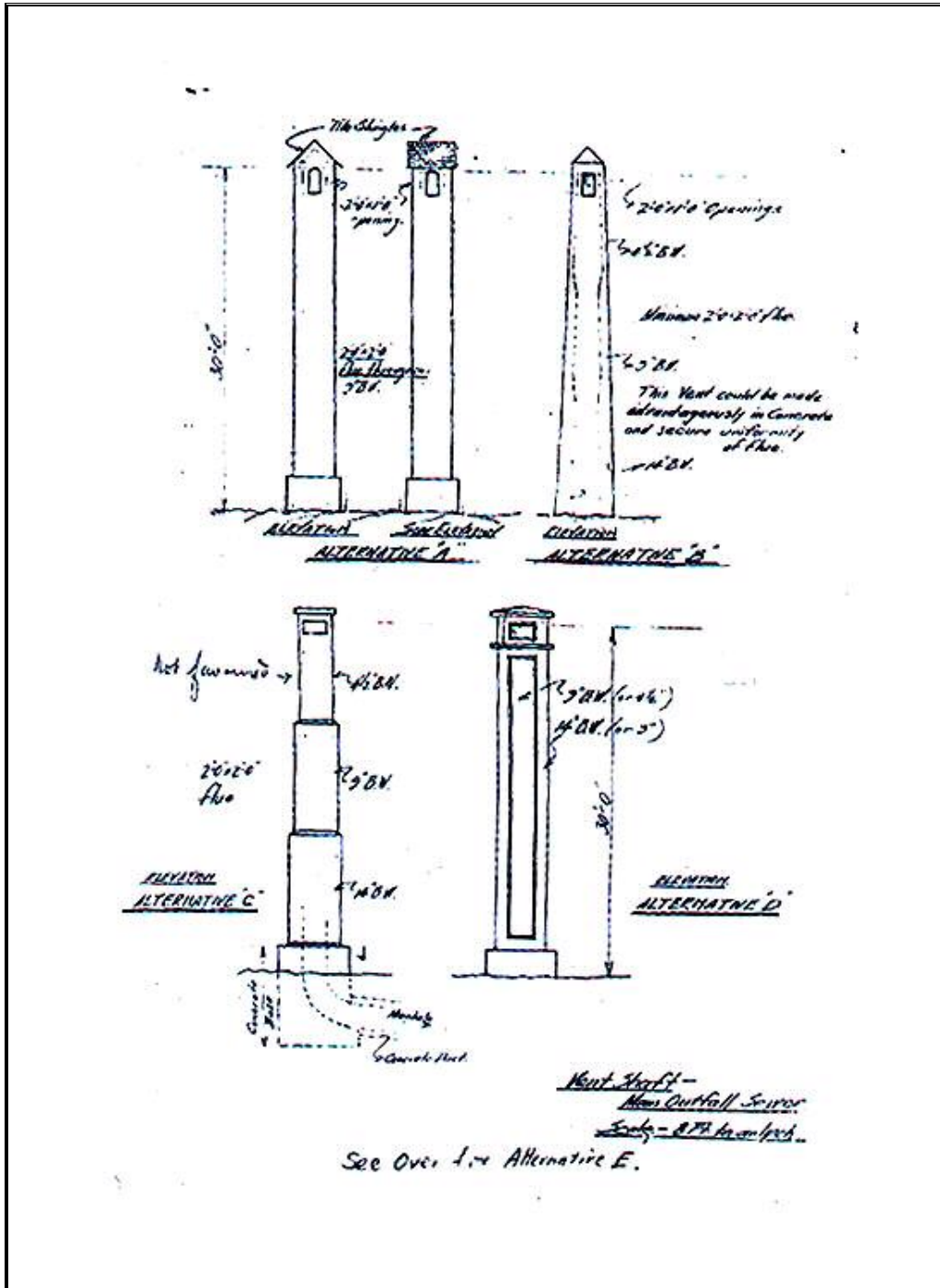
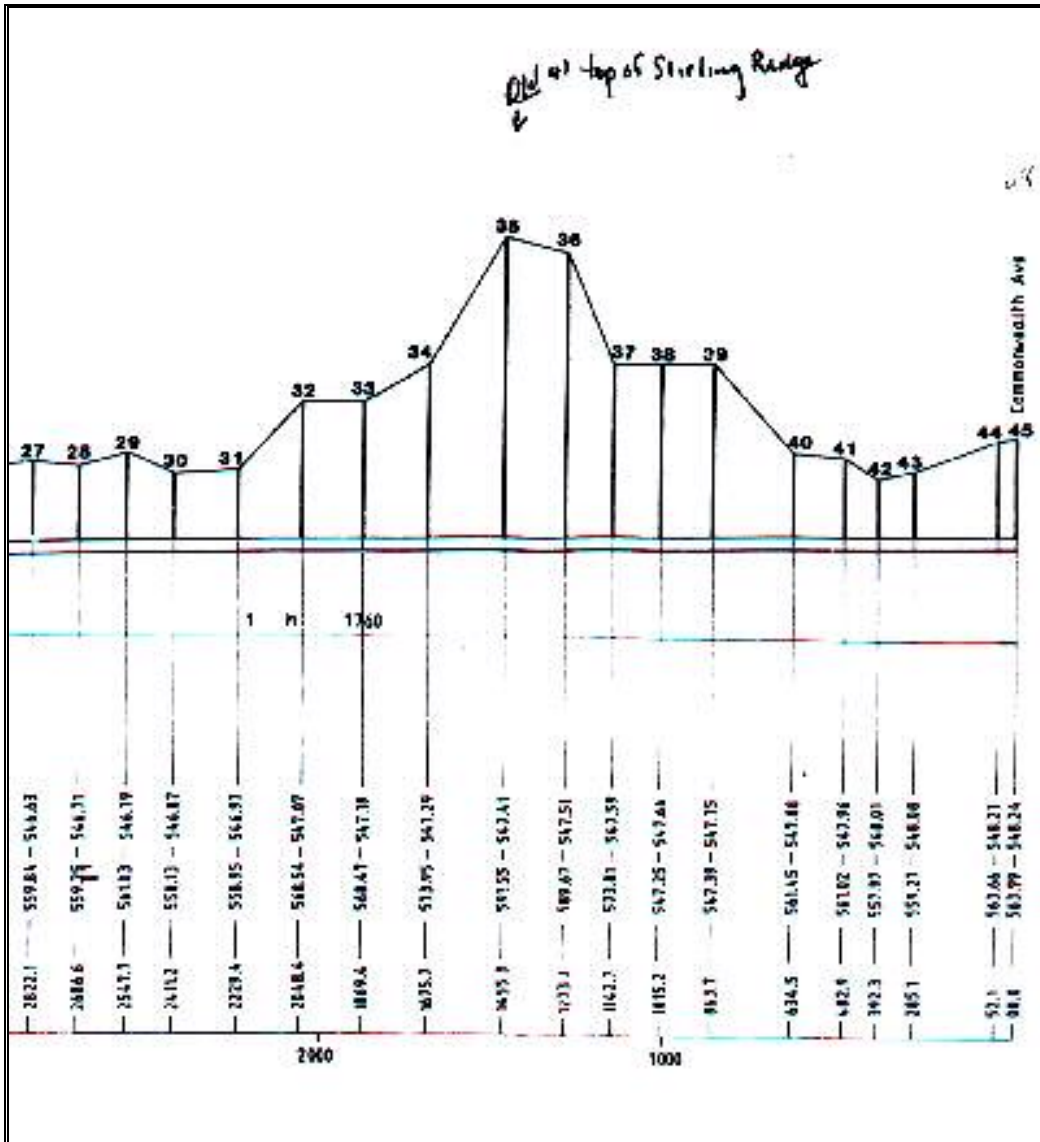


**WESTLAKE SEPTIC TANKS - DESIGN OF SEWER VENT & THE WORK IN THE WESTLAKE AREA ETC
PART THREE**

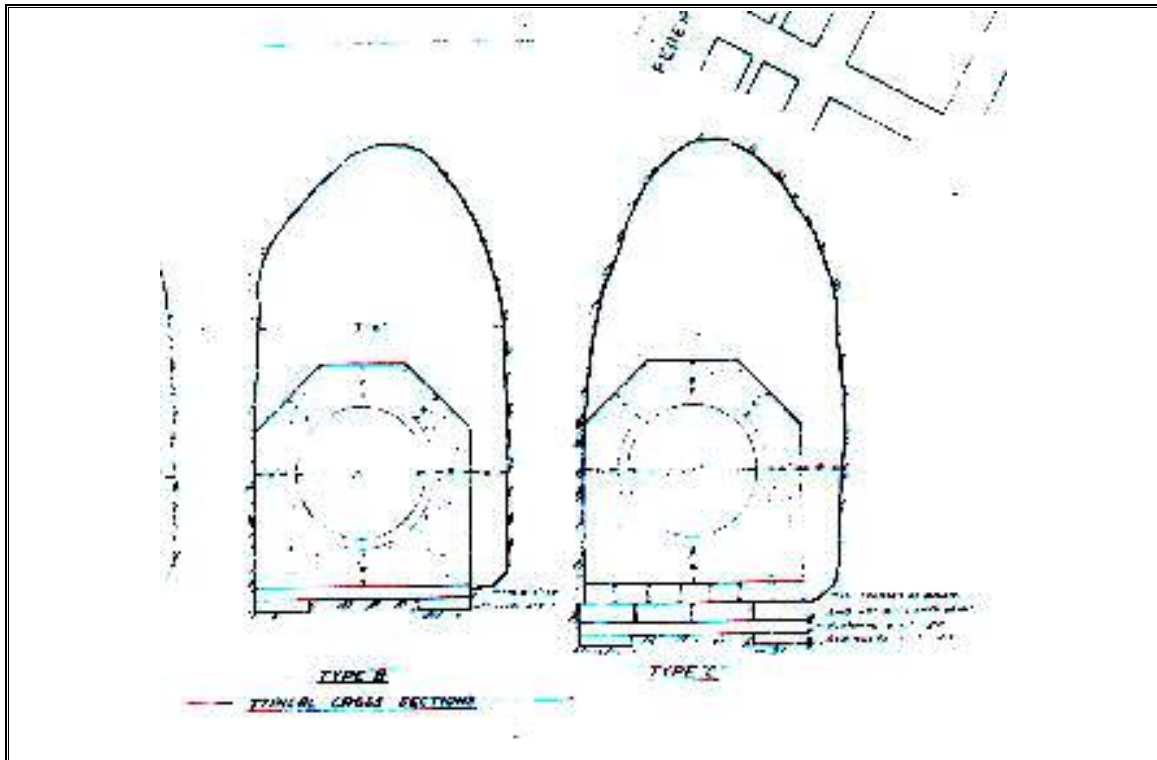


Designs for the sewer vents. The final choice was D.



Detail of Main Outfall Sewer Longitudinal Section. No 35 on top of Stirling Ridge is the old No 41. The numbering was changed in the post World War 2 period. This is the deepest shaft in the system and the silver lode was found about forty feet down from the surface. The lettering on the far right says *Commonwealth Avenue*. The works start on the left hand side - Yarralumla.

Below are two examples of tunnel types. The tunnels were constructed from concrete using river rocks. Men who worked in the tunnel at times had to work waist high in water and at one time the tunnel in the Yarralumla area had to be moved when the work broke into one of the many limestone caves.



On the top of Stirling Ridge are a number of concrete slabs and a concrete trench. These are part of the sewer workings area. Here the steam driven traction engine lowered and raised men into and from the tunnel and the mullock was brought up to be transported in skips along a narrow gauge rail to a point where it was tipped out. The area is marked by a concrete post. Left is a photograph of the trench on top of Stirling Ridge— taken circa 1996.



The Australian Archives contain a number of documents that tell the story of the construction of the sewer tunnels by sewer miners. The Sewer Men were probably the first to strike in the FCT for better conditions.

A document in Australian Archives AH6270/1 E2/27/2765 written by AG O'Connell, Chief Civil

Engineer and dated 5th March, 1923 gives an indication of the men required at that time for the construction work on the sewer. This report would include those working at Westlake. The Sewer Camp in The Gap in 1925 had 100 single men. The report in part reads: *The length of this section is 10,500 feet. when the estimate for this work was originally made, the indications, obtained from the workings on outfall sewer, were that the tunnel could be driven economically by hand drilling, excepting for a distance of about 1,000 feet. The estimate given, owing to increased cost of working, had to be raised to 96,000 pounds. The work on the outfall sewer had now demonstrated that, excepting in cases of broken ground or drift, drilling machines driven by compressed air have to be used, and the following estimate based upon this knowledge has been prepared, -*

Men required (not including men required for lining).

(a)	(b)	(c)
miners	36 miners in face	12 scrabblers
18 bracemen	36 miners in shaft	4 truckers
2 blacksmiths	9 scrabblers	6 bracemen
2 strikers	36 bracemen	4 winchmen
2 carpenters	18 truckmen	2 blacksmiths
1 labourers	4 blacksmiths	2 strikers
2 concrete hands	18 winchmen	2 carpenters
3 electricians	4 strikers	2 labourers
3 fitters	4 compressor drays	2 horse & drays
2 horse & draymen	2 carpenters	2 shift bosses
1 shift boss	2 labourers	1 electrician
1 foreman	2 horse & draymen	1 fitter
1 clerical labourer	1 powder monkey	1 foreman
1 electrician	1 electrician	1 clerical labourer
	1 fitter	
	2 shift bosses	
	1 foreman	
	1 clerical labourer	
(Total) 85	(Total) 178	(Total) 42

18 faces would be open, working alternately. Two compressors would be necessary. One main camp.

The foregoing list of men does not include the men required for concreting. The price for concreting is stated in the estimate at per lineal foot based on the actual cost in outfall sewer.

The number of faces mentioned is a minimum: - whenever possible, without increasing the number of miners, additional faces, up to a maximum total of 26 will be worked.

The job will take 18 months to complete. The work will be divided into three portions -
(a) 10 Weeks Fixing Plant, Sheds, etc and sinking shafts.
(b) 10 Weeks Tunneling and Concreting.
(c) 18 Weeks Finishing off work and cleaning up.

Wages:

450 pounds per week for 10 weeks 4,500 pounds
940 pounds per week for 50 weeks 4,700 pounds
228 pounds per week for 18 weeks 4,104 pounds (Total) 55,604 pounds"

The document continues with amounts for linings of tunnel, shafts, electric current, explosives, timber for shafts and tunnel, steel, tools, plant, supervision, execution, ladders, water, camps mess room, firewood, general timber & maintenance, general repair materials, smith, carpenter, electric mains, piping - air, traction, candles, oil, waste, lamps, boots etc. The costs did not allow for holiday pay, contingencies and did not include a supply of manhole covers, penstocks and pipes, but allowed for the fixing of same.

Another Australian Archives document A6270/1 E2/29/1955 dated 25th November, 1924 discusses the sewer work during the period the men worked on the sewer at Westlake. It follows:

"The general proposals for dealing with the Sewerage of Canberra were investigated by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works in 1915, and it reconsidered an outfall scheme. The main construction of the first section viz Outfall Sewer, being proceeded with accordingly.

Already authorized - Main Outfall Sewer, Main Intercepting Sewer, Southern Branch Sewer. To be looked at - Northern Branch Sewer, Sewerage Treatment Works. [The latter] to be constructed at end of Main Outfall Sewer and to provide for dealing with the whole of the city sewerage by gravitation... Essential completed by the time Parliament transferred to Canberra, as without them, the general sewerage scheme cannot be of...

Estimated Cost - Northern Branch Sewer - 82,000 pounds, Sewerage Treatment Works 37,000 pounds...

The Westlake Section of the Sewer Works 1922-1925

No 3 Sewer Camp was established in The Gap at Westlake in 1922 and closed in mid 1925. Single men lived in tents that ran along the hillside now called Stirling Ridge, Stirling Park. The first Mess Caterer was Arthur Freeman Sn. He with his wife and children lived in rooms off the Mess Room. Following the departure of the Sewer Camp the Mess was converted into a Hall for use by those living in the Westlake cottages in The Gap.

Some of the married sewer workers such as the Hawke and Thompson families who lived at Westlake were also sewer men. A number of them were in Jerry Dillon's football team known as - The Sewer!



Above: The Thompson brothers on the Westlake tennis court December 1927. The boys were sewer men. In the background are cottages 61,62 and the Westlake Hall.

Jimmy O'Reilly of 38 Westlake wrote a song about the team. It began:

*The Captain's name was Eddie Hawke
Five-eight was brother Bert
When they got the ball to Winger Beadman
A try became a cert...*

[Remembered by Adrie Callan - nee O'Neill]



Above: Jeremiah Dillon (the only one not wet) in one of the tunnels. The photograph is one of the Mildenhall Collection in Australian Archives Canberra. At times the sewer men had to work in water up to their waists. In the centre are the faces of men in the other section of the tunnel. Jerry Dillon started work on the sewer from 1915. He also was put off in 1916 when work stopped. Following the resumption of work in 1921 he again took up the position of Foreman of the Sewer Works. He died in 1929. Between 1922 and the time of his death he lived in a small brick cottage in Hutchins Street - now opposite the Yarralumla Shops. It is in Section 64 and has little changed from the time that Jeremiah and his wife lived there.

Another story mentioned by Haven Thompson of 37 Westlake - told by his father, a sewer miner - is about the fault line that runs through Westlake. It started in the vicinity of O'Connor and was very sandy.

On Stirling Ridge and in The Gap, Westlake there are reminders of the sewer men who lived and worked in the area. Particularly on the sites of the humpies there are remnant gardens and nearby a number of rubbish dumps. The humpies - cottages - were erected across the hillside of Stirling Ridge. The single men's tents were below. Amongst the rubbish that included broken beer and cordial bottles there were a number of personal items such as a brass *AUSTRALIA* badge that once graced the shoulder of an army uniform, a brass button with Edward VII on it, the remains of a chamber pot, the clasp of a woman's handbag, brown lino, nails etc. The beer bottles were in the main *NSW BOTTLE COMPANY* with dates ranging from 1916 to 1925 and Email Resch. The cordial bottles ranged from Schweppes, to Sheekey and a few early cod bottles produced by George Morton of Queanbeyan with his EW O'Sullivan key stone impressed on the glass. The largest number of bottles were condiment with a few perfume and ink. Horse shoes and small metal plates used on the bottoms of boots were also found along with worn out boots that had been mended until the bottoms were more nails than leather. On one site are a few rusted kerosene tins filled with concrete and nearby a number of light purple iris plants bloom each year.



Far left: Some of the bottles dug up from various dumps in Stirling Park (Westlake). The one in the foreground is one of many different *Schweppes* bottles and those in the background – condiment. The small one on the left hand side is an ink bottle. On

the right is a detail of one of the old trees in the park.

Nearly every old tree in old Westlake bears scars of man's use. Some have had branches cut off (see above) for building purposes and others to fuel the steam driven traction engine. Many have bolts and nails driven into them and one still has around its grey dead trunk the metal *rope cable* used to pull it

over. Some of these trees bear the scars of earlier use by Ngunawal people - the traditional owners of the land.



Left is one of the scarred trees on top of Stirling Ridge. Others are found in the grounds of the French Embassy and the residence of the South African High Commission. These old scribbly gums are over two hundred years old - probably closer to three



hundred years.



Above and left are two photographs of sewer workers on Stirling Ridge. The dump of earth was still there when I was a child. The colour of the earth was grey. The dump between 28 and 53 Westlake was a light orange colour.