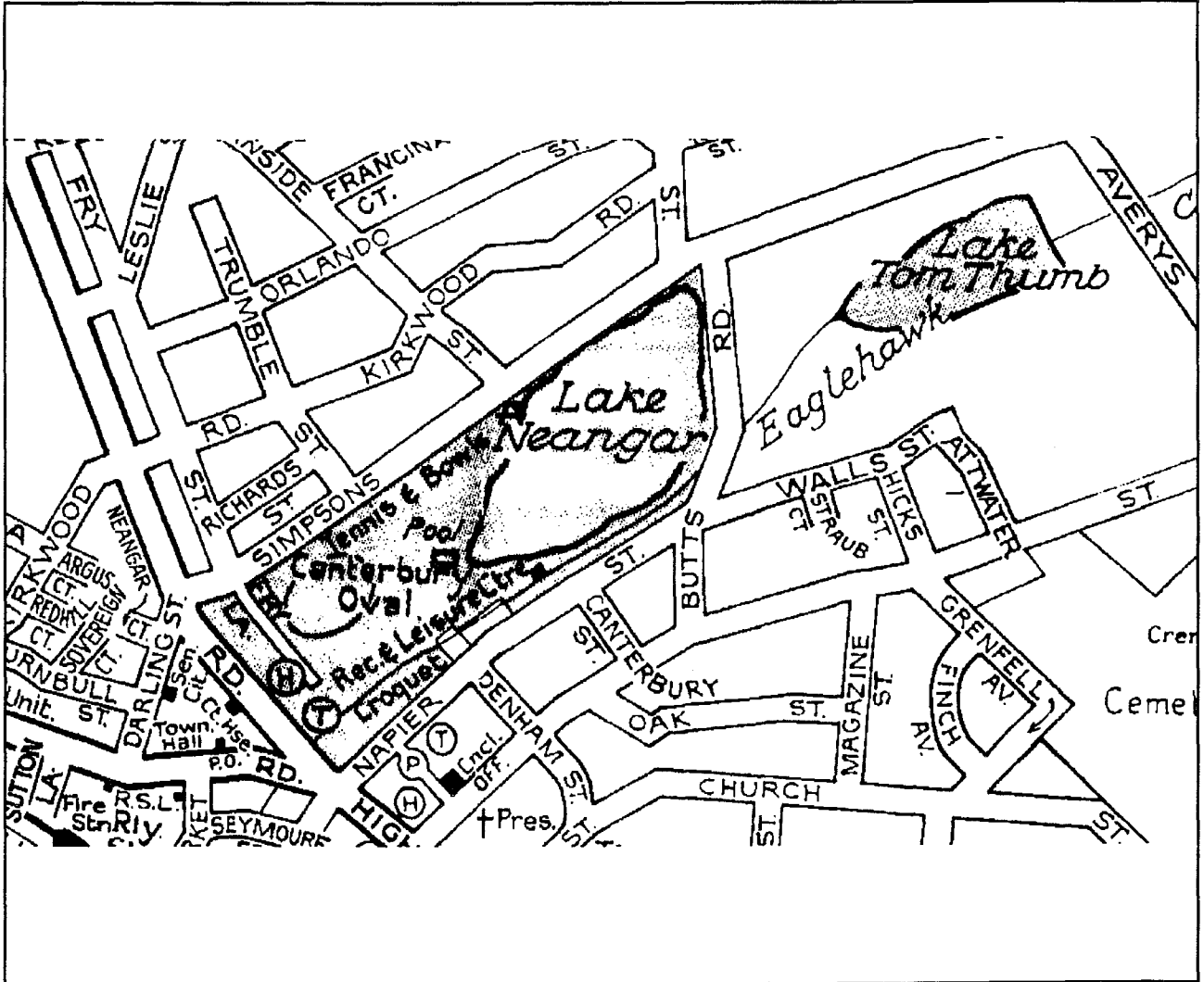


Eaglehawk Public Gardens (Canterbury Park) & Lakes



3-51

Eaglehawk Public Gardens (Canterbury Park) & lakes (Derived from 'Bendigo & District Street & Tourist Map' (UBD, 4th edit.)

Eaglehawk Public Gardens (Canterbury Park) & Lakes

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Shire of Eaglehawk

LOCATION/ADDRESS

Sailors Gully Road, Eaglehawk

CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Crown Reserve Rs 5923,

TYPE of PLACE

Public Garden

SIGNIFICANCE

Canterbury Park and associated landscape including Lake Neangar and the public park now known as Lake Tom Thumb, dating from c.1860, temporarily reserved in 1870 and continuously maintained as a public garden and recreation reserve is of regional significance:

- * as a reserve for significant exotic and native species, in particular the commemorative trees and shrubs ;
- * for its role in providing passive and active recreation to citizens of Bendigo, Eaglehawk and neighbouring areas;
- * for its pivotal role in the social activities of the local community
(AHC Criteria A3, A4, B2, E1, G1)

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

CANTERBURY GARDENS, LAKE NEANGAR, LAKE TOM THUMB

1860 Petition from numerous locals, in particular store keepers, for reservation of land at the northern corner of High and Napier Sts. for Mechanics Institute.

31.8.1860 Charles Letheby, one of the earlier petitioners and now appointed Honorary Secretary, met on the previous Tuesday; agreed Mechanics Institute to be established.

11.1860 Plan indicates larger area of land requested.¹

1.1.1870 Public gardens - grant for fencing £250 est, area 5 a 2r 24-1/2 p.²

1.6 1870 Deputation for public gardens reserve in Eaglehawk Gully³

16.8.1870 Temporary reservation approved followed by Governmental Gazettal in October.1870⁴

5.4.1873 Eaglehawk Borough request to Lands and Survey that the former Mechanics Institute reserve, now gardens reserve allow access from Sailors Gully Rd. Later in 1873 the Eaglehawk Borough again put a request to Lands and Survey desiring an extension to the reserve for lakes. Site named 'Canterbury Park' shown on tracing which absorbs Mechanic Institutes reserve and storm water/sludge channel.⁵

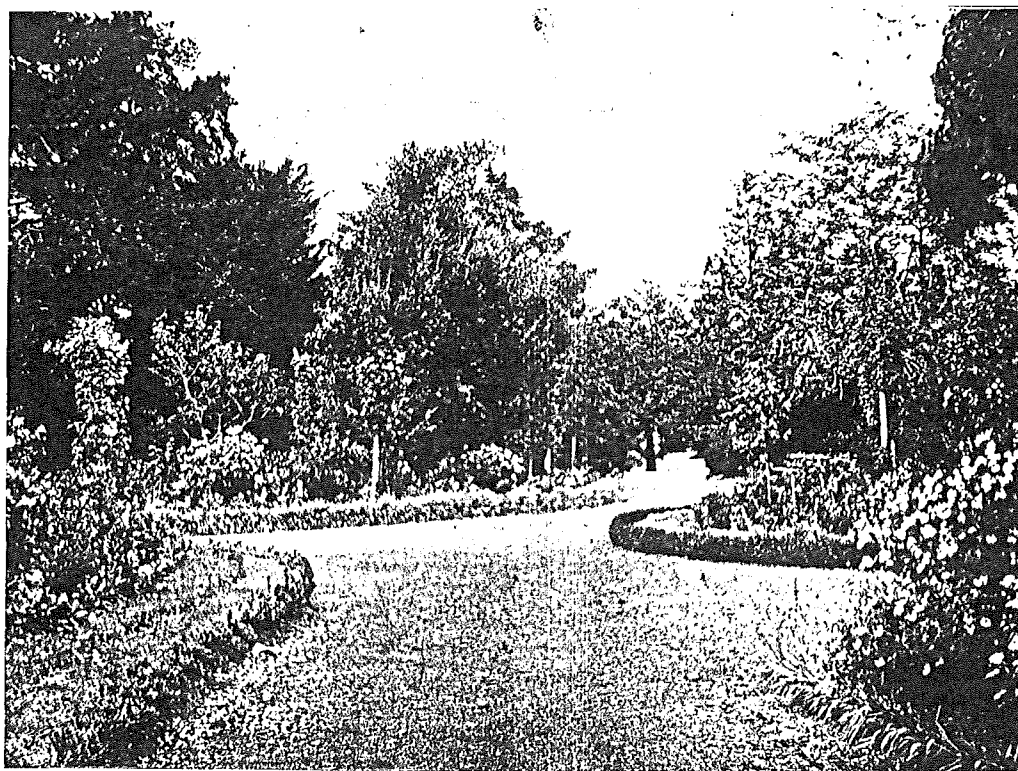
1873 Trees planted c1870 and by 1873 it was necessary to appoint a man to look after the trees.⁶

6.6 1874 Plan shows area of reserve as 28a (lake) plus 6a of the Canterbury Park totalling 35.0.6.⁷

6.7.1874 Reserve 3.1.28 public gardens: 35a 6p public park & water channel; 4a 2p water channel⁸

1876 A reserve for recreational purposes was part of the original grant for the park. In 1876, 10acres were kept separate for a sports ground. Prior to this a playing area was formed, & on 23.06.1867 a chain fence was erected.⁹

1 Rs 5923
2 Rs 5923
3 Rs 5923
4 Rs 5923
5 Rs 5923
6 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
7 GG 10.7.1874; Rs 5923
8 GG 14.8.1874; Rs 5923
9 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992



3-52

In the Park at Eaglehawk ('Bendigo & District, 1902, BCL)

1882 Committee appointed to investigate building a lake in Canterbury Park. Around December a tender was let for £1350 for the forming of the lake.¹

Eaglehawk Football Club formed.²

13.10.1882 Correspondence from the Town Clerk notes the lake is being constructed.³

9.12.1882 Report from council that large amounts of money were being spent on construction of the 'lake and plantation'⁴

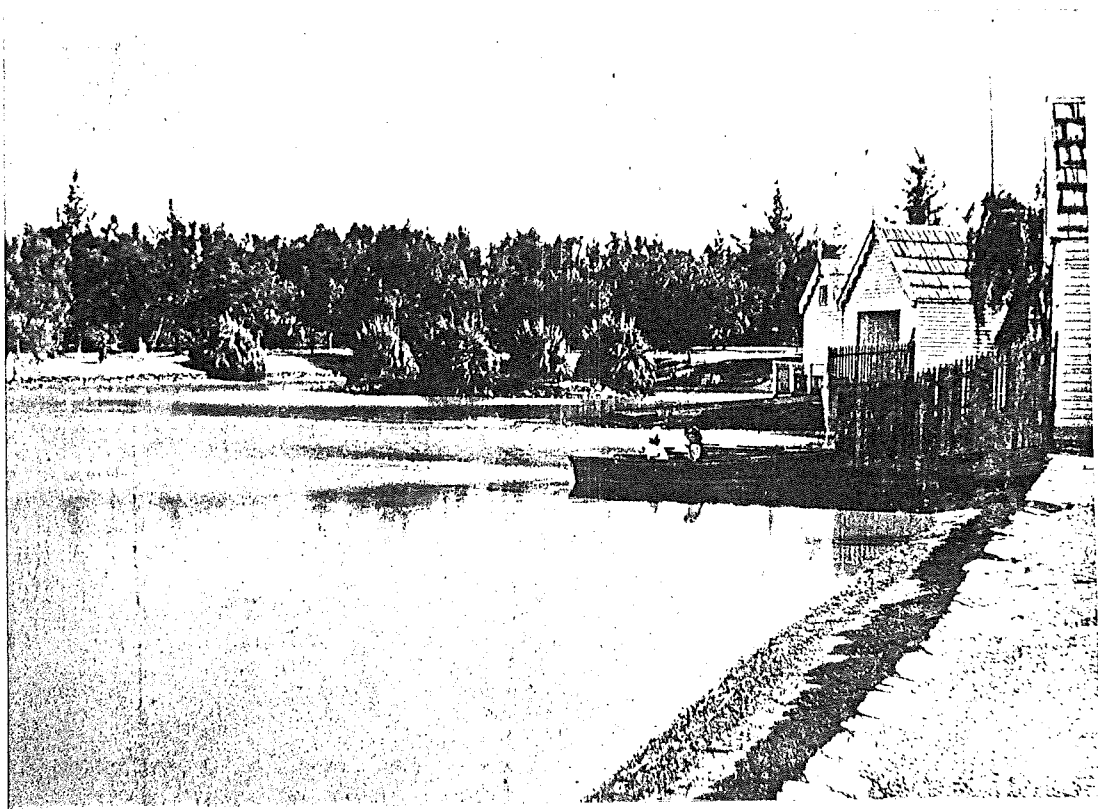
1883 Eaglehawk Rowing Club, formed c1882, granted permission to erect a shed.⁵

12.12.1883 Official opening of the lake by Major Cr. Loudon. A regatta followed with a banquet held in the evening.⁶

January 1884 Petition signed by 350 ratepayers presented to Council requesting a grandstand.⁷

21.10.1885 Official opening of the sports ground with a cricket match against a Melbourne team. The Eaglehawk Cricket Club had been established many years earlier at a meeting of 17.10.1856.⁸

1 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
2 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
3 Rs 5923
4 Rs 5923
5 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
6 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
7 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
8 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992



3-53

On the Lake at Eaglehawk (Bendigo & District, 1902, BCL)

04.05.1885 Formation meeting of the Eaglehawk Bowling Club held at the Mechanics Institute. Annual subscription set at 1.1s.¹

19.05.1885 Borough Council decided to construct a bowling green on the north east corner of the lake reserve adjacent to Napier Street. The green was completed by October that year.²

1890 Council decided to erect a rotunda and conservatory.³

1893 A description by W B Kimberley in 1893 describes the mature and attractive garden formed at Canterbury Park:

Eaglehawk is well provided for - Canterbury Park, which has its main entrance from the principal thoroughfare of Eaglehawk, is a well laid out pleasure ground. On one side is a fairy-like fern retreat, a little dell with splashing fountain and hidden streamlets. The rest of Canterbury Park is laid out in flowerbeds artistically blended. There is also a rotunda, a conservatory, and recreation ground where cricket, football, tennis & other sports are indulged in. Lake Neangar is a fine sheet of water, with a surface area of 181/2 ac. and a capacity of 30,000,000 gallons. It is here that all the aquatic sports of Eaglehawk are held.

The present island on Lake Neangar is presumed to have been formed at the same time as the lake was excavated in 1882, although a motion (recorded in the Borough Minute Books) put to council to construct an island was rescinded in April 1892.⁴

1 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
2 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
3 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
4 Kimberley, *Bendigo & its vicinity*, 1893

6.6.1896 Eaglehawk Borough Council plan indicates layout of Canterbury Park and Lake Neangar. The extension over Butts Rd [now Lake Tom Thumb] is noted as 'Public Park'. Canterbury Park is entered through the gates at the main entrance on High St; to the west is the oval and grand stand and to the north the visitor proceeds to the Lake Neangar. At the junction of the gardens and the park are the nursery with conservatory and aviary, and areas of lawn. Another gate is located on Napier Street, opposite Denham Street beside which is a bowling green. A 'new' bowling green is marked on Simpsons Road and a rotunda is sited between the bowling green and Lake Neangar.¹

17.11 1896 Eaglehawk Borough Council meeting agreed that during the summer months, say for six months from date a boy to assist the gardener be employed in Canterbury Park. Wages were not to exceed 10/- per week.²

21.2 1899 Eaglehawk Borough Council meeting agreed to the offer from Thomas Thorn for the supply of fish for Lake Neangar at the rate of 5/- per dozen if the Council agreed to take 10 dozen.³

c.1899 A postcard 'On the lake Eaglehawk' (c.1899) taken by Ninniss shows the popularity of the lake with ornamental planting of pampas grass on the lake edge and children boating near the three large timber boatsheds with timber shingle roofs and decorative barge boards. Timber picket fencing separates the boatsheds.⁴

1899 Tenders called & accepted for grandstand to be erected in park [renovated in 1988]. Construction completed in 1900.⁵

c.1900 A postcard features the rotunda, placed within a garden bed edged with rough stone painted white, amidst reasonably mature tree plantings. Many timber bench seats are placed around the rotunda. The structure itself is quite ornamental, timber base with steps and rail leading from the path, iron roof with a decorative globular feature atop.⁶

c.1903 Description of the park locates many features:

*Canterbury Park and Gardens are planted with some very fine trees, consisting chiefly of the pine, oak and elm, whilst the conservatory contains many beautiful pelargoniums, begonias, ferns, etc. Near the entrance is a small aviary of choice birds. The lake is well stocked with a variety of fish, pike and trout predominating. The lake can be filled or emptied by a flood-gate from the creek which runs along the left side of the gardens. At one end of this are the bowling green and lawn tennis court. The fernery, although not large, is well stocked, consisting mostly of those varieties indigenous to Victoria. A small fountain in the centre of the fernery contributes to its freshness.*⁷

c1900, 1907 Postcards (A Ward, nd) published around the turn of the century show a well laid out, ornamental garden. Beds are edged with rough edged stone similar to that at the Bendigo Railway Reserve; planting consists of a number of palms in the beds near the main entrance (probably *Trachycarpus fortunei*) as well as roses and other shrubs. A memorial gun is evident near the entrance and mature eucalypts have been retained.

A postcard of 1907 featuring the section of the gardens near the main entrance shows a much more ornamental garden. The rough stone edged beds are full of annuals or roses and there are many decorative arches and bowers up which roses have been trained. None of these arches remain.⁸

1907 A new and larger bowling green was constructed, the Croquet Club taking over the old green.⁹

1908-9 Old trees rooted out and lawns planted. 600 roses planted.¹⁰

1912 Remnants of old fence around park removed when Mrs W. E. Brown & family presented an ornamental fence in memory of the late Cr. Brown.¹¹

Council expenditure on park for the year (1.1.1912-31.12.1912) totalled £368, mostly spent on manure, filling and carting of soil.¹²

11.4.1917 The council consented to grant a mining lease along part of the reserve on Simpsons Rd.¹³

c.1918 Free public swimming baths were established in Canterbury Park.¹⁴

1 Rs5923
2 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
3 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
4 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
5 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
6 J. Taylor
7 *The Cyclopaedia of Victoria*, c.1903
8 Postcards (A Ward, nd)
9 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
10 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992 from *Back to Eaglehawk*, 1928
11 I. Wild, Eaglehawk & District, 1992
12 Rs 5923, 11.8.1913
13 Rs 5923
14 Rs 5923

1928 In the *Back to Eaglehawk* published in 1928, the original swimming pool is shown abutting the lake with an elaborate changing facility adjacent to the pool. When the present swimming pool replaced the original one in 1959/60, it was sited on the old boatsheds site at the south western end of Lake Neangar. Also evident in the photograph are the already mature *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* on Butts Road.¹

10.1.1947 Conflict of construction of public swimming baths in Canterbury Park, formerly Lake Neangar, in c1918 which were not in accordance with regulations which forbade bathing.²

1960 Construction of present Olympic swimming pool.³

DESCRIPTION:

The current park layout is not very altered from that shown in the 1896 plan although some of the detail has been removed. The main entrance on Sailor's Gully Road is as indicated although the nursery, conservatory and aviary have long since disappeared as has the rotunda. The former gates on Napier Street have been removed but an entrance remains.

The oval and grandstand has been retained in the western section of the site called the Canterbury Oval. The 'new bowling green' on Simpsons Road is still there today but the Bowling Club adjacent to the entrance to the park from Napier Street is now a croquet green and tennis courts. A photograph c.1920s titled "The New Pagoda in Canterbury Park, Eaglehawk" is mysteriously the only record of this shelter which is quite different to that described as the 'rotunda'. Its location is unknown. A sound shell was constructed in 1977 on the eastern side of the main path in the section of park near the entrance from High Street.

As one enters the park from High Street a major path winds through the formal park from an entrance at the side on High Street. The path winds around the recently reconstructed fountain (marked "The gift of Ex Mayor Kirkwood, 1882") and towards the central circular beds of dahlias. The paths in this section have been altered from the more sinuous ones shown in early aerial photographs of the site. From here the intensive exotic horticultural nature of the gardens are reduced to merge into the recreational focus of the reserve where there is a public swimming pool, Lake Neangar and various sporting buildings and public facilities. In recent years, large areas of the reserve have been lost to providing asphalt surfaced carparking adjacent to the sporting facilities. An access road has been constructed off Simpsons Road, south of Burnside Street.

One of the most marked changes is the alteration of the land north of Butts Road to form what is now known as Lake Tom Thumb. This section of land is marked on the 1896 plan as 'Public Park Extension' with the appended handwritten comment 'Virgin State' indicating it was probably uncleared bush. Lake Tom Thumb was constructed by J.W. & P.M. Brook in the period March to May, 1981.

The Canterbury Park is notable for its collection and display of dahlias with the annual Dahlia Festival a distinctive local horticultural event. The only other public display of a collection of dahlia cultivars in the state is at the Portland Botanic Gardens. The gardens are also notable for the collection of trees and shrubs planted by various celebrities dating from 1975 as part of the Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festivals including Don Dunstan (1984) and R J Hamer (1975).

Apart from water based activities, active recreational sports were part of the earliest developments in the park from the 1870s onwards. Clubs formed included cricket, football, athletics, rowing, bowling and croquet. Popular sports also included cycling and greyhound racing.

Ian Wild notes that a cycling track ran around the football ground but when cycling waned it was removed to make the playing ground larger. Greyhound racing also became very popular particularly on Saturday evenings.

Planting and landscaping on the east side of Lake Neangar along Napier Street was carried out as part of Victoria's sesquicentenary.

ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A number of elements are of significance and include:

Canterbury Gardens

- * storm water channel running along eastern side of Canterbury Gardens under Butts Road and along the eastern side of Lakes Neangar and Tom Thumb. This is the storm water/sludge channel shown on the earliest maps of the reserve;
- * memorial gates on High Street (1912);

1 *Back to Eaglehawk*, 1928
2 Rs 5923
3 *Back to Eaglehawk*, 1928

- * eagles at main entrance, High Street (date unknown but at least pre 1960s judging from photographs); remounted on new brick piers c.1990;
- * reconstructed fountain, originally the gift of former mayor Mr. Kirkwood, 1882;
- * mature plantings including *Araucaria cunninghamii*, *Cedrus deodara*, *Quercus ? robur*, *Ulmus x hollandica* (numerous), *Pinus canariensis*, *Livistona australis*, *Araucaria bidwillii*, *Phoenix reclinata*, *Arbutus unedo*.

Sports Ground and surrounding reserve

- * grandstand, 1900;
- * Simpsons Road tennis courts, date unknown;
- * bowling club, Simpsons Road, 1907;
- * croquet green, Napier Street, in this location dates from 1907; previously were located on tennis court site, Simpsons Road;

Lake Neangar

- * general outline conforms in major part to early plans except for reduction of south eastern edge, dating from 1882, officially opened 1883;
- * mature and/or historic plantings including *Cortaderia selloana*, *Lagunaria patersonii*, *Pinus radiata* (numerous), *Pinus canariensis* (numerous) and *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* (numerous).

Lake Tom Thumb

- * artificial lake created on public park reservation in 1981.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These have been prepared with respect to the different levels of significance of the three major landscape features, the Canterbury Gardens, Lake Neangar and Lake Tom Thumb. The Canterbury Gardens are the most significant component of the total site as they have undergone least alterations and retain portions of their original fabric and individual elements. The commemorative planting is also a contributory facet although some limits need to be established to control a potentially overplanted area with unsuitable plants. Lake Neangar and its surrounds have been considerably altered although essentially still conform to their original purpose. Lake Tom Thumb is of more recent origin but is part of the early reservation for recreation.

1. Retention of Canterbury Gardens as intensive horticultural garden with historical integrity. Minimal introduction of new elements and plantings in keeping with period of significance 1870-c.1928. Predominantly exotic planting character to be maintained.
2. Lake Neangar to continue as active recreational focus for parks reserve. Mixed exotic and native planting character to be retained. New plantings, buildings and works to be sympathetic to the areas historical development with no specific period of significance defined. New park structures to incorporate traditional elements such as timber picket fencing, shingle roofs, etc. New planting a priority with incorporation of salt tolerant, low water usage themes. Potential for demonstration planting and mulches with information display on salt tolerant, water conservation theme.
3. Lake Tom Thumb to be incorporated into salt tolerant, water conservation theme. Retention of essentially indigenous plant character.

OWNERSHIP

Borough of Eaglehawk

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

Peter Watts Gardens study - not listed.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees- no listing