The form of houses built by Italian migrants in post-World War II Brisbane, Australia

Raffaello Furlan

B Arch (Hons), M Arch

IUAV - University of Venice

School of Environment
Science, Environment, Engineering and Technology
Griffith University, Brisbane-Australia

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Declaration of Originality

Thereby I declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, my own original work, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not previously been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other University.

By Raffaello Furlan

Principal Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Neil Sipe
Associate Supervisor: Dr. Chris Kynaston
Abstract

Dwellings stand as the concrete expressions of a complex interaction among cultural skills and norms, climatic conditions and the potentialities of natural materials (P.L. Wagner cited in Chandhoke, p. 70).

This thesis begins with an enquiry into the way the house is the physical expression of interacting cultural factors. Despite views emphasizing the determinant influence of culture on the house form, an investigation of the literature on architectural sociology reveals that, in the contemporary development of the built environment, the relationship between house form and human behaviour and/or activities, as manifestation of the users’ cultural needs, was treated as secondary.

This study provides a conceptual framework based on cross-cultural studies and architectural sociology to understand how first generation Italian migrants in Brisbane have influenced the form of a specific typology of dwelling, the archetypal ‘house on a quarter-acre block’, in the post WWII period, in response to cultural needs. Qualitative data collected from the testimonies of Italian migrants in conjunction with evidence left from four houses, were analysed to answer the research question: in what ways did Italian migrants influence the form of their houses built in Brisbane in the post WWII period, and what were the forces behind, and outcomes of, this influence?

The findings revealed that the architectural form of the house is influenced by the need to continue architectural traditions. The spatial form of Italian houses was influenced by socio-cultural factors and urbanization patterns. These are the lack of public urban spaces like a town square traditionally utilized by Italian migrants in their native built environment for performing social activities. This insight means that migration to another land represents a fundamental disruption of social activities and, in this regard, the spatial form of the house could be conceptualised as a means of re-establishing and enhancing social interactions.
Acknowledgements

The commencement and completion of this research project would not have been possible without the cooperation, guidance and support of a number of talented individuals with whom I had the privilege to work. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all of those who have made contributions to my research. First, my deepest gratitude goes to my thesis advisors who assisted and helped me to open my views and ideals on this study.

I especially wish to convey my sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Chris Kynaston, for setting the research strategy and direction from the beginning and for her insights and support. I proffer my deepest thanks to Assoc. Prof. Neil Sipe for his encouraging and valuable criticisms as the thesis writing progressed, for his continuous guidance and valuable assistance during the course of this project, for providing priceless and scrupulous editorial intervention regarding the contents, structure, completeness and consistency of this thesis. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Anthony Kelly who was extremely helpful in providing critical assessment of the structure and content of the work since the beginning. His enthusiastic encouragement and the challenging conversations we had during the research process were a constant source of motivation.

Three leading academic institutions provided invaluable support for the four years fieldwork: The Australian Catholic University provided the arena and funding in which to carry out the research, and arranged the link with the ‘Instituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia’ (IUAV - University of Venice) who provided research facilities in Venice; and Griffith University who allowed me to transfer my candidature and complete my PhD.

The academic and administrative personnel of all Schools have all helped to make it a pleasant and conductive environment in which to conduct research. Particular thanks and much appreciation are due to Carmel Ivers and Robina Bamforth for their precious and unique support and assistance in coordinating the Joint PhD programme between the two Institutions. A special thank to Carmen, for her endless enthusiasm, prompt assistance and for being always present to solve any bureaucratically issues. I also thank Prof. Giulio Ernesti, from the University of Venice, for helping to coordinate the Joint PhD programme between the two Institutions.
I am particularly thankful to all those people who helped me to find associations and respondents: Father Mauro, from the Scalabrignani Order in Brisbane, for pointing out the Tuscany club of Brisbane; Prof. Lindsay Farrell for creating an initial link and for putting me in contact with the management staff of Canossa hospital; Mr. Luciano Servadio, President of the Tuscany Club of Brisbane; and Sister Concetta Coppe, director of Canossa Hospital, an aged care facility for Italian immigrants, for helping me to select the people for my interviews.

This study was made possible because first generation Italian migrants were available to talk passionately about their life experiences. Their experiences highlighted how migrating to a new country was like ending a journey in order to start a new one. Migrants setting out on the journey to Australia brought with them a suitcase containing clothes, shoes and personal objects. In reality they carried with them much more than just handy objects: the wealth of knowledge, traditions, way of life and culture.

In order to understand their life experiences, participants were interviewed multiple times and, although it was anticipated that in-depth interviews were supposed to last for approximately one hour each, most exceeded this limit. With great enthusiasm, they all wanted to tell their own unique story: those diverse and personal stories deeply fascinated me. I really think that for nearly each one of them there would be enough unpublished material to write a book. However, even though participants had different life experiences in their Australian journey, I understood that for all of them there is a common factor which marked their experience as migrants. As Italian migrants stated on several occasions: ‘E’ stata una vita di grandi sacrifici’ (which translates as ‘It was a life of big sacrifices’).

I would like to thank all interviewees for two reasons: firstly, for sharing their views, providing answers to my questions, and for taking valuable time from their own lives to provide me with the information to enable this research to occur. Their stories represent the most precious part of a journey called a Ph.D.: each one provided invaluable anecdotal insights and greatly enriched my experience. I hope their testimony will be passed to future generations of any cultural group and will enable the public to better understand the hardships that Italian migrants experienced in their efforts to achieve a better life in Australia. Secondly, I thank them for their positive contribution to the wonderful fabric of Australia’s multicultural society, through many sacrifices, hard work, diligence, adaptation, and with inventiveness, strength and vigour.
Additionally, I would like to express the most gratitude to Australia, a young nation which gave Italian migrants the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions in a host nation. One must be reminded that, as it will be revealed through this research study, most Italian migrants migrated with the intention of making their fortune and returning to their homeland in a few years. Many realised they could build a better life for themselves and for their families in Australia. Here in Australia they built houses and raised families but, more significantly, they fulfilled their dreams. It must be proudly stated that these people migrating from Italy to Australia now call Australia their home. Thanks also to the Australians who gave them a chance to have a better life in Australia than in their own native country. My sincere thank you goes to the Australian people.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my wife, Laura, for her patience and understanding, and for providing me with unflinching emotional and practical support since day one. Thank you, Laura, for your immensurable encouragement during the intensive PhD journey which came into our lives.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Laura and to my son Simon Jonathan.

Ethical considerations

This project has received ethical clearance on the 4th of February 2008 from the Australian Catholic University’s HREC, after complying with the requirements laid out by the NHMRC (see Appendix C).
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1.1 The research problem

Architecture emerged from mankind’s need for shelter. It soon became a fundamental expression of technological skill and of spiritual and social objectives … it is a profound reflection of the complex motives of individuals and societies (Rogers & Gumuchdjian, 1996, p. 67).

The notion of architecture being highlighted by Rogers and Gumuchdjian is one that sees architecture as being a rich and multi-faceted discipline. Since its beginning, architecture had the primary purpose of creating shelter, shaped by employing natural materials and technological skills, in order to cater to key human needs. As societies developed and knowledge began to be formalised through traditions and practices, architecture went beyond the creation of a functional structure to incorporate aesthetic elements by manipulating texture, light and shadow. Inevitably, it also became an expression of the cultural factors of individuals and societies.

This notion of architecture is the same as that celebrated by Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (born c. 80-70 BC, died after c. 15 BC), the first Roman writer, architect and engineer to have written in this field. In his very earliest surviving and much-celebrated treatise on the subject, ‘De Architectura’ (translated as ‘The Ten Books on Architecture’), written in Latin and Greek and dedicated to the emperor Augustus, he declared ‘Firmitas’ (stability), ‘Utilitas’ (utility), and ‘Venustas’ (beauty) to be the three essential attributes of architecture (Morgan, 2005). Contemporary architectural theorists argue that architecture is always concerned fundamentally with three interrelated factors: it should stand up robustly and remain in good condition; it should be useful and functional; it should delight people and raise their spirits (Nöth, 1990, p. 436).

However, aside from the structural, the functional and the aesthetic (Nöth, 1990, p. 436), Vitruvius stressed the importance of culture which is fundamental to the field of architecture. In fact, we can see the significance of this element in how he defined architecture, ‘[Architecture is] … the art and science of designing buildings and structures, addressing aesthetics, function and cultural purposes.’ (Morgan, 2005, p. 68). Vitruvius’s classical view of the discipline is also shared by many contemporary researchers. Schoenauer stresses how cultural differences in users’ way of life can influence the built form.
Even at the primitive stage of human dwellings, the slight differences in cultural inheritance and way of life can bring about considerable changes in built form and the use of space (Schoenauer, 1992, p. 62).

Furthermore, Korllos stresses that the built environment as well as the built form provide the setting for human activity and, as a result, they both must also be considered as cultural products (Korllos, 1980, p. 247). Schoenauer and Korllos mention key terms such as built form and built environment which are recurrent throughout the dissertation. It is important then to define the meaning of these terms in the context of the research project. Built form refers to building types created to shelter, define, protect activity and be included in the built environment (Rogers & Gumuchdjian, 1996, p. 68). Built forms include houses and spaces that are defined and bounded but not necessarily enclosed, such as the uncovered areas in a compound, a plaza or a street (Lawrence & Low, 1990, p. 454). Lawrence and Low define the built environment as an abstract and multidimensional concept employed to describe the products of human building activity and it refers to any physical alteration of the natural environment through human construction (Lawrence & Low, 1990, p. 454).

It is clear that buildings have been seen as an expression of people’s and societies’ cultural factors since the early days of civilization and that the role of culture as a determinant factor in shaping the built form has also been acknowledged by modern theorists, scholars and practitioners. However as Ross (1991) stresses, the intense complexity of human motivation which has generated architecture is being neglected in contemporary architectural design. In his view, in the contemporary development and modernisation of the built environment, practitioners often ignore or fail to take into appropriate consideration the individuals’ specific needs which are an expression of culture.

Housing design should be an end result, not a starting point. A good design cannot be produced until one knows the users’ requirements, including their way of life, and the uses to which the building will be put (Ross, 1991, p. 137).

Also, Paul Oliver highlights how in the design of a housing project in Ghana, to be developed to allow the Gurundi and Tallensi tribespeople to resettle before their lands were engulfed by a lake formed by the Volta river dam, the way of life of the inhabitants was not given much consideration. Also he stresses the need to not ignore cultures in the design of housing.
The new housing which was designed for them was modern but I was shocked by the total lack of consideration for the existing way of life of the people, who were to be relocated in orws of dwellings reminiscent of war-time’ore’fabs’ (Oliver, 1997, p. vii).

The architect may design responsibly, but the process fails when he ignores the values, mores, building skills, experience and wisdom of the cultures whose housing needs are to be met. Housing that involves the active participation of the community, which accommodates its values, relates to its vernacular traditions while meeting its aspirations. That which retains or remains substantially as the housing of and by the people, is the housing most likely to succeed (Oliver, 2006, p. 408).

Ross and Oliver’s argument is shared by architects Richard Rogers and David Gumuchdjian (1996) who also argue that architecture, the multi-faceted discipline celebrated by classical theorist Vitruvius, nowadays often ignores its primordial roots that are based on cultural forces. They stress that with so much consideration of standards, regulations and accountability, along with the pressures inherent in the property market whose final goal is to simply minimise building costs and maximise profit, contemporary practitioners neglect to design spatial environments that respond to users’ specific needs (1996).

1.2 The disciplinary context

Due to the need to create contemporary spatial environments responding to users’ cultural needs or simply to humanize the built form, social researchers and practitioners pointed out the necessity of re-evaluating a theoretical cultural framework in the architectural design of the built form (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000). This approach aiming to humanize spatial environments is defined as humanistic in opposition to a ‘formalistic approach’ which focuses mostly on the appearance of buildings (Rogers & Gumuchdjian, 1996, p. 107; 2003, p. 7). The conceptualisation of the discipline of architecture based on a purely limited and narrow formalistic approach often adopted by contemporary practitioners has also recently been criticised by Bruno Zevi, an Italian critic of contemporary architecture and founder of the ‘Association for Organic Architecture’ in Italy. Zevi emphasises that the architectural design process adopted by modern practitioners when creating functional spaces, needs to further address the complexity of the society where buildings sit. He states:
Being a great designer is not enough in order to be a great architect. There is something more in order to become a great architect: the interest for the complexity of the society we live in (Zevi, 1948, p. 68).

In response to the recognition that much contemporary architecture, in its pursuit of economic and technological efficiency, has paid little attention to its human context, the last two decades of architectural studies have been marked by a renewed interest in the way designed built environments are related to users’ specific needs, which are expressions of culture as way of life. This triggered the birth of the ‘social design movement’, whose purpose was to create physical designed environments responding to occupants’ specific needs (1983, pp. 92-108). The social design movement prompted practitioners to become more sensitive to the human context of the designed built form. In the 1980s, researchers from various social sciences conducted extensive research and gained insights into the relationship between human context and designed physical environments. Notably, disciplines that emerged during this time include but are not limited to: (a) environmental psychology which is the study of the relationship between human thinking and the physical environment (Gifford, 2002); (b) environmental anthropology, which focuses on socio-cultural behaviour in specific environments (Crumley, Deventer, & Fletcher, 1998); (c) human ecology which examines how competition among groups within the urban environment caused residential and land use patterns (Hawley, 1986); (d) organisational ecology which investigates how the physical design of workplace organisations impacts workers, and work performances (Catton & Dunlap, 1978); (e) environmental sociology which focuses on the relationship between human behaviour and the natural environment; and finally (f) architectural sociology, a specialised field defined as the study of how human behaviour and/or activities, are projected onto the form of buildings, namely in space plan, interior design and external features (Smith & Bugni, 2003, p. 8).

Smith and Bugni (2006), who created a resource that addresses many aspects of the relatively new discipline of architectural sociology, argue that the designed physical space, ranging from macro-scale level built environment (big-scale cities) to micro-scale built form (small-scale buildings), influences and, at the same time, is influenced by the behaviour and/or activities of its occupants. Additionally, they state that it is virtually impossible for any human behaviour to reside outside of cultural influence, because behaviour and culture interact continually throughout development. Therefore, they emphasise that while the focus of investigation is the relationship between spatial environment and human behaviour, the role of culture must also be explored. More specifically, architectural sociologists argue that an analysis of human behaviour and/or activities can provide an understanding of how the users shaped the form of
their settings in response to specific needs which are an expression of culture as a way of life. Therefore, architectural sociologists aim to apply their theories and research methods to the architectural design process, with the purpose of creating designed physical environments responding to users’ specific needs or simply humanising them (Smith & Bugni, 2006).

*My own view is that architecture is a reflection of behaviour or the use of space which, in turn, is a reflection of culture; the use of space is the result of highly culture-specific and at times temporal-specific designs (Kent, 1997, p. 3).*

Architectural sociology is the most relevant discipline to the context of this study because the object of this study is to understand how the fulfilment of users’ needs, based on their cultural framework, had priority in the architectural design process of their houses, and consequently contributed to a humanization of the spatial environment.

### 1.3 The focus of the research

The literature reveals that in spite of a focus by architectural sociology on the relationship between human behaviour and/or activities and physical environments at any scale, ranging from built form to built environment, as two scholars emphasise, in the past the discipline has not given much attention to the investigation of micro-scale housing (Smith & Bugni, 2002b, 2002c, 2006). They stress that the architectural sociology field now contains a large body of findings relevant to job satisfaction, expression of emotion at work, space-design influence of organisational well-being, the impact of buildings on human behaviour in business, organisational-development and effectiveness. Social researchers have described how physical designed environments reflect managerial philosophies, while analysing how they subsequently impact on the participants, processes and outcomes of the organisation (Smith & Bugni, 2002c). Bugni and Smith (2003) have also highlighted how architectural sociologists in the past have mostly focused either on matters related to people and organisations that often involve workspace design, choice of furnishings, layout of work stations and location of conference and break rooms. As Handy (Handy, Boarnet, Ewing, & Killingsworth, 2002) highlights, the link between built environment and human behaviour has been of great interest to the field of urban planning, particularly to the subfield of urban design, zoning planning and transportation planning, which is the object of study of a discipline named urban sociology (Handy et al., 2002, p. 64).
This gap in the literature is also asserted by Amos Rapoport (1969, p. 5), who undertook extensive research, dating from as early as 1969, on the relationship between built form and culture, namely in a cross-cultural context (King, 1984, p. 4). In his pioneer work, Rapoport claimed that the interest in the way human behaviour and/or activities influence the form of domestic dwellings, the most typically vernacular building type, is frequently neglected by architects, sociologists and multi-disciplinary researchers, who are more interested in studying cultural preferences embedded in built form at a macro scale rather than a micro scale level (King, 1984, p. 6). Furthermore, as Rapoport states, the interrelationship of the built form and human behaviour and/or activities has not been extensively investigated in a cross-cultural vernacular housing context. In this setting, as Rapoport notes (1982a), vernacular houses built by their users in an alien built environment are referred to as ‘transnational houses’. Consequently, broadly this thesis endeavours to bridge the gap in the knowledge concerning the comprehension of the relationship between the form of buildings and cultural factors, and specifically in a detailed micro-scale context which is represented by vernacular houses, and to a ‘setting’ which is referred to as transnational houses (Poulsen & Lange, 1998; Rapoport, 1982a).

It is then important to provide a brief explanation of (a) the relationship between buildings and social-cultural factors and (b) the type of building which constitutes the topic of investigation. (a) As highlighted below by King, all buildings are produced as per societies’ social and cultural factors, which are changed and modified as per societies’ needs. This means that as needs in societies change, so building form changes: buildings serving the same function may have different forms in different societies at a different period of time.

Buildings result from social and needs and accommodate a variety of functions—economic, social, political, religious and cultural. Their size, appearance, location and form are governed not simply by physical factors (climate, material or topography) but by society’s ideas, its forms of economic and social organisation, its distribution of resources and authority, its activities, and the beliefs and values which prevail at any one period of time (King, 1984, p. 1).

... In this way, it might be possible to see how the ideas, values, beliefs, activities, relationships and forms of social organisation of particular institutions were related to the form and plan of particular buildings, and also to see how changes in institutions were reflected in changed building form (King, 1984, p. 10).
While architecture encompasses many different types of buildings, the focus of this study will be limited to vernacular architecture, and particularly to domestic dwellings which, as said, are considered to be the most typically vernacular building type (Rapoport, 1969, p. 5). The term ‘vernacular architecture’ represents all buildings designed and built by their users within a bounded cultural and traditional context, in opposition to building exemplars created by formally trained architects (Oliver, 2006, p. 143; Tilley, Keane, Kuchler, Rowlands, & Spyder, 2006, p. 230).

In his book called ‘House, Form and Culture’, Rapoport (1969) argues that the form of houses are related ‘to culture as a way of life, world view and form of social organisations’ (King, 1984, p. 4), where by culture it is meant ‘a group of people who have a set of values and beliefs which embody ideals and which are transmitted to members of the group through enculturation’ (Rapoport, 1984, p. 286). Specifically, Rapoport states that the form of the vernacular house is (1) the product of human beings’ culture, which acts as a dominant or primary determinant, and is (2) in turn modified and/influenced by architectural responses both to climatic conditions and to limitations of materials/construction technologies, which act as secondary determinants. As Rapoport argues:

> Primary determinants affect the way we behave and how we wish to behave, the clothes we wear, the books we read, the furniture we use and how we use it, the food we eat and how we prepare and eat it, and consequently the houses and settlements in which we live and how we use them. It is these influences that make it easy to identify a house or city as belonging to a given culture or subculture (1969, p. 85).

This view is shared by Oliver, who highlights that vernacular architecture is the reflection of two components, material and cultural, of its builders and occupiers. Oliver highlight that all cultures have distinctive and unique vernacular architecture traditions which are shaped by specific needs dictated by a way of life.

> Vernacular architecture generally embodies community values, and less evidently, may symbolize concepts of the cosmos, or acts as an analogue for the abstractions of belief. Thus, even a simple dwelling may reflect both the material and spiritual worlds of builders and occupiers (Oliver, 1997, p. xxii).
Over time, cultures have determined the buildings that will accommodate their needs, subsequent generations drawing upon their traditions and tempering them as changing circumstances warrant (Oliver, 2006, p. xviii).

Finally, vernacular architecture has been chosen because it is considered to be more autochthonous, spontaneous and authentic compared to that designed in a professional environment. Therefore, its form can be examined as evidence of the way the users influenced it in response to both specific cultural needs and physical factors.

...vernacular design will be considered here in terms of the insights it can provide about the relationship between culture and form. It will be used to to analyze a particular aspect of the relation of culture and built environment (Rapoport, 1984, p. 285).

Specifically, the main purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of vernacular architecture in a precise context. The research study focuses on the form of vernacular houses built in Brisbane in the post WWII period by first generation Italian migrants, namely upon the way the users influenced the form of their house in the attempt to fulfil their cultural needs and in response to physical factors.

A related concern of this research study is the extent to which building design and its spatial form, in its turn, influenced and is also influenced by the quality of social interaction. In relation to this topic, Rapoport highlights that it is the need of humans to meet, to share food and finally to have a private place which affects the form of the house or its spatial configuration. He points out the importance to investigate and understand patterns of behaviour, influenced by culture as a way of life, and which influence the house’s spatial form.

...humans who need places to meet, to share food, to have private territories, should have differentiated among spaces and places from earliest times.

...It is therefore imperative to consider man-environment interaction both through time and cross-culturally in order to trace regularities and patterns and also in order that any generalizations which are made might be valid (Rapoport, 1984, p. 284).
Built environments, in fact, have various purposes: to shelter people, their activities and possessions from climate, from human and animal enemies and from supernatural powers; to create a humanized, safe place in a profane and potentially dangerous world; to establish place; to stress social identity and indicate status; and so on. Socio-cultural factors in the broadest sense are thus more important than climate, technology, materials and economics in influencing built form. In any situation it is, of course, the interplay of all these factors which best explains the form of environments. No single explanation will suffice because environments, even apparently humble dwellings, are more than material objects or structures: they are institutions, basic cultural phenomena (Rapoport, 1984, p. 285).

Another scholar whose theories are a main point of reference for this investigation, Susan Kent (1990, p. 53), argues that the spatial form of vernacular houses, namely the distribution and use of space, is determined by variables of culture such as activities, which in her view individuals learn in their childhood.

The use of space is an integral part of every human being’s daily life. Every day, we make subliminal and conscious decisions concerning the occasions at which a diverse range of activities will be performed. Such decisions are based on the spatial patterning that is learned in childhood through socialization (Kent, 1984, p. 1).

Therefore, the extent to which the need to perform social activities influenced the spatial distribution of houses built by Italian migrants will be explored.

1.4 Research Question

The research project builds upon a small but a growing body of literature that seeks to explore the ways in which migrant groups influence the form of their vernacular houses in their host societies. The specific aim of the project is to use the insights of architectural sociology and cross-cultural studies to investigate the ways in which first generation Italian migrants in Brisbane have influenced the form of a specific typology of dwelling, the archetypal ‘house self-built (not renovated, refurbished or extended) on a quarter-acre block’, in the post-WWII period. This study takes in (1) the period of construction of the house, the reasons behind the decision to build the house in a specific period and its construction process; (2) the
architectural form of the house, namely the structure, the materials and construction
technique, the facade, (3) the spatial form of the house, namely spatial configuration and
utilization of space, and (4) the way it contributed to an enhancement of social interactions.
While the primary focus is upon the physical dwelling, attention will also be given to the
configuration and uses made of the land upon which the artefact stands, the garden areas, and
(4a) to the way the spatial configuration enhanced social interactions.

The central research question, then, is:

In what ways did post WWII first generation Italian migrants influence the form of their houses
built on a quarter-acre block’ or ‘single front block’ in Brisbane, and what were the forces
behind, and outcomes of, this influence?

To deal with this multifaceted question, a number of specific sub-questions will be addressed:

(a) When did Italian migrants build their own houses in Brisbane, why were their houses built
in a specific period and how did Italian migrants build their houses? (Chapter 5)

(b) What were the influences on the architectural form of the Italian migrants’ house, namely
on the artefact’s structure, materials and construction technique adopted for erecting the
building, and decorative features visible on the façade? (Chapter 6)

(c) What were the influences on the spatial form of the house, namely on the configuration
and utilization of domestic space? In particular, did these influences contribute to an
enhancement of social interactions? (Chapter 7)

1.5 Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

- To provide insight into the ways in which migrants influence the material
  environments of their host societies, with specific reference to the influence of Italian
  migrants on the form of their vernacular houses in Brisbane in the post WWII period;
- To help to bridge the important—but surprisingly much-neglected—gap between the
disciplines of Architecture and Sociology and thus foreground the ways in which (a)
human values and aspirations are embedded in buildings, (b) cultural needs, expressed
as human behaviour and/or activities influenced and is influenced by the built form and (c) the architectural aspects of buildings impact on the nature of human interactions;

- To explore the way in which architectural design may contribute towards the construction of a distinctive cultural identity;
- To explore, in particular, how architectural design can enhance social interactions;
- To capture the store of knowledge held by older Italian migrants, by their still standing artefacts before this knowledge is lost in time;
- To explore a historically significant process of Australian domestic architectural development and therefore contribute to knowledge of contemporary Australian society;
- To promote intercultural dialogue among the different cultural groups in order to preserve and protect the various socio-cultural factors preserved/embedded in the built environment which represent the national cultural heritage of Australia.

1.6 Chapters’ summary

This thesis is structured into nine chapters focusing on bodies of knowledge required for this study investigation, the design and the methods of the research, the empirical research, the analysis, the discussion of findings and its conclusions. The content of each following chapter is summarized below.

In chapter two the object of investigation which is vernacular and transnational houses and the interpretation of key-concepts embedded in the form of transnational houses were defined. The role of culture and the nature of the cultural variables which influence the development of the houses was outlined; the way houses and urbanization patterns are a setting enhancing social interactions was discussed. Finally, in this chapter I present a schematic conceptual framework for the exploration of the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their transnational houses in Brisbane.

Chapter Three reveals the research methodology that deals with the conceptual cultural perspective highlighted by the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. Following this, I present the case study strategy, the research methods employed in the research to collect data.
In Chapter Four the procedure for collecting and analysing the data is outlined. I discuss the criteria for the selection of the cases, the followed stages of the fieldwork and the procedure for collecting oral and visual data using a variety of methods. Then, I outline the interpretative approach used in order to interpret the data and the factors related to the position of the investigator which might influence the collection and analysis of the data.

In Chapters Five, Six and Seven the analysis of the collected data for their relevance to the research questions and I highlight key empirical findings and issues is shown. The period first generation Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane, the reasons behind, the way they influenced the form of their houses, and what were the forces behind this activity, and outcomes of, this influence is revealed in these three chapters.

In Chapter Eight I present the discussion of the findings for each category analysed. In presenting my own interpretations of the results, I point out agreements and disagreements between the data analysed in this study and that of others as outlined in the literature review.

In Chapter Nine I provide a summary of the findings and I discuss the arguments reflecting on my original aims highlighted through the literature reviewed and how the findings contribute to fill the gap in the body of knowledge. Finally, I highlight issues raised in this research project which lead to recommendations for further exploration and development of both theoretical and applied areas of research.

1.7 Conclusion

This first chapter has presented an outline of the thesis. The conceptual framework, the research problem, the disciplinary context, the literature review on which the research is based and the gaps that this study intends to fill were concisely described.
The research problem

Cultural framework

The need to re-evaluate a theoretical cultural perspective which has been neglected by practitioners, builders and developers in their architectural housing design process

The relationship between culture, expressed as human behaviour and/or activities, and built form

To reveal (1) how the fulfillment of users' needs based on their cultural framework have priority in the architectural design process of the users' houses and (2) how this knowledge can contribute to a humanizing of spatial environments

The disciplinary context

Architectural Sociology

Gap to be filled

(1) Domestic architecture (2) Houses built in a cross-cultural context

The object of investigation

Italian vernacular houses in Brisbane

Purpose of the discipline

To reveal how Italian migrants' cultural needs and (2) physical factors influenced the form of house, (3) and how the spatial configuration enhanced social interaction.

Research Question

In what ways did post World War II first generation Italian migrants influence the form of their houses built on a quarter-acre block or ‘single front block’ in Brisbane, and what were the forces behind, and outcomes of, this influence?

A better understanding of the way Italian migrants (1) applied a humanistic approach in the construction of their vernacular houses; (2) contributed to the development of the built environment in Brisbane; (3) influenced the spatial form of the house to enhance social interaction.

Diagram 1: The research problem, the disciplinary context and the object of investigation
2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the parameters of the research study, to establish a conceptual framework for an exploration of the topic under investigation and to address the research question. Therefore, in this chapter critical attention to basic narratives and to the theoretical resources found in the relevant literature will be outlined.

More specifically, the literature reviewed in this Chapter is divided into four major sections. In the first section I define key terms and terminology related to the physical field under investigation, namely building types identified as vernacular and transnational houses. Secondly, an examination of research studies undertaken on migrants’ housing experience in a host built environment reveals key-concepts and meanings which are embedded in the construction of transnational houses. In the third section, I discuss the literature, leading to an identification of studies, models supporting the topic under investigation and reviewing different interpretations of the inter-relationship of culture and vernacular houses. The last section reviews urbanization patterns, both in migrants’ native and host countries, which have an impact on the dwellers’ way of life, on the nature of social interactions and in turn on the spatial form of migrants’ houses.

A review of the literature on the concepts listed above will facilitate an understanding of the factors influencing the form of transnational houses. These insights will be crucial in drawing and defining in detail the areas and the topics for the design of the research study process and method. In turn, an examination of the empirical data collected for each area and topics will provide an answer to the research question.

2.2 Building types: vernacular and transnational houses

In the introduction of chapter one, while outlining the conceptual cultural framework neglected in architectural design, the scope of investigation of the discipline of architectural sociology and the gap that this study aims to fill, I introduced key terms in the context of the field under exploration for this study, namely vernacular and transnational houses. In this section I focus more explicitly on the definition of vernacular and transnational houses.

As mentioned in chapter one, Rapoport points out that vernacular houses are built in a more spontaneous way in comparison to high style buildings designed in a professional environment. Notwithstanding, he stresses that vernacular buildings are generally under-
studied in architectural theory, which is traditionally more concerned with investigating the
pure context of monuments, temples and generally macro-scale buildings which emphasizes
the skills and insights of visionary architects (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000). In his
view, while buildings belonging to the grand design tradition - such as macro-scale public
buildings built in a professional context to impress the population - represent the culture of an
elite, those of the folk tradition are ‘the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical
form of a culture, its need and values-as well as desires, dreams and passion of a people’
(Rapoport, 1969, p. 2) and therefore are much more closely related to the culture as a way of
life of the majority.

Rapoport’s view is shared by Asquith, Vellinga (2005) and Paul Oliver (1997) who states that
despite ‘at the close of the 20th century, it is evident that the majority of the peoples of the
world still live, works and worship in vernacular buildings’ (Oliver, p. xxii), the study of
vernacular architecture has been neglected in the past half century due to the interest of
historians to grand or elite design.

Grand or elite building has always received a measure of attention, if only because
historical works were written and read by those who built and inhabited the great
houses of the past and important historical decisions were taken in them. But the
builders of vernacular houses were in most parts of the world until the recent past
very nearly illiterate. They kept few records, and the social classes which stood
above them showed little interest in their lives or their lifestyles.

The persistent neglect by formal historians of vernacular architecture is easier to
explain than to excuse. The historian has traditionally been concerned with power,
its locus within the state and the balance of power between states. The humbler
classes have not, except on rare occasions, exercised power (Oliver, 1997, p. 46).

Furthermore, in his following definition Oliver highlights that vernacular architecture,
developed to meet the occupiers’ specific cultural needs, embodies community values and
reflects both the material and cultural view of its builders and occupiers.

Vernacular architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the
people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are
customarily owner- or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms
of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating the
values, economies and ways of living of the cultures that produce them (Oliver,
To which it could be added that ‘they may be adapted and developed over time as needs and circumstances change’ (Oliver, 2007, p. 14).

[Vernacular architecture] are constructed by communities to meet the specific needs of their respective ways of life. In varying degrees these all constitute parts of the vernacular architecture traditions, the diversity of the buildings being expressions of the differing demands and values of the cultures concerned (Oliver, 2006, p. xxi).

Finally, Oliver argues that if architecture can be defined as a language form, vernacular architecture can be defined as ‘the architecture language of the people’ with its ethnic, regional and local dialects (Oliver, 2006, p. 17).

Specifically, Rapoport defines as vernacular houses those artefacts (a) built by their users within a bounded cultural and/or traditional context and (b) whose architectural and spatial forms are determined by cultural traditions learnt by the users through history and then enduring for long periods. His definition highlights the importance of understanding the active role of the (a) users in the construction of the artefact and of (b) cultural traditions as a factor determining the overall form of the vernacular house. This is explained through his quote reported below:

The vernacular house, built by the average member of the group, has certain forms which are taken for granted and strongly resist change, because some societies tend to be very tradition oriented. This justifies the relationship between built forms and culture and, furthermore, the fact that these forms endure for a very long time. In a primitive society the model is uniform, being the dwellings all identical (Rapoport, 2000).

Furthermore, as stated above, Rapoport stresses the differences between vernacular and primitive built forms: he states that ‘primitive buildings refers to that produced by societies defined as primitive by anthropologists, while vernacular refers to pre-industrial, modern and present-day design’ (Rapoport, 1969, p. 4). Rapoport points out an aspect which is relevant to the purpose of this study: the process of construction which characterizes and differentiates primitive from vernacular architecture. While any member of the group has all the available technical knowledge to build a primitive building, in a vernacular context owners/users employ tradesmen for the construction of the building while being also a participant in the
design/construction process. Consequently he stresses that vernacular houses are cooperatively built by specialist tradesmen.

This insight suggests that in a primitive context all dwellings are basically identical and as a result this explains the relationship between culture as a way of life and the form of the house; in a vernacular context the form of the building, still influenced by its users/makers’ way of life, is subject to a more individual variability and differentiation than in a primitive context because of the involvement of tradesmen. Finally, Rapoport summarizes the characteristics of vernacular buildings as follow: (1) the result of the collaboration of many generations and of makers and users; (2) working within an idiom with variations; (3) a lack of theoretical and aesthetical pretension. In the diagram below, I summarize the differences among building types, as highlighted by Rapoport.

Diagram 2: Building types
In relation to the exploration of the typology of the house chosen for this study, namely the archetypal ‘house on a quarter-acre block’ built by Italian migrants, I will explore the theory that the artefact can be defined as a vernacular building type. In order to reveal this, I will investigate firstly, if the cooperative design and construction process was performed by a primary work group involving specialist tradesmen and a secondary non-professional group represented by the users, the extended family members, relatives and friends who were not professionals; secondly, if the form of the house is shaped in response to an idiom adjusted and adapted as the user and the maker proceed and therefore if architectural and spatial forms are determined by cultural traditions based on users’ history; thirdly if the physical model is characterized by a simple design lacking in theoretical and aesthetical pretence.

In addition to Rapoport’s architectural approach to the study of vernacular architecture, Oliver highlights the need to co-ordinate multiple approaches to the study of the discipline. Specifically, he summarises a number of approaches which can benefit to the objective study of the discipline: aesthetic, anthropological, archaeological, architectural, behavioural, cognitive, etic/emic, conservationist, developmental, diffusionist, ecological, evolutionary, folkloristic, geographical, historical, museological, phenomenological, spatial and generative-transformational (Oliver, 1997, p. 1). The behavioural approach is of particular relevance because of the nature of this study aiming to study the relationship between human behaviour and built form. Oliver stresses that all built environments, at any scale, are a reflection of behaviour and as a consequence the study of people behaviour can help to understand spatial decisions.

Like all built environments vernacular one exist to contain, support and guide behaviour. However, although one can thus distinguish the built environment from behaviour, in order fully to understand any built environment people and their behaviour must be considered (Oliver, 1997, p. 16).

Besides, Rapoport emphasizes the relationship between vernacular houses and variables of culture such as cultural traditions, in a context where those who create the built form have a common cultural framework with those who occupy and use the built form. This suggests that Rapoport’s theory, applicable in a vernacular architectural context, where the resultant built forms are designed and built by the users of the built form who share a particular cultural frame, can also be applied when a migrating cultural group is involved in the creation of its own living environment while cohabiting under a different dominant framework (Miller, 1994, p. 321). As a result, Rapoport defines vernacular houses built by migrants in a host country as
transnational houses. As he also highlights, transnational houses, representing the location of most of the interaction between the members of migrant families, adopt or change local vernacular built forms to accommodate migrants’ needs and to respond to migrants’ cultural frames. Therefore, as Rapoport stresses, the form of transnational houses can also be considered to be a physical manifestation of the culture of the users (Rapoport, 2000, p. 129). Finally, according to Rapoport’s theory, houses built by migrants in a host environment can be defined as transnational if the form of the artefact is the result of changed local vernacular built forms which have been adopted to accommodate migrants’ social and cultural needs.

The focus on immigrant houses involves the use of terms and concepts which will occur throughout the study; therefore it is necessary to define them before continuing. The term ‘migrant’ can be understood as ‘any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born … born of foreign parents’ (Poulsen & Lange, 1998). As mentioned, migrants’ vernacular houses in a host built environment are defined as transnational houses. As a result of this phenomenon, the emergent field of transnational studies, or transnationalism, broadly refers to multiple interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states and it focuses on contemporary socio-economic, political and cultural processes which span international boundaries (Noussa, 2004, p. 60).

According to Lewin (2000), social and cultural backgrounds can have a great influence on the meanings assigned to the concept of transnational houses. He points out that these meanings among migrants can be developed as a mix between the culture deriving from the native country and the culture assimilated in the host country. This is an important insight to be considered: before building their own houses, Italian migrants interviewed lived in Australia within a different cultural context for a few years and occupied existing housing designed and built by Australians. This suggests that migrants’ behaviour can be questioned and influenced while living in a society with a different culture. Therefore the exposure to a new culture or way of life experienced outside the country of origin can also cause a change of culture as a way of life (Somerville, 1997).

This aspect is also emphasised by Sam and Berry, who highlight the fact that migrants’ culture connected to their origin may change in order to settle in a new society and to become integrated into the new culture: integration is defined as a process occurring when there is both an interest to maintain the culture of origin while being open to interactions with the dominant-cultural group (Sam & Berry, 2006). As a result, immigrants can split between two
different cultures: the culture of origin—former country—and the one of the present—new country. This division hypothesis is also supported by a number of key theorists. For instance, Barrett (1991, p. 59) notes that the culture behind a migrant group is not static but rather dynamic, flexible and mutable; the group adapts and adjusts its way of life as it become accustomed to a different socio-cultural context. As Lydon (1999, p. 91) highlights, alterations in a way of life are reflected in the artefacts or physical culture that people actively create and make use of.

In conclusion, I argue that living in a host country and in a different cultural context such as the Australian one could also have influenced Italian migrants’ way of life. More specifically, Italian migrants’ way of life can be interpreted as a mix between the culture deriving from the native country, Italy, and the one assimilated in the host nation, Australia. This suggests that the form of their transnational houses can also have been influenced by cultural needs learnt in the native country and by a way of life which has potentially changed and developed since their arrival in Australia. Through this study I aim to investigate the extent to which (1) Italian migrants’ vernacular houses were the resultant of changed local vernacular built forms adopted to fulfil specific cultural needs and (2) how the form of the house was influenced by a way of life which inevitably may have changed and/or developed by living in a host cultural environment.

2.3 Transnational houses and migrants’ cultural needs

As highlighted in the previous section, before building their transnational house in a host country, migrants resided in their native country in houses built by their ancestors and then in a host country in houses built by locals. This means that the form of past houses can also have had an impact on migrants’ human behaviour and/or activities, way of life and ultimately culture, and as a result on the form of present transnational houses built by migrants. In this section I give attention to interpretations from scholars about the way the form of transnational houses is influenced by migrants’ housing experience, both in the homeland and in the host land, prior to construction of their houses, and how key concepts and meanings are embedded in the construction of transnational houses. My argument is that both an investigation and understanding of the form of houses where migrants resided before the construction of their artefacts will allow the implementation of a conceptual framework for the analysis of the empirical data for this study.
An important aspect for the purpose of this section is the one investigated by Thomas (1997), who investigated the way Vietnamese migrants configured their houses in Australia in comparison with the one in their homeland. He stressed how Vietnamese migrants attempted to adapt the spatial form of the house they lived in to their conception of the house they lived in their homeland. This is also envisioned by Rapport and Dawson (1998), who stress that the vernacular house is a mobile habitat which is subject to change and which cannot be perceived as a fixed physical structure, and by Kent, who argues that the users tend to distribute the domestic space to perform activities which are developed during childhood.

The use of space is an integral part of every human being’s daily life. Every day, we make subliminal and conscious decisions concerning the occasions at which a diverse range of activities will be performed. Such decisions are based on the spatial patterning that is developed in childhood through socialisation (Kent, 1984, p. 1).

These insights suggest that this perception of the house as a habitat open to changes may strengthen migrants’ desire to build and distribute their own new houses in the host country according to their past housing experience, to enhance the feeling of familiarity. Therefore, the construction process is seen as a way to create a tangible linkage between a migrant’s present dwelling and their desired past house. Inevitably the new transnational house built in the host built environment can become a place of memory.

In addition to this view, Blunt (2003, p. 717), in his analysis of houses belonging to Anglo-Indians in McCluskieganj, Bihar, in the 1930s, highlights that this cultural group constructed and shaped their houses through nostalgic practice, where the house exposed a sort of attachment to both India and Britain. Consequently, I argue that the transnational house can be interpreted as a place of memory shaped through nostalgic practice whose purpose is to enhance a sense of familiarity. This is also supported by Malouf:

First houses are the grounds of our first experience … and who is to say if our notions of space and dimension are not determined for all time by what we encounter there, in the particular relationship of living-rooms to attic and cellar … of inner rooms to the verandas that are open boundaries? (Malouf, 1986).

The possibility of interpreting the form of the house in response to the need of creating (1) a place of memory shaped through a nostalgic practice in attempting to enhance a sense of
familiarity suggests the potential for an approach to analyze the spatial form of transnational houses built by Italian migrants’ in Brisbane.

In addition to this interpretation, Depres (1991), in her studies of transnational houses, emphasises that cultural groups interpreted the house as a place of refuge - reminding migrants of their origins - and a place allowing migrants to go back to the traditional activities they used to perform before emigrating. In his paper, Gordon Young discusses the the impact of a group of German settlers in South Australia. Young investigates the way of life brought from the native country which inevitably influenced the spatial distribution of their houses.

The hall-kitchen house (Flurkuchenhaus) predominated. Here, as you entered through the front door you would be confronted with a kitchen in which not only the family meals were prepared but where pork products of all kind were manufactured. Hams and sausages were hung from walls and ceilings to cure in even temperatures (around 20°C), whilst elaborate devices were employed for smoking these products either in the house cellars, or loft spaces, or in external smohouses. Some of the extensive cellars under these German houses were used for the preparation and storage of dairy products or for the production of wine for which the Germans soon became famous (Young, 1985, p. 43).

Following these insights, I will also investigate the extent to which Italian migrants’ past housing experience has influenced the shape of their new houses in their host environment with the ultimate purpose of fulfilling the need to create (2) a place of refuge reminding migrants of their origins and (3) allowing migrants to go back to the activities traditionally performed in previous spatial environments.

Important, the review of the literature reveals that the form of the transnational house is also influenced by a social factor: family. The role of the family as related to house ownership is highlighted by Vasta (1991, p. 171) in his transnational studies, as he points out that generally for Italian migrants, the family was at the apex of their hierarchy of values. As a result, he points out that, for Italian migrants, settling down in Australia was important in the context of having the (4) family united and settled with a roof over their heads. In her studies into transnational houses, Depress (1991) reveals that transnational houses are interpreted as a place where migrants established a (a) close-knit family, and (b) where they tend to spend more time than the dominant group. In a more economic context, Pulvirenti (2000, p. 237) notes that Italian migrants in Melbourne had the highest home-ownership rates of all
birthplace groups. She also points out how housing was of great significance to this cultural group, who, in her view, once they disembarked in Australia, had paramount the wish to settle down permanently. Furthermore, she stresses that home ownership was not only a way of investing income, it was a symbol of the ‘sacrifices’ made for the family, and of the success achieved in Australia (Pulvirenti, 2000, p. 247). Also Troy (2000) and Harris (1999) highlights that in the past century European Australian built distinctive form of houses in the major Australian cities and that home ownership in Australia has always been at a high level. In his view, home ownership helps migrants to reinforce the feeling of egalitarian nature of Australian society and to reflect their wealth and self-image. In his words, ‘houses reflect the aesthetic and other values of their occupants’ (Troy, 2000, p. 4) and the house is the reflection of the way the users project ourselves within the society. In his study of houses built by British working-class in Melbourne, Davison highlight the new sense of privacy and proprietorship and how users self-helped and cooperated in the construction of the house enhancing a sense of community, safety, family privacy and private ownership (Davison, 2000, p. 13).

*What the immigrants sought, and what their homeland often denied, was domestic independence. Freedom from the neighbours, freedom from the landlord, freedom from the boss: these, as much as the moral, aesthetic, sanitary and social ideals of the ideal English middle class, were the homeland dreams on which the Australian home was founded (Davison, 2000, p. 20).*

These studies highlight the role of the family as a factor which influences the decision to own a house. Thus, the transnational artefact can be interpreted as a manifestation of the unity and economic success of the family. In conclusion, I will investigate whether Italian migrants in Brisbane wished to settle permanently on arrival in Brisbane in order to have a united family and the extent to which the form of their houses is the manifestation of family unity and economic success.

Furthermore, while scholars provide an interpretation of the spatial form of transnational houses, other scholars extend the argument to the architectural form of transnational houses, in particular to the façade. For instance, Jacobs (2006, p. 180) is concerned with the relationship between migrants’ past and the current architectural form of the houses. Through an analysis of architectural features within the current generation of migrants’ houses, Jacobs shows how migrants attempt to emulate decorative elements present in their past houses with the purpose of feeling at home in their new constructions and in the host country built environment. Moreover, in her study focusing on Italian migrants houses’ architectural style,
as Baldassar (2002, pp. 84-85) highlights, Italians migrating from Treviso (San Fior) to Perth, Western Australia, built the façade of their houses in the architectural style of houses built in Treviso, and therefore were influenced by (6) architectural elements learnt in their native country. Borgo and Boyd showed that Italian migrants in Carlton, Melbourne, built their own houses in an ‘Italian-style’ and they decorated the houses with Italian statues and materials like marble (Azriel, 2010, p. 51; Borgo, 2006, p. 2; Boyd, 1987, p. 51). Apperly, Irving and Reynolds discuss how, in the 1960s, Italian migrants built their houses with a distinctive style named ‘Victorian Italianate’ (Apperly, Irving, & Reynolds, 1989, pp. 70-73). They state that in the 1950-60s Italian migrants purchased terrace or small Victorian and Edwardian-style cottages in inner suburbs. Afterwards the exteriors and interiors of these houses were renovated and modernised according to their interpretation of the way an Italian house should look.

Exterior walls were painted with cheerful colours, porches were repaved with tiles, wrought-iron friezes were removed from the front porch and picket or wrought-iron fences were replaced with rendered concrete or exposed bricks. Columns and posts decorated the exterior, and front porches were decorated with flowers grown in pots. Pergolas were built in backyards which were usually reserved for cultivation of vegetables, grapes and olive plants. Interiors were also transformed from the dark wooden Victorian style to become light-filled and minimalist. Wooden floors were replaced with tiles or linoleum, aluminium window frames replaced timber sash windows and windows were protected with roller-shutters that were unfamiliar to local homes at that time (Azriel, 2010).

Willingham states that with the renovation of their houses in Melbourne, Italian migrants followed a ‘Mediterranean Idiom’. In the quote below, he provides a description of the ‘Mediterranean Idiom’.

The Mediterranean idiom or sub-style in housing in Melbourne is characterised firstly by the heavily modified façade of suburban housing in the inner suburbs, and then by the grandiose pseudo-Italianate villas erected on standard building lots in the outer suburbs in the late twentieth century (Willingham, 2004, p. 473).

Apperly, Irving and Reynolds also explained that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Italian migrants built their houses with the idea of expressing their success in a new country and also to show architectural elements they learnt from their native country. This style is defined as
‘Nostalgic’ (Apperly et al., 1989, pp. 270-271). A detailed portrayal of this house is explained below:

[It] was two-storied and symmetrical, with central external stair and verandah edged with bulbous Baroque balusters of precast concrete. The front elevation featured walls of buff or brown face brickwork pierced by large arched openings.

Consequently, I argue that not just the spatial form, but also the architectural form of transnational houses can be interpreted in relation to previous housing experience, or as a manifestation of memory shaped through nostalgic practice. In relation to this research study, this suggests the importance of investigating the extent to which the architectural form of transnational houses, namely the decorative features on the façade, was influenced by traditional architectural elements learnt by migrants through previous housing experience both in their native and host countries. In conclusion, in the diagram below, I list the meanings and/or key concept embedded in transnational houses revealed through a review of the literature. These meanings will be explored in relation to Italian transnational houses built in Brisbane. In the diagram below, I summarize scholars’ interpretations of the way the form of transnational houses is influenced by specific needs.

Diagram 3: Transnational houses’ meanings

Also, scholars revisit meanings embedded in the Australian vernacular house in a garden which contribute to improve human life and well-being. In particular, Freestone stresses how the back yard was integral to the house and to its ownership. While the private back yard is interpreted not just as an investment but as a manifestation of autonomy and freedom, the front yard is both a zone of display and social contact, a semi-public space which gives personality to the property. Freestone also highlights that the function of the backyard have changed through time in response to the growth of public infrastructure, cultural needs and
changes and that the maintenance of the front garden in particular helped to enhance a sense of community for the tenants (Freestone, 2000).

The garden provided ‘direct contact with nature’, opportunities for healthy outdoor activity, and even a return to agrarian ideals. In one sense it was the yeoman idyll in a suburban setting, and the desire for a well-kept garden setting was said to be ‘in the soul of evry individual’ (Freestone, 2000, p. 132).

The maintenance of front gardens was vital in order to attain the coherence of the garden suburb street picture, which secured a demonstrable sense of community. This was pursued by moral imperative, if not by government policy (Freestone, 2000, p. 133).

With a little labour and care, a back yard can be transformed, in one short year, into a veritable fairyland of brightness, where children may play and learn to love the flowers, the foliage and the bright sunshine. There is nothing more indicative of bad living than a back yard littered with bottles, pots, tins and other rubbish. It reflects also upon the neighbours as being careless and uninterested in the health and welfare of the community. The effects of untidy back yards must have a very bad effect upon the minds of young. In times of reverse and through days of bitter trouble, the garden always offers solace and pleasure. It also brings cheer and adds brightness to the declining days of the aged (Freestone, 2000, p. 134).

As Holmes argues, the role of the garden can be extended to the transnational house where garden become a metaphorical place and where the embedded meanings can be both personal and cultural.

For their owners and creators, gardens form an expression of creativity: a space invested with dreams and fantasies, where plants can evoke memories of other places and people, where desire and pleasure and skill can bring about the transformation of a desolate landscape into a secluded oasis, and where an immigrant people can create expressions of permanence and belonging (Holmes, 2000, p. 165).

Also scholars like Dingle, Greig, O’Callaghan, Harris and Larkham defining the 1950s’ Australian dream as the wish for all immigrants to own a suburban house on a quarter acre block, argue
that since the Second World War most Australians preferred this option as the reflection of the Australian way of life (Dingle, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Greig, 1995; R. Harris & Larkham, 1999; O'Callaghan, 1993). More specifically, in the 1950s the huge number of migrants arriving from Europe forced the Australian government to create new communities in the outer suburbs of the major Australian cities. This meant that the vast majority of commission cottages were located in social and physical isolated areas, over an hr from the city, far from public transport and with no facilities such as shops, schools, hospitals or recreational facilities (O'Callaghan, 1993, p. 119). People were encouraged to move away from established living areas and to establish new communities. It became popular to transform an attractive piece of ground in front of the house into a garden of beauty and to display it as a manifestation of horticultural achievement. O'Callaghan discusses how the 1950s houses were marked by a combination of new do-it-yourself garden and horticultural display trends. Australian gardens became numerous and very much diversified in comparison to the previous decade.

The rapidly spreading suburbs in the major cities began the trend (which continues to this day) of subdivided green fields on which were imposed first, house, and then their gardens, as Robin Boyd so pitilessly described in Australia’s home. Most of new gardens were created by young couples who were at the age and stage to know little of gardening, and not much documentation remains of such gardens, save in the order books of the small suburban nurseries where the plants were bought (O'Callaghan, 1993, p. 136).

The role, configuration, utilization and meanings embedded in the gardens of houses built by Italian migrants in Australia will also be investigated.

2.4 A cultural framework for vernacular spatial environments

In the introduction of chapter one, I pointed out that, in his book ‘House, Form and Culture’ (1969), Rapoport stresses that the form of the vernacular house is primarily determined by human beings’ culture and secondarily modified by physical factors. The specific focus of this section is to review the literature outlining the meaning of the key term ‘culture’, which occurs throughout the dissertation, its relationship to spatial environments, how physical culture is related to social class and finally how spatial traditions and physical factors influence the built form.
2.4.1 Culture and physical culture

Culture is a broad and abstract concept defined by Emily Dickinson (Cited in Johnson, 1960) as the sharing by a group, or more broadly a society, of a common system of standards, meanings, language, manners of relating and interacting, behaviour or way of life based on common history and tradition. Moreover, as Howard and McKim highlight in their quotation below, culture is learning or gaining knowledge: every individual learns from the social environment how to think, speak and behave.

_Culture is the customary manner in which human groups learn to organize their behaviour and thought in relation to their environment (Howard & McKim, 1983, p. 5)._  

Hall, Howard and McKim also stress that the knowledge of a culture is acquired by a sharing process of a cultural frame which a social group has in common (Hall, 1966, p. 172; Howard & McKim, 1983, p. 6). Besides, as stressed by Marcus (1995, p. 94), ‘a cultural frame refers to an interpretive grid, meaning system or schema. It consists of language and a set of tacit social understandings, as well as of the social practices that reflect and enact these understandings in daily life’. The concept of ‘culture’ and ‘cultural frame’ explained above provide a useful basis for understanding how people make sense of the world by sharing commonalities, such as language, behaviour and more generally a way of life, based, as said, on history and tradition.

**Diagram 4: The interpretation of the concept of culture**

The knowledge of a culture is acquired via a complex process. The sharing of culture comes through interaction, and conventional interaction is made possible when people have values and attitudes in common. If people do not share common values and beliefs, then distorted communication between them may occur and lead to misunderstandings (Hall, 1966, p. 172; Howard & McKim, 1983, p. 6). Furthermore, Howard and McKim stress that all of the influences and experiences in a person’s life contribute to the construct of the cultural frame.
This suggests that culture is acquired by a sharing process of a cultural frame which is not just statically based on common history and tradition. The cultural frame is dynamic: it changes and develops as per the individuals and the group experiences.

The literature revealed that scholars and researchers point out that culture is conceptualised as existing in both cognitive and physical dimensions. (1) Rapoport suggests that environmental influences affect the way people think, behave and act, and that this can be detected in the spatial and constructed arrangements of their milieu: physical and cognitive behaviour have a cultural framework. In his words: ‘Culture is ultimately translated into form through what people do as a result of what is in their heads and within the constraints of their situation’ (2000, p. 162). (2) Harris (1984, p. 32) stresses that ‘Culture encapsulates a person’s way of life and everything one thinks and feels, and how one behaves or represents thoughts/feelings in a social and spatial environment’. The view of culture extends to the way in which a social group represents itself through a spatial environment or its physical artefacts. This material aspect of culture is reproduced through mechanisms that are also part of culture; the design and construction of buildings, its characteristics, mirror the commonalities of a culture as a whole.

(3) Chapman (2005, pp. 18-57) emphasizes how historic evidence suggests that the human species developed with a materialistic-physical orientation: people share the need for a material world – physical, tangible objects – which provides a means for people to engage with the world on both rational and emotional levels. In this regard, Chapman refers to the numerous findings of archaeologists indicative of the prehistoric origins of material culture, such as cave paintings, tools, body adornment and other material artefacts. Objects are ‘…seen as an embodiment of meaning and it is from this perspective that they have to be designed’. He also states that ‘even earlier versions of our present selves may have developed some form of material culture which has shaped strong emotional attachments to material possessions’ (2005, p. 59). The reference here is to the objects that people purchase, make and use, as these have a symbolic and affective connection to the person’s status. Such objects serve to generate (1) a sense of belonging to a culture that is beyond the need for survival and sustenance, and also objects are (2) expressions of meanings and/or specific needs (Gamble, 2001, p. 101).

(4) Csikszentmihalyi, Rochberg-Halton and Arvidsson (1981, pp. 1-24) share this view of culture: they argue that people make common sense of the world by social interaction and also by interacting with things or objects. They add that when an object has a ‘meaning’ to
someone, then it is interpreted in the context of past experience, either consciously or
unconsciously in the form of habit. The development of things in a (3) cultural tradition means
that people can compare their actions with those of their ancestors. People can share common
values and beliefs, or more generally culture, through interaction with objects (Arvidsson,
2006, p. 75).

These are important insights for the study of how a cultural frame extends to the way in which
Italian migrants represent themselves through the architectural and spatial form of their
houses. These insights reveal the importance of analysing the form of the house, generally as a
sense of (1) belonging to a culture, (2) as expression of meanings or needs, (3) habit and
traditions which people share through interaction with past housing experiences.

Moreover, as Rapoport highlights, the relationship between culture and physical environments
can also be expressed in response to human behaviour. He points out the importance of
exploring and ‘understanding patterns of behaviour which is essential to the understanding of
built form, since built form is the physical embodiment of these patterns. Forms, once built,
affect behaviour and way of life’ (Rapoport, 1969, p. 16). Also, Howard and McKim
conceptualise culture as ‘the customary manner in which human groups learn to organize their
behaviour and thoughts in relation to their environment’ (1983, p. 5). This perspective suggests
that cultural patterns or commonalities are manifested in spatial behaviour through the
creation of spatial environment, and finally that spatial environments are designed to
encompass human behaviour. Additionally, Rapoport (2000, p. 162) states that human
activities are direct expressions of culture as a way of life. This is also supported by Inglis, who
states that ‘Culture is the result primarily of human activities, rather than wholly the product of
nature’ (2005, p. 10). What this suggests is that human behaviour, activities and spatial
environment are joined by a cultural frame.
The relationship between built form and culture can be expressed in a number of different ways: as a symbolic representation of a culture’s beliefs and practices, in response to spatial activities which are framed by cultural institutions, or by a combination of both symbolic and spatial structuring. It is important to recognise, however, that built form also influences culture, expressed as way of life, human behaviour and/or activities; it is a two-way reflective relationship (Rapoport, 2000). For example, a person’s experience of different physical environments and cultures can subconsciously and consciously affect how they interpret their own environment. If an environment inhibits a preferred cultural practice it might be seen as a vehicle for cultural change or adaptation. This suggests that physical environments are influenced by a cultural frame which is developed through past spatial experiences.

Hence, the point of this current study is to explore the extent to which Italian migrants have modified the form of their houses, expressed through their architectural and spatial form as well the configuration and uses of the yards, in the light of the cultural frame that formed them. Therefore, the insights from Rapoport, Howard and McKim, highlighting the relationship between built form and human behaviour and/or activities, as expression of culture and way of life, help (1) to understand the role of human behaviour and/or activities as a determinant factor in the shape of a spatial environment (2) and to construct a conceptual framework for the exploration of the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses.

If the theorists listed above identified human behaviour and/or activities as determinant cultural factors in the shape of the house, I stress the importance of investigating the relationship between these cultural factors and the form of houses built by Italian migrants through what Vygotsky defines as the most sensitive indicator of relationship between an
individual and a social group and the vehicle to share and acquire a cultural frame and the
cognitive skills of a specific group: language (Vygotsky, 1978). He stresses that a social group’s
language, its inflections, and range of vocabulary reflect a set of embedded commonalities.
Though language in some obvious sense conserves inherited meanings and values, it is also the
means to name and negotiate new challenges as they arise and to educate its users in new
cognitive and practical new skills. It is at once a socio-cultural product and in its life-shaping
capacity, transmitting memories from the past and opening the way to the future. In an
everyday context, people use language to express, embody and to symbolize a cultural frame
(Kramsch & Widdowson, 1998). Also, as Dickson emphasises, ‘Culture is the product of socially
and historically situated discourse communities that are to a large extent imagined
communities, created and shaped by language’ (Emily Dickson, cited in Johnson, 1960). This
suggests that the role of language is crucial to the aim of this study. Specifically, in this thesis I
argue that for anyone aiming to explore the influences of first generation Italian migrants’
culture on the form of their houses, it is essential to speak the native language of the
immigrant group concerned if its cultural frame is to be explored, understood and analysed.

In summary, in this section I reviewed theoretical approaches right to the definition of culture
itself. I discussed the theory that standing structures, namely houses, can be interpreted as an
expression of culture. I outlined the need to explore behavioural patterns and/or activities,
which are expression of culture, in order to understand the way users shape spatial
environments. Finally I highlighted the crucial role of language as a tool of investigation.

2.4.2 Social status and culture

As highlighted in the previous section, the sharing of culture comes also through interaction
with things, which in turn can shape the identity of the maker and user of objects. I also
stressed that, in this perspective, the development and use of things for utilitarian purposes
also operates within the symbolic province of culture (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton,

In Inglis’s (2005, p. 5) words...‘this means that someone brought up in one socio-cultural
context could respond to a particular thing or situation in a manner somewhat or indeed very
different from someone brought up in another socio-cultural context.’ In other words, the
specific ways in which societies do things can vary from one society to another and from one
cultural context to another. Hence, the point of this study is to explore the extent to which
Italian migrants have modified domestic building design in the light of the culture and society
that formed them. Following Inglis, and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1992, p. 3), it is
accepted that culture, along with social status and educational background, is manifested within the objects we build and live in.

More specifically, according to Bourdieu’s theories (1990), in modern Western societies, class-based groups can be divided into 3 distinct classifications: (1) the working class, associated with job categories such as skilled and unskilled manual workers; (2) the lower middle class, associated with job categories such as primary school teachers and nurses and (3) upper middle class, associated with job categories such as lawyers, university professors and other high-status professionals. For Bourdieu, each of these classes possesses its own ‘habitus’ - a set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour - and more specifically its own ways of doing things such as eating, drinking, walking or talking. Bourdieu considers that individuals are the product of a given class-culture; and this helps to understand that the choices and behaviour of a particular group is not reducible to biologically determined features.

While Bourdieu’s emphasis is on class, it is important to point out that this topic has a symbolic value applied to ethnic groups as well. The term ‘ethnic group’ is defined by Boal (2001) as a ‘collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements as the epitome of an ethnic group’. In the context of this study, first generation Italian migrants to Australia can be defined as an ethnic group sharing a cultural frame— or simply, as a cultural group. The notion of ethnicity is essential to the study of the Italian character of migrants’ houses, because the cultural history of Italian migrants must have influenced, at least to some extent, the stylistic and functional features of Italian houses in Brisbane.

Given this perspective, it is inevitable, then, that the form of a house is also replete with broader cultural significance: architectural works or artefacts can be perceived as cultural expressions of an ethnic group or of a collectivity, and more specifically of a sub classed-based group. As a result, in relation to the object of this study, I point out the need to take Italian migrants’ culture and their social context into account, since, as outlined by Pierre Bourdieu, the concept of culture is closely related to social class.

2.4.3 Physical factors and spatial traditions

Lawrence and Low point out that while a few scholars have placed emphasis on the built form as being mainly determined by the social groups’ culture as a way of life, others have argued that built form is primarily determined by design and construction technology, which
indigenous builders adapt to material and climatic conditions (Lawrence & Low, 1990, p. 458).

This view is contrasted by Rapoport. As he states below:

> Once the identity and character of a culture has been grasped, and some insight gained into its values, its choices among possible dwelling responses to both physical and cultural variables become clearer. The specific characteristic of a culture—the accepted way of doing things, the socially unacceptable ways and the implicit ideals—need to be considered since they affect housing and settlement form (Rapoport, 1969, pp. 46-47).

Rapoport and Oliver argue that history has shown how building forms cannot be understood merely by reference to climatic conditions, availability of materials, technology and biological needs. Critically, in their view materials and construction techniques can facilitate and make possible certain decisions about the form but they cannot determine or provide fully an explanation of the nature and diversity of the form to be built; it is the subtle influence of cultural forces that may affect the way people behave, and consequently the houses and settlements in which users live and the way users use them (Oliver, 2006, p. 143; 1969, p. 85; 1982a). They concludes that physical factors are treated as modifying factors rather than determinants of the form, because they do not decide what has to be built, the ways and the reasons. In his view it is the cultural concept of the house, shaped by an accepted way of doing things, acting as a factor determining the form.

Rapoport’s view is shared by Kent (1997, p. 127) who states that the spatial form of buildings is specifically a reflection of behaviour, which can be viewed as a reflection of culture. She asserts that the organisation and utilisation of domestic space is based on determined spatial traditions. Furthermore, she stresses that undoubtedly, the constraints of climate and natural settings will have some impacts on space traditions, but more deeply, spatial traditions are moulded by the cultural backgrounds of societies. Kent’s statement suggests that spatial traditions are the accepted way of doing things which Rapoport referred to, and in turn are the specific characteristics of a culture which determines the form of the building.

> Space traditions cover various aspects of space organizations. Modes of enclosure and exposure of private indoor and outdoor spaces, indoor–outdoor and public–private interaction patterns and the establishment of special sequences are all determined by space traditions (Kent, 1997).
The relation between the form of vernacular houses and tradition is also emphasised by Oliver who stresses that vernacular architecture is usually developed where there is a strong tradition and a supportive environment (Oliver, 1997).

*Tradition and transmission consider the means by which traditions in vernacular architecture are passed on, or ‘handed down’ from one generation to another. Some of these are verbal, others require the training of bodily memory, but all are subject to the values and norms of the culture* (Oliver, 1997, p. 70).

*Traditionally, the sensitivity and the know-how, the skills and the competence to build affectively in response the land, the climate and the resources to land, have been passed on between generations* (Oliver, 2007, p. 16).

In relation to the way materials are selected for the construction of the house, Rapoport argues that availability of materials and knowledge of technology does not mean that available materials and known construction techniques will be necessarily employed in a primitive and vernacular context. He stresses that (1) in some cases, for example where timber is lacking and stone plentiful, wooden houses are quite common while stone houses are common among the wealthier class, (2) the same materials may produce different forms, therefore, he concludes that construction materials and techniques cannot be considered a determinant factor in shaping the form of the house. He stresses that sometimes there is a practice of selecting specific solid materials, such as stone and bricks for the construction of public buildings, monuments and temples while houses are built with more perishable materials, such as wood.

In conclusion, Rapoport states that, the use of a specific material is decided by five factors: (1) fashion, (2) tradition, (3) religious proscription, (4) prestige value and (5) memory, since, in relation to this last factor *‘certain materials were related to those used in a previous habitat prior to migration and thus represent archaic survivals’* (Rapoport, 1969, p. 109). More specifically, as discussed in the previous section, if the built form is an expression of a cultural frame based on habits and traditions related to past housing experience (Marcus, 1995, p. 94), my argument is that in the same way the selection of materials and construction techniques for the construction of Italian houses can also be influenced by memory of architectural traditions shared through a common cultural frame developed through interaction with the artefacts in which Italian migrants resided in the past, in the native and in the host environment.
According to the theories discussed above, in this study aiming to explore how Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses and the reasons behind this influence, I will investigate first (1) how, and the extent to which, physical factors such as available materials and techniques of construction have determined the form of the house, or if physical forces have only provided possibilities among which choices were made through cultural practices, the accepted way of doing things or cultural traditions and a way of life, and consequently acted as secondary and/or modifying factors; (2) Secondly, the reasons for which Italian migrants selected a distinctive construction material and technique for the construction of their houses.

In addition, as Gipstein (2007) explains below, the built form, interpreted as a reflection (1) of culture, expressed through variables conceptualized as existing in its physical dimension, and (2) of the way materials and construction techniques are selected and employed, is inevitably a reflection of ‘time and space’. Gipstein’s view suggests that there are two further factors to be considered: the period of construction and the location of the artefact.

> Every building is a snapshot of a particular time and space - the raw materials that were on hand, how far the builders’ technology had progressed, and the aspirations of its creators. But architecture also makes a powerful statement about the unique culture it reflects, whether the elegant simplicity of a grass bungalow, or the dramatic complexity of a chrome skyscraper (Gipstein, 2007, p. 9).

Therefore, in the context of this study, it will also be important to explore the period of construction and the location of the houses built by Italian migrants - being the form of a building influenced by cultural and physical forces which are both affected by ‘time and space’.

Construction materials and techniques are not the only physical factors which can influence or determine the form of the house. As Rapoport highlights, in the climatic determinist perspective of a few architectural theorists, the form of the house is determined by the need for shelter and to protect the users from the natural environmental conditions. Therefore, in their view the form of the house is simply determined by climatic factors, because the house can shelter human beings against the extreme conditions of the climate. On the other hand, Rapoport points out that many forms of the house have been developed within the same climatic zones and, therefore, the form of the house is more closely related to cultural factors than to climate. In the same climatic zone there is indeed a great variety of house types. As Rapoport also highlights, elaborate dwellings are discovered in climatic areas where the basic
need for shelter is minimal. He also points out that in some cases the way of life can lead to anticlimactic solutions, because the dwelling is more related to economic activities and the way of life than climate. For example, he highlights the fact that a group of Europeans in North Africa live in European style dwellings, not accepting that they should live in traditional courtyard houses which would be more comfortable. One of the reason Europeans were not able to live in those traditional houses was that they were comfortable with the European scale and arrangement of spaces, which were culturally unsuitable. These houses did not facilitate the performance of those activities which are influenced by cultural practices. This suggests that migrant groups tended to develop the form of their transnational houses in order to fulfil the need to perform specific activities which are influenced by an assimilated way of life or culture and not by climatic conditions.

In relation to this study’s exploration of houses built by Italian migrants in Brisbane, it is also important to investigate the extent to which climatic conditions have influenced the form of Italian houses in Brisbane. In summary, as explained through the diagram below, I outlined the importance of exploring the extent to which the form of houses built by Italian migrants were influenced by (1) spatial traditions, as an expression of their culture as a way of life, (2) materials and construction techniques, as a manifestation of fashion, tradition, religious proscription, prestige value, memory, time and place of construction, and finally (3) climate.

![Diagram 6: House form and physical factors](image)

2.4.4 Socio-cultural variables

In the previous section I reviewed theories which highlighted built form, namely house form, as primarily determined by culture, as the accepted way of doing things or space traditions,
and physical factors. In the following section I discuss the nature of specific variables of culture in light of their influence on the form of houses.

*Culture is a theoretical construct. No one has seen or ever will see or observe culture - only its effects and products... ‘Culture’ exists by definition: it is a conceptual summary shorthand (and proposed explanation) for particular conjugations of a great variety of human phenomena* (Kent, 1997, p. 10).

Earlier I discussed how the concept of culture was dismantled in a cultural frame, shared by a group, encompassing commonalities, based on an historical and traditional context. As Kent highlighted in the quote above, culture is an abstract concept which must be further clarified by dismantling it into more concrete components or variables. She stresses that an identification of these variables will provide a tool for the exploration and understanding of how users influenced the form of their houses.

Kent and Rapoport make reference to culture in relation to socio-cultural variables; they also stress that the concept of socio-cultural variables still remains an overall abstract concept, not helping to determine how culture affects the form of houses. Therefore, they highlight the importance of breaking the concept down into more specific and concrete terms. More specifically, Rapoport makes a distinction between two distinctive components which are both manifestations of culture: social variables, such as group composition, family structures, social networks and behaviours, which are more physical; and cultural, such as world view, values, way of life and activities which refer to ideational variables (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000). As Rapoport and Kent (1997) emphasize, the concept of culture as a way of life leads to a system of activity: activities are direct expressions of a way of life and ultimately of culture.

*Built environments are created to support users’ desired behaviour and ... if the architecture encloses behaviour tightly, then activities will tend to shape architecture* (Kent, 1990, p. 11).

The diagram below shows how the concept of culture relates to socio and cultural variables.
Diagram 7: Culture and socio-cultural variables

They stress that through an investigation and analysis of the activities performed within the domestic space by the family members, it is possible to understand how the users distributed and utilized the space of their houses and the extent of which human beings’ culture, namely specific needs and way of life, has influenced the spatial form of the house. This approach is also emphasized by Oliver who stresses that built environment are reflection of behaviour which has to be considered in the context of activities (Oliver, 1997, p. 16).

Furthermore, as Rapoport (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000) highlights, the importance and the need to dismantle the concept of activities into its variables, as he did with the concept of socio-cultural variables. Rapoport identifies six components which, in his theories, represent the system of activities. He highlights the variability of the activity which involves (1) the nature of the activity itself (what), (2) the persons involved or excluded (who), (3) the place where it is performed (where), (4) the order or sequence it occurs (when), (5) the association to other activities (how - including or excluding whom), and finally (6) the meaning of the activity (why). He stresses the importance of studying the systems of activities, because in his words ‘variability with lifestyle and ultimately culture goes up as one moves from the activity itself, through ways of carrying it out, the system of which it is part, and its meanings’ (Kent, 1990, p. 11).

For example, in relation to a common activity like cooking, he stresses that the way people cook might be diversified, but the way cooking is associated with other activities, namely of social significance, is even more diversified among different cultural groups. He stresses that
cooking, practices in eating or in preparing food, location and time, might impact on the house spatial form. There might be differences in spatial distribution depending on whether one has a formal family meal in a separate dining room or eats in the kitchen; whether everyone eats separately or all together. In addition, Pascali (2006, p. 685) shows how, in North America, Italian women decided to have two independent kitchens in the house, to be distinctively used in an informal/formal context. Therefore, patterns of (3a) formality or informality in dining and additionally in an associated activity like social interactions can play an important role in the distribution of the house.

As Rapoport also highlights, (2a) separation of domain, gender and (3b) privacy might be still very much culturally shaped, and consequently have a great impact on the house spatial form. In relation to the separation of domain, my argument is that the pre-eminence of women might also have affected the spatial form of Italian migrants’ houses, in particular the kitchen area, which in Italian practices, is a woman’s domain. Males, on the other hand, might have dedicated specific working activities performed in a different space. This view is shared by other scholars. Supski suggests that gender is another dimension through which the domestic distribution and utilization of space can be interpreted (Supski, 2006, p. 133). For example, he showed how in Western Australia, migrant women decided the location, design and size of the kitchen in their houses, ensuring that the kitchen is the central efficient place of the house. As Blunt and Dowling (2006, p. 15) also emphasize, domestic space is interpreted through gender relations. In their view, gender also has a critical role in the way the domestic space is distributed and utilized. More specifically, they revealed that, while women within the domestic space are perceived as responsible for the management of the domestic daily activities such as cleaning, preparing food, cooking and looking after the children, on the other hand men are more involved in activities performed outside, for example in the garden and in the garage. They show how the gender division of the activities performed within the domestic space has an influence on the distribution and utilization of domestic space. Besides, Oliver highlights the role of gender in influencing not just the distribution and utilization of space but also the selection of materials.

Domestic activities are frequently differentiated as specific gender roles which may extend to specialized skills in the handling of materials and the construction of the house (Oliver, 1997, p. 69).

The need for privacy can also vary among cultural groups, and the way privacy is achieved has to be considered because it will in turn affect the distribution and utilization of space (Strong-
Boag, Dyck, & England, 1999). For instance, Rapoport makes a distinction between privacy in relation to strangers and privacy in relation to a clear separation of domains. In summary, the system of activities can be dismantled as explained in the diagram below:

Diagram 8: System of activities

The insights discussed above suggest that an analysis of the system of activities can help to understand the way Italian migrants distributed and utilized the domestic space and the influences which affected the spatial form of their houses.

In addition to the system of activity, Rapoport highlights the importance of looking at a wider spatial context to which the activity system of the occupants is linked: the settings of the activity. For example, he shows how a common activity such as cooking, which is the transformation of raw food into cooked, can be related to the cultivation of vegetables or fruit which is an activity often performed in the outdoor area, the garden. Therefore, he points out that the settings of activities might include outdoor garden areas.

Moreover, as Rapoport stresses, setting means not only the one at a micro-scale level, as explained above, but also the one at a macro scale-level: the settlement. As Rapoport highlights, ‘the setting frequently provides the appropriate props for these behaviours and activities’ (Kent, 1990, p. 12). Therefore he urges the importance of investigating the configuration of the surrounding built environment or the settlement, since this can influence the way people carry out activities in a public context, and as a result, also the distribution of domestic space to create space for performing activities in a more private context.
Setting of activities

- The outdoor areas (The yards)
- The settlement (The built environment)

In conclusion, in this section I reviewed the theories of Rapoport and Kent arguing that the domestic space is determined by the occupants’ need to perform specific activities, which are an expression of culture. Additionally, Rapoport and Kent highlighted the importance of investigating (1) the system and (2) setting of activities in order to understand how space has been distributed and utilized. In relation to the object of investigation for this study, I will adopt Rapoport’s and Kent conceptual framework to analyse and reveal how Italian migrants influenced the spatial form of their houses.

2.5 Spatial environments and social interactions

In addition, in order to gain an understanding of the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their transnational houses in Brisbane, the forces behind this influence, and outcomes of, this influence, this study is concerned with investigating the extent to which the spatial form of the house influences and/or contributes to the enhancement of social interactions. Therefore, in this section I review the literature investigating the relationship between spatial environments and social interactions. I focus on scholars’ views exploring the extent to which housing spatial form and settlement patterns contribute to an enhancement of social interactions. These insights can help in an exploration and an understanding of the way Italian migrants influenced the spatial form of their houses in Brisbane and, furthermore, the extent to which the spatial form of the house contributed towards the enhancement of social interactions.

2.5.1 Houses: a setting to enhance social interactions

As Foley stresses, a house comprises much more than a physical shelter for people to occupy: it encompasses the broader residential setting, including privacy, location, safety and investment (Foley, 1980, p. 457). More importantly, a house provides the setting within which people live their lives in a community; the house impacts on human beings’ senses, emotions, participation in physical activity and community life, sense of community, and general well-being (Israel, 2003).
Commonly, once tenants have achieved the security that a house provides, be it rented or owned, it is then possible to transform that house into a home. A home becomes a place which can accommodate people’s needs; a place reflecting and affecting people’s behaviour according to their cultural preferences; a place where people spend part of their time undertaking the sort of human activities determined by their own culture (Inglis, 2005, p. 10; Kent, 1997; Rapoport, 2000); a place where tenants create memories (Sarup, 1994). At this level the home become a setting and a symbol for meanings. It is a physical space providing a sense of safety for the occupants - metaphorically, such as a roof protecting occupants from the natural elements - and it is also a social space allowing occupants to meet and finally enhance their social interactions (Steele, 1973, 1983). In short, housing, and most especially the design of housing, can promote social relationships.

Despite the recognition of this last two-way relationship, in this study I argue that limited attention has been paid into the ways in which housing design may contribute to the enhancement of social interactions. For instance, the literature reveals that the relationship between built form and social interactions has been studied by Steele in a work-space environment context (1973, 1983). In that context, Steele argues that a large executive suite within an office setting would first indicate a hierarchal type of organisational structure, and second would facilitate social–business interactions. This is a critically important insight operating primarily at the level of the work-space environment.

There have been very few attempts to chart the relationship between the design of stand-alone buildings—i.e. individual houses—and the enhancement of social interactions. One noteworthy study in a micro-scale context is by Beyene (2005), who focuses on the experiences of Eritrean and Ethiopian migrant women in Lebanon. In particular, she draws attention to the way in which the internal apartment space, including a living room, a small kitchen, water closet and two bedrooms, contributed towards the facilitation of gatherings and the cementing of relationships between the women in a way that produced important social networks.

Since there is a lack of research into the relationship between built form and social interaction/activities, especially at a micro-scale level, this thesis investigates whether, and the extent to which, houses built by Italian migrants in Brisbane, and in particular their spatial configuration, have contributed to an enhancement of social interactions.
2.5.2 Urban settlements: a setting to enhance social interactions

As Putnam highlights, the way we design and build a macro-scale urban setting where communities reside can have an impact on the degree to which people are involved in those communities (neighbourhoods). He stresses that it is not just the micro-scale level single house’s spatial configuration, but also the surrounding built environment, enhancing a sense of community, which can enrich social interaction among the population (Putnam, 2000).

*Those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit ... The individual is helpless socially if left to himself ... If he comes into contact with the neighbour, and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community (Putnam, 2000).*

As Smith and Bugni stress, the planning of a city has an impact on the way people live in the city, in a similar way as the internal layout of a house, distribution, location and size of each room within the house has an impact on the way tenants live their lives (Smith & Bugni, 2003). Emphatically, the way the city and its sectors is planned has a deep impact on the way people use the city, live their daily lives and carry on their social activities.

In addition, scholars argue that the way in which people use the settlement also affect the spatial form of the house: for example in some urban contexts the meeting space can be the house while in other urban contexts the meeting space can be a street or a plaza which is part of the urban settlement. For example, Rapoport shows how, in Latin America, the domestic space is mainly used to sleep and store things, while most social activities take place outside the house within the public open spaces of the city. In particular, Rapoport points out a relevant distinction between Latin, Mediterranean towns where people use the settlement or the public town square area within the settlement for social activities purposes, and Anglo-American cities where inhabitants use their house and backyard to entertain social interactions (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000).

This suggests that for a better understanding of the way the configuration of the house enhances social interactions, the house cannot be studied in isolation from the settlement. It
has to be explored as part of the whole macro-scale spatial system which relates the single house, the settlement and the way of life, because the spatial form of the house is not just affected by the way the users live in it and the range of social activities taking place in it, but also by the way such activities are performed in the whole built environment.

Furthermore, as Rapoport stresses, researchers argue that the way the settlement is used for social purposes is related to the climatic conditions. Nevertheless, he explains how this is not a correct assumption: for example, he shows how in some European cities, cafes, town squares and public open spaces are very popular all during the year, while for example in Australia and California, which are very outdoor minded in their use of parks and beaches, the town or the settlement urban areas are rarely used for social activities (Rapoport, 1969).

As already stated, previous studies on the residential built form do not provide a deep understanding of the way, and the extent to which, the built environment influences the spatial form of transnational houses. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap. More specifically, my argument is that the built environment in Brisbane affected the way of life of first generation Italian migrants. In particular, I argue that the form and structure of the typical Australian suburb in Brisbane affected (1) the frequency and nature of social interactions among Italian migrants, (2) the spatial distribution of Italian migrants’ houses and/or the space allocations for rooms and areas utilized to enhance social interactions.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented a conceptual framework for the exploration of the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses in Brisbane. It is important to point out that the studies listed in this chapter analysed only some confined areas of transnational houses and not its entire form as this study intends to do. Therefore, in the following empirical chapter I will apply the conceptual framework defined in this chapter to identify how Italian migrants influenced the form of their transnational houses in Brisbane, and what were the generating forces, as well as the private immediate surroundings represented by the garden areas.
Are the result of the collaboration of makers and users
Are characterized by an idiom with variations
Show a lack of theoretical and aesthetical pretension

Are the result of changed local vernacular built forms
Are influenced by a way of life as expression of two cultures

1- a place of memory shaped through a nostalgic practice
2- a place of refuge reminding migrants of their origins
3- a place allowing them to go back to traditional activities
4- a place to have the family united
5- a place to show the family success
6- a place showing traditional architectural decorative features

Conceptual framework

Field under exploration

Transnational houses

Migrants' experience

Transnational Houses
(designed and built in response to the need for creation)

House Form
(influenced by)

Conceptual framework

Topic of investigation

Italian migrants' Transnational houses

Social forces

Cultural forces

Architectural and spatial traditions

Materials

Construction techniques

Climate

Social activities

Urbanization patterns

Space & Time
(Previous housing experience)

Physical factors

1- Period of construction
2- Architectural form
3- Spatial form
4- Spatial social interaction

Diagram 10: Conceptual framework of the research
CHAPTER 3 – THE RESEARCH DESIGN
3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the design and the methods of the research. The first section deals with the research question and its expectations. The following two sections outline the research strategy and data collection tools. In the last section I discuss the qualitative research methods utilized to gather the data.

3.2 The research question and expectation

This study addresses the case of a specific typology of house: the dwelling built by Italian migrants on a quarter acre block in Brisbane in the post WWII period. No research attempt has yet been made in the context of post-WWII migrants’ houses in Brisbane to identify (1) the way the users influenced the form of their artefact, (2) the forces behind this influence and (3) to assess the role of the spatial form of the house in the enhancement of the social environment.

In order to answer the main question in a comprehensive manner, as shown in the following diagram, four sub-questions have been identified, namely the period of construction, the architectural form, the spatial form, the relationship between spatial form and social interactions, according to which a number of supplementary questions are outlined.

The expectation of the research is that (1) the specific period Italian migrants built their own houses was related to migrants’ initial migratory plan. This in turn was dictated by migrants’ economic circumstances at the time of their departure from Italy; (2) the architectural form of the house, namely the structure, the façade, and material and construction technique, were influenced by architectural cultural traditions; (3) the spatial form of the house, namely the spatial distribution and utilization of space, was influenced by socio-cultural factors which were in turn affected by migrants’ previous housing experiences; (4) the way the spatial form contributed to an enhancement of social interactions was influenced by urbanisation patterns and culture as a way of life, also affected by previous settlement experiences, both in Australia and in Italy.
Diagram 11: The object of investigation, the research questions and the topics of investigation

As mentioned, in order to answer the four sub-questions listed above, a number of supplementary questions have been developed. The following diagram illustrates the general contents of the supplementary questions which will be answered by the participants during the interviews.

1. What was the initial plan of migration?
2. What were the economic, political and social circumstances at departure?
3. What was the form of past houses in Italy and in Australia prior construction of migrants’ houses in Brisbane?

1. What is the architectural form of the house?
2. What are the materials and construction technique available to migrants to build their houses?
3. What are the decorative features visible on the main façade?
4. What is the influence of previous houses on the architectural form of present houses?

1. How is the internal domestic space distributed and utilized in current houses?
2. What are the forces influencing the spatial form of the house?
3. What is the influence of previous houses on the spatial form of present houses?

1. How does the local built environment is related to current houses’ spatial configuration?
2. How does the spatial configuration influence and enhance social interactions?
3.3 Qualitative Research Methodology

To avoid confusion, throughout the research study I refer to the term ‘methodology’ to show the theoretical approaches that underpin this thesis. The term ‘strategy’ is used to refer to the choice of the case-study method. Additionally, the term ‘methods’ and ‘techniques’ are applied equally in reference to particular ways of gathering data, such as interviews, field observations and visual material. All of these terms are subcategories of my qualitative research approach.

3.3.1 Housing research approaches and methods of study

The following section explores a selection of housing research approaches, methods and perspectives. I present three different theoretical approaches applied by social researchers (Clark, Deurloo, & Dieleman, 1984; Littlewood & Munro, 1997; Saunders, 1989; Smith & Bugni, 2002a): (1) quantitative economic or demographic studies on housing and moving patterns; (2) a qualitative approach to understanding the cultural meanings of the home to its occupants; and (3) a quantitative approach to understanding cultural differences in housing consumption and preferences.

Architectural sociologists stress that the data collection methods used by social researchers, ranging from statistical to qualitative, are most applicable to architectural practice because they can assist practitioners in understanding the nature of people’s specific needs. As they also highlight, the choice of method, either quantitative or qualitative, is dependent on the research objective (Sommer, 1983).

This thesis draws upon the work of Clapman (2005). He shows that quantitative housing research uses rationalistic criteria focusing on the size and installations in the house in order to understand housing choices and consumption. However, he argues that this is not the most appropriate criteria with which to understand the cultural influences on the form of the house by its occupants. According to Clapman (2005), the cultural influences on dwellings need to be investigated through research based on qualitative methods, in order to capture and understand the way of life of occupants. Architectural sociologists (Smith & Bugni, 2006) also argue that the form of the house is difficult to understand outside the context of its cultural settings.
Therefore, in attempting to gain insights into the relationship between the form of Italian migrants' houses and the users' cultural forces, the study employs a predominantly qualitative methodology. This is because insights into the cultural meaning that a material form has for individuals within a given social context can best be gleaned from the individuals themselves, and by exploring the rich symbolic universe within which individuals exist. This study, then, is based on a symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969).

### 3.3.2 The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbolic interactionism is the selected perspective for this study (Blumer, 1969) because of its usefulness in exploring the meanings which are produced through social interactions between human beings. Applied symbolic interactionism was developed in the early twentieth century by John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead, three scholars at the University of Chicago, and by Jane Addams, a practitioner with an interest in research. Although each of these thinkers sympathized with the philosophy of ‘pragmatism’, Dewey and Mead were interested in intellectual pragmatism, while Addams had an interest in the applied sciences. All three believed that thinking/doing, theory/practice, social science/social work, should not be separated (Forte, 2003). Dewey, Cooley, Mead and Addams asserted that objects do not have inherent meaning, but that their meaning is attributed to them (Blumer, 1969). Additionally, as these researchers emphasise, human beings shape and reshape their reality through an ongoing interaction with and among social objects, self and others (Blumer, 1969). This concept of the social construction of reality was also established by Plato:

\[
\text{Socrates . . . what is really true is this: the things of which we naturally say that they \textit{are}, are in process of coming to be, as the result of movement and change and blending with one other. We are wrong when we say they \textit{are} since nothing ever is, but everything is coming to be (Plato & Campbell, p. 152).}
\]

This perspective suggests that the views, perceptions and meaning Italian migrants attribute to their houses are produced and shaped by the complexity of interactions between human beings and the cultural context of the setting.

Symbolic interactionism, according to Blumer (1969, p. 79) draws on ‘the fact that human beings interpret or ‘define’ each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions ... human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another’s actions’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Charmaz adds that symbolic interactionism is ‘best understood as a ‘perspective’ rather than as a ‘theory’ . . . a
point of departure for investigating the world’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). This perspective, suggesting that human beings exist in an environment of social objects and shared language, provides the intellectual foundation for a theoretical perspective referred to as interactionism (Cooley, 1902, p. 163; Mead, 1932, p. 100).

Blumer (1969, p. 32) proposes that symbolic interactionism rests on three premises. First, human beings act towards objects or ideas on the basis of the meaning that they have ascribed to them. Such objects or ideas include everything that the person may note in his or her world, including physical objects, tangible things, abstract ideas, cultural events, other people and institutions. The second premise of symbolic interactionism is that the meanings of things emerge through social interaction between people. For example, the meaning that an object has for a person ‘grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing’ (Blumer, 1969, p. 4). The third premise is that through a process of verbal and nonverbal communication between each other, people modify the meanings they attach to objects so that they know that the ‘thing’ has meaning and they know how to respond to it. These three premises are the basis of the interpretive process whereby meanings are utilized or reviewed to guide and form action.

3.3.3 Social groups

This study is broadly located within the interactionist framework. It is explicitly concerned with teasing out the meaning produced through the interactions of individuals and/or social groups within society. As explained in the previous section, the study focuses on a social group rather than ‘society’, investigating the way individuals create the social world through their behaviour (Atkinson & Housley, 2003). In addition, as Crotty (1998) stresses, truth and meanings are consequences of our interactions with the realities within society. People construct meanings in relation to their knowledge of, and experience in, society. He defines the symbolic interactionist approach as follows:

*All knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings, and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (1998, p. 42).*

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the meaning people construct through human interactions is understood as varied, multiple and subjective. Creswell (2003a) also foregrounds the way in which participants’ subjective meanings are primarily formed through
interaction between human beings, and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives. Therefore, human beings’ meanings, world and/or identity are derived from human interactions within a social, cultural and historical context.

The Italian migrant group may be categorised by the broader society in which it lived: as a social group which shares a common cultural frame based on tradition and history. Being identified by society, and identifying itself as belonging to this social group, will impact upon how both society and social groups view themselves. For this reason, a symbolic interactionist approach to studying the Italian cultural forces which Italian migrants (1) brought with them and (2) came about - or develop - through interaction with each other within the host culture is an appropriate approach to take.

3.3.4 People and Objects

As pointed out by theorists, the symbolic interactionist approach not only focuses upon the interaction between human beings, but also on the interaction between people and objects. Some theorists (Rapoport, 1969; Sanders, 1997) argue that objects have agency in exactly the same way that human beings do (Smith & Bugni, 2006). Symbolic interaction theorists assert that designed physical environments such as buildings are not merely a setting for our behaviour. They argue that ‘physical objects’ contain and communicate meanings (P. Bourdieu, 1990b; Gieryn, 2002; Mead, 1934; Smith & Bugni, 2002d). Blumer (1969, p. 32) likewise pointed out that buildings can be identified as objects or material things for which people may interpret meanings.

*Interactionists explain that people interact with physical environment in a manner similar to how they interact with people. People think about architectural artefacts; they examine and interpret them; and they interact with them (Smith & Bugni, 2002d, p. 25).*

Symbolic interactionists highlight the complex relationship between people and architecture. Italian migrants, through the design and construction of their architectural artefacts which are influenced by common factors, might communicate and share meaning formed in an historical period through interaction between human beings or with each other. Therefore, a symbolic interactionist theory is also an appropriate approach to a study of the socio-cultural preferences that Italian migrants embedded in their self-built artefacts.
3.3.5 Inductivism

Symbolic interactionism is one of the basic examples of the broader interpretive or inductivist approach. According to inductivism, theory is generated from the research. Inductivism implies a cycle in which the researcher weaves back and forward between data and theory because the analysis of the initial set of data may reveal that further data is needed to establish the conditions in which a theory may or may not be asserted. Inductivism tends to be aligned with qualitative research methods (Charmaz, 2006). In the case of the post-WWII Italian migrants upon which this study focuses, it is considered that gaining insight into the meanings inherent in the specific historical, social and cultural contexts is best accomplished by adopting an inductive approach.

3.3.6 Qualitative Methodology

Creswell and Morse (2003b, p. 181) argue that there are a number of assumptions that underpin the design of all appropriate qualitative studies. These assumptions can be applied to this research study to demonstrate the appropriateness of a qualitative methodology to the current study. These assumptions are:

1 - Qualitative research uses an inductive approach;

As Warren and Karner (2005, p. 8) highlight, most qualitative researchers use an inductive approach in which key concepts are derived from the data collected in the field. This current study aims to investigate how Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses. I collect and analyse oral and visual data in order to answer the research question. The concepts derived from the findings are then used as the basis for the development of a theory.

2 - Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured. A phenomenon must be explored and described in order to develop a theory;

According to Warren and Karner, when the concept under exploration is ‘immature’ due to a conspicuous lack of previous research, qualitative researchers need to adopt an exploratory strategy of enquiry in order to develop concepts from the data gathered (Warren & Karner, 2005, p. 8). Additionally, Morse (1991) argues that a qualitative enquiry is needed when the topic under investigation is new, has never been addressed with a certain sample of people, or existing theories do not apply to the particular sample under study. As Marshal and Rossman (2006, pp. 57-72) also highlight, when the topic is new or little research has been done on it,
qualitative researchers explore complex phenomena rather than measure findings. The adoption of a qualitative approach is appropriate for the subject of vernacular housing because it has yet to gain much academic attention.

3 - Qualitative data collection and qualitative data analysis are likely to be generated concurrently;

According to Merriam and Silverman (1998; 2000), since qualitative research’s focus is on process, qualitative data generation and qualitative data analysis are likely to be generated together. Throughout this current research project, data analysis has been progressively developed as oral and visual data were collected. The data collection helps the theory to emerge and develop into broad themes and categories.

4 - Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative;

According to Merriam (1998), the key philosophical assumption in qualitative research is based on a constructivist set of beliefs about truth, claiming that there are only constructed realities. Additionally, Merriam states that a qualitative approach is also underlined by an epistemology, or a set of beliefs about knowledge, arguing that knowledge clearly emerges from reality. Consequently, he argues that qualitative research is broadly ‘interpretivist’ because its concern is to understand how an event is experienced and produced by its participants (1998). As a result, qualitative researchers are committed to an epistemology and an ontology that respectively adopt knowledge and social constructivism as meaning in context, which is achieved by social interaction (Williamson & Bow, 2000, p. 73). Notably, for this research, events and testimonies are studied in order to interpret the meaning developed by participants who play a central role (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Hassard (1990) also states that a qualitative methodology requires a research problem involving people’s constructions of meanings which have not previously been explored. For Creswell (2003a, p. 181), qualitative researchers look for the involvement of their participants while seeking to build rapport and credibility with them in the study. An interactive dynamic exists between the qualitative researcher and the subject and/or participants. Qualitative research involves fieldwork rather than work done in a laboratory, such as in experiments (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 10) (Yin, 2003, p. 72). In contrast, quantitative research uses a deductive approach, which is more appropriate when there are historical precedents, theories or predictions which the researcher seeks to test (Warren & Karner, 2005, p. 8). Such theories would provide an explanation for the variables in questions and hypotheses (Creswell, 2003a, p. 119) and contribute to the
advancement of knowledge in the selected field of study (G. Thomas, 1997). A quantitative approach would not suit this research study, for it is dealing with rich ‘textual’ material and, as intimated above, the conceptualisation cannot be fully determined until after the empirical data has been gathered.

For this research study, the inquirer is involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants and their self-built artefacts. Furthermore, the researcher analyses data for themes and categories and finally makes an interpretation or draws conclusions.

5 - Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic

In Creswell’s view, in order to generate rich empirical data, qualitative researchers must rely on a variety of techniques or qualitative research methods, including personal experience and interviews, as well as field observation and visual material that can be used to further explore the experience of the participants (Creswell, 2003a, p. 76). Therefore, the data collected involves oral and visual data. In the current research study, various methods are employed and combined with the objective of exploring a case from different perspectives. This process, defined as triangulation, or the combination of different techniques, methods and strategies is the essence of the case-study strategy for this research study.

6 - Qualitative research takes places in natural settings;

This current research study was conducted at the site of the participants. This enabled me to become more familiar with the experiences of the participants and to develop a level of detail about the place to be investigated. Also, I spent considerable time with participants discussing personal and often emotionally charged topics.

### 3.4 Qualitative Research Strategy

As highlighted in the previous section, the qualitative research methodology is considered the most appropriate one to apply in the current study. Additionally, it is necessary to choose between a number of qualitative research strategies. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 14) stress the importance of choosing ‘a flexible set out of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of enquiry and methods for collecting empirical material’. They identify four sub-categories of research inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2000): (1) phenomenology may be chosen when the subject of the research examines a deep, underlying reason for a
person to believe a particular thing, or to act in a particular manner; (2) ethnography may be employed if the study is based on cultural values; (3) case study may be used when the study is of a particular person or clearly defined group; (4) grounded theory is appropriate when the researcher has no clear theory on the subject of investigation. A qualitative research study can be developed by adopting any, or a combination, of these strategies (Creswell, 2003a).

3.4.1 Case-study Strategy

In the context of this study, it is important to define ‘case study’ and ‘case’. Researchers agree that a case study is a research strategy based on an in depth investigation of a ‘case’, which can be an individual, a group, an object or event (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1994). Ragin and Becker define the ‘case’ as an object bounded by a period of time and space or a process that may be theoretical and/or empirical (Ragin & Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995). As Yin (2003) argues, the purpose of a case study is ‘to portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of individuals and situations through accessible accounts; to catch the complexity of behaviour and to represent reality’ For Yin a case study is defined as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, namely when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2003, pp. 13-14).

The case study design was selected to address the main and the supplementary questions for this study. As De Vaus (2001, p. 223) highlighted, the use of a hypothesis building approach, starting with specific questions and expectations, explores actual cases in order to construct a hypothesis. As a result through this approach, the cases will be used to develop conceptual generalisations. Through an analysis of the case study it will be possible to explore and understand commonalities among cases to reach these generalizations. In this research study, the strategy of case study was selected because there is a need to produce context based knowledge about the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses in a host country.

Further to this, as Merriam (1998, p. 38) emphasises, case studies can also be defined in terms of the overall intent of the study as ‘descriptive, interpretive and evaluative’. Because the ultimate purpose of this study is to explore the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses in Brisbane, the most appropriate type of case study for the current research is the ‘interpretive’. An interpretive case study framework will provide an in-depth study of how Italian migrants influenced the built form and of the nature of the forces behind.
Johansson (2003, p. 5) states that the case study strategy enclosing cases has been developed not only within the social sciences but also in practice-oriented fields such as natural and built environment studies. Similarly, the investigation carried out in this current research is described as a single case study, including multiple cases or subjects, because the use of a number of subjects allows for greater variation. This thesis uses a case study strategy based on multiple cases to gather and analyse oral and visual data since individuals and physical artefacts, in this current research, form the cases to be investigated.

In conclusion, multiple cases were selected under the case study design because data from multiple cases can strengthen the findings (Yin, 2003, p. XV). In this case, the case study allows the researcher to draw upon the lived experiences, thoughts and feelings of the potential participants in order to understand the meaning of living in a house built by Italians in Brisbane. It will also provide qualitative data to be gathered from the self-built artefacts, and finally it gives Italians the opportunity to share their experiences and to speak about their contribution to the built environment of Brisbane.

Furthermore, it is also important to point out that this research is exploratory. Due to the multiple cases consisting of only a small sample of participants selected through limits based on date of birth, date of arrival in Australia, social class and their physical artefacts limited to geographical terms, this study is a hypothesis-generating instead of hypothesis-verification. The criteria for the selection of Italian migrants and their artefacts will be explained in detail in the ‘Data Collection’ section.

The diagram below shows the case study format based on an investigation of cases.


Diagram 13: The case study format

3.5 Qualitative Research Methods

In adopting a ‘qualitative’ methodology, this research study inevitably draws upon multiple qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2003b, p. 181). One of the most significant aspects of case study strategy is that varied methods are employed and combined, or triangulated, with the objective of exploring a case from different perspectives in order to ensure the validity of the case study research (Denzin, 1978). This process, defined by Johansson as triangulation, or ‘the combination of different levels of techniques, methods, strategies, or theories, is the essence of case study strategy’ (Johansson, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, to validate the findings within the current study, ‘triangulation’ from different sources (Yin, 2003, p. 159) is adopted. The methods employed in the research study enable the researcher to collect (1) oral data, through digitally recorded focus groups and in-depth interviews, and (2) material or visual data through photo elicitation, site visits, field observations and visual materials including drawings and photographs (Creswell, 2003b). An integration of methods collecting both oral and visual data is considered essential for the purpose of this research study. A summary of the methods selected for this current research is listed below.
3.5.1 Focus-group interviews

According to Smith, Bugni (2002d) and Creswell (2003b), focus group interviews are usually employed when the group of people is smaller than six to eight. Usually the interviewee is asked to respond to unstructured questions, focusing on a specific topic. As Creswell stresses, this method helps the researchers to involve their participants and seeks to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study (Creswell, 2003b, p. 181). Furthermore, because vernacular architecture, in the context of post-WWII migrants’ houses in Brisbane, is a new topic and little research has been done on it, I will be relying on the perspective of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

3.5.2 In-depth interviews

In architectural sociology, this method was originally proposed by two active social researchers, Smith and Bugni. While discussing data collection qualitative methods applicable to architectural practice (Smith & Bugni, 2002d), such as the interview and the field observation method, they noted that the interview can range from entirely structured, with fixed questions and response categories to completely unstructured. This method was adopted so that the interviewee could speak freely, and the interviewer could guide with key areas and questions to be covered while trying to give the interviewee as much freedom as possible. This enables all parties at the interview to raise issues that they see as important. Also, this method gives the interviewer opportunities for in-depth responses, which can help the researcher to capture the participant’s perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). The weakness of the qualitative in-depth interview is the limited number of interviewees. Nevertheless, the strength of the limited number of qualitative interviews is that in-depth information on opinions from individuals and a richness of detail and narrative may be collected (Smith & Bugni, 2002d).

Additionally, Dunn (2005, p. 80) listed four main reasons for employing the interviews method, which are relevant to the purpose of this study. The first reason is to fill a gap in the knowledge of interviewees’ perceptions about the distinctive way they shaped their houses. The second reason is to explore complex behaviours that also have an impact on the form of the house. Interviewees will reveal the activities and practices undertaken within the domestic space, and the allocation of domestic space. The third reason is to collect a range of experiences, also in relation to their past housing experience, opinions and motivations which influenced the way the house has been planned. The last reason is that interviews allow participants’ evidence to
be valued and treated with respect and to give importance to the participants providing the data.

### 3.5.3 Photo elicitation

According to Creswell (1994) and Merriam (1998), sharing private visual material such as photographs can be recognised as a discreet method of collecting data and, furthermore, it can act as an ice-breaker, especially when the respondent needs to become more familiar with the researcher and the subject investigated. This method helps to provide an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality while at the same time enabling the researcher to become familiar with the language and words of the informants.

### 3.5.4 Site visits and field observation/notes

Site visits or field observation enable architectural sociologists to directly observe groups, or individuals within groups, in relation to their natural or built environment. In choosing this method, the researcher should directly inform the participants of their role and purpose and generally observe how participants behave within their space and physical objects. Smith and Bugni (2002c) state that observing the artefacts and behaviour of individuals within the artefacts can provide clues for the researchers. These clues enable them to understand the occupants’ needs which have influenced aspects of the house design such as space configuration/location and façade. Additionally, as Smith and Bugni emphasise, the observer-researcher must be aware of the extent to which subject behaviour may be altered by the researcher’s presence and participation. This is reiterated by Creswell (2003b), who argues that during the observation on the site it is important to take field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals. He states that field notes can help to record observational data. Furthermore, a protocol or form for recording information should include (1) descriptive notes – sketches, a description of the physical settings, and a reconstruction of a dialogue; (2) reflective notes (personal thoughts and impressions); and (3) demographic information – the field setting’s time, place and date.

### 3.5.5 Visual material and documents

Visual materials which can be generated by the researcher or by the respondents are: diaries; field notes; written stories; biographies; videos and movies; pictures and photographs; sketches; architectural drawings; newspapers and magazines; charts; tables and lists (Mason, 2001). According to Mason, the collection and analysis of visual material and documentary sources is a major method of social research (Mason, 2001). This view is also shared by Harper
and Faccioli, stating that they ‘... believe that photographs can describe social life and that visual sociology is a legitimate cousin to documentary photography and photojournalism’ (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 23). Furthermore, according to Mason (2001) photographs have tended to be seen as the primary form of visual data because photos show what the eye can see.

The importance to use visual material, namely drawings and photographs, for a better understanding of vernacular architecture is also emphasized by Oliver (1997) in his *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*. In his words:

*Drawings can often be far more eloquent than paragraphs of text in describing terms and techniques... Architectural conventions of plan, section and elevations are understood by those within the profession... Drawings are important in EVAW in providing a variety of graphic means of presenting technical information and field data, not normally available in anthropological sources. Some are drawn precisely to scale, others are sketch plans, while still others are diagrammatic. ... Photographs have been used where they best portray the building, especially in its environmental and cultural context... Though the aesthetic qualities of vernacular buildings in many traditions can be expressed by photographs, their value in conveying information has been a prime consideration in their selection.* (Oliver, 1997, p. xxviii).

Visual data, then, is useful to my research because I can use it to prompt the respondents to share their views which are then recorded as text. It might also be necessary to use other methods such as interviews, in order to understand some visual elements. The point is that visual material and documents can be as influential in social sciences as text data, and that both can provide an alternative angle on the topic under investigation.

The selection of this method in order to understand architectural and spatial form is implicitly emphasized by Krase (2003). In his article ‘Italian American Urban Landscapes, Images of Social and Cultural Capital’ he explains the importance of utilizing a visual approach in the empirical and theoretical case study of the Italo-American urban neighbourhood. He presents a series of photographs of the neighbourhood and he emphasizes how the use of visual methods is important for a deep understanding of the changes in urban spaces. Similarly, his insight can
be implied at a micro-scale level, namely housing. The diagram below explains the research method format.

Diagram 14: The research method format

This chapter has justified the choice of research methodology, strategies and methods that characterise the empirical part of this investigation. The methodology, strategies and methods are based on a number of theoretical and philosophical principles. This chapter also highlights the crucial role of selecting a methodology in relation to the purpose of the study.
4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, (1) a detailed case-study is required in order to collect first-hand data to understand the way Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses in Brisbane; (2) the data to be gathered is oral data (collected from oral stories from Italian migrants living in Brisbane through focus groups, in depth interviews and photo elicitation) and visual data (gathered through site visits, field observation, visual material and photographs).

The aim of this chapter is to present the selected case study and to describe the process of collecting and analysing data. The chapter has two main sections: data collection and data analysis. In the first section I discuss the limits for the selection of the cases and the procedure chosen to collect the data. In the second section I discuss the interpretative approach of discourse analysis used to interpret migrants’ narratives and visual representations. Furthermore, I discuss how specific factors related to my position as the interviewer affect the relationships with the interviewees. I also discuss how these factors influenced the interviewees’ participation.

4.2 Data collection

Data was collected between February 2008 and December 2009. The process started with the selection of Italian migrants, followed by the selection of the artefacts. The persons and the artefacts were selected according to specific criteria. The theories of Creswell helped me to set the boundaries and limits for the selection of the participants and their artefacts. According to Creswell (2003b) the idea behind qualitative research is that participants and sites or artefacts must be purposefully selected, as opposed to a quantitative study in which participants and sites can be selected randomly. Creswell (Creswell, 2003b) states that the selection should include four aspects: (1) the location where the research will take place; (2) the respondents who will be interviewed and the artefacts that will be observed; (3) what the actors will be doing during observation; and (4) the process that will unfold during the research. The data collected from the testimonies of Italian migrants and from the evidence form their houses will be divided into ‘oral data’ and ‘visual data’.

4.2.1 Oral data (February 2008 - December 2009)

Following ethics approval (See Appendix A), two presentations outlining the nature and aims of the research project were scheduled for the 18th and 25th of February, 2008, at two venues: Canossa Hospital (an aged care facility/retirement village for Italian immigrants) in Oxley, and
the Italo-Australian Centre (Italian Club) in Newmarket. These presentations were facilitated with the help of Sister Concetta Coppe, Director of Canossa Hospital, and Luciano Servadio, President of the Tuscany Association of Brisbane (See Appendixes L-M).

The two presentations were designed to be informative and of general interest, with an opportunity to communicate informally with attendees after the presentation. The aim of the initial presentation was to stimulate interest in the research and ultimately, to invite some of the attendees to participate in the project. Letters, written in both English and Italian, inviting audience members to participate in the study were available at the presentation (See Appendixes D-G). These letters could be taken away by interested parties. Contact details of those who expressed interest in participating were also collected. These potential participants were contacted a fortnight later to ascertain their on-going interest in participating in the project. If they decided to proceed, an appointment time for a focus group interview was arranged. Alternatively, if the original presentation and subsequent participation did not provide an adequate number of participants, there was a plan to use an alternative interview strategy as a ‘snowballing’ plan. In this case, since these additional participants would have missed the presentation session, a letter of invitation would be sent to them, either directly or through an intermediary.

The focus group interviews and the in-depth interviews were recorded electronically, later analysed and partially transcribed. The time allocated to the interviews was an hour, however in practice they often ran for 2-3 hours. The presentation sessions and all interviews were conducted in Italian, the native language of all the participants. As Cresciani (2003, p. 143) notes, more than 80 per cent of first-generation migrants speak Italian at home. Moreover, Australian Italians are still the largest ethnic group in Australia, and the language is the third most spoken language in the country after English and Chinese (Baldassar & Pesman, 2005, p. 55). Conversing in Italian and mostly in their regional dialect, when required, facilitated a flow of information allowing the participants to express concepts, events and personal emotions without reservation, especially since some key concepts would not translate easily into English. It is unlikely that the same result could have been achieved if the interviews had been done in English. The choice of holding the interviews in Italian is also supported by interactionists who point out that conversations between different groups in a society can be complicated and difficult. This is because each group has its own treasured culture, and the associated meanings and values are communicated through a distinctive set of symbols, codes, and key phrases in the language.
Issues of confidentiality were adhered to during the presentation session, focus group interviews and the in-depth interviews process as most participants had concerns about revealing their identity and the house’s location. The participants were asked for permission to digitally record their testimony and, when applicable, the features of their houses. The interview questions were available to participants prior to their interviews, as was the opportunity to read, review and edit the partial transcripts of their interviews. Furthermore, an interview journal was created from the notes taken during the interviews.

The selection of interviewees was based on clearly defined criteria. Interviewees were limited to migrants born in Italy during the 1930s and 1940s, who are referred to in this study as ‘first-generation Italian migrants’. All selected first-generation migrants had migrated to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, after WWII reconstruction in Italy. As all interviewees were approximately 20 to 30 years old at the time of their arrival in Australia, I assumed that people who lived in their homeland for several years and migrated as young adults were preferable as subjects because they had spent enough time in Italy to assimilate a way of life belonging to a cultural group. Additionally, social class is a ‘limit’ that must also be taken into account. Pierre Bourdieu (1992) argues that domestic behaviour and cultural priorities differ according to the social class people belong to. Those selected for interview can be broadly classified as working class people. They constituted the majority of Italian immigrants migrating to Australia in the post-WWII period (Cresciani, 1985, p. 95). In order to simplify the naming of working class ‘first generation Italian migrants’ selected for this thesis I chose to use the term ‘Italian migrants’. Accounting for the criteria listed above, the case study included 40 Italian migrants (20 male and 20 female) and four self-built houses, whose criteria for selection are defined in the following section. The oral data and material evidence were concurrently collected at different stages.

In the following sections I discuss the multiple qualitative methods which were employed and combined to collect oral data from the case study.

4.2.1.1 Focus group interviews

There were five focus groups with eight participants in each group. The interviews, conducted over a five week period from 24th March to 28th April, 2008, were held at a retirement village for Italian immigrants located in Canossa Hospital in Oxley and at the Italian Club in Newmarket.
4.2.1.2 Semi-structured and in-depth interviews

Following on from the focus group interviews, appointment times for semi-structured interviews were arranged with twenty married couples. Semi-structured interviews were carried out at Canossa Hospital in Oxley, at the Italo-Australian Centre (Italian Club) in Newmarket and at the residences of eight of the participants who built their houses.

The hour long interviews with the twenty couples were recorded electronically, and later thematically analysed and partly transcribed in Italian. Participants were encouraged to bring to the interview any existing photographic material that they deemed relevant that they were willing to share. At the commencement of the in-depth interview, participants talked about any photographs they brought with them. The photo-elicitation interview provided a model for collaborative research, where the interviewer would become a listener as the participants interpreted the images for the interviewer. This method served as an ice-breaker activity to help to create a comfortable space for discussion. The interviews began with a number of generic questions directed at the respondent’s personal story about migrating to Australia, about their relationship with the neighbourhood, community, the city and their initial experience in Australia. The interviewees were then asked to provide a description of the homes in which they had lived in Italy and since their arrival in Australia. These included questions about the homes’ atmosphere, and physical characteristics. Interviews varied from light informal conversations to formal sessions, depending on the type of information required (for a sample of the full interview schedule, see Appendix D).

As pointed out by Creswell, one of the assumptions underpinning qualitative studies is that qualitative researchers are the primary instrument in data collection. Qualitative researchers must be physically on site, as opposed to quantitative researchers who rely on more remote means of data collection (Creswell, 2003b, p. 181; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As a result, for this thesis, the data were collected personally and an inductive process was adopted for generating meaning from the data (Creswell, 2003b, p. 182).

In-depth interviews with the four couples, who were chosen as cases, each of whom owned a house, took place in the participants’ house and sometimes involved other family members. The interviews took around two hours on average, were digitally recorded and then were partially transcribed. These interviews begun at the participants’ house, usually stimulated by a cup of coffee and some home-made biscuits. The interviews were conducted in line with the main question and set of sub-questions (See Appendixes F-I) following the three themes.
discussed previously. Interviews were open-ended and were allowed to take the conversation to different facets of their migration experience, to tell their stories of their housing experiences, to describe their previous houses in Italy and in Australia, to draw sketches, plans and elevations of houses, and show photographs of their former houses in Italy and in Australia. The interviews included a tour of the current house and yards. I took photographs myself and also collected photos of former houses in Italy, as well as architectural schemes of the current house.

4.2.2 Visual data (December 2008 – December 2009)

After gaining insight into Italian migrants’ oral histories, attention focused on their houses. The criteria for the selection of the houses were that the artefact had to be a single detached house built by Italian migrants in the Brisbane metropolitan area in the post-WWII period. Another criterion was that the house be on a quarter-acre block or, alternatively, a ‘single front block’. The assumption was that rented or renovated/extended houses are more limited in terms of modifications because of the restrictions posed by the owner, if rented, or by the configuration of the existing house, if owned. However, if built on a single front block, the freedom existed to build a new house as desired and as per their needs. Moreover, since the size of the lot has an impact on the size, structure and typology of the house, I limited my research to houses on a single front block.

4.2.2.1 Site visits and field observation

The study of Italian migrants’ houses on site and the collection of visual material were carried out simultaneously with in-depth interviews performed with migrant couples. This was done in order to explore the form of the houses occupied by Italians and to gather information about the experiences and background of the households, the number of family members and the major activities carried out inside the property.

The ability to enter people’s homes facilitated a direct observation of the domestic dwellings built by Italian migrants and of the social behaviour of the respondents. Additionally, it helped to establish friendships and remove barriers. During the site observation, I took field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals. Additionally, I designed a protocol for recording information including: (1) descriptive notes and sketches, a description of the physical settings, and a reconstruction of a dialogue; (2) reflective notes (personal thoughts and impressions); and (3) statistic information, that is, the field setting’s time, place and date.
4.2.2.2 Visual material (drawings and photographs)

The field work was done over a twelve month period (December 2008 to December 2009). The four houses were recorded and analysed in the same way, according to a conventional architectural format comprising architectural plans, sections and elevations. This was supplemented with photographs and sketches which were accompanied by notes in order to highlight key architectural elements (Hockings, 1984, p. 33; Mason, 2001, pp. 102-110). In particular, photographs were taken of each house in order to identify any distinctiveness. The aim was similar to that of the interviews: to gain insight into the influences of Italian migrants on the form of their houses, focusing on the use of construction materials and technique, and stylistic/decorative features visible on the external façade. From the data collected, conclusions were drawn about the interior configuration and utilization of domestic space, the utilization of the yards, including the decorative/utilitarian landscape features visible in the garden and the way the spatial form contributed to social interaction.

The diagram below illustrates the data collection procedure.
Informative presentation session
outlining the nature and aims of the research project

Venues
• Canossa Private Hospital
  (Retirement village in Oxley)
• Italo-Australian centre
  (Italian Club in Newmarket)

Selection of 40 first generation migrants limited to:
• Born in Italy from 1930-40s
• Migrated to Australia between 1950-60s
• Working class

Five focus group interviews with 20 couples

Semi-structured and photo elicitation interviews with 15 couples

In-depth and photo elicitation interviews with 4 couples who built their houses

Diagram 15: Data collection procedure

Case Study

Multiple Cases

Selection of 4 houses limited to:
• Typology (detached house on a single front block)
• Period of construction (built in the post WWII period)
• Location (Brisbane)

Site visits
Field observation
Photo elicitation
Architectural drawings and documents
Sketches
Photographs
Field observation and notes
4.2.3 The cases: Italian migrants and artefacts

In this section I provide details of the twenty couples interviewed for the focus group and interviews. The names listed below are pseudonyms of those interviewed. I provide details of their (1) year of birth; (2) city and region of origin; (3) year of migration to Australia and/or Brisbane; (4) family status and composition at their departure from Italy; (5) place of arrival in Australia and/or Brisbane; (6) profession in Australia and/or Brisbane. As already mentioned, I selected four houses owned by four Italian migrant couples. Following are the details of the twenty couples interviewed. The first four couples are those who built their own houses in Brisbane.

Case 1:
Lina and Vittorio were both born in 1935 in Pasian di Prato and Rivignano, Udine, in Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. Vittorio migrated to Australia in 1956 and Lina migrated in 1961, after marrying Vittorio who returned to Italy in 1960 for a period of six months. In 1961 they arrived in Melbourne while Lina was pregnant with her first daughter, Lucia. After spending one week with friends in Melbourne they moved to Ingham to work in the cane fields. In 1967 they moved to Brisbane where Vittorio found work in road construction and Lina was self-employed in the clothes manufacturing industry. They built their own house in Everton Park in 1983.

Case 2:
Maria and Salvatore were born in 1934 in Villaseta and in 1930 in Favara, Agrigento in the region of Sicily. Maria and Salvatore had known each other in Italy. Salvatore left for Australia in 1954, promising to write to Maria. For four years they exchanged letters and in April 1959 Maria married Salvatore by proxy. Salvatore explained that marrying by proxy was a popular practice among Italians in Australia during the mass migrations of the 1950s and 1960s. It usually involved couples from the same village or region, many of whom had already met or were introduced by the respective families. Most Italian men preferred to build a life with someone who shared their language and traditions. Six months after the wedding, they were happily living together in North Queensland where Carlo worked as a cane cutter. They worked in the cane fields in Mareeba until 1968, when they moved to Brisbane. Salvatore worked as a concreter-builder for 30 years and Maria was a housewife. They built their house in 1982 in Everton Park.

Case 3:
Flavia and Aldo were born in 1938 and 1936 respectively, in Monteforte Irpino, Avellino in Campania. After marrying in Italy in 1952, they migrated together the same year. After spending two months in Sydney with friends, they moved to Mareeba, North Queensland, where they lived and worked in the cane fields until 1963. On their arrival in Brisbane, Aldo was employed in tunnelling and road construction and Flavia worked as a cleaner. They built their own house in Aspley in 1983.

Case 4:
Pina and Carmelo were born in Acireale Catania, Sicily in 1939 and 1932 respectively. Carmelo migrated to Australia in 1954 and Pina migrated in 1959, after marrying by proxy (photo wedding by proxy). Pina pointed out that in Italy in the 1950s most girls were not allowed to leave home as single women. For many, marriage represented a way out of grinding poverty. Therefore, once a woman accepted a proposal and the documents were in order, it was common practice in Italy to be married by proxy to someone living overseas. The ceremony was like any other church wedding, conducted before friends and relatives, but with a family member standing in for the groom. After the arrival of the bride to Australia, the event would be formalised with a studio photograph of the married couple in their new house. Carmelo worked first in Brisbane as a painter and then as a carpenter and tiler up to retirement in 1998. Pina assisted in her husband’s business. They built their own house in Everton Park in 1984.

Case 5:
Concetta and Domenico (Mimmo) were both born in Olmedo, Sassari in Sardegna in 1932 and 1931. Domenico migrated in 1954 and Concetta in 1957. They married by proxy in 1957. They resided in Ingham from 1954 to 1962 where they worked in the cane fields. In 1962 they moved to Brisbane where Mimmo was employed as a tiler and concreter and Concetta was employed in clothes manufacturing. They worked their way up from poverty to become owners of a small food shop in 1980. They both retired in 2000.

Case 6:
Teresa and Franco (Frank) originally from Sarno, Salerno in Campania, were born in 1940 and 1938. Franco migrated in 1952 and after working for five years in Ingham in the cane fields he went back to Italy and married Maria. They returned together to Brisbane in 1958. They lived and worked in Ingham for another five years and in 1963 they moved to Brisbane. Franco was a builder and Maria helped him since she had worked as an accountant in Italy. In 1983 they returned to their native town in Italy and lived there for the period of a year.
Case 7:
Gina and Giuseppe (Bepi) are from Sacile, Pordenone in Friuli Venezia Giulia, where they were born in 1939 and 1940. After marrying in 1958, they migrated to Australia in 1959. They worked in Ingham for twelve years and then moved to Brisbane in 1971. Giuseppe was involved in the building industry, operating a business as a small builder and Gina worked as a secretary for an Italian governmental company.

Case 8:
Teresa and Antonio (Tony) were born in Trieste, in 1932 and 1931. They migrated as refugees to Australia in 1952 with their own families. They were told that in 1947 when Italy ceded the lands surrounding the Free Territory of Trieste to Yugoslavia, many Giuliani-Dalmati left their homes to go to Italy for protection. Many were refused Italian passports and became stateless people. Teresa and Antonio moved from the refugee camps in Naples and Palermo, waiting up to four years before being accepted into Australia. On their arrival in 1952, they were shipped out to the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre in New South Wales, where they spent two months waiting for an offer of temporary work. They married in 1954. On their arrival in Brisbane, Teresa worked in a laundry and initially Antonio worked as a handyman. Antonio changed jobs a few times, before working as a storeman, where he remained until retirement. They highlighted the fact that for ten years they did not have a day’s holiday. They worked from early morning until late at night because the laundry gave Teresa extra work. Antonio helped his wife every evening after he finished work.

Case 9:
Emma and Luigi came from Rocca Montepiano e Acquila in Abbruzzo and were born in 1932 and 1933. After their marriage in 1954, they migrated to Australia in 1955. Alfonso’s brother was already in Australia. They lived in Mareeba from 1955 to 1965 where they worked first in the cane fields and then in the tobacco industry. In 1966 they moved to Brisbane. Alfonso was a small builder and Emma worked for Co.As.It. In 1972 they returned to Italy initially to settle, but after a period of eighteen months they returned to Australia.

Case 10:
Pia and Luciano from Lucca, Tuscany, were born in 1937 and 1936. Luciano migrated in 1959, invited by his two brothers who migrated in 1956. After their marriage by proxy in 1960, Pia arrived in Australia. They worked in Mareeba for 7 years and then they moved to Brisbane where they opened a food store which they managed for nearly forty years.
Case 11:
Vittorina and Paolo are from Trieste and Udine. Born in 1936 and 1934, Paolo migrated to Australia in 1955 on the ship ‘Toscanelli’. Two years later, he married his wife by proxy and she joined Paolo in Australia. Paolo worked in Brisbane as a painter-decorator and Vittorina worked in a food store for a few years.

Case 12:
Anna and Italo were born in Cagliari and Naples in 1936. Italo migrated to Australia in 1958 and Anna arrived in 1959 by invitation of a family friend who was working with Italo in the building industry. They first met in Brisbane and after a few months they were married. In 1965 they opened a factory manufacturing windows and door frames. Anna helped her husband with the books in the business.

Case 13:
Carmela and Gennaro are from Agrigento and Naples, Campania and Sicily. Born in 1940 and 1939, they met in Australia in 1960, two years after their arrival. They were both invited to Australia by relatives. After changing a few jobs, Carmela ran a food preparation shop in Aspley until 1995, and Luigi worked as a concreter and small builder for nearly forty years.

Case 14:
Assunta and Pasquale were born in Chieti and L’Aquila, in Abruzzo, in 1930 and 1934. Pasquale migrated to Australia in 1952 arriving on the ship ‘Toscana’, after his brother Pino. He worked in Ingham for 5 years and then he returned to Italy to marry Assunta. They arrived in Australia together in 1959. They lived and worked in Ingham for five more years and then moved to Brisbane in 1964. After changing a few jobs, they became involved in importing foodstuffs from Italy until 1998, when they retired.

Case 15:
Filomena and Armando, born in 1931 and 1930 in Catania and Cagliari, met in Brisbane in 1958. They both migrated to Australia by invitation from their older brothers. Armando worked as a builder, tiler, carpenter, painter, or as he defined himself ‘a carpenter-handyman’ until 1998. His wife assisted in her husband’s small building company as an accountant.

Case 16:
Iselina and Mario were born in Avellino and Naples in 1933 and 1935. After marrying in Italy in 1959, they spent their honeymoon on the ship ‘Aurelia’ migrating to Australia. Iselina’s
brother, who migrated in 1956, helped them to settle in Australia. They lived and worked in North Queensland for six years and then they moved to Brisbane in 1965. From 1968, they ran a building materials trading company in Brisbane, however they have now retired.

Case 17:
Dina and Michele were born in 1938 and 1935 in Naples and Palermo. They married in 1957 and migrated to Australia in 1958. They spent six years in Mareeba where Michele worked as a cane cutter. In 1965 they moved to Brisbane. After working in the construction industry, Michele, with the help of Dina, started a food importing business. They ran a food store for thirty years.

Case 18:
Giuseppina and Silvano, were both born in 1930 in Salerno and Avellino. Silvano migrated to Australia in 1955 invited by his brother Pino. In 1960 Silvano returned to Italy to marry Giuseppina. On their arrival in Brisbane, Silvano kept working with his brother as a concreter-builder and Giuseppina worked in a laundry. In 1968 they opened a building construction materials importing company specializing in tiles, which now is operated by their son, Pietro.

Case 19:
Serena and Amedeo were born in 1932 and 1933 in Pola, Triste and Udine. They migrated to Australia in 1954 on the ship ‘Fairsea’. Amedeo worked as a tiler, painter decorator and builder from 1956. He ran his own company as a professional builder for nearly thirty years. He retired in 2005 after the business passed to his son Paolo.

Case 20:
Lucia and Angelo were born in Naples and Ragusa in 1929 and 1930. They migrated to Australia in 1950 following their older brothers. They met in North Queensland where they married and worked in the sugar cane industry for thirteen years. They moved to Brisbane in 1963 and ran a food importing and preparation company.

4.3 Data Analysis

This research employed qualitative exploration as the main method of examination. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3), qualitative research studies adopt a variety of methods to collect data, including personal experience, interview, cultural texts, observational and visual material. These methods are used to collect data describing the participants’ way of life, after
which a variety of interpretative practices are used to better understand the subject under investigation (Cooper & Schindler, 2008, p. 162).

The data were analysed from August 2009 to December 2010. It is organised according to categories and chronologically. Patterns and themes are identified and described. Topics are analysed for each individual case and across cases. To check the accuracy and validity of the findings, ‘triangulation’ from different sources (Yin, 2003, p. 159) will be adopted. Normally data collection methods are combined or triangulated and, in addition to data sources, theory might also be triangulated, in order to ensure the validity of the case study research (Denzin, 1978). According to Johansson, triangulation, which is defined as the combination of different levels of techniques, methods, strategies, or theories, is the essence of case study strategy (Johansson, 2003, p. 8).

This research utilizes discourse analysis, as a method of interpreting any form of written and spoken language. The aim was to identify recurring ideas and views, and/or meaningful categories or themes, within the conversational data or the transcript of the conversation, in order to identify shared patterns of talking and features. In order to achieve this, I transcribed and then deconstructed parts of the conversations recorded during the interviews. I then attempted to understand the issue being explored and the way in which participants constructed their own version of the events that had occurred.

This following section highlights the methods used to interpret the collected data and is divided into two parts. The first describes the ways used to interpret the oral data and the second explains how the visual material was analysed. Additionally a focus is made on the role of the investigator in the data interpretation.

### 4.3.1 Interpreting oral data

The interpretation of personal narratives of Italians’ stories gathered during the interviews was based on discourse analysis, since this method of interpreting the meaning of language, texts and visual representations, is able to *move beyond the text, the subtext, and representation, to uncover issues of power relationships that inform what people think and do* (Waitt, 2005, p. 165). As highlighted by Azriel (2010, p. 51) the discourse is influenced by the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault who conceived discourse within a theoretically informed framework exploring *the rules about the production of knowledge through language (meaning) and its influence over what we do* (Waitt, 2005, p. 164).
It is also crucial to highlight the fact that the interviews were conducted in only one language, Italian. All participants delivered their stories in this language, their mother-tongue, expressing their thoughts, opinions and feelings. Having this shared native language allowed me to gain a better understanding of the ideas and feelings surrounding the home than what would have been possible for an interviewer conducting the same study in a non-native language (Vygotsky, 1978). While the exact words participants used were translated into English, the ideas and concepts conveyed originally in Italian allowed these translations to reflect a much richer understanding of the ways migrants view their homes and relate to them.

4.3.2 Observation and interpretations of visual data

The analysis of the visual data followed the same approach as that applied to the oral data, in that it employed discourse analysis as the primary analytical tool. Throughout the results (Chapters 5-6-7) selected quotes are presented, along with drawings and photographs which are shown in the appendices. The aim was to analyze and interpret the visual data in a consistent manner, because visual data provided different knowledge about the way participants see the world and understand it.

The photographs taken during the site visits were used to document the interviewees’ houses and to provide an important point of reference in a study which considers both the intangible ideas put forward by interviewees and the physical manifestation of these ideas when translated to the architectural features of their houses. Visual material helped in better understanding the role of cultural traditions and socio-cultural forces, that is, activities, and physical variables, as determining factors in shaping the form of Italian migrants’ houses.

In addition to the visual material collected, interviewees were also encouraged to draw plans and elevations of the previous houses in which they resided. This has enabled interviewees to provide more detailed descriptions of the way they interpreted the form of their previous houses, and more specifically the way architectural and spatial features were of particular relevance to them.

Furthermore, interviewees were asked to draw urban plans of the past built environment where their houses were located (Gould & White, 1986). My interest focused on the way in which people perceive certain urban landmarks, like town squares and malls for example, as places enhancing social interaction (Lynch, 1960). This visual method facilitated the expression of perceptions related to the relationship between the built environment and their houses (Haynes, 1981).
Lastly, a small number of my own images were used to highlight the architectural features and the spatial distribution of the house, to help participants to point out details which they considered relevant to the aim of the investigation. By using this approach, the interviewees could further contribute to the study by highlighting those features which they believed made their houses distinctive.

### 4.3.3 The role of the investigator

In this section I discuss my role within the interviews, highlighting the ways my specific identity influenced the interviewees and their answers.

The location of the in-depth interviews with the owners of the houses explored was always in their houses. This is a crucial aspect for the aim of the investigation, since the house was also the object of investigation of examination, not only the setting of the interview. Holding the in-depth interviews at the participants’ houses facilitated a deeper familiarity than was possible at the Italian Club and Canossa Hospital, where I held the focus-group interviews and the initial in-depth interviews.

Also, the participants always offered to be interviewed at their houses. This meant that participants, by inviting me into their homes, were willing to expose their houses to me. All participants expressed their clear and welcome approval for my request to take photos of the interior and exterior features of their houses.

My position as the researcher was influenced by factors, including my age, mother tongue, gender and profession. Below I will discuss how these four factors affected the interviews with participants (Mullings, 1999).

The first category is age. I was younger than all of the Italian migrants I interviewed, and as I am an Italian who migrated to Australia just a few years ago, they assumed they knew what I was going through, and they talked about their difficulties in settling in Australia forty years earlier. Therefore, most of the interviewees related to my position. They empathized with me because they felt I was ‘walking the same road’ forty or fifty years later. This facilitated conversations about general opinions, comments and differences on culture and way of life, but also about the construction industry, the way houses were and are built in Italy and Australia.
In addition the interviews were influenced by the fact that both investigator and interviewees spoke the same native language. It is essential to speak the language of the immigrant group concerned if its cultural frame is to be explored, understood and analysed.

The third category is gender. As already highlighted, half of the participants were male and both partners were always present at the interview. I noticed during the interview process that it had been easier for me to establish contact with the men. However, on different topics, both men and women were open in contributing to the conversation. Women spoke more freely about domestic activities, specifically in relation to the space utilized for food preparation and cooking, while men were more confident in discussing income related activities which required the use of domestic space at home.

Finally, I noticed that my profession influenced the ease of conversation, particularly with those who were involved in the building industry. These interviewees became more comfortable with me once I informed them that I am an architect. This facilitated a detailed discussion about: typologies of houses; structural issues; the materials and construction techniques adopted; the decorative features visible on the façade; and costs and practices related to residential building.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the procedure for collecting and analysing the data. I started with an outline of the criteria for the case selection and I explained how, where and when oral and visual data were collected. I also discussed the interpretative approach of discourse analysis used to interpret migrants’ narratives and visual representations. In the last section I highlighted the factors related to the position of the investigator which may influence the collection and analysis of the data.
CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS: THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND
5.1 Introduction

The following analysis identifies the ways did post WWII Italian migrants influence the form of their self-built houses in Brisbane, and what were the forces behind, and outcomes of, this influence?

In order to deal with this multifaceted main question outlined above, a number of specific sub-questions were addressed. The first sub-question enquiring when, why and how Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane emerged from the view of Gipstein. As explained by Gipstein (2007), since culture and physical forces, that is materials and construction techniques, are inevitably a reflection of time and space, the form of the house is related to its period of construction and location. In this Chapter I analyze the collected data in order to answer the first sub-question asking about the specific period Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane, the reasons driving their decision to build them at a specific time, and the way personnel was selected for the construction of the house. My argument is that the period in which migrants built their own houses in Brisbane is a result of the motivations which encouraged Italian migrants to leave Italy, of their expectations from migrating to Australia and of their initial immigration plan.

In the following data analysis chapters, references to transcript extracts will appear in text as ‘Transcript: couple number: minute in transcript where quote can be located’. For example, (Transcript 11:78). Also, in order to not interrupt the flow of the thesis, visual materials have been placed in appendices rather than within the body of the text.

5.2 Immigration course, urbanization patterns and housing forms: An historical overview

Firstly, an analysis of first generation Italian migrants’ initial immigration plans will help to understand the period in which Italian migrants built their own houses, the reasons behind their decision to build a house and the way in which they built the house. Secondly, an analysis of the house forms and settlement patterns in which Italian migrants lived before building their own houses in Brisbane will help in understanding how previous architectural and spatial forms have influenced the form of migrants’ present houses in Brisbane.
5.2.1 The immigration plan and expectations of Italian migrants

5.2.1.1 Fascism and post WWII in Italy

All interviewees resided in Italy up to the early post war reconstruction period. They all have a clear memory of the historical and political events which occurred in Italy from the 1940s to the 1950s. To people of my generation, those events which occurred 60 to 70 years ago, seem far away and somewhat detached, but for Italian migrants interviewed for this study, those events are recounted as if they had happened yesterday.

The interviewees described how, even in the period prior to the war, conditions in Italy were dramatic and precarious. Luigi (Transcript 9:77) and other participants discussed how in the lead up to WWII, the Fascist dictatorship, led by Benito Mussolini who held power from 1922 to 1943, impoverished the Italian economy. The policy of Benito Mussolini and its effect on the population is also emphasized by historical scholars such as Randazzo and Cigler who highlighted the fact that, due to the alliance signed by the dictators Mussolini and Hitler in 1933, Italy under its dictatorship had entered the war on the side of the Germans (Randazzo & Cigler, 1987). The impacts of this decision were far-reaching. Economically, the high taxes collected to fund the war effort drastically impoverished the population in the early 1940s. Randazzo and Cigler confirmed this in their work, pointing out the detrimental impact of Mussolini’s twenty year dictatorship on the Italian economy and the compounding effect of the disastrous end of WWII (Randazzo & Cigler, 1987).

Interviewees stated that the poverty the Italian population suffered during WWII because of the fascist dictatorship was followed at the end of the war with a lack of work. As mentioned below by Carmela (Transcript 13:87), after the devastating defeat, many Italians who were already impoverished found themselves to be unemployed.

*Italy was poor even before the beginning of WWII. Mussolini took supreme control over the military of Italy in 1925. He killed the leaders of the opposition parties to stay in power. The dictatorship lasted until 1943. Then the war made things worse.*
for us [Italians]. Italy lost the war: many suburbs in big cities, buildings and houses were razed to the ground and there was no work for many of us (Transcript 13:87).

Also, as Assunta and Pasquale (Transcript 14:107) stressed, the post war status of the Italian economy did not leave much scope for employment and no positive prospects for the immediate future. As quoted below, Pasquale sadly and vividly remembered the precarious conditions of the Italian population and how there were not enough work opportunities for Italians in the post war period.

*We really did not have any opportunity of employment over there [in Italy]. No money, no work and not enough food: this was Italy in those miserable days. There were families who had more, but in general we were very poor* (Transcript 14:107).

Armando (Transcript 15:17) pointed out that the lack of work opportunities was in his view also related to the phenomenon of overcrowding, which became common in many Italian cities during the post war period. This was caused by people moving from rural areas towards the cities, due to the lack of land to be cultivated in rural areas. Moreover, as Armando stressed, the lack of agricultural land was caused by the Italian government’s political incapacity to distribute the agricultural land among the working class.

*agricultural land was mainly owned by a few families and that the land reform attempted by the Italian democratic government in order to distribute the land among the farm labourers was useless because finally the agricultural land could not be expropriated due to the political influence of these families’* (Transcript 12:21).

The way the Italian government managed land reform, which could have helped the national economy to recover, is also emphasized by Ginsborg (1990). As he points out, even though Italy in the post war period became a republic with a new constitution, the working class lost faith in the Italian government because it was unable to provide sufficient reform for a stable economic future. In particular, he pointed out that the agrarian reforms, funded through the Marshall Plan in order to reduce the large land owners’ hegemony, in particular in the south of Italy, and expropriate thousands of hectares of land possessed by a few rich families in favour of the agricultural labourer with no financial resources, were blocked because of the difficulty of removing the old fascists from the bureaucracy. This worsened the Italian population’s living
conditions because landless labourers were forced to move towards the cities to search for work. In his words:

*In the countryside landless labourers had often been reduced to penury. The situation in the rural areas was also aggravated by the temporary overpopulation caused by mass emigration from the cities (Ginsborg, 1990, p. 80).*

As Harper and Faccioli state, in Sicily the agricultural land could not support the entire regional population and this encouraged Italians from Sicily to migrate towards more prosperous destinations. As stated by Castles, this phenomenon occurring in other regions of Italy was one of the main reasons for emigrants to leave the homeland.

*Eighty percent of Sicilian farmland was run under the latifondo system, and most of the remaining Italian south. With its low productivity, the land was not sufficient to support even the local population, and the system survived only because people emigrated (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 37).*

*Neither the peasant movements of the 1940s, nor the Christian democratic government’s attempts at land reform and industrialisation from the 1950s, did much to break through the age-old cycle of exploitation, poverty, corruption and homelessness. Emigration was the only way out (Castles, 1992, p. 37).*

Paolo and Vittorina also pointed out that because their houses were severely damaged during the German and Allied bombing in 1944, at the end of the war many Italians found themselves homeless and consequently they were forced to live in shacks, barracks, schools and camps.

*Hundreds of thousands of Italians were homeless because of the bombardments from the Germans and then from the Allies too. Houses had to be rebuilt but there was not enough money. There was no money even to buy food and no work for all the people. Furthermore landless labourers were almost starving and basic foodstuffs supply was minimal. People migrated from rural areas to cities. Italy was about to fall in a civil war. The country needed to be reorganised and rebuilt….. (Transcript 11:14).*

This is also acknowledged by Rosoli. He states that during the final period of WWII the Italian resistance movement increased. The Italian partisans, as military formations of the Italian
resistance movement opposed to Nazi-Fascism in Italy, fought the Germans and they also fought against the formation of the ‘Fascist Italian Social Republic’. The Germans, in their slow retreat, caused as much destruction as they could to punish the Italian people for having overthrown Mussolini and for welcoming the Allies. Additionally, the Allied forces brought ruin to Italian cities and to the countryside through a programme of intensive aerial bombing in their efforts to defeat the Germans. When the war finally ended, the Republic of Italy following its defeat was included by the United States into the ‘European Recovery Program’ or Marshall Plan, to allow Italy to move towards its reconstruction (Rosoli, 1978).

WWII devastated Italy. After the Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy’s withdrawal from the war, the Germans occupied the country and fought Allied soldiers as they advanced mile by mile, producing a year and a half of continual combat. As the Nazi army retreated, it destroyed roads, bridges, and dams and thus set back the full modernization of agriculture while extending Italy’s desperate conditions to well past the war’s end. Because much of the fighting took place in the south, it damaged what was already a more primitive agricultural system (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 42).

As many interviewees emphatically pointed out, the reconstruction process encouraged through the Marshall Plan took longer than expected. This is also pointed out by Padovani (1984) who highlighted the fact that the reconstruction process was slow in terms of infrastructure and particularly uneven in terms of housing. In his view this was caused (1) by political instability reflected in town planning, lending and public housing policies and (2) by a lack of personal and state funds.

Many interviewees sadly remember the shortage of food they experienced during and after the war. For example, as Assunta highlights below, the food available in her country town was scarce and often there was not a wide variety.

There was shortage of food and the only thing we could find was polenta or bread. There was no great variety of meat, fish or pasta available (Transcript 14:111).

The problem of the scarcity in Italy in the post war period is also stressed by Harper, Faccioli and Ginsborg. As they highlight, in the post war period there was great poverty in cities as well as in rural areas, and generally in Italy food was scarce, due to the large population and also due to inefficiency in the way food was stored and distributed.
Italy’s economy declined in the nineteenth century, which led to chronic food shortages that lasted until the 1950s. The population was too large for the agricultural system; surplus food was inefficiently stored or distributed; the government taxed agriculture and food and encouraged production for export, even in the face of shortages (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 38).

By the end of the war, Italy was one of the poorest countries of Europe. The rationed food available per person was 1160 calories in 1941 and dropped to 990 by 1944. Most Italian agriculture remained a peasant system based on sharecropping, land rent, and daily labour. After the war, peasants from across Italy agitated for land reform, access to land owned by deposed fascist landowners, and, more simply, food and jobs (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 45).

In the cities bombardment had left many hundreds of thousands of Italians homeless and basic foodstuffs were in very short supply (Ginsborg, 1990, p. 80).

Therefore, from the evidence collected I summarize five main factors which encouraged the interviewees to leave their native country and to migrate to a host nation. More specifically, it was (1) the poverty due to the pre-WWII Fascist dictatorship and to the ruinous outcome of the war; (2) the lack of working opportunities due to the Italian government’s inefficient policy in distributing the agricultural land among people and a consequent lack of confidence and hope in the future; (3) the phenomenon of overcrowding which occurred in the big cities; (4) the loss or the damage to the family house; and (5) the scarcity of food. In the next sections, I will explore the extent to which these factors, which played a relevant role in enhancing in the Italian population the wish to leave the homeland, were also crucial in influencing the spatial form of Italian migrants’ houses.

As interviewees pointed out, the common desire to leave Italy was also facilitated by the Italian Republican government, which in the 1950s approved a favourable migration policy in order to encourage the Italian people, that is those who were poor and unemployed, to migrate towards foreign countries, such as Australia, Canada and Argentina, which were all experiencing a shortage of labour. Therefore, stimulated by the five factors listed above and facilitated by a favourable migratory policy, interviewees decided to leave Italy and to migrate to Australia. As stated below by Luciano (Transcript 10:72) the departure day is still fresh in his memory.
One morning my dad told me that the government selected people to go to South America, Canada or Australia. The only requirement was that you just needed to be willing to work and to be clean [I mean to have a clean criminal record]. My dad told me ‘Why don’t you go? ... In Australia, Canada or South America you will have a better life than here. You will have a better future there and you will be able to help the family back home too’. I did not even know where Australia was geographically located, but I applied and I was selected (Transcript 10:72).

As Ugolini points out, in March 1949 a report to the Italian Department of Emigration explained that the population was exceeding the economic resources and structures of the country by almost four million. Therefore, the Italian government assumed that migration could relieve mounting pressures caused by overcrowding and unemployment. Consequently, encouraged by the new Christian Democrat Prime Minister, De Gasperi, Italy started looking for overseas countries as possible emigrating outlets where Italians who could not find employment at home could go and work (Ugolini, 1991, p. 236). Furthermore, as Cresciani states, the government assumed that Italians migrating overseas could eventually provide the financial support to their struggling families in Italy and therefore could also be of assistance to the Italian economy (Cresciani, 1985, p. 95). Finally, in 1951 Christian Democrat Prime Minister, De Gasperi, put in place a policy to encourage an exodus of Italian emigrants to Australia.

5.2.1.2 The Australian government policy

As mentioned earlier, while post war industrial production in Italy had diminished and millions of people were unemployed (Baldassar & Pesman, 2005), Australia was facing the opposite problem of shortage of labour, due to rapid agricultural and industrial development. In Australia, like in most European counties, the war placed great strain on the economy. For nearly six years the industry had been mainly producing war weapons and the war had caused the death of thousands of Australians who were part of the workforce. This meant that for years after the end of the war, there was a shortage of labour in Australia (Castles, Alcorso, Rando, & Vasta, 1992). In July 1945, the newly appointed first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, aiming at overcoming the Australian small population problem, embarked on a ‘populate or perish’ program which would increase the country’s population and build up its manufacturing and industrial resources. Summing up the need for the immigration scheme, he addressed these words to the nation in 1945:
Additional population is Australia’s greatest need. For security in wartime, for full development and prosperity in peacetime, our vital need is more Australians. The Pacific War taught us Australians a lesson we must never forget - that in any future war we can never hope to hold our country unaided against a powerful invader … We can never hope to hold our country unaided against a powerful invader … Australia can increase her population three-fold or more and still provide full employment and adequate standards of living for all (Church, 2005, p. 35).

Randazzo and Cigler stated that in 1945, due to shortage of labour, the first country that Australia turned to in order to source migrants was Britain, because Australians believed that people from Britain could most easily and speedily assimilate in Australian society. However, the number of migrants coming from Britain could not satisfy Australia’s demand. Consequently the Australian Government profoundly changed its immigration policy in order to encourage large scale migration of non-English speaking people from several countries. The aim was to increase the Australian population in order to develop the continent and to defend it if invasion came, as suspected by Arthur Calwell. In 1947, under the scheme called ‘Displaced Persons’, Australia agreed to take in 170,000 war refugees from many different European nations (Randazzo & Cigler, 1987).

In 1951 the governments of Italy and Australia agreed upon a bilateral immigration scheme which provided Italians with assistance with the cost of migration to Australia. The agreement resulted in the Australian government subsidising 25% of the cost of the voyage, the Italian Government paying 25%, with the remaining 50% to be provided as a loan to the migrant. This financial aspect was vital to the success of the migration policy promoted by the Italian and Australian governments (Bosworth, 1996).

In the years following the bilateral immigration scheme, the number of Italian arrivals in Australia increased significantly. The 1950s was the peak decade of Italian migration to Australia with approximately 194,000 Italians disembarking in Australia. This made Italians the second largest cultural group after the British. Within one decade, the immigration flow towards Australia increased thanks to an encouraged process of chain migration, where settled migrants would sponsor their family, relatives and friends. Consequently the number of Italians in Australia increased their number tenfold (Bosworth & R.Ugolini, 1992, pp. 191-206; Ruzzene & Battiston, 2006).
By virtue of the immigration policy that the Australian government adopted in the 1950s, many different cultural groups, not only limited to English, British and Italians, emigrated to Australia (Chow, 2003, pp. 6-8). More specifically, more than 100 different cultural groups migrated to Australia (Jayasuriya, 1997, p. 20) which makes it one of the world’s most multicultural societies. According to the 2006 Census, the Italian cultural group in Australia is the fourth behind English, Irish and Scottish and the Italian language is the second most commonly spoken language in a domestic context (Cresciani, 2003). This current study argues that if vernacular houses can be regarded as the direct reflection of socio-cultural forces, a multi-cultural nation such as Australia provides an ideal site for exploring the extent to which the Italian group has expressed their own socio-cultural preferences through the construction of their transnational houses.

5.2.1.3 The meaning of migration to Italians migrants: prosperity

The 1950s Italian government’s decision to advertise this opportunity to migrate overseas was interpreted as a way to give the unemployed and poor in Italy hope for a prosperous future. For example, as Aldo (Transcript 3:32) highlighted below, migrants were simply offered the opportunity to travel away from the ruins of Italy, work abroad for a few years, and then return with economic security to a nation which would have recovered from the outcome of the war.

*Italians willing to leave their homeland were not happy about leaving their parents, relatives and friends. But it was supposed to occur just for a few years.*

*What made us happy was the positive prospect for ourselves and our families future (Transcript 3:32).*

In addition, several interviewees, specifically Franco, Luigi and Pasquale, mentioned that migration had a distinct meaning to the Italian people in the 1950s: it meant migrating to America! It did not matter whether it was North America, South America or Australia which was the actual destination. The testimony below illustrates this point:

*After the war most migrants were encouraged to migrate to America. This was advertised by the government and it soon became a common belief among Italians. In reality migrants were directed only to Canada, Australia and South America. Nevertheless it was ‘America’ to everybody (Transcript 14:82).*
According to the interviewees, the term ‘America’ was used regardless of the destination since it carried a general meaning. That is, America stood for the dream that prosperity, wealth and well-being could be attained within a few years. This idea of ‘America’ being the ‘dreamland’ was influenced by the recognition that America also was the ‘winner’ of the war and Italy, on the contrary, had been left in ruins. As interviewees pointed out, in Italy, after the death of the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini in 1945 by the hands of the partisans, the Americans (or the Allies) disembarked in Sicily and Lazio and fought the invading Germans. Therefore, the Americans were recognized as the ‘rescuers’ of the Italian people. Moreover, interviewees pointed out that the United States had been exercising a powerful positive influence on the Italians even before the 1950s. Interviewees recalled that many Italians migrated en masse to cities like New York and Chicago in the 1920s after World War I and some of them, after becoming very rich in the United States, returned to their home towns in Italy. This enhanced the myth of a prosperous America among the Italian people who were willing to migrate in the 1950s. So because in the 1950s the United States of America closed its doors to Italians due to the significant waves of Italian immigration taking place in the 1920s, therefore Italians were allowed to migrate only to Australia, Canada or Argentina, America was still foremost in Italian people’s minds. The following quote from Italo (Transcript 12:22) encompasses this belief, which was widespread among the Italian population:

> *When I told some friends of mine that I wanted to migrate to Australia...they told me...‘lucky you ‘paesano’ you go to America and you will come back rich’. I replied that my destination was Australia and not the U.S.. But to everyone in the village it was just ‘America’. After four years we visited Italy since my father was sick...everyone called me and my wife ‘gli Americani’ (the Americans)! That was in the 1960s...but nowadays it is not much different: they all know we live in Australia and nevertheless every time we are in Italy we are called ‘the Americans’ Transcript 12:22).*

### 5.2.1.4 The immigration plan

In relation to the duration of their residence in Australia, all interviewees clearly stated that they did not intend to permanently leave ‘la madre patria’ (the homeland). As mentioned, their initial plan was to leave Italy for a period varying between two and five years, just long enough to improve their personal financial situation and that of their families at home in Italy. Interviewees revealed that they thought that this period away from Italy would have allowed them to return after a few years in a better financial position and to settle finally in Italy. As
quoted below by Armando and Amedeo, most participants defined this short period of absence from Italy as a temporary phase of ‘grandi sacrifici’ (immense sacrifices):

After I heard there was an opportunity to leave Italy, I thought that was a good opportunity to have a better life. ‘Two years will go fast...how much worse than Italy could Australia be? My mum told me. Italy lost the war and the country was in total ruin. On the other hand, Australia was one of the war’s winner countries. They said there was a lot of work, and that once you disembarked, you already had a job! So I thought that I could have been far away from my family for a few years, make a sacrifice, save some good money and then go back to Italy and buy a farm and some land to cultivate it (Transcript 15:47).

Amedeo, while showing a photo of the ‘Fairsea’ (Figure 1) on his departure from the port of Trieste in 1954, talked about his initial plan to stay away from Italy for a five year period. He also pointed out the fears that he shared with other Italian migrants about his future in Australia.

In the 1950s many ‘paesani’ (peasants), cousins and friends migrated towards Canada, Argentina and Australia. Living conditions were quite miserable in Italy. We wanted to leave Italy and to stay away just for a few years in order to help our families at home and then to return home with some money. I remember the morning of the 10th of August 1954 when the ‘Fairsea’ sailed out of the port of Trieste. We shared our worries for the future years far from the homeland with other ‘paesani’. We were worried about our future in Australia an unknown and far away nation. As you can see in this photo (Figure 1), we were not happy about leaving our beloved people but we really thought it would have been a sacrifice for a short period (Transcript 19:31).

The feeling of uncertainty about the future in Australia was dominant in the memory of most interviewees. Emigrants were about to leave the safety of their homeland and their families for an unknown land promising to fulfil a dream of prosperity. This feeling encouraged migrants to look for friendship even on the journey to Australia. For example, during his interview Paolo pointed out how on his voyage on the ‘Toscanelli’ in 1955 he met other Italian migrants, in particular Pietro and Pasquale, with whom he became lifelong friends sharing many times together in Australia.
During the journey on the ‘Toscanelli’ I met and became friends with other Italian migrants. Here in this photo (Figure 2) I was singing with Pietro and Pasquale, two of my best friends in Australia. We would have never thought we would spend most of our lives in Australia (Transcript 11:16).

Many interviewees recall the voyage to Australia as being an experience useful for socializing with other migrants and creating a new fresh social network. On the ship migrants felt uncertainty and loneliness for their future and this enhanced their need to create bonds with their fellow countrymen, even though this migration experience was supposed to last for a short period. This is an important insight and it highlights the need migrants have to enhance social interaction with others. Moreover, as Paolo confided, the feeling of uncertainty augmented Italian migrants’ intention to stay in Australia for a short time only. All interviewees clearly stated that they planned to migrate to Australia for limited period, varying from two to five years. This, in turn, had an impact on the period during which they built their own houses in Brisbane. For example as Paolo pointed out, since he intended to migrate to Australia for a short time, he did not have any intention of purchasing or building a house on arrival. As mentioned below, purchasing or building a house was considered a long term commitment, contrasting with his plan to reside in Australia only for a few years.

I, like many friends of mine, did not think at all about purchasing a house in Australia. The plan was to stay in Australia just for five years. We thought that was the period needed to save the money to buy some land and build a house in Italy at our return (Transcript 11:19).

Italo (Transcript 12:41) said that migrating to Australia simply would have allowed him to help his family back in Italy and, at the same time, contribute to improving his financial situation or his chances of having a better future on his return to Italy which was supposed to happen after only a few years.

You don’t migrate just for yourself. Not in those years. All of us migrated because we were poor and our families were poor. By migrating to America or to Australia we would have been capable of helping our families back in Italy. And later on we could have had the funds to buy a house in Italy. I helped my parents and my brothers for several years, until things started getting better for them too (Transcript 12:41).
As interviewees emphasized, migrating for a short period, varying from two to five years (to the so-called ‘America’, which for this study’s interviewees meant Australia), would have allowed them (1) to financially help their extended family back in Italy, (2) to provide the economic security needed to build a new house in Italy on their return, and/or (3) to open a business in their native country which was supposed to have recovered from the past devastation. This suggests that the idea of helping the family and building a house were values of central importance to Italian migrants. Besides, it also meant that, since Italian migrants’ initial plan was to stay away for a relatively short period, they did not arrive in Australia with the intention of settling and building their own houses. Finally, this is well expressed through Mario’s quote:

Initially I always kept thinking that across the ocean there were parents and relatives waiting patiently till I made my fortune and returned home to build my own house and settle with my new family. Initially I thought it was a matter of just a few years (Transcript 16:23).

In the diagram below I summarize the insights revealed from this first section.

![Diagram] (Diagram 16: The Italian migrants’ historical context)

5.2.2 Former house form in the homeland

After exploring the reasons interviewees left Italy, their initial migration plan on arrival in Australia and how their plan influenced their decision not to build on their arrival, participants were asked about the family composition and the form of the former house they lived in in Italy. In this section I argue that past houses of Italian migrants reminded participants of past family experiences and values. Therefore, past houses can be perceived as a ‘reference’ for the construction of a new house in a host country.
As most interviewees highlighted, before migrating to Australia, they commonly resided with their extended families in large multi-storey houses located in rural areas. For example, as Paolo (Transcript 11:21) pointed out, his grandparents, his parents with children, aunts and uncles lived together in a large house in a rural area near Trieste (Figure 3). This occurred because, as he stated below, in the 1950s many individual families did not have the opportunity to purchase a single dwelling due to common conditions of poverty and lack of employment in Italy.

In Friuli Venezia Giulia region, we lived in a big three storey house, as you can see from this photo (Figure 3). Although the house was large, there was not very much space for everyone, because five families were residing in the same building. We were poor at that time, like many other families. There was no work, therefore each family could not purchase its own house (Transcript 11:21).

Interviewees also described the architectural form of the house. For instance, Paolo revealed that in most cases, the façade of the extended family house was characterized by arches marking the entry (Figure 3). There were no balconies or extruding volumes like porches or terraces. In conclusion, the volumetric shape of the house was a parallelepiped.

The façade was also simple and tidy. I remember just arches marking the entry-exit doors and the windows at the levels above and also inside the house. There were no balconies (Transcript 11:34).

Paolo and other interviewees who lived with their extended families in Italy were asked to describe the distribution of the house where they lived. Mario’s description of his house is reported below:

Kitchen, dining area and storage rooms were located on the ground floor in the ‘zona giorno’ (day area) and bedrooms were located on the upper levels in the ‘zona notte’ (night area). This was common, not just for our house, but for most houses in the area. There was no living area. The dining area worked as a sort of living area, especially after the meals. The bathroom was not within the house. It was located in the back in the house and detached from the house. I remember it was hard to walk in the night sometimes to go to the bathroom, especially in cold winters (Transcript 16:41).
According to the description of the spatial distribution of the house by Amedeo (Transcript 19:21), Mario (Transcript 16:41), Paolo and Vittorina (Transcript 11:9), it clearly emerged that the multi-storey house was generally characterized by a ground floor level comprising a kitchen, a dining area, and some extra rooms allocated to store food and clothes, and by two or three upper levels including bedrooms. The ground floor area was also named ‘zona giorno’ (day area) and the area at the upper levels was named ‘zona notte’ (night area). The bathroom was not usually allocated within the domestic space of the house, but was outside the house. Also, interviewees revealed that there was no space allocated to a formal living area. As pointed out by Mario, the dining area functioned as a sort of living area, where the members of the family usually spent some time together after dinner. The description of the typical extended family house revealed by the participants allowed the researcher to draw the schematic plans and elevations of the house (Figure 7), which were then approved by the participants.

Teresa (Transcript 8:41), revealed that the large multi-storey house where she resided in Trieste before migrating to Australia allowed enough rooms for a few individual families to live. As she highlights, most of houses, like hers (Figure 4), were located in rural areas surrounded by land where the extended family grew crops. She stresses that these activities contributed to providing income for the family.

The house shown in this photo (Figure 4) is the house where I grew up. It was and still is located in a rural area with not many houses around. My father had not much land, but enough to cultivate vegetables and fruit for the surviving of the family, especially when the harvest the wheat was not abundant and it could not provide a large income (Transcript 8:41).

Interviewees, who lived with their extended families in Italy, mentioned that it was a common tradition to hand family houses down from father to one or two of the older sons or daughters. For example, as Luigi mentioned, his house (Figure 5), which has been in the family for many generations, embodied the family heritage, history and efforts of previous generations.

This house (shown in Figure 5) where we resided in Italy belonged to my family for generations. It was due to a traditional custom of society. The house was the image of the family heritage and the effort of our ancestors. It was also a tradition
to host at least one of the heirs, since parents get old and they need the help of a son or a daughter. So, inheriting the family house was a tradition but it was also a form of necessity (Transcript 9:15).

Amedeo and Franco also stated that during the war their family house, like many others in the area was severely damaged by the bombing. Since many members of these families were unable to find employment in order (1) to contribute to the renovation and reconstruction of the damaged house, and/or (2) to purchase or build their own new house when the family house was inherited by a brother or a sister, as in Amedeo’s case (Figure 6), as a consequence that younger brothers or sisters migrated to Australia and other countries to provide financial help to their family members in Italy. At the same time they hoped to accumulate enough money to build their own new houses once they returned to Italy.

The family house was inherited by my older brother Vincenzo. All brothers and sisters agreed to that decision. In the 1980s’ my brother restored the house as you can see from this photo (Figure 6). My plan was to come to Australia to make some money and then return to Italy to build my own house, but things went in a different way since I am still here in Brisbane (Transcript 19:21).

In conclusion, interviewees recall the house form in which they spent their childhoods. They pointed out that five features characterized the extended family house: (1) it was a multi storey house with a parallelepiped form, (2) sitting on a large plot of land in a rural area, with (3) a façade characterized by arches, usually utilised to mark the entry of the house; (4) while the ground floor area comprised rooms used for daily activities, the floors above comprised bedrooms; (5) the house was traditionally handed down from the older generation to one of the children.

Since as stated, my argument is that the form of Italian houses in Brisbane was influenced by migrants’ previous housing experiences, in the following chapter I will explore the extent to which the form of Italian houses in Brisbane was influenced by the architectural and spatial form of the extended family house in Italy.
5.2.3 The natural and built environment in the sugar cane fields

In the previous section I argued that the way Italian migrants influenced the architectural and spatial form of their houses in Brisbane was in turn influenced by the form of previous houses, where migrants resided both prior to leaving Italy and after their arrival in Australia. Therefore, after investigating Italian migrants’ extended family house form in Italy, I asked interviewees about the form of the houses they lived in Australia. Furthermore, as Rapoport argued, the surrounding built and natural environment can also influence the way of life and consequently the spatial form of houses. Therefore, in this section I investigate the extent to which the surrounding natural and built environment in Australia influenced immigrants’ way of life.

The majority of Italian migrants interviewed stated they came from rural communities, where, as Salvatore mentioned, ‘seasonal employment was a way of life’ and where ‘Italian migrants acquired a wealth of practical knowledge, experience and skills’ (Transcript 2:18). Salvatore and several interviewees also pointed out that they migrated to Australia on the Assisted Passage Scheme, which obliged them to accept any work offered to them anywhere in the country for a two year period (Transcript 2:20). As Salvatore mentioned, once disembarked in the so-called ‘America con i canguri’ (‘America with kangaroos’), the first thing for migrants to do was to get a job in order to achieve the economic security for which they came. In his words:

*Upon our arrival my wife and I were determined to do any kind of labour work we were skilled to do. Me and many other Italians coming from different Italian regions, migrated to Australia to work. Upon our arrival we understood that there*
was a lot of land to cultivate. There was work for everyone here, in any sector, agricultural and/or building. Italians were employed in agricultural farms and also in the construction of infrastructure, roads, tunnels, railways. Australia was a country which needed to be built. That’s the reason we came here (Transcript 2:19).

As Antonio (Transcript 8:41) confirmed, on their arrival in Australia, due to their rural background, Italians were able to turn their hand to agricultural activities, viticulture and farming, and also to work in factories, building, construction and mining. As Luciano pointed out, getting a job as low-skilled labourers in the 1950s to 1960s was facilitated by the need to develop and industrialise Australia.

I think that most Italian migrants were initially involved in the building-infrastructure and agricultural industry, since the majority of the workforce was required in those fields and there was no other choice. At our arrival it was easy to get a job because of the high request for labourers (Transcript 10:21).

The literature revealed that the decision of many migrants to work in the agricultural sector was influenced by their professional background. Most Italians who arrived in Australia in the post war period came from the poorest agricultural areas like Abruzzo, Campania, Calabria, Sicily and Veneto (Church, 2005). Panucci, Kelly and Castles revealed that a large proportion of Italians migrating to Australia were shopkeepers and farmers and by 1966 the majority of Italian migrants in Australia worked as low-skilled labourers. Therefore, as pointed out by Panucci, Kelly and Castles, it is not surprising that the jobs Italian migrants found upon arrival reflected their professional backgrounds. Over 80% of migrants worked as labourers or in semi-skilled or skilled sectors of labour intensive industries such as manufacturing, building construction, railroads, roads, bridges, dams, tunnel construction, irrigation and sewage systems, the draining of swamps, land clearing, road building, mining and quarrying, cane cutting and seasonal agricultural work (Cresciani, 2003; Panucci, Kelly, & Castles, 1992; Ruzzene & Battiston, 2006).

As most interviewees said, on their arrival in Australia in the 1950s, the most urgent need for labour was in the sugar cane industry in North Queensland. Therefore, as mentioned by Carmelo (Transcript 4:11) it is not surprising that many Italians flocked to North Queensland in search of well-paid seasonal work as cane cutters.
I arrived in Melbourne and I caught a train direct to North Queensland. Others arrived from Sydney and Perth too. Many of us went to the sugarcane plantation because there was so much work up there. The more you worked, the more money you made out of it. So, we always worked for many hours each day (Transcript 4:11).

Historical researchers have also reported this tendency. As Juppenlatz stressed, many Italians who migrated to Queensland in the 1950s obtained work in the cane fields, because its booming industry could guarantee them work and higher wages compared to many other unskilled job. He stated that they settled at the migrant camps of Bonegilla or Greta in New South Wales, and also around the townships of Cairns, Ingham, Hinchinbrook Shire, Lower Burdekin and the Isis district in Queensland. He also pointed out that other industries saw an increase of Italian workers in Queensland. Italians started growing fruit and grape vines in the Stanthorpe region. They also cultivated tobacco in the Inglewood/Texas district (Juppenlatz, 1970).

Apart from their agricultural/rural backgrounds, interviewees highlighted another aspect which encouraged them to embrace a job in the cane fields in North Queensland. This was their single status. Panucci, Kelly and Castles pointed out that in the post war period Italian men migrated to Australia in larger numbers than females because Australia required men for unskilled labour in primary and secondary industries. Women generally migrated in the second stage through sponsorship by husbands, and/or relatives (Panucci et al., 1992, p. 72). This was confirmed by the interviewees who stressed the fact that most males who migrated to Australia were single. As a consequence, especially for those with no family, on their arrival the search for work took them from the urban environment of Italian cities to the remotest corners of Australia, where labour was needed and wages were higher.

On several occasions interviewees mentioned how on the cane fields in North Queensland they found the promised very well paid work they had come from Italy for. Salvatore, who spent seven years working in the cane fields, pointed out that they laboured from dawn till dusk under hazardous conditions. As he stressed, Italian migrants found an unfamiliar and unexpected (1) wild natural environment in North Queensland and that he and other migrants working in the cane fields had to struggle with unusual fauna, in particular, venomous snakes.

Cutting the sugarcane was very dangerous because there was the ‘bloody’ venomous brown snake and the red-bellied snake. In our plantation a few got
bitten by those dangerous snakes but no one got killed, thank God! We saved some people by pure miracle. You know, sometimes snakes were also inside our house. We found one in the kitchen cupboard, and another one in the bathroom. We were always scared for our kids...we were used to losing a dog every couple of months, although we did not want to lose a kid (Transcript 2:09).

Salvatore showed a photo taken in 1958 of him with some friends, which highlighted the Italian migrants’ unfamiliarity with Australian wildlife, for example, snakes (Figure 8). However, Teresa (Transcript 6:28), showed a photo where she is close to a dead snake (Figure 9). She pointed out that after the initial period of adaptation to the natural environment, migrants became accustomed to living and working around the wildlife they encountered.

In addition to the wildlife found in the sugarcane fields, Vittorio stressed the sheer immensity of an uncommon isolated natural environment: the sweep of the fields and in particular the physical distances, which the migrants were not accustomed to. In his words, ‘The extension of the field to be worked was large and the neighbouring cottages were kilometres apart. Everything was far away. We were too isolated (Transcript 1:23)’. He pointed out that the nearest town centre could be visited only once a week or fortnightly, to do some shopping or to buy at the very least ‘pane, formaggio e latte’ (bread, cheese and milk). Maria, for example, vividly remembered how it was important to diligently prepare the ‘shopping list’ and how she could not afford to forget anything, otherwise for a week or longer they would have been without milk, cheese, bread or flour.

Fortnightly or weekly when required, we went to buy food at the nearest country town, which was located at 30-40 km from our sheds. I prepared the shopping list with my husband, just to make sure that nothing was forgotten! It was better to double check the list, because once you are back with your foodstuff...it will take another two weeks to go and buy food again! We could not go back to shopping the day after (Transcript 2:16).

Many interviewees like Lina and Concetta stressed that the wild and isolated natural environment of the plantation they found upon their arrival was unexpected because, before departing, the Italian government did not give them much information about their new destination’s environment.
(Lina) We were always working in the plantation...we were cut off from the entire world. Unfortunately we were not informed about these working and living conditions before leaving Italy (Transcript 1:07).

(Concetta) Most of us did not have much education. Before leaving Italy, we barely knew that Australia was far away. We were not told much about the natural and built environment of Australia. We thought it was more or less like Italy: in rural areas villages are all nearby! Once I arrived in the plantation I understood I was cut off from society and from the rest of the world! After a week I wanted to go back home! My husband told me we had to make big sacrifices and that we were there for work and to make some money (Transcript 5:14).

From the interviewees’ testimonies it emerged clearly that the biggest hardship for those living in the cane fields was the remoteness of the place they lived in. As Maria mentioned, ‘I felt isolated in the sugarcane plantation’ (Transcript 2:14). For most interviewees it was this isolation that prevented them from having much interaction with Australian people and which consequently did not allow them to practise and learn English. As Maria highlighted below:

*The language was very hard for me. I could never speak English...we were all Sicilians in the sugar cane plantation. I used to go fortnightly with my husband to the country town to buy butter, milk, bread, and meat. The butcher spoke to me in English and I could not understand him. He was upset, and I was frustrated too. There were not many other opportunities to speak English in the plantation. I had to be a self-learner* (Transcript 2:16).

As interviewees who worked in the sugarcane plantation in the Ingham area pointed out, in the 1960s there was no need at all to learn and speak English because the country town was mainly populated by Italians. Sometimes the difficulty for them was to communicate and understand other Italians coming from different regional areas where different dialects were used. As Domenico stated below, it was common to speak only Italian and/or a dialect.

*In Ingham just the doctor was Irish...but you know, we were lucky and we did not have to meet him often. For many years we were all Italians there and we were not required to speak English. There were many other Italians from Sicily, Friuli, Abruzzo and it was already difficult to understand each other because we all spoke different dialects* (Transcript 5:18).
An unexpected wild and isolated natural environment was not the only hardship interviewees encountered upon their arrival in North Queensland. On the cane fields they lived in existing shelters or cottages, with walls built from weatherboards with a roof of corrugated iron. These buildings were referred to as ‘sheds’. Initially, as mentioned by Aldo (Transcript 3:72), in the early 1950s mainly single Italian men migrated to Australia alone so therefore he, as many other Italian migrants, shared their houses with other migrants. Respondents were asked to describe the house they occupied on the cane fields, and about their initial sensations and feelings about their new dwellings in North Queensland. Salvatore, who showed a photo of the shed he lived in while in the plantation, described the shed he was sharing with other Italian migrants in the late 1950s.

When I arrived at the cane fields...there was just a sweep of fields, a weatherboard shed (Italians called them ‘la baracca’) and a timber cottage. A few of us were living in the shed. In terms of furniture there were the bare necessities....I was not upset about the furniture, but I was upset about the shed (Figure 10). It was like living in a tent...you could hear all the noise from outside! We heard the rain...we heard the animals moving in the night (Transcript 2:32).

It was the feeling of isolation, combined with the need to be helped on the farms due to the abundance of work which, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, encouraged these migrants to sponsor partners, members of their families, relatives and friends to migrate to Australia through the ‘chain migration’ process. As Pina stated, after she was married by proxy in 1959 (As shown in Figure 11), she joined her husband Carmelo who first arrived in Australia in 1954. She stated that Carmelo’s brother and her sister also travelled with her in 1959.

I married by proxy Carmelo in 1959 and then I met him in Australia. Carmelo arrived in Australia in 1954 and then he also helped his brother and my sister to migrate to Australia. We all travelled together (Transcript 4:38).

Therefore, the ‘extended family’ phenomenon, which was common in Italy in the 1950s, also became a common status for Italian migrants living in Australia. This is confirmed through Domenico’s words, as quoted below:

I arrived in North Queensland in 1954. My wife Concetta, married by proxy (Figure 12), arrived in 1957 and my brother and sister with their families joined us in 1959.
Initially our three families lived together in the house on the cane fields. After seven years living and working together we purchased the property including the farm (Transcript 5:52).

As reported, in the 1960s the first migrants were sharing their houses with their spouses and their extended families in the host country. From Lina and Vittorio’s testimony it emerged that Italian migrants also felt uncomfortable living in sheds because it was easy to hear the outdoor noises and there was no insulation in the walls to stop the heat and humidity. As quoted below, living inside the shed was like living outside.

*I liked living in North Queensland. Many migrants did not like the climate because it was very hot and humid, but I liked the climate there. What I did not like was the cottage we lived in. During the night there were always noises from animals and I was scared. Not just that. There was no insulation at all in the walls. So living inside was even worse than living outside, because it was even hotter and more humid inside than outside* (Transcript 1:23).

Furthermore, as Maria who joined Salvatore in the cane fields a few years after Salvatore’s arrival stressed, they were not accustomed to living in timber and metal houses, because, as stated below, before leaving Italy they had always lived in brick houses, as shown in Figure 3-4-5-6.

*(Maria) I said many times to my husband that once we had the necessary money, we would go home and build a masonry house...a proper solid house made of stone! Like the one our parents used to have in Italy. I always lived in masonry houses in Italy. That was what I was used to, so it was difficult to adapt oneself to that environment* (Transcript 2:27).

As interviewees said, living in cottages on the cane fields was an experience that apparently enhanced many migrants’ desire to live in a masonry house. This was most likely due to the fact that in Italy most migrants had always lived in masonry houses, which were much more acoustically and thermally insulated than the timber and metal cottages located in the fields. This sentiment is very well expressed in the recollection quoted below by Concetta:

*When I was in North Queensland, I was scared of snakes...for us and for our kids. We could have lost our kids! You did not feel protected inside those*
cottages...timber or metal...it was the same to me. Those were good to store the agricultural tools to work the fields! ...You could see through the metal sheets of our roof... I heard something moving slowly on the roof. It was there for a few days...I thought it was a possum. I asked Domenico to take a ladder and have a look. ‘Mamma mia!’ (Oh my God) It was a big python snake! I was so scared. So, I asked Domenico to remove it, but he was even more scared than me to get close to that sort of animal. I told him: ‘Domenico, we must do something’. He replied to me: ‘The snake will go sooner or later, don’t bother’. I replied that I could not sleep inside the shed knowing that a snake was above me...what about if it came inside? Domenico tried to assure me that a big snake like that one could not come inside...but I was too scared. Can you do any domestic work, cleaning, cooking and all that stuff, and then you and your family go to bed with a snake on top of your head? ....I asked Domenico to shoot the snake from inside the house! He was worried about the metal sheets...I told him we would replace them later! Finally he shot the snake as I asked him...there was a big hole in the roof...the snake was gone! Later we fixed the roof.... I told Domenico many times ... ‘With a proper masonry roof you would not see through the roof’...I always wanted to live in a solid masonry house. That’s why we built this one in concrete (It is a brick house). If I think about those years on the fields...we worked so hard! It was good for the money...but we made so many ‘grandi sacrifici’ up there (Transcript 5:19).

After years of hard work in the cane fields, interviewees stated that they still felt the strains of isolation, even though family members joined them in Australia. It was this early adversity encountered in North Queensland that motivated them to move towards the more urbanised capital cities. Indeed, as shown through the analysis of the interview transcripts, after the initial years of ‘Grandi Sacrifici’ in the cane fields, in the 1960s many Italian migrants decided to leave the isolated natural environment of the plantation and move to the developed urban environment of Brisbane. This is well stated through Teresa’s statement below:

We spent a few years in Ingham. We saved some money and then we moved to Brisbane. Ingham was too isolated and we never felt comfortable there (Transcript 8:29).

This phenomenon was also stressed by Juppenlatz, who stated that after a few years of working in the cane fields where much of the money they earned went either to helping their families in Italy, to sponsoring family members, to buying land of their own, to settling up...
farms, many moved to the metropolitan areas. This was due to the fact that in the 1960s the industrialisation process began to attract waves of migrants from the rural areas to the peripheries of Australian cities which had prospects of a large variety of working opportunities (Juppenlatz, 1970).

In summary, the findings analyzed in this section revealed that (1) on their arrival in Australia, many Italian migrants found jobs in North Queensland in the sugar cane industry. This was facilitated by (2) migrants’ agricultural background and by (3) their single status on their arrival in Australia. Also, interviewees revealed that they felt very isolated in the wild natural environment in North Queensland, and since the majority of people working in the sugar cane industry were Italians, they did not have the chance to interact with locals to learn English. After a few years in isolation, migrants encouraged and sponsored family members to join them in Australia, because of the abundance of work, and also to help them to feel less isolated. In North Queensland they lived in sheds made of timber and metals sheets which they were not accustomed to. Also, despite the fact that family members joined them, migrants keenly felt the sense of isolation and of deprived social interaction they were used to in their native country. Therefore, after a period varying from five to ten years, many migrants decided to move to more urbanized cities.

Diagram 18: Italian migrants in North Queensland

5.2.4 The settlement form in Brisbane in the 1960s

In this section I investigate the migrants’ experiences, for those migrants who moved from North Queensland and for those who arrived directly from Italy, in relation to the built environment and housing form they encountered on their arrival in Brisbane. As already mentioned, my argument is that the built environment and previous housing experience influenced the architectural and the spatial form of Italian migrants’ houses built in Brisbane.
As highlighted in the previous section, the interviewees who lived in North Queensland stated that the decisions to move to Brisbane in the 1960s were motivated mainly by a common social factor, since upon their arrival in North Queensland they felt very isolated. This feeling of isolation was emphasized by many migrants, for example, by Vittorio, Teresa and Gina.

(Vittorio) I was happy to leave the cane fields. One could not live one's whole life in the plantation. It was too isolated. Our social life was practically imaginary. It was not just us ... after a few years, many Italians left the fields and settled in Brisbane as we did (Transcript 1:37).

(Teresa) It was like being reborn after I moved to the city. The city was multicultural and people were not scared to talk to you. Before they used to call us 'wogs' but now they were very polite...I went for a walk and they said 'Hello Mrs Lucia' (...). Where we lived before they did not say 'Hello' (Transcript 8:19).

(Gina) We had so much work on the cane fields, after a few years we could have purchased the farm and the land. But we did not like the environment from a social point of view. We were too isolated and we lived too far from built-up areas (Transcript 7:41).

As Salvatore and Maria mentioned (Transcript 2:27), after a period varying from five to ten years, many Italian migrants realised that work could not fulfil their entire lives and consequently they wanted to improve their social lives and to live the way they had in Italy. Therefore, Italian migrants assumed that the city could offer a chance of interacting with more people since it would provide the urban environment capable of facilitating social interactions which migrants lacked while living in the environment of the cane fields.

I spent five years in North Queensland and my husband spent ten years up there. Once we had the money to purchase a house, we moved to Brisbane. I did not want to live in the cane fields forever. It was too harsh for me. Coming to Brisbane was the best thing to do for us, despite the difficulties to settle and to find a job in those years. But it was always better living here in Brisbane than in a shed in the middle of nowhere (Transcript 2:27).
Both those interviewees, who moved to Brisbane from North Queensland in the 1960s and those who arrived directly from Italy in the 1950s, stated that, upon their arrival in Brisbane, they encountered some differences in the host built environment. In their view, this hindered their ability to interact socially with other people. More specifically, interviewees stated that the first difference compared to the built environment of provenance was represented by a missing urban public element such as town squares which allowed interaction with other people. As respondents highlighted, in the Italian built environment, it was common for dwellings to be arranged around a central courtyard, town square or plaza, which reflected a strong sense of community among residents. Angelo and Lucia (Transcript 20:17) pointed out that in the Italian urban environment, residential units, either single or semi-detached dwellings, were part of a single structure that faced the town square. They also mentioned that civic and religious gatherings, events and common daily social activities taking place in the town square gave them the opportunity constantly to meet with other people.

Every week there was more or less something going on in the town square: the vegetables and fruit market was a weekly event; then every so often there was a religious procession or the mayor giving a speech. No matter the nature of the event...people had often an opportunity to meet with other people (Transcript 20:17).

As interviewees pointed out, they perceived that social interactions were not facilitated in the Australian suburbs since there were no public spaces, such as town squares. Vittorina (Transcript 11:27) explained that, in her view, in Australia the typical public town square they were used to was replaced in the 1970s by shopping malls, or shops which are not pedestrian friendly but which is accessible by cars. Antonio also added that, in his view, the shopping mall was not planned for social purposes but just for commercial reasons (Transcript 8:27). In addition, Pia stated that the shopping mall or the suburban mall was a place to pass by, buy goods and then leave. On the contrary, the town square she was used to in Italy, was a more static space - a place to stop, meet, have a chat and occasionally to do some shopping. Therefore, interviewees revealed that the lack of public space in the built environment contributed to depriving them of the possibility of socially interacting in the way they used to do in Italy (Transcript 10:34).

Apart from the town square as a missing urban element, interviewees pointed out another factor which did not encouraged them to socially interact with locals: the lack of knowledge of English. Italian migrants who were working in North Queensland had not been frequently
exposed to English. Italian migrants living in isolated sheds in the cane fields were not required to speak English. As Salvatore stated: ‘We were all Sicilians in the fields! We spoke dialect among us all the time and we could understand each other’ (Transcript 2:18). Therefore, once Italian migrants moved into the city they had to face the problems related to their lack of knowledge of English. It was also this deficiency that hampered their chances of enjoying any social interaction with the locals. As Vittorio mentioned:

> On my arrival in Brisbane I was not able to communicate with locals because I did not speak English very well. This was caused by the fact that in the cane fields we were not speaking English at all (Transcript 1:12).

To summarize, this suggests that it was (1) the lack of public space such as a town square traditionally utilized for social activities combined with (2) a lack of knowledge of the English language which contributed to slowing down the migrants’ socialization process.

Driven by the need to interact with other people and also within a broader new society, Italian migrants stated that they formed cultural associations and clubs, which would allow them to facilitate interaction between themselves and with English speaking Australians, and consequently to learn the language. Aldo and many other respondents stated that in the 1960s through to the 1970s Italian migrants built the Italian Club in Newmarket (Figure 14) and several regional associations, such as the Tavernetta (Figure 15). These clubs enabled migrants to meet on a regular basis and carry on those common social activities and events which were part of their culture in Italy, such as feasts, traditional festivals, playing cards, bowls or simply dining (Figure 16). Among all the buildings hosting national and regional clubs, the interviewees pointed out that the Italo-Australian Centre (the Italian Club) in Newmarket was the most relevant and active.

> There were many Italians living in Brisbane who initially formed regional associations. These associations collected funds among Italians to build the national and regional clubs. The Italian club in Newmarket became the most important one, like a constant ‘landmark’ for many Italian migrants (Transcript 12:39).

For Italian migrants the club soon became a recreational centre with its own sports facilities, gaming rooms, bars and reception areas, and also a place where support and companionship could be found. As many interviewees highlighted, they would meet on a weekly basis for
dinner and to play cards or bowls (Figure 17-18). Gennaro pointed out that many ‘paesani’ traditionally met every Sunday afternoon at the bowls area beside the Italian club in Newmarket to play ‘bocce’ (bowls).

There were several teams playing bowls and competitions very Sunday. The bowls area was crowded of Italians every weekend. Sometimes, while men played bowls, women were inside the club for a coffee and for a chat (Transcript 13:54).

Interviewees emphasized that the social life at the club was very active. As stated by Luciano (Transcript 10:41) and also by other interviewees, the club soon became a meeting place or a second home for Italians, or a sort of ‘little Italy’ for Italians in Brisbane!

Each weekend we gathered at the club (so called, but it stands for Italo-Australian Centre). Often the committee organised dinners, parties and special evenings. There were also other smaller regional clubs around, which were always full on weekends. Everybody was at the club on weekends, for dinner, to play cards or bowls. For special events, you were required to book months in advance; otherwise you would not get a seat (Transcript 10:41).

Pasquale also pointed out that after the construction of the Italian Club in Newmarket, many other regional clubs were constructed (A list of regional clubs is enclosed in Appendix L). As Silvano pointed out, due to the clubs’ intense entertainment and social activities, most of them were booked in advance for weddings, religious celebrations and special events.

The ‘Tavernetta’ was also known as the head office of the Veneto club. The club was built in the 70s by the Venetian people and then sold to a private owner. Now it is still privately run as a restaurant. The ‘Tavernetta’ and the Italian Club were the most prestigious places to celebrate weddings and religious celebrations....for example my son celebrated his wedding at the Italian club (Figure 19), while my daughter had the reception for her wedding at the Tavernetta (Figure 20) (Transcript 18:21).

Interviewees also pointed out that the ground floor of the building hosting the Italian national club in Newmarket was allocated to host an Italian language school, the Dante Alighieri School (Figure 21). According to Lucia, the school was attended by second generation Italian migrants willing to learn Italian and also by Australians.
Both my son and daughter attended the school Dante Alighieri at the club. Angelo and I wanted them to learn Italian not just from us since we tend to speak a dialect (Transcript 20:47).

As Giuseppe (Transcript 7:74) highlighted, the Italian Club in Newmarket and the regional clubs around Brisbane became places attended mainly by Italians and therefore English was not spoken much within the club. So the club provided the best way, even if it was limited, to interact at least at a macro-scale level with other Italians now living in Brisbane, and certainly did not facilitate their social integration within the Australian society. Therefore, as stated below by Gennaro, opportunities to meet Australians at the Italian club were rare and, consequently, so too were opportunities to converse in English.

In the early times there were no Australians at the club. There were no such restrictions of course, but I suppose that since we used to speak Italian, Australians did not feel encouraged to get in … Some rare Italian men were married to Australians. Sometimes they came together to the club. We spoke a bit of English with them, but not much. In the end we were all Italians there (Transcript 13:39).

Sagazio (2004, p. 85) also stated that in the suburb of Carlton in Melbourne, also called ‘Little Italy’ because of the Italian cafes, shops and restaurant, Italian migrants maintained their dialects and they created their own social organisations, as happened in Brisbane.

In summary, migrants revealed that before migrating to Australia they were used to civic gatherings and general social activities within the local town square in Italy, which provided a space mainly utilized for social functions at a macro-scale level. Interviewees revealed that once in Brisbane they found that this urban element was missing in the built environment. Therefore, migrants built first national and secondly regional clubs which were used for social activities and therefore worked as a sort of replacement for the Italian town square. This worked within a macro-scale level built environment. It is possible that if Italian migrants tried to change the built environment at a macro-scale level, the division and utilisation of internal space of houses built by Italians was also influenced by their need to perform specific social activities, dictated (1) by their native way of life and (2) also by the difficulty of performing them in the surrounding built environment. More specifically, the extent to which domestic space was utilized for performing social activities will be investigated in the section related to
the way activities have impacted on the configuration and utilization of the internal space in Italian houses.

Diagram 19: 1960s Brisbane built environment

5.2.5 1950s-1960s dwellings’ form in Brisbane

After exploring the difficulties and differences related to the built environment Italian migrants encountered on arrival in Brisbane, I enquired about the form of the dwellings Italian migrants resided in since their arrival in Brisbane.

Carmelo, stated that, similarly to many other interviewees, upon his arrival in Brisbane in the 1950s the best option was to rent an existing property, since he, as all of his friends, were seasonally employed – in market gardening, poultry and pig farming, horticulture and viticulture – without regular jobs. At the same time they also had in mind to return to Italy soon.

When I arrived in Brisbane, I did not have a permanent job...so I could not afford to buy an existing house. At the same time I would not want to, since I wanted to return home after a few years. I chose to pay my rent so I did not have to worry about anything else (Transcript 4:41).

It was revealed by many interviewees that renting rooms or houses became the most common choice for Italian migrants in Brisbane in the 1950s. As Franco recollects, it was common for many migrants to rent and, at that time, was not expensive.

I worked in road construction and I saved as much as I could. I kept on renting for a few years. Renting was the most suitable option in my case. There were many houses available for rent and it was not that expensive (Transcript 6:32).
Also, as mentioned below by Emma, there were some advantages in renting a property. As long as Emma and her husband paid the rent on time, they did not have to worry about the maintenance of the building.

*We rented because we did not want to worry about anything. You pay your rent and you don’t have to worry about painting, or maintaining the building in a good shape ... when you rent you become responsible just to pay your rent, that’s it! You don’t have other responsibilities (Transcript 9:27).*

As other interviewees, for example Italo and Antonio, clearly highlight in the early 1960s they were not committed to settling in Australia. They still had in their mind the wish to spend a period varying from five to ten years in Australia and then return to Italy. Therefore, as stated below by Italo, in the early 1960s they were not intending to buy or build a house but rent for a few years until their return to Italy.

*We rented because, when we arrived in Brisbane, we wanted to stay just for a few more years. Not for too long. You don’t want to buy a house just for a couple of years, do you? And then leave the country (Transcript 12:24).*

Many interviewees stated that, after an initial stay varying from five to ten years where they rented existing houses, they decided to stay in Australia for further five to ten years to consolidate their financial assets. Therefore, many interviewees stated that in the late 1960s they opted for purchasing an existing house with the ultimate aim of renovating, extending and eventually selling it. For example, Assunta and Pasquale, after purchasing their first property in 1967, decided to renovate the house. As Pasquale showed in two photos (Figure 22-23), there were not many external Italian influences that affected the new look or the façade of their renovated Australian house. Pasquale explained that he mainly renovated the internal space of the house and externally he just replaced the timber stumps supporting the ground floor timber slab with a brick wall.

*Renting was always a ‘sistemazione temporanea’ (temporary settlement). We did not like the idea of wasting our money in renting. Unfortunately we did not have enough money to purchase the land and build a new house. It was too risky to invest all your money in a big property. Therefore after a few years, we purchased a timber house (Figure 22). The house was standing on timber stumps. It was*
empty at the ground floor. We enclosed the space at the ground floor with a perimetral brick wall (Figure 23) (Transcript 14:29).

Salvatore told how, after living in Ingham for ten years, he initially settled in New Farm which, in his view, became one the most popular suburbs among Italian migrants. Salvatore stated that ‘after renting for a few years, through the influence of my wife we bought a house in New Farm where we lived for nearly twenty years. Due to the fact that New Farm was close to the city, it was convenient to reside there because people could easily move to other suburbs for work.’ Furthermore, Maria emphasized that ‘New Farm was also chosen because of the large size building plot’ (Transcript 2:45). Salvatore also pointed out his experience in renovating and extending an existing house which he purchased in the 1970s in New Farm (Figure 24-25). And, as mentioned below, he stated that in the 1970s renovating and extending existing timber houses became common among Italians residing in New Farm who aimed to then sell the renovated house.

As shown in these photos the house we purchased in New Farm was empty at the ground floor and standing on timber stumps, like many other houses Italian migrants purchased in the area. We lifted the house and we enclosed the space at the ground floor (Figure 24). We lay a concrete floor and we created a few extra rooms on the ground floor. In addition we extended the back of the house towards the back yard (Figure 25). We did not change anything on the façade. We were allowed to change ... but we did not want it. After a few years we sold the house and we purchased another existing house. This process, renovating and the selling the house, was common among Italian migrants in the area. Therefore, for many Italian migrants, renovating and extending existing houses became a business (Transcript 2:51).

Pina and Carmelo (Transcript 4:22) also told of their experience related to the renovation of houses. They mentioned that after purchasing their wooden house in New Farm, they renovated it and extended so that it took up most of the land. Again, as Pina highlighted, extensions of existing houses were quite common among Italians in the area. Pina and Carmelo pointed out that eventually, after a few years when migrants were financially better off, they moved away because it became fashionable to buy a block of land at Aspley and other far away suburbs and build their own houses in the style they liked. In addition, her husband Carmelo underlined that usually ‘those who built their new houses did not want to have wooden houses and they opted for brick houses’ (Transcript 6:38).
Interviewees revealed the features of the most widespread architectural form of houses in Brisbane. As Flavia and Aldo highlighted, on their arrival in Brisbane in 1963 the most widespread architectural form of dwellings was the single-storey wooden house, often empty on ground level and suspended on timber stumps. As Aldo mentioned, ‘in 1960 the most traditional residential typology available was the single-storey wooden house. The external walls were built with a weatherboarding timber, finished painted. The external cladding consists of timber boards horizontally overlapping one another’ (Transcript 3:48). Aldo pointed out that the walls for this type of house were built by adopting a technique known as the ‘weatherboard wall’ (Figure 26-27). The composition and structure of weatherboard walls is well explained in the quote below by Giuseppe, who worked in Brisbane as a builder for a few years:

_In 1970s Australian typical wooden houses, the wall consisted of the outside 20 mm thick horizontal weatherboard cladding, 100 mm air space housing the timber framing and the internal 12 mm thick plasterboard rendered and painted finish. The external timber boards were then painted (Transcript 7:62)._  

As illustrated in Figure 26-27, this type of wall was schematically drawn by myself as detailed by Giuseppe and other builders who described the composition-layers for this type of wall. As many interviewees pointed out, the floors and the roofs of weatherboard-houses were also constructed in timber. The entire house was built in timber and there was no masonry construction involved in the construction of the floor or of the roof. This is well expressed by Gennaro through the quote below:

_On the ground floor there was a timber-finish floor sitting on timber beams which were laid on the footing. Also, the roof was constructed of timber trusses. A house built with weatherboard walls was entirely wooden (Transcript 13:42)._  

Those Italian migrants who moved from North Queensland to Brisbane were already acquainted with this technique, because many of them lived in timber cottages while working in the cane fields. As Michele mentioned, in North Queensland the cottage where he lived was built with the same techniques used in Brisbane to build the typical single storey weatherboard houses.
When we arrived on the plantation we lived in the cottage that was already there. We did not build it ourselves. It was a timber cottage similar to the one we found in Brisbane when we moved. The one in Brisbane was slightly bigger but built the same way (Transcript 17:35).

Therefore, since the ‘weatherboard wall’ single storey house was the most widespread typology available in Brisbane, many interviewees, like Amedeo for example, purchased and lived in weatherboard houses for a few years in.

In 1965 we moved to Brisbane but we did not purchase a house straight away. We rented for two years. Then we wanted to buy our own house, so we purchased an old wooden house in New Farm. There were not many brick houses at that time in Brisbane, so we had to buy a wooden house (Transcript 19:28).

In contrast, Mario pointed out that, in Italy, he was not acquainted with the ‘weatherboard wall’ dwelling, since he lived in brick houses. As explained below by Mario, brick houses were the most common residential building types in Italy.

In Abruzzo we lived with our parents and grandparents in a large 3 story house near Chieti. It was a stone and brick house: built with the stones collected from the surrounding mountains and partially with bricks. The wall was very thick, probably 50 or 60 cm. The house was old but still very solid. I don’t remember any house in timber from where I come from. Most houses were built in brick, then rendered and painted. Others were built in stone (Transcript 16:32).

Apart from the weatherboard wall technique, Amedeo revealed that in the 1970s Australian houses were built by adopting another technique which at that time was considered to be less common and more expensive than the weatherboard one. This system was commonly known as the ‘brick veneer’ wall (Figure 28-29) system. The way the walls were erected with the use of this technique is well explained by Amedeo who was involved in the building industry for more than three decades. As he pointed out, he built many houses by adopting this technique:

The ‘brick veneer wall’ consists of a non-structural external layer of 110 mm thick extruded bricks, with an inner panel of 12 mm plaster board separated by a 100 mm air space housing the structural timber studs. The studs support a light timber slab and a timber trussed roof. Because the outer brick wall is non-structural, it is
essential to tie it back to the structural wall with metal straps nailed to the structural framing. This will help to prevent movement under wind (Transcript 19:56).

As illustrated in Figure 28-29, this type of wall was schematically drawn by me as described by Amedeo and other Italian builders who confirmed the composition-layers for this type of wall. Moreover, as Mario pointed out, this system was frequently used by Italians especially when they opted to extend and renovate existing weatherboard houses standing on timber stumps. More specifically, as mentioned earlier, in the 1970s many Italians purchased existing single-storey wooden houses, then lifted them and enclosed the ground floor wall with brick veneer walls supporting a light timber slab on which the existing timber house was positioned. This procedure, commonly used for house extensions, is described below by Mario:

In 1972 we purchased a timber house in New Farm. It was a nice two bedroom timber house on one level. Later on we renovated the house. We lifted the house: the ground floor was empty and the house was standing on timber stumps. Therefore we enclosed the empty ground floor space with brick veneer walls to create more rooms on the ground floor. These new walls supported a new timber slab where the existing old house was sited. Some Italian friends of ours also purchased a timber house similar to this one and then they extended it. Today, you can see many houses like this in New Farm: brick veneer for the ground floor walls and weatherboard for the first floor walls (Transcript 16:51).

It was revealed by the participants that even though the brick veneer system became popular among Italian migrants who intended to renovate and extend existing ‘weatherboard wall’ single storey houses on stumps, this technique was not used by Italian migrants to build their new houses because, in their view, the weatherboard and brick veneer technique were considered inadequate for the typology of house chosen by Italian migrants in Brisbane. This notion is well expressed by Paolo below:

Building a new two-storey house and extending an existing one was a completely different process. In a new house it was not appropriate or nice to have half a wall in brick and the other half in timber. The timber wall would not be as solid and stable as a brick one. Although dearer, in the late1970s-early 1980s it was preferable to build a house with a double brick wall separated by a hollow space or cavity (Transcript 11:78).
Several Italian migrants pointed out an element which was recurrent in the main façade of the existing houses where they lived. All houses described were characterized by a main façade with a distinguishing projecting porch or a veranda. In some cases, the portico was also located on the façade facing the back yard.

Italian migrants were also asked about the spatial distribution of the house they lived in. All of them pointed out that, since the space allocated on the single floor was not subdivided in ‘zona giorno’, day area, and ‘zona notte’, night area, in some cases kitchen, dining and living were in the front area, in others in the back area and in some other cases there was no clear division of the two areas.

In summary, interviewees stated that in the 1960s-1970s many Italian migrants initially rented. After a few years they purchased existing houses with the ultimate aim of renovating, extending and in many cases re-selling their houses. They also stated that this decision was dictated by their intention not to settle permanently in Australia. Interviewees also described the typical dwellings they lived in upon their arrival. They highlighted that in the 1960s to 1970s the most widespread typology of dwelling in Brisbane was the one storey house, where the external walls were commonly built by using two common construction systems, the brick veneer and weatherboard exterior wall systems. Also, they pointed out that the façade was characterized by a projecting porch.

Despite the most widespread construction techniques adopted for the construction of residential buildings, Italians anticipated that for their new houses, built only in the late 1970s to early 1980s after they had decided to settle in Australia, they would adopt a different construction technique. The reasons behind their decision to settle in Australia only in the 1980s and to choose a specific type of house constructed by using an uncommon construction technique will be analysed in the following sections.
5.3 When, why and how Italian migrants built their own houses in Brisbane

An analysis of first generation Italian migrants’ initial immigration plans and expectations, combined with their housing and settlement experiences in Italy and in Australia, provide useful insights for a better understanding of when, why and how Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane. In the following section I analyze data to respond to the first research sub-question enquiring about the period Italian migrants built their own houses in Brisbane and the reasons that drove Italian migrants’ final decision to settle permanently and build a house in Australia.

5.3.1 1970s: Settling the family permanently in Australia

As mentioned at the beginning of the data analysis, interviewees revealed that at the end of the war they originally planned to migrate to Australia and to stay away from Italy for just a few years. Their plan was to accumulate the financial resources in order to return to Italy and to build a house and/or open a business. Despite their original plan, interviewees stated that initially they extended their residence in Australia for a further period of five to ten years, due to the fact that the Italian economic post war recovery took much longer than expected. Finally, interviewees emphasized how in the early 1970s, about twenty years after their departure from Italy, many migrants were still living and working in Australia, despite their original plans.

Pasquale highlighted a phenomenon happening in Italy in the 1970s which influenced Italian migrants’ to leave Australia and to return to Italy. He stated how, after spending a period of ‘tanto lavoro e risparmio’ (hard working and savings) varying from ten to twenty years, in the 1970s many Italian migrants were tempted to return to Italy. Many returned to live permanently in Italy as originally planned (Transcript 14:42). Paolo also pointed out that many
Italian migrants among his friends went back to Italy because finally, after more than twenty years of recovery, the economy in Italy started booming. As stated by Paolo, getting a well-paid job or opening a new business in Italy in the 1970s was not so hard anymore due to the so called ‘Italian economic miracle’.

In the 1970s, some friends of ours went back home. They did not want their kids to be too old because when your kids are old, it would be difficult to leave. They live in Treviso now. They run a big restaurant there and they never returned to Australia. Many migrants from the north of Italy went back. In the 1970s Italy was booming. This was called the ‘Italian economic miracle’. Indeed in the 1970s many Italians migrated from the south to the north of Italy because there was more work in the north than in the south (Transcript 11:37).

In relation to the 1970s Italian economic boom, Cresciani pointed out that after the post war period of intense hardship, Italy made a stunning recovery in the late ‘50s and early ‘60s. Economic reconstruction was followed by unprecedented economic growth between 1950 and 1963, a period known as the ‘Italian economic miracle’ (Cresciani, 2003). Italy concentrated on economic reform, and consequently in the 1970s the country created and maintained a strong and sustainable economy.

According to Cresciani, the Italian economic boom in the early 1970s marked the beginning of a steady decrease in the number of Italians arriving in Australia. In fact, since the mid-1970s, the wave of workers and the generated chain migration towards Australia terminated because of less favourable employment conditions. Due to the 1960s to 1970s period of great economic prosperity in Italy, in the late 1970s many migrants who had already spent a few years in Australia decided to return to Italy and to settle in their native towns. As Cresciani stressed, the prosperous economic conditions of Italy in the early 1970s gave many migrants a chance to invest what they had earned in Australia in their own businesses in their homeland (Cresciani, 2003). This was confirmed by participants interviewed for this study who pointed out that many Italian migrants returned to Italy in the 1970s due to the favourable conditions.

However, as Pina pointed out in her interview, among those who went back to Italy, not all of them succeeded in their return. Therefore after spending approximately a year in their native country they returned to Australia. As Pina stated (Transcript 4:47), one of her friends returned to Australia after spending a period of ten months in Italy, as they could not adapt to the
Italian way of life. As Pina also stressed, other Italian friends went through the same experience and they returned to Australia after a period of approximately a year.

A few friends of ours went back for approximately one year with their families. For example two among our best friends, Carmelo and Maria did not sell the house they had in Brisbane at that time before going to Italy: Carmelo’s brother lived in the house while they were away. They wanted to go back for a while and then in case they would stay permanently in Italy, they would have sold the house. This was their plan. They told us that living in Italy was difficult for them. Maybe they changed their lifestyle while living in Australia... anyway, they could not get used to living there. After a year in Italy they returned to Australia, like other friends of ours did. Once back in Australia, they sold their house, they purchased a building plot and then they built a new house (Transcript 4:47).

As Mario pointed out (Transcript 16:36), several first generation Italian migrants who attempted to return to Italy in the 1970s, realized that, after spending nearly twenty years in Australia, it would have been difficult for them and for their children in particular, to adapt to the Italian way of life. Life in Italy had inevitably changed since their departure twenty years earlier. Apart from the differences in way of life, as highlighted by Franco (Transcript 6:52), first generation migrants believed that their descendants would have found it difficult to enter the new Italian business environment since, as having been born in Australia, they had never been exposed to life in Italy.

Going back to Italy inevitably meant to start a life from zero, getting a job etc. That would not be as difficult for us (parents) as it would be for our kids since they never lived there before (Transcript 6:52).

Interviewees stated that after having carefully evaluated the opportunity to leave Australia to return to their home country, or eventually after having tried to, at the end of the 1970s Italian migrants embraced the prospect of permanently settling in Australia. Italy was far away, not just in terms of distance, but also in terms of way of life. This is well expressed by Flavia, in her words below:

I think of my old country all the time. We wanted to go back. My brother tried to go back and settle, but he returned here. After my parents passed away in 1967, I thought that my life was here with my family. Today things have changed. I am
very happy to stay here and not go back to Italy. Here (in Australia) I have my family, my own house and all my friends. There (in Italy) it would have been difficult to get accepted too (Transcript 3:39).

In summary, interviewees revealed that in the 1970s, after living overseas for a period much longer than the one originally planned, many Italian migrants attempted to return to Italy. Unfortunately, some of those who returned realized that, despite the fact that Italy was a country facing an economic miracle, consequently offering the ideal opportunity for migrants to return, it was also a country with a different culture compared to the one they were used to in the 1950s. Consequently, some first generation Italian migrants who attempted to go back to Italy with their own teenaged children found the settling difficult for themselves and for their children. In particular, it was the prospect of their children facing hardships in attempting to settle into a new cultural environment that finally persuaded first-generation Italian migrants to permanently return and settle in Australia in the late 1970s.

In turn, interviewees revealed that the decision matured in the 1970s to settle in Australia. Italian migrants were encouraged to build their houses in Australia, not as a temporary measure or for an investment, as many migrants previously did when they purchased, renovated and extended existing houses in the late 1960s, but for life. Therefore, the only houses built in the late 1970s to early 1980s became the answer to the Italian migrants’ desire to settle permanently in Australia with their families.

5.3.2 Late 1970s-early 1980s: the meanings embedded in Italian houses

Interviewees stated that many Italian migrants living in Brisbane, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, after owning an existing house and renovating and extending it, they purchased a block of land to build a new dwelling. Interviewees were then asked about the reasons driving the decision to purchase a building plot to build a new house rather than purchasing a ready built house.

As Domenico and Concetta stated, the decision to build a new house on a building plot was not just dictated by the desire to be more independent, secure and settled. This could have been achieved by purchasing an existing house, but they wished to own a house designed and built in response to the family’s specific and/or cultural needs, as dictated by their way of life.

*When we built our house in Kedron, Concetta and I had already decided to be here for the rest of our lives. So first we purchased a plot of land, second we sold the old*
house and third with the funds gained from the sale we built our own house as we liked. We wanted to have a spacious house, with many rooms to be used as per our needs, as per our way of life (Transcript 5:32).

Flavia and Aldo, who purchased an existing house before building their own, pointed out the disadvantages they encountered in renovating an existing house, including the limited freedom in making internal or external modifications to the house. As they stated below:

*When we renovated the first house, modifications to the interior and the exterior of the house were limited. We could not enlarge the house much or change much of the façade since the house was already built with a well defined shape (Transcript 3:24).*

This limitation caused some inconveniences. The floor space was limited and family members needed more space for performing some of their working and/or social activities. So, as the quote below from Pina and Carmelo highlights, the renovated house was no longer acceptable to some Italian migrants who later opted for a larger house designed specifically for their needs.

*We were allowed to renovate it but we could not extend the house as we wished...and the family was getting bigger. There was not a large kitchen and the space on the ground floor was very limited because the house was standing on stumps and only a portion of the ground floor was enclosed* (Transcript 4:94).

Many interviewees expressed their scepticism about the idea of renovating an existing house and utilising it as their final home. As mentioned below by Salvatore, an existing house might have needed more funds than expected in order to properly extend, renovate and/or refurbish it. The amount of funds to be invested for renovation was difficult to calculate since it was difficult to quantify the work to be done on the house.

*If you buy an old house like a few friends of ours did, there is always something to do. You have to fix the gate, the fence, the roof, to clean the gutter...everything is old and most times not working in an existing house. That’s why people sell old houses. On the other hand, the house might be renovated, but that can also be very expensive because you are not fully aware of the amount of money you will
spend for the renovation. And finally, even after a renovation, it would remain an old house (Transcript 2:38).

As Filomena pointed out, purchasing land and building a house was a way to direct their savings towards a very safe investment.

If you die (referred to her husband, Armando), I will be living here myself, and if I die you will be living here. We will move from here to go to the ‘campo santo’ (cemetery) and then our sacrifices will go to our kids (Transcript 15:74).

Apart from the idea of having a newer larger house designed for their needs and on a fixed budget, all five couples interviewed pointed out the value and prestige of building a house on a building plot. As Flavia and Aldo (Transcript 3:85) highlighted, like many other Italian migrants, they were attracted by the idea of owning a piece of land. History showed that Italians in the 1950s came from various parts of Italy where land was not available, either for agriculture or building purposes. Therefore, migrants saw this investment as a prestigious way of settling permanently with their families. As mentioned below by Lina and Vittorio, Italy was remembered as a very crowded place, where ‘houses were on top of each other’ (Transcript 1:32), because of the lack of available land.

Purchasing a lot and building a house was like fulfilling a dream. Perhaps I would never have had this opportunity in Italy. Land in Italy was and still is very expensive. Only rich people can afford to do it in Italy. My sisters and most relatives of mine live in small apartments in Italy. I could never live like that. You don’t have your own privacy (Transcript 1:32).

Carmela highlighted that in Italy only rich people could buy a building plot and build a new house, so, in comparison, a brand new house in Australia built on a building plot became the image of a triumph. This is well expressed in the following quote:

In Italy there were only a few who could afford to build their own houses, at least not those of our social status. In those years only rich people could have their own new built house in Italy (Transcript 13:41).
For Italian migrants, purchasing a building plot and building a new house became an ambitious plan. As pointed out below by Filomena, a new self-built house was also a way to show that, after years of hard work, the family had reached a certain level of success.

*Because Italians worked hard and saved some money, once they had a chance they wanted to show off their successes in the community. For this reason they wanted to build big new houses with many rooms (Transcript 15:72).*

Anna and Italo mentioned below a further aspect which influenced Italian migrants in the construction of a new house. The house they built represented a sort of legacy for their descendants. Their self-built house was supposed to become the new family house, as in the Italian tradition or as the house they lived in before departing Italy.

*This house we built for us will be inherited by our son. We also built it for him and his descendants. We thought that one day they would come and live here (Transcript 12:44).*

As interviewees emphasized, another factor which encouraged them to build their houses was the construction material and technique. Aldo, Domenico and Salvatore stated that ‘fully brick and concrete houses’ were uncommon in the 1970s to 1980s. Moreover, all interviewees pointed out that the majority of existing houses available for sale in Brisbane were represented by weatherboard and brick veneer houses, generally partially built in timber. Despite this, interviewees who built their own houses stated that they did not accept the prospect of living in a timber house and they wanted to build a brick-concrete house. As stated below by Domenico:

*We already lived in a timber house in North Queensland and in New Farm. That was not the idea of the house we had in our mind. We wished to live in a brick and concrete house, which was uncommon in Brisbane. So, as many other Italians I suppose, we built a brick-concrete house (Transcript 5:48).*

In the diagram below I summarize the emerged factors influencing Italian migrants to build their own houses in Brisbane.
Diagram 21: The form of Italian houses

In summary, following the period from the 1960s to the 1970s when Italian migrants opted for purchasing and renovating existing timber houses, it was only in the late 1970s to early 1980s that Italian migrants decided to purchase a building plot with the intention of constructing their new houses. In this section I highlighted the reasons dictating this choice and also the idea of the house for Italian migrants. More specifically, interviewees revealed that they wanted to build a larger house designed and built on a fixed budget as per their family needs, influenced by a way of life; a house designed to show their success or their pride in their achievements within the community after many years of ‘grandi sacrifici’ (hardships); a house to initiate a new family trust with its new history and heritage, which, afterwards, will be inherited by one of the children; a grand house built of bricks and concrete which would become the family house in Australia, would represent the family’s belonging over time and would give to the family a sense of future. In the following chapters I will explore how and the extent to which the architectural and spatial form of the house has embedded the key concepts listed above.

5.3.3 The process of construction: Italian builders and craftsmen

After Italian migrants revealed the reasons motivating the decision to build their dwellings in Brisbane, they were asked about the way builders and craftsmen were selected for the construction of their houses. As mentioned below by Aldo (Transcript 3:58), the first and the most important professional person to start with was the certified builder. The builder could firstly propose samples of houses already built and secondly he could also get the building permit from the city council.

First a builder was needed to obtain the indispensable council permit and secondly to discuss the preliminary layout of the house. We contacted a professional builder
originally from Campania. He built many houses in this area. He showed us some design options. We started with a common preliminary design and then we changed and adjusted it together (Transcript 3:58).

As quoted below by Carmelo (Transcript 4:102), after appointing the builder, he discussed the architectural and spatial distribution of the house with the builder. The form of the house could easily be changed and decided according to his family composition, needs and taste.

We met with the builder a few times before applying for a permit to discuss the internal layout and features on the façade. The builder proposed some samples. We worked on one which was quite close to what we wished to build. Afterwards we changed it according to our taste and needs. We wanted a large house with big round arches on the main façade (Transcript 4:102).

Salvatore (Transcript 2:121) explained that apart from the council permit for construction and the initial design of the house, the builder was responsible for building the structure of the house, which included the foundations, the concrete slabs, the external and internal bearing walls, the non-bearing walls and the timber roof. This is well explained in the quote below:

All brick walls (external and internal), concrete slabs and the timber roof were constructed by the builder. He had to do that because you need to employ and lead a team of people and to have specific big tools, like a concrete mixer, small cranes, scaffolding, and many other construction instruments. You need a professional builder at least to erect the structure of the house (Transcript 2:121)

Importantly, all interviews pointed out that the builders employed for the construction of their houses were also first generation Italian migrants. As Carmelo (Transcript 4:134) highlighted, once the main walls were erected, the slabs cast and the timber roof constructed, the builder was no longer required as the internal finish could easily be performed by Italian friends, neighbours, relatives and/or semi-professionals with good experience and skills. This suggests that many Italian migrants with a range of skills in the building industry were involved in the construction of the house. As stated below by Carmelo, this was the recurrent case:

Floor tiles and timber finishes were realised by a tiler and a carpenter we were introduced to through my brother Vito. Rough internal walls were rendered and
painted by a cousin of mine. Also internal doors were manufactured by a relative of my wife (Transcript 4:134).

As Luigi (Transcript 9:81) and Armando (Transcript 15:97) pointed out, many Italian migrants, once they arrived in Australia, were pioneers in areas of plastering, cement moulding, tiling, casting concrete, bricklaying, marble laying and terrazzo. Luigi said that many Italian migrants brought with them several specialised building and construction skills. Luigi showed two photos (Figure 30-31) where with his colleagues he is working on a building site for the construction of a detached house for an Italian migrant, Vito.

In Italy I worked as a carpenter for a few years in my village. My dad was also a builder and he taught me a little bit... Here (in Australia) I worked in the sugar cane for five years and then I worked in the building industry as a concreter. Some friends of mine told me that it would be easy because I already had experience. After five years working as a sub-contractor decorator with some friends in Brisbane (Figure 9-10), I decided to run my own business with my own clients. It was a good business for many years. I built a few houses around here. I am not a very rich man, but I made a living thanks to my father’s teachings (Transcript 9:81)

Apart from learning the profession in Italy, Italian migrants imported construction materials directly from Italy. As Aldo mentioned, when he built his own house, the tiler, Vittorio, imported all the internal (Figure 32) and external tiles (Figure 33) from Italy.

Vittorio was a friend of my brother in law. He worked as a tiler for many years in Italy before migrating to Australia. For this reason he had good connections in Italy and he imported the tiles from Italy. All tiles in this house were imported from Italy (Transcript 3:111).

Vittorio and Lina told about their experience after they met an Italian decorator, Renzo, who was famous in the area for reproducing Renaissance paintings. They proudly showed how the ceiling in the living room in their house was decorated with a copy of the works of Michelangelo Buonarrotti and Raffaello Sanzio, carried out by Renzo (Figure 34-35-36).

Renzo was considered an artist in the neighbourhood. Definitely he was a very talented decorator. My daughter playfully called our living room ‘The Sistine
Chapel’ because of Renzo’s paintings. On the ceiling he painted copies of ‘The Creation’ by Michelangelo and of the ‘Madonna’ by Raffaello (Transcript 1:145).

Gennaro (Transcript 13:75) pointed out that not all Italian migrants involved in the building industry learnt the profession in Italy before coming to Australia. He stated that a few ‘paesani’ he worked with were not experts at all in concreting and they learnt the profession in Australia from their ‘fellow villagers’, as pointed out below:

Many Italians were self-employed in the building industry. Many chose this field because they were experts, since they learnt the job in Italy. Others chose it because they were restricted in the professional opportunities that were available here. They were employed by the Italians who knew how to do it...and they learnt it here. For example a friend of mine, Silvio, learnt and became a good decorator after working for a few years with me in Brisbane. We did not have much education, so we could find just jobs that Australians or English people did not really want to do. It was intensive and hard labour like cementing, concreting, tiling, brick work. Who was expert opened the door to those who were not expert (Transcript 13:75).

In summary, it was revealed that the owners of houses employed an Italian professional licensed builder to deal with official aspects of the building, such as permits and quality control inspections. The builder suggested some layouts as a sample, which the owners would change according to the needs of the family. The builder was in charge of erecting the external frame, including ground and upper levels’ concrete slabs, timber roof and internal brick wall partitions. Notably, most finishes such as rendering, doors, windows, tiles, internal non-bearing partitions and painting were carried out by Italian carpenters, joiners and craftsmen. These people were chosen among friends, relatives, neighbours, professionals or through word of mouth. The owners of the houses explored revealed that, in the end, all professional and non-professional staff working on the construction of the houses were Italian migrants. Therefore, the houses were built mainly by Italians, who learnt the profession in Italy, as well as in Australia while working with other Italians. This is an important insight into the way Italian migrants built their own houses in Brisbane. This also suggests that the houses built in Brisbane by Italian migrants might have been built in a traditional way, since the users and the builders came from the same cultural environment.
5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to reveal when, why and how Italian migrants built their own houses in Brisbane. To do this, it was paramount to investigate the reasons Italian migrants left Italy, their initial plans and the settlement patterns and housing forms they experienced before building their houses. These factors which influenced the period, the reasons and the way Italian migrants constructed their houses, might also have influenced the final form of their houses. In the following chapter it is addressed the way Italian migrants influenced the architectural form of their houses in Brisbane.
6.1 Introduction

After exploring the period during which Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane, the reasons they built them only in the late 1970s to early 1980s and the way they selected the personnel for the construction of the building, I explore the architectural form of the house. From the data collected from the interviewees (oral data) and from site observations (visual data) it emerged that the architectural form of the house built by Italians in Brisbane was characterized by the specific (1) number of storeys, (2) construction materials and techniques adopted to erect the external walls and (3) decorative features visible on the main façade. In the following sections I analyse the nature of the characteristics of each of the three categories and the reasons attributed to their selection.

6.2 The two-storey dwelling: spatial needs and cultural traditions

As Domenico (Transcript 5: 16) pinpointed, it was a widespread belief among Italian migrants who wanted to build a new house in Brisbane that the common single storey typology could not offer the necessary space required for the family’s specific needs. This view was also shared by Aldo (Transcript 3:24) who stated that, due to this belief, in the late 1970s and early 1980s Italian migrants opted to build a spacious two storey dwelling, despite the more common usage of the more single storey house. As Teresa stated, a two storey dwelling was considered to be ideal since it allowed the users to have more rooms where basic daily activities could be performed.

*Despite the fact that single storey houses were more common in Brisbane, we wanted to build a two story house because we wished to have more rooms on each floor. We did not have a big family since we just had two kids. We just needed space to carry on general and domestic activities* (Teresa, 8:54).

Firstly it was the wish to have a house designed for their needs that is having more space to perform domestic and general activities, which influenced Italian migrants’ decisions to build two storey houses. As mentioned by Italo, in 1982 when his wife and he decided to build their new detached two storey house in Aspley, they were also motivated by the wish to establish a new family history in Australia. In his words, ‘This was the house for us and for our descendants, or at least for one of our kids’ (Transcript 12:31). Italo’s intention to build a family house was also shared by Luigi (Transcript 9:21) who stated that he wanted to build a
multi-storey dwelling, to follow in the tradition of the grand Italian houses where he and his wife had lived with their extended family before migrating to Australia.

This is our family house in Australia. Initially we thought that one of our heirs would live here after us...and then this would happen afterwards with our nephews too, as it happened in Italy for generations. But, I don’t think it is going to happen here in Australia (Luigi, 9:21).

Secondly it was the wish to continue the old tradition of the grand family house where interviewees had lived in Italy before migrating. Consequently their houses displayed the desire to ‘recall’ the architectural style of their family house in Italy. It was the memory of the family house which played a role in the decision to build a two storey house in Australia. In conclusion, interviewees revealed how two factors, namely the need to perform specific activities, and cultural traditions, influenced the number of storeys chosen by Italian migrants’ for the houses they build for themselves in Brisbane.

To have more space where specific activities were carried out

To ‘recall’ the tradition of the extended family grand house

Diagram 22: The Italian house structure

6.3 The cavity brick wall technique

After the interviewees pointed out the two storey dwelling as the type of building mostly adopted by Italian migrants for the construction of their houses in Brisbane, they pinpointed another feature which, in their view, was generally distinctive in houses built by Italian migrants. This was the material and construction technique used. All interviewees who built their houses in Brisbane pointed out that the external walls were built using a double brick layer with a cavity in between.

As Silvano (Transcript 18:33), who worked as a builder in Brisbane from 1968, emphasized, this technique, commonly known as ‘cavity brick wall’, was the most widespread construction system adopted by Italian migrants in the erection of the external walls of their two storey
houses in Brisbane. Franco (transcript 6:18) who operated as a builder for more than 20 years and built a few houses for Italian migrants in Brisbane, again stressed how this construction technique was widely selected by Italian migrants for the construction of their houses in the 1980s. He explains below what a ‘cavity brick wall’ technique consists of.

*A brick cavity wall consists of two walls of 110mm thick extruded bricks separated by a 50mm air space. The outside walls are not rendered since they have an external face brick finish. Internal partitions were constructed with one rendered wall of 110mm extruded brick. While the external bricks were of first quality, the internal ones were of second quality (Transcript 6:18).*

Figure 37-38 show the drawing of a section and an axonometric view of the typical ‘cavity brick wall’ as described by Franco, Silvano and all four couples interviewed who built their houses.

As interviewees also highlighted, in the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a more common brick wall technique, called the ‘brick veneer wall’, used to build the walls of residential dwellings in Brisbane. Salvatore (Transcript 2:52) described below the main differences between the more widespread brick veneer wall and the uncommon cavity brick wall technique, adopted by Italian migrants.

*The difference between a brick veneer and a cavity brick wall one is mainly in the internal wall. While in both techniques the external wall is built in bricks, the brick veneer wall has an internal layer consisting of a timber stud wall, while the cavity brick wall has an internal brick layer... Italian migrants and builders replaced the typical internal structural timber wall with a brick wall. It was definitely a dearer way of building walls in comparison to the brick veneer one since timber stud walls were lighter and usually it took less time to build a house with this wall type. Cavity walls required more time to be constructed and consequently this made cavity brick houses more expensive, so nowadays ‘brick cavity wall’ houses have become obsolete because they are dearer build (Transcript 2:52).*

In addition, Salvatore (Transcript 2:56) mentioned, the structural differences between the ‘brick cavity wall’ and the ‘brick veneer wall’ systems, with particular reference to the materials utilized to build the slabs.
In the case of the brick veneer wall system, the light timber slab and trussed roof are supported by the internal timber stud frame. In the case of the cavity brick wall system, the internal brick wall layer supports all structural loads represented by the concrete slab and the timber trussed roof. Therefore, in a cavity brick house timber is rigorously made use of only to construct the trusses supporting the roof and for the doors and windows frames, since the slab is built in concrete (Transcript 2:56).

After interviewees explained the technique adopted to build the external walls of their two-storey houses in Brisbane and the main differences between brick cavity and brick veneer wall systems, they pointed out the reasons they preferred the uncommon and more expensive cavity brick wall to a widespread and cheaper brick veneer wall building technique. Salvatore (Transcript 2:12) and Aldo (Transcript 3:21) stated that the selection of this material and construction technique came after the interviewees had first lived in brick houses in Italy before migrating and secondly in ‘weatherboard’ and in ‘brick veneer’ wall-houses in Australia. As Aldo stated, ‘In Italy we lived in a brick house. Once we arrived in Australia we lived in a very nice weatherboard house in Wilston. When we decided to build a house, we just wanted a cavity brick house (Transcript 3:21)’. Many Italian migrants revealed that before building their own houses they lived in weatherboard houses, both in the cane fields in North Queensland and in Brisbane. In Italy, before migrating to Australia, they lived in brick houses. As Carmelo (Transcript 4:18) and Domenico (Transcript 5:95) highlighted, in their view it was their previous housing experiences that enhanced their desire to build cavity brick wall houses in Australia.

(In North Queensland) I lived in a wooden cottage for seven years. Afterwards, we moved to Brisbane and I lived in a single storey wooden house in New Farm for another nine years. The house in New Farm was fine, but I suppose I never got used to the timber house. I wanted to build my own masonry house, like the one my family owned in Italy (Transcript 4:18).

As interviewees who operated as builders in Brisbane stressed, within the context of the detached house construction, they were well acquainted with brick as a material, and with the cavity brick wall as a construction system. As Domenico pointed out below, once financial resources permitted him to build a house, it became natural to choose the dearer but more
familiar cavity brick wall as the preferred construction system for in spite of the fact that brick veneer houses were cheaper to build and more common in Brisbane.

_I always lived in masonry houses in Italy. I did not live in timber houses before coming to Australia. I think that the British built timber houses in Australia because there was big availability of timber and also I assume because it was part of their culture. On the other hand, Italians preferred to build brick and concrete houses because they were acquainted with this construction technique, which was part of their traditions ... I believe (Transcript 5:95)._"

Several interviewees stressed that they were acquainted with the ‘brick cavity wall’ construction technique in Italy before migrating to Australia. For example Giuseppe (Transcript 7:81) stated that he learned how to build a cavity brick wall in Italy before coming to Australia, as did many other Italian builders he met in Brisbane. He stressed how he and his compatriots had worked in Italy in the building industry as carpenters, concreters, bricklayers and tillers: ‘I worked as a carpenter in Italy for five years. The cavity brick wall was a system used in Italy too. This system was the way we already knew it (Transcript 15:24)’. As Antonio (Transcript 8:63) pointed out, there was no recollection of brick veneer or weatherboard houses in Italy when he left the country in the 1950s. He stated that in Italy dwellings were mainly made of three materials, stone, bricks and concrete. In addition, Antonio said that while concrete was used for building houses for rich people, or for public buildings, such as schools, municipal buildings, bricks and stone were employed in the residential construction environment.

_I have no memory of timber houses in Italy. There were houses built by the use of natural local stone and rocks - from the mountain - and by the use of bricks. Then rich people had houses built in concrete. I remember that concrete was also used to build schools and other public buildings in the village (Transcript 8:63)._"

As well as the fact that Italian migrants chose the cavity brick technique for the construction of their houses because they were acquainted with this technique in Italy, all interviewees, in particular those who were employed in the building industry, highlighted how they considered a cavity brick wall to be structurally ideal for the construction of two storey dwellings in Brisbane. As they emphasized, in their view, the brick cavity wall system could give more solidity and stability to a multi-storey and large foot print building than a weatherboard or brick veneer wall system. They all expressed a firm belief that a cavity brick two storey house was more ‘solid and stable’ than any other two storeys residential dwelling built using a different
technique. For example, Gennaro (Transcript 13:48), a builder with forty years experience, made a clear statement about this matter.

*If you ask me about two-storey cavity brick houses, I think they are generally more solid and stable than two-storey weatherboard and brick veneer houses. I cannot say the same thing for a single story house, since, in that case, I don’t really think it makes a big difference whether it is a weatherboard, brick veneer or cavity brick wall house.*

Armando (Transcript 15:24), Luigi (Transcript 9:41) and Amedeo (Transcript 1951) also clearly stated that Italian migrants wanted to build a cavity brick wall house because this specific technique was to them synonymous with solidity and stability. Since Roman times, stability has been emphasised as one of the principles of construction. This suggested that the choice to adopt this technique was based on traditions assimilated in Italy.

Armando (Transcript 15:24) highlighted another factor which, in his view, influenced Italian migrants in their selection of this specific material and construction technique, the higher durability of bricks in comparison to wood. More specifically, he pointed out that cavity brick houses could last longer than weatherboard and brick veneer houses, which in his view, also required constant painting and maintenance.

*Italians used brick walls because there is no need for any maintenance, or at least to be frequently painted as timber usually requires. Also, brick walls last for a longer time than timber walls: they did not deteriorate as quickly as timber, either in weatherboard or brick veneer wall. You can see it here...all the buildings on this street have been built nearly 40 years ago by Italians...and they will last for the next 50 years or longer! I don’t know if these houses are beautiful to everyone, but I am sure they have a solid long lasting structure (Transcript 15:24).*

Therefore, as Armando pointed out, brick as a construction material was chosen for its durability and also for its convenience in relation to maintenance costs, and not for aesthetical or decorative reasons.

In addition to its durability and low-maintenance, Armando justified the choice of the cavity brick wall system for a further reason. He (Transcript 15:54) pointed out that it was commonly
believed among Italian migrants that this system would provide better thermal insulation than a brick veneer or weatherboard wall.

*I thought, presumably like most Italians who built their own dwellings, that cavity-brick houses were better insulated against climatic temperature range and season changes. In the timber houses where we lived it was usually very cold in winter and very hot and humid in summer. This happened because the timber wall absorbed the outdoor humidity. Besides, a cavity wall system provides a better acoustic insulation. When I lived in timber houses I could easily hear external noises (Transcript 15:54).*

Luigi (Transcript 9:57) reckoned that the external timber wall could absorb moisture from the atmosphere and consequently it would provide inferior thermal insulation to the internal spatial form compared to a brick wall.

*If you build a timber house in a humid subtropical climate like the one in Brisbane, the wooden wall will first expand because the timber swells and expands when absorbing the moisture from the atmosphere and second it will shrink when the surrounding environment changes. This means that the timber wall will facilitate rain penetration (Transcript 9:57).*

All four couples who built their houses stressed that they assumed that a double skin brick wall provided better thermal insulation for the climate in Brisbane. In response to a subtropical climate that is hot and humid in summer, Salvatore (Transcript 2:103) and Domenico (Transcript 5:89) highlighted that in their opinion the cavity brick wall was the most appropriate construction system available in order to keep the inner space cool and airy during the summer. Furthermore, Concetta (Transcript 5:96) pointed out that in winter there wouldn’t have been much need to heat the house because inside it was not very cold. Thus there was no need for an air-conditioning/heating system. This was the case for the ground floor only, where there was a concrete slab both on the ground and the first floor above. However, as highlighted in the quote below by Salvatore (Transcript 2:104), the scenario was different for the first floor. This floor needed an air-conditioning system because the timber trussed roof was built with no insulation material:

*It is cool on this floor [it was summer and we were conversing on the ground floor] and as you can see there is no need for air-conditioning. This is due to the double*
brick walls and the concrete slab below and above which keep the temperature warm in winter and cool in summer. At the upper level it is much warmer because the timber roof is not insulated (Transcript 2:104).

In conclusion, the effectiveness of the structure and stability, the durability and the effective thermal insulation features which, in Italian migrants’ opinions, were enhanced in a cavity brick wall compared to a brick veneer or weatherboard wall, can be argued and proved only through technical and scientific studies, and this is not the purpose of this study.

However, interviewees stated that the decision to select the cavity brick system for the walls of their houses was dictated by the choice of the use of the same materials and technology that they were acquainted with in Italy, or with an architecturally traditional way of building houses in Italy. Therefore, firstly this decision was dictated by a choice based on learned traditions. This initial analysis has shown that when cultural patterns become established, there is generally a propensity to conserve them. Most of the time individuals are deeply committed to their own customs. This has been proved by the Italian migrants in Brisbane. They chose the cavity brick wall system for the outside walls of their houses and cast a concrete slab as a floor, influenced by an accepted way of doing things learned in Italy.

Diagram 23: Cavity brick wall houses

6.4 The decorative features of the façade

In addition to the selected number of storeys for their house and the construction technique adopted for the external walls, interviewees pointed out distinctive stylistic/decorative features which, in their view, characterize the façades of their houses.

The first feature identified through site observation was that while some owners opted for a main façade which was straight and parallel to the front line boundary (Figure 65), other owners preferred a non linear façade, stepping back a meter or two, usually for the garage
area (Figure 55). As interviewees pointed out, this was simply related to the shape and depth of the lot and also to personal taste. In their view, this feature was not influenced by cultural or physical factors.

In addition, Vittorio (Transcript 1:38) stated that the most evident decorative feature of houses built by Italian migrants was the finish on the perimetrical brick walls. As stated by Aldo below, the external walls were not personalized by incorporating texture, finish, render, and colours: walls on Italian houses were characterized by a neat brick finish (Figure 39-55-65-74).

*I have always seen Italian houses with face brick finish façades. The colour of the brick can vary from light to dark cream. Nevertheless houses built by Italians were not usually painted or rendered, as for example used to happen for Greek migrants (Transcript 3:53).*

According to Carmelo (Transcript 4:83), external brick walls on Italian houses were not rendered or painted since this made the bricks generally maintenance free. More specifically, he pointed out that painting or rendering were not essential treatments for external brick walls, as they usually were for weatherboard walls. As he also mentioned, thus avoiding the periodical rendering and painting of the bricks on the façade would allow saving on maintenance costs.

*Some Italians built their houses with dichromatic bricks, which are two different coloured bricks; one is used as a base course and the other is used on the rest of the house. I think the dichromatic brick is a distinctive characteristic of Italian houses. External brick walls in Italian houses were not usually painted or rendered. In doing so, there was no need to do any future maintenance to the wall, since a painted or rendered wall needs maintenance each year, as occurs for weatherboard walls (Transcript 4:83).*

Interviewees were asked if a neat brick finish wall was influenced by some feature of their extended family houses in Italy, as had been revealed about the structure and the use of the cavity brick wall. In regard to this issue, Aldo (Transcript 3:78) highlighted the main difference between the way the external wall was treated in Australia and in Italy. In Italy, usually the external walls of dwellings were characterised by a rendered finish consisting of a layer of material such as cement which was applied to the external brick wall and then painted in different colours. Domenico (Transcript 5:110) also pointed out how Italian migrants’ houses in
Brisbane stopped at the exposed brick façade, which was not common in Italy. As he stressed, this feature of houses built by Italian migrants in Brisbane was dictated simply by the desire to avoid the potential constant maintenance required to preserve a rendered or painted wall.

In Italy the façade of houses were usually rendered and painted. This required continuous maintenance of the façade and therefore additional costs. In my view, that’s why Italian houses in Brisbane were not rendered (Transcript 5:110).

An architectural element visible in all the facades of the houses investigated for this study is the porch projecting at the ground floor level (Figure 39-56-65-74). Usually the porch, external to the walls of the main building and located on the front and back façades of the house, is covered by the first floor cantilevered concrete slab on which there is a balcony. Interviewees mentioned that porches were built at a distance from the house wall for the floor running from each side of the house (1) to form a ventilated opening between the wall and the façade covering, (2) to provide shade for the entrance and for the living areas on each floor and finally (3) to allow for sufficient transition space for a person to comfortably stop before entering or exiting the house via the front or rear entrance. They also emphasized that porches were not usually used to entertain guests or to gather on special occasions.

Interviewees pointed out that these architectural elements, the porch and veranda in houses built by Italian migrants, were not influenced by the design of the extended family houses in Italy. On the other hand, in relation to the provenance of the porch and balcony, Antonio clearly suggested that these architectural elements were commonly visible in ‘Queenslander’ houses, and in their opinion, it was the design of the Queenslander which influenced the shape of porches and balconies in Italians’ houses.

The projecting porch was an element commonly visible in low or high-set timber houses which are commonly called ‘Queenslanders’. Usually these houses are suspended on stumps and they float above the terrain. They have a veranda space all around the perimeter of the house. I think the veranda has a stylistic and a practical purpose: this area all around the building and the empty under floor area are used to cool the building through ventilation and also for protection of the main structure from termite and other insects. The veranda around the Queenslander house is ideal in a sub-tropical climate to allow cross-ventilation within the building. I think this has influenced the look of the houses built by Italian migrants (Transcript 8:91).
Furthermore, as interviewees highlighted, a very prominent architectural and decorative feature noticeable above the porch, was balcony on the first floor which was covered by the extended roof of the house (Figure 39-56-65-74), represented by openings or arches. As mentioned below by Aldo (Transcript 3:45), arches were considered to be a distinctive feature in houses built by Italian migrants. As Aldo pointed out, the purpose of arches on the main façade was simply to provide some extra flair to the building, therefore serving a purely decorative purpose.

Most Italian houses have arches and/or a porch on the façade. It is usually a feature of Italian houses. I think that arches made the façade much nicer. Then you can have big openings with arches, and, if they were made by a professional, they gave the façade an extra flair (Transcript 3:45).

As Gennaro (Transcript 13:82), a builder skilled in building brick arches highlighted, the aesthetic appeal of an arch lay in the variety of forms which could be used to express balance, proportion and character or identity. Also, Gennaro pointed out that arches were of great structural advantage, because they could span large openings.

I liked arches because you can span big openings on the wall. Then, you can have different types of arches and each can manifest a different proportion, balance and identity within the entire façade (Transcript 13:82).

In relation to arches and the way the elevation of the house was initially conceived, discussed and chosen, it was important to report the testimony of Luigi who worked as a builder in Brisbane for nearly thirty years. Luigi retired at 65 after suffering an accident on a building site which initially stopped him for nearly a year. He tried to return to business after his ten months’ convalescence, but since in his words he realized he ‘was not the same man he was before the accident’ (Transcript 9:73), he retired a few months after his return to the building industry. Luigi told how after building several houses for a few ‘paesani’ in Brisbane (as he cheerfully used to define them), he built his own house with the help and collaboration of Italian craftsmen and self-employed professionals like tilers, electricians, decorators and carpenters.

Luigi explained that usually after being contracted by the client to build the house, he used to propose an initial layout with two samples of front elevations and one sample of a rear
elevation. A copy of the drawing of the front and back elevations initially proposed, which in Luigi words’ represented a ‘punto di partenza’ (a starting point) or a way to start discussing with the potential owner the overall appearance of the house, is shown in Figure 109-110-111.

As Luigi also pointed out, while the proposed front elevation was more ‘majestic, luxurious and high style’, characterized by round (Figure 109) or elliptical arches (Figure 110) and concrete Roman columns, the back elevation was generally more frugal and economic, with no arches and with a basic steel balustrade (Figure 111). These schematic elevations represented for Luigi the typology to be proposed to Italian migrants willing to build their own houses at the time. In addition, as mentioned by Luigi, aesthetical variables, such as round arches to elliptical or vice versa, were related to the personal taste of the owner and of the owner’s budget. When there was a more frugal budget, owners would choose not to have any arches and Roman columns on the façade. In that case the owners opted for the more simplified back elevation to become the main façade, with some finishing improvements, such as a more elegant steel balustrade and/or tiles covering the exposed balcony concrete slab. Also, as he stressed, the width of the façade and the number of the arch-bays were related to the width of the lot. Tony pointed out that usually he built ‘three arch-bays for narrowed lots and four and even five for larger lots’ (Transcript 9:76).

If as interviewees pointed out, porches and balconies were not influenced by the Italian architectural design, according to Salvatore, Domenico and Vittorio, the choice of using arches to decorate the main façade was justified by the fact that this architectural element was one of the most antique construction and stylistic features visible in Italian architectural history. Some interviewees recalled the look of their previous house in Italy, whilst others recalled the use of this element in Roman architecture, justifying the use of arches because they have been used for hundreds of years and developed during centuries of use in Italy. For example, Lucia pointed out that the Romans applied this technique to a wide range of structures and this justified the use of this element because it forms part of their architectural tradition. Lucia also showed a photo of herself in Rome, and she highlighted how arches were visible on the façades of most buildings, both religious and residential (Figure 84). So, as stated below by Salvatore, the use of arches as decorative elements visible on the main façade was inspired by the architectural history of Italy and its building construction traditions:

*In our village in Italy, most houses had arches. This is in the Italian tradition and culture. Even the Romans, two thousand years ago, employed arches in their ancient architectures like the Colosseum, the theatres and the bridges (Transcript 2:88).*
Interviewees pointed out another common decorative element usually visible on the façade of houses built by Italian migrants. This was the distinctive balustrade located on the balcony on the first floor, and in many cases, on the boundary fence (Figure 39-56-65-74-90-91-92). As Flavia highlighted, ‘Most houses built by Italians have a distinctive concrete balustrade usually manufactured by Italian migrants’ (Transcript 4:102). Aldo also specified that Italian houses were characterized by two different types of balustrades, the one with a stylish handmade stainless steel pattern (Figure 55-65) and the one with solid concrete columns painted in white (Figure 39-74). As he also mentioned, both types were designed and built by Italian craftsmen.

Most Italian houses have arches, handmade concrete, steel balustrades and Roman columns. If you see these external elements on the house, it means that the house was built by Italians (Transcript 4:104).

Salvatore stated that most common balustrade types visible in Italian houses were Roman columns painted in white, which in his view was an element also commonly visible in many Italian cities and buildings. More specifically, Salvatore showed a photo (Figure 85) of himself in Rome, and as he highlighted, balustrade concrete columns were commonly visible on bridges, and generally on public and private buildings.

In Italy concrete columns balustrades are easily visible on public and private buildings. I guess many Italian houses have got a balustrade with Roman columns and a rectangular concrete handrail on top of the columns (Figure 85) (Transcript 2:92).

Giuseppe, who worked as a concreter-builder in Brisbane for many years, stated that in the 1980s he started manufacturing balustrade concrete columns, mainly for Italian migrants, friends and relatives who were building their houses. Initially he started this as a hobby, and after a few years, due to the high demand for his columns, he opened his own business. Giuseppe showed a drawing and some samples of the concrete columns he used to manufacture (Figure 86-87-88-89).

This is the original drawing (Figure 121). I drew this myself in Italy. It was a column I saw in my own town, Pordenone. I cast a few samples here…smaller and bigger columns with the same design. Italian migrants liked it and therefore I manufactured thousands of these concrete columns (Figure 98) (Transcript 7:134).
The Roman columns supporting the balcony, or supporting a slab above the main entry were pointed out by interviewees as another distinctive decorative feature of the façade (Figure 39-40). As mentioned below, Lina highlighted that this element was chosen for aesthetic reasons:

*Roman columns or pillars supporting the balcony slab can make the house more beautiful. They give a grand and elegant appearance to the house. These elements were designed centuries ago, probably by the Greeks or the Romans, and they are still very common in Italy (Transcript 1:108).*

Luigi emphasized that this architectural element was also chosen for structural reasons, and not just for decoration. The columns could support the load of the cantilevered balcony concrete slab on which the Roman concrete column balustrade usually sat.

*Roman columns add stylistic and structural strength to a house. The concrete columns support a cantilevered concrete slab on top, which because of its load, cannot be supported by a timber post. In addition, concrete columns do not need any maintenance and they last longer than timber posts (Transcript 9:82).*

In summary, the data analysis showed that the distinctive stylistic/decorative characteristics visible on the façades of houses built by Italian migrants were the porch and the balcony, the dichromatic and monochromatic cream face bricks, the use of round arches as openings and balustrade elements on the balcony on the first floor and the Roman columns on the ground floor.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, transnational housing is interpreted as being a mix between the culture deriving from the native country and the one assimilated in the host nation. In the case of Italian migrants, if the porch and the balcony on the front and back façade and the neat brick finish on the external walls were influenced by local architectural forms, the adopted material, construction system and distinctive stylistic features were influenced by architectural traditions learnt when people are socialized into the culture of a particular society, in this case, that of Italy.
Diagram 24: Decorative elements on the façade

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I analyzed the distinguishing features characterizing the architectural form of the house built by Italian migrants in Brisbane. I also explored the reasons for choosing distinctive features. In the 1980s Italian migrants chose a two-storey house. They built the shell of their house by using a brick cavity wall construction technique and they decorated the façade with distinctive stylistic-architectural elements. All these features, which characterized the architectural form of Italian migrants’ houses, were extensively an expression of culture, as an accepted way of doing things. Finally, it was shown that Italian migrants in Brisbane have not abandoned their cultural traditions and they have expressed them through the distinctive features of their houses.
The way Italian migrants influenced the spatial form of their houses is explored in this chapter. These influences are divided into two categories: the distribution and utilisation of domestic space; and the extent to which the conceived spatial form contributed to an enhancement of social interaction.

As reviewed in the literature, in Rapoport’s and Kent’s views the domestic space of vernacular houses is distributed in order to be utilized by family members for the performance of specific activities in response to cultural needs. This encompasses a way of life learnt through a cultural frame and is adapted by living within the native and the host society. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I investigate the way the domestic space has been distributed for the performance of specific activities.

As Rapoport and Kent also stressed, for a better understanding of the relationship between human behaviour and/or activities and spatial form, it is important to analyse not just the nature of the activities performed by the users within the domestic space but also the system of the activities. Therefore, I explored who performed the activity, where and when it was carried out, how the activity was associated with other activities, and finally, the meaning of the activity itself (specifically the extent to which it was influenced by culture as a way of life). From the analysis of the responses gleaned relating to the nature of the activities performed by family members, it emerged that the activities performed within the domestic space could be categorized into two main groups: working and social activities.

### 7.2 Working activities and spatial form

In this section I analyse how Italian migrants distributed the domestic space in response to their need to perform specific working activities. These activities were further divided into domestic and income generating activities. In addition, since Rapoport stresses the importance of analysing the setting of the activity which includes the outdoor areas (which will be divided into front and back garden areas), I analyse the way in which Italian migrants configured the gardens, or yards and utilized the space for specific activities.

#### 7.2.1 Food preparation and storage: kitchen and multi-function rooms

Something commonly known is that Italians and Greeks are world famous for their food and restaurants. As Maria suggested, it is probably safe to state that Italians and Greeks are two of...
the most important contributors to the Australian diet. Therefore, it is no surprise that the working activities most frequently performed by Italians within the domestic space of their houses were related to food preparation and cooking. As Maria pointed out:

_Cooking was probably the most important activity at home. It is probably in our culture, like for the Greeks. Because of this, Italians contributed so much to the food industry in Australia and nowadays most famous restaurants in Brisbane are run by Italians (Transcript 2:34)._ 

According to Flavia and Pina, when Italians arrived in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, the range of foodstuffs was very limited: ‘_When we arrived, the only dish we could find was fish and chips. There was no tomato sauce, pasta, lasagne or gnocchi_ (Transcript 3:24).’ In addition to this anecdotal evidence, as other interviewees highlighted several times, on their arrival in Australia they could not find their typical national food such as ‘_passata di pomodoro, sugo, salame, prosciutto or grappa_’ (pulped tomato, tomato sauce, salami, ham or ‘grappa’). Consequently, they set about making it themselves. Teresa expressed this well in the quote below:

_On our arrival there was no pasta, tomato sauce, olives, salami, ham and mozzarella cheese....There was only canned food. You could not find many Italian fresh ingredients and even Italian canned food. There was only one thing we could do: to cook ourselves (Transcript 6:87)._ 

Many interviewees stated that making tomato sauce was the most common and traditional cooking activity carried out each year in Italian houses. This usually takes place in March when there was abundance of tomatoes. This was an important event that involved not just husband, wife and children, but also relatives and friends. Lucia showed a photo taken in their garage where the tomatoes were prepared in order to make tomato sauce (Figure 93). She explained the all process of making tomato sauce in the quote below:

_While some of us chopped the tomatoes and fed them into the seeding machine, others added basil and salt to the sauce and put it into the bottles. Then someone else sealed the bottles and put them into a big pot full of boiling water where the bottles were left for about half an hour in order to be hermetically sealed (Transcript 20:128)._
The importance of the tomato as the base for many commonly known Italian dishes is emphasized by Harper and Faccioli: ‘Tomatoes are best eaten fresh, but they are amenable to storage through drying, canning, or freezing. Above all, tomatoes are important in Italian cuisine because they work especially well with other typical Italian foods such as olive oil, basil, pasta, or the bread form of wheat flour, pizza! It is excellent raw or made into a sauce, or it can be half-cooked by simply adding hot pasta. It welcomes characteristic spices and tastes of Italy, including garlic, basil and oregano’ (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 158). In addition, Harper and Faccioli pointed out that the export of Italian tomato sauce became popular in the United States, for example in the post war period especially, because of the Italian migration flow which took place.

*Tomatoes became popular in the United States because of Italian immigration; before the waves of Italian immigration in the late nineteenth century, they had been rare. Hunger for tomatoes in off-season (and where tomatoes could not be easily grown) stimulated the export of canned tomatoes from Italy to the United States. In fact, canned tomatoes were one of the first industrial products in Italy, primarily to provision the emigrant population (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 159).*

As Harper and Faccioli stated, tomatoes were exported to the United States only in the post war period. The high number of Italian migrants to this country began before the Second World War, a few decades earlier than in Australia. As this confirmed, Italian migrants could not find this ingredient in Australia as there were few Italian migrants in Australia in the 1950s. Therefore, as stated above by the respondents, in Australia in the 1950s migrants felt the need to make the tomato sauce themselves.

Anna (Transcript 12:43) stated that making tomato sauce was just one of the common activities carried out among Italian migrants. The preparation of fresh food such as pasta, lasagne or gnocchi, cakes and cookies and the preserving of products such as eggplants, zucchini and olives in oil were common activities usually performed on weekends. Vittorina (Transcript 11:98) stated that while pasta, lasagne, gnocchi and cakes in general (Figure 97) were prepared by her and stored, her husband helped to collect vegetables from the garden and to prepare them for hermetic sealing as was done for the tomato sauce. As she showed in two photos, green olives were gathered from the trees in the backyard (Figure 98) and then sealed in bottles (Figure 99). As Teresa highlighted (Transcript 8:78), bottles with tomato sauce, olives, and vegetables in oil were usually stored on shelves in back rooms facing the backyard of the house.
Serena (Transcript 19:83) also mentioned that food was often prepared on weekends, since both she and her husband had more spare time than during the weekdays, and often their children could help them then. Therefore, the pattern was that activities related to food preparation were carried out on weekends and usually involved the entire family.

*We did not have to work on weekends...so we had time to prepare gnocchi, pasta, sweets. Amedeo also helped sometimes when he was not busy with his job or on the building site. Sometimes Gino (Serena's son) helped me too...when he did not have to play tennis, soccer, cricket with his friends (Transcript 19:83).*

Interviewees described and showed the domestic space where activities related to food preparation were carried out. Giuseppina for example pointed out that ‘sugo di pomodoro’ (tomato sauce), pasta and lasagne and other traditional Italian dishes, were prepared in the kitchen (Figure 47) and then stored in multi-use rooms commonly located on the ground floor, near the backyard.

*The back space facing the back yard on the ground floor was sub-divided into separate rooms. This space was intended to be used to produce and store food. On the ground floor of our house there is an informal kitchen, a laundry, a sewing room facing the back yard (Transcript 18:133).*

As Maria (Transcript 2:102) pointed out, in her house multi-functional rooms dedicated to producing and storing food were located at the back of the ground floor, conveniently located near the backyard in order (1) to facilitate bringing the vegetables in from the backyard and (2) to work in a more private context .

*The kitchenette has a door facing the back yard. In this way it was easy to work privately indoors and outdoors. From the kitchenette it is possible to walk to the garden and to collect vegetables and fruits (Transcript 2:102).*

A site observation of the houses investigated enabled the plans to be drawn for each house. As is shown through the plans (Figure 42-60-69-77), the pattern in all houses investigated is that the kitchenette and multi-use rooms were allocated on the ground floor, near the garden.
Emma (Transcript 9:93) and Assunta (Transcript 14:73) pointed out another distinctive activity which was commonly carried out among Italians in Brisbane. This was the annual slaughtering of the pig and the preparation of smallgoods.

My brothers and I ordered the pig as winter approached. Usually we slaughtered the pig at our house because we had a bigger cantina and garage to work in. We made prosciutto out of the legs, salami and ‘salsiccia’; the intestines were cleaned and stuffed with meat, offal and herbs to make sausages. The fat was then transformed into lard (Transcript 9:93).

Antonio (Transcript 8:63) also stated that the slaughtering of the pig commonly involved more than one family, and it was carried out at one of the family house’s ‘cantina’ and/or garage: usually the one with the larger garage or work room. Teresa also revealed how finally, ‘after a long day of work to prepare the smallgoods and the meat, the food was shared among the families who purchased the pig’ (Transcript 8:66).

Italo (Transcript 12:86) also mentioned that during the year he was often busy bottling the wine which was then stored in the ‘cantina’ or cellar on the ground floor. Interviewees revealed that the term ‘cantina’ referred to a typical room, which usually in houses in Italy was located in the cellar to process and store wine, tomato sauce and smallgoods. As the cellar was underground, it maintained a constant cool temperature during the year. In reality, as highlighted by Italo, the houses built in Australia did not have a cellar, since there was no underground floor, but simply multi-functional rooms on the ground floor which were used as cellars and storage rooms.

When we built our house in Australia, we wanted to build a large garage, extra rooms and ‘una cantina’ (a cellar) located at the back of the ground floor to store homemade provisions to feed the family for a few months. A few years ago, the walls and ceiling in the ‘cantina’ were hung with cheese, small-goods, tomatoes, garlic, chilli and other vegetables. Tomato sauce, jam and bottles of olives were stored on shelves along the walls. In the back rooms there also was ‘una cucinetta’ (a kitchen), a stove, a table for preparing small-goods. Although we did not have a proper underground cellar as our family had back in Italy, we maintained our culinary traditions within the back space of the house (Transcript 12:86).
From the analysis of the activities related to processing and storage of food, it emerged that the need to perform food preparation and storage activities was influenced by (1) the lack of typical Italian food on arrival in Australia. A few interviewees, specifically Assunta and Pasquale highlighted how, during and after the war, they faced a (2) shortage or scarcity of food in Italy, and this was one of the reasons which influenced their migration. As Assunta remembered:

> We had a ration card and we had to stand in line to be given a piece of meat, bread and some milk since the food was rationed. There was no butter, oil or coffee. Some people, who did not get much food, starting losing weight, became very ill and died from starvation. This scenario occurred more in the cities than in rural areas, since peasants in rural areas had poultry and grew vegetables on the land (Transcript 14:51).

Emma also highlighted the scarcity of food she faced with her family back in the early 1950s and the desire to have more variety and better food. ‘During and after the war, we ate the same food so many times during the week. Now we eat special food every day…food we dreamed of it in the old days back in Italy. In contrast, now every day is Sunday since we have all the food we wish on the table at any time’ (Transcript 9:56).

As Luigi also pointed out (Transcript 9:58), it was the poverty and the scarcity of food migrants experienced before coming to Australia which enhanced their desire to have more space to perform activities related to food preparation and cooking. Pina and Salvatore remembered that when they were in Italy in the 1940s, there was typically a main dish called polenta. Pina remembered that ‘Nearly every day mum made polenta on a large piece of wood called ‘tagliere’ over the table, and all of us sitting around the table had a piece. The polenta was cooked until it was dense and on special occasions it was eaten with meat, with pieces of sausage and ham, with mushrooms and beans, or with cheese’. Salvatore added that ‘polenta was the best way to fill your stomach. It was the food of poor people in the old days’. This traditional dish is still present Pina’s menu specially on Sundays when their sons and their families join them for lunch. As Pina highlighted: ‘Today it is a feast when there is polenta and veal stew on the table.’ As Harper and Faccioli highlighted, in the post war period, polenta was a common dish in the Italian diet, ‘…the polenta diet that the poor depended upon led to plagues of pellagra, a dreadful disease caused by niacin deficiency’ (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 39).
Giuseppina (Transcript 18:47) stated that since her arrival in Australia in 1960, raw ingredients and food generally were never as scarce as they were in Italy. She added that in Australia there was not as much variety as there is now and that food and ingredients were cheap. Therefore, due to the abundance and low cost of foodstuff in Australia, Italian migrants allocated space for a kitchenette and multi-use rooms at the back of the ground floor to perform activities related to food preparation when they had the opportunity of building their own houses in Australia.

Space allocated to food preparation in houses built by Italian migrants in Brisbane was also influenced by another factor: (3) spatial traditions assimilated in Italy. Several interviewees pointed out that the typical extended family house in Italy contained a kitchen and two or more rooms on the ground floor allocated for the preparation and storage of food (Figure 7).

Similarly, the space located on the ground floor of the houses built in Brisbane comprised a kitchenette with included a stove, a fridge, a basin and a small table, and a storeroom or multi-functional room located beside the kitchenette. This space was situated in the back area of the house, inaccessible to guests and conveniently close to the backyard. The vegetables and fruits cultivated (Figure 42-58-67-77), in the backyard were prepared in the kitchenette. It was discovered that in Italian extended family house the kitchen and dining room were located in the front area of the house, easily accessible to everyone. In contrast, in the houses built in Australia the ground-floor kitchenette was not accessible to guests, since it was located in the back area and it worked as a multi-function area.

Diagram 25: Food preparation and storage activities
7.2.2 The cultivation of vegetables: the backyard

It was noticed that detached houses were commonly located towards the middle of the ‘quarter-acre block’ or ‘single front block’. This marked the physical shape of two separate outdoor areas, gardens or yards: a private backyard separating the house from the neighbours’ property which usually could not be accessed without permission by strangers or visitors (Figure 50-64-71-73), and a public front yard, visible from the street, functioning as a separator between the house and the street and acting as a semi-public display area for passers-by and neighbours (Figure 52-53-54-62). In this section I analyze the way Italian migrants configured and utilized the back yard in accordance with their needs.

All interviewees who built their houses pointed out that their backyards were rarely visible from the street, since they were physically separated from public view by a high timber or brick fence surrounding the property. As Salvatore mentioned, ‘We have a high timber fence all around the house, except in the front yard which is open. This makes the backyard more private than the front garden’ (Transcript 2:43). This means that the backyard in Italian houses is treated as the personal domain of the family, where activities are carried out in a private context. In addition, Maria (Transcript 2:52) highlighted that the back yard was subdivided into two separated sectors: an area to grow vegetables for cooking (Figure 49), and another to grow flowers and plants for decorative use (Figure 51).

Flavia (Transcript 3:12) stated that the activity of food preparation and storage was much related to the activity of the cultivation of vegetables in her backyard. As she highlights in the quote below, the backyard played a very relevant role as a space where ingredients for Italian dishes were grown.

"We had a bit of land in the back of the house, so we planted tomatoes, eggplants, zucchini, and all the veggies ending on a plate. It was a lot of work. Some seasons were lucky…others were not! Also, we used to buy a lot of veggies…to make minestrone, passata di pomodoro and many other typical Italian dishes. Here, at the back of the house, there is a big kitchen and some spare rooms, for storage. Now I am old and I cannot work much anymore, but a few years ago in these rooms there were a lot of pots" (Transcript 3:12).

Lina (Transcript 1:42) claimed that a house could be identified as Italian based on the agricultural species planted in the private backyard. Concetta (Transcript 5:62) also pointed
out that their private backyard was full of multi-purpose cooking plants. As Vittorio (Transcript 1:46) mentioned, he cultivated the backyard to grow fruit trees, such as lemons, oranges, peaches and olives, and grape vines, and also tomato plants, basil, eggplant, rosemary, capsicum and zucchini (Figure 49-71-72-73-79-80-81).

> Usually Italians plant something in the garden that can give fruit or something that can be eaten. It does not matter the tree species, it has to produce something! My food here is the same I had in Italy: herbs and vegetables are from my own garden. I could live on the vegetables from my ‘orto’ (garden) (Transcript 1:46).

Therefore, according to Italian migrants, gathering foods was part of the daily food preparation. For example, Lina (Transcript 1:82) showed how she harvested plants growing at the edge of their back and side yard. *‘We harvested the nettles, then asparagus, spinach, garden rocket, chicory, fennel, brown and green beans in the back yard and along the fence’ (Figure 51).* Her husband, Vittorio, highlighted the importance of having a ‘protected’ vegetable garden. He built a closed steel wire box in his backyard to protect the cultivated vegetables and fruits from the local wildlife, possums and birds (Figure 49).

> I love working in the vegetable garden and I spend a lot of time here...although here in Australia possums, bats and many other birds make your life hard. Possums love tomatoes! So, we built this sort of box with a metal post structure, covered with a wire netting. This is to keep away animals ... colourful fruits or vegetables attract animals (Transcript 1:82).

As pointed out by all interviewees, cultivating vegetables was an activity performed by both husband and wife. This activity occurred on a daily basis, especially in the early morning before leaving for work, in the evening after work and on weekends.

As was discussed in the previous section, on their arrival in Australia migrants could not find the typical food they were accustomed in Italy. Therefore, if cooking became a main activity in their life in Australia, the cultivation of vegetables and fruits was partially dictated by the fact that migrants could not find their typical ingredients in Brisbane, and ended up cultivating them themselves. This activity was influenced by an assimilated way of life in Italy since these activities were carried out daily in Italy when migrants lived with their extended families. As mentioned by Filomena, after the war the scarcity of food forced many families to cultivate
vegetables and grow fruit trees in Italy. It was also the custom to exchange products growing in abundance in order to minimise waste.

_I used to live in the open country in Italy and I liked the space. When I was younger, my dad had a lot of olive trees in the field and my mum used to cultivate the flowers and ornamental plants. They used to spend much time gardening. Everyone in our village in Italy had olive, orange, lemon trees, cherry and peach trees, pear and apple trees, but also flowers and vegetables in their gardens. Here the climate is not much different from the one in my old town in Italy, so I thought I would give it a go too! First I tried with small ornamental plants and flowers and it worked! Then we planted fruit trees, lemon, olive and orange trees, but also we cultivated vegetables. All these trees and plants make me feel like I am in my own country in a way (Transcript 15:74)._"

As interviewees highlighted, the exchange of vegetables and fruit growing in abundance became a common habit in the Italian neighbourhoods and helped to consolidate friendships with neighbours. As mentioned below by Pia and Luciano (Transcript 10:34), the exchange of seasonal vegetables and fruit was an experience common in Italy before coming to Australia:

(Pia) _We cultivated the land in the backyard and grew vegetables and fruits. Every Italian around here has broad beans, orange trees...and everything else growing up._ (Luciano) _We also used to exchange veggies and fruit with our neighbours. You know, this year you might be lucky with the tomatoes and ...your neighbour might be lucky with the eggplants...so it is better to share any surplus than wasting it! My parents in Italy used to do the same sort of exchange with their neighbours. They also had a veggie garden and many species of fruit trees at home (Transcript 10:34)._"

As Dina (Transcript 16:82) highlighted, in rural areas, extended Italian families helped each other not just in terms of an exchange of vegetables and fruit, but especially in periods of heavy agricultural work. During the harvest, men helped each other, and women who did not work the fields, were skilled in animal husbandry and food preparation. The result of this sort of collaboration was a high level of social integration based on solidarity. This way of life assimilated in Italy influenced Italian migrants’ way of life in Australia. It was no surprise that most interviewees offered me vegetables and fruit, and so I also experienced this exchange of products. (Unfortunately I did not have any vegetables to give in return). As Maria stated
below, exchanging vegetables was a common habit for Italian migrants in Australian
neighbourhoods.

This year we were lucky with the fennel. Look how many plants we have! In two
weeks it will be ready to be picked. Come back in few weeks and we will give you
some! We do this with our neighbours and friends too in the area.

Many interviewees stated that up until the late 1990s, they raised chickens, rabbits, ducks,
turkeys and, in some cases, quail in their backyards. The cages are still visible hanging on the
timber fences (Figure 73). Salvatore (Transcript 2:56) pointed out that raising animals was a
common activity among families living in rural areas back in Italy. He also said that in Italy it
was more a woman’s job, as it then became in Australia. As another interviewee, Flavia
(Transcript 3:48) highlighted, in Italy her family also raised cows and pigs. This happened in
rural areas where the house was surrounded by a large area of land and was mainly carried out
by men. Since the land surrounding the typical house in Brisbane was small, Italian migrants
raised small animals.

Beyond the distinctive agricultural species cultivated in the back yard of Italian houses, a
utilitarian object noticeable in the backyards was the typical wood-fired oven (‘forno a legna’)
(Figure 94-95) which, as highlighted by Vittorio (Transcript 1:84), was commonly used for
baking bread, cooking pizza and also sometimes meat and fish:

We turned it on two or three times a week to bake bread and to make pizza,
especially on weekends. We rarely bought bread at the shop because we preferred
to bake it ourselves. When we had friends I also cooked meat and fish. It always
worked well (Transcript 1:84).

Aldo, pointing out the wood-fired oven in his house, stated that the dome of the traditional
Italian wood-fired oven was built on site in bricks by an expert Italian craftsman who learnt how
to build it in Italy. The firebricks in the chamber were imported from Italy (Figure 96).

Salvo, an Italian craftsman built the dome of the oven which usually is the most
difficult part to be built. This gentleman learnt how to build it in Italy and then he
built the domes for our many friends’ outdoor wood-fired ovens. The firebrick to
build the base of the wood-burning oven was imported from Italy. It took one
week to build it (Transcript 3:94).
Several interviewees revealed that the outdoor oven was often used during the week for the family’s cooking needs. As Domenico (Transcript 5:77) mentioned, ‘once the wood fired oven was built in the back yard, my wife Concetta baked bread twice a week. We liked it fresh, and it was cheaper. Maria mixed everything by hand: flour, yeast, water (or milk) and salt.’ Concetta also stated: ‘I always looked forward to baking days, as I always saved some flour dough for baking bread, and made pizza! The fresh pizza out of a wood fired brick oven was the best! Usually I started the fire around 5pm - it would be cooled down around 6pm - and the bread and pizza sometimes baked by 8 pm’ (Transcript 5:79).

The wood-fired oven located in the back yard was also used on weekends when friends and relatives were invited for lunch or dinner. As Teresa stated, ‘on Saturdays or Sundays we often had friends for lunch or dinner. That was also a good occasion to turn on the oven. Not just to bake bread or pizza, but also to cook fish and meat’ (Transcript 6:137).

An interesting aspect pointed out by several interviewees was that they realized they could not pass on their passion for cultivating vegetables and fruit in the backyard of their houses to their descendants. Interviewees highlighted how their children’s back gardens have a different function. Pasquale pointed out that both his son’s and his daughter’s houses had a less utilitarian, more social function, in comparison to that of their parents'.

If you look now at our son’s and daughter’s (second-generation Italians) gardens, they put a very fashionable sort of paving, a timber decking, a swimming pool, and all flashy outdoor furniture …they don’t want to invest time to work on the veggie garden. They buy all the greens from the greengrocer. They know it would be better to cultivate and eat your own veggies and fruits because they would be raised more naturally. They would also save money! But they don’t want to work on the garden. They spend more time to go around rather than devoting it to doing gardening (Transcript 14:112).

This suggests that the backyard of first generation Italian migrants’ houses was not utilised for entertaining guests or for social interactions but mainly for private activities such as cultivating vegetables, fruit trees and gardening. Interviewees also highlighted how in second generation Italian migrants’ houses the backyard was not utilised to cultivate veggies and fruit trees but it was used as an extension of the living area. As pointed out by Armando, the outdoor backyard area in second generation Italian houses became a ‘combination of covered deck and open-sky
space including a barbecue or a pool area which was regularly utilised to entertain guests on weekends and generally to perform daily social activities within the family.’ (Transcript 12:143)

In conclusion, it emerged how, in using the backyards for utilitarian purposes, Italian migrants were influenced by the way of life learned within the extended family in Italy. In the extended family house in Italy, the garden or the domestic outdoor area was not used to entertain guests or for social interactions, but simply for growing vegetables and fruits. Italian migrants lived in Italy in rural areas where they were accustomed to using large areas of land for growing crops. Once in Australia, the lot where the house was built was limited to approximately half an acre. Therefore, they tried to utilize as much land as possible to cultivate vegetables and fruits and not for social interaction, in spite of the fact that the subtropical climate facilitated outdoor social activities.

Diagram 26: Activities in the backyard

7.2.3 Cooking: the kitchen

All female interviewees pointed out that apart from food preparation and storage, cooking was a prominent activity requiring most of their daily time. Iselina highlighted that ‘homemade food was always on the table whether I was going to work or running a business from home’ (Transcript 16:102). Vittorina also stressed that ‘cooking homemade food was my main daily activity, especially on weekends when we were all united for lunch and/or dinner’ (Transcript 11:92).
All interviewees revealed that in their way of life, lunch took usually place around one pm and it was the main meal where homemade food was a must. This custom was also emphasised by Faccioli and Harper: ‘Lunch in Italy traditionally took place between one and three p.m., and it was eaten at home. That meant that shops closed and children were sent home from school. The family gathered, ate, maybe took a nap, and then returned to work until early evening’ (2009, p. 221). Furthermore, interviewees also emphasized that, not just on weekends but even during the week, homemade food for lunch required time for preparation and that on the other hand, fast food or take away meals did not occur often. As Facioli and Harper stated: ‘Italians search for quality foods in the wild or in shops and markets and they cook them with care. They eat mostly at home, surrounded by family and friends. In these ways Italians remain separate from the increasingly pervasive international system of processed and manufactured foods, eaten on the run as fast food or popped into the microwave for a home-cooked variety’ (2009, p. 191). Therefore, Italian migrants’ need to have homemade food on the table was part of their culture and/or way of life.

It was shown that within all Italian families interviewed, the woman retained control of the kitchen, and had a central role in preparing food. Traditionally, she was the one spending time to cook a great variety of homemade food for the family. The woman had the responsibility for the organization of the meal, deciding what to eat and finally cooking it. This activity did not usually involve the men. Lucia (Transcript 20:104) for example, explained that she usually spent a lot of her leisure time planning and creating elaborate meals. While she planned the shopping, she was often driven to the shops by her husband. Within all couples interviewed, the gender roles were unquestionable. This was the pattern I observed. As quoted below, this was also emphasized by Faccioli and Harper:

*There is evidence that the extraordinary changes in modern Italy have not fundamentally altered the emotional structure of the family and the role of food in family dynamics. Mothers remain the centre of Italian families, providers of a constant flow of totalizing care, directed primarily towards their child or children, but also towards their husband, their parents and often their husband’s parents as well (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 110).*

While it was revealed in the previous section that food was processed in the kitchenette and stored in the back rooms on the ground floor, interviewees pointed out that the activity of cooking was commonly carried out in the kitchen located on the first floor. This was recognized as the main formal kitchen, usually also accessible to guests. It can be concluded that houses
built by Italian migrants were characterized by two kitchens: one located at the back of the ground floor utilized as pure working area for preparation of food (Figure 44-60-69-77) and one located at the front of the first floor used primarily for cooking (Figure 43-59-68-76).

From observation on site it was noticed that the formal kitchen located on the first floor (Figure 67-77) was not physically separated by the living and dining rooms, but it formed a single space, also defined by respondents as 'la zona giorno' (the day area). This is the same definition which was given to the area located on the ground floor plan of Italian migrants’ extended family houses in Italy (Figure 7) where the ‘zona giorno’ comprised only the kitchen and the dining area. In contrast, the ‘zona giorno’ located at the first floor of houses built by Italian migrants in Australia also comprised a large living area, which was an area used to interact with other people in a more formal context, or among family members.

This suggests that traditionally the Italian way of life has revolved around the preparation and storage of food. It is true that after processing the food, usually on the ground floor, Italian migrants had a meal and a glass of wine in the company of friends and family members in the ‘zona giorno’ on at the first floor, especially on weekends. Coming together at the dining table was also a way of sharing the distinctive, traditional homemade food from their towns and villages. But it meant more. Interviewees highlighted how important it was for them to create a new social network, and in many cases social interactions were built and maintained around the dining table. Cooking and consuming food was also an encouragement to spend time with relatives and friends. Therefore, the activity of cooking was very much associated with social interaction.

Diagram 27: The activity of cooking
7.2.4 Gardening: the front garden

In comparison to the back yard, mainly cultivated to grow vegetables and fruits, as Filomena (Transcript 15:71) stated, the front yard of her house was cultivated with plants and fruit trees for their aesthetic appeal (Figure 52-62). She stated that ‘There were roses, tulips, sunflowers and many other typical local flowers cultivated in front of the house, publically visible from the street. That was just for an aesthetic purpose’ (Transcript 15:71) (Figure 54). Contrary to the backyard, as Filomena highlighted, the front yard was easily visible and accessible from the main street and, therefore, used in a more public context.

As Teresa and Antonio showed, the narrow passages to the side of the house were cultivated with trees such as lemon, orange, peach and olive, as well as grape vines (Figure 80-81). Michele also showed how, in the front and side yards of his house there were plants and lemon, orange and olive trees which were commonly cultivated in the region in Italy he came from. As mentioned below by Michele’s wife, Dina, it was easy to cultivate them because of the similarity of Brisbane’s climate to that of their native country town.

In our front and side yard we cultivate typical Italian fruit trees: olive, orange and lemon trees. Some seasons we are lucky with the fruits, while others we are not. The climate is very similar to the one in Sicily. Here sometimes it is more difficult because of animals like possums and birds (Transcript 17:51).

All interviewees stated that landscaping was commonly an activity involving both husband and wife. Emma and Luigi also mentioned that both of them used to spend much time working on the front yard to make it look appealing (Transcript 9:57). As Italo (Transcript 12:47) pointed out, ‘We used to work nearly every day on both yards...just for few hours a day. I loved the flowers and the plants we cultivated’ (Transcript 12:47). Italo said that activities such as landscaping, cultivation of flowers, grass and shrubbery, fertilising, watering and cutting, were regularly carried out in the front yard, sometimes on a daily basis. Lucia (Transcript 2:134) stated below that, to her and her husband, landscaping the front yard, keeping it neat and tidy was a way to improve the overall look of the house and to express some individuality within the suburb and to the local community.

I used to spend much spare time to keep the front yard nice, neat and tidy. Also the house looked better when the yard was tidied up! A nice looking garden also
makes a house look nicer in the neighbourhood. Now we are older and we cannot keep it like we would like to (Transcript 2:134).

In addition, as mentioned below by Luciano and Pia (Transcript 10:84), a sophisticated, neat, landscaped front yard cultivated with various flowers and plants for aesthetic purposes could also give more personality to the overall property and it was a way to show Italian migrants’ personal success.

We always worked hard. We had two jobs….we did well in our lives. Maybe because we worked hard we wanted to show off our successes through the appearance of a nice looking house. Although a house does not look nice if the front yard is not well arranged with nice colourful flowers [roses] (Transcript 10:84).

The differentiation in function between the back and the front gardens was also marked by a differentiation in the selection of decorative landscape objects visible in both areas. If in the backyard it was common to find the typical wood-burning oven, used to bake bread and pizza, in the front yard pure decorative landscape items such as fountains, pots and various statues, such as lions were distinctively visible (Figure 62-81-82-83). As Pina and Carmelo (Transcript 4:97), emphasized in the quote below, having some distinctive objects in the front yard was again a way to personalise the house.

We put some lions on our fence, because we liked that feature. Without lions the house looked like the others. Also, there is a cement fountain…the water used to flow, but now it is not allowed to waste water because of the water restriction policy. So, you cannot see the water flowing feature. The fountain was purchased from an Australian retailer. I don’t think it is Italian (Transcript 4:97).

Contrary to the cultivation of vegetables, interviewees revealed that the landscaping work was not influenced by their extended family’s living experience in Italy. Most confirmed that they were not used to landscaping the garden within the extended family house in Italy, since these areas were used to cultivate crops, or for other utilitarian purposes. Once in Australia, Italians were influenced by the locals’ way of life. Italian migrants wanted to have a bit of Italian flavour in their front gardens in order to enhance the overall appearance of their houses. They showed this by cultivating distinctive plants and flowers, and by having some decorative object
in the front yard. Landscaping the front yard became ways of showing individuality and success.

Diagram 28: The activities in the front garden

7.2.5 Income generating activities

Many interviewees revealed that after being employed for a few years and getting more acquainted with the Australian economic system, they started running their own businesses in Brisbane. As most pointed out, in order to run a business, they had to buy tools and organize a space to keep them (Figure 100-101-102).

As mentioned earlier, in Australia Italians did not find the food they used to in Italy, so in the 1960s many Italian migrants became involved in importing food as a business. Some migrants initially started by selling from home products imported from Italy and then, once the business was settled and consolidated, they opened a small shop. For example, Assunta and Pasquale (Transcript 14:107), who opened a food shop in Aspley in 1985, showed how much space in the back of the ground floor of their house was needed to store foodstuffs imported from Italy, as well as local fresh food products, such as fruit, vegetables and meat. They stated that it was then necessary to have a place to distribute or sell the goods: ‘A few years ago we used to import canned food from Italy and sell it to food shops. We also stored our own fresh food for sale. Much space in the back area of the house was required to store the food (Transcript 14:107)’.

Apart from food distribution which, as mentioned by the interviewees, was a business frequently carried out by Italian migrants in Brisbane, respondents stated that they were involved in the building industry, as self-employed professional builders, carpenters, tilers,
plasterers, cabinet makers and joiners. As they highlighted, due to the tools required to work in the building industry, indoor and outdoor space at home was allocated to the storage of construction tools and raw materials. More specifically, as stated by Giuseppe (Transcript 9:89), construction materials and tools were stored in his back rooms on the ground floor (Figure 100-101-102) and in metal sheds in his backyard.

*I was a builder, a concreter and a carpenter! There was a lot of stuff outside the house... in the backyard... all stuff I needed for my work. I also used some rooms inside the house to store the tools that cannot be exposed to water and humidity, like drills, woodwork chisels. After I retired I sold many bulky tools, like the concrete mixer and most of the heavy tools. I still have most of the small tools necessary to do small jobs for friends (Transcript 9:89).*

Interviewees pointed out that it was mainly men who worked in the construction industry, but within the domestic space there were also income generating activities carried out mainly by women. For example, Concetta and Domenico (Transcript 5:102) had two back rooms on the ground floor of their house where they manufactured and stored clothes. Since Concetta had worked as a part-time contractor for a few clothing factories during the past thirty years, she needed the space to accommodate a couple of professional sewing machines. She also pointed out that her husband Domenico helped her, especially in the evening after he returned home from his job, and sometimes on weekends when the workload was too heavy for one person. For Concetta, sewing was a means of supplementing the family income with the advantage that it could be done at home. In the end she stated that it was not difficult for her to work from home for a clothing factory since she drew on the skills she had learned in Italy such as, ‘embroidering, farming, cooking and cleaning’ (Transcript 5:134).

In relation to the income generating professional activities carried out by Italian migrants, interviewees often mentioned how they were influenced by their past experience in Italy. Most interviewees pointed out that in Italy they lived in rural areas, they shared a large house with the extended family (which was very common in post war Italy), and finally it was the lack of financial resources and work opportunities for most members of the extended family living under one roof which especially encouraged the younger members of the family to migrate. As Aldo mentioned below:

*Before migrating to Australia, we lived in a small country town in the south of Italy. Four families lived in the same house. There were my grandparents, my*
father and my two aunties. I had six older brothers, one sister, and twelve first cousins. After the war it was common to live in big houses like that one ... with 30 and sometimes even more family members. Most of my brothers migrated overseas because there was no work in Italy. Living within the family helped me to learn how to do many jobs such as electrical work, carpentry and work in the fields (Transcript 2:47).

Maria and Salvatore stated that the extended family environment was a good learning environment where many professional skills could be taught by the elders and where many activities were carried out within the domestic space. They also highlighted a common ‘motto’ often passed from the older members of the family to the younger: ‘Impara l’arte e mettila da parte’ (Learn a skill and fill the till) (Transcript 2:143). Italo (Transcript 2:52) pointed out that ‘learning from the elders of the family how to do things was as good as gold’ since ‘you never know what you might be professionally doing in the future’. Therefore, living in an extended family situation gave people the opportunity to become multi-skilled. Unfortunately, as also pointed out by Gennaro (Transcript 13:32), in the 1950s post war Italian economic and political context it was difficult to find a professional job where the skills learned could be used.

When I lived in Italy, during the day I was with my dad helping him in the fields and in the cowshed. When the cow or the horse was ready to give birth, the neighbours used to come and help. My dad did the same with the neighbours. Harvesting the grapes was always an event gathering many people in the vineyards. Also, when there was something to be built at home, everyone was involved in doing something around the building site. Kids used to do ‘small things’ and adults used to do ‘big things’. I remember we went to bed very early...and the day after started also very early. Cows needed to be milked! We all were busy in agricultural and construction activities, but it was difficult to find a real job outside the family or house context because there was no paid work at that time (Transcript 13:32).

As several interviewees highlighted, the extended family in Italy had a relevant role in their apprenticeship. By living within the extended family they were involved in a series of basic activities, for survival or to try to make a living. As Luciano mentioned (Transcript 10:58), ‘It was like attending a daily self-apprenticeship or training on several professional and domestic subjects.’ Therefore, the men of the house needed to be acquainted with most issues related to the house where they lived. They needed to be multi-skilled handymen, in order to fix most
of the daily problems related to the building and surrounding agricultural land. Families could not afford to pay a professional for these household problems. They needed to know how to use the building and agricultural tools to fix the problems themselves. For the women, these essential skills related to cooking, sewing, ironing, cleaning and gardening, were taught from a very young age so that by the time they reached adulthood, they would be expert in these activities. The members of the extended family were encouraged to learn how to perform those activities because there were so many people living under the same roof, and being called on to carry out these working activities within the confined domestic space was highly likely to happen.

The apprenticeship within the extended family in Italy helped Italians to find jobs in the areas they were familiar with. Interviewees mentioned several times that when they arrived in Australia, they worked as farmers, concreters, carpenters, tilers and builders. As they also highlighted, these were all activities they learned in Italy before coming to Australia. Australia was a new country and there was a great need for labourers. After the initial years in Australia working as employees, many migrants used their skills to open their own businesses and so they continued to perform these activities in a professional context.

Italian migrants remarked on how the need for large houses with many rooms was influenced by their need to carry out various activities within a domestic space which was delineated by the compact size of the lot. More specifically, prior to building their own houses, Italian migrants lived in houses surrounded by detached buildings used for the storage of tools, to breed animals and to perform income generating activities. Once in Brisbane this was not possible because of the urban environment and the relatively small size of the lot. Therefore it became important to build a large house with many rooms to be used to house these activities. Italian self-built houses in Australia were designed to make space to carry out these activities, which had been learned in Italy and basically influenced their entire lives. Pina (Transcript 10:52) for example, revealed that within the extended family in Italy the daily activities were often differentiated for males and females, and activities were also carried out in different spatial environments.

*We never were bored because we always had so many agricultural activities to do during any season of the year. For sure there was no need of television in our house! Everyone was busy with their ‘things to do’. Women used to cook, to sew, to iron, to do all necessary domestic work. Men were busy with animals in the*
This suggests that in the extended family context, while women performed activities within the indoor domestic space, men were more involved in outdoor income earning activities in the fields and in the detached buildings such as the cattle sheds and buildings situated beside the house. Agricultural and construction tools were stored in these buildings and animals such as cows, pigs, sheep and others were bred in the cowshed.

_We had a depository for agricultural tools, a cowshed and a hayloft beside the house. In my family, women were not much involved in those areas: that was a job for men. Women spent more time inside the house and in the vegetable garden (Transcript 10:55)._ 

Furthermore, Mario (Transcript 16:82) discussed how, within the extended family, typically men and women were involved in outdoor activities such as the cultivation of vegetables. Men were more involved in physical activities such as tilling the soil and women in collecting vegetables and fruit or sewing.

_For each season there were different vegetables and that affected our family diet: when there were beans and red rocket for example we use to have beans soup with rocket salad for lunch and dinner (Transcript 16:82)._ 

As the interviewees stressed, in Italy the working activities performed within the extended family could be divided into three groups: domestic activities mainly performed by women within the indoor domestic space; vegetable cultivation performed by both women and men in the outdoor garden; and agricultural, breeding and/or construction activities or income generating activities performed mainly by men within the detached buildings. This subdivision of activities meant that the space allocated at the back of the ground floor was divided to perform gendered activities. Specifically, as interviewees highlighted, income generating activities were always carried out in rooms located at the back of the ground floor and sometimes also in the garage, in a more private context. These activities became central to Italian migrant families economy and life. Therefore, in many cases most of the domestic space located at the back of the ground floor (facing the backyard) was for multi-purpose uses, responding to the need to perform not just domestic but also income generating professional activities.
Interviewees stressed that, as the lower level was mostly used on a daily basis for performing working activities, family members lived mainly on the ground floor. They also revealed that the traditional family space including a formal kitchen, living and dining area (zona giorno) and bedrooms (zona notte) was located on the first floor of the house. Lina and Vittorio (Transcript 1:92) explained how, the first floor area was mainly used as bedrooms and they did not spend much time in the ‘zona giorno’.

*The domestic activities kept me busy all day long. Cleaning the house, washing and ironing clothes and cooking were all activities carried out on a daily basis. We spent most of our time on this floor (ground floor). I was all the time in and out of the house for gardening, cooking and all the domestic activities. Also, kids used to do their homework here in the living room near the kitchenette, so I was able to check on them. I did not want them to study in their bedroom because I wanted to keep an eye on them. My husband returned home from work around 7pm. We used to have dinner here, near the kitchen (at the ground floor). We watched a little bit of television and then we went upstairs to go to bed (Transcript 1:92).*

Diagram 29: Income activities

7.3 Social activities and spatial form

In this section I analyse the extent to which Italian migrants distributed the domestic space in response to their need to perform social activities. In relation to the nature of the social activities performed within the domestic space, Putnam argues that the nature of social
activities performed at home is in turn influenced by the surrounding macro-scale settlement configuration or the suburban built environment, which represents the macro-scale setting of the activity. Therefore, for this study, I will analyse how social activities, which will have consequences on the spatial configuration of the house, were also influenced by the urban setting.

As already mentioned, interviewees who worked in the cane fields revealed that their move to Brisbane was driven by the wish to enhance the social interaction they lacked in the environment of North Queensland. Once they moved to Brisbane, either from North Queensland or from Italy, as respondents pinpointed, they were not accustomed to meeting in public areas such as suburban shopping malls because they did not perceive the shopping mall as a place to interact with other people. Carmela and Gennaro (Transcript 13:82) pointed out that at a macro-scale level they tend not to meet often in public because of the absence of a town square, which they were used to in Italy. They stressed how in Italy the town square was perceived as a place which played a significant role in establishing and supporting social interaction.

\[\text{In our village in Italy we used to meet \textit{\`in piazza}} \textit{\ (town square) sometimes in the evening, especially on weekends. In Australia there are no town squares and usually we did not meet at the shopping centre. Therefore (in Australia) we just go to the \textit{\`club} \textit{\ (the Italian Club in Newmarket) for special events...or for dinner on the weekends. Sometimes our friends come to our place to visit us or we go to their place to visit them. It is good to have some nice space in your house to meet your friends (Transcript 13:82).}\]

Lucia and Angelo (Transcript 20:92) revealed that generally they preferred to meet with friends and relatives in the comfort of their houses rather than in an outdoor built environment. The internal layout of their new houses was then distributed in order to create a living area on each floor to facilitate social activities with relatives and friends (Figure 43-44-59-60-68-69-76-77). Iselina (Transcript 16:132) also emphasized how, on each floor of the house, back rooms were commonly used for private working activities during the day and for sleeping at night, while front rooms were generally used for social activities. In addition, if respondents initially made a clear distinction between space utilised for working and social activities, then they made a clear distinction between social activities which were performed in an informal and formal spatial context. As Michele said:
Sometimes we also have friends coming to visit us on Sundays. We used to meet and entertain our guests upstairs. The living room upstairs is more formal. Also, during the week we had some friends visiting us without notice. In that case we used to meet them in the living room on the ground floor (Transcript 17:89).

Paolo (Transcript 11:145), like many other interviewees, pointed out how informal and formal social activities were performed on distinctively different days and times during the week. Paolo highlighted that (a) informal social interaction, which took place in the living and dining room located in the front on the ground floor, potentially occurred on any working day of the week, and (b) that formal social interaction, which was carried out within one big open space comprising the kitchen, living and dining room located at the front of the first floor, occurred on weekends or on holidays (for special events and/or occasions).

Sometimes during the week we meet our closest friends here, in this living room on the ground floor. It is not an organised formal meeting. It might happen several times a week just for a coffee or for a chat. We usually have our gatherings with our family upstairs. Usually each month, on Saturdays or Sundays, we organise a dinner all together (Transcript 11:145).

All interviewees who built their houses highlighted that the space in the house was distributed as informal and formal areas used at a different times of the day and of the week for social activities. Therefore, in the following section I analyse the nature of informal and formal social activities and the way the need to perform specific social activities influenced the spatial form of the house.

7.3.1 Informal social activities and spatial form

The daily family dinner was highlighted by several female respondents as the best opportunity to have the family united around the table. For example Giuseppina stated: ‘*We always tried to be together for dinner here (on the ground floor), since the children were babies. At dinner, while we were around a table in front of a nice dish of pasta, we discussed common issues related to daily life. On some occasions we also quarrel and laugh*’ (Transcript 18:92). Giuseppina pointed out that this daily event always occurred in the dining area on the ground floor.

Besides the daily family dinner involving all family members, interviewees revealed that it was a recurring event to meet friends and/or other families for dinner, for a drink or to talk about
business in general. This was sometimes followed by a ‘giocata a carte e a tombola’ (card and tombola game). As Amedeo stated, this gathering, which usually occurred during the week, took also place on the ground floor, in an informal context.

Some of our best friends came to our place occasionally during the week to have dinner with us, or for a drink or to play cards for a couple of hours or so. Sometimes I also had dinner with my colleagues to talk about work developments, as shown in this photo where I was sitting between Pino and Carmelo. We are informally seated here, and we had pasta at the table on the ground floor (Transcript 19:78).

Interviewed women stated that sometimes on weekday afternoons they met with some of their closest relatives and friends. It was pointed out that the informal meeting did not last for a long time. It was just for a chat, a cup of tea, and to taste some homemade cakes or biscuits. In relation to the space where these meetings occurred, Iselina highlighted that the living-dining area on the ground floor was usually where these short meetings took place.

Gisella and Maria come here often during the week and I also go to their place often. They live here in the neighbourhood. Usually we have a coffee or a tea here on the ground floor...usually they are here for a short visit (Transcript 16:81).

Interviewees highlighted how informal social interaction was often created around the table and through a shared meal in the dining-living area located on the ground floor. As Harper and Faccioli stated ‘food connects network and family relationships: child to mother; mother to family; wife to husband. In the Italian version these connections are deep indeed’ (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 85). Interviewees confirmed the importance of sharing a meal even where they had daily informal social interaction. This insight is important in order to understand the spatial configuration of the ground floor in relation to food preparation and informal social interaction. In conclusion, while back rooms were utilized for preparation and storage of food, the front area of the ground floor was used for informal social activities.
As interviewees stated, they often had formal meetings with relatives and friends. For example, Pina and Carmelo (Transcript 4:89) pointed out that randomly on weekends they would organize a formal dinner with some close friends and relatives (Figure 103). Often this event did not occur for a specific reason, but it was just a way to meet friends and relatives with their families to share food and good company. Pina highlighted that these gatherings were usually held on the first floor in a more formal spatial context (Figure 46). She also stated that ‘meeting with friends and relatives on Sundays around a table was an opportunity to have meaningful discussion about daily life issues. The table stimulated the conversation. The only differences were that the presentation of the food and of the table was more elaborate than during the week and it occurred in a more formal area’ (Transcript 4:89).

Teresa and Franco (Transcript 6:96) stated that the Sunday lunch was often the weekly occasion where all the family and some guests were united around the table. Maria also stated that on Sundays ‘I usually do not make great things: we have some antipasti like a slice of salami, ham and cheese and then ‘tagliatelle’, pasta or lasagne made by hand with ragu with mushrooms or tomato sauce. Then, as second plate we have meat accompanied by a fresh salad, beans or potatoes. Usually I prepare at least a pie on Saturday, which is the favourite part for my nephews (Transcript 2:105). All interviewees, especially the women, stated that making special food and eating together as a family on Sundays was a tradition. It was not just a way to consume quality food, but also a way to sit all together around the table longer than usual and have a conversation, a chat about the past week and the coming week. As Pina stated, ‘sometimes there are arguments and discussion when we have lunch all together on
Sundays, but good food is also a way to minimize any discussion and the tension’ (Transcript 10:95).

Religious events were also mentioned as being important occasions to meet with close relatives and friends. All respondents highlighted how, after attending religious celebrations such as Sunday Holy Mass, and above all Christmas and Easter, the family met formally with relatives, neighbours and friends in one of their houses. Vittorina (Transcript 11:83) pointed out that for these events they used to gather in the formal living room located at the front of the first floor.

On Saturdays or Sundays and especially at Christmas and Easter, after attending the Holy Mass in Italian at St Kevin’s Catholic Church (Figure 105), we used to gather with our relatives and dearest friends upstairs for lunch. It was lovely to spend time with family and friends. We celebrated Christmas and Easter all together. We still have the old traditions….those will never die, like morals (Transcript 11:83).

This tradition is still a habit among first generation Italian migrants. Now that parents have become grandparents, after attending mass on Sundays, and/or on Christmas and Easter, they still invite their children, nieces and nephews to their homes to have lunch together. On such occasions, as Emma (Transcript 9:74) proudly stated below, beloved ‘nonna’ (grandmother) is the cook.

...and then we celebrate of course Christmas and Easter with a good meal. We meet at the Italian Mass celebrated by the Scalabrignani Fathers at the Catholic Church located in Woolowin (Figure 106) and then we all return home (here). They all know that ‘nonna’ (grandmother) is a good cook! They all love the spaghetti tomato sauce and lasagne. So, I cook both! They know that the tomatoes come from the backyard! That’s why I have a large kitchen, as you can see. We love having our family at home...entertaining. Family is important. You cannot live without family (Transcript 9:74).

The religious traditions within Italian families’ customs are emphasized by Harper and Faccioli. They emphasize the historical and the contemporary relationship between food and social life within the Italian society.
Eating has been ritualized as part of Catholicism for more than a thousand years and increasingly has become a secular ritual in increasing secular Italian culture. Christianity became the official religion of Italy in the third century and oversaw the decline of Rome and the subsequent development of Europe. Catholicism is a highly ritualized religion; activities are repeated on a daily, weekly, and yearly schedule, using objects, often food, that has symbolic meaning. Even singular events in a person’s life—birth, marriage, and death—are ritualized in this manner (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 55). Italy is no longer poor, regionally isolated, nor religious. However, Italians continue to eat with reference to religious as well as secular rituals (Harper & Faccioli, 2009, p. 57).

Gina and Giuseppe (Transcript 7:54) described the usual feast prepared each year for Christmas:

We celebrate Christmas on December the 24th for dinner on Christmas Eve. On that day we only eat fish (Figure 104), since meat is not allowed! We usually have many dishes of fish before the midnight mass. Usually we start with fish antipasti, pasta or risotto with fish as first plate and assorted fresh fried and cooked with tomato fish as second plate. Then there is a cake, the typical ‘panettone’ and also homemade pastries and biscuits served with sparkling wine. Fruit salad or fresh fruit like grapes, mandarins and orange, and ‘frutta secca’—dried fruit like nuts, dried figs and dates follow the cake. On the 25th, for lunch there is also a big meal, usually including ‘pasta al forno’, ‘tortellini al ragu’, roasted and stuffed capon.

This was the typical Christmas feast prepared by most of the respondents I interviewed. Although there were small variations, the event, celebrated in a similar way by most of them, is the most important religious event in the year. This means that there is a ritual of dishes to be prepared following a rigid menu. Apart from the meals, it is a special time for the closest members of the family to spend time together.

In conclusion, Italian houses investigated for this study contained two independent ‘zona giorno’ located on each floor comprising a living-dining and kitchen area. The two areas utilized for social interaction, both informal and formal, have a different configuration on each level. The findings reveal that the while the living and dining room on the ground floor are separated from the kitchen, the living, dining and kitchen area at the first floor are treated as
one large open space. This occurred because the kitchen situated on the ground floor was used to prepare, store and cook food, and forms part of the private domain of the family and is usually not accessible to guests. However the kitchen on the first floor was accessible to guests and was used in a more public manner.

In relation to the dwellings in which migrants lived in Italy and in Australia before purchasing their land and building their houses, interviewees pointed out that all previous houses contained only one area comprising living and dining and kitchens, usually separated. Therefore, I concluded that once Italian migrants had the chance to build their own homes, they expanded the area normally used for social interaction (‘la zona giorno’) to both levels of the house (Diagram 107-108). This suggests that Italian migrants emphasized their need for interaction with other people. This was due in part to the lack of town squares in the built environment and also to the fact that migrants felt isolated as part of their extended families was still in Italy. As Salvatore mentioned, ‘it was me and my wife, and my brother’s family. We did not have our extended families with us here in Brisbane’. Italian migrants had to create a new social network which for some of them included a few relatives, and for others the neighbours and friends. This new social network became their family in Australia. For this reason the space distributed and utilized for social interaction was doubled in comparison with their houses in Italy.

Diagram 31: Formal social activities

7.4 1990s: a two unit house typology

A consistent feature in the spatial distribution of Italian houses which emerged during the on-site interviews and field observations is the horizontal subdivision into two separate and
independent units of the house, located on each level (Figure 45-61-70-79). This modification was introduced in the late 1980s, within a period of approximately ten years from the completion of the house.

When the house was completed in the early 1980s, while the ground floor usually comprised a kitchenette, a bathroom, a laundry, some back working/storage rooms, a garage and an informal living/dining area, the first floor comprised a kitchen joining a formal dining and living area, a bathroom and the bedrooms. As Flavia and Aldo (Transcript 3:62) highlighted, in order to create one independent unit on each floor, there was no need for a major and very expensive renovation. As Pina also mentioned, plumbing did not need to be re-installed and the structure did not need to be modified.

In 1992 we created two autonomous units, one per floor (the house was built in 1979). We converted one of the rooms we used for storage on the ground floor into our double bedroom. A kitchen, living, dining room, bathroom and laundry were already located on each floor. At the upper levels there were already bedrooms in the back area of the house. It was not a major and expensive renovation and in the end it did not take too long (Transcript 4:83).

Concetta (Transcript 5:79) explained that in 1985, a few months before their son was married, a unit was arranged on the ground floor to accommodate themselves, while the unit on the upper level was renovated to accommodate their son and their daughter-in-law after they were married. The couple stayed on the upper level of their parents’ house until they were financially independent and could purchase their own house nearby. As mentioned below by Pina (Transcript 4:78), once a child left the parents’ house, the elderly parents would remain on the ground floor, leaving the first floor uninhabited.

After their marriage, my son and my daughter-in-law lived upstairs for seven years. Consequently we moved downstairs to the ground floor. In a few years my son wanted to purchase his own house. So, once they got a deposit, they bought their own house not far from here. We also helped them to pay off the house although I preferred them to stay with us. Now we just live downstairs because we are too old for the staircase (Transcript 4:78).

Maria and Salvatore also revealed that in 1987 they created an independent apartment for their daughter and son-in-law on the upper level, while they kept living on the ground floor.
The couple left the parents’ house after five years, when they purchased their own house. Maria stated that she still hoped for their grandsons to come and live in the unit located on the upper level. For this reason the entire unit is kept in perfect conditions and, as quoted below by Salvatore the rooms upstairs are immaculate:

> Since my son and his wife moved to their house in Aspley, this part of the house (upper level) has been uninhabited. Sometimes my grandson comes and stays here with us for a few days. Who knows! It might be that one day he will come and live here again with his family…no one lives upstairs these days. My wife cleans upstairs nearly every day, even though we do not live upstairs now. We don’t sleep upstairs either; our bedroom is on the ground floor. I am too old to go up the staircase twice a day (Transcript 2:87).

Carmelo (Transcript 4:77) pointed out how the decision to subdivide their houses into two units was dictated by their wish to help their son and his new family to save enough funds for a deposit to buy their own house. Aldo (Transcript 3:112) also proudly stated that after a few years living together, their son and daughter-in-law could purchase their own houses without a mortgage.

Other interviewees highlighted how in the late 1980s their two-storey houses were subdivided into two independent units to make space for one of their children. Vittorio (Transcript 1:118) also mentioned that it was, and still is a tradition for families in Italy to accommodate one of the children within a confined area of the house. As Maria (Transcript 2:147) pointed out, this still continues in Italy: for example her cousin’s house was renovated with the purpose of creating two independent apartments within the same building, due to the shortage and high cost of housing.

> My family resided in a big house in the village where I come from. Now my nephew resides with my brother and my sister-in-law. They each have an independent unit in the same building. This is common in Italy, due to the high cost of dwellings. My brother often tells me that this happens more and more often (Transcript 2:147).

Also, as Lina and Vittorio (Transcript 1:97) pointed out, they subdivided the house into two independent units because they were influenced by tradition and a way of life they were accustomed to in Italy. Concetta (Transcript 5:92) also stated that this is the way things are
done by most of his relatives in Italy because of the housing shortage and also because parents want to hand the house down to one of their heirs.

On the other hand as Carmelo (Transcript 4:97) pointed out, in the late 1980s in Australia there was no shortage of dwellings as occurred in Italy. He pointed out that he and his wife just wanted to have one of their children living with them. Then, this person would inherit the house. This view was shared by many other interviewees who confirmed that it was not the shortage of houses that influenced their will to house one of their grown children. They simply followed this habit which was influenced by tradition and a practice learned in Italy within the extended family.

**7.5 Conclusion**

Oral and visual data from a case study, which included 40 Italian migrants and four self-built artefacts, were concurrently collected. Quotes from respondents’ testimonies were presented in conjunction with visual material inserted in the appendix A. By means of a combined source of oral and visual data, topics which provided several meaningful insights enabling an understanding of how Italian migrants influenced the spatial form of their houses were discussed.
CHAPTER 8 – DISCUSSION
8.1 Introduction

The findings revealed through the data analysis provide the answers to the outlined supplementary questions addressed to deal with the multifaceted main question: the ways post WWII Italian migrants influence the form of their houses built on quarter-acre blocks or single front blocks in Brisbane. In this chapter I present a discussion of the findings. Also, I discuss agreements and disagreements with scholars’ and researchers’ theories, as reviewed in chapter two.

The following discussion is structured into four categories, following the answers to the outlined supplementary questions: (1) the period of construction of the house, the reasons behind the decision to build the house in a specific period and finally the process used for the construction of the house; (2) the architectural form of the house, more specifically the structure, materials and construction techniques, external features of the façade; (3) the spatial form of the house, that is, the spatial distribution and utilization as well the configuration and uses made of the garden area; (4) the extent to which spatial form enhanced social interaction.

8.2 The period of construction of Italian migrants’ houses in Brisbane

The findings revealed that initially Italians migrated to Australia in order to help their families in Italy financially, and to build houses for their families and/or open businesses on their return to Italy.

All interviewees clearly stated that in the 1950s, when they were offered the opportunity to migrate, they did not intend to leave Italy permanently and settle in a foreign country, in this case Australia. Their plan was to migrate to Australia for a period varying from two to five years in order to accumulate sufficient funds, and then return to their homeland. The prosperous future Italian migrants referred to was supposed to happen in Italy, once they returned.

Interviewees revealed that, on one hand, if before departure, they were not informed by the Italian government about the way of life, conditions, context of the natural and built environment in Australia, on the other hand they did not ask for any specific information, because they were supposed to migrate for a short period only. Italian migrants were simply
informed that Australia was a geographically distant destination and a country offering the desired opportunity to work and accumulate funds.

As the findings revealed, on their arrival in Australia, Italian migrants in Brisbane did not intend to settle in this country, because their paramount wish was to help their extended families in Italy, and eventually to settle permanently in Italy.

Moreover, in the 1950s the great majority of Italian migrants came to Australia without their spouses and other families members. Indeed, migrants highlighted that it was their single status which encouraged them to accept well-paid jobs in an isolated natural environment, such as that of the cane fields in North Queensland. Thanks to the high wages they were paid, migrants were able to send money to their families in Italy.

It was only in the 1960s that family members began to arrive in Australia, approximately five to ten years after the first migrants’ departure. Families were able to come to Australia through the ‘chain migration’ process, because of the abundance of work, and also to help with the isolation that the first migrants were experiencing. Nevertheless, even though in the 1960s families were united in Australia, and after years of hard work migrants had already saved enough money to purchase or to build a house, they did not intend to settle in Australia. As a result in the 1960s most migrants did not purchase or build houses in Australia.

The findings revealed that Italian migrants purchased their first houses in Brisbane in the early 1970s, mainly as investments. It was only in the late 1970s early 1980s, approximately twenty to thirty years after their arrival that they decided to settle permanently in Australia, and began to build their houses.

This research study does not confirm the findings revealed through the studies of Vasta (1991, p. 171), Pulvirenti (2000, p. 237), Castles (1992, p. 51) and Sagazio (2004, p. 92) focusing on transnational houses built by Italian migrants in Melbourne. As Vasta emphasized, generally for Italian migrants the family was at the apex of their hierarchy of values, and owning a house and settling in Australia was important in the context of having their family united and settled ‘with a roof over their heads’. Pulvirenti, noting that Italian migrants had the highest home ownership rates of all birthplace groups in Melbourne, pointed out how housing was of great significance to this cultural group and also, as a result, that Italian migrants disembarking in Australia had the paramount wish to settle down permanently. Castles revealed that in the
mid-1960s Italian migrants in Melbourne moved out of the central area of Carlton, to northern and western suburbs where they purchased larger plots of land and built their large houses.

8.3 The architectural form of Italian migrants’ houses

Interviewees revealed that they built two storey houses using a specific material and construction technique called cavity brick, despite the more common techniques known as ‘weatherboard’ and ‘brick veneer’ systems. They stated that the decision to select the cavity brick system for erecting the walls of their houses was dictated by the preferred choice of the same materials and technology that they were acquainted with in Italy, or with an architectural traditional way of building houses in Italy. In addition, interviewees stressed that living in existing Australian houses built of weatherboard and brick veneer encouraged them to use cavity brick walls for their houses. In their view this technique was ideal for two storey buildings and gave more stability, solidity, durability and thermal insulation than other construction techniques.

This initial analysis has shown that when cultural patterns become established, there is generally a propensity to conserve them. Most of the time individuals are deeply committed to their own customs as has been proved by the Italian migrants in Brisbane. They chose to use the cavity brick system for the outside walls of their houses and to cast concrete slabs for the floors, as influenced by cultural tradition, or an accepted way of doing things, as remembered from their homes in Italy and for prestige value. This partially confirms Rapoport’s theory, since for this research study the use of a specific material was not influenced by fashion or religious proscription.

In the literature, as Rapoport outlined, materials and construction techniques act only as influential and not determinant factors in the way users shape the spatial form of the house. This investigation revealed that (1) in the 1980s Italian migrants built two storey houses despite the more widespread single storey building type and (2) the walls of these houses were erected using the cavity brick technique, despite the widespread and cheaper use of weatherboard and brick veneer. Italian migrants revealed how they felt more confident in building two storey houses since they were familiar with multi-storey residential buildings and with the cavity brick technique. In their view, the cavity brick wall system was the most appropriate technique for the construction of a large footprint two storey house. In contrast, Italian migrants highlighted the fact that they did not feel confident in building large two storey houses using weatherboard or brick veneer techniques because they were not familiar
with the construction system. Respondents stressed that if they chose a single storey building, they would not have selected the cavity brick technique, but they would have employed a more common and available technique. Therefore, I can conclude that in the case of houses self-built by Italian migrants in Brisbane there is a direct association between the shape of their houses, the large two storey building type, and the material and construction technique used. Despite Rapoport’s view, where materials and construction technique are considered secondary forces influencing the form of the house, in the case of houses built by Italian migrants in Brisbane, the material and construction techniques were primary factors determining the typology and the spatial form of the building.

Some of the architectural features evident on the main façade of Italian migrants’ houses investigated for this study are the round arches, the balustrade located on the balcony on the first floor, differentiated in stainless steel, patterned or solid white concrete columns, and the Roman pillars supporting the overhanging slab on which the balustrade sits. Interviewees explicitly pointed out the reasons for having these features on the main façade. Although they decided to build their houses within the Australian built environment, they still wanted to maintain an ‘Italian flavour’ on the main façade through the use of architectural elements, which, in their view, are recurrent on the façade of many residential buildings in Italy. By utilizing traditional architectural elements visible in the built form in their native country, they wanted to create a façade reminding them of their origins. This was also proved by the fact that Italian builders, craftsmen and the owners of the house in Brisbane did not have access to any formal architectural drawings of houses. I conclude that these elements were influenced by architectural traditions learned when people are socialized into the culture of a particular society, that of Italy in this case. It was shown that Italian migrants in Brisbane have not abandoned their cultural architectural traditions and they have expressed them through distinctive features of the house.

This confirmed the theories of Baldassar (2002, pp. 84-85) about traditional architectural elements used in their native country being the primary factor in influencing the façade of the transnational house. In reference to Rapoport’s definition of the features characterising vernacular houses, the findings confirmed that Italian migrants worked within an idiom which they varied according to their taste. However, the lack of an aesthetical pretension, which in Rapoport’s view is one of the features of a vernacular house, cannot be confirmed through this study. Italian migrants tried to express aesthetical pretension through the use of decorative architectural elements which reminded them of their traditional architectural origins.
In addition to the architectural features listed above which were influenced by cultural traditions learnt in Italy, another distinctive feature of Italian houses, represented by the porch and the balcony, was according to migrants’ perspectives an architectural element influenced by local architectural forms, commonly visible in Australian houses. This confirms Rapoport’s view, as he stresses that transnational housing is interpreted as a mix between the culture deriving from the native country and the one assimilated in the host nation.

8.4 The spatial form and working activities

In the literature I discussed the theories of Kent and Rapoport who dismantled the concept of culture to socio-cultural variables. More specifically, how these researchers make a distinction between two distinctive components which are both manifestations of culture: social variables, such as group composition, family structures, social networks and behaviours; and cultural variables, such as world view, values, way of style and activities (Rapoport, 1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000). I discussed how, in their view, the concept of culture as a way of life leads to a system of activity. Activities are direct expressions of ways of life and ultimately of culture (Kent, 1997). Therefore, as they argue, through an investigation and analysis of the system, it is possible to understand how the users distributed and utilized the space of their houses, and consequently, the extent to which culture has influenced the spatial form of the house. In addition to the system of activity, researchers highlight the importance of looking at the wider spatial context to which the activity system of the occupants is linked, that is, the setting of the activity.

The analysis for this study shows that the internal space of Italian houses was distributed in a specific way in response to the need to perform specific working and social activities. In relation to working activities, the findings revealed that domestic activities such as food preparation, storage and cooking and income generating activities, such as distribution of food, manufacturing clothes and storing agricultural and construction tools, were the most performed activities around the house. These activities were all performed in a private context in the kitchenette and in the back multi-use rooms located on the ground floor. These rooms were used as workshops or storage spaces, usually unavailable to outsiders.

In addition, it was revealed that most of the activities listed above were influenced by a way of life assimilated in Italy through the past extended family living experience, and also by necessity, or by a way of life learned in Australia. This suggests that the domestic space was used for various working activities which were determined by the users’ way of life, which is an
expression of culture. Equally activities are expressions of culture, which in turn are translated into the houses’ spatial form through people’s way of life.

This result was also revealed by Azriel in her study on Italian migrants in Melbourne. She showed how Italian migrants in Melbourne utilized the space of their houses in an attempt to ‘connect them with both their past lives in Italy and present lives in Melbourne’ (Azriel, 2010, p. 83). In addition, this confirms Rapoport’s and Kent’s view arguing that the division and utilization of space is interpreted as the reflection of culture expressed through human activities. In Rapoport’s words:

> Once the identity and character of a culture has been grasped, and some insight gained into its values, its choices among possible dwelling responses to both physical and cultural variables become much clearer. The specific characteristics of a culture – the accepted way of doing things, the socially unacceptable ways and the implicit ideals – need to be considered since they affect housing and settlement form (Rapoport, 1969, pp. 46-47).

As Rapoport stressed, transnational houses, built cooperatively by users and professional tradesmen, adopt or change vernacular built forms to respond to migrants’ culture as a way of life, and more specifically to accommodate migrants’ specific needs. In addition, according to Jacobs (2006, p. 180), Thomas (1997), Rapoport and Dawson (1998), Blunt (2003-717) and Depres (1991), the spatial form of the transnational house is influenced by migrants’ past housing experiences in order to become a (1) place of memory shaped through nostalgic practice and (2) a place of refuge reminding migrants of their origins and allowing them to go back to the activities traditionally performed in previous spatial environments.

### 8.5 The spatial form and social interaction

The literature shows that over the course of the last century, massive transnational migration has occurred, not just in Australia, but also in Europe, North and Latin America. Most people migrated to these countries for economic reasons, searching for jobs and better opportunities. Often they tended to live together and be engaged in various specific economic activities. These migrants, to some degree, motivated the economic growth and development of cities and nations. Many studies show evidence that the creative and positive attitude shown by migrants aspiring to start their own businesses, and so diversifying and developing economic activities of the new country, was very impressive. However, at the same time, their arrival has
stimulated significant social-cultural discussion about migrants’ influences on the built form of host societies (Klaufus, 2005).

The findings revealed that food preparation, storage and cooking were informally performed on a daily basis in the multi-use rooms and in the kitchenette located on the ground floor. However, cooking was also performed in a formal way in the kitchen located on the first floor of the house, in the so called ‘zona giorno’ which usually included a dining and living area. Traditionally the Italian way of life has revolved around the preparation and storage of food and cooking. It was also revealed that Italian migrants, after processing the food usually within the working area located on the ground floor, had a meal and a glass of wine in the company of friends and family in the ‘zona giorno’ located on the first floor, especially on weekends, and during festivities. Coming together at the table was also a way to share the distinctive traditional homemade food of their own towns and villages. But it meant more. Interviewees highlighted how important it was for them to create a new social network, and in many cases social interaction was built and maintained around the dining table. Cooking and eating food was also an encouragement to spend time with relatives and friends. Therefore, for Italian migrants the activity of cooking was also associated with social interaction.

The internal layout in Italian migrants’ houses was purposively conceived to enhance their social interaction among family members, relatives, friends and neighbours. Italian migrants’ houses comprised two ‘daily areas’ utilized for social interaction: an area comprising living and dining rooms on the ground floor used for informal meetings, and an area comprising kitchen, living and dining rooms on the first floor used for formal meetings. The space for preparing food, cooking and social activities is emphasized in Italian houses built in Brisbane. This occurred because (1) traditionally the Italian way of life has revolved around the preparation of food, a glass of wine and the company of friends and family; (2) in Australia many migrants had no families and for those, new friends became as intimate as family, taking the roles of aunts, uncles and grandparents. In Australia, coming together at the dining table was like creating a new family network and a sense of being Italian.

The findings revealed another factor which contributed to the allocation of space for social activities - the host built environment. As interviewees stressed, (3) in the 1970s residential areas in Brisbane lacked open public spaces, commonly used as meeting spaces, such as town squares which were an element incorporated into the fabric of Italian cities. As a result, Italian migrants, perceiving that this lacking element deprived them of the possibility of socially
interacting in the way they were used to, allocated more space for social purposes within the house.

The importance of this urban element in the Italian built environment is emphasized by Lenard (2002) who points out that this urban element has been included in most European cities’ built environments for centuries. In her studies into the function of the town square, Lennard emphasises how the presence and diversity of shops and services around the town square contribute to maintaining this urban element not just as the centre of economic activity, but also as a place facilitating and enhancing social interaction among commuters.

*The urban square has been a distinguishing characteristic of European cities in one form or another for over two thousand years, ever since the Ancient Greeks first created a place for people to gather in the agora. The agora was imitated by the Romans in the forum, and reinvented in the Middle Ages. From the eleventh to the fourteenth century hundreds of market squares were created as the centre of new European cities both in Western and Eastern Europe.*

... 

*If the city is the second most important invention of mankind, then the market square is the most important invention of European city-making. It is the heart of the city, the centre of economic, civic, religious, social and cultural activity, the place for markets, festivals and celebrations. In order to function, social and economic life had to be organized through negotiation and consensus, by establishing democratic principles in the equitable use of place. The traditional European square is a multifunctional urban space surrounded by an almost continuous wall of buildings, with small entrances and exits leading in and out, creating the feeling of an outdoor room. Most of the surrounding buildings are what we now call mixed-use shops/houses. They are complemented by important civic and religious edifices that are frequently, though not always, part of the contiguous urban fabric of the square, and emphasize its significance as the most important place in the city (Lennard, 2002).*

Also, as the mayor of Venice, Salzano, stated that it is the *‘configuration of shops, cafes, restaurants, businesses and private dwellings, civic, religious and institutional buildings around the square that provide diverse reasons for people to come to the square, increasing the opportunity for meetings between friends and neighbours’* (cited in Lennard, 2002). Lennard also stresses that town squares act as a social learning environment for social behaviour and,
consequently, are an object of study of behavioural scientists. She points out the importance of the traditional multi-functional European square in the preparation for children and young people to live in a community, since they learn how to relate to friends or to strangers from different social backgrounds.

We know that behaviour is learned through observation and participation. Being in a multi-functional urban square offers many models and repeated examples to the young; they learn how others relate to family, friends, or to strangers. They learn through observation, participation and practice how to behave with both young and older people, with those, and also how to approach and relate to fellow citizens with physical or mental disabilities (Edoardo Salzano cited in Lennard, 2002).

These are important insights. On one hand, as the participants of this study highlighted, in Italy they were exposed to this social-urban environment characterized by an urban public element such as open paved town squares commonly (Zyscovich & Porter, 2008) located in the heart of most towns, near a church or a cathedral, typically surrounded by small shops. These shops included bakeries, grocery stores, clothing stores and restaurants as well as government buildings and city halls. The town squares were used for community civic and religious gatherings, markets, concerts, political rallies and various social activities (Rossi, Eisenmann, Ghirardo, & Ockman, 1994). However in Australia, the built environment is characterized by the shopping mall, which refers to either multiple commercial buildings (shopping centres) or to an open pedestrian street with shops on each side, centrally located within the suburb precinct (Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001).

In contrast to the multi-functional use of towns squares located in the Italian built environment, Calthorpe and Dyer highlight that suburbs have lost their role of public community urban space with active public participation, in favour of commercial and speculative use (Calthorpe, 1993; Dyer & M.Ngui, 2010).

Calthorpe and Dyer’s view is supported by the way Italian migrants perceived the mall in the Australian built environment. Driven by the need to interact with locals, and also amongst themselves at a macro-scale level, in the 1960s, Italian migrants built ethnic clubs and associations for the purpose of facilitating social interaction. For Italian migrants the typical club became a recreation/social centre replacing the town square. At the club, at a macro-
migrants shared their traditional meals and socially interacted with their fellow Italians.

This is an important insight because it suggests that before building their houses in Brisbane, Italian migrants tried to change or adapt the built form at a macro-scale in response to their need for social interaction. This was in turn influenced by their past way of life and urban experiences. The club became the expression of this need. It became a landmark or an entertaining centre for first generation and also for second generation Italian migrants. It contributed to the creation and reinforcement of a sense of community, of familiarity, of belonging in an alien environment.

I conclude that this means that it is not just the built environment that impacts on the degree to which people are involved in social interaction, but it is also the way of life, expression of culture, and past environmental experiences which influence the built environment.

This was envisioned by Putnam (2000) and Rapoport (1969, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2000) who stressed that it is not just the micro-scale level single house’s spatial configuration, but also the surrounding built environment that can enhance social interaction among the population. In their view the way a macro-scale urban setting where communities are shaped has an impact on the degree to which people are involved in those communities.

Also, this raises another question related to urban sociology. More specifically, if, as Malouf (1986) and Depres (1991) highlighted, transnational houses can be interpreted as places of memory shaped through nostalgic practice and therefore reminding migrants of their origins, at the same time allowing them to carry out the traditional activities, one would consider whether this insight could also be applied to the clubs built by Italian migrants.

This insight about the way the built environment, both in Italy and Australia, enhances or limits social interaction bring close to the topic of urban sociology which is outside the compass of this study. Nevertheless, as already highlighted through Putnam’s (2000) quote, the spatial form of the house should also be investigated in relation to the town, its social meeting places and the way urban spaces are used to socially interact with other people.
8.6 Conclusion

This exploratory study aimed to gather insights from data and analyses in order to sustain emerging hypotheses and to answer the research question. Hence, it is important to point out that the findings reported will often remain heuristic/explorative rather than being definitive. Notably, the findings reported here cannot act as an answer on all Italian-Australians behalf because the findings in this investigation are related to and restricted by manageable limits. These limits were initially appointed in the selection of the people to be interviewed and in the artefacts to be investigated.
9.1 Introduction

This final chapter is subdivided into three sections. The first section present a summary of the findings, highlighting patterns for each of the themes revealed in the data analysis. In the second section I discuss the arguments reflecting the original aims highlighted through the literature reviewed, and this will lead to the contribution to the gap in the body of knowledge. The last section highlights issues raised in this research project which lead to recommendations for further exploration and development of both theoretical and applied areas of research.

9.2 Summary of findings

The summary of findings is structured into themes, using the three research questions presented in chapter 1: (1) the period of construction, the reasons behind the decision to build the house in a specific period and the construction process; (2) the architectural form; (3) the spatial form and the extent to which spatial form enhanced social interaction.

9.2.1 When, Why and how Italian migrants built their houses in Brisbane

The interviewees revealed the main factors which affected their decisions to leave Italy. They were identified as (1) poverty due to the pre-war fascist dictatorship and the ruinous outcome of the war; (2) the lack of working opportunities caused by the Italian government’s policy of unequal distribution of agricultural land; (3) the phenomenon of overcrowding in the big cities; (4) the loss of or damage to the family house; (5) the scarcity of food. In addition, as the interviewees pointed out, their desire to leave Italy was facilitated by (6) a favourable bilateral migration policy agreed by the Italian and Australian governments. On one hand, in the 1950s the Italian government realised that a migration policy would relieve pressure on the Italian economy caused by overcrowding and unemployment. On the other hand, the Australian government adopted this policy in order to attract a workforce due to a chronic shortage of labour. As a result, through these migration policies both governments aimed to give the unemployed and poverty stricken Italian population hope for a more prosperous future. It was these factors which finally persuaded a great number of Italians to leave their homeland and migrate to Australia.

The findings revealed that Italians decided to migrate to Australia for three main reasons: to find economic security, to help their families in Italy financially, and to build a house for their own new family and/or open a business on their return to Italy. This means that the idea of
helping their extended families in Italy and creating economic security for their future family was the dominant factor which gave them the courage to leave Italy. This also suggests that Italians migrating to Australia in the 1950s did not intend to settle in Australia permanently, consequently to have a family in Australia and/or to build a house. This was confirmed by their migratory plans. All interviewees stated that before leaving Italy, they planned to migrate to Australia for a short period varying from two to five years. They assumed that during this period Italy would have recovered from the ruin of the war therefore there would then be favourable conditions to return and settle in Italy permanently.

After enquiring about their reasons for leaving Italy, their expectations and their initial migratory plans, I asked the migrants about the form of the houses in which they had lived in Italy and about their family’s composition. My purpose for making these enquiries was that an understanding of these two factors would help to understand how Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses in Brisbane.

In relation to the form of the houses in which Italian migrants had lived in Italy, many interviewees revealed that before migrating to Australia their houses were large multi-story buildings which hosted more than one family. This was due to necessity, since not many families had the opportunity of purchasing their own dwellings. Interviewees revealed that most of their houses were located in rural areas surrounded by land where the extended family were involved in a series of agricultural activities, such as growing crops, in order to provide income to support the family.

It was revealed that extended family multi-storey houses presented a neat parallelepiped volume, they were built of brick and the façades were characterised by arches as decorative architectural elements. The spatial form was also distinctive. While a day area (‘zona giorno’) used for daily activities was located on the ground floor, a night area (‘zona notte’) enclosing bedrooms was located on the upper levels. An important aspect revealed by interviewees was the traditional way in which the family house was bequeathed to an heir.

In addition to the investigation of the houses in which Italian migrants resided in Italy before their departure, I explored the house form of dwellings where Italians resided in Australia before building their houses, because my argument is that previous housing experiences influenced Italian migrants’ way of life, and as a result impacted on the form of their present houses.
The findings revealed that most of the interviewees obtained work in the cane fields in North Queensland, due to the booming sugar industry, and to the fact that this work could guarantee them higher wages in comparison to many other unskilled jobs. Interviewees revealed that their agricultural backgrounds and their single status enabled them to work carried out in the isolated and wild natural environment of the cane fields, which was much different to the environment they were used in Italy. It was this isolated environment, mainly populated by Italian migrants, which in turn discouraged them from learning English.

Interviewees revealed that after spending a few years living and working in the cane fields, they had saved enough money to help other members of their family in Italy to join them in Australia through a ‘chain migration’ process. Members of first migrants’ families, sponsored partners and friends, migrated to Australia for two reasons: to help and work on the farms due to the abundance of work, and to dispel the sense of isolation which the first migrants were experiencing. Therefore, it was in the 1960s that the extended family phenomenon in Italy in the post war period became common to Italian migrants living in North Queensland.

In relation to the houses migrants shared with their extended families and friends, the findings revealed that migrants lived in sheds, built of weatherboards with corrugated iron roofs. Italian migrants were uncomfortable living in sheds. These buildings were not acoustically or thermally insulated, and the migrants were not used to living in houses constructed of timber and metal, as in Italy, they lived in brick houses. It was revealed that this housing experience enhanced their desire to live in brick houses.

As the findings also revealed, many Italian migrants after working in the cane fields still keenly felt the isolation of North Queensland, even though family members had joined them. This motivated them to move to the more urbanised capital cities in order to improve their lives within an urban environment which facilitated social interaction.

Once Italian migrants moved to Brisbane, they became aware of the difference in the built environment compared to that in Italy. In particular, the major difference was represented by the missing urban element of the town square, which in Italy had facilitated social interaction. In their view, this lack in the urban environment deprived them of the sort of social interaction they were used to in Italy. Another factor which did not help the enhancement of social interaction with the locals was their lack of knowledge of English. Italian migrants were not frequently exposed to English, especially in North Queensland as this area in this time was populated mainly by Italians.
Driven by the need for interaction among themselves and also with Australians, Italian migrants built ethnic clubs and associations to facilitate social interaction and also to help them to learn English. For Italian migrants, the typical club became a recreation/social centre which replaced the function of the town square. Unfortunately, the national and regional clubs became places attended mainly by Italians, and therefore English was not frequently spoken. As result, the club environment did not encourage Italian migrants to speak and learn English.

In relation to the houses in which Italian migrants resided on arrival in Brisbane, first of all interviewees stated that for a few years, since they were not committed to settling in Australia, they rented single storey houses. These houses were generally built using two common construction techniques, weatherboards and brick veneer systems. These construction techniques were the most commonly used methods for the building of residential dwellings in Brisbane at that time. After renting a property for a few years, Italian migrants purchased existing houses, eventually with the ultimate aim of renovating, extending and selling. Therefore, until the early 1970s houses were purchased by Italian migrants as investments, and definitely not because they wanted to settle in Australia.

By the 1970s interviewees had already spent approximately twenty years in Australia. This time had been a period of hard work and saving money, and most had not forgotten their initial plans to return to their homeland. It did not take from two to five years to achieve the economic security they had been seeking. It took them up to twenty years, and it also took the Italian economy twenty years to recover from the ruin of the war. Italian migrants confirmed what historical researchers stated: it was only in the early 1970s that the Italian economy finally boomed in the form of the well documented ‘Italian economic miracle’. Therefore, due to the favourable economic circumstances in the homeland, in the 1970s many of those migrants who had come to Australia in the post war period attempted to take advantage of the favourable economic conditions in Italy and returned. They wanted to settle in Italy, to build a house for their family and start up a small business, a dream they had been pursuing for twenty years.

In the 1970s many Italian migrants returned to Italy. While many of them successfully settled in their native land, others could not cope with the Italian way of life which had inevitably changed after their departure twenty years previously. In particular, Italy was revealed to be a country with a different culture, especially for the children of first generation migrants. This second generation were young adults and as result faced hardship in attempting to settle into
a new cultural environment. After a year or so, this persuaded first generation Italian migrants to return to Australia, intending to live there permanently.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, after living in Australia in houses which they did not build and after a failed attempt to settle in Italy, Italian migrants decided to build their own houses to maximise, through the form of the house, the metaphysical idea of stability, success and wealth which had been denied them in Italy. For more than twenty years, they had dreamed of returning to Italy and building their houses as a manifestation of their success, wealth and stability. As they said, this decision to stay in Australia was a statement. The house built in Australia, its architectural and spatial form, became the manifestation of this statement.

More specifically, its form was conceived in order to (1) have a large space where the family could perform specific activities; (2) safely invest funds on a fixed budget; (3) achieve a prestigious plan; (4) show the family success; (5) have a new family house as grand as the one they had left in Italy; (6) build a brick and concrete house similar to the one in which they had lived in Italy, and in place of the house they could not find in Australia.

Their revelation that their new house in Australia was meant to represent a sort of legacy for their family and their descendants is not surprising. Their houses were supposed to become the new grand family house, at least for one of their children, as was in the Italian cultural tradition, or like the house they lived in before leaving Italy.

The findings revealed an interesting aspect related to the way in which the houses were built. Owners of houses employed a professional Italian licensed builder to deal with official documents and permits. The builder was in charge of discussing the design of both the façade and the internal distribution of the house, and erecting the external and internal structural brick walls, the ground and first floor upper level concrete slabs, the timber roof and the partition walls. Most finishes, such as rendering, painting, tiling, internal finishes, doors and windows were carried out by Italian carpenters, joiners and craftsmen who were chosen among friends and family members through word of mouth. The house was built only by Italians, that is the users, professional tradesmen and non-professionals, shared the same cultural background.
9.2.2 The architectural form

The architectural form of Italian houses refers to its structure, materials, construction techniques and the decorative features visible on the main façades. These are the categories which I analysed. The findings summarized below will follow the categories listed above.

In relation to the structure of the house, Italian migrants pointed out that despite the commonality of single storey houses in Brisbane, they opted to build a spacious two storey house. Italian migrants stated that this choice was influenced by two main factors: (1) this type of building allowed the users to have more space to be used to carry out specific daily activities and (2) it would have recalled the tradition of the extended grand family house in Italy. The large house was the manifestation of their wish to continue the old tradition of the grand family house, which was inherited by one of the heirs.

It is a fact that most detached houses in Brisbane up to the 1970s were built by the use of two different construction systems. These were the weatherboard and brick veneer techniques. Italian migrants wanted a house constructed using a system called cavity brick, which, as reported by the interviewees, was a technique not commonly used in the construction of dwellings in Brisbane. All interviewees stressed that the distinctive cavity brick construction technique was chosen for traditional reasons, that is because Italian migrants in Brisbane were acquainted with this construction technique as it was commonly used in Italy. Interviewees pointed out that the houses in which they lived in Italy before their departure were traditionally constructed using the cavity brick construction system. As Italian migrants also stressed, while in Australia some of them resided in weatherboard and others in brick veneer houses, all chose to build a cavity brick house as a manifestation of physical stability, solidity, durability and also for thermal insulation. Therefore, cultural traditions, memory and migrants’ housing experiences, both in the homeland and in the host land prior to construction of their present houses, influenced the way Italian migrants built their own houses in Brisbane.

The last category related to the architectural form of the house is the façade. The material utilized to build the external walls of the house, that is, the bricks, dictated the most common external decorative features visible on all the façades, the face brick finish. Italian migrants revealed that this was not a feature visible in the houses in which they lived in Italy before migrating to Australia, since houses in Italy built using the cavity brick technique were usually rendered and painted. Therefore, in this case they were not influenced by cultural traditions. On the other hand, they revealed that they were influenced by Australian brick veneer houses
where the external wall always had a face brick finish. This did not require plastering and/or painting as happened in Italy, and consequently was maintenance free.

Other features highlighted by respondents and quite evident on all the main façades of Italian migrants’ houses investigated are the porch and the balcony, the brick arches, the balustrade situated on the balcony on the first floor, differentiated by stainless steel patterned or solid white concrete columns, and the Roman pillars supporting the overhanging slab on which the balustrade sits. The first architectural element, the porch and the balcony were not recognized as elements visible in previous Italian houses. The extended grand family house presented a parallelepiped shape with no projecting volumes. On the other hand these architectural elements were influenced by forms visible in Australian houses. The other features listed above were all influenced by architectural traditions learned in Italy. Interviewees explicitly pointed out the reasons for having these features on the main façade. Although they had decided to build their houses within the Australian host built environment, they still wanted to maintain an ‘Italian flavour’ on the main façade through the use of architectural elements, which, in their view, are recurrent on the façades of many residential buildings in Italy. By utilizing traditional architectural elements visible in the built form in their native country, they wanted to create a façade reminding them of their origins. This was also proved by the fact that Italian builders, craftsmen and the owners of the house in Brisbane did not have access to any formal architectural drawings of houses built in Italy – plans, section and/or elevations – and in the end the designs of the façades of their houses arose from traditions in their efforts to simulate, through memory, an Italian architectural design in Australia.

9.2.3 The spatial form

After analysing the way Italian migrants’ influenced the architectural form of the house, namely its structure, material, construction technique and the façade, I analysed the spatial form of the house that is the way Italian migrants distributed and used the domestic space. Italian migrants revealed that the typical two storey Italian house allowed for more space to be used by the family to perform activities in response to their specific needs. Therefore, the influence of the internal mechanism and organisation of the activities performed by family members was the leading factor in decisions regarding the division and utilisation of domestic space in these houses. More specifically, the activities performed by family members could be subdivided into two main groups: working and social activities.

The pattern showed that working activities could be further divided into two sub-groups comprising domestic and income generating activities. The findings revealed that most
domestic activities within the house were in turn related to food preparation and storage. These included making tomato sauce, pasta, gnocchi, lasagne, wine and other traditional foods and also the annual slaughtering of the pig and preparation of smallgoods. This occurred since (a) after their arrival in Australia, Italians could not find the types of food that they were accustomed to in Italy, (b) producing and storing food were activities performed within the extended family in Italy, and (c) Italian migrants were influenced by the memory of scarcity of food in Italy in the post war period.

The domestic activities related to food preparation and storage were carried out on a daily basis in the kitchenette and in the back multi-use rooms located on the ground floor, near the backyard. This was influenced by a spatial tradition assimilated through the extended family house experience in Italy. The house of the extended family in Italy enclosed multi-use rooms on the ground floor, close to the kitchen used for the preparation and storage of food.

In addition, food preparation was related to the cultivation of vegetables. As a result, the backyard was used to plant agricultural species, not for aesthetic appeal, but for cooking purposes. In turn, these products were exchanged with other Italians who also cultivated vegetables. Italian migrants wanted to create space within the outdoor area of the house to cultivate food in a more private context. This occurred because Italian migrants were influenced by their way of life in Italy. Even before leaving their native country, interviewees stated that, besides producing and storing food within the extended family in Italy, they also grew vegetables and fruit trees in the gardens.

If on one hand, the activity of food preparation and cooking was informally performed on a daily basis in the kitchenette located on the ground floor, on the other hand cooking was also performed in a second formal kitchen located on the first floor. This occurred especially on weekends and in preparation for special events, and was related to social interaction. The kitchen, dining and living area on the first floor formed one large open space used mainly for formal events. The conformation of this space was partially influenced by the extended family house configuration where the dining and kitchen areas were unified. In the case of Italian migrants in Brisbane, they linked the living area to the dining and kitchen area, creating one large open space. In turn, this was influenced by migrants’ way of life in Italy, that is, by their need to enhance social interaction in a host environment.

In comparison to the backyard, cultivated mainly for more utilitarian purposes, that is to grow vegetables and fruit, the front yard was cultivated with plants and flowers for their aesthetic
appeal. While the backyard was used in a more private context, the front garden was easily visible and accessible from the main street. The findings revealed that landscaping the front garden, cultivating it with distinctive plants and flowers, and also by displaying decorative objects, was considered to be a way of improving the overall look of the house and expressing some individuality within the suburb. It was also interpreted as being a way of showing Italian migrants’ personal success.

The need to perform income generating activities, which were mainly related to food distribution, the building industry and the manufacture of clothes, also played a relevant role in the spatial distribution of the house. In turn these activities were influenced by the way migrants lived within the extended family in Italy, and by the need to make a living in Australia. The findings reveal that these activities were carried out on a daily basis in the multi-use rooms located on the ground floor at the back of the house.

Migrants revealed that working activities were subdivided by gender. The pattern shows that while wives spent much time in the kitchen preparing, storing and cooking food, husbands were more involved in income producing activities.

As stated earlier, after working in the cane fields in North Queensland, many Italians moved to Brisbane driven by the wish to live in a less isolated built environment where they would have more opportunity to socially interact. As a result, the house was configured in order to allow social activities to be performed in a different context. More specifically, social activities were also subdivided into two categories: informal and formal social activities.

The findings revealed that informal activities, such as the daily family dinner, the random meetings of the family and female friends and relatives, occurred in the living-dining area located on the ground floor, readily accessible through the front door of the house. Formal activities, such as the Sunday, Christmas, Easter and general holiday lunches were carried out in the open space comprising the living, dining and kitchen area, located in the front of the upper level.

A site investigation of the houses examined revealed that the living area in Italian houses is never a combination of covered and open space, situated at the back of the house, allowing for an open area equipped with a barbeque and/or a swimming pool. This is because the backyard of Italian houses is used for private working activities such as gardening, cultivating vegetables and fruit trees, and the adjacent rooms on the ground floor are used for working
activities. Therefore, the backyard is a private place for the family. It is not accessible without permission, and it can be considered as a private extension of the working rooms located at the back of the ground floor.

A consistent feature which emerged in the spatial distribution of Italian houses was the horizontal subdivision of the house into two separate and independent units located on each level. Interviewees explained that in the 1990s, when one of their offspring married, space was made within the house to host a new family. While parents would reside in the unit on the ground floor, the adult child and his/her family would live in the unit on the first floor. Interviewees stated that this strategy, adopted to allow the grown children to save to buy their own property, was influenced by an Italian tradition, where there was a shortage of housing, and also where houses were very expensive. In reality, interviewees revealed that in Australia in the 1990s there was no shortage of houses and houses were relatively inexpensive. In conclusion, they hoped to accommodate one of their adult children with his/her family, as was traditionally done in Italy, within the grand family house. This confirms their wish to build a new grand family house in Australia, which eventually would be inherited by the son or daughter who had lived there. As the way of life in Australia is very different to that in Italy, after living with their parents, the offspring and his/her family eventually purchased their own house, often in a different suburb. As a result, parents remained in the family house and used only the informal space on the ground floor, while the first floor was left empty. This first floor area also works as a sort of formal museum, containing much cultural material recalling the past sixty year history of Italian migrants.

9.3 Contribution to knowledge

(1) The findings revealed that Italian migrants adopted a humanistic approach when they built their houses, because they constructed their artefacts in response to specific needs, based on their culture. Therefore, this study can help in translating these research findings into practice. In order to support a humanistic approach, and fill the gap between the disciplines of Architecture and Sociology, the architectural design of houses should be based upon two aims: to investigate (a) the extent to which house design can be guided by the users’ cultural needs, expressed as human behaviour and/or activities; and (b) possible avenues of alternative creative designs for housing based on users’ cultural need. Therefore, the involvement of residents and an evaluation of responses to forms of habitation from users within a given society can improve future planning, and can progress housing process design. Such participation would enable the users to express their needs and would facilitate a
spontaneous, dynamic change. The culture, way of life and architectural traditions of inhabitants cannot be expressed if the environment is built through an imposed formula dictated by standardisation, speculation and for profit purposes. People can have a deciding role in the creation of their built form. They can put a visible imprint on it. Houses built by Italian migrants are an example of this concept. Their houses facilitated the mode of living of the users according to their culture.

(2) Additionally, this study contributed to better understanding of how Italian migrants influenced the built form of the host Australian built environment and how socio-cultural factors are embedded and preserved in the built form which represents the national cultural heritage of Australia. This exploration of a historically significant process of Australian domestic architectural development contributed to knowledge of contemporary Australian society.

(3) Finally, this study enables to better understand how the urban built environment and built form influence human behaviour and/or activities which can enhance inhabitants’ social interactions.

9.4 Limitations

This current study was limited to an exploration in architectural sociology, since the aim was to study the relationship between human behaviour and built forms. In spite of the fact that I intended to investigate how Italian migrants influenced the form of their houses, the findings revealed that the built environments also played a relevant role in the shaping of these houses. Therefore, further studies can be conducted into an exploration of the relationship between human behaviour and the built environment, which is the object of study of the discipline of urban sociology.

In addition to the specific disciplinary context’s limitation of this study, the selected case study, comprising people and artefacts, was also bounded by specific limits. The selection of participants was based on their country of origin, country of destination and period of migration, participants’ age at time of migration and finally their social class. The selection of the artefacts was also based on specific limits. They had to be newly built detached single house typology situated on a quarter acre block, not existing, renovated or extended, built in the Brisbane metropolitan area. This suggests that the findings obtained through this exploration are related to a case study selected by restricted and manageable limits.
9.5 Future research opportunities

*If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?*  
*(Albert Einstein cited in O’Leary, 2009, p. 1)*

Based on the findings revealed through this study and on the limitations listed above, in the next sections I suggest some directions for future research.

### 9.5.1 Urban sociology

This research project intended to use the insights of architectural sociology to explore how human behaviour and/or activities influence the built spatial form, with specific reference to transnational houses built by first generation Italian migrants in Brisbane. It was highlighted that cultural patterns, manifested in spatial behaviour or activities, are displayed in the spatial distribution of Italian migrants’ houses.

An interesting issue raised during this research study is related to urban sociology. This discipline is differentiated from architectural sociology in that it operates at a larger macro-scale of investigation, exploring the extent to which the urban built environment is related to human behaviour and/or activities. More specifically, this study shows that for Italian migrants, at a macro-scale level, a public open space such as the town square played a relevant role in supporting social interaction in Italy. Upon their arrival in Australia, migrants realized that town squares were an urban element missing in the built environment and this fact, in turn, did not facilitate social interaction. Consequently, as respondents highlighted, the original function of this public space was initially replaced by ethnic clubs and associations (at a macro-scale level) and later on by the space allocated within their houses for interaction with other people (at a micro-scale level). Both spatial environments were designed and built in order to enhance social interaction.

Two questions arising from this study are: (1) did Italian migrants attempt to modify/change the built environment of Australian cities and suburbs by introducing public urban open spaces such as a town square (for example in North Queensland near the cane fields townships and/or in suburbs of other major Australian cities) and (2) to what extent does an open public urban element like a town square within the Australian built environment contribute to enhance social interaction among community residents? These further topics could be explored from an urban sociology perspective in order to provide a detailed insight into the conceptualisation and development of the Australian built environment.
9.5.2 Cultural groups in Australia

This study focused upon the influences of Italian migrants on the form of their detached houses in Brisbane. As Australia is a multicultural society, other cultural groups that have migrated to Australia in general, and to Brisbane in particular, could be investigated. This would provide an understanding of the way other cultural groups influenced the form of their transnational houses, give detailed insight into the Australian built form development, and will also enrich understanding about the relationship of design and culture.

9.5.3 Social class

In the literature I discussed the theories of Bourdier, AlSayyad, Passeron and Thompson (J. P. Bourdieu & AlSayyad, 1989; P. Bourdieu, 1977, 1979, 1983, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1993, 1998; P. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; P. Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) who highlighted the fact that the concept of culture is closely related to a cultural group and to social class. In their view, each social class possessed its own habits, defined as a set of acquired patterns of thought and behaviour, and generally of a way of life. Therefore, he stressed that the built form is the reflection of culture, as a way of life, of a cultural group and its social class. A house and its appearance can be linked to social identity and therefore can distinguish one social status group, and also one social class, from another. Through functional and decorative attributes, a house can be used as a marker of status and class. As mentioned earlier, this factor was considered in the selection of Italian migrants for this research study. I selected participants belonging to a working social class, since participants belonging to this specific class represented the majority of Italians who migrated to Australia. Further studies considering Italian migrants belonging to other social classes than the one selected for this study could be engaged in order to provide a further understanding of the influences of migrants belonging to another social class had on the form of their houses.

9.5.4 Geographical areas and historical period

Italian migrants settled in most Australian capital cities including Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Moreover, they settled in other countries such as the United States, Canada, Brazil and Argentina, not just in the post-war period, but also in other historical periods. Therefore, this current study could be expanded to investigate migration flows and their influences on the built form in the other Australian cities and/or in other countries.
9.5.5 1960s renovated, extended and refurbished houses

This study was limited to houses built by first generation Italian migrants. The findings revealed that they occupied existing housing that was designed and built by Australians, and they also renovated/extended/refurbished existing houses before building their own artefacts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The cultural expression inherent in such housing might be that of colonial Australia, but the way in which it is used and understood might be through an Italian cultural framework. Therefore, this study can also shed light on an exploration of houses renovated/extended/refurbished by first generation migrants in Brisbane. This could provide a further detailed understanding of the ways in which first generation Italian migrants in Brisbane influenced their renovated/extended/refurbished houses.

9.5.6 Building typology

This current study explored one specific typology of building, that of detached houses situated on a quarter acre block of land. Italian migrants revealed that this was not the only typology of building they developed in Brisbane. They pointed out that in the late 1970s to early 1980s Italians joined their savings to purchase large building plots where they built multi-storey apartment buildings for speculative purposes (Figure 112-113). Therefore, further research can be extended to the study of how Italian migrants influenced the form of other housing typologies, such as town-houses and multi-storey apartments.

9.5.7 Material culture

This study did not focus on decorative and utilitarian objects such as furniture, visual art (photographs, images, maps, paintings and craft objects), books and newspaper articles, crockery and cutlery and sacred objects, visible inside the house, and/or fountains, pottery, ceramics, statues, or wood-burning ovens which are, usually located in the backyards and front gardens.

The literature shows that physical objects left by past cultures or within people’s cultural context are defined as ‘material culture’ (Tilley et al., 2006), because it is assumed that humans perceive and understand the ‘things’ around them as they have learned from their culture. For this reason such objects are expressions of cultural identity after meanings have been given to them. Therefore, a similar study could be conducted to investigate the meaning of material culture within Italian migrants’ houses in Brisbane.
9.5.8 Second generation Italians’ houses

The link between form, culture and behaviour is difficult to explore and to define due to the fact that people’s way of life changes and evolves with time. In regards to vernacular houses designed and built by first generation Italian migrants, a question arising from this study would be how second generation Italian migrants, which are defined as ‘an ethnic group who is either born overseas and migrates at a very early age (0-7 years) or is born in the host country of first generation migrants’ (Rapoport, 1982a) (Poulsen & Lange, 1998), have influenced the form of their houses. A supposition is that houses built in the late 1970s by first generation Italian migrants have different features compared to those built in the 1990s by second generation Italian migrants. Research could be expanded to study these variations. This could assist in understanding how the houses’ features, heritage and cultural influences have changed over time and also to what extent first and second generation Italian migrants have sustained a loss of the native cultural framework and have been absorbed into the host country’s framework.

9.6 Reflections on the research study

I began this thesis with the argument that in the past decade the building industry has given only sporadic consideration to the relationship between the built form and users’ specific needs based on culture. This is mainly due to the fact that builders and developers adopt imposed architectural forms and building codes based on the speculative standardization-profit philosophy. Moreover, as pointed out by scholars and researchers, the contemporary architectural design process has often facilitated the construction of standardized buildings which frustrate the users. This is because the users’ needs, which are influenced by culture as a way of life, are not accommodated as well as they could be. This has contributed to the construction of the argument that architectural practitioners should develop a humanistic approach to building design, in which buildings are designed according to people’s needs.

The literature revealed that the discipline of architectural sociology had made little progress in investigating the close relationship between human behaviour and/or activities as an expression of culture and the micro-scale level built form, specifically in relation to cross-cultural houses.

A study of vernacular houses could provide a better understanding of how users’ needs, human behaviour and/or activities based on culture as way of life, influence the form of houses, and how a re-evaluation of a theoretical cultural perspective can be promoted. In this
study, I examined Italian vernacular houses built in post-WWII Brisbane, to help provide an understanding of the way Italian migrants shaped their houses. I collected and analysed the views and experiences of twenty couples and studied from their four detached houses.

In order to obtain the richness and depth of data required for the analysis, the interviews were conducted in Italian. It is unlikely that the depth of analysis or results could have been achieved if English was the language used for the interviews. Using the participants’ language and/or dialect allowed interviewees to express themselves fully and comfortably.

The analysis of collected oral and visual data suggested that (1) the architectural form of the building (that is, the structure, the materials and construction technique, and the architectural elements visible on the façade), and (2) the spatial distribution and utilization of space, were influenced by (a) socio-cultural factors and cultural traditions, filtered through 40 years of migration and past housing experiences. Also, it was revealed that the spatial form of the dwellings gradually evolved in response to the (b) configuration of the alien built environment. Italian migrants’ houses incorporated two distinctive kitchens and two dining-living areas, both of which contributed to an enhancement of social interaction.

In the Italian migrants’ view, this was not facilitated by the host built environment, as the host environment lacked an urban element typically used in the Italian built environment to interact with other people, specifically the town square. This means that the built environment had an impact on inhabitants’ social interaction. It was the need to carry out these activities, dictated by a culture or way of life, which influenced the way Italian migrants configured the spatial distribution of their houses. Thus, the study of the spatial form of the house cannot be isolated from the analysis of the built environment, since the social activities performed within the house are influenced by the range of activities performed in the built environment.

Finally, the findings show that the form of the transnational house mirrors the cultures derived from the ways of life belonging to two societies, based on history and tradition. This confirms that culture, as a way of life, is dynamic and subject to change. The form of houses built by Italian migrants in post WWII Brisbane is the manifestation of two developing cultures: the Italian and the Australian cultures.
Appendix A: Visual Material (Photographs and Drawings)

Figures 1 to 38 are general photographs to support the research study;
Figures 39 to 83 are from the four selected cases;
Figures 84 to 113 are general photographs to support the research study.
On his departure from the port of Trieste Amedeo (third from the left), like other Italian migrants, felt worried about his journey to Australia because of the distance from his family and homeland and because, as he stated he ‘did not know what to expect from this migration journey.’ (Photo from case 19)

As Paolo (first on left) highlighted, the voyage to Australia on the 'Toscanelli' gave him an opportunity to get acquainted with Pietro and Pasquale who, afterwards, became lifelong friends. (Photo from case 11)
Figure 3: Italian family house in Trieste
Paolo’s Italian house in Trieste where five families lived together. The cowshed, hayloft and a store for agricultural tools were attached to the residential house.
(Photo from case 11)

Figure 4: Italian family house in Trieste
Teresa’s family house in Trieste was surrounded by land where the extended family grew crops.
(Photo from case 8)

Figure 5: Italian family house in Aquila
Luigi’s extended family house in Aquila, Abruzzo.
(Photo from case 9)

Figure 6: Renovated family house in Udine
Amedeo’s family house in Udine was inherited by his brother Vincenzo and then renovated, preserving the character. Face brick arches are a feature of the façade.
(Photo from case 19)
Interviewees described the typical architectural and spatial form of their extended family houses in Italy: Façades were characterized by arches. The ground floor, comprising kitchen, dining, store room and laundry, was commonly called ‘zona giorno’ (day area). The upper levels, where the bedrooms were situated, were called ‘zona notte’ (night area).

(Drawing by the author)
Venemous snakes were commonly found in the cane fields and on the farm. Teresa said that not just people working in the cane plantation were at high risk, but also family members living in the area. She said that they had a few dogs and when one of the dogs was found dead, it meant there was a snake in the vicinity of the house. Several interviewees who had worked in the cane fields stressed how they lived in fear of venomous snakes. In this photo, Teresa shows her daughter a snake shot by her husband a few minutes earlier in the backyard.

(Photograph from case 6)

As Salvatore (second from the right) highlighted, Italian migrants were not familiar with wild creatures, such as snakes, present in the sugar cane fields in north Queensland.

(Photo from case 2)

Aldo stated that in the 1950s most single Italian migrants working as cane cutters in north Queensland, shared a shed with other workers.

(Photograph from case 3)
Figure 11: Marriage by proxy

Pina opted for marriage by proxy before joining Carmelo in Australia. In this photo the groom Carmelo is not physically present since he had migrated to Australian in 1954. He was represented by his father. Carmelo went through the same process in Australia: this was also known as the 'double proxy wedding'.
(Photo from case 4)

Figure 12: Marriage by proxy

Concetta married by proxy in 1957. A photo of the groom, Domenico, was afterwards inserted in the family picture.
(Photo from case 5)
The Italian Club, located at 23 Foster Street Newmarket, also known as the Italo-Australian Club, was built by Italian migrants in the 1970s. As highlighted by all interviewees, the club played a relevant role in enhancing social interaction among Italian migrants. (Photo by the author)

The Taverne Club was founded in Aspley by Italian migrants from the Veneto region. Other regional clubs, such as the Abruzzo, the Tuscany, Casa Italia were also founded in the 1970s. (Photo by the author)
Figure 16: Dinner at the Italian Club
Italian migrants met at the club on a regular basis to enjoy each other’s company to celebrate anniversaries and birthdays.
(Photo from case 12)

Figure 17: The bocce game
The Italian Bocce Club is situated next to the Italian Club.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 18: The bocce game
The game of bocce became very popular among Italian migrants. Gennaro highlighted that every Sunday afternoon, after mass and lunch with the family, many Italians met regularly at Newmarket for a game of bocce.
(Photo by the author)
The Dante Alighieri Society is located at the ground floor of the Italian Club building. The main objective of the Society is to teach Italian and to maintain a passion for Italian culture among foreign and Italian people. Many second generation migrants attended this school.

(Photo by the author)
In 1967 Pasquale and Assunta purchased a weatherboard house standing on timber stumps in Bracken Ridge. In 1972 the renovation of the house was completed. A brick basement wall around the perimeter of the house replaced the original timber stumps. The external weatherboard walls were sanded and painted to maintain the original look of the house. (Photos from case 14)

In 1970 Salvatore and Maria purchased a single storey weatherboard house standing on timber stumps in New Farm. In 1971 the house was lifted and the ground floor was enclosed with a brick veneer wall. (Photo from case 2)

In 1972 the back of Salvatore and Maria’s house was extended in order to create two more rooms, a bathroom, a laundry and a double garage. They adopted the ‘brick veneer’ system to build the new walls. (Photo from case 2)
Figure 26: Schematic section of a weatherboard wall
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 27: Schematic axonometry of a weatherboard wall
(Drawing by the author)
Figure 28: Schematic section of a brick veneer wall
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 29: Schematic axonometry of a brick veneer wall
(Drawing by the author)
As Luigi pointed out, in the 1960s the building industry was booming and due to the need for carpenters, concreters, tilers, painters and other professional people, many Italian migrants were employed in the building industry. (Photo from case 9)

Figure 31: Italian migrant craftsmen

After working for a few years as a concreter, Luigi decided to go back to the initial profession he learned in Italy: interior decoration. In 1961 with his friend Giuseppe he started his own business in Brisbane. (Photo from case 9)
As Aldo stated, all tiles in his house were imported from Italy by an Italian tiler, Vittorio.

Figure 32: External tiles
As Aldo stated, all tiles in his house were imported from Italy by an Italian tiler, Vittorio.

(Photo from case 1)

Figure 33: Internal tiles
Internal tiles also imported from Italy.

(Photo from case 1)
The ceiling of the living room of Lina and Vittorio's house was decorated by Renzo, a well-known decorator in the neighbourhood, with paintings in the style of Italian artists such as Michelangelo Buonarrotti and Raffaello Sanzio.

(Photo from case 1)

In the centre of the ceiling of the living room there is a reproduction of "The Creation", a section of Michelangelo Buonarrotti's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel painted circa 1511.

(Photo from case 1)

In the corners of the ceiling of the living room, Renzo reproduced "The Madonna della seggiola" or "Madonna della sedia" copied from the Italian Renaissance artist Raffaello Sanzio. The original is dated c. 1513-1514 and is housed in the Palazzo Pitti collection in Florence.

(Photo from case 1)
Figure 37: Schematic section of a cavity brick wall
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 38: Schematic axonometry of a cavity brick wall
(Drawing by the author)
CASE 1

Figure 39: The façade
The house was built in 1983 by Lina and Vittorio. The main façade is characterized by a hand made concrete balustrade and Roman columns supporting the concrete slab on the front porch.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 40: The façade
White concrete column balustrade and Roman columns are visible on the first floor balcony.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 41: Entry area
View of the staircase from the entry area on the ground floor. Beside the marble staircase, the door could close to partition the house into two independent units.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 42: Two units subdivision
View of the entry from the first floor. In the early 1990s Lina and Vittorio moved downstairs while one of their children, Pino, lived upstairs with his family.
(Photo by the author)
Figure 43: Schematic first floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 44: Schematic ground floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 45: Schematic ground floor plan
(renovated in 1990)
(Drawing by the author)
Figure 46: The formal living, dining, kitchen area on the first floor
(Photo by the author)

Figure 47: The kitchen on the ground floor
(Photo by the author)

Figure 48: The informal living, dining area on the ground floor
(Photo by the author)
CASE 1

Figure 49: The backyard
Vittorio built a netted shed which combined a chicken coop and a vegetable garden. (Photo by the author)

Figure 50: The backyard
The backyard, not commonly used for social activities, is used for the cultivation of vegetables and to store tools. (Photo by the author)

Figure 51: The backyard
The backyard was also used as a garden nursery to cultivate decorative plants that would be moved to the front garden. (Photo by the author)
In the front garden Lina cultivated plants for decorative purposes.

Figure 52: The front garden
(Photo by the author)
House built in 1982 by Maria and Salvatore. The main façade is characterized by a steel balustrade, brick columns supporting the concrete slab on the front porch and arches on the balcony. (Photo by the author)

In 1991 Maria and Salvatore divided their house into two independent units. While their offspring lived upstairs, the parents lived downstairs. (Photo by the author)
ARCHWAY
ARCHWAY
ARCHWAY
ARCHWAY
PORCH
LIVING/DINING
DOUBLE GARAGE
PORCH
STAIRCASE
L’DRY BATHROOM
BEDROOM
KITCHENETTE
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROOM
LIVING
KITCHEN AND DINING
STAIRCASE
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BALCONY
BALCONY
BALCONY
BALCONY

Figure 59: Schematic first floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 60: Schematic ground floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 61: Schematic ground floor plan
(renovated in 1991)
(Drawing by the author)
The front garden was landscaped to show the family's success. (Photo by the author)

Figure 62: The front garden

Side gardens were cultivated with fruit trees such as lemon, orange and olive trees. Alternatively, it created a barrier between the house and the neighbours. (Photo by the author)

Figure 63: The side garden

The backyard
(Photo by the author)
CASE 3

Figure 65: The façade
House built in 1983 by Flavia and Aldo. The main façade is characterized by a steel balustrade, brick columns supporting the concrete slab on the front porch and arches on the balcony. (Photo by the author)

Figure 66: The living area on the first floor
The living room was connected to the dining room by an archway. (Photo by the author)

Figure 67: The dining area on the first floor
The dining room was connected to the kitchen and to the living room, forming an open space. (Photo by the author)
Figure 68: Schematic first floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 69: Schematic ground floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 70: Schematic ground floor plan (renovated in 1992)
(Drawing by the author)
Zucchini, eggplants, fennel and tomatoes were cultivated in the backyard of the house.  
(Photo by the author)

Figure 71: The backyard

A lemon tree cultivated in the backyard.  
(Photo by the author)

Figure 72: The backyard

A coop located in the backyard which housed ducks and turkeys as well as chickens.  
(Photo by the author)

Figure 73: The backyard
Case 4: House built in 1984 by Pina and Carmelo. The main façade is characterized by a hand made concrete balustrade and brick columns supporting the concrete slab on the front porch and elliptical arches on the balcony. (Photo by the author)

Figure 75: The kitchen on the first floor (Photo by the author)
Figure 76: Schematic first floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 77: Schematic ground floor plan
(Drawing by the author)

Figure 78: Schematic ground floor plan
(renovated in 1990)
(Drawing by the author)
CASE 4

Figure 79: The backyard

A tomato plant.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 80: The side garden

A lemon tree.

Figure 81: The side garden

Olive trees.
The statue 'Moses', a reproduction of Michelangelo Buonarroti’s work adorning the front garden. (Photo by the author)

Fountains were located in the front garden of the house. (Photo by the author)
As Lucia highlighted, arches and balustrades were common in Rome and in many other Italian cities.

(Summary image)

Salvatore and his wife during a short visit to his family in Italy in 1978. Salvatore was a builder and he pointed out in this photo the typical Italian balustrade concrete columns behind them. He stressed “...you asked me why Italians have concrete columns in their houses in Australia? Because they are from Italy!”

(Summary image)
Figure 86: Concrete column balustrade

Tony manufactured balustrade columns based on his design, which was influenced by Roman columns typically visible on public buildings, bridges and palaces in Italy.

(Drawing form case 8)
Figure 87: Sample of concrete columns for balustrades
(Photo by the author)

Figure 88: Sample of concrete column balustrade
Home made cast Roman columns. The final cast for the concrete balustrade column.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 89: Sample of concrete column balustrade
(Photo by the author)
Figure 90: View of concrete column balustrade fence
(Photo by the author)

Figure 91: Samples of concrete column balustrade fence
(Photo by the author)

Figure 92: Samples of concrete column balustrade fence
(Photo by the author)
The typical wood burning oven was commonly used by Italian migrants to bake bread, pizza and also to cook meat. (Photo by the author)

As Aldo stated, the construction of the dome inside the oven was not an easy task. Usually Italian migrants familiar with the construction technique were called upon to build the dome (catenary arch). (Photo by the author)
Vi/g425orina making ‘Canoli Siciliani’: a traditional recipe from Sicily.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 97: Cooking ‘Canoli Siciliani’

Black olives collected from the front garden.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 98: Food preparation: olives

Green olives collected and sealed in bottles.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 99: Food preparation: olives
Paint and construction materials were often stored in the garage.

(Photo by the author)

Figure 100: Working activities

Joiners’ tools and materials stored in the garage.

(Photo by the author)

Figure 101: Working activities

Carpenter’s tools in the back room on the ground floor.

(Photo by the author)
Figure 103: Social activities
Italian migrants meeting at home on weekends.
(Photo from case 4)

Figure 104: Social activities
Gina with her family on Christmas Eve 1986. Fish was the speciality of the day.
(Photo from case 7)

Figure 105: St Kevin’s Catholic Church
St Kevin’s Catholic Church, located at 249 Newman Rd Geebung, played a major role in the enhancement of social interaction among Italian migrants. The mass was held in Italian each Sunday at 10 am by a Scalabrignani Father.
(Photo by the author)

Figure 106: Holy Cross Catholic Church
Holy Cross Catholic Church, located at 69 Chalk Street Woolowin, was a point of reference for Italians. The mass was held in Italian each Sunday at 8am by a Scalabrignani Father.
(Photo by the author)
Figure 107: House form differences

Architectural and spatial form differences between the extended family house in Italy and the house built in Brisbane.

(Drawing by the author)
While the front area on each floor was utilized for public social purposes, the back areas were used for working-domestic activities and for sleeping. The back areas of the house were the private domain of the family.

(Drawing by the author)
Figure 109: Front elevation of sample house
(Drawing from case 9)

Figure 110: Front elevation of sample house
(Drawing from case 9)

Figure 111: Rear elevation of sample house
(Drawing from case 9)
Figure 112: Multi-storey apartment building

Italian migrants joined their savings to develop multi-storey apartments in Brisbane. Even in this case, architectural elements like arches are prominent. (Photo by the author)
Appendix B: Ethic Approval Form

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Chris Kynaston  Brisbane Campus
Co-investigators: Dr Lindsay Farrell  Brisbane Campus
Student Researcher: Mr Raffaele Furlan  Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Italian socio-cultural influences on the domestic architecture of Brisbane in the post World War II period:
An exploration in architectural sociology.
for the period: 4 February 2008 to 31 December 2009
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q200708 11

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
   - security of records
   - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
   - compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
   - proposed changes to the protocol
   - unforeseen circumstances or events
   - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a Final Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an Annual Progress Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Date: 4 February 2008

(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)
Appendix C: List of Italian Regional Associations and Clubs

Community associations

Italian

Alpini Association of North QLD
P.O. Box 429 WAMBINAN QLD 4870
Contact: Mr Rizzotto Emmanuel
Telephone: (07) 4933 5032
Mobile: 0428 432 955

Amici Connazionali Tavernetta Aspley
45c Ellinon Rd ASPLEY QLD 4034
Activities: Recreation, social
President: Mrs Giuseppina Musara
Telephone: (07) 3355 9934

Associazione Nazionale Alpini Sezione di Brisbane
P.O. Box 1971 ROWMARKET QLD 4051
Activities: Reunion functions
Secretary: Ms Caterina Lenardoni
Telephone: (07) 3185 6666

Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigrati
50 Woychic St FORTE DEI VALLEY QLD 4006
Secretary: Mr Concilio Ottobrandi
Telephone: (07) 3356 3748

President: Mr Giuseppe Cosentino
Telephone: (07) 3350 6477

Associazione Sarda Del Queensland
P.O. Box 2732 CHERRY HINTON QLD 4003
585 Arundel St CHERNOUGA WEST QLD 4053
Website: www.sardiaustralia.com.au
Activities: Welfare, social, sporting
President: Mr Giuseppe Maffia
Telephone: (07) 3162 8303
Fax: (07) 3162 8303
Mobile: 0408 185 112
Email: info@csq.org.au

Catalana Cultural and Sporting Club
P.O. Box 373 STAFFORD HEATH QLD 4053
235 Holland St RICHARDS QLD 4065
Website: www.catalanaustralia.com.au
Activities: Cultural, social, sporting, educational
President: Ms Giuseppina Zanda
Telephone: (07) 3373 9995
Fax: (07) 3373 9996
Mobile: 0413 932 278
Email: fsandina@hotmail.com

Secretary: Ms Maria Zanda

Casa Italia Community Centre
66 Grey QREI NA NA QLD 4003
Activities: Social, cultural, sporting, recreational, religious
President: Mr Carmelo Di Francesco
Telephone: (07) 3353 4550
Fax: (07) 3353 4550
Mobile: 0425 705 580
Treasure: Mr Sam Turrisi
Mobile: 0417 705 583
Community associations

COLAS-IT - Italian Australian Welfare Association Inc
PO Box 633 ELEVEN GROVE QLD 4059
42 Rimberry St NEWMARKET QLD 4051
Website: www.colasit.org.au
Activities: Welfare, health, access, equity issues, education, aged, language
Assistant Director: Ms Tania Sofia
Telephone: (07) 3352 7076
Fax: (07) 3352 7075
Email: tsofia@colasit.org.au
Director: Ms Dina Ranieri
Telephone: (07) 3352 7076
Fax: (07) 3352 7075
Email: dirwan@colasit.org.au

Comitato Italiano All'Estero (COM. IT. ES) 817
120 Main St KAIKOURA POINT QLD 4165
Activities: Cultural, consultation, community development, Italian with local government
President: Ms Mariangela Stagnitti
Telephone: (07) 3813 7011
Fax: (07) 3813 7011
Mobile: 0405 163 181
Email: comitato@bigpond.com
Office Manager: Ms Enrica Sella
Telephone: (07) 3813 7011
Fax: (07) 3813 7011
Mobile: 0405 716 956
Email: comitato@bigpond.com
Vice-President: Mr Fausto Zanella
Telephone: (07) 3813 7011
Email: comitato@bigpond.com

Dante Alighieri Society - Brisbane 786
PO Box 830 KEEN STREET QLD 4001
23 Foster St NEWMARKET QLD 4051
Website: www.dante-alighierisociety.org.au
Activities: Language, culture
President: Mr Jean-Paul Lorin
Telephone: (07) 3356 7731
Fax: (07) 3356 7731
Email: dante@bigpond.net.au
Secretary: Ms Jennifer O'Neill
Telephone: (07) 3356 7731
Fax: (07) 3356 7731
Email: dante@bigpond.net.au

Dante Alighieri Society - Calma 799
PO Box 2679 CHARLIE QLD 4021
Website: www.dante-alighierisociety.org.au
Activities: Cultural, educational, social, language classes
President: Mr Gary Montgomerie
Telephone: (07) 4054 4940
Mobile: 0444 670 706
Email: gmontgomerie@kamine.org.au

Dante Alighieri Society Stanthorpe
PO Box 645 STANTHORPE QLD 4380
Secretary: Mrs Mary Scalona
Telephone: (07) 4688 1815
Email: scalona@internet.at.net
President: Mr Vince Nocentini
Telephone: (07) 4688 3889
Vice-President: Mr Angelo Scalona
Telephone: (07) 4688 1815
Treasurer: Mr Henry Scase
Telephone: (07) 4688 2850

Dante Alighieri Society, Townsville
PO Box 2654 ABNEY VALE QLD 4814
Activities: Italian, language, cultural and social activities
President: Mr Cris Dall'Osto
Telephone: (07) 4788 1556
Fax: (07) 4788 1577
Email: dantesocietytownsville@bigpond.net

Federaion Cattolica Italiana - Aspley Geelong
PO Box 26 QUT VIC 4014
Activities: Religious, social, cultural wellbeing of migrants
Secretary: Mrs Carmela Bozzi
Telephone: (07) 3936 1037
Fax: (07) 3936 1036
President: Mr Leo Bozzi
Telephone: (07) 3936 1037
Fax: (07) 3936 1036
Mobile: 0403 606 390
Email: bozzi@bigpond.com.au
Contact: Mrs Riana Frangiosa
Telephone: (07) 3936 1037

Federaion Cattolica Italiana - North Brisbane
PO Box 2645 LUTTERIDGE QLD 4059
Activities: Religious, social, cultural wellbeing of migrants
Secretary: Mrs Maria Toscano
Telephone: (07) 3936 1037
President: Mrs Anna Sassu
Telephone: (07) 3936 1037

Giovanni Italian Network Qld
134 Main St KAIKOURA POINT QLD 4165
Website: www.giovanni.org.au
Contact: Mr Giuseppe Armani
Telephone: (07) 3833 3138
Fax: (07) 3833 3137
Email: murton@vsn.net.au
Contact: Mr David Frantini
Telephone: (07) 3833 3139
Mobile: 0411 924 883
Email: frantini@vsn.net.au

Ingham International Rostic Club
PO Box 1330 INGHAM QLD 4850
Activities: Social, cross-cultural awareness
President: Mr Peter Costanzo
Telephone: (07) 4785 6650

Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory 2010
Italian Catholic Centre
PO Box 1539 MILLION QLD 4006
111 tale St PETRIE TERRACE QLD 4000
Activities: Religious, social, cultural
President: Ms Lucy Verali
Telephone: (07) 3369 0948
Fax: (07) 3369 0956
Mobile: 0412 615 833
Email: lucy.veleri@hotmail.com
Vice-President: Ms Gino Taraborelli
Telephone: (07) 3356 3166

Italian Community Centre Association (Cairns) Inc
100 Sheepards St GORDONVALE QLD 4865
Activities: Social, welfare, religious, education activities
President: Mr Sam Cardillo
Telephone: 074056 1455
Fax: 074056 1456
Mobile: 0410 587 410
Vice-President: Mr Giuseppe Sindoni
Telephone: 074056 5118
Fax: 074056 5119
Mobile: 0410 587 410
Email: keider@bigpond.net.au

Italian Social and Dance Club
23 Sydney St BAYMEADE HEIGHTS QLD 4668
Website: www.italiansocialdanceclub.com.au
Activities: Cultural, music, dance
President: Mr Luciano Codutto
Telephone: 074054 9258
Fax: 074054 9258
Mobile: 0401 601 766
Email: keider@bigpond.net.au

Secretary: Ms Neira Tuolo
Telephone: 074054 9258
Fax: 074054 9258
Mobile: 0401 601 766
Email: tuolo@bigpond.net.au

Club Manager: Ms Liz Williams
Telephone: 074054 9258
Fax: 074054 9258

Italo-Australian Centre
23 Foster St KEDINAQLD 4819
Website: www.italoaustraliancentre.com.au
Activities: Cultural, educational, social, sporting activities
President: Mrs Helen Watkin
Telephone: 073356 4833
Fax: 073356 4833

Italo-Australian Centre
23 Foster St KEDINAQLD 4819
Website: www.italoaustraliancentre.com.au
Activities: Cultural, educational, social, sporting activities
President: Mrs Giovanna Santomauro
Telephone: 073356 4833
Fax: 073356 4833

Community associations

Manoora International Club (MIC)
PO Box 870 MARILDA QLD 4860
Vaucluse MARILDA QLD 4860
Activities: Social, sport, cultural
Treasurer: Mr Gabriele Zanetti
Telephone: (07) 4061 6911
Fax: (07) 4061 6911
Email: manoora_club@bigpond.com
President: Mr Gabriele Zanetti
Telephone: (07) 4061 6911
Fax: (07) 4061 6911

National Italian-Australian Women's Association (Qld)
323 323 Rotherham St BANKSIA POINT QLD 4019
Activities: Cultural, educational, women's issues
President: Ms Angela Barone
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
Email: tilo543@bigpond.net.au

Plemontels Association of Queensland
PO Box 1290 MOUNT COOK QLD 4065
Website: www.plemontels.org.au
Activities: Cultural, educational, women's issues
President: Mrs Deanna Scidoni
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
Email: deanna.scidoni@hotmail.com
Vice-President: Mr Anna De Persone
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444

Queensland Sardinian Culture Club 'ULISSE USAI'
PO Box 437 CHEEMLAND QLD 4675
Website: www.sardinian.org.au
Activities: Cultural, educational, women's issues
Secretary: Ms Monica Campa
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
President: Mr Fausto Sambo
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
Mobile: 0413 908 271
Email: Numero_italian@bigpond.com

Sicilian Association
PO Box 149 ZILLERA QLD 4074
Website: www.sicilian.org.au
Activities: Cultural, social
Treasurer: Mr Phillip Bond
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
President: Mr Giuseppe Politi
Telephone: (07) 3370 0444
Fax: (07) 3370 0444
Email: philipbond@bigpond.net.au

Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory 2020
Appendix B: Information Letter to Participants

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT:
ITALIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF BRISBANE IN THE POST WORLD WAR II PERIOD: AN EXPLORATION IN ARCHITECTURAL SOCIOLOGY.

Name of Supervisor(s):
Dr Chris Kynaston
Dr Lindsay Farrell

Name of Student Researcher:
Raffaello Furlan

Name of Programme:
Ph.D. by Research

Dear

I am a student at the Australian Catholic University at the McAuley at Banyo Campus. I am seeking your help in relation to a research project that I am currently undertaking. The research project is the thesis for my Ph.D. degree.

My project focuses on the nature of influences (both architectural and sociological) of the Italian community on the built environment of Brisbane in the post World War II period, with specific reference to the migrants' own self-built/renovated/detached houses and the land on which they stand. The aspects to be explored include: the external stylistic features (such as the use of Roman-like pillars); the internal use of space (including the configuration of partitions separating one part of the house from another); the utilitarian use of gardens (especially for cultivating foodstuffs); and the use of garden features (such as fountains) for aesthetic purposes.

I am particularly interested in exploring the extent to which changes have been influenced by Italian architectural design and the way in which it may contribute towards the construction of a distinctive Italian cultural identity. At the same time I am very interested in the lives of people living in houses designed and built by Italian migrants: the social composition (age, socioeconomic status, relationships, etc.), the everyday lives of the residents and the relationship between the individual and the wider society.

I believe that your input would be invaluable and I would be most appreciative of an opportunity to conduct an interview (of about an hour in duration) with you. If you are agreeable, the interview session will be digitally recorded. I will contact you again in about a two weeks time to see if you wish to participate and, if you do, to arrange a convenient time and location for the interview to take place.

It is hoped that you will gain a sense of satisfaction from participating in this research project and from giving your insights on an important community issue. In a broader sense, the research project will also add to existing stocks of knowledge regarding contemporary Australian society. A copy of the completed project will be lodged with the Australian Catholic University Library at Banyo.
Your participation in this research would be warmly welcomed; however, it is entirely voluntary on your part and therefore, you are free to refuse to take part in this study. Also, please be assured that should you consent to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw that consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

In line with ethical guidelines, let me reassure you that your identity will be held in strictest confidence (by using an alias or a code number) and will not be exposed in the research, any arising publications, or, in data provided to other researchers.

Should you have any questions regarding this project, you may telephone either of the supervisors at the Australian Catholic University:

- Dr Chris Kynaston (Principal Supervisor)
  Phone (07) 3623 7188; email: c.kynaston@mcauley.acu.edu.au
- Dr Lindsay Farrell (Associate Supervisor)
  Phone (07) 3623 7191; email: l Farrell@mcauley.acu.edu.au

Or if you prefer, you may write to them at:

The School of Arts and Sciences
Australian Catholic University
McAuley at Banyo
1100 Nudgee Road
BANYO QLD 4014

At the end of the research, if you would like, I will send you a summary of the research results, as a token of appreciation for your participation in this project.

I would like to assure you that this study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study, or a query that the Student Researcher or the Supervisor has not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, HREC
Office of Research
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Tel: 07 3623 7294
Fax: 07 3623 7523

Any complaint will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please retain both copies of the Consent Form, as these will need to be signed at the time of the interview. Then, you will be able to retain one copy for your records, and the other copy is for the researcher's records.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely

Principal Supervisor .......................................................... (Block Letter) .......................................................... (Signature)

Student Researcher .......................................................... (Block Letter) .......................................................... (Signature)
Appendix E: Consent Form for Focus Group and In-depth Interviews

Consent Form - FOCUS GROUP and IN DEPTH INTERVIEW

TITLE OF PROJECT:
ITALIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF BRISBANE IN THE POST WORLD WAR II PERIOD: AN EXPLORATION IN ARCHITECTURAL SOCIOLOGY.

Name of Supervisors: Dr Chris Kynaston
Dr Lindsay Farrell

Name of Student Researcher: Raffaello Furlan

I have read and understand the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

I agree to participate in:

□ a one hour digital audio taped focus group
□ a one hour digital audio taped in depth interview

NAME OF PARTICIPANTS: ____________________________

(Block Letters)

SIGNATURE: ______________________________________

DATE: ____________________________

NAME OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: ____________________________

(Block Letters)

SIGNATURE: ______________________________________

DATE: ____________________________

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: ____________________________

(Block Letters)

SIGNATURE: ______________________________________

DATE: ____________________________
Appendix D: Sample Questions for Italian owners

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

TITLE OF PROJECT:
ITALIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF BRISBANE IN THE POST WORLD WAR II PERIOD: AN EXPLORATION IN ARCHITECTURAL SOCIOLOGY.

Name of Supervisors:  Dr Chris Kynaston
                           Dr Lindsay Farrell

Name of Student Researcher:  Raffaello Furlan

The interviews will be conducted into two distinct sessions: during the first session (Focus Group Interview), the interviewed persons will be asked to answer some generic questions, during the second session participants will answer some specific questions (in depth interview). Each session is expected to take approximately one hour.

Session I: Sample Generic Questions:

(Focus Group Interview)

Q1. In which way did you find the Australian houses adequate to your needs?
Q2. What were your initial reactions to Australian houses, and subsequent judgements?
Q3. When did you buy/build/renovate your own house in Brisbane?
Q4. What types of material and objects do you have that remind you or reflect your culture (internal layout and facade)?
Q5. What does your house in Brisbane represent for you?
Q6. How much is the look of the outside of your home important to you?
Q7. Do you believe your home reflects your native cultural background in any way? If so, how?
Q8. What do you think makes an Italian house distinctive from other cultural groups? If any?
Q9. What parts/areas of your house in Brisbane are/were important to you here in Australia and why?
Q10. Where did you spend most of the daily time in your house in Brisbane? (Activities inside the house. Areas used for the different activities mentioned, by individual household members)
Q11. Are there any additional important issues that you would like to raise?
Session II: Sample Specific Questions

(Photo-elicitation interview)
Q1. What do you see in this photograph?
Q2. What do you think about this photo?
Q3. When you live in this house how you did usually feel?
Q4. What did you like about the most about this house?
Q5. Is there any object in particular that you like in the photo? Why?
Q6. If you had a magic wand what would you change about it?
Q7. Are there any additional important issues that would like to raise?

(In depth semi-structured interview)
Q1. How old were you when you left Italy?
Q2. In which regional area in Italy are you form and where did you spend most of time?
Q3. When did you migrate to Australia?
Q4. Why did you leave Italy?
Q5. What were your feelings when you left Italy?
Q6. What were your plans in Australia?
Q7. What mode of transport did you use to come to Australia?
Q8. Why did you choose to come to Australia, specifically Brisbane?
Q9. What was your occupation in Italy?
Q10. What was your first occupation in Australia?
Q11. When you arrived, what was life like in Brisbane as an Italian migrant?
Q12. How did other cultural groups treat you when you first came to Brisbane?
Q13. What types of hardships did you face?
Q14. In what ways do you think Italian lifestyle has changed since you first came to Brisbane?
Q15. What do you believe Italians have contributed most to over the years since first coming to Brisbane?
Q16. Can you describe the house you used to live in Italy? (Details of last house lived in Italy, verbal and graphics if possible, with comments on what was liked and disliked about the past house)
Q17. How was the household composition?
Q18. Who did build the house in Italy and when?
Q19. What parts/ features/areas of your house in Italy were important to you and why?
Q20. Where did you spend most of the daily time in the Italian house?
Q21. What were your initial reactions to Australian houses, and subsequent judgements?
Q22. How was life in Australia compared to life in Italy?
Q23. When did you buy/build/renovate your own first house in Brisbane?
Q24. Why did you decide to settle in this particular area/suburb?
Q25. How did you modify your house in order to compensate the lack of elements which are expression of Italian culture? (Town square)
Q26. Did you want to get closer to mall/stations/shopping centre?
Q27. Did you build/renovate/refurbish your house with the help of other Italians or family members? Why/Why not?
Q28. What types of material objects do you have that remind you or reflect your culture (internal layout and facade)?
Q29. What does your house in Brisbane represent for you?
Q30. How much is the look of the outside of your home important to you?
Q31. How much is the look of the inside of your home important to you?
Q32. What do you think makes an Italian house distinctive from other cultural groups? If any?
Q33. What types of hardships did you face when you build/renovate it?
Q34. What parts/features/areas of your house in Brisbane are/were important to you here in Australia and why?
Q35. Where did you spend most of the daily time in your house in Brisbane? (Activities inside the house; areas used for the different activities mentioned, by individual household members)
Q36. How frequently did you visit neighbours, friends and relatives?
Q37. In which areas within the house did you use to meet?
Q38. How has the internal use of space affected your every-day social life/your social relationships?
Q39. What would you change in the internal layout in order to enhance social interactions?
Q40. Are there any additional important issues that you would like to raise?
Q41. Would the interviewee like a copy of the interview? Yes or No. Please state this in the recording process?
Appendix G: Information Letter to Participants (In Italian language)

ALLEGATO B: LETTERA DI PRESENTAZIONE PER I PARTECIPANTI

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

TITOLO DELLA RICERCA:
INFLUENZE SOCIO-CULTURALI DEGLI ITALIANI SULL’ ARCHITETTURA DOMESTICA DI BRISBANE NEL SECONDO DOPOGUERRA: UNO STUDIO IN SOCIOLOGIA DELL’ ARCHITETTURA

Nome dei relatori:
Dr Chris Kynaston
Dr Lindsay Farrell

Nome del dottorando:
Raffaello Furlan

Nome del corso di studi:
Dottorato

Sono uno studente della ACU - Australian Catholic University, McAuley, Banyo Campus di Brisbane, e sto svolgendo un progetto di ricerca ai fini del conseguimento del dottorato (Ph.D.).

Sto cercando persone immigrate dall’Italia che mi possano aiutare con le loro preziose ed uniche testimonianze.

Il progetto di ricerca si concentra sulla natura delle influenze (architettoniche e sociologiche) da parte degli immigrati italiani sull’architettura domestica di Brisbane nel periodo del secondo dopoguerra. In particolare il progetto intende esporre la natura di tali influenze sulle case costruite e/o ristrutturate dagli stessi emigranti a Brisbane.

Le caratteristiche oggetto di studio sono: (1) gli elementi stilistici esterni della facciata (per esempio l’uso delle colonne nelle ringhiere o l’uso di archi); (2) la distribuzione e l’uso dello spazio interno (per esempio la gerarchia delle stanze); (3) l’uso del giardino (per esempio se e che cosa veniva coltivato); (4) gli oggetti estetici di decoro nel giardino (per esempio le fontane).

Sono particolarmente interessato ad esplorare come questi elementi utilizzati nelle case degli italiani a Brisbane siano stati influenzati dall’architettura italiana. Inoltre sono interessato a capire in che modo tali elementi possano aver creato una distinctive identità culturale a Brisbane.

Allo stesso modo e’ di grande interesse raccontare le testimonianze delle esperienze quotidiane delle persone che hanno vissuto in abitazioni disegnate e costruite dagli stessi immigranti italiani.

Ai fini dello studio sarai importante capire quali erano le relazioni sociali della famiglia con i vicini, gli amici, i parenti e la società e come lo spazio interno e la distribuzione delle stanze possa aver influenzato tali relazioni.

Ritengo che la testimonianza degli italiani immigrati in Australia nel secondo dopoguerra sia di innestimabile valore, non solo ai fini del progetto di ricerca, ma soprattutto ai fini di trasmettere alle generazioni future la vostra preziosa esperienza di vita trascorsa in Australia ed specialmente il vostro ricco ed unico bagaglio culturale. Inoltre la vostra testimonianza contribuirà ad esplorare e capire le dinamiche e le influenze che hanno contribuito a formare il bagaglio culturale della società australiana.

Se acconsentite, l’intervista sarà registrata. Sarà contattati tra due settimane per sapere se avete deciso di partecipare. In caso decidentile di partecipare, sarà fissato un incontro a vostra convenienza.
Una copia del progetto di ricerca sarà depositato presso la biblioteca della ACU - Australian Catholic University, McAuley, Banyo Campus di Brisbane.

Siete a conoscenza che avrete aderita la vostra partecipazione è di vostra scelta personale. Nel caso in cui decidiate di partecipare, sarete comunque liberi di rinunciare in qualsiasi momento senza dare alcuna spiegazione.

In accordo con le direttive etiche, vi assicurare che la vostra identità sarà tenuta in ambito confidenziale e non sarà rivelata (sara' usato un codice numerico o un soprannome) nella tesi, nelle pubblicazioni che ne derivano, nelle informazioni fornite ad altri ricercatori.

Nel caso in cui ci fossero ulteriori domande riguardo il progetto di ricerca, potete telefonare ai relatori di tesi presso la ACU - Australian Catholic University, McAuley, Banyo Campus di Brisbane.

- Dr Chris Kynaston (Principal Supervisor)
 Telefono (07) 3623 7169; email: c.kynaston@mcglny.acu.edu.au

- Dr Lindsay Farrell (Associate Supervisor)
 Telefono (07) 3623 7191; email: l Farrell@mcglny.acu.edu.au

Se preferite, potete contattare i relatori di tesi per iscritto al seguente indirizzo:

The School of Arts and Sciences
Australian Catholic University
McAuley at Banyo
1100 Nudgee Road
BANYO QLD 4014

Alla fine della ricerca, se preferite, vi sarà inviato un resoconto delle conclusioni, in segno di ringraziamento per la vostra partecipazione ed il vostro prezioso contributo.

Si assicura che questo progetto di ricerca è stato approvato dal 'Human Research Ethics Committee' presso la ACU - Australian Catholic University, McAuley, Banyo Campus di Brisbane.

Nel caso in cui ci fossero dei reclami od incomprensioni durante le interviste, o delle richieste non soddisfatte dal ricercatore o dai relatori di tesi, potete rivolgere al seguente indirizzo.

Chair, HREC
of Office of Research
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456 - VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Tel: 07 3623 7294 - Fax: 07 3623 7328

Qualsiasi reclamo sarà trattato in via confidenziale ed investigato. Il richiedente sarà informato dell’esito del reclamo.

Nel caso in cui si decida di partecipare, si è cortesemente pregati di tenere entrambe le copie del modulo di consenso (Allegato C), in quanto entrambi i moduli devono essere firmati prima di iniziare l’intervista. Successivamente potete tenere una copia. L’altra copia rimarrà al ricercatore.

Riguardiando osso subito per il vostro prezioso aiuto si coglie l’occasione per porgero i più cordiali saluti.

Il relatore di tesi .............................................................. (Lettera maiuscola) .............................................................. (Firma)

Il ricercatore .............................................................. (Lettera maiuscola) .............................................................. (Firma)
Appendix H: Consent Form for Focus Group and In-depth Interviews (In Italian language)

ALLEGATO C: MODULO DI CONSENSO

TITOLO DELLA RICERCA:
INFLUENZE SOCIO-CULTURALI DEGLI ITALIANI SULL’ARCHITETTURA DOMESTICA DI BRISBANE NEL SECONDO DOPOGUERRA: UNO STUDIO IN SOCIOLOGIA DELL’ARCHITETTURA

Nome dei relatori: Dr Chris Kynaston
Dr Lindsay Farrell

Nome del dottorando: Raffaello Furlan

INTERVISTE DI GRUPPO - INTERVISTE PERSONALI

Il sottoscritto dichiara sotto la propria responsabilità di aver letto e preso visione delle informazioni fornite nell’allegato B “Lettera ai partecipanti”. Ogni punto è stato illustrato e spiegato in modo chiaro.

Il sottoscritto dichiara di acconsentire ad essere intervistatolo, con la possibilità di potersi ritirare a proprio scelto in qualsiasi momento.

Inoltre il sottoscritto aconoscente che i dati inerenti il progetto di ricerca siano pubblicati o distribuiti ad altri ricercatori, con la condizione che il nome del sottoscritto rimanga anonimo.

Il sottoscritto acconsente a partecipare

- intervista di gruppo registrata alla durata di un ora ☐
- intervista personale registrata alla durata di un ora ☐

NOME DEL PARTECIPANTE: ........................................... ...........................................
FIRMA: ...................................................................................................................
DATA: ...................................................................................................................

NOME DEL RELATORE DI TESI: .......................................................... (Block Letters)
FIRMA: .............................................................................................................
DATA: ...................................................................................................................

NOME DEL RICERCATORE: .......................................................... (Block Letters)
FIRMA: .............................................................................................................
DATA: ...................................................................................................................
Appendix I: Sample Questions (In Italian language)

ALLEGATO D: DOMANDE PER I PARTECIPANTI

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

TITOLO DELLA RICERCA:
INFLUENZE SOCIO-CULTURALI DEGLI ITALIANI SULL' ARCHITETTURA DOMESTICA DI BRISBANE NEL SECONDO DOPOGUERRA: UNO STUDIO IN SOCIOLOGIA DELL' ARCHITETTURA

Nome dei relatori: Dr Chris Kynaston
Dr Lindsay Farrell

Nome del dottorando: Raffaele Furtado

Le interviste saranno condotte in due distinte sessioni: durante la prima sessione (intervista di gruppo) alle persone intervistate saranno rivolte alcune domande generali; durante la seconda sessione (visione del materiale fotografico) le immagini fotografiche portate dagli partecipanti saranno discusse ed esaminate con l'aiuto degli stessi partecipanti, successivamente ai partecipanti saranno formulate alcune domande specifiche (interviste personali). Ciascuna sessione avrà una durata approssimativa di un'ora.

SESSIONE I - INTERVISTA DI GRUPPO: DOMANDE
Q1. Al tuo arrivo in Australia ha trovato la casa australiana conforme alle sue esigenze?
Q2. Come hai inizialmente reagito e quali sono stati le sue impressioni nei confronti della casa che ha trovato in Australia?
Q3. Quando hai acquistato/costruito/ristrutturato la tua prima casa a Brisbane?
Q4. Che tipo di materiali ed oggetti avete che ricordano l'identità culturale italiani? (nello spazio interno e nella facciata)
Q5. Che cosa rappresenta per Lei la sua casa a Brisbane?
Q6. Quanto è importante l'aspetto esteriore/estetico della tua casa?
Q7. Lei ritiene che la tua casa rifletta le sue proprie origini culturali? In quale modo?
Q8. Che cosa distingue una casa italiana dalle altre?
Q9. Quali sono le parti caratteristiche dell'aree che ritiene essere più significative e perché sono significative?
Q10. Dove trascorreva la maggior parte del tempo nella sua abitazione? (Descrivere le attività all'interno della casa. Le aree usate dai diversi membri della famiglia per svolgere le differenti attività)
Q11. Ci sono ulteriori considerazioni che vuole chiarire/esporre?

SESSIONE II – PART I – VISIONE DEL MATERIALE FOTOGRAFICO: DOMANDE
Q1. Che cosa vede in questa fotografia? Che cosa pensa di questa foto?
Q2. Quando viveva in questa casa, come si sentiva? Che cosa ha pensato in particolare di questa casa?
Q3. Ci sono degli oggetti particolari che meritano attenzione in questa foto? Perché?
Q4. Che cosa cambierebbe in questa immagine?
Q5. Ci sono ulteriori considerazioni che vuole chiarire/esporre?
SESSIONE II – PART II – INTERVISTA PERSONALE: DOMANDE

Q1. Da quale regione italiana proviene? Quanti anni aveva quando ha lasciato l'Italia?
Q2. In che anno è immigrato/a in Australia?
Q3. È venuto in Australia/Brisbane da solo o con alcuni membri della famiglia e/o amici?
Q4. Perché ha deciso di venire in Australia? Con quale mezzo di trasporto è arrivato/a in Australia?
Q5. Con quale stato d'animo è partito/a? Con quali prospettive è venuto/a in Australia?
Q6. Qual è la sua professione in Italia?
Q7. Può descrivere la casa in cui viveva in Italia? (commenti e schizzi se possibile sulla casa italiana-caratteristiche che piacevano e non) Chi costruì la casa in Italia?
Q8. Da quante persone era composto il nucleo familiare in Italia?
Q9. Quali erano le aree della casa in cui viveva in Italia più significative per Lei?
Q10. Dove spendeva la maggior parte del suo tempo giornaliero nella sua casa in Italia?
Q11. Qual è stata la sua prima professione in Australia?
Q12. Al suo arrivo, come era vivere a Brisbane da emigrante italiano?
Q13. Al vostro arrivo a Brisbane, come eravate visti dagli altri gruppi etnici?
Q14. Quali sono state le maggiori difficoltà iniziali?
Q15. Come era la struttura di vita australiana comparato a quello italiano?
Q16. Nel corso degli anni, come è cambiato il vostro stile di vita italiano a Brisbane?
Q17. Nel corso degli anni, secondo Lei, in che cosa gli italiani hanno maggiormente contribuito?
Q18. Come ha inizialmente reagito e quali sono stati le sue impressioni nei confronti della casa australiana?
Q19. Quando ha acquistato/costruito/ristrutturato la sua prima casa a Brisbane?
Q20. Perché si è stabilito/a in questa particolare area/ quartiere?
Q21. Come ha adattato la sua casa al fine di compensare l'assenza di una serie di elementi che fanno parte della tradizione in cui vivevate? (per esempio la piazza)
Q22. Vi siete avvicinati ai negozi/mercati di trasporto/centro commerciali?
Q23. Aveva costruito/istruzionato la vostra casa con l'aiuto di altri italiani e/o parenti/amici? Perché?
Q24. Quali sono i materiali ed oggetti che riflettono la vostra identità culturale d'origine? (interno ed esterno)
Q25. Che cosa rappresenta per voi la vostra casa a Brisbane?
Q26. Quanto è importante/significativo l'aspetto esteriore della vostra casa?
Q27. Quanto è importante/significativo l'interno/ arredo della vostra casa?
Q28. Che cosa rende la casa degli italiani unica rispetto alle altre?
Q29. Che tipo di difficoltà ha incontrato quando aveva costruito/ristrutturato la vostra casa?
Q30. Quali sono le aree della casa in cui viveva che ritiene essere più significative e perché?
Q31. Dove trascorre la maggior parte del tempo giornaliero nella sua abitazione? (Descrivere le attività all'interno della casa. Le aree usate per le diverse attività menzionate dai diversi membri della famiglia)
Q32. Con quale frequenza facevate visita ai vicini/amici/parenti? In quali aree vi incontravate/incontrate?
Q33. Ritiene che la distribuzione interna abbia influito sulla vostra vita sociale? Come? Perché?
Q34. Che cosa cambierebbe in modo tale da migliorare la vita sociale all'interno della casa?
Q35. Ci sono ulteriori considerazioni che vuole chiarire/esporre?
Q36. Desidera rimanere anonimo o posso citare il suo nome nella tesi?
Q37. Desidera avere una copia dell'intervista? Sì o No. Potrebbe per cortesia dichiararlo?
Appendix I: Declaration from Canossa Hospital

Canossa Private Hospital
169 Seventeen Mile Rocks Rd
Oxley 4076 QLD
Sister Concetta Coppe
Phone: (07) 3717 5555

To Whom it May Concern:

I write to inform you that our organisation is fully supportive of the research to be conducted by Raffaele Furlan for his Ph.D. at the Australian Catholic University.

We are aware that the research project seeks to explore the ways in which migrant groups influence the material culture of their host societies. We are also aware that the aim of the project is to use the insights of architectural sociology to investigate the ways in which Italian migrants have influenced the nature of the built environment of Brisbane, with specific reference to domestic architecture.

We are willing to facilitate access to potential participants for his research. We are also willing to provide Raffaele with the use of our facilities as he works with focus groups or conducts individual interviews.

We look forward to the outcomes of Raffaele’s research.

Sincerely

Sister Concetta Coppe
C.E.O. & Mother of Ownership
Appendix M: Declaration from the Tuscany Club

Associazione Toscani – Tuscany Club
23 Foster street
New Market 4051 QLD

President: Mr Luciano Servadio
Phone: (07) 3356 8433

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to inform you that our organisation is fully supportive of the research to be conducted by Raffaello Furlan for his Ph.D. at the Australian Catholic University.

We are aware that the research project seeks to explore the ways in which migrant groups influence the material culture of their host societies. We are also aware that the aim of the project is to use the insights of architectural sociology to investigate the ways in which Italian migrants have influenced the nature of the built environment of Brisbane, with specific reference to domestic architecture.

We are willing to facilitate access to potential participants for his research. We are also willing to provide Raffaello with the use of our facilities as he works with focus groups or conducts individual interviews.

We look forward to the outcomes of Raffaello’s research.

Sincerely

Mr Luciano Servadio
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