

**Park Orchards Country Club Estate and Chalet,
Brucedale, Ennismore, Dirlton and Hopetoun Crescents, Park Orchards.**

The site of the Park Orchards Country Club Estate was originally part of a large orchard property owned by Tom Petty, described as "Doncaster's most active and progressive fruitgrower, Petty bought and developed orchards on 19 different properties in Doncaster and Templestowe. Park Orchards, which has been called his most ambitious project contained 80 orchard blocks, ten dams and 559 acres.³⁵ A 1922 Army map shows the area as part of an extensive orcharding district.³⁶

³⁶ Ringwood, Military Survey 1 inch to a mile prep. Australian Section Imperial General Staff, June 1922.

District rate records confirm that by 1924 Petty's Park Orchard land had been sold to William Sell, of the Mitcham estate agent firm, G. H. Gibb, Sell and Co., in partnership with Eva Jane and Minnie Gibb.³⁷ By 1925, Australis Sharp and John Taylor, South Melbourne timber merchants, had purchased the 559 acres of the Park Orchard Estate³⁸ Sharp and Taylor already had many land holdings including the Ranelagh Country Club at Mt. Eliza (1923) designed by Walter Burley Griffin.³⁹

Peter Navaretti (RMIT lecturer), who has been carrying out a comprehensive study of W.B.Griffin's work in Australia and the United States, has not found any evidence linking Griffin with the design of the Park Orchards Estate, as has been claimed.

The Park Orchard Estate with its innovative 'circus' design was the work of Tuxen and Miller, surveyors, who had worked with Griffin at Ranelagh (Mt. Eliza) and Heidelberg.⁴⁰ A Lodge Plan dated 1926-27 prepared by G. L. Miller, surveyor, shows the original design with its curved roads and large one-acre allotments around Dirlton, Brucedale, Ennismore, Gosford and Elgin Crescents, and smaller residential allotments in Arundal, Bowmore, Colin and Daintree Avenues.⁴¹

An Auction Plan for the sale of these allotments (which may date from this time) described the Estate as the "site of the finest orchards in the State." Blocks were advertised as suitable for "a delightful week-end and holiday house" for City families in "health giving surroundings." It was planned to build a club house, cricket ground, tennis courts, parks and bowling greens and croquet lawns for the use of the purchasers, all laid out by Tuxen and Miller.⁴² However, despite the construction of some of these facilities and of a club house in 1928, the estate did not attract buyers at this time.⁴³

The Chalet, a Spanish Mission style building with fine blackwood panelling in its interior, a ballroom and billiard room, was constructed for 2000 pounds.⁴⁴ It was rated first in 1929-30.⁴⁵ Later, in 1931, a nine-hole golf course was laid out along the south side of the estate. Unused bushland was cleared and pine plantations put in.⁴⁶

³⁷ Shire of Doncaster RB 1923-24 Templestowe Riding No.502 (NAV 325 pounds).

³⁸ Shire of Doncaster RB 1925-26 Templestowe Riding No.1110; 1926-27 No.462 (NAV 711 pounds).

³⁹ Irvine Green, "Park Orchards Chalet," in Doncaster Templestowe Historical Society Newsletter, Sept., 1982.

⁴⁰ Irvine Green and B.Beavis, *Park Orchards. A Short History.* 1983,p.9.

⁴¹ Lodge Plan 11939 (1926-27).

⁴² *Auction Plan. Park Orchards. Doncaster.*n.d., Haughton Collection, SLV.

⁴³ Green and Beavis, p.12.

⁴⁴ Green and Beavis, p.12.

⁴⁵ Shire of Doncaster and Templestowe RB 1929-30 Warrantdyte Riding Nos.541-549(Chalet and 374 allotments and two reverted blocks. NAV 600 pounds).

⁴⁶ Green and Beavis, p.13.

During the Second World War, the Australian Army requisitioned the Park Orchard Estate and 400 personnel moved in, living in tents on the football ground. The Chalet with six acres of land was purchased and repaired.⁴⁷ The 1944-45 district rate records listed the Government as owning the Chalet and Lots 203-206, 222-224 in the Park Orchards Estate.⁴⁸

In the post-war years after the deaths of Australis Sharp and John Taylor, there was another attempt in 1946 to sell the Estate allotments. The land was advertised as an "exceptional opportunity to an Investor and to the Public, Educational and Private Organisations" desiring "a large allotment with easy access to the City."⁴⁹ In 1947, the Estate was sold to Edments, a Bourke Street department store, and the Army sold the Chalet to W. R. Jones, who ran it as a cabaret. Subsequently, the Edwards family purchased the Chalet, which became a restaurant.⁵⁰

Of regional significance A unique combination of topography, site layout and plantings in the "garden suburb" tradition. It illustrates the work of Saxil Tuxen, an influential Melbourne surveyor, in its 1920s overall layout and curving road patterns. The Chalet, Spanish Mission in style, has been associated with the Estate from about 1929, as clubhouse, Army residence, cabaret and restaurant.

⁴⁷ Green and Beavis, p.13.

⁴⁸ City of Doncaster and Templestowe RB 1944-45 Warrantdyte Riding NAV 547-549 (Valued at 116 pounds for water rating purposes).

⁴⁹ *Auction Plan. Park Orchards Estate, Mitcham. Dec., 1946, Haughton Collection, SLV.*

⁵⁰ Green and Beavis, p.6.