

Researching properties

Some tips on searching house
histories

Jan Wegner

JCU

Houses (freehold)

- First photograph the house from every angle
- Use these to check historic photos of the street (remember houses can be background to events being photographed)



Sheldon - Lake St. Looking North



Note the tall Hoop Pines
behind the house

The area

- Has this always been residential?
- Is this the only older house in a new suburb?
 - Was it brought in?
 - Is it the original farm house before subdivision?
 - Are there unusually large garden trees in the yard and in nearby yards?

Freehold title search

- Get the Real Property Description (RPD)
 - parish, lot, division, subdivision, resubdivision etc. from a rates notice
 - Note the addresses and RPDs of neighbouring houses, especially if your house is on a corner

Freehold title search

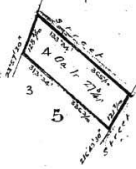
- Go to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines - Titles Office.
- Get all the previous titles (computerised).
- The search will work backwards from your RPD to the first Deed of Grant (when the land was freeholded).
- Property area will probably get bigger as you go back (it may have been resubdivided).
- You will have to cough up \$17 for EACH title.

Titles search – what's there?

- ◉ Owner and mortgages.
- ◉ No indication of improvements eg houses.
- ◉ No indication of resident if rented.

State Archives has some copies of Deeds of Grants – town, country, suburban lots (free access).

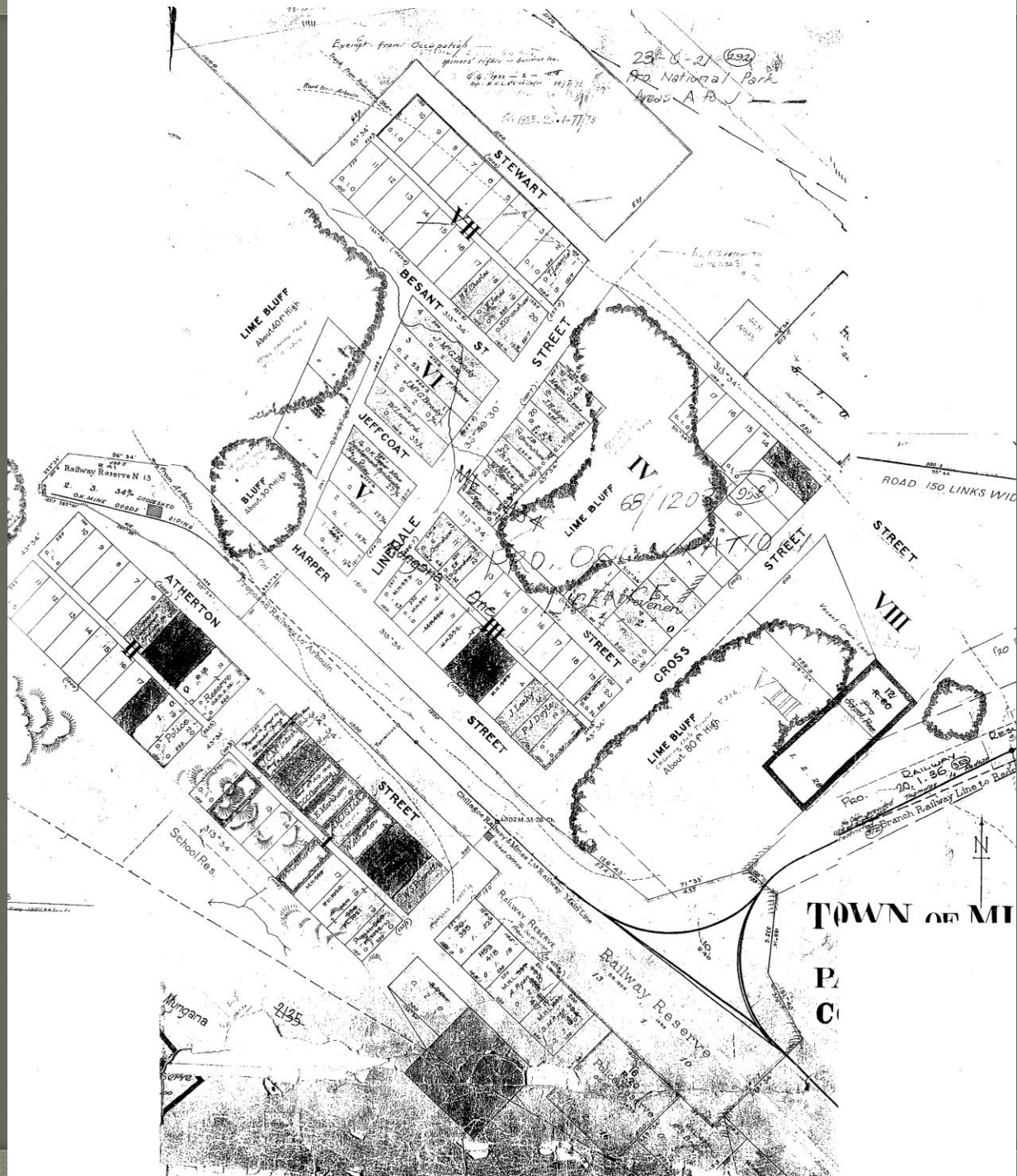
MUNGANA



Scale 2 chains to an inch
1/100 1/100 1/100

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WITHIN LAND IS CONVERTED
TO LOT(S) 504
ON REGISTERED PLAN No. M4872
12 NOV 1986 *Roch* REGISTRAR OF TITLES
DEPT. OF LANDS
(NORTHERN DISTRICT)

DILAPIDATED TITLE
DO NOT SEND FOR RESCAN



TOWN OF MI
 P
 C

Is the house in a large town?

- Try the Post Office directories where residents are listed by street. (No numbers – just working down the street)
- Doesn't work for small towns.
- Why do so many houses have names before the early 20th century?

MOURILYAN, a receiving office on the South branch of the Johnstone River, about 880 miles N. (by sea) of Brisbane. It is a fine harbour on the eastern coast, the entrance to which has been improved by dredging to a depth of 14 feet at low water for a width of 100 feet. It is intended to further deepen the channel. The steamers of the A.U.S.N. and Adelaide S.S. Cos. find no difficulty in entering and leaving by the improved channel. During the crushing season the large steamers of the latter company call at the harbour. Much sugar has been grown in the neighbourhood, and the Mourilyan Sugar Company's plant is of a very complete character, the cane being conveyed to the mills by trucks and locomotive power. The plantation is about 7 miles distant, and is reached by train line. The scenery of the harbour is described as being very romantic. Population, 50 Europeans, 250 Asiatics.



Problems with Directories

- Street numbers and names can change
- Directories are often out of date by a year or few
- They can misspell names
- They can accidentally get the order down the street wrong
- They list residents, not owners

Can cadastral maps help?

- Some will have owners marked.
- They will only ever show the first purchaser
- Check estate maps for new subdivisions

Names indicate blocks purchased



* Valueless Land surrendered to the Crown -
 1/12/85 of Section 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

2297.1 W
 14-3-73

ALOTS	SECTIONS	LOTS
1-4	1	101-104
1-5	2	201-205
1-10	3	301-310
1-30, 20A	4	401-430
1-8, 5	5	501-508, 8
1-11	6A	601-611
1-4	7	11-14
1-11	8	101-111
1-6	9	801-806
1-20	10	901-920
1-7		1-7

Hospreed

For Additional Plan & Document Notings Refer to CISP

Mareeba Shire
 Lots 1-14, 101-104, 201-205, 301-310, 401-430, 501-508, 601-611, 701-711, 801-806, 901-920, 21 & 22

Vol 4 fol 219

COUNTY OF **CHITRAIS**
 DISTRICT OF **CONGER**
 PARISH OF **MAREEBA**

T2131

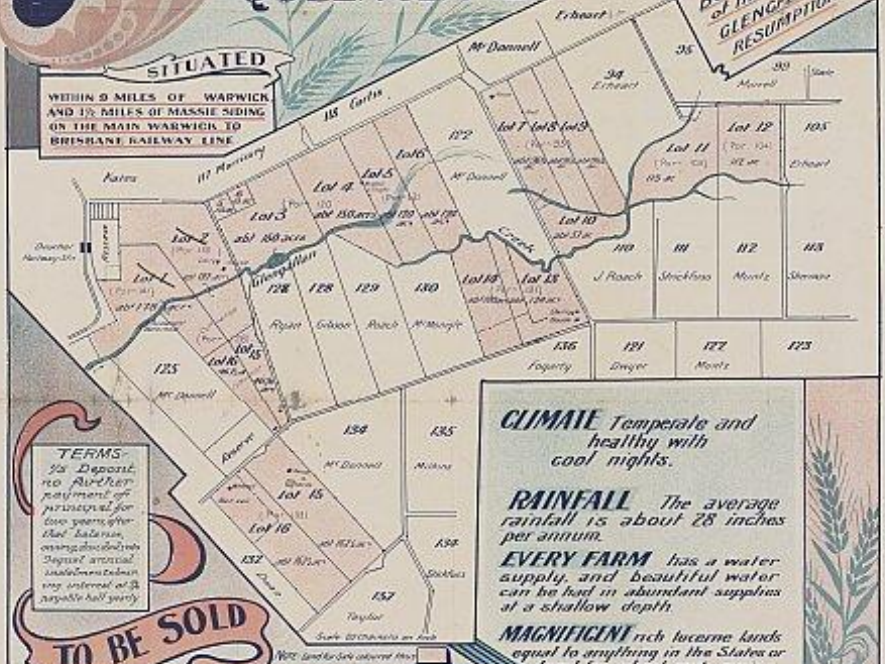
HYRDALE

ESTATE

DARLING DOWNS QUEENSLAND

Being Subdivision
of the late-leased
GLENGLIAN No. 3
RESUMPTION

SITUATED
WITHIN 9 MILES OF WARWICK
AND 1 1/2 MILES OF MASSIE SIDING
ON THE MAIN WARWICK TO
BRISBANE RAILWAY LINE



TERMS—
5% Deposit
no further
payments of
principal for
two years after
that balance,
over 24 months
beginning annual
installments unless
any interest at 5%
payable half yearly.

CLIMATE Temperate and healthy with cool nights.

RAINFALL The average rainfall is about 28 inches per annum.

EVERY FARM has a water supply and beautiful water can be had in abundant supplies at a shallow depth.

MAGNIFICENT rich lucerne lands equal to anything in the States or Land for wheat and maize growing, dairying and Lamb raising.

TO BE SOLD
BY PUBLIC AUCTION

AT DENHAM BROS., AUCTION ROOMS
WARWICK
SATURDAY 12TH MARCH 1910
AT 2.30 P.M.

DENHAM BROS. Warwick
DEACON & Co. Allora
Auctioneers in conjunction.



Local government sources

- ◉ Rate registers for each property
- ◉ Registers of ratepayers (owner OR resident – depending on who paid the rates)
- ◉ Valuation registers (may include description of improvements)

Local government records

- Plus:
- Sewerage and reticulated water plans (water supplies mostly 1930s onwards, sewerage after WWII)
- Registers of building permits – only likely after town planning becomes normal from 1920s (apart from First Class areas)

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

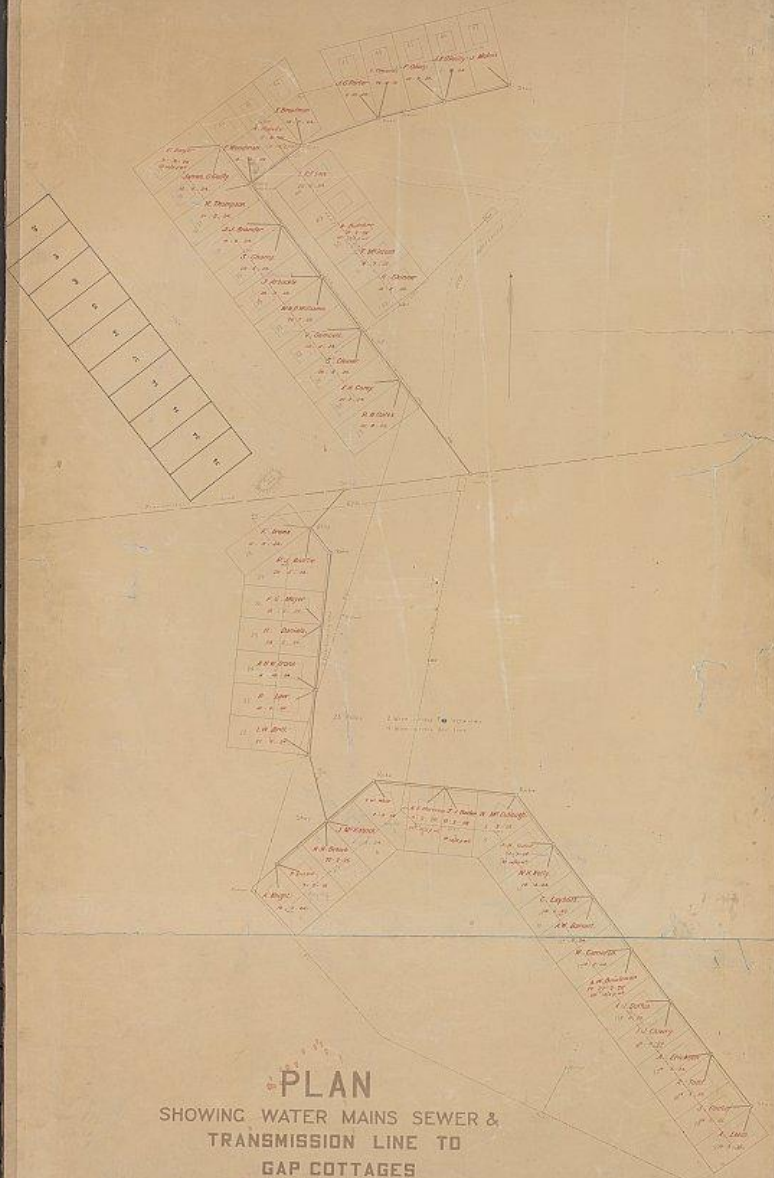
PLAN N° 15.

WILLIAMSTOWN



Scale 100' = 1 inch

C. H. H. H.



PLAN
 SHOWING WATER MAINS SEWER &
 TRANSMISSION LINE TO
 GAP COTTAGES

Scale 1/4" = 1' 0"
 Date _____

Electoral rolls

- More for checking addresses if you have the name of owner or resident
- See how long the person was resident
- Check boundaries of electoral district maps to see which one the land is in
 - Boundaries change!

No.	Surname and Christian Name.	Sex.	Place of Residence.	Occupation.	Situation of Freehold or Leasehold for which Elector's Name is Transferred.	Date when Claim received by Electoral Registrar.
5766	Knights, Annie	F	Norwood st., Mort Estate	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5767	Knowles, George Peara	M	Mylne st.	steward	...	7 May, 1906
5768	Knowles, Mary	F	Mylne st.	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5769	Knowles, Matilda	F	Nigel st., Goggs Estate	domestic duties	...	17 Apr., 1906
5770	Krienke, Louisa	F	Wilsonton	housekeeper	...	23 May, 1906
5771	Krienke, Wilhelmina	F	Wilsonton	domestic duties	...	23 May, 1906
5772	Krueger, Sarah	F	Gauntlet st., Goggs Estate	domestic duties	...	23 May, 1906
5773	Kruger, Charles	M	Kent st.	farmer	...	23 May, 1906
5774	Kruger, Louise Maria Auguste	F	One-mile, Drayton	domestic duties	...	8 May, 1906
5775	Kuder, Christoph	M	Green Wattle Gully, near Asylum	none	...	23 May, 1906
5776	Kurtz, Annie	F	corner Neil and Herries st.	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5777	Lacey, Albert Ernest	M	Austral Hall, Margaret st.	assistant club steward	...	27 Mar., 1906
5778	Lacey, Annie	F	Norwood st., Mort Estate	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5779	Lack, Frederick	M	corner Stuart and Moloney st.	farmer	...	14 May, 1906
5780	Lackey, Rachael	F	South st., 3rd from Hume st.	household duties	...	23 May, 1906
5781	Lake, Eleanor Mary	F	Bridge st.	domestic duties	...	14 May, 1906
5782	Lake, Percy William	M	Bridge st., near Raff st.	carpenter	...	14 May, 1906
5783	Lambert, Elizabeth	F	Little st., near Loch's Stables	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5784	Lam Poon, Elizabeth	F	Sir st., Kennedy Estate	domestic duties	...	14 May, 1906
5785	Laudener, Agnes	F	Kirk st., 3rd from Neil st.	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5786	Lane, Edith Annie	F	Neil st., opposite Gasworks	household duties	...	23 May, 1906
5787	Lane, Susan	F	Neil st., opposite Gasworks	dressmaker	...	7 May, 1906
5788	Langmend, Bella Eliza	F	Bridge st.	dressmaker	...	14 May, 1906
5789	Langmore, Amelia Maud	F	Campbell st. West	household duties	...	7 May, 1906
5790	Langmore, Walter James	M	Campbell st. West	grazier	...	7 May, 1906
5791	Langston, Frederick Church	M	James st.	shearer	...	27 Apr., 1906
5792	Langton, Rebecca	F	Charlton	housewife	...	1 Jun., 1906
5793	Laurie, Barbara	F	Partridge st., Kennedy Estate	domestic duties	...	14 May, 1906
5794	Lavis, Thomas	M	Martock, Ruthven st.	none	...	7 May, 1906
5795	Lawrence, Edith Mary	F	Charles st., Lamington st.	household duties	...	23 May, 1906
5796	Lawrence, Frederick William	M	Brodribb's, Wellcamp	farm labourer	...	1 Jun., 1906
5797	Laws, Emily Cecilia	F	Mrs. Boyce's, Range	domestic duties	...	23 May, 1906
5798	Lawton, Nellie	F	Gipps st., Drayton	shop assistant	...	8 May, 1906
5799	Laycock, Alfred	M	Grenier st., near Campbell st.	saddler	...	7 May, 1906
5800	Laycock, Annie	F	Grenier st.	domestic duties	...	14 May, 1906
5801	Layton, Winifred	F	Hazel Cottage, James st.	boarding-house keeper	...	7 May, 1906
5802	Lea, Ellen	F	West st., 2nd from Taylor st.	domestic servant	...	9 Apr., 1906
5803	Lea, Jane	F	West st., 2nd from Taylor st.	housewife	...	9 Apr., 1906
5804	Leamon, Ethel	F	Hazeldean, Herries st.	household duties	...	14 May, 1906
5805	Leamon, Maria	F	Hazeldean, Herries st.	household duties	...	14 May, 1906
5806	Leane, Jane Nora	F	Mort st.	dressmaker	...	7 May, 1906
5807	Leane, Maud Mary	F	Mort st.	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5808	Lebsanft, Johanna	F	Neil st., next Masonic Hall	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5809	Ledbury, John	M	Carrington road	carpenter	...	23 May, 1906
5810	Ledbury, Martha	F	Carrington road	housewife	...	23 May, 1906
5811	Lee, Elizabeth	F	Carrington road	housewife	...	23 May, 1906
5812	Lee, James Edmund	M	Norwood st.	music teacher	...	5 Feb., 1906
5813	Lee, Jessie Emily	F	Tiverton, Norwood st.	domestic duties	...	1 Feb., 1906
5814	Lee, Sarah Jane	F	Taylor st., Mort Estate	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906
5815	Lee, William	M	Taylor st. North, 3rd from Mort st.	labourer	...	9 Apr., 1906
5816	Lee, William	M	Grain Exchange, Willowburn	labourer	...	31 Jul., 1906
5817	Leggatt, Sarah	F	Ivory st., Christmas Estate	domestic duties	...	7 May, 1906

Check the
addresses
!

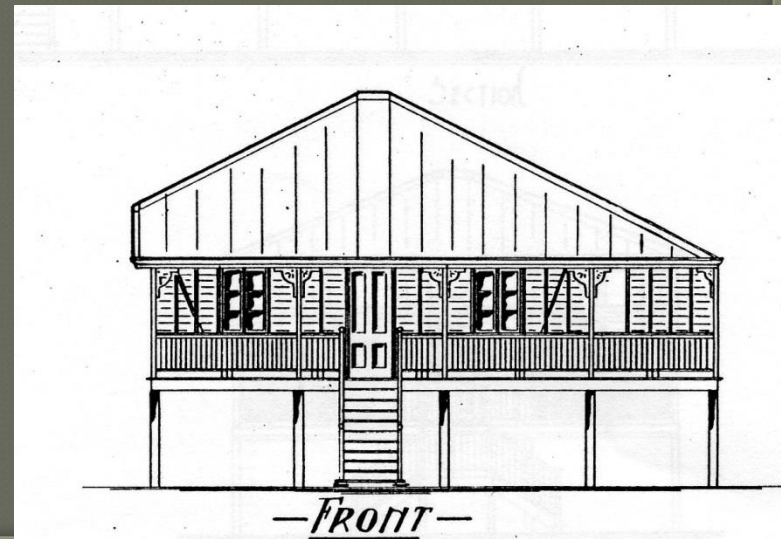
Valuer-General's Department

- ◉ Began in 1944, first valuation 1947.
- ◉ Notifications of transfers of property
- ◉ Appeals against valuations (earlier – Court of Petty Sessions)
- ◉ State Archives



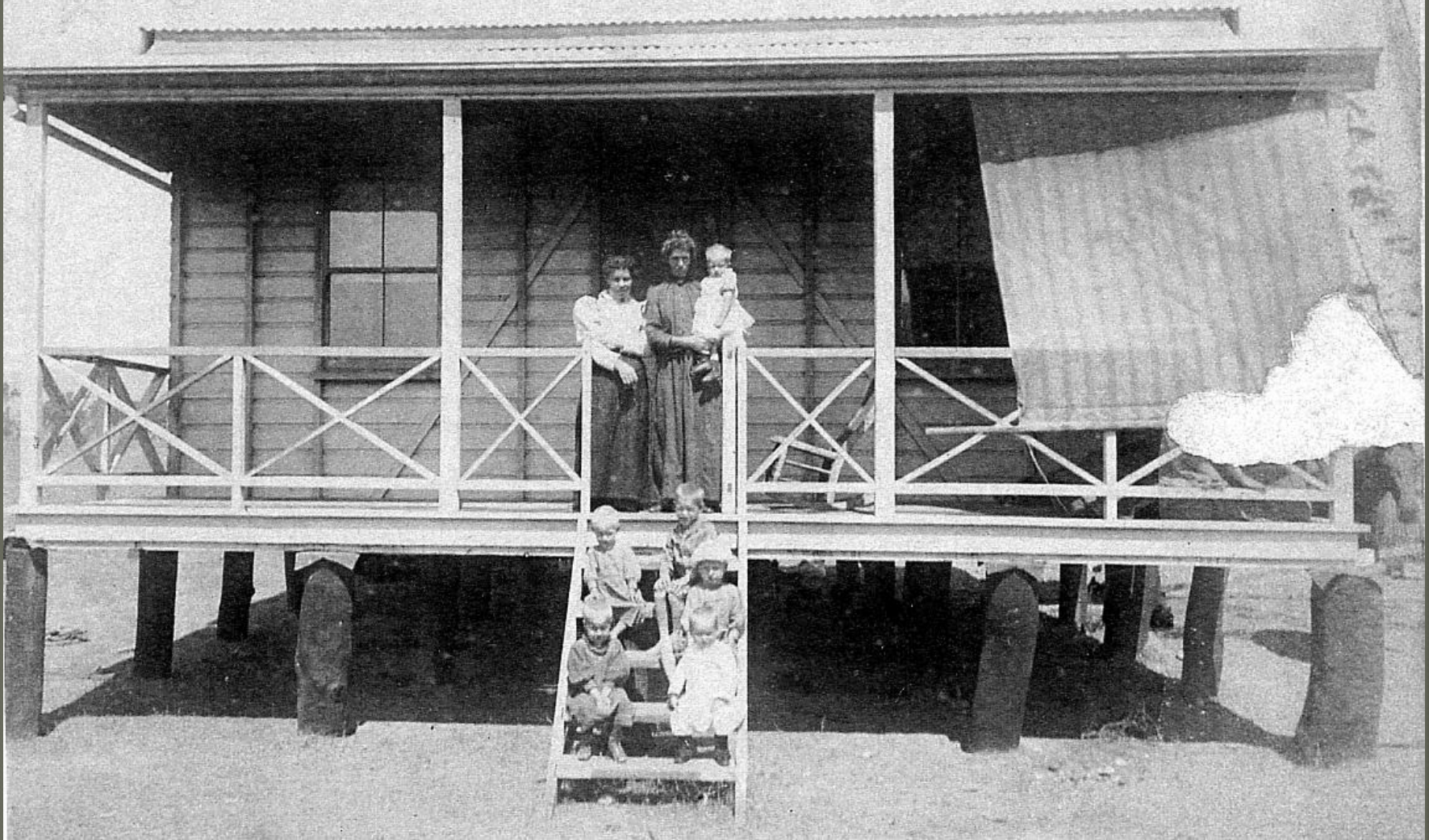
Worker's Dwellings

- ◉ Later Housing Commission
- ◉ Great reports in *Parliamentary Papers*
- ◉ Came in types – each with plans, photos



1880s

House Styles



Exposed frame

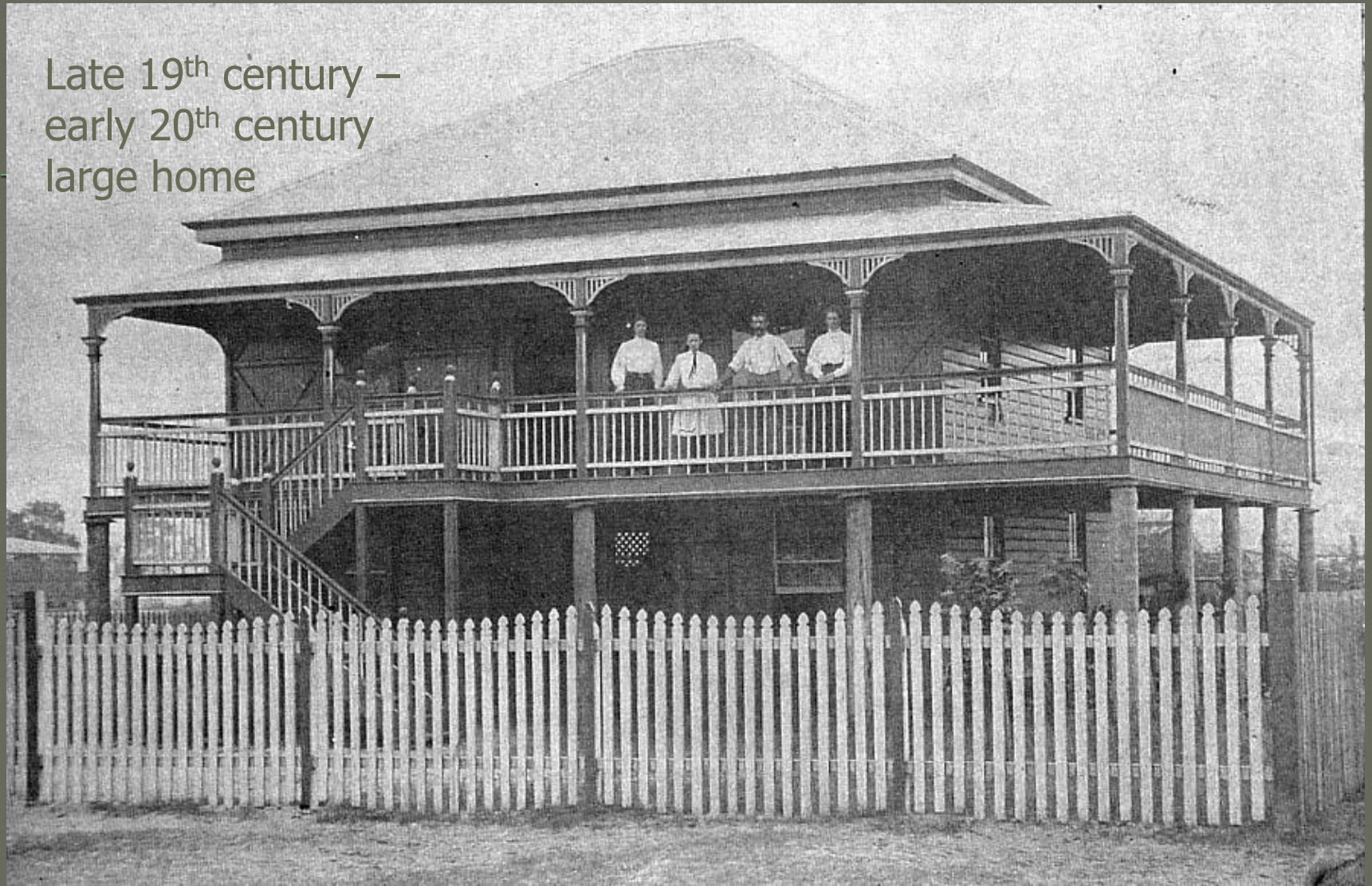
Symmetrical

Internal lining boards wider

Cross balustrade

Roof separated from verandah roof

Late 19th century –
early 20th century
large home



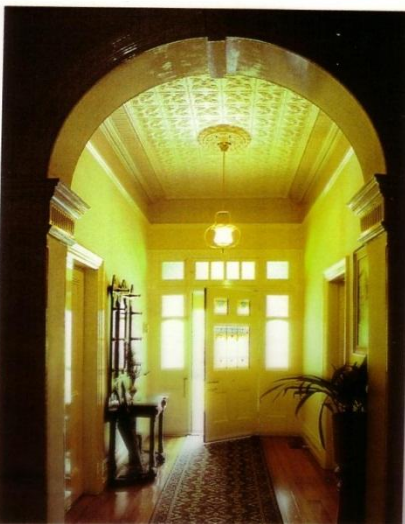
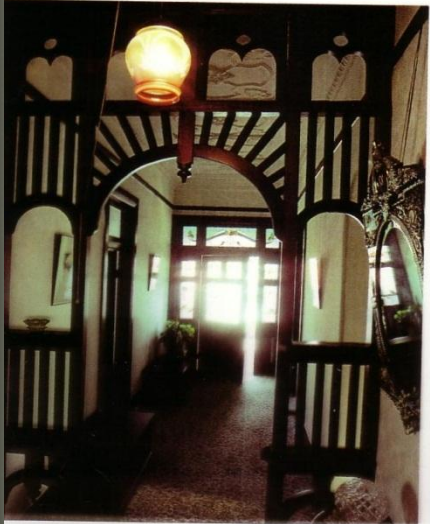
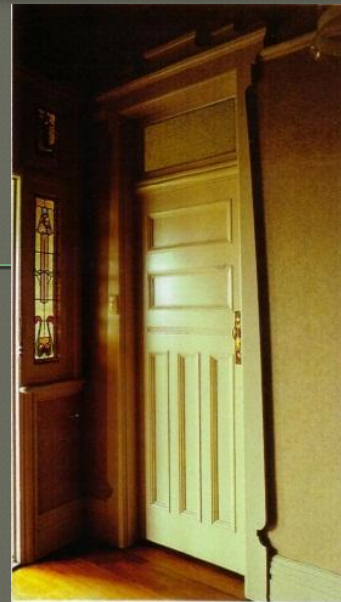
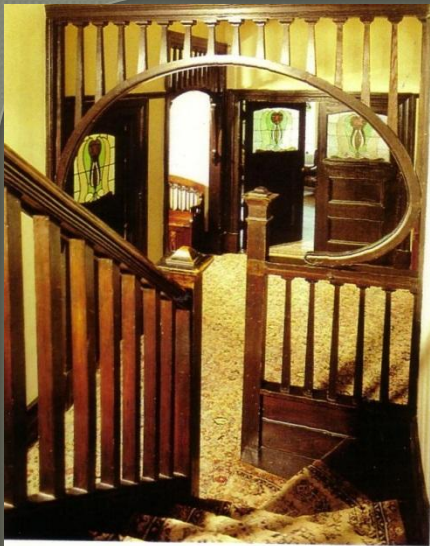
Roof still separate from verandah roof May not be symmetrical
Dowel balustrading (iron lace for very rich) Staircase broken by
landing Chamferboard walls appearing Internal walls tongue
and groove Brackets and moulding on verandah posts

Early 20th century



House and verandah under one roof
Double staircase (broken by landing)
Wooden louvres
Decorative gable over porch

Dowel balustrading
Art nouveau decorations
Brackets and moulding on verandah posts



Above left A late Federation doorway, evidenced by the tapering architraves and the high-waisted door. Note the use of the double-reeled and ovolo profile to the architrave head, top of the skirting, door moulds and the lower architrave cut-out.

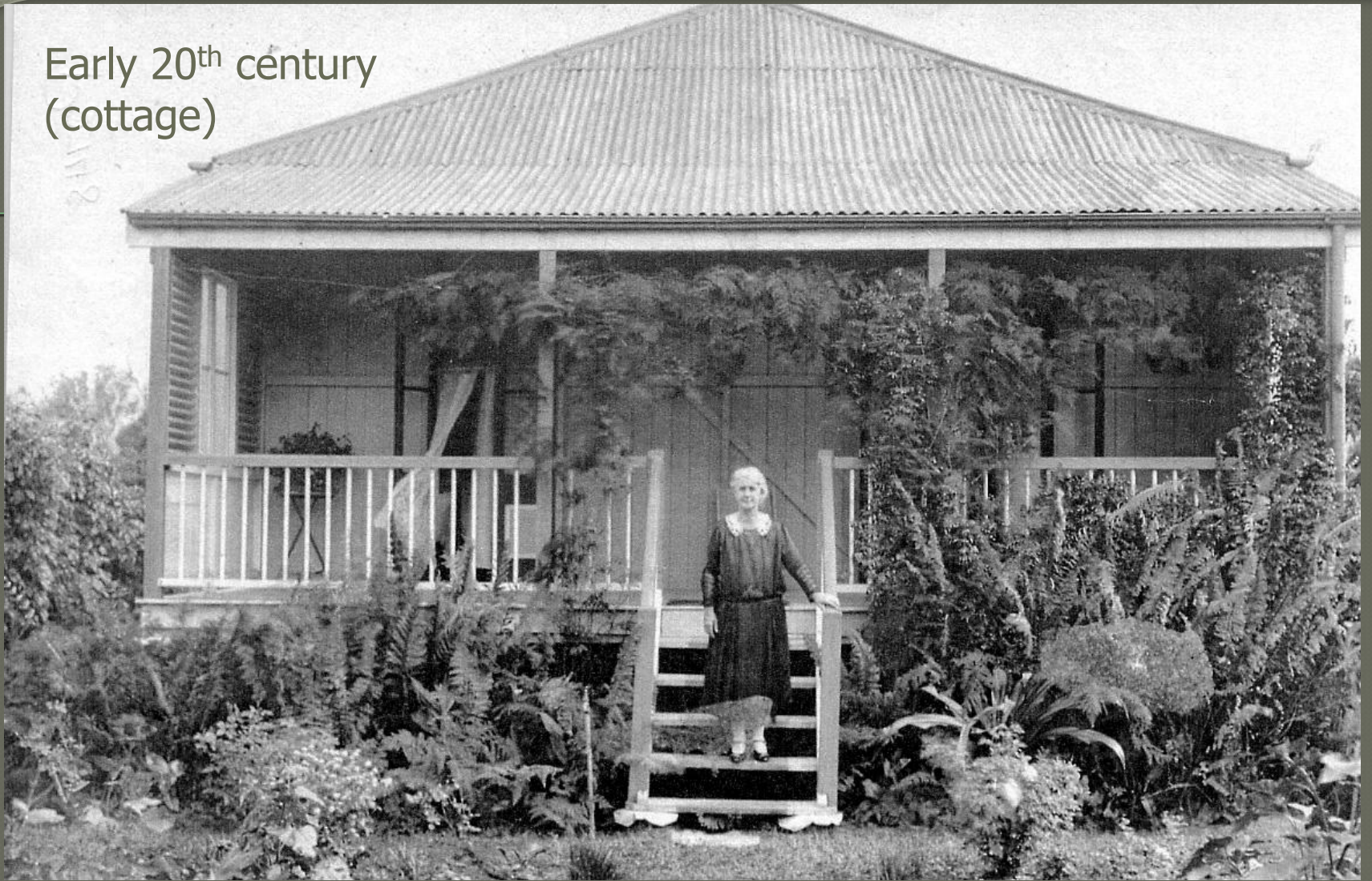
Above An asymmetrical Art Nouveau timber-framed door fitted with brass door handle, backplate and a door bell.

Far left During the Federation period, oval-shaped door handles began to appear, rivaling the popular circular models. This Art Nouveau handle, which is fitted to a mortise lock, has been positioned to align with the reeded mounting of the centre rail.

Left A highly decorative Art Nouveau lock surround, combining both finger plate and backplate. The Dogwood Vinter motifs have been formed in relief on to a beater background. The walls within the room are lined with a rich timber panelled wainscot, capped with a mould which appears to have double-

Internal Art Deco touches in turn of the 20th century (Federation) houses

Early 20th century
(cottage)



Exposed frame (tongue and groove internal lining) Main house and verandah
roof continuous (broken-back here) Dowel balustrading

1910s



Weatherboard or chamferboard (external) walls Straight window shades (earlier – curved or bullnose) Hipped roof rather than pyramidal

Interwar
(small
house)



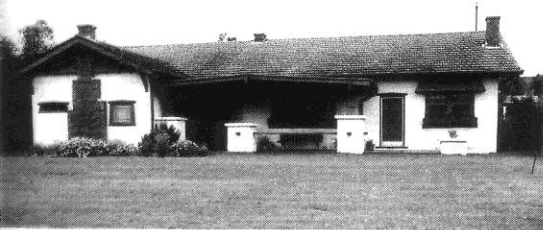
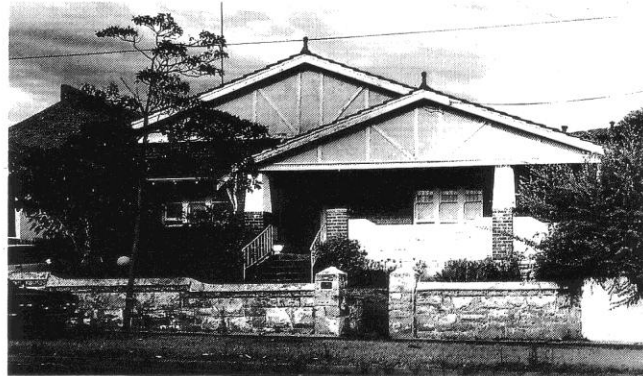
Asymmetrical with porch or short verandah Dowel balustrading
Gable with decorative infill Wooden louvres
Ogee shape or straight window shades Oriental-style trellis and cap-
rail fencing



◁ 532 House, Ormond Grove, Toorak Gardens, SA. Architect and date unknown. A stone version, with brick-and-render verandas, and typical sharp roof edges.

▽ 536 House, Southport Street, Leederville, WA. Architect and date unknown. The large and small gables facing the street are true to type.

▽▽ 537 Myola, Wellington Street, Launceston, Tas. Architect and date unknown. A weather-board house with an iron roof and a skillion dormer.



◁△ 534 House, High Street, Glen Iris, Vic. Architect and date unknown. The warm colours and textures add to an inviting design.

◁ 535 A. E. Gibson house, Manly, Qld. E. P. Trewern, architect, 1919. The shady, veranda'd informality was singularly appropriate to warmer regions.

California bungalow
– nested gables,
deep eaves,
tapering piers



California bungalow, Queensland style (rendered brick)

Build it in timber and put it on stilts, and you get...

Interwar
(large
house)



Asymmetrical
lookalikes)

Nested gables with decorative infill

Bay windows (or

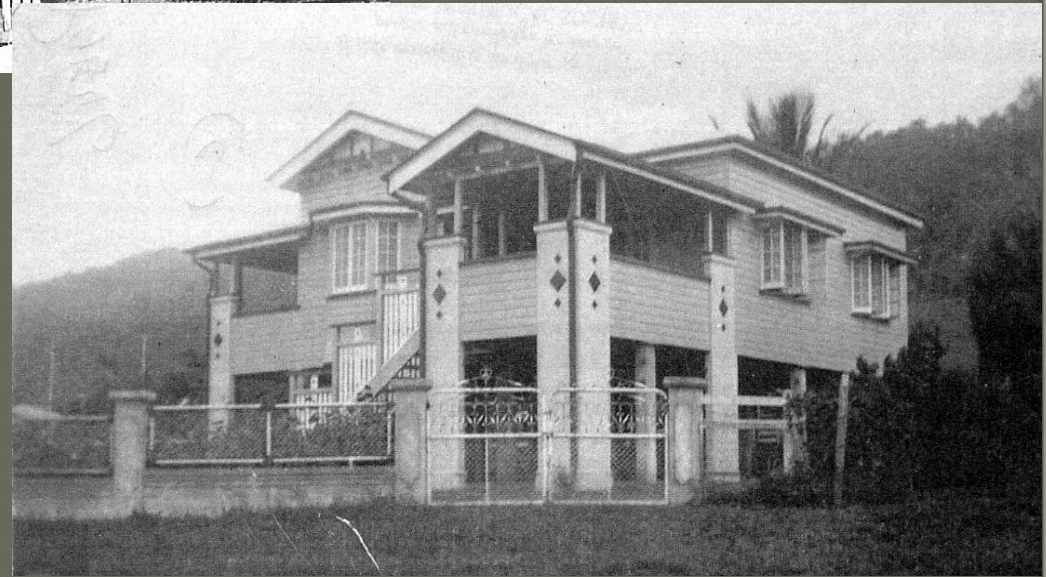
Front porch/verandah built to resemble pillars either side

Coloured panes of glass in windows

Staircase broken by landing

Straight/continuous window shade

Plank balustrading



More distinctive stylistic features of the Interwar Queenslander:
Stepped balustrade Unusual cut-out shapes for batten
screens under the house Art Deco features

1940s



Like the interwar house but stepped-back façade
Plainer eg straight staircase, no bay windows, no decorative touches

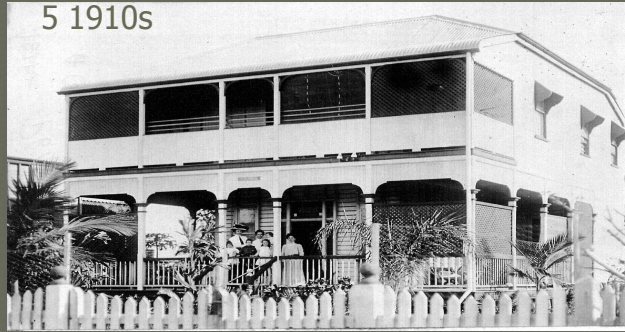
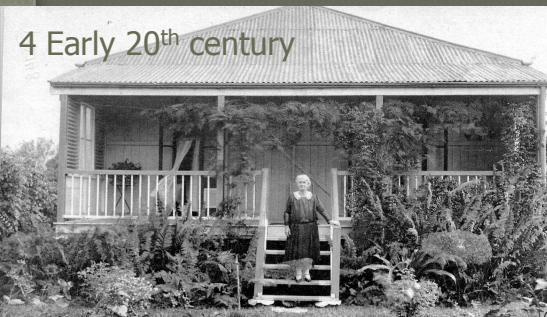
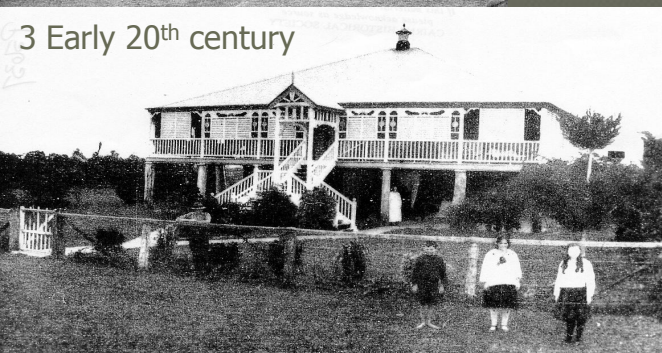
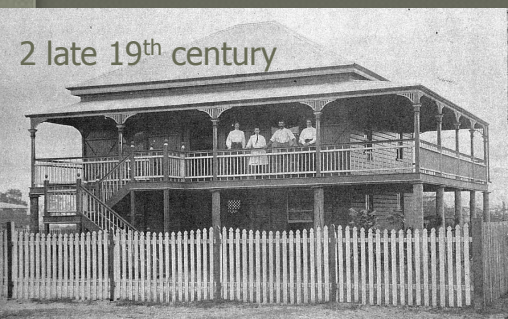
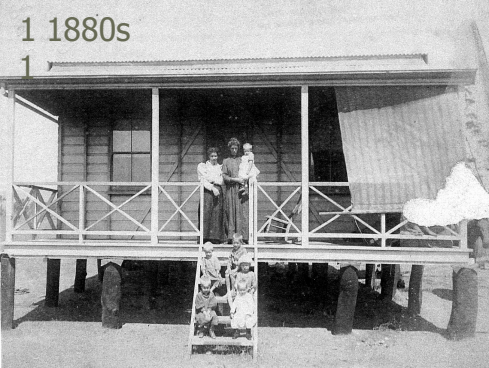
1940s-1950s



Stepped-back style becomes more elaborate.



Rectangular box on stilts (car went underneath) Flat façade, flattened roof
Verandah along front, porch at back
Stairs run parallel to house
After this – styles tend to follow southern fashions (no verandah, low set – cheaper)



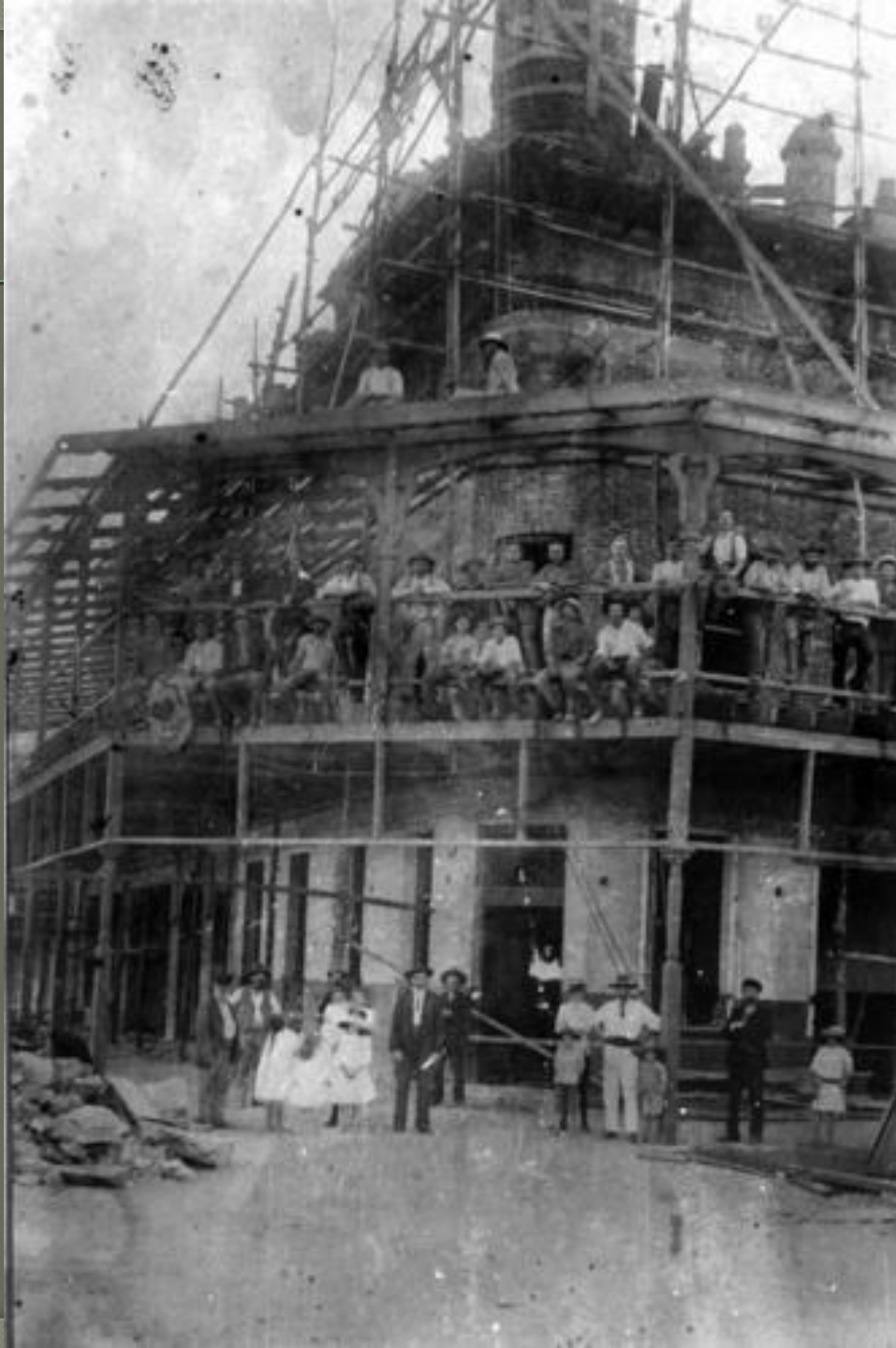
What if you have an old-fashioned owner?

More problems

- ◉ Could the original house have burned down/been blown down? Is this one really the first?
- ◉ Can be extensively renovated and extended – your big building could have begun as a tiny cottage!

Destroyed house, 1918
cyclone, Innisfail





The Central Hotel, Cairns, under construction – around an earlier building (the ground floor)

So, research by:

- RPD records
- Post Office Directories/ Pugh's Almanac
- Photos
- Cadastral maps
- Electoral rolls
- Local government records and maps
- Workers' Dwelling styles
- Building style and materials