

# Colonel Light Gardens Chronology



## 1914

Charles Reade lectured in Australia about Town Planning. His planning principles were based on The Garden City Movement which aimed to improve the lifestyle and residential environment of all classes of people.

The first Labor Government in South Australia passed the Advances for Homes Act. Administration was vested in the Bank of South Australia. People with yearly incomes of less than £300 were eligible for loans with a limit of £500. The result was a housing boom in the years leading up to World War 1.

## 1915

Vaughan Labor government purchased Grange Farm from the trustees of the William Mortlock estate intending to establish a model garden suburb along the lines advocated by Charles Reade. One important concept of Reade's plan was 'land use zoning' which means 'special attention is directed to the fact that no buildings for business or manufacturing purposes will be permitted except in the business sector specially designed for that purpose'.

At this time there was a severe housing shortage.

## 1916

Charles Reade becomes South Australia and Australia's first Government Town Planner. He was requested to prepare plans for a model suburb and submitted a plan titled 'Mitcham Garden Suburb'.

Plans to establish the model suburb on the Grange Farm site were put on hold due to World War 1 and the area, briefly known as the Mitcham Army Camp, was used for the training of troops who served overseas.

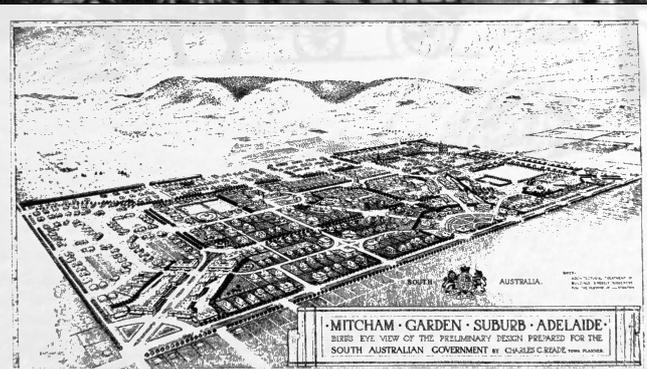


Unidentified soldier at the Mitcham Army Camp



**COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS**  
A MODEL GARDEN SUBURB

COMFORT CONVENIENCE BEAUTY



Aerial perspective of the Proposed Garden Suburb  
1917

**1919**

Garden Suburb Act passed. This provided a detailed plan for the suburb's development. Reade's plan included gardens, swimming baths and an ornamental lake with bridge. These features were dropped when the plan was altered to incorporate the Thousand Homes Scheme.

**1921**

The name 'Colonel Light Gardens' was adopted by State Cabinet and the first land was released for sale.

**1924**

At this time only 60 houses were occupied or being built, even though 269 blocks had been sold.

As housing for many South Australians had become too expensive the Labor Government decided to initiate a mass housing project - the Thousand Homes Scheme. The central and southern sections of Colonel Light Gardens were remodelled to accommodate 363 houses. Also, two farming properties on the western side of Goodwood Road were purchased as sites for another 332 homes. This changed the whole concept of the original scheme.

**1927**

The Garden Theatre (for moving pictures) sited on Goodwood Road was opened.

Colonel Light Gardens School opened in Windsor Avenue. By the end of 1927 952 homes had been built. Of these 700 had been built under the State Government's Thousand Homes Scheme. Under this scheme preference was given to "persons with 4 or more children under 16 years". The 700 homes erected under this scheme were a basic design. The northern area of Colonel Light Gardens wanted to distinguish itself from the Thousand Homes Scheme and became known as Reade Park (because of the recreation park named after Charles Reade).

Tram services extended to Springbank Road.

**1928**

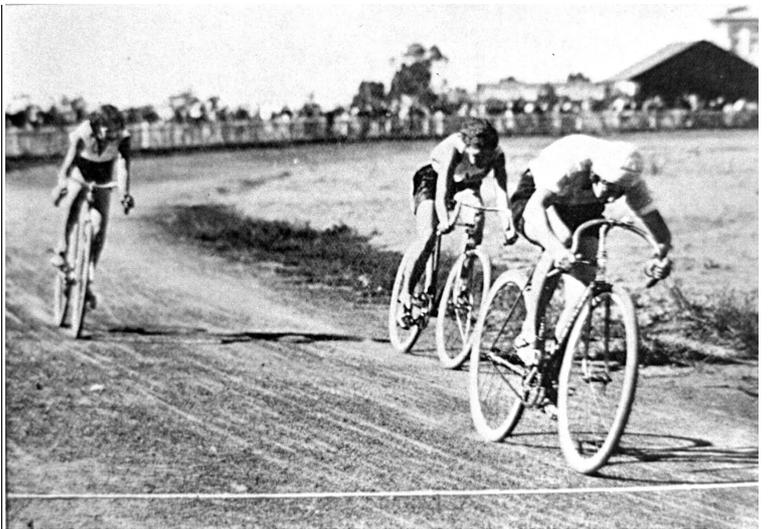
The Great Depression begins to have an impact on housing.

**1936**

Worst of Depression is over.

**1940**

Garden Suburb Commissioner approved the subdivision of Piccadilly Circus, originally intended as the main entrance to the suburb. Also, unused shop sites in the former Bond Street (now Salisbury Crescent) were allocated, for housing.

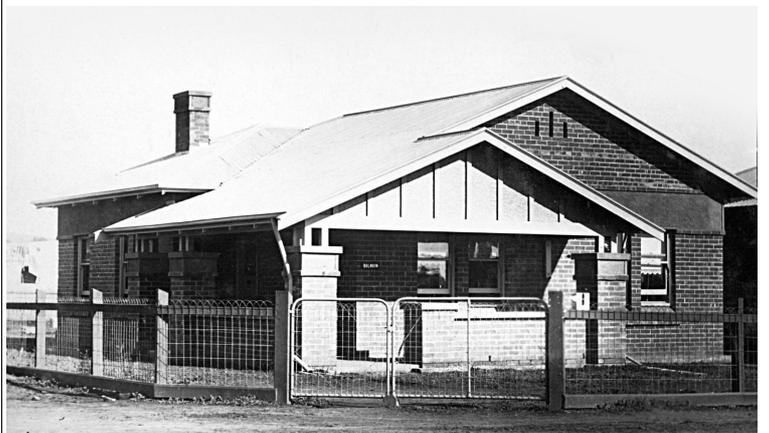


Women's half mile cycle race about to be won by Miss M Thomas - Mortlock Park Oval 1931

Mortlock Park is the largest public reserve in the suburb. It is named in recognition of the donation of 4 hectares of land given by the Mortlock family for a recreation area.



The Garden Theatre



The bungalow style house characteristic of the 1920s, and so, of Colonel Light Gardens. This is 'Cottage Design No. 7' one of the 14 designs available under the Thousand Homes Scheme.

**1975**

Because of financial constraints, responsibility for Colonel Light Gardens was transferred to the City of Mitcham.

**2000**

In recognition of its unique place in national and international planning history, Colonel Light Gardens was included on the Register of the National Estate in 1999 and declares a State Heritage area in 2000.



Charles Reade

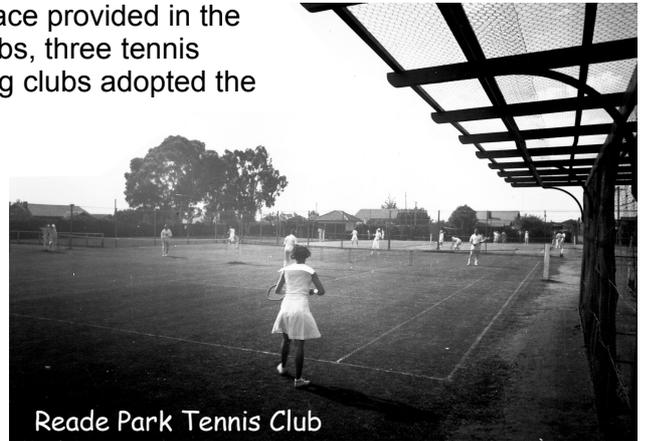
**Charles Reade's** design is now regarded as one of the first attempts to zone areas according to their best use. Areas were zoned for schools, churches, recreation etc.

Reade allocated two shopping zones to service the suburb's residents. This concept of neighbourhood shopping differed greatly from the corner shops found elsewhere and was eventually adopted in the State Development Plan from the 1960s. In his original plan he called this area 'The Strand Shopping Centre'.

In 1914 Reade wrote that it was necessary to classify roads according to the intended level of use. In a 1918 account of the design elements of the suburb it was explained that streets were designed to direct and concentrate the flow of traffic on the routes specially constructed for their use, and away from residential streets.

**The Reade Park reserve** formed the second tier of open space provided in the plan. Reade's suggestions included bowling and croquet clubs, three tennis clubs, rotunda, formal gardens and open space. The sporting clubs adopted the name Reade Park and quickly established their facilities.

The principle that 'any existing trees or natural objects of interest should be preserved if possible and incorporated into the plan' is evident in Reade's retention of the avenue of River Red Gums planted along the driveway which led to the original farmhouse. The River Red Gums located adjacent to the Croquet Club were planted prior to 1914 and also retained in his plan.

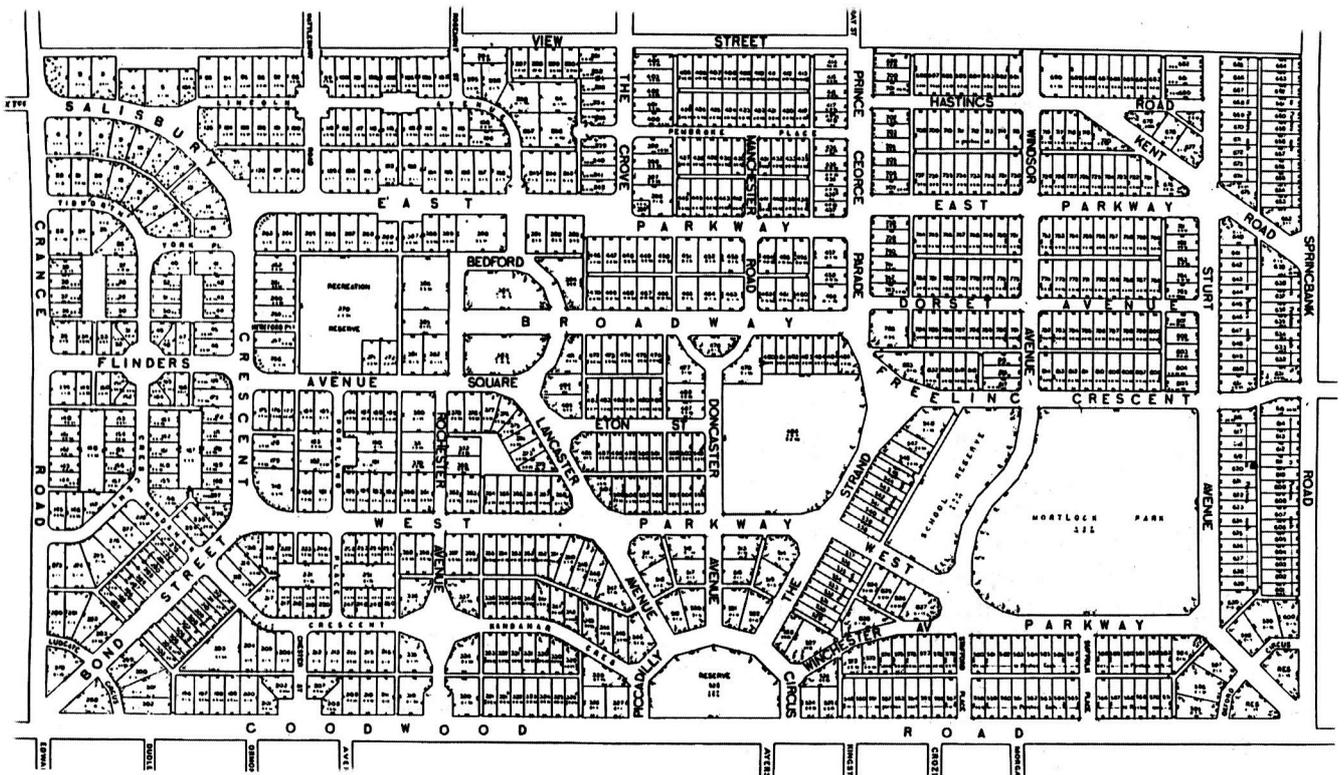
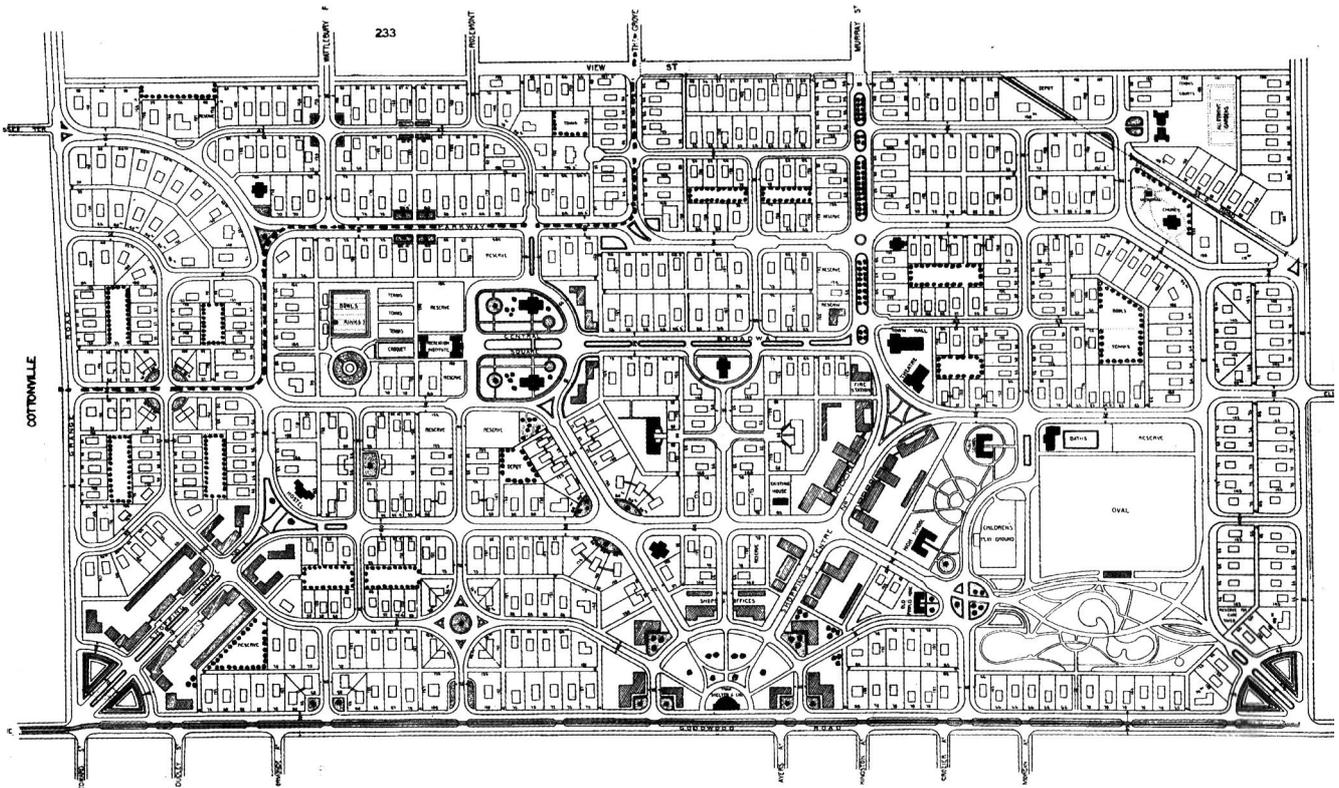


Reade Park Tennis Club



Mortlock Park c1930

# Maps



**Above:** Approved plan of Colonel Light Gardens based on Reade's original plan - 1921. **Below:** Amended plan by Walter Scott Griffiths (not Walter Burley Griffin) to accommodate the Thousand Homes Scheme. Note the replacement of the shopping precinct and gardens on Bond Street with housing allotments.



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