

# History of the site of the Fern Avenue Community Garden

## Indigenous Heritage

The Fern Avenue Community Garden is located on the Adelaide Plains which is the traditional land of the Kurna people. Members of the Garden acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional owners of this land and we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still important for the living Kurna people today and we offer our respect to their leaders past, present and emerging.

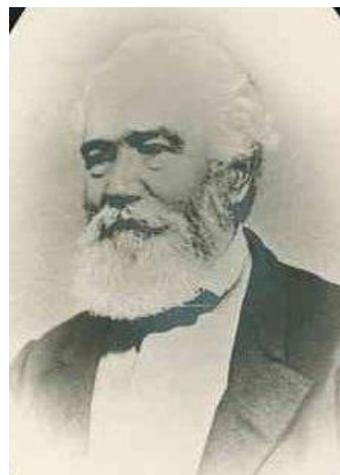
### 1836 - 1965

After South Australia was settled by the British in 1836, the section of land on which the garden now is located was granted to Mr John Brown in March 1839. He in turn sold the land to Mr William Giles (pictured right), a manager of The South Australian Company and a South Australian politician from 1851 to 1854.



A few years later some of the Giles land was sold to Mr James Frew after his arrival in South Australia in 1839. The suburb of Frewville is named after James Frew while his wife's maiden name (Fullarton) now names the suburb within which the garden is located.

Mr Frew (pictured right in 1865) and his wife, Jane, used the land for farming and grazing and their property became known as 'Fullarton Estate'.



In the 1840's a house known as Barn Abbey was erected on the property. It is thought to be the first stone building in Fullarton. It still stands just north of the Community Garden.

In 1851, the Frew property was subdivided and Barn Abbey was sold to Mr Jules Joubert. After being refused permission to marry a local girl and being imprisoned for debt, he was forced to sell the property back to James Frew 6 months later.

James Frew then leased the property to a number of tenants, the last of whom was Mr Thomas Fairbrother. He later purchased the property. The photo at right shows Barn Abbey when owned by Thomas Fairbrother



By this time, Barn Abbey had become run-down and the surrounding property neglected. Mr Fairbrother set about to rectify this by clearing the land, planting apricot trees and confining and retaining the creek that now runs under the southern border of the community garden.

Consequently in 1880, Fairbrother built the Fullarton Jam Factory on the site where award-winning jams were produced. By 1883, more than 25 acres of fruit trees had been planted to serve the Jam Factory. [Sourced from an 1883 newspaper article.] Fairbrother was responsible for 'confining' the Glen Osmond Creek to a straight path through the property – presumably along the path of the current culvert under the southern side of the garden.

The Fullarton Jam Factory remained in the Fairbrother family for two generations. It is believed that Thomas Franklin Fairbrother, son of the founder of the Jam Factory, became disillusioned with the industry when fillers such as pumpkin started to be used in jams. He retired and the factory was dismantled in 1929. Remnants of the wall and foundation of the Fullarton Jam Factory can still be seen today. In particular the wall on the western side of the property is the only above ground feature of the Factory that remains today.

The property then changed hands several times before the City of Unley took ownership of it in 1965 for use by the local community. At this stage, a 'Miss Fairbrother' was still a local resident and the two blocks of land at 18 – 20 Fern Avenue had been offered to the Unley Council by the Fairbrother family on the condition that the land would be used for community activities. Its purchase in 1965 was partly funded by a government Grant and was classified as Open Space under the Parklands Act.

## **1965 – 1997**

In 1985 a Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) project known as Action Youth Service was granted permission to use the land at 18 – 20 Fern Avenue for training purposes under the management of a Local Management Committee.

The aims of this program included:

1. To instruct young unemployed people, especially those most at risk, in basic horticultural practices and techniques.
2. To base this instruction on 'permaculture' principles.
3. To provide related training in the building of structures (such as raised garden beds) for use by the physically impaired, aged and people with mobility issues
4. To provide training in first aid, communication skill and self-employment practices.
5. To engage the wider community in order to increase awareness of the need to maintain/promote the health of the environment and the young people being trained.
6. To liaise with local council authorities to ensure that local regulations and community expectations were met.

The 12-week training programs were well received by the local community as well as communities beyond the Unley area. The training programs evolved over time according to the needs of the participants.

Upon the closure of CYSS at the end of 1988, the site was taken over by an enthusiastic group of community members.

In 1992 an incorporated body known as *Alternative 3 Incorporated* was formed to look after the site. Initially this was an unemployed peoples' support group, but it gradually evolved into a broader group of passionate gardeners.

## **1997 and onwards**

In seeking to further its work, Alternative 3 Inc. approached the City of Unley with a view to formalising the use of the property at 18 – 20 Fern Avenue as a community garden. In July 1997 a formal three-year lease was signed by Alternative 3 Inc and the City of Unley outlining the conditions for use of the property. The lease is renewed every 3 years. The garden management committee is responsible for maintaining appropriate Public Liability Insurance as well as Contents Insurance. The City of Unley accepts the cost of water usage up to 500KL per annum with Alternative 3 Inc being responsible for the cost of water in excess of this amount.

## **Archaeological Site**

The Fern Avenue Garden site was brought to the attention of the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University by the City of Unley in 1999 after remnants of walls, foundations etc were located on the site of the water feature on the south western corner of the property. Artifacts found on the site included the partial remains of a ship tank, a tessellated brick features that may have been a component of the floor of the original jam factory, a complete intact bone handled toothbrush, a brass earring and various items associated with the jam factory. It appears that the factory as well as orchards were supplied with water from a well 'at the corner where the creek turns into Windsor Street'. It is surmised that some of the factory machinery was thrown into the well when the factory was dismantled.

A total of 10 trench sites were excavated in the southwestern corner of the property covering approximately 300m<sup>2</sup>. A full discussion about the site dig is contained within the book "Money for Jam" that is located in the library in the straw bale house.