WAVERLEY PARK

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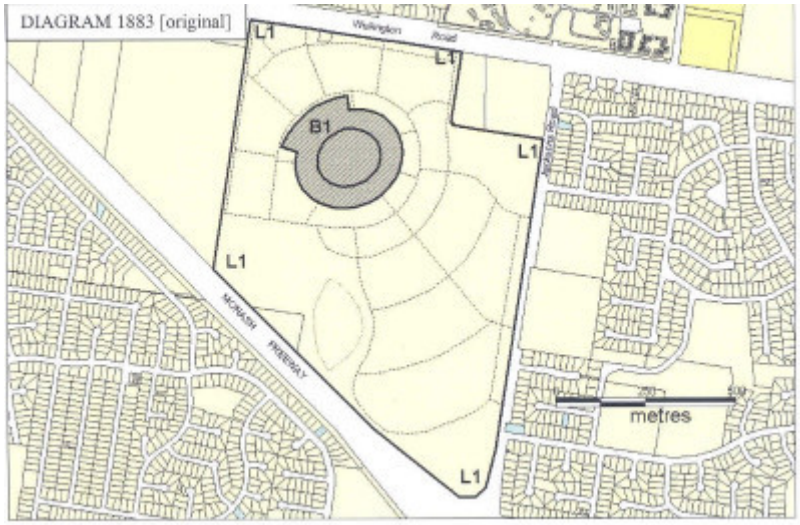
h01883 waverley park plan revised



h01883 waverley park plan original

Location

2 STADIUM CIRCUIT AND 566-634 WELLINGTON ROAD MULGRAVE, MONASH CITY

Municipality

MONASH CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1883

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO88

VHR Registration

September 7, 2000

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?
Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park), was opened in 1970 and operated as a key a stadium for Australian Rules Football until 1999. The stadium, with its sunken oval and high cantilevered grandstand (originally intended to completely encircle the ground, was designed by architect Reginald Padey with engineering design by John Connell. The stadium was the manifestation of a long-cherished vision of the president of the Victorian Football League, Sir Kenneth Luke. Up until the building of Waverley, the league had no control over the venues where elite level Australian football was played. The game, which developed in Melbourne in the immediate post-Gold Rush era, quickly became the most popular team sport in several States. Yet the Victorian Football League, the code's most powerful governing body, was still at the mercy of established cricket clubs, particularly the Melbourne Cricket Club, which held the leases of public land for the playing grounds, and inner Melbourne municipal councils where the grounds were situated and were most usually the landlords. A stadium in the fast growing outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne, on land owned and controlled by the league and designed for Australian football rather than cricket, was the plan.

Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park) has had a life of controversy, not least because its threat to the revenues of the politically powerful Melbourne Cricket Club put obstacles in the way of supplanting the Melbourne Cricket Ground (VHR1937) as the pre-eminent football stadium in the State, but also because its location, climate and design made it either loved or hated by football fans. Ironically, a stadium that gave the Victorian Football League the independence it required to pursue the creation of national competition, itself became unwanted by the Australian Football League as that new body concentrated on fewer, more centrally located stadia. The original vision of a stadium of enormous capacity (157,000) was only partly realised with the construction in 1974 of a segment of the encircling stand with its unusual 'scissors' trusses.

The nomination of Waverley Park to the Victorian Heritage Register was also controversial and its inclusion in the Register in 2000 something of a landmark decision for heritage conservation in Australia. The granting of a heritage permit in 2002 for the creation of an entire suburb in the surrounding car park, the retention of the oval, part of the Sir Kenneth Luke stand and a modified lake, led to a recommendation for the reduction of the extent of registration to encompass only those parts of Waverley Park that retain sufficient fabric and form to enable interpretation of the place's significance.

How is it significant?
Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park) is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is is significant?
Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park) is historically and socially important as a manifestation of the importance of the game of Australian Rules football to Victorians. Australian Rules football has permeated all regions and all sections of society in Victoria, particularly in the twentieth century, and must be viewed as a substantial part of our culture. Waverley Park was the first major venue to be designed specifically for Australian Rules football and was planned expressly to be a showcase for the sport. In a modest-sized city which already accommodated a popular general sports stadium (the MCG) that held more than 100,000 spectators, it was a remarkable ambition of the Victorian Football League to commence what they intended from the outset to be the second-largest stadium in the world (to seat some 157,000) for the benefit of a locally-developed football code which was the dominant winter sport in only four of the Australian states. Waverley Park derives historical interest from its role as host stadium to major VFL and later AFL matches which were regularly scheduled there from 1970; as the site of the 1991 AFL Grand Final when the MCG was unavailable; and as the first venue of night games of World Series one-day cricket which had a divisive effect on the sport, but which was the forerunner of one-day international cricket. Despite being used on occasions for other sports and functions, Waverley Park has remained largely true to its original purpose to be a ground for Australian Rules football.

Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park) is historically and socially important for its pivotal role in the Victorian Football League's wresting of control of its venues from local cricket clubs and municipal ground managers and of the Melbourne Cricket Ground in particular thereby helping to maximise revenue and independence for football. It is of historical and social interest for its associations with the greatest changes that Australian football has undergone. For many Victorians the ground has been perceived as a symbol of change, and even as an agent of change; at the very least it accelerated development from the largely inner-suburban origins of the League football competition to a more commercialised and later, a national competition. It offered the first opportunity for clubs to detach themselves from traditional home grounds for financial advantage. It encouraged the expansion of corporate facilities and revenues from advertising.

Waverley Park also derives historical significance from its place in the post-Second World War suburban expansion of Melbourne towards the east and south-east of the city and belongs to the same era and region as the Chadstone Shopping Centre, Monash University and the new Sandown Park racecourse. Infrastructure lagged behind the building projects, and VFL Park suffered in public estimation because of the deficiencies of road access and public transport.

Waverley Park (formerly VFL Park) is of architectural (and engineering) importance for the design and assembly of its physical structure. The structure and the organisation of the physical elements of Waverley Park give clear evidence of the monumental scope of the undertaking and the attention paid to the long-term planning of the entire scheme. Influenced by the most recent and important overseas stadia existing at that time, and by American sporting facilities, it was unique in Australia, when conceived, for its size, for its innovative and integrated design, and for its amenities. It reflects an advanced approach to stadium design in the early 1960s and the vision of Australian architect Reginald Padey in collaboration with the engineers John Connell and Associates. The use of a sunken oval, excavated to a depth of nine metres (with a fully reticulated drainage system to an on-site storage lake), was a pioneering feature in Australia and allowed for rapid entry to and egress from the ground for patrons, and easy access by way of external ramps to the high stands. Clear sight lines were provided from all locations in the stadium (apparently based on standards adopted for the Tokyo Olympics); however this was at the expense of intimacy. The generous seating allocation and low gradients of the stands and the lavish set-back of the boundary line from the spectator fence(which would have produced a sense of imposing vastness had the full project been completed)conspired to deprive the incomplete ground of theatrical atmosphere except perhaps when the venue was full.

The high stand (the Sir Kenneth Luke Stand), designed in 1963 but not built until 1973-76, is of architectural (and engineering) importance as an early example of a reinforced concrete structure on this scale, and makes a design and architectural feature of this material. It employed the unconventional device of repeated large concrete scissors, or X, frames supporting large-span pre-stressed and post-tensioned concrete cantilevers for seating. This structural solution was recognised by a national merit award from the Association of Consulting Engineers, Australia in 1978, more than a decade after it was designed. The capacity for staged and integrated construction of further sections of the high stand with little inconvenience to the ground's use was impressive and practical.

The stadium was sited in open ground, formerly used for car parking, but the structure has been positioned to take advantage of its elevated location. Even though never completed to its original design, the Kenneth Luke Stand occupies part of the perimeter and closely reflects the original Padey and Connell design. Visible from many vantage points in the district (and itself offering fine views from its higher levels), the stadium as built suggests size, strength and functionality, and this impression is confirmed on approaching Waverley Park itself.

Of note is the large mosaic mural on the central axis of the main stand, which was commissioned by the VFL and completed between 1984-86 by artists Harold Freedman and David Jack. Its significance lies in its symbolism at the time when the VFL was attempting to relocate its Grand Final to Waverley. The mural portrays the heroic, legendary and mythical qualities of Australian Rules football in the heyday of the eleven Melbourne clubs plus Geelong, which for many years constituted the Victorian Football League.

[Revised statement of cultural heritage significance adopted by Heritage Council 5 June 2003 when it agreed to a progressively reduced extent of registration]

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:

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. General Conditions: 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. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. 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. STADIUM
* All non-structural works to the public areas (other than the Harold Freedman mosaic).
* All works to administrative, service or non-public areas.
* Extension of the high grandstand in a manner which remains true to the original design concept for an encircling grandstand.
LANDSCAPE
* All works to hard and soft landscaping elements provided that the original layout of access roads is retained.

FURTHER EXEMPTIONS
*The erection of signage, to remain only during the on-going marketing of Waverley Park during its development stages and to the related marketing
*The construction of a sales and information centre to be sited on a superlot on the plan endorsed under the Planning Permit STA/2001/000714
*Subdivision, services and works associated with the development of the land in accordance with the approved plan accompanying Planning Permit STA/2001/000714 and the incorporated (Monash Planning Scheme) Comprehensive Development Plan
*All site contamination testing and remediation works, except where they may require any modification to the Sir Kenneth Luke Stand.
* Development and use of dwellings, associated out-buildings and works in accordance with the Monash Planning Scheme Neighbourhood Character Overlay Schedule 1 and Planning Permit STA/2001/000714
* Development and use of minor sports and recreation facility, place of assembly, associated outbuildings and works in accordance with Planning Permit STA/2001/000714
*Removal of trees, establishment of parks and implementation of landscape works, in accordance with Planning Permit STA/2001/000714
*Demolition and under-grounding of high voltage powerlines.
*Temporary and/or protective fencing.
*Temporary site buildings associated with construction and works.

Construction dates	1970,

Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	VFL PARK, V.F.L. PARK, AFL PARK, A.F.L. PARK,
Hermes Number	6059
Property Number	

History

FROM CONSERVATION ANALYSIS AND HERITAGE NOMINATION PREPARED BY NIGEL LEWIS ON BEHALF OF CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG FEB 2000

HISTORY

Chronology of Waverley Park

This chronology covers the initial planning and development as well as the subsequent history of the former VFL Park, Waverley. It also includes related events in Australia and elsewhere in the world, that may have influenced the ambitious concept, and architectural and engineering design of Waverley Park.

This chronology should be read in conjunction with the attachment, “A social history of Waverley Park by Roy Hay, Marnie Haig-Muir and Peter Mewett, Deakin University. References are made to their social history document in the following chronology, as well as other sources.

1937
Hampden Park stadium, Glasgow, was completed with capacity of 150,000. (Roy Hay, Marnie Haig-Muir and Peter Mewett, “A Social History of Waverley Park” 2000, Table 5.

1938
The now demolished Southern Stand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground was constructed, designed by Purnell and Pearce. (Bryce Raworth, pers.comm. 4 February 2000).

It employed a modernist design ethos for both seating area and canopy as well as external wall, which later inspired many of Melbourne’s leading modern architects of the 1970s-80s, including Peter Corrigan, who regarded it as one of the best buildings in Melbourne before its demolition. (Personal recollections).

1947
This year marked the apogee of the era of vast attendances at football matches, in the US and Europe, after an earlier peak before World War II. (Hay, Haig-Muir and Mewett, op. Cit.

1948
Construction commenced of the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janiero in Brazil for the soccer World Cup. The Maracana stadium was designed to hold 220,000 patrons, a figure nearly reached for the 1950 World Cup, a record capacity never exceeded. The circular ground was enclosed by a continuous cantilever roofed grandstand which reflected the new “donut” stadium design. It became an icon on the sporting world for its design and scale (ibid.). This is despite it never been completed and having substandard facilities (Reg Padey, pers. Comm. 27 January 2000).

This modernist structure was constructed at the same time as the futuristic capital Brasilia was being designed by Oscar Niemeyer, a protege of Le Corbusier. Brasilia became on of the icons of the post WWII modernist architectural movement.

1948-50
Melbourne made its successful bid for the 1956 Olympics; the first venue selected was to be the Melbourne Showgrounds. (Keith Dunstan, The paddock that Grew, Hutchinson Australia, 1962, 1988, p214).

1950s-60s
This period saw the reconstruction of large soccer stadia in Britain and Europe. (Hay, Haig-Muir and Mewett, op. cit.)

1950-53
The MCC has rejected the use of the MCG in 1950. The MCC rejection lead to a search for a new stadium venue, including Junction Oval, the Showgrounds, and the Carlton ground at Princes Park. Kenneth Luke successfully promoted the Carlton venue as he was looking for a new home for football finals matches and an independent venue controlled by the Victoria Football League. This venue had the potential to provide the Carlton Football Club with a “dream” stadium as envisage by club president Luke, and almost became a reality. Plans were prepared for a new major Olympic venue in price Park, North Carlton. (Lionel Frost, The Old Dark Navy Blues, Allen and Unwin, 1998, pp. 102-104).

A completion for a new design was won by Best Overend, but his design was not implemented. (Reg Padey, op. cit). The plans began with a modest stadium holding 70,000, but then it was later expanded to house 125,000. The resultant cost blowout crippled the project and Carlton lost the financial support of Premier John Cain, just as work was about to commence. The Carlton Olympic venue was abandoned because of this, and because the MCC reversed its opposition to use the MCG. This would have been a huge disappointment for the club and its president Sir Kenneth Luke. (Lionel Frost, loc. cit.).

1952
The term “New Brutalism” was first used in London, to define a new school of architectural design in Britain. (Philip Goad, a Guide to Melbourne Architecture, The Watermark Press, 1999, p 203).

1952-56
The design and construction of the award winning Olympic pool by Kevin Borland, Peter McIntyre and John and Phyllis Murphy captured the public imagination. On completion it became “one of Melbourne’s most prized contributions to modern architecture”. This was on account of the expression of balanced forces including the exposed steel tension cables, roof trusses and angled seating undercroft. (ibid., p 165). Other Olympic Park stadia constructed adjacent for soccer and cycling, were of less ambitious designs. The Olympic stand at the MCG was very utilitarian, probably due to the rush to construct it in a short space of time.

1954
Davis Cup tennis finals were held at Kooyong and led to the 1920s pioneering concrete centre court stands being expanded to seat to 11,700 in extensions designed by Bates Smart McCutcheon. Temporary stands expanded this figure to approximately 20,000. This was an early highlight of the wave of national sporting pride which was just beginning in Australia. (Nigel Lewis, City of Stonnington Amendment L47, 1998 citation).

Sir Kenneth Luke, then Vice President of the VFL said the League must “Think big. Act big”, and called for a VFL stadium to hold 125,000. (100 Years of Australian Football 1897-1996, Penguin Books 1996, p 199).

1956
Melbourne Olympics focussed further world attention on Melbourne and Australian sporting prowess. Sir Kenneth Luke appointed President of the Victorian Football League, a post he held until his death in 1971. At this time or soon after, he planned a new VFL owned stadium to ensure that gate takings were maximised, with the proposed ground completely under VFL< control. This was apparently a response to the loss of Princes Park as a football “super ground”. Luke’s era as head of the VFL marked the beginning of the Waverley Park project and a new vision for strong economic leadership by the VFL over the power of individual clubs, as covered by Hay et. al. in their Waverley Park social history (Attachment Two).

1958
Sandown Park racecourse was built, the first dedicated sporting ground constructed on a new site in post war Melbourne, other than Olympic venues. The location was chosen because of Melbourne’s expansion to southeast, and existing rail links. A modern design idiom was adopted for the grandstand design.

The modernist Ullevi soccer stadium in Gothenberg was completed, with a grandstand roof supported by two giant light towers, as venue for 1958 World Cup.

1959
In April the 12 delegates of the VFL resolved to look for a site for a new venue. (Victorian Football league

Waverley: a permanent home at last for Australia's national game, 1964 brochure produced to publicise the newly designed project, copy held by Reg Padey [Attachment One]). VFL power brokers President Sir Kenneth Luke and Secretary Eric McCutchan began the search for site for new ground. They formed a close working relationship, and remained the main force behind the development of the Waverley ground.

The Sidney Myer Music Bowl was completed, designed by Barry patten and Angel Dimitroff of Yuncken Freedman Brothers Griffiths and Simpson. It was a radical suspended cable roof system supported by two giant columns tapered to match bending moment forces. It attracted similar acclaim as the Olympic Pool. (Philip Goad, op. cit., p 183).

1960
The Rome Olympics venues designed by brilliant engineer Pier Luigi Nervi possessed structural design solutions that became a benchmark for creative structural design for the next 20 years.

1961
Sir Robert Menzies opened Monash University, Clayton, in March. This followed a battle for a second university between RMIT, which sought university status, and supporters of a totally new university dedicated to technology. Premier Henry Bolte strongly endorsed a new university rather than an upgraded RMIT. (Dr Neil Lewis, RMTC and RMIT council member 1948-78, pers. comm.). Monash was located on farmland in the burgeoning southeastern suburbs, on Wellington Road, the same general area where Waverley Park was to be built later. The promised train or tram line along Wellington Road for the university was never realised. The university and the proposed rail link pump primed development in this area.

Hillsborough stadium has the first modern cantilever stand constructed in the U.K.

1962
Architect Reginald Padey, a partner of Meldrum and Partners, undertook a six month private self educational world tour of architectural monuments as a precursor to establishing his own practice. Padey had had early work experience with modernist pioneers such as John Rivett and Roy Grounds. Padey had a strong commitment to "simplicity and structural expression" in architectural design.

Padey included stadia at the request of Sir Kenneth Luke, who hinted at the possibility of a new home for the VFL to Padey, but there was definitely no discussion of a commission at this stage. Padey assumed that Luke was tight lipped because critical negotiations over the purchase of the Waverley site were underway at that time. Padey had been working on Luke's factories at Mitcham and Clifton Hill prior to this. Padey had a great respect for Luke, especially as he always "thought big". An example he cited was Luke's attempt to relocate the Showgrounds site to Debneys paddock, projected to be large enough for a world exposition. Padey developed a close friendship with Luke that lasted until Luke's death.

Padey visited 26 countries, although not all for their stadia, which occupied about half of the trip. The rest was to other architectural landmarks, that included the work of Eero Saarinen and Frank Lloyd Wright in the US. Wright's ramped Guggenheim museum particularly impressed Padey. He also visited Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia, and was intrigued by the buildings being largely constructed below ground level.

He was particularly impressed by the 225,000 capacity 1948 Maracana stadium at Rio de Janiero for its design and scale (150,000 seated and 75,000 standing), even though it was half finished. "You suddenty realised the magnitude of the building you were about to design". Others of special interest for their architectural and structural design included the 1958 World Cup Ullevi stadium at Gothenberg, and stadia at Milan and Crystal Palace, London. The Ullevi stadium had a grandstand roof supported by two 30 metre light towers and the first warped roof that Padey had seen. It was also excavated into the ground. (The warped roof form was later used by Padey for the Princes Park grandstand). Milan was of interest for the encircling ramps that extended to the top of the stands.

He also inspected stadia at Helsinki (the 1952 Olympic venue), Stockholm, Wembley, Cardiff, Rome (including the 1960 Olympic venue), Mexico City university stadium (before the Olympic stadium was built), Candlestick Park San Francisco, Dodgers Stadium Loss Angeles, Shea Stadium New York. He was impressed by the US stadia, "the degree of facility they provided was unbelievable", although he saw few above a capacity of 60,000. His tour of stadia followed the Japanese who were planning the Tokyo Olympics. These games provided an opportunity for Japanese architects to continue to push the bounds of structural design innovation.

The VFL announced the purchase of the Waverley Park site at Mulgrave in September. 212 acres of market gardening and grazing land were purchased for £250,000, with the announcement that the League would build the finest stadium in the Southern Hemisphere. The project had been kept quiet before this, as they did not wish to pay an inflated price for land.

Meldrums contacted Padey in New York to say that Luke had announced the Waverley purchase and that his architect was studying the world's great stadia. Somewhat surprised, Padey then concentrated on stadia and returned home via Japan to inspect the plans on the drawing boards for the Tokyo Olympics. Typically, Luke, always the though businessman, did not immediately commission Meldrum and Partners until Padey provided a thesis on modern stadium design. At that stage, architect Harry Norris was still undertaking some work for the VFL.

The Padey thesis covered all aspects of stadium design, sightlines, seating, infrastructure on concessions, toilets, as well as indoor stadia such as the Crystal Place complex which had an athletics track, a swimming pool, a hotel for visiting athletes etc. Another aspect was that all modern overseas stands were excavated. The trip exposed the backwardness of the MCG, built at ground level, with all facilities on the ground level concourse and the resultant conflict with circulating pedestrian traffic.

1963
When Meldrums were commissioned they paid Padey for his trip. This marked the beginning of an association between with Padey and the VFL that extended until Padey retired from practice in 1995, other than the brief period after Padey left Meldrums. (Reg Padey, pers. comm. 27 January 2000).

Design development of a new sporting complex was undertaken, adopting many of the features observed by Padey overseas. It was to have a main stadium, two secondary ovals, and indoor sporting facilities, a motel, ornamental lake, bus terminal with overhead walkway, and a heliport. ("Waverley", promotion brochure. VFL 1964). This had been based on the crystal Palace sports complex. Luke had a future Olympic Games in mind for the site planning. (Padey, op. cit.). This was one of the reasons that the huge 212 acre site was acquired. Only 6 years after the Melbourne Olympics, this would have been likely to be the first consideration for a second Melbourne Olympiad. However, the stadium was designed and promoted from the start as an exclusive football venue, without the slippery Merri Creek clay problems associated with a cricket wicket.

Padey was the project architect for the design of the Waverley site, with John Connell and Associates appointed as structural engineers later that year. This was to be the first of many major stadia that Connell's firm designed in Melbourne. (These included the Great Southern Stand and the Colonial Stadium). The proposed design was for a smaller version of the Maracana stadium in Rio with a continuous cantilevered covered grandstand. Padey developed the basic structural design parameters. The distinctive reinforced concrete scissors shaped support frame was jointly conceived by Padey and John Connell. The frame was tested by models, before computer analysis was available, although it was later checked by computers in 1972.

The excavated design of Waverley was an innovation for Australia. Extensive ramping was designed to encircle the outside of the grandstand to allow clearance of the stadium within 11 minutes. (ibid., and John Connell, pers. comm. 1 February 2000).

In November, town planning approval No. 346 was granted by the City of Waverley. This allowed three ovals, 20,000 cars, bus depot, and indoor stadium group that included squash and bowling. The endorsed plan also showed trees and contours. (Reg Padey archives).

1964
The ambitious plans for VFL Park were released with a huge stadium to accommodate 157,000 patrons. A lavish promotional brochure stated that the plans were to "incorporate the best and latest features" from stadia visited on Padey's tour. "Upon this vase expanse, the League is now to establish its own home – a football stadium as fine as any on earth, with ancillary grounds where not only football but many other games will be played and enjoyed". Other references more modestly claimed it would be the "finest stadium in the Southern Hemisphere" with all patrons under cover and uninterrupted views (ie no columns to support the roof).

This would have made it the second largest capacity in the world after Maracana. It would have held 7,000 more than Hampden Park in Glasgow. With the adoption of the high standard of facilities of US grounds, the ambitious claims were not overstated. ()Hay and Haig-Muir, Table 5).

The brief for around 150,000 came from Luke, and not McCutchan, although he had a close working relationship with Luke on the project. These two men handled all dealings with Premier Bolte, his cabinet, and the Waverley City councillors. The rest of the Board had no input at all. Luke wanted some standing areas in the final stadium, despite Padey strongly disagreeing with him. This was because there was no standing room in US stadia. The original design was based on 126,000 seated and 31,000 standing, with the possibility of retro fitting seats. Some of the higher projections of 166,000 came from some options that created larger standing room areas to ensure adequate seating could be installed later. At that time Padey worked on a ratio of 2:1 standing spaces for each seat. Luke had strongly disagreed with Padey about private boxes which Luke had said would never come to Australia. In the end small boxes separated by low partitions were introduced, adopted after Luke's death. The viewing distance, sightlines and shallow bowl approach were based on Padey's research, including the Japanese work for the Tokyo Olympics. The basic standard adopted for the seating rake was 150mm above the head of a person two rows in front. (Padey, op. cit.).

The announcement incurred the immediate wrath of the MCC who used the press to voice their opposition. Percy Beams, who played cricket for Melbourne was prominent in his opposition. After it opened he criticised the size of dressing rooms despite their generous areas; they were later copies for the Great Southern Stand. This criticism reflected the vocal section of the community that wanted to kill the project. (ibid.)

1964-69
Full design and documentation was commenced by Meldrum and Partners and John Connell and Associates, structural engineers. The first section of the grandstand was designed to be const5ructed in several basic stages with the terraces and the lower section of the stands constructed first and the grandstand with cantilevered seating and roof constructed above, after the low level stand roof was removed. Concrete towers extending above the roof line with roof support cables replaced the earlier cantilevered roof design, without towers, shown in 1964. (John Connell and Associates "V.F.L. Park – Waverley football Stadium; the Association of Consulting Engineers Australia, 1978 Engineering Awards", submission brochure [Attachment Four]). Exposed encircling full height access ramps remained dominant features of the design, however. (Padey archives). Concrete blockwork was chosen not only for the 1960s aesthetic, but to avoid the problem of brick growth inherent in such a large structure, and minimise wall thickness, using 150mm blocks in lieu of 250mm for brick thickness. (Padey, op. cit.).

L.T. Frazer designed the initial civil works, and Scott and Furphy undertook later stages. (ibid.).

1964
The first relocation of VFL teams from traditional home grounds occurred. St Kilda moved from Junction Oval to Moorabbin. This was the commencement of a process of rationalisation with Waverley Park as a key element, which eventually lead to most clubs moving from traditional local grounds. Waverley became a home ground for two clubs. (Bob Stewart, The Australian Football Business, Kangaroo Press, 1983, p 97).

1960s-70s
Architecture in Australia came under the influence of "British Brutalism". Reinforced concrete elements angled to represent structural and functional requirements became strong stylistic elements. In Melbourne, the architecture of Graeme Gunn, Kevin Borland, Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker provided some of the best examples of the genre. (Philip Goad, A Guide to Melbourne Architecture, The Watermark Press, 1999, loc. cit).

1966
The commencement of construction at VFL Park was started with Sir Kenneth Luke turning the first sod on 5 January, with oval grading and infrastructure works undertaken over the next two years. 289,170 cubic metres of soil and clay were reformed and compacted to create the sunken oval approximately 9 metres below natural ground level. This was an innovative and key feature of the design, which enabled a mid-level entry above terraces. (1989 AFL Year Book, p 143). The formation of the terraces and oval was facilitated by a 5 metre cross fall. The cut and fill involved most of the cut soil being used to form the terraces, with the balance to form the dam for the irrigation system. (Padey op. cit.)

The Department of Transport planned construction of a train line alongside VFL Park at this time, with a tunnel through the hill next to the park to avoid creating a traffic barrier. Further planning work was then suspended. The VFL were not given any reason for this. (ibid.). It is possible that this could have been the result of early anti VFL Park lobbying of Bolte by the MCG, certainly it is consistent with the 1972 view of the Transport Minister.

1968
The first four contracts covered site and civil works. Drainage works were undertaken for the oval with 170mm of

screenings covered by 220mm of soil. The oval was formed with a 600mm fall from the centre. All drainage was connected to the large dam and recycled to avoid any reliance on MMBW water supply. (ibid.). Documentation was completed of the lower level seating (terraces) and members' enclosure, for Contract 5 of the works. (Reg Padey archives).

1969
Completion of the embankment surrounding the sunken oval and terraces with stepped concrete 600mm deep, and foundations for the first stage of the stands poured. (1989 AFL Year Book, loc. cit.).

The design was still based on original design for a continuous covered grandstand with 88 structural bays, each with its own tower. The partially constructed K.G. Luke stand was built, (Contract 5), and roofed in the same design as the current lower public stands. It was designed to be unbolted to accommodate the construction of the high stand. The first sections of the public stands were constructed, bays S14-S22. The public stands were designed to have the high stand constructed behind them, and were constructed sequentially over the next three years. (City of Waverley building plans).

1970
Stages 1 and 2 of the ground were sufficiently completed for the first match to be played in April, although two years behind schedule. Geelong defeated Fitzroy before a crowd of 25,887. An official opening was performed by the Governor, Sir Rohan Delacombe. The ground had a capacity of 46,500 with a substantial proportion being standing room, and one match attracted 55,000. (1989 AFL Year Book, loc. cit.; Hay, Haig-Muir and Mewett, op. cit.). Expansion plans for the 1971 season were announced. (VFL Press Release 11 August 1970). The opening season was marred by traffic jams and criticism from opponents to the VFL plans. (Hay, Haig-Muir and Mewett, op. cit.).

1971
New public stands and extensions to the members stand completed. The first private boxes were added to the first stage of the members' stand. The capacity of the ground was expanded to hold 69,500, with outer ground and public reserve seating 25,000 and members reserve seating 17,000, with the balance of capacity from 27,500 standing room places. The mixed reception to the new ground continued. Some sports writers, such as Jack Cannon wrote, "Waverley's a Beat!", which contrasted with many complaints from other journalists; traditionalist diehards used traffic and weather issues to promote their opposition to the ground. (Jack Cannon the Herald, 15 April 1971). The death of VFL President Sir Kenneth Luke represented the end of the initial visionary era that established VFL Park, the absence of Luke's strong political clout, and the beginning of pressure to contain the project. (1989 AFL Year Book, loc. cit.).

1972
The first final series were played at VFL Park with further traffic chaos. There was renewed criticism regarding the financial drain of the project on smaller clubs, access issues, lack of intimacy of the ground, and a higher incidence of inclement weather than traditional venues. Such opposition by traditional home ground supporters created many critical colloquial expressions, such as the "rain belt" location and the title "Arctic Park". In fact, a major reason the ground was cold was because of the incomplete stands and the exposed hill top location. The League strongly defended VFL Park in the face of this criticism.

Premier Henry Bolte, an MCC trustee, made a major political attack on VFL Park when he stated that the Grand Finals must remain at the MCG. His Transport Minister, Mr. Vernon Wilcox followed up with a statement that Waverley Park had big problems and could not ho9pe to cope with the mass movement of people. He said that it would be 10-15 years before a rail link was provided near the park, despite earlier promises to Monash University and the VFL. At the same time that VFL Park was subject to such powerful political opposition, it was further disadvantaged because it did not receive any direct or indirect government funding. (The Age, 24 May 1972).

The documentation of the first section of the main grandstand, or high stand, was commenced to serve as the Members Stand, called the K.G. Luke Stand. It was designed with facilities of a standard not found at other grounds at this time. It also embodied various features that were not found on later stadia. It comprised 16 structural bays, 10 metres each. This was 18% of the proposed 88 bay upper level grandstand.

The design was altered from 1969 drawings with respect to external facade and entry ramps. The 3 metre wide ramps which serve the full height of the stand had to be changed to be cranked with a flat landing every 12 metres, rather than being in one alignment. This was because of building regulation requirements related to disable access that exceeded overseas practice for such structures. The external wall was constructed to provide

protection from wind. This prevented the seating plats being expressed from the exterior. (Padey op. cit.).

The high stand had seating and function rooms, and dining rooms for 12,000 patrons. (John Connell and Associates, 1978 Engineering Awards submission brochure, op. cit.) The infrastructure was designed on a grand scale. There is a police station for 300 officers, huge equipment stores. Mobile food transporters used the ramps to take vast quantities of food to the upper levels of the high stand.

The structural design of the high stand represented the limit to the capacity of reinforced concrete construction. (John Connell, op. cit.). The seating cantilevers were post-tensioned in situ concrete. The seating plats, or decks, were precast prestressed concrete spanning the main frames. The structural steel was suspended roof from concrete towers with under-slung sheeting for a clean appearance and prevention of bird fouling. Importantly, this roof was a pioneering design for Australia and was wind tunnel tested by professor W.H. Melbourne of Monash University. (John Connell and Associates, 1978 Engineering Awards submission brochure, op. cit.).

1973
Documentation of the high stand and associated works were completed and Reg Padey left Meldrum Burrows and Partners to commence private practice. (Padey, op. cit.).

Meldrum Burrows and Partners administered the contract, and designed the electrical engineering services. Mechanical engineering services were provided by Rankine and Hill Pty Ltd. Jennings Industries Limited were the building contractors. The high stand cost $4.5 million. (John Connell and Associates, 1978 Engineering Awards submission brochure, op. cit.).

1974
The financial pressure of the construction of VFL Park and the short nine year loan period led to lobbying from a number of League clubs to put a limit on the future expansion of the ground. The grand vision for 157,000 spectators was now under a strong and prolonged attack both from inside and outside league football. (Ben Hills, Peter McFarline, “The gnomes of VFL House”, Insight Report, The Age, 27 May 1974).

1975
The high stand, the Sir Kenneth Luke Stand, was occupied for the finals, in an incomplete state. (ibid.).

1976
The contract for the high stand was completed at the end of the year, and the design and documentation of the light towers by Meldrum'' engineers were completed. (Padey archives). This marked the end of major works at the ground, after ten years of construction. The ground was now seating only, with a capacity for members of 18,000, and 58,000 for the outer. This provided a total 76,000 with peak capacity of 85,000. An unofficial attendance was once over 100,000. (Padey, op. cit.).

1976-7
The VFL Park light towers were constructed. The four towers were of a very basic open web steel design, making no design concession to the advanced stadium design, and were too low for patron comfort. They were, however, the first giant light towers for regular night football competition, and were also used to usher in night cricket.

Moonee Valley grandstand was constructed with a seating capacity of 4,100. John Connell and Associates were the structural engineers. It had cantilevered concrete seating but the roof was supported with columns. (John Connell and Associates, “Grandstands” publicity brochure, n.d. but c 1978 [Attachment Five]).

1978
VFL Park won the national merit award from the Association of Consulting Engineers, Australia. The final size of a 150,000 seat stadium was still envisaged. (John Connell, pers. comm.)

Carlton Football Club grandstand was completed with a seating capacity of 5,000. It was designed by Reginald Padey and Associates, with John Connell and Associates as the structural engineers. It had cantilevered concrete seating and roof. The roof was based on the Waverley design, except that it had a warped plane because of the geometric requirements of a square site and an oval playing ground. The external walls were clad with sheet metal.

Flemington grandstand was constructed with a seating capacity of 6,000. John Connell and Associates were the structural engineers. It had cantilevered concrete seating and roof, but the roof structure was a heavy traditional

truss structure. The Singapore Turf Club grandstand was completed with John Connell as the structural consultants. It represented the only other known usage of the reinforced concrete scissors frame design of VFL Park. (John Connell and Associates “Grandstands” publicity brochure, op. cit.).

1979
VFL President Allen (Mick) Aylett said that VFL Park would be the only possible venue for the proposed 1988 Olympic Games bid, a claim strongly refuted by the MCC. (Herald?, 26 July 1979).

1980-82The VFL prepares plans for ground sharing and club rationalisation, including proposal for all major matches to be played at MCG or VFL Park because of capacity; South Melbourne moved to Sydney, a fore-runner to the national league.

1981
Padey documented 20 new super boxes and a V shaped video matrix screen, scoreboard and side panels. This involved the removal of roofing from several bays. The monochrome video matrix screen was relocated from City Square. Initial planning was undertaken by Padey for additions to seating. (Padey archive). Subsequently, plans were announced that the League was going to extend the stands and increase official capacity from 76,000 to 104,500. It was indicat4ed that this was going to be undertaken as cheaply as possible. Special funding, quarantined from the rest of the League’s finances, was to be obtained. This was to avoid putting additional pressure on struggling clubs. These funds were unavailable for the clubs and were earmarked to stage future Grand finals at the ground.

The plan involved the addition of a new deck of grandstand around the outer, which was aimed at providing a better crowd atmosphere by being more enclosed. It would also have provided 12,500 more non-members’ capacity than the MCG, and with all spectators being seated, at a time when the MCG still had a significant standing capacity. (VFL Press Release, “The future of VFL Park”, n.d. c August 1981). However, the ambitious dream of the original masterplan was now almost dead. There was a public outcry from traditionalists and supporters of the MCC against this proposal to increase the Waverley Park capacity.

An official VFL Park attendance record of 92,935 was set by the Collingwood v. Hawthorn match.

1982
Installation of the Video matrix screen was completed.

Reg Padey completed the documentation of the foreshadowed expansion to the ground in November. The design was for a total capacity to 104,500. The proposal was for the outer stands to be extended over the concourse in a manner that would prevent the construction of a high stand in the manner of the original design, with three seating tiers and the scissors frame. Thus the grand vision of 1964, which had endured through most of the 1970s, had been formally abandoned. Only six bays were to be added to the high stand as an extension to the Members Stand. (Padey archive).

Plans for expansion for 1984 Grand Final were soon thwarted by new state Labor government through its refusal to grant planning approval. The government was concerned that Melbourne was going to be a car dominated city and that there was a need to better utilise inner city infrastructure and transport. Consequently the State’s urban consolidation policy was established, aimed at containing suburban expansion. Subsequent VFL negotiations by Mick Aylett and Secretary Jack Hamilton almost overturned this rejection. The consultants kept on working until the project was ready for tendering. (Reg Padey, op. cit.)

1983
Unflattering comparisons were made by VFL Park detractors regarding train and tram clearances from the MCG, compared with VFL Park congestion. These criticisms overlooked parking limitations and egress difficulties at Yarra Park.

Not only was planning approval for the extensions blocked by the State Government, but the government also used its powers to prevent Grand Finals being played at VFL Park for ten years. The VFL lost about $1 million in fees spent on the expansion plans. (Allen Aylett and Greg Hobbs, My Game, Sun Books, 1986, pp 201-215). This date represented the end of plans for VFL Park to become Australia’s major football venue.

1984-6
The giant mosaic mural on the central external axis of the Members Stand was designed by Harold Freedman

and executed in mosaics by partner David Jack. 10.9 metres high and 4.8 metres wide, it cost in the order of $80,000-$90,000, and comprised 126,000 pieces. It represented the two best players of each club, as well as having some generic figures playing, one of whom was modelled on Dermot Brereton. Football was a beloved subject of Freedman, who loved painting the human figure. His 6 metre high cartoon was housed in the Members Stand. (David Jack, pers. comm., 7 February 2000).

1985
The first proposal was made for St Kilda to move to Waverley as home ground.

1982-8
East Melbourne and Richmond residents campaigned against increased use of the MCG for home and away matches, especially night matches.

John Cain introduced special powers to enable the construction of MCG light towers in the face of public and union protests, and planning for the new Southern Stand was commenced. (The author was a consultant to the City of Melbourne throughout most of this period; the City of Melbourne expressed grave concerns at the impact of expansion of the use of the MCG on the residential amenity of East Melbourne and Jolimont).

1987
St Kilda relocated to Waverley.

1988-91
The Great Southern Stand for the MCG was constructed to replace 1938 Southern Stand. The spectacular design by Daryl Jackson inherited the limitations of the stadium, with ground level access requiring steep seating and septs. New fire engineering codes allowed exposed steel construction that helped create a dynamic structural design. At the same time the National Tennis Centre at Flinders Park, designed by Philip Cox, was also under construction ending the historic role of Kooyong as a major venue. Both projects were part of Melbourne's failed 1996 Olympic bid. Connell Wagner were structural engineers for both projects.

1989
The Victorian Football League became the Australian Football League, in recognition of the importance of interstate clubs. Waverley Park was adopted as the new name for VFL Park.

1990
Hawthorn moved to Waverley Park. The 1996 Melbourne Olympic bid, with venues at Docklands, was lost.

1991
Padey designed more super boxes for Waverley Park. (Padey archives)). The only Waverley Park Grand Final, when Hawthorn defeated the West Coast Eagles, was played at the ground. This was due to the impact of the construction works for the Great Southern Stand at the MCG. The entry to the club rooms was designed by architect Justin Madden, famed footballer and later politician. (Reg Padey, op. cit.). The design pays reference to Padey's roof with support towers, and represents the only significant element not designed by Padey, other than the light towers.

1992
The new Liberal government accelerated Labor initiatives that concentrated development on the inner city area, some heavily financed from state resources, or gambling licence revenue. The Grand Prix track, Tennis Centre expansion, Docklands, City Link, Museum of Victoria, Exhibition Centre and Federation Square became symbols of the city-focussed Kennett government.

1994
Sydney won the 2000 Olympic bid. John Elliot calls for Waverley Park to be bulldozed in order to promote his Carlton ground at Princes Park, "Optus Oval".

1995
The AFL discusses abandoning Waverley Park.

1997
The Docklands stadium deal was finalised between the state government and AFL. The proposal was unpopular with many traditional football supporters. This was because it was planned to have a capacity of 52,000

compared with the larger capacity of Waverley Park and the MCG. In addition there was to be a higher percentage of corporate boxes, further limiting public seating, a major issue for finals matches. The tradition of unreserved seating for home and away matches would also be lost. The removable roof and the possibility of the introduction of synthetic turf were seen as further threats to football traditions.

The stadium was regarded by some commentators as an expedient means for the state government to pump prime the faltering Docklands project.

1999
The election of a Labor government followed a Labor promise to try to retain Waverley Park. This support contrasted with the policies of previous Liberal land Labor governments that directly or indirectly acted to limit Waverley's development. The lack of financial and infrastructure support for Waverley in the face of such support to rival venues were perhaps the greatest negative factors in its history.

2000
The City of Melbourne announces that the agreement for the use of Yarra Park for car parking will not be renewed because of the adverse impact on the historic parkland. The issues of traffic congestion and car parking for the central city sporting infrastructure emerge at the same time as the opening of new venues.

Biographical notes

Reg Padey

Reginald Padey was born in 1927 and educated at the Melbourne Technical College.

He attended the evening Atelier at Melbourne University in 1948. At the same time he worked in architect's offices. His first employment was with David Rivett, the designer of the renowned modernist flats in Tahara Road, Toorak, which were being constructed at this time.

He then worked for Marcus Barlow, the prominent and well regarded architect of the Manchester Unity Building. His next job was with Mussen, Mackay and Potter, when this firm entered the Olympic Games venue competition. He worked with another noted architect Don Fulton, who was documenting Roy Ground's projects at this time. He was fortunate to train with such illustrious architects. They would have been influential in Padey's commitment to "simplicity and structural expression" in architectural design.

After he became registered in 1952, he joined Meldrum and Partners. He became office manager in 1954, and associate in 1957, and partner in 1960. His aspiration to enter private practice was put on hold because of the Waverley project. It is clear that Padey's involvement with Waverley was critical to the overall advanced concept. It is obvious that such a large job would have required the resources of a large office such as Meldrums. Waverley was the biggest project in Padey's career. He left Meldrums as soon as documentation was completed in 1973. He established his own practice, Reginald Padey and Associates. His experience with grandstands led to the VFL commissioning him to design the new stand at Carlton in 1976. This design enabled him to design a warped plane cantilever roofed stand at Carlton. This was obviously strongly influenced by the Ullevi stadium at Gothenberg. He was then commissioned to undertake further work at Waverley Park and other projects for the VFL. He gave up private practice in the mid-1990s, coincidently at the same time that the decision was made to abandon Waverley Park.

Padey was a keen football player in his younger days, and even trained with Richmond for a period.

John Connell

John Connell and Associates was a small practice in the 1960s when commissioned for VFL Park. It grew rapidly during the 1960s to become the major engineering firm in the state. The firm has subsequently undertaken the structural design for most of the major stadia in Melbourne.

The firm joined with a US firm to be titled Connell Wagner in the mid-1980s. John Connell gradually retired in the 1990s.

Stadia now form an important part of the practice and provide some of the most interesting design challenges.

Sir Kenneth Luke and Eric McCutchan

Sir Kenneth Luke was a successful self-made businessman whose metal founders and fabricators K.G. Luke Industries stamped silverware, medals, possibly including Olympic medals and made washing machines. He was frequently at odds with Melbourne's "establishment". He was President of the Carlton Football Club for many years before he became VFL Vice President and then President in 1956. He was on the committee of the Royal Agricultural Society, and was an Exhibition Building trustee. He died in 1971.

Eric McCutchan was long serving Secretary of the VFL until Jack Hamilton took over. He formed a close working association with Luke. The social history by Hay et al. al. provides more references. (Padey, op. cit.).

Meldrum and Partners

Meldrum and Partners, later Meldrum Burrows and Partners, are best known for their competent but conventional commercial work at this period. Waverley Park clearly stands out from the rest of work of the practice in Melbourne. Their Middle East and other overseas offices in the 1970s, by comparison, often did work of a more international design standard.

Percy Meldrum had a distinguished partnership with Arthur Stephenson, which included many fine residential projects in Toorak, as well as the Royal Melbourne Hospital, with Meldrum as the design partner. Percy was still in charge when Padey joined the practice in 1952. The practice then had only about 10 staff, but later grew to about 100. Son Richard took over in the 1950s and was a prominent figure, and to some a difficult figure. He had a period on the council of the City of Melbourne including a term as Lord Mayor.

The company reduced size rapidly due to financial pressures in the early 1990s including the retirement of Richard Meldrum. It is now an entirely new firm run by his sons, and operates as Meldrum Partners.
Associated People: Sir Kenneth Luke

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion Waverley Park is a place with unusually rich and varied cultural values.

They meet Criterions A, B, C, D, E, F, and G for the assessment of cultural heritage significance by Heritage Victoria.

Criterion A
The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.
It played a key role in one of Victoria's rich sporting history and Australian Rules football in particular.

Criterion B
The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.
The only venue in Victoria, the home of Australian Rules football, designed specifically for the game.

Criterion C
The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.
The place has a didactic role related to the design of the building both in engineering terms, and stadium design, as well as Australia's sporting history.

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.
It demonstrates a combination of innovative stadium design features not found elsewhere in Victoria and is an excellent example of stadium design.

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 high stand demonstrates an excellent and relatively intact of Brutalism, and is an early example of this style and is of a large scale, with a richness of design features.

Criterion F
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.
Demonstrates engineering and stadium design innovations, including being designed as the second largest stadium in the world and the "best stadium on earth".

Criterion G
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.
For its role in the development of Australia's only national game, for its controversial history in the sporting world, including the introduction of World Series Cricket.

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

Extent of Registration

[NOTE: This revised extent of registration was adopted by Heritage Council June 2003. The Council directed the Executive Director to gazette the amendment to the registration progressively as subdivision plans are approved and as titles are about to be issued.]

1. All of the place shown L1 (oval and part of Sir Kenneth Luke stand including Harold Freedman mural), and L2 (modified lake) on Diagram 1883 *[revised]* held by the Executive Director.

[The following former gazetted extent of registration will remain in force until individual parcels are removed from the Register by gazettal. For the exact status of registered land at any point in time please contact Heritage Victoria.]

1. All the building known as Waverley Park and shown B1 on Diagram 1883 *[original]* held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1883 *[original]* held by the Executive Director.