

# EDINBURGH GARDENS

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BRUNSWICK STREET

NORTH FITZROY

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



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## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) provides an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the Edinburgh Gardens, North Fitzroy. The assessment supports a framework for the conservation and management policies which in turn support and guide development of a master plan for the gardens.

The CMP broadly follows the methodology recommended by the Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans and the principles set out in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter* 1999.

The CMP includes:

- ## A history which places an emphasis on the physical development of the Edinburgh Gardens and identifies major sequences of development (Chapter 2).
- ## A thorough physical survey of the buildings and hard and soft landscaping elements within the Edinburgh Gardens based on an examination of the available documentary evidence and on a physical examination of the built fabric as it exists. On the basis of this survey, levels of significance are ascribed to the various elements within the gardens. (Chapter 3 & 4).
- ## A comprehensive analysis and assessment of the significance of the Edinburgh Gardens taking into account established categories of cultural heritage significance: aesthetic, historic, scientific and social (Chapter 5).
- ## General conservation policies relating to significant elements, use and public access, repairs and maintenance, adaptation and new works, fabric and setting, views and vistas, new buildings and elements, parking, pest control, provision for the disabled, signage, and interpretation (Chapter 6).
- ## Specific conservation policies and strategies for significant individual elements and areas. These policies are framed to allow for appropriate adaptive re-use and alteration (Chapter 6).
- ## Community comments were sought by the City of Yarra to the draft Conservation Management Plan. Points discussed are those where the consultants have a different view (Chapter 7).

### Conclusion

The assessment concludes that the Edinburgh Gardens are of historical, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Yarra. The elements and areas of primary significance include the Elm avenues and rows throughout the Gardens, the Peterson Oval (former Fitzroy Cricket Ground), the English Oak Avenue opposite Rowe Street, the Holm Oak specimen and the remnant Dutch Elm circles. With regard to buildings and hard landscaping features, those of primary significance are the grandstand, the principal nineteenth century path layout and remnant basalt edging, the Freeman Street entrance gatehouse, the timber entrance pavilion, cast iron gas lamp standards and nineteenth century cast iron bollards, the tennis club pavilion and courts (excluding fabric of courts), the Fitzroy Bowling Club (excluding fabric), the war memorial arbour, the Chandler drinking fountain, the pedestal of the Queen Victoria statue and the memorial rotunda.

The conservation policy recognises that continued use of the Edinburgh Gardens for public and private recreation is fundamental to its cultural significance. The conservation policy also recognises that whilst the Edinburgh Gardens retains significant nineteenth and early twentieth century elements, they have in many other respects changed from their nineteenth century appearance. Because of this layering, or co-existence of significant elements, the policy does not encourage favouring one particular phase in the history of the Gardens over others. Policies are instead directed towards conserving significant elements and features from a variety of periods in the history of the place and to remove others, while allowing for some new elements. Overall they are intended to conserve, enhance and recover lost elements of significance in the Gardens.



## PROJECT TEAM

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Background and Brief

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Edinburgh Gardens was commissioned by the City of Yarra and has been prepared jointly by Allom Lovell & Associates and John Patrick Pty Ltd. The CMP is being prepared as part of an overall master planning process being undertaken for the refurbishment and management of the Edinburgh Gardens. The purpose of the CMP is to provide an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the gardens and its hard and soft landscape elements. The assessment is intended to provide a heritage framework which in turn will underpin and guide the development of a masterplan for the Gardens.

Beyond heritage, the masterplan also addresses a number of issues, including a vision for the Gardens, sporting and community facilities, horticultural and arboricultural, management, which variously relate to the future refurbishment of the Gardens

### 1.2 Methodology

This CMP broadly follows the format of the Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans<sup>1</sup> and the principles set out in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, 1999, adopted by Australia ICOMOS to assist in the conservation of heritage places.

The methodology involves the documentation of the overall history of the place and putting it into an appropriate context. This research is supported by a thorough physical survey of the extant elements and features, with additional research into elements which have been lost or removed from the subject area. A comparative analysis then follows, which literally compares the subject area with other similar places or developments, so as to arrive at an understanding of its relative importance or 'significance' both within the City of Yarra and the broader context of inner metropolitan parks. Based on this analysis, documentation and assessment, the conservation policies and strategies were then developed.

### 1.3 Constraints and Opportunities

#### *Constraints*

There have been a number of constraints in the preparation of this report. While the former City of Fitzroy Council Minute books are held by the Public Records Office, the lack of indexing, coupled with the incorporation of all committee meeting minutes including the gardens committee, into single reports, has meant that they were extremely difficult to access within the time and budgetary constraints of the report. This was particularly the case with smaller elements such as path edging, where there were no known key dates for the works on which to base a search. In addition, very little nineteenth and early twentieth century photographic evidence is available.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment hold the Crown Land Reserve Files. However, while the relevant file was consulted for this research, many of the early drawings were too delicate and were unable to be reproduced. Therefore, where the file has been consulted and where the only available image exists in the study by Rex Swanson of Landform Australia, these images have been reproduced and the source appropriately noted. A small number of relevant historic photographs are held in the State Library of Victoria Picture Collection and the Fitzroy local history collection at the Fitzroy branch of Yarra-Melbourne Regional Libraries.

## *Opportunities*

A broad range of issues, values and visions have arisen from an extensive community consultation programme undertaken as part of the master-planning process. Open days and community meetings of interested parties/stakeholders, and the broader community, have been held throughout the duration of the project. While a small number of issues raised do not impact directly on the heritage aspects or cultural significance of the Gardens, they are pertinent to the master-planning process. For a full analysis and discussion of these issues, the master-plan should be referred to.

The issues which relate directly to heritage have been addressed in the policy chapter and cover improved maintenance; implementation of a tree management programme; the retention and enhancement of the nineteenth century character of the Gardens; the improvement of underutilised and/or poorly maintained sections and facilities within the Gardens, such as the former depot and nursery area and ladies bowling club; the removal or replacement of poorly planned and sited intrusions such as toilet facilities and service buildings; the reinstatement of removed significant features; traffic and parking; and improvement of sporting facilities. While some of these aspects were considered by the various community groups to be essential, others could be identified as desirable. In effect, these issues have formed a ‘wish list’.

### **1.4 Location**

The Edinburgh Gardens are located in North Fitzroy and are bordered by Brunswick Street, St Georges Road, Alfred Crescent, Jamieson Street, Queens Parade, Napier Street and Freeman Street. (Figure 1)

### **1.5 Listings and Classification**

#### *Victorian Heritage Register*

The Edinburgh Gardens are not included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*, maintained by the Victorian Heritage Council other than for the Fitzroy Cricket Ground Grandstand which is included as H751. Permits will be required from Heritage Victoria for new buildings and works which affect the grandstand.

#### *Register of the National Estate*

The Edinburgh Gardens are classified as an ‘indicative place’ (database No. 1018130, file No. 2/11/020/0097) by the Australian Heritage Commission. They are not included in the *Register of the National Estate*, and there are no statutory requirements as a consequence of this listing.

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

The Edinburgh Gardens are not classified as a whole by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). However, some elements within the Gardens are classified individually. The Fitzroy Cricket Ground Grandstand was classified as a building of state significance on 3 August 1998 (File No. B6060). The North Fitzroy Railway Footbridge was classified as a building of state significance on 4 June 2001 (File No. B7125). 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 No. T11566). There are no statutory requirements as a consequence of these classifications.





**EDINBURGH  
GARDENS**

*Figure 1      Location Plan*  
Source: Melways Melbourne Directory

### *Planning Scheme*

The Edinburgh Gardens are included in the Heritage Overlay Schedule to the City of Yarra Planning Scheme (HO 213). Individually identified is the Fitzroy Cricket Ground Complex which comprises the grandstand, timber gatehouse, entrance gateway, brick gatehouse (HO 215). Planning permits will be required for new building and works which affect elements included within the Heritage Overlay.

The citations are included in Appendix B.

## **1.6 Terminology**

The conservation terminology used in this report is of a specific nature, and is defined within *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter)* as endorsed by all statutory and national heritage bodies (See Appendix A). 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 site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

*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 is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

*Preservation* means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

*Restoration* means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components 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 into the *fabric*.

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

*Use* means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at 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 area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.

*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 special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

*Meanings* denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

## 2.0 HISTORY

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### 2.1 Introduction

The emphasis of this chapter is on tracing the physical development of the Edinburgh Gardens. The chapter is based on research undertaken previously by Rex Swanson in his *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study* of 1987, with additional research as required.<sup>1</sup> It therefore attempts to identify and describe key phases of development of the Gardens.

### 2.2 Geomorphology

The area in which the Edinburgh Gardens are located is flat to undulating with a uniform shallow dark grey heavy textured expansive clay layer over basalt.<sup>2</sup> Early land use included basalt quarrying and pasture. The nearest quarry was located in the area bounded by Nicholson, Church, Rae and Alfred Streets.<sup>3</sup> Other quarries were located in Carlton, on the site of the Lee Street Primary School,<sup>4</sup> and Clifton Hill.

### 2.3 North Fitzroy – the development of a suburb

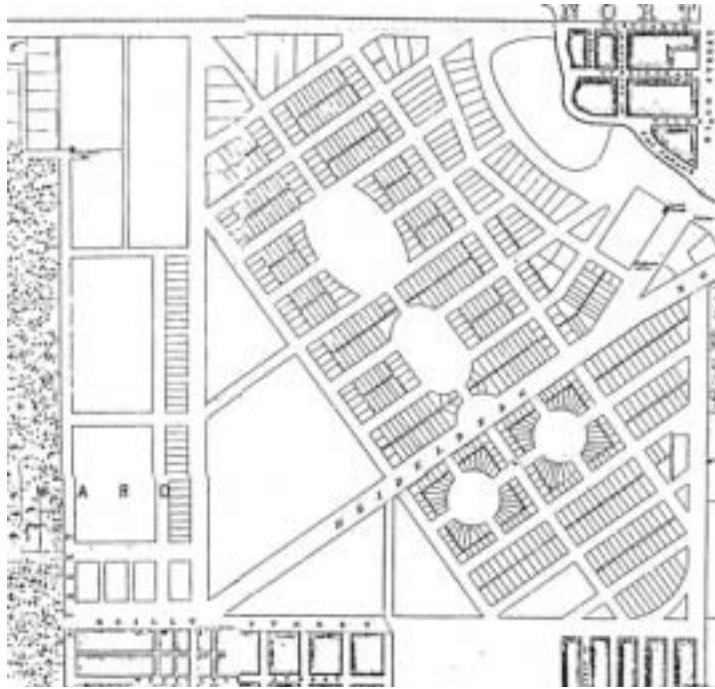
In contrast to South Fitzroy, which was undergoing vigorous development in the 1840s and 1850s, North Fitzroy's urban development was slow and followed a very different pattern. By the 1850s very little of North Fitzroy had been developed. The two areas, North Fitzroy and South Fitzroy, were separated by the Reilly Street Drain (now Alexandra Parade). North of the drain was the desolate wasteland of the Corporation of Melbourne's quarries. Nineteenth century commentator, '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>5</sup>

Despite such disincentives to residential development, the road to the village at Heidelberg, laid out by surveyor Robert Hoddle, ran through North Fitzroy. In 1850, the government constructed a bridge and metalled the Heidelberg Road (now Queens Parade). Within a few years allotments in the government township of Northcote were sold, and in the process, portions of land south along the Merri Creek, in what is now North Fitzroy, were also sold.

From the mid-1850s the colonial government's plan for subdivision of North Fitzroy unfolded. The plan specified a more spacious and gracious arrangement than the *ad-hoc* street layout of unplanned South Fitzroy. James Kearney's 1855 map of Melbourne and its suburbs shows the planned subdivision for North Fitzroy. It was prepared by Captain Andrew Clarke of the Survey Department, and comprised a series of geometric spaces aligned on an axis (Figure 2). The scheme was never realised, probably 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>6</sup> Architectural historian, Miles Lewis, suggests that perhaps traces of Clarke's grandiose plan survive in the Darling Gardens and Edinburgh Gardens.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the failure of the government to implement Clarke's plan, the eventual subdivision pattern and street layout in North Fitzroy was still vastly different from the uncontrolled development which had taken place in South Fitzroy. Streets, as laid out by the government surveyor, were more carefully ordered and much wider than those in South Fitzroy.



*Figure 2 James Kearney's 1855 map showing Captain Andrew Clarke's proposed layout for North Fitzroy.*  
Source: State Library of Victoria Map Collection

Additionally, in North Fitzroy, a higher standard of development was encouraged by allotments with a minimum size and street frontage.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.4 Sport as the Recreation of Gentlemen

In 1858, when the City of Fitzroy was declared, 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 in 1853, other institutions – such as sporting institutions – appropriate to a British city, began to take shape. As sport historian, June Senyard, notes,<sup>9</sup> already, in 1840 the Flemington race course had been formed, and in 1853 the Melbourne Cricket Club was permitted to make a cricket ground, fence it and erect a cottage pavilion on ten acres to the east of the city. While cricket was played in the summer, in August 1858, the game of football between Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College has been fixed as one of the starting points of the history of Australian football.

In Fitzroy, the gentry living along Victoria Parade and the nearby streets were involved in these initiatives. Playing cricket and football and following the horses drew residents of Fitzroy into the patterns of British sporting culture brought to the colony in its first decades of 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 were gentlemen who sought to replicate the recreational choices of Britain in Fitzroy. In 1865, for the older gentleman, the Fitzroy Bowling Club was formed in the centre of Victoria Parade.

### 2.4.1 The Impact of Athleticism and the Introduction of Organised Sport<sup>10</sup>

In the eighteenth century, England took the leadership in the world of transforming traditional games and sports into modern organised sport. Apart from the interest in establishing more regular horse-racing and cricket matches, the middle class recognised a moral value in organising games previously played by the aristocracy. Originating in the public schools, the desire to provide recreational activity for young men and young women (to a certain extent)

to make them healthy, disciplined and co-operative members of society, became educational policy.<sup>11</sup>

In Melbourne, from the 1870s, a similar sporting revolution took place. Organised sport and the educational philosophy of athleticism became part of the public school experience, the public schools were the leaders in secondary education at the time.<sup>12</sup> From the 1870s, these schools introduced, to varying degrees, a sporting program as part of their school's activities. In 1877 a Public School Committee was formed to define a common set of regulations governing sport in the constituent schools. In Melbourne, this development occurred at a time when the city was experiencing a spectacular economic boom caused by the gold rushes. In England, the expansion of organised sport was dominated by the public schools and Universities,<sup>13</sup> and the same occurred in Melbourne.

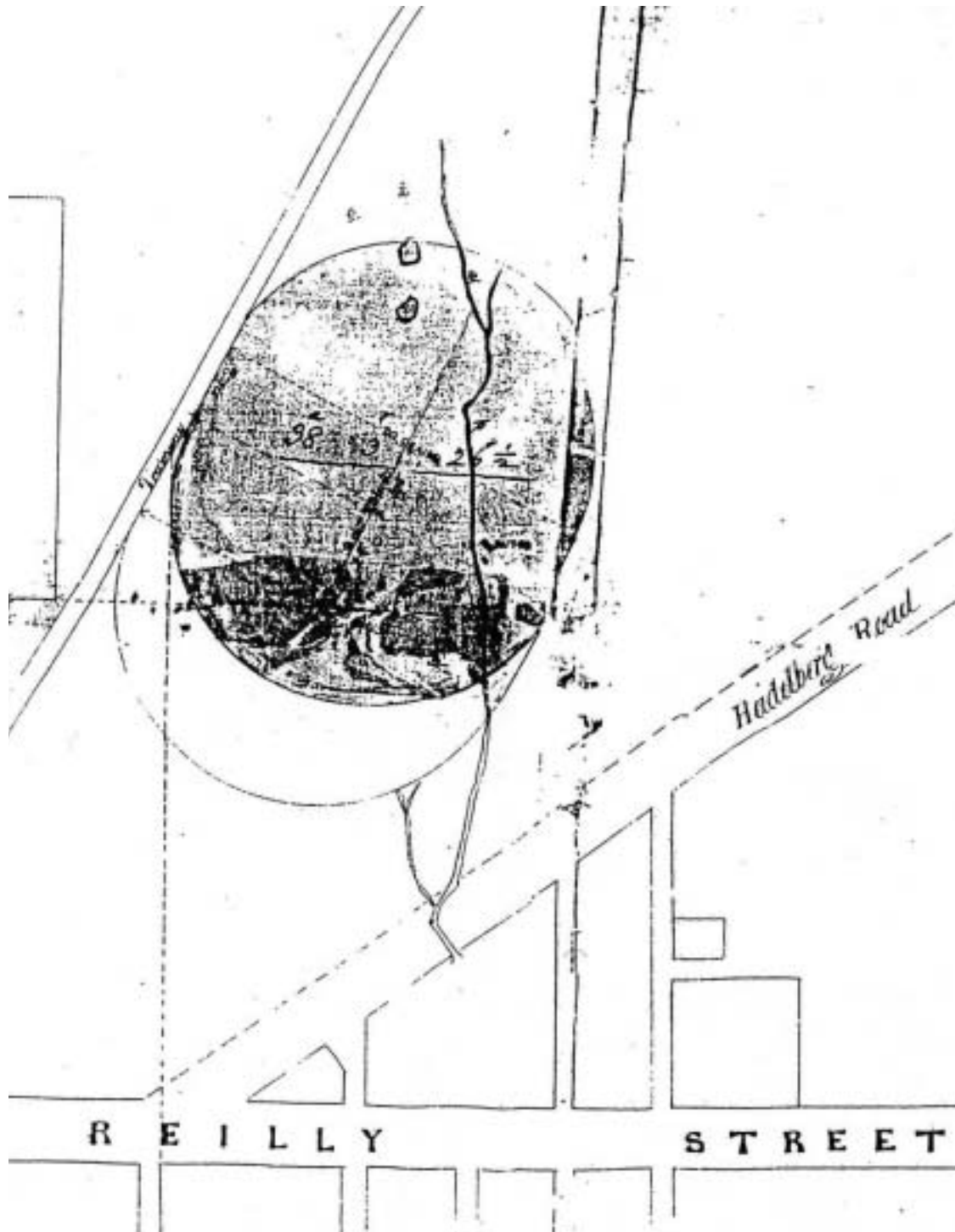
In Melbourne, with the optimism generated by the decades of expansion from the 1850s, cities like the City of Fitzroy extended the benefits of organised sport to their residents. They committed the resources of the City to organised sport because of their belief in its value in propagating desirable moral values. The Edinburgh Gardens is one of the extant sites in Melbourne where the impact of this revolution in thinking can be observed.

## **2.5 The Establishment of the Reserve: 1859-1882**

From 1854 the *Act for the Establishment of Municipal Institutions in Victoria* provided Councils with the power to establish local recreational Gardens; grants of land and monies were made available by the colonial government. The present site of the Edinburgh Gardens was unreserved Crown Land when, in January 1862, the Fitzroy Council requested an area of approximately 50 acres (20 hectares) for public recreation. This site was chosen as an alternative to a triangular site between Heidelberg Road, Reilly Street and Smith Street, temporarily reserved for public recreation in 1859.<sup>14</sup> The initial choice had been rejected when it was pointed out by an officer of the Lands Department that the reserve came within the line of fire of the nearby rifle butts used by the Collingwood Volunteer Rifles.<sup>15</sup> The rifle butts, possibly the earliest sporting facility on the site, were located in the eastern half of the reserve.

The land chosen for the reserve was swampy, with a creek running through it. A Lands Department sketch map of the area dated February 1862 (Figure 3) shows an oval shaped reserve containing billabongs, a few scattered trees and the creek running north-south (broadly following the line taken today by the path running from Jamieson Street to Falconer Street).

Shortly after the initial site choice had been rejected, under the direction of Clement Hodgkinson, the reserve size was reduced from 50 acres (20 ha) to approximately 39 acres (15.78 ha). Hodgkinson, as the Deputy Commissioner of the Lands Department, was a leading figure in the planning of Melbourne's early parks and gardens. The southern half circle of the reserve was moved back to allow for the future extension of Brunswick Street, thus finalising the location of the Gardens (Figure 3). The northern half-circle of the reserve subsequently defined Alfred Crescent while the half circle at the southern end was obliterated when the square grid of Freeman, Langton and Brunswick Streets was laid. Temporary reservation of the new site was gazetted in March 1862.



*Figure 3*      *Detail of a Lands Department sketch, 1862, showing the modified plan.*  
Source: Reserve File RS360, DSE, Melbourne, reproduced in Landform  
Australia, *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*.<sup>16</sup>

In September 1862, the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club was given permissive occupancy of 9 acres (3.6 hectares) of the reserve. The following year, The Prince of Wales Cricket Club was given permissive occupancy of 6 acres (2.4 hectares), directly to the south of the Collingwood ground. A Lands Department map of 1867 shows the division of the two grounds (Figure 4). The two cricket clubs amalgamated in 1872 and were given permissive occupancy of the combined site of 15 acres (6 ha) with sporting activities becoming focused on the southern oval. The balance of the reserve at this time appears to have remained undeveloped land, enclosed by a post and rail fence, and used for grazing by the Fitzroy City Council.<sup>17</sup> It was around this time that the Gardens acquired their name. Following the attempt on the life of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's younger son, on his visit to Australia in 1867-68, the council decided to commemorate the Gardens in his name.<sup>18</sup>

Early improvements undertaken by the cricket club included building, fencing, trenching and planting works, the latter comprising 'a magnificent assortment of trees...obtained from Dr von Mueller'.<sup>19</sup> Director of the Botanic Gardens from 1857-1873 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>20</sup>

A Lands Department memorandum dated 26 July 1876 noted that the Fitzroy Cricket Club had, to date, expended some £450 on improvements.<sup>21</sup> It also states that the remainder of the grounds was enclosed 'by a post and two rail fence at a cost of £90'.<sup>22</sup> The development of the ground during this period is shown in a sketch map submitted to the Lands Department in 1877, with a letter requesting permission to charge admission to the ground (Figure 5). The plan shows the playing ground encircled by a footpath/running track and seating. Sited along the Brunswick Street boundary is 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>23</sup>

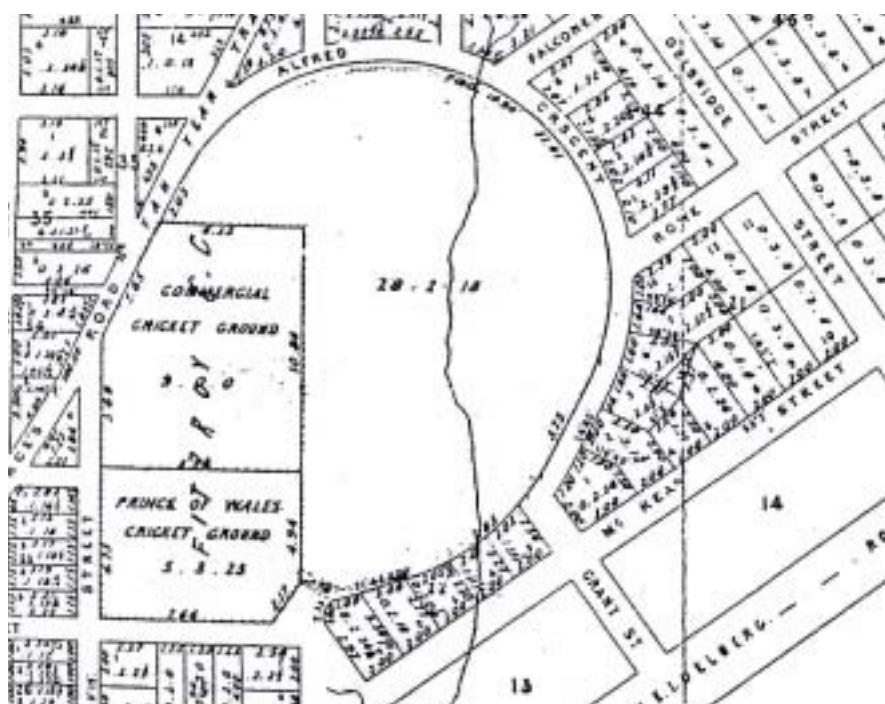


Figure 4 Portion of Lands Department lithographed map F99 of Fitzroy and Brunswick, October, 1867 showing the recreation reserve with two cricket grounds.

Source: Reserve File RS360, DSE, Melbourne, reproduced in Landform Australia, *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*.

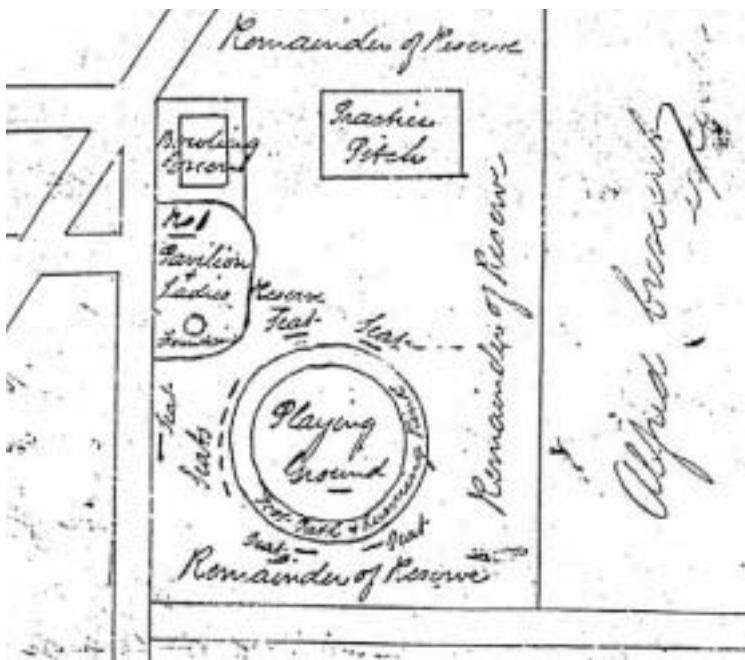


Figure 5 Sketch map of the portion of the reserve occupied by the cricket club, October 1877.

Source: Reserve File RS360, DSE, Melbourne, reproduced in Landform Australia, *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*.

Directly to the north of the ladies reserve is a bowling green (established in 1877 on the site of the existing bowling club) while practice pitches occupy the north-east corner. The memorandum also refers to a caretakers' residence, possibly that marked on an 1883 plan, in the approximate location of the existing gardener's house.<sup>24</sup>

In October 1877, a committee of management, comprising members of the cricket club, was appointed to control the area occupied by the club. In September of the following year (1878) regulations were gazetted appointing Fitzroy Council as committee of management for the remainder of the reserve.<sup>25</sup>

The first of many attempts to appropriate Edinburgh Gardens parkland occurred in 1881, with the proposed excision of 2 acres (.8 hectares) east of the cricket club, for a school site. Fitzroy Council promptly expressed its opposition, noting that 'the scheme of drainage for the greater part of Fitzroy north runs through the said land'.<sup>26</sup> The present site of the school, on the north side of Alfred Crescent, was subsequently chosen. The integrity of the Edinburgh Gardens was again under threat when, in October of the same year, when the Railways Department requested a strip of land running east-west through the Gardens for the purpose of a railway reserve. The proposal was subsequently amended so that the railway ran north-south through the gardens, terminating at Queens Parade (then known as Heidelberg Road). The railway line can be seen marked out on the 1882 plan of the Gardens (Figure 6) however, the Railways Department request lapsed and the matter was not to resurface again until 1888.

On 24 October 1881, the land were permanently reserved as a site for a public park and garden. A Crown Grant was issued on the 12 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>27</sup> It was



not until June 1883 that the remainder, comprising a smaller section at the northern end of the Gardens, was permanently reserved. By this time Alfred Crescent had been continued around the south-east boundary of the park, linking up with Freeman Street.

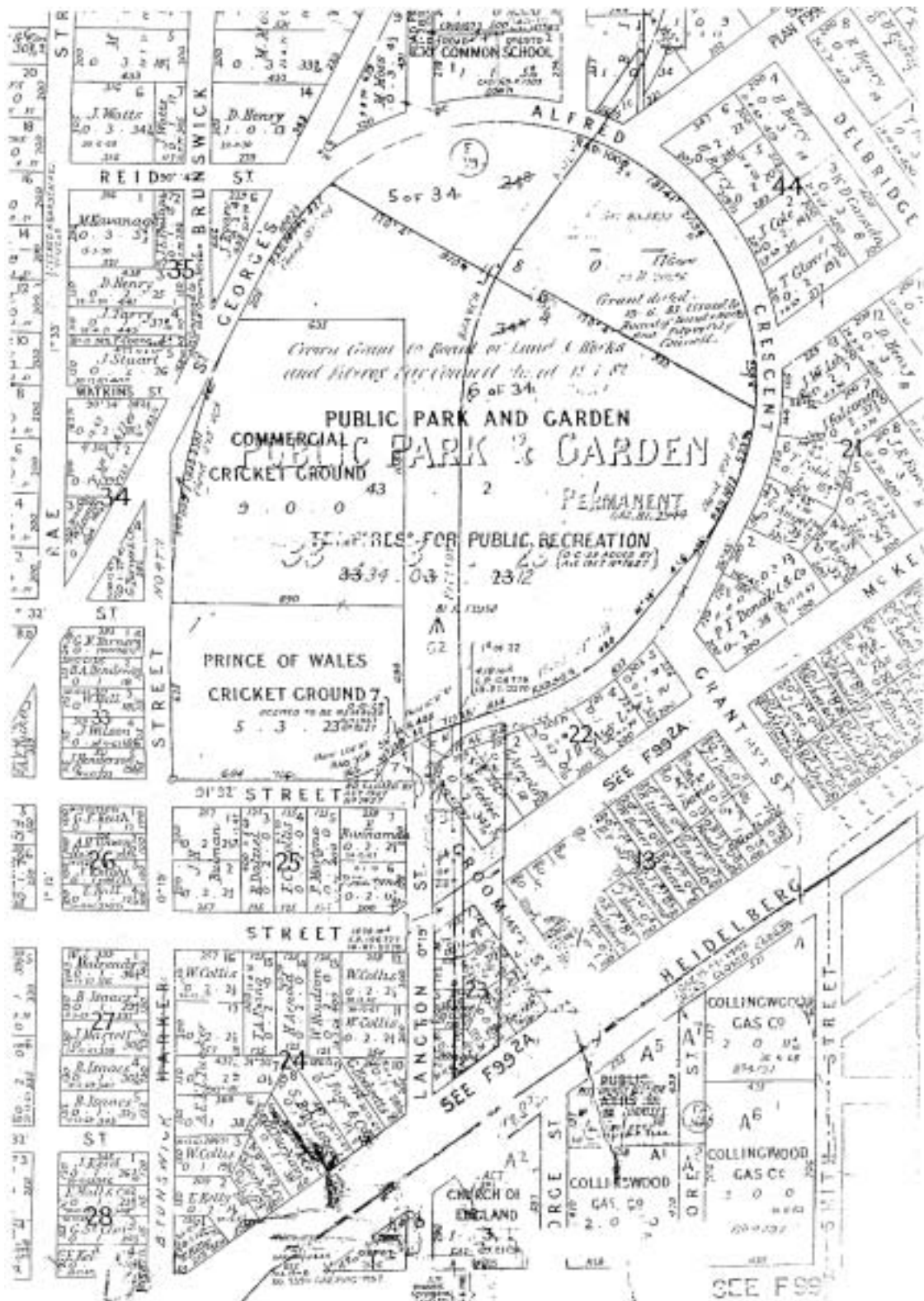


Figure 6 Plan of the 1882 Crown Grant  
Source: Willys Keeble, Architect & Conservation Consultant

The 1882 Plan (Figure 6) clearly indicates the two cricket grounds – the Commercial and the Prince of Wales – and their acreage, though the clubs had merged in 1872. The plan does not name the area as the Edinburgh Gardens, but simply as the Public Park and Garden.<sup>28</sup> The recreation reserve had appeared on an earlier 1867 Lands Department plan of Fitzroy. However, the allocation of this acreage followed a pattern that had been established by the Superintendent of the Colony, Charles Joseph La Trobe in the 1840s. Reserves such as the Edinburgh Gardens, served as symbols of community ‘development’.<sup>29</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>30</sup>

While the reserve had been established as a public park and garden, the boundaries were clearly set that only a portion of it should be used for sporting activities, such as cricket. This portion was, after all, approximately one third of the available land. While no evidence has come to light to verify any explicit policy with regard to the ratio of sporting and recreation ground available, it appears the Gardens evolved in this way to everyone’s satisfaction, certainly in the earliest days of their existence.

## **2.5.1 Edinburgh Gardens: a Site for Nineteenth Century Sporting Clubs<sup>31</sup>**

### *Cricket and Cricket Spectating*

By the 1870s, as Senyard argues,<sup>32</sup> the revolution in the organisation of sport that had begun in England in the eighteenth century had been taken up in Melbourne with enthusiasm, and those involved were at the forefront in the world in giving sport its modern shape. From the late 1860s cricket and football began to assume the structure of associations with constituent clubs entering teams that usually played each Saturday of a season. This was quite different from the scene of the 1850s. Now, in the interests of competition, teams were graded and placed in an ascending order of skill. In 1872, the Fitzroy Cricket Club was formed from the amalgamation of the Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club and the Prince of Wales Cricket Club and the Fitzroy Cricket Club emerged as a major site for the development of modern cricket. Fitzroy was always part of the strongest cricket competition until, in 1895, the Victorian Cricket Association was formed and Fitzroy became a club in the District competition.

Cricket became a spectator sport in the latter part of the nineteenth century. From 1862, when an estimated crowd of 25,000 turned out to see the first English side to visit the colonies, cricket attracted an audience. This audience peaked for Test cricket (organised from 1877) and for inter-colonial games, but there were regular crowds for the most matches between the strongest clubs, especially from 1895 with the formation of the District competition.<sup>33</sup>

### *Australian Rules Football and the Fitzroy Football Club*

In Australian football, the same process of organising interested teams into regular competition had begun<sup>34</sup> as Senyard notes.<sup>35</sup> In 1877, the Victorian Football Association was formed and it became an urgent matter for Fitzroy to show its community identity by forming a club to represent the suburb. In 1883, the Mayor of Fitzroy chaired a meeting to form a Football Club. The Football Club negotiated with the Cricket Club to share the oval in Edinburgh Gardens. Before the season opened in 1884, the importance of the decision was reported in the *Australasian*:

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>36</sup>

The 1880s to 1900 period of the Gardens development is also marked by the inception of the Fitzroy Football Club. The Cricket Club had been approached in 1882 regarding the formation of a football club, and in September 1882 they were granted approval to extend the ground to allow for football games.<sup>37</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 colours of blue cap and knickerbockers, maroon jersey and hose were subsequently adopted and the club was admitted to the Victorian Football Association.

The first football match at the Brunswick Street ground took place in September 1883,<sup>38</sup> however the participants were the Melbourne and Carlton clubs. Fitzroy's first game was against the Richmond Union Junior Football Club on April 26 1884. A crowd of some one thousand people saw the home team score 14 behinds to their opponents 2 behinds.<sup>39</sup>

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 notes that paths were 'already worn by feet'.<sup>40</sup> The Surveyor-General subsequently recommended the removal of the fences whilst generally praising the efforts of the committee of management:

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>41</sup>

In c.1887, an ornamental fountain was erected in the north-west corner of the Gardens and connected to the main path network by four radiating paths. The fountain was constructed following a council meeting on 17 May 1887, the minutes record that 'a fountain be erected in the Edinburgh Gardens, to be called the Jubilee Fountain, at a cost not exceeding £100'.<sup>42</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 13).

The plan form of the cricket ground oval had been largely fixed in its present configuration by 1887. The popularity of cricket and football at the Brunswick Street ground continued to grow, providing the cricket club with the financial means to construct a substantial new grandstand. Completed in 1888, the grandstand was designed by the prominent architect Nathaniel Billing<sup>43</sup>. Other works to the ground included the relocation of the cricket pavilion to the east side of the ground, below the site of the present day tennis courts. An old timber stand was also moved to the eastern side of the ground but was later pulled down. Additional sporting facilities were provided with establishment of the tennis club in 1888.<sup>44</sup>

### *Football Spectating*

Australian rules football undoubtedly attracted large crowds and each week, crowds of thousands began to be recorded. In October 1872, the *Australasian* attested to the power of the game:

Six or 7,000 people assembled to witness this context ... a stranger to this amusement would find it hard to believe that it is only a football match in which such great interest is being displayed.<sup>45</sup>

This was a Melbourne versus Carlton game. Throughout the 1870s, attendances peaked for those matches while the rest generally attracted from one to two thousand spectators.

In the 1880s, crowds spiralled. Some games attracted huge crowds. In August 1890, the 30,000 barrier was surpassed. The match between South Melbourne and Carlton attracted a crowd of 32,595. The *Argus* commented with some pride, 'In these days of "records" as showing the ever-increasing popularity of our game, it might not be out of place to set forth here that the match Carlton v South Melbourne played on the Melbourne Cricket-ground on August 1, 1890, drew together the largest assemblage that has ever been present at a football match in any part of the world'.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Lawn Bowls*

In 1877, the North Fitzroy Bowling Club built two rinks in the Edinburgh Gardens. In July 1880, the Victorian Bowling Association was formed with delegates from Melbourne, Prince Alfred (St Kilda), West Melbourne, Carlton, Richmond, Richmond Union, Victoria, 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 élite level. In this development, the North Fitzroy Bowling Club was a major voice.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Tennis*

In 1894, a Fitzroy Tennis Club was formed, only twenty years after Major Wingfield had patented the game in England. As with other sports, the rules of the game were only 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>48</sup> In 1884, a pennant competition had been established in Melbourne and the Fitzroy Tennis Club contributed to the establishment of tennis as a major competitive sport in the city.

#### *Baseball*

In the United States, baseball replaced cricket as the summer game in the 1860s and the game was inevitably linked with American immigrants when it was played on the goldfields. The Spalding tour of December 1888, when two American professional teams played in Melbourne and Ballarat, was a major impetus to the introduction of the sport. Harry Simpson, one of the baseballers, stayed on to organise the game in Australia. The next year, in 1889, a baseball league was established in Melbourne and the first inter-colonial match was played between South Australia and Victoria in Melbourne.

Because the skills required were seen as similar to those of cricket, the sport gained a following amongst cricketers and the first baseball clubs were sections of the cricket clubs. East Melbourne Cricket Club emerged as a stronghold of the sport and with the Melbourne Cricket Club dominated the Baseball Association pennant competition.<sup>49</sup> By 1904-5, after some variations, there was a regular competition between East Melbourne, the MCC, South Melbourne, Fitzroy, Carlton, Prahran, Richmond and St Kilda. There was sufficient enthusiasm for this to expand and in 1907 there were sixteen teams in the Victorian competition.

## **2.6 Paths, Tree Avenues and the Railway: 1883-1900**

In July 1883, a Committee of Management for the Gardens was appointed, comprising representatives of the Board of Lands and Works and the Fitzroy Council, with one member nominated by the Minister. Evidence that Clement Hodgkinson, who was instrumental in establishing the garden, has not been found to support the suggestion he was also a member of the Committee of Management.<sup>50</sup> The COM and the Council agreed to contribute £250 per annum towards the improvement and maintenance of the Gardens. The separate committee of management responsible for the cricket ground area continued at this time.<sup>51</sup>

### *Paths and Tree Avenues*

Work on the laying out of the Gardens network of pathways and avenue plantings appears to have begun in earnest soon after the formation of the Committee of Management. A report prepared in December 1883 for the Lands Department by the Committee, records 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>52</sup>

A plan of the Gardens, which was prepared in 1883 to accompany the tender documents for the trenching works, (Figure 7) shows the beginnings of the main path network. Entry points to the Gardens correspond to the surrounding pattern of radiating streets. The paths take routes which, as Swanson notes, ‘clearly reflect the practical, through traffic needs of pedestrians rather than a garden designers aesthetic predilections’.<sup>53</sup> The path running broadly east-west from Rowe Street to St Georges Road, and the main north-south paths are shown. The creek bisecting the eastern half was filled in around this time and an underground brick culvert laid to the west.<sup>54</sup> The creek route today corresponds to the path running north from Jamieson Street to Falconer Street and the two bridge crossings shown on the plan are now marked by path intersections.

Perimeter fences (thought to be timber picket fences) with entrance gates, the northern oval and southern cricket ovals, the bowling green, cricket pavilion and a gardener’s dwelling with a fenced yard (on the site of the existing gardener’s cottage) are shown on the 1883 plan (Figure 7). Various circular and rectangular plan shapes shown scattered randomly about the eastern half of the Gardens are possibly garden beds.

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>55</sup> Wide paths were therefore required and those in the Edinburgh Gardens were up to 14 feet in width (4.3 metres).

The planting of the avenue trees appears to have begun in 1884. Correspondence from the Department of Agriculture dated 12 June 1884 records the approval for the plantings in the Edinburgh Gardens.<sup>56</sup> Prior to planting, the trenches dug alongside the paths were filled with street scrapings, a common practice at that time and believed to improve the soil.

Despite the extensive improvements undertaken in the early 1880s, the Council continued to deposit garbage, rubbish and dead animals in the Gardens. In response to the complaints of local citizens, one Councillor was to comment that ‘only seven horses have been buried in the Gardens during the past six years and none of them less than four feet below the surface’.<sup>57</sup> The Minister for Lands subsequently directed that the rubbish dumping should stop.<sup>58</sup>

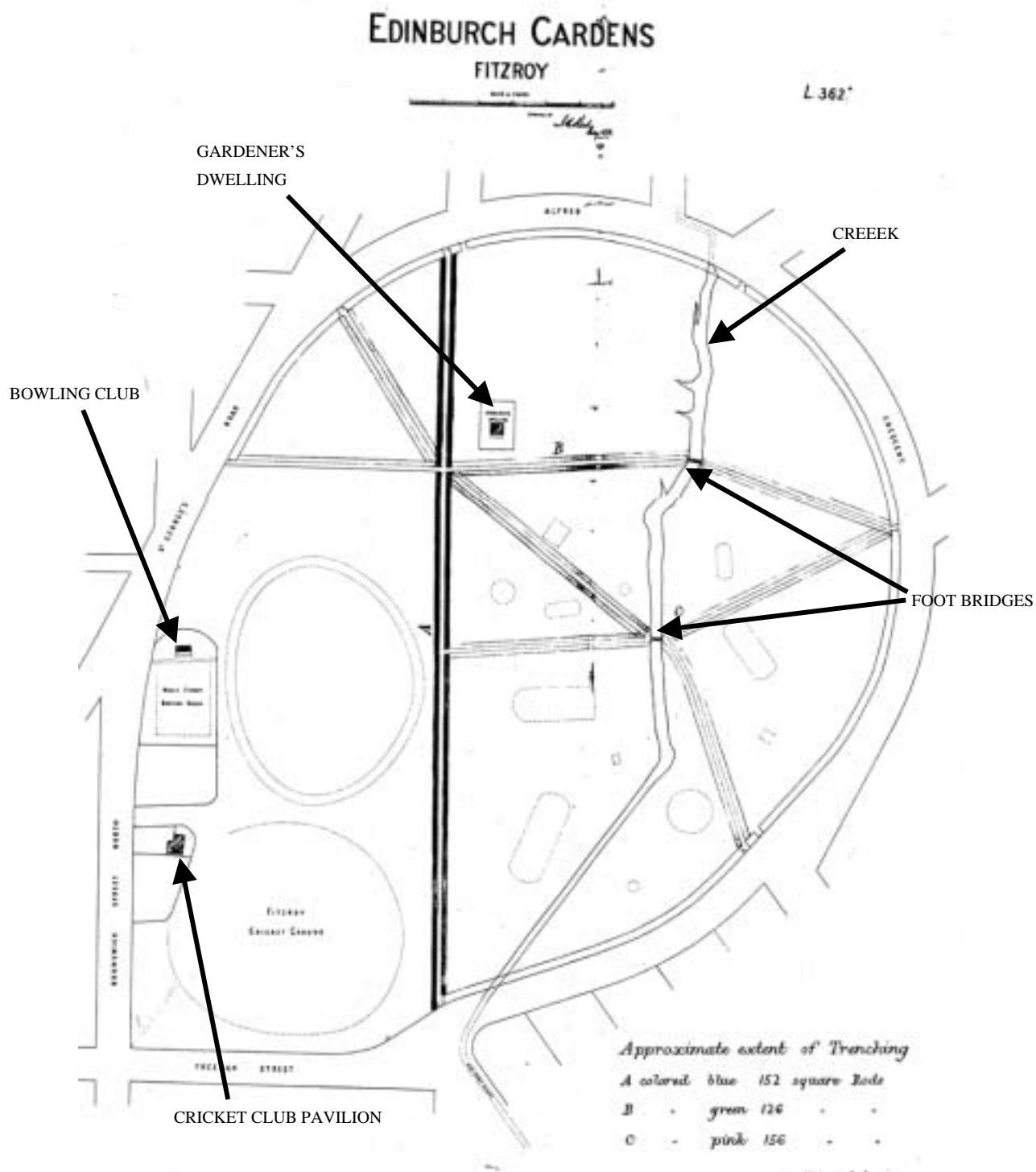


Figure 7 Plan of the Edinburgh Gardens dated 1883.  
Source: VPRS 44/P 745, Public Record Office, Melbourne.

### *Construction of the Railway Line*

Further development of the Gardens was severely curtailed by the construction of the railway line running through the centre of the Gardens in 1888. During the decade of the 1880s, railways legislation authorised the construction of 475 miles (765 kilometres) of new line in Victoria. This was achieved by the passing of the *Railway Construction Act* (No. 682) in December 1880.<sup>59</sup> Among those authorized were the North Melbourne to Coburg (via Royal Park) and the Clifton Hill to Alphington lines.

As work on these lines began, parliamentarian and notorious land boomer, Thomas Bent, became Minister of Railways. His *Railway Construction Act* (No. 821) of 1884 (known colloquially as the '*Octopus*' *Bill*) proposed the construction of sixty-five individual extensions to the network. The *Bill* promised lines to all electorates in order to gain electoral support.<sup>60</sup> It also allowed for the construction of a link from Alphington to Oakleigh – the Outer Circle Railway, and a link between Royal Park and Clifton Hill, with branches to Fitzroy and Collingwood – the Inner Circle Railway.

The Inner Circle line opened on 8 May 1888, with a terminus on each of the branch lines at Fitzroy and Collingwood.<sup>61</sup> As its name suggested, the Inner Circle progressed in a semi-circular formation after leaving the Coburg line slightly north of the 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>62</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>63</sup> A second spur ran southwards from Clifton Hill Station as far as Johnston Street, Collingwood.

The passenger service on the Fitzroy line of the Inner Circle line was short-lived. Although a platform had been built as part of the railway siding to serve the anticipated crowds attending the Fitzroy Football Ground in Brunswick Street, these expectations were never met. In reality, neither of the spur lines could be used for anything but goods traffic, and did not advantage the residents of Fitzroy greatly.<sup>64</sup> After traffic on the Inner Circle line declined, 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>65</sup>

#### **2.6.1 Further Developments to the Edinburgh Gardens**

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 note the purchase of 5,000 Hawthorn 'quicks' or cuttings, with more purchased in subsequent years.<sup>66</sup> Swanson surmises that in addition to being planted alongside the railway line, the hedges of Hawthorn were sited elsewhere in the Gardens, including possibly along the boundary fence.<sup>67</sup>

*Annual Reports* for 1894-95 note the following additions to the park:

- ## a one room extension to the caretaker's cottage;
- ## four drinking fountains (the location and type is not specified);
- ## a new 'circle' on the eastern side of the railway fenced in iron picket planted with flowers and shrubs.



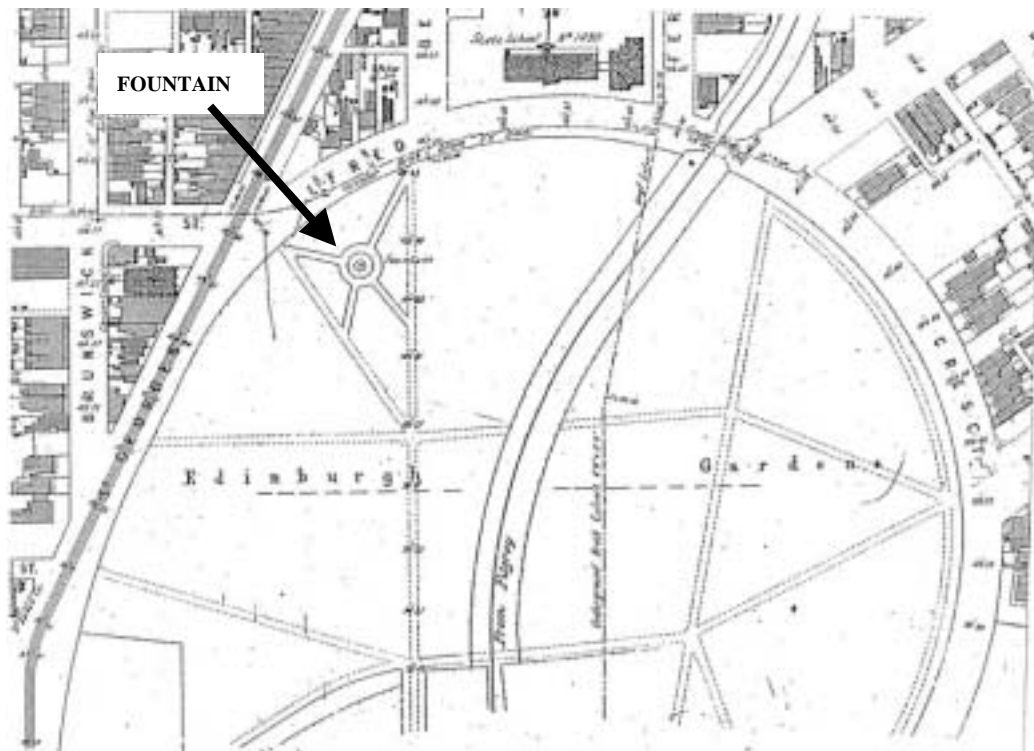


Figure 8 Portion of MMBW Plan 50 (northern section) c.1900 (Scale: 160 feet to 1 inch)  
Source: State Library Map Collection

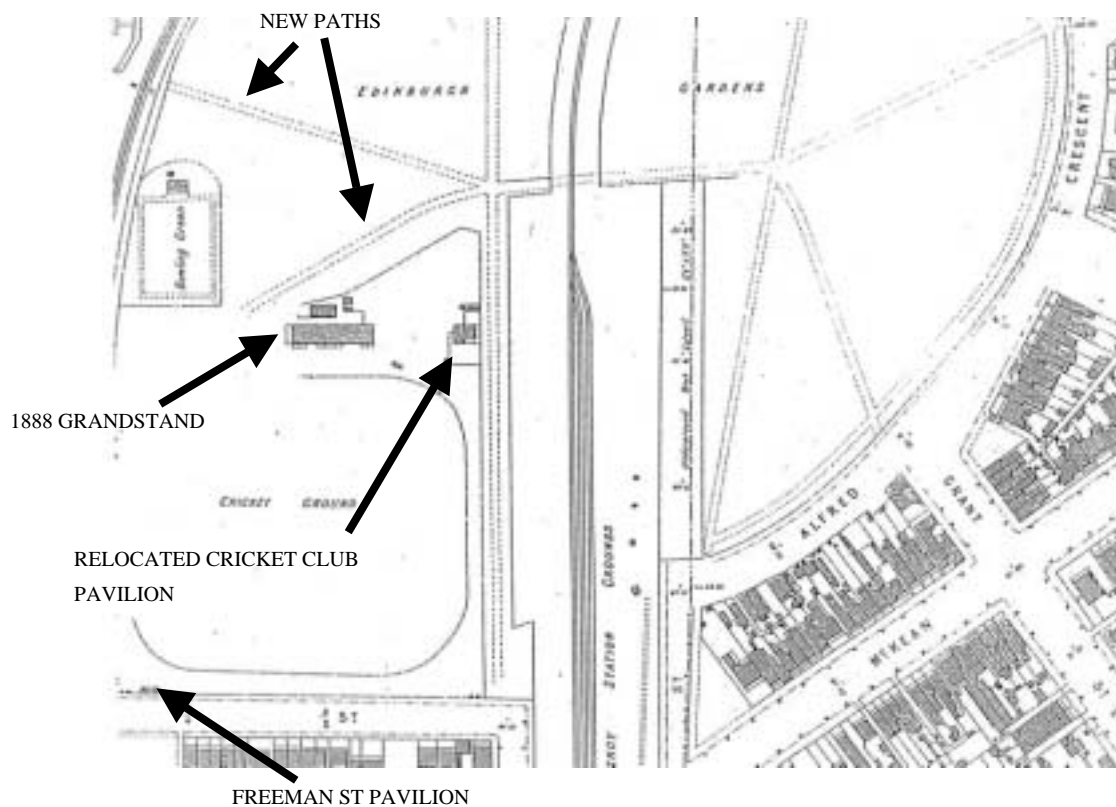


Figure 9 Portion of MMBW Plan 29 (southern section) c.1896 (Scale: 160 feet to 1 inch)  
Source: State Library Map Collection

The 'circle' does not appear on the MMBW plan of c. 1900 (Figure 9) but is likely to be either the circular garden bed in the north-east of the gardens or the planting around the ornamental pond (Figure 10). It is also noted in the *Annual Report* for the year 1894-95, that storm water run-off from Rowe Street was carried into the Gardens; it has been suggested that the ornamental pond later erected in the eastern side of the Gardens was used to store this water.<sup>68</sup> The Committee began selling grass for revenue in this financial year, a common practice in Melbourne's parks and gardens during that time. Details of the nature of the sale of grass have not been located.

By 1900 there had been a number of changes to the path system, as shown in MMBW plans 1896 and 1900. The northern oval was removed and two additional paths were created to the north and south of the bowling club, intersecting at the main north-south path.

The paths were possibly constructed in response to the resident's petition of 1887. In the centre of the Gardens, a diagonal path located near the current site of the Queen Victoria memorial, was also removed. The 1900 plan indicates that the area occupied by the bowling club had expanded, the fence line differing from that shown in the 1896 plan. The Freeman Street pavilion, constructed c. 1895, is discernible on the south side of the oval.

## 2.7 The Growth of Fitzroy

Fitzroy, Melbourne's first suburb, was made up of a mixture of professionals, merchants, clerks, shop assistants and labourers.<sup>69</sup> Its main development occurred from the 1870s until the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence, various housing types from the Victorian and Edwardian periods are represented within the Precinct. The areas which developed first, prior to 1890, have the largest number of single and double-story attached dwellings: these are best represented in the area near Brunswick, Rae, Birkenhead and Best Streets.

The Clifton Ward grew as an exclusively residential enclave. North Fitzroy, and especially the streets around the Edinburgh Gardens, became the favoured area for industrialists and land speculators to reside.<sup>70</sup> Most of the Fitzroy councillors of the 1880s and 1890s invested there – indeed, it was a speculators' paradise. Some of the councillors also lived in the area. 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 a contractor, W H Deague, also lived around the Gardens.<sup>71</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 defined the north and east sides of the Gardens, has a large number of substantial, and largely intact, mostly double-storey Victorian and Edwardian dwellings which overlook the Gardens. They provide pleasant vistas from around the Crescent.

Commercial development – which includes a number of Victorian and, to a lesser extent Edwardian, shops with residences above – is concentrated in St Georges Road, near Scotchmer Street and in Queens Parade. Small retail strips are in Nicholson Street, and further north near Holden Street. Banks, hotels and post offices are also represented. Notable retail buildings include the Gladstone Buildings (1888) and a row of ten two-storey Italianate shops and residences with a corner pediment and paired, arched window openings. Along with hotels, and to some extent public buildings, banks were amongst the largest and most imposing of nineteenth century buildings, and most were located on prominent corner sites. The North Fitzroy Primary School in Alfred Crescent, directly opposite the Edinburgh Gardens, is a single-storey polychromatic brick Gothic revival building with a tower and St Brigid's Roman Catholic Church (1869) are notable non-residential buildings in the area.

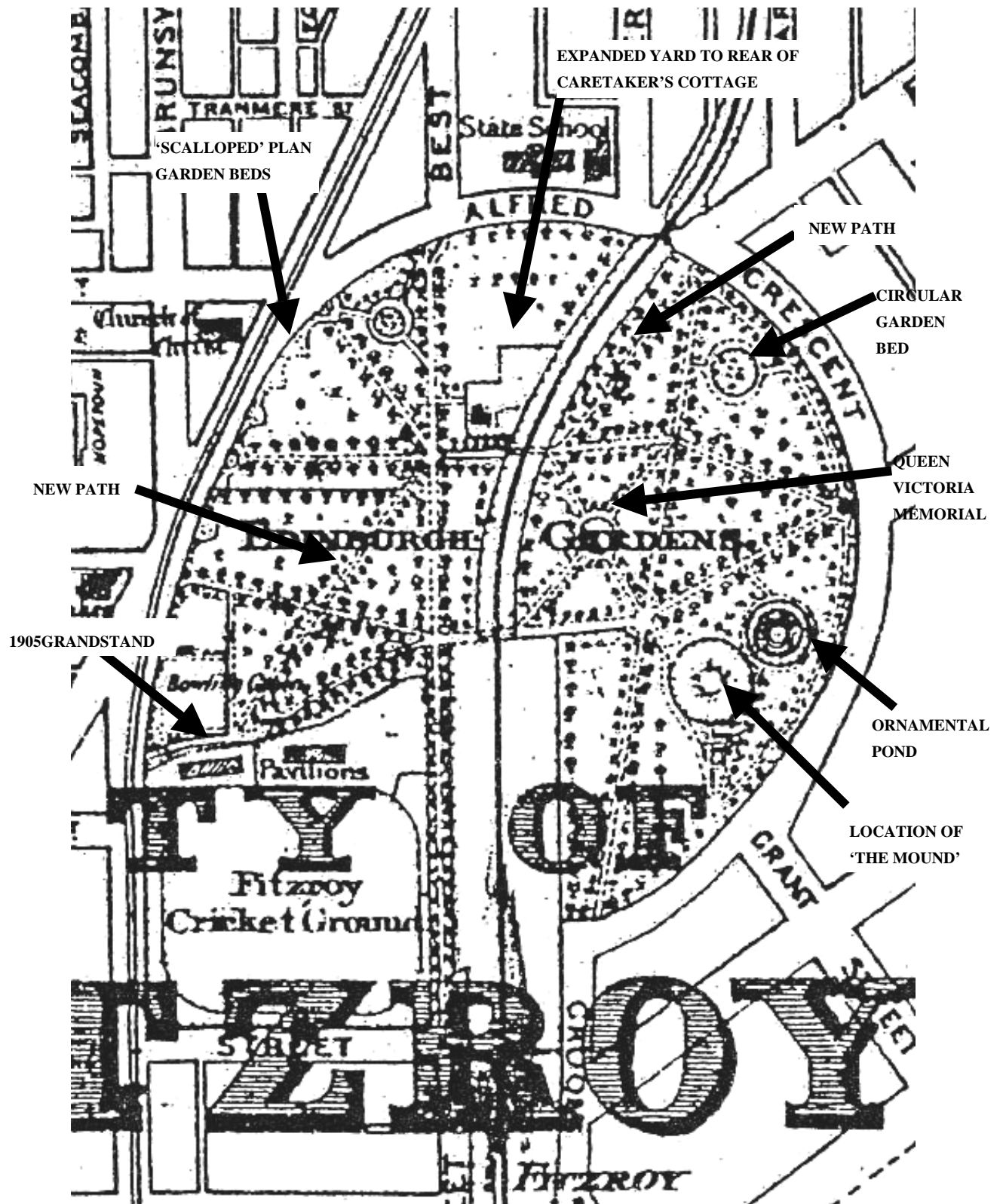


Figure 10 Detail of an unidentified map of northern suburbs, c. 1905, showing the avenue plantings and other features of the Edinburgh Gardens. (Scale 1 inch equals 10 chains)

Source: Reproduced in *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*

### **2.7.1 The Development of the Gardens: 1901-1916**

From Federation to the First World War, a number of additions were made to the Edinburgh Gardens. These are indicated on an unidentified map of the northern suburbs dated c.1905 (Figure 10). In the western half of the Gardens two new paths were laid, the first along the eastern boundary of the bowling club. The second path runs diagonally from the south-east corner of the bowling club to the main north-south path.

In the eastern half of the Gardens, an additional path runs from the Falconer Street entrance to a railway crossing within the Gardens. South of this path is the site of the former Queen Victoria monument, originally comprising a statue of Queen Victoria in the centre of a circular garden bed with two intersecting diagonal paths. The statue was erected in 1902, though documentary evidence to confirm this date has not been located. In the north-east corner of the Gardens is a circular garden bed, possibly the one referred to in 1894-85 annual reports.

The Best Street entrance to the main north-south path appears to be of a 'horseshoe' configuration, similar to that which exists today. No other plans of the period shows the entrance in this form; and it is not appear again until a 1945 aerial (Figure 19). In the south-east of the Gardens an ornamental pond is encircled by a garden bed and path containing a small island planted with palms and other shrubbery. Adjacent to the pond is a large circular feature with a serpentine path skirting its eastern edge. It is likely that this is 'the mound', a grassy hillock which is shown to occupy this location in a plan dated 1926 (Figure 18).

Located in the centre of the Gardens, and evident on the 1905 plan, are the caretaker's cottage, shown with an enlarged yard area, and a second grandstand located to the west of the 1888 grandstand. Constructed in 1905 and designed by architects Twentymen and Askew,<sup>72</sup> the new grandstand was required to accommodate the large crowds which Fitzroy matches were then attracting. The football club had won the premiership the previous year and were enjoying their most successful period. In the summer of 1903 the cricket club organised a series of 'open air concerts' with attendances reputedly in the thousands.<sup>73</sup> The 1910 photograph shows the crowds at the football match at the Fitzroy Cricket Ground (Figure 14).

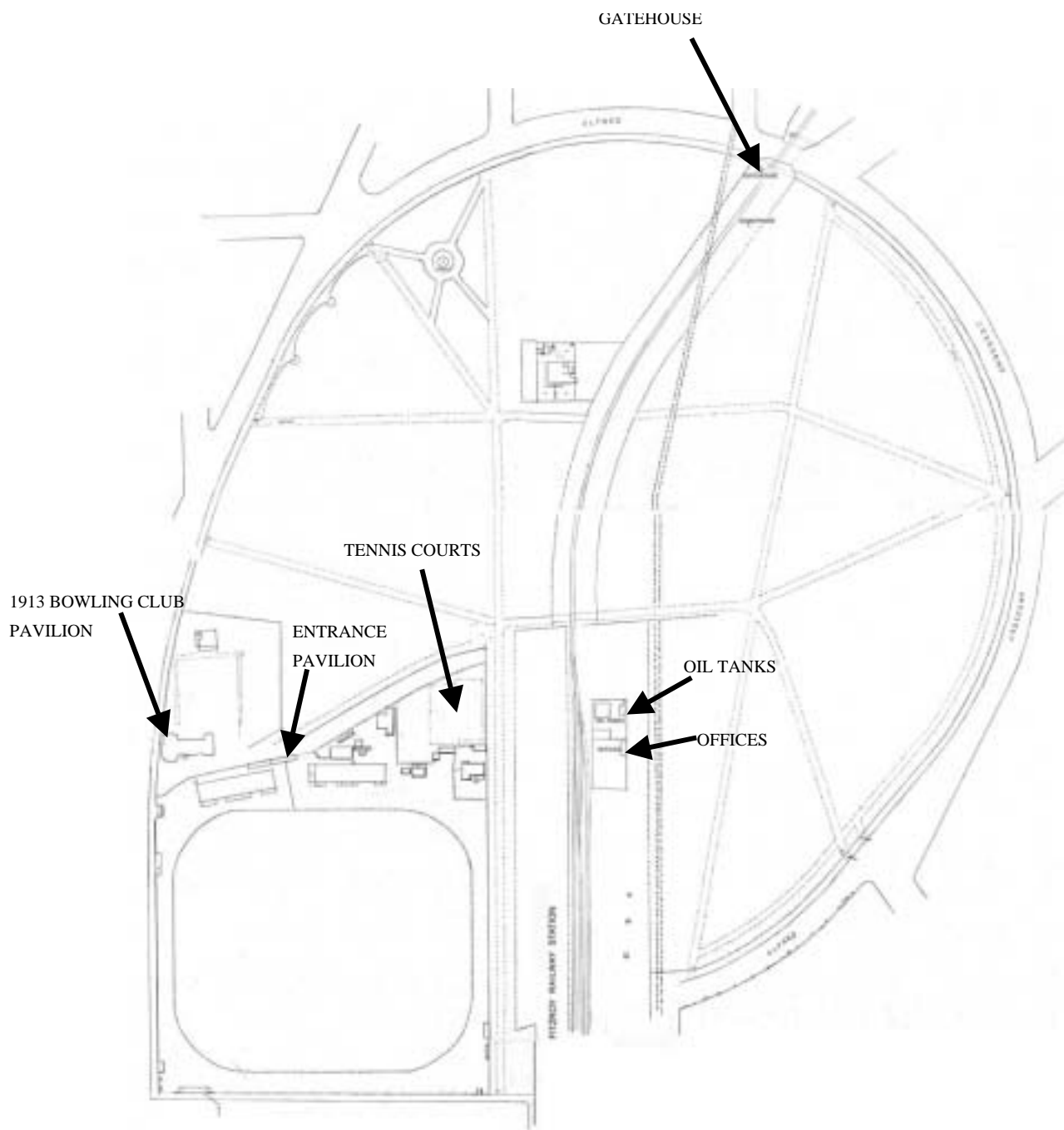
The development of the Gardens during this period is also demonstrated on a c.1906 MMBW plan (Figure 11). The plan appears to have been annotated at a later date and shows the bowling club pavilion which was constructed in 1913 on the south side of the green. The timber cottage previously used by the 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>74</sup>

The Fitzroy Station ground remained largely undeveloped at this time and contained oil tanks and a small office building. At the railway entrance to the Gardens on Alfred Street a gatehouse with a semaphore signal is located to its south.

## **2.8 Between the Wars: 1917-1944**

The Board of Lands and Works ceased to play an active role in the management of the Gardens in October 1917. Following a Cabinet decision, the Joint Committee of Management was revoked and the Fitzroy Council was appointed as the committee of management in full control. Financial contributions to the cost of the upkeep of the Gardens from the Crown were then discontinued.<sup>75</sup>



*Figure 11*      *MMBW plan, c. 1906, annotated and showing bowling club constructed 1913.*  
Source: State Library Map Collection.





*Figure 12*      *A c.1906 postcard of the ornamental pond*  
 Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria



*Figure 13*      *A c.1907 postcard of the fountain.*  
 Source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria



*Figure 14 View of a football crowd at the Fitzroy cricket ground, c.1910.*  
 Source: Reproduced from *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*

A plan of the Gardens dated 1926 shows the pathways little changed since the early nineteenth century (Figure 15) although there were a number of new structures. 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 fell in the war.

The second memorial took the form a bandstand rotunda and was built in 1925 by the City of Fitzroy.<sup>76</sup> Photographs of the memorial indicate it was surrounded by garden beds, enclosed with what appears to be wire with timber posts and rails (Figure 17).

At the time of the rotunda's construction in 1925, approval was granted for the construction of a children's playground, to be sited opposite the state school in Alfred Crescent.<sup>77</sup> Other park elements dating from this period include the D J Chandler fountain (1926), and the infant welfare centre, a small timber building located adjacent to the caretaker's residence (1926, demolished c.1966). It has been suggested that boundary fences to the Gardens were probably removed during this phase of development, in line with the contemporary trend for 'opening up' Melbourne's parks and gardens.<sup>78</sup>

The cricket club *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>79</sup>

The extension of the cricket ground in 1934 brought about the most substantial change to the Gardens during the inter-War period. The Fitzroy Cricket Club had first proposed to extend the ground by 30 feet (9.1 metres) in 1926. In doing so, an avenue of elm trees was to be removed. The proposal drew much opposition from local residents: it was described by the press of the day as 'as a gross act of vandalism' and a 'typical instance of the methods adopted by interested parties in flinching portions of the public estate'.<sup>80</sup>

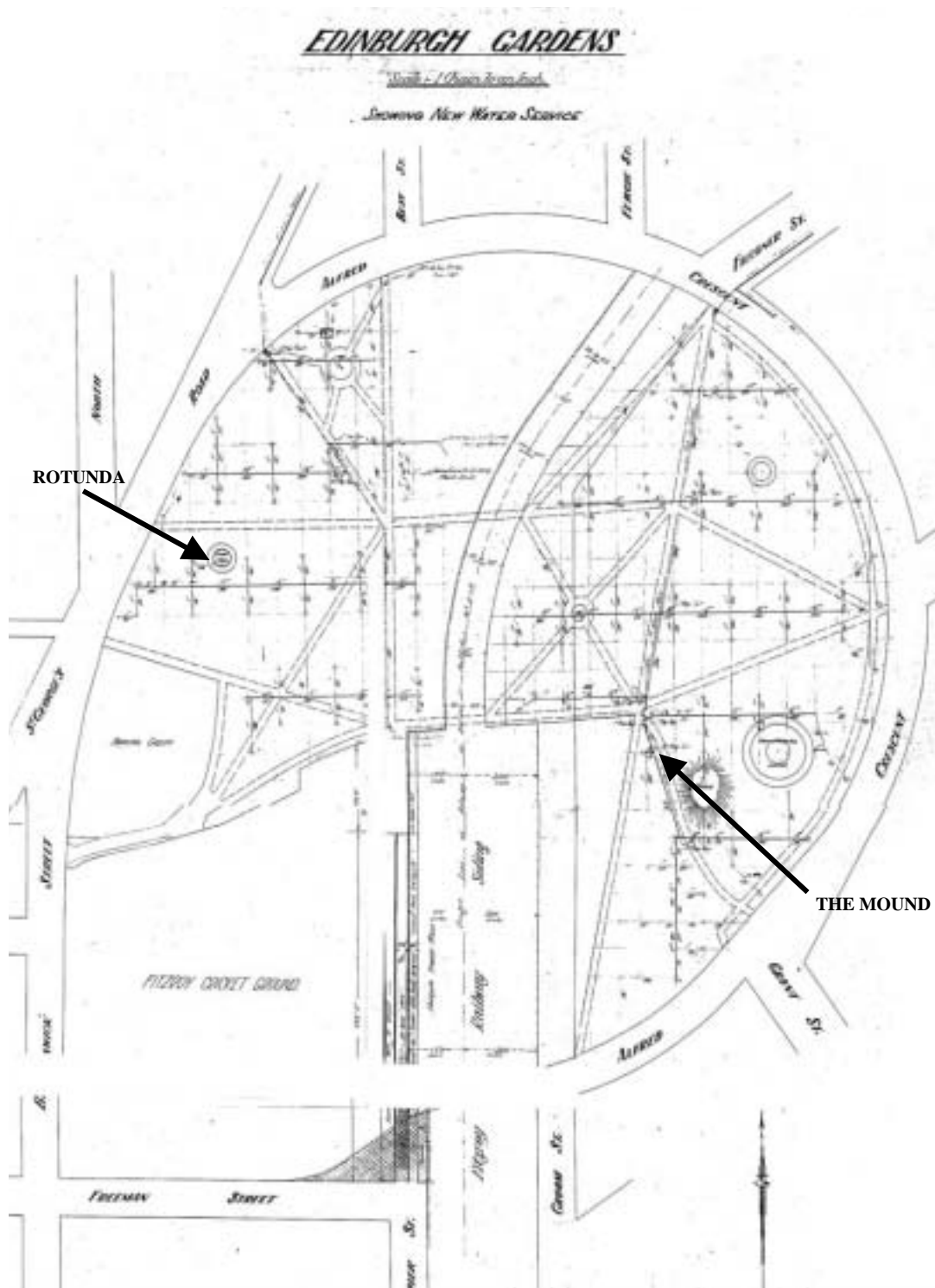


Figure 15 Plan of the Edinburgh Gardens, dated 1926 (annotations to the east of the cricket ground date from c.1948).  
Source: Reserve File, RS360, DSE, Melbourne.



A reduced extension of cricket ground eastwards by 26 feet (7.9 metres) was eventually approved by Lands Department in March 1934.<sup>81</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 16). The trees were, nevertheless, removed by 1938, the Fitzroy Council reported to the Lands Department that they had become an ‘eyesore and a danger’.<sup>82</sup>

Additional trees adjacent to the tennis court 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>83</sup> The action was further justified by the Council on the grounds that 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>84</sup>

Additionally, at this time the footpath along the eastern and southern side, 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>85</sup>

## 2.9 The Post-War Years: 1945-1969

The path layout remained largely unchanged in the immediate post-War years. An aerial photograph dated 1945 shows a previously unrecorded narrow path, possibly an informal foot track, in the eastern side of the Gardens, running north-south from Falconer Street to the Alfred Crescent/Grant Street intersection (Figure 19). In addition, one of the diagonal paths radiating outwards from the fountain had been removed. The grassy hillock, known as the ‘the mound’



*Figure 16 Oblique Aerial view 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



*Figure 17*      *View of the rotunda, c.1927.*  
Source: Yarra Melbourne Regional Libraries, Fitzroy Local History Collection.



*Figure 18*      *A family photograph of 1941 with 'the mound' visible in the background.*  
Source: Reproduced from *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*



*Figure 19      Aerial view of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1945.*  
Source: University of Melbourne Archives Image Collection

is still discernable in the south east of the Gardens (Figure 18), as is the adjacent ornamental pond and surrounding ring of trees. Modifications to the north-south path running past the nursery complex are also evident with the formation of the existing ‘horseshoe’ configuration at the entrance off Alfred Crescent.

The most substantial change to occur during this period was 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>86</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 that the field would be used for Sunday football. The council subsequently amended the proposal, reducing the size of the playing field.<sup>87</sup>

In 1948 a ladies bowling green was established in the centre of the Gardens. This was indicative of what Swanson describes as:

... 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>88</sup>

By the mid- to late 1960s, a number of modifications to the Gardens 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 fronts of the grandstands while there are a number pavilions and structures along the east side of the oval. The concrete fence is discernable to the east, west and south boundaries. The northern end of the railway goods yard, shown largely vacant in the 1945 aerial, is dominated by a large industrial building, the National Can Company building. In the centre of the Gardens, the park depot and nursery complex appear to be largely complete to its current extent. Around this time the original caretaker’s cottage was demolished and the existing cream-brick villa erected.

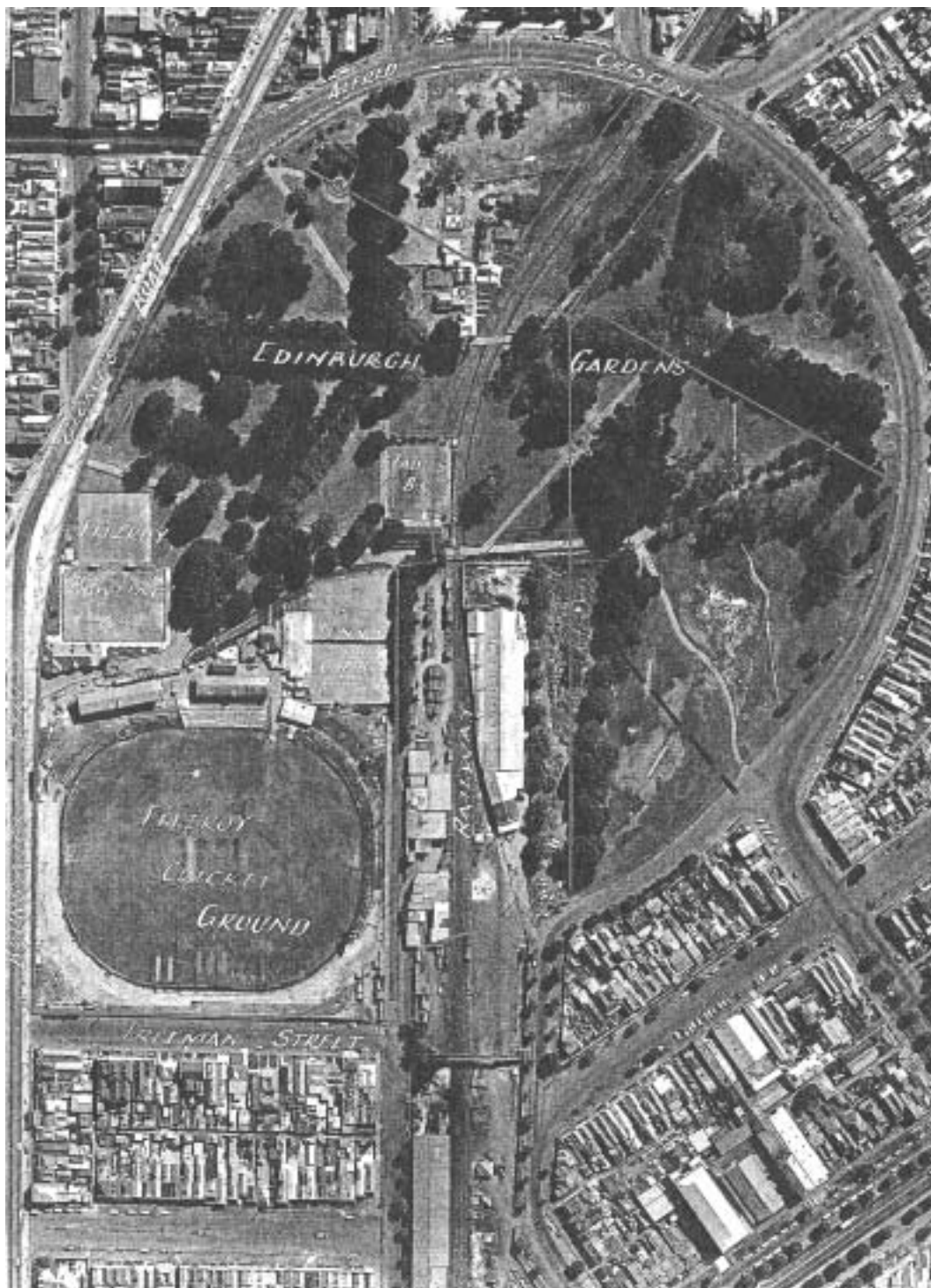
A circular garden bed is discernible near the Rowe Street intersection (presently occupied by the dwarf conifer bed with bluestone edging). In the south-east corner of the Gardens is the playing field, as created in the late 1940s and occupying a site half the size of the playing field which exists today. The irregular path to the north of the sports ground, evident in the 1945 aerial photograph, has been remade as a well-formed serpentine path. The ‘mound’ to the north of the path appears to have recently been removed and is discernable as a patch of cleared ground. The adjacent ornamental pond has 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 trouble to maintain.<sup>89</sup> It was filled in with earth removed from the mound, the remainder being used as cheap fill by the Fitzroy Council.<sup>90</sup>

Garden beds along St Georges Road, reputedly planted with massed cannas and described as an ‘eye catching summer feature’, are believed to have been grassed over in the 1960s.<sup>91</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 cost effective methods.

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>92</sup> Consequently, the Fitzroy Council was unable to lend money to the clubs and lacked the legal power to raise it for them. The Fitzroy Council was appointed as the Committee of Management and allowed to make specific leases of parts of the Gardens to various sporting clubs. The *Act* also closed a small portion of Freeman Street and incorporated it into the Gardens.<sup>93</sup>

The late 1960s also marked the end of the Fitzroy Football Clubs’ 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 for upgraded facilities and increased car-parking. Unable to arrive at a satisfactory lease arrangement, the club vacated the oval in 1967.





*Figure 20      Aerial view of the Edinburgh Gardens, 1966.*  
Source: Reserve File RS360, DSE, Melbourne.

## **2.10      Recent Developments: 1970-1999**

The trend towards simplification of management and maintenance of the Gardens as a cost saving measure continued into the 1970s. The practice of maintaining labour intensive flower beds was largely abandoned during this period, effectively leaving the garden's nursery facility

redundant. In 1972, a children's welfare centre, toilet block and a pedestrian shelter were constructed, all in a starkly utilitarian design typical of parks and gardens architecture of the period. The welfare centre was built to replace a 1926 timber building located adjacent to the original caretaker's cottage, a site which occasionally attracted 'undesirable characters'.<sup>94</sup> Another of the parks' early structures, a Victorian timber lattice gazebo, was demolished to make way for the pedestrian shelter. In 1977, the Centenary Pavilion was built to provide rooms for children using adjacent school sports oval.

The cricket ground remained largely ignored in the 1970s. Proposals mooted in 1972 to develop the ground as a car-racing track came to nothing.<sup>95</sup> Most of the buildings on the site were allowed to fall into a derelict state and in 1977 the 1905 grandstand was destroyed by fire.<sup>96</sup>

Subsequent proposals for upgrading of the ground were focussed upon providing for community uses. Redevelopment commenced in the early 1980s with the Fitzroy council committing around \$500,000 to the cost. Works included demolition of the boundary walls and fences, regrading of earth banks and tree planting. The 1888 grandstand was restored, the adjacent community room constructed and the timber entry pavilion relocated to the main through path. Other changes at this time included the removal of one of the diagonal paths intersecting the former Queen Victoria statue. The school sports oval was also enlarged and the serpentine path from the Grant Street entry was removed.

The closure of the railway line in 1981 was to have a significant impact on the amenity of the Gardens. The railway line had long been an unsightly scar, dividing the Gardens in two. Following its removal, the track was remade as an 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 housing. A small quadrant of land, to the north of the railway footbridge, is currently being redeveloped as public housing.



Figure 21      *The cricket ground as it stood empty during the 1970s*  
Source: Reproduced in the *Roar of the Lions*

In 1992, the Fitzroy Football Club proposed to return to the cricket ground. Part of the 1888 grandstand was to be enclosed for use as an administration area and a first floor gym constructed above the community rooms. In response to significant opposition from the local community, the scheme was abandoned. The vulnerability of the historic park structures to vandalism and arson was highlighted in 1996 when the timber gatehouse was destroyed by fire. It has subsequently been reconstructed.

## 3.0 PHYSICAL SURVEY OF HARD LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

The following physical survey of the hard landscape elements of the Edinburgh Gardens is based on an examination of the available documentary evidence and on a physical examination of the built fabric as it exists. The objective of the survey has been to establish, as far as possible the nature and intactness of the original layout, structures and plantings, and to describe the various modifications which have occurred up to the present day and by doing so, determine those elements which are original and/or significant.

### 3.2 Documentation

The physical development of the Edinburgh Gardens may be traced from a range of different sources, both primary and secondary. A key documentary reference is the *Edinburgh Gardens Landscape Study*, prepared by Rex Swanson, Landform Australia Pty Ltd, in 1987. This report includes a historical overview of the development of the gardens. The history was largely drawn from correspondence, maps and other documents in the Crown Lands Reserve file held by the Department of Sustainability and the Environment. Relevant documents held by the Public Record Office of Victoria include Crown Lands correspondence and City of Fitzroy Minute Books. A small number of relevant historic photographs are held in the State Library of Victoria Picture Collection and the Fitzroy local history collection at the Fitzroy branch of Yarra-Melbourne Regional Libraries. Additionally, this report incorporates comments made in submissions to the City of Yarra following the community consultation process.

### 3.3 Levels of Significance

In considering cultural heritage significance, an assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the analysis and assessment of the Gardens as a whole, including the soft landscape contained in Chapter 4. The elements are variously described as being of primary, contributory, little or no significance and intrusive. The definitions of the levels of significance are as follows:

#### *Primary Significance*

Elements of primary significance are those which:

- ☞ contribute in a fundamental way to an understanding of the cultural significance of the Edinburgh Gardens, and/or
- ☞ are of individual significance in their own right, and
- ☞ are predominantly intact in overall form and/or fabric.

#### *Contributory Significance*

Elements of contributory significance are those which:

- ☞ are of a secondary nature in the understanding of the cultural significance of the Edinburgh Gardens, and/or
- ☞ have been altered or degraded to the degree that they no longer demonstrate their original design or other qualities.

Elements of contributory significance are generally of a lesser level of significance in their own right and, while they make some contribution to an overall understanding of the history and significance of the Gardens in a contextual sense, they are not fundamental elements which underpin the significance of the Gardens.



### *Little or No Significance*

Elements of little or no significance are those which:

- ## are not of any significance in their own right, and/or
- ## do not contribute to an understanding of the cultural significance of the Edinburgh Gardens

Elements of little or no significance generally include plantings, building and structures of recent origin.

### *Intrusive Elements*

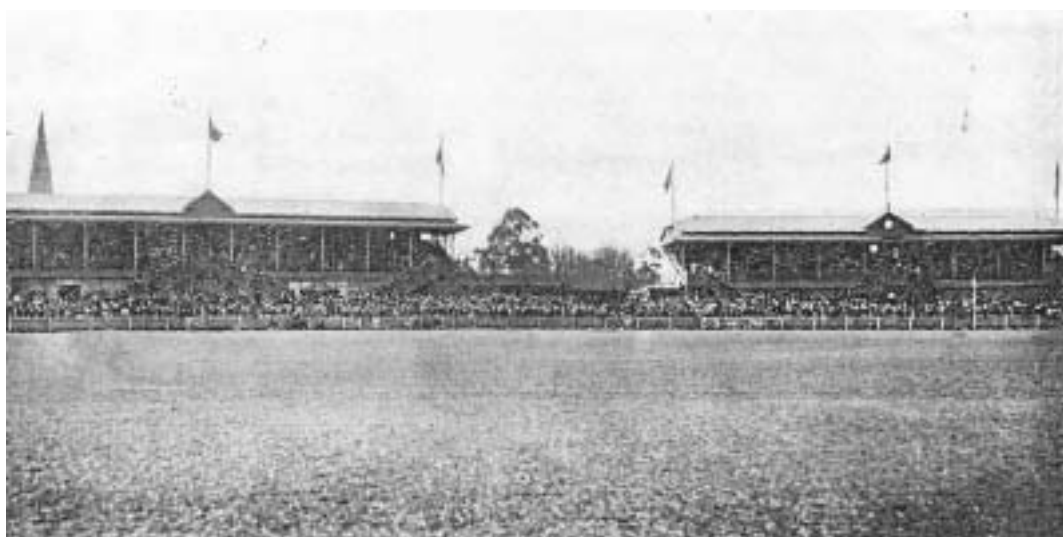
In contradistinction to elements of significance are elements which are intrusive and which have a negative impact upon the Gardens.

## **3.4 Hard Landscape Elements**

### **3.4.1 Grandstand**

#### *History*

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>1</sup> The builder was a Mr Purser and the total amount expended was £2,086.<sup>2</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>3</sup> 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. 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, the 1905 grandstand was destroyed by fire in 1977.



*Figure 22 View of the 1905 grandstand (left) and the existing 1888 grandstand (right), c.1913*

*Source: Fitzroy Cricket Club Jubilee Annual Report 1912-13.*

In the early 1980s, the 1888 grandstand was restored as part of the redevelopment of the oval facilities for community use. Further restoration works were undertaken in 1991-2 and included the reinstatement of the timber bench seating and repainting in a heritage colour scheme.<sup>4</sup>

### *Description*

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 lower 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. Flagpoles are mounted on the roof at the centre and at either end. 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.

Reconstructed timber stairs, located to the centre and one at either end of the south elevation, provide access to the seating area, which has a timber board floor and simple timber bench seating with steel supports to the backrests. The front and sides of the seating area have a cast iron balustrade with a moulded timber handrail, set above V-jointed board panels. Behind the seating area are the remnants of the sliding timber-framed windows which ran across the full width of the rear elevation.

The north elevation has weatherboard cladding set between timber posts and containing fixed-sash, six-pane, timber-framed windows. Two of the timber posts have been replaced with brick piers. The brick walls to the ground floor have been overpainted and contain a series of V-jointed board doors and louvered timber-framed windows fitted with wire mesh security screens. Abutting the west elevation is a skillion-roofed verandah supported on timber posts.



*Figure 23      Grandstand (left) and adjoining Community Hall (right)*