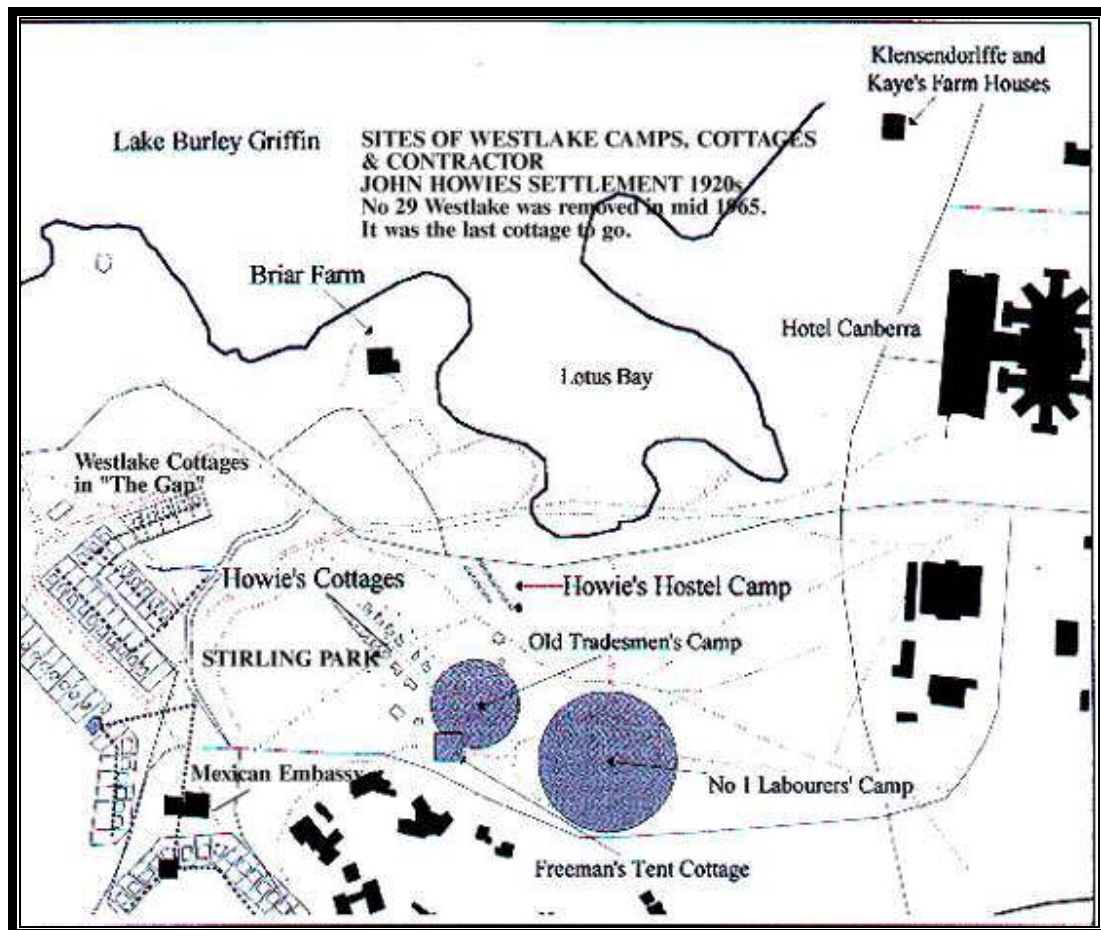


A History of STIRLING PARK, YARRALUMLA

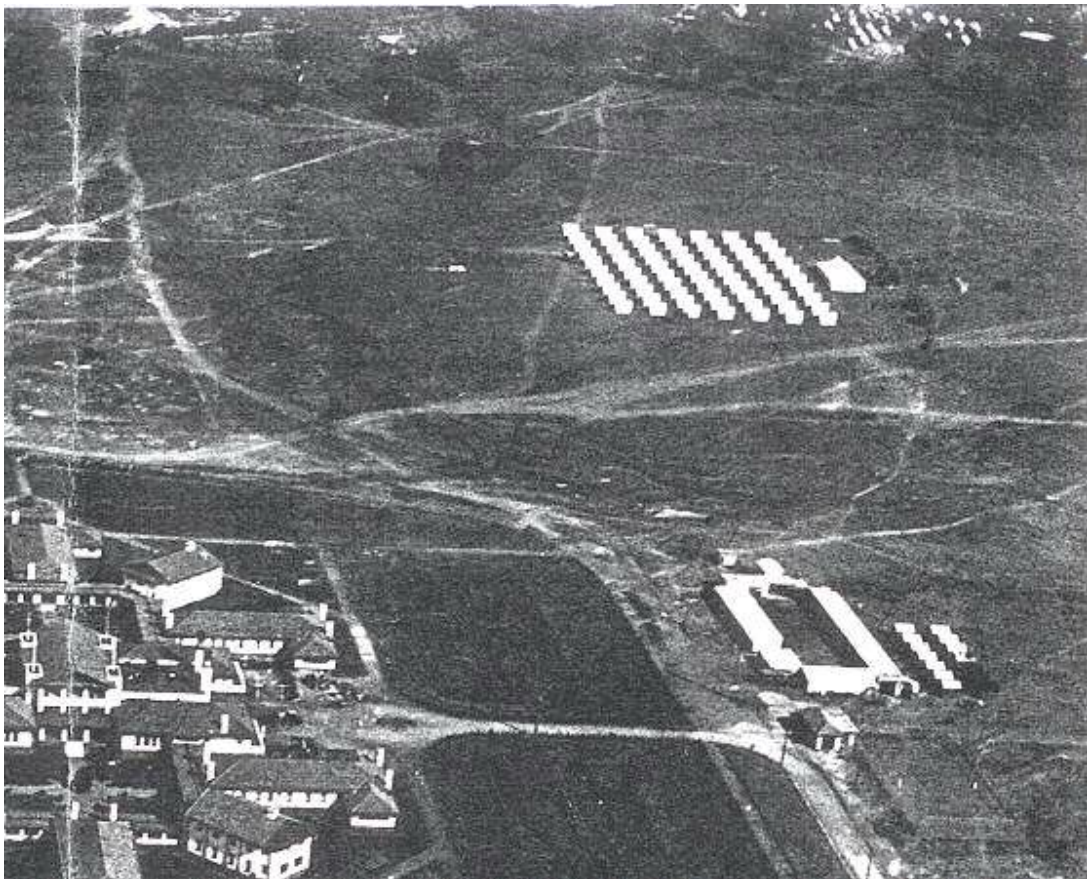
The Ngunawal called it GURA BUNG DHAURA (Stony Ground) and the colonials - KLENSENDORFF'S LAND
& Walter Burley Griffin named it WESTLAKE



Above is a mud map of Stirling Park showing the sites of Westlake Cottages in *The Gap*, Howie's Cottages and Hostel Camp and the two Commonwealth single men's camps – Old Tradesmen and No 1 Labourers. [2009- The site marked as No 1 Labourers Camp site was the area chosen by the Federal Capital Commission to erect the shortlived camp erected for police, sailors etc involved in the celebrations May 9, 1927. No 1 Labourers Camp was on Capitol Hill, Westlake.] Missing from this map is No 3 Sewer Camp that sat on the area later occupied by Westlake Cottages 53-62 (far left above the dump and dotted lines showing sewer lines).

This map also does not show the major Ngunawal sites that are throughout the park. The modern buildings in the area are marked in black.

Stirling Park is situated on the southern bank of Lake Burley Griffin and is wedged between the lake, Forster Crescent, Flynn Drive, Empire Circuit, Fitzgerald Street and Lady Hopetoun Circuit. It is in the suburb of Yarralumla.¹ Alexandrina Drive cuts through part of the park and divides it into several sections. The larger portion is Sections 128 (eastern end) and 22 (The Gap & Stirling Ridge) Yarralumla. This area has been allowed to regenerate and unlike the land between the road and the lake is not (with the exception of The Gap where cottages stood) mown and has no bicycle path, barbecue, or other facilities available for public use. Off Alexandrina Drive is Marina Place. It leads to the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club - site of Briar Farm Cottage. On its eastern side is Lotus Bay and on the west Attunga Point - the old Quarry. Throughout the park are many old tracks used from Colonial times. These probably followed the Ngunawal pathways as this area was a major route used by the Aboriginal people on their way from Black Mountain to Tuggeranong.



Above is a May 1927 Mildenhall photograph (Canberra & District Historical Society collection) showing the short lived camp used for the police and men from other services in Canberra for the opening of the Provisional Parliament House by the Duke of York on 9th May 1927. In the background top right is the Tradesmen's Camp.

¹ It was originally in the suburb of Acton up until the early 1960s.

Portion of Mildenhall photograph National Archives
 Series NoA3560 Item No 3086.
 Police camp opposite Lotus Bay, Yarralumla.
 In background is Tradesmen's Camp. June 1927



The first known name for this parcel of land is *Gura Bung Dhaura* (Ngunawal -stony ground). It was also known, according to Stewart Mowle who lived in the district from the 1830s to 1852 and spoke language, as *Canberry* (woman's breasts – it was also a meeting place). From around 1829 until the 1920s it was referred to as *Klensendorlffe's Land* after William Klensendorlffe who was granted the land on 7 March 1839. In the early 1920s Walter Burley Griffin named this land *Westlake*. Maps drawn in the mid 1920s indicate that the western section of the park now referred to as Stirling Ridge was divided into a site for a permanent Government House and a park called Stirling. Exactly when the name Stirling Park came into common usage is not certain but it was probably after the last Westlake cottage was removed from the parkland in 1965.²

² This cottage with three brick flats and garage was tenanted from 1929 by George Sykes and was known as 29 Westlake. On this site is one of two boulders with memorial plaques to those who lived at Westlake.



Above is one of the two Plaques erected by Westlake people. This plaque is near an apple tree on Block 3, Section 128 Stirling Park opposite Lotus Bay. Below is a photograph showing the plaque on the site of 29 Westlake and the tree planted by our then oldest men.



On the 15 March 1998 members of the Westlake Communities³ met at George Sykes' house site (29 Westlake) to dedicate one of two bronze plaques, plant a tree and unveil

³ Gap Cottages, Howies, Briar Farm & Kaye's Farm.

a sign to remember and record our suburb. The other plaque is situated in the park near an apple tree and Howie's Hostel Mess site. It is on the flat land opposite Lotus Bay. Both plaques have the following inscription:

*Walter Burley Griffin named this land
Westlake.
Site of Briar Farm, the Hostel,
No 3 Sewer, No 1 Labs & Tradesmen Camps &
1st workmen's villages built in the ACT
Howie's & Westlake (The Gap) Cottages.
"Over the hill and down into the hollow
There's a path we all follow
To this place we still call home"⁴
Erected by Westlake children 15.3.1998*

Members of the Westlake Community erected a number of small signs throughout the park to mark some of the sites of historical significance.⁵ They include a plan of the Westlake cottages⁶ and the names of some of the people who lived in them.



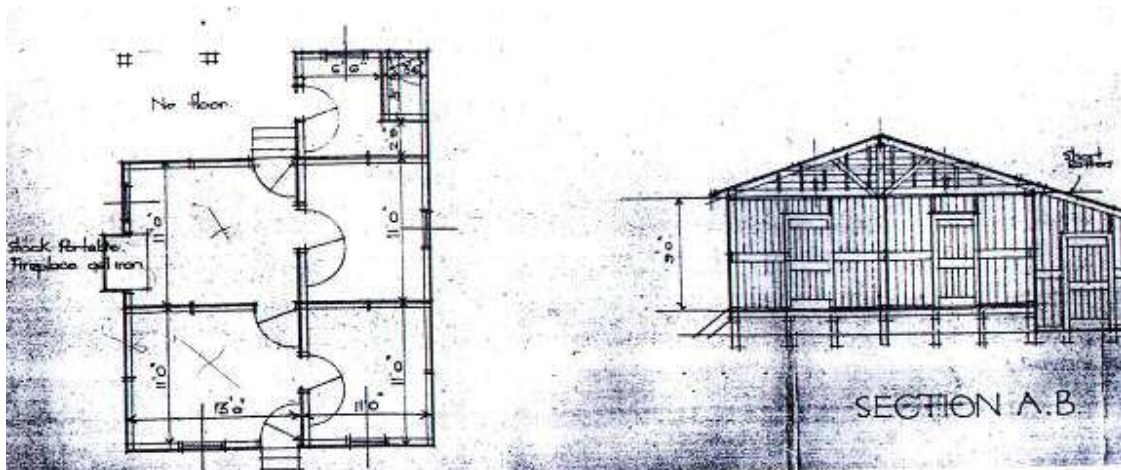
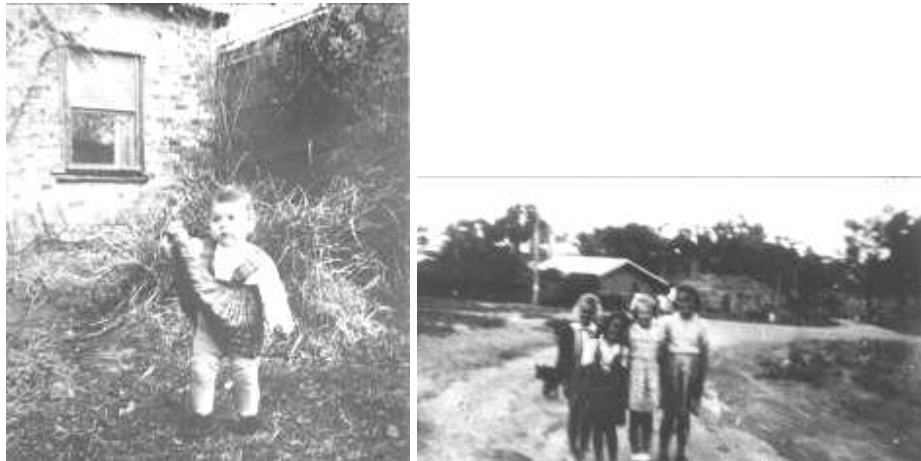
Above: Three photographs of the backyard of 29 Westlake. Left and centre brick floors of the three flats in the backyard on 29 Westlake built by George Sykes (1997). Right the gardens near the flats early 1960s. Marianne Heikarinen on left.

⁴ The poem on the plaque was written by Ronnie O'Rourke of 45 Westlake.

⁵ This work has been carried out without financial help from any government bodies and with the permission of the NCA.

⁶ Stirling Park may be divided into three general areas - In the centre is The Gap through which a Creek known from the 1940s as Haines Creek. On the western side is Stirling Ridge and on the east hills with no European name. They run up the area of Darwin Avenue and between Lotus Bay and Forster Crescent.

On the right below is a blurred photograph taken from outside 27 Westlake looking down towards George's house with the flats in back yard. (late 1940s) and left Katja Heikarinen with one of the flats in the background and 29 Westlake cottage on right – c1962. [Photographs courtesy of Heikarinen family – published in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge & Acton* Gugler AR]



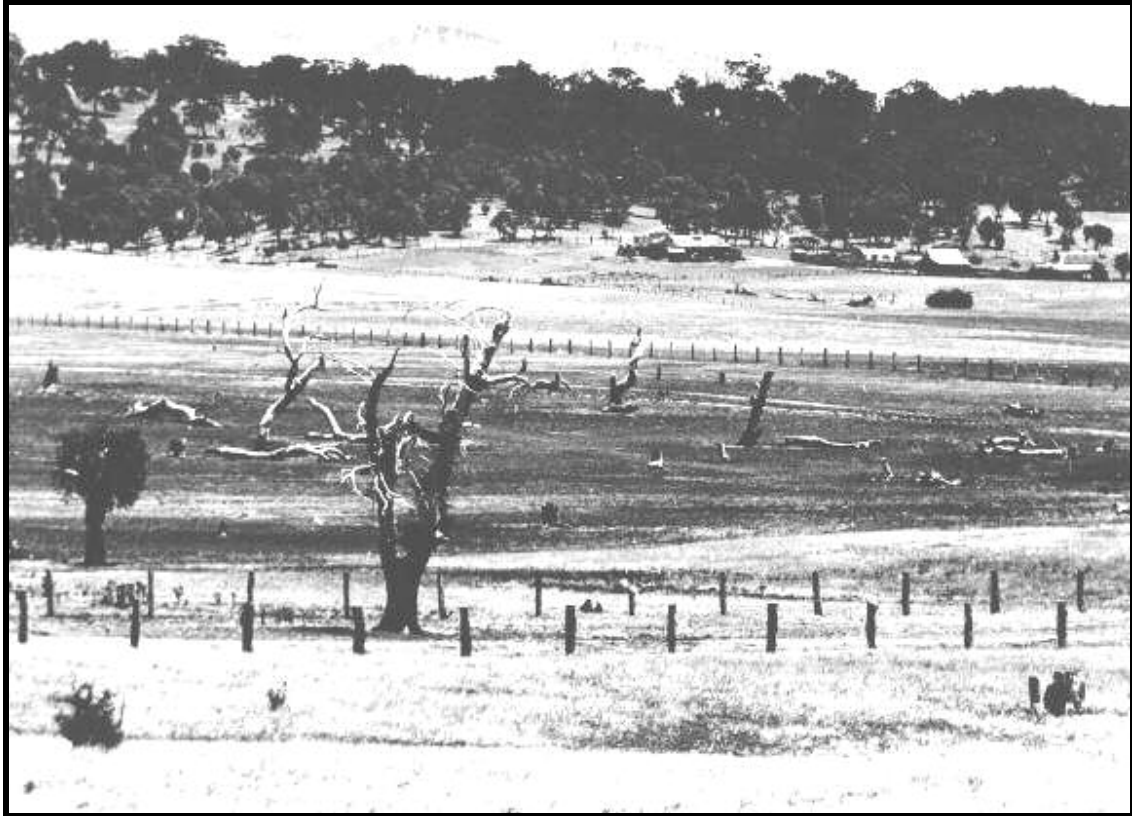
Above is a plan and side view of the Westlake Cottages designed by HM Rolland. They were constructed from second grade timber with the timber lengths being attached to the frame vertically. Cottages 53-62 built in 1926 on the sites of the tents of No 3 Sewer Camp in *The Gap* had horizontal timbers. The small two bedroom cottages were unlined and stood on concrete piers. The roof was galvanized iron. The small room at the rear of each cottage was the combined bathroom, laundry and a lavatory that was accessed from the outside. The bath was tin and water for it was heated in the wood fired copper and carried across to the bath by bucket. Below is a view of the cottages (1924) at the top of the hill in the area of present day Darwin Avenue. The sites of the first twenty houses are within the area of Empire Circuit, Forster Crescent and Darwin Avenue. The sites of the remaining 51 (should have been 52 but no one is sure what happened to 21). The small pipe on the side of each cottage was the metal flu for a cast iron stove. It was later replaced with an open fireplace that has a tin backed chimney. This meant that the heat went out of the building rather than staying in.



Above is a photograph taken around 1952 outside 27 Westlake. Ann Austin on right and Vagi Varo – a visiting Girl Guide from New Guinea. The pine trees in the background right still grow in Stirling Park and are near the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent Yarralumla.

History of the European Use of the Land

Viewed from Acton Peninsular, the hillsides and Quarry of Stirling Park appear little changed from the scene recorded in a 1913 panoramic photograph.⁷ Below is a detail of the photograph.



Today the lake hides the steep descent down to the old flood plain which prior to the establishment of the Royal Canberra Golf Club in 1926 was used for grazing and cultivation.⁸ West of the area below the Quarry the low lying land was covered with a tufted type of grass and a few gum trees of varying ages. The river banks were lined with willows. Mid way between the end of the links and Westridge (Yarralumla) cottages there was an old crossing.⁹ It is marked on some of the early maps and one track leading to it comes from Yarralumla property and heads towards to Springbank and Acton.

⁷ Photograph is held in the National Library of Australia and Blundell's Cottage.

⁸ The greens stretched from an area on either side of the river opposite Attunga Point up to the back of the Hotel Canberra. I also write from personal knowledge of the land - I lived at Westlake between 1941 and 1959 and walked almost daily in the bush surrounding my home. See map in appendix.

⁹ This ford was used by cattle rustlers who herded the cattle over it and up through the Gap on their way south. From memory it was "constructed" from river rocks and after a flood was well examined by children in search of golf balls. The 1913 map marks the ford and tracks to and from it - one of which led to Acton. In the late 1840s a school was established at Yarralumla and after its closure at Springbank across the river. This shallow ford would have been used by the school children as well as others with business to conduct on the north side of the river. Another ford was at Lennox Crossing (opposite Acton peninsular) and further up river near Blundell's cottage was Scott's Crossing - originally called *Church Crossing*.

One group of buildings in the area is shown in the photograph on the previous page. They are Briar Farm. Kaye's¹⁰ is out of the picture frame on the left. Briar Farm was pulled down in 1950 and replaced circa 1964 with the buildings of the Canberra Yacht Club.¹¹ Kaye's buildings lasted until 1924 when the land was required by the Commonwealth. A tall pine in Lennox Gardens marks the site of the entrance gate to Kaye's yard.¹² Members of the Kaye family have not put up a bronze plaque near the remaining pine in memory of their family history and association with the area. The stone from Kaye's barn (Klensendorff's villa) lies under the surface of Commonwealth Avenue¹³ and the stone fire place in the old slab cottage was incorporated into the RCGC clubhouse. This building was destroyed around 1963.

The 1913 photograph shows hillsides covered with gum trees and here and there one can glimpse through them the land that was surface mined during the last century. A clearer view of the mined areas, old roads, tracks and Westlake Settlement show up in aerial photographs.¹⁴ But it is only by walking through the area that one sees the details of the landscape. On the hillsides protruding through patches of red and dark grey earth in a rock strewn landscape are native trees, shrubs, grasses and wild flowers. In contrast the plant life in *The Gap* is lush. Here European flowers, trees and shrubs take over on land enriched by gardeners. On either side of the old Westlake road in *The Gap* and at Attunga Point the ground is littered with yellow, white and apricot coloured soft stones (shale). These stones were picked up by Westlake children and used to draw on the road and faded green tin chimney backs.¹⁵ Up until 1963 the white stone from the Quarry was used by the Canberra Brickyards to produce the brick known as *The Canberra Cream*.¹⁶ For many years Bill Haines of 52 Westlake was the quarry's powder monkey. The quarry was also a source of stone used for the rebuilding of St John the Baptist's Church of England tower in Reid (c1865 -).

The 1913 photograph testifies that the hillsides of Stirling Park, unlike many of the local mountains and the paddocks of Yarralumla, were not denuded of trees.¹⁷ During the next few decades, however, many gums were cut to fuel kitchen stoves and steam driven traction engines.¹⁸ Some were also used to make the frames of tents and

¹⁰ Kaye's farm houses consisted of Klensendorff's stone villa used from the early 1890s as a barn and a new slab cottage. This farm was part of the Westlake area but today most of its land is under the waters of Lake Burley Griffin. The divide between Kaye's and Kinlyside's Briar Farm was a creek which came down from the hillside opposite Lotus Bay.

¹¹ The buildings now belong to the Southern Cross Yacht Club.

¹² The pine, one of two was planted in 1919. Two farm "houses" were on the site Slab cottage built in the early 1890s and Klensendorff's stone villa built in 1838. The latter was used following the completion of the new house as a barn by Charles Kaye whose family had leased the small tenant farm in 1854. Kaye's property is not part of Stirling Park.

¹³ This dual carriage way like Wentworth Avenue was one of several concrete roads laid in Canberra.

¹⁴ A copy of the 1952 photograph is enclosed in the appendix. Missing are Westlake cottages 21 and 53. The former was removed sometime before May 1925 and the latter burnt down around 1950.

¹⁵ The nearby white shale/clay quarry is marked on the 1913 map and may have been used by Aboriginal people.

¹⁶ This information came from Terry Horan, last Works Manager of the Canberra Brickyards. The quarry was in use before 1913 and was used up until 1963 when Lake Burley Griffin filled. It is possible that the shale may have been used in the hand made bricks used to construct Briar Farm cottage (1870).

¹⁷ During the pastoralist area tree clearing occurred on these mountains and other in the territory. They were replanted from 1913. Charlie Russell whose family was in the district before 1913 said that Red Hill was named after the colour of the vegetation planted on it. Mugga was to have been called "Grey Mountain" after the grey gums planted there.

¹⁸ Miners and locals cut the trees. Ron O'Rourke estimated that Westlake people cut over a hundred trees until stopped by the ranger, "Pineneedle" Southwell.

humpies. Reminders of these activities mark most of the old gum trees in the park. Some trees were coppiced at ground level, others cut at waist height and many stumps of long gone branches are the right size for building. The light grey trunk of one long dead gum still has around its trunk the metal cable used in the process of pulling it over.¹⁹

A number of the gums²⁰ survived the ravages of the pastoralist and Federal development periods.²¹ Some, such as a number of old *scribbly* gums, bear the marks of Aboriginal use. These scarred trees grow on Stirling Ridge, off Alexandrina Drive and Forster Crescent and in the grounds of the French Embassy and South African High Commission.²² Hollows in the trees are homes to bees, opossums and the bird population of Stirling Park.²³



Above right is a photograph of a Ngunawal scarred tree on Stirling Ridge. This tree was fully grown before the arrival of Europeans in the district. Left is a photograph of Dr Peter Dowling measuring one of the scarred trees in the grounds of either the French Embassy or South African High Commission residence in the late 1990s.

Not shown in the 1913 photograph is the western side of Stirling Ridge. Part of it faces the cottages in Fitzgerald Street Yarralumla. From 1922 until the mid 1960s this land was the Westlake Horse and Pound Paddock. It was part of Yarralumla Estate and was almost clear felled in the last century.²⁴ The old fence line between Klensendorff and Yarralumla properties ran roughly along the top of the ridge. In 1912 the western section of Stirling Park was leased to a number of dairy farmers and was known from the 1921 as *Corkhill's Paddock*.²⁵ The fence line cut across the end of the ridge and ran towards

¹⁹ This tree lies on Stirling Ridge near the sewer vent.

²⁰ These trees may be between two and three hundred years old. Their age is identified by Dr Robert Boden who in 1994 produced a report for the NCA on the vegetation in Stirling Park.

²¹ During the 19th century trees were cleared to permit grazing and cultivation. The wood was used for fuel, fencing and building. Some living trees have fence wire, bolts etc embedded in their trunks.

²² Identified by Peter Dowling in 1997. I am aware that Heritage Department has examined a number of the trees - now formally identified and accepted by them as Aboriginal. I have been told that these are now on a register for such trees. A number of other trees in the Park are yet to be examined.

²³ Eighty five species of birds have been identified in the park. See appendix for full list which was provided by Dr Cowan of Yarralumla. The earliest reference to bee keeping is found in Les Lyon's article on the Morrison family. They lived in the Stirling Park Precinct between mid 1860s and 1871. The Kinlysides of Briar Farm kept bees as did many of the Westlake residents (1924 -)

²⁴ Personal recollections and a circa 1923 Mildenhall photograph of sewer work on the western slope of Stirling Ridge shows a scene of a relatively treeless hillside and plains stretching over to the brickworks. John Corkhill told me that the Corkhill family used fence posts made from local trees because they did not rot easily.

²⁵ Corkhill's paddock has a large number of rock arrangements not disturbed by Westlake children and adults who kept cows in the paddock to the east of Corkhill's.

the quarry. The fence line near the top of the ridge is clearly identifiable by old wagon tracks that run alongside it, post holes and a gum with barbed wire protruding through its trunk.²⁶

Confirmation about the condition of the land in 1913 is found in AW Moriarty's detailed records. He was employed by the Commonwealth to record and value all structures, fences, roads and land in the territory.²⁷ From this information it has been possible to date the construction of the old road from Briar Farm - 1890. A section of this road runs along the lower slopes of the hillside opposite Lotus Bay. It is one of several old roads in the park. (It is possible also that this road is an older one used in the early 1860s)

AW Moriarty in his 1912 notes about Klensendorff's paddock described it to be principally of gently undulating land timbered with gum (box), ironstone and slate outcrops. It supported three sheep to the acre. The green timber was not suitable for building but satisfactory for fencing.²⁸ His report details Briar Farm and Kaye's but makes no mention of several house and outhouse sites on the eastern slopes of Stirling Ridge and on the hillside overlooking Briar Farm (western side of *Haines Creek*). One of the sites is in Corkhill's paddock and remnants of an old road leading to the area of the house site may have come from Yarralumla?²⁹ Oral histories present no clues about this site. Research work to date supports the supposition that one of the mystery sites was John Morrison's tenant farm cottage (mid 1860s - 1871).³⁰ Or it may have been a sewer worker's humpy erected in the early 1920s.)

Between 1922 and 1927 the Gap and hillsides opposite Lotus Bay were used to erect three government single men's tent camps,³¹ Contractor John Howie's settlement (cottages & Hostel Camp), Arthur Freeman's tent cottage and The Gap Cottages designed by HM Rolland based on Howie's Cottages. These houses, the first built by the Federal Capital Advisory Committee in 1923 – occupied 1924 - for married tradesmen following the departure of Howie's Settlement and the camps was known as *Westlake*. The camps were removed by the end of 1927, Howie's cottages around 1931 and The Gap cottages from the mid 1950s to 1965.

A 1927 map shows that the area of Stirling Ridge was divided into two sections. The western end was the chosen site for a Government House and the eastern end a park named Stirling. The proposed Government House was never built. Instead Yarralumla

²⁶ Frederick Campbell bought Yarralumla in 1882 and set about fencing his lands. He used wire. The man who introduced wire fencing which replaced the post and rail, was Andrew Cunningham. The fence is marked on the 1913 map which contains Moriarty's information and a late 1950s map of the area. I also remember climbing through this fence on the way across to visit friends at Westridge.

²⁷ Moriarty was employed by the Commonwealth to detail all buildings and improvements on lands resumed. Australian Archives A358/2 21.

²⁸ Australian Archives A358/2 21 Resumption of land by commonwealth and Moriarty's lists.

²⁹ Bert Sheedy, whose ancestors were tenant farmers on Yarralumla between 1846 and the 1880s has detailed research (unpublished) on the tenant farmers of Yarralumla. He also recalled that John Morrison had a farm at Westlake from the mid 1860s until sometime after August 1871. All the sites have tell tale signs of earlier European occupation - box thorn and hawthorn bushes, briar roses and sweet peas.

³⁰ Bert Sheedy suggests that the site may be home of the Keefe family (1850s)- site not yet known.

³¹ Recent work on Stirling Ridge has revealed several house sites situated between the area of the Sewer Vent to an area just past the Westlake Hall. These cottages were humpies and were most likely part of No 3 Sewer Camp. Broken bottles dug from dumps near these cottage sights date from 1918 to 1925.

House renovated for the Duke and Duchess of York's visit in 1927 became and remained the official residence of the Governor General.³² Probably contributing to this decision not to build were the financial constraints caused by the Great Depression and World War II. For the same reason the sixty one temporary workmen's cottages (Gap Cottages) at Westlake remained into the post World War II years.³³

Below is a July 1943 map of the area of Westlake that also shows the proposed Stirling Park. It also shows the Westlake Cottages and on the north side of the Molonglo in the area of Acton is the racecourse that is known to have had a Ngunawal Bora Ground in it.



³² Renovation work commenced after the opening of the Hotel Canberra in December 1924 which freed up Yarralumla House for the required work. Mrs Ruth Lane Poole, wife of the first Principle of the Forestry School, took on the task of the interior decorations. She lived in Melbourne and one monthly bill for expenses came to 76 pounds - paid without the blink of an eye! The average wage for a labourer at the time was around the 3 to 4 pounds per week mark.

³³ The Federal Capital Commission (FCC) intended the cottages to be moved to new sites following completion of building work in the area - circa 1929.



Above: One of the Haines boys on the golf links 1950s. The small white dot upper right is Briar Farm. The rocky outcrop on the right is today Attunga Point (old Quarry). Below: Noel Carn's hand near one of the Westlake trees that shows a bolt in the trunk of the tree. The majority of the old trees have evidence of Aboriginal and European use

Following the sale and removal of Westlake cottages in *The Gap* the piles of earth - known as *Dumps* - left by the sewer miners in the early 1920s was spread over former house sites.³⁴ In 1961 the Canberra Mosque was built in the Westlake Horse Paddock and in 1963 a number of exotic trees were planted by the government on the sites of Westlake cottages 31 to 34, 51-52 and 53 to 62. In the same year a number of wattles and gums were planted on the Stirling Ridge, the Westlake Hall site and on the eastern side of *Haines Creek*³⁵ on land opposite the Canberra Yacht Club.³⁶ Unknown is the year when the pines were planted in the horse paddock in the area now facing Fitzgerald Street.

Around 1970 a road making camp was set up opposite the area of Westlake cottages 40 - 45 and the roads of Alexandrina Drive, Darwin Avenue, Forster Crescent and Empire Circuit Yarralumla were constructed.³⁷ The first



³⁴ A Jario family photograph taken of the area of the dump in 1960 supports the oral information about the spread of earth. There were two dumps at Westlake. One was between cottages 28 and 53 and the other near the Sewer Vent on Stirling Ridge. They were big dumps - bigger than a house.

³⁵ Haines Creek is a named used from the 1940s. The Haines family lived in 52 Westlake near *The Creek* and the old crossing. Similarly the road going up the hill was known as *Beadman's Hill* after another Westlake family.

³⁶ Information from Ms C Brooks who has produced a report (December, 1997) for the NCA on the exotic plantings from the period of pastoralist and camps/settlements construction period. This report recommends the removal of the 1963 exotics and planting of indigenous trees on non-sensitive cultural sites.

³⁷ Arthur Freeman Jr remembers the road making camp and showed me the area where it was erected. Around this time Empire Circuit was extended into the area of Stirling Park Precinct. The main section of this road was constructed some years earlier.

embassy erected in the Westlake area was the American (early 1940s). It was followed in 1957 by the residence of the South African High Commission and in 1959 by the French Embassy.³⁸ Lord Casey's red brick house off State Circle was built in the late 1930s. Today embassies in Empire Circuit, Forster Crescent and Darwin Avenue cover the sites of Westlake Cottages 1 - 20 and children's playground.³⁹

Below is a photograph of Ilma Keir taken outside her home (1940s). In the background is part of the dump between cottages 28 and 53 Westlake.



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

In the early 1970s Stirling Park West was selected as one of three possible sites for a new prime minister's lodge. The final choice was Attunga Point. The project was abandoned when the Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Frazer rejected both the sites and proposal. Stirling Park remains one of the possible sites for a new prime minister's lodge.⁴⁰

Native Flora in Stirling Park (Section 22) - Post 1970

Because of limited resources and the uncertainty about the future use of the parkland the land was left to regenerate.

In his book, *The Ecological Resources of the ACT*, David Shorthouse (1984) stated that Stirling Park was the only remaining area of savannah woodland⁴¹ close to Lake Burley Griffin.⁴² This fact is still valid and noted an August 1994 report by Dr Robert Boden in which he details the vegetation in Stirling Park.⁴³ Dr Boden divided the park into three sections: A - Stirling Ridge, B - The Gap and C- the hillsides opposite Lotus Bay. Part of his report reads as follows:

This [Section A] and adjacent areas of Stirling Park are the only remaining areas of savannah woodland close to Lake Burley Griffin (Frawley 1991). They also contain the major remaining population of the nationally endangered button wrinklewort...The continued survival of the button wrinklewort in the wild depends upon conservation viable self perpetuating populations on national land in Stirling Park. This may be the only example in temperate Australia of a plant species whose survival is the direct responsibility of the Australian rather than a state or territory government. This places a significant responsibility on the National Capital Planning Authority as the land management agency responsible for most of Stirling Park...

³⁸ The Foundation Stone for the French Embassy was laid 13.3.1957 in the presence of the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies. The address was Darwin Avenue. Today the road is named Perth Avenue. Information from French Embassy. During the building of the American Embassy and South African High Commission the children of Westlake used to wander through the buildings. Neither were fenced until well after Westlake settlement was moved from the area.

³⁹ See 1950s map of the area.

⁴⁰ *Committee on Official Establishments. Final Report May 1979.*

⁴¹ Now referred to as *Yellow Box, Red Gum Grassy Woodland*.

⁴² Dr Robert Boden's 1994 Report on Vegetation on Commonwealth Lands makes the same point. Both were produced for the National Capital Planning Authority.

⁴³ *Conservation and Management Plan for Native Vegetation on National Land Managed by the National Capital Development Commission.* August 1994 by Robert Boden, Robert Boden & Associates. Fauna by Ian Fraser, Vertego Ecological Education Consultancy.

Leeton & Fripp, found morphological differences between the Victorian and NSW/ACT populations and Benson and Wyse-Jackson (1994), believe it is imperative that viable populations in both states (sic) are protected so that the generic variability of the species is maintained.

Dr Boden's report on the Button Wrinklewort is neither the first nor the last to detail the importance and significance of Stirling Park in the fight to save this endangered native flower. A 1998 report - *Action Plans for Protecting ACT Threatened Species* in part states:

*In accordance with section 21 of the Nature Conservation Act 1980, the **Button Wrinklewort (Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea)** was declared an **endangered** species on 15 April, 1996 (formerly Determination No. 29 of 1996 and currently Determination No. 89 of 1997). Section 23 of the Act requires the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to prepare an Action Plan in response to each declaration. This is the Action Plan for the*

Button Wrinklewort
***Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea*...**

Protection: *This Action Plan, together with the National Recovery Plan, are the main instruments by which continued survival of the Button Wrinklewort and its habitat can be ensured*

Conservation effort will be focused on protecting the existing ACT populations as a cluster of sites, since there are few viable populations remaining in NSW and Victoria. Special emphasis will be placed on protecting the two largest populations, being in Stirling Park, Yarralumla and within the Majura Field Firing Range...

Stirling Park also has significant regrowth areas of native grasses and yellow box and red gum trees. Dr Boden mentioned in his report that red gum regeneration is prolific but this particular tree is most severely affected by psyllids and other insects. However Dr Roger Farrow, CSIRO Entomology is studying the biology of this insect and considers that if the present level of repeated attacks continues many of the red gums will die. They may be replaced by the other two woodland species, yellow box and apple box both of which are not attacked by this particular psyllid. Ironically this may produce a species distribution pattern closer to that which existed 200 years ago before Europeans began selectively removing yellow box for fuel and farm timber... Dr Farrow is working on psyllid-resistant red gums and has offered some for a trial in Stirling Park.⁴⁴ Dr Boden's report also mentions the majestic old white gums - *Eucalyptus rossii*.

Exotic Flora in Stirling Park Post 1970.

It is in the area of The Gap and Westlake cottages that the majority of exotic trees, shrubs and flowers are to be found. Dr Boden in his report on this area refers to the settlement in the following manner:

⁴⁴ In the December, 1997 NCA report by Ms C Brooks several areas were identified for planting native eucalypts. I was present at some of the on site discussions. Another suggestion made at the time was the removal of the exotic trees planted by the commonwealth in 1963. Some of these trees have now been removed.

Their memory in Westlake remains in the numerous garden shrubs and trees and ripped bitumen pavement from former roads. One of the trees is a tall Californian big tree (Sequoiadendron giganteum)...⁴⁵ Botanically the area includes a significant patch of button wrinklewort growing with kangaroo grass and yellow buttons, Chrysicephalum apiculatum. This part is adjacent to Alexander Drive and was formerly contiguous with Attunga Point. The contrast between the two areas [sections A & B] presents an excellent example of the ease with which a plant community can be changed...[He further states in reference to Westlake that] An opportunity exists to reconstruct a Rolland house with garden possibly near the existing Californian big tree⁴⁶. It could be linked with Blundell's Cottage in a cultural time sequence of Canberra's lifestyle at a level which contrasts markedly with the diplomatic and political lifestyle evident in the suburb of Yarralumla nearby. The house could become part of the ACT museum network and an interpretive centre and works depot for Stirling Park.

The majority of exotic trees, shrubs and flowers in the area of the HM Rolland cottages (*The Gap* Cottages later named just Westlake) with the exception of those put in by the Commonwealth post 1965, were planted by those who lived there. Rowan trees and hawthorn bushes are found in the areas of Howie's settlement and on the eastern side of Stirling Ridge (tenant farm). Trees were planted by the authorities in the area of Block 1, Section 128 (eastern end near Flynn Drive) around the late 1940s and others on the lake side of Block 22 (Stirling Ridge) around the mid 1960s. Old box thorns and white and white iris flowers, purple sweet peas, pink and red briar roses and numerous bulbs are throughout the park on and near cottage sites.⁴⁷

Numerous pine trees (old hedges) grow in the area of Westlake (*The Gap*) cottages and a few willow trees grew along the banks of Haines Creek.⁴⁸ A few fruit trees - quince, apple, apricot and plum remain from the settlement times and the old elms on the western side of the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club were planted by tenants of Briar Farm.

Throughout the park are stone, brick and Canberra tile edged garden beds and Aboriginal stone arrangements. One group of rocks surround a kurrajong tree growing on the hillside opposite Lotus Bay (Block 3, Section 128). Nearby is a large strawberry patch planted some seventy odd years ago.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ This tree was in the backyard of 56 Westlake. This cottage along with another 9 was built on the site of No 3 Sewer Camp (1922-1925).

⁴⁶ Backyard of 56 Westlake.

⁴⁷ I am the person responsible for marking the sites of camps and cottages on a modern map. The garden beds have been invaluable in marking the exact sites of camps etc. The pattern of exotic fauna grown by the residents of Stirling Park becomes clear as one documents each site. The Ngunawal stone arrangements differ from the European garden beds and are found throughout the park with the exception of the house sites in *The Gap*.

⁴⁸ The willows on Haines Creek bank were cut down in the 1996 woody-weed clearance. Numerous stories suggest that the trees originated in St Helena from around Napoleon's grave. A number were planted at Yarralumla in the 1840s and again in the 1880s by Frederick Campbell.

⁴⁹ The kurrajong tree - one of two growing on the hill opposite Lotus Bay if of historical significance. The original European name of Capital Hill was "Kurrajong Hill" - named after the one kurrajong on that hill. Nearby Hostel No 2 - Hotel Kurrajong - was also named after the tree on the hill. This type of tree was of importance to Aboriginal people.



The above stone arrangements are in the area of the Tradesmen's Ablution Block – between the buildings and the road. They may or may not be European. Oral information about the area indicates that the European farmers and probably the men of the camps, respected Aboriginal stone arrangements and known areas of significance.

Geological Composition of Stirling Park.

Examination of geological maps of the Stirling Park area reveal that the land is within a triangle of fault lines and has a number running through and converging in the park area.⁵⁰ The main geological composition is Sandstone Quartz.⁵¹ It is on this land that the surface mining took place sometime in the last century.⁵²

⁵⁰ Acton and Deakin Faults. Also known by sewer miners - Willie Thompson of Westlake told his son, Haven that a fault line came from the O'Connor area down to Westlake. This was a line of sand.

⁵¹ Geological map of Canberra 1971.

⁵² The surface mining was identified by Barry McGowan who suggested that the activity took place over a period of eighteen months to two years by around twelve to twenty men.

One of the fault lines on Stirling Ridge is on the *Register of National Estate Database Place Report*. [25 March, 1986. The location is]

Approximately 40ha and comprising all that area of Block 3, Section 22, Yarralumla, west of a line drawn from the eastern intersection of Alexandrina Drive and Mariner Place and the intersection of Forster Crescent and Empire Circuit...

Description: A low ridge on the Deakin Fault, extending in a north-west-east direction consisting of Ordovician and Silurian shales and sandstones of the Acton, Pittman and Canberra groups, in altitude from the shore of Lake Burley Griffin (c 556 m) to the summit of the ridge (c600m). The vegetation on the main part of the ridge consists of an ecotone between EUCALYPTUS MACRORHYNCHIAA/EUCALYPTUS ROSSII dry sclerophyll forest and EUCALYPTUS MELLIODORA/EUCALYPTUS BLAKELYI woodland.

Condition: The native vegetation on the upper part of the ridge, where the main population of RUTIDOSIA are to be found, has suffered some disturbance in the past [mining], but is now regenerating...

A fault line was known to the sewer miners. It extended from O'Connor through to Westlake.⁵³ Their stories also referred a silver lode discovered around forty feet below the ground level near the sewer vent on Stirling Ridge. This vent is heritage listed (ACT) and is noted in Dr Robert Boden's 1994 report in the following manner:

A fourth management issue relates to the cultural heritage significance of some features in this part of the Park. One of these is the brick sewer vent above the sewage tunnel running from behind the Canberra Hyatt Hotel to Western Creek.

The tunnel and vents were constructed under primitive working conditions and the above-ground brickwork is a fine example of the type of detail applied even to entirely functional works of the period. Although the tunnel and vents are now classified as part of Canberra's engineering heritage they are a neglected part of Canberra's early 20th century history which is worthy of interpretation for contemporary visitors to Stirling Park.

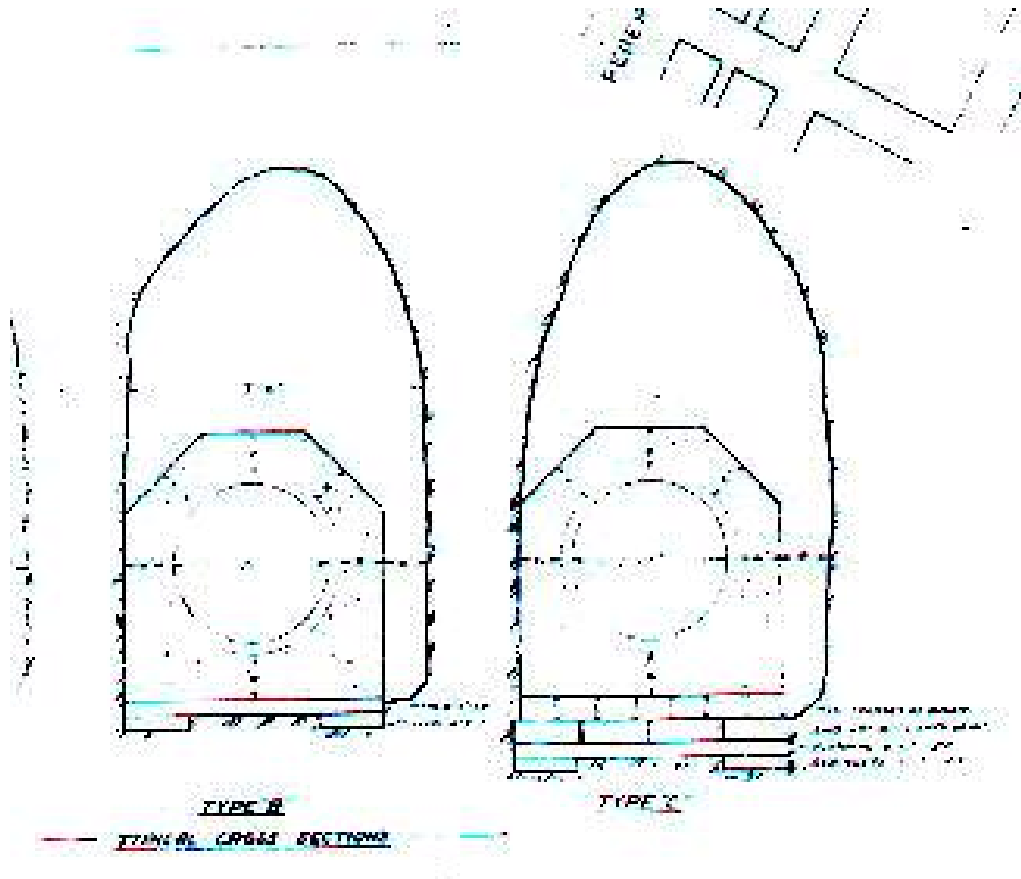
On top of Stirling Ridge are a number of concrete slabs and a concrete lined trench. This was the site of the main shaft down which sewer miners were lowered and raised by the steam driven traction engine and the mullock brought to the surface. The Institute of Engineers, Canberra Division, Heritage Panel have included these workings in a recent citation on the Outfall Sewer for the ACT Register.

Other miners' stories mention limestone caves near Yarralumla that resulted in at least one section of the tunnel being diverted from its original course. The miners also spoke about an underground natural drainage channel which runs along the base of Stirling Ridge in the area of Fitzgerald Street.⁵⁴ The nature of the land under the surface must

⁵³ Willie Thompson, a sewer miner - told his son, Haven that a fault line extended from O'Connor through to Westlake. Part of its composition was sand. This is the Acton Fault.

⁵⁴ This story is told by Terry Horan, last works manager at Canberra Brickyards. He was born at Yarralumla over seventy years ago and lived in the area until recently.

have *something to do with* the number of natural springs in the area, one of which may feed *Haines Creek*. It is never dry.⁵⁵

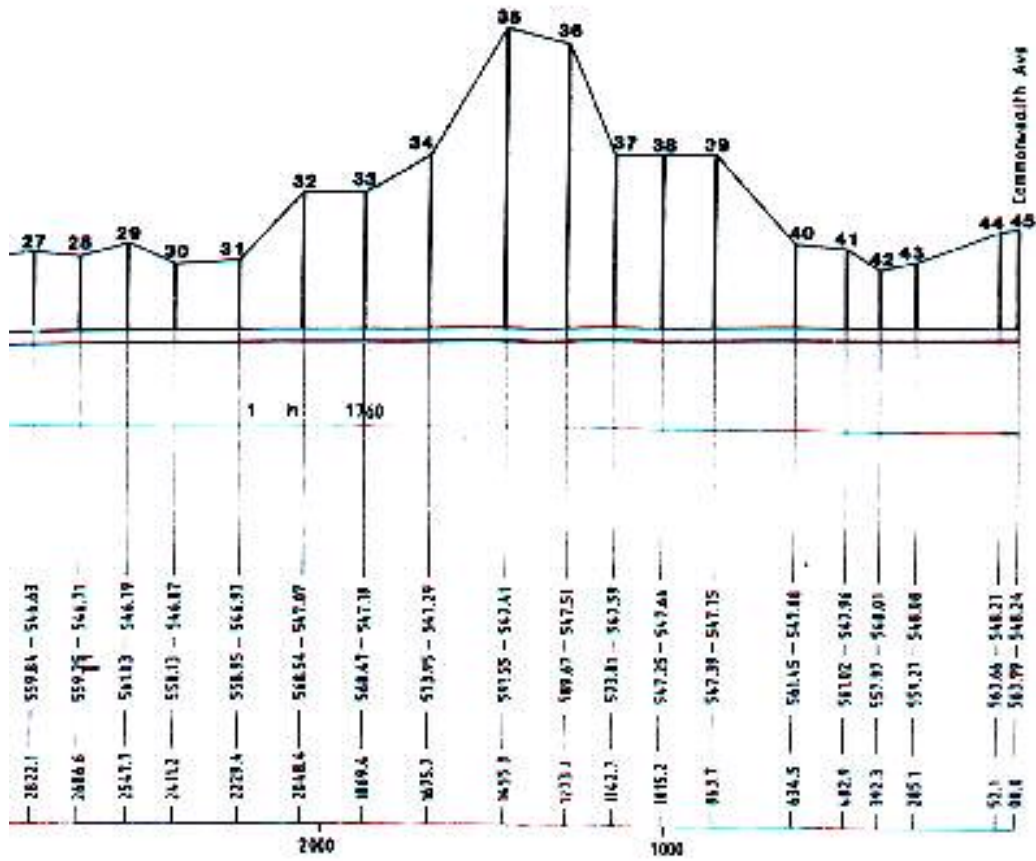


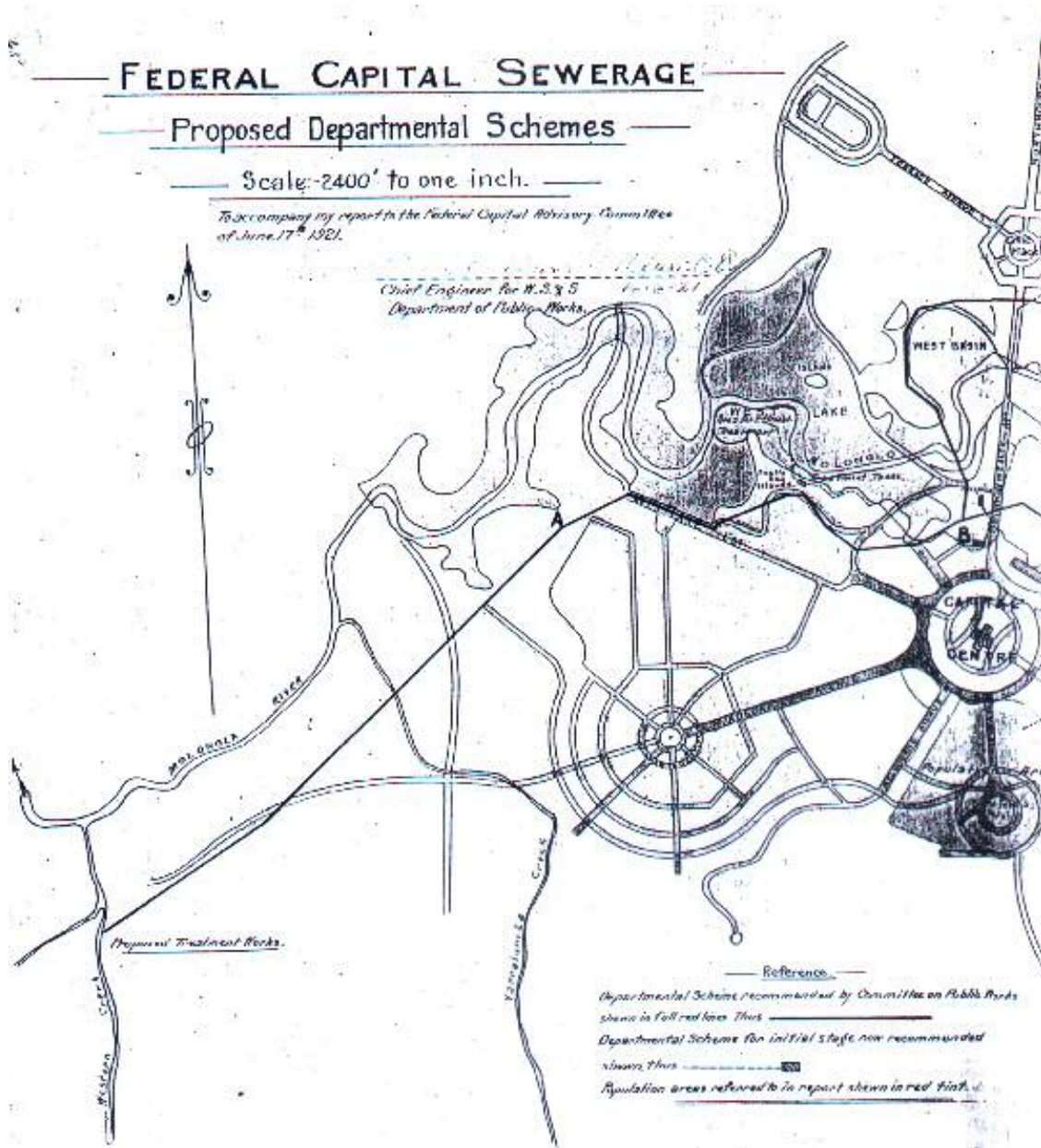
Above cross-section of the sewer tunnel – of the type that runs under Stirling Park. Following is a cross-section of Stirling Ridge that has the deepest shaft in the system leading down to the tunnel.

⁵⁵ Haines Creek which divides the park is never dry. Another which is referred to in the NCA vegetation map as “Stormwater Outlet” opposite the Brazilian Embassy appears on a 1913 map as a creek and is referred to in 1920s documents as “the quagmire”. It too may be fed by a spring.

Rel to top of Stirling Ridge

2/8





The Westlake Cottages in *The Gap* were connected to the main intercepting sewer following its completion in 1927. Prior to that time the cottages were connected to three septic tanks. The camps used a pan system. The collections were usually made between twice and three times a week. One of the three Westlake septic tanks still remains in Stirling Park in the area of Block 4, Section 128 near Haines Creek that cuts the park in two. On the early maps this creek is marked as a deep watercourse. Now it is full of rubbish and overgrown.



The blue arrow in the photograph on the right points to the area of the septic tank. On the left is a detail of the tank. This shows the series of walls between the two chambers of the tank. The one nearest Henry the fox terrier still has lead adhering to it.



On the left is a photograph of one of the buckets used by sewer miners to bring the mullock to the surface. This one was found in the creek.

The NCA's policy is to protect sensitive sites in the park - that is - button wrinklewort and historical heritage sites. Walking paths have been established on Stirling Ridge and on the eastern side of *Haines Creek*. Extensive areas of the park are enclosed within a copper log barrier to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.⁵⁶ In 1996 button wrinklewort sites were marked with metal tags and in December, 1997 concrete posts were erected near the majority of sites of cultural significance. The NCA has now completed the erection of a fence around the button wrinklewort growing on Attunga Point and have extended the

⁵⁶ In 1996 copper log barriers were erected around sections of the park. These were extended in 1998 to enclose the entire park to protect the land from unauthorised vehicle traffic - including four wheel drives which have caused some damage.

copper log barrier to fully enclose the park.⁵⁷ The fence on Attunga Point also encloses a rubbish dump in the old quarry. This dump was used by Howie's men and the Hotel Canberra between 1922 and 1925. Some exploratory work has been carried out on this dump.

Below: Button Wrinklewort. Photograph Trish Frei.



History of Human Occupation in the area of Stirling Park.

Canberra was an important Aboriginal centre where three clans - Ngunawal, Ngarigo and Walgalu met to trade, arrange marriages and hold ceremonies.⁵⁸ Canberra is Ngunawal land.

The earliest evidence of Aboriginal presence in Stirling Park is found on the surface of the land⁵⁹ and in the scarred trunks of original gum trees

which were saplings before Europeans came to the area.

The Gap in Stirling Park through which two creeks used to run⁶⁰ Haines Creek and another under the road of Empire Circuit, provided Aboriginal people with a good camping area. It is well sheltered, has permanent water and abundant food supply.⁶¹ Littering the surface of the hillsides are the hard rocks suitable for tools and in plentiful supply throughout the area are large deposits of soft chalk like shale and red earth which may have been used for ceremonial purposes.⁶²

The land was still being used by Aboriginal people well into this century. Two Westlake children (now in their sixties and seventies) recalled during recent conversations that each year during the 1930s and 1940s around the time of the first heavy frosts one small group of Aboriginal people camped in the gully between the Westlake Bus Shed on State Circle and the Prime Minister's Lodge on Capital Hill. At that time the camping place was sheltered and partly hidden by trees and out of sight of permanent buildings.

⁵⁷ The sites of cultural significance were identified by Ann Gugler. The majority of these areas are marked on a map (see appendix) and with concrete posts.

⁵⁸ Josephine Flood *Moth Hunters of the Australian Capital Territory* (1996). The word "Canberra" comes from an Aboriginal word meaning - "Meeting Place." Many of the Aboriginal people living on the Limestone Plains moved to Oak Hill (near Yass). In 1934 these people were moved into an Aboriginal reserve - "Hollywood". Information from Don Bell.

⁵⁹ West Stirling Park in particular has numerous Aboriginal rock patterns extending over most of the surface of the ground.

⁶⁰ Haines Creek which roughly follows Darwin Avenue to the area where it now enters the park and another which flows under Empire Circuit. It runs across the lower part of the Mexican Embassy grounds before joining Haines Creek.

⁶¹ I have seen on my walks fat lizards, kangaroos, opossums, birds of many kind and kangaroos. Once I saw a dingo.

⁶² Haines Creek which runs through The Gap during the last eighty years (oral history) has never been dry. It is probable that it is fed by a spring and is a permanent water supply. Even today the land abounds in a wide variety of flora and fauna and there is no reason to suspect that it was different in the past.

The American Embassy was not built until the early 1940s. Phillip Carroll, a Ngunawal man was born in the Blacks Camp Capital Hill in 1931.⁶³ Recent work 2003-2004 suggest that the areas of the parkland were still in use into the 1960s. Also on the eastern end of the park a number of large rock arrangements were discovered that have now been identified as Ngunawal. That these were not noted before is simply that I did not expect to find anything in that area and had never walked this section of land. Updated information about the Aboriginal sites in the park is available on CD from National Library Canberra, Heritage Library, Canberra & District Historical Society and the National Trust ACT Branch – *A History of Human Habitation of Stirling Park, Yarralumla* ACT Gugler 2004. Anyone interested in this information may also contact me – annrobina@actewagl.net.au or annrobina@gmail.com .]

On Stirling Ridge in the area nearest the Lake is a large mourning tree surrounded by circular rock patterns.⁶⁴ This tree like the numerous rock arrangements is situated in the area of Corkhill's paddock. Across the hillside there are a number of larger rocks each about two feet by eighteen inches in size. A Ngarigo lady visiting the site with me in 1999 suggested that these stones were placed on an energy line. They are in the vicinity of a known fault line. It is possible that there are Aboriginal burials on Stirling Ridge, the hillside in the Gap near Haines' Creek and the hillside above Lotus Bay.⁶⁵



Left: One of the scarred trees on Stirling Ridge. Photograph Trish Frei.

The importance of Stirling Park to Ngunawal people is noted in the Summer 1999 issue of *Heritage in Trust* which states the following: *Heritage Watch. Endangered Places in the ACT. Aboriginal Sites Stirling Park. Considered by Mr Don Bell, a Ngunawal elder to be a place of high significance, displaying physical and spiritual associations with the past traditional ways of life of his people... The ridge was used by Aboriginal people before and after European arrival. Three Blakely's Redgums bearing scars attributed to bark removal by Aborigines have been identified. Stone arrangements have been located throughout the park. Mr Bell believes several to be connected with important ceremonial activities...*

Europeans on the Limestone Plains The Pastoralist Era

⁶³ Phillip Carroll is the grandson of Queen Lucy (nee Hume) and King Ned Carroll. He is also the grandson of Queen Nellie Hamilton. His sister, Phyllis Phillips lived at Duntroon. She too may have been born at Capital Hill. Some European authorities suggest that Black Mountain was a main camp site. Don Bell, brother of Phillip Carroll and other aboriginal people to whom I have spoken state that Black Mountain was the main ceremonial ground - not a camp site. It was also a place of burial - numerous stories mention a burial cave in the mountain. The oldest confirmed European research work identifying Aboriginal presence in the territory has been found at Birrigai - 21,000 years old.

⁶⁴ Identified by Mr Don Bell.

⁶⁵ Possible sites identified by Mr Don Bell Ngunawal elder and a visiting Ngarigo lady.

The first recorded Europeans to see the Limestone Plains (Canberra) were Wild, Vaughan and Throsby Smith - the year was 1820.⁶⁶ By 1824 J J Moore's stockmen arrived with cattle and occupied lands in the area now called Acton Peninsula. He was followed in 1825 by Robert Campbell's overseer, Ainslie, who established Campbell property in the district.⁶⁷ By the 1880s members of the Campbell family held the largest land holdings on the Limestone Plains.⁶⁸

By 1828 the Limestone Plains were divided up into a number of land grants. One, described as Portion 7, Parish of Narrabundah, County of Murray, was bought in 1829 by William Klensendorlffe from John Stephen Jr. From this time until the post World War I period this section of land was known as *Klensendorlffe's*. Stirling Park is part of this grant which also takes in the sites of the old and new Parliament Houses, Hotel Canberra, West and East blocks and the sites of a number of embassies in Yarralumla.

In May 1847 William Klensendorlffe surrendered his land to Peter William Plomer in payment of a debt of 3,700 pounds⁶⁹ and from that time on portions of Klensendorlffe's land were leased to tenant farmers.⁷⁰ It is possible that Klensendorlffe also leased but no evidence to date has been found.

Tenant farming on the Limestone Plains has not been well documented. The primary source of information comes from family histories and Moriarty's 1913 records. The boundaries and size of tenant farms varied over the years.⁷¹ The area of Stirling Park covers lands which were once part of three or more tenant farms. The site of Briar Farm is known. The last tenant was Thomas Kinlyside - *The Jangler*. He and his family left sometime towards the end of 1913 and from that time onwards the farm cottage was tenanted by Commonwealth employees including Percy Douglas, Fire Brigade Chief. From 1927 until it was pulled down in the early 1950s it was home to the family of Charles Foster Day.

Within the boundaries of Section 22 of the park (Stirling Ridge and *the Gap*) there are at least two farm cottages/buildings sites. One is in Corkhill's paddock on the eastern side of Stirling Ridge may have been the site of John Morrison's farm cottage and outhouses. Today this site is marked by NCA concrete posts and a small sign. It recorded on a 1997

⁶⁶ L H Fitzhardinge *Old Canberra*

⁶⁷ A story is told in a number of early histories, that Ainslie was shown the land by an Aboriginal woman.

⁶⁸ Many of the Campbells were absentee landlords.

⁶⁹ Plomer sold Klensendorlffe's land to George Campbell in 1860 from which time it became part of Duntroon Estate. Tenant farming continued until the land was required by the Commonwealth.

⁷⁰ Terrence Aubrey Murray leased Klensendorlffe's land in 1847 and in turn sub-leased it to his friend, Stewart Mowle. In 1852 Mowle left and the land between the Molonglo River (also known as "Queanbeyan River") and the foothills of Stirling Park was divided into two tenant farms - on the Eastern side, Kaye's and the western - Briar. In the area of The Gap and Stirling Ridge John Morrison leased land from circa 1865-1871. Stirling Ridge at that time may have been known as "Morrison's Hill" and the site of the farm cottage found on this hillside in the area of West Stirling Park may have been the site of his farm house and buildings.

⁷¹ Briar Farm for example, during the occupancy of members of the Kinlyside family from around sixty odd acres to eighty odd. By 1927 when Charles Foster Day took up residence in the farm cottage the farm lands consisted of four acres - Charles Kaye took over former Briar Farm lands.

NCA map.⁷² Because it is just within the boundaries of Corkhill's paddock it is a relatively undisturbed site.⁷³ This paddock in Klensendorff's land was following the resumption of land by the Commonwealth leased first to Sullivan of Springbank and in 1921 to Corkhill.⁷⁴ The Corkhill family by this time had moved from their farm near the National Library to the dairy farm on Yarralumla property.⁷⁵ They lived in the old two story Yarralumla Dairy Cottage built in the 1890s by Young until the rising of the lake waters in the early 1960s forced them to leave.

The second site, which has been disturbed, is near the Westlake Hall. Nearby is the stump of a hawthorn bush cut down in the 1996 woody weed clearance. It measures over sixty centimeters across.⁷⁶ There is also an old gum tree nearby that has several rectangular holes cut into its trunk - probably used as part of a post and rail fence. Nearby there are several gums with old bolts embedded in their trunks. Near the base of one tree is the remains of either a pise wall or an earth floor.

One candidate for the possible nineteenth century sites is John Morrison Sn and his wife, Catherine who took up lands in the area in the mid 1860s.⁷⁷ Support for this supposition is found in Les Lyon's article to the *Canberra & District Historical Society Journal* dated September 1974 part of which reads as follows:

*The Morrisons moved in the mid-sixties to a cottage on the southside the Molonglo and the southside of a hill known as Morrison's Hill, and farmed an area now in Yarralumla Bay that came to be called Morrison's Flat. The precise location of the cottage is uncertain. One view is that they lived in a cottage later occupied by the Kinlysides [Briar Farm] ... another is that it was situated on the side of a rise about 100 yards nearer Westlake [Settlement in the Gap]...In addition to Morrison's Flat, it seemed that the Morrisons farmed land now occupied by the United States Embassy. John Jr of 'Tralee' in later years mentioned that at one time he grew wheat in the area.*⁷⁸

⁷² The NCA map documents the sites of cultural significance. The majority of sites are marked with concrete posts. The site of the old fence line was confirmed by Noel Carn (Westlake boy). A number of original gums were used as part of the fence and in the ground are post holes.

⁷³ The site is easily found. It is marked by a large rowan tree which was one of a number planted near the old cottage site. An old hawthorn bush and a number of box thorns also grow in the area. Clear evidence of the **old site is noted in a circular** stone garden bed, numerous briar roses grow along the old fence line.

⁷⁴ Australian Archives A192/1 FCL22/510 A192/ FCL/24/347

⁷⁵ Yarralumla Dairy is on the site of earlier dairies tenanted by members of Bert Sheedy's family. The Yarralumla Dairy was leased to Mr John McPherson by Frederick Campbell. With the land came a two story brick house built from the same brick as the new homestead by Fred Young. This building was ready for occupation in 1891. The property was then called - "Curl" after the curlew birds on the property, and later from 1913 when the Corkhill family took over - "Riverview" (Information from a taped interview with Mrs Ray Price (nee Avery) 8.3.1979 - courtesy of Bert Sheedy.)

⁷⁶ Hawthorns and rowans were grown to protect people against evil. This belief is documented in a 1926 copy of the *Federal Capital Pioneer* at the time of the ceremonial planting of a rowan tree in the grounds of St Andrew's Church.

⁷⁷ The Morrison family were not Yarralumla tenants which suggests the hall site to be the more likely possible site for their farm cottage. The site overlooking the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club (Briar Farm cottage site) is more likely to have been used for outhouses - sheds etc. On the hillside above the hall area is one original trees which has a number of metal spikes protruding from its trunk. These are pre-twentieth century - purpose unknown an may be from the tenant farm period of occupation.

⁷⁸ Les Lyons, author of the history, was the son-in-law of John Morrison Jr. It is more likely that the Morrisons farmed the land near Lotus Bay rather than Yarralumla Bay which was part of Yarralumla land. The only area suitable for wheat growing near the site of the American Embassy is The Gap. It is possible that John Morrison Senior may have been responsible for the surface mining carried out on the hillsides of Stirling Park Precinct. Before coming to the Limestone Plains he had tried his luck on the Kiandra Goldfields.

It is unlikely that the Morrison family lived in Briar Farm cottage constructed in 1870 from brick and pise.⁷⁹ It is probable that the builders of Briar Farm Cottages were Bryant and Cook - partners in the tenant farm and bricklayers by trade. The Morrisons left their Stirling Park land around the end of 1871. They moved into a into a slab cottage at Bulga Creek and I would think that their Westlake cottage may have also have been slab construction. Les Lyons described the Bulga Creek home as consisting of:
*Three rooms - a bedroom on either side of the central room called the parlour - and detached kitchen. The kitchen was a large one with an earth floor.*⁸⁰

A point of interest mentioned to me by members of the Day family (last tenants of Briar Farm) is a story that during the Kinlyside tenancy of Briar Farm the cottage was *The first Canberra hospital*.⁸¹

The Federal Period:

The first surveyors' camp in the territory, under the leadership of Charles Scrivener, was set up in March, 1909 near the boundary of Stirling Park and next to a creek at the base of Kurrajong Hill (Capital Hill). The camp lasted for three weeks during which time surveying work on an area of thirty square miles - the city - commenced. In 1910 the surveyors returned and at that time timber offices and concrete plan room were erected. Following the completion of administrative buildings at Acton these buildings were abandoned and for many years the old concrete building was used as a depot by Parks and Gardens.⁸²



In 1911 Duntroon property (including Klensendorlffe's) was resumed by the Commonwealth. It was followed by Acton and Yarralumla. Frederick Campbell, in fact

⁷⁹ Moriarty 1913.

⁸⁰ Les Lyons, 1974.

⁸¹ The records of St John the Baptist Church, Reid show that a number of children were born in the old farm house which suggests that "Granny Cook" - Thomas Kinlyside's aunt and mother-in-law, may have been a mid-wife. There are also a number of recorded deaths - not family members - in the farm house which suggests that some nursing took place.

⁸² Information from Colin Smith.

was only given only three week's notice to vacate his home at Yarralumla. The family left on 8 April, 1913.⁸³

In 1913 work on the city began in earnest and by the end of the year the brickyards were in operation, Canberra House (Acton) was built and the Power House and Cotter Dam were under construction. In 1914 the rail link between Queanbeyan and Canberra was completed and the following year work on the sewer commenced. By the end of 1916 most major works ground to a halt as men and money were diverted to the war effort.⁸⁴

Work on the city started up again in 1921 under the direction of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) headed by Charles Sulman. One of the first projects to recommence was the sewer. Major building projects undertaken by the FCAC were: Telopea Park School (opened September, 1923), Hotel Canberra (opened December, 1924) and Provisional Parliament House (first sod turned August, 1923 - opened 9 May, 1927).⁸⁵ In January 1925 the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) took over from the FCAC.

Westlake was chosen by the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) in 1923 as the site to erect cottages for married tradesmen and tent camps for single men working on the Provisional Parliament House, Administrative buildings of East and West Blocks and surrounds.⁸⁶ Already in the area from 1922 were No 3 Sewer Camp and Contractor John Howie's cottages and Hostel Camp. His men built the Hotel Canberra. Westlake was an ideal site. It was within walking distance of work - no zone allowance paid to men - and it was out of sight of permanent Canberra.

⁸³ Charles Newton *Spirit of Wharf House*

⁸⁴ World War I - 1914 to 1918.

⁸⁵ From 1 January, 1925 until March, 1930, the Federal Capital Commission headed by John Butters took charge of construction work in the territory.

⁸⁶ The Brickyards and nursery area was named Westridge.



Above: Mildenhall photograph circa 1925 or 1926. NAA collection A3560 No1278 (2). Photograph taken from the area of the Provisional Parliament House. In the background on the left is Hotel Canberra and in the far distance are the buildings of the Acton Administrative Offices. The Molonglo River is marked by a line of willow trees. Black Mountain in the background. Commonwealth Avenue which was a concrete road is in front of the Hotel.

Camps & Settlements erected in Stirling Park Precinct & Capitol Hill (Westlake)

A. In The Gap:

1. No 3 Sewer Camp (1922 - mid 1925) Around one hundred single men were housed in fifty or so tents set up in two rows along the base of the eastern side of Stirling Ridge.⁸⁷ Following the dismantling of the camp the galvanised iron mess hall was left in situ for use by Westlake Settlement as a community hall. Other buildings belonging to the camp included ablution, laundry etc.⁸⁸ The camp was connected to electricity and water supplies. Evidence of the work of the sewer miners is found on Stirling Ridge and on the hillside opposite the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club. Structures which remain include the heritage listed sewer vent, concrete slabs and trench on top of Stirling Ridge and an old road leading from the area of Perth Avenue to the vent. Between the tents and the upper slope of the hill a ditch was dug. Part of this ditch is still visible above the sites of Westlake Cottages 61-62.

Above this ditchline and roughly in line with the sewer vent and the lake end of Stirling Ridge there are signs of a number of house sites. Recent work on these sites suggest that these cottages may belong to the time of the Sewer Work (1922-1925). Finds in

⁸⁷ The number of tents is based on two men sharing each tent. The information about the location of the tents came from Arthur Freeman Jr whose father was Mess Caterer for No 3 Sewer Camp.

⁸⁸ Each tent was around ten foot by twelve foot. Showers used cold water.

nearby dumps include bottle fragments dated between 1918 and 1925. A bronze badge in the form of the word, *Australia* of the type worn on army uniforms was also found. Remains of old branches cut from nearby gum trees are of the size necessary for building frames. A number of rock and brick lined garden beds are also found in this area including one containing white iris flowers.



Above: Hawke family photograph showing sewer workers on Stirling Ridge 1924. In the background just discernable are the tents of No 3 Sewer Camp. Mullock from the tunnel below was brought to the surface and put into skips that ran along rail lines and the earth dumped. I believe that the line of skips was pulled by steam driven traction engines. Arthur Freeman Jr whose father was the first Mess Caterer at No 3 Sewer Camp, was lowered down into the tunnel and walked across to Westridge (Brickyards area). He told me about the skips.

2. The Gap Cottages - later known as *Westlake* 1924 - 1965

This workmen's village consisted of sixty-two⁸⁹ small two bedroom unlined timber cottages with galvanised iron roofs. H M Rolland, government architect designed the cottages and based his plan on Howie's Cottages (1922-1931).⁹⁰ Westlake Settlement

⁸⁹ No 21 Westlake may have been built. There are two stories about it's demise. The first is that it burnt down and the second that it was moved because it was too close to the creek which flowed down the area of Empire Circuit and across the grounds of the Mexican Embassy.

⁹⁰ Contractor John Howie who won the contract to build the Hotel Canberra had his carpenters construct 25 two-three bedroom timber cottages for his married men and 18 or more timber huts for his single men. The cottages were erected either side of the old road from Briar Farm and along Haines Creek on the eastern side.

was the first workmen's temporary suburb built by the FCAC. Rolland workmen's cottages were later built at Acton (1924) and Causeway (1925 - 1926).

Arrangement of *The Gap* cottages at Westlake did not follow the usual grid pattern. The first twenty are wedged into a distorted U shape between two creeks which flowed into The Gap. These were soon followed by another thirty in The Gap and across a hillside. In 1926 a further ten cottages (53-62) were erected on the site of the tents of No 3 Sewer Camp. All were painted a dull green colour to blend in with the landscape.⁹¹ The cottages were connected to electricity, water, septic (1924-1927) and sewer (post 1927).⁹²

Below is a 1924 photograph showing the construction of Westlake cottages 21-27. In the background are some of the finished cottages.



B. Eastern side of *Haines Creek* - on the hillside above Lotus Bay:

The camps and Howie's Settlement were arranged either side of the 1890 road which led from Briar Farm towards the Uriarra Road. (This road may be as early as the 1860s and was probably used by the men who moved stone from the Quarry near Briar Farm to St John the Baptist Church at Reid for the reconstruction of the tower.)

In 1925 on the way from Briar Farm travelling towards the Power House one would have passed Howie's Settlement, Arthur Freeman's tent cottage, Old Tradesmen's Camp and No 1 Labourers' Camp. There was another camp - Westlake Horse Lines⁹³ - not

⁹¹ Information regarding the choice of colour came from Tom Robertson of Oaks Estate. He was one of the men who built the cottages. The policy of the authorities was to put temporary dwellings out of sight of permanent Canberra.

⁹² One of the two concrete septic tanks in the settlement was uncovered during the 1996 woody weed clearance. It sits between Haines Creek and a ditch leading to Haines Creek. Another is in the park area near the area where Haines Creek enters the park.

⁹³ Horse and Dray Camps were called *Pug Camps*. On the social scale they were above the labourers but below the Tradesmen.

mentioned in the 1927 Sanitation Report. It was on Red Hill in the area of modern Latrobe Park.

1. **Contractor John Howie's timber cottages 1922 - 1931:** In 1922 twenty five two and three bedroom timber cottages were constructed by Howie's carpenters. By May 1925 the number was reduced to twenty by October, 1926 to thirteen.⁹⁴



The cottages were unpainted and were connected to electricity and water, but not the sewer. A recreation hall for cottage residents was constructed on the hillside. Sometime before October, 1926 ownership was taken over by

Federal Capital Commission (FCC).⁹⁵ These cottages were arranged either side of the 1890 road from Briar Farm and recent work has indicated that a number were also erected on the eastern side of Haines Creek. These house sites have a distinctive drainage pattern and those near the creek are dug to lead waste water into the creek. Nearby is the old track used by Westlake people to walk across to Hotel Canberra. It would have been used by Howie's people.

Above is a photograph loaned by Ken Dinnerville's daughter showing one of Howie's cottages. Ken is in his scout's uniform and along with his friend, Arthur Freeman who lived at 13 Howie's Cottages, took part in the opening ceremonies on 9th May 1927.

2. **Contractor Howie's Hostel Camp 1922-1927.** This camp was constructed by John Howie's carpenters for his single tradesmen. It consisted of around eighteen timber huts, recreation/mess hall and ablution blocks.⁹⁶ The inaugural meeting of the Burns Club took place in the Hostel Mess hall in 1924 and the amongst the first office holders were several of Howie's men.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Information about the numbers of cottages come from 1. Jack Dinnerville who lived at Howies; May 1925 Transport Officer's list (Social Service Files Australian Archives) and 27 July, 1927 Sanitation Report - full copy of which is in the appendix Gugler A, *Westlake, One of the Vanished 'Suburbs' of Canberra*. 1996.

⁹⁵ A map supplied by ACTEW of Howie's settlement dated October, 1926 indicated that the settlement at that time was owned by the Federal Capital Commission (FCC).

⁹⁶ The concrete floor of the ablution block is on the lower slopes of the hillside opposite the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club. This area is now marked with a concrete post.

⁹⁷ Ian Howie-Willis *Canberra and the Scots. The Canberra Highland Society and Burns Club - its first 71 years*. Harry Hamilton's father, Alexander, was one of the committee men. Harry was born in one of Howie's cottages in 1927. His father came directly from Scotland to Howie's in Canberra which suggests that Howie may have advertised for men in his country of birth.

3. Arthur Freeman's Tent Cottage 1924-1927. This dwelling may originally have been the home of Mrs Erikson mess caterer of the Tradesmen's Camp. She moved into a Westlake cottage in March, 1924. Arthur Freeman moved from No 3 Sewer Mess to this dwelling in 1924. On the baptism certificate of his youngest son born in the tent in November 1924 Arthur Freeman's occupation is described as *Mess Caterer Hostel Camp*. The tent cottage, like all the tents in the Tradesmen's camp had a wooden floor and sides. Nearby were two small timber buildings one of which was used as a kitchen and the other as a storage shed. In 1927 the family moved into No 13 Howie's Cottages.

4. Old Tradesmen's Camp 1923 - 1927. The men of this camp lived in shared tents - two men to each 10ft x 8ft tent. Each tent had a wooden floor and sides. Like all the camps the Tradesmen's had a mess building and ablution blocks. Electricity and water was connected to the communal buildings. It is probable that a pan system was used in the toilet blocks. Several trenches were dug for use as urinals.⁹⁸ In 1925 a new ablution block was erected. It had four galvanised iron baths, cold water and coppers (wood fired) to heat water.⁹⁹ The facilities were used by around one hundred and fifty men.

5. No 1 Labourers' Camp 1924 - 1927. The men lived in tents, had cold water showers and from 1927 the lavatories were connected to the sewer. The numbers in the camp varied between one and two hundred men.¹⁰⁰ This camp was established on Capitol Hill, Westlake. The site was later used for Hillside Hostel built in Post World War 2 era.



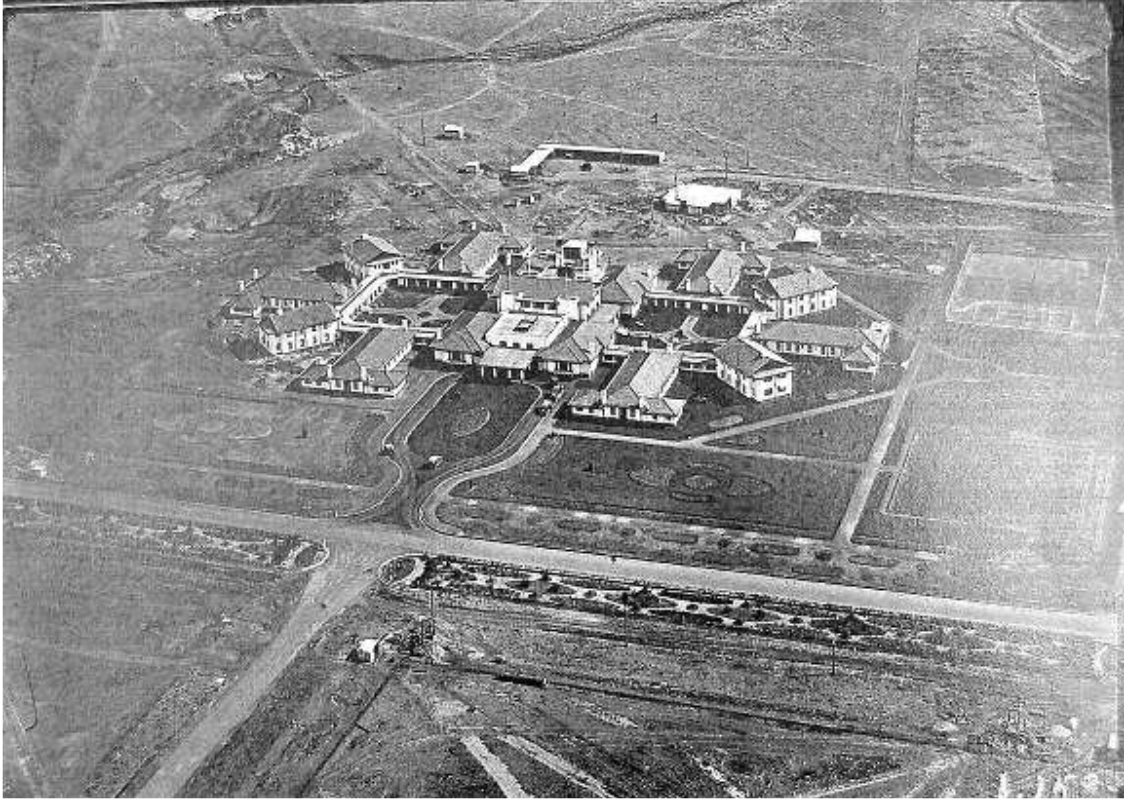
Above: Mildenhall photograph taken in 1925. Mid left is the Hotel Canberra and on the far right – top Tradesmen's Camp – road – Howie's Cottages and below Howie's Cottages, Howie's Hostel Camp. A line of Westlake Cottages in *The Gap* is above all partly hidden in the tree line. In the background is Red Hill and foreground to mid left is Commonwealth Avenue leading to Commonwealth Bridge. The photograph

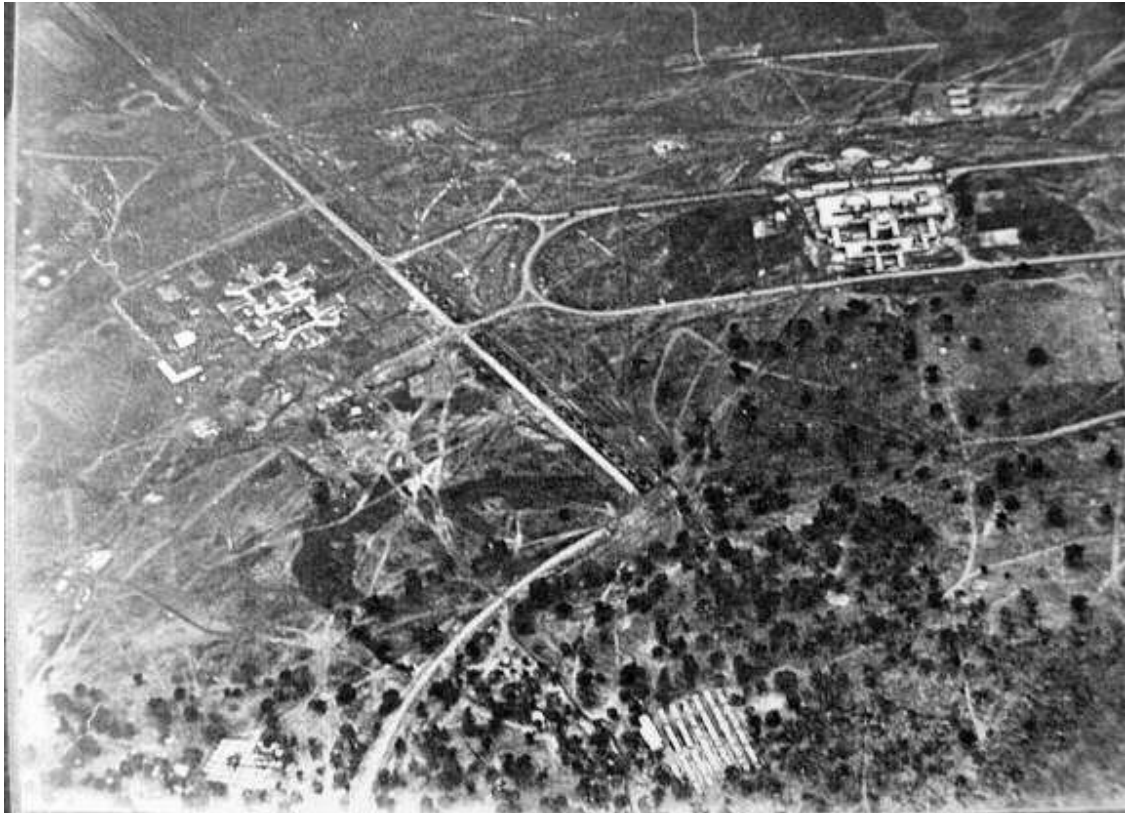
⁹⁸ Three trenches have been found in the area of the Tradesmen's Camp along with a number of drainage channels dug from the ablution areas to the quagmire. Also left behind are the remains of brick floors used in ablution blocks. The Mess rooms were transported by jinkers to new sites when no longer needed.

⁹⁹ Australian Archives A2501/1 AA92

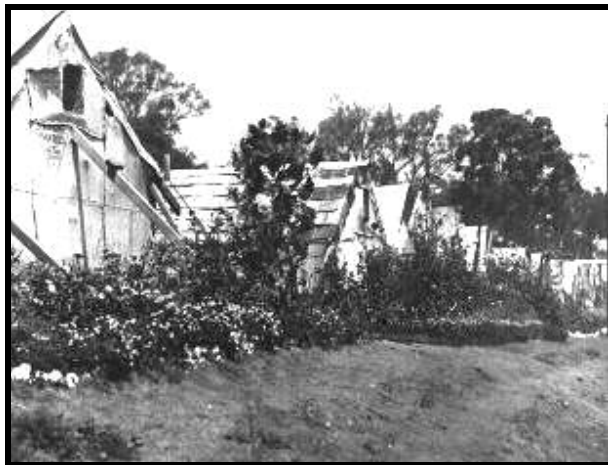
¹⁰⁰ Areas where tents were pitched have drainage channels. Numerous stone lined garden beds are found near the sites of these tents and a number of small dumps which may have been part of the old tin fire places which were added to a number of tents. A few of the tents were constructed from hessian. One man was incinerated when his tent caught fire.

was taken from City Hill (Mt Vernon) Courtesy of National Australian Archives – NAA 3560- No 1772
Below Mildenhall photograph from NAA A3560 No 1158 that shows the rear of the Hotel Canberra circa 1925. The track that crosses the deep creek is the one used by Howie's men and the people of Westlake Cottages in *The Gap*.





Above is the Mildenhall photograph NAA A3560 No 1161 taken in 1925 that shows No 1 Labourers Camp bottom mid right. Scrivener's Plan room is above to left of the camp. Far left, bottom is the Tradesmen's Camp. Hotel Canberra is mid left and the Provisional Parliament House mid right. The curved road is State Circle and the long road that leaves it is Commonwealth Avenue. Below is a photograph showing the Cooks' Tents No 1 Camp 1924.



The population of Westlake in 1924 was four hundred. By May 1925 the numbers had swelled to seven hundred - that is around one fifth of the population of the territory.¹⁰¹

The temporary suburb of Westlake - additional information:

This suburb like all temporary construction workers' accommodation was erected out of sight of permanent Canberra. In the 1920s Westlake was the second largest concentration of population in the territory – second only to Molonglo (ex-internment camp converted into 120 cottages and barracks for 150 single tradesmen). By 1930 only the Westlake cottages (designed by HM Rolland) in *The Gap* remained. During the period Westlake settlement in *The Gap* only those who either lived there or had reason to enter the settlement did so.¹⁰² Because of its isolation and the hard times of the Great Depression and World War II a strong community developed. This sense of belonging to Westlake continues today.

Westlake cottages, owned by the commonwealth, were neglected and ignored by them. All Westlake residents well remember the official reply to any request for repairs or improvements - *it can't be done because its [the settlement] only temporary!* By the 1950s Westlake, along with Causeway were referred to by the public and newspaper articles in terms such as *the slums of Canberra*.

Canberra's unofficial ombudsman, Mr Jim Fraser - local MP spoke out publicly about the neglect and disgraceful conditions under which people were forced to live. As a result of his efforts in 1950 a few repairs and improvements were made - the cottages were lined with canite, interiors painted, enamel baths substituted for the old galvanised iron ones and chip heaters installed.¹⁰³

Around the mid 1950s a decision was made to complete the city. Evidence of this is found in many documents including the Minutes of an Advisory Council Meeting held 14 January, 1955. Mr Shakespeare was reported as saying:

We have come to the stage when all this waste on temporary establishments will have to be scrapped and the permanent city put on its proper foundations ... I feel that one of the greatest duties of this Council in the next twenty five years is to put a drive into the Canberra Development Plan in the right direction instead of allowing the authorities to take the line of least resistance by using all sorts of stop gap provisions that will never complete a city...

¹⁰¹ Gugler, A *The Builders of Canberra 1909-1929* and Gugler A *Westlake One of the Vanished 'Suburbs' of Canberra*.

¹⁰² I am a member of this community and following the launch of the Westlake book May, 1997, which brought us together again, a number of community activities have taken place including the raising of over one thousand dollars for plaques which will be erected in Stirling Park 15.3.1998. Members of the community are loaning photographs and writing their stories which will be published.

¹⁰³ Prior to the chip heaters the water for the bath had to be heated in the wood fired copper and carried across to the bath. Westlake Settlement missed out on footpaths and bus service into the settlement. Around 1955 a school bus did pick up and return children to the settlement.

During the September quarter in 1957 Federal Parliament passed an act to form the National Capital Development Commission.¹⁰⁴ Money and resources were made available to recommence moving Government Departments from Melbourne to Canberra and to complete the building of the city interrupted by two world wars and the Great Depression.

Westlake's history reflected the population changes taking place in Australia and from the late 1940s into the 1950s as old tenants left Westlake they were replaced by *New Australians*. By 1955 around one quarter of the population of Westlake spoke languages other than English and names such as Bondarenko and Smijewski replaced McKissock and Keir. In their turn they too left and in 1965 the last Westlake cottage was removed from the land¹⁰⁵ and the work of hiding their existence began.¹⁰⁶ Earth moving machines spread earth, flattened gardens, ripped out shrubs and fruit trees. Exotic trees were planted on house sites. It was almost as though the history of human occupation of the park had to be obliterated.

Stirling Park to date has survived plans to built on its lands a new Prime Minister's Lodge and houses. It is now classified by the National Trust and nominated by them to be placed on the Register of the National Estate. It is listed in the National Trusts Register of Endangered Aboriginal places in the ACT.

I believe Stirling Park should remain a native bush parkland for all to enjoy. However, I, and many members of the Westlake community support Dr Robert Boden's suggestion that a museum in the form of a Rolland house be erected in the park - perhaps on the site of George Sykes' place near the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent. Thought could also be given to adding to this site other types of housing used by the men and their families who came to build the city of Canberra. To date there is no museum in the ACT dedicated to the construction era of Canberra's history and the people who built the city. A Rolland's cottage would be a fitting tribute to their memories and the temporary suburbs of Westlake, Westridge, Eastlake Tenements, Acton, Molonglo, Causeway, Riverbourne, Russell Hill and the numerous workmen's camps.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *Australia in Fact and Figures* No 55. Issued by the Australian News and Information Bureau, Dept of the Interior.

¹⁰⁵ It is somewhat ironical that Westlake buildings were sold and moved to new sites in Queanbeyan etc whilst at the same time the commonwealth bought and brought huts from Narrelan and Tocumwal to rebuilt in Canberra - in many cases for more temporary accommodation eg. Narrelan House, Mulwala House and Tocumwal houses. Other new temporary accommodation built or added to post 1947 included Reid House, Ainslie Village, Turner Hostel, Eastblock, Riverside, Capital Hill Hostel, Hillside Hostel, Fairbairn Hostel.

¹⁰⁶ Above the surface of the ground are a few reminders of cottage sites such as the concrete floor of the bathroom, laundry and toilet area of 55, the concrete butter cooler in the ground of 47 and just below the surface of the ground near a brick path a ceramic gully trap. The concrete curb near 48 Westlake is still in situ along with the names of the children who used the wet concrete to record them.

¹⁰⁷ Oaks Estate became a workmen's suburb in the post World War 1 era. This suburb still exists as does Westridge which today is Yarralumla. At Westridge, however, the ex-Molonglo cottages and single men's barracks and other temporary camps have now been removed.

The remainder of the park should be left to regenerate. It is the only area of savannah woodland within the city area and amongst its wildflowers grows the endangered button wrinklewort. It is home to many species of birds and native creatures. This park in the in the centre of Canberra presents a unique opportunity for people including archaeologists, researchers and school children to visit, wander through and enjoy a landscape which has links with the time before European occupation - a landscape that bears lightly the marks of the Aboriginal, pastoralist, mining and construction eras of Canberra. This small parcel of bushland next to the national parliament house forms a symbolic link with Australia's history and upholds the name - *the bush capital*!

Ann Gugler 16 December, 1999. Former resident of 27 Westlake (1941-1959).

POSTSCRIPT

Update – September 2004 – the NCA (National Capital Authority) who are in charge of Commonwealth land in the ACT are in the process of having Section 1 of the parkland that is on the Eastern end, surveyed and a report made. This land is now designated for diplomatic use. At time of writing I have been told that there are no further plans for the rest of the parkland, but one cannot be sure about this as rumours abound!

2009 – Block 1, Section 128 is currently being developed and is divided into a number of new blocks. Two small sections with large stone arrangements were removed from the area to be developed.

Block 3, Section 128 (opposite Lotus Bay) has been designated for development and Block 4, Section 128 is now officially designated as a site for a road.

2009 - The most recent draft heritage report (March 2009) by Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd acknowledges the Westlake settlements – that is the historical heritage of the land and this may help to save this old area for future generations to enjoy. Ann Gugler May 2009.



Leslie Menzies, Neville Menzies, Sylvia Cleveland (nee Menzies) and Shiralee Cleveland 1997.