

# Spence Cottage, Kensington Gardens

1963 – 1980

## Details

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Spence Cottage was the fourth suburban cottage home established by the government. It opened in 1963 at Kensington Gardens. The Cottage accommodated up to ten State children in a family-style setting under the supervision of a cottage mother. Children attended local schools and churches. In 1980 Spence Cottage closed and was replaced by the Northern Region Group Home.

Spence Cottage was the fourth of six suburban cottage homes to be opened by the government during the 1960s. The other cottages were Merrilama Cottage at Glenelg, Stirling Cottage at St Peters, Clark Cottage at Clarence Park, Colton Cottage at Thorngate and Hay Cottage at Lockleys.

Spence Cottage opened on 12 September 1963 at 403 The Parade, Kensington Gardens. It was named after Miss Catherine Helen Spence who was a member of the State Children's Council and a key figure in the development of the Boarding Out system for State children in the late nineteenth century. The cottage accommodated up to ten children under the supervision of a cottage mother, a full-time assistant and a part-time daily helper.

Children placed at the Home were those who were under the care of the State. Departmental Annual Reports from the 1960s stress the belief that cottage style care enabled greater individual attention to be given to each child. The Department also felt that children living in cottage style accommodation and attending local schools would be less conspicuous as 'State' children, making it easier for them to become part of the local community. The cottage system aimed to simulate a form of family life with children sleeping in bedrooms rather than dormitories. It also allowed for brothers and sisters to be placed together. It was expected that children would attend church and other social activities as members of the cottage family.

Departmental reports also noted that providing cottage style care was less costly for the government than running large institutions.

In 1980, as part of a restructuring of departmental facilities, Spence Cottage closed and became the Northern Region Group Home.

## Gallery

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**Spence Cottage**

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that was published in the Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare 1966.

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## More info

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# Chronology

- **Spence Cottage, Kensington Gardens (1963 – 1980)**
  - Northern Region Group Home (1980 - current)

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board \(1927 - 1966\)](#)  
Spence Cottage was run by the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board and its successors.  
Date: 1963 - 1966
- [Department of Social Welfare, South Australian Government \(1966 - 1970\)](#)  
Date: 1966 - 1970
- [Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australian Government \(1970 - 1972\)](#)  
Date: 1970 - 1972
- [Department for Community Welfare, South Australian Government \(1972 - 1990\)](#)  
Date: 1972 - 1980

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Records of the Social Welfare Department and predecessors \(1849 - c. 1987\)](#)
  - [Records of the Department for Community Welfare and Successor Agencies \(1972 - current\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/spence-cottage-kensington-gardens/>