RESIDENTIAL FLATS IN MELBOURNE

The Development of a Building Type to 1950

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SYNOPSIS
This work seeks to trace the development of residential flats designed in Melbourne before 1950. Particular emphasis is placed upon the earliest purpose built blocks which have been built in about 1905.

Two distinct types of flats evolved. The multi-story city type and the low rise suburban blocks which were built in response to an increasing demand for flats and as a result of the improvement of public transport. The quality of flat development varied with the location and class of the suburb and consequently the best blocks were generally built in the prestigious areas of Toorak and South Yarra.

Flats not only varied markedly in quality but also in planning and this report makes a specific study of elements in flat design which differentiate them from any other building type. No overall view of architectural styles within flat design is made except when the adoption of a particular architectural philosophy affects the planning. The study reveals the remarkable variety in flat design and significant number of important individual buildings in what has generally been a neglected building type.
CHAPTER ONE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FLAT

Overseas & Background.

Flats, or suites, existed in a form recognizable to us from the early 1800's in England for upper class residents and by the 1840's philanthropic movements developed to provide artisan houses. Despite these initiatives, the English middle classes did not readily take to this type of residence and it was not until the 1880's that its general acceptance led to increased numbers of flats in the growing city of London.

Picadilly House, in Picadilly, London, designed by Sir William Chambers as a private residence was converted into flats for bachelors in 1804 and its name changed to the Albany. Many of the suites were freehold, and a number of notable British men resided at some time at the Albany. In one of his letters, Lord Macaulay says:

I have taken a comfortable set of chambers in the Albany ... I have an entrance hall, two sitting rooms, a bedroom, a kitchen, cellars and two rooms for servants, all for ninety guineas a year.

The widespread development of suites of the type occupied by Lord Macaulay at the Albany would have been limited in demand, as they were only attractive to those people who could afford servants and 90 guineas a year for what was most probably not their primary home.

The first significant English development of flats for those other than the ruling classes began in London in the 1840's, but
the tentative experiments in flats for the middle class, undertaken in Victoria Street, Westminster, were both an economic and aesthetic failure, while early working class developments were severely criticized in contemporary building journals.

Henry Roberts, honorary architect to The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes designed his first working class houses for construction in Pentonville in 1844. The completed houses drew sharp criticism from the editor of Builder, who wrote:

... our worst anticipations are confirmed. The arrangement is a disgrace to the Society... We call most urgently on the committee and the shareholders to prevent this most dangerous mistake, or they will rear a hot-bed of infection, and throw a great impediment in the way of that improvement which they profess to seek.

Despite such comments, Roberts persisted with his interest in the design of working-class housing, and his numerous later works have led Pevsner to describe him as the most important working class architect of the nineteenth century. The work of Roberts and others in the philanthropic movements led to a steady development of flats for the working class throughout the nineteenth century.

The development of flats as specifically working class housing resulted in the association of the building type with the social status of the artisans and created a prejudice against flats. This prejudice was reinforced by the association of flats with philanthropy. In addition to these problems, the common stair,
which was characteristic of flat development, was seen as a threat to two important aspects of English Victorian life, namely, family segregation and privacy. While being acceptable in office buildings, the common stair was not regarded as fit for use in residential buildings.

... It becomes a rather serious inconvenience where families, who are strangers to each other, actually reside: and, where, besides the inmates and their visitors, those who bring things sent home by trades people must pass up and down.5

Despite the social stigma attached to flats, Builder was still able to record in 1868 that dwellings in flats were no longer exclusively built for the lower classes. But there was no rapid expansion of flats for the middle classes as the 1879 edition of Dickens' Dictionary of London listed few examples: namely, Queen Anne’s Mansions, a good number of sets in Victoria Street, a few in Cromwell Road and a single set in George Street, Edgeware Road. Of these, only the George Street block and a few sets in Victoria Street provided self-contained flats. In the 1885 edition, the position is barely altered, the only additional flats being listed as Cromwell Mansions in Regents Park and Oxford Mansions. Builder in 1883 recognized that:

... building in flats ... a system which for centuries has prevailed abroad, ... is only slowly and very imperfectly being introduced into this country.8

The reluctant acceptance of residential flats by the middle classes is reflected in the pioneering flats in Victoria Street, Westminster. Following the early financial failure of the
development, the remaining blocks planned at the outset were not completed until 1887 - some 36 years after the opening of the original block.

Herman Muthesius, in *The English House* (first published in German in 1904) observed that foreign influences had infiltrated England in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, and this had affected English attitudes towards flats. Muthesius suggested various reasons for the increasing appeal of flats to the English. These included the provision of economic housing to suit the needs of young couples with limited means, the provision of particular types of flats (such as bachelor flats) and the American bias of the modern English woman, which allowed liberty of movement, freedom from encumbrances and increasing social mobility. However, from the viewpoint of a German well used to flat living in his own country, Muthesius concluded that the form of the flat was yet to be established, and also the requirements of the public using the flats had yet to be definitely formulated. Contemporary journals indicate a continuation of a waverer attitude towards the suitability of flats for housing the English family. The problem of the reduction in privacy inherent in the common entry to the European style of flats had long worried the English. *Builder* in 1883 suggested that some American flat types may be more suitable to local needs. Favourable comment was made on an American block where each flat in a four-storey block had its own separate and individual entrance. The arrangement was regarded as being worthy of consideration as "... it seems to answer our singular English
ideas of privacy." However, it was apparent that this type of development would have been more suited to suburban development and generally, the London flat conformed more closely to the European flat type, with certain variations to make it more appropriate to English use.

The entrance hall, an idea borrowed from the hotel was, in English blocks, a large, well appointed homely space which had little of the continental fashion of obtrusive luxury. According to Muthesius, the English saw little difference between life in a flat and hotel life and private kitchens in flats were less common than those with access to communal kitchens or communal serviced dining rooms as found in hotels. It is not surprising then that Dickens' Dictionary of London of 1879 and 1885 recorded the existence of so few self-contained flats. Yet an examination of the plans of contemporary flats published in the pioneering work Residential Flats of 1905 shows that the provision of private bathrooms and kitchens was becoming quite common in England, and the flats had all the facilities of a permanent home. Also the block of flats had gained an architectural respectability primarily through R. Norman Shaw's "Albert Hall Mansions" built in 1881. This block was much admired and was far removed from the image of Henry Roberts flat developments of the 1840's. Although Albert Hall Mansions had been standing for more than twenty years before the publication of The English House, Muthesius found that:
"... there has scarcely been a single building erected since that has surpassed it, either in general layout or distinguished architecture. 13

The stigma of flats as being nothing other than architecturally undistinguished, poor quality housing had been shed, after thirty long years.

Interstate

It is generally acknowledged that Sydney led the rest of Australia in flat development and while this study makes no specific study of flats other than those in Melbourne, it is known that the Sydney blocks Cromer, the Albany and Cecil Chambers were established prior to the construction of Melbourne's Melbourne Mansions in 1906. It is not clear, however, how many of the Sydney blocks consisted of self-contained flats, as an examination of the plans of Strathkyle (fig. 1), which was opened in 1910 shows that this block contained suites with no kitchen. The Sydney periodical, Art and Architecture reported that Strathkyle was "... the latest addition in Sydney to that class of buildings which provides for the comfort and convenience of the flat dweller." Halligan & Wilton, the architects responsible for the design of Strathkyle, also designed the large Kingsclere Flats at Pott's Point, which were built prior to 1912. Kingsclere Flats (fig. 2) obviously provided for upper class flat dwellers, as each flat consisted of six rooms, a kitchen, two bathrooms and lavatories, with linen, cooks and housemaids cupboards. Sydney appears to have had Australia's largest flat development in the T & G Flats the size
of which is indicated in that it had in excess of two hundred folding wall beds.

Adelaide's handsome Ruthven Mansions (fig.3) which was built between 1912 and 1916, has been called Australia's first apartment block, but this claim cannot be sustained as both Sydney and Melbourne had earlier comparable developments. However, Ruthven Mansions is a notable block and is well worthy of its recent rehabilitation.
CHAPTER 1 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FLAT

5. Builder
6. Perks, op. cit., p.27
7. Perks, op. cit., p.147
8. "Flats at Home and Abroad", Builder, XLIV, 2087, (Feb 3, 1883), p.135
9. Perks, op. cit., p.147
10. "Flats at Home and Abroad" Builder, XLIV, 2087, (Feb 3, 1883) p.135
12. Perks, op. cit., p.148
13. Muthesius, op. cit., p.146
15. Building Dec. 12, 1912, pp.63,64a
16. Building, XVII, 99 (Nov. 12, 1915) p.29
CHAPTER TWO
SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS FLATS

There is little doubt that Australian architects recognized the importance of flats as the Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects reviewed the first study of the building type, Sydney Perks' Residential Flats shortly after its publication in England in 1905. The review acknowledged that the work was greatly needed, as apart from sundry papers on the subject, no text book had previously appeared in Great Britain or America.

The reviewer noted, however, that many of the published plans of the Continental flats were "...in most cases unsatisfactory from a sanitary standpoint and lacked the privacy dear to Britons." Serious reservations were expressed about the possible ill-effects of flats upon the occupants, particularly on families.

We regret to notice the increase of residential flats, because of more than an indication that home life is not the success in realisation that it is in theory - at any rate, in large cities. In asylums, hospitals, and barracks, the policy of segregation is aimed at, whilst in residential flats, aggregation - and that in a city atmosphere - is the result. We fail to observe how even a small family of healthy children can be reared in quarters containing two, three or four rooms of small area, and frequently confined in situation, with perhaps not even a balcony for romping upon, and any noise necessarily annoying the 'neighbours.

The Sydney periodical, Building expressed almost the same sentiments in 1910 when it concluded that flats were of doubtful suitability to Australian domestic life as privacy was "so
essential to the true home." However, Building also indicated that the lack of privacy was not such a problem in Sydney flats of the period, as they were largely used by country visitors to the city who had their primary home elsewhere. If this is an accurate reflection of Sydney flats in 1910, then it would appear that flats were not being built for family use, and those being built, were modelled upon on English flats for the upper classes.

Prior to World War I, purpose built flats, while not common, were steadily increasing in number. Flats were attractive to investors and the real estate journal, Real Property Annual of 1913 indicated that investment in property erected solely for residential purposes would provide a good return. Two types of flat properties were suggested:

1. high class and fashionable city flats, in which the provision of a common dining room was considered essential, and
2. suburban flats (with no common dining room) "To meet the needs of the man of middling income and the artisan."

Of the two types, Real Property Annual concluded that as an investment, the middle class or artisan flats had proved to be the best in Melbourne. There was a great need for them, especially at a time when hundreds of homeless workers were coming into the country from abroad. A net return of 10-14% was assured as tenants sought alternatives to the subdivided, overcrowded old homes in suburbs such as East Melbourne.

It is clear that prior to World War I a demand for flats existed and there was no shortage of investors willing to invest in them.
But this did not mean that flats had gained a high level of social acceptability. By 1910, terrace houses were out of fashion and consequently the favoured residential type was the detached house. The flat block was associated with the terrace block. The flats were regarded by Real Property Annual in 1914 as "...simply a series of suites piled one on top of the other." The distaste for terrace housing had led to a general dislike of high density housing and once again, concern was raised about the need for an appropriate form of housing for families.

... In this country where there is so much open space, life in flats does not appeal to families.8

Building was even more condemnatory of flats than Real Property Annual regarding the flats as a transitory form of housing which had grown up out of the new era of industrialism and the resulting difficulty in obtaining domestic staff. This emphasis upon the problems in retaining domestic staff indicated that the flats in mind were meant for the class of people able to make use of and afford domestic staff, and not the middle and artisan classes to whom the investors were looking. Building conceded that no alternative to flat life for a section of the people could be seen under "the present circumstances" but hoped for a speedy return to normality.

Perhaps, when the influx of immigration settles our problems of defence, of settlement, of labor scarcity and the like, the perplexing problem of the maid will not escape solution. Then should flats slump.
Building, while expressing a view that flat development was only a temporary aberration, left no doubt in the minds of its readers as to its view as to the unsuitability of flats for Australian use. Indeed, the position taken by the editor of the magazine Florence Taylor, indicated that it was not only a question of suitability, but morality, that was involved. This is summed in one of the more extreme of the generally derogatory articles published between 1910 and 1915.

The flat dweller, because of her environment, becomes flaccid and unwomanly, losing physical, mental and moral tone - her muscles are all untrained, her body unnaturally weak through drugs intended to destroy the germ of life - for the whole of the circumstances of her existence, as well as her condition, make her a coward, afraid to face the discomfort of pain and motherhood.

While Sydney flats may have elicited this response, Melbourne's early purpose built flats were of impeccable credentials. Melbourne Mansions and Cliveden catered for the wealthy and were built in fashionable locations. On the other hand, unsatisfactory conversions within the city area may have brought flats into general disrepute.

Criticisms of flats up until this time were generally made on two grounds:

1. they lacked privacy, and
2. they were unsuitable for children and detrimental to family life.

The high class city flats such as Melbourne Mansions could not be criticized on as being detrimental to family life as the suites were not intended for families. The style of life in the city
flats was more like that of an hotel and while each suite accorded privacy to the occupant, the homogeneity of the occupants meant that the lack of privacy problem within the common areas was negligible. The provision and use of a common dining room in both Melbourne Mansions and Cliveden emphasized the implication of sociability within them. The pioneer flats in fact had an aura of respectability, and the poor housing tag was carried by terrace housing conversions and lodging houses, which passed the stigma on to some of the post World War I flat development.

Most residential chambers at the time of World War I still provided for single people or childless couples and a lack of satisfactory family accommodation in anything but single houses was apparent. Real Property Annual of 1916 stated there was "a growing demand for a well built structure combining all the economies and conveniences of flat life with family accommodation. The multi-family house is designed to fill this want." An American model was taken with two sets of apartments on the ground floor, having separate entries from the street, and separate entrances from stairs and lifts to the upper floors. It was suggested however, that the flat construction in Australia was not well understood and models taken from British American structures needed adapting to suit Australian climatic conditions. Of particular concern was the need for sufficient garden space and open air sleeping accommodation.
While the Sydney based journal *Building* led the attack on flats for many years, others expressed concern over the possible social ills of flat development. Some alternatives to flats were explored and the most prominent of these was the Bungalow Court Concept.

Melbourne architect John Gawler expressed doubts as to the suitability of flat development, and proposed that Australia adopt the American Bungalow Court idea which had proved successful in Los Angeles and other American cities. Gawler saw flats as having many disadvantages and he conceded that "[flat life]...always seems to me to be vaguely unnatural".

The bungalow court concept was brought to the attention of Australians as least as early as 1916 when it was described and illustrated in an article in the *Real Property Annual*. The one and two roomed units were grouped around a U-shaped courtyard in pairs with no fences or hedges between them. *Building* was not impressed finding the development "...to have all the obnoxious principles of the terrace house". It concluded that the examples illustrated were really a series of semi-detached houses, "...except for the closing of the spaces which should come between the pairs". The old concern with lack of privacy once again surfaced and the concept does not appear to have gained a ready acceptance in Australia at this time. However, there are two developments in St. Kilda that can be seen to derive their plan from the Bungalow Court concept.
The four single storey units at 96 Grey Street, St. Kilda which are grouped tightly around a small court, have rough cast walls and shingles in the manner of the Californian Bungalow style. (fig. 30)

The other example does not actually conform to the concept of the Bungalow Court but still is similar in style to 96 Grey Street, in that it consists of attached villas with some Californian Bungalow motifs. While these examples were small and tightly planned, Gawler's proposal of 1923 was far more spacious and designed more in the developing spirit of the American prototypes. Gawler envisaged that if such a scheme was carried out in an attractive part of, say, St. Kilda or Brighton, it would probably be successful from every point of view. The tentative plan by Gawler in fact had moved away from the bungalow court concept as it appeared in Building of 1919 and the Grey Street development in that the units, now quite substantial houses, were completely separated and grouped around what might now be seen as a private cul-de-sac.

The shortage of houses and the desire for smaller, more manageable homes had been a factor in the development of flats, but the continual concern with privacy had led developers to seek alternatives such as the Bungalow Court. Another solution suggested in America was "the two-flat home". Building 13 illustrated an American scheme in 1918, which was simply a block containing one large flat on the ground floor and a similar one on the first. The separate entries gave the two flats the
"privacy of cottages". It was intended that the home seekers could finance such a development by living in one unit and renting the other. This type does not seem to have been widely used in Melbourne, where the differentiation between houses and flats remained quite distinct despite architects numerous attempts to impart a residential air by making flats look like a single residential block whilst still providing separate entrances. This was a difficult problem as separate entrances often involved external or semi enclosed stairways which always revealed the building to in fact be flats.

An early two flat property exists in Acland Street, St. Kilda but it is not related to the American type, but obviously follows an English model and bears an English name, Southwold. (fig.44.) The entrance doors to the ground and first floor flats are paired together inside a small entrance porch with one door leading directly into the ground floor flat while the other gives access to the stair to the upper floor flat. This pattern, which was common in Victorian English row housing, was not an acceptable design for paired houses due to the close proximity of the entrance doors and few examples of this type were built.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 2 - SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS FLATS

1. Journal of the Royal Victorian of Architects, (Nov. 1905) p.179
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Building, 12 Jan, 1910, p.39
5. Real Property Annual, 1913, p.23
6. Ibid
7. RPA, 1914, p.35
8. Ibid.
10. "The Home or - The Flat", Building, XV, 93. (May 12, 1915) pp 125-6
12. Building, 12 May 1919, p.54
13. Building, March 1918, pp 77-80
CHAPTER THREE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITY BLOCKS

It is difficult to determine when and where flats as we know them first appeared in the city of Melbourne. Blocks built specifically for residential purposes often became offices or professional rooms as demand grew within the city for business premises. Also, some well-known office buildings of the turn of the century appear to have been constructed as office buildings, then converted to flats before being returned to office use again. For instance, Oxford Chambers, which was built as an office block c.1890, was shown on the 1917 Mahlstedt map as being offices and residential flats. Similarly, Melbourne Chambers was listed in Sands and McDougall directory as a "residential mansion" in 1913, and a recently demolished small two-storey building at 157 Spring Street was shown as flats on the 1923 Mahlstedt map.

It is also most likely that city residences were converted to flats and at least one example of this type still stands. Goodwin Chambers at 386 Flinders Lane was probably built as a two-storey house in 1884 and had an extra two stories added at an unknown later date. The building was listed as a residential mansion in a 1913 directory. The current internal layout of Goodwin Chambers gives no indication of its past use as it has been substantially altered internally to suite office use. There are, however, still a number of fireplaces existing in various rooms of the building which may be related to its former residential use.
Gordon House

An examination of the development of the English flat has shown a parallel growth in both the provision of accommodation for the upper classes and a concern in housing the poor artisan class. If Melbourne has no clear nineteenth century example of the former type, it does have a remarkable surviving example of the latter - Our Lodgings (now Gordon House) designed by leading Melbourne architect William Pitt.

George Coppin, theatrical entrepreneur, actor, politician and philanthropist headed a syndicate which bought land in Little Bourke Street and in 1884 build family accommodation, and a lodging house on the site. It was Coppin's original idea to copy the large Chelsea Model Lodging House in England which accommodated families. The thirty nine dwellings of three and four rooms had "... water and gas laid on to each" with extra accommodation including baths, separate wood cellars, washing troughs, coppers and drying lines.

The tenements were to be let subject to rules controlling the advance payment of rent, subletting, and the cleanliness of the tenants, but within three months of the opening, only nine of the thirty nine units had been let. An article in the Australasian suggested that the imposition of these rules and the restriction of the individual that had caused the failure of the project.

The working man in Victoria is proverbially impatient of control. He is politically lord and master of this fair land, and no code of discipline, however mild, will be accepted by him if he can help it. So he prefers to live uncomfortably out of the
'improved dwellings' - but independent - than comfortably in them and under discipline. .... the working man who can afford 12/6 per week would prefer to live in the suburbs, even if the accommodation there were not so complete as in the improved dwellings.

An examination of the contract drawings for Gordon House (fig 7), shows the accommodation to have similarities to nineteenth century English artisan housing. The internal courtyard is of a similar type to that used in the Gatcliff Building of 1867 in London and the room layout has general characteristics of the English models.

But while English housing of this type developed and improved, Melbourne's Our Lodgings failed and no similar venture was launched. The directors of the company decided to convert the building into rooms for single men and Gordon House continued to run along these lines until 1975, when it became a shopping complex. The form of the building remains much the same as it was in 1884 and is an important relic of Victorian Melbourne.

Queen Bess Row

If a Victorian upper class counterpart to the artisan housing of Gordon House exists in Melbourne, it must be another building which was technically not a flat building. Queen Bess Row was designed by Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy in 1886 as a "... terrace of three and four storey houses." and its plan and section are typical of terrace housing. The building was converted into a coffee palace in 1888 but the venture failed and in 1896 builder T.E. Dalkin gave notice to the Melbourne City Council that he
wished to stop up the openings in the party walls. It appears that Queen Bess Row was used as an apartment house around 1910 with each floor in each house providing a separate spacious apartment. The details of the internal arrangement are not known to the author but it does seem reasonable to suggest that despite this use and various other rooming arrangements over the years, Queen Bess Row is essentially a row of large terrace houses and not of particular importance as flats or conversion.

A similar example occurs some twenty five years later with Nelson Square (formerly Bremen Square) in East Melbourne. Although architects Billing, Peck & Kemter called tenders for the construction of flats in East Melbourne and this is most probably for Bremen Square, it is apparent that the building takes the form of the terrace house row. (fig.20)

The fully self-contained flat as we know it with bedrooms, living rooms, kitchen and bathroom within a block of similar units was rare, or did not exist in Melbourne prior to 1906. An article in the Australasian Decorator and Painter of August 1906 reported that residential flats,

...although common in other large cities, were unknown in Melbourne until quite recently. The idea seems to be 'taking on' rapidly, for two large buildings, especially designed and fitted up for residential quarters, have been erected this year in the city, and a third is having an additional storey added in order to provide more accommodation for tenants.
Melbourne Mansions

The opening of Melbourne Mansions (figs 10, 11) in 1906 was undoubtedly an important event in the development of flat building in Melbourne. This imposing six storey residential block occupied a prime position in the east end of Collins Street, a favoured and fashionable address. A glowing article in the Leader stated that Melbourne Mansions was the first building of its type the city had seen.

[Melbourne Mansions] ... has introduced to Melbourne the system of residential flats... hitherto unknown to Australia, except on a small scale in Sydney.

However, there is a hint of parochialism in this view, as it is known that David Syme, the owner of Melbourne Mansions, sought information from Sydney on similar blocks that were operating there prior to the construction of his own building.

In 1905, Syme received a short report on the layout and management of three blocks of flats operating in Sydney at that time. One of the blocks on which the report was based, Cromer in Phillip Street had "... been established for some years," and Mr. Marshall, the manager of the newly completed five storey block The Albany, in Macquarie Street claimed seven years experience in managing "... this class of place." Marshall advised against the provision of separate kitchens to individual flats as the spread of cooking smells could cause problems. (It is not clear whether Marshall was referring directly to The Albany.) The third block mentioned in the report, Cecil Chambers, was nearing completion, and was built more specifically as professional rooms with no
provision of kitchens, as it was not intended that meals be taken on the premises.

The responsibility involved in developing this relatively new residential building type in Melbourne was keenly felt by those involved in the project. Proprietor David Syme sought information not only from associates in Sydney, but also from those in London. Syme's architects, Inskip and Butler, also indicated some concern with their role in the development when they sought information from Syme with regard to management problems of similar buildings. Indeed, they went as far as to indicate to Syme that "...if any plans can be obtained of suites or entire plans of such buildings they will be appreciated."

Syme did receive information on flats from London but as the letter is not dated, it is not clear whether it was specifically sought in response to Inskip and Butler's request or was coincidental. Syme's London correspondent reported that the London practice was for single flats to be kept apart from family suites and the tenants of both flat types provided with by separate access lifts. The writer described two blocks of London flats - Whitehall Court ("...a superior quarter among tenants") and Eaton Mansions ("...a fine block near Sloane Square"). A detailed description of one of the suites at Whitehall to which the writer gained access was given and a rough sketch made of the layout. The Whitehall suite contained two sitting rooms and a bedroom fronting Whitehall with two small bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen facing the rear of the property. An examination of
the sketch made of the layout of the Whitehall suite and the plan
of Inskip and Butler's self-contained flats in Melbourne Mansions
have similar layouts, which would suggest that Syme's architects
had seen the Whitehall plans.

In December 1904, Inskip and Butler outlined their proposal for
the design of Melbourne Mansions. They informed Syme that the
accommodation provided consisted of doctors' rooms with entrances
set entirely apart from residential quarters at basement and
ground level, with twenty seven suites on the upper floors of the
building. The suites varied in size from two rooms and a bathroom
to four rooms, kitchen, servants room and a bathroom. The
architects proposed that a general kitchen should be located in
the basement for the provision of meals to a dining room on the
ground floor and to serving pantries on each floor. However,
they also proposed "small kitchens ... in the larger suites, so
that tenants preferring to do their own cooking may do so."

Although the architects had given the Melbourne City Council
notice of intent to build in 1904 and plans were being prepared
at that year, it appears that the form of the building and its
construction took some time in being finalized, as Melbourne
Mansions did not open until approximately December of 1906.
However, there can be no doubt that the new six storey block with
balconies facing onto Collins Street created a strong impression
upon gentlemen seeking a residence in the heart of the City. The
Leader reported that Melbourne Mansions provided three distinct
systems of accommodation, which undoubtedly added to its appeal. The three types of accommodation provided were:

1. Residential suites with food service supplied to their own rooms.

2. Those which were attended by servants but with the option of taking meals in the main dining room.

3. Those who chose to "... keep the necessary servants, provide the required food and be as entirely independent of the administrative part of the establishment as if resident in a country villa." 17

Melbourne Mansions provided every arrangement for securing privacy and homeliness to each tenant. It was occupied by prominent men of the time but the pressures of city expansion and commercial value of its location led its eventual demise as a favoured residential address. In 1932, its bold facade was removed and the building was eventually demolished to make way for a new era in high rise office development.

Whitehall

Of the flat developments built in the city area of Melbourne prior to 1910, only one remains, and this has long since been converted into office use. The original layout of this block, Whitehall in Bank Place, is unknown to the author but a press report of 1906 referred to the popularity of the "self-contained flats" within the block. Each self-contained suite in Whitehall had from one to eight rooms with "separate sanitary, bathroom and lavatory accommodation." The demand for the flats was high and they were let prior to the completion of construction. The building was also of interest because of the
involvement of Major John Monash, who designed the reinforced concrete structure with the floors built of Monash's own Monier concrete system. Members of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects were invited by the architects Tunbridge and Tunbridge to inspect the building during its construction in 1906 and an account of the visit was given in the Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects but it referred only to structural aspects of the building and gave no information on its planning. The choice of the name Whitehall may have some significance as Whitehall Court in London was regarded as one of the most distinguished blocks of flats in that city at the turn of the century. Melbourne's Whitehall, on the other hand, seems to have gone unnoticed.

The East Melbourne block Cliveden Mansions, (fig 12) which was converted from Cliveden, the palatial home of Sir William Clarke, always enjoyed widespread recognition for its quality and class of resident. Cliveden was purchased in 1910 by a company formed by the Baillieu family and others with the intention of converting it into a luxurious mansion block. A publicity brochure, produced by Cliveden Mansions Ltd., stated that plans were being prepared by the company's architects Butler and Bradshaw, for conversion of Cliveden into a "... high-class modern residential flats." Butler was experienced in this type of work through his involvement in the successful Melbourne Mansions, which he had designed with his former partner, George Inskip. However, the Butler and Bradshaw conversion for Cliveden was not proceeded with as the development company directors
considered the scheme financially unsound. A competition was then held to find an acceptable design and the design of Grainger and Little was accepted. However, presumably unlike Butler and Bradshaw's scheme, the accepted design did not contain self-contained flats. Cliveden Mansions as converted in 1911 was similar to mansion blocks being erected for the upper and middle classes in London in the 1880's. Cliveden Mansions was clearly designed for the gentry of Melbourne and Sir John Madden, the Lt. Gov. and Chief Justice had

... set the hallmark of fashion in the flat habit by taking up a suite in Cliveden Mansions, East Melbourne and everybody that is anybody is casting eyes more or less longingly in the same direction. 23

Cliveden Mansion residents had probably been accustomed to having servants or some form of domestic help, but the increased difficulty in retaining reliable servants was a major factor in turning the upper class towards the serviced mansion block. The staff of the mansion block provided them with personal service and it is not surprising that Grainger and Little's conversion provided no private kitchens for residents.

The suites designed by Grainger and Little were similar throughout Cliveden Mansions. A typical suite consisted of an entry hall, one or two bedrooms, a bathroom and a sitting room. There were no kitchens to any of the suites, and no provision was made for the accommodation of personal servants within the suites. Cliveden Mansions appears to have been similar to a hotel, which is a characteristic of many blocks built in England.
between about 1844 and 1880. Cliveden Mansions had much of the grace and style of the original mansion and its convenience to the city and its superb position opposite the Fitzroy Gardens assured its success as a high-class residential address.

Alexandra Mansions

While Cliveden Mansions and Melbourne Mansions both catered for the upper classes of Melbourne, Alexandra Mansions in Aikman Street, South Melbourne, was built expressly for middle class tenants. Alexandra Mansions is all the more remarkable in that it was a conversion of Hoadley's old jam factory. It is not known what prompted the conversion of a factory to residential use, but its convenient location and its fine position near the Yarra would seem an obvious factor in the decision. Building reported that the idea of the conversion was "... to produce residential chambers at moderate rentals for middle class tenants now suffering in uninhabitable boarding houses."

Robert Haddon was engaged in 1912 to redesign the factory and produce a remodelled front elevation (fig 15) to "... impart the requisite domestic air". Rooms in Alexandra Mansions were let singly and in suites with hot water and telephones in various corners of the building. The building also featured a roof garden and a Continental dining cafe on the ground floor. The young building manager for the conversion, Howard R. Lawson, (who was later to design and build a large number of flats throughout Melbourne), may well have realized the potential for flat building in Melbourne at this time, as Building reported that prospective
tenants for Alexandra Mansions were "... chasing after him before a hand's turn [was] done to the building."

Alcaston House
The continuing spread of the suburbs with the resulting increase in travelling difficulties led to a re-examination of the city centre for residential purposes. There were very few modern apartment buildings in Melbourne in 1932 which were carried to a stage beyond the two-storey block of flats. After the death of Dr. E.M. James the trustees of his estate accepted that the site of his family home at the corner of Spring and Collins Streets was well suited to redevelopment. They recognized that the intensive development of a well positioned site would have a strong attraction to those seeking an alternative to suburban life. As the trustees also noted a demand for suites for medical practitioners in Collins Street, architects A. & K. Henderson were commissioned to design a building to suit both professional and residential use.

The resulting building, Alcaston House, (figs 16, 17) was built in 1931 with the basement and three lower floors devoted to medical suites and the remaining four floors planned as twenty residential flats. A survey was made of prospective tenants wanting city flats, and a decision was made to provide a combination of one, two and three bedroom flats. Flats were arranged in three separate wings, with the main rooms and balconettes facing north. The three wing arrangement allowed
good light and extensive views over parkland to each flat. This arrangement was common in American city apartment blocks (fig 18) and expressed the residential nature of the building where, unlike office buildings, the provision of views and sunlight to the flats was an important design consideration. Although all flats were self-contained and there was no communal diningroom or restaurant within the building, a set-back storey at roof level contained in addition to a custodians flat, trunk storage rooms and bedrooms with bathrooms for letting to occupants for the use of servants. Alcaston House marked the return to the city of comfortable and stylish flats in the manner of its Collins Street neighbours, Melbourne Mansions and Lister House. (fig 13)
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 3 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITY BLOCKS

3. Lewis, N. Historical and Architectural Survey of the Central City of Melbourne - Bourke Street East (1976) p.43
4. Ibid
5. Australasian, 25.7.1885, p.186
6. Ibid
9. Information from local resident Mr. Carlson in HBPC file M/7/300
10. Building Construction, 3.3.1913, p.34
11. Australasian Decorator and Painter (1.8.1906) p.227
12. Leader, 15.12.1906, p.14
13. In David Syme papers, SLV LaTrobe Library Manuscript Collection MS 9751/1025.
14. Letter. Inskip & Butler to David Syme, SLV MS 9751/1025
16. Letter. Inskip & Butler to David Syme, SLV MS 9751/1025
17. Leader, 15.12.1906, p.14
19. Australasian Decorator and Painter (1.8.1906) p.227
21. Publicity brochure with working drawings at La Trobe Library, SLV.

22. Working drawings held by La Trobe Library, SLV.


24. Building (12.9.1912) p.27

25. Ibid.


27. Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (Jan, 1932), pp.150-151
CHAPTER FOUR
SUBURBAN FLAT DEVELOPMENT

i. Location

World War I affected the patterns of living and social life within Australia. The difficulty of retaining domestic staff meant that many of the older mansions could no longer be maintained as workable houses and many were sold and either demolished or converted into flats and rooming houses. The problem in maintaining large properties was exacerbated by the shortage of skilled labour and the high cost of building materials. There was a need for the efficient use of labour and materials as the number of good quality small houses was limited and the existing terrace houses were becoming increasingly unpopular. The flat with its sharing of services and land and the resultant building economies was an obvious answer.

As flats gained in popularity, investors looked towards the better suburban locations. Good location was regarded as of prime importance in flat development. Architect Joseph Plottel maintained that it was possible to make a success of indifferently planned units given a good site, but a well designed building may prove a financial failure if poorly located. Ideally flats were placed near to good public transport and shops, in an area of character or atmosphere and preferably enjoying views. Obviously these qualities were sought by most developers as they sought sites in good residential areas such as South Yarra, East Melbourne and Toorak or areas with particular
qualities such as the old seaside resorts of St. Kilda and Brighton or the fashionable boulevards of St. Kilda Road and Dandenong Road.

As early as 1913, Real Property Annual had concluded that the development of suburban flats for the middle income groups would prove to be most rewarding to the investor. Most flats at this time were within the city or on the perimeter of it (e.g. Cliveden Mansions and Alexandra Mansions), but smaller suburban blocks had begun to appear in the inner suburbs by 1914. But one large development, Fawkner Mansions appears to predate the smaller blocks by about two to three years.

Fawkner Mansions.

Fawkner Mansions (figs 21, 22) in Commercial Road, Prahran, built in 1911-12 for Mr. George Fairbairn, undoubtedly marked a major development in flats in Melbourne as it was one of the few purpose built blocks (as opposed to conversions) to be built outside the city area and its close confines of East Melbourne. Architects Tombs and Durran originally envisaged the block to be built under two contracts with fourteen suites being built in the first and eight in the second. However, in November 1911, Building announced that Master Builder A. O'Leary was to build a "... terrace of flats at Commercial Road, to plans by architects Tombs and Durran, at a cost of £8106"

The decision to build a block of flats as substantial as Fawkner Mansions outside the close proximity of the city was a courageous
one considering the relatively recent development of suburban flats. However, the site was well chosen, taking advantage of the good public transport within the area and the close proximity of Fawkner Park and the Alfred Hospital. The imposing mass and solidity of the building would have attracted prospective tenants who would have been familiar with the often inconvenient and flimsy nature of residential mansion conversions of the past. Fawkner Mansions used a common enclosed entrance hall of generous proportions, and the block appears to have been popular with the middle class occupants. In 1912, Fawkner Mansions was occupied by an inspector, two clerks, a merchants agent, a shipping agent, a captain, a solicitor, an engineer and a surgeon. It is now owned by the Alfred Hospital to provide accommodation for nurses.

The success of Fawkner Mansions was ensured through its attractive location and access to public transport. Similarly, the early small East Melbourne blocks, such as Victoria House, (fig.60) Clarendon House and Maisonnettes, (all c.1913-14, fig 19), were also well placed for transport in addition to being located near attractive parkland. Of all the factors involved in locating a block of flats convenience to reliable transport seems to have been of prime importance.

ii. Transport

As in previous phases of Melbourne's development, public transport both served existing and encouraged new development. It was necessary for prudent investors to site flats on or near
public transport routes to ensure success. The development of cable and then electric tramway services in particular, caused flat developers to pay particular attention to the High Street, Prahran route to Tooronga Road, various routes in the seaside resort of St. Kilda, and the well established and fashionable boulevards of St. Kilda Road and Dandenong Road. The announcement in 1912 of plans for the extension of the Dandenong Road line from Chapel Street, Prahran to High Street, Malvern, resulted in a sharp jump in land values along the route. Real Property Annual reported the "fine mansions" and vacant lots along Dandenong Road were being subdivided.

The redevelopment of Dandenong Road must have been quite rapid as the extension of the tramway took effect. The architect, (although not a member of RVIA), and flat developer, Howard Lawson, built his own house, Broxted in Dandenong Road and by 1919 there were twelve examples of his work in this road. While it is not clear how many of these were flats, it is likely that most of them were, as Lawson had been specialising in flat building since at least 1916.

Ardoch and Kelvin Mansions
Two impressive examples of the early flat development remain in Dandenong Road. Ardoch built by developer, A.M. Younger between 1920 and 1922 and Kelvin Mansions, (fig 24) probably designed by Edwin J. Ruck and C.L. Ruck and built c. 1922. Ardoch is a complex of flats which consists of ten two-storey buildings, which includes the original Victorian residence. The buildings
are grouped along Dandenong Road and Ardoch Avenue which was created along with the subdivision of the grounds of the original house. Each flat block contained four flats, making a total of some forty flats in all. The viability of a project of this scale would have been largely dependent upon the quality of public transport.

The development of cable and electric tramways along the Esplanade, St. Kilda had solidified real estate prices by 1913. At this time, St. Kilda was particularly well served by public transport with the train service to the city fed by an electric tramway from Elwood to the station. The importance of this link in terms of land development along the route can be appreciated today, although the tram route no longer exists. Flats predominate along Grey Street, Barkly Street, Mitford Street and Broadway, lining the former tram route.

Flat development was not completely dependent upon the existence as public transport, as the residents of flats such as Melbourne Mansions, Cliveden and Lister House would well have been able to afford private transport. However, some blocks seem to owe the form of their development to their relationship to the public transport routes. Yurnga, (fig 23) in Brighton Road, Elwood, designed by H.R. Johnson in 1920, is an obvious example. The three storey block is intensively developed, the site coverage is high, the flats are small and the block is distant from the city and the heart of St. Kilda. The development makes little sense.
until it is realised that Yuranga marked the end of the tram route as it existed in Brighton Road in 1920.

iii. Character

East Melbourne and the Inner Suburbs

In some cases the prime importance of good public transport was offset by subsidiary factors. East Melbourne, for instance, was well served by public transport but it was also an area of high residential quality in close proximity to the city and the Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens. However, some of the large mansions had become rooming houses and the area attracted the attention of developers. Architect Joseph Plottel was known to have had plans for converting "...the once fashionable but now decayed old boarding house quarter into a first class residential chambers centre." and he also is known to have called tenders for large residential flats in Victoria Parade in 1912. The only block known to the author to have been erected in Victoria Parade at the time was Clarendon, which may well be Plottel's work.

Other investors were also looking for mansions to demolish to make way for flats, and a syndicate proposed to convert "...a famous old hostelry" near the Botanic Gardens entrance in Domain Road, South Yarra into residential chambers and architect Nahum Barnet was planning some elaborate mansions on St. Kilda Road to cater for the "...silver-tailed variety of flatites."

This most probably referred to Florida Mansions, a block of five 2 storey flats which were built in 1915 and later partly
remodelled by Bates, Smart and McCutcheon after fire damage in 1928-29. The building which was demolished in 1982, was one of the numerous flat blocks which were built along St Kilda Road.

Thorlinda Mansions

Thorlinda Mansions (figs 25, 26), designed by Thomas W. Pearce, was one of the few blocks built that developed the whole site in the manner of the city developments such as Whitehall and Melbourne Mansions. Flats of this type were mainly situated along Fitzroy Street with the high density hotels, shops and larger residential blocks such as Majestic Flats, Kingsclere and Ritz Mansions. The East Melbourne block Thorlinda Mansions sought to take advantage of the style and popularity of its fashionable near-neighbour in Wellington Parade, Cliveden Mansions. The variety of flat type in Thorlinda Mansions made it closer in style internally to Melbourne Mansions and Cliveden Mansions than the suburban types and its proposed street facade was an exact copy of Melbourne Mansions. (fig 10)

St Kilda

Not only did St. Kilda enjoy good public transport, but it had a reputation as a pleasant seaside resort. At the same time, it was undergoing the stresses of having an excessive number of large houses which could no longer be maintained as family or holiday residences and had fallen into disrepair, or, had suffered through poor conversion into rooming houses.
The combination of good transport facilities, reasonable access to the city, good access to parklands and the established seaside character made St. Kilda an attractive proposition to investors in flat development. Residential blocks developed quickly along the St. Kilda streets, especially along the tram routes and the seaside boulevards. For large scale development, Fitzroy Street was particularly popular and the demand for accommodation high.

In 1912, one of Melbourne's large blocks of apartments Majestic Flats was designed and built. (Discussed in Chapter Six, Part i.)

While the size and location of Majestic Flats (figs 27, 28) was no doubt made it an important suburban development, its planning was utilitarian and its facade outdated. (fig 28) However, a vast group of investors recognized the possibility of building high class flats in St. Kilda, as well as South Yarra and Toorak. A particularly ambitious scheme was planned to be built in 1912 in Fitzroy Street to the design of architect Col. Tunbridge (of Tunbridge and Tunbridge), who had designed Whitehall in the city some six years earlier. A development company planned to erect at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Canterbury Road a "... magnificent mansion of residential flats, unequalled in design and appointment by any similar building in Australasia." The proposed one to five roomed entirely self-contained flats were to have their own front doors and entrance halls and large balconies with good outlooks. The most notable aspect of the planned development however, was the high standard of facilities offered to the residents, including a spendidly furnished billiard room,
a dining hall, lounges and ballroom and full sized tennis courts on the roof. The company estimated that each of the 125 rooms in the development would bring rent of 16/- per week for 50 weeks per year, which the company stated was much less than prices paid in Melbourne, Toorak and South Yarra for a similar class of accommodation. However, the scheme, which would have been grander than anything in Toorak or South Yarra, did not go ahead.

Another grand scheme, designed in 1926 by Hare and Hare for St Kilda identity and real estate agent T.H. Berkeley, failed to eventuate. (fig 29) The proposal for eighty-six luxury self-contained flats was seen to be comparable to the best American residential apartments and would have been one of Melbourne's most prestigious blocks.

Malvern, South Yarra and Toorak

Langi Flats

Langi flats were erected in Lansell Road, Toorak in 1925 for Mrs. Mary Williams who commissioned the acclaimed architect Walter Burley Griffin to execute the design. The high quality flats were planned with folding windows for the conversion of rooms into sun porches, hidden stairways, and double sided cupboards and drawers opening to both the kitchen and dining areas. Each flat had a maids room with its own bathroom. In 1930 Mrs. Williams again commissioned Griffin to remodel her own residence on Toorak Road adjacent to the flat block and the house was renovated in the American Prairie style to match that of the 1925 flat block.
While there are many individual flat blocks worthy of particular attention in Melbourne's suburbs, there are three projects which deserve examination for their particular suburban (or anti-suburban) quality. Griffin's The Cloisters had an organic character which was related to a suburban site. Howard Lawson's Alexandra Avenue precinct flat development is remarkable for its quality and scope, while Frederick Romberg's Stanhill rejects the notional suburbanity of its site.

The Cloisters

There are many examples in Melbourne building literature of flat projects which were never built. One of the most outstanding of these must be Walter Burley Griffin's The Cloisters (figs. 135, 136) which was planned in 1927 for a site in Clendon Road, part of which was later occupied by a Griffin house. The Cloisters would have undoubtedly brought a new standard to Melbourne suburban flat building. The proposed units were of high quality and imaginatively integrated into a building of remarkable quality. In a period where most flat developments were single rectangular blocks on rectangular sites, The Cloisters integrated building and site in a manner which embraced the ideals of his Castlecrag houses in Sydney, and would have been most influential here.

Lawson's Alexandra Avenue Precinct

Howard R. Lawson's remarkable flat development in the Darling Street, Caroline Street Domain Road and Alexandra Alexandria area of South Yarra was developed between approximately 1923 and 1941.
and encompasses various styles of the period from a Californian Bungalow (Avignon), through Spanish Mission/Hollywood Exotic (Beverley Hills) to Modern (Stratton Heights.) Lawson and partner Reginald W. Biffen bought the whole of the land from Punt Road to the South Yarra railway bridge, (bounded by the river on the south and Domain Road on the north), in approximately 1922 and commenced development of the site shortly afterwards. The early buildings on the site included Avignon (Fig. G) and Le Chateau, which were built as small scale Californian Bungalow style maisonettes, and designed for easy conversion to flats. A number of two to three storey Californian Bungalow style flats remain on the site and nearby (e.g. Chadwick Mansions and Kintore in Alexandra Avenue and The Ivel at 322 Walsh Street), and may well all be Lawson's work.

It appears that the site was not developed rapidly and there was most likely little building done in the last half of the 1920's. When Lawson, who advertised as "The Architect who Builds", recommenced work after the depression, he became more ambitious and abandoned the small scale Californian Bungalow style flats in favour of large multi-storey blocks designed in a Spanish Mission/Exotic manner. These included Granada Court, Dorrington House, Devonshire House, Durham Hall (all c. 1934) followed by York House (c. 1935) and the imposing Beverley Hills (blocks 1 and 2) (fig.19) in approximately the same year. The Beverley Hills blocks dominated the steeply sloping site, and Lawson included a swimming pool on a terrace between the two blocks. The integration of flat blocks and the surrounding gardens and
terrace levels and the exotic style of the development retains its unique character today, despite some deterioration in some of the flat blocks.

In the three years prior to September 1935, Lawson had built 175 flats on the subdivision and local residents objected to proposals for further development of the site. Lawson responded by reducing the height of his blocks and in 1936, obtained a building permit for three storey flats at the corner of Alexandra Avenue and Darling Street. In this next phase of building, Lawson designed the outstanding Maritama and Stratton Heights (both c. 1940) which were similar in form to his earlier Beverley Hills (block 2), but stripped of the highly decorative stucco work of his exotic style blocks. At the magnificently sited Stratton Heights (fig.120) Lawson encompassed modernism by using the roof terrace, which had been enjoying increasing popularity. Beverley Hills also had a flat roof, but this had been used only as a laundry and drying area, and was hidden behind a sloping tiled parapet, which appeared from below to be a conventional pitched roof.

The whole development is without equal for the period in Melbourne. The variety in buildings, the integration of the well-landscaped site and the excellent Spanish Mission/Exotic style flats in particular make the precinct unique. Lawson went unrecognized in professional circles, due most probably, to his development activities. He had brought attention to his
abilities as early as c. 1912, when, as a young building manager, he set a new bricklaying record on Melbourne's Britannia Theatre.

The Alexandra Avenue flat precinct is arguably the zenith of the career of the man who was probably Melbourne's most prolific flat builder.

Stanhill
Frederick Romberg's Stanhill (fig. 65) was designed in 1942 but, due to World War II, was not completed until 1950. This much admired nine storey block in Queens Road, South Melbourne, brought a new scale of development to a suburban setting. The south facing rooms overlooked Albert Park and the seaside suburbs and open galleries lined the north face. A sliding door between the living area and the second bedroom gave a flexibility to each flat and each living room extended to the north and south walls of each unit, providing views and sunshine penetration.

When Stanhill was completed, it was reported that the building unions would "take action if any more luxury flats were built. " Neil Clerehan recognized the problem in flat developments of this type would have in gaining public acceptance in a country still experiencing the effects of post war austerity.

Classifying this building as "luxury" and "Not-for-us" typifies the craving for the average, which is so much a feature of our life. In any city overseas, blocks of the standard of "Stanhill" would be taken as a matter of course. In Melbourne we have come to regard anything better than or different from the brick veneer cottage on a fifty-foot lot as "luxury."
The influences of Modern European architecture on the design of Stanhill and its outstanding aesthetic qualities have been widely discussed and the building has recently received National Trust recognition. But in the context of this study, it is more important to relate Stanhill to other suburban flat developments. In fact, Stanhill has no suburban counterparts. Its modernity, height, high site coverage and integration of shops within the block (as opposed to flats over shops) set it apart from any other suburban block. It is in the European mould of city apartments and has more in common with Alcaston House in Collins Street than any block in the suburbs. It is a de facto city block, and like many early city blocks, has become an office building. Stanhill, however, anticipates the changing nature of inner city suburban development, and shares design philosophies with that of luxury flat towers now being erected in St. Kilda Road, some thirty years after Stanhill's completion.
FOOTNOTES:

CHAPTER 4 - SUBURBAN FLAT DEVELOPMENT.


2. Real Property Annual, 1913, p.20.

3. Building, 11 Nov. 1911, p.7. (Note: Photograph of Fawkner Mansions in Building, 12 Feb. 1912, p.59 has caption "E.H. Willis, Architect". From information available to the author, this is most likely an error.)


5. Real Property Annual, 1912, p.16.

6. "Modern Flats and Bungalows - From the Specialists Point of View - An Interview with Howard R. Lawson", Real Property Annual, 1919, p.64.

7. There are 8 entries for flat blocks in the St. Kilda Building Register for 1917 alone, and 1 in 1916.

8. My attribution made on stylistic grounds.


10. Building, 12 Sept. 1912, p.27.


13. This is most probably The Botanic Hotel, Domain Road, South Yarra.


15. Company Prospectus held by University of Melbourne Archives - Clements Langford collection.


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17. Herald, 8 July 1925, p.12.

18. I am indebted to Peter Navaretti for information on Langi and
   The Cloisters.


20. Ibid.


22. It is not clear to which this block refers, but Lawson's
   Narooma was certainly erected by 1937 as it appears in the
   Sands and McDougall of that year.

23. Building, 12 Sept. 1912, p.27.


25. Ibid.
i. Block Layout.

Unlike the city blocks, suburban developments had sufficient space for the provision of garages. Mayfair had individual garages set amongst lawns and adjacent to a tennis court and by 1926 architects Irwin & Stevenson stated that '... a garage for each [flat] is now an absolute necessity...' However this does not seem to have been a widely held view as many flats were built without garages after this time.

Garages were most often placed at the rear of the site with direct access from a lane or from a drive down one side of the block. The detached garage block was rarely used after 1930 and from this time on, there was an integration of garage and the flat block itself in the better quality flats such as, Maritimo (figs. 33, 34) in South Yarra.

Roy Grounds' Quamby (figs. 35, 36) of 1941 also had garages under the flats on steeply sloping site, while his later block Moonbria incorporated the garages into the flat block to provide direct access to the stairs and covered walkways. Frederick Ronberg's Hillstan (figs. 37, 38, 39) had a sunken driveway which allowed garages and laundries to be placed under the two storied flats whose bedrooms cantilevered over the drive.
I.G. Anderson's flat development Ostende (figs. 40, 41) at Brighton Beach combined boat sheds and dressing sheds with a deck over for recreational use. The brick and reinforced concrete sheds were built into the slope of the land, and the continuous flat roof formed a balustraded terrace and private promenade with seats for the use of the tenants. Although the flats were built in a three story block, the building appeared as four stories from the beach due to the location of boat sheds and the terrace on the low side of the site. Accessway to the garages was usually via a simple driveway but designers attempted grander entrances either for effect or, in some cases, necessity due to disadvantageous site conditions.

W.H. Merritt planned vehicular access through "...an old world gateway..." beneath a corner tower of his flats on The Esplanade (fig. 107) at St. Kilda but this scheme was not carried out. At Eastern House (fig. 43) in East Melbourne however, the opening in the front block of the development; while possibly bearing some romantic relation to an old style carriageway; seems more of an expediency. The flat development is actually a conversion of an old house which was set well back from the street frontage and the new block on the street frontage is simply to take advantage of the available space.

Porte-Cochère
The porte-cochère was used on the more luxurious serviced flats such as South Yarra's Mayfair and Amesbury House.
(fig. 45) of 1919 was punctuated by a large porte-cochère through which vehicles took up and set down passengers in a manner similar to that used at hotels.

A variation of the porte-cochère occurs with the development of multiple blocks of flats on the same site. In most single blocks of the 1920s with garages, the driveways were placed at the side, or both sides, of the block with the garages at the rear of the property. Where the flats were placed in two blocks upon the site a drive placed centrally between the two, offered an expedient solution to the access problem. In most cases the blocks in this type of development ran perpendicular to the street frontage and the entrance to flats and stairs was placed midway along each block. A logical design decision would be to link the two blocks with the porte cochere and there are at least two examples of this design in Melbourne. Dunstan and Reynolds and Partners flats in Orrong Road (figs. 46, 47) linked the two blocks with a porte cochere, the roof of which formed an outdoor patio for communal use with access from the stairways of each block. Stanberlil Court (fig. 48) in Hawthorn used a similar form. The combined porte cochere arrangement was not common in Melbourne as it was applicable only to flats of more than one block and it is likely that cars using the centrally placed driveway caused unacceptable noise levels within the flats.

An examination of St Kilda blocks, Harcla Flats (fig. 49) of 1932 (which did not have a porte-cochère), gives some idea of the
potential problems when two blocks were placed close together. The space for pedestrians and cars is minimal, and the noise levels within the flats can only be very high.

Most flat developments with multiple blocks have preferred the enclosed area to be for the use of pedestrians and the provision of garden space with cars kept to the rear of the site. However, many of Robert Hamilton's flat developments do have car access into a centrally placed, semi-enclosed court between blocks, but the scale of his developments make them significantly different from that of the earlier type. (figs. 96, 97) The sites are large, the flats are spacious and their numbers limited. The blocks are well separated from internal traffic by garden areas and the volume of traffic is low due to the low density development of the site.

ii. External Stair.

1. Conversions.

Following World War I, an increasing number of large old houses were being divided up into self-contained flats. Two storey houses were often converted into flats by subdividing rooms and adding an external stair to provide access to each flat. The external stair was most often erected across the front of the building. Two of the most interesting examples of this type are found in St. Kilda, where many houses and terraces were converted in this way.
At Marli Court (formerly Marli Place) in the Esplanade, the original Victorian terrace and the superimposed external stair is clearly visible. (fig. 51) The conversion, which was carried out in 1911, provided a central maisonette flanked by a pair of flats (one upstairs and one downstairs).

A remarkable example of this type of conversion was carried out in Williams Street, St. Kilda (figs. 52, 53) where Howard R. Lawson converted a row of eight double storey houses into a flat block Grosvenor Mansions, containing sixteen self-contained flats. After conversion, the financial return of the property more than trebled and if this result was typical, the popularity of large house conversion was understandable. One pair of flats in Grosvenor Mansions has been reconverted to form a double storey terrace house through the addition of an internal stair. Just as the addition of the external stairs clearly indicated the change of residential use, the flat pair that has been returned to single occupation is now identifiable through the new irregularity in the stair pattern.

Two-storey walk-up Flats - External Stair.

It is arguable that the external stair which was common on two storey walk-up flats derives from its earlier use on converted houses. The external stair system had the advantage of being entirely independent of the internal plan of the flat, just as it allowed minimum disruption in converting existing residences. But it also had the considerable disadvantage of offering no protection from the weather to its users.
iii. Semi-enclosed Stair.

The semi-enclosed stair came into use during the 1920's and was generally associated with flats designed in the Californian Bungalow style. Carnong Court at 29-33 Robe Street, St. Kilda is a fine example of this style. (fig. 54) The semi-enclosed stair had two important advantages over the open external stair.

i. It provided some protection from the weather.

ii. The stair became an integral part of the design of the block.

There was recurrent criticism of the appearance of flats and their stairs in particular and despite the superiority of the semi-enclosed type over the open external stair, it was clearly inferior to the fully enclosed stair.

The sensitivity towards the unpopular external stair was obviously of concern to architects and builders and occasional minor variations were attempted to overcome the exposure and appearance of the stair. One of the most interesting is at Lurnea, at 50 Dalgety Street, St. Kilda. (fig. 55) The entrance to ground floor flats and the stair and those to the upper flats are set back under a verandah which conceals the stair and offers protection from the weather.

iv. Enclosed Stair.

The full enclosure of the stair would appear the logical way to overcome the deficiencies of the open and semi-enclosed type but the enclosed stair was used in many of Melbourne's earliest
suburban flat buildings. The Canterbury (fig. 56) which was designed by well known city architects H.W. & F.B. Tompkins in 1914 had the staircase within the building as does Evans and Wright's Maisonnettes (fig. 19) designed in 1913 and Victoria House (fig. 60) c.1914 designed by Philip Hudson. The majority of flats built with an integrated staircase were designed to make the stair as inconspicuous as possible no doubt due to the association of poor quality flats with prominent external staircases. It is ironic then that the designers of many 1930's blocks chose to make a dramatic expression of the stair upon the elevation, which clearly defined a building as flats.

v. The Enclosed Stair and Corridor.

The early East Melbourne block Victoria House had flats arranged on either side of a long central corridor, with a stair situated midway along the block. The style of Victoria House is English, but the layout of the flats had similarities with an American type which was certainly out of fashion at the time Victoria House (fig. 60) was built. The American book Apartments, Houses, Hotels and Apartment Hotels of Today, published in 1929, made it clear that the corridor type was regarded as a relic of the past.

The long, narrow hall characteristic of the old railroad apartments of a quarter century ago has been eliminated. In those days there was only one objective, to place the parlour in front of the house with windows looking out on the street. Today we work on an entirely different basis. Our modern method of planning is based on grouping the rooms around a convenient foyer, making it possible to include conveniences and decorative features...
previously unimagined ... The question of light and air practically unheard of in the days of the railroad type, is now given careful consideration. The result has been an effort to open up the plan by means of courts, gardens and playgrounds.4

The long central corridor was used in the 1930's block, Tunbridge Manor (fig. 58) and as late as 1939 at Sherwood (fig. 59) in East Melbourne, where the stairs are kept to the rear of the building. The architects Robert B. Hamilton and Associate, Marcus H. Norris, clearly preferred to use the whole of the front section of the building for the provision of a pair of spacious flats overlooking Fitzroy Gardens, rather than waste it on the stair.

vi. Combined open and closed stair.

The enclosed stair, or indeed any centralised staircase had some problems of privacy and in smaller suburban flats some designers sought to provide separate entrances to each flat, or at least, to each pair of flats. Pitt and Walkley's Santa Rosa (figs. 61, 62) of c.1921, has the central stair enclosed with the side entrances open but a more common arrangement was the reverse, with direct access to the ground floor flats through a central lobby.


With the introduction of multiple large blocks of flats within the one development in the mid 1930's the previous access patterns became unworkable without the addition of long corridors or a number of separate stairways. The access problem was
compounded by the fact that flats were becoming smaller and more efficiently planned and thus each large development carried more flats. As a result architects re-introduced the open access balcony which had been one of the less satisfactory aspects of early suburban flat life. However, the open access balcony seemed a simple and economical way to solve access problems. It also met with the approval of a young generation of architects who were looking towards the new modern styles appearing in Europe during the 1920's and 30's.

While Best Overend used the open gallery balcony combined with a spectacular cantilevered stair at Cairo in 1936, the potentialities of the cantilevered galleries are best captured in Romberg and Shaw's, Newburn of 1939 and Romberg's Stanhill of 1942. The north side of Newburn had a series of cantilevered concrete balconies (figs. 63, 64), while the south side was dominated for its entire length by three simple concrete gangways. Stanhill's north face dramatically contrasts the verticality of the stair and the sweeping horizontality of the reinforced concrete galleries. (fig. 65) This pattern was characteristic of two Melbourne building types, namely, flats and hospitals. Gallery access was established as the predominant way of providing access to flats, and was to remain so for about the next 20 years.

vi. Expanded Gallery Access.
One type of flat access appears to have been used within the study period by only one man; its originator, Roy Grounds.
Grounds's famous pre-war quartet, Clendon, Clendon Corner, Quamby and Moonbria all have large access galleries which act also as outdoor decks. The most expansive of these are used at Clendon (figs. 66, 67) and Moonbria, where the U-shape of the blocks encloses the north facing decks. The revolutionary and complex nature of these decks is revealed in the fact that they have variously been referred to as balconies, verandahs and even as an internal street. World War Two halted Grounds's involvement in architecture and flat building, and the concept of a mixed use gallery was not taken up in flat construction again.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 5 - BLOCK DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS PATTERNS.

1. Australian Home Beautiful, 1 Nov. 1926, p.34.

2. Chui, et al, "The Development of Accomodation in St. Kilda"


4. R. Sexton, (Ed.), American Apartment Houses,
   Hotels and Apartment Hotels of Today, 1929, p. ?


6. Art in Australia, 6 Jan. 1941, p.79.

7. C.H. Hamann, "Grounds, Romberg & Boyd",
CHAPTER SIX

FLAT TYPES

Flat plans varied markedly over the period of this study due to such factors as changing social attitudes, location and overseas influences. While the Real Property Annual could confidently state in 1919 that "no modern block of flats was complete without its restaurant"; the changing social attitudes towards flats after World War 1 due to housing and domestic staff shortages forced a revision of this view. Indeed, by 1922, architect James H. Wardrop had proposed that the public acceptance of the flat would be won by making it self-contained.

The location of flats clearly affected their individual layout. In most cases, Toorak and South Yarra flats were superior to St. Kilda or South Melbourne flats. The layouts generally reflected the socio-economic character of the area and the attitudes of the respective local councils to flat development. St. Kilda City Council appears to have adopted a more laissez-faire attitude towards flats than the more restrictive Prahran and Malvern Councils, who fought for the retention of the established residential quality of their municipalities.

Overseas precedents have often influenced Australian architecture and flat design is no exception. While stylistic influences such as Californian Bungalow and Spanish Mission came from the west coast of America, the most remarkable influence was Wells Coates' Minimum Flat principle from England, which affected the whole of flat design from around 1935 to 1941. For a short period the
Minimum Flat challenged the conventionality of most flat designs and the profligacy of the luxury flats.

In considering the factors that affected flat design, it is difficult to classify types in a way that would include all flats. The classification made here is broad and considers:

i. conversions and basic plans,
ii. conventional layouts,
iii. luxury flats,
iv. bachelor flats and
v. building of combined functions.

i. Conversions and Basic Plans.

The nature and quality of early conversions of houses into flats is difficult to determine as many would have been demolished to make way for better developments. There is little doubt, however, that unsatisfactory conversions generally brought flats into disrepute. An article in the Australian Home Builder of May 1923 which discussed the suitability of flats for family use was particularly critical of conversions.

Take any old house, dress up the front with a coat of roughcast and an outside staircase; insert a bathroom and lavatory somewhere on the upper floors, also a stove and a sink. If there is room at the back, add a back verandah - platform rather - to the upper floor...[etc.]

The author concluded that flat life was no life for the children and that stairs were especially dangerous for the young.

Conversions in some cases were very poor, with reports of such
things as the subdivision of a large room into three rooms with three ply partitions not extending to the ceiling, gas stove and sinks poked into dark corners of little rooms, and badly lit makeshift bathrooms. Much of this work was done without the knowledge or approval of the local councils. The Uniform Building Regulations were not in force and some councils had very old building regulations. The post war housing shortage, and the difficulty in interpreting any regulations that did exist, hindered municipalities in controlling makeshift conversions.

While the quality of the conversion of Cliveden to Cliveden Mansions in 1911 was undoubtedly exceptional, many others must have been of reasonable quality. Some still exist today. Eastern House at 174 George St., East Melbourne (fig. 43) and Park House at 7 Keith Court, Brighton (fig. 9) both have large, high quality Victorian houses at their centres and are well-maintained, pleasant flat blocks. Park House is of particular interest as it is a conversion of the residence of early architect James Webb. A more prosaic example is found at 16-18 Victoria Street, St. Kilda (fig. 50) where the quoins of the original house are clearly seen behind the superimposed brick stair. The former terrace rows of Marli Place (fig. 51) and Grosvenor Mansions, (figs. 52, 53) also in St. Kilda, are more notable for the multiplicity of stairs and this aspect of conversions is discussed later in this work.
Conversions also had an effect upon the design of purpose built residences as some architects sought to allow themselves flexibility in making house designs more suitable for conversion to flats. In c.1927 Edwin J. Ruck designed his own house at 46 Clendon Road, Toorak with the intention of allowing an easy conversion to flats. The property was converted at an unknown date, but is now a single house again.

Some of the earliest flats built in Howard R. Lawson's development along Alexandra Parade, South Yarra were flat pairs, with separate entries to the ground and upper floors from the side of the building. These were specifically designed for easy conversion into a single dwelling. Lawson advertised the building as maisonettes which could be converted into separate flats if required at the cost of an extra £12. As a result of this dual purpose design, the entrance to both flats are into what would have been a stair hall in the maisonette option. The only intact remaining example of this design is Avignon, of c.1922 at 51 Darling St., South Yarra, where the separate flat entrances are still used. (figs. 68, 69) Chateau, the house next door at 49 Darling St., South Yarra, was probably very similar to Avignon and appears to have been a house until 1935 when it was converted to flats. This probably is now considerably altered.

Some flat designs before World War 1 employed rudimentary plans and had a distinctly late nineteenth century character. Carlisle buildings designed by A.W. Purnell in 1914 for a site in St. Kilda, was similar to schemes proposed by the benevolent
societies in England for workers housing, with small suites of interconnecting rooms off a large internal common corridor. The drawings for two proposals still exist. An examination of the earlier plan (fig. 71) reveals it to have serious deficiencies especially with regard to natural light to habitable rooms, and the second plan is even less attractive. In this plan, Purnell dispenses with private bathrooms and provides a centrally placed communal toilet and bathroom areas. This plan is even closer to some of the poorer examples of nineteenth century artisan housing and it is not surprising that the whole project was eventually abandoned.

Another example of basic flat plans occurred at Majestic Flats at St. Kilda of 1912 which had the external appearance of a multi-storey terrace house. The flats were designed by their builder J.R. Daley who was reputed to have disliked architects and never employed them. Daley's flat development was in fact for the most part not flats at all, but suites of two rooms (a livingroom and bedroom) which shared communal bathrooms and had use of a dining room on the top floor of the five storey block. (fig. 27) While the front units appear to have been self contained flats with private kitchens and bathrooms, the rear two-roomed units are not. The grouping of the rooms and access balcony around an open central courtyard, and the appearance of the street facade of Majestic Flats, (fig. 28) places it firmly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The outmoded design is in fact very similar to that of Gordon House which was designed some thirty
years earlier. In the 1930's the building was substantially altered and now operates as a private hotel.

Kingsclere (fig. 70) is one of the few remaining blocks of flats in Melbourne which is built around an enclosed central courtyard - a type which proved to be unpopular in Australia. This block in Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda was designed in 1926 by architect P.J. O'Connor and even at that time, must have seemed a distinctly old fashioned layout, having this layout in common with buildings such as Gordon House (1884) and Majestic Flats (1912). While Kingsclere is in a suburban locality, the density and commercial character of Fitzroy Street has almost forced this form upon it due to the expense of land in such a popular seaside location. The block is large, (24 flats) and densely developed and has more in common with city buildings than the smaller suburban blocks of flats which were being built in the same period. It is a layout which was common in nineteenth century England, and is baldly handled by O'Connor at Kingsclere with a severity that belies the more impressive facade of the building. Indeed, an article in the Real Property Annual as early as 1918 suggested that the enclosed courtyard layout would prove unpopular here.

... It is a mistake to assume that the flat which satisfies the conditions of life of the people of London, New York or Paris, will prove satisfactory to the people of this country. For instance, flats built over shops or overlooking light courts or backyards, will prove somewhat difficult to let here, whereas in other countries they are accepted as a matter of course.9
Joseph Plottel, the author of the article was an architect with considerable experience in flat design, and considered that sufficient privacy could not be provided by the enclosed light court layout.

ii. Conventional
While Gordon house belongs to the nineteenth century and Majestic Flats, Kingsclere and Carlisle buildings were, in effect, nineteenth century designs, there were flat developments contemporary with the latter two which were much more modern in concept. The East Melbourne blocks Victoria House, (fig. 60) Clarendon House and Maisonettes (fig. 19) and Canterbury (fig. 56) in St. Kilda were all designed around 1913-14 and were all blocks of self contained flats. The flat plans were quite conventional in character, with a bedroom (or bedrooms) kitchen, livingroom and bathroom opening off an entry hall or internal passage. Similar arrangements with minor variations occur in thousands of blocks of flats from at least 1906, (Melbourne Mansions), to the present day. An examination of the Melbourne Mansions plans shows various flats of this type. (fig. 11)

The rear units of Studley Flats (fig. 72) of 1918 are of similar pattern, with access to the rooms generally from the entry hall or a passage, although the sitting or dining room has to be crossed to gain access to some parts of the house. Eldern Flats in Brighton of circa 1929 as designed by F. Keith Cheetham, (fig. 73) Sherwood in Albert Street, East Melbourne of 1939, designed
by R.B. Hamilton and Associate Marcus H. Norris, (fig. 59) and Seabrook and Fildes' Park Court in St. Kilda Street, Elwood, (fig. 75) of 1938, all illustrate what might be regarded as variations of conventional layout.

While many flats which have rooms grouped around a central hall have a separation between daytime spaces, (living, dining and kitchen), and nighttime spaces, (bedrooms and bathroom), no example exhibits this more clearly than the type A units in the Frederick Romberg's Hillstan. (fig. 39) The two areas are well defined and separated by an entrance hall. The concept so clearly articulated at Hillstan of dividing residential properties into zones has been a continual influence in domestic design to this day.

iii. Luxury flats.

The larger flats of Toorak and South Yarra had some of the characteristics of the houses they often replaced. In contrast to a typical St. Kilda flat, the Toorak and South Yarra flats were in most cases more spacious, better equipped, in better surroundings and often incorporated quarters for domestic staff.

The pioneer suburban flats of high quality such as Mayfair (fig. 14) in South Yarra followed the city flats concept in that they provided communal dining rooms and a generally high level of service. This concern with service and luxuriousness was reflected in the standard of individual flats. Consequently, the South Yarra blocks such as Amesbury House in Domain Road, (fig
45) and even the more modest Garden Court in Marne Street, (fig. 42) had communal dining rooms and high quality flats, which set the standard for the area. A.W. Plaisted's Castle Towers, (fig. 42) which was designed in the relatively late year of 1940, incorporated elements of past luxury flats by having separate service entries to each flat and a reception desk in the entry foyer.

Robert B. Hamilton, who designed many high class flats during the 1930's, pointed out in an article in 1938 that there was demand in the South Yarra district for flats "which provide accommodation for more affluent residents". He quoted the example of one recently erected flat which contained an entrance hall, cloak, lounge and dining rooms, study, kitchen, service pantry, four bedrooms and two bathrooms. While this was of exceptional size, Hamilton stated that numerous flats in Toorak contained an entrance hall, lounge, dining room, two bedrooms, maid's room, and either one or two bathrooms.

Burnham Flats (fig. 77) built in 1933, at the corner of Grange Road and Lascelles Ave., Toorak, is typical of Hamilton's work. All rooms are spacious, (the entry hall is as large as the second bedroom of many St. Kilda flats), there is a generous pantry and an extensive verandah. The maid is provided with her own room and shower room which includes the toilet. The planning of the flat is conventional, all rooms opening off the hall. While considerable effort was made in the design to ensure the comfort
of the inhabitants of the flat, the needs of the maid were less well met. It appears that the only access route from the maid's room to the shower room is via the hall, pantry, kitchen and an outside pathway.

The generous planning which characterises the Malvern, South Yarra and Toorak flats was also found in Edward F. Billson's Maritimo (figs. 33, 34) in Marne Street, South Yarra, and Arthur W. Plaisted's maisonettes in Kensington Road, South Yarra. (fig. 76) Few blocks of deluxe flats were built outside the South Yarra, Toorak, Malvern area but Arthur Plaisted's Hartpury Court, which was built in Milton Street, St. Kilda midway between the unfashionable St. Kilda and the more genteel residential area of Brighton, was extensively featured in the 1927 Australian Home Beautiful series "Some of Melbourne's notable flats".

iii. Bachelor flats.
While the bachelor flat is generally associated with the Modernism of the 1930's, there may be some overlap with bedsitting room conversions with various levels of private facilities. In any case, bachelor flats were included in Howard R. Johnson's Yurnga, designed in 1920. This block in Brighton Road, St. Kilda, had some flats which consisted of a kitchen, bathroom, dressing room and living room. This is the same configuration of rooms that appears at Best Overend's Cairo, which is a paradigm of the new Modernism.
Melbourne architect, Best Overend, seems to have been solely responsible for the introduction of Minimum Flat to Australia. Overend had worked in London for Wells Coates, the English architect responsible for the concept of the Minimum Flat. (fig. 79) Coates had designed a block on the Minimum Flat principle which was built in Lawn Road, Hampstead in 1933. Coates' development catered for the floating population of London which sought a distinctive type of accommodation providing comfort and privacy for one or two people at a minimum rent. The Lawn Road flats attracted such tenants as Walter Gropius, who were leaving Europe due to the political instability within the continent. The Lawn Road flats development was seen as an important step in the development of Modern architecture in England and J.M. Richards declared it to be "... nearer to the machine a habiter than anything Le Corbusier ever did."

On his return from England in 1933, Overend promoted the idea of the Minimum Flat which had obvious attractions, at least to tenants, in offering space, economy, and modernity with minimum rentals. Overend noted however, 'that

...with the present regulatory bodies it must be some time before we will see and experience the comfort and economy embodied in this form of planning.'

Overend illustrated his article with a floor plan of a unit which contained a living room, bathroom/dressing room, a small hall and a kitchenette. (fig. 80) The compactly planned flat made full use of space through the use of built-in furniture and equipment and such devices as folding beds and tables. It encompassed the
concern of the new generation of architects - efficiency and modernism.

Although there seems to have been a demand for bachelor flats in Melbourne, Overend could not find an investor interested in backing the building of the Minimum Flat until December 1935, when the intention to build forty bachelor flats was announced. With regulatory problems overcome and an investor found, the construction of twenty-eight flats (not forty as initially proposed), was begun in 1936 in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. The block, Cairo, followed the Minimum Flat principles as outlined by Overend in 1933, and the plan of the smaller flats was very similar to that published in his article. (figs. 81, 82) The living and bathroom/dressingroom were almost identical to the published layout, but the kitchenette was enlarged to incorporate a dining nook, giving the kitchenette a more conventional appearance when compared with the narrow galley kitchenette of the 1933 proposal.

In addition to the twenty flats of the bed sitting room type, there were eight larger flats with a separate bedroom and more spacious lounge, kitchenette and bathroom. These were more conventional in nature but still designed with a minimum of waste space and with space saving built-in furniture. Although the larger flats were not in fact Minimum Flats, the principle of careful planning and space economy was still applied.
Bellaire was designed and built in 1936 to meet an existing demand for small bachelor flats. The building contained seventeen flats, each having a bedroom, a bathroom, livingroom, meal alcove and kitchenette. (figs. 83, 84) The aim of the proprietors had been to keep the cost of building down without sacrificing appearance, comfort or good construction. The bachelor flat concept not only suited these requirements, but also was compatible with the notion of efficiency, which was one of the determining factors in the rise of modern architecture. Geoffrey Mewton, of Mewton and Grounds, the architects of Bellaire, outlined his views on modernism in architecture in an article in 1937 in which he equated beauty with efficiency.

... and the more efficient it (the car) has become, the more beautiful also, because the two are inseparable. This efficiency is sometimes found in the homes of today ... If then the present movement in Architecture which we call 'modernism' is wrong, so also is the modern liner and the streamlined train. The latest design on this modern domestic pattern is not a whim or a fashion as were the others, it is an expression of national living.

Mewton had worked in New York during c.1929-30 and had become interested in bachelor flats within that city. Following his return to Melbourne, he designed Woy Woy, (fig. 85) a small block of bachelor flats in Marine Parade, and the influential Bellaire in Cowderoy St., St. Kilda.

Flats designed on efficient use of space and an interest in built-in furniture which had been revived with Cairo, Woy Woy and Bellair, was picked up in 1940 by Roy Grounds with his design of Clendon, (figs. 66, 67) a block of eight bachelor flats in
Toorak. A typical flat consisted of a large bed/living room with a small kitchen alcove and bathroom tucked away at one end. The compact plan was a manifestation of Grounds' fondness for what he called "...a simple idea, carried through simply".

Grounds designed Clendon Corner, Quamby and Moonbria on similar lines but most of the flats in these blocks had a separate bedroom and the severity and strict spatial discipline of the Clendon design was never repeated.

An irony of the development of the Minimum Flat at Cairo was the re-introduction of the central restaurant or dining room, which had generally not been seen in Melbourne flats since its use in the grand blocks of the first quarter of the century, such as Melbourne Mansions, Cliveden and The Mayfair. But there was a marked difference between the needs of the tenants of Cairo and those of the older blocks. With the early mansion blocks, the serviced dining room was a necessity, but for the tenants of Cairo, it was an adjunct to a perception of modern bachelor life, where the sole occupant of the flat might well have been at work all day and be disinclined to prepare a meal every night. The small kitchenettes in the flats were more suited to simple and/or occasional cooking. The flats were provided with an intercom system to the cafe and shop at the rear of the block. The tenants had three choices - to prepare and eat meals within the flat, to have meals brought to the flat from the cafe, or to dine at the cafe.
Howard R. Lawson's large flat development along Darling Street and Alexandra Ave., in South Yarra also included a cafe within one of the blocks of flats. The scale of the development prompted Lawson to include a cafe in his c.1935 block Warwick Lodge. A number of the flats in Lawson's development had small kitchens which would have been more suited to occasional rather than continuous use. The cafe was meant to provide a service to the flats, but like its counterpart at Cairo, it does not seem to have operated in this way for very long. By 1941, the cafe in Warwick Lodge had become a confectioners shop. The former dining cafes at Warwick Lodge and Cairo still exist, but now operate as milk bars.

viii. Combined Building Types.
The combination of residential and commercial uses within the same building has a long and complex history as houses and flats have been linked to, among other things, shops, office buildings, hotels, post offices and garages. (Owing to the difficulty in identifying early examples of this type and the time limitations on this study, no extensive studies have been made of them in this work.)

One of the longest continuing combined uses is the integration of firemen's flats with fire stations. This work tended to be carried out by specific firms for extended periods. Cedric Ballantyne (fig. 128) designed a series of fire stations with flats throughout the 1920's. Harry Winbush designed at least one of this type in the 1930's, and Seabrook and Fildes designed
significant fire stations with flats at Brunswick in 1937, (fig. 132) Brighton in 1939 (fig. 130), and Windsor in 1939-40. (figs. 129, 131) These buildings all feature broad horizontal bands of coloured brickwork with windows. At Brunswick the flats are detached from the fire station building, while at Windsor the two are integrated with appropriate differentiation in the scale to define and identify the fire station from the flats.

Many combinations of shops and flats were stylistically unpretentious. An early example Joseph Plottel's Waverley (fig. 125) of 1920 is particularly utilitarian. The shop facing Acland Street is rendered on the upper part of the elevation, while the flat behind is simply a severe red brick rectangular block with little embellishment.

One of the largest blocks of flats in over shops in Melbourne is Summerland Mansions (fig. 134) designed by Christopher Cowper in 1925. This block has a long frontage to Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda with a row of shops at ground level, while the flats entrance faces the primarily residential section of Acland Street. The elevation of the two separate blocks presents a decidedly domestic air to Acland Street, while the Fitzroy Street elevation with its long horizontal spandrels evokes a surprisingly modern character to an elevation of this period.

The mid 1930's works of L.G. Cahn (fig. 133) and Seabrook and Fildes (figs. 126, 127) combined the two functions in a much more
stylish manner, and while the flats and Cahn's block are not of high quality, Seabrook and Fildes' are well planned and pleasantly orientated towards a small garden accessway.

An outstanding combination of flats and early service station development was constructed at Brunswick in the streamlined modern style, popular in the mid 1930's. Beacon Garage was constructed by 1936 and the flats by 1938. The flats were distinguished by domestic style bay windows which contrasted with the general rectangularity of the rest of the building.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 6 - FLAT TYPES

1. Real Property Annual, 1919, p.52.


4. J.S. Gawler, A Roof Over My Head, 1936, pp.54-55.


7. Real Property Annual, Feb. 1923, inside front cover.

8. Information from J.R. Daley's grandson and current owner of Majestic Hotel - Mr. J. Lawrence.


21. I am indebted to Nigel Lewis and Associates for drawing my attention to this building and its date of construction.
CHAPTER 7
ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

1 Built-in Furniture.

The necessity of designing flats with the most rigid economy of space differentiated from housing and began a particular interest in built-in furniture. Architects acknowledged the importance of "horizontal planning", which meant a system which made use of all the available wall space for drawers, cupboards and shelves.

Emphasis upon efficient planning was stressed.

Space above the door, for example cannot be sacrificed to bare plaster, as in the ordinary house. The flat planner seizes upon it covetously for a set of shelves ... All the walls six feet above the floor line are lined with drawers, cupboards and shelves. Every inch of space has its value, and is utilized to its best advantage.

There was no place for ordinary villa furniture within the flat. The furniture had to combine functions and items such as the sideboard and cupboard, the dressing table and chest of drawers, and the wardrobe and linen cupboard all became combined units.

The nature of built-in furniture assisted efficient house-keeping - no labour was required to move it and dust under it. Indeed, the Real Property Annual of 1913 made the analogy of flats with ships cabins where "... everything is near at hand and most pieces are fixtures."

While it is not known how widespread the use of built-in furniture was at the time of the Real Property Annual article, the units in Walter Butler's Studley Flats of 1918 were notable for their unusually large number of cupboards. The kitchenettes
included air cupboards for meat and butter and double-faced cupboards and drawers opened to both the diningroom and kitchenette. (figs. 86, 88) One of the new pairs of flats had an inglenook, and the other a walk-in linen press while both were provided with built-in fuel bins at the rear of the block.

The efficiency in planning of the new pair of flats (figs. 72, 87) is most marked when comparing the size of the kitchenettes with those of the spacious old kitchens which remain after the conversion of Butler's original residence into flats (fig. 72). A block of flats contemporary with Studley Flats, the prestigious South Yarra block Mayfair designed c. 1919 by Edwin J. Ruck, also boasted of "ample built-in cupboards, lockers, etc." A.W. Plaisted also used built-in furniture at Hartpury Court in St. Kilda and the combined dresser and double-faced drawer to the kitchen and diningroom still exists in some of the flats. (figs. 90, 91)

Cairo and Modernism.

While built-in furniture was regarded as an important tool in achieving spatial economies, it was an obvious area for cost cutting for builders erecting flats of lesser quality than Studley Flats, Mayfair or Hartpury Court. It is most likely that the idea lost popularity with the large increase in the number of strictly utilitarian flats, particularly in St. Kilda. Some twenty years after Real Property Annual had publicized built-in furniture, a new generation of young architects looked once again
towards built-in furniture as a space saving device.

Best Overend's Cairo Flats were designed along the Minimum Flat principles that had been developed in London by Wells Coates. Australian Home Beautiful reported the flats had so much built-in furniture that they would be liveable with the addition of only a bed. The dressing room of the smaller flat was designed with built-in shelves, wardrobe, toilet item shelves and mirror over the basin which was situated in the dressing room.

The tightly planned kitchen contained a stove, sink, vegetable racks, food storage cupboards, a tiny meal alcove with bench seats for two. The base of the bench seat lifted up to provide additional storage as did the coat and case cupboards in the entrance hall.

Roy Grounds' Clendon and Clendon Corner of 1940-41 made extensive use of built-in furniture (fig. 69), with up to twenty built-in cupboards and fitments Robin Boyd remarked that the small area was ".. packed with cupboards, gadgets and everything that opens and shuts, including such a bed". The wall bed had enjoyed limited popularity in Melbourne some twenty years earlier. Melbourne architects, Gawler & Drummond and E.A. Peebles were known to have used wall beds but it is not known where they were used, or in what type of building.

The "Oscillating Portal Wall Bed" was introduced to Australia in
c. 1920 and marketed in Sydney by its American manufacturing company. Melbourne agents, Brooks Robinson & Co. made extravagant claims promoting its benefits, including a "generally conceded ... forty per cent saving ... effected by building on the multiple home system". The beds were attached to the rearside of a large door which revolved on a ball-bearing mechanism and the bed, stored vertically, was then lowered into position. Various pieces of custom made furniture were available for fitting onto the front of the panel, such as a mirror, bookcase, sideboard, writing desk or music cabinet for an extra cost of five pounds.

Despite the fact that Brooks Robinson advertised the system widely and produced a free brochure on the beds and the design of flats wall beds do not appear to have gained in popularity in Melbourne. Architect James H. Wardrop in a lecture to the RVIA members on flats in Australia, may have reflected a general community attitude when he said that "bed sittingrooms with wall beds were an anathema, and stated his preference for placing the bed in a sun porch off the livingroom."

ii. The semi-enclosed court.

The integration of the flat block and the site was given consideration only in the flat blocks of some quality, such as Mayfair, Hartpury Court and Le Chateau. Joseph Plottel's Garden Court (fig. 42), built c. 1918 in Marne Street, South Yarra, in name at least made some pretension towards the integration of flat block and garden. The flat blocks were developed in a
shallow "u" shape with the openside facing Marne Street. While the garden court may well have been attractive in its early years, (it is mostly concrete today), the area was shallow and bore little relation to the flats themselves, which was separated from the court by accessways or access balconies.

Arthur W. Plaisted's designs for Le Chateau of 1919 and Hartpury Court in 1923 followed a similar configuration but were handled much more successfully, especially at Hartpury Court (fig. 92). At Hartpury Court, the windows to the principal rooms allowed an unimpeded view over the garden as the external stairs and accessways, which had marred the integration of flats and garden at Garden Court, were placed and within the building itself.

While the flat/garden relationship at Hartpury Court and a limited number of other suburban flat blocks might seem unremarkable, it is important to remember that most of the flat blocks built up until about 1935 were single rectangular blocks placed upon the site with little regard for the relationship of the flat block to its external space. In many developments, the site coverage was very high and the amount of open space remaining after the flats, garages and laundries had been placed on the site was limited and was of little practical use.

Critics of flat development recognized this design weakness and were quick to condemn flat blocks on social grounds. The general feeling voiced throughout the 1920's seemed to indicate that a
man and family were better off with his own cottage and backyard.

On the other hand, a proponent of flat development, architect James H. Wardrop argued in 1922, that the aggregation of open spaces in flat development would provide "... a decent breathing space" when compared with the mean yard space available to the conventional small cottage.

Some blocks built between 1920 and 1935 attempted to enclose a reasonably sized pleasant garden space of reasonable size for communal use of the tenants, but this became more common when flat blocks followed a more linear pattern and when multiple blocks were developed on the one site. Cairo, Brookwood in Queens Road, Kia Ora in St. Kilda Road (fig. 95) and Bedford Court in Albert Park, all built in 1937, are good examples of this type.

The popularity in the mid 1930's of the semi-enclosed court pattern in the highly regarded suburbs of Toorak and Malvern, is understandable if the following points are considered.

1. In Toorak, flats were generally limited to a height of two storeys.
2. Toorak flat blocks were to contain no more than four or five flats in one building.
3. The outlook from each flat to the garden should not be prejudiced by the later erections of buildings on an adjoining block.

This combination of Prahran City Council by-laws (i & ii) and architectural good sense (iii) as outlined by architect Robert Hamilton in 1938, almost dictates the adoption of a low density, multi-block inward looking development, or in other words, the
semi-enclosed court. Hamilton frequently used this pattern of block layout in his large scale works in South Yarra, Toorak and Malvern, (figs. 78, 96, 97) with the enclosed area being used for vehicle and pedestrian use. The gardens were usually set out in a more formal manner than most and were more suited to looking upon, rather than active recreational use.

At Hillstan in 1950, Frederick Romberg developed the semi-enclosed court concept by linking a series of "u" shaped courts with a connecting spine running parallel to the Nepean Highway (figs. 38, 39). The north facing courts were separated from the drive on the site by the spine which acted as a barrier between pedestrian and vehicular areas.

iii The Enclosed Court
The enclosed central light court was common in English blocks throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. The central court plan was used in Melbourne at Gordon House, Majestic Flats and Kingsclere but the planning each case was utilitarian and was primarily intended as a light court and accessway rather than a garden court.

Eldern Flats, F.K. Cheetham's conversion and new flats of 1928 at Brighton, created a courtyard by closing off an area which had two flats and a verandah on the other three sides (fig. 73). The courtyard was mainly decorative and bore no particular relation to the living areas or remaining garden space on the site.

85
At Clendon of 1940, Roy Grounds arranged the flats on the site to form a north facing court closed off on the north side by a high brick wall on the site boundary (figs. 98, 99, 100). While the arrangement was similar to the semi-enclosed courts of the 1930's, there were significant differences at Clendon which distinguishes it from any earlier example.

1. The Clendon courtyard was not faced to the street but towards the side boundary to face the sun and ensure privacy.
2. The flats were pushed towards the perimeter of the site to form as large a central courtyard as possible.
3. All living rooms had large, floor to ceiling windows and glazed doors adjacent to the court to visually link outdoor and indoor space.

The integration of the courtyard with both the site and the flats provided a private, sun-filled open space without parallel in earlier flats. Grounds used the three blocks and the terminating high brick wall to create what is arguably Melbourne's first modern courtyard. It was a most influential concept, and the high brick walled courtyard to enclose space on the site perimeter retains its popularity to the present time, some forty years after its introduction at Clendon.

iv. Balconies.

While some of the large balconies in flats of the 1920's were used as sleep-outs the smaller balconies were sometimes placed to take advantage of a particular view. Wimmera, a flat block near the seashore at St. Kilda had large balconies facing the street but also had smaller balconies at the side of the building which
face towards the sea. In most cases, however, balconies were simply treated as a compositional element in the overall design and invariably face the street. This is particularly obvious in the common three bay, balcony/stair/balcony facades of the mid 1920's, of which Biltmore (fig. 101) and The Royal (fig. 102) are typical examples.

By the mid 1930's, the emphasis upon the benefits of sunshine to health resulted in some cases in a more careful regard for orientation. Overend's Cairo (fig. 81) faces all balconies to the north or east, as do Grounds' at Clendon Corner and Romberg & Shaw's at Newburn (fig. 63, 64).

The private balconies at Grounds' Clendon Corner and Quamby, are small but at Clendon, there are no private balconies at all. Grounds makes the innovative step of enlarging the balcony and integrating it with the accessway to form a large raised patio. The large combined sun balcony/accessway was later used by Grounds at Clendon (figs. 66, 67), Quamby and Moonbria and is characteristic of Grounds' flat design.

Frederick Romberg's Glenunga (figs. 103, 104) has large open balconies to all four flats and can be seen to be unequivocally part of modern life. This is clear from the generous scale of the balconies and its connection to the living room both with two doors to the balcony, and the visual link through the large area of floor to ceiling windows. The integration of private indoor and outdoor space is on scale not seen in flats prior to 1940,
and rarely since.

v. Sleepouts and Sunrooms

It was suggested in a 1916 article that Australian flat design suffered from following too closely British and American models without sufficient regard being paid to Australian climatic conditions. It was pointed out that in most cases Melbourne flats had not enough garden space and open air sleeping accommodation.

Also, James Wardrop noted in an article in 1922 that sun porches for sitting and sleeping out in the open air should be provided corresponding to the porch or verandah of the cottage. They should be square and as roomy as possible "... and not the usual useless three feet balconette."

The difference between balconies and sleepouts is difficult to define, but it appears that few flats specifically included sleepouts, while many had large balconies. There are some examples of 1920's flats where the balcony is semi-enclosed with solid walls on either side with windows built in. There are three good examples of this type in St. Kilda (Aldershot, (fig. 116) Leithen and Carlton Court), and no doubt there are others elsewhere. The only contemporary reference known to the author which refers specifically to sleepouts in flats tends to confirm that sleepouts and balconies were based on the same structure. Flats with two balconies at Mayfair had one of them screened to
provide sleeping-out accommodation. Arthur R. Barnes' flat
development Melville Court, which was built c. 1922, had large
sleepouts to the upstairs flats. These have the appearance of
what might now be regarded as large balconies which are built
into the block and under the main roof structure (fig. 94).

The notion of the balcony doubling as a sleepout is confirmed by
an examination of plans submitted in a student competition, held
in 1918 for the design of residential flats. Two designs
illustrated both showed balconies with direct access from the
bedrooms. One of the designs (fig. 8) submitted by J.H. Douglas
Overend, a pupil in the Melbourne office of S.H. Wilson confuses
the issue somewhat by positioning a window of the den of one flat
so that it overlooks the adjoining flats balcony. If this
balcony was meant to be used as a sleepout, the important
principle of privacy would have been seriously compromised. This
is more likely inept planning rather than a deliberate design
decision.

C.H. Ballantyne's flats of 1925 in Heyington Place, Toorak, Eric
C. Beedham's Coonett Flats (fig. 105) and G.J. Sutherland's Durham
Manor (fig. 106) all had a balcony off the bedroom which was
obviously intended to be used as a sleepout. Like the English
architects of the 1920's Australian architects became interested
in the health giving benefits of the sun. While it is not known
when sunrooms as adjuncts to flats began, James Wardrop mentions
in an article of 1922 that the Sun Porch could be a suitable area
for the placement of a bed, in preference to a folding wall bed
in the livingroom.

Blocks at St. Kilda particularly emphasized the health side of the flats. Durham Manor, designed in c.1931 by G.J. Sutherland, was promoted as having "... the latest home-planning ideas, sunshine unit kitchens and many other delightful features". Durham Investments advised tenants to secure flats without delay as the select locality, modernity and period atmosphere would ensure rapid filling of the block. The promoters put particular emphasis upon the roof garden and the

"... magnificently furnished sun-lounge, in which VITA GLASS is used for observation windows, following the latest continental practice. Here tenants can sun bathe in both summer and winter without losing the beneficial ultra-violet rays of the sun.... Durham Manor is the first block of flats in Melbourne to feature anything of the kind."13

As the advertisement pointed out, Vita Glass was developed to transmit a greater amount of ultra radiation than ordinary glass and allow long term sunbathing inside. However, the health enhancing effects of the glass was disputed and its popularity, in Britain, was short lived and there is little evidence of its use in Australia.

Best Overend would have been well aware of Vita Glass, in England and he advocated its use in his promotion of the Minimum Flat concept on his return. It is not known, however, whether the material was actually used in his flat projects.

The popularity of sunrooms was increasing early in the 1930's in
houses and the better quality flats. Archibald Ikin's The Royal
(fig. 102) in Robe Street, St. Kilda of 1933, had open balconies
to the front flats which overlooked Robe Street, but those of the
rear flats were glazed to form a sunroom. A neighbouring Robe
Street flat block, The Esplanade (fig. 107) of 1929 is the
earliest example known to the author where reference is made to
sunrooms within flats. While there may well be earlier examples,
each flat in The Esplanade had a sunroom and this was undoubtedly
rare in developments of this size.

Filling in Balconies.
It is likely that many balconies were converted into sunrooms in
the early 1930's as sleepouts lost, and the sunrooms gained
popularity. The large balconies, which were used as sleepouts
during the previous decade, were of obvious potential in
increasing lettable floor space. While these ad-hoc sunrooms
were not particularly attractive, those built in to the better
quality post depression flats were. Stuart Hall's block of flats
built at Armadale (figs. 109, 110) in 1940 were high quality
flats - and six of these had sunrooms. By 1942, building in
Melbourne had stopped due to the World War II, and when it
resumed after the war, the sunroom had gone.

vi Roof Terraces and Towers
The importance of location was always recognised in the siting of
flats and some flats were designed to take advantage of
particular locations. Panoramic views were always highly
regarded and observation decks are found in flats on the highest points in Toorak, such as Tsoshaan (fig. 14) and Caringal. (fig. 57) Towers were included in the St. Kilda blocks Canterbury, (fig. 56) and the Esplanade (fig. 107), and Aldershot, and I.G. Anderson's Avenue Court in Albert Park, to take advantage of the bay views.

The tower at W.H. Merrit's The Esplanade (fig. 107) while of obvious importance as a lookout, was also a formal compositional element in emphasizing the corner of the block. The design is similar to apartment blocks being built during the nineteen twenties on the west coast of America (fig. 108) where the Spanish Mission style was set for seaside locations.

The tower in the East Melbourne block Bradoc House (fig. 113), appears to have served the dual purpose of providing views while acting as a design device, while the reinforced concrete tower at Dorijo in Victoria Parade, East Melbourne (fig. 112) was designed as a purely decorative element floodlit at night "...to give significance and a certain identity to the buildings". The tower, often designed in the Norman or French Chateau style, enjoyed some popularity in the mid nineteen thirties where it was most often used to define the staircase. Gawler and Drummond, Stuart Hall and A.W. Plaisted (fig. 76) all used this style of tower in flat developments as did Robert Hamilton, who produced a handsome example of the type in his Toorak flats, Kings Lynn.
While J.W. Rivett's modern flat block 'Caringal' at Toorak has no distinct viewing tower in the manner of the early seaside developments, the design is obviously influenced by a desire to capitalize on the panoramic view available from the site. The development is divided into three blocks, a low rise garage block, a three story wing of flats and a dramatic six storey block (fig. 57) which has a viewing platform at the top. If this tower block is seen as only an elemental part of the overall site development, then it is arguable that it bears the same functional relationship to that of the towers in the earlier blocks and is guided by the same design philosophy.

While roof decks are associated with the flat roofs of Modern architecture, some of Melbourne's earliest flat building such as Alexandra Mansions (1912), Tsoshaan (1918) (fig. 114), and Lister House (1915), all had flat roofs for communal use. Some of these were regarded as observation decks and performed similar functions to towers, which were also a common inclusion in flat blocks. The roof terraces of the modern period were designed for the enjoyment of the sun and provided an alternative to ground level garden space for recreation and leisure use. Best Overend had a particular interest in roof gardens and used them at Cairo (fig. 81) and at a conversion in Cole Street, Elwood, (fig. 118) where the livingroom of an upper flat opened onto the roof of the ground floor flat below. This roof terrace was for private use while the uppermost roof level was for communal use.
Roy Grounds made use of the fall of the site at Quamby to use the same arrangement, where the roof of a lower flat became the roof terrace of the one above. Other notable examples of the period of roof terraces were at Romberg's Newburn (fig. 63) (part of which has since been enclosed), Lawson's Stratton Heights (fig. 120), Plaisted's Castle Towers (fig. 122) and the city block Alcaston House (fig. 17).

Alcaston House, Castle Towers and Plaisted's block of flats built in Acland Street (fig. 117), St. Kilda in 1939-40 were distinctive in that the roof terraces provide the only communal outdoor space to the blocks. There appeared to be an acceptance on the part the building authorities that communal roof terrace space was an acceptable alternative to providing open space at ground level.

An outstanding example of the integration of roof terrace space into the overall development occurs at Caringal, which was designed by John Rivett, and built between 1948 and 1952. The communal roof terrace is divided into three areas, the tea garden, the sun deck and the playground (figs. 123, 124). The playground was to be equipped with swings, a sand pit, see-saw, slide and roundabout and the whole area enclosed by a high mesh fence. The equipment no longer remains but the area is still defined by the mesh fence.

Of the numerous roof terraces incorporated into flat block design, none known to the author so clearly defines an intended
specific use of the area. In this respect, Rivett's design is closer to Le Corbusier's ideal of providing specific facilities on the roof of elevated blocks, thus freeing the ground space for an extension of the landscape. While the small scale of Caringal and say the massive Unite d'Habitation is markedly different, the concern with providing for the needs of the occupants is apparent in both, and the roof terrace becomes more than simply a general roof space for undefined purposes.

Most flat roofs of the 1930's were malthoid covered and generally were not maintained satisfactorily. The inevitable result was that the material broke down and the roofs leaked. There seems to have been two steps taken in remedying this fault - firstly the roof damage was repaired and secondly, access to the roof terraces was closed off, so that few remain in use today.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 7 - ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

1. "Flats and Flat Life", Real Property Annual, 1913, p.60
2. Ibid
3. RPA, 1918, p.44
4. RPA, 1919, p.52
5. T. Keating, "Luxury-Economy Bachelor Flats - New Enterprise in Modernism", Australian Home Beautiful, 1 April 1937, p.17
7. J.C. Dunlop, "Shall I Own a House or Rent a Flat!" - The Answer to an Oft-asked Question", Australian Home Builder, 15 Sept. 1925, p.44
9. Ibid, p.74
11. Wardrop, op. cit., p.78
13. Ibid.
15. Tower planned, but not built.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In 1950, flat design was heading in new directions. The prospect of a strong post-war recovery led parliamentarians towards a reconsideration of the problem of poor housing in the Melbourne area. A feasible answer to slum eradication was the building of high-density, high-rise housing. Press reports gave prominence to the views of architect advocates of high-rise housing, Leslie Perrott and C.M. Morgan. Ironically, one of the opponents of multi-storey housing was Frederick Romberg, whose large nine storey development, Stanhill, was opened in 1950. Romberg favoured row houses, and John Buchan and Best Overent also condemned multi-storey flats. The emphasis was placed on high-rise flats to replace slum dwellings.

A parallel may be drawn between the development of artisan or working-class housing in England and Australia. In England, nineteenth century workers' housing was provided by the Benevolent Societies and later, local government. Generally, the housing was continually developed and improved. In Melbourne, after the demise of Gordon House, little was done about providing working-class flats until the advocacy of the development of high-rise flats in the early 1950's.

It is interesting to note that Howard R. Lawson argued, in response to criticism of the height of his flats in the Alexandra Ave., South Yarra precinct, that large scale flat development
would help to overcome the slum housing problem by a process of osmosis.

We suggest that the solution to the slum problem lies in providing better housing for the artisan, and then moving the slum dwellers into the houses formerly occupied by the artisans.

Flats were being increasingly seen as something more than simply an alternative form of housing. As early as 1926, Hare and Hare's proposal for a large flat block in Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda was seen as an antidote to suburban sprawl. This aspect of high density housing and concentration of services was resuscitated in the 1950's and became part of the Housing Commission raison d'être throughout the 1960's and early 1970's. While conventional, private development continued, the Housing Commission's flats bore the brunt of public criticism which had plagued flat development since its beginning.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION


2. On the other hand, Stanhill may be more appropriately seen as the progenitor of the high-rise, private flat blocks now being built in the city and St. Kilda road.

3. Argus, 5 Sept. 1935, p.4

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PUBLISHED WORKS POST 1950


ARTICLES: PRE 1950


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"Flats and Home Life", Building, July 11, 1914.

"The Home or - the Flat?", Building, XV, 93., May 12, 1915, pp. 125-6.


THeses

APPENDIX ONE: LIST OF ARCHITECTS AND KNOWN FLAT PROJECTS.

ANDERSON, I.G.
1934  Avenue Court, 64 Victoria Ave., Albert Park.
1934  Ostende, 4 Seacombe Grv., Brighton Beach.
1937  Clowes, 4 Clowes St., South Yarra.
1937  Bridge Rd., Richmond.
1937  Cnr. Stanhope & Fraser Sts., Malvern.
1938  Cnr. Wellington Pde. & Garden Ave., East Melb.
1938  Dickens St., St. Kilda.

BALLANTYNE, C.H.
1925 Heyington Pl., Toorak.

BALLANTYNE & HARE
1922  Camboya Flats, Malvern Rd., Cnr Carmile Ave.
1922  Malvern Rd. & Iona Ave, Prahran.
1925  St. Kilda Road.

BALLANTYNE, J.F.W.
1929  64 Sutherland Rd., Armadale.

BARLOW & ASSOC.
1940  Malvern Rd., Malvern

BARNES, A.R.
1922  Melville Court, 453 Glenferrie Rd., Kooyong.

BARNET, N.

BATES, PEEBLES & SMART.
1911  Collins St., Melbourne.

BEAVER & PURNELL
1917  Tsoshaan Mansions, 777 Malvern Rd., Prahran.

BEEDHAM, E.
1926  Dandenong Rd.

BEEDHAM & WRIGHT

BILLING, PECK & KEMTER
1913  (Bremen Square?) East Melbourne.
BILLSON, E.F.
1930 Maritimo, Cnr. Toorak Rd. & Marne St., South Yarra.
1934 Cnr. Power Ave. & Toorak Rd., Malvern.
1934 Montalto, 39 Marne St., South Yarra.

BLACKETT & FORSTER
1920 Burnett St., St. Kilda.

BLUMIN & KAGIN
1941 97 Punt Rd., Windsor.

BUTLER & MARTIN
1929 Toorak.
1928 Toorak Rd., Toorak.

BUTLER, W.R.
1918 Studley Flats, 398-400 Toorak Rd., Toorak.

CAHN, L.G.
1934 Boncap, Fitzroy St., St. Kilda.

CARLETON & CARLETON
1936 Glenroy Rd., Hawthorn.

CHEETHAM, F.K.
1928 Eldern Flats, Cnr. Bay St. & Beach Rd., Brighton.

COWPER, C.A.
1922 400 Toorak Rd., Toorak

COWPER, MURPHY & APPLEFORD
1927 Bryn, Orrong Rd., Toorak.
1932 Middle Brighton.
1932 East Camberwell.

CRAIG, REYNOLDS & GARRETT
1936 Box Hill.

DIXON, O.F.
1936 Toorak Rd., near Rivers St.

DORNEY, J.H.E.
261-263 Williams Rd., Prahran.
St. Annes, Cnr. Toorak Rd. & Park St., South Yarra.
35 Docker St., Elwood.
1937 9 Coolullah Ave., Toorak.

EGGLESTON & OAKLEY
1916 South Yarra.
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<tr>
<td>ENGLAND, F.G.</td>
<td>1921 Hillingdon, 383 Glenferrie Rd., Toorak.</td>
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<td>EVANS &amp; WRIGHT</td>
<td>1913 Maisonnettes, 82 Vale St., East Melbourne.</td>
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<td>FERGUSON, L.P.</td>
<td>1939 Toorak Rd., South Yarra.</td>
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<td>FICK, V.</td>
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<td>1939 Salmon Ave., Essendon.</td>
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<td>FILDES, A.L.</td>
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<td>1932 Clovelly Court, 170 Barkers Rd., Hawthorn.</td>
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<td>1933 Clovelly Garden Apartments, Barkers Rd., Hawthorn.</td>
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<td>1936 Wattle Valley Rd., Canterbury.</td>
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<td>1936 Cnr. Wattle Valley &amp; Prospect Hill Rds., Camberwell</td>
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<td>1936 Cnr. Howard &amp; Chetwynd St., North Melbourne.</td>
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<td>1939 41 Caroline St., South Yarra.</td>
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GODFREY & SPOWERS
1912 (19?) Park St., South Yarra.

GRiffin, W.B.
1923 Langi, 579 Toorak Rd., Toorak.
83 Clendon Rd., Toorak. (not built)

GROUNDs, R.
1941 Clendon Corner, Clendon Rd., Armadale.
1941 Moonbria, 68 Mathoura Rd., Toorak.
1941 Quamby, 3 Glover Crt., Toorak.

HALL, S.W.
1936 Orrong Rd., Caulfield.
1936 Del Marie, 4 St. Leonards Ave., St. Kilda.
1939 Cnr. Whitehorse & Burke Rds., Camberwell.
1940 Cnr. Orrong Rd. & Lalbert Cres., Windsor.

HAMILTON & NORRIS
1936 Cnr. Royal Pde. & Walker St., Parkville.
1936 Langham House, 234 Domain Rd., South Yarra.
1938 Glenferrie Rd., Malvern.
1939 Sherwood, 246 Albert St., East Melbourne.

HAMILTON, R.B.
1933 Haddon Hall, 465 Toorak Rd., Toorak.
1934 Powlett St., East Melbourne.
1934 Moore Abbey, Marne St., South Yarra.
1935 Toorak Rd., Toorak.
1938 107 Mathoura Rd., Toorak.

HARE & HARE
1926 Berkeley Court, Fitzroy St., St. Kilda. (not built)

HENDERSON, A. & K.
1913 Canterbury Rd., St. Kilda. (not built ?)
1937 21 Spring St., Melbourne. (conversion)
   Alcaston House, Cnr. Spring & Collins St., Melb.

HOLZER, L.A.
1934 Davis Ave., Prahran. ?

HUDSON, P.B.
1932 South Yarra.

HUGHES, W.J.
1911 Cnr. High St. & Barkley St., St. Kilda.
Hughes & Orme
1940  Victoria St., Brighton.

Ikkin, A.
1930  Cnr. Hennesy Ave. & Tennyson St., St. Kilda.
1933  The Royal, 1 Robe St., St. Kilda.

Ingpen, E.C.
1934  100 George St., East Melbourne.

Inskip & Butler
1906  Melbourne Mansions, 91-101 Collins St., Melb. (dem)

Irwin & Stevenson
1926  St. Kilda.

Johnson, H.R.
1920  Yurnga, 36 Brighton Rd., Elwood.
1933  77 Park St., St. Kilda.

Jorgenson, O.H.
1938  Elsmere Rd., Prahran.

Keogh, E.J. & J.B.

King, R.M. & M.H.
1932  Boyanda & High Sts., East Malvern.
1936  Kensington Hall, Kensington Rd., South Yarra.
1936  Glenferrie Rd., Toorak.
1939  Marine Pde., St. Kilda.
1939  Elwood.
       Irymple Ave., Malvern.
1939  Lewis Drv., Malvern.

Klingender, F.L. & K.
1925  Mathoura Rd., Toorak.

Lawson, H.R.
1918  The Ivel, 322 Walsh St., South Yarra.
1940  Stratton Heights, 63 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra.
1940  Maritama, 89 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra.

Leith & Bartlett
1940  2 Drake St., Brighton.

Levy, L.
1926  79 Park St., St. Kilda.
1930  79 Beaconsfield Pde., St. Kilda.
LONG, E.H.
1930 Rothesay Flats, Sidwell St., Balaclava.

LORD, C.H.
1934 Evans Crt., Toorak.
1937 Victoria Ave., Camberwell.

McKAY, F.S.
1940 Riversdale Rd., Hawthorn.

McMILLAN, A.
1934 Evans Crt., Toorak.
1937 Victoria Ave., Camberwell.

MARSH & MICHAELSON
1936 Edsell Ave., Toorak.
1938 2 Coolullah Ave., Toorak.
1939 Bowen Cres., South Melbourne.
1939 106 Toorak Rd., South Yarra.
1941 Rancil Flats, 1 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra.

MARTIN, M.
1925 Cnr. Domain Rd. & Caroline St., South Yarra.
1935 271 Domain Rd., South Yarra.
1936 216-218 Domain Rd., South Yarra.
129 Domain Rd., South Yarra.

MARTIN & TRIBE
1939 Kenley Estate, Toorak.
1939 Cnr. Albany & Kooyong Rds., Toorak.

MELDRUM, P.
1938 Avoca St., South Yarra.

MERRITT, W.H.
Wellington Pde. & Ordone Ave., East Melbourne.
1928 Marine Pde., St. Kilda.
1929 22 Esplanade, St. Kilda.
1932 Bourke St., Camberwell.
1936 Toorak Rd., Toorak.
1936 Victoria St., St. Kilda.

MEWTON & GROUNDS
1936 Bellaire, 3 Cowderoy St., St. Kilda.

MEWTON, G.

MORIARTY, F.
1939 Brighton Rd., St. Kilda.

MURFETT, P.J.W.
1928 Georgian Court, 27 George St., East Melbourne.
NELSON, S. & M.S.
1940  40 & 42 Burnett St., St. Kilda.

OAKDEN & BALLANTYNE
1917  Lister House, 61-65 Collins St., Melbourne. (dem)

O'CONNOR, P.J.
1926  Kingsclere, 44 Fitzroy St., St. Kilda.
1932  George St., East Melbourne.
1934  Fiolacleugh Ave., Brighton.

OVEREND, B.
1938  Edithvale.
      Cole St., Elwood.

PEARCE, T.W.
1924  Thorlinda Mansions, 106 Wellington Pde., East Melb. (dem)

PECK & KEMPTER
1938  Flemmington Rd., North Melbourne.

PITT, W.

PITT & WALKLEY
1921  Santa Rosa, 6 Riversdale Rd., Hawthorn.
1921  Santa Lucia, 4 Riversdale Rd., Hawthorn.

PLAISTED, A.W.
1923  Hartpury Court, Milton St., St. Kilda.
1936  Kensington Rd., South Yarra.
1938  Stanhope Court, Toorak.
1938  Park Towers, 19-29 Adam St., South Yarra.
1939  45 Acland St., St. Kilda.

PLOTTEL, J.
1912  Victoria Pde., East Melbourne.
1918  Garden Court Flats, Cnr. Marne St., & Domain Rd.,
      South Yarra.
1934  Cnr. Toorak Rd. & Evans Crt., Toorak.

PURNELL, A.W.
1919  Malin St., Kew.
1933  St. Kilda St., Brighton Beach.
1935  St. Kilda Rd.
PURNELL & PEARCE
1934 Anderson St., South Yarra.
1937 Hornsby St., Prahran.
1938 (71) Queens Rd. (dem)
1939 Craignethen Flats, Mason St., Hawthorn.
1939 Cnr. Toorak & Glenferrie Rds., Malvern.
1940 Cnr. Mason & Church Sts., Hawthorn.
1940 Riversdale Rd., Hawthorn.
1941 194 George St., East Melbourne.

REED, L.J.W.
1933 Cnr. Glenferrie Rd. & Moorakyne St., Malvern.

REYNOLDS, D. & PARTNERS

RIVETT, J.W.
1952 Caringal, 4 Tahara Rd., Toorak.

ROBINSON, J.R.
1925 Nicholson St., Fitzroy.

ROMBERG, F.
1940 2 Horsburgh Grv., Armadale.
1949 Parklands Flats, 2-4- Grattan St., Hawthorn.
1950 Stanhill, 34 Queens Rd., South Melbourne.
1950 Hillstan, Nepean Hwy., Brighton. (dem.)

ROMBERG & SHAW
1940 Newburn, 30 Queens Rd., South Melbourne.

RUCK, E.J. & C.L.
1919 Kelvin Mansions, Dandenong Rd., Armadale.
Mayfair, Marne St., South Yarra.

SCARBOROUGH, ROBERTSON & LOVE
1939 Toorak Rd., South Yarra.

SCHEFFERLE & DAVIS
1939 147-149 Domain Rd., South Yarra.

SCHRIEBER & JORGENSON
1917 Midford St., St. Kilda.

SEARROOK & FILDES
1936 Cnr. Millswyn St. & Domain Rd., South Yarra.
1938 921 High St., Armadale.
1938 473 St. Kilda St., Elwood.
1941 164 Albert St., Prahran.

SHERRARD, L.H.
1939 Fewater Rd., Hampton.
1939 Wiseman St., Hawthorn.
STEVENSON & BOGLE
1940 Docker St., Richmond.

SUTHERLAND, G.J. & B.
1936 Grimwade Court, Chaddersley Ave., Caulfield.
1937 Lockerbie Court, Lockerbie Crt., Caulfield.
1938 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra.
1939 St. Leonards, St. Leonards Crt., South Yarra.
1939 Alexandra Ave., South Yarra.

SUTHERLAND, G.J.
1931 Durham Manor, 12 Acland St., St. Kilda. (dem)

SUTTON, B.
1937 Maple Grv., Prahran.

TAPPIN, GILBERT & DENNEHY
1887 Queen Bess Row, 72-76 Hotham St., East Melbourne.

TAYLOR, SOILLEUX & OVEREND
1933 Cnr. Lyall St. & Oxley Rd., Hawthorn.
1936 Cairo, Nicholson St., Fitzroy.
1936 Canterbury Rd., Toorak.
1938 635 Malvern Rd., Malvern.
1939 The Avenue, Parkville.

TAYLOR, R.M.
1932 Abbotsford.

TOMBS & DURRAN
1910 Fawkner Mansions, 250 Punt Rd., Prahran.

TOMBS, W.A.
1917 Inkerman St., St. Kilda.

TOMPKINS, H.W. & F.B.
Cnr. Irving & Devorgilla Rds., Toorak.

TRUGION, G.F.
1919 29 Gurner St., St. Kilda.

TUNBRIDGE & TUNBRIDGE
Fitzroy St., St. Kilda. (not built)

WARDROP, J.H.
1934 Malvern.

ZIEBELL, E.H.J.
1936 Vale St., St. Kilda.
Author/s: Sawyer, Terry

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