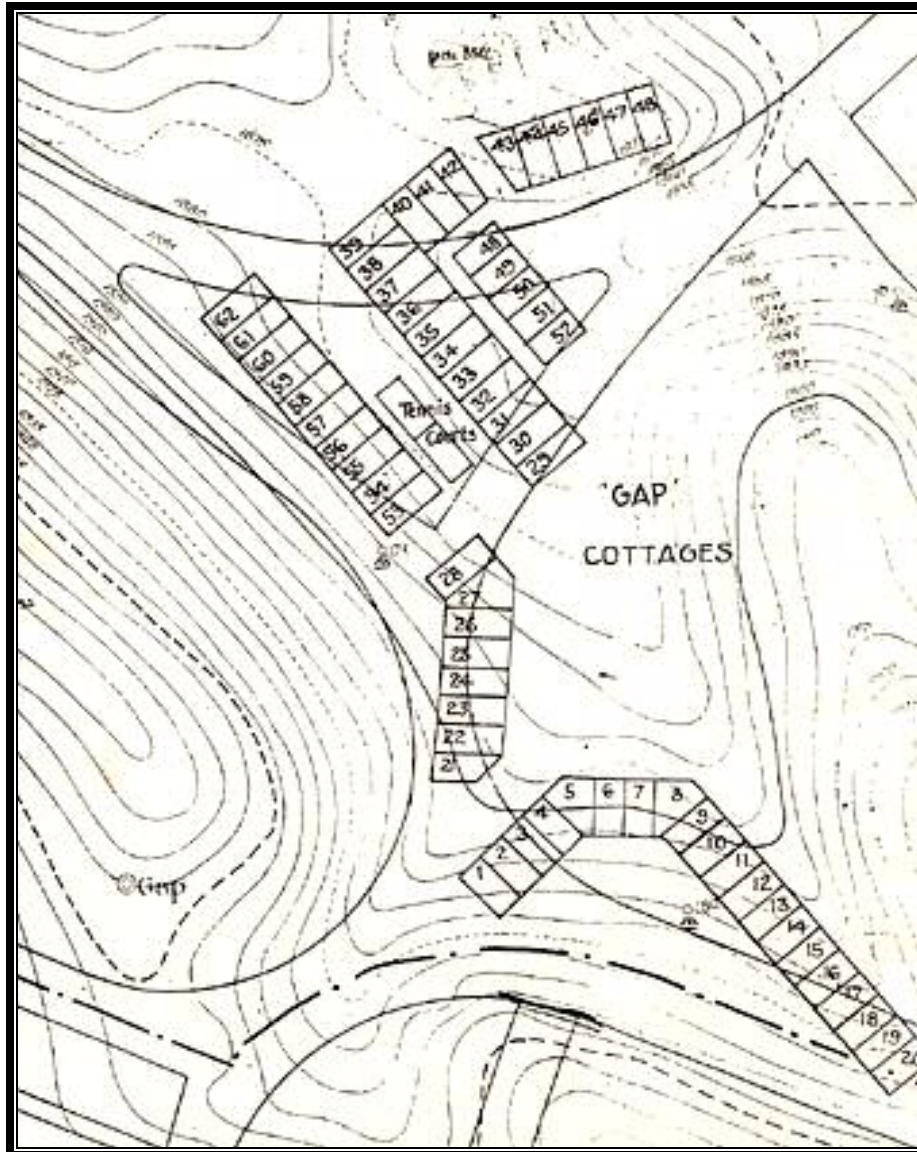


## Part Four WESTLAKE COTTAGES IN THE GAP

HM Rolland, Government architect was asked in the early 1920s to design small timber temporary cottages for use by married tradesmen.<sup>1</sup> He based his design on houses constructed at Westlake in 1922 by John Howie for use by his workmen. The first of the Rolland cottages were constructed in Westlake in 1924 to house men working on the construction of the Provisional Parliament House.



<sup>1</sup> The reason for the construction of workmen's cottages instead of expecting men to build their own humpies came about because of the shortage of tradesmen who preferred to remain in the capital cities where a building boom was under way. Following the erection of cottages at Westlake by the FCAC another 15 were built at Acton. In 1925 the FCC arranged for 100 cottages of the same type to be built at Causeway.

The plan of the cottages (see previous page) show the setting out of the sites of the cottages in *The Gap* at Westlake. These cottages were placed next to the old tracks through The Gap. Cottage 21 was built but was not there for long. One story says that it burnt down and the other is that it was moved because it was flooded whenever the nearby creek filled to overflowing after heavy rain. The first 52 houses were built and tenanted by 1924. The last 10 – numbers 53 to 62 were built in 1926 on the site of the tents of No 3 Sewer Camp. The above map shows the tennis courts between the line of 53-62 and 29-39. They were not built there. Instead the court was built near the hall. The Westlake Hall was in the area above 62 Westlake and the tennis court was opposite 39 Westlake.

The old roads in the area were well used by the builders who constructed the temporary accommodation at Westlake. Two of the roads that entered *The Gap* came down two



gullies and then joined to continue in the area in front of 29 - 39 Westlake and across the hill and thus account for the

odd arrangement of the Westlake cottages. Following construction on the US Embassy in the early 1940s the main entrance into the Gap moved from the area of 1 Westlake to 20. The first house in The Gap at Westlake was tenanted in March 1916 - Francis Clowry and the last one to go, 29 tenanted by G Sykes went in 1965. The tennis court marked on the above map was actually built on the land opposite 39 and 40 Westlake. The cottages were painted green to blend in with the landscape. The above photograph shows 16-13 in the area of modern Darwin Avenue. The following diagram shows the cottage design.

# PROPOSED WORKMEN'S DWELLING CANBERRA F.T.

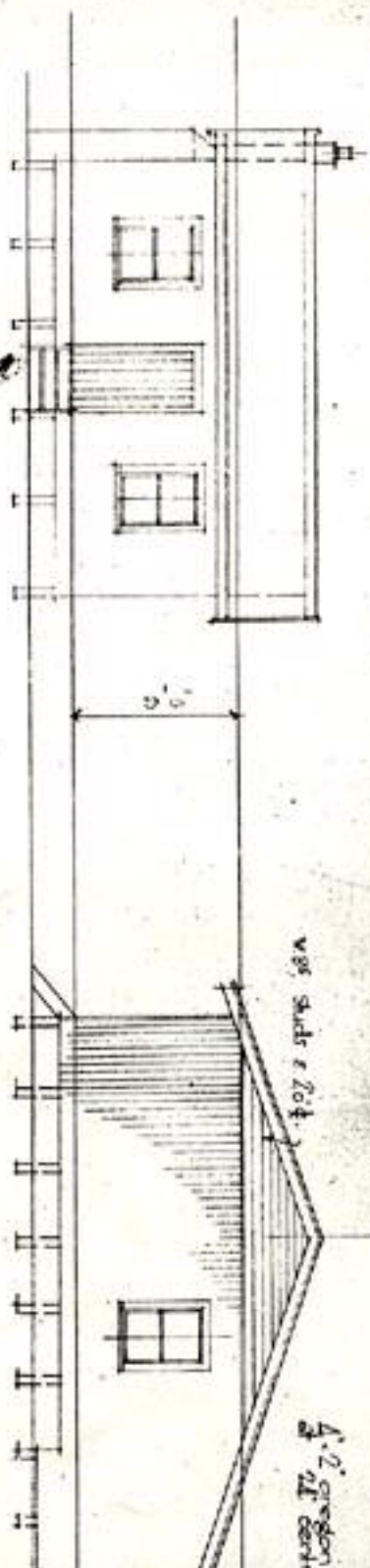
SCALES EIGHT FEET AND ONE FOOT TO AN INCH

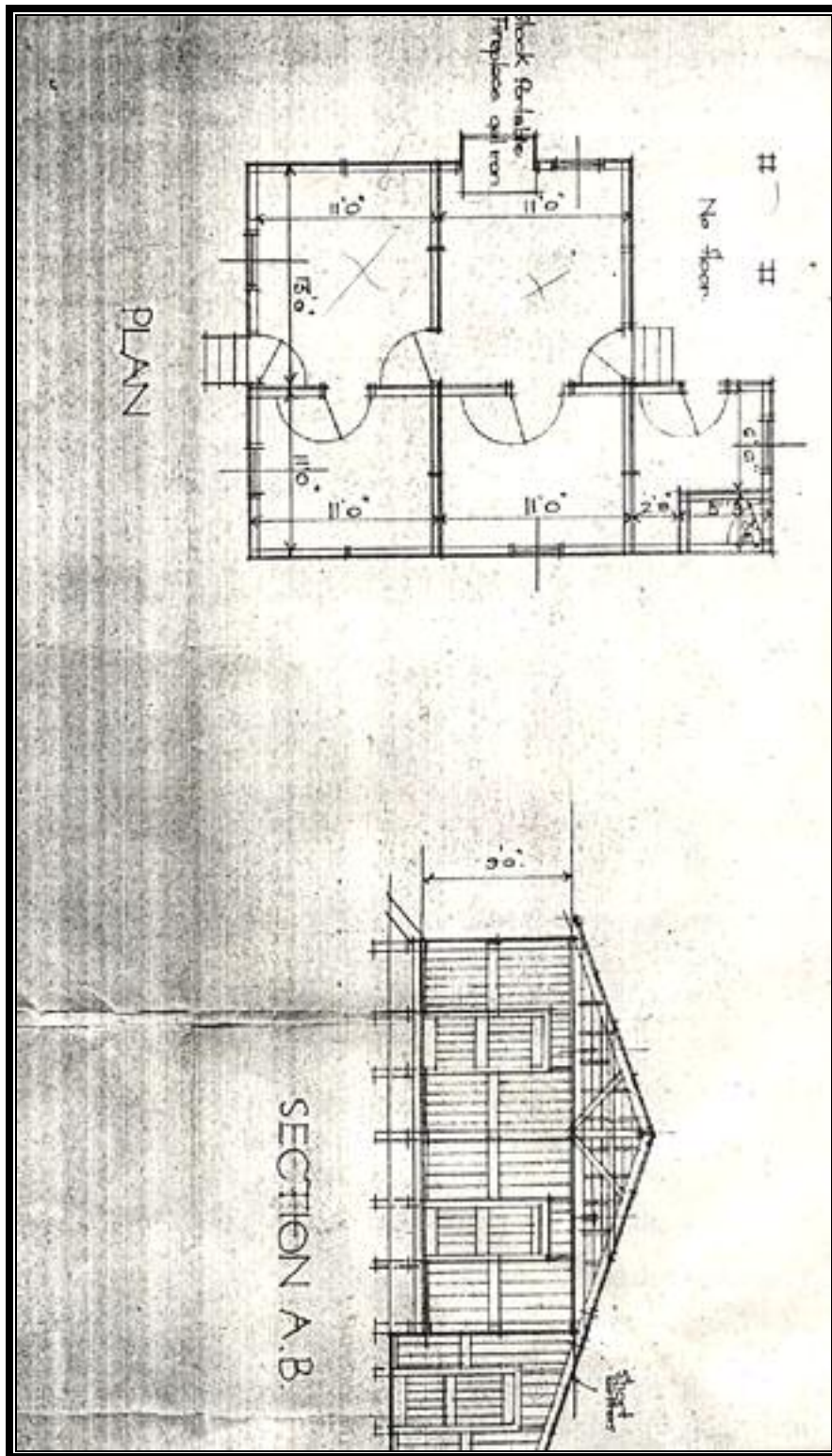
Department of Works & Railways  
Works Branch Canberra

*John Randall*  
Works Designer

FRONT ELEVATION

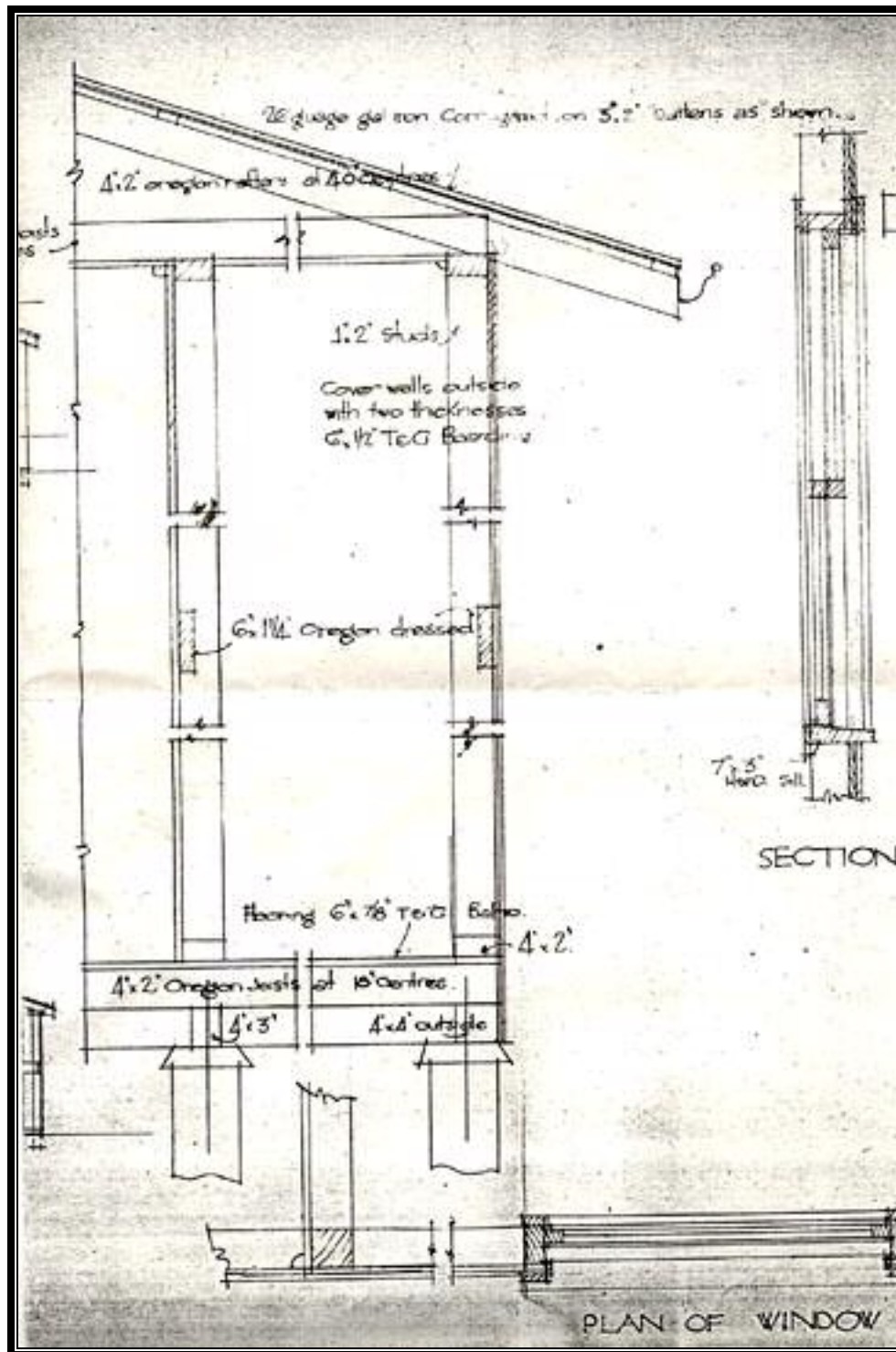
SIDE ELEVATION





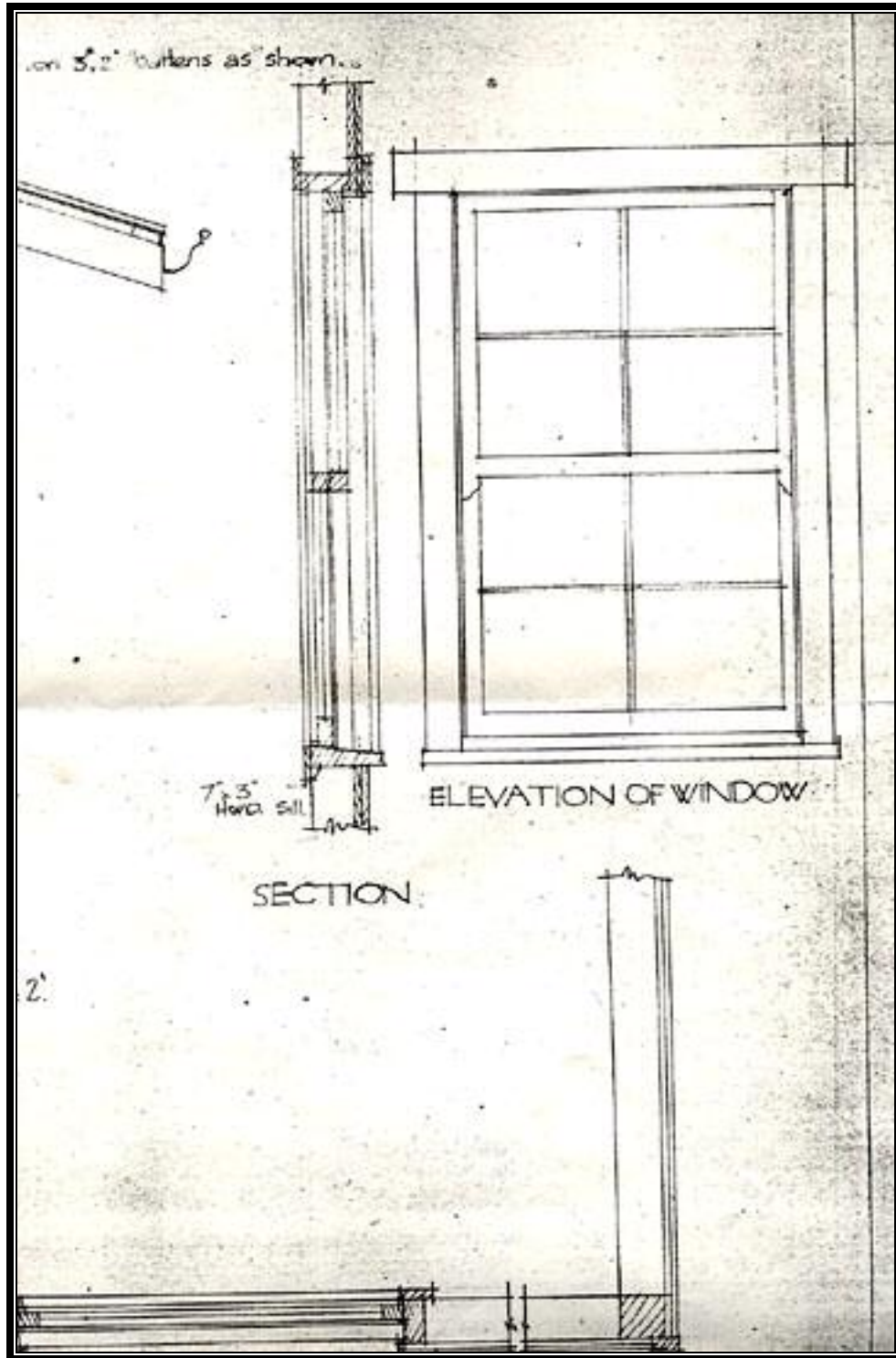
The above plan, designed by HM Rolland shows the basic shape of the house - a square divided into four with another small area at the rear that contained the laundry (wood fired copper & concrete tubs), tin bath fitted into the 2ft wide area was filled from a cold

water tap and hot water from the copper, and lavatory with separate entrance. Many people added another room off the back of their cottages.



The timber structure was unlined and heating was provided with a pot belly stove in the living room and a wood fired stove in the kitchen. Later the pot belly was replaced with

a tin backed fire place that allowed the heat to go out the chimney. By the time my family moved into 27 Westlake in 1941 the once dark green exterior of the cottages were reduced to a flat dull grayish green. The roof was corrugated iron. The piers under the buildings were concrete - about six inches square.







Above: Cottages (L-R) 18 to 13 in 1924 (Todd family photograph). Note the vertical timber used for facing and the pipe coming from the front room that served the cast iron heater in that room. By the time we moved to Westlake the front room pot belly stove had been replaced with a tin backed fire place that allowed to heat to escape.



Above is a photograph showing the construction of cottages 21 to 27. The photograph was loaned courtesy of the McCulloch family who lived in 8 Westlake for a time.



Left: one of the O'Rourke girls standing outside her home at 45 Westlake. The tin chimney was added to the cottages at the later date when an open fireplace was added to the front rooms of the cottages. Below a photograph showing the finished cottages in 1924

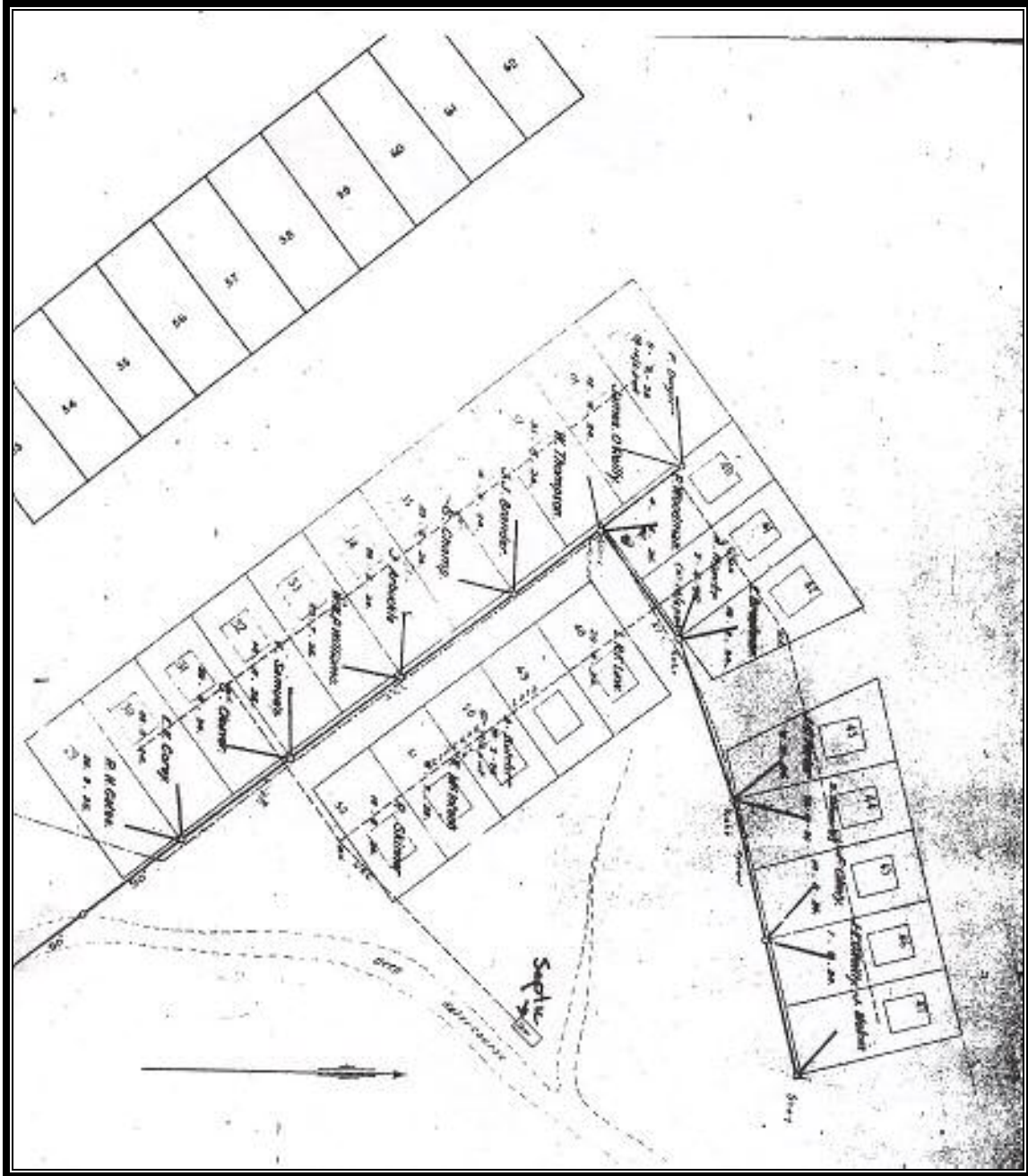


Below left: Ilma Kein outside 32 Westlake. In the backgrounds is the dump (mullock dump from the sewer tunnel below). On the right is Ann Austin feeding Lambert. In the background is 28 Westlake. The dump is out of the picture on the left.



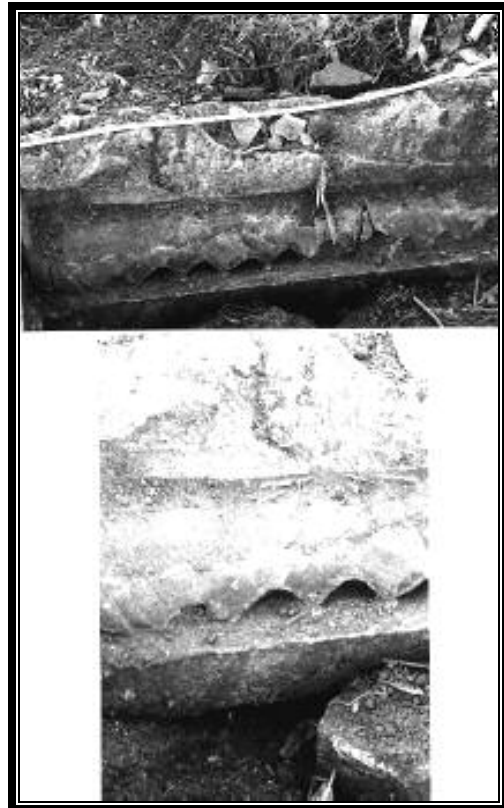
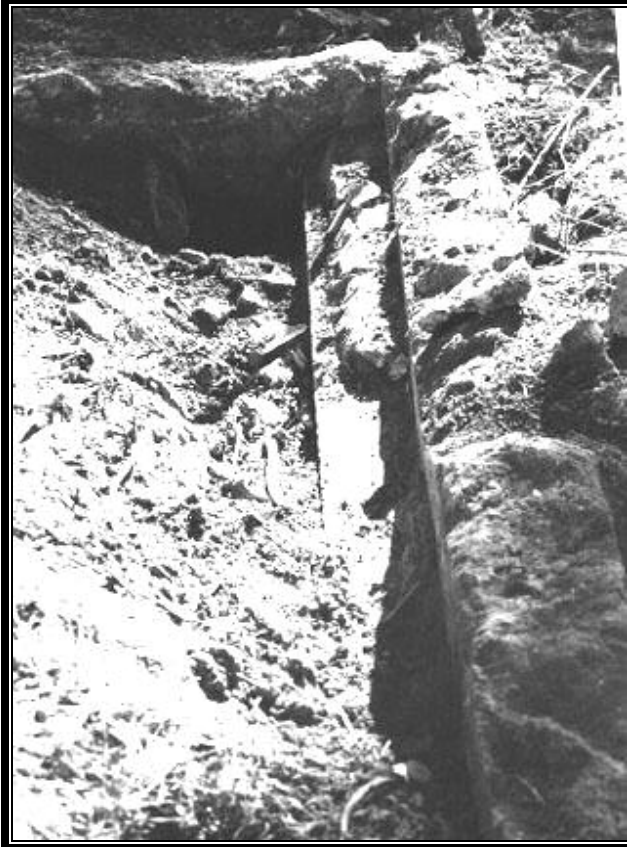
Ilma Keir in yard of 31 Westlake 1940s  
In the background is "the Dump".





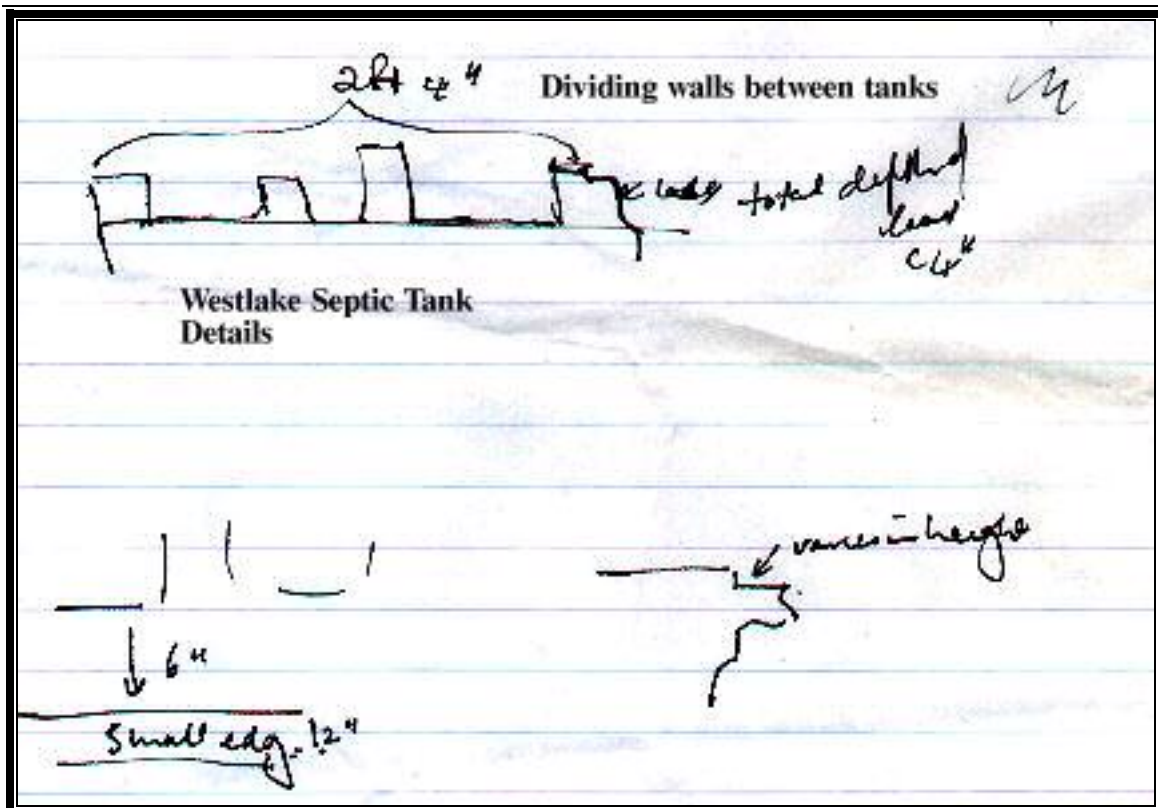
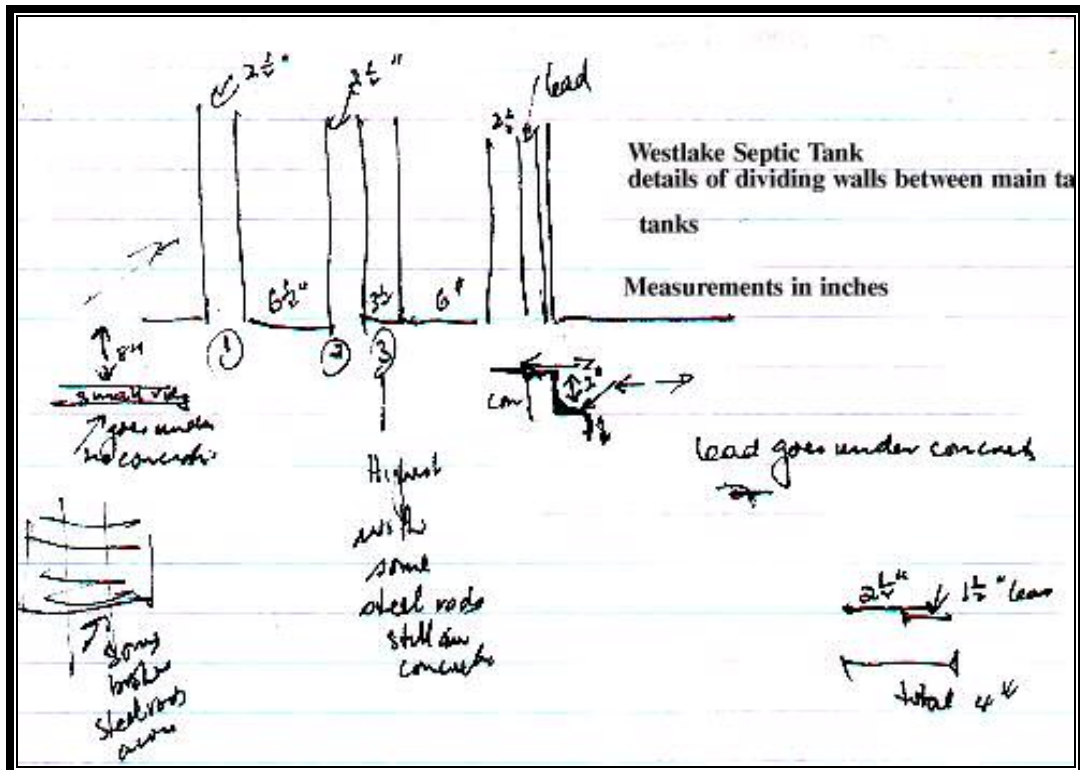
Above is a detail of a plan showing the site of one of the three septic tanks that served the settlement until the main intercepting sewer went through the area in 1927. The other two tanks were near 29 and in the yard of 5 Westlake. The deep watercourse (Haines Creek) is now shallow because of the rubbish pushed into it over the years. The ditch below cottages 43 to 47 is still in situ and used to drain the area. The septic tank marked on this plan is also still in the ground at Westlake. The concrete top is now missing. Beneath the surface of the ground are all the pipes installed for use with the septic and sewer systems. The reason for placing the septic tanks near to the creek was to take the overflow from septic tanks. On the next page are photographs showing details of the septic tank. It is divided into two main sections and in the centre section there are a

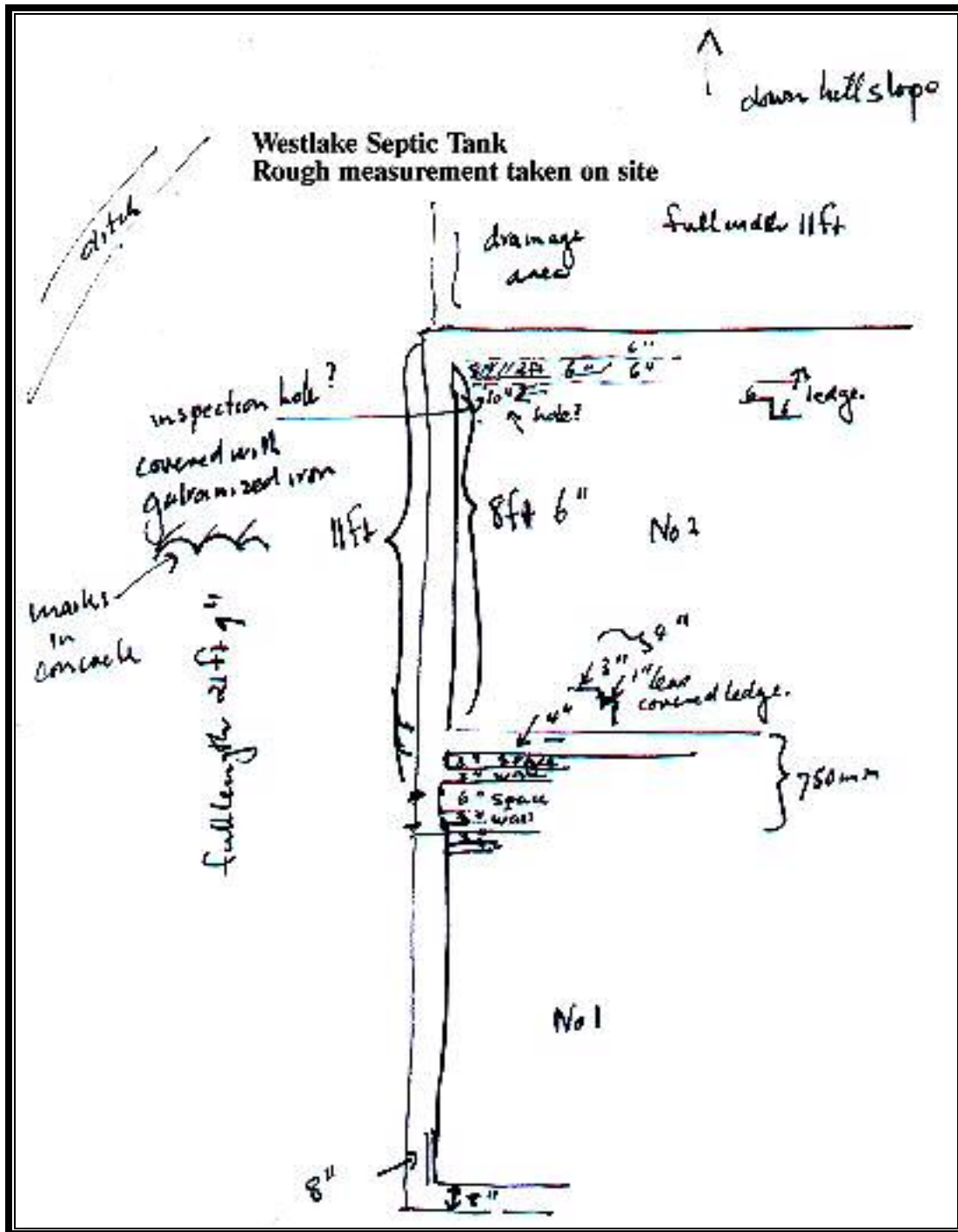
series of walls shown in the photograph with Henry the foxie. Still in situ on one edge of the tank wall is lead. An inspection hole was at one end. Corrogated iron was used and the form is still evident in the cement. Cottages 53-62 sites are marked on this plan but had not been built. They were constructed on the sites of the tents of No 3 Sewer Camp following their departure in mid 1925.



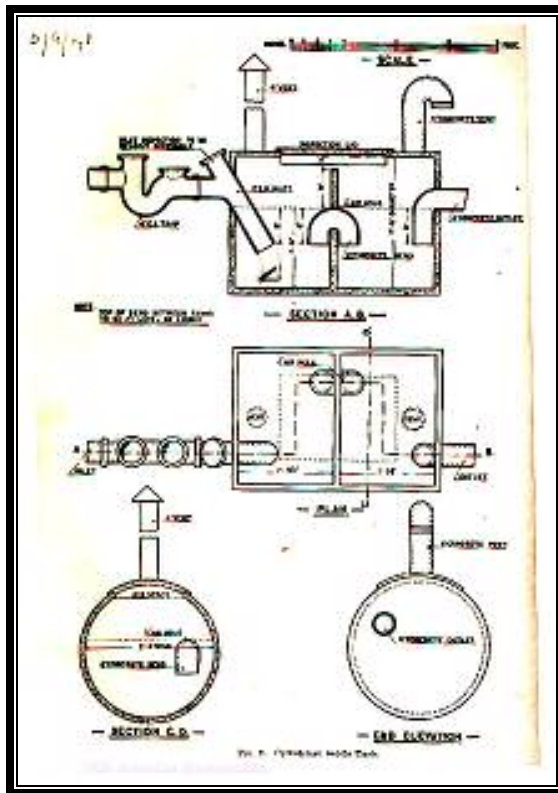


Above right is a photograph of the site of the tank. The creek is on the other side of the gum trees seen on the right. The view is towards the lake.

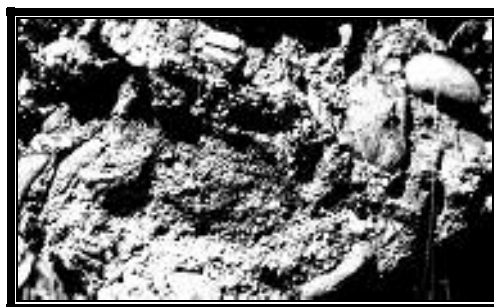


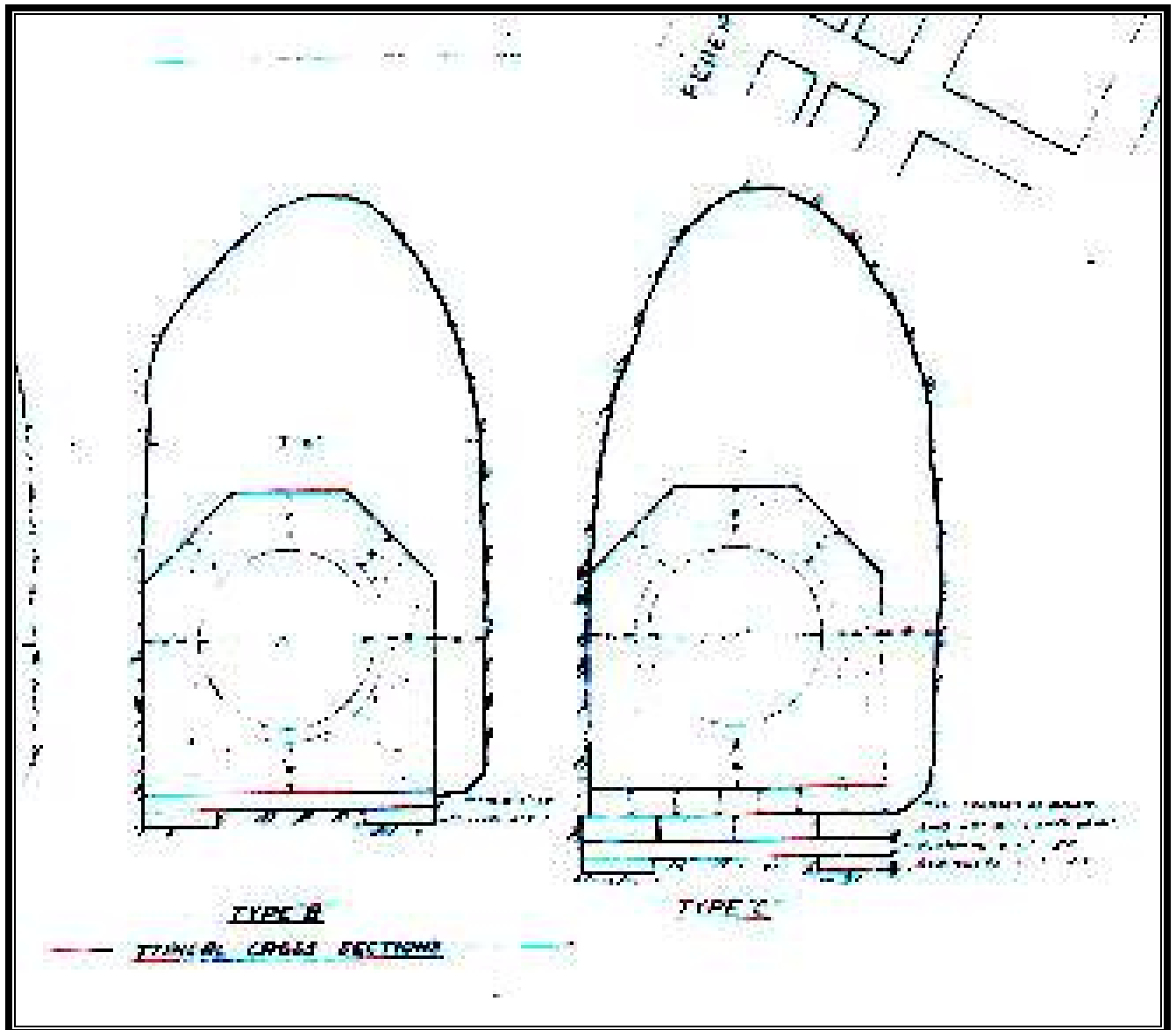


The above diagram shows the basic measurements of the tank. Probably because it was meant to be temporary the measurements vary a little. Eleven feet instead of twelve feet which would be the norm is one example of the *carelessness* of measurements.



Above left is an example of a septic tank design found in a 1926 encyclopedia. It is similar to the Westlake tank. On the right is a photograph of the tank with view looking up towards the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent. Below left is a details of the concrete wall showing the use of river rocks. On the right is a detail of one of the walls of the tank. The outside walls of the tank vary in width from around 6 to 8 inches. Below is a photograph of the concrete showing the use of river rocks. Photograph on the right shows one of the walls.





Above - examples of the tunnel types that run under the hills of Westlake.



Above is a 1990s photograph of Stirling Park at the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent. Cottages 22-28 sat on land just out of sight on the left of the picture frame in Empire Circuit. Cottages 1-20 sat on land now covered with embassies - on the right out of picture frame. The creeks that run down under the road in Empire Circuit and down Darwin Avenue - the latter confined in concrete pipe - join to enter the park near the telegraph pole on the far right. The big tree in the park just behind the car is most likely the same tree just behind the children's sand box in the photograph taken below in 1926. The angle is different and a few branches have been trimmed in the intervening years. When George Sykes of 29 Westlake extended his backyard it took in the swing. This swing was used by children of Westlake at any time they wished to do so. The walking track used by Westlake people is to the left of the tree and on the other side of Haines Creek. The line of green that crosses the photograph marks the line of the ditch and an area about a quarter of the distance between the car and right picture frame on the ditch line marks the site of the septic tank.



At the rear of 29 Westlake, George Sykes, the tenant, erected three small flats and a garage. The brick floors of all these buildings remain in situ in the park - see below right. The photograph of Katja (Jario) was taken outside one of the flats nearest to the house (on right in the photograph).



FIND

Below details of the front gate in the front hedge of 29 Westlake.



Above: Toy cap gun 1940s type found in the area of George Sykes' garage. Another was found near 47 Westlake.



Top left is the old road in front of 29-39 Westlake with the hedge of 29 lined up on the right. Top right is the laundry/lavatory concrete slab that was at the rear of 55 Westlake. The trees are part of the original hedge that divided the yards of 54 and 55. Below is a detail of the slab showing the lavatory area on the right. Below right is a photograph of the Carn family with Mrs Carn's (far left) relations outside 54 Westlake.

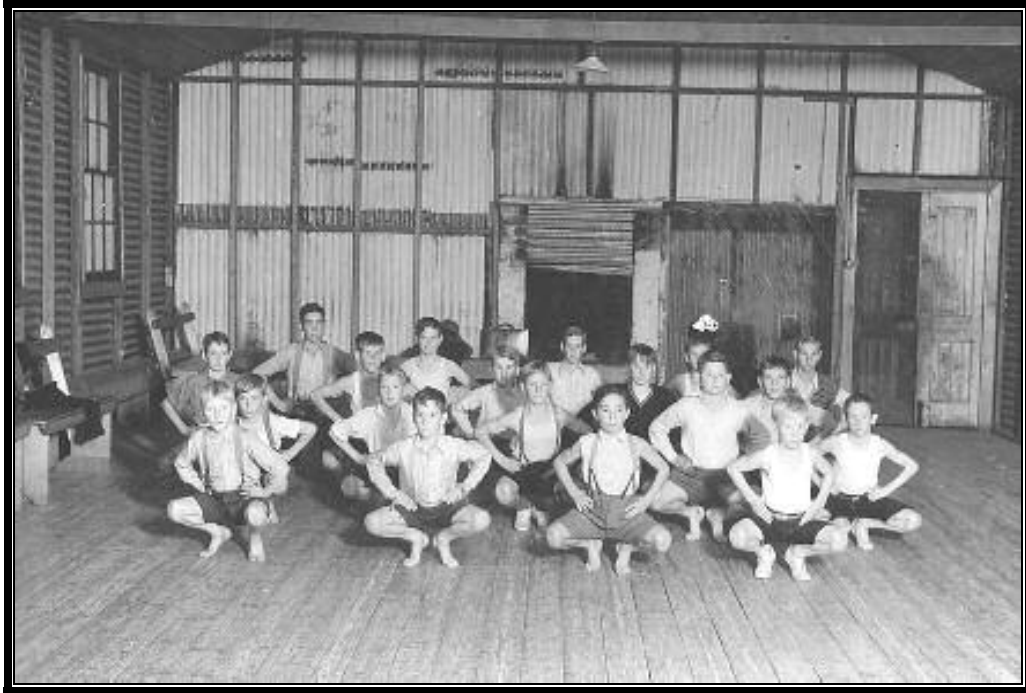




The photograph above left was taken in the early 1950s. It shows members of the Ivanovici family and was taken outside the Westlake Hall looking down towards the dump. No 55 Westlake was outside the two gum trees seen in the distance. The photograph on the right was taken in June 2003 of the same area.

The two trees are on the right near to the hedge between 54 and 55. On the other side - left - is the front hedge of 29 Westlake. Below view from Hall looking across to sites of cottages 40-43 in 1940s - L-R rear Nurse Britton, two Gibbs girls, Rev Murchison. Bottom row - Ray Wilder (deceased), Gibbs girl, Carmel Maxwell. On the right below is the same area in the 1990s taken from a slightly different angle.





Above: photograph loaned by Vic Reynolds of the Westlake Gymnasium in 1937 or 1938. The boys are in the Westlake Hall. Note the fireplace at the end. Vic has on the back of the original photograph the names of all the boys.

Back Row (all L-R) W Hawke, D Armstrong, R Davies, L Hart, B Armstrong

3<sup>rd</sup> Row - E Brill, H Reynolds, L McVeigh, B Phillips, D Reynolds

2<sup>nd</sup> Row - Keith Hawke, George Blewitt, Bruce Hawke, R Day, R Brill

Front Row - E Smith, B Davies, Keith Dixon, Victor James Reynolds.

Below, Children coming out of the Westlake Hall late 1940s. Back Row L-R - Ray Wilder, once of the Campbel girls, Sylvia Menzies. Next row - Gregory girl, Johnson girl, Jimmy Burns, boy Purtell.



Below on the left is Andy Hawke's radio aerial hanging from the tree in his backyard - 36 Westlake. The photograph centre is Andy Hawke in his yard with one of the grandchildren. Right is Bobby Bellchambers in his backyard. He played cricket in the first Prime Minister's Eleven.



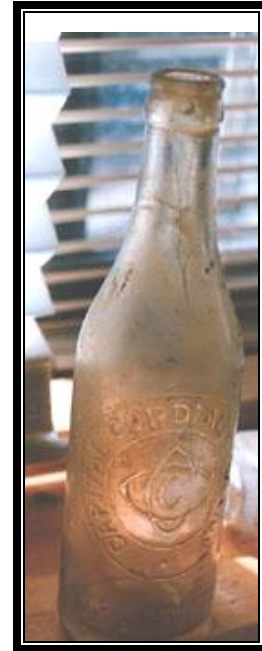
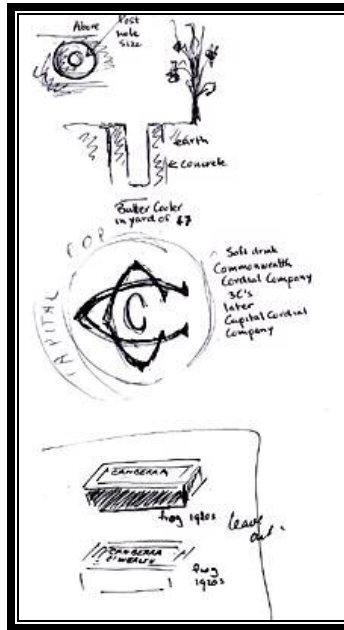
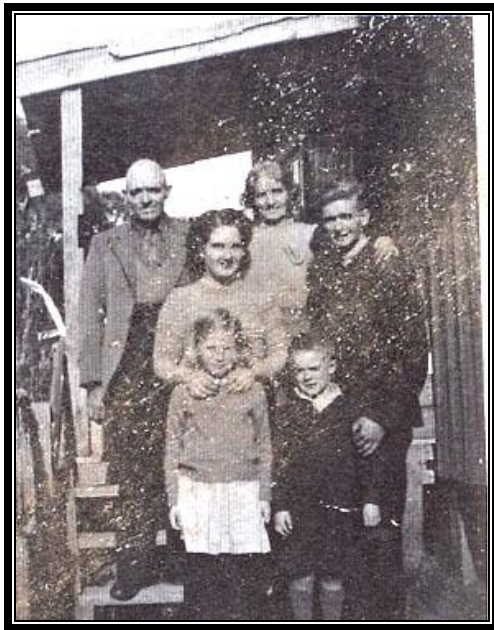
Above one of the Bellchamber grandchildren in the yard of 50 Westlake. The creek is in the background.

Below, Mr Bellchambers working in his backyard of 50 Westlake. On the right Ann Austin in yard of 27 Westlake – 26 in background.



Above - McCullough family in the backyard of No 8 Westlake, 1927.

Below left - Members of the Bellchamber's family on the front porch of their cottage at Acton(?). The family moved from Westlake to Acton Cottages. Below centre are diagrams of the butter cooler (pipe in ground) found at 47 Westlake and CCC motif. Right Commonwealth Cordial Company soft drink bottle.





Mrs Bellchambers, Eva and Bobby in their front yard 50 Westlake circa 1939. In the background is 43, 44 and 45 Westlake. The old road in the background is now covered with grass, but parts are still seen quite clearly particularly at the bottom of the hill where a culvert and drain stand out.



Above left is a photograph taken in the mid 1990s that shows the culvert on the opposite side of the road to 49 Westlake where the Brien family lived from the early 1950s. The culvert has the names of a few of the Westlake children written into the concrete when wet. They include Hazel Haines and *Duncy* Campbell. On the other side of the road is a drain that has a concrete apron in front of it. In this concrete are the initials *KH* - Kevin Haines. On the right above is Helen (left) and Roma Brien with the youngest sister, Karen.



Above top left, Mrs McKissock and four of her children. On the right are two of her sons, Archy and Andy some years later during the time they were in the AIF.



Above is Mr Jock McKissock with his second wife, Maude, daughters, Belle and Molly and grandchildren. Below - Graeme Box in his back and front yards of 25 Westlake - 1940s.





Above Cotter 1930s. Jene Baker, seated in the centre with her little sister and husband to be along with friends - Besty Knight of Westlake standing on right.



Above is a photograph taken in June 2003. The four pine trees were in the backyard of 28 Westlake. The photograph below taken in the 1940s shows the same trees with *Blue* Menzies.



Above Left - Hazel Haines at 52 Westlake. Right - Vi, wife of Lionel Haines and Hazel Haines.

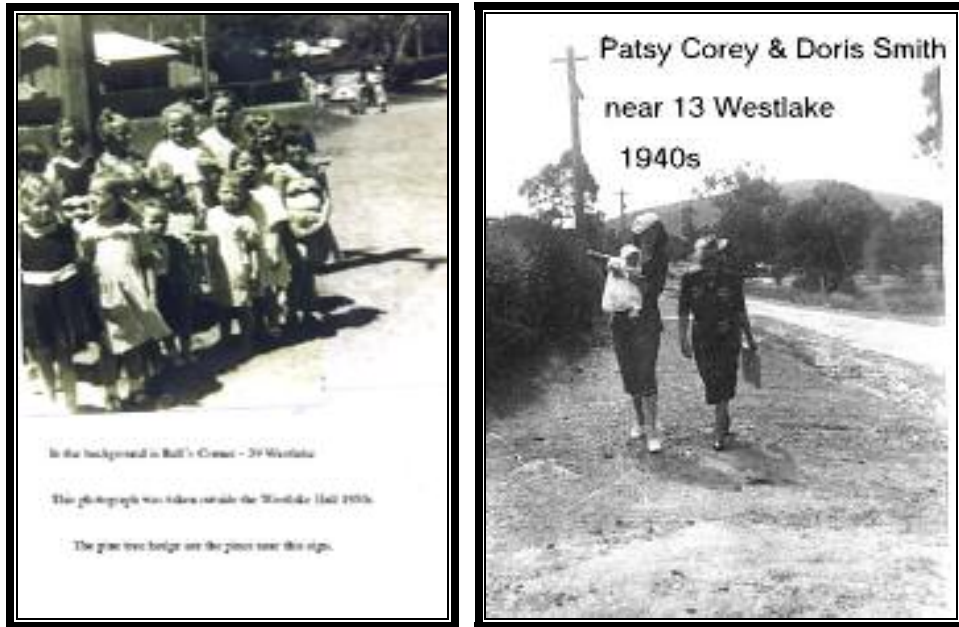


Above 52 Westlake, home of the Haines family.



Above Left: Mrs Pennington and son Herbert. Centre, Doug and Herbert Pennington. Right Sally Petty and Alma Gane. Bottom left - Harold Gane, son of George Sykes. Centre Gwyn and Alan Gane; right Ernie Corey.





Above left - children of Westlake early 1950s. Photograph taken outside the Hall and in the background is 39 Westlake. On the right Patsie Corey holding Pauline Smith and on the right, Doris Smith. The group are outside 13 Westlake in an area roughly where Darwin Avenue is today.



Above - Rhona Bourke and one of her brothers outside 1 Westlake.

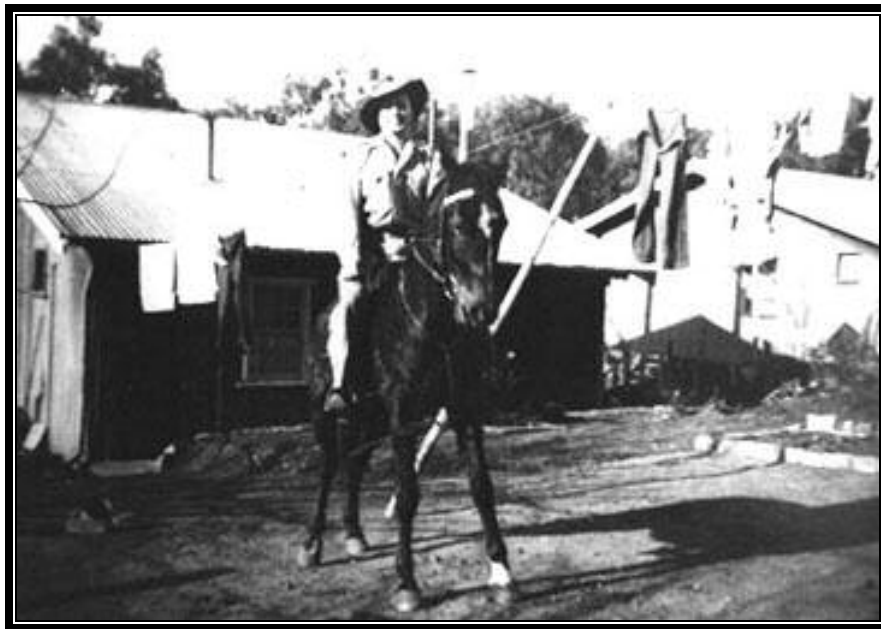


Above left, Mrs Kelly and three of her neighbour's children (Gibbs'girls). Right Smith family of Westlake. Below left drawings of artifacts found in the park and right concrete slab in the backyard of 46 Westlake with the name Campbell written in the concrete and the date 1941.



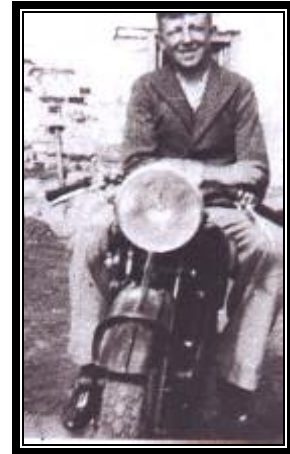


Above left construction of the residence of South African Commission. Right - details of tracks around the Quarry (Attunga Point) and the end of the Royal Canberra Golf Course on the south side of the Molonglo River.



Above- Alan Gane home from leave early 1940s. He is in the backyard of 12 Westlake on one of Mrs Llewellyn's horses. [Alan died in 2009]

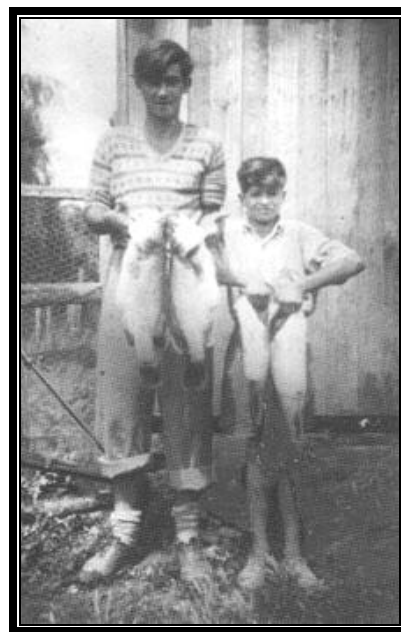
Below left, Three Smith children of 13 Westlake; Centre - children catching the school bus outside 27 Westlake - the service did not come into the settlement until the 1950s. Right - Jacky Dinnerville at Briar Farm.



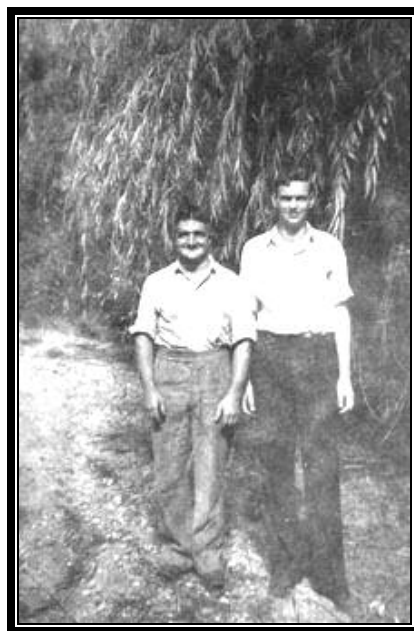
Above: L-R - Mr Walters, Arthur Maxwell, Dorrie Maxwell, Carmel Koenig (nee Maxwell), Erich Koenig, Mr Forth. Below: Horrie Cleaver and his hire car. Below right, Ann Austin 20<sup>th</sup> December 1958 at 27 Westlake. Bridesmaid is Moya Lynch.



Above left, Mrs Dixon and right, Molly & Belle (nee McKissock) and Violet Austin at the Cotter 1942.



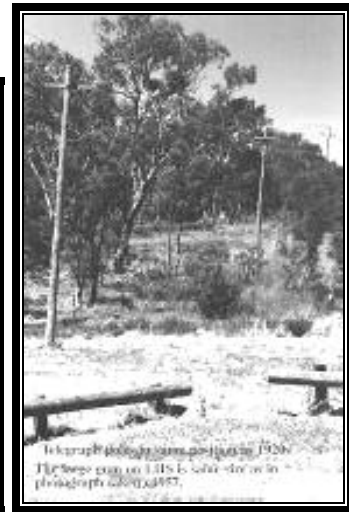
Above left - Violet Austin with Toby (on chair) in the garden 27 Westlake. Right, Kevin Haines and his younger brother at 52 Westlake.



Above left *Bull* Bellchambers and Des West (on right) and above right, Des West and John O'Rourke. 1950s.

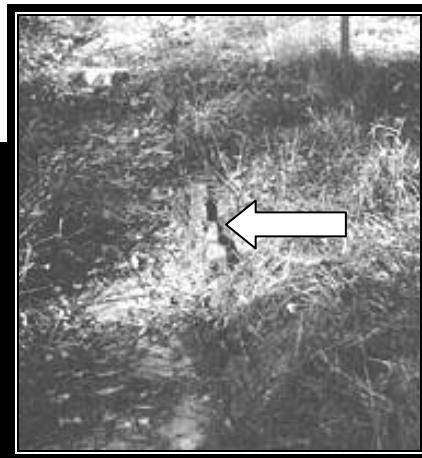
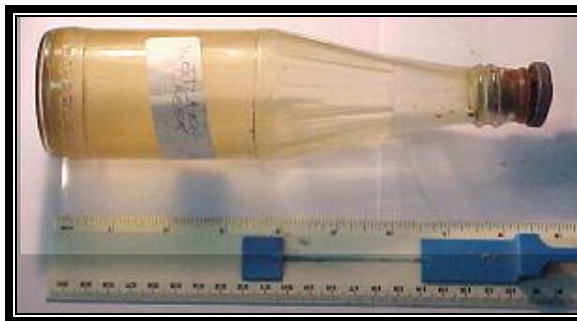


L-R - Myrtle Dixon, Colleen West and Monte Brooks - 1940s. Below left Florian and Ann Gugler outside 27 Westlake. On the left is the fence of 29 Westlake. The telegraph poles centre right is the same poles shown in the photograph on the right.





Above - Gully trap on the site of 62 Westlake. It has been recovered with earth. The gully trap at 27 (my home) was outside the area of the kitchen sink. Below – objects found at Westlake.





Following are a number of metal items found and documented (sites) by Gary Skewes









Top photograph Ann Austin and Vagi Varo outside 27 Westlake circa 1952 and below two of the O'Rourke girls in army uniforms (probably borrowed from one of their brothers) in the backyard of 45 Westlake – 1940s war years.