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International working party for
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New International Selection
Full Documentation Fiche 2003

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composed by national/regional working party of: **Australia**

0. Picture of building/ group of buildings/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden



depicted item: Duration Cottages (Permanent) at St Marys, view taken from one of the two the shared parks
source: Scott Robertson

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1. Identity of building/ group of buildings/ group of buildings/ landscape/ garden

(a) Data for identification

current name:	DURATION COTTAGES (PERMANENT)
former/original/variant name:	PEACE OFFICERS QUARTERS STAFF COTTAGES
number(s) and name(s) of street(s):	Block bounded by Forrester Road, Griffiths, Maple and Viney Streets including Commonwealth Crescent, Liddle Street and the associated parks.
Town/ suburb	St Mary's
province/state:	NSW
post code:	2760
block or lot (if known)	
country	Australia
national topographical grid reference:	
current typology:	Housing
former/original/variant typology:	Housing
comments on typology:	Model workers housing based on the Radburn model

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1.2 Status of protection

protected by: state/province/town/record only

Register of the National Estate	No
RAIA National Register	Not Listed
RAIA Register of Twentieth Century Buildings of Significance	Not Listed
National Trust Register	No
State Heritage Register/Inventory	SHI only
LEP	Conservation Area
Grade (ie level of protection)	Local, state proposed
Archival Recording exists?	No
Date:	N/a
valid for: whole area/parts of area/building	Conservation Area which includes the parks.

1.3 Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s):	Former St Mary's Munitions Factory (now partly ADI and partly the Dunheved Industrial Estate)
visual relations	The housing is located across the road and railway line from the Munitions Factory grounds.
functional relations	The housing was intended for security working at the Munitions Factory
other relations:	This is the smaller of two groups of duration cottages built adjacent to the St Mary's munitions factory.

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2. History of building(s) etc.

2.1 Chronology

Note if the dates are exactly known (e) or approximately estimated = circa (c) or (±)

commission or competition date:	c. 1942
design period(s):	1942
start of site work:	1942-43
completion/inauguration:	1942-43

2.2 Summary of development

commission brief:	The second, smaller group of duration cottages built at St Marys
design brief:	Not located
building/construction:	By the NSW Housing Commission on behalf of the Commonwealth War Workers Trust
completed situation:	Adjacent to the St Mary's Munitions Filling Factory
original situation or character of site:	Green fields site

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2.3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s):	Commonwealth Housing Commission
architect(s):	Walter Bunning
design architect:	Walter Bunning
landscape/garden designer(s):	Walter Bunning
other designer(s):	Unknown
consulting engineer(s):	Unknown
building contractor(s):	Unknown

2.4 Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site

name(s):	None located
association:	
event(s):	
period:	

2.5 Summary of important changes after completion

type of change: alteration/renovation/restoration/extension/other:	Additional brick dwellings have been added to the group. Small-scale modifications have been undertaken by the individual homeowners.
date(s):	Unknown.
circumstances/ reasons for change	Sale of property by commonwealth government has resulted in a series of changes.
effects of changes:	The intended layout of the group, and the relationship to the central parks remains evident.
persons/organisations involved:	Individual owners

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3. Description of building(s) etc.

3.1 Site/building character

The 32 permanent duration cottages are more substantial than the larger group of 200 temporary duration cottages built south of the railway line at St Marys, and the examples of Duration Cottages that survive at Lithgow and Bathurst. Nearly 1,000 houses were built adjacent to the various munitions factories across NSW in 1942-43. These permanent duration cottages were intended for the security officers rather than factory staff. These cottages were known as duration cottages as the accommodation only available, for the duration of their employment, to those employed in the war effort at the nearby munitions plants.

There are three groups of houses within the subdivision, two larger groups, each of 12 houses fronting a central park. The third smaller group, fronts the semi-circular park at the western end of the subdivision. Mature trees on the site appear to have been retained in the two central parks. The layout of the vegetation is largely as shown on the plans and perspectives published in Bunning's 1944 report recommending post war housing models.

As is shown on the published plans a variety of house forms were built, although the palette of materials was the same. Each residence had a brick chimney, a hipped corrugated iron roof, a weatherboard (timber) dado, to sill height above which was asbestos sheeting. The triangular gable was likewise clad with weatherboards, rather than with asbestos sheeting. This detail would have been designed to avoid wastage of materials. The porch were screened with simple uprights, two configurations of which survive. Today the houses largely open directly onto the shared parkland in the centre.

The interiors of the houses have not been inspected, however the Penrith Heritage Advisor noted that the houses originally contained compact built in kitchens.

3.2 Current use

of whole building/site:	Private housing
of principal components (<i>if applicable</i>):	As above
comments:	The site is no longer staff housing controlled by an institution, but has been sold as individual dwellings.

3.3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site:	Good
of principal components (<i>if applicable</i>):	As per above
of other elements (<i>if applicable</i>):	The central parks remain largely in their original condition.
of surrounding area (<i>if applicable</i>):	Part of the adjacent munitions factory survives.
comments:	This appears to be the most elaborately laid out of the Duration Cottages in NSW

3.4 Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments

Indicate, if known, potential developments relevant for the conservation/threats of the building/site

The buildings, which are of a small scale, are under threat from inappropriate additions, fencing and garages. The original joinery including the built in kitchens, some of which survives is particularly vulnerable.

The heritage advisor has copies of the original drawings that show the type of fences and garages originally intended, which will be used to help guide future proposals. A detailed Development Control Plan would be beneficial in developing an understanding of this rare group of wartime housing.

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4. Evaluation

<i>Intrinsic value</i>
4.1 technical evaluation:
<p>The detailing and choice of materials used to construct the duration cottages shows the use of materials that were both easy to construct: asbestos sheeting and weatherboarding and hipped roofs, the same type of construction used for RAAF bases in NSW during the war.</p> <p>The layout of these houses shows Bunning's concern in planning compact dwellings, foreshadowing the post war suburban house with its range of labour-saving electrical appliances.</p>
4.2 social evaluation:
<p>Designed by the prominent architect, town planner and architectural writer, Walter Ralston Bunning, the layout of the subdivision for the permanent duration cottages at St Marys is prototype of his vision of suburban housing for post war Australia. Bunning's concern with the provision of open space can be seen in the parks laid out in both of the surviving groups of duration cottages built for the St Mary's Munitions Factory. The layout is also significant in that it was not widely adopted as the car was relegated to the back service lane, the 'close' model was adopted in preference, a street layout that can be seen throughout the post war suburbs of Sydney.</p>
4.3. cultural and aesthetic evaluation
<p>Based on the Radburn layout, Bunning's Cul-de-Sac Park layout, shows the influence of housing developments in the 1930s in both North America and Scandinavia. Bunning had traveled widely in the northern hemisphere, studying modern architecture and town planning.</p>
<i>Comparative significance</i>
4.4 canonical status (local, national, international)
<p>The housing at St Mary's remains a rare example of the use of a suburban housing based on the Radburn Model and may also be based on Scandinavian models. The model layout, termed the cul-de-sac park subdivision, was included by its designer, Walter Bunning in his recommendations to the Commonwealth Government on the housing requirements of Australia in the post-war period.</p>
4.5 historic and reference values:
<p>The Permanent Duration Cottages are significant as examples of the 920 homes and 5 hostels erected adjacent to the munitions factories in NSW during 1942 and 1943, of which the largest concentration of dwellings was located adjacent to the St Marys Munitions Filling factory.</p>

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5. Documentation

5.1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address):

Conservation Plan prepared?	No
Listing & files Australian Heritage Commission	No
Listing & Files National Trust	No
RAIA	No

5.2 principal publications (in chronological order):

Bunning, Walter Ralston, Commonwealth Housing Commission Final Report, Australian Department of Post War Reconstruction, 1944

Bunning, Walter Ralston, Homes in the Sun, 1945

Proudfoot, Helen, *Exploring Sydney's West*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1987

Penrith City Library, ADI St. Mary's Oral History Project which contains 40 interviews with former workers at the St Mary's Munitions Factory. 338.4767 ADI/1

Robertson, Scott, *Seeking AWOL wartime heritage*, in the NSW Heritage Office Newsletter, Autumn 2005

5.3 visual material (state location/ address)

original visual records/photographs/others:	No original photographs have been located
Original drawings	Aerial View (ie perspective) and a plan of the group was published in the final report of the Commonwealth Housing Commission 1944
recent photographs and survey drawings:	Penrith LGA Heritage Study Inventory. The Heritage Study is currently being updated.
film/video/other sources:	Unknown
website	N/a

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5.4 list documents included in supplementary dossier

Robertson, Scott, *Seeking AWOL wartime heritage*, in the NSW Heritage Office Newsletter, Autumn 2005

Extracts from the Commonwealth Housing Commission Final Report, Australian Department of Post War Reconstruction, 1944

Bibliographical Information, Walter Bunning supplied by the RAI

6. Fiche report

name of reporter:	Noni Boyd
Information provided by	
address	GPO Box 1334, Sydney, NSW 2001 Australia
telephone:	+61 412 737 921
fax	Not applicable
e-mail:	noni_jd@hotmail.com
date of report	June 2005

examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section
approval by wp co-ordinator/registers correspondent (name):
sign and date:

examination by DOCOMOMO ISC/R
name of ISC member in charge of the evaluation:

comment(s):

sign and date:

ISC/R approval:

date:

wp/ref. no.:

NAI ref. no.:

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WALTER RALSTON BUNNING 1912-1977

Walter Ralston Bunning was born in Brisbane, Queensland in 1912 and was educated at Slade School, Warwick. He initially studied Art in Sydney at the East Sydney Technical College but soon transferred to architecture, which he studied part time at Sydney Technical Institute (SIT). Walter worked for Carlyle Greenwell and then for Stephenson and Meldrum, later Stephen son and Turner, attending lectures in the evenings. Interestingly he did not undertake the degree course offered at Sydney University by Professor Leslie Wilkinson but the more technical course offered by the SIT. Stephenson and Turner pioneered modernism in Australia and the firm is particularly well known for their modern hospitals in Sydney and in Melbourne. Gloucester House at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney was completed in 1932, during which time Bunning was still a student. Arthur Stephenson had travelled overseas to look at modern hospital designs and began to implement similar ideas in the design of Australian hospitals. Bunning was later to travel widely in Europe, visiting the Paimio Sanatorium by Alvar Aalto, a building that had previously inspired Stephenson.

It was at the SIT that Bunning's interest in writing first became evident, he contributed to the architectural students newsletter Smudges and later edited their journal, Atelier. He was awarded the Kemp Memorial medal and travelling scholarship in 1933 and the Board of Architects of NSW Travelling Scholarship in 1937. In 1937 Bunning travelled to London where, in addition to becoming an associate of RIBA, he studied town planning at the Regent Street Polytechnic. He used the two-year scholarship to travel widely in Europe and Scandinavia and he also worked briefly in London, Dublin and New York. In London Bunning worked for Joseph Emberton, with whom Sydney Ancher had previously worked. The worsening situation in Europe may have precipitated his return to Australia in 1939.

Bunning and Madden's 1948 competition winning design for Anzac house is believed by architectural historians to owe much to Terragni's design for the Casa del Fascio in Como, Italy completed in 1936. Bunning was certainly familiar with recent architecture in Rome, noting that 'paradoxically Italy favours the modern style of architecture as expressive of the Fascist outlook.' (Architecture, 1 June 1939 p. 117)

On his return Bunning began to implement some of the progressive architectural ideas of his colleagues in London, establishing a MARS (Modern Architectural Research Society) in Sydney. In 1939 Bunning was one of the editors of Atelier, the journal of the architectural school at the SIT, contributing an article entitled

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'The Value of Travel' to Volume 10. He also contributed articles on modern architecture in Europe to Architecture, including an article on the Paimio sanatorium. During the early years of the war he worked for H. Ruskin Rowe. Bunning was one of a number of architects who, although serving with the RAAF, remained in Australia designing camouflage and military establishments Bunning, Douglas Annand, and Bunning's subsequent partner Charles Madden, may have met whilst designing camouflage. A guideline on camouflage in Australian conditions was prepared by the RAAF, a document Bunning was involved in the production of. Circa 1960 Annand designed art work for Bunning and Madden's Sulman award winning Liner House in Bridge Street.

In 1942 Bunning, designed the duration cottages for the St Mary's Munitions factory for the Commonwealth War Homes Commission. From 1943 he served as Executive Officer for the Commonwealth Housing Commission, preparing a comprehensive report on housing needs and policy for post war Australia published in 1944. This report contained numerous illustrations including a model kitchen arrangement, a range of suitable houses including tropical and sub tropical forms designed to suit the Australian climate, multi-storey housing and model suburban layouts, the latter being similar to the permanent duration cottages at St Marys.

His interest in suitable housing forms for Sydney was taken up by the local MARS group, which Bunning helped set up, along similar lines to the English MARS. In 1945/46 Bunning published *Homes in the Sun*, a 'plea for more rational domestic architecture in Australia, responding to its climate'. (Johnson, P. *Architecture in Australia* (AA) Dec 77/Jan78 p. 33). Bunning's work was 'very influential in its insistence on the need to design for the Australian environment'. (Obit held by the RAIA NSW Chapter). Bunning also served as chairman of the NSW Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee, established to advise the State Government, a position he held from 1945 until 1964 and was chairman of the Ian Buchan Fell Housing Research Project Committee and member of the RAIA Chapter Council.

Once the war was over Walter Bunning established his own architectural practice, taking Charles Madden on as a partner in 1946. One of his first commissions was the design of a town plan for the sections of the former Munitions Factory at St Mary's that were to become an industrial area. Part of this area continues to be an industrial area today. He also served on a number of RAIA committees and chapter council, including the Post War Reconstruction Committee, the Town Planning Committee and the Exhibition Committee.

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Despite his early interest in housing, the firm of Budden and Madden became known for their award winning commercial and institutional buildings. The partners were successful in many competitions, including winning the competition for Anzac House (demolished) and the National Library in Canberra (extant). Walter, who had married in 1944, designed a split-level home for himself and his wife in Ryrie Street, Mosman. This design, which has been modified, became well known in architectural circles. The lower storey of the building is random sandstone, the upper floor has a terrace and a cantilevered room of lighter weight construction. Freeland notes that Bunning '*at Quakers Hat Bay allowed climate, and to a lesser extent the topography, to be the major influences.*' (Freeland, *Architecture in Australia*, p.277). The photograph of the house in Freeland's *Architecture in Australia, A History*, shows the house to be precisely the type of Australian home in the sun Bunning advocated in his book.

Bunning and Madden won the competition for ANZAC house in 1948 however the building College Street was not completed until 1957, receiving the RIBA bronze medal in 1958. Unfortunately Anzac House has been demolished, however another important example of the firm's elegant work from the 1950s survives, Liner House in Bridge Street. Like Anzac House the design of this building has similarities with Terragni's work in Como. Built as a shipping company headquarters, Liner House continues to be a corporate head office and retains the mural screen by Douglas Annand and the staircase to the mezzanine that can be seen from the street through the glass curtain wall. Bunning and Madden's design respected the scale of the adjacent Burns Philp building, although the choice of materials was very different. The firm was also responsible for the design of a number of buildings in Canberra including Bruce Hall (1961) and International House (1967) at the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia. Their Canberra buildings continue to be used today.

As chair of the Town & Country Planning Committee Bunning was influential in halting a number of government schemes, in an era when environmental impact assessment was unknown, that would have been destructive to either the built or natural environment. He recommended that the inner city suburb of Paddington be declared a historic area and that the Moore and Centennial Parklands remain as parklands rather than be intensively developed as Olympic facilities. He also recommended that sand mining not occur at Myall Lakes, an area now a national park. Bunning was also a founder member of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and was one of the authors of the proposals to replace the workers housing in the area with high rise, although he appears also to have advised on restoration of the historic buildings to be retained.

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WAR TIME HOUSING

Circa 1942 Bunning, designed the duration cottages for the St Mary's Munitions factory for the Commonwealth War Workers Trust. These houses formed the prototype for one of the suburban layouts he recommended in the comprehensive report on post war housing needs and policy for Australia prepared whilst he was Executive Officer for the Commonwealth Housing Commission. Established in April 1943 the aim of the Housing Commission was to

Inquire into and report to the Minister for Post War Reconstruction on

- (a) the present position of housing in Australia and
- (b) the housing requirements of Australia in the post-war period (RAIA NSW Chapter Bulletin March 1944 p. 4)

The advice of those currently engaged in building and designing houses, as well as the unions whose workers would occupy the houses, was sought. Witnesses who addressed the commission included architectural firms: Gutteridge, Haskins and Davies (GHD); Peddle Thorp and Walker and Samuel Lipson of Lipson and Kaad. Manufacturers including Van Dyke, who made ready cut homes, gave evidence as did the Small Arms Factory at Bathurst, (the location of one of the groups of duration houses, the Munitions and Metal Workers Union and the Zinc Corporation of Co-operative Housing from Broken Hill. (Final report p. 157) The witnesses were not confined to NSW, Bunning traveled extensively during the preparation of this report.

The final report, which contained numerous illustrations including a model kitchen, a range of suitable houses designed to suit the Australian climate, multi-storey housing and suburban layouts. Although the report clearly introduces modern concepts in housing, its recommendations were not taken up to any great degree. This may be in part due to the continued shortages of building materials. Housing shortages lead to the use of imported prefabricated houses from Europe.

The housing layout based on the Radburn model that Bunning had pioneered at St Mary's was illustrated in this report as the cul-de-sac park subdivision type. An aerial view of the layout as well as a landscape plan was included. A second cul-de-sac type was also illustrated, with a central close, designed for car access, rather than a park designed for pedestrian access. It was this car-based model that was to be

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widely adopted in post war suburban planning rather than the layout with a park. Bunning may have been familiar with European examples of housing with shared parklands such as Södra Ängby near Stockholm commenced in 1933.

The Cul de Sac Park Subdivision type was described in detail in Bunning's report.

The roads are designed only for service access to the allotments therefore the width of the roads and construction can be that of service roads. These roads are dishd to the centre with gulleys to stormwater drains, thus obviating the need for kerbs and gutters. All services could be carried in ducts at the sides of roads, with leads to the rear of the houses.

The allotments are all of a similar shape and size and a part of each allotment forms the park for general use. The main access to the houses is from the park, onto which all of the houses front. This system of subdivision provides many amenities, including a pleasant outlook for all houses, a park or playground for general use, good service access to the houses, including garages where they are required. Road development and services in the area are economical. This system gives an increased number of allotments to the acre and the park area could be maintained by the management of the estate or by the council.

In addition a more detailed landscape plan was provided, the arrangement of planting shown is similar to what survives at St Mary's. The suburban layout of St Mary's is more elaborate than that illustrated in the Housing Commission report, with a crescent containing the two hostels located at the western end. The use of crescents was not uncommon during World War II.

A series of model houses that correspond to recommended housing standards were also included in the Housing Commission Report. Type A was a semi-detached single bedroom house of 33 square ft, type B and type C both contained 2 bedrooms and were 50 and 49 square feet respectively. Type D and Type E were three bedrooms, of which type E was the larger, containing a sleep-out. In all but one of the designs the kitchen and dining room was combined, as shown in the cut away drawing entitled Kitchen Modern Arrangement. The semi-detached houses, suitable for 'childless couples or pensioners' would 'take its place in a housing scheme as a design comparable with larger types of houses'. Earlier designs for model workers housing such as the housing at Daceyville designed by Peddle Thorp also contained semi-

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detached houses. Most post war suburbs do not contain this mix. St Mary's contained single residences and hostels, there are no semi-detached examples in the smaller group of duration cottages.

The housing at St Mary's was designed with built in kitchens, the compact layout was something of a novelty at the time. Bunning believed that

A modern kitchen, being the most used room in the house, should be efficient and attractive to offset any drudgery and monotony – in short it should be a congenial place to work in with a pleasant outlook.
(p. 123)

The kitchen is a small factory, modern factories are equipped with modern appliances; great improvements in mechanical equipment and other kitchen work are expected. (p123)

The RAI A bulletin records that the Commonwealth Housing Commission had received detailed advice regarding the use of electricity in the modern home.

Electric Home Planning

Ten associations connected with the Radio and Electrical Industry have prepared a submission with recommendations for the provision of electrical facilities and equipment in homes to the Commonwealth Housing Commission.

The submission, in booklet form, deals with electric cooking, water-heating, refrigeration, room-heating and washing. Lighting is also covered, and recommendations in regard to fittings, wattage, power-outlets etc. are also included.

Radio reception is discussed, and some interesting proposals regarding the installation of aerials for buildings put forward

Bunning's concern that housing be an appropriate response to climate is evident in the report, as it contained designs for a sub-tropical and a tropical house. Both of these layouts were designed with ventilation in mind and were raised above the ground like a typical Queenslander.

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The higher density models that Bunning proposed, which included large areas of landscaping, community, child care and sporting facilities are probably modeled on Scandinavian examples. No examples of these higher density model layouts by Bunning have been identified. He was well aware that the resultant housing schemes were far less generous in their provision of open space, community and sporting facilities.

Forthright in his criticisms, Bunning accused State Governments of being too timid in town planning, and called for tougher controls over land and housing design. Like [Robin] Boyd he despised the detritus of suburban Australia and attacked the spread of television aerials, advertising hoardings and the destruction of trees. He abhorred the dull products of the State Housing Commissions...(Australian Dictionary of Biography)

Bunning had envisaged that well designed buildings would follow slum clearance in inner city areas. In his later role with the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority he was involved with the preparation of large-scale slum clearance proposals, proposals that were effectively halted by union action. The concern of the unions was with the loss of the workers housing, in an area that had been specifically set aside as workers housing in 1900. In the 1940s Bunning's concern was with the replacement of substandard housing with modern housing, by the 1970s the demand for commercial floor space had begun in earnest. New workers housing was, however, built in The Rocks, the substantial Sirius apartments at the northern end of Cumberland Street designed by the Government Architects Branch of the Department of Public Works.

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION

Bunning was actively involved with the local chapter of the RAI, serving on the Post War Development Committee of the RAI. Other member of this large committee included Cobden Parkes (the NSW Government Architect), John D. Moore, S. G. Thorp (of Peddle, Thorp & Walker), Professor Wilkinson, the architect and planner R. K. Harris and Miss R. Edmunds. During 1944 study groups, in collaboration with the Post-war development committee issued reports on

- Regional and Town Planning
- Community Buildings and Neighbourhood Groups
- Prefabrication and Small House Planning Principles
- Kitchen Design and Equipment

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Discussion groups, of both members and non members were held to canvas opinions. The Post War Development Committee's publication 'Wanted! A Plan' appears to have been well received both nationally and internationally. Requests for copies were received from the Office of the President of the Philippines; the regional association of Cleveland; the City Planning Commission of Philadelphia; the Universities of Harvard, Michigan and California; The American Commission of International Co-operation, Cuba; the Contra Costa County Planning Commission, California and the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. The report, which had been published by June 1944, was described in the RAIA bulletin as being '*illustrated with a number of broadly treated black and white sketches and diagrams &c, while the cover, bearing the caption 'Wanted a Plan" is arresting*'. (RAIA NSW Chapter Bulletin June 1944)

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