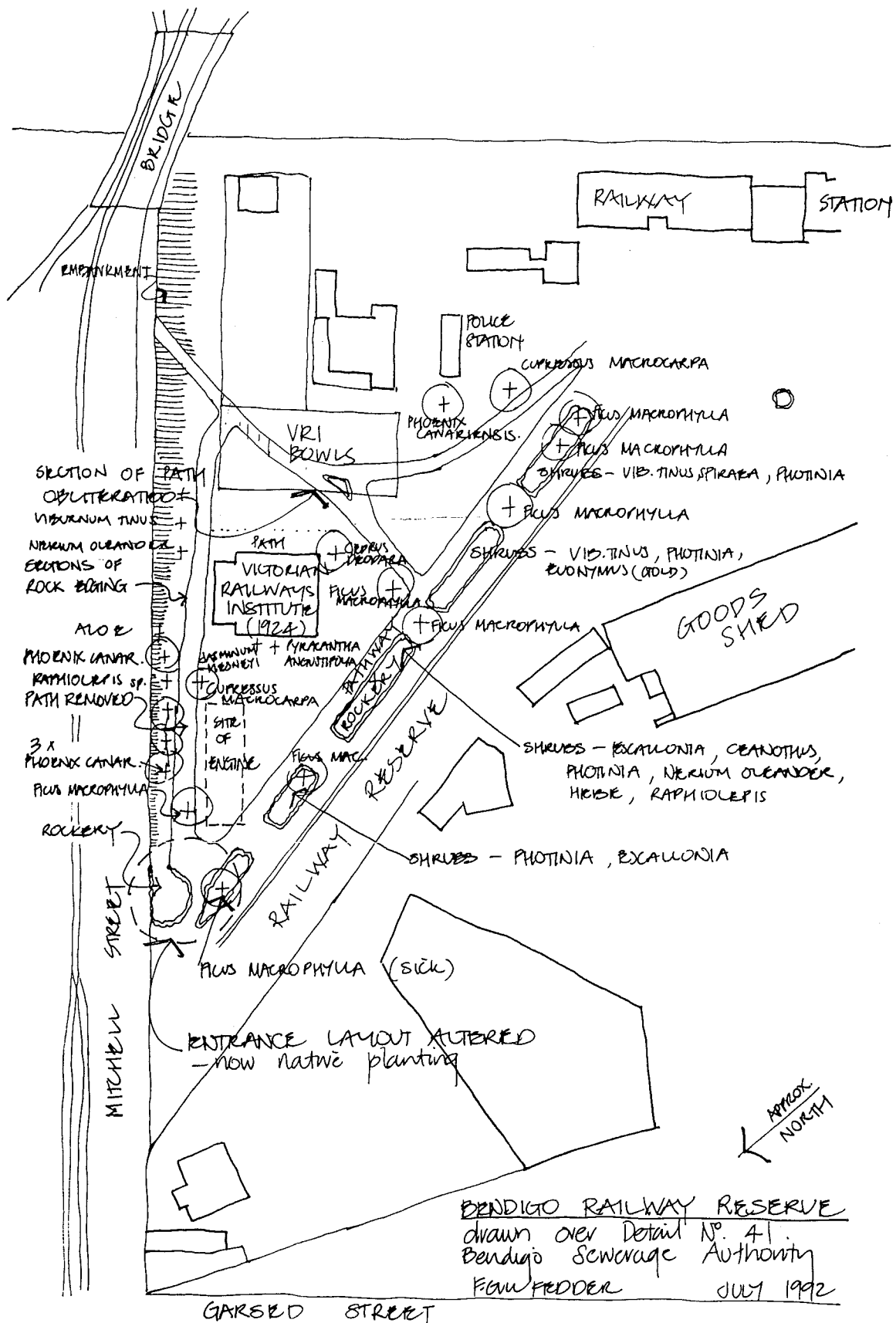


Railway Reserve, Bendigo Station (Sandhurst Railway Station)



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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

City of Bendigo

LOCATION/ADDRESS

Railway Place, Bendigo

CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Crown Reserve C891188, Parish of Sandhurst, County of Bendigo

TYPE of PLACE

Institutional Garden

SIGNIFICANCE

Railway Reserve, Bendigo Station, dating from the 1870s and continuously maintained as an institutional garden is of regional significance:

- * as a reserve for significant exotic species in particular the row of *Ficus macrophylla*, *Phoenix canariensis* and other various palm species;
- * for its association with the railway station and the establishment of the railway line to Bendigo;
- * for its demonstration of features as a representative part of a group of railway gardens with individual variation;
- * for its aesthetic value to the railway travellers and local individuals and the garden's appropriateness as the setting to the building;
- * for its major importance as a place highly valued by the community for reasons of cultural and social associations. The garden has been enjoyed by the community over a long period of time and provides a passive green space within an institutional/industrial precinct; the garden is an integral part and associated



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View- 1891 (Arnold, 'The Forest City') showing the reserve still undeveloped but fenced

with a local landmark valued by the community; the place has social sentiment and is well used for social interaction.¹

HISTORY

Tenders for the Melbourne to Echuca railway were accepted on 01.01.1858 from Cornish and Co. but it was some time before the Bendigo Railway Station was built in 1862. The reserve was gazetted in 26 July 1861 and in 1873 notice given to those occupying the reserve for mining purposes². At the same time pressure was brought to allow freehold lots along some of the reserve frontages (Olinda, Garsed and Gladstone Streets)³.

The earliest photograph of the associated garden reserve, taken by Caire around c1875, shows a fenced-in triangular reserve with no planting and a simple three-railed timber fence. Lamps were placed on the footpath along Railway Place leading to the station. Parish plans of that era also show the Station Master's Residence, with the present ornamental reserve outline appearing as its yard⁴. Another view of c1891 shows little had changed since Caire's photograph⁵ (see Figure).

A later postcard 'Railway Station & Quarry Hill' of c1903⁶ indicates many large and mature pine trees planted within the triangular reserve of land. An ornamental fence extends along Mitchell Street, possibly the same fence as in the earlier photograph. The Bendigo City Council records contain an entry of 04.10.1919 noting that the pine trees to be removed from Mitchell Street entrance to the railway station are now to be retained, evidence of a contentious issue.

On 12 April 1924, the Victorian Railways Institute building was officially opened; a small garden is associated with this institution and extends into the adjacent VRI bowling club. Detail Plan No 41 (scale 1:500) of the Bendigo Sewerage Authority (no date but probably the 1920s), indicates the essential layout of the triangular reserve much of which is evident today. On Railway Place is an extensive rockery on the corner of Mitchell Street with five individual beds lining Railway Place to separate the reserve from the Goods Shed and other buildings.

The path layout is quite formal. The major path extends from the corner of Railway Place and Mitchell Street south east to the railway station entrance flanked on the western side by the ornamental rockeries. A path extends along the Mitchell Street frontage at the base of a steep embankment. Another section of path bisects the triangular reserve and leads diagonally across to the north eastern corner towards the bridge on Mitchell Street. In the centre of this path is a rockery bed and another section of this path curves south towards the railway station.

A faded sign on the nearby Goods Shed indicates the importance of the railway station as the point of exchange for many plants from nurseries and growers around the state. The advertisement is for Brunnings seeds and plants via their local agent, the Northern Seed Supply Co., at 315 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo.

DESCRIPTION

The garden is established in the triangular shaped reserve between Railway Place and fronting Mitchell Street. The mature planting is predominantly of exotic trees, in particular a fine row of *Ficus macrophylla* along Railway Place which were probably planted between c1880 and 1900. A number of palm trees, including *Phoenix canariensis*, *Washingtonia robusta* and *Jubaea chilensis*, border Mitchell Street - this planting is more typical of the turn of the century and 1920s and may therefore be associated with the development of the VRI garden (assumed to be post 1924 when the building was erected).

The rockery beds and formal path layout are largely intact with the exception of the path running north east towards Mitchell Street. Much of this has been altered with the construction of the VRI Bowling Clubhouse and greens in the 1930s. The rockery on the corner of Railway Place and Mitchell Street has been replaced by an unsympathetic native rock garden. In some sections of the rockery beds, bluestone has been used to replace the local stone which is a different scale, colour and texture.

Current planting includes many shrubs such as *Viburnum tinus*, *Euonymus sp.*, *Photinia spp*, *Escallonia*, *Ceanothus*, *Nerium oleander*, *Abelia*, *Raphiolepis delacourii* and *R. indica* much of which would seem to date from the 1930s.

OWNERSHIP

VicRail

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

National Trust - not listed

Peter Watts Gardens study - not listed.

1 AHC Criteria A3, A4, D2, E1, G1
2 Reserve File 14.03.1873
3 see parish plan and corres. 23.7.73
4 Reserve file, copy held
5 Arnold, 'Forest City'
6 G Butler