

Identification and location

Name of place: **Canary Island date palm row and Canary Island pines**

Other Name 'Phoenix canariensis'

Address 399-413 Barkly Street
Footscray

Place Identifier 573

Heritage Significance City

Creation date(s) 1920c, 1935c **Map (Melway)** 42A4

Boundary description The trees and sufficient land around each to allow for root zone and canopy protection, nominally 1m beyond the drip line, root zone or canopy perimeter which ever is the greatest.

Local Government Area City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type Public

Description

Site Type: Tree(s), specimen

Physical Description

These 15 palms and 3 pines are located in the reserve on the south side of Barkly Street at the Whitten Oval. Planted near the footpath, they provide a distinctive border to the reserve and relate in period to the Drill Hall to the south. Carparking areas nearby inside the reserve are unrelated to this era of planting. There are 15 palms with major gaps at the west end. There are 3 mature Canary Island pines) at the west end of the reserve.

The Canary Islands date palm is described as a 'massive palm from the Canary Islands [which] grows to 50 ft (15 m) tall with a spread of 30 ft (9 m), and has a sturdy trunk up to 3 ft (1 m) across and arching, deep green fronds up to 12 ft (3.5 m) long. Small yellow flowers in drooping clusters in summer are succeeded by inedible, orange-yellow, acorn-like fruit { Botanica}.'

Canary Islands pine ('Pinus canariensis'): this 'moderately fast-growing tree from the Canary Islands, though adaptable and tolerant of dry conditions, prefers an open, sunny spot where the soil is rich and moist yet well drained. It matures to a spreading tree, up to 80 ft (24 m) high. The upright trunk has reddish brown, fissured bark. The densely packed, shiny, grass-green needles are 12 in (30 cm) long and are carried in groups of three. The oval, brown cones are 8 in (20

cm) long { Botanica}'.

Condition

good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

Integrity

substantially intact/some intrusions; palms removed for entry to the car park and possible sign locations.

Context

Located in a busy road with unrelated built character nearby plus large paved carparking areas.

Threats:

Pruning for added and existing service lines, pollution, removal with maturity, road widening, carparking, root compaction, adjoining development.

History

Like other early reserves in Footscray, the David Spurling Reserve (now Whitten Oval) commenced in 1860 as a municipal (former railway's) stone quarry, to serve those areas north of the Sunbury railway. Its only neighbour was the Rising Sun Hotel, which marked the Williamstown Road's beginning on the opposite side of the Geelong Road. { Rs1714 file: 20/4/60 }

The next phase was the reserve's proposed enlargement, in 1866, to become a pound and public gardens, { Rs1714: 1/12/66 } meeting some resistance from the Board of Land and Works, given the 34 acres already reserved for public gardens (Yarraville Gardens) elsewhere in the municipality. They suggested an exchange, given the swampy nature of the existing Yarraville garden reserve. It was gazetted as requested, nevertheless. Footscray borough's reasoning was that the railway bisected the municipality and gardens must serve both north and south. { VGG 1869: 22/1/69 }

By 1871 this reserve took on an uncanny resemblance to the plight of the Yarraville (q.v.) one. Both, it seems, were leased out as quarries to one Leek, and no planting or fencing had been done towards their use as public gardens. { VGG 1871:16/6/71, 8/7/71 } This reserve was still shown as a 'Botanical Reserve and Pound' on the 1877 Borough Plan.

Meanwhile the main development of the reserve was for cricket and football. The Footscray Cricket Club formed in 1894, while records of the Yarraville equivalent go back to 1870, an 'old cricket ground' being shown at the south-east corner of Lyons and Whitehall Streets in that period. { FFOY:199, Rs.1453 } Memory had it that an impromptu football ground was once within the land triangle, formed by Geelong Road, Droop and Barkly Streets. { FFOY: 200 } The Footscray Football Club began in 1883 { FFOY: 204 }.

The 'Western Oval' was used soon after Footscray entered the Football Association competition, but apparently with some opposition from Councillors who feared tree damage { FFOY: 204 }. The reserve's redefinition for public recreation, in 1884, was presumably a result of its use for football. { VGG 1884: 1970 }

From this period (the 1880s) the reserve became more specialized in its sporting use and received (as with other grounds) more specialized ancillary buildings such as grandstands and larger clubrooms. The excision of the drill hall site was in 1916.

An aerial view of this reserve and the adjoining Footscray oval taken by Charles Pratt from c1925-35 shows the reserve with a diagonal pathway, trees (including the Canary Island pines), shrubs and grassed areas to the west end but the palms are not shown. The 1945 aerial view shows this scene with the new Footscray tennis club at the eastern end of the reserve and the row of palms, semi-mature. They were presumably planted c1935 under the direction of David Matthews. The rest of the reserve was then open with few structures but this date marked the start of gradual erosion of passive open space by the introduction of new buildings and parking areas. At 1945 what was termed as the Footscray Oval Reserve for Gardens & Recreation held a football and cricket ground, two tennis courts, and an equipped playground.

A major development was announced in 1953 which led to the new football ground concrete grandstand along Gordon St among other changes.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

Developing cultural institutions and ways of life

PAHT Subtheme

Creating landscape

 Local Theme(s)

Reserves and parks

Cultural Significance

This Canary Island date palm avenue is significant to the City:

- for the combination of the type, maturity and number of trees which make them distinctive within the City and of interest within the region (Criterion B2);
- as a reflection of an era of planting in the City, under the direction of the noted landscaper David Matthews, and the sequence of development of the reserve itself (Criterion A4, H1).

Comparative Examples:

Other similar palm avenues in the City, in terms of consistency, numbers and maturity, include the Railway Reserve; there is a comparable row in the Williamstown Botanical Gardens and specimens in the Williamstown Cemetery. Within the region there is the row in Mt Alexander Rd (Mt Alexander Road (between Shamrock & Leake Streets), Essendon of 119 trees which is on the National Trust of Australia significant trees register. The other registered row of Canary

Island date palms is at Seventh Street, Mildura, from Lime Avenue to Deakin Avenue.

Recommendations

- Heritage Victoria Register
- Register of the National Estate:
- National Trust Register:
- Other Heritage Listings
- Planning Scheme Protection
- External Paint Controls Apply?:
- Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:
- Tree Controls Apply?:
- Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:
- Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:
- Prohibited Uses may be Permitted

Recommendations:

The following management objectives have been drawn from the Statement of Significance:

- to conserve and enhance the listed trees and the planting pattern at the place where enhancement includes replacement of missing original components in the planting scheme;
- to conserve and enhance the visual relationship between trees at the place;
- to conserve and enhance the public view of these trees;
- to conserve and enhance the amenity of the place to aid in its heritage conservation;
- to ensure that new planting or elements at or adjoining the place are visually recessive and related to the trees;
- to ensure that replacement trees in the row are similar species; and
- to further research the detailed origins of the row and maintain the link with the reserve's history, via promotion and publication of the findings.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.

as a reflection of a distinct planting era in the City and the sequence of development of the reserve itself

B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.

for the combination of the type, maturity and number of trees which make them distinctive within the City and of interest within the region

Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

HI Importance for their close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, state or region.

as a reflection of an era of planting in the City, under the direction of the noted landscaper David Matthews

historical significant architectural significant social significance scientific significant

Documentation

References

Rs1714 reserve file;
`Footscray's first 100 Years' (FFOY);
Butler, 1989. City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study;
`Botanica' CD Rom 1997 (Beaver Multimedia P/L, Random House Australia)
State Library of Victoria - aerial view of this reserve and the adjoining Footscray oval taken by Charles Pratt from around 1925-35;
Footscray Council committee minutes (VPRO) VPRS 005337;
City of Footscray, 1945. `Facts about Footscray City', n.p.

Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date:

Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

