

WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS MASTER PLAN VOLUME 2: BACKGROUND REPORT

May 2018

HOBSONSBAY CITY
COUNCIL



LAIDLAW & LAIDLAW DESIGN



Figure 1: Gardener in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Date unknown.
Source: Hobsons Bay Libraries via Picture Victoria

Front Cover Left: Western edge of Gardens, Source: Williamstown Botanic Gardens, L.Callow
Front Cover Right: Crinums, Source: Williamstown Botanic Gardens, L.Callow

Introduction to Volume 2

This volume contains the background information and supporting documentation for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Master Plan 2017. It should be read in conjunction with Volume 1, which covers the Master Plan recommendations, drawings, costings and priorities. For explanatory notes including conditions of use please also refer to Volume 1.

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Unless otherwise indicated photos are by Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design

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Naming conventions

For clarity, throughout this report the decorative northern half of the Gardens is referred to as the "Northern Gardens" and the southern part of the Gardens as the "Pinetum". Any reference to "Gardens", "Botanic Gardens" or "Williamstown Botanic Gardens" refers to the site as a whole.

1 Background and Process

1.1 Project Background

In February 2013 the Hobsons Bay City Council undertook a tender by invitation for the appointment of a contractor to produce a Master Plan for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens. These Gardens, one of the most significant and intact 19th century public gardens in Victoria, had been subject to a 2001 Conservation Management Plan Master Plan which had been instrumental in transforming the degraded Gardens to the place of beauty they are today. However, as the document's focus was heritage and most of its recommendations had already been implemented, the time had come to produce a new Master Plan which would carry the Gardens forward, provide fresh ideas and help ensure the Gardens remain a vibrant, relevant part of Williamstown and Victoria. This new Master Plan is outlined in this document, and the accompanying Volume 1 report.

1.2 Brief

The brief for the project was to provide a new Master Plan to guide the development of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens over the next 10 plus years. In particular, the document was to provide "guidance on conservation, usage, management of the landscape and built form including improvements to provide for a higher level of amenity and user experience". As the consultation process progressed, the following elements emerged as key issues to be addressed by the Master Plan:

- Continue the Gardens' emphasis of being a place of quiet, passive recreation
- Continue enhancing the Gardens' educational role
- Respecting and enhancing the Gardens' heritage significance
- Review of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens against the modern expectations of Botanic Gardens generally, with the aim of ensuring the Gardens' remain relevant
- Identify existing issues with general landscape presentation and amenity
- Improvement of entrances and presentation to the street, including addressing issues with car parking
- Provision of all abilities access – especially from the street to Bateman House
- Recommendations on new landscape proposals
- Need for additional "back of house" space for the Gardens' staff and recently formed "Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens"
- Review of the long term role of the workshop area / former Williamstown Council parks depot
- Identify water harvesting and storage strategies to provide long term water security
- Improvement of the presentation of Bateman House and the former parks depot (referred to by Mind Australia as "Amaroo House") to the Botanic Gardens and Fearon Reserve
- Management of the ageing tree canopy
- Review of staffing levels to ensure they are adequate both now and into the future

Figure 2: Palm Avenue



- Review of wedding's in the Gardens, acknowledging the pressure they can place on the fabric and amenity of the site
- Review the way the Gardens' connect to the broader Williamstown community and ways to strengthen this

1.3 Process

The Master Plan was produced in consultation with council staff, stake holders and the public. The Master Plan process was started in 2013 and an initial body of work was completed across 2013-14. After this time the project encountered extensive delays, coinciding with a period of internal change at the Hobsons Bay City Council. This led to the project being largely dormant for a period of three years from 2014 to 2017, although some works recommended in the draft Master Plan were carried out by the Hobsons Bay City Council during this period.

The body of work for the Master Plan, including stage 1 consultation, was completed by 2014, and the bulk of this work remained relevant, even after three years. As a result, modifications to the 2014 drafts were kept to a minimum, with modifications focusing on the following three areas:

- Changes in management structures and staffing levels
- Reflecting works already completed (see page 29 for list)
- Ensuring recommendations made have kept pace with industry best practice

All existing conditions plans and site analysis discussions are based on conditions as observed in 2013, and as these informed the recommendations made they have not been updated for the final report. The following is an overview of the entire Master Plan process and timelines:

- Consultants met with Hobsons Bay City Council staff pre-appointment and discussed and viewed the Gardens
- Hobsons Bay City Council appoints Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design to produce the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Master Plan in April 2013
- Consultants met with Hobsons Bay City Council staff responsible for the day to day management of the Botanic Gardens. This meeting was used to discuss the brief, the issues effecting the Gardens and the consultation strategy
- Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design continued to review the background documentation for the Gardens and the existing conditions of the site, with site analysis taking place across April-May 2013
- Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design, together with Hobsons Bay City Council Staff met with various stakeholders, including the tenants of Bateman House and the former parks depot ("Amaroo House"), Council Staff, the Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group
- A Community Consultation open day was held in the Botanic Gardens on Saturday 29 June 2013 to allow the public to meet the consultants and contribute to the development of the Master Plan
- Draft concepts were developed and presented to Hobsons Bay City Council staff and the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group (WBGAG). In principal approval was given for

the development of these concepts into the draft Master Plan document

- The Draft Master Plan was developed, including a full review of all background information, the further development of the schematic concept designs and the development of management policies. This was done in strong consultation with the Hobsons Bay City Council and the WBGAG. The Draft Master Plan was provided to the Hobsons Bay City Council and WBGAG for comment in November 2013
- Comments were received on the Draft Master Plan, and a process of intensive internal consultation took place with draft documents reviewed and modifications made across 2014 and 2015
- Project was reactivated in July 2017 with the aim of finalising the draft documents for public release. Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design met with the Hobsons Bay City Council to discuss changes which had occurred at the Gardens in the intervening period and the modifications needed to finalise the documents.
- The Draft Master Plan was circulated to Hobsons Bay City Council staff for final review and approval, with modifications made for release for public comment
- The Draft Master Plan was released for public comment for a period of one month in April-May 2018. Volume 1, containing all the recommendations, was released for public comment, and both volumes were available for internal Council comment
- A number of submissions were received in response and these were reviewed by the Hobsons Bay City Council and recommendations made to the consultants.
- The draft Master Plan was revised to incorporate changes as a result of the public consultation and to finalise the design. The drawings and reports were then finalised for submission and adoption by Council in June 2018.

1.4 Scope

The Master Plan for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens includes the entire 4.04ha area of the Botanic Gardens, including the traditional Northern Gardens and the Pinetum (also known as LA Parker Reserve) to the south. This land is bounded by Osborne Street to the north, Giffard Street to the east, the Esplanade to the south and Fearon Reserve to the west. This also includes the entire area formerly covered by the Williamstown City Council parks depot and Bateman House. Both these areas of land are currently leased to third parties. The road reserve surrounding the Botanic Gardens is also part of the study area. Some ideas have also been mooted for continuing works beyond these boundaries to further incorporate the Botanic Gardens in the surrounding landscape. These ideas have been included in the Master Plan in the form of general recommendations, but will be subject to further review.

Figure 3: Palms and Lake



1.5 Previous Reports

A number of previous reports have been produced on the Botanic Gardens and have been reviewed as part of the background research for the production of the Master Plan. It is not the role of the Master Plan to reproduce the contents of these documents, however

it is recommended that all future works adhere to the relevant sections of these strategies and plans.

2001 John Patrick Pty Ltd Conservation Management Plan Master Plan

In 2000 the Hobsons Bay City Council commissioned John Patrick Pty Ltd to undertake a Conservation Management Plan Master Plan for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens. This was the first long term planning document known to have been produced for the Gardens since the Bateman Plan of 1858.

The 2001 Conservation Management Plan Master Plan looked at the condition of the Northern Gardens and the Pinetum (known as LA Parker Reserve since c.1960s), assessing their cultural heritage significance and making recommendations of works needed to preserve this. This was done as a review of the 1986 Conservation Analysis produced by Richard Aitken (see below), and expanded this document into a Master Plan and full set of management policies. At the time of production the Williamstown Botanic Gardens had become degraded through lack of maintenance and horticultural expertise. Critically, the executive summary highlighted the state of the Gardens at the time, maintaining that *"the condition of the Gardens has declined over the second half of the 20th century and urgent steps are required to protect them from further decline and revive their fortunes."*¹ Consequently, the report was a document aimed at arresting this deterioration and restoring the Gardens, with key recommendations addressing the protection of the heritage fabric and restoration of appropriate maintenance levels.

The majority of the 2001 report is dedicated to addressing the Conservation Management Plan portion of the brief – which given the degraded state of the Gardens was the most critical factor at the time. This 2001 Conservation Management Plan (with the exception of works already completed) is still relevant and should guide any future development of the Botanic Gardens. The Master Plan portion of the document made the following key recommendations, most of which have been fulfilled:

- **Unification of the site** – in particular reinstating the lost path system in the Pinetum and creating more entrances between it and the Northern Gardens. This work has since been carried out. It also suggested *"a long-term goal will be a review of the role of the central picket fence and hedge once the new circulation system is established..."*² which has taken place as part of this new Master Plan.
- **Tree Replacement** – This particularly addressed the pinetum where *"the majority of trees... were approaching or in senescence"*³ although recommendations were also made in relation to historically inappropriate species in the Northern Gardens. These works have been largely carried out.
- **The Aviary** – an aviary located in the Gardens was recommended for removal, with this taking place in 2009.
- **Entry Gates** – The magnificent front entry gates for the Gardens had been painted white and it was recommended that they be repainted olive green with gold trimming based on paint scrapings taken from the original gates. This has since been done, but with the gates painted black instead of olive green as further research revealed this was the original colour.

- **Play Equipment** – The report recommended implementing the Hobsons Bay City Council Playground Strategy, which recommended a playground be placed in the Pinetum. Planning was undertaken for this, but given the health and safety concerns posed by the over-mature tree canopy the playground was instead placed on the opposite site of the Esplanade.
- **Garden Planting Themes** – This looked at a broad range of issues addressing the lack of diversity and interest in the plantings. This included making recommendations on the reintroduction of small areas of bedding plants (completed), development of plant collections (still to be completed), replanting of the mound (completed with limited success) and replanting of the palm avenue understory (completed).
- **Curator's Lodge** – Recommendations made in relation to better screening the building, which has been partially achieved, and eventually reinstating the building as a gardener's cottage and replacing it with a new structure based on historical information. At the time of writing the last two recommendations have not taken place.
- **Lighting** – Recommendations on lighting the main avenue and uplighting the Clark statue for security purposes. The decision was made not to add lighting with the aim of discouraging night time use.
- **North garden Paths** – Recommendations were made for repairing the path surface. This has been done with new steel edging and granitic gravel paths of a high standard.
- **Weeds and Pests** – Recommendations were made on the control of invasive weeds and possums within the Gardens. A report on the possum population with recommendations was produced by Ecoplan Australia in 2007 and extensive maintenance procedures have been put in place to manage weeds.
- **Public Involvement** – Recommended the establishment of a Friends group, which formed in 2009.
- **Inter Garden Liaison** – Recommendations were made in relation to liaison with other Botanic Gardens in Victoria to bring the Williamstown Botanic Gardens into the broader Botanic Gardens network. This has taken place.
- **Alfred Thomas Clark Statue** – Restoration works completed 2008

Figure 4: Iron, Golden Elm Lawn sign



The following, additional, major projects have been undertaken since the completion of the 2001 Conservation Management Plan Master Plan. These projects were not recommended by the Master Plan, but were compatible with its aims:

- **Pond Restoration** – The central pond was restored in 2011 with the rockwork and the clay lining repaired
- **Main Path Planting** – The decorative planting beneath the Palms on the main axial pathway was installed in 2008 to a design by Vivid Design.
- **Decorative Gates** – New, decorative gates, by Anu Patel and Velislav Georgiev were installed at the main axial entrances on Osborne Street and Giffard Street.
- **150 years celebrations** – between 2006 and 2010 the Hobsons Bay City Council held celebrations to mark the Gardens 150th anniversary.

1986 Richard Aitken Conservation Analysis and Policies

The Conservation Analysis and Policies produced by Richard Aitken in 1986 for Williamstown Botanic Gardens were commissioned with the aim of producing “a policy to guide the future direction of the gardens”⁴. At the time a number of intrusive changes had been made to the Gardens, and while their history was acknowledged and valued, there wasn’t a complete understanding of their heritage significance as a formal conservation assessment had not been undertaken. The document produced by Richard Aitken thoroughly researched the site and formed the basis for all future planning documents, including the John Patrick Pty Ltd Master Plan and this document.

The 2001 John Patrick Pty Ltd Conservation Management Plan thoroughly reviewed Aitken’s document and updated it to reflect the modifications to the Burra Charter in 1999, and therefore much of the original document is now superseded, other than as an interesting record of the period. However, the excellent and thorough history produced by Aitken remains relevant, and has been used as the basis for this report. A full copy of the history is also provided at Appendix 5, as the original copy was in poor condition and not available electronically.

Additional Botanic Gardens Documents

The following documents relating specifically to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens were sighted as part of the background research for the Master Plan and were reviewed in greater detail where appropriate. Collectively, these documents form a valuable body of work to aid the management of the Gardens:

- Australian Landscape Management, 2001, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Stage 1, Maintenance Plan, Garden Beds*
- Australian Landscape Management, 2001, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Stage 1, Maintenance Plan, Trees*
- Australian Landscape Management, 2002, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens Bed Renovations*
- Australian Landscape Management, 2007, *Path Drainage Report Williamstown Botanic Gardens*
- Ecoplan Australia, 2007, *Assessment of Common Possums at Williamstown Botanic Gardens*
- Ekkel, J, 2009, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens Oral History Report*
- Heritage Victoria, 1999, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens* (Victorian Heritage Register Statement of Significance and Registration, No. 1803)
- Hobsons Bay City Council, 2013, *Giffard and Osborne Street Concept Plans*
- Hobsons Bay City Council, August 2013, *Hobsons Bay Public Toilet Strategy*
- Olsen, K, 2003, *L.A. Parker Reserve Conservation Implementation Strategy*
- Olsen, K, 2007, *Williamstown Botanic Garden Interpretation Policy and Implementation*

- Schahinger, J, 2008, *Treatment Report Alfred Thomas Clark*
- Terra Culture, 2003, *Archaeological Monitoring at L.A. Parker Reserve, Williamstown*
- Vivid Design, 2006, *Williamstown Botanic Gardens Palm Walk Design Intent*

1.6 Findings of the Consultation Process

The initial consultation process took place in 2013 and included discussions with Williamstown Botanic Gardens Staff and managers, tenants of Bateman House and the former parks depot ("Amaroo House"), Hobsons Bay City Council staff from other departments, the Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, a Hobsons Bay City Council Councillor, the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group and the general public. A full list of issues discussed can be found at Appendix 1, with the following being a summary of the discussions:

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Staff

The main issues raised with the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Staff are included here in their entirety as they guided the production of the Master Plan:

- The role of Botanic Gardens has changed so that features such as education facilities, toilets, exhibition spaces and gift shops are now expected
- There is a lack of provision for basic staff amenities
- There is a lack of space for Botanic Gardens "back of house" activities
- There is a lack of space / facilities to accommodate activities of the Friends group
- There is an insufficient number of qualified/skilled horticultural and management staff
- There are not the facilities to allow the Gardens' to expand their educational role as is expected of good, 21st century Botanic Gardens
- Determining what level of use the Gardens' can handle – especially in relation to organised events
- Public toilets are too far away
- Car Parking
- Presentation of the Gardens to the street
- Succession planning for climate change
- Networking with other Botanic Gardens
- Collections Management
- Water security

Figure 5: Fairlie Gates



Tenants

Two parts of the Botanic Garden are currently tenanted – the former parks depot to Mind Australia and the former Superintendent's Cottage (Bateman House) to Benetas. Discussions with Benetas focused on the need to provide good access for frail and disabled people from the street to Bateman House, and through the Gardens. Mind Australia focused on the Botanic Gardens as a resource and options for shared / complimentary programs.

Councillor and Council officers:

Meetings with a local Councillor and Council Officers from other departments focused on way finding, accessibility, infrastructure requirements, the future of the former parks depot and how the Gardens is currently used. There were also extensive discussions

about the impact of increased visitation numbers to the Gardens and how this could be managed / alleviated to provide for the best visitor experiences and care for the Gardens. In particular the role of the Botanic Gardens as part of Hobsons Bay's wider network of public open space was discussed.

Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens

The discussion with the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens looked at general Gardens issues and the role of the Friends group now and in the future. In particular it dwelt on the infrastructure needed by the Friends to expand / consolidate their work and how they can contribute to the Gardens.

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group (WBGAG)

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group is a sub-committee of the Landscape Advisory Committee for Hobsons Bay, formed 1997 in response to the deterioration of the landscapes in the municipality. This group, made up of landscape professionals has been instrumental in driving the recovery of the Botanic Gardens and was a valuable resource in the production of the Master Plan. The initial discussions with the WBGAG skipped over the major issues already discussed in great depth with other groups, and instead focused on landscape issues affecting the Gardens, allowing the consultants to draw on the WBGAG's professional expertise and knowledge of the site. This included discussion of a vision statement / overarching objective of the Gardens, signage, plant collections policies, the connection between the Pinetum and the Northern Gardens and the future of the former parks depot.

The Public

The public consultation open day drew a range of people, including those with a special interest in the Gardens and members of the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens. Many reoccurring themes were raised, often corresponding to suggestions that came out in previous stakeholder meetings. The main suggestions unique to the public discussions were that people liked the separation between the Northern Gardens and the Pinetum and thought the fence helped this; more plant labelling and general signage was wanted; the lawn quality should be improved; and there were requests for the rotunda to be rebuiltⁱ.

Additional

As the development of the Master Plan progressed over the following eighteen months two issues raised during earlier consultation became increasingly important. The lack of access to public and staff toilets had been raised by staff, the Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and the public during earlier stages, but as work progressed it became increasingly apparent that this was a critical issue. New toilets for use by staff and the Friends were clearly required as a matter of urgency, and provision of public toilets within the Gardens was necessary as part of medium term works.

ⁱ Note: There is no evidence that a Rotunda ever existed within the Botanic Gardens. The wooden structure known as the Rotunda was in Fearon Reserve and the bluestone "bandstand" mound constructed in the 1930s is still present, and other than a possible missing guard rail, appears to be in its original form.

The provision of adequate staff for the maintenance of the Gardens, whilst always a priority, also became increasingly important as the project progressed. From the commencement of the project the apprentice system and current low staffing levels were under discussion. As the project progressed however the need for extra staff once new garden beds were constructed was also recognised as essential. The issue of staff qualifications and experience was raised – with it being seen that the botanic gardens require staff with higher skill levels than that required for general horticulture elsewhere in the Council.

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- ¹ John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg ii
 - ² John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 66
 - ³ John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 66
 - ⁴ Aitken, R, 1986, pg iii



Figure 6: "Williamstown Botanic Gardens" c.1900
Source: Wilson P Evans Collection, State Library of Victoria

2 Location and Context

Williamstown is a picturesque bay-side suburb to Melbourne's West. Originally established as the Port of Gellibrand c.1834, the town has a long maritime, industrial and military history as well as being a popular day spa and tourist destination from the end of the 19th century. While the town was a working class suburb for many years, in recent times the township has become increasingly gentrified; its proximity to Melbourne (aided by the Westgate Bridge which opened in 1978), bayside location and period housing all attracting young professionals and their families into the area. The two commercial centres - the first located around Douglas Parade and Ferguson Street, and the second along Nelson Place, opposite the harbour - contain a wide variety of shops and restaurants, while three primary, one catholic and two secondary schools are in the township. Buses and trains both run to Williamstown, with the township maintaining its own railway line which services three stations – North Williamstown, Williamstown Beach and Williamstown Stations.

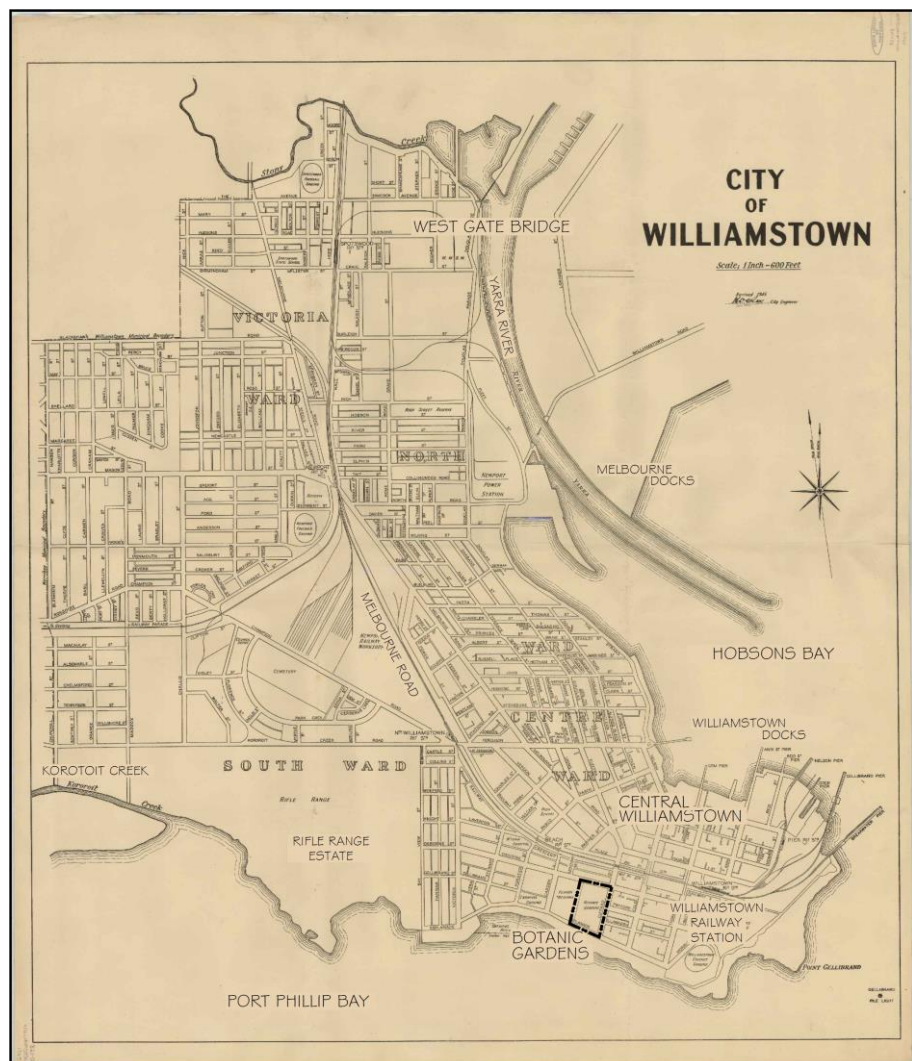


Figure 7: Context Plan: Wider Williamstown Area

Base Plan Source: City of Williamstown 1945, State Library of Victoria

The Botanic Gardens is located a kilometre south from Williamstown's commercial centre, in the middle of a residential district. To the south the Gardens face onto Port Phillip Bay, and once formed part of the foreshore precinct including the Williamstown Beach, Williamstown Dressing Pavilion, baths and a carnival ground – as was typical of 19th century resort towns. At the end of the beach sits a 1930s art deco style dressing pavilion, which is covered by a local heritage overlay and is now home to a restaurant, with the Williamstown and Newport Angling Club in a separate building to the east. To the east of this building is an open lawn area dotted with over mature conifers, with a small cricket / football oval called Hatt Reserve nestled beyond this. The large conifers provide some protection for the Gardens, and therefore should be subject to a tree replacement strategy.

Between the Gardens and the foreshore runs the Esplanade, a wide road which runs from the length of the foreshore precinct continuing to the Williamstown football oval. This road is well maintained, with bluestone kerbing and rumble strips and extensive paid parking. Additional paid off-street parking is located in front of the former dressing pavilion.

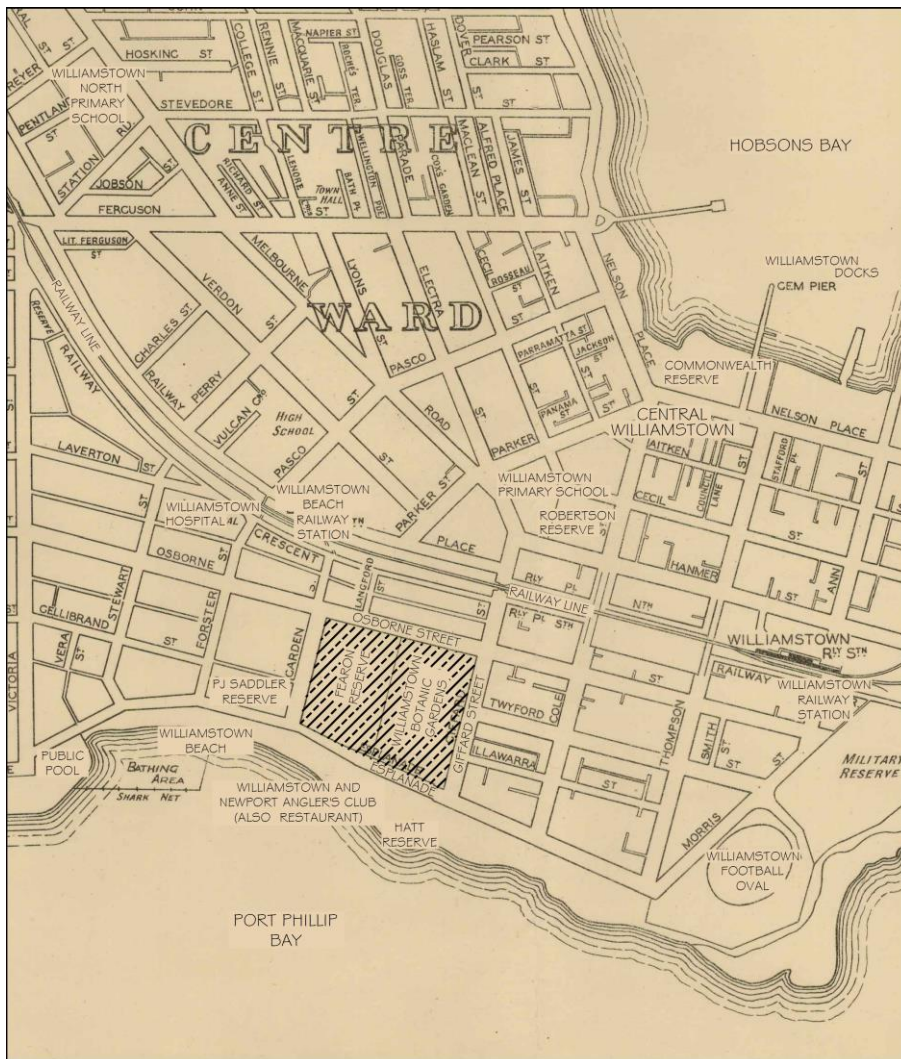
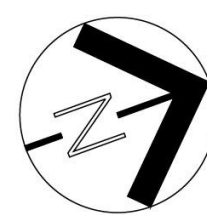
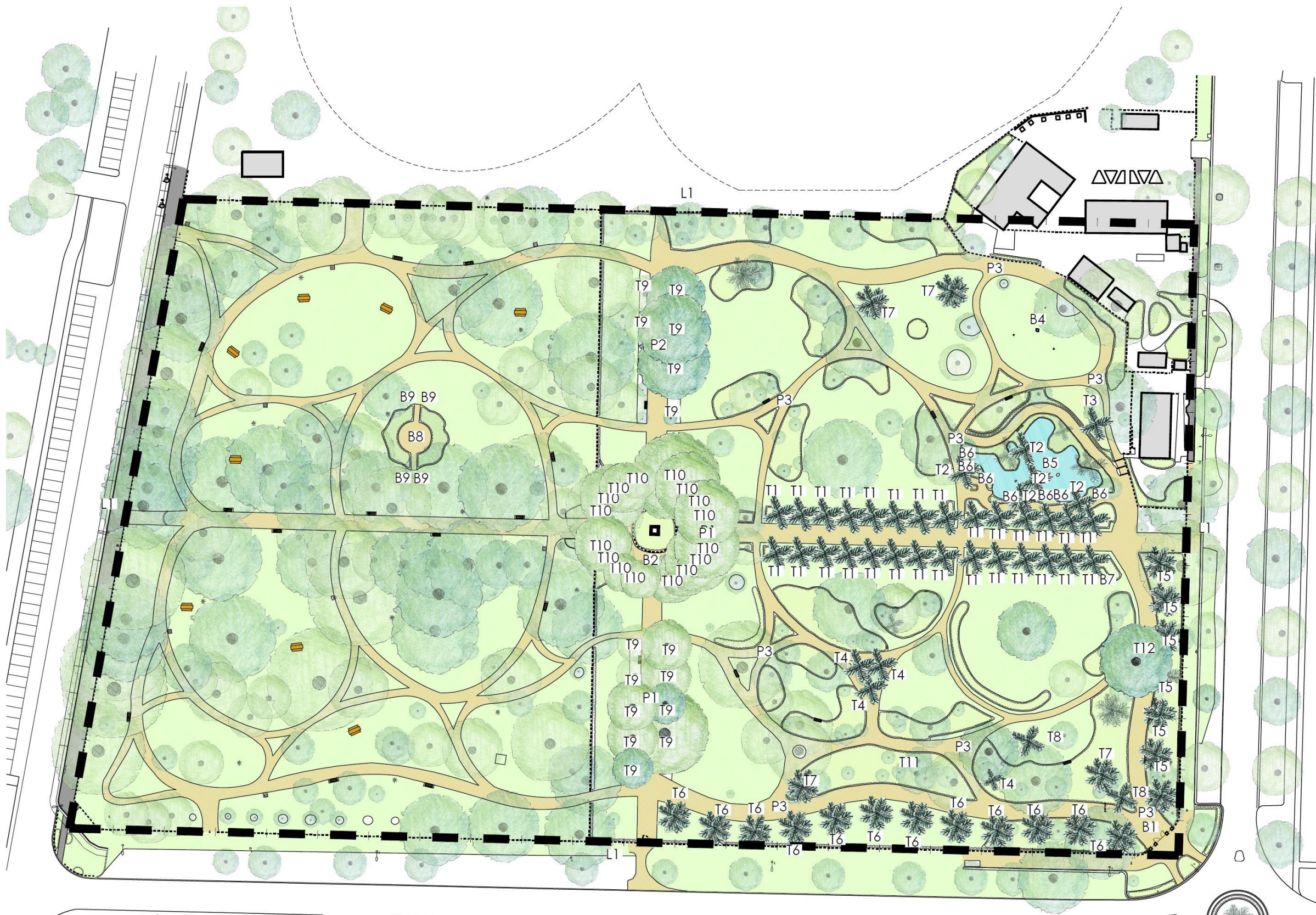


Figure 8: Context Plan: Immediate Area

Base Plan Source: City of Williamstown 1945, State Library of Victoria





LEGEND

Extent of Registration as listed on H1803:

1. All of the structures marked as follows:

- B1 Entrance Gates (1907)
- B2 A.T. Clarke Statue (1891)
- B3 Drinking Fountain (1906)
- B4 Flag Pole
- B5 Pond
- B6 Eight Iron Stanchions
- B7 Four Metal Hoops
- B8 Open Air Bandstand
- B9 Four Iron Stanchions

2. All of the paths marked as follows:

- P1 Main Path
- P2 Path (north-south)
- P3 Paths

3. All of the plants marked as follows:

- T1 *Washingtonia robusta* Avenue x 28
- T2 *Washingtonia robusta* Stand x 5
- T3 *Washingtonia filifera*
- T4 *Washingtonia robusta* x 4
- T5 *Phoenix canariensis* row x 7
- T6 *Phoenix canariensis* row x 12
- T7 *Phoenix canariensis* row x 4
- T8 *Butia capitata* x 2
- T9 *Ulmus procera* Avenue x 15
- T10 *Ficus macrophylla* x 16
- T11 *Crinum asiaticum*
- T12 *Cupressus sempervirens* (wide form)

4. All of the land known as the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and L.A. Parker Reserve (pinetum) being Crown Reserve RS 2076, permanently reserved for Public Park and Recreation Purposes marked L1.

HOBSONSBAY CITY COUNCIL



WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS

HERITAGE VICTORIA EXTENT OF REGISTRATION (H1803)

Scale: 1:1000 @ A3





Figure 9: Street Frontages
From top, Esplanade, Giffard Street, Giffard-Osborne Street Corner, Osborne Street

The area surrounding the Botanic Gardens was originally subdivided c.1880 to a plan by Booth and Beckett⁵ and contains a number of period cottages. Osborne Street to the north and Giffard Street to the east contain a mix of housing stock, but both retain a high percentage of period housing. The entire precinct is covered by a local Heritage Overlay as discussed in section 5.1.



Figure 10: Fearon Reserve looking south from rear of Mind Australia

Fearon Reserve now acts as an excellent buffer to the Botanic Gardens, and provides for active recreation, allowing the Botanic Gardens to maintain their focus on passive recreation and "quite retreat". The dominant features of the Reserve are the large football/cricket oval with a lacrosse field to the south. Over mature Monterey Cypress are dotted across the park, maintaining its seaside character and visually linking it with the Pinetum. The Reserve is currently home to a St Johns Ambulance Museum and five sports clubs; the Williamstown C Y M S Football & Cricket Club, Williamstown Imperials Cricket Club, Newport Ladies Lacrosse Club, Williamstown Women's Lacrosse Club and Williamstown Lacrosse Club. The Fearon Reserve public toilets, located in their south-east corner, also service the Botanic Gardens.

Fearon Reserve has recently been subject to a Master Plan with some elements being relevant to Botanic Gardens. In particular it makes recommendations in relation to fencing, toilets, consistent tree planting and interpretative signage.

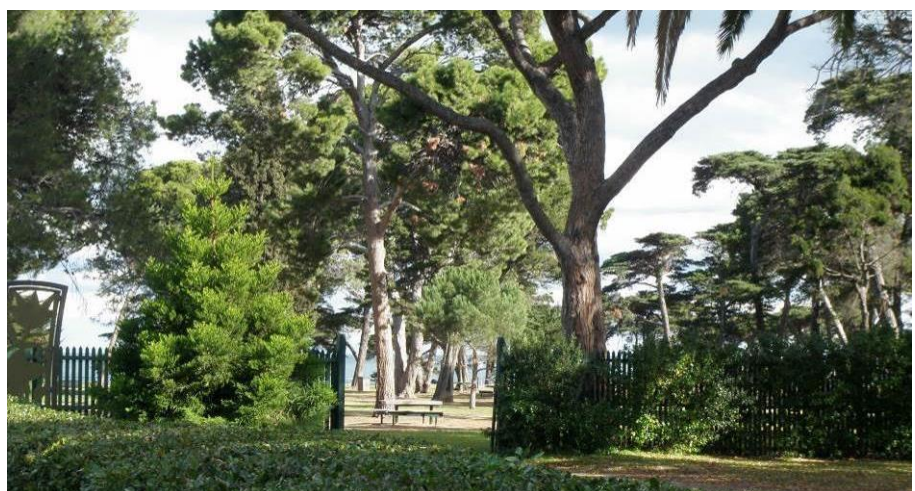


Figure 11: View through Northern Gardens and Pinetum to the bay

⁵ Kinhill Stearns, 1993, City of Williamstown Conservation Study

3 History

3.1 Aboriginal

The area surrounding Port Phillip Bay and as far north as Euroa was the territory of five language groups or tribes, which together were said to form a confederacy known as the Kulin Nation. In traditional aboriginal society the tribes were divided into individual land owning units known as clans. Each clan spoke the same language and identified with a particular parcel of land. They were connected to other clans through intermarriage, trading, cultural and mutual interests and totems.⁶

Two large groups lived in the area around Port Phillip Bay – the Bunerong and Woiworung. These people were hunter gatherers, with some moving camp according to the availability of food, and others settling in one location if there was a reliable local food source. Within these two groups there were clans made up of ten to thirty families. The Yalukit-willam clan was part of the Bunerong tribe and occupied a 5km wide strip of land at the top of Port Phillip Bay, which included present day Williamstown. The Yalukit-willam referred to Williamstown area as “koort-boork-boork” meaning “clump of she-oaks”. *“The area around Point Gellibrand was a major food gathering site for the Yalukit-willam as the mangroves located there are important fish and bird breeding grounds. While a shortage of freshwater meant that the area was unsuitable as a camp, Indigenous people of Victoria frequently used the area.”*⁷

There were a number of references to Indigenous occupation made by early European settlers, including a Williamstown man speaking in 1856 of corroborees held around a large tree at the foot of Thompson Street (corner of Commonwealth Reserve, Nelson Place and Syme Street), and a 1919 reference by a woman in her 80s of her childhood memories of corroborees near the current Town Hall site. “Stones, animal boles and shellfish mounds” were recorded at a number of sites near Williamstown, but over time vandalism has removed any known evidence.⁸

3.2 Botanic and Public Gardens

The European colonisation of Australia corresponded with a time of increased botanical and horticultural interest within the British Empire. Previously unknown species of plants were being collected from newly discovered portions of the globe, and Botanic Gardens were being established as adjuncts to educational institutions in England (at Oxford) and on the Continent (such as at Pisa and Padua)⁹. With the abundance of new species being introduced to horticulture, plant collection and display, especially of the new and unusual, became somewhat of a British national passion.

In the south of England this enthusiasm for plant collection centred around Kew¹⁰, encouraged by Royal patronage. By the time Australia was settled¹¹ Kew had become a scientific centre, spurred on by both economic and scientific pursuits. The influence of Kew became critical in the establishment of Botanic Gardens in Australia, and by

the 1850s, major Botanic Gardens had been developed in Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Brisbane¹².

In their original context, Botanic Gardens were scientific centres, where plants were displayed according to various botanical systems, rather than as objects of ornamentation. Herbariums for the collection of pressed specimens were attached, as were botanical libraries¹³. In the Australian context however, Botanic Gardens developed a greater emphasis as pleasure grounds and places of public use and enjoyment. This was exemplified by the development of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, where Baron Ferdinand von Mueller's traditional scientific structure was remodelled by William Guilfoyle on picturesque principals, forming the basis of the Gardens we know today.

This approach to providing Gardens which were more than just scientific displays, was in itself likely to be a product of the times. During the 19th century public parks were widely established to provide relaxation and enjoyment to all city residents, a concept which was new at the time of European settlement in Australia. These green spaces were seen to have moral and health benefits, providing respite from the overcrowded, dirty and smelly cities, and allowing all classes of people to mix freely¹⁴.

3.3 Victoria's Regional Botanic Gardens

In the Australian context, the phenomenon of widespread regional Botanic Gardens is uniquely Victorian, where virtually every country town and city of any consequence developed its own 'Botanic Garden'¹⁵. These gardens were generally established at the initiative of residents, rather than as a result of any formal government policy or funding. The Gardens were generally established when local residents formed a committee and petitioned the government for a land grant. If suitable land was available, and the request was suitably justified, the government "was inclined to consent"¹⁶.

A number of factors are likely to have contributed to the widespread establishment of regional Botanic Gardens. The Victorian fervour for plants and open spaces as described above, the popularity of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and the copy-cat effect as other regional towns developed Botanic Gardens are all possible contributors to the phenomenon. For the most part these new gardens were confined to regional Victoria, where they were seen as a status symbol for the town, and by the 1860s Botanic Gardens had been established at Koroit, Geelong, Ballarat, Kyneton, Daylesford and Port Fairy¹⁷. Of the 19th century gardens Williamstown (1860) and St Kilda (1858) alone established suburban Botanic Gardens.

These Botanic Gardens were, for the most part, pleasure gardens, although in early times plants were carefully labelled, and the gardens had a role to play in trialling new species, especially through the work of von Mueller. Today many of the Botanic Gardens are almost indistinguishable from public pleasure gardens¹⁸, although they contain fine tree collections, albeit with a strong bias to Victorian era tastes.

3.4 History of Williamstown

Government records for Williamstown began in 1836 when Captain William Lonsdale arrived in Williamstown as a "Police Magistrate and servant of the New South Wales Governor" to maintain law and order at the new Melbourne colony which had been started by John Batman a year earlier. The township had first been established in 1835 at Point Gellibrand and was the first permanent settlement in the Port Phillip district¹⁹, and *"by 1838, small vessels, mainly from Tasmania, had landed 55,000 sheep, several hundred horses and 2,000 passengers at Williamstown and Geelong."*²⁰

In early days Williamstown was the major port for Melbourne, with the first pier constructed in 1838, on the site of what is now the Gem Pier²¹. The first land sales took place in 1837, but lack of fresh water originally hampered the new settlement²² and it was not until the 1850s with the discovery of gold in central Victoria that activity around the port really increased²³. In 1851 the growing township was granted municipal status, with the first Council elected in 1856²⁴.

Towards the end of the 19th century Williamstown was promoted as a health resort, and was a popular destination for day trippers from Melbourne. The beach area adjacent to the Botanic Gardens was especially popular, and baths were constructed in 1888 on the site of the current kiosk, with hot sea baths added in 1902 – although they were destroyed in a storm 32 years later. The bluestone sea wall was added in the early 1900s, and the art deco style dressing pavilion (now the Siren's Restaurant) was constructed in the 1930s.²⁵

3.5 The Williamstown Botanic Gardens

The following history of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens draws heavily on the work of others, in particular Richard Aitken (1986), although John Patrick Pty Ltd (2001), the Victorian Heritage Register (1999) and Joanne Ekkel's 2009 Oral History Industry Report were also valuable sources. The full text of Richard Aitken's excellent history of the site is provided at Appendix 5.

Desire for a Garden 1855-56

The first description of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens site indicates a typical, wind-swept coastal site with a *"goodly number of trees which had blown down with their roots dragged out of the ground and branches blown off. Amongst these trees and branches the grass was very thick, long and abundant, resembling in the distance a crop of corn. At this time there was very little stock to consume it or trample in (sic) down. The trees at Back Beach, near where the gardens are now, were bent and stunted from the effects of the north-west wind, the branches being also stripped of their foliage on the seaward side. Rocks were abundant..."*²⁶

Late in 1855, agitation amongst the local community for a Botanic Gardens site prompted a public meeting to be held to discuss the question. At the meeting on the 7th of January 1856, the Williamstown Improvement Committee resolved to petition Major General Macarthur, who was the officer administering the Government of the Colony *"to grant to the inhabitants of this Township such portion of the public lands adjoining the southern portion of the Township... for the*

purpose of forming a public park and garden for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants thereof".²⁷

By March 8th, 1856 the district surveyor had marked out a 10-acre site on the southern foreshore, and by the end of the month the Executive Council had formally set aside the site as a "a Public Park or Pleasure Ground"²⁸. At this time there was still no formal Williamstown Council, the first meeting of which would take place the following month.

One of the first tasks of the new Council was the appointment of a municipal surveyor, with William Bull being narrowly elected to the position from a field of 15 candidates including the well-known architects A. Purchase, C. Porter and A. Kerr. At the time of Bull's appointment the site boundaries had already been trenched, and Bull would become responsible for the fencing and planting out of the Gardens that continued for the next two years.

Designing and Layingout the Botanic Gardens 1856 - 1860

A report from the Municipal Council for Williamstown in October 1858 made reference to a plan which it had "*caused... to be prepared for laying out the gardens*", and for which purpose it had received a voucher of £500 from the government. This plan is most likely that prepared in 1856 by the well-known designer and artist, Edward La Trobe Bateman²⁹. Bateman, a cousin of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe, worked as a book illuminator and architectural decorator in England before moving to Victoria to join the gold rush, where he sketched the native flora and scenes of gold field's life³⁰. After deciding to stay in Australia, Bateman moved onto garden design, recognising that opportunities for earning a living as an artist were limited³¹. Bateman's work included institutional, public and private gardens including the Carlton Gardens and the University of Melbourne Systems Garden, but Williamstown is the only Botanic Garden known to have been designed by Bateman. Bateman returned to Britain in 1869, where he continued to work as a garden designer, dying in Scotland, where he had been employed as landscape designer to the Marquess of Bute³².

The original plan for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens is not known to have survived, and for many years the designer of the Gardens was unknown. Bateman's involvement was not established until Anne Neale produced her PhD in 2001, fifteen years after Richard Aitken's *Conservation Analysis and Policies* for the Gardens. Although Bateman's original drawing has been lost, his designs for the Fitzroy (never implemented) and Carlton Gardens, provide excellent examples of the likely calibre of the Williamstown drawing. Like other examples of Bateman's work, the Williamstown Botanic Gardens is comprised of a series of serpentine paths which sweep against each other at intersections with triangular garden beds in the remaining spaces. These pathways are divided into a hierarchy of primary, axial pathways; secondary serpentine pathways and tertiary connecting pathways. The John Patrick Pty Ltd Conservation Management Plan does point out that the strong axial pathways that intersect the Williamstown Gardens differ from Bateman's other known plans, but that the flowing, "arabesque" patterns in the secondary paths are consistent.



Figure 12: View in the shade house located in the Pinetum c.1880s

Source: Courtesy R Aitken 1886, from Wilson P Evans Collection, copyright in City of Williamstown collection

Early planting of the Gardens included donations by Mueller from the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and Bunce at Geelong, and "has been principally (been) guided with a view of getting up as early as possible a thorough cover or shelter by planting wattle and other seeds of quick growth for the protection of other and more rear and valuable plants, some of which are now being raised in the nurseries at the garden and cemetery."³³ The Council also called for donations from the public of plants in the "shape of seeds, plants and cuttings of all ornamental, or rare or valuable plants – whether of forest growth, shrubbery, or herbaceous varieties"³⁴ –offering plants from the Gardens as compensation to anyone who helped.

Early Years 1860 - 1899

The Gardens were opened to the public in January 1860, with the Town Clerk taking out an advertisement in the Williamstown Chronicle stating that "Notice is hereby given that the PUBLIC GARDEN will be OPEN to the Public on and after Monday next, 2nd January 1860".³⁵ No formal ceremony appears to have taken place.

Within five years the Gardens were already too small to cope with the influx of visitors. On 10 January 1865 the Town Clerk wrote to the Commissioner of Lands and Survey regarding the problem and requested an extra ten acres on the western side. However the government granted only 5 acres, which was gazetted on 20 February 1865 as a temporary reservation "for Public Park or Pleasure Ground".³⁶ Despite this description, judging from later council correspondence and newspaper reports it appears as if the extra area was used for fetes and athletic sports. Ten years later the council still wished for a larger site and requested a further 10 acres. The government delayed a decision pending the resolution of a site for the rifle range and in May 1878 temporarily reserved 4 acres, 2 roods, 19 perches, bringing the total rear of the garden to almost 20 acres.³⁷



Figure 13: Williamstown Botanic Gardens main avenue c. 1900

Source: Wilson P Evans Collection of glass plates, State Library of Victoria

In 1867 more plants were received, as well as mixed seeds from a Mr Pestall, who also painted the gates at his own expense. Cows were a problem as sand drifts enabled them to wander into the Gardens unhindered.³⁸ Swings were also mentioned in newspaper reports although their exact location is not known.³⁹ During this period the garden came in for some harsh criticism. In 1870 the Garden Committee tabled a report to council which found the Gardens having:

*"half-dead wattle trees defacing and destroying the under vegetation, dwarfing the shrubs and poisoning the ground, to the great injury of more recent plantation; also that the ground in the neighbourhood of the rows of blue gums was perfectly exhausted by these trees, to the detriment of various other trees planted near them and much more ornamental... re-planting round the fences with either shrubs and trees (is needed), so as to give shelter to the more choice plantation inside, especially planting the north and south end..."*⁴⁰

The same report also recorded "a large planting of conifers and shrubs gradually going on for the last three years" which presumably referred to the southern 'Pinetum'.

By this stage Williamstown was a favourite resort for the residents of Melbourne, who reached the township by boat or train. Most guides referred to the Botanic Gardens as "ornamental" or "Well laid-out" and by the turn of the century numerous photographs appears in weekly journals illustrating its merits.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Gardens were apparently poorly maintained. "Waterlily" complained in the columns of the *Williamstown Chronicle* that little council funds were being directed to the Gardens and the committee of management

was "shamefully neglecting its duties". However, his angry letter reveals details in an otherwise poorly documented period of the Gardens.

"The gardener has made an excavation near the Giffard Street entrance. This was intended for a fish pond, but the wiseacres on the committee cleverly decided that the excavation shall remain gaping open like a Newport quarry hole. They have not approved of a lawn or even the expenditure that would be necessary to equip the gardener with working tools. Their policy is one of masterful inactivity. Anyone would have thought that when there was a chance of getting a fernery and a fish pond in the gardens as an attraction, those brilliant financiers would not have raised objections. The council is supposed to expend all its income on streets and hence nothing is done at the gardens..."⁴¹

A statue of local MLA A. T. Clark was erected in a circular plot at the intersection of the major axial path on 18 July 1891. The monument was sculptured in Cararra marble by Enrico Lucchinelli from a suitable photograph. Council also paid £5 for a fernery to be erected in the Pinetum and a year later triangular aviary was also erected. A rotunda was to be erected in the adjacent reserve in 1891 and this was re-erected in the south-east corner of Fearon Reserve in 1901 to allow football to be played unencumbered by the structure (which was in the middle of the oval). The new site, as seen on the 1910 MMBW plan was in the southern corner of what is now Fearon Reserve.

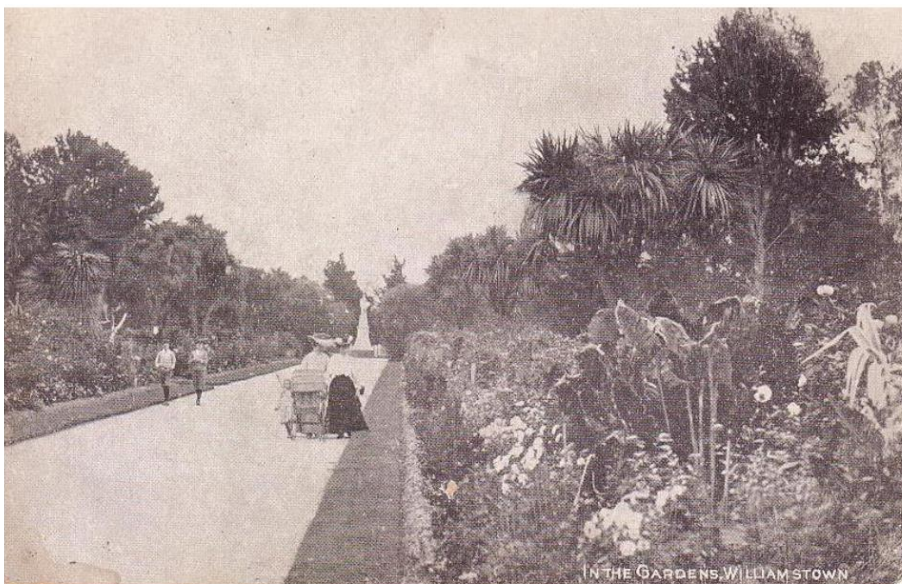


Figure 14: Williamstown Botanic Gardens main avenue c.1900

Source: Williamstown Botanic Gardens – digital postcard archive

Little significant evidence regarding the appearance of layout of the Gardens is available until 1894⁴² when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works mapped the area as part of its precatory work for sewerage for the metropolis. This plan (see Appendix 2), followed by another in 1910 (Appendix 3) provide an excellent record of the Gardens' progress and bear a striking resemblance to its current form.

Halcyon Days - Samuel Thake and William Crowe 1899 - 1938

A major turning point in the history and development of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens occurred in May 1899 with the appointment of Samuel Thake as curator. Little is known about his background, although during his time with Williamstown Borough Council until his departure in 1912 he was also a staunch committee member of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society. Thake's job was also aided by the appointment of William Crowe as assistant in 1900.⁴³



Figure 15: Williamstown Botanic Gardens 1906

Source: State Library of Victoria

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of his talents is to compare the 1894 MMBW plan with the later MMBW plan of 1910.⁴⁴ Major changes include the ornamental pond (completed by 1904), new caretakers cottage (1907) and reorganisation of the north east corner with the demolition of the old cottage, erection of new gates (1907) and placement of an old gun (1906). A drinking fountain was also erected in 1907.

Funding for these improvements was mooted c.1903-04 and local newspapers supported the cause unceasingly. By November 1905 the funding was seriously considered by council but allowed to stand for twelve months.⁴⁵

The changes to the garden occurred at the time of heightened local interest in gardening. Membership of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society doubled during 1903-04⁴⁶ and the *Williamstown Chronicle* commenced weekly 'Notes on the Gardens' by 'Sweetbrier' in September 1905. Although mainly directed at the home gardener, 'Sweetbrier' had much praise for the Botanic Gardens and regularly lavished praise on Thake and his gardeners.

The *Chronicle* published a long article following an excellent attendance in the garden on Melbourne Cup Day 1905. Amid the general praise were some notes on the plantings.

"Williamstown Gardens...now that we are being favoured with more season weather, are beginning to present an

*unusually bright and attractive appearance...(judging from comments)...there is a greater variety of bloom than is to be found in any of the other public gardens in and around Melbourne. The monster bed of pansies and also the smaller one, receive their share of admiration...(visitors) also experienced much delight in viewing the stocks (of numerous shades), the very fine show of rhennucles (sic) bulbs, and other flowers. The roses are just beginning to bloom, and in the course of a few days should be seen at their best, but here were sufficient in bloom in the nursery and in the beds which run parallel with the main walk and surrounding main lawn to convince the enthusiast of the quality of the stock planted. The artificial lake, in which water lillies have been planted is now looking well, and when all the flowers and shrubs planted thereabouts get a firm hold, that spot should prove indeed enticing...(curator has plenty to do now) particularly as an additional area of virgin ground has been put under flowers."*⁴⁷

Regret was expressed by the *Chronicle* when the pansy bed was finally 'turned-over' in January as it had obviously been an extremely popular attraction.



Figure 16: Pond with Curator's cottage behind c.1907-1910

Source: Wilson P Evans collection of glass plates, State Library of Victoria

Lobbying by the Member for Williamstown, Mr Lemmon, persuaded the Premier, Thomas Bent to consent to four obsolete guns being handed over to the council for ornamental purposes. Two were placed in the north-east corner of the garden, with one being much admired on Boxing Day 1906, soon after its placement on a concrete plinth.⁴⁸

A further impetus to local pride was given by the purchase of massive iron gates at a very favourable price in March 1907. They had been located at the corner of Acland Street and Anderson Street, South Yarra 'Fairlie', the property of Mr. FitzGibbon. His executor had

offered them to council for only £72 and the *Williamstown Chronicle* gleefully pointed out they had originally cost £1,200. They were manufactured by Walter Macfarlane's Saracen Foundry in Glasgow and by late April 1907 the gates had been relocated to the north east corner of the WilliamstownG.⁴⁹

In 1906 a drinking fountain was proposed to celebrate the golden jubilee of the municipality, following the suggestion of an elderly local resident who urged the council to follow Ballarat's example with its profusion of statutes and memorials. A contractor from Carlton had presented Council with a design, but outraged local citizens complained that prices and designs had not been sourced from local craftsmen in the district. The matter became protracted and finally on 1 December 1906 a tender from Bliss and Sons, who had erected the 'Fairlie' gates was accepted and the work completed by Easter 1907.⁵⁰



Figure 17: Main Gates – previously at Fairlie, South Yarra c.1907-1910
Source: Rippin Series Postcard, Williamstown Botanic Gardens – digital postcard archive

To complete the transformation of the northern end of the garden, a new curator's residence was erected. This replaced the old cottage which had formerly stood near the large cast iron gates at the north-east corner. The Town Council engineer Mr Champion submitted a design to council in the arts and crafts style in March 1907 and another design from an 'illustrated paper' was also presented. Champion's design was chosen and on 1 June 1907 Murdoch and Stevenson's tender of £386 1s 6d was accepted for the cottage. The old cottage was purchased for £53 in September and £13 voted by council for a fence around the new residence later that month.⁵¹

In 1907 the rotunda in what is now 'Fearon Reserve' made the news when "a sensational incident happened" involving "a box of rockets stored under the structure explode(ing) with such a tremendous report that people believed the comet had landed in the Gardens."⁵² A number of people were injured in the resulting explosion and panic, two palings were knocked off the Osborne Street Fencing, and a door mat destroyed on the opposite side of the street. The rotunda still appears on the 1910 MMBW plan – and since no mention is made in

the *Williamstown Chronicle* article of the structure being destroyed, it is to be assumed that it survived the incident.

Samuel Thake's employment in Williamstown ended in September 1912 when he resigned to take up a similar position with the Albert Park Trust. The *Williamstown Advertiser* in reporting the farewell service commented that

*"The gardens were practically a wilderness when Mr Thake took them over. For their size, they (sic) are no better gardens in the metropolitan area, and considering the small staff employed, the extension of the lawns and flower beds, and the institution of an artificial lake shows what hard work has been done."*⁵³

William Crowe took over as curator following Thake's resignation.⁵⁴ At this date the Gardens had reached approximately the form which still exists. The central palm avenue appears to have been planted by c.1915 and the southern section of the Gardens (now the Pinetum) comprised an extensive arboretum with some shrubberies.



Figure 18: Main avenue prior to planting of the Palms c.1908

Source: *Williamstown Botanic Gardens – digital postcard archive*

In the 1930s a "bandstand" mound was constructed in the pinetum, possibly as a replacement for the earlier bandstand in Fearon Reserve. There is no evidence that a bandstand was ever constructed on the mound.⁵⁵ During this time the Gardens continued to enjoy a high level of maintenance – confirmed by a 1932 landscape department report which stated that

*"The Public Park is enclosed, laid out with beautiful walks and flower gardens and shelter trees. There are also several large guns on stands and some statues. A caretakers dwelling with necessary out work buildings is situated in the northwester corner. This park and gardens is well kept and compares favourably with other gardens in the Melbourne district."*⁵⁶

Thake's influence continued through his assistant William Crowe who remained at the Gardens until he passed away at the residence on the 9th of January 1938 after a very long illness.



Figure 19: Elm Avenue with cannons, statue and figs c.1924

Source: Williamstown Botanic Gardens – digital postcard archive

The “Jewel in the Crown” 1938 - 1994

After Crowe's death the Gardens continued to be maintained to a high standard, with a strong tradition of horticultural excellence and pride in the Gardens handed down through apprentices and long term gardeners. As stated by Archie Matthews, who started as an apprentice in 1937 and stayed with the Gardens until c.1943, returning as Superintendent from 1965 to 1988⁵⁷ *“We (the 3 apprentices) used to have competitions to see who could keep it looking the best. We used to take great delight. It wasn't like work, it was a pleasure”*⁵⁸ Joanne Ekkels, who produced an Oral History of the site, interviewing gardeners who had worked on the site from 1937 until the present day summed it up by stating that *“The interviews highlight the high standard of horticulture that was expected, carried out and passed on to each new group of apprentices by long term, experienced gardeners. There was a strong tradition of gardening, of techniques and “the way things are done” being passed on”*⁵⁹

From 1961 to 1995 the Gardens' were under the Superintendentship of Barry Heath, the Superintendent in charge of Parks and Gardens for the Williamstown Council, who also lived in the residence on the site. During this time the Superintendents still had their office onsite, along with the parks depot which held equipment for the wider Williamstown Council. The depot also contained a nursery “where seedlings, trees and other plants”⁶⁰ were grown for both the Botanic Gardens and other Council sites, and there was a tradition of sharing material and cuttings with other gardens. The nursery included glass houses and a propagation shed, and until 1990 the thousands of seedlings required for the Botanic Gardens annual displays were still sown in this nursery.⁶¹

During this time the gardeners tried to stay true to the Edwardian style of the Gardens, but without a Conservation Policy, which wasn't produced until 1986, there were inevitable degradations such as the removal of the Palm avenue in the mid 1960s⁶² and the loss of the path system in the Pinetum which was “covered by debris from overhanging pine trees and gradual accumulation of dirt in the 1970s due to lack of maintenance”⁶³ In 1975 the four cannons were

removed from the Gardens to other locations in the municipality and early 1981 the ornate curator's cottage was replaced with the present brick structure.

A major renovation of the Gardens took place in the late 1980s as part of the bicentennial project including the replacement of the Thread Palm Avenue (which had previously been removed in the 1960s) with the current Cotton Palms which dominate the site.

This sense of pride and the importance placed on the Gardens continued until Council amalgamation in 1994. For the former Williamstown Council, the Botanic Gardens were "like the Jewel in the Crown" ⁶⁴.

Decline 1994 - 2000

Following the amalgamation in 1994 of the Williamstown and Altona Councils with parts of Laverton and South Kingsville Councils into the Hobsons Bay City Council the Gardens experienced a general decline. The role of "Leading Hand" in charge of the Botanic Gardens was abolished, and the Council depot moved off site. Reduced staffing levels, loss of experienced staff, and a lack of adherence to the 1986 Conservation Analysis and Policies lead to a general decline, ⁶⁵ with lack of maintenance and vandalism being an ongoing problem. This was not an isolated problem with Council gardens, as stated by Council staff in the Ekkels report *"It wasn't just here I think, but across the board with local government. Their lawns were mowed and paths raked and it took a few years for people to realise that the gardens themselves, the shrubberies needed work, ongoing work, need expertise and knowledge...Gardens didn't attract the same interest from Councils from that time."* ⁶⁶

In 1999 a Landscape Advisory Committee for Hobsons Bay had been established, with a Williamstown Botanic Gardens sub-committee "in response to concern for the state and direction of the Gardens". These two committees were "instrumental in ensuring a renewed focus on... heritage values and the (commission of the) 2001 Conservation Management Plan" ⁶⁷

Restoration 2001 - 2017

In 2000 the position of curator or head gardener was reinstated for the Gardens, with Shelley Wood being appointed as the next curator in 2006⁶⁸ (a role she still holds). Following this time maintenance of the garden and public attitudes towards it improved – with support provided by the 2001 Conservation Management Plan and Master Plan produced by John Patrick Pty Ltd. This led to considerable restoration work being undertaken including restoration of the front gates, reinstatement of the path system in the 'Pinetum' and restoration work to Thake's ornamental pond. In 2009 the Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens was established, in advance of the Gardens 150th anniversary in 2010⁶⁹. Other works include the addition of decorative planting along the main path in 2008 and installation of new pedestrian gates in recognition of the Gardens 150th anniversary.

Maintenance standards in the Gardens were also high, so that they now ranked as one of the top 19th century Botanic Gardens in Victoria, comparable to Melbourne and Geelong. By 2013 most of

the works recommended in the 2001 Master Plan had been completed, and Council commissioned the production of a new Master Plan to guide the Gardens over the next ten years.

From 2013 to 2016 considerable structural changes took place within the Hobsons Bay City Council, with the result that the curator's position was expanded to include the role of Team Leader Horticulture for the City. This effectively reduced the important Curator's role from a full time to a one day a week position. The same internal changes led to the Master Plan project being dormant for a period of three years.

During the 2014-17 period while the Master Plan was inactive a number of changes recommended in the draft document were still carried out. These included asphaltting the Gardens' external pathways on the Giffard and Osborne Street frontages; the appointment of a full-time, rather than rotating, apprentice; a review of the system for booking and managing weddings; bulb planting beneath the Elm Avenue; commencement of the irrigation system upgrade and restoring access to part of the shed previously leased to Mind Australia. These completed works were reflected in the final Master Plan which was reactivated and completed in 2017.

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- ⁶ Shire of Melton Reconciliation Plan 2010-2014
 - ⁷ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 6, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile, citing Parks Victoria's website
 - ⁸ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 6, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile
 - ⁹ Aitken and Looker, 2002, pg 98
 - ¹⁰ Thacker, 1994, pg 233
 - ¹¹ Aitken and Looker, 2002, pg 521
 - ¹² Aitken and Looker, 2002, pg 98
 - ¹³ Aitken and Looker, 2002, pg 98
 - ¹⁴ Fitzroy Gardens HVic registration (H1834) and Aitken and Looker, 2002, pg 490
 - ¹⁵ Watts, 1983, pg 54
 - ¹⁶ Watts, 1983, pg 56-57
 - ¹⁷ Watts, 1983, pg 54
 - ¹⁸ Watts, 1983, pg 59
 - ¹⁹ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 7, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile
 - ²⁰ Hobsons Bay City Council, undated, History of Hobsons Bay
 - ²¹ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 7, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile
 - ²² Aitken, R 1986
 - ²³ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 7, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile
 - ²⁴ Hobsons Bay City Council, undated, History of Hobsons Bay
 - ²⁵ Hobsons Bay City Council, 2009, pg 8, Williamstown Neighbourhood Profile
 - ²⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing W.A. Hall, 'Early Williamstown', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, IX, 4, September 1923, p 118

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- 27 Aitken, R 1986 citing Department of Conservation, Forest and Lands, reserve file, Rs 2076.
- 28 Aitken, R 1986 citing Department of Conservation, Forest and Lands, reserve file, Rs 2076.
- 29 *The Argus*, 26 March 1857, p6 – 'Fine Art Gossip (From the Athenaeum)'
- 30 Thomas, D 1969 'Bateman, Edward La Trobe (1815-1897)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3
- 31 Neale, A 2002 'Bateman, Edward La Trobe' in 'The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens' ed. R. Aitken and M. Looker
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- 33 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Seventh Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown*, ending 2 October 1959
- 34 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Seventh Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown*, ending 2 October 1959
- 35 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 31 December 1859, pg 1.
- 36 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Victorian Government Gazette*, 28 February 1865, pg 522.
- 37 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Victorian Government Gazette*, 17 May 1878, pg 1124; *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, 2 January 1865, 1 February 1865.
- 38 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 8 June 1867, pg 4.
- 39 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 11 May 1867, pg 5.
- 40 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 4 June 1870
- 41 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 26 July 1890, pg 3.
- 42 Aitken, R 1986 citing Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan no. 14, copyright 17 July 1894, 160 feed = 1 inch.
- 43 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 2 November 1912, pg 2; numerous references to the W. & D.H.S. in *Williamstown Chronicle*, e.g. 5 August 1905, pg 2; council minutes 19 May 1899, 1 October 1900.
- 44 Aitken, R 1986 citing Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan nos. 14, 15, lithographed September 1910, 40 feed = 1 inch.
- 45 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 25 November 1905, pg 3.
- 46 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 5 August 1905, pg 2.
- 47 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 11 November 1905, pg 2.
- 48 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 13 October 1906, pg 2; 24 November 1906, pg 2; 29 December 1907, pg 3.
- 49 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 9 March 1907, pg 2; 30 March 1907, pg 2; 20 April 1907, pg 2.
- 50 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 24 February 1906, pg 3; 17 March 1906; 21 July 1906, pg 3; 28 July 1906, pg 3; 1 December 1906, pg 2; 30 March 1907, pg 2; 6 April 1907, pg 2.
- 51 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*? (source missing on original report), 24 November 1906, pg 2; 27 April 1907, pg 2; 1 June 1907, pg 2; 24 August 1907, pg 2; 7 September 1907, pg 2 14 September 1907, pg 2.
- 52 *Williamstown Chronicle*, Saturday 9 March 1907
- 53 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 2 November 1912, pg 2.
- 54 Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 23 November 1912, pg 2.
- 55 John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 37
- 56 Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op. cit.
- 57 Ekkel, J 2009, pg 8
- 58 Ekkel, J 2009, pg 9
- 59 Ekkel, J 2009, pg 21
- 60 Ekkel, J 2009, pg 6
- 61 Ekkel, J 2009, pgs 23,24
- 62 Ekkel, J 2009, pg 12
- 63 Terra Culture, 2003, pg 1
- 64 Ekkel, J 2009, pgs 34 (Wilkins quote)
- 65 Ekkel, J 2009, pgs 34
- 66 Ekkel, J 2009, pgs 34
- 67 Ekkel, J 2009, pgs 35
- 68 S Wood, personal communication
- 69 Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens website



Figure 20: Main axial paths from Clark Statue
From top looking: west, north, east and south

4 Existing Conditions and Site Analysis

4.1 Site Description and Analysis

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is divided into two distinct sections – the northern half with its high end horticulture and strong Victorian and Edwardian influences, and the open, tree dominated 'Pinetum' to the south. Previous documents have referred to this southern section as the LA Parker Reserve, but in line with current practice this report will refer to it as the Pinetum, better reflecting its historic role and connection to the northern half of the Gardens.

Northern Gardens

The Northern Gardens is the ornamental, high end horticultural section of the Botanic Gardens and are made up of a series of delightful garden rooms connected by sweeping, arabesque paths and intersected by a strong north-south pathway. This main pathway continues beyond the Northern Gardens and through the Pinetum, being intersected at its central point by a strong east-west avenue of Elms, with the 1891 statue of the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, Alfred Thomas Clark at the intersection of the two paths. This statue, on a high pedestal and surrounded by a ring of c.100 year old Moreton Bay Figs, is highly visible and is the central feature of the site (see Figure 25). The shaded area provides a strong sense of enclosure and escape into another world and the high visibility of the Cararra marble statue means it draws people to the Northern Gardens. Although it is separated from the Pinetum by the dividing fence, its height means it is still visible.

The Elm Avenue on the east-west pathway is in the process of being replaced as the trees have reached the end of their safe, useful life. Along the main avenue from the statue to the northern entrance runs the Williamstown Botanic Gardens most iconic and compelling feature, a tall avenue of Cotton Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) at approximately 6.5m centres (see Figure 2). This Avenue is a replacement for an earlier one of Thread Palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) planted by William Crowe c.1915 and cut down in the 1960s. The current trees, planted as part of bicentennial works in 1987, are visible from all over the northern end of the Botanic Gardens, dominating the space in a positive way and providing visual orientation and a strong sense of place. Perennial planting at the base of these palms has been designed by Vivid Design to mirror their strong architectural form, and is for the most part highly successful, although it could be improved by the addition of some stronger accent plants.

Palms are a consistent and recognisable part of the Botanic Gardens canopy, without over dominating the space to the detriment of other species. Nine different species of Palm are in the Botanic Gardens, including two strong Avenues of Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) running along the Osborne Street and Giffard Street frontages, and a handsome Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*) in front of the main entrance gates. Other accent trees in the Northern Gardens include a wide form of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), a Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*), Golden Elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Lutescens') and Thread Palm (*Washingtonia filifera*). The Northern Gardens is also home to a rare type of lily, *Crinum asiaticum*.

Figure 21: Ornamental Pond



To the west of the main Palm Avenue lies the ornamental pond, this landscape feature was constructed by Samuel Thake in c.1904 and is reflective of the style of grotto-like rockwork made popular in the era by William Guilfoyle's work at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. This pond was restored in 2011 and is a highly ornamental feature, though some-what obscured from view. Large leafed, tropical style planting flag the pond, dominated by a number of extremely large palms which complement the adjacent Palm Avenue. With the visual dominance of the Palm Avenue the pond is less prominent, and it may be possible to increase its presence by the addition of a simple water feature. The pathways between the pond and Bateman house have also been modified from their original significant design and now form an awkward intersection that detracts from the pond.



Figure 22: Heritage arbour and awkward pathways near pond



Figure 23: Open Giffard Street frontage



Figure 24: New gates at Osborne Street framing the AT Clark Statue

The two street frontages of the Northern Gardens, along Osborne Street to the north and Giffard Street to the East both reflect the Northern Gardens character – although much more enclosure is provided along Osborne Street. This frontage is enclosed by a thick band of ornamental shrubbery, with the fence being tubular steel and mesh covered in a hedge of Italian Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*). The same fence runs down Giffard Street, but without the shrubbery this side of the Northern Gardens is more exposed, and therefore walking on the internal boundary path along Giffard Street does not

Figure 25: View to Clark Statue
From top looking: west, south and east

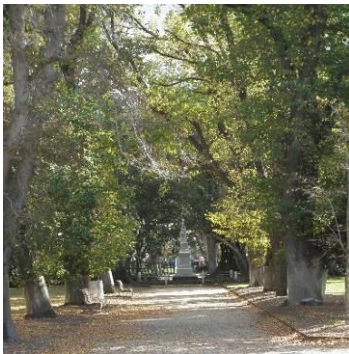


Figure 26: Eastern half of gardens.
Sunset lawn above, decorative planting below



give the same feeling of enclosure and being "in the Gardens" (see Figure 23).

Shrubberies throughout the Northern Gardens are for the most part decorative, and divide the site into its rooms (Figure 24 and Figure 26). Generally speaking there are more garden beds, with greater diversity of plantings in the eastern side of the Northern Gardens and more lawns scattered with large trees in the western half. This western half is partially open to Fearon Reserve, from which it is separated by a tall, dark green, picket fence. This fence provides a good sense of enclosure, while still allowing views beyond, but more shrub planting would strengthen this side of the Northern Gardens. Lawns through the Gardens are generally good, but wear patches are apparent, and have deteriorated from the Buffalo Lawns that were of such pride to the Gardens pre 1994.

The pathways through the Northern Gardens are generally in good condition, with granitic gravel surfaces and mild steel edges forming a crisp, clean line. Some of the historic rock edging is still present, and makes an effective border between paths and garden beds. This is especially apparent near the Fairlie Gate entrance and around garden beds at path intersections.

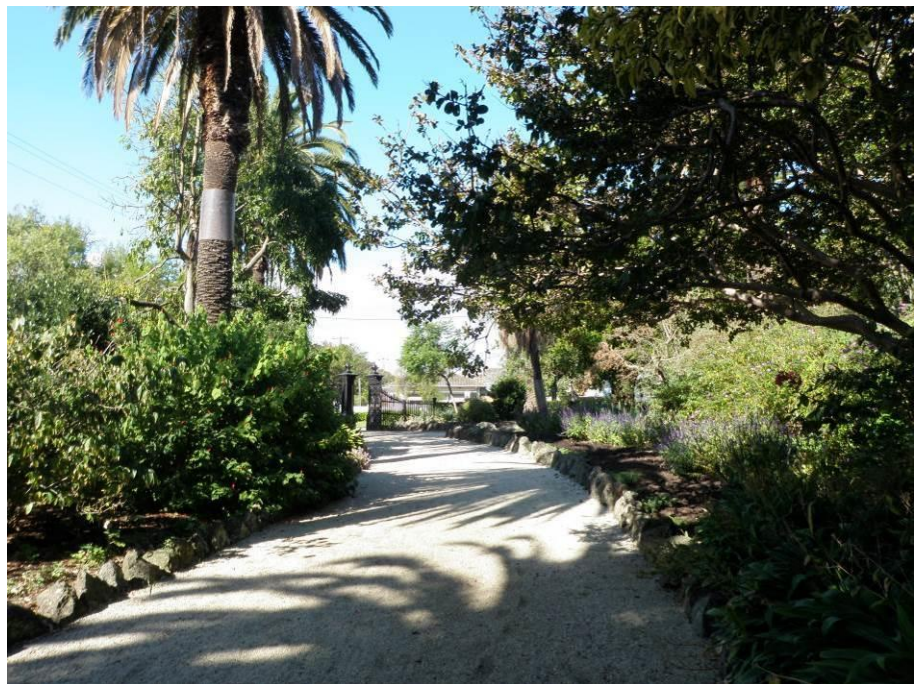


Figure 27: Enclosing shrubbery along eastern side of the Gardens

The Fairlie Gates at the north-east corner of the Gardens are now the main entrance point (Figure 5). These highly ornamental gates are in a prominent visual location, and draw people into the Gardens. The Canary Island Date Palm in the centre of the adjacent roundabout is also a fitting marker (Figure 9), although the remainder of the planting at this entrance and along Osborne Street is poor. In particular the alternating street trees of Prickly Paperbark (*Melaleuca stypheloides*) and Desert Ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia* ssp. *angustifolia*) are not sufficiently beautiful or botanically interesting to complement the Gardens. The Norfolk Island Hibiscuses (*Lagunaria patersonii*) located along Giffard Street, while equally common, at least provides a consistency which does not detract from the Gardens.

For more information on the location and condition of elements in the Northern Gardens refer to the Site Analysis Plans on pages 39 and 40.

The Pinetum

The Pinetum is an open area of parkland dominated by an over story of mature and over mature Aleppo Pines (*Pinus halepensis*) and Monterey Cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*). A tree replacement strategy was prepared in 2003 as part of a general Conservation Implementation Strategy for the Pinetum. As a result extensive new tree planting has been undertaken, but succession planning for tree canopies is a long term project, and this work needs to continue. The over mature nature of much of the canopy puts the site at risk of considerable character and micro-climate change as trees are gradually removed on safety grounds. It is unlikely that removal of these trees can be delayed until the new planting (which has taken place in the last 10 years) is of sufficient size to prevent this. The micro-climate change is particularly problematic for the Northern Gardens, as they will be more exposed to the damaging sea winds. This is discussed further under climate on page 41.

At ground level the traditional Bateman designed path system has been reinstated according to archaeological records and picnic tables and seats are dotted across the reserve. The paths are surfaced with granitic gravel, with timber edges, rather than with the neat steel edging in the Northern Gardens. The only significant built element, other than the paths, is the mound in the Pinetum's north-west quadrant.



Figure 28: Open lawn above, poor Osborne Street planting below



Figure 29: The Pinetum

The bluestone mound (Figure 32) is sometimes referred to as the "bandstand mound", but it appears unlikely it ever had a formal bandstand constructed on it,⁷⁰ and the elevated stone platform may have taken the place of a wooden structure. The mound is "of contributory significance as a major element built in the gardens during the mid-20th century."⁷¹ It is comprised of a roughly circular



Figure 30: New planting in the Pinetum



Figure 31: Dividing fence between the Northern Gardens and the Pinetum



Figure 32: The "bandstand" mound

and elevated earth platform, surrounded by three rings of bluestone fieldstones with sawn bluestone steps leading up on the eastern and western sides. These steps are worn and shallow, and could pose a trip hazard. Six metal stanchions surrounding the mound are also identified on the heritage registration, and are the same as those surrounding the ornamental pond, being said to indicate the alignment of a surrounding barrier.⁷² Planting on the mound is limited to Bears-breeches (*Acanthus mollis*) and Yuccas (*Yucca* sp.) with many bare patches.

The mound is not connected to the surrounding path system, and presents more as a curiosity than an important feature of the Pinetum. The opportunity exists to reinvigorate the mound by connecting it to the path system and installing a decorative planting scheme. As the only elevated portion of the site it could become a good location for photographs, performances and wedding ceremonies if suitably picturesque.

The overall character of the Pinetum is exposed and somewhat desolate, aided by the dark, stately conifers which reflect the Victorian era love of plants with dark, imposing forms. There is now little to draw visitors into and through the Pinetum, as views to the Northern Gardens are obscured and there is little of interest in the Pinetum itself. The boundaries of the Pinetum are open on all sides, with good views into and out of the space. While this does make the Pinetum somewhat more inviting, it also makes it more exposed to wind – and while picnic facilities are good there is no protection from the weather.

Many of the entrances to the Pinetum have been upgraded through the addition of short lengths of picket fences, which gives them definition. A tall section of picket fence at the south-east corner blocks views into and out of the Pinetum and although there has never been an entrance at this point, it is a visually prominent location and should be opened up to make a formal entrance as has occurred at the southern end of the main axial path.

Overall the Pinetum has strong potential as a public space, which while being improved is still underutilised. From a heritage perspective the Pinetum is an extremely valuable part of the Botanic Gardens – reflecting their early role as a scientific resource. Its prominent foreshore location gives it strong potential to draw visitors from the beach up into the Botanic Gardens and its open nature makes it appropriate for some activities not suitable in the Northern Gardens.

Barriers between the Pinetum and Northern Gardens

A tall, dark green picket fence separates the Northern Gardens and the Pinetum and creates a physical and visual barrier which separates the two parts of the Gardens (Figure 31). This separation is further emphasised by the chicane style gate at the end of the main north-south axial pathway, which unless closely inspected, appears to present as a barrier to movement.

The difference in character between the two portions of the reserve also contributes to them reading as separate spaces. The Northern Gardens is enclosed, sheltered and inward looking, with a high level

of decoration and maintenance; while the Pinetum is exposed, outward looking (with excellent bay views), without decoration and with lower maintenance levels. While this difference is desirable to a point, and the two portions of the site should maintain their own distinctive character, there is a lack of cohesion between the two that needs to be addressed. By removing the barrier fence, reintroducing low shrub massing to the Pinetum and improving maintenance levels the two sites could read more coherently, with the Pinetum once again reading as an essential part of the Botanic Gardens, and as a decorative, park like annex to the ornamental Northern Gardens. For this to be successful greater staff numbers will be required, as there are currently insufficient staff to increase maintenance levels in the Pinetum.

Parks Depot

The former Williamstown Council parks department depot has been divided in two, with one third available for use by the Botanic Gardens and the remaining section let to an outside party, currently Mind Australia who provide services for people recovering from mental illness. The Botanic Gardens side of the depot contains a small, two room office, a portable lunch room / toilet / bathroom for staff and a small machinery shed. There are also some garden beds and space, albeit very limited, for parking vehicles and stockpiling materials and waste. As of c.2015, use of a large shed straddling the two areas is split between the Gardens and Mind Australia, with the Gardens have successfully negotiated for use of three-quarters of the building.

This area is currently insufficient for the Gardens' back-of-house maintenance requirements, and with the formation of the Friends group more pressure is being put on already limited resources. It also does not provide sufficient room for provision of other customer services areas expected in modern Botanic Gardens such as visitor information, an educational facility, gift shop or food and beverage.

The area of the former parks depot let to Mind Australia is referred to as "Amaroo House". This includes a main building with offices, activities spaces, kitchen and bathroom facilities; a large, somewhat dilapidated shed which is little used; car parking and raised vegetable gardens (again, little used). The modern building is painted in bright colours and fronts the garden, sitting very uncomfortably with the 19th century character of the landscape. The rear presentation of this area to Fearon Reserve is also extremely poor (Figure 33), with a mix of fencing treatments including cyclone wire and timber paling. The white picket fence which fronts part of the interface is attractive, but the effect is compromised by the other fencing types. Planting in the "Amaroo House" side the park's depot is mostly very poor, lacking any interest and character which would complement the Gardens.



Figure 33: Poor interface between former depot and Fearon Reserve



Figure 34: Williamstown Botanic Gardens works depot (current)

4.2 Bateman House

Bateman House, the former Head Gardener / Superintendent's Residence is a 1980s, tan brick building which was constructed on the site of an earlier arts and crafts style structure. It is currently leased to Benatas, an aged care provider, who use the building for resident day and overnight respite. This use is compatible with the Botanic Gardens role as a place of quiet retreat and passive recreation. Two

main issues surround Bateman House, the first one relating to its presentation to the Gardens, as the building is rather unsightly and jars against the 19th century landscape. The second issue is with disability access from the street to the house, and from the house into the Gardens. Given the building is occupied by elderly and frail people it is essential that good all-abilities access be provided. Additional seating at regular intervals would also help residents to access the rest of the Gardens.

4.3 Facilities and Infrastructure

Good picnic facilities are provided throughout the Pinetum, and although these are not highly decorative they are all of good quality and consistent style which is sympathetic to a historic garden. Some backed bench seats are also provided in the Northern Gardens, but their number is insufficient. No picnic tables are provided in this part of the Gardens, a policy which should be maintained as this function is suitably catered for in the Pinetum. The Northern Gardens does however contain two rubbish bins and a number of bench seats, both of which are appropriate. Currently the maintenance of this furniture falls to the Garden's Horticulturalist.

No toilets are provided in the Botanic Gardens, with the public being forced to use those on the edge of Fearon Reserve to the Gardens' south-west. These toilets are an old, bluestone structure and are due for replacement. Lack of toilet facilities in the Gardens is considered to be a problem for all users, but especially for school groups, people with young children and Williamstown Botanic Gardens staff.

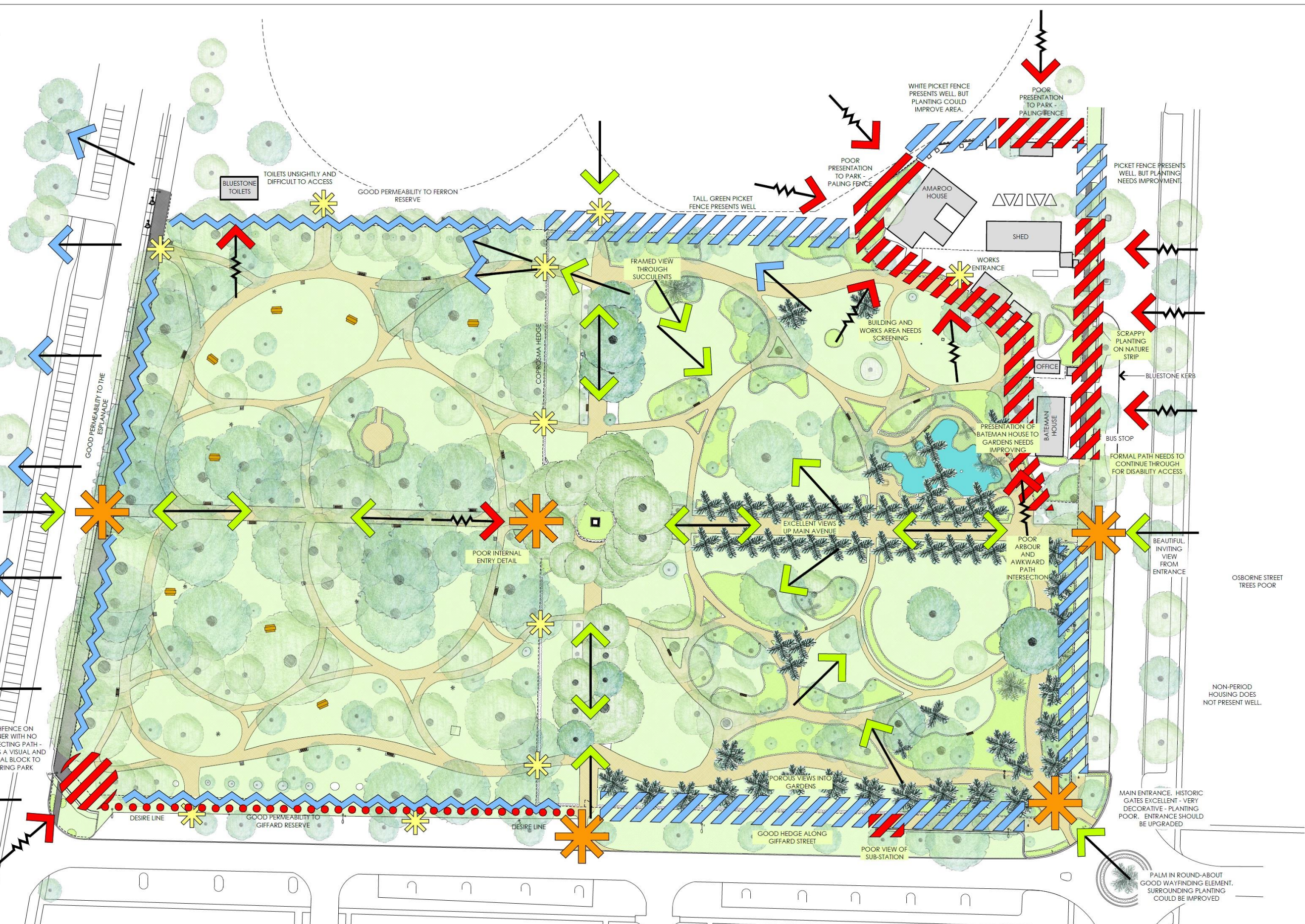


Figure 35: View from Northern Gardens, through the Pinetum to the Bay

⁷⁰ John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 37

⁷¹ John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 37

⁷² John Patrick Pty Ltd, 2001, pg 37





Irrigation System

A pop-up irrigation system was installed in the Northern Gardens and Pinetum in 1994 and resulted in a notable increase in plant growth. This system is now of considerable age and very inefficient. It has extensive problems in recent years included leaks, breakdowns and jamming of sprinkler heads resulting in flooding.

Parking

There is extensive parking available on the Esplanade and offstreet in front of the art deco former dressing pavilion. This parking is sealed and well made, but has limited shade, is paid parking and is removed from the ornamental Northern Gardens; therefore visitors tend to favour parking on Giffard and Osborne Streets. The parking on these two streets is informal, with cars angle parking on roughly gravelled areas between street trees. A lack of drainage and pathways can lead to these areas becoming a quagmire, and the informal nature is unsightly. There are plans by the Hobsons Bay City Council to seal the parking and create formal pathways along these two streets. This will also help with disability access problems. While access within the Gardens is good, there are no compliant pathways from the parking to the Gardens entrances which needs to be rectified.

4.4 Environmental Conditions

Climate

Williamstown's climate is very similar to Melbourne, being warm temperate in character with hot summers, cool winters and relatively even rainfall across the year. Weather observations for Bureau of Meteorology Melbourne station are provided in Table 1, below and reflect a relatively stable climate with few frosts.

Table 1: Climatic Data for the Melbourne Regional Office

	Jan	April	July	Oct	Annual	Period
Mean max. temp	25.9°	20.3°	13.5°	19.7°	19.9°	long term ⁱⁱ
	26.3°	21.0°	14.2°	20.1°	20.4°	recent ⁱⁱⁱ
Mean min. temp	14.3°	10.8°	6.0°	9.5°	10.2°	long term ⁱⁱ
	15.6°	11.8°	7.1°	10.6°	11.4°	recent ⁱⁱⁱ
Mean rainfall (mm)	47.3	57.1	47.7	66.1	649.8	long term ⁱⁱ
	45.1	50.2	44.7	58.5	602.6	recent ⁱⁱⁱ
Relative humidity (3pm)	47%	52%	61%	50%	53%	long term ^{iv}
Mean daily evaporation	5.8mm	2.5mm	1.7mm	3.5mm	3.2mm	long term ^{iv}
Average wind speed	9.9km/h	8.4km/h	10.2km/h	10.4km/h	9.8km/h	long term ^{iv}
Mean No. frost days	0 days	0 days	0.5 days	0 days	1.1 days	long term ^{iv}

ⁱⁱ Based on years 1855-2013

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on years 1981-2010

^{iv} Based on years 1955 onwards

The bayside location of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens specifically means that site specific micro-climate issues are of more relevance to plant performance than general climate data. Strong, salt-laden, on-shore winds make the Pinetum an important buffer and protector for the more delicate plants in the Northern Gardens. These winds also affect how people use the site, with the Pinetum being too exposed to provide a comfortable environment for visitors on a windy day. Traditionally the Gardens also provided a shady retreat for bathers escaping the afternoon heat on the exposed beach front.

Topography

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is essentially flat, with slight (less than 1%) fall running from the north-east to the south-west corner. The only elevated area is the mound in the Pinetum, which sits around 900mm above the surrounding lawn.

Soils

Due to 150 years of careful cultivation the soil in the Botanic Gardens is generally good, being friable and fertile with a ph of 6. It is anticipated that the soil in the Pinetum will be less fertile, with problems caused by the allopathic tendencies of the large conifers.

Natural Environment

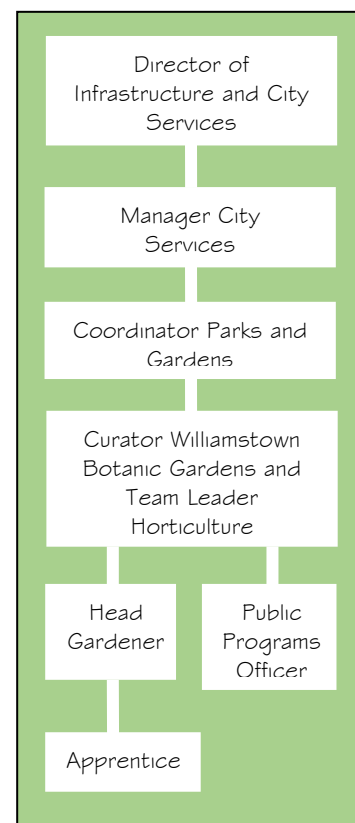
Given the highly urbanised nature of Williamstown and the long development history of the Botanic Gardens any indigenous vegetation and landform has been long lost. Early accounts of the area describe the Gardens as being on the edge of a belt of trees which skirted Hobsons Bay and the Yarra River.⁷³ The strong Victorian and Edwardian character of the Botanic Gardens, its heritage significance and the presence of stronger nature reserves in the area (notably at the Williamstown Rifle Range, Newport Lakes and Altona Nature Conservation Reserve) means that introducing indigenous vegetation is not a focus of the Botanic Gardens, and from a heritage perspective is largely undesirable.

A number of native animals occupy the site including Brushtail and Ringtail Possums, birds, bats and over 155 species of insects⁷⁴. The possum population was not at a problematic level in 2007 when assessed by Ecoplan Australia, although the report expected the number of Brushtail Possums to increase and recommended measures to maintain their population at an acceptable level. The Ringtail Possums numbers were low (likely one to two pairs). Overall the report concluded that "their continued, managed presence (of possums) at sites such as the Williamstown Botanic Gardens is generally regarded as an additional asset"⁷⁵ due to their popularity with visitors.

4.5 Management Structure and Staffing

In 2000 the essential role of Curator of the Botanic Gardens was reinstated, and the current management structure is as outlined in Figure 36, left. The role of Curator has a planning and administration focus for the Gardens, and as of 2014 also leads the Hobsons' Bay City Council horticultural team. The Head Gardener is responsible for the day to day management of the Gardens including general maintenance, gardening, small-scale capital works and supervision of the apprentice.

Figure 36: Williamstown Botanic Gardens Management Structure



Other Council departments provide some outside help with the management of the Gardens, in particular with rubbish collection in the Pinetum over summer and minor arboricultural works. Recently the Botanic Gardens has a temporary Public Programs Officer allocated to the Gardens to undertake interpretation and visitor programs and liaise with Williamstown Botanic Gardens Friends Group as a 0.35 position – providing valuable help in the management of the Gardens' public relations and archives.

4.6 Use of the Site

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is largely used as a place of passive recreation and retreat, in line with the recommendations made in the John Patrick Pty Ltd Master Plan. A number of organised activities do take place in the Gardens, with these all being sympathetic to their historical and social significance, and complementing the Gardens place in Williamstown society. These include:

- Storytime under the Elm
- Reading Corner
- School Activities
- Paint the Gardens art event
- Tree and Heritage Walks
- Shakespeare in the Gardens
- Garden parties
- Vintage Games at the adjacent Fearon Reserve

Subject to the provision of appropriate facilities and staffing levels there is the capacity to expand this list into other areas, especially those relating to horticultural education.



Figure 37: Story time under the tree
Source: Williamstown Botanic Gardens

4.7 Weddings

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens has long been a popular venue for wedding ceremonies and photographs, and the Gardens receive around 100 bookings annually. These events, while adding to the social significance of the place, put pressure on the heritage fabric, especially through trampling garden beds during photos. A booking system was put in place in the early 2000s to manage wedding numbers but was not entirely successful, and issues remained with unscheduled arrivals as the booking system was not policed.

As of 2016, and as a result of preliminary recommendations made in the draft Master Plan, the system for managing weddings was tightened. New guidelines were put in place and a Hobsons Bay City Council staff member is now present on the day. This has resolved many of the previously identified problems and reduces the impact of weddings on the heritage fabric of the Gardens.

4.8 Demographics

Introduction

For the purposes of the Master Plan the demographic profile of Williamstown specifically (excluding Williamstown North) and Hobsons Bay City Council have been reviewed. It is acknowledged that the Botanic Gardens has broader, state wide appeal, but the local demographics are most relevant to this document, as the majority of everyday users are local, and the majority of the Garden's interactions are with the local community. Demographic data reviewed looked at population density, age, ethnicity, socio-economic factors and household composition.

Statistics are based on the 2011 Census and information provided by the Hobsons Bay City Council "profile.id", "atlas.id" and the Australian bureau of Statistics. For comparison purposes the data was compared to the statistics for the Greater Melbourne area.

The demographic makeup of the Hobsons Bay City Council was found to closely reflect that of the Greater Melbourne area, however there were some notable differences between these two areas and Williamstown specifically. The most significant differences were in income level and ethnicity, with the population of Williamstown being found to have a higher income level, be more qualified and have higher mortgage repayments. They were also significantly more likely to have been born in Australia and speak English at home. A summary of the demographics are as follows.

Population

- **Williamstown** had a population of **10,589** at the 2011 census, making up 12.6% of the Hobsons Bay City Council
- The population density of Williamstown is more than twice that of the Hobsons Bay City Council, with **28.11 people / ha in Williamstown**, compared to 13.06 in Hobsons Bay and 0.43 in the Greater Melbourne area
- Williamstown has a slightly higher number of **children and teenagers** with **23.9%** of the population being under 18, compared to 21.7% for Hobsons Bay and 22.2% for Greater Melbourne

- Williamstown has a significantly lower number of **18-34 year old** residents – perhaps being reflective of the higher property prices in the area. **16.4%** of Williamstown's population is in this age bracket, compared to 23.1% for Hobsons Bay and 25.5% for Greater Melbourne.

Ethnicity

- **20.7%** of Williamstown residents were **born overseas**, compared to 30.8% for Hobsons Bay and 31.4% for Greater Melbourne
- The most common country of origin other than Australia for Williamstown residents was the **United Kingdom with 6.8%** followed by **New Zealand with 1.5%**. All other countries reflected less than 1% of the population.
- Only **11%** of Williamstown residents come from **countries where English is not the first language**, compared to 23% of Hobsons Bay residents
- Only **14%** of Williamstown residents speak a **language other than English** at home, compared to 29.4% for Hobsons Bay and 29.1% for Greater Melbourne
- **0.4%** of Williamstown residents were **of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin**, very similar to the statistics for Hobsons Bay and Greater Melbourne.

Household Type

- **34.2%** of Williamstown households were **couples with children**, comparable to Hobsons Bay and Melbourne rates (31.7% and 33.6% respectively)
- Williamstown residents were slightly more likely to live on their own with **26%** of households being **lone person** compared to 22.3% for Greater Melbourne

Socio-economics

- **35.5%** of Williamstown residents had a **Bachelor degree or higher**, significantly higher than for Hobsons Bay with 21.1% and Greater Melbourne with 23.6%
- **57.1%** of Williamstown residents had a **qualification** of some description compared to 44.4% of Hobsons Bay and 47.4% of Melbourne, although Williamstown residents were less likely to have a **vocational level** qualification (**12%** compared to around 15%).
- **Household income** was significantly higher for Williamstown residents, with a very large **40.4%** of the population having a household income in the highest quartile.
- **31.4%** of Williamstown households were classified as having a **high income** (greater than \$2,500/week) compared to 24.2% for Hobsons Bay and 22.5% for Greater Melbourne
- **17.9%** of Williamstown households were classified as having a **low income** (less than \$600/week) compared to 20.6% for Hobsons Bay and 19.2% for Greater Melbourne
- **Home ownership** rates in Williamstown were comparable with Greater Melbourne, although Williamstown residents were slightly more likely **to own their home (34.2%** for Williamstown, 31.5% for Greater Melbourne) rather than be **paying off a mortgage (31.9%** compared to 35.3%)

- **37.3%** of Williamstown households had **high mortgage repayments** compared to 23.6% for Hobsons Bay and 22.6% for Greater Melbourne
- **16.5%** of Williamstown households had **low mortgage repayments** – the same as for Greater Melbourne. Interesting, Hobsons Bay had a rate of 18.1%

Disability

- **4.0%** of Williamstown residents required **assistance with daily activities** (a measure of disability levels) compared to 5.2% for Hobsons Bay and 4.5% for Greater Melbourne

⁷³ Aitken, R 1986, pg 1

⁷⁴ Shelley Wood, direct communication 2014

⁷⁵ Ecoplan Australia, 2007, pg 8

5 Statutory Context

5.1 Planning Controls and Local Government Policies

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is governed by a number of controls under the Hobsons Bay City Council Council Planning Schemes. Full text for the zoning and overlays can be obtained from the Council. The following provides a brief outline of the implications of each of the overlays, but the original text should be referred to before deciding whether a planning permit is required.

Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) Schedule 1

Williamstown Botanic Gardens is zoned "Public Park and Recreation". Under this zoning a permit is required to "construct a building or carry out works" except for a number of works commonly associated with parks and gardens (e.g. paths, seating, shelters, bins, landscaping). Therefore this zoning should have little impact on the works proposed by the Master Plan, the exception being that a permit will be required for any changes the Gardens may want to make to the built fabric of the former parks depot. The relevant schedule to the zone makes reference to the Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park Master Plan 2003, with no permit being required to carry out works described in this document. It may be possible to get similar exemptions for the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Master Plan once endorsed by Council.

Design and Development Overlay (DDO) Schedule 4

The Design and Development Overlay covering the Botanic Gardens is intended to protect the Hobsons Bay Foreshore as "*an environmental, conservation and recreation asset of State, metropolitan and local significance.*" The overlay is clearly aimed at the development of domestic and commercial properties, but does require a permit to carry out works which could affect the Botanic Gardens. It is recommended that the Botanic Gardens seek guidance from Council Planners to determine if a permit is required under the DDO for any proposed landscaping works.

Heritage Overlay (HO238)

There is a Heritage Overlay (HO238) covering the Gardens and corresponding to the Heritage Victoria Registration (see below). The Heritage Overlay does not impact on the management of the Gardens as they are overridden by the Victorian Heritage Register. Various Heritage Overlays also effect all areas surrounding the Botanic Gardens and will provide some protection to the Gardens from intrusive development.

Hobsons Bay City Council Council Policies

The management and development of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens is potentially impacted by a number of Hobsons Bay Council policies and strategies, and any works undertaken as part of the implementation of the Master Plan should have consideration for these.

5.2 State Government Controls

Victorian Heritage Register

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register as HR1803. This registration takes precedence over the local Heritage Overlays (as described above), as no permit is required under a Heritage Overlay for a place on the Victorian Heritage Register. The State Heritage Registration for the site covers the entire site. A copy of the registration is provided at Appendix 6, with key elements summarised on Drawing 2: Extent of Heritage Registration (HR1803), page 14.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity

The entire Williamstown Botanic Gardens has been designated as an area of *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity*. This may be due to its proximity to Hobsons Bay and/or because considerable Aboriginal activity was recorded in the area. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria will need to be contacted to determine whether any places or objects have been registered under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System* (ACHRIS) and whether a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required.

5.3 National Trust

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens is registered by the National Trust as G12046. Interestingly, none of its trees either individually or collectively are listed on its Significant Tree Register. While National Trust listing provides no statutory protection or financial support, it does carry weight with the public and increases the profile of the Gardens.

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Appendix 1: Findings of the Consultation Process

The following is a summary of the main issues raised during the initial consultation period. It should be noted that not all these ideas were necessarily considered appropriate, but were raised during discussion:

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Staff

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Staff were met on a number of days, including March 5, April 16, and June 13, 2013.

- Lack of space for Botanic Gardens “back of house” activities
- Lack of space / facilities to accommodate activities of the Friends group
- Insufficient number of qualified/skilled horticultural staff
- Lack of facilities to expand the Gardens’ educational role
- Determining what level of use the Gardens’ can handle – especially in relation to organised events
- Public toilets too far away
- Car Parking
- Presentation of the Gardens’ to the street
- Succession planning for climate change
- Networking with other Botanic Gardens
- Collections Management

Meeting with the tenants of Bateman House (Benatas) and “Amaroo House” (Mind Australia):

June 13, 2013

- Maintaining views into the garden from Bateman House
- Insufficient garden seating for elderly residents of Bateman House – would like more walking opportunities for frail residents (Benatas)
- All abilities access from car parks (Benatas)
- Provide good surfaces on pathways (Benatas)
- Gardening opportunities (both)
- Shading rear garden of Batemans House from afternoon sun
- Provide tables and chairs together (Benatas)
- Creativity and art based activities held at site with some use made of the Gardens (Mind Australia)
- Opportunity for involvement with nursery activities (Mind Australia)
- Opportunity to provide qualifications in Cert 1 Horticulture (Mind Australia)
- No footprint changes wanted (Mind Australia)
- Centre uses the Gardens for programs and sees opportunities for expansion of this (Mind Australia)

Councillor and Council officers:

June 13, 2013

Way finding and Access:

- Way finding to the Gardens can be a problem to visitors – no signage from the train. Visitor information directs people to the Gardens

- Problem with meeting accessibility requirements due to lack of paths outside the Gardens. Also need to look at lips at path edges and lack of access to public toilets

Infrastructure:

- Supply cycling facilities to alleviate parking pressure
- Look at lighting
- Opportunity for a community café – lot of people go past in mornings so coffee would be popular
- Made path needed outside the Gardens
- Parking on match day a problem if it clashes with a wedding at the Gardens
- Need to maintain driver vision on traffic islands
- Need to consider long term appropriateness of tenancing the former parks depot
- Fearon Reserve would like more space from the former parks depot if it becomes available as oval is currently cut off on wing
- Capacity for Friends infrastructure issues to be catered for with Fearon Reserve toilet redevelopment

Capacity and Position as Part of Parks Network:

- Council looks at all open space as a demonstration space for sustainable practices – Gardens to be a part of this – including looking at water use.
- There is not a lot of open space in Williamstown. Botanic Gardens provides for a variety of uses. Need to look at what they can handle, and more broadly how can other public open space in the town support that. Could there be similar attractions nearby to alleviate use of the Gardens?
- Botanic Gardens provide diversity and horticultural expertise (place in suite of Council Gardens)
- Pinetum could share load and spread use of the Gardens if more attractive and with more privacy
- Look at Gardens in terms of the whole beach precinct. Parking pressures, connections, "retreat" and family gathering spaces could be catered for in other areas nearby. Use of "Saddler Reserve" as a destination and play space
- Fearon Reserve is not an option for sharing use – is already significantly overused and muds in winter
- Hatt reserve and play space is underutilised – so opportunities to share use there
- Passive open space is available elsewhere in the Council
- Look at new ways to promote the Gardens, but also how you manage the increased visitation. Overuse of the Gardens will only get worse as time progresses
- Look at increased visitation not just in terms of numbers, but in quality of visit. People staying longer and gaining a greater understanding
- Could link into Council "My Smart Garden" and "Discover Your Own Backyard" programs

Organised Events:

- Story time in the Gardens is popular – perhaps expand to a similar event for older people. Need to consider crowd control

- Plays are held in the Gardens. Problems on weekends because of noise clash with sport on Fearon Reserves. Not appropriate at night because of wind. Usually around four events per year – can “take over” the Gardens on a fine day
- Heritage tours undertaken – could be expanded to include a self-guided brochure
- Family open day was very successful
- One off, 150th anniversary Garden Party was popular
- Paint the Gardens run by Friends group (annual event)
- Festivals don't occur in Gardens because of lack of respect for the space – Gardens is a community space
- Gardens is used by school groups for photography, bugs, etc. This also educates students on a standard of behaviour in the gardens.
- Haven't used the Pinetum for events in the past but are open to this
- Look at structured events such as movie nights
- Can use the Gardens to promote the heritage of the Williamstown area - Williamstown is a heritage town – and this brings in tourists and attracts residents
- Look at option of evening tours

Passive Use of the Gardens:

- Gardens used as a picnicking space
- Walkers use the Gardens
- Used for big family gatherings
- Golden Elm lawn is very heavily used in summer – doesn't get a break

Weddings:

- Becomes very busy and neighbours complain about cars
- Weddings have a major impact on the Gardens and are not properly managed with no staff on weekends
- May be other locations for weddings
- Needs to be managed properly
- Fees from wedding bookings go into consolidated revenue, rather than back to the Gardens
- Front entrance gates have becoming a landmark as they appear in people's wedding photos
- Could share load with Pinetum if this space was more attractive

Water Security:

- The Water Management Plan (WMP) and Open Space Strategy that are both being developed for the Hobsons Bay City Council should consider the Botanic Gardens
- A Water Security Plan should be developed which considers Council's passive reserves and conservation areas, including the Botanic Gardens
- Consider option for passive irrigation (e.g. swales along street scape)

Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens

June 13, 2013

Structure:

- Made up of 45 members – with 60-70 individuals (household memberships available)
- Around 20-25 members are active
- Hold 2-3 general meetings a year
- Want to have activities for people to do when they join. Young group, so needs this

Current Role:

- Liaison between community and Council about the Gardens and promotion of the Gardens
- Are not hands on gardeners, and do not see this as being appropriate. Level of gardening professionalism required, do not want to compete with council staff or waste their time in having to supervise and there are OH&S issues.
- Run the reading corner
- Run "Paint the Gardens" annually
- Educational talks for members
- No capacity currently for financial input - provide one off "in-kind" support
- Original focus – education, children and art
- Children's programs – high school children, "Bugs" every second year, preps, jack and the beanstalk, pond life. Two schools are close enough to walk.
- Propagation group established for 12 months but limited resources have made things difficult

Opportunities to Expand Role of Friends:

- Crinum collection a possible focus for friends
- Plant record keeping
- Would like to do Garden tours
- Fundraising
- History and research
- Propagation (see below)
- Plant labelling

Facilities Requirements:

- Rain and possum proof storage area – for reading corner material
- Propagation area – can't currently be undertaken work because of lack of facilities. The current yard needs to be shut for OH & S purposes – so they need their own area
- Meeting room – current room is too small (approximately 13sqm) so the Friends have to hire the ladies room at the bowling green but this may not be available for much longer
- No facilities available for plant sales except as part of major events
- Events notice board in Gardens

General Garden Comments:

- Happy to maintain the historic feel of the Gardens
- People like all the corners and discovering the unexpected
- Want planting to block desire lines in the Pinetum

- Quality of public toilets a problem – signage would help. Location a problem for people with small children
- Possibility of new composting toilets (less infrastructure required) in Fearon Reserve
- No facilities available for weddings at the moment (e.g. shelter, toilets, waiting room)
- People sometimes sit and play on “bandstand” mound (music)
- Pinetum – look at variation, diversity, original aim of trialling species. Use as an open space is important
- Safe pedestrian access needed between the Pinetum and former dressing pavilion
- Extra seating needed for the elderly
- Insufficient picnic tables in the Pinetum
- Bike racks wanted
- Collection options: pinetum, palms. Bill Nichol’s – member of the friends and has a good succulent collection
- Revenue generated should come back to the Gardens not into consolidated revenue
- Good to produce a “Wedding Protocol” handout about respect for the Gardens – could give it out before the day
- More rubbish bins needed
- Pinetum gets trashed by Christmas parties and over the new year
- Could extend design out of Gardens and over the Esplanade
- Native / coastal graduation into the Gardens
- Comments about weddings being a lovely use of the Gardens

Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group (WBGAG)

June 13, 2013

Vision Statement / Overall aim of Gardens:

- Gardens providing opportunities “for everyone”
- A beautiful park
- Place for the Gardens to educate the public on horticulture through “osmosis”
- Provoke public to feel that there’s been an “extra special effort to make something special for me”
- “jewel like”
- “opportunity to delight beyond wildest expectations”
- Something intriguing
- Engaging the whole community

Signage:

- Good that there is limited interpretation in the Gardens as this can lead to people looking at signs not the space and means people don’t draw their own opinions
- Technology can be useful
- Use of “ephemeral” temporary, laminated signs
- Website beyond the Gardens – look at how it’s used and edited^v
- Interpretation with stories at main entrances

Living collections focus:

- Crinum
- Tree replacement policy

^v Note: There is no website at this time

- Maybe conserve old cultivars – but species important too
- Non-genera collections are very relevant here – different climatically to other areas
- Maybe it is about plants from around the world – so maybe not about local flora – foreshore and Newport lakes cover that
- Influence of past planting styles. Carpet bedding was very popular as “an exhibition or an event”
- People respond to flowers and soft landscaping – “romantic luxury” and people like that
- Setup an accession plan. Databases (BGANZ is developing one)
- Look at what's out there in state collections to find holes and plug into these
- No obvious plant collections spring to mind (other than Crinum) so really need to celebrate what the Gardens decide to collect
- Hold workshops for collection planning

Connection between Pinetum and Gardens:

- Pinetum not considered part of the Gardens – want to blend it back into total Gardens
- Needs to join from perspective of use as well as horticulture
- Pinetum probably used by visitors not local community
- Lack of connection to the pinetum and what it is – part of the health resort idea in the 19th century

General Landscape Issues:

- Drought proof
- Short term focus should be entrances and streetscape
- Better for Gardens to be more open
- Water play not a focus – Gardens already popular in summer – year round attractions are more important

Opportunities:

- Ability to adapt – follow a fad then change
- Silly name garden bed
- Bizarre Plants (collection)
- Role of public gardens is greater
- Community Garden

Former parks depot / “Amaroo House”:

- Opportunity for former parks depot– any proposed changes need to be listed in Master Plan
- Should look at how the Botanic Gardens needs the area to operate firstly, and then look at options for involving the tenants in this – so a “shared objective” for the space
- Should aim to bring the space back for Botanic Gardens use
- Shouldn't be any increase in the footprint of the buildings – instead share spaces

Public Consultation

A public consultation day was held on Saturday 29 June, 2013. The following is a summary of the main reoccurring issues raised and any individual ideas of particular merit:

- A number of comments were made about liking the division between the Botanic Gardens and Pinetum – with the

different character and use of the two spaces. People felt that the fence should be retained as it helped with this.

- Redevelop the pinetum including better lawns, more variety in trees, more picnic facilities including shelter and defining the major entrance from the esplanade
- Many comments about increased plant labelling including names, trees of especially interest and addition of aboriginal names for local plants
- Many comments about providing interpretation / signage on the history of the place
- Improvement of the quality of the lawns – especially in the Pinetum, “four corners” and under the elms
- Desire for bike racks
- Comments about water security with suggestions such as recycled water use and storm water harvesting
- Comments about the depot area and a desire to return the area to Gardens use
- A number of comments about the high quality of the current staff
- Providing for educational opportunities
- Desire for indigenous / native garden
- Provision of a meeting space for staff and the public
- Many comments about replacing the rotunda and use it for events^{vi}
- More opportunities for events, especially comments on music
- Many comments requesting more seating
- Many comments that money from weddings should go to Gardens use, not consolidated revenue
- A teacher mentioned that a presentation space and person to speak about the Gardens would be great
- Gardens near main gate (used for bedding) give a first impression and should remain planted. Other comments about having more annuals so beds do not lie dormant
- Have peonies in the Gardens
- Have toilets available in the Gardens

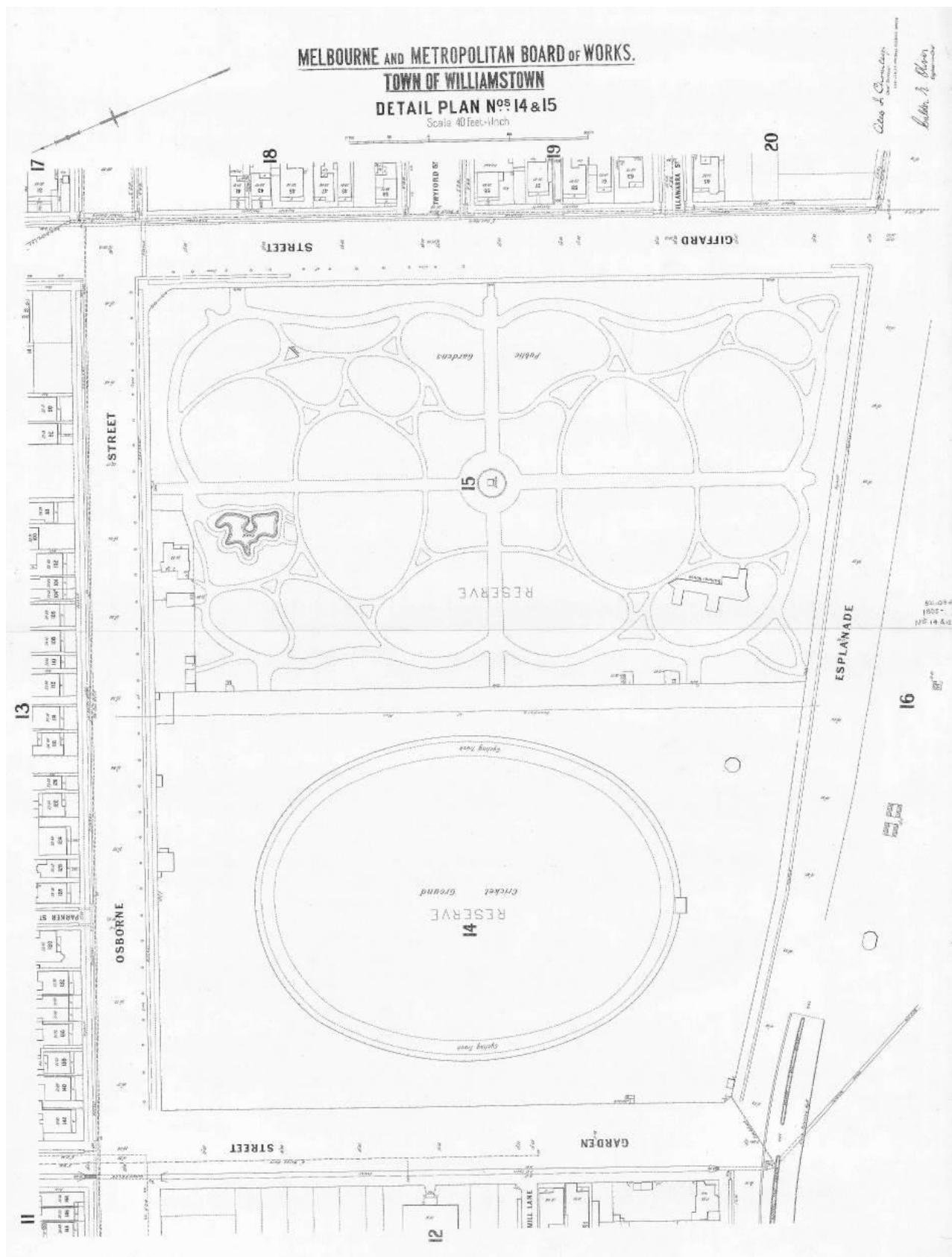
^{vi} Note: There is no evidence of a rotunda being in the Gardens

Appendix 2: 1894 MMBW Plan



Source: State Library of Victoria

Appendix 3: 1910 MMBW Plan



Source: State Library of Victoria

Appendix 4: 1945 Aerial Photograph



Source: University of Melbourne Map Collection
Department of Lands and Survey, Aerial Survey of Victoria: Photomap
Melbourne B4C or 848 B4C zone 7, 1945

Appendix 5: Richard Aitken History of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens

The following history was produced by Richard Aitken in 1986 as part of his *Williamstown Botanic Gardens Conservation Analysis and Policies*. It has been reproduced as an Appendix to the 2013 Williamstown Botanic Gardens Master Plan because of its excellence, thoroughness and the now poor condition of the original document. Minor changes to the original document have been made to correct apparent errors, and any references to images included in the original report have also been removed, but otherwise the document is an exact reproduction. In the more than 25 years since this document was produced more information on the history of the Botanic Gardens has come to light. Notes on this new information and any other relevant comments are provided as foot notes to the text.

1836 – 41 Early History of Williamstown

The first sales of land in Williamstown took place in 1837 and 1838 when sections 2, 3 and 4 were auctioned. This land, in the vicinity of Nelson Place and Thompson Street was located adjacent to a landing place for ships and several piers were later erected along this portion of the Hobsons Bay foreshore. Lack of fresh water however hindered the settlement and in 1840-41 a description of the area now occupied by the Botanic Gardens indicated it was still covered with indigenous vegetation.

"There was a goodly number of trees which had blown down with their roots dragged out of the ground and branches blown off. Amongst these trees and branches the grass was very thick, long and abundant, resembling in the distance a crop of corn. At this time there was very little stock to consume it or trample in (sic) down. The trees at Back Beach, near where the gardens are now, were bent and stunted from the effects of the north-west wind, the branches being also stripped of their foliage on the seaward side. Rocks were abundant, and a circuitous route had to be taken with a horse and dray to get to the slaughter house at the bottom end of Giffard Street. There was also a belt of trees skirting the bay and river from Point Gellibrand to the north of Stony Creek, near where Yarraville now is. This belt of trees extended back from the shore, and varied from half a mile to a mile in width, reaching its maximum about the present Newport Station. In defining the area covered with trees in Williamstown proper, one might say that the boundaries were from the Bay along Giffard Street, thence along Lyons Street and Ferguson Street and Melbourne Road.."⁷⁶

The earliest geological survey of the area indicated a sandy belt along the foreshore, with the gardens site as 'basalt diorite'.⁷⁷

1855-56 Early Agitation for Botanic Gardens

Late in 1855, agitation amongst the local community for a botanic gardens site prompted a public meeting to be held to discuss the question. At the meeting, on 7 January 1856, the Williamstown Improvement Committee spearheaded by Messrs. Stratford and Litchfield resolved to petition Major General Macarthur, the officer administering the Government of the Colony *"to grant to the inhabitants of this Township such portion of the public lands adjoining the southern portion of the Township... for the purpose of forming a public park and garden for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants thereof"*. 134 persons signed and as a rider to the main request, the petitioners prayed that the land be administered by Trustees or a future municipal council.⁷⁸

The Surveyor General moved swiftly and by 8 March 1856 district surveyor George Darbyshire had marked out a 10 acre site on the southern foreshore. Darbyshire's plan was laid before the Executive Council on 29 March 1856 and formally set aside as *"a Public Park or Pleasure Ground"*.⁷⁹ At this date no development had taken place south of Hanmer Street or west of Electra Street and the Esplanade was only a name on the map.

1856 Appointment of William Bull as Municipal Surveyor

The first meeting of the Williamstown Borough Council took place on 11 April 1856 and five days later at the second meeting the council decided to see the services of a municipal surveyor. Fifteen applicants responded, including A. Purchas, C. Porter and A. Kerr, all well-known architects. At the sixth meeting of the council on 1 May 1856, William Bull was narrowly elected for the positions from a short list of seven. At a meeting later in May a letter from the Surveyor General was tabled indicating that the boundaries of the gardens site had been trenched some time ago and that no time need be lost in fencing and planting the area. Thus as inaugural surveyor, this task occupied William Bull over the next few years.⁸⁰

1856-59 Laying out the Botanic Gardens

On 11 August 1856 the council requested an extra 10 acres on the western side of the botanic gardens site, being of the opinion that *"the area of the ground is too confined to be in keeping with the improved prospects of the town, and to be sufficiently beneficial to its increasing population."* At a deputation on 4 September the council agreed to drop their request on the understanding that other more suitable open spaces would be reserved elsewhere in the municipality. At the next council meeting (11 September 1856) Cr. Maclean gave notice of a motion *"that the council apply to the Government for a sum of money to be placed on estimates of the ensuing year for forming and planting the Public gardens of Williamstown"*. £250 was requested although it was not until the half year ended 11 April 1858 that council could report that the public garden reserve had been formed at a cost of £220, defrayed by the government.⁸¹

In the fifth Half Yearly Report of the Municipal Council for Williamstown for the half-year ended 11 October 1858 reference was made to a

plan which it had “caused... to be prepared for laying out the gardens”.^{vii} A voucher of £500 for this purpose had been received from the government and by November it was expected that “operations would be immediately commenced.”⁸² The report also commented that the council had “resumed the management of the Public Gardens” although in what capacity is unknown. A year later, when the Town Clerk sent byelaw 45 (“for the care and management of the Public Gardens of Williamstown”) to the Chief Secretary for approval, J. Denniston Wood queried its legality remarking that the garden appeared to be Crown Property.⁸³ The byelaw does not appear to have been granted and council did not obtain control over the land until 1867.⁸⁴

By April 1859 the council could report with some pride that

“the garden had been set out, and the parts intended to be planted have been trenched, seeds have been sown all round it, and the reservoir had been enlarged”^{viii}. The paths have been set out, and are in progress of formation, and 500 yards of shell metal have been provided and carted, ready for metalling them. A gardener has been engaged, and a great quantity of seeds have been collected, both of shrubs and herbaceous plants; and as the rainy season has now set in, the planting is being vigorously proceeded with. Plants, cuttings and seeds are still required, and the council invites the inhabitants to contribute in any way they have at their disposal.”⁸⁵

William Bull also called tenders for a “close boarded fence with gates &c around an allotment of ground in South Williamstown” on 9 April 1859 and this may refer to the gardens site.⁸⁶

The half-yearly report of the Council for the period ending 7 October 1859 included a lengthy description of work at the gardens.

“Great progress has been made in laying out and planting the Garden. The paths are formed and the shell-metalling nearly completed; the plantations are in a forward state, shrubs and flowers are already showing their heads, and the tout ensemble^{ix} is assuming a cheerful and enlivening aspect. Liberal contributions of plants, cuttings, and seeds have been received from Dr. Meuller (sic) of the Botanic Gardens, Mr. Litchfield, and Mr. Bunce of the Geelong Public Gardens, Captains Ferguson and Burrell, Messrs. T. Stewars, Bayes, Weldon, Wilson, Seddon, Bull, Dove, Lewis and several other gentlemen. The plan adopted by Mr. Bull in forming the plantation has been principally guided with a view of getting up as early as possible a thorough cover or shelter by planting wattle and other seeds of quick growth for the protection

^{vii} The plan referred to here is now believed to have been produced by Edward La Trobe Bateman

^{viii} Note: this is apparently the only reference to the reservoir, the location of which is unknown

^{ix} “All Together”

of other and more rear and valuable plants, some of which are now being raised in the nurseries at the garden and cemetery. The garden will be ready for opening to the public in the course of a few weeks.

The council in concluding this notice, would call the attention of the inhabitants and others willing to contribute to the establishment and support of this commendable institution the continued requirements thereof in the shape of seeds, plants and cuttings of all ornamental, or rare or valuable plants – whether of forest growth, shrubbery, or herbaceous varieties, and to notify that all who contribute, in however small a degree, will be entitled to and will receive, if required, some plants and seeds as can be spared for the stock of the garden, in return for their contributions.”⁸⁷

Bunce’s contribution was stated as “a quantity of seeds of some popular (or perhaps poplar?) trees &c”.⁸⁸

Payment for day labour in the gardens was paid on 19 December 1859 and the Garden Committee of the Williamstown Council recommended that the garden was ready for public use.⁸⁹

1860 formal opening of the garden

The Town Clerk therefore took out an advertisement in the *Williamstown Chronicle* stating that “Notice is hereby given that the PUBLIC GARDEN will be OPEN to the Public on and after Monday next, 2nd January 1860”.⁹⁰ No description of any ceremony appeared in subsequent issues although the visit of a local Wesleyan Sunday School entourage on 5 January 1860 was reported.⁹¹ The garden was sufficiently developed by November 1860 for flower pilfering to become a problem. “The delinquents are mainly female... (they) help themselves to the choicest flowers... scaling the garden fence in some instances to get away.”^{x 92}

Payments by the council in September 1859 included the salary of George Aitken, gardener and the following year council discussed at length the question of a salaried gardener versus a contract labourer. On 13 August 1860 council resolved to reduce^{xi} Aitken’s salary to £300 per annum “conditional on his finding all labour necessary to keep the gardens in as good condition as when handed to his charge”⁹³

£12 2s 0d was paid to John Rose for six garden seats on 2 April 1860 and £3 worth of grass seed was also purchased. This followed a recommendation of the Garden Committee in January 1860 for six seats of ten feet each in length. ⁹⁴ £200 was also provided by the government in July 1862 conditional on the council matching the expenditure, to which they reluctantly agreed. ⁹⁵ Finance was tight and local feeling against the gardens was great. Councillors were at a loss to understand the outcry given that only £300 of ratepayers had thus far been expended on the gardens. It was, as Cr Stewart observed, “a garden in the desert”.⁹⁶

^x Note: quote partially missing in original report

^{xi} Possibly should read “increased”

1860-1900 Maintenance and Expansion of the Botanic Gardens

Within five years the gardens were already too small to cope with the influx of visitors. On 10 January 1865 the Town Clerk wrote to the Commissioner of Lands and Survey regarding the problem.

"I am also directed to submit for your consideration the fact that the Public Gardens here are now so well frequented by the inhabitants of Williamstown and by numerous visitors from Melbourne and the suburbs on holidays and fete days that the present site is insufficient to afford the accommodation required. The council therefore with a view of protecting the beds and flowers (which in consequence of the numbers attending have been much damaged) and to afford facilities for holding the exhibitions of the Horticultural Society, also for the erection of a pavilion or orchestral for the volunteer bands who are willing to play in the gardens if accommodation can be afforded, and to give room for the gymnastic exercises and sports which are largely participated in by the visitors at the fetes and on holidays especially."⁹⁷

The letter eventually came to the point and requested an extra ten acres on the western side, precisely the area first requested in August 1856. However, the government granted only 5 acres this was gazetted on 20 February 1865 as a temporary reservation "for Public Park or Pleasure Ground".⁹⁸ However, judging from later council correspondence and newspaper reports it appears as if the extra area was used for fetes and athletic sports. Ten years later the council still wished for a larger site and requested a further 10 acres. The government delayed a decision pending the resolution of a site for the rifle range and in May 1878 temporarily reserved 4 acres, 2 roods, 19 perches, bringing the total rear of the garden to almost 20 acres.⁹⁹ During the period of expansion the council was appointed a Committee of Management, possibly due to administrative bungling; the council apparently only wished to control the large recreation reserve in North Williamstown. Nevertheless, on 7 May 1867 the council of the Borough of Williamstown were officially gazetted as Committee of Management.

More plants were received in 1867 as well as 10 lbs of mixed seeds from a Mr Pestall, who also painted the gates at his own expense. Cows were a problem as sand drifts enabled them to wander into the gardens unhindered.¹⁰⁰ Swings were also mentioned in newspaper reports although their exact location is not known.¹⁰¹ During this period the garden came in for some harsh criticism. In 1870 the Garden Committee tabled a report to council which found the gardens having

"half-dead wattle trees defacing and destroying the under vegetation, dwarfing the shrubs and poisoning the ground, to the great injury of more recent plantation; also that the ground in the neighbourhood of the rows of blue gums was perfectly exhausted by these trees, to the detriment of various other trees planted near them and much more ornamental... re-planting round the fences with either shrubs and trees (is needed), so as to give

shelter to the more choice plantation inside, especially planting the north and south end. The distribution of water is injudiciously planned... about thirty loads of manure and a hundred loads of fresh soil to renovate the exhausted border must be provided..."¹⁰²

The same report also recorded "a large planting of conifers and shrubs gradually going on for the last three years" which presumably referred to the southern 'pinetum'.

The Australian Sketcher reported in 1882 that "Williamstown is a great resort for Melbourne people on summer Sundays or Saturday afternoons, owing to the pleasantest of the breezy trip across the bay, and also to the fact that the maritime suburb has generally something of interest to exhibit".

The Victorian Railway Tourist Guide went further in 1885 when it observed that "the tourist can hardly be regarded as having "done" Melbourne without having visited Williamstown".¹⁰³ Most guides referred to the botanic gardens as "ornamental" or "Well laid-out" and by the turn of the century numerous photographs appears in weekly journals illustrating its merits.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the gardens were apparently poorly maintained. "Waterlily" complained in the columns of the *Williamstown Chronicle* that little council funds were being directed to the gardens and the committee was "shamefully neglecting its duties". However, his angry letter reveals details in an otherwise poorly documented period of the gardens.

"The gardener has made an excavation near the Giffard Street entrance. This was intended for a fish pond, but the wiseacres on the committee cleverly decided that the excavation shall remain gaping open like a Newport quarry hole. They have not approved of a lawn or even the expenditure that would be necessary to equip the gardener with working tools. Their policy is one of masterful inactivity. Anyone would have thought that when there was a chance of getting a fernery and a fish pond in the gardens as an attraction, those brilliant financiers would not have raised objections. The council is supposed to expend all its income on streets and hence nothing is done at the gardens..."¹⁰⁴

A statue of local MLA A. T. Clark was erected in a circular plot at the intersection of the major axial path on 18 July 1891. The monument was sculptured in Cararra marble by Enrico Lucchinelli from a suitable photograph. Council also paid £5 for a fernery to be re-erected^{xii} in the gardens and a year later triangular aviary was also erected thanks to a generous financial assistance from Councillor Hick. A rotunda was to be erected in the adjacent reserve in 1891 and this was re-erected in the gardens in 1901 to allow football to be played unencumbered by the structure (which was in the middle of the oval). The new site was possibly the mound now located in the southern

^{xii} Note: this is the first reference to the fernery but refers to it being "re-erected". It is unknown as to whether an earlier fernery building existed

section.^{xiii} 100 tons of shell grit was also purchased for garden paths in 1892.¹⁰⁵

Regulations framed for the management of the gardens were finally approved by the Board of Land and Works on 23 March 1895. Amongst other things, they provided the following.¹⁰⁶

1. *The garden...shall be open to the public from sunrise to sunset, but children under the age of 10 years shall not be admitted... unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.*
2. *No person shall enter or remain in any of the reserves who may offend against decency as regards dress, language or conduct.*
3. *No person shall damage in any way the footpaths, water pipes, seats, buildings, fences, walls or other erections, trees shrubs, or flowers... nor shall fires be lighted therein without written permission of the council.*
- ...
9. *No person unless authorised by council shall enter any plots in any of the reserves which may be enclosed or set apart for plantation of your trees or shrubs.... £5 penalty ^{xiv}.*

Council had wanted to make provisions for an admission charge but this was apparently refused as it was not in accordance with section 138 of the *Lands Act* 1890.

Administrative 'housework' was the only other item of notes as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The 9 acres 2 roods 19 perches temporarily reserved in 1865 and 1878 as public gardens were revoked in August 1897 and a month later temporarily re-reserved for the purpose of public recreation. This reflected the usage pattern of the two distinct sections of the garden reserve.¹⁰⁷

Little significant evidence regarding the appearance or layout of the gardens is available until 1894¹⁰⁸ when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works mapped the area as part of its precatory work for sewerage the metropolis. This plan shows a number of important aspects.

1. The system of major axial patterns – north/south and east/west.
2. The system of minor pathways encircling lawn or garden plots.
3. Several buildings, including triangular aviary (1892), a shade house (?re-erected 1891) and a small cottage (date unknown).
4. The distinct line of demarcation between the 10 acres set apart in 1856 and the 9 acres, 2 roods 19 perches reserved in 1865 and 1878.

^{xiii} This appears to be incorrect. The Rotunda is clearly visible on the 1910 MMBW plan being located in the south-east corner of what is now Fearon Reserve. The mound appears to have been constructed in the 1930s and appears on the 1945 aerial photograph but on neither the 1894 nor 1910 MMBW plans.

^{xiv} Probably should read £5 penalty – pounds sign omitted in original report

1900-1920 Rejuvenation of the botanic gardens

A major turning point in the history and development of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens occurred in May 1899 with the appointment of S. Thake as curator. Little is known about his background, although during his time with Williamstown Borough Council until his departure in 1912 he was also a staunch committee member of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society. Thake's job was also aided by the appointment of W. Crowe as assistant in 1900.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of his talents is to compare the 160' = 1" ^{xv} 1894 MMBW plan with the later 40' = 1" ^{xvi} MMBW plan of 1910.¹¹⁰ Major changes include the ornamental pond (completed by 1904), new caretakers cottage (1907) and reorganisation of the north east corner with the demolition of the old cottage, erection of new gates (1907) and placement of an old gun (1906). A drinking foundation was also erected in 1907.

Funding for these improvements was mooted c.1903-04 and local newspapers supported the cause unceasingly. By November 1905 the funding was seriously considered by council but allowed to stand for twelve months.¹¹¹

The changes to the garden occurred at the time of heightened local interest in gardening. Membership of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society doubled (from 82 to 158) during 1903-04¹¹² and the *Williamstown Chronicle* commenced weekly 'Notes on the Gardens' by 'Sweetbrier' in September 1905. Although mainly directed at the home gardener, 'Sweetbrier' had much praise for the botanic gardens and regularly lavished praise on Thake and his gardeners.

The *Chronicle* published a long article following an excellent attendance in the garden on Melbourne Cup Day 1905. Amid the general praise were some notes on the plantings.

"Williamstown Gardens...now that we are being favoured with more season weather, are beginning to present an unusually bright and attractive appearance...(judging from comments)...there is a greater variety of bloom than is to be found in any of the other public gardens in and around Melbourne. The monster bed of pansies and also the smaller one, receive their share of admiration...(visitors) also experienced much delight in viewing the stocks (of numerous shades), the very fine show of rhennucles (sic)bulbs, and other flowers. The roses are just beginning to bloom, and in the course of a few days should be seen at their best, but here were sufficient in bloom in the nursery and in the beds which run parallel with the main walk and surrounding main lawn to convince the enthusiast of the quality of the stock planted. The artificial lake, in which water lillies have been planted is now looking well, and when all the flowers and shrubs planted thereabouts get a firm hold, that spot should prove indeed

^{xv} Approx. 1:2000

^{xvi} Approx. 1:500

*enticing...(curator has plenty to do now) particularly as an additional area of virgin ground has been put under flowers."*¹¹³

Regret was expressed by the *Chronicle* when the pansy bed was finally 'turned-over' in January as it had obviously been an extremely popular attraction. At this date, coarse sand from the Gem pier was also spread over certain paths although councillors were critical of the excessive amount used claiming that an inch cover was all that was needed.¹¹⁴

Lobbying by the Member for Williamstown, Mr Lemmon, persuaded the Premier, Thomas Bent to consent to four obsolete guns being handed over to the council for ornamental purposes. At least one was located in the north east corner of the garden and it was much admired on Boxing Day 1906, soon after its placement on a concrete plinth.¹¹⁵

A further impetus to local pride was given by the purchase of massive iron gates at a very favourable price in March 1907. They had been located at the corner of Acland Street and Anderson Street, South Yarra 'Fairlie', the property of Mt Fitz Gibbon^{xvii} (sic). His executor had offered them to council for only £72 and the *Williamstown Chronicle* gleefully pointed out they had originally cost £1,200. They were manufactured by Walter Macfarlane's Saracen Foundry in Glasgow. Council accepted the tender of E. Bliss (£60) to remove and re-erect the gates and by late April 1907 the gates had been relocated to the north east corner of the Williamstown gardens.¹¹⁶

Mr Bliss was also involved with another project in the gardens. This was a drinking foundation to celebrate the jubilee of the municipality (17 March 1906^{xviii}). A contractor from Carlton, G. Dawe, had presented the council with a design following the suggestion of an elderly local resident who urged the council to follow Ballarat's example with its profusion of statutes and memorials. Outraged local citizens complained that the council had not sought prices and designs from local craftsmen in the district. The matter became protracted and finally on 1 December 1906 Bliss and Sons tender of £60 16s 0d for a drinking fountain was accepted and the work completed by Easter 1907.¹¹⁷ To complete the transformation of the northern end of the garden, a new curator's residence was erected. This replaced the old cottage which had formerly stood near the large cast iron gates at the north-east corner. The Town Council engineer Mr. Champion submitted a design to council on 5 March 1907 and another design from an 'illustrated paper' was also presented. Champion's design was chosen and on 1 June 1907 Murdoch and Stevenson's tender of £386 1s 6d was accepted for the cottage. The old cottage was purchased for £53 in September and £13 voted by council for a fence around the new residence later that month.¹¹⁸

Thake's employment in Williamstown ended in September 1912 when he resigned to take up a similar position with the Albert Park Trust. The *Williamstown Advertiser* in reporting the farewell service commented that

^{xvii} Actually E. G. FitzGibbon – *The Argus* 18 September 1937, p. 4

^{xviii} Golden Jubilee – 50 years

*"The gardens were practically a wilderness when Mr. Thake took them over. For their size, they (sic) are no better gardens in the metropolitan area, and considering the small staff employed, the extension of the lawns and flower beds, and the institution of an artificial lake shows what hard work has been done."*¹¹⁹

W. Crowe took over as curator following Thake's resignation.¹²⁰ At this date the gardens had reached approximately the form which still exists. The central palm avenue appears to have been planted by c.1915 and the southern section of the gardens comprised an extensive arboretum with some shrubberies. Thake's influence, through his assistant Crowe, lasted until at least the early 1920s. An open air bandstand was constructed in the 1930s. Possibly on the site of the former shadehouse.^{xix 121}

1920-1986 Maintenance of the botanic gardens

A lands department report 1932 confirms the continued high level of maintenance enjoyed by the Williamstown Botanic Gardens.

*"The Public Park is enclosed, laid out with beautiful walks and flower gardens and shelter trees. There are also several large guns on stands and some statues. A caretakers dwelling with necessary out work buildings is situated in the northwester corner. This park and gardens is well kept and compares favourably with other gardens in the Melbourne district."*¹²²

⁷⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing W.A. Hall, 'Early Williamstown', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, IX, 4, September 1923, p 118

⁷⁷ Aitken, R 1986 citing Geological Survey of Victoria, 'Quarter Sheet S.W.1', n.d. (c.1856-60)

⁷⁸ Aitken, R 1986 citing Department of Conservation, Forest and Lands, reserve file, Rs 2076.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Aitken, R 1986 citing Williamstown Borough Council minute book. Held by Public Record Office, Laverton.

⁸¹ Ibid; Aitken, R 1986 citing; *Forth Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown* ending 11 April 1858, dated 12 May 1858.

⁸² Aitken, R 1986 citing *Fifth Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown* ending 11 October 1858, dated 12 November 1858.

⁸³ Aitken, R 1986 citing VPRS 1189, unit 607.

⁸⁴ Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op.cit.

⁸⁵ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Sixth Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown* ending 7 April 1859, dated 8 June 1859.

⁸⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 9 April 1859, p.1.

⁸⁷ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Seventh Half-yearly Report of the Municipal Council of Williamstown*, ending 2 October 1859

⁸⁸ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 3 September 1859, p.2; Ada Ackerly mentions reports which say 'poplar'.

⁸⁹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 24 December 1859, p.2.

⁹⁰ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 31 December 1859, p.1.

^{xix} According to the Conservation Management Plan produced by John Patrick Pty Ltd in 2001 this new "bandstand" is the mound in the south-west quadrant of the gardens

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- ⁹¹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 7 January 1860, p.2.
- ⁹² Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 17 November 1860, p.2.
- ⁹³ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 7 January 1860, p.2; 17 March 1860, p.2; 1 September 1860, p.2; Ada Ackerly cites council report of 3 September 1859, in *Williamstown Chronicle*
- ⁹⁴ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 21 January 1860, pp.1,2; 7 April 1860, p.2.
- ⁹⁵ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 30 June 1860, p.2; 7 July 1860, p.2.
- ⁹⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 17 March 1860, p.2.
- ⁹⁷ Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op.cit
- ⁹⁸ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Victorian Government Gazette*, 28 February 1865, p. 522.
- ⁹⁹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Victorian Government Gazette*, 17 May 1878, p. 1124; *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, 2 January 1865, 1 February 1865.
- ¹⁰⁰ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 8 June 1867, p.4.
- ¹⁰¹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 11 May 1867, p.5.
- ¹⁰² Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 4 June 1870
- ¹⁰³ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Australasian Sketcher*, 25 February 1882, p.54; J. Pickersgill, *Victorian Railways Tourist Guide...*, 1885, p.73.
- ¹⁰⁴ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 26 July 1890, p.3.
- ¹⁰⁵ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 25 July 1891, p.2; council minutes 27 January 1891, 28 April 1891, 15 March 1892, 7 June 1892.
- ¹⁰⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op.cit.
- ¹⁰⁷ Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op.cit.; VGG, 1 October 1897, p. 3689
- ¹⁰⁸ Aitken, R 1986 citing Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan no. 14, copyright 17 July 1894, 160 feed = 1 inch.
- ¹⁰⁹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 2 November 1912, p.2; numerous references to the W. & D.H.S. in *Williamstown Chronicle*, e.g. 5 August 1905, p.2; council minutes 19 May 1899, 1 October 1900.
- ¹¹⁰ Aitken, R 1986 citing Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan nos. 14, 15, lithographed September 1910, 40 feed = 1 inch.
- ¹¹¹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 25 November 1905, p.3.
- ¹¹² Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 5 August 1905, p.2.
- ¹¹³ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 11 November 1905, p.2.
- ¹¹⁴ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 20 January 1906, p.2; 3 February 1906, p.2.
- ¹¹⁵ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 13 October 1906, p.2; 24 November 1906, p.2; 29 December 1907, p.3.
- ¹¹⁶ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 9 March 1907, p.2; 30 March 1907, p.2; 20 April 1907, p.2.
- ¹¹⁷ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 24 February 1906, p.3; 17 March 1906; 21 July 1906, p. 3; 28 July 1906, p.3; 1 December 1906, p.2; 30 March 1907, p.2; 6 April 1907, p.2.
- ¹¹⁸ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*? (source missing on original report), 24 November 1906, p.2; 27 April 1907, p.2; 1 June 1907, p.2; 24 August 1907, p.2; 7 September 1907, p.2 14 September 1907, p.2.
- ¹¹⁹ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Advertiser*, 2 November 1912, p.2.
- ¹²⁰ Aitken, R 1986 citing *Williamstown Chronicle*, 23 November 1912, p.2.
- ¹²¹ Aitken, R 1986 citing Information from members of the Williamstown and District Historical Society
- ¹²² Aitken, R 1986 citing Rs 2076, op.cit.

Appendix 6: Heritage Victoria Registration

Victorian Heritage Database Report

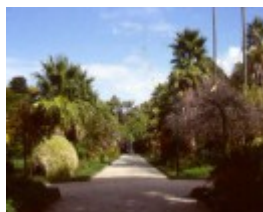
Report generated 04/06/18

HERITAGE
COUNCIL
VICTORIA
HERITAGE
COUNCIL
VICTORIA

WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS



WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS
SOHE 2008



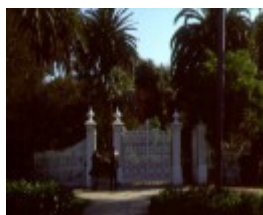
1 williamstown botanic gardens palm
avenue ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens at clarke
statue ac2 apr1999



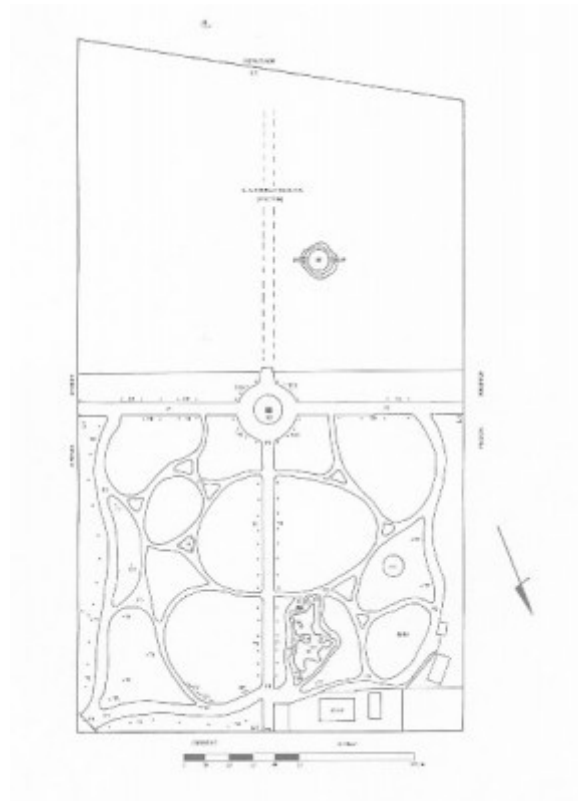
williamstown botanic gardens drinking
fountain ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens entrance
gates ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens golden elm
lawn ac2 apr1999



h01803 plan

Location

97 OSBORNE STREET WILLIAMSTOWN, HOBSONS BAY CITY

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1803

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO238

VHR Registration

August 19, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 1, 2000

What is significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens of 4 hectares was permanently reserved in 1856 as a public park and botanic garden. The creation of the gardens was largely due to the efforts of the citizens of Williamstown who lobbied the Williamstown Council to persuade the State Government to set aside the land and then contributed to its early development through the donation of plants. Plants were also donated by Ferdinand von Mueller, first Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Daniel Bunce, first curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The gardens were designed by Edward La Trobe Bateman c.1858 and Williamstown municipal surveyor William Bull implemented the design, with significant alterations in the north east corner and the creation of a large pond by S. Thake, curator from 1899-1912. The gardens feature structures and design characteristic of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, including cast iron entrance gates relocated from 'Fairlie' in South Yarra in 1907 and repaired in 1987, a marble statue of AT Clarke, local MLA (1891), a rustic pond (1904), a drinking fountain to commemorate the jubilee of the municipality (1906) and rock, timber and concrete edged paths and garden beds from the 1860s. The layout of the gardens is virtually intact from c.1907 and typifies the geometric layout of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens, with the design providing a major external vista to Hobsons Bay and a variety of picturesque internal vistas.

How is it significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, scientific (horticultural) and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are historically important as one of Victoria's earliest and most intact botanic gardens and along with St Kilda, one of only two suburban botanic gardens established in the 19th century in Victoria. They are one of seven botanic gardens established in Victoria between 1846 and 1856. They are significant for the retention of the geometric layout typical of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens. The gardens have considerable significance for their strong association with eminent 19th century landscape designer Edward La Trobe Bateman and for their early connections with Ferdinand von Mueller and Daniel Bunce.

The Gardens are aesthetically significant for their excellent design and for the remarkably elegant execution of that design within a small, flat site. Important facets of the layout are the major north-south and east-west axes, the vista to Hobsons Bay, the impressive central palm avenue, the major focal point around the AT Clarke statue, and the deliberately enclosed nature of the site which enhances the wide variety of internal views and spatial experiences within the framework of the formal layout. The striking palms (*Washingtonia robusta*, *Phoenix canariensis* and *Butia capitata*) with their different forms and colour, provide a dramatic and contrasting landscape character against the evergreen and deciduous background. The strikingly intact Victorian layout, early tree plantings, the palms, the pinetum and the pond, structures and herbaceous and woody plantings from the Edwardian period all contribute to the picturesque landscape.

The Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their collection of plants, particularly the dominating palm and conifer themes and the large quantity of plants remaining from the Edwardian and Victorian periods. The *Crinum asiaticum* is rare in cultivation. The 19th century pinetum, densely planted with a collection of conifers displaying interesting forms and foliage, is significant as an enclosed dark, evergreen space forming an effective windbreak for the Gardens in their coastal setting. It features a central avenue and two outside rows of *Cupressus macrocarpa*, a row along the south boundary and a *Pinus halepensis* row along the east and west boundaries.

The Gardens are socially important for their long and continuous relationship with the citizens of Williamstown

who were largely responsible for their creation and early development and who continue to use them as a place of recreation.

Permit Exemptions

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Landscape:

- * The process of gardening, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works and landscaping in accordance with the original concept.
- * The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character.
- * Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.
- * Removal of plants listed as Noxious Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- * Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, memorial plaques, gravel paths and roadways, stone and concrete edging, fences and gates.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems beyond the canopy edge of listed trees.
- * Plant labelling and interpretive signage.

Statue:

- * Minor repairs.

Drinking fountain:

- * Minor repairs.

Construction dates	1856,
Architect/Designer	Bateman, Edward Latrobe,
Heritage Act Categories	Heritage place,
Other Names	WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANICAL GARDENS,
Hermes Number	1908
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:

In Melbourne moves to establish a botanic garden were made in the early 1840s, with Batman's Hill earmarked for the purpose. A small committee headed by Superintendent La Trobe looked at alternative sites for a garden and in December 1845 La Trobe recommended the present site in the Domain and appointed the first Committee of Management. These gardens were the forerunner to a number of smaller botanic gardens that were set up over the next forty years. During the 1850s gardens based on those in Melbourne were established in several country areas including Geelong, Portland and Bendigo. Provincial botanic gardens were created in nearly every country town and city of any consequence. These gardens ranged in size from 20 acres (8

hectares) to 150 acres (61 hectares). Land was usually set aside more as a result of public pressure rather than any official government policy. In recognition of the increased community demand for botanic gardens in the early 1850s, Government legislation was passed to provide for municipal and borough councils to make by-laws for the establishment of botanic gardens.

In combining scientific endeavour with a pleasing design and passive recreation, botanic gardens were seen to promote notions of 'civilisation' and moral improvement, and as such, were considered a great asset to Victoria's provincial towns in the 1850s. Hamilton and Geelong had reserved land for public gardens in 1850, and Portland had botanic gardens by 1851. An 1854 plan of White Hills (Bendigo) indicates a reserve for Botanic Gardens. Williamstown gardens were set aside 1856, Malmsbury gardens in 1857, and Ballarat and Kyneton followed in 1858, with Daylesford (Wombat Hill) in 1861. Castlemaine gardens were reserved in 1860.

History of Place:

The first land sales in Williamstown took place in 1837. By late 1855, agitation began within the local community for a botanic garden site to be set aside and following a petition to the government from the residents, a ten acre site on the southern foreshore was marked out by March 1856.

A recently discovered report in an 1857 issue of London journal The Athenaeum, and a reprint of the same article in the Melbourne newspaper The Argus, 26 March 1857, confirm that Edward La Trobe Bateman prepared the design for the gardens sometime in 1856.

During the period 1856-1860, the main activity in the gardens centred on the development of garden beds and construction of the path system. Considerable tree planting was undertaken to establish windbreaks. By April 1859, the design had been laid out by municipal surveyor William Bull and a gardener appointed to carry out planting. Paths were laid down with shell grit. Plants, cuttings and seeds were donated by the local community as well as Ferdinand von Mueller, recently appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Daniel Bunce, Curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

On 2nd January, 1860 the gardens were opened to the public with apparently little ceremony and by 1865, appeared to be too small to accommodate the influx of local and other visitors coming for day excursions to the seaside suburb. Following petitions from the Williamstown Council, the government reserved additional land for the gardens in 1865 and 1878 so that by 1878, the original ten acre reserve (comprising the gardens and pinetum), had doubled to include what is now known as Fearon Reserve, named after a local sea pilot and sporting identity Captain James Fearon.

Between 1867-70, the southern section of the gardens(now the L.A Parker Reserve), was densely planted with conifers, particularly pines and cypresses to form the pinetum, the plantings of which remain relatively intact today. Recent attempts have been made to continue the tradition of conifer planting in this area.

On 18th July 1891, a statue of local MLA A.T. Clarke was erected in a circular plot at the intersection of the major axial paths. During the last decade of the 19th century, a fernery and aviary were erected. A rotunda was to be re-erected in the pinetum in 1901, to allow football to be played in the adjacent reserve (Fearon Reserve). The new site was possibly the volcanic rock mound and steps still located in the pinetum.

Until the MMBW mapped the gardens in 1894, little evidence regarding the appearance or layout of the gardens is available. The plan shows the La Trobe Bateman design of two major axial paths crossing at the Clarke statue, a perimeter path and minor pathways encircling lawns and garden beds, several buildings, including the 1892 triangular aviary, a shade house and a small cottage. The distinct demarcation between the ten acres set aside in 1856 (gardens proper and pinetum) and the 9 acres 2 roods and 19 perches reserved in 1865 and 1878. ((Fearon Reserve) is clearly shown.

1900-1920 Rejuvenation of the Gardens

A major turning point in the development of the gardens occurred in May 1899 with the appointment of S. Thake as curator. Little is known of Thake's background, though during his period with the council, he was an active committee member of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society.

Major changes during Thake's curatorship included construction of a small ornamental lake or large pond, (completed 1904), a new caretaker's cottage (north-west corner, 1907), and reorganisation of the north-east corner with the demolition of the old curator's cottage and erection of new gates (1907). These gates had originally been located at the corner of Acland and Anderson, South Yarra at 'Fairlie'. Other changes included the placement of four canons (1906, removed late 1960's) and construction of a granite drinking

fountain in 1906 to celebrate the jubilee of the municipality.

Thake's employment in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens ended in September 1912 when he resigned to take up a similar position with the Albert Park Trust. W. Crowe took over as curator following Thake's resignation. At this date, the gardens had achieved the layout which exists today. Around c. 1915 the central palm avenue was planted. It was replanted with the same palm genus (*Washingtonia*) in 1987 assisted by a Bicentennial grant. The southern section of the gardens (Parker Reserve) comprised an extensive pinetum.

The employment of Edwardian municipal gardening techniques continued for lengthy periods in an unbroken tradition under each successive curatorship from Crowe who served under Thake to the present. It is this phenomenon and the lack of any significant changes to the layout of the gardens from 1907, which accounts for their remarkable Edwardian authenticity today.

Associated People: Edward Latrobe Bateman, designer.

S Thake, curator

Ferdinand von Mueller, Director of Melbourne Botanic Gardens

Daniel Bunce, curator of Geelong Botanic Gardens

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are historically important as one of Victoria's most originally intact botanic gardens and for their display of the geometric layout typical of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens. They have historical importance for their association with eminent 19th century landscape designer Edward La Trobe Bateman and for their early connections with Ferdinand von Mueller and Daniel Bunce.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The gardens are aesthetically significant for their excellent design and for the remarkable execution of the design on a small, flat site. The intact Victorian layout, early tree plantings, the palms, the pinetum, and the pond, structures and herbaceous and woody plantings from the Edwardian period all contribute to the picturesque landscape.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

The Gardens are important for their scientific (horticultural) value particularly for the dominating palm and conifer themes and the large quantity of plants remaining from the Edwardian and Victorian periods. The *Crinum asiaticum* is significant as it is rare in cultivation. The 19th century pinetum, densely planted with a collection of conifers displaying interesting forms and foliage, is significant as an enclosed dark, evergreen space forming an effective windbreak for the Gardens in their coastal setting.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The gardens are socially important for their long and continuous relationship with the citizens of Williamstown and as a place of recreation.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1803 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Osborne Street, Williamstown, City of Hobsons Bay.

EXTENT:

1. All the structures marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Entrance Gates (1907)
- B2 A. T. Clarke statue (1891)
- B3 Drinking Fountain (1906)
- B4 Flagpole
- B5 Pond
- B6 Eight iron stanchions
- B7 Four metal hoops

B8 Open Air Bandstand
B9 Four iron stanchions

2. All of the paths marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

P1 Main Path
P2 Path (north-south)
P3 Paths

3. All the plants marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

T1 Washingtonia robusta avenue x 28
T2 Washingtonia robusta stand x 5
T3 Washingtonia filifera
T4 Washingtonia robusta x 4
T5 Phoenix canariensis row x 7
T6 Phoenix canariensis row x 12
T7 Phoenix canariensis row x 4
T8 Butia capitata x 2
T9 Ulmus procera avenue x 15
T10 Ficus macrophylla x 16
T11 Crinum asiaticum
T12 Cupressus sempervirens (wide form)

4. all of the land known as the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and the L. A. Parker Reserve (pinetum) being Crown Reserve RS 2076, permanently reserved for Public Park and Recreation Purposes marked L1 on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 5 August 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 33 19 August 1999 pp.1915-1916]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 1995. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place data owner.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>