

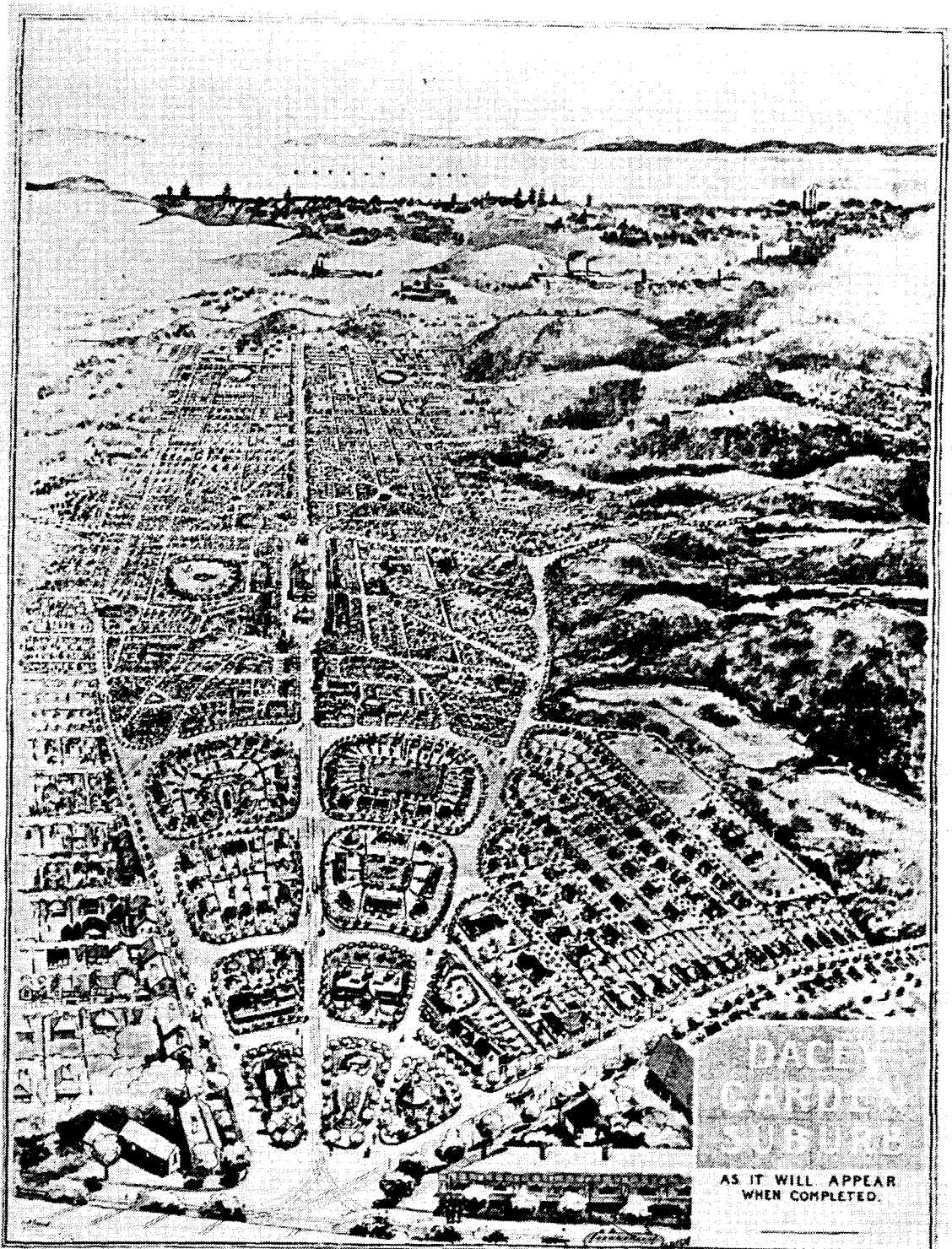
THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN CITY:
A PLANNING HISTORY 1910-1930

by

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Dacey Garden Suburb plan, 1914

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ABSTRACT

The garden city tradition in estate and metropolitan design derived its name from the garden cities advocated by Ebenezer Howard in To-Morrow (1898). A major force in the history of British planning, its influence was felt around the world. This thesis is the first overview of Australian theory and practice, focusing on the period between 1910 and 1930. Five basic tasks are attempted: an outline of the original garden city idea; an examination of the general ideology and organization of the garden city movement; clarification of the international context; specification of the general character and distinctiveness of garden city advocacy in Australia; and a systematic record of actual projects.

The discussion indicates that the nature of the Australian response reflected the interaction of imported ideas with local circumstances. As in other countries, Howard's 'peaceful path' to 'a better a brighter civilization' was not fully followed. Instead, the garden city assumed three main guises. First, it functioned as an inspirational environmental ideal. Second, it brought together concrete principles for improved lay out that were advocated for and implemented in three different settings: special purpose 'garden towns'; 'tied' housing estates for industrial employees; and residential suburbs and subdivisions. These 'garden suburbs' dominated the local scene but, as with the other developments, translation of the ideal into reality was imperfect, being deleteriously affected by financial, political, and administrative factors in particular. Third, and at a larger scale, the garden city helped to introduce certain tentative ideas regarding the desirable size, shape and structure of the metropolis.

The approach adopted is basically empirical, with the most important source material being the contemporary Australian planning literature. The structure is best described as 'stratified chronology'. The analytical framework combines three main approaches to planning historiography: the societal (setting planning events and developments in their broadest economic, political, cultural, and institutional context), the biographical (emphasizing the important role of individuals in the importation, diffusion and implementation of garden city thought), and the morphological (a spatial emphasis involving an inventory of landscape impacts). The major theme permeating the thesis is that of the 'diluted legacy': the drift in the garden city tradition away from Howard's holistic, radical manifesto through liberal environmental reforms to actual schemes which compromised or even totally contradicted the original idea in physical, economic and social terms. The extension and conceptualization of this idea provides one of several important areas for future research highlighted by the thesis.

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The Australian garden city: A planning history 1910–1930

This work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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