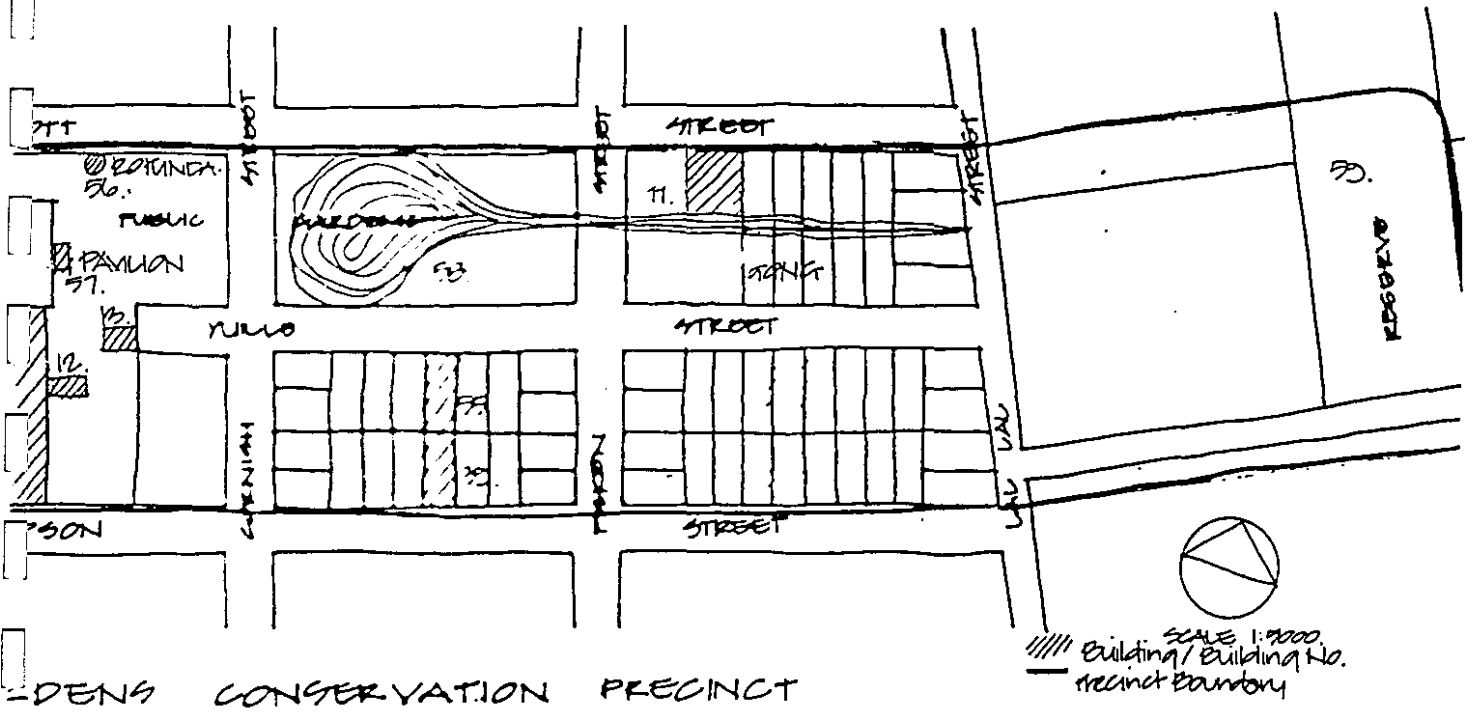


No. 3. Gardens Conservation Precinct

Boundary

The precinct is bounded by Scott Street, Inglis Street, Simpson Street and beyond Lal Lal Street, to include the public purposes reserve.



Identified Buildings and Sites

The following buildings have been identified within the precinct:

- No. 11. Former St. Nicholas Catholic Church.
- No. 12. Former Police Station.
- No. 13. Former Court of Mines.

- No. 18. Buninyong State School No. 1270.
No. 39. 'Kings Hill'.
No. 55. Former Brewery.
No. 56. Queen Victoria Rotunda.
No. 57. Pavilion.

The following sites have been identified within the precinct:

- No. 58. 'The Gong'.
No. 59. Hasties Spring.

Recommendations

This precinct is recommended for inclusion on the register of the National Estate and to be an Area of Natural Beauty to be protected under the provisions of Clause 8a and 8b of the Town and Country Planning Act. (Third Schedule).



VIEW OF THE GONG, AND GARDENS FROM FISKER STREET.

Statement of Significance

The site of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens is identified on the 1856 township map as "springs and tea tree". In August 1861, a temporary reserve was gazetted and fifty acres were withdrawn from sale. This acreage was later reduced to ten acres, and by 1889 the site was permanently reserved for the Buninyong Gardens.

The gardens were commenced in 1888 under the direction of curator, Mr Figbeitch, and plants were obtained from several sources including Dr Mueller at the Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Notably plants were also supplied by local nurseryman, Francis Moss, which is an indication of the economic diversity found in the prospering Buninyong community.

The Buninyong Gardens boasted a natural park and woodland setting and quickly became the centre for recreational activity in Buninyong. The opening of the Buninyong Railway line closely followed the establishment of the Gardens in 1889, and many picnic parties journeyed from Ballarat to the gardens.

The Gardens contain several notable structures, including the Bowling Club Pavilion, (circa 1872), the Queen Victoria Rotunda (1901) and the Public Baths (1920). The original bluestone baths basin was constructed in the 1870's and was initially surrounded by a picket fence.

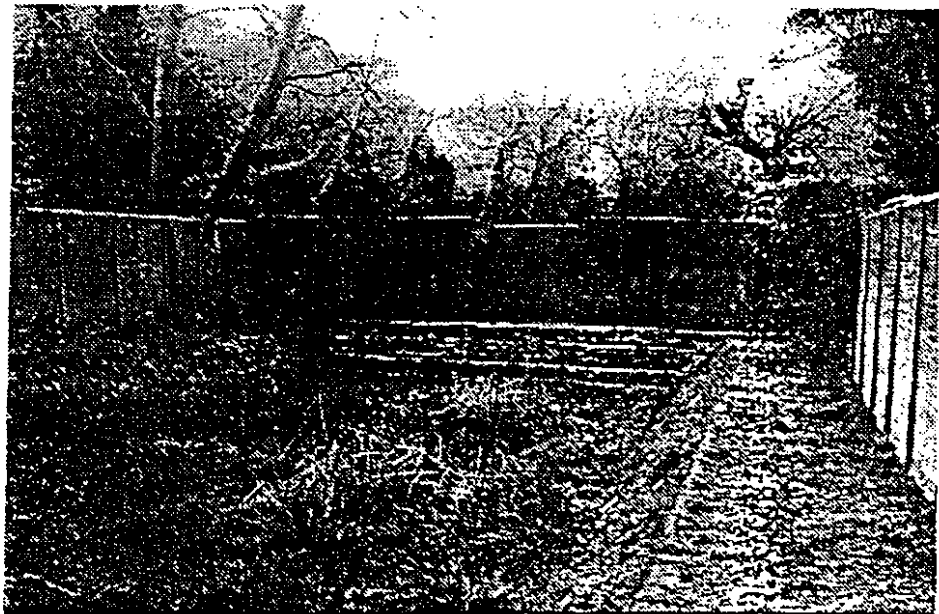
Several water features occur in the gardens, and these were initially supplied by natural springs. Later the Gong Reservoir became the supply to the ornamental lake and Public Baths.

The site of the Gardens is bounded by Inglis, Scott and Yuille Streets, however the area identified encompasses the springs valley basin to the source at Hasties Springs. This gently sloping basin is highly picturesque and terminates with the Gong Reservoir. This location was favoured for the Roman Catholic Church, and land was permanently reserved in 1862. Economic activity was also based on the natural springs, with Thomas Sheppard's Brewery and residence preceeding the gardens.

The southern portion of the gardens incorporates a Government Reserve and is the site of the early Court of Mines and Police Station. The Local Government Depot now utilizes this site, and this activity is recommended to be removed to another site.

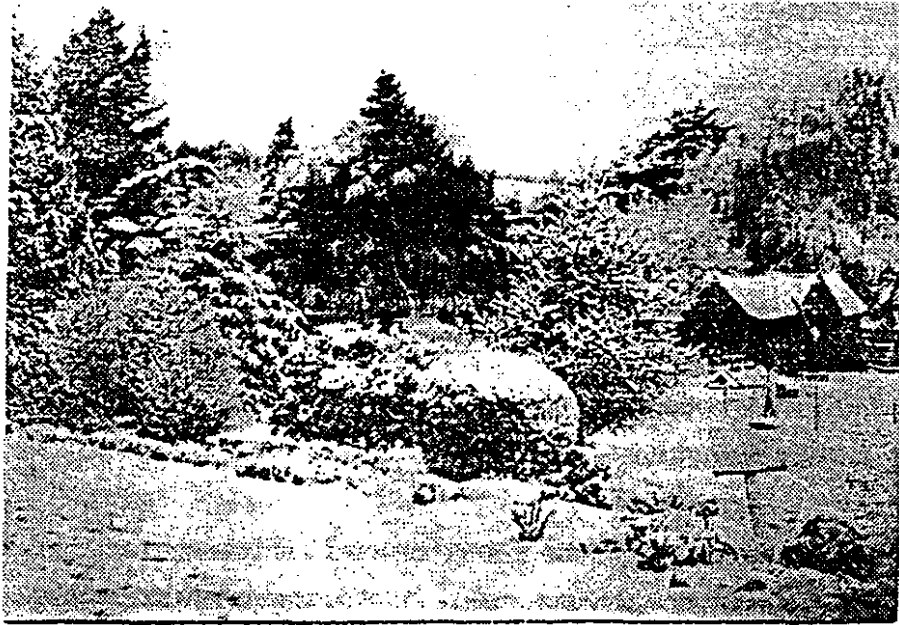
The Gardens now exhibit a mature woodland appearance and have declined. However a number of early relics and the original planting layout remain including the Half Moon Pond, the bridge structure, and the entry gates.

The Buninyong Gardens remains highly significant for its siting to utilize the natural springs and volcanic soils. Many mature shrubs and trees survive from the early Victorian planting and the surviving garden structures, in particular the Queen Victoria Rotunda, add to its significance.



FORMER PUBLIC BATHS WITH BULLGOSTONS BASIN CONSTRUCTED IN THE 1870s.
CONCRETE WALLING REPLACED THE EARLIER PICKET FENCING ABOUT 1920.

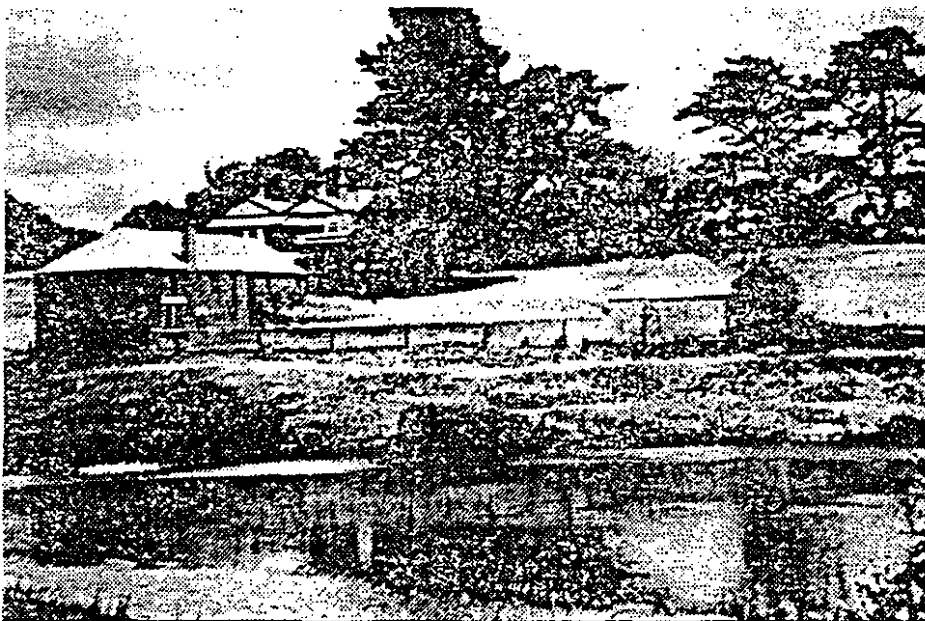
SEVERAL EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EARLIER APPEARANCE OF THE BUNNYONG GARDENS.



PH. 6 BUNNYONG GARDENS N.D. SHOWING THE BOATING CLUB PAVILION.



PH. 7 BUNNYONG GARDENS N.D. SHOWING THE HALF MOON POND.



PH. 50 THE BREWERY AND THE GONG. N.D. LOOKING SOUTH TO 'KINGSHU'.

Policy

1. A policy of garden maintenance for existing trees should be undertaken. Enhancement of the mature woodland character of the Gardens is also recommended.
2. Removal of inappropriate planting, in particular the Pittosporum Hedge at the corner north east section of the Gardens.
3. Removal of the play equipment and barbeques is recommended as these structures do not contribute to the nineteenth century character of the gardens.
4. Maintain the Queen Victoria Rotunda, and undertake repair and restoration work on the Pavilion and Public Baths.
5. Removal of the Council Depot to a more appropriate location would allow for exploitation of this area for toilets, barbeques etc. not suitable for location within the Gardens.
6. Before any new works are undertaken in the Gardens a detailed conservation analysis should be conducted.
7. A policy of maintaining the open space south of Yuille Street should be encouraged,, as it forms part of the natural spring valley.

References

P. Lumley et al "Ballarat Historic Landscapes, trees and gardens in Draft Form Melbourne 1983.

Government Gazette 29 August 1861.