes almost into the heart of the city...’4 This understanding of Hoddle’s work as a precedent for later town planning is echoed in the introduction to the MTPC’s Final Report.5 This might be regarded as an example of propaganda by planners on behalf of planning, for it seems unlikely that Tuxen’s peers would have had positive, or even neutral, attitudes towards urban design of the previous century. Melbourne is an example of the common style of ‘planned’ Australian city – that is, laid out by colonial settlers on the grid as first commonly used during the spread of the Roman Empire across Europe achieving that which Sennett calls ‘a space of neutrality’.6 Brown-May refers to this in the 19th century British Empire context as ‘an inherited spatial concept, an accepted view of... simplicity, regularity and expediency.’7 Tuxen would not have seen these as inherently faulty approaches in the way that Brown-May and, to a lesser extent Sennett, would now typify them. Nor would he have seen them as anything more than a lesser evil, ignoring, typically of such planning stratagems, controls or regulations on the built environment, the provision of designated use space, or accommodation of any aesthetic outlook.

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2 Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, pp. 14-15
3 Sulman, ibid, p. 17
4 Saxil Tuxen, ‘What We Might Do With the Yarra’ Melbourne Herald, 27 November 1926, p.17
7 Andrew Brown-May, Melbourne Street Life, p. 7
The Australian city which notably lacked a planned centre was Sydney. The 1909 civic improvement hearings in that city were the first large-scale attempt to deal with problems which extended over many facets of a settlement which had grown far beyond either the intentions or the expectations of its founders. Sulman accentuated the endeavours of NSW surveyor-general Sir Thomas Mitchell in delineating an improved road system for Sydney in 1833, fifty years after its foundation, and bemoaned the ineffectual nature of his improvements. However, the grid-planned centres of other major Australian cities, particularly the potential inherent within them for development of smaller, unplanned lanes – potential sites for secret crime and moral depredation, amongst other things – were often criticised by planners in the 1920s. Sulman expressed the feeling of this time toward such ‘slum’ living and working conditions in his 1921 text. Here he discussed one rectangular block in Sydney which contained numerous irregular lanes and ‘cartways’, drawing his reader’s attention to ‘how meagre is the open space, the small size of enclosed light areas, and the impossibility of fresh air penetrating them.’ Criticisms like this enabled a new use of social engineering rhetoric to come to the fore as a response.

‘Planning’ as inter-war planners such as Sulman and Tuxen loosely defined it had, therefore, a consistent role in Australia since British settlement. The exact ‘date of arrival’ of garden suburb planning as practiced in the teens and twenties of the 20th century, however, as well as the identity of its messenger(s), has been a matter for debate. Sulman was clearly of the opinion that it was by his exertions that urban planning was first introduced to Australia. Marion Griffin was similarly certain that many of Walter Griffin’s planning concepts were his alone, though Griffin does not appear to have made such claims himself.

John Sulman’s claim to have initiated discussion on planning – particularly on the planning of new towns – appears in many respects to be correct.

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8 Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. 17
9 Sulman, ibid., p. 35
Sandercock, in *Cities for Sale*, credits Sulman with the ‘earliest use of the term “town planning”’ in his paper ‘The Laying Out of Towns’, which he presented in Melbourne in 1890. Sulman here promoted his favoured ‘spiderweb’ plan (Fig. XIII), composed of diagonals and circles, although Reps suggests that Sulman was more interested at this time in mounting a case for architects, rather than surveyors, as town planners. Whether this was, as Sandercock states, genuinely the first use of the term ‘town planning’, there were already, by the time of Sulman’s address, a number of private subdivisional schemes in existence in Sydney and Melbourne which contained features – such as curved roads, a hierarchy of roads and park provision – which would come to be associated with the town planning movement. Sulman referred to two of them, Hopetoun Model Suburb and Kensington, in his paper. The existence of these schemes lend credence to Graeme Davison’s contention that the garden suburb, as it was understood in the northern hemisphere in the wake of *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, was in fact strikingly similar to that which had been marketed in urban Australia under conventional subdivision practice since the 1880s. Davison typifies this as ‘that trinity of auctioneer’s delights – fresh air, a pleasant view and a shady garden’, which he explains as ‘romantic obsessions of the mid-Victorians, expressing... their revulsion from the stench, ugliness and congestion of the industrial city.’ Such a compromise sees 19th century Australian home buyers positioning themselves in suspension between the city, the country and the ‘town-country’ – those forces which Howard would later symbolise as the ‘three magnets’ – but drawn most strongly to the latter, which in this case took the form not of a garden city but of the garden suburb.

There are prominent examples of new initiatives in suburban growth which emerged too closely to the same time as Howard’s garden city model to have

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10 Sandercock, *Cities For Sale*, p.16
11 Reps, *Canberra 1912*, p.46
12 Freestone, *Model Communities*, pp.89-94

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Fig II. An (anonymous) artist's vision of the 'model suburb' of Kensington in 1889. From Ernest Blackwell 'Model Suburbs - I. Kensington, Sydney' *The Centennial Magazine, An Australian Monthly* Vol II August, 1889, pp. 74-80, p. 76

Fig III. A portion of Henry Byron Moore's Grace Park Estate of 1890. The southern allotments were later excised for what has become Hawthorn Football Ground. Coghill and Haughton Papers, Hawthorn Box MUA
been inspired by it: Freestone cites the Appian Way development in Burwood, NSW (1903), the Malvern Hill Estate in Croydon, NSW (1909) and Seaforth, NSW (1907).\(^{15}\) The grandest of Sydney’s garden suburb designs predated these by more than a decade. The winning design for the Model Suburb of Kensington by W. L. Vernon had been announced in 1889, only a few months before Sulman’s paper. Vernon became the Government Architect the following year; he was to play a part in the decision to base the national capital in Canberra.\(^{16}\) The Vernon design, which was not implemented, included features that went well beyond those usually associated with the responsibilities of estate developers. Tree-planting, the creation of public gardens, and the construction of sewerage systems prior to building were just a few of the comprehensively considered elements of the estate. Ernest Blackwell, a contemporary writer, saw the suburb-to-be in his imagination as ‘a city of parks and boulevards, of high lights and deep shades, of comfortable houses and pleasant gardens – a place in which lakelets glitter amongst the trees, and paths wound gracefully about the gentle hills.’\(^{17}\) The Kensington plan also strove to be comparatively classless, inasmuch as both ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ people were to be accommodated there (Fig. II). It was also to be culturally rich: diversity was a key element of its appeal.

In Melbourne in the late 19\(^{th}\) century, the surveyor August Tuxen was creating small subdivisions – and some larger ones, such as Wonga Park (1897) south east of Melbourne – that utilised a few of the concepts that would later come to be associated with the garden suburb. He did this either alone or with different partners, including his brother P. V. Tuxen, A. C. Allen, Walter Madden, and, after the turn of the century, his son Saxil Tuxen, as Tuxen and Son. The features which appear to presage the garden suburb include a preference for foliage and flora on private property and in streets; roads classified in size

\(^{16}\) Chris Johnson, Shaping Sydney: Public Architecture and Civic Decorum, Hale and Iremonger, Alexandria, Sydney, 1999 pp. 84-96
according to projected use and curvilinear or otherwise irregular streets designed for ease of access and scenic beauty. Irregular streets were not unknown in 19th century subdivisions, though grid development was usually preferred, and with rare exceptions asymmetrical street patterns occurred only on hilly or mountainous terrain, and even there, as Sulman often pointed out, the grid was still often used.

Viewed from the perspective of 1920s experiments or theories in urban development-led urban reform, the most notable suburban project in the 1880s in Australia was Grace Park. This estate was located in Hawthorn, a well-to-do railway and riverside suburb of Melbourne, and was planned in 1885 by Henry Byron Moore who had been Victoria’s Assistant Surveyor General the previous decade. Streets on the gently sloping estate were curvilinear (Fig. III); a number of the houses built on it were themselves considered novel, some of them the result of an architectural competition launched for publicity. Grace Park land was to be leased to homebuilders on a fifty-year basis. This was not because of the owner’s desire to maintain environmental standards, as would later be advocated in larger planned communities such as Canberra, when it was seen as a garden city innovation, but as a condition of inheritance imposed on the owner/developer, Michael Lynch. The estate was not a great success, probably because of the preference for the majority of suburbanites for home and land ownership over leasehold occupancy; it was largely uninhabited at the onset of the 1890s depression.

Ironically, the pragmatic minds of the late 19th century railway bureaucracy saw a practical use for the Grace Park design. The curvilinear roads were in one sense the undoing of its residential appeal; the tranquillity and exclusivity of the suburb was shattered within ten years of the subdividing of the

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18 Tuxen Bros., undated Wonga Park plan, in ‘Ringwood & Mitcham’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, 60 7, Melbourne University Archives; G.F. James, Border Country: Episodes and Recollections of Mooroolbark and Wonga Park, Lilydale, Shire of Lilydale, 1984, p. 37
19 National Trust of Victoria, File and Report on Grace Park, Hawthorn, n.d., unpublished report in National Trust of Victoria Archives. Grace Park in Hawthorn is not to be confused with Grace Park Station Estate in Heidelberg, which dates from 1924 (‘Grace Park Station Estate, Grace Park’ Evening Sun, 10 April, 1924, p. 8)
land. It appears to have been decided that these streets proved to be suitable
cross streets for a short railway spur, which was built through Grace Park though
no station was provided within the estate itself. The gently curving Hawthorn-Kew
railway was justifiably criticised in the press of the time, for its impractical
terminus and for its dangerous point of departure from the main line. This
suggests that the railway planners' indecent haste to make use of Grace Park led
them to make impractical decisions elsewhere. Grace Park was an anomaly,
and the 1890s depression bankrupted its promoters. Its designer and promoters
left no indication of the kind of precedent they believed they were following. Its
status today as a significant heritage area is due not to its street design but,
according to the National Trust report, to the unusual land tenure rules which
'created the conditions for rapid development, and the resultant architectural
unity of the predominant area, in a later era'.

A Sydney development, created closer to the turn of the century, was to
have considerable impact on the Australian garden suburb. It was marketed as
the Haberfield Garden Suburb, and was created under the aegis of entrepreneur
Richard Stanton in 1902. Haberfield, unlike Grace Park, was designed as a
complete community. It featured areas set aside for particular use, and a
considerable number of trees planted in the streets; it also contained a co-
operatively-run sports club and a recreation area. After some minor re-
subdivision to utilise street frontage, this became an internal reserve, of the type
which would soon become common in the more innovative garden suburbs of the
1920s. There were also a number of aspects to the design which were more
reminiscent of more common 19th century urban design: the plan was almost a
grid, and there was, as John Sulman pointed out, a lack of any hierarchical
streets, and little open space. Sulman was to create the original design for
Stanton's next major project, Rosebery. Nevertheless, Haberfield – and its
commercial success – was a significant move in the direction of the interwar

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20 Criticisms include 'More Railway Blundering', Age, 15 March 1890, p. 13. The railway line is no
longer in evidence. It was closed in the 1950s due to inadequate traffic and competition from
other transport modes.
21 National Trust of Victoria, File and Report on Grace Park, Hawthorn, p. 7
garden suburb, and Stanton had no compunction about claiming Haberfield, thirteen years after its original launch, as an example of 'scientific town and suburban planning'.

\[22\] Stanton also showed a distinct nationalist leaning in his naming of the suburb's streets. He took names from members of the first Federal Cabinet, thus making clear Haberfield's status as a new Australian suburb and a candidate for a new kind of suburb for a new nation. Haberfield is also well-known as the location of much residential architecture in what has come to be known as the 'Federation' style - a variation of the Queen Anne housing form which included Australian motifs in its external decoration, an early example of a particularly nationalist or patriotic housing style. This suggests that new residents agreed with Stanton that this was a habitat suitable to inhabitants of a new nation.

As the above examples indicate, many elements that would later be associated with garden suburbs of the 1920s made their first appearance in Australian suburbs long before the First World War. As is evident in the case of Grace Park, the curvilinear street, while far from a common feature of suburbs of the 1880s, was certainly not unknown. As mentioned, some writers have posited that the curvilinear street was not, in any case, the invention of even the 19th century garden suburb designers. Ian Hoskins claims that curvilinear streets were 'borrowed directly from eighteenth century landscape theory where variation of view is considered important for aesthetic stimulation'.

\[24\] Others, such as Lewis Mumford, have pointed to examples such as cemeteries, or grand park layouts, as the original templates for suburban streetscapes as far removed as possible from what Sulman called 'rectangularity'.

\[22\] Building, April 12 1915 (back page)
\[23\] V. Crow, Haberfield the Federation Suburb, Ashfield and District Historical Society, Ashfield, 1983, p1
\[24\] Ian Hoskins, 'Constructing Time and Space in the Garden Suburb' in C. Healy et al (eds.) Beasts of Suburbia, p. 7
'Scientific town planning' and suburban expansion

The ten years between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the depression mark a period of large-scale urban growth in Australia. Much of this growth took the form of garden suburb-styled subdivisions.

'There is very little speculation going on,' an anonymous real estate agent was reported as telling the Melbourne Argus in 1919, 'although a few moneyed men are buying and selling subdivided estates very quickly. Speaking generally land in the suburbs has gone up 25 to 50 per cent. in the last five years.'

A large amount of this growth was concentrated in Melbourne. Suburbs still considered as lying on the outer perimeter of the northern urban reaches of the city, such as Coburg, almost doubled in population between 1911 and 1921, from 9,454 to 18,114. This region was to double in population again in the following eight years, to an estimated 40,090 by 1929. Similar expansion occurred in suburbs of Sydney such as Bexley, which experienced a leap from 6,241 in 1911 to 14,746 in 1921; in contrast, densely-populated inner-city Sydney suburbs like Erskineville and Darlington had almost static populations over the decade.

Preston, to the north of Coburg and less developed in the 1920s, became more accessible on the opening of a tramline west of the railway in 1920. These increases are inseparable from the development of new suburban estates, many of which took place under the influence of advocates of town planning and the

26 'Suburban Land Values: A Fifty Per Cent. Increase' Melbourne Argus (hereafter Argus) 25 November 1919, p. 6
28 A. M. Laughton, Victorian Year Book 1929-30 H. J. Green, Govt. Printer, Melbourne 1931, p. 36
29 Ibid.
32 Between 1911 and 1921 Erskineville rose from 7,234 to 7,553, while the smaller but more densely populated Darlington fell from 3,815 to 3,651 (source: Knibbs, op. cit; Wickhams, op. cit).
new garden suburb. The provision of transport facilities was one important reason that caused the number of people choosing to live in the area to grow from 5,025 in 1911 to 9,670 in 1921, then soar to almost three times the population – an estimated 29,150 – in 1929. Growth of this nature stemmed in part from the increasing migration to cities, which had seen Australia’s colonial/state capitals steadily increase population, a considerable contrast to the rural rate. The 1906 proportion of city dwellers nationwide – 35.5% of the total – had moved to 45.5% by 1924, but it was also symptomatic of the migration to the new suburban ring by inner city dwellers. This new suburbanism was predicated on suburban rail travel and, to a lesser degree, expectations of new forms of travel. In the state of Victoria passenger traffic on trains doubled between 1919 and 1923, from 5308 'passenger miles' to 10626. The cable tramways of Melbourne – which included lines to Coburg, nearby Brunswick and, from 1920, Preston – expanded their passenger traffic from 118, 302, 781 in 1919 to 155, 820, 153 in 1923, an increase of 32%. Sydney, with its larger network operating on electricity and steam, carried just over twice as many passengers – 312, 930, 225 in 1923.

During approximately the same time – the early years of the 1920s – the number of motor vehicles per hundred of population Australia-wide more than doubled, from 2.25 in 1920-21 to 5.15 in 1924-25. The amount of vehicles – 89, 403 in Victoria in 1924-25 – was not in itself a significant number, but enough of an increase over a short period to encourage expectations of an exponential rise to be incorporated into future predictions of land use and conditions.

34 Laughton, Victorian Year Book 1929-30, p. 36
35 Laughton, op. cit
36 Arthur Wilberforce Jose and Herbert James Carter (eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1926, p. 315
38 Ibid., p. 326
39 Wickens, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 13, p. 325
41 Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia 1926, p. 303
Garden suburbs that clearly evoke the Howard model are far more difficult to pinpoint than those which clearly do not. Freestone’s *Model Communities*, the most authoritative chronology of 20th century planning in Australia, does not cite any suburban development before 1916 as belonging to the post-Howard ‘garden suburb’ stream. Examples from 1916 include a ‘model industrial village’ Sulman designed in his capacity as a member of the NSW Town Planning Association, and the Griffins’ Mount Eagle Estate of the same year. Both used elements which referred to the garden city ideal. The former was in the social improvement mold – a development for workers, in this case sewerage workers, including environmental determinist features such as drill grounds and a co-operative store. The latter was a middle class development in which natural beauty was emphasised and, brought into harmony with the streetscape. To this might be added others, regarded in their time as town-planned garden suburb estates: Saxil Tuxen’s ‘Hill-Top Estate’, comprising 80 lots, and his ‘East Kew Heights Estate’ of 414 lots, both from 1916. The ‘Hill-Top Estate’ (see Fig. VII) was ‘An Ideal Site for a Garden Suburb’, according to contemporary advertising, ‘a Residential Area, unequalled alike for its Delightful Views... and its Pure and Bracing Air.’ The estate itself featured only three streets, one of them a crescent and the others crooked in what must be assumed is the creation of picturesque streetscapes and endpoints. Like many estates promoted by the developer T. M. Burke, advertising literature on ‘East Kew Heights Estate’ has been hard to find; however, the street design of this project suggests it was closer in concept to the ‘scientific’ town planning ideas of the time. It featured straight streets positioned at an angle to provide even sunlight around housing, and two small but not inconsequential street-frontage park areas. One of these was labeled ‘park reserve’, the other ‘plantation reserve’.

An overview of the development of the garden suburb around Australia

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42 Freestone, *Model Communities*, pp. 102, 106.
43 Hill-Top Estate Brochure, ‘Mont Albert/Box Hill’ box, Coghill and Haughton papers, Melbourne University Archives.
44 ‘East Kew Heights Estate’ in ‘Kew’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives.
must countenance the work of a number of designers often working almost exclusively in one region, and establishing garden suburb design as their own domain. Within this, however, there are definite differences between planning in Australian cities. Perth's foremost garden suburb surveying firm, Hope and Klem, created the Menora estate of 1920 influenced by Reade's work on Colonel Light Gardens in Adelaide. Earlier experimental work which led them in the garden suburb direction included projects such as the Dalkeith Estate (1913). The company, Percy Hope recalled half a century later, was asked by private land vendor Peet and Co. for 'a design and layout as distinct from the usual chessboard pattern... The crescent design provided three very pleasing triangular reserves of about one acre and these reserves were given by Mr. Peet to the local authority.' It was not Hope but his partner and brother-in-law Carl Klem who went on to be a recognised authority on Town Planning. Klem played an important role not only in the creation of a large number of important projects including the local council-sponsored Perth Endowment Lands garden suburbs of City Beach and Floreat Park, but also in the Town Planning Association and the Town Planning Commission of 1929. As a city which was growing rapidly in the early years of the 20th century, and to which government and business hoped to attract new settlers, Perth embraced garden suburb development.

Adelaide, its north and south grid blocks situated inside a park belt, had featured in Howard's work as a positive example of appropriate city growth. This – as well as the awareness in Adelaide of the city's origins as an experimental settlement – might have been a driving force amongst those residents who embraced town planning, though Adelaide's growth in the 1920s was far below that of Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. The Vaughan Labor Government of South Australia engaged Charles Reade as its advisor on town planning.

47 Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, p. 141
planning in 1916. Reade proposed a Town Planning and Housing Bill, legislation which sought to entrench planning powers at both local and state government levels.\(^{48}\) Though neither this nor a later bill achieved all that Reade hoped, and he was the subject of considerable antipathy from Adelaide’s city council,\(^{49}\) he was able to establish the position of Government Town Planner: he was the first to fill the position, in 1917.\(^{50}\) Reade’s most notable planning success, though it was altered somewhat in the construction process,\(^{51}\) was Colonel Light Gardens, a garden suburb conceived as a rehousing scheme and an environmental determinist ‘social lever’ and the subject of ongoing administration by a controlling body. He also created a number of garden suburbs for private sale in Adelaide, including Galway Garden Suburb, which Christine Garnaut considers to have been ‘an object lesson’ used to show Reade’s ‘principles’ in practice;\(^{52}\) Gallipoli Garden Village,\(^{53}\) and a number of rural settlements.

When Reade left Australia in 1920, he was succeeded in the position of Government Town Planner by William Earle, a British-born engineer who similarly combined work for private practice with his government position. Earle went on to work in Tasmania and Queensland.\(^{54}\) The third to take the position was Walter Scott Griffiths, a vocal planning advocate in his native Sydney, whose entry in the Canberra competition, prepared with Charles Caswell and Robert Coulter, was controversially the first choice of one of the judges, J. M. Coane.\(^{55}\) Griffiths was to retain the office of Government Town Planner until his death in 1929, and prepared elaborate garden suburbs in private practice as well as redesigning a portion of Colonel Light Gardens and other areas in the state.

\(^{48}\) Peel, Good Times Hard Times, p. 32
\(^{50}\) Christine Garnaut, “Towards Metropolitan Organisation: Town Planning and the Garden City Idea” in Hamnett and Freestone (eds.), The Australian Metropolis, pp. 46-64, p. 53
\(^{51}\) C. W. Harris, Memo, 12 May 1924 ‘Alteration of subdivision of southern part of Suburb’ file [1924] Garden Suburb Commissioner’s Office files, Mitcham Historical Society
\(^{52}\) Christine Garnaut, Model and Maker: Colonel Light Gardens and Charles Reade, PhD thesis, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1997, p. 213
\(^{53}\) Ibid. p. 220
\(^{54}\) Freestone, Model Communities, p. 74
\(^{55}\) Reps, Canberra 1912, p. 399
The majority of writers on South Australia's town planning history—the large number of histories on this subject is certainly disproportionate to those of other states—see Reade's four years in Adelaide as formative, though assessments of him are varied. They range from Garnaut's high estimation to Robert Cheesman's guarded summary of Reade as 'a salesman and prolific author of repeated writings on the same "potted" spatial solutions to urban development'.

The above examples also demonstrate that—as is the case in almost any innovation which takes hold gradually over time—it is difficult to pinpoint an exact moment at which the kind of planning which would now be typified as containing 'garden suburb' characteristics become a recognised or recogniseable phenomenon. What is clear, however, is that while most Australians were not living in garden suburbs of any sort by the end of World War I, the planned combination of natural and built environment, with roads and recreation spaces responding to topography, was unlikely to be an alien concept by this time, though many such designs were not a product of the garden city movement.

Australia after 1918: living for the moment

Stuart Macintyre has suggested that the years after the First World War were enervated and decadent; 'to live for the moment was a common response to the protracted ordeal' of the post-war years. 'It was a time of change, outrageousness, optimism and madness' says Manning Clark of this era; he characterises the people of Australia as 'giddy with life and drunk with despair.' Advertising of the time contained appeals to order and work for the good of

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57 Cheesman, *Patterns in Perpetuity*, p. 175

58 Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p. 166

mutual national prosperity, often using emotive concepts designed to strike at the hearts of reader/consumers:

It has taken the World’s Greatest War to open our eyes to the fact that our National Home wants re-modelling and a good spring cleaning. The old cobwebs have to go. The windows want cleaning, to let in the light of progress and efficiency; a new policy of co-operation needs to be adopted, calling upon every inmate to set to work to bring about the desired and necessary alterations and improvements in our National life... will you ‘turn to’ and give the help necessary to put your Australian Home in order?60

These words, a rallying cry from the Dunlop rubber company hoping to entice Australians to purchase local goods, demonstrates a way the metaphor of ‘home’ was commonly used in the years immediately after the conclusion of the Great War. ‘Home’ in the wider sense of the national domain had been defended, and ‘home’ was an emotive term, and additionally, perhaps, one with connotations of prestige. But its use as a metaphor should not cloud its additional meaning, one which is in one sense more literal, that suggested a concern that the ordinary home of the average Australian might be lacking.

Australia had lost 60 000 citizens in a European war and contemporary rhetoric often suggested that it had finally distinguished itself as worthy of the nationhood assumed almost two decades before. Another Dunlop advertisement proclaimed that ‘Our manhood by their valour in the war arena opened the eyes to the fact that Australia is a nation worthy of respect, and one destined to rank with the foremost.’61 Yet the new status meant that peace was not a time for idleness, but for reassessment. The energy created by Australians in helping to win the war for the Empire was too potent to cease at war’s end. New battles were identified and new foes engaged.

The Dunlop advertising campaign encapsulates many of the attitudes of peacetime Australia. This is found chiefly in its tone, though its intent – the sale of rubber products – is not peripheral to its importance as an indicator of new

60 ‘Putting Australia’s House in Order’ Argus, 30 June 1919, p.8
61 ‘The Making of a Nation: Australia’s Awakening’ Argus, 27 January 1920, p.6
markets and new desires. Australians had come to see themselves, through their involvement in the war, as a country with a number of responsibilities.

One of these was a responsibility to the British, or simply the 'white', race in Australia, to repel what was seen as Asian expansion aspirations in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{62} This could only be done, it appeared, by increasing the nation's population as rapidly as possible, and expanding the habitable area of the country to suit. Newspapers in the 1920s often elaborated on this idea, with visual devices such as a redrawn map of Australia containing the square mileage of European countries around its coastline, with the implication that the continent could sustain up to 300 million inhabitants.\textsuperscript{63}

A number of concepts related to the unease over Australia's 'emptiness' came to prominence at this time. Theories of Eugenics peaked in popularity in the interwar years. Stephen Garton has suggested that – contrary to the views of earlier historians such as Carol Bacchi – Eugenics, as the 'heredity' theory of development, was not always in opposition to the 'environment' theory, which includes movements such as town planning.\textsuperscript{64} The two, says Garton, were able to co-exist in a scientific climate acknowledged by many of its participants as limited by the state of available tests, and therefore evidence, on mental aptitude. Other writers on Eugenics history in Australia, such as Grant Rodwell, regard environmental factors as being as important – if not more so – as heredity to Eugenics thinking in the 1920s and 30s.\textsuperscript{65} The rhetoric used by promoters of such theories was in some regards similar to that of the town planning movement, particularly when they spoke in terms of the ultimate goal of racial or national strength. Certainly, notable public figures like the Melbourne scientist

\textsuperscript{62} For discussion of these issues, particularly as they relate to late 19th and early 20th century policy in Australia, see H. I. London, \textit{Non-White Immigration and the 'White Australia' Policy}, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1970, particularly Chapter 1, 'Development of "White Australia" Policy', pp. 3-23; A. T. Yarwood, \textit{Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion} Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1964, particularly Chapter 1, 'The Late Colonial Background' pp. 5-18; A. C. Paffreman, \textit{The Administration of the White Australia Policy}, Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1967, particularly Chapter 1, pp. 5-19.

\textsuperscript{63} 'Did You Know Your Country was as Big as This?' Melbourne Evening Star, 6 May 1924, p. 2

\textsuperscript{64} Stephen Garton, 'Sound Minds and Healthy Bodies: Re-considering Eugenics in Australia, 1914-1940' \textit{Australian Historical Studies}, Vol 26 No. 103, 1993, pp. 163-181, p. 163

\textsuperscript{65} Grant Rodwell, "The Sense of Victorious Struggle": The Eugenic Dynamic in Australian Popular Surf-Culture, 1900-50' \textit{Journal of Australian Studies}, No. 62, 1999, pp. 56-63
and academic James Barrett appears to have seen no conflict between allowing a mental hygiene faction sympathetic to Eugenics exist within his Public Health Association. Indeed, his own sympathies with Eugenics co-existed with his role as president of the Victorian Town Planning Association.

A third factor, linked to both the hereditary and environmental arguments and perhaps endemic to a settler society like white Australia, was the question of immigration. Appropriate races were sought to migrate to Australia, with British stock preferred, and other European areas graded in suitability through contemporary prejudices. As Michele Langfield makes clear, early 20th century Australians were ‘determined to create an ideal society in racial terms... made up of only the very best ingredients.” Freestone has identified the ‘reproduction of a virile race of white Australians’ as one of the themes of early planning literature. All of these factors contributed to the concern over the quality and quantity of the mass population of the new nation. None of them could solve what most would now see, in the early 21st century, as problems which were, firstly, unsolvable and, secondly, far less important than they seemed in the first half of the 20th century.

Unease about the future, and the anxiety felt by many Australians over the supposedly exposed nature of their continent, has been a feature of much of the 20th century. However it seems to have been particularly strong in the years after the end of the war, when the responsibilities of Australia’s nationhood and the ramifications of being a separate nation in the world theatre may still have seemed overwhelming.

For many Australians, foreign invasion and foreign ideas both caused similar kinds of discomfort. The people of the nation continent were used to feeling uneasy about Russia; in the 19th century it had been seen as a potential aggressor. Now, as Russia itself was in the throes of civil war, the example of the

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66 Garton, ‘Sound Minds and Healthy Bodies’, p. 169
67 Michele Langfield, ”The Ideal Immigrant”: Immigration to Victoria Between Federation and the First World War” Journal of Australian Studies No. 62, 1999 pp. 1-14, p. 1
Bolsheviks caused unease amongst the middle and upper classes as to expressions of dissatisfaction amongst Australian workers. Bolshevik atrocities were a common feature of the news and were often juxtaposed with reports speculating on communist or anarchist – the two political alliances were often represented as interchangeable – uprisings in the USA, and the complaints of the poor in Australia. The fear of the time that Bolshevism would take hold in the ruins of Germany may also have forged a worrying link between the local underprivileged and the far distant, defeated but still reviled, enemy. The implication of such speculation was, of course, that violent political extremism could take hold in Australia, already at this time the scene of political action in industry.

Mainstream newspapers, which tended to project an establishment view of class problems, naturally portrayed industrial unrest in a negative light, focussing particularly on the ‘victims’ of strikes, for instance, the families of male breadwinners. However there were sections of the establishment which were anxious to be seen to be striving to assist the working classes, and by extension to be making ‘home’ – in both senses – something to be worth the carnage of the war. Hence, Prime Minister Hughes’ establishing of the Basic Wage Commission, a panel made up of a chairman, three representatives of employers and two of unions. The commission heard testimony from Melbourne’s underprivileged on subjects such as the price of clothing, food and the unsatisfactory nature of workers’ housing. Witnesses attested to the crowded nature of accommodation, seen as ‘not conducive to morality’; the poor design of houses; the inaccessibility of parkland and recreation areas, and the proliferation of vermin in these areas.69 All were linked, and urban health – not least because of the introduction of the

69 ‘Life in Small Houses: Housewives Tell Troubles’ Argus, 24 January 1920, p. 19. This report abuts news of British advances in its battle with the Bolsheviks, ‘Russian Fighting: More hopeful news’; while the news pages of The Argus at this time numbered only a few, making coincidences possible, the placement of such stories makes comparison unavoidable. See also Morris Graham, A. B. Piddington: The Last Radical Liberal, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1995, pp. 79-99
‘Spanish Flu’ at the end of the war which cost a fifth as many lives as the war itself – was a factor which loomed large in contemporary conceptions of cities.\textsuperscript{70}

Since the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century or before, private or church-based philanthropic organisations had exercised a growing influence on the wider attitude to problems of poverty, health and education, to name but three. Such organisations were to have a profound effect on the liberalised, if proscriptive, social sciences and socially responsive ‘progressive’ movements of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

The rise of the Kindergarten movement, based on the philosophy of German educator Freiedrich Froebel and beginning in Australia with the first Kindergarten Union in Sydney, 1895,\textsuperscript{71} had ramifications in the context of the rise of popularity of garden suburbs. A number of Freobel’s innovations – for instance, the encouragement of the study of nature amongst young children – were commensurate with the creation of special play areas and parks generally in the garden suburb schema, particularly where such garden suburbs were calculated to retain natural features.

There can have been few politically or socially active individuals in Australia of the late teens and early twenties who felt that Australian society had become a post-war Eden. Paul Ashton has shown that ‘during the First World War, would-be social reformers looked forward to the possibility of a new social order’.\textsuperscript{72} For reformers who were essentially in sympathy with, and usually of, the middle and upper class status quo, peaceful domestic revolution, involving the utilisation of new technology of the kind which was advancing at a very rapid pace in all countries of the west, was naturally preferred. As entrenched as middle class philanthropy may have been by this time, it was fear of uprisings amongst the poor which became a motivating factor for many in the professional

\textsuperscript{70} Stuart Macintyre, The Oxford History of Australia, Vol 4 1901-1942 Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 188
\textsuperscript{72} Paul Ashton, “‘This Villa Life”: Suburbs, town planning and the new social order 1914-1929’ in Freestone (ed.), The Twentieth Century Urban Planning Experience, pp. 19-24
classes and the government, who turned their attention to the lot of the poverty-stricken in urban Australia.

This is not to say that there was not already a considerable interest, based in philanthropic or evangelical thought, in the status of the urban poor, or in the renovation or resuscitation of urban Australia, before World War I. In fact, the chief players in the rise of town planning in the 1920s were already well entrenched in public life by the time that the idea of social engineering through town planning really came to the fore. John Sulman later recalled that the Town Planning Association’s work in 1917 had particular ‘zest’ because ‘it was felt that a better state of things municipally and socially should be in evidence when our soldiers returned to civil life’. As well as returned soldiers, there had been an influx of new migrants just prior to the onset of the war: 85, 177 in the 1911-1913 period. This coupled unhappily with an almost complete halt to the activities of the building industry during 1914-18.

Planning filled many diverse roles in the decade following the war; in the 1930s, however, planners became particularly concerned with social reform. Peter Spearritt remarks that this was an era in which Depression concerns prevented government from concentrating on large projects, but in which ‘the depression-stimulated protests of middle class slum reformers’ came to the fore. Spearritt is writing about Sydney, but his comment holds true for the nation. Planners such as Saxil Tuxen who, with his father, had previously campaigned for the establishment of committees to create widespread planning activities within government frameworks found their arguments now not only heard, but acted upon in this decade. The rise in government involvement in planning and associated slum clearance and rehousing schemes reflects not only the result of efforts made by planning advocates in the 1920s and before, but also the changing economic and social climate of the depression years. The two

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73 Sulman, untitled memoir not dated, in Sulman Papers MSS 4480 6 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
74 Langfield, "The Ideal Immigrant", p. 12
76 Peter Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, p. 15

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phenomena are, however, intertwined. Tuxen and, to a lesser extent, Sulman, were two planning advocates who had long argued for the importance of government expenditure and administrative involvement in improving the domestic environment for the disadvantaged. As will be seen, Tuxen found in the early 1930s with his involvement in the newly founded Brotherhood of St Laurence that he was able to bring his skills as a planner to his concern for the poor, homeless, and slum-dwellers of Melbourne. His role was expanded when he began working as part of anti-slum crusader Oswald Barnett’s Study Group, formed in December 1934. Barnett’s provocative and persuasive campaigning for slum clearance, which used arguments in favour of environmental determinist solutions to the housing problems of inner-city Melbourne, led directly to the formation of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board in 1936 and Victoria’s Housing Commission in 1938. While NSW had led the way in experimenting with low-cost apartment housing in the 1920s, it did not launch its own Housing Commission until after the outbreak of war, in 1941.

At Fisherman’s Bend near Port Melbourne, planned development was initiated by the State Savings Bank of Victoria in consultation with the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission. The small garden suburb informally known as Garden City was expanded by the Victorian Housing Commission in 1939 on a design by Tuxen. Such projects were not revolutionary; there was a similarity, on many fronts, to projects like Daceyville, created twenty years earlier, and its international precedents. What had changed – the lack of private development due to the economic crisis notwithstanding – was the acceptance by state governments of an ongoing role of social improvement through environmental change. The planning advocate’s work had, essentially, been

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78 Spearritt, op. cit.
79 Howe, ‘Reform and Social Responsibility’, in Howe (ed.) New Houses for Old, p. 38; ‘Industrial Garden Suburb’, Argus, 19 March 1929, p. 10. The choosing of the name caused much controversy at the time, but even before it was officially adopted for the area The Argus would claim ‘The Bank settlement is already officially known as “Garden City”’. Argus, January 24 1939, p. 4
CHEST TROUBLES
Coughs, Colds, Croup, &c.
ARE SWIFTLY
KNOCKED OUT BY
"HEARNE'S BRONCHITIS CURE"
The Finest Chest Medicine in the World.

PRICE
Ordinary Size. 2/6
Double Size. 4/6

W. G. Hearne & Co. Ltd.

Head Offic... ORLEONG VICTORIA
N. S. W. Offic... 2 BOND ST, SYDNEY
N. Z. Offic... 25 CUBA ST, WELLINGTON.

Fig. IV Modern scientific approaches to disease: Hearne's Bronchitis Cure. From the Argus, 12 April 1919, p. 22
successful; that Housing Commissions would come, themselves, to be seen as an ogre in some respects as uncaring and totalitarian as the slum landlord system was, at this point, unthinkable.

Modernising Australia

Stuart Macintyre writes of the period following World War I as one which saw ‘the establishment of the advertising industry to promote consumer goods aimed at a mass market’; he sees advertising as the domain of ‘the most ardent apostles of American business methods’.\textsuperscript{80} In a country such as Australia, in which Americanisation and modernisation was also in many minds equated with progress and population increase, itself a defence strategy, an understanding of contemporary mores and beliefs can be drawn from the advertising of the day.

Two particular prominent advertising campaigns – one for Kodak cameras and the other for Hearne’s Bronchitis Cure – bring the urban Australians of 1919 into relief. Both campaigns make reference to public health, which was an important consideration at the time. One calls on a rural idyll and aesthetic development, the other on modernity and speed. Both must be seen in the context of the ‘Spanish influenza’ outbreak of that year. The Kodak advertisement urging readers to ‘Make up your mind to spend every week end, and the Easter holidays out in the open, away from possible sources of infection’ suggests young lovers escape the city, which was assumed to harbour the disease. At the same time, they could create amateur art with their camera – a ‘pleasant hobby’ adding ‘to your health and strength’.\textsuperscript{81}

The Hearne’s advertisement (Fig. IV) suggests that chest troubles would be ‘knocked out’ by its product, symbolised in an accompanying illustration by either a car pursuing gremlins labelled ‘croup’, ‘lung troubles’, ‘coughs’ and the like; or bombed by drops of the bronchitis cure from an aeroplane.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{80} Stuart Macintyre, \textit{The Oxford History of Australia, Vol 4}, p. 218
\textsuperscript{81} ‘Get out in the open with a Kodak’ (advertisement), \textit{Argus} 9 April 1919, p. 10
\textsuperscript{82} Advertisements in \textit{Argus}, 12 April 1919, p. 22, and 16 April 1919, p. 10
The two advertising concepts show two different assumptions about the city which co-existed at this time when peace was desperately desired and yet the overhang of violent counter-attack was embedded in the popular psyche. One could either escape the unhealthy city to nature, or turn and defend the city from disease using new technology.

Both these ideas were to become a formative part of the notion of town planning. It was seen as a scientific yet at the same time an aesthetic response to a number of problems or potential problems. These included urban growth, the combat of disease, the perceived growth of the slums and Australians’ ambivalence towards the natural landscape. These ideas ran in tandem with the construction of ‘slums’ and their antidote, ‘garden suburbs’. The juxtaposition of town and country saw advertisers, town planners and their public engage with the modernist tendency towards simultaneity, which Eugene Lunn typifies as an artistic device under which ‘[t]hings do not so much fall apart as fall together’.83

The Griffins were the planners most frequently involved in debates on modernism in Australia. Their attitude may best be typified by Walter’s 1913 pronouncement that architects could ‘hardly yet find ways of adapting preceding architectural principles to present conditions’ so ‘rapid and extensive’ was the ‘great change’ in building technology, which, paradoxically, he combined with his faith in established ‘classic’ forms.84 James Weirick sees the Griffins at this time as following a ‘profoundly anti-modern’ aesthetic; if they are seen as modernists, he claims, it is because their lives and philosophies were radical; but their work was not.85 For Weirick, the couple’s radicalism is highlighted in their responses to World War I itself, typified in the naming of streets of Castlecrag after fortifications of a medieval castle, ‘setting antimodern illusions of Camelot... against the modern condition of uncertainty, insecurity and the isolated self.’86

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84 ‘Mr. W. B. Griffin’s Views’, The Salon, October 1913, p. 183
One might alternately suggest that Castlecrag is not a fortification so much as a camouflaged suburb, and Weirick himself refers to its invisibility from the air.\textsuperscript{87} However, Weirick, like so many Griffin enthusiasts, is concerned with seeing the couple as apart from the society they lived in. He ignores the fact that there is a tension or an irony between this use of the vocabulary of defence in naming streets, and the tendency in comparable suburban development to name streets after Australian war heroes. Laurie Duggan has additionally pointed out an element of humour in the ‘castle’ theme, in reference to the idea of ‘an Englishman’s home is his castle’.\textsuperscript{88}

On a broader level, Weirick’s interpretation of the Griffins’ attitude to modernity can be extended across most town planning of the 1920s, particularly in the commercial sector. In the garden suburbs the desired rural idyll could be separated from the necessary evil of the metropolis, and its associated fears and cares, by use of new kinds of transport.

It has already been shown that changing transport modes have affected the growth of the Australian city in size, density, and type. In the years immediately following the end of the war, it became clear that the automobile was the mode on which the future clearly rested. Dunlop’s appeal, seen above, for public support of its product as a kind of investment in the nation’s future was to prove portentous. A Dunlop advertisement of 1920 which, unlike the advertisements mentioned earlier, eschewed all mention of Australian population or pride, made much of the possibilities and rigours of modern automobile travel, which presented the traveller with a ‘brown riband of road ahead – a swirl of dust behind.’\textsuperscript{89} Here Dunlop was echoing words attributed to Henry Ford: ‘We shall solve the City Problem by leaving the city behind.’\textsuperscript{90}

Similarly, the aeroplane was coming to prominence as a transport mode – one which seemed destined, in many eyes, to eventually take its place alongside

\textsuperscript{87} Weirick, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{88} Laurie Duggan, \textit{Ghost Nation: Imagined Space and Australian Visual Culture, 1901-1939} University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 2001, p. 175
\textsuperscript{89} ‘Ever had a fast run on a stripped Car Chassis?’ Argus, 6 February 1920, p. 8
\textsuperscript{90} John Sewell, \textit{The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning}, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1993, p. 5
Fig. V An artist's impression of the Yarra Boulevard, from the cover of a brochure produced to promote the Griffins' Mount Eagle estates. The road to the estate, rather than the estate itself, figures heavily. Mount Eagle Estate, n.d. in Coghill and Haughton Papers, Heidelberg box, MUA

Fig VI The Summit Estate plan, the second part of the Griffin's Mount Eagle estate, produced in 1916. Coghill and Haughton Files, Eaglemont Box, MUA
road vehicles as a mode of personal transport. These developments, it was
presumed, would join railways and sea transport as essential components in the
‘unlocking’ of modern Australia for the 20th century.

Perhaps the best example of the early effect of the automobile on urban
Australia in the years after World War I is demonstrated by a Griffin project which
actually began in 1916: the Glenard Estate laid out at what is now the Melbourne
suburb of Eaglemont. This area had already been the focus of local lobbying to
allow it to be reserved as a park area. The President of the Heidelberg Progress
Association described it at this time as affording ‘one of the most glorious views
to be obtained around Melbourne’ and asked the Ivanhoe and Alphington
Progress Society for aid in to ‘get this superb scenic attraction reserved for the
benefit of the people’. The subdivider of Glenard was Peter Keam, a member of
the recently-formed Town Planning Association; employment of the Griffins to
effect the garden suburb design of the area may well have been a response to
local concerns for the preservation of the area. Prospective purchasers were
assured that Walter Burley Griffin’s involvement guaranteed ‘development on
modern lines’.

The cover of the brochure advertising ‘Mount Eagle: Melbourne’s New
Residence Area’ (Fig. V) features a simplified and idealised representation of the
route new homeowners in the area would take to and from the city. An
accompanying text explains the role of the road in this process, and states that:

Ultimately the various sectors will be linked up to form one of the
greatest scenic river highways of the world, eclipsing in natural
beauty the famous Broadways of America and the Unter den
Linden.

Within the context of advertising hyperbole, at least, there was scope to praise
Australian landscape and technology as superior in the world. The scenic beauty
of the area, the estate (Fig. VI) and of the Boulevard itself, the prospect of

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91 For instance, ‘The New Road: Aeroplaning in Australia’ Building June 12, 1914 p. 127; ‘No
Trams in 100 Years: Collapsible Aeroplanes, Says Mr. Doran’ Sydney Daily Pictorial, 2 October
1930, p. 2

92 ‘Ivanhoe and Alphington Progress Society’, Heidelberg News, 1 August 1914, p. 3

93 Mount Eagle: Melbourne’s New Residence Area 1916 brochure in ‘Eaglemont’ box, Coghill and
Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
building of 'garden city homes' in the area, the health aspects and the
eticements of 'Modern Town Planning' were all predicated on this valuable road.
It was to link the suburb with the city and pursuing ‘the trend of modern
civilisation... towards utilising the beauty spots for the benefit and recreation of
the people'.

The Boulevard has failed to become the road the interwar planners
anticipated. The notion of such boulevards as primarily a route for enjoyment of
scenic views by middle-class motorists gave way first to the optimistic but short-
sighted notion of the parkway; its parallel in more built-up areas was the
Broadway. These roads combined speed, efficiency and recreation: the parkway
was ‘a series of radiating and picturesque drives between the inner and outer
suburbs... to fringe the various creek and river parks’, as mooted by the MTPC
in the 1920s. The Broadway was a common enough concept by the 1920s that
land at Tuxen’s Leslie Estate, retitled the Railway Station Estate, was advertised
as having ‘Actual Frontage to the Broadway’. Both were quickly superseded as
innovative rapid transit routes by the arguably more utilitarian freeway.

Of the original Boulevard conception, which was in any case hazy and
unsupported by major investment or planning initiatives, only fragments remain.
Tuxen apparently envisaged the road stretching as far along the Yarra as
Warrandyte, 25 kilometres from Melbourne’s CBD - Eaglemont itself being
approximately 10 km from the city centre. Tuxen’s Henley Woods Estate was a
42 lot development one side of which was bordered by a portion of a road
purporting to be the ‘Yarra Boulevard’, though it was at that point in no way
connected with the existing Boulevard, alongside the ‘river flats’. Tuxen, in his
involvement with the MTPC, in his work on the Hartlands estate south of
Eaglemont, and in a plan for an Amphitheatre presented to Heidelberg council in

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94 Mount Eagle, op. cit.
95 Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, Plan of General Development, Melbourne : Report of
the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission H.J. Green, Govt. Printer, Melbourne, 1929 p. 116
96 ‘Railway Station Estate, Reservoir’ advertisement, Argus, 2 February 1924, p. 32
97 Tuxen and Miller plan for Henley Woods Estate, n.d. ‘Warrandyte’ box, Coghill and Haughton
papers, Melbourne University Archives
1933 which contained provision for 'an extension of the boulevard',\textsuperscript{98} addressed the idea of this Boulevard or Parkway in many different ways and at different times through the 1920s and 30s.

From these examples, it should be clear that the garden suburb, the town planning ethos and modernity or modernism cannot be comfortably put together, though they do intersect in a large number of places, both rational and unexpected. Though town planners made concessions to, and even on occasion embraced, technological change, dislocation of tradition and other aspects of the modern, they nevertheless attempted to appeal to the consumer with images implied and overt of a rural and anti- or pre-technological space. Garden suburb planners bore little similarity to overt modernists like Le Corbusier, who Sandercock depicts with accuracy as utilising 'principles of decontextualisation... denial of history, and of everyday life rhythms', and of using straight 'male' lines to oppose 'female' nature.\textsuperscript{99} In doing so there was a deliberate masking of modernity and modernist expression. There was a distinct dichotomy between expressions of the modern and the pre-modern in 1920s Australia, though in essence both were responses to the modern world. The dichotomy was one that garden suburb designers would exploit to the greatest extent possible.

*Fitting the 'garden city' into the existing framework*

Planning’s prominence in the first two decades of the 20th century was much less predicated on planning garden suburbs for the poor, and much more on planning garden suburb developments for the wealthy. Sulman, in Sydney, had a number of government-sponsored projects to his name; the returned soldiers’ suburb of Matraville (1917) was built to his design and his 1912 plan for Daceyville, though redesigned by William Foggitt in 1917, nevertheless retained

\textsuperscript{98} ‘Heidelberg Amphitheatre Plans’, *Melbourne Star*, 30 November 1933, p. 20
the general form of his conception. But Sulman’s engagement by the entrepreneur Richard Stanton, the founder of Haberfield, hoping to replicate the success of that project, was a far more typical arrangement for the time. Government sponsorship of housing projects for the disadvantaged was the exception, and private engagement of planners to design middle class suburbs was the general rule. The Griffins, their own political radicalism notwithstanding, were never engaged to design a worker’s garden suburb, with the exception of a short-lived project to create the Tuggeranong munitions manufacturing suburb (1916) near Canberra, which appears to have been worked on under protest.¹⁰⁰ Their interest in small homes did parallel an interest in cheap housing for the disadvantaged, however, and their design for a five-roomed worker’s house for a couple with three children was referred to a number of times during the Basic Wage Commission’s inquiry.¹⁰¹ By the end of World War I, as well as their numerous American suburban developments, they had created the Glenard and Summit estates at Mount Eagle. These were resolutely middle-class developments, the purchasers of which were encouraged to expect to be able to drive their automobiles between city and home on the Boulevard.

Tuxen appears to have planned the Merrilands Estate at Reservoir with lower middle class residents in mind. Tuxen’s professional past, working with his father and then by himself, was entrenched in the design of subdivisions in prosperous, middle class areas such as the aforementioned Hill-Top Estate (1916) at Mont Albert and Eastern Gardens Estate (1918) for which the advertising brochure proclaimed:

> the work of sub-division has been carried out in the accordance with the most modern methods of town planning. The contour [sic] of the country has been turned to the best advantage from the point of the intending residence. Abundance of natural light is assured in

¹⁰⁰ Turnbull and Navaretti (eds.), The Griffins in Australia and India, p. 144
¹⁰¹ ‘Housing the Worker: Conditions at Richmond’ Argus, 21 January, 1920, p. 16; ‘Housing the Worker: The Standard of Comfort’, Argus 4 February 1920, 3; Turnbull and Navaretti, op cit, p. 166
the case of every home built on the estate, and the system of

drainage is perfect.\textsuperscript{102}

It can be seen, therefore, that the notion of the garden suburb as a ‘social lever’
is misleading: Freestone accurately casts it as ‘always... a bit of a myth’.\textsuperscript{103} The
most prominent of the planned suburbs of the early 20th century were largely
projects for middle class homebuyers seeking beauty and comfort. As was true
for the recasting of the garden suburb as the product of Howard’s writings, so the
remoulding of the garden suburb as an urban reform tool is to only countenance
a part of the genesis of the garden suburb. Factors such as the ‘abundance of
natural light’ were a signifier of a middle class escape from close association with
the urban poor, not an escape \textit{for} the poor themselves.

It has already been noted that such a use of garden suburb planning has
been seen by many commentators as an example of the misguided or dishonest
use of planning in the private sector. However, Rosebery and Eaglemont have
come to be held up as examples of early innovative town planning work,\textsuperscript{104} and,
while it is less highly regarded, Merrillands is clearly an attempt to create a wide-
ranging planned community. It was in projects such as these that planning
innovation occurred at this time.

The initial burst of development in the creation of new housing in urban
Australia following the end of World War I was to accommodate returned soldiers
– though many soldiers were, of course, able to house themselves and their
families in privately owned homes. At the insistence of the Queensland
government, the Second Australian Town Planning conference of 1917 was
dominated by the issue of the repatriation of returning soldiers: the Darra Garden
Suburb, a new development intended to be established in Brisbane and which
was in many ways the ‘centrepiece’ of this conference, was cautiously welcomed

\textsuperscript{102} Eastern Gardens Estate brochure in ‘Balwyn’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne
University Archives
\textsuperscript{103} Freestone, ‘The Great Lever of Social Reform’ in Kelly, (ed.) \textit{Sydney, City of Suburbs}, p. 53
\textsuperscript{104} Freestone claims Rosebery as embodying ‘greater awareness of overseas developments in
both concept and design’ (\textit{Model Communities}, p. 183). Most writers on Griffin projects consider
the Eaglemont estates one of ‘his’ greatest planning works, e.g. Peter Harrison, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin: Landscape Architect}, 1995, p. 57.
by John Sulman. ‘Fully 50 per cent. of the returned soldiers will want to live in or near the cities’, explained Thomas Price, the Mayor of Toowoomba, discussing Darra, ‘any service we can render to replace them wisely in civil life is not charity – it is our sacred duty’. Garden suburbs and rehousing schemes were launched under the aegis of government to aid in the rehabilitation and repatriation of returned soldiers. In Sydney in 1917 Sulman designed a street plan for Matraville Garden Suburb, a soldier resettlement area. In Melbourne in 1919, a ‘Housing Scheme’, which was to include ‘numbers of houses in suburban districts and ... extensions to existing suburbs’ was begun with the erection of a single house in the suburb of Caulfield.

However, the majority of new developments in town planning and garden suburb development in urban Australia at this time had their genesis in the private sector, led by the perceived boom times of the 1920s. This may have been sparked by the end of the war and the anticipated return of troops looking to start families and own houses. But the apparent boosting of the nation’s prospects and the encouragement, by land vendors using new media and innovative business methods, of the notion of investment in burgeoning suburbia, marked the real beginning of another suburban boom in Australia. This was to be similar in scope to the 1880s boom but with the garden suburb and town planning ‘ethos’ attached. Hundreds of new subdivisions were made on land adjoining areas which were either already suburban or which had been sold in anticipation of suburban development in the previous thirty years, and which only now faced the prospect of the long-anticipated urbanisation.

As might be expected, terms such as ‘garden city’ and ‘garden suburb’ were used very loosely in advertising such schemes. However, there was a distinct and new design ethos to many of the schemes that were established and advertised by both public and private sectors in the 1920s. In this regard, while developments such as ‘Hill-Top’ and ‘East Kew Heights’ might be regarded by

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105 Sulman, *Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. 100 and facing page
106 Thomas A. Price, ‘Proposed Industrial City at Darra, Queensland’ *Second Australian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition Papers*, Brisbane, 1918, p. 36
107 ‘Repatriation: Housing Scheme’ *Argus*, 26 July 1919, p. 19
some as an example merely of the uses to which unscrupulous agents and vendors would put the notion of the 'garden suburb', they are also an important step as the 19th century garden suburb evolves into its post-Howard form in urban Australia.

As one travels between the centre of an Australian city like Sydney or Melbourne and the periphery, only in the most general terms is the landscape inscribed with a chronology of urban development. New buildings are constantly replacing old, and as older satellite towns become co-opted into the urban 'sprawl', older buildings appear in unexpected contexts.

Yet the influence of the garden suburbs' creators is apparent even in older areas, where footpaths, sealed roads and new infill development all follow tenets introduced by garden suburb or town planning advocates. Even the idea of the highway or freeway can be said to have its genesis in the garden suburb's parkway, as different as the two modes have become.

As well as this, Sulman and Tuxen were involved in government-led bodies set up to address the overall replanning of the city and the new direction of the city's development, in Sydney (1909) and Melbourne (1921-29). Sulman and the Griffins were possibly the three people most influential in the built development of Canberra in its first two decades. In addition to this, Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen continued their influence through student/apprentice relationships. Sulman had, as his student, George Taylor, the publisher of the enormously influential Building magazine; Fred Cook, draftsman for the MTPC was regarded by Tuxen as a pupil and had also worked under Sulman in Canberra in 1921. Cook's drafting and surveying work for the MTPC was lauded, and he later became prominent in the post-World War II development of Melbourne. The Griffins' partner after 1923, Eric Nicholls was to continue working

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108. Fred Cook who, incidentally, was a pupil of mine (in Surveying, not Town Planning): Tuxen, letter to University of Melbourne, Department of Town Planning, 1 July 1971, in possession of Mrs P. Tuxen
109. Sulman, January 24th diary entry: 'saw Alderman Stapley and Mr Cook of the Town Planning Association [sic]... Cook was at Canberra in 1921 during my first year as Chairman of Advisory committee and remembered me. He was on the surveying staff.' Diary of Sir John Sulman of McMahons Point Sydney on a Trip to Europe – January 22nd 1930 – January 22nd 1931 Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 Box 2 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
under the name Griffin and Nicholls for decades after Walter’s death and Marion’s return to the US.

Australia for most of the 1920s was prosperous, comparative to the preceding decades, yet socially the decade was filled with agitation caused by new developments in the wider world and within its own borders. Australia at this time was also vibrant and highly receptive to proposals for reassessment of its cultural, artistic and political life, and its built environment was affected by this. Would-be city builders and reformers jostled with each other before the wider public as they campaigned to publicise issues which they saw as crucial to the future development of the nation.

Campaigns or schemes to replan the city as it existed, and to plan new garden suburbs, was a manifestation of this new mentality. It carried on work that had already been going on, to a lesser extent, for forty years – stretching back to the days of the previous boom. The creation of suburban areas such as Merrilands was an important step in the mass acceptance of new forms and also provides a valuable example of the way in which town planning rhetoric and design could be used to sell land in the interwar years.
Chapter Three

‘Very Inadequate Textbooks’: Creating an Australian Garden Suburb

Garden Suburbs for Sale

It is not possible to say when the terms ‘garden city’ and ‘garden suburb’ became a part of the everyday parlance of Australians, though as has been shown it is clear that by the late 1930s ‘garden city’ was a common enough concept for the inhabitants of Garden City, at Port Melbourne, to adopt it as their suburb’s name.

However, land vendors of the interwar period were quick to take advantage of the ambiguity of the terms ‘garden suburb’ and ‘garden city’, and the common confusion between the two. While the majority of suburban subdivisions of the 1880s were fashioned on a grid plan, and did not encompass features imperative to the social reformist ‘town-planned’ model, there were numerous physical similarities. Chief amongst these was a comparable aesthetic sense; for instance, the use via curved roads of any variation in topography to create varied and picturesque streetscapes. There was also ample space provision for individual gardens and the large, detached houses of the rising middle-class, lending these new suburban areas to association with the contemporary notion of the ‘urban lung’ of parkland provision. There were a few exceptions, some of them previously noted, which were more experimental than this basic idea: in Sydney, Appian Way and other avenues of Burwood; in Melbourne, the curved roads surrounding the salubrious park area of St. Vincent Gardens, South Melbourne, and Grace Park. The majority of surveyors, architects and the vendors they worked for were content to adhere to the grid method.

While the interwar years witnessed the emergence of a new style of urban planning in the form of the garden suburb, a number of surveyors and planners in Melbourne of the 1920s did not change with the times to any noticeable degree.
The Melbourne surveyor George Parsons, for instance, relied solely on the traditional grid pattern in creating the numerous suburban estates produced from his office between 1919 and 1926. These included Tweedside (Essendon) 1919; Phantassie (Blackburn) 1920; Eastern Heights (Burwood) 1920; Hassett’s (East Camberwell) 1924 and Pope’s Paddock (Blackburn) 1924. Others, such as Reade, Griffiths, Hope and Klem, Sulman, the Griffins and, after 1916, Tuxen, produced work antithetical to the conventional north-south, east-west grid subdivisional approach. The Griffins believed their work to be based on ‘elements of abstract form itself’, deliberately created as oppositional both to the tradition of the previous century and that of western civilisation. Meredith Walker says of the Griffins’ planning philosophy:

[Walter] Griffin argued that much of the present subdivision practice was based on a combination of government regulation, fixed ideas, and habit. He asserted that better environments, accommodating increased numbers of allotments, together with community open space, could be created by careful planning that respected the landscape character of the site itself.

The Griffins were consciously and overtly anti-conservative; Saxil Tuxen might, however, be seen as an example of a prominent designer who had been enjoying success with conventional forms but found himself open to persuasion. Tuxen made a deliberate decision to cross over from traditional 1880s-style subdivisions to embracing what he called ‘town-planning ideas’ during WWI, though he never wrote about his ‘conversion’ in this regard. While Tuxen may have simply identified a market trend in the new planning form and followed it, he

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1 Not to be confused with the Eastern Gardens Estate designed by Tuxen in Kew the previous year, though it may well have been named as such to generate such confusion in the mind of the buyer/speculator.
3 Paul Kruty, ‘Walter Burley Griffin: An Architect of America’s Middle West’ in Mati Maldre and Paul Kruty, Walter Burley Griffin in America, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1996, p. 17; a discussion of the non-western influences in Griffin work can be found in Jeffrey Turnbull, ‘A Reading of the Griffins’ Early Australian Work’ in Turnbull and Navaretti (eds.), The Griffins in Australia and India, p. 48-62; while this is primarily a discussion of the Griffins’ architecture, much of its reasoning can be logically applied to their planning work.
4 Meredith Walker, ‘The Development at Castlecrag’ in Turnbull and Navaretti (eds.) The Griffins in Australia and India, p. 74
Fig. VII: Tuxen's Hill Top Estate of 1915, a small subdivision in which the surveyor has created varying curved streetscapes within the confines of the existing streets and housing allotments. As can be seen in this example from the files of Coghill and Haughton, real estate agents, all but the northernmost portion of the estate quickly sold well. (Coghill and Haughton Papers, Mont Albert/Box Hill Box, Melbourne University Archives)
had already expressed reformist tendencies before this time, though only in
matters of council policy towards approval for subdivisions, not aesthetic or
physical form, or in the challenging of the social order. This can be seen both in
his founding membership of the Victorian Town Planning Association and in his
preparation, with his father, of a paper arguing for a central planning approval
body for suburban subdivisions. The presentation of this paper can be seen as
part of the continuing debate, ongoing since Sulman’s 1890 paper ‘On the Laying
Out of Towns’ and discussed by John Reps, between the architectural and
surveying professions over which of the two disciplines was suited to assumption
of the planning role. As indicated, Tuxen’s ‘break’ from tradition – perhaps better
typified as a shift from one tradition, the 19th century standard, to a new one, the
new garden suburb philosophy – was not abrupt. While this is so, it must also be
considered that in tabulating any kind of chronological change in matters of this
nature recognition must be given of vagaries associated with the time lapse
between subdivision of land and its sale. In 1914, Tuxen executed a right-angled
subdivision design for 41 ‘Five Acre Blocks’ and two others, of approximately
eight and four acres respectively, at Ritchie’s Paddock, Bittern, on the
Mornington Peninsula. The contrast between this and the ‘Hill-Top Estate’ of
1916 is dramatic. ‘Hill-Top’ (Fig. VII) included 80 ‘villa sites’ – many of unusual
size and shape – at ‘An Ideal Site for a Garden Suburb’, Mont Albert in
Melbourne’s eastern suburbs. It featured the curved Carlyle Crescent and the
irregular Carrick Street, but did not include parks, and was not graded into
commercial or civic properties – probably because it was too small. It did,
however, represent a significant move towards the embracing of the picturesque
streetscape, and might be seen as a transitional design for Tuxen in this regard.
Tuxen’s Eastern Gardens Estate, in the burgeoning suburb of Balwyn, designed

5 August Tuxen and Saxil Tuxen, ‘Subdivision of Land: Paper read before the Victorian Institute of
1900-1909 p.127-134
6 Reps, Canberra 1912, pp. 46-49
7 ‘Grand Realising Auction... Ritchie’s Paddock, Bittern’ pamphlet for auction dated December
28, 1914, in Box 2, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives; ‘Land Sale
Extraordinary... Hill-Top Estate’ pamphlet for auction dated October 14, 1916 in ‘Mont Albert/Box
Hill’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives.
for T. M. Burke in 1918, was an even more irregular and esoteric plan. It appears to have been the first of Tuxen's to be described as 'carried out in accordance with the most modern methods of town planning'. The advertising brochure states:

The contour [sic] of the country has been turned to the best advantage from the point of the intending residence [sic]. Abundance of natural light is assured in the case of every home built on the Estate, and the system of drainage is perfect.\(^8\)

At the same time as it was producing such unusual designs, Tuxen's office was continuing to produce subdivisions such as the Oval Estate in Brunswick of 1918. This estate, its name notwithstanding, was of the traditional grid variety, in keeping with the form of the surrounding 19\(^{th}\) century streets.\(^9\)

Saxil Tuxen's surveying practice emerged from a partnership with his father. By the time of the elder Tuxen's death in 1913 the practice was known as August Tuxen and Son. The younger Tuxen's practice was, therefore, already almost forty years old by the time he came to design Merrilands, though it has not been recorded how large the Tuxen firm was and whether staff experienced in August Tuxen's working methods may have carried his influence into Saxil Tuxen's planning work.

It was not until Merrilands that Saxil Tuxen could be said to have made a complete break from the grid style to the new 'town-planned' form. His move towards the style of garden suburb advocated by the Griffins may have been commercially driven. Indeed, Tuxen would, late in his life, typify himself as opportunistic in the immediate post-war years. Other evidence, however,

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8 One of the streets on this estate is named Tuxen Street. While it might at first be assumed that this indicates Saxil Tuxen's rise to prominence as a garden suburb designer, the estate also includes a cross-street, Madden Street, presumably named for one of August Tuxen's surveying partners, Walter Madden, though there was a Victorian Premier of this name. It seems probable that Tuxen Street was named in homage to August Tuxen. An example of Madden and Tuxen's work, which bears both their names, is the Glen Vale Estate, an undated plan of which appears in the 'Elsternwick' box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives.

9 'Eastern Gardens Estate' advertising pamphlet, in 'Baiwn/North Baiwn' box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives.

10 'Oval Estate', pamphlet advertising auction on 23 November 1920, in 'Brunswick' box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives. The roads on Tuxen's Oval Estate are much wider than those of the surrounding streets, suggesting that in this regard at least Tuxen retained an adherence to certain town planning principles.
Fig VIII. Merrilands Estate, from S. Tuxen 'Design of Subdivisions in Victoria', *The Australian Surveyor*, Vol. 3 No. 3, September 1932, p. 181
suggests that this was almost certainly largely a move made from ideological motivation, and a belief in the value of improving the urban environment. However, as will be seen, it was not exclusive of commercial considerations.

Merrilands – a potpourri of influences

Tuxen, while never self-aggrandising even during his time as a high-profile planner and planning advocate, nevertheless held firm to his professional integrity and did not project himself, or allow himself to be typified, as a conduit of any one international style or doctrine. His forays into different areas of planning in the interwar years show a professional practitioner concerned with negotiating an individual path for himself and his practice within the bounds set by international wisdom. This is true whether he was operating within the MTPC which was far more concerned with the redesign and reorganisation of Melbourne’s city centre than it was with the creation of new garden suburbs, or in private practice working for major land vendors like T. M. Burke.

Despite MTPC chairman Frank Stapley’s ambivalence to garden suburbs, Tuxen’s work on garden suburb design in the interwar years was not incompatible with his work for the MTPC. Rather, he was subscribing to the common expectation amongst garden suburb designers, and advocates, of the time that town planning principles would come to be applied to entire metropolises within a short time frame. With this understanding, individual suburban subdivisions designed to the ‘correct’ planning standards could come to be seen as forming what Tuxen called in 1927 ‘the mosaic of a great city’.

Merrilands (Fig. VIII) was the first major project of the T. M. Burke company in the large-scale provision of anything other than middle class housing allotments. It was laid out with suggested sites for civic buildings, suggesting a new local government area would eventually be formed. It was also, at approximately 4.5 square kilometres, the largest garden suburb undertaking in

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11 Tuxen, ‘Melbourne Subdivisions’ typescript of radio address, p.3, broadcast on 3LO 5 July 1927, in MTPC ‘Propaganda’ file (Box 14), Public Records Office, Victoria
Melbourne, though in keeping with the form of most large garden suburb designs, only a portion was initially available for purchase.

It will be shown here that, while Tuxen's design is a distinct melting pot of diverse influences, it is ultimately impossible to assign to it the hallmarks of one sphere of international influence or to attribute its design to any particular innovator aside from Tuxen himself.

Merrilands was located in the area now known as Reservoir but within the boundaries of the northern suburb of Preston, a region of 'working class suburbia' in which, Kerreen Reiger has said, 'material conditions did not support a rosy family existence.' However while the area was not wealthy, it did not fit the mould of a conventional slum, if only because of its sparse population. The Merrilands estate was reputedly highly successful for Burke and was the first of many subdivisions in that area 'which sprang into sudden favour with the home site seeker' in the words of advertising rhetoric of 1924. The name 'Merrilands' had been attached to the site – which is situated east of Merri Creek – since the previous century.

Merrilands' streets describe forms reminiscent of previous Tuxen designs sold by Burke, such as the Eastern Gardens and Hill-Top Estates, though the overall plan (Fig. VIII) contains elements which can be seen as a step further towards the garden suburb designs of Colonel Light Gardens and Daceyville. Though there were some elements of curved streetscape and incorporation of natural elements in the earlier designs, little public open space was provided on estates like Eastern Gardens or Hill-Top and certainly there were no internal reserves or shopping or community areas. The creation of a new subdivision like Merrilands on such dramatically different lines from Tuxen's previous work is, therefore, a matter which requires some examination.

12 Reiger, The Disenchantment of the Home, p. 39
13 Ibid.
14 'Hillside Estate' Melbourne Evening Sun (hereafter Evening Sun) 28 May 1924, p. 8
15 Eastern Gardens Estate Plan, n.d., in 'Kew' Box, Coghills and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives; Hill-Top Estate Plan, Coghills and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
Freestone's description of the Griffins' Canberra plan as a part of 'the evolution of a distinctive vocabulary of mainstream modernist planning' could almost be applied word for word to Merrilands, as could his description of the plan itself:

[T]he holistic, organic approach to urban form and function; the predilection for specialisation of land use functions; the penchant for segregated residential spaces; and the idea of road hierarchies.\textsuperscript{16}

Robert Fishman, writing of the work of Howard, Wright and Le Corbusier, claims that these men's plans were 'effective because they spoke directly to hopes and fears that were widely shared.' Fishman sees these 'hopes and dreams' as being both a rejection of the past and the embracing, through technology, of 'a revolutionary age of brotherhood and freedom'.\textsuperscript{17} Merrilands' plan, with its internal reserves and precinct designations, is of a style that many would have found instantly recognisable as a modern attempt, in a garden suburb context, to plan for a community.

The Merrilands plan may also have had a more pragmatic appeal for homebuyers. Peter G. Rowe, speculating on the reasons for planners' and vendors' shift from the standard grid in suburban subdivisions in the US, suggests that appropriate land for grid plans became harder to find in the years between the wars. He also nominates subdividers' or prospective purchasers' wishes to make their areas less attractive to through traffic, and remarks that public opinion came to regard grid planning as 'overly uniform and monotonous'. However, Rowe places the time of such a change in the US as starting '[f]rom about the 1930s on', at least ten years after Merrilands.\textsuperscript{18}

If deductions are to be made on the reasons for the irregular, anti-grid outline of Merrilands in Australia a decade before Rowe's designated period for the rise of the asymmetrical suburban design in America, much of Rowe's

\textsuperscript{16} Robert Freestone, 'From City Improvement to City Beautiful' in Freestone and Hamnett (eds.), The Australian Metropolis, p.40
\textsuperscript{17} Robert Fishman, \textit{Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century : Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier}, Basic Books, New York, 1977
reasoning applies to the Australia of the post-First World War period, and should be taken into account. The suburban subdivision in the form of a ‘town plan’ gained approval in Australia earlier than it did in America via the example of Canberra, despite the fact that there are a large number of US garden suburb developments which predate any Australian example. The Griffins’ plan for Canberra was still undergoing revision, but its basic form had been public knowledge for six years before the initiation of the Merrilands development, and the similarities between the two, particularly the central triangle form (Figs. IX, XI) suggests the former is linked in some design respects with the latter. The similarity also gives rise to the distinct possibility that T. M. Burke believed that the public would respond to a comprehensively planned garden suburb which made visual reference to the Griffins’ conception of the national capital.

There is no direct evidence of a Canberra connection made with Merrilands, however, the publicity for Merrilands having been conducted by door-to-door salesman rather than through print media. Certainly, developer Henry Halloran was of the opinion that association with Canberra – not only in proximity but also in evoking the rhetoric of town planning practice – was an appropriate way to sell land, and his Environa estate just outside the Federal Territory which not only had location but also design in common with the capital, was a successful speculative venture. Similarly, Docherty suggests that the promotion of a Burke suburb in Newcastle, Birmingham Gardens, in 1922 was partly predicated on the planning having been effected by ‘a Mr. Kelly who was said to have had a part in the planning of Canberra’.19

Tuxen re-assessed Merrilands in 1932, thirteen years after its creation, when he was serving as President of the Victorian Institute of Surveyors. He used the spare time forced on him by the Depression to write a series of articles entitled ‘Design of Subdivisions in Victoria’ for the national surveyor’s journal, The Australian Surveyor. The chief example he used for discussion of surveying practicalities in garden suburb subdivisions was the Merrilands design. He wrote:

19 Docherty, Newcastle: The Making of an Australian City, p. 88
Fig IX Portion of Merrilands showing the 'Triangle', two points of which formed proposed 'Civic' (north-east) and 'social' (south) centres. Both the internal reserves within the triangle have been alienated by local government. Land Titles Office, Victoria
Fig. X Inspirations and contexts for Merrilands: comparative sections of Sulman’s original Dacey Garden Suburb and Tuxen’s Merrilands. Both sections have been skewed so that north is at the right of each.
Fig. XI Inspirations and contexts for Merrilands. 'Federal Capital of Australia, Preliminary Plan' showing Capitol, Market and Civic centres. 
[It is not contended that it is a perfect plan. It was carried out in 1918 when I was less experienced in subdivisitional work than now, and was based mostly on a knowledge of principles gleaned from the very inadequate textbooks then available, and from a study of different subdivisions around Sydney. [...] What features are embraced were, however, sound.\textsuperscript{20}]

Tuxen did not make clear which textbooks or which Sydney suburbs he consulted in the creation of Merrilands, though regarding the question of Sydney ground plans, it might reasonably be assumed comparing Merrilands with Sulman’s Daceyville and Rosebery plans that Tuxen referred to these.\textsuperscript{21} In his 1919 paper 'Suburban Subdivisions', Tuxen cited ‘an idea that has been successfully carried out in Sydney’ for building houses on triangular or otherwise oddly-shaped residential allotments. He did not name the site of this ‘idea’, though Dacey Garden Suburb’s original plan contains a large number of such lots (Figs. X, XVI). That Tuxen cites this design concept suggests that perhaps his ‘study’ of Sydney subdivisions may have been related more to small practicalities rather than, or as well as, larger-scale design templates. The Merrilands design does contain many triangular or near-triangular allotments, for instance at the corner of Weymuss and Sims streets and Weymuss and Jackson streets. It is also important to note that Sydney, with a far more varied topography than Melbourne’s, presented many more challenges to the surveyor/planner than Melbourne or other cities of Australia.

By 1932 Tuxen had designed or co-designed at least thirty suburban subdivisions – a majority of which could be termed ‘garden suburbs’ – so it might initially seem strange that he chose this plan, dating from the beginning of his true ‘garden suburb’ work to present thirteen years later as an example of good subdivision planning.\textsuperscript{22} It may simply have been large enough to include all the aspects of a plan, including intersections, street curves, internal reserves, which


\textsuperscript{22} For a list of Tuxen projects, see Appendix.
he wished to discuss. It was also one of few projects to bear his name that overtly addressed land use issues beyond the provision of centres or strips dedicated to local shopping, and the inclusion of parkland and other recreational area projections, and this was also probably a factor in the decision to use it as an example. For these and related reasons, it was the only one of his suburban schemes that attempted to fulfil the functions of a discrete town, or at least of a complete suburb, arguably excepting the nearby Leslie Estate (Fig. XII). The Merrilands plan adhered to Sulman's credo, that suburbs, 'of whatever kind, should be more or less a town in miniature, with all the conveniences, amenities, and responsibilities of such a condition.'

It was also one of the rare instances in which Tuxen was not required to connect his subdivision with others nearby, or to accommodate existing roads. There had been a few roads on the estate as it stood when Burke bought the land, but none were adapted for the final project.

Any connection between Merrilands and Canberra can only be deduced from the physical appearance of the two ground plans. The offices of the Griffins and Tuxen neither publicly acknowledged, nor engaged with, each other's work. Tuxen's newly formed partnership, Tuxen and Miller, acted as surveyors to the Griffins on the Ranelagh estate four years after Merrilands, in 1924. At this time, Tuxen's obituary states, Tuxen formed a 'wary' friendship with Walter Griffin, wary 'because some of their ideas conflicted and neither would concede error'.

The only evidence of Tuxen commenting favourably on a Griffin project is from 1927, when he drew the attention of his fellow Commissioners at the MTPC to the last of the Griffins' suburban estates, Milleara/City View, for its generous park provision. This occurred less than three weeks after MTPC commissioners had inspected the reserves of Heidelberg, which would have included a visit to the Griffins' Eaglemont estates. In his battles with Griffin in 1930, embittered Greater Sydney Development Association employee Henry Hudson suggested

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23 Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p.100
24 Merrilands map, n.d. in Maps collection, State Library of Victoria
26 'City View Estate, Shire of Keilor' entry dated 2 December 1927 in MTPC Minute Book 2, Public Records Office, Victoria
27 'Heidelberg Inspection' entry dated 18 November 1927, op cit.
that the GSDA enlist Tuxen to discredit Walter Griffin’s work at Castlecrag. It is unlikely that this route was taken but, if Tuxen was contacted, it is clear that he refused to participate in this plan. Tuxen’s respect for the Griffins’ ideas in the 1920s did not continue into the post-war years; in 1947, when he redesigned the northern section of the Griffins’ ‘Blue Hill’ subdivision of 1923 ten years after Walter’s death, he made no attempt to incorporate any portion of the Griffins’ original plan into the new ‘Pine Lodge’ estate (Fig. XXX). 28 All of these incidents suggest not only that Tuxen must have considered the value and intentions of Griffin work on a number of occasions, but also that he interacted with them in various forums and facets of business; however, the only direct evidence of public interaction between the Griffins and Tuxen is the presence of both Walter Griffin and Tuxen at the First Australian Town Planning Conference in 1917. 29 Circumstances suggest so many opportunities for contact in the period up to 1919 that only conscious avoidance could have allowed them to stay out of contact with each other. Tuxen would have been well aware of the Griffins’ initial Canberra plan from the time it was first publicised in 1913, if for no other reason than his uncle, Peter Tuxen, another surveyor, who worked in the same building as he and his father, was an entrant in the Federal Capital Competition. 30 The Griffins were Melbourne-based between 1914 and 1924. The Griffins and Tuxen shared numerous contacts in the real estate industry: both worked on properties sold by T. M. Burke, H. V. Palmer, whose office was in the same building as the Griffins’, and Coghill and Haughton. The Griffins were also in contact with land developer C. J. De Garis, who employed Tuxen to design the ‘Heart of Rosebud’ Estate in 1923. 31 The Griffins’ office at 395 Collins Street, Melbourne, was less than a city block away from Tuxen’s at 94 Queen Street. While the Griffins’ social

28 ‘Pine Lodge Estate’, pamphlet (n.d.) ‘Croydon’ Box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
29 Griffin, speaking in response to Vaughan, Official Volume of Proceedings of First Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition, Adelaide, South Australian Executive Town Planning Conference, 1918, pp. 79-83. 83
30 Reps, Canberra 1912, p. 373. Reps incorrectly states here that Peter Tuxen was Saxil Tuxen’s father.
31 ‘Heart of Rosebud Estate, Rosebud’ advertising pamphlet in ‘Rosebud’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
status and arguably ‘bohemian’ interests suggest they were unlikely to have socialised with Tuxen on any regular basis, they were clearly professionally acquainted.

That Tuxen’s plan was influenced by the Griffins is however difficult to deny, particularly in view of the distinct similarity between the designs of Merrilands and Canberra, particularly in the replication of a ‘Parliamentary triangle’ styled road plan (see Fig XI) at the centre of both designs.

It should not be inferred from comparisons made between Merrilands and Canberra that Tuxen saw any particular symbolic relevance, or any ‘sacred geometry’ as postulated by Peter Proudfoot, in the appropriated Parliamentary triangle. If Tuxen took the triangle, and the idea of ‘civic’ centres with distinct social functions from the Griffin plan, then he did so for much more pragmatic reasons, as outlined below. The triangle itself had possibly been ‘borrowed’, as Harrison suggests, by the Griffins from the Macmillan Plan for Washington. There is also a similar triangular design element in Parker and Unwin’s Letchworth of 1904. Tuxen may have used Unwin’s *Town Planning in Practice* as one of the textbooks he consulted in the planning of Merrilands, but the Parker and Unwin triangle, unlike the Griffins’, did not include designated functions at apexes. That the triangle/hexagon was an important part of town planning ideals at this time is evident from the use of versions of this form in Hampstead, Letchworth; it later appears as the central concept of Henry Halloran’s Tanilba Bay.

Both the Griffins’ and Tuxen’s plan identify, in the words of John Reps, ‘the exact sites for a variety of municipal and business uses’. Whereas in Canberra, as designed by the Griffins, the triangle’s corners are given special features – ‘Civic’ and ‘Market’ centres, and the ‘Capitol’, Tuxen’s triangle has only two demarcated ‘centres’: a ‘Civic Centre’ in the north east and a ‘Social Centre’

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33 Harrison, *Walter Burley Griffin*, p.29
35 Reps, *Canberra 1912*, p. 141
in the south, although the delineation of Hughes Parade as a ‘Business Area’ seems to suggest that the north east corner of the Merrilands triangle was intended to parallel the Griffins’ ‘Market Centre’. In Tuxen’s plan, another Centre, the ‘Education Centre’, appears further west of the triangle: this feature might be equated with the position of the University to the west of the triangle in the Griffins’ Canberra plans.\textsuperscript{36}

A railway line runs along the eastern side of both the Griffins’ and Tuxen’s triangles; as with Unwin’s Hampstead Garden Suburb.\textsuperscript{37} The railway on the eastern side of Merrilands was undoubtedly a prime reason behind the construction of the suburb, though at Canberra the railway was built to serve the city itself. In the Griffin Canberra plan, part of this line branches off and skirts the edge of the triangle before continuing north. In Tuxen’s plan, wherein the railway line is on a pre-existing and fixed route on the eastern boundary of the estate, provision is made for a tram line to be extended from Preston. Construction of the tramline to Preston was in progress at the time. In Tuxen’s conception the line would be extended past the recently created but already popular Edwardes Lake, to form a large loop following most of the two sides of the triangle and then passing near the Education Centre. Neither the train line across Canberra nor the Merrilands tram loop were built, but the inclusion of both in the original plan shows an attempt not only to create efficient transport but to connect the various ‘precincts’ of each design. Such a device was undoubtedly a personal preference of Tuxen’s; he claimed in 1919 that the inclusion of a main communication – an arterial road or, even better, a tramline – in a subdivision created a ‘backbone’ to the estate; ‘the absence of it makes what might be called a spineless subdivision’.\textsuperscript{38}

There is another point of design ‘unification’ though one which, in Merrilands’ case, is really only appreciable on maps or plans. These are the internal reserves situated inside the Merrilands triangle, forming a discontinuous

\textsuperscript{36} Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivision’, p. 181
\textsuperscript{37} See Mervyn Miller, ‘Hampstead Garden Suburb: Paradigm or Paradox?’ in The Twentieth Century Planning Experience, pp. 663-638, p. 633
\textsuperscript{38} Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivision’, p.42
Fig. XII: A portion of Tuxen's Leslie Estate of 1923. This large-scale private development, southeast of Merrilands and on the other side of the same rail connection, was clearly created in the wake of Merrilands' success. Though the area today is approximately the same as Tuxen's design, there have been some modifications, notably the removal of all internal reserves. Tuxen's proposed 'Broadway' has, however, grown into the shopping strip he envisaged. (Coghill and Haughton Papers, Preston Box, Melbourne University Archives)
line of parkland which divides the triangle. The Canberra triangle is similarly bisected, though in this case so as to create a sight-line across the central basin of what was to become Lake Burley Griffin. In Tuxen’s plan, the terrain of Merrilands does not lend itself to any line of sight through the centre of the triangle, although the positioning of its east and west sides does allow a clear view along these avenues, thus adhering to his stated position: ‘Points from which good views may be obtained may be placed at street intersections, or alternatively in a park reserve.’

Tuxen did bring some elements of the Griffins’ use of visual endpoints, a feature they may well have taken from Washington D.C., to his Merrilands scheme. Most notable is the placement of what Tuxen called ‘an important church’ east of the Civic Centre, where it would rise above the town hall and form a ‘closing vista’ eastwards along Hughes Parade. Unwin placed a similar church within a vista at Hampstead, as ‘the only significant focal point, visible along an axis to the Heath Extension’. The Griffins did not place churches on their plan of Canberra, though they did create picturesque endpoints with parks within circuits, which filled a similar visual purpose and which may also, given the Griffins’ interest in natural harmony and aesthetics, have had a moral role, and which could also be viewed through their Canberra’s Civic Centre.

Merrilands did not give Tuxen the opportunities to experiment with vistas that the Griffins had with Canberra, where, Harrison says, ‘the visual prolongation of... avenues terminated at the skyline on the hills and ridges which defined the valley... making a strong link between the city and the enveloping countryside’. The Merrilands area’s terrain is flat and, apart from two creeks running north-south through it and areas of rocky grasslands areas which have only recently become valued by the community, featureless; there is no mountainous backdrop as there is in Canberra. When Tuxen came to design the adjoining Leslie Estate (Fig. XII), however, he showed that he was cognisant of the kind of signification and use of sight lines leading to natural high terrain which the Griffins used in

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39 Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivision’, p.43
40 Miller, ‘Hampstead Garden Suburb’, p. 635
41 Harrison, *Walter Burley Griffin*, p. 30
their Canberra street plan. Tuxen provided seven diagonal southeast-northwest streets on the Leslie Estate which provided easy communication with Reservoir Station for those who lived in the northeast part of the estate. These also serve to lead the eye to the distant Dandenong Ranges, not only amongst residents but also for those passing by on the railway line, a visual feature reminiscent of the ‘irregular amphitheatre’ of the Canberra site.\footnote{Freestone in Freestone and Hamnett (eds.) \textit{The Australian Metropolis}, p.39}

The involvement of developer/vendor T. M. Burke in the creation of Merrilands was also important. Burke, as a businessman who supported the growth of Australian secondary industry rather than reliance on British markets and trade, would have been favourably disposed to a suburban form reminiscent of the national capital. Such a form would have been regarded as positive both for patriotic reasons, and also one following what may have been seen as an American ‘form’ rather than a British one. This was pertinent to Merrilands: as will be made clear, Burke saw a cultural alliance with the US as a positive step for Australian independence and social progress. Burke sold land at the Griffins’ Mount Eagle subdivisions, and would have been well aware of the major success of that project. As the Griffin name was linked at this time with Canberra, definitely under way in 1918, the creation of a subdivision with similarities to the new capital would have been a natural next step. The evidence of this notion is firmly embedded in the Merrilands plan.

In \textit{Place Promotion}, a study of advertising and publicity for towns and regions largely concentrating on the 20th century, which he co-edited with Stephen V. Ward, John R. Gold countenances the possibility that ‘it can be argued cynically that many communicators are happier imitating the best ideas of others rather than innovating, the repetitiousness of place promotion may also reflect the particular nature of their discourse.’ This ‘particular nature’ in Gold’s view is the ‘similarities in ideological outlook’\footnote{John R. Gold, ‘Locating the Message: Place Promotion as Image Communication’ in John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward (eds.) \textit{Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions}, Whiley and Sons, Chichester, 1994, p.29} between promoters and the audience they seek.
Fig. XIII: A version of John Sulman's 'spiderweb' concept, as it appears in his *Introduction to Town Planning in Australia*, Government Printer, Sydney 1921. Sulman developed a version of the 'spiderweb' in 1890, and the concept bore some similarity to Ebenezer Howard's schemes for garden cities.
Fig. XIV Inspirations and contexts for Merrilands: The Ground Plan for Fawkner Memorial Park, as conceived by Charles Heath at the end of the 19th century. The cemetery, like Merrilands, is situated north of Melbourne, to the west of a railway line. North is at the bottom of this plan. *The Fawkner Memorial Park*, n.d. 1938, p. 7
However clear the connection between the Griffins' Canberra plan and Merrilands, the Merrilands plan is much more than imitation, and the differences between Tuxen's design and Canberra are also revealing. One of the most overt is the direction and orientation of the streets outside the triangles. The suburbs of the 1918 Canberra plan featured many short streets which switched their orientation half-way between intersections, thus creating endpoints in each street section without the drawback of the disorienting, continually circular street; longer streets were straight. However the majority of the shorter streets in Merrilands are straight, and longer streets change direction at intersections.

These straight streets may have been a practical response to the requirements of the small lots of the Merrilands design. Previous international attempts to plan working class towns or suburbs, for instance Olmsted's Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, had encountered problems in adapting the curvilinear form to the requirements of smaller allotments.\(^4^4\) While it is unlikely that Australian planners would have been aware of the problematic nature of projects such as Vandergrift, they may have independently realised the difficulties it represented.

Tuxen's reasoning must, however, be left to speculation. The effect of the plan, in the westernmost part in particular, is a similarity to Sulman's hypothetical 'spiderweb' plan (Fig. XIII), which Reps describes as containing 'radial and ring thoroughfares' to 'provide monumental vistas and speed traffic'.\(^4^5\) Here, the concept is probably less geared towards the 'speeding' of traffic as it is to the limiting of speed, as in Rowe's conception, as all the longer streets change direction at points 'anchored' by smaller cross streets.

Tuxen need not have looked as far as Sydney for an existing example of this type of design: Fawkner Memorial Park (Fig. XIV), also known as New Melbourne General Cemetery, less than a kilometre from the westernmost point of Merrilands and dating from 1905, was laid out to such a design. The author of a 1930s pamphlet promoting the cemetery recognised the scheme by which its

\(^4^5\) Reps, *Canberra 1912*, p. 12
roads were laid out, and commented that ‘the principle of the spider’s web was selected by the Architect as being that on which to base the main lines of the design.’ The ‘spider’s web’ at Fawkner allows efficient access via diagonal lines, leading from Fawkner railway station, to most areas of the cemetery. In this, it is similar to many garden suburb designs, including Tuxen’s, in which the street plans focus on easy access to and from a railway station. The radiating ‘web’ had no relevance to traffic speed, as few of the avenues of Fawkner were created for traffic and no connecting roads ran through the cemetery. The designer of Fawkner was Charles Heath (1867-1948), an Australian-born architect and surveyor, who, like many architects and surveyors of his generation, had entered the Federal Capital Design Competition with a design which also featured many radial and diagonal streets. Heath’s son, Frank (1907-1980), would take over his father’s business in the late 1940s, at which time he was already a highly influential figure in Victorian planning circles. Frank Heath would later take Tuxen’s place as surveyor/designer in the transition phase during which the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board became the Victorian Housing Commission. He was also prominent in the Victorian Town and Country Planning Association, and was a member of the National Capital Development Committee in the 1950s.

Curiously, Tuxen typifies his major roads in his 1932 explication of Merrilands as ‘long, straight streets’. In fact, only Mahoneys and Broadhurst Roads, which form the northern and southern boundaries of Merrilands and which pre-date it, strictly fit this description. Tuxen may have been defining the ‘straight’ streets against the curvilinear street, which does not appear in the Merrilands plan. ‘Nature works in curves, the contours following sinuous lines all over the plan’, he said in 1919. ‘But a town is the work of man, not of nature, and man works in straight lines.’ In expressing this belief, while not expressly

46 The Fawkner Memorial Park, n.d., p. 7 The author of this pamphlet may have been Charles or Frank Heath, both of whom maintained connections with the cemetery until the 1940s.
47 The Fawkner Memorial Park, p. 2
48 Reps, Canberra 1912, pp. 177, 315-317
49 Plan News Review, Oct-Dec 1966, p. 5; Freestone, Model Communities p. 217
50 Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivisions’, p. 42
Fig. XV Sulman's designs for Daceyville (1912) (above), and Rosebery (1911) (below). Neither of these designs was built – Daceyville was redesigned by William Foggitt in 1914, and Rosebery was modified by developer Richard Stanton for commercial reasons. Both schemes show Sulman's interest in topography, curvilinear roads, the creation of 'view points' and community centres.
drawing attention to the differences between his own work and the Griffins’ in this regard, he was representing an aspect of his work as originating from a personal standard which was, coincidentally or otherwise, quite removed from the Griffins’ approach. He was soon to abandon this tenet, which may have been an attempt to justify his continuing to create small grid ‘infill’ subdivisions as well as garden suburbs.

Though his construction of the opposition between ‘man’ and straight lines on one side and ‘nature’ and ‘curves’ on the other may seem identical to Le Corbusier’s confrontational scenario between the two, Tuxen’s work almost always included some curved streetscape, and he clearly recognised the appeal of such a design feature for clients. His designs of the 1920s are, however, generally executed with use of straight lines in a variety of orientations, though rarely in formal square or oblong blocks.

If the visual similarity of the western part of Merrilands to a version of Sulman’s ‘spiderweb’ design was suggested to Tuxen by Sulman’s advocacy of the same as a building block for the national capital design, then the end result was not intended to achieve the same function. Sulman’s web was conceived to cut the shortest route between various ‘key’ points and was meant only as a schematic sketch for a design intended to be altered to accommodate natural features. Sulman himself had already arrived at an adaptation of the spiderweb which he used in his ‘Proposed Subdivision of Dacey Garden Suburb’ (Fig. XV a); the blocks numbered 1-17 by Sulman in this plan are very similar to those placed by Tuxen between what is now Davidson Street and Massey Avenue.51 Tuxen visited Daceyville in the mid-1920s if not before, and wrote of it favourably in 1927.52

Sulman’s Rosebery estate (Fig. XV b) is also close in some respects to Merrilands. It includes a tramway ‘loop’, a feature which did not exist in Melbourne at this time, but which was common in suburban Sydney, for example

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51 Sulman, ‘Town Planning and Garden Suburbs’, The Salon, August 1913, facing page 22
52 Tuxen, ‘Town Planning and the Working Man: Giving the Small House its Proper Place in the Community’, Australian Home Beautiful, 1 September 1927, p. 29
at Millers Point, La Perouse and Erskineville. Rosebery also featured an internal reserve which Sulman denoted a ‘lookout point’: Tuxen wrote in 1919 that parts of a terrain which offered ‘good views’ could be placed in ‘a park reserve’. Rosebery’s accommodation of creeks as picturesque features, with avenues either side, were also echoed in Merrilands. While Tuxen may have encountered these features in many plans, there would be few examples in Sydney before 1919; it seems therefore likely that areas like Rosebery were in some respects influential on the Merrilands plan.

While there is value in identifying the influence of Sulman and the Griffins on the Merrilands design, the tools which brought about the overall unification of the final plan were probably the textbooks available at the time, remembered by Tuxen as ‘very inadequate’. The writings of Raymond Unwin, whose own work was in part the result of engagement with, and adaptation of, the ideas and sensibilities of German planner Camillo Sitte, might well have played a part in Merrilands. It is difficult to imagine that Tuxen would have deemed Unwin’s writing ‘inadequate’ in this or any other context. Perhaps the ‘inadequacy’ was the extent to which Unwin’s work could be applied in Australia, or specifically to Merrilands.

Kenneth T. Jackson describes ‘the image of the bending road – not a short cut, not a thoroughfare, not a commercial strip, not a numbered street’ as ‘part and parcel of the suburban ideal’. The fractured curves of the Merrilands streets lent themselves to creating the kind of streetscapes and ‘street pictures’ of Unwin’s and Sitte’s conception, as might the central squares and placement of churches and other public buildings, so as to guard against the ‘monotonous atmosphere’ Tuxen railed against in a 1927 radio address. Tuxen may even have considered the simple curve a Tuxen family trademark. He wrote in 1932

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54 Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivisions’, p.43
55 Reps, Canberra 1912, pp. 35-37
56 Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, p. 76
57 Raymond Unwin, Town Planning in Practice, p. 260
58 Tuxen, ‘Melbourne Subdivisions’ p. 3
that he ‘followed in the footsteps of my father, who was a staunch advocate of curves’. Both father and son seem to have come to appreciate, long before Unwin had published *Town Planning in Practice*, the ‘beautiful street pictures’ he describes appearing in the curved streetscape. That the use of the curve was also, for Tuxen, a demonstration of the surveyor’s technical skill, is perhaps more indicative of his interest in the feature. ‘For the inexperienced designer,’ he wrote, ‘I would strongly advocate leaving curves alone.’

There is a brief and unsubstantiable mention of invitations made to Sitte in the late 19th century to prepare plans for Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney in George R. Collins and Christine Craseman Collins’ work on Sitte. If any overtures were made to Sitte at this time regarding a plan for these cities, it suggests that his work was known to the Australian architectural or surveying fraternity of the time. This might additionally suggest that practitioners like August Tuxen were familiar with the Sitte philosophy before Unwin promoted it more widely in the English-speaking world. If the Collins’ assertion is correct, this may then be a source for August Tuxen’s use of curves to produce ‘street pictures’, as passed on to his son, though he may as easily have originated this concept himself, with Unwin providing the terminology Saxil later used to describe it.

The semi- or quarter-circle road represents an aesthetic preference expressed in Tuxen’s work suggesting a connection both to the 1880s garden suburbs in a broader sense and, more specifically, the work of his father; usually such roads partially ringed the corner of a subdivision where sales were initially made. Tuxen regularly utilised this simple device: McLagan Crescent, at the south eastern corner of Merrilands – near the proposed ‘Merrilands Station’ which ultimately was not built, though Ruthven Station was later erected further north of its proposed site – takes this form, as does Tuxen’s original design for Newton Crescent in Lalor (1947) (Fig. XXX). Viviani Crescent, in Heathmont

59 Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice*, p. 260
60 Tuxen, ‘Design of Subdivisions in Victoria’, p. 182
Fig. XVI. A small subdivision of Tuxen's at Heathmont, near Ringwood, from 1922. Tuxen's curved streets maximise access to the station; Heathmont station is at the end of Lisgoold Street. Victorian Land Titles Office.
(1921) (Fig. XVI) is an inversion of the usual design orientation, probably necessitated by the shape of the subdivision block.

Saxil Tuxen was more, however, than the technically skilled assembler of a collage. His street plan at Merrilands was directed in part by a wish to minimise waterway crossings: he wrote in 1932 that ‘the number of crossings… was kept down to a minimum to avoid expense in bridge construction’.  

Many early 20th century land developers in the USA – such as J. C. Nichols and his Country Club District in Kansas City – were required to build roads for their projects, relying on government and private bodies for other services. The responsibilities for the provision of urban infrastructure and the control of subdivisions were very different in Victoria. Companies such as T. M. Burke in Melbourne were dependent on local councils for the building of roads. All other social and infrastructure services in this period were the responsibility of the Victorian government. Sewerage and drainage was the responsibility of the Metropolitan Board of Works, which extended its jurisdiction to 13 miles from the GPO in response to developments such as Merrilands. Electricity was available to the northern limit of Merrilands’ area, courtesy of the Melbourne Electrical Supply Company. Train and tram lines were built, and services operated, by state transport authorities.

The Shire of Preston’s obligation – and the degree to which it could claim to be entrusted with the ‘town planning’ of the area – lay in approving the subdivision plan. Its criteria for doing this involved ensuring that the roads of a development such as Merrilands were no impediment to drainage of the land and

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65 There were some technical exceptions, including instances in which the subdivider included ‘foot reserves’ or ‘where a street is placed alongside a railway, a pipe track, etc.’ Tuxen, ‘Design of Subdivision in Victoria’, The Australian Surveyor Vol. 4 No. 2, p. 123
67 Argus, 2 February 1924, p. 21

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that thoroughfare levels were fixed. Municipal engineers were required to examine subdivision plans with drainage issues in mind.\textsuperscript{69}

There was little co-ordination between suburban districts on planning issues in Melbourne until the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works took over this role in 1949, thirty years after the first land sales at Merrilands.\textsuperscript{70} The role taken by local government at Merrilands was not consistent throughout Australia; the Greater Sydney Development Association, for instance, was required to pay for the construction of roads at Castlecrag.\textsuperscript{71}

While T. M. Burke and Co. could be grateful they were not obliged to pay for road construction (or indeed anything other than a survey plan and advertising programs), such an arrangement did mean that they had to rely on local government for the successful execution of their sales schemes. In the case of Merrilands, limited access to portions of the estate might therefore limit sales and growth: thus a subdivision’s street plan would necessarily strive to guide growth and the nature or extent of development. A series of articles in the Preston \textit{Leader} of late 1919 suggest that Preston council were opposed to spending any money on the initial development of the area they, or the newspaper, consistently called ‘Merrielands’.\textsuperscript{72} Though there is no clear explanation for the council’s reticence in the \textit{Leader’s} reports, it is symptomatic of a wider attitude to new real estate development at the local government level in Melbourne.

Tuxen was, in certain respects, far more experienced in subdivision planning for Australian suburban conditions than many others in the field. Like his father before him, Tuxen worked within the commercial land subdivision system under which Melbourne had grown; by the time he designed Merrilands, he had

\textsuperscript{69} Tuxen, op cit p. 122  
\textsuperscript{71} Walker, Kabos, Weirick (eds), \textit{Building for Nature}, p. 11  
worked on many more suburban subdivisions\textsuperscript{73} than the Griffins\textsuperscript{74} and Sulman.\textsuperscript{75} Most of Tuxen’s planning work prior to Merrilands would not easily fit into the category of ‘garden suburb’ or ‘town planning’ work. However, considering that Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen were all required to be skilled at recognising the balance between a vendor and developer’s requirements and the needs of purchasers/investors in a subdivision, there is no doubt that Tuxen was by far the most successful – if success is defined in terms of projects actually reaching completion in a form close to the original design.

While Merrilands is undoubtedly a blending of styles and fashions of planning immediately after the First World War, it is also a template for the mature subdivision work of Saxil Tuxen. While few of the proposed land use conceptions included in the original plan were realised, it nevertheless marks an unusual and in many respects unique beginning to the 1920s garden suburb in Australia. Its conception is the result of the imaginative appropriation of original, local, and international ideas by a skilled Australian technician.

Tuxen was in touch with international developments, and utilised them where appropriate in his work. The Merrilands plan is a diverse mixture of influences and ideas, brought together in a plan which both Tuxen and his client, T. M. Burke, must have calculated to appeal to the Australian public. While Canberra was a major influence in the design of Merrilands, this cannot be taken to suggest that Merrilands was designed in imitation of Canberra or that the

\textsuperscript{73} Tuxen’s works produced under his own name – rather than from the office of August Tuxen and Son – to 1919 include Ritchie’s Paddock, Hill-Top, Eastern Gardens, East Kew Heights Estate, Cheltenham Park Estate, the Mar Lodge Estate, the Oval Estate, the Landscape Estate, and an estate including Beckley, Cole and Grant Streets, Coburg. See Appendix.

\textsuperscript{74} The Griffins’ Australian garden suburb work was limited before 1919 to Summit and Glenard, although their city designs prepared in Australia were numerous, and included Griffith, Leeton, Tuggeranong, Jervis Bay City Home Extension and Port Stephens City Estate. Griffith and Leeton aside, none of these cities were realised to any extent. Turnbull and Navaretti also cite a project at Fairy Harbour, Manly which was similarly unrealised and of which no plans survive. During their first few years in Australia the Griffins also prepared plans for numerous North American projects, including Newton Centre, Illinois; Vanderhoof Town Plan Extension, British Columbia; Gardenvale, Montana; Burna, Montana; a town plan for George Harvey of West Chicago; and the Greenleaf Park Estate, Indiana. See Appendix.

\textsuperscript{75} Sulman prepared many hypothetical plans before 1919 most of which appear to have been intended solely as illustrative examples. His commissioned works at this time include Rosebery, 1911; Dacey Garden Suburb, 1912, which was modified radically by Foggitt in 1917; Matraville Garden Village in 1917; and Littleton, at Lithgow in 1918.
Griffins exercised a personal influence over Tuxen disproportionate to other works or designers that may have indirectly contributed to the overall design.

No pictorial representations survive of the lifestyle projected at Merrilands; the estate may have been sold purely as speculative land, the onus to entice buyers lying entirely with the estate plan itself. However, the street plan of Merrilands itself has a rhetoric of its own which fits John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold’s definition of sales rhetoric: ‘images and symbols… selected from reality by the advertisers but fashioned to meet the audience’s needs’.

The Merrilands plan as it was made available to real estate agents like Coghill and Haughton, printed in large-format on quality parchment, appears to speak in a commonsense or pragmatic fashion for itself.

Tuxen’s categorisation and allocation of specially designated areas in Merrilands promotes the idea of an ordered landscape appropriate to a modern post-war, and perhaps shell-shocked, society. It also suggests a new domestic ideal corresponding to the ‘scientific’ reading of suburban home life, now seen as the province of ‘experts’ – as analysed by Kerreen Reiger. Here the planner created a further realm for the expertise of the new profession to flower: a realm which comes close to the Benthamite vision referred to by Huxley and by which the planner created a design for living for the inhabitant of the plan. In the case of Merrilands this scenario is perhaps further from the paternalism of the Benthamites, as the estate was for private sale; as property owners, the inhabitants would be, one must assume, in a position to discuss the acceptance or rejection of the suggested zoning.

It is clear that Tuxen firmly believed in the value of expertise and that he felt that the surveying profession was responsible for the central tenets of

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76 John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold “Home at Last!”: Building societies, home ownership and the imagery of English suburban promotion in the interwar years’ in Gold and Ward (eds.) Place Promotion, p.77
77 Reiger, The Disenchantment of the Home, p.33
Fig. XVII The area of Reservoir, in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, showing Tuxen’s estate developments and the dates they were designed. Only the southern portion of Reservoir West, which dates largely from the 19th century, was not strongly influenced by Tuxen. The railway line, which strongly influenced development in this area, runs approximately parallel to High Street.
Melbourne’s planning, including its ‘magnificent layout and park system’, and that this was a responsibility that could not be taken lightly.79

Tuxen’s interest in both civic improvement and the advancement of professional practice preceded the widespread interest in town planning; these are elements which cannot be ascribed to an American influence which took hold in Melbourne in the 1920s, as they precede even the First World War.

The Merrilands design is, therefore, a melting pot of various design practices prevalent in Australia, and in some instances internationally, in 1919, combined with features which, while they were not unique to Tuxen’s work, mark a continuum from his father’s 19th century garden suburb work.

_Tuxen uses Merrilands_

Merrilands contained distinct elements of contemporary and innovative town planning, and as a commercial venture deserves recognition of its unique qualities.

In her books _Cities for Sale_ and _The Land Racket_, Sandercock outlines an argument against land speculation that lionises the position of ‘planner’: ‘the planning process has been exploited,’ she writes, by private speculation.80 Sandercock uses the term ‘planner’ to refer not to the subdivisional or garden suburb planner in private practice but to the metropolitan planner and is, within her own terms, largely correct. However, Merrilands should be regarded as a privately funded foray into planning a ‘desirable pattern of urban development’. Although it is only a fragment of such development without a publicised wider scheme for growth behind it, it should be recognised that with Merrilands, the Keon Park estate which he designed in 1921, and the Leslie Estate of 1923, Saxil Tuxen was responsible for a significant proportion – the majority – of the street plan of what was to become the suburb of Reservoir (Fig. XVII). Indeed, in this area, Tuxen achieved through the creation of three separate estates for

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79 Saxil Tuxen, ‘Presidential Address by Mr. Saxil Tuxen, Retiring President’ _Australian Surveyor_, vol. 4 no. 6 1933, p. 321
80 Sandercock, _The Land Racket_, p. xii
different entrepreneurs, interlinked 'garden suburbs' with some unified components. Although this was a ground plan only, and Tuxen had no input into the administration or development of this region, the area of his three plans combined exceeded the ambitions or the capabilities of any government body until after the Second World War. It would be difficult to imagine a way in which Tuxen might have negotiated deliberately for this to occur, the vendors of all three estates being different operators working at different times and, presumably, rivals. It must be assumed therefore that it was coincidental, or, perhaps more likely, that Merrilands was seen to be so lucrative that the vendors of Keon Park and what was to become the Leslie Estate approached Tuxen with a view to replicating that success.

In 1919, the time he was working on Merrilands, Tuxen delivered a paper to the First Victorian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition in Ballarat. Here he made it clear that he believed there was a role for the planner in private practice to add to the 'town-planned' nature of the Australian city:

[T]he subdivision of land... is a work which is going on ceaselessly, and if Town Planning principle are studied in such extensions much can be done... to repair or at least ameliorate the original errors of the skeleton plan... I contend that with a little foresight, proper supervision, and a simplification of the present system of such supervision very great improvements may be effected.

Tuxen is here referring to the very limited controls on planning that were in place under both state and local governments: it was his own imperative, however, as active town planning advocate and practitioner, that directed the shape Reservoir has taken. Both surveyor and entrepreneur were limited in what they could or would do with an area like Merrilands. This limitation was shaped by their own financial considerations, by what they were permitted to undertake under local

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81 The most notable of the unified components in question is the number of streets that reflect each other between Leslie and its northwest neighbour, Merrilands. Carrol street and a section of Glasgow street, Orange and McCasker streets, Strathmerton and Allenby streets, all correspond with each other between the two estates. All three estates follow roughly the same design principles, including wide central ‘backbone’ roads on the broadway concept; all include internal reserves; all are oriented, to some degree, to convenience for pedestrian access to railway stations.

82 Tuxen, 'Suburban Subdivisions', p. 41
council jurisdiction, and by what was considered appropriate in the setting out of a suburban area by a private company. It is clear that, while they may not have been openly hostile, the majority of the councillors of Preston shire treated the Merrilands development with some suspicion. Burke's response to this kind of approach was to advocate the placing of 'offending councillors' in a lion cage and to drive them over 'the bad roads they had permitted to exist'.

There were a number of ways in Burke rewarded those in local government who assisted in his projects, and these were no doubt typical of the approach of many successful land vendors. They can also be seen as an attempt by Burke, as the developer and in some respects visionary leader of a project, to create both significant symbolic monuments and entrenched facilities such as parks. Burke presented land he could not sell for building purposes to councils — for instance, swampland alongside Gardiner's Creek in Malvern — conforming to planning requirements at the same time as collecting kudos for his benevolence.

Burke could also offer those who assisted him, commemoration in the expanding city. The nomenclature of Merrilands is for the most part quite grandiose. The naming of one of the main roads of Merrilands after Councillor and local real estate agent J. S. McFadzean is an unusual exception among street names commemorating great men of government, diplomacy and the military.

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83 Shire of Preston Minute Book. 13 August 1917 - 18 October 1920 in Central Records Dept, Darebin Council; entries for October 20, 1919 (p. 519); December 15, 1919 (p. 559); Jan 27, 1920 (p. 584), Feb 23, 1920 (pp. 600, 608) all refer to objections made by Preston Council to the procedure undertaken by Burke and Tuxen at Merrilands in dealing with council regulations, as do 'Merrilands [sic] Estate Subdivision', Preston Leader December 6, 1919, p. 6; 'Preston Shire Council', Preston Leader, December 15 1919, p. 6. The majority of these objections seem to relate to the assumptions made by both Tuxen and Burke regarding the council's approval of plans and supply of services.

84 T. M. Burke, 'If I Were Dictator!' Evening Sun, June 21 1924, p. 13

Merrilands' street names appealed, largely, to patriotism and represented 'brotherhood and freedom' in a form easily decoded by prospective homebuyers of the interwar years. In this it bears some similarity to the nomenclature of Richard Stanton's Haberfield development, where streets were named for Australia's first federal politicians. It is not known who was responsible for the application of these names, though Tuxen used one – Vasey – in six subdivisions he designed subsequently, for a variety of vendors.86

McFadzean's presence among great men of world politics may have been in recognition of his support for Merrilands, though there is no evidence of such support in either council minutes or newspaper reports. It may have come from his involvement in the construction of the artificial Edwardes Lake, and its surrounding parklands, nearby, which provided a boost to the area.87 It might also have been an honour conferred on McFadzean as 'the leader of a team of workers' which constructed the first Presbyterian church in the area, or in recognition of his membership of the Town Planning Association of Victoria.88 The street named for McFadzean takes its place as one side of the Merrilands 'triangle'. The names of the roads on the other two sides of the triangle are Hughes, for Australia's Prime Minister, and Botha, presumably after South Africa's Louis Botha, widely regarded at this time as one of the great statesmen of the British Empire.89 This elevation of McFadzean to the symbolic heights of

86 These are the two Vasey Avenues in Lalor and Mt Waverley; Vasey Concourse in Croydon/Ringwood East, the 'Pine Lodge' estate; and the two Vasey Streets in Ascot Vale and Ivanhoe's Hartlands Estate. George Vasey (1895-1945) was a popular Lieutenant in the First World War who also had a distinguished career in the Second World War, during which he was killed. The names Dunstan and Jacka also recur as street names in many Tuxen subdivisions, including those at Crib Point, Balwyn and Macleod. Plans for these estates were prepared for diverse clients and it can only be assumed that, left to his own devices, these were the men Tuxen himself chose to commemorate. William Dunstan (1895-1957) was a soldier and newspaper manager; Albert Jacka (1893-1932) was a soldier and merchant. Both men received the Victoria Cross in World War I. Tuxen's guilt over his own failure to serve in the First World War may have played a part in this interest in war heroes. All three men, and many other 1914-1918 war heroes, are commemorated in interwar subdivisions around Australia; Jacka is notably memorialised amongst the street names of Daceyville.
87 Preston Leader, 20 May 1922, p. 4; Preston Leader, 20 December 1916, p. 6
88 Granville Wilson, Celebrating 75 Years of God's Grace: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Reservoir, St Andrews, Reservoir, Vic. 1993, p. 6; 'Town Planning Generally' Folder, MTPC archives box 14, Public Records Office, Victoria
89 Editorial, Preston Leader, Sept 27 1919, p. 2
contemporary 'great men' is merely confusing, and neither Burke nor Tuxen recorded the reasoning behind this. It takes, perhaps, a symbolic approach to three tiers of government – albeit one which excludes a representative state leader. \(^{90}\) Most of the other streets of the area were named after war heroes from around Australia, as well as international leaders such as President Wilson.

Tuxen wrote in 1932 that, for Merrilands, 'there was no planning authority, apart from the limited jurisdiction of the council, to control the work, and I had to obtain the best result in the interests of my client.\(^{91}\) Such a representation of the designer as suspended between the Council's planning regulations – which might oblige the vendor to create a more civic-minded suburb for his projected community – and the client, who might 'lean' on the designer to create the maximum of lots with valuable frontages – suggests that Tuxen experienced something of a dilemma over his assumed role of social engineer at this time. He also wrote that 'a surveyor is encouraged neither by his principal, usually a land agent, nor by the public, who are going to live in the area, to put his best work into... the suburb.'\(^{92}\) Perhaps it was not so much a moral dilemma as a professional one: one which his attempt to promote the creation of a board of specialists to judge the worth of subdivision projects, was calculated to save him from.

Tuxen was only able to make suggestions, through his advocacy and through his actual plan, about garden suburb development. What he suggested shows the influence of the kind of belief in environmental determinism espoused and practiced by Sulman and many of his and Tuxen's contemporaries. Tuxen wrote that Merrilands 'forms a true residential area in which the inhabitants as a body would take as much pride as the individual generally does in his own private garden, and the effect on the community spirit must be most

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\(^{90}\) The state premier in 1914 was the National Party's Harry Lawson. Tuxen's design for the Leslie Estate, which adjoins Merrilands but dates from 1923, does contain a Lawson Street – however, as it is situated next to a Lindsay Street, it is probably fair to assume that these are in honour of the writers Henry Lawson and Adam Lindsay Gordon.


pronounced.\textsuperscript{93} Community spirit is enshrined in Tuxen's original plan for Merrilands in unusual ways: the placement of the churches, for instance, made it impossible for anybody going to the Town Hall to avoid passing one. Tuxen also believed in 'amenity':

You must have shopping areas, playgrounds and other forms of parks, schools, places of worship and amusement within easy reach of your home, and any industry of an objectionable nature as far removed from same as possible.

All these factors must be considered when designing subdivisions, and it will at once be appreciated that many of them are community factors; that is, they cannot all be provided in one plan of subdivision, unless it is of a very large area, such as Merrilands.\textsuperscript{94}

These ambitious projections and the areas labeled 'town hall', 'church' and so on in the Merrilands plan were not enshrined in law, and T. M. Burke had no intention of building anything of this nature.

The Merrilands 'fiction'

The way that Tuxen designed Merrilands has actually brought forth derision from certain historians. Two histories of Preston have called it into question: Carroll and Rule term his plan 'grandiose';\textsuperscript{95} Forster calls it 'elaborate and rather fictitious'.\textsuperscript{96} Freestone also claims that it 'contributed to the massive oversupply of residential allotments in Melbourne's northern suburbs'.\textsuperscript{97} These critiques are all justified. The plan was overly ambitious in conception, considering the measures Burke and Tuxen might honestly have expected to achieve with the limited interest or resources of Preston council. There seems to have been no particular involvement in the area on the part of Burke once the original lots were sold, beyond the continued administration of the internal reserve areas. Preston

\textsuperscript{93} Tuxen, 'Design of Subdivisions in Victoria', \textit{The Australian Surveyor}, Vol. 4, No. 3 September 1932, p. 180
\textsuperscript{94} Tuxen, 'Design of Subdivisions in Victoria', op. cit, p. 178
\textsuperscript{95} Brian Carroll and Ian Rule, \textit{Preston: An Illustrated History}, City of Preston, Preston, 1985, p. 127
\textsuperscript{97} Freestone, \textit{Model Communities}, p. 192
council apparently refused to take possession of these. However, to dismiss the Merrilands plan out of hand is to negate a valid experiment in garden suburb planning for private enterprise: Tuxen was embarking on what was, in many ways, an unprecedented creation for Australia. As an early experiment in garden suburbs developed on 'town planning lines' it is a careful, imaginative and comprehensive ground plan.

The project was certainly seen as ambitious at the time, and there is at least as much skepticism as interest in the Preston Leader's comment in 1919 that Tuxen and Burke showed "some" vision in putting forward such elaborate 'model city' plans – 'some' being a fashionable turn of phrase that implied understatement, probably equal to the present day use of 'to say the least'. At the same time, Tuxen’s peers in the planning and civic progress community received the Merrilands plan favourably. The Victorian Education Department’s William Gates, speaking the same afternoon as Tuxen at the First Victorian Town Planning Conference in 1919, said the 'projected township' of Merrilands was 'much in advance of anything yet done in Victoria'.

If there is any explanation for the huge success of Merrilands – the pre-existing high demand for housing provision notwithstanding – it must surely be its value as an aspirational model for those who remained optimistic for Australia's prospects in peacetime. Robert Fishman writes of the utopian plans of the interwar years that:

[They] were effective because they spoke directly to hopes and fears that were widely shared. In particular, they reflected (1) the pervasive fear of and revulsion from the nineteenth century metropolis; (2) the sense that modern technology had made possible exciting new urban forms; and (3) the great expectation that a revolutionary age of brotherhood and freedom was at hand.

98 Editorial, Preston Leader, Sept 27 1919, p. 2  
100 Robert Fishman, Bourgeois Utopias: the Rise and Fall of Suburbia, Basic Books, New York, 1987, p. 10
Merrilands was one of the first new suburban subdivisions of the interwar era, and its grand scale and range of projected facilities might well have appealed to the returned soldier brutalised by their war experience, as well as his family, who may also have been traumatised in a different way. Janet McCalman ascribes the conservatism of the post-war years to the ‘deadened and deadening spirit’ of the traumatised middle class suburbanites.\textsuperscript{101} If the first settlers in areas like Merrilands can be typified as inherently conservative, this may go some way to explaining why garden suburbs failed to develop the kind of community spirit their creators wished; but the peaceful urban-rural nature of the slowly developing area may well have appealed to such a mentality in the first instance. There is irony, for the observer eighty years later, in the fact that in Merrilands this vision would be brought to prospective post-First World War homebuyers by a vendor effectively profiteering from low land prices brought on by the war itself, and a surveyor who suffered extreme guilt over his own failure to enlist.

The very name ‘Merrilands’ is meaningful in a post-war sense. Though the name of the area pre-dates the 20th century, and comes originally from the Aboriginal name for the creek running alongside the estate’s western border, there must have been resonance in the name for returned soldiers or other Australians who aspired to a better future. Another vendor tried to replicate the estate’s success with a ‘Merrylands’ estate in Camberwell in 1925.\textsuperscript{102}

To term plans such as Merrilands ‘grandiose’ or ‘fictitious’ is in some respects to misrepresent the way in which real estate vendors and the public at large regarded land sales at this time. It is akin to the approach, attributed by William H. Wilson to historians who, using Marxist analysis, damn the City Beautiful movement for its ‘fake altruism and altruistic rhetoric’.\textsuperscript{103} There is no evidence that the sale of land at Merrilands was promoted as anything more than a speculative venture, and indeed the typifying of his clients as speculators was a

\textsuperscript{101} Janet McCalman, ‘Private Life in the Garden Suburbs Between the Wars’ in Davison et al (eds.), The Cream Brick Frontier, p. 52

\textsuperscript{102} This estate is advertised in the Melbourne Herald Dec 2 1925, p. 17

\textsuperscript{103} W. H. Wilson, ‘The Glory, Destruction and Meaning of the City Beautiful Movement’ in Campbell and Fainstein (eds.) Readings in Planning Theory, pp. 68-102, p. 84
part of Burke’s conventional ‘pitch’. It is true, of course, that little evidence exists of Burke’s claims for Merrilands largely because so much of his sales approach was predicated on the door-to-door salesman, who might indeed promise many things to the naive ‘investor’ which would never appear on paper, let alone in the built environment. However, this does not nullify Merrilands as an attempt by Tuxen to create a desirable and discrete garden suburb. Rather, Tuxen’s plan is encoded to appeal not only to the investors of 1919, but also the hypothetical homebuyers of the future – as their tastes would be envisaged by the original investors.

In writing disparagingly of private enterprise garden suburb developments such as Merrilands, historians such as Carroll and Rule and Forster suggest that the developer and planner failed their clients by refusing to provide services for them and otherwise nurture the growing suburban community. To do so would, however, be to take roles more suited to that of various tiers of government in the post-war years of 20th century urban expansion. Once again, this is a criticism of the progress of ‘planning’ as seen through the second half of the 20th century, and it introduces assumptions that are not relevant to the formative years of the planning profession.

Burke regarded his role, as developer, to work in tandem with local councils, the municipalities of which would benefit by an increased population. As it transpired, certain parts of the Merrilands estate – notably the internal reserves – were still in the possession of his company forty years later, when they were finally transferred to Preston council for a pittance in exchange for release from rate and road maintenance commitments.\(^{104}\)

Government – often local government – bye-laws controlled the nature of individual planning schemes from region to region. In Australian cities, and particularly Melbourne,\(^ {105}\) which did not have planning regulations as comprehensive as, for instance, Adelaide’s, Brisbane’s, or even Sydney’s during

\(^{104}\) Correspondence files, re: Reserves – Merrilands Estate, Preston Council Records, Public Records Office, Victoria

\(^{105}\) Freestone, *Model Communities*, pp. 201-202
the interwar years, this created different kinds of subdivisions in different council jurisdictions. H. C. Crouch, a Melbourne-based surveyor said in response to Tuxen’s paper at the 1919 Victorian conference:

I don’t think any two councils in Melbourne have the same conditions. If I don’t happen to have done a subdivision in a municipality I try to find out what the conditions of that council are, and then try to fall in with them.\(^{106}\)

It is also true that the creative planner could easily find his aspirations for a plan hampered by the financial considerations of the vendor. R. de C. Wilks pointed out in response to the same paper that ‘all surveyors have got to work according to instructions. Very often these come from land speculators.’\(^{107}\) Tuxen himself spoke of getting ‘the best result in the interests of my client’ in regards to Merrilands.\(^{108}\) It is impossible to gauge the extent to which a surveyor like Tuxen might have fought for aspects of a plan he felt were integral. It can be deduced from the fact that he chose, in 1932, to write about Merrilands as a good example of garden suburb subdivision that he felt it was a project on which he was not forced to compromise unduly, or one in which compromise had not spoiled the plan.

*Garden suburb features in commercial subdivisions*

Merrilands, though an important step in garden suburb development within the private sector, was of course far from unique. There are numerous examples in Melbourne alone of 1920s subdivisions being sold on the basis of their connection to ‘town planning’, the garden suburb or the ‘garden city’. Many of these appear to have none of the conventional aspects of the garden suburb, and some adhere instead to the conventional grid. For others, the garden suburb aspects of a plan were accentuated as much as or less than features such as access to public transport, or the financial advantages of owning one’s own

\(^{106}\) H. C. Crouch, quoted in ‘Questions and Discussion’ following Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivisions’, p. 44

\(^{107}\) R. de C. Wilks, quoted in ‘Questions and Discussion’ following Tuxen, ‘Suburban Subdivisions’, p. 44

Fig XVIII. A portion of the Ranelagh Estate, designed by the Griffins with Tuxen and Miller as surveyors. This, the western portion of the design with north to the right and Port Philip Bay at the top, shows the Griffins' use of organic forms and internal reserves and other open space provision.
Fig. XIX: A portion of Park Orchards, designed by the firm of Tuxen and Miller in 1926. This section shows the large central circles of the estate, and the parkland provision (Dirleton Reserve) in the centre. Though initially promoted as a resort site, Park Orchards is today a middle-class suburb. Coghill and Haughton Papers, Doncaster box, Melbourne University Archives.
home. The Box Hill Estate of 1922, for instance, designed by E. P. Muntz and sold by the estate agents Duncan and Miller, listed ten ‘Main Essentials in Selecting a Home Site’; these included environmental features and facilities, and tenth, ‘Town Planning’ with the vague assurance that ‘The Estate has been laid out with the latest approved Town-Planning ideas, and each lot has a slope to Graham Place’. The small ‘Estate’ itself consisted of one crooked street and 37 lots.

Advertising for other estates highlights the middle-class appeal of garden suburbs. The ‘Golf Links Estate, Macleod’, not to be confused with Tuxen’s smaller estate at Macleod for which no advertising has been located, announced ‘the Commencement of the Planning Age’, adding:

And it comes none too soon. Instead of land being subdivided for suburban purposes in every hole and corner that prompts the speculator, the areas for building suburban residences on allotments… should be fixed by the municipality, and development would proceed along practical lines, and the domestic utilities would then be within the reach of all instead of being out of the reach [sic] as they are to-day for many outer-suburban builders. GOLF LINKS ESTATE On account of its situation and suitableness would be the first area opened up at Macleod if the above conditions were in force.110

This estate – which did indeed adjoin a golf links – was also to be the site of a number of sporting facilities, which suggests that Coghill and Haughton, who sold it, and James G. Gillespie, who planned it, hoped to attract a clientele seeking a country club-styled lifestyle in the vein of J. C. Nichols’ Kansas City, Missouri estates.

Two other projects which seem to have taken inspiration from Nichols are the Ranelagh Estate (Fig. XVIII), planned by the Griffins in association with Tuxen and Miller, near Mount Eliza on the Mornington Peninsula, and Tuxen and Miller’s design for Park Orchards (Fig. XIX), at the very edge of development in

109 ‘Box Hill Estate’ advertising pamphlet in ‘Mont Albert/Box Hill’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
110 ‘The Prospective Golf Links Estate Macleod: Melbourne’s New Suburb 1921’ Pamphlet in ‘Eaglemont, Heidelberg, Macleod’ box, Coghill and Haughton papers, Melbourne University Archives
the north east of Melbourne. Both projects were executed for Taylor and Sharp, timber merchants who had expanded into real estate development and who used unsold land in their subdivision schemes for their primary business.\textsuperscript{111}

Ranelagh was both seaside resort and country club, its streets named with Anglophile zeal. ‘All the comforts of city living will be there, but not its drawbacks’, proclaimed its advertising brochure, ‘and with the composite advantage only to be found in a locality that so happily unites the bush and the sea’.\textsuperscript{112} Land purchase carried with it automatic membership of the Ranelagh Club, a recreation club at the beach end of the development. The plan by ‘Mr. Walter Burley Griffin, designer of the Federal Capital, co-operating with Mr. Tuxen, surveyor’\textsuperscript{113} would, it was said, ‘in the future be ‘a monument to his genius’.\textsuperscript{114}

Not surprisingly, land was not auctioned but sold to approved customers: Sequoia Pty Ltd announced that it would ‘exercise a certain amount of discrimination in selling lots upon this Estate, and it is trusted that it will commend itself particularly to professional men generally’.\textsuperscript{115} The exact conditions by which one might be approved were not specified in the literature, Australian estate planning was rarely overtly exclusive of racial minorities in the manner that some American developments were.\textsuperscript{116} That said, Australian society at this time was of course profoundly racist, and cultural divides existed even within the dominant white community, where constant strong tensions were maintained between Protestants and Catholics. The names of the 15 Committee members elected at the first Ranelagh Club meeting in 1924 were all Anglo-Saxon.\textsuperscript{117} Racist or otherwise, this kind of upper class development was a far from unusual project for the Griffins to be involved in,\textsuperscript{118} though it was a concept plainly quite distant

\textsuperscript{111} Trading under the name Sequoia (for Ranelagh) and the Park Orchards Company.
\textsuperscript{112} J. S. McDonald, ‘Ranelagh’ in \textit{Ranelagh}, n.d. p. 17
\textsuperscript{113} McDonald, \textit{Ranelagh}, op. cit., p. 1
\textsuperscript{114} McDonald, \textit{Ranelagh}, op. cit., p. 17
\textsuperscript{115} McDonald, \textit{Ranelagh}, n.d. p. 9
\textsuperscript{117} Marie McMahon, \textit{The Story of the Ranelagh Estate (Nyora) and of the Ranelagh Club of Mount Eliza}, Ranelagh Club, Mt Eliza, 1996, p. 8
\textsuperscript{118} The Eaglemont estates, and American developments such as Rock Crest, Rock Glen (1913) appear to have been designed for a similar, elite clientele.
from their notions of democratic planning and architecture. They did not become members of the Club, though it is not clear whether they were offered membership.

In the wake of the commercial success of the Ranelagh estate its vendors engaged Tuxen and his new business partner George Miller\(^{119}\) to create a simulation of an ‘alpine resort’ on the outskirts of Melbourne. The ‘alpine’ nature of the area perhaps accentuated by the fact that the land had previously been used as a pine plantation and many of the pines were still in existence; Melbourne’s climate guaranteed that it would never see snow. Its name conformed to the tradition Jackson has identified as a departure from identification with the urban.\(^{120}\) The design of the area – focused on two features, a large circular park to the south and a recreation and clubhouse area to the north – fitted with this departure. Unlike Merrilands, Leslie and other large estates Tuxen had designed in the previous seven years, there was no shopping precinct or area suitable for civic buildings or local government administration.

As they had done with Ranelagh and the essay entitled ‘The Idea of Ranelagh’, Taylor and Sharp produced an attractive booklet to promote ‘The Idea of Park Orchards’:

The idea of ‘Park Orchards’ is a community settlement of country homes situated in delightful and beautiful hill country, accessible at all times and seasons without undue loss of time or expense, permitting a speedy return to daily routine at any moment, where every possible healthy recreation and convenience will exist, and while, though the cost per family be comparatively infinitesimal, the facilities for enjoyment, which will belong absolutely to the owners of those homes, will be much more extensive than the wealthiest in the land out of any single purse would care to attempt.\(^{121}\)

\(^{119}\) Despite a consistent and conscientious search throughout the course of researching this thesis, very little information has been uncovered about George Miller. He was a qualified surveyor, and came formerly from Ballarat; there is no evidence that he had any presence in town planning before his association with Tuxen. The partnership of Tuxen and Miller began in 1924 and does not seem to have survived the Second World War.

\(^{120}\) Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 273

\(^{121}\) *Park Orchards* booklet, p. 6, in ‘Doncaster’ Box Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
There was also the possibility – a situation in which Tuxen may conceivably have found himself in a conflict of interest – that the Park Orchards site would increase greatly in value when the Doncaster railway line, proposed and promoted by the MTPC, was built. Advertising for Park Orchards drew attention to its position ‘within half a mile’ of the intended railway and by 1929 there were newspaper reports suggesting that the anticipated railway had ‘caused a substantial rise in the value of this land’.

Park Orchards’ plan was ascribed to ‘Messrs. Tuxen and Miller, Surveyors, whose recent similar work carried out at “Ranelagh”, at Frankston, has attracted a great deal of public commendation.’ Thus the name of Walter Burley Griffin was eliminated from the Ranelagh project. The Griffin reputation for being a ‘crank’ may have been thought to have caused purchasers to shy away from Ranelagh; Park Orchards did not contain internal reserves, and if the vendors wished to eliminate this feature from the new project, there may have been some conflict with the Griffins. However, it is also true that the Griffins left Melbourne for Sydney at the time of the planning of Park Orchards, and may have been unwilling to return for this project. The name of Tuxen was itself well-known amongst potential homebuyers at this time and may have been deemed sufficient as a selling point without the need to bring the Griffin name to the project. Advertising for the more solidly lower-middle-class Leslie Estate (by this time retitled the ‘Railway Station Estate’, due to its proximity to Reservoir railway station) in 1923 mentioned that he was ‘a member of the Town Planning Commission, and the district has been subdivided on the most modern lines.’ Whether this proved an effective selling point, it certainly did not hinder purchasers, who, advertising claimed, bought the entire first section of the subdivision in the first hour of sale.

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122 Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, Plan of General Development, p. 132
123 Park Orchards, p. 12
124 ‘Unique Railway Problem/Home Sites and Orchards/Kew-Doncaster Line’ Argus, 1 Jan 1929, p. 10
125 Park Orchards, p.7
126 Railway Station Estate pamphlet, ‘Preston’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
127 Ibid.
The idea of the garden suburb

It is clear that the planned garden suburb was a desirable feature for many land purchasers in the interwar years, whether such purchasers were speculators or potential homebuilders, and regardless of class. In this, the form nevertheless competed with advantageous factors found in other, older forms of urban living.

What is also clear however is that the garden suburb created for commercial purposes was not, as so many since the mid-20th century have dismissed it, a fake. The way in which Merrilands was conceived reveals attitudes amongst interwar Australians towards the sale of land, the way in which land had to be packaged appealingly and with associated benefits that went beyond the mere desire to own one's own home. This was, in part, a post-war desire for comfort and security; it was also a desire, as seen in many cultural expressions of the 1920s, for glamour and modernity.

Vendors exploited this desire; similarly to the ambiguity around the idea of the 'garden suburb' or 'garden city'; it was also, however, utilised by planners to experiment with streetscapes and other aspects of the new built environment.

The example of Merrilands is very potent in this regard. As a project, it was perhaps far in advance of realistic expectations for suburban development at this time – indeed, if it were to appeal to speculative buyers intending to capitalise on their investment at some later date, it had to appear to be 'ahead of its time'. However it was not only a commercial but also a critical – within the limited boundaries of the planning community at this time – success. It seems likely that this success encouraged the sale of the Leslie Estate nearby which also utilised the services of Tuxen, and might well have made planned suburbs far more acceptable to private vendors. In this regard it can be seen as furthering the acceptance and usage of plans of a 'town-planning' or 'garden suburb' variety. In this, too, we see Saxil Tuxen finding professional benefit from his embracing of the town planning 'ethos', and the elevation of his standing in the planning community as he promoted these ideas. The MTPC's invitation of
membership to Tuxen can probably most directly be linked to his involvement in the 1919 Victorian Town Planning Conference – at which a number of men who would become commissioners were in attendance, most notably Frank Stapley – and it was here that Tuxen put forward both his views on suburban subdivision and at which Merrilands was discussed.

There is no doubt that for vendors of land in the Australia of the 1920s, the garden suburb and new notions of garden city-inspired ‘community’ or even ‘amenity’ were selling points which they had neither the capacity or desire to deliver to aspiring purchasers. Speculation was rife, a situation which was to prove antithetical to town planning and garden city ideals.

However, within this framework, planners were experimenting with new forms and schemes. There are multiple examples of innovation in garden suburb schemes around Australia which were sponsored not by government but by private land developers interested primarily in the selling of land via ‘modern’ design. While these examples do not serve as a refutation of the assertion that there was no metropolitan planning in Australia before the end of the Second World War, they do show that there was considerable constructive work undertaken in the 1920s by particular individuals in the private arena.
Chapter Four

Congestion, beauty, efficiency, prosperity… the Metropolitan Town

Planning Commission and ‘the Man in the Street’

Austral-Americans

A number of writers have discussed the influence American planning exercised over Australian planning. While it is instructive to gauge the extent of American planning’s influence on Tuxen both in private practice and as a member of the MTPC, a significant American element in Australian planning which must be accounted for is that of the Griffins themselves. While the Griffins’ work was, in many respects, too individualistic to be regarded, then or now, as typical of any movement, the responses of the Australian profession to their work is indicative of the respect accorded American ideas or American professionals.

Recent Griffin scholarship, for instance, Paul Kruty’s ‘Chicago 1900: The Griffins Come of Age’ in Ann Watson’s collection of Griffin essays, has attempted to locate the extent of the Griffins’ involvement in American planning practice in the first quarter of the 20th century.¹ Writers on the Griffins have rarely attempted to define what their status as Americans in Australia meant for them at this time. A recent exception is Jeff Turnbull, who, in ‘Dreams of Equity, 1911-1924’, also in Watson’s collection, makes some suggestions in this regard. Turnbull typifies the Griffins as belonging to a group of Americans who eagerly anticipated the growth of democratic institutions in Australia in the wake of Federation. Though these ideals were soon tempered by their encounters with bureaucracy, it nevertheless suggests that in relocating to Australia the Griffins anticipated taking a guiding role in the new nation, as ambassadors from a nation they perceived as the apex

¹ Paul Kruty, ‘Chicago 1900: The Griffins Come of Age’ in Watson (ed.), Beyond Architecture, pp. 10-25
of democracies. Turnbull also suggests the Griffins’ clients respected them for an ‘individuality’ which set them apart from the Australian architectural and planning mainstream.

However it was not only the Australian mainstream which the Griffins opposed. From the beginning of their time in Australia, they made their position apart from the mainstream of US planning opinion very clear. When Walter addressed an audience in the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects’ room in Melbourne in 1913, he emphasised ‘freedom from convention’ as the cornerstone of his approach. While he did not go heavily into detail it is clear that the convention in question – the staid, archaic architectural styles of the 19th century – were, to him, as much America’s as any other country’s. Walter had encountered criticism, in Sydney, from architects with American experience. For his Melbourne address, he anticipated a similar problem by taking pains to make clear that his views were not compatible with those taught in contemporary American universities. Their interest in innovative domestic living arrangements and community living notwithstanding, the Griffins do not seem to have been a part of any instantly identifiable ‘movement’ as far as their planning practice was concerned. They may however have come to sympathise with the kind of philosophy Rowe ascribes to both Gustav Stickley and Frank Lloyd Wright: ‘the parsimonious principle of doing the most with the least’. This is seen in their plans for very small houses – their own one-room ‘Pholiota’ being the nadir of this – and in their designs for suburbs such as Castlecrag with large areas of natural bushland far out of proportion to housing allotments.

By the mid-1920s, it is plain that the Griffins no longer considered themselves to be unproblematically ‘American’; Christopher Vernon has argued convincingly that they had been forgotten in America by this time and had no

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3 Turnbull ‘Dreams of Equity’ in Watson (ed.), Beyond Architecture, p. 115
4 ‘Mr. W. B. Griffin’s Views’ The Salon, October 1913, p.183
5 Rowe, Making a Middle Landscape, p. 69
option but to remain in Australia. C. R. Bradish, who wrote a profile of Walter for the magazine *Table Talk*, accentuated the way in which he had embraced Australia – for its landscape, if not for its people:

There is no doubt that he could have become richer and more celebrated by remaining in the United States, but Australia attracts him – the brilliancy [sic] of the local sunlight and the character of the landscape, so soothing in their shadowed greens and distinctive tree-shapes, appeal irresistibly to his artistic eye: and so it is a thousand to one that here he will eventually leave his bones.

Neither Walter nor Marion attempted, however, to gain Australian citizenship.

For reasons that can only be speculated upon, the MTPC – for all its interest in American planning practice – did not see fit to consult the Griffins on any planning matters during its tenure. The MTPC's ambivalence towards the Griffins may have been related in some measure to Walter's effective dismissal from the Canberra project, and to the controversy stemming from the antipathy between Walter and the bureaucrats he worked with there – that is, he may simply have been seen as an unstable element. It is also likely that the Griffins did not encourage or even tolerate the interest or patronage of government or semi-government bodies. However, the MTPC maintained files of newspaper clippings on the work of important private practitioners of the day, such as Harold Desbrowe-Annear, the Melbourne architect and planner, though contact was never formally established with such figures. The Griffins are not represented by such a file, which suggests that the MTPC, firstly, did not see their work as representing a recognisable stream of US planning practice, and secondly, that the Commissioners as a body did not rate it highly in any case. Certainly the Griffins were not in step with the MTPC's outlook; they were, for instance, in no measure adherents to the functionalism that Grubb sees the MTPC as following.

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7 C. R. Bradish, ‘Walter Burley Griffin: Creator of Canberra’ *Table Talk*, December 30 1926, p.11
8 For instance in Max Grubb, ‘Planning in Melbourne During the 1920s: the Operation and Work of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission 1922-1930’ in Freestone (ed.), *The Australian Planner* pp. 112-116
The Griffins may not have considered themselves to be Australian, but nor did they see themselves as involved in, or connected to, American planning. The "magic" referred to in the title of Marion’s memoir, *The Magic of America*, refers to her own conception of ‘democratic’ thought, defined in opposition to British colonial or ex-colonial bureaucracy and intrusiveness; a concept of ‘Americanness’ far removed from pragmatic planning or architectural ideologies of the time in either America or Australia.

It is clear, therefore, that to typify the Griffins as exercising an American influence on Australian planning is to generalise about the nature of their work based purely on their nationality and origins. Their inclusion in what has come to be known as the Prairie School group of architects is, similarly, only incidental to their Australian practice. By the time the Griffins had been established in Australia for a few years, and as their reputation faded in the US, their work became far more a response to the Australian landscape and an attempt to mould Australian society, than it was a response to that which they had left behind.

Therefore, when the Griffins cited American examples in their publicity material for Castlecrag, they were not talking of the works of contemporaries or even doing more than indulge in the standard real estate ‘boosterism’ of the time, perhaps using their own American origins as a selling point:

> While there is no standard of comparison possible in the Commonwealth, similar developments in the US have been financially and socially successful – often beyond all expectation. The following are outstanding and famous illustrations: Forest Hill Gardens, Long Island; Mariemont, Cincinnati; Roland Park, Baltimore; Nichols’ Country Club District, Kansas City; Palos Verdes, Los Angeles; Coral Gables, Miami. These have become the most exclusive social centres of their cities. It is certain that a similar judgement will be passed on Castlecrag.⁹

This comparison of Castlecrag with US schemes – some of them, like Roland

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⁹ *Castlecrag Homes*, n.d., p. 21, pamphlet in Deans Papers, MS 2019, National Library of Australia
Fig. XX The MTPC inspect the Melbourne Docks, 1924. L-R: Tuxen; H. J. McDonald, Chief Technical Officer to the MTPC; C. E. Merritt, Commissioner; J. H. McCutcheon of the Harbour Trust; Frank Stapley, MTPC Chairman; W. H. Warington, Commissioner; H. E. Morton, City Engineer; Fred Cook, the Commission’s surveyor. Melbourne *Argus*, 2 February 1924, p. 29

Fig XXI Tuxen as an authority figure and visionary: this portrait accompanied his article ‘What We Might Do With the Yarra’. Saxil Tuxen, ‘What We Might Do With the Yarra’ Melbourne *Herald*, 27 November 1926, p.17
Park, dating back to the middle of the previous century – and the bold statement that there was 'no standard of comparison possible' with anything in the Commonwealth was typical of the Griffins' rhetoric. In this regard, the use of 'overseas' examples was as useful in the Griffins' career as it was to be to the MTPC during its existence.

'Everyone's in bed at midnight': How 'American' was Melbourne?

The creation of the MTPC (Fig. XX) under planning advocate and former Mayor of Melbourne Frank Stapley in 1923 was the beginning of a new stage in the evolution of town planning and garden suburb development from a private concern to the public arena. In forming the MTPC, Melbourne's governmental bureaucracies created a platform of technical authority from which they could claim the right to pronounce on urban planning for the city.

There is no record of the reasoning behind Stapley's invitation to Tuxen to become a part of the MTPC; it may have been because of the radical layout of Merrilands, though more likely it was due to Stapley's awareness of Tuxen's role as a garden suburb advocate. Stapley had been present at Tuxen's 'Suburban Subdivisions' address, and both men were members of the Victorian Town Planning Association.¹⁰

Tuxen's role at the MTPC has been all but ignored by commentators, and most prefer to see the organisation as guided by its chairman, former Mayor Frank Stapley, and its planning philosophy as though it were outlined by surveyor Fred Cook. Grubb is rare amongst historians as he does discuss Tuxen by name, as a man with 'practical experience and extensive knowledge of town planning matters', as well as typifying him as a follower of the MTPC's 'Americanised' approach to planning.¹¹ Yet his media image at this time (Fig. XXI) suggests much more.

¹⁰ Stapley spoke in defense of Tuxen's paper, particularly a portion wherein Tuxen advocated provision of sewerage and water supply prior to the sale of housing lots on a new subdivision. Tuxen, 'Suburban Subdivisions', p. 45
¹¹ Grubb, A History of Town Planning, p.75
In fact, Tuxen’s role at the MTPC, as it emerges from the Commission’s archives, is that of an independent voice; this has not been explored in Australian planning history to date. In the first few years of the MTPC’s existence in particular, Tuxen often engaged in vociferous argument with other members of the MTPC – who appear to have been united in opposition to him – over particular planning matters. Such debates concluded with Tuxen’s conceding to the majority. Although five of the twelve Commissioners had been members of the Victorian Town Planning and Parks Association,\(^{12}\) few had practical ‘hands-on’ experience of planning; five of them were local government councillors, and of the three ‘technical experts’ aside from Tuxen, two were engineers, and one was an architect.\(^{13}\)

One example of conflict is the heated debate which took place in August 1923, when Tuxen opposed a move to reconfigure Victoria Street, Richmond, to what he considered to be an unfeasible – he called it ‘utopian’ – width.\(^{14}\)

Another subject leading to conflict was his proposal for the replanning of the 19\(^{th}\) century design of a western Melbourne suburb, Maidstone, which had been identified by the MTPC as an inappropriate ‘grid’ subdivision. Here Tuxen proposed retaining the major part of the existing street plan, closing every alternate street and reducing lot sizes for the purpose of constructing internal reserves. His scheme was an alternative to that proposed by Cook, which allowed for 1115 dwellings in the replanned area; Tuxen’s version featured only 993, but his redesign required the ‘removal’ of 66 fewer housing allotments than Cook’s plan. The MTPC minutes report that:

Mr Tuxen wagered that his proposal was more practical, having regard to the existing conditions and the prospects of improved


\(^{13}\) MTPC Plan of General Development, p. 6. Tuxen was also qualified as an engineer (a ‘Certificated Municipal and Water Supply Engineer’) and had practiced as Engineer for the Shire of Hastings, a rural/beachside area which was close enough to Melbourne to come under its influence. Like his cousin Cecil, the City Engineer for Brighton, Tuxen was therefore experienced in local government, though, while no records of this time survive, it must be assumed that the work of Shire Engineer in Hastings was limited. It was certainly not a full-time job.

\(^{14}\) ‘Tuxen’s Statement to the Commission’ 24 August 1923 in ‘By –pass roadway from Victoria Street to Studley Park Rd. Scheme by Mr. Tuxen’ folder, Box 2, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria
legislation. He finally asked that both [his own and the MTPC's] schemes be submitted to the Braybrook Council... Before the motion was put to the meeting Mr. Tuxen referred to his right to advocate this proposal as a private citizen if it was not accepted by the Commission, but members objected. It was agreed that if the motion [to accept Cook's plan] was carried Mr. Tuxen's scheme should be shown to the Braybrook Council but that the Council should be advised that the scheme had been rejected after consideration. Mr. Tuxen then agreed to support the motion which was carried unanimously.\textsuperscript{15}

It is plain from these examples that Tuxen was not easily induced to condone MTPC projects he considered impractical, decisions usually based on his own experience as a surveyor and subdivider, rather than town planning principles. In this regard, Tuxen was far from the ardent follower of American ideas – typified here by Cook's plan – that Grubb has depicted. He was critical of the direction and the opinions the MTPC promoted, and he appears to have been the only MTPC member to mount such attacks on the assumptions of the Commissioners. He could also, however, be pragmatic in his concessions to the majority decision.

Examinations of the influence of the international planning scene on Australia often focus on overseas trips undertaken by prominent Australian planning advocates. Freestone and Grubb in particular cite visits to the US undertaken by members of the MTPC. The international tour of investigation had already become a common feature of the career of the planning 'expert' by the 1920s.\textsuperscript{16} One of the earliest to make such a trip in an official capacity was J. C. Morrell, the Melbourne architect who reported on overseas developments in town planning to the Victorian Minister of Public Works. Morrell visited Britain and the USA in 1915 with the intention of establishing firm information on the state of town planning and garden city development in those countries for use in Victorian...
towns and cities. Morrell's was, however, only one of a number of town planning 'fact-finding' tours undertaken by Australian professionals, and even suburban councils were funding overseas tours by their employees. In 1924, the Argus reported on the return of Camberwell Council's city engineer from the US, where he was impressed by the fenceless front gardens but felt that Camberwell was not yet in a position to adopt such an innovation 'owing to the large numbers of wandering stock', an indication of its semi-rural nature at this time. The fence was also represented as important in Australian suburbia because of the dust nuisance from unsealed roads. For both of these reasons, the Camberwell engineer's trip appears to have been intended for use in planning for future development of a middle-class suburb in an area still semi-rural. Similarly, Oakleigh Council sent their engineer to the US in 1925, where he 'studied various forms of roadmaking.' Melbourne's City Health Officer toured America, France and England at this time to 'pay attention to housing.' The General Traffic Manager of the South Australian Government rode the railways of the US and Canada in 1923, and found them marvelously efficient. John Sulman journeyed around the world in 1924, concentrating on the US and Europe, to compile a report on civic government for use in developing a governmental form for the city of Canberra, though this ultimately proved ineffectual.

No doubt a number of the experts or would-be experts in planning and associated fields who made these trips encountered novel facets of planning which they then replicated in their Australian work. However, for some the fact-finding tour was regarded more as accumulation of evidence for pre-existing

17 J. C. Morrell, Town Planning: Report to the Honourable the Minister of Public Works, Albert J. Mullett, Melbourne, 1915
18 'Engineer Abroad', Argus, 31 August 1924, p. 7
19 Ronald Munro-Ferguson, discussion of J. C. Morrell, 'Fundamental Principles of Town Planning', RAIA General Meeting, Tuesday 1 August 1916 in RAIA Victorian Chapter General Meetings Book, 1906-1930, File M9454, Melbourne University Archives
20 'Plans Better Roads/Engineer Experiments' Evening Sun, 5 March 1925, p. 3
21 'Housing Problems/Dr. Sinclair's Trip Abroad/Will City Council Pay?' Evening Sun, 15 January 1924, p.3
22 'Quick Moves/American Railway Methods/Marvelous Efficiency' Evening Sun, 16 January 1924, p.5
23 P. G. Stewart, Minister for Works and Railways, to J. Sulman, 20 March 1924, Item A1/13/18510, Australian Archives, Canberra
Fig. XXII. Roland Park, Baltimore, photographed by Saxil Tuxen on his American trip in 1925. Tuxen's pictures show numerous treatments of street curves and street plantings, as well as roundabouts, shopping centres, setbacks and roadworking machinery. He had little chance of putting his U. S. experience to work in his own planning practice, but his pictures may well have had some influence on the MTPC's *Final Report*. Photograph from collection of J. Tuxen.
beliefs than as a search for knowledge. Tuxen was one planner who took this approach: indeed, his fact-finding during his extensively-planned (though possibly somewhat curtailed) 1926 trip to the US appears to have been largely restricted to discovering details of building materials and advances in machinery relevant to city-building (Fig. XXII). Though Tuxen did visit a number of well-known American ‘garden suburb’-styled developments (including Sunnyside, Riverside and the J. C. Nichols Country Club Estates)24 he created so few garden suburb designs between this time and the era following World War II, that there is little evidence that his American experience was influential in this regard.25 Similarly, he did not advocate American practice for Melbourne in his role as ‘propagandist’ for the MTPC. Rather than regard US planning as a source of superior and tested ideas, Tuxen preferred to use the larger, more powerful nation as a source of authority to pursue his own idea of what was best for Melbourne. This should not be seen as too subtle a distinction. It is clear from Tuxen’s rhetoric at that time that while, unlike the Griffins, he saw value in compromise for the greater good, he considered himself an authority on surveying practicalities, and possessed a clear moral sense of his duties as a planner. To Tuxen, these were not issues to be altered by fashion. The reason it was necessary for Tuxen to ‘use’ American examples, as will be shown, was the

24 Tuxen proposed, on his trip, to take in the following, though there is no evidence that he achieved his aim to visit all these named: Vancouver; Seattle; Olympia; Portland; Salem; Sacramento; Berkley; San Francisco; Fresno; Los Angeles; Fort Worth; Austin; Houston; Oklahoma; Baton Rouge; New Orleans; Jackson; Little Rock; St. Louis; Jefferson City; Kansas City; Springfield, Illinois; Indianapolis; Cincinnati; Columbus; Pittsburgh; Harrisburg; Baltimore; Washington; Philadelphia; Camden; Trenton; Jersey: New York City; Hartford; Providence; Boston; Norwood; Albany; Rochester; Niagara Falls; Buffalo; Erie; Cleveland; Akron; Toledo; Detroit; Grand Rapids; Loganport; Chicago; Milwaukee; Madison; St. Paul; Minneapolis; Sioux City; Omaha; Des Moines; Denver; Salt Lake City; Carson City. ‘Mr Tuxen: Correspondence etc. during visit overseas 1925’, Box 22, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria.

25 Tuxen’s last major garden suburb development of the 1920s was Park Orchards, the ground plan of which was almost certainly completed before he left for the US. Many of the plans which emerged from the Tuxen and Miller office after this time were smaller, one- or two-street subdivisions in more affluent Melbourne suburbs. Freestone sees Tuxen’s plan for Corsewall Close, in Hawthorn, a t-shaped street subdivision sold in 1938, as an example of ‘Californian “bungalow courts”’ in Melbourne. (‘Corsewall Close’, section of brochure with newspaper clipping dated ‘18/7/38’ in ‘Hawthorn’ Box, Coghill and Haughton Files, Melbourne University Archives; Freestone, Model Communities, p. 198) This is true, though from Tuxen’s point of view Corsewall Close need not have been inspired by his own American experience: similar developments, such as Lempiere Avenue in East St. Kilda, had been created in Melbourne before Tuxen’s American foray.
MTPC's role as a political body, which found it necessary to promote its policies amongst the general public.

Melbourne's newspapers of the 1920s reveal a great enthusiasm for planning issues. The following discussion of planning and the appeal of American culture and progress focuses on Melbourne, in particular regard to the abovementioned 'American influence' on the MTPC.

Planning in the press

There was an identifiable interest in planning issues in the Melbourne press – particularly, but by no means exclusively, true of the popular evening paper the Herald and its competitor for high-profile real estate advertising, the Evening Sun.26 The Evening Sun assumed sufficient sophistication on planning matters amongst its readership that it used terms such as 'city beautiful' without further description, though the apparent self-explanatory nature of the phrase might have made this action appear warranted.27 This is not to say that the mass media was always purposefully high-minded: civic beautification schemes which might now seem eccentric, if not unsympathetic to a holistic planning vision, were promoted. A plan to relocate to Australia any of Wren's London churches which were under threat of demolition was one such project which received publicity in this paper.28

The high profile planning matters had in this interwar period is signified by the fact that it was a relatively simple matter at this time for interested 'private citizens' to have their own – often highly fanciful – schemes for the replanning or rebuilding of Melbourne published and debated in newspapers. In the last years of the decade, when broadcasting technology took hold, town planning amateurs

26 This lasted until 1925, when the Herald's publishers, Herald and Weekly Times bought both the Evening and Morning editions of the Sun, closing down the former and retitling the latter the Sun News-Pictorial.

27 'Cities Beautiful/Examples that We Might Copy/Foreign Town Planning/Australia Prominent at International Conference' Evening Sun, 4 March 1923, p. 9

28 'For Australia?/Problem of Old London Churches/Could They Be Transported?/Expert Suggests that One Might Adorn Canberra' Evening Sun, 4 March 1923, p. 3

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also had their views broadcast on radio.

Planning's grasp on the popular imagination at this time is at least in part attributable to the fact that Australians had been encouraged for some time to regard their nation as poised on the threshold of massive growth. Such growth was often likened to that which the US had experienced in the 19th century. Richard Waterhouse, writing on the influence of American popular culture on Australia, suggests a possible starting point for this phenomenon. He writes of the assumption amongst many Australians, including political leaders, that 'Australia was the United States of the future; although the United States was further advanced this meant it could provide lessons for Australians.'

Australia was commonly cast as a burgeoning virgin landscape ready to be utilised, developed and civilised, a conception which also linked to campaigns to increase the country's population for reasons of security. A diagram published in the *Evening Sun* in 1924 featured an outline of the coast of Australia filled with population figures of various European countries inside hypothetical territories. Such depictions of the Australian continent fired the imagination of what the region might become with the perfection of certain technologies, particularly those associated with irrigation. Professor Griffith Taylor of the University of Sydney was involved in debates on this subject, creating for instance a map of Australia showing a capacity for a population of 62 million, a figure which many 'boosters' felt was actually too low.

Griffith Taylor was, however, dismissive of Australia's development potential. Once again using the US for comparison, he opined that had Australian been situated 'some ten geographical degrees to the south of [its] present position' it would be 'a rival of the US.' The early 1920s also saw the creation of a movement advocating the 'subdividing' of the six

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29 Richard Waterhouse, 'Popular Culture' in P. Bell and R. Bell (eds.), *Americanization and Australia*, p. 45
30 'Did You Know Your Country Was as Big as This?' *Evening Sun* 6 May 1924, p. 2
31 Griffith Taylor, 'Nature Versus the Australians', *Science and Industry*, vol. 2 no. 8, [August] 1920, p. 460
32 Ibid p. 462
states of Australia into 13 which, alongside three ‘federal territories’ would become the ‘United States of Australia’.  

In line with this continual contrast between the two nations, Australians appear to have been eager to read descriptions of American cities. Mrs. Kenneth Hanson, a Melbournian just returned from Chicago, was rapturous about that city which she saw as beautifully opulent:

Around a sea-like lake which stretches further than the eye can see, the leafy boulevards run for miles. Michigan Avenue is perhaps the loveliest, certainly from a woman’s point of view it is the most attractive street in the world... Before these the shop windows of Nice, or Monte Carlo, of New York or Paris are merely as stars to the sun.  

Melbourne, many readers of Hansen’s description might well have noticed, was based not on a sea-like lake but a lake-like bay; it was also almost exactly the same age as Chicago.

More overt comparisons were continually being made in the popular press between Australian cities and cities in the US. Los Angeles, glamorous centrepiece of the ‘glittering West’ was of particular interest, partly because like Melbourne and Sydney it was a Pacific Rim city, and one which had experienced massive growth. Symbols of Los Angeles’ progress could be found anywhere: the Evening Sun published a picture of a concrete Los Angeles street surface with the caption ‘The kind of street we would like to see everywhere... Experts consider that these roads are the best.’ Concrete was, indeed, a popular road surface at this time, for instance at the Camberwell Golf Links Estate of 1927. A sculptor and poet from Los Angeles, one Gwen Michael, compared the two cities to Melbourne’s detriment. Michael was savage in her condemnation of

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33 ‘United States of Australia/Basis of New Staters’ Scheme for Subdividing Australia’, Evening Sun 1 February 1924, p. 3
34 Mrs Kenneth Hansen, ‘Chicago Is Chic/ “A Woman’s Paradise”/Melbourne Visitor’s Impression’ Evening Sun, 7 April 1923, p. 7
35 Merry Ovnick, Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow Balcony Press, Los Angeles, 1994, p. 239
36 ‘Latest Thing in Streets’ Evening Sun, 16 August 1923, p. 9
Melbourne’s ‘drab nature’, and mocked the notion of ‘night life’ in Melbourne: ‘Why, there isn’t any... everyone’s in bed at midnight’. In common with many Australians of the time, Michael had her own notion of that which composed a ‘modern’ and active city, which was, however, located in the most mundane of day-to-day details:

In her mind’s eye she has an ideal city that would elevate and inspire! In the cafes in that city, while you waited for your ham and eggs, you would be lulled by high class music. Every wall would be embellished by works of art, and there would be no acres of blank mirror, or bare wallpaper, no ‘Pay as you go out’ or ‘Hat rests under the chair’ signs. And in those cafes you would be made to feel at home, and not as a limpet keeping someone out of a payable chair.36

Other American visitors were less damning, though often as opinionated; one visitor’s astonishment that Melbourne was extending its tram lines, whereas the prevalent opinion in the US was, he said, that trams would soon become redundant, made the news.39 Another, Owen Jones, chairman of the Californian Forests Commission, contributed to Australians’ own good opinion of their prospects for development. He told the Evening Sun that ‘California is very much like Australia in climate and temperament of the people.’40 The communications gap between the two countries was also closing. Radio enthusiasts found themselves able to tune into KDKA Pittsburgh in 1925.41 Australians were broadcasting to the US in the same year.42

T. M. Burke captured the flavour of some Australians’ expectation within his hyperbolic weekly advertising ‘column’:

The fortunes made from real estate in American cities during the last century are proverbial. Now it is Australia’s turn. This great Country is passing through the stage that America has left – the

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36 ‘Is Melbourne Drab?/How an American Artist Sees Us/Starved Art in a Dull City/How Dare Australians Speak of Beauty’ Melbourne Evening Star, 26 June 1924, p. 13
39 Argus, 2 February 1924, p.6
40 ‘Where’s Australia/Yanks Don’t Know Us/Forest Chief’s Suggestion’ Evening Sun, 4 January 1924, p. 7
41 ‘K.D.K.A. Again/Radio Test Success/Listeners Tune In’ Melbourne Evening Star, 29 June 1924, p. 13
stage of most rapid development. Melbourne is growing today as fast as New York and other great American cities were growing in the middle of last century, and nothing short of a collision with the moon can stop her progress.\textsuperscript{43}

In an earlier column, Burke had written of ‘pessimists’ who ‘overlook... the fact that in America during the past half century towns have grown into cities with millions of inhabitants. And what has happened in America can happen in Australia.’\textsuperscript{44}

However, this is only a part of the picture Australians were receiving of America, and not everything about the US was embraced by the Australians of the 1920s. One example, for instance, of fears over the consequences of Americanisation is the Evening Star’s publication of a picture of a memorial for those who had died in traffic accidents. ‘Ninety names are inscribed on this obelisk erected in Detroit (US) in memory of victims of motor accidents in city streets’ the caption reads. ‘Names are continually being added.’\textsuperscript{45} In a broader sense, too, ‘Americanisation’ was seen as pernicious and culturally degenerating; Waterhouse points to a number of campaigns against American culture in the 1920s and 30s. While the MTPC regarded American planning in a positive light, it might also have held the view that to typify Melbourne as an appropriate target for its own form of ‘Americanisation’ was a way of making planning appealing to the mainstream.

Members of the MTPC looked to the US for examples of work with which they might justify their own plans for Melbourne. Since there was a widespread interest in American progress in the Melbourne media, the use of American examples to appeal to the general public would have been a useful propaganda tool in the eyes of the Commissioners. That they needed such a tool will be revealed below.

\textsuperscript{43} T. M. Burke, ’A Talk on Opportunities: T. M. Burke’s Column’ Evening Sun, 19 April 1924, p. 8
\textsuperscript{44} Burke, ’A Talk on Melbourne’s Future: T. M. Burke’s Column’ Evening Sun, 12 January 1924, p. 8
\textsuperscript{45} ’Traffic’s Heavy Toll’ Evening Sun, 23 November 1923, p. 3
A paper by J. C. Morrell, ‘Fundamental Principles of Town Planning’, which he read before the General Meeting of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, in August 1916, caused discussion amongst its audience. The Victorian Governor-General, Ronald Munro-Ferguson, opined that while Morrell had presented an ‘able statement’ of the case for town planning’s widespread adoption, ‘the main difficulty in Australia was to determine the authority which should deal with the subject.’ The RAIA’s General Meetings Book records Munro-Ferguson as claiming ‘he had in mind the collective wisdom of a body of men constituting a council,’\(^{46}\) though there is no further detail on what this might entail.

It was established, by the early 1920s, that garden suburb planning appealed to middle class suburbanites in Melbourne, as well as to the lower middle class homebuyers and speculators who purchased lots at estates such as Merrilands. This did not translate automatically to a desire or interest amongst the general public in the reorganisation of city streets; once the MTPC was established in 1923, there was clearly concern amongst Commissioners that the public be educated in urban planning. The MTPC’s interest in, or commitment to, this interventionist role – a new development in a sphere in which government had hitherto tended to foster and reinforce the work of private landlords, developers and land speculators\(^ {47}\) – was tempered by its status. It was a Commission created to report on urban problems, rather than to implement solutions to them. While the MTPC clearly exercised some influence throughout Melbourne in the 1920s because of the expectation that its members would be invited, on submission of their report, to form a permanent planning control body, this was only the strongest political weapon the MTPC could use. The realisation

\(^{46}\) Munro-Ferguson, discussion of J. C. Morrell, ‘Fundamental Principles of Town Planning’, RAIA General Meeting, Tuesday 1 August 1916 in RAIA Victorian Chapter General Meetings Book, 1906-1930, File M9454, Melbourne University Archives

of the goal of permanence was predicated on its establishment of its own importance.

Freestone and Grubb point out that the MTPC was ‘a (white) male, middle class organisation’. In this, it did not stand out from most other contemporary groups of its kind, legislative, religious, educative or recreational. While it was certainly comprised of middle-class men, they were nevertheless from diverse backgrounds, and represented a range of interests.

The MTPC established itself, and publicly asserted its authority, in a number of different and sophisticated ways. As a blend of local politicians and ‘expert’ technicians, it naturally paid much attention to that which its members termed ‘propaganda’. This included a consistent campaign of publicity and lectures in suburban town halls and, where requested, to community groups. Funding for the MTPC came in the main from suburban councils, which further explains why this was seen as a necessary part of its work. Its need for public interest and support also came from the fact that its members found it necessary to lobby the Victorian government to extend its tenure a number of times throughout the 1920s. While it might justifiably be said – particularly in the light of Sandercock’s Cities for Sale – that the public accountability of bodies such as the MTPC was less of a public concern in the 1920s than it would later become, the reasons listed above demonstrate the tenuous nature and the vulnerability of the MTPC’s position.

The MTPC also perceived the need to discredit bodies such as the Victorian Town Planning Association, of which five MTPC commissioners had previously been members. This may have been due to criticism of the MTPC by the Town Planning Association, but the explanation more likely lies with the MTPC members’ wish to establish themselves as Melbourne’s most important planning body. The process of discrediting the TPA is illustrated by a piece of subterfuge utilised during a debate over J. A. Smith’s plan for the ‘roofing’ of the Jolimont railway yards – a concept that has recently come to fruition as

Federation Square. Smith, who was amongst the members of the panel which had awarded first prize to the Griffins in the National Capital Design Competition in 1912, had public supporters in Walter Griffin, the Victorian Railways, the Herald and the Town Planning Association. In 1928 Fred Cook, along with Mr. Fethney, the Victorian Railways' representative on the MTPC, City Engineer P. S. Robinson and H. S. Wootton, the Deputy Town Clerk, formed a Special Committee to report on the 'Proposed City Square'. Their report, which criticised Smith's proposal, was itself criticised in the press by W. Gates, secretary of the Town Planning Association.

The MTPC file on Jolimont contains a draft of a letter attacking Gates in turn. It states that in campaigning against the Special Committee, 'he may have had the authority of the Town Planning Association which is often confused with that efficient body the Town Planning Commission' and accuses him of hypocrisy. There is no signature on this letter in its draft form as it appears in the MTPC archives; it appeared later, slightly amended, in the Argus of 19 October 1928, over the name 'Businessman'. Anonymous letters to newspapers signed only with descriptive noms-de-plume were not uncommon at this time, and this does not in itself suggest the letter is sinister in intent. It does appear, however, to be a sanctioned attempt by members of the MTPC to discredit another association in the town planning field and to shore up its own authority at the same time, not least by giving the impression that Melbourne's business community considered it 'efficient'. It demonstrates the MTPC's recognition of, and interest in, the importance of creating a role for itself, as a recognised authority, in Melbourne's public sphere. While it is clear that this is a good example of the MTPC desiring to wrest authority from the TPA, it must also be

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49 'Roof for Railway/Traffic Relief Scheme' Evening Sun 7 April 1924, 5; 'More Vision on Yards Scheme/Mr. W. B. Griffin's Support/ "Spires and Square Go Hand in Hand"' Melbourne Herald, 17 March 1928, p. 6
taken into account that there was personal antipathy between Stapley and James Barrett.\textsuperscript{51}

The ideas the MTPC pursued for the development of urban areas around Melbourne proper, and the city centre itself, were rarely extravagant, and were usually grounded in the language of economic or financial common sense. The MTPC sought to alter the way Melbournians thought about their city. It also hoped to shape the way they felt about planning and development, not only by insisting that effective planning was desirable, or even that it was feasible, but that it was \textit{necessary}. This position was often supported and heightened by the common argument that the correct attitude to take to planning and replanning was not the cost of reconstruction, but the cost of failure to reconstruct – in time and opportunities lost, and in inefficiency generally. This rhetoric became, and remains, a notable aspect of most planning discussion, especially that which involved the initiation of major development, and this functionalist aspect of the MTPC’s planning outlook is correctly assessed by Grubb as coming from examination of US practice.\textsuperscript{52}

Anthony Sutcliffe, in his contrasting study of the rise of town planning in Germany, Britain, the US and France up to the First World War, states that ‘we cannot fail to note that the workers [of these countries] took very little interest in planning’.\textsuperscript{53} By the time planning rose to prominence in Australia in the 1920s, however, while there was definitely an elitist aspect to its execution, even within the Griffins’ ‘democratic’ planning ideal, it gained considerable interest from the popular press. This in itself cannot be seen as a gauge of popular interest in the matter, but it is also true that many members of the general public – all men – made suggestions to the MTPC. Such suggestions concerned solutions to problems people saw in their city, or on large scale works they felt should be undertaken to encourage future development into desirable areas.

\textsuperscript{51} Freestone and Grubb, ‘Melbourne Metropolitan Town Planning Commission’, \textit{Journal of Australian Studies}, p. 140


\textsuperscript{53} Anthony Sutcliffe, \textit{Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France 1780-1914}, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981 p. 209
In the 1950s, John Overall writes, the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) acknowledged the importance of public opinion:

Politicians were not the only people we had to win over. They, after all, were responsible to the electorate and it was taxpayers’ money the NCDC was spending. We felt very early on that it was essential to get the public behind our philosophies and our program.54

This aspect of the NCDC’s approach mirrored that of the MTPC thirty years earlier. The MTPC, though largely ambivalent towards the suggestions submitted to them, as well as to their creators, also took them seriously as a gauge of public opinion. Letters and plans were catalogued assiduously, either in folders devoted to each writer if a correspondence resulted, or in a ‘General Suggestions’ folder. Commission propagandists incorporated official responses to these suggestions into public pronouncements. Such suggestions are, therefore, not only revealing of popular opinion on planning, but also of the way that the members of the MTPC regarded their own position.

Conspicuous a cancer: suggestions from the general public

The extent to which the MTPC was influenced by the suggestions of private individuals and public opinion may be ascertained from the ‘General Suggestions’ and ‘Private Citizens’ files in the MTPC papers. A number of examples follow, centring on the subjects of waterways and street traffic, two matters of considerable concern to private citizens at this time. The use of multiple examples is contrived to illustrate that there were a number of areas of planning, specifically applied to Melbourne, which some of its citizens felt were worthy of the MTPC’s interest. The MTPC’s responses show that its members felt, firstly, that their interests as a body and the interests of the field of town planning required that sympathetic and interested attention be given to all suggestions from private citizens.

54 Overall, Canberra: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, p. 49
These examples should be seen in the context of the MTPC’s first public relations blunder, in June 1923, an incident from which it appears to have learnt a great deal. A plan for a foreshore road from Port Melbourne to Beaumaris, on the coastline of Port Phillip Bay, was condemned by the *Evening Sun* under the headline ‘Town Planners want to Throw Money Into the Sea... Canute Outdone’.55 Tuxen, who had queried the original plan’s extravagance,56 was later to concentrate assiduously on the preservation of Melbourne’s foreshores, in both his public pronouncements and, in the 1930s, with the initiation of a particular scheme to this end.

The Yarra River, notorious around Australia for its unusual, soupy brown colour, was largely ignored by Melbournians, the popular annual ‘Henley’ boat race notwithstanding. The public’s concerns rested not with any aesthetic appeal the Yarra may have had or potentially had – but in pragmatically addressing the space rivers and creeks occupied in the city and the way such space might better be used for either commerce or the alleviation of traffic congestion. This distaste, or disregard, for urban waterways may have been linked to the “miasmata” proposition – that is, the presumed association of the spread of disease with bodies of water57 – which, while having essentially been outmoded by assumption of germ theory, nevertheless lingered in the public imagination into this period. It may also simply be a reflection of the poor state of Australia’s urban waterways at this time.

Many Australians were also intrigued by the possibility of redirecting water in large quantities to arid or uninhabited areas. The example of Los Angeles – which was essentially a desert area before large scale irrigation projects – appeared relevant to Australia. The burgeoning interest in the modification of waterways and hydraulic engineering may also have been an urban response to the publicity given to new engineering projects geared towards the use of

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55 ‘Town Planners to Throw Money Into the Sea’, *Evening Sun*, 1 January 1924, p. 1
56 ‘Foreshore Road etc. Brighton’ file, Box 5, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria
irrigation technology in the Australian interior. The Australian newspaper reading public was often tantalised with ideas of the productive farming land which would be ‘unlocked’ from the watering of the desert. The previously mentioned map of Australia divided into sections as large as various European nations had such connotations; another hypothetical map promoted the notion that the continent was very easily classified, like a butcher’s chart of beef cuts, into ‘agricultural’, ‘good pastoral’ and ‘sparse pastoral’. Only a small central area, under this representation was ‘almost useless’.  

In 1927, C. D. Gardner, a carpenter from a sparsely-populated western suburb of Melbourne, Altona, wrote to the MTPC with a scheme of his own devising. Gardner envisaged not an irrigation scheme, but the building of a canal network, an ‘Artificial Yarra’ through his own locale, north to Keilor. Gardner’s spelling errors have been retained:

Open a canal in a suitable place on the foreshore of land (low lying) about Altona and Continue same for shipping conveniences, to Industrial or Factory sites along its Banks. make an Artificial Yarra through flat and almost see level country across Keilor plains if necessary cross section of canals to make the Industrial Area compact. I hardly think any optimism on my part will outway any levelheaded and practical conclusion of your Committee, but I would like to say here. (Survey this idea from a National and economic Point) + I beleive it will outway any financial difficulties...

Gardner signed off ‘yours faithfully for Australia’ then reconsidered and continued with a most revelatory (of his attitudes and perhaps the wider community’s hopes for the nation) ‘visionery pen picture’ which he set in 1960:

Worlds ships entering this canal passing Docks capable of Repairing the best and biggest of them. Swiftly + directly moving to their destination for the unloading of their Cargo’s… in deliveries to suit their respective Customers. Passing factory and foundry smokeless and clean. the objectionable smoke being converted in gas or power utility… Crews of British and foreign vessels mingling + working with our Pure White Stock of Mankind’s Brotherhood.

58 ‘Plenty of Fertile Land in Australia’, Evening Sun, 16 May 1924, p. 2
Fig. XXIII F. E. Dixon’s plan to reroute the Yarra. ‘Bold scheme to Divert Yarra’, *Herald*, 20 March 1924, p. 3
whom are working under compulsory, co-operative or piece work standards conditions.\textsuperscript{59}

Whether personal financial profit, the desire for stricter segmentation of the populace or a genuine belief in his country’s developmental potential motivated Gardner, his totalitarian vision did not go further than the printed page. The Commission summarily rejected his ‘Artificial Yarra’, and he did not pursue the matter.

Others, rather than constructing new waterways, saw potential in ridding Melbourne of its central waterway altogether. One scheme in particular was given much publicity in this period, despite its rejection by all official and recognised planning bodies. F. E. Dixon, an accountant of Collins Street, invested a large amount of time and money in promoting a plan of his own devising to divert the Yarra through Albert Park to St Kilda (Fig. XXIII). This would, firstly, provide extra room for a new road to be added south of Flinders Street where the river had flowed, and secondly would allow underground railway platforms and car parking space to be constructed on the former river bed.

Dixon’s plan connected in part with a prevalent assumption at this time that Flinders Street Station, at a southern central point on the inner Melbourne grid, was sited ‘in an inconvenient position’, as E. C. Rigby, six years before he became a member of the MTPC, had told the first national town planning conference in 1917. At this time, Rigby had emphasised the need to provide ‘adequate space’ for the station’s ‘expansion’\textsuperscript{60}. The 1920s saw much publicity given to the assertion that Flinders Street was the ‘world’s busiest’ railway station.\textsuperscript{61}

Newspapers gave Dixon’s notion enough publicity that others, for instance a pointsman by the name of O’Brien and Tuxen, in his role as a Commissioner, felt it necessary to refute the concept. In the Melbourne \textit{Herald} of 26 March,

\textsuperscript{60} E. C. Rigby and T. Geo. Ellery, ‘The Future of Australian Cities’, \textit{Official Volume of Proceedings of 1\textsuperscript{st} Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference}, pp. 52-57, p. 53
1924, under the title ‘Bold Scheme to Divert the Yarra’, Dixon outlined his scheme, then wrote:

Assuming these proposals are practicable, a sound business proposition presents itself. One cannot figure costs at this juncture, but, assuming that the cost of diversion and of the new station and yards equalled the value of the surface frontages rendered available for building purposes... the total cost has every prospect of being reimbursed out of net revenue in a few years.\(^{62}\)

Dixon wrote to the MTPC supplying as complete details of his plan as he had formulated. The Commission delayed responding to Dixon for some months; finally, on 29 July 1925, MTPC Secretary James Kemsley, wrote to Dixon that:

Members of the Committee have considered your proposals from time to time, and it is the opinion that whatever merit the scheme possesses, it does not come within the realm of practical politics. The Metropolis is too expensively and extensively built upon and business has been stabilised according to the present order of things. A scheme which is designed to seriously interfere with these conditions is not, in the Commission’s opinion, capable of accomplishment.\(^{63}\)

Dixon was not easily dissuaded, however, and took exception to the notion that his scheme might be at all extraordinary or impractical. He published a large plan of his projected re-routing of the city’s main waterway, as a folded pamphlet, which also included quotes form the MTPC letter and his reply. The pamphlet also featured his plan set out as a solution to traffic problems – particularly the perceived ‘congestion’ experienced in Flinders Street near the railway station of the same name – with quotes from the Commission’s recently-published First Report as interjections. This imagined conversation enabled Dixon to include comments from the Commission which appeared to agree with his position, and for him to neatly refute comments that did not. He concluded by suggesting that private individuals’ rights were being restricted by the intransigence of both the

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\(^{61}\) For instance, ‘World’s Busiest Station/Claim for Flinders Street/282,000 Passengers Daily’ Melbourne Herald, 10 January 1925; ‘Flinders Street Still World’s Busiest Station’, Melbourne Sun, 3 May 1928

\(^{62}\) ‘Bold New Scheme to Divert Yarra’ Melbourne Herald, 26 March 1924, p. 3

\(^{63}\) A. Kemsley to F. E. Dixon in Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
MTPC and the river itself. 'My scheme... gives to citizens... the same right of exit on the south side of the city as they already possess on the north side...'\textsuperscript{64}

Dixon may well have been taken aback by the MTPC's resistance to his plan, although he claimed to have had his supporters as well (he refers to 'favourable opinions expressed by professional and business men with whom these proposals have been discussed.'\textsuperscript{65})

Though this diversion scheme did not result in any action from the MTPC or elsewhere, Dixon did not give up his battle. Even at the end of the 1920s, he was lecturing on town planning matters, both in public and on radio.\textsuperscript{66} His stances on particular issues were, presumably on principle, almost always opposite to the Commission's. This was usually from the point of view of their perceived diversion from certain American planning authorities' textbooks. Despite the MTPC's lack of interest in endorsing major diversion projects, it was far more favourably inclined towards D. A. Swanson, a builder, who posited straightening the Yarra at points between Swanston Street and Spencer Street.\textsuperscript{67}

It is clear that throughout its tenure the MTPC was under attack from self-proclaimed experts or defenders of expertise like Dixon. The basic thrust of Dixon's suggestion also had appeal for many. Joseph Nixon, of McMahon's Creek, asked of the Commission that if 'shifting of the Yarra' was to be done, 'why not make a Perfect job of it? Instead of starting at Princes Bridge why not start at the Botanical Gardens and run it in a tunnell [sic] under Government House, Domain, cross St Kilda Road near the Barracks, Moray Street, City Road and lower Clarendon Street and into the river again opposite the Gas Works.'\textsuperscript{68}

Nixon's assumption, in his letter, that the rerouting of the Yarra was a foregone

\textsuperscript{64} F. E. Dixon, \textit{Proposals for the Relief of Traffic Congestion in the City of Melbourne}, Melbourne, 1925. Dixon File, Box 3, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria
\textsuperscript{65} Dixon, \textit{Proposals for the Relief of Traffic Congestion}, ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Dixon, 'Town Planning and Land Values and the Effect of Rapid Transit Railway Systems Thereon', address broadcast 3 April 1928 on 3LO, in Dixon File, Box 3, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria.
\textsuperscript{67} D. A. Swanson to F. Stapley, 10 August 1923, in 'Town Planning Generally' file, Box 17, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria. An attached comment from Stapley indicates that Swanson met with the Commission which expressed the opinion that his scheme had possibilities in the future.
\textsuperscript{68} J. Nixon to Councillor Merritt, 19 May 1924 in General Suggestions File, Box 5, MTPC Files Public Records Office, Victoria
conclusion with only the details to be perfected, is perhaps an indication of the success of Dixon's campaign.

Other commentators also saw the Yarra as valuable 'airspace' ripe for civic use. Edward Shears, of Toorak, asserting that 'cars – and more cars – have come to stay' and opining that 'the Yarra can never, at that point, give beauty to the city', envisaged a car park constructed on two platforms, 'the full width of the river... with a depth of 3 or 400 feet,' surrounded by 'an extensive framework – having an opening in the centre of a bridge to an Arcade, with shops on either side, to one or two Halls at the extreme end. The revenue from such a scheme must be enormous.'

The above letters, from four members of the public with no apparent connection to the planning movement, show a number of facets to the rise of town planning in Melbourne which hitherto have not been considered by historians. Certainly, members of the lay public had long contributed to public debate on such issues. The rhetoric of the letters to the MTPC show, however, that planning was sufficiently a part of the public imagination that Dixon, an accountant, could gain some reputation for devising his own planning scheme as well as gaining, perhaps, some of the notoriety that came to the men of the 1920s who defined themselves as visionary. They also show that a body like the MTPC necessarily defined as one of its responsibilities the creation of intelligent responses to private citizens' suggestions.

This is also shown in the case of letters to the MTPC regarding the 'road congestion' problem and the mooted creation of 'parkways'.

The MTPC's First Report (1925) reflects the perception that road 'congestion' was one of the most serious issues facing Melbourne at this time. Whereas the MTPC studied Melbourne and its environs as a whole, and attempted to envisage future development and geographical expansion, most private citizens who wrote to the MTPC were more concerned with traffic and traffic control systems in the city itself: 'traffic' in this regard involving pedestrian

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69 E. Shears to Kemsley, undated, in Shears File, Box 18, MTPC Files, Public Records Office, Victoria
70 MTPC Preliminary Report, Melbourne, 1925
traffic, automobiles, trams, horse-drawn vehicles, and bicycles. Two correspondents to the MTPC, Peter W. Hughes of Williamstown, and E. Walton, of Hawthorn, proposed an elevated walkway as a solution to this problem. Both wrote to the MTPC in the first half of 1924.

Hughes was probably the most frequent letter-writer of all private individuals. In his first letter, he commented that he had 'been given to understand that the Commissioners are desirous that anyone who has a suggestion to make should do so – hence my troubling you with mine.'

Hughes' initial suggestion was the replacement of the verandahs above the first storey of all shops around 'The Block', a fashionable shopping area between Collins, Swanston, Bourke and Elizabeth Streets in the heart of Melbourne, with an elevated footpath. He called such a path a 'parkway', though it was really a pedestrian walkway. Hughes' 'parkway' also extended to Flinders Street Station, making (he said) Melbourne the 'safest city in the world for pedestrians.'

Walton wrote to the MTPC less than two months after Hughes, suggesting a similar scheme. Since 'a lot of wild cat schemes have been made', he reasoned, 'I'm my [sic] as well get my little whistle in'. Walton went a step further than Hughes, concluding that 'in the course of time the bottom shops should be cut out altogether and what is not the pathway added to the width of roads.'

The ideas behind these writers' conception of the 'parkway' suggest familiarity with such phenomena as Chicago's overhead railway, and comparison made between this construction and Melbourne's often-criticised road-railway level crossings. It may also mark an early point in the general perception that verandahs on buildings – a once-popular inclusion on many buildings dating from the 1880s – had become unsightly and outdated; a relic of Victorian times which seemed to limit urban architects visually, forcing them to keep the Melbourne streetscape on the level of an outsized country town. Walton envisaged a city that would layer itself higher and higher, creating new specialised strata with both

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71 Peter W. Hughes to MTPC 23 April 1924, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
72 Ibid.
73 E. Walton to MTPC 23 April 1924, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
streamlined services and separate classes of transit modes. He, like Gardner and many other citizens of 1920s Melbourne, saw an increasingly mechanised and ordered future. Their solutions were far sighted but also ignored the simple fact that much of Melbourne’s city centre ‘traffic problem’ involved the rush of pedestrians to Flinders Street Station, across Flinders Street itself, into the path of road vehicles. Brown-May has shown this problem was endemic at this time, when many Melburnians regarded city streets as primarily the province of pedestrians.\textsuperscript{74}

Trams were often seen as the culprit when it came to congestion. Their fixed rails, the ‘safety barrier’ stops in the centres of main roads of the city centre, were impediments to other traffic, especially in busy Swanston Street. The early 1920s, when tram electrification was taking place, was a time when the future of trams came into question. As has been shown, American visitors would express surprise that Melbourne was investing money in its tram network; it might be surmised that replacement of trams with buses and private cars was a particularly American idea. Letters to the MTPC were often concerned with possible ways of removing trams from the roads. L. R. Munro, of Coburg, submitted, for the ‘consideration of “The Powers that be”’, notes on the ‘undergrounding’ of electric trams from the Victoria Barracks in St. Kilda Road, under the Yarra, and along Swanston Street, surfacing at Franklin Street.\textsuperscript{75} The MTPC politely wrote to Munro, requesting a map of this proposal.\textsuperscript{76} Underground rail lines were often, at this time, considered comparable with underground tram lines; the underground loop in Sydney – the first stage of which opened in 1926 – was seen by many as the solution to Sydney’s tram congestion problem.\textsuperscript{77} If there was, as Monro’s letter suggests, a popular enthusiasm for underground rail lines in Melbourne in 1924, then this may show considerable confidence in

\textsuperscript{74} Brown-May, \textit{Melbourne Street Life}, facing p. 55
\textsuperscript{75} L. R. Munro to MTPC 30 May, 1924 in Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
\textsuperscript{76} Chief Technical Officer, MTPC to L. Munro 12 June 1924, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
\textsuperscript{77} Peter Cole, ‘The Survival of Melbourne’s Trams’ in Dingle (ed.) \textit{The Australian City – Future/Past}, p. 257
Australian planning and engineering as his exchange with the MTPC took place within six months of the collapse of the Newington tube tunnel in London.\textsuperscript{78}

The MTPC's members were unlikely to be unaware of critiques of congestion, and other public transport issues, taking place in the public arena. In mid-1925, the \textit{Herald} held a ‘Traffic Congestion Essay Competition’; the winner was, appropriately, a pointsman at the intersection of Swanston and Flinders Street, Constable C. T. O'Brien. Using the metaphor of disease to criticise urban problems, O'Brien labeled congestion ‘a cancer’. ‘The only way to eradicate it,’ he continued, ‘is to cut out the nucleus, trim away the tissues and allow the roots to shrivel and die’. As shocking as this metaphor might have been, O'Brien was not literally proposing the closure of the only route from the central city across the Yarra at Princes Bridge in order to reduce congestion. Instead, he mooted the creation of other ‘nuclei’, for instance a bridge at Spencer Street across the river which would be used by slow-moving vehicles. He also saw the replacement of city trams with more versatile buses as an effective method of reducing bottlenecks; such buses would relay passengers to tram termini outside the city centre.\textsuperscript{79}

The elimination of trams from the centre of Melbourne (or from the entire metropolis) was a much-debated topic at this time, and the MTPC was strongly against it. The rationale for this opposition at a time when American cities were already abandoning their road based rail transport was justified by a simple comparison between the ratio of passenger numbers to area occupied, in trams and in private vehicles.

Sandercock has stated that 120 pages – a third – of the Commission’s final (1929) report ‘agonize’ over traffic congestion at the expense of public transport. She sees this move as responsive to the increase in car ownership in the 1920s and therefore to the interests of the middle and upper classes of

\textsuperscript{78} ‘London Gasps/Appalling Calamity Just Averted/Tube Disaster Enquiry/Anxiety Regarding Safety of Rest of Metropolis’ Melbourne \textit{Evening Star} 29 November 1923, p. 1

\textsuperscript{79} C. T. O’Brien, ‘Relieving Traffic Congestion/Flinders Street Maelstrom/Prize Essayist’s Solution’ Melbourne \textit{Herald}, 16 July 1925, p. 17
Melbourne at the expense of those less wealthy. This does not necessarily, however, demonstrate a preference for the private vehicle over trams or other public transport on the part of the MTPC. To the people of Melbourne at this time, public transport – be it by tram, train or omnibus – was the entrenched and established mode of travel. If ‘traffic congestion’ was a major feature of the MTPC’s final report, concentration on road development did not preclude, and indeed to an extent encouraged, further development of public transport, particularly tramways. The concentration on road ‘congestion’ does, however, reflect a common conception that the roads of Melbourne’s city centre were becoming uncomfortably crowded.

In considering and addressing all of the general public’s suggestions, and other solutions proposed in the media, the men of the MTPC needed to discover a source of authority which they might then use to promote their own opinion. This source came from Tuxen, recently returned from the US and shortly to embark on a ‘propaganda’ campaign on the MTPC’s behalf. As well as addressing the issue of the city’s waterways, Tuxen also put forth the MTPC’s view on roadways and public transport. These views included the desirability of the retention of tramways in the metropolis, and the desirability of building new railways and ‘parkways’ along major watercourses.

Arthur Kemsley, the secretary of the MTPC, wrote in a patronising manner of one of the Commission’s correspondents. He felt that ‘people should be encouraged to take an interest in civic development and to at least have cause to believe that the Commission is not unmindful of their letters.’ This is a rare instance in which an MTPC member acknowledged that being seen to be interested in ideas brought to its attention by members of the public was more important than the ideas themselves. For his part, the subject of Kemsley’s comment, Joseph Nixon – the writer suggesting the rerouting of the Yarra River through a pipe – must have sensed the Commission’s coolness to his idea, for he retracted his suggestion soon afterwards. Nixon wrote to the MTPC with an

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80 Sandercock, Cities for Sale, p. 68
81 Kemsley to Cr. Merrett, 9 April 1925, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria.
acknowledgement, possibly sarcastic or perhaps genuinely humble that he was 'but a very insignificant member of the public whose opinions could have very little influence with such a distinguished body of gentlemen.'\textsuperscript{82}

On the other hand, the MTPC was eager to solicit opinion from men its members either felt were sufficiently qualified, or perhaps who they may have considered would make good political or tactical allies. Such solicitations may have had their genesis in the belief expressed by Munro-Ferguson — simultaneous to his urging for the creation of a council — that for the creation and implementation of effective town planning, 'what was undoubtedly required was a mastermind.'\textsuperscript{83} In 1924, for instance, Kemsley wrote to Col. P.T. Owen, Director of General Works in Canberra, after hearing 'unofficially' that he had formulated a plan for future railway development in Melbourne. Perhaps responding in tactical fashion himself, though the perceived ends of such tactics are now untraceable, Owen denied having done so.\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, the MTPC was interested in the published ideas of prominent Melbourne architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear, whose article 'How I Would Alter Melbourne' appeared as Saturday evening reading in the \textit{Herald} of August 16, 1924.\textsuperscript{85} Desbrowe-Annear, who envisaged an entirely remodelled Melbourne full of cross-cut diagonal avenues and specially constructed endpoints, conforming to tenets of the City Beautiful ethos in this regard, was never officially contacted by the MTPC. However, they kept folders on both his public pronouncements on urban design and the much-lauded Church Street Bridge which crossed the Yarra between Richmond and Prahran and which he co-designed, and the opening of which was attended by many MTPC members.

The work of the MTPC, it is clear, did not take place in a void, and the Commissioners were consistently affected by other phenomena taking place in

\textsuperscript{82} Nixon to Kemsley, 27 April 1925, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria.
\textsuperscript{83} Munro-Ferguson, discussion of J. C. Morrell, 'Fundamental Principles of Town Planning', RAIA General Meeting, Tuesday 1 August 1916 in RAIA Victorian Chapter General Meetings Book, 1906-1930, File M9454, Melbourne University Archives
\textsuperscript{84} Kemsley to Owen, 4 July 1924; Owen to Kemsley, 8 July 1924, Box 5, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria
\textsuperscript{85} Harold Desbrowe-Annear, 'How I Would Alter Melbourne', Melbourne \textit{Herald}, 16 August 1924, p. 15
planning and related areas throughout their tenure. As well as this, it was an ongoing feature of the MTPC’s existence that its members were required to be aware of public and media opinion and their public face. Their performance in this regard was a calculated one, though perhaps to no greater degree than that of any other group of gentlemen in the public eye. The public performance aspect of the MTPC’s existence must necessarily be regarded as exercising an impact on their work.

*Saxil Tuxen, technical expert*

The most consistent and considered responses to public debate on the future of planning in Melbourne are those by Saxil Tuxen. Tuxen justifiably saw himself, at this time, as one of the country’s leading town planning experts. Speaking before the First Interstate Conference of the Australian Surveyor’s Institute in 1928, he stated that it was ‘a matter of grave concern that persons with no knowledge of the true requirements’ of town planning – those without professional skills, be they bureaucrats in local government or private developers – ‘should assume control of work of such importance’.

His occasional disagreements with certain points of MTPC policy notwithstanding, Tuxen was an effective propagandist for the commission and, unlike many of its members, his status in a number of different arenas – as ‘technical expert’, as town planning advocate, and as qualified surveyor – served him well. He was clearly aware of the importance of professional qualifications in public forums, as demonstrated when he urged the MTPC to acknowledge his qualification as a Municipal and Water Supply Engineer in 1928 not only within the organisation but in announcements to newspapers. Tuxen was rarely prone to self-congratulation, and it is likely that

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66 ‘First Interstate Conference of the Australian Surveyor’s Institute’ *Australian Surveyor*, May 1928, p. 15

67 Extract from minutes, 7 December 1928, ‘Mr Tuxen said that he desired to have the words “Certificated Municipal and Water Supply Engineer” inserted after the letters after his name. After discussion this was agreed to.” After passing the Water Supply Engineer’s exam in May, Tuxen had requested that Kemsley send an announcement of the new qualification to the newspapers: the *Herald* published the news on the 21 May 1928, and the *Sun* on the following day. ‘Mr. Saxil Tuxen’ file, Box 22, MTPC files, Public Records Office, Victoria.
he saw public awareness of his new qualification only as a means to gaining further authority for the MTPC, particularly at a time when debate was ongoing about possible changes to the course of the Yarra River. Tuxen participated in more conferences and interviews to publicise the MTPC’s work than any MTPC members aside from Frank Stapley and Edward Rigby, Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively.88 Tuxen’s writings, and the lectures he conducted both in public meetings and radio broadcasts on his return from his trip to the US in 1925, are not on the subject of the cities of the US or design techniques in practice there. They do, however, use examples from his American experiences to reinforce the MTPC’s position on certain issues under public debate. Tuxen either chose or was chosen by the MTPC – the organisation’s archives do not clarify this – to address certain areas of particular concern to the public: those of the treatment of the Yarra, and problems of traffic congestion.

Tuxen’s position has been represented differently by the commentators who have dealt with him as a figure in his MTPC context. Most notable of these are Freestone and Grubb, who claim as evidence of the MTPC’s embracing of the American ‘city functional’ ideal, which placed ‘beauty… at the bottom of the list’, that his American experience ‘convinced’ Tuxen that ‘the main object of town planning’ was ‘efficiency over beauty’.89 The newspaper article on which this interpretation is based is in fact highly ambiguous and, when taken in tandem with other examples of Tuxen’s opinion on this matter it serves instead to reinforce Tuxen’s ambivalence to America and its planning practice. The item, ‘Australia lags in Town Planning, says Saxil Tuxen’ which appeared in the Morning Post, states that Tuxen had recently returned from a visit to America where he visited thirty cities ‘for the purpose of studying the latest town planning methods’. The next line quotes Tuxen: ‘The main object of such activities… is to make the city efficient, and the least consideration is beauty’. The ‘activities’ which Tuxen refers to may have been the previously mentioned ‘latest town planning methods’, but there is nothing to indicate that Tuxen is proposing that

88 MTPC Plan of General Development, p. 305
such a course is either positive in itself, or that it would be appropriate for Melbourne.90 The article does not quote Tuxen as saying words to the effect that Australia lagged in town planning at all. The Morning Post, a short-lived paper controlled by rural interests, 91 is in itself not a very reliable source on such matters. It was just over three weeks old at this time and was operating under difficult conditions. It did not take the interest in town planning matters that the Herald or the Evening Sun did; within the next three weeks it would confuse the MTPC with the Victorian TPA.92 This is a common enough error at the time as the ‘Businessman’ letter, mentioned above, indicates; but one perhaps indicative of a lack of engagement with either body’s work or role. The Tuxen quoted in the Morning Post and by Freestone and Grubb is certainly inconsistent with the man who, less than a year later, derided the US in a radio broadcast by suggesting that Melbourne should avoid imitating ‘the ugly face of commercialism’ to be found despoiling America’s natural features.93 Here, Tuxen clearly expresses his disapproval for cities where ‘the least consideration is beauty’. Fifty years later, Tuxen recalled the American cities he had visited as ‘just an uninspiring collection of bricks and mortar’.94

The type of ambiguity represented by the Morning Post report is not uncommon. A similar item from the Evening Star two years earlier, discussing C. J. De Garis and his plans for Corio, states: ‘In discussing his various projects, Mr. De Garis remarked that he had seen enough in the US to justify an increasing reliance in the art of town planning.’95 This item does not make clear whether De Garis was advocating town planning because he saw positive examples of its appropriate use in the USA, or because he feared that, without an unspecified variety of town planning, Australia’s urban areas might develop in the manner of the USA. In both this case and that of the Tuxen interview in the Morning Post,

90 ‘Australia Lags in Town Planning, Says Saxil Tuxen’ Melbourne Morning Post (hereafter Morning Post), 20 November 1925, p. 5
92 ‘Are There Slums in Port Melbourne?’ Morning Post, 10 December 1925, p. 5
93 ‘The Need for Parks’ (report of radio broadcast by Tuxen) Age 27 October 1926 p. 14
95 ‘New Suburbs Planned/Big Subdivisions/De Garis at the Helm’, Melbourne Evening Star, 7 December 1923, p. 11
only an assumption on the part of the reader that American planning or American cities were to be regarded as inherently superior will give the impression that the former opinion is being expressed.

Indeed, the article that Tuxen was soon to publish in the Melbourne Herald on the subject of the Yarra River demonstrates that, even if the Morning Post had correctly interpreted his statement, it was not representative of his attitude in subsequent years. Tuxen was opposed to the exclusion or minimisation of ‘civic beauty’ within the MTPC’s planning ethos. Like many planners, Tuxen’s interests did lie in practical solutions to problems of congestion and convenience. He nevertheless did not see construction or reconstruction towards this goal as an end in itself.

Tuxen’s spirited defense of the Yarra was, along with his published items recommending the retention of the tramway system, the most forceful of his public campaigns. ‘What We Might Do With The Yarra’ was published in Saturday’s Melbourne Herald in November 1926. Here he expounded on the beauty of the Yarra at the specific point where Dixon would have it removed; he remarked that ‘[m]any artists have put it on canvas’. He also appealed to the prevalent attitude that Melbourne’s beginnings, under early settler and (contested) founder John Batman, were noble – comparative, one might assume, to the convict origins of Sydney. He wrote:

Do you realise what a wonderful city Nature, assisted by her henchman John Batman, has given to us, not for our use merely, but as a trust for posterity, to use, to enjoy, to hand on enhanced by whatever of invention, of art, of hard work each generation can give?

Tuxen also seems to have been attempting to kindle in his readers an appreciation for the river’s ecology. Here he used the example of America and his own experience of it to drive his point home:

After [the Yarra traverses] another mile of mingled charm and ugliness, Nature being responsible for one and man the other, Studley Park is reached, and from that point for miles the river twists through an enormous permanent reservation which has the
bad luck to be in Australia instead of America. Were it in the latter country, it would be advertised so widely that folk would come from far countries to see a natural park whose nearest point was but two miles away from the heart of a great metropolis.  

Tuxen was a firm believer in the ‘parkway’, not of course an elevated footway but the forerunner to the freeway, what Rowe calls ‘a limited-access highway located through a park’: Rowe believes the concept is one of Olmsted’s, dating from 1877.  

Walter Griffin had proposed such roads for Canberra in 1916, when he suggested that he desired to ‘make [Canberra’s] avenues really parks’.  

Early in the Commission’s existence Tuxen was ardently campaigning for the diversion of city traffic to a parkway along the Collingwood banks of the Yarra near Victoria Street. This road was not embraced by the other members of the MTPC, but the Commission was clearly in favour of parkways in general, recommending many tree-lined boulevards for automobiles, in the style of the recently-created Yarra Boulevard at Eaglemont, along Melbourne waterways such as Merri, Darebin and Gardiner’s creeks. A few weeks before the publication of Tuxen’s Yarra article, he discussed in a radio broadcast the need for more parks in the Melbourne area. These, he said, should be systematically aligned so as to be accessible one from the other by the recreational dweller, ‘connected with parkway drives or boulevards such as were found in America’. The photographs he took in the US in 1925 suggest his examples for such boulevards might have been Central Park’s sunken roads.

Tuxen’s two-part series on Melbourne’s tramway system was initially rejected by the Herald and then, after the intervention of Stapley, published in the Age. Tuxen, unable to resist making an example of the lack of expertise of the ‘man in the street’, nevertheless appealed to the logical outlook of this same ‘man’ by couching his argument in terms of the American experience:

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96 Tuxen ‘What We Might Do With the Yarra’, Melbourne Herald 27 November 1926, p. 17
97 Rowe, Making a Middle Landscape, p. 185
98 Typed Transcript of Evidence Given at the Committee Hearing on Grading and Surveying of Canberra Streets, Feb-March 1916, item AA 1964/71/1, Australian Archives, Canberra
99 ‘The need for Parks’, op. cit.
The man in the street says, 'That's what I always told you; remove the trams and substitute buses', but the man in the street never having closely studied the problem, does not appreciate the fact which the whole of the evidence of America to-day goes to prove that the buses can never outst the tram from an economical standpoint, or by themselves never deal with mass transportation...\(^{100}\)

The evidence in question concerned no particular American policy, but rather Tuxen's observations during his travels there. Tuxen saw moves to replace trams with other transport forms as a failure and could not, of course, foretell the actual machinations by which American tramway systems would be destroyed. For Tuxen, the only serious problem that trams presented to cities were those involved with other vehicles that necessarily used the same routes. Here he engaged with the notion of trams in subways, as proposed by the 'private citizen' Munro:

The MTPC has schemes in hand for widening out bottle necks, and making these roads fully efficient. This is going to cost a good deal of money, but only a fraction of the cost of undergrounding the tracks, which is the only alternative... [t]hat day is far distant.\(^{101}\)

\textit{American examples in Tuxen's, and the MTPC's, work}

Tuxen's use of American examples in his advocacy of the value of town planning is problematic. While he was consistently engaging with American planning practice of the time, he was doing so while concurrently navigating his own course between public opinion and the opinions of his fellow commissioners. He did, on occasion, suggest that features with a genesis in American planning — such as linear parks — be adapted for use in Melbourne. He also used examples from America to illustrate a variety of points, for instance, when he opined that American urbanites would value a park such as Studley Park far more than

\(^{100}\) Tuxen, 'Tramways Past, Present and Future' (II) Age, February 10 1926, p. 12
\(^{101}\) Tuxen, ibid
Melbournians did – with the additional implication that the Australian feature was superior to anything in urban America.

Tuxen's use of America was also occasionally similar to assumptions and assertions such as those made by Burke, that Australia was 'passing through the stage that America has left – the stage of most rapid development'. The currency such an assumption held was useful to Tuxen in his 'propaganda' on behalf of the MTPC. However, while the MTPC's ultimate report may reflect the influence of contemporary American planning doctrine, this does not indicate that the Commission itself was unified in support of the application: indeed, Tuxen's debates with members of the Commission suggests that, while the Commission presented a unified front – and Tuxen was a vocal part of such a front – there were disagreements within it. Similarly, the importance of other individuals or bodies of thought in determining the Commission's outlook and recommendations should not be ignored.

Tuxen, as a mouthpiece of the Commission, took care to reign in as many of the concerns of the general populace as could be easily identified, and, both with and without the American experience, sow other seeds in the imaginations of Melbournites. This he did with particular attention to what he saw as a general dissatisfaction with the tramway system and a lack of interest in the fate of the city's largest river, the Yarra. In addressing these issues, he used examples from his own experience of American cities to cajole and enthuse Melbournians into considering his own opinions on these issues.

Steven V. Ward, writing on the international diffusion of planning, categorises Australian planning practice as having 'a strong initial dependence on planning models from the imperial homeland,' followed by 'an almost equally uncritical admiration for ideas and practices from the United States'. In the case of the MTPC, there is little to suggest that British planning practice was the template or model from which planning ideas were being derived; the Commission was quite obviously (and overtly) utilising ideas from American

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102 Ward, 'Re-examining the International Diffusion of Planning', in Freestone (ed.) Urban Planning in a Changing World, p. 49
planners and planning commissions of the time. However, there is also a case to be made that a professional ‘expert’ such as Tuxen was less likely to have a ‘strong... dependence’ on planning models from either Britain or America. Ward allows for ‘the role of individuals as independent variables in the diffusion process’ which he sees as ‘less amenable to generalisation’. While Tuxen may, arguably, thereby be an acceptable exception to Ward’s view of Australian planning, an understanding of Tuxen as an ‘independent variable’ does not take into account either his impact on the Commission, or the Commission’s outlook on the general public’s desires and requirements.

Certainly, Ward’s view of Australian planning as reliant on international models but ‘very much in the British image’ is not one Tuxen would have agreed with. Late in life, Tuxen wrote witheringly of Melbourne’s ‘City Fathers’. Looking around Melbourne of the late 1960s and early 70s, he saw planners and bureaucrats whose eyes were ‘dazzled by what was happening in other cities abroad’. His observations of overseas influence on Australian practice caused him to contrast this with the MTPC’s Final Report of forty years before, which he described as ‘the work of local talent without the aid of outside experts, and they had to feel their way as they went along’. Clearly Tuxen would not have typified the MTPC’s work or his own as a direct channeling of another country’s policies or ideas.

The archives of the MTPC, voluminous as they may be, only record what the Commissioners chose to leave on paper. What has remained does appear to indicate that some aspects of the Commission’s publicity and perhaps even its policy were geared towards placating or appealing to the general public.

The MTPC’s members did not take the individual suggestions of the public seriously. The Commissioners’ estimation of the value of their own collective expertise and authority led them to regard amateur planning enthusiasts as potentially valuable allies, or as useful indicators of areas of public concern. It is entirely understandable that a creature of government such as the MTPC, which

103 Ward, ibid p. 55
104 Ward, ibid p. 50
105 Tuxen, untitled, undated MS in possession of Tuxen family
placed so much emphasis on publicity and propaganda, would find it necessary to at least accommodate the idea of public input into its policies. Having received such input, it was necessary to then be seen to respond to it.

In this regard, the suggestions of the public were possibly even more influential on the Commission's publicity and propaganda than such suggestions' practicability warranted. The Melbourne public were clearly interested in American culture and society, and regarded American examples as indicative of the future Australia. The 'Americanisation' of the Commission's policy, as Grubb and others have typified it, was as much a response to these suggestions, incorporated into publicity and public statements, as it was a genuine influence of American ideas on the MTPC's planning ethos.

Given this, it might be more apposite to establish not whether, or to what extent, the MTPC borrowed from American – or other international – planning practice, but rather to consider American planning practice as the authority the MTPC looked to and cited in pursuing goals which were the product of a wide and diverse range of influences and self-generated, locally responsive, solutions.
Chapter Five

‘I dreamed in a dream I saw a City invincible’: Selling the garden suburb to Australia in the 1920s

‘I dreamed in a dream I saw a City invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth, I dreamed that was the new City of Friends...’

- The Pacific City Times, 1916

Landed gentry

A number of recent publications in North American planning history have involved examination and discussion of the commercial and sales approach of the commercial land developer.\(^1\) There have been no studies, however, of the private land developer in the interwar period in Australia aside from non-academic histories relating to (and often published by) real estate firms themselves.\(^2\) As with many aspects of the business of land sales, development and speculation, it has routinely been assumed that developers were and are unscrupulous if not dishonest, and that tactics or rhetoric involved in the selling of land are essentially undeserving of examination. However as will be seen the projected public persona of the developer and the methods used in selling land—particularly at this time, when concern about planning was coming to the fore in

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\(^2\) For example, I. Willmore and E. Warburton, *Willmore and Randell: Seventy Years in Australian Real Estate 1922-1992*, Willmore and Randell Sales, Sydney, 1994
many quarters – is revealing of the state of planning and land development in the 1920s.

W. S. Worley, in his study of prominent real estate developer J. C. Nichols, places Nichols as the creative heart at the centre of Kansas City’s Country Club District. Nichols was not the planner or designer of the area – he was merely the proprietor and vendor – yet Worley suggests that Nichols played a formative role in the development of new modes of suburban settlement.\(^3\) Alice T. Friedman, in her ‘Not a Muse: The Client’s Role at the Rietvold Schroder Home’ suggests the ‘failure of attention’ paid to the client’s role in the creation of architectural projects, ‘together with the overvaluing of the individual architect as innovator, has contributed to the “star system” and distorts our understanding of the design process.’\(^4\) Friedman is dealing particularly with the architectural field, but her reasoning holds true for planning: the input of the initiator of a scheme, which must surely almost always be as considerable as that of the producer in a film, is rarely considered in planning history. Instead, an auteur view is promoted.

In his book Selling Places, which does not examine the persona of the land developer as much as it does the representation of place for commercial purposes, Stephen V. Ward details the business career of Samuel Eberly Gross, a well-known and, for a time, extraordinarily successful and flamboyant real estate developer in Chicago between the late 1860s and 1903.\(^5\) Gross, according to Ward, was a ‘genuine showman. He knew how to capture and retain popular and press attention.’\(^6\) Ward also draws attention to the fact that Gross regularly named subdivisions after himself: for instance, Grossdale and Gross Park. In this

\(^5\) Ward, Selling Places: the Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850-2000, E. & F. N. Spon, London, 1998, pp. 88-91. Ward’s lack of interest in the promotion of the real estate agent as a ‘personality’ is clear from the fact that he reproduces an extraordinary newspaper advertisement representing Gross as ‘the world’s greatest real estate dealer’, with his properties arrayed like a ‘boxing champion’s belt’ (p. 134) but uses the illustration not as a representation of the persona of the estate agent but to demonstrate the use of rural names in estate titles.
\(^6\) Ward, Selling Places, p. 88
way the success of one estate might be reflected in others, and all would publicise Gross’ business.

Gross and other real estate promoters of this late 19th century period were not only able to use the press and a public profile to expand their business: the capacity to construct and maintain streetcar routes and other forms of transport was a marketing and business tool allowed American entrepreneurs but denied their Australian counterparts, trams in particular having been the concern of government bodies from their introduction to Sydney in 1861 and since 1919 in Melbourne. This situation did not, of course, preclude corruption in the creation of public transport routes for the benefit of politician-speculators and their associates. In the 1920s, the public transport bureaucracies were powerful players – usually in collusion with private property developers and councils – in the development of new urban territory in Australian cities. For most Australian property developers, particularly those working primarily in suburban subdivisions, transport was an important part of a subdivision’s infrastructure, and required co-operation with local or state government bodies.

Other developers – Henry F. Halloran is perhaps the best example – clearly chose to work in rural, rather than urban, areas as much as possible, while still producing estates which conformed to the ethic and aesthetic of the urban fringe garden suburb at the time. Halloran created, or sponsored the creation of, far more ostentatious and eccentric land promotion schemes than T. M. Burke or C. J. De Garis. One might expect such a figure to be seen by the interwar years’ professional planners – and by planning historians of the present day – as bringing the profession into disrepute. Instead Halloran was embraced by planners such as Sulman and the Griffins without reservation, for no more reason than his own personal magnetism and his ability to co-opt contemporary planning rhetoric into his own ethos. Present-day planning historians seem to be content to accept Halloran’s assessment of himself and his business.

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'The T. M. Burke System'

Thomas Michael Burke (1870-1950) was a leading figure in Australian real estate in the first half of the 20th century. Burke's company – named after himself – had established offices not only in Melbourne but also Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Newcastle by the end of the 1920s, when its 'power to operate in all the States' was notable amongst real estate developers. Though T. M. Burke was an auctioneer, and also sold pre-existing properties, it was as a subdivider that the company had a substantial impact on the Australian urban landscape. He was a union activist in the rail workers' strike of 1902; leaving the union movement soon afterwards, but retaining strong socialist principles, he established the Civil Service Co-Operative Society, a co-operative store. Here, he secured his position as a vocal advocate of Australian manufacturing and production, beginning with a tenure as secretary to the 'Made-in-Australia' exhibition in 1904. He was concurrently prominent in the Australian Natives' Association, an extremely influential organisation from the late 19th century membership of which was exclusive to white men born in Australia.

Burke established his real estate business in 1915. According to an article in Australasian Business in 1921, Burke became distracted from an attempt to enter Federal Parliament, by the question 'How is it that land cannot be sold in the same way as other commodities are sold?' To the Australasian Business journalist, 'other commodities' appears to have meant 'mass-produced commodities' and indeed Burke did, to a degree, sell land in the way a manufacturer of a commodity might, though his rhetoric went beyond

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8 'Demand for Land', Argus, 11 December 1928, p. 10
10 'Our New Office/Two Interesting Histories' Evening Star, 21 February 1925, p. 14
11 'Stories of Business Success: No. 1 – The House of T. M. Burke' Australasian Business, March 1921, p. 32
conventional advertising. Burke appears to have introduced, or at least
popularised, the practice of providing financing for would-be purchasers of land
within the same company that sold the land. He was eventually to expand T. M.
Burke Pty. Ltd. into other, related, areas of finance which ultimately enabled his
company to survive the Depression, when large numbers of clients forfeited
payments on allotments.

Burke was an astute businessman and picked an excellent time to enter
the real estate industry. As in the rest of the western world, there was a massive
increase in car ownership in Australia in the ten years between in 1916 and
1926. Like many technological changes in Australian society, the advent of the
private motor vehicle not only altered the lives of those who owned them; it also
affected many in Australian society who aspired to or assumed they would soon
own or have access to a car. The reduction in the need for horses as transport
may also have conveniently freed up land at the perimeter of urban regions
which had previously been used for grazing.

Burke projected a particular character via his advertising columns and
other publicity. These were essential to his clients' understanding of his value as
a public figure, and his business. This understanding may also, for many, have
been connected to his career prior to entering the real estate business, although

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12 Details of Burke's actual activities in setting up his business are limited to a few scant sources;
L. J. Hooker, the company which bought out T. M. Burke Pty Ltd in the 1960s, have not retained
the company's records. Burke's approach may also have mirrored that of purveyors of new
technologies, for instance that of telephone companies described by Michele Martin which
initiated 'a discriminatory diffusion... to maximise profit' thereby establishing ownership of a large
share of the market. Burke clearly did discriminate between classes in the way that Martin claims
the Bell telephone company did in Ontario and Quebec. (Michele Martin, ‘Communication and
pp. 307-33, p 309)

13 For instance in New South Wales, car ownership almost doubled, from 14,175 to 28,665
between 1916 and 1921, then soared to 104,675 in 1926. Lester Hovenden, ‘The Impact of the
Motor Vehicle, 1900-39’ in Wotherspoon (ed.), Sydney’s Transport, p. 140

14 This process and other cause-and-effect arguments about adaptation of new technology are
discussed in Claude S. Fisher, America Calling – a Social History of the Telephone Berkley,
University of California Press, 1992, p. 8. Fisher is justifiably ambivalent about this ‘impact’
approach and I agree that at the very least there are a number of processes interacting at the
suburban ‘frontier’ at this time.
Burke himself rarely made reference to this in his published writings or self-promotion.

Burke’s real estate operation often invoked the language of modernity and efficiency. There was an appeal in Burke’s advertising pitch which suggested a modern streamlining of the land sale process. His company advertised its sales process as a ‘system’:

Under the TM BURKE SYSTEM the Business of Seeking a Suitable Home becomes a Pleasurable Procedure, instead of a Wearisome Ordeal... each [property] is GUARANTEED to be worth the amount asked... there is no time wasted in looking at Unsuitable Houses.... INSPECTION IS BY MOTOR, which means the maximum comfort and the minimum delay.\textsuperscript{15}

‘Inspection by motor’ also, of course, meant the same kind of redrawing of the established residential terrain as that heralded by the construction of the Yarra Boulevard at Heidelberg; another step, however subtle, into the age of the private motor vehicle. It also hid the fact that many Burke properties might have been far from public transport facilities, or subject to the vagaries of an inefficient train, tram or bus service. Drivers were instructed to take clients to land by ‘the most picturesque route’.\textsuperscript{16} Such an approach also subtly invoked an aspiration to car ownership as part of the new suburban lifestyle to which clients were moving.

It appears representatives urging speculative investment made many subdivision sales door-to-door, and this seems to have quickly become a cornerstone of the company’s approach. Within five years of its establishment T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. claimed to have 120 specially-trained salesmen in its employ; it also had offices in all major cities across the country.\textsuperscript{17}

In assessing the T. M. Burke company’s attitude to the social reformist attributes of some garden suburb planning, it is pertinent to consider the company’s attitude to less affluent purchasers. The Burke ‘system’ did not exclude any class – the company professed to have land investments in mind for all perceived social classes, and used examples such as land-owning ‘office

\textsuperscript{15} ‘Making “House-Hunting” a Pleasure’, Argus, 15 Nov 1919, p. 20
\textsuperscript{16} ‘Stories of Business Success’, op. cit, p. 32
\textsuperscript{17} ‘Stories of Business Success’, op. cit, p. 33
boys' in its advertising – but it did distinguish between the classes. There is little archival material relating to Burke's company available, but a 'sales manual' from 1929 includes many examples of letters the company would send to householders, including different kinds of form letter pitched at the 'Industrial Classes' or the 'Better Classes'. A letter deemed acceptable to 'All Classes' reads: 'We are specialists in Land Investment studying the trend of development and forecasting the growth of settlement in all Australian cities. The best brains of our organisation are devoted to anticipating increases in land values and to securing land in selected areas along the track of development.'

It is clear also from this manual that once a piece of land was paid off it was considered imperative to then induce customers to begin to buy another, thus keeping an ongoing financial relationship with the company and increasing its turnover. The emphasis T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. put on this approach shows the importance speculative buyers had for the enterprise. This further suggests that T. M. Burke's subdivision projects should not be evaluated as if they were created for immediate use, or as if the purchasers of allotments of land were intending to live on them. Burke's estates are not instantly comparable with the 'new towns' of the second half of the 20th century; they were, instead, futuristic predictions of towns waiting to be flesched out over time.

The Burke letterhead shows a fanciful illustration of Melbourne's Flinders Street Station – perhaps as seen from T. M. Burke's Collins Street offices. The illustration depicts red tiled roofs, stretching upwards in improbable perspective, behind the station. These were the 'red suburbs' Burke idealised in one of his columns, 'extending on all sides' of Melbourne and a contrast to what he called 'green suburbs' – which were unproductive paddocks. The implications of this graphic are simple: that the future of the Australian city was in new, prolific suburbanisation. While such a conceptualisation may appear to be the opposite of the garden suburb, other pronouncements of Burke's show that, in fact, he took a favourable attitude to garden suburb development.

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18 T. M. Burke sales manual, MSS 4411, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
19 'Talks on Real Estate/T. M. Burke's Column/Green and Red Suburbs' Evening Sun, 6 September 1923, p. 12
Burke’s continued advocacy of the ‘Australian-made’ approach through the 1920s, through which he recommended prohibition of import of any item which could be manufactured locally,20 his Catholicism and Irish background, may have positioned him in a particular social sphere in Australia of the 1920s. If he was not outspokenly anti-British, he certainly was not pro-Empire in the established sense. His union background – for those of his potential clients whose memories stretched back far enough – may also have counted in his business’s favour amongst the working and lower-middle class, but by the same token may have counted against it amongst other sections of the population. His recognition of class was clearly important, as the name of the Newcastle suburb of Birmingham Gardens, which was planned and built under his aegis, demonstrates.21 To a certain sector, the name of his company may also have had a satisfying resonance, ‘T. M.’ being an Australian slang term meaning ‘tailor made’, and commonly used in relation to cigarettes.22 Another slang term of the time was perhaps more pertinent, given the tragedy that would befall many of the company’s clients during the Depression: ‘to burke’ meant ‘to fail to execute or fulfil a duty.’

Burke did not align himself with any class sector, and his own promotion of himself and his company, which was achieved in part through a weekly ‘column’ in Melbourne’s Evening Sun of the 1920s, avoided direct references to party politics.

This column was not actually editorial, though it was often illustrated with drawings reminiscent of editorial cartoons. It was a paid advertisement, and in fact occasionally, presumably in error, bore the heading ‘T. M. Burke’s Advertisement’.23 Despite the fact that it was essentially promotion for T. M. Burke and Co, however, there is no reason to believe the text of the column was the product of an advertising agency rather than Burke’s own work. He had an

20 Australian Industries/“Prohibit Motor-Car Importation” Argus, 11 June 1924, p. 9
21 Docherty, Newcastle: The Making of an Australian City, p. 88
23 For instance, ‘A Talk on Future Plans: T. M. Burke’s Advertisement’ Evening Sun, 24 May 1924, p. 8
established reputation as an orator, and in keeping with this, he often referred to the columns themselves as ‘talks’. Despite the apolitical nature of the ‘column’, it did however utilise Burke’s public persona, adopting various aspects of political boosterism, the promotion of the value of hard work, and self-motivation rhetoric:

Mankind may be divided into many classes, but two of the most prominent are the successes and the failures. A look around and a little reflection will show us that the most successful men are all men of vision and action, and the failures – well, they either lack mental vision or are devoid of energy. Probably they are both.\(^{24}\)

And, at its most extreme, a damning description of those who could not look after themselves:

Are the majority of people satisfied to live in comparative poverty? They must be, otherwise they would not live in it. If people make up their minds to do a thing, they can nearly always do it, but very few ever try to make money, apart from their modest weekly wages. So, if they are living in poverty, it is surely through their own faults, in most cases.\(^{25}\)

These lines, published in 1924, may be an attempt to provoke those of his readers who could afford to buy land into action, or perhaps to awaken a competitive spirit. Perhaps it was even something Burke, as a ‘self-made man’, genuinely believed. The sentiment was certainly a far cry from the opening lines of his essay, ‘Co-operation’, which had appeared in a Labor Party publication twelve years previously: ‘The chief cause of the unequal distribution of wealth is the competitive system... the arch-enemy of social and economic justice.’\(^{26}\) If the activities by which Burke first rose to prominence – those of political agitation on behalf of workers – were motivated by antagonism towards the traditional exploiters of workers, then by the 1920s his antagonism was instead directed towards those – in government and elsewhere – who sought to exploit Australia’s resources for ‘foreign’, including British Empire, interests. Burke could then take the position that selling land or other services to Australians regardless of their

\(^{24}\) ‘A Talk on Melbourne’s Future: T. M. Burke’s Column’ Evening Sun, 12 Jan 1924, p. 8

\(^{25}\) ‘Real Estate Talks: T. M. Burke’s Column’ Evening Sun, 5 April 1924, p. 10

background or social standing was in Australia’s interest, which was in his view first and foremost.

‘T. M. Burke’s Column’ often took a rather avuncular tone.\(^{27}\) He experimented with humour – he utilised the characterisations of Jewish Scotsmen, for instance, a popular stereotype at the time which combined the supposed two most miserly races. Burke almost always finished with an appeal to the reader to visit his company’s offices and inspect properties for sale.

Such properties were usually referred to as ‘investments’. If the T. M. Burke ‘sales book’ class divisions are indicative of the company’s approach, a Burke property was an invitation to become either a landlord or a land investor. Such ‘investment’ may have taken the form of buying a block of land with no immediate intention of either building or living on it, but rather waiting to see how the area developed around it. Ward explains the approach of Gross, in the last third of the 19\(^{th}\) century in Chicago, as persuading ‘ordinary workers to move from the familiar concept of house renting to embrace the notion of home ownership.’\(^{28}\) Burke’s approach was often to assume that his reader either already owned or was paying off a home, or that the affordable areas on the outskirts of Australian cities were places for speculation, not residence. Burke was taking the approach explicated by Jackson in *The Crabgrass Frontier*, advocating speculative investments in an increasingly urbanised nation which made ‘urban real estate... the single most important source of leisured wealth in the nineteenth century [in the US]’.\(^{29}\)

It is difficult to tell whether some readers mistook Burke’s ‘column’ for actual editorial; in the 1920s, during a time in which newspaper technology and form was changing and circulations increasing,\(^{30}\) the difference between advertising and reporting might have been blurred for most readers; it may have been irrelevant to many. Newspapers, eager for real estate’s advertising

\(^{27}\) ‘Talks on Real Estate: T. M. Burke’s Column’ *Evening Sun*, 12 July, 1924, p. 5
\(^{28}\) Ward, *Selling Places*, p. 89
\(^{29}\) Jackson, *The Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 135
revenue, only fuelled the ambiguity by making prominent advertisers like Burke into news items.

It is clear that Burke was a successful subdivider and estate vendor during the inter-war years. He also functioned as a traditional real estate agent, selling pre-existing houses and properties. He began his business with land bought during the economically depressed years of the First World War. One of his first projects of this nature was the Merrilands estate of 1919, executed by Tuxen, and discussed at some length in Chapter Three. The Tuxen-Burke connection deserves further exploration.

It has already been stated that Burke wrote his columns as though his readers were smaller players in the same game as himself, that is, speculators buying a stake in the future expansion of Melbourne; he occasionally suggested that they may have been buying property to live on. He often also suggested a combination of the two, recommending his readers buy two adjoining blocks on one estate. This appeal to speculators may have been developed because Burke's company was rarely in the position to offer new subdvisional land contiguous with existing settlement: there were still subdivisions dating from the 1890s, well-serviced by roads and public transport, but which were only sporadically settled. This is one of the reasons that, in the years immediately following the end of the First World War, Tuxen's office was still producing 'infill' subdivisions in Brunswick, only a few miles from the centre of Melbourne.

Burke did not seek to hide the fact that his larger subdivisions were not contiguous with development, though he did seek to make this appear a positive feature. He wrote from the assumption that much of the subdvisional land that he was offering for sale was not likely to be built on for some time, which was of course an important factor in its relative cheapness. He made no firmer prediction than that it would one day increase in value. In this, however, we see how valuable a surveyor of Tuxen's standing was to Burke. This was particularly important as regards Tuxen's status as a technical expert at the MTPC. If, as was generally believed, the MTPC's recommendations were soon to become law, then landholders in outer suburbs would want to be certain they owned
portions of land which conformed not only to the regulations, but also to the way the new suburban landscape was developing. Given this, Tuxen – as a member of the MTPC – was the best person to know, and to produce, land allotments and suburban designs which ‘conformed’. However, it is also true that Burke did not refer directly to Tuxen’s involvement in his plans in published advertising.

W. S. Worley writes that, in the US:

> Real estate operatives slowly came to realise that by accepting zoning and getting themselves appointed to zoning boards and commissions, they could influence governmental and public decisions in their favour to an even greater degree than before.\(^{31}\)

The *Evening Sun* explained in 1924 that zoning ‘removes suspicion as to stability of... the value [of particular sites].\(^{32}\) Though Burke in the 1920s was operating in a time before the widespread adoption of zoning in planning, he clearly saw the wisdom of co-operating with the planning bureaucracy or, in this case, would-be bureaucracy. He expressed a favourable opinion of the MTPC’s plans for Melbourne, and he saw profit in them. He wrote:

> From what has been disclosed by the Town Planning Commission, we have learnt that the outer suburbs of Melbourne will be open and airy settlements, far different from the close-packed suburbs closer round the city. Pocket handkerchief allotments and terraces of dwelling houses will be unknown in the new suburbs, and one of the main proposals is to form a ring of parks through the outer metropolitan area... These are not wild schemes of irresponsible visionaries. They are some of the proposals of a commission of experts appointed by the Government to solve the city’s most pressing problems.

As the Commission’s proposals were put into practice, Burke explained, ‘the new suburbs of the outer metropolis, with their large building allotments and spacious parks, will be settled much more rapidly than the inner suburbs have been.\(^{33}\) The MTPC’s recommendations would, therefore, bring expansion, rather than restriction, of the land market. Land further from the centre of cities would become more valuable more quickly, bringing greater prosperity to speculators

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\(^{31}\) Worley, J. C. *Nichols* p. 90

\(^{32}\) ‘Zoning Areas/Expansion Encouraged/Councils Assist’ *Evening Sun*, 2 May 1924, p. 10

\(^{33}\) ‘Talks on Real Estate: T. M. Burke’s Column’ *Evening Sun*, 3 August 1924, p. 8
and vendors... as well as incidentally bringing the advantage of ‘open, airy settlements’. The speed at which land in the outer suburbs of cities would gain value was the cornerstone of Burke’s selling approach.

Burke would also reveal other aspects of his personality and approach in unusual ways. Perhaps it was the pressures of generating enough material for a weekly column which sometimes caused him to deviate into unexpected, if not obscure, areas which nevertheless make his columns even more revelatory as texts. One column explores, and condones, the theme of what has come to be known as insider trading. Burke invented a small town, Kelly’s Crossing, and its shrewd Scottish hotelkeeper, Jock McDougall, who hears that a railway station might be built in the area:

Jock watches developments around Kelly’s Crossing, and becomes pretty friendly with the Shire Secretary and other gentlemen with inside information, which eventually is passed on to Jock in strict confidence in Jock’s private bar. After a year or two the newspapers publish an announcement about a new railway and a station at Kelly’s Crossing. Immediately the land agents in the district are besieged by enterprising townsfolk with inquiries about the price of land around the site of the new station, but, strange to say, all the land around about that site has been bought up by Jock McDougall and one or two of his friends.34

Far from condemning Jock, Burke praises his initiative, and adds that ‘probably the whole population of Kelly’s Crossing heard as soon as Jock did that the railway engineers were busy in the district, but Jock was the only man shrewd enough to investigate and take advantage of the new railway.’ Burke was leading to an ‘example’ which he was inviting his readers to partake in: ‘The Jock McDougalls’ he wrote, ‘are already at work along the Broadmeadows line.’35 His ultimate point – in essence, that he was giving an ‘insider tip’ to his readers about developments in Melbourne’s ‘undeveloped north’ – shows Burke’s, and perhaps 1920s Melbourne’s, attitude to business ethics, the making of money, and land development. The term ‘undeveloped north’, its frontier allusions aside, in itself

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34 ‘The Undeveloped North: T. M. Burke’s Column: An Investor’s Paradise, and the Activities of Jock McDougall’ *Evening Sun*, 30 August 1924, p. 10
35 ‘The Undeveloped North’, op. cit.
held meaning for Melburnites: the northern suburbs of Melbourne, such as Preston and Broadmeadows, grew quickly at this time, being well-serviced by public transport routes established in the 1880s. The name chosen for the fictitious settlement of Kelly's Crossing also suggests a pitch to Irish-Australians, though it might also have been merely intended as a generic 'Australian' place name, particularly considering the possible historical – though perhaps not the criminal – associations with the outlaw and 'working class hero' Ned Kelly.

The core of Burke's wealth had not originated in real estate, but he had certainly increased it massively through T. M. Burke Pty Ltd. His housing allotment plans featured aphorisms at their borders with quotes attributed to Carnegie and Roosevelt. It is not surprising that Burke was bucolic on the subject of Australia's progress, claiming there was to be nothing ahead for Australia but prosperous expansion:

'[T]he crash will have to come,' they say.... the best way to deal with these croakers is to push them down the back steps and let them crash into the dust bin. They are looking for crashes, so why not let them have one?  

As is apparent from the above examples of Burke's 'column' during the early 1920s, the garden suburb and 'town planning' were discussed only within the context of the financial gain to be made from such developments. Burke was overt about the aspects of his operation which were calculated to appeal to speculators as much as to home buyers, and in either case ultimately to do no more than package blocks of land for sale. To Burke, it was government's job to supply the services, and the traditional role of local councils was to anticipate the needs of new residents with the compensation of increased rate revenues. 'As far as I know,' Burke wrote in 1923, 'no-one has ever accused me of being a philanthropist ... Yet I claim that my business is, as every business should be, a

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36 Untitled plan of portion of Hartlands estate, 'Heidelberg' Box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
37 Burke, 'Talks on Real Estate/T.M. Burke's Column/Who Said Land Boom?/The Bad Old Days-And Now' Evening Sun, 11 August 1923, p. 10
public service.\textsuperscript{38} In this Burke was merely echoing the land boomers of the
1880s, who Davison says ‘saw themselves… as public benefactors’ though they were
in truth driven by ‘greed and optimism’\textsuperscript{39} The \textit{Morning Post} – presumably in
pursuit of a new advertiser – did actually accuse Burke of philanthropy, two and a
half years later. The fledgling newspaper ran a glowing report of a visit paid to
Burke and his wife at their home in its third issue. As well as discussing his work
for charity, the \textit{Post’s} reporter also noted Burke’s strong patriotism, reflected in
the paintings by Australian artists hung throughout his home, and his status as
president of the Australia League.\textsuperscript{40}

Though he prepared plans for Burke right up until the late 1940s, Tuxen
was critical of the standard process of subdivision and the purchase of
allotments. This was potentially a risky stance to take: Tuxen’s company
depended so much on the continued success of businesses such as Burke’s,
and suggests that Tuxen saw value in publicly establishing his own
independence. Tuxen spoke quite scathingly, and probably from the experience
of attending numerous land sales in the course of his surveying work, of the
subdivision process in a 1927 radio address:

You remember the first time you attended a land sale. You were
first of all attracted by a glowing advertisement in the press. You
then went round to the land salesman’s office and obtained a
beautifully printed plan. On the appointed day you attended the
sale, arriving about half an hour before the sale started and after a
hurried inspection of the property, sat with the crowd in the
marquee and raised your hand timorously for the lot you really
thought would suit you. You missed that one but there were a
dozen or more which were all beautifully alike and finally you
managed to secure one and walked up to the table alongside the
rostrum and, in exchange for a small deposit, were handed a
document setting out that you were really at last the proud
possessor of a slice of your own State.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} Burke, \textit{Talks on Real Estate/T.M. Burke’s Column/Philanthropy, Business and the Shortage
Problem} \textit{Evening Sun}, 28 April, 1923, p. 10
\textsuperscript{39} Davison, \textit{The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne}, p. 155
\textsuperscript{40} T. M. Burke at Home/His Family and Philanthropic Work Get as Much Interest As His
Business/Mrs. Burke Helps, Too’ \textit{Morning Post}, Nov 2 1925, p. 3
\textsuperscript{41} Tuxen, ‘Melbourne Subdivisions’, p 4.
Tuxen’s ironic approach is intended here as a ‘caveat emptor’ warning: buyers had little to fall back on if they chose unwisely. At the same time, paradoxically, Tuxen was at the forefront of the very business – packaging land attractively and appropriately for the purchaser – which he was criticising so harshly.

It is clear, too, that Walter Griffin had no high opinion of Burke, who had sold the Griffin-designed Summit Estate (1914) at Eaglemont on behalf of Peter Keam. At one of the heated GSDA meetings in late 1928, Walter compared the company’s chairman, Charles Cerutty, to Burke in what appears to have been an attempt to disparage Cerutty as mercenary.42

Merrilands was one project which was extremely lucrative, at least in its initial stages, for Burke. The *Preston Leader* editorialised in 1920 that:

> We learn on good authority that every one of the thousand odd blocks of the Merrilands sub-division (first section) has been sold, also a large number of blocks in the second section... It now looks as if the vendor, T. M. Burke, would make something like £75,000 on his deal. He did not sit in his office and wait for clients to come, but made of it something of a tour-de-force. Salesmen were sent to all parts of the country. A fleet of motor cars was engaged for inspection purposes. The proposed ‘garden suburb’ was boomed to the limit that printer’s ink could do it. In the meantime very desirable land miles closer in... hangs fire at rates per foot little, if any, higher. It is one more tribute to salesmanship and advertising.43

The *Preston Leader* had not attracted any of Burke’s advertising, which stands to reason – there would be little advantage in publicising a project of this nature in the area itself – but which may explain the curt nature of this report. It would also have been an early example, obvious to those who knew the area well, of new proposed development ‘leapfrogging’ undeveloped suburban areas. If Merrilands was ‘boomed’ in print, then very little of that print survives; there were, however, expensive and attractive large-scale street plans printed which presented the new suburb seemingly on its merits.

42 ‘Re: Mr. Griffin’s Affidavit’ Undated [circa 1928], unsigned typescript, Box 3, Greater Sydney Development Association Records BS 3-2-25 (hereafter Cerutty Papers), Melbourne University Archives
43 *Preston Leader*, 24 January 1920, p. 2
Stuart MacIntyre’s representation of advertising in post-WWI Australia as the domain of ‘the most ardent apostles of American business methods’ is supported by the example of both Burke and a potential – though ultimately, unsuccessful – competitor in the mid-1920s, C. J. De Garis. Burke promoted himself as a wise (and witty) patriarch, whose best interests lay in assisting the people of Australia to buy land, in which he happily coincided with their best interests. However De Garis was more charismatic, and in fact his rise and fall corresponds to the classic Weberian notion of the charismatic figure, most notably in his rapid fall from grace at the advent of failure.\(^4\)

*The alert grey twinkling eyes of C. J. De Garis*

Clement John De Garis (1884-1926) was amongst the most eccentric and exotic entrepreneurs of the 1920s. He was a pioneering aviator, author, playwright, patron of the arts and an innovator in advertising. He came to urban land subdivision late in his short life, and, though he was in the field for less than a year, made a substantial impact.

Certain passages in De Garis’s biographical novel, *The Victories of Failure*, take an inventive detour from the standard ‘internal monologue’, wherein De Garis is addressing an audience. Doubt – in the form of a disbelieving heckler – challenges De Garis, who in response typifies himself as ‘a committee of one…always unanimous’.\(^5\) De Garis made individualism a cornerstone of his approach; his self-created ‘visionary’ persona was to be the central focus of his appeal as a land vendor.

De Garis entered the land subdivision business essentially because he was adept at publicity, and greatly in need of money: a fact that in itself says much about perceptions of the real estate industry from the point of view of both

\(^4\) MacIntyre, *The Oxford History of Australia* Vol 4, p. 218
entrepreneurs and buyers in the 1920s. In the years immediately preceding the
decade, the Mildura-based De Garis had revolutionised the Australian dried fruit
industry, of which his family's company, Sarnia, was a major player. He created a
national market through advertising and publicity gimmicks, such as a lucrative
competition to guess the number of sultanas in a particular bunch. He also
named products for publicity: the 'Good Little Normey', for instance, a sweet with
a name designed to intrigue. Some of these ideas were highly successful as
gimmicks and may well have already influenced the real estate industry prior to
De Garis's venture into the field. In the same month, December 1919, that the
Australian Dried Fruit Association was offering four first prizes of £15 for the
people who discovered the 'two magic words' in the phrase 'Sunraysed B – S – '
in a large advertisement over De Garis's name, the Sydney real estate agent
Arthur Rickard and Company was offering a first prize of £15 for 'an appropriate
name for new subdivision and railway station' in a subdivision in Western
Melbourne, which was to become Seaholme, near Altona.

The years up to 1920 were halcyon days for De Garis. In the new decade,
however, he was to become one of the first high-profile casualties of the 1920s
boom. The collapse of his businesses was not related to the wider economy,
however, but to an aspect of his personality which business people and investors
perceived as his own recklessness. Looking beyond his family's Mildura
concerns, he invested heavily in the fruit growing town of Pyap, in South
Australia. De Garis zealously instituted new irrigation techniques which increased
productivity, and encouraged population growth – and his own status as a father
figure – in the area, by instituting a system of financial rewards for couples
bearing children in Pyap. Before Pyap had been fully established, however, De
Garis set his sights on Kendenup, in Western Australia, which he had discovered

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47 In this regard his career mirrors that of the Rosen brothers, Leonard and Julius, who used their
skills in 'spruiking' and travelling sales to build a thriving real estate business in Florida. David E.
Doddrell, Selling the Dream: The Gulf American Corporation and the Building of Cape Coral,
Florida, University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1993 pp. 16-17, 25
48 Argus, 13 December 1919, p. 8; Argus, 4 December 1919, p. 6. Peter Spearritt singles Arthur
Rickard and Company out as 'Probably the biggest speculative subdivider' of the 1920s in
Sydney; however Rickard's business ventures in Melbourne were substantially fewer, and
Rickard tended to eschew 'garden suburb' designs. (Spearritt, Sydney Since the Twenties, p. 48)
on a flying trip. Here he established a settlement in 1921 to grow fruit and vegetables – though a small town already existed, and it is clear that no new ‘town planning’ was undertaken.

Finance for the settlement failed, and in 1924 De Garis was in Melbourne, General Manager and Director of Sales of the Melbourne Subdivisions Company. The MSC’s advertising masked the fact that De Garis effectively owned the company, and was working to regain former glories and to earn sufficient money to pay back investors and settlers and prop up Kendenup. It is clear that despite his financial downturn at Kendenup, De Garis had the confidence of many prominent financiers; at a court case in 1925 De Garis was described as being able, ‘even when he was in the most desperate financial straits… to raise thousands of pounds.’ This skill made him ‘not an ordinary class of man.’

One of the earliest MSC projects was the ‘Heart of Rosebud Estate’, a seaside resort on the Mornington Peninsula sold by the MSC. ‘Heart of Rosebud’ was advertised as ‘the biggest and best Town-planned Estate along the Beach Fringe’, with its health-giving properties accentuated in the form of the ‘Rosebud Doctor’, a De Garis touch presumably inspired by his recent experience of the ‘Fremantle Doctor’, a famous evening sea-breeze in Perth. This estate was laid out by Saxil Tuxen, and provides a distinct link between Tuxen and De Garis. De Garis was quoted in the Evening Sun as referring to Rosebud as ‘an ideal holiday settlement by Mr Taxie Tuxem’. The reporter’s inability to comprehend Tuxen’s name notwithstanding, this suggests that Tuxen’s involvement was regarded by

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49 Bank Sues Sawmiller/De Garis’s Character/“Unscrupulous in Difficulties” Argus, 3 October 1925, p. 31
50 ‘Heart of Rosebud Estate’ plan, in ‘Rosebud’ box, Coghill and Haughton papers, Melbourne University Archives. There is also a full-page advertisement for this estate in the Evening Sun, Dec 14 1923, p. 13. Both estate map and advertisement credit the design to Saxil Tuxen.
51 ‘New Suburbs Planned/Big Subdivisions/De Garis at the Helm’, Evening Sun, 7 December 1923, p. 11. De Garis may have been referring to Tuxen affectionately: other sources suggest ‘Tux’ as Tuxen’s nickname.
52 Tuxen’s name was often misspelled in these very Anglo-Saxon times. The Preston Leader, for instance, misspelled his Christian name as ‘Saxel’ in 1919 (‘Merrie/lands Estate Sub-Division’ Preston Leader, 6 December 1919, p.6); the Argus labelled him, in a photograph of the MTPC, ‘S. Tuxton’ (Argus, 2 February 1924, p. 29), the Evening Sun referred to him as ‘Mr. Huxem’ (‘Ranelagh’, Evening Sun June 27 1924, p. 9) and the GSDA’s Henry Hudson referred to him as ‘Tucson’ (Hudson, letter to Cheong 12 July 1930 in Hudson File, Box 2, Cerutty Papers, Melbourne University Archives). These are surely only a few examples of the confusion this
De Garis as being a selling point for the 'Heart of Rosebud'. The connection with Tuxen might also have been exploited by De Garis in 1926, when he took out leases in the Hastings and Bittern area in an attempt to find oil there: Tuxen was Shire Engineer of Hastings at this time. Despite its 'town-planned' status, the estate was promoted as a holiday village, not as a conventional residential area, though De Garis and his second wife made it their home. De Garis marketed Heart of Rosebud as an exclusive country retreat for a middle-class clientele with expendable income and aspirations towards a lifestyle similar to British aristocracy: the attractions were advertised as including 'Superb fishing. Good Quail shooting'.

The first major residential, working class development for the MSC was Corio, 'The Garden Suburb of Geelong'. This should not be confused with the present-day suburb of Corio, which is in a different location: both were named for their location on Corio Bay. The suburb was designed by the Geelong architect, I. G. Anderson, in association with Arthur Stephenson, previously 'consulting planner' at the colliery town of Yallourn, and Leighton Irwin. At Corio, according to one of the full-page advertisements placed in the Herald, 'industry and artistry, idealism and practicality, natural advantages and creative beauty are being expertly blended by scientific modern town-planning methods under the guidance of capable enthusiasts'. In September 1924 the Evening Sun, for whom the MSC was a major advertiser, reported that 1075 people had toured the Corio site in one day. De Garis, the Evening Sun reported, 'hatless... in a leather motor coat... radiated enthusiasm from those alert grey twinkling eyes' and claimed for himself the title of 'the modern Batman'. Referring to the words with which John Batman reputedly founded Melbourne: 'this is the place for a village' – De Garis said 'this is the place not for a village, but for a garden suburb on the most advanced of town planning principles'.

unusual name generated, though Tuxen's own writings do not suggest that he found this problematic.

53 'Mr C. J. De Garis Found Dead/Asphyxiated By Gas/Note Left Under Door Mat/"Fell Down on a Big Job" Argus, 18 August 1926, p. 21
54 Evening Sun, Dec 14 1923, p. 13
55 Melbourne Herald, 16 August 1924, p. 25
The way in which De Garis proclaimed himself the founder of a new community was also revelatory of the way developers might be seen as initiators of new planned settlements. During his involvement in Corio, De Garis made no mention of local government support or interest in the development. This shows both the weak powers of local government planners to control the excesses of speculative subdividers, and the lack of interest that entrepreneurs such as De Garis had in cultivating good relationships with local government.

In an apparently spontaneous gesture of generosity – one which, it would soon become clear, the MSC could not afford – De Garis paid for his 1075 visitors’ dinners at local hotels.\(^{56}\) De Garis was later to claim that he had been aware that the Ford company was soon to locate its Australian operations in the Corio area, \(^{57}\) a move which assured development in the region.\(^{58}\) The area’s name was soon changed to Grandjean Park in honour of P. W. Grandjean who had selected the area as Ford’s base.\(^{59}\)

De Garis was also, it is plain, concerned about his own social status as initiator of the Kendenup scheme, and larger advertisements referred to his restored reputation as a businessman, and that he had ‘voluntarily redeemed over £35,000 of Kendenup debentures...’ as well as discharging other financial commitments in the development, ‘although he already had a legal release.’\(^{60}\)

A month after launching the Corio estate, the MSC moved into the recently completed Capitol House, the remarkable Melbourne skyscraper designed by the Griffins, which also housed the Capitol Theatre. The MSC occupied the top floor, and De Garis christened it – unofficially – the ‘De Garis floor’. ‘From these offices,’ advertisements declared, ‘can be seen nearly all our Estates – situated near Melbourne and Geelong’.\(^{61}\) De Garis claimed that he would be making land


\(^{57}\) ‘Melbourne Subdivisions/Lively Meeting/Company Continues for Present’ *Argus*, 8 April 1925, p. 16

\(^{58}\) ‘American Tyre Coy. Buys Land at Corio’ *Morning Post* 12 December 1925, p. 12


\(^{60}\) Melbourne *Herald*, 16 August 1924, p. 25

\(^{61}\) *Evening Sun*, 27 September 1924, p. 23

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sales with a telescope from his office. This reference to science was as close as De Garis came to making the kind of pitch architectural historian Merry Ovnick writes of in Los Angeles, where the new spectacle and experience of flying – something close to De Garis’ heart and with which he was associated in the public mind – was twinned with advances in suburban development. Other estates offered by the MSC included the ‘Best Part Estate’ in Ringwood and the extravagantly named ‘SeaJay Estate’ in Croydon. ‘SeaJay’ was a pun on ‘C. J. De Garis’, mirroring Samuel Gross’ tendency to memorialise himself in place names. It also contained a perverse or perhaps even ironic – considering Croydon’s inland position – reference to the practice of drawing attention to seaside subdivisions, such as Seaholme, within a place-name. Details of the whereabouts of some of these developments were scant and it is possible that a few may actually have been fictitious, created to boost the number of estates on the MSC’s books. The ‘Best Part Estate’ did exist; it was not, however, a garden suburb in the accepted vein. It was, however, to De Garis, healthy living by virtue of its non-urban location, particularly by:

- the rosy-cheeked children - real children. Ringwood is famous for its apple orchard, the rosy-cheeked apples of Ringwood are known all over Australia and on the London market, and the rosy children are said to be a direct result of the rosy apples, but the unbiased observer would like to attribute a portion of the praise to the pure, uncontaminated air, pure water, good food, and plenty of sleep. ‘Early to bed and early to rise’ is a slogan not unknown to the children of Ringwood – they are simply natural, healthy children – the best variety in the world.

Thus De Garis made good use of his background, and reputation, in the fruit packaging and preservation industry, as well as the contemporary rhetoric of national growth through a healthy environment in MSC advertising literature.

Not surprisingly, considering his previous pioneering forays into publicity, De Garis quickly embarked on a large-scale campaign to intrigue the public. The

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62 ‘Sky High/Subdivisions’ New Home/Capping the Capitol’ Evening Sun, 3 October, 1924, p. 5
63 Ovnick, Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow, pp. 148-9
64 Eureka Plan Book nd (probably 1925), Melbourne, Ringwood Historical Society Archives, Ringwood.
Evening Sun was an ardent supporter of De Garis in such campaigns, largely it is to be assumed because the newspaper was the MSC’s chief advertising outlet. The Evening Sun was attempting to wrest real estate advertising from its competitor, the Herald, which was to purchase both the morning and evening editions of the paper late in 1925. The paper reported that De Garis had ‘bought 975 acres of land fronting the Yarra 23 miles from the city.’ De Garis, his loyalties still lying with the family business, managed to slip the subject of dried fruit into his answers to questions regarding the new purchase. Asked ‘even disguised questions’ regarding the new property, he would respond ‘Have a raisin? They help you to think.’

Having whetted the public’s appetite, De Garis took the next step. The land was to be known as the ‘Windulva’ estate – the name formed from a jumble of De Garis’ family’s names, as was that of another estate, St Ruvia – and De Garis tantalised his readership with its possibilities, making reference to the most modern developments of the day:

Wonder what it could be used for? Too big for a park. Too small for a new state. Not quite big enough for a rival Federal Capital. Also too close to Melbourne. Bit large for a radio station. Or a golf course...Might make a racecourse. Yes, that’s an idea. A racecourse. But there are plenty of racecourses now... He said ‘It will be a most ambitious and unusual proposition.’

The reference to racing may have been a reference to T. M. Burke, who was famously an owner of several champion racehorses. This was not, however, the central point of the advertisements. It was revealed ultimately that the Melbourne Subdivisions Company was offering £100 in cash for 250 word essays:

We know what we are going to do with ‘Windulva’
But what would YOU do?
So many Ideas Prevail as to the Purposes for which “The Mystery Sub-Division” is to be used, that we would like to ascertain what you would do with it, if you owned it.

65 ‘Dumb as a Raisin’, Evening Sun, 5 September 1924, p. 9
67 ‘975 - 24/Mystery Numbers/What is the Answer’ Evening Sun, 19 September 1924, p.11
68 Evening Sun, 25 October 1924, p.14
The judges of the competition were E. Kennedy, the Sun's Real Estate Editor; G. H. Watkins, of the MSC, and Walter Burley Griffin.

The Griffins and De Garis had known each other for some time: King O'Malley's diary for 1921 puts them both in O'Malley's presence on 17 November of this year, almost three years prior to the Windulva competition.\textsuperscript{69} This competition, and Capitol House, are however the only hint of a business partnership between De Garis and the Griffins, although both parties appear to have been involved in ventures, or the same venture, to explore for oil in southeastern Victoria.\textsuperscript{70} However, given Walter Griffin's and De Garis's interest in progressive irrigation techniques, it seems likely that the two men had encountered each other in this forum, as well. The references to Windulva being 'not quite big enough for a rival Federal Capital' suggest that De Garis was on familiar enough terms with the Griffins to joke gently with them. It also suggests that - whatever De Garis did have in mind for Windulva - the Griffins may have been involved, or were earmarked to become involved, in its design. This tendency of the Griffins to become a part of commercial promotions such as this is noted by Harrison, who remarks on the 'use of [Walter] Griffin's name... in the promotion of real estate ventures, especially those which were fairly clearly set up to mislead the unwary' as being 'no credit to his reputation'.\textsuperscript{71} Rather, it shows that the public figure of Walter Griffin was not, in the Griffins' opinion, sullied by involvement in ventures which commercialised urban planning projects.

The Windulva competition never went ahead, however; it soon became clear that De Garis had attempted too much in too short a time. By November 1924 his financial troubles were in the news again. His creditors were, he told the Evening Sun, being 'most helpful'. The Evening Sun was justified in its nervousness about this, as the MSC owed them a large amount of money from

\textsuperscript{69} 'Wynn/Oliphant/Mr. and Mrs. Griffin/S Miller/Tracy/De Garis': Nov 21, 1921 entry in King O'Malley's diary. King O'Malley papers, Box 13 Items 7366-7411, MS 460, National Library of Australia.
\textsuperscript{70} 'Mr C. J. De Garis Found Dead/Asphyxiated By Gas/Note Left Under Door Mat/'Fell Down on a Big Job' Argus, 18 August 1926, p. 21
\textsuperscript{71} Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 58
advertising, and they reported regularly on the organisation’s progress as it underwent what was described as ‘a Big Re-construction’. The pressure of repeating failure once again was obviously too much for De Garis, who disappeared on the 5th of January 1925, having apparently committed suicide in the sea at Mentone.

This was scandal enough. But it was actually only the beginning of the end for De Garis, who was arrested on board a boat travelling to New Zealand under the name Leslie; in this persona De Garis spoke in an ‘exaggerated American accent’ and wore large, horn-rimmed glasses. Though he jovially claimed to have sold two blocks of land to the detective who arrested him, De Garis must have known he no longer had a future in real estate.

The MSC did not recover from this incident. It is possible to speculate that the downfall of De Garis may have had other repercussions amongst those who planned suburban subdivisions for private developers. The Griffins finally succumbed to pressure from the GSDA for them to live at Castlecrag; they moved to Sydney in Autumn 1925, within months of the De Garis controversy. Tuxen left for his six-month study trip to the US in June of the same year. Whether De Garis’s behaviour was directly influential on these departures is impossible to say, and there were no doubt other factors involved. The failure of the much-publicised MSC itself, however, might well have been a factor which brought the real estate industry into disrepute and affected buyers’ confidence. The demise of De Garis, who finally did commit suicide in August 1926, and the end of the MSC came at the beginning of a period in which Melbourne’s real estate market had slowed down considerably.

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72 ‘De Garis Goes On/Melbourne Subdivisions Company/”Creditors Helpful” Evening Sun 22 November 1924, p. 9; Evening Sun, 22 November, 1924, p. 21
73 “De Garis Mystery” Evening Sun, 5 January 1925, p. 7; ‘De Garis’s Letter/Alive... A Menace/Dead... A Memory/De Garis Writes Story/Tells of Peculiar Twist’ Evening Sun, 7 January 1925, pp. 7, 12
74 ‘Leslie’ was, for a short time, the name of the estate designed by Saxil Tuxen to the east of what is now Reservoir Station; there is, however, no other basis for a link between De Garis and this project.
76 Walker et al, Building for Nature, p. 11
The failure of De Garis to rise above his business problems seem to have been the product of a combination of bad luck and possible mental illness, which seems to have made him close to megalomaniac. His approach to the sale of land relied, perhaps, too much on gimmicks and competitions, rather than on the promotion of the financial advantages of land ownership. What the public might have been willing to accept in the promotion of something as cheap and commonplace as dried fruit might not have been so easily accepted in real estate. There was, however, a land vendor who in some regards made even more outrageous claims than De Garis, and was even more shameless in his approach, and yet who – perhaps through his embracing of the rhetoric of the town planning movement – appears to have been immune to any such stigma. This was Henry Halloran.

A dapper little man: Henry F. Halloran

Surprisingly, little biographical material is available on the Sydney developer and surveyor Henry F. Halloran (1869-1953), despite the efforts of his son, Laurence, who has privately published a bibliography and outline of his work.\textsuperscript{77} In view of the source material that has been uncovered on developers like Burke and De Garis, the comparative lack of evidence of Halloran’s property development activities may be attributed to his preference for the rhetoric of town planning in the actual promotion of his work, rather than the promotion of himself as a figure of authority or as a showman. Lack of primary material notwithstanding, far more has been written about Halloran than either De Garis or Burke, probably because of his own estimation of himself as a planner as well as developer. He had been typified him as ‘an artist’ – albeit with ‘a skill in advertising which finally exceeded reality’\textsuperscript{78} – as ‘remarkable’ and ‘flamboyant’\textsuperscript{79} and as someone ‘with a particular


\textsuperscript{78} Errol Lea-Scarlett, \textit{Queanbeyan: District and People}, Queanbeyan Municipal Council, Queanbeyan, 1968, p. 185

\textsuperscript{79} Freestone, \textit{Model Communities}, p. 75
flair for land planning'.\textsuperscript{80} In view of the nature and ultimate failure of many of Halloran's own speculative business ventures, it seems fair to suggest that many historians and other commentators have tended to regard Halloran overly favourably – while having little time for many of his contemporaries who were, perhaps, more overt about their interest in profit, and less publicly committed to 'town planning'. In the years immediately following the First World War, Halloran made a number of pronouncements in which he attempted to coalesce his financial interest in land development and his commitment to town planning ideology. In a paper presented at the 1918 Australian town planning conference, entitled 'Districting or Zoning of Cities and Towns', he brought up a favourite garden suburb example of Sulman's, Haberfield:

one of our much praised garden suburbs in Sydney... it was built by a speculator, and being aware of some of the many difficulties he had to overcome, I say he deserves what reasonable profits he gets out of it.\textsuperscript{81}

At the same conference, Halloran's own plans for 'towns' at Jervis Bay on the south coast of NSW were praised by the Governor of Queensland, who suggested that, while it was an excellent example of modern planning, 'probably business and philanthropy are combined in it.'\textsuperscript{82} An article in the magazine \textit{Land and Transport} from the same year praised Halloran as a 'town-planner who builds no castles in the air but risks his money and spends his whole vitality on the lay-out and construction of a new city... City planning is the life interest and undeviating purpose of Mr. Halloran.'\textsuperscript{83} Halloran, as a consistent advertiser in \textit{Land and Transport}, appears, like Burke and De Garis in the \textit{Evening Star}, to have been able to rely on editorial space praising his projects. De Garis was also featured in \textit{Land and Transport} in the following year, by which time it had changed its name to \textit{Land, Transport and Sea Trade}; one article praised his

\textsuperscript{80} John Fryer (ed.), \textit{Surveying the Hunter}, Hunter-Manning Group, Newcastle 1980, p. 33
\textsuperscript{81} Henry Halloran, 'Districting or Zoning of Cities and Towns' \textit{Volume of Proceedings of the 1918 Australian town planning conference}, pp. 167-168
\textsuperscript{82} 'The Perfect City', \textit{Land and Transport}, vol. 2 no. 16, September 1918, p. 16. This is a corrected version of the text which in the original reads 'Probably business and philanthropy are combined it'.
\textsuperscript{83} 'Maritime Cities of New South Wales', \textit{Land and Transport}, vol. 2 No. 13, May 1918, p. 21
Fig. XXIV. A portion of Pacific City, Henry F. Halloran's projected ideal coastal port city. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. This grand, formal design - for a city, rather than a suburb - incorporates many town planning features. Absolutely nothing has been built of Pacific City. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.
'indefatigable' enthusiasm for publicity, and he appears to have written another, anonymously, on concrete roads in Mildura. Halloran had no compunction about praising his own planning endeavours in advertising. His design for the Salamander Estate at Port Stephens on the Central Coast of NSW was, he claimed in one advertisement, 'so good and interesting that it is worth obtaining a Plan just to study its many good points.' Halloran's rhetoric also attempted to touch on readers' patriotic sense; investment in his Pacific City at Jervis Bay was, he claimed, the 'responsibility' of 'men and women of to-day', 'in order to wipe out war debts'. The area was also, not coincidentally, 'laid out on the most modern town planning lines!' In the most grandiose terms, Halloran prefaced the first issue of his advertising quarterly, *The Pacific City Times*, with an uncredited reproduction of 'I Dream'd in a Dream', from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, which appeared to promise all mankind had dreamt of in his new planned city:  

I dreamed in a dream I saw a City invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,  
I dreamed that was the new City of Friends,  
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest,  
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that City,  
And in all their looks and words!'  

In addition to the 1918 conference, Halloran's presence at two major international town planning conferences of the early 1920s, one in Sweden in 1923 and another in Amsterdam in 1924 suggest a man with a definite interest in planning. That he attended both international events in the company of John Sulman might also suggest that he recognised the commercial value of retaining influential  

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84 'Fruit Food for Australian Homes', *Land, Transport and Sea Trade*, Vol. 2 No. 12, April 1919, pp 11-18; 'Mildura Needs Concrete Roads' ibid pp. 36-38  
85 'Port Stephens', [advertisement] *Land, Transport and Sea Trade*, vol. 2 no. 17, October 1918, p. 16  
86 'Opportunity!' [advertisement] *Land Transport and Sea Trade*, vol. 2 no. 19, December 1918, p. 36  
However, his extensive advertising of schemes such as the Salamander Estate at Port Stephens, Pacific City (Fig. XXIV) at Jervis Bay, and Environa and Canberra Freehold Estate between Canberra and Queanbeyan, suggest that his enthusiasms led him to pursue far-fetched ambitions.

Halloran, unlike Burke or De Garis, had no need to employ or enlist planners. He was a qualified surveyor himself, well-versed in contemporary town planning and garden suburb modes; he was proprietor of his own company, Henry F. Halloran Pty. Ltd. and later another, Realty Realizations: he claimed to have ‘the only completely self-contained Real Estate Business’. His description of his business, recast from the first person, appeared in the Proceedings of the First Town Planning Conference, where he was speaking in response to Walter Scott Griffiths’ paper ‘Estate Development Under Town Planning’:

As owner or part owner he selected and purchased the site... As surveyor he prepared the designs... as conveyancer he attended to the legal conditions under which the land was sold. As auctioneer and estate agent he disposed of the land in lots.

Though his planning recognisably took the garden suburb form, Halloran usually sold land in rural or semi-rural locations in anticipation of new urban development, as holiday resort destinations, or both. In both the Griffins and Sulman, Halloran found high-profile authorities whose approbation of and, in some cases, collaboration in his business activities and interest in planning philosophy appears to have brought him associated credibility, and he claimed to hold ‘high grades of membership in many scientific institutions in Australia, England and America’ though detail on these is scant. Whether for this reason, or simply his own recklessness, he was apparently much less fearful of public or

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88 It is clear also that Sulman was willing to be publicly associated with Halloran’s ventures. An article by Sulman, ‘Australian Cities – Their Past Growth and Future Development’ was reprinted with permission in Halloran’s advertising brochure The Pacific City Times, March 1916, pp. 3-4.
91 Ibid.
legal censure leading from flamboyant advertising claims than either Burke or De Garis.

Freestone notes that Halloran typically ‘specialised in property along the waterways of coastal N.S.W. and near major government installations.’ He was apparently captivated by the possibilities for sale of private land near the Federal Capital Territory, created in 1908; most specifically, the decision made that land in the national capital would be leasehold, rather than freehold. Land at Halloran’s Environa estate – advertised as the closest freehold land to Canberra – and other of his subdivisions was often sold to Britons. Halloran was the first Australian real estate vendor to open a London office, and estate agent Ian Willmore admiringly recounts that Halloran ‘travelled around Britain flogging off allotments from his multi-coloured plans, and he did very well.’ While some of his other projects appear to have had greater substance, it is certain that Halloran deliberately misled purchasers of Environa land about the state of urban development in the Canberra region. It is reported in Errol Lea-Scarlett’s history of the area that two thirds of the people who paid over a hundred pounds for one of the thousand lots at Halloran’s Canberra Freeholds Estate had not seen it, and it is difficult to imagine how any of them profited by their investment. Questions were raised in Federal Parliament about the ethics of Halloran’s advertising, particularly an advertisement which stated that one pound a month ‘would buy a plot of the nearest freehold land to Canberra’ and which appeared, as paid advertising, on the back of an Australian Inland Revenue form.

It appears that neither Sulman, who considered Halloran an ally – probably, a friend – nor the Griffins, objected to such tactics. This perhaps

92 Freestone, Model Communities, p. 75
93 Note in Laurence Halloran Papers, MLMSS 3956 add on 2195/13/5, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
94 I. Willmore and E. Warburton, Willmore and Randell, p. 98
95 Freestone, Model Communities, p. 197
96 Lea-Sarlett, Queanbeyan, p. 186
97 ‘Advertising Canberra Land’ Argus, 8 May 1924, p. 9
98 Greg Murphy, ‘Henry F. Halloran: Dealer in Land and Dreams’ Canberra Historical Journal, March 1986, p. 5
suggests something of Halloran's own personal magnetism; both the Griffins and Sulman had, at different times, an interest in the successful development of Canberra, development which was predicated at least partly on the creation of a city free from interference from the property market. In attempting to promote freehold land sales near to Canberra, Halloran was overtly promoting a project by which he would gain personally from Canberra's leasehold system, and potentially damage the reputation and integrity of Canberra as a model of good planning.

Halloran's major speculative project at Jervis Bay abutted land which had been set aside for Canberra's port area. In 1917, according to John Sulman's memoir of the Town Planning Association of NSW, Halloran offered prizes of twenty, ten and five pounds for the three best plans 'for the subdivision of an estate at Jervis Bay'; Sulman claimed to have found this 'useful and instructive'; unfortunately the entries submitted for this competition are not presently available. Various estates were soon constructed in the Jervis Bay area. The Griffins created a large plan for the 'Jervis Bay City Home Extension' in 1917 for Austin Chapman, a politician who supported them in their battles at Canberra and who would soon become a shareholder in the GSDA. This 'Home Extension' subdivision was later sold to Halloran, and added to St Vincent City and Pacific City, other settlements in the area. Much of the land here remains in the hands of the Halloran family at time of writing.

In Magic of America, Marion credits Walter with the identification of the Port Stephens site as one of only two 'natural seaports' in Australia. She writes that 'in his innocence he interested a client, who was carrying on a considerable real estate business, in the opportunity offered at Port Stephens... It was surveyed and staked out and the allotments rapidly sold – but the story ends there.' She credits the failure of the Port Stephens project not with Halloran's

99 'Town Planning', Manuscript handwritten by Sulman, n.d. (c. 1933), p.12, Box 8 (8), MSS 4480 Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
100 Marion Griffin, Magic Of America Vol. II, p. 376, Microfilm 5449, Matheson Library, Monash University. The microfilm copy of the manuscript of Magic of America held at Monash University features a number of different page numberings. The references herein refer to the numbers on the top right hand of the page.
speculative approach, but with the unimaginative and indeed vindictive foolishness of government bureaucracy, particularly the military, as well as the limitation, in law, of the building and operation of railways by private enterprise: ‘If the railroads had not been nationally owned, the settlement of Port Stephens would have taken place long ago.’\textsuperscript{101} With a few exceptions, the Griffins did their best work for private enterprise. Their work at Canberra was, effectively, diminished by government interference. It is not surprising, therefore, that the villain of this story is governmental bureaucracy and that Halloran’s role is benign, though this once again is an example – a relatively early one – in which Halloran’s reputation is unsullied despite clear evidence that he took here the traditional role of speculative developer.

\textit{The three showmen}

Burke, De Garis and Halloran all approached the selling of newly subdivided, garden suburb land with flair and dedication. Each of the three used very different approaches.

Both Burke and De Garis employed a serene paternalism and good humour to sell their land. They were, in a manner of speaking, father-figures to new domestic communities, though De Garis’s flamboyance was a contrast to Burke’s good humoured armchair philosopher approach. The two men also depicted themselves as Melbourne pioneers. De Garis encouraged comparison between himself and John Batman. Burke, in one column, spoke extensively of the pioneering work of John Pascoe Fawkner, and drew comparisons between this early settler and himself.\textsuperscript{102} Fawkner and Batman were notoriously rivals in their own lifetimes; as well as this, the evocation of the names of the two most famous founding fathers of Melbourne invited the imaginative homebuyer to consider themselves as potential adventurers on the suburban frontier. By comparison, Halloran – described fifteen years after his death as a ‘dapper little

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Burke, ‘Talks on Real Estate/T. M. Burke’s Column/Relic of early Melbourne/Fawkner’s Old Home Estate Subdivided’ \textit{Evening Sun} 1 September 1923, p. 8
man"\textsuperscript{103} – adopted the approach of the technician and the expert in promoting himself as a subdivider. Halloran’s concentration on rural New South Wales also sets him apart: concentrating on rural areas allowed Halloran free use of his skills in the creation and propagation of booster rhetoric. Halloran’s base in Sydney may also go some way to explaining his rural focus: Sydney did not have the kind of large-scale ‘garden suburb’ projects that Melbourne did, due in part to Sydney’s topography, the rural focus of the railways in its suburbs,\textsuperscript{104} and the greater control given to councils by the NSW Local Government Act.\textsuperscript{105}

Burke predicated his land sales on the concept of unabashed land speculation and what are, in hindsight, absurd assurances that land prices could not fall. The company's brochures and maps often featured maxims espousing the continued and natural rise in value of urban land. Even more frequently, Burke pamphlets quoted from apparently unassailable – and wealthy – figures like Andrew Carnegie: ‘Few Fortunes are made in any part of the world except from the rise in value of Real Estate.'\textsuperscript{106} Although Burke readily expressed firm opinions on what he saw as the duty of local government to provide roads and other support for new suburban subdivisions, he did not use his advertising to grandstand on this or other matters. This in itself may have been a business decision, in case prospective purchasers were discouraged by an overly radical approach. His advocacy of garden suburbs, too, seems to have been subsumed by the advocacy of speculative practices. Burke appears to have been content to allow the garden suburb ideal, or the policies of the MTPC, to influence the new estates sold under his name, but he had no obvious active role in such ideals or policies. Halloran, in distinct contrast, was distanced in the public eye from speculation, despite the fact that he adopted what would generally, then and now, be regarded as the most exploitative of land promotion practices – the fact

\textsuperscript{103} Lea-Scarlett, \textit{Queanbeyan}, p. 185
\textsuperscript{104} Ian Collins, ‘The “country interest” and the eastern suburbs railway, 1875-1932’ in G.
\textsuperscript{105} P. Spearritt, \textit{Sydney Since the Twenties}, p. 22
\textsuperscript{106} ‘The View Estate’ brochure, ‘Balwyn’ box, Coghill and Haughton Papers, Melbourne University Archives
that in many cases it was British buyers, not Australian, who were affected might explain this. Whatever the reasons, Halloran’s public discussion of planning practice, his membership of the NSW Town Planning Association and his promotion of himself as a ‘town planner’ were taken at face value by both the public and Halloran’s peers.

De Garis’ approach to land sales was more predicated on the promotion of health, as seen in the ‘Best Part’ promotion, and community, as evidenced by his actions and words at the launch of the Corio Garden Suburb. His public persona as a decisive actor in industry and business presented a new face in property development: he claimed in his fictionalised autobiography to have been ‘infected... with the virus of invulnerability’.\textsuperscript{107} This persona seems to have masked a psychological condition which was ultimately responsible for his suicide.

It is not hard to understand why De Garis, Burke and Halloran would all find it easier to sell real estate using these constructed personas than would a faceless company. Burke and De Garis were in many ways similar to the ‘good provider’ husband and father figure; Burke’s armchair chats, and De Garis’ earnest honesty mixed with good-natured generosity and game-playing were surely irresistible to many homebuyers. Halloran used the appeal of science and ‘progressive’ planning.\textsuperscript{108}

The contrast between Burke and De Garis and people like Halloran is clear. For the purposes of commerce, Burke and De Garis presented themselves in relation to planning practice as essentially unscientific, unknowing, generous innocents. The garden suburb designers, on the other hand, had to be seen as scientists, artists and thinkers. As will be seen in the next chapter, Suiman, the Griffins and Tuxen also found it necessary to construct public images for themselves; in this they almost invariably distanced themselves from the commercial aspect of their planning work. In the last few decades, Griffin scholars have taken steps to distance the Griffins from appearing to have been

\textsuperscript{107} De Garis, The Victories of Failure, p. 433
\textsuperscript{108} The Glorious Coast Line of New South Wales’ [advertisement] Land and Transport, Vol. 2 No. 13 May 1918, p. 20
involved in speculative land development. Harrison's explanation for the Griffins' attitude is that 'it is doubtful whether [Walter] would have missed any opportunity to demonstrate his skills as a planner, no matter what the motives of the client might have been'.\textsuperscript{109} Commerce was, however, present in the majority of garden suburb planning projects at this time. It was the role of the vendor or promoter of land sales to enlist the planner's authority and, combined with the vendor's own promotional flair, for the two to launch a twin appeal on the emotions and desires of the consumer. The use of combinations of 'reason', engaging and charismatic personality, paternalistic rhetoric and planning language were all effective in selling land, and, as the planners themselves were to develop engaging personalities, vendors too found this a valuable device.

\textsuperscript{109} Harrison, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin}, p. 58
Chapter Six

The Battle for the Garden Suburb: case studies of conflicts amongst the interwar planning cohort

The Griffins vs. Sulman and the Taylors: The 'Women's Section'

It has been shown that Australia’s interwar planners were far from unified in their outlook. They differed dramatically in aesthetic approach, in their understanding of what planning was intended to achieve and in their evaluation of their own and each other’s relative importance and value. Sulman, for instance, favoured programs of demolition, rebuilding and remodelling streets and buildings in city centres; his plans for garden suburbs did not reflect a strong interest in amelioration of social ills, but rather an individualistic approach to climate and topography. The Griffins, by contrast, were community-minded environmentalists; they saw the planned suburb as a way of preserving natural landscape and of bringing its positive effects into suburban life. Tuxen was a believer not only in the social improvement capacity of planned urban landscapes, but also in the importance of functional and logical planned layouts. While all four worked in both private practice and on government projects, only Sulman was not publicly outspoken about the risks of private land development and commercialisation. The defence of what they saw as their own terrain, and the attempts to promote their own work, was to see them battle with each other and the wider planning fraternity in a number of diverse areas. The examination of key conflicts throughout the interwar planning years can be remarkably revealing of the planner's search for authority. This is true whether they are conflicts between individual planners or – in the case of Tuxen’s departure from environmental determinism into the slum-clearance and philanthropic movements
– a conflict between different approaches to social justice within one individual’s conscience.

Authority played an important part in the planners’ roles; be it the kind of authority described by Richard Sennett and applicable to Sulman – an authority typified by ‘assurance, superior judgement, the ability to impose discipline, the capacity to inspire fear’¹ – or Marion Griffin, who described the Griffin view of democracy as ‘a fundamental world principle which is simply a belief in authority from within, instead of from without’.² Planners’ promotion of themselves as worthy and able authorities was a cornerstone of change, development, progress and experimentation in planning. The post-war planners’ professional confidence is markedly advanced from that of the pre-war cohort.

The impact of the Griffins in Australia, and indeed the length of their stay, has in the past been underestimated by historians. The Griffins were often successful in their campaigns to propagate their message(s) by example; they clearly saw themselves in such roles. ‘Democratic Architecture’, a two-part article written by Marion Griffin soon after her arrival in Australia, provides evidence of this; Marion states that democracy is ‘simply… a belief in authority from within’. She draws a line between personal example, of which the above might be one aspect, and production of creative work:

An analysis of character, method of output of others, as well as of ourselves, is constantly necessary to keep us from falling into the fighting ranks of the enemy in the battle for our ideals.

The Griffins came to Australia as successes. The Federal Capital Competition, announced by King O’Malley in his capacity as Minister for Home Affairs in the Fisher Labor government in 1912 brought forth a wide array of varied and often imaginative entries. This occurred despite controversy surrounding its judging panel and other aspects of its execution.³ Marion and Walter’s entry, under

³ J. Reps, Canberra 1912, pp. 82-84
Walter's name only, won first prize and, after further controversy during which time Walter lobbied O'Malley for the chance to supervise construction, the couple moved to Australia (first Sydney, then Melbourne) in 1913/14. They were ultimately to stay in Australia for over twenty years; Walter left for India in 1935, Marion in 1936. A decade after Walter's death, Marion compiled *The Magic of America*, a revealing document of their lives together.

The Griffins' assumptions on arriving in what was to become their adoptive nation – though they were never to apply for citizenship – were naïve, influenced to a degree by their own interest in the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and their dedication to a idealistic conception of democracy.\(^4\) It appears they were not expecting – and for some time were unwilling to recognise – the entrenched Britishness of the new nation. What they had, in fact, expected was a nation eager to embrace the potential of its democratic institutions and its freedoms.\(^5\)

The first battle the Griffins inspired in Australia had occurred before their arrival in the country: it was waged by Florence and George Taylor, Sulman and other planning advocates to actually engage Walter to supervise his own plan for Canberra, and received only minimal input from Walter himself.

Though the Taylors befriended the Griffins on their arrival in Australia, within a short time the Griffins would be ‘battling’ with them and, later, with Sulman as well. Marion's own feminism and her status as the first practicing qualified woman architect in the USA are not overtly discussed in *Magic of America*, though they may be said to inform all of her writings. The episode of the ‘Women's Section' of the Town Planning Association of NSW casts light on the relationship between the Taylors, the Griffins, and Sulman and his daughter; the controversy around the ‘Women's Section' was not, however, the cause of the


\(^{5}\) Turnbull argues that a strongly-held conceptualisation of the democratic ideal, transferred to Australia, is the rationale behind the Canberra plan (Turnbull in Watson (ed), *Beyond Architecture*, pp. 106-109); Harrison outlines the couple's marriage and their preparation of the competition entry – two key events which happened at almost the same time – in *Walter Burley Griffin Landscape Architect*, pp. 25-26. Vernon outlines the events occurring subsequent to the Griffins' success in the competition in his ‘An “Accidental” Australian: Walter Burley Griffin's Australian-American Landscape Art' in Turnbull and Navaretti (eds.) *The Griffins in Australia and India*, p.3.
rifts between the Griffins on one side and the Taylors and the Sulmans on the other, but a stage on which a pre-existing dispute was fought out.

In his memoir of the town planning movement, simply entitled ‘Town Planning’, Sulman writes ingenuously and patronisingly of the ‘Women’s Section’ controversy, entered into by Marion Griffin in 1915, a year after she and Walter moved to Australia: ‘During the year the Women’s Section held independent meetings, and while doing good work gave rise to divided interests, so that a certain measure of co-ordination had to be provided...’

Marion Griffin’s relating of the story of the ‘Women’s Section’ is cast as a series of letters which allow her, as narrator, to ignore conventional explanations of motive or even detail, and cut to her interpretation of the heart of the matter and the tactics and waging of the battle itself. She presents the debate in contrast with Walter’s efforts to progress with the building of Canberra, writing: ‘My own battle in Sydney is reflected in some of the correspondence of that year. A number of fine and very capable women lined up with me in the democratizing of Sydney’s Town Planning Association.’

In the first months of their Australian tenure, the Griffins had been extremely friendly with the Taylors, publishers of Building and enthusiastic town planning advocates. In Marion’s narrative, the camaraderie between herself and Florence is ended by an attempt by the Taylors and their ally, the surveyor and lecturer F. Ernest Stowe to ‘control’ Canberra. She writes in Magic of America:

The publisher of a magazine, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and their pal, Mr. Stowe, who had tied up with us from the first days, called me into their office and told me that from now on Griffin was to do what they told him to do in Federal Capital matters, etc. I left pronto.

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7 Marion Griffin, Magic of America Section I p. 51
8 Marion Griffin, Magic Of America Section II p. 51 The Taylors and Stowe are also here referred to by Marion as ‘Our “friends”, the trio... trifling people...and so apparently malicious that if they have any effect it is the opposite of their intentions.’ Bronwyn Hanna has suggested that the Taylors’ relationship with Stowe – specifically the possibility of an affair between Florence Taylor and Frances Stowe – was the subject of Sydney gossip which may add extra meaning to terms.
Of the world war that was being waged at the same time, Marion says little in *Magic of America*, although there is evidence – in the pages of *Building* magazine – to suggest that the United States’ reluctance to enter the war caused Americans like the Griffins to be regarded with suspicion. Almost certainly George Taylor’s criticism in the pages of his magazine of the failure of the US to involve itself in the war was the key to this dispute. As well as editing and publishing *Building*, George Taylor was a keen cartoonist and much of his cartoon art – most of which appears maudlin to present-day eyes – appeared throughout the magazine. Roy Lippincott, who was married to Walter’s sister Genevieve and who was in Australia and working for the Griffins, took particular exception to a drawing depicting a crucified Christ looking on as the Kaiser and Uncle Sam brokered business deals. Lippincott wrote to *Building* in protest at the cartoon’s sacrilegious nature, allowing George an opportunity to launch a diatribe at the greed of Americans, and republish the cartoon.

In the same issue of *Building* that featured Lippincott’s objection and George Taylor’s response, Florence Taylor announced ‘the formation of a special committee comprised solely of women… a brilliant field for “uplift” work for the women with the big hearts.’ Marion was apparently already a member of the NSW Town Planning Association and came to be involved in the Women’s Section, on its formation, as Vice-President. Her move to ‘democratis[e] the Association – which appears to have involved an attempt to allow the Women’s Section equal status with the conventional men’s Association, although details are unclear – raised the ire not only of the Association’s male leaders but of Florence Taylor. It is not obvious whether this is the first sign of overt disagreement between the two women. Marion relates these episodes in letters

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9 That political cartoons were considered appropriate in what was ostensibly a trade magazine for the construction and related industries perhaps shows either the extent to which planning, housing and other matters were considered to be part of the national interest, or just the Taylors’ esoteric outlook.


written to Walter as he travels between Melbourne, Sydney and the Canberra site; her letters are interspersed with his and are apparently arranged chronologically, though neither makes reference to the contents of the other’s missives. In one of her letters to Walter, Marion indicates her antipathy to Florence Taylor, and at the same time her fondness for John Sulman’s eldest daughter, also named Florence:

Mrs Taylor called up just now to see if I would come to Town Planning annual meeting and lunch. Nothing to say but yes…. Miss Sulman called me up last evening and I am to meet her at Farmers’ to go together to the Town Planning lunch. Very much pleasanter.\textsuperscript{12}

However, it appears that John Sulman himself was beginning to feel the need to reign in the errant American woman. The tactics used in attempting to quell Marion’s desire to make changes in the powers of the Women’s Section show him as an effective tactician, but do nothing to destroy the image of him as a reactionary. Marion writes:

Dearest Walter, I’m terribly lonesome tonight. Mr. and Miss Sulman have been here. I’m afraid my surmise was true and that none of these men have any desire to have what they are doing under scrutiny of a bunch of disinterested members. You can’t get an Australian to be direct. Mr. Sulman settled himself close to me, and Miss Sulman went over and engaged Roy and Genevieve in animated conversation on the other side of the room… I asked him if he wanted to talk over Town Planning matters. He said he wanted to ask how matters were getting along in Melbourne. So we talked around the bush for a while and then, casually of course making it seem as if it were not premeditated, he dropped into the question. I can’t give you the conversation but he insisted the women could not be organized as a Branch… He said the women could not take up general work but must do what the Council told them to do. I said if that were the case the women should be told what they were expected to do. He said they had thought they could take up such subjects as would be delicate for the men to handle. ‘That’s why “we” have been giving such prominence to lowering street car steps

\textsuperscript{12} Marion Griffin, \textit{Magic of America} Section II, 51-2. ‘Farmer’s’ was a well-known Sydney department store.
to that pregnant women might not sustain injury, and to the height of laundry tubs'.

Marion saw Sulman as 'very suave', and feared he would charm the other women in the section into obeying him. She also felt the issues that the 'Women's Section' were being asked to address, issues enthusiastically taken up by Florence Taylor in Building, were irrelevant. She had decided 'Mrs. Taylor is really a pathetic figure... Her caretaker ought not to let her out of his sight I don't see how he is going to pull her out of this hole.' Of Florence Sulman she was far more forgiving: 'I don't think her father gave her very particular details of the meeting though the facts have been more or less in the papers.'

The Taylors telephoned Marion to attempt to speak with her personally and coerce her into backing down in her demands for the Women's Section. She explains the conversations in Magic of America:

Dear Walter, The plot thickens. At about six o'clock this evening Mr. Taylor called me up and in the most dictatorial tones conceivable (I'm sure the Great Panjan never spoke with greater assurance of implicit obedience) said 'When are you coming down town?'

Taylor presses Marion to allow him to visit her home, which she reluctantly agrees to. 'Then the telephone rang again,' she writes. 'I answered. It was Mrs. Taylor this time and I really ought not to have hung up the receiver while she was still talking but I did.' In Marion's words, Florence Taylor takes credit for giving her power in the 'Women's Section':

'I made you vice president you know and we hope you will have the decency to resign. You were made vice-president you know not because of your popularity. I suppose you know that. But you -'

Here I hung up the receiver. A pity too because of course I know she made me vice president... because of the advertising

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13 Marion Griffin, Magic of America, Section II pp. 53-54. This letter is not dated but it appears immediately before a letter dated '1915 April 28'
14 Marion Griffin, Magic of America, Section II p. 58 This letter is not dated but it appears immediately after a letter dated '1915 May 5' and immediately before a letter dated '12 May 1915'
15 Marion Griffin, Magic of America, Section II p. 60 Letter dated 'Snaefel Greenwich 12 May 1915'
16 Ibid.
value of Walter Burley Griffin’s name, and it would have been interesting to hear just how she would put it.

[...] the telephone rang again... it was Miss Sulman to say that if I was going to be at home she and her father would like to come over in the afternoon. I told her I was delighted and tried to get them to stay for dinner but they are coming earlier. They know you are not here. I bet Taylor called him up to get him to take me in hand.

‘Playing the game with Australians,’ Marion concludes, ‘is some sport if you look at it that way’. 17 She explains to Walter that she had met a Mrs. Cooper, who detailed a critique of her by Florence Taylor made on a visit to the Sydney suburb of Randwick:

‘The Randwick branch’ was ‘told there that Mrs. Griffin was trying to run them into an American scheme. ‘Why’ said Mrs. Taylor, ‘that’s a verbatim copy of the Hull House constitution.’ 18 Which I had never seen nor probably had she. As Mrs. Cooper said ‘What if it was!’ 19

The reference to Hull House – an important aspect of her own upbringing – as part of Marion’s political artillery may serve to make clearer the kind of ‘democracy’ which Marion was eager to bring to the Branch. It is difficult to imagine how the women of the ‘Women’s Section’ must have perceived a figure like Marion, who was far more overtly feminist than would have been acceptable in Sydney society at the time. Though details are vague, Marion presents the story as ending in her triumph, largely because of what she sees as the commonsense attitude of Mrs. Holman, wife of the NSW Premier, who had been asked to preside at the meeting in an honorary capacity. In Marion’s narrative, Mrs. Holman resigns, as do all of the officers of the Women’s Section with the exception of Florence Taylor, who is apparently ordered not to do so by her husband. Marion remarks: ‘The ladies made it clear that they did not intend to

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17 Marion Griffin, Magic of America, Section II p. 63-33 Letter dated ‘Snaefel N.S.W. 18 May 1915’

18 Robert Freestone notes that Building was wont to quote Jane Addams – the founder of Hull House – as an authority. Robert Freestone, ‘Women in the Australian Town Planning Movement 1900-1950’ Planning Perspectives, 10, 1995, pp. 259-277, p. 262

19 Marion Griffin, Magic of America, Section II p. 68 Letter dated ‘Snaefel N.S.W. 25 May 1915’. Sentence in italics has been added to typescript by hand, and is possibly not part of the original letter but an annotation added by Marion at time of compiling the manuscript.
stand for being pulled around by the nose like a bunch of children as Mrs.
Thomas put it.\(^{20}\)

The pages of *Building* make no direct comment on the controversy over
the ‘Women’s Section’; however they do reflect in other ways on these matters.
Following from the Lippincott letter mentioned above, the issues for the second
half of 1915 show an editorial approach more and more critical of the Griffins
which creeps over to condemnation of their architecture, their planning and their
political abilities. In the June issue, an uncredited item states that ‘American
“town planners”, particularly those of Chicago, are very “German” in their ideals,
their methods and their boast of “organisation”.\(^{21}\) The following month, in George
Taylor’s serialised account of his trip to the US, he achieves another swipe at the
Griffins, in a discussion of Frank Lloyd Wright:

Some of his [Wright’s] pupils who are now scattered, are
reproducing these freaks and prattling with the Sullivan phrase:
“Form follows function”, without apparently knowing what it
means... The almost forgotten aesthetes of the ‘early eighties’ in
London with their long hair, velveteen pants and affectation for
Lilies; the Cubists of France, with their squares and circles in
painting are two of the species.

This kind of critique – amounting, amongst other things, to a crude questioning of
Walter’s sexuality – appears to have been taken up and echoed by Stowe. In
1919, Walter wrote to his Chicago friend Will Gray:

I hope you have been very careful in statements you have made to
George Taylor’s partner whoever he may be this time. As a result of
their former visit to America, Taylor and his partners to whom I
introduced my best friends at home warned Prime Minister Hughes
of my disreputable character in America in order that his
government should not make the mistake of re-engaging me, which
they did however.

\(^{21}\) ‘American and German Town Planners’ *Building* Vol. 15 No. 94, 1915, p. 96. James Weirick
points out that the same estimation of the Griffins’ work was either independently arrived at or
reiterated by the Governor-General of the time, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, in a speech at which
Walter Griffin was present. James Weirick ‘Spirituality and Symbolism in the Work of the Griffins’
in Watson, (ed.) *Beyond Architecture*, pp. 56-85, p. 76
Taylor’s opinion of you, I take it, must be included in Stowe’s written statement that I belonged in America to a “long-haired, bow-tie, cigarette-smoking absinthe-drinking cult.”

Similarly, in a debate summarised in Building, Stowe attacked Walter’s hypothetical ‘one-roomed house’ as ‘debased’ and abhorrent’, but worst of all perhaps, foreign: he typified the one-roomed house as a ‘common method in the poorer Japanese homes where the British idea of the sacredness of family privacy and modesty does not exist’. Florence Taylor, in the same issue, found space to attack the beliefs of Mrs. Holman on women’s rights.

Freestone, in his ‘Women in Australian Town Planning’, has explored to some degree the controversy around the ‘Women’s Section’ of the NSW Town Planning Association; he writes that ‘it was clear that Marion and Florence Taylor were at loggerheads’. It seems likely that the women in question were involved in a wider battle, which involved not only their husbands but separate factions hoping to control the future of planning in NSW or even Australia.

Freestone’s view is that Marion’s attempt to mirror her battles with the Taylors and Sulmans at this time with Walter’s Canberra battles is the struggle of a woman ‘in her husband’s shadow’. The debates over what Marion called the ‘democratisation’ of the Women’s Section are, in part, revealing of the role of women in the second decade of the 20th century. Nevertheless, the disagreement between Florence Taylor and Marion Mahony Griffin clearly occurred as part of an ongoing and important debate over the future of planning overall. Marion’s expressed desire for the Town Planning Association’s transactions to be transparent – though she brings forth no evidence to substantiate her hints that there had been underhand dealings in the Association – contrast with the Taylors’ and Sulmans’ desire that there should be no change.

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22 Walter Griffin to Will Gray, 7 July 1919, in Box 24, D. L. Johnson Collection of W. & M. Griffin Documents, MS 7187, National Library of Australia
23 ‘The One-Roomed House/Is It Desirable?’ Building, Vol. 17 No. 97, 1915, p. 103. The Melbourne Herald reported Griffin’s critique but added that Griffin ‘did not advocate the adoption of the one-roomed house here.’ ‘One-Roomed Houses: Mr Griffin’s Plan’, Melbourne Herald, 15 July, 1915, p. 10
26 Freestone, ‘Women in the Australian Town Planning Movement’, p. 266
to the existing regime: Freestone quotes Florence Taylor as saying that she had worked hard to form a women's section and that she didn't see 'why Mrs Griffin should come along and upset everything.'

Marion's description of the debate as a 'sport' is also extraordinary, since it was clearly an important and emotional experience for her. It appears – not only from events as she relates them, but also by attacks from Building itself – that the presence of the Griffins in Sydney in 1915 was regarded as a serious threat to the status quo by many established town planning advocates. The Taylors' attempts to co-opt or manipulate the Griffins was at first successful, but turned to hostility within a year; by this time, they and their allies, such as Stowe, use traditional propaganda methods, particularly the branding of their personalities and their work as 'other', to discredit them and hold them up to ridicule. It is to be assumed that Florence Taylor's assertion, as related by Marion, that she was responsible for Marion's election to the Vice-President role in the Women's Section, are typical of the Taylors' attitude to their dominant role in planning at this time.

As will be seen, there were also a number of attempts at this time on the part of planning advocates to take credit for the Federal Capital.

*The Griffins vs. Australian Planners: The Federal Capital*

The Federal Capital competition and its outcome looms large over any discussion of Australian town planning in the first half of the 20th century. It might be argued – given the derision and even outright hostility the Federal Capital was subject to from the press, public figures and other commentators – that aspects of the creation of Canberra actually set back the 'cause' of planning in the 1920s and 30s, if not beyond.

Walter Griffin certainly appreciated the importance of Canberra as a tactical instrument. This was related to the way he regarded 'democracy', as the expression of public opinion outside the established electoral system, which

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27 Freestone, 'Women in the Australian Town Planning Movement', p. 265
necessitated propaganda and ‘educational’ programs to inform and persuade the mass public. In 1931, twelve years after he had concluded his direct involvement in the Federal Capital, he wrote that the road to progress had to be ‘forced’ through public opinion, and that ‘public opinion can only be aroused in one way – by the big comprehensive thing that appeals to the imagination.’ Griffin was clearly speaking from personal experience. Canberra itself, both in its original conception and in its early form, was an obvious candidate as just such a ‘big, comprehensive thing’.

The battle ‘for’ or ‘over’ Canberra is often typified as a struggle between Walter Griffin and government bureaucracy. Certainly, the ignorance of public servants in planning matters and the hostility they displayed on being placed subject to Walter Griffin’s direction was one very important aspect of the struggle that the Griffins faced. However, the Griffins also contended with many attempts by other key figures in the world of town planning to take credit – on a diverse range of grounds – for the development or existence of Canberra, and thereby place themselves in a focal position in the development of planning itself. When Walter Griffin made the aside ‘[I]t is surprising how much time men in a small community like this can find for solely destructive enterprise’, he was indicating his own view of himself – a constructive, creative, active person.

In 1963, two years after Marion’s death, Florence Taylor laid claim on behalf of her long-deceased husband to having affirmed the official approval of the Canberra site. She wrote in her memoir:

[W]hen a site of the Federal Capital City was under consideration they (I do not know who ‘they’ were) wanted some verification to ensure that there would be no error in their selection.

So, one day George Taylor and I went a-riding on horseback, into bushland, with here and there a farmhouse and

29 Walter Griffin to Will Gray, 7 July 1919, in Box 24, D. L. Johnson Collection of W. & M. Griffin Documents, MS 7187, National Library of Australia
settlement. George had a reel of paper on his wrist on which he recorded the terrain and wound it up as used.\textsuperscript{30}

Almost fifty years after falling out with the Griffins, Florence Taylor seems to have no compunction about taking credit for the fact that the Chicago architects were able to work in Australia. Not only does she assert that George Taylor played a formative role by checking the terrain upon which the federal capital was to be built, she gives him the credit for the petition which lobbied the government to abandon the departmental plan for Canberra and instead engage Walter Griffin as planner. In her narrative, however, she cannot resist slipping the word 'planned' between a pair of inverted commas, suggesting deception or something worse on Walter Griffin's part. She writes: 'Griffin, only because of Taylor's magnificent fight, came back to Australia and gave us the city he "planned". You can thank one man for that, George Taylor.'\textsuperscript{31}

Florence Taylor expresses no doubt that her husband was the formative influence on Canberra, and states that because of this, at the opening ceremony, 'I think I was the proudest person there.'\textsuperscript{32} In arguing that it is not planning which made the city but rather the machinations of bureaucrats, Florence Taylor takes a comparable approach to Marion Griffin.\textsuperscript{33} In Magic of America, Marion makes numerous references to Melbourne engineer James Alexander Smith, who aided the Griffins both politically and technically in their Canberra battle. Marion sees Smith as a genius; even before meeting the Griffins, Smith voted for their competition entry, and thus receives credit from Marion for 'awakening the world by bringing Canberra to birth'.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{30} Florence Taylor, letter to Sir Manuel Hornibrook, 10 January 1963, in Florence Taylor papers MSS 4420, Mitchell Library
\textsuperscript{31} Florence Taylor, 'Biographical Material' in Florence Taylor papers MSS 4420, Mitchell Library. The italics in this passage are Florence Taylor's.
\textsuperscript{32} Florence Taylor, letter to Sir Manuel Hornibrook, 10 January 1963, in Florence Taylor papers, MSS 4420 Mitchell Library
\textsuperscript{33} Florence Taylor, 'Biographical Material', op. cit.
\textsuperscript{34} Marion Griffin Magic Of America Section II, p. 1c. Marion adds that 'Two members of Parliament – Mr. O'Malley and Mr. Webster fought the battle against bureaucracy, the Empire, through till Canberra became an established fact.' Of Smith, she elsewhere states that 'The combination of Griffin's town planning knowledge and Smith's scientific knowledge and diplomacy prevented disaster [in dealing with bureaucracy over Canberra].' Magic of America, Section I, p. 169
George Taylor had been a student of Sulman’s at Sydney University; he and Florence remained firmly in the Sulman ‘camp’ throughout the battles of the 1920s, publishing his writings in *Building.* Sulman himself had a narrative concerning the siting of Canberra, which chronologically pre-dates that involving the Taylors:

In 1909 the question of the site for the proposed Federal Capital having been so far settled that it was to be somewhere between Yass and Queanbeyan, I spent the first week of January in that year with my eldest son Arthur scouring the district and finally settled on Canberra north of the Molonglo as the most suitable. I gave particulars to Colonel Vernon who was a member of the site selection Committee, and it was adopted by them. But on reference to the Cabinet it was overruled and a hilly area south of the Molonglo was added to that on the North which was comparatively level. My intention was to use the southern area for parks and reserves as it was much more costly to develop for building purposes than the northern area.

If both Sulman’s and Florence Taylor’s stories are true, then Sulman’s figures are, presumably, those which the Taylors checked. However one or both of these accounts may be revisions calculated to increase the authority of their authors; there is now no other contemporary document which verifies or denies these stories.

As in many of Sulman’s personal memoir texts, the above is not only a version of events in which Sulman himself is a key player, but also in which he presents a ‘rational’ view—his preference for concentrating the city on the

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35 Sulman mentions his pedagogical relationship with George Taylor in Sulman, “Town Planning” handwritten manuscript, p. 4, 1933, Sulman Papers box 8/8, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
36 Sulman, “Town Planning” handwritten manuscript, 1933, Sulman Papers box 8/8, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. Many professionals of the time would have disagreed with Sulman as to the potential of the south side of the Molonglo; as John Reps’ *Canberra 1912* shows, at least six of the entrants in the Federal Capital Design Competition sited their projected capital on the south side. None of the surviving entries puts it on the north (Reps, *Canberra 1912*, pp. 126, 130, 138, 162, 170, 172)
37 There are, however, additional claims for this important role. As Chris Johnson has recently shown in his *Shaping Sydney*, Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW government architect, was involved in assessing the suitability of the chosen Federal Capital site and, unlike Sulman or Taylor, achieved recognition through commemoration—the naming of Mount Vernon—for his efforts. Johnson, *Shaping Sydney*, p. 92
northern side of the Molonglo – by which he not only appears an independent thinker and expert, but also evades criticism for faults in the ultimate result.\textsuperscript{38} Sulman’s proprietorial interest in Canberra was, of course, an ongoing reality of his town planning interests. He could, arguably, even lay claim to its circular and diagonal road patterns: his writings on a preferred national capital design for Australia, which suggested such a form, having been published in the RIBA town planning conference papers of 1910.\textsuperscript{39} He also, effectively, assumed control of the capital from Walter Griffin in the 1920s, and made his mark in ways that differed severely from the Griffin concept. Walter did not take this calmly, going so far as to publicly attack Sulman, accusing him of taking the job that Sulman himself said in 1914 should have been Walter’s alone.\textsuperscript{40} In 1921, Sulman wrote to the Minister of Works and Railways that he had ‘the friendliest feelings’ towards Walter Griffin; however these feelings changed over the following few years.\textsuperscript{41}

If the relationship between Sulman and the Griffins was cordial prior to this time it was not so once Sulman began developing Canberra along more traditional British garden city lines. It is typical of Sulman to record the remarks of others in his diaries without comment, with the implication that they were remarks with which he agreed. On his American trip in 1924, he met an architect, H. J. Frost, of Chicago who he records as ‘Very interested to hear about Canberra – knew Griffin was a crank’\textsuperscript{42} This appears to have been Sulman’s own estimate of

\textsuperscript{38} Similar examples occur many times in Sulman’s An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia; for instance, his assertion that he ‘worked out a plan for a spacious circular open space on the area of Belmore Park, with roads on two levels surrounded by buildings of uniform design, and submitted it to the Royal Commission on the Improvement of Sydney, 1908-9... now the chance has been lost’ (Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, pp. 90-91) and that he ‘submitted a plan for the improvement of Circular Quay to the City Improvement Commission in 1908, which would have remedied many of the present difficulties... This is now impossible’ (Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 91)

\textsuperscript{39} Reps, Canberra 1912, p. 12

\textsuperscript{40} Building, Vol. 27, No. 162, 1921, p. 55

\textsuperscript{41} Sulman to L.E. Groom, 18 January 1921, in Catts Papers, Series 1 Item 10, MS 658, National Library of Australia.

\textsuperscript{42} ‘The Diary of Sir John Sulman of Sydney, Australia during a trip to England and the United States in 1924’ Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 box 2 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
the man by this time, only two years after the two had conferred on certain elements of the Canberra plan’s development.43

It is hardly surprising that Canberra, as the largest planning project in Australia in the early 20th century, should attract so much attention, and be the focus of a battle between the interwar planners. It is clear that the ‘ownership’ of, or involvement in, the project – most particularly at the stage before the Griffins entered the picture, when little blame could be laid for later complications – was a prize sought by a number of planners and planning advocates of the time. While there may be have been clashes of personality in disputes over Canberra, and while there may also have been clashes over planning ideals, the debate was ultimately over who deserved prestige for establishing Australia’s planned capital city.

The Griffins’ Battles with the GSDA

It is clear that one of the major problems the committed and focussed town planner has always faced is the lack of co-operation from the inhabitants he or she intends for a suburban utopia. Stern and Massingale write of the designer/developer Hartshorn and his New Jersey development of Short Hills, Milburn (1874) that:

Hartshorn laid out Short Hills himself and picked his customers carefully – he said he wished to attract nature-loving people to his community as he found such people had taste and initiative – but even after selling the land he reserved the right to review all plans. Consequently, as late as 1885 there were only 33 homes.44

Writing about Short Hills, Mary Corbin Sies says that ‘the quality of community life was important to the founding generation of planned, exclusive suburbs’.45

The private garden suburb developer and planner was forced to take a

43 ‘Int. (Mr) Griffin 12.4.22’ notes in Sulman’s Canberra notebook, Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 7 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
Fig. XXV. Plan of Castlecrag, the Griffins' only realised plan for suburban Sydney and their home for the last decade of their Australian tenure. Castlecrag's roads and open spaces reflect its topography, which, for decades before the Griffins' interest in the area, had been deemed too uneven for building. Reproduced in Turnbull and Navaretti, *The Griffins in Australia and India*, p. 75
radically different approach to the slum reclaimer or the government-funded planner, for whom the majority of clients do not need to be consulted, merely told where to go as part of government policy and strategy. The private planner must attract his or her client with promise of suburban utopia. Unlike the Griffins, Hartshorn was sufficiently wealthy that the realisation of immediate return on his creation of the suburban ideal could be a secondary consideration. However, in other respects, his experience was replicated by Walter and Marion Griffin in Castlecrag fifty years later, soon after their Canberra experience.

For the majority of Griffin experts, the couple’s Australian story also falls easily into two parts: the Canberra experience, which lasts from 1913 to 1920, when Walter resigned as director of the Federal Capital project; and the much longer period of 1920 to 1935, when he is depicted as leader of the Greater Sydney Development Association (GSDA), formed by friends and supporters to construct the suburb of Castlecrag (Fig. XXV). Many of these, for instance Paul Ashton who writes of the GSDA as ‘their [the Griffins’] land company’ or Anna Rubbo who writes that ‘Castlecrag was a utopian vision for a suburb developed between 1920 and 1935 by the Griffins through the [GSDA], show the company as the Griffins’ own, which it clearly was not.

Harrison makes brief mention of the tensions at the GSDA:

[I]t is indicative of Griffin’s charismatic qualities that over 20 otherwise hard-headed business and professional men each subscribed £1,000 or more to enable him to pursue a dream... C. J. Cerutty, the Auditor-General... eventually took over the chairmanship of the Board when things became really difficult. Austin Chapman [judged] Griffin to be ‘a dreamer, not a businessman’.

However, only Walker, Kabos and Weirick, writing in Building for Nature, have examined the struggle within the GSDA – if the allocation of a half-page paragraph to the matter can be termed as such. The reason so few

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46 Paul Ashton, ‘This Villa Life’, p. 23
47 Anna Rubbo, ‘Marion Mahony: A Larger Than Life Presence’ in Watson (ed.) Beyond Architecture, p. 47
48 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 77
commentators have noted the tensions between the Griffins and many of the shareholders of the GSDA is that it has been hidden or ignored by Griffin supporters, those contemporaneous with them and scholars who have written since their deaths.

A review of the papers of GSDA shareholder Charles J. Cerutty reveal many instances in which the Griffins are obtuse and obstructive, to say the least. Even taking into account the fact that the Cerutty’s assiduous compilation of a catalogue of evidence against the Griffins shows him to be antipathetic to them, other material contained within the papers shows that the couple’s relationship with the GSDA was not often harmonious.

Marion Griffin herself sought to keep this battle from public scrutiny: she excludes all mention of such a situation from her version of events in Magic of America. GSDA shareholders such as King O’Malley, who had turned against the Griffins by 1930, are presented by Marion only in their earlier role as supporters, or not mentioned at all.\textsuperscript{50} In fact, while Marion does depict conflict occurring in the attempt to construct an ideal suburb at Castlecrag in Magic of America, the conflict which has attracted the greatest notice from subsequent commentators is that which occurred between Walter and the local council, Willoughby, and the councillors’ inability to comprehend innovative planning and architectural developments. Marion terms this the ‘municipal battle’.\textsuperscript{51}

The Cerutty papers suggest, however, that the chief Castlecrag ‘battle’, to use Marion’s term, was not between Walter and the Willoughby council, but between Walter and the majority of the shareholders of the GSDA itself. Cerutty’s papers suggest that, rather than an organisation assembled by well-wishers to allow Walter and Marion to pursue a dream, the Griffins deceived investors in the GSDA in pursuit of their own ends. The purpose the Griffins set themselves at Castlecrag was the creation of a new kind of Australian suburb, to be immersed in and inseparable from natural bushland. The controversial aspect of the

\textsuperscript{50} For instance in the section reprinted on page 10 of Kabos, Walker and Weirick (eds.), Building for Nature, but incorrectly referenced.
\textsuperscript{51} For instance, see the letter from Walter Griffin to Alderman Parker, Willoughby Council re: Castlecrag foreshore, Griffin, Magic Of America Section I pp. 15-16a
Griffins' assessment of an ideal style of living for Australia was its assumption that Australia’s uniqueness was not to be found in Australians of European origin at all, but in the landscape they had chosen to colonise.

Examination of this particular Castlecrag 'battle' will demonstrate the way in which the Griffins detoured from what was then commonly understood to be the chief purpose of 'garden suburb' planning. More importantly, it will show the way in which they and their supporters regarded the role of the planner and architect, and the degree to which such a role differed from the expectations of investors. While the contentious point of the battle between the 'Cerutty faction' and the Griffins came to centre around the issue of flat-roofed buildings, the wider issue – as the Griffins saw it – was at least in part that of the individual planner/architect's ability to fully realise a vision. In deciding this point, it would have to be said that neither the Cerutty or the Griffin 'factions' were entirely successful.

Cerutty was the Federal Auditor-General, Melbourne-based, and one of the most vocal opponents of the construction of Canberra. He believed that Canberra 'from first to last has been a huge mistake involving immense expense which will have to be borne for ever, as well as much travelling and inconvenience to people whose business takes them there'. He effectively refused to move his department to Canberra when the Federal Capital was formally opened in 1928.

In light of his extreme opposition to Canberra, Cerutty's decision to buy into the GSDA can only be seen as either a tactical move made ultimately to discredit Walter Griffin or simply naivete bordering on perversity; as well as buying into the GSDA he also appears to have bought shares in 'Knitlock', the Griffins' patented concrete tile system. Of course speculation on a link between Cerutty's involvement with the Griffins and his opposition to Canberra is problematic, for the Griffins had not been directly involved in Canberra for more than three years by the time Cerutty became involved with the GSDA. For that

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52 Cerutty to Dow, 27 June 1929 in Cerutty Papers, Melbourne University Archives
53 Hudson to Cheong, 19th June 1930, in Hudson File, Cerutty Papers, Box 2 BS 3-2-25 Melbourne University Archives
matter, the outraged tone of much of Cerutty's correspondence as preserved in his GSDA papers suggest a man who had not set out to prove the Griffins to be charlatans, but to engage in honest land speculation. However throughout the Cerutty papers collection Cerutty proves himself eager to appeal to wider public sentiment wherever possible, to realise the value of public status and, equally, the value of ridicule. Discussion of Cerutty's distaste for both the new federal capital and the Griffins must countenance, too, the fact that he resented not the notion of Canberra as a planned city, but that he in particular was expected to relocate from his family home in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield to a new city; that is to say, the Griffins’ design itself seems to have played little part in his distaste for Canberra.

Cerutty was not a founding shareholder in the GSDA. When formed, however, the company did include many prominent Melbourne men of the time, some of whom the Griffins had worked with or for in the past. These included politicians King O’Malley (O’Malley had been instrumental in bringing the Griffins to Australia, and was – though he denied it whenever challenged – also an American), E.D. Millen, J.H.Catts, Sir Elliot Johnson and Agar Wynne; the Rev. Cheok Hong Cheong and other members of the Cheong family, for whom the Griffins had designed buildings and for whom they would create the ‘Blue Hill’ estate at Croydon; and other former clients, such as A. J. J. Lucas. King O’Malley’s diaries from 1920-21 suggest that all these men socialised together in Melbourne, along with their wives and other family members.\textsuperscript{54} GSDA shareholders were to be given a free block of land on the proviso that they built a house on it, to a Griffin design. Five shareholders took this offer and five houses (as well as a sales office) were built in the very early days of the estate.

The Castlecrag site appears to have been intended by the Griffins to be a showcase of both the potential of ‘garden suburb’ design, its application to the ‘democratic’ built form, and their own architectural skill in creating buildings which would blend into the environment. Therefore, purchasers of land were informed that they would be compelled by covenant to build only housing which was

\textsuperscript{54} King O’Malley Papers, Box 13, Items 7366-7411 MS 460, National Library of Australia
approved by Walter Burley Griffin. A court case between GSDA landholder Dr. Rivett and the GSDA in 1927 suggests that this policy was not always clearly stated in verbal communication with prospective clients. Cerutty wrote unhappily that ‘The fact that although about 170 blocks have been sold, only three persons have seen their way to commence building, on land only four miles from the General Post Office in Sydney, carries its own condemnation of the present methods.’\textsuperscript{55} It appears that the majority of purchasers were refraining from building until the covenant was lifted, or – a more conventional scenario, common in new estates – until more houses were built. It might also be surmised that development was in limbo because landholders and residents anticipated the linking of their area with the CBD via what would soon become known as the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Cerutty was vocal about his distrust of Walter Griffin’s working methods and a fear that his design and domestic preferences would come to limit the GSDA’s capacity to profit from Castlecrag and the adjacent promontories, Covecrag and Castlecove, which the GSDA also hoped to develop. The design of the Castlecrag streetscape had been a success – it had previously been held that the rocky outcrop could not be built on – and many of the lots had been sold. Cerutty wrote to Walter in early 1923:

\begin{quote}
I view with very great concern the reluctance of people to build houses on the sites purchased... I...want those houses [built] to be of a superior class. I hear a good deal of talk about the blocks being purchased by impecunious clerks and artisans, but it should be an endeavour to get the better-off class of resident to take up land and build. ...If we can create a standard of this sort, it should not be difficult to achieve our object of making the area a garden city and at the same time lining our own pockets.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

If the Griffins actively encouraged ‘impecunious clerks and artisans’ or other groups outside the conventional middle-class to purchase land at Castlecrag, there is no evidence of such encouragement. What appears to have gal

\textsuperscript{55} Undated and unsigned typescript in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives
\textsuperscript{56} Cerutty to Walter Burley Griffin, 13 Feb 1923 in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives
Cerutty even more than their real or imagined associations with the ‘lower’
classes, however, is Walter Griffin’s own personality, particularly his apparently
boundless capacity for obfuscation. Cerutty wrote to Basil Parkinson, the GSDA’s
secretary, of Griffin’s ‘reputation for inefficiency and his incapacity to bring things
to a prompt and businesslike conclusion’. Cerutty’s letters to Parkinson become
increasingly unhappy over the course of the mid-1920s. He also composed a
large number of open letters to all shareholders which appear in the Cerutty
papers though it is often unclear whether these were sent out. Cerutty felt that
Griffin was wasting time; he wrote to Parkinson that ‘there is too much time
occupied at our Board Meetings in listening to Mr. G’s rambling and disjointed
statements of our various activities’. He was also exasperated by Griffin’s
apparent distaste for correct business procedure. After another meeting he wrote
to Parkinson: ‘I have never in all my life, officially or privately, seen a man in such
a state of ignorance of matters which should be well known to him. I do not know
whether his appearance of helplessness was real or assumed for the purpose of
withholding information which should be instantly forthcoming.’

Perhaps not surprisingly, Cerutty came to the conclusion, after some
years of working with the Griffins, that he and the majority of shareholders on the
GSDA were victims of an ongoing swindle, and that Walter Griffin’s obstructive
behaviour, peculiar manner of expression and even his unusual designs were
calculated to make him money at the expense of other shareholders. To Cerutty,
Walter Griffin’s inability to clarify his ideas for purposes of costing or assessing
their worth was also suspicious. ‘When asked to state what his scheme is,’ he
wrote, ‘Mr. Griffin has always replied that it is in his head. That may be readily
believed, because his scheme appears to vary from day to day – probably with
the state of Mr. Griffin’s liver.’

57 Cerutty to B J Parkinson, 12 November 1925, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University
Archives
58 Cerutty to Parkinson, 12 Jan 1926, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives
59 Cerutty to Parkinson, 10 December 1926, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1 Melbourne University
Archives
60 Undated, unsigned notes for public address, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University
Archives
Matters first came to a head in this regard when it was revealed that Walter had employed Marion to draw up designs for certain estates at a price of sixty pounds per lot. Cerutty felt that this was 'a condition of affairs which no reasonably-well conducted business would tolerate'. Cerutty was apparently unaware that Marion Griffin was a trained architect – he wrote that it was ‘[s]trange that Mrs. G's talent remained so long unsuspected’ – and it is perhaps indicative of their lack of regard for his authority that neither of the Griffins saw fit to point this out to him. It is clear also that Cerutty had no regard for Marion or the Griffins' partnership; in one typescript of a board meeting he tells her: 'Oh you shut up – I am trying to talk to Mr. Griffin' Such a state of affairs suggests that the Griffins held Cerutty in the same kind of contempt as he did them.

Part of this contempt might well have been connected to the Griffins' actions which clearly suggest that they regarded Castlecrag and the other land owned or supervised by the GSDA as their own. When, in 1926, the GSDA refused to purchase a small block of land adjoining Castlecrag, known as the Haven Estate, Walter Griffin instead undertook to purchase it himself. The Griffins did not directly inform the GSDA of this purchase, and the Associations only became aware of it when advised that Walter, when consulted by prospective purchasers of Castlecrag land, would blithely recommend his own Haven Estate land as though it were interchangeable with Castlecrag lots. The roads on the Haven Estate – The Bulwark, The Scarp and The Barbican – were continuations of roads on the Castlecrag estate. The purchase of the Haven Estate appears to have been recognised by the GSDA as a fait accompli, and the company purchased the Estate, adding it to Castlecrag. Other adjoining land, such as the Torquay and Cape Estates, were also purchased in part by the Griffins, but attempts to add these to Castlecrag land were largely unsuccessful.

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61 Cerutty, letter to Chairman, GSDA 14 September 1926 in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives
62 Undated, unsigned notes for public address, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives
63 GSDA Ltd, General Meeting 4 August 1927, pp. 15, 36, in Cerutty Papers, Box 1, Melbourne University Archives.
It has been suggested that Walter Griffin envisaged the entire area breaking away from Willoughby as a separate suburb. ‘To this end,’ his partner Eric Nicholls wrote to Harrison, ‘he always imagined that the high section of Middlecove...which he generally referred to as the Acropolis, could be the centre of the new Municipality.’\(^6^5\) This somewhat grandiose idea was not shared with the GSDA shareholders.

Perhaps the most appalling act of the Griffins’, in Cerutty’s eyes, was the revelation that Walter had organised an unprecedented arrangement in the distribution of shares which allowed him control of the development of Castlecrag. Walter owned what were termed ‘A’ shares in Castlecrag; these gave him more power in voting than all the other shareholders put together.\(^6^6\) Cerutty appears to be in a state of outrage on discovering the existence of Griffin’s ‘A’ shares – he claimed to have had no knowledge of such an arrangement when he bought into the company – and was particularly shocked by the fact that Walter refused to relinquish such shares or to categorically state that he would not ‘use’ them.

In 1928, Cerutty noted in a draft of a letter he intended to present to all shareholders that:

> Although I deny having called Mr Griffin a rogue, I acknowledge that his actions are such to cause me to believe that he is not honest. Mr. Griffin’s solicitude for sub-purchasers and shareholders seems strangely out of place, in view of his own employment at an excessive salary, his neglect of the company’s business, his own incompetence as a manager in almost every direction... By reason

\(^{65}\) E. Nicholls to P. Harrison, 12 August 1960 in Harrison Papers, Series 6, Folder 3 MS 8347 National Library of Australia. In running the name Middle Cove together, Nicholls appears to have been confusing this term with either Covecrag or Castlecove.

\(^{66}\) The provision of ‘A’ shares is dealt with in part 71 of the Memorandum of Association of the GSDA Ltd.: ‘On a show of hands every member present in person shall have one vote but upon poll every member present in person of by proxy or attorney shall be entitled to vote according to the class of shares held and for this purpose the shares of the Company shall be divided into A and B shares the holder of an A share being entitled to ten votes upon a poll in respect of each A share held and the holder of a B share being entitled to one vote in respect of each B share held. The A shares shall be one-tenth in number of the Company’s shares and shall be issued to Walter Burley Griffin or his nominees...’ Memorandum of Association of GSDA Limited, p. 25 in Harrison Papers, Box 8, Series 5, Folder 42 MS 8347, National Library of Australia
of his freak homes [he] has excited the derision of thousands of people.\textsuperscript{67}

This is not to say that all shareholders were opposed to Griffin’s use of ‘A’ shares; as Cerutty noted, the Griffin charisma ensured that a number of investors retained their faith in the creator of Castlecrag. Cerutty and some of his allies suspected that other shareholders were, in fact, merely caretakers of shares owned by Walter Griffin himself.\textsuperscript{68} Other possibilities of Walter’s inexplicable hold over his faction were floated by Cerutty. ‘The question naturally arises,’ he wrote, ‘whether these Members of the Board really own their shares or whether they have been hypnotised by Mr. Griffin. No other view is possible.’\textsuperscript{69} Cerutty wrote in 1930:

I am more than disappointed to find that some shareholders, notwithstanding our previous experience, side with Mr. Griffin and thus give him renewed confidence to make use of our company for the benefit of himself alone... you know well that the “A” shares were given to Griffin for two specific purposes – to carry out his scheme of a garden suburb and to conserve the foreshores. I and some other shareholders had no knowledge of the “A” shares when we first became shareholders. In fact, we subscribed before the articles of association were passed. The “A” shares were always kept in the background until Mr Griffin got the shareholders practically under his thumb... The power held by Griffin... is too great for one man to have, especially a man of his type.\textsuperscript{70}

It was perhaps this reverence a number of the Griffins’ followers held for them that inspired Cerutty to attempt to discredit Walter by turning what appeared to be one of his claims back on him. The attack was on the Griffins’ preference for flat-roofed houses, a preference which even the most enthusiastic members of

\textsuperscript{67} Cerutty, ‘Notes on Mr Griffin’s statement to shareholders on 10\textsuperscript{th} February’ (1928?), Box 8, Cerutty Papers, Melbourne University Archives

\textsuperscript{68} Walter was known to pay rates on land ostensibly owned by his supporters. Walker, Weirick, and Kabos (eds.), Building For Nature, p. 26

\textsuperscript{69} Cerutty (?) G.S.D.A. printed sheet in 1932 file, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives

\textsuperscript{70} Cerutty to Jenkins, 17 June 1930, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives
the GSDA could not understand or empathise with. Sir Elliot Johnson, a 
supporter of the Griffins’ in many other matters, wrote to Cerutty in August 1928:

Of course Mr Griffin thinks they are ideal and we that think 
otherwise are barbarians devoid of taste or culture. Perhaps we are  
– but most Australians probably will think as we do and it is to  
Australians we expect to sell our land – his homes mostly look like  
prisons outside...\textsuperscript{71}

In mid-1929, Cerutty sent a letter to D. M. Dow, at the Office of the  
Commissioner for Australia, explaining his dilemma. Cerutty was hoping to  
exploit the possibility that what he saw as Walter’s boasts about an American  
project, created prior to his coming to Australia, might prove his undoing. He  
wrote:

I am interested in a land property on Sydney Harbour. Walter  
Burley Griffin, the Federal Capital Architect, is Managing Director of  
it. I think this property should be a regular gold mine to us  
shareholders. Griffin has such extraordinary ideas about building  
that it is not going ahead as it should. Now and again, he advertises  
that he was the originator of the development scheme at Mason  
City, Iowa (U.S.A.), of which scheme he says he was also the  
controlling architect.\textsuperscript{72}

Dow wrote to one J. G. Mitchell, who appears to have lived within driving  
distance of Mason City, Iowa, asking him to investigate on Cerutty’s behalf. 
Mitchell and some friends duly paid a visit to the city and reported good-  
naturally:

Yesterday being Sunday we drove to Mason City for the purpose  
(among others) of inspecting the place from the standpoint of Town  
Planning. Our survey confirmed our previous impression that the  
city had been laid out by a cyclone with the aid of an earthquake...\textsuperscript{73}

More importantly, Mitchell was adamant that ‘I never saw such a destitution of flat  
roofs in my life.’\textsuperscript{74} Dow included this letter in his reply to Cerutty, which was not

\textsuperscript{71} Sir Elliot Johnson to Cerutty, 17 August 1928, Cerutty Papers Box 2, Melbourne University  
Archives
\textsuperscript{72} Cerutty to David Dow, 27 June 1929 in Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives  
\textsuperscript{73} J. G. Mitchell to Dow, letter dated ‘Springtime, Nineteen hundred thirty’ in Cerutty Papers, Box  
2, Melbourne University Archives
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
sent for more than a year after Cerutty's original query, surmising himself that 'if Mason City, Iowa is the centre claimed by Griffin as an example of his town planning, he is obviously completely out of court.'

Rather than revealing the Griffins to be charlatans, however, Cerutty's sleuthing was based on an incorrect premise. Walter and Marion Griffin had created Rock Crest, Rock Glen, an 18-acre 'community' housing 'within three blocks of the central square' of Mason City, Iowa in 1912, shortly before their first trip to Australia. Its plan was for less than twenty houses, all of them far more imposing than the Castlecrag residences, and with a mixture of gently pitched and flat roofs. The important connections between Rock Crest, Rock Glen and Castlecrag for the Griffins are that they had intended to live in a house of their own design at the Mason City site, as they ultimately did at Castlecrag; there is also a distinct connection in that both sites were a part of contiguous urban development within their respective cities, but had been previously overlooked by urban development due to the difficulty of the terrain. Two pictures of Griffin buildings constructed at Mason City, Iowa appeared in the pamphlet Castlecrag Homes; one of these buildings actually has a pitched roof.

Dow's letter is the last mention in the Cerutty papers of Mason City, Iowa, so one is left to assume that either Cerutty confronted the Griffins with his information on the lack of flat houses in Mason City and merely received a correction of his supposition that they had claimed to have designed the whole city. Most importantly, however, this exchange between Cerutty and Dow shows the complete lack of understanding between Cerutty and the Griffins, and their respective camps within the GSDA. At this time even King O'Malley, who the

75 Dow to Cerutty, 18 June 1930 in Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives. Dow had previously shown himself to be somewhat antithetical to town planners generally; he was sufficiently perturbed when Tuxen called at his office in September 1925 to write to the Secretary of the MTPC querying Tuxen for raising 'questions regarding matters not recorded in this office'. Dow to Secretary MTPC, 4 September 1925, in 'Commissioner for Australia, NY' file, MTPC Papers, Box 1, Public Records Office, Victoria
76 'Rock Crest & Rock Glen' caption, Marion Griffin, Magic of America section II, p. 115
77 Walter Griffin described 'Rock Glen' as having been 'left for a generation behind the growth of the town' because 'it was very low in part and very rough in part'. Griffin, 'Planning for Economy', Official Volume of Proceedings of 1st Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, p. 45
78 Castlecrag Homes, pp. 4-5
Griffins might have assumed was the most steadfast of their supporters, turned against them, writing a letter of introduction to Labor politician and prominent lawyer H. V. Evatt on Cerutty’s behalf:

Though not having had the honour of your acquaintance yet, owing to us both being in the same old Labor Movement allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. C. S. [sic] Cerutty, Commonwealth Auditor General, who will be in Sydney for a few days in connection with business in which he and I are deeply interested. I should be glad if you can put him on the right track as to our future action with a certain uncertain little gentleman. He will explain.\textsuperscript{79}

In the same year – 1930 – a most revealing factional split occurred between Walter Griffin and the GSDA surveyor, Henry Hudson, who had previously worked in the Federal Capital Office, as a temporary draftsman, and who had been living on the Castlecrag estate with his wife. As recently as 1928, Hudson had made claims for back pay in which Griffin supported him, a matter which Cerutty suspected Griffin was controlling so as to receive a percentage of Hudson’s pay claim.\textsuperscript{80} Hudson’s letters suggests that his pay claim was not honoured, and he seems to blame a number of incidents – including the death of his wife and what he sees as his own loss of face – on this fact. Clearly there was antagonism between Cerutty and Hudson, from this matter or before it; it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of Hudson’s hostility towards Walter Griffin, however, by the time he started writing to Cheong in mid-1930 accusing Griffin of a multitude of crimes and deceptions. There are two long letters from Hudson to Cheong from this time; the letters themselves eventually found their way to Cerutty’s possession, which leaves open the possibility that Cheong was himself deceiving Hudson for the benefit of the anti-Griffinites of the GSDA. Cheong’s letters to Hudson are not, however, featured in the Cerutty Papers. Hudson’s letters are filled with accusations over various GSDA shareholders. ‘Who is the

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{King O’Malley to Dr. Evatt 2 June 1930, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives.} The antipathy between O’Malley and the Griffins was such by this stage that when Walter died in 1937 O’Malley did not even see fit to record in his diary the demise of a man who, ten years before, he had socialised with two or three times a week.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Cerutty to B. Parkinson. 1 March 1928, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives}
lawyer advising you all?’ he asks. ‘Is it Mr. Basil Parkinson, if so, try another lawyer, I have very good reasons for advising this.’ His breathless tone, with what appear to be, with no other evidence but his own words, paranoid elements, continues:

I told you how to prove the dishonesty, the pipes used on Castlehaven, Griffins ground, if Mr Cerutty was sincere, why did he not go into this, search the Company's books, I am almost certain Griffin never paid for the pipes there is dishonesty and goodness knows there is proof enough of his using the votes for his own ends.

How horribly complicated things are, he has everything beautifully tied up. 81

Hudson had, it is to be assumed, spent a considerable amount of time with Walter Griffin working on the street plan, sewerage and sewage of Castlecrag; it was an experience which seems to have soured him on the man and Walter’s professed love of the natural landscape altogether. He ridiculed the Griffins’ devotion to the preservation of Australian flora, perhaps from the viewpoint of one who had lived many years in the site’s natural bushland:

Now ask yourself why, in the name of goodness, did they make Botanical Gardens. What a colossal waste of money. Why ever did people make the beautiful gardens we all see, especially north of Sydney, what a waste of money and energy. Here they have the natural bush, lovely (yes, for a few weeks each year) to harbour ticks, which will give the residents tick poisoning... to harbour snakes at the very door. 82

Hudson typified himself as someone ‘who has more reason than any one of you, to feel bitter against this Company for I have been wrongly accused of dishonesty, the reputation of myself and my daughter wrongly attacked, my wife’s death hastened by deplorable conditions here, my own health ruined and

81 Hudson to Cheong, 19th June 1930 in Hudson File, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives
82 Hudson to Cheong, 12 July 1930 in Hudson File, Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives
cheated out of the money earned by me, even of the money due to me in lieu of holidays, and I say that this man should not and must not be allowed to go on." 83

Like Cerutty, Hudson felt that the way to end the Griffins' power over Castlecrag was to discredit Walter in the eyes of his followers. He, like Cerutty, appears to have been convinced that Walter Griffin's behaviour was, at least in part, due to a desire to benefit financially from illicit transactions at the GSDA's expense. But where Cerutty hoped to reveal Walter as a charlatan, however, Hudson's plan was to destroy him on grounds of technical incompetence. Remarkably, Hudson's proposed solution was to bring Tuxen into the argument between the Griffins and the GSDA. His letter does not indicate whether he was aware that the Griffins and Tuxen had worked together at Ranelagh only six years previously, and nor does it indicate how Hudson came to know, or know of, Tuxen although Tuxen had visited Castlecrag in the mid-1920s, as his photographs of the estate attest. Hudson wrote to Cheong:

I want you or Mr King O'Malley to challenge at the general meeting that his scheme is only a geometrical drawing, that he could not lay out with the instrument and chain a simple curve or level either, that he is ignorant of either theodolite or level or of Trigonometry. He will accept your challenge, then get Mr. Tucson, Surveyor of Melbourne to act as umpire, get him... out in the field anywhere where it is open and prove the type of man this is, this should convince anyone. [...] Why not let this man Tucson of Melbourne who knows town planning and the cost of roads etc., meet me here and I will show him where the money has been wasted and the utterly impossible schemes of Griffin. He could give you a report which would convince anyone[...] As for educating the public up to Bush Gardens Roof Gardens living under trees, well, Griffin would have a job for life, and the shareholders Hot Air for dividends for life also, not Griffin of course. 84

There is no record, however, of Tuxen having been brought into the Castlecrag debate, and it is doubtful that he would be willing to challenge a man he had previously admired and perhaps continued to respect. The Cerutty papers record less friction throughout the 1930s, probably not because of any amnesty effected

83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
between the Griffin and Cerutty factions but because there was clearly less to argue about while there was so little money to be made from the sale of land and the building industry itself was at a standstill.

After Walter’s death in 1937, Cerutty wrote a note – possibly to himself – which appears to be an attempt to resolve the contradiction of Walter Griffin. It reads: ‘Griffin’s eccentricities – action suggest that he really did not want the land built on at all.’ After almost two decades of conflict with the Griffins, Cerutty may well have hit on the truth of the matter. The Griffins, after moving to Castlecrag and establishing their small sub-bohemian community with its arts interests and tight-knit communal nature, may well have felt that it was preferable to put off the growth of the suburb’s built environment for as long as possible while they educated the local community and the wider community by example in the care and worship of the natural landscape. With their involvement in Anthroposophy and the early Environmentalist movement, it is possible that the Griffins felt that, rather than build to be inside nature, it was better for them simply to avoid the process of building altogether, and allow nature to continue in its pristine state or, in the case of the previously denuded areas of Castlecrag, regenerate.

Deyan Sudjic says of the ‘men of the property business’:

The naked realities of guile, bravado, aggression and ego, tactfully concealed in more mature, not to say anaemic businesses, are still disconcertingly close to the surface in property. It is not only the confidence men of the property business who have perfected the technique of adopting a convincingly serious tone when announcing that things which they know perfectly well to be impossible are, in fact, entirely practicable. In the early stages of the creation of a property empire, bluff, hyperbole and vainglorious publicity seeking are as much a part of the developer’s repertoire as financial skill.

The Griffins may have adopted such tactics to sell land to the public, though their ultimate goal appears to have been far from profit-driven. However, they were far more likely to use a ‘convincingly serious tone when announcing things they know...to be impossible’ in discussion with Cerutty and the GSDA. The

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85 Cerutty, note dated 1938 in Cerutty Papers, Box 2, Melbourne University Archives
86 Deyan Sudjic, The 100 Mile City, Andre Deutsch, London, 1992, p. 42
Australians who dealt with the Griffins throughout their twenty five years in Sydney and Melbourne may have treated them cautiously because of Americans’ reputation for boosterism; however, the Griffins – particularly Walter – appear to have deserved their reputation for charismatic salesmanship. This persuasiveness was not always used for financial profit: it was also, on occasion, used to promote the Griffins’ ideas.

John Forester, writing in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, has examined the role of planners forced to be ‘simultaneous negotiators and mediators’ in their conflicts with developers and community.\(^{87}\) The Griffins and their faction within the GSDA, and Cerutty and his, were clearly at odds in almost every matter regarding the development of Castlecrag and other GSDA properties; it appears, however, that the Griffins understood Cerutty far better than he did them, at least enough to outmanouevre him. Their belief in themselves as evidenced by their behaviour at Castlecrag, and Marion’s later descriptions of their work in *Magic of America*, made them extraordinarily elitist, albeit in the name of what they saw as democracy.

Here they were not battling directly against other planners for supremacy, although it seems that they did see Castlecrag (like much of their work) as an example for others to follow.\(^{88}\) What was occurring, however, in the broader sense, was the end to the kind of planning authority the Griffins represented. Though the notion of democracy and mass public appeal was crucial to their rhetoric, the Griffins – particularly, though by no means exclusively, Marion – made much of the notion of genius, which for her was inextricably related to Walter’s charisma and persuasive manner. As the 1930s drew to a close and town planning became less the province of the middle classes and more a tool of social change, the planner, too, took on a different role. After the Second World War, the planner was no longer typified as an artistic or creative individual who

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\(^{88}\) Walker, Kabos and Weirick write that ‘Nowadays, writers as prolific as Griffin would be encouraged to present their ideas in a book; but Griffin had more faith in improving the standard of development by examples...’ Walker, Kabos and Weirick (eds.), *Building for Nature* p. 15
Fig XXVI. An artist's impression of the planners of the post-war era; an illustration accompanying an article on the new, South Australian government-planned city of Elizabeth. "Elizabeth: a City for the Future", *Bank Notes*, June 1957, p. 1
bridged science and aesthetics to create beautiful or even functional habitats: instead, he or she became part of committee, board or commission, a team member rather than an inspired leader (Fig. XXVI).

*The changing role of the planner during the Depression: individual authority or committee member?*

As planning gained ground and acceptance, responsibility for its conception and execution gradually devolved from individuals to committees. This was not, however, an organic progression but one engineered by the deliberate actions of certain key figures in the planning field.

Town planning of garden suburbs, in its earliest Australian form as espoused by John Sulman, was to be the province of the architect relaying instructions to a surveyor. John Reps, in his *Canberra 1912*, explains comprehensively the way in which Sulman’s early stirrings of town planning in Australia were in part calculated to ensure that it be exclusive to the architecture profession. 89 Indeed, Reps provides a convincing argument that we may regard the initiation of discussion of town planning in Australia as based almost entirely on tactical moves initiated by Sulman claiming a new role for architects. Reps shows too that certain members of the surveying profession at this time also took the view that Sulman was asserting the role of architects over that of surveyors, and that surveyors protested at this move. Tuxen was much later to attempt to unify the architectural and surveying professions by inviting Sulman to write a piece on planning for the *Journal of the Surveyor’s Institute*, in which he spoke less of architects or surveyors and more of the new professional, the town planner. 90 Tuxen’s move in inviting Sulman to compose a piece on this topic was a tactical one, as Tuxen feared for the future of planning. In 1927, addressing the first national conference of the Australian Surveyors’ Institute, he emphasised the need for experts from both fields to take control of town planning ‘speaking from

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89 Reps, *Canberra 1912* pp. 46-48
his experience in America. While Tuxen was not overt about his meaning, it suggests that he felt that certain examples in America of unchecked commercial development outlined the need for strict planning controls.

In other quarters at this time – the late 1920s – planning was emerging as a discipline in itself, one which did not necessarily owe allegiance to surveying over architecture, or vice-versa. At the same time as this was occurring, those at the forefront of planning were also arguing for the role of experts and committees composed of such experts, to take control of planning with the aid of executive powers.

When F. Oswald Barnett was interviewed in the early 1960s by E. W. Russell, a question about Tuxen prompted this reply:

Oh Saxil Tuxen. He’s a good chap. He was a surveyor, and he was one of the forty in my office. He designed the Fisherman’s Bend housing estate. He won that by competition. Saxil is in the Brotherhood of St Laurence. A very fine fellow, Saxil.92

Tuxen’s role had changed, over a thirty year period, from leading campaigner for town planning to being ‘one of the forty’ in the Barnett Slum Study Group of 1934, an informal grouping which was instrumental in the creation of the Victorian Housing Commission under Barnett. Tuxen had, effectively but unknowingly, created positions such as that he occupied on the Slum Study Group, by campaigning vigorously for planning by committee.

Between the wars, Tuxen continually argued for the advisability of planning and other social issues to be presented to specially-created boards of review with power to effect their decision, a concept that dates back to his original proposal in conjunction with his father of a planning approval board. The first time Tuxen is on record as discussing such a board is in 1918, at the presentation of a paper by the Hon Crawford Vaughan, MP at the First Australian Town Planning Conference. Entitled ‘The South Australian Town Planning and

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91 ‘First Interstate Conference of the Australian Surveyors’ Institute’ Australian Surveyor, May 1928, p. 15
Housing Bill: A Synopsis", Vaughan's paper advocated the establishment in Adelaide of a central town planning commission. Of this commission, three members would be appointed by the governor, and other additional or temporary members by the appropriate Minister.

In discussing Vaughan's proposal, Tuxen took an optimistic tone, suggesting that 'the board being a continuous one, it was not likely to be subject to the whim of the Minister of the day' Walter Griffin, also present, joked that a board was 'a thing long narrow and wooden'. Two some extent these comments represent the two men's very different attitude to planning issues: Walter's chief interest was in being allowed to create imposing and innovative projects, whereas Tuxen's preference was for a more conventional notion of progress and civilisation. The year after the First Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, Tuxen was proposing a 'Town Planning Board' of his own devising, to review and approve all plans and subdivisions.

By the early 1930s, Tuxen had not changed in his firm belief in the value of committees and teamwork. In a letter to the Melbourne Evening Star an anguished Tuxen advocated a solution for 'The Problem of Unemployed Youth': that 'men who could speak with authority to write papers on different phases of the subject to be read at a convention'. Walter Griffin, however, does appear to have altered his viewpoint somewhat, at least in his outward pronouncements. He wrote in Architecture magazine, in 1931:

If the training and experience of the architects does not qualify them to stimulate this imagination, then there is nobody in the community who can bring into being a real town planning scheme...Town Planning Associations, publicists, sociologists, engineers, welfare workers, statisticians, financiers and technical

93 Hon Crawford Vaughan, MP 'The South Australian Town Planning and Housing Bill: A Synopsis' in Official Volume of Proceedings of 1st Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, pp. 79-83, p. 79
94 Tuxen, speaking in response to Vaughan, Official Volume of Proceedings of 1st Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, 1918, pp. 79-83, p. 82
95 Griffin, speaking in response to Vaughan, Official Volume of Proceedings of 1st Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, pp. 79-83, p. 83
96 Saxil Tuxen, 'Suburban Subdivisions', p. 42
experts of all lines can contribute valuable help in putting across the various phases of the idea, but the comprehensive idea must originate in the creative faculties of the architects. It may be shocking; it must be striking at first to arouse interest, it may be impractical in parts, but in its comprehensiveness, its greatness, it must present a picture that will evoke an image in the imagination of the people of Sydney... How about a modest beginning in a study circle with emulative efforts on the part of each one to contribute constructive suggestions and a will to co-operate? 

That Walter Griffin himself found it necessary to countenance the idea of a cooperating ‘study circle’ suggests a distinct alteration in the assumptions made by planners in the 1930s. This change would take full affect in the years after the Second World War, by which time of Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen, only Tuxen would still be active in Australia.

Tuxen had occasionally drawn public attention to the idea of applying planning principles to improve the lot of the underprivileged. In 1918, he claimed at the First Town Planning Conference in Adelaide that ‘the most important work [planners] had before them was to clear out the slum areas and re-establish the people under proper conditions. Human life was a more important thing than the beautification of a city.’ In his ‘Town Planning and the Working Man’, published as part of his propaganda campaign on behalf of the MTPC, he criticises the prevalent thought on ‘town planning’ in 1927, that it was a method of building beautiful suburbs for the wealthy:

What has Town Planning to do with the worker? We read long accounts and view beautiful illustrations of high-class developments and elaborate homes for the well-to-do... However that is, at most, only a fractional part of town-planning, which, in its true sense, is more a matter for the poor man than for the wealthy.

99 Saxil Tuxen, speaking in response to H. E. Mason, ‘Town Planning in Special Relation to Building Regulations’, 1st Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, pp. 79-83, p. 79  
100 Saxil Tuxen, ‘Town Planning and the Working Man: Giving the Small House its Proper Place in the Community’ Australian Home Beautiful, September 1, 1927, p. 28
In the years following the submission of the MTPC’s report, and the onset of the Depression, Tuxen was to take this approach further; he would become a key player in three organisations that led directly to important changes in governmental and social attitudes to the poor and unemployed. Here he entered wholeheartedly into the field of planning for relief of the poor and disadvantaged. However, he did not embrace the philosophy described by Alan Mayne as an understanding that the ‘elimination of unhealthiness and poverty from the city was to be achieved through brick, mortar and stone, rather than by social and sanitary reform, philanthropy and education’. Instead he saw change in environment as just one attack on poverty and injustice, and ‘philanthropy and education’ as equally important. As a leading planning advocate, his change in focus towards social change was marked and typifies the change in direction of planning overall.

As has been noted, of Tuxen’s planning contemporaries, Sulman made little comment on the fate of the poor or disadvantaged, preferring to rest on vague notions of civic pride as a civilising influence on the working classes. The Griffins, for all their discussion of democracy and public opinion, did not seriously address class issues to any degree, beyond their occasional attempts over their careers to promote their preference for uniquely small houses which was, in any case, their personal preference in housing.

Though they could not have anticipated it, Tuxen and his partner Miller were, ultimately, to make quite a large amount of capital from Tuxen’s involvement in the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition (HIASA) Board. Tuxen and Miller won the competition to design a portion of what was to become known as Garden City, Port Melbourne. This area was already known to Tuxen through his time at the MTPC; it had also been a focus of interest for the HIASA

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101 Mayne, Fever, Squalor and Vice, p. 213
102 For instance, ‘Notes on Workmen’s Cottages, Canberra as designed by W. B. Griffin’ ('Workmen's Cottages/Ainslie Settlement' A414/1, Australian Archives, Canberra) and Griffin’s discussion of ‘The One-Roomed House’ in 1915 (reported in Sydney Morning Herald, July 15, 1915). Though the Griffins would promote the one-roomed house as an economic measure, they actually preferred to live in an intimate environment; as evidenced by their own home at Eaglemont, Pholiota.
Board. Perhaps even more lucrative was the HIASA Board’s interest in the Glen Waverley area, as typified by their field trip to the Glen Alvie estate in April 1937. Though this area had been designed by the MTPC in 1929, it had not been built on. Tuxen and Miller were to design and subdivide the Syndal area of Glen Waverley as a Housing Commission-sponsored project after the Second World War. These are unlikely to be coincidental matters, but nor are they the kind of situation one could easily typify as corrupt. It is, more accurately, an example of the high standing Tuxen had in the planning community at the time, and perhaps a reflection of his own ethical standards. It is also undoubtedly a reflection of the small number of professionals associated with the planning community in Melbourne before the Second World War.

The organisations promoting a belief in the advantageous use of planning in addressing poverty and ‘slum living’ were the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the HIASA Board. The two were linked by members and spokespersons having common membership in the Barnett Slum Study Group of 1934. This membership included Father Gerard Kennedy Tucker and F. Oswald Barnett. The one common member of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the Barnett Slum Study Group and the HIASA Board was Saxil Tuxen.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence was a Church of England-based organisation of both clergy and laymen, founded in 1930 on the initiation of Father Tucker. Barbara Brinsley Darling, in a 1982 MA Thesis, describes the Brotherhood’s ‘emphasis on self-discipline, unconditional devotion to the work of God and the church, and frugality’. Father Tucker and Saxil Tuxen had the connecting experience of having been born in the same year, in similarly well-to-
do suburbs of Melbourne.\textsuperscript{106} Though Tucker and Tuxen's meeting date is not
recorded, it is to be assumed that it took place between 1930, when the
Brotherhood was founded in Adamstown, a suburb of Newcastle, NSW, and
June, 1934 when the Brotherhood was formally transferred to Melbourne. In
1965, on material apparently supplied by Tuxen himself, \textit{The Brotherhood News}
stated that Tuxen had taken an interest in the Brotherhood 'ever since it began in
Melbourne... [h]e has been a member of the board almost from the time it
began.'\textsuperscript{107} Though the Brotherhood of St Laurence's approach has been
criticised as continuing 'the rhetoric of slum journalism which debased those it
sought to help', it is nevertheless undeniable that it achieved radical change in
public attitudes to the poor and, perhaps more importantly, in directly aiding
some of the poor of the Australian 'slums'.\textsuperscript{108}

As related in the last chapter, Tuxen claimed credit for the resettlement
program undertaken by the Brotherhood. He had conceived of an idea for
relocating families harshly affected by unemployment in rural areas, and outlined
these plans at a meeting, the date of which he does not specify. 'I told the
audience about my resettlement plans. Father Tucker who had not then
formulated any plans... came to me after the meeting and said "I want you".'\textsuperscript{109}
Tuxen's continued involvement in the Brotherhood of St Laurence until his death
is extraordinary not only for the commitment it showed towards the organisation's
mission but also for the low profile he kept at all times throughout his association
with the organisation.

Superficially, Tuxen's original connection with the Brotherhood was similar
to his involvement with the Metropolitan Town Planning Association: he took the
role of 'technical expert'. He was first noted in Brotherhood promotional literature
as one of a number of 'professional people' who were 'co-operating' in the
creation of a resettlement scheme at a farming community at Carrum Downs,

\textsuperscript{106} Tucker was born on the 18\textsuperscript{th} of February, 1885 in South Yarra.
\textsuperscript{107} Brotherhood Profiles No. 2: Mr. Saxil Tuxen' \textit{The Brotherhood News} June 1965, No. 169, p. 2
\textsuperscript{108} Tony Birch, 'The Battle For Spatial Control in Fitzroy' in Healy et. al (eds), \textit{Beasts of Suburbia},
p. 25
\textsuperscript{109} Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 14.
then outside Melbourne on the road to Frankston. The Carrum Downs ‘settlement’ land was purchased by the Brotherhood with funds donated by grocery magnate G. J. Coles, and the settlement begun in March of 1935. Though Tuxen did not originate the design for the built form, credited to Thos. Watt and Son, architects, he gave ‘professional advice’ on the settlement, and its main avenue was named for him. Tuxen, who had recently qualified as a hydraulic engineer, also devised an irrigation system for the project, necessitating the construction of a dam and windmill for water reticulation. This area, later renamed the G. K. Tucker Settlement, was converted to a ‘village’ for care of the aged after the end of the Depression and the war, in 1946.

In addition to his technical work at Carrum Downs, Tuxen was on the Brotherhood’s Advisory Committee. He also chaired the organisation’s Hostel Committee, which supervised a hostel for homeless boys in the crowded ‘slum’ area of Fitzroy. Here, young men were housed while they worked at jobs given them through Brotherhood assistance, until they were deemed capable of caring for themselves, or were otherwise rehabilitated. The Hostel ceased operations at the beginning of the Second World War due to lack of staff, at which time Tuxen prepared a pamphlet for the Brotherhood in conjunction with another Committee member, Douglas Keep, entitled *The Homeless Boy in Victoria.*

Seven years prior to this, in 1934, Barnett produced a pamphlet, *The Unsuspected Slums.* It was essentially a precis of an MA Thesis he had written for the University of Melbourne and was published by the Melbourne Herald, which had publicised Barnett’s slum campaign throughout 1933 and 1934: Herald proprietor Keith Murdoch was a keen slum abolition campaigner. In 1935, writing in the Brotherhood’s publication *Notes,* Father Tucker made mention of ‘the labours of Messrs. Barnett, Barlow and Tuxen... bearing fruit’.

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110 'The B.S.L. Settlement' *B.S.L Quarterly* April 1935, no. 14, p. 7 (Note: the issue following this one, July 1935, is also numbered 14).
111 ‘Some Milestones in the Brotherhood’s Journey’ *B.S.L Quarterly* Dec 1940, no. 36, p. 1
112 'Settlement Committee Report' *B.S.L Quarterly* April 1937, no. 21, p. 14
113 Rosemary Dargaville *Just the Beginning: An Exploratory Study of Care of the Aged* Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, 1974, p. 5
At last the conscience of Melbourne is being roused in regard to the appalling conditions under which many of our fellow citizens are compelled to live. We (by “we” I mean the Brotherhood and you, our friends) have taken what we maintain should be our first step towards slum abolition. We are removing families from the crowded areas of the city to open spaces of the country.115

Architect Marcus R. Barlow, Barnett and Tuxen were, however, operating in another sphere aside from rural resettlement. Barlow and Barnett were members of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board, appointed by the Dunstan state government, which first met in August 1936 in Melbourne.116 The minutes for their meetings over the remainder of 1936 detail their assessment and inspection of various ‘slum pockets’ in inner-urban Melbourne, most specifically the 19th century housing stock of the inner areas North and South Melbourne, Collingwood and Fitzroy.117 There are also many mentions of the attempt by certain members of the newly-formed board to enlist Tuxen as their ‘Town Planner’.118 Burt even suggested that he, Burt, should serve in a voluntary capacity and the fee he had been receiving to sit on the board be paid to Tuxen.119 There was clearly resistance in some quarter to Tuxen’s involvement, but the minutes do not explicitly state how, why or even who created this resistance. Certainly, the Board already had a surveyor – one Mr. Ridoutt – and it also employed a ‘social surveyor’, Mr. Arnell, whose task was to assess the condition of homes in ‘slum areas’. Finally Tuxen was enlisted when Barnett challenged the members of the Board:

115 G. K. Tucker, Editorial, BSL Notes July 1935, p. 18
116 The Board’s preliminary meeting was held in the Victorian Premier’s office, 13 August 1936. Board members were the abovementioned Barlow and Barnett, who was also chairman, and H. Pye, W. O. Burt (who, like Tuxen, had been a member of the MTPC), H. Crosbie and T. Forristal. Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Committee Minutes of Meetings 1936-37, 8208 P1/1, Public Records Office, Victoria
117 The term ‘slum pocket’ might have originated by Barnett. He explains it in The Unsuspected Slums as distinct from a large slum area; a small, discrete collection of degraded housing hidden behind better buildings.
118 Mentions of attempts to enlist Tuxen to the HIASA Board are mentioned in HIASA Board minutes 15 October 1936, 27 October 1936, 17 November 1936, 3 December 1936. HIASA Committee minutes, op. cit.
119 Minutes for 15 October 1936, HIASA Committee minutes, op. cit
The Chairman referred to the qualities of Mr Tuxen and asked whether the Board knew of any other person in Melbourne with the necessary qualifications. He was advised that the Board was not aware whether anyone else could carry out this particular work.\footnote{Minutes for 17 November 1936, ibid}

Tuxen was appointed on 11 December 1936, at which time Ridoutt was removed from duty on the HIASA Board by the Lands Department. While Tuxen was never formally a part of the board, he had been involved with it from the beginning and had clearly been kept informed of its activities. Tuxen was soon presenting the Board with plans for redevelopment of ‘slum’ areas and rehousing schemes in vacant areas of Melbourne, almost weekly. The Board consulted with architect Leslie M. Perrott, a specialist in the relatively new phenomenon – pioneered in a very different form by the Griffins – of concrete housing, and another former member of the Barnett Slum Study Group. Together the decision was made that the new housing the HIASA would recommend in its report would be a mixture of flats and ‘cottages’, although the board was mindful of public opinion they felt ‘the term flat was not the best that could be applied’.\footnote{Minutes for 13 January 1937; 21 January 1937, op. cit.} Tuxen might have felt that he was experiencing the same problems he faced at the MTPC all over again when the HIASA Board instructed him to create plans for seemingly arbitrarily plucked vacant areas around Melbourne, ‘employing use of private land where necessary’ without any practical guarantee that such land would actually be available.\footnote{Minutes for 11 Feb 1937, op. cit.} He also found himself, once again, in disagreement with the majority of members of the HIASA Board as he had the MTPC membership. In one case, Tuxen appeared before the Board with a plan of an area of South Melbourne radically different from that which he had been instructed to create. Tuxen ‘gave reasons for the apparent discrepancies between the areas shown and the Board’s minimum standards’; they might well have lain in Barnett’s own \textit{The Unsuspected Slums}, where he points out that had Fitzroy been subject to the kind of building controls insisted on by the Camberwell council, an area containing 101 houses would only contain 16.\footnote{F. Oswald Barnett, \textit{The Unsuspected Slums}, Herald Press, Melbourne, 1933, pp. 21-22} The Board found his explanation, details of which are
not recorded in the minutes, unacceptable and Tuxen was forced to rework his scheme ‘to house as near as possible to 90% of the present population’, indicating that his original plan had been for a very sparse population.\textsuperscript{124}

The board’s report duly arrived in 1937, illustrated by Tuxen’s colour-coded maps indicating ‘types of homes’: yellow denoting areas to be demolished, green ‘below standard but capable of repair’ and blue ‘up to standard’.\textsuperscript{125} This report marked the beginning of the Victorian Housing Commission, and the start of a new kind of government-sponsored planning which would develop the original garden suburb concepts into Le Corbusier-inspired flats in large parks, and smaller, close-knit ‘cottages’ in waste land around Melbourne.

Neither Tuxen’s memoirs or material relating to Barnett, the HIASA, or the Housing Commission explain why Tuxen was not invited to work with the Housing Commission. His place was effectively taken by Frank Heath, who co-authored the highly influential book \textit{We Must Go On} with Barnett and Tuxen’s former supporter, Burt.\textsuperscript{126} This work drew on many of the issues Tuxen had publicised over the previous fifteen years, to the extent of exploring the social issue of the ‘problem child’\textsuperscript{127} in the slum environment, as Tuxen had done in his study of homeless boys.

It would be stretching the truth to suggest that Tuxen’s initial advocacy in a form of equitable planning controlled by committee had borne fruit. While most of these goals, which he had nominated in the years 1910-1918, had been achieved in Melbourne by the coming of the Second World War, it was clearly not on the strength of his advocacy that they had been achieved. The planner campaigning for planning by committee was, however, quite plainly campaigning to subjugate his or her own power to the greater authority of the will of the group, and in effect creating a situation in which a body of professionals from different backgrounds would take control of planning. The original voice ‘in the wilderness’ had become entrenched in the mainstream of governance.

\textsuperscript{124} Minutes for 16 June 1937, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{125} Minutes for 7 October 1937, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{126} F. Oswald Barnett, W. O. Burt, F. Heath \textit{We Must Go On}, Book Depot, Melbourne 1944
\textsuperscript{127} ibid, p. 99
This situation, one which emerged during the Depression years in tandem with government acceptance of a role in planning for achieving slum clearance and rehousing, was only partially the outcome of conflicts within the planning movement. Tuxen’s own willingness to create for himself a subjugated role – the kind of role that Walter Griffin refused to accept in the building of Canberra and which Sulman only superficially accepted – is perhaps yet another explanation for his minimised role in planning history. There is, however, a sense in the progress of the planning ‘movement’ in the 1930s of renewed social reform, and rehousing strategies take precedence at this time as the highest priority amongst planning-related issues.

What the wider spectrum of planning conflicts in Australia in the interwar years show is something which is perhaps unsurprising when uncovered, but which is rarely taken into account in planning histories. This is simply evidence that planning practice in the interwar years, particularly in the process of its establishment and acceptance by the population and civic bodies, was the haunt of would-be authority figures and leaders of the new movement. The conflicts within the planning movement were a struggle, overtly or covertly enacted, through which particular individuals attempted to assume leadership positions within the movement. The final devolution of this attempt to create an authority-led planning movement was achieved by those, such as Tuxen, who used his authority and professional status to move to a forum-based approach to planning problems.

For all the planners under discussion here – Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen – there is a further element, however, to the creation of oneself as an authority figure. This element was the creation of memoir and biography, the provision for future generations and historians of one’s own textual testimony.
Chapter Seven

'Maybe I have lived more intensely than most of us': the planner's construction of self in memoir.

Biographies of Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen

This chapter will introduce a new strand to the examination of the creation of authority in the field of town planning and garden suburbs in the interwar period, with the examination of biographical memoir. Memoirs written by Sulman, Marion Griffin and Tuxen can be seen as an attempt to create authority for planning practice and aesthetics, as well as to lay a claim personally to the importance of one's ideas.

A decade after Anthony Sutcliffe's estimation, in 1981, of international planning biography as 'uncritical, even eulogistic'¹, Freestone claimed this still held true in Australia.² It may still be true amongst some historians internationally: Sandercock has recently criticised Peter Hall as a historian of planning who 'chooses to focus on individuals rather than on social forces'³ in a eulogistic manner. The 'individuals' have been formative British town planning advocates such as Howard or Patrick Abercrombie.⁴

Questions of the motivations behind subjects' actions, the way they promoted themselves in public life, and the particular 'vision' they had of their

¹ Anthony Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France 1780-1914*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981 p. 22
² Freestone, 'Introduction: Planning History, Australia and the Bibliographical Tradition' in Hamnett and Freestone (eds.), *The Australian Metropolis*, p. 5
³ Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, p. 36
chosen field are all relevant to the discussion of planners in memoirs, biographies or autobiographies. Dangers of misinterpretation lie in the potentially deceptive nature of the biographical position, as outlined by Janet Malcolm, who writes of the 'transgressive nature' of the biography, in which the reader and writer are in collusion, 'tiptoeing down the corridor together, to stand in front of the bedroom door and try to peep through the keyhole.'\(^5\) Malcolm is amongst those who argue convincingly that biographical text is comparable to fictional text; both are conventionally structured to be read in the same way.

The historian must necessarily skeptical of the notion that anyone's history is 'recreatable'. Brian Matthews uses his biography of Louisa Lawson to examine not only Lawson's life and work but also the approach a present-day biographer must take – through uses of sources and archives – to make points about the writing of biography itself, or to evaluate others' revisions of his subject's story.\(^6\)

Literary biography has made more of a case for the critical analysis of the author than town planners' biographies. There are, however, a number of recent works about comparable public figures that move towards critical analysis. Susannah Lessard draws a connection between the 'enspelling seductiveness' of her great-grandfather Stanford White's architectural work, and what she sees as his decadent and grotesque immorality.\(^7\) Lessard clearly places herself as a hostile witness and critic within the re-reading of White's life: this stating of the narrator's own prejudice or involvement in the text is acknowledged as an often valuable aspect of contemporary biographical work.

The public life of individuals is another important aspect of biography. Judith Brett asserts that the biographer must not only attempt to uncover the person, his/her subject, but also 'the publicness of the public life... realising that the public person is the real person and so learning to read the public political life.'\(^8\) Recently, Edmund Morris has helped to establish a new stream of

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\(^6\) Brian Matthews, *Louisa McPhee Gribble*, Fitzroy, 1987  
\(^8\) Judith Brett, *Political Lives*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1997, p. 3
biographical writing with the publication of *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, a meticulously researched work in which Morris subverts the established ‘rules’ of biography by interpolating a fictional version of himself as an observer in Reagan’s life. Not only does Morris take his Reagan biography into this disputable territory of ‘faction’, he is also playful with the reader, confessing of one point in Reagan’s early career that he ‘can’t remember’ a speech at which he only purports, through the conceit of the ‘faction’ genre, to have been present.º

Examination of published work and the ‘public political life’ – in the widest sense of the term ‘political’ – is an important aspect of writing about figures such as town planners, especially when writing about their attempts to establish themselves in the public eye.

A planner’s autobiography will also contain details of the public figure, but is unlikely to be as analytical as a biography: instead, the reader must attempt to read critically, and attempt to locate the public persona used by the figure in question to justify and promulgate attitudes and approaches. While it might not necessarily contain true insight into the individual, autobiography is in one respect the individual’s message to posterity and the historians of the future.

Autobiography is also useful in examining the validity of the notion of a ‘town planning movement’. While a political or social movement may appear to take on a ‘life of its own’, it is, in fact, doing so by the exertions of those who claim to be a part of it, each with his or her own agenda, compelled to jostle with each other for influence. Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen brought experiences of different disciplines to their work in Australian town planning, as well as differing attitudes and approaches inspired not only by their backgrounds but their social, political and religious outlooks. K. F. Fischer has said of the planners of Canberra – the Griffins and their successors – that ‘even when we are trying new approaches, we still have to use the old tools, models, language, and we carry with us a whole baggage of unconsciously retained ideological concepts not easily recognised and reformed.’¹⁰ There is, of course, a great contrast between

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this and the planners' own concept of themselves, as adherents to, if not initiators of, 'scientific' authority.

In granting Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen relatively equally significant roles in a study of town planning between the wars, this work diverges significantly from previous studies. These have either concentrated on the work of planners – that is, the actual plans and their relation to, and influence on, each other – or on figures such as the Griffins' work in architecture, rather than planning. This is certainly the case for the many books, particularly the first few published on Walter Burley Griffin. Though James Birrell\textsuperscript{11} and D. L. Johnson look at the Griffins' work chronologically and with occasional reference to their lives, no attempt is made at presenting a formal biography, and nor is there any attempt to analyse or even quantify the Griffins' subdivision schemes.\textsuperscript{12} Any attempt to contextualise their work relate to architecture and the connection of such work with that of fellow 'Prairie School' architects, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright. Mark Peisch began this trend in 1964 with his book \textit{The Chicago School of Architecture}, in which he singles out Walter Griffin 'because his career typified the broadest aspects of the Chicago School', a description few would agree with today.\textsuperscript{13} This kind of contextualisation ignores the fact that the Griffins operated for most of their working lives, in a different country and continent to Wright and their other former colleagues. It also ignores the fact that the Griffins worked in many more fields – landscape and urban design, to name but two – than Wright.\textsuperscript{14} Peisch recognises this; nevertheless, comparisons such as Peisch's, between the Griffins and Wright, limits discussion of the Griffins to the one area Wright excelled in.\textsuperscript{15}

There have been no large-scale studies of the planning work of, and certainly no published biographies of, John Sulman or Saxil Tuxen. Freestone has appraised Sulman's work with reference to incidents in his life, in two journal

\textsuperscript{11} Birrell, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin}, op. cit
\textsuperscript{12} D. L. Johnson, \textit{The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin} Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1977
\textsuperscript{13}Peisch, \textit{The Chicago School of Architecture}, p. 5
\textsuperscript{14}Wright's extraordinary and impractical anti-city, 'Broadacre City' was the one major exception.
\textsuperscript{15}Peisch, \textit{The Chicago School of Architecture}, p. 91
pieces.\textsuperscript{16} John McIntyre has also examined Sulman, in a paper concentrating largely on his evidence to the 1908-9 Royal Commission into the Improvement of Sydney and its Suburbs.\textsuperscript{17}

Tuxen is generally depicted as a figure of standing in works on town planning in Melbourne in the 1920s. At various times, examples of his design work have been mistakenly attributed to Walter Burley Griffin.\textsuperscript{18} Tuxen's work outside town planning, in the areas of welfare and slum clearance, is also acknowledged in histories of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, where he is acknowledged as one of the organisation's founding members.\textsuperscript{19} This thesis is the first work, however, to discuss his design work or published writing in any detail, or to place his slum clearance activities in context with his planning work.

Sulman, Marion Griffin and Tuxen all composed memoirs late in their lives; but these texts date from different historical periods during the 20th century. Sulman's was written in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and it appears that other biographical materials he assembled were gathered in the last ten years of his life: he died in 1934. Marion wrote \textit{The Magic of America} in the late 1940s and died in 1961, the last years of her life reputedly spent in advancing dementia. Saxil Tuxen's reminiscences were written in the early 1970s, within a short time of his death in 1975.

Sulman did not live to see government intervention in planning matters, which he had campaigned for strongly, take effect to any significant degree in Australia. Marion was perhaps aware of increasing academic interest in the work she and Walter did together before she died but had probably completed her text


\textsuperscript{17} John McIntyre, 'Sulman and the City Beautiful in Sydney' in Freestone (ed.) \textit{The 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Urban Planning Experience Conference: Proceedings}, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{18} Examples include Johnson, \textit{The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin}, p. 33 [credits 'Port Orchards' to Walter Griffin]; Freestone, \textit{Model Communities}, p. 193 [credits Park Orchards to Walter Griffin]; 'Burley Griffin lives on in Heidelberg' \textit{Age}, 27 October 1972, p. 18 [Tuxen's Hartlans credited to Walter Griffin] Neil Cleehan, 'Capital Works' \textit{Age}, 20 February 1999, p. 10 [credits Park Orchards to Walter Griffin].

by this stage. Mark Peisch, who wrote *The Chicago School of Architecture: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright*, interviewed her for his book, which, despite its title is chiefly concerned with the career of Walter. Tuxen made some public statements on planning matters in the early 1970s – for instance, he put forward his opinions on the new city square – but was largely forgotten by the wider public when he died, and his death received no editorial recognition in major newspapers.

These are the contexts in which the planners wrote their memoirs and these, as much as their own personalities and convictions, shape their writing.

*John Sulman's memoirs*

The majority of accounts or summaries of the life of John Sulman seem to be based largely on material from his own memoirs. In contrasting this ‘life’ with his own recollections for the purposes of contextualising the ‘memoirs’ one is, therefore, in danger of doing no more than simply relating secondary evidence back to its primary origin. The brief account that follows is, therefore, in part a critical engagement with some of these primary papers; some key issues of the memoirs are addressed again in the section which follows, as part of a discussion on the rationale behind Sulman's retention of certain texts and his creation of others.

Sulman was trained as an architect, and had made a name for himself in Britain as a designer of churches by the time he relocated to Australia in 1885. Sulman was to recall that it was the 1870s in which he first became interested in town planning. ‘My interest [in Town Planning] was aroused... on my first visit to Paris in 1873,' he wrote. 'The fine tree-planted boulevards and avenues were such a contrast to the narrow streets of London...I determined, when opportunity permitted, to make [town planning] a subject of special effort.'

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20 Peisch, *The Chicago School*, op. cit
21 Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. xv
descriptions of the cities of Europe he visited for the newspaper *Christian World*.\textsuperscript{22}

Sulman’s resolve to enter the sphere of town planning was strengthened further, he would much later claim, when he witnessed the appalling state of ‘the slum districts of Britain’s capital’.\textsuperscript{23} However, his interest before he was engaged to design post-World War I subdivisions in Sydney such as Daceyville and The Warren was more focussed on the design of new, discrete towns and the redesign, for beauty and efficiency, of city centres – large-scale operations which would necessarily have created a good deal of work for architects. So noticeable is the lack of concern over working class housing conditions in Sulman’s writing before World War I, it might be reasonably assumed that his claim in the 1930s to have been concerned with these matters in the 1870s was made with hindsight. Sulman does not appear to have taken part in any planning initiatives in Britain, aside from conference and planning association business at which time he was representing Australia.

His move to Australia was motivated primarily by poor health – both his own and his first wife, Sarah’s – in the search for a ‘warm + dry climate’.\textsuperscript{24} Health matters were to continue to be an important factor in Sulman’s life, and in his personal writings and diaries he often associates the well-being of himself and his family with very specific geographical locations.

The 1885 voyage, undertaken to forestall worsening health of John and Sarah Sulman, was itself almost fatal for the Sulmans’ eldest son Arthur, who developed a condition diagnosed as ‘consumption of the bowel’ while at sea. The family and their small domestic entourage were forced to disembark in Adelaide.

Richard Sennett says that Paris after the eighteenth century was built to ‘function like a healthy body’ and writes of Haussmann’s network of new roads as

\textsuperscript{22} I have been unable to locate issues of *Christian World* from this period.
\textsuperscript{23} Sulman, ‘Town Planning’, handwritten manuscript in Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 8 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
\textsuperscript{24} Sulman, untitled memoir not dated p. 36, in Sulman Papers MSS 4480 6 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
‘veins’ and ‘arteries’. Perhaps a similar conception of the city governed the responses Sulman, as a lover of Paris, had to the 40-year-old city of Adelaide, along with his fears for his son’s life. His diaries, in which Sulman rarely professes opinions, much less emotions, do not record anything of his feelings on the condition of Arthur whose namesake, Sulman’s brother, had died young. Instead, they note his critical responses to the interaction of built and climatic environments of Adelaide: ‘City requires Haussmann – verandahs – arcades – station most suitable – Hot Sun – dust – Flat roofs – waste space’. Arthur recovered, and the Sulman family resumed their travels, initially unable to decide between Sydney and Melbourne as their final destination. His impression of Melbourne, with its ‘English’ climate, ‘[s]mokey atmosphere’ and its Yarra River, a ‘[m]uddy ditch’, made it an easy choice. Eventually, he writes, they decided on Sydney for its natural beauty: Sulman wrote of ‘The Harbour! Pretty but everlasting gum trees! Sydney unfolds – Beautiful’. Freeland suggests that Sulman’s settling in Sydney was actually a foregone conclusion – Sulman had been ‘charged’ by the British architectural establishment ‘to try and clean up the Sydney profession’.

Sulman made detailed and considered notes in response to Australian cities at this time. Thirty-five years later, he wrote of his early Australian travels as if they had been a fact-finding mission:

Arriving in Australia in 1885 and visiting each of the capital cities in turn, as well as some of the larger towns, it was evident that though slums were few, and plenty of space had been allowed in most cases for traffic, yet traffic needs had not been studied, the commonplace chessboard system of planning being almost universal. The placing of public buildings, except in a few instances, was very haphazard...

27 Sulman, ‘Journey to Australia 1885’ (entries dated August 8 and 13), handwritten MS in Sulman Papers MSS 4480 2 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
28 Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, p. 61
29 Sulman, *An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia*, p. xv
It appears to have been a matter of regret to Sulman – presumably because in some eyes it made him appear more of a follower than a leader in town planning matters – that his architectural business had taken precedence over town planning in the 1890s and into the first years of the 20th century. He later wrote:

It was not until 1907 that I made a concentrated effort to get Town Planning recognized as a matter of urgency by writing a series of articles for the Daily Telegraph on the ‘Improvement of Sydney’ which aroused... much attention.\(^{30}\)

Asa Briggs says of the architects of the Victorian era that ‘they took immense pains to educate people in taste or to use one of their favourite verbs, to “elevate” taste.’\(^{31}\) In his 1876 talk to the Bromley Friends’ Society, a piece he preserved in his papers, Sulman made plain that, in his opinion, taste had to be instilled into the future citizens of the Empire and proposed that it should be done via environmental influences:

There appears to my mind a very obvious and simple answer. Surround your children [..] beset their path from their very cradles with objects of beauty and utility, accustom them to rooms which display refinement of colour and appropriate designs in their decorations, so that they may become naturally impressed with the laws of harmony of colour, and the principles which dictate its application to form.\(^{32}\)

It is not clear, from this text, whether Sulman is suggesting that all people, or even just all British people, would find his method of ‘elevation’ advantageous. Nevertheless, he is demonstrating here in 1876 a belief in the civilising effect of the environment – in this case, the child’s environment – a belief he would later expand from a domestic base to encompass entire cities. In essence, Sulman’s environmental determinism and faith in the social value of a cultivated aesthetic sense made him arrive at the same attitudes of city beautiful advocates very early, in the 1870s. Later, he was to blend this ethos with a professed concern for

\(^{30}\) Ibid.
housing and housing programs. In this way he successfully confronted a problem which William H. Wilson, and others, have seen as the failing and, ultimately, the undoing of the American city beautiful movement: the lack of social engineering policy.\textsuperscript{33} Sulman's first public statements on town planning came in the first weeks of 1890, when he presented his paper 'On the Laying Out of Towns' to the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science in Melbourne.

In 1889-90, Sulman would later relate, his family was spending summer in Katoomba in the Blue Mountains near Sydney; they had relocated temporarily from their home in Parramatta, once again for health reasons. The coastal heat affected young Geoffrey Sulman's digestion and his mother, Sarah, incurred rheumatism from the 'clay soil and shale subsoil' of Parramatta.\textsuperscript{34} Sulman claimed that the grid layout of Katoomba itself – entirely inappropriate for such hilly terrain – first excited his interest in planning. The occasion was his involvement in the first Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science Conference in Melbourne.

I... was struck by the bad lay out of many of the roads in that mountain resort, some of them so steep that vehicular traffic was impossible and even walking a difficulty. Being very busy I had not had time to prepare the paper on 'The Laying Out of Towns' which I proposed reading at the meeting of the section in Melbourne, until I was actually in the train where I thought out my points, and wrote the manuscript in my hotel bedroom after my arrival – it arose considerable interest, being reported in all the leading papers of the states, + a special committee was appointed to go more fully into the matter...\textsuperscript{35}

This account suggests spontaneity and inspiration, but 'On the Laying Out of Towns' was more than just a pragmatic response to the impractical nature of Katoomba's street plan, and more, even, than a culmination of over a decade of rumination on town 'lay out'. As John Reps points out, Sulman used the paper and the occasion to promote the argument, on the behalf of all architects, that his

\textsuperscript{33} William H Wilson 'The Glory, Destruction and Meaning of the City Beautiful Movement' in Campbell and Fainstein (eds.) \textit{Readings in Planning Theory}, p. 84

\textsuperscript{34} Sulman, Memoir dated December 1927, handwritten MS in Sulman Papers MSS 4480 1 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

\textsuperscript{35} Sulman, 'Town Planning', handwritten MS in Sulman Papers MSS 4480 8 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
profession deserved a primary, initiative role the field of urban design. He was concerned that architects be involved with the surveyor at all points of the design of new areas and the redesign of old, and this aspect of his paper was the subject of debate.

As a work in support of the interests of architects over surveyors as creators of built landscapes, 'On the Laying Out of Towns' may well have been composed as a counter-attack to another paper. A Melbourne surveyor, Captain Keily, was scheduled to address the Victorian Institute of Surveyors' meeting on 31 December 1889, only a week before the Science Association's Conference, with a paper entitled 'A Study on the Unity of Design in the Planning of New Towns and New Suburbs'. Keily's paper had been postponed, though Sulman was unlikely to have known this would occur when he was formulating his own topic, thus suggesting strongly that there was an element of competition between architect and surveyor in his decision to speak on this subject.

Sulman's hypothesis of the ideal of planning was, however, novel in itself. The Age noted that he had argued for a rejection of the 'chessboard' or grid plan and in favour of zoning, suggesting that 'distinct functions' should be given areas within new towns; tree planting; legal restrictions on building on swampy ground or ground prone to flooding, and 'the limitation of private rights'. The Age's reporter relayed that Sulman felt many of these features were 'evidenced' in the work of 'private corporations already taking the initiative, as at Kensington, near Sydney, and Hopetoun, near Coburg'. Sulman proposed that new towns should have an open reserve at the centre 'to prevent congestion', and that there should be a belt of parkland following the 'admirable example of Adelaide'. He also mentioned Katoomba — without naming it — as an example of a town in which 'curved roads following the natural configuration of the hills' would have been 'immeasurably more useful'. In this way, Sulman briefly introduced a number of

36 Reps, Canberra 1912, pp. 46-47
37 Victorian Institute of Surveyors' Age 2 Jan 1890, p. 7
38 'Architecture and Engineering' Age, 14 January 1890, p. 6
39 Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 215
40 Ibid.
tenets of what would become interwar town planning design into a professional forum in Australia.

Sulman's paper should be seen in context with others presented at the conference. Many issues were dealt with at this event which would later become important in the town planning movement though, like Sulman's, many debates were suspended or otherwise limited by the depression of the 1890s. Association president and former Director of Melbourne's Botanic Gardens Baron Von Mueller opened the conference with an appeal reminiscent of the kind of environmentalism the Griffins would later come to embrace. Von Mueller proposed 'the reservation of certain areas and their maintenance in a state of nature in perpetuity', for the enhancement of the 'health and pleasure of the population' as well as to the advantage of botanists and zoologists.41 Other voices reflected a groundswell of interest in achieving civic and social improvement through restructuring of the urban environment. Sewerage, still a rarity in urban Australia, was naturally seen as an important issue, requiring urgent attention: it was addressed both by the Governor of Victoria, the Early of Hopetoun, before the Association, and by papers given at the conference itself.42 Urban Australians were also being encouraged to question not only systems of urban governance – in stirrings of a Greater Melbourne movement,43 related to the sewerage issue and predicated largely at this time on proposed council mergers – but also to question the traditional system of land ownership and responsibilities of land owners.44 This was the case particularly when the well-known land tax reform advocate Henry George, a figure Walter Griffin was later to claim as influential on his own thinking, paid his second visit to Australia early

41 Editorial, *Age* 8 Jan 1890, p. 4
42 'Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science', *Age*, 8 January 1890, p. 5; 'Australasian Science Association' *Age*, 14 Jan 1890, p. 6
43 All Australian capitals experienced periodic calls for wider powers of local government, to control the whole city rather than small portions. In Perth and Sydney, there were some inner-city council mergers in the first half of the century that were in some respect the product of such movements, and the push for one large urban council was successful in Brisbane. In Melbourne, similar moves were defeated, largely because of local councils' resistance.
44 'The Metropolitan Amalgamation Movement: Moorabbin Prepared to Join', *Age* 12 Mar 1890, p. 7; 'Municipal Amalgamation: The Annexation Question' ibid. 22 March 1890, p. 15
in 1890 and gave well-attended lectures in Sydney and Melbourne.\textsuperscript{45} John Docker has shown that the 1890s in Australia was 'a time when everything seemed open to question', and the above small sampling of Melbourne's public debate on urban matters in only the first few months of 1890 demonstrates this.\textsuperscript{46}

It is important to note, therefore, that Sulman's paper was only one voice amongst many that the public was hearing early in 1890. Sulman's republication of 'On the Laying Out of Towns' in his 1921 book \textit{An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning In Australia} and his contention in a 1933 memoir that he was, in the early 1890s, 'a sort of St John the Baptist crying in the wilderness'\textsuperscript{47} suggests, however, that he hoped at this time to promote his paper of forty years before as a unique work. In addition it suggests, as a piece of religious imagery with equal parts humour and gravitas, an unconscious nod to the evangelistic impulse of slum reform. It also evokes Charles Reade, the most prominent challenger to Sulman's claim to have initiated town planning in Australia, who Garnaut says 'described himself as a missionary'.\textsuperscript{48}

Many years later, when 'town planning' as an ethos had become a well-known and popular force, Sulman and his allies on the Town Planning Association of NSW chose to construct his 1890 paper as the first important event in Australian town planning.\textsuperscript{49} Freestone points out that while Sulman may have been an early planning advocate, he was not so much an innovator as one of many grappling with these issues. Freestone also notes, in regard to the veracity of the 'Father of Town Planning' title, that 'the complexity of the early

\textsuperscript{45} 'Mr. Henry George: Opening Lecture at the Town Hall' ibid., 26 Mar 1890, p. 6; 'Mr. Henry George's Lecture: Labor and the Tariff' ibid., 27 Mar, 1890, p. 6; 'Mr. Henry George's Lecture: The Single Tax' ibid., 29 Mar, 1890, p. 10
\textsuperscript{47} Sulman quoted in Freestone, \textit{Model Communities}, p52
\textsuperscript{48} Garnaut, 'Of Passion, Publicity and Planning' \textit{Australian Planner}, Vol. 32 No. 3 1995, p. 185
\textsuperscript{49} 'Town Planning in Australia was inaugurated in January 1890 by a paper on the "Laying Out of Towns" by John Sulman... and was followed up in succeeding years by him (and others) giving rise to the "Sydney City Improvement Commission", "The Royal Commission on Greater Sydney", and the inauguration of a world competition for a plan of the Federal Capital.' From 'Resume of the Town Planning Association's work to Date: 8.11.22' in 'Town Planning Minutes Feb 19th 1919 – Jan 9th 1924, 113/5/25 as handed to Mrs. Taylor' Florence Taylor Papers, Mitchell Library, MSS 4420
planning movement defies...personalisation’. In choosing to construct a narrative which emphasised his role in the rise of the planning ‘movement’ in Australia, however, Sulman and his followers were able to establish his authority as an important critic and commentator, while at the same time, diminishing the role of Howard and the Garden City movement, as well as the American City Beautiful movement, its founders and progenitors. In making figures such as Howard seem less original and significant, Sulman was freed from following stringent doctrine. In 1915, Sulman wrote:

In each state [of Australia] a Town Planning Association is now in existence, whose objects are much the same as those in England; but the movement was started by the writer no less than 25 years ago, and long before it was advocated in the old country.

Sulman does not make clear how he views the inactivity of this ‘movement’ in the 1890s and its slow progress after the turn of the century. Sulman also makes it clear in his memoirs that the reader should understand that he had arrived at his aesthetic position on an initiative that was his alone:

My interest in Town Planning was first aroused by a visit to Paris in 1873, its fine streets and boulevards being very impressive ... But it was not until I settled in Australia that I began to take a more lively interest in the matter. In 1886 I wrote a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald urging the widening of Macquarie Street and the allocation

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51 It could be argued, however, that Freestone’s citing of Sulman’s diary entry describing Ebenezer Howard as ‘dull’ (Freestone, Model Communities, p. 65) does not represent Sulman’s feeling of superiority over Howard. This description – which is not in Sulman’s writing – appears in his ‘Diary: Europe and America 1924’ in the entry dated July 3. It describes Howard as ‘in the chair’ at the General Meeting of Town Planning Association, ‘but not good at the job’. Sulman is introduced to Howard, ‘who seemed dull’ and also to ‘Sir Theodore Chambers president of Welwyn Garden City who is bright’. This contrast of ‘dull’ and ‘bright’ gives one cause to try a different reading of the conventional meaning of ‘dull’, especially when, in the afternoon, Sulman finds Howard responding to questions ‘well and fluently but quietly’. A description of Howard here as ‘dull’ seems to suggest that Sulman found this elderly man listless and unresponsive, rather than disappointing or boring. Sulman Papers, ‘Diary: Europe and America 1924’ MSS 4480 2 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

52 Sulman, ‘Australian Cities: their Past Growth and Future Development’ in Australia To-Day: Special Number of The Australian Traveller, 1 Nov. 1915, pp. 49-60, p. 59
of the frontages on the eastern side for a series of public buildings.\textsuperscript{53}

He was often to take examples from Europe, as opposed to Britain or America.\textsuperscript{54} He was convinced of the necessity of placing responsibility for planning in the hands of one central body, and perhaps one central individual, as per Haussmann's control over Paris.

Sulman brought certain concerns and prejudices to his interests in planning. He was particularly interested in the environmental and geographical factors he saw contributing to well-being and comfort. His personal experience of poor health as related to environment, climate and geography is borne out by his insistence in his own professional literature that 'maps showing the soil and subsoil... are essential in connection with cultivation, road-making, building and health' and that rainfall, winds and temperature averages and extremes were all factors of import in planning a new town.\textsuperscript{55} While this is not a radical or extreme position, it seems evident from Sulman's personal papers that it was a concern generated by his own experience.

Other aspects of Sulman's character might appear, a century later, eccentric and even iconoclastic. His interest in major projects – for instance his paper on a tunnel under Sydney Harbour in 1896 – are indicative of his attraction to the 'big picture' of city development, in what many would now term the City Beautiful vein.\textsuperscript{56} He also espoused what could only be described as militaristic tendencies; in the late 1890s he assembled and commanded a private 'regiment', which professed only to serve ritual purposes rather than outright military ones. His 'Garden Village for Industrial Workers', a sewage farm proposed for the

\textsuperscript{53} Sulman, "Town Planning" handwritten manuscript, 1933, Sulman Papers MSS 4480 6 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

\textsuperscript{54} For instance, in 1888, he wrote in regard to Australian building practices that 'the modes in use on the Continent of Europe are foreign to our customs and ideas, though did time permit some useful hints might be gained therefrom'. (Sulman, The Fireproofing of City Buildings Sydney, F. Cunninghame, 1888, p. 6)

\textsuperscript{55} Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 192

mouth of the Cooks River on Botany Bay, included amongst its many facilities a
drill ground.⁵⁷

Though it cannot have been unusual for a man of his time and position, it
also notable that Sulman held a number of biases against certain religious and
social 'types', such as Catholics or certain groups of tradesmen. Though only
mildly expressed in his personal papers – in which almost everything is only
mildly expressed – these undoubtedly influenced his conduct in public affairs,
including his approach to planning matters. He was, firstly, and perhaps most
understandably for an expatriate Englishman who maintained strong links with
the establishment, an Anglophile.

In all these facets of Sulman's character, there is no little potential to
explain the planner he was. In making conclusions about Sulman himself, it is
difficult to separate the character of the man from his 'interests'.

At his death in 1934, Sulman had achieved an extraordinary amount. He
was successful in business and had achieved much in what could be considered
public service. His family established the Sulman Award for Architecture and the
Sulman Prize for landscape painting, both prestigious awards in New South
Wales to this day. His name is now better known for these regular endowments
than it is for anything connected with planning.⁵⁸

Some material in Sulman's papers is addressed to his immediate family
only – for instance, a short and anecdotal history of the family home in Sydney,
Ingleholme, which Sulman designed. Sulman was also a comprehensive diarist,
though only, apparently, when he was in transit; when residing at home in
Sydney, he either did not keep a diary or did not feel it warranted preservation.
His travel diaries cover mundane details, sights and phenomena, brief

⁵⁷ Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 110. Sulman also
mentions his opinion that 'Drill and Review grounds [are] essential near populous towns' in his
Vernon Memorial Lecture 12, 'Reserves, Playgrounds, Gardens and Trees' Sulman Papers,
MSS 4480 6 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
⁵⁸ For instance, an article on Horbury Hunt in a recent edition of Qantas' in-flight magazine
ignores Sulman's planning forays entirely, claiming that 'Sulman is remembered because he left a
sum of money to establish a prestigious art award, which is still given annually, but his buildings
are forgotten.' Hilary Hollow, 'Federation's Spirited Designer', Qantas: The Australian Way No.
77, Nov. 1999, pp. 58-64, p. 62
summaries of meetings with both casual encounters and notable figures, and personal details such as health matters. Sulman rarely recorded his own thoughts or feelings directly. Other written material from Sulman’s private life has survived, most notably letters sent home by two of his children, Geoffrey and Florence, on a trip to Britain during the First World War. These were preserved for sentimental reasons, as Geoffrey Sulman died in 1917 in an aviation accident. Florence, who had been a member of the Town Planning Association, returned to Australia and published a number of books on native flowers.

Throughout his career as a planner and planning advocate, Sulman republished certain series of articles, lectures or pamphlets – some decades old – in which he had foreseen certain issues which would come to have some importance to planners. In republishing, and therefore re-publicising for a new generation, such works, he was undoubtedly campaigning to establish his claim to have been Australian’s foremost planning innovator as well as a prescient intelligence. In doing so he was able to both forestall critics and increase his own reputation. In addition to this, the retention, in particular, of key papers from his life before leaving England, suggest that Sulman was making provision for the sake of a future biographer – though one has, unfortunately, yet to materialise. It is reasonable to regard these papers as a biographical ‘text’, for they are almost certainly retained by Sulman to be used by a third party to compose a narrative of his life.

In his memoirs, Sulman also details his battles with the bureaucracies of Sydney in stories which almost invariably depict him in a logical and disinterested role. Sulman’s own version of the City Beautiful – he did not use the term,

59 For instance, in his An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia Sulman included his 1890 paper ‘The Laying Out of Towns’, his 1907 series of four articles, ‘The Improvement of Sydney’, and his 1909 series ‘The Federal Capital’ as appendices, drawing attention in his preface to the chronology of his campaign to rouse public support for, and interest in, planning. He did not limit this practice to planning matters: his 1888 pamphlet The Fireproofing of City Buildings included, as an appendix, a letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald which quoted his own paper and its relevance to a recent fire which had occurred in central Sydney. (Sulman, The Fireproofing of City Buildings, p. 17)

60 The Sulman collection at Mitchell Library, Sydney owes its existence to J. M. Freeland, architectural historian, who began researching Sulman’s life in the early 1970s, apparently with a view to the writing of a biography. Freeland postponed the writing of the Sulman work; he died in 1993, before any substantial undertaking could be made on the book.
preferring simply to refer to ‘town planning’ – does seem to have been linked with his own interests in civic spending and the employment of, and an increased authoritative role for, those in the architectural profession.\textsuperscript{61} Historians who have perused the Sulman papers have seen the stiff, arrogant persona, but failed also to countenance the more inspired, socially responsive Sulman. This failure is certainly understandable, as Sulman seems to have been so unaware himself of his own prejudices that they are quite prominent.

One example of Sulman’s approach lies in his attitude to the philanthropic ideas behind planning. When Sulman first became interested in planning in the late 19th century, his interest did not stretch far beyond questions of the physical design and placement of new towns in an urban environment which he assumed would be ever-expanding and populating. By the time he retired from architectural practice and returned to planning, it had moved beyond the simple elements of land use and design he was addressing in 1890, to include a strong element of environmental determinism. After the First World War, Sulman designed a ‘Soldier’s Garden Village’ to be located near La Perouse in Sydney.\textsuperscript{62} However, while he may have had some sympathy for people in such conditions, he certainly felt little empathy: his memoirs suggest a man with an ambivalent attitude to the marginalised, particularly the poor and the disabled. Though he does not make direct reference to the casualties of the First World War aside from a remark on the excitement generated in the Town Planning Association of NSW in anticipation of catering for returned soldiers, he does allude to other invalids of battle in his reminiscences of early childhood spent in Greenwich:

\begin{quote}
Greenwich Park being close by our home, we boys were often in it for play or for walks, and were much interested in the old wounded or disabled naval pensioners, who were housed in the old palace with its twin domes erected early in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century... Many had
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{61} Sulman's lectures on Town Planning were part of a course taken by candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Architecture from 1920-23. The University Calendar states of these lectures that 'Great importance is attached to the study of the architectural aspect of Town Planning. This is not treated as a special subject, but as one which should form an essential part of every architect's training.' \textit{Calendar of the University of Sydney for the Year 1920}, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1920, p. 289. John W. Reps discusses Sulman’s 'Laying Out of Towns' paper in terms of a 'pitch' for the initiation or co-option of the planning of new towns, by the architectural profession. (Rents, \textit{Canberra 1912}, pp. 46-49)

\textsuperscript{62} Sulman, \textit{An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia}, p. 121
wooden legs, or hooks instead of hands and looked piratical and interesting, but we never talked to them.\textsuperscript{63}

A man who could only describe maimed soldiers as ‘piratical and interesting’ seems to lack any sense of their predicament, though in fairness to Sulman, he encountered these invalids at a time in his life when he was plainly unable to help them had he wished to. Sulman was, however, often strangely hostile in his criticism of certain sectors of the population, for instance in his particular exception to certain tradesmen he found it necessary to work with in his architectural practice. For Sulman plasterers were ‘a set with whom I could never get on, and somehow or other there has always been something of a prejudice in my mind against the men in this trade. It is, however, I believe warranted by the experience of others.’\textsuperscript{64} He was also, it seems, prejudiced or at best ambivalent towards Catholics.\textsuperscript{65} As well as this, his writings record objections to ‘[q]ueer cranks, long-haired and nebulous in ideas’, in a 1924 diary he records, and appears to agree with, a description of Walter Burley Griffin as a ‘crank’.\textsuperscript{66}

In all these things he hardly stood apart from others of his class or background, and it may well be that his distaste for the ‘other’ may have been exacerbated by responses to his unusual surname, which some of his contemporaries assumed was Turkish though it is, in fact, English.

Other asides in his work, however, reveal him to have been – even by the standards of his own times – both a snob and humourless; his ‘discovery’, for

\textsuperscript{64} ‘Recollections of John Sulman’ (typescript) in Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 6 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
\textsuperscript{65} In his history of ‘Ingleholme’, the Sulman family home, Sulman suggests that the ‘RC orchardists of the vicinity’ believed an open-air schoolroom at the house was ‘a Protestant chapel [and] threatened to burn it down’. Sulman, ‘Ingleholme’, Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 I(8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
\textsuperscript{66} In Chicago on 3 October, 1924 Sulman met with architect H. J. Frost, who was ‘Very interested to hear about Canberra – knew Griffin was a crank’ ‘The Diary of Sir John Sulman of Sydney, Australia during a trip to England and the United States in 1924’ handwritten (by Sulman and his son Arthur) diary MS in Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 2 (8) Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
instance, that well-dressed people in Amsterdam all spoke English. His pomposity reaches extraordinary heights on occasion – for instance in 1924, when he records his experience of being woken to the news that he was to receive a knighthood, and his irritation that one of the first people he spoke to ‘omitted to use [my] title.' In this regard Sulman undoubtedly lives up to the opinion commentators on early planning, such as Sandercock and Freestone who describes him as an ‘unreconstructed elitist', have of him. It is valid, therefore, to bring his dedication to the ideal of social improvement – at least in the more egalitarian sense it is understood today – into question. If this is an unfair or untrue summation of Sulman, it has to be said that it is nevertheless the picture he appears to have wished to portray of himself. It might perhaps be more correct to typify Sulman’s attitude to planning not as a social lever but as a dedication to rational efficiency, large building projects and civic art, and at the same time the elevation of the architecture profession to a central role in city planning.

Though conservative, Sulman clearly understood the improvement of the poor – in social, moral or other areas – to be a government, and therefore taxpayer’s, responsibility. While he invariably embedded his planning argument in discussions of the economic viability of slum clearance and re-housing, he always advocated government involvement in and finance for such schemes. In this it is notable he diverged somewhat from the plank of the garden city ideal wherein construction would be financed by philanthropist businessmen.

One of the most peculiar aspects of Sulman’s writings is the heavy concentration he places on his own planning work in comparison to his work in other fields. He finds very little worth recording of the architectural career which sustained him financially for over two decades in Australia and which produced many grand business premises, university college buildings and churches in

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67 July 3 entry (not in Sulman’s writing) op. cit
68 Diary: Europe and America 1924 Sulman Papers, MSS 4480 2 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
69 Freestone, ‘Sulman of Sydney’, op. cit. p. 51
70 For instance, in his advocacy of Liverpool council’s example. Sulman, An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia, p. 43
Australian cities. He also fails to record in any great detail aspects of his life as director and, for a time, chairman of the Daily Telegraph newspaper, or his membership of the board of trustees of the Art Gallery of NSW between 1899-1934; he was president of the board from 1919 till his death in 1934. It seems probable – given that his involvement in planning and, most specifically, as chairman of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (1921-24), was the official reason for the award of his knighthood – that he saw planning as more prestigious, largely for the reason that he could lay claim to being its founder in Australia. He may also have simply found it more interesting, particularly because it was one area in which he was not particularly beholden to his clients, in contrast to his architectural practice. He may additionally have felt – or hoped – that his involvement in planning was the one of his many activities for which he would be best remembered.71

As Sulman became more interested in town planning, his ideas of environmental determinism as understood by his planning contemporaries became closer to that of others in the movement. In his Introduction to the Study of Town Planning, he writes:

[W]ork in a vitiated atmosphere arouses the craving for stimulants; the abuse of drink encourages immorality; immorality causes widespread disease; and there cannot be sound minds in unsound bodies.

It is not at all surprising that a man of Sulman’s position would, in contrast, be very concerned at all times to appear proper. Of course, his own morality was never called into question. Sulman – unlike other planners who did not countenance the possibility of conflict – even made certain that he depicted himself as ethical in all areas of his business. In his memoirs, he anticipates criticism of his crossing so readily between private practice and matters of government concern. Sulman asserts at one point during his paper ‘Town

71 Max Kelly, in his Faces of the Street, comments on the inappropriateness of one of Sulman’s buildings, The St Bernard’s Home for Working Gentlewomen, in its William Street surrounds – particularly in terms of scale. The only explanation for this favourable to Sulman is that he hoped St. Bernard’s would become the first of a series of new, grand structures for the street. Kelly, Faces in the Street: William Street Sydney 1916, Doak Press, Paddington, 1982, p. 103
Planning', that the Sydney Council was suspicious of the Town Planning Association's advice, in which case he gave 'personal and individual help which was so appreciated that in a few cases I was paid a small fee for so doing.'\(^2\) The inference herein being that Sulman neither sought nor anticipated payment, but neither did he refuse it.

Sulman's papers do not easily lend themselves to interpretation, and the above criticisms of his attempts to shape his own authority should not be taken to suggest that he was in any way ingenuous or obvious. Though he could not be described as a contradictory or contrary man, Sulman presents himself as a man of strongly-held and individual, if not unique, opinions. He is at pains to show that he has arrived at these opinions of his own volition and from his own research and life experience; to Sulman, his own best qualities are the intense and unyielding focus of his own conception of planning. It is surely this strength of vision – rather than the vision itself – which gave credence to this personification as 'the father of Town Planning in Australia'.

*The Magic of America*

As noted, the lives of Marion and Walter Griffin have been dealt with in detail in many recent works, and do not need summarising here. Indeed, perhaps even more than in Sulman's or Tuxen's cases, as will be seen, it is the legacy of Marion's own memoir of their lives which has shaped the way they have come to be seen by subsequent writers; this matter is discussed further in Chapter 8.

In architectural history, Marion Mahony Griffin's work is usually dismissed as an ungainly attempt to fit with the styles of, firstly, Wright and then her husband. Paul Sprague, in an essay overly concerned with notions of 'genius', says she 'lacked the architectural imagination necessary to invent original concepts of her own.'\(^3\) Even Rubbo says Marion was 'not... an architectural

\(^2\) Sulman, "Town Planning" handwritten manuscript, p.17, 1933, Sulman Papers MSS 4480 8 (8), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
\(^3\) Paul Sprague, 'Marion Mahony as Originator of Griffin's Mature Style: Fact or Myth?' in Watson (ed.), *Beyond Architecture*, p. 32
hero’, though of course it takes admirers to make a hero. Yet there are some aspects of Griffin planning that suggest the strong influence of Marion, particularly those relating to domestic life of the suburb and the well-being of mothers and more particularly children. In *The Magic of America*, Marion suggests that there are some basic tenets of Griffin’s planning which can never be improved on and yet which are rarely used:

These fundamentals are so simple yet almost never put into practice – the simultaneous attack of the problems of distribution and occupation, the one requiring radial thoroughfares wide enough to accommodate all kinds of traffic, and the other requiring the complete elimination of acute angles by bringing in the distributive narrower streets at right angles to the thoroughfares. The third requirement is the bringing of the country into the city by making all residential blocks large enough in area to enclose open parks and playgrounds in their interior thus taking up no street frontage and so being no extravagance. For lack of this our children are degenerating physically, mentally and morally, bringing delinquency and crime.

Marion favoured small and ‘minimum cost’ houses, and she and Walter designed, built and lived in residences such as Pholiota, a one-room cottage in Eaglemont, and later, at Castlecrag, GSDA No. 2 Dwelling and Grant House. Though they must have been readily aware – if only because of the difficulties they faced with the authorities of Heidelberg shire in regard to Pholiota, which was legally not a dwelling but a child’s playhouse – of the challenge this unconventional preference posed to society, they clearly felt that in such a matter it was appropriate for them to set an example to others. In the mid-1920s Marion commented to her co-worker and cohabitant at Castlecrag, Louise Lightfoot, that ‘anyone needing privacy is not living right’, a position she seems to have

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74 Rubbo, ‘Marion Mahony’ in Watson (ed.), *Beyond Architecture*, op. cit. p. 54
75 M. M. Griffin, *Magic of America*, Section II, p. 11
76 On the 14th October, 1935, Marion wrote to Walter, ‘Miss Crabb was pleased with our beloved Pholiota plan. A one-room house should suit her as well as it did us in those good old days.’ M. M. Griffin, *Magic of America*, Section I, p.15. The houses the Griffins lived in at Castlecrag are detailed in Walker, Kabos, Weirick, *Building for Nature*, pp. 42, 46
reconsidered only after accidentally walking in on Lightfoot as she was praying.77 Lightfoot contends that Marion had a close and mutually respectful relationship with the infamous Sydney eccentric Bea Miles, ‘the only one who was perfectly free with Marion’,78 suggesting that free-spiritedness was itself considered by Marion to be the essence of ‘living right’. The need to eliminate the individual’s privacy, however, appears to have been one of the credos of a couple who saw small, but efficient dwellings as a modern necessity.79 At Castlecrag, as noted above, the small house was to be a central feature of the community ethos, in which the social living space included the ‘space’ of the bushland outside the small dwellings.

‘Democratic Architecture’, a two-part article written by Marion soon after her arrival in Australia, provides a few further clues to the part she played in the Griffins’ work. The ‘democratic’ nature of the work she and Walter produced was, she claims, typified ‘simply’ as ‘a belief in authority from within’. She draws a line between personal example, of which the above might be one aspect, and production of creative work:

An analysis of character, method of output of others, as well as of ourselves, is constantly necessary to keep us from falling into the fighting ranks of the enemy in the battle for our ideals.

At this time, the only ‘battle’ Marion perceived was between the unimaginative, conservative traditionalists and the ‘democratic’ architects. The only explicit examples she gives of the latter are Louis Sullivan, Walter and herself, although at this early time before he had fallen from her favour, Frank Lloyd Wright is implicitly included in the same category.80

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77 Louise Lightfoot, ‘With the Burley Griffins’ typescript, p. 3, in D. L. Johnson Collection of W. and M. Griffin Documents, Box 8, MS 7187, Australian National Library
78 Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 5
79 For examples of the Griffins’ interest in small homes, see: Marion Griffin’s contribution to One Hundred Bungalows, Building Brick Association of America, Boston, 1912, 115-118; ‘The One-Roomed House/Is It Desirable?’ Building, Vol. 17 No. 97 August 12 1915; ‘Notes on Workmen’s Cottages, Canberra as Designed by W. B. Griffin’, A414/1, Australian Archives, Canberra
Like Marion Mahony Griffin, Walter Burley Griffin was entranced by the natural surroundings in which he was raised. It would appear that this love of nature was to come into play most strongly during his and Marion’s time at Castlecrag, when they would conspire against the GSDA to keep as much of the area as possible free of large and inappropriate buildings. But as a Chicagoan, and an attendee at the Columbian Exposition and World’s Fair in 1893, he was also cognisant of the remarkable possibilities of modern technology and design in American urbanisation.

In *The Magic of America*, Marion portrays her late husband as a man with a mind uniquely equipped to shape the design of a continent. At the same time, she insists that the fact that the bulk of his work was done outside the US – in Australia and, very late in his life, India – was due to his role as a ‘path-finder’, fulfilling the task she claims all Americans must undertake to ‘break down the bondage of individuals everywhere’ and to introduce congressional-style democracy around the world.\(^1\)

It is in this spirit that Marion writes Walter’s life and work in *The Magic of America*. A vast and multi-faceted work, *Magic of America* runs to thousands of pages, and includes examples of work from the office of Walter Burley Griffin going back to the time shortly before their marriage. There is no contemporary document of the partnership with a similar range or scope; the closest being University of Sydney architecture student Nancy Price’s 1933 thesis. While this dry work is preferred by some historians as presenting Walter’s side of the story as opposed to Marion’s, it has, however, none of the flair or challenge of *Magic of America*.\(^2\)

The ‘magic’ of the title is that of democracy, a concept which Marion came to feel was antithetical to the government systems that the pair encountered at all

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\(^1\) M. M. Griffin, *Magic of America*, Section I, p. 2

\(^2\) Nancy Price, under her married name of Nancy Laurie, wrote to Harrison in 1970 that her thesis was ‘just about pure WBG’. Possibly subsequent historians have taken this to mean that it is, essentially, his work. However, she may have been simply minimising her role from modesty. She also told Harrison, for instance, that she didn’t ‘really feel I need to come into the picture any further’. Nancy Laurie, letter to Harrison, 6 October 1970, Harrison Papers, Series 6 Folder 1 Box 9 1/1, MS 8347, National Library of Australia
levels of their experiences working in the British Commonwealth. The text is divided into four parts, each one purporting to describe a battle: the first is the ‘Empirical Battle’, the second the ‘Federal Battle’, the third the ‘Municipal Battle’, and the fourth the ‘Individual Battle’. I will discuss only short sections from the first and last ‘battles’.

Throughout the text, Marion is generous with her praise of her husband’s character, beginning with his very early childhood on the outskirts of Chicago:

The first vivid picture of a personality inflexible, indomitable, is a baby boy following his mother about the garden patting the flowers as he went. All his life it hurt him to have flowers picked, hurt him as it does others to see a bird’s wing broken, an absorbing love that enabled him to recognise new flowers in the field that he had read about in encyclopaedias years before, the absorbing interest that develops the absolute memory.83

Thus the young Walter is shown as both a gentle and nurturing soul, as well as a man of advanced and effortless intelligence. Marion’s description of the young Walter has undoubtedly assisted in the production of the Walter Burley Griffin figure of today.

The creation of this figure has a number of parallels in other areas of biographical creation. Paul Carter, writing on the subject of the diverse biographies of the surveyor William Light, comments on writers’ treatment of Light’s attempts, shortly before he died, to find new work. Light’s biographers, says Carter, reject such evidence as it does not fit with their picture of a man closing his career in preparation for death:

Overcome by posterity’s sense of an ending, weeping in advance as it were, they find Light’s efforts to put off his quietus merely pathetic. As history’s Olympian gods, they know how it will finish, and as such, they are more interested in his afterlife than his life. It is his reputation whose birth they relish, and the details of his day-to-day existence cannot gloss this.84

Marion might be seen to be following a similar reasoning when she begins The

83 M. M. Griffin, Magic of America Section IV, p. 84
Magic of America with an account of Walter's death in India in 1937, 'that last year' in which he executed 'such a range of work with such a richness and variety of design'. In this first step in creating an 'afterlife' for her husband, she gives him not only a noble conclusion to his career but a noble cause of death. Walter's demise is accompanied by 'a few hours of excruciating agony as an internal organ gave way due to that fall, fighting fire at midnight, on the rocks of Castlecrag to which he so willingly sacrificed himself. This mysterious injury – which links Walter so firmly to the landscape and to Castlecrag in particular – allows Marion to subtly imply that his death is a reprimand to an uncaring Australia which overworked and under-appreciated a genius. This is not an uncommon theme in histories of 'visionaries': Geoffrey Serle, writing on the architect Robin Boyd implies the same lesson is to be learnt from the early death of his subject. It is also the first of many assertions in the text in which Marion defies a conventionally accepted truth: the official cause of Walter's death was peritonitis. Here, too, Marion creates a Walter fighting to maintain a built form of his own creation, the Castlecrag environment which would come to form a part of his own legacy.

Marion then returns to the beginning of Walter's Indian sojourn, keeping much of the Indian narrative in the present tense in a way that appears to keep Walter 'alive'. She would clearly be opposed to Greg Dening's claim that 'there is in history no resurrection'. The Magic of America is a biography, and autobiography, which attempt to revive Walter's reputation; it also contains a genuine prediction of Walter's resurrection. The Magic of America challenges not only the temporal perspective but even, it is to be assumed, conventional ideas of time and human life, reflecting the Griffins' religious affiliations. Marion writes

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of Walter as a man with a future: ‘He will return when he is ready for the next task’.

As well as challenging the meaning and outcome of physical death, however, the Indian section of the book is filled with its details. The first fifty pages of the typescript include discussions of the deaths of three other people close to the Griffins and the text frequently touches on questions of reincarnation. Marion even discusses the spate of deaths within their circle with Walter himself before his own death: ‘What a harvest this great reaper is gathering from the fields we are in,’ she writes. ‘There must be something stirring on the other side just now, and these fields are productive.’

Marion’s text then operates in a way that seems to unfold the story of Walter’s Indian triumph and tragedy in an almost cinematic fashion. Indeed, cinema is an important part of the narrative, and Marion frequently refers to films that she or Walter saw. Soon after the details of his death, we are returned to a period two years before, in which Marion is writing to Walter of a film, Escape Me Never, which she has recently seen, and which she compares to their own life, as ‘the story of a genius and his gypsy wife’.

Walter is presented as a hero in faultless, almost melodramatic form. At numerous points throughout the text Marion infers he should be regarded as Christ-like. Perfect in all stages of life he is then, in death, as untouchable and beyond reproach.

While Magic gleefully recounts minute detail of historical incidents in which Walter and Marion were tried and found – by their own standards and usually those of others around them – to have retained the moral high ground, it ignores incidents in which there is no clear outcome, such as the long debate between the Griffins and members of the GSDA. It freezes figures in the Griffins’ lives, like King O’Malley, in the attitude of supporter and friend, when O’Malley later became their harsh critic. The idea of garden suburbs, meant largely for investment purposes, did not fit well with one of the themes of the work: the

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89 M. M. Griffin, Magic of America, Section I, p. 9
89 M. M. Griffin, Magic of America, Section I, p. 50a
90 M. M. Griffin, Magic of America, Section I, p. 24a
necessity of wrestling ‘town planning’ from, firstly, bureaucrats and, secondly, capitalist land vendors. Marion – following a tenet of Weber’s, that the charismatic figure often ‘shuns the possession of money’\textsuperscript{91} – wished to distance both Walter and herself from a town planning field which was ‘unfortunately... still largely controlled by land speculators.’\textsuperscript{92} The couple’s collusion with land speculators, such as Henry Scott who commissioned them to design a large estate at Keilor, is not mentioned in \textit{The Magic of America}.

None of the above is intended to suggest that \textit{The Magic of America} is not a reliable source. Indeed, where many commentators have misused the work as a historical text is in their attempts to filter out the persona of Marion Mahony Griffin to reveal the true Walter Burley Griffin. This is, in fact, largely impossible. The work that the two executed together does not require dissection for the purposes of separate attribution and similarly, this text – which is both biography and autobiography – has the potential to play a number of diverse roles. Not least of these is the creation of Walter Griffin as a charismatic and untouchable figure.

\textit{Saxil Tuxen and ‘Footsteps’}

Whereas Sulman was a trained architect long before town planning was a phrase with any currency in Australia, and the Griffins were Americans with backgrounds in the interlinking fields of landscape design, architecture and art, Saxil Tuxen, though younger than the aforementioned three, was nevertheless versed in a system of technical and legal requirements of planning land in Australia at least a decade before them.

Only the most basic facts are available of Tuxen’s early life. His father, August, migrated to Australia from Denmark in 1868, and was granted a survey license in Victoria the following year. Saxil, the eldest of his three children, was

\textsuperscript{91} Weber, ‘The Sociology of Charismatic Authority’ in \textit{From Max Weber} p. 247
\textsuperscript{92} M. M. Griffin, \textit{Magic Of America} Section IV, p. 87
born in 1885 in the Tuxen home in Kew, at that time an outer suburb of Melbourne. When his wife died, August married her sister. The family lived in the same street as David Syme, the proprietor of The Age, himself an advocate of land reform. Saxil became a licensed surveyor in 1907, joining his father under the banner Tuxen and Son. In 1909, when Saxil was 24, father and son presented a paper entitled 'Subdivision of Land' to the Victorian Institute of Surveyors. In this paper, which in some respects anticipated the passing of the Local Government Act of 1914, they argued for the establishment of a self-regulatory body within the Institute of Surveyors which would report on all subdivision plans prior to their presentation to local councils. 'It is undoubtedly desirable,' they opined, 'that much greater care in designing subdivisions should be taken in the future.'

August Tuxen died in 1911, and Saxil took over the business and gave it his own name. The reformist tone of the 'Subdivision of Land' paper did not extend to a wish to revise urban development patterns on a large scale – at this point Tuxen's early work is barely distinguishable from most urban subdivision surveyors. He worked predominantly in the burgeoning suburbs of Balwyn and Kew and in southern, semi-rural areas on the Mornington Peninsula such as Bittern and Flinders. His subdivisions here do not demonstrate any recognition of 'garden suburb' principles. It is not until after World War I that Tuxen's work begins to show the influence of the town planning movement, including Sulman, Unwin and of course the Griffins.

Saxil Tuxen's interest in any aspect of town planning itself before World War I – of which the only documentary evidence is the 'Subdivision of Land' paper – seems to have been minimal. It must be assumed that the influence of

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93 He believed that all land sales by the government should take place under a leasehold system. 'Editorial', Age 29 March 1890, p. 8
95 For instance, a plan for Crib Point, adjoining Flinders Naval Base, dated December 26, 1913 and credited to A. Tuxen and Son. Haughton Collection, Vol. 4 p. 115, State Library of Victoria
the Reade and Davidge tour, the Victorian Town Planning Association which followed it and, possibly, the arrival of the Griffins in Australia, which involved him in numerous large-scale ‘garden suburbs’, caused a change in his approach. This in turn led him to the MTPC, an experience which appears to have persuaded him towards a particularly cynical opinion of his own professional associates, the land agents, as well as the public, none of whom, he wrote in 1932, encouraged the surveyor ‘to put his best work’ into a subdivision. Town planning also eventually led him to involvement in the slum abolition movement, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board of 1937. Though none of the planners under consideration in this work were drawn – as, say, Ebenezer Howard or Raymond Unwin claimed to have been – to town planning by a wish to reform, nevertheless Tuxen’s path, from planner to reformer, was unique amongst prominent planners.

Tuxen’s use of the title Footsteps for his proposed autobiography is an extremely revealing one. The simplest interpretation is one that makes use of the phrase ‘following in the footsteps of...’ and in this case, Saxil Tuxen did indeed enter his father’s profession, and perhaps saw himself as following in the footsteps of other professionals. However footsteps are also made by men traversing the landscape. An obituary of Tuxen (uncredited, but likely to have been written by his son, also named Saxil and who had at one stage been a partner in his firm, thus becoming a third walker in August’s footsteps) remembered him as a tireless and committed worker on foot:

On arriving at a ‘job’ he was usually half way across the paddock before his assistants had time to open the car door... Though normally good-natured, he was impatient of other people’s shortcomings in the field, and to see him bearing down on you at a brisk trot from the middle distance and with arms waving was enough to unnerve the most stout-hearted assistant.97

96 The audience at a Reade lecture at Melbourne Town Hall, on October 5, 1914, on a motion from J. W. Barrett, voted to form a ‘town-planning league for Victoria’. Argus, 6 October, 1914, p. 4. The inaugural meeting was held on the 26 October at which Tuxen was elected to the committee. ‘A plan of a garden suburb designed at Mount Eagle, Heidelberg, by Mr. W. B. Griffin’ was ‘exhibited’. Argus, 27 October, 1914, p. 10
97 ‘Obituary: Saxil Tuxen’ Traverse, June 1975, p. 12
This impression of Tuxen at a ‘job’ suggests a man for whom the land is already contained and inscribed by his vision: though he is moving over it, it is simple formality to contain it in surveyor’s pegs, maps, a street plan and land titles. This presentation of Tuxen working in the landscape creates a colonizer’s conception of the land as no more than a ‘problem’.

When Tuxen began writing biographical material in the late 1960s and early 1970s he was experiencing a slight return to the public prominence he had enjoyed forty to fifty years previously. He had received life membership of both the Australian Institute of Surveyors and the Town and Country Planning Association. As well as this, his comments in the professional surveyor’s journal *Tangent* on the Melbourne City Square proposals of the time had sparked some comment amongst fellow practitioners, though he did not present this within the context of his work with the MTPC over forty years previously.

Tuxen had retired and sold his business in 1969; all professional documents from that time, aside from responses to technical queries appended to specific subdivision plan declarations still held at the Victorian Land Titles Office, are now lost. However his private papers from late in his life suggest a man eager to record and pass on both his philosophical outlook and some individualised reminiscences of his experiences in the 1920s and 30s, necessarily filtered through his somewhat fatalistic (though not humourless) hindsight.

Of the three memoirs under consideration here, Tuxen’s is arguably the most revealing of all, if only by dint of the fact – in distinct contrast to Sulman’s or Marion’s texts – that it does not attempt to champion the subject’s own work: instead, is a self-portrayal so humble as to border on the fictitious.

Tuxen’s obituary in *Traverse* states that his concentration on a subdivision task ‘was so complete that he would not notice... the nature of the terrain’, though this appears to be a reference not to a disregard for the nature of the landscape in the broader sense but to a drive which made mud, vegetation or other restrictions, no impediment.\(^6\) This representation of Tuxen, with his

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\(^6\) ibid
determined and professional demeanour 'in the field', is notably very different from that which he presents in Footsteps; however its author's characterisation of the authoritarian and practical surveyor adds another interpretation of the title.

The idea of footsteps which colonise the landscape in such a way is explored by Carter, making reference both to colonial surveyors and Friday's footprint in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, writes:

To make the lie of the land an object of the mind, it has to be printed in steps; and the steps, their depth, their space apart, will bear witness to the gravity of the passage and its motive. 99

Tuxen made great strides across the landscape, according to his obituary; in his memoir, too, he strides quickly across the first forty years of his life, avoiding discussion of technical detail or specific projects. Instead, he has another mission than to re-present his planning or design work.

The reading of Tuxen's memoir Footsteps – or, at least, the thirty foolscap pages that exist of its first and apparently only draft – indicate a number of explanations for the relative obscurity of Tuxen in contrast with his peers. Unlike Marion Griffin or John Sulman, Tuxen was unwilling to take credit for planning ideas beyond application of a vague notion of 'common-sense' or technical skill. In Footsteps, he allies himself with strong or inspirational figures, to whom he defers. This tendency becomes heightened after a religious episode which – at least in the form in which it is represented in the memoir – changed his life irrevocably. In it, he hears the voice of God speaking directly to him and asking why he does not assist directly in aiding the unemployed of the Depression. This, in conjunction with the financially crippling effect the Depression itself had on his business, causes the Tuxen of the narrative to become far less proud and headstrong. It appears that when Tuxen chose to move from involvement in the town planning movement and into the field of slum reclamation and re-housing, as well as associated social improvement schemes, he chose to take much more of a follower's role. This was led first under Father Tucker of the Brotherhood of

St Laurence, and second as 'one of the forty' in Oswald Barnett's office, two experiences which coincided.

Tuxen's manuscript begins with a discussion of the subject of 'great men'. He writes in admonishment of both his readers and himself:

Surely instead of brooding on the lives of great men it is better to be inspired by such thoughts as:

The daily round, the common task
Will furnish all we need to ask
Room to reveal ourselves a road
To lead us daily nearer God\textsuperscript{100}

He identifies with, and seeks to encourage his readership to identify him as just one of, many essential but ordinary artisans:

The men we cannot do without are the chaps that brave all sorts of weather to leave a bottle of milk on our doorstep. Or the chap that works in filthy conditions to clear away your rubbish or maybe those who deal with a lot of loutish children trying to knock a little learning and some sense of good manners into them.

All those men and women, in short, who strive to do their jobs for the well being of their fellow men and do it conscientiously. It is thus that we can build footsteps in the sands of time and more than that, we can stamp out a path which will make it easier for coming generations to follow.

He then turns to the subject of his own autobiography, and anticipates criticism for writing such a work with the unusual justification that he feels he may have 'lived more intensely' than most people.

This proposes to be an autobiography but you can call it the autobiography of an ordinary man though that might detract from its sales. Who can be bothered reading about an ordinary man what we want is something thrilling those men that have had the world at its feet. But that is not the purpose of this as I want to try to convey the feelings and thoughts of an ordinary everyday mortal.

My excuse for doing this is that maybe I have lived more intensely than most of us.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 1., manuscript in possession of J. Tuxen.
\textsuperscript{101} Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 1A, op. cit.
Tuxen then goes on to embark on a short chronology of his early life in the Melbourne suburb of Kew, and to his own aspirations to the surveying field:

And so what of my own life. The time arrived when I left school
"What would you like to be? asked my father[.]"
["I want to be a surveyor like you[.]" His answer was "Don't be a bloody fool." However I persisted and he finally yielded if I undertook to become a civil engineer as well[.]
And so I entered his office as a pupil[.]

This persistence in the face of a stern Victorian father like August pays off in Saxil's story of sitting the survey exam, which probably took place in 1906, from which he earns his father's praise and perhaps even respect:

It was a particularly difficult exam and I think I was the only one in Australia that got through although it was my first shao [sic] [.]. The Secretary to the Board came up to the office with the glad tidings and saw my father as I was doing a job in the suburbs. He immediately rushed out to me and with tears in his eyes said "You're through Saxil and you are the only one, come and have a drink."

August Tuxen died in 1912, a matter only mentioned in passing by Saxil. In his text this death is overshadowed by his own marriage and the onset of the First World War. He did not fight in the war, a situation that obviously caused him enormous unease and regret even as an elderly man:

A man in full possession of his faculties that stayed out of the army was a creature beneath contempt and yet that is what I did Call it cowardice if you like and you would be quite correct but perhaps not cowardice because of bodily fear.

I had been married less than two years. We had no children but I did have a rather delicate wife who was highly strung and was definitely in love with me. She said that if I went it would be the death of her. Hysterical talk? Maybe but it certainly put me in a difficult position and she finally got her way. I do not wish to deal further with that aspect of my life. I found it difficult to face my comrades who were then in the army but I comforted myself with

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102 Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 3-4, op. cit.
103 Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 5, op. cit.
the reflect on that I might some day be in a position to make amends. And the opportunity did occur. People in later life regarded me as having done a good job but I thought to myself that if I had done my duty my bones would have been rotting in Flanders though maybe that is an exaggerated way of looking at it.

In this, Tuxen is certainly extremely hard on himself, since he was clearly fulfilling a social need in Melbourne as a surveyor both in private practice and as municipal engineer for the Shire of Hastings between 1912 and 1924. He continues:

On the whole I must have done a pretty good job as I stuck it out [the municipal engineer job] for twelve years, right through the war and for seven years afterwards so apparently providence or whatever it is controls the destinies of man, forgave me for funk[ing] the battlefield. Though I did not forgive myself. The stigma still remained.104

From this, Tuxen's narrative leads to the town planning movement, the first of his 'community service' interests. Even in the 1970s, he appears to have been somewhat bitter over the limited direct influence of the MTPC:

Town planning started to take a important place in the thinking of the Community and gave birth to the MTPC. I was appointed a member on the nomination of those three professions and so started a period of five years with attendances of one 1/2 day per week in an honorary capacity preparing material for the filling of Govt pigeon holes.

How much time money and enthusiasm can be wasted on things that never happen or lead nowhere.

He does add in another manuscript from this time, a paper entitled 'Master Plans', that there was 'no doubt' that the MTPC plan was 'an excellent report and would have saved Melbourne a great deal of subsequent expense if it had been acted on if only in part'.105 Footsteps continues with the object lesson of the futility of pride:

In fact as I look back over the last 50 years it seems to me that the name of the book should not be footsteps but a chronicle of futility

104 Tuxen, ‘Footsteps’, p. 8, op. cit.
105 Tuxen, ‘Master Plans’, p. 1, unfinished typewritten MS in possession of Pat Tuxen
That would be true except for a thread of purpose of idealism if you like that had run through the whole fabric and perhaps was leading somewhere. 106

Tuxen makes no mention whatsoever of the Griffins in this text, and nor does he discuss any particular suburban developments that came from his office. 107 The reason these important matters are not detailed are that, to Tuxen, they are relevant only in that they are examples of his own vanity:

Events seem to have crowded in one on top of another during those years since my marriage, then the Town Planning Comm [sic] and my trip to America and my accession to what must have been a fairly prominent place in the business world Great hopes, based on the kudos I had gained as a member of the comm and the knowledge that I had gained on my American trip I visualised myself as being the proprietor of a thriving office in the city and being recognised as an authority on townplanning. How false how ephemeral are the hopes of man all to be shattered after two short years by the great depression and lying in ruins around me

Instead of being up to my eyes in interesting work I dragged out a miserable existence looking bugged for mail of waiting hopelessly for the telephone to ring, trying to carry on a travesty of a business. 108

It is clear from contemporary documents that Tuxen attempted to excite government interest in a number of projects that would boost both the surveying trade and the prospects of unemployed. Tuxen also campaigned to resettle the unemployed in abandoned country settlements, and it was this which led him to a Quaker meeting which set him on a new course:

The guest speaker was Canon Hammond who seemed to be the only man in Australia doing anything practical and Father Tucker and myself were invited. Canon Hammond said his piece I told the audience about my resettlement plans. Father Tucker who had not then formulated any plans said never a word but came to me after

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107 Certainly Tuxen could not have been unaware that the Griffins’ work was receiving increasing attention in academic circles in the 1960s and 70s. Harrison for instance spoke with him about the Ranelagh estate in the late 1960s. (Harrison, letter to Richard E. Stringer 17 May 1968 in Harrison Papers, Series 6 Box 9 Folder 2 MS8347, National Library of Australia)
the meeting and said "I want you" I have been with him ever since so that is where the thread led me\textsuperscript{109}

Tuxen had always been religious in what might be termed the conventional sense. However the Depression experience, as related in his memoir, leads him to a new experience. He writes:

Here was I an individual with a conscious urge to wipe out the failures of the past wanting devoutly to get some land from the Church and bitterly disappointed by the events of the previous Sunday and that night walking up the street by myself plunged in thought. Oh God why does not someone do something. A voice said to me quite clearly "Why don't you do it?"

I collapsed on the footpath, but crawled home somehow and sobbed myself to sleep with the whole vision of my future association with ministers of religion (whom I had previously regarded with something of awe) with social workers and those who placed the needs of the community before their own interests rose up before me\textsuperscript{110}

Other religious experiences of a similar nature are related in the text.\textsuperscript{111} What exists of the manuscript of Footsteps is not, therefore, a memoir of a surveying practice or the early days of slum abolition: it is, rather, a record of a spiritual search and, secondarily, an attempt to erase what Tuxen saw as an embarrassing lack: his avoidance of war service.

\textit{Creating an Authority}

This chapter has made contrasts between the presentations of self within the works of these writers and the manner in which, and rhetoric with which, the planners conducted themselves at the time they were operating in the town planning field. In drawing such comparisons it makes a case for the planners' use of stories of their own lives to justify or promote their own planning rationale and aesthetic.

\footnote{109}{Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 14, op. cit.}
\footnote{110}{Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 15, op. cit.}
\footnote{111}{Tuxen, 'Footsteps', p. 25, op. cit.}
There is a great diversity between the three memoirs under discussion. The similarities are, however, also extraordinary. It would be generally agreed that the most important outcomes of successful town planning and garden suburbs as created by the private and public sector is the creation of new areas in which people might wish to live: however this matter is barely touched upon by any of the writers. Their attitude to what today would be called ‘livability’ of the areas they designed could be typified as a detachment bordering on aloofness. Nor is there in the writings of each of these planners any notable expression of interest in the popularity of the work amongst land vendors or their clients. It is difficult to see how this could not have been a matter of concern for all of the writers at the time, or why this interest was lost.

Instead of discussing popularity or usability, these are narratives which attest success and failure of plans and schemes in the abstract. Tuxen does not claim a moral high ground at all times: both Sulman and Marion Griffin do, and this may be seen as a form of success.

It is also notable that of the three planners under discussion, only one – Sulman – depicts himself as a planner first and foremost. Marion, who trained as an architect, not unnaturally places much emphasis on the architectural work of the Griffin office, and one wonders if Walter would have given this work prominence over his planning. Tuxen is concerned with recording his career as a surveyor and, briefly, as a member of the MTPC, probably assuming that his readership would not understand or care about privately sponsored garden suburb subdivisions, but rejects all of this in favour of his role as a campaigner to right social wrongs.

It has been shown that the memoirs under examination have a function of propaganda for either the planners’ ideas or philosophies. The Magic of America in particular works effectively as a propaganda tool presenting the Griffins’ ideas.

It is also valuable, however, to see the planners as colonisers, who seek to possess and enclose the land with both their stories and their preconceived notions. The representation of planning as a series of problems to be solved also effects this kind of colonising scientific approach on the landscape.
It has also been seen that the planning historian has traditionally taken a relatively literal, as opposed to analytical, approach to the planners’ biographies. Where writers on the Griffins in particular have found Marion’s text difficult because of its non-linearity and other features atypical to a conventional autobiography the majority of such writers have nevertheless sought to use it simply as a source for factual information. Similarly, Sulman’s papers have been taken almost exclusively at face value, with few commentators seeking to allow or account for the biases inherent in Sulman’s writing. Tuxen’s work has been largely ignored, a fact which must at least in part be due to his unwillingness to create an archive of his own achievement.

The conflict within the planning movement – which I have termed ‘the battle for the garden suburb’ in reference not only to *The Magic of America*’s ‘battles’ but also because of the struggle for prominence or pre-eminence that can be seen within such conflict – was one in which the tactical telling of stories was a vital component. For instance, in the case of Sulman, whose wish to establish himself as an innovator in town planning, and as a tireless campaigner for reform, appears to have gone hand in hand with a number of deeply held beliefs. One was his admiration of European cities and the belief that the grandeur and building unity of cities like Paris came from the ability of one individual to exercise power in sweeping demolition and rebuilding programs. As well as this, it came from his wish to establish a place for his profession – and naturally, by association, his own business and social standing – in his adopted country. His keen belief in the civilising influence of the environment would also, not unnaturally, lead him from considering domestic space to the wider surroundings. His antipathy towards the perceived lower classes, those following religions other than his own might also have lead him to accept environmental determinism as a response to the ‘slum’.

Marion Griffin clearly had other motives than that of the ‘innocent’ writer of memoir: her text includes a number of attempts to promote current projects, with the rationale that though she was, by the 1940s, working without Walter, she had so thoroughly absorbed his design ethos that she could not only relay it to the
public through a book like *Magic of America*, but also approach design problems as Walter himself might. Marion includes a detailed discussion of her plan for a ‘World Fellowship Centre’, a development in New Hampshire, which she conceived some years after his death. In this Walter himself becomes more than just a beloved husband and charismatic visionary: he becomes an embodiment of an idea, and the text itself seems to have as its raison d’être the furtherance of these ideas.

Similarly, the key to the deletions of Walter’s name from plans of unfinished projects must surely be a part of this ongoing project to keep Walter’s ideas and methods alive after his death. A design executed by Walter and Marion in India in 1936 may be the key to this mystery. Though the building in question was not built in India, Marion did apparently consider its appropriateness as an opera house for Sydney, and retitled it as such. As *The Magic of America* is a celebration of Walter which insists that his work is not finished, so too might the deletion of his name from designs allow her to pass off his work as current or timeless, perhaps either as the work of Walter’s partner, Eric Nicholls, or even Marion’s own. There might even have been an intention of retaining the work for submission in future competitions, in which the obliteration of the designer’s name would be necessary. Having failed in her first attempt to keep Walter’s work in the present, Marion may have decided that the writing of a book on her late husband would instead return him to currency.

*The Magic of America* is a rich document; it does appear to fulfill a function of being if not all things to all people, certainly many things at once to those who have used it. If it genuinely were the mutterings of a bitter old woman, it could be represented as ‘false’; it is, however, the best surviving record of a fruitful and fascinating partnership, and as such should be embraced by Griffinites, urban historians particularly, and all historians of 20th century

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112 M. Griffin, *Magic Of America* Section II p. 173

113 Harrison believed that ‘Marion put the “Sydney Opera House” caption on the drawing ‘when she returned from India a widow and there was talk of an opera house for Sydney.’ Harrison, letter to David Van Zanten 26 November 1970 in Harrison Papers, Box 9, Series 6 MS 8347 National Library of Australia
Australia generally. The further aspect nominated here – that of promotional
document – hardly negates its status as a memoir. Marion’s intentions are almost
ostentatiously obvious. It is a propaganda work, created to keep Walter Burley
Griffin’s name and ideals alive and vital. The ‘bitterness’ of Marion’s approach to
government and Empire is an incidental feature to this central premise.

At first reading, *Footsteps* appears to bear little relation to the memoirs of
Sulman or the Griffins. However, as was examined in the previous chapter, it
actually contains insight into the course that Tuxen’s planning career took after
the Depression years. This course was essentially a reverse of the usual
planner’s story: rather than perceiving social problems and working in planning to
address them, Tuxen worked in planning from a young age and only the
Depression inspired him to move towards more concerted and arguably practical
efforts in addressing social problems. However, in ‘Footsteps’ this is linked to the
laments of an elderly man with some regrets, who is also unhappy with the state
of society in the late 1960s and early 70s.

The three memoirs are, in effect, the last word from Sulman, Marion Griffin
and Tuxen; they show us the way that these three planners hoped to be
remembered by posterity. In some respects, as researchers and writers – the
present writer included – engage with these texts, their authors’ intentions are
being realised. Even those who do not take a memoir at face value are
nevertheless engaging with the authority and personality of its author, and in
some regard propagating his or her beliefs and ideals.
Chapter Eight

Planning Heroes: the use and abuse of interwar planning’s legacies

Planning history – critical, subtle, reflective?

The rise of postmodernism, and the assumption that new forms are best created by the plundering of old forms has been a hallmark of planning in the 1990s. Of course, this itself is nothing new: those creating the built form in western society have routinely borrowed from or reshaped the past. What is, perhaps, new in postmodern design, is the revisiting of interwar planning design forms, in recent planning work. This – along with the related recasting of significant planning figures in planning history – will be discussed in this concluding chapter.

Urban planning practice in Australia, perhaps more than in other countries, has typically eschewed consideration of planning’s past. In their introduction to Readings in Planning Theory, Campbell and Fainstein state that the writing of planning history should aim to present a challenge to present-day planners: encouraging ‘an accurate but also critical, subtle and reflective understanding of contemporary planning practice’.¹ The evidence suggests, however, that planners rarely read planning history – or that, in any case, they do not act on its lessons. Successive waves of new variations on planning practice, and governmental and bureaucratic policy change in Australia since the 1930s, have given planners little incentive to investigate earlier planning forms such as the interwar garden suburb. The history of interwar planning practice has a number of important ramifications on suburban planning in both the public and private sector in the present.

This chapter will begin by tracking the way in which the Griffins’ posthumous reputations have undergone profound change in academic circles over the last thirty years, and how the new reading of their lives and work has

¹ Campbell and Fainstein, ‘Introduction: The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory’ in Campbell and Fainstein (eds.) Readings in Planning Theory, p. 6
been presented to the wider Australian community. As Sandercock has noted, there is a strong tendency in planning history to create heroic narratives. The Griffins’ example is problematised here by the fact that they were not solely planners, but also worked as architects, yet it remains true that they have achieved posthumous prominence amongst Australian planners and architects. The extent of this prominence and its basis, is revealed with examination of the uses of Marion Griffin’s *Magic of America* and the ways in which approaches to the text have altered over time.

In contrast with this reassessment of a body of planning work will be a consideration of present perceptions of planning, and ways in which architectural/planning professionals both in America and Australia have attempted to justify a renewed interest in the ‘classic’ garden suburb form.

The examples of Stanhope Gardens in Sydney and Roxburgh Park in Melbourne will show that there is presently – under the banner of ‘new urbanism’ – a revival of a style of planning which harks back to the work of the garden suburb planners of the interwar years. This movement does not countenance or reference the work of any one designer. Instead, it takes the late-twentieth century attitude to planning as a product of committee or group work. In most of its forms it includes amongst its tenets, however, a rejection of the car-based post-Second World War design ethos in favour of the urban ‘crystals’ of the interwar period.

Planning history has gained currency in a number of ways in the last few years of the 20th century, in ways which reflect both the increasing interest amongst Australians in local history and also, in the case of the Griffins, in the gradual rehabilitation of a planning/architectural couple who had previously been ignored in Australian national legend.

In 1991 Victoria Peel and Deborah Zion claimed that ‘[m]ore local history is written in Australia [than] any other single historical genre’. Peel and Zion identified Victoria as the ‘most productive’ state in this regard and many local

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2 Victoria Peel and Deborah Zion, ‘The Local History Industry’ in Rickard and Spearritt (eds), *Packaging the Past?*, pp. 208-214, p. 208

3 Ibid
histories of Melbourne suburbs were prepared at this time, perhaps as local councils anticipated the reorganisation of their boundaries and the creation of new local government areas under the Kennett government (1992-99) in Victoria. Local histories of Melbourne suburbs published before 1990, such as Hugh Anderson’s *Ringwood: A Place of Many Eagles*[^4] and Dorothy Rogers’ *A History of Kew,*[^5] often concluded their chronological narrative early in the twentieth century perhaps on the assumption that suburbia at this time was too mundane or homogenous to be shaped into an historical pattern. Local histories of the 1990s (such as Andrew Lemon’s *Broadmeadows: A Forgotten History*[^6] and Susan Priestley’s *Altona: A Long View*[^7]) are much more likely to take the reader late into the century, often in acknowledgement of migration patterns not only into Australia but within suburban areas after the second world war, this itself a recognition that the history of a region was not simply the history of its built environment but also its social structures and interactions.

The increasing interest in local history accompanies an awareness of heritage in the built environment which has become an important phenomenon in recent years. Concern for the preservation of streetscapes, buildings, and flora and fauna of particular urban areas have reflected an interest in planners amongst the many individuals and organisations which have impacted, and continue to have an impact, on the built environment of suburbia. This has not meant, however, that writers of local histories have come to see planning issues or examples, beyond superficial references which are often erroneous or based on hearsay, as an important part of such a work.[^8] Twenty-first century town planning and garden suburb development has impacted so heavily on the suburban landscape of Australian cities, its absence from most local histories needs to be addressed.

[^5]: Dorothy Rogers *A History of Kew,* Lowden, Kilmore, 1973
[^6]: Andrew Lemon *Broadmeadows: A Forgotten History,* City of Broadmeadows/Hargreens, West Melbourne, 1982
[^7]: Susan Priestley *Altona: A Long View,* Hargreens, North Melbourne, 1988
[^8]: For instance, Priestley suggests that an estate known as ‘Newport Railway Estate No. 2’ in the Altona region was a Griffin project. Priestley, *Altona: A Long View,* p. 167
In other areas of history, planning has not been ignored. The interest in
the work of the Griffins has grown to the extent that they are by far the best-
known of town planners of the early 20th century. This interest has resulted in
major exhibitions, seminars and publications through the 1990s.\(^9\) Within middle-
class areas such as Eaglemont and Castlecrag, interest in the creators of these
areas is reinforced by interest in the heritage of streetscapes. That there are also
a number of houses designed under the Griffin name in these areas assists in
the creation of these suburban enclaves as 'special' areas.

The Griffins, as the most famous interwar figures in Australian planning
history, have been the subject of a number of heroic narratives written during and
after the 1960s. Amongst the narratives Sandercock labels as containing
'planning itself' as 'the real hero',\(^10\) the story of the Griffins' involvement in
Canberra, for instance, is a rare example in which it is the individual planner who
emerges the hero.

John Sulman has not come to fill the kind of position that the Griffins have
been elevated to, despite a recognised importance during his lifetime that far
exceeded the American couple. His well-written and prolific publications are
testament to his earnest advocacy of important planning issues, but his built
planning projects, such as Rosebery and Hamilton, have not lasted as clear and
self-explanatory testaments to his intentions in the way that Castlecrag or
Eaglemont have for the Griffins. In those suburban areas, the value and sense of
community felt by residents has reinforced the legend of their creators. Sulman's
planning advocacy has, in some respects been so successful as to now appear
mere common-sense; for instance, the use of curvilinear streets, or the creation
of public view points. In other areas, such as in his interest in grand, gothic
monuments and neo-classical statuary, his ideas are thoroughly outdated and at

present unlikely to return in a form he would have recognised. Sulman negotiated himself a position in the planning movement whereby he 'created' planning, and then 'created' himself as its creator. This process – as has been seen in this work – lacked subtlety, but was highly convincing.

As has been discussed a number of times in this thesis, neither Sulman nor Tuxen have a prominence in Australian planning history approaching the Griffins'. The reasons for this are diverse, but in many cases they are connected to readings of Marion Griffin's *Magic of America*.

*The use of Magic of America*

The recent film *City of Light*\(^\text{11}\) is but one step further into enshrining the myth of the Griffins. It is, presumably, the dictates of cinematic narrative that led the film's makers to avoid all of the Griffins' forays into suburban design aside from Castlecrag. Their one-roomed house, Pholiota, is discussed and depicted, but neither the house's location on the Glenard subdivision, nor the subdivision itself, are mentioned. The last notable film made on the Griffins in Australia – *No Fences, No Boundaries*,\(^\text{12}\) made in 1976 – did attempt to explore the Griffins' impact on Australian suburbia, but overestimated their influence. *City of Light* avoids the GSDA and its role in Castlecrag, as well as the Griffins' debates with the company's shareholders. Indeed, all the Griffins' 'battles' go unmentioned in the film, aside from those which they encountered with bureaucracy in their time on the Canberra project. Here, more than in many accounts attempted in print, it is Marion's version of events – as outlined in *The Magic of America* through letters and stories, and which is read by an actress over dramatisations and photographs – which dominates.

A 55-minute documentary can, of course, only contain a limited amount of information. However, histories devoted exclusively to the Griffins often reveal a

\(^{10}\) Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis*, p. 34-35

\(^{11}\) B. Mason (dir.) *City of Light*, Film Australia, 2000

\(^{12}\) T. Mial (dir.) *No Fences, no Boundaries* Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1976
range of attitudes which constrain understanding of their role and, most particularly, the context of their work. This may be indicative of the wider flow of history, but it does have ramifications for understandings of planning and heritage, and the interface between the two.

The overwhelming majority of the narratives and analyses of Walter Burley Griffin published in the last four decades use the image Marion Griffin created of her late husband in *The Magic of America*; the work has encouraged subsequent writers to utilise Walter Griffin as a powerful, charismatic figure in both planning and architecture. The existence of Nancy Price's thesis,\(^{13}\) purportedly based on interviews with Walter, has problematised the *Magic of America* for a number of writers. With the Price thesis as the 'official' work, *Magic of America* is often typified as an encoded, overly dense, reworking of Walter, made explicable by the 'truth' of the Price thesis.

At least forty secondary texts have been created since the 1950s that make use of *The Magic of America* in a number of different and often extraordinary ways. It is plundered so often simply because there is no other first-hand account of the Griffins' career which combines narrative with theoretical discussion as well as copies of articles, correspondence and design work by the Griffins. The Griffins' Australian story as told by both Australian and American commentators is generally one of thwarted, though uncorrupted and never compromised, genius in a backward, overly bureaucratic and small-minded country. This thesis shows that there is potential for a different reading of the experience both of the Griffins in Australia, and of those Australians who encountered them. Unusually for stories of this kind, recent versions of Walter Griffin's life often end in his salvation, in the form of a burst of creativity, occurring not in Australia but on his relocation to India. He travelled there in 1935, to create a multitude of extraordinary designs, few of which were built but many of which survive on paper. Paul Kruty, for instance, writes:

\(^{13}\) Nancy Price, 'Walter Burley Griffin.' B. Arch. Thesis, Department of Architecture, University of Sydney, 1933.
If Griffin felt that much of his life had been preparation for this journey, in
many ways the experience affected him more profoundly than he could
have imagined. Griffin's Indian adventure produced a creative outpouring
that, because of his untimely death... was also his final testament.  

This representation of Walter's last year as an epiphany fits well with a reading of
Walter as a visionary and as a genius; as does the fact – usually ignored – that
Walter's death in India in 1937 met with little or no interest in either Australia or
America. By this time he was known only in Australia for his apparently bohemian
anthroposophic practices at the Sydney garden suburb of Castlecrag, and while
some solemn obituaries were published, attention was directed in other pieces
towards the 'unusual homes' of Castlecrag and the eccentric behaviour of the
Griffin family. His connection to Canberra was little-remembered and the 65
buildings, not to mention the twelve suburbs and cities, designed by his office in
Australia were not highly valued. The widowed Marion returned to Chicago to live
with her niece, embarking during the 1940s on some planning and architecture
works of her own.

In 1964 Mark Peisch accurately observed that Walter was 'largely
forgotten'. There were no major published works produced on the Griffins even
in Marion's lifetime, though two PhD theses, by H. Allen Brooks and Peisch, were
completed in the late 1950s. Both authors interviewed Marion, and she must
have been aware that Griffin work was undergoing examination, as an historical
phenomenon rather than the way she would have preferred it – as an ideal for
living. Since the publication of the Peisch and Birrell books in the early 1960s –
both of which purported to be works on Walter Burley Griffin alone – the process
of canonisation has proceeded apace.

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14 Paul Kruty, 'Creating a Modern Architecture for India', in Watson (ed.), Beyond Architecture, pp. 138-159
15 For instance, 'W. B. Griffin/Death Announced' Canberra Times, 15 February 1937, p. 2; Miles
16 'Noted Designer Dead', Argus, 15 February 1937, p. 9
17 'W. B. Griffin/Death In India', Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 1937, p. 8. This piece
asserts that Walter Griffin's 90-year-old father had recently been to Sydney to visit him, unaware
that Griffin was at this time in India.
18 Peisch, The Chicago School of Architecture, p. 5

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Until recently, the majority of those who wrote on Walter’s life and work have tended to regard Marion as a problematic aspect of his life story. There is still a tendency amongst many writers on the Griffin legacy to refer to Walter Burley Griffin as a lone operator; this not only minimises his wife’s involvement in his work, but also incidentally aids in the creation of a charismatic genius figure. Interviews with early Castlecrag residents and others who knew the Griffins do correlate with and accentuate the picture of Marion as brash and unusual. With this depiction of Marion to the fore, it has been unsettling for Griffinites that the greatest amount of first-hand information on Walter’s personality, beliefs and private life come from her text.

Bonnie G. Smith has written on the phenomenon of the ‘abusive widow’: the way in which the widow of a ‘great man’, if she takes it upon herself to edit or otherwise represent textually, her husband’s work, is both minimised and demonised by historians whose own rhetoric is ‘highly charged, contentious, loaded with gendered fantasy, passion and outrage’.19 The first few writers to deal with Walter’s work began with assessments like James Birrell’s, that Magic of America is ‘unfortunately...bitter’ and unpublishable.20 Donald Leslie Johnson dismissed it as ‘often incoherent and naïve’.21 H. Allen Brooks described it as a ‘jumbled text, which abounds in vindictive comments surrounding Wright’.22 Peter Harrison, who contributed much to both Birrell’s and Johnson’s works on Walter, saw it as ‘romantically disparate.. full of inaccuracies and memory lapses [but it] does impart a clear picture of her hero-worship of her husband’.23 Vernon has recently said that it merely shows Marion’s ‘wonderful regard for Walter’.24 Over a decade later Jill Roe, in her 1986 history of the theosophy movement in Australia, calls the work ‘revealing’ but not ‘manageable’, suggesting that the text is tainted


20 Birrell, Walter Burley Griffin, op. cit. p. 14


22 H. Allen Brooks The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwestern Contemporaries University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1972, p. 86

23 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 90

24 Vernon, interviewed in B. Mason (dir.) City of Light, Film Australia, 2000

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in reflecting the 'preoccupations of an old, lonely and rather embittered woman.'
Yet, all of these writers have used the text as a major source for their works,
apparently on the assumption that it was possible to detach Marion's zealous
interpretations from its 'documentary' elements.

Both Birrell and Johnson saw fit to attack Marion personally at the same
time as they attacked her manuscript: for Birrell, Marion is both opportunistic and
'coldly intellectual';
Johnson dismisses her by simply concluding she was 'not
an important influence' on Walter's creative output.
Johnson claimed shortly
after the publication of his book on Walter Burley Griffin that it was flawed due to
limited time; he has recently written an extraordinary 'letter' to Marion,
apologising for his 'insensitivity to the nature of your collaboration with Walt' and
his tendency to 'portray you as a gifted assistant'.

Adding to the confusion around the way that Magic of America has been
received by the host of post-1960 Griffin commentators is the act of vandalism
she committed on a number of their works after his death but before writing her
laudatory text on his life and work. It is this act, presumably, which led Frank
Lloyd Wright's biographer Brendan Gill to deduce that when Marion 'sacrificed
her career' for Walter's, 'she lived to regret it.' Harrison simply attributed the act
of removing Walter's name to 'some eccentric reason of her own'.
More
recently, Vernon has suggested that Marion wanted to present the drawings as
'art objects themselves'.
Though she clearly intended to include these drawings
in the finished Magic of America book, Marion makes no reference in the text to
the obliteration of the name on these designs.

Magic of America is also a text filled with interjections, illustrations, poetry,
plans, portraits, blueprints and parody songs. Turnbull has recently written that

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26 Birrell, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 14
28 D. L. Johnson, 'Dear Marion', op.cit.
29 Brendan Gill, Many Masks: A Life of Frank Lloyd Wright, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York,
1987, p.186
30 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 90
31 Christopher Vernon, interviewed in B. Mason (dir.) City of Light
32 Griffin, Magic of America Section III p. 184
Magic is frustrating for the architectural historian wanting a chronological and orderly sequence. It is also difficult for the architectural theorist desiring a straightforward, systematic and cogent explanation. It is not a conventionally structured narrative, its format perhaps mirroring a magazine, a scrapbook or even a multi-media presentation. Given this, it is not surprising that architectural historians and theorists – and historians and theorists of other disciplines – find it so hard to use.

Many Griffin scholars seem to have been content to rely on Magic of America as though it were a benign, if somewhat scatty, diary full of accurate descriptions of the Griffins’ life and work. It might more fairly be described as a propaganda document espousing a particular doctrine that embraced lifestyle, aesthetics, art, science, religion and a dedication to practical efficiency. Though Walter’s biographers may well have a negative attitude towards Marion, they do not hesitate to draw upon her version of Walter’s life or character.

An example of this which relates closely to some points under discussion here – the Griffins’ involvement in suburban subdivision – is the question of suburban developments such as Milleara, also known as City View (Fig. XXXI). Commentators seem to have relied entirely on the text for information on such matters, and here they have been guided by Marion’s words, which give Canberra and Castlecrag the highest importance; she also discusses, briefly, Leeton, Mont Eagle and Port Stephens. That Canberra and Castlecrag are afforded the most importance is understandable: these projects were the most fully realised and important of the Griffins’ work in Australia. However, this does not explain why the Melbourne subdivisions of Blue Hill (Figs. XXVII and XXVIII), later redesigned by Tuxen as Pine Lodge (Fig. XIX), Ranelagh and Milleara (Fig. XX) are not discussed at all in the Magic of America, though it may explain their absence from Birrell’s and Johnson’s works on the Griffins – although they do appear in a short catalogue of works in the Price thesis.

In her discussion of ‘culture and community at Castlecrag’, Jill Roe addresses the use of the word ‘magic’ in descriptions of the Griffins’ milieu. ‘This

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33 G. Turnbull, Introduction Turnbull and Navarette (eds), The Griffins in Australia and India, p. xvii
Fig. XXVII. The original projected plan for the entire 'Blue Hill' scheme, created by the Griffins in 1923. Only the portion below the railway line was built (see fig. XXVII). The form of the plan appears to suggest that the section to the left - where the Cheong family, who owned the land, were still living - was intended by the Griffins to later mirror the right.
Fig. XXVIII. The portion of the ‘Blue Hill’ scheme which was built approximately to the Griffins’ design. The concourse and surrounding streets north of the rail line - intended, it appears, for shops and business - were not constructed, and the area was redesigned by Tuxen in the 1940s (see Fig. XXIX)
Fig. XXIX. Tuxen's design for the Pine Lodge Estate of 1946, which replaced the Griffins' sketch for the estate. The central circle is reminiscent of Dirilton Crescent, Park Orchards (see Fig. XIX). Land Titles Office, Victoria.
Fig. XXX a & b. Tuxen designed the Peter Lalor Garden Suburb in 1947, almost thirty years after Merrilands, but the area includes many features similar to the surveyor's earlier work. What is notable is the inclusion of many cul-de-sacs, which had by this time lost the taint of the 'jerry-built' dead end. The internal reserve in the present-day plan is the site of a kindergarten. The area is just under 3 km north of the north-eastern corner of the Merrilands estate, and its street pattern is largely intact today. Reproduced from Gary Johns, Building a Suburb, 1978, and Gregory's Compact Melbourne Street Directory 3rd Edition, 1997.
Fig. XXXI. The first portion of the Griffins' City View Estate, advertised with some bravado by Henry Scott as 'Melbourne's First Garden Suburb'.

*Australian Home Beautiful*, 2 January 1928, p. 75
was not merely sales pitch or media hype,' she says, ‘though there was some of that.'\textsuperscript{34} The reason the names of the arguably less important suburban subdivision estates the Griffins designed do not appear in Marion’s text is that \textit{Magic of America} is, first and foremost, propaganda and promotion: it is advertising and advocating a version of the Griffins' lifestyle and outlook, and there is little reason, in such a work, to concentrate on projects which do not fit to the themes being promoted. There is little element of the planner as logician and social engineer in the plans for Milleara, for instance, aside from its generous open space provision. This is no negation of its usefulness or, for that matter, brilliance as a complex and involving planned suburban area. To read The Magic of America as a piece of propaganda is, however, a direct challenge to the common conception of the Griffins as finding power or authority in anything other than logic and reason. The GSDA files show Walter as a tactician, rather than an aloof artist, and he must surely have learnt a considerable amount about tactics from his experiences at Canberra. If he was not purposefully deceiving at least some members of the GSDA board, he was nevertheless drawing power from manipulation and obsequiousness. His motivation, unlike the majority of the board’s members, who were eager for him to relax the building covenants on Castlecrag land and allow landowners to construct conventional houses, was clearly not material gain.\textsuperscript{35} It is nevertheless inaccurate to depict him as one who did not pursue power, or as naive.

There is little doubt that the Griffins were in no way diplomatic when it came to expressing their beliefs. It must also be conceded, however, that they were not consistent in the expression of these beliefs, and it might be assumed that a number of their statements were executed for tactical value rather than as a genuine expression of their attitudes. Their ability to influence others in Australian planning and architectural spheres at the time they were in Australia

\textsuperscript{34} Jill Roe, ‘The Magical World of Marion Mahony Griffin: Culture and Community at Castlecrag in the Interwar Years’ in Shirley Fitzgerald and Garry Wotherspoon (eds.), \textit{Minorities: Cultural Diversity in Sydney}, State Library of New South Wales Press in association with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, 1995, pp. 82-102, p. 83

\textsuperscript{35} Peter Harrison suggests that by the mid-1930s Walter Griffin was in fact financially troubled. Harrison, \textit{Walter Burley Griffin}, p. 86
was certainly affected adversely by their inability to compromise with those around them, either politically, or in relationships with clients, though evidence of the nature of their client relations is scarce. While Marion and Walter could be said to follow the same paths to this extent, they also had different personal approaches, which may have worked in combination to produce the results they desired. Walter appears to have been persuasive and charismatic, and Marion was seen by many around her as needlessly aggressive and bullying. This has been shown by Marion’s experience firstly in the episode of the establishment of a ‘Women’s Section’ in the NSW Town Planning Association, and secondly in the Griffins’ response to the desire of all around them to exercise influence over Canberra. The couple’s belligerent approach to those who opposed them is also shown in their dealings with the GSDA in the 1920s and 30s.

The hostility shown towards Marion in late twentieth century representations notwithstanding, it is nevertheless true that the Griffins have become, posthumously, heroes of early twentieth century planning. This construction has been undertaken by planning historians the majority of whom have an architectural, or architectural history, background. The predominant view of their ‘visionary’ yet ‘self-sacrificing’ work sees them cast as lone progressives in an unsympathetic social environment. In this way they are shown to be ‘toiling in isolation’, 36 ‘always involved in duty and service to the majority’, 37 and Castlecrag their ‘quasi-Bohemian colony of social non-conformists’. 38

It is not a refutation of this view to simply state that the Griffins worked in isolation or detached from the mainstream because they chose to be so: there were undoubtedly many good reasons why they may have pursued an aloof approach. What is perhaps inaccurate in this portrayal is that, firstly, it suggests that the Griffins were disengaged from all but a select few in Australian society – when they were, in fact, involved in planning and architecture for a wide range of areas, interests and individuals; and that they suffered materially for their principles, for which there is little evidence. Such a portrayal of the Griffins is a

36 Harrison, Walter Burley Griffin, p. 92
37 Jeff Turnbull, Introduction to Turnbull and Navaretti, The Griffins in Australia and India, p. xvi
38 Freestone, ‘The Garden Suburb’ in Kelly (ed.) Sydney: City of Suburbs, p. 65
part of a narrative construction which denies any aspects of their Australian careers and influence of commercial practice on the development of planning.

*Planning's heroes in the 21st Century*

As has been argued by Reps, there is a distinct possibility that in Australia planning as an activity, and as a doctrine, is in fact the outcome of a battle waged over a century ago between professional groups such as architects and surveyors. It is further possible that once the planning profession was firmly established, the battle adapted to two new fronts, to become a conflict between planners and, on one hand, communities; on the other, vendors or, less frequently, government agencies. Such a representation clearly minimises unusual and esoteric facets of the planning profession. However, while the efforts of the interwar planners to create an entrenched and powerful body of planners was clearly successful, the planning fraternity today has found that many of its number are ready to renounce this organisation.

Paul Ashton writes that in the last third of the 20th century, ‘planning personified became, for some, a Kafkaesque figure, a nameless hero wrestling with obscure intimidating powers’.³⁹ For others, however, planning was not a Kafka protagonist but an example of the incomprehensible and intransigent bureaucracy such protagonists confront in Kafka’s works. Planning was already, by the 1960s, portrayed in many quarters – not least Jane Jacobs’ *Death and Life of American Cities* – not as an unproblematic tool to resolve conflict or to foil property speculators and developers unsympathetic to the holistic needs of the city, but as a bureaucracy that was itself uncontrollable and destructive. In the 1960s, mass rehousing projects in the inner-city areas of Sydney and Melbourne were identified particularly as schemes that had not only been superseded by less dehumanising solutions, but which were also intended for location in areas that had become no longer the province of low-income, non-English-speaking residents. Instead of this demographic, which had been assumed to be politically

³⁹ P. Ashton, *The Accidental City*, p. 10
impotent, the inner city increasingly became home to educated, politically aware residents willing to take political action to preserve their environment. The conflict encountered by the University of Sydney in its attempts to expand its campus into the inner-city suburb of Darlington – a colonisation made possible by the Cumberland County Scheme – in the 1950s and 60s is a case in which a battle such as this was lost by residents and their allies.\(^{40}\) The conflict between the residents of Brookes Crescent, in Fitzroy, and the Housing Commission of Victoria, is another. By this time – the 1970s – a new populist distrust of planning bodies, and the use of positive protest action against what was seen as harsh and unreasonable planning activities, had gained momentum and the street was not demolished. The Housing Commission was seen by this stage as an unimaginative, intransigent body unable to comprehend a non-conforming streetscape, against an urban population which embraced local quirks rather than conformism. This was particularly so when such a doctrine was enforced without provision for public consultation or comment.\(^{41}\)

From this typification of planning as a destructive force, at the end of the twentieth century planning has seemingly undergone a further transformation. Urban planning in Australia is now much more the province of politicians and their partnerships with developers, in the wake of the re-entry of middle class groups to the inner-city and the resultant changes in relative land values and understanding of community. Where planning history retains – and even seeks to reify and consolidate – its heroes, planning in the late 20th century dispensed with heroic figures altogether.

A recent television advertisement for Victoria’s Urban Land Corporation’s Roxburgh Park project makes this clear. Roxburgh Park is on the site of Hopetoun Model Suburb, which Sulman referred to in his 1890 paper on town planning. The advertisement (Fig. XXXII shows a print version) begins with a sepia depiction of the original Hopetoun plan, and a voice over explains that in

\(^{40}\) David Nichols, ‘Darlington and the University of Sydney’, in T. Dingle (ed), *The Australian City Future/Past*, pp. 73-82
\(^{41}\) Terry Burke, ‘Public Housing and the Community’, in Howe (ed.) *New Houses for Old*, pp. 211-244
Over 100 years ago, architect Phillip Treeby dreamed of a well-planned model community on the place that we call Roxburgh Park. Today, his dream is alive and flourishing.

Fig XXXII: Promotion for Roxburgh Park, north of Melbourne, which includes mention of the Hopetoun Garden Suburb’s original designer, Treeby, and elements of his plan, in tandem with a humorous projection of what progressives of the Victorian era might have imagined transport of the late 20th century to be. Urban Land Corporation, *Roxburgh Park: Now Your Dreams Have a Postcode* ULC, Melbourne 1999, p. 2
the 1880s, ‘one man’ had a dream. The ‘dream’ is then parodied, with animated figures utilising technologies – spring-heeled boots, personal gliders – supposed to have been a part of the 19th century progressive’s vision of the future. This takes place in a contemporary green landscape overlaid with 19th century cottages. Of course, the advertisement does not examine the failure of the original ‘dream’ to reach fruition, but rather seeks to promote the new Roxburgh Park project. The built form of this development bears absolutely no connection to the Hopetoun plan, despite the fact that the corporate logo for the estate incorporates the Hopetoun plan into its design, and the final plan does incorporate a 19th century homestead as a community centre. Jonathan Smith has written that ‘landscape is, above all else, a legacy of the past’. In Roxburgh Park’s case, however, there is clearly no ‘past’ that its promoters wish to recall or invoke from the site itself. Instead, the past it invokes is a fantasy version of 19th century idealism. In this television advertisement, the Urban Land Corporation does not replace the original ‘one man’ with either a new visionary or even a body of experts under its aegis. Instead, the new plan is simply represented as having no authorial source, though vague references to open space and greenery do suggest to the viewer that an effort has been made to create a particular kind of environment compatible with contemporary concerns with the lifestyles and health, through physical activity, of both children and adults.

A single vision, or personification of the planner or even the vendor, is no longer required to promote planned environments. The Urban Land Corporation – a restructured and privatised version, after the 1997 Urban Land Corporation Act, of the Urban Land Authority which can trace its genesis and even some of its landholdings back to the Victorian Housing Commission – bases its advertising not on overt references to science, aesthetics, or experts, but on the same points that vendors of the 19th century used, ‘that trinity of auctioneer’s delights – fresh air, a pleasant view and a shady garden’ of Graeme Davison’s description.43

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Fig XXXIII. Portion of plan of Stanhope Gardens, in Sydney's Western Suburbs - Australian New Urbanism in practice. From Peter Anand and Associates, Stanhope Gardens... a better suburb, Landcom, Sydney 1998, p. 2
Roxburgh Park is, in the ULC's words, 'a complete community planned from the outset,' an outcome of the ULC's 'more than 24 years experience in development' and its 'strong culture of planning for communities'.

Indeed, Landcom, the Urban Land Corporation's NSW equivalent, has embraced the 19th century suburb in its advertising rhetoric, as it seeks to establish 'better suburbs', new areas in which the built form nominally takes its cues from 'older' suburbs such as 'Eastwood, Concord and Burwood': 'These are places, not just suburb names on a map'. Ironically, the term 'better suburbs' mirrors the same confusion between 'garden city' and 'garden suburbs' of the interwar years, for it refers to the Federal Labor government's 'Better Cities' program of 1991-96, of which urban consolidation – the return to inner-city or Victorian areas – was a keystone. The architects preparing new Landcom developments – for instance, Stanhope Gardens in Sydney's western suburbs (Fig. XXXIII) – eschew 'contrived', 'isolated', car-based suburbs predicated on feeder roads and road hierarchies which follow 'dead worm' street patterns and deny natural landscape features, espousing instead 'the retention of historical elements on site... trees, farm dams, rural roads, old homesteads or industrial archeology' and a street plan in which 'clear and multiple links' throughout areas make both vehicular and pedestrian routes possible.

Once again, the Stanhope Gardens advertising rhetoric does not cite individual planners as visionaries, though it does make use of rhetoric referring to social science and ecology, for instance in discussion of the 'pre-1970s suburb' and its 'energy efficiency'. The assertion in Stanhope Gardens literature that 'Rectangular blocks allow efficient subdivisions into regular shaped lots of the preferred orientation' would not be out of place in the real estate sales rhetoric of the 1880s, except that it would then have appeared absurdly obvious. There is

46 Michael Lennon, 'The Revival of Metropolitan Planning' in Hamnett and Freestone (eds.) *The Australian Metropolis*, op. cit., pp. 149-167, pp. 15-17
47 Annand et al, *Stanhope Gardens*, p. 9
48 ibid.
now, however, an additional meaning – informed by the early town planning understanding of maximising sunlight by diagonal positioning of streets and lots – which has come to be applied to the term 'orientation'.\textsuperscript{49} The promoters of Stanhope Gardens cite Burwood, a Sydney suburb incorporated as an LGA in 1874 and Concorde as ideal templates for the 'better suburb'. These areas do not truly conform to garden suburb style – nor does their built form find reflection in Stanhope Gardens. The 19\textsuperscript{th} century suburb of Burwood is one of the more exclusive, vital and valuable areas of western Sydney, a fact which is hardly likely to escape the attention of prospective buyers of Stanhope Gardens properties, though it is difficult to imagine the sense in which Burwood’s advantages of position and prestige might ‘rub off’ onto Stanhope Gardens.\textsuperscript{50} Concorde is a 1920s development the street plan of which incorporate some town planning principles, though Grace Karskens, in her study of the area, posits that ‘when Walter Burley Griffin passionately denounced Sydney’s 1920s suburbs, he probably had Concorde in mind’.\textsuperscript{51} However, areas such as Burwood and Concorde do not correspond in any identifiable way: the former is a pre-garden suburb area with many pleasant leafy streets, and the latter belongs to the era of the garden suburb, but certainly not the spirit, in its built design. These areas are used here as examples of suburban terrain which exclude post-World War Two planning doctrines. The importance of these areas lies at least as much in what they do not have – a coherent but restrictive planned and zoned infrastructure; as it does in what they do have – a ready-made simulation of ‘organic’ growth which in Burwood, for instance, is the product of the growth and change sustained by many 1880s boom suburbs over the 20th century. Burwood is also a business and retail centre as well as a middle-class residential suburb, a scenario which is unlikely to be recreated in a dormitory suburb such as Stanhope Gardens: it is perhaps only its freedom from ‘restrictive’ zoning practices which account for its use here as a comparative example.

\textsuperscript{49} For instance see Suiman, \textit{An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia} pp. 35-40
\textsuperscript{50} Annand et al, \textit{Stanhope Gardens}, p. 3
It has already been shown that the speculative nature of much of the suburban subdivision planning of the interwar years – combined with the lack of building activity during the Depression and the Second World War - meant that many Australian suburban subdivisions remained underpopulated until the 1950s and 60s. The occupants of these suburbs were inheritors of an unexplained terrain; only some features – for instance, the half-size lots intended for shops and offices, or park reserves – were self-evident, and both of these could be resubdivided or sold by vendors or governing bodies who neither understood nor appreciated the role intended for these features by their originators. The planners of the 1950s were largely unsympathetic to the work of the interwar planners. They were attuned to a much greater extent than their predecessors to the importance of the car in the average Australians’ life – incorporation of this revolutionary change into the built form was to become a self-fulfilling prophecy – and other features, such as the cul-de-sac, first introduced to Australia’s planned suburbs in Foggitt’s Daceyville, finally reached complete respectability.

The self-consciously progressive nature of architecture, planning and other associated design realms would necessarily ignore all that had gone before; it was not until the late 1970s and early 80s when a combination of factors – tied to the urban conservation movement, the rise of post-modern design and, later, a major reorganisation of industry and government – have caused Australian planners to look back on past planning patterns for inspiration and ideas.

The contribution of the architectural and planning firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk and Co., of Miami to hastening what Sandercock calls ‘the crumbling pillars of modernist planning wisdom’ is important here. The firm – most famous for having designed the ‘traditional’ and highly successful Florida resort village of Seaside in the 1980s – has argued for a return to what it sees as the central tenets of pre-Second World War planning. These include streets based on a combination of grid and diagonal planning, road-widths of two to four lanes, and the creation of neighbourhood units.

52 Sandercock, Towards Cosmopolis, p. 22
Duany and Plater-Zyberk have, in many cases, been quick to praise the early planners, without acknowledging the reformist ambitions of these figures. While they praise the land management strategies of Ebenezer Howard, they indicate no desire to adopt such strategies themselves.\textsuperscript{53} Similarly, while these architects state that Raymond Unwin's \textit{Town Planning in Practice} is 'still the best planning manual available', and that Seaside itself is a homage to Unwin's 'suburban crystals',\textsuperscript{54} they do not distinguish between examples of 'Nineteenth century city planning'\textsuperscript{55} and projects from 'the 1920s' when 'the American town planning movement was at its apogee'\textsuperscript{56}. Deyan Sudjic calls Duany and Plater-Zyberk 'latter day Sittes' though they might better be described as 'latter day Sultans':

Their priorities were to recreate the traditional principles of Beaux Arts composition, axes and vistas culminating in landmark public buildings, and carefully dimensioned streets and sidewalks, like Haussmann's Paris in miniature.\textsuperscript{57}

Like the reviving of the Griffins' careers, to a reputation and regard far beyond that which they enjoyed in their lifetimes, it seems that a version of interwar town planning – its style and form superficially appropriated by Duany and Plater-Zyberk into a mythical and idealised suburban landscape of 'American small-town urbanism'\textsuperscript{58} – is achieving a comeback. Though this is a complex issue, and while Seaside is not itself a good example of new urbanism in practice, Duany and Plater-Zyberk are eager for it to be seen as a model. Seaside's example is intended by its creators to inspire the resurgence of the form of the urban 'crystal' – neighbourhood units predicated on convenient walking distance\textsuperscript{59} – reminiscent of interwar planning and the demands that were placed on that planning by transport limitations.

\textsuperscript{54} Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, \textit{Suburban Nation}, p. 36
\textsuperscript{55} Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, \textit{Suburban Nation}, p. 31
\textsuperscript{56} Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, \textit{Suburban Nation}, p. 18
\textsuperscript{57} Dejan Sudjic, \textit{The 100 Mile City} Andre Deutsch, London, 1992, p. 28
\textsuperscript{59} Mohney and Easterling, \textit{Seaside}, p. 58
Australian film director Peter Weir's film *The Truman Show* reflects this in using Seaside for much of its location. Here it is portrayed firstly as a town too good to be true, and secondly as an enormous television production set, a high-contrast caricature of 'ideal' suburbia which emphasises the film's dark satire of American life.\(^{60}\) Here, Weir may well be pairing his own experience of Australian suburbia with the suggestions, arguably inherent in Seaside's built form, of Benthamite surveillance and a suburban private/public dichotomy. This is not to say that the film has revealed a central truth to Seaside; rather that Seaside, in adopting a form without countenancing or addressing the thinking behind that form, lays itself open to such an interpretation.

The official Charter of the Congress of the New Urbanism itself addresses many broad and important issues, countenancing the value of the existing built heritage and ecological issues.\(^ {61}\) There are elements of the garden city ideal ('Farmland and nature are as important to the metropolis as the garden is to the house'), of early town planning interest in the aesthetics of a merging with topography, and the social lever (an expressed wish to 'avoid concentrations of poverty').\(^ {62}\) Yet these ideals are not always addressed in projects which appear in many ways to follow the New Urbanism in style, without substance.

The creators of Stanhope Gardens are travelling in a similar direction to Duany and Plater-Zyberk in their appropriation of older suburban styles for reconfiguring the Australian 'sprawl'. There are other tenets in current Australian planning and urban development which mirror the interwar years. Conditions once again favour the private developer, whose prime considerations are maximisation of profit — in the guise of public service — over the controlled government-sponsored plan. The suburban planner in such a scenario is, once again, required to create an attractive future for the vendor's customers, who must be able to see themselves in the picture created by the planner. That the rhetoric is no longer purely centred around the attraction of the most modern

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\(^{60}\) Peter Weir (dir.) *The Truman Show*, Paramount, 1998  
\(^{62}\) ibid
lifestyle, instead focusing on a modern lifestyle in a ‘retro’ or ‘traditional’ domicile, is perhaps only a minimal difference. Ultimately, the suburban estates of the new century will bear a remarkable similarity to those eighty and ninety years older.

The superficiality of this reinvention of interwar planning styles ironically reflects a criticism of the original garden suburb. This criticism was that the garden suburb used the style of the international, particularly the British, planned suburb designed on social engineering lines but eschewed the social lever element. Seaside repeats this element once again, with no recognition of the social change rhetoric. Once again, planned garden suburbs will be created 'on town planning lines', but this time with no allusion to scientific or social engineering 'town planning' necessary in the bid to make Australian homebuyers accept or desire new housing estates. Rather than suggest the new suburban areas are new and efficient, it will be their 'classic' and archaic appearance that will be the central part of their appeal.

The Heritage of Town Planning

As planning ‘heroes’ such as the Griffins are elevated in the public mind and in the heritage, architectural and planning spheres, the roles of others less vocal about their achievements – for instance, Tuxen – are underrepresented. A study of the Ranelagh estate – a project on which Tuxen and the Griffins worked together – will reveal this. The full report indicates the ways in which planning history, or a particular version thereof, can be shaped to form an argument for the preservation of, in this case, an entire garden suburb design. It pragmatically outlines a simplified version of the Griffin story in the pursuit of a specific aim – the preservation of the suburban area.

The report states that, at a meeting of the National Trust Urban Conservation Committee in early 1983, 20th century estates were made a committee priority; four years later, a proposal for a cluster housing development on a small section of the Ranelagh estate attracted an objection from the Trust, and Mornington Council’s refusal to permit the new subdivision was upheld on appeal in 1988.
In 1997, the National Trust recognised the importance of the Ranelagh estate, adding it to the National Register as an 'outstanding and intact example of Griffin's town planning, still apparent in the road layout, disposition of allotments and reserves, and complementary relationship of plan with topography'. The emphasis here is on Walter Griffin, with both Marion and Tuxen relegated to the background: once again, this is an example of the creation of Walter Griffin as the planning hero of a heroic planning narrative. Ignoring the Glenard and Summit estates at Eaglemont, the report on classification claimed 'the Ranelagh Estate is his only fully realised residential estate [in Victoria] and is comparable with his better-known Castlecrag estate in Sydney.'

The National Trust report commends the Ranelagh estate:

'for design qualities... which have a bearing on the current visual qualities of the estate, such as gently curved and semi-circular roads, the incorporation of open space backing onto many allotments, incorporation of dramatic coastal site', and 'for its ability to demonstrate a phase in Melbourne's inter-war metropolitan expansion, especially through the involvement of surveyor Saxil Tuxen (linked with many Melbourne estates) and developer John Taylor...''

The report repeats Freestone's mistaken linking of the Griffin name with Park Orchards, and presents the following contentious information credited to 'Peter Navaretti, November 1996':

Griffin was not a licensed surveyor so it was necessary for him to work in association with a qualified surveyor in order to get survey plans lodged and approved. In this instance, Griffin worked with Saxil Tuxen, who later incorporated Griffinesque features in his later estates. The extent of Griffin's influence on Tuxen can be gauged at the latter's Park Orchard's estate which was unashamedly a copy of the Ranelagh estate in regards to the country club concept; the extant chalet at Park Orchards was intended to be a pivotal point of community activity.

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63 National Trust of Victoria, File no. G49, National Trust of Victoria Archives, Melbourne
64 ibid.
65 ibid. Peter Navaretti is co-editor, with Jeff Turnbull, of The Griffins in Australia and India, and a noted Griffin expert.
The assumption here is that Tuxen was a Griffin imitator, a figure who Walter was forced to work with due to a bureaucratic specification that insisted Walter himself could not submit survey plans. In fact, all evidence, particularly though not exclusively the hostile evidence of Henry Hudson in the Cerutty papers, suggests that Walter would not have been capable of creating survey plans himself. However, this was and is a far from unusual situation, and Sulman’s 1890 imprecation that an estate should be ‘designed by an architect, laid out by a surveyor, and checked by an engineer’ was a commonplace, at least amongst the architectural fraternity of the 1920s.\textsuperscript{66} The plans for Ranelagh were lodged at the Land Titles Office by George Miller and some of this work may have been done during the time that Tuxen was in the US.\textsuperscript{67}

The attribution of Park Orchards to Tuxen is clearly a point that Griffinites are unwilling to concede. The typifying of Park Orchards as ‘unashamedly a copy… in regards to the country club concept’ is simply confused and confusing, as, firstly, Tuxen was not the facilitator of the country club idea for Park Orchards; secondly, the concept was not the Griffins’, and thirdly, as has been shown in this thesis, the Griffin influence on Tuxen was minimal by the mid-1920s compared to the influence of the Canberra plan on Merrilands seven years before it (see Fig. XXXIV). Johnson’s mention of a ‘Port Orchards’ estate in his text\textsuperscript{68} may have been responsible for Freestone’s original error, which has been repeated in many quarters, including a recent Landscape Heritage Study on the Mt Eagle and Glenard Subdivisions, Eaglemont written and researched by Meredith Dobbie and Fran Jackson in 1995.\textsuperscript{69} It can be tracked as reaching further into the public consciousness with a review of the Turnbull and Naveretti book by Neil Cleerehan in \textit{The Age}, in which Cleerehan claims that the Griffins’ ‘clients ranged from private developers (Ranelagh, Glenard, Milleara),

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item}\textsuperscript{66} Sulman, ‘On the Laying out of Towns’ reprinted in \textit{An Introduction to the Study of Town Planning in Australia}, p. 216
\item}\textsuperscript{67} Plans LP 11938, LP 10716, LP 10718, Land Titles Office, Victoria
\item}\textsuperscript{68} Johnson, \textit{The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin}, p. 33: ‘The City View Estates (or Port Orchard) in East Keilor were partially complete…’
\item}\textsuperscript{69} Dobbie and Jackson, \textit{Landscape Heritage Study: Mt Eagle and Glenard Subdivisions}, page 12, Appendix E
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Fig. XXXIV. Comparison of Milleara and Park Orchards estates. Though the two areas are quite different in design, the concept of grouping a community around a central, street-frontage park area appears in both the Milleara and Park Orchards plans. While Tuxen and Miller's Park Orchards did not contain internal reserves, it does feature footpaths between the outer ring (Ennismore Crescent) and the inner (Dirlton Crescent). Pedestrian access to open space was a key feature of both plans.
municipalities (Eaglemont, Park Orchards, Castlecrag) to cities (Griffiths, Leeton, Lucknow). The point that Clerehan is making with this sentence – that the Griffins planned for a wide range of clients with different backgrounds and intentions – is entirely correct, though Clerehan errs in most of his examples. He goes on to remark that 'Most of these projects stand in stark contrast to the failure of today's planners to keep political intervention at bay,' which is, if not an attempt to argue for the revival of the sole, authoritative planner, a small celebration of the Griffins as staunch auteurs of the planned community on a range of scales.

The Park Orchards plan, featuring as it did one large central park constructed on a high point of the area and contained within concentric boulevard circles, is only similar to Griffin schemes made public before 1925 in its use of curved roads rather than a grid. The first large, central, street-frontage suburban park in an Australian Griffin plan appears at Milleara, which post-dates the Park Orchards scheme.

These errors of fact and interpretation towards the Griffins, or Walter Griffin, as heroes of early planning are a part of the promotion of the planner which is typical in planning history. However, the National Trust report does not simply represent the fact that historians are careless or that they may massage facts in the pursuit of a goal. In the context of a line of argument leading to a heritage report such as this, such actions are perhaps justified. What is also shows is that the Griffin story is still being cast in terms of influence, international ideas, the 'great man' and the heroic planning narrative; in this regard, the Griffin legend remains potent in present-day urban planning discussion.

Tuxen's obscurity relative to the Griffins has resulted in his work being neither highly valued nor recognised as worthy of protection. The Reservoir area in particular has grown to become understood by Melbournites to be a dreary and bland suburb. Melbourne author and columnist Barry Dickins frequently writes about his childhood in Reservoir, using an exaggerated yet laconic form of

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70 Neil Clerehan, 'Capital Works' Age, 20 February 1999, p. 10
71 Clerehan, ibid.
Fig. XXXV. Merrilands in 2001; one of the remaining spaces set aside by Tuxen as internal reserve space. This space, near Hughes Parade, has been given extra street frontage but local government has not come up with a clear usage strategy for the area. Part of the reserve is used by local residents to grow vegetables. Photo: D. Nichols
the condemning language Australian literature has often used to write or speak of the suburbs.

Reservoir is a place of flatness, psychologically, spiritually and geographically. Men are flat who are born there and so are women and greyhounds and ironing boards and even seconds of days... Beautiful in its intricately awful way, but peaceful for me, because there's no pretension, or any hope there of any kind. Just ugly gardens and out-of-registration cars... Reservoir is home.  

Of the Merrilands designed by Saxil Tuxen for T. M. Burke and Co. to be laid out in a large, 'empty' section of the Shire of Preston in 1919, there is now only a street plan and some park reserves (Fig. XXXV), which, of course, was all that the original plan could realistically promise.

The street plan has not substantially altered from Tuxen's original design, and the local government authorities which have been responsible for it – the Shire of Preston became a city in 1921, and the area came under the jurisdiction of the new City of Darebin in 1992 – have responded unsympathetically to the internal reserves in the plan, which they took control of from T. M. Burke in 1962. The councils have not embarked on a strictly systematic policy of destroying these areas, for to do so would require recognition of their intended use. Instead, they have expanded some to become street-frontage parks and sold others as land for the erection of private units or, more commonly, retirement homes. A similar process has taken place in the Leslie Estate, substantially modified in terms of park provision from the original Tuxen design. A large portion of the Tuxen-designed Keon Park was deemed 'useless for housing' by Preston council in 1951, but 'ideal for recreation grounds', which is what the majority of the area has become.

The demographic of the area is much as Tuxen and Burke would have anticipated: it is lower-middle class, consisting mainly of detached housing only a small proportion of which dates from the 1920s. Most of the area, as Burke predicted in his 'talks', was not built on for some time after the original lots were

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72 Barry Dickins, 'The Reservoir of Memory' The Age 13 January 2000, Today section p. 3
73 'Two year plan at Preston: 50 Acres just for Sport' Argus, 9 January 1951, p. 7
sold. This was, of course, the result not of speculators realising the value of their investment but of Depression and war.

Merrilands never became a local government district of its own, as Tuxen appeared to be predicting in his original plan, and in many respects the original plan may be said to have been a failure. It would no doubt be an example of the kind of region Duany, Plater-Zyberk and their co-author of Suburban Nation, Jeff Speck would have in mind when encountering people who, having read of their work, are ‘prepared to move almost anywhere to experience the sense of community described’:

Our first response is to ask the called to consider one of the older towns that has served as our inspiration. Frankly, as residents of traditional communities ourselves, we wonder why someone would want to live in a brand-new development rather than a neighbourhood that has matured over generations of use... it is troubling that people are happily moving into new communities when there are still many old communities that could benefit from new arrivals.74

It is possible, now, to conceive of a time when the Merrilands estate may become attractive to homebuyers as suburbs further south have progressively become more expensive and exclusive. If this were to happen in Merrilands, the area would change, in the way that Northcote and Preston to its south have changed, to become far more affluent than was ever envisaged. Merrilands remains, currently ignored; Sulman’s Matraville estate, by contrast, has been entirely erased, its built heritage the victim of a 1980s bureaucracy that failed to value a housing stock that seemed, at that time, to be simply worn out. The entirety of Sulman’s streetscape was remodelled to a new design.

Perhaps the greatest of Sulman’s and Tuxen’s legacies to their respective cities are the widespread, comparatively uniform planning controls in place throughout both Sydney and Melbourne, which were at the heart of their planning advocacy early in the 20th century. While neither of these men could be said to have been solely responsible for such innovations, their advocacy roles were

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74 Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, Suburban Nation, p. 184
undeniably important in this regard.

In Tuxen's case, it might be more appropriate to consider the lasting influence of the Brotherhood of St Laurence as an organisation in which Tuxen played a constructive part, and this interest in social change may also be traced to his planning work. Aspects of all Tuxen's planning concerns – urban reform, determinism, morality, social justice, economy and even profitability – are reflected in the street pattern of Merrilands. The last two are arguably more T. M. Burke's concern that Tuxen's though, as this thesis has shown, the interests of commerce and planning are usually intertwined, and not always to planning's detriment.

Tuxen planned Merrilands as an experiment in post-First World War community building; the ephemeral nature of that experiment regardless, it appears that it will remain as a 'crystal' in the urban landscape.

Dickins writes of Reservoir's domestic habitat:

My grandfather built our double brick home in Reservoir as a guarantee against life's annoying, ephemeral nature. We may go, but it will remain.\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{Reassessing Tuxen}

The way in which a writer will define planning is, clearly, related to that writer's opinion of or position on the garden city ideal; and his or her opinion of the purpose of planning – perhaps, ultimately, a writer's belief in the degree of social change that planning is, or should be, capable of.

The concentration on the life and work of Saxil Tuxen throughout this thesis, and an approach intended to raise him to a level of importance in the public sphere compatible with Sulman and the Griffins in the interwar years, has been made with the intention of contextualising all four of the thesis subjects in the public – and, simultaneously – commercial milieu of the time in which they

\textsuperscript{76} Dickins, op cit.
were most active. Tuxen, it has been shown, was a complex and important figure in the interwar years. He engaged with many different facets of the planning ethos, beginning with the assumption of technical expertise in the field of surveying, moving to political agitation for changes in local government planning laws, then embracing planning's perceived determinist function; working with the MTPC, and exploring the possibilities of functionalism. Finally, during the Depression, he rejected planning or re-planning as a cure-all, in favour of an altruistic concern for, and deep association with, social change organisations at both a religious and governmental level, with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Slum Abolition Board respectively. As he explored all these areas – in some respects, carried by the flow of events but in others, an innovator – Tuxen showed himself to be an extremely capable and skilled practitioner in the planning field, with the street patterns of Reservoir, as well as numerous other large and small areas of Melbourne, testament to his ability to create 'livable' spaces for all classes.

At the same time, this approach has been made in part to argue for a less reverent and more detached reading of figures such as Walter Griffin; while there can be no doubt that both he and Marion were extraordinary figures for Australian society in the 25 years they lived in this country, and that they were often at cross purposes with the conventions of a British-based society and bureaucracy, they cannot be regarded as apart from that society. Nor can their work be seen as separate from the general commercial world of Australian business and building; apart from the large body of evidence that they executed a large body of work for Australian companies, there is the consideration that, as Vernon has argued, the Griffins were cognisant as early as 1920 that as a result of their commitment to Canberra they did not have the option of re-establishing their American practice.76

Sulman, it has been shown, had a keen sense of the importance of establishing one's own credibility, and validity, as a planning authority. His

76 Vernon, 'An "Accidental" Australian' in The Griffins in Australia and India, pp. 2-14. In City of Light, Vernon remarks that had the Griffins gone back to the US in the 1920s, 'they would have returned to nothing'. B. Mason (dir.) City of Light, op. cit.
actual planning work in suburban subdivisions varied in quality, and it might have been his own importance as a planning advocate and as a professional that gained him commissions in this area, rather than the high quality of his work. If this is so, this tends to emphasise the importance in the interwar years of establishing oneself as an authority.

Successful interwar planners, it has been shown, found it necessary to promote themselves, and to promote planning. As I have demonstrated, to speak of a town planning ‘movement’ is to merely use a catch-all phrase to describe disparate individuals with different ideas and goals, who aligned themselves with the notion of a ‘movement’ only insofar as it suited their purposes. It is nevertheless true that, designating themselves as a planning ‘movement’, they needed to enlist public interest and support. to this end, planners created themselves as advocates and even, to some extent, personalities, in ways that would lend credence to their own planning ideas, and also give import to planning in general.

This thesis is an argument for opening up the field of debate on planning history further, and for releasing certain of history’s actors from the assumptions that have bound them to certain – usually posthumously created, as convenient pigeonholes –‘movements’ or ‘influences’.

Paul Carter writes of Colonel Light that he:

simultaneously avoids the enclosure acts of biography and imperial history. And this enigmatic refusal to have his portrait taken raises the question: where, on what ground, does he then claim to stand??

The same kinds of questions should now be asked of Sulman, the Griffins and Tuxen, who should not be allowed to be captured as representative figures, ciphers, or as leaders or followers, but as important seminal figures in a newly-created professional institution, forming not only the profession but the built environment they experimented on.

Australian planning – even at the early stage of the interwar years – had valid and recogniseable attributes and that, while there can be no
doubt that the field has taken its cues from international developments for most of the century, these particular attributes are nevertheless an integral part of a rich and important aspect of both Australia's, and international urban planning's, history.

77 Carter, *Lie of the Land*, p. 228
APPENDIX
Australian garden suburb subdivisions and projects of John Sulman, Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin, and Saxil Tuxen

The category ‘Location’ suggests closest city nearby. Projects marked with a * are smaller than three suburban streets or 20 housing allotments.

1. 1 Garden suburb projects by John Sulman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Estate name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Rosebery</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Rosebery</td>
<td>Later redesigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Daceyville</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Dacey Garden Suburb</td>
<td>Project redesigned by Foggitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Garden Suburb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>The Warren</td>
<td>Sulman, An Introduction p. 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Gladesville</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sulman, An Introduction p. 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Cook’s River Industrial Area</td>
<td>Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Lithgow</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Littleton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Matraville</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Matraville Garden Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Oatley</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Jew Fish Point Estate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 2 Australian garden suburb projects produced by the Griffin office
The Griffins’ Australian office produced many plans of towns and cities at this time, as well as subdivisions for American clients. This list is confined to Australian suburban subdivisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Estate Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Fairy Harbour</td>
<td>Project/no plans survive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Heidelberg</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>Section of Mount Eagle Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Heidelberg</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Glenard</td>
<td>Section of Mount Eagle Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Garden Suburb</td>
<td>Also known as Croydon Hills and Blue Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Castlecrag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Mount Eliza</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Ranelagh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Covecrag</td>
<td>Partially realised</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Avondale Heights</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>City View</td>
<td>Known in its expanded form as Milleara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Keilor</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Station</td>
<td>Extension of Milleara estate. Partially realised</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Haven</td>
<td>Extension of Castlecrag</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Castlecove</td>
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</table>
### 1.3 Garden suburb projects of Saxil Tuxen/Tuxen and Miller to 1950

Note: as part of his surveying practice, Tuxen executed a large range of subdivision projects. All the following are subdivisions with elements of ‘garden suburb’ planning, unless otherwise noted. Tuxen or Tuxen and Miller’s authorship is implied either by the name of Tuxen or Tuxen and Miller appearing on advertising material or plans, or by Tuxen’s or Miller’s name appearing on plans lodged at the Land Titles Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Estate Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Bittern</td>
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<td>Ritchie’s Paddock</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mornington</td>
<td>Peninsula</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1916</td>
<td>Mt Albert</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Hill-Top</td>
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<td>1918</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>East Kew Heights Estate</td>
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<td>1918</td>
<td>Balwyn</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Eastern Gardens Estate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Essendon</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Mar Lodge Estate</td>
<td>Not a garden suburb</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Oval Estate</td>
<td>Not a garden suburb</td>
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<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Merrilands Estate</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>Burwood</td>
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<td>Newbigin’s Estate</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 streets and internal reserve</td>
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<td>Crib Point</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All streets named for heroes of WWI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mornington</td>
<td>Peninsula</td>
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<td>Springs Estate</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td>Macleod</td>
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<td>Landscape Estate*</td>
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<td>Heathmont</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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<td>Woyna Estate</td>
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<td>Chadstone</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<td>Mt Morton</td>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Gumnut Estate</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<td>Also known as Railway, Panorama and Tramway Estate</td>
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<td>Rosebud</td>
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<td>Springbank – Arthur’s Seat Estate</td>
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<td>North Camberwell</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>‘18 Exclusive Home Sites’*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Rosebud</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Heart of Rosebud Estate</td>
<td>C J De Garis sold allotments and lived on the estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Highton Estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Brighton Tramway Heights</td>
<td>Streets named for prominent garden city and garden suburb projects e.g. Dacey Ave., Welwyn Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Black Rock</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Black Rock</td>
<td>Residential and retail lots</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
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<td>Park Orchards</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Park Orchards</td>
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<td>1925</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Balwyn</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Hertford Crescent</td>
<td>Street extension – five lots</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>Mt Eliza</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Ranelagh Estate</td>
<td>Tuxen and Miller were surveyors for Griffin plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Warrandyte</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Henley Woods</td>
<td>Connection to Yarra emphasised in both name of estate and inclusion of Boulevard</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Black Rock</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Ricketts Point</td>
<td>'The Toorak of the Future'</td>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>The Cluden Estate*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Toorak</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Tyalla*</td>
<td>Subdivision of grounds of mansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Toorak</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Yarradale*</td>
<td>Subdivision of grounds of mansion</td>
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<td>Mount Waverley</td>
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<td>Mount Waverley Gardens Estate</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Moorooduc</td>
<td>Melbourne – Mornington Peninsula</td>
<td>Close to Ranelagh estate</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
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<td>Mountain View Estate</td>
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<td>1933</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
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<td>Stonnington Fields Estate*</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Corsewall Close*</td>
<td>Street</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Aisbett Avenue*</td>
<td>Street</td>
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<td>1943</td>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Tedstone Crescent/Cremorne St.*</td>
<td>Shop and residential sites</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>Lailor</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Peter Lailor Garden Suburb</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Pine Lodge Estate</td>
<td>Redesign of part of Griffins' 'Garden Suburb' estate</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Syndal</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Acton</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Box Hill</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>High School Estate</td>
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