

# **ATTACHMENT 2: CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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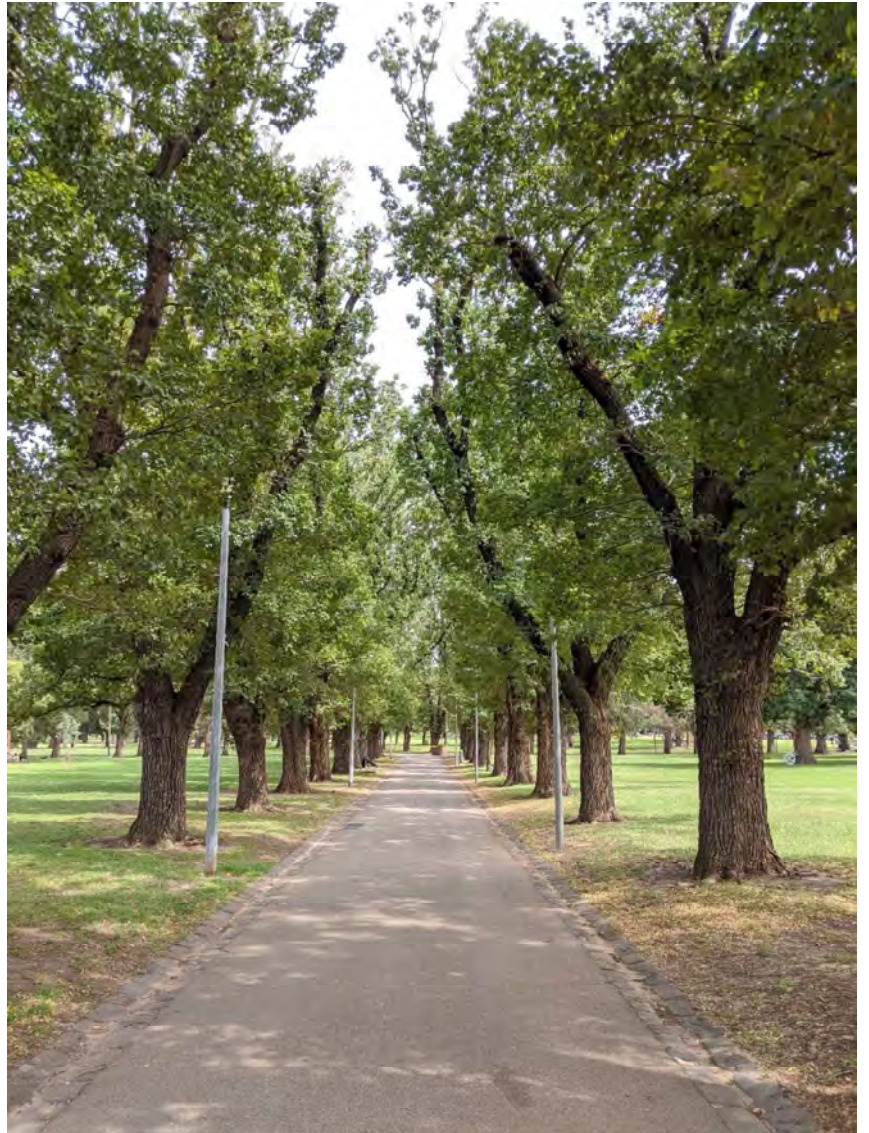


# Edinburgh Gardens

including Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand

## Conservation Management Plan

Fitzroy North 3068 VIC



April 2021

Prepared by

LOVELL CHEN

Prepared for

CITY OF  
 YaRRA

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## **Edinburgh Gardens**

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Grandstand

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EDINBURGH GARDENS

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Soo Ngu,	<i>Heritage Consultant, Lovell Chen</i>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and Brief**

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Edinburgh Gardens (including the Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand) was commissioned by the City of Yarra and has been prepared Lovell Chen. The purpose of the CMP is to provide an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the gardens, buildings and landscape elements and provide guidance and policy to manage the identified heritage values and fabric of these elements.

For the purposes of this report, a Sporting Precinct has been identified based on the historical patterns of development and continuing contemporary use and values. This precinct includes the W.T. Peterson Community Oval (Brunswick Street Oval), the Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand, the Freeman Street Entrance Gatehouse, the Bowling Club and Tennis Club facilities, and their immediate surroundings in the south-west of the Edinburgh Gardens.

It is noted that the Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand is also known as the Fitzroy Cricket Club Grandstand and is described as such in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme and by the National Trust.

The following assessments were not undertaken as part of this CMP; notwithstanding, recommendations regarding these are made in Chapter 6 Conservation Policy and Management Plan:

- An assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage and associated values
- An assessment of social value.

### **1.2 Methodology**

This CMP broadly follows the principles and processes set out in the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013 and its Practice Notes. The *Burra Charter* establishes a standard of practice for those involved in assessing, managing and undertaking works to places of cultural significance.

It also has regard for the recommendations of *Conservation Management Plans: Managing Heritage Places*, prepared by the Heritage Council of Victoria (2010). The technical language utilised in this report is also based on the definitions included on the *Burra Charter*.

The report comprises the following:

- An overview of the history of the site (Chapter 2)
- A physical survey of the built elements and landscape (Chapter 3)
- Assessment of significance (Chapter 4)
- An opportunities and constraints discussion (Chapter 5)
- A conservation policy and management plan (Chapter 6)

Appendices

- Appendix A: Heritage citations

### **1.3 Location**

Edinburgh Gardens is located in Fitzroy North, bounded by Brunswick Street and St Georges Road to the west, Freeman Street to the south and Alfred Crescent to the north and east.



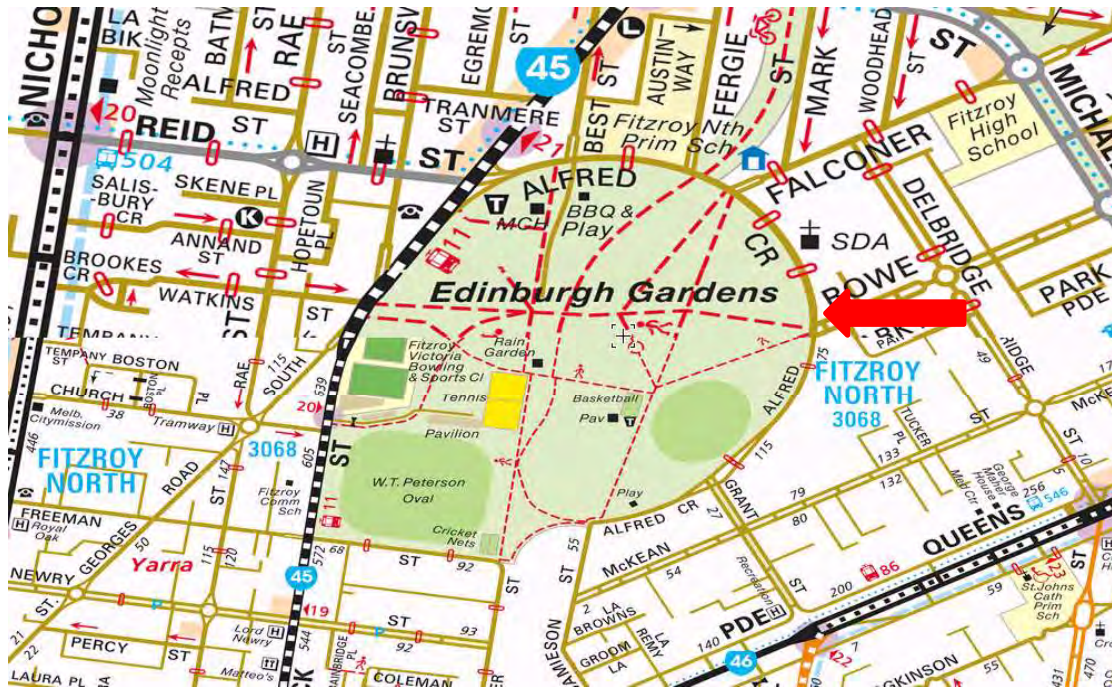


Figure 1 Map of Fitzroy North (part) with Edinburgh Gardens indicated by the red arrow  
Source: [www.street-directory.com.au](http://www.street-directory.com.au)



Figure 2 Aerial view of the Edinburgh Gardens  
Source: Nearmap, August 2019

## 1.4 Statutory heritage controls

### 1.4.1 *Heritage Act 2017*

The Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), maintained by the Victorian Heritage Council as VHR H0751.

The extent of registration for the Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand as included in the VHR documentation is as follows:

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act 2017, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0751

Category: Registered Place

Place: Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand

Location: Brunswick Street, Fitzroy North

Municipality: Yarra City Council

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 751 encompassing part of Allotment 6 Section 34 at North Fitzroy, Parish of Jika Jika.

Permits are required from Heritage Victoria for new buildings and works which affect the grandstand or which would occur within the extent of registered land. A series of permit exemptions have been added to the registration which identify minor works for which no heritage permit is required.

The citation is included at Appendix A. Refer to Chapter 5 for a summary of the citation and the extent of registration plan.

### 1.4.2 *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

The Edinburgh Gardens are individually included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Yarra Planning Scheme (HO213). The heritage overlay for the Edinburgh Gardens comprises an extensive landscaped area and a number of historic and modern structures. Notable individual buildings and landscape elements include the timber entrance pavilion, the Freeman Street entry gatehouse, Sportsman's Memorial, Memorial Rotunda and the site's tree lined avenues and gardens. The Edinburgh Gardens are subject to an Incorporated Plan under the provisions of clause 43.01 of the Heritage Overlay, Planning Permit Exemptions, 2014.<sup>1</sup> This Incorporated Plan provides for permit exemption to be applied for a number of minor works.

The Fitzroy Cricket Ground Grandstand is individually identified in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme (HO215) reflecting its inclusion on the VHR, noting that the amended VHR registration identifies the place as the Brunswick Street Oval Grandstand.

Planning permits will be required for new buildings and works which affect elements included within the Heritage Overlay, with the exception of the grandstand and the registered area around it, which is subject to permit approval from Heritage Victoria.

The citations are included in Appendix A.

## 1.5 Non-statutory listings

### 1.5.1 *National Trust of Australia (Victoria)*

The Edinburgh Gardens are not classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). However, the Fitzroy Cricket Club Grandstand is classified at a State level, file number B6060.

A Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), located north-east of the bowling club, was classified as a tree of local significance on the 10 May 1993, file number T11566.

There are no statutory requirements as a consequence of these classifications.

### 1.5.2 *Victorian War Memorial Inventory*

The Rotunda is included in the Victorian War Heritage Inventory as follows.

- Fitzroy Memorial Rotunda, place id 126667.

There is no statutory requirement as a consequence of this registration.

## 1.6 References

This CMP has been informed by the following documents:

- *Edinburgh Gardens Conservation Management Plan*, prepared by Allom Lovell & Associates in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2004.

This CMP includes information and content drawn from the *Edinburgh Gardens Conservation Management Plan*, prepared by Allom Lovell & Associates in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2004. It is understood that this document relied on the *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*, prepared by Rex Swanson, Landform Australia Pty Ltd, 1987. Other documentation referred to in the 2004 report including correspondence, maps and other documents in the Crown Lands Reserve file, held by the then Department of Sustainability and the Environment, the Public Record Office of Victoria, including Crown Lands correspondence and City of Fitzroy Minute Books.

Research for this CMP has resulted in a revision of the content in the previous CMP through accessing records available on Trove and the State Library of Victoria. In this respect, the history, physical analysis and assessment reflect the additional research and analysis.

Material provided by Terence Nott Architect.

## 1.7 Limitations

Access was generally available throughout the gardens and buildings, with the exception of the interior of the Alfred Crescent Pavilion.

## 1.8 Terminology

The conservation terminology used in this report is of a specific nature, and is defined within the *Burra Charter*. The terms most frequently referred to are *place*, *cultural significance*, *fabric*, *conservation*, *preservation*, *restoration*, *reconstruction*, *adaptation* and *interpretation*. These terms are defined in the revised charter as follows:

*Place* means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

*Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. *Cultural significance* is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, *records*, *related places* and *related objects*.

*Fabric* means all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents and objects.

*Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*.

*Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and *setting* of a *place*, and its *setting*. Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

*Preservation* means maintaining a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

*Restoration* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

*Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material.

*Adaptation* means changing a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use.

*Use* means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the *place* or are dependent on the place.

*Compatible use* means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

*Setting* means the immediate and extended environment of a *place*, that is part of or contributes to its *cultural significance* and distinctive character.

*Related place* means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another *place*.

*Related object* means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the *place*.

*Associations* mean the connections that exist between people and a *place*.

*Meanings* denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.<sup>2</sup>



## **2.0 HISTORY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the Edinburgh Gardens and Brunswick Street Oval within a historical context over a period of more than 170 years. It charts the reservation of the gardens as a public park and recreational reserve in the mid-nineteenth century through to its usage as a well-loved community site for passive and active recreational activities. It identifies key phases of development, with emphasis placed on built structures and landscape changes. The chapter has built upon on Allom Lovell's 2004 *Edinburgh Gardens: Brunswick Street North Fitzroy Conservation Management Plan*<sup>3</sup>, with substantial additional research incorporated which serves to clarify the origin and early development of the Edinburgh Gardens.

Occupation of the study area by the Wurundjeri-willam people of the Kulin nation prior to European settlement has not been addressed in this history.

### **2.2 North Fitzroy, 1840s-1880s**

In contrast to the southern part of Fitzroy which was undergoing vigorous development in the 1840s and 1850s, North Fitzroy's urban growth was slow. By the 1850s very little of North Fitzroy had been developed and it was separated by the more densely settled area of Fitzroy by the Reilly Street Drain (now Alexandra Parade). North of the drain was the desolate wasteland of the Corporation of Melbourne's quarries. In c. 1852, 'Garryowen' wrote an unflattering summary of North Fitzroy:

It was for a long time surmised that building enterprise would never penetrate to any extent beyond the sickly Reilly Street drain. This due north region was the most unpleasant of the surroundings of Melbourne; the cold north wind in winter and the hot wind in summer, produced climatic variations anything but agreeable. One was either half-drowned or half-baked and between mud and dust, and wet and heat, you could hardly dream that homes and hearths could have an abiding place there.<sup>4</sup>

In 1850, the government constructed a bridge over the Reilly Street drain and metalled Heidelberg Road (now Queens Parade). Within a few years, allotments in the government township of Northcote were auctioned, and in the process, portions of land south along the Merri Creek (now North Fitzroy) were also sold.

From the mid-1850s, the colonial government's plan for subdivision of North Fitzroy unfolded. It was prepared by Captain Andrew Clarke of the Survey Department and comprised a series of geometric spaces aligned on an axis (Figure 3). However, the scheme was never realised, possibly because the axial arrangement conflicted with the line taken by the Yan Yean pipe along St Georges Road, supplying fresh water to the growing metropolis.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the failure of the government to implement Clarke's plan, the eventual subdivision pattern and street layout in North Fitzroy was more carefully ordered and much wider than those in the southern portion of the suburb. Additionally, in North Fitzroy, a higher standard of development was encouraged by allotments with a minimum size and street frontage.<sup>6</sup> In 1868, the naming of the streets surrounding what eventually became the gardens within the borough of Fitzroy was adopted, including Best, Fergie, Church, McKean, Falconer, Rowe, Grant and Watkins streets and Alfred Crescent.

North Fitzroy, and especially the streets around the Edinburgh Gardens, became the favoured area for industrialists and land speculators to reside and grew to become an exclusive residential enclave.<sup>7</sup> Many of the Fitzroy councillors of the 1880s and 1890s lived or invested there – indeed, it was a speculators' paradise. John McMahon, mayor of Fitzroy in 1892, employed David Masterton, a local



contractor, to erect his large villa facing the Edinburgh Gardens. Local industrialists such as Johannes Yager, and contractors, like W H Deague, also lived near the park.<sup>8</sup>

The streets to the north-east of the Edinburgh Gardens contain a mix of single and double storey, attached and detached housing from both the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Alfred Crescent, which defines the north and east sides of the park, has a large number of substantial and largely intact double-storey dwellings from these periods which overlook the gardens.

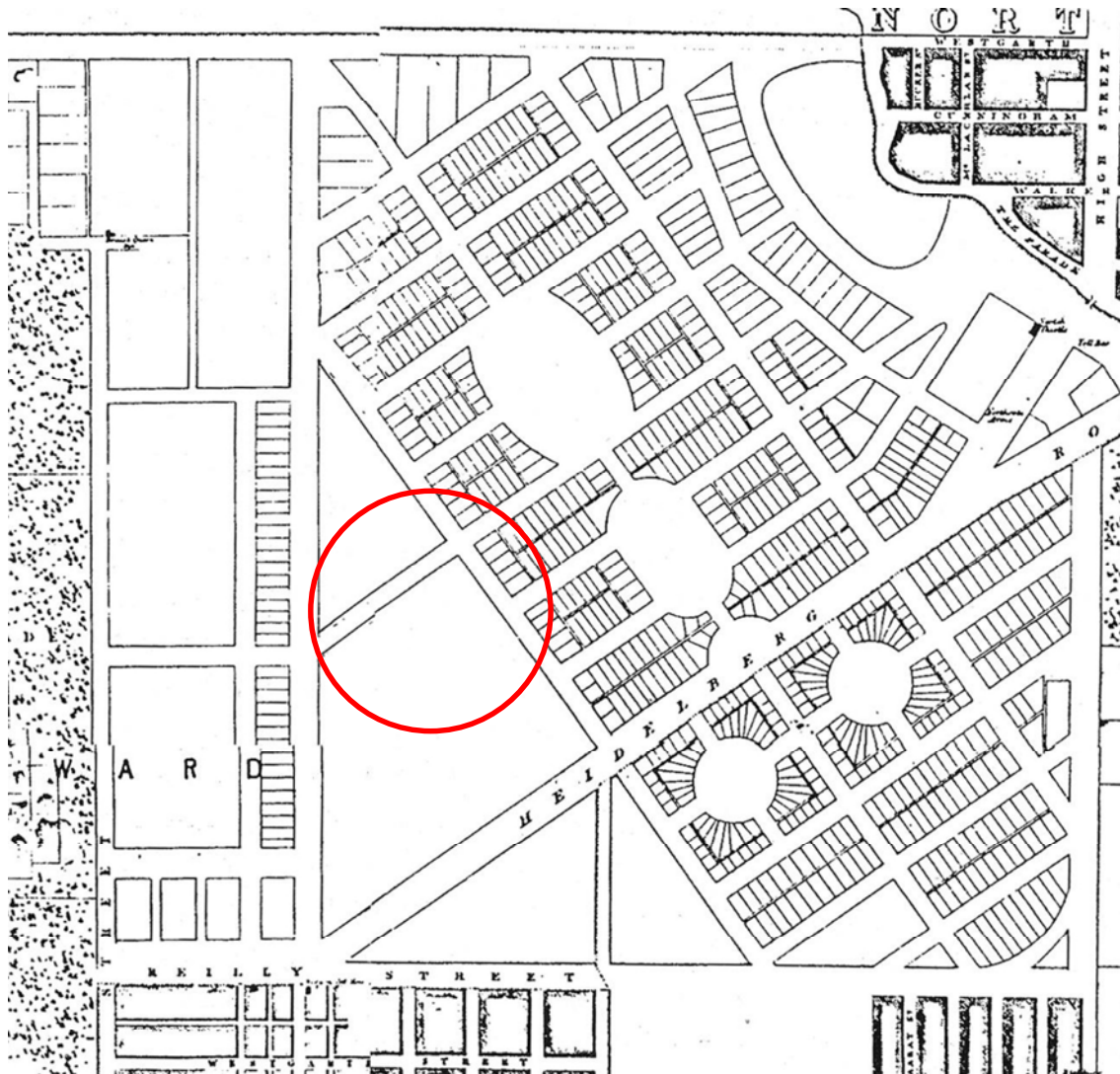


Figure 3 James Kearney's 1855 map showing Captain Andrew Clarke's proposed layout for North Fitzroy, with the approximate location of the Edinburgh Gardens indicated  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection

### 2.3 Reservation of the Edinburgh Gardens

The reservation of the Edinburgh Gardens followed a pattern that had been established by the Superintendent of the Colony, Charles Joseph La Trobe in the 1840s. Recreational reserves were perceived as being important community resources that contributed to the physical and moral health of residents, as well as symbolising civility and community 'development'.<sup>9</sup> The Melbourne Town Council's petition to La Trobe emphasised the:

vital importance to the health of the inhabitants that there should be parks within a distance of the town where they could conveniently take recreation therein after their daily labour ... the effect produced on the minds of all classes is of the most gratifying character.<sup>10</sup>

The *Act for the Establishment of Municipal Institutions in Victoria* (1854) provided councils with the power to establish local recreational gardens with grants of land and funds made available by the colonial government.

The present site of the Edinburgh Gardens was unreserved Crown Land when, in January 1862, the Fitzroy City Council requested an area of approximately 50 acres (20 hectares) for public recreation. The motion directing this application was introduced at a council sitting by Councillor Simeon Cohen, who had promised to do so at the previous day's meeting of a Fitzroy cricket club in order to secure a suitable playing ground for the club.<sup>11</sup> Accompanying the motion to make an application to the Commissioner of Crown Lands was further direction to the council's Health and Legislative Committees to support the application and to report to council 'upon the best means for encouraging and supporting such recreative and popular amusements as might tend to develop and improve the sanitary condition of the municipality'.<sup>12</sup>

The requested reservation appears to have been in alternative to a much smaller triangular site between Heidelberg Road, and Reilly and Smith streets, which had been temporarily reserved for public recreation in 1859, but which would have proven unsuitable for large-scale organised sports.<sup>13</sup>

The land ultimately selected for the reserve was swampy, with a creek running through it. A Lands Department sketch map of the area dated February 1862 (Figure 4) shows an elongated oval shaped reserve containing few pits or wetlands, and the creek running north-south (broadly following the line taken today by the path running from Jamieson to Falconer streets). The pits may have been made by the Collingwood Volunteers Rifles which were present on the site until the 1880s.<sup>14</sup>

Under the direction of Clement Hodgkinson, who as Deputy Commissioner of the Lands Department was a longstanding participant in the planning of Melbourne's recreational parks and gardens, the reserve size was ultimately reduced from 50 acres to approximately 39 acres (15.78 hectares). The length of the reserve was shortened and land released which would form the block to the south of Freeman Street as well as the northerly extension of Brunswick Street to where it now merges with St Georges Road (Figure 4). The northern half-circle of the reserve has been retained as originally planned and gazetted.

The temporary reserve was gazetted in March 1862 as a 'Reserve for Recreation Purposes'.<sup>15</sup> In May, Fitzroy City Council adopted a recommendation that areas of nine acres each be set aside for the use of the Prince of Wales Cricket Club and the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club, along with one acre for the Fitzroy Quoiting Club.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, the Lands and Works Department would approve permissive occupancy of about six acres (2.4 hectares) of the reserve for the Prince of Wales Cricket Club by October 1862, and nine acres (3.6 hectares) for the Collingwood Commercial Club by November 1862.<sup>17</sup>

The fenced allotments of the two cricket clubs are depicted on an 1867 survey by the Lands Department (Figure 5), together occupying one third of the reserve and extending north from Freeman Street (the



site of the Prince of Wales club ground) to the present location of the rotunda. The two cricket clubs amalgamated in 1872 and were given permissive occupancy of the combined site of 15 acres (six hectares) with sporting activities becoming focused on the southern oval.

During 1868, the name 'Edinburgh Gardens' was adopted by the Fitzroy City Council.<sup>18</sup> The reserve was also sometimes referred to as the 'Duke of Edinburgh Gardens' during the nineteenth century. The name honoured the royal visit of the British Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, to Australia in 1867-68. A 1938 newspaper article observing the eightieth anniversary of the City of Fitzroy suggested a tree had been planted in the reserve by the Duke during his visit.<sup>19</sup> However, evidence confirming this event has not been located in newspaper coverage of the visit.

In 1881 the government had proposed to excise two acres of the Edinburgh Gardens, east of the cricket club, for a school site. The council promptly expressed its opposition, noting that 'the scheme of drainage for the greater part of Fitzroy north runs through the said land'.<sup>20</sup> The present site of the school, on the north side of Alfred Crescent, was subsequently chosen.

On 24 October 1881, land for the Edinburgh Gardens was permanently reserved as a site for a public park and garden. A Crown grant was issued in April 1882 for the larger southern section to the Board of Lands and Works jointly with the Mayor, Councillors and citizens of Fitzroy as a 'site for public park and gardens for the recreation and amusement of our subjects and people'.<sup>21</sup> In June 1883, a further section of eight acres at the northern end of the gardens was permanently reserved. Although this arc along the south side of Alfred Crescent corresponded to the much earlier surveyed form of the reserve from the 1860s, it was subsequently reported that this section had been added as compensation for the anticipated future loss of land when a railway was constructed through the gardens in the 1880s.<sup>22</sup>

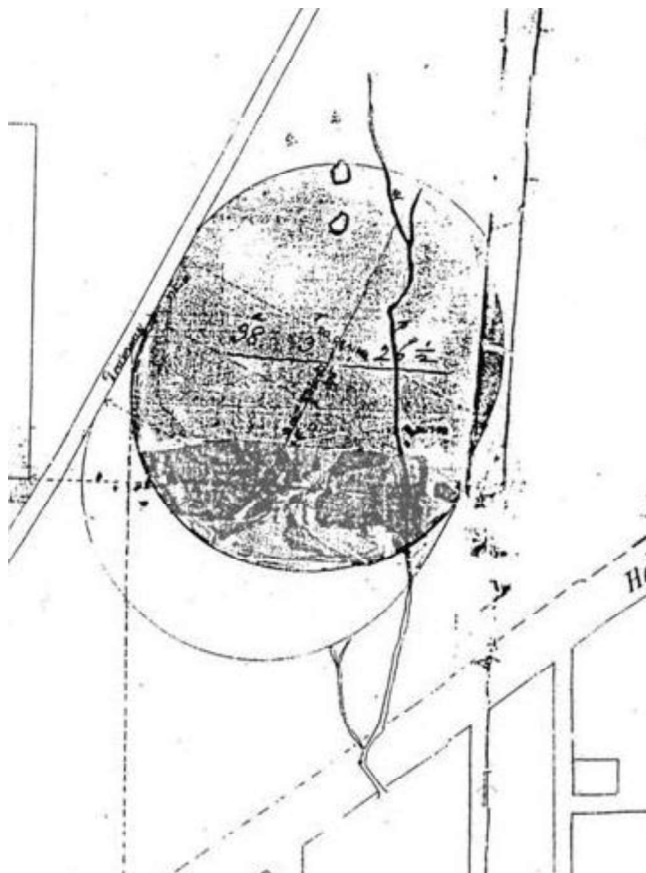


Figure 4 Detail of a Lands Department sketch, 1862, showing the modifications to the reserve  
Source: Reserve File RS360, Department of Sustainability and Environment

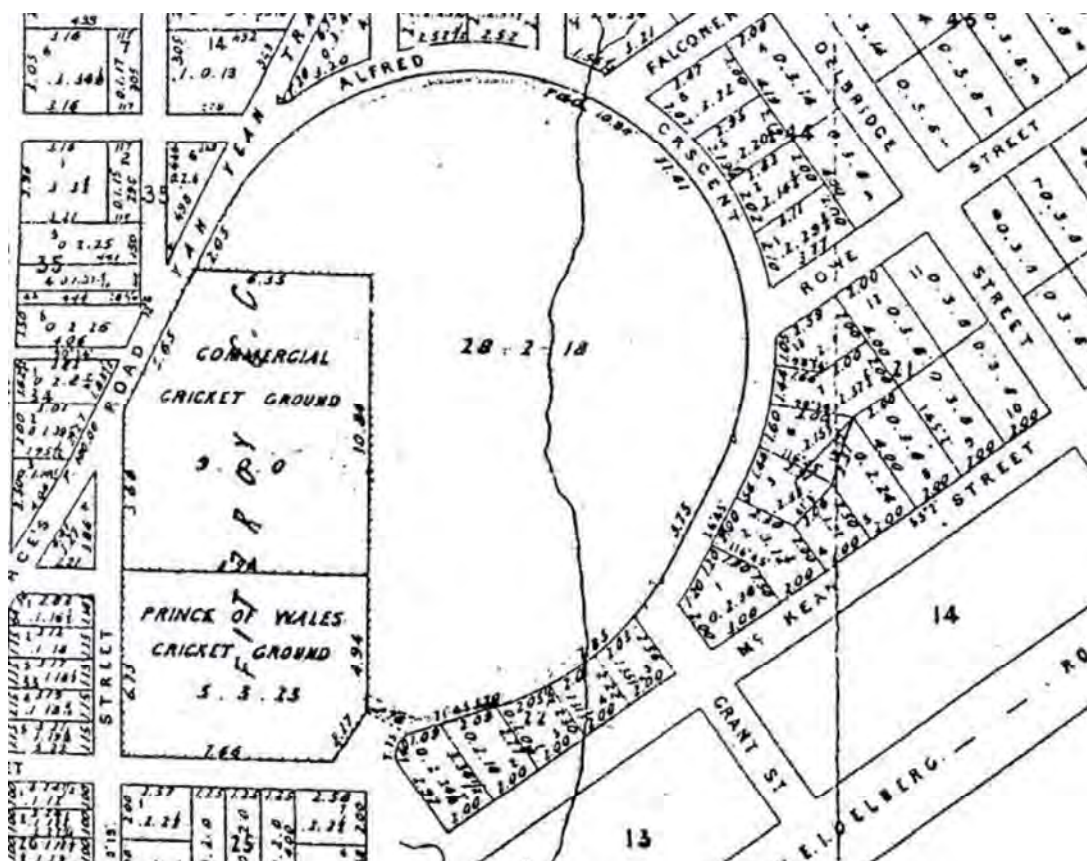


Figure 5 Portion of Lands Department lithographed map of Fitzroy and Brunswick showing the recreation reserve with two cricket grounds, October 1867  
Source: Reserve File RS360, Department of Sustainability and Environment

## 2.4 Early usage and management of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1860s-1880s

### 2.4.1 Sporting activities

By the 1870s, the evolution in local sporting organisations that had begun in England in the eighteenth century had been taken up in Melbourne with enthusiasm, and formally organised sport was played in many of its parks.<sup>23</sup> When the City of Fitzroy was declared in 1858, Melbourne was expanding to become one of the major cities of the British Empire. As with the establishment of the Public Library in 1852 and the University of Melbourne in 1853, other institutions – such as sporting organisations – appropriate to a British city began to take shape in Melbourne. In 1840 the Flemington racecourse had been formed, and in 1853 the Melbourne Cricket Club was permitted to create a cricket ground with a cottage pavilion on 10 acres to the east of the city (today's Yarra Park).<sup>24</sup> While cricket was played in the summer, in August 1858, a game of football between Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College occurred which was the start of Australian rules football.

Municipal councils, like that of Fitzroy, extended the benefits of organised sport to their residents. They committed resources to such activities because of their belief in its value in propagating desirable moral values and promoting health. The Edinburgh Gardens is one of the many parks and reserves in Melbourne where the impact of this revolution in thinking can be observed.

Playing cricket and football drew residents of Fitzroy into the patterns of British sporting culture brought to the colony in its first decades of European settlement. In 1862 and 1863, when the Prince of Wales Cricket Club and the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club sought permission to play cricket on the site of the Edinburgh Gardens, they replicated the recreational choices of Britain in Fitzroy.

## Cricket

From the late 1860s cricket began to assume the structure of organised associations, with constituent clubs entering competitions with teams graded according to skill. It was a popular sport for both players and spectators. In 1862, approximately 25,000 people turned out to see the first English cricket side to visit the colonies. This audience peaked for Test cricket (organised from 1877) and for inter-colonial games, but there were regular crowds for most matches between the strongest clubs, especially from 1895 following the formation of the district competition.<sup>25</sup>

A playing field was first established on the site of the present oval located at the south-west corner of the Edinburgh Gardens in 1863. In 1872, the Fitzroy Cricket Club was formed from the amalgamation of the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club and the Prince of Wales Cricket Club. Improvements undertaken by the Fitzroy Cricket Club during the 1870s included the laying of a footpath and running track around the field. Early facilities constructed for the club comprised a timber members' pavilion (located to the north-west of the oval), a small timber stand and seating around the oval. A Lands Department memorandum dated 26 July 1876 noted that the club had, to that date, expended some £450 on improvements within this area.<sup>26</sup> It also stated that the remainder of the grounds was enclosed 'by a post and two rail fence at a cost of £90'.<sup>27</sup>

Early improvements undertaken by the club included building, fencing, trenching and planting works, the latter comprising 'a magnificent assortment of trees ... obtained from Dr von Mueller'.<sup>28</sup> Director of the Botanic Gardens (1857-73) and widely regarded as Australia's pre-eminent botanist, Baron Dr Ferdinand von Mueller was responsible for distributing thousands of plants across Victoria for the ornamentation of public spaces.<sup>29</sup> The development of the ground during this period is shown in a sketch map submitted to the Lands Department in 1877 (Figure 6). The plan shows seating and the playing ground encircled by a footpath/running track. Sited along the Brunswick Street boundary was a pavilion and ladies reserve, described as 'fenced and planted with trees [and] flowers' with a 'fountain erected in the centre of one of the flower beds'.<sup>30</sup> A later newspaper writer recounted that the club had also tried twice to establish a line of trees on its eastern boundary, with both plantings having failed.<sup>31</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, cricket games at the ground had become so popular to warrant the construction of additional spectator facilities. A grandstand on the north side of the oval was built in 1888 to the design of the architect Nathaniel Billing.<sup>32</sup> The builder was a Mr Purser and the total amount expended was £2,086.<sup>33</sup> A timber gymnasium was erected at the rear of the grandstand and the existing cricket pavilion was relocated to the eastern side (below the tennis club).<sup>34</sup> It appears that the ground floor originally contained some sewered facilities, such as toilets, while the upper floor was possibly a viewing area. The old timber stand, later moved to the eastern side of the oval, was eventually pulled down.

Temporary fences were erected around the ground by the cricket club on match days, giving rise to complaints from local residents. A petition was drawn up in September 1887 asking for the removal of the fences, which were apparently left in place after match days, necessitating detours around the ground and restricting access to public parkland. The petition also requested that 'paths should be made from one gate to another for pedestrians' and that existing paths were 'already worn by feet'.<sup>35</sup> The Surveyor-General subsequently recommended the removal of the fences whilst generally praising the efforts of the Committee:

From what can already be seen as the effect of the operation of the trenching and manuring the results achieved by the managing committee in the improvement of the grounds considering the small amount at their disposal is something remarkable.<sup>36</sup>

## Quoits

As recorded above, along with allotments to the two initial cricket clubs, in 1862 the Fitzroy City Council had also approved an acre to be set aside for the Fitzroy Quoits Club. Quoits is a traditional lawn game involving the toss of a hoop or disc at a raised metal spike.

Newspapers record challenge matches between the Fitzroy Select Quoiting Club and other Melbourne and Victorian clubs throughout the 1860s and as late as the 1890s. The club at first operated out of the Labour-in-Vain Hotel on Brunswick Street, with matches recorded to have taken place on a vacant property nearby, but matches against rival clubs are also recorded to have taken place at other hotels and at the Melbourne Cricket Club.

Although surveys do not record that any formal allotment at Edinburgh Gardens was granted to the club, in 1864 a match against Geelong West is reported as having taken place on the Fitzroy Select Quoiting Club's ground 'which adjoins the ground of the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club'.<sup>37</sup>

## Football

In 1877, the Victorian Football Association (VFA, later Victorian Football League (VFL) and, from 1990, Australian Football League (AFL)) was formed and Fitzroy quickly set about establishing a club to represent the suburb. The cricket club was approached in 1882 regarding the formation of a football club, and in September 1882, the cricket club was granted approval to extend the ground to allow for football games.<sup>38</sup> On 26 September 1883, the Fitzroy Football Club was formed at a meeting held at the Brunswick Hotel and chaired by the Mayor of Fitzroy, John McMahon. The club colours of blue cap and knickerbockers with maroon jersey and socks were subsequently adopted and the club was admitted to the VFA. The football club negotiated with the cricket club to share the oval in the Edinburgh Gardens, as reported in the *Australasian* in 1884:

The Fitzroy Club will have a good ground to practise on – a great desideratum for a club, and one highly calculated to fully develop any real talent it may possess. Moreover, it has a large and populous district to recruit from; so that it contains within itself the elements of success, and its future will much depend on its committee of management.<sup>39</sup>

The first football match at the Brunswick Street oval took place in September 1883 between Melbourne and Carlton football clubs.<sup>40</sup> Fitzroy Football Club's first game was against Richmond Union Junior Football Club in April 1884. A crowd of some 1,000 people saw the home team score 14 behinds to their opponents' two behinds.<sup>41</sup> During this early period, the football club enjoyed great on-field success, winning four premierships and playing in nine of the first 10 VFL grand finals.

## Lawn bowls

Along with cricket and football, Edinburgh Gardens was also home to a local lawn bowls club from the 1870s. The establishment of a bowling green on the site was approved in 1877 by the Fitzroy Cricket Club in its capacity as the Committee.<sup>42</sup> In July 1880, the Victorian Bowling Association was formed with delegates from Melbourne, Prince Alfred (St Kilda), West Melbourne, Carlton, Richmond, Richmond Union, Fitzroy, North Fitzroy and Ballarat and an apology from South Melbourne. One of its first decisions was to organise an inter-colonial match. The concept of local competition was complemented by the idea of an elite level and, in this development, the North Fitzroy Bowling Club was a major voice.<sup>43</sup>

Soon after its 1877 establishment, subscriptions from the public and members of the cricket club raised £160 towards the laying of a two-rink green. Within the next two years an additional rink was laid. A timber shed, which had initially served as the club's pavilion and canteen was replaced by a timber

cottage, relocated from the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Ground.<sup>44</sup> Prior to 1893, the grounds of the club were expanded.<sup>45</sup> An 1896 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan shows the early arrangement of the bowling green with the timber cottage at its northern end (Figure 11). In 1893, financial difficulties prompted the bowling club to affiliate with the cricket club; this coincided with the 1890s economic depression.

## Tennis

Tennis facilities were the last of the nineteenth century sporting facilities established at the Edinburgh Gardens.

The modern game of tennis (lawn tennis) was developed in late 1860s England and formalised in a club organisation there in the early 1870s. As with other sports, the rules of the game were gradually established. Scoring by sets had only been introduced in 1889 and in 1891 the covered ball was finally adopted to replace the rubber ball used up until that time.<sup>46</sup> While court tennis (eg. indoor racquet) clubs had existed in 1860s Victoria (newspapers record one such club meeting at Geelong in 1865), modern tennis clubs only formed as awareness of the updated outdoor sport percolated into Australia.

By late 1879 tennis had certainly arrived, with the Geelong Advertiser reporting on the publication of a book on 'Lawn Tennis and Badminton'<sup>47</sup> a Victoria Lawn Tennis Club operating in Carlton and facing a visiting team from the Richmond Bowls Club,<sup>48</sup> and the Bendigo Parks Committee weighing a request from a Lawn Tennis Club to make use of the bowling green in the town's main reserve.<sup>49</sup> In 1880 and 1881, more clubs formed and fielded teams for inter-club play, including the Williamstown Lawn Tennis Club,<sup>50</sup> the Melbourne Cricket Club's tennis club, and the Sandhurst Tennis Club,<sup>51</sup> as well as reference to an 'asphalted lawn tennis court' at the Warehousemen's Cricket Club on St. Kilda Road,<sup>52</sup> a new lawn tennis court on the Ballarat Cricket Club's Eastern Oval,<sup>53</sup> an Essendon and Flemington Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club,<sup>54</sup> and a Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club forming at Brighton.<sup>55</sup> At Melbourne, an 1880 update on cricketing reported of the M.C.C. that 'the convenience and comfort of the numerous tennis playing members of the club has been well cared for, and the dimensions to which this particular pastime has attained proves it to be both acceptable and beneficial to the club and a large number of its supporters.'<sup>56</sup>

In the 1880s, tennis was also adopted by residents of Fitzroy, with activity revolving around the existing Cricket and Bowling Clubs at Edinburgh Gardens. In 1884, a pennant competition was reportedly established in Melbourne in which a team from Fitzroy participated.<sup>57</sup> A Fitzroy Lawn Tennis Club is recorded as meeting at the Bowling Club Pavilion in June 1886;<sup>58</sup> and within a few months the North Fitzroy Lawn Tennis Club was reported to have held its formal opening event, having constructed a tennis court on the bowling club's grounds.<sup>59</sup>

The next year, a tennis court situated as 'an adjunct of the bowling club' is reported in the Fitzroy Cricket Club's histories to have been removed when the cricket ground's 1888 grandstand was constructed, with the bowling club compensated £40 for this loss.<sup>60</sup> A new lawn-tennis court was reportedly formed as part of the Cricket Club's 1888 works.<sup>61</sup> As with the bowls club, the tennis club also appears to have become formally affiliated with the Fitzroy Cricket Club in the early 1890s, with the Cricket Club reportedly constructing two tennis courts in 1894 at a cost of £57, and adding a further court in 1901-1902.<sup>62</sup> The 1901 MMBW plan records this asphalt tennis ground within the current location of the Tennis Club, along with a pair of small pavilions / lavatories to the south of its fenced enclosure.

#### 2.4.2 *Public management and uses to 1880*

In 1866, the Fitzroy City Council applied for money from the Public Parks Improvement Fund for planting the recreation reserve.<sup>63</sup> That year the council ultimately received £80 from the Department of Crown Lands ‘for fencing and improving public parks and gardens,’ and voted to appropriate those funds for ‘fencing in the recreation reserve in North Fitzroy.’<sup>64</sup>

In 1868, plans for the laying out of the reserve were passed by the municipal council, the content of which is not known.<sup>65</sup> Despite these earlier plans, the public portions of the Edinburgh Gardens reserve appear to have remained undeveloped land throughout the 1860s and 1870s, enclosed by a post and rail fence and used for grazing by the Fitzroy City Council.<sup>66</sup>

During this time, an area had been set aside within the park by the City of Fitzroy for the deposit of night soil, a practice which occurred at Princes Park and other metropolitan and suburban parks prior to the completion of the metropolitan sewerage system. At the Edinburgh Gardens, a ‘lease of right’ was granted, by which a private party was given the right to deposit night soil in the reserve for a moderate annual fee (£4 in 1868). Three men were employed digging trenches some 12 inches deep where the refuse was deposited. When the trenches were three inches above ground, they were then covered over with the excavated soil.

In 1871, a public meeting was held calling for an end to the dumping of night soil within the gardens and urging vigilance to ‘preserve the gardens from becoming a manure depot.’<sup>67</sup> The practice, however, continued, and difficulties were recorded periodically in ensuring that the lessee made these deposits responsibly and with strategic purpose in support of improving the grounds of the reserve. In the 1880s, the gardens were described as ‘a refuse heap or corporation ‘tip’ of the most filthy kind’ as house rubbish and street sweepings were buried in its grounds. An 1887 newspaper article noted ‘no dead horse or carcass larger than that of a dog has been buried in these gardens since 22<sup>nd</sup> June last’ and referred to the ‘usual tip nuisance and smell’.<sup>68</sup>

In 1877, regulations were gazetted for the sports section of the Edinburgh Gardens, by this time known as the Fitzroy Cricket Club and Recreation Reserve. The reserve was divided into four ‘divisions’: firstly, the grandstand, pavilion, members’ and ladies’ reserve, secondly, the playing ground, thirdly, the bowling green and, lastly, the remainder of the reserve. The regulations detailed acceptable and unlawful behaviour within the divisions, including entry into the various sections. People were only allowed into the first division if they had purchased a ticket and on days where cricket matches were held, entry in the fourth area was no longer free.<sup>69</sup> A Committee of Management was also established at this time for the land occupied by the sporting club.<sup>70</sup> In 1878 the Office of Lands and Survey made Fitzroy City Council the Committee of Management for the remainder of the of the reserve.<sup>71</sup> This was later rescinded and the gardens placed under a joint Committee of Management in 1883.

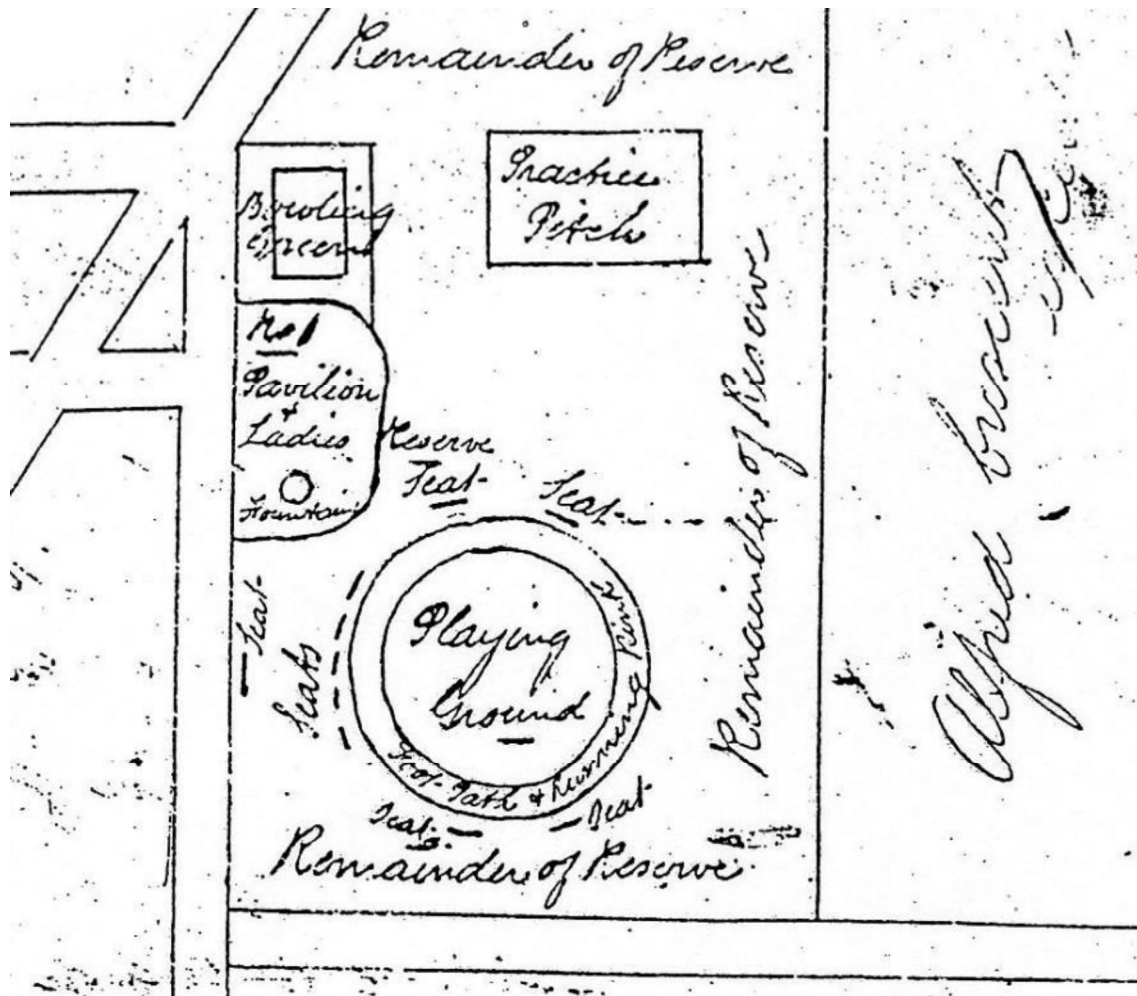


Figure 6 Sketch map of the portion of the reserve occupied by the cricket club, October 1877  
Source: Reserve File RS360, Department of Sustainability and Environment

## 2.5 Formalisation of the public gardens, 1880s-1910s

### 2.5.1 Initial gardens improvements, 1880-1883

By 1880, the gardens had been trenched and fenced and were awaiting planting. In 1880 Fitzroy City Council commenced the formal planting of the park, with a fenced row planting established around the edge of the site to Alfred Crescent and various plantings made to the interior (described below).<sup>72</sup>

In 1881, the council's public works committee recommended that a gardener's cottage be erected on the site, 'to further beautify the grounds and have the gardens more thoroughly looked after'.<sup>73</sup> One writer would later comment:

the foreman and caretaker, Mr. J. James, lives in a house in the ground, but a great mistake has been made in its site, which is nearly in the middle of the ground, instead of being near the boundary on the highest ground, where convenient access from the street could have been obtained and whence he might have had a view of the whole of the garden.<sup>74</sup>

In September 1881, preparations were made for extensive plantings of trees in fenced clumps, established in trenches 2.5 feet deep, as well as in individual holes protected with guards.<sup>75</sup> An article that October inventoried the initial plantings:

In the gardens some 400 trees have been planted in the form of clumps, of diamond, oval, and circle shapes, radiating from the centre, with a large forest tree, such as the *Wellingtonia gigantea* [ie. Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)], or large pine, with the Queensland fig, the pepper plant, and the *Grevillia robusta*, interspersed with Californian pines, Norfolk Island pines, pittosporums, and other small flowering shrubs. All round the gardens, at a distance of half a chain apart, rows of *pinus insignis* [ie. Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*)] and blue gums have been planted.<sup>76</sup> [brackets = modern names]

An 1883 report by the City Surveyor, published in the press, also details these plantings:

These gardens have been planted around with *pinus insignis*, alternated with blue gums. As far as I can judge, at present, the pines are the healthiest and fastest growing tree, a large number of the gums have succumbed to the attacks of a vermin called the black blight which (from what the curator of the various Government gardens and parks states) is almost incurable, except at great expense, such as hand-picking, &c.

Several clumps have been planted in various portions of the gardens, the trees selected being Norfolk pines, *ficus macrophylla*, *lambertiana*, *pittosporum*, cedar and other medium growing trees, as also the pepper tree or *schinus molle*, *grevillea robusta* and Moreton Bay fig.<sup>77</sup>

A commentator in 1884 wrote (presumably after loss of the Blue Gums) that 'two lines of Pines and Pittosporums were also planted around the further side of the gardens, which are of semicircular outline and bounded by Alfred-terrace'.<sup>78</sup> Further tree plantings were authorised in 1882.<sup>79</sup> Elm trees were evidently planted, as there is a November 1882 report that two boys were each fined five shillings for destroying a number of these trees in the Edinburgh Gardens.<sup>80</sup> The complete layout intended by these early 1880s works by the City of Fitzroy is not known. One commentator wrote in 1884:

a commencement was made two or three years ago to lay out and plant the garden in an artistic manner with curved walks and clumps of trees and shrubs, but the curved walks were wisely deemed unsuitable to the situation in which the walks ought to be made for the accommodation of the public, rather than with the object of producing fine landscape effects.<sup>81</sup>

## 2.5.2 *Subsequent improvements undertaken by the Committee of Management, 1883-1890*

In 1883, the gazettal and grant of the gardens was concluded, with the land held by the Board of Land and Works. In July 1883, a Committee of Management for the gardens was appointed, comprising representatives of the Board of Lands and Works and the Fitzroy City Council, with one member nominated by the Minister. The committee and the council agreed to contribute £250 each per annum towards the improvement and maintenance of the gardens.<sup>82</sup>

Work on the laying out of a more formal network of pathways and avenue plantings appears to have begun in earnest soon after the formation of the Committee of Management in 1883. A report the committee prepared in December 1883 for the Lands Department noted these developments in detail:

We commenced operations by having surveys made and plans prepared of the principal paths leading to the adjoining streets and thoroughfares bordering the Gardens. We also, with the object of creating ornamental avenues, had strips of ground on either side of such paths surveyed and marked out for trenching, this work we had done by tender in all 434lb sq rods at a cost of £144-10-6. We then availed ourselves of the opportunity to which fortunately presented itself of securing gravel from the St Kilda Road, and latter for tenders accordingly in this



way we secured and had delivered in the Gardens 610 cubic yards at a cost of £113-2-1 which we believe will be sufficient for all our requirements. The principal work now being proceeded with is beside the care of existing trees the formation of and the gravelling of the walks giving it in the first place a coat of 2 inch thickness of lime. 20 chains has been completed, the works still progressing. The same length of ground for the avenues has been prepared and is ready for the reception of the young trees at the proper season.<sup>83</sup>

A plan of the gardens was prepared concurrent to this 1883 report, as shown at Figure 7. The plan depicts a number of elements already present in the gardens, including the north and south ovals, a cricket pavilion, the bowling green, and a gardener's dwelling with a fenced yard. It also depicts a number of fenced enclosures to the east of the sporting grounds, as well as fenced borders around much of the north and east perimeters of the reserve. These fenced enclosures are likely to have contained the bulk of the young trees reported to have been planted c. 1881-83 and provide an excellent record of where previous plantings had occurred prior to the creation of the committee.

The 1883 plan details the main path network established by the Committee of Management, with indications of the trenching which had occurred in preparation for tree planting. Entry points to the park corresponded to the surrounding pattern of radiating streets. The paths were laid out in an irregular but linear fashion approximating the pedestrian desire lines but making concessions from these diagonals in order to meet other paths as well as to connect with two footbridges over the creek.

Common to parks and gardens of the period, regulations drafted in 1883 required that 'persons visiting or walking through the [Edinburgh] Gardens shall keep to the footpath'. This notice was accompanied by a warning that 'no person shall lie on the seats or on the grass'.<sup>84</sup> Wide paths were therefore required with deeply planted borders; those in the Edinburgh Gardens measured 14 feet (4.2 metres) in width with 16 foot (4.8 metres) planted borders.<sup>85</sup>

New plantings to the pathways followed in 1884. The planting arrangements were made by Nicholas Bickford, who from 1875-90 served as the curator of parks and gardens under joint management within the City of Melbourne in his role as the crown lands bailiff. He appears to have had a similar involvement at other parks under the joint management of the Victorian government and local council.<sup>86</sup>

Bickford summarised the works himself in a later report to the Committee of Management, providing further detail on the apportionment of canopy trees and ornamental shrubs to the initial avenues (refer to Chapter 3 for details).<sup>87</sup> Although English Elms were an important component, Bickford had also established major avenues of English Oak and of Monterey Pines and Peppercorn trees. Throughout the plantings, each row of avenue trees was accompanied by borders of evergreen ornamental shrubs to both the inside and outside. Further row plantings provided a background to the avenues, including native Eucalypts like Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*), Red-flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*) and Southern Mahogany Gum (*Eucalyptus botryoides*), as well as Bhutan Cypress (*Cupressus torulosa*) and Sweet Pittosporum. Bickford also maintained the original c. 1881 boundary planting of Monterey Pines and Sweet Pittosporum.

An observer that described the works in 1884 noted that the Elms had been raised in Studley Park from suckers harvested in the Fitzroy Gardens, and that the Oaks had been supplied by the state nursery. They also commented on 'the rather peculiar taste of Mr. Bickford' as demonstrated on one walk which had been planted with an alternating pattern of three flowering shrubs: Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*), Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecoma capensis*) and Plumbago (*Plumbago capensis*), flowering white, red and blue respectively and purportedly to be known as the 'Tricolor Walk'.<sup>88</sup>

In 1887, an ornamental fountain was erected in the north-west corner of the gardens in honour of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (fiftieth anniversary of accession). The fountain was constructed following a council meeting on 17 May 1887, with the minutes recording that 'a fountain be erected in the Edinburgh Gardens, to be called the Jubilee Fountain, at a cost not exceeding £100'. It was unveiled in June 1887 with a surrounding garden of flowers and shrubs attributed to Bickford.<sup>89</sup> The cement fountain was described as 'a Corinthian structure 15 [feet] high, with an octagonal well, 64 feet in circumference, with eight vases; three basins varying in size give to the fountain a very unique appearance.'<sup>90</sup> Early photographs of the fountain show it to have been located in the centre of a garden bed, and later enclosed by an iron picket fence (Figure 8).

Despite the extensive improvements undertaken, the council continued the deposits of rubbish and dead animals in some sections of Edinburgh Gardens. In response to complaints of local citizens in 1887, one councillor commented that 'only seven horses have been buried in the [Edinburgh] Gardens during the past six years and none of them less than four feet below the surface'.<sup>91</sup> The Minister for Lands subsequently directed that the rubbish dumping stop.<sup>92</sup>

The 1887 petition (see section 2.4.1) with respect to match day fencing and other issues of public access through the part of the reserve managed by the cricket club, spurred the provision of permanent public access through the area. Diagonal paths were added through the former north oval to make a connection from the gardens to Brunswick Street between the south oval and the bowls club. Following the pattern of the neighbouring avenues, these were also planted with Elm trees.

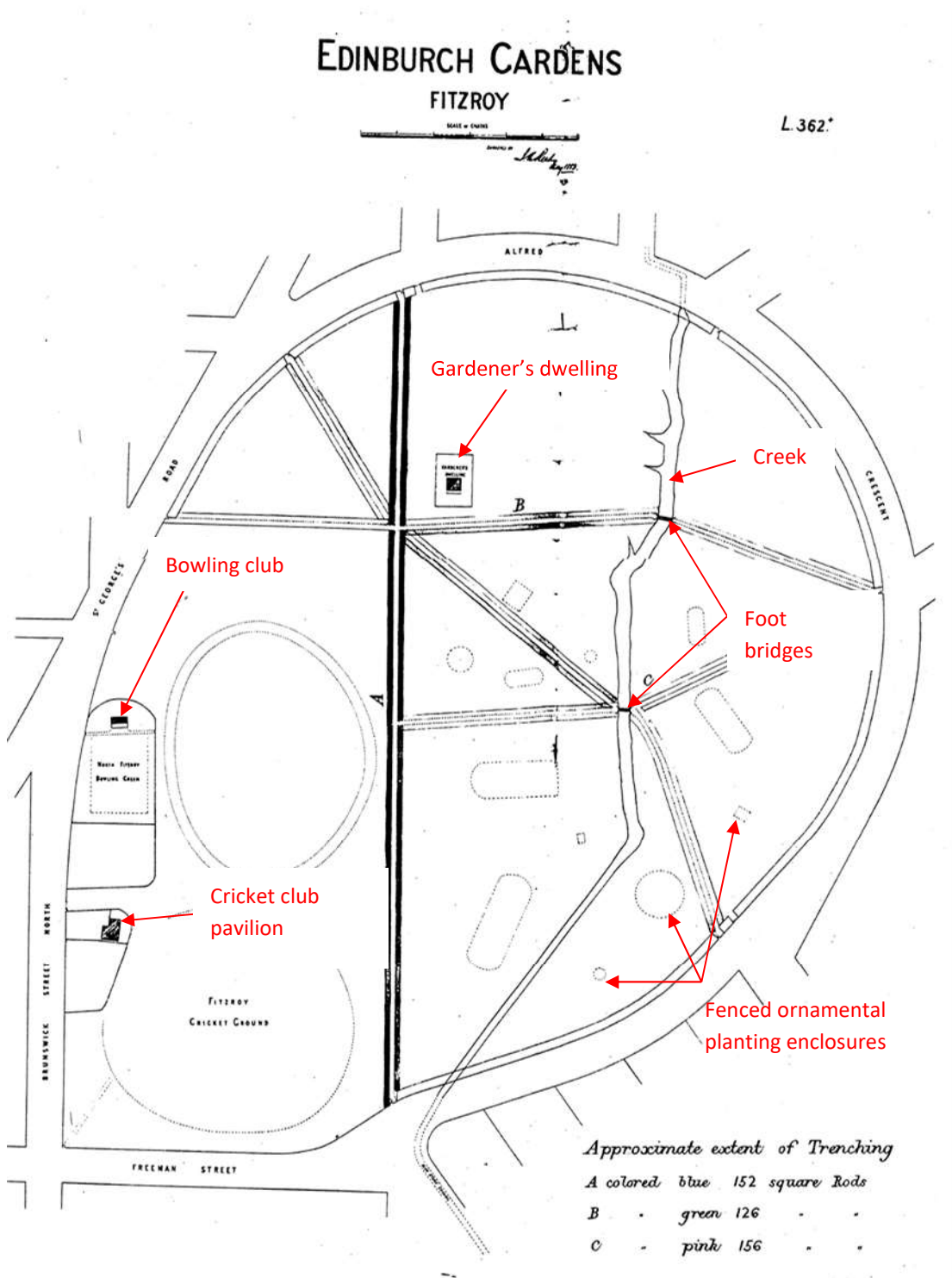


Figure 7 Plan of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1883, with annotations added  
Source: VPRS 44/P0/745, Public Record Office Victoria



Figure 8 A c. 1907 postcard of the fountain  
Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection

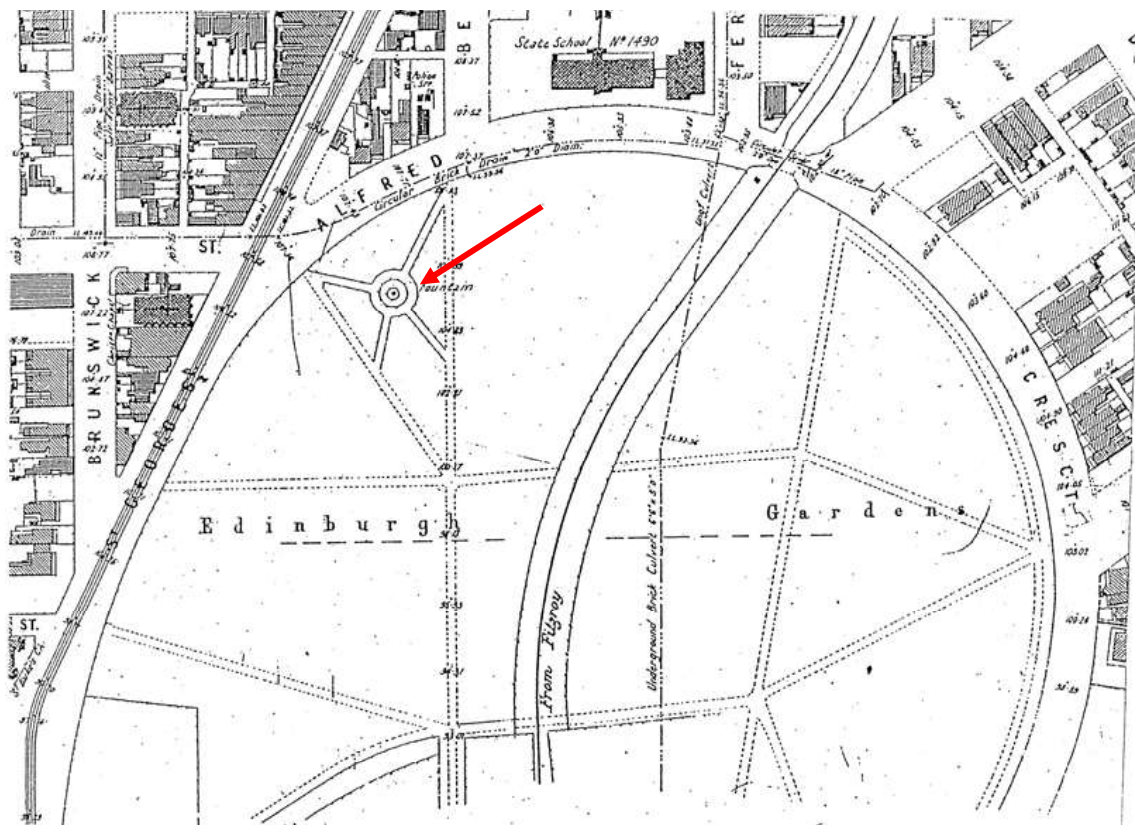


Figure 9 Portion of MMBW Plan 50 (northern section) with the location of the fountain indicated (red), 1900  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection

### 2.5.3 *Reservation and construction of the railway line, 1880s*

The construction of the railway line through the Edinburgh Gardens in the 1880s was a controversial issue and altered the park's design. In 1880, there had reportedly been lobbying by certain citizens to have Napier Street extended north through the park but by 1881 the question of the gardens' division had moved resolutely to the prospect of railway construction.<sup>93</sup>

During the 1880s, legislation authorised the construction of 475 miles (765 kilometres) of new rail lines in Victoria, including branch services like that ultimately built through the Edinburgh Gardens. A plan for suburban circle railways had first been promulgated in the 1870s but was derailed by the 1877 elections. The new government's ministry for railways apparently drew a plan for a railway running from Richmond via Collingwood and Clifton Hill to Brunswick and Coburg via North Fitzroy but abandoned this following a change of ministers.<sup>94</sup>

The Fitzroy City Council became involved in the rail issue in November 1880. The Mayor of Fitzroy, Councillor McMahon, supported a line running from Dight's Paddock through the Edinburgh Gardens to Northcote and points beyond, with a branch serving North Fitzroy and Coburg. Rejecting the government's preferred circle line concept, the council passed resolutions favouring the city's 'inclusion in railway communication' and supporting conference with neighbouring municipalities in a joint lobbying effort. Several members of the council also specifically advocated a railway depot for Fitzroy, so that:

we could have produce dropped at our own doors, instead of being taken to Spencer-street, which entailed additional expense upon the consumer. As one side of Melbourne at present monopolised all the benefits accruing from the presence of a depot it was only fair that this side should have a share of whatever might be derived.<sup>95</sup>

Despite council's late lobbying efforts, the *Railway Construction Act* (No. 682) passed in December 1880 authorised only the North Melbourne to Coburg (via Royal Park) and the Clifton Hill to Alphington lines, with a branch to service Fitzroy not supported by the Minister of Railways, who preferred that a private tramway be constructed.<sup>96</sup>

The prospect of a railway through Edinburgh Gardens did not disappear with these initial approvals. The two lines approved in the 1880 Act were prerequisites of the circle line schemes that would ultimately be adopted later in the decade. Lobbying for a railway connection for Fitzroy, either from Richmond or via North Melbourne or Alphington, was renewed by the council in 1881. This time, the proposals appear to have elicited substantial public alarm from local residents in the vicinity of the park, who understood that the schemes would require 'cutting off a slice of the Edinburgh gardens, the principal reserve in Fitzroy'.<sup>97</sup>

A public deputation to council expressed concerns that the railway would:

injure the only recreation ground belonging to the city. It would also divide it into two parts, and the existence of a number of level crossings which would be constructed would depreciate property and cause great inconvenience.<sup>98</sup>

One report of the debate observed that, although 'very little has certainly been done yet to this place to qualify it being called a garden ... it will, doubtless be a valuable recreation ground some day'.<sup>99</sup> An opinion piece published soon after spoke out against any of the options and called out the proposal to run a line from North Melbourne for special scrutiny, slapping it as 'costly, it will disfigure no fewer than three recreation reserves, namely, the Royal Park, Prince's Park and Edinburgh Gardens; it will block the traffic in some thirteen streets'.<sup>100</sup>

Councillors supporting a railway connection for Fitzroy appear to have been unmoved by this opposition, and continued lobbying for various options that included use of the Edinburgh Gardens for a portion of one route, whether as part of the Inner Circle Scheme or as an extension of the Whittlesea line (some also involved Darling Gardens to the south-east). In winter 1882, the Fitzroy City Council gave permission to the new Minister of Railways, the parliamentarian and notorious land boomer, Thomas Bent, for the Edinburgh Gardens to be used in an extension to the Whittlesea railway.<sup>101</sup> This intent was added to that year's railways bill.<sup>102</sup> The railway corridor can be seen marked out on the 1882 plan of the gardens at Figure 10, however the Whittlesea line would ultimately be located further east to make its connection to Clifton Hill.

Bent's 1884 *Railway Construction Act* (No. 821) (known colloquially as the '*Octopus' Bill*) proposed the construction of 65 individual extensions to the network. The bill promised lines to all electorates in order to gain electoral support.<sup>103</sup> This included a railway to Fitzroy that would run through the Edinburgh Gardens although the final determination of its alignment remained undetermined and the subject of recurring debate and confusion for some time. By 1885, the Inner Circle line was chosen to pass through the park.

Some speakers continued to disapprove of the planned use of the gardens for railway purposes while proponents pointed to the examples of Royal Park and the St Kilda Reserve (Alma Park) as acceptable examples of railways having been run through parklands.<sup>104</sup> When it became clear that only the branch line would be built and that a relatively large portion of the Edinburgh Gardens would be utilised for sidings and associated structures, the Fitzroy City Council passed a unanimous motion 'to the effect that the council regretted that the Railway Department should have considered it necessary to take so much land in the Edinburgh Gardens for railway purposes, and that so many streets should be closed up.'<sup>105</sup> One councillor registered his particular disgust 'with the miserable apology for a railway that we are offered, it is an insult to the City of Fitzroy, just something to bring in firewood and a few palings'.<sup>106</sup>

Tenders were finally called at the end of October 1885 for construction of the Inner Circle Railway, including the Fitzroy branch line.<sup>107</sup> The contract included the construction of a brick drain through the Edinburgh Gardens, diverting the creek that had previously run in a gully from Falconer to Napier streets through the east half of the park.<sup>108</sup> The drain was a requirement of the railway construction, which intersected the watercourse (apparently dubbed 'the river of pollution' by the Railways Department) at both the north and south ends of its route through the gardens, and the £4000 cost was shared between the Railways Department and the City of Fitzroy.<sup>109</sup> As part of the works, the existing watercourse and gully were filled.

The Inner Circle line opened on 8 May 1888, with a terminus on each of the branch lines at Fitzroy and Collingwood.<sup>110</sup> As its name suggested, the Inner Circle progressed in a semi-circular formation after leaving the Coburg line slightly north of Royal Park Station. From there it ran north-east under The Avenue and Royal Parade, before crossing Bowen Crescent and Park Street at street level. The line then turned eastward, running parallel to Park Street to Rushall Crescent, North Fitzroy, where it curved south-easterly around a bend in the Merri Creek to join the Alphington and Heidelberg line at Clifton Hill.<sup>111</sup> Near Best Street, North Fitzroy, a single-track branch, or spur line, diverged to run southwards, parallel to Mark Street and then through the Edinburgh Gardens, terminating on the north side of Queens Parade.<sup>112</sup> A second spur line ran southwards from Clifton Hill Station as far as Johnston Street, Abbotsford.

The passenger service on the Fitzroy line of the Inner Circle line was short-lived. Although a platform had been built for passenger traffic to and from Fitzroy, in reality, neither of the spur lines were of great use for anything but goods traffic as the passenger services could not compete with the more direct



routes offered by tram services.<sup>113</sup> After patronage on the Inner Circle line failed to prove economical, passenger services to Fitzroy were withdrawn in May 1892. The Fitzroy branch line instead became a major goods route, making coal deliveries for the Metropolitan Gas Company's gas works on the south side of Queens Parade, as well as transporting other inward and outward goods for nearby timber yards, contractors and factories.<sup>114</sup>



Figure 10 Plan of the 1882 Crown grant with the alignment of the branch line indicated (red)  
Source: Parish Plan, North Fitzroy, F99(2), Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services

#### 2.5.4 *Further improvements to the gardens and sporting precinct, 1890s-1910s*

Following the construction of the railway, much planting work in the Edinburgh Gardens appears to have been directed towards screening the railway line. Annual reports of the Committee of Management for 1892-93 noted the purchase of 5,000 Hawthorn 'quicks' or cuttings, with more bought in subsequent years.<sup>115</sup> In addition to being planted alongside the railway line, Hawthorn hedges were established elsewhere in the park, including possibly along the boundary fence.<sup>116</sup>

Improvements continued within the sporting precinct, spurred by the Fitzroy Cricket Club's successful organisation and the growing audience for football. Annual reports of the 1890s record a variety of improvements made to the playing surface and to the grounds surrounding it to improve spectator comfort and ingress/egress. As part of these works already existing embankments around the ground were enhanced in c. 1893 to shelter the oval and provide additional viewing areas.<sup>117</sup> Further improvements were later reported across the recreation grounds (including the various other sporting club grounds now under the management of the Fitzroy Cricket Club), under the caretakership of E. Slack, who had been appointed to the position in 1895.<sup>118</sup> The club was described as 'showing themselves thoroughly alive in their efforts to improve the surroundings of the ground.'<sup>119</sup>

The City of Fitzroy's annual reports for 1894-95 noted a one room extension to the caretaker's cottage and a new 'circle' on the eastern side of the railway fenced in iron picket and planted with flowers and shrubs. The 'circle' does not appear on the MMBW plan of c. 1900 (Figure 9), however several circular plantings appear on a c. 1905 directory plan (Figure 12), including beds surrounding an ornamental pond and two other plantings that would become the elm circles remnant today. The 1894-95 annual report also noted that storm water run-off from Rowe Street was carried into the park, this water may perhaps have been employed in the ornamental pond (Figure 14), later constructed nearby although access to articulated water from the Yan Yean system would have also been available.<sup>120</sup>

The 1895 annual report of the Edinburgh Gardens Committee of Management recorded the purchase of four drinking fountains, the type and intended location were not specified.<sup>121</sup> Drinking fountains were introduced into Victorian streets under the influence of the temperance movement and philanthropic organisations who were concerned with the quality of drinking water in the city and sought to provide an alternative to intoxicating beer. The connection to the Yan Yean Reservoir was a major factor in facilitating these improvements as it provided accessibility to water supplies. Nineteenth century drinking fountains tended to be of cast iron with attached taps.

Contradictions between use of the gardens as an ornamental reserve and their practical employment by the council continued. On the one hand, A 1900 commenter recorded that 'flowers are comparatively few in the Edinburgh Gardens but trees and shrubs, and redundancy [sic] in growth, makes it one of the pleasantest of retreats for the wearied walker, of the lover of foliage seclusion'.<sup>122</sup> Yet in 1902 it was also noted the creation of desirable lawn areas was hampered by the grazing of animals, particularly cows, near the railway line, and the growing of grass to sell as cattle feed.<sup>123</sup> The committee had started selling grass for revenue in 1894-95, a common practice in Melbourne's parks and gardens during that time.<sup>124</sup>

However, the role of the gardens as a locus for community activities was becoming increasingly clear. Passive recreational activities, from picnics and walks, occurred as did more active pursuits, including children's games and social events. Open-air concerts had become popular and were reported regularly in the local newspapers from about 1900. In the summer of 1903, the cricket club organised a series of 'open air concerts' with attendances reputedly in the thousands and a brass band performed in the park to raise money for the Drought Relief Fund.<sup>125</sup>



A statue of Queen Victoria received as a gift to Fitzroy City Council was assigned to the gardens' Committee of Management in 1903 and unveiled in the park's eastern section in 1904.<sup>126</sup> Set on a plinth that remains in place in the gardens, the plaster statue stood at the centre of a circle formed by a fenced garden bed and an encircling path, planted with Elms and established at the intersection of two crossing diagonal pathways.

Also in c. 1903, an 18 feet high grassy mound in the south-east section (near the Grant Street-Alfred Crescent intersection) was constructed from sewer soil and vegetable mould; apparently spearheaded by the City Engineer as a site for children's play. The artificial hillock was reportedly 'the delight of children on Saturday afternoons and Sundays,' and was initially planted with English rye grass.<sup>127</sup> A visitor to the gardens in 1906 reported the presence and use of the mound, as well as other more conventional playground equipment:

I learned that the green mound was made for little boys to roll down on Sundays ... They keep the gate locked all the week, but they always open it on Sundays, and then we do have fun,' one said, and his eyes sparkled. They all nodded emphatically when I asked them if they would like the gate to be unlocked every day. When I told them I used to play see-saw on a rail through the fence when I was little like them, the spokesman said he would take me to the see-saws. He led the way down a path past some flowering pittosporums, which they all stopped to sniff, then on past a circular flower bed.<sup>128</sup>

The presence of a playground is also confirmed in a 1904 newspaper article which describes the facilities for children's play:

the children have the playground provided for them in the Edinburgh Gardens as well as the gardens themselves in which to play, walk, or bask in the sun. In the playground are see-saws and swings, in the gardens the hill, jestingly dubbed Mount Showers, which is to give them the chance to tumble, climb, or roll down as often as they like, so that the case of the children of the North need not now concern.<sup>129</sup>

Difficulties maintaining the lawns apparently led the council to fence the mound soon after. Its condition subsequently become a recurring target of complaint, such as 'the grass has grown and died many times since that and still the fence remains', and the hill derided as 'Mount Showers' and 'Mount Misery' by critics.<sup>130</sup>

In the first decade of the twentieth century, a number of additions were made to the Edinburgh Gardens. These are shown in some detail on a c. 1905 map (Figure 12). In the western half of the park two new paths were laid, the first along the eastern boundary of the bowling club, and the second, diagonally from the south-east corner of the bowling club to the main north-south path. Also shown on this plan is an additional path which ran from the Falconer Street entrance to a railway crossing on the eastern half of the park. The Best Street entrance to the main north-south path is shown as a 'horseshoe' configuration, similar to that which exists today. In the south-east of the gardens an ornamental pond (Figure 14) was encircled by a garden bed and path containing a small island planted with palms and other shrubbery. Adjacent to the pond, a large circular feature with a path skirting around its western flank apparently represents 'the mound' constructed two years earlier. Located in the centre of the gardens are the existing caretaker's cottage, shown with an enlarged yard area.

The onset of the twentieth century also resulted in further improvements to the sporting club facilities. Developments in 1901-02 included a brick drain around the oval, revamping of the oval and three new bowling rinks and a third tennis court, all totalling £400. The c. 1905 plan at Figure 12 indicates the area occupied by the bowling club had expanded, the fence line differing from that shown in the 1896 plan.

The earlier timber Freeman Street pavilion, constructed c. 1895, is discernible on the south side of the oval (Figure 11).<sup>131</sup> In 1905 further improvements were made, including a new grandstand, refreshment booth and toilet facilities. Completed in 1905 to a design by architects Twentyman and Askew, the new grandstand was required to accommodate the large crowds which Fitzroy matches were then attracting (Figure 15).<sup>132</sup> At this time, a new brick entrance building was also erected on the corner of Freeman and Brunswick Streets, thereby replacing the timber pavilion.<sup>133</sup>

The development of the Edinburgh Gardens during this period is also demonstrated on a c. 1906 MMBW plan (Figure 13). The plan appears to have been annotated at a later date and shows the bowling club pavilion which was constructed in 1913 on the south side of the green. The timber cottage previously used by the club can be seen on the north side of the green. By the early 1900s, the area around the oval was more intensively developed. In addition to the two main grandstands, a number of smaller structures are evident, including a tennis club pavilion, entrance pavilions, a gymnasium to the rear of the 1888 grandstand and a number of unidentified structures, including the toilet blocks. The asphalt tennis courts, previously located adjacent to the bowling club, were relocated to make way for the 1905 grandstand.<sup>134</sup> The cricket club's 1912-13 annual reports record the construction of a brick drain around the perimeter of the playing field.<sup>135</sup>

In the 1910s the bowling club was further expanded. An extra two rinks were added in 1910-1911 and in 1913 construction of a new pavilion was commenced at a cost of £1,600. In 1929-30 the paths around the bowling greens were paved with old stone flags, donated by the Fitzroy City Council. The Fitzroy Railway Station ground remained largely undeveloped at this time and contained oil tanks and a small office building. Where the railway entered the gardens across Alfred Crescent, a gatehouse with a semaphore signal was located to its south.

As detailed above, native trees had been included in the early public plantings established in the Edinburgh Gardens in c. 1881 and 1884, first by the City of Fitzroy and then by Nicholas Bickford working on behalf of the Committee of Management. From 1904, local newspapers printed expressions of public advocacy for inclusion of additional native plantings in the park, referring to other previous advocates for native trees in the gardens.<sup>136</sup> One writer noted that 'the suggestion to plant wattles in the Edinburgh Gardens was made some years ago by Cr. Robt. Barr, but so far we can see no evidence of the trees'.<sup>137</sup>

In 1913, a writer to the *Herald* expressed their astonishment at seeing one of the Mahogany Gums removed to clear space for electric lighting, and their concern that the complement of Eucalypts in the gardens was being depleted by incautious management and attack by grub. Managers of the gardens, said the writer,

might introduce fresh young trees to replace those that have gone, and provide for others that may be doomed. The value of an area such as Edinburgh Gardens in the midst of a thickly-populated district is indeed great, but that value is considerably increased by the existence of health-promoting eucalypts. Therefore it is sound policy to maintain the original intention of the designers of the gardens and make a speciality of gums. In my opinion, if the pines which skirt the Alfred-crescent border were replaced by eucalypts, it would be a change for the better.<sup>138</sup>

Another writer soon agreed, observing that

It may be worthwhile stating that the site of the gardens was a drain, and the present level was made up by thousands of tons of corporation refuse. No doubt those who planted the trees had the fact in mind. The cause may have disappeared but the teeming population which surrounds the reserve remains as a strong argument for such health-giving trees to be maintained. Several have died

and have not been replaced. This is a chance for the committee to prove that it is more wide-awake than the average garden committee, which, as a rule, is singularly short-sighted.<sup>139</sup>

In 1914, the row of pines which had formed the perimeter of the gardens to Alfred Crescent since c. 1881 were felled as 'it is thought that the trees obstruct the view of the residents in that quarter, and they also militate against the cultivation of ornamental shrubs and flowers'.<sup>140</sup> One newspaper report conveyed the council's intention 'that an avenue of palms and flowers shall take their place. About 40 palms will be planted at distances of a few feet, and they will be surrounded by gay-coloured geraniums. It is proposed also that acacias will be planted next year'.<sup>141</sup> If the anticipated plantings were installed at the time, no evidence has been located to that effect. However, a new row planting of native Kurrajongs, is known to have replaced the removed pine row by 1931.

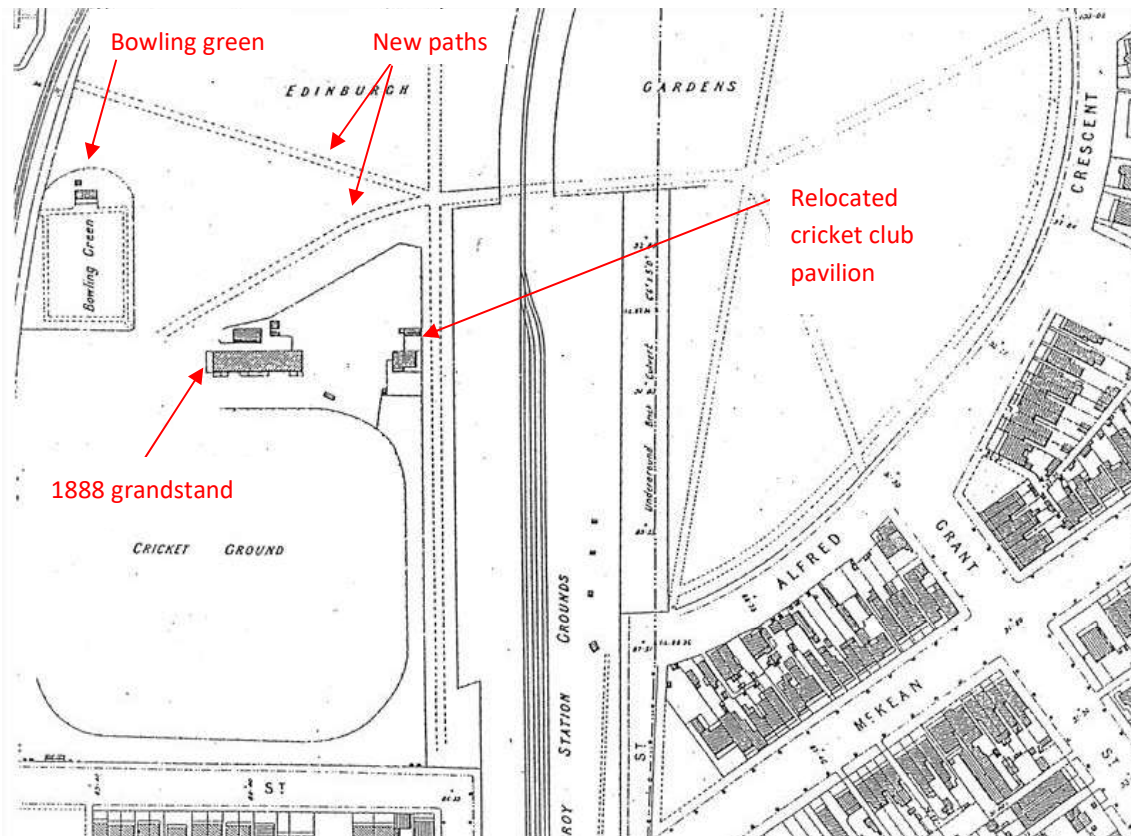


Figure 11 Portion of MMBW, 160': 1", plan no. 29 (southern section), c. 1896, with annotations added

Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection

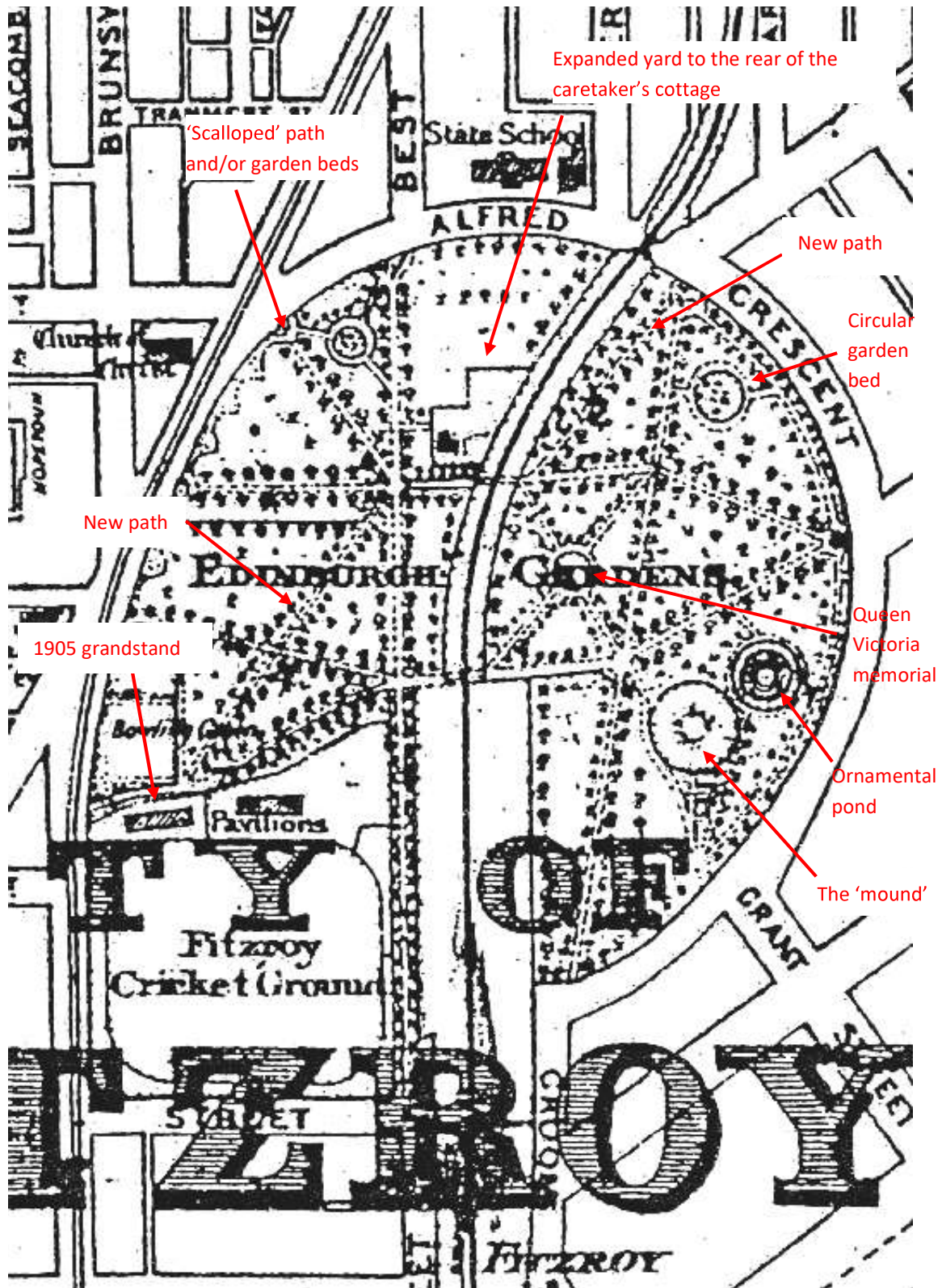


Figure 12 Detail of an unidentified map of the northern suburbs, showing the avenue plantings and other features of the Edinburgh Gardens, c. 1905, with annotations added  
Source: Reproduced in Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study



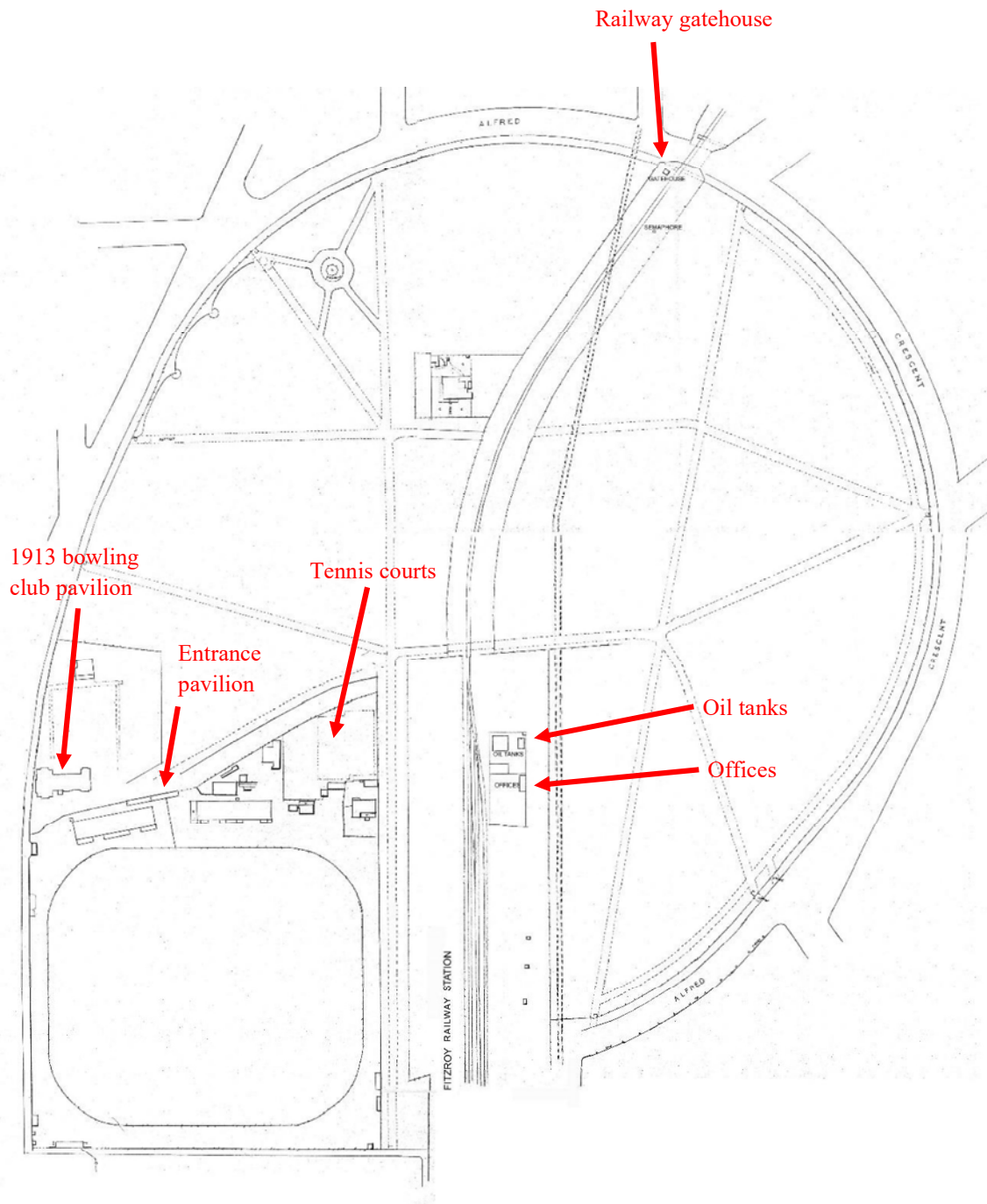


Figure 13 MMBW plan c. 1906, annotated and with later elements noted on the plan  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection



Figure 14 A c. 1906 postcard of the ornamental pond; in the background are seen (1) the boundary rows of Monterey Pine and Sweet Pittosporum, and (2) a line of Southern Mahogany Gum that was established as a background element to the English Oak Avenue  
Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection



Figure 15 View of a football crowd at the Fitzroy cricket ground, c. 1910  
Source: Melbourne Regional Libraries, Fitzroy Local History Collection

## 2.6 The development of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1910s-1930s

Between the late 1910s and the 1930s, the park underwent some major changes; with one of the most significant concerning its management. The Board of Lands and Works ceased to play an active role in the administration of the gardens in October 1917. Following a Cabinet decision, the Joint Committee of Management was revoked, and the Fitzroy City Council was appointed as the committee in full control. Financial contributions to the cost of the upkeep of the gardens from the Crown were then discontinued.<sup>142</sup>

While a 1926 plan of the park shows the pathway arrangement little changed since the end of the nineteenth century (Figure 16), a number of new structures were introduced during the interwar years. Two war memorials were erected, as expected of a nation still grieving for the loss of thousands of young men. The first memorial was an arbour constructed in 1919 by the various sporting clubs occupying the ground, to commemorate their members who died in the war. This Sportsman's Memorial originally stood over the main path running along the northern side of the cricket ground and 'several thousand' people witnessed its unveiling.<sup>143</sup>

The second World War I memorial took the form of a Memorial Rotunda (Figure 16) built in 1925 by the City of Fitzroy.<sup>144</sup> It was designed by Edward Twentyman, long serving office bearer with the Fitzroy Cricket Club and of the well-known architectural firm Twentyman and Askew, who also designed the grandstand and other structures in the sporting grounds. Bearing plaques in honour of the citizens of Fitzroy who had served in World War I and recognising the work of the city council and the Peace Year Citizens Committee who had organised its construction, the Memorial Rotunda originally had a rusticated bluestone base and was encircled by garden beds enclosed by an iron picket fence. A photograph of the rotunda dated 1927 (Figure 17) shows surrounding garden beds with timber post and rail fences, and some timber seating. A plaque was later added to the Memorial Rotunda to honour Fitzroy citizens who served in World War II. The appearance of the rotunda was subsequently altered by the rendering of the quarry-faced bluestone plinth; the date of this modification is unknown.

Also in the 1920s, approval was granted for the construction of a new children's playground, to be located opposite the state school in Alfred Crescent.<sup>145</sup> Playgrounds were built in many of Melbourne's parks and gardens during this period, largely in response to lobbying by the Guild of Play. Established in Melbourne in 1912, the Guild advocated the need for supervised play as an essential component of children's development. The Guild was a local manifestation of an international playgrounds movement formed in the United States and England which had been active since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement sought to alleviate some of the social problems experienced by families living in crowded inner cities areas.<sup>146</sup>

A city councillor had raised the issue of new play equipment in 1924, asking whether swings might be returned to the Edinburgh Gardens, after having 'been removed some time ago as they were considered dangerous, but if the swings were lowered they would afford pleasure to the children'.<sup>147</sup> Construction of the new playground in the northern end of the gardens commenced in 1925 and added to the park's existing play equipment and the grassy mound.<sup>148</sup> The new play equipment was so popular with children that the principal of a local primary school complained of increased truancy levels. Others thought them unsafe as they were not supervised by adults.<sup>149</sup>

Other park elements installed during this period include the Chandler Drinking Fountain (1926), and an infant welfare centre (1926, demolished c. 1966), initially a small timber building located adjacent to the caretaker's residence and later replaced with the Emely Baker Centre along St Georges Road. It has been suggested that fences to the boundaries of the gardens were probably removed during this phase of development, in keeping with the removal of fencing from other Melbourne parks and gardens.<sup>150</sup>

With the park well utilised by the local community, changes to public use and its management aroused strong responses by residents. In the mid-1920s, there was protest at plans to alienate part of the garden to enlarge the Fitzroy Football Club's ground. Complaints centred on the belief that such alienation would be 'an infringement of the rights of the people', especially as it was a public park.<sup>151</sup> By 1927, people were criticising the apparent neglect of the gardens. Not only had prolonged dry conditions impacted on the trees and plants which were 'bare and barren instead of green and delightful to the eye;' but areas were filled with foul smelling stagnant water and there was also a tip site near the Napier Street entrance and a resting paddock for council horses within the grounds.<sup>152</sup>

Despite local protests concerning some of the gardens' management practices, sporting activities continued to be well maintained and resourced. The cricket club's annual report for 1930-31 describes the sporting facilities during this period:

in addition to the playing area there are fifteen bowling rinks on two of the finest greens in Victoria, five tennis courts (three of concrete and two of asphalt), the whole forming for Fitzroy citizens a Recreation Reserve which has few equals and no superior in Victoria.<sup>153</sup>

A ladies' dressing room was added to the tennis pavilion between 1933-34 at a cost of £54 and a new shower and toilet block was constructed in 1953-5. An additional tennis court was erected in 1955-56.<sup>154</sup>

The extension of the cricket ground in 1934 brought about the most substantial change to the gardens during the interwar period. The Fitzroy Cricket Club had first proposed to extend the ground by 30 feet (9.1 metres) in the mid-1920s, but nothing came of it. The new proposed extension required the removal of some trees bordering the tennis club and the path extending from Rowe to Brunswick streets.<sup>155</sup> A reduced extension of the cricket ground eastwards by 26 feet (7.9 metres) was eventually approved by Lands Department in March 1934.<sup>156</sup> A strip of land was subsequently purchased from the Railways Department and the main north-south path, running alongside the cricket ground, was pushed eastwards to its present alignment. Approval for the extension had been conditional upon the retention of the row of elm trees along the east of the path, which are visible in a 1925 oblique aerial photograph of the area (Figure 18). The trees were, nevertheless, removed by 1938, with the Fitzroy City Council reporting to the Lands Department that they had become an 'eyesore and a danger'.<sup>157</sup> Additional trees adjacent to the tennis courts were removed on the basis that the shadows thrown onto the courts were distracting players and the tree roots had interfered with the surface.<sup>158</sup> The action was further justified by the council on the grounds the:

floral decorative strip along the pathway north of the playing arenas from the Brunswick Street entrance eastwards ... could not be continued to the end of the courts as desired because of these trees.<sup>159</sup>

In 1937, the Fitzroy Council accepted the donation of the Cook Memorial by the local artisan J.A. Heyman after the monument had been rejected by Melbourne City Council. Originally intended to have been installed with Cook's Cottage in Fitzroy Gardens, on receiving the monument Fitzroy Council erected it in Edinburgh Gardens, along the path in front of the timber entrance pavilion and grandstands of the Brunswick Street Oval<sup>160</sup> (the monument was later relocated to its present location opposite Rowe Street).

At this time the footpath along the eastern and southern side of the Edinburgh Gardens, abutting Alfred Crescent, was removed and grassed over. Other improvements described by the council include the removal of hedges and picket fences alongside the railway line.<sup>161</sup> In 1937, the Fitzroy City Council announced a 'beautification scheme' for the Napier Street entrance, including the construction of an



asphalt path six feet in width along the eastern side of the oval to the tennis courts, and a path of lawn 11 feet wide.<sup>162</sup>

As in the past, the park remained a venue for social gatherings and events, some of which were run by the municipal council or other organisations. The 1933 fete and bazaar which ran for nearly two weeks was held within the grounds to raise funds for the unemployed.<sup>163</sup> At times, anti-social activities occurred at the park. For instance, in 1919, some 50 to 60 members of two rival gangs, known as 'pushes', were set to battle it out in the gardens when police arrived and dispersed the push members.<sup>164</sup> The next month, a push of about 20 young people attacked a boy who was lying in the grass with two friends.<sup>165</sup>

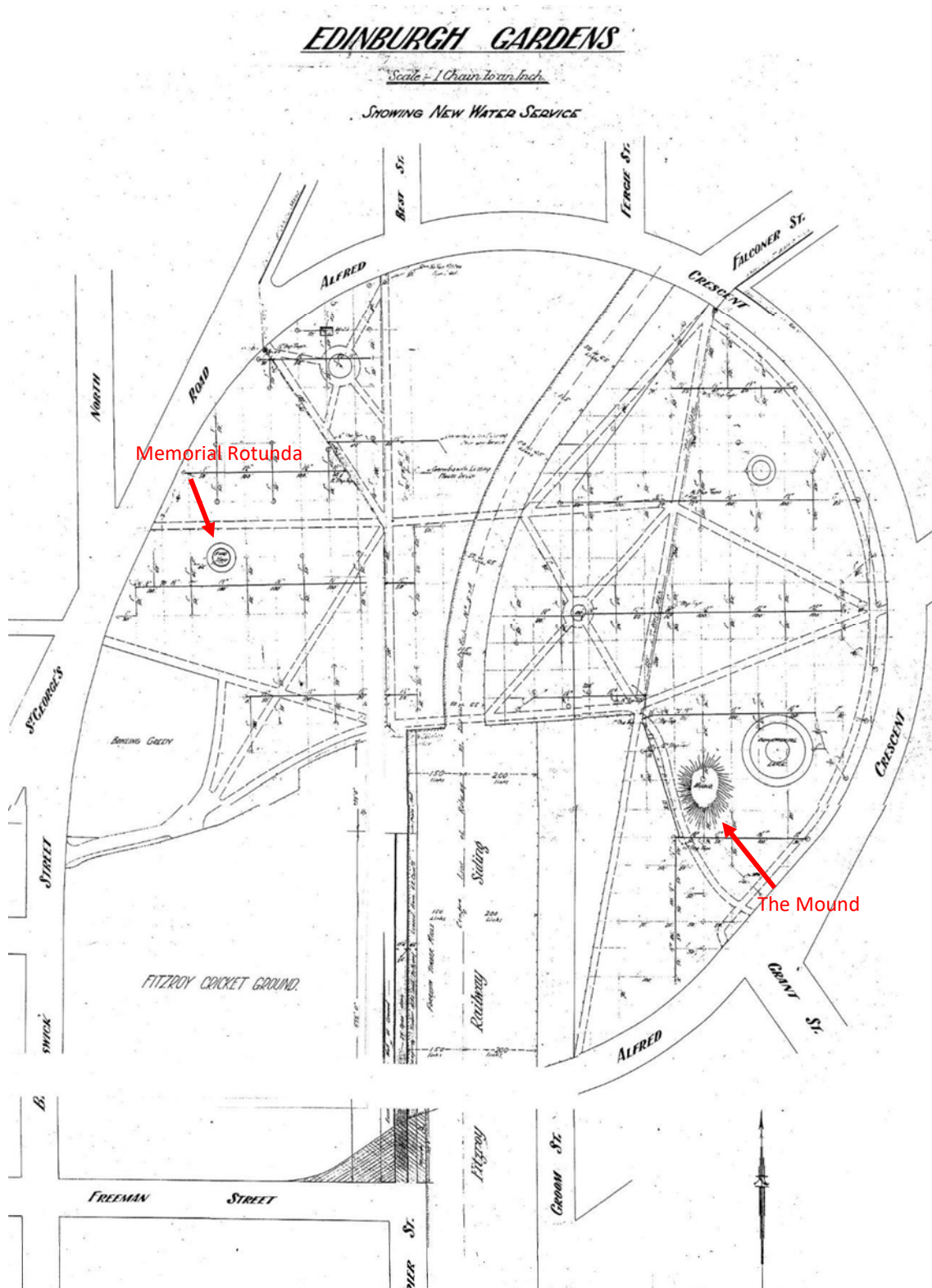


Figure 16 Plan of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1926 (annotations to the east of the cricket ground date from c. 1948)

Source: Reserve File, RS360, Department of Sustainability and Environment



Figure 17 View of the Memorial Rotunda, c. 1927

Source: Yarra Melbourne Regional Libraries, Fitzroy Local History Collection



Figure 18 Oblique aerial view looking south-west, showing part of the Edinburgh Gardens, dated c. 1925; the row of elms removed following the extension of the cricket ground are visible to left of the oval

Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection

## 2.7 The post-war years, 1940s-1960s

From the late 1940s, the park underwent some significant changes, with a number of older structures removed or modified, garden design simplified and some of its passive use spaces altered. The path layout remained largely unchanged in the mid-1940s with only a few minor variations. A 1945 aerial photograph shows a narrow path, possibly an informal foot track, in the eastern side of the park, running north-south from Falconer Street to the Alfred Crescent/Grant Street intersection (Figure 19). The grassy hillock, known on plans as the 'the mound' (Figure 16) is still discernible in the south-east of the gardens, as is the ornamental pond and surrounding ring of trees. However, one of the diagonal paths radiating outwards from the fountain had been removed. Modifications to the north-south path running past the nursery complex adjacent to the caretaker's house are also evident in the 1945 photograph, with the formation of the existing 'horseshoe' configuration at the entrance off Alfred Crescent.

Changes began to take place in the late 1940s, one of the most substantial being the clearing of the south-east corner of the gardens for use as a playing field in the late 1940s. The sports field, as first proposed by the council in 1945, was to have included two ovals and a single storey pavilion.<sup>166</sup> Local citizens opposed the plans which would have involved the loss of a number of trees as well as 'the mound'. Church groups were also in opposition, fearing the field would be used for Sunday football. The council subsequently amended the proposal by reducing the size of the playing field.<sup>167</sup>

In 1948 sporting spaces and facilities were further increased when a ladies bowling green was established in the centre of the park. Both the green and new oval were indicative of:

... a period of public interest in simple open space values and passive recreation in the inner suburban parks [that] declined in favour of more intensive sporting and institutional uses.<sup>168</sup>

That year, Fitzroy City Council sought a loan for, amongst other things, £445 for water reticulation of the gardens and £150 for playground equipment.<sup>169</sup> Two years later, a further £2,250 was procured for the garden's water reticulation system.<sup>170</sup>

By the mid to late 1960s, a number of modifications to the park had taken place, as is evident in a 1966 aerial photograph (Figure 20). Facilities at the cricket ground had, by this time, been developed to their fullest extent. Terraced viewing areas can be seen to the front of the grandstands while there are a number of pavilions and structures along the east side of the oval.<sup>171</sup> The concrete wall is evident to the east, west and south boundaries. The northern end of the railway goods yard, shown largely vacant in the 1945 aerial, had been developed with a large industrial building, for the National Can Company, constructed in the c. mid-1950s.

A circular garden bed is discernible in the 1966 aerial, near the Rowe Street intersection. In the south-east corner of the park the late 1940s playing field is visible, occupying a site half the size of the playing field which exists today. The 'mound' to the north of the path appears to have recently been removed, its location is discernible as a patch of cleared ground. The path which had previously skirted it to the west had been further formalised into a serpentine path, maintaining the 'kink' where the mound had intervened but now also taking a second curve towards the south-east to recentre this minor park entrance at Grant Street. The adjacent ornamental pond had also been removed, along with the trees encircling its southern half. The pond and its stock of goldfish were apparently considered to be too much effort to maintain and it was filled in with earth removed from the mound, the remainder being used as cheap fill by the Fitzroy City Council.<sup>172</sup> Garden beds along St Georges Road, previously reported to have been planted with massed cannas and described as an 'eye catching summer feature' are believed to have been grassed over in the 1960s.<sup>173</sup> The fountain was also demolished at this time.

The removal of early features is demonstrative of a trend in the post-war period towards the simplification of park management in line with modern economies of labour and other resources.

Further changes to the administration of the gardens took place when the *Fitzroy (Edinburgh Gardens) Lands Act* of 1967 was proclaimed on 12 December 1967. The Act had come about following a realisation that the Crown land occupied by the cricket ground had, through a legal technicality, never been formally allocated to the cricket, football or bowling clubs.<sup>174</sup> Consequently, the Fitzroy City Council was unable to lend money to the clubs and lacked the legal power to raise it for them. To resolve the issue, council was appointed as the Committee of Management of this part of the reserve and so could lease parts of the park to various sporting clubs. The Act also closed a small portion of Freeman Street and incorporated it into the gardens.<sup>175</sup>

In c. 1964 the original caretaker's cottage in the centre of the gardens was demolished and a cream-brick villa erected, with the adjacent park depot and nursery complex appearing to have reached its ultimate extent.<sup>176</sup> The service yard had expanded incrementally over the years and appears to have been largely developed by the mid-1960s.

The late 1960s also marked the end of the Fitzroy Football Club's eight-decade long association with the cricket ground. During this period, the club had found itself increasingly in conflict with the council and local residents over requests to upgrade facilities and increase car-parking. Unable to arrive at a satisfactory lease arrangement, the club vacated the ground in 1966. Other sporting facilities, however, were further developed. In 1969, the local council procured a \$75,000 loan to construct a new club house and amenities block for the Fitzroy Bowling Club. An additional \$15,000 loan was sought for the project the following year.<sup>177</sup>

Throughout this period, the gardens remained a place where local residents came together as a community, and not just within the sphere of cricket and football. Beyond sporting events, it continued to be used for a range of community events, including fundraising activities. For example, in 1945 a carnival spanning several days was held within the park to raise money for the Fitzroy Citizen's Victorian Police Association Youth Club.<sup>178</sup> Other people continued to use the park for passive activities or walked through it on their way to another place, as illustrated at Figure 21.



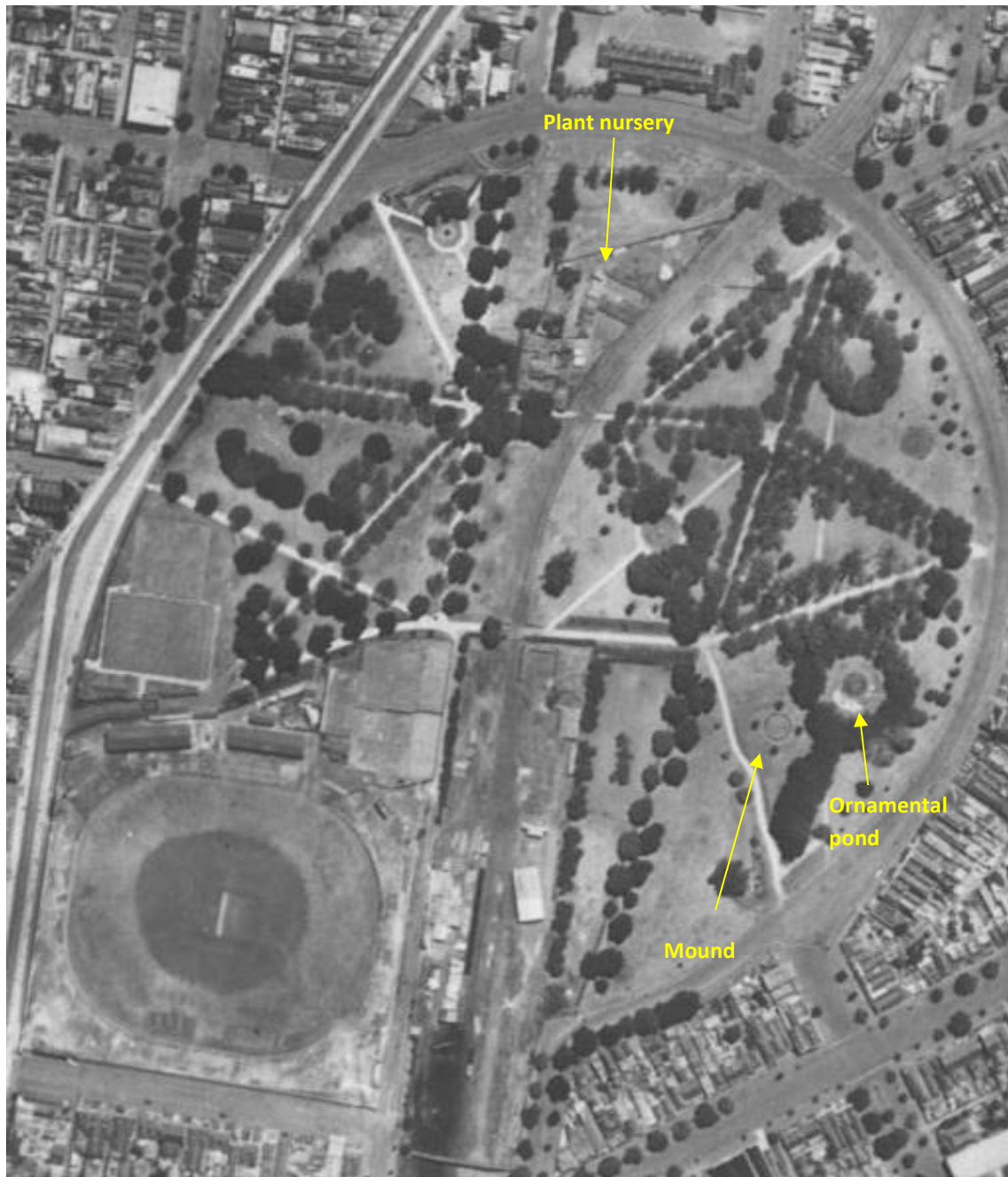


Figure 19 Aerial view of Edinburgh Gardens showing the location of the paths, plant nursery, mound and ornamental pond (empty), 1945  
Source: University of Melbourne Archives Image Collection

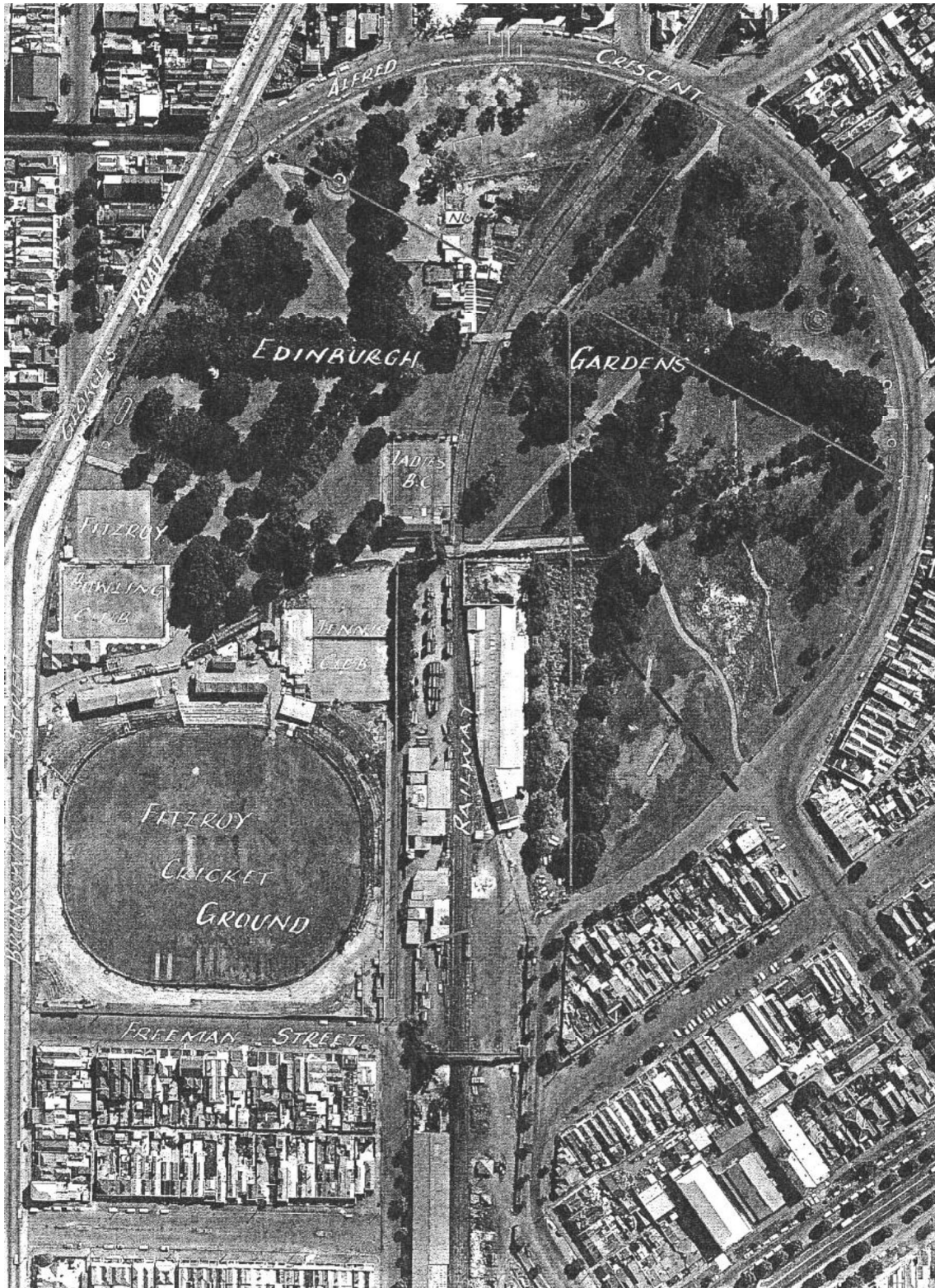


Figure 20 Aerial view of Edinburgh Gardens, 1966  
Source: Reserve File RS360, Department of Sustainability and Environment



Figure 21 A mother and infant walk through Edinburgh Gardens, 1954  
Source: *Herald*, 9 April 1954, p. 3

## 2.8 Late twentieth century developments, 1970s-1990s

### 2.8.1 Public gardens

The 1970s saw the construction of new amenities in the park. In 1970, the council borrowed \$37,000 to construct a new infant welfare centre along St Georges Road, together with a toilet block and shelter shed.<sup>179</sup> In 1972, an additional \$34,000 loan was obtained to build the facilities which were completed later that year.<sup>180</sup> The new structures were built in a starkly utilitarian design typical of parks and gardens architecture of the period. The Emely Baker Infant Welfare Centre was built to replace the 1926 timber building located adjacent to the original caretaker's cottage, a site which occasionally attracted 'undesirable characters'.<sup>181</sup> Security concerns and the need for ease of supervision appear to have prompted the relocation of the centre to a site on the perimeter of the park.<sup>182</sup> Another of the park's early structures, a Victorian-era timber lattice gazebo, was demolished to make way for the new pedestrian shelter known as the Centenary Pavilion, located near the National Can Company industrial site. The pavilion was erected in 1977 and officially opened in January the following year to mark the centenary of the City of Fitzroy.<sup>183</sup>

A shift away from the practice of maintaining labour-intensive flowerbeds in the parks and gardens of Fitzroy began in the early 1970s. Also in this period, the council discontinued the traditional June mayoral ball, for which the nursery had played an important role in providing palms and other potted plants.<sup>184</sup> The nursery was vacated in the 1990s, and was demolished sometime between 2004 and 2009.



Other changes within the park at this time included the removal of one of the diagonal paths intersecting the location of the former Queen Victoria statue. The school sports oval was also enlarged, and the serpentine path from the Grant Street entry may have been removed, although a path on a similar alignment was later restored to this area. The removal of the railway line in 1981 had a significant impact on the gardens and no longer divided the park in two. The now-empty rail path became asphalted bicycle and pedestrian pathway. Industrial structures on the former goods yards site were removed in the 1990s and the area south of the railway footbridge redeveloped as public housing.

The gardens developed as the local community evolved. The construction of the bocce courts occurred in the 1980s following the redevelopment of the oval. This reflected the area's changing demographics as it was a game typically played by Italians (particularly men), a community with a strong presence in Fitzroy and neighbouring suburbs. A skate park in the northern section of the gardens was constructed in 1991 for the park's younger users, thereby continuing the provision of both passive and active recreational facilities in the park.

In the late twentieth century parts of the park came to be recognised as being of significance.<sup>185</sup> In 1990, the grandstand was included to the Register of Historic Buildings, a statutory listing that was the precursor to the Victorian Heritage Register. The whole of Edinburgh Gardens was added to the heritage overlay of the Yarra Planning Scheme c. 1999. For example, in 1989, the Fitzroy Cricket Club Grandstand was classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a site of state significance since it 'is one of only three surviving grandstands that predate the great depression of the 1890s [and] is one of the last works in the long and distinguished career of Nathaniel Billing'. In 1993, a Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) specimen north-east of the bowling club was classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as being of regional significance and included in its Significant Tree Register, a non-statutory list.<sup>186</sup>

### 2.8.2 *Sporting precinct*

By the 1970s the ground had fallen into a derelict state and the 1905 grandstand was destroyed by fire in 1977<sup>187</sup> with the cricket ground remaining largely ignored in the 1970s (Figure 22). Proposals mooted in 1972 to develop the ground as a car-racing track came to nothing.<sup>188</sup> By the early 1980s, redevelopment of the site commenced, with the Fitzroy council committing around \$500,000 to the cost. In 1980 a loan of \$10,000 was provided for the reconstruction of the park's paths, as well as \$23,500 for the redevelopment of its cricket and football oval.<sup>189</sup> The following year, a \$112,000 loan was sought to help fund the Edinburgh Gardens redevelopment project and in 1983, an additional \$40,000 was requested.<sup>190</sup> Works included demolition of the boundary walls and fences, regrading of earth banks and tree planting. The nineteenth century grandstand was restored, the adjacent community room was constructed, and the timber entry pavilion relocated to the main through path. Further restoration works to the grandstand were undertaken in 1991-92 when the grandstand was painted and timber bench seating reinstated.<sup>191</sup>

In the late 1990s the lawn bowls club was redeveloped. This was carried out as part of the amalgamation of the Fitzroy Club with the Victoria Club to form the Fitzroy Victoria Bowling and Sports Club. Shortly after, the Ladies Bowling Club was relocated from elsewhere in the park and integrated into the new club. The upgraded facilities included the enlargement of the clubhouse, installation of a synthetic surface to the green nearest the clubhouse, additional storage sheds and the relocation of a shed from the Brunswick Street boundary to the eastern boundary adjacent to the gardens. A new chain mesh fence was constructed around three sides of the perimeter to a height of two metres.

In 1992, the Fitzroy Football Club proposed to return to the cricket ground. The proposal also included the enclosure of the 1888 grandstand for administration offices and gymnasium. In response to significant opposition from the local community, the scheme was abandoned. The vulnerability of the

park structures to vandalism and arson was highlighted in 1996 when the timber gatehouse was destroyed by fire. It has subsequently been reconstructed.

## 2.9 Recent developments at the Edinburgh Gardens

The Edinburgh Gardens continue to evolve as it mirrors the shifting communities it serves, as well as changing landscape design principles and practices, climatic conditions and local expectations. In 2012, a raingarden was installed in the centre of the park, near the former Inner Circle Railway line. Reflecting the concern of drought and changing weather patterns, the garden was created:

to provide a sustainable source of treated stormwater for the parks mature trees and sporting fields in a way that added to the existing landscape character of the park and added interest for users.<sup>192</sup>

It was designed to deliver approximately 60 per cent of the garden's annual water needs and in a style that had a natural, less formal arrangement of plantings. The 700 square metre garden was designed by GHD and cost \$1 million.<sup>193</sup>

In 2017, the northern section of the park was upgraded. This saw the removal of the carpark and demolition of the community centre called International House, the relocation of the playground area, a new active play area (complete with table tennis) and the reinstatement of parkland.<sup>194</sup> This complemented earlier works in 2010 which resulted in the construction of the Alfred Crescent Pavilion to a design by Clarke Hopkins Clarke (Architects). This structure replaced the previous pavilion which had been constructed in 1977. In 2019, upgrades to the Brunswick Street Oval facilities were announced.

Since 2016, the City of Yarra has undertaken a program of temporary art commissions which utilise the Queen Victoria Plinth and reference the former statue. Following previous commissions by Adam Stone and Robbie Rowlands, the most recent is Kathy Holowko's sculpture of an earthworm, 'The Unsung Hero'.<sup>195</sup>

In December 2017, further interpretive elements including a large photographic panel were added to the Sportsman's Memorial (Figure 23) as part of the conservation and refurbishment of the arbour. A replica ceramic wreath in a bronze case, produced by local ceramicist Jessica Taylor in collaboration with the Grimwade Centre, was also installed, with the original wreath relocated to Fitzroy Town Hall.<sup>196</sup>

Occasionally, contests over the park's use are still played out within its grounds, as evident on New Year's Eve 2013. For many years, large crowds had peacefully assembled at the park to see in the new year but that night the situation became out of control when crowd numbers reached nearly 20,000. Two people were assaulted, people were urinating in public because there were not enough toilets and large quantities of rubbish were left strewn across the park (Figure 24). The local council was criticised for not providing enough facilities (particularly toilets and rubbish bins) to meet the crowd's needs.<sup>197</sup> The following year's alcohol ban further fractured relations between some locals and the Yarra City Council.<sup>198</sup>

Today, the park continues to be appropriated by locals for a diverse range of recreational activities and events. Picnics, social gatherings, dog walking, cycling and informal games occur within its grounds. Organised sporting activities continue to be played on the Brunswick Street Oval (now officially called the W.T. Peterson Community Oval) and on its bowling greens and tennis courts. With the introduction of 'Barefoot Bowls', the bowling club is undergoing a recent resurgence with younger players taking up the sport. While the Brunswick Street Oval no longer hosts VFL or AFL football games, it remains the home of Fitzroy Football Club and hosts Victorian Amateur Football Association matches, as well as junior league games.



Figure 22 The cricket ground as it stood empty during the 1970s  
Source: Reproduced in the *Roar of the Lions*



Figure 23 The 'Sportsman's Memorial' at the Edinburgh Gardens illustrating the photographic panel and encased wreath introduced in 2019



Figure 24 The aftermath of the 2013 New Year's Eve festivities at the Edinburgh Gardens  
Source: Adam Elwood, *Herald sun*. 1 January 2014



### **3.0 PHYSICAL SURVEY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The following physical survey of the buildings and associated elements of the Edinburgh Gardens relies on the historical information from the 2004 CMP, substantial supplemental research undertaken with new sources to inform the current study, and site inspections undertaken in 2019-2020.

The objective of the physical survey and analysis has been to establish, as far as possible the nature and intactness of the original layout, structures and landscape, and to describe where relevant the modifications which have occurred up to the present day. This informs an updated assessment of significance in chapter 4, and the recommended management policies in chapter 6.

Access was generally available throughout the gardens and buildings, with the exception of the interior of the Alfred Crescent Pavilion. Limited additional examination of architectural drawings was also undertaken to inform this chapter. Further information is drawn from the archives of Terence Nott Architect, provided in 2021.

Current information from the City of Yarra's arboricultural inventory was reviewed and is relied upon for species identifications and other details. It is notable and bears discussion that the current inventory differs from previous studies, which appear to have understood that a substantially greater complement of Dutch Elm was present in Edinburgh Gardens and formed the original Elm avenues established in the 1880s. The inventory assigns most of the surviving original avenue plantings as English Elm (*Ulmus procera*), an identification that is consistent with reports from 1884 and 1885 describing the initial plantings (including Nicholas Bickford's own account of the plantings to 1885). Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) is present in numbers at Edinburgh Gardens, but based on the City of Yarra inventory, the cultivar appears to be represented in plantings and infills carried out somewhat later, beginning c. 1900-1905.



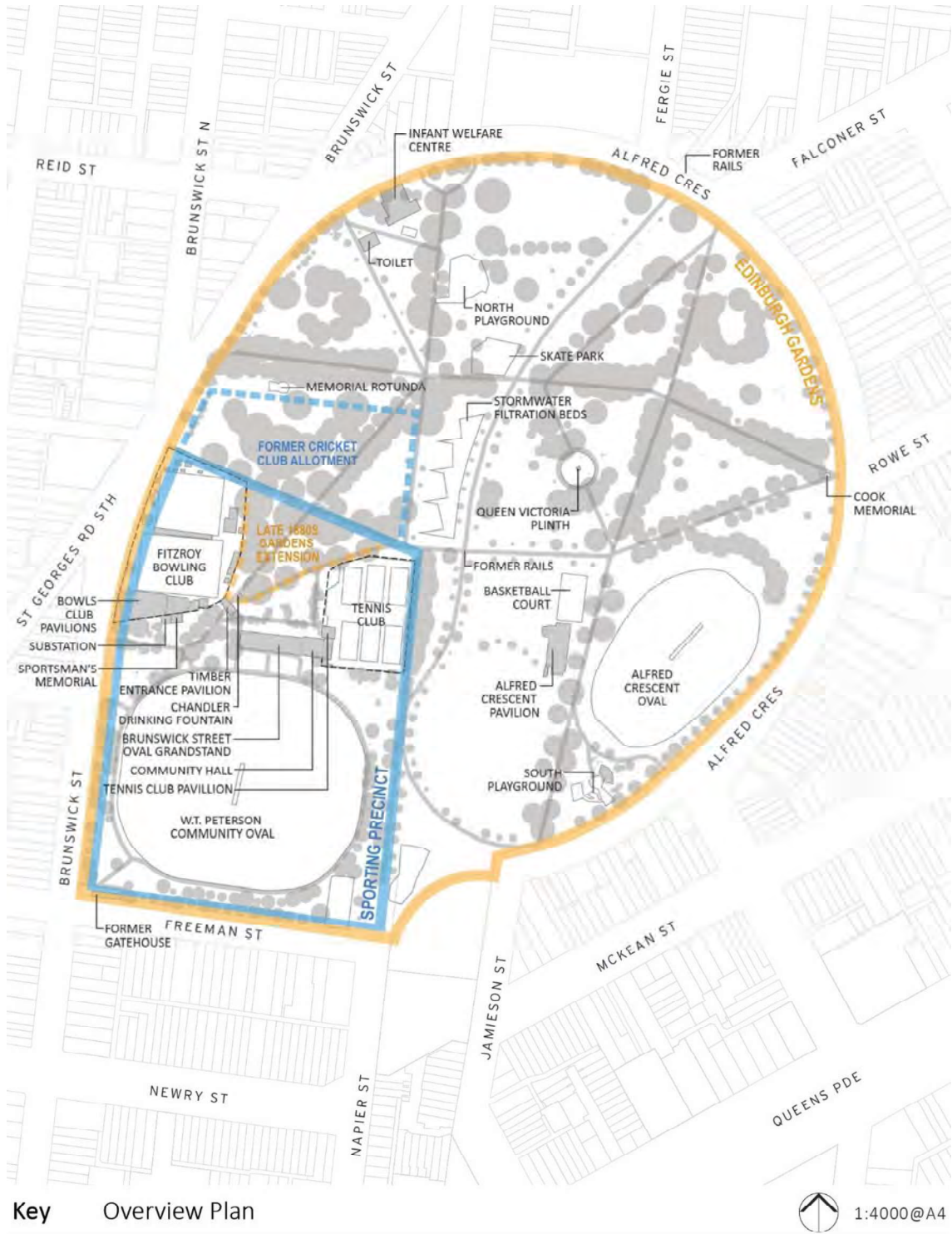


Figure 25 Overview of the Edinburgh Gardens, showing major features and the relative areas of the gardens and the sporting precinct

## 3.2 OVAL AND SPORTING PRECINCT

### 3.2.1 *Brunswick Street Oval and Sporting Precinct*

From the outset, a sporting precinct was established in the south-west part of the recreation reserve that would become Edinburgh Gardens. As detailed in Chapter 2, this precinct established around the two cricket clubs which had received allotments in 1862 and 1863 before amalgamating as the Fitzroy Cricket Club in 1872. The Fitzroy Cricket Club went on to manage the land and facilities in the precinct for a number of decades. The lawn bowls club was established in 1877; the Fitzroy Football Club in 1883; and tennis courts added to the precinct in the mid-1880s and moved to their present location after construction of the 1888 grandstand.

The sporting precinct itself, and the presence of the oval and a bowls club, predate the naming of Edinburgh Gardens and the initial layout of the gardens in the 1880s. Early records note that the Cricket Club obtained an assortment of trees from Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens<sup>199</sup> and that a 'ladies reserve' north-west of the oval was 'fenced and planted with trees, [and] flowers'. The grounds administered by the Club during the late 1860s and 1870s were extensive, and ornamental planting may have been undertaken over a broad area before being removed through attrition or to accommodate the addition of bowls and tennis courts, new facilities at the oval and the municipal avenues from the 1880s.

Use of the original commercial club oval to the north of the surviving oval ceased and this area was reassigned to the gardens c. the late 1880s-1890s, with crossing paths and avenue plantings added through the north part of the precinct. However, the remainder of the clubs areas continued to be shaped principally by the development of the sports grounds and club facilities until the 1960s, when the tenure of the Fitzroy Lions and management of the oval by the Fitzroy Cricket Club unravelled.

In addition to the various sporting grounds, the grandstand and the oval's two gatehouses, members of the sports clubs led development of a number of the public ornamental elements of the precinct, including the Sportsman's Memorial and the Chandler Drinking Fountain. The Memorial Rotunda, developed by Fitzroy City Council on the northern edge of the original club allotments, was also designed by a prominent office holder within the Fitzroy Cricket Club.

### 3.2.2 *Grandstand*

Early facilities at the ground constructed by the cricket club are known to have included a timber members' pavilion (located to the north-west of the oval), a small timber stand, and a number of seats located around the oval. By the late nineteenth century, cricket and football games at the ground had become so popular as to warrant the construction of additional spectator facilities. The grandstand was built in 1888 to the design of the prominent architect Nathaniel Billing.<sup>200</sup> The builder was a Mr Purser and the total amount expended was £2,086.<sup>201</sup> Architectural documentation shows that the two bays to the western ground floor end of the grandstand were constructed with outer brick walls and fenestration. The balance of bays were originally constructed as an open area with brick piers on the north and south sides (Figure 26); the oblique aerial image (Figure 28) indicates that the eastern end bays were infilled, likely with lightweight materials. The mezzanine level (currently clad in horizontal weatherboards) features only regularly placed vents to the upper section of all but the most easterly bay. A timber gymnasium was erected at the rear (north side) of the grandstand (Figure 27) and the existing cricket pavilion was relocated to the eastern side (below the tennis club).<sup>202</sup> The various structures to the north of the grandstand are also shown at Figure 28. The old timber stand, also moved to the eastern side of the oval, was eventually pulled down. A second grandstand was erected by the football club in 1905, to the west of the 1888 grandstand (Figure 29-Figure 31), and included a 'refreshment booth and sewerage convenience'.<sup>203</sup> The area to the north of both grandstands evolved



and changed with maps and oblique images indicating a variety of structures including closets (toilets) and the like. The presentation of the 1888 grandstand to the south was largely as seen today, with the ground level exposed; this was prior to the introduction of the terraced areas to the front of the grandstands.

In 1966, the Fitzroy football club vacated the ground, unable to achieve a satisfactory lease from the Fitzroy Council. By the 1970s the ground had fallen into a derelict state and the 1905 grandstand was destroyed by fire in 1977. Aerial imagery dating to 1979 indicates that a number of structures remained to the immediate north of the 1888 grandstand (Figure 32).

In the early 1980s, the 1888 grandstand was restored as part of the redevelopment of the oval facilities for community use. The extent of the restoration work is unknown, and it is expected that early fabric was replaced or reconstructed as part of this project. This work included the construction of the community room to the east of the grandstand, to a design by Peter Elliott Architect.<sup>204</sup>

By the mid-1980s the terracing to the south of the grandstand, along with the retained terracing to the demolished 1905 grandstand, was removed and the area surrounding the oval was re-graded and landscaped. This work exposed the ground level façade of the building again. The c. 1987 aerial image indicates that the structures to the north of the grandstand were also removed and the landscape altered to introduce pathways, a parking area and the timber entrance pavilion relocated to the north-west (Figure 33).

Further restoration works were undertaken in 1991-2 and included the reinstatement of the timber bench seating (noting that nearly 70% of seating was replaced due to damage) and repainting of the grandstand in a heritage colour scheme (Figure 34-Figure 35).<sup>205</sup> The colour scheme for the 1991-92 repainting works was prepared by Terence Nott Architect and established a colour scheme of Haymes Paint 'Deep Indian Red' to metal work (posts, rainwater goods and the like), 'Cumberland Stone' to seat backs, some joinery and cast lacework to the balustrade, 'Light Beige' to the balance of timber work, 'Rustic Tan' to brickwork and a 'Jarrah' decking stain to the timber floor.<sup>206</sup> A subsequent paint analysis was undertaken by John Briggs Architect and Heritage Consultant in 2009, and this broadly supported the scheme introduced in 1991-92.<sup>207</sup>

A redevelopment of the changeroom and internal spaces was undertaken in 2008. Works undertaken in 2016-7 included the introduction of measures to reduce anti-social behaviour and comprised of improved lighting and the installation of security locking systems. Bird proofing was also introduced to the underside of the roof at this time.

The grandstand is located on the north side of the community oval. It is of typical Victorian design with a stepped, timber-framed seating area above a ground level brick storey containing club rooms and change rooms. The jerkinhead roof is clad in corrugated galvanised steel and contains a central gable with weatherboard infill and a circular louvered timber vent (the latter replacing a clock, visible in Figure 30, at an unknown time). It is known that the gable end and vent were subject to fire damage prior to 1996.<sup>208</sup> Flagpoles are mounted on the roof at the centre and at either end. To the underside of the roof, the timber roof trusses are supported on cast-iron columns with Corinthian capitals. Extending along the front and sides of the main roof is an awning supported on timber brackets.

Modern timber stairs, located to the centre and each end of the south elevation, provide access to the seating area. At ground level, the face brickwork is painted and punctuated by modern windows, doors and openings fitted with roller shutters. The central opening, formerly the club room entrance from the race, is infilled with a modern timber and glass doors and sidelights.

The seating area has a terraced timber board floor and simple timber bench seating with steel supports to the backrests. Cast iron balustrade panels with a timber handrail between the cast columns make-up

the balustrade to the seating area, with this element extending to the east, south and west elevations. This is set above V-jointed board panels. Behind the seating area, the rear wall features sliding timber-framed panels, which extend across the full length of the rear elevation, above the wall which is lined variously with vertical timber boards and flat panel to the interior side. The central panel to the screens is infilled with either vertical or diagonal v-jointed boards. Cast brackets, bolts and similar fixings are evident on the timber trusses, and timber framing at the seating level. The timber flooring to the seating area is tongue and groove boarding. The floor is stepped, to allow for the seating, the latter of which comprises a timber seat and back with steel supports.

The north elevation is comprised of three distinct levels; the overpainted brickwork of the ground level, horizontal weatherboard clad mezzanine and upper section (relating to the upper level of the tiered seating) which includes a band of vertical boarding, separated by a timber bead from the sliding panels above. Timber brackets are located beneath the roof and the eave is infilled with timber board lining. The ground level brick wall, of which the two westerly bays are likely to be early though modified, extends to the full length of the north elevation; of which the brickwork was introduced at an unknown date. The ground level is fenestrated by two v-jointed board doors, modern doors and windows, and louvered timber-framed windows fitted with wire mesh security screens. The mezzanine level has weatherboard cladding set between timber posts and containing fixed-sash, six-pane, timber-framed windows (these are modern interventions of an unknown date). Two of the timber posts have been replaced with brick piers. Abutting the west elevation is a skillion-roofed verandah supported on timber posts. The sliding panels have been variously replaced and repaired, with these elements being subject to ongoing damage and vandalism; repairs works were undertaken in 1991-92, and subsequently subjected to further damage.<sup>209</sup>

Internally, the grandstand is divided over three levels: the ground level change rooms and amenities area, the partial mezzanine, and the upper seating area (Figure 36-Figure 41). The ground level of the grandstand includes utilitarian spaces associated with sporting uses, such as change rooms and toilets. The ground level is largely modern in its presentation, having been modified over the years to accommodate related sporting club needs. Early brick internal dividing walls have been altered to create larger spaces and new openings between the spaces. The floor is lined with rubber matting and the internal walls are either overpainted brick or lightweight plasterboard walls. The eastern end of the building is divided into four compartments, and these spaces are subsequently divided to provide for toilets and other amenities. The eastern bay is divided into kitchen and toilet spaces with a canteen and associated spaces, with the corridor extending directly into the adjacent community hall. Some areas, such as the entry way, retain sections of beaded timber lining boards to the ceiling, whereas other sections retain ceiling lined with flat panel with strapping over the joints.

To the northern side of the grandstand interior is a mezzanine level. The floor is enclosed by a lightweight metal balustrade surround; this level is accessed by a modern ladder. The mezzanine is partially open to the ground level. This area is largely used for storage and for services such as hot water units and air conditioning equipment, with ducting extending throughout this space. The key early feature in this area are the early timber trusses, noting some of these have been modified, and remnant timber lining to sections of ceiling and walls, mostly to the eastern end of the space. Cast metal vents are retained in several locations on the north wall, as is a single ceiling vent in the most easterly space. Brick dividing walls have been modified to create access to all spaces in the mezzanine. While retaining early fabric, such as the timber trusses and wall linings which provide evidence of original detailing, this area is in poor condition and reflects numerous ad hoc alterations undertaken over the life of the building (Figure 43-Figure 44).

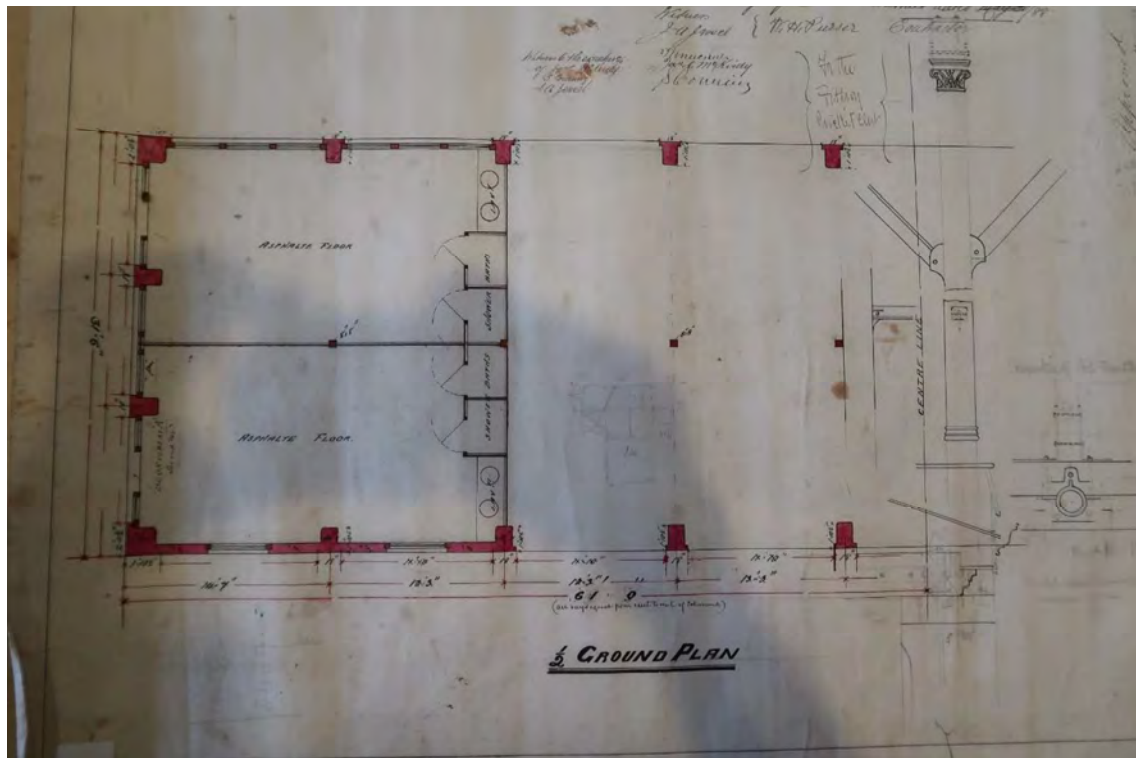


Figure 26 Half ground level plan of the 1888 grandstand  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection

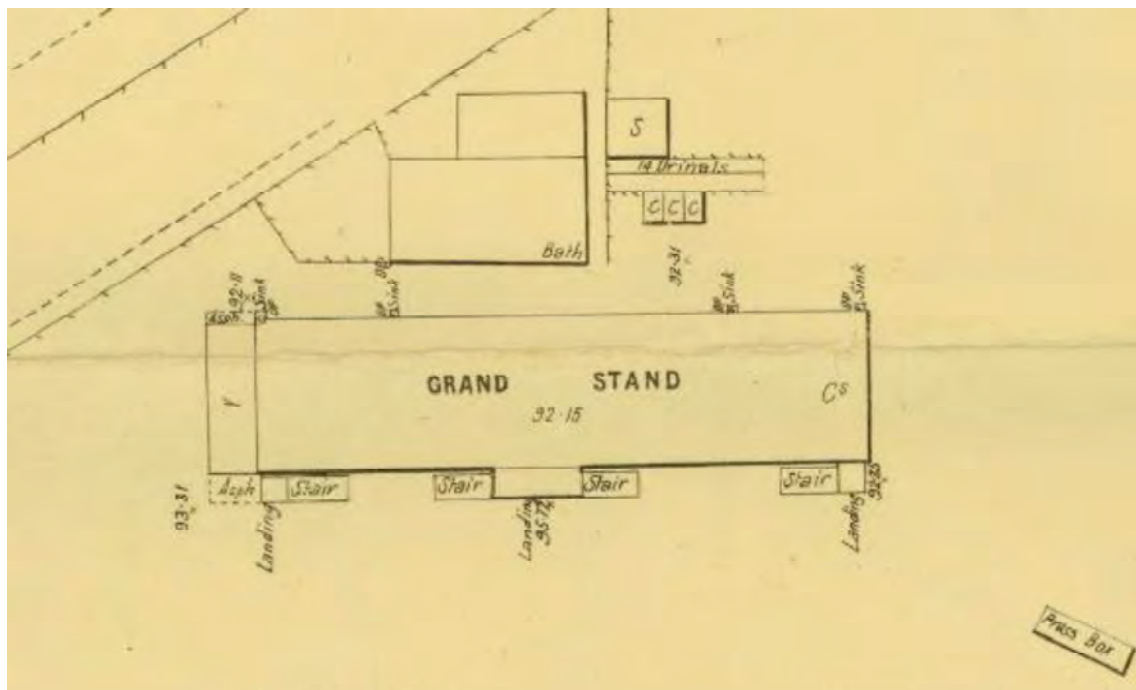


Figure 27 The 1888 grandstand and structures, including the gymnasium, to the north in the c. 1901 MMBW plan No. 1258  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection



Figure 28 Oblique aerial image of the grandstand dating to c. 1925 illustrating the structures to its north side and the early arrangement of the north facade  
Source: Land Victoria

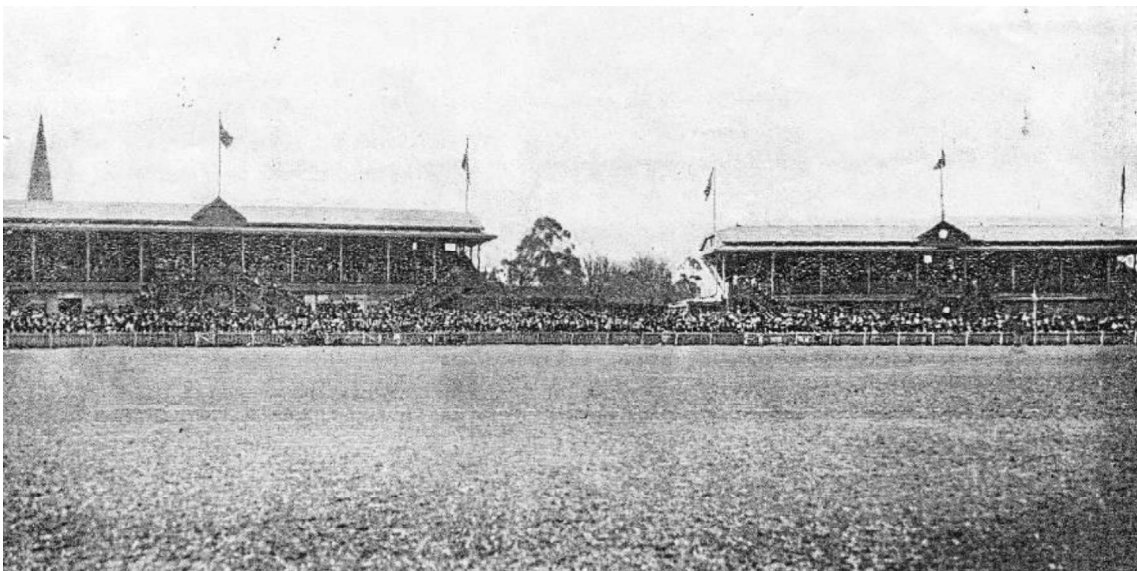


Figure 29 View of the 1905 grandstand (left) and the existing 1888 grandstand (right), c. 1913  
Source: Fitzroy Cricket Club Jubilee Annual Report 1912-13



Figure 30 Image titled Councillors Cricket Match, c. 1900-20 showing both grandstands in the background; note the bracketed timberwork to the central gable and clock of the 1888 grandstand (right) and arrangement of stairs and ground level of 1888 grandstand prior to the introduction of mounding and terracing to the front of the building  
Source: City of Yarra Library, image CL PIC 18





Figure 31 Player in front of the 1888 grandstand c. 1945-49, noting the tiered arrangement between the oval and the grandstand and the timber picket fence surrounding the oval  
Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection



Figure 32 Detail aerial image of the grandstand c. 1979 showing structures to its immediate north  
Source: Land Victoria



Figure 33 Detail of c. 1987 aerial image of the 1888 grandstand showing the relocated entrance pavilion (north-west) and altered landscape to the north  
Source: Land Victoria



Figure 34 Image of the upper viewing area, looking east, prior to the reconstruction of the seating and repair of timber flooring and other works undertaken in 1991-92  
Source: Courtesy of Terence Nott Architect (copyright Terence Nott)





Figure 35 Image of the upper viewing area, looking west, after the reconstruction of the seating and repair of timber flooring and other works undertaken in 1991-92  
Source: Courtesy of Terence Nott Architect (copyright Terence Nott)



Figure 36 Grandstand (left) and adjoining Community Hall (right) viewed from the south



Figure 37     Beneath the canopy of the grandstand looking east and showing the current condition of the seating and seating area



Figure 38     North-east view of the grandstand with the Community Hall visible to the left





Figure 39 The west elevation showing the later verandah, though a verandah is shown in this location in the c. 1901 MMBW plan



Figure 40 Internal view of the change rooms and club facilities beneath the grandstand



Figure 41 View of the ground floor of the grandstand, looking east; note the modification of the internal walls to create linked internal spaces; mezzanine is visible at left



Figure 42 Ground level change rooms with open section of mezzanine above





Figure 43 Interior view of the mezzanine area showing timber truss (at left), timber lining boards to wall and ceiling and modern services throughout



Figure 44 View of the mezzanine area showing the section open to the ground floor, partial enclosure of the truss and modern lining to wall and ceiling