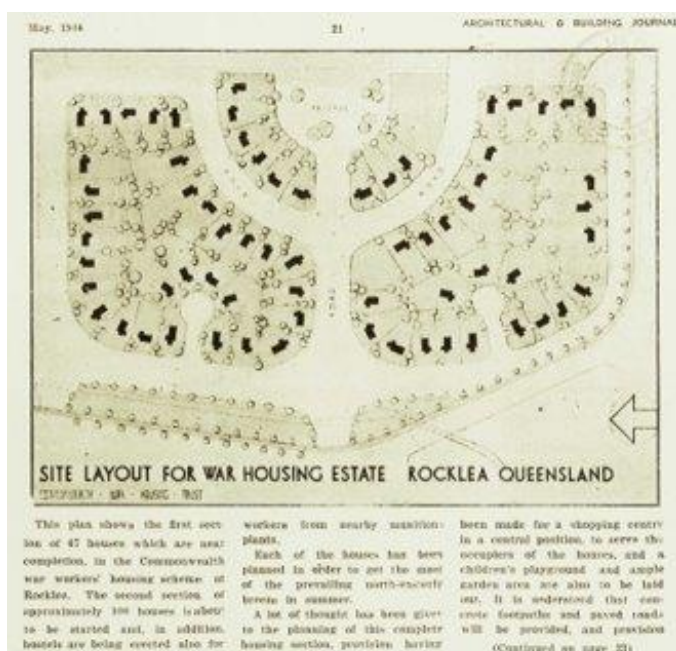


PROPOSED LOCAL HERITAGE AREA

Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate (former), Nettleton Crescent, Kibby Street, Gratwick Street, Cutler Avenue and Whittle Street, Moorooka, and parts of Currey Avenue, Fegen Drive, Blomfield Street, Dunstan Street, Evans Road and Beaudesert Road, Moorooka (and Salisbury)



Typical exterior view
1944



Exterior view, 2021

SUMMARY

As the only large scale and fully planned Commonwealth government-initiated housing estate constructed in Brisbane during the Second World War, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate was constructed to provide housing for civilians who worked nearby at the Rocklea Munitions Works. The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate was planned and developed by the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust, created in 1941 and responsible for building housing for workers employed by Australia's war industries. The largely intact estate demonstrates the application of contemporary principles of mass house planning and estate layout influenced by the Radburn model of urban planning. Highly intact, the design and planning of the former Moorooka War Workers Estate is characterised by parklands, curvilinear street patterns, cul-de-sacs, relative uniformity of lot size and standardised housing design of lightweight construction.

Proposed Citation - Local Heritage Area: Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate (former), Nettleton Crescent, Kibby Street, Gratwick Street, Cutler Avenue and Whittle Street, Moorooka, and parts of Currey Avenue, Fegen Drive, Blomfield Street, Dunstan Street, Evans Road and Beaudesert Road, Moorooka (and Salisbury)
For public consultation – Qualified State Interest Amendment – Local Heritage Places



SECURITY LABEL: OFFICIAL

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HISTORY

A history of Moorooka

While built to house workers from the adjacent Rocklea Munitions works, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is located within the suburb of Moorooka, which has been described as a post-Second World War suburb.¹ Early European settlement of Moorooka began in the 1860s when the land was sold off and used for agricultural purposes. The arrival of the railways in the 1880s saw the development of residential estates in Moorooka, such as the Moorooka Railway Station Estate. However, such land speculation overestimated the desire to live in the suburbs and commute into central Brisbane. In 1911, the population of Moorooka stood at just 350 residents.

Moorooka grew between the First and Second World Wars and slowly developed from a rural area into a residential suburb. Much of the commercial and residential development centred around Beaudesert Road, a major thoroughfare through Moorooka to the south-west of Brisbane. In 1929, Moorooka State School opened on the corner of Beaudesert Road and Sherley Street. The population of Moorooka, including Salisbury and Rocklea, rose to 8,364 residents by 1947 due to the increased suburbanisation of Brisbane. Suburbanisation in Brisbane was driven by factors such as economic issues, infrastructure developments, population increase, and the role of government. For example, between the First and Second World Wars, developments in Moorooka's transport infrastructure included replacing horse-drawn transport with trains, trams and eventually, the motor car.

Moorooka's transport infrastructure changes encouraged further residential developments in the area as these modes of transport provided better links to central Brisbane. During the 1930s, the local population in Moorooka actively sought the extension of the Ipswich Road tram system down Beaudesert Road. *The Courier-Mail* recorded in 1934 that it was 'considered that the extension of the tramline was imperative for the progress of Moorooka.' This local activism clearly illustrated the link between transport infrastructure developments and Brisbane's continued suburbanisation during the period.² The tram line's extension into Moorooka proper opened in May 1937 and cost £18,000 to construct.³

The development of the Rocklea Munition Works

The development and construction of the former War Workers' Housing Estate in Moorooka was directly related to the construction of the Rocklea Munitions Works located to the north and south of Evans Road, then known as Compo Road. The Commonwealth Government approved Rocklea as the site for a munitions factory in Queensland in January 1941.⁴ Established in 1941, the Rocklea Munitions Work principally consisted of two Small Arms Ammunition plants, known together as SAA Factory No. 5 and 6 and a case factory. The establishment of the Rocklea Munitions Works occurred at a time when the Commonwealth Government became a key member of the Eastern Supply Group Council, which had been established in March 1941 to co-ordinate the production, provisions and distribution of war stores produced in its member countries as part of the British

¹ 'Moorooka,' *Queensland Places* (Centre for the Government of Queensland, University of Queensland, 2018).

² 'Ipswich Road Tram: Extension Sought,' *The Courier-Mail*, 16 July 1934, p. 9; 'Ipswich Road Tram: Extension Sought,' *The Telegraph*, 17 July 1934, p. 13; 'Ipswich Road Tram Extension: Transport Proposals,' *The Courier-Mail*, 8 July 1936, p. 12.

³ 'Opening on May 8: Ipswich Road-Moorooka Tram Extension,' *The Telegraph*, 30 April 1937, p. 7; 'Cost £18,000: Moorooka Tram Extension,' *Truth*, 9 May 1937, p. 12; 'Tram Service to Moorooka: Extension Now in Operation,' *The Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1937, p. 22.

⁴ 'Rocklea Selected,' *The Longreach Leader*, 25 January 1941, p. 13; 'Munitions Works to be Built Near Brisbane,' *The Evening News*, 6 February 1941, p. 5.

Empire's war effort.⁵ As well as Australia, membership of the Eastern Group Supply Council consisted of India, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. In addition, construction of a munitions facility in Brisbane was undertaken to decentralise production and take advantage of an available workforce. Compared to New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, where 43 government weapons factories were established, the Rocklea Munitions Works was the most northerly located munitions in Australia and was the only established in Queensland.⁶ Between March 1942 and October 1943, a total of 137,729,208 million rounds of small arms ammunition were produced at the Rocklea Munitions Works and 1,221,122 brass cartridge cases for 25-pounder shells. In addition to producing Australian ammunition, the Small Arms Ammunition factory reconditioned and repacked American ammunition.

In 1938, as the likelihood of war became more apparent, Australia announced a rearmament program. Initial developments focused on southern states where both raw materials and labour were close by. However, towards the end of 1940, the Commonwealth Government explored the possibility of constructing an ammunition factory in Brisbane to support the war effort.⁷ In early 1941, the Commonwealth Government announced that an initial £1,500,000 would be spent constructing a Small Arms Ammunition factory at Rocklea, Queensland. A site along Compo Road was considered favourable because it was reasonably flat, above the flood level, could be provided readily with road, rail, electricity, water, and gas services, and was accessible to populated areas.

From February 1941, the Works and Services Branch of the Department of the Interior prepared the plans needed for the Rocklea Munitions Works. On 10 March 1941, the Queensland Main Roads Commission commenced the cutting and filling groundwork for the first large building on site, the Small Arms Ammunition factory building (now 32 Commerce Street, Salisbury). By November 1941, this factory had commenced operations, ten months after the site was chosen. The cost of completing the buildings, works, services, air raid precautions and camouflage at the Munitions Works amounted to £989,288.

At its peak, in May 1943, the Rocklea Munitions Works employed approximately 3,000 people. By comparison, the larger Footscray factory in Melbourne employed over 9,000. Absenteeism was, however, a problem. The reasons for this included the introduction of night shifts, the regimentation of the work, industrial fatigue, and lack of proper meals.

From early 1943, in response to a request from the United States (US) government, planning commenced to convert the munitions works buildings to overhaul of aircraft engines for the US Army Air Force operating in the South-West Pacific Area.⁸ This work was undertaken as part of the Reciprocal Lend-Lease agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the US whereby Australia supported US forces stationed in the country. The decision to repurpose the Rocklea Munitions Works also coincided with a Commonwealth Government decision to reduce munitions production and workforce in Australia due to changing strategic conditions.⁹ Further discussion then focused on transferring the whole factory site to the Department of Aircraft Production.¹⁰ In late November 1943, the Commonwealth Government approved £358,000 for this task.

⁵ National Archives of Australia (NAA), A2680, 40/1941, Confidential Report on the Eastern Group Supply Council, 21 April 1941, p. 2; Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), pp. 359-60.

⁶ Ross Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland: From 1915 to the early 1980s* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p. 184.

⁷ NAA, MP438/3, S/43, *History: Ammunition Factory, Rocklea, Queensland* (1946), p. 1.

⁸ NAA, BP262/2, 9127 Part 3, Operation of the Aircraft Engine Overhaul Depot – Queensland, 1 July 1943 to 30 June 1944, Notes for the Annual Report of the Allied Works Council, 2 October 1944, pp. 1-2.

⁹ S.J. Butlin and C.B. Schedvin, *War Economy, 1942-1945* (Canberra, ACT: Australian War Memorial, 1977), pp. 398-9.

¹⁰ NAA, MP438/3, S/43, *History*, p. 15.

Aircraft engine overhaul at the Rocklea works commenced early in 1944. Banks of sound-proofed engine testing stands were constructed at the eastern end of Evans Road. The work undertaken at Rocklea was the 'largest undertaken on behalf of the Americans in the aircraft maintenance field.'¹¹ Unfortunately, despite the investment made in the repurposing of the Rocklea Munitions Works, by mid-1944 the demand for aero-engine overhaul had decreased. This was due to the shifting strategic priorities of the South-West Pacific campaign of the Second World War and that 'the Americans as usual grossly overstated their requirements.'¹²

Subsequently, several former Munitions Works buildings were then turned over to the military for use as storage facilities. By the conclusion of the war, 82 of the former Rocklea Munitions Works buildings were occupied by the Department of the Army, the Royal Navy, and the Department of Aircraft Production. While there was some discussion of the site being used by the Australian Army as a peacetime depot, the Commonwealth Government decided that the former Rocklea Munitions Works should be turned over to civilian use.¹³

After the Second World War, the former Rocklea facilities were viewed as a significant site for future manufacturing and industry. Consequently, soon after the Second World War, the Commonwealth Government progressively leased buildings to various secondary industries to promote manufacturing.¹⁴ From 1947, the Queensland Government progressively purchased the former munitions site from the Commonwealth Government. Despite leasing buildings to private industry, the Commonwealth Government recommended the sale of the former Rocklea Munitions Works buildings to help Queensland further develop secondary industries in the State in its 'own way.'¹⁵ This acquisition process commenced with the buildings north of Evans Road.¹⁶ The work to convert the Rocklea Munitions Works to civilian use was overseen by the Secondary Industries Division of the Department of Labour and Industry.¹⁷ The Secondary Industries Division, established in 1946, was 'concerned with the provision of land and financial industries' in post-Second World War Queensland.¹⁸ By 1947, 56 tenants on the industrial estate occupied 500,000 square feet (46.45 square metres) of floor space with over 700 employees.

The creation of the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust

The early years of the Second World War saw a growth in the construction of private houses, with pre-war levels maintained until 1941.¹⁹ However, in late 1940, the Commonwealth Government, under the terms of the *National Security Act, 1939-1940*, introduced the *National Security (Building Control) Regulations* that limited private housing construction during the Second World War.²⁰ This decision eventually contributed to a housing shortage, with the number of completions dropping

¹¹ Butlin and Schedvin, *War Economy*, p. 415.

¹² NAA, A5954, 286/5, Minister for Defence to the Commanding General, Southwest Pacific Area, 26 September 1944; Butlin and Schedvin, *War Economy*, p. 415.

¹³ NAA, J56/11, QL686 Part 1, Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury on the Ammunition Factory, Rocklea, Q'Land – Care and Maintenance by the Secretary, Property and Survey Branch, Department of the Interior, 10 September 1945.

¹⁴ NAA, J56/11, QL686 Part 1, List of Commonwealth Owned Properties leased to Enterprises Sponsored by the Secondary Industries Commission, 1947.

¹⁵ Butlin and Schedvin, *War Economy*, p. 771.

¹⁶ NAA, J56/11, QL686 Part 1, Memorandum on the Handover of Northern Area, Rocklea Munitions Factory to the State of Queensland, 1 July 1947.

¹⁷ Kenneth Wiltshire, 'Public Finance' in D.J. Murphy, R.B. Joyce, and Colin Hughes (eds.), *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Government in Queensland, 1915-57* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 278; Ian Cameron, *125 Years of State Public Works in Queensland, 1859-1984* (Bowen Hills, QLD: Boolarong Publications, 1989), p. 302.

¹⁸ Cameron, *125 Years of State Public Works in Queensland*, p. 302.

¹⁹ Ronald Mendelsohn, 'The Australian Housing Programme,' *Public Administration* 26, no. 2 (1948), pp. 101-2.

²⁰ Statutory Rule No. 250, *National Security (Building Control) Regulations*, 18 November 1940.

from 28,751 in 1941 to just 3,548 in 1942.²¹ However, at the same time, as illustrated by the construction of the Rocklea Munitions Works, there was a concurrent need to house war-related workers.²²

To alleviate the challenge of housing vital war workers, in July 1941, the Commonwealth Government assented to creating regulations related to the housing of war workers, under the terms of the *National Security Act, 1939-1940*. These regulations, known as the *National Security (Housing of War Workers) Regulations*, sought to prevent war workers from eviction, provide statutory powers to compel owners to rent houses to war workers, and the requirement for fair letting in such instances.²³

A subsequent amendment in August 1941 to the *National Security (Housing of War Workers) Regulations* created the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust.²⁴ These regulations gave the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust the power to provide housing and other accommodation to workers where appropriate, buy and sell land related to the building of housing, and provide financial assistance where applicable.

Planning and developing the Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate (former)

The construction of the Rocklea Munitions Works had, from 1941 onwards, led to a pressing need to construct suitable local accommodation to house war workers. However, the influx of war workers into Brisbane due to the decentralisation of Australia's war industries created a challenge as to where they could be housed. To overcome this challenge, the construction of housing by the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust sought to anticipate the effect the decentralisation of Australian war industries would have on housing stock availability in urban areas of the country both during the Second World War and post-war.²⁵ While some consideration was given in 1941 to the construction of 'Wartime Cottages to serve the Rocklea Munitions Factory,' the entry of Japan into the Second World War in December 1941 saw the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust cancel a loan to the Queensland Government to 'provide for the construction of permanent houses' for workers in the state.²⁶ However, in 1943, renewed interest in building accommodation for war workers emerged when concerns were raised by the Queensland Branch of the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia regarding the provision of housing close to the Rocklea Munitions Works.²⁷ After this, planning began in earnest to provide appropriate accommodation for workers. By August 1944, the first tenant moved onto the War Workers' Estate in Moorooka.

Elwyn Campbell Jackson and J.H. Jorgensen of the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust led the planning and development of the War Workers' Housing Estate at Moorooka. Jackson was the Chief Architect of the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust while Jorgensen was the Supervising Architect. Jackson was responsible for high-level design, planning and overall coordination of the war workers' housing across Australia. Both were involved in identifying appropriate sites, liaising with Local and State Government representatives and State

²¹ Stuart Macintyre, 'Owners and Tenants: The Commonwealth Housing Commission and Post-War Housing, 1943-1949,' *Australian Economic History Review* 58, no. 3 (2018), p. 269.

²² Mendelsohn, 'The Australian Housing Programme,' pp. 101-2.

²³ Statutory Rule No. 169, *National Security (Housing of War Workers) Regulations*, 18 July 1941.

²⁴ Statutory Rule No. 207, *National Security (Housing of War Workers) Regulations*, 26 August 1941.

²⁵ National Archives of Australia (NAA), BP30/6 Volume 1, 'Wartime Housing in Australia' in *The Commonwealth War Housing Trust Activities*, July 1946.

²⁶ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Minutes on Housing in Brisbane, Queensland, 2 June 1943.

²⁷ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, A. Macdonald, Secretary to the Queensland Branch of the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia to Edward Ward, Minister for Labour and National Service, 18 May 1943.

representatives of the Allied Works Council, an organisation set up to oversee and organise military construction works in Australia during the Second World War.

In 1939, whilst employed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, Jackson entered and won a competition run by the Housing Commission of Victoria to design workers public housing in Melbourne's Fishermen's Bend.²⁸ Alongside this context, the Housing Commission of Victoria also ran a competition to design and plan the layout for the estate on which these 400 houses would be constructed.²⁹ The design selected exhibited elements of the Radburn model, or principles of urban design.³⁰ Named after an urban development scheme that was designed in 1928 in Radburn, New Jersey in the US, the Radburn model 'aimed at segregating cars from people and orientating houses towards neighbourhood open space.'³¹ The model itself was influenced by the Garden City movement that had its origins in the UK. As has been argued, Radburn 'tailored British garden city ideas to the distinct legal and social customs of the United States.'³² Both Radburn and the British Garden City movement were influential in Australia. Most notably, the estate selected by the Housing Commission of Victoria included curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.³³ This influenced Jackson with similar elements being applied in the layout of the War Workers' Housing Estate at Moorooka.

The site selection for what became the War Workers' Housing Estate at Moorooka began in 1943. As a greenfield site, the estate was developed in two stages and was located on the eastern side of Beaudesert Road, on the corner of Compo Road (now Evans Road). As well as what became the former War Workers' Housing Estate, the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust also built several war workers hostels in Brisbane (none of which survive), as well as making temporary sleep-outs available for people to erect in their backyards. Another small pocket of 22 cottages, built as infill housing, was developed south of Hamilton Road in Moorooka, and included Robinson Street and the western side of Tonks Street. This site was located just north of the War Worker Hostels.

The development of the greenfield sites at Rocklea, was based on sound town planning principles of the day. Development went ahead within a capital city that had only recently commenced developing a town planning policy. Brisbane would not have its first Town Plan for another two decades, in 1965.³⁴ For example, in July 1943, Jorgensen met with Brisbane City Council Town Clerk, J.C. Slaughter, to discuss appropriate lot sizes for the new estate and to ensure water and electricity were available to service the estate.³⁵ Slaughter outlined that 49'6" x 132' (approx. 15m x 40m) was the standard lot dimensions, but provided that 'no objection would be given to a lot 50' x 110' or 120' (approx. 15.2m x 33.5m or 36.5m).³⁶

Planning of the War Workers' Housing Estate was generally well-received. For example, in March 1944, an article in *Architecture, Building, Engineering* observed that whilst much criticism was made of the original floor plans of the housing, it was noted that the War Workers' Housing Estate had a 'contemplated lay-out' and that:

²⁸ 'Fisherman's Bend Homes: Competition for Layout,' *The Age*, 9 February 1939, p. 14; 'Workers' Homes: Fisherman's Bend Scheme,' *The Age*, 5 May 1939, p. 4. 'Housing Competition,' *Daily Mercury*, 27 June 1939, p. 12.

²⁹ 'Fisherman's Bend Homes: Competition for Layout,' *The Age*, 9 February 1939, p. 14.

³⁰ 'Plan for 370 House at Fisherman's Bend,' *The Age*, 24 June 1939, p. 33.

³¹ Robert Freestone, *Urban Nation: Australia's Planning Heritage* (Collingwood, VIC: CSIRO Publishing, 2010), p. 194.

³² E.L. Birch, 'Radburn and the American Planning Movement: The Persistence of an Idea,' *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46, no. 4 (1980), p. 426.

³³ 'Plan for 370 House at Fisherman's Bend,' *The Age*, 24 June 1939, p. 33; Freestone, *Urban Nation*, p. 191.

³⁴ John Cole, *Shaping a City: Greater Brisbane, 1925-1985* (Brisbane, QLD: William Brook, 1984), pp. 206-12.

³⁵ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Notes on a Visit to Brisbane re Housing by Mr Jorgensen, 7 July to 15 July 1943, pp. 3-4.

³⁶ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Notes on a Visit to Brisbane re Housing by Mr Jorgensen, 7 July to 15 July 1943, p. 4.

[i]t would appear that the Commonwealth department concerned intends making an attractive residential area, which could well be copied in private subdivision schemes.³⁷

Similarly, another *Architecture, Building, Engineering* article in May 1944 reflected that the so-called 'Rocklea scheme' by the Commonwealth War Housing Trust was 'a bold step forward.' It was noted in the same article that the War Workers' Housing Estate 'set an example for other housing planners' with regards to planning for the complete housing project, including consideration of future shops siting, children's playground, ample garden areas and concrete paths, kerb and channel and other services and infrastructure.³⁸

Construction of cottages on the War Workers' Housing Estate eventually began in March 1944 and was completed in 1945. The Commonwealth War Housing Trust, as the Trust had been renamed in 1944, engaged the Allied Works Council to manage the development of the estate and the construction of the cottages.³⁹ George Gray Prentice, the Architect in Charge, led the team preparing the working drawings for the cottages in the Brisbane office of the Allied Works Council.⁴⁰ Prentice was a well-known architect in Brisbane, having previously practised with T.R. Hall as Hall and Prentice between 1919 and 1929 and then with Henry Atkinson as G.G. Prentice and W.M. Atkinson between 1931 and 1937. With Hall, Prentice was responsible for designing Brisbane City Hall. The Commonwealth Government employed Prentice from 1939 until he died in 1944.⁴¹ Under Mr Bowen's supervision, architects Mr Storey and Mr Jones were engaged in preparing the working drawings for the cottages in Brisbane.⁴²

The design of the houses conformed to four general designs. These designs were referred to as Type A, Type A1, Type B, and Type B1. Type A and A1 houses had two bedrooms while Type B and B1 houses had three. Compared with Type A and Type B houses, both Type A1 and B1 houses had verandahs suitable for enclosure as sleepouts. The houses were not prefabricated but were constructed on precast reinforced concrete stumps with fibre cement sheet walls and terracotta tile roof linings. The houses were erected on lots that were generally 80' x 132' (approximately 24.38m x 40m) in size. The plan of the subdivision provided for a generous, private open recreation space within each lot. Water and electricity were provided, bitumen roads and concrete footpaths were formed, and the estate was provided with sewerage reticulation.

The standardisation of design and low project construction costs enabled a low rent to be determined. This enabled low-cost accommodation to be provided to tenants who, in some instances, had been domiciled in outlying areas and, or in sub-standard accommodation such as tents and shacks.⁴³ As with post-Second World War public housing, all repairs and maintenance were the housing provider's responsibility, in this case, the Commonwealth Government.⁴⁴ The design of the War Workers' cottages attracted much public interest and debate long before the first

³⁷ 'Much ado about War Workers' Homes,' *Architecture, Building, Engineering: The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland* 22, no. 9 (1944), p. 17.

³⁸ 'Rocklea Workers' Homes,' *Architecture, Building, Engineering: The Architectural & Building Journal of Queensland* 22, no. 11, (1944), pp. 21-3.

³⁹ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Memorandum on Housing for Workers to be Employed on Aircraft Engine Repair Works, Brisbane, 14 August 1943; 'War Workers' Housing Trust,' *The Central Queensland Herald*, 2 December 1943, p. 16; 'Rocklea Cottages Job Begun,' *The Courier-Mail*, 10 March 1944, p. 4.

⁴⁰ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Handwritten notation describing those involved in preparing working drawings for houses, no date.

⁴¹ Donald Watson and Judy McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940* (Brisbane, QLD: University of Queensland Library, 1984), p.159.

⁴² NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, Handwritten notation describing those involved in preparing working drawings for houses, no date.

⁴³ NAA, BP30/6 Volume 1, The Commonwealth War Housing Trust – Trust Activities Australia, 1946; 'Rocklea Homes 'Heavenly' after Congestedhovels,' *The Courier-Mail*, 17 March 1944, p. 3.

⁴⁴ 'Rocklea Homes No Slum Danger,' *The Courier-Mail*, 12 June 1944, p. 4.

tenants moved in, in August 1944.⁴⁵ Public interest was still high for some time afterwards, with one tenant stating in April 1945 that he had had 'an average of 30 curious visitors a month.'⁴⁶

The tenders to construct the housing on the War Workers' Housing Estate were called from mid-1943 onwards.⁴⁷ Separate tenders were called for each site and across the various trades required to construct the housing and develop the War Workers' Housing Estate. For example, in 1943, a '[s]atisfactory tender' was received from builder T.H. Dennis 'for the erection of 100 cottages and 100 sleepouts.'⁴⁸ Similarly, a tender for the construction of 67 cottages closed on 28 March 1944 while the tender for the installation of hot water services and the tender for supply of hot water tanks and calorifiers closed on 21 March 1944.⁴⁹ Further tenders were invited for the next groups of cottages in May 1944, with October 1945 seeing tenders called for the erection and completion of 25 verandahs on 25 cottages and the construction of kerbing and channelling, while in January 1947, tenders were received to enclose the sleeping balconies.⁵⁰

It had been intended that the War Workers' Housing Estate would house workers from the Rocklea Munitions Works. However, due to the late development of the War Workers' Housing Estate, and the decision to transfer factories at the Rocklea Munitions Works over to the Department of Aircraft Production, workers associated with that industry were also eligible to apply for housing assistance. In 1945, eligibility was once again expanded to encompass 'essential workers broadly.' This was due to the number of workers associated with the overhaul of aircraft engines being dismissed and heading to other parts of Australia to seek work. This created housing vacancies.⁵¹ To allocate cottages, essential workers were defined as those who worked in a first priority industry that was associated directly with the war effort. Nonetheless, several allocations were criticised for being given to managers and professionals who worked within the industry and who were married, but had no children.⁵² It was later reported that more families of 'non executive' war workers moved in, thankful to be leaving their temporary accommodation, which ranged from overcrowded tenement rooms to backyard sheds and tents.⁵³

The post-Second World War development of the Moorooka War Workers Housing Estate (former)

In 1944, the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust was reconstituted as the Commonwealth War Housing Trust.⁵⁴ The reconstitution of the Trust allowed the organisation to undertake a broader range of activities associated with Commonwealth housing and post-war planning. In 1945, the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust became a part of the newly formed Department of Works and Housing.⁵⁵ While the Commonwealth War Housing Trust finished its work in 1946, the

⁴⁵ "'War" cottages to Suit Climate,' *Warwick Daily News*, 20 October 1943, p. 3; 'Criticism of Home Wrong Says Premier', *The Courier Mail*, 11 February 1944, p. 3; 'Male Architect Antediluvian,' *The Telegraph*, 25 February 1944, p. 4.

⁴⁶ 'Thirty-six New Homes at Rocklea,' *The Telegraph*, 3 April 1945, p. 3.

⁴⁷ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, J.H. Jorgensen, Supervising Architect and Housing Officer, to the Executive Officer, Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust, 29 June 1943.

⁴⁸ NAA, J2821, 1409/1/1, J.H. Jorgensen, Supervising Architect and Housing Officer, to the Executive Officer, Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust, 29 June 1943.

⁴⁹ 'Tenders Invited,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 53, 16 March 1944, p. 656; 'Tenders Invited,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 58, 23 March 1944, p. 701.

⁵⁰ 'Tenders Invited,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 93, 11 May 1944, p. 992; 'Tenders Invited,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 196, 11 October 1945, p. 2169; 'Tenders Invited,' *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 201, 18 October 1945, p. 2215.

⁵¹ 'Few Cottages, Many Applicants,' *The Telegraph*, 2 January 1945, p. 6.

⁵² 'Keymen Given Homes First,' *The Courier-Mail*, 26 September 1944, p. 3.

⁵³ 'Rocklea Homes 'Heavenly' after Congestedhovels,' *The Courier-Mail*, 17 March 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Statutory Rule No. 33, *National Security (Commonwealth War Housing Trust) Regulations*, 11 February 1944.

⁵⁵ NAA, BP30/6 Volume 1, 'Wartime Housing in Australia' in *The Commonwealth War Housing Trust Activities*, July 1946, p. 3

Trust provided 'valuable assistance' in launching Australia's long-term post-war housing policy by virtue of its position.⁵⁶ This was because the Trust:

[s]ignalized a heightened government interest in housing and initiated a programme the full benefit of which [would] be seen in the years to come.⁵⁷

The Commonwealth Government's interest in housing policy as part of its post-Second World War reconstruction efforts can be traced back to the creation of a small Reconstruction Division as part of the Department of Labour and National Services.⁵⁸ The Reconstruction Division was created to support various activities by the Commonwealth Government, including, for example, in assisting 'Commonwealth and state departments in planning investigations into reconstruction problems.'⁵⁹ Then, in 1942, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security reported on the need for a centralised housing authority. As a result, in 1943, Ben Chifley was appointed as Minister for Post-War Reconstruction. He appointed a board of inquiry, the Commonwealth Housing Commission, to examine the state of housing in Australia and how to plan for Australia's future housing needs.⁶⁰ In a striking statement of principle for housing policy, the Commonwealth Housing Commission stated:

We consider that a dwelling of good standard and equipment is not only the need but the right of every citizen – whether the dwelling is to be rented or purchased, no tenant or purchaser should be exploited for excessive profit.⁶¹

On the recommendation of the Commonwealth Housing Commission, the Commonwealth inaugurated the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement to fund state governments to build and operate public housing. Most of the new accommodation built using funds from the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement in Queensland were detached houses constructed according to sanitary town planning principles on middle and outer-suburban estates in a similar manner to those built by the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust as exemplified by the former War Workers' Housing Estate in Moorooka. Moreover, many of the houses built by the Commonwealth War Housing Trust from 1944 onward 'subsequently became part of the dwellings provided' by the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. Importantly, as with the Commonwealth War Housing Trust, upon the creation of the Department of Works and Housing in July 1945, this department became responsible for the 'administration of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.'⁶² These developments were important steps in creating and developing Australia's post-Second World War public housing policy.

Regarding the former War Workers' Housing Estate, the end of the Second World War saw the Rocklea Munitions Works turned over to civilian industry. This meant that housing to support war workers were no longer required. As such, in 1946, the Chairman, Executive Member, the Controller of Accommodation and the Area Planning Officer of the Commonwealth War Housing Trust 'conferred' with Brisbane City Council's Town Clerk, Slaughter, about releasing the Trust from its 'obligation to continue with developmental work' of the War Workers' Housing Estate.⁶³ The Commonwealth War Workers Trust also sought to have Brisbane City Council complete 'certain

⁵⁶ NAA, BP30/6 Volume 1, 'Preface' by H.A. Pritt, Chairman, Commonwealth War Housing Trust in *The Commonwealth War Housing Trust Activities*, July 1946.

⁵⁷ NAA, BP30/6 Volume 1, 'Wartime Housing in Australia' in *The Commonwealth War Housing Trust Activities*, July 1946, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Graeme Powell with Stuart Macintyre, *Land of Opportunity: Australia's Post-War Reconstruction*, Research Guide (Canberra, ACT: National Archive of Australia, 2015), pp. 17-18.

⁵⁹ Powell and Macintyre, *Land of Opportunity*, p. 17.

⁶⁰ Macintyre, 'Owners and Tenants,' pp. 265-82.

⁶¹ Commonwealth Housing Commission, Cover letter to *The Final Report of the Commonwealth Housing Commission*, 25 August 1944, p. 8.

⁶² Powell and Macintyre, *Land of Opportunity*, p. 50.

⁶³ NAA, J2821, 1409/2/1, Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the Commonwealth War Housing Trust, 28 June 1946, p.4.

other work' on the War Workers' Housing Estate 'for a cash consideration.'⁶⁴ As a result, an agreement was reached whereby Brisbane City Council agreed to finish development work on the War Workers' Housing Estate, including the final construction of roads, footpaths and kerbing and water channelling, at the cost of £5900.⁶⁵ This approach anticipated developing the so-called 'Developer Contributions' and later 'Infrastructure Charges' policy developed by Brisbane City Council later in the 20th Century. These policies sought to alleviate the burden on the public purse by ensuring that private enterprise pays for the cost of infrastructure developments where applicable.

Further development of the former War Workers Housing Estate continued into the 1950s. For example, the area set aside for recreation, and the children's playground on Blomfield Street was transferred to the Brisbane City Council as trustee in 1950 for continued use for recreation purposes and children's playground.⁶⁶ Formal road dedication on the War Workers Housing Estate was undertaken at the same time.⁶⁷ Street names within the War Workers' Housing Estate were named after personnel awarded the Victoria Cross during the First and Second World Wars. Similarly, in 1952, the Commonwealth Government called a tender to construct a shopping centre to service the former War Workers' Housing Estate, though it was not constructed.⁶⁸

Even though the former War Workers' Housing Estate was no longer required to support the war effort, the estate continued to provide conveniently located housing for workers associated with the post-war industries that were set up on the site of the former Rocklea Munitions Works. From around 1949 onwards, the Commonwealth Government began to consider disposal by sale to the tenants of the houses.⁶⁹ The assessment and valuation of the sites on the former War Workers Housing Estate was undertaken by the Property and Survey Branch of the Department of the Interior.⁷⁰

However, much of the initial discussion around sales centred around the sale of surplus and undeveloped land, such as the area identified for future business sites. However, properties were progressively sold to private purchasers from 1951 onwards. For example, lots were created and transferred to the Director of War Service Homes in 1951, with the sale of the cottages on these lots staggered over the following decades. The first two cottages on the War Workers' Housing Estate were sold at auction in mid-1951. As tenants expressed an interest in purchasing their homes, more were sold during the 1950s. In the 1960s, further vacant lots were sold as the Commonwealth Government pursued its policy of surplus property disposal. Gradually, from the 1960s until the late 1980s, all the remaining cottages were sold off. The last group of cottages were sold to private owners by the end of 1989.⁷¹

⁶⁴ NAA, J2821, 1409/2/1, Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the Commonwealth War Housing Trust, 28 June 1946, p.4.

⁶⁵ NAA, J2821, 1409/2/1, Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the Commonwealth War Housing Trust, 28 June 1946, p.5.

⁶⁶ NAA, J1519, SP375/1, Memorandum on the Transfer of Land at Rocklea, Queensland, to the Brisbane City Council for Recreation Purposes and Children's Playground, 4 July 1950.

⁶⁷ Queensland Government, Department of Resources, Certificate of Title, Vol. 2395 Fol. 58.

⁶⁸ 'Tenders,' Brisbane *Telegraph*, 1 May 1952, p. 23.

⁶⁹ NAA, J1519, SP375/1, Memorandum on the Rocklea War Housing Scheme: Possible Disposal by Sale to Tenants, 23 September 1949.

⁷⁰ NAA, J1519, SP375/1, Memorandum on Rocklea Housing Scheme: Possible Disposal by Sale to Tenants, 20 January 1950.

⁷¹ Queensland Government, Department of Resources, Certificate of Title, Vol. 2395, Fol. 58.

DESCRIPTION

The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is a wartime subdivision and associated housing developed by the Commonwealth Government and based on contemporary principles influenced by the Radburn model of urban planning.

The standardisation of house designs and layout of the subdivision are important examples in the planning and development of Commonwealth Government war workers housing and post-war housing policy, mass housing design and estate development for public housing, and the development of town planning in Brisbane. The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate has a significant association with the wartime and post-war industry at Rocklea.

General description – Estate layout

The estate was planned using contemporary town planning principles of the time, influenced by elements of the Radburn model, characterised by its attempt to segregate pedestrians from motor cars. The form of the houses, on lots generally measuring 80' x 132' (approximately 24.38m x 40m), and the subdivision layout accommodates parkland for community use and open, private recreation space within each lot. The extant road layout, community park and built form of individual housing results in a residential area that is, overall, highly intact.

General description – Housing

Housing generally comprises simple plan layouts, gable roofs with extended skillion roofs over amenity areas and verandahs/sleepouts. Intended as single-family homes, housing consists of two and three-bedroom cottages, originally with additional external spaces that could be readily converted from sleepouts to bedrooms. The war workers' houses are constructed on precast reinforced concrete stumps, 760mm above ground level, with fibre cement sheet wall and terracotta tile roof linings. Houses constructed toward the end of the housing development construction phase consisted of fibre cement sheet wall linings and corrugated fibre cement roof sheeting. Of those originally clad with fibre cement roof sheeting, the majority have been replaced with corrugated sheet metal roofs.

Modular, standardised design and simplified construction resulted in economised living spaces, while still accommodating individual entry lobbies, living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, and laundries. Standardised lengths and sizes of timber used in wall framing, roof trusses and flooring, including stained and varnished internal timber linings, further simplified construction. Windows with clear glass louvres, doors and kitchen fittings were standard throughout, further contributing to the consistent design aesthetic of the housing estate. The majority of these respective housing typologies retain the original footprint, simple built form, and lightweight construction, with alterations largely concentrated to changes to external glazing arrangement, painting of fibre cement sheet linings, and replacement of fibre cement sheet wall claddings with painted woodwork and fibre cement sheet roofs with corrugated sheet metal.

Throughout the estate, housing accommodates consistent landscaped front and side setbacks from respective lot boundaries, comprising extensive lawn areas with border plantings. This fencing typology remains largely intact, originally possessing timber paling side and rear fencing with wire fencing along street frontages. Alterations to this aesthetic intent relate to the privatisation of front gardens and the construction of solid fencing, garages, and carports. In some instances, the construction of secondary dwellings at the rear of houses have also contributed to the degradation of the garden aesthetic of the estate.

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The interior of the cottages have not been inspected.

Significant features

Features of cultural heritage significance are:

- Subdivision pattern and civil works, including:
 - Lot pattern and layouts
 - Community Park with intended and continued use as a children's playground
 - Roadways with concrete kerbing
 - Deep grass verges, including some with formed concrete footpaths
- Consistent, open streetscape character of similarly scaled housing, landscaped front setbacks and fencing allowing unimpeded views to and from the street.
- Existing location, orientation, and relationship of the low-set housing 760mm above ground level
- Original built form, composition, and external design details of the housing, including:
 - Off-centre gables, skillion verandahs
 - Entry porches incorporated under the main roof
 - Skillion roof amenity areas (laundry/water closet) to side and rear elevations
 - Fibre-cement sheet and batten external linings
 - Original window openings with clear glazing
 - Terracotta tile roofing
 - Corrugated roofing
- Siting and landscape amenity including:
 - Low height open-style, wire front fencing
 - Timber paling side fencing
 - High ratio of soft landscaping area to hard paved surface areas in front yards
 - Consistent width side setbacks or consistent side yard widths
 - Open landscape areas between landscaped front setbacks and street reserves

Non-Significant features

Non-significant features include:

- Non-original glazing formats to individual houses
- Non-original fencing formats to individual properties
- Later additions to the front and sides of housing where visible from the street

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- Detached and semi-detached structures, including secondary dwellings, garages, carports, and sheds
- Houses that are not originally war workers cottages:
 - 56A Currey Avenue, Moorooka
 - 5 Cutler Avenue, Moorooka
 - 30 Evans Road, Salisbury
 - 32A Evans Road, Salisbury
 - 38 Evans Road, Salisbury
 - 31 Fegen Drive, Moorooka
 - 7A Gratwick Street, Moorooka
 - 14A Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 15 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 16A Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 17 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 23A Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 24 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 27 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 34 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 36 Nettleton Crescent, Moorooka
 - 5 Whittle Street, Moorooka

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CURTILAGE

The curtilage captures all significant or original elements of the place as described and consists of [insert detail – see note above].

The curtilage captures all significant or original elements of the place as described and aligns with Site 2 and Site 3 of the original greenfield estate developed by the Commonwealth War Housing Trust as identified on the map below. The average lot size of these lots is approximately 700m².

The Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate (former) is comprised of the area as indicated on the curtilage map below, including all allotments on Nettleton Crescent, Cutler Avenue, Gratwick Street, Kibby Street, Whittle Street, and the following:

- 350 to 358 Beaudesert Road
- 78 and 80 and 91 to 99 Blomfield Street
- 31 to 65 Currey Avenue
- 40 to 46, 47 to 51 and 52 to 56 Dunstan Street
- 1 to 13, 21 to 43; 28 to 44, 47 to 61, 56 to 66, 72 to 86 and 73 to 89 Fegen Street
- 28 to 38 Evans Road, Salisbury



Source: Brisbane City Plan Online Mapping

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STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<p>Criterion A Historical</p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history.</p>	<p>The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is important for the contribution it made to the history of Brisbane during the Second World War and the advancement of urban planning in the city. In providing housing for those workers from the nearby Rocklea Munitions Works, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate demonstrates the role civilians played in Brisbane's contribution to Australia's wartime economic output during the Second World War. As the only large scale fully planned Commonwealth government-funded housing estate constructed in Brisbane by the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate also demonstrates the early application of contemporary principles of mass house planning and estate layout influenced by the Radburn model of urban planning.</p>
<p>Criterion B Rarity</p> <p>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage.</p>	<p>The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is rare and uncommon as the only fully planned and constructed public housing estate developed in Brisbane for war workers by the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust during the Second World War.</p>
<p>Criterion C Scientific</p> <p>The place has the potential to provide information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history.</p>	<p>As the only example of a planned public housing estate developed in Brisbane during the Second World War, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is important for the potential it has to reveal information about the development of public housing estates and the advancement of urban planning in the City. Further investigations into the Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate, influenced by the Radburn model and involving purpose designed and built housing with a uniformity of scale, style and form, will provide information to contribute to an understanding of the history of urban planning in the City and aid in comparative analysis of other public housing developments in the post-Second World War period in Brisbane.</p>
<p>Criterion D Representative</p> <p>The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places.</p>	<p>As the only example of a fully planned and Commonwealth government-funded housing estate built in Brisbane during the Second World War, the highly intact former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate exemplifies the core principles and approach to permanent war worker housing designed by the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust and demonstrates key characteristics of urban planning as influenced by the Radburn model. As</p>

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	expressed in the citation's description, the planning and design of the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate is characterised by the use of parklands, curvilinear street patterns, cul-de-sacs, broad uniformity of lot size, single-level housing design and layout, consistent housing setback, landscaping and fencing, construction, and use of materials.
Criterion E Aesthetic The place is important because of its aesthetic significance	As a fully planned and purpose-built Commonwealth government-funded housing estate, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate has aesthetic importance for its expressive attributes and character. Through its high intactness, streetscape character, uniform scale, style and form, landscaping and consistent alignment of lots, the former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate expresses the desire of the Commonwealth War Workers Housing Trust to provide suitable permanent housing.
Criterion F Technical The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period.	N/A
Criterion G Social The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.	N/A
Criterion H Historical Association The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the city's or local area's history	The former Moorooka War Workers' Housing Estate has a special association with the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust, which planned, designed, and funded the Estate's development and construction. Created in 1941 and responsible for building housing for workers employed by Australia's war industries, the Commonwealth War Workers' Housing Trust was the first to design and deliver Commonwealth Government funded mass public housing schemes in Australia.

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