

The Life Cycle of Migrant Hostels Established in South
Australia post WWII (1948-1955)
With an emphasis on those run by the Commonwealth

by

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Output produced for National Archives of Australia (SA Branch)
in fulfillment of the requirements of the Arts Internship Scheme 2009 (ARTS 2001),
University of Adelaide, South Australia.

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Table of Contents	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	iv
List of Abbreviations	v
Figures	vi
Brief Background to the Establishment of Migrant Hostels in South Australia	1
Commonwealth Administered Hostels	3
Finsbury/Pennington	4
Gawler.....	6
Gepps Cross	7
Glenelg	8
Mallala	9
Mannum	10
Mt Barker	10
Rosewater.....	10
Salisbury.....	11
Seaton (Park).....	12
Smithfield.....	12
Whyalla	13
Wingfield	14
Woodside	15
State Administered Hostels	16
Elder Park.....	17
Hendon	17
Semaphore.....	18
Woodville.....	19
Summary of Findings	21
Closing Comments/Recommendations	22
Bibliography	23

Appendices

Appendix 1: Quick Reference List of Migrant Hostels in South Australia

List of Sources of information for Appendix 1

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Although this work was originally produced as a reference guide for National Archives of Australia staff, National Archives of Australia have kindly given their permission to the author to publish and disseminate this work freely.

Acknowledgements

There are a large number of people and organisations, without whom, this fantastic experience would not have been possible. Firstly, I would like to thank Enid Woodley, Assistant Director, National Archives of Australia (SA Branch) as the representative of the host organization, for agreeing to the internee placement and for her supervision. I would also like to thank the staff at National Archives of Australia (SA Branch) for their friendly, efficient assistance. Also National Archives of Australia staff interstate, for their technical assistance.

Next, I would like to thank Professor Nick Harvey, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide for accepting my application for the Arts Internship Scheme 2009. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance and guidance of my academic supervisor Mr Frank McGregor, Dept of History, University of Adelaide.

Thankyou also to Amanda Phillis, Administration, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, who first identified me as a suitable candidate for the Arts Internship Scheme 2009, and who has been a valuable nexus of administrative information and provider of friendly assistance.

Thank you to the staff of the Barr Smith Library, particularly Margaret Hosking for her guidance.

State Government Departments I would like to thank are: The Migration Museum, in particular Catherine Manning, Curator, who let me trawl though the collection of old files and photos which were worth more than a thousand words. State Records, particularly Matthew and Simone (Reference Officers), for their friendly assistance and going “beyond the call”. Thankyou also to staff at the State Library of South Australia for their assistance with access to their collections, particularly Chris Read (Research Services). Also to Simon Nelder at the Development Applications Commission, who walked me through the use of a search tool “Atlas of SA”, which proved invaluable in identifying land allotments. The Lands Titles Office was a valuable source of information about title ownership.

In the preparation of this report I have met many helpful and friendly people in various Local Government organisations. I would like to acknowledge the help of the Local History staff at the Port Adelaide Enfield Library (Margaret & Meredith) and Port Adelaide Enfield Council staff. Thankyou to the staff at the City of Charles Sturt, particularly Linda Lacey (Cultural Heritage Project Officer) and “Alex”, on reception who provided the initial lead for the Hendon Migrant Workers Hostel. Dieuwke Jessop at the Holdfast Bay History Centre provided valuable information about the Woodville State Migrant Hostel, being a former resident. Thankyou also to Jamie Ritchie, Local History Officer at the City of Playford Library, Theresa O’Grady at the Salisbury Public Library and Anne Richards, Local History Officer at the Gawler Public Library. Thankyou also to the staff at the Whyalla Public Library for the loan and donation of text resources.

Thankyou also to Joy Bollmeyer (SA Film Corp.) who provided information regarding the location of the Hendon Hostel and the staff at Eldercare Acacia Ct, who confirmed that their premises are located on the site.

Finally, thankyou to my parents and immediate family for their support, and to aunts, uncles and family-friends, many of whom are post WWII migrants, for their assistance in locating and describing the hostels in Pennington, Gepps Cross, Smithfield and Salisbury.

Introduction

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to produce a document, which can be referenced by the staff of National Archives of Australia (SA Branch) to assist with enquiries from the public regarding Migrant Hostels/Camps established in South Australia Post WWII.

Scope of Research

The scope of the research is limited to providing information on the buildings (establishment, layout/design, decommissioning); facilities (toilets, washing, food, entertainment, sport); dates of operation; administration; targeted nationalities/migrant groups.

Limitations of Research

Although every effort has been made to conduct thorough, accurate and quality research of the topic, some of the migrant hostels/camps will be addressed in more detail than others due to the fact that much of the documentation and knowledge has been lost in the passage of time. Although National Archives of Australia makes every effort to archive documentation for future reference, it is a fact that it can only archive what it is presented.

Methodology/Resources

Primarily, investigative historical research will be conducted via access to archival records held at National Archives of Australia, identified via searches conducted on the "RecordSearch" computer system. Additionally, research will be supported via access to archival records held at other Government institutions (Federal, State and Local), Title searches at the Land Titles Office (SA), Newspaper articles, old maps and directories, photographs, telephone enquiries to current landowners, general discussions with local historians, and electronic resources.

List of Abbreviations

CACSL (FS)	Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Ltd (Food Services)
CACSL (MS)	Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Ltd (Migrant Services)
CES	Commonwealth Employment Services.
CHL	Commonwealth Hostels Limited
CRTS	Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme
DLNS	Department of Labour & National Service
DOI	Department of Immigration
DPs	Displaced Persons
HD	Hundred
HTSA (MM)	History Trust of South Australia (Migration Museum)
IPTB	Immigration, Publicity and Tourist Bureau (State dept)
MWAD	Migrant Worker's Accommodation Division (Commonwealth)
NAA	National Archives Australia
OH&S	Occupational Health & Safety
PPLH	Playford Public Library, Local History Collection
TQEH	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
SLSA	State Library of South Australia
UTLC	United Trades & Labour Council
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Figures



State Migrant Accommodation Centre –Woodville.
With permission of Ms Dieuwke Jessop.



State Library of South Australia (Mortlock Library): B19805 - Migrant Hostel, Railway Rd, Adelaide, 1970. [Elder Park] (with permission)



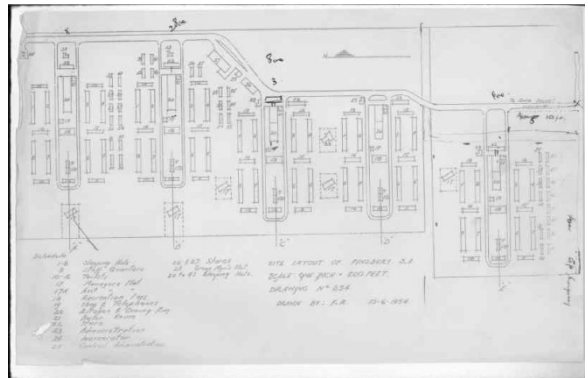
National Archives of Australia: A12111, 2/1973/22A/142 (with permission)



National Archives Australia: A1211, 2/1969/22A/31. (with permission)



Migration Museum: “Reconstruction of interior of Nissen Hut” (original photograph provided) –with permission.



National Archives of Australia: D2998. [Finsbury Hostel Layout Plans] (with permission)

Brief Background to the Establishment of Migrant Hostels in South Australia

As the Pacific War drew to a close in 1945, the Minister of Immigration, The Honourable Arthur Calwell M.H.R. announced the initiation of a planned migration scheme with the aim of “increasing our numbers”. This was a response to the “...one lesson learned from the Pacific War... (is) that we cannot continue to hold this island continent for ourselves and our descendents unless we greatly increase our numbers.”¹ The Australian Government had experienced the rude shock of realising Australia’s isolation and that the British and Americans may not always be able to, or indeed be inclined to, come to our aid. The resulting catch-cry “populate or perish” reflects the thinking of the time.

Initially, it was expected that the target increase in population of 2% per annum would be supplied by the British “our own kith and kin”.² The desire for British stock reflected the entrenched ideology of the White Australia Policy. Under pressure from the International Refugee Organisation, Calwell was forced to accept a limited number of European DPs. Calwell also announced that “British residents in Australia are encouraged to bring their families.” that “British migrants will be given every encouragement and assistance”, and that there would be “free passages to Australia for British ex-service men and women and their dependents and assisted passages to civilians in the United Kingdom who are not eligible under the free passage scheme.”³ Polish ex-servicemen were also offered free passages.⁴

The net result of the policies of 1945-1947 was a massive increase in arrivals. In 1947-48, net arrivals exceeded departures by 29,365 (in 1947 Australian agreed to resettle 12,000 displaced persons). This was the first time arrivals had exceeded departures for some time. In 1949 assisted arrivals exceeded 118,800, four times that of 1948.⁵ By the early 1950’s, a

¹ Australian Dept. of Immigration. *Immigration-Government Policies* (Ministerial Statement), Arthur A. Calwell (Hon.), Minister for Immigration. Canberra: Dept. of Immigration, August 2nd, 1945.

² Australian Dept. of Immigration. *Immigration-Government Policies* (Ministerial Statement), Arthur A. Calwell (Hon.), Minister for Immigration. Canberra: Dept. of Immigration, March 6th, 1947.

³ Australian Dept. of Immigration (August 2nd, 1945).

⁴ Australian Dept of Immigration, *Immigration to Australia During the 20th Century – Historical Impacts on Immigration Intake, Population Size and Population Composition – A Timeline*, p.3, viewed 21/2/2009
<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/federation/timeline1.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

recession in Australia and an economic boom in the UK and some parts of Western Europe, meant that Australia no longer seemed attractive as a destination for the more “desirable” immigrants from these countries. Increasingly, migrant labourers were sourced from Eastern European countries or from the stocks of DPs. Recent peace treaties signed with former Axis countries (particularly Italy) allowed for increased immigration from these countries.

All of these immigrants needed to be housed quickly and in Australia there was a severe shortage of housing and labour. To mitigate both of these circumstances, migrant camps/hostels were established to accommodate these “New Australians”. Initially, in the interests of expedience, existing military barracks (Woodside), munitions worker’s accommodation (Finsbury) and even woolsheds (Rosewater) were converted into communal accommodation. Later, specific parcels of land (either existing Crown land or Commonwealth purchases/leases from the SAHT) were designated for the erection of migrant hostels e.g. Gepps Cross. Conditions in the Commonwealth hostels were often described as being Spartan. The hostels were “developed in order to provide temporary accommodation” and this was provided on a “communal” basis.⁶ Site plans for hostels display a military precision in their arrangement, even the new Gepps Cross Hostel continued in this vein, with *new* Nissen huts being built, rather than homes, to the bemusement of the residents.⁷ The State Government also housed migrants it had targeted for employment in specific occupations. These migrants were usually housed in homes or mansions purchased from private owners by the State. It is therefore often difficult to trace these hostels as they were usually only in use for short periods before being re-sold.

Between 1947 and 1985 thousands of individuals and families passed through migrant hostels in South Australia. Initially they were British migrants and European DPs, then refugees fleeing political oppression. Some only stayed a short time; others remained for up to 5 years. The one thing they had in common was that they had come seeking a better life for themselves and especially their children, free from the horrors of war and post-war rationing. Most had ambitions of owning their own homes, enticed by Government propaganda, but between arrival and the fulfilment of that dream, the hostels were ‘home’.

⁶ HTSA(MM): RF0850. ‘Synopsis of Lecture: Migrant Hostels in Australia’ by Mr. A. L. Ife (Assistant Gen. Manager CHL), undated.

⁷ See Victor Turner. *Tin Huts and Memories: We got our Ten Pounds worth*, Norwood: Peacock Publications, 2006.

Commonwealth Administered Hostels

Finsbury/Pennington

Establishment: Location, Layout and Design

The Finsbury Migrant Hostel was opened on the 1st of January 1950.⁸ It was located on Section 516 and part Section 782, Hundred of Yatala, Finsbury North, later known as 220-228 Grand Junction Rd, Pennington. It was bounded by King St to the South, Glenroy St to the East and approached Ariel St and Bell St on the West. At its peak, the hostel housed over 2000 people in converted Nissen Huts, which were either quartered or halved via partitions. The layout was based on an efficient, military configuration, the site/buildings having been previously used to house workers for the Pennington Munitions Factory during wartime.⁹ This layout was efficient, organised, and familiar to the engineers at the Department of Works & Labour who prepared the site for migrant accommodation. The psychological effect, however, on migrants who had recently been interred or accommodated in European camps can perhaps be inferred from the numerous complaints about hygiene, food and quarters.¹⁰

During the 1960s and 70s various renovations of the Nissen Huts were made.¹¹ In 1985, the hostel was redeveloped with the Nissen Huts being demolished and replaced by individual brick units (flats).¹² By this time only 12.52 acres remained of the original 53 acres, the rest having been granted by the Commonwealth to the SAHT and developed into low cost housing.¹³

Dates of Operation

The Finsbury Migrant Hostel opened on 1st January 1950. In October 1966 the Finsbury Hostel became known as the Pennington Hostel. The Pennington Hostel ceased functioning as an accommodation centre for migrants in Sept 1985.¹⁴

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

From 1949–1953 the MWAD was responsible for administration of Commonwealth run Hostels operating under the direction of the DLNS. Between 1953 and 1978, CHL administered the hostels under the direction of the Department of Immigration. The DLNS took on the policy-making role in regards to migrant accommodation.¹⁵ In 1978 CHL became CACSL and its functions were split into two agencies, Food Services and Migrant Services. In 1983 the two agencies amalgamated again, managing about 50 flats.¹⁶ With the redevelopment in 1985 and the closure of the hostel functions, the Food Services division was no longer required. Migrant Services provided medical, language, and social support

⁸ NAA: D2416.

⁹ NAA: D358, 502/1/1/P1.

¹⁰ See HTSA(MM): RF0845. W. Funnell, Chairman of Directors, Commonwealth Hostels Limited (15th May, 1952) 'Letter regarding media reports of complaints by residents of some of the Migrant Hostels in your state'; 'Hostel Food Complaints', *The Advertiser*, 31 July, 1965, p. 26.

¹¹ NAA: A12111, 2/1973/22A/131.

¹² 'A facelift at Pennington Migrant Hostel signals new era for newcomers', *The Advertiser*, 22 August, 1985, p. 18.

¹³ See NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5119; 'Migrant centre to be sold by tender', *City Messenger*, 23 November, 1994, (Commercial Section).

¹⁴ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5119. In 1986 thirty new home-units were opened for the accommodation of refugees from Poland, Hungary, IndoChina, Chile & Iran (see 'New units replace migrant barracks', *The Advertiser*, 3 November, 1986, p. 11.

¹⁵ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 40.

¹⁶ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5128.

only to the new Pennington Migrant Centre until it ceased operations on 20th February 1987.¹⁷

Initially, the hostel was designed for British families, however, upon opening accommodated DPs mainly from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. During the 1960s, British migrants resided in the hostel, and then in the 1970s refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos occupied the hostel. In the 1980's, migrants from Iran and Chile were accommodated at the hostel.¹⁸

Facilities

The Nissen Huts were constructed of corrugated iron with timber and steel girders. Partitions were initially constructed of bitumen-covered hessian¹⁹ but were upgraded later to asbestos cement fibre sheeting (building board).²⁰ Linoleum was laid over the original bitumen floors, which exhibited cracks through which grass would grow.²¹ Ablutions and toilets were communal in separate male/female blocks, and meals were taken in a dining hall with meals prepared by kitchen staff in a communal kitchen.²² By the 1970s a playground was provided for children and a crèche and day care facilities.²³ Open drainage, which still existed at the time of the 1985 redevelopment, was often the cause of disease in the hostel.²⁴

The food provided in the hostel(s), the poor facilities, rental payments, and sub-standard hygiene were the main points of contention between migrants and the administration for many years, as evidenced by the numerous articles in *The Advertiser*, *The Mail*, and local *Messenger Newspapers* between 1951 and the mid 1960s. Displaced Europeans complained about the plain food, and later British migrants complained about the “New Australian” food, which “did not suit them”.²⁵

Decommissioning

In the early 1970s the SA Dept of Further Education was leasing part of the old hostel site as a training facility for chefs prior to the opening of Regency Park TAFE. In 1975 a proposal was tendered to develop a new hostel on the site (recently purchased by the Commonwealth from the State of SA) as Pennington was the only “old style” accommodation on the mainland, however, this was abandoned due to low occupation of the hostel.²⁶ As the migrant influx waned in the 1980s, parcels of land were granted by the Commonwealth back to the SAHT who had originally owned the land, and subsequently developed into low-cost housing estates.²⁷ In 1985 the Pennington Hostel site was renovated with new self-contained brick

¹⁷ NAA: Agency notes for Agency CA 4799.

¹⁸ See ‘A facelift at Pennington Migrant Hostel signals new era for newcomers’ above.

¹⁹ ‘British Migrants Seek Finsbury Camp Enquiry’, *The Advertiser*, 10th January, 1951, p. 4.

²⁰ ‘Migrant Camp Huts To Be Remodeled’, *The Advertiser*, 13th June, 1951, p. 1.

²¹ Varacalli, F. Arrived at Finsbury hostel as 6 year old with parents and brothers from UK– memories of discussions with her mother relayed in general discussions with the author.

²² NAA: D2998,1. (page 2 of 27)

²³ NAA: A12111, 2/1973/22A/138; NAA: A12111, 2/1973/22A/140.

²⁴ NAA: A12111, 2/1984/22A/134.

²⁵ ‘British Migrants Seek Finsbury Camp Enquiry’.

²⁶ NAA: A446, 1975/81324. The Pennington hostel site was State owned (although the actual hostel was Commonwealth run) until May 1975, so missed out on Commonwealth funding for upgrades as per other hostels in 1966.

²⁷ Land Titles Office searches provide this information. See also ‘House estate launch for old hostel site’, *Portside Messenger*, 6th October, 1993, Ed:1, p. 8.

units replacing the few remaining old Nissen Huts, which were demolished and removed.²⁸ At this time the hostel was administered by Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Ltd. At the commencement of the 1985 renovations, the Pennington Migrant Hostel ceased its operations. As of 1973 it had been the only original migrant hostel still open in the state. Lands Titles Office records indicate the transfer of large parcels of land from the Commonwealth to the SAHT in the early 1990s. The final parcel, which was the site of the Pennington Migrant Centre, was sold by tender in December 1994; it still contained some original Nissen huts.²⁹ The site now comprises low cost housing, industrial land in the Eastern section and some parks.

Gawler

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Gawler Migrant Hostel was opened in February 1949 and was located on Commonwealth land at the former R.A.A.F. base at Willaston (now the location of the Adelaide Soaring Club), Section 129 and Part Section 692, HD of Mudla Wirra, area 24 acres.³⁰ Accommodation was in altered pre-existing military barracks previously used by munitions workers.

Dates of Operation

Circa 10th Feb 1949^[22] – Sept 1952^[31] (temporary closure), then June 1955^[32] – c. 1960.³³

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

From 1949–1953 the MWAD was responsible for administration of Commonwealth run Hostels operating under the direction of the DLNS. Post 1953, CHL administered the hostels under the direction of the Department of Immigration. The DLNS took on the policy-making role in regards to migrant accommodation.³⁴ The Gawler Hostel was originally established to cater for 1,000 DPs from the Baltic States and Poland, who were intended as industrial workers.³⁵ In 1955 the hostel was reopened as accommodation for British migrants as the second-wave of British migration commenced.³⁶ Many of the DPs who left the Gawler Hostel settled in Gawler, Willaston, Nuriootpa and Mallala.³⁷

²⁸ 'A facelift at Pennington Migrant Hostel signals new era for newcomers'; NAA: A12111, 2/1984/22A/125–129.

²⁹ 'Migrant centre to be sold by tender', *City Messenger*, 23rd November, 1994, (Commercial Section).

³⁰ NAA: D358/5, 1/9/2; HTSA (MM): RF0847.

³¹ Whitelock, D. (1989), *Gawler: Colonel Light's Country Town*. Corp of Town of Gawler.

³² 'Migrant Hostel Re-Opening Next Month', *The Bunyip*, Friday, May 13th, 1955 (page number not printed).

³³ NAA: A703, 445/3/231.

³⁴ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 40.

³⁵ 'R.A.A.F Camp at Gawler: Will be inspected by Leading Officer within three weeks', *The Bunyip*, 29th October, 1948.

³⁶ 'Migrant Hostel Re-Opening Next Month'.

³⁷ NAA: D2421.

Facilities

The layout as shown in 1956 indicates 5 barracks style sleeping huts, 3 smaller huts, communal kitchen, dining room, kiosk facilities, 2 toilet blocks, a play area, managers hut, admin quarters & c.³⁸

Decommissioning

A closure date for the Gawler Hostel could not be ascertained in this research. NAA: A703, 445/3/231 provides details of damage to the “Gawler Hostel” on 23/2/1960; however, other files indicate a closure date of circa 1956.³⁹

Gepps Cross

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Gepps Cross Migrant Hostel was located in the North-Eastern corner of the junction formed by Grand Junction Rd and Nain North Rd, opposite the Mainline Drive-in, and was bounded to the north by the fence–line running alongside the Velodrome.⁴⁰ Construction of the hostel commenced on 16th April 1950; the property was leased by the Commonwealth from the SAHT for a yearly rental of £460 (\$912) until handover in 1952.⁴¹

The hostel was hailed as a “Luxury Camp” designed exclusively for British migrants (families).⁴² It was the first purpose-built migrant camp in South Australia and was designed to a plan specified by the SAHT that would allow for easy subdivision and private sale, or rental, later.⁴³ There were 360 units or approximately 180 huts. The huts were divided in two crossways, so that one hut could be modified into a small house by the removal of internal partitions and the addition of bathrooms. Interestingly the newly built huts were of the same design as the old Nissen Huts, which were so hated by migrants. Victor Turner (former resident) surmises that the design may have been used for ease of construction.⁴⁴

Dates of Operation

Administration staff moved into the hostel on 25th June 1951, and the first residents (400) were accommodated on 9th July 1951.⁴⁵ The Gepps Cross Hostel was handed back to the SAHT in 1952; however the transfer of administration did not occur until 1953.⁴⁶ Post 1953, the hostel site was used as emergency housing by SAHT, until its closure in 1964. The hostel was demolished in 1965 and new Housing Trust homes built.⁴⁷

³⁸ NAA: D2998, 1 (page 3 of 27).

³⁹ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5122; NAA: A703, 445/3/231; NAA: D358/5, 1/9/2.

⁴⁰ See Appendix 1 entry for details.

⁴¹ NAA: D848, AP1945.

⁴² “Luxury” camp for migrants’, *The Advertiser*, 10th January, 1951, p. 4.

⁴³ Marsden, Susan E. (1986), *Business Charity and Sentiment: The South Australian Housing Trust 1936–1986*. Richmond: Wakefield Press, pp. 129–127; SRSA: GRG 53/166.

⁴⁴ Turner, Victor T. (2006) *Tin Huts and Memories—We got our Ten Pounds worth: The Story of Gepps Cross Hostel*. Norwood: Peacock Publications, p. 21. This small book is an excellent reference to the hostel and contains oral histories, the author’s personal recollections and photographs.

⁴⁵ Turner, p. 14; NAA: D358, 1/9/6.

⁴⁶ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5120.

⁴⁷ Turner, p. 70. Supported by evidence in *Fuller’s Adelaide Street Directory 1965*, map 38. Site shown as vacant which was previously shown as ‘migrant hostel’ in earlier editions.

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

See above regarding administration and targeted migrant group.

Facilities

Shops, post office, movie/dance hall, and church hall were located on-site. The large hall (Nissen Hut) was also used for bingo nights and as a day nursery for small children.⁴⁸

Wingfield Primary School (ref. Wingfield entry) was specially opened to serve 300 school-aged children residing at Gepps Cross Hostel.⁴⁹ A bus service (20 mins) ran from the hostel to the Enfield Tram Terminus. Cinemas and library were located within 2 miles.⁵⁰ Initially ablutions and toilets were communal; in 1953 cooking ovens were installed in each individual 'flat', to much fanfare and the joy of residents.⁵¹ Residents in the Commonwealth hostels were never afforded this luxury due to 'safety and hygiene fears'.⁵²

Decommissioning

The Gepps Cross Hostel, in reality, ceased to operate as a hostel in 1953 with the hand-over to SAHT. The SAHT ran the site as 'emergency housing flats' for British migrants and charged a rental. In 1964 the hostel was closed and demolished. In 1965 new brick houses were constructed by the SAHT as low-cost rentals as part of a general move by the State Government to independent living for migrants.⁵³

Glenelg

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Glenelg Migrant Hostel opened in 1950 and was located on Commonwealth Land—Portion of Adelaide Airport, Part Lot 8, Section 186, HD of Adelaide with an area of 20 acres. This portion of land was situated in the SW corner of the Adelaide Airport, bounded by Warren Ave, Tapleys Hill Rd, and the Patawalonga Drainage Canal.⁵⁴ Accommodation was in converted Nissen Huts, arranged in military divisions, with the main entrance from Warren Ave. In the 1954 site map 28 huts are shown, in two divisions either side of the entrance road. Photographic evidence, along with numerical data, suggest that the huts were divided into 4 parts (units), with an average of 4 persons per unit (taking into account the addition of huts in subsequent years).⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Turner, p. 33.

⁴⁹ 'Gepps Cross one of best hostels', *The Advertiser*, 28th June, 1952, p. 28–4d.

⁵⁰ NAA: D358, 1/9/6.

⁵¹ 'Kitchenettes Welcome', *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 8th September, 1952, p. 2b; 'Good Progress with Gepps Cross flats', *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 23rd January, 1953, p. 4e; Turner, p. 41.

⁵² The Advertiser Newspaper and The Mail gave extensive coverage to migrant strikes and protests at Commonwealth hostels due to complaints about poor food and hygiene. CHL administration refused to install individual cooking facilities citing fire and hygiene concerns.

⁵³ Turner, p. 41.

⁵⁴ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5121. Supported by NAA: D618, IM14; *Gregory's Adelaide Street Directory*, 18th Ed. c.1965, map 17.

⁵⁵ NAA: D4441, 54/1/2 (page 27 of 33), indicates 700 people living at hostel in 1960. 'Hostel as holiday site: Bay Council bid', *News*, 21st June, 1972, p. 10, indicates 750 people in 1972.

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

From 1949–1953 the MWAD was responsible for administration of Commonwealth run Hostels operating under the direction of the DLNS. Post 1953, CHL administered the hostels under the direction of the Department of Immigration. The DLNS took on the policy-making role in regards to migrant accommodation.⁵⁶ Glenelg Migrant Hostel was opened as accommodation for DPs.⁵⁷

Facilities

Each division has a laundry, kitchen and dining hall, toilet block and office. The kiosk, recreation hall, and sick bay were shared between both divisions.⁵⁸

Decommissioning

The hostel closed on 1st July 1972 due to a slowing of migrant influx and changes in the migrant program.⁵⁹

Mallala

Establishment: Location, Layout Design

The Mallala Migrant Hostel was located at the site of the wartime RAAF base. It appears that existing buildings were converted for use.⁶⁰

Dates of Operation

Dates of operation are unable to be confirmed; NAA records date range (1949–1953). There is also a mention made in reference to Mallala contained in the records for the cancelled Salisbury Migrant Hostel. The reference states, “the first installment of the Mallala area which you have provided is now ready for the reception of immigrants and some hundreds will be moved in very shortly”.⁶¹

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

Commonwealth Administered (MWAD) with the intention of accommodating “New Australians”.⁶²

Facilities

NAA archives give detail of intended facilities such as Temporary Classroom, Teacher’s hut, Laundry, Male and Female ablutions and toilets, Bank, Shop, Kitchen and Administration buildings. Site/layout plans were not able to be located.⁶³

⁵⁶ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 40.

⁵⁷ NAA: D2419; NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5121.

⁵⁸ NAA: D2998, 1. (page 4 of 27)

⁵⁹ ‘Bay hostel may close down soon’, *News*, June 9th, 1972, p.13; ‘Hostel as a holiday site: Bay council bid’, *News*, 21st June, 1972, p. 10.

⁶⁰ NAA: AP567/1, 1950/214B.

⁶¹ NAA: A445, 221/1/99. (page 2 of 23)

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Decommissioning

No evidence was able to be located regarding the decommissioning of this hostel.

Mannum

The Mannum site was not developed; land was purchased circa 1950 by the Commonwealth Govt but was disposed of on 24/12/1954.⁶⁴ The land was located at Part Section 130, HD of Mannum, area 10 acres, fronting Dereks Rd to the South.⁶⁵ The hostel was intended to accommodate British Commonwealth Nominated migrants for targeted employment with Peter Shearer Limited, Agricultural Farm Machinery, Mannum.⁶⁶

Mt Barker

The Mt Barker site, like the Mannum site, was never developed. Land located at Part Section 4472, HD of Macclesfield was compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth on 1st February, 1951 and subsequently disposed of as 'surplus to requirements' on 16/7/1953. The land was intended as a site for a British Migrant Hostel.⁶⁷

Rosewater

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Rosewater Migrant Hostel, along with Woodside, were the first two hostels established in South Australia for post WWII migrants. The Hostel was one of the most primitive, being located in converted wool storage sheds on Rosewater Rd (Now Bedford St) opposite the Gray Tce intersection.⁶⁸ The location was identified as 'suitable for adaption' by W. Funnell, secretary DLNS despite the fact that it was located near rat-infested swamps and docks.⁶⁹ Many complaints were made by residents regarding the poor living conditions including the lack of playing space for children, overcrowding, lack of privacy (walls were made out of cardboard or tar-covered hessian bags), and lack of ceilings which allowed birds to roost and defecate in the living areas.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ NAA: A445, 221/1/73/21.

⁶⁵ NAA: A445, 221/1/73.

⁶⁶ NAA: A445, 221/1/73. (page 18 of 30)

⁶⁷ NAA: D4404/1, 2/1323.

⁶⁸ This information was gleaned from corroborating evidence being: NAA: D358, 700/2/1; NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5120; Old maps located at Port Adelaide Library Local History room and enquiries made with local businesses in the area; HTSA(MM): PN 01853 'Rosewater' [photograph of converted woolsheds].

⁶⁹ NAA: A445, 221/1/96. (page 217 of 217)

⁷⁰ NAA: A445, 221/1/96. (page 181 of 217); "'Battling Britons' planning reunion', *Portside Messenger*, 6/2/1980. (cutting located in Port Adelaide Local History Collection, LH ROS/ B40001)

Dates of Operation

The Rosewater Migrant Hostel commenced operation on 25th July, 1949 and ceased operation on 28th February, 1953.⁷¹

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The hostel was administered by DLNS (MWAD).⁷² The hostel was not intended for ‘British Families’ but for ‘migrant workers’, however, a shortage of accommodation meant that ‘early arrivals’ of Commonwealth Nominated British Migrants were temporarily accommodated in the woolsheds.⁷³ Many complaints were made by the British about the hostel and the Minister of Immigration was at great pains to explain that the hostel was ‘never intended for British migrants’. It was obviously fine for DPs and they received no such apology (a reflection of the White Australia Policy).⁷⁴

Facilities

There is no specific information available regarding facilities at the Rosewater Migrant Hostel. Correspondence indicates that meals were communal and it is reasonable to assume that ablutions, laundry and toilets were also communal. As previously stated, there were no facilities for children’s play or education.

Decommissioning

The Rosewater hostel was closed on the 28th February 1953. Migrants still residing at the hostel were moved to either Finsbury or Gepps Cross Hostels.⁷⁵ The woolsheds remained at least until 1980.⁷⁶ Currently, the location is occupied by large, modern storage sheds used by trucking companies and retailers.

Salisbury

The establishment of a migrant hostel for DPs in the Salisbury area was first conditionally approved by W. Funnell, secretary DLNS on 31st May, 1949.⁷⁷ A subsequent meeting of the Cabinet Subcommittee on Accommodation for Migrants heard “strong objections” from the Department of Defence on “security grounds”⁷⁸ and the project was abandoned on 14th June, 1949.⁷⁹

There is mention in archival files of a “small hostel which is attached to the [LRWE] establishment” and that “this hostel houses about 40 persons, mostly male”.⁸⁰ There is no further information regarding the administration of this hostel, however being in a Commonwealth establishment it is likely to have been administered by the Department of Defence.

⁷¹ NAA: D1917, D2/53; D358, 700/2/1; D358, 700/3; NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5123.

⁷² NAA: D445, 221/1/96. (page 208 of 217)

⁷³ NAA: D445, 221/1/96. (page 188 of 217)

⁷⁴ NAA: D445, 221/1/96. (page 176 –178 of 217).

⁷⁵ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5123.

⁷⁶ Ashbourne, R. ‘Migrants relive “the bad old days”’, *Sunday Mail*, February 10, 1980, p. 26.

⁷⁷ NAA: 445, 221/1/99. (page 21 of 23)

⁷⁸ NAA: 445, 221/1/99. (page 18 of 23)

⁷⁹ NAA: 445, 221/1/99. (page 17 of 22)

⁸⁰ NAA: D358, 3, 3005/1/18.

Some long-time residents of Salisbury recall a large group of cabins in the vicinity of the Salisbury oval on the Eastern side of the railway line and bounded by Park Tce to the North and in the vicinity of Brown Tce to the East.⁸¹ Enquiries to the City of Salisbury Council and subsequent telephone conversation with Theresa O'Grady, Local History Officer, confirm that there were temporary cabins erected in the area by the Commonwealth to accommodate British migrants (on a rental basis) who were employed at LWRE until they could find homes. Many chose to stay long-term in the cabins and when Salisbury Council purchased the land with the intention of building permanent homes in the mid 1960s, they had trouble moving them on.⁸² The current residences in the area were erected around the late 1960s.

Seaton (Park)

The 49-acre Seaton (Park) site located in Section 922, HD of Yatala was not developed by the Commonwealth.⁸³ The land was purchased as an alternative to the Royal Park site comprising 106 acres, which subsequently became unavailable for purchase as the harbors board required part of the land.⁸⁴ Part of the land (3 perches) was sold to the E&WS (SA Govt), the remainder was offered to the SAHT but no evidence was found in archival records to confirm a subsequent purchase.⁸⁵

Smithfield

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Smithfield Migrant Hostel was located on the site of a former Army Ordinance depot on part of Section 3163 and 3156 (43 acres), opposite Whittington Rd and bounded by Coventry Rd to the West and the Adelaide-Gawler rail line to the East.⁸⁶ In pre-war days and during WWII, the army used the buildings as stores serviced by the railway, which ran from the Smithfield magazine buildings, alongside Davoren Rd and into the area.⁸⁷

The buildings were of the Nissen type, being constructed of wood and iron. Most huts were 2 or 3 bedroom with one sitting room, although some were single bedroom and there were two big huts with dormitory accommodation. The huts contained vinyl flooring, were insulated and furniture was provided. The hostel was designed to house 250-300 people maximum.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Varacalli, R. Discussion in response to general questioning about recollections of any migrant hostel in Salisbury, 14/8/2009. (Mr Varacalli immigrated to Australia in 1952 and grew up in the area till the mid 1960s. He has always lived in the region and is a local businessman and primary producer.) ; Varacalli, I. (transl. by Mr R. Varacalli) General discussion regarding migrants hostels in Salisbury. (Mrs Varacalli immigrated to Australia in 1952 with her four children to join her husband Luigi (d. 2003) who immigrated in 1948. She has lived in the area for over 60 years.)

⁸² O'Grady, T. Local History Officer-City of Salisbury, telephone conversation, 25/8/09.

⁸³ NAA: A445, 221/1/154.

⁸⁴ NAA: A445, 221/1/144. (page 8 of 13)

⁸⁵ NAA: A445, 221/1/154.

⁸⁶ NAA: D358, 700/2/1; NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5120.

⁸⁷ PPL: LH SMI/BU00011.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; 'Hostel Shut Down', *News Review*, 4/8/1971. (Cutting held in Local History Collection, Playford Library).

Dates of Operation

The Smithfield Migrant Hostel opened in March 1949 and closed on 31 July 1971.⁸⁹

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The hostel was Commonwealth administered by DLNS (MWAD) until 1952, then CHL until closure in 1971.⁹⁰ The Smithfield Hostel was intended for the accommodation of British families; however, European migrants also stayed at the hostel. In the later days of operation, the population was predominately British.⁹¹

Facilities

Showers, toilets, kitchen and dining room were all communal, with a playground provided for children and gardens for visual ascetics. A welfare officer was available to assist migrants, officers were on hand to assist with housing enquiries, the CES helped migrants to find work, and a nursing sister was provided for children and the sick.⁹²

Migrants organized their own social and sporting activities. Equipment was provided and there was a large playing field adjacent to the hostel. A Youth Leader was provided by the Commonwealth to assist in providing picture shows and entertainment for the children.⁹³

Decommissioning

The Smithfield Migrant Hostel was closed in July 1971 due to a slowing of immigration.⁹⁴ The hostel “[had] been shut down and re-opened on several occasions” and “only five families were at the hostel at the time of its shutdown”.⁹⁵ The ‘Fullers street directory, Adelaide, 1976’ displays the site as a “migrant hostel” which may either indicate that the site still contained Nissen huts, or that it was vacant land. No evidence was found regarding the sale/redevelopment of the site, however there is now a housing development on the land once occupied by the hostel.

Whyalla

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Whyalla Migrant Hostel “Milparra” was established by the DLNS (MWAD).⁹⁶ The Whyalla Public Library website, supported by confirmation from the Visitor Information Centre and NAA: D359, 64/326, indicates that the migrant hostel was located in Lacey St, Whyalla.⁹⁷ NAA: D618, IM2 provides detailed site plans on pages 80–82 of 110 and pages 84–93 of 110 contain details of specifications, including vermin proofing and fly proofing of buildings (something not afforded to migrants at other hostels at the time e.g. Rosewater).

⁸⁹ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5124; PPL: LH SMI/BU00011.

⁹⁰ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5124.

⁹¹ NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5124; LH SMI/BU00011.; NAA: A434, 1950/3/22475.

⁹² LH SMI/BU00011.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ NAA: ‘Agency notes for agency CA 5124’.

⁹⁵ PPL: LH SMI/BU00020; ‘Hostel Shut Down’, *News Review*, 4/8/1971.

⁹⁶ NAA: D618, IM2; NAA: D359, 64/326.

⁹⁷ Whyalla Public Library. *Library Matters* (Newsletter), May 2008, p 3; NAA: D359, 64/326.

The cost of establishing the hostel was divided into thirds, one part each to be paid by the Commonwealth, State, and BHP.⁹⁸

Dates of Operation

The construction of the hostel was completed on the 11th October, 1949.⁹⁹ A date of closure could not be ascertained via research, however, NAA: A445, 221/1/129 has a file closing date of 1952, which may be indicative.

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The hostel was administered by the DLNS (MWAD).¹⁰⁰ It was initially intended to accommodate 200 men (Balts). This target was later revised by Mr Funnell to 50 skilled DPs (Balts) plus 50 unskilled, and 100 skilled British migrants (tradesmen/builders) due to difficulties in finding enough British skilled migrants.¹⁰¹ The tradesmen were employed to build housing for BHP employees. It appears that during mid 1952, BHP attempted to negotiate with the Commonwealth regarding using the hostel to accommodate their own shipbuilders; however, the outcome of this request is unclear. The final correspondence indicates that the request was rejected.¹⁰²

Facilities

Nissen huts were transported from the former army camp in Whyalla and used for accommodation in the migrant camp. A brick communal toilet block was pre-existing on the site and a communal ablutions block was erected. A recreation block was included in the initial plan, but was omitted in the final construction due to previous experience of disuse by tired labourers. Women's staff quarters were erected on the site. A former mess room was converted into a canteen.¹⁰³

Decommissioning

No details regarding the decommissioning of the hostel were able to be located via research. See above regarding file closing date for NAA: A445, 221/1/129.

Wingfield

The intention of the Commonwealth Government was to develop the former site of the CRTS at Wingfield into a migrant hostel for about 400 British migrant families.¹⁰⁴ The site was leased by the Commonwealth to the State Education Department for use as a temporary school for migrant children only from Gepps Cross and Finsbury hostels. The Education Department vacated the buildings in late 1952, when their own school was completed at Gepps Cross. The site was deemed surplus to requirements of the Commonwealth migration

⁹⁸ NAA: 618, IM2 (particularly pages 34 and 36 of 110).

⁹⁹ NAA: A445, 221/1/129 (page 62 of 74).

¹⁰⁰ NAA: D618, IM2; NAA: D359, 64/326.

¹⁰¹ NAA: 618, IM2 (pages 28, 32 and 109 of 110).; Scheiffers, S. (1985), *A Ribbon of Steel: Whyalla Surges Ahead*, Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, p. 74.

¹⁰² NAA: A445, 221/1/129.

¹⁰³ NAA: 618, IM2/10; NAA: 618, IM2 (pages 80–82).

¹⁰⁴ NAA: A445, 221/1/147 (page 13 of 30).

scheme (the first wave of British immigration had slowed) and was disposed of on 24th June 1953 via public auction.¹⁰⁵

Woodside

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The Woodside Migrant Hostel was located in converted barracks within the Woodside Army Camp.¹⁰⁶ The barracks were arranged as per military requirements and were constructed of wooden planks.¹⁰⁷

Dates of Operation

1949–1963 (see below)

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The Woodside Hostel was opened in 1949 by the Commonwealth (DLNS–MWAD). It accommodated DPs until 1952 when the Displaced Person's Mass Migration Scheme was terminated.¹⁰⁸ Between 1952 and the closure of the hostel in 1963, European economic migrants were accommodated under CHL administration.¹⁰⁹

Facilities

Archival files indicate that there was a midwifery section, infant care and crèche, classroom for English language lessons, kitchen, and entertainment hall located within the hostel.¹¹⁰

Decommissioning

The Woodside Migrant Hostel ceased operations in 1963 (see above). The buildings were returned to the Australian Army.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ NAA: A445, 221/1/147.

¹⁰⁶ NAA: D156, 1956/346; Murphy, C. *Boatload of Dreams* (1994). UTLC. Accessible at: <http://www.utlc.org.au/arts/boatload/intro.html>.

¹⁰⁷ HTSA(MM): PN 03938.

¹⁰⁸ Murphy.

¹⁰⁹ HTSA(MM): RF0833 (Draft of Murphy's *Boatload of Dreams*).

¹¹⁰ NAA: A567/1, 1950/3; NAA: D618, IM175; NAA: D618, IM237; NAA: D618, IM238; NAA: A12111, 1/1952/24/1.

¹¹¹ Confirmed in conversation with 16RAR commanding officer, Woodside Barracks.

State Administered Hostels

Elder Park

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

No information was able to be located regarding the erection of buildings at Elder Park. The buildings appear to be of prefabricated design, with tin roofing. The layout was in a cellblock format.¹¹²

Dates of Operation

The Elder Park Migrant Hostel commenced operations about 1949. The migrant hostel ceased operating about 1969, and the South Australian Government commenced construction of the Festival Centre in 1970.¹¹³

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The Elder Park Hostel was administered by the State Migrant Department. The hostel was intended to provide accommodation for British assisted migrants.¹¹⁴

Facilities

Written information regarding the facilities at this hostel was not found, however, there are a number of photographs held by SRSA, which give some idea.¹¹⁵ The Hostel appears to be in quite good order at this time (ca. 1962) with a good quality contemporary dining room, bedrooms and reception area.

Decommissioning

(See above 'dates of operation')

Hendon

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

There are few records available regarding the Hendon Hostel. NAA: A445, 221/1/56 indicates that 'the Hendon scheme be deferred pending further consideration'; the contents of the file are dated at 1949, the document itself is undated. Susan Marsden states that there 'was [one hostel] at Hendon for 170 men working for the Engineering & Water Supply Department', which would suggest that the State Govt was utilising the land.¹¹⁶ Enquiries indicate that the site was located at 81 Tapleys Hill Rd, Hendon.¹¹⁷

¹¹² SRSA: GRG7/80.

¹¹³ 'Adelaide festival Centre –History', <<http://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/afc/history.php>>, 26/8/2009.; 'Strathsister's Guestbook', post by Steve Thomas stating that his family briefly stayed in the Elder Park Hostel in 1968. <<http://www.rivercityfm.com.au/~strathsisters/guestbook/page14.htm>>, 26/8/2009.

¹¹⁴ SRSA: GRG7/80.

¹¹⁵ SRSA: GRG7/70/2 (RN1289–RN1295).

¹¹⁶ Marsden, Susan E. (1977), *A History of Woodville*, Corporation of the City of Woodville, p. 250. Cites letter from DLNS to Woodville Council, 7/6/49 (Woodville Council Records).

¹¹⁷ Information provided by City of Charles Sturt admin staff, supported by Joy Bollmeyer (SA Film Corp) and confirmed by staff at Eldercare Acacia Ct. LTO searches also confirm that this parcel of land was owned by the Minister of Works (SA) in 1978.

Dates of Operation

No definite information is available. Susan Marsden's reference seems to indicate that the site was used as accommodation for State sponsored migrants (DPs?) in 1949. The staff at Eldercare Acacia Ct (Aged Care Home) confirm that Eldercare purchased the site in 2001 from the Charles Sturt Council (previously Woodville Council) who developed it in 1983. LTO title searches reveal that the site was owned by the Minister of Works in 1978.

*** No information was found regarding administration, migrant groups, facilities or decommissioning.**

Semaphore

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

Although details about the Semaphore hostel are very thin, State records indicate that the hostel was opened in 1949, and was located at 86–90 Hart St Semaphore.¹¹⁸ No information was located via research regarding the layout or design of the hostel.

Dates of Operation

SRSA: GRG 7/37/00000 provides daily returns registers for 1949–1957. The *Sands & McDougall's Directory of South Australia* 1952 to 1956 editions support this evidence indicating that a “migrant hostel” was located at number 86–90 Hart St.¹¹⁹ LTO records indicate that a large parcel of land at 90 Hart St transferred into the ownership of the City of Port Adelaide in 1960, and subsequently to the Dept of Education on 26/2/1965.¹²⁰

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

The Semaphore Migrant Hostel was administered by the Immigration, Publicity and Tourist Bureau (State dept). The file held by SRSA (see above) indicates that the immigrants were predominantly from the UK, with periodic influxes of DPs from Europe.¹²¹

Facilities

No information was able to be located regarding the facilities at this hostel.

Decommissioning

The evidence garnered via research indicates that the hostel was closed circa 1957 (see “Dates of Operation” above).

¹¹⁸ SRSA: GRG 7/37/00000; *Sands & McDougall's Directory of South Australia*. Adelaide, S. Aust. : Sands & McDougall Pty. Ltd., 1952-1957.

¹¹⁹ *Sands & McDougall's Directory of South Australia*. Adelaide, S. Aust. : Sands & McDougall Pty. Ltd., 1952-1957.

¹²⁰ LTO: CT5923/304; CT4129/826.

¹²¹ SRSA: GRG 7/37/00000.

Woodville

Establishment: Location, Layout, Design

The historic “Tenterden” house in Woodville was the location of a Munitions Worker’s Hostel during the war and was leased by the Commonwealth to the YWCA in 1941. The hostel was situated in the wedge formed by the intersections of Findon and Woodville roads. National Archives records contain details of the acquisition by agreement of Tenterden House from Dr L. J. Dunstone by the Commonwealth for £3,500 on 11/12/1941.¹²²

The layout of the Hostel was based on the main mansion, adjacent rooms and outbuildings, and grounds. The mansion, which was two stories high with 5 rooms per floor, was comprised of a dining room, pantry, linen press and four cellars. Many of the rooms were quite large i.e. the billiard room, drawing room, and dining hall.¹²³

Dates of Operation

The YWCA started accommodating young, single female munitions workers ca. early 1942. The State Immigration Centre, as the facility became known later, was closed in late 1977.

Administration, Targeted Nationalities/Migrant Groups

In 1941 the premises was owned by the Commonwealth and leased to the YWCA who administered accommodation for young, single, female munitions workers during wartime. On 27/8/1948 the Commonwealth transferred ownership to the State of SA, who continued the lease to the YWCA.¹²⁴ Post-war, the hostel was used to house state-assisted migrants from many different countries. On 1 March 1954, TQEH board decided to add a clause to the lease between itself (acting for the State Govt) and the YWCA, which stated that if nursing staff required accommodation then it was to be provided in Tenterden House.¹²⁵

When migration slowed, the hostel was used to house student boarders from country schools. In 1974–75 the hostel was used to temporarily house victims of Cyclone Tracy. By July 1977 the large pavilion was transferred to the Woodville Primary School, and the annexe situated at the rear of the hostel has been converted for use as an office block for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.¹²⁶ In 1979, the hospital acquired Tenterden in its own right after making a formal approach to the government, immigration staff having vacated the premises in 1978. In 1982, a new nineteen bed accommodation unit was opened on the site.¹²⁷

Facilities

No specific information regarding facilities at the hostel were found, see “Establishment” above.

¹²² NAA: AP314/1, 3254.

¹²³ NAA: D4404, 2/6. Provides details of the layout, design and facilities of the mansion and grounds.

¹²⁴ NAA: AP1186, D848; HTSA(MM): RF0846.

¹²⁵ Forbes, Ian L. D. (1994), *The Queen Elizabeth Hospital: Woodville, South Australia*, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, p. 192.

¹²⁶ HTSA(MM): RF0846.

¹²⁷ Forbes, p. 193.

Decommissioning

Enquiries made with TQEH administration indicated that the site was progressively demolished and cleared beginning circa 1995, due to OH&S concerns. By 2005, the last of the original buildings had been demolished to make way for a multi-story car park for TQEH.

Summary of Findings

In the late 1940s there was a frantic rush by the Commonwealth to prepare accommodation for a large influx of migrants from the UK and DPs from Europe, which Australia had agreed to accept under agreements with the IRO. Initially, accommodation used during wartime for munitions workers, disused army barracks, and even old woolsheds were converted for use as migrant hostels. By 1950–51, purpose-built migrant accommodation was available, albeit using army designed Nissen huts, or buildings designed to the same specifications.

Preempting (and hoping for) a massive influx of immigrants, preferably British, a number of parcels of land were identified for purchase by the Commonwealth. This land was either bought by agreement, or compulsorily acquired, however, with the waning of British migration in the early 1950s, due to a recession in Australia and a better economic outlook in Britain, construction of new hostels was abandoned and the land was re-sold.

Evidence was found of hostels being specifically constructed for British migrants and of the moving of European migrants into specific hostels away from the British hostels. This may be a reflection of the White Australia Policy, which predominated the early period of post-war immigration to Australia.

The hostels were located close to industrial areas to provide a ready workforce to industry. In many cases housing developments sprung up nearby as migrants found work and bought vacant land or newly constructed housing, near to their employment.

Although accommodation was only intended to be temporary, some migrants (mainly families) stayed for up to 5 years in Commonwealth hostels on a rental basis. At a State level, the SAHT appears to have been cannier in this regard. The SAHT purchased old mansions on large estates or large town houses to house migrants, who had arrived under State sponsorship (the SAHT had established its own office in London). These houses were later either re-sold or the SAHT subdivided the land and built rental housing on it. This was the case with the Gepps Cross site, upon which a Commonwealth migrant hostel (British families) was constructed to SAHT requirements to allow for future sub-division.

No physical evidence of the post-war migrant hostels now remains. The sites have long since been demolished, leveled, and redeveloped. The old Nissen huts were either dismantled, or sold as beach shacks or shelter for animals and have been consumed by the elements. The material record of the past has, for better or worse depending on your point of view, been erased from the sight and minds of the public. Site plans exist for some of the larger hostels, along with some photographs from which some information can be gleaned. Written documentation consists mainly of correspondence between ministers and Daily Returns records.

Newspaper articles provide some evidence of conditions within the hostels and references to rebuilding works. Many of the newspaper articles are about complaints from migrants regarding rental payments, food and hygiene. Some articles provide information about closures of hostels, re-openings, or notice of new arrivals. This information can be used as circumstantial evidence about the life cycle of the migrant hostels.

Closing Comments/Recommendations

Closing Comments

In conducting the research for this topic, the author has become aware of the lack of documentation regarding migrant hostels in South Australia. There are, perhaps, a number of reasons for this: A failure to recognize the cultural importance of the hostels to future generations; a reflection of the dysfunction between the Commonwealth and the State regarding responsibility for the hostels due to some overlap in ownership and accommodation provision; a “wiping clean” of the slate once hostels had been closed.

Although there are numerous texts and historical records regarding the migrants who came to this country, the same attention has not been paid to the places in which they were accommodated on arrival. The lack of research into migrant hostels in South Australia is concerning given that these facilities played an important role in the lives of a quarter of a million migrants who made South Australia home. It is analogous to writing about the passengers on a long train journey without mentioning the actual train!

Recommendations

- As there is no longer any material evidence of the migrant hostels, it is vital that research such as this one are preserved for future reference.
- It is recommended that the findings of this work be made available to the public via publication, or at least publically accessible.
- It is further recommended that more extensive research into this topic should be conducted.
- Although, as a result of this research, a number of archival records have been digitalized by National Archives of Australia, it is recommended that further digitalization of records pertaining to migrant hostels in South Australia be undertaken.
- All National Archives records relating to South Australian migrant hostels should be collated in the one location, preferably in the Adelaide Office, which could be facilitated by the digitalization of records for access in other locations.
- A reconstructed Nissen hut, along the lines of the interior reconstruction created by the Migration Museum a few years ago, situated at an accessible and secure site close to Adelaide, would be useful for the education of students and the public.

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Varacalli , I. (transl. by Mr R. Varacalli) General discussion regarding migrants hostels in Salisbury. (Mrs Varacalli immigrated to Australia in 1952 with her four children to join her husband Luigi (d. 2003) who immigrated in 1948. She has lived in the area for over 60 years.)

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Appendix 1
Quick Reference List of Migrant Hostels in South Australia

Name	Location	Dates of Operation	Initial Purpose	Administration
Elder Park	Railway Rd, Adelaide – on present day Festival Theatre site. ^(xx)	1948 ^(xxi) – circa 1969 ^(xx)	Temporary accommodation of British assisted migrants ^(l)	State Migration Dept. ^(l)
Finsbury/ Pennington (name change 1966)	37 acres Section 156 & 17 acres Section 516 and part Section 782 Hundred of Yatala, Finsbury North. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Bounded by Grand Junction Rd (N), King St (S), Glenroy St (E) and approaching Ariel St & Bell St.(W) ^{(xiv)(xv)}	8/3/1949 ⁽ⁱ⁾ – 1985. ^(iv)	Accommodation for munitions workers. Converted to Migrant Hostel (DPs) ^(v) , then British assisted migrants.	(Commonwealth) DLNS to 8/3/49, then DLNS (MWAD) to Jan 1952 ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ , then CHL to 1974, then CACSL(MS) to 1985 ^{(iv);(xxi);(xxviii)}
Gawler	R.A.A.F. Camp on Commonwealth land. Section 129 and Part Section 692, HD of Mudla Wirra. Area 24 acres. ^(xxiv)	circa 10/2/1949 ^(xlii) – Sept 1952. ^(xxv) Reopened June 1955 (British assisted migrants) ^(xxv) – circa 1956. ^(xli)	DPs from Baltic states and Poland	(Commonwealth) DLNS to 1948, ^(xxii) then DLNS(MWAD) to Jan 1952 ^(xxii;xxiii) , then CHL to circa 1960. ^(xlii)

Name	Location	Dates of Operation	Initial Purpose	Administration
Gepps Cross	67 acres, HD of Yatala, “Montague” Farms, Gepps Cross. ⁽ⁱ⁾ NE corner of “Five Ways” intersection, Gepps Cross. Bounded by Main Nth Rd(W), Grand Junction Rd (S), Fenceline to South of Velodrome and Tepko St (E). ^{(ii)(xiv)}	25/6/1951 ^(xvii) – 1965 ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	British migrant accommodation. ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) to 1952, then SAHT (1952-1965) ⁽ⁱ⁾⁽ⁱⁱ⁾
Glenelg	Commonwealth Land – Portion of Adelaide Airport. Part Lot 8, Section 186, HD of Adelaide. Area 20 acres. ^(xxvi)	1950 ^(xxvi) – 1/7/1972 ^(xxvii)	DPs ^(xxvi)	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) to 1952, then CHL to 1972. ^(xxvi)
Hendon	81 Tapleys Hill Rd, Hendon. ^(xliii)	1949?–? ^(xliv)	Accommodation for 170 DPs “Balts” for employment with EWS ^(xvi)	State administered? ^(xliv)
Mallala	Air Base ^(xlv)	1949 – 1953? (range of records held by NAA)	New Australians ^(xlv)	(Commonwealth) DLNS ^(xlv)
Mannum *Not Developed	Part Section 130, HD of Mannum. ^(xxxi) Area 10 acres. Fronts Dereks Rd to Sth. ^(xxx)	Land purchased circa Nov 1950. Land disposed of 23/12/1954. ^(xxix)	British Commonwealth Nominated Migrants.	(Commonwealth) DLNS ^(xxx)

Name	Location	Dates of Operation	Initial Purpose	Administration
Mount Barker *Not developed	Part Section 4472, HD of Macclesfield. ^{(xlvj);(xviii)}	Land purchased 1/2/1951 and disposed of 16/7/1953. ^{(xlvj);(xix)}	Intended as British migrant hostel. ^{(xlvj)(xix)}	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) ^{(xlvj)(xviii)}
Rosewater	Wool Stores, State Crown Land, Part Sections 386 and 387, HD of Port Adelaide. Works and Housing Plan SA/IM.4/13. ⁽ⁱ⁾	25/7/1949 – 28/02/1953 ^(vii)	DPs (Balts & Polish) ^(vi)	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) to Jan 1952, then CHL to closing. ^(vii)
Salisbury *Not Developed (ref. main text for notes)	Intended site: RAAF Base, Edinburgh – Shell Area.	* Not Developed ^{(xxxv)(xxiv)}	Intended for DPs ^{(xxxv)(xxxiv)}	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD)
Seaton *Not Developed	Section 922, HD of Yatala. ^(xlvii)	*Not Developed ^(xlvii)	Intended as site for British migrant hostel ^(xlvii)	(Commonwealth) DLNS(MWAD) ^(xlvii)
Semaphore	86 –90 Hart St Semaphore? (Corner of Swan Tce) ^(xxxvi)	1949 –1957 ^(xxxii)	DPs ^(xxxii)	IPTB ^(xxxii)
Smithfield	Former Army Ordnance Depot on Commonwealth Land. Part Section 3156 and 3163(Govt Rd), HD of Munno Para. Area 43 acres. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Bounded by Coventry Rd(W), Railroad(E) and opposite Whittington Rd. ^(xiii)	March 1949– 31/7/1971 ^{(x)(xi)}	British/European initially then predominantly British in latter dates. ^(xii)	(Commonwealth) DLNS(MWAD) to 1952, then CHL to closure. ^(x)

Name	Location	Dates of Operation	Initial Purpose	Administration
Wingfield *Not developed	Grand Junction Rd, Wingfield. ^(xxxiii)	*Not developed Previously used by CRTS to 1951, then leased to State Education Dept to late 1952. ^(xxxiii)	Intended as British migrant accommodation. Leased to State Education Dept. ^(xxxiii)	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) to 1952, then CHL to disposal in 1953. ^(xxxiii)
Whyalla	Lacey St ^(xxxvii)	11 th Oct 1949–1952? ^(xlviii)	European DPs and British skilled migrants. ^(xlix)	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) ^(xlix)
Woodside	Woodside Army Barracks ^(ix)	1949–1963 ^(viii)	European DPs to 1952, then Western European ^(viii)	(Commonwealth) DLNS (MWAD) to 1952 ^(ix) , then?
Woodville	Tenterden House, Woodville. Corner of Woodville & Findon Rds (opposite QEH). ^(xxxix)	1942 –1977 as a migrant hostel. ^{(xxxix)(xxxviii)} , then as nursing accommodation and TQEH admin. ^(xlvii)	Female munitions factory workers to 1970 then State Immigration Reception Centre. ^(xl)	Commonwealth leased to YWCA (1942–1970) then State Immigration Centre to 1977. ^(xl)

List of Sources of information for Appendix 1

* Note brief citation forms used for ease of reference of NAA staff

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- (iii) NAA: Notes for agency CA 5118 (Finsbury Hostel).
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- (v) NAA: D156, 1949/1092, 1093, 1237, 1238 (Finsbury Hostel-provision of accommodation for DPs).
- (vi) NAA: AP567/1, 1951/25.
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- (x) NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5124; PPL: LH SMI/BU00011.
- (xi) PPLLH: LHSMI1/BU00020 (extracts from property register CACSL (MS), Sydney).
- (xii) PPLLH: LHSMI1/BU00011 (information supplied by Mr Burch, CACSL (FS), Pennington.
- (xiii) Fullers Adelaide Street Directory, 1969. Map 40.
- (xiv) NAA: A446, 1975/81379.
- (xv) UBD Adelaide Street Directory, 14thEd. Map 17; Gregory's Adelaide 55th Edition, 2007. Map 146.
- (xvi) Marsden, Susan. *A History of Woodville*. City of Woodville, 1977, p. 250. Information also confirmed via telephone conversations with Ms Joy Bollmeyer, S.A. Film Corp (Admin) and Ms Linda Lacey, Local History Officer, City of Charles Sturt.
- (xvii) NAA: D358/1/9/6.
- (xviii) NAA: D4404, 2/1323. (contains Extract of Commth of Aust Gazette, No.9, 1/2/1951).
- (xix) NAA: D4404, 2/1323,7.
- (xx) NAA: B5561, 1948/669; 'Adelaide festival Centre –History', <<http://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/afc/history.php>>, 26/8/2009.; 'Strathsister's Guestbook', post by Steve Thomas stating that his family briefly stayed in the Elder Park Hostel in 1968. <<http://www.rivercityfm.com.au/~strathsisters/guestbook/page14.htm>>, 26/8/2009.
- (xxi) NAA: Fact Sheet 170.
- (xxii) NAA: D358, 1/9/2.
- (xxiii) HTSA (MM): RF0847.
- (xxiv) Whitelock, Derek. *Gawler: Colonel Light's Country Town*. Corp of Town of Gawler, 1989.
- (xxv) 'Migrant Hostel Re-Opening Next Month', *The Bunyip*, Friday, May 13th, 1955 (page number not printed).
- (xxvi) NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5121. Supported by NAA: D618, IM14.

- (xxvii) 'Hostel as a holiday site', *News*, June 21st, 1972, p. 10. (clipping held by Holdfast Bay History Centre). Supported by evidence in NAA: 'Series notes for series 2419'.
- (xxviii) NAA: Notes for agency CA 5126.
- (xxix) NAA: A445, 221/1/73.
- (xxx) NAA: A445, 221/1/73, Map S1166.
- (xxxi) NAA: A445, 221/1/73/21.
- (xxxii) SRSA: GRG 7/37/00000; LTO: CT5923/304, CT4129/826.
- (xxxiii) NAA: A445, 221/1/147.
- (xxxiv) D156, 1949/817.
- (xxxv) 'Migrant Hostel to Reopen at Salisbury', *The Advertiser*, Monday, June 13, 1955, p. 8.
- (xxxvi) *Sands & McDougall's Directory of South Australia*. Adelaide, S. Aust. : Sands & McDougall Pty. Ltd., 1952-1957.
- (xxxvii) NAA: D359, 64/326; Whyalla Public Library. *Library Matters* (Newsletter), May 2008, p. 3. <http://www.whyalla.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/May_2008_Newsletter.pdf> , accessed (4/8/2009).
- (xxxviii) Marsden, Susan. *A History of Woodville*. City of Woodville, 1977, p. 218-219.
- (xxxix) Marsden . *A History of Woodville*, p 300.
- (xl) HTSA (MM): RF0846. (details also confirmed in conversations with Dieuwke Jessop , Local History Officer, Holdfast Bay History Centre and with staff at QEH's PR section); NAA: AP1186, D848.
- (xli) NAA: Agency notes for agency CA 5122; NAA: A703, 445/3/231; NAA: D358/5, 1/9/2.
- (xlii) Information provided by Charles Sturt Council admin staff, supported by Joy Bollmeyer (SA Film Corp) and confirmed by staff at Eldercare Acacia Ct. LTO searches also confirm that this parcel of land was owned by the Minister of Works (SA) in 1978.
- (xliii) Marsden. *A History of Woodville*, p. 250. Cites letter from DLNS to Woodville Council, 7/6/49 (Woodville Council Records).
- (xliv) NAA: AP567/1, 1950/214B.
- (xlv) NAA: D4404/1, 2/1323.
- (xlvi) NAA: A445, 221/1/154.
- (xlvii) Forbes, Ian L. D. (1994), *The Queen Elizabeth Hospital: Woodville, South Australia*, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, pp. 192–193.
- (xlviii) NAA: D618, IM2; NAA: A445, 221/1/129; Scheiffers, S. (1985), *A Ribbon of Steel: Whyalla Surges Ahead*, Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, p. 74.
- (xlix) NAA: D618, IM2; NAA: D359, 64/326.
- (l) SRSA: GRG7/80.