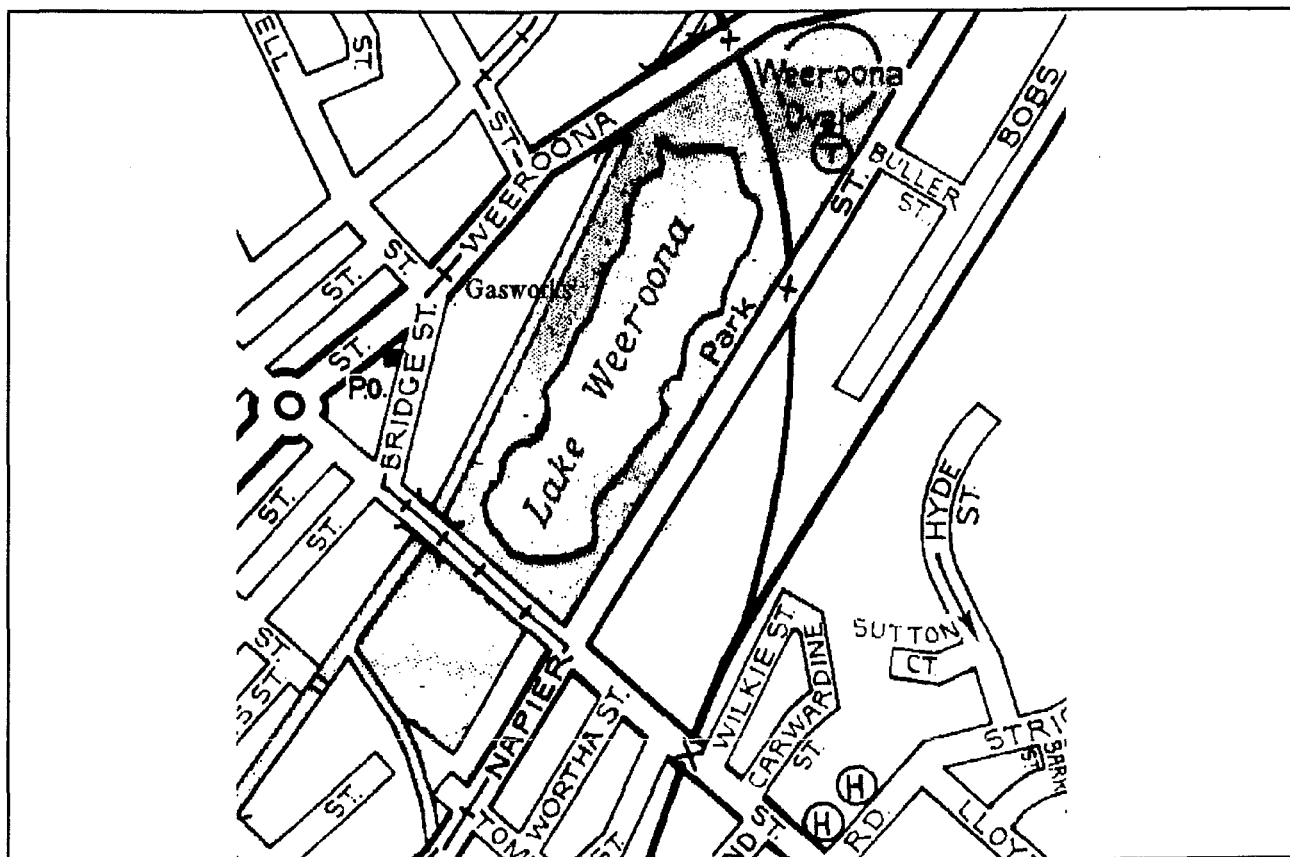


Lake Weeroona & Environs



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(Derived from 'Bendigo & District Street & Tourist Map' (UBD, 4th edit.)

Lake Weeroona & Environs (Gas Works)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

City of Bendigo

LOCATION/ADDRESS

Napier Street

CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Crown Reserve Rs 4314, Parish of Sandhurst, County of Bendigo

TYPE of PLACE

Public Garden (Lake Weeroona)

SIGNIFICANCE

Lake Weeroona, dating from c1874 and continuously maintained as a public park and recreation reserve is of **local/regional** significance:

- * as a reserve for significant exotic and native plant species;
- * for its role in providing passive and active recreation to citizens of Bendigo and neighbouring areas;
- * for its role in demonstrating the social and recreational activities associated with water and boating;
- * for its aesthetic setting and layout and association with the nearby Bendigo Gas Works site.¹

HISTORY

Main Reference is Bendigo City Council Correspondence Index & Reserve File Rs 4314 [sections missing between 1874 and 1933].

23.03.187445 acres temporarily reserved by the City of Sandhurst for recreation purposes to be vested in the Board of Land and Works.

24.04.1874Gazetted.

16.06.1874Parks Committee visits reserve and decided on the works to be undertaken.

23.05.1878Report by Parks Committee, Sandhurst noted landscape gardeners were to be asked to submit designs for the Nolan Street Reserve and a large lake (Lake Weeroona). A note in the margin commented "Get Guilfoyle" ².

1878Lake Weeroona officially opened ³

1879Government Gazette (p2760) stated the public reserve called Weeroona Reserve was vested in the City Council. Reference also made to boathouse sites. A listing for the reserve in the Council expenditure on reserves noted just over 3000 pounds were spent in that year.

1880Curator Gadd expended 75 pounds at Lake Weeroona (30.6.80)

1881Curator Gadd reports "We have planted all vacant places, cleared and kept the whole ground in good order, also have made a new wall around the south east side of the Lake; also added additional accommodation to the Keepers Cottage. The most expensive item of the Lake at present is to keep the silt cleaned out of the drain from the White Hills Botanic Gardens" ⁴.

1882Gadd reported on 16.12.1882 the expenditure of 210 pounds on the Lake between the period 1.1.1883 to 30.09.1880 [sic]. Perhaps he meant January 1880 to September 1880.⁵

1883In an extract from another report ⁶, Gadd commented "we have only done the necessary work of keeping the place in order, working around the trees".

1 AHC Criteria A3, A4, G1, B2, D2, E1

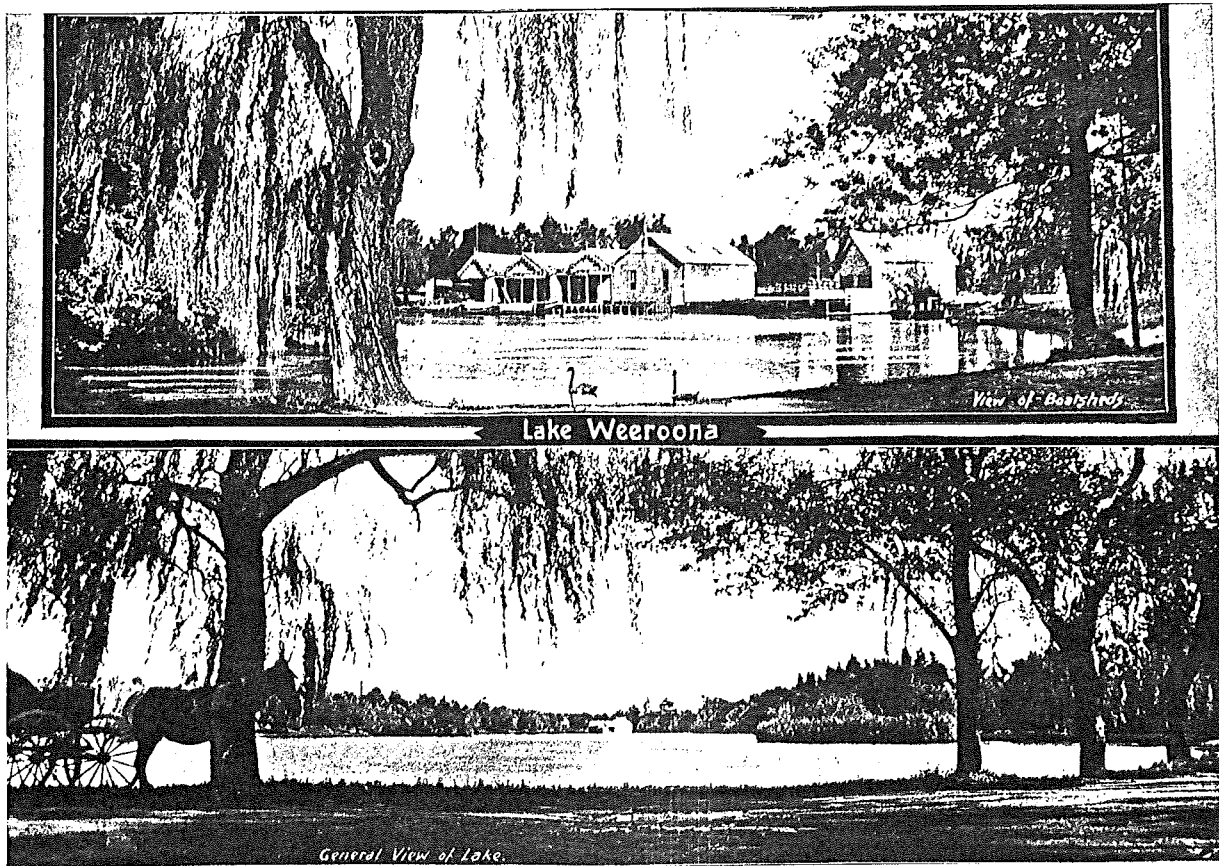
2 BCSCM, Box 14, 1875-79, Item 7

3 Cusack, F. 1973

4 Bendigo City Council Minutes, Extract from report, 15.11.1881

5 Bendigo City Council Minutes, Extract from report, 16.12.1882

6 Bendigo City Council Minutes, Extract from report, 9.8.1883



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Lake Weeroona as in Bendigo For Sunshine Business & Pleasure (BCL), showing the picturesque timber structures which were once numerous

In his estimates of expenditure dated September 1883 for the twelve months from 1.10.1883 to 30.9 1884, Gadd allocated 250 pounds to Lake Weeroona, the same amount which was required to clean out, water and plant the fernery at Rosalind Park.

1886 Gadd prepared a report of work and improvements at the Botanical Gardens, Lake Weeroona and Rosalind Park. At Lake Weeroona no extra work was done for the current season other than attention to the trees and shrubs and keeping the place in order. He did make the comment "every thing here is looking and doing well" ¹.

Gadd summarizes expenditure for all parks in the years 1885-6 and 1886-7 in a report of 16.8.1887. Lake Weeroona in 1885-6 was allocated approximately 200 pounds with some 11 pounds less in the following year. In the same period, the Botanical Gardens allocation was double this and that for Rosalind Park almost five times the amount spent on Lake Weeroona.

1887 Gadd's report of 24.10.1887 detailed £182 for the keeper and labourer at the reserve with £12 spent on a horse and dray and another £25 spent on repairs and sundries, totalling £219.

c1901 Photographs by Kimberly show considerable development - lake, boatsheds, ornamental planting.

16.05.1920 Committee discussed improvements to the main entrance to Lake Weeroona by making a lawn of buffalo grass; the curator was to report ².

28.09.1920 Curator Campbell provides estimate of £55 for planting couch grass at the Lake Weeroona entrance. Committee defers action. ³.

¹ Bendigo City Council Minutes, Extract from report, 11.11.1886
² BCPWC
³ BCPCM

06.06.1951 Council of the City of Bendigo appointed as Committee of Management of Lake Weeroona Reserve.

Arnold (op cit) describes the 45 acre reserve as having been filled and opened to the public in October 1869 however the Reserve file date of 1874 is likely to be correct. Extensive earthworks cost £5000, according to Arnold, with the reserve fenced and entered by a gate at the corner of Nolan and McCrae (now Midland Highway) Streets. The landscape setting was picturesque and may have been designed or guided by William Guilfoyle, Director of the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. The reserve had well formed promenades, walks and a carriage drive. A Care-takers residence was sited in a well treed area and with the boathouses was a popular leisure retreat. A postcard held by A Ward shows the decorative nature of the boatsheds around the turn of the century or later.

DESCRIPTION:

The Lake Weeroona reserve is a relatively flat site which extends from Nolan Street in the south to Weeroona Avenue in the north. The eastern boundary is formed by the Midland Highway and on the western boundary The Bendigo Creek channel separates the reserve from housing and the Bendigo Gas Works site.

The majority of the reserve is taken up by the artificial lake dating from 1878 and ornamental planting to the south of the lake and around the perimeter. The planting is largely ornamental and is considered to have no nature conservation values. There is no longer fencing on the boundary nor is it known when this was removed.

Planting is of mixed native and exotic plants, predominantly trees. These include good specimens of pines and conifers, *Araucaria bidwillii*, *Phoenix canariensis*, *Ulmus procera* and *Ulmus x hollandica*, *Brachychiton acerifolia* and numerous *Eucalyptus* spp.

The reserve contains two ornamental pavilions of c1910 (see plan for planting) as well as a Chinese tea pavilion which was constructed for the Melbourne International Festival in 1990. Boatsheds have always been a feature at the northern end of the lake; these appear in early photographs and the present boatsheds are of recent origin (1954 ? with later additions). The Bendigo Sea Cadets have utilised buildings on the lake since 1953 when they were first allowed use of the Rowing Club's building.

The interplay between the Lake and the nearby Bendigo Gas Works site would need to be investigated by way of oral history interviews with former employees of the Gas Works. It would seem likely that the adjacent location of a large ornamental reserve would have provided an aesthetic retreat and recreational venue for the industrial workers. Its social and recreational value is not well documented but the Gas Works conservation study currently underway may examine the social aspects in more detail.

OWNERSHIP

City of Bendigo

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

Peter Watts Gardens study - not listed.

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