

# ROYAL PARK



rp The Burke & Wills monument and the nearby natural landscape



RP The Australian Native Garden.jpg



rp ross straw baseball field



rp Tree planting alongside tramway through Golf Course.jpg



rp Trim Warren Tam-Boore wetland system.jpg



return to royal park concept plan.jpg

## DIAGRAM 2337

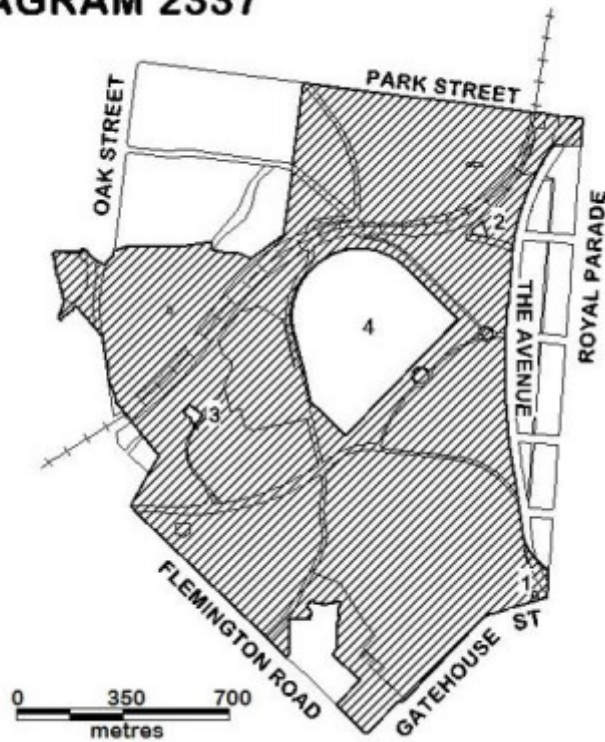


diagram 2337.JPG

### Location

FLEMINGTON ROAD AND ROYAL PARADE AND GATEHOUSE STREET AND THE AVENUE AND ELLIOTT AVENUE AND PARK STREET AND POPLAR ROAD AND MACARTHUR ROAD AND OAK STREET AND BRENS DRIVE PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2337

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO4

### VHR Registration

October 23, 2014

# Amendment to Registration

December 4, 2015

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Royal Park is a large public park of 188 hectares established in 1854 in the northern part of the City of Melbourne. It contains a wide range of designed and informal landscapes incorporating remnant indigenous vegetation, together with historic buildings, structures and community facilities.

#### History Summary

Royal Park was an integral element in Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe's vision, from the mid-1840s, of Melbourne as a city surrounded by extensive public parklands, which were considered to be vital to the health and wellbeing of the inhabitants. The site was part of the large area of land north of the city reserved for public purposes in 1845, and La Trobe personally identified the boundaries of the future park on the day of his departure from the colony in 1854. By the time the park was gazetted in 1876 it had been reduced in size by residential development. The park has provided the site for various scientific endeavours, including the establishment of an Experimental Farm (1858) and as a reserve set aside for the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria (1861), part of which later became the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens. The park received national recognition as the starting point of Burke and Wills' expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1860, an event marked by a memorial cairn in 1890. Royal Park has been used for a range of military purposes from the late-nineteenth century: as the site for a government powder magazine, for displays and parades and as an important military camp during World Wars I and II. The Park has also been the site of various institutions for public health and welfare, including the Royal Children's Hospital. It has provided an open space for large public gatherings and civic functions as well as being an extensive public recreation ground. It has been a venue for various sporting competitions from the late 1850s, including cricket, football and golf, and is particularly associated with women's sport. Royal Park has been appreciated as a place of beauty since the arrival of European settlers, and this is evident in writings and artworks. Throughout its history there has been ongoing concern for its preservation, and despite various excisions the reserve has remained relatively unchanged in size since 1876. The retention and replanting of much indigenous vegetation is a feature of Royal Park and in 2010 the City of Melbourne won national recognition for its implementation of the 1984 Master Plan which helped preserve and develop the natural landscape so close to the city centre.

#### Description Summary

Royal Park is a 188ha park which is located close to the northern edge of Melbourne's city centre and forms part of the network of open parklands that characterise the city and inner suburbs. Royal Park is bordered by Park Street along the northern boundary, The Avenue along the eastern boundary, Gatehouse Street along the south-east boundary, Flemington Road along the south-western boundary (excluding the Royal Children's Hospital) and Southgate Street and Manningham Street along the western boundary (excluding the institutional complex in the north-west corner). The centre of the park accommodates the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (VHR H1074).

Royal Park comprises large open spaces for passive and informal recreation, areas of native and indigenous vegetation including grassland, open woodland and wetland habitats, historic buildings and monuments, and areas for sporting activities, including ovals, buildings and other facilities.

Royal Park is part of the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

## **How is it significant?**

Royal Park is of historic and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

Why is it significant?

Royal Park is significant at the State level for the following reasons: Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Royal Park is historically significant as an outstanding and largely intact example of the public parks set aside by Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe from the mid-1840s as part of his vision for the city of Melbourne. It retains its early use and demonstrates La Trobe's contribution to the provision of public open space in the colony and also the vision of the colonial administration for the future development of Melbourne. Largely as a result of La Trobe's vision Melbourne now has a group of spectacular parks.

Royal Park is historically significant as the site of scientific institutions important to the development of the colony, including an Experimental Farm (1858) and the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria (1861), part of which later became the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (VHR H1074) on the site. Many trees on the site were planted by the Acclimatisation Society between c1862 and 1900. Royal Park is historically significant as the starting point of Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria (1860), an event which gained national recognition and was depicted by prominent Australian artists, including William Strutt and Nicholas Chevalier. Royal Park is historically significant for its use for military purposes since the 1860s. It was the site of a major Australian military camp and training ground during the First World War, was used for the mobilisation of Anzacs to the Western Front, and was a camp for both Australian and US troops during the Second World War prior to their deployment to Pacific War campaigns (1941-45). Royal Park is historically significant for its long association with sport in Victoria. It is the site of one of the earliest public golf courses in Victoria (1903), of Australia's first dedicated baseball field (Ross Straw Field c1970) and from the early 1900s has played an important role in the advancement of women's competitive sport in Australia.

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Royal Park is rare as the most outstanding and intact example of the metropolitan parks aside from the 1840s for the people of Victoria, which retains its basic form, its early use, remnant indigenous vegetation and important views to the city. It is the only example of an inner Melbourne park which retains stands, as opposed to specimens, of remnant indigenous vegetation and clearly demonstrates an ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous trees over a period of more than 150 years.

## **Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics**

Royal Park is aesthetically significant as an outstanding example of a large metropolitan park, particularly notable for its remnant indigenous vegetation and important views to the city. It is the only example of an inner Melbourne park which retains stands of remnant indigenous vegetation and clearly demonstrates an ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous plants over a period of 150 years. The Park landscape provides significant internal and external vistas, including the native grassland 'hilltop' circle where a 360-degree panorama provides a dramatic and sensory appreciation of the city skyline and surrounding landscape. An appreciation of the aesthetic value of the park is evident in the numerous contemporary descriptions of the place from the nineteenth century onwards, and in the numerous paintings, sketches and photographs of the Royal Park landscape. The most recent layer of development associated with the 1984 Master Plan is significant for its design philosophy and natural landscape aesthetic. In 2010, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects awarded the City of Melbourne the "ALIA national award for sustainable settlement, green infrastructure and landscape principles" for "its stewardship of Royal Park as a nationally significant landscape".

Royal Park is also significant for the following reasons, but not a State level:

Royal Park is of historical significance at a local level for its long history of recreational use, including the early establishment of the Brunswick Cricket Club in 1858 and its early use for Australian Rules football (by 1865). It is historically significant at a local level for its use as Emergency Public Housing by the Housing Commission of Victoria (1947-56) on the site of Camp Pell following the withdrawal of army troops.

Royal Park is significant at a local level for its association with Victorians who have played leading roles in its development: early trustees such as Ferdinand Mueller and William Davidson; the Town Clerk of Melbourne E G Fitzgibbon, who opposed nineteenth century attempts to alienate the parkland; the landscape architect Grace Fraser, designer of the Australian Native Garden; and with the City of Melbourne Councillors Elliott, H.G. Smith, William J. Brens, and Colin C. McDonald (who was also an Australian Test cricketer). It is also associated with prominent sports people including Julius Lockington 'Judy' Patching (athletics) and prominent Australian baseball figure Ross Straw.

Royal Park is of social significance at a local level for its continuing use by community sporting groups across Melbourne and Victoria.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

PERMIT EXEMPTIONS (under section 42 of the Heritage Act)

#### Landscape exemptions

\*The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.

\*The removal of dead or dangerous trees and emergency tree works to maintain safety. If the tree is identified as either remnant indigenous vegetation or part of the first wave of tree planting associated with the acclimatisation period c1860-1900 in Map B of Christine Dyson 'Cultural and Historic Significance of Royal Park', Prepared for the City of Melbourne, September 2013 (see below), the Executive Director must be notified of these removals within 21 days of them being undertaken.

\*Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373-1996.

\* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS 4970-2009.

\*Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services outside the canopy edge of significant trees in accordance with AS4970 provided that works do not impact on archaeological features or deposits.

\*Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

\*Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.

\* New plantings in accordance with:

o City of Melbourne, Royal Park Master Plan, 1997

o SERCO, Royal Park Native Vegetation Management Plan (2007)

o ALM, Australian Native Garden - Vegetation Management Plan (2001)

o SERCO, Royal Park Vegetation Zones Plan (2013)

\*All works associated with water harvesting and storage outside the canopy edge provided that archaeological features and deposits are not impacted.

\*Repairs and maintenance to all hard landscape elements, fences, gates and lighting (excluding memorials and historic signage).

\*The installation of Royal Park specific and standard City of Melbourne furniture, including rubbish and recycling bins, park seats, picnic tables, park and interpretative signage, drinking fountains, pathway park lights, park fencing and safety barriers outside of tree protection zones and not within 5 metres of historic monuments, statues and signage.

### **Road, carpark and public transport infrastructure exemptions:**

\*All works associated with operating and maintaining the existing road and public transport infrastructure including:

o All carparks, signs, fire hydrants, parking meters, seating, shelters, speed humps, pedestrian refuges and splitter islands, footpaths, tramlines, railway tracks, kerbs and channels.

o Royal Park train station building and platforms.

### **Sports facility exemptions:**

\*In areas designated for sport in the 1997 Royal Park Master Plan, maintenance and repair of existing facilities and the addition of minor structures related to sports activity or safety, for example resurfacing playing surfaces, fencing and cricket nets.

\*All interior and exterior works to the State Netball and Hockey Centre complex.

### **Building exemptions:**

\*All internal works

\*External repairs and maintenance that replaces like with like.

### **Event exemptions:**

\*Any event under 5 days in duration which has received an event permit from the relevant event approvals body.

### **Return to Royal Park Project exemptions:**

\*Works already approved for the 'Return to Royal Park' project. This project will see parkland reinstated on the site of the old Royal Children's Hospital (see approved scheme following).

The City of Melbourne and Department of Health are working together on the Return to Royal Park project, which will see parkland reinstated on the site of the old Royal Children's Hospital. The park will be established on the corner of Gatehouse Street and Flemington Road in Parkville, providing a new entrance to Royal Park. The goal is to create a native park which complements the existing vegetation and landscape character of Royal Park.

For more information see [www.returntoroyalpark.com.au](http://www.returntoroyalpark.com.au)

### **Exception**

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

### **Additional requirement**

All works should be consistent with (as relevant):

\*City of Melbourne, Royal Park Master Plan, 1997

\*Andrew Long and Associates, *Royal Park, Parkville, An Aboriginal Archaeological and Historical Heritage Study*

(2002)

\*SERCO, *Royal Park Native Vegetation Management Plan* (2007)

\* ALM, *Australian Native Garden - Vegetation Management Plan* (2001)

\*SERCO, *Royal Park Vegetation Zones Plan* (2013)

\*City of Melbourne, *Tree Retention and Removal Policy* (2012).

### **Continued application of planning and building requirements**

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

## **Theme**

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes 4. Transforming and managing the land 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce 6. Building towns cities and the garden state 7. Governing Victorians 8. Building community life 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates 1856,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 1954

Property Number

---

## **History**

### **HISTORY**

#### **1 A Wurundjeri camping ground**

The land now occupied by Royal Park had long been used as a camping ground by the Wurundjeri and by other tribal groups visiting the area. The early colonist William Westgarth encountered an Aboriginal camp here in the early 1840s and corroborees were observed to have taken place here. Aboriginal groups continued to use the reserve in the 1850s as a camping ground, and often visited the Royal Park Mounted Police barracks (Walmsley House, VHR H1946) on the south-eastern corner of the present park. They continued to visit this building after 1862, when it became the residence of the Crown Lands Bailiff for Royal Park, Francis Meaker, who may have provided them with rations. Albert Le Souëf, the first residential manager of the Acclimatisation Society's Gardens in 1870, was the son of William Le Souëf, a former Protector of the Aborigines on the Goulburn and a long-serving member of the Aborigines Protection Board, and may have encouraged the Aborigines' ongoing associations with Royal Park. These connections helped Le Souëf establish an Aboriginal encampment at the zoo in the 1880s, which accommodated over 20 people.

#### **2 Development of Royal Park**

##### **A 'royal park' for the colonies**

Parks and gardens in Britain had traditionally formed part of royal domains, or private pleasure grounds. The royal parks in Britain, such as Hyde Park and Regent Park in London, were large areas of Crown land that were part of the king's or queen's domain. Traditionally the use of these lands was restricted to the royal family, but following the Crown Lands Act of 1851 many royal parks were increasingly designated for public recreation and enjoyment. The British Government did not set aside land specifically for the purpose of public parks until the 1840s, following the 1833 report of the Select Committee on Public Parks and Places of Exercise. This proposed the provision of public parks as a means of alleviating the social problems suffered by the working class, notably overcrowding, which had resulted from rapid industrialisation.

In the 1840s, progressive ideas about the benefits of public parkland reserved for the health and recreation of the people began to influence town planning in the colonies. An 1844 petition prepared by the Melbourne Town

Council to send to the Government in Sydney noted that:

It is of vital importance to the health of the inhabitants that there should be parks within a distance of the town where they could conveniently take recreation therein after their daily labour ... experience in the mother country proves that where such public places of resort are in the vicinity of large towns, the effect produced on the minds of all classes is of the most gratifying character...

In 1844-45 Superintendent C J La Trobe negotiated with Governor Gipps in Sydney over the reservation of a large area of land north of the city. This resulted in 2560 acres or 4 square miles [1036 hectares] being set aside for public purposes, which was to include the site of Royal Park, Princes Park, the University of Melbourne and the Melbourne General Cemetery. On the day of his departure in 1854, La Trobe, then Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, rode to the area he had reserved ten years earlier and indicated to the surveyor-general exactly where he wanted the boundaries of Royal Park (then of 730 acres or 295 ha) and Princes Park. La Trobe's contribution to the provision of open space in Melbourne was therefore of great importance. However by the time Royal Park was officially gazetted as a public park in 1876 it had been reduced to 424 acres [172 ha] in extent, mainly because of pressure for residential development in the area.

By the mid-1850s Melbourne had an inner ring of reserved parkland close to the centre of the city, including Flagstaff Gardens, Carlton Gardens, Fitzroy Gardens and the Treasury Reserve, as well as an outer ring of parks further from the city. The outer parks included Royal Park and Princes Park (whose names represented a symbolic link to the royal parks of Britain) to the north of the city, the Richmond Police Paddock (Yarra Park), Studley Park and the Survey Paddock (Burnley Park) to the east, and Fawkner Park and South Melbourne Park (Albert Park) in the south. The reservation of public parkland surrounding Melbourne was critical in La Trobe's vision for Melbourne as a city of great beauty and function.

#### Developing a public park

Originally the northern parklands extended across Sydney Road to Princes Park and the Melbourne Cemetery, creating a vast area of largely uninterrupted bush and grassland. This remained largely undeveloped, unfenced and mostly unimproved. A design competition was advertised by the government in 1856, but was subsequently abandoned. Through the 1850s and 1860s, livestock grazed in Royal Park, which brought in a small amount of income. By 1867, a carriage drive encircled the reserve. The site was managed by trustees under the Crown Lands Department from 1862, with Crown Lands Bailliff Francis Meaker acting as a caretaker, followed by his son Charles.

#### Early planting

Early plantings included those donated in the 1860s and 1870s by Ferdinand Mueller, who was the Director of the Botanic Gardens and a trustee of Royal Park. These plantings are thought to have been largely concentrated in, but not confined to, the area of the Acclimatisation Gardens in the southern part of the park. An 1888 plan of Melbourne shows more intense areas of planting in a strip along the western boundary of Royal Park and at the intersection of Gatehouse Street and Park Drive on the eastern side. Under the management of the City of Melbourne from 1934, extensive planting was undertaken and nurseries were established on site for the purpose of growing plants.

#### Layout

From the outset Royal Park was envisaged and appreciated as 'natural' parkland with wide open spaces interspersed with trees, and its development has continued to reflect this vision. Many of the public uses of the reserve, for sporting, scientific, military, health and welfare purposes, have relied on this open character.

The use of Royal Park in the nineteenth century as the site for Melbourne's powder magazine, for a quarantine station, a hospital, and a mental asylum relied on it being a lightly timbered open space that was both close to, and separate from, the city. The open character has made it an ideal site for sporting activities. In its early period of development, Australian Rules football relied on the availability of a large area of grassland that was uninterrupted by trees. Later, in 1903, the 18-hole golf course also required a large area of land. The Curator of Parks and Gardens for Melbourne City Council, J W Smith, pointed out in 1923 that too much planting would reduce the area available in the park for cricket and football. Other uses required areas of open space that were only lightly timbered. In 1915 it was urged that Royal Park be kept open for the benefit of 'flying machines' that needed a safe area on which to land and take off. The open nature of Royal Park made it suitable for use by the military from the later nineteenth century and during World Wars I and II, and for its subsequent use for



emergency public housing.

### 3 Use by police

The building known as Walmsley House (VHR H1946) is a rare surviving example of the 36 prefabricated iron buildings brought to Victoria in 1854 for use by the colonial government. It is not certain where it was first erected in Royal Park, but it is said to have been used as barracks for the mounted troops in charge of the gold escort that travelled down Sydney Road. The location of the barracks at the northern gateway of the city was both convenient and strategic. From 1862 the building was used as a residence by the bailiff of Royal Park, and has been used continuously since then as rangers' accommodation or storage. Later in the nineteenth century a police station was established at the north-eastern corner of Royal Park.

### 4 A space for scientific endeavours

In the nineteenth century, science was regarded as the foundation of industry and the harbinger of progress, and men of science were unusually well represented in colonial society. By the late 1850s, a little more than twenty years since settlement commenced, the colony boasted botanic gardens, an observatory, a natural history museum, a public library and a university. These institutions were all located on public reserves within the city of Melbourne, with the botanic gardens and the observatory established on public parkland. Royal Park presented itself as an ideal area for further scientific endeavors.

#### The Experimental Farm

An experimental, or model, farm was established in 1858 in Royal Park as a means of testing different pasture crops, farming techniques and farming equipment in local conditions so to benefit the agricultural progress of the colony. The experimental farm was regarded as a progressive public institution, introduced at a time of significant agricultural development in the colony. Ploughing matches, which drew large crowds, were held here, reflecting the high importance placed on agriculture in a young rural-based economy.

#### Acclimatisation

The Acclimatisation Society of Victoria established its first reserve at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens in 1857. When this site proved unsuitable, the society was granted 550 acres in Royal Park for zoological purposes. No permanent reservation followed but just over 50 acres [20 ha] were reserved in the centre of the park in 1862. The objective of the Acclimatisation Society was to acquire exotic animals and birds that were potentially useful in the new colony and acclimatise them to Australian conditions. The acclimatisation reserve was extensively planted with exotic trees and a pleasure garden was developed, which under Le Souëf was developed into a modern zoo, now the Royal Melbourne Zoo (VHR H1074).

#### Exploration (and its commemoration)

Royal Park is well known as the departure point of the explorers Burke and Wills on 20 August 1860 on their ill-fated exploratory expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Camels were imported from Asia for the purpose and acclimatised prior to the expedition in large purpose-built camel sheds in Royal Park. Before their departure, Burke and Wills acclimatised themselves by camping out in Royal Park. The grim outcome of the mission, with the deaths of Burke and Wills and others on their return journey, cast a heavy gloom over Melbourne. Their state funeral procession in 1863, which included the firing of the volunteer artillery stationed in Royal Park, brought the city to a standstill. A large gum tree close to the departure point of the expedition, probably an indigenous River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), became a memorial to the explorers and a place of pilgrimage. The tree subsequently died but a memorial cairn was erected nearby in 1890.

### 5 Providing for public health and welfare

#### Hospitals

The use of Royal Park for health-related facilities was encouraged by the understanding that fresh air and a natural environment away from the crowds and dirt of the city aided healing and convalescence. A quarantine station for infectious diseases was established in Royal Park in the late 1860s during a smallpox outbreak in Melbourne. In 1864, when Yarra Bend Asylum was becoming overcrowded, the existing powder magazine at Royal Park was adapted, and subsequently extended, as a temporary Receiving House for mentally ill men until they were allocated room at Yarra Bend or another institution. A new mental hospital was erected in 1907. All of

these sites are now outside the present Royal Park boundary. An area in the southern corner of Royal Park was excised in 1950 for a children's hospital, which opened in 1962. A new hospital was opened in 2012 on land also excised from Royal Park (which is not included in the registration), and the site of the old hospital is currently being returned to Royal Park.

#### Industrial school & immigrants' home

Industrial schools were developed following Victorian legislation in 1864 that sought to address child vagrancy and poor attendance at school, and one operated at Royal Park from 1877-80. The Schools were soon abolished but the Royal Park complex was adapted for other uses, including a mental asylum. An immigrants' home was established in Royal Park by 1883 by the Immigrants Aid Society, probably in the former buildings of the Industrial School. This is also located outside the current park boundary.

#### Public housing

The State Government established an area of emergency public housing at Royal Park during the postwar population boom of 1947-56. The housing was rudimentary and the conditions were fairly basic.

#### 6 A space for public gatherings

Since the 1840s, the open spaces at Royal Park lent themselves to sporting events and large public gatherings. An enormous crowd was present in 1860 to farewell the explorers Burke and Wills. By the late 1860s the Acclimatisation Gardens were an added popular attraction. In 1867, a quiet and civilised 'fete and free banquet' was held at Royal Park to honour the visiting Prince Alfred. After the railway opened in the 1880s visitors were attracted from further afield. Royal Park became a popular venue for picnic parties, especially on Boxing Day and Easter Monday. The trustees of Royal Park claimed there was no other park in Melbourne suitable for mass public gatherings, and emphasised the importance of retaining the open space by not planting too many trees.

#### 7 A military ground

Royal Park was used for various military purposes from the 1860s. Melbourne's powder magazine was moved to Royal Park in c1866 as it was considered safer to store ammunition in the relative remoteness of Royal Park than in the town centre. A military squad marched from the St Kilda Road Barracks to Royal Park each day to guard the building.

Royal Park was regularly used for military parades and displays. Around 5000 military men from the Australian colonies and New Zealand were camped in the Royal Park in 1888 in preparation for the Centennial Exhibition's combined Imperial and Victorian naval display. In 1901 a large contingent of soldiers from Australia and Fiji were stationed at Royal Park in preparation for the Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne. In 1915, following outbreaks of disease at other more crowded military camps in Victoria, the Prime Minister sought permission from the Premier of Victoria to use the southern part of Royal Park as a military camp. Thousands of men enlisted, camped, trained and paraded at this site. To mark the King's Jubilee in May 1935, an extravagant military display involving the RAAF was held at Royal Park.

#### Army camp in royal Park c1915 (Museum Victoria)

This site was used again as a military camp during World War II. From 1940 it was operating as a recruit reception depot with personnel accommodated in buildings and tents. In early 1942 a large part of Royal Park was used as a staging camp for US troops en route to the Pacific. The Americans called their area "Camp Pell", a name which immediately became associated with the military occupation of Royal Park. Anzac Hall (VHR H1747) was erected in Bren Drive by the RSL in 1940-41 for use by the troops. After the war Camp Pell was used by the Housing Commission as emergency housing (popularly known as 'Camp Hell') until its demolition during a clean up campaign leading up to the 1956 Olympics. The army remained in Royal Park near Anzac Hall until 1958. The hall has been used since then by the City of Melbourne for various community uses, including the Urban Camp program which provides accommodation for country school children visiting Melbourne.

#### 8 Sport at Royal Park

The earliest recorded sporting club to occupy Royal Park was the Brunswick Cricket Club, which established a ground in the north-eastern corner in 1858. Inter-club cricket competition has continued at the ground since that time.

Australian football was played in Royal Park from the 1860s, gaining a large following from the surrounding predominantly working-class neighbourhood. Barrackers identified closely with the local teams that included Royal Park, North Melbourne and Carlton. The playing field was an unfenced cleared area that was probably situated in the north-east areas of the park, south of the Brunswick Cricket Ground. Royal Park football club was based here by 1865. Carlton football club played its games at the Royal Park ground from 1866 before moving to Princes Park in 1882. North Melbourne football club also played its first games at Royal Park in the 1860s and later moved to a new home ground at Arden Street. Other clubs from further afield played at Royal Park from the 1860s to the 1880s, including Melbourne, Albert Park and Geelong. In the early twentieth century football matches continued to attract thousands of local supporters to the park.

An 18-hole public golf course was established at Royal Park in 1903, making it one of the earliest public courses in Victoria. The original tee-ing off point of the first hole at Royal Park was near the Burke and Wills memorial cairn. During World War I, the course was reduced to 9 holes.

Other sports played at Royal Park have included lacrosse (from at least the 1890s), polo (from the 1890s) and tennis (1920s). The reserve has been used for sports grounds by various local municipalities and other groups. During the Camp Pell era in the 1940s, when a large number of American military personnel were camped at Royal Park, it became a venue for baseball games, and soccer was played there by new migrants during the period of post-war emergency housing in the 1950s. In c1970 the Ross Straw Field, the first purpose-built baseball field in Australia, was created. Ross Straw was a prominent figure in local and international baseball, and was instrumental in efforts to develop the field in Royal Park.

Since the early twentieth century Royal Park has been an important venue for women's sporting competitions, including cricket (from 1903), netball (from the 1920s) and amateur athletics (from the 1930s). An athletics track was established in c1937, and was used for state and national level competitions. The women's dressing pavilion (1937) (VHR H1585) relates to this use. Royal Park has been the main venue for women's and schoolgirls' netball in Victoria since the 1920s. Outdoor netball courts were provided from the 1950s and an indoor stadium opened in 1969 for state and national competition.

## 9 Preserving the natural parkland

The Royal Park landscape has been appreciated and noted for its special character since the 1840s and 1850s. Several nineteenth-century artists painted the natural landscape of Royal Park, including William Craig and James Calder. As pressure on Melbourne's public parkland intensified by the 1860s, the government sold off sections of Royal Park for private housing, which became a major public scandal. Traffic was prohibited from the reserve from the time of the first regulations for the site in 1884.

Royal Park has remained remarkably intact given the pressure on development in the crowded inner northern suburbs of Melbourne. In the 1880s, despite the construction of a railway line, Royal Park was described as 'nearly a square mile of fine open woodland', which still bore some resemblance to how it must have looked when John Batman walked through the area in 1835. While the Acclimatisation Gardens (later the Zoological Gardens) were intensely developed and planted with exotics, the area outside the zoo retained much of its original character. This was encouraged by the trustees, including the Deputy Surveyor-General Clement Hodgkinson, who was a keen advocate for retaining indigenous trees in designed landscapes (for example in Yarra Park and the Fitzroy Gardens).

The development of Melbourne's public parklands was influenced by a rising ecological consciousness in the colonies in the 1880s, championed by the Field Naturalists' Society of Victoria and the Australian Natives' Association, which took an interest in tree-planting at Royal Park. In the 1930s the Curator of Parks and Gardens for the City of Melbourne, J W Smith, was an advocate of native planting in Royal Park.

While Royal Park suffered to some extent from minimal government investment throughout the nineteenth century, this inadvertently helped to preserve its natural character. Before the City of Melbourne took over the park's management in 1934, the trustees had encouraged the planting of native trees largely because they were easy to maintain during periods of drought. The use of Royal Park for mass gatherings also encouraged the retention of the open character of the landscape.

Public appreciation and use of Royal Park as a large intact natural parkland close the city centre has been a key force in its preservation. From the 1860s the Melbourne City Council, led then by the Town Clerk E G Fitzgibbon, and the public have opposed plans by the government to reduce the extent of the reserve. Fitzgibbon frequently used the slogan, 'Hands off the Parks!' There was great outcry in the 1880s that the new railway line had 'ruined'

the Park, and further disquiet in 1916 when a tramline was constructed. The proposal to build a roadway (Elliott Avenue) through Royal Park in the late 1920s again prompted the call, 'Hands off the Park!', and triggered an avalanche of public protest that included the support of conservationist Sir James Barrett.

An appreciation of Royal Park's natural setting, with an emphasis on indigenous plantings and the recreation of a 'natural' landscape, was reinforced by the 1984 Master Plan by Laceworks Landscape Collaborative, and also by the Grace Fraser Native Garden, which was opened in 1977. Whilst some of the original vegetation in Royal Park has been lost, the deliberate planting and preservation of native trees has helped to retain the appearance of Royal Park as a pre-settlement landscape.

#### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Aitken, Richard. 'Royal Park: Draft historical notes', prepared 2 May 1997, held National Trust of Australia (Vic.), file L10019.

Aitken, Richard and Michael Looker (eds). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2002.

Donati, Laura. 'Royal Park' in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

Dyson, Christina. 'Cultural and Historic Significance of Royal Park'. Prepared for the City of Melbourne, September 2013.

Laceworks Landscape Collaborative. 'Royal Park Landscape Development Plan'. Prepared for Melbourne City Council, 1985.

Reeves, Simon. 'The Walmsley House at Royal Park: La Trobe's other cottage', *LaTrobeana*, vol. 7, no. 3, November 2008, pp. 12-18.

Royal Park reserve file Rs 5242, held Department of Environment and Primary Industry, Melbourne.

Royal Park files (various), held City of Melbourne.

Sanderson, W.A. 'Royal Park', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. XIV, no. 3, May 1932, pp. 109-139.

Sanderson, W.A. 'The Alienation of Melbourne Park Lands', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. XIV, no. 4, December 1932, pp. 141-149

State Library of Victoria - Maps Collection.

Sutherland, Alexander (ed.). *Victoria and Its Metropolis*. Melbourne, 1888

Swanson, Rex. *Melbourne's Parks and Gardens: History, Features and Statistics*. Parks and Gardens Division, Melbourne City Council, 1984 (revised 1991).

*Victorian Government Gazette*.

Whitehead, Georgina. 'Royal Park: Cultural Heritage Study'. Prepared for the City of Melbourne, August 1999.

Wright, Ray. *The Bureaucrats' Domain: Space and the public interest in Victoria*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989.

#### Plaque Citation

Royal Park was an integral element in Governor La Trobe's vision from the mid 1840s of Melbourne as a city surrounded by extensive public parkland and has been the site of significant scientific endeavours, military use, sporting and public events.

#### Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion Royal Park is significant at the State level for the following reasons: Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Royal Park is historically significant as an outstanding and largely intact example of the public parks set aside by Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe from the mid-1840s as part of his vision for the city of Melbourne. It retains its early use and demonstrates La Trobe's contribution to the provision of public open space in the colony and also the vision of the colonial administration for the future development of Melbourne. Largely as a result of La Trobe's vision Melbourne now has a group of spectacular parks.

Royal Park is historically significant as the site of scientific institutions important to the development of the colony, including an Experimental Farm (1858) and the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria (1861), part of which later became the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (VHR H1074) on the site. Many trees on the site were planted by the Acclimatisation Society between c1862 and 1900. Royal Park is historically significant as the starting point of Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria (1860), an event which gained national recognition and was depicted by prominent Australian artists, including William Strutt and Nicholas Chevalier. Royal Park is historically significant for its use for military purposes since the 1860s. It was the site of a major Australian military camp and training ground during the First World War, was used for the mobilisation of Anzacs to the Western Front, and was a camp for both Australian and US troops during the Second World War prior to their deployment to Pacific War campaigns (1941-45). Royal Park is historically significant for its long association with sport in Victoria. It is the site of one of the earliest public golf courses in Victoria (1903), of Australia's first dedicated baseball field (Ross Straw Field c1970) and from the early 1900s has played an important role in the advancement of women's competitive sport in Australia. Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Royal Park is rare as the most outstanding and intact example of the metropolitan parks aside from the 1840s for the people of Victoria, which retains its basic form, its early use, remnant indigenous vegetation and important views to the city. It is the only example of an inner Melbourne park which retains stands, as opposed to specimens, of remnant indigenous vegetation and clearly demonstrates an ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous trees over a period of more than 150 years.

**Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics** Royal Park is aesthetically significant as an outstanding example of a large metropolitan park, particularly notable for its remnant indigenous vegetation and important views to the city. It is the only example of an inner Melbourne park which retains stands of remnant indigenous vegetation and clearly demonstrates an ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous plants over a period of 150 years. The Park landscape provides significant internal and external vistas, including the native grassland 'hilltop' circle where a 360-degree panorama provides a dramatic and sensory appreciation of the city skyline and surrounding landscape. An appreciation of the aesthetic value of the park is evident in the numerous contemporary descriptions of the place from the nineteenth century onwards, and in the numerous paintings, sketches and photographs of the Royal Park landscape. The most recent layer of development associated with the 1984 Master Plan is significant for its design philosophy and natural landscape aesthetic. In 2010, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects awarded the City of Melbourne the "ALIA national award for sustainable settlement, green infrastructure and landscape principles" for "its stewardship of Royal Park as a nationally significant landscape".

## **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 Heritage Register Number H2337 in the category described as Heritage Place.

Royal Park  
Parkville  
Melbourne City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2337 encompassing all of Crown Allotments 2019, 2020, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2144, 2250, 2274, 2327, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2354, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2563, 2564, all of Crown Allotment 9B of Section D, all of Crown Allotments 9 and 11 of Section 98, all of Crown Allotments 2A, 2B, 4A and 6D of Section 99A, Parish of Jika Jika, all of Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 427739, all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 865423, parts of Crown Allotments 2140, 2355, 2356, 2562, part of

Crown Allotment 13 of Section 98, Parish of Jika Jika and parts of the road reserve for The Avenue and Oak Street, Parkville, but not the places already included in the Heritage Register and marked as follows on Diagram 2337:

- 1 Walmsley House (H1946)
- 2 Womens Sport Pavilion (H1585)
- 3 Anzac Hall (H1747)
- 4 Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (H1074)

Dated 23 October 2014

TIM SMITH  
Executive Director

---

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

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