

**THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF
SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES 1788-1980**



Victoria Street, Temora (Author 2010)

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ABSTRACT

The semi-detached house (colloquially known as a semi) is a common, yet ordinary dwelling type in New South Wales. Buildings containing a pair of dwellings attached by a party wall have generally been overlooked by Australian architectural historians, and semis are poorly represented in the statutory heritage registers within New South Wales. Many semis which are listed appear to have heritage significance arising only from their aesthetics – their resemblance to two attached Victorian terraced houses.

This study seeks to show that semis are a dwelling type which is distinct from both terraced houses and detached dwellings. It traces the development of the semi from its roots as a rural double cottage in Britain to its place within the colonial dwelling hierarchy. By analysing the social, economic and political factors which have influenced the development of housing in New South Wales, the study shows how the semi became the ideal vehicle for the speculative builders who provided private rental housing for lower middle class tenants in the suburbs and towns of the state after Federation. The form fell from favour during the interwar period, but during the latter part of the twentieth century semis once again became a pragmatic use of residential land, and a popular dwelling type.

The role of architects in this development is examined, and the way in which the garden city movement facilitated the transition of the semi down the social scale into working class public housing. The attitudes towards semis and terraced houses between the wars are compared, with new evidence provided for why no new terraces were constructed in New South Wales after the First World War. The post-Second World War regulatory framework, including rent control and de facto subdivision, is shown to have transformed the stock of semis from being respectable investments for widows and spinsters into a way for lower middle class tenants to participate in the Great Australian Dream of home ownership.

Based on the evidence of the social and historical factors underpinning the development of semis in New South Wales, the study challenges the view that semis have no heritage or cultural value other than some limited aesthetic value. An assessment of significance gives rise to a discussion about how the community and heritage professionals perceive the heritage value of modest, suburban buildings. The vexed question of whether semis are worthy of conservation is considered, as well as the threats posed by unsympathetic alterations and additions. While change is inevitable, it is hoped that if the history and heritage of their semis is better understood, owners may make more appropriate choices when implementing those changes.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- I. This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
- II. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used
- III. The thesis does not exceed the word length for this degree
- IV. No part of this work has been used for the award of another degree
- V. This thesis meets the *University of Sydney's* Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.



Pamela Lofthouse

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

ADB – Australian Dictionary of Biography

AGNSW – Art Gallery of NSW

CBD – Central Business District

DCP – Development Control Plan

ICO – Interim Conservation Order

ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites

KAVHA – Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (Norfolk Island)

LPI – Land and Property Information, NSW Land and Property Management Authority

ML – Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW)

NAA – National Archives of Australia

NLA – National Library of Australia

NSW – New South Wales

NSWHD – NSW Heritage Division

PCO – Permanent Conservation Order

SCC – Sydney City Council

Semi – Semi-detached house

SHFA – Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

SLNSW – State Library of NSW

SMH – Sydney Morning Herald

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Trevor Howells, my Associate Supervisor, friend and mentor, who died in July 2015. Without him I would not be working and researching in the field of heritage conservation.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Pairs of attached dwellings in New South Wales (NSW) are known as semi-detached houses or, more commonly, as semis. They are found in urban, suburban and rural town settings, although the relative numbers vary. This study was prompted by the observation that many pairs of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century semis in the suburbs and towns of NSW are being degraded with inappropriate alterations to one of the dwellings, thereby destroying the integrity and symmetry of the building as a whole. Other observations made by the author during many years working as a heritage consultant include:

- There are large numbers of heritage projects involving terraced houses, and very few for semis, creating a lack of heritage listings;
- Those semis which are on a heritage register are typically described as “terraces” and the assessments of cultural significance (where they exist) tend to be narrowly focussed on the aesthetics of architectural form and style, or on age, because no social and historical information is available;
- Of hundreds of land titles records for attached dwellings (terraced houses and semis) accessed during the preparation of heritage reports, almost all show that they were subdivided into individual titles during the 1950s and 1960s;
- Until these subdivisions, almost all terraced houses and semis were occupied by tenants; and
- Some suburbs of Sydney have mostly terraced housing and no semis, some suburbs and NSW country towns have a few semis within streetscapes otherwise dominated by detached (free standing) housing, while other suburbs have no terraced houses or semis.

By exploring these and other factors, this research seeks to provide a knowledge base which may give rise to currently unrecognised importance, and strengthen the management of change to the stock of semis in NSW.

1.2 WHY STUDY ORDINARY HOUSING?

Traditionally, there has been an element of snobbery within the heritage industry, which in NSW is dominated by architects. The ordinary, relatively new, or working class aspects of the built environment have tended not to be assessed by heritage experts as being heritage, despite the fact that they may be highly valued by their communities. For example, an ironic cover headline appeared in 2006:

BLACKPOOL? WORLD HERITAGE?

YOU CAN NOT BE SERIOUS!

(British Archaeology, September-October 2006)

However, this attitude is being questioned and challenged. John Schofield argues that:

Increasingly those employed or engaged in heritage management practice see the past as something we (society) actively engage with, not something only a select group of heritage managers pontificate upon and 'manage'. That's what the heritage should be about; the everyday, the everywhere and something for (and of) everybody. The time for elite heritage has long passed, if it ever really existed at all. (Schofield 2009, 112)

Being ordinary, according to Daniel Maudlin,

... has been problematic for an art historical tradition centred upon the study of great works by known architects based on archival evidence. However, when considered not as works of art but as artefacts of material culture, small buildings offer the opportunity to establish a new relationship between architecture and social and economic history; they can offer new perspectives in the analysis and interpretation of building practices, architectural form, style and the interaction between social practices, manners and designed spaces. Architecture can then be interpreted as an indicator of popular cultural values and social practices. A collation of physical evidence allows for the analysis of undocumented, ordinary buildings in the same design context as well-documented works of architecture. (Maudlin 2009, 5)

Several architectural historians have turned their attention to the simple, uncomplicated dwellings which sit anonymously within cities, towns and suburbs of England.¹ Armed with social and historical information about ordinary housing, heritage professionals are able to make more informed heritage assessments of the built environment. John Schofield has researched:

... those places people feel attached to, often evoking more personal meanings and values, amounting to a more 'intimate engagement' than state-led mechanisms for

¹ For example Peter Guillery's 2004 work, *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London: a social and architectural history*.

heritage management currently allow... [T]hese intimate engagements are often with mundane or 'everyday' places, as opposed to those that are deemed to be special, and those typically afforded statutory protection. (Schofield 2009, 93)

In Australia Philip Goad poses the question of which everyday buildings should be conserved, when faced with their ubiquitous presence in the community. He considers "unloved and undefended" post-war public buildings, housing commission estates, Pettit and Sevitt project homes, high-rise flats, walk-up flats, nurses' quarters and "repetitive houses". Given the problem of numbers and a "lack of visual or spatial charm", he asks:

How does one distinguish between which one of hundreds of baby health centres, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and municipal libraries is worthy of retention or which buildings might be let go? Which community is more worthy than another? Should one preserve one of these buildings, a series, or none at all? This is not a new challenge and can equally apply to buildings and structures of the nineteenth century in Australia but the difference is that in terms of post-World War 2 architecture, one is dealing inevitably with much greater numbers and with an idiom that many people feel is unremarkable despite the often extremely strong community attachment to buildings, say like the local tennis or bowling club. The reality, clearly, is that one must accept loss but make careful and considered judgement and also run the real risk that by 'letting go' a library, kindergarten or maternal health and welfare centre, that one might be taking away fragments of a larger community whole, in many cases removing a key part of a significant precinct of, in themselves, architecturally unremarkable small community buildings. (Goad 2013, 20)

Links have been made between understanding the social history of ordinary dwellings and their conservation:

Understanding the context in which these houses were built – the people who first lived there, their occupations, the services that were, or were not, available, and the fashions that dominated particular periods – gives a greater insight into why they look as they do and, it is hoped, an even greater impetus to the urge to preserve them. (Barrett and Phillips 1988, 7)

Just being ordinary does not mean lacking in cultural significance. By studying ordinary housing, more informed decisions can be made on the level of that significance.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

Philip Goad hopes that by assessing the social and historical significance of modern buildings, there could be a "beneficial effect on the future social sustainability of these

buildings and their precincts" (Goad 2013, 20). By researching and studying semis, in themselves a relatively common yet unremarkable part of the suburban landscape, there could be a similar beneficial effect. Goad goes on to explain the impact which recent typological studies have had:

Without doubt, there is a role for typological studies, for commissioned and detailed national studies of building types over an extended historical period. Ross Thorne's comprehensive 1981 study of Australia's cinemas was seminal in this regard, as was Jennifer Taylor's Australian Heritage Commission report (1994) for a national study of high-rise office buildings from 1945 until 1975 and its subsequent publication as a monograph (Thorne 1981, Taylor and Stewart 1994, Taylor 2001). More recently Caroline Butler-Bowden and Charles Pickett's book (2007) on the development of apartments in Australia has opened the field on Australian urban history in a way that no other book on housing has done previously. Now there is a dire need for national studies on postwar building types such as schools, churches, factories to name just a few, as a way of assembling a body of shared knowledge as the basis for serious comparative analysis. (Goad 2013, 23)

Semis are worthy of study for several reasons. Most of them still fulfil their original function of providing a home for people, particularly if the older examples have been maintained and updated. As Richard Apperly states in his study of Sydney houses, "any study of history enables man to understand more clearly how he has arrived at his present situation. Armed with this understanding, he may then more confidently tackle the challenge of the future" (Apperly 1972, 5). And if we do not discover and understand the cultural significance of the stock of semis, we risk losing them to demolition and unsympathetic changes.

Apperly also warns that in relation to the study of Sydney's interwar houses:

Close-range involvement with a subject can generate enthusiasms for things which are not of major importance in relation to the total field of man's endeavours. It is thus necessary to maintain a balanced view of this relationship between the local and the general, and to realise that this chapter of Sydney's development can never be more than a footnote to the history of architecture. Be that as it may, it is man's nature to record and assess the past, and in the recording to delight in the discoveries, both large and small, which are made. (Apperly 1972, 5)

This sentiment applies equally to the study of semis. It is worth noting here that Apperly's thesis on Sydney's houses makes only passing mention of semis. He suggests that:

The semi is an example of the rough-and-ready functionalist logic which the Australian building industry often applies to a problem for which there is no easy answer. ... In trying to provide the best of both worlds (i.e. the terrace and the detached house), the semi ultimately failed to satisfy anyone. It was not a large enough unit to provide a cohesive street pattern, and the individual occupant felt more like a Siamese twin than a fully independent person. (Apperly 1972, 5)

This judgement (by an architect) is harsh. The "Siamese twin" probably preferred a suburban semi to a run-down terraced house in the inner suburbs of Sydney.

A dwelling which may have been perfectly suitable in one period may be considered inadequate or even unfashionable in another. Changes in attitudes and expectations, as well as changes in household composition and behaviour, all pose threats to the conservation of dwellings. Heritage listing is one mechanism to ensure that some examples of semis are conserved. Heritage conservation in NSW is underpinned by a framework of heritage listings, at world, national, state and local community levels. Semis, based on their proportion of the housing stock in NSW, and in the 152 local municipalities, are currently significantly under-represented in State heritage listings, and poorly represented at a local level.² There is no world or national listing for a NSW semi. Rebecca Hawcroft has investigated the work of migrant architects practicing modern architecture in Sydney between 1930 and 1960, noting that the "architecture of this group can be seen as 'unloved heritage', in that very few examples are heritage-listed" (Hawcroft 2013, 39). A similar inference may be made about semis; that they are under-represented in heritage listings because they are unloved by the heritage profession. It might also be argued that semis are neither loved nor unloved – they are just ignored.

The problem is being able to recognise an important example of a semi. A recommendation to heritage list a building must be based on a structured assessment which addresses specific criteria including its historical, social, aesthetic and technical importance. Most of the semis which are currently heritage listed in NSW have been assessed for their aesthetic value only. Only with readily available information about the historical development of semis and their social context can significant examples be properly identified.

The information in this study may provide a basis for improved conservation outcomes in NSW, both within and outside the statutory heritage framework. The aims of the study are to:

1. Describe the aesthetic characteristics of semis in NSW;
2. Discover the historical context of the stock of semis in NSW;

² Based on the NSW Heritage Division Online Heritage Inventory of listed items, and the proportion of semis in the housing stock of NSW. See Section 9.1.

3. Place semis into their economic, social and political context;
4. Reveal the role and importance of the semi in the development of housing in NSW;
and
5. Assess the cultural significance of semis in NSW.

Semis form an integral part of the suburban landscape, and the story of their development deserves to be told as part of their broader suburban context.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research seeks to redefine Australia's housing typologies to recognise the position of the semi-detached dwelling type in NSW. The historical, aesthetic, social and technical characteristics of semis will be identified and compared with those of terraced housing and detached housing.

The questions to be answered include:

- When and why were semis built in NSW, who designed them, who built them, who purchased them and who lived in them?
- What determined their distribution within the suburbs and towns of NSW?
- What factors have influenced the rises and falls in the popularity of semis when compared to other dwelling types such as detached houses, terraced houses and apartments?
- What caused the subdivisions of terraces and pairs of semis during the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed them from rental housing into mostly owner/occupied housing?
- What is the cultural significance of the semi-detached dwelling type in NSW and do semis have unique characteristics which should be conserved?
- Is the lack of heritage listings because semis have insufficient cultural value, or is their significance not understood by the community and heritage consultants?

1.5 DWELLING TYPE

It is commonly understood that "type" refers to:

... an object or artifact that belongs to a class or group that brings together others with similar attributes. In architecture, 'type' is commonly understood as buildings grouped by their use, that is schools, hospitals, prisons, churches and so on. However, this understanding is limiting as the use of a building has been shown to be independent from its building and evolves in time. A warehouse can be turned into apartments, and a Georgian terrace into a school. What this means is that to

understand 'type' via use tells us little about the shared characteristics and traits of the artifacts or objects that belong to the group in question, hence impeding against (sic) the knowledge that could have been otherwise acquired. (Lee 2011)

Rather than being based on "use", the concept of type in architectural theory, which was introduced in 1825 by Quatremère de Quincy, is "the idea of an element which ought itself to serve as a rule for the model" (de Quincy 2000). Christopher Lee has summarised the various theories put forward by scholars since then (Lee 2011), including a practical approach outlined by Giulio Carlo Argan:

The birth of a "type" is therefore dependent on the existence of a series of buildings having between them an obvious formal and functional analogy. (Argan 1963)

Michael Zanardo provides an example of the terrace as a building type:

The terrace type is characterised primarily by its party wall condition, that is, it is built hard to both subdivision boundaries. This *idea* of the terrace allows for innumerable permutations without limiting its potential. Terraces can be narrow or wide; one storey or more; a shop or a residence; have a pitched or skillion roof and still be a terrace. The terrace type has also come to include different place-specific cultural ideas over time. In Sydney, these meanings might be 'workers' housing', 'main street strip shop' or 'well-located gentrified accommodation'. Thus, an understanding of architectural typologies is powerful; it allows architects to select an appropriate solution in broad principle, and adjust it to suit specific circumstances. Types become a design 'shorthand' for more complex architectural ideas; they embody the interrelated architectural strategies, arrangements and dimensions within the design of buildings. (Zanardo 2009, 2)

A subset of the terrace as a building type is the terraced house as a dwelling type. In the past it was common in Australia to refer to four basic dwelling types – detached, semi-detached and terraced/row/town houses, and apartments/flats/units. More recently, the consideration of semi-detached housing as a distinct dwelling type has become less common, with semis generally included with terraced houses. For example, the ABS reports "Dwelling Type" as "occupied" or "unoccupied". The bureau's data for "Dwelling Structure" is collected and reported in four categories:

- Separate house
- Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc
- Flat, unit or apartment

- Other dwelling³.

(Census 2011)

In the University of Sydney Library catalogue there are multiple sub-headings for the three subject categories “terrace houses”, “apartments” and “houses”. Semi-detached houses are not a subject.

Until 2005 the property section of the weekend *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on the cheapest and most expensive dwellings in four categories – house, terrace, semi and apartment. Semis were later merged with houses in the reports. Today dwelling sales are reported in only two categories – houses and apartments. The data is collected and provided to the newspaper by Australian Property Monitors, who have confirmed that they still collect data under the four categories⁴ but that they “do not have the requirement to report on each type separately” (Odi Reuveni pers. comm. December 2014). A similar company, Residex, collects statistics for residential properties in three categories – house, unit and vacant land (Connie Kwong pers. comm. December 2014).

Comments made to the author,⁵ books which do not differentiate between terraced houses and semis, and the many misleading descriptions of semis on statutory heritage lists all suggest that there is a widespread belief within the community and the heritage profession in NSW that semis are the same dwelling type as terraced houses. This is discussed further in Chapter 2. However, semis still seem to be recognised overseas as one of four basic dwelling types.⁶ A competition for young British architects in 1999 aimed to “stimulate ideas for low cost housing based on one of the major housing typologies – the semi-detached house” (*Architecture Today*, March 1999, 14).⁷ Muhammad Haider in his analysis of the spatial choice of housing builders in the greater Toronto area disaggregated the housing by structural type – detached, semi-detached, apartments and row-link housing (Haider 2003).

This study is based on the assumption that a deeper understanding of dwelling types is crucial for the conservation of significant cultural values. Its hypothesis is that a pair of semis is not merely a terrace with only two dwellings, but that the physical attributes and historical development of semis make them a distinct dwelling type in NSW.

³ Such as a caravan, tent etc.

⁴ If the dwelling type is specified in the advertisement for the sale of a property.

⁵ By way of example, when speaking about this research, the author was often provided with suggestions about an interesting “row of semis” in a particular place.

⁶ Census data in Canada is collected for “single detached”, “semi-detached”, “row house”, “apartment in building of at least 5 storeys” and “apartment in building less than 5 storeys”.

⁷ Many publications use the term “housing typologies” instead of “housing types”. This study assumes typology is a process or the science of type, and will therefore use the term “housing type”.

1.6 THE TERM “SEMI-DETACHED”

The term “semi-detached”, which will be used throughout this thesis to describe a pair of dwellings attached by one shared party wall, was first used in England during the nineteenth century. Its exact origins remain unclear, although as a term to describe a state of not being quite separate, its use was at least as early as 1816, when in relation to smut in wheat:

...there remain only semi-detached globules, which would, probably, have become seeds... (*The Monthly Magazine* Vol 42, London, 1816, 298)

The Online Etymology Dictionary suggests that the term's use for houses dates from 1845 (although the supporting quotation is from 1852):

semi-detached (adj.)

in reference to houses, 1845, from **semi-** + past participle of **detach** (v.).

The "Detached House" bears its peculiar characteristic on its front; it stands alone, and nothing more can be said about it; but with the "semi-detached house" there is a subtle mystery, much to be marvelled at. Semi-detached! Have the party-walls between two houses shrunk, or is there a bridge connecting the two, as in Mr. Beckford's house in Lansdown Crescent, Bath? A semi-detached house may be a house with a field on one side and a bone-boiling factory on the other. Semi-detached may mean half-tumbling to pieces. I must inquire into it. ["Houses to Let," in "Household Words," March 20, 1852]

The Oxford English Dictionary's earliest source is 1859:

Semi-de'tached (adj. and n.)

a. Partially detached.

1859 *Archaeol. Cant.* II. p. xxxix, The foundations of the villa were very extensive including one semi-detached apartment.

However, *The Times* in 1842 advertised for rent a “semi-detached gentleman's residence” with a coach-house and pleasure grounds (*The Times* 7 September 1842, 2).⁸

The renowned English etymologist Mark Forsyth, when asked by the author whether he could determine any earlier usage, replied, “I can't beat 1842 by any of my normal methods. The

⁸ Located by searching www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

OED starts at 1859, but research shows that it was in common use by then” (Mark Forsyth pers. comm. January 2014).

The pattern books of the early nineteenth century (see Section 3.5) use the terms “double cottages”, “double villas” or “villas” to describe semis. In 1850 the architect and engineer Robert Scott Burn provided a “plan of a semi-detached cottage” (Burn 1850, 193) but most pattern books continued to use “double cottages” for rural pairs and “villas” for middle class suburban semis.

The English architectural historian John Burnett suggested that the term semi-detached was coined by the developers of the Eyre Estate in St John’s Wood (Burnett 1986, 107) where the building of the first double cottages began in 1809 and most of the estate was developed during the 1840s. He provided no source for this assertion. In her definitive book about the estate, Mireille Galinou notes the early preference by Walpole Eyre for the term “cottage” and later “villa”, and credits the estate with making the two terms interchangeable within a middle class suburb (Galinou 2010, 8). However, in the extensive archival material accessed by Galinou for her book, the first usage of “semi-detached” which she found was in an agreement with Edward Davies in June 1851 (Mireille Galinou pers. comm. August 2014; Eyre Estate 2651/60, Westminster City Archives). By 1863 the terms “detached” and “semi-detached” were consistently used in the Eyre Letter Books.

An online search of Australian newspapers⁹ reveals that the first use of the term “semi-detached” was in early 1852, when the *Sydney Morning Herald* advertised for sale:

O’Connell Town – 2 semi-detached brick cottages, verandah, and well, good frontage
(*SMH*, 14 February 1852, 1).

While further research is required to pinpoint when the term was first used, and who coined its use for double dwellings, by the mid nineteenth century it was being used in Britain to describe a middle class urban double villa, but not a working class urban or rural double cottage. Being called semi-detached implied a superior dwelling to a double cottage. In 1853 the prominent architect William Tite, in evidence given during the debate surrounding the *Hampstead Junction Railway Bill*, was asked whether some houses were semi-detached cottages. He replied, “I should say that semi-detached suggests something better. They are houses built in pairs” (cited in Murphy 1977, 14). The term “semi-detached house” was later used to describe any dwelling which was one of an attached pair, large or small.

⁹ Performed using <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper?q=%20>

1.7 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In 1961 John O'Brien and Peter Balmford wrote that:

If a great deal of work remains to be done for the study of 19th century domestic architecture in Australia, it is largely because of this pre-occupation with the example which is 'good of its kind' – with the large, imposing, architect-designed house. It is this sort of house of which some contemporary or near contemporary account is most likely to have survived, or some illustration, or perhaps a plan; and this has also tended to encourage students of the subject to limit their attention to the mansion or comparatively large and elaborate dwelling in both city and country. (Balmford and O'Brien 1961, 379)

Since then there have been many publications about housing in Australia. However, with few exceptions, the focus remains on large, detached houses. Speculative, ordinary, detached houses have tended to be overlooked, although the authors of *Australian Cottages* seek to "champion the simplest and still perhaps the most common form of our regrettably undervalued heritage of 'commonplace' housing" (Moore *et al.* 1989, 6). Their book contains a brief history of the cottage, with reference to its development in Britain, and illustrates its adaptation in Australia. Issues for the conservation of cottages are also addressed.

Small, detached houses may have been hardly mentioned in the literature, but attached housing (terraced houses and semis) is often omitted completely. Although semi-detached houses fit neatly into the description of cottages, they are not mentioned in *Australian Cottages*. The introduction to the collection of essays *A History of European Housing in Australia* admits that, in seeking to trace the Australian house and home as "both the stereotype and the dominant and distinctive form: the free-standing, family-defined residential unit, primarily in an urban or suburban environment", the book makes only passing reference to multi-unit dwellings or flats, because "this form has only become significant in relatively recent times" (Troy 2000, 2). It makes no reference to the omission of attached housing.

The relative academic neglect of dwelling types other than detached houses has been remedied to some extent overseas since the late twentieth century. In 1982 Stefan Muthesius published the acclaimed *The English Terraced House*. The author claimed that this was the first book to chart the development of the English terraced house from the late Georgian period to Edwardian times. In his introduction Muthesius asks, "Do we need a book with illustrations of what we can see every day in almost every street?" In explaining his reasons for why we do, he says:

The obvious often escapes notice, precisely because we take it for granted. Our attention needs to be drawn to the individual features, as well as to the story of the house as a whole. (Muthesius 1982, x)

This work was followed by several publications on aspects of terraced housing, both in Britain and Australia (for example Turner 1995, Howells and Morris 1999). Trevor Howells illustrates several examples of semis, and states that such dwellings were “a house type popular in the Federation period” (Howells and Morris 1999, 67); but in his discussion he does not differentiate between semis and terraced houses.

Muthesius’ work on terraced houses was preceded by some research into the ordinary housing of Britain. Maurice Barley diverged from the typical subjects of post-war architectural historians (such as country mansions and village churches) to study sixteenth and seventeenth century rural housing (Barley 1961). At that time it was acceptable for archaeologists to study the remains of small houses, but Barley suspected that his work with vernacular dwellings of the lower classes would be seen by other academics as “historical slumming” (Barley 1961, xvii).

Since Barley’s study, British researchers have considered a broader range of dwellings and there have been a handful of books written on the subject of English and Irish semis. In *The Semi-detached House – its Place in Suburban Housing*, James D. Murphy discusses the place of semis in Dublin, using documentary sources as well as a survey of house builders (Murphy 1977). Of particular interest in this study is a short historical overview of the development of the semi-detached form, although the focus of the research is the post-Second World War expansion of Dublin.

In 1981 Oliver, Davis and Bentley analysed the English interwar semi in *Dunroamin: the suburban semi and its enemies*. They considered “the conflict of values of those who choose to live in the English suburbs, and of those who work in the professional and educational milieu of architecture and planning” (Oliver *et al.* 1981, 9). The latter groups comprise people who have traditionally chosen to ignore or denigrate ordinary housing. Indeed Peter Guillery observes that the *Dunroamin* research and analysis was ignored for 25 years, and he suggests that the interwar English semi has been both “feted and ignored” by researchers (Guillery 2011, 3).

Alan A. Jackson in *Semi-detached London – suburban development, life and transport, 1900-1939* (1991) provides the background to and influences on the early twentieth century garden suburbs around London, concentrating on the influence of public transport which allowed suburban expansion on a new scale. During this period the terraced house, which had previously been the primary rental housing form, fell from favour and the middle classes

aspired to a semi with a garden and space. Jackson does not consider the historical development of the English semi.

The book *Semi-detached and Terraced Houses* (2006), edited by Christian Schittich and translated from German, briefly touches on attached housing as being a sustainable alternative to detached housing, but otherwise concentrates on providing details of more than 20 modern projects in Europe.

It was not until Finn Jensen published his book *The English Semi-detached House* in 2007 that English semis were given a comprehensive social and historical context. This work was to semis what Muthesius' ground-breaking 1982 book was to terraced houses. Yet the entrenched negative attitudes towards the ubiquitous suburban English semi, which had buried *Dunroamin*, also ensured that Jensen's research was not widely noticed. In 2012 Jensen published *Modernist Semis and Terraces in England* which, like his earlier work, was meticulously researched and well-illustrated.

Perth, the West Australian capital, experienced its boom time expansion much later than Sydney. There, the terraced house is relatively rare, yet semis form a significant part of its inner suburbs. In *The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)*, Ian Kelly provides many examples of semis which form part of the streetscapes of suburbs such as Subiaco. He details the social, political and regulatory influences on the development of Perth's housing, and briefly outlines the role of the speculative builders, but does not compare the different dwelling types in detail.

Daryl McCormick (2006) analyses the risks associated with the property development process in Adelaide. His research was based on two case studies, both of which were pairs of semis. However, his analysis was not dependent upon that dwelling type – rather the case studies were chosen only because he had access to information about those projects. In other research in Adelaide, James Cunnew studied how the use of semis in urban consolidation affected amenity in the suburb of Unley (Cunnew 2002).

Within NSW, in rare cases, there is a small amount of historical information on the Inventory Sheet used to support the statutory heritage listing of a pair of semis.¹⁰ However, this tends to be secondary material which has been copied from broader heritage studies, and seldom provides primary sources. The non-statutory listings by the National Trust (NSW) contain more verifiable historical details.

¹⁰ Inventory Sheets contain the assessment of heritage significance and the Statement of Significance for a building. Most local councils have made this information available via the NSW Heritage Division Online Inventory. Many Inventory Sheets are incomplete in NSW.

Many comparative studies of building types (mostly unpublished) have been carried out by the National Trust (NSW), the NSW Heritage Division and heritage professionals within NSW. These cover a wide range of subjects including control towers, post offices, shearing sheds, air raid shelters and so on. Yet a lengthy literature search has failed to locate any Australian research or publications on the topic of semis.

If assembling a body of shared knowledge about the architectural heritage of NSW is as important as the previously mentioned academics have suggested, then there is a need to identify, understand, document, assess and manage the stock of semis in NSW. Given the dearth of research specifically on the topic of semi-detached housing in Australia, this study will canvass a broad range of existing information about the development of housing in Australia, and extract those aspects which can be directly applied to the semis of NSW. By also identifying and exploring other aspects which are unique to semis, thereby filling some gaps in the published materials, an overall picture of the dwelling type will be drawn.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This research builds on the material gathered, and the unanswered questions arising, during the preparation of a small, unpublished research report into the history and heritage of semis in Mosman, a suburb of Sydney (Lofthouse 2004). The extremely limited scope of that research has been expanded to include other places in NSW. The study also incorporates by reference some of the material gathered during the preparation of an MA dissertation on the history of English semis (Lofthouse 2012), by considering how those British influences were translated into NSW.

The basic modes of enquiry for the study were text-based historical research and field trips within Sydney and in selected rural locations in NSW. Primary sources were used where possible, in archives and libraries (State Library of NSW, State Records NSW, National Trust (NSW), Land and Property Information, Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Royal Australian Historical Society Library, various Local Studies Libraries) and online sources. The text-based data collection also included secondary sources such as theses, books, journals, government reports, heritage reports and listings, magazines and newspapers. Personal communications with experts have also been used.

The primary methodology used was interpretive analysis, with the information sorted and presented in a descriptive format. In some cases there was quantitative data available; this was considered with the other factors, but the study does not include quantitative methods.

The research covers both the societal and morphological aspects of semis. The former places semis in their broader context, including economic, political and cultural factors, and

influences such as materials, transport and technological advances. The spatial and built forms of semis are considered without a detailed architectural analysis of their function.

1.9 LIMITATIONS

The colony of NSW initially included what are now the states of Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land). The study area for this thesis is the current Australian state of NSW. It includes cities (such as Sydney, Parramatta and Armidale) and their suburbs, as well as smaller municipalities, shires and towns throughout NSW. It is not an exhaustive study of all the semis within each suburb or municipality, nor was any attempt made to identify a fully representative sample of suburbs and towns, or semis within those areas. However, the study uses a wide range of representative examples and case studies from various locations to illustrate specific points and themes.

The thesis is a social history, not an architectural history. The author is neither an architect nor an architectural historian; therefore the analyses of fabric, building techniques and architectural qualities are presented in general terms only.

The semis which are discussed are not necessarily the most culturally significant (aesthetically, historically or socially) in NSW because the study does not survey and assess all individual semis. This study is not the stories of the individuals who lived in these dwellings, nor does it focus on the fabric of individual buildings as an architectural history might do. It explores the social and historical context, including other dwelling types such as terraces and apartments, to discover the facts surrounding who designed and built semis, when they were built, why they were built and the types of people who lived in them.

The study excludes buildings which contain a dwelling attached to spaces with other functions such as a shop or a hotel, and buildings which were later subdivided into two dwellings. Only buildings which were constructed as a pair of attached dwellings are considered.

The landscaping and gardens surrounding the semis of NSW are not considered, and details about interiors are restricted to some floor plans.

1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis aims to provide information in each of the categories necessary to assess heritage significance, based on the methodology outlined in the *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS¹¹ Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013a)* and the NSW Heritage Division guidelines for the assessment of significance in NSW (NSW Heritage Office

¹¹ International Council on Monuments and Sites

2001). Chapter 2 covers the aesthetics of form, style and fabric. Chapters 3 to 8 are concerned with social and historical aspects, the two areas which are commonly lacking when heritage assessments are made. To provide context, each chapter is preceded by a short introduction outlining the issues, events and statistics pertaining to that period. The historical chapters are structured chronologically.

While the scope of the thesis is NSW from 1788 to 1980, important British influences (including pre-1788) are discussed in Chapter 3 (sourced primarily from Lofthouse 2012) and post-1980 incarnations of the semi are also included where they are relevant. Based on their physical attributes and the social history, the semis of NSW are assessed (in Chapter 9) for cultural significance against the NSW Heritage Division criteria. The conservation issues arising from this significance are then discussed in Chapter 10.

The thesis contains a large number of illustrations, which has created a lengthy List of Figures. Because of its size, the list has been moved from the Table of Contents into Appendix 1. Many examples of specific semis are used within the sections to illustrate particular points, and where possible those same examples are used in later discussions to develop an understanding of the various factors impacting over time on the semi-detached dwelling type.

1.11 CASE STUDIES

Although the social history is presented chronologically, several underlying themes became evident during the research. These historical themes are discussed as part of the heritage assessment in Chapter 9, as well as being illustrated by 14 case studies (Appendix 2). The selection of the subjects for the case studies was not based on random sampling, or a systematic survey. Rather they have been chosen to provide depth and additional detail to illuminate the major historical themes, and thus to supplement the chronological historical evidence.

With the exception of Case Study 10, which looks at a large regional town and why it has so few semis, the case studies do not provide any in-depth analysis of complete towns or whole suburbs. However, the Sydney suburb of Mosman has been researched extensively as part of the study, and as well as several themes being covered in Case Studies 7, 11 and 13, the information is used throughout the thesis to provide a comprehensive picture of a suburb which has a relatively large proportion of semis.

2.0 THE SEMI-DETACHED DWELLING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the important steps in the assessment of heritage significance is to investigate and analyse the fabric of a building. Rather than focussing on a single place or building, this chapter looks at representative examples from the stock of NSW semi-detached houses, in order to reveal characteristics which they have in common, and aspects which may differentiate them from other dwelling types such as terraced houses and detached houses.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

The terminology surrounding attached dwellings is confusing. The terms used in NSW are often different to those used in other Australian states and overseas. Even within NSW attached housing is known by a variety of names. In this study, the terminology adopted will be based on the statutory definitions applicable to NSW, or the terminology applicable to the historical period under discussion. Where these differ from the current terminology in general use, this will be noted.

A single dwelling-house means:

A dwelling used or adapted for use solely for habitation by not more than one family and includes a dwelling in a row of 2 or more dwellings attached to each other such as are commonly known as semi-detached or terrace buildings, but does not include a flat. (*NSW Local Government Act 1993*, as amended 20 May 2014, Dictionary)

The phrase "attached to each other" in this definition is important in defining semi-detached and terraced houses. Two dwellings which abut each other are not attached, unless they share a party wall. A **party wall** is:

A wall severed vertically and longitudinally with separate ownership of the severed portions, and with cross easements entitling each of the persons entitled to a portion to have the whole wall continued in such manner that each building supported thereby shall have the support of the whole wall. (*NSW Conveyancing Act 1919*, as amended 20 May 2014, Part 22, Section 181b (1))

A building which contains three or more single dwelling-houses attached by party walls is a **terrace**.¹² Each of the dwellings in a terrace has traditionally been known as a **terraced**

¹² Buildings which contain multiple dwellings under Strata Title are excluded from the definitions of attached housing. See Section 8.5 for more information about Strata Title.

house. Today the terms “terrace house” or just “terrace” are commonly used to describe the individual dwelling. Appendix 3 contains a more detailed discussion of the terminology surrounding terraced houses.

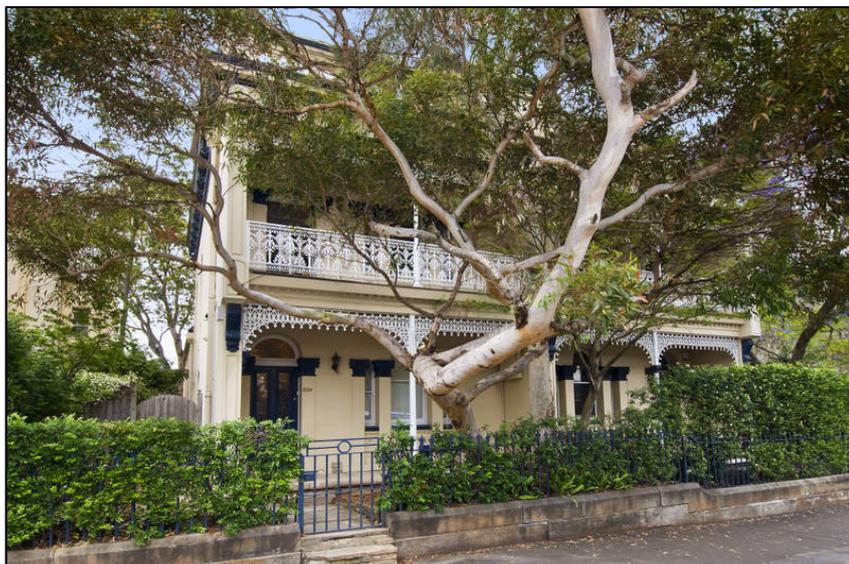
A building which contains two single dwelling-houses attached by a party wall is a **semi-detached building**. Each of the dwellings in such a building is called a **semi-detached house**. In NSW this type of dwelling is commonly known (and was known historically) as a **semi**.

Another feature which distinguishes a terrace and a pair of semis from buildings which merely abut each other is the façade. Detached abutting houses each tend to have an individual façade which differs from those of its neighbours. Each dwelling in a terrace or a pair of semis is visually linked; each has a front which forms part of an integrated façade for the whole of the building. This diminishes the individuality of each dwelling within the building.

In Tasmania, and sometimes in NSW, semis are called **conjoined houses**. In South Australia, a single-storey semi is known as a **maisonette**, while a two-storey semi-detached dwelling is a semi. Western Australia uses the term **duplex**, for both a semi-detached building and a semi-detached house. In NSW a duplex is a pair of dwellings one above the other, in one building, and having the legal status of two strata-titled flats.

Early in the English development of semis, the upmarket versions were called **villas**. Builders in Australia sometimes used this term for large semis, for example on the façade of “Edith Villas”, a pair of nineteenth century semis in Glebe (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: “Edith Villas”, Glebe, 1877.



Glebe Point Road, Glebe. (Belle Property 2009)

For some contemporary semis, the developers have adopted the term "villa" in their marketing campaigns, to indicate something rather superior to traditional semis. In "real estate speak", semis are also sometimes called an **attached house**, or a **semi-attached residence**.

In this study, the following definitions will be used:

- **Semi-detached building** - a building containing two dwellings which are attached by one party wall. Could also be called a pair of semis.
- **Semi (semi-detached dwelling, semi-detached house)** - one of the two dwellings in a semi-detached building. A semi has a shared party wall on one side.
- **Terrace** - a building containing three or more dwellings which are attached by party walls. Could also be called a row of terraced houses.
- **Terraced house** - a dwelling in a terrace building. The end dwellings have a party wall on one side, while those between them have two party walls.
- **Townhouse** - a post-Second World War terraced house.

2.3 CONFUSION BETWEEN SEMIS AND TERRACED HOUSES

Not only is there inconsistency surrounding the terms used for attached housing, but there is also confusion about the difference between a semi-detached house and a terraced house. Some pairs of semis have the form of two terraced houses and despite having only one party wall, they are very often incorrectly referred to as "terraces" or "terrace houses". In this form they may abut another building rather than having a setback¹³ at the side, because, being based on the terraced house form, they often have no side fenestration. However, despite touching one or both adjoining buildings the side walls are not party walls, and they are therefore semis, not terraced houses.

Some pairs may have no setbacks (Figure 2.2), one setback (Figure 2.3) or a setback on each side of the building (Figure 2.4). Those semis with a setback sometimes make use of the side walls for additional fenestration, even though the floor-plan and form is similar to that of a terraced house (Figure 2.5).

¹³ A setback is the gap between a building and the boundary of the land which it occupies.

Figure 2.2: Semis with no setbacks.



George Street, The Rocks. Although described as a “pair of terraces” in their heritage listing, they are actually a pair of semis. The side walls are not party walls. (Google Maps, April 2014)

Figure 2.3: Semis with only one setback.



Gloucester Street, The Rocks. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5053218)

Figure 2.4: Semis with two setbacks.



George Street, Manly. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.5: Semi with a setback and side fenestration.



One of a pair in Addison Road, Manly. (Author 2004)

Some nineteenth century builders confused the issue by naming some pairs of semis as terraces, for example "Louisa Terrace" in Mitchell Street, Glebe. This may have been because additional attached dwellings were planned (thereby creating a terrace) but not built.

To further add to the confusion around terminology, a detached house which has the form of a single terraced house is often incorrectly called a "freestanding terrace" despite the lack of internal logic for this term (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: "Magnificent Freestanding Terrace", Newcastle.



Bruce Street, Cooks Hill. (Chapman Property, Newcastle)

2.4 WHY BUILD SEMIS?

There are both practical and social reasons for building a pair of dwellings. The latter are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters, while this section considers the economic and thermal benefits, as well as amenity.

In inner city areas, a pair of houses with no setbacks would often be built between two other buildings, because one dwelling would be an inefficient use of the land and there was not sufficient space for a row of three or more dwellings. In other situations, particularly as suburban land was subdivided and sold, a choice could be made between a detached house

and a pair of small attached houses on a modest-sized lot.¹⁴ Where an owner-occupier might build a detached house, a speculator/investor would seek to maximise the economic returns (rentals) from the land by building a pair. In an 1864 book of designs for villas and cottages, Calvert Vaux noted in his design for a suburban "double cottage" on a 50 foot (15.2m) wide lot, that:

No advantage whatever results from building two small detached cottages, with the same amount of accommodation in each, on two twenty-five feet lots; and by building them back to back one wall is saved, and both houses are rendered much drier and warmer.

The roof is simpler, and offers better attic rooms. The passage-ways at the side of the house are wider, and the whole effect is more dignified and agreeable. (Vaux 1864, 148)

Vaux went on to say:

It is much to be regretted that some attention is not bestowed on this class of buildings, as it is a more economical and far preferable arrangement to erecting small, detached buildings within a few feet of each other, as is generally done on village streets. In this design the rooms are supposed to be of a good size, and the whole arrangement is adapted to the requirements of a man of business in comfortable circumstances, who requires to be no further from his office or store than the immediate outskirts of the country town in which he resides, and where, consequently, extra land will be both more valuable and of less use than it would be farther away from his neighbours. The same idea might, if preferred, be developed on a smaller and cheaper scale. (Vaux 1864, 150)

A party wall shared by two dwellings is economical in terms of the materials saved. The duplication of the dwellings provides economies of scale and ease of construction, and by placing two dwellings on one parcel of land, land use is maximised. If each semi has direct side access to the rear of the site a back lane is no longer required, which also makes better use of the available land in a development.

¹⁴ Terraces required the purchase of larger parcels of land or multiple lots.

2.5 FORM

2.5.1 Symmetry

The floor-plans of each semi in a pair are usually mirror images of each other. This symmetry may also extend to the external appearance where the building appears to have two identical but reversed halves (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Symmetrical semis.



Spencer Road, Mosman. (Author 2004)



Burwood Road, Belfield. (Author 2005)

However, there are many semis which at first glance appear to be a traditional asymmetrical detached house (Figure 2.8). Only on closer inspection does the dividing fence or the two front doors reveal that it is a pair of semis. This effect is enhanced because the party wall rarely extends through the roof as a parapet.

Figure 2.8: Asymmetrical semis.



Cabramatta Road, Mosman. (Author 2004)



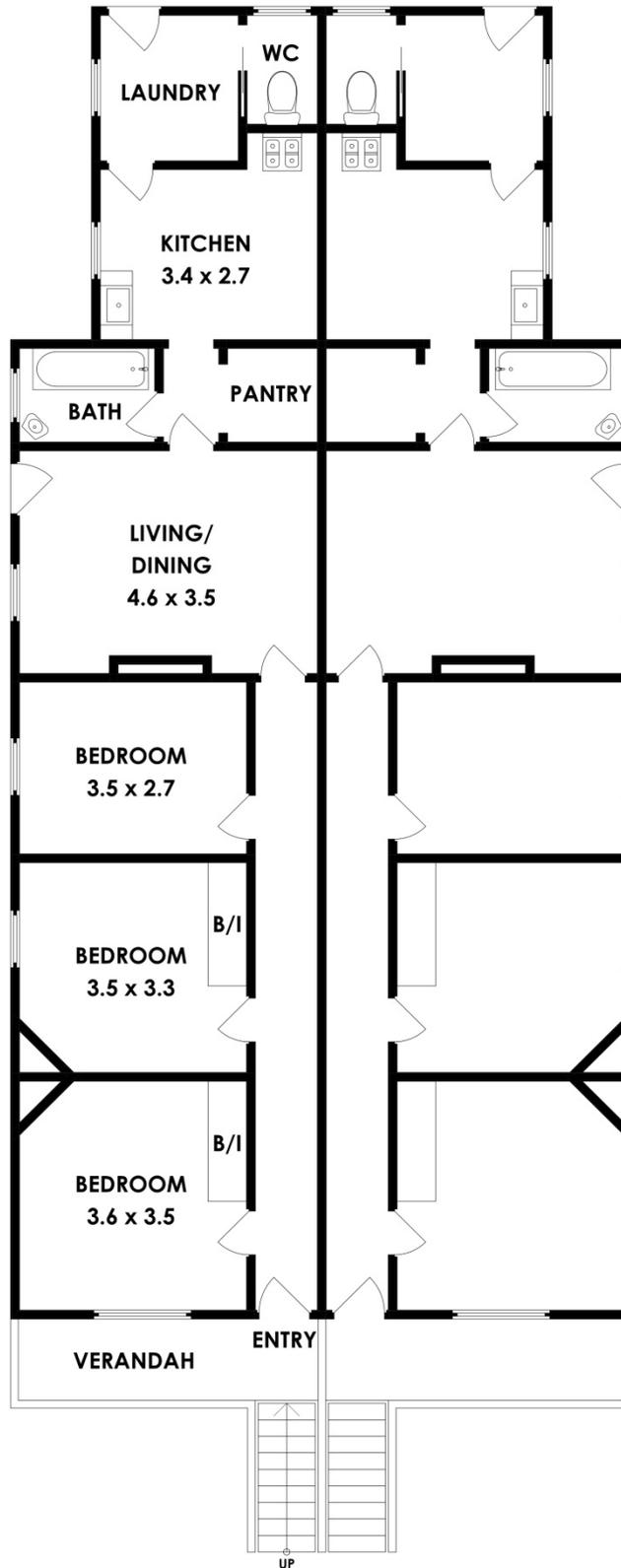
Botany Road, Rosebery. (Author 2008)

2.5.2 Single-fronted Semis

Although during the nineteenth century it was common to build two-storey semis which were identical in form and layout to terraced houses, by the turn of the twentieth century, like most suburban detached dwellings in NSW, semis tended to be single-storeyed. They were also mostly single-fronted dwellings – one room and a hallway wide. A single-fronted semi has a room layout and form adapted from the terraced house, although later semis also contain aspects of a detached house.

There is very little variation in the basic design of a single-storey, single-fronted semi, which is longer (deeper) than a terraced house because rooms can have side fenestration. Typically, the hallway runs from the front door, along the party wall, past the main bedroom and the second bedroom, then to the living/sitting room which is the full width of the house. Originally the kitchen, bathroom, toilet and laundry facilities (if any) were at the back, usually under a corrugated iron skillion roof (Figure 2.9). Most owners have now reconfigured these rear spaces to reflect the current preference for open-plan living areas (for example Figure 2.10). Although many of the early twentieth century semis contained only two bedrooms, some longer semis had an additional full-width dining room, or a small third bedroom (Figure 2.11). In later semis the bathroom was moved into the house between the bedrooms and the living room, or between the living room and the kitchen. When this occurred, the entrance to the house was sometimes moved to the side, which allowed for a full-width main bedroom at the front (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.9: Floor-plan for single-fronted semis, 1903.



Avenue Road, Mosman. The front rooms are of brick and tile, while the kitchen, laundry and WC are in an extension with a metal skillion roof. (Drawing by Anthony Zonaga 2015)

Figure 2.10: Typical contemporary reconfiguration of the rear of a semi.



Vista Street, Mosman. (McGrath Real Estate 2014)

Figure 2.11: Single-fronted semis with a dining room or extra bedroom.



Holt Avenue, Mosman.
(McManus Real Estate 2006)



Ourimbah Road, Mosman.
(McGrath Real Estate 2007)

The rear spaces of these early twentieth century semis have been reconfigured.

Figure 2.12: Semi with an internal bathroom and a side entrance.



This semi has had the internal alterations which are common to many – enclosure of the front verandah, removal of bedroom fireplaces, removal of the rear skillion roof and the reconfiguration of the rear rooms, and the addition of a rear second storey containing a main bedroom and second bathroom.

(L J Hooker Real Estate 2014)

Although semis are generally small dwellings, they are reduced in size by the number of rooms, not the sizes of the rooms themselves, which are usually of the same dimensions as would be found in a standard detached house. For example, a living room of around 4.2m x

3.6m and a main bedroom of 3.6m x 3.6m are common. A house with fewer large rooms was cheaper to build than one with a greater number of smaller rooms.

2.5.3 Single-fronted Detached Houses

In the early twentieth century speculative builders constructed thousands of detached dwellings and semis for the rental market. Semis were considered an inferior dwelling type compared to detached houses, even for renters (see Chapter 3). However, the speculative builder had a solution. On two standard lots, instead of two detached houses (two rooms wide) or two pairs of semis (each dwelling one room wide), three narrow detached houses could be built. The width of such houses is one room and a hallway, making their layout identical to semis, and providing the speculator with an opportunity to use the semi's standard floor-plan and materials to build a detached house with a small setback on each side. These single-fronted detached houses are discussed in this section because they are so closely related to semis.

Groups of three single-fronted detached houses are common in the inner Sydney suburbs such as Mosman (Figure 2.13) and Randwick, where the rentals which could be achieved from three detached single-fronted dwellings exceeded the returns from two larger detached dwellings, or four semis. Pairs of single-fronted detached houses could be built on a standard lot instead of semis (Figure 2.14), but this was rarely done as the negligible setbacks and awkward placements reduced the appeal (and higher rent) arising from being detached.

Figure 2.13: Row of three single-fronted detached houses.



Cowles Road, Mosman. (Author 2014)

Figure 2.14: Pair of single-fronted detached houses.



Spencer Road, Mosman. Although the two detached houses are almost touching, they still commanded higher rentals than if they were semi-detached and shared a wall. (Author 2004)

Even less common are individual single-fronted detached houses, which were a useful way of using a narrow piece of land left over in a row of standard speculative detached houses and/or semis. They could also be built in rows of more than three (Figure 2.15) where the speculator owned more than two contiguous lots.

Figure 2.15: Row of five single-fronted detached houses.



Wudgong Street, Mosman. (Author 2004)

The economies of scale achieved by constructing semis could be extended to these rows of single-fronted detached houses, albeit without a saving derived from a shared wall; only the roof structures had to be amended by the builders. Despite the opportunity to add fenestration to both side walls, most have one blank wall as it would have been in a semi, or perhaps with an additional window to just the living room (Figure 2.16). Being on a relatively small parcel of land, single-fronted houses were more affordable than a standard detached dwelling, yet the occupant still had the status of living in a detached house. Where semis are

often considered to be a dwelling type between a terraced house and a detached house, the single fronted detached house is between a semi and a detached house. Although the form and materials of a row of single-fronted detached houses are usually identical, the builder often made a small attempt to differentiate the houses by varying the decoration on the gables or the fretwork on a verandah.

Figure 2.16: Floor-plan of a single-fronted detached house.

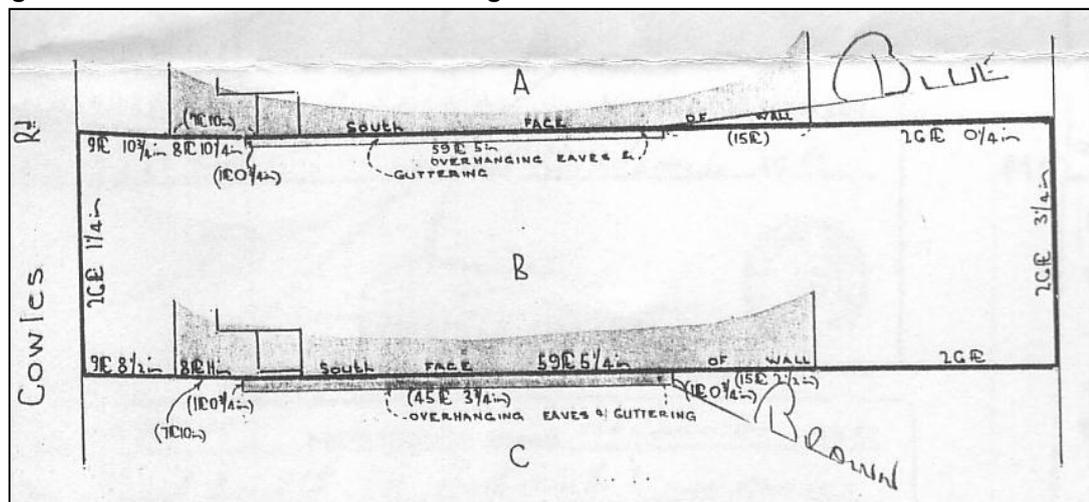


Alterations to the original floor-plan include the reconfiguration of the rear rooms and the conversion of part of the third bedroom to a bathroom.

Although there is no party wall, the builder has not taken the opportunity to insert fenestration into the wall (left), except for the living room. The dwelling is otherwise identical to a semi. (McManus Real Estate 2006)

Prior to changes to the *NSW Local Government Act* which came into effect in 1920, setbacks were not mandatory for buildings and the blank side wall of a single-fronted detached house could be placed on one boundary – this placement still provided for access to the rear yard on the other side. In the most common case where three single-fronted detached houses were built on two standard lots, each had a frontage of just over 26 feet (7.9m) between their dividing fences. A row of single-fronted detached houses which crossed the original boundaries between the component lots could not be subdivided and therefore remained in a single ownership by an investor, who obtained rental income from the houses. After 1920 when a change in the regulations allowed them to be subdivided (see Section 7.3), the side walls of each house became the boundaries of each subdivided lot (Figure 2.17). This caused some problems with eaves and gutters overhanging a neighbour's lot, although they were mostly overcome by the use of easements on the titles. Single-fronted detached houses were not approved by local councils after 1920, unless the parcel of land was large enough to provide a 6 foot (1.8m) clearance between the houses, and a 3 foot (0.9m) setback from both side boundaries. This made them an uneconomic use of land, and single-fronted detached houses were rarely built after 1920.

Figure 2.17: Subdivision of a row of single-fronted houses.



The boundaries of Lot B are the side walls of the houses shown in Figure 2.13. (LPI Volume 6849 Folio 127)

2.5.4 Double-fronted Semis

A double-fronted semi, which is two rooms and a hall wide, has all the essential characteristics of a semi, but is in effect a full sized house which shares a party wall (Figure 2.18). Instead of the hallway along the party wall, double-fronted semis usually have a central hall with rooms on each side (Figure 2.19). They are not as common as single-fronted semis because they require a wider parcel of land, and some of them do not share the same speculative origins. Where a family built a pair of semis as their own residence

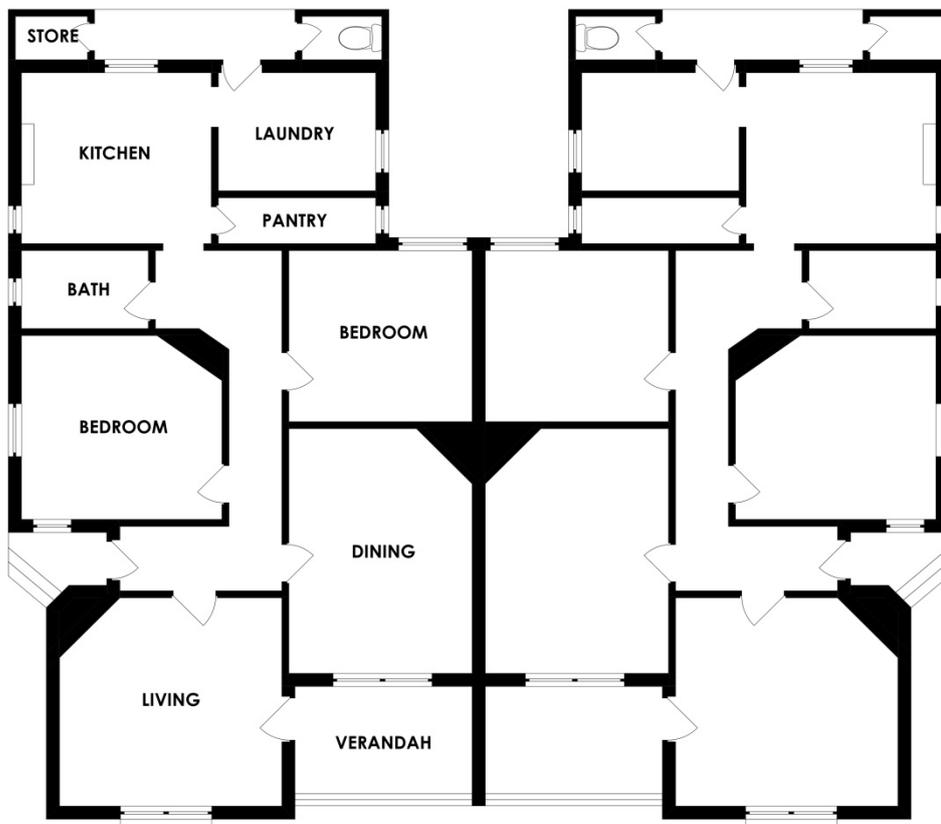
plus an income-producing house, or for two parts of the family to occupy, the larger double-fronted semis were the preferred form, and they tend to be of better quality than speculative single-fronted semis.

Figure 2.18: Double-fronted semis.



Formosa Street, Drummoyne. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.19: Floor-plan for double-fronted semis, 1912.



Belmont Road, Mosman. The kitchen, laundry, pantry and back verandah are under a skillion roof. (Drawing by Anthony Zonaga 2015)

In the historic NSW towns of Blayney and Millthorpe, all the semis appear to be double-fronted (Figure 2.20). This may be due to the availability of land – there was not the pressure to fit so many new houses onto smaller lots of land. The speculator was able to gain some cost savings by sharing one wall, yet still fitted two dwellings onto one lot and was able to sell or let “full sized” houses.

Figure 2.20: Double-fronted semis in rural towns.



Ogilvy Street, Blayney. (Author 2003)



Blake Street, Millthorpe. (Author 2003)



Park Street, Millthorpe. Originally built close to the church, to house nuns on one side and priests on the other. The decorative fence is original. (Author 2003)

2.5.5 Number of Storeys

Most of the stock of suburban and rural semis in NSW comprises single-storey cottages of a modest size. However, where the semis were in a desirable location and were designed for more affluent tenants, multi-storey buildings were sometimes constructed (Figure 2.21). This provided additional accommodation for larger families and space for servants. Semis which are more than one storey high are “integrated vertically from top to bottom, and autonomous on their portion of a lot (Schittich 2006, 15).

Figure 2.21: Multi-storey semis.



Shadforth Street, Mosman. (Author 2004)



Carrabella Street, Kirribilli. (Author 2013)

2.5.6 Verandahs

While the early colonial dwellings were based on the styles and forms of British dwellings, the warmer climate of NSW prompted the introduction of the verandah – a feature which is now integral to the typical Australian house. It had been a common feature in tropical countries, and the British imported the idea to NSW after experiencing its benefits in other colonies. As well as for cooling, verandahs were used in larger houses as a means of access (via French doors) to various rooms (Freeland 1972, 45). As with most of the architectural styles and fashions, simplified versions of the verandah were soon applied to speculative housing.

Many early working class terraces and semis were built to the front boundary and, with the exception of cantilevered balconies¹⁵ (Figure 2.22), had no verandah or balcony (Figure 2.23 and Figure 2.24). When laws were passed requiring residential development to be set back from the street alignment cantilevered balconies tended only to be used on shops and hotels. For single-storey terraces and semis there was then often a small verandah at the front (Figure 2.25) and for two-storey examples a single-storey verandah (Figure 2.26) or a verandah with a balcony above (Figure 2.27).

Figure 2.22: Cantilevered balconies, 1840s.



Talbot's Townhouses, Dalgety Terrace, Millers Point. (Robertson & Hindmarsh 2011a, 11)

¹⁵ Such balconies were in use in Britain, particularly on Georgian townhouses with views.

Figure 2.23: Two-storey semis with no front setback and no verandahs, 1855-56.



Kent Street, Millers Point. (Robertson & Hindmarsh 2011b , 76)

Figure 2.24: Single-storey semis with no front setback and no verandahs.



Athlone Place, Pyrmont. Photographed in 1900 prior to demolition. (City of Sydney Archives NSCA CRS 51/6)

Figure 2.25: Single-storey semis with verandahs.



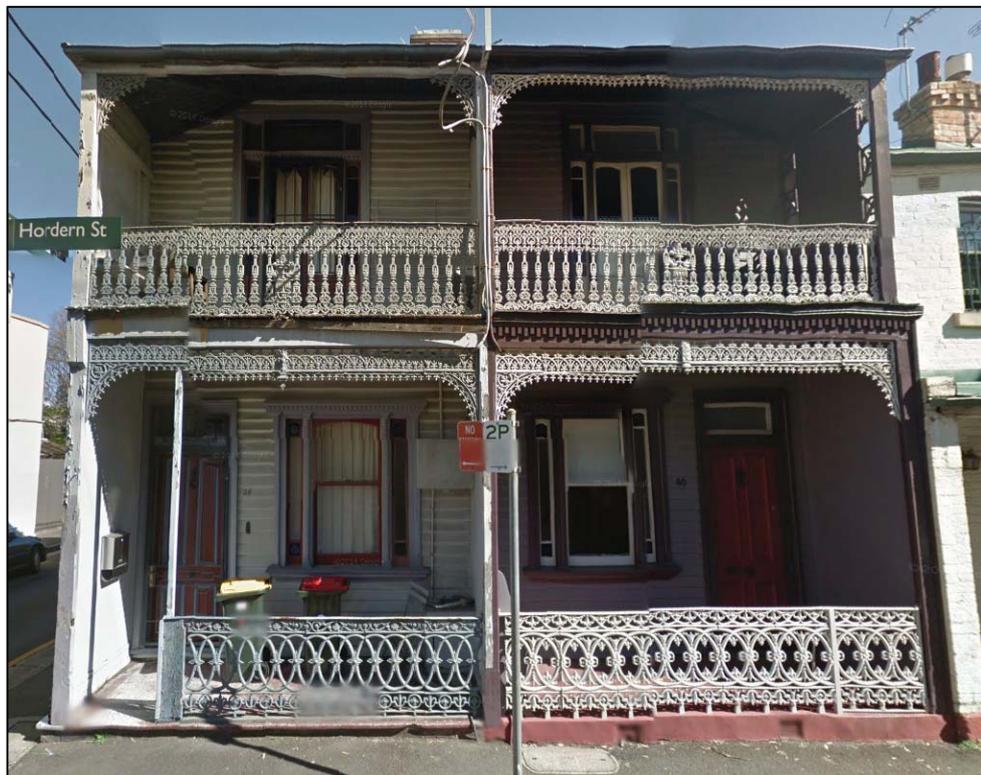
Myrtle Street, Chippendale. Photographed in 1909. (City of Sydney Archives NSCA CRS 51/335)

Figure 2.26: Two-storey semis with verandahs.



Queen Street, Campbelltown. (Dupain 1963, 3)

Figure 2.27: Two-storey semis with verandahs and balconies.

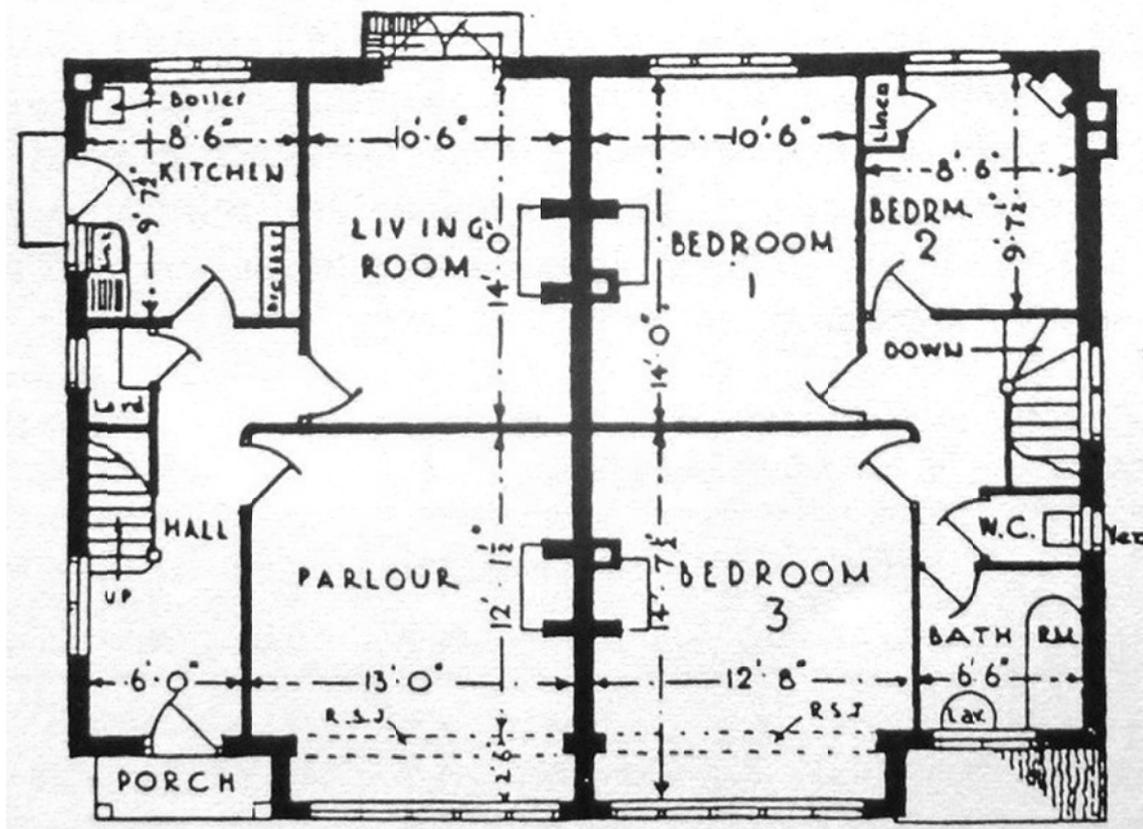


Weatherboard semis, Hordern Street, Newtown. (Google Maps, July 2014)

2.5.7 The Position of Front Entrances and Hallways

Most English semis are two-storeyed and have three bedrooms upstairs. A kitchen is located behind a wide entry hall, next to a living room and a parlour, which makes the width of the dwelling somewhere between the Australian single-fronted and double-fronted semi. The almost ubiquitous English design (Figure 2.28) is based on the *Housing Manual* released in 1919 (see Section 3.10), and such inter-war semis became known as “universal semis”.

Figure 2.28: English inter-war universal semis.



(Brown 1990, 269)

The entrances and hallways of a pair of semis may be at the left and right front corners of the building, with the bedrooms and living rooms sharing the party wall. This arrangement has less sound insulation than the alternative of having the entrances and hallways along the party wall, and the dwelling can only be two rooms deep because there can be no windows along the party wall. Despite this, the English two-storey universal semi has the entrances on each corner of the building, not in the centre, because a depth of only two rooms is not as restrictive in a two storey building. This entrance configuration also provides more privacy for the residents.

Australian single-fronted, single-storey semis, unlike English double-storey universal semis, have two adjacent entrances in the centre of the building. A single-storey dwelling which

requires at least three rooms (two bedrooms and a living room) cannot have them located along the party wall. Only with central entrances and hallways can each room be provided with a window. Entrances at the sides of the building are an alternative, but the hallways must still share the party wall. There is more flexibility in Australian double-fronted semis, where the entrances may be in the centre of each dwelling, and the rear rooms may extend across only half of the back of the house, allowing for fenestration at the sides.

2.5.8 Oddities

There are some unusual exceptions to the mirror-image floor-plans and the symmetrical forms. For example, Figure 2.29 shows an otherwise perfectly symmetrical pair of semis with an asymmetrical roof, while Figure 2.30 shows a pair of attached dwellings which are identical except for the alternating window treatments.

Figure 2.29: Symmetrical semis with an asymmetrical roof.



Dalton Road, Mosman. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.30: Semis which are not mirror images.



Holt Avenue, Cremorne. (Author 2004)

In a curious departure from the shared roof form, a pair of large double-fronted semis (now demolished) had a party wall, and attached verandahs, but separate roofs (Figure 2.31).

Figure 2.31: Semis with separate roof forms, c1860s.



Bourke Street, Goulburn. Photographed in 1870. Demolished 1980s. (Sydney Living Museums 35640)

2.6 MATERIALS

Most of the extant semis in NSW were built during the first half of the twentieth century, when the prevailing architectural styles (see Section 2.7) favoured the use of bricks, often with sandstone bases and footings. There are, however, examples of semis which are built of sandstone (Figure 2.32) where this material was readily available from local quarries. Roofing materials were terracotta tiles and corrugated iron, often combined on the one building, with the cheaper metal at the rear. The more expensive slate roofing on semis is rare, except on better quality double-fronted semis.

Figure 2.32: Sandstone semis.



Francis Street, Fairlight. (Cunninghams Property 2011)

Figure 2.32: continued



These sandstone semis, being of higher quality, have a slate roof with terracotta ridge-capping. Clark Street, North Sydney. (Google Maps, May 2014)

At the lower end of the housing scale, where it was important to fit the maximum number of dwellings onto a site, at the lowest possible cost for materials, attached timber housing was built, despite having minimal savings arising from the party wall. Acoustically as well, timber party walls are inferior. In some inner city areas such as Balmain, large saw mills provided a cheap source of timber and weatherboards, “promoting weatherboard houses as the norm for workers’ housing throughout Balmain until brick terrace housing became prevalent in the late nineteenth century” (Godden Mackay Logan 2004, lxii). Without building regulations these nineteenth century inner city terraces (Figure 2.33) and semis were of such poor quality that few survived the later slum clearances.

Figure 2.33: Timber terraced housing.



Hart and Elizabeth Streets, Surry Hills. Now demolished. (SLNSW, Image d1_31161)

There are however, examples of better quality timber semis which have survived relatively intact (Figure 2.34 and Figure 2.35). These too were built when fitting two dwellings onto one lot was more important than saving materials in a party wall or obtaining a better class of tenant, or when a plentiful supply of cheap timber was available.

Figure 2.34: Weatherboard semis in regional NSW.



Lascelles Street, Braidwood. (Author 2013)

Figure 2.35: Suburban weatherboard semis.



Timber construction with later brick verandahs, c1884. Wigram Street, Harris Park. (Author 2011)

Fibro (asbestos cement sheeting) was first produced in NSW in 1916 by Wunderlich Limited. As with weatherboard, there are minimal savings in materials to be gained by constructing party walls of fibro. Nevertheless, some fibro semis were constructed during the twentieth century. In 1939 a building application was submitted for "two fibro semi-detached cottages, Kennedy Road, Austinmer" (*South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 29 March 1946, 8). As a very cheap building material, fibro was used for dwellings at the lower end of the market, and such semis were small. For example, a pair of fibro semis was advertised for sale in 1950:

Pair modern fibro semis each containing 1 bedroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, separate bath and laundry. Rent 35/- per week each. (*Illawarra Mercury*, 22 June 1950, 7)

In some cases semis were built of a combination of weatherboard and fibro, for example a 1939 pair in Brown's Lane, Dubbo (*The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 15 June 1939, 2). Or a combination of brick and fibro could be used (Figure 2.36).

Figure 2.36: Sale of brick and fibro semis, 1930.

MAROUBRA.

BOOMERANG-STREET, near LONG BAY-ROAD.
The Maroubra Bay bus from Railway passes Long Bay-road, and the second street towards Coogee is Boomerang-street, or take Lurline Bay bus to Tod-dington-road.

—

PAIR OF BRICK AND FIBRO SEMI-DETACHED COTTAGES erected 5 years, roof of tiles, built like a Bungalow Cottage, each having front and back verandah, 2 bedrooms, dining-room, breakfast-room, kitchenette, bathroom, with heater.

—

Built on high ground and having an uninter-
rupted view of Maroubra Bay and ocean.

—

LAND has a frontage to Boomerang-street of 44 feet by a depth of 116 feet on one side, and 143 feet on the other or thereabouts, being Part Lot 20, one lot at 35/, one at 34/.

—

TOTAL RENTS £179/8/ per annum.

—

RICHARD S. GAWTHORPE, of 307 Avoca-street, Randwick. Phone FX4602, will sell the above at Public Auction ON THE PREMISES, BOOME-RANG-STREET, MAROUBRA, at 3 p.m.
SATURDAY, 24th MAY, 1930.

(SMH, 31 May 1930, 22)

2.7 ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Semis do not display the architectural sophistication of larger detached houses; much of their appeal lies instead in the exterior decoration which was necessary to differentiate what were essentially almost identical buildings. The semis of NSW evolved from the early terrace-like two storey form to become a mostly single storeyed, two-bedroomed suburban building. They then became larger as service areas such as a bathroom were incorporated into the floor-plan. Various architectural styles were displayed during each period, primarily on the facades and roof forms. During the research for this study, no evidence of styles specific to any suburb or region in NSW was found.

Architectural styles are important because “they help us to visualise the various kinds of people who have wanted, designed, paid for, made and used buildings, and thus to understand the society in which those people have lived” (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 15). Richard Apperly acknowledges both the limitations of and the inspirations (such as Robin Boyd) for his seminal work on Australian architectural styles. The following section uses Apperly’s style classifications.

The early colonial architectural styles were directly derivative of the British styles. However, as the Australian colonies matured, features such as verandahs¹⁶ were added to the British versions, to better address the local climate and the available local materials.

Almost nothing remains of the earliest settler housing which, rather than reflecting any architectural styles, were vernacular responses to the harsh, unfamiliar conditions in the new colony. However tents, slab huts, wattle and daub, and other manifestations of “making do”, were soon co-existing with the British classical Georgian style and the more refined, romantic Regency style (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 23). As more permanent structures were built, using brick or stone, the first semis to appear were in the Georgian style, a simple, symmetrical box familiar to the British military, convicts and free settlers. The stone foundations of a pair of c1807 semis are visible in The Rocks (see Section 4.2) but the earliest known extant semis in NSW date from 1811 (see Section 4.7). The c1830 pair in The Rocks, known as “Reynolds Cottages” (see Case Study 1) (Figure 2.37) display the characteristic exposed brickwork, medium-pitched roof, sash windows with small panes and a simple chimney.

¹⁶ Some of the Australian adaptations were imported from other British colonies.

Figure 2.37: Colonial Georgian semis, c1830.



“Reynolds Cottages”, Harrington Street, The Rocks. (Author 2014)

The Regency style tended to be manifested in the housing of the wealthy colonists, who could afford architect-designed mansions on estates at the edge of Sydney and often used convict labour to build them. One of its most important colonial proponents, the English builder and architect John Verge, designed large detached houses such as “Lyndhurst” in Glebe (c1833-5) and “Camden Park” (1831-5) in Camden, yet between his arrival in December 1828 and his commissions for large houses he is known to have owned two pairs of c1829 semis in The Rocks (Figure 2.38 shows them prior to their demolition in 1901). It is not known if he designed them, but he resided in one for a period (Wayne Johnson pers. comm. March 2009). Although small, the semis had the characteristic Regency symmetrical façade, rendered walls and sash windows. Section 4.10 has more information about John Verge and his semis.

Figure 2.38: Colonial Regency semis, architect John Verge, c1829.



Cumberland Street, The Rocks. (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Image B-V2F20)



Gloucester Street, The Rocks. The building was converted to a single dwelling by blocking one door. (NSW State Records, Image 867)

The fashionable British architectural styles of the day were translated by local architects into housing for the relatively wealthy colonists of both NSW and Victoria, although as Hardy Wilson states:

Owing to the remoteness of the two colonies from the scene of changing fashions, the late-Eighteenth Century style was continued well into the Nineteenth Century, and the succeeding Revivals were also delayed in reaching these shores. (Wilson 1924, 4)

The ongoing use of the Georgian style, even as late as the 1860s, was particularly noticeable in smaller, cheaper dwellings such as semis. For example, a pair of c1860s semis in Glebe (Figure 2.39) has the low, broad lines of the earlier colonial buildings. Speculative builders were reluctant to give up the simplicity of the style.

Figure 2.39: Post-Georgian semis, late 1860s.



Derwent Street, Glebe. (Google Maps, April 2014).

Although the Georgian and Regency styles persisted, the increasing prosperity of the colony, after the 1850s gold rushes and the boom in pastoralism, led to a desire to adopt more flamboyant Victorian styles, primarily as an indicator of wealth. As Richard Apperly states, the new architecture was:

... essentially about confidence, material progress, prosperity and the triumphant survival of the fittest, all clothed with fairly transparent veils of morality and respectability. (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 41)

There were several Victorian styles, and the speculative builders soon found ways of interpreting them on their dwellings for the less wealthy. Perhaps the most flamboyant of the Victorian styles, and one which has become known as quintessentially Australian, was the Victorian Filigree, which made extensive use of decorative cast iron on the verandahs and balconies. The verandahs often obscured what was in all other respects a basic symmetrical Georgian dwelling, which made this style a particular favourite with speculative builders who could order all the iron components from catalogues and assemble them on site. Thousands of two-storey dwellings encrusted with “iron lace” were built in terraces and pairs around the city and nearby suburbs (Figure 2.40 and Figure 2.41) and some as detached dwellings.

Figure 2.40: Victorian Filigree semis.



Addison Road, Manly. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.41: Victorian semis in regional NSW.



Mitchell Street, Camden. (Author 2013)

Eschewing completely the symmetrical Georgian style was the asymmetrical Victorian Italianate style, a British style which was inspired by the Picturesque movement. The Victorian Italianate style was used extensively for domestic architecture, typically of brick and plastered with lime render marked to imitate stonework. The asymmetrical houses had a picturesque faceted bay window on one side and a verandah on the other. In NSW it became the stylistic indicator of wealth in the large detached merchant houses during the economic boom of the 1880s.

Many Italianate semis are single-storey and single-fronted, with one bay and a tiny verandah the width of the central hall, often decorated with iron filigree (Figure 2.42). Double-fronted semis have a wider verandah and a bay (Figure 2.43), or the developer might have adapted the verandah space to make the building look more like a large detached dwelling (Figure 2.44). Windows (commonly arched) were often complemented by rendered ornamentation such as swags, garlands and broken pediments. The most popular roofing material was tiles (sometimes slate), often with a separate bull-nosed corrugated iron roof on the verandah.

Figure 2.42: Small Victorian Italianate semis.



Terry Street, Balmain. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.43: Double-fronted Victorian Italianate semis.



Victoria Street, Temora. (Author 2010)

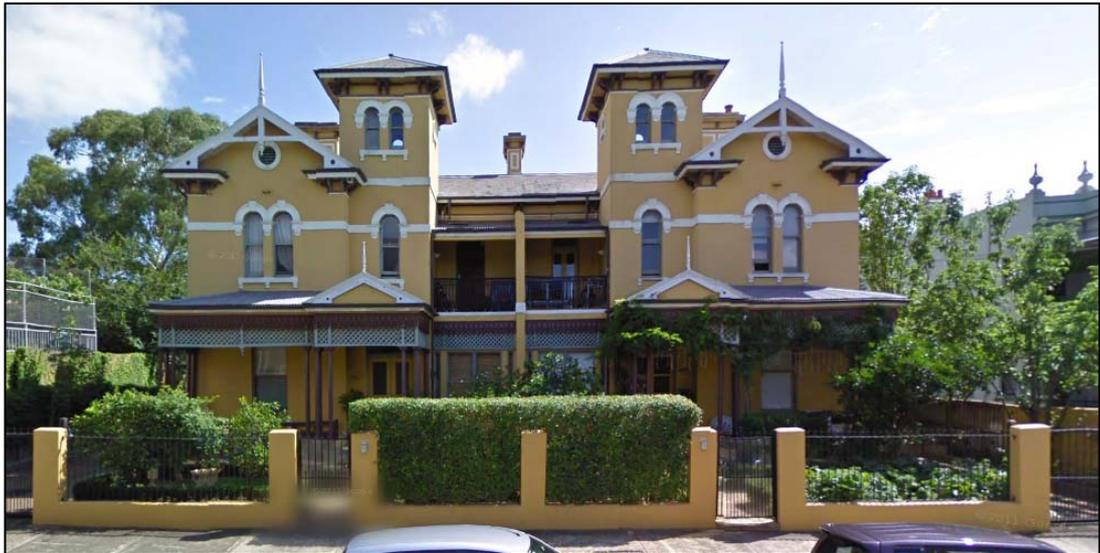
Figure 2.44: Large Victorian Italianate semis.



Addison Road, Manly (Author 2004)

In what became known as the Victorian Free Classical style, various classical elements were combined “with little regard for academic rules but sometimes with a certain flair” (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 56). The example shown in Figure 2.45 was clearly not designed as workmen’s cottages; nevertheless the building was originally two semis for tenants.

Figure 2.45: Victorian Free Classical semis, c1880s.



Collins Street, Annandale. Now eight apartments. (Google Maps, April 2014)

The Victorian Gothic style with steeply pitched roofs, elaborate bargeboards and a faintly ecclesiastical air, also featured the bay window and asymmetrical form (Figure 2.46 and Figure 2.47).

Figure 2.46: Victorian Gothic semis.



Wallis Street, Woollahra (Australian Property Monitors)

Figure 2.47: Victorian Italianate semis with Gothic features, 1873-4.



Derwent Street, Glebe. Photographed in 1973 after the decorative bargeboards had been removed, but retaining the steep gothic gables, tall chimneys and hood mouldings. (Smith and Smith 1973, 56)

The builders of Victorian semis could “mix and match” features from all the styles to differentiate their developments. Some curious examples resulted, such as a pair of semis in Glebe (Figure 2.48) which has iron filigree, Italianate bays and gothic mouldings and windows.

Figure 2.48: Variation on the Victorian Italianate style, c1885.



Mansfield Street, Glebe, photographed in 1973. (Smith and Smith 1973, 71)

The asymmetrical Italianate style did not readily lend itself to rows of terraced houses. Although some better quality terraces with Italianate bay windows were built, it was considered that they worked "against the visual character of the terrace itself. For the bay type seeks to maintain something of the appearance of a semi-detached house" (Smith and Smith 1973, 92-93). Some terraces were built as attached Italianate pairs (Figure 2.49) but most terraces continued to be built in the Filigree style.

Figure 2.49: Victorian Italianate terrace as attached pairs of semis, c1885.



Walker Street, Kirribilli. (Google Maps, April 2014)

The depression years of the early 1890s signalled the end of the Victorian styles as building almost ceased in NSW. As confidence returned by the late 1890s, the planned Federation of the six Australian colonies was cause for celebration and saw an outpouring of nationalistic fervour. Many architects at the turn of the twentieth century were seeking a uniquely Australian style of architecture. Australian themes were promoted in the decorative and applied arts, and the flannel flower, waratah and rising sun became common motifs in housing decoration. The architectural fashion turned in earnest to the English Queen Anne Revival style, although elements of the style had been creeping in to NSW since the late 1880s.

In 1973 Bernard Smith suggested that because the English Queen Anne style had been so modified in Australian houses, the architectural style would be better described as the Federation style (Smith and Smith 1989, 107; Ramson 1988). This term is now widely used to describe the architectural style developed between 1895 and 1915 in Australia.

A major feature of the Federation style was its red face brickwork (often tuck pointed on the front facade) which could showcase the skill of the bricklayer, rather than the render which had frequently hidden shoddy workmanship. The use of cast iron for the structural and

decorative elements of the verandah was superseded by a preference for timber posts, balustrades, brackets and valences (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 108). Detached and semi-detached double-fronted dwellings retained the asymmetrical Italianate characteristics – with one room projecting out and a verandah in the remaining frontage. For single-fronted semis the verandah could be reduced to a porch, or could extend across the width of the dwelling. In all cases, the verandahs were decorated. The roof of a Federation house displayed a wide variety of picturesque elements including full and half gables (often decorated), gambrels, towers and turrets, hips, spires, chimneys with pots, and terracotta Marseille tiles and ridge capping (Howells and Nicholson 1989, 16). Many semis had roughcast or timber shingles on their gables. Windows could be one of several styles – double hung sash or mullioned casement windows. A window or door could feature small panes of coloured glass.

Although first developed by architects, the Federation style was admirably suited to the speculative pair of semis, thousands of which were built before the First World War. There was an almost infinite variety of ways the decorative features could be combined onto a façade (such as the examples in Figure 2.50). In addition, the complex roof forms and prominent gables made it equally feasible to build symmetrical pairs or asymmetrical pairs of semis, thereby providing opportunities to make the asymmetrical building resemble a single detached house.

Figure 2.50: Federation semis.



Asymmetrical semis with gable decoration, terracotta roof tiles and timber fretwork on the verandah. Holt Avenue, Mosman. (Author 2004)

Figure 2.50: continued



Symmetrical semis with red face brickwork, render, turrets, and shingles. Allen Street, Glebe. (Smith and Smith 1989, 113)



Symmetrical semis with terracotta Marseille tiles, ridge ornamentation and chimney pots, turned timber verandah decoration and a decorative plaster "rising sun" gable motif. Glover Street, Mosman. (Author 2004)

During the Federation period there were also several related but different architectural fashions. As well as the Queen Anne style, both the English Arts and Crafts movement and the European Art Nouveau style contributed to the Federation style. Simplified Art Nouveau motifs, such as tulips, featured in fretwork and stamped metal (Figure 2.51). Circular or semi-

circular “accent” windows were often used to add to the decorative effect, with Art Nouveau leadlight glass designs in some of these feature windows as well as in front doors.

Figure 2.51: Art Nouveau decoration on a gable.



This pair of semis has a local heritage listing based on the decorative stamped metal panels on the gable. Harbour Street, Mosman. (Author 2003)

The Federation Arts and Crafts style in Australia was another manifestation of a late nineteenth century British trend, inspired by William Morris. The British Arts and Crafts movement relied on simplicity, together with traditional building materials and construction methods, avoiding mass production and any material being used to imitate another material. Materials such as slate, shingles and timber were used, without the florid decoration of the Queen Anne style. Unfortunately the required craftsmanship and lack of mass production in Arts and Crafts houses added to their cost – and additional expenses could not often be contemplated by the speculative builders of semis. As a consequence, true Arts and Crafts pairs of semis are rare, and tend to be better quality double-fronted semis, usually in a relatively desirable location. For example, the semis in Figure 2.52 are located on a larger-than-usual lot in an exclusive area of Mosman, quite some distance from the tram routes. They are of unusually high quality in design and decoration. The semis are constructed of face brickwork on a sandstone base with a simple terracotta tiled roof. The chimneys are decorated with render and brick, matching the unusual parapet which projects through the roof. Typical of the Arts and Crafts style, the timber arches and balustrading decorating the verandah are simple yet elegant. The semis could easily be mistaken for a large detached house. These dwellings were not built by speculators for the rental market; one provided a comfortable home for the owner while the other provided an income.

Figure 2.52: Arts and Crafts semis.



Redan Street, Mosman. (Irving 1985, 88)

From around 1908 a new American influence appeared in Australia. Articles in Australian magazines started to extol the virtues of the bungalow – a single-storey house with verandahs and simple construction, which catered for a more casual lifestyle including easy access to the open air (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 144). Gradually some houses adopted a mix of Federation and Bungalow styles. After the First World War the American influences increased, and most new middle class and working class houses were built in what became known as the California Bungalow style. Although the low, single-storey style was unsuitable for the large two-storey upper class mansions, which instead favoured a more classical style, speculative builders warmly embraced the California Bungalow style. There are many examples of brick semis with a low, dominant, gabled roof, with Marseille tiles or corrugated iron, chunky timber detailing, and a verandah roof supported by thick masonry piers (Figure 2.53). The introduction of the car during this period also resulted in the standard subdivision lot becoming 60 feet (18.3m) wide, to allow for a driveway at the side of a house. This in turn allowed the bungalow semis (even if they did not include a driveway) to exhibit the wider roof style.

Figure 2.53: California Bungalow semis.



Cowles Road, Mosman. The verandah has been filled in. (Author 2003)



Hamilton Avenue, Earlwood. (Raine and Horne Real Estate, Bardwell Park)

In a British movement inspired by Norman Shaw, a revival of the Georgian style began in the late nineteenth century. After the First World War, the Interwar Georgian Revival style was promoted in Australia by the architect William Hardy Wilson. It became synonymous with “upper-middle-class concepts of good taste” (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 150). Although not part of the speculative builder’s lexicon, the style can be observed on semis which are located in streets which otherwise contain substantial detached dwellings. For example, the semi shown in Figure 2.54 has the characteristic paned double hung windows of vertical proportions, classical columns, shutters, boxed eaves and a hipped roof. The pair was originally built as a home and income, not as a speculative venture. The semis are on a large parcel of land in an up-market part of Mosman.

Figure 2.54: Interwar Georgian Revival semis.



Tivoli Street, Mosman. (Raine and Horne Real Estate, 2013)

After 1925 the Art Deco movement embraced modern technology and its geometric horizontal and vertical design elements were seen on buildings. This style is common in small interwar blocks of flats, but it was unable to dent the dominance of the California Bungalow style in semis. However, there are some examples of interwar semis with decorative brickwork which are currently described by the real estate industry as Art Deco (Figure 2.55), although many retain elements of the California Bungalow style.

Figure 2.55: California Bungalow semis with Art Deco influences.



Clyde Street, North Bondi. (Century 21 Real Estate 2014)

After the depression of the 1930s, the California Bungalow style did not make a comeback. The Functionalist semis which had previously been dressed in Italianate, Federation or California Bungalow finery were revealed as basic structures. Some were decorated with mass produced moulded bricks, or by brick patterns (such as herringbone and basket-weave) which broke up the plain facades (Figure 2.56).

Figure 2.56: Interwar Functionalist semis.



Countess Street, Mosman. (Author 2003)

During the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, severe shortages of building materials and labour reduced housing development to a trickle. While wealthy landowners could still afford some new housing, the building of speculative dwellings such as semis ceased.

By the time the building material shortages had eased in the mid-1950s, modernism and functionalism were the major influences on building styles. People seeking rental accommodation, including many post-war migrants, were housed in the rows of inner city terraces which had been abandoned by those seeking the Great Australian Dream in suburbia (see Section 8.2), or in the thousands of existing rental semis and cottages in the suburbs. The blocks of flats which were built during the late 1950s, and the 1960s high rise apartment buildings, both catered for the excess demand. After the Second World War, speculators largely abandoned the semi, although some were built as part of public housing projects (see Section 8.4).

The late twentieth century saw the appearance of “mock” styles such as neo-Federation and neo-Georgian in the mass-produced end of the housing market. The Italian-influenced

“Tuscan” style also emerged. At the same time, the speculative builder/developers re-discovered the pair of semis as a way of fitting two houses onto one lot, often in the very suburbs where the earlier stocks of semis had been built. No longer targeted at the rental market, nevertheless these contemporary semis provide to speculators all the advantages of their earlier counterparts. As with the pre-Second World War semi styles, the new speculative semis display pastiches of the current style fashions (Figure 2.57).

Figure 2.57: Contemporary semis.



Prince Street, Mosman. (Author 2004)



Brand Street, Carlingford. (D F Johnson Estate Agents 2014)

2.8 STREETSAPES

During the nineteenth century, many pairs of semis were built in the inner city, amongst and often abutting terraces. Although technically semis, they have all the characteristics of a pair of terraced houses, and as such, Georgian and Victorian semis are often almost indistinguishable from terraced houses within the streetscapes. The detached houses of the very wealthy tended to be on larger lots of land, and were sufficiently remote from each other to have minimal impacts on a streetscape.

Twentieth century suburban semis are generally found in streetscapes together with small detached houses (including single-fronted detached houses) and small blocks of flats. With few exceptions, the land speculator who subdivided the suburban estates was not the builder who developed dwellings on those lots. This tendency to subdivide an estate, then to sell individual lots to various purchasers (those planning to build their own detached homes as well as speculative builders) has resulted in most pre-Second World War streetscapes in NSW displaying a mix of dwelling types. Such early twentieth century streetscapes are defined by individual but stylistically-linked buildings, with modest detached houses forming the vast majority of dwellings in the mix. In England where the subdivider and builder/developer were usually the same company, an estate subdivision was not sold until after it was developed with identical buildings on each plot. Streetscapes with row after row of identical semis began to define suburbia, where the monotonous, soulless, long rows of terraced houses were joined by equally monotonous streetscapes of identical universal semis.

In NSW, a speculative builder would often repeat the design of his semis, but on a smaller scale. A keen observer in suburbs such as Mosman and Manly can find almost identical pairs of semis scattered throughout the streetscapes. Yet there were usually slight attempts to make them individual with differing gable treatments and decorative features.

2.9 ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Most pre-Second World War semis were modest dwellings, located in prime suburbs, close to transport links. As such, more recently they have been a popular entry point into desirable suburbs and towns, and the pressure to expand and modernise them for contemporary living is enormous. During this study, only one original pair of pre-war semis was discovered, complete with external toilets. They have since been re-developed with large glass rear extensions, and the loss of most of the internal fabric. All of the semis which were researched and inspected in the cities, suburbs, towns and rural areas of NSW had been modified to a greater or lesser extent. Some have since been demolished, some have been sympathetically altered and some have lost their integrity through inappropriate alterations. Attitudes towards the conservation of semis are discussed further in Chapter 10.

The demolition of an individual semi and its redevelopment with an attached construction is rare but not impossible. For example, an attached commercial development dwarfs a small semi in Military Road, Neutral Bay (Figure 2.58). Even less common is the demolition of one semi and the construction of a detached building on the land (Figure 2.59).

Figure 2.58: Redevelopment of one semi, Neutral Bay.



Military Road, Neutral Bay. (Author 2010)

Figure 2.59: One semi demolished and replaced with an apartment block.



Darling Point Road, Darling Point. The remaining dwelling of a pair of Gothic Revival semis, c1849. The party wall has been clumsily reconstructed. (Author 2014)

Rather than demolish one semi, it is more common for one or both semis to be altered or to have their use changed (Figure 2.60). In both of these situations the integrity of form and symmetry of the pair is generally lost unless care is taken.

Figure 2.60: Conversion of one semi from residential to a commercial use.



Beamish Street, Campsie. (Author 2014)

Further examples of both inappropriate and sympathetic changes to semis are provided in Sections 10.3 and 10.7.

2.10 CONCLUSIONS

The semis in NSW are in many ways similar to detached speculative housing of the same eras – the materials used and the superficial architectural styles are common to both. They are generally co-located within the same streetscapes. Yet there are distinctive differences in their form; where the standard detached house is double-fronted, most semis are single-fronted. Pairs of semis either display a pleasing symmetry, or are cleverly disguised to appear as one detached house. They are a superb example of the skills of the speculative builder in maximising land use and producing more affordable rental homes, while also providing a dwelling with a higher status than a terraced house and most of the benefits of a detached house.

Semis today remain a popular dwelling type. The following chapters track the history of the semi in NSW, and the influences imported to the colony from Britain, in order to demonstrate why and how semis found their niche in the housing stock of NSW.

3.0 HISTORICAL BRITISH INFLUENCES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

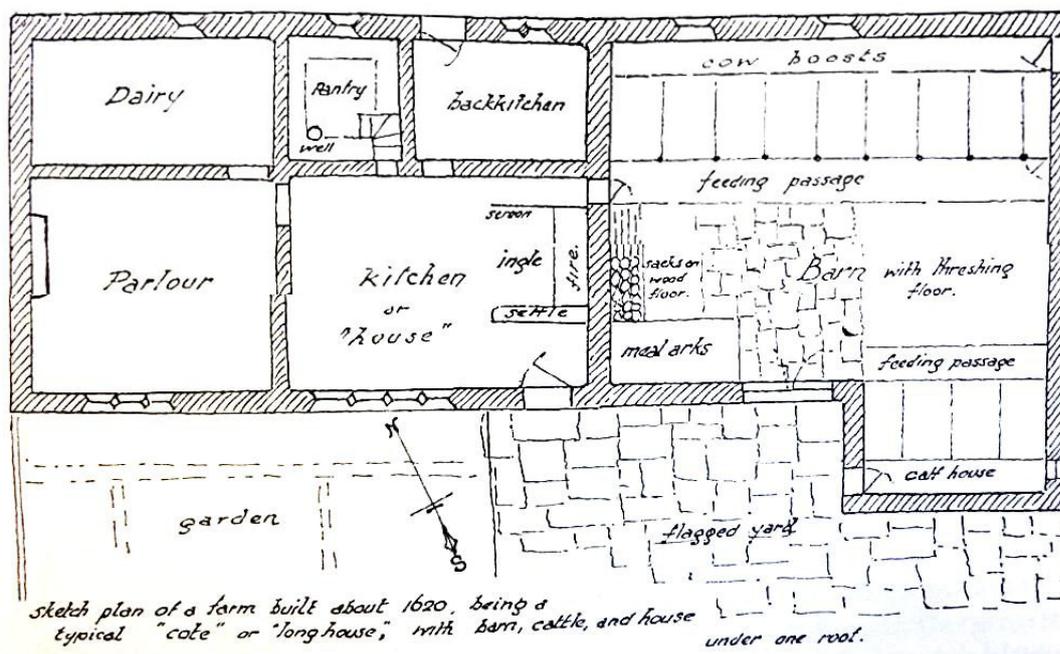
The colony of New South Wales was founded by the British in January 1788. The development of housing within the colony was therefore inextricably linked to what was concurrently occurring in Britain. As the colony matured, some of those influences decreased, and dwelling forms and features were adapted to become more identifiably Australian. Whilst English influences were the most pervasive, there were governors, military personnel, convicts and settlers from Scotland and Ireland who also brought with them the customs of their homelands. To a lesser extent, there were also influences from other British colonies and America. The following sections describe several of the major British influences.

3.2 THE ORIGINS OF ATTACHED RURAL DWELLINGS

Prior to the seventeenth century British houses “designed deliberately to adjoin were rare” (Johnson 2010, 137) although joined houses sharing a common wall can be seen in Pompeii and in the walled medieval cities in Europe (Turner 1995, 17). Most early examples of pairs of dwellings resulted from the subdivision of a single dwelling into multiple occupancies.

During the medieval period many peasants lived in longhouses; single-storey timber-framed buildings divided into two bays, one for people and the other (a byre) for animals. During the sixteenth century when bricks became more readily available, many longhouses were rebuilt to incorporate a brick chimney or a fire-hood instead of a central, open hearth. This made it possible to install a ceiling, which created a two-storey building, with a useable space in the roof. The living areas and the byre could be further separated by creating a solid wall with a door. These changes created what became a very common form of rural dwelling, and as the population increased, new dwellings were also built with two storeys, an enclosed chimney and an attached byre. This provided ease of access to the animals, warmth and a saving in building materials compared to the cost of building a separate barn (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: A typical stone longhouse, c1620.



(Raistrick 1976, 49)

Gradually separate buildings and barns for grain and animals were built around farmyards, although some functions such as a dairy remained attached to the farmhouse. The byres were then converted to additional service rooms, or in many cases became an attached dwelling for a second family. By adding further bays to the original building, a row of attached dwellings could be created.

By the end of the seventeenth century a typical village contained a mix of small individual cottages and longhouses, many of which had been converted into a pair of attached dwellings. By 1788 when the colony was founded, attached pairs of cottages had become synonymous with rural life in Britain (Lofthouse 2012, 18).

3.3 ENCLOSURES AND EMPARKMENT

During the eighteenth century the rural landscape in parts of Britain (particularly northern Scotland and eastern England) changed dramatically. To increase the food production needed to support growing urban populations, much of the farmland was appropriated and consolidated into larger holdings, in a process known as “enclosure”.¹⁷ Common land and strip farms, which had previously sustained the subsistence farmers became part of larger estates which were enclosed with hedges and walls. Enclosure created more efficient farms; the small-holders were evicted and the resulting large parcel of land was leased to one tenant farmer (Maudlin 2010, 12). The process had begun in the thirteenth century but accelerated

¹⁷ The original spelling was “inclosure”.

as the profitability of sheep farming increased during the sixteenth century. All the production on the new estates belonged to the estate owner.

Enclosures often caused poverty and homelessness, because not all those who had lost their land were subsequently employed by the new estate owner or tenant farmer. By the late eighteenth century large numbers of dispossessed rural people had gravitated to urban areas in search of paid employment in the factories and industries which were appearing as the industrial revolution gathered pace. Many of those who could not find work found themselves convicted for minor crimes and transported to NSW.

The rural housing stock was transformed by enclosure as some redundant buildings became derelict and others were converted into multiple dwellings for tenant farmers and the labourers who no longer lived under their employer's roof (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Converted farmhouse, mid eighteenth century.



Station Road, Cullingsworth. A farmhouse converted to two two-bedroomed semis. (Caffyn 1986, 6)

Some estate owners built new dwellings for their labourers, often in the form of new “closed” estate villages with cottage occupation tied to providing labour on the estate. Most of the new dwellings were double cottages, which had become the most common form following the conversion of longhouses and farm buildings, and continued to provide additional benefits:

This species of cottage can be built cheaper than two single ones, and, in general, these double cottages are found to be warmer and fully as comfortable as single ones. (Smith 1834, 27)

Some older villages escaped enclosure and remained “open”, growing organically with a mix of dwelling types, many built by their occupants in vernacular styles and others by investors hoping to lease the dwellings to labourers working outside the estates.

Although some British estate owners built utilitarian double cottages for their labourers, others created their new villages as part of the landscaping around their new manor houses. Where existing villages were not compatible with the landscape designs and views, they were demolished and the villagers rehoused in a more picturesque setting, a process known as “emparking” or “emparkment”. The village cottages were often designed by the same architect who designed the manor house, working with prominent landscape designers such as Capability Brown. The exterior styles and layouts of the new cottages were designed to impress visitors to the estate (Darley 2007, 15), although the interiors were often cramped. The double cottage suited this purpose admirably – it was large enough to display the fashionable styles and was cheap to build, but could still house two families for whom such double cottages were the norm. The use of cottage pairs for housing estate labourers in emparkment villages soon became commonplace (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Double cottages in New Houghton, Norfolk, c1723.



Cottages built on the approaches to the mansion “Houghton Hall”. (Galinou 2010, 81)

3.4 SCOTTISH IMPROVED COTTAGES

The *Act of Union 1707* brought Scotland under increasing English influences. Agricultural improvement and its associated enclosures gathered pace within the Scottish Lowlands as did the building of new dwellings. Many of these cottages were of stone, with a tradition of

stonemasonry already established. Within the Scottish Highlands during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Gaelic indigenous subsistence communities were cleared and enclosed to make way for sheep farms run by middle-class tenants, many from the Lowlands. The traditional blackhouses (a form of longhouse with walls of stone and turf) of the tenant farmers were replaced by “modern” farmhouses and labourers’ cottages in the classical, symmetrical style of the Lowlands, which became “highly visible symbols of agricultural improvement” (Maudlin 2009, 3). Unlike the longhouses of southern England, the blackhouses were abandoned rather than being converted into pairs of dwellings, because the dwellings themselves were seen as too primitive. The labourers’ new “improved” stone and slate cottages were typically single-storey with two rooms, but still displaying a classical symmetry and proportion. The cottages were in short terraces or pairs near the farmhouses, or in picturesque planned estate villages such as Inveraray (Maudlin 2009, 98). Other more austere planned villages were built to support new industries such as fishing, textiles and slate quarries, which could employ displaced farmers. The mix of dwelling types in these villages also included semis, for example in the 1769 textile village of Granttown-on-Spey (Figure 3.4). Its promoter, Sir James Grant, also encouraged the practice of the labourers building their own dwellings, to his designs and regulations, including a unified façade for attached dwellings (Maudlin 2009, 89).

Figure 3.4: Semis in a planned Scottish town, c1769.



High Street, Granttown-on-Spey. (Author 2013)

Building on Sir James Grant’s ideas, the British Fisheries Society played a major role in the development of planned industrial villages in Scotland. Each village had a mix of terraced housing, pairs of semis and detached dwellings. Maudlin observed that:

The British Fisheries Society's building regulations produced a single, clearly defined building type without recourse to drawn plan and elevation. The high public profile of the British Fisheries Society ensured that the regulatory system was adopted as the standard building model in later planned villages throughout the Highlands. The plain, classically proportioned, improved cottage is now regarded as the generic building type of the Highlands. It is a building designed to sit within a rational improved agricultural landscape. The improved cottage was an architectural symbol of the spirit of improvement: commercial landlordism comfortably combined with humanitarian paternalism. (Maudlin 2009, 91)

The Scottish housing boom reached a peak in the early nineteenth century, just as the NSW colony was striving for agricultural success and the colonists, like the owners of the new Highlands farmhouses, wished to make a "deliberate statement" that they "belonged to a wider society informed by...British consumer values" and "good taste" (Maudlin 2009, 4). Lachlan Macquarie, a Scottish Army Officer who arrived in NSW in 1810 to become a very influential Governor of the colony, was very familiar with the improved cottages and model towns of Scotland (see Chapter 4).

3.5 PATTERN BOOKS, MODEL DWELLINGS AND MODEL VILLAGES

The idea of architecture as distinct from the skills of the artisan builder or designer developed during the seventeenth century, when the British upper classes adopted the elite Palladian style. Since then a clear distinction has been made between "polite" architecture (designed by an architect) and buildings constructed without the services of an architect.

In 1710 when British law first protected authors' copyright, mass publication commenced, and the *Engraver's Copyright Act 1735* extended the protection to printed designs. This, together with advances in printing technology and growing literacy, prompted the publication of many books of architectural designs and technical building manuals. The pattern books contained designs for buildings such as cottages and farmhouses as well as furniture and furnishings, with advice on their construction and suitability for various classes of occupants. The designs could be copied exactly, or used as inspiration. The technical manuals outlined the mathematical principles of classical design for masons and other tradesmen. By using such books, building owners who could not afford an architect could be confident that their new dwellings were fashionable, in good taste and socially appropriate. London was the source of most British pattern book production and the overseas distribution of such books ensured that the cultural ideas emanating from London were also spread to the colonies.

The pattern books covered a range of dwelling types. For example, the architect John Crunden in 1767 published *Convenient and Ornamental Architecture, Consisting of Original*

Designs for Plans, Elevations and Sections Beginning with the Farm House and Regularly Ascending to the Most Grand Villa Calculated for Both Town and Country and Suitable to Persons in Every Station of Life. John Plaw published *Rural Architecture and Design or Designs from the Simple Cottage to the Decorated Villa* in 1785. Many of Plaw's published designs had already been built and his popular book was reprinted several times until 1804. Other pattern books included David Laing's *Hints for Dwellings* (1800), W F Pocock's *Architectural Designs for Rustic Cottages, Picturesque Dwellings, Villas, Etc, With Appropriate Scenery* (1807) and Edward Gyfford's *Designs for Elegant Cottages and Small Villas* (1806) and *Designs for Small Picturesque Cottages and Hunting Boxes* (1807).

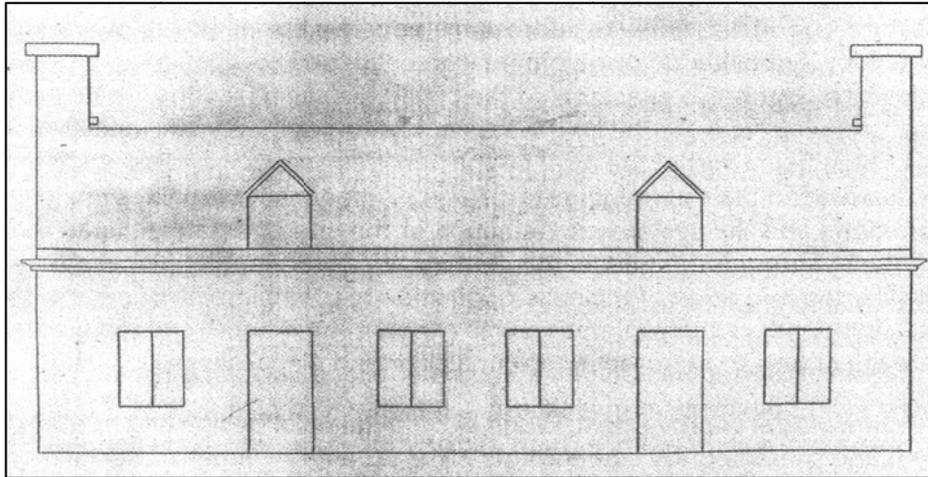
The pattern books contained suggestions not only for suitable urban villas and picturesque cottages for the middle classes but also on the layouts and buildings for "model" farms and labourers' cottages, many of which were being built on the new estates created by enclosure. The designers of labourers' cottages also sought to improve the morality and virtue of the labourer, by placing Neo-classical Georgian architecture ("good" architecture) into the landscapes, to address the negative social impacts of enclosure (Maudlin 2010, 13). Concerns about lighting, heating and hygiene were reflected in proposed designs for new cottages and planned villages, as growing humanitarian concerns about poverty led to a desire to improve the living conditions of rural and urban labourers.

The English architect John Wood the Younger produced what he claimed was the first pattern book to address the cottage dwelling of the rural labourer (Wood 1781, 3). He combined Neo-classical design with a program for humanitarian reform in *A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer* (1781). Wood sought to replace the common single-room, vernacular dwelling with an improved cottage. Of his seven principles of cottage design, the fifth was:

Cottages should always be built in PAIRS [the capitals are Wood's], either at a little distance the one from the other, or close adjoining so as to appear as one building that the inhabitants may be of assistance to each other in case of sickness or any other accident. (Wood 1781, 6)

However, despite Wood's claims to have produced the first "architectural" designs for labourers' cottages, plans for paired cottages had been published six years before, in Nathaniel Kent's *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property* (1775) (Figure 3.5), although Kent was a surveyor rather than an architect. Kent's designs for double cottages had already been used (c1760) at Nuneham Courtenay, a new emparkment village comprising two rows of brick semis.

Figure 3.5: Design for a pair of attached cottages, 1775.



“Two bricked Cottages of the smallest size” by Nathaniel Kent. (Maudlin 2010, 14)

In 1818 the architect John Papworth published *Rural Residences*, which promoted asymmetrical designs to better serve the fashion for the picturesque. Around 1830 a new interest in suburban housing was reflected in the pattern books (Long 2002, 35). Edward Trendall, a London architect, produced *Original Designs for Cottages and Villas, in the Grecian, Gothic and Italian Styles of Architecture* (1831). It was targeted at builders rather than owners, and although both Laing and Plaw had included similar designs in their books, this was the first to focus on smaller dwellings for the growing suburban areas around the cities and towns.

One of the most influential books of dwelling designs was published in 1833 by the Scottish architect John Claudius Loudon, his *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture*. It offered designs in a range of fashionable architectural styles, for both builders and owners, and new editions were published for the following 40 years. Continuing the progressive humanitarian agenda commenced by Wood, his principal interest in cottages was “as devices of social formation and agricultural production” (Loudon 1833, 8).

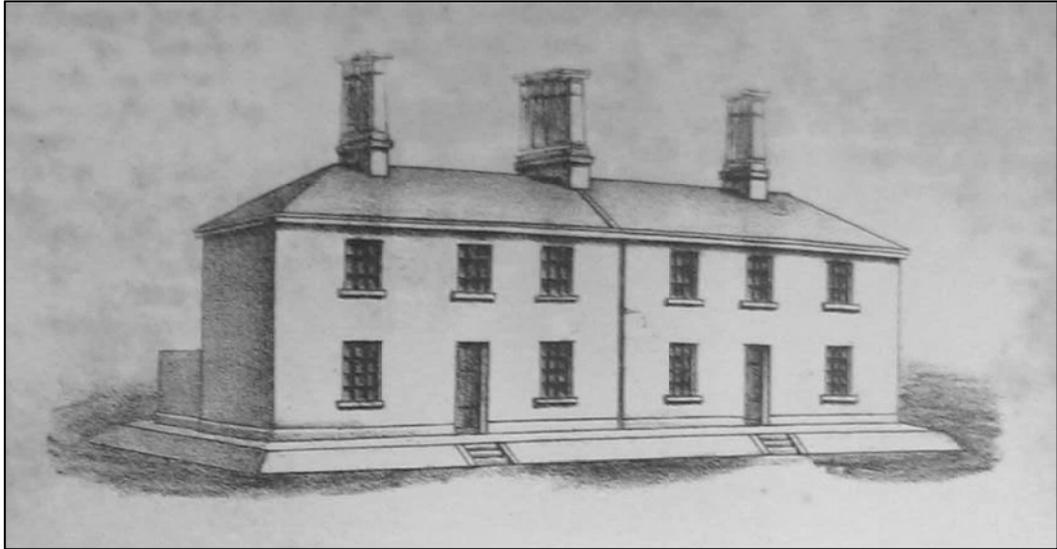
The publication was divided into three sections (Books 1, 2 and 3) depending on the class of a dwelling's proposed occupant. In his introduction to Book 1 Loudon wrote:

The designs of this book are calculated for what, in countries having a privileged aristocracy, are called the lower and middling classes of society; but which, in self-governed democracies, like North America, or in newly-colonised countries, like Australia, constitute nearly the whole of the rural population. (Loudon 1833, 8)

Clearly his designs were meant for the colonies as well as Britain. Those in Book 1 were arranged in descending order from detached cottages, double cottages (Figure 3.6), a group

of six cottages similar to a two storey apartment block and “Eighty Dwellings of the humblest Class, placed together, with a View of being heated by One common Fire, and enjoying other Benefits, on the Cooperative System” (Loudon 1833, 24). Although the term semi-detached was not used, the semi-detached dwelling type was thus very firmly placed in its position in a dwelling hierarchy – not quite as good as a single detached dwelling, but superior to those in buildings containing more than two dwellings.

Figure 3.6: Double cottages, 1833.



“Two Cottages for Country Labourers, under one Roof, with four Rooms in each, Back Kitchen, Pigsty and other Conveniences” (Loudon 1833, 170)

Despite the pattern books being developed almost exclusively by architects, there was a tendency by other architects to disparage any ordinary dwellings which were based on them. As the architect Samuel H Brooks noted in 1839:

The architectural style of the dwellings of the different classes of society is certainly an object of great importance, and every attempt towards the improvement of it is worthy of serious consideration. The efforts of architects in all ages have hitherto been generally directed to public buildings, and to the mansions of noblemen; and those who may be considered as composing the middling orders of society have been for the most part left to become their own architects. (Brooks 1839, iii)

Brooks goes on to observe that:

The art of arranging villas in England is far better understood than the construction of cottages; the reason of this is, that the occupants of the latter

description of residence have hitherto been deficient in that degree of cultivation which is necessary to the display of what is considered good taste, and have neglected to call in the assistance of professional men. (Brooks 1839, viii)

Brooks' pattern book was targeted to the middling orders, and his book does not contain any designs for double cottages or double villas.

Yet the estate owners who were building picturesque new labourers' cottages were not only inspired by the pattern books, particularly if they were simultaneously having an architect-designed mansion built. Acclaimed buildings in the picturesque style were also a source of inspiration, including the group of detached cottages (and one double cottage) designed by the prominent architect John Nash at Blaise Hamlet in 1811 (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Double cottages by John Nash, Blaise Hamlet, 1811.



(www.flickr.com/photos/majorclanger/3740641952/ accessed 12 March 2012)

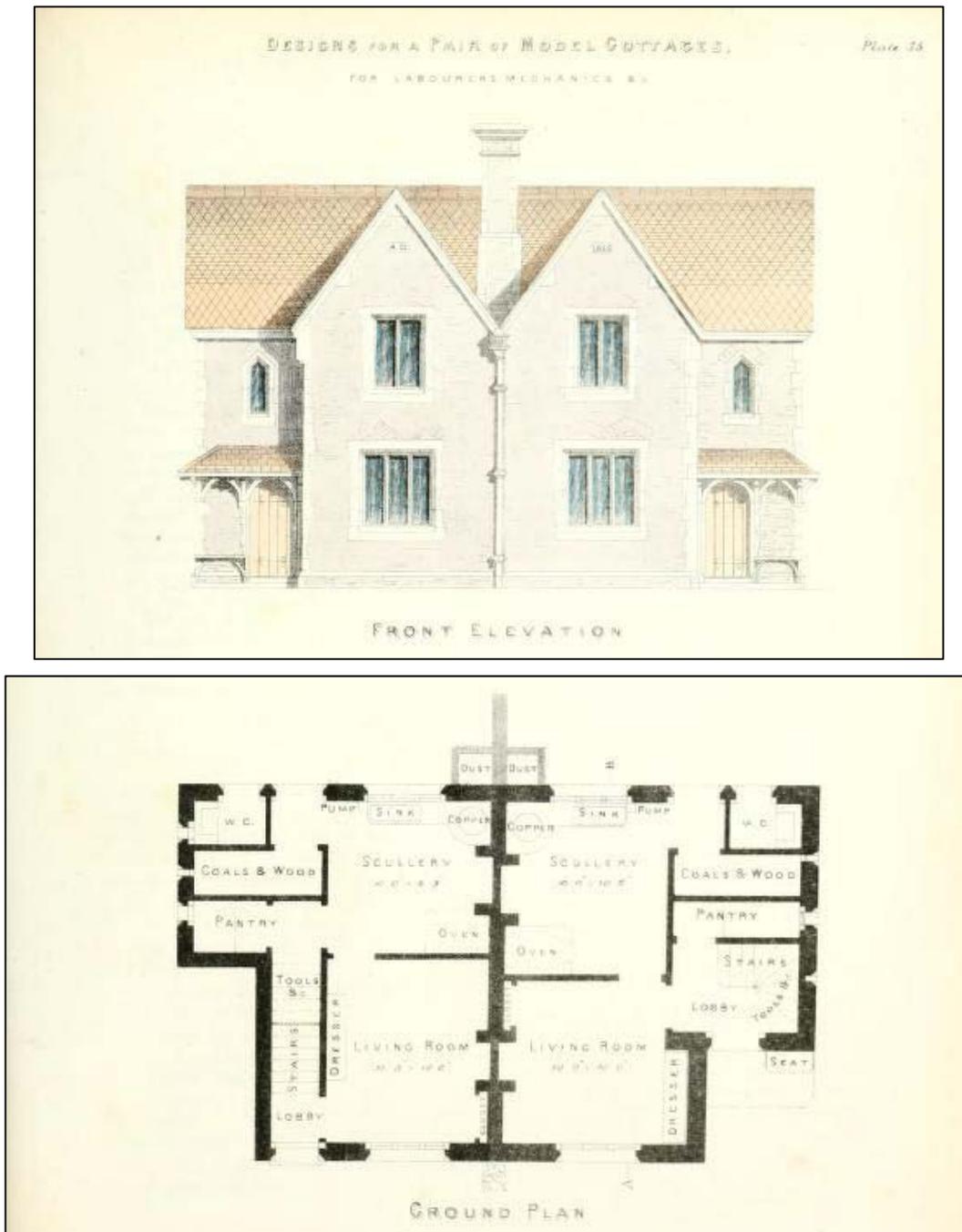
Architectural magazines and trade catalogues became more influential during the Victorian era and the scale of book publication was transformed as the technology involved in publishing matured. As Helen Long suggests:

Mechanisation, new transport methods, speculative builders, a large workforce of cheap labour and cheap machine-made building components all encouraged the proliferation of architectural pattern books for the building and ornamentation of small and medium Victorian dwellings. (Long 2002, 2)

Some authors sought to improve the housing conditions of the working classes by offering model designs, many of which were semis. Class was explicit in these pattern book designs.

For example, between 1855 and 1858 Edward Lance Tarbuck edited *The Builder's Practical Director*, in which the designs ranged from First Class to Fourth Class (Figure 3.8).

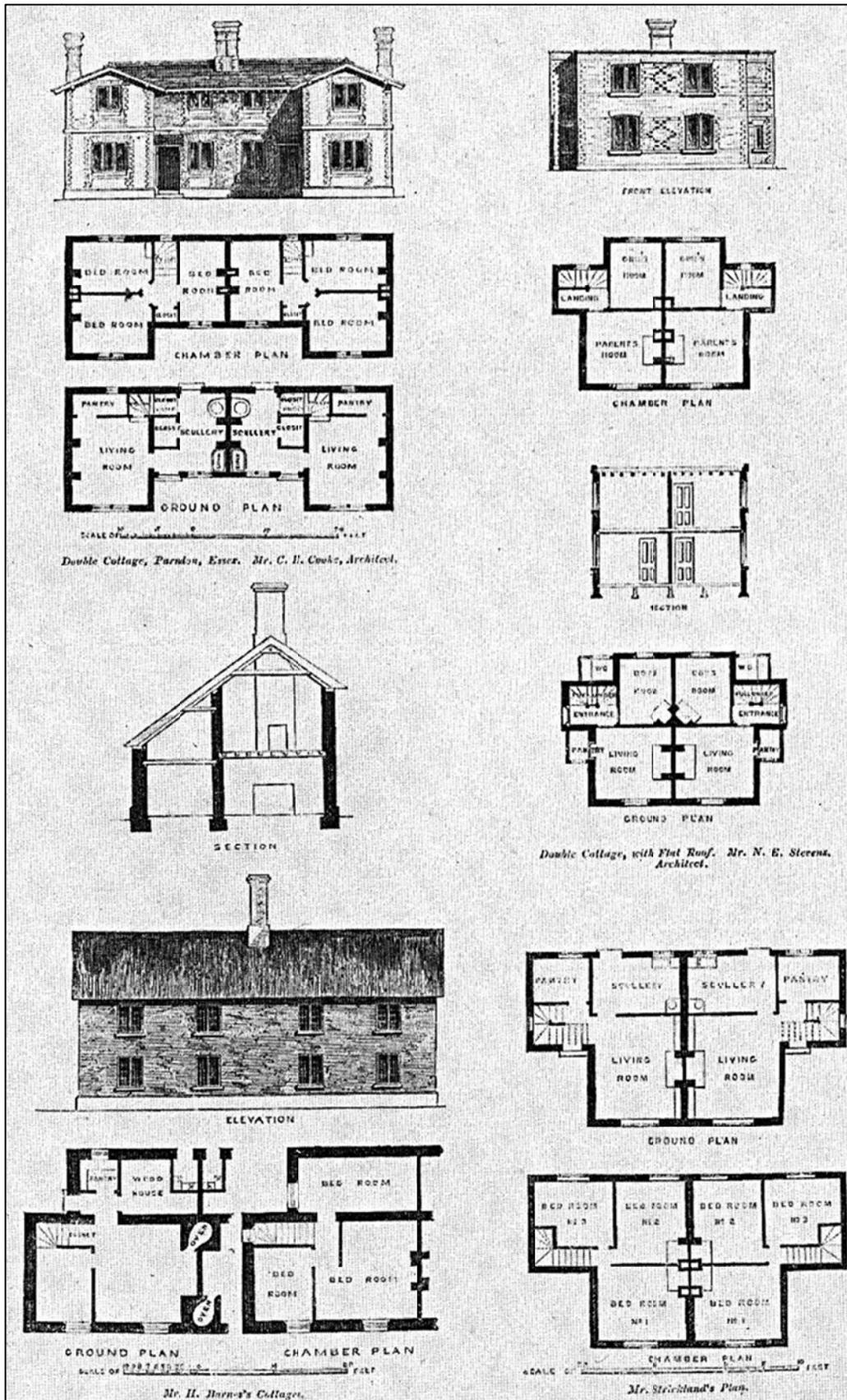
Figure 3.8: Third class model cottages, 1855.



“Designs for a pair of model cottages, for labourers, mechanics etc” (Tarbuck 1855, Plate 36)

Other methods for trying to improve the dwelling standards of the poor included design competitions, with the results published in journals such as *The Builder* (Caffyn 1986, 85). Frequently the winning model designs were for semis (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Designs for labourers' cottages, 1860.



The Builder (in Caffyn 1986, 85)

When new industries were set up in places lacking a plentiful supply of labour the employers could see the advantages in building appropriate housing to attract a workforce. The estate villages tended to focus on aesthetics while the industrialists' villages were designed to be models of how a village should be, and how the residents should behave.

The model villages were set out with dwellings, roads, village squares, churches and other community facilities to provide what the developer thought was an ideal environment in which people could live happy, healthy lives and therefore be more productive at work. Often based on an idealised medieval village (Barrett and Phillips 1987, 92) with its supposedly superior sense of community and value systems, the new villages became models of how people (especially the labouring class) should live.

One of the earliest model villages, Railway Town (1842) housed railway workers near Swindon. Like many later industrial model villages it contained terraced housing, as well as facilities such as a church, a vicarage and a school. Sir Titus Salt developed a model village adjacent to his Bradford alpaca mill between 1851 and 1861. Saltaire contained a variety of dwelling types, each determined by the status of the occupants – labourers in long terraces of small dwellings, overseers in terraces with gardens, managers in shorter terraces with gardens and for those at the top, five pairs of semis with gardens (Lofthouse 2012, 59)

West Hill Park Estate (1863) at Crossley Mill near Halifax also contained a range of dwellings to match the status of the occupants including six pairs of large semis overlooking the park. The dwellings were not only zoned by social class, but positioned so that the primary outlook from each class of house was only to cottages of a similar or superior class (Gorst 1995, 27).

Pattern books not only promulgated dwelling types and floor plans, they played a major role in promoting various architectural styles. The Neo-Classical Georgian style was soon joined by Gothic, Swiss, Picturesque, Old English/Tudor and Arts and Crafts. Some favoured a certain style, while others provided a wide range of style options. Most books focussed on villas for the middle classes; however, many continued to include designs for small terraced houses and semis. The small to medium dwellings tended to maintain the Georgian style – speculative builders preferred to use styles they were familiar with and avoid the risk that a fashionable style such as Gothic might not sell.

The influence of the pattern books on British working class housing was significant, as the vernacular traditions were gradually replaced with more standard designs, styles and materials. Sensitivity to class structures ensured that the form and style of such buildings clearly indicated the status of the occupants, while at the same time confirming the superior taste of the employer or landlord. While colonial housing did not conform to the norms of the typical English estate villages, British pattern books have been linked to the development of

housing in NSW (see Sections 4.6 and 6.2, and Case Study 4). As British settlers (including architects) moved to the NSW colony, they brought with them pattern books which not only fuelled the fashions for various architectural styles but also reinforced the dwelling hierarchy by including numerous examples of cottages suitable for labourers and artisans as well as larger dwellings for the middle classes. Local architectural periodicals first appeared in NSW during the 1880s (Boyd 2010, 30). These included *The Illustrated Sydney News and Town and Country Journal*, which frequently reproduced British designs as well as the Australian variations.

3.6 PHILANTHROPY

The industrial revolution created sub-standard living conditions for the working classes in overcrowded British cities and towns, and rural housing outside the closed estate villages continued to deteriorate. Census figures show that the English population had increased by 50% between 1750 and 1801, and doubled between 1801 and 1851. The percentage living in rural areas declined from 80% in 1801 to less than 50% in 1851 as people drifted to the urban areas (Burnett 1986, 4). The decaying inner city areas were gradually abandoned by the middle classes, who soon labelled them “slums”.¹⁸

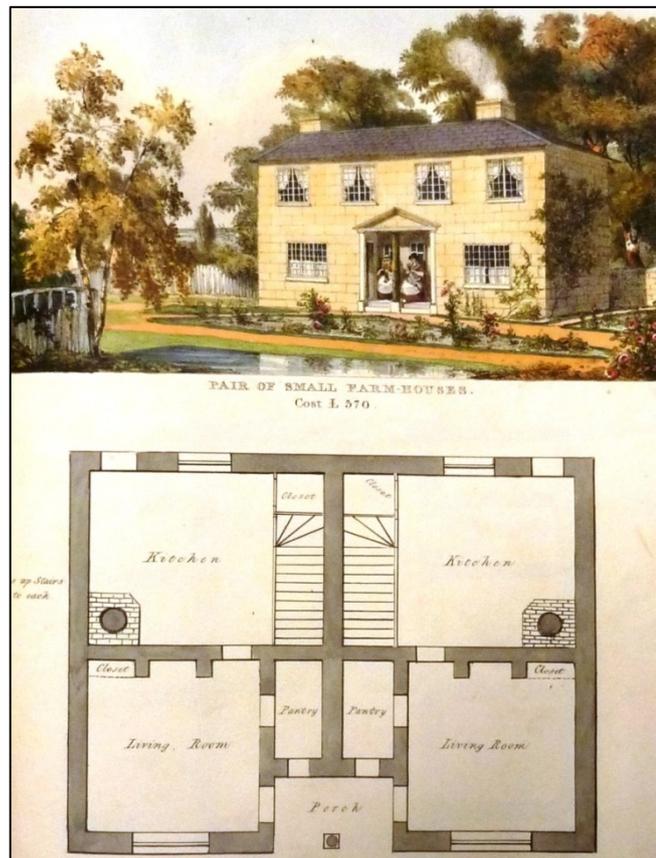
During the eighteenth century the doctrine of *laissez-faire* had prevailed – the belief that there was no need for interference, especially by governments, in the structure of society. Philanthropy had been a component of the model dwellings in some of the new estate villages, but it was not as important as ensuring a stable, virtuous workforce by linking “architecture, artisans and morality” (Guillery 2004, 298). Concerned middle class citizens, many of them Quakers, began to believe that some form of intervention was required and formed societies to achieve their aims.

The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was formed by Benjamin Wills in 1825 (Curl 1983, 75) and the same year the Secretary to the Society, architect John Hall, published a book of designs to inspire the “nobility and gentry” to build cottages and schools for the “rural poor”. The designs in Hall’s book were mostly of pairs of cottages (Figure 3.10). Adopting Wood’s principle from more than 40 years before, he stated that it was:

... best to build them in pairs, not only as respects economy, but for the purpose of vicinity, supplying neighbours to minister to each other in times of sickness &c. &c.
(Hall 1825, 8)

¹⁸ The first use of the term was in 1812 (Guillery 2004, 290).

Figure 3.10: A pair of small farm houses, 1825.



The cottages are shown in a picturesque setting. (Hall 1825, Design No 6, no page number)

The philanthropic societies also recognised that to encourage investment into improved housing, an economic return must also be available. Hall calculated that a landowner would receive a return of 7.5% on capital by building his designs. Neither the anticipated returns nor indeed many of the model dwellings were realised, and the philanthropic societies were relatively inactive until the 1840s.

A new *Poor Law* was introduced in 1834, requiring those living in poverty to enter a workhouse before they could receive what little assistance was available. Housing conditions remained poor, and outbreaks of cholera and typhoid were common. In 1842 Edwin Chadwick reported to the Poor Law Board on the sanitary conditions and planning regulations (if any) within towns and a *Royal Commission on the Health of Towns* reported in 1845. These reports prompted attempts to introduce planning controls and health regulations, as politicians feared the spread of disease as well as civil unrest arising from the poor conditions.

Until that time what little planning regulation there was related mostly to fire prevention. London's *Metropolitan Building Act 1844* had continued this narrow approach. The *Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847* empowered local authorities to make byelaws on issues

including health and safety, sanitation, drainage, structural stability and fire safety. The *Public Health Act 1848* applied only outside London.

During this period, the philanthropists, who had achieved negligible improvements in the housing of rural labourers, turned their attention to the urban working classes. They were concerned not only with public health, but the moral hazards supposedly caused by substandard housing.

Several philanthropic societies were founded during the 1840s and 1850s as a result of Chadwick's report and the Royal Commission's findings, including the Labourer's Friend Society. This group published a journal of the same name, in which they set out the principles of cottage building and provided model designs. William Bardwell suggested in 1854 that these were "a model for millions" including the colonies in Canada and Australia, and that "plans for that purpose were, I believe, sent out" (Bardwell 1854, 11). Reconstituted in 1844 as the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes (adopting the name of the earlier society), it had powerful backers and patrons, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and its Honorary Architect was the prominent architect Henry Roberts (*The Labourer's Friend*, June 1844, 1). The Society raised capital from investors to build model dwellings for urban workers, and promised a rental return of 4%. Other builders were then expected to copy these models of how people should live.

To achieve a return of 4% on the capital invested, the Society was forced to abandon its plans to build double cottages. Instead it built terraces, flats, model lodging houses and large tenement blocks¹⁹. In addition, it was found that only "the artisan and journeyman class" could actually afford the rents (*The Labourer's Friend*, June 1850, cited in Tarn 1973, 20). This left the over-crowded labourers' housing in no better state than it had been before.

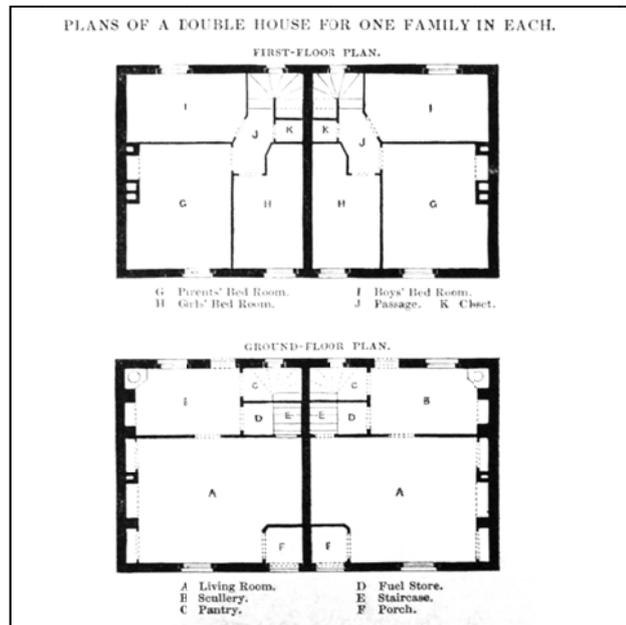
In 1850 the Society released *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes*, written by Henry Roberts. His designs included model houses adapted for towns as well as agricultural and manufacturing districts (Figure 3.11). He included double cottages for both urban and rural areas:

On the ground of economy, as well as for other reasons which it is unnecessary to detail, the dwellings generally are designed in pairs, care being taken to prevent, as far as possible, the interface of adjoining families with each other, by placing the

¹⁹ A tenement is any house, building, or portion thereof, which is rented, leased, let, or hired out to be occupied or is occupied, as the home or residence of more than three families living independently of one another and doing their own cooking upon the premises, or by more than two families upon a floor, so living and cooking and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yards, water-closets, or privies, or some of them (*New York Tenement House Act 1867*). Today such buildings are called blocks of flats, or apartment blocks, and the term tenement implies a run-down block of flats.

entrance doors at the opposite extremities of the cottages, whilst, by carrying up the chimney-stack in the centre, the greatest possible amount of warmth is obtained from the flues. (Roberts 1853, 21)

Figure 3.11: Design for a double house, 1850.



Design by Henry Roberts for “Workmen’s Dwellings in Towns, to be built in pairs or in a row”. (Roberts 1853, 42)

Other philanthropic societies such as the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes had the dual aims of providing actual housing for the poor (rather than model dwellings for others to copy) and generating a commercial return on investment. It was the dual philanthropic and commercial aspects which gave rise to the “5% philanthropy” tag for such groups.

As the societies continued to clear slum areas and build urban tenement blocks and lodging houses it became clear that semis, although an ideal for workers, were feasible in rural areas where the cost of land was low, but in urban areas only high density terraces and tenement blocks could provide the required returns on investment.

By the late 1860s the philanthropic housing schemes were struggling to provide commercial returns, even though they were targeting artisans, not labourers (Tarn 1973, 26), and speculative builders continued to build substandard workers’ housing, unfettered by regulation. James Hole of the Leeds Model Cottage Association suggested that:

A better plan for relieving the crowded seats of population would be the erection of “model” villages outside our large towns and on the main lines of railway, so that the

workmen might be brought to and from their work each day at almost nominal cost. There the artisan might enjoy the blessed gifts of sunlight and pure air, open space for his children to play in, and a cottage garden to find him pleasant and profitable employment for a spare hour. (Hole 1866)

As the activities of the earlier 5% philanthropic societies declined, two new organisations were founded – the Peabody Trust (1862) and the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company (1863). The business models for both were to house the urban artisan class, rather than the poorer labourers, in large tenement blocks. A 5% return on investment was also expected. Many of their developments were described as “grim” and “harsh” leading to a “cult of super-urbanism”, a phenomenon which John Tarn believes “lies at the root of the subsequent violent reaction in favour of very low density, which became the objective of the working classes and inspired the founders of the first garden cities at the end of the century” (Tarn 1973, 55). The Artizans’, Labourers’ and General Dwellings Company (1867) concentrated on terraced housing in the suburbs, again, despite the name, exclusively for the artisan class (Lofthouse 2012, 53).

3.7 MODEL VILLAGES

The early model villages built by the industrialists were functional places, often comprising pattern book houses in rows along straight streets. It was not until Port Sunlight was developed near Liverpool for the employees of Lever Bros that the involvement of architects became a key component of model village design. However, the mix of terraced houses for the lowest ranks, pairs of semis for the middling ranks and detached dwellings for the managers or foremen was maintained.

The development of Port Sunlight model village by William Lever commenced in 1887. He wished to revive the “middle-class idealisation of working-class housing” inherent in the black and white vernacular Cheshire architecture, with its half timbering and Tudor effects (Miller 2010, 9). Lever stated in 1888 that:

It is my and my brother’s hope, some day, to build houses in which our work-people will be able to live and be comfortable – semi-detached houses with gardens back and front, in which they will be able to know more about the science of life than they can in a back-to-back slum. (cited in Darley 2007, 142)

Despite Lever’s initial preference for semis, what was actually built was a low density mix of short terraces, semis and a few detached dwellings for managers. In addition, the layout minimised the number and length of the streets. Both of these features were later embraced as principles of the garden city movement (see Section 3.9). Many of the semis and grouped dwellings were designed to appear as individual houses within the streetscapes (for example

Figure 3.12), a technique reminiscent of the early London villa developments (see Section 3.11).

Figure 3.12: Semis at Port Sunlight.



New Chester Road (Google Maps, March 2012, Author 2011)

At his Bournville model village, George Cadbury was less a philanthropist and more an economic rationalist than was Lever. The intention was that his village would net a return of 4% after costs and, unlike Port Sunlight, it was not built exclusively for his employees. He had aspirations to provide a model village to “encourage a social intermixture of all classes” (Tarn 1973, 159) and as a Quaker Cadbury was also keen to promote moral improvement.

The Cadbury cocoa works moved to a new site near Birmingham in 1879, and the village of Bournville commenced on a small scale with a detached house for the manager and six pairs of semis, “widely spaced and set in large gardens” to house key workers (Creese 1966, 111). Bournville expanded significantly after 1895, mostly with semis (such as Figure 3.13) and some detached houses and short terraces.

Figure 3.13: Semis in Bournville, c1900.



Maryvale Road, designed by William Alexander Harvey, influenced by Voysey. (Miller 2010, 10).

Port Sunlight and Bournville were responsible for the “cloaking of working class housing in a middle class disguise” and “breaking down the distinctions between housing for the workers and housing for others” (Darley 2007, 144-5). For the first time, low density urban semis were designed by architects for the working classes. Cadbury fulfilled the goals of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes by proving that:

... a low density layout could be a practical possibility even for the working classes, and unwittingly he opened the flood gates to a new kind of suburbia (Tarn 1973, 161).

3.8 REGULATIONS

The British *Public Health Act* was amended in 1875, after many reports and commissions looking at sanitation and health. Section 157 allowed local councils to make byelaws for street layout, the construction of buildings and for sanitary requirements. The Act did not apply to London, and the adoption of the byelaws by local councils was optional. The Local Government Board in 1877 prepared a set of model building byelaws which in time became the standard throughout England, and also influenced the colonial regulators. They specified a maximum density of 40 dwellings per acre, a minimum dwelling width, a front setback and a rear garden for each dwelling, thereby preventing the worst excesses of the speculative builder. Byelaws also prevented housing being built around limited-access roads, courts and yards (Lofthouse 2012, 53).

To ensure compliance with the byelaws, most local authorities insisted on building plans being submitted for approval. Yet as byelaws began to take effect, the speculative builders used the guidelines not as minimums, but as maximums, and the “byelaw house” and “byelaw street” of terraces or semis became commonplace (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14: Byelaw housing in England.



Terraces, Bournbrook, Birmingham, c1890. (Creese 1966, 82)



Semis, Sylvan Avenue, London, 1906. (Jackson 1991, 11)

Local government powers were further strengthened in the *Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act 1875*, which allowed councils to force the acquisition and demolition of slum areas, and to have the site redeveloped with working class housing. This Act, like its predecessors, contained no compulsory provisions and was largely ignored due to the expense of paying adequate compensation to slum landlords. Yet together with the *Public Health Act 1875* it provided an initial framework for slum clearances and council building codes. The new regulations encouraged philanthropic societies such as the Peabody Trust to re-develop land on which slums had been cleared, rehousing the people in large tenement blocks.

3.9 THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

The expanding railway networks during the nineteenth century provided access to the British countryside for city dwellers seeking recreation in the supposedly healthier rural towns and villages. Ebenezer Howard in his book *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) outlined his utopian ideas for bringing the qualities of the countryside back to the urban setting. He suggested building new self-contained communities (garden cities) on rural land, away from existing towns. Howard was inspired by the social reforms and philanthropy of the nineteenth century, suburbs such as Bedford Park (see Section 3.11), successful industrial model villages such as Port Sunlight and Bournville, and writers such as John Ruskin and William Morris. In 1899 he established the Garden City Association²⁰ to promote his ideas as an integral part of a social revolution which would bring about what he described as a “joyous union” of the town and the country.

Ebenezer Howard’s book was re-published in 1902 as *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. A garden city was defined as:

A Town designated for healthy living and industry; of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life, but not larger; surrounded by a rural belt; the whole of the land being in public ownership or held in trust for the community. (Howard 1902, 26)

By placing community space at the centre and industries on the periphery, the traditional industrial town model was inverted. Howard envisaged a “slumless, smokeless city” (Freestone 1989, 13). In 1903 land north of London was purchased to build Letchworth, the first of the garden cities. The architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin were chosen for the project after submitting the winning entry in a competition. Both were followers of the Arts and Crafts movement and, like Howard, were “alert to the emerging social forces and popular aspirations that were to transform housing and factory design in the next generation” (F J Osborn in the preface to Howard 1902, 12). It was these architects who gave form to Howard’s high level vision.

In his earlier booklet *Cottage Plans and Common Sense* Raymond Unwin had stated that the standard unit of dwelling should be the double or semi-detached house (Unwin 1902, 3). In 1903 one of Parker and Unwin’s designs was built in Harrogate (Figure 3.15).

²⁰ The term Garden City had previously been used to describe Chicago and Christchurch, and was the name of a New York suburb (1869). However, although Howard had lived in Chicago, he coined his term to mean a city within a green space rather than a city containing gardens.

Figure 3.15: Parker and Unwin semis, Harrogate, 1903.



Hookstone Chase, Harrogate (Google Maps, January 2012).

Parker and Unwin had also been commissioned by the Quaker philanthropist and industrialist Joseph Rowntree to build a model village at New Earswick, near his York cocoa works. Owned by a Trust, the village had curved roads which followed the local topography and dwellings grouped around courts. The houses were designed for Rowntree's skilled workers. The first houses built in 1902 were a pair of semis (Figure 3.16) and several short terraces, based on the dwelling mix at Port Sunlight and Bournville. This dwelling mix was continued in later phases. Parker and Unwin's designs for double fronted semis with bay windows were soon widely adopted by speculative builders.

Figure 3.16: The first semis at New Earswick, 1902.



Western Terrace, New Earswick (Author 2011)

Having tested their dwelling designs and layouts in New Earswick, Parker and Unwin in 1904 developed their master plan for Letchworth Garden City with dwellings and factories encircled by agricultural land. The housing density (at that time unregulated) was set at twelve dwellings per acre²¹ for the cheapest houses, and less for the more expensive dwellings. Working class housing near the industrial areas was higher density (terraces) while further away were lower density zones of semi-detached and detached cottages. Closer to the prime streets such as Broadway, larger detached houses for the “upper middle classes” were set in spacious lots (North Hertfordshire District Council 2001, 7).

Although many other architects were later involved in the development, Parker and Unwin’s semis, built in a vernacular style, with dormers, tall chimneys and painted roughcast, became Letchworth’s defining style (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17: Letchworth semis designed by Courtenay Melville Crickmer.



South View, Letchworth (Google Maps, January 2012)

The idealism of the garden city experiment was somewhat reduced by the economic realities. Unlike the model villages which had been subsidised and overseen by their philanthropic owners, the first garden city had a variety of developers and the dwelling mix soon included standard output from speculative builders and individual co-partnership dwellings funded by building societies, as well as the carefully designed architectural groupings. In addition it proved almost impossible to build affordable dwellings for the factory labourers. Yet, despite the problems, Letchworth became a desirable, middle class city.

²¹ Unwin, in *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!* (1912), demonstrated that a density of 12 houses per acre was an efficient use of land. This benchmark was used extensively in later suburban developments.

The concept of the self-contained garden city in a rural setting (only two were built, the second being Welwyn Garden City in 1920) was soon translated into the garden suburb - a residential estate on the outskirts of towns and cities, with a carefully planned layout based on garden city principles, but no industries. Similarly, the garden city principles of a well-planned, open layout, trees and green open spaces were applied to the layouts of model villages tied to specific industrial operations, which soon became known as garden villages rather than model villages.

While much of suburbia continued to spread with rows of byelaw terraces, the social reformer Henrietta Barnett commissioned Raymond Unwin to design a suburb in London. The Hampstead Garden Suburb, for which planning commenced in 1905, is acknowledged as the first English garden suburb. To achieve his vision for the suburb, Unwin was able to have a special law passed to suspend the byelaws and allow the use of short cul-de-sacs. In 1907 work began on the first cottages, which were semis (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18: Unwin’s Foundation Cottages at Hampstead Garden Suburb, 1907.

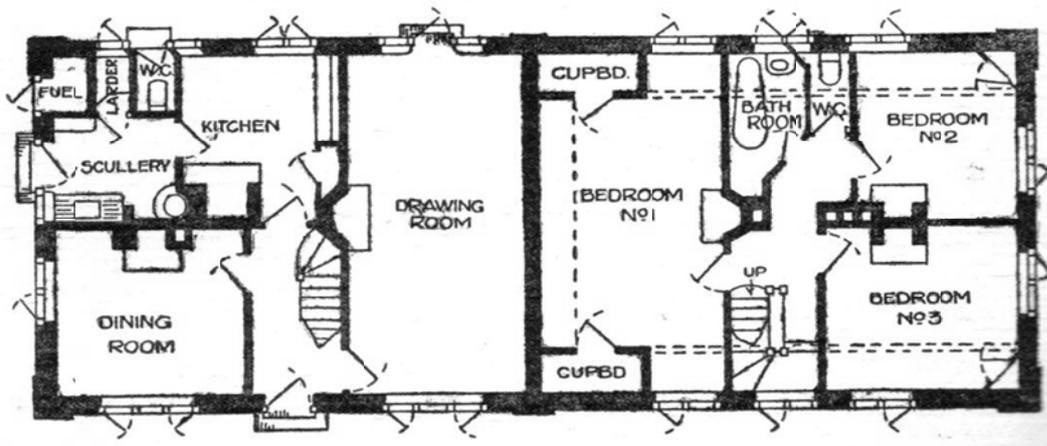


Hampstead Way, Hampstead. The plaque on the front wall by the window proclaims them as the first dwellings in Hampstead Garden Suburb. (Google Maps, January 2012)

Hampstead Garden Suburb was to have a mix of dwelling types (including flats), with the aim of housing a social mix including the lower classes. Like Unwin, Mrs Barnett believed that to “raise the level of total culture” even in urban slums, beauty had to become fundamental to urban life (Creese 1966, 230). Just as the desire for external beauty had given rise to the semis of the emparkment villages (see Section 3.3), so the concept of rural beauty could be transferred into a suburb by the use of that semi-detached cottage motif. However, middle

class tenants soon took up all the occupancies in the “artisan” semis such as those shown in Figure 3.19.

Figure 3.19: Hampstead Garden Suburb semis designed by Arnold Mitchell, 1909.



Temple Fortune Lane, Hampstead (Unwin and Baillie Scott 1909, 46)

Semi-detached dwellings were widely accepted in the British garden cities, suburbs and villages as an appropriate compromise between space and economy, and were the most efficient way of providing each dwelling with a garden setting. The *Town Planning Act 1909* incorporated many of the garden suburb standards and principles such as road widths and housing density, and was supposed to make low density (“healthy”) housing widely available even for the working classes. Many town planning schemes developed under the Act mandated that “not more than four dwelling-houses shall in any place be built under one continuous roof” (Sharp 1932, 144). It was the garden city movement which accelerated the trajectory of semis down the social ladder from the upper middle class to the artisan class, and later in the twentieth century, to the poorest levels of the working classes in the form of

public housing. It has been argued that the garden city movement “democratised” housing design and standards (Miller 2010, 37).

3.10 PUBLIC HOUSING

Local councils gradually abandoned the *laissez faire* attitude towards housing, as it became clear that neither private enterprise nor the philanthropic societies could provide adequate housing for the most disadvantaged sections of the community. The relationships between disease, poverty, crime and slums were causing increasing political problems. The *Labouring Classes Lodging Act 1851* had given local councils the ability to acquire or build lodging houses. Although optional and rarely used, it was one of the earliest attempts at government intervention in housing. In 1866, following an outbreak of cholera, the *Sanitary Act* defined overcrowding as a “nuisance”. This Act applied to all types of dwellings and hence enabled local councils across England to deal with overcrowding, again with negligible effect because there was still a widespread view that poverty was caused by the poor themselves (Lofthouse 2012, 55).

In 1869 Liverpool Council built St Martin’s Cottages, four storey blocks of tenements (demolished in 1977) which the council claims in a plaque opposite the site to have been the “first council houses in Europe”. As the government became more worried about overcrowding a Royal Commission and subsequent *Housing of the Working Classes Acts* provided the impetus for clearing slums and rehousing the tenants, often in a different area if the slum area was a valuable development site. With increased accessibility by train and tram they could theoretically be rehoused in the suburbs. One of the largest suburban council estates was at Tooting where in 1900 the London City Council built rows of terraced housing covering over 39 acres (15.8 hectares).

London County Council from 1893 built 23 individually-designed five-storey tenement blocks in a cleared slum area at Shoreditch. The Boundary Estate opened in 1900 to wide acclaim; however, of the 5,000 tenants evicted from the slum, very few moved into the new estate, because the rents were too high and the paternalistic rules governing behaviour too restrictive. Most of the displaced people just moved into other slums.

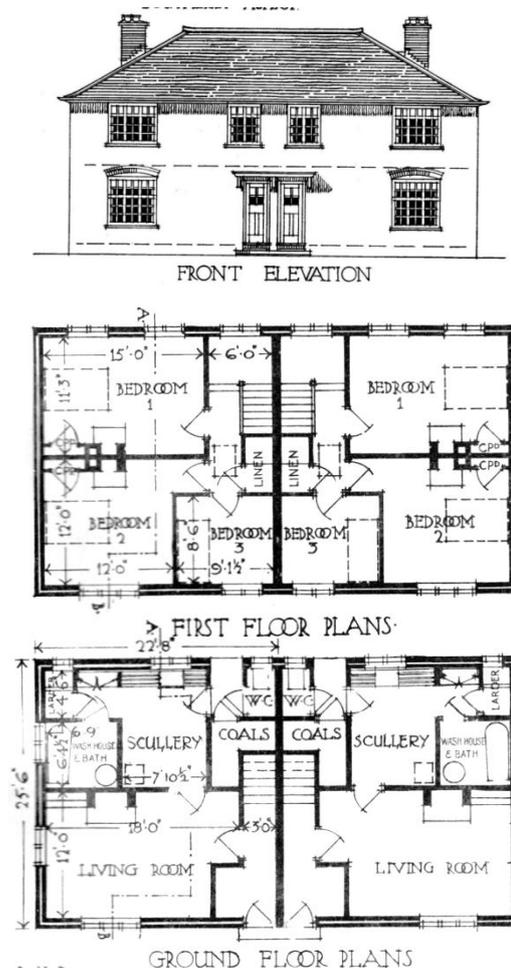
Prior to the First World War government intervention in the British housing market was limited in scope and was mostly confined to the “poorer classes” (artisans) for whom tenement blocks were built (Local Government Board 1919, 3). Severe housing shortages, both during and after the war (particularly for returned soldiers) then made public housing a priority. The program to build houses aimed to provide “Homes Fit for Heroes”, a slogan coined by the Prime Minister Lloyd George. The shortfall in housing was estimated to be 500,000 cottages (Local Government Boards 1918, 4). In 1914 only 2% of England’s dwellings were owned by

local authorities. By 1979 when the Thatcher government was elected, one third of the British population lived in public (council) housing (Cole and Furbey 1994, 1).

In 1918 a government committee, chaired by Sir John Tudor Walters MP reported on its investigations into “satisfactory dwellings for a working man’s family” (Local Government Boards 1918, 8). This report, known as the Tudor Walters Report, was endorsed by all sides of politics. The Victorian byelaw standards were rejected in favour of Raymond Unwin’s garden suburb design principles.

The principles of the Tudor Walters Report were reflected in the Local Government Board’s *Manual on the Preparation of State-aided Housing Schemes* (1919). The housing manual provided twelve cottage designs as a guide for local councils. There is one design for a terrace of four dwellings (with access for the inner terraced houses via a central open archway), one for a small block of four flats and ten for pairs of semis, including rural semis and two bungalow semi designs (Figure 3.20).

Figure 3.20: Housing Manual urban semis with no parlour, 1919.



The most common type of design was for Class A3 - three bedrooms (Local Government Board 1919, Design No 2, no page number).

Unwin was of the view that low-cost council housing in a garden suburb setting was possible using mass produced components and removing all decorative elements from his designs. The Tudor Walters Report had warned against “covering large areas with houses all of one kind accommodating tenants all of the same social class” (Burnett 1986, 223) and Unwin’s advice to local authorities was to create pleasing streetscapes with a mix of short terraces (for labourers) and semis (for artisans). However, this advice was often ignored because:

... the thing that most local authorities desired above all was the “semi”; it was the “semi” that fulfilled most popular aspirations and it was not something that local authorities were prepared to give up readily in order to satisfy the notions of the architects at the ministry. (Swenarton 1981, 144)

Despite the initial target of 500,000 cottages plus 100,000 per year, only around 213,000 dwellings were built prior to 1921 (UK Parliament nd). Adherence to garden suburb layouts was largely abandoned as streetscapes of identical semis were built (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21: Typical English interwar council semis



Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, photographed in 2007.
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Councilhousing02.jpg> accessed 26 September 2011).

A new *Housing Act* in 1930 obliged local councils to develop five year programmes to clear all the remaining slum areas and rehouse the tenants. This Act, which was the only one of the British interwar housing acts to specifically target the poorest segment of the working classes, led to the construction of more than 700,000 council dwellings, bringing to 1.1 million the number of council houses built as a result of the interwar housing Acts (UK Parliament nd). Although after 1933 there was a general move back to the use of five-storey blocks of flats to rehouse slum tenants, the vast majority of the interwar council houses were semis.

After the Second World War housing returned servicemen became a priority. The Dudley Report on the design of post-war housing was published in 1944 and the *Housing Manual* was updated.

It was still assumed in 1944 that the most common building type would be the semi-detached house with three bedrooms to meet the needs of the normal four- or five-person family...Flats received only one page of text in the 1944 Manual. (Burnett 1986, 299)

Despite this assumption post-war council estates began to include a higher density mix of terraces and flats, including high-rise flats. In 1961 a government report *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* (known as the Parker Morris Report) determined that there had been a “revolution in expectations” (Burnett 1986, 304). The design principles for council housing then became focussed on minimum standards such as space and heating, and the way rooms were used, rather than the type of dwelling itself.

In 1980 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher introduced the “right to buy” scheme, where council tenants could purchase their home at a discounted price. Thousands of tenants purchased their council semi and the houses continue to provide comfortable homes.

3.11 MIDDLE CLASS HOUSING AND THE EXPANDING SUBURBS

The British class system for centuries retained a traditional balance between the gentry, the “middling sorts” and peasants. (The middling sorts comprised people such as yeoman farmers and merchants.) This began to change during the eighteenth century. The working classes, which were generally divided into the labourers and the artisans, grew in both size and visibility as peasantry declined. The definition of the middling sorts broadened to include those who became wealthy in commercial and industrial pursuits, and this new middle class also grew significantly. Peter Guillery estimated the sizes of the various classes in London at the end of the eighteenth century – upper income 2-3%, middling sort 16-21%, artisans 25% and labourers 50% (Guillery 2004, 11-13).

In post-fire London²² a separation of the classes gathered momentum, as the wealthier classes developed large terraced houses in the west, leaving the working classes in the east. Both architects and speculative builders sought ways to differentiate the middle classes from the working classes. One of the architectural forms which could make “material statements of the social order” (Johnson 2010, 133) was the upper middle class villa. Villas were large detached dwellings on the edges of cities, close to the estates of the elite (McKellar 2011, 50). Designs for villas were readily available in the pattern books, for example Crunden

²² The fire was in 1666.

(1767), Plaw (1785) and Liang (1800). As transport improved, suburbs of villas for wealthy residents were created, albeit haphazardly.

Some of the older, larger villas were subdivided to form multiple dwellings, and soon large new villas containing two attached dwellings were also being built by speculators who could take advantage of the lower costs involved in building semis and still provide an out-of-town retreat with an illusion of detachment. For semi-detached villas the most important thing was that the building must appear to be only one large house (for example Figure 3.22). This unified appearance ensured that semi-detached villas retained their middle class status.

Figure 3.22: Semis in Dartmouth Grove, c1776.



Designed by Thomas Gayfere to appear as one large villa. (McKellar 2011, 65)

Part of the attraction of a suburban villa was the notion that residents were living the idealised, country lifestyle (*rus in urbe*). Having pairs of villas was quite consistent with this – pairs of rural cottages being the norm.

The first planned estate of suburban villas was St John's Wood in London. In 1790 the architect George Dance the Younger used semi-detached villas in his design for the Camden Estate, but this was not built (Galinou 2010, 77). Planning for St John's Wood (the Eyre Estate) commenced in 1794 with the architect John Shaw. Building commenced in 1805. Instead of the previous ad hoc developments, the estate had large numbers of semis (Figure 3.23), and some detached housing, set in squares and crescents, with formed roads.

Nash was very influential in making the semi-detached villa socially acceptable for the middle classes, as long as it retained the appearance of a single large villa, and was in the right location. His terraces in areas such as Regent's Park were middle class enclaves, yet the double villas provided a dwelling which had a status between a terraced house and a detached villa. The semis, in picturesque settings, were also able to replicate the imagery of rural villages and towns, which had become a desirable suburban attribute.

John Ruskin had an opposing view; he disliked the suburbs of semis, describing such dwellings in 1873:

They are fastened in a Siamese-twin manner together by their sides, and each couple has a Greek or Gothic portico shared between them, with magnificent steps, and highly-ornamented capitals. Attached to every double block are exactly similar double parallelograms of garden, laid out in new gravel and scanty turf... (cited in Burnett 1986, 202)

Extensions of the British railway network not only facilitated the spread of the ad hoc middle class villa and terraced house suburbs, but planned estates for the upper middle class also took advantage of the improved access. The Bedford Park Estate (1875-81) adjacent to Turnham Green station was one of the first. Several architects were involved, including (Richard) Norman Shaw who was the suburb's architect from 1877; in his dwellings he expressed what became known as the Queen Anne style.

There are claims that Bedford Park was the world's first "garden suburb" (Greeves 1975, Bolsterli 1977). Other researchers claim this honour for the much earlier St Johns Wood (Galinou 2010). Whichever claim has more substance, both estates had a significant influence on the later garden city movement, particularly their low densities and the forms of their dwellings. Bedford Park contained some terraces and detached dwellings, but most of the buildings were pairs of semis. The houses were arranged around existing trees and roads; each dwelling was set back from the road and each had its own garden. Most of the semis adopted Nash's maxim that they should appear to be one large dwelling (such as those shown in the poster (Figure 3.25)).

Figure 3.25: Poster advertising Bedford Park, 1877.



Three pairs of semis. (Barrett and Phillips 1987, 93)

The Bedford Park designs and Queen Anne features were widely publicised in the English and American architecture journals (Boyd 2002, 26). Yet despite the initial success of Bedford Park, and its attempt to bring the double cottages of the idealised rural village to the town, the suburb gradually declined, with most of the houses eventually divided into multiple occupancies.

Suburbia continued to expand mostly in streets of terraces. The architect M H Baillie Scott voiced his protests in the late 1890s. He saw only two alternatives, both unappealing – the building of small unimaginative houses on identical plots, or colonies of model cottages where:

... the earnestness and reality of the ancient village is replaced by complacently picturesque semi-detached cottages which seem to constitute a sort of high-class suburbia. In attempting to mimic larger houses they become little villas and in their pretensions fail utterly to succeed on any count. Art is underlined everywhere and each of these miniature bijou residences seems to pose and smirk in the conscious appreciation of its own artistic qualities. (Kornwolf 1972 cited in Darley 2007, 186)

After the First World War it became clear that the ubiquitous terraces were being replaced by Baillie Scott's "unimaginative houses on identical plots". Most of the guidelines in the 1919 housing manual were adopted almost universally as the standard by both councils and

private developers; pairs of semis, built at a density of twelve dwellings per acre, in estates with cul-de-sacs, became the norm for most interwar suburban expansion. The dwelling mix of short terraces, semis and detached houses continued to reflect social status, with vast tracts of interwar semis becoming the defining motif of middle class suburbia. Of the 2.9 million privately-built interwar dwellings, 2.5 million were semis (Clapson 2008, 155).

The speculative builders undertook every aspect of suburban estate development. For the buyers of the new houses, appearance was everything. Lest they be confused with the council semis which were now being provided to working class tenants, middle class suburban semis were lavishly decorated with details such as bay windows, mock Tudor half-timbering, lead-lights, oriel windows, porches, gables and hanging tiles. Despite this “Tudorbethan” style (Figure 3.26) being lambasted by architects, it served its purpose admirably.

The main aim of the Victorian in suburbia was to emulate the gentry, and of the Edwardians to reflect an artistic sensibility... the new generation of suburbanites had a more complex set of aspirations. The suburban semi... had to express a degree of individuality without being too different from its neighbours. Even more importantly, it had to be easily distinguishable from its local-authority counterpart. (Barrett and Phillips 1987, 125)

Figure 3.26: Interwar “Tudorbethan” speculative semis.



(Google Images)

The differences between council semis and middle class semis were largely cosmetic – the basic floor plans remained almost identical. The almost universal use of the housing manual

floor plans for middle class suburban semis led to them being called “universal semis” or as Paul Oliver *et al.* (1981) later named them, “Dunroamins”. Without decoration the semis comfortably housed the working classes, while with suitable embellishments the Dunroamin was a desirable suburban dwelling which came to define the middle classes of Britain.

3.12 AMERICAN INFLUENCES

The similar climates of California and south eastern Australia, plus the popularity of Hollywood and American culture, gave rise to an increasing desire for the Californian style of suburban housing in interwar Australia. Single-storey timber bungalows had, by the First World War, become “the standard unit of US West Coast suburbia” (Apperly *et al.* 1989, 206). These houses had low-pitched gabled roofs and chunky verandah supports. Sleep-outs and pergolas encouraged a “healthy” outdoor lifestyle. The reducing incidence of households with servants at this time also influenced the design of bungalows (Butler 1992, 28).

The style was actively promoted in Australia, particularly after Reginald A Prevost published *Australian Bungalow and Cottage Home Designs* in 1912. In 1916 a prefabricated redwood bungalow was imported from the Pasadena Hills outside Los Angeles, and erected as a display house in the Rosebery Estate, a garden suburb in Sydney being promoted by Richard Stanton.

The bungalow style was interpreted by Australian architects for wealthy clients, but was also adopted by speculative builders as one which was readily incorporated into otherwise standard dwellings. Suburban bungalows, particularly semis, could be cheaply built (see Section 2.7).

The indoor/outdoor design of the bungalow became a popular choice for detached homes in the suburbs of NSW. It reflected a lifestyle – the quarter acre block, the nature strip, the motor car, available bank finance, low building costs, sleep-outs, and native gardens (Butler 1992, 2). The style was also promoted in the Daceyville model public housing estate (see Case Study 12). Britain also saw several bungalow suburbs developing after the First World War as “classless housing tracts”. There, however, bungalow dwellers were considered somewhat amoral – “informal living it was said, inspired informal morals” (Butler 1992, 3).

3.13 THE DWELLING HIERARCHY

Class structure was explicitly recognised in the architectural pattern books, both in the descriptions of the intended occupants and the dwelling type. Designs could be specified for gentlemen or labourers, and the dwelling type was consistent with the social order. Even while urban terraced housing remained desirable for the middle classes if it was in the right area and of a suitable size and quality, a semi-detached villa was superior. And a detached

house or villa, which was out of reach for all but the wealthiest segments of the middle classes in the larger cities of Britain, was the most desirable of all.

For the urban working classes, the assumption was that labourers would live in cramped terraced housing, in less desirable areas close to their work. They were also expected to occupy the larger dwellings in the same area, which were subdivided into tenements after the previous occupants moved to the suburbs. Artisans might live in slightly better terraced housing, or they may aspire to a semi, but not in middle class areas except where they were providing skilled services to middle class residents. Artisans' semis were more akin to pairs of terraced houses than the middle class landscaped villas.

In rural areas a double cottage was considered appropriate for farm labourers, especially those in estate villages. Labourers in industries such as mining and textiles were provided with terraced housing. Artisans may have had larger double cottages, or even detached dwellings which they often built themselves. The middle classes could usually afford detached houses, and the size and location of rural detached dwellings was the marker of social standing.

In this way, by the end of the eighteenth century, when the colony of NSW was developing, semis had become a statement about social conformity and social aspiration – they were firmly fixed in a dwelling hierarchy which placed them above terraced houses but not as desirable as detached dwellings.

3.14 REPORTING OF BRITISH ACTIVITIES IN AUSTRALIA

News from the “mother country” was extensively reported in Australian newspapers. For example, in 1863 a short article described “middle class London”, an area “on the outskirts of the City, and within two or three miles of the ancient walls”, where the visitor might find:

... there are enough large, good, substantial houses, with gardens in front and behind, to give a character of well-to-do respectability to the neighbourhoods; while if he goes still further, in either direction, he will discover noble roomy dwellings, which in Italy would be called palaces, and in France hotels. Here, however, they are simply known as villas, detached or semi-detached, as the case may be, but always with trees and gardens about them, and generally having porticoes and venetian windows towards the road, and stables and conservatories in the rear. (*SMH*, 1 May 1863, 3)

Officials went on overseas fact-finding trips and many articles from British newspapers were reprinted in Australian publications. In an article headed “Housing by Private Enterprise” one local journalist noted that:

Everyone has read of the great housing experiments carried out by private enterprise in London and elsewhere, beginning with Mr Peabody's model dwellings, Lord Shaftsbury's model suburbs at Battersea, and continuing down to the Lever Brothers' experiment at Port Sunlight, Cadbury's at Bourneville (sic), and the First Garden City Company's venture. (*SMH*, 10 September 1908, 5)

After a five-month "roving commission" to investigate town planning and municipal activities in the "Old Country", the Chairman of the NSW Housing Board J D Fitzgerald found that the "most remarkable sphere of municipal activity" was "the building of houses for the working classes and others in beautiful garden surroundings in villages" and he stated that "the old-fashioned terrace house, by the way, seems to be as dead as Caesar" (*SMH*, 10 October 1913, 8).

Despite Australia striving for its own identity, governments and the general public still closely followed any news of what was happening in Britain, including the development of housing. British housing policies and activities continued to influence the discourse around housing in NSW until well into the twentieth century.

4.0 THE EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD – 1788 TO 1840

4.1 INTRODUCTION

There are several myths surrounding semis in NSW. For example the academic John Toon of the University of Sydney believed that “semis first appeared in Sydney about 1880 (and catered to an expanding middle class” (*SMH*, 6-7 April, 2002, 6H). The heritage architect Robert Staas suggests that they were first built in the inner west, and “fell out of fashion in the 1930s with the advent of residential flats” (*SMH*, 15-16 November 2003, 8H). In fact semis have been built in NSW since the early days of the nineteenth century and remain a popular dwelling type in the twenty-first century. The following chapters will trace their historical development by considering the various factors which have determined why, where, when and for whom they were built.

The traditional view that the British colony of NSW was created solely as a “dumping ground” for convicts has more recently been updated (Karskens 2010). As well as being a penal colony it was also a strategic base for British ships in the Pacific, it provided access to the natural resources of nearby Norfolk Island and prevented the French and others staking claims to the continent (Karskens 2010, 63). The mostly labouring class convicts were not incarcerated – the men and women, many of whom had been displaced by the enclosures and clearances of their English or Scottish land (see Section 3.3), or were Irish political prisoners, were used as a labour force. Initially they worked for the government on public buildings and projects, then also for the private settlers who began arriving in 1793. The British Home Secretary Lord Sydney, after whom the settlement was named, ensured that slavery was not introduced into the colony.

After a relatively short qualifying period, depending on their sentences, convicts were eligible for a Ticket of Leave which freed them from enforced government labour and allowed them to live in a specified district, hire themselves out or be self-employed. After they were granted a Full Pardon, or had served their sentence, convicts were known as emancipists. Significantly, both Ticket of Leave convicts and emancipated convicts could acquire property (Convicts to Australia nd). Self-sufficiency was encouraged, and small grants of land were made to emancipists for the purpose of farming.²³

Between 1788 and 1840 approximately 80,000 convicts were transported to NSW (State Records NSW, nd). Most convicts were transported for minor property offences such as stealing. In the colony they had opportunities for social mobility which would have been unthinkable in Britain, and housing and land played a great role in this mobility. From the

²³ This was the standard practice until 1825 (Karsens 2009, 109).

earliest days of the colony, the Governors were empowered to grant land to selected soldiers, settlers and convicts. In 1817 the first bank was opened and in 1824 the NSW Legislative Council was formed, giving some self-government to the colony and ending the autocratic rule by Governors.

4.2 EARLY DWELLINGS

From the erection of the first tents in January 1788, on the seaboard of NSW, the maintenance of the British class system was of great importance, and this included both separation of the classes and adherence to the dwelling hierarchy. Arthur Phillip, the Captain of the First Fleet and first Governor of the colony, set up camp on the eastern side of the fresh water source (the Tank Stream), while the convicts were on the western side, separated by the military along the edge of the stream. Around half of the approximately 1,500 people in the First Fleet were convicts and their children, the rest marines and military personnel. The rugged western side of the Tank Stream was soon named The Rocks, and became the first working class housing area in Sydney (see Section 4.8). The earliest dwellings in Sydney were built from the materials at hand (with the exception of the Governor's prefabricated house) and reflected the need for immediate shelter and the limited labour, tools and skills available.

The new colony faced food rationing and the government was the universal provider. Yet although the government fed the convicts, and allocated their work, housing was mostly left to the convicts themselves. The initial tents were gradually replaced by more permanent structures. Convicts who were not locked up for offences committed after their arrival, or assigned as servants (on farms or in houses), built huts for themselves on government land or land on which they merely squatted. This was the situation until the Hyde Park Barracks opened in 1819. However, even after the completion of the convict barracks, many convicts lived in their own houses.

Convicts and marines (those who did not live in the military barracks) could choose a site in their respective zones in The Rocks, and most constructed their dwellings in the familiar rural vernacular styles of England, Scotland and Ireland, initially using wattle and daub and later, whitewashed brick walls and thatched roofs. The basic unit of accommodation was the two-roomed hut (Higginbotham 2011, 8). Over time, many of these simple huts were incrementally expanded, with additional rooms and lean-tos, leading to many haphazard, poor quality housing areas.

Because the early residents were creating a basic dwelling for themselves, there was no incentive to build attached housing. However, as the town developed, and the demand for rental accommodation grew, speculative builders and investors began producing buildings for multiple occupancies. The working class British occupants were familiar with and readily

accepted attached dwellings as being appropriate for their class. Thus Sydney developed in a haphazard way, with a mix of dwelling types, and a mix of building materials (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: A view of Sydney Cove, 1804.



Artist F Jukes. (NLA NK270)

Governor Phillip had no mandate to create Sydney as a commercial centre, yet his interest in town planning led him to consider a master plan for a new town, with “grand public buildings and a new government house” and permanent residences to replace the shanties and tents (Karskens 2010, 72). Although Phillip’s plan for Sydney was not strictly followed, in 1789 the first substantial building was completed. First Government House, surrounded by gardens on the eastern side of the stream, was built in the fashionable English Palladian style, using convict labour, and a mix of bricks imported from England and made locally. The Lieutenant-Governor had a long, low house to which was soon added a verandah. A row of smaller brick dwellings, each with a garden, was built for the civil officers, also on the eastern side of the stream, as befitting their status. The architect Robert Irving describes the two houses for the Governors as “opposite kinds of house design”; classical and “what might be called the organic”, and noted that both kinds appeared from then on in early Australian architecture (McCormick 1987, 16). He goes on to describe the early colonial dwellings:

The primitive dwellings of convicts figure consistently in the early pictures of Sydney. The typical early house was two-roomed, with the door in the centre, a window on each side, and a gently rounded roof of thatch. As conditions improved, and convicts were freed, and free settlers came, so the houses they built became better: there were brick and stone as well as wattle-and-daub, better cooking facilities and fireplaces (represented in the paintings by chimneys), window glazing instead of

wooden shutters, and shingles and tiles as well as thatch for roofs. (McCormick 1987, 17)

Whether convict or emancipist, the early residents of The Rocks were mostly working class and their dwellings reflected this.

Men and women, convicts and ex-convicts, built houses according to their needs and tastes, and the natural topography...

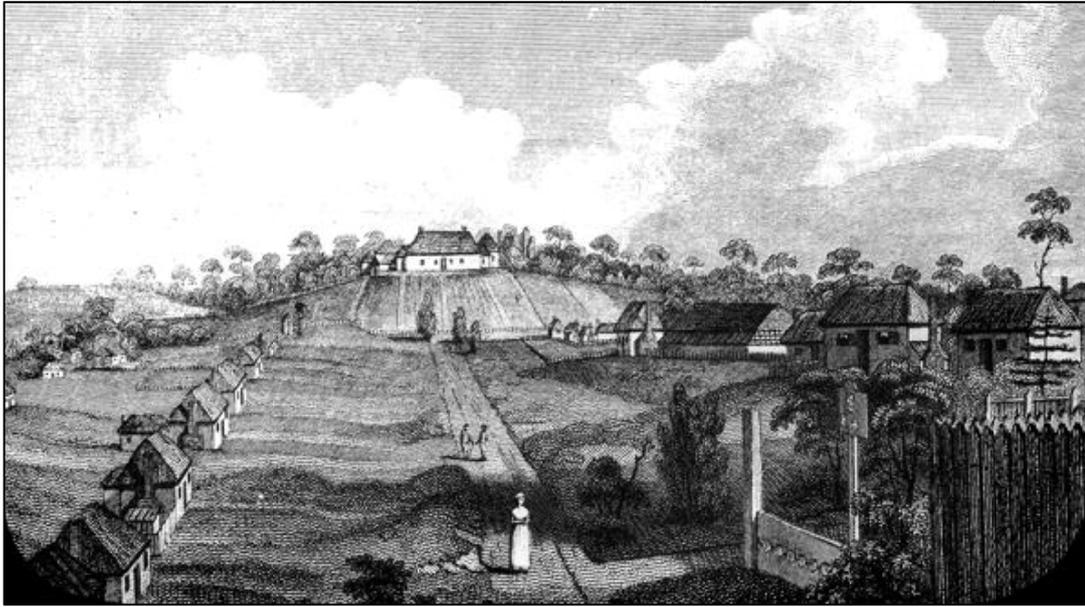
By the 1810s, Rocks people, here and elsewhere, were building more substantial houses of hammer-dressed rubble stone, which many quarried out from their own backyards...

They were pragmatic, organic houses, they *grew*. (Karskens 1999, 33)

In Governor Phillip's second town at Parramatta the controls were stricter. There was officially no private building or squatting on land. Parramatta (originally called Rose Hill) was the agricultural centre, separated from the town of Sydney by 14 miles (22.5km) of rough road. A makeshift residence was constructed for Governor Phillip on a rise at the end of a road from the landing place on the river. The government provided housing for the convict labourers stationed at Parramatta – whitewashed dwellings in a line along the new road, equally spaced and set back, and each with a patch of garden. Phillip's master plan also created picturesque vistas towards a proposed town hall, school, church and marketplace, and the planned centrepiece, a new Government House (Karskens 2010, 79).

The layout and picturesque style of the convict cottages (Figure 4.2) are remarkably similar to those of the emparkment village of Milton Abbas in Dorset (see Section 3.3). Arthur Phillip, before he left for NSW, spent several years farming in Hampshire, close to Milton Abbas, where between 1773 and 1786 Lord Milton demolished the old village of Middleton which was obscuring the view from his new mansion, and worked with Capability Brown and the architect William Chambers to build 20 whitewashed, thatched, double cottages (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2: Convict housing near Government House, Parramatta, c1798.



(Royal Australian Historical Society, Image U0466)

Figure 4.3: Rows of double cottages, Milton Abbas, c1770s.



Engraving c1851 (RIBA British Architectural Library Drawings and Archives Collection)

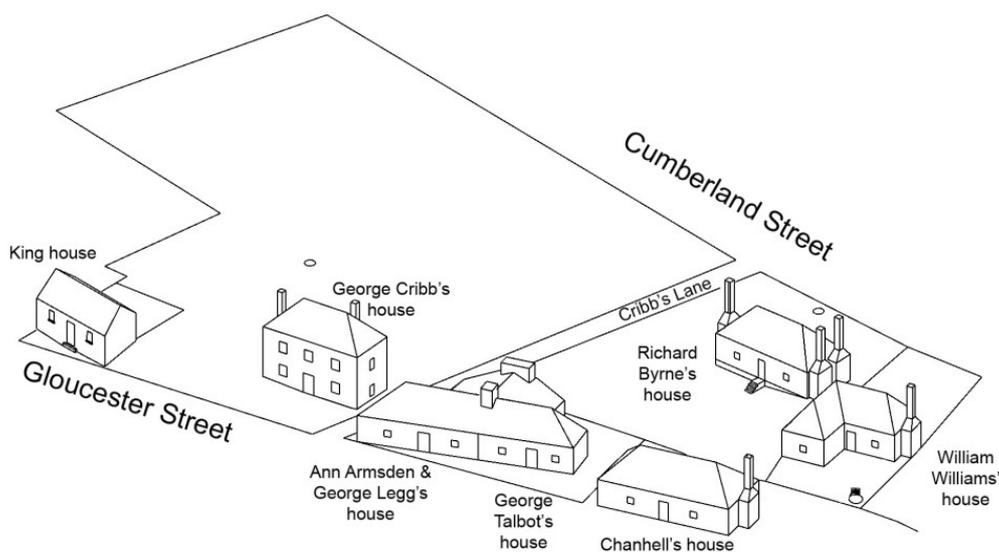
The picturesque external appearance of the rural cottage pairs in Milton Abbas was more important than the comfort of the occupants; each pair had only one front door and the eight rooms housed four families (Karskens 2010, 80). Similarly, the Parramatta convict cottages contained two rooms and housed up to 14 men (Higginbotham 2011, 8) yet they appeared to be detached cottages and were formally laid out to enhance the approach to the Governor's house. They were later expanded and used by free settlers as single dwellings.

The oldest extant semis in The Rocks and neighbouring Millers Point are “Reynolds Cottages” (see Case Study 1) and “Glover Cottages” (see Section 4.8), both dating from around 1830. It has been claimed that “Glover Cottages” were “Sydney’s first example of semi-detached cottages” (Historic Houses Trust of NSW 2012b). However, the Surgeons’ residences (see Section 4.7) date from 1811, and there is archaeological evidence of even earlier double cottages.

Although the Parramatta convict dwellings were not built in pairs, other housing providers realised the potential for a significant saving in materials by building the standard two-roomed convict cottages in this way. For example, at Belgenny Farm on John and Elizabeth Macarthur’s Camden Park Estate archaeological excavations revealed “a row of three buildings, each comprising a conjoined pair of two-roomed cottages...built for the convict workforce” (Higginbotham 2011, 10). These were built of stone, brick and timber in 1805.

The remains of a pair of semis in Gloucester Street in The Rocks were uncovered during the “Big Dig” during the 1990s (Figure 4.4). These dwellings were originally occupied by Ann Armsden and her first husband George Legg in one dwelling and George Talbot (a baker) in the other, a later addition which was “not so well built”. Ann had been transported in 1790 for highway robbery – she lived in “an oddly-shaped house with thick stone walls on a rockface pared flat with a broad-bladed adze”. Following George Legg’s drowning, Ann married George Talbot in 1810. At that time her house had three rooms, plus a baker’s oven at the rear and a “deep cistern for water” (Karskens 1999, 33).

Figure 4.4: Early semis in The Rocks, c1807.



Dwellings built in Gloucester Street, The Rocks c1807-8, identified from archaeological evidence (Wayne Johnson, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority).

4.3 FREE SETTLERS

As industrialisation proceeded, the British population grew rapidly and there was growth in the demand for raw materials such as wool. British citizens were able to take up the option of emigration to the colony, with the promise of land for grazing and farming. The arrival of more free settlers to expand the fledgling colonial enterprises saw the NSW colony develop beyond an unruly penal settlement, particularly during the period after the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1810. When he arrived the population was around 10,000 of which 8,000 were convicts or emancipists (McCormick 1987, 20).

From about 1815 the real story of the Australian state and economic development began. The two necessities of exiling politically and socially dangerous convicts from all parts of the Empire and of finding raw materials formed the dynamic of Australia's development. By the 1830s Australia had become of major significance to Britain in both penal and economic senses. (Lloyd 2005, 4)

While the wealthy middle class settlers followed the English architectural fashions for villas in prime locations (such as Woolloomooloo) on the edges of the town, most of the new free colonists were working class people from Britain, who were seeking a better life with the possibility of obtaining freehold land. Many immigrants were fleeing from the social disruption and poverty caused by the agricultural revolution with its land enclosures and displacement of people. Emigration to North America was already significant, and the Australian colonies provided new opportunities. The colonial government offered many settlers assisted passages for their journey, and by favouring skilled labourers (such as farm workers) they ensured that the most illiterate and unskilled workers did not come to the colony (Davison 2000, 8). However, whether convict or free, the early settlers came mostly from cities, towns and villages where the housing was predominantly attached (terraces and semis), albeit of vastly differing size and quality depending on the neighbourhood.

When building their homes the working class settlers were:

... shaped by pressures of both emulation and avoidance: a desire, on the one hand, to reproduce loved and familiar styles and patterns of life; and on the other, to escape the crowding and poverty of houses which were no longer home-like. (Davison 2000, 6)

Although there were some efforts to avoid the pollution and overcrowding which characterised the British city centres, the lack of town planning in NSW rapidly led to congestion and poor sanitation. The colony expanded in an "arc running south to east" from Flagstaff Hill (now Observatory Hill). In the centre of town at the mouth of the Tank Stream,

were "rows and clusters of small houses of lesser folk", then the "ragged skirts of the town", then the forest outskirts (Karskens 2010, 167).

As the city developed, the lack of any transport infrastructure led to the increased use of attached housing to meet the demand for dwellings in close proximity to workplaces. Although the aspirations were for detached, relatively low density housing, people of all classes rented terraces (and to a lesser extent semis) in the city. The class of the occupant was indicated by the size and location of the terraced house, rather than by the dwelling hierarchy.

Governor Macquarie had been influenced by the Enlightenment principles of economic and social improvement through the practical application of reason, and set about creating a new "improved" Sydney and a more progressive colony. He and his wife Elizabeth are credited with laying the foundations for modern Sydney. He planned the city around a central grid (which largely exists today) and guidelines were set for street widths and the floor areas of dwellings. Convict labour was used to create some magnificent public buildings. However when he arrived the governor considered the settlement to be:

... barely emerging from infantile imbecility, and suffering from various privations and disabilities, the Country impenetrable beyond forty miles from Sydney, Agriculture in a yet languishing state, Commerce in its early dawn, Revenue unknown, threatened with famine, distracted by faction, the public buildings in a state of dilapidation and moulding to decay, the few Roads and Bridges formally constructed rendered almost impassable, the population in general depressed by poverty, no public credit nor private confidence; the morals of the great mass of the population in the lowest state of debasement and religious worship almost totally neglected. (Watson 1914, 671-2)

The Scottish governor would have observed the transformation of the Scottish Highlands during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, as the agricultural revolution caused mass clearances of the traditional settlements and their replacement with new farmhouses for tenant sheep farmers, and two-roomed farm cottages or planned villages for labourers. Unlike the English rural labourers' two storey cottages of the period, most Scottish "improved cottages" were two-roomed single-storey dwellings (often with attic rooms), mostly in terraces, with some detached and some in pairs (Maudlin 2009, 159).

Governor Macquarie favoured an agricultural community (albeit with the government in charge) and was keen to provide emancipists, mostly from the rural labouring class, with land to facilitate this. Other talented ex-convicts were given important government posts. For example, William Redfern was pardoned in 1803 and became Assistant Colonial Surgeon, although he continued to live in The Rocks (ADB nd). Macquarie also gave him a position as

a magistrate. The emancipist Francis Greenway was appointed Colonial Architect in 1814 and took over Redfern's house and garden in The Rocks. However, Macquarie's attitude upset some free settlers and military officers, who sought to replicate the British class system in the colony and were threatened by the social mobility of convicts. Eventually, in 1819 Britain sent the Royal Commissioner Thomas Bigge to investigate Macquarie's building program and his equitable treatment of emancipists. Governor Macquarie resigned in 1821. He left Sydney the following year, saying in a letter to Lord Bathurst:

There are only two classes of person in New South Wales – those who have been convicted and those who ought to have been. (Watson 1914)

The settlement of Sydney around the Tank Stream expanded, and outposts were established in rural areas as explorers ranged further afield in search of land for crops and grazing. This gathered momentum after 1813 when access via the Blue Mountains to the interior became possible, and Bathurst (which became the first inland city, 202 km west of Sydney) was established.

After the Napoleonic Wars ceased in 1815, rates of unemployment and crime rose in Britain. This prompted a dramatic increase in the transportation of convicts to NSW as well as the emigration of free settlers. Within two years the population of the colony had increased to around 37,000 (Appleton 1986, 101). Under new land laws enacted in 1830, many British emigrants had their passage to NSW paid or partly paid under the assisted passage scheme. Land grants were no longer free; settlers purchased their land, with the proceeds used to fund the passage of labourers and more settlers. Settlers were granted land according to an assessment of their financial means and allocated a convict for every 100 acres (40.5 hectares). The settled areas of the colony were divided into nineteen counties and the land outside this area could not be sold or leased. Pastoralists could obtain a licence to use large tracts of land (stations) outside the counties, but many simply squatted on the land. Landowners and speculators all had the opportunity to become very wealthy. In 1835 the Bounty Scheme was introduced to attract skilled workers, young couples and women.

A lack of building resources in the fledgling colony coincided with the English Georgian fashion for simplicity, symmetry, proportion, line and minimal ornamentation in architectural design. The outcome in NSW was pared-back buildings which were constructed using the materials to hand. With the addition of verandahs, this style, based on Georgian tradition, was "an adaptation suited to the climate of the antipodes, and a certain ingeniousness and vigour of approach which marked it as architecture that was unmistakably Australian" yet retained the "good architectural manners of its Georgian antecedents" (*The Education Gazette*, 1 July 1966, 174-5). Ten years after the arrival of Governor Macquarie, who

instigated a public building program as well as encouraging the building of masonry cottages, Sydney had a range of Georgian buildings (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Sydney, c1821.



“The Entrance to Port Jackson and part of the Town of Sydney”, Major James Taylor (SLNSW Image V1/ca. 1821/4).

4.4 REGULATIONS

Governor Phillip applied the British regulations pertaining at the time, but he (and several later Governors) introduced their own regulations as well. Within months of the arrival of the First Fleet, Phillip, in his first plan of Sydney, proposed that:

... land will be granted with a clause that will ever prevent more than one house being built on the allotment, which will be 60 feet in front and 150 feet in depth. This will preserve uniformity in the buildings, prevent narrow streets, and the many inconveniences which the increase of inhabitants would otherwise occasion thereafter. (Governor Phillip's dispatch to Lord Sydney, 9 July 1788, in Birch and Macmillan 1962, 30-31)

This noble ideal, to prevent the construction of poor forms of housing, soon fell by the wayside as the freehold system of land ownership gave land owners free rein in the type of housing they constructed.

In 1807 Governor Bligh ordered James Meehan, the assistant surveyor, to prepare a Plan of the Town of Sydney, in an attempt to bring some order to the haphazard development. This attempt at regulation also failed.

Governor Macquarie introduced Australia's²⁴ first building regulations in 1810. These required dwellings to be of brick, stone or timber, with brick chimneys and timber shingle roofs. In the early days of the colony bricks were used only for important buildings such as Government House, but by the 1830s in Sydney bricks were the common walling material for dwellings, particularly attached housing with shared party walls.

Many British regulations had delayed implementation in the colony. Governor Darling in 1829 issued surveying regulations specifying minimum lot frontages and a building setback from the footpath. The *Act for Regulating Buildings and Party-Walls, and for Preventing Mischiefs by Fire, in the Town of Sydney 1837* was concerned primarily with the control of fires, although the equivalent *London Building Act* dated from 1774. The 1837 Act laid down requirements for the thickness of external and party walls, requiring the latter to extend 1.5 feet (46cm) above the roof line. All timber work was to be kept 4 inches (10.2cm) from the face of the building, and no bow windows were to be built beyond the street line. However, not only were British regulations delayed in the colony, but when they were implemented, many were ignored by the people whose purpose in coming to the colony included escaping from British bureaucracy.

4.5 LAND SPECULATION

The history of land speculation and subdivision in NSW closely follows the economic fortunes of the state and of the land owners. The land boom of the 1830s was generated by the optimism surrounding the expansion of the wool industry. While the boom lasted, the subdivision of Sydney's suburbs proceeded in earnest. James Underwood subdivided and sold 80 lots in his Paddington Estate, market gardens in Surry Hills were subdivided and the Macarthurs sold 41 lots in Pyrmont. Most of these subdivisions contained large villa lots, not small lots for workers' cottages. A subdivision for a complete town (Bourke Town) was offered for sale in what is now Drummoyne.

Each sale had a "hook" to entice potential purchasers to what were relatively remote areas. For example, Bourke Town was supposedly going to become the new deep-water port for NSW and Gipps Town (Five Dock) was to be a major service centre between Sydney and Parramatta. Even in country NSW, as towns were gazetted by the government, adjacent landowners soon advertised their subdivisions. The bubble burst in 1840 and the speculators were left holding land worth a fraction of the purchase price.

Land speculation in Australia relies on the purchaser believing that the property is a commodity which can be resold for a profit. Unlike other parts of Europe where land value was based more on its ability to display power and wealth, in nineteenth century Britain it was

²⁴ In 1817, Macquarie adopted the name Australia, as recommended by the explorer Matthew Flinders.

predominantly a source of income. In 1800 around 80% of farming land in England was being rented, the tenant farmers providing a cash income to the owners. Australia, being a British settlement, continued these beliefs and practices – that land was a prestigious and secure form of making money, not just for displaying and enjoying wealth. Therefore much of the land in NSW was seen not as providing shelter, or for producing food or even for displaying wealth; it was just a marketable commodity (Dyster nd, 11). This may help to explain why even when there were clearly not enough people to inhabit all the villa sites outside Sydney, the subdivisions continued unabated. And why so few villas were actually built on the sites.

When the colony of NSW was founded, all land was deemed to belong to the Crown. When the Governors wished to reward men who had served the colony well, a regime of granting large parcels of freehold land was introduced – the first grant was to James Ruse in 1792. Governor Macquarie extended the system beyond military men and free settlers by granting land to worthy emancipists. Some recipients developed farms on their land, while others established industries such as distilleries and lime pits. Several inner areas were developed with workers' housing, supporting nearby industries or facilities such as the Paddington Barracks, and by the 1830s numerous estates on the outskirts of Sydney contained large architect-designed Georgian houses set in parklands.

As the demand for housing increased, subdivisions of many of the larger estates occurred. Thus began a system of speculative land holdings, with each successive owner hoping to sell the undeveloped land at a profit in the future, or to further subdivide and sell the smaller portions. For example, the 800 acre (324 hectare) Brighton Estate along the Cooks River was first granted in 1808. The emancipist Simeon Lord took it over and the land was used only for some grazing and timber getting (Muir 2013). In 1824 it was acquired by the crown solicitor William Moore. There was no owner's residence on the estate, although basic accommodation for labourers was built. As better roads were built, the area became attractive for picturesque retreats; the land was subdivided in 1836 into "country villa" lots described in the marketing literature as "Gardens of Eden" (Madden and Muir 1988, 7-8). The lots sold well, although only a few owners built villas on their land. Most of the land continued to be used by tenant farmers or as market gardens.

During the 1820s and 1830s, pastoralists and squatters fanned out to the vast tracts of rural land while a "dynamic form of settler capitalism" facilitated the "associated speculation in land and livestock" (Lloyd 2005, 5). This created a uniquely Australian economic and social structure, with merchants and those able to obtain land forming the elite, and an underclass of convicts, emancipists and poor white immigrants providing the cheap labour required to develop the pastoral land or provide services in the urban areas. During the 1820s transportation increased, and the granting and sale of land was so rapid that almost 3 million

acres had been alienated by 1828 (Lloyd 2005, 5). The *Forbes Act 1834* allowed higher interest rates to be paid in the colony and British capital flowed in, further fuelling the speculative land boom.

4.6 PATTERN BOOKS IN THE COLONY

The most important pattern book aimed at the Scottish market was *The Rudiments of Architecture* published in 1772 in Edinburgh, and reprinted several times (Maudlin 2009, 71). This contained designs for Palladian-style villas. Architectural historian David Walker observed in the 1992 reprint that the book had had "an enormous influence on the pattern of Scottish building in the boom period of 1770 to 1840" (Anon. 1772, viii).

Prior to 1810, the year the Scottish Governor arrived in the NSW colony, the "sources for local building design relied on the chance mix of military skills and vernacular traditions combined with experiences in India and other colonial territories" (Martin 2009, 10). Macquarie's wife Elizabeth is credited with bringing the first architectural pattern books to reach Sydney. These were *Designs for Elegant Cottages and Small Villas* (1806) and *Designs for small picturesque cottages and hunting boxes* (1807) by the English architect Edward Gyfford (Greenway 1819). While it has been demonstrated that Gyfford's patterns influenced the design of several important new colonial buildings and "introduced a layer of architectural politeness into early colonial Sydney" (Martin 2009, 10), researchers have given minimal attention to the linkages between the early British pattern books and the design, form and style of the smaller cottages being built in the colony. Abbott Lowell Cummings (2001) has explored the links between Britain and New England in North America. He discovered that more than 170 different architectural pattern books, printed in London, were available in eighteenth century New England, and found evidence of their actual use by builders (cited in Maudlin 2009, 144-5).

James Broadbent has documented various linkages between architectural pattern books and the development of the Australian colonial house, although vernacular buildings were not part of his brief (Broadbent 1997, 19). Trained architects such as Daniel Mathew began to arrive in the colony as free settlers around 1815. Mathew designed a new house for the judge-advocate, using inspiration from a pattern book lent to him by Mrs Macquarie (McCormick 1987, 20). A small c1821 octagonal convict gardener's lodge (since demolished) near Hyde Park Barracks was remarkably similar to the picturesque hexagonal and octagonal lodges for estate labourers which appeared in several early pattern books (Stephens 2010, 9).

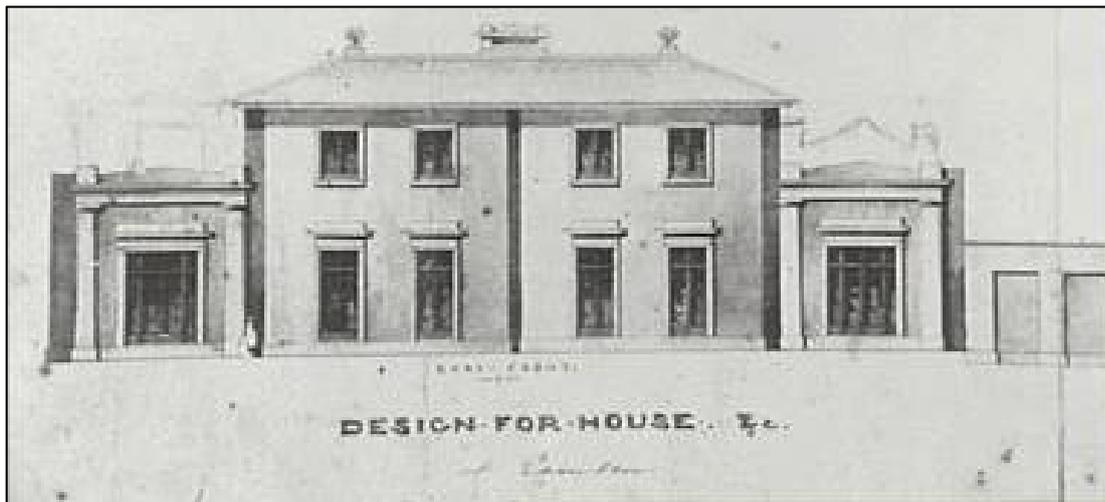
Although Elizabeth Macquarie's pattern books by Gyfford may have influenced the colonial architect Francis Greenway, it appears that by the 1830s:

... new pattern books by writers such as David Laing, Peter Nicholson, John Plaw, John Papworth and the prolific John Claudius Loudon were circulating among the rising class of merchants, landowners and civil servants anxious to demonstrate their claims to gentility against the prevailing vernacular of convict society. (Martin 2009, 11)

James Broadbent noted an “unfortunate” influence in the colonial architect John Verge’s design for “Camden Park House” in the early 1830s (Figure 4.6):

Without the unifying effect of the colonnade, the garden front looks disconcertingly like a pair of elegant semi-detached villas which have strayed perhaps from Cheltenham, the outskirts of Regent’s Park or Ladbroke Grove, the kinds of semi-detached houses that J B Papworth and a score of lesser known architects produced in the 1820s, but with their entrance doors replaced by four-leaved French doors. (Broadbent 1997, 198)

Figure 4.6: Early design for "Camden Park House", John Verge, 1830s.



(Camden Council Library Service, Image CL0\CL0151)

The British cottage designers tended to recommend masonry dwellings, usually because timber was a scarce commodity. Where timber was plentiful in NSW, cottages or huts were commonly constructed and clad in timber, whilst still retaining the British elements of form and design, such as rectangular floor plans and symmetry. What was less likely was that timber cottages would be attached (as pairs of semis or in terraces), because there was no thermal and limited cost advantages in doing so. In addition, a typical owner-builder, whether building in timber, brick or stone, sought only to provide a dwelling for himself and his family, and where his own lot size permitted this was usually in the form of a detached cottage. It was therefore the providers of dwellings which were to be occupied by others, who were

building in masonry, and who wished to maximise the use of their land, who had the incentive to build attached dwellings.

The building speculators who were constructing attached dwellings for sale, and the investors and industrialists who purchased them, or who built their own rental dwellings, had a ready source of designs in the pattern books. For example, in 1848 the English architect Henry Weaver published a pattern book of dwellings (many of them attached) for rural labourers. His brother William Weaver, also an architect, moved to the colony and several years later designed not only mansions and villas, but attached housing for labourers. His designs are very similar to those promoted (and actually built in England) by Henry Weaver. This is discussed further in Case Study 4.

4.7 GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

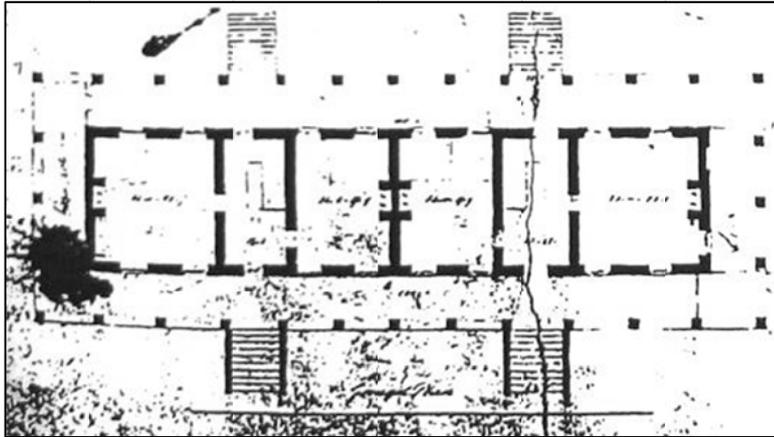
In 1811 Governor Macquarie provided a three-year monopoly in the rum trade in return for the building of a new General Hospital for convicts, which was to replace the colony's tent hospital in The Rocks (Historic Houses Trust nd). Built between 1811 and 1816 the "Rum Hospital" in Macquarie Street was designed without the help of an architect, although it has been linked to one of Elizabeth Macquarie's pattern books - Gyfford's *Designs for Elegant Cottages and Small Villas* (Holmes 2012, 6). The hospital was poorly built using unskilled convict labour and was demolished in 1879. However, the flanking buildings, designed as surgeons' dwellings, are relatively intact. Both were originally designed as similar pairs of semis (Figure 4.7). The northern (left) building was used by the Principal Surgeon and the Judge of the Supreme Court. To the south the two Assistant Surgeons occupied the semis, which "began life as two separate apartments" (Broomham 2002, 3). Although the buildings appear to be substantial, each of the semis had only two rooms downstairs and three upstairs (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.7: The "Rum Hospital" and Surgeons' dwellings, c1811.

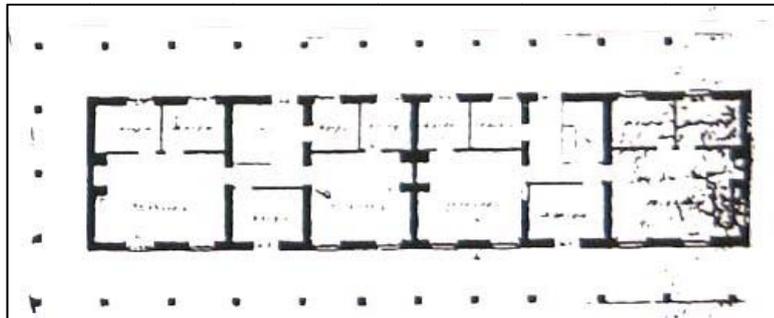


"Elevation of the General Hospital at Sydney AD 1811" (Public Record Office London, Bigge Papers)

Figure 4.8: Semis for the Assistant Surgeons, 1811-15.



Ground Floor



First Floor

(State Records NSW, Plan 2343)

The northern wing was converted in 1829 to house the Legislative Council of the colony and, significantly extended, now forms part of the State's Parliament House (Figure 4.10). From 1823 the southern wing was occupied by the 39th Regiment as a military hospital²⁵, until in 1855 the building became part of the Royal Mint (Figure 4.9). The Deputy Mint Master lived in part of the building while the balance was converted to offices. When the mint closed in 1926 the building became government offices and part of a law courts complex.

In 1946 there were plans to demolish The Mint and the adjacent colonial barracks. The newly-formed National Trust (NSW) fought for many years to save the building, until eventually it was restored as a museum in 1980-82. Still known as The Mint, the building currently houses Sydney Living Museums (previously known as the Historic Houses Trust of NSW). After extensive alterations and additions, and in the case of The Mint many changes of use, the two buildings' origins as pairs of residential semis have largely been forgotten. The only obvious clues are the extant pairs of stone front steps and the dual entrances.

²⁵ One of the Assistant Surgeons stayed on until 1836 (Broomham 2002, 3).

Despite claims that the rare 1820s/1830s surviving semis in The Rocks and Millers Point are the oldest extant semis in Australia, this honour must go to Parliament House and The Mint.

Figure 4.9: The Mint in 1870.



Macquarie Street, Sydney. (SLNSW Image a089320)

Figure 4.10: State Parliament House, NSW.



(www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Government buildings, from the earliest days of the colony, conformed to the prevailing social order. This is exemplified in the development of the second settlement at Norfolk Island (see Case Study 2) where different dwelling types were constructed for the different military and civilian ranks, including pairs of semis for the middle-ranking officers.

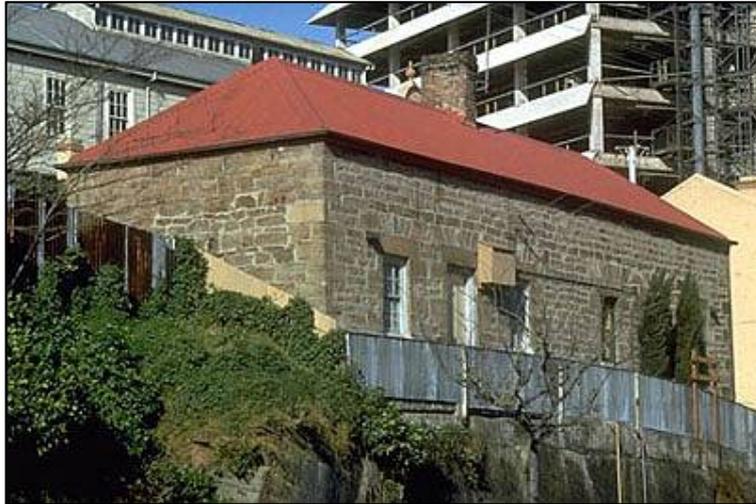
4.8 WORKING CLASS HOUSING

As the colony matured the standard two-roomed hut, one room deep, continued to provide the basis for much of the working class housing both in urban and rural areas. The original timber huts were gradually replaced by more permanent structures to house working class labourers and artisans. Most of the dwellings were based on the urban terraced form or the rural double cottages which were so familiar to many colonists. The first areas settled by workers, The Rocks and Millers Point, contained a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings appearing randomly on leased land around the rocky slopes, some little more than shanties and others of better quality. There were no formal streets until 1810 and:

... vernacular cottages were built on rock ledges; (they) are evidence of the process of land subdivision prior to the formal granting of titles. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 2423504)

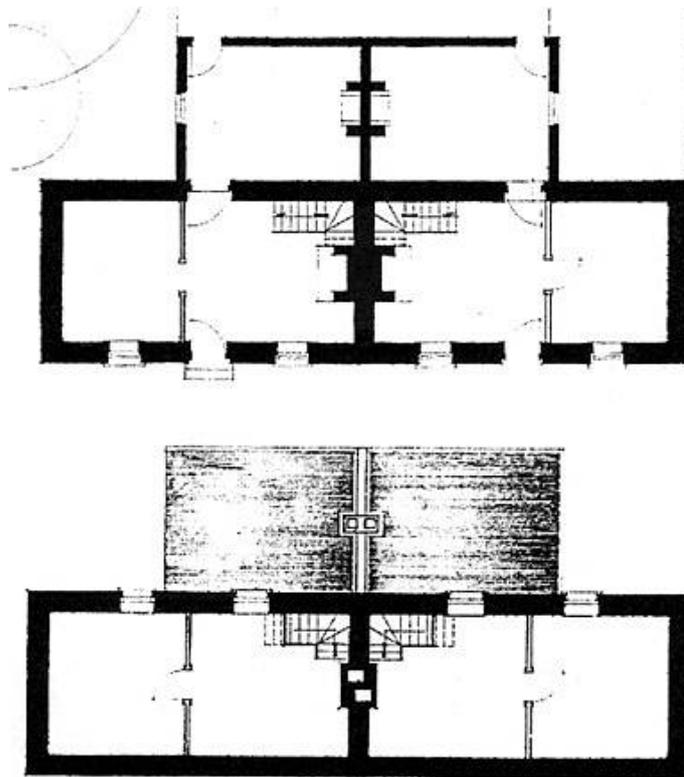
When built of stone or brick, attachment was common for workers' housing. Near what had been a stone quarry in Millers Point, a pair of cottages was built using stone off-cuts, during the late 1820s (Figure 4.11). They were built as income-producing dwellings by the emancipist Thomas Glover, a Somerset miner who had been transported in 1815 for seven years for stealing a coney (rabbit) (Ancestry.com). Glover by that time also owned and occupied a house elsewhere on his parcel of land. Glover was a stonemason, and later became the landlord of a pub. "Glover Cottages" each had a shingled roof and a rectangular ground floor space, with a chimney on the party wall (Figure 4.12). Timber partitions divided each cottage into two rooms and spiral stairs led to similarly-divided attic rooms. The kitchens were located in small attached outbuildings. The cottages have been described as "a rare example of Colonial Georgian architecture based on forms seen in English rural cottages and adopted for urban buildings in Australian colonial towns" (Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2012b). They are probably the oldest extant privately-built semis in NSW.

Figure 4.11: "Glover Cottages", c1829.



Photographed in 1963. (Register of the National Estate, ID 2164)

Figure 4.12: Floor plans, "Glover Cottages".



(NSW Heritage Division Online Inventory No 2423504)

Much of the early working class housing in The Rocks and Millers Point was demolished at the start of the twentieth century during the slum clearances (see Section 6.5). As part of that process the buildings were photographed prior to the demolitions, providing a valuable record of the early development of the area (for example, Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Working class semis, Cumberland Street, The Rocks, c1830s.



Photographed in 1901 before demolition. (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, B-V1F11)

In 1818 Governor Macquarie granted the emancipist John Smith a property at Maitland. He built a house “Englefield” in c1837, close to his flour mill and mill workers’ cottages (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5056381). The two-roomed single storey cottages were in a terrace of five dwellings, built between 1831 and 1835 for “working class people” (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045654). By 1842 only a pair remained; they were then leased by Caroline Chisholm, a well-known philanthropist who converted them to one dwelling and set up a hostel for homeless immigrants. The pair of cottages (Figure 4.14) is now listed with State heritage significance arising from their association with Caroline Chisholm, their construction method, and for demonstrating the typical working class way of life during the 1830s.

Figure 4.14: Pair of workers' cottages, c1831.



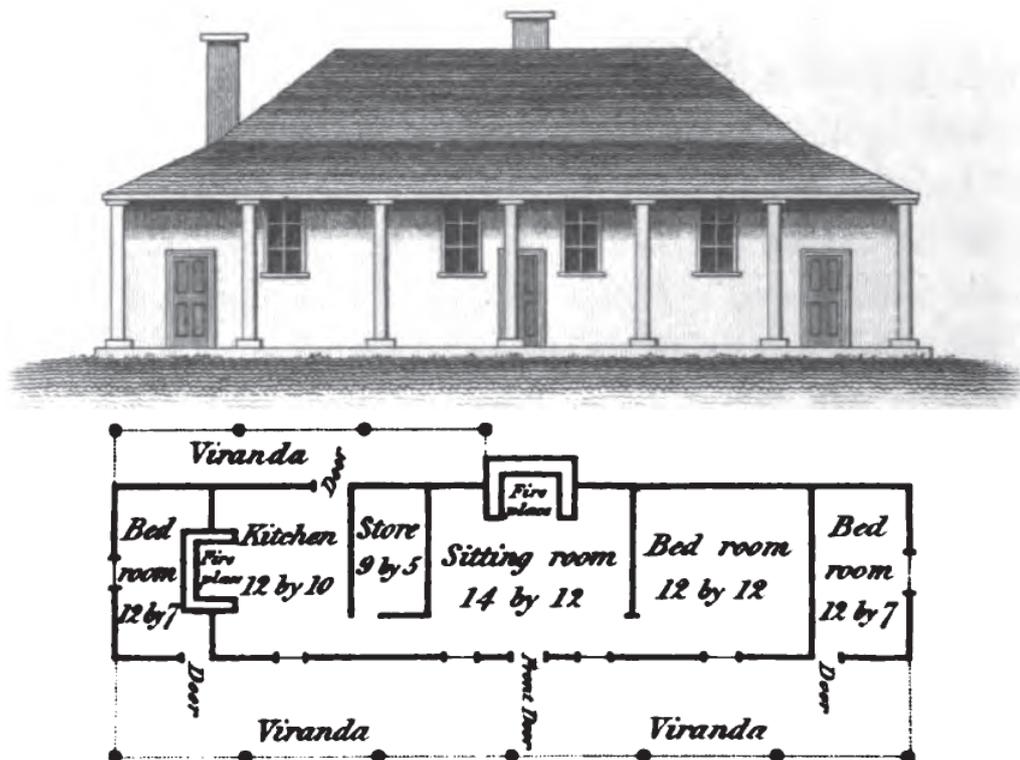
Mill Street, East Maitland (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045654)

Brick dwellings were becoming common in urban areas of the colony, and the towns close to Sydney, but in the more remote rural areas most dwellings were rudimentary and vernacular. James Atkinson advised potential free settlers:

The first step in commencing a farm in Australia, is to cut down a few trees, and erect a bark hut...and many of the early settlers have lived in no better for more than twenty years. (Atkinson 1826, 48, 49)

Bark huts were also built for the stockmen on a new run. When a farm had become sustainable, the settler was advised to build a “decent dwelling” keeping in mind that “grandeur and ornament must be kept out of sight; and that comfort and convenience are the only requisites to be studied” (Atkinson 1826, 137). For a moderate sized family, the house design in Figure 4.15 was provided as a model. It was narrow to allow the use of split timber for rafters, joists and beams, the same reason the medieval longhouse, from which double cottages derived, was long and narrow. The rural dwelling was built of timber, by “common labourers” without the aid of carpenters. It had walls of split slabs and a shingled (or bark) roof. The walls, inside and under the verandahs, were lathed and plastered. With a stone chimney and whitewash it formed “a very comfortable and decent dwelling” (Atkinson 1826, 139).

Figure 4.15: Rural dwelling, 1826.



(Atkinson 1826, 136)

The rural settlers were allocated convict labourers to work as shepherds and herdsmen, and other free labourers such as mechanics could also be employed. The advice for their employers was:

Comfortable huts for the men should be by no means neglected; many people suffer them to live in dirty and comfortless bark huts, but it is certainly to the interest of every settler, to get his men comfortably lodged as soon as possible. The best and cheapest huts are built of logs, plastered within and without, with a bark or shingle roof, and stone chimnies [sic]; fourteen feet long by twelve feet wide will be found large enough to accommodate three men, and it is better not to put too many together into one hut. (Atkinson 1826, 142)

There was a negligible saving in materials to be made by building double timber cottages for the labourers on an Australian farm or station and there was no need for a display of taste or fashion by the settlers. The picturesque model double cottages of rural England were a long way removed from the labourers' huts in NSW.

4.9 PLANNED TOWNS

Governor Macquarie was from the Scottish island of Mull, where black-houses were the dominant dwelling type until the Highland clearances replaced them with stone "improved cottages". In 1807 Macquarie married Elizabeth Campbell, the granddaughter of the man who built a new castle at Inveraray together with an associated 1770s model town. As Marsden has observed, "such a marriage would align Macquarie and his new estate with prime examples of Highland improvement, and [led to his tour of] Inveraray as a guest of the fifth Duke" (Marsden 2010, 16).

Tobermory (1788) was another model village, built for the fishing industry on Mull, which would have been familiar to him. Macquarie planned his own model village at Salen on his Mull estates. He aimed to build "a neat Village there for Crofters and a certain number of useful Tradesmen, together with a new good Inn, a Smithy, and a Shop for Merchandize" (Macquarie 1804, 5). The dwellings were:

... typical improved cottages of mortared masonry with built-in chimneys and glazed windows, and were ... ranged along a proper street, rather than set in the traditional scatter among the fields. (Marsden 2010, 17)

Macquarie's policy of providing small plots of land for his crofters was reflected in the NSW colony where he gave small land grants to emancipists. This put him at odds with the affluent colonial sheep farmers and was a factor in his removal as governor. However, his passion for planned towns had a major impact in the colony.

Planned Scottish villages such as Grantown-on-Spey (see Figure 3.4) have been described as the “practical model...factual, functional...the concept that motivates colonial towns and company towns” (Lynch 1981, cited in Kostof 1991, 15). Such villages were based on a grid plan, with single storey, symmetrical Georgian improved cottages, in terraces or pairs. Their development was managed centrally from London, including the appointment of surveyors and architects.

In 1810 Macquarie determined the layout of five towns²⁶ in the Hawkesbury River region, which had been settled in the early 1790s and provided agricultural produce for the colony. On the edge of the town of Richmond, 63 km from Sydney, several land grants were consolidated and in 1828 a large homestead, “Hobartville”, reputedly designed by the emancipist Colonial Architect Francis Greenway, was constructed on the resulting estate (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory 5045232). Some of the workers on the estate were housed in semis (Figure 4.16).

Figure 4.16: Farmworkers' semis, Richmond.



(Author 2010)

Macquarie also established Sydney’s satellite towns of Liverpool (1810) and Campbelltown (1820), and proclaimed the first inland town at Bathurst (1815). Other inland towns were Berrima (established during the 1830s; the most intact Georgian town in mainland NSW²⁷) and Goulburn (1833). It is reasonable to assume that the governor would have had a vision of his settlements similar to the model villages of his Scottish experience. However, although the streets of his towns were planned and land was set aside for amenities such as churches,

²⁶ Windsor, Richmond, Castlereagh, Pitt Town and Wilberforce.

²⁷ Kingston on Norfolk Island is more intact.

rectories and schools, the development of the subdivided land was left to individual residents, investors and speculators.

4.10 MIDDLE CLASS HOUSING

As more free settlers arrived, and some emancipists became wealthy, middle class enclaves developed. Just as the English middle classes at that time were embracing villas (including pairs), middle class tenants in the city were willing renters of high quality semis, as long as they were located within middle class areas. And there were many speculators and investors who were willing to provide such rental accommodation.

The evolution of Dawes Point (part of Millers Point, a precinct to the west of The Rocks) provides an example. The earliest structures in what was a relatively inaccessible area were windmills and a short-lived fort. In 1815 a military hospital was constructed and William Dawes built his observatory on the point. Quarrying was an established industry in Millers Point by the 1820s. By 1827 in the vicinity of Dawes Point, there was “a string of high quality villas” including “Wharf House” (1802, and later expanded), “Clyde Bank” (1825) and “Durham Cottage” (1826) (Jackson *et al.* 2011, 18). These were owned and occupied by the merchants who were developing maritime industries along the waterfront at Millers Point. From the early 1830s when access from The Rocks had been improved, “wharf owners and employees, labourers and artisans” lived at Millers Point, and “sections of Millers Point became regarded as affluent enclaves” (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory 01682).

The semis at 21-23 Lower Fort Street, built in 1832-34, were part of the affluent enclave. The three storey²⁸ dwellings are built of stone and rendered brick (Figure 4.17). The original single storey verandahs have been replaced by two storey Victorian cast iron verandahs, and the stables have been removed. They were built as investment properties by Captain John Nicholson, Master Attendant at the government dockyard and the first Harbour Master appointed by Governor Macquarie (Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2012a).

²⁸ There is a lower ground floor on the sloping site, plus attic rooms.

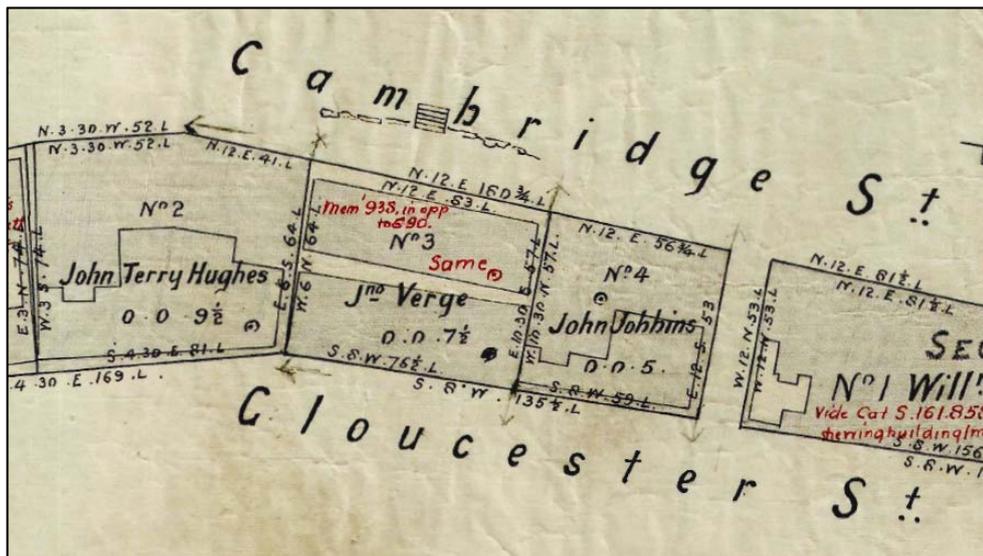
Figure 4.17: Middle class semis, Dawes Point, c1832-34.



Lower Fort Street, Dawes Point (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045667)

Also within what was the affluent enclave is a pair of c1836 extant semis further along Lower Fort Street. Some of the free settlers to NSW were architects keen to participate in the development of the colony. The designer of “Lyon’s Terrace” (see Section 4.11) was the English architect and builder John Verge who arrived at the end of 1828. He acquired land on which two pairs of semis were built in 1829.²⁹ The land was owned by Verge until at least 1833 (Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18: Land held by John Verge in The Rocks, 1833.



(Robert Russell City Section Survey Plans 1833, Section 77-78, www.photosau.com.au)

²⁹ There is no primary evidence to show that he designed these semis.

Practicing during the 1830s, most of Verge's commissions were for the grand, detached, Regency dwellings for which he is now celebrated. However, he also designed smaller dwellings. In 1833 he designed "The Colonnade", a row of seven terraced shops and residences in Bridge Street (now demolished). The following year Verge was paid £60 to design and supervise the pair of three-storey Regency semis which still stands at 39-41 Lower Fort Street (Turner 1995, 24) (Figure 4.19). They were clearly targeted at wealthy tenants, containing a basement with kitchen, scullery and cellars, a dining room, parlours, three bedrooms and a coach house and stables.

Figure 4.19: Middle class semis, John Verge, c1836.



Lower Fort Street, Dawes Point. Photographed in 1961. (City of Sydney Archives, SRC20993)

Although the urban areas had middle class enclaves which included semis, the outer areas were dominated by large detached villas in landscaped grounds. Semis were a compromise dwelling type which was not desirable or necessary for those affluent enough to live outside the cramped inner city.

4.11 THE DEVELOPMENT OF TERRACES

Particularly during the nineteenth century, many semis in Sydney took the form of pairs of two-storey attached "terraced" houses (see Section 2.3). The fact that they were in pairs rather than in longer terraces was more a function of the land and space available than a specific desire to build a pair. The higher status embodied in semi-detached housing with side setbacks, and the appearance of a detached house was not applicable to these early

pairs of dwellings, which were often in areas with concentrations of working class housing. This section will therefore explore the history of terraced housing, because the *raison d'être* for those early Australian semis is the same as it was for terraced houses. In addition, it was the ubiquitous nature of the terrace in Sydney, and its fall from favour later in the nineteenth century, which created the social climate in which the semi flourished.

The combining of several dwellings to form one long integrated building became a defining characteristic of English urban housing after London was rebuilt following the Great Fire of 1666. Speculative builders such as Praise-god Barebones and his son Nicholas Barbon redeveloped large swathes of London with cheap attached working class housing (Summerson 1945, 28). The sharing of party walls was the most economical way of adhering to the new building regulations. At the same time architects were designing new dwellings for wealthy country estate owners requiring “town houses” in London. These were of two contrasting forms – the “great family house” with gardens and stables or

... the newer form of the terrace house, developed in the expanding new squares like Bloomsbury and St James. These were called street houses. Both kinds existed throughout the eighteenth century although the terraced form was the most popular and the less expensive. (Tait 1996, 31)

Although described as terraced houses by Tait, the “street houses” or “streets” were single, large dwellings which abutted the dwellings on each side. They were not attached dwellings. It was during the 1760s that the English architects Robert and James Adam designed a large, innovative building which contained a row of attached “streets” for wealthy residents. Their sketch of the building (Figure 4.20) which was later known as “Adelphi Terrace”, was captioned:

New Buildings called ADELPHI...the above Print exhibits the Royal Terras [sic], the Houses and Openings of the Streets leading to The Strand. (Adam and Adam 1773-8, Plate III-i)

The term “terrace” soon came into general use not only to describe a row of attached dwellings for the middle classes, but also for the rows of attached working class housing.

Figure 4.20: “Royal Terras”, c1773.



(Adam and Adam 1773, Plate III-i)

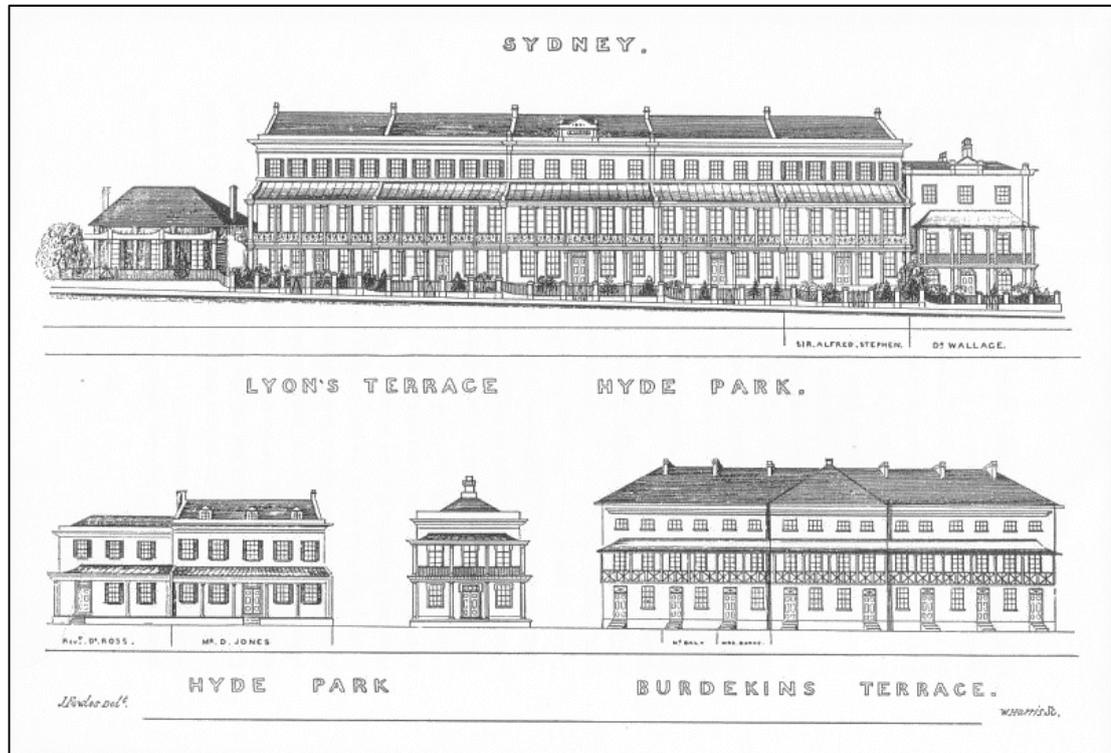
By the end of the eighteenth century, London was known as a city of rented terraced houses, with narrow frontages and served by a rear lane. In fact, they were so common that a terraced house was "a house" while the less common detached houses had distinguishing names such as villas and cottages. Depending on their size, quality and location, terraces housed tenants from "earls to artisans", in both cities and regional towns (Summerson 1945, 49).

This type of dwelling was also being used in Sydney, where more permanent housing was starting to replace the earlier vernacular dwellings. As the subdivisions of the inner suburbs such as Glebe gathered pace, they were developed with terraces. Even in regional outposts such as Windsor, Albury, Bathurst, Orange and Goulburn terraces were built. However, the extremes of terraced housing in England – from the sweeping Georgian crescents of Bath, Bristol and Regent's Park to the endless rows of "back-to-backs" in industrial cities – were not duplicated en masse in Australia.³⁰ Unlike London, in Sydney the wealthiest middle class residents had detached housing, often on large estates on the fringes of the settlement, with easy access to the centre of what was still a relatively small town. Slightly lower down the scale, wealthy tenants had large, elegant terraces such as "Burdekin's Terrace" and "Lyon's Terrace" overlooking Hyde Park (Figure 4.21) and the lower classes had more basic terraces such as those shown in Figure 4.22. It was not only working class examples of the early

³⁰ The eight back-to-back terraced houses for servants and farm workers at "Clarendon" in Tasmania are "unique in colonial Australia" because of their spaciousness and quality. They are "in sharp contrast to the typical farm worker accommodation of the time" (Tassell 2011, 9). Several small, isolated terraces of back-to-backs were built in suburbs such as Glebe and Darlinghurst, but have been demolished.

colonial terraces which were later demolished (see Section 6.5) – both “Burdekin’s Terrace” and “Lyon’s Terrace” have been demolished.

Figure 4.21: “Lyon’s Terrace” (1841) and “Burdekin’s Terrace” (1830s).



(Fowles 1848, Plate 70A)

Figure 4.22: Working class terraced housing, c1836.



Campbell Lane, Surry Hills (*Dictionary of Sydney, Surry Hills*)

“Lyon’s Terrace” was described by Joseph Fowles:

The private buildings surrounding the [Hyde] Park deserve particular notice, those on the south side, built by Mr. S. Lyons in the year 1840, and completed in 1841, are without exception the best in the City, and would not disgrace the Regent’s Park in London. (Fowles 1848, 70)

It had party walls raised 1.5 feet (46 cm) above the roofline – a consequence of the *Building Act 1837* which was introduced to reduce the risks of fire. Visible party walls became a feature of post-1838 attached housing.

4.12 CONCLUSIONS

It has been said that The Rocks was Sydney’s “old place” even when it was new.

Convicts arriving on ships were delighted to see such a familiar urban landscape. The houses scattered on the rugged slopes looked much the same as the simple vernacular cottages of England and Ireland – houses that had been built by the people themselves (Ashton *et al.* 2010, 11).

Grace Karskens suggests that in the early years of the colony:

Newcomers would be amazed and delighted at the “English” appearance of Sydney: it reminded them of a familiar, rural England (Karskens 2010, 75).

This familiarity would no doubt have been enhanced by the mix of British dwelling types, imported into the new colony. There were the small detached huts and at the other end of the social scale were the large detached dwellings on the estates of the wealthy. In between was a mix of detached houses, institutional accommodation and both large and small attached dwellings. Some of the housing was provided by the authorities, some by employers, some by the occupants themselves and some by speculative builders.

Ironically, while enclosure in England was erasing the strip farms, in the colony the emancipists were being granted small, strip-shaped parcels of land on which to become subsistence farmers. The farmers were expected to live in villages and “the plan as it unfolded looked uncannily like traditional English rural village life” (Karskens 2010, 109). However, rather than becoming a subsistence farming community as originally conceived, Sydney rapidly gained the appearance of a haphazard, urban, commercial and shipping centre.³¹

³¹ The farming took place around Parramatta and other regions outside the new town of Sydney.

Governor Macquarie set out to transform the colony, with grand new buildings such as a new Government House, a cathedral and a courthouse. His plans were only partially realised and he returned to England in 1822. However, during his tenure he established a planning framework for Sydney, created several planned towns to the north of Sydney and played a leading role in the economic, social and architectural development of the colony. Commissioner Bigge reported that in 1821 there were 68 stone houses, 239 of brick and 777 of timber in Sydney (Bigge 1822, 42-43). The buildings were “symmetrical, well-proportioned and unaffectedly detailed” and houses were “either in rows or on separate blocks; in either case they were mostly close together, attaining an urban rather than a rural disposition” (McCormick 1987, 22). Verandahs were still unusual, and Sydney was to all intents and purposes a British Georgian town.

By 1840, many settlements had spread well beyond Sydney. A class of wealthy landowners had formed, some of them emancipated convicts, separate from the government officers. Unlike the situation in Britain, land and wealth could be acquired rather than inherited. During the 1830s many mansions were built, on extensive land holdings which resembled English country estates on the edge of Sydney.

It is clear that despite the almost unlimited, often free land in the new colony, attached housing was an important part of the mix of dwellings. The urban labourers copied their British rural double cottages, and even for the higher classes the British hierarchy of dwelling type related to social class was maintained in NSW, as evidenced by the large semis for the middle classes.

The boom times of the 1830s were driven by high wool prices, free or cheap land, access to capital and cheap convict labour. The wool industry had supported the urbanisation of Sydney, providing employment in the docks, warehouses and administrative structures, and new rural towns had been established. Many emancipists had seized the opportunities available and were themselves becoming “urban commercial liberals” (Lloyd 2005, 6); thereby moving up the social scale³². However, as the decade closed, wool prices were declining and financial difficulties in Britain were reducing the inflow of migrants and capital. The transportation of convicts to NSW was abolished in 1840 and the supply of cheap labour dried up.³³ Without the labour and the capital, the system collapsed and economic depression followed.

³² Although for many wealthy emancipists, their status was not recognised by all of the Establishment.

³³ This was temporarily overturned in the late 1840s, with a small number of convicts arriving up until 1850.

5.0 THE VICTORIAN PERIOD – 1841 TO 1900

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The drought of 1838 followed by the depression of the 1840s marked the end of the first prosperous period for the colony. Banks collapsed, unemployment soared and the first NSW workers' union, the Mutual Protection Society, was formed in 1843. Yet despite the depressed economy, the modernisation of Sydney proceeded and it was declared a city. Large new public buildings were constructed and gas street lighting was introduced. By 1845 wool prices were recovering and gold was discovered in 1851. Steam ships and river vessels opened up access to the interior and coastal towns. The resulting economic boom saw immigration to NSW increase dramatically, with free settlers and prospectors outnumbering emancipists and their descendants for the first time.

The population of the City of Sydney was measured several times between 1828 and 1851 (Table 1). This showed that the non-Aboriginal population had almost quadrupled in 23 years, albeit from a small base.

Table 1: City of Sydney population figures, 1828-1851.

1828	10,815	% increase over previous figure (%)
1833	16,232	50.1
1836	19,729	21.5
1841	29,973	51.9
1846	38,358	28.0
1851	44,240	15.3

(*SMH*, 14 January 1852, 4)

The first census of the whole NSW colony was carried out in 1846, and repeated in 1851 (Table 2).

Table 2: NSW population figures, 1846-1851.

	1846	1851
Country towns	24,742	33,306
City of Sydney	37,203	44,240
Suburbs of Sydney	6,832	9,684
Military	1,155	-
Total urban	69,932	87,230
Rural	84,602	100,013
Total for the colony	154,534	187,243

(SMH, 14 January 1852, 4)

The author and free settler James Atkinson, on his return to Britain, provided detailed information for those planning to emigrate to the colony. He reported that:

Notwithstanding this extraordinary increase, perhaps unparalleled in the progress of any country, all the institutions of the colony, civil and religious, are keeping pace with the general advance of society. During the first twenty years from its foundation, the inhabitants had to struggle for a bare subsistence, and were greatly dependent on the mother country – but now, the mere necessities in life far exceed in abundance the wants of the Colonists. (Atkinson 1844, iv)

The private houses are generally built of hewn stone, and have been designed in better taste than the same description of residences in England. (Atkinson 1844, ix)

There never was a time since the foundation of New South Wales as a British Colony, when capital could be invested therein to so much advantage. (Atkinson 1844, xi)

The census of 1851 lists 11 inner suburbs surrounding Sydney:

- Balmain
- Camperdown
- Canterbury

- Chippendale
- The Glebe
- Newtown
- O'Connell Town (now part of Newtown)
- Paddington
- Redfern
- St Leonards
- Surry Hills.

In that year the suburban Sydney population of 9,684 (around 5% of the colony's population) occupied 2,167 dwellings. Of these dwellings, most were terraced houses, some were semis and some were detached.

Attempts were made to control the ad hoc development of the colony. The *Building Act 1837* in Sydney drew upon the *London Building Act 1774* and was concerned with fire control. It introduced party walls extending above the roof and banned the use of combustible materials such as thatched roofs. These regulations applied only to the City of Sydney, and suburbs such as Paddington had no building regulations until the 1880s. Regional areas were regulated even later.

In 1842 the *New South Wales Constitution Act* gave the NSW Legislative Council more autonomy, although the British Governor retained over-riding authority. The first local government organisation, the Sydney Corporation, was also formed in 1842 with land owners, including emancipists, eligible to vote. However, Britain still retained 50% of the land sales revenues, to fund the emigration of labourers and their families to the colony. The inner suburbs of Glebe, Redfern, Randwick and Waverley were incorporated in 1859.

Land grants to emancipists and free settlers provided the colony with revenue and land speculation continued. Agricultural land was sold or leased within the boundaries of the eleven counties, and outside those limits stations for grazing stock could be occupied under licence. The economy diversified, with the development of secondary and tertiary urban industries. Construction of the first railway began in 1850, and Westminster passed the *Australian Constitutions Act 1850* which split the colony of Victoria (Port Philip) from NSW.

In 1855 an amendment to the *New South Wales Constitution Act* gave NSW a constitution and self-government. The end of direct rule by British governors, and the development of NSW-specific laws and policies, had a dramatic effect on the regulation of housing within the colony. The same year, the opening of the first railway, from Redfern to Granville (at that time an agricultural centre) stimulated the development of the suburbs to the west of Sydney.

The influx of people during the gold rushes and the wool boom trebled the population of NSW in the ten years before 1861, and by 1891 it was just over 383,000 (Census 1861, 1891). The resultant overcrowding in the inner city areas accelerated the movement of the artisans and middle classes to the suburbs, where trains and horse-buses provided transport. The infrastructure imperatives for the colony became sanitation and public transport. The International Exhibition at the Garden Palace in 1879 was a catalyst for the introduction of steam trams, and the railway to Hurstville in 1884 provided access to land south of the city.

Large suburban estates and farms were gradually subdivided into lots of around 5 to 20 acres (2 to 8 hectares) – sufficient for a substantial middle class detached house surrounded by park-like gardens, or for a speculative land holding. In the next outer ring, small farms, market gardens and dairies flourished (Madden and Muir 1988, 14). This expansion in turn encouraged skilled workers (artisans) such as quarrymen, fencers, wood-carters, butchers and dairymen to the outer areas. The outer settlements eventually grew sufficiently to become incorporated municipalities, many of which were formed during the late Victorian period.

Waves of immigration and the flight to the suburbs stimulated a building boom during the 1880s. Much of this building activity was generated by speculative builders providing rental accommodation in suburbs close to the city, most of which was in the form of terraces. Very little undeveloped land remained in the inner city. In the suburbs, the affordable land and convenient, cheap public transport made a detached house a realistic dream for many. This contrasted with the situation in British cities, where the cost of land made compromises necessary; the realistic ideal there was a semi rather than a detached house. Suburban semis in Sydney did form part of the housing mix, albeit a minority form, for those who could not afford to rent a detached house.

Rural settlements too were made accessible by trains and improved roads during the late Victorian period. Farming expanded, and yields were boosted by new inventions³⁴ and improved farming methods. Much of the arable and pastoral land which had been occupied by the squatters was seized in the 1860s by the Crown and sold to the settlers who continued to see the colony as a land of opportunity. Land speculators took advantage of the economic boom which was curtailed only during the 1890s by low wool prices and drought, and the subsequent depression.

Early colonial building regulations had focussed mostly on fire prevention. From the mid-nineteenth century, the desire by the government to improve the housing stock was motivated primarily by the prevention of disease. Legislation in 1879 laid down a minimum

³⁴ For example the stump-jump plough.

width for streets. The smallpox epidemic of 1881³⁵ prompted the creation of the first NSW Board of Health, which was given the authority to inspect dwellings and force the disposal of household waste, and to deal with overcrowding. After the miasma theory of disease was replaced by the germ theory, NSW introduced a *Public Health Act* in 1896.

Rules which encouraged the inclusion of washing facilities in dwellings, and more rooms so that adults could be segregated from children, then girls from boys, were seen as part of the class-based “moral function” of housing. The middle class regulators sought to change the behaviour of working class residents by moving them to superior housing in suburbia (Marsden 2000, 30). This vision was unrealistic, just as it was in overcrowded British cities; while artisans might improve their housing, the labouring class could neither afford the suburban rents nor the commuting costs to their workplaces on the docks and industrial areas. The inner city areas therefore continued to degrade.

5.2 PHILANTHROPY, MODEL DWELLINGS, MODEL SUBURBS, MODEL VILLAGES

The English philanthropic movement, the 5% philanthropy societies and their model dwellings for the working classes (labourers and artisans) were reported widely in the colonies. Soon after their completion in 1846, the first English model dwellings at Bagnigge Wells were reported in the colony of South Australia, itself a planned model settlement (*South Australian Register*, 26 September 1846, 3). However, it was not until 1848 that model dwellings were first mentioned in the press in the colony of NSW, when the completion of the 1847 model lodging house built in London by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was reported (*SMH* 22 January 1848, 4). Later that year the full transcript of the Society’s Annual General Meeting (from May 1848) was published (*SMH*, 21 September 1848, 3).

One newspaper article described the conditions in Lambeth which led to the formation of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, and pondered the impacts on business in the colony of poorly-housed employees. It compared NSW to the situation in America where the “captains of industry” spared no expense to secure good lodgings for their employees, and concluded that:

The support of the model lodging-house movement may be a matter of philanthropy or Christian duty to all, but to the employer of labour it will soon be considered as an important branch of his business arrangements. Society is rapidly drifting to the conviction that violations of sanitary laws will not pay, and that it is absolutely impossible to rear first-class workmen in hovels and pig-sties. This is putting the matter upon its lowest footing; but while we rejoice to find lofty principles widening

³⁵ In Cumberland Street, Surry Hills, Waterloo etc *The Sydney Mail* 18 June 1881, 999.

their sphere of action, it is consolatory to know that we have arguments which will at last creep into the pocket when a higher appeal may fail to reach the heart (A Model Lodging-House Movement, *SMH*, 3 October 1854, 3)

In 1856 the politician, judge and social reformer Edward Wise delivered a lecture called *The Health of Towns* to a group of influential businessmen at the Sydney School of Arts. The content was reproduced in the newspapers, and outlined the links between poverty and disease, as well as the progress made by the philanthropists in England (*SMH*, 14 August 1856, 8). The following year Mr Wise gave another lecture, to the Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance, linking “filth and intemperance” and suggesting that small plots of ground for the working classes, wash houses and model dwellings were the ways to save the colony from the “evils of the old countries” (*SMH*, 27 April 1857, 5).

In 1858 the Sydney School of Arts offered a prize for the design of “model dwelling-houses for the labouring classes, especial regard being had to the peculiar circumstances of the colony and its economy” (*SMH*, 4 February 1858, 2). However, at the meeting when this was announced, a question was raised about “what had been done” regarding previous ideas for model lodging-houses. The Chairman admitted that the matter had “only been promulgated and voted”.

According to the subsequent newspaper reports, there appear to have been many noble ideas expressed by various societies and clergymen in Sydney, but little in the way of tangible results for housing the workers. The exceptions were individual businessmen, who saw the provision of suitable housing as an economic necessity to ensure a reliable workforce for their factories and industries. Case Study 5 provides a more detailed examination of the provision of workers’ housing by the prominent businessman and philanthropist, Thomas Mort. This also looks at Mort’s connections to the philanthropists of England, and his responses to the challenges of balancing philanthropy and economic returns.

There were some model suburbs being developed in Sydney during the 1880s and 1890s (Freestone 1986, 66), although most tended to focus more on model dwellings than an overall planned suburb. Case Study 7 traces the subdivision of an area of Mosman, and the building of pairs of semis as model dwellings in Muston’s Model Township. A significant example of a model suburb was the Neutral Bay Estate, developed in the late 1880s by the immigrant English architect, Walter Liberty Vernon, prior to his appointment as the Government Architect. He, together with other English architects such as John Sulman, had emigrated to NSW during the 1880s for its healthier climate (Boyd 2010, 144). Noni Boyd states that:

The work of these English-trained architects in Australia also indicates a thorough knowledge of contemporary developments in England in the design of model housing, model subdivisions and civic planning. John Sulman in particular is credited with the establishment of the discipline of town planning in Australia. (Boyd 2002, 25)

Vernon set out roads, subdivided and designed dwellings for the Neutral Bay Estate. He aimed to:

... develop and maintain what will undoubtedly be the model and favourite suburb for families with moderate means, but desirous of pleasant surroundings. (Neutral Bay Land Company 1889)

Vernon designed his dwellings with the Queen Anne architectural detailing which had been developed at Bedford Park, with the addition of verandahs facing the sea breezes. Like Bedford Park, there are no “unhealthy” cellars or basements, and community facilities such as a tennis court for healthy outdoor activity, and a church, were included in the layout. To maintain control over the quality of his model dwellings, Vernon initially adopted the English practice of leasing rather than selling his subdivided lots. They were later converted to freehold.

Amongst the first buildings in the estate, which were mostly speculative, was a pair of c1887 semis initially called “Clytha Terrace” (*Sands Directory* 1887) and later “Llanarth” and “Gwylatta” (Figure 5.1). This extant pair has one dwelling facing Wycombe Road, and the other facing the side street, making it difficult at first glance to identify them as semis. Reflecting the dwelling hierarchy, “Llanarth”’s tenant was a clerk, while the larger detached dwellings nearby had occupants such as wool merchants and mining agents (*Sands Directories*). Unlike London’s Bedford Park with its predominance of such semis, all of the later villas in the Neutral Bay Estate were detached (North Sydney Block Plan No 39, 1892). With more affordable land than in the English suburban estates, professional middle class men could achieve the dream of a detached villa in the suburbs, without the compromise of a semi.

Figure 5.1: Semis in Neutral Bay Model Suburb, 1887.



Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay. Note the projecting party wall. (Google Maps, August 2014)

The Kensington Model Suburb, adjacent to Centennial Park, was designed in 1889 by Vernon and his partner Howard Joseland. Their entry, *Rus in Urbe*, won first prize in the competition to design the new suburb, although the economic depression of the 1890s prevented it from being built. It was later observed that:

... the winning design showed features that were a great advantage on anything so far attempted. But the time was not right and financial stringency intervened, so that the area was cut up in the usual chequer board fashion to screw the last penny out of the estate. (Sulman 1913, cited in Boyd 2002, 28)

The model suburban dwellings were not expected to be rented by the labouring class, although there was a goal, often unachievable, for artisans to be housed in improved dwellings such as semis in the suburbs. In reality the artisans and middle class tenants usually moved to slightly better terraced housing in the suburbs. For example, in 1886 sales had been slow for the New Brighton Estate. The owner Thomas Saywell built "Brighton Terrace" in Grand Parade as a model to stimulate sales. Designed by William Kenwood, it contained 12 dwellings (only five remain) with rear rooms for servants and lavish detailing in the high Victorian style. Importantly it was "not for the working man" (Rathbone 2000, 41). Thomas Saywell himself lived in one of the terraced houses until the late 1920s.

Similar to the experience in London, the high cost of inner city land confined model dwelling projects for labourers there to multi-storey tenements and lodging houses. As was reported in Sydney:

To buy up hovels and rebuild good cottages on their sites would be anything but a paying speculation. The wretchedest description of house property pays the highest proportionate rent. No landlords get so high a return for their money as those who hold property in the dingiest courts and the filthiest alleys. (*SMH*, 3 June 1863, 4)

The article goes on to say:

The most experienced philanthropists recognise the expediency of keeping charity within its proper limits, and of not allowing it to transgress into the domain of business.

Nevertheless, the School of Arts in Sydney continued to hold occasional lecture evenings about housing the labourers. In 1860, in a lecture titled "Dwellings as they are, and as they might be", the speaker admitted that although the topic "had for some years past attracted the attention of the most able and philanthropic men in the mother country", there had been no entries at all in his competition launched three years previously for suitable designs for labourers' dwellings (*SMH*, 11 July 1860, 8). Members were encouraged to consider the tenements which were at that time being built in London and Edinburgh to re-house the poor. These were said to have the advantages of being "above malarious influences", cheap to build and affordable to rent. They were also an economic use of land and easier to maintain than individual cottages. They would "bring a large remunerative return". Although the speaker referred to some cottages "recently erected in Bathurst Street, which surpassed anything he had seen in this city", he lamented the fact that they were in "an unwholesome and low neighbourhood".

For the poorest labourers, forced to live in unsanitary lodging houses, model lodging houses such as had been built in London were supported by the School of Arts (*SMH*, 11 July 1860, 8). Again there was much discussion, but no action until the Model Lodging-house Company of Sydney Limited was incorporated in 1878 by the Health Society of NSW. Investors could subscribe to shares at £5 each, and £7,500 was raised. Capital was also borrowed (*SMH*, 23 May 1882, 3). Land was purchased in Kent Street, Millers Point, and the architect Mr Wardell designed the building to house 260 men. The success of the venture was probably enhanced by the experience of investors in Melbourne, who were receiving a dividend of 10% for a similar model lodging house.

The Model Lodging House was opened in 1882 and was hailed as “the downfall of dirt”. It was important “not only to the labouring classes but to the whole city of Sydney” (*SMH*, 20 June 1882, 3). In most contemporary articles about the model lodging house and model dwellings for labourers, the residents were known as “inmates”, suggesting that the philanthropy was more about returns on investment than compassion about the people forced to live in substandard housing. Twenty five years later the Model Lodging House was known as “Sydney’s Sixpenny Hotel” and although by then it had been taken over by the NSW Government it still offered cheap lodgings to men (*Evening News* 13 July 1907, 3).

Despite the obvious drawbacks to building model dwellings for artisans in the inner city, when the site of Barker’s Mill was advertised in 1887, it was suggested that philanthropists may consider purchasing it as a “grand site for the experiment of the erection of Model Artisan Dwellings” (Figure 5.2). No such dwellings were built, although correspondents who had visited model dwellings in London and been “surprised and charmed” by them thought that the construction of similar model dwelling-houses (tenements) should be built in Sydney as part of the Centenary celebrations in 1888 (*SMH*, 21 February 1887, 7).

Figure 5.2: Sale of inner city land, 1887.

SPLENDID CITY BUILDING BLOCK.

To MANUFACTURERS, CAPITALISTS, PRODUCE MERCHANTS, AGENTS, and PHILANTHROPISTS.
1 ACRE 2 ROODS 17 PERCHES,
close to the very heart of the CITY. Near busy wharfs and RAILWAY at DARLING HARBOUR, with large frontages to DUNCAN-STREET, JAMES-STREET, JAMES-LANE, and entrance from SUSSEX-STREET, near to BATHURST-STREET WEST, being the site of the historic and long-occupied BARKER'S MILLS, formerly working flour as the product, and more latterly and now known as VICAR'S TWEED FACTORY.

From the eligible situation of this block, coupled with the exceptional **LARGENESS OF THE AREA** in the CITY, only a few hundred feet from the water. It should engage the attention of BUILDING SYNDICATES for COMMERCIAL STORE purposes and industrial capitalists, or it would prove a favourable opportunity to our wealthy colonists of acquiring a **GRAND SITE** for the experiment of the erection of **MODEL ARTISAN DWELLINGS.**

It will be leased for **21 YEARS' term, from 1st JANUARY, 1888,** so that the considerable capital sum of its value is not to be found and paid by a buyer, and the ANNUAL RENTAL will remain the same throughout the whole period.

TERMS.—Purchasers to bid an ANNUAL RENTAL, and also to make a cash payment of £6000, by way of bonus, viz. :
—25 per cent. deposit, and the balance on execution of the LEASE.

The present buildings are extensive and varied, and the machinery therein belonging to the vendor will become the property of the buyer without extra cost.

(SMH, 10 September 1887, 17)

At the end of 1887, the Mayor of Sydney called a meeting to discuss improved dwellings for artisans, only to be disappointed at its "meagre attendance". Nevertheless, a committee to investigate the options was formed as a result, in which some members spoke against the flats and tenements being favoured in Britain. As with many such committees, the movement lapsed, although Rev F B Boyce continued to request some action, including government intervention to underwrite a housing scheme (SMH, 12 January 1889, 1).

5.3 WORKING CLASS HOUSING

As Sydney spread southwards, and the more affluent moved to the suburbs, inner city areas such as The Rocks became known as predominantly working class suburbs of people who needed to live close to their places of employment around the dock areas. Many of the previously-desirable dwellings became cheap lodging houses. Other industries which developed on the fringes of the city also required an accessible workforce. For example, land on the edge of Sydney was allocated as a Military Garden, to supplement the military rations. This was subdivided into large lots in 1830, and those lots were soon subdivided into smaller lots as a gin distillery and factory were developed in the area. In 1835 the Kent Brewery opened nearby, and over the following decades the brewery complex expanded dramatically. The historian Shirley Fitzgerald notes that:

In 1842, Chippendale became part of the newly incorporated City of Sydney. In the 1830s and 1840s an increasing number of narrow streets appeared, providing cramped and substandard housing to Chippendale's working families, especially near Parramatta Street and the headwaters of the Blackwattle swamp. By mid-century there were several medium-sized industrial neighbours, including a flour mill on Abercrombie Street and numerous small establishments on Parramatta Street. (*Dictionary of Sydney*, Chippendale, S Fitzgerald 2008)

The need for accommodation for brewery workers encouraged the speculative subdivision of the Kensington Estate in 1842. By 1850 the eastern side of Kensington Street was built upon, and the western side by 1860, yet during the 1850s the City Health Officer described the houses in the street as “in the most wretched condition, so far as ventilation and cleanliness are concerned” (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory 2424269). Some of the terraced houses were demolished during the 1880s and 1890s, with most of the land in the Estate eventually being absorbed into the brewery site. Some houses in the area were demolished and replaced by factories and industries, leaving the remaining housing stock to be occupied by working class tenants employed by those industries. The terrace-like semis at 46-48 Kensington Street (Figure 5.3) are amongst the few remaining original dwellings in the street. They, together with the other remaining workers' dwellings in the street, have been restored as a vibrant entertainment and cafe destination. Completed in 1855, the sandstone semis are built to the front boundary line and have cantilevered balconies.

Figure 5.3: Sandstone semis for brewery workers, c1855.



Kensington Street, Chippendale. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory 2424269)

The 1840s depression prompted some landowners such as Joseph Grose in Glebe to turn their attentions to workers' housing, in an attempt to stave off bankruptcy. He built a maze of cottages near the Blackwattle Swamp slaughterhouses and tanneries. Although the housing was unpleasant and polluted, the residents had no alternative as they needed to live close to their work.

Many towns which had been gazetted by Governor Macquarie to service the expanding agricultural areas of the colony did not grow significantly until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the prosperity generated by wool and gold led to large population increases. Speculators who had been holding land were able to subdivide and sell residential housing lots, many of which were then developed by speculative builders. While the most common dwelling type in country towns was detached, some semis were built and although less common, several terraces were built (for example "Bowen Terrace" in Orange, 1876). Case Study 3 illustrates the development of a street in Campbelltown, which at that time was a rural town some distance from Sydney.

When gold was discovered in 1851, gold rushes led to the creation of new towns such as Tambaroora and Hill End, 280km from Sydney. There the prospectors were initially housed in tents, but by its peak in 1872/3 Hill End supported a population of around 8,000 in buildings

which ranged from substantial (churches, schools, hotels, commercial buildings) to temporary (vernacular hotels and houses). Many of the houses were built of wattle and daub, with bark roofs. The town was recorded in 1872 by the photographer Beaufoy Merlin, whose images included a pair of mid-century wattle and daub semis, with a bark roof (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Wattle and daub semis, Hill End.



Photographed in 1872. (SLNSW Image a2822804)

In 1852 a newspaper advertised for sale in the “flourishing town of Goulburn” a steam mill with 15 acres of land containing a family dwelling house and several cottages in the insolvent estate of Mr Sinclair (*Empire* 19 March 1852, 4). Speculators were urged to consider the land which if “portioned out judiciously would yield to the purchaser a large return on the capital invested”. The dwellings themselves, which presumably housed the mill manager and the mill labourers, conformed to the dwelling hierarchy with its mix of large detached, small detached and semi-detached dwellings, even though there was obviously sufficient land for each employee to have a detached dwelling (Figure 5.5). The detached dwellings were all described as “comfortable and desirable” or “comfortable and respectable” – the semis merely as “comfortable”.

Figure 5.5: Housing for a steam mill in Goulburn, 1852.

Lot 2.

**EXCELLENT FAMILY DWELLING-HOUSE
IN SLOANE-STREET.**

This is one of the most snug and comfortable properties in the Town of Goulburn, highly desirable for a respectable family. There are four windows in front, stone terrace, with verandah and flight of steps to the hall entrance, with ornamental railings; contains, on the entrance floor, good hall, large dining and drawing rooms, and two good bed rooms; on the ground floor, good sitting and two bedrooms, store, and cellar; in the rear, large kitchen, servants' room, office, wash house, &c.; in the court-yard, three-stall stable and coach house, man-servant's room, carpenter's shop, fowl house, with a well of good water.

Lot 3.

FOUR COMPACT COTTAGES IN AUBURN-STREET.

Stone and brick built, of good elevation, containing four rooms each, built upon allotments numbered 13 and 14, comfortable and respectable residences.

Lot 4.

EIGHT COTTAGES IN CLIFFORD STREET.

Semi-detached, and built upon allotment No. 5. They contain four rooms each, and have out-buildings in the rear. A small outlay upon these cottages would render them comfortable dwellings, and would command good tenants.

(*Empire*, 19 March 1852, 4)

5.4 SLUM CLEARANCES

Despite the colony being relatively young, by the late Victorian period many overcrowded areas had substandard housing. Middle class activists began agitating for improvements, although much was discussed and very little action was evident. As with British slums, the economic reality was that substandard buildings in slums gave landlords the best returns on capital. To demolish such housing, and replace it with more spacious (and therefore more expensive) dwellings was not feasible where working class tenants could not afford to pay increased rents. Some artisans and skilled workers were able to move to the suburbs such as Paddington, Glebe, Newtown and beyond, leaving behind the labourers in areas such as The Rocks and Millers Point. For example in Bishopthorpe (Glebe) new terraced houses provided “accommodation for artisans, small businessmen, tradespeople, and a sprinkling of professionals” (Smith and Smith 1973, 31). The reality was that most labourers were not commuters with permanent work – they were day labourers who had to be close to the wharves and factories to obtain whatever work was available each morning. This further concentrated labourers and unskilled workers within the degraded inner city housing.

Some demolition of substandard housing was carried out where a large parcel of land remained in a single ownership. For example, in Glebe’s St Philip’s Estate, for the 1842 subdivision the land owner had sold leases rather than freeholds. When the leases expired in 1870, the old cottages were demolished and the area was redeveloped with two-storey terraces for working class tenants.

The *Incorporation of the Town of Sydney Act 1842* had empowered the City Surveyor to give notice to property owners to take down or secure dangerous buildings under the threat of further action by Council. However, landlords were often in a powerful position to ignore such directions. As a result of the poor condition of city buildings and sanitation, exacerbated by a lack of proper legislation and codes of building practice, the *City of Sydney Improvement Act 1879* (also known as the *Building Act*) was enacted. Clause 29 gave the authorities the right to demand repairs or demolish any building “in a ruinous state and dangerous to the public or to the occupiers of the neighbouring buildings”, with all costs payable by the owner.

The question of “housing the poor” was acknowledged as “one of universal interest in this age of great cities” (*SMH*, 25 January 1884, 7). Its increasing importance was attributed to people beginning to:

... study the laws of sanitary science, and as enlightened selfishness enables them to perceive that we cannot neglect the condition of the lowest strata of society with impunity; for if we do, the epidemic which springs into existence amidst the foul and noisome back slums of a city will invade the mansions which occupy its best

quarters, and will there reap an indiscriminating harvest of death. (*SMH*, 25 January 1884, 7)

Smallpox outbreaks heightened the fear of disease and created a peak of resumption and demolition activity, although “decisions about municipal reform were commonly based not on evidence but on unfounded and often alarmist assertions” (Doyle 2005). By defining crowded terraced housing as “slums” and the resumptions and demolitions as “slum clearances” the demolition process was legitimised. This also enabled Sydney’s commercial and industrial interests to acquire the cleared land and redevelop it with warehouses and offices rather than replacement workers’ housing.

The slum clearances were also tied up with the Victorian notions of morality. Poor housing was assumed to foster immoral behaviour. The city building surveyor stated that the intention of the demolitions was as much to “prevent immorality” as “to preserve the health of the Citizens and beautify the City” (cited in Doyle 2005). The citizens themselves were characterised as “worthless people” (*NSW Intoxicating Drink Enquiry 1887*, 22).

By late 1887, as a result of the *Building Act*, 1,726 city houses had been condemned and 1,576 of those were demolished (*SMH*, 15 December 1887, 5). Much of the land was then used for commercial purposes or the widening of streets rather than housing, forcing even more families into the already-overcrowded “rookeries” of terraced housing (and some terrace-like semis).

5.5 MIDDLE CLASS HOUSING

The free settlers from the British middle classes brought with them strict rules relating to social class, religion and morality. Many emancipists had become wealthy and readily adopted the middle class ways. The colony lacked an equivalent to the British landed aristocracy, the wealthiest colonists being regarded as upper middle class. Housing (both type and location) was able to provide a tangible display of class and respectability.

By the 1840s the British middle classes were living in detached villas, urban semi-detached villas or large terraced houses in desirable areas. However, to place this in context, they were only 15% of the population in 1851 (Burnett 1986, 14, 97). Choosing to live in a semi-detached villa or a terraced house in the suburbs was a compromise, made necessary by the value and scarcity of land in the desirable British suburbs. Most aspirational colonists in Sydney were able to afford their own detached suburban dwelling, because land was readily available on the edge of the city. The wealthiest residents had mansions on estates in harbourside localities such as Point Piper and Vaucluse outside the city. St Leonards, across the harbour from the city, had also been settled by wealthier people who could afford ferry access to the city.

People of the middle classes who remained in the city leased dwellings in the large, high quality terraces such as “Lyons’ Terrace” (see Section 4.11) or in the affluent enclaves in areas such as Millers Point. The niche which had been created in Britain for upper middle class semi-detached suburban villas such as those designed by John Nash did not exist in the colony, therefore they did not form part of the NSW housing mix. However, by the late Victorian period, the previously middle-class dwellings had been subdivided and occupied by multiple tenants.

The development of the suburb O’Connell Town (now part of Newtown) provides an example of the evolution of a middle class area. The Camperdown Estate was land granted to Governor William Bligh in 1809. It was used as farmland until 1842, when Bligh’s daughter subdivided it into “villa allotments between 800m² and 2 hectares in size” as well as an area for residential lots and streets creating an “idealised, hierarchical village” (O’Connell Town) to service the villa estates (Baskerville 1997). Artisans were to live in the village itself, and to the east:

... two further urban subdivisions named Bligh's Terrace and Camperdown Terrace stretched along the north side of King Street with a more middle class ambience. A 'terrace', in this sense, meant a row of (detached) houses on the top or face of a slope, and the streets are all long and follow the contour of the Orphan School Creek catchment. (Baskerville 1997)

Some land was held and/or traded by speculators while other estates contained upper middle class villas, which were all detached. As the population of Sydney increased and industries spread out from the city, most of the villa estates were further subdivided, several villas were demolished, the middle classes moved further out and the area filled with working class housing.

Regardless of the dwelling type, middle class dwellings had features such as servants’ quarters and fashionable architectural styles. Although the remnants of the Georgian architectural style were still seen in some new buildings until the 1860s, by the end of the 1830s a “decorative, sometimes banal, vulgar but always vital architecture was taking the field” in NSW (Dupain 1963, 31). These Victorian architectural styles (see Section 2.7) became an ideal way to flaunt the increasing wealth of the middle classes.

The influx of immigrants to NSW as a result of the 1850s gold rushes, plus a booming export market for wool saw middle class residential enclaves in areas such as Millers Point and Dawes Point being redeveloped with larger wharves, warehouses, bond stores and new streets of working class housing, mostly high-density terraces. The wealthy merchants gradually moved elsewhere and their large dwellings became working class boarding houses.

Balmain is a suburb which demonstrates how parts of an area can move up and down the social scale. William Balmain, a surgeon who had arrived with the First Fleet, was granted 550 acres (223 hectares) on the peninsula in 1800. The area was first settled between 1830 and 1860, when “gentlemen” built detached villas on large parcels of land along the ridges, and travelled to the city on the ferry service which was set up during the 1840s. Adjacent to William Balmain’s land, Birchgrove was originally a 1796 grant of 30 acres (12 hectares) on the waterfront. A house was built there in 1810, and the property changed hands frequently until a subdivision plan was drawn up in 1860. Due to financial problems, the sales of the lots were delayed until 1878.

Meanwhile the rest of Balmain was developing quickly. Although road travel into the city was via a circuitous route, the area’s convenient water access enabled the growth of small local industries servicing the city and the port. Housing for the tradesmen and service workers employed in those local industries was in modest dwellings along Darling Street, the access road from the city (Leichhardt City Council 2003, A218). The boom of the 1850s led to the establishment of larger industries such as Morts Dock³⁶, and several noxious industries, which encouraged further subdivision of the adjacent land for workers’ terraced housing. The more affluent middle classes who could afford to use the horse-drawn bus or water transport:

... developed grander houses and enclaves in favoured locations such as to the harbour edges of Birchgrove and Elkington Park, further removed from the industry (Leichhardt City Council 2003, A218).

What had been relatively large estates containing desirable detached villas were now too close to the new industries. They were subdivided and “the sections were purchased over the next thirty years by wealthy investors, local speculators and builders” (Godden Mackay Logan 2004, lxi). The largest of the estates, subdivided into 197 lots with frontages of only 30 feet (9.1m), was auctioned in 1874 and:

... canny speculators...sold to small builders who constructed very dense workers’ housing (Godden Mackay Logan 2004, lxii).

The arrival of the steam tram along Victoria Road in 1892 provided artisans and lower middle class people in Balmain with:

... transport to the city and a greater choice of employment away from places within immediate walking distance of home. The advent of the tramway probably explains the major impetus to growth in the area...so that in the 1890s much of [the area] was

³⁶ Case Study 5 contains more information about Thomas Mort.

built upon with one-storey brick semis, pairs or small groups of terraces and double-fronted single storey houses. (Godden Mackay Logan 2004, lxii)

By the end of the Victorian period, the dwelling hierarchy was thus established within the Balmain area – dense terraced housing for tenant labourers close to the industries, semis and small terraced houses along the tram routes for artisans and the lower middle class tenants (Figure 5.6), and enclaves of middle class detached houses, large semis (mostly double-fronted) and some terraced houses in favourable locations, especially by the harbour’s edge in Birchgrove (Figure 5.7).

The middle class suburban mix of Birchgrove at that time, which includes undeveloped sites still held by speculators, can be seen in Figure 5.8. The presence of terraces, albeit in short rows, and the absence of large villa estates suggest that the upper middle classes resided further from the city, in their flight to escape from the disease and pollution in working class areas.

Figure 5.6: Lower middle class semis, Rozelle and Balmain.



Evans Street, Rozelle. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1940176)



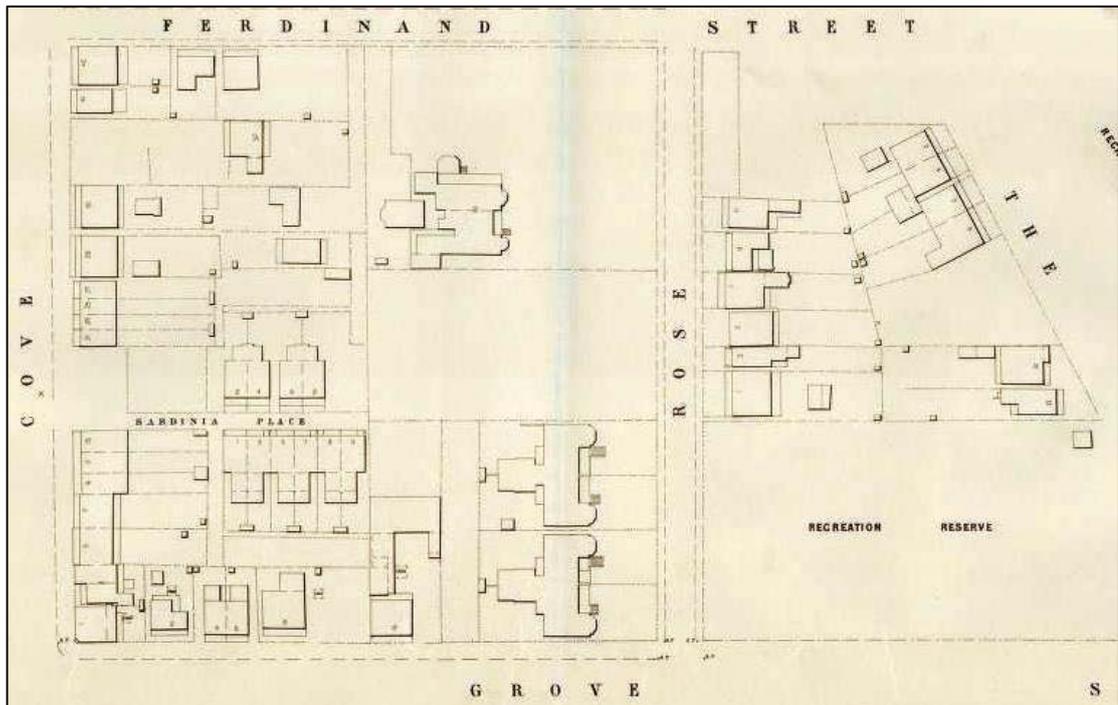
Darling Street, Balmain. (Google Maps, 2015)

Figure 5.7: Middle class semis, Birchgrove, c1883.



Rose Street, Birchgrove. The first tenants in 1883 included an auctioneer and a contractor (Sands Directory 1884). (Google Maps, August 2014)

Figure 5.8: Suburban mix of middle class dwellings, Birchgrove, 1893.



Includes the two pairs of large c1883 semis in Rose Street (centre) (SLNSW, Metropolitan Detail Series, Balmain, Sheets 3 and 4)

Despite the initial attraction of Birchgrove for middle class residents escaping from Balmain, it too was soon considered to be too close to the expanding industries and working class areas. The semis in Rose Street were split into flats – four in No 6 and nine in No 8 (National Trust 2009, 8, 10). It was not until the 1970s, when interest in the Victorian housing of suburbs such as Paddington and Balmain grew, that the semis were purchased, restored and converted back to single residences. Birchgrove is now an expensive, fashionable, conservation area. The semis are listed with local aesthetic significance.

Conversely, some dwellings which previously housed tenant labourers are located in inner city areas which are now desirable commercial areas. Case Study 8 traces a pair of semis in Parramatta from their construction as rental housing (within a mix of dwelling types) to its re-incarnation as prime real estate in a commercial area.

In contrast to the mixed dwelling types of Birchgrove and Parramatta the developing middle class suburb of Mosman had no terraced housing until the early twentieth century, when only two short rows of large terraced houses were built. Instead there were numerous pairs of large, two-storey late Victorian semis such as in Figure 5.9. The other nineteenth century dwellings in Mosman, both large and small, were detached.

Figure 5.9: Victorian Filigree semis, Mosman, 1886.



Mosman Street, Mosman. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 2060320)

The suburb of Randwick also contains several pairs of middle class late Victorian semis, for example the outstanding pair at 211-215 Avoca Street, Randwick. Until the 1850s Randwick was relatively isolated and had some areas with large, fashionable villas, as well as working class areas with piggeries, market gardens and an Irish ghetto (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045332). In 1853 Judge Callaghan obtained a grant of land, on which he built a mansion, "Avoca". After his death, his widow and spinster daughter built "Corana" and "Hygeia" (Figure 5.10) for rental income while they continued to live at "Avoca". The semis were completed in 1894. As well as housing tenants such as doctors and dentists, one semi was used as a post office until Randwick Post Office was built. By 1925 the building had been converted to flats and gradually deteriorated. The National Trust (NSW) agitated

for an Interim Conservation Order, which was placed over the building in 1984. It now operates as a budget hotel and has a State heritage listing.

Figure 5.10: Late Victorian Italianate semis, Randwick, 1894.



“Corana” and “Hygeia”, Avoca Street, Randwick. (Sydney – City and Suburbs, <http://sydney-city.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/randwick-corana-and-hygeia.html>)

Semis also formed part of private middle class estates. For example, the "Graythwaite" property in North Sydney (now part of a school) was first developed in the 1840s with "Euroka Villa" on 13 acres (5.3 hectares). A later owner, Edwin Sayers, built a new house and used the original cottage as a kitchen and servants quarters. When, in 1867, Sayers was forced to sell the estate its subdivision included “a first class villa residence, containing extensive accommodation, and fitted with every family convenience, together with six acres of ground”. Also included were two semi-detached stone villas, two “similarly constructed villas”, four “delightful sites” and five “villa sites” (*SMH*, 6 July 1867, 11).

5.6 GOVERNMENT HOUSING

Middle class semis were not only built by suburban speculators and investors. The government was also responsible for providing housing for its employees, including defence personnel and public servants. In many cases the dwellings provided included semis in the mix. Case Study 9 shows how government architects adhered to the dwelling hierarchy when accommodating lighthouse keepers. The Head Keeper was provided with a detached house, while the Assistant Keepers lived in semis.

In 1896 as part of the development of the Garden Island Naval Base, a pair of semis was built as accommodation for married officers (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: Semis at the Garden Island Naval Base, 1896.



(Naval Historical Society of Australia, Image 8119365-005)

In 1898 Walter Liberty Vernon (by then the Government Architect) designed a pair of semis for staff at Sydney's Botanic Gardens (Figure 5.12). He had recently returned from a study tour of England, which included the model village of Port Sunlight. The staff semis have striking similarities to several pairs he would have seen there, with tile-hanging on the gables and casement windows instead of the usual double-hung windows being used in NSW at that time (Boyd 2010, 445).

Figure 5.12: Staff cottages, Botanic Gardens, W L Vernon, 1898.



(NSW State Records, Series 4346, Image 15, in Boyd 2010, 446).

5.7 HOUSING IN THE REGIONS OF NSW

The research for this study has not identified any Victorian era pairs of cottages built on farms or rural properties in NSW. With ample land, and readily available building materials such as timber and stone, detached housing for farm workers could be provided. Although in Britain purpose-built workers' housing for rural factories and mills tended to be in masonry terraces, in most of regional NSW timber was the dominant building material. Therefore the typical two-roomed workers' cottages were detached, for example the slab-walled two-roomed miners' cottages built in the 1860s at the Cadia Copper Mines, near Orange (Edward Higginbotham 2005a).

However, there are cities, towns and villages in regional NSW with an urban housing mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings, although terraced housing is rare. Timber terraces such as the row of timber terraced houses (now shops) in Collins Street, Kiama, which was built in stages during the 1880s to house quarrymen, are even more scarce. This State-listed terrace is reputed to be the only timber terrace extant in NSW. Regional towns had a limited need for high density living, except where housing density was related to social status as it would have been for quarry labourers.

Those terraces which were constructed tended to be purpose-built by the owner/investor rather than speculative ventures. "Bowen Terrace" in Orange, a row of 12 brick terraced houses, was designed by the town architect John Hale, and built in 1876 for Henry Bowen (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045024). Hale also designed Bowen's detached home, built at the same time.

Dubbo experienced a boom after the arrival of the railway in 1881, which made the town a trading hub in the region. There are only two surviving Victorian terraces in Dubbo (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1520346), both close to the railway station and probably built for railway labourers. Unlike inner Sydney workers' terraces of the same period, the example in Dubbo's Darling Street is short (only three dwellings), and it has substantial side setbacks and room for landscaping (Figure 5.13). Working class tenants in Sydney would have occupied terraced housing, but in rural areas they were able to move up the dwelling hierarchy into small semis designed with setbacks and gardens. Although not built in great numbers, Victorian semis are found in many country towns. For example, the Dubbo example in Figure 5.14 is listed with local heritage significance and it has "special interest as semi-detached" (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1520414).

Figure 5.13: Late Victorian terrace, Dubbo.



Darling Street, Dubbo. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1520346)

Figure 5.14: Single-storey semis, Dubbo, c1870s.



Macleay Street, Dubbo (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1520414)

Semis in the form of two terraced houses are very rare in regional NSW. There is an example in the small town of Uralla, near Armidale (Figure 5.15), which is claimed to be the only pair of semis in the Armidale local government area. This claim is explored further in Case Study 10.

Figure 5.15: Terrace-like semis, Uralla, 1889.



Maitland Street, Uralla. (Google Maps August 2014)

Just as the working classes could occupy small semis rather than terraced houses in regional towns and cities, the lower middle class tenants moved up the dwelling hierarchy from small single-fronted semis to the larger, double-fronted semis which are relatively rare in Sydney and tended to be occupied by more affluent tenants. Double-fronted semis are the most common form of attached housing in the country towns and cities of NSW. Lot sizes in town subdivisions were larger, but savings in materials could still be made by sharing a party wall.

Rather than being purely speculative, many large regional semis tended to be purpose-built for specific tenants. For example, a pair adjacent to the church in Millthorpe was built to house nuns in one side and priests in the other (Figure 2.20).

In 1806 John Macarthur obtained a large grant (Camden Park Estate) on which he and his wife Elizabeth established the colonial wool industry. The Macarthurs built farmhouses as well as conjoined cottages (semis) for convicts. Their mansion was designed by John Verge (see Section 4.10). In 1830 several prominent citizens of the area petitioned the governor to establish a town. Macarthur was requested to surrender 320 acres (129 hectares) of his land for this purpose. He declined to do so, but after his death his sons had the area surveyed and in 1840 offered allotments for sale in a town they named Camden. Control of the layout and ownership of many of the lots were retained by the family, giving the town some of the characteristics of a closed English estate village. The Macarthur-Onslow family later built many cottages, including residences for their senior staff in Camden (Janice Johnson pers. comm. July 2014). Major General James Macarthur-Onslow captained the Camden Squadron of the NSW Mounted Rifles, serving in India and the Boer War, and other family

members and residents of Camden served as officers. James Macarthur built a drill hall in Camden, as well as a pair of semis (now “Brookfield’s House”) for the Non-Commissioned Officers in the Camden Rifles (Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16: Semis built for NCOs of the Camden Rifles, c1897.



Hill Street, Camden (Author 2013)

Camden has only two surviving pairs of Victorian semis (Janice Johnson pers. comm. July 2014). The other pair (now “Mitchell House”, Figure 5.17) was built during the 1870s; the iron lace verandah is probably a later addition. The semis were constructed by the Furner family of builders, possibly for their two sons (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1280069).

Figure 5.17: Semis in Camden, c1870s.



Mitchell Street, Camden. (Author 2013).

5.8 LAND SPECULATION AND SUBDIVISION

In nineteenth century NSW, the most common model for the development of an estate for suburban housing was for a land speculator to subdivide his land, create new roads (usually grids), sell individual freehold lots, and leave the development of dwellings to the individual purchasers, including building speculators (see Section 5.9).³⁷ Therefore, unlike the situation in Britain, where estate owners developed their subdivided estates with rows of identical houses before selling or leasing each building and its land as a package, there was very little architectural consistency within the streetscapes of new housing other than the widespread use of the prevailing fashionable architectural styles of the day. In estates without sewerage, rear lanes provided access to service outside privies. And with few exceptions there was no provision for public open spaces or services.

Increasing populations, the extensions to the railway and tram networks, and the incorporation of municipalities which could manage the local services, made the outer parts of Sydney very attractive to land speculators. Even the rumour of a train extension could spark subdivisions and speculation. As the tram network expanded, more suburbs were opened up to city workers who could commute cheaply. At this time many of the larger estates and villa sites were further subdivided into smaller lots, typically with a 40 foot (12.2 m) frontage but some with as little as 15 feet (4.6m). Some of these estates had remained undeveloped, but on others a colonial villa and/or outbuildings were demolished to make way for the new housing lots. For example in 1881 the Rosedale Estate in Croydon Park was subdivided (Figure 5.18). It was launched by the Australian Mutual Investment and Building Company (a syndicate of investors), in anticipation of a tram service from Ashfield to Enfield. Most of the lots were 33 feet (10m) wide and they sold well based on the rumours of imminent public transport in the area.

The company issued a book of “pattern houses” for which finance would be available to speculators and investors, or indeed the residents themselves if they could afford it. The houses were aimed at “working men, railway employees, and others who desire to acquire a suburban house not too far from Sydney”. There were three variations on the “semi-detached workman’s cottage” (Figure 5.19 shows a one bedroom example), a pair of which using “first class work and best material” could be purchased by an investor for £555; savings could be made by lessening the frontage, using pine in place of cedar and iron in place of slate (Madden and Muir 1988, 9).

³⁷ The Excelsior Land, Investment and Building Company sold house and land packages in Leichhardt during the late nineteenth century.

Figure 5.18: Rosedale Estate Subdivision, 1881.

Rosedale
TO BE SOLD
ON THE ESTATE
ON SATURDAY 10th DECEMBER, 1881 AT 3 PM

ROSEDALE
(Adjoining CROYDON PARK),
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION ON THE ESTATE ON
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, AT 3 P.M.
BY
WATKIN & WATKIN

ROSEDALE CONTAINS AN AREA OF
55½ ACRES

The extensive frontage to the GEORGES RIVER ROAD, to the RURWOOD ROAD (the main road leading from Burwood Station), and to COOKS LANE. The subdivision embraces 570 LOTS, 5000 feet frontage, the MAIN AVENUE, 90 feet wide, the GEORGES RIVER ROAD and RURWOOD ROAD, 60 feet wide; BROADWAY CRESCENTS, upwards of 1000 feet in length, crossing across the Estate, and a BEAUTIFUL SITUATED RESERVATION BEHIND of over 5 Acres, comprising the waste of the River frontage, thus securing for all time a home to the resident of this Estate.

Call and get the Perspective, a beautiful picture, showing the surroundings of this Estate.

NOVEL TERMS!
The Maximum Deposit is fixed at the low rate of 40/- per Lot, no matter what the consideration. The Maximum Monthly Payment is fixed at the Low Rate of 10/- per Lot, so that, in effect, the larger the purchase, the longer the term, with interest 6 per cent., calculated on the monthly balance owing.

TORRENS' TITLE.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR
INSPECTION
DURING 7 DAYS PRECEDING SALE!!!

UPWARDS OF 9500 FT.
FRONTAGE TO WIDE ROADS.

ROSEDALE CONSISTING OF 55½ ACRES

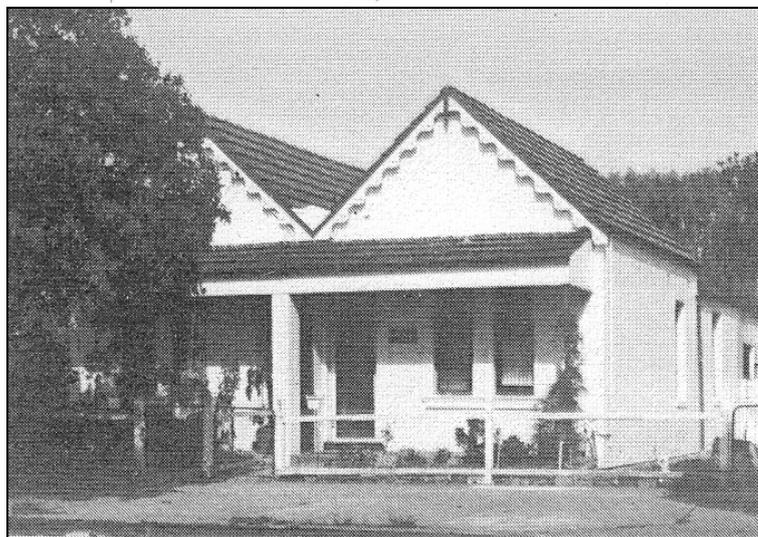
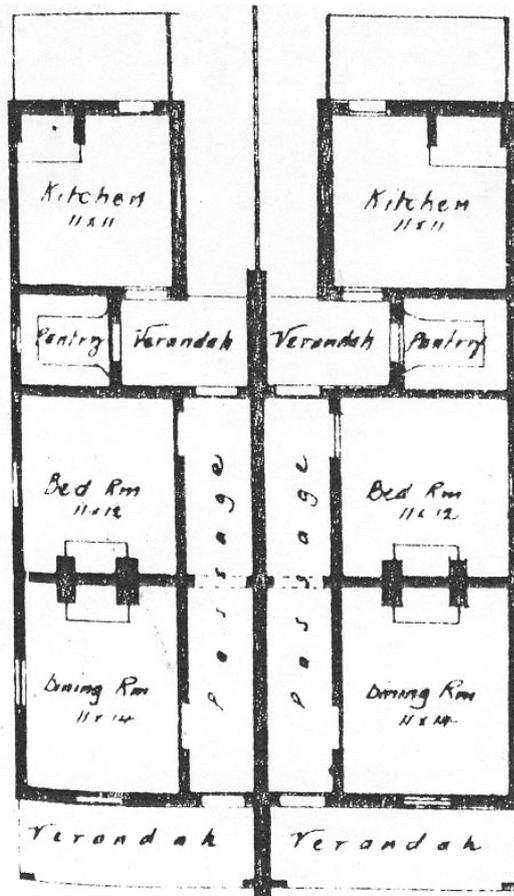
BY **WATKIN & WATKIN**

T. S. PARROTT.
CIVIL ENGINEER &
SURVEYOR.
65 PITT ST.
SYDNEY.

TORRENS TITLE. NOVEL AND LIBERAL TERMS,
only £3 deposit per lot, monthly payments only 10/- per lot

(NLA Map Collection LSFP680)

Figure 5.19: Pattern book semis for investors, Rosedale Estate, 1881.



Windsor Avenue, Croydon Park. Floor plan from the pattern book, and an example actually built in 1893. (Madden and Muir 1988, 17)

Some estates were targeted at middle class residents, others such as Paddington's Underwood Estate subdivision in 1886 contained some lots only 15 feet (4.6m) wide (Figure 5.20). Case Study 6 provides a more detailed example of speculative subdivisions in Paddington.

Figure 5.20: Underwood Estate, Paddington, 1886.



(NLA Map Collection LFSP2040)

Land subdivision was "little more than a gamble, in which profit, not housing needs, was the first consideration" (Birch and Macmillan 1962, 237). Many speculators made fortunes, while others suffered financial loss, especially those who were not experienced. For example, the Headmaster of Hurlstone College at Ashfield was a land speculator on the side. He purchased 53 acres (21.4 hectares) on Bexley Road in anticipation of the tram extension to Canterbury, but was bankrupted when the public transport failed to materialise quickly enough (Madden and Muir 1988, 17).

The first ferry service to the north shore of the harbour was introduced in 1871 by Richard Harnett Snr (*SMH*, 18 November 1902, 5) who also ran two horse-drawn bus services. The ferries and buses provided access to his land on the north shore, which he gradually subdivided. Although he suffered bankruptcy and setbacks, he subdivided most of the suburb of Mosman. Like many other speculators, realising that real estate syndicates were a way to share the risks (and profits) he formed a partnership with Alexander Stuart, a financier and politician.

A visit to Australia in 1890 by an American, Henry George, was to change the land speculation landscape. He argued persuasively for a tax on unimproved land – a single tax which would allow for a more equitable distribution of the value inherent in land. Such a tax was expected to force landowners to better utilise their holdings, or sell some of it, thus lowering land prices. Land tax was introduced into NSW by the *Land and Income Tax Assessment Act 1895* and provided another incentive to subdivide and develop the speculative land holdings in the suburbs.

5.9 BUILDING SPECULATION

A typical suburban Sydney street during the late nineteenth century contained many buildings, each constructed by a different builder. The buildings were a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraces, the weighting of each depending on the area and the class of anticipated residents. Some speculative builders had multiple land holdings within a subdivision, but even though their buildings often shared common features and styles, those buildings tended to be scattered rather than dominating one streetscape. This breaking of the nexus between land speculator/subdivider and building speculator has created suburbs and streetscapes which contain a great variety within the housing stock. This stands in stark contrast to the byelaw streets of Britain.

Speculative building reached a peak during the 1880s boom, and with quantity came variable quality. The *NSW Width of Streets and Lanes Act 1881* made the minimum lot size in a subdivision one-tenth of an acre, but this did not prevent a speculator buying multiple lots on which to build poor quality, high density attached housing. As a result, new colonial and municipal regulations were gradually introduced.

5.10 THE OWNERSHIP OF ATTACHED HOUSING

Terraces and pairs of semis were all products of investors or the speculative builders, who then on-sold them to investors. With few exceptions, the owners did not occupy attached dwellings. The buildings were owned together with the freehold of the land on which the building was located. The British custom of selling long-term leases (usually 99 years) for individual dwellings while the land containing the building remained in the investor's ownership was not adopted in NSW. There were some long-term leases in Paddington and Glebe, but these were for land, not dwellings. Speculative detached houses could be sold to owner/occupiers or to investors who were seeking rental income. However, at that time an investor had to buy a whole terrace, or both semis – subdivision into individual titles for each dwelling was not possible until 1920 (see Section 7.3). This meant that virtually all attached housing was for the rental market.³⁸

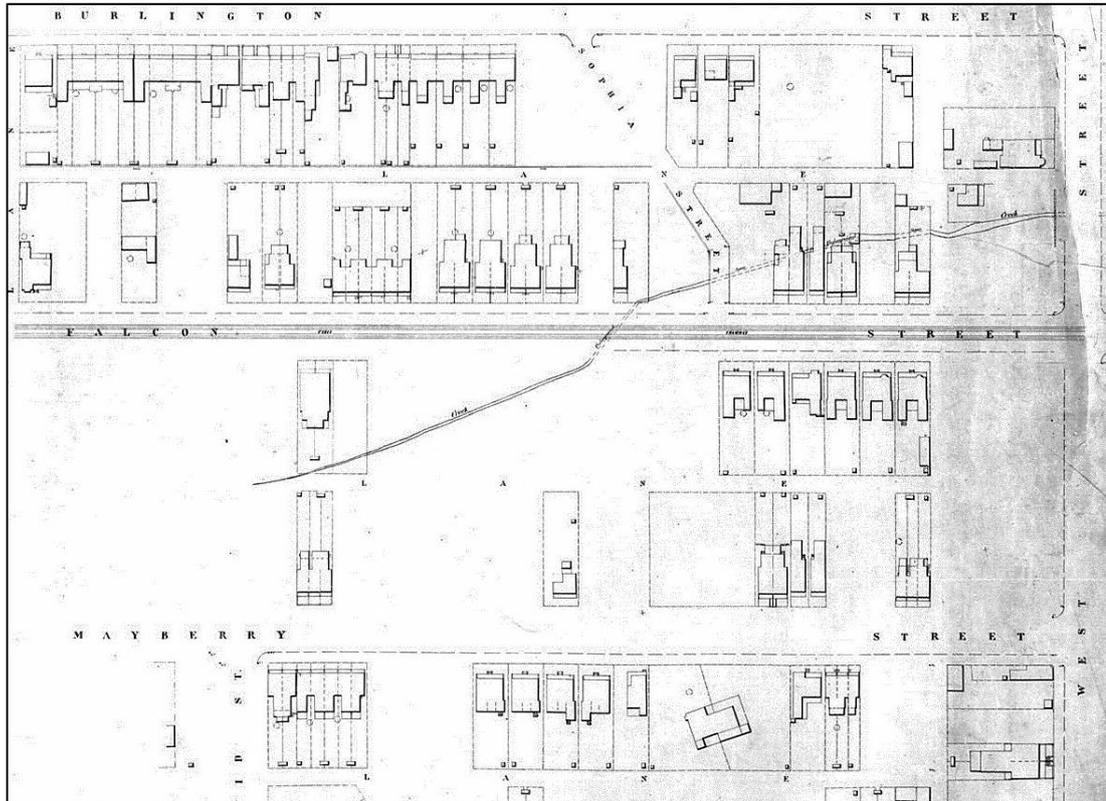
The distinction between the *building* containing terraced houses or semis, and the *individual dwellings* in such buildings is important. Not only did a title deed (both Torrens and Old System) refer to the ownership of the land containing the *building* rather than an *individual dwelling*, but any building and planning regulations also applied only to the whole *building*.

Land containing a detached house (even one abutting its neighbours) could be conveyed to a new owner at any time. Until 1920 land containing an individual terraced house or one semi could not, even if that land had previously comprised one lot in a subdivision. Only the land containing the whole building could be bought and sold, as one parcel. Typical investors who owned a pair of semis included widows and spinsters, for whom the rentals were a respectable middle class form of income. Semis attracted higher rentals than terraced houses in the same area. A terrace, with more dwellings (and covering more land) was usually more expensive to buy and maintain, and tended to be owned by professional investors, many of whom became slum landlords as their terraces deteriorated.

A North Sydney suburban area (Figure 5.21) provides a typical example of the dwelling mix. It has a grid layout of streets, and in 1890 was only partially developed. Some lots (and groups of lots) contain detached houses (small and large), in a variety of forms which suggests their development by individual owners. There are short rows of identical detached dwellings which indicate the involvement of speculative builders or investors. There are long and short terraces. The semis include standalone pairs on single lots and some rows of identical semi pairs.

³⁸ In rare cases owners lived in one terraced house in a row, or one semi in a pair and derived income from the other dwelling/s.

Figure 5.21: Typical suburban housing development in North Sydney, 1890.



(North Sydney Council, Block Plan No 68)

The block plans such as Figure 5.21 show the fences which divide each dwelling from its neighbour, including the divisions between the back yards of the dwellings within a row of terraced houses. For a detached dwelling on an individual lot, the boundary fencing will also be the boundary of the land shown on the title deed of the property. For attached dwellings, as discussed above, the *whole building* was under one title, although individual tenancies were indicated by the fence-lines on a block plan. Therefore the dividing fences on the block plans do not indicate subdivisions of land.

The current confusion between the fence-lines on nineteenth century survey plans and block plans, and the actual boundaries of a property containing a terrace or a pair of semis, as shown on a title deed, has clouded the issues surrounding the ownership of attached housing. Importantly, it has diminished the understanding of the highly significant *de facto* subdivision clause in the *Local Government Act 1919* which used the fence-lines as a basis for subdividing a building into individual titles (see Section 7.3).

5.11 CONCLUSIONS

After the depression of the 1840s the colony diversified into pastoralism, mining and urban services, all based on capitalist foundations. The balance of power moved from the elite to “urban mercantile capital and urban liberal democratic reformers” (Lloyd 2005, 11). During this period the various class distinctions were made more obvious by the physical separation of the working class areas in the city and the middle class suburbs.

As Sydney developed, the wealthy residents gradually moved out to the suburbs and their houses were subdivided. This process has been described as the “filtering down” of dwellings, where they are occupied by people lower and lower down the socioeconomic scale (Roseth 1969, 7-18). Even some members of the working classes who became wealthy during the boom times shifted from the grimy, overcrowded inner city to the outskirts. Some also purchased or were granted land in rural NSW as the wool boom continued.

Yet despite the boom times generated by the gold rushes and the thriving wool industry, the housing conditions for labourers in the city remained dire. The Sydney City Council continued to come under criticism for the “sanitary state” of the city in the mid-nineteenth century.

Something must be done immediately for the removal and suppression of filth and nuisance which must, if allowed to continue in existence, plunge this city into plague and pestilence. (*Freeman's Journal*, 5 December 1850, 7)

A social survey carried out by the British political economist Stanley W Jevons in 1858 described the tiny two-roomed cottages as “a shocking sight...quite uniform and uniformly abominable throughout” (*Dictionary of Sydney*, Chippendale). In 1860 a Parliamentary Select Committee reported on the *Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis*. It embraced the prevailing Victorian views of the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor.

A large number of persons belonging to the working classes are at present, and have been for some time past, suffering much distress from want of employment. In too many instances this is attributable to intemperance or improvidence on the part of the sufferers; but supposing these cases to be undeserving of or beyond relief, there are still left several distinct forms of distress, arising from want of employment, which cannot be so easily explained, and ought not to be found in a well-ordered and progressive state of society. (*SMH*, 19 April 1860, 3)

The Chairman of the Committee reported that:

The housing accommodation of the working classes of Sydney is admitted on all hands to be deplorably bad; even in the more recently erected dwellings the means of drainage and ventilation are almost entirely neglected, and many of the older tenements are so unfit for the occupation of human beings, that one witness declares them to be “past remedy without a general fire”. (*SMH*, 19 April 1860, 3)

Artisans were in general considered to be “deserving” of better housing. Many were able to move to the inner city terraced housing (including pairs of terrace-like semis) left behind by the middle classes moving to the suburbs, or to new terraces in the suburbs. Some were even prosperous enough to build their own small detached cottages in the suburbs, usually close to transport hubs and shopping areas. In country towns, the double cottages which had been promoted with such limited success in British urban areas became achievable for the artisans of the working class. They also became popular for speculative builders and investors, who rarely needed to build the urban terraced form in order to achieve their returns on capital.

The middle classes were moving to the suburbs and towns where, unlike the English suburbs, land was relatively cheap and plentiful. Large and small detached villas and houses became the norm for middle class housing, although the better quality terraces continued to provide comfortable rental housing in the city itself, away from the docks and industrial areas. The separation of the classes gathered momentum with the introduction of train networks from the late 1850s.

Three factors which contributed to changes in housing and housing provision in NSW during the second half of the nineteenth century were the creation of large housing markets, the growing role of the state, and the use of land and houses as a means of transferring wealth (Paris 1993, 9).

By the 1890s only a quarter of Sydney’s population lived in the inner city, and the expansion of the suburbs had been curtailed only by the depression. Rows of terraced houses and pairs of semis constructed prior to the turn of the century were mostly built within the inner city where their occupants walked to work, or in the middle ring of suburbia after tram and train networks were developed. Some semis but very few terraces were built in country towns. Both dwelling types were constructed by speculators or investors for the rental market. The preference for detached dwellings in their own suburban gardens was reflected in the spread of Sydney – before the end of the century Sydney (as well as Melbourne) had consumed more land than any city in Britain or North America, except Chicago (Freestone 1989, 42).

Although local municipalities were formed during the 1850s and 1860s, government regulations, such as there were, continued to have very little impact on the development of suburban housing. As Sydney expanded, overcrowding and exploitation became common even in newer working class areas. Water supplies and waste disposal were inadequate. By the 1880s urban problems were being recognised and reform bodies were generating interest in model dwellings and suburbs. At first there had been the hope that the philanthropists might provide a solution to substandard housing, but even the most generous philanthropist was faced with the economic realities of inner city land values. When seeking investors in the proposed schemes, or even interest in meetings to discuss the issues, proponents of the model dwelling movement were also faced with the prevailing Victorian attitudes towards poverty – that poverty was a “failure of will” of the poor themselves. Although some poverty could be helped, the other types were “culpable”, which led to a focus on artisans who were more “deserving” of improved housing (Gunnell 2009).

The government’s *laissez faire* approach to social issues, including housing the working classes, was breaking down. The authorities became more actively involved in the regulation of working class housing as health concerns grew. Some slum areas were resumed and cleared, yet the slums persisted elsewhere. Trade unionists, socialists and working class people turned to politics to give the workers a voice in relation to their housing. The Labor Electoral League of NSW (later known as the Australian Labor Party) won 35 of the 141 seats in the NSW parliament at the 1891 state election, the same year that the census recorded that almost half of Sydney’s dwellings were terraced houses. The terraced form of housing was not inherently unhealthy, yet by being overcrowded, poorly served by utilities such as sewers, and populated by the lower classes, it had become inextricably linked to slums.

As the new century progressed, the Labor Party played an important role in providing some working class people with affordable dwellings in the suburbs. And semis, which for a century had been recommended in the pattern books as ideal dwellings for labourers, for the first time formed an important part of that affordable housing mix in NSW. Separately, the Federation of the Australian colonies on 1 January 1901 created an outpouring of nationalistic fervour, which was reflected in the suburban housing styles. The stage was set for the semi to find its niche and become an integral part of suburban NSW.

6.0 THE FEDERATION PERIOD – 1901 TO 1918

6.1 INTRODUCTION

During the nineteenth century industries spread to the west and the south of the City of Sydney, accompanied by transport routes (rail, road and sometimes water) and housing for the workers involved in those industries. The eastern suburbs, the northern beachside suburbs through Mosman and Manly, and the suburbs along the north shore railway line tended to be less industrial and therefore more attractive to the social elites. Even people of more modest means, with social aspirations, could afford to move to the more attractive suburbs after the introduction of tram networks and the concomitant speculative building booms. Table 3 shows the composition of dwellings in NSW in 1901.

Table 3: Dwelling Counts and Materials Used, NSW, 1901.

Wood, Iron, Lath and Plaster, Slab	150,814
Stone, Brick, Concrete etc	105,197
Calico, Canvas, Tents etc	8,874
Not specified	3,886
Total Dwellings	268,771

(Census 1901)

In 1901 the population of NSW was 1,354,846 (Census 1901). Of these people, more than one million were born in Australia. At the end of 1900 the estimated population of the City of Sydney was 98,750 (City of Sydney Minutes 1900, 257). The 1911 census (the first that measured tenancy) indicated that 68% of households in greater Sydney rented their home. The majority of those tenants lived in terraced houses and semis.

As the Australian identity grew, so did a patriotism surrounding the 1901 Federation of the Australian colonies. One of the manifestations of this was the desire to develop a uniquely Australian architectural style. The nascent Queen Anne style inspired by Bedford Park and imported into NSW by architects such as Walter Liberty Vernon was soon adapted for local conditions. Later dubbed the Federation style (see Section 2.7), it was widely used in both

small and large dwellings, quickly replacing the Victorian styles and any remnant Georgian features.

Federation dwellings often displayed Australiana motifs (such as native flora, fauna and the rising sun) on gables, ventilators, leadlight windows and door panels. Semis rely very much on superficial ornamentation for their architectural character, and provide some excellent depictions of the prevailing nationalism. For example, three pairs of Federation semis in Haberfield display the Australian coat of arms and “Advance Australia” (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Australiana motifs on Federation semis.



Ramsay Street, Haberfield (Google Maps, June 2014)

The overt nationalism surrounding Federation continued during the First World War, when for the first time Australians fought under the national flag. The casualties suffered during that war, in addition to the men lost fighting the Boers in South Africa (1899-1902) created an imbalance in the numbers of men and women in NSW. Many of the middle class widows and unmarried women (spinsters) who required a respectable income turned to the ownership of Federation semis (see Case Study 11).

Meanwhile, by the turn of the twentieth century the living conditions for Sydney’s labouring class remained dire. Over 35% of all inner city dwellings were “dilapidated, unsanitary and unfit for human habitation” (Kelly 1981, 2). Despite the lobbying of philanthropists, charities, unions and the workers themselves, housing reform consisted mostly of calls for stricter building regulations and cheap suburban transport (Freestone 1989, 49). This was in stark

contrast to the active interventions by several British local authorities, commencing during the late nineteenth century, where blocks of council-owned tenements for working class tenants had been constructed. As commercial and social pressures to clear slum areas grew, an outbreak of the bubonic plague in 1900 was a convenient catalyst for the State Government to resume properties, to demolish most of the colonial dwellings and to rehouse some of the workers in new tenement housing. This was the first public housing in NSW (see Section 6.10).

However, government housing policy in NSW continued to be mostly “dictated from within a laissez-faire liberal framework in which housing provision was best left to the operations of market forces” (Volke 2006, 1). In 1909 the Royal Commission for the Improvement of the City of Sydney and its Suburbs recommended that workmen’s houses should be built by the state in the suburbs, but the conservative government was not willing to adopt this policy. It was the creation of the Australian Labor Party as the political wing of the labour movement, and its electoral success in NSW in late 1910, which fundamentally changed the government’s “hands off” liberal approach to intervention in housing the working classes.

The introduction of reticulated water and gas, sewerage systems and electricity facilitated the growth of Federation suburbs without further compromising health standards. Modern materials including masonite, fibrolite (“fibro”), plywood, malthoid, structural glass, rubber and terrazzo, as well as cheap cement and mass produced bricks, made housing construction less costly. The early twentieth century also saw many technological innovations such as the cinema, the wireless and, with significant impact on dwellings and subdivisions, the motor car. The first car drove on Sydney streets in 1900 and by 1922 there were 78,000 cars in Australia (*Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1923). Prior to the First World War domestic servants remained part of many upper middle class households, although the provision for servants in most middle class housing was declining.

After the 1890s financial crash, building society activity had waned, with only the State Savings Banks bridging the financial gap (Freestone 1989, 175). However, as the economic conditions improved, finance became more readily available (see Section 7.7).

6.2 PATTERN BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

By the early twentieth century, the influence of pattern books in Britain had diminished as most speculative builders adopted the standard byelaw terraced house or semi. However, several influential authors released books about small cottages. The architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin published *The Art of Building a Home* in 1901, arguing for fewer but larger rooms, and applying the Arts and Crafts principles to small dwellings. Unwin, Parker and other designers such as Maurice B Adams, whose *Modern Cottage Architecture* (1904) included his designs for Port Sunlight and Bedford Park, were to have a lasting influence on

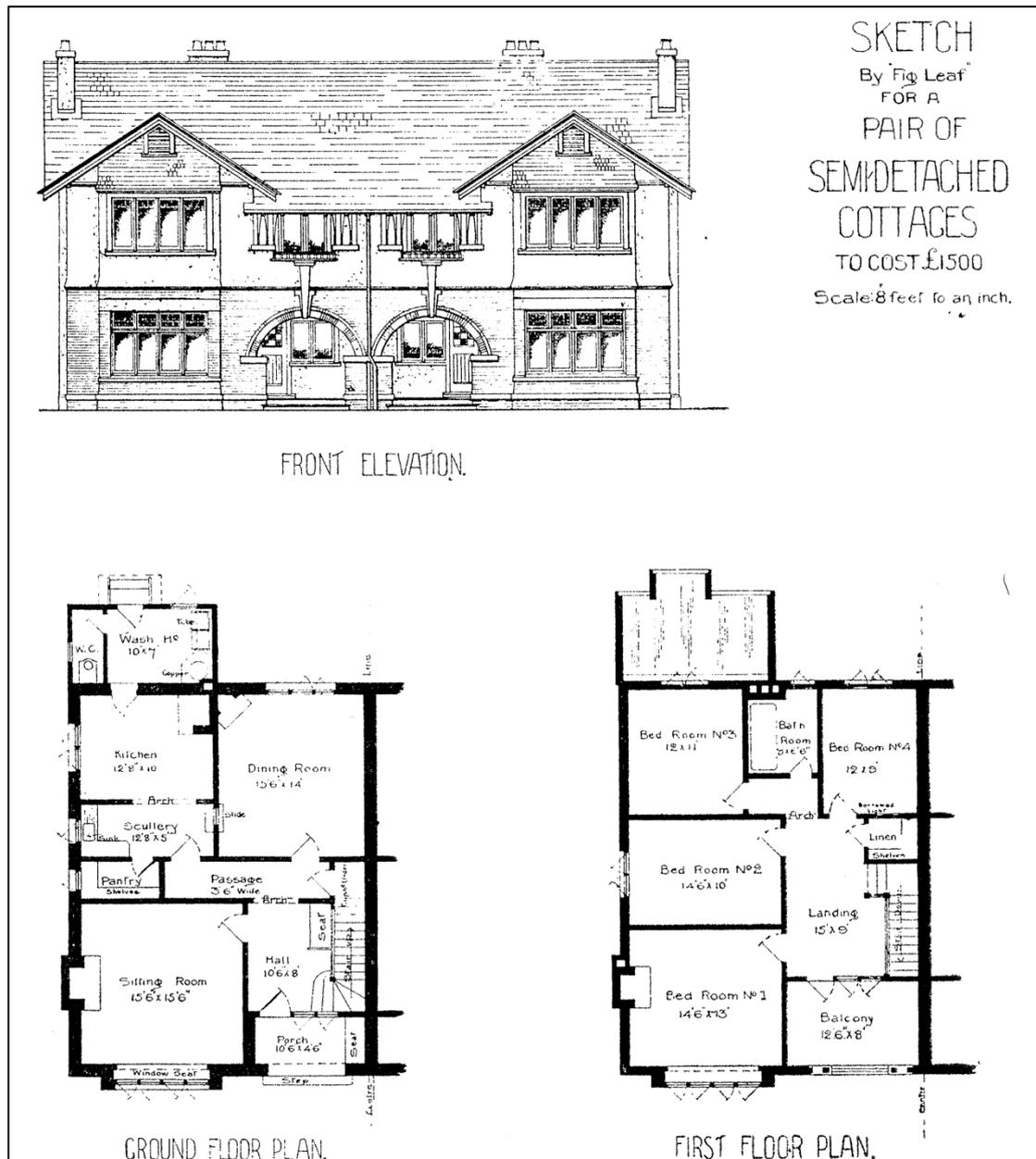
designs through the Garden City Movement. The designs for Letchworth Garden City were published in London and “were available in public libraries in Australia almost immediately” (Boyd 2010, 22).

Pattern books continued to be published in Australia during the Federation period, mostly featuring designs by architects. For example, Robert Haddon's *Australian Architecture* (1913) described itself on the cover page as a “Technical Manual for all those engaged in Architectural and Building Work”. An architect, Haddon was of the view that the technical books from England and America did not cater for the special needs of Australia. He provided designs for small and large houses, commercial buildings (shops, hotels, banks) and miscellaneous buildings such as shearing sheds. The architect Reginald A Prevost in 1914 published *Australian Bungalow and Cottage Home Designs*. Neither of these books included semis. Yet despite the obvious focus on detached housing in books targeted at the home owner, speculative builders also had access to some pattern books containing more modest dwellings. For example, the American *New Duplex Book* (undated) was in the Wunderlich Limited collection, and later owned by an architect in Coogee.³⁹ This book contains designs for pairs of dwellings (duplexes) sharing a party wall, which are better known in NSW as semis.

One of the most influential sources of information about building construction and housing, as well as dwelling designs and styles, was *Building* magazine, published in various guises from 1907 until 1972. Its founders were a high profile couple; George Taylor, a builder, inventor and cartoonist, and his wife Florence, the first woman in Australia to qualify as an architect. While publishing opinion pieces on a wide variety of topics, they also included designs for small dwellings, including many semis. These designs were often reprinted from British or American magazines and books, and even from New Zealand (Figure 6.2).

³⁹ This book is now in the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Sydney Living Museums.

Figure 6.2: Sketch for a pair of semi-detached cottages, 1911.



Design for the "competition for turning a cottage into a house". (*Building* 11 November 1911, 68)

6.3 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1906

The first local government entities in NSW were created as a means by which the Colonial government could force communities to provide their own services. When representative government was established in 1842, several district councils were also formed, each with the ability to make byelaws. This proved to be an ineffective structure, and the *Municipalities Act 1858* was introduced to make it possible for residents to petition for their own municipality. These new local councils had almost no control over building standards.

Town planning was in its infancy in NSW during the Federation period. In 1906 the first *Local Government Act* was passed, coming into effect in 1907. The whole State was divided into 193 municipalities and 134 shires.⁴⁰ Ordinance No 70 which was attached to the Act came into force in early 1909. This contained the regulations under the Act. It stopped short of explicit town planning objectives but gave local councils control over building heights, design, structure, materials, building lines, sanitation, the proportion of a lot which could be covered by a building and the subdivision of land. Although they had rarely used the provisions, local authorities were no longer able to make their own byelaws or ordinances; henceforth they developed their own building and subdivision regulations within the Act. It was said that “the happy days of the greedy land speculator ended with the year 1906” (*SMH*, 16 March 1922, 7).

Local municipal councils became the approval authority for all new buildings and subdivisions. For the first time a formal building application and detailed plans and specifications of a proposed building had to be submitted for approval before its construction. Ordinance No 70 also required “due ways of access to the rear as well as to the front of a building” (Part B, Clause 8). Importantly for terraced housing, this applied to the *building*, not an individual terraced house. All that was required to comply with this regulation was to leave a side setback, wide enough to allow access, at one or both ends of a terrace building.

6.4 COVENANTS

Another instrument which was influential in controlling the development of housing in the suburbs was the covenant, a legal restriction placed on the title to a parcel of land. In London covenants had been used to control the social mix of a new estate. For example, the Eastbury Estate in 1887 offered building lots which specified that some houses must cost at least £750 and “at the other end of the social scale” was an area for houses costing not less than £120. In 1909 the prospectus for a new estate at Ruislip was even more explicit about its social aims:

Ruislip Manor Limited aims at introducing all classes into the community...but it is not intended to indiscriminately mix all classes and sizes of housing, however (cited in Edwards and Pigram 1986, 11).

In NSW covenants were typically used to control the building type and the materials to be used (as well as some controls on the cost) thereby only indirectly influencing the class of resident. For example, the creation of Centennial Park was partly funded by the sale of part of the common land. In October 1905, an allocation of 193 acres (78.1 hectares) of common land was approved for subdivision (LPI Vol 1641 Fol 211). The resulting residential lots along

⁴⁰ There are currently 152 municipalities in NSW.

Lang and Martin Roads were released in 1906. Each lot carried strict covenants, specifying that the owner could not erect a terrace building, wooden buildings, commercial buildings or more than one dwelling on each lot. The latter, of course, ruled out semis. All buildings were to be constructed of brick and/or stone with a slate or tiled roof, and had to cost at least £625. No building was to be erected for purposes other than a dwelling, especially no hotels, stores or dairies. The result was an area containing high quality, architect-designed, large, detached residences (Tropman and Tropman Architects 1995, 51). The covenants were less restrictive one street away from the park; they allowed not more than one detached dwelling or two semi-detached dwellings per lot. However, the minimum specified cost of £15 per foot of frontage for semis ensured that they too were of a high quality (such as Figure 6.3). Ironically, the semis in Figure 6.3 are now surrounded by high-rise blocks of flats.

Figure 6.3: Federation semis, Centennial Park, 1910.



Cook Street, Centennial Park (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 2420593)

In Haberfield Garden Suburb (see Section 6.9) covenants on the land titles for each lot ensured adherence to minimum sized houses, contained a ban on terraces and specified appropriate building materials (no weatherboards allowed). The Dobroyde Estate subdivision, adjacent to the Haberfield Estate, had no covenants; it has a housing mix including semis and weatherboard houses.

The new model suburb of Malvern Hill in Croydon was the first developed with Burwood Municipal Council as the consent authority under the *Local Government Act 1906*. In his Report for 1909 the Mayor announced:

A very important extension of settlement on what is known as the Malvern Hill Estate has taken place during the past year. This portion of our municipality is likely to become a first-class residential area, and a good example of the benefits conferred on councils under the Local Government Act with regard to new roads and subdivisions of land as compared with the go-as-you-please style obtaining under the old Municipalities Act and from which this and other areas are suffering and will suffer for many years to come. (Burwood Local Studies Library Collection)

Malvern Hill's streets were at least 20m wide and planted with palms. Covenants excluded both semi-detached and terraced houses.

6.5 SLUM CLEARANCES

During the late nineteenth century there was significant urban reform in Sydney relating to sewerage and drainage, water supply, pollution control, public transport, local government, civic beautification, the lighting and sealing of streets, and the provision of open spaces. A major focus of these initiatives was slum eradication and prevention. The reform agenda was dominated by the middle classes, who wished to remove the symptoms rather than solve the underlying social problems of slums and unemployment. Most of the commentary focussed on the slums themselves being the cause of ill-health, immorality and discontent (Freestone 1989, 47). Private development by speculative builders, investors and often the occupants themselves, with no planning controls, had led inevitably to slums in areas with high densities of working class housing. The characteristics of slums were:

- A pattern of streets and associated lanes, alleys and dead ends that was chaotic at worst or bleak gridiron at best;
- Pocket handkerchief allotments, negligible garden and yard space and relatively high housing densities;
- Narrow fronted terraces and row houses (mostly jerry built);
- Overcrowding in small, poorly lit and poorly ventilated rooms;
- Lack of bathrooms, laundries, drainage;
- Housing interspersed with factories and workshops;
- Absence of trees and green open spaces. (Freestone 1989, 48)

Yet despite the rhetoric about slums, until 1900 little could be done to remove the sub-standard buildings. In December 1899 there were seven reported deaths in the inner city

from “miasmatic diseases” (influenza and typhoid) (City of Sydney Minutes 1899, 96) but in February 1900 the first cases of bubonic plague were recorded in the city. From March to May there were 15 recorded deaths from the plague, with no more deaths after May.⁴¹ In the Town Clerk’s Annual Report at the end of 1900, he suggested that:

The greatest blessing that ever came to Sydney, viewed from the standpoint of the future welfare of our City, was the Bubonic Plague, which broke out in February (City of Sydney Minutes 1900, 3).

This was because the State Government was at last being forced to clean up the wharves and waterfront areas under its control. The Council too, using powers under the *Public Health Act 1896*, embarked on a program of cleansing and disinfecting properties, plus other measures such as attempting to force connections to the sewerage system and requiring dilapidated dwellings to be repaired. Despite the insignificant number of deaths, the emotive response to the plague was sufficient reason to push for resumptions and clearances as the best solution to prevent future outbreaks.

In his report for the year 1900, supplemented by a map of the proposed resumption areas, the City Surveyor stated:

In my Annual Report of 1894, I strongly urged the resumption of that portion of the City known as the “Rocks”...these streets were proclaimed in impossible directions and irregular widths...and can only be removed by a comprehensive resumption. The recent outbreak of the plague has fully confirmed the wisdom of my advice (City of Sydney Minutes 1900, 176).

In his report he also raised:

... the question of the erection of workmen’s dwellings, tenements, and lodging houses, with a view to providing more suitable, healthy, and convenient domiciles for the poor, a matter which has been so successfully engaging the attention and activity of the Municipal Governments of the larger cities of England, and Scotland, and latterly in America, and to which attention has been drawn in previous reports.

It is a matter fraught with many possibilities of success, and in the undertaking of such desirable works much might be done to rid the City of many of its slums and alleys, and providing the more densely populated portions of the City with light and

⁴¹ There was only one death in The Rocks.

air, and so generally raise the tone of those areas that might even become desirable situations for dwellings. (City of Sydney Minutes 1900, 189)

The City Health Officer suggested several courses of action, including provisions for proper lighting and ventilation:

We have back-to-back houses already in Sydney as a consequence of the absence of indispensably compulsory rules of this kind. We do not want any more buildings of this dangerous class. (City of Sydney Minutes 1900, 223-4)

In late 1900 the State Government announced a scheme to resume and redevelop The Rocks and Millers Point (see Section 6.10). This specified that:

Rookeries dating from the early days of the colony, irregular streets, narrow alleys, and crowded neighbourhoods should be swept away under the provisions of the scheme. We may hope to see, following the example of the improvements made by the London County Council, new thoroughfares or at least wider and straighter ones driven through this congested area, and green reserved spaces occupying the place of these crowded corners. (*SMH*, 3 November 1900, 8)

Not all of the resumed dwellings were dilapidated terraced houses. For example, Windmill Street in Millers Point had a mix of small, detached, single story dwellings and several pairs of single-storey semis. The roofs were in good condition and the road was not particularly narrow. It appears that rising damp was the only major problem justifying clearance (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4: Slum dwellings awaiting demolition, Millers Point.



Windmill Street, Millers Point. A mix of detached cottages and semis. Photographed in 1900. (State Records Image 4481_a026_000079)

Other areas seen as slums in the inner city of Sydney included Darling Harbour, Ultimo, Chippendale and Redfern. These too had areas which were systematically resumed and redeveloped, usually with warehouses and commercial buildings⁴² rather than new dwellings.

6.6 WORKING CLASS HOUSING

In the early 1900s the City of Sydney Council drafted a Bill for the "Better Housing of the Working Classes in the City of Sydney" and lobbied the State Government to consider it. They also lobbied for a new *Building Act*. The Mayor noted in his 1902 Annual Report:

Portions of the City are so densely inhabited as to be highly injurious to the moral and physical welfare of the inhabitants. (City of Sydney Minutes 1902, 29)

However, it was not until 1906 that many of the City Council's recommendations were incorporated into the *Local Government Act*.

The housing and model villages being built for the working classes in Britain by the philanthropists, reformers and the government were well understood in NSW. For example the prominent campaigner Rev F B Boyce, a rector in Redfern, spent a year in England visiting housing schemes and model dwellings for the working classes (*SMH*, 15 January 1900, 3). Like many campaigners of the Federation period he recognised that the same financial constraints applied in Sydney as in London. Flats (tenements) were the only dwelling form which could provide new housing at affordable rents in the inner city, despite their perceived disadvantages compared to detached housing. Other campaigners continued to hope that the workers could move to a cottage in the suburbs.

A garden in front of the cottage, and a plot of ground of respectable dimensions behind it, belong as a matter of course to the Australian workman's dwelling. It has been said that the workman is able, if he wishes, to live within comfortable walking distance of his work. The tendency of the Australian middle class is still to occupy the more distant suburbs, so that the suburbs of an Australian city nearest to the actual city area will usually be found in the occupation of the humbler classes.

But should the workman choose to rent a cottage a few miles out of the city, he is admirably served by tram and train, or by a cheap and rapid ferry-boat service (Buley 1905, 109).

The City of Sydney was outside the jurisdiction of the *Local Government Act 1906*; instead its housing was regulated by its *Building Act*. The Royal Commission for the Improvement of the

⁴² And sometimes for new or widened roads.

City of Sydney and its Suburbs was set up in May 1908. Its brief was to research the activities surrounding slum demolition, the housing of the working classes, town planning and the general beautification and adornment of the city (Royal Commission Ch I, xxi). When the Royal Commission reported in May 1909, a new *Building Act* (along the lines of a draft already prepared) was recommended as an immediate necessity, to “secure unity of purpose and harmony of design in our architecture”, with provision also to “minimise fire risks arising from the overcrowding of building areas, the absence of fire breaks and proper means of access” (Royal Commission 1909, Ch I, xxi).

It was also recommended that local authorities have full powers to resume and remodel slum areas, and to prevent by regulations the growth of fresh slums in their district. In addition, local authorities would have the power to acquire land for the provision of workmen’s dwellings, and to “provide by regulation for the erection of such dwellings on approved hygienic lines”. It was noted that while the City Council was opening up and demolishing unsanitary areas in the city, the “creation of fresh slums goes on apace in the suburbs” (Royal Commission 1909, Ch IV, xxvii). While the city contained 45 people per acre, Redfern and Paddington each had 55, Newtown 59 and Darlington 77 to the acre (Royal Commission 1909, Ch IV, xxviii). The South Australian capital, Adelaide, was a planned city with a population density of only 10.9 people per acre. After reviewing the working class tenements of London and Germany, the Commissioners stated:

We do not think that the tenement or flat system of housing would meet the requirements of Australian workmen, and we recommend that, on social and hygienic grounds, workmen should be encouraged to live in separate houses in the suburbs (Royal Commission 1909, Ch IV, xxxviii).

They recognised that waterside workers would need to remain close to the wharves and that “special provision should be made in or near the city” (Royal Commission 1909, Ch IV, xxviii).

The Lord Mayor subsequently announced a policy to “continue in the work of slum elimination until half the residential population of the city is removed to the suburbs” (*Building* 12 November 1912, 141). In reality, slum clearances usually created even more overcrowding in existing slums rather than rehousing working class tenants in the suburbs, with the exception of several public housing schemes (see Section 6.10). Despite the wide-ranging scope of the Royal Commission, its report was accepted, then widely ignored. It was not until major amendments were made to the *Local Government Act* in 1919 (see Section 7.2) that many of its recommendations were adopted.

6.7 THE DECLINE OF THE TERRACE AND THE RISE OF THE SEMI

During the nineteenth century the terrace was the dominant dwelling form in the colony, housing both the working classes and the middle classes in the city. Detached dwellings on the outskirts of the city tended to be limited to the wealthy. This gradually changed as the middle classes and skilled artisans moved to the burgeoning suburbs, initially into larger terraces and later into detached or semi-detached dwellings. This migration was facilitated by the expansion of the railway, tram and ferry networks and the plentiful land outside the city on which to develop low density housing.

The predominance of terraces within the slum areas of the inner city, and the positive correlation between plague outbreaks and slums, gave rise to negative attitudes towards terraced housing. This led to the decline of suburbs such as Paddington which had very few dwellings other than terraced houses. Even though many large terraces were in middle class areas rather than slums, the taint of the terrace was sufficient to make them unattractive to tenants everywhere. The situation was summed up by John Roseth:

What really helped to push Paddington into decline was the general disfavour into which the terrace house had fallen during the early decades of this century. The ownership of a cottage had become everyone's ideal; large gardens and ample space were the qualities wanted in a home. Terrace houses, even in suburbs like Waverley and Randwick where they were in the minority, were left to decay while the detached cottages around them remained in good condition. (Roseth 1969, 72)

Terraces became synonymous with the very poor, who had no alternative but to rent a small terraced house or part of a larger terraced house. Not only were existing terraced houses being "filtered down"⁴³ in the early twentieth century, but very few new terraces were constructed after 1900, except where they were specifically targeted. For example, a row of five small, single-storey terraced houses was built in 1902-3 by the investor James Leslie at 112-120 Fletcher Street, Woollahra. They housed workers from the nearby Fletchers Foundry.

Ordinance No 70 of the *Local Government Act 1906* was gazetted in February 1909. It introduced a requirement for access at each side of a terrace building, which made new terraces a less economical use of land. The size of the required side setback was not specified – it was required only to allow access to the rear of the building. The Act also gave local councils (excluding the City of Sydney) the ability to set building and subdivision regulations for their suburbs. One commentator suggested that:

⁴³ Fashionable residential districts move outward from the centre and the houses left behind are occupied by progressively poorer families (Roseth 1969).

Terrace houses can be justly charged with being the indirect cause of much unpleasantness among neighbours, and “should be put down” (as one victim remarked) “by the strong right hand and the large, flat foot of the law”. (*SMH*, 18 July 1909, 7S)

Although the terraced dwelling type was associated with disease, there was no scientific research to suggest that other dwelling types were superior. It was admitted that:

The question of unhealthiness is a difficult one to answer, no statistics being available in regard to the different types of houses...There are also great differences among terraces. Some are well built, and allow plenty of access to light and air; while others are triumphs of the jerry-builder’s nefarious art, and are, in addition, erected on unsalubrious locations. Properly built, a terrace can be made unobjectionable, if the site is suitable, and that method of building, therefore, calls not so much for absolute prohibition as for careful regulation. (*SMH*, 23 August 1909, 4)

This opinion was restated some years later when Dr Werner Hegemann, a prominent German town planner, visited Sydney as the guest of J D Fitzgerald, the Chairman of the NSW Housing Board. Hegemann reported that in the large cities of Europe:

Everybody, rich and poor, has to live in five or six storied tenement houses. Compared with these high tenement houses, I consider the much-despised “terrace houses” of Sydney as an ideal state of affairs. You have developed some very comfortable types, and by giving somewhat wider frontages and by better planning of streets and backyards a high amount of comfort and privacy can be given in these terrace houses.

But the ideal, of course, to my mind is the detached one-family house, with plenty of garden all around it. (*SMH*, 3 July 1914, 10)

Hegemann went on to compliment the “young countries” such as Australia, where the “happy climate and plentitude of land” allowed most detached dwellings to be spread over a single storey, unlike the standard two-storey houses of countries such as Britain. However he warned that:

Bungalows require plenty of land. As soon as land becomes expensive, the semi-detached or even the terrace dwelling is better than detached houses with only a few feet between them. (*SMH*, 3 July 1914, 10)

Some councils, when drafting their regulations based on Ordinance 70, introduced stricter controls for terraces, but did not ban them. For example Woollahra Council adopted the regulation:

No person shall erect any building, except a store, shop, or warehouse, which will be attached⁴⁴ to another building on both sides. (*SMH*, 11 August 1909, 6)

Despite the fact that Ordinance No 70 already mandated side setbacks, one architect found this requirement “unnecessarily strict” and in an article headed “No More Terraced Houses” it was reported that he had complained to the council that “terraced houses are being practically prohibited” although the council had stopped short of declaring they would not be allowed at all (*SMH*, 11 August 1909, 6).

Other councils went further when drafting their new regulations and banned terraces outright from 1909. For example Waverley Council decided that “only detached or semi-detached dwellings be erected in the municipality for residential purposes, or, in effect, that in future permits will not be given for the building of terraces”. The alderman who was responsible for inserting this clause into the regulations stated that:

It was absolutely impossible to associate terraces with perfect sanitation. Rooms might be large enough, and a scheme of ventilation utilised as complete as could be devised, but, owing to structural features the maximum quantity of air could not be admitted....As a rule terraces were built by persons for purely speculative purposes. They did not live in them. (*SMH* 21 August 1909, 16)

In stark contrast, Marrickville Council not only allowed terraces, but also allowed timber terraces. Their controls stated that:

In the case of weatherboard dwellings in terraces, there must be party walls of either brick, stone or concrete, 9in in thickness, and rising 15in above the roof. (*SMH*, 21 June 1909, 11)

Some land subdivisions in areas which had previously allowed terraces started advertising “no business premises or terrace houses will be allowed on this subdivision” (Dickinson’s Malvern Hill Estate at Croydon, *SMH*, 24 September 1909, 3).

The suburb of Glebe was part of the City of Sydney, and was therefore not regulated by Ordinance No 70. There, terraces with no setbacks could continue to be built. Three

⁴⁴ The use of the term in this context implies a meaning of abutting rather than attachment by party walls.

examples have been identified - 12-24 Victoria Road (1913), 1a-1d Wigram Road (1914) and 212-218 St Johns Road (1915-17).

Although in some municipalities there were regulatory barriers to the construction of terraces, as a dwelling type they were not finally killed off until 1920 when the *Local Government Act 1919* was gazetted (see Section 7.2). However, the requirement for setbacks, controls on site coverage and the reputation of a dwelling type which was widely considered to be unhealthy and associated with slums, and therefore unlikely to attract suburban tenants, removed all incentives for speculators to build them. There was reluctance on the part of lending institutions to make loans available to build terraces, favouring instead new suburban single-storey detached houses or semis (Roseth 1969, 224).

It was therefore the semi which became the preferred dwelling type for the speculative builder constructing housing for the lower middle class and artisan tenants in the suburbs. It was the perfect solution; it wasn't a terraced house with all the negative connotations, yet it was cheaper than a detached house. Building a pair of semis was an economical use of land and they had all the benefits of a detached house – light, space and access. Semis could also be located in the same streets and the same suburbs as the small detached homes, blending into the streetscapes and providing the tenants with the illusion of being equal to those living in the detached houses.

6.8 SUBURBAN EXPANSION

With a focus on detached housing as the suburban ideal, most suburbs expanded with a mix of large and small detached dwellings. Many middle class families no longer had servants and were no longer constrained by Victorian formality; therefore they could live comfortably in smaller dwellings. Speculative builders provided many of the houses. Some were purchased by investors for the rental market and others by owner/occupiers. The standard, small, speculative pair of Federation single-fronted semis comprised a relatively minor yet significant proportion of the new dwellings in most suburbs. It had two bedrooms, a hallway along the party wall, a living room, a bathroom and a kitchen, and was dressed externally and internally with Federation styling (for example, Figure 6.5). Such styling was made simpler by the wide availability of cheap, mass-produced components.

Figure 6.5: Typical two-bedroom suburban Federation semis, Kogarah.



High Street, Kogarah. The semis have a terracotta roof, tuck-pointed red face brickwork and detailed timber fretwork on the verandahs. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1870053)

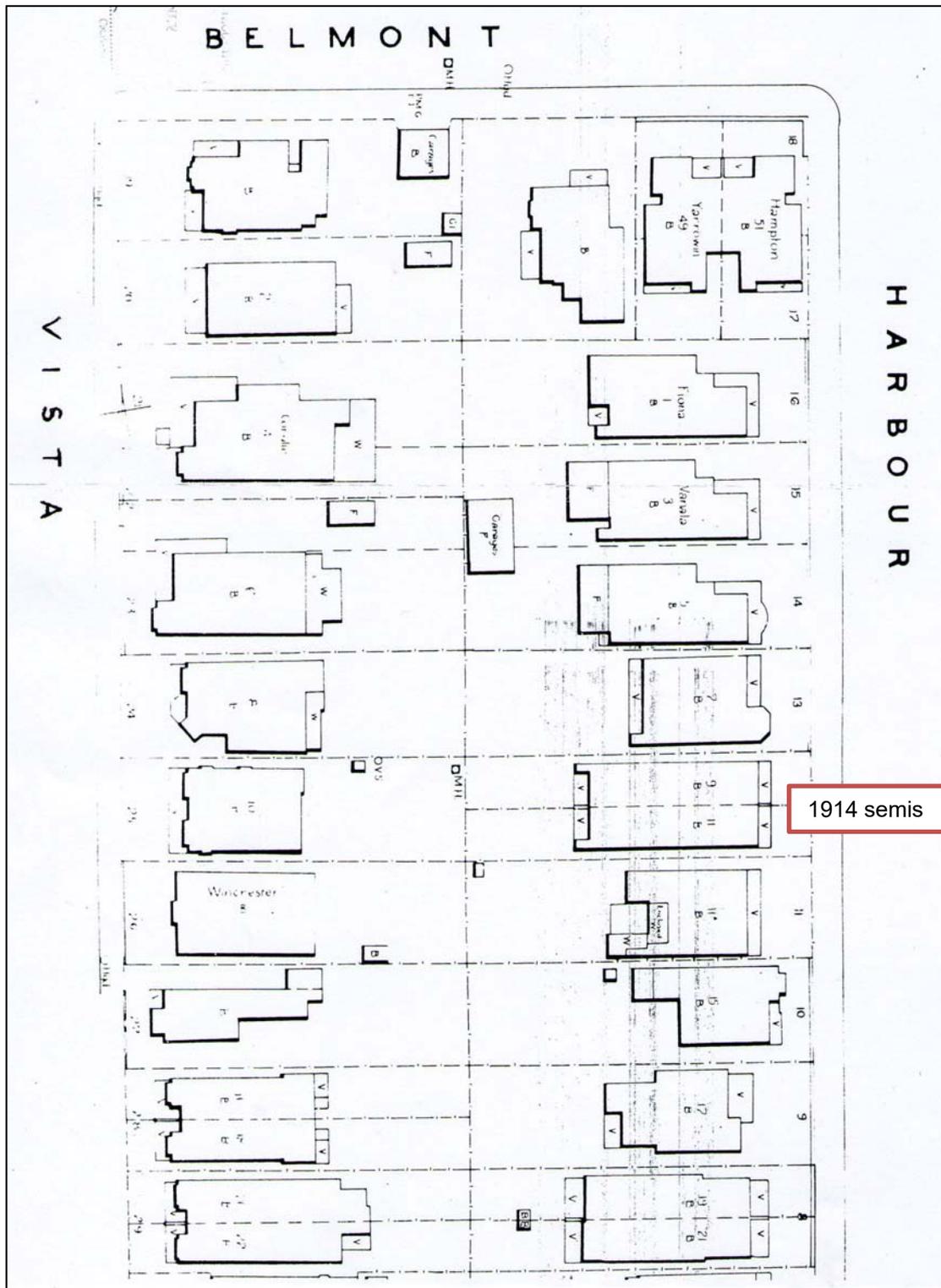
Suburbs such as Mosman and Bondi Junction, which had convenient tram access to the city and reputations as middle class suburbs, contain a higher proportion of semis than more distant suburbs with train access and cheaper land. In the inner ring suburbs, large, detached houses on substantial lots were concentrated in the prime areas, and the semis and small detached houses were usually close to the stations or tram stops. For example, Mosman's large detached Federation houses, with harbour views, are amongst the most expensive dwellings in Australia. Yet Harbour Street, Mosman contains a mix of small detached houses and pairs of semis (Figure 6.6) – the street is very close to what was the tram junction (Spit Junction). The typical lower middle class suburban mix of dwelling types in Harbour Street can also be seen in Figure 6.7. Mosman has no Victorian terraces and only two short terraces which were built during the Federation period.

Figure 6.6: Federation streetscape, Mosman.



Harbour Street, Mosman. A pair of 1914 semis (centre) is flanked by a late Victorian detached house (left) and Federation detached houses (right). The Federation dwellings all have the characteristic terracotta roofs, decorated gables and timber fretwork on the verandahs. (Google Maps, September 2014)

Figure 6.7: Mix of dwelling types, Mosman.



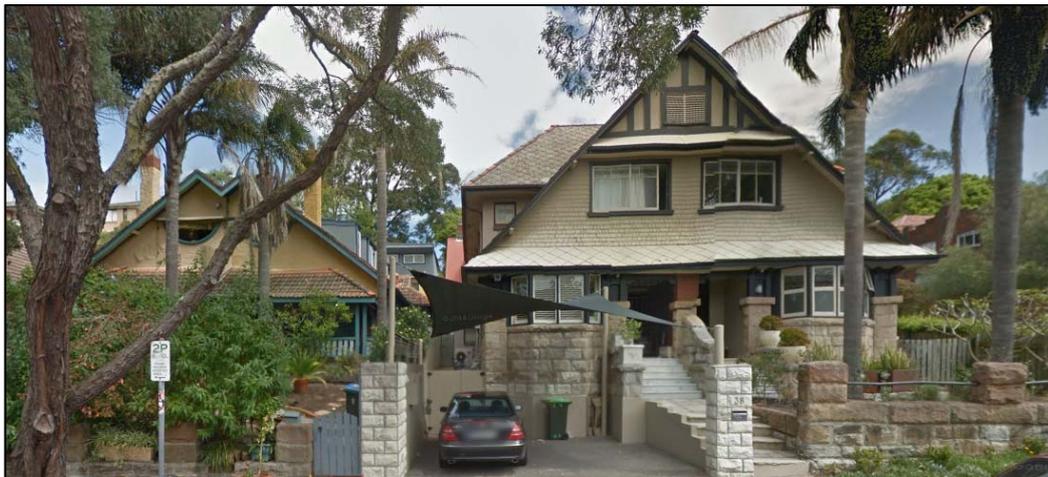
Of the 26 dwellings in this section of the Harbour View Estate, 10 are semis, including the pair shown in Figure 6.6. The proportion of semis is almost zero in the more desirable parts of Mosman. (Sydney Water Archives, SRS 2622, dated 1949)

Some Federation semis were built as isolated pairs in streetscapes otherwise dominated by detached dwellings, while others were built in rows. For example, a row of seven almost-

identical pairs was built in 1913 at Nos 8-34 Ourimbah Road, Mosman on seven lots in the Herring's Estate subdivision. They were immediately sold to investors, and land titles records show that most of the pairs were, at some stage, owned by spinsters or widows. In some cases a speculative builder could combine semis, single-fronted detached houses and small double-fronted detached houses as a way of maximising the returns on a parcel of land (see Case Study 11 which shows how a clever speculator managed to fit multiple dwellings on a relatively small land holding).

Not all suburban semis were small, standard dwellings with mass-produced decoration, built by speculators for a quick sale to investors. Some investors used their own builders to construct a standard design, while other investors used the services of architects. Architects tended to produce larger, more sophisticated semis for a better class of tenant and any semi with Arts and Crafts detailing is almost certainly architect-designed and located in the more desirable part of a suburb. In addition, these better quality semis were sometimes designed for family members or as a house and income. For example, in 1908 James Turner, a gentleman,⁴⁵ purchased three contiguous lots in Sir Thomas Mitchell Road, Bondi (LPI Vol 2768 Fol 207). The same year he commissioned the prominent architectural firm of Waterhouse and Lake to design two identical pairs of semis for two of the lots, and a larger pair for the corner lot (Howell 2010, 236). These were all completed in 1909 (*Sands Directory* 1910). Turner moved into the large end semi and the other five were tenanted. He lived there for over 30 years with the rentals from the semis as his main source of income. The relative scale of his home compared to the rental properties can be seen in Figure 6.8; the end pair each had three bedrooms, two reception areas, a separate dining room and a maid's room.

Figure 6.8: Architect-designed semis as a home and income, Bondi.



Sir Thomas Mitchell Road, Bondi. Turner's home was on the right. His other semis (left) were rental properties. (Google Maps, September 2014)

⁴⁵ As described on the title deed.

For most investors, even with the involvement of architects, their semis were a source of rental income while they lived elsewhere, usually in a larger detached house in a better area. In 1913 Waterhouse and Lake designed a pair of semis in Burwood for a ship's chandler, Ernest Buzacott, and his wife (Howell 2010, 100). Unlike the architects' major commissions, the semis have simple, inexpensive detailing and only one storey, yet there are still Arts and Crafts influences. Situated on a corner, the semis each have their entrance from a different street, making it almost impossible to identify the building as a pair of semis (Figure 6.9). The *Sands Directory* lists tenants in both semis from 1914.

Figure 6.9: Federation Arts and Crafts semis, Burwood, 1913.



The semi facing Wallace Street, Burwood. (Howell 2010, 100).

6.9 THE GARDEN SUBURB

John Sulman, an English architect who emigrated with his family to Sydney in 1885, had developed an interest in town planning during a visit to Paris in 1873, and lectured in town planning and architecture at the University of Sydney during the late 1880s. In Melbourne in January 1890 he delivered a paper, "The Laying-out of Towns", which amongst other ideas advocated moving away from grid layouts in favour of a "spiderweb" pattern, and emphasised the necessity of reserving green belts. Although his ideas were hailed as innovative, the idea of a spiderweb plan had already been suggested in 1873 by J B Waring at the Royal Institute of British Architects (Cornell University nd).

Nevertheless, Sulman's motto was "convenience, utility and beauty" and his lecture marked the start of town planning as a discipline within Australia (Apperly and Reynolds 1990). He became a powerful advocate of the English garden city movement, which was reported extensively in the Australian newspapers. In 1914 the British Garden Cities & Town Planning

Association sponsored leading members of the garden city movement from England to lecture in Australia (Robert Freestone pers. comm. April 2015).

A real estate agent, Richard Stanton, was Sulman's friend and a fellow advocate of town planning. In 1901 he purchased land approximately 5.5 miles (8.9km) west of the centre of Sydney, on which he commenced the development of a new estate. Access to the city was by electric tram. His design incorporated tree-lined streets and single-storey detached dwellings on lots owned freehold by individuals. Parker and Unwin's ideas of an integrated, planned city or suburb relied on high level ownership or control of the whole estate. This was underpinned in English garden cities by the sale of co-partnership shares in a holding company (rather than individual lots of freehold land) or lease agreements with residents. In NSW the Torrens system of land titles facilitated the speculative subdivision and sale of individual freehold lots as a separate exercise to the development of those lots. Stanton sold vacant lots, or house/land packages. Despite selling freehold land, Stanton retained control of the development by the use of covenants over the titles.

Stanton's preference for detached dwellings in his new estate was quite deliberate – Haberfield was for people to live in their own homes, not to rent. As Sulman stated some years later, even the semis and terraces of the admired Hampstead Garden Suburb were "hardly desirable" (Freestone 1989, 90). Estate architects were available to provide house designs (every house was unique) and estate gardeners laid out the gardens before the owners moved in. There was space for some commercial premises, but no corner shops, no factories and no hotels (Ashfield Municipal Council 2007, 5). Just as Ebenezer Howard had envisaged a "slumless, smokeless city", the slogan for the Haberfield estate was "Slum-less. Lane-less. Pub-less". There were no back lanes in Haberfield, as every site was sewerred.

Stanton initially called his development "Haberfield Estate – Sydney's only Model Suburb" (*SMH*, 22 November 1902, 16). In 1909, obviously influenced by the success of the English garden suburbs, and conveniently overlooking the grid design of his streets, and the lack of provision for public parks, he rebadged it as Haberfield Garden Suburb (Figure 6.10). Haberfield established the principles which guided the development of suburban Australia for many years.

Figure 6.10: Newspaper marketing for Haberfield Garden Suburb.

**SEND FOR ONE OF OUR
BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED
BOOKLETS,**

whether you intend buying a Home or not. **HABERFIELD "GARDEN SUBURB"** is therein described, and it will be a valuable fund of pictorial suggestions. It shows the various Homes, which are different and built after ideas adopted in the most desirable mansions. You will be enchanted with the **ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE COSY HOMES,** just the places a woman's fingers itch to drape, and a man likes to curl up in with his Newspaper and Pipe. The greatest financial authorities admit that there is no investment as safe as Real Estate. No investment in this country is more attractive than building allotments at Haberfield Garden Suburb at present prices. We are spending thousands of pounds in general improvements, and you will reap the benefit of a share of this expenditure if you buy now. We have now ready for sale, independent of vacant land, about

**20 DIFFERENT TYPES OF
COTTAGE HOMES,**

all most unique in designs and most substantial in structure. The Prices range from £550, £650, £750, £850, to £1200. You should inspect these fine productions and

MODELS OF COMFORT,

at the same time being most substantial and cheap. There is a vast difference between wishing and winning. Many a good man has failed because he had his wishbone where his backbone ought to have been, and the man who persists in paying rent and does not

TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY WE ARE OFFERING him is the man we have just described. Thirty minutes by electric tram will take you to Haberfield from the city, and the through fare is 3d. We have healthy surroundings, very wide avenues, all planted with shade trees, and lovely cottages. The Building Covenant prevents business premises other than in one spot, and you have here

**THE IDEAL IN ALL RESPECTS OF SUBURBAN
RESIDENCES.**

We are not particular whether you are a terms or cash buyer. We can meet the financial position of anyone who seriously thinks of doing business with us. The next thing for you to do is to **INSPECT HABERFIELD AND SEE US.** The rest is easy.

We shall be happy to give you all the necessary information, and show you over the property at any time that suits you.

**STANTON and SON, Managing Agents,
109 Pitt-street; and at Station, Summer Hill.**

(SMH, 26 May 1909)

Despite Stanton's preference for detached dwellings, and the banning of terraces via covenants, the mix of dwellings in the suburb of Haberfield does include semis, as did the English exemplars such as Hampstead Garden Suburb. Just as in Britain, it became fashionable to label most new Federation suburban developments as a "garden suburb", whether or not they adhered to the original principles of the garden city/suburb movement. In examples such as Kensington, Seaforth and Rosebery the dominance of the detached dwelling continued. Rosebery had "no weatherboards or semi-detached pairs" (*SMH*, 28 December 1921, 5).

By 1905 other developers were subdividing land adjacent to the Haberfield Estate (Crow 1978) and although their estates broadly followed Stanton's "garden suburb" concept, they have a mix of large detached, single-fronted detached, semi-detached (such as Figure 6.11) and even weatherboard dwellings. The National Trust (NSW) registered two urban conservation areas in Haberfield in 1978. In 1985, following public pressure and a State Government enquiry, Ashfield Municipal Council gazetted Haberfield as a conservation area, the first Australian suburb to receive that recognition and protection. The Commonwealth Government also recognised the significance of Haberfield when the entire suburb was included on the Register of the National Estate in 1991.

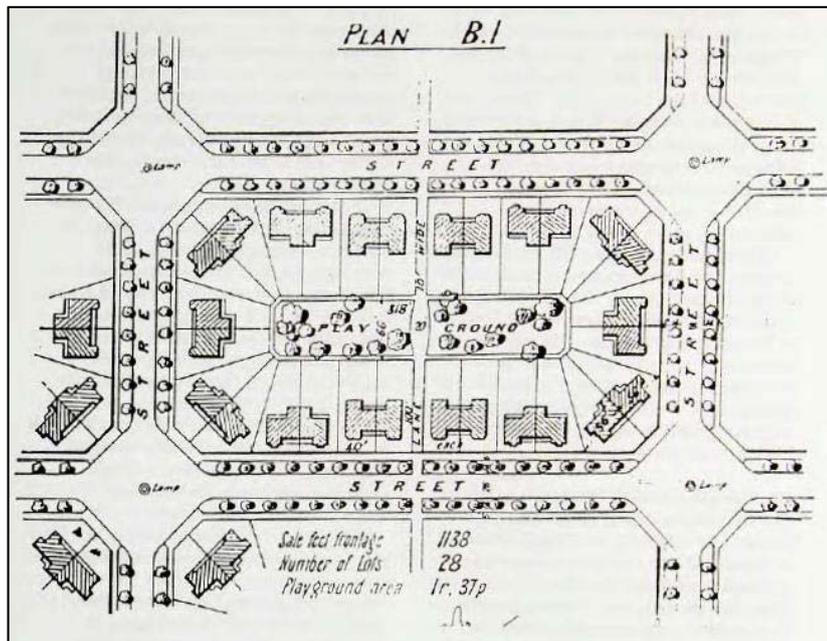
Figure 6.11: Semis in the Haberfield Conservation Area.



Wattle Street, Haberfield. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 4305625)

Raymond Unwin's publication *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!* (1912), which provided guidelines for the "suburbanisation" of Howard's garden city ideal, was also an important influence in the development of the Australian garden suburb. For example the planner W Scott Griffiths presented a paper to the first Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference, held in Adelaide in October 1917. In it he showed how a city block should be laid out, based on Unwin's ideas (Figure 6.12). All of his dwellings are semis.

Figure 6.12: Layout of a city block.



W S Griffiths (reproduced in *Planning History*, Vol 20, No 3, 1998, 21)

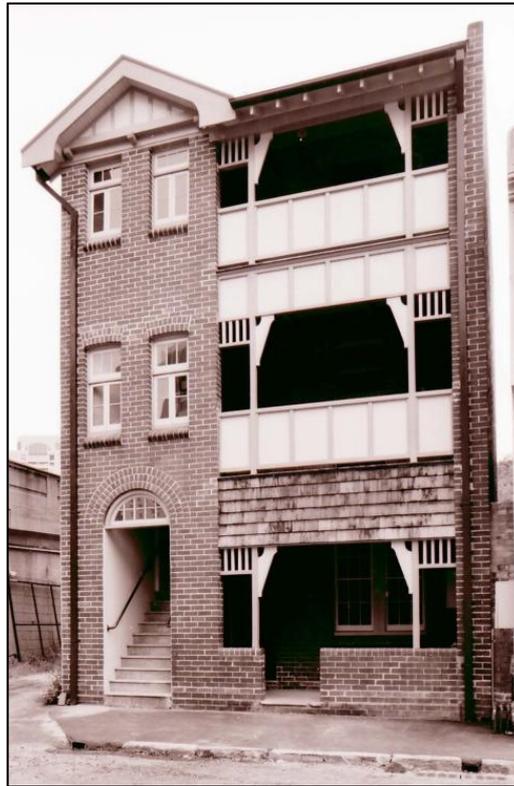
6.10 PUBLIC HOUSING

The wharves of The Rocks, Darling Harbour and Millers Point were resumed by the State Government in 1900 after the outbreak of the plague, and 803 properties, including 430 dwellings, were taken over the following year (Volke 2006, 13). The government, via the Sydney Harbour Trust, substantially extended and redeveloped the wharves; in reality this was the primary reason for the resumptions, not to clear the slums or to provide improved housing for the residents (Volke 2006, 13). There were also ideas forming about a harbour bridge linking the peninsula to the north shore – this too would require the area to be cleared, thereby encouraging the resumptions. The demolition of some dwellings took place from 1901, without any attempt to immediately build new dwellings. All timber dwellings were demolished and only well-constructed masonry terraces with adequate sanitation and some fire separation were retained and re-let (Boyd 2002, 29).

In 1902 plans were announced for the redevelopment of The Rocks with new roads and five-storey tenement blocks, covering two blocks and housing 4,000 people. These were soon deemed too expensive and the reputation of large tenement blocks in London and New York went against their acceptance in Sydney. Instead, in 1907 the first terrace-like rows of tenements were built in Windmill Street and Upper Fort Street (Figure 6.13). Despite their form, the 41 dwellings were described by the government as “model dwelling houses” (Boyd 2002, 32). They had good ventilation, outdoor space and modern conveniences such as gas cookers. Each flat had its own entrance. Demolitions continued and between 1912 and 1924

large numbers of similar tenements were built, although most of these were later demolished for the construction of the Harbour Bridge and the Cahill Expressway. The residents in the old and new housing, mostly labourers on the new docks of Millers Point, became tenants of the Harbour Trust. This was the first public housing in NSW.

Figure 6.13: Public housing tenements, The Rocks, 1907.



The lone survivor of the original row of tenements. (SHFA Heritage and Conservation Register, Tenements, 117 Gloucester Street, The Rocks)

The rows of flats were still perceived by their occupants as tenements. In general at that time there was a lack of clarity between the definitions of flats (apartments) and tenements. The Royal Commission into the Improvement of the City of Sydney and its Suburbs (1909) had no specific brief to consider housing for workers, but many middle class housing reformers alluded to it during their evidence. The Commissioners reported on the strong opposition to tenements and the Labor Government elected two years later was lobbied by the Sydney Labour Council:

... the conditions in which the tenement occupiers lived at Millers Point were disgraceful. My only regret...is that the matter of reconstructing the tenements in question was not taken in hand immediately after the Labour [sic] Government took office. It was brought before previous Administrations but nothing was ever done...The result has been that we have gone on building these tenements upon plans which I do not think private enterprise would adopt. One can readily imagine

the dire results should a case of plague or other contagious or even infectious disease break out in any one of them...the present method of construction in New South Wales has already been condemned in the old country. I think I am safe in saying that the medical faculty in New South Wales is opposed even to terraced houses let alone tenements. (Mr Kavanagh, Secretary, Sydney Labour Council, *SMH*, 16 February 1911, 12)

In 1911 the Labor Government's Colonial Secretary John Rowland Dacey stated that:

The day is past, when free Australians were content to be herded together in terraces of mere dog-boxes. In some suburbs they are compelled to herd together like flies ... the time has come when we should create a Garden City and provide houses of an up-to-date character at the lowest possible rental. (Parliament of NSW, *Hansard* 1911-12, 3251)

The *Savings Bank Amalgamation Act 1912* established government funding so that the State Savings Bank could offer loans to first-home purchasers or builders. However, this did nothing to increase the availability of housing for those on low incomes. Despite fierce opposition, Dacey also introduced a Bill to enable the construction of a garden suburb of public housing. In April 1912 the Labor State Government passed the *Housing Act* which gave the State the right to construct public housing as a landlord. The first planned public housing suburb was built at Daceyville, with a low density mix of detached houses, semis and short terraces⁴⁶. Case Study 12 combines the themes of dwelling hierarchy, housing the workers and the development of garden suburbs, showing how Daceyville became a showcase for public housing in NSW

Daceyville did little to relieve the pressure on inner city housing. By then, because terraces had fallen from favour as a suitable dwelling type, and the "scarcity of houses and the rent problem" were escalating, there were calls for the workers to be housed in flats, which could be built more economically than terraces (*Building* 12 November 1912, 49). However, although the need for higher density housing was acknowledged, it was also noted that:

... it would be inadvisable to build them on too comprehensive a scale. The better policy would be to provide facilities for the workman having his own little cottage out in the suburbs. In the meantime, with all our advances in municipal hygiene and scientific planning, we still meet the old, the familiar "long terrace". (*Building* 12 November 1912, 49)

⁴⁶ They were called "group houses" to avoid the use of the term "terrace".

The *Sydney Corporation (Dwelling Houses) Act 1912* gave the Sydney City Council the power to resume land, redevelop it with commercial premises or dwellings, and raise loans to fund the redevelopments. The Council also commissioned an enquiry into the “housing of workmen in Great Britain and the Continents of Europe and America” in order to determine suitable housing policies. The principles for the provision of municipal housing were discussed in newspapers and journals. For example, although low density housing was preferred:

Opinions may differ on whether the semi-detached or the continuous street system of cottage building is to be preferred. There, however, can be no two opinions if economy in erection is considered. (*Building* 12 December 1912, 135)

Despite using much of its resumed land for other projects such as warehouses, Sydney City Council built four blocks of flats between 1914 and 1927, for low-income tenants. The first was the “Strickland Buildings” in Chippendale, which in form resembled a long terrace, similar to the tenement rows in The Rocks and Millers Point. Unlike Daceyville, the cost of the inner city land did not allow for a lower density. Curiously, although the flats were built under the public housing provisions of the Act, the first tenants of the “Strickland Buildings” were all council employees rather than displaced slum dwellers (Spearritt 2000).

6.11 GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRIAL HOUSING

The use of semis within a dwelling hierarchy for government housing and in purpose-built housing for industrial workers continued during the Federation period. For example, a “duplex” was built c1916 at the dockyard on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour, to house management staff (Figure 6.14). The Superintendent had a large c1841 detached dwelling nearby. Although each semi is very large, their form makes them subservient to the detached house. The first residents to occupy the pair of dwellings were the Medical Officer and the Engineering Manager.

Figure 6.14: Duplex on Cockatoo Island, 1916.



(<http://chopinandmysaucepan.com/cocktail-sunday-on-cockatoo-island-sydney-2>, accessed September 2014)

The Portland Cement Works Precinct near Lithgow was listed with State significance in 2012. Although the focus of the listing is on the buildings of the cement works, the associated housing is also included. There are four pairs of c1900-02 semis (Figure 6.15) which are “representative Federation period cottages that demonstrate the social stratification of this company town in the early twentieth century” (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 01739). Of the 319 pairs of semis in NSW which have State or local heritage listings (see Appendix 6) this appears to be the only listing where a Statement of Significance hints at the dwelling hierarchy in which the dwelling type was a tangible expression of social status.

Figure 6.15: Semis for workers at the Portland Cement Works, c1900-02.



Williwa Street, Portland (NSW Heritage Division Online Inventory No 01739)

6.12 REGIONAL HOUSING

Although the Federation architectural style was readily embraced by the speculative builders in the suburbs of Sydney, aspects of the Victorian Italianate style lingered in some country towns. For example a pair of c1905 semis in Temora displays the characteristic bay windows of the Victorian style together with the timber fretwork of the Federation style (Figure 6.16). The large, double-fronted semis “Terang” and “Mortlake” were designed by the local architect Ernest H Boyd for a local grazier John Brett, and let to tenants (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 2480044). The building is listed with local heritage significance; they are the only listed semis in Temora although there is an excellent pair nearby with the characteristic Federation rising sun detailing on the gables (Figure 6.17).

Figure 6.16: Victorian/Federation semis, Temora, 1905.



Victoria Street, Temora. (Author 2010)

Figure 6.17: Federation semis, Temora.



De Boos Street, Temora (Author 2010)

6.13 THE DEVELOPMENT OF APARTMENTS

Just as terraces were starting their rapid decline, the first flats⁴⁷ appeared in NSW. “Stevens’ Buildings” (1900, Figure 6.18) was the first example of private, purpose-built flats in the state. At that time known as a tenement building, it contained 32 rooms in four stories.

⁴⁷ The terms flat and apartment are generally interchangeable in Australia, and most early tenements in NSW were also self-contained flats rather than New York-style tenements with shared facilities (Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007, Introduction).

A feature of the building worth mentioning is the privacy of each flat, which is isolated from the others, and having its own lookout windows in front and rear....The kitchen is supplied with Dover stoves, and enamelled baths. (*SMH*, 15 December 1900, 17)

Figure 6.18: "Stevens' Buildings", 1900.



Windmill Street, Dawes Point (*Sydney Mail* 8 December 1900, 20)

This "walk-up" form was the precursor to many suburban blocks of flats which, particularly during the interwar period, joined detached houses and semis in the dwelling mix. Initially, blocks of apartments were of two types – inner city tenement blocks for labourers, many of whom had lost their homes during slum clearances, and architect-designed blocks in desirable locations for wealthy middle class tenants. The latter type is exemplified by "The Astor" complex in Macquarie Street, completed in 1923, although the first purpose-built "mansion flats" were "The Albany" in Macquarie Street (1905). For many years, both types were widely condemned as "slums of the future" and un-Australian (Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007, 2). Yet they were popular with tenants. From being just 1.5% of the private dwellings in Sydney in 1911, by the 1940s flats comprised 19% (Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007, 8).

6.14 CONCLUSIONS

The early twentieth century saw the consolidation of suburban living as the ideal, and the denigration of the inner city residential areas.

The aim...of legislation should be to push the inhabitants out into the wider stretches of suburban area where plenty of room can be given to each. (*Building* 12 December 1918, 94)

The new Federation suburbs with wide streets, parks and detached housing came to be “associated with cultural and racial superiority” when compared to the inner city (Ashton 2000, 42). Inner city Chinese areas such as Wexford Street were prime targets for resumptions. As the ownership of dwellings by their occupants increased in Australia, those who rented a dwelling were considered somewhat inferior to those who owned their own home (even if they were still paying it off). This reinforced semis and terraced houses as inferior dwelling types.

The speculative builder was a major force in the development of Federation suburbia. Despite some criticisms:

Broadly speaking, when the builder was aiming at a working class clientele the houses lost their individual identities and became semi-detached. Rarely, however, was the continuous terrace form used except in heavily built-up areas near the city. Accusation of sharp practice and jerry-building were often made against these speculative builders. Nevertheless, after more than fifty years of exposure to the weather and to the wear and tear to which their occupants subjected them, the houses of this period have on the whole performed very adequately. (Apperly 1989, 40)

Federation had strengthened feelings of being Australian, and Sydney sought to become a modern city far removed from its convict roots.

In the face of persisting anxiety about the convict “stain” a strong mechanism of denial developed in the realm of the social imagery which sought to repress the memory of the city’s penal origins. The destruction of Sydney’s pre-modern built environment was a step towards erasing the material remnants of its shameful human history. Those hewn stone houses, narrow and verminous and dark, had been built by convicts, and therefore, might not some of the old convict tradition have soaked into them? (Doyle 2005)

The ideas about suburbia, healthy living and modernism not only legitimised the programs of demolitions which were carried out under the umbrella of slum clearance, but also underpinned the types of new dwellings which were built. Following the plague and large scale slum clearances, inner city terraced houses, even the larger ones, were considered suitable only for working class tenants who had to walk to work, while skilled workers and middle class tenants preferred to rent in the suburbs. Suburban semis provided the ideal compromise between rundown terraced houses and detached houses with their higher rents.

The garden city movement did not change the face of urban Australia, but it is reflected in the houses, building lines, trees, parks and playgrounds of suburban Australia (Freestone 1989, 8) and more particularly in suburbs such as Haberfield and Daceyville.

Housing regulation was focussed primarily on urban areas, and only later filtered out to rural and regional areas. The *Local Government Act 1906* placed responsibility for controlling urban development with local authorities and had a major influence on cementing the place of semis within the urban housing mix.

The provision of public housing by local authorities and the State Government was not widely embraced. When the post-war Commonwealth Government began to discuss policies to resolve the "housing problem", the reactions included:

The Commonwealth Government has no more right to attempt to solve the housing problem of working men than it has to provide motor cars for another "class". Why should the Government take the money from the unfortunate taxpayer to provide homes for any particular class? It is never claimed that the thing can become a profitable investment; hence, it becomes class legislation of the very worst kind. (*Building* 12 December 1918, 59)

Many commentators believed that the provision of housing should be left to private enterprise, pointing to the enormous subsidies funded by taxpayers for public housing in Britain. Others argued that the nation's health was paramount:

Even if it be a costly matter to provide and maintain (a dwelling-house) in a condition conducive to the promotion of good health, it is money well spent. (*Building* 12 December 1912, 138)

At the First Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition in Adelaide in October 1917, E C Rigby was reported in the press as arguing, on the question of slums, that:

... it was all a matter of definition. To his mind, a slum was a place that did not allow a reasonable amount of air space on at least three sides of the dwellings, having some distance between the roadway and the front doors, and a back yard in which they could do more than swing a cat, so that the dustbin and the baby should not be crowded side by side. (*The Advertiser* 19 October 1917, 7)

In other words, a terraced house was a slum, but a semi with a side setback was not. Yet between the wars, not only did the terrace disappear from the mix of new housing, but the semi also came under attack from some local authorities.

7.0 THE INTERWAR PERIOD – 1919 TO 1945

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As the troops returned home, the aspirations for many were a house in suburbia, a steady job and access to the increasing array of consumer goods. Home ownership continued to be promoted as the ideal – the “best way to build the personal qualities that would benefit the nation” (Robertson and Broomham 1997, 6). It was also a useful political tool; in the 1920s the Prime Minister, Stanley Bruce, stated that:

When all our workers own their own homes, Bolshevism and Communism will find no place in Australia. (cited in Robertson and Broomham 1997, 5)

However, the speculative builders complained that:

Regulations make it impossible to erect a home at a figure that has any possible relation to the average worker's income...it was [once] possible to put up a dozen brick terrace homes on the minimum frontage required for half a dozen detached cottages. (Spearritt 1978, 23)

In 1915 the population of Sydney was only three quarters of a million. It passed the one million mark in 1924. In 1939 it was 1,302,890 (*Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1915, 1925, 1940). This increase in population required around 150,000 additional dwellings during the interwar period. The number of houses built annually in Sydney peaked in the mid-1920s when wool and wheat prices were high but by 1931 it was only 10% of that number. The next peak was in 1937, but still only 65% of 1925 levels (Butler 1992, 45).

Despite its rapid urban growth during the 1920s, Sydney lagged behind the Australian average for home ownership. By 1933 only 48% of Australians were tenants – in Sydney this figure was over 58% (Table 4).

Table 4: Home ownership in Sydney.

	1911	1921	1933
Owner	27.1%	25.7%	28%
Purchasing by instalments	4.9%	15%	13.5%
Tenant	68%	59.2%	58.5%

(Census 1911, 1921, 1933)

When its construction eventually began in 1923, the Sydney Harbour Bridge became a symbol of the city's modernity. The post-war economic boom also facilitated other manifestations of modernity, such as new global architectural styles and new local magazines such as *The Home*. Even humble dwellings such as semis were touched by the fashionable styles. Conversely the enthusiasm for modernism resulted in the sacrifice of many earlier dwellings, mostly workers' housing. For example, some early colonial houses which had survived the previous demolition projects in The Rocks were removed to make way for the new bridge across the harbour.

The Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent collapse in commodity prices signalled the start of the depression and widespread unemployment. Many families found themselves relying on sustenance (the "susso"). Those who could no longer afford to rent moved into shanty towns and tents. The building industry virtually ground to a halt.

Before the First World War, in general only wealthy households had a car. During the 1920s, with cheaper mass produced vehicles, the middle classes found themselves able to afford cars. Detached suburban dwellings started to make allowance for a side driveway and a garage, although most semis continued to be built without provision for cars, on the assumption that their less-wealthy tenants would not have vehicles. The standard frontage of lots in new subdivisions increased from 50 feet (15m) to 60 feet (18m) to accommodate cars, and roads were widened. There were 217,000 cars in Australia by 1939 (*Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1940).

The network of electric trams in Sydney reached its peak in 1922, when it extended to the beach suburbs to the east of the city, and west to Canterbury and Ryde. Other lines serviced the south west, the northern beaches and Parramatta. The first electric trains ran in 1926 and trains crossed the harbour on the new bridge in 1932. The expansion of the railways and car ownership provided a wider choice for the location of new suburbs. Locations within walking distance of public transport were popular with both owners and speculators.

Between the wars mass produced fittings became readily available, and with the demise of the servant, kitchens became more prominent in house design. Bathrooms (and toilets) moved further indoors. New materials such as cement sheeting, fibrous plaster, fibreboard and plywood, together with more efficient building techniques, brought construction costs down (Cuffley 1989, 2).

The following sections describe how the influence of Britain declined as NSW gave priority to home ownership over the provision of public housing.

7.2 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1919

The NSW colonial government during the second half of the nineteenth century introduced regulations in response to “low structural standards, unhealthy premises and overcrowding, fear of disease, crime and political discontent” (Marsden 2000, 34). Stricter building controls tended to be introduced first for the older inner city areas with more problems, after which they were gradually extended to suburban municipalities and regional areas. The *Local Government Act 1906* was primarily a tool to assist local government in administering the *Public Health Act 1896*. Reforms after 1906 followed developments in English local government, which “were closely observed by New South Wales reformers, and later with modification, introduced into that State” (Willis and Paddon 2011, 1).

It was not until the rise of the labour movement during the 1890s and the election of a Labor government in 1910 that the regulatory framework was expanded to cover housing policy and greater control over financing and construction. As life gradually returned to normal after the First World War, optimism grew. Stimulated by the banks’ more liberal lending policies, low interest rates and the opening up of new suburbs, the demand for home ownership increased. The NSW government was concerned about housing the workers, with Sydney lagging behind the Australian average of home ownership. In introducing the *Local Government Bill* in 1918 the Minister stated that it should enable a man with a small amount of money to become independent of a landlord. When the *Local Government Act 1919* came into effect in July 1920, local councils (excluding the City of Sydney) gained wide-ranging powers over land subdivision and the built environment. The detailed regulations underpinning the Act were specified in Ordinance No 71. Although some commentators thought the devolution of central power from the State to local government did not go far enough, the new regulations had significant impacts on the provision of housing. For example:

During the last generation the jerry-builder employed his evil devices in secret. Now he has to expose all of his tricks beforehand to the scrutiny and publicity of a council meeting. (*Gilgandra Times* 8 November 1923, 3)

The 1919 Act defined a dwelling as:

A building designed for use as a dwelling for a single family, together with such outbuildings as are ordinarily used therewith, and includes a dwelling in a row of two or more dwellings attached to each other such as are commonly known as semi-detached or terrace buildings.

Separately, the City of Sydney continued to be covered by the *City of Sydney Improvement Act 1879* and the *Sydney Corporation Act 1842* until they too were brought under the *Local Government Act* in 1948.

7.3 DE FACTO SUBDIVISION

The *Local Government Bill* in 1918 contained subdivision clauses to control the density of dwellings in residential areas, and to prevent the development of more slums. Prior to this, councils could refuse a subdivision only on the basis of access to the site.

The Hon Sir Joseph Carruthers moved an amendment to the Bill's definition of subdivision. He was concerned that a farmer, in selling part of a land holding, might find that the contract was invalid because he had not gone through the whole routine of gaining approvals. Hansard records his 1919 speech:

It would be more serious to the people of the country than to the people of the town or village. The owner may be an old farmer or settler who has no lawyer at his elbow, and who has no one to advise him on these intricate problems, and he may make a gift by document in the form of a family division of his property. He says, "I give this piece of land in that paddock with that fence to my son John" and he thinks that is an end of it, and his son pays him so much on the balancing of accounts. That old farmer thinks that having done that he has made provision for his boy. No one in the world will suffer, [there is] no municipal purpose, but it would be a serious thing if that man found the whole transaction was invalid because he had not gone through all the procedures of this law – that is, that he had not got a survey, lodged a plan, submitted it to the council, had an inspection and an approval all previous to making this document out. The thing would be impossible.... the more people who own land the better for the community.... if we do not simplify the law we shall be harassing and impeding the transfer of land and decreasing the chances of having more people settle on the land... by all means preserve the municipal purposes of conserving the public health; but I do say that at the same time the individual rights of a man which do not invade those purposes ought not to be prejudiced.

The amendment was agreed to. When the *Local Government Act 1919* came into effect in 1920 it included the following definition of subdivision (Joseph Carruthers' amendment is highlighted):

"Subdivision", "Subdivide" and similar expressions mean and refer to dividing land into parts not being lots or portions in a Crown or private subdivision made before or after the commencement of the Act, whether the dividing is –

- by sale conveyance transfer or partition; or
- by any agreement dealing or instrument inter vivos (other than a lease for a period not exceeding five years without option of renewal) **rendering different parts thereof immediately available for separate occupation** or disposition; or
- by procuring the issue of a certificate of title under the Real Property Act 1900, in respect of part of the land.

Under Part XII (Town Planning) of the *Local Government Act 1919* and the attached Ordinance 71 (which was proclaimed in November 1921) local councils were given the power to set minimum lot sizes and lot frontages in a land subdivision, and council approval was required before the new titles could be registered.

However, although Joseph Carruthers had farmers in mind when he proposed his definition of subdivision, to cut out the “red tape” of council approval for subdivisions where different parts of a farm were already occupied by different members of a family, the owners of land with buildings containing terraced houses or semis soon realised that the definition also applied to them. The definition was interpreted to mean that if the land had been “de facto” physically divided into self-contained parts by the erection of buildings with separate occupancies, council approval was not required for a subdivision to be registered. This process became known as de facto subdivision, and operated under guidelines issued by the NSW Registrar General (see Appendix 4). All that was required for the subdivision of a row of terraced houses or a pair of semis was the submission to the Registrar General of a survey plan prepared by a registered surveyor and a Statutory Declaration providing information such as the number of years the dwellings had been in separate occupation, how long the dividing fences had been in place, and whether the dwellings were separately rated by the water authority and the local council. This meant that from July 1920, any pre-1920 pair of semis or row of terraced houses could be subdivided *without council consent*, even though the resulting lots may not have met the council’s new minimum lot size or minimum lot frontage.

To give effect to the new subdivision clause, a party wall was formally defined by the *NSW Conveyancing Act 1919*:

A wall severed vertically and longitudinally with separate ownership of the severed portions, and with cross easements entitling each of the persons entitled to a portion to have the whole wall continued in such manner that each building supported thereby shall have the support of the whole wall.

To further facilitate subdivisions, S181B of the *Conveyancing Act 1919* created the concept of easements on common boundaries for the support of a shared party wall.

Councils recognised that any terrace or pair of semis built prior to 1920 could be subdivided into very small lots without their approval. However, they were not about to approve any new buildings which could be subdivided at any time in the future without their consent, unless each dwelling in the new terrace or pair of semis was on the minimum sized lot. Although a pair of semis was previously permissible on a standard 50ft (15.2m) lot, as long as a setback was left at each side, any new semis on lots with frontages less than the minimum were not approved, even if they satisfied the minimum lot size. For example, Canterbury Council set a minimum lot width of 33 feet (10 m) for any lot arising from a subdivision of attached housing and:

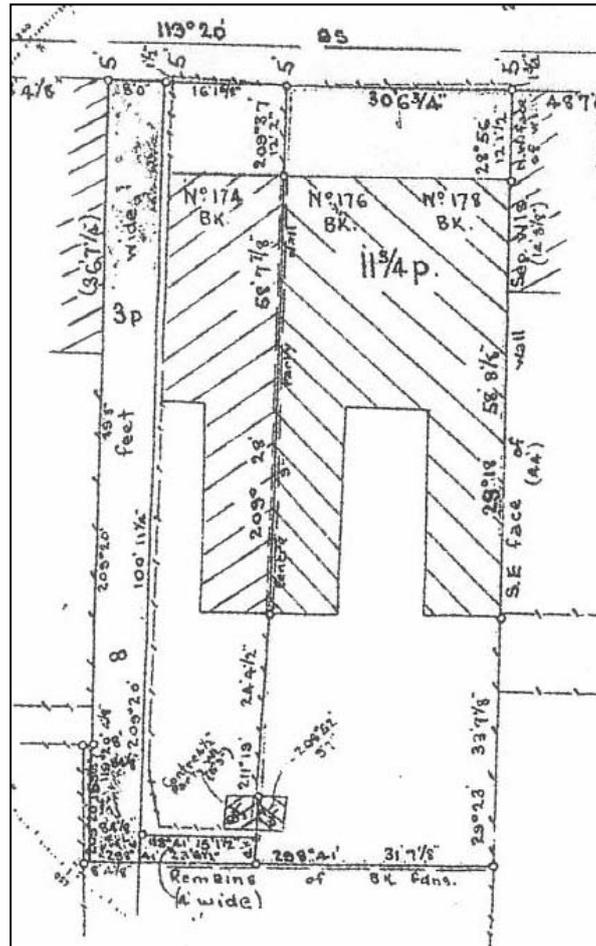
At [the] last meeting of the Canterbury Council an application to erect two semi-detached cottages on an allotment of 50ft frontage was refused... Apparently, from present indications, the erection of terraces will not be permitted by the council except for purpose of shops. (*SMH*, 3 September 1920, 7)

The following example illustrates the de facto subdivision of a short terrace of three dwellings in Paddington. In 1922 "Wyatts Terrace" in Paddington (see Case Study 6) was surveyed for subdivision. The terraced houses at 176 and 178 Underwood Street were transferred to Adelaide Darby, a widow of Waverley (LPI Vol 3187 Fol 114). Lucy Gooch, a widow of Paddington, became the owner of No 174. The transfer form noted:

Where the consent of the local council is required to a subdivision the certificate and plan mentioned in the L.G.Act, 1919, should accompany the transfer. (LPI Transfer A875135)

The only documents lodged were the title deeds for the property, a Statutory Declaration and the surveyor's plan (Figure 7.1), leading to the conclusion that the subdivision was a de facto subdivision done without council consent.

Figure 7.1: Survey of 174-178 Underwood Street, Paddington, 1922.



The survey shows the party wall dividing the two lots, and an easement next to No 174 to allow access to the rear of Nos 176 and 178. (LPI Deposited Plan 173009)

Until subdivision became possible in 1920, the ownership of a building containing terraced houses or a pair of semis could be transferred, but the purchaser had to buy all of the terraced houses in the row, or both of the semis on the land. The buildings had been purpose-built for the rental market and were not initially considered suitable for owner-occupation. After 1920 it became possible to own one terraced house, or one semi, with the shared party wall/s on the boundary of the allotment. Yet despite the de facto subdivision provisions of the *Local Government Act 1919*, very few such subdivisions occurred until the 1950s (see Section 8.3). There was no incentive for an investor to subdivide and sell off the individual dwellings – housing shortages ensured that rental returns were good, even from slum buildings. In particular, the many pairs of semis which had been purchased by widows or spinsters⁴⁸ continued to provide very satisfactory rental income.

⁴⁸ Until the 1960s unmarried women were referred to on title deeds as spinsters.

7.4 THE DEATH OF THE TERRACE AND THE DECLINE OF THE SEMI

After terraced houses were abandoned by middle class tenants at the turn of the twentieth century, they fell further into disrepair. Formerly fashionable addresses and areas became run down and overcrowded, as the larger dwellings were divided into “residential” with enclosed verandahs and partitioned rooms. The depression during the 1930s saw suburbs such as Paddington full of unemployed lodgers in “resos” and poor families in run-down terraced houses.

Added to the general craving for space was also a growing dislike of old dwellings. By 1920 most of Paddington’s terraces were 40 years old and had reached the stage when substantial repairs were needed to bring them up to date. Their kitchens and bathrooms, in particular, had become obsolete. But owners found that the rents which the waning prestige of the area could command did not justify further investment... During the depression of the 1930s, the already neglected buildings of Paddington became veritable slums. (Roseth 1969, 72-73)

Under the *Local Government Act 1919*, de facto subdivision was also applicable to any terraced houses and semis to be built after 1920, with the additional condition that the local council must also have approved the building application for the semis or terraced houses. As well as the Act providing suburban and rural local councils with powers over the size of building allotments, roads and subdivision layouts, Ordinance 71 mandated a 3 foot (0.91m) setback from the lot boundary at each side of a single-storey building, and a 5 foot (1.52m) setback for a two-storey building, primarily to reduce the risks of fire spreading between buildings, and for side access, light and ventilation. Significantly, the setbacks were for buildings, not dwellings.

For those councils which had not already banned terraces outright, a row of terraced houses could still have met the side boundary setback conditions with the specified setback at each end of the row. However, knowing the future potential for de facto subdivision, no local council was willing to approve a row of terraced houses which could later become individual land holdings of less than their minimum lot sizes. And a terrace with each dwelling on a minimum sized lot, *plus* a setback at each end was not an economically viable use of land for an investor or speculative builder. Middle class tenants (the only people who might have been able to afford such large terraced houses) had by then shunned the terraces in the inner city and would not consider such an unpopular, “unhealthy” dwelling type, even in new buildings in the suburbs.

While building approvals for rows of terraced houses ceased in the suburbs after 1920, due to minimum lot sizes and the threat of de facto subdivision, those clauses did not apply within

the City of Sydney. The City of Sydney was not subject to the *Local Government Act* until 1948, so it was not a factor in the demise of the new terrace within the inner city. There, the numbers of new terraced houses had already dwindled to almost nothing by 1920 – anyone who could afford the rental of a new house had already moved to the suburbs. And after clearing so many slums, the City was not about to approve the building of new ones.

A deputation from the Building Trade Federation to the State Government in 1921 suggested that:

For casual workers who have to find their work in different places, the Government should build homes to let... [and] consider the building of terraced houses or semi-detached houses to rent to men in casual employment. (*SMH*, 1 October 1921, 14)

The Minister promised to consider the representations; however, in reality the only affordable inner city workers' housing being built at that time was flats.

It has been suggested that “by the 1920s the terrace house was widely regarded as a building type which inevitably degenerated into slums, and as a consequence was outlawed under new building regulations” (Howells 1999, 12). However, there was no regulatory impediment to the construction of a building containing a row of terraced houses after 1921, in either the City of Sydney, or in municipalities which had not specifically banned terraces. The *Local Government Act 1919* did not outlaw terraces. However, it was reported that:

The building and subdivision laws have at last educated the public to a dislike of the terrace to such an extent that among new buildings it is almost extinct. It has been reduced to an unobjectionable minimum in the semi-detached cottage. The complaint of councils is that this latter form of building is often availed of to put two houses upon an allotment which is really only large enough for one. Once again the framers of the Act were awake to this natural tendency. Where a plan is submitted of semi-detached or terraced houses the council can refuse to consider the plan of the building until a plan of the subdivision has been placed before it. As the new ordinance provides for an area of nearly 4,000 square feet [372 square metres] for a dwelling it is probable that the semi-detached house will tend to become almost as uncommon as the terraced house unless this minimum area is decreased.⁴⁹ (*SMH*, 16 March 1922, 7)

When the *Local Government Act* of 1906 was passed it was practically the death-knell of the terrace house. Semi-detached cottages then came into favour, but in

⁴⁹ This minimum was indeed soon reduced from 372 to 230 square metres, which still applies today.

more recent years the single home is more common. This is the outcome rather of the subdivision powers of councils than their building powers. (*SMH*, 16 October 1924, 5)

In the new era of minimum lot sizes and frontages introduced by the Act, a terrace building with side setbacks, rear access to each dwelling, and each dwelling on a minimum-sized lot would have satisfied all of the Ordinance 71 regulations. However, such large terraces would have been too expensive for working class tenants, and middle class tenants no longer wanted to live in any sort of terraced house. The terrace disappeared because of its poor reputation and its lack of economic viability for speculators, investors and governments, when compared to flats, semis and detached cottages.

During a State Government debate concerning fair rents it was said that:

The shortage of homes synchronised with the Local Government Act, which had brought about the cessation of terrace buildings. That legislation had forced the stoppage of buildings which alone could bring about reasonable rents. Terraces were the only property which afforded reasonable accommodation to men on the basic wage. There was no earthly reason why terraces should not be built to provide good homes, amid ideal surroundings, for the people. He was not opposed to flats, but those erected in congested areas such as Darlinghurst were not suitable for the bringing up of a family (Opposition cheers). (*SMH*, 25 October 1928, 11)

The minimum lot size was soon reduced to 230 square metres, yet this was still not sufficient to make terraces viable. Buildings containing a pair of semis with side setbacks continued to be approved by many local councils after 1920, as long as each dwelling was on this minimum lot size and had the minimum lot frontage. Thus 1920 saw the end of new semis on very small sites, but unlike terraced houses, the stock of semis continued to grow after 1920 to meet the demands of the skilled lower middle class market which could afford to rent a semi in the suburbs. In practice, many developers obtained subdivision approval from local councils as part of the development application for the semis, rather than relying later on the de facto subdivision clause. This made it possible to sell each semi to a different investor or owner/occupier but as with the pre-1920 stock, the vast majority of new semi pairs remained on one title and provided investment income from rentals.

Some local councils were not prepared to approve the development of new semis, even if they complied with minimum lot sizes and setbacks.

Not content with hampering development by the banning of flats within their municipalities certain councils have declared war on semi detached cottages. (*SMH*, 5 June 1929, 7)

For example, Mascot Council:

... decided to prohibit the building of semi detached cottages within the municipality. The objection was taken that buildings of this type were not in the best interests of the public. It was argued that, on hygienic grounds, they were not to be recommended. The Council has now posted up a notice at the Town Hall advising the public that no more of these buildings are to be erected in the Mascot municipality. (*SMH*, 28 July 1929, 16)

Ryde Council also expressly banned semis (*SMH*, 28 February 1928, 4). Conversely, a Granville alderman argued that refusing semis would turn away investment in the suburb.

Many suburbs permitted the erection of semi-detached cottages. Unless the applicant was allowed to build such cottages he would not receive an adequate return for the money he had spent in purchasing the land. (*SMH*, 4 June 1929, 4)

Parramatta's Health and Building Inspector recommended that:

... the erection of semi-detached dwelling homes be prohibited. In my opinion the erection of this class of dwelling in the municipality is undesirable, blocks of land often being cut up into frontages of about 21 feet as a result. Alderman Musto: I don't think we should definitely turn down buildings of that class. Semi-detached dwellings are a long way better than flats. (*SMH*, 20 June 1929, 16)

Woollahra Council found itself debating whether semis were actually flats, and if not, whether they were preferable to flats (*SMH*, 23 December 1925, 6). Willoughby Council prohibited semis in certain areas because:

It was thought their erection would depreciate the value of the pre-existing type of buildings in those areas. There was a fear that if semi-detached cottages were allowed they might bring into certain areas people who might be regarded as undesirable by persons in other homes there. (*SMH*, 9 May 1939, 13)

The lack of consistency amongst policy-makers was highlighted during the housing crisis of the mid-1930s. The three major issues were defined by the Real Estate Institute as slum

clearance, industrial housing⁵⁰ and the wisdom or otherwise of building flats and semi-detached cottages.

The problem presented by flats and semi-detached cottages is becoming acute. Within recent months several suburban councils have announced their objections to any extension of flat construction, and, more recently still, some of them have taken a firm attitude against semi-detached cottages. Among the agents themselves there are differences of opinion about the wisdom of allowing these types of housing to develop, but they are more nearly unanimous in their complaint that the present lack of uniformity in the councils' attitudes, and even the alleged inconsistencies of individual councils, is hampering business in real estate and causing uncertainty among builders and investors. (*SMH*, 4 December 1935, 8)

7.5 APARTMENTS

After the First World War, the increasing regulation, uncertainty and expense around semis caused many speculative builders to turn to flats for low-cost rental housing for the lower middle classes, particularly single people. Two and three storey walk-up blocks of flats proliferated in the suburbs (although they were banned in some suburbs), and middle class suburban streetscapes became a mix of detached houses, semis and small blocks of flats. The high-rise block of flats as a dwelling form also appeared in the city between the wars, in inner city suburbs such as Kings Cross and Potts Point, and the city centre, after zoning laws were relaxed. These provided comfortable homes for middle class tenants, and often had expansive harbour views.

Apartments made up only 6.8% of Sydney's housing stock in 1921 but by 1933 the proportion was 12.8% (Census 1921, 1933). However, when public housing flats were proposed for workers in Erskineville during the late 1930s (see Section 7.10) there was a great deal of opposition, based on concerns around social disruption and family breakdown. Caroline Butler-Bowdon noted this "curious paradox" and observed that:

Although middle class flat life could be tolerated or even celebrated, flats for workers inflamed political and social anxieties. (Butler-Bowdon and Pickett 2007, 7)

The interwar period was therefore characterised by the disappearance of the terrace, the semi coming under siege from some local authorities and the selective acceptance of the apartment. The over-riding opinion was that detached dwellings were the most suitable dwelling type.

⁵⁰ Dwellings provided by industrial companies for their employees.

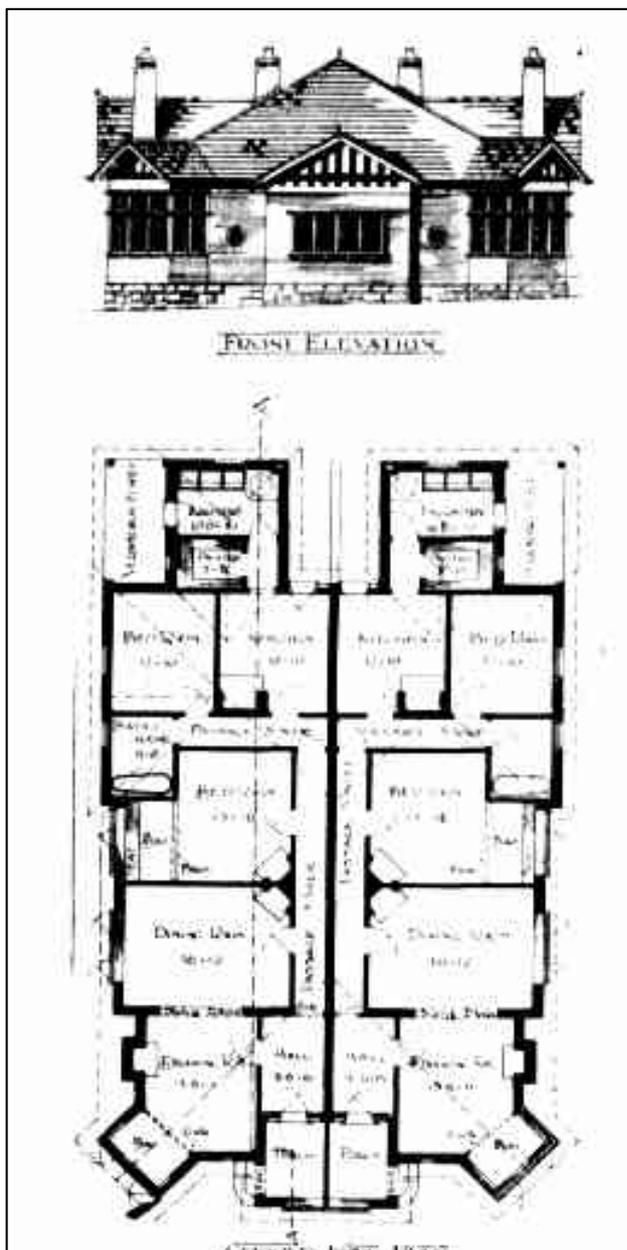
7.6 PATTERN BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

Although the California Bungalow was the dominant architectural style during the interwar period, magazines such as *The Australian Home Beautiful* also promoted styles such as Spanish Mission, Mediterranean, Tudor, Colonial Revival, Old English and Modernist. These tended to be used by architects, and were not reflected in the speculative construction of semis, which continued to display bungalow characteristics. It was common for Australian architects to travel to Britain, Europe and North America, bringing back ideas and trends, many of which were promulgated in local publications (Cuffley 1989, 2).

The Advances for Homes Department of the Government Savings Bank of NSW provided a *Plan Booklet* in 1929. Loans were made to lower income owners as long as the new dwelling was chosen from the catalogue of approved designs. Other published books included *101 Australian Homes* (John R Brogan 1935), *Australian Homes and Plans* (1935), *Practical Homes* (R L Spooner 1947) and *The 50 Best Practical Homes for 1948*. For those building their own houses, timber homes could be purchased pre-cut from the Hudson Timber Yard and the company also produced pattern books during the 1920s. Architectural journals such as *Architecture* and magazines such as *Art in Australia* also published house designs.

However, amongst this plethora of designs it was only magazines such as *Building* and *Construction* which contained any designs for semis (such as Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3). Most of the interwar journals and pattern books were targeted at the man who wished to build his dream detached home and live in it with his family.

Figure 7.2: Magazine design for semis, 1920.



(*Construction and Local Government Journal*, 2 August 1920, 12)

7.7 THE AVAILABILITY OF FINANCE

Home ownership as an ideal was facilitated by financial schemes implemented after the war. The Commonwealth Government provided home loans for ex-servicemen through the War Service Homes scheme. The *War Service Homes Act 1918* gave a high priority to the right of all Australians to own their own home. War services homes (which did not include semis) were built in suburbs including Belfield (1921) and Willoughby (1925).

The banks introduced new lending policies and the State Government in 1923 introduced legislation to support the creation of co-operative building societies on the English model. The *Savings Bank Act 1928* guaranteed the availability of home loans through the State-owned Government Savings Bank of NSW. In 1934 the State Government established the Homes for the Unemployed Trust which aimed to assist the unemployed to build their own "crude, simple dwellings" (Housing NSW 2007).

Borrowers could also access funds from Life Assurance Offices who operated Home Purchase Plans where an assurance policy was taken out with the same term as the loan, and on maturity paid out the loan.

Rent controls during and after the First World War made owning a rental property less profitable. Where investors might previously have invested directly in real estate, the economic return from rental properties became less certain. Instead, investors sought better returns in the rapidly-growing building society sector (Barrett and Phillips 1987, 20). As a consequence, building societies had the funds to offer loans, at reasonable rates of interest, to people who aspired to own, rather than to rent, a home. The credit foncier system adopted by the lenders provided long term loans with small deposits and small repayments, using the title of the property as security. Owning rather than renting a home became achievable for many Australians as mortgage finance became widely available.

7.8 SUBURBAN SEMIS

As the suburbs expanded, the vast majority of the new interwar dwellings were detached. Large tracts of Crown land were subdivided; the lots were sold at low prices and it was this cheap land that reduced the need for semis.

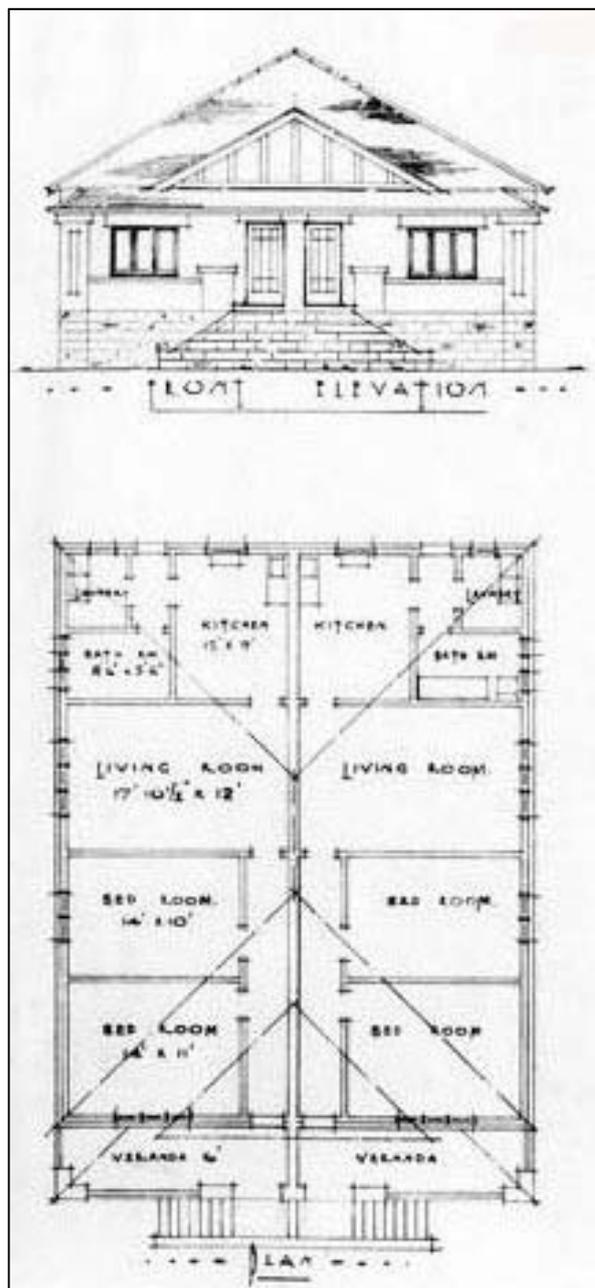
While economy will always call for the semi detached, triple or quadruple block building, there is really less economy from these arrangements than that of the ground area, but, where the latter is fairly cheap, this circumstance need not be considered, and wholly detached buildings should be erected. (*Building* 11 January 1919, 83)

The speculative builder, who had previously sold a large proportion of his product to investors wanting terraces and pairs of semis, now had an alternative (but just as lucrative) market – the man who was able to obtain finance to buy his own detached home.

The jerry-builder years ago built nice cottages – Queen Anne at the front and Mary Anne at the back – and let them to tenants at fictitious (sic) rentals. They were not concerned with providing homes for people, but with getting 10 per cent. gross profit when they unloaded them to the speculator. The speculative builder had gone out of business a good deal lately, but he was now building homes by the thousand, and making just as big a profit by selling them on easy terms to the public. (*SMH*, 25 October 1928, 1)

The proportion of semis in the new stock was further reduced by some councils refusing outright to approve that dwelling type, and others creating regulations which indirectly discouraged them by making them economically unviable. Nevertheless, in suburbs with good public transport, semis continued to be built (see Case Study 13 which describes the development of a pair of bungalow semis in Mosman). In North Sydney, with access greatly enhanced by the opening of the harbour bridge in 1932, some semis were designed by architects (for example Figure 7.4) while others were the standard speculative product. In many cases there was very little difference between the two. Although derived from the California Bungalow style, many interwar semis have patterned brickwork as their primary decorative feature (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.4: Architect-designed interwar semis, 1930.



Doris Street, North Sydney. Architect A Roy French. (North Sydney Council, Building North Sydney, 30/300003)

Figure 7.5: Interwar suburban semis.



O'Donnell Street, North Bondi. (Google Maps, May 2014)



Gardiner Street, Banksia. (Century 21 Real Estate ID 112555)

The depression during the 1930s ended most speculative home building. However, it created a small niche for semis. Many large suburban detached dwellings were set in grounds which included landscaped gardens and tennis courts. To improve cash-flows, some owners were forced to subdivide their properties, and sell the portion containing the tennis court for infill development. The land (usually a relatively small lot) was often purchased by a speculative builder, who constructed a small detached bungalow, or a pair of semis. The towns and suburbs of NSW contain many examples of Victorian or Federation streetscapes with an interwar pair of semis or small bungalow adjacent to a large, detached house. The semis in Figure 10.5 are on what was the tennis court of a large Federation house.

Although the dominant architectural style before the depression was the California Bungalow, the materials and labour shortages during the Second World War led to Functionalist, stripped-down semis (such as Figure 10.5).

7.9 GARDEN SUBURBS AND GARDEN VILLAGES

Between the wars NSW (unlike Victoria) had no large private housing developers (Robertson and Broomham 1997, 1). Many land speculators used grid street layouts which maximised the number of lots in a subdivision and the speculative builders continued to develop individual lots rather than designing new suburbs. Other suburbs such as Wahroonga continued to develop with large houses set in landscaped surroundings, although those suburbs were not specifically designed as garden suburbs. An exception was Walter Burley Griffin's designed suburb of Castlecrag. Few manufacturers built housing for their workers, although Australian Glass Manufacturers constructed flats for their workers and detached houses for managers in Kensington.

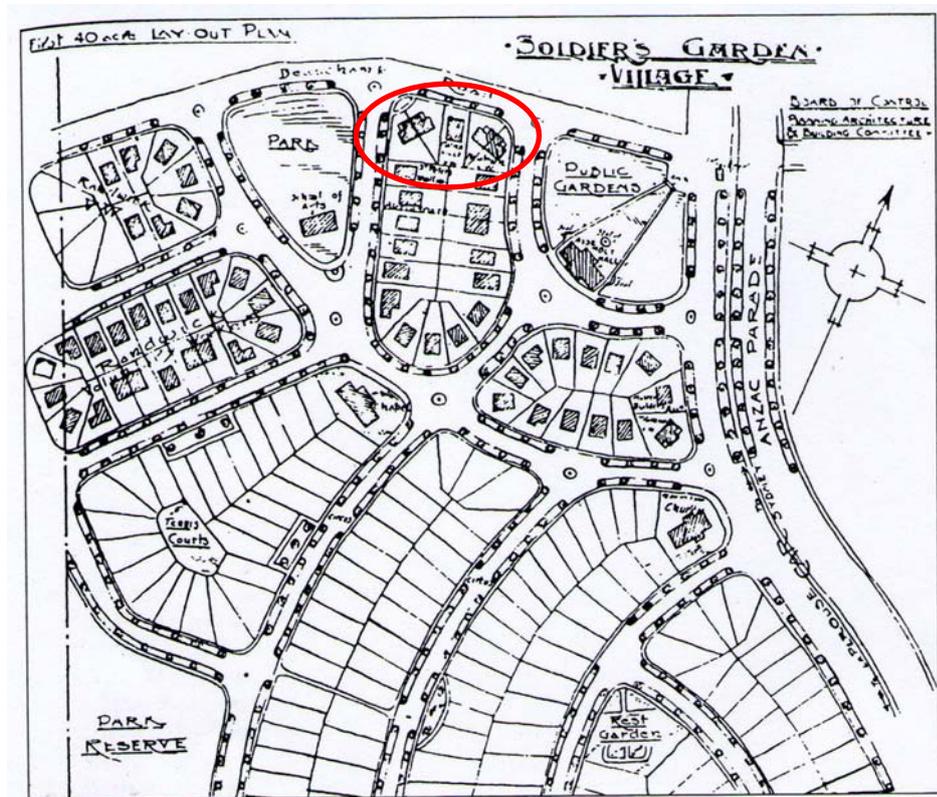
During the First World War the Commonwealth Government entered the sphere of housing the workers, using wartime defence legislation. A model village (Littleton Village) was planned near Lithgow, on 130 acres (53 hectares) adjacent to the Small Arms Factory, to house large numbers of munitions workers who could not obtain accommodation due to housing shortages in Lithgow. The house designs were adapted from the NSW Housing Board designs for Daceyville (Freestone 1989, 158). At the end of the war the factory continued to operate on a smaller scale, and in 1919 a tender for the first 100 dwellings at Littleton Village specified eight two-bedroom semis, 68 three-bedroom cottages and 24 four-bedroom cottages (Joint Committee of Public Accounts 1924, 3). Due to cost increases and materials shortages, the first cottages were not completed until September 1920, by which time the workforce was greatly diminished. The remaining cottages were handed over in 1921, and many of the houses remained empty until non-employees were permitted to rent the cottages. By 1924 the settlement was "neglected and unattractive" (Joint Committee of Public Accounts 1924, 6). The houses were eventually taken over by the State Government as public housing.

The garden suburb ideals prior to the war had emphasised physical and moral health; post-war it was the commercial benefits of garden suburbs which came to the fore (Freestone 1989, 85) although most suburban developments were reduced to the minimum features of curved roads, cul-de-sacs and low-density housing.

A voluntary association of returned servicemen and their families built the Matraville Soldiers Garden Village between 1919 and 1924. This was designed by John Sulman and, like most of the garden suburbs, included semis in the mix of dwelling types, despite Sulman's dislike of them. However, of the 93 cottages, only four were semis, and these were located on

corner sites on the busiest road (Figure 7.6). The homes later became part of the State Government's public housing portfolio and in 1977 all but one of the homes were demolished.

Figure 7.6: Layout of Matraville Soldiers Garden Village, 1919.



The housing included two pairs of semis (Freestone 1989, reproduced in Troy 2000, 213)

Ideal garden suburb designs became a standard assignment for architecture students and for town planning professionals during the interwar years (Freestone 1989, 105) and the inherent excellence and profitability of model suburbs provided inspiration for private entrepreneurs. However, the depression of the 1930s extinguished any residual enthusiasm for developing garden suburbs or garden villages in NSW.

7.10 PUBLIC HOUSING

While Britain was building large interwar council estates of semi-detached and terraced "Homes Fit for Heroes", in Australia the emphasis by both the State and Commonwealth Governments was on supporting returned servicemen to buy or build their own homes. However, the growth in home ownership in NSW was driven primarily by an expanding middle class; the availability of finance did not assist those people on very low incomes. After the war a low level of slum clearance was carried out, efforts to control rents were often ineffective, overcrowding worsened and evictions became a political issue. The State Government constructed small areas of public housing at Auburn, Bunnerong, Gladesville and Marrickville in Sydney, as well as Stockton and Woodville Junction in Newcastle

(Robertson and Broomham 1997, 1). The Stockton scheme was abandoned in 1920 and was the last low density public housing built by the State Government until after the Second World War (see Section 8.4).

Academics and politicians made several study trips to Britain and “returned to Australia imbued with the gospel of local government as the appropriate body to undertake any governmental experiment in housing for low-income people” (Volke 2006, 59). However, unlike the many British local authorities which had political and economic power, Sydney City Council was the only local authority in NSW with the resources to provide public housing.

Sydney City Council made an unsuccessful attempt to acquire land at Dawes Point and accused the State Government of:

... merely demolishing houses and using the land for commercial purposes, and a sum of £95,000 monthly was being lost in rents. (*SMH*, 17 February 1921, 10)

A change of government in 1932 brought renewed calls for the new conservative State Government to provide public housing as the depression created even more pressures on low-income housing. A Housing Improvement Board was created in 1936, in the hope of working with local councils to provide housing for the poor. In 1938 the Board built 56 flats in seven two-storey blocks in Erskineville, to house the “industrial classes” (Volke 2006, 80). There was a great deal of opposition from Erskineville Council to the building of the flats and they refused to contribute to the costs because:

Although the flats might be more habitable than the present homes of many residents of Erskineville, those who would be forced into the flats would be robbed of their privacy, and that, if an undesirable tenant got into flats, he could interfere with the comforts of the other tenants. It was also suggested that the encouragement of the flat system would tend further to reduce the birth-rate. (*SMH*, 24 August 1937, 11)

The Housing Improvement Board replied that:

The suggestion that the scheme for flats should be discarded in favour of a workmen’s cottage plan must be considered from the economic aspect. (*SMH*, 25 August 1937, 15)

The experiment at Erskineville was not repeated, particularly after it became evident that none of the new tenants were from any demolished slums. In addition, no slums were cleared in Erskineville itself, so the building of flats on previously open space only added to the suburb’s congestion.

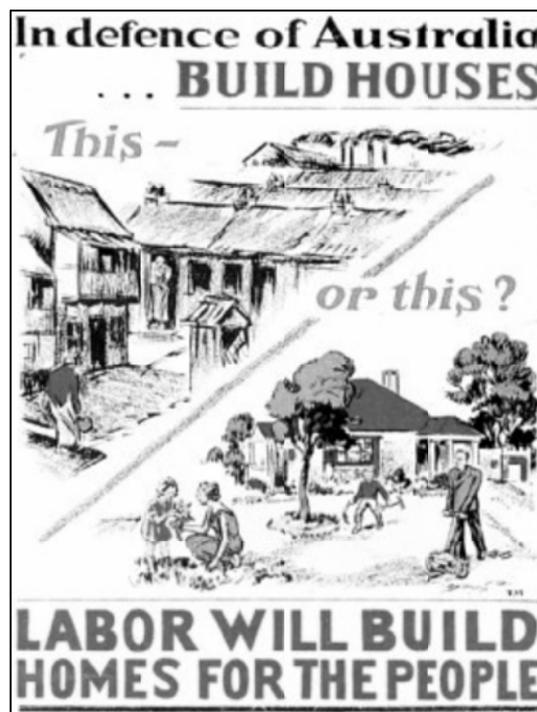
A petition in 1938 suggested:

If we desire to populate Australia with Australians we must encourage them to propagate... [the preference is for] semi-detached cottages or some other such design that will give each family a definite form of home life embodying a backyard to each home. (cited in Butler-Bowdon and Pickett 2007, 7)

Politicians of both parties continued to insist on the ownership of a cottage in the suburbs as the best solution for those displaced by slum clearances, despite this being a flawed business model. The Bishop of Bathurst stated that “whatever might be said in defence of flats for our cities, I cannot see any justification for them in country towns” (*SMH*, 4 October 1937, 11). Thus the housing situation continued to deteriorate, and politicians were reluctant to challenge the conventional wisdom that private enterprise should solve it.

In 1941 a Labor State Government was once again elected, with promises to “build homes for the people” (Figure 7.7). The poster implies that that attached housing was “out” and a detached cottage, with lawns and gardens was the solution. The *Housing Act 1941* created the Housing Commission of NSW which had wide powers to resume land and build public housing without requiring cooperation from local authorities. And after the Second World War ended, public housing was put firmly back on the agenda.

Figure 7.7: Election poster, 1941.



(Volke 2006, 93)

7.11 CONCLUSIONS

Prior to the Great Depression:

Australia was one of the most urbanised nations in the world. Sydney, the country's largest and fastest growing city, was rapidly becoming a cosmopolitan metropolis. Between the 1910s and 30s, it was significantly reshaped: new architectural monuments changed its appearance, department stores altered patterns of consumption, apartment blocks rearranged domestic life, and a subway network moved transport underground. (Art Gallery of NSW 2013)

Yet, while the two-storey, three bedroom, interwar semi in Britain came to define suburbia there, the semi in NSW struggled for acceptance. In England the monotonous rows of universal semis gave rise to epithets such as "soul destroying anonymity" and "Anywheresville/Nowheresville" (Oliver *et al.* 1981, 9); the small, neat, single-storey semi-detached bungalows in NSW meanwhile tucked themselves unobtrusively into streetscapes of detached bungalows.

Although slum clearances between the wars continued on a small scale, the evicted residents were either housed in flats or in new suburbs far from their social ties. The cleared land was considered too valuable for working class housing. In one "remodelling" in Surry Hills the priority was clear:

The reduction of unnecessary streets... will give additional land for industrial purposes, and consequently, additional revenue to the City Council. (*SMH*, 13 August 1927, 16)

By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 there was an estimated shortage of around 80,000 homes in NSW (Housing Commission of NSW 1948, 7) even though the suburbs had expanded enormously. Scott Robertson suggests that:

The middle ring interwar suburbs display a uniformity of streetscape, colour, form and architectural detail that gives them a sense of harmony. Such harmony has been created through conformity; conformity of aesthetic approach and conformity to society's norms of house ownership and political meekness. As such, interwar housing epitomises the British-derived and American-influenced stable nature of Australian society... (Robertson and Broomham 1997, 3)

A water shortage during the war prompted the following comments:

The elimination of terraced houses and the abolition of slums, and the substitution therefore of homes with gardens; the rise in the standard of living and habits; the provision of sewers over the balance of the metropolitan area; and the growth in industries requiring much water, all tend to increase water consumption.

It is most probable that, after the war, there will be a big influx of population into Australia. Industries will expand, and others will be transferred from the stricken lands. Sydney will grow – perhaps at a rate beyond our dreams. (*SMH*, 5 June 1941, 3)

The correspondent was prescient. There was indeed an influx of European migrants, many of whom came from a high density housing environment. The cheap, reviled terraced houses and the slightly less unloved semi-detached houses of Sydney and its suburbs provided very satisfactory accommodation for them. This, overlaid with a regulatory framework which controlled the rentals payable for such dwellings, was to transform the stock of semis and terraces in post-war NSW.

8.0 THE POST-SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD – 1946 TO 1980

8.1 INTRODUCTION

By the mid-twentieth century, like most cities which developed during the nineteenth century, Sydney had a CBD surrounded by declining inner suburbs (such as Glebe, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Paddington), a ring of intermediate suburbs (such as Ashfield, Auburn, Botany, Canterbury, Concord, Drummoyne, Hunters Hill, Hurstville, Kogarah, Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, Randwick, Strathfield, Willoughby, Woollahra) and the expanding outer suburbs (such as Bankstown, Blacktown, Fairfield, Holroyd, , Liverpool, Parramatta, Ryde, Baulkham Hills, Hornsby, Sutherland, Wahroonga). Some of the inner suburbs had poor quality buildings while others were once-desirable areas which had suffered a decline. There were ongoing calls from politicians, councils, social workers and developers for the demolition of terraced housing, despite the most severe housing shortage NSW had ever experienced.

The housing shortage, plus the need to provide for returned servicemen and their families, prompted a large State Government program of building suburban public housing estates (see Section 8.4). For the first time, the goal of moving many working class tenants from the inner city terraces to detached or semi-detached houses in the suburbs was achieved, although some were rehoused in flats. The number of occupied dwellings in NSW increased rapidly (Table 5), and the population was also boosted by the arrival of large numbers of European migrants and displaced people. Over three quarters of the population growth of Sydney from 1947 to 1971 comprised European and British immigrants and their Australian-born children (Spearritt 1978, 91).

Table 5: Number of occupied dwellings in NSW

1947	747,343
1954	912,877
1960	1,082,616

(Royal Commission 1961, 93)

As working class Australians moved to the public housing in the suburbs, the inner city terraces were occupied by the European migrants, who found the high density lifestyle both very familiar and very affordable. During the 1960s people who were tired of the sterility of the outer suburbs also began moving into the terraced housing of the inner city. They included many artists who were interested in more cosmopolitan lifestyles. Resident groups such as The Glebe Society were formed to protect their built environment. The spontaneous

rehabilitation of old housing stock which these movements generated, most noticeably in Paddington, was achieved without government intervention, and it resulted in many plans for wholesale demolition and redevelopment being shelved (Roseth 1969, 2). Community opposition to the loss of the state's old buildings eventually prompted government action.

Protection for built heritage had commenced in a small way via the 1945 changes to the *Local Government Act 1919*. Section 342G(3)(p) introduced provisions for "the preservation of places or objects of historical or scientific interest or natural beauty or advantage". The National Trust (NSW) was founded the same year, and articulated criteria for identifying and listing what might be important to preserve. In 1951 the Trust prepared a list of important places, all of which were from the nineteenth century. The new Commonwealth Labor Government in 1972 established a Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate, which resulted in the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. These first formal steps towards a regulatory framework of heritage conservation in Australia were followed up in NSW by the landmark *Heritage Act 1977*.⁵¹ This created the NSW Heritage Council which was able to protect threatened items by declaring Interim Conservation Orders and Permanent Conservation Orders. The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (which came into force in 1980) created a three tiered system of State, regional (now repealed) and local levels of heritage significance, and enabled the creation of heritage conservation areas in NSW. The Act requires the impacts of any proposed development of a heritage item to be taken into consideration by the consent authorities. The *NSW Heritage Act 1977* was amended in 1998 to create the State Heritage Register and in 2004 the Commonwealth Government introduced the National Heritage List.

The regulatory framework for new buildings in NSW changed dramatically after the war. Town planning provisions were inserted into the *Local Government Act 1919* in 1945 and three years later the City of Sydney was brought under the jurisdiction of the Act. The State Government created the Cumberland County Council⁵², and in 1948 the *Cumberland County Planning Scheme Report* was released. Its wide-ranging planning guidelines for suburban growth included hubs with facilities such as businesses, entertainment and education. Local councils within the county were obliged to prepare planning schemes. Surrounding the urban areas was to be a "green belt" with transport networks linking the city, the suburbs and the rural areas, although political infighting between the layers of government and various housing authorities made the scheme only partially successful. The *Height of Buildings Act 1912*, which limited heights to 150 feet (46m) was repealed in 1957, allowing tower buildings

⁵¹ Britain has had heritage legislation since 1882.

⁵² NSW is divided into 141 counties, for the registration of land titles. They have no government or administrative functions. The County of Cumberland was established in 1788 and now comprises metropolitan Sydney and its outskirts. It had a county government from 1945 until 1964, with its primary focus on the town planning of the metropolitan area.

such as high-rise blocks of flats to be built in the city. This made it possible to cheaply rehouse inner city labourers displaced by ongoing slum clearances and land resumptions.

The *Rent Control Act 1948* had far-reaching effects, with the creation of “protected” tenants who were a major barrier to the proposed demolitions of terraces and semis (see Section 8.3). The subsequent frenzy of de facto subdivision (see Section 8.3), with sales of dwellings in a building to multiple owners, further hindered any demolition schemes.

Post-war housing was provided by a mix of speculative builders and the State Government, as well as a significant number of owner/builders. Some of the latter employed professional builders while others literally built their own dwellings (often with Fibrolite; sheets of asbestos cement) on cheap blocks of land. The war-time and immediate post-war shortages of building materials led to restrictions on the size and form of housing. Any semis which were built were small, simple and unadorned. Of the 58,000 houses built in Sydney between 1948 and 1953, over 50% were fibro, 47% brick and 3% weatherboard (Spearritt 1978, 17). The suburbs spread far beyond the reaches of public transport, as the private motor car made new areas accessible.

Sydney’s tram network, one of the largest in the world, was gradually dismantled and replaced by buses. The network, which had been so influential in facilitating the construction of Federation and interwar semis, was closed in 1961. Cars and motorways were seen as the future, rather than public transport. The new road infrastructure, such as the Warringah Freeway and the Cahill Expressway, often required the demolition of working class housing. In response to the incessant demands for redevelopment during the early 1970s, local resident groups gained the support of the Builders Labourers Federation, which imposed Green Bans and refused to work on demolition projects. The bans prevented the destruction of many areas of terraced housing, such as The Rocks.

8.2 HOME OWNERSHIP AND THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM

Middle class and upper working class colonial Australians with an English background placed a high value on external space, and they formed the major groups in the expanding suburbs in NSW (Davison 2000). Scots placed a lower value on the detached house and garden, but aspired to family privacy and home ownership. The Irish preferred a small piece of land on which to grow vegetables or keep animals, but ownership and domestic privacy were less important.

What the immigrants sought, and what their homeland often denied, was domestic independence. Freedom from the neighbours, freedom from the landlord, freedom from the boss: these, as much as the moral, aesthetic, sanitary and social ideals of the ideal English middle class, were the homeland dreams on which the Australian home was founded. (Davison 2000, 20)

Australia today is considered to be a relatively egalitarian society, with equitable access to the “dream” of home ownership. This was particularly the case during the period following the Second World War when almost 90% of all households had a taste of ownership at some stage of their lives (Neutze and Kendig 1991).⁵³ Politically, especially during the cold war, home ownership was also seen as a means of ensuring stability and docility amongst the masses.

An online search⁵⁴ of Australian newspapers and journals suggests that the first use of the term “Great Australian Dream” was in relation to unionism, when the dream was for “equal opportunity for all” (*The Mildura Cultivator*, 30 April 1913, 8). By 1954 it was a “nice farm or an orchard” in the country (*The Brisbane Courier-Mail*, 7 August 1954, 1). But by 1966:

The great Australian dream has almost always included a beaut big house with a great big backyard. (*The Canberra Times*, 24 February 1966, 3)

“Dream Homes” were reported on by the *Australian Women’s Weekly* (16 June 1934, 26) while in 1941 the magazine built and furnished a Dream Home which was donated to and raffled by the Red Cross (23 August 1941, 7). By the time Robin Boyd satirised the Great Australian Dream in his last book (Boyd 1972) the concept of owning a house, preferably set in a garden on a quarter-acre suburban lot, was well entrenched in the urban Australian psyche. It is reflected in the significant increase in home ownership after the Second World War, some of which was due to the construction of new homes and some to the subdivision and sale of attached housing (see Section 8.3).

The Great Australian Dream was facilitated by ready finance, relatively high wages, cheap land and pattern books showing people how to build their own home. For example, *The Australian Carpenter* by C Lloyd was first published in 1948, and reprinted many times. It provided plans for a simple, two bedroom fibro house and complete instructions on how to build it.

8.3 RENT CONTROL AND DE FACTO SUBDIVISION

Today it is common for individual terraced houses in a row, and each semi in a pair, to be in separate ownership under Torrens title (similar to the title of a detached house on its own parcel of land). As with detached houses and apartments, individual terraced houses and individual semis may now be owner-occupied, or leased by their owners to tenants. As

⁵³ Although “home ownership has fallen for all but the oldest households”. More than 60% of 25-to 34-year-olds owned their own home in 1981. By 2011, it was down to 48 per cent (*SMH*, December 13-14 2014, 27).

⁵⁴ Using Trove, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper?q=>

discussed in Section 7.3, the ability to subdivide a terrace or a pair of semis into individual titles was made possible by the *Local Government Act 1919*, as long as the resulting lots met the minimum size set by the local council, or the building had been constructed before 1920 and could therefore be subdivided without council approval. However, as long as terraces and pairs of semis provided a reasonable rental return for their owners, there was no pressure to subdivide. It was the introduction of rent control legislation in 1948 which created the surge of de facto subdivisions that occurred during the 1950s and to a lesser extent, the 1960s. This transformed the pre-1920 stock of buildings containing attached dwellings. Where a building had previously been owned by one investor and occupied by multiple tenants, now each terrace or pair of semis had multiple owners, and many of those owners occupied their own dwelling. This subdivision of attached housing in NSW had significant implications for the later preservation (as well as degradation, see Sections 10.3 and 10.7) of such buildings during attempts to redevelop the late Victorian and Federation suburbs. By having to deal with multiple owners rather than a single investor, developers found it difficult to acquire degraded buildings for demolition and the redevelopment of the land.

The *Landlord and Tenant Act 1899* was the first stage in regulating the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants in NSW, although it stopped short of rent control. There was an unsuccessful attempt by the new Labor State Government in 1913 to introduce legislation for rent control but the *Fair Rents Act 1915* secured tenants' rights, and determined matters such as fair rents and acceptable rates of return on real estate investments. During the depression of the 1930s further measures were put in place to secure tenants' rights. Then in 1939 NSW introduced an amended *Fair Rents Act* which pegged rents at the rates prevailing on 31 August 1939. Some of these provisions were suspended in 1941 in favour of the *National Security (Landlord & Tenant) Regulations*. These regulations were based on the Commonwealth Government's wartime defence powers. After the war ended in 1945 the validity of these controls was challenged and they finally ceased. However, under pressure from tenants' advocates, NSW then adopted similar controls. The *NSW Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act 1948* repealed the *Fair Rents Act 1939* and created a class of protected tenancies. In general terms it applied to dwellings and shops with weekly rents not exceeding 3 pounds 10 shillings and 6 pence respectively. The Act severely controlled the right of landlords and tenants to freely determine the major terms of their relationship, and in an extraordinary victory for the rent control lobby Section 15 had the effect of fixing the rents of these prescribed premises at the rate applying on the prescribed date of 31 August 1939, some nine years previously. For dwellings built after that date, rents were fixed at the levels in force on 1 March 1945.

Rents were fixed notwithstanding any alterations, additions, repairs and renovations, or any change of ownership or tenancy. Nor could it be a lease condition that the tenants would make improvements and carry out repairs. Conversely, the landlord could not let a dwelling-

house which was not in "fair and tenable repair". Tenants could be evicted, but only under very strict conditions. If a dwelling was sold, and was to be occupied by the new owner, the tenant required six months' notice to quit, and the lessor had to find alternative accommodation for the tenant (*Government Gazette* No 96, 13 August 1948, 2107).

The Act defined a dwelling-house as any prescribed premises (including shared accommodation) leased for the purposes of residence, and included lodging houses and boarding houses, and any part of a residence which was leased separately for the purposes of residence. Although this definition also included detached dwellings, attached housing provided the bulk of the dwellings covered by the Act. It was the owners of terraces and pairs of semis who were the most seriously impacted.

As rental properties, terraced houses and semis originally provided very satisfactory returns for investors. However, if rent is pegged while the market value of a dwelling rises, the yield to a landlord will fall. This provided an incentive for a landlord to sell rent controlled dwellings. Selling a whole terrace or semi-detached building to another landlord was not viable, because the tenants remained protected, and significant outlays on building maintenance were still required after many years of neglect during the depression and the war. However, selling the individual dwellings was made possible by the de facto subdivision clause in the *Local Government Act 1919*. There was a growing demand (and ready financing) for the Great Australian Dream of home ownership, fuelled by post-war immigration. Tenants were almost impossible to evict legally, but they were very keen to purchase their own home. In some cases the tenant could be offered a sum of money to vacate the premises, which they could then use as a deposit on a different dwelling, but in most cases the tenants purchased the dwellings they were already living in. In effect, rent control led to a transfer of dwellings into the owner/occupier market.

During the 1950s and 1960s, registered surveyors carried out thousands of de facto subdivisions of attached dwellings in NSW, and most of the dwellings were sold by the landlords to the protected tenants, often at significantly discounted prices or on terms, especially after an amendment in 1958 made it mandatory to give a tenant first refusal on the sale of a prescribed dwelling (Kevin Blume pers. comm. September 2004). After 1958 a dwelling was no longer prescribed if the tenant moved out.

In 1961 a Royal Commission was set up to investigate the impacts of rent control. The evidence included the following:

Over the years of control, has there been a trend of people trying to get rid of their property? Yes, and it has been most marked in the last 6 or 7 years (Royal Commission 1961, 807).

And with regard to those sales, they are all sold subject to tenancies, I take it, or to the tenant? In most cases the sales have been to the tenants or to speculators. In a great number of cases the dwellings were sold well below valuation and many on a deposit and then paid off weekly. A speculator will buy a terrace (tenanted) when an owner does not want a sale to tenants on deposit but says "I have had them. I do not want anything on terms. I want to be rid of them. I need the money. Get me the best cash price you can." The speculator then tries to get rid of the tenants, does up any vacant dwellings and arranges finance for the purchaser. There was a frightful lot of people anxious to get homes especially when the owner was forced to sell below its value (Royal Commission 1961, 808).

Rent control also had the effect of curtailing the speculative building of investment properties, with any available funds going instead into institutions which could finance owner/occupiers.

While people have not been investing and putting their properties to rent, like ordinary terrace houses which were once built, duplex cottages and flats, one might very well ask – where is the money going? You have a situation where Mrs Jones, instead of building herself a pair of duplex houses in order that she can get some return from them when she gets old, invests it in an investment company (Royal Commission 1961, 1529).

Dwellings built after 1954 were not subject to rent control, but there continued to be very little construction of private rental dwellings. Evidence to the Royal Commission stated that the percentage of rented dwellings in Sydney (houses and flats, including government housing) fell from 44% in 1947 to 32% in 1954, a period during which the proportion of government housing rose. By 1961 the proportion of private rented dwellings was only 25%.

Local councils became very concerned about their lack of control over the enormous increase in the number of small housing lots in their residential areas, the result of a subdivision clause which more than thirty years before had been drafted with farmland in mind. In 1951 Mosman Council added a motion to the agenda of that year's Local Government Conference:

THAT this Conference is concerned at the fact that the Registrar General regards the existence of semi-detached and terraced houses upon an allotment of land as constituting a subdivision in fact, and justifying the issuance of separate titles for the several parts of such allotment. The result of the issuance of separate titles in such cases is that allotments of land are being created with frontages far narrower than would be approved at the present time, (some being as narrow as 20 feet, 15 feet or even 11 feet), and that these, passing into separate ownership, will, after the life of

the existing buildings, be called upon to accommodate individual dwellings of very inferior and undesirable plan forms. This Conference therefore requests the Minister to take such steps as will prevent the issuance in the future of separate title in such cases (Minutes of Mosman Council Meeting, 10 July 1951, 4).

Although the Conference passed the resolution almost unanimously, the de facto subdivision clause remained in force. The concept of owning a whole building of terraced houses or semis as an investment was generally abandoned. De facto subdivision remained in force until 1998, with some tightening of the conditions in 1983 (see Appendix 4 for the Registrar General's Directions). In 1998 the *Environmental Protection and Assessment Act 1979* was amended, and local councils now control all subdivisions.

The rent control provisions introduced in 1948 remain in force, albeit with major amendments during the intervening years. By 1971 only around 10% of the rental stock in NSW was controlled (Spearritt 1978, 18). A recent attempt to repeal the Act was dropped after opposition from the Tenants' Union of NSW. In an emotive newspaper article it was reported that:

In the absence of any reliable data, a government discussion paper said it was unknown if any such "protected tenancies" remained. But the tenants' union said this was "palpably wrong" and more than 600 people - mostly aged pensioners such as Mr Shearer - would be forced out if the act were scrapped. "It is well-known that these tenancies do exist, and their number is relatively small but significant," its senior policy officer, Chris Martin, said. "If the law is repealed, these elderly tenants will lose their homes of many years. Many will face homelessness." (*SMH*, 22 November 2012)

8.4 PUBLIC HOUSING

The *Housing Act 1941* paved the way for the creation of the Housing Commission of NSW in 1942. In 1945 the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement allocated Commonwealth funds for the states to provide housing for ex-servicemen and other families who were living in substandard accommodation. Just prior to the introduction of rent control in 1948, the Housing Commission constructed a three-storey block of 31 "garden flats" around a landscaped courtyard in Balmain. All of the flats had balconies, and each was self-contained with the exception of shared laundry facilities (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 48). Attention soon turned to the development of complete estates of public housing. The Commission stated in its 1949 publication *Homes for the People* that it was going to be "impossible for substandard conditions ever to develop" on its estates. The aim was to build a "comfortable, well-appointed dwelling for every family in the community...within the compass of this country's resources and capacity" (Spearritt 2000, 93-94). Each dwelling was to have a minimum lot size of 557 square metres and, as the British *Housing Manual* had

done after the First World War, the Commission's brochure included site layouts, house plans and construction advice. The cottage designs ranged from two to four bedrooms and were built of fibro, brick or timber. The building could cover only up to 20% of the lot.

The first planned neighbourhood estate was built during the 1950s at Orphan School Creek in Canley Vale, consisting of hundreds of detached and some semi-detached houses, with local facilities such as shops and schools. Other 1950s public housing developments were at Ryde, Villawood, Maroubra, Seven Hills, Ermington, Rydalmere, Dundas Valley, Newcastle, Unanderra and Wollongong (Housing NSW 2007). During the 1960s the largest ever public housing suburb was built at Mt Druitt, to house 32,000 people in over 9,000 dwellings (Spearritt 1978, 11).

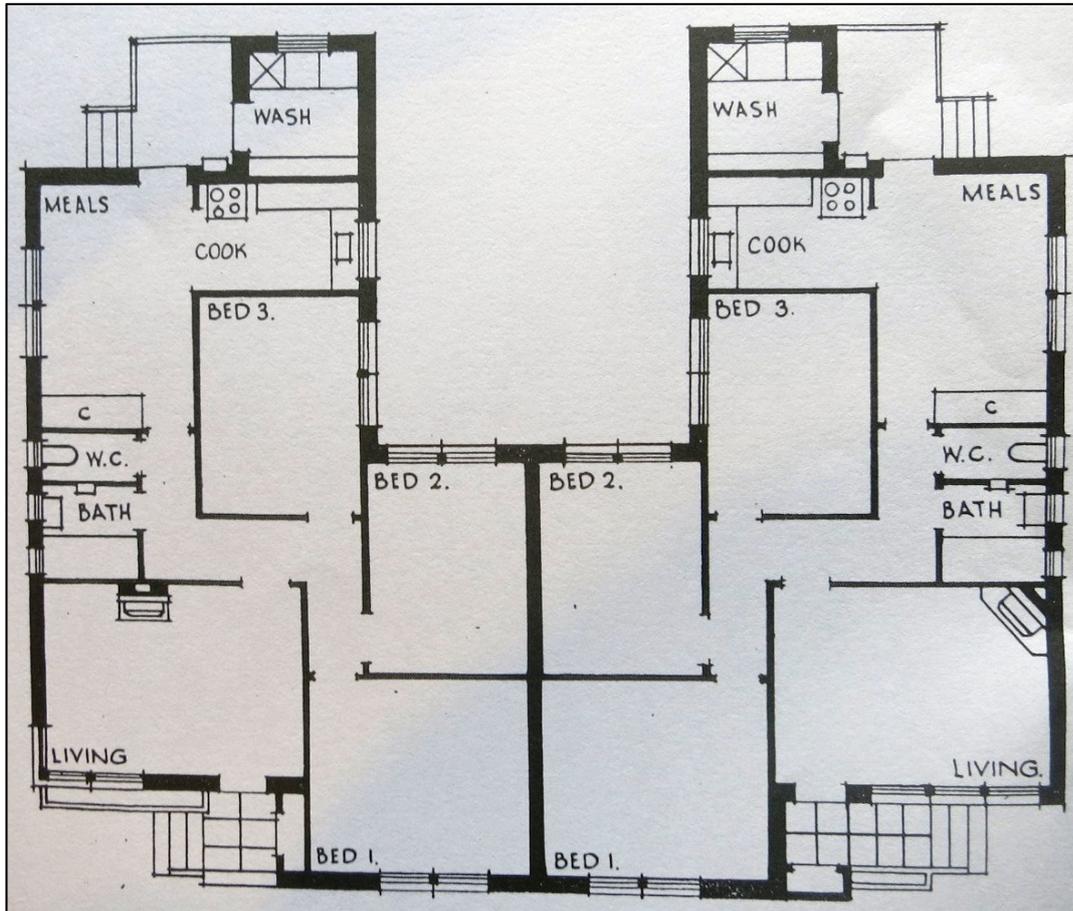
Single-storey detached dwellings of various sizes were designed for small, medium and large families. Semis, duplexes and two-storey dwellings were also included in the mix provided by the Housing Commission. Such "double unit" dwellings were erected in locations where:

Greater density of population is acknowledged and they will be utilised to obtain full housing advantage from allotments of intermediate size. Especially will this apply to areas of land considered too large for an individual home but too small for subdivision into two lots. ... Apart from the economic aspect, the intermingling of double unit types will lend additional variety to the already wide and splendid selection of individual home designs which the Commission is building. (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 52)

The semis (Figure 8.1) were designed to enjoy "individuality and privacy". They were effectively double-fronted and, like the British universal semis, the Commission's semis had entry porches at each side (rather than in the centre of the building) to maximise privacy. In addition, just as John Nash had achieved with his pairs of villas in the nineteenth century:

The broad appearance presented by the plan illustrated conveys the impression of one big house. This feature is in striking contrast with the monotonous sameness of the old symmetrical semi-detached home which possessed no individual relieving characteristics. (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 52)

Figure 8.1: Housing Commission of NSW semis, 1947.



(Decoration and Glass May-June 1947, 52)

There was also the “extremely interesting approach” taken by the Commission to housing the elderly, with provision made for both married couples and unmarried or widowed older people:

Recognising the rightful place of these people as an integral part of the well-balanced community, the Commission very definitely rejected the idea of concentrating this class of dwelling in a particular area set aside for the purpose. On the contrary, these dwellings will be interspersed on suitable sites throughout all of the Housing Commission projects.

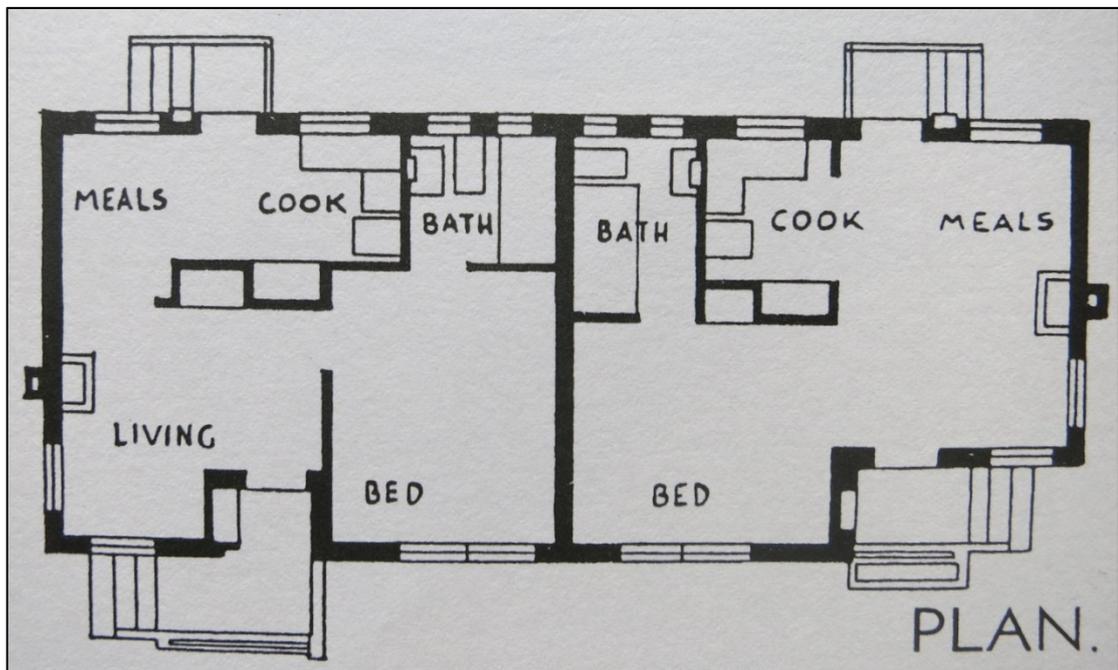
Plans provide for two separate types in this special category of small unit homes.

First is the unit designed for the “Darby and Joan” couple. Built in pairs but giving the external appearance of one house, internal arrangement of the individual units provides everything that could be desired for the comfort and simple living needs of the elderly married couple. *(Decoration and Glass May-June 1947, 38)*

The floor plans of the semis were not symmetrical (Figure 8.2) and the open-plan design was very basic:

There are no large and unnecessary rooms to provide cleaning worries and the whole lay-out has been most compactly designed with practical consideration to that all important object. Each unit will have its own separate garden at front and rear (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 38).

Figure 8.2: Housing Commission semis for elderly married couples, 1947.



(*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 38).

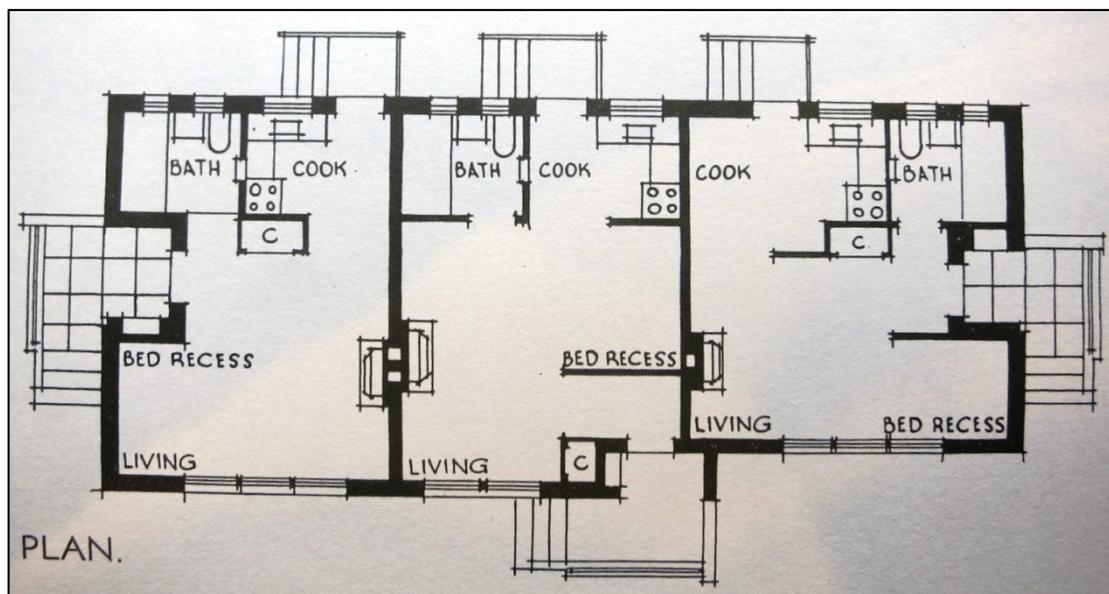
For single elderly people, a short terrace of three dwellings was considered appropriate (Figure 8.3). The fact that the terrace form was used lends weight to the assertion that the *Local Government Act 1919*, which was still in force, had not directly outlawed terraces (see Section 7.4). As a State body the NSW Housing Commission did not have to seek building approvals from a local council for their dwellings, and the threat of de facto subdivision of the small dwellings was not considered important because no State public housing at that time was being sold to the tenants.

The small terraced houses, like the semis, appeared externally as one large dwelling. For the interiors:

(An) outstanding feature of the plan is the provision of a compact interior arrangement more along the lines of a self-contained bachelor flat but with the added improvement of greater privacy and the other advantages common to the individual home.

Each "flat" has an individual entrance but generally the front and back garden areas will be common to all three tenants for easy working. (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 38)

Figure 8.3: Terraced houses for single elderly people, 1947.



(*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 38)

The semi-detached and terrace buildings were of a size and scale such that:

(The) total area of the whole building, both in the case of doubles and triples, comes up to the scale of the normal Housing Commission home. Continuous street harmony is thereby preserved as the units blend with the surrounding dwellings of other types. (*Decoration and Glass* May-June 1947, 38)

By 1954 the Housing Commission was building 108 dwellings per week, with a target of 30,000 by the end of June that year (*SMH*, 30 April 1954, 7). The housing schemes were being developed in many country towns as well as in the suburbs of Sydney. For example, the Maroubra Speedway site, covering 137 acres (55.4 hectares), was developed to house 4,000 people. The Housing Commission erected 374 flats, 662 maisonettes, semi-detached

and detached cottages and 12 shops, with the different dwelling types mixed within each streetscape (Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.4: Layout of public housing scheme, Maroubra, 1954.



The layout shows large numbers of semis in the dwelling mix. (SMH, 30 April 1954, 7)

Many tenants took pride in their new homes.

Inspection of Commission estates reveals that many tenants have devoted considerable time, effort, money and imagination to the creation of beautiful lawns and gardens. Proof indeed, that well-designed, colourfully decorated homes induce civic pride, so necessary to the development of better towns and cities. (SMH, 30 April 1954, 7)

By June 1956 the Housing Commission had fallen short of its targets, but nevertheless had built 23,863 dwellings in Sydney and 13,855 in the rest of the state (NSW Housing Commission Annual Report 1956). After 1956, a new conservative government decided that 80% of any new Housing Commission dwellings would be offered for sale on small deposits. The first high-rise public housing was “Northcott Place” in Surry Hills (1961) to house inner city residents. This building was originally planned by Sydney City Council, but the State Government took over the provision of housing from the City during the 1950s. The whole of Sydney City Council’s housing portfolio was transferred to the State Housing Department in 1988.

Although the *Local Government Act 1919* had made it possible for local councils to provide housing, Ryde Municipal Council was the only one, apart from Sydney City Council, to do so. Between 1945 and 1952 they borrowed money, built 599 brick and fibro houses, and sold them at cost to ex-servicemen and civilians. In addition, mortgage finance was provided for an additional 360 dwellings (*Architecture in Australia* June 1962, 85). All of the dwellings built were detached houses.

After 1962 townhouses (which were terraced houses with a new identity; see Section 8.6) were often mixed with detached cottages in the public housing estates. By the 1970s the Housing Commission of NSW had built more than 100,000 dwellings, and the medium-density townhouse was the main dwelling type (Housing NSW 2007). Community opposition to high-rise public housing was increasing, as well as social problems within the large enclaves of suburban Housing Commission estates. The large public housing programs were curtailed during the 1980s, and the government focus shifted towards smaller-scale infill projects and the spot purchasing of appropriate dwellings in existing suburbs. The Housing Commission became the Department of Housing⁵⁵ and the priority became the rehabilitation of the existing public housing stock and its allocation to those most in need, rather than to working class people in general.

8.5 THE CONVEYANCING (STRATA TITLES) ACT 1961

Prior to 1961 blocks of flats could only be sold as one building to an investor, or to a company which issued shares to occupants for their exclusive use of each flat. Lending institutions were reluctant to lend for the purchase of company title flats, and with mounting pressure to make the purchase of an individual flat easier, the State Government introduced the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act 1961*. A strata title gives ownership of the interior of a flat, and shared ownership of any common areas. The world's first new strata-titled block of 18 flats was built in Liverpool Road, Burwood in 1961. Many older blocks of flats were also converted to strata title. The Act was updated in 1973 and the concept of strata title was adopted in other Australian states and in many overseas countries.

In 1961 71% of Sydney's private dwellings were owner-occupied; 80% of all houses but only 21% of flats. Flat building had recommenced in a small way after rent controls were removed from flats in 1954, but after 1961 the ease of obtaining finance to purchase a strata-titled apartment led to a massive increase in speculative flat construction. Many of these were "three-storey walk-ups" with setbacks on each side, often with dominant concrete driveways and minimal landscaping.

⁵⁵ And later Housing NSW.

Strata title, and the ability to own an individual flat or apartment, signalled the end of the dominance of the detached dwelling in NSW. The dream of home ownership could now be achieved with an apartment, and the speculators and developers were quick to seize the opportunity to build for owners rather than tenants. Apartments, ranging from small flats to large, luxurious penthouses now outnumber detached dwellings in many suburbs as well as the inner city of Sydney. Ironically, as many of the speculative 1960s blocks of private flats reach the end of their useful lives, their multiple ownership structures (just as they did with terraces and pairs of semis) are making it almost impossible to demolish the buildings and redevelop the sites.

8.6 THE RE-EMERGENCE OF TERRACES AND SEMIS

Although no new terraced houses were approved by local councils after 1920 due to the threat of de facto subdivision, the *Local Government Act* was amended in 1962 to allow rows of attached terraced houses (renamed town houses) to be built by developers. However, unlike the previous situation where a row of terraced houses was one building on one parcel of land, the new town houses were built on already-subdivided lots of land, each of which met the minimum lot size and frontage. The restriction on a side boundary setback on each lot was relaxed if a party wall was built on that boundary. Section 48a of the *Local Government Act* stated:

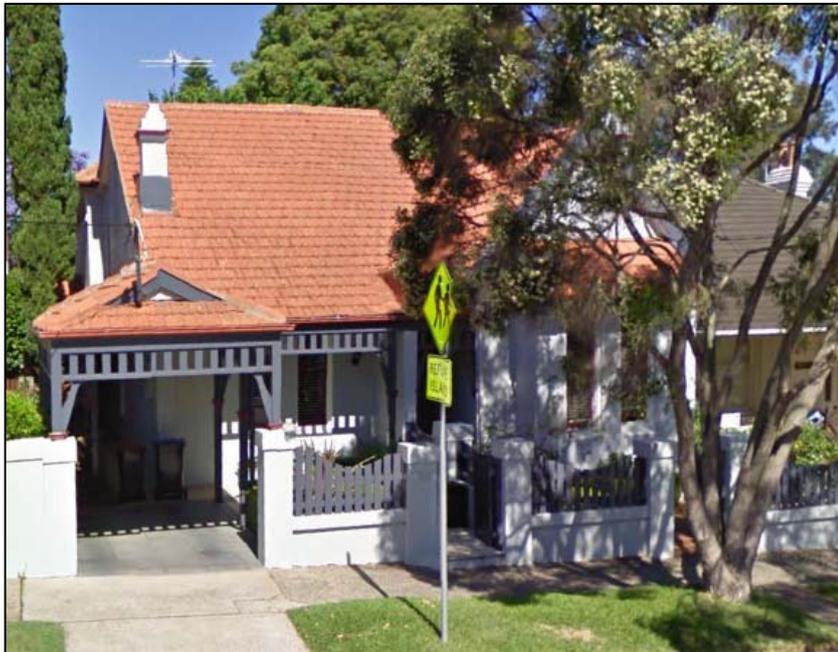
... provided also that where two or more dwellings attached to each other such as are commonly known as semi-detached or terrace buildings are erected on two or more separate parcels of land and are separated from each other by party walls, [setback requirements]... shall not apply to such party walls.

Local councils no longer rejected building applications for rows of terraced houses or town houses, because the subdivision had already occurred (and therefore de facto subdivision into small lots was not a threat). With higher density living in flats now well accepted, and the rehabilitation of the old inner city terraced houses, there was no longer any public opposition to the construction of new terraces or middle class rejection of living in a terrace. Speculators were able to build larger terraces (town houses), which had not been economically viable during the interwar period, knowing that they were now attractive for middle class purchasers. Town houses with no shared property usually have a Torrens title, while those with common areas such as driveways and parking areas tend to be strata titled.

After the Second World War semis had not been a widely used building form in the suburban expansion of NSW towns and cities, except for public housing. Community disdain of the suburban semi-detached housing type had developed; they were considered inferior to a "proper" detached house and lacking the character and desirable inner city lifestyle offered by a terraced house. With detached housing relatively affordable, the private construction of

semis was not required. Their use for public housing had also reduced their general appeal. However, later in the twentieth century, just as a new generation had “discovered” terraced houses during the 1960s, those seeking more affordable homes in the inner suburbs realised that older semis provided an entry level home in what, by then, were often very affluent suburbs. The social stigma surrounding semis diminished, developers rediscovered the appeal of fitting two dwellings onto one standard lot, and pairs of new semis once again became popular. The land was subdivided as part of the development and the semis are typically sold to different owners. The minimum lot size for a new semi continues to be around 230 square metres. There are even examples of detached houses being subdivided and extended to form a pair of asymmetrical semis, each on a separate title (Figure 8.5).

Figure 8.5: Detached Federation house converted into two semis.



Harbour Street, Mosman (Author 2014)

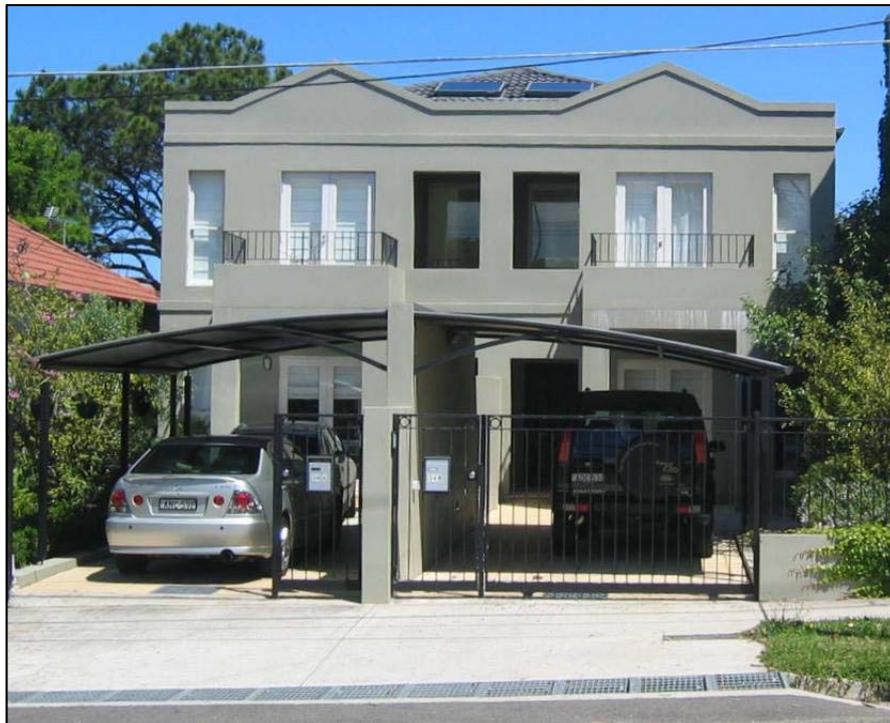
Recent research has shown that when the realities of income and costs preclude their first choice of a detached home, most Australians will trade off the type of dwelling rather than compromise on the location. Yet there are insufficient semis to meet this demand in desirable locations and new developments.

If people say they want different types of housing, why aren't they being built? The answers are largely to be found in the incentives facing residential developers. Through interviews with developers, banks, builders, councils and others, along with our own analysis, we discovered a range of reasons why some housing types are not being built where people say they would like to live. These include financing practices, planning and land issues and material and labour costs. (Kelly 2011, 2)

Despite the lack of semis being built by major developers in new suburbs, in many older suburbs, particularly those with interwar detached housing, the “knock down and rebuild” phenomenon has gathered pace. Many owner/occupiers choose to build a new detached replacement house. Where the lot is a standard quarter-acre (0.1 hectare), two narrow detached dwellings can be constructed on the subdivided land. In other cases, particularly on smaller lots, pairs of semis are being built. The real estate firm L J Hooker notes that the “rise of the home developer” is one of their five key trends for 2014, adding that demolishing the family home in order to build a pair of semis is “increasingly common for elderly couples who no longer have children or the savvy investor who wants to make maximum capital extraction from their block” (L J Hooker 2014, 2).

Mosman, with a high proportion of Federation semis, has seen many twenty-first century developments where a detached house has been demolished and replaced by large pairs of semis. Several of these new developments have been in conservation areas, examples of which are shown in Figure 8.6.

Figure 8.6: New semis in conservation areas.



Cabramatta Road, Mosman (Author 2004)

Figure 8.6: continued



Glover Street, Mosman (Author 2014)

In an attempt to position the new semis as superior to older semis, many are advertised as “villas” instead, bringing the terminology full circle back to John Nash’s villa developments of the 1820s in London.

8.7 CONCLUSIONS

For older semis (and terraces) the most important post-war phenomenon was their transformation from rental buildings to individually owned dwellings following the re-introduction of rent control in 1948. This made them almost immune to demolition and, together with the spread of working class public housing to the suburbs, broke down the nexus between class and dwelling type. The Great Australian Dream became achievable for almost everyone at that time. However, the Dream now appears to be changing. Instead of a large back yard in the suburbs, many people now want to live closer to the city and work, and do not want to spend time on gardening and maintenance. A survey of apartment residents showed that “high density living is becoming increasingly popular as a long-term option, particularly among owners of freehold apartments, single people and older empty-nesters” (*SMH Domain*, 27-28 October 2007, 4A).⁵⁶ And the alternative to an apartment for many of these people is a semi.

⁵⁶ The headline for this report was “Lights go out on the great dream”.

After the war, old terraced houses were gradually transformed from unloved to highly desirable, and they became worthy of conservation. Speculative builders once found a ready market selling their pairs of suburban semis as investments to spinsters and widows. Although these old semis now mostly have individual owners, many continue to fulfil their function as small, comfortable homes in the suburbs. Yet they go unnoticed and are rarely considered worthy of conservation or heritage listing. For some people semis have become an entry point into desirable suburbs. These are not homes to be enjoyed but real estate to be improved. Many of the alterations and additions made to one semi of a pair have destroyed the symmetry and harmony of the semi-detached building form and created unpleasant streetscapes. The following chapters will try to establish whether semis have any cultural significance, and whether they, like terraces, might one day be considered worthy of conservation.

9.0 THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SEMIS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the fact that there has been much debate around what constitutes “heritage” (Davison 2008) there can be no doubt that the semis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are part of the cultural heritage of NSW. Whether they are culturally *significant* depends on whether or not they are valued by society. As English Heritage explains:

People believe that it is important to keep sight of the past for personal reasons, and because it gives them a sense of belonging, defines their identities at a national and local scale, and provides depth and character for their working and living environment. In particular we value the legacy of the past, our archaeology and buildings, because it tells us in an immediate way about who we are, and because it is the principal evidence and record of our history. (English Heritage 2008, 313)

That legacy is assessed (usually by professionals within the heritage industry) and reflected in the level of heritage significance⁵⁷ given to a building, place or item. Within NSW there are five levels of heritage significance – none, local, state, national and world. There are no semis within NSW which have been assessed as having national or world significance.

The NSW Heritage Division⁵⁸ provides an online, searchable inventory of all listed items of state and local significance in NSW.⁵⁹ The inventory contains over 25,000 such items, all with a statutory heritage listing. Of these, around 1,650 have been assessed to have state significance; they are of particular importance and value to the people in the whole of NSW. Due to the confusion surrounding the terminology of dwelling types in NSW (see Case Study 14) various searches were required in order to identify the number of listed semis in NSW. The results are detailed in Appendix 5.

The vast majority of semis have no formally recognised cultural significance because relatively few semis have actually been assessed. In 2011 there were 263,926 semis, terraced houses and townhouses in NSW; these comprised 10.7% of all dwellings in the state (ABS, 2011 Census Quickstats). Of those semis which have been assessed, not necessarily with any rigour, 22 pairs have State significance.⁶⁰ This represents a negligible proportion of the state’s semis, and only 1.3% of *all* State-listed items. In suburbs with a higher than

⁵⁷The *Burra Charter* notes that term cultural significance is synonymous with cultural heritage significance and cultural heritage value.

⁵⁸The Heritage Council of NSW (see Section 8.1) is supported by the Heritage Division of the State Government’s Office of Environment and Heritage.

⁵⁹<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/heritagesearch.aspx>

⁶⁰Many of these are also within conservation areas such as the State-listed Millers Point Precinct.

average proportion of semis, the lack of listings is even more pronounced. For example, Mosman has 1,340 semis, terraced houses and town houses, which represent 28% of the suburb's total of 4,746 dwellings (ABS, Census 2011 Quickstats). There are no State-listed semis in Mosman.

Local listings show a similar under-representation for semis. Of the approximately 24,000 locally-listed items across NSW, around 300 are pairs of semis. This is only 1.2%. The 24 locally-listed pairs of semis in Mosman comprise only 0.5% of the total number of dwellings in that suburb, yet almost one third of the dwellings in the suburb are semis.⁶¹ And of those local listings, several pertain to groups of up to seven identical pairs of semis in rows, making the individual local listings of semis in Mosman almost negligible.

The recognised principles for assessing and conserving heritage were first defined by ICOMOS in the *Venice Charter* of 1964. Based on this work, Australia ICOMOS developed the *Burra Charter* in 1979. This sets out the philosophy and principles for defining, managing and conserving places of cultural significance in Australia and has been updated several times, most recently in 2013. The NSW Heritage Council has provided further guidelines and criteria for assessing heritage significance within NSW (NSW Heritage Office 2001). In 2013 Australia ICOMOS also released its Practice Note *Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS 2013b), which elaborates on the principles within the *Burra Charter*.

This chapter uses the methodology outlined in the *Burra Charter 2013* and the *NSW Heritage Assessment Guidelines 2001* to assess whether, with a better understanding of the history and development of semis in NSW, they might have greater heritage significance than has previously been recognised.

9.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

To assess whether an item is a rare or representative example of its type, a comparative analysis is often carried out as part of a structured heritage assessment. However, a full comparative analysis of the semis of NSW and the semis in the other Australian states is outside the scope of this study. Whether there are significant regional and interstate differences in the architectural, historical or social characteristics of Australian semis requires further research before relative significance can be determined. Similarly, with the exception of a sample of British semis which have been analysed for their direct influences within NSW, semis in other parts of the world have not been considered. Nevertheless, during the research for this thesis, various interesting examples within Australia and overseas were

⁶¹ There are only seven terraced houses in Mosman.

discovered. This section contains a selection of those examples which highlight some of the similarities and differences among semis outside NSW, when compared to NSW semis.

Many European countries have semis as part of the dwelling mix. The European Commission's housing statistics reveal that Britain's "propensity to live in a semi" is 60.9% of the population, second only to the Netherlands at 61.4% (Eurostat 2009). The semis of Ireland are very much like British semis in both style and materials. The Irish speculative builders also tend to fill complete streetscapes with identical buildings as they do in England (Figure 9.1), unlike NSW where most individual semis are located within streetscapes of otherwise detached dwellings. In post-war Dublin, speculative building of semis accounted for 97% of the house production for the private market (Murphy 1977, 39).

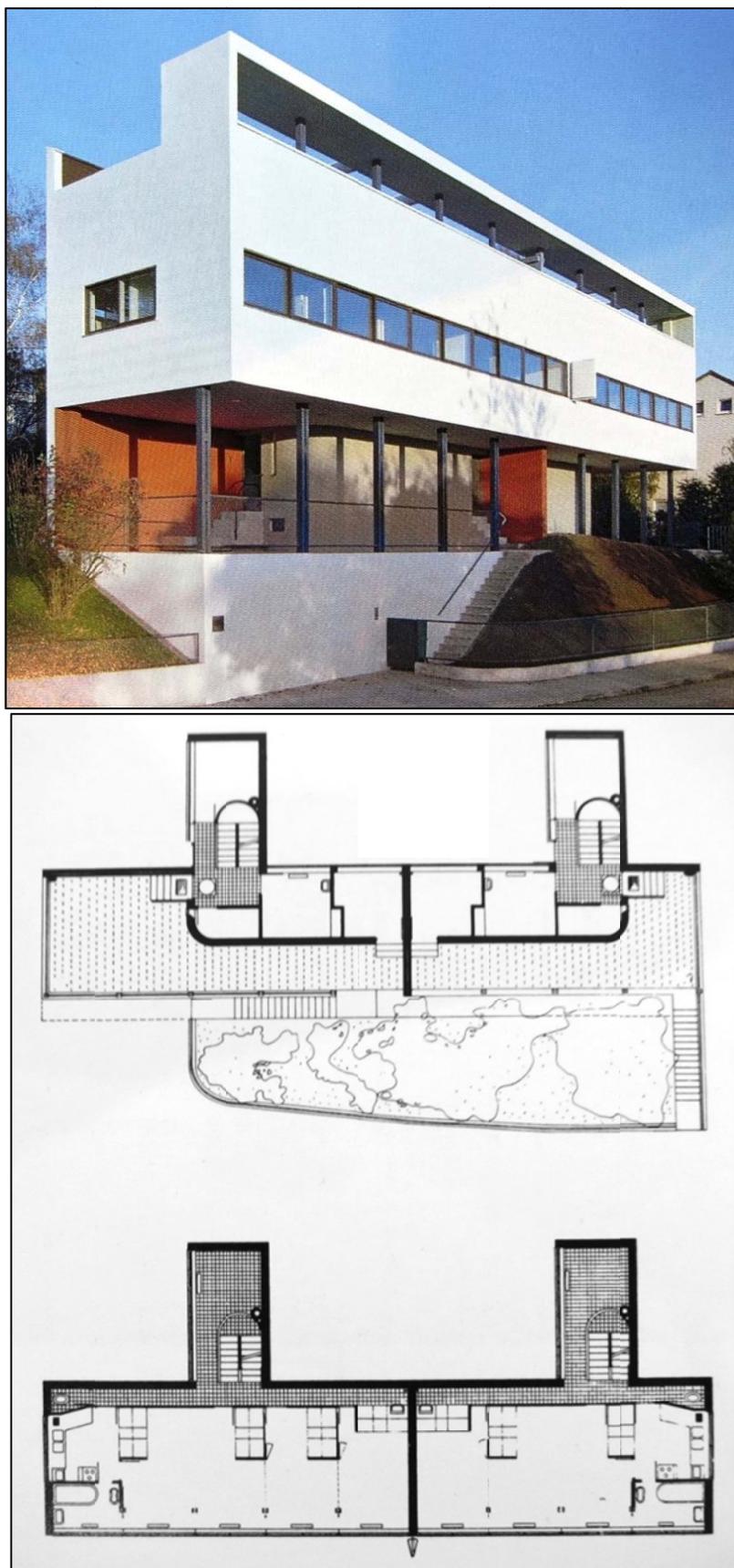
Figure 9.1: Street of semis, Dublin.



Iona Street, Dublin (Author 2011)

Between the wars Germany developed an innovative approach to large-scale urban developments for the "lower classes", for whom semis were deemed most suitable. In Stuttgart's Weissenhofsiedlung public housing project, "new forms of living for modern people" were developed, with new technology and construction methods used to keep the costs down (Schittich 2006, 12). As part of this project, in 1927 the architects Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanerette designed the Doppelhaus, a pair of semis (Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2: German semis designed by Le Corbusier, 1927.



(Schittich 2006, 11)

Le Corbusier's semis were described as having:

... the space-saving arrangement of railroad cars. The floor plans have hardly any connecting hallways; living and working areas are clearly separated and functionally connected to each other. (Schittich 2006, 12)

The dwelling hierarchy also appears to apply in European countries such as Germany.

It is indeed a paradox that mass-produced houses bought "off the shelf" and constructed in identical versions across the country are favoured over individually designed semi-detached and terraced homes. (Schittich 2006, 15)

The mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced housing within the one housing development was observed in Norway, where each dwelling type shared the same building materials and styles, yet they were clearly targeted towards different types of tenants (Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3: Terrace and semis, Norway.

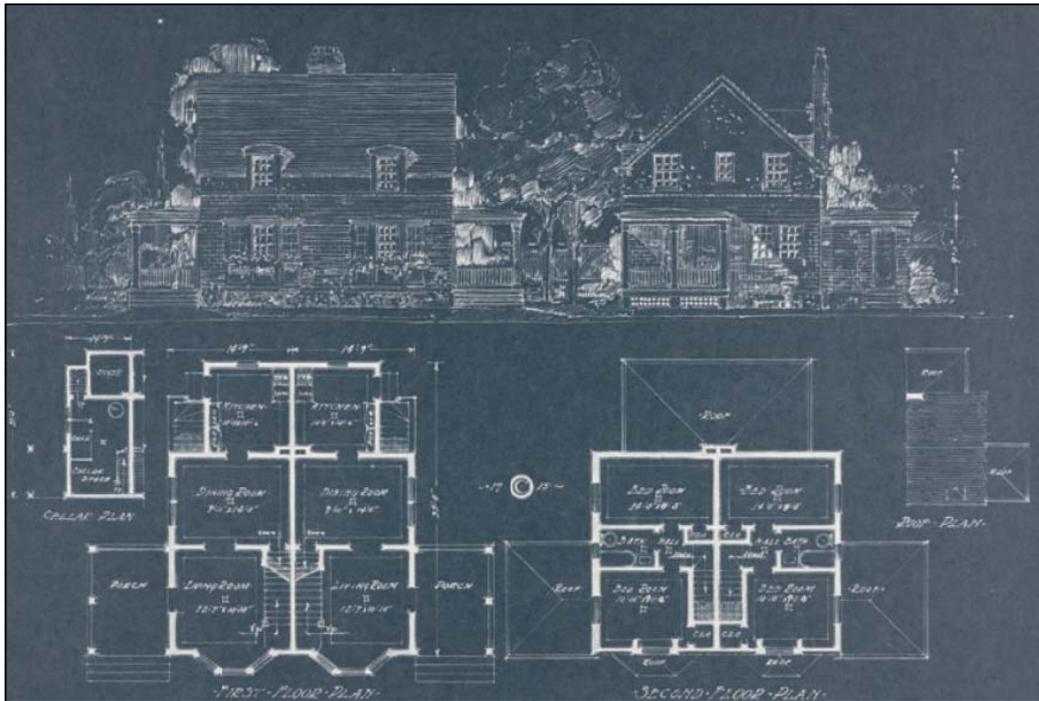


The end terraced house in a row (left) adjacent to pairs of semis. Persenbakken, Bergen (Author 2010)

The British dwelling hierarchy was transported to colonies other than NSW. For example, in 1909 plans for part of Hong Kong University were drawn up. The Principal's house was a substantial detached house, while the professors were to be housed in semis (National Archives UK, Ref MFQ1/146).

America, like Australia, has semis as a minority dwelling type. For example, Figure 9.4 shows two designs for the “cheap construction of dwellings” in New York City. Figure 9.5 shows rows of semis in Pennsylvania. The tenants of the latter were “foreign labourers and mechanics”, suggesting that semis’ place in the dwelling hierarchy of the USA was similar to that in Britain and NSW.

Figure 9.4: Semis in New York City, 1915.



East 45th Street, New York City. (Harvard University Library Open Collections Program HUAM153584soc)

Figure 9.5: Semis in Pennsylvania, c1903.



Midland, Pennsylvania. (Harvard University Library Open Collections Program HUAM153267soc)

All of the Australian states have semis. Queensland has relatively few, perhaps due to the extensive use of timber for housing in that state (Figure 9.6), while they are more common elsewhere.⁶² Differences in architectural styles and forms between the states appear to relate more to the local building materials than to floor plans. For example, Sydney's sandstone is a lighter colour than Hobart's golden brown sandstone. Melbourne has grey basalt known as bluestone, and a great variety of coloured bricks due to different clays. Adelaide has brown/grey slate also known as bluestone, often used with brick quoins (Figure 9.7).

Figure 9.6: Timber semis, Brisbane, c1880s.



Brighton Terrace, West End. Photographed in 1982. (National Trust of Queensland)

Figure 9.7: Bluestone semis in Adelaide, c1900.

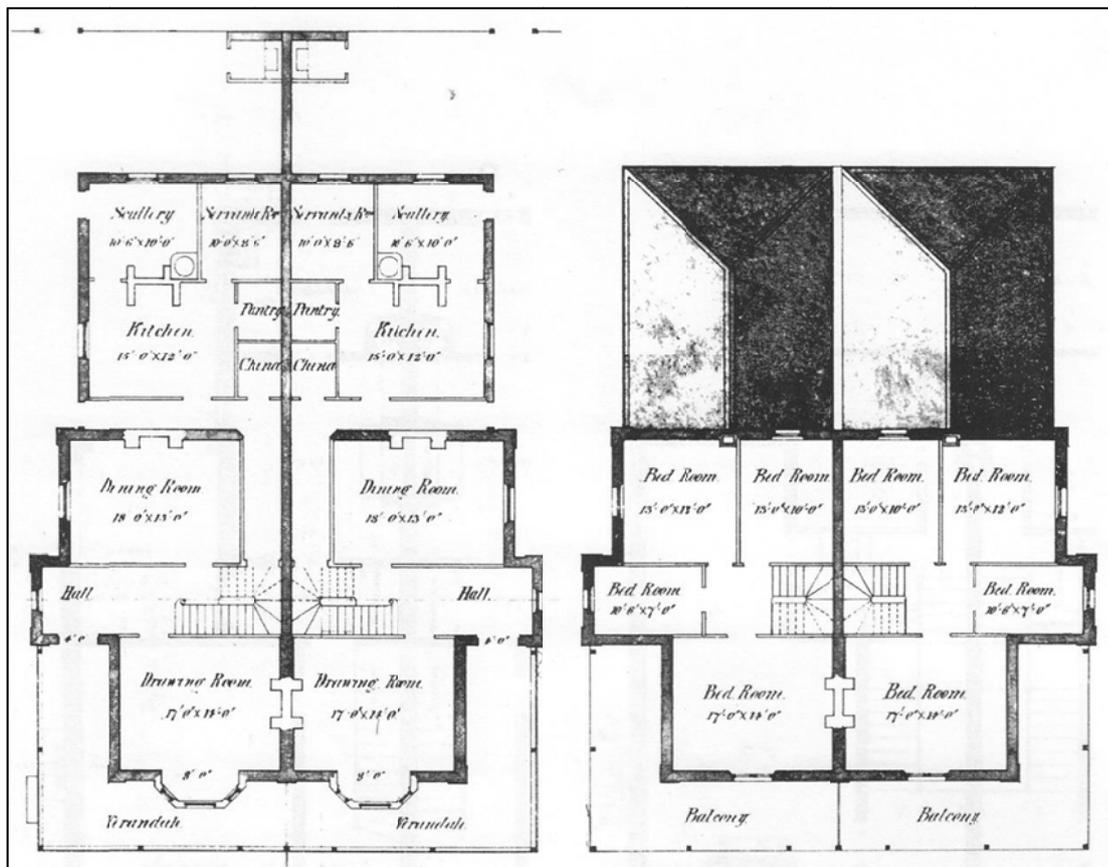


(State Library of South Australia B20849)

⁶² Compared to over 10% for NSW, semis, row/terraced houses and townhouses make up only 5.8% of dwellings in Queensland (Census 2001).

Unlike Sydney, Adelaide (a planned city; the capital of South Australia) did not have concentrations of working class terraces in the inner city. There was a mix of large and small terraces and semis, with the type, size and quality of the dwelling rather than the address signifying the status of the occupant (Pikusa 1986, 96). Some of the larger semis had provisions for servants, as well as higher class features such as a room for china (Figure 9.8).

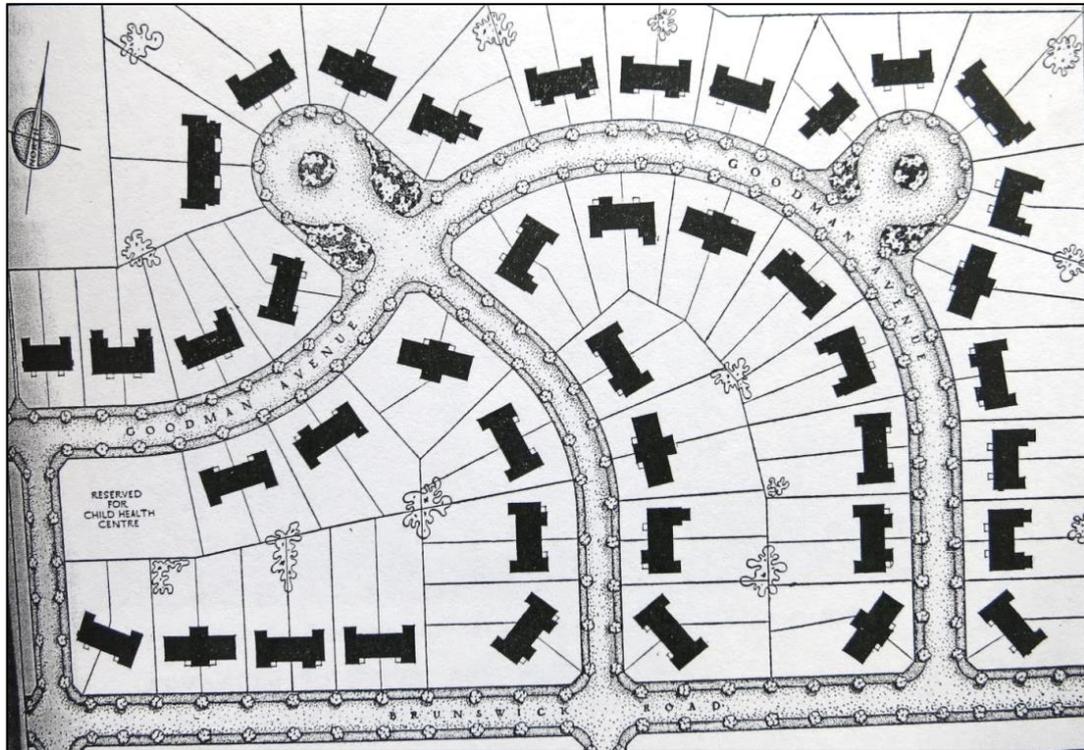
Figure 9.8: Speculative up-market semis in Glenelg, Adelaide, 1883.



Architect George K Soward. There is no bathroom because the area had not been sewered in 1883. (Pikusa 1986, 116)

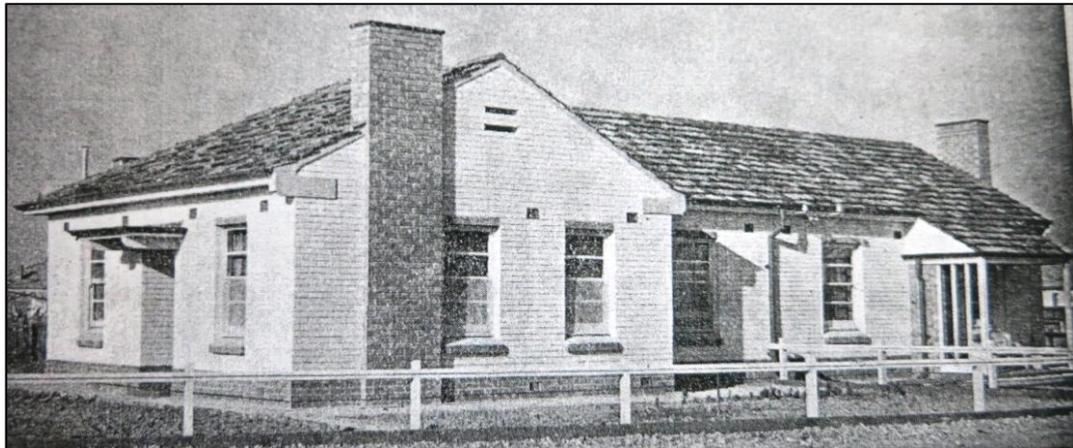
Towards the end of the Second World War the South Australian Housing Trust began building "larger and more convenient houses" (South Australian Housing Trust 1945, 3). With the wartime materials shortages, this was only possible by building semis, designed by the Government Architect. These were laid out in groups at various locations in Adelaide and country towns, along garden suburb lines (Figure 9.9). Some were symmetrical pairs, while others had a two bedroomed dwelling attached to a three bedroomed dwelling (Figure 9.10).

Figure 9.9: Layout of public housing, Adelaide, 1945.



Islington Park, Kilburn (South Australian Housing Trust 1945, 3)

Figure 9.10: Public housing semis, Adelaide, 1945.



Islington Park, Kilburn (South Australian Housing Trust 1945, 4)

Melbourne has semis ranging from the flamboyant styles of the boom years of the late nineteenth century (Figure 9.11), to the austere public housing of the 1940s (Figure 9.12). The latter rivals the grim appearance of the British council housing of that period.

Figure 9.11: Late Victorian semis, Melbourne.



Simpson Street, East Melbourne.
(Australian Terrace Houses <http://www.australianterrace.com/terrace-houses>, accessed October 2014)

Figure 9.12: Victorian Housing Commission semis, 1942.



(State Library of Victoria a37821)

More small colonial Georgian dwellings have been retained in Tasmania than in NSW (Figure 9.13). Tasmania also appears to have many more timber semis than NSW (Figure 9.14).

Figure 9.13: Colonial Georgian semis in Hobart, c1840.



Arthurs Circus, Hobart (Google Maps, April 2014)

Figure 9.14: Gothic timber semis, Hobart.



Quayle Street, Sandy Bay (Author 2006)

Most Australian Federation semis are single storey, but with some better quality two-storey examples. Perth, in the aftermath of the gold rush boom of the 1890s, has some particularly impressive two-storey Federation semis (Figure 9.15).

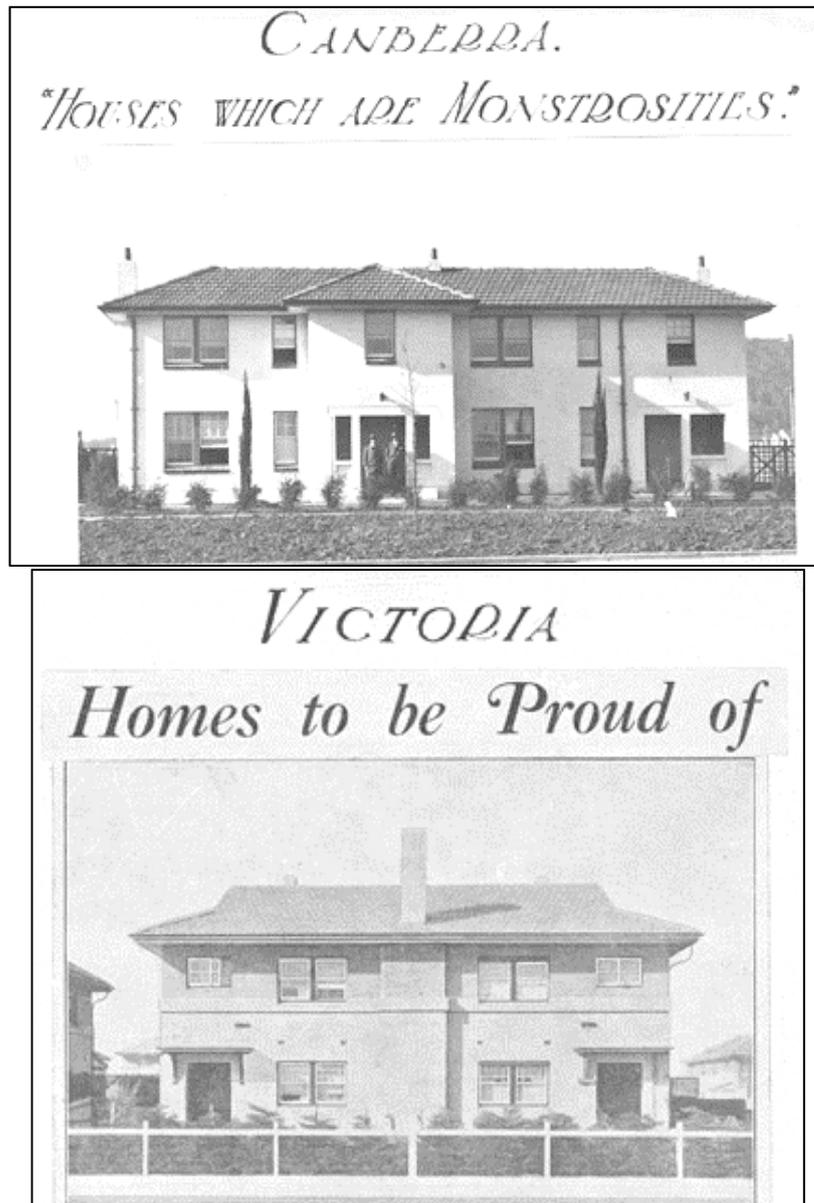
Figure 9.15: Federation semis, Perth.



Beaufort Street, West Perth (Howells and Morris 1999, 68)

In the new Australian capital of Canberra, with total government control of the housing development from the 1920s to the 1970s, the suburban detached villa was the standard dwelling for public servants, providing a clear indication of the government's preferred housing design. However, in some areas rows of identical semis were built for the lesser public servants, causing some outrage. This was a period during which many local municipalities in Sydney had banned semis (see Section 7.4). However the opprobrium did not appear to arise because of the dwelling type itself. The "monstrosities" being built in the suburb of Reid, despite being quite substantial dwellings, were said to somehow not quite measure up to the semis being built by the Government Savings Bank of Victoria at that time (Figure 9.16). It is difficult today to find any differences between the two examples.

Figure 9.16: "Monstrosities" in Canberra.



Booroondara Street, Reid (NAA A3560, 5870)

After the Second World War Australia was part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. Close to the 130th Australian General Hospital on Eta Jima Island was the accommodation for the families of serving personnel – a mix of detached houses and semis (Figure 9.17).

Figure 9.17: Family accommodation, Eta Jima, Japan.



Eta Jima, Japan (Australian War Memorial 133027)

9.3 THE INVOLVEMENT OF ARCHITECTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEMI

The heritage profession within NSW is dominated by architects. Some but not all also have formal training in heritage theory and practice. As de facto “custodians” of heritage listings within the state, architects therefore play a key role in the assessment of heritage and the resultant listing processes. Their attitudes towards suburban dwellings are greatly influenced by whether or not such dwellings have aesthetic value arising from the involvement of a recognised architect. For example, Peter Lovell suggests that when assessing the modern house:

They are still places which rely on knowledge and visual appreciation of a built form, and for many are an acquired taste. Their identification is one which is still likely to rely on the traditional assessment of architectural values and analysis of stylistic purity rather than on strong historical or social values. The questions to be asked are; is it architect designed, who was the architect, where does it sit in their oeuvre, was it recognised in awards? Well ahead of questions of history, ownership and place in patterns of development. (Lovell 2013, 77)

Oliver, Davis and Bentley wrote a book about negative attitudes towards interwar English semis:

Perhaps the issue was that if *architects* designed semi-detached houses in the suburbs all was well; the problems started with 'non-professional designers'. (Oliver *et al.* 1981, 50)

Given that “less than ten percent of housing in Australia has architectural involvement and many observers consider the figure for architectural involvement in new housing to be much less” (Murray 2007), it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that architects were not involved in the development of ordinary, speculative dwellings such as semis and terraced houses. Despite the extensive literature on NSW architects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there is little, if anything, written about their design work for semis.⁶³ However, although a significant number of semis were constructed by speculative builders, without any involvement by architects, and perhaps not even with the benefit of a draftsman if the builder was following a basic design in a pattern book or journal, this study has revealed that there have been many architects involved in the development of semis in NSW.

The pattern book designs were produced by both British and Australian architects and the ongoing success of those designs speaks volumes about their suitability for NSW. The work of the prominent English architects was well known by the early colonial architects (including transported convicts such as Francis Greenway), and as free settlers began to arrive, some of the pupils of the great architects saw many opportunities in the developing colony. The architectural historian Morton Herman was of the opinion that:

The early architects in Australia [were not] men of outstanding fame – great architects do not leave the centres of culture to go to convict colonies on the far side of the world. (Dupain 1963, 30)

Yet the lack of fame enjoyed by the colonial architects should not imply a lack of talent. And many are rightly famous today for their work in NSW. These include early colonial architects such as John Verge, who is celebrated for his mansions but whose first colonial projects were to design semis. Edmund Blackett designed important government buildings and churches, yet in 1865 he designed a terrace in Redfern (Herman 1963). Acclaimed twentieth century architects such as Walter Liberty Vernon and B J Waterhouse both designed semis, and suburban planning documents held by local council archives contain many designs for ordinary dwellings by lesser-known architects. Architects not only advertised tenders for substantial dwellings, but also let contracts for more humble projects. For example, in one published early twentieth century list of contracts let by architects, the projects ranged from work on St Mary’s Cathedral to a cottage in Neutral Bay, a pair of semi-detached cottages in Manly, and six cottages in Bondi (*SMH*, 11 August 1908, 9).

The work of Government Architects is sometimes considered of lesser importance than that of private architects. Nevertheless, their skill in housing people displaced by slum clearances, and designing purpose-built working class housing in industrial estates such as

⁶³ Boyd’s 2010 work on Walter Liberty Vernon is an exception.

Littleton should not be underestimated. It is curious that Raymond Unwin is celebrated for his council housing in England, yet his equivalents in NSW are not recognized.

It will be a challenge to convince architects practising within the heritage profession of NSW to see any cultural significance in ordinary housing such as semis. Shane Murray asks:

Can we reconsider architecture's relationship to general housing provision in Australia? This is an ambitious task because Australian architects generally treat the possibility of architectural involvement in general housing with either a shrug of despair or quizzical disengagement. (Murray 2007)

Would the semis designed by Le Corbusier have any cultural significance if they had been designed by a staff member working for the German public housing project? The following assessment of significance assumes that an association with architects is not the only source of heritage significance for a class of dwellings.

9.4 ASSESSMENT AGAINST HERITAGE CRITERIA

To understand the heritage significance of an item the *Burra Charter* requires an investigation into its history, use, associations and fabric (Australia ICOMOS 2013a, 10). The *Burra Charter* defines cultural significance as aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Knowledge about these values will allow an informed response to the questions – does this pair of semis have cultural significance? Is it rare? Is it a representative example of its type? If the answers are in the affirmative, they can then be encapsulated into a Statement of Significance, which can guide future conservation decisions.

The NSW Heritage Office (now the NSW Heritage Division) has developed seven criteria against which an assessment of heritage significance can be made (NSW Heritage Office 2001, 9). An item has State or local heritage significance if it meets one or more of these criteria. The following assessment is based on these criteria.⁶⁴

Criterion a) Historical - an item is important in the course, or pattern, of the local area's cultural or natural history.

The use of pairs of dwellings in colonial NSW reflected the established British practice of housing rural labourers in double cottages, and middle class urban people in double villas. Despite the availability of land in the colony and outposts such as Norfolk Island, attached housing (terraced housing and semis) was used to maintain the hierarchy of dwelling type which, together with detached housing, so explicitly signified the social class of the

⁶⁴ This study does not assess semis for national or world significance.

occupants. When apartments were added to the dwelling mix during the twentieth century, and terraced houses became desirable dwellings after the Second World War, semis were perceived as better than a flat but inferior to a detached house.

Many suburbs and towns in NSW have semis within their housing mix. They may be in small groups, or scattered within streetscapes which otherwise have detached housing. Their location reflects the development of transport systems, in particular the tram system in Sydney and trains in country NSW. Semis are distributed around the junctions and nodes of those networks, which were close to commercial areas and were therefore less desirable for housing. The layout of semis and single-fronted houses within a streetscape provides evidence of the subdivision history of an area.

Semis were built for the rental market to meet the desire of aspirational workers to live in a suburb outside the city, where those people could not afford to or did not wish to purchase their own home. In middle class suburbs, semis were occupied by the lower middle class, and in the inner city and working class suburbs the tenants were mostly artisans. In this way, particularly if areas also had terraced housing for the working classes, communities grew with a more egalitarian mix of social classes.

Historically semis were a minor but important component in the role of government as a provider of social housing, particularly after the Second World War.

The de facto subdivision history of semis illustrates the evolution of the lower middle class from tenants to home owners as they embraced the Great Australian Dream of home ownership after the Second World War.

Criterion b) Historical Association - an item has strong or special associations with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the local area's cultural or natural history.

The tenants of semis, who were not members of the ruling classes, are not generally recognised as important in the cultural development of NSW. There are exceptions, such as the Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, who had a working class background, and lived in a semi. However, semis are a physical manifestation of the aspirations of a group of tenants who could not afford detached housing in the suburbs, but for whom a suburban semi was a step up from a run-down terraced house.

The speculative builders who helped to transform the speculative land subdivisions into communities of residents are important for the architectural legacy they left.

Because semis have not traditionally been associated with architects, many examples, particularly early colonial works designed by prominent architects such as John Verge, have been demolished. However, there are extant examples in many suburbs, some associated with prominent architects such as Walter Liberty Vernon and others designed by lesser-known architects.

Criterion c) Aesthetic - an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area.

Unlike terraced houses, attached dwellings in pairs are most commonly mirror images of each other. This creates an aesthetically pleasing, symmetrical building, which because of its form and scale successfully blends into streetscapes of detached houses. Where it was important to enhance the status of a pair of dwellings, the building is asymmetrical, to give the appearance of a single, detached dwelling.

The facades and roofs of the semis display the aesthetic characteristics of the various architectural styles within NSW, particularly the Victorian and Federation styles. As such they form an integral part of the city, town and suburban streetscapes. Because most semis had similar floor-plans, their external appearance was very important; some semis display excellent examples of the decorative features of their style. Being mass produced for small sites, semis are not at the forefront of technical achievement in NSW.

Criterion d) Social - an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the local area for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Until the 1950s the semis of NSW were strongly associated with lower middle class tenants. However, as the community has no historical knowledge of the individuals within that group, today there is no particular significance placed on the association.

More is known about the owners of buildings containing semis. A large proportion of owners, until the introduction of rent control after the Second World War, were middle class unmarried women, for whom they provided a socially acceptable source of income. Again, since the transformation of attached housing into owner/occupied housing, this association has been diminished.

Criterion e) Technical - an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the local area's cultural or natural history.

The current subdivision patterns within NSW were influenced by the skill of the speculative builders in maximising the number of dwellings which could be located on a site, in particular by building attached housing.

Semis have no more archaeological potential than other dwelling types in the same area.

Criterion f) Rare - an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the local area's cultural or natural history.

Semis are not rare in NSW, although some individual examples display characteristics which are rare for the semi-detached housing form. During some periods (such as Federation) many semis were built, while at other times (such as the 1950s) they were less common.

Pairs of semis in which each dwelling retains its original relationship to the other are extremely rare in NSW. Most pairs have had alterations to at least one dwelling which have reduced or destroyed the integrity of the building as a whole.

Criterion g) Representative - an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the local area's

- **cultural or natural places; or**
- **cultural or natural environments.**

Semis are representative of the rental homes which were situated in what were generally the less desirable areas within the suburbs.

Each period since the 1820s has extant representative examples of semis in NSW. Some (particularly those which already have a heritage listing) have retained their principal characteristics, including symmetry, form and style. They are able to provide physical evidence of their historical development, including their position within the dwelling hierarchy. Others are no longer representative because they have been altered and expanded so that the building has lost its integrity.

9.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The semi-detached houses of NSW, built from the early days of the colony until the 1970s, are historically significant as the rental accommodation for the lower middle class who aspired to live in the suburbs outside the city. Built by a range of speculative builders, each pair is differentiated from the others by often-lavish decoration on their facades, and they make a significant contribution to the aesthetic significance of the streetscapes of NSW. Semis are historically significant as an indicator of the extension of public transport networks,

the bulk of them being situated close to tram routes in the cities and train stations in country towns. Historical significance also arises from the pattern of de facto subdivision of pre-1920 pairs of semis during the 1950s, as home ownership became an achievable dream for many Australians.

Semis form an integral part of the mix of dwellings which exemplifies the hierarchy of dwelling types developed during the nineteenth century, based on the British class system. Once considered superior to a terraced house, they retain their historical significance in the hierarchy as slightly inferior to a detached dwelling.

Semis have some social significance arising from their association with middle class unmarried women, who through their ownership of semis were able to earn a respectable income from tenants while supporting the speculative builders' output of semis

Buildings which retain their original integrity as either a pair of symmetrical semis with identical façade detailing, or a pair which resembles a detached house, are very rare.

10.0 CONSERVATION ISSUES

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In answering the question “Why Conserve?” the *Burra Charter* states that:

Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records that are important expressions of Australian identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious. These places of cultural significance must be conserved for present and future generations in accordance with the principle of inter-generational equity. (ICOMOS 2013a, 1)

For semis with identifiable heritage significance, more needs to be done to document and understand what characteristics give rise to their cultural value. Only then can appropriate action be taken. Such actions may include preservation, conservation or recording, depending on the level of significance. As a relatively modest residential building type, semis are unlikely to be viable as house museums or as buildings “frozen in time” and merely preserved. A notable exception to this is the semi where the Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley lived – this has been preserved as a house museum in Bathurst (see Appendix 5). The reality is that many semis are located on prime real estate, where the existing building is not an economically viable use of valuable land. In this case alterations and additions are inevitable. In a minority of situations demolition may be justified as long as an appropriate record is made of the building prior to its destruction. In essence then, it is conservation, rather than preservation or recording, which remains the most important heritage outcome for the stock of semis in NSW.

10.2 THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

Heritage conservation is a balance between reasonable contemporary uses and the maintenance of the characteristics which give rise to heritage significance. Society should not evolve without some safeguards to protect significant buildings and places, but nor should conservation be considered in isolation from the evolution of society. As John Schofield warns:

There is a danger that heritage – as officially sanctioned and undertaken – will commodify and package things – places, objects, reports or interventions – in a way that separates them off from society. (Schofield 2009, 101)

Australia has a history of rapid progress and expansion. Unlike older countries with long-held local traditions, colonial and twentieth century Australia wanted to “catch up”. There was (and often still is) a widely held view that new was better than old. The colonial Georgian streetscapes were replaced by the Victorian styles in the second half of the nineteenth century. Property rights provided great power which could not be curtailed by minimal planning regulations. Similarly, the prosperity after the Second World War devalued the earlier Victorian and Federation styles in the race to be modern.

Although the current statutory heritage protections in NSW are relatively robust, it was only an increasing recognition of what was being lost that prompted the development of the conservation movement during the twentieth century. As David Lowenthal commented:

Perils of the moment make heritage managers more reactive than proactive; they respond when things look parlous. In so doing they mirror public awareness and concern. Nothing arouses affection for a legacy as much as the threat of its loss. (Lowenthal 2009, 19)

The Rocks provides an illustration of how community opinions about the conservation of ordinary housing have evolved. At the turn of the twentieth century The Rocks, the oldest settlement in Australia, was resumed for the government redevelopment of the area. Government officials made a photographic record of the “slums” which they planned to demolish. At the same time several prominent Sydney artists decided to capture the look and feel of the places before they were lost. In 1902 they held an *Exhibition of Pictures of Old Sydney*, where the artists:

... sought to record local life in Sydney’s oldest neighbourhood, not just the grand city of new buildings or the affluent citizens of the growing metropolis. (Ashton *et al.* 2010, 17)

The modest working class dwellings included large numbers of terraces and semis, for example the pair at 95-97 Cumberland Street (Figure 10.1). The photographs captured the reality while the drawings and paintings were more picturesque. Despite a lack of reality in some of the paintings they:

... gave voice to emotions; they gave form and narrative shape to feelings of affection, concern and loss....they were instrumental in fostering the earliest appreciation of Sydney’s oldest buildings and the early townscape. This was a constant stream, growing in strength and conviction over the 20th century. Eventually

it turned the tide against the idea that the necessary price of modernity, of history, is destruction. (Grace Karskens in Ashton *et al.* 2010, 13)

It was no coincidence that the Australian Historical Society (now the Royal Australian Historical Society) was also formed in 1901.

Figure 10.1: Demolished semis, The Rocks.



NSW Government photograph, 1901. (State Library of Victoria, Image b28044)



Drawing by Sir William Elliot Johnson, 1901. (State Library NSW, Image a1528513)

Figure 10.1: continued



**Painting by H Stuart Wilson, 1902. (State Library NSW, Image a1528522)
Cumberland Street, The Rocks.**

The National Trust NSW (the first in Australia) was founded in 1945 by Annie Wyatt and other concerned citizens who wished to raise community consciousness about the widespread destruction of the built and natural heritage in Sydney.

During the 1970s The Rocks area was once again under threat; saved only by the union Green Bans which prevented the demolitions proceeding. As a result of the widespread publicity, the preservation of old buildings, whether modest or mansion, became important. This was reflected in the ground-breaking NSW *Heritage Act 1977* which was at the time one of the first of its type in the world. During the National Trust's heyday in the 1970s and 1980s they were responsible for saving much of the historic environment in NSW; they used the Act's provisions to great effect by recommending both Interim Heritage Orders and Permanent Conservation Orders for buildings they considered were worth preserving (see Case Study 14). Yet despite increased regulation, and a growing awareness of the need to preserve some of the past, the pace of change to the built environment of NSW continues today.

The ongoing destruction is underpinned by the economic progress of the state. As the population expands and personal wealth increases, land values increase and personal expectations are heightened. As the social historian Marjorie Barnard noted during the 1960s, a time of enormous development pressures:

Cities are functional, they flow, their very stones are in flux. They adjust themselves to changing ways of life and are conditioned by values, by population pressures, by transport...Old [buildings] become uneconomic and go they must unless protected by a powerful public sentiment. As cities grow richer money becomes more important and every foot of land must yield its return. (Dupain 1963, 14)

It is a similar story in suburbia, where the cottages which once provided an adequate home for tenants are now renovated and expanded to meet the contemporary needs of owner-occupiers. Or they are demolished and replaced with a modern house. In rural NSW, if a local economy is in decline, the housing stock is prone to degradation through decay and abandonment.

The surviving Georgian mansions from the early colonial period in Sydney, such as Elizabeth Bay House (1835-1839) have all been meticulously restored, mostly as house museums. The portfolio of house museums owned by Sydney Living Museums⁶⁵ includes mansions and a small terrace (Susannah Place in The Rocks, c1844). There are no semis and no apartments in the portfolio, despite several pairs of government-owned colonial semis surviving in The Rocks and Millers Point. It is an example of the relative conservation values identified in mansions and working class housing, and underlines the need to conserve at least some of the semis in NSW.

10.3 ATTITUDES

The British architectural journalist James Green, after casting a critical eye over the architecture of Sydney in 1890, suggested that the suburban terrace and semi-detached villas were “objectionable forms of housing”, supporting this opinion by quoting John Ruskin’s views on the symbolic role of the home (*The Australasian Builder & Contractors’ News*, 27 January 1890, 1). However, the semi became the dominant form in the expanding English suburbs during the twentieth century, and although not as dominant in NSW it was a significant part of the evolution of housing in the state. The longevity of the dwelling type in both Britain and Australia suggests that, despite the opinions of architects, people enjoy living in semis.

A semi is a dwelling and usually it is also a home. As such it offers the owner or occupier utility as well as providing a focus for sentimentality. It can also be an indicator of social and economic status. House names, while often whimsical, can display a concern for status, or an association with middle class virtues. Despite being rental properties, Victorian and Federation semis were named with the same enthusiasm and variety as their neighbouring

⁶⁵ Previously known as the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

detached houses. For some tenants in semis, being able to personalise their home with a name was important, although the turnover in tenants in some semis suggests that such sentimentality was not always deemed necessary. Some house names conjured the romance of the country (for example “Rose Cottage”) while others commandeered Aboriginal or New Zealand names. Some combined the names of the occupants, and English placenames were also popular choices. The longing for security was reflected in “Emoh Ruo” and “Dunroamin” - the latter being used as a generic name for two-storey English interwar semis in *Dunroamin: The Suburban Semi and its Enemies* (1981). In that book Paul Oliver ponders:

Dunroamin - A real place, or no place; a suburban home, or a symbol of Suburbia? The name may be seen on a plate on the wall of any house in any suburb, and how we respond to it is a reflection of our values. (Oliver *et al.* 1981, 9)

At one time the semi was seen as “not quite a proper house”. Sharing a wall was seen as socially less desirable than having a detached house, although it was superior to sharing two walls in a terraced house. In a handwritten letter to the North Shore Historical Society in 1979, the eminent artist Lloyd Rees said that fellow artist Roland Wakelin “lived in a little semi-detached Cottage rather than a house”.⁶⁶ Semis were overlooked by many house buyers who were still influenced by the Great Australian Dream quarter-acre block tradition and desired a detached dwelling. People wanting to be close to the city purchased a terraced house in Paddington, Glebe or Balmain, if they could afford it. Semis were an awkward in-between, as they are usually in suburbs such as Mosman and Randwick with a predominance of detached houses. However, despite the dwelling hierarchy, semis remained a respectable, comfortable choice as rented suburban homes and later as owner-occupied dwellings. As two-person or single-person households became more common and speculative developments focussed on townhouses and apartments, semis became less of an anachronism and their value per square metre was compared favourably with a detached house.

In 2011 the Grattan Institute, an “independent think tank”, surveyed more than 700 residents in Sydney and Melbourne to explore “the relationship between the housing we say we want and the housing we have” (Kelly 2011, 2). The great majority of respondents, given no barriers to choice, aspired to a detached house. Yet taking into account current housing costs, incomes, and the trade-off between size and type of housing and its location, most respondents said they would settle for a semi⁶⁷ or an apartment.

⁶⁶ Letter from Lloyd Rees to Mrs Brierley, 1 February 1979, North Shore Historical Society Archives, reproduced in the *North Shore Historical Society Journal*, April 2010, 5.

⁶⁷ Terraced houses were defined as semi-detached in this research.

Newspaper articles tend to reflect the attitudes of the day. Twenty years ago a story was captioned "Semi-detached Homes – Cinderellas of Sydney Real Estate". In it Adrian Herbert stated that:

There was a time when the ubiquitous semi, a single-storey house linked to its neighbour like a Siamese twin, tended to be overlooked. Today, buyers are seeking out semis in popular suburbs.

Why the popularity? Simple. Semis offer relatively cheap entry to quality suburbs, are solidly constructed yet generally bright and easy to renovate. Drawbacks? Possible neighbour problems, limited space and (often) lack of parking. (*SMH*, 4 August 1993, 47)

The increasing popularity of semis was attributed to two factors – acceptability and affordability. Ten years later house purchasers were told "you'll get more for your money and achieve greater capital growth with a semi-detached house than you will by buying a unit". In an article captioned "Semis – they're not half bad", some buyers still saw a "humble semi" as the "poor man's alternative to a freestanding house" even though it was "one of the stars of the Sydney property market". Semis at that time were sought after because of their "price, character and space" (*SMH Domain*, 6-7 April 2002, 6H). The following year in "Halfway houses" (*SMH Domain*, 15-16 November 2003, 8H-9H) a real estate agent Alan Weiss described semis as "a transitional home – the stepping stone between a unit and a freestanding house" and admitted that in Bondi demand far outstripped supply.

Even in twenty-first century advertising there are hints of the earlier hierarchy of dwelling type. For example, when advertising a large Art Deco apartment in Mosman, Gayle Walker Real Estate suggested that it was a "Secluded Semi Sized Apartment" which is "more like a semi in size and floorplan" (*Mosman Daily*, 28 October 2010, 70). Another Mosman apartment offered in late 2013 by Belle Property had "semi like appeal" (belleproperty.com/2p5651). O'Gorman Partners Real Estate in 2013 offered a "semi-like Art Deco courtyard apartment" in Cremorne, which was "more like a semi in layout and ambience". It appears that it is more desirable to have a semi than an apartment in these suburbs. Even the duplex⁶⁸ takes its place in the pecking order – in a cover story Jimmy Thomson stated:

Duplexes – two homes under the one roof – are the hidden gems of the apartment world. They can be hard to find but the good ones are little gems.

⁶⁸ Here the term is used in the NSW context as a strata-titled building containing two apartments, one above the other, rather than being a synonym for a semi as is commonly used in Western Australia.

The official definition of a duplex is two strata apartments, one above the other like a large house split horizontally between floors. Nowadays, however, you are just as likely to see brand new semi-detached homes, side by side, advertised as duplexes, perhaps because duplex sounds a little sexier than “semi”. (*SMH Domain*, 23-24 April 2005, 4A)

Yet the semi is still not quite equal to a detached house – in a feature article about a semi, the introduction stated that “it’s hard to believe this home is just a semi” (*Mosman Daily* 21 October 2010, 71).

A major factor in the ongoing popularity of semis (both old and new) is the steep rise in housing prices in recent decades. A semi is cheaper than a detached house with the same floor-space, and although many semis are no larger than an apartment they do not involve Owners Corporations and strata laws. The main problems with semis are noise transmission through the shared party wall, and the proximity of neighbours. Many buyers see a semi as a transitional home – between an apartment and a detached house, while others like the compact nature of a semi and the ease of adapting them to modern living. Buyers are attracted to the Victorian and Federation styles and although off street car parking spaces can be impossible, parking is usually easier than it is near the inner city terraces. Historically semis developed in the wake of main roads, trains and trams, so they are usually convenient to public transport and shops.

Attitudes towards semis are also reflected in how their owners maintain them (or not) and change them. In extreme cases, where a building is perceived as being worthless, or inappropriate for its land value, it will be demolished. This study has provided many examples of semis which have been demolished, mostly before the Second World War. Since then the key factor which minimises the threat of the demolition of both semis in a pair is the dual ownership of the building, arising from de facto subdivision. Where dual ownerships did not exist, in some cases whole rows of semis were demolished – for example the semis in Spit Road Mosman which made way for blocks of flats during the 1960s (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2: Federation semis, demolished 1960s.



Spit Road, Mosman. Photographed in 1957. (SLNSW, Image d2_16172)

Even more recently, where dual ownership did not exist, pairs of semis have been demolished. For example, a pair of substantial Victorian semis (with very unusual roof forms) in Goulburn was demolished during the 1980s (Figure 10.3). A pair of very intact Federation Bungalow semis in Bellevue Hill was demolished in 2002 (Figure 10.4). Neither pair had a heritage listing.

Figure 10.3: Demolished c1850s semis.



Bourke Street, Goulburn. Photographed in 1870. Demolished 1980s. (Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Record No 35640)

Figure 10.4: Demolished 1917 semis.



O'Sullivan Road, Bellevue Hill. Demolished 2002. (Author 2002)

If demolitions do occur, then in some cases archival recordings should be made. Only a handful of local councils in NSW have a requirement for a heritage assessment as part of an application to demolish. They then require an archival recording of anything which has some heritage significance but not enough to prevent a demolition. For example Woollahra Council insisted on both a heritage assessment and photographic documentation of the semis in Figure 10.4 prior to their demolition.

The ability to demolish terraces and pairs of semis after their de facto subdivision and to redevelop the separate lots was tested in Court in 1952, when the Judge described the "substandard blocks" which must "lie vacant once the usefulness of the present building should be exhausted because they would be too small for a single dwelling" (Lloyd v Waverley Municipal Council (1952) 18 LGR (NSW) 224). This assisted with the survival of many semis which would otherwise have been demolished. However, in another case in 1988 the Judge referred to the earlier case and ruled that:

Attitudes have changed considerably towards terraces and semidetached dwellings, and there is now no legal bar to the redevelopment of allotments referred to by his honour as substandard. (Harrison Friedmann & Assoc v Kogarah Municipal Council (1988), 35 APA (NSW), 359)

Although developing the separate lots is probably not the major reason for demolition, this ruling has removed a small impediment for developers. However, general attitudes towards extant semis are of greater concern.

Dwellings do not just reflect the era in which they were built. Even if semis retain their use as residences, they also have their own histories of change. They can be extended, have floor-plans changed, get new uses for rooms, have decorative features and structural elements such as window frames replaced; and parts may be demolished. Many are "renovated" to display current fashions.

Planning an upgrade to a semi necessarily involves consideration of the neighbours and the other half of the building. Life can also become difficult and property values may be impacted if a neighbour makes unsympathetic alterations. Even simple changes such as painting half the façade can degrade the building (Figure 10.5).

Figure 10.5: Painting one of a pair of semis.



Before - Belmont Road, Mosman. Semis built in 1941. (Author 2004)



After - what was a small but symmetrical pair in 2004 is now unbalanced by painting and the addition of a carport. (Author 2014)

The scarcity of pairs with matching alterations and additions provides an indication of just how difficult the relationship with neighbours in a semi can be. The sometimes astounding alterations are also a demonstration of how little the developers understand and appreciate the unique character of the dwelling type. Such alterations are also a testament to the ineffectiveness of planning guidelines for semis (see Section 10.7).

There are instances of sympathetic alterations and additions for buildings containing a pair of semis. For example, in 2013 Benn + Penna Architects “readapted and extended” two “dilapidated” semis in Balmain so that they remained “visually and structurally integrated from the outside, while maintaining plenty of internal individuality” (*SMH Domain*, 13-14 December 2013, 15). The architect Andrew Benn noted in the article his pleasure in developing the pair so that “the building geometries are never abrupt or discontinuous” and he avoided “fragmenting the building into separate parts”. His challenge was to “maintain the uniformity while being able to respond to the needs of the occupants”. He achieved this by using a “consistent material palette (timber), and an avoidance of the slapped-on box-like additions that litter much of the inner city” (Figure 10.6). Of crucial importance in this project was the ownership of the building – both semis were owned by members of the same family, which enabled the architect to consider the building as a whole rather than as individual dwellings.

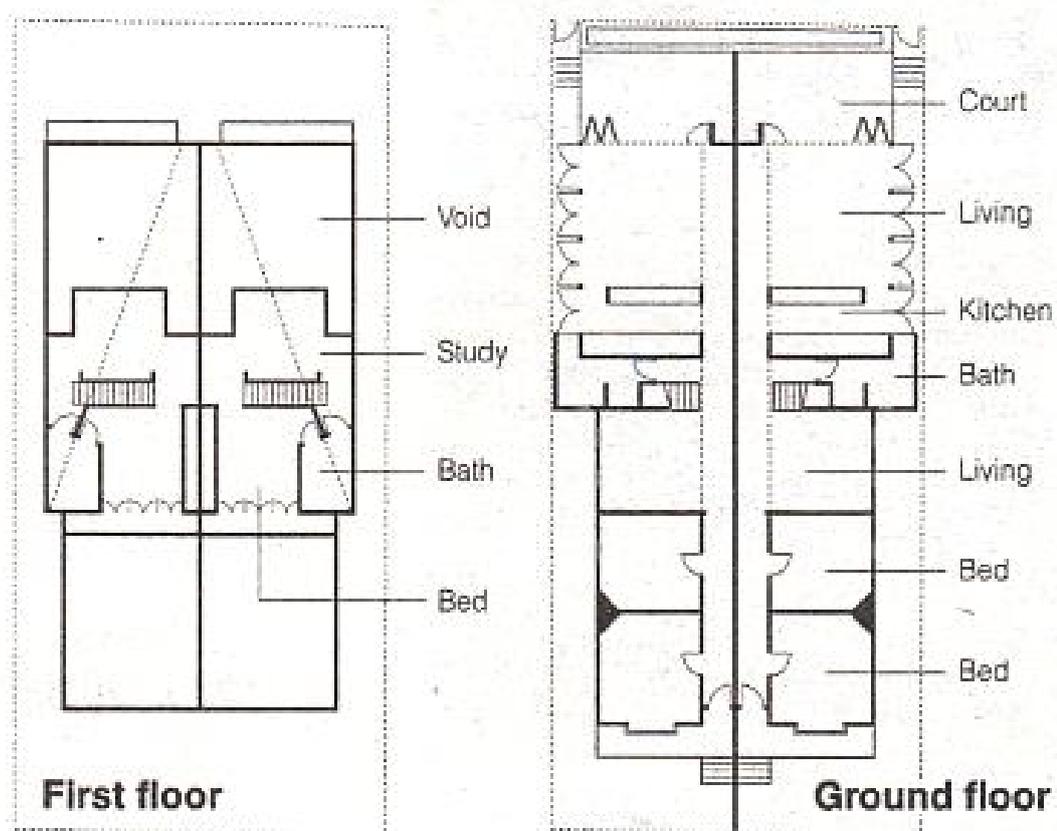
Figure 10.6: Balmain semis, renovated 2013.



Rear of the semis. (Tom Ferguson, Katherine Lu, *SMH Domain*, 13-14 December 2013, 15)

In rare cases two individual owners may cooperate on the renovation of the building. For example in 2005, architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer redesigned the rear of a pair of Federation semis in Bondi. The brief from both owners was to add “space, light and air” to the semis. This was achieved while retaining the original symmetrical appearance of the semis from the street, and creating an unusual but still symmetrical roofline at the rear. Internally, the two original bedrooms, fireplaces and living area accessed from each hall were also retained (Figure 10.7).

Figure 10.7: Federation semis, Bondi, renovated 2005.



(Tim Greer, *SMH Domain*, 14 July 2005, 11)

Sometimes, both owners may co-operate to maintain the façade such that it retains its original integrity. For example, two pairs of identical Victorian Filigree semis in Darling Point each display original fabric which has been sympathetically restored to maintain the relationship between the two semis in each pair and the other pairs within the streetscape (Figure 10.8).

Figure 10.8: Cooperation to maintain the integrity of facades.



Darling Point Road, Darling Point. Built in 1902. (Author 2014)

10.4 CONSERVATION AREAS

Individual heritage listings will preserve a limited number of terraces and pairs of semis which are assessed as being good, representative examples of those dwelling types. However, it is the creation of conservation areas which has underpinned the conservation of terraces, mostly because terraces can be found in large concentrations in specific areas such as Paddington. Semis, because they are typically found within streetscapes which include large and small detached dwellings, semis and small interwar apartment blocks, may be within a conservation area, but there are no known examples where they have been the main reason for the creation of a conservation area. Instead, they may be within an area which contains streetscapes of Federation housing (such as Haberfield) or an area of historical importance (such as Daceyville).

The controls and guidelines for conservation areas with mixed dwelling types are currently lacking specific controls for the semis within the area.

10.5 HERITAGE PERCEPTION

Internationally the definition of what constitutes heritage has been broadening to include categories such as intangible heritage, cultural landscapes and, more recently, cultural routes (Blair 2013, 5). The focus has changed from buildings to the diversity of cultural expressions. The environment and context of urban landscapes can now be assessed for significance. Broadening the concept of cultural value can “empower a diversity of communities and individuals through actively supporting and valuing their stories, objects and places” (Gibson

and Pendlebury 2009, 2). In Australia the concept of heritage value has also expanded to include smaller niche categories such as graffiti, and post-war fibro houses. For example, the ordinary fibro house at 97 Wentworth Street, Blackheath was heritage listed in 2005 because it:

... provides evidence of the consolidation of Blackheath during the mid twentieth century and is one of several post World War II era buildings located in this part of Blackheath. It is a good, very intact and representative example of a house erected in the post World War II era which demonstrates well the use of fibro at this time. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1172031)

Not all attempts to widen the definition of heritage have proceeded without incident and controversy. For example, a fibro house on land worth in excess of \$4 million was mysteriously burned down just hours before the newly-listed property was due to go to auction (*SMH*, 19 October 2003).

Many owners and developers are opposed to heritage listings, and there is widespread political pressure to downgrade the heritage framework in NSW, as evidenced by the 2013 proposals to amend the state's planning laws. Although several public housing estates have been heritage listed (for example, in South Granville), there remains some reluctance to accept twentieth century public housing as heritage. There are some concerns about the imposition of middle-class values onto the residents of public housing, as well as the creation of an additional layer of management and expense. The negative implications of heritage listing on the repairs, maintenance, modification and redevelopment of social housing were outlined by Shelter NSW in late 2013, without any mention of potential positives (Martin 2013).

Alister Scott, when considering the public perception of the cultural value of landscape, suggests that "assessing public perception of landscape continues to be both an academic and a policy challenge" (Scott 2008, 346). He presents a new methodology which recognises that perception does not just depend on the components of the physical landscape, but also on the "values, past experiences and socio-cultural conditioning of the observer" and that perception is an important component of planning practice and policy (Scott 2008, 347). Similarly, there is a need to recognise that there are varying perceptions about what constitutes the heritage significance of ordinary housing.

Traditionally, the assessment of an "intrinsic" heritage value has been seen as the realm of the heritage "expert" (in NSW, usually an architect). Yet what the expert may value as heritage is not necessarily what a member of the community finds significant, and conversely what might appear bland and ordinary to the expert may have great heritage value for the

public. Lianne Gibson and John Pendlebury argue that cultural value is *not* intrinsic, but rather “the fabric, object or environment is the bearer of an externally imposed culturally and historically specific meaning, that attracts a value status dependant on the dominant frameworks of value of the time and place” (Gibson and Pendlebury 2009, 1). They also say that there is “a contemporary imperative to consider different cultural, historical and social values as equal” for the management of heritage and hypothesise that the question of how to overcome the practical issues arising from this is the “most significant issue facing contemporary heritage management and policy”, including the assessment of heritage.

Both dwelling types and architectural styles have over many decades been the subject of what may be called “heritage perception”, and it is clear that many such perceptions change over time. Much of the colonial past of NSW was demolished during the late Victorian era, yet from 1924, when Hardy Wilson published *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*, that book’s “wonderfully evocative drawings gave each building (and their kind) an iconic status” (Howard Tanner, quoted in Tassell 2011, 21). The planned destruction in The Rocks during the 1960s and 1970s highlighted that working class colonial Georgian architecture was not perceived by the government as heritage at all, much less as iconic. In 1963 the National Trust (NSW) published a book about the 34 buildings in NSW which comprised their “A List” of buildings which must be preserved. Almost all were from the colonial Georgian period (Dupain 1963). Even Georgian houses in England have only relatively recently become “heritage icons” (Borsay 2009, 157-177).

Just as the Georgian house was transformed from unloved into an icon, the earlier attitudes to Victorian and high Gothicism – of “pompous moral and architectural pretensions and sheer aesthetic fussiness” (Borsay 2009, 165) – have now been widely replaced by the perception that such architectural styles are most definitely heritage.

In 1948 an official government report stated that in the inner suburbs of Paddington, Balmain, Redfern, Glebe and Annandale, which contained large numbers of Victorian terraces,

... the existing street and subdivision patterns are so much below acceptable standards that rehabilitation of the area is not possible without drastic clearance and the treatment of substantial areas at a time. (Cumberland County Council 1948, 33)

Since then public opinion about terraces has changed. Terraced housing, once seen as slum housing, began to be perceived as heritage when dwellings in suburbs such as Paddington in the historic areas of the city started to “filter up”⁶⁹ during the 1960s, based on movements in their “real value and relative position within the housing stock” (Roseth 1969, 247). As early

⁶⁹ Each new occupant perceiving the building as having a higher status.

as 1968 a recommendation was made to create a new “historical area” residential zone in Paddington (Roseth 1969, 83). Graham Jahn explains how in 1968 “urban designers began to debate the tensions between individual expression and the continuous whole of the streetscape” (Jahn 1994, 149). He goes on to say:

Sydney’s iron-lace Victorian terrace suburbs were officially recognised as areas of heritage character during the period 1973-78. Inner city Councils soon established protection policies which generalised the “character” of areas by recording existing samples and developing guidelines that new development should follow. (Jahn 1994, 151)

Now most Victorian terraces are protected within conservation areas. Woollahra Council has heritage listed many individual terraces, and has extensive conservation areas containing terraces. There is no argument about whether Victorian terraces are perceived as heritage. Further, there are large numbers of heritage listings where buildings other than terraces (for example, pairs of semis, or even detached dwellings) are listed based on them merely being *described* as a “terrace” or “terraces” (see Case Study 14).

Heritage status has increased the value of Victorian terraced housing. Under the heading “Paddington is still tops for terraces” Carolyn Boyd suggests that:

Terraces used to be dark, dank and for the downtrodden. Now they’re hip. Paddington was one of the suburbs to drive the terrace revival and when it comes to price, property analyst Australian Property Monitors says this eastern suburb still leads the way with a median tag of \$1,235,000, based on 12 months of sales.

Paddington has been, and I believe it will continue to be, a sought-after suburb for a lot of wealthy professionals who are prepared to pay the price tag to call it home. (*SMH Domain*, 10-11 April 2010, 8)

The middle class Victorian and Federation detached dwellings which now feature so prominently in the NSW heritage lists were not greatly valued during the 1960s, and many were either demolished or had their characteristic “fussy” detailing removed. Even during the 1970s perceptions were mixed. Although Haberfield was lauded as Australia’s first Garden Suburb, in 1979 some of its beautiful Federation houses were demolished (*The Glebe* 14 November 1979). By the 1980s it was fashionable to restore Federation houses, with many “how-to” books published on the subject. An original Federation house became very desirable and heritage listings of large, representative detached examples proliferated.

Despite being the subject of several books, the interwar California bungalow in Australia still seems to be under threat in some suburbs. Often degraded, bungalows are prime targets for demolition and replacement, perhaps because they are a common, ordinary, interwar style which is not yet perceived as having much cultural value, being only 80 to 90 years old. None of the few remaining inter-war California bungalows in the Woollahra Council area is listed. Just as regret is now expressed about the many Federation buildings lost to demolition before the style was perceived as being heritage, the loss of so many bungalows may in future be a source of regret.

The seminal *(Un)loved Modern* conference hosted by Australia ICOMOS in 2009 provided a forum to progress the debate over the cultural value of twentieth century buildings, and the “love/hate” attitudes towards Modernism. Comment was made about “the mentality that permeates government at all levels; that of demolition and new build being seen as a symbol of economic progress rather than an act of cultural amnesia” (Robertson 2013, 5-6). Although it is promoted primarily by architects (because of the association of various architects with the Modern movement in NSW), the drive to have twentieth century modern buildings recognised as heritage has not been an overwhelming success, despite several listings of twentieth century houses on the State Heritage Register. For example, as part of the Sydney Architectural Festival, two years after the *(Un)loved Modern* conference:

A stellar cast of Australian architects, designers, curators and commentators came together in a symposium at the Museum of Sydney titled “Australian houses of the 1950s and 60s” to explore the significance of the houses of this era. As we continue to pull down fine examples of these houses and replace them with McMansions, it is worth questioning what we are trading off. Why aren’t these structures seen as part of our heritage? (Lieberman 2011, 13)

That such a debate for a better understanding of an important section of the built environment of NSW is well under way is encouraging. However, for semis there is currently just indifference. If there is any public sentiment at all relating to semis, it has not been documented, except in broad terms by real estate commentaries in newspapers. Yet for terraces, it was not just indifference, but active dislike which had to be overcome before they were perceived as heritage.

Until relatively recently apartment blocks in NSW were, like semis, treated with indifference. They were not widely perceived as heritage, although there are purpose-built flats in NSW which are more than 100 years old. In 2004 the architecture and design writer Jenna Reed Burns published a glossy book titled *Apartment Living: Australian Style*. Later, an award-winning book (Butler-Bowdon and Pickett 2007), an exhibition *Homes in the Sky* at the Museum of Sydney (2007) and a ground-breaking PhD thesis (Butler-Bowdon 2009), created

a better understanding of the social and historical value of apartments, which has heightened their appreciation within the community. At the same time, the public acceptance of apartment living over recent decades has contributed to the diminution of any social stigma associated with flats and apartments, and consequently it is now mainstream to perceive apartments as having heritage value.

There are also instances of the “post-modern pluralism of value” to be seen in the ordinary housing of Britain (Gibson and Pendlebury 2009). For example, in the Scottish Highlands the traditional thatched “blackhouse” dwellings were mostly replaced with English-style “improved” cottages and planned villages during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Despite this the myth of the traditional highland village of cottages persisted, and the perception of Scottish heritage was based more on the myth than the “real” Scottish Highlands. Daniel Maudlin “put romanticism and national mythologies to one side” and examined “the distinctly unromantic but historically and culturally significant houses that continue to define the Highland landscape” (Maudlin 2009, xii).

Laurajane Smith theorises that within England the “Authorised Heritage Discourse” defines heritage as “all that is ‘good’, grand, monumental and, primarily, of national significance” (Smith 2009, 35), although she observes that this traditional discourse obscures the fact that heritage value is not intrinsic but can only be assigned by people. If people do not perceive any cultural value, then it is not heritage.

Semis themselves (as with all dwelling types and styles) may not have intrinsic heritage value, but value is a social construction of time and place. If the experts and the NSW community do gain an increased understanding of the social, socio-economic and historical factors which underpinned the development of Victorian, Federation and interwar semis (as they have done with apartments and Victorian terraces), they may not necessarily perceive any heritage value arising from that. The international statement made in 2005 by the Council of Europe (the *Faro Convention*) expressed the idea that heritage should be considered pluralistically and linked to the rights people have over their heritage. The author may be the only person who, at the present time, perceives that semis in NSW have a greater heritage value than is currently reflected in their statutory heritage listings. Even so, this research will have been worthwhile if it assists groups or individuals to better appreciate semis in NSW, and to have a more informed idea of the impact of proposed alterations and additions on them. If it adds enough to the heritage discourse in NSW to generate a greater perception of their heritage value and a more informed listing regime for semis, so much the better.

10.6 STATE HERITAGE LISTINGS

This section will consider the 22 pairs of, and one individual, State-listed semis (see Appendix 5) to determine when and why they were listed, and what, if anything, sets them apart from the semis which remain unlisted or the 296 which have a local listing only. State-listed items have a much greater level of statutory protection (including the oversight by the NSW Heritage Council of any planned changes) than items which are listed as locally significant on Local Environmental Plans.

The *Heritage Act 1977* created the NSW Heritage Council, which was able to apply Interim Heritage Orders to buildings it considered were under immediate threat. After more detailed assessments, some of the Interim Heritage Orders were converted to Permanent Conservation Orders. Other buildings deemed worthy of protection could also be given Permanent Conservation Orders. All items which had a Permanent Conservation Order were automatically transferred to the State Heritage Register in 1999, after it was created by amendments to the Act in 1998. It is generally recognised that the current process of assessment against criteria to justify any listing on the Register is much more rigorous than the earlier process of applying Conservation Orders.

Four pairs of semis are listed on the State Heritage Register because they were previously given Interim and Permanent Conservation Orders on the recommendation of the National Trust (NSW). Most of these were as part of the Trust's Small Houses Scheme (see Case Study 14). An analysis of these semis suggests that none would reach the threshold for State significance under the current assessment criteria, except the magnificent pair of 1893 Victorian Italianate semis in Randwick.

Four pairs are part of listed precincts, where the semis are a minor part of the significance. For example, two colonial lighthouses (Pittwater and Smoky Cape) have nearby lighthouse-keepers' cottages. While the ability to demonstrate the dwelling hierarchy is there (the head keepers had detached houses while the assistant keepers had semis), neither of the listings makes mention of the semis having any importance. The only State listing to provide any hint of the importance of semis in the social class structure is that for the Portland Cement Works Precinct where there are "representative Federation period cottages that demonstrate the social stratification of this company town in the early twentieth century". None of the semis in the precinct listings has been assessed individually.

One semi in Bathurst is listed because of its association with former Prime Minister Ben Chifley. The fact that it is a semi is so unimportant that its twin is not included in the listing.

Fourteen of the State listings are for semis within The Rocks and Millers Point. These areas have for many years been scrutinised by heritage experts, and as well as the creation of the State-listed Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct in 2003, many of the buildings were individually listed. The listings include remnant Colonial Georgian, Victorian and Federation semis and with only one exception (“Reynolds Cottages”) they are all described as terraces, because they have the characteristic architectural styles of the terraces of the periods. They are all pairs of dwellings, yet clearly their listings rely more on the perception that terraces are heritage than their actual dwelling type. “Reynolds Cottages” are listed because they are old, and the other 13 pairs have significance arising from the contributions their architectural styles make to the streetscapes.

In 2014 the NSW State Government announced plans to evict many of the public housing tenants of Millers Point, and sell the dwellings (*SMH*, 20 March 2014, 1,6-7), despite the “social composition” of the working class people themselves forming an integral part of the significance of the area (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5054725). The conservation outcomes for the built heritage (including the semis) of Millers Point remain uncertain.

It would therefore seem that there is no semi in NSW which has been assessed as having State significance because it can illustrate why semis were so important in the dwelling hierarchy as the colony evolved, and why they occupy such an important position between terraces and detached dwellings. The existing listings either hark back to the late 1970s and 1980s, the heyday of the influence of the National Trust (NSW), or they are for semis which just happen to be located next to an icon such as a lighthouse or a cement works or a naval base, and are caught up in the precinct listings. Or they are located within recognised heritage precincts such as Millers Point and The Rocks, and assessed as having importance because of their “terrace” styling and contributions to the streetscape. Since the creation of the State Heritage Register in 1999 the only semi outside Millers Point, The Rocks or a precinct to have been listed is the half building in Bathurst, listed in 2002 because of its historical association with a politician.

10.7 PLANNING CONTROLS

Within this thesis many examples and case studies have been provided to illustrate specific points. In this section a selection of local government planning controls will be considered, particularly as they pertain to some of those examples.

The Daceyville Garden Suburb Heritage Conservation Area was created to promote its conservation:

... through understanding the suburb in terms of its plan, buildings and Garden City design principles. These elements have come together to create a distinctive character, identity and sense of place. (City of Botany Bay 2005, 4)

The Statement of Significance suggests that it is “one of the most important urban areas in Australia” (City of Botany Bay 2005, 45). There are eight components to the significance, yet only one component hints at the buildings themselves - “Daceyville is able to demonstrate ‘modern’ design philosophy in response to the physical and social conditions of the 19th Century inner cities in Australia” – and there is no mention of the importance of the different dwelling types as part of the social fabric of the time. There is nothing in the Daceyville Development Control Plan (DCP) for the conservation area or in the supporting Historical Report which discusses the position of the suburb’s semis within the housing mix. There is an explicit recognition of Daceyville as a “product of the city planning philosophies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries” and as a key player in “the development of modern Australian suburbs” (City of Botany Bay 2005, 4) yet no recognition of the dwelling hierarchy based on social class which was embedded within that planning philosophy. There are no controls in the Daceyville DCP which encourage the conservation of dual-dwelling buildings as a single, integrated form. Without an understanding of the suburb’s semis as a dwelling type which differs significantly from detached dwellings and group housing, it may be difficult to achieve the stated conservation policy of “conserving the heritage significance of individual buildings contained within the Daceyville Garden Suburb” (City of Botany Bay 2005, 5). The DCP unambiguously differentiates between the original Federation housing and the later infill development, but not between the original dwelling types, apart from providing photographic examples of some semis. It can only be assumed that any further infill development or alterations to existing dwellings will pay no regard to the historical hierarchy of dwelling type, and the place of Daceyville’s semis within that hierarchy.

The Randwick DCP has objectives (supported by controls) for the development of semis, requiring that:

- Any redevelopment or alteration and addition to an individual semi-detached dwelling recognise it as being half of a pair of symmetrical, similar or complementary buildings.
- Any development to a semi-detached dwelling is carefully integrated with the building to which it is attached, and takes into account any possible future development to the latter. (Randwick City Council 2013, 19)

Despite this, in early 2014 a developer sought advice from Randwick City Council’s heritage planner about a residential development within a conservation area (Lorraine Simpson pers. comm. January and February 2014). The proposal was to demolish one of a pair of semis

and construct a medium density block of apartments, attached to the remaining semi. Although the semi which was to be demolished was significantly altered, the façade of the remaining semi was relatively intact.

For many years Mosman Council's Residential DCP has had a section giving specialist guidance to the owners of semis. The objectives (supported by detailed planning controls) for semi-detached dwellings are:

1. To have the concept of semi-detached dwelling as one of a pair or group of dwellings retained, maintaining traditional scale, character and established streetscape values;
2. To have alterations and additions to a semi-detached dwelling which are appropriate to the established scale and building envelope of the original building and to the predominant development in the vicinity;
3. To have alterations and additions to a semi-detached dwelling seen as an extension of the general form of the existing building envelope, appropriately related in form and detail to the adjoining semi-detached dwelling; and
4. To have potential for complementary development of an adjoining semi-detached dwelling. (Mosman Council 2012, 53-55)

Whilst providing very unambiguous guidelines, it is clear that some owners and Mosman Council planners see them as optional. Council approval was given for all the examples shown in Figure 10.9. The example shown in Figure 10.10 was approved and built in 2012.

Figure 10.9: Alterations to semis, Mosman.



Rosebery Street. (Author 2006)



The original Federation style remains on the semi to the right. Awaba Street. (Author 2005)



Ourimbah Road. (Author 2004)

Figure 10.10: Recent alterations to a Federation semi.



Before – an intact pair of semis, Belmont Road, Mosman. (Author 2003)



After - the remaining semi is dwarfed by the 2012 additions and the building has lost its integrity as a pair of semis. (Author 2013)

10.8 CONCLUSIONS

Lisanne Gibson, in her discussion about social value, states that:

Social or cultural value is often difficult to establish for a variety of reasons. The primary reason is the fact that often the “provenance” or the history of the social or cultural significance of an object has been lost or forgotten, a problem exacerbated when the object is perceived to be outside established heritage frameworks. (Gibson 2009, 73)

It is clear from the paucity of meaningful heritage listings that semis are currently outside the established heritage framework in NSW, as indeed they are in England (Lofthouse 2012). The ongoing destruction of their integrity with inappropriate alterations and additions suggests that they are also poorly understood by the community. They have no intrinsic heritage value; but why are there so few people today for whom they have meaning? In many cases the type of lower middle class tenants for whom semis were built in NSW during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can no longer afford to live in them; the stock of semis has been disconnected from its historical community. That community today therefore has little perception of semis as part of their heritage. Many semis are located in suburbs in which any housing is highly sought after. For example Mosman, with a higher than average proportion of semis, is the suburb with the highest median house price in Australia. The new owner/occupiers do not perceive semis as heritage – they are small dwellings ripe for renovation, to provide contemporary accommodation in a desirable suburb.

Many semis are not ornate enough to be included in the listings based on architectural styles, unlike nineteenth century terraced houses which are perceived as being heritage because of their often-lavish Victorian features and their age. The fact that most state-listed semis are incorrectly described as Victorian terraces reinforces this view. The semis which are locally listed tend to display superficial Victorian or Federation architectural styles.

Local communities with terraced housing support the creation of conservation areas because terraces are now perceived as being old enough, and having enough historical character, to be heritage. Communities also generally support the listing and management of their landmark buildings such as mansions and churches. They may even support the assessment of relatively modest detached dwellings if they are associated with prominent architects or other noteworthy people. However, there is currently little imperative for communities to value the semis within their housing mix. The only indication that communities as a whole may value their semis is the inclusion of specific planning controls within local government instruments such as Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans. Yet the development outcomes in these municipalities suggest that the

controls themselves are barriers which can be readily overcome, indicating also that many residents see no reasons to comply. The heritage experts in NSW do not perceive semis as heritage – within the fabric-focussed regime of identifying local heritage items for local heritage studies by direct observation (walking around the suburbs and towns), social and historical values are overlooked, and the trained architectural eye finds very little aesthetic significance in the modest façade of a speculatively-built suburban semi.

Realistically, even if individual heritage listings were to increase as a result of a better understanding of the significance of semis, the main form of their listing is likely to be as part of conservation areas or within groups of buildings. Such areas “show how Australians have responded physically, emotionally, socially and architecturally to the environment and how places have been variously occupied, used, changed and associated with society over time” (City of Botany Bay 2005, 14). The policies for those areas, precincts and groups should recognise their mix of dwelling types, and provide specific policies for each dwelling type. Within such conservation areas there should also be a balance between conservation, restoration and reconstruction. Conservation areas are more than collections of individual buildings. If the semis are enlarged to become equal in size to the detached dwellings within a conservation area, the historical relationships between the buildings will be lost. As a by-product, such excessive enlargements will usually also result in the destruction of the symmetry of the original buildings containing the semis. The sense of place within a conservation area will be diminished.

There will be many circumstances where buildings containing semis cannot be retained at all. Philip Goad acknowledges that “some aspects, perhaps even a great deal of unloved architecture will stay that way and simply become part of the disposable fabric of everyday life” (Goad 2013, 26). He asks:

Should one document ordinariness and bequeath it as heritage to the realm of memory, nostalgia or, in the case of Howard Arkley’s paintings of Australia’s suburban houses, art? (Goad 2013, 21)

Despite the partial protection from demolition provided by multiple ownership structures, the economic reality is that most semis occupy land in the most valuable areas of the cities – the inner and middle ring suburbs with excellent transport infrastructure. A small pair of semis located on valuable land is in many cases no longer economically or socially viable. To meet modern housing needs many such pairs of semis will inevitably be consolidated into a single ownership, and demolished. In a relatively recent phenomenon, cooperation between different owners is allowing small apartment blocks and rows of detached houses in prime suburbs to be sold to a single developer.

Neighbours in Sydney suburbs are doubling, and in some cases, tripling the value of their homes by teaming up and selling rows of homes to land-starved developers. (*SMH*, 4-5 October 2014, News 13)

Shortages of prime development land during a housing boom will similarly encourage the individual owners of semis to artificially inflate the values of their homes by selling simultaneously to a developer.

Without an understanding of the cultural significance of semis in general, significant changes such as demolitions and massive alterations will continue to occur, until there are no intact semis left to help tell the story of how the past has informed the built environment. At the very least semis are historical records, and a representative sample should be identified and heritage listed as part of the tangible expression of the architectural history of NSW. The philosophy for heritage items embodied within the *Burra Charter* is to do as much as is necessary to care for a place and to make it useable, but otherwise to change it as little as possible so that the cultural significance is retained. However, this could just as easily apply to the overall stock of semis in NSW. This does not preclude change, but as urban areas evolve such change must respect the cultural values of the buildings and their context in suburbia and in towns, and strike a balance between the demands of contemporary lifestyles and the fundamental characteristics which define the cultural significance of buildings containing pairs of semis.

Despite sharing many historical and social aspects with semis, terraced houses are deemed worthy of conservation by the community; semis are not. Yet whose value systems should prevail when assessments are made of cultural value? Those of the architect-dominated heritage profession in NSW? Or the residents who enjoy living in semis? Or the owners who wish to expand and modernise their semis? Or the community which wishes to retain its identity with heterogeneous streetscapes of detached dwellings and more modest semis? It has been suggested that heritage is a socially constructed concept, that “people’s perceptions of heritage tend to focus on the construction of the elite” and “the mobilization of the concept of heritage is a political tool of certain classes in society, essentially a culturally-focussed part of the upper and middle-classes” (Pendlebury *et al.* 2009, 181).

This thesis argues that an increased understanding of the stories and the place of semis within the housing stock may broaden the concept of cultural value in NSW and make it more “democratic”, regardless of who is making the assessment of significance.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

The significance of some items may increase as we learn more about our history. Indeed, historical information is crucial to understanding the context of individual heritage items and why they are important. (NSW Heritage Office 2005, 2)

This study commenced with the hypothesis that semis are a distinct dwelling type in NSW. The evidence presented supports the assertion that, although semis share some characteristics and historical influences with terraced houses, and others with detached houses, they do occupy a unique niche within the stock of dwellings in NSW. Several questions were posed in Chapter 1:

- When and why were semis built in NSW, who designed them, who built them, who purchased them and who lived in them?
- What determined their distribution within the suburbs and towns of NSW?
- What factors have influenced the rises and falls in the popularity of semis when compared to other dwelling types such as detached houses, terraced houses and apartments?
- What caused the subdivisions of terraces and pairs of semis during the 1950s and 1960s, which transformed them from rental housing into mostly owner/occupied housing?
- What is the cultural significance of the semi-detached dwelling type in NSW and do semis have unique characteristics which should be conserved?
- Is the lack of heritage listings because semis have minimal cultural value, or is their significance not understood by the community and heritage consultants?

By telling the story of the historical development of semis in NSW, and considering their aesthetic and physical qualities, answers have been discovered. The research has uncovered several forgotten or overlooked aspects of the architectural and planning histories of NSW, and linked semis directly to the social, political and economic conditions during each major period since the foundation of the colony.

The mixed fortunes of the semi-detached house reflect a formative chapter in Australian history from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. This period saw the emergence of an aspiring middle class which transformed Australian society and created particular social needs. As legal adjustments followed social change, the popularity of the semi rose and fell, then rose again.

The question “Why study ordinary housing?” was also asked in the introduction to this thesis. Article 12a of the *Faro Convention* (2005) commits signatories (including Australia) to encouraging everyone to participate in:

The process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of cultural heritage (Council of Europe 2005a)

The Convention further suggests that this process:

Without excluding the exceptional, particularly embraces the commonplace heritage of all people (Council of Europe 2005b)

Just like semis in NSW, American front porches might seem to be an unlikely subject for research.

Nobody thought much about the front porch when most Americans had them and used them. The great American front porch was just there, open and sociable, an unassigned part of the house that belonged to everyone and no one, a place for family and friends to pass the time. (cited in Cook 1997)

Yet by researching the American front porch as a cultural object, Scott Cook was able to directly link its popularity during the 1850s and its decline after the Second World War to the prevailing social and technological conditions. He concluded that:

... the front porch developed a cultural significance. It represented the cultural ideals of family, community and nature. As these ideals would decline in importance in American culture, so would the porch. (Cook 1997)

James W Gibson’s study of small, timber, bush chapels in Australia concluded that:

Considered singly, these church buildings appear to have little worth. The simple naivety of their design and construction, the sameness and lack of individuality, not to mention their poor response to the climate, all tend to undermine their worth as pieces of architecture. However, collectively they are of significant communal value. They are a reflection of the social history of their time, of the values and standards that motivated earlier generations. (Gibson 2008, 19)

The same may be said of semis. It is important to view semis in the spirit in which they were built, through contemporary comments and reactions, as well as with twenty-first century eyes. Individually there were few semis which had outstanding architectural merit. As is the

case today, the dichotomy between what architects and planners liked to think was “good” or “polite” design, and what was actually being built in the new suburbs, was stark. While occupants wanted some individuality, they also wanted to be part of a recognizable street or community, with its associated status. Dwelling forms and their superficial external styling partly satisfied this need, yet many heritage architects see this as “bad” design. And architects remain the most powerful influence in the heritage profession in NSW.

Although they are mostly small, simple dwellings, semis cannot be described as vernacular architecture. They were constructed by speculative builders and investors, or governments, rather than owner-builders. Collectively, the stock of semis in NSW tells a story about the British class system, as well as illustrating the consummate skill of the speculative builder in meeting the needs of an aspirational tenant.

In the field of stylism, or fashion, most major developments were seen in the lower middle class bracket. In this class, most houses were designed by speculative builders, who judged carefully the tastes and desires of the average mistress... They instigated no fashions – this was left to experimenters and exhibitionists in upper class homes – but they were sensitive to the fashion temper of society. (Boyd 1968, 12)

A large proportion of semi owners were single women – spinsters or widows. For a relatively modest investment, a pair of semis provided an ideal, respectable source of income, in the absence of formalised social security.

The most dominant theme to emerge during this study is the dwelling hierarchy based on social class. Levels of attachment and detachment in housing were inextricably linked to wealth and status. This is one of the most enduring British colonial influences on the housing stock of NSW, although it was not a new concept in architecture. The Roman architectural theorist Vitruvius in *De Architectura* outlined six principles which distinguished architecture from “random building practice” (Lefas 2000). One of these, *ordinatio*, suggests the creation of a hierarchy. At the time Vitruvius was writing, there were huge differences in social status, from Caesar to slaves, and “any rank order tends to the asymmetrical in this sense”. There was the risk that in architecture:

... one element may overshadow all others, and render them unimportant, or irrelevant. This is what Vitruvius fears, and this is the danger about which he is trying to warn us. ... A well-structured and ordered whole presumes a rank order. (Lefas 2000)

Detached housing, in both Britain and NSW, remains the most desirable dwelling type if there are no barriers to choice. The realities of land availability, budgetary constraints, housing affordability and other personal preferences such as locality mean, however, that in Britain the semi-detached house is the dominant dwelling type. These constraints were not as severe in the colony of NSW, with its virtually unlimited land resources and the opportunities for wealth creation which were independent of social class. By the mid-twentieth century the middle classes in NSW, unlike those in Britain, were able to afford the Great Australian Dream of a detached house on a quarter-acre block (0.1 hectare) in the suburbs. Despite the opprobrium surrounding terraced houses, a large portion of the working classes continued to occupy the huge numbers of them which were built during the nineteenth century. Rented semis in the suburbs provided an ideal compromise between the two.

If the location of a dwelling does not clearly signify social status, a dwelling's outer appearance takes on new meaning. This originally placed semis between a terraced house and a detached house, although the current popularity of the Victorian terraced house in NSW has effectively negated the difference in status between the terraced house and the semi. The detached still remains superior to the semi-detached. Even the term "semi-detached" has more cachet than "attached" when the ideal is "detached".

By 2011 over 75% of the Australian population lived in a detached house, although this dwelling type increased by only 7.2% between 2006 and 2011 (Census 2006, 2011). The highest rate of increase over five years was for attached housing (terraced houses, semis and town houses) – at 16.3% (107,120 dwellings) this was more than double the increase in detached housing.⁷⁰ Clearly, the economic and social benefits of attached housing are once again being appreciated by the community, further diluting the hierarchy in NSW.

With the ubiquity and dominance of semis within the streetscapes of suburban Britain, the hierarchy of attached vs detached is stronger than it is in NSW. For example a small detached bungalow in “the fourth most expensive property hotspot in the world” was demolished and replaced by two dwellings, separated by only 25cm (*Daily Mail* 22 May 2014, 39). The developer could have made substantial savings in the costs of materials by attaching the dwellings with a party wall, yet to avoid the dwellings becoming semis, he left “just enough of a gap for them to officially be described as ‘detached’” (Figure 11.1). The result is grotesque.

⁷⁰ Apartments increased by 13.2%.

Figure 11.1: Pair of new detached dwellings, 2014.



Sandbanks, Dorset, UK. (*Daily Mail* 22 May 2014, 39)

In NSW, it was detached housing which became the dominant middle class dwelling type, while semis initially catered for the lower middle class and skilled workers who could not achieve the dream of home ownership. During the Second World War Robert Menzies (between periods as the Australian Prime Minister), in a celebrated radio address defined what he saw as the middle class by first excluding what it was not:

The rich and powerful: those who control great funds and enterprises, and are as a rule able to protect themselves...and, at the other end of the scale the mass of unskilled people, almost invariably well-organised, and with their wages and conditions safeguarded by popular law.

He then suggested that in between them were:

Salary-earners, shopkeepers, skilled artisans, professional men and women, farmers and so on. These are, in the political and economic sense, the middle class. They are for the most part unorganised and unself-conscious. They are envied by those whose benefits are largely obtained by taxing them. They are not rich enough to have individual power. They are taken for granted by each political party in turn...and yet, as I have said, they are the backbone of the nation. (Menzies 1942)

And it was the ownership of a middle class home which was the “indispensable condition of continuity; its health determines the health of society as a whole” (Menzies 1942). After the war, a combination of factors, including rent control and a long-overlooked subdivision clause in an Act which was 30 years old, suddenly enabled the lower middle class and skilled

workers to purchase cheaply the semis and terraced houses they had been renting. Home ownership moved down the social scale, and semis became firmly entrenched as desirable lower middle class suburban homes.

De facto subdivision had far-reaching effects on the attached housing stock of NSW. Notwithstanding the potential for unsympathetic alterations and partial demolitions arising from the multiple ownerships of attached housing, the fact that so many semis have escaped (for now) the waves of demolition sweeping the suburbs is due primarily to them having separate owners for each half of the building. But they are located mostly in inner and middle ring suburbs with excellent transport links. As land values soar, the potential for developers to negotiate with only two owners in order to buy both semis in a pair and redevelop the land is increasing.

Change is inevitable. Renovations to semis will be ongoing as dwellings are adapted to meet changing needs. According to Afroditi Chatzoglou:

Historic cities and centres are never simply preserved as an entity since they are living organisms in which the constituent parts are affected by the socio-cultural processes of their time. (Chatzoglou *et al.* 2011, 2)

Suburbs can be viewed similarly. Like city centres, suburbs have “social, political and economic qualities that make them different from other kinds of heritage places” and they are “part of, and embedded within, everyday life” (Chatzoglou *et al.* 2011, 4). It would be ideal if the many distinctive suburban nineteenth and twentieth century streetscapes, which local people value for their mix of dwelling types, could be conserved without the formality of creating listed conservation areas. However, the economic reality is that many owners will continue to damage the integrity of individual buildings, particularly pairs of semis, until what was previously perceived as a “heritage streetscape” will have been incrementally destroyed. Unless the community as a whole can demand stronger planning and heritage controls (highly unlikely in the current political climate in NSW), the conservation of mixed streetscapes of ordinary dwellings will depend on educating owners about the significance of the semi-detached building form. By raising awareness, when people make changes they may do so sympathetically.

This has already happened to a large degree for the terrace. As well as changes to streetscapes being constrained by conservation area guidelines, owners tend to be proud of the fact that they are purchasing and dealing with a part of a building which has heritage value. Indeed, several books have been written to guide owners on the recommended methods of making changes to and restoring terraced houses (for example Howells and Morris 1999). Yet this is a relatively recent phenomenon. During the 1970s it was

fashionable to remove the protective render from the sandstock brick walls of Victorian terraced houses. Iron railing fences which formed an integral part of the design of dwellings were often replaced by high brick privacy walls. Timber Federation detailing was replaced with iron lace to better resemble a Victorian terraced house. Rows of terraced houses often featured clashing colour schemes and many variations on the verandah enclosures. Since then the understanding of the significance of a terraced house as a dwelling type has increased enormously, and such changes are rare. Many of the 1970s changes have been reversed, and a row of terraced houses is now often appreciated as an integrated building, with unified façade treatments and colour schemes.

With a deeper understanding of the semi-detached dwelling type, semis may be recognised as having some heritage values, and benefit from the same conservation processes and protections enjoyed by terraced houses. They might even become as loved and appreciated as terraced houses. Statutory protections in the form of heritage listings for semis, or their inclusion within conservation areas, are important ways to recognise and protect any aesthetic, historical or social significance, but not the only ones. There are some local guidelines, often ignored, in documents such as Development Control Plans. The conservation of these dwellings will rely primarily on their owners deciding that they are worth preserving. A formal Conservation Management Plan (usually for an item of State or national significance) aims to guide the future development of a place or building through an understanding of its significance. The same principle could apply to buildings such as semis which may not even reach the threshold for local listing – understand the significance and meaning, perceive that there is value, and it follows that more appropriate changes might be made.

Value is not inherent in any cultural items or properties received from the past, at least not in the same sense as, say, size and colour or hardness. Value is learned about or discovered by humans, and thus depends on the particular cultural, intellectual, historical, and psychological frames of reference held by the particular individuals or groups involved. (Lipe 1984, 2)

Laurajane Smith in her analysis of the Authorised Heritage Discourse argues that:

The process of recreation of the social values both of the heritage site, and those of importance to a particular social order, are simply what all heritage does – whether it be a country house, a terraced house, industrial site, archaeological monument or whatever – although the particular values that are recreated and negotiated will obviously differ. (Smith 2009, 34)

And as Tracey Avery asserts:

Cultural heritage can be a dialogue and a celebration of living cultural practices.
(Avery 2009, 152)

A building is a record of the time during which it was constructed. As alterations are made to reflect changing fashions, or to increase amenity, its value as a record decreases. There must be a balance between retaining a record of the past and altering the built environment to meet changing needs within society. The heritage conservation framework in NSW provides a mechanism to manage these competing interests, but only if a place is recognised as being potentially valuable as a record. It has been argued in this study that detached dwellings of all ages, sizes and styles, terraced houses and apartment blocks have all been widely researched, documented and recognised as being worthy of assessment as potential heritage items. The semi-detached dwelling type, however, is not represented in current heritage listings because of a deep understanding of its significance. Rather, the listings are mostly based on superficial assessments of style and age. If there is any supporting Statement of Significance (and most existing listings of semis have no such statement) it tends to be general, and provides no guidance for the management of future changes.

The cultural significance of a dwelling, or a dwelling type, derives not just from its architectural style, or its fabric, but also from the reasons why it was built and the people who have lived in the dwelling. In other words, the historical and social significance should not be overlooked. If the rare and representative examples of semis from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are to be conserved, they must first be recognised as having cultural value. While this heritage perception is lacking within the community and heritage conservation circles, the twenty-first century infatuation with “progress” (demolitions, alterations and additions to dwellings) will ultimately destroy a dwelling type which formed a small but important part of the architectural and social history of NSW. When terraced houses and semis are altered without a consideration of the attached dwelling/s, there is a loss of the “unity that the essential character of the building as a whole deserves” (Smith and Smith 1989, 8). For semis which are no longer a matched pair, this means the loss of the essence of their form. Yet alterations and additions *can* be made to a dwelling with a feeling and appreciation for the original character of a building, as long as that character is understood.

A broader understanding within the community of how and why their dwellings types differ from each other, and further “democratisation” of the heritage industry in NSW, may lead to a greater appreciation for the everyday housing of the past – and hopefully the preservation of enough representative examples of pairs of semis so that in future there is some tangible evidence of the stories they have to tell about their contribution to the everyday identity of

middle class suburban housing. Perhaps some owners may document their semis prior to changing them beyond recognition, so that they are not totally removed from the historical record. This does not necessarily mean a formal archival recording. Simple “before and after” photographs (such as Figure 11.2) may be all that is required.

Figure 11.2: Semis before and after changes to their fabric.



Before – rear view. (Sandy Ludman Real Estate 2006)



After – rear view. (Ray White Real Estate 2014)

Figure 11.2: continued



Before – front view. (Sandy Ludman Real Estate 2006)



After – front view. (Author 2014)

Marlborough Road, Willoughby.

Philip Goad says that in the context of Modern architecture as heritage, the required therapy is “a course of treatment that requires of both public and professional a level of re-education and self-reflection” (Goad 2013, 13). He seeks to challenge the conventional notions of what constitutes heritage. This study is an attempt to start the re-education process for semis.

For John Schofield and Graham Fairclough:

Heritage management is gradually moving away from the view that only special places matter, to a recognition that such a clear distinction between that which is

valued and by implication that which is not can be unhelpful. Instead, one can argue that what really matters is the diversity of features that make up the historic environment, and the particular local characteristics that contribute to this diversity. (Schofield 2008, 18).

This study sought to expand the knowledge base for a commonplace, suburban dwelling type – the semi-detached house in NSW. In so doing, it may add weight to the movement away from the traditional expert-led heritage assessment regime in NSW, which is based primarily on physical fabric (Waterton *et al.* 2006), and empower those who may find cultural value in the social and historical aspects of ordinary housing in NSW. Daniel Maudlin argues that:

A typical everyday building...should not be judged negatively and dismissed as an ordinary, plain or even poor example of the art of architecture. [It can offer] a fascinating architectural study when interpreted as a vehicle for the transmission of messages about social rank, social conformity and affiliation to distinct social groups. (Maudlin 2009, 5)

The research carried out for this study has discovered many such messages, offered by the semis of NSW.

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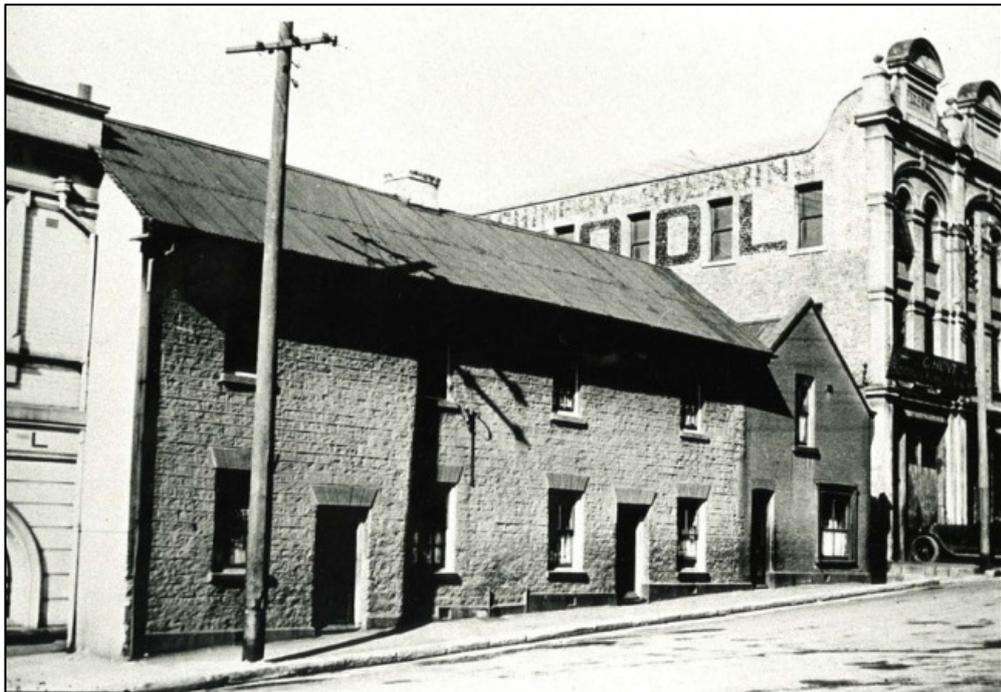
APPENDIX 2 – CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1 – “Reynolds Cottages”, Colonial Georgian Semis

This example shows the increasing influence of emancipists in providing working class housing in the growing colony. It also shows how changing attitudes towards the few remaining Colonial Georgian working class dwellings led eventually to most of them being listed with State heritage significance in the late twentieth century.

Although many semis were demolished in the early twentieth century slum clearances in The Rocks (see Section 6.5), one pair of c1830 Colonial Georgian semis at 28-30 Harrington Street has survived relatively intact (Figure A.1).

Figure A.1: “Reynolds Cottages”, c1830.



Harrington Street, The Rocks. Photographed in 1923. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5053189.)

The Irish emancipist Thomas Ryan acquired part of the original tent hospital land (later the garden of the Assistant Colonial Surgeon Redfern's house) under dubious circumstances while working as a clerk for the Colonial Secretary. By the 1820s approximately a quarter of the population in The Rocks comprised Irish emancipists and their families (Karskens 1997, 58). The Irish emancipist blacksmith William Reynolds purchased the land in 1830. Reynolds had been transported in 1815 for highway robbery. The quality of his convict-built

attached cottages demonstrated his "upwardly mobile economic and social status" (Holmes 2012, 1). In the 1836-40 Magistrates' Returns he is listed as a shipsmith.

The symmetry and order of the semis are typical of the Colonial Georgian style, with walls of coarse sandstone rubble with raised pointing to simulate ashlar. Sandstone was readily available in the area, even for working class housing. The mortar contains remnants of the oyster shells which the convicts burned to make lime. The building was originally roofed in shingles. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5053189)

Reynolds built several other houses on his land, including two in the courtyards behind the semis and a timber dwelling at No 32, part of the process of The Rocks becoming more crowded with infill development. After his death his children retained ownership of the group of dwellings and collected rents from tenants. The pair of semis was then owned by various investors until 1884. During that time the tenants included a labourer, a carter, a porter, a mariner and a laundress (*Sands Directories*). In 1884 the owner of No 32, a grocer, purchased the adjacent pair of semis and continued to let them to tenants (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5053189).

When all of the dwellings in The Rocks were resumed by the State Government in 1900, many were demolished as part of the slum clearances. "Reynolds Cottages" escaped demolition. The courtyard dwellings had been demolished during the 1880s. The semis continued to be tenanted, and in 1909 when the *Royal Commission for the Improvement of the City of Sydney* recommended that the level of Harrington Street should be raised, steps were built to allow access down to the entrance of No 30.

During the 1970s the residents in the semis were replaced by commercial tenants, such as tea rooms and shops. Although being amongst the oldest semis in Australia, and rare examples of Colonial Georgian dwellings, No 30 was modified and adapted by the State Government owner in what Melissa Holmes described as "contrived gentrification" (Holmes 2012, 1). In 2012 No 28 had been empty for three years, slowly decaying, despite the semis being listed on the State Heritage Register in 2002, with social, scientific and historical significance. By 2014 No 28 had been renovated, with a new commercial tenant (Figure A.2).

Figure A.2: "Reynolds Cottages" after renovation.



(Author 2014)

The semis themselves are not remarkable architecture; however, just by surviving they are able to tell a story about working class life in colonial Sydney.

Case Study 2 – Norfolk Island

There is no better exemplar of the dwelling hierarchy, and how buildings can denote the status and rank of a person, than a military establishment. From the earliest days of settlement in NSW, the British class system was evident. The military was separated from the convicts, and when more permanent dwellings were built, they reflected the types of building that the occupants had known in Britain as well as being situated in different areas according to the class of the occupants.

Soon after the First Fleet arrived at Port Jackson in 1788, an agricultural settlement was established on Norfolk Island, partly to prevent the island being claimed by the French or the Russians and partly to exploit the timber resources and grow flax (Hubber 2008, 40). As Lieutenant Governor King laid out the settlement, it “reflected that of coastal villages on rocky British shores familiar to many of the settlers”. The Old Town reflected both his and the subsequent leaders’ “invisible baggage” arising from their associations with Cornwall, Devon and Hampshire (Baskerville 2011, 7). The first settlement was successful, with free settlers, emancipists and ex-marines becoming productive farmers selling grain and pork to the government stores, and becoming almost self-sufficient. However, in 1803 the British authorities decided to close the settlement. During the following years the residents were re-settled in Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) and Sydney, and the remaining colonial buildings were burned in 1814.

In 1825 the British Government reopened the island as a penal settlement for the worst re-offenders from NSW and Van Diemen’s Land. This Second Settlement, named Kingston, commenced with the convicts’ barracks, lumber yard, lime kilns and a quarry located between the sea and a swamp. At the foot of the hills, on the other side of the swamp, a row of barracks, houses and stores for the military was constructed. Along the high (north) side of a street named Military Road (later renamed Quality Row) the civil officers were housed. On the top of the hill overlooking the whole settlement was the Commandant’s house (Wesley 1994, 4).

Unlike Sydney, Kingston has retained many of these early Colonial Georgian buildings and as Jane Wesley notes, they tell a clear story about hierarchy:

The positioning of the buildings and the architecture of the Second Settlement closely followed the precise rules of nineteenth century military architecture. Military customs and social hierarchical structures were observed and are indeed evident in the execution of the Kingston buildings and in their location... The size of the building was

also a significant indicator of the position of its occupant within the system. (Wesley 1994, 5)

The designs for the buildings in Military Road were prepared by the Royal Engineers in Sydney and built in stages over more than ten years from 1832, using convict labour. All of the new buildings, although sharing similar design features, complied with the hierarchy. There were detached First Class Quarters (for the Royal Engineer Officer and Stipendiary Magistrate) each with a frontage of 51 feet (15.5m) and at the eastern end were Second Class Quarters (Commissariat Officer, Commissariat Clerk, Commissariat Storekeeper) 46 feet (14m) wide. The Third Class Quarters (Catholic Clergyman, Clerk of the Civil Commissariat, Chief Constable) were detached, but only 30 feet (9.1m) wide and located away from Military Road, in the swamp-land closer to the convicts (Wesley1994, 21; KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre Inventory F15).

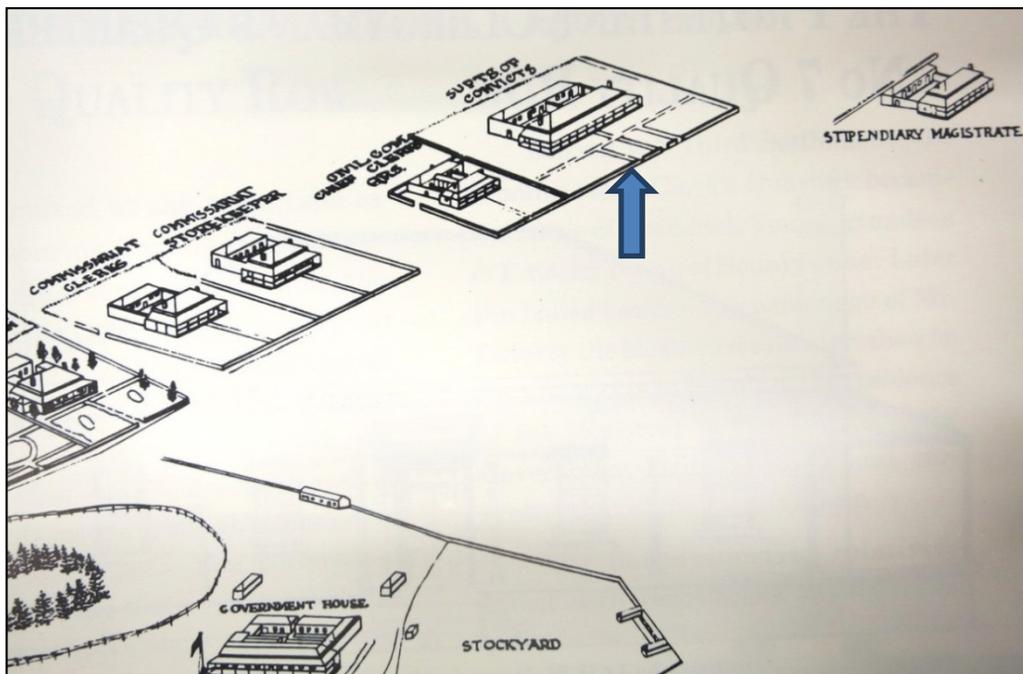
With a Second Class status somewhat less than the commissariat officers, yet not as low as the Third Class, were the two Superintendents of Convicts. For them it was deemed necessary to build a Second Class duplex (pair of semis) in Military Road to best reflect this status. Each semi was the same size as a Second Class detached house, but by being attached, their status was visibly lower than the Second Class houses. The building was completed in 1845. Some smaller semis were initially planned for Free Overseers but the Assistant Superintendents and Free Overseers were instead housed in a c1850 terrace built on the swamp-land near the Third Class houses, with the swamp dwellings collectively known as “the Inferior Persons’ Quarters” (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre, Inventories F16 and D2 and 3) (Figure A.3). When the available space in the Military Road row was running out, a First Class detached dwelling for the Stipendiary Magistrate was built on the other side of the road, but facing away from the road to avoid views of the Second Class duplex (Figure A.4).

Figure A.3: The Second Settlement, Norfolk Island.



Military Road (Quality Row) is shown in the foreground, the convict barracks and supporting facilities on the foreshore, and the “inferior persons’ quarters” on the swamp-land between (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre, Image 292).

Figure A.4: Superintendents’ Duplex in Quality Row (Military Road), Kingston.

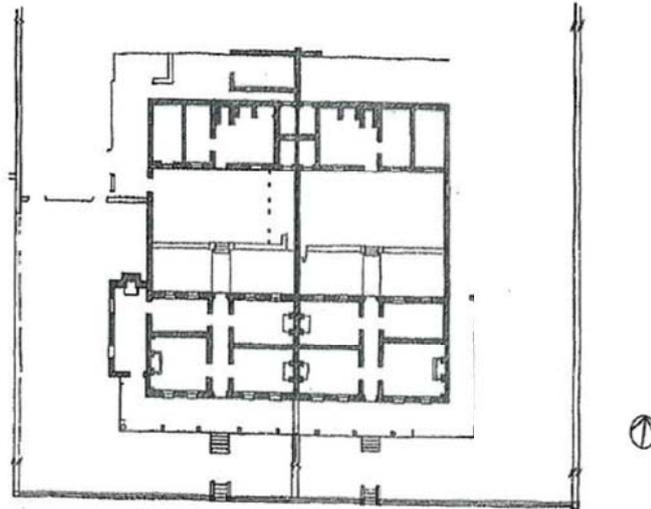


The Duplex is indicated. Extract from *Isometrical View of Kingston, Norfolk Island, prior to 1856* (1954). (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre).

As were the other dwellings in Military Road, the semis were set in a walled garden, and the rear outbuildings were connected to the main building by a wall which formed internal courtyards. The semis were constructed of local rubble with a shingled timber roof. The

verandahs had turned timber columns and were flagged with stone. The floor plan of each dwelling was similar to that of the detached Second Class dwellings in the row (Figure A.5).

Figure A.5: Plan of the semis in Quality Row.



(Department of Housing and Construction 1983, 24).

In 1855 the penal settlement was closed down and all the convicts were transferred to Van Diemen's Land. The following year the Pitcairn Islanders⁷¹ were relocated to Norfolk Island in what is known as the Third Settlement. The leader of the Pitcairn Islanders immediately occupied the largest dwelling in Military Road. The semis were occupied by the Christian and McCoy families. By 1903 the condition of the semis was "fair" and "very fair", although they were still occupied by their original Pitcairn families. The eastern semi was destroyed by fire in 1908, during protests about the islanders' land rights (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre, Inventory D2 and 3) (Figure A.6). By 1939 the building was "walls only" and although the interior of the building is still in ruins, the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) restoration works team has stabilised the remaining walls and re-roofed the building (Figure A.7).

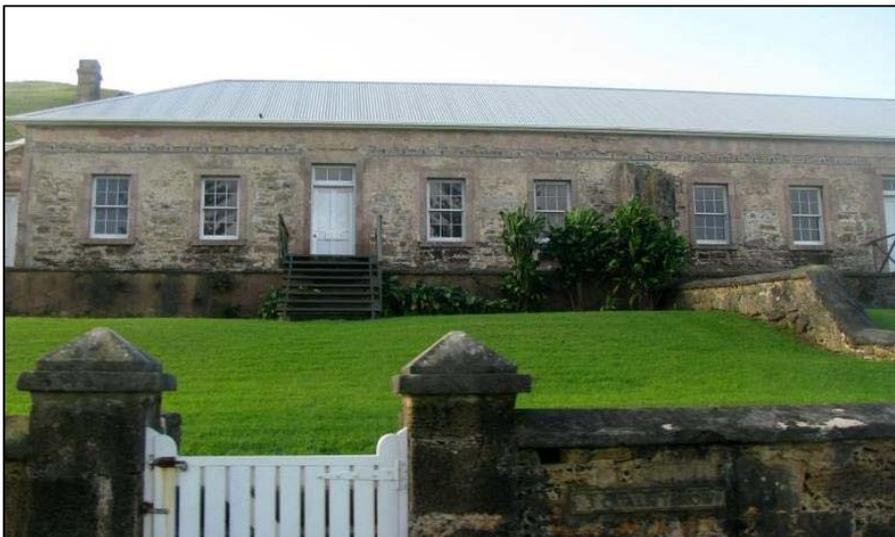
⁷¹ The *Bounty* mutineers and their families.

Figure A.6: Duplex after partial destruction by fire, 1908.



The duplex (left) has been partially destroyed. The building on the right is the Stipendiary Magistrate's First Class detached house (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre, Image 3534)

Figure A.7: Quality Row duplex in 2008.



(Clancy 2008)

The duplex and the other buildings and ruins comprising the KAVHA are heritage listed under Norfolk Island's heritage statutes. The Statement of Significance for the Superintendents of Convicts Duplex (vestiges of) is:

One of a series of first and second class quarters designed by the Royal Engineers. Evidence of the original layout and detail of these buildings survives in the physical fabric and documentary record. Changes in the design of the Quarters on Norfolk Island reflect the change from shared single men's quarters to family residences.

As residences occupied by the Pitcairn community on arrival on Norfolk Island. The decline of Quality Row indicated the dispute between the Pitcairn community and the

Governor of NSW over land tenure and title. Associated with the McCoy and Christian families.

As one of the most extensive groups of Officers' Quarters constructed in Australasia, providing evidence of the differing standard of accommodation provided for officers and inferior persons.

Providing an indication of changes in conservation philosophy, the only Quality Row building to be conserved as a ruin, retaining evidence of original features.

Indicating the standard of construction and craftsmanship that could be obtained from the convict labour force. (KAVHA Research & Interpretation Centre, Inventory Sheet D2 and 3)

In July 2010, an item named Australian Convict Sites was inscribed on the World Heritage List. There are 11 sites throughout Australia which make up the listing, including the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area on Norfolk Island, of which the duplex forms a part.

Case Study 3 – Queen Street Conservation Precinct, Campbelltown

This case study illustrates the mix of dwelling types used during the early Victorian development of a rural town in NSW, and how such buildings were gradually perceived as heritage after the Second World War. Unless otherwise noted the information has been obtained from the National Trust Archives' file of the Queen Street Group.

Campbelltown is 50km from the Sydney CBD. Land grants in the area (for farming) commenced in 1805. The Queen Street Conservation Precinct consists of four buildings at 284-298 Queen Street, on land which was part of a 140 acre (57 hectare) grant in 1816. The town of Campbelltown was proclaimed in 1820 although it was not developed until the 1830s.

As the town grew, the 140 acre farm was gradually subdivided as the Bradbury Estate. A brick and sandstone coaching inn, later a hotel (Nos 288-90), a rendered brick pair of semis, later to become shops (Nos 284-86), a sandstone detached house, later extended to become a shop and residence (Nos 292-94) and a pair of rendered brick dwellings separated by a wide coach drive, later a Cobb and Co coaching inn (No 298) were constructed during the 1840s (*The Education Gazette*, 1 July 1966, 175).

The semis at Nos 284-86 (Figure A.8) have braced timber verandah balustrading which pre-dates the introduction of cast iron to the colony. The pair of dwellings was owned by various investors including a doctor and a solicitor and were leased by a shoemaker who probably introduced the mid-Victorian shopfront. From 1860 until 1955 the semis were owned by members of the McGuanne family and leased to tenants (National Trust Listing 3565, 1973).

The semis originally had all the characteristics of a British double cottage for artisans such as a shoemaker. They maximised the use of land, and the shared party wall reduced building costs. They were owned by a series of investors (until at least 1955) who were seeking rental returns from the property in what was a growing urban area. And importantly, at first glance the building could be a detached house.

Figure A.8: Sandstone semis, Campbelltown, c1840s.



The building after its restoration by the State Planning Authority (*The Education Gazette*, 1 July 1966, 175)

The building at No 298, although originally a pair of dwellings, was later converted into a coaching inn (Figure A.9).

Figure A.9: Coaching Inn, Campbelltown, c1840s.



(Dupain 1963, 3)

On 13 October 1961 the four buildings were gazetted as “places of historic interest” and classified “A” by the National Trust (NSW) in 1963. Max Dupain described them as “endangered” (Dupain 1963, 3). That same year, to ensure the preservation of the group, the

County bought the four buildings, the first such purchases in NSW by a local authority for conservation purposes. They were then restored and leased to commercial tenants. In 1966 the buildings were described as a “unique” group, “unchanged in essence from colonial days” and the “only such group remaining in the County of Cumberland” (*The Education Gazette*, 1 July 1966, 174).

In 1970 the buildings formed the centrepiece of a planned Campbelltown Historic Precinct to “link the future city with its early colonial past and to act as a focal point in the future metropolis” (*Campbelltown Ingleburn News*, 24 February 1970, 1). This involved the closure of that section of Queen Street to create a mall.

In 1979 a Permanent Conservation Order under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* was placed on the group. It now has a State heritage listing as the Queen Street Conservation Precinct. The Statement of Significance is:

The Queen Street Buildings are among the earliest buildings surviving in Campbelltown, which was one of the first centres of population to be established outside of Sydney. The buildings were owned and used by many families who played a leading role in the foundations and development of Campbelltown during the 19th Century.

The buildings retain a good deal of evidence about the way of life at the time they were constructed, the buildings were one of the first instances of the State Government buying privately owned property for the purpose of conservation. The Cumberland County Council purchased them in 1963, and was seen as a landmark moment in the history of the conservation movement in NSW. The Buildings were also among the first to be given an A classification by the National Trust.

Of the remaining Georgian design buildings left in Australia, even fewer are of the standard which is seen in the Queen Street terraces. They are examples of commercial and domestic buildings from the 19th Century.

The listing makes no mention of the semi-detached, symmetrical form of two of the buildings. In fact they are called “terraces”. There is no recognition that the building of a pair would have been a deliberate choice, for the specific purpose of housing artisans in a building which would provide an adequate return on capital for an investor, yet conform to the ideals of the classically-styled double cottage which was being promoted by the British pattern books. The buildings were sold in the 1990s and are now in private ownership.

Case Study 4 - William Weaver, Colonial Architect

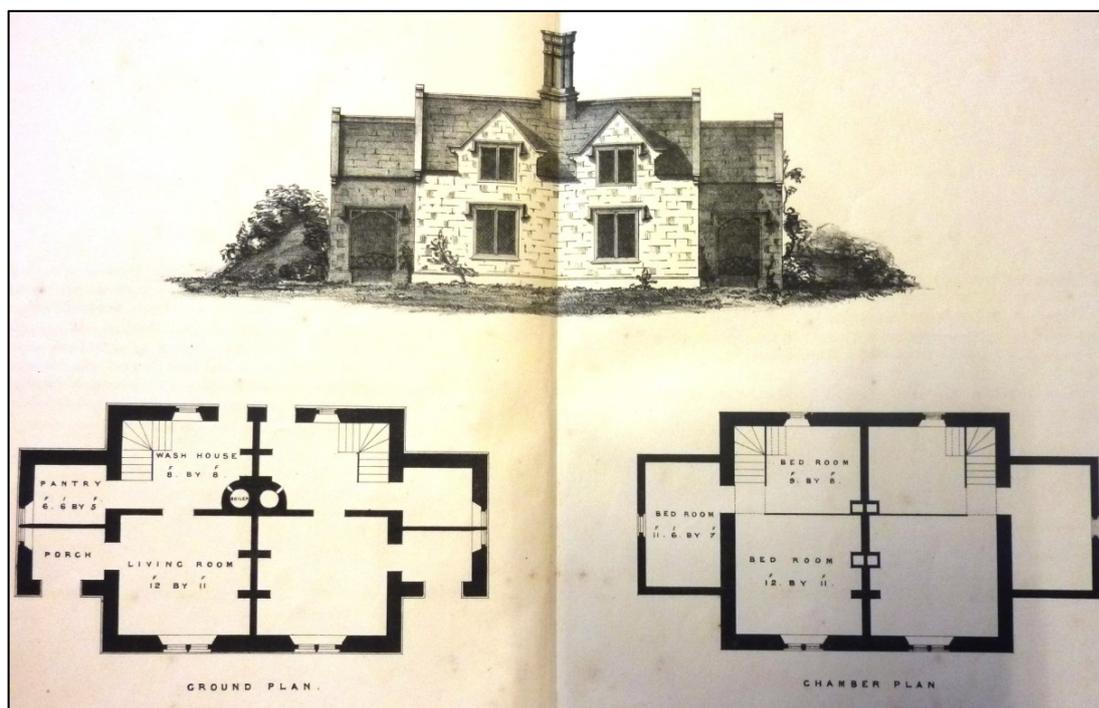
This case study provides an example of how British pattern books and architects influenced working class housing in the NSW colony.

Many of the early English pattern books focussed on improving housing within the cities and large manufacturing towns, with model lodging houses and dwellings. Some, however, offered advice to rural estate owners whose labourers' housing was inadequate. In 1848 Henry Weaver, an English architect and estate agent, in what he claimed was the first book of its kind, provided nine such designs with floor plans; a detached cottage (for a "superior servant"), several pairs of cottages, and two groups of cottages. Each was a "model for the abodes suitable to the labouring population in rural districts". Weaver's goal was to "afford practical and detailed assistance to those landed proprietors who are desirous of at once improving their estates and ameliorating the condition of the poorer tenantry, and to enable them to carry out their plans at an ascertained and definite cost". Weaver was convinced that by including modern conveniences in picturesque buildings, the "poorer population" would gain the "inestimable advantage of separate sleeping accommodation for parents and children of either sex" including cleanliness, decency and order while the landlord would pay little more than for the "old and imperfect plans hitherto usually adopted". Critics hailed the book as "calculated to improve the personal comforts, as well as the moral and social condition, of the labouring classes of England". They also noted that the internal details were "quite suitable for the class they are intended for" and that improving the domestic conditions of the labourers would facilitate attempts to "extend the means of education amongst them". Weaver was of the view that school lessons about morality, modesty and decency would be of little use if the "over-crowded, inconvenient and filthy dwelling, with all its accompanying evils" precluded the possibility of practicing those virtues at home (Weaver 1850, 9-13).

By the time the second edition of his book was released in 1850, all of his designs had been built on various English estates, particularly in Wiltshire, and the designs had been modified slightly as a result of this practical experience.

Weaver's semis include both symmetrical (Figure A.10) and asymmetrical designs. For grouped houses (terraces), he advised that no more than four dwellings should be included in a row.

Figure A.10: Symmetrical double cottages for labourers, 1848.



(Weaver 1850, Plate 2)

William Weaver was an engineer and architect who, through his family connections, moved in society circles in Sydney. He was also Henry Weaver's brother, and had trained as an architect in Henry's practice in Southampton (Institution of Civil Engineers 1871, 233). After arriving in the colony in 1851, William designed large mansions and "marine villas" for wealthy clients, many in Hunters Hill (Maguire 2011). These included several large speculative detached dwellings. He was appointed as the Colonial Architect in 1854, designing public buildings but also maintaining his private practice. Two years later he moved back to private practice and departed for New Zealand in 1864.

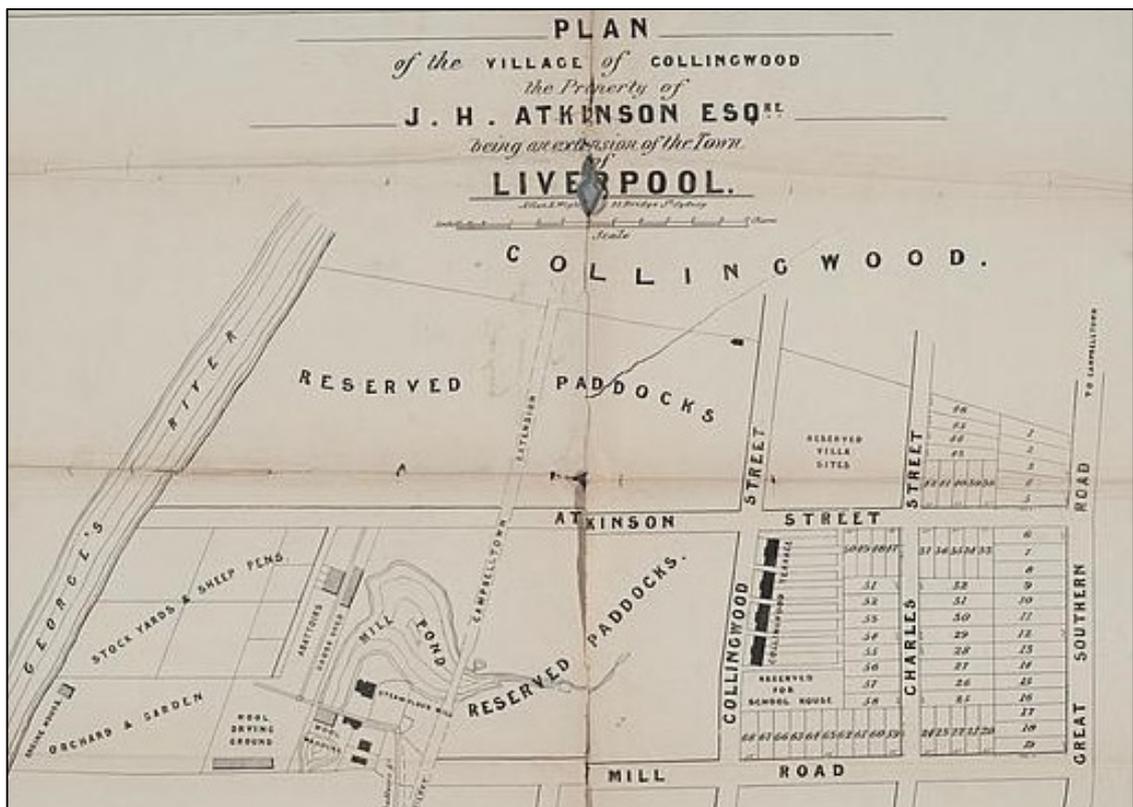
The railway from Redfern to Parramatta was opened in 1855 and the following year it was extended to Liverpool, 40km from Sydney. In anticipation of this a wealthy Sydney wool merchant, James Henry Atkinson, had in 1853 acquired more than 530 hectares in the vicinity, including the large Collingwood Estate on which a steam flourmill was operating (Liston 2010, 57). He set up industries such as a steam-powered slaughter house, a piggery, a wool wash and a fellmongering⁷² facility on the estate. To transport his meat to Sydney, Atkinson funded the materials and labour for a private branch line of the new railway line (Liston 2010, 31).

⁷² Processing skins and hides

Atkinson “dreamed that Liverpool would become an industrial town on the patriarchal English mill-town model with row after row of four-roomed workers’ houses surrounding his factories” (Keating 1995, 77). A paper mill was established in 1864 and the flour mill became a rag depot to supply it. Collingwood became the industrial centre of Liverpool and it was stated that “the spirited proprietor, Mr Atkinson, is making Liverpool one of the liveliest and most flourishing towns in the colony” (*Freeman’s Journal* 22 November 1856, 3).

The abattoir, storage sheds, saleyards and other industrial buildings on the estate were designed by William Weaver, who also in 1857 renovated “Collingwood House”, adding a second storey and verandahs, and a new kitchen block (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5052418). Weaver was also responsible for the workers’ housing on the estate. In 1856, when Atkinson began to subdivide part of the Collingwood Estate to create the village of Collingwood, the survey plan (Figure A.11) shows four groups of five terraced houses in Collingwood Street (now Nagle Street) collectively known as “Collingwood Terrace” or “The Cottages” (Keating 1995, 77).

Figure A.11: Survey plan of the village of Collingwood, 1856.

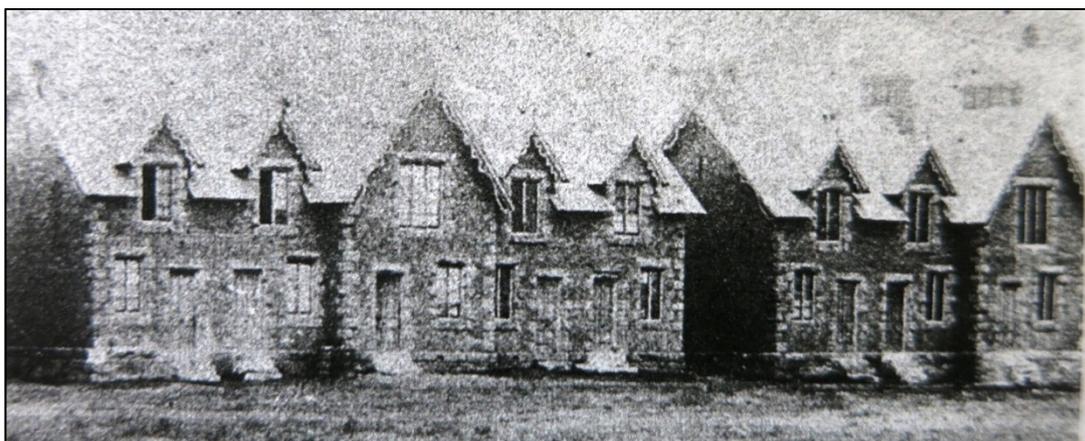
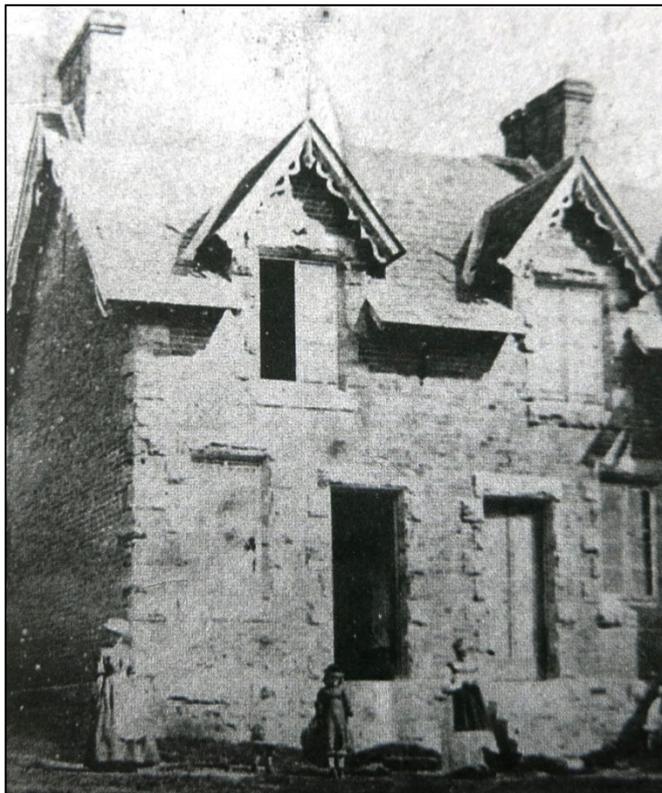


(National Library of Australia, 20022019)

These twenty 4-roomed, brick, stone and slate cottages were built in the picturesque gothic style, promoted by Henry Weaver in his pattern books as being most suitable for rural

labourers (Figure A.12). Curiously, Henry Weaver's advice to build terraces with a maximum of four dwellings was ignored in favour of groups of five dwellings. However, on closer inspection, the groups are seen to comprise two pairs of mirror-image dwellings, attached using a central dwelling which is set forward. A comparison between Figure A.10 and Figure A.12 shows many features in common, including the distinctive dormer windows. The terraces were demolished around 1900.

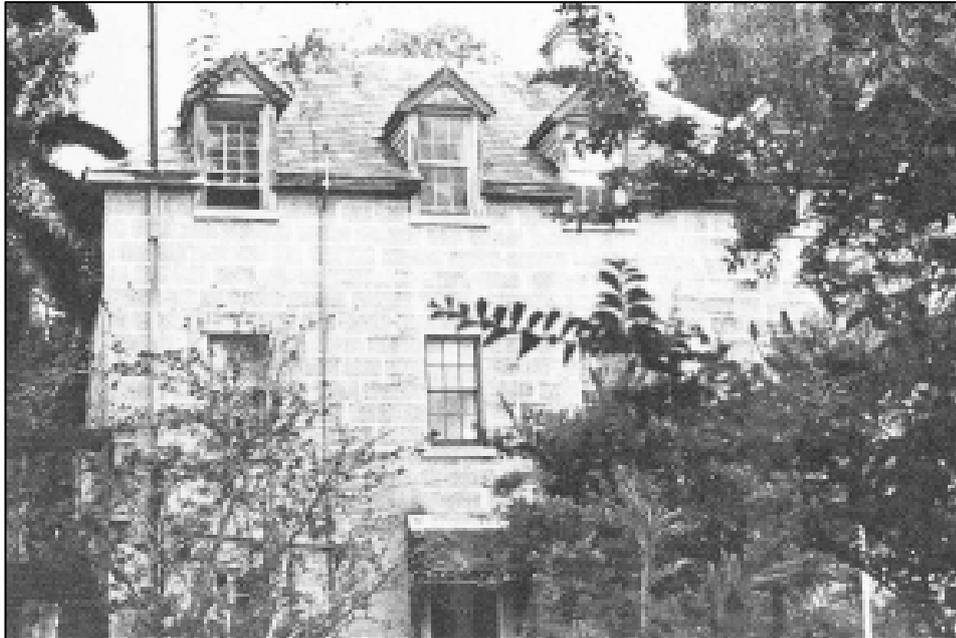
Figure A.12: Collingwood labourers' cottages, c1850s.



Nagle Street, Liverpool (Liverpool Heritage Collection, in Liston 2010, 58)

The Collingwood Estate was not the only labourers' housing designed by William Weaver. The house now known as "Annabel Lea" in Hunters Hill was built in 1855 as "worker housing cum farm building". Servants had access, via a covered walkway from the third level, to the adjacent villa "Coorabel". The building displays the influence of the picturesque designs from Henry Weaver's pattern book, with four gothic dormers and chimneys (Figure A.13). Roslyn Maguire suggests that "inspiration for this striking design of worker housing would have come first-hand from Weaver's brother Henry" (Maguire 2011, 90).

Figure A.13: Servants' quarters, architect William Weaver, c1855.



Now known as "Annabel Lea", Joubert Street, Hunters Hill (Hunters Hill Trust 1977, 8)

Case Study 5 – Thomas Mort, Philanthropist

Philanthropy played a vital role in the improvement of housing for the working classes in Britain. This case study provides an example of how the ideals of those philanthropists also spread to the NSW colony.

The English architect Henry Roberts' publications and designs for the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes were translated into several languages and his pattern sheets were sold in Europe and America. His designs became "models for generations of designs for working-class housing" (Curl 1983, 9). Roberts' 1850 pattern book *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes*, and the subsequent editions, contained an essay about the philosophy behind the philanthropic societies, plus designs for model dwellings, some already constructed. A copy of the 1853 edition of this book was owned by the Sydney philanthropist, Thomas Mort.⁷³

Thomas Sutcliffe Mort was born in Manchester, England, in 1816. His wealthy father Jonathon Mort owned a cotton mill. However, Jonathon died when Thomas was 18 years old, leaving substantial debts (Barnard 1962, 1). With limited prospects in Manchester, Mort moved as a free settler to the colony of NSW in 1838, where after working as a clerk and a salesman for five years, he set up his own business as an auctioneer and broker of wool, hides and tallow (*SMH*, 5 September 1843, 3). Within a few years Mort was handling a large proportion of the colony's wool, and had become very wealthy. His later activities included dairy farming, sugar production, wine making, cotton production, importing alpacas, mining and the promotion of an expanding railway network via the Sydney Tramroad and Railway Company. He set up a dry dock and was credited with the invention of refrigeration for shipping (Jervis 1938, 330-361).

Mort believed that the possession of wealth implied responsibilities and obligations, as well as rights and comforts. A devout Christian, he had been influenced by the philanthropists with whom his family had associated in Manchester. Their activities were widely publicised and their "ideals and outlook made a profound and lasting impression on him" (Barnard 1961, 38). These reformers included the banker William Langton who had formed the Manchester Provident Society in 1833. Another Manchester banker and philanthropist, Oliver Heywood, sponsored causes such as the Manchester Mechanics' Institute. Samuel Greg, a Manchester cotton spinner, had built a model village for his mill workers in 1832. Langton, Heywood and Greg had all been associated with the formation of the Manchester Statistical Society in 1833, the early activities of which were focused on social problems, in particular

⁷³ This book, provenanced to Mort, is now held by the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Sydney Living Museums.

the "health and education of Manchester's rapidly growing population" (Barnard 1961, 37). Barnard goes on to state that:

Mort, despite the broadened horizons implicit in colonial life, was still distinctively a product of Manchester. The models on whom he patterned his attitude to society were less the Lords of Astley Manor and more the Langtons, Heywoods, and Gregs, of industrial Manchester, for the enlightenment of the new "squires" of the nineteenth century reflected the influence of city, trade and manufacture. His models were the serious, conscious vanguard of the new reform movements through which the conscience of urban England was making itself felt. (Barnard 1961, 37)

Mort's philanthropy was underpinned by a belief that "labour is wealth in every sense of the word in this country" (*SMH*, 22 February 1851, 5). His efforts were directed towards ensuring a plentiful labour supply, and that his labourers were healthy and productive. He believed that "the material welfare of the community depends on the successful cooperation of labour and capital, and that a prosperous community could rid itself of social ills" (Barnard 1961, 129). Whilst the Manchester philanthropists were keen to improve the lower classes in order to increase England's industrial potential, Mort wanted to improve their conditions in order to increase production, in particular the exploitation of the colony's natural resources. He achieved this by involving himself in a wide range of philanthropic work.

After becoming aware of the plight of people who had no support after illness or as they aged, Mort was one of the founders of the Australian Mutual Provident Society in 1849. This non-profit insurance company was based on the similar organisation set up earlier in Manchester. Mort was actively associated with the anti-transportation movement, and in 1850 was a founder of the NSW Association for Preventing the Revival of Transportation (*SMH*, 18 September 1850, 7). Mort lobbied for reforms in the funeral industry and gave generously to charitable causes and his church. He also set up the Sydney Homeopathic Dispensary with a stated aim of bringing that system of medicine within the reach of "the labouring and poor classes" (*SMH*, 27 August 1859, 8).

In order to service the steam ships which were arriving in the colony, in 1855 Mort opened a large dry dock in Balmain, on the edge of Sydney Harbour. The business was a very large employer, and to attract skilled labourers Mort subdivided and developed houses on large tracts of his land around the dock. His surveyor laid out an area for 700 dwellings, including houses for tenants and others for purchase (he had ideas of setting up a building society to facilitate this). Terraces and semis were built by small-scale contractors or individual owner/builders (Leichhardt City Council 2003). The working class area surrounding the dock continued to be developed for many years by Mort and, after his death, his trustees.

At a farewell dinner in 1857 just prior to his departure on a visit to England, Mort gave an address in which he called attention to the need to build houses for the working classes (Jervis 1938, 70). Back in Sydney, in 1860 Mort set up a dairying operation at his farm at Bodalla, south of Sydney. He provided each of his tenants with a cottage and a small land holding with yards, milking bails and cows. The venture was to be run as a share-farming operation, a structure which was rare in the colony. The weatherboard cottages were on land set aside for “labourers’ cottages”.⁷⁴ Ten years later the cottages were moved to an area less prone to flooding, and which together with a school and an inn became known as Bodalla Village. A sketch of the village made in 1886 (Figure A.14) shows the unusual nature of the cottages built by Mort. Typically, Australian rural cottages at that time were single storey, with a hipped roof and a front verandah to shade the central front door (Figure A.15). Mort’s cottages have verandahs, but they are asymmetrical with prominent Gothic gables and second storey attic rooms. Several buildings appear to be semi-detached. The model village at Bodalla bears the hallmarks of Henry Roberts’ cottage designs (Figure A.16) in the pattern book owned by Mort.

Figure A.14: Cottages at Bodalla Village.



Sketch dated 1886. (Royal Australian Historical Society, Image 5419.001)

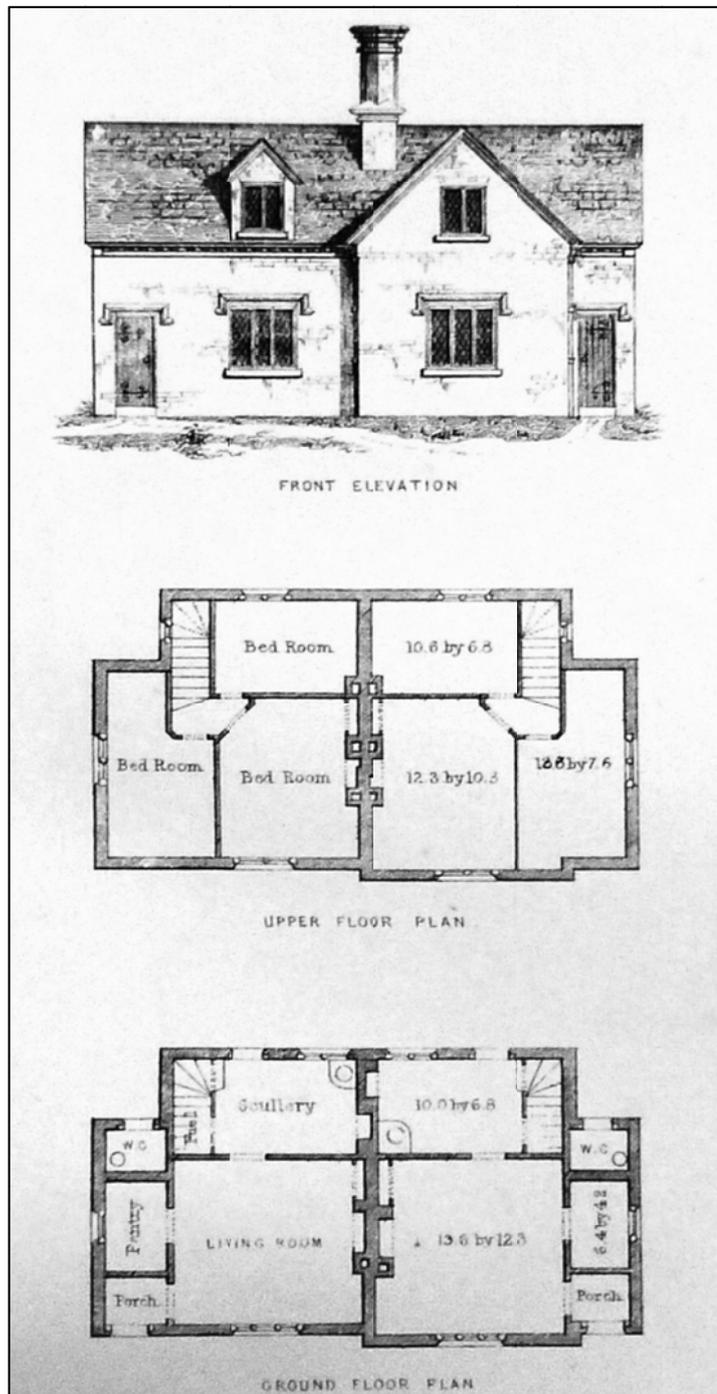
Figure A.15: Australian rural cottage, 1860.



A typical rural Australian cottage. (National Library of Australia, Image 11953526-21-v)

⁷⁴ Shown on the 1856 subdivision map for Boat Alley, later called Bodalla.

Figure A.16: Double cottages with three bedrooms, architect Henry Roberts, 1850.



(Roberts 1853, Design No 5, no page number)

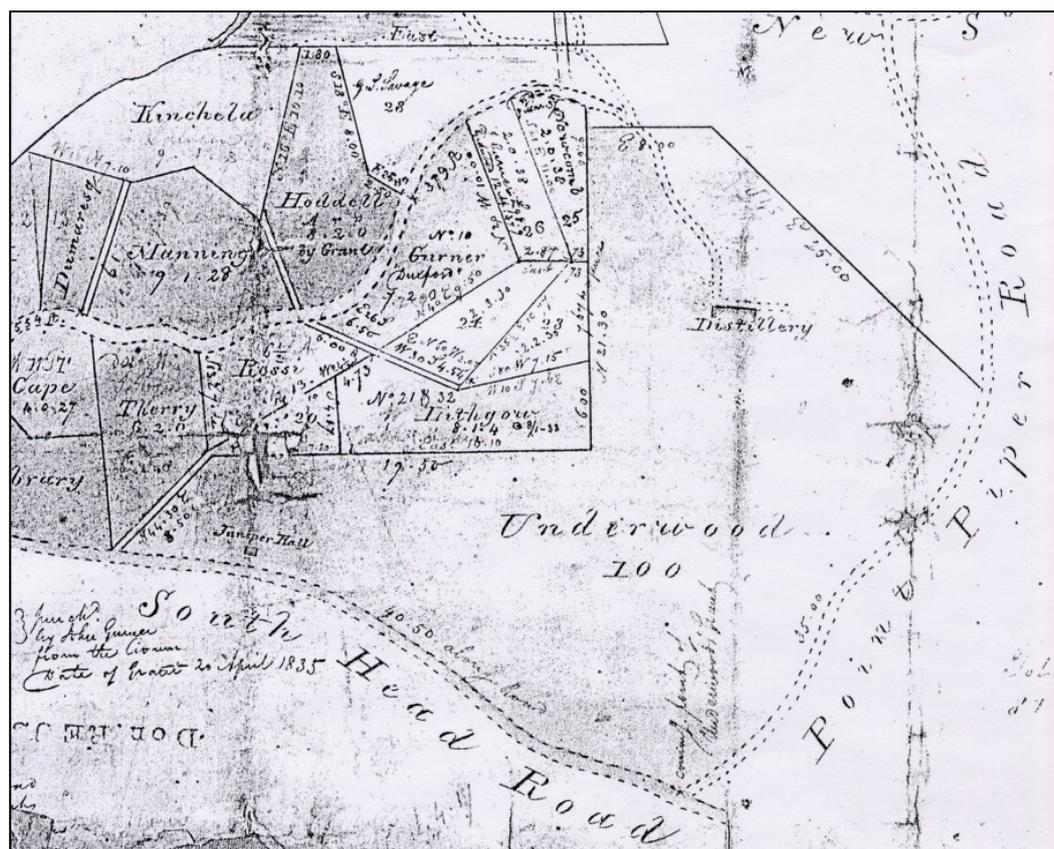
Although not involved directly with an English 5% philanthropy society, Thomas Mort's philanthropic ideals and his belief in the provision of quality housing for his workers were clearly influenced by the activities of the philanthropists in England during the nineteenth century.

Case Study 6 – Land Speculation and Subdivision in Paddington

The Paddington Estate provides an example of the gradual subdivision of an area for working class housing. It illustrates the themes of land speculation and the ability of building speculators to maximise the economic returns of their land by constructing attached housing.

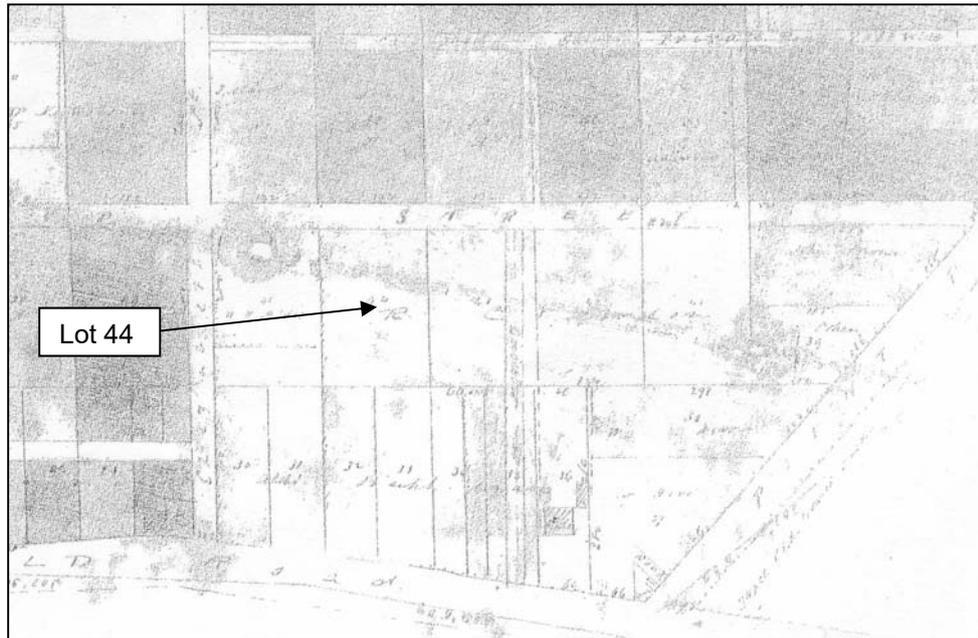
In 1831 a grant of 100 acres (40.5 hectares) was made to James Underwood (a distiller and merchant), Robert Cooper, and Francis Ewen Forbes. Each of the three had an agreement that their own houses could be built on part of the land. Cooper built his large home (“Juniper Hall”) and Underwood ran a distillery on the grant (Figure A.17). James Underwood soon became the sole owner of the land, which he commenced subdividing in 1839 as the Paddington Estate, with 80 large lots (Figure A.18).

Figure A.17: Paddington Estate, 1830s.



Underwood’s 100 acres, showing the position of the distillery and “Juniper Hall” (Woollahra Local Studies Library).

Figure A.18: Paddington Estate Subdivision, 1839.

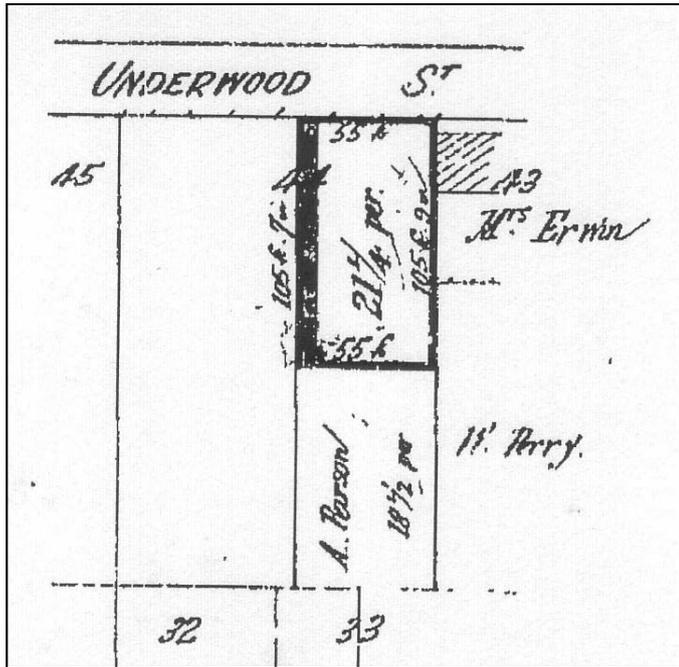


Extract from the subdivision plan of the Paddington Estate, showing Lot 44 (Woollahra Local Studies Library).

Lot 44 was one of the few villa lots sold. James Underwood died in 1844, leaving a complicated will which resulted in years of legal battles before the estate was further subdivided and auctioned during the 1870s (Parkinson 1989, 80-104). Until then the area remained semi-rural as the land speculators who had purchased parts of the estate held their properties, and in some cases subdivided their holdings. Lot 44 was further subdivided, with around one quarter of it purchased by William Wyatt before 1860 (1860 Rate Book, Municipality of Paddington). He did not develop his property for many years. The suburb of Paddington grew rapidly during the 1870s, and in 1879 William Wyatt built a row of three terraced houses on his land (*Sands Directory* 1880). A right of way was provided for access to the rear of the dwellings (Figure A.19).

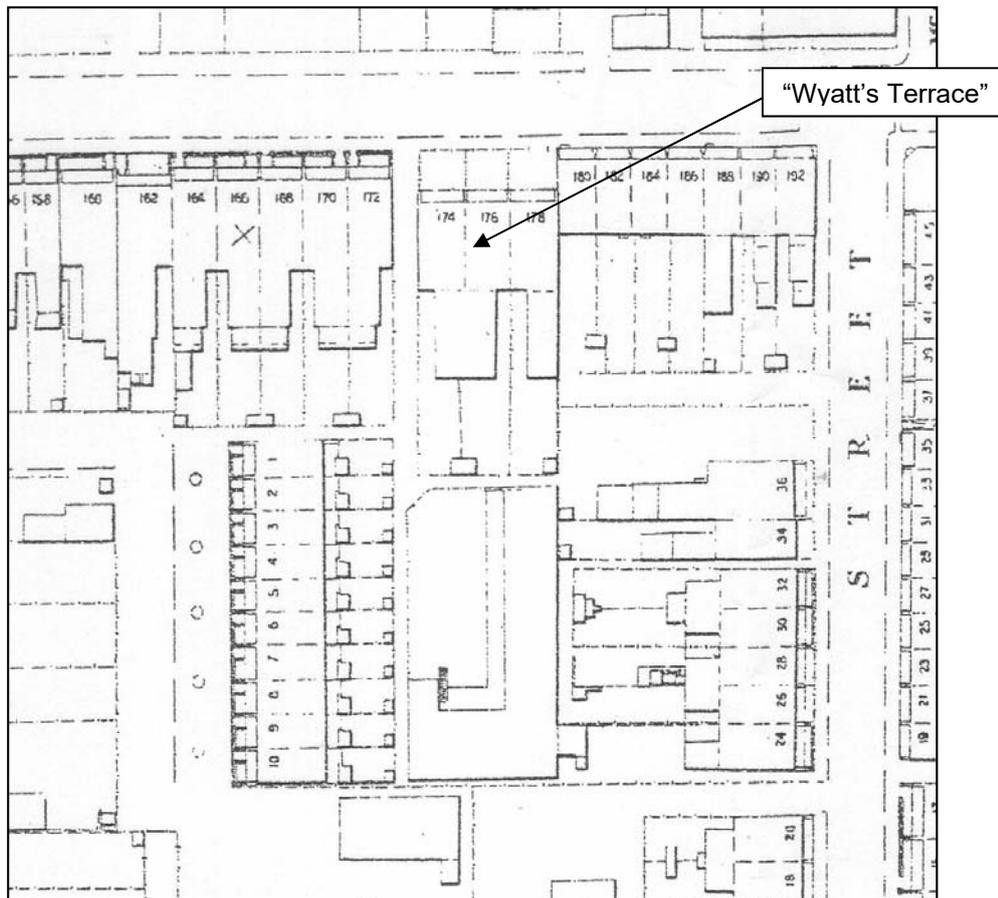
Tenants occupied each of the dwellings in the building which was named “Wyatt’s Terrace”, now known as 174, 176 and 178 Underwood Street. A survey from 1894 shows the building, containing three dwellings on the one lot owned by William Wyatt (Figure A.20). On the other parts of what had been Lot 44, one owner had built a row of five terraced houses fronting Underwood Street, and another had squeezed a row of ten tiny terraced houses into the court behind them.

Figure A.19: Land owned by William Wyatt.



The land containing a building with three terraced houses (LPI Vol 3187 Fol 114)

Figure A.20: "Wyatt's Terrace" and surrounding development, 1894.

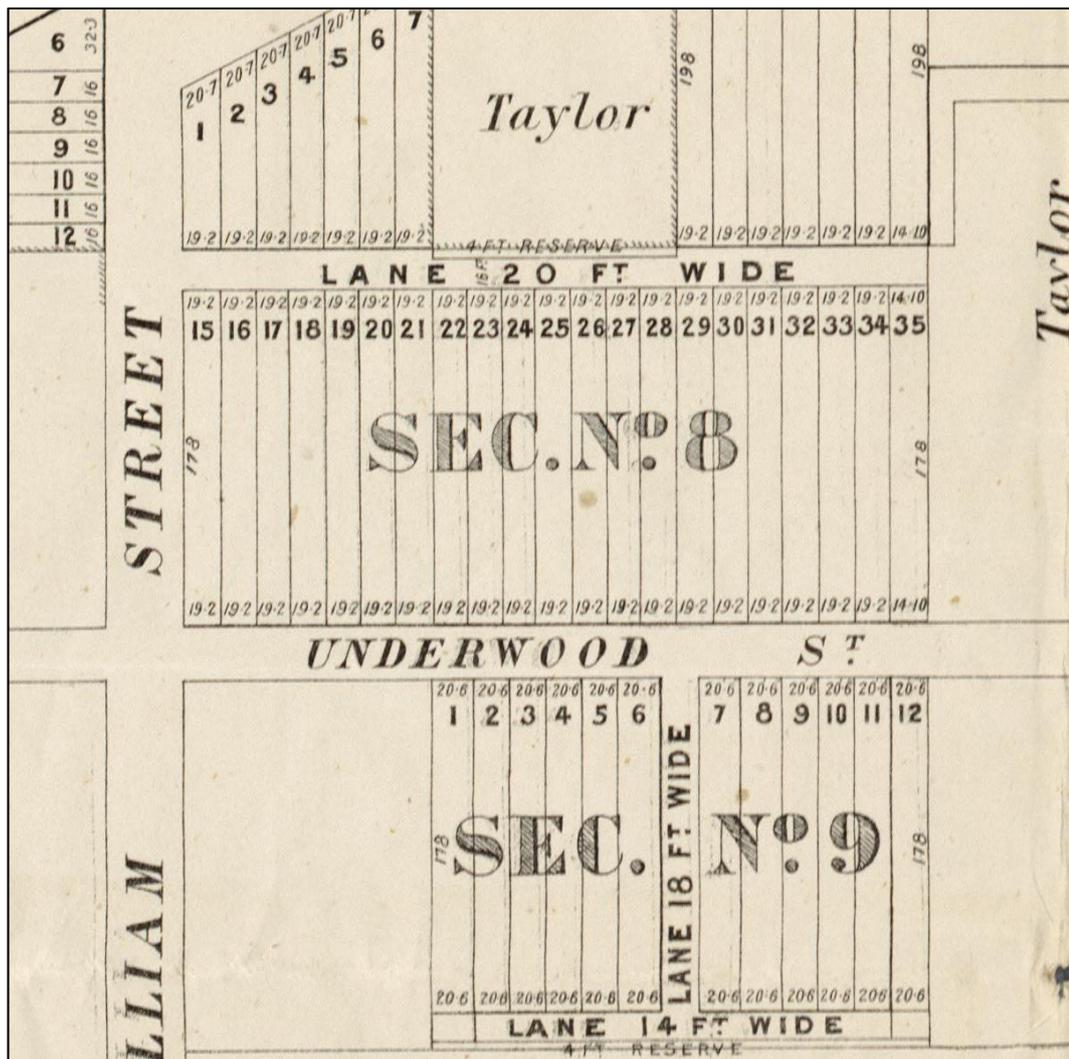


(Extract from Metropolitan Detail Series Plan, Paddington 1894)

The ownership of “Wyatt’s Terrace” changed in 1887 to Frederick Wyatt, and in 1906 to his three executors, including Louis Wyatt. It was not until 1922 that the building was surveyed for de facto subdivision (see Section 7.3) to facilitate the division of the assets of the deceased estate. The terraced houses at Nos 176 and 178 Underwood Street were transferred on one title to Adelaide Darby, a widow of Waverley, and Lucy Gooch, a widow of Paddington, became the owner of No 174 (LPI Vol 3187 Fol 114).

William Wyatt built his terrace on one parcel of land. Other investors and building speculators in Paddington bought multiple lots in a subdivision, and built on the consolidated parcel of land. As Paddington grew, the subdivision of the Paddington Estate into smaller lots accelerated. These lots were sold by public auction. In the 1875 auction of the part known as the Underwood Estate, the lots in Section 8 were mostly 19 feet 2 inches (5.8m) wide (Figure A.21).

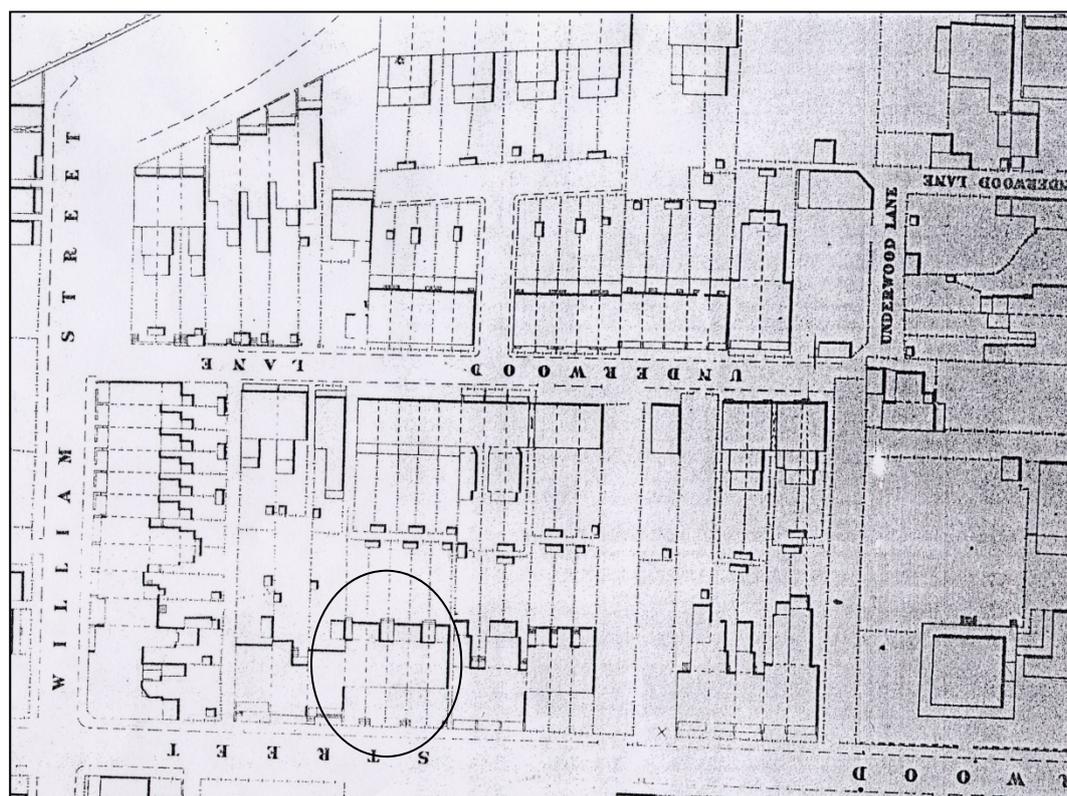
Figure A.21: The Underwood Estate subdivision, 1875.



An extract showing Section 8 (NLA Map Collection, LFSP 2041)

Lots 22, 23 and 24 of Section 8 were purchased by John Percy McGuanne, who sold them to John Ambrose Carroll in early 1881. They were then transferred to Thomas Lea, a gentleman of Surry Hills, in 1882 (LPI Vol 518, Fol 194). One might assume that the narrow lots were expected to be the width of a terraced house. However, instead of three terraced houses, between 1881 and 1883 either Carroll or Lea built a row of five terraced houses on the three lots (1880 Plan of the Municipality of Paddington and *Sands Directory* 1884). The terrace and land were sold to the financier Solomon Matthews in 1885. A survey the following year (Figure A.22) shows the terrace surrounded by short and long terraces, each different because they were built by various speculators and investors who had purchased land in the subdivisions. This compares to the situation in British suburbs where the owner of an estate, instead of subdividing and selling the land, developed the streets with long rows of identical byelaw terraces, leading to the characteristic homogeneous (and some might say grim and boring) appearance of those suburbs.

Figure A.22: Terraced housing in Paddington, 1886.



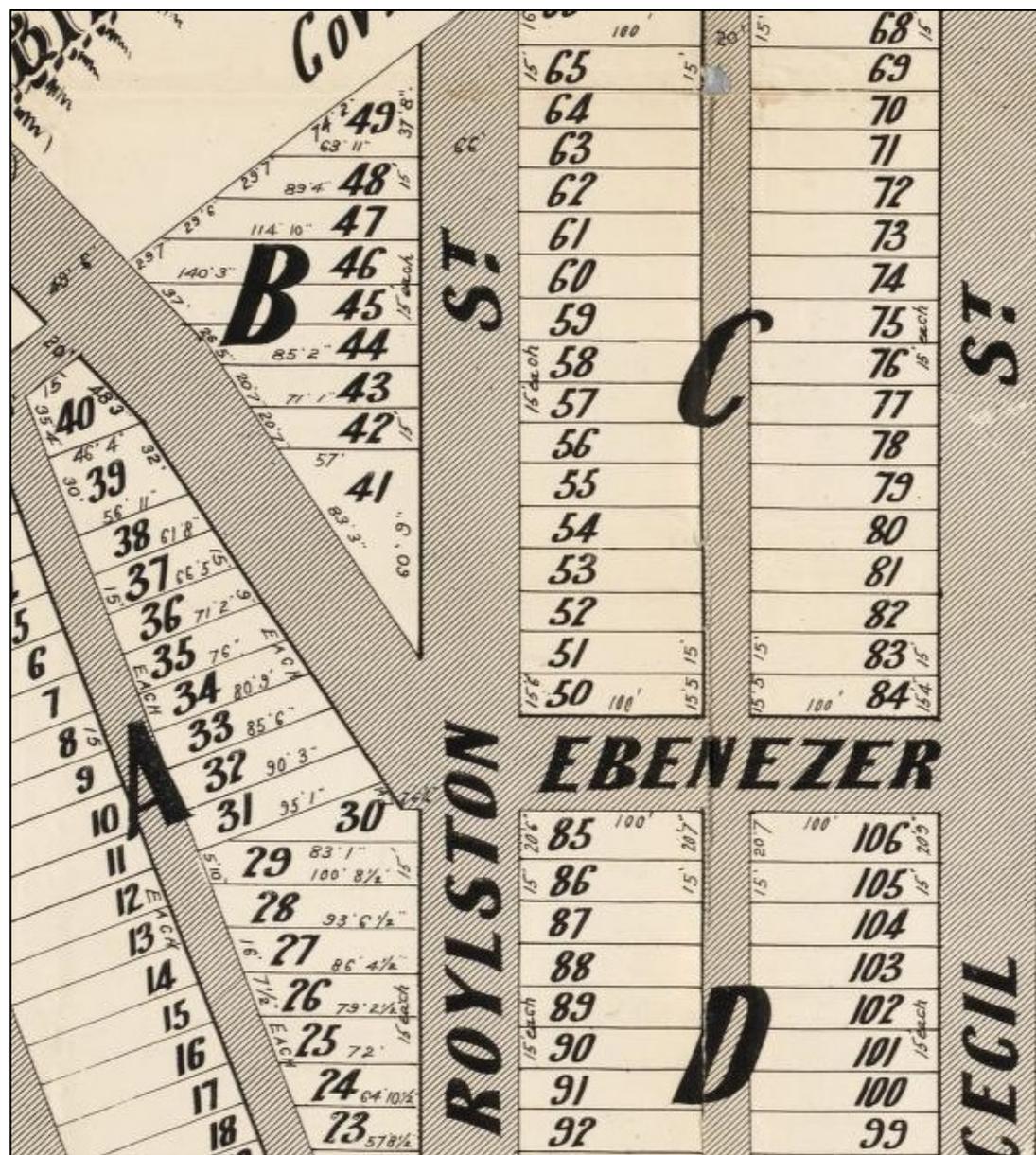
The five terraced houses in Underwood Street, Paddington (Extract from Metropolitan Detail Series Plan, Paddington 1886)

The investor Solomon Matthews held the terrace from 1885 until 1922, during which time the five dwellings were occupied by a variety of working class tenants. The property changed

hands several times during the 1920s, then in 1957 it was subdivided into five lots under the de facto subdivision provisions (LPI Vol 4164 Fols 20 and 21).

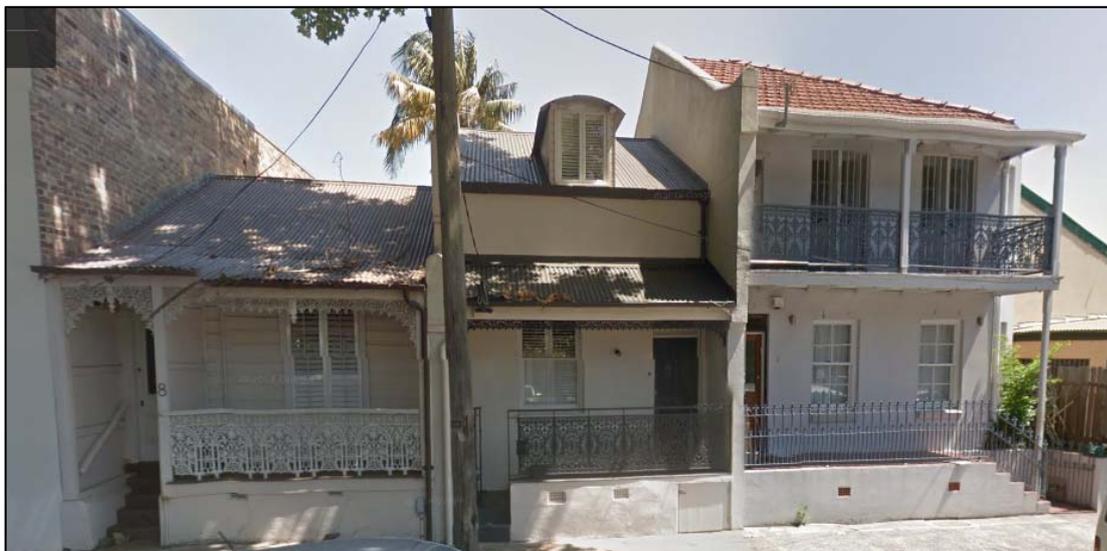
Semis were rare in Paddington during its late nineteenth century development; investors found terraces for their working class tenants more lucrative. However, some detached housing was built, usually when the land was cheap enough for a person to build their own simple house on a small lot. Some lots as small as 15 feet (4.6m) in the Underwood Estate (Figure A.23) were developed with detached dwellings (Figure A.24), which mostly abutted the adjacent dwellings. These too added to the variety within the suburban streetscapes.

Figure A.23: Underwood Estate subdivision, 1886.



(Extract from Underwood Estate Subdivision Plan 1886, NLA Map Collection LFSP 2045)

Figure A.24: Detached dwellings in Paddington.



Royston Street, Paddington (Google Maps August 2014).

Case Study 7 – Muston's Model Township, Mosman

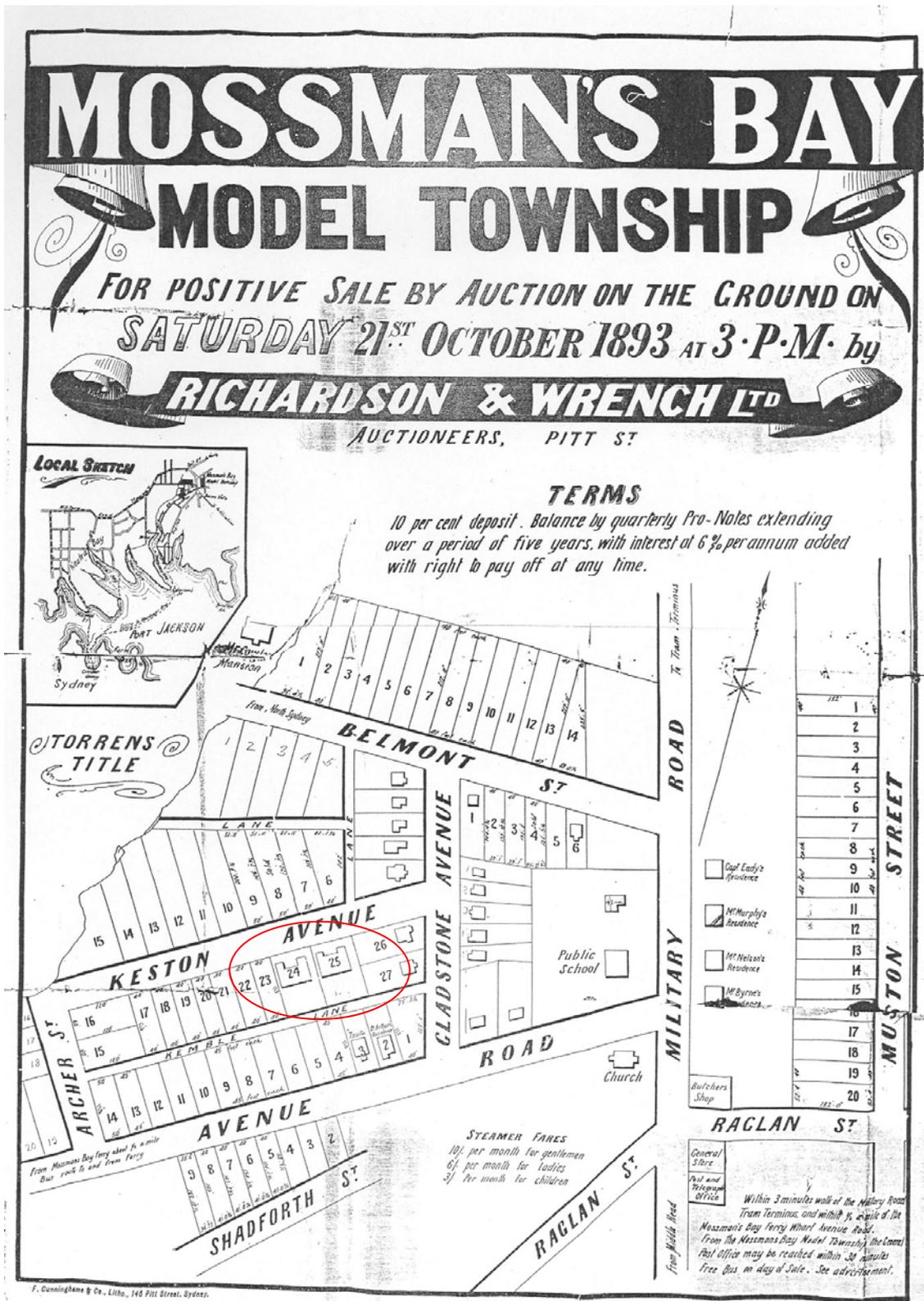
This case study illustrates the early settlement and speculative subdivision of an inner ring suburb of Sydney and an attempt to provide model housing for the artisan and middle class residents moving to the area.

In 1838 Archibald Mosman was granted 30 acres (12.1 hectares) at what later became known as Mosman Bay. He set up a whaling station in an area which was at that time very remote from the main settlement in Sydney, and therefore suitable for noxious industries. This operated for several years. The first formed road in Mosman (Avenue Road, c1860) led from Mosman Bay up to the ridgeline, where in 1870 a second road was built to access the military fortifications at Middle Head. This stimulated some settlement and land speculation in the area, and much of the land, including the whaling station grant, was eventually purchased by the entrepreneurs and land speculators Richard Harnett Jnr and Alexander Stuart, who were responsible for most of the subdivisions in the suburb of Mosman.

Arthur Muston, a bank manager and later a merchant, in 1882 purchased several large portions of the subdivided Mosman Bay land, as well as several other portions to the east of Military Road which were part of the Silex Estate. He lived in a large house named "Blakesley" in Bradley's Head Road, Mosman. Muston's approach to the further subdivision and sale of his land was to build 11 examples of the type of building he wanted in his estate, which he called a Model Township. On Lots 24 to 27 and Lots 2 and 3 of his Model Township subdivision (Figure A.25) he built four houses and two pairs of semis (Figure A.26). The first listing of occupants of those semis was in the 1891 *Sands Directory*, suggesting that they were built in 1890, some of the earliest semis in Mosman.

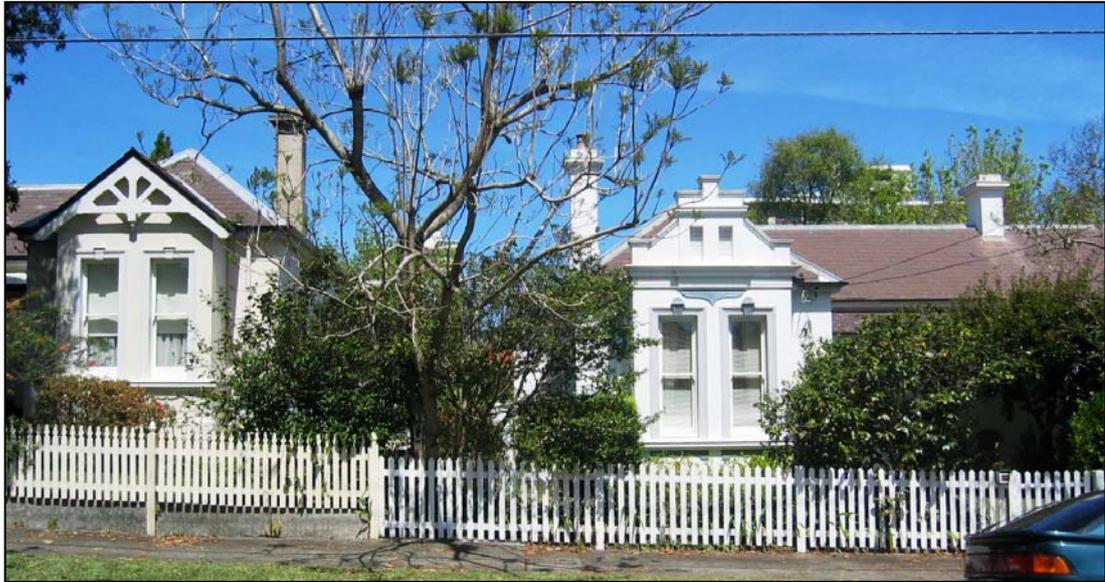
The four semis, named "Keston" (No 29), "Yalaroy" (later "Leona" No 27), "Ashkabad" (No 25) and "Strathallan" (No 23), are in the fashionable Victorian Italianate style. Each pair is double-fronted which provides spacious accommodation for middle class tenants. They have hipped slate roofs with metal ridges and Nos 23 and 25 have parapets, while Nos 27 and 29 have gables with timber bargeboards. The verandahs have small cast iron friezes, and the brickwork is rendered. The other speculative houses built by Muston have very similar roof forms, and façade styles.

Figure A.25: Muston's Model Township Subdivision, 1893.



The pairs of model semis are indicated. (Mosman Local Studies Library Collection)

Figure A.26: Semis in Keston Avenue, Mosman, c1890.



The end semis of each pair, showing the slight variations in the treatment of the gables. (Author 2004)

Muston transferred his estate to his wife Henrietta Sarah Louisa Muston in 1891, although a power of attorney ensured that he retained effective control (LPI Vol 972 Fol 22). The undeveloped lots in the Model Township subdivision were first auctioned in October 1893, the same year in which Mosman became a municipality and the electric tram was extended to Mosman. Sales were slow, the economy was depressed and the lots were offered again in 1897 and 1901. The later auctions were more successful because the tram had been further extended in 1897 to run along two sides of Muston's estate, and the economy was recovering.

Henrietta Muston sold Nos 23 and 25 in 1901 but retained the four detached houses and the other pair of semis until her death in 1950, when her executors divided up her estate. Nos 27 and 29 were sold in 1951 to Marjorie Edmonds the wife of Francis Edmonds, an insurance inspector of Mosman, who subdivided the semis in 1955 under the de facto subdivision clause of the *Local Government Act 1919* (see Section 7.3). No 27 was purchased by Robert Griffen, a painter and decorator of Mosman and No 29 was transferred to Jeanette Xenis, a spinster of Darlinghurst (LPI Vol 7099 Fols 142, 143).

This group of semis is listed as a local heritage item in the *Mosman LEP 2012*.

Despite the size and quality of Muston's model Italianate semis in Keston Avenue, they were not duplicated by the investors and building speculators who later purchased lots in his estate. By the time development commenced in earnest in the early twentieth century, the two-bedroom Federation-style semi (such as Figure A.27) was the dwelling of choice for

speculative builders targeting the artisans and lower middle class people who were seeking to rent in the growing suburb.

Figure A.27: Federation semis in Muston's Model Township.



Avenue Road, Mosman (Google Maps July 2014)

Case Study 8 – Late Victorian Semis, 1-3 Grose Street, Parramatta

These semis were built on land which was subjected to many years of speculative transactions, and show the typical changes in fortune of modest rental dwellings which later find themselves being adaptively reused in inner city areas.

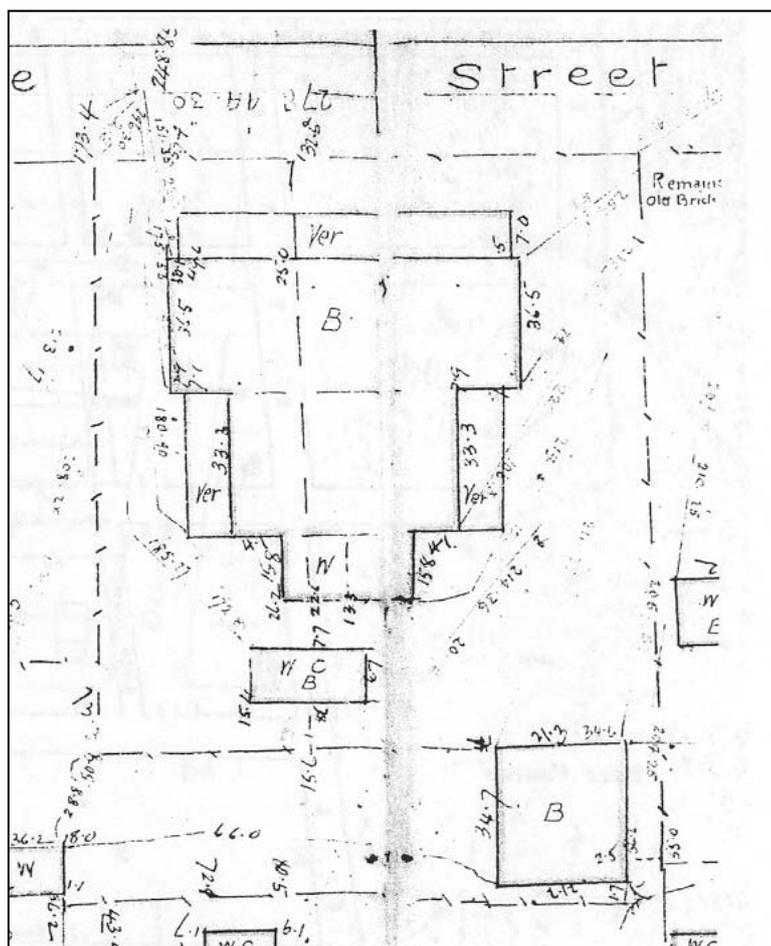
In the late 1820s, people such as police constables and colonial-born youths who applied for land in central Parramatta were advised that suitable land for such “lower class” persons was along Windsor Road or in Grose and Ross Streets (Kass *et al.* 1996, 117). Crown land auctions of town allotments commenced in 1832. In 1835 Lot 13, which by then contained a coach house and a weatherboard stable, was purchased by Janet Templeton (LPI Vol 2026 Fol 193). Janet Templeton had arrived in the colony in 1831 as a widow with eight children and enough assets to acquire land, including pastoral land at Goulburn (Higginbotham 2005b, 7). She purchased Lot 14 in 1836 (LPI Book K No 757) and Lot 12 (containing a cottage) in 1842 (LPI Book G No 466). After acquiring Lot 11 she had consolidated her ownership of the four lots bounded by Grose, O’Connell and Ross Streets.

Janet Templeton was declared bankrupt in 1844 and the four lots were transferred to her mortgagees. During the 1850s land speculation was common, and the group of four lots changed hands several times without being further developed. Mrs Elizabeth Bobart, a widow of Parramatta purchased them in August 1856 but after her bankruptcy in 1862 they were transferred to John Campbell in 1870. William Goodwin, a gentleman of Parramatta purchased the four lots in 1872 (LPI Book 132 No 944).

After the death of William Goodwin in 1886 the land was inherited by Mary Elizabeth Allen, the wife of a builder, Frederick Allen. Shortly after her acquisition of the land, Mary and her husband commenced building rental dwellings - two detached houses (one in O’Connell Street and one in Ross Street) and a pair of semi-detached houses in Grose Street.

The first listing of tenants in the semi-detached houses is in the 1890 *Sands Directory*, suggesting that they were built in 1889. Several years later they were surveyed by the water authority (Figure A.28).

Figure A.28: Victorian semis, 1-3 Grose Street, Parramatta.



1892 survey, detail from the surveyor's fieldbook, Sydney Water Archives, in Higginbotham 2005b, 22.

Although she sold the other portions of her land holding in 1909, Mary Allen held the site containing the semis as an investment until 1936. It was purchased in August of that year by Mabel Thorpe, a spinster of Double Bay (LPI Vol 2307 Fol 82). In October 1939, the semis were sold to Alice Rafter, the wife of John Rafter, an electrical mechanic of Parramatta. Lilian Whiteoak, a spinster of Parramatta, purchased the semis in May 1955 and two years later she transferred ownership to Bruce Whiteoak, a motor mechanic of Parramatta, and his wife Margaret.

After consolidating the site with the rear portion subdivided from 46 O'Connell Street in 1959, Whiteoak sold the property to Elizabeth Securities Pty Ltd. The Parramatta Leagues Club purchased the semis from the Kia Ora Land Company Pty Ltd in August 2002 and they have not been subdivided, although both are now used as commercial premises (Figure A.29).

Figure A.29: Victorian semis (1889) now used as commercial premises.



Before renovation, some verandah detailing intact (National Trust NSW, 2004)



**After conversion to commercial premises (Google Maps October 2014)
Grose Street, Parramatta**

Case Study 9 – Barrenjoey Head Lightstation

This example shows the ongoing adherence to the dwelling hierarchy during the late Victorian period.

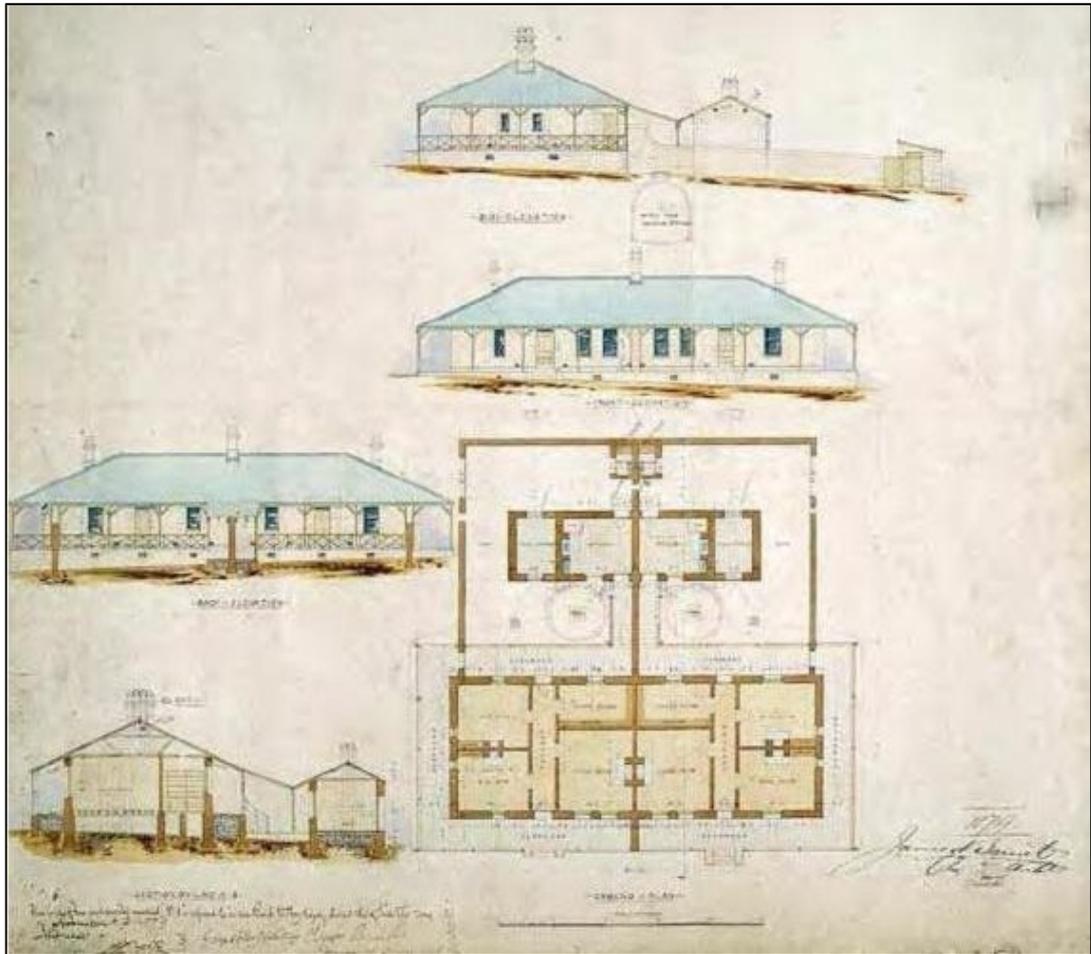
Numerous shipwrecks in Broken Bay prompted the authorities in 1868 to provide two timber Stewart Towers from which lanterns could guide ships. These were replaced in 1881 by a lighthouse, designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet. Stone was quarried on the site for both the lighthouse and the three dwellings for the lighthouse keepers. The Head Keeper was provided with a detached dwelling. The Assistant Keepers lived in semis (Figure A.30). Each semi contained four rooms around a central corridor and had a service block and privy in the rear courtyard, connected to the houses by a covered walkway (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5014096) (Figure A.31).

Figure A.30: Barrenjoey Lightstation Assistant Keepers' cottages, 1881.



The rear of the semis. Photographed in 1902.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrenjoey_Head_Lighthouse, accessed July 2014)

Figure A.31: Floorplans for Assistant Keepers' cottages.

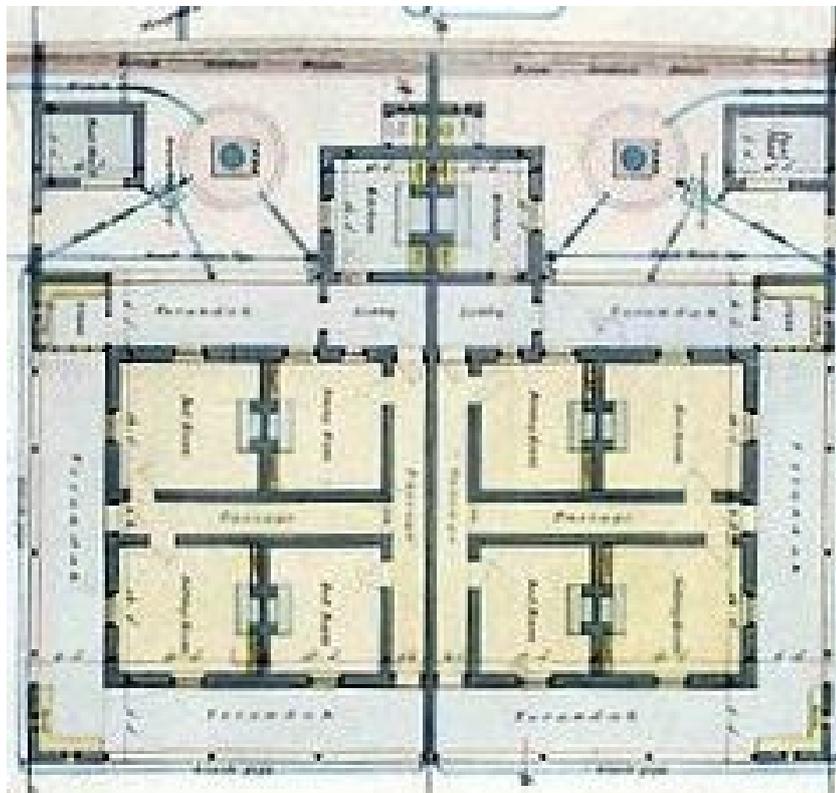
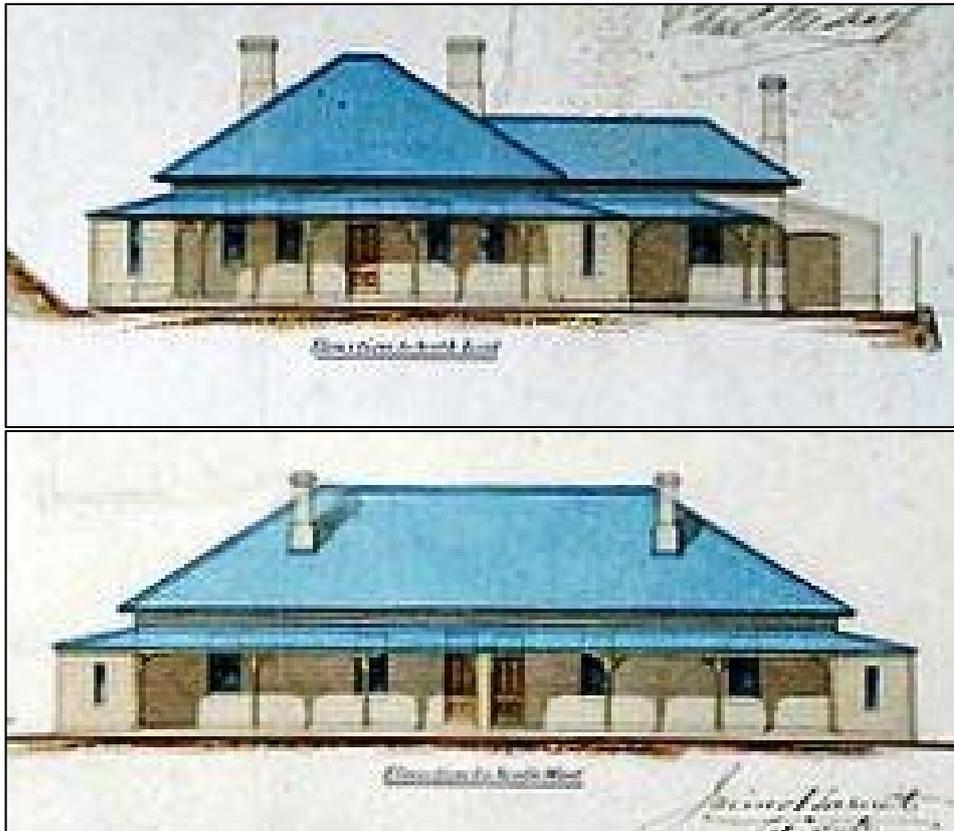


(www.pittwateronlinenews.com/resources/ accessed March 2014)

The colonial government, by providing attached dwellings for the subordinate keepers, was adhering firmly to the dwelling hierarchy. The lightstation complex is now a listed State heritage item, with social significance arising from the “evidence of the changing living and working conditions of the lighthouse keepers and their families”, yet there is no analysis of the social underpinning of the dwelling types. The dwellings also have associative historical significance because they were designed by James Barnet, and the stonework and walls have aesthetic significance (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5014096).

Lightstations with a similar dwelling hierarchy were also built elsewhere in NSW during the late Victorian period. For example, the complex at Smoky Cape, the last designed by James Barnet, opened in 1891 with the Head Keeper in a detached house and the Assistant Keepers in semis (Figure A.32).

Figure A.32: Smoky Cape Lightstation Keepers' quarters, 1891.

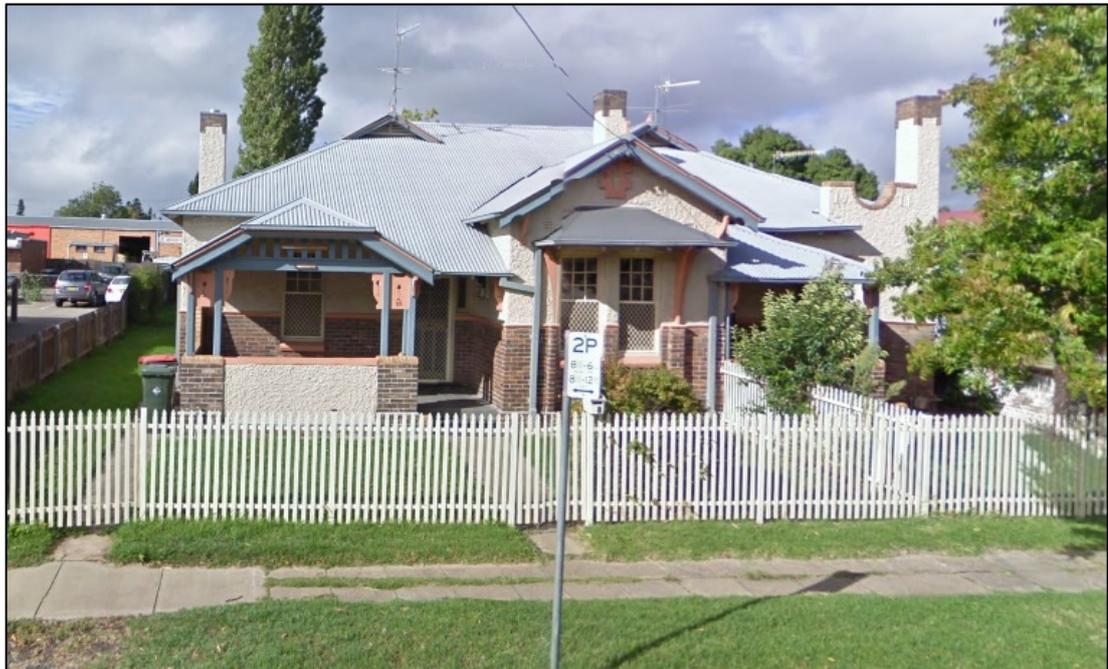


Head Keeper's quarters (top), Assistant Keepers' quarters (centre and below).
(Wikipedia "Smoky Cape Lighthouse" accessed March 2014)

Case Study 10 – Armidale: A City Without Semis?

The Victorian semis in Uralla (see Section 5.7) near Armidale are reputed to be the only extant two-storey semis in the New England region of NSW. The “only other pair” was in Armidale, but they “were demolished in 1975 to provide a concrete parking area for a service station” (Mayo 2009, Item 15). There is only one pair of heritage-listed semis in Armidale – a curious pair of asymmetrical single-storey Federation semis at 88-90 Beardy Street (Figure A.33) which has local significance. These were designed by the prominent Armidale architect William Henderson Lee (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1010014).

Figure A.33: Federation semis, Armidale, c1915.



Beardy Street, Armidale (Google Maps, August 2014)

As discussed in Section 5.7, many regional towns in NSW, even small settlements such as Millthorpe, Blayney and Temora have extant Victorian and Federation semis as part of their housing stock, some of them substantial double-fronted examples. In towns such as Camden there are numerous two-storey examples. In a city the size of Armidale (more than 24,000 residents) it is surprising to find no similar examples. Were they built and all subsequently demolished? Or was there something about Armidale which made them an unsuitable or unnecessary choice of dwelling type?

Research into the domestic buildings of Armidale is relatively sparse.

The stately homes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are reasonably well known. The houses of ordinary workers, however, and the local middle class, have tended to be overlooked. (Perumal Murphy 1991, 14)

The 1991 heritage study of Armidale's building stock looked closely at workers' housing as well as middle class dwellings, yet the only semis found were those in Beardy Street.

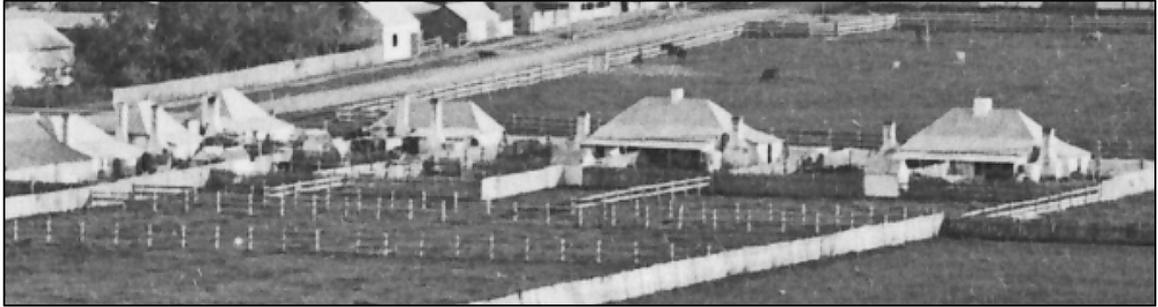
Armidale in the 1830s was outside the "limits of location" of the colony, for administration, communications, law and order. There were several graziers who were squatters in the region. The Crown land outside the limits was later taken back from the squatters and divided into nine districts, each with a Commissioner. New England's Commissioner was appointed in 1839 and his residence was built in an area which was later to become Armidale. In a letter he advised that his house was to be of brick:

... as this is cheaper than wood from the distance the latter material has to be fetched...No slabs can be got within fifteen miles of this place, the bricks can be made on the spot. (Thomas Tourle, letter 9 July 1841, cited in Gilbert 1982, 17)

Despite this, as with the typical rural dwellings in other regions at that time, timber was the material used for most of the dwellings in Armidale. In October 1845 Bishop Broughton described Armidale as consisting of "twelve or fourteen scattered cottages, principally composed of timber, and the roofs of bark" (Gilbert 1982, 9). The population was around 76. During the decade 1851 to 1861, following the discovery of gold, the population increased to 910 (Census 1851, 1861). Of the 99 dwellings in 1851, 88 were of timber. In 1861 115 out of 152 dwellings were of slab or weatherboard, and only 37 of stone or brick.

In a collaborative heritage research project (*Heritage Futures Database*) the University of New England has provided information about a collection of eight timber cottages (Trim's Cottages) dating from the 1860s. Together with three sheds they were grouped around the edges of a large town allotment on the corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets. They can be seen in a panorama of Armidale dated 1865, and again in a 1900 panorama (Figure A.34). John Trim was an emancipist who obtained the land in 1849 and operated one of the first stores in Armidale, later becoming the Mayor. Although none of the research mentions the form of his dwellings, it is clear from the panorama that at least two of the buildings were pairs of semis. The divisions between the back gardens and rear verandahs are very clear.

Figure A.34: Trim's Cottages, 1860s.



Some of the cottages in Dumaresq Street. Photographed in 1900 (Armidale Folk Museum)

By 1920 only two of the cottages remained. The land was in a flood-prone area, which was subsequently completely cleared to become parkland.

The railway was extended to Armidale in 1883. Along with the railway station and ancillary structures, a large two-storey detached residence was built for the Station Master. The railway gatekeeper was provided with a small, single-storey detached cottage. Even smaller semi-detached cottages (Figure A.35) were built for the railway porters. A barracks building was provided as a drivers' and engine crew rest house.

Figure A.35: Pairs of railway cottages, Armidale.



Ampol Street, Armidale (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 1010141)

The 1991 heritage survey identified many Victorian, working class, timber buildings (Perumal Murphy 1991, 21). It was noted that even many Federation cottages were still being built of timber, despite red brick being a defining characteristic of the style in other places.. No purpose-built pre-Second World War flats were identified in Armidale during the survey. Perhaps the researchers' most significant statement about Armidale's housing stock was:

The dominance of timber, particularly this century, is a local characteristic. (Perumal Murphy 1991, 26)

It is this use of timber, instead of masonry, for workers' housing which suggests the reason for the lack of semis in Armidale. Land was not expensive; therefore even the speculative builders could provide affordable detached cottages. And with a negligible saving in materials to be gained from a shared timber party wall, there was little point in building timber semis. Similarly there was no need to build flats. The few Victorian and Federation semis which were constructed seem to have been specifically built to signify the status of the occupants and, with the exception of the railway cottages and the Beardy Street pair, they were demolished many years ago.

Case Study 11 – Federation Semis and Single-fronted Dwellings, Mosman

This case study illustrates a typical chain of speculative suburban land holdings, and the skill of the speculative builder in maximising the number of dwellings on a parcel of land, without using terraced housing yet still recognising the social aspirations underpinning the dwelling hierarchy. The dwellings at Nos 2 to 16 Wudgong Street in Mosman are located close to where the tram line ran along Military Road. The group comprises five single-fronted detached houses, one pair of semis, and one detached house (Figure A.36).

Figure A.36: Group of dwellings, Mosman, 1910.



Single-fronted houses, Nos 2 to 10.



Semis, Nos 12 and 14.

(Author 2004)

These sites were part of 20 acres (8 hectares) granted to Charles Nathan in 1853. The land was later subdivided by Richard Harnett Snr, shortly before the tram was extended to the area. In 1891 Lots 5 and 6 were purchased from Harnett by John Taylor, a farmer of

Gerringong, Lot 7 was purchased by John Kelly, a coachbuilder of Gerringong, and Lots 8 and 9 by Frederick Rush, a Civil Servant of Paddington (LPI, Vol 1025 Fol 122, Vol 1025 Fol 45, Vol 1088 Fol 78). The five lots remained undeveloped until 1909 when they were all purchased by William Dedden, a builder of Mosman. In 1910 he built five single-fronted detached houses, one pair of semis and a double-fronted detached house, all in the Federation style with variations of the same porches, windows, sills, awnings and decorative features. The only point of difference between the five single-fronted houses is the pattern in the render of the front gable, and the pattern of lead-lights in the top of each window.

On only five standard lots there are eight dwellings, and of these only two are semi-detached. The five single-fronted detached houses, despite being narrow (they are squeezed onto three standard lots), have all the cachet surrounding detachment, and as such would have generated higher rentals than the same sized semis next door. The housing density was achieved by having only a small gap between the dwellings – a practice which was no longer possible after 1920 (see Section 7.2). Just like semis, the single-fronted houses have no fenestration on one side wall.

When they were completed in 1910, the semis were purchased by two spinsters, Amy and Maud Pownall of Mosman (LPI, Vol 2085 Fols 235, 236). Amy died in 1934, but it was not until Maud's death in 1948 that the semis were sold to William Miller, a draftsman of Mosman. Three of the single-fronted cottages (Nos 8, 10 and 12) were on land which in 1910 could not be subdivided, because the buildings crossed two of the original lots' boundary lines. Similarly the other group of two (Nos 4 and 6) was on one original lot and could not be subdivided. Both groups could only be bought and sold on their consolidated parcels of land. Both groups of single-fronted cottages were purchased in 1911 by two spinsters, Bridget and Annie Kelly of Sydney (LPI Vol 1486 Fol 96). They held all the houses as investment properties until 1914, when Nos 4 and 6 were sold to Thomas Jackson, a retired grazier of Wollstonecraft and Nos 8, 10 and 12 were sold to Arthur Jackson, a property owner of Wollstonecraft. Thomas died in 1929; however his Trustees held the two houses until the early 1950s, when they were subdivided under the de facto subdivision regime. Bede Dixon, a fitter of Mosman, purchased No 4 in 1955. Mr Dixon was an example of a skilled workman being able to afford to buy a small cottage to realise the Great Australian Dream in the 1950s. The other three single-fronted cottages were purchased in 1923 by Edith Sands, the wife of a Sydney merchant, and subdivided in 1971. This created very small lots, each with the side wall of a house on its boundary, but because council approval was not required under de facto subdivision, Mosman Council was powerless to prevent this situation.

Case Study 12 – Daceyville, Garden Suburb

Daceyville provides an example of a planned suburb of social housing during the Federation period, when semis became an important part of the working class dwelling mix.

In 1911 the Labor Government's Colonial Secretary John Rowland Dacey worked closely with the prominent architect John Sulman on a plan for a garden suburb of public housing. The private developer Richard Stanton (creator of Haberfield Garden Suburb, see Section 6.9) was simultaneously planning a new private garden suburb in nearby Rosebery, and Stanton became a strident critic of Dacey's scheme.

Several layout plans were developed for the Dacey Garden Suburb (later known as Daceyville), an estate of 400 acres (162 hectares) on sandy wasteland seven kilometres from the city centre. The second plan, by John Sulman and John Hennessey, was broadly adopted and construction began in mid-1912.

A competition was launched to design the housing, in which tenements and flats were not to be part of the mix. Endorsed by the NSW Institute of Architects (*Building*, 12 November 1912, 47), the competition was divided into three sections – single cottages, semi-detached cottages and group cottages⁷⁵ – which reflected the dwelling hierarchy which was so entrenched in the British public housing schemes. This was a significant departure from the previous policy of providing only terraces and flats for labourers in The Rocks and Millers Point, and was possible only because the suburban land was much cheaper than inner city land. The government had estimated that although the rents for the semis would be cheaper than the private rentals for similar dwellings, the scheme would still generate a return of 4% to taxpayers (Irvine 1913, 40). In addition, to avoid the "taint of charity" Dacey emphasised that it was not targeted at the working class. He suggested that his new suburb would "do away now with any idea of class distinction" and was "vehement in his discouragement of the suggestion that this property would only be available to people of one particular class" (*Daily Telegraph* 1 January 1912, 9). Yet paradoxically, Dacey also suggested that his scheme would be a model which could be copied by local authorities "in affording an object lesson as to the rentals which would be charged to the poorer classes" (NSW Parliament 1911-12, 3266). It is also significant that, like the council housing in Britain, the terraces (group houses) were limited to three or four dwellings in length.

The competition guidelines stated that the dwellings should contain as a minimum:

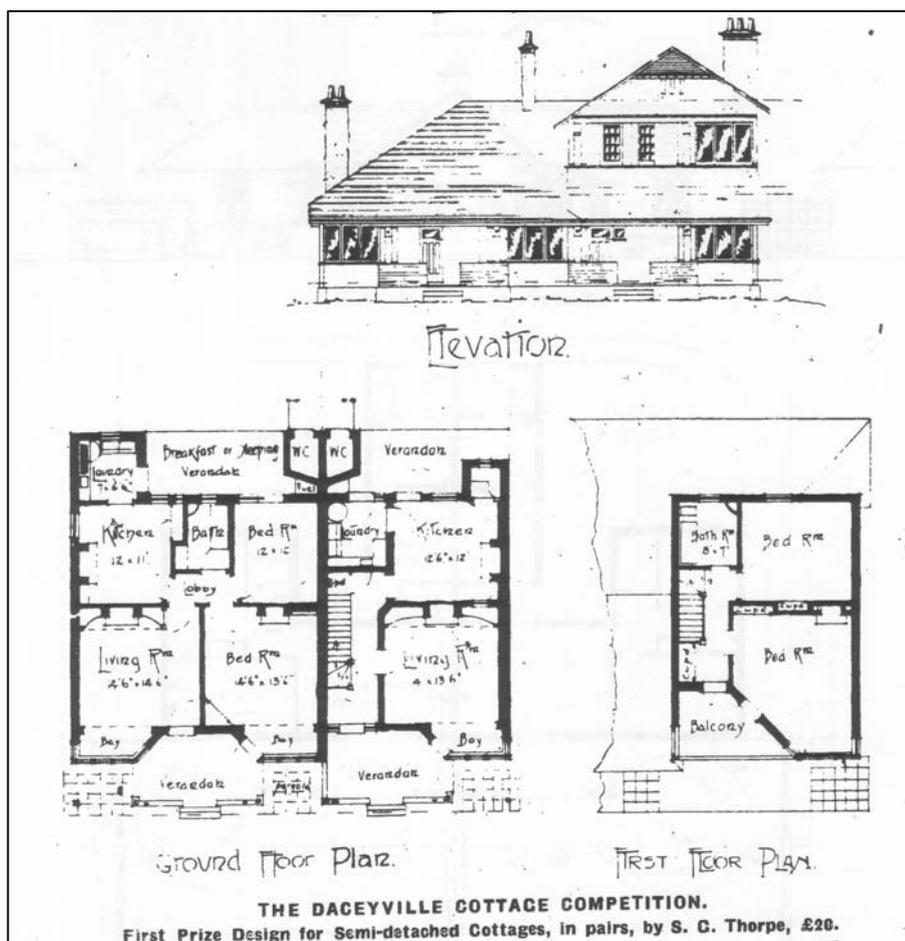
⁷⁵ The term "group" was used rather than "terrace" to avoid the negative connotations of the latter.

A living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, laundry, bathroom, pantry or storeroom and two verandahs. No bedroom should contain less than 1000 cubic feet of air space, with a maximum height of 11 feet. (*Building* 12 November 1912, 48)

This differs significantly from the English council housing model, which even for the smallest dwellings specified a minimum of three bedrooms, so that male and female children could be separated.

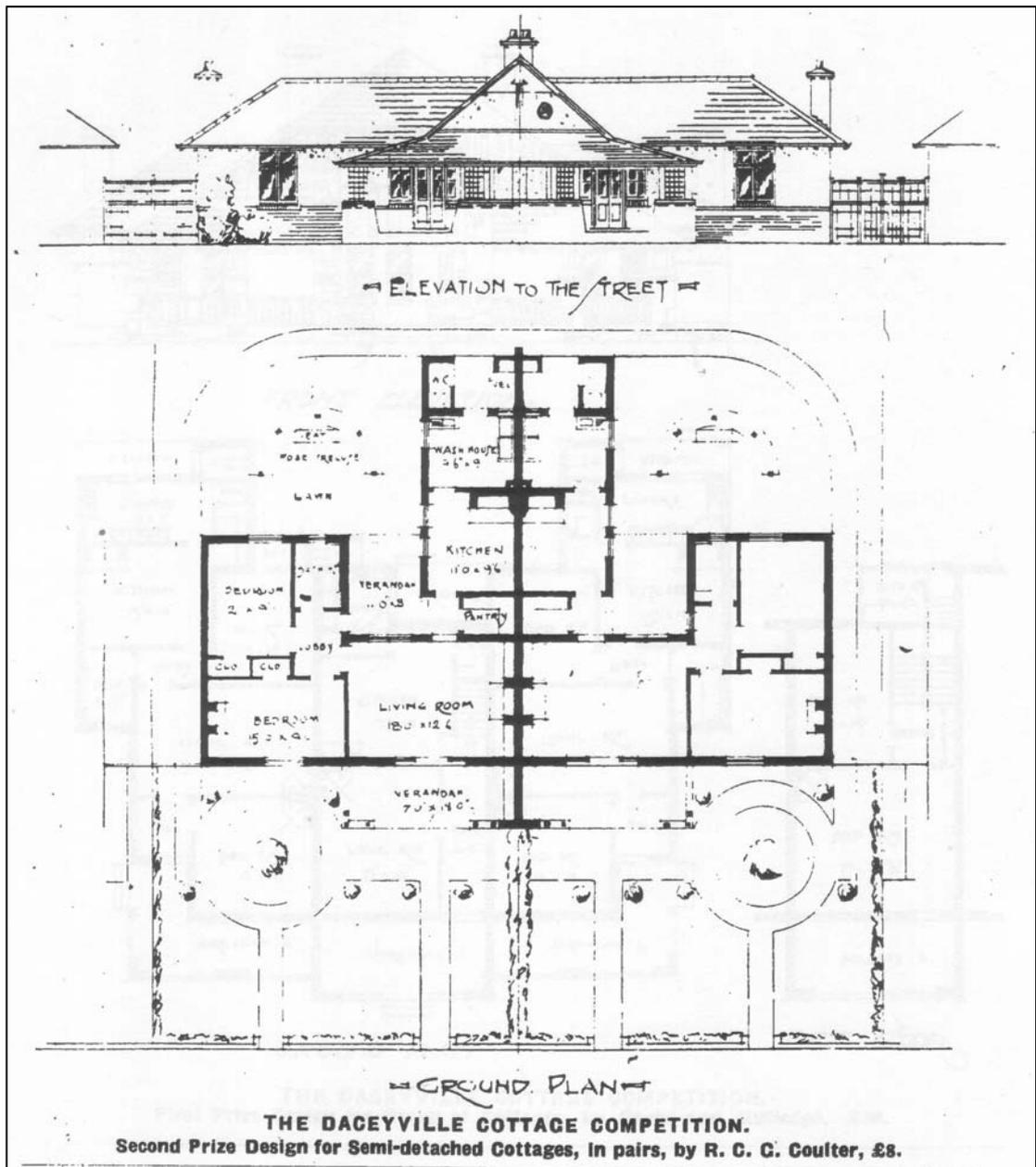
The amount of prize money was too small to attract the prominent architects of the day, but several winners later became highly successful architects. Other winning designs were by government architects. Although many other architects, including government architects, were later involved in the designs of the dwellings, the early housing was based on the winning competition designs, including a highly unusual pair of asymmetrical semis, with one two-storey dwelling (Figure A.37, Figure A.38 and Figure A.39). A more traditional design by the Housing Board architect W H Foggitt is shown in Figure A.40.

Figure A.37: First prize design for Daceyville semis, 1912.



(*Building* 12 November 1912, 49)

Figure A.38: Second prize design for Daceyville semis, 1912.



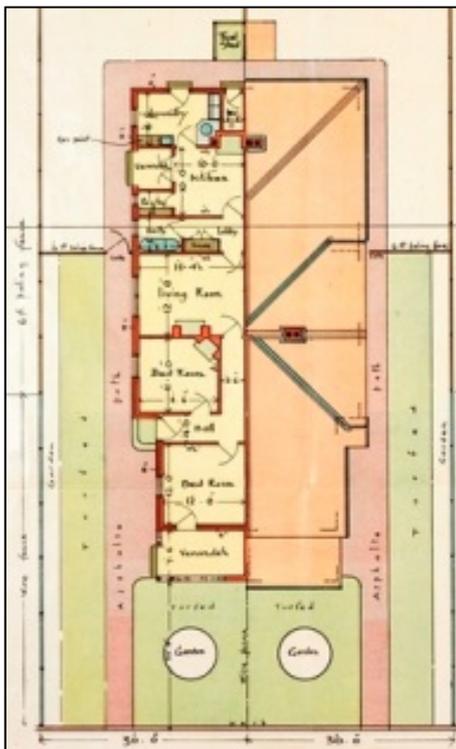
(*Building*, 12 November 1912, 50)

Figure A.39: First prize semis as built, 1913.



Solander Road, Daceyville. When let, this unusual pair was described as “a cottage and a house”. (NSW State Library, d1_31545)

Figure A.40: Daceyville semis designed by W H Foggitt, 1913.



(SLNSW Image a6882001)

Sulman was of the view that a major element of a garden suburb was “the allocation of special quarters or sites for each kind of building” (Sulman 1921, 106). Figure A.41 shows the first section of the Daceyville plan which was actually built – it has areas of small detached dwellings and some group housing, but most of the dwellings are large semis along Gardiners Road and smaller semis in the side streets leading from the main road.

Figure A.41: Plan of Daceyville as built, 1917.



(City of Botany Bay 2005, 25)

The predominance of semis in Daceyville attracted some criticism. Those complaining about the flats in Millers Point had demanded detached cottages in the suburbs for workers, and even semis were seen as inappropriate. However, the financial reality was that the detached dwellings were too expensive for the intended tenants and, as had happened in Britain, the

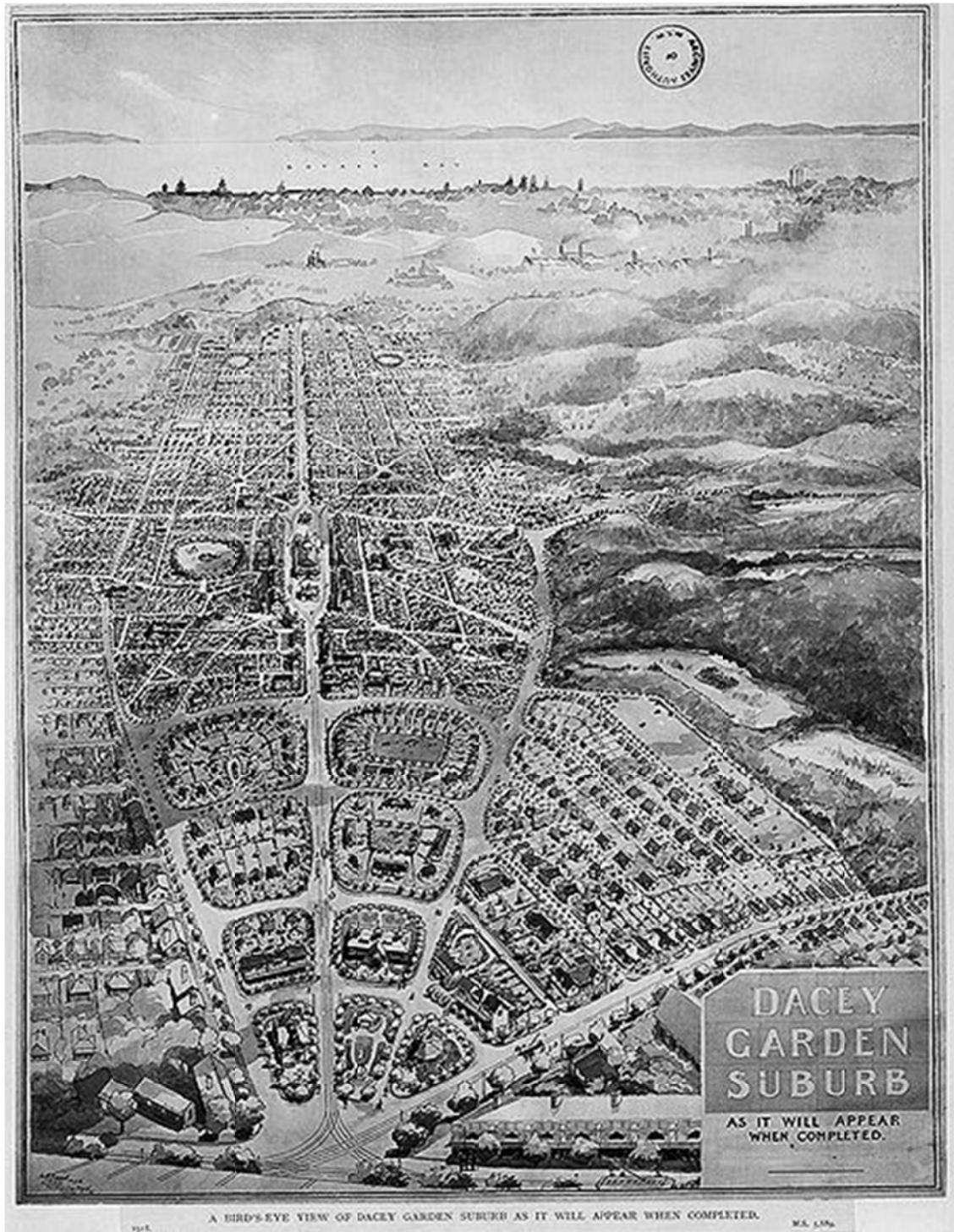
semi became the ideal compromise between unaffordable detached housing and the “slum” of the terrace when housing the working classes.

Building at Daceyville almost ceased during the materials shortages of the First World War and in 1919 the focus of the Housing Board turned to the provision of rental housing for returned servicemen.

The design of the suburb was amended by the government architect to more closely resemble an English garden suburb, with a hierarchy of streets around a cul-de-sac layout (City of Botany Bay 2005, 32). An idea of its original scope is provided in Figure A.42. But Daceyville proved very costly to implement and when the whole project was shut down by the post-war conservative government in 1924, only a small part of the original design had been achieved. In the end, only 315 dwellings were built, between 1912 and 1924 (Volke 2006, 48)

The Daceyville public housing remains in government ownership. By the 1970s, a lack of maintenance had led to widespread degradation, and the State Government planned to clear the area and replace the housing with high-rise flats. This was opposed by the growing conservation movement and Daceyville, Australia’s first planned public housing scheme, was eventually listed as a conservation area. It is still primarily a public housing estate, with some sympathetic infill development and rear additions designed to preserve the streetscapes.

Figure A.42: Concept design for Dacey Garden Suburb, 1918.



Ultimately, only the section on the lower right was developed.
(NSW State Records, ID 5225_a018_a01800001.jpg)

Case Study 13 – Pair of Interwar California Bungalow Semis, Mosman

The history of these semis shows a typical chain of land speculation (involving both gentlemen investors and tradesmen) and the involvement of spinsters in the ownership of semis.

The site is part of 20 acres (8 hectares) in Mosman, granted to Charles Nathan in 1853, and later subdivided by Richard Harnett Snr as the Glover Estate. In 1914 Lots 26 and 27 of Section 2 were sold by Harnett's mortgagee to Arthur Weldon, a railway clerk of Goulburn, and Arthur Harpham, a builder of Mosman (LPI Vol 2515 Fols 160, 161). They sold the land to a carpenter Thomas Rochfort of Neutral Bay in 1916, but it remained undeveloped and in 1918 Rochfort sold Lot 26 to a tiler, Charles Matheson, of Mosman. It was soon sold to James Travers, a Gentleman of Mosman and in 1922 a Master Mariner, Edward Finlayson of Mosman purchased the land. He died in 1924 and the property was sold to Mary Cusack, a spinster of Ashfield (LPI Vol 2912 Fol 73). She obtained mortgage finance from the executor of Finlayson's estate, a retired police inspector from Mosman, and developed the property with a pair of semis in the California Bungalow style (Figure A.43).

Figure A.43: Interwar California Bungalow semis, 1924.



Glover Street, Mosman (Author 2004)

They display typical features of the Bungalow style, including solid piers, a low, wide roof form and a verandah with a horizontal corrugated iron roof.

Miss Cusack retained the semis until 1959, when she sold them to Total Oil Products (Australia) Ltd. This company immediately subdivided them and sold No 15 to a clerk Eric

Derriman and his wife Sylvia of Mosman. They held it for 7 years then it changed hands several times until the 1980s. It was variously owned by an advertising executive, two real estate agents, a divisional manager and a producer's assistant, mostly of Mosman. No 17 was sold by the oil company in 1959 to a bag merchant of Neutral Bay then to an engineer, then a solicitor, and to a medical practitioner in 1976. Few of these owners actually lived in their semis.

Case Study 14 – State-listed Semis, 200-202 Howick Street, Bathurst

This case study follows a pair of semis from their construction until their listing on the State Heritage Register. It illustrates the themes of speculation, de facto subdivision, confusion between dwelling types and heritage perception. It also shows the key role the National Trust (NSW) played in the heritage listing of semis in NSW during the 1970s. Unless otherwise stated the information has been extracted from the National Trust Archives, Bentinck and Howick Streets Group File, Volumes 1 and 2.

In 1832 the new Governor, Major General Sir Richard Bourke, visited Bathurst. He instructed the Surveyor General, Major Thomas Mitchell, to make arrangements for further developing the town of Bathurst and he in turn instructed J B Richards, the Assistant Surveyor at Bathurst, to lay out the blocks and streets. The first auction of town land was in August 1833. A condition of sale was that a building had to be erected on each lot within two years. An 1845 map of the town shows George Suttor and R Sturk owning Lots 19, 20 and part of Lot 18 of Section 4 of the City of Bathurst. Despite the conditions of sale, the parcels of land remained undeveloped, except for a c1837 detached cottage at what is now known as 198 Howick Street.

It was not until the 1850s that three pairs of semis were built on the lots; at 71-73 Bentinck Street, 200-202 Howick Street and 204-206 Howick Street (now demolished). Each of the red brick buildings was of a similar form and late Georgian style, with a hipped iron roof, front verandahs with picket fence balustrades and flat trellised timber columns, four rooms and a kitchen block to the rear (Figure A.44, Figure A.45). The semis at 200-202 Howick Street abut, but do not share a party wall with, the detached dwelling at No 198.

Figure A.44: 73-71 Bentinck Street, Bathurst, c1850s.



No 71 (right) has recently had the verandah columns reinstated. (Google maps accessed June 2013)

Figure A.45: 200-202 Howick Street, Bathurst.



Photographed in 1990. (NSW Heritage Division Online Inventory, local listing 1080001)

During the 1880s, a terrace containing two dwellings and a corner shop was built at 67 Bentinck Street and 194-196 Howick Street, in a similar style to the older dwellings (Figure A.46).

Figure A.46: The group of buildings in Bentinck and Howick Streets, Bathurst.



(Register of the National Estate, Online Database, ID 789)

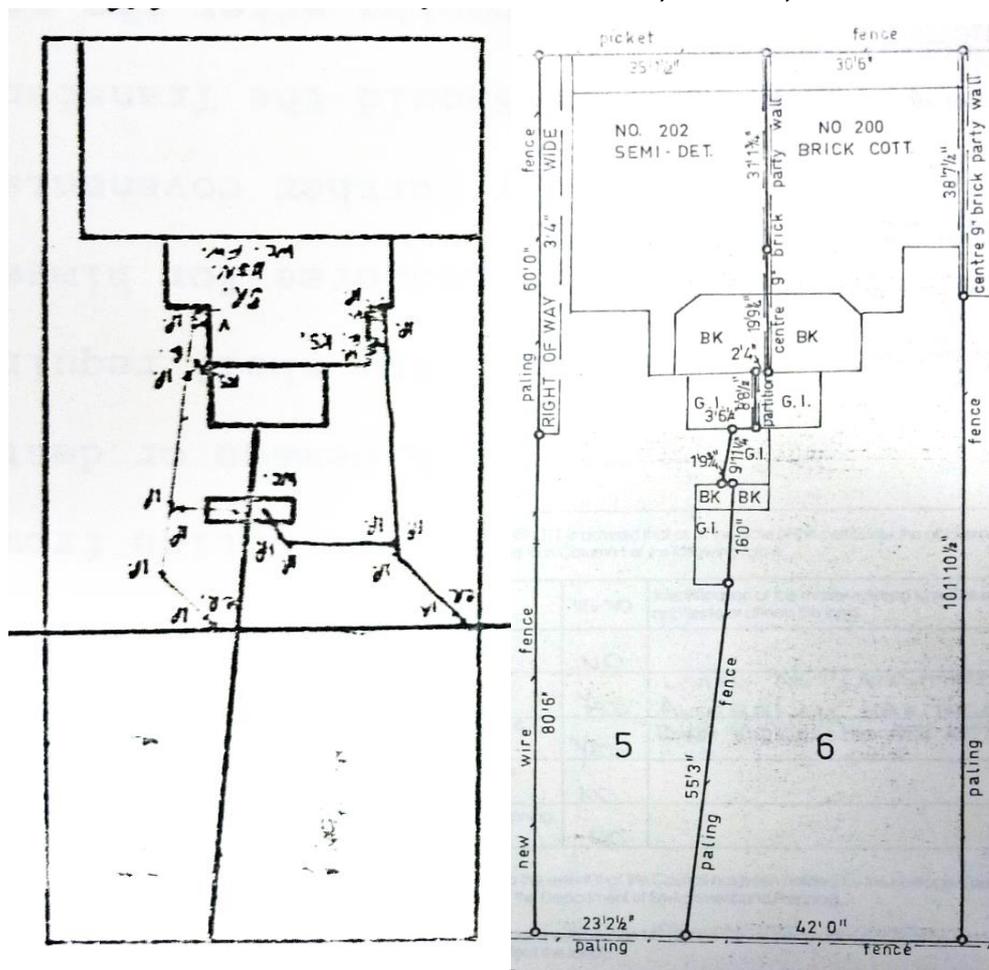
In 1974 the National Trust (NSW) set up the Small Houses Scheme, to buy, restore and sell dwellings to “demonstrate how early dwellings can be restored for comfortable modern living and still contribute to an historic streetscape” (National Trust Press Release, 24 April 1981). The scheme was based on the National Trust of Scotland’s Little Houses Improvement Scheme which was launched in 1961.

The Small Houses Scheme had funding support from the Commonwealth Government’s National Estate program. The Trust’s first purchase under the scheme was two buildings in

North Street, Windsor, in 1974. These were an inn which had been converted to two dwellings in the early twentieth century (Nos 37 and 39, which the Trust restored as one dwelling) and a pair of mid-nineteenth century semi-detached workmen's cottages (Nos 23 and 25). The Trust received a \$50,000 grant from the National Estate program to purchase and restore the Windsor buildings and \$7,000 for a conservation study in Bathurst. Under the scheme, the Trust later purchased two additional buildings in the North Street Group – detached houses at Nos 29 and 35.

The Bathurst conservation study confirmed the suitability of the un-renovated semis at 200-202 Howick Street for the Small Houses Scheme. They were purchased by The National Trust (NSW) in August 1975. This was the Trust's second purchase under the scheme. The National Trust subdivided the property in 1976. Because the semis were built prior to 1 January 1920, the subdivision was completed without the approval of Bathurst Council, as a de facto subdivision. The subdivision was registered based on the drainage diagram and a survey of the properties (Figure A.47).

Figure A.47: De facto subdivision of 200-202 Howick Street, Bathurst, 1976.



(Bathurst City Council Drainage Diagram
No 544)

(LPI, Deposited Plan 585933)

Unfortunately, although the semis had been built as a symmetrical pair, the outbuildings included a pair of brick “back-to-back” toilets, as well as a rear dividing fence which followed an angled drainage line. Under the rules of de facto subdivision the boundary between the two new lots followed the fence-line and the party walls of both the dwellings and the toilets. This created Lot 6 which was considerably larger than Lot 5, and had a convoluted shared boundary line as shown in the Deposited Plan 585933.

The group of eight cottages was listed by the National Trust in 1978 and the same year was placed on the Register of the National Estate. Neither is a statutory listing. Both listings correctly described the buildings as a detached house, a terrace and two pairs of semis. The supporting Statements of Significance are:

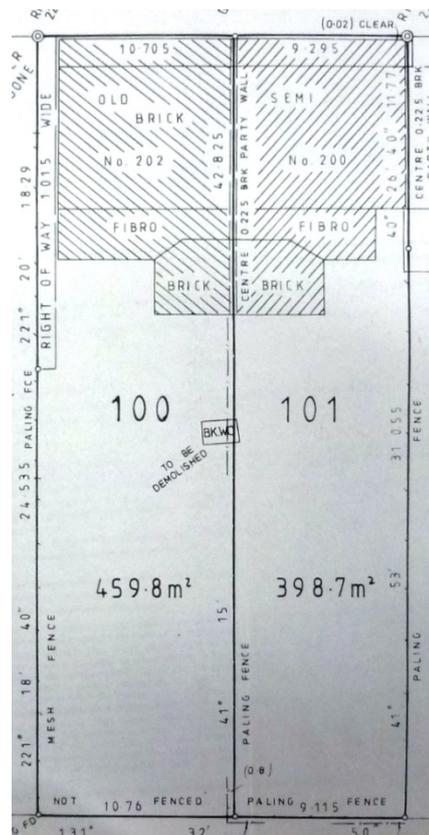
This group of unified, harmonious Victorian Georgian cottages is of architectural significance and forms an important corner element in the streetscape of busy central Bathurst. The buildings are of a type now rare in this city. (Register of the National Estate, Online Inventory ID789)

Streetscapes of unspoiled colonial cottages now unique in Bathurst, where there were very few large houses of this period, and most small ones have been demolished or unsympathetically altered. (National Trust NSW nd)

After the subdivision and restoration of the semis at Nos 200 and 202, they were individually offered for sale by the Trust in 1980. In the sale documentation for each property, covenants and conditions were inserted to ensure the ongoing preservation of the building. Lot 5 (No 202) was sold in June 1980 to the tenant who used it as a gift shop. Lot 6 (No 200) remained unsold, with one member of the public querying the “clauses in the Special Condition (covenant) section wherein the purchaser is required to and warrants to make good damage or destruction to an extent as may be required by a notice from the National Trust”.

The Trust then decided to create less complex easements and more equal land holdings for the semis. To create the new boundary line, the toilet at No 202 had to be demolished (what the owner called the “subdivision/toilet wars”) and a new toilets constructed. The properties had to be re-surveyed and the owner of No 202 had to purchase an additional parcel of land from his neighbour, the National Trust. The new subdivision required Council approval and was registered in 1981 (Figure A.48) with the notation on the plan that the rear toilet is “to be demolished”.

Figure A.48: 200-202 Howick Street, Bathurst, 1981 subdivision.



(LPI, Deposited Plan 618290)

Ironically, after the lengthy and expensive subdivision process and the “toilet wars”, Lot 6 (No 200) was purchased by the owner of Lot 5 in August 1982.

Rather than rely just on covenants for the preservation of the restored semis, the Trust in November 1982 applied to the NSW Heritage Council for a Permanent Conservation Order on the semis, a remedy which had become available under the *Heritage Act 1977*. A Permanent Conservation Order (Number 244) was placed over the semis on 25 February 1983. In November 1985, Permanent Conservation Orders were also placed over the terrace (67 Bentinck and 194-196 Howick), the detached house (198 Howick) and one semi at 71 Bentinck Street. Curiously, half of the latter building (No 73) had no order, although it was No 71 which had lost its verandah detailing. In 1999 when the State Heritage Register was created, all buildings subject to a Permanent Conservation Order were transferred to the new register. The Statement of Significance for the Howick Street semis is:

The building is part of a unified group of late Georgian cottages which present harmonious, human-scale urban architecture to the local streetscape. As cottages the style and age (1850s) are of a type which are very rare in Bathurst. (NSW Heritage Division, Online Inventory No 5045108)

Although the building is listed with State significance, it is clear from the Statement of Significance that the assessed significance for the semis arises only from their style and contribution to the streetscape, and the age of the building. There is nothing to suggest any significance arising from the dwelling type, or indeed the history of why the semis were built, by whom and for whom. A State heritage listing currently requires a more rigorous assessment than was needed for a Permanent Conservation Order during the 1980s. The identical pair of semis in Bentinck Street (despite its verandahs being restored) has been assessed as having only local significance on one side (No 73) and State significance on the other (No 71). This suggests that the semis at 200-202 Howick Street have their State heritage status not because they have been assessed as such, but because of the activities of the National Trust (NSW) in the Small Houses Scheme during the 1970s.

Similarly, the State-listed semis at 23-25 North Street Windsor have this status only because of the National Trust's involvement with their restoration through the Small Houses Scheme, and the Permanent Conservation Orders the Trust initiated for all the buildings in the North Street Group in 1981. In fact the two semis have been combined into one residence and there is nothing in the heritage inventory to suggest that the building has ever been assessed according to the current Heritage Council criteria.

The listings of the four buildings in Bathurst also provide an example of the confusion surrounding the terminology of dwelling type. While half the building at 71-73 Bentinck Street has a State listing (No 5045491) and is described as a "house", the whole building has a local heritage listing (No 1080011) and is described as "Bentinck Terrace/Cottage/Commercial Building Group". Neither listing mentions "semi-detached". The corner shop (67 Bentinck) is described in the State listing (No 5045114) as a "house" in the "semi-detached house" category, when in fact it is part of a terrace. Its local listing (No 1080012) correctly describes it as a "Terrace/Cottage/Commercial Building". The State listings (No 5045117 and No 5045119) for 194 and 196 Howick Street state that the dwellings are "houses" in the "semi-detached house" category, when they are in fact part of a terrace, while their local listings suggest No 194 is one of a "pair of attached residences" and No 196 is a "terrace" which is one of a "pair of attached residences". The detached dwelling at 198 Howick Street is described in the State listing (No 5045120) as a "house" in the "semi-detached house" category, while its local listing correctly describes it as a "house" with no mention of attachment. The building at 200-220 Howick Street is correctly described in the State listing (No 5045108) as "semi-detached houses" and in the local listing (No 1080130) as "gift shops" and an "intact pair of colonial Georgian cottages".

APPENDIX 3 – THE TERMINOLOGY OF TERRACES

The terms “terrace” and “terraced house” were not in use until the late seventeenth century; instead such buildings were described as a “continuous building” or “uniform houses” (archival sources cited in McKellar 1999, 151). In the 1755 Samuel Johnson Dictionary a terrace is defined as a balcony or outdoor area, not a building type.

However, in current real estate and colloquial usage the terms “terrace house” or simply “terrace” are usually used to refer to a single dwelling in a row of identical, attached houses, although sometimes “terrace” might (more correctly) refer to the row itself. It is not known when or why common usage in NSW shortened “terraced house” to “terrace house”, then to “terrace”, however it is likely to have been after the 1950s, when most terraces were subdivided to create individual titles for each dwelling in the row (see Section 8.3). It is also likely to have been promulgated by the real estate industry after terraced houses became fashionable during the 1960s.

In Britain, the source of the Australian terraced house as a dwelling type, the seminal book about terraces, published in 1982 by Stefan Muthesius is titled *The English Terraced House*. In contrast, Trevor Howells and Colleen Morris called their 1999 book *Terrace Houses in Australia*. Brian Turner in *The Australian Terrace House* (1995) argues that only pedants use the term “terraced house” instead of “terrace house” (Turner 1995, 13). He notes that the term “terrace” is “overworked, and used capriciously” to describe all old, joined houses, including semi-detached houses. In his view the minimum number of attached houses to form a terrace is three, and he also questions the notion of a “free-standing terrace”. However, his book includes pairs of houses and detached houses with the character of single terraced houses. This blurs the distinction between terraced houses, semis and detached houses.

Some authors use the term “terraced cottage” for single-storey terraced houses, and “terraced house” for those of two or more storeys (for example Smith 2009, 94). **Row house** is a term sometimes used in Britain and Australia for a terraced house. More recently the term **townhouse** has been widely used in Australia, Britain and the US to describe a post-Second World War terraced house.

The terminology used by various State and Commonwealth Government departments is also ambiguous around the meaning of “terrace”, “terrace house” and “terraced house”. In the Australian Tax Office's *GST Guidelines* a retirement unit can have one or more bedrooms and can be:

- a high or medium-rise complex
- a terrace
- semi-detached
- stand-alone (Australian Tax Office nd).

The *NSW Tax Laws Amendment (Retirement Villages) Act 2004* states that "a detached house, row house, terrace house, town house or villa unit is not a serviced apartment".

In the NSW Government's *BASIX Guidelines* an "attached dwelling house means a dwelling which is attached to, or less than 0.5m from any other dwelling or building (excluding a garage or carpark), but which does not have another dwelling or building (excluding a garage or carpark) above or below it, such as a semi-detached house, terrace house, row house or townhouse" (BASIX NSW nd).

Clearly, the term "terraced house" is no longer in common usage in Australia, even by the legislators, and in some legislation even the terms "terrace house" and "terrace" are used interchangeably.

APPENDIX 4 – REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DIRECTIONS FOR DE FACTO SUBDIVISION

1 July 1920 to 2 May 1983

In the past it was the practice of LPI to register, without council's approval and subject to certain conditions, plans showing the division of land by devise, road severance or the erection of buildings and occupations, on the grounds that the land in the relevant title(s) had been "de-facto" physically divided into self-contained parts. There were two main types:

1. Physical division by erection of buildings and occupations

A plan (in all cases one of survey) illustrating a subdivision of a title by the erection of buildings or occupations did not require council's approval if it was accompanied by evidence that:

- The buildings were erected prior to 1 July 1920
- The buildings were separately occupied since that date, and
- The occupations defining the new subdivision boundaries (both walls and fences) were identical to those originally erected, or, had been erected in the same positions.

The evidence was in the form of certificates from the relevant water and sewerage authorities indicating the date of first connection of their services and by statutory declarations from adjoining owners with the requisite knowledge of the history of the buildings.

Note 1 If the buildings were constructed subsequent to 1 July 1920 further evidence was required to indicate that the Council had approved the erection of the buildings as constructed at the date of the plan (ie that they were no uncertified extensions).

Note 2 Where the land was situated within that area formerly controlled by the Sydney City Council under the *Sydney Corporation Act*, the same conditions applied, the effective date being 1935 in lieu of 1920.

2. Division of land by other means

A plan (either of survey or by compilation) that illustrated a subdivision created by the opening of a road, a resumption for railway, a devise in a will or for any other specified reason did not require council's approval provided the new lot boundaries were co-incident with the boundaries of the road/railway/etc as shown in the original plan. In every case, it was the responsibility of the subdivider to satisfy the Registrar General that a lawful subdivision had been made.

2 May 1983 to 1 July 1998

The introduction of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the legal decisions of Windeyer J. in *Bisits and Others v Registrar General* and Smart J. in *Lee v Registrar General* (1990) 19 NSW LR 240 necessitated that further evidence be supplied. From 2 May 1983 all new "de-facto subdivision" plans had to be accompanied by a certificate from the council indicating that the new subdivision did not contravene the Act and consequently consent thereto was not required.

1 July 1998 to date

Further amendments to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* commencing 1 July 1998 repealed all previous practice and require that any "de-facto subdivision" type plans (of any sort) must be endorsed with a completed subdivision certificate.

Copied from:

Land and Property Information

Registrar General's Directions

http://rgdirections.lpi.nsw.gov.au/deposited_plans/subdivision_certificates/defacto_subdivision
(accessed 6 October 2014)

APPENDIX 5 – SEMIS ON THE NSW STATE HERITAGE REGISTER

The following table lists the pairs of semis which have been listed with State significance on the NSW State Heritage Register. The source is the online database provided by the NSW Heritage Division.⁷⁶ Because of the ambiguity surrounding the terminology for terraced houses and semis, and incomplete categories for some listings, five searches were carried out (in February 2014):

- Items with “semi” in the Item Name;
- Items with a Heritage Category of Semi-detached House (this category is one of a large list in a drop-down menu);
- Items with “semi” in the significance, description or historical notes;
- Items with “pair” in the significance, description or historical notes;
- Items in Millers Point (where the whole precinct is on the State Heritage Register).

This created lists of both State and local items. When the duplications arising from the five searches were removed, and items such as detached houses, terraces, warehouses, shops and hotels were removed, **22** pairs of semis and **one** individual semi were identified on the State Heritage Register. There are over 1,650 items listed on the Register, of which semis comprise only 1.3%. It is worth noting that of the five State-listed items formally categorised as semi-detached houses on the database, not one is actually a pair of semis. It is possible but unlikely that there are other listed pairs which could not be identified using this search process.

For each of the State listings the Statement of Significance, descriptions and historical notes were analysed to determine whether being a semi-detached dwelling was a factor in the assessment of significance. The results are provided as comments in **Table 1**.

The local listings were not analysed in detail, but after removing the duplications, **296** listings of pairs of semis with local significance were found. Most were described as terraces, some as conjoined houses, some as pairs of dwellings, some as houses and just a few as semi-detached houses.

⁷⁶ <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/heritagesearch.aspx>

Table 1: Listings of semis on the NSW State Heritage Register

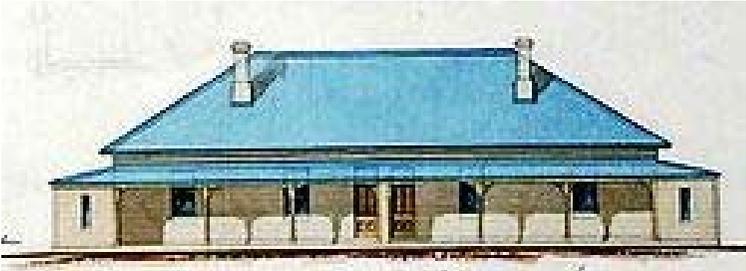
Name	Address	Local Government Area	SHR Listing Number	Comments	Photograph
Argyle Terrace - Caminetto's Restaurant (1883)	13-15 Playfair Street, The Rocks	Sydney	01525	Listed as part of a mixed streetscape of dwellings. Various descriptions as a terrace and a tenement. No mention of being semi-detached. Listed in 2002.	
Avery Terrace (1881)	2-4 Atherden Street, The Rocks	Sydney	01529	Described on the façade as a terrace, but called both tenements and terraces in the listing. Detailed research underpinning the assessment. No mention of being semi-detached. Listed in 2002.	

<p>Barrenjoey Head Lightstation</p> <p>(1880, includes a pair of semis)</p>	<p>Barrenjoey Headland, Palm Beach</p>	<p>Pittwater</p>	<p>00979</p>	<p>A group of buildings which includes a lighthouse, a “duplex with two semi-detached dwellings” and a detached house.</p> <p>The focus of the listing is the lighthouse, not the three dwellings.</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	 <p>c1902, Wikimedia Commons</p>
<p>Ben Chifley's House</p> <p>(1887- 1891)</p>	<p>10 Busby Street, Bathurst</p>	<p>Bathurst Regional</p>	<p>01657</p>	<p>Listed because of its association with former Prime Minister Ben Chifley, demonstrating his working class roots.</p> <p>Dwelling type of no significance. Only one of the dwellings (on the left) in the pair is listed.</p> <p>Listed in 2002.</p>	 <p>Tripadvisor</p>

<p>The Carriageway (1860)</p>	<p>506-508 Smollett Street, Albury</p>	<p>Albury</p>	<p>00040</p>	<p>Described as town-houses with a terrace form. Amongst the oldest mid-Victorian houses in Albury.</p> <p>Received an Interim Heritage Order in 1979 at the request of the National Trust NSW and the Albury Historical Society. A Permanent Conservation Order followed in 1981 for "architectural merit and significance".</p> <p>Transferred to State Heritage Register in 1999.</p>	
<p>Corana and Hygeia (1893)</p>	<p>211-215 Avoca Street, Randwick</p>	<p>Randwick</p>	<p>00454</p>	<p>Described as semi-detached mansions but categorised as Victorian terraces. Has aesthetic significance as a pair of decorative houses as well as historical associative significance.</p> <p>Was given an Interim Conservation Order in 1984 at the request of the National Trust NSW. A Permanent Conservation Order followed in 1988.</p> <p>Transferred to State Heritage Register in 1999.</p>	

<p>Edwardian Terrace (c1900)</p>	<p>66-68 Bettington Street, Millers Point</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00848</p>	<p>Built on the site of a residence demolished as part of The Rocks resumptions and demolitions. No mention of being semi-detached.</p> <p>Part of the Millers Point Conservation Area.</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	
<p>House (1844-1865)</p>	<p>25 North Street, Windsor</p>	<p>Hawkesbury</p>	<p>00150</p>	<p>Was originally semis at 23-25 North Street, now one residence. Part of a group of listed buildings.</p> <p>A Permanent Conservation Order made in 1981 while owned by the National Trust NSW.</p> <p>Transferred to State Heritage Register in 1999.</p>	 <p>Google Maps</p>

<p>Portland Cement Works Precinct</p> <p>(includes four pairs of semis 1900-1902)</p>	<p>Williwa Street, Portland</p>	<p>Lithgow</p>	<p>01739</p>	<p>The listing's focus is the cement works but it also includes "representative Federation period cottages that demonstrate the social stratification of this company town in the early twentieth century".</p> <p>The only identified heritage listing of semis to hint at the dwelling hierarchy.</p> <p>Listed in 2012.</p>	
<p>Reynold's Cottages</p> <p>(1829)</p>	<p>28-30 Harrington Street, The Rocks</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>01573</p>	<p>Significant as rare examples of small-scale Georgian architecture. Part of an historical character group of buildings. Built in separate stages but described as semi-detached.</p> <p>Listed in 2002.</p>	 <p>Author 2014</p>

<p>Semi-detached Cottages (1850s)</p>	<p>200-202 Howick Street, Bathurst</p>	<p>Bathurst Regional</p>	<p>00244</p>	<p>Part of a group of late Georgian style cottages. Permanent Conservation Order in 1983 at the request of the National Trust NSW. Transferred to State Heritage Register in 1999.</p>	
<p>Smoky Cape Lighthouse Group (1888, includes a pair of semis)</p>	<p>South West Rocks, 10km east of Kempsey</p>	<p>Kempsey</p>	<p>01007</p>	<p>The semis are part of the lightkeepers' accommodation (also included a detached house). The listing is focussed on the lighthouse itself. Listed in 1999.</p>	 <p>Wikimedia Commons</p>

<p>Stone House (no date given)</p>	<p>49-51 Street, Point</p>	<p>Kent Millers</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00876</p>	<p>Mostly intact mid-Victorian Georgian “terraces”, although also called a stone house.</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	 <p>Author 2014</p>
<p>Stone House (1862-1865)</p>	<p>53-55 Street, Point</p>	<p>Kent Millers</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00900</p>	<p>Described as Victorian terraces.</p> <p>Part of the Millers Point Conservation Area.</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	

<p>Sydney Harbour Naval Precinct</p> <p>(includes an 1896 pair of semis)</p>	<p>Cowper Wharf Roadway, Garden island</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>01705</p>	<p>The semis are not mentioned in the assessment of significance or the Statement of Significance.</p> <p>Precinct listed in 2004.</p>	 <p>Naval Historical Society of Australia, Image 8119365-005</p>
<p>Terrace</p> <p>(no date given)</p>	<p>90-92 Kent Street, Point Millers</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00916</p>	<p>Early Victorian "terrace" with a late Victorian upstairs addition to No 92. Has an access to the rear in the centre.</p> <p>An important streetscape element.</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	 <p>Author 2014</p>

<p>Terrace (1864)</p>	<p>62-64 Place, Point</p>	<p>Argyle Millers</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00895</p>	<p>Mid-Victorian “terrace house” with streetscape significance.</p> <p>Comment made about the unequal size of the semis on the upper floor (ground floor is symmetrical).</p> <p>Listed 1999.</p>	 <p>Author 2014</p>
<p>Terrace (1881)</p>	<p>113-115 Gloucester Street, The Rocks</p>	<p>The</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>01601</p>	<p>A “pair of terraces” significant as part of the Longs Lane precinct. Historic, aesthetic and scientific significance.</p> <p>Listed in 2002.</p>	

Terrace (no date given)	123-125 Kent Street, Millers Point	Sydney	00901	Victorian "terraces" which are an important streetscape element. Listed in 1999.	 <p>Author 2014</p>
Terraces (1850)	46-48 Argyle Place, Millers Point	Sydney	00924	Victorian Italianate terrace which is an important streetscape element. Asymmetrical – one dwelling larger than the other. Listed 1999.	 <p>Author 2014</p>

<p>Terraces (1891)</p>	<p>132-134 Cumberland Street, The Rocks</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>01606</p>	<p>Described as “conjoined two-storey terraces” constructed as infill between the two larger existing buildings.</p> <p>Has a rare access to the rear between the two dwellings.</p> <p>Listed in 2002.</p>	
<p>Terraces (1866)</p>	<p>29-31 George Street, The Rocks</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>01608</p>	<p>Described as “terrace housing”. The tenants’ occupations suggest that the relatively large dwellings were for the middle class.</p> <p>Listed in 2002.</p>	

<p>Vermont Terrace (no date given)</p>	<p>63-65 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point</p>	<p>Sydney</p>	<p>00910</p>	<p>The significance relates only to being an “early Federation” building which is an “important streetscape element”.</p> <p>Included in the Register of the National Estate in 1980 as “late Victorian townhouses”</p> <p>Listed in 1999.</p>	
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Unless otherwise attributed, all information (except comments) was sourced from the NSW Heritage Division Online Inventory.

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