

**EDINBURGH GARDENS
LANDSCAPE STUDY**

**Prepared for the
CITY OF FITZROY**

**LANDFORM AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Landscape Planning and Conservation Consultants**

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Plate 1 From an infra-red aerial photograph of the Edinburgh Gardens and its surrounding area taken c. 1977. This was prior to removal of the railway and the redevelopment of the Oval.

INTRODUCTION

As the only substantial area of parkland in Fitzroy, the Edinburgh Gardens deserve particular care. This has not always been the case in the past, and in fact the Gardens have a long history of abuse and alienation of land to other purposes of which the worst episode was sub-division for the State Railways in the late 1880s. Now that the railway has at last been removed, the City is presented with a golden opportunity to reverse this decline and restore the Gardens to their proper role as a well integrated and attractive inner city park serving the passive and active recreation needs of the local community. That is the central theme of this report. In due course the industrial land which intrudes on the Gardens will also be converted back into parkland.

Fitzroy is very much aware of its history, although the background of the Edinburgh Gardens has to date been somewhat obscure. The brief for this landscape study was strongly oriented to conservation, which meant that sufficient research had to be done to clarify the sequence of development of the Gardens with a view to determining the significant features and guiding future work. Without doubt, the best feature of the Gardens today is the canopy of mature exotic trees that dates in large part from the late nineteenth century. These trees are mostly planted in avenues along the path system of slightly earlier date which links to the surrounding streets and perpetuates the through-passage needs of the pedestrians of that era. Paths and trees provide the basic design and structure of the park which, although pragmatic in origin and essentially uninspired, are characteristic of many of the simpler town parks of its period and well worth preserving.

The sports ground in the south-west corner of the park (formerly the Cricket Ground and now redeveloped as the Community Oval) dates from the 1860s and in fact predates by several years the effort to develop the remainder of the park as a decorative public garden. The passive and active recreational uses of the park have always existed side by side. Fitzroy has carried out an extensive program of improvements to the Community Oval and its facilities in recent years and the area has been agreed to be substantially outside the scope of the present study.

It was accepted at the outset that large amounts of development funding are unlikely to be available, so that the consultant's recommendations for improvements to the Gardens were required to be correspondingly modest. The basic structure of the park has been respected and the established patterns of recreational use have been accepted. The recommendations can be viewed as the minimal improvements in design and management needed to make the park work properly in its present combination of roles, while upgrading its horticultural presentation to an acceptable level and conserving its best features for the future.

The report is designed to be easy to use. All the more important recommendations are summarized in Section 1 and references are provided to the appropriate sub-sections of the text. The more detailed recommendations are summarized at the end of each sub-section. A Master Plan is reproduced at a reduced scale at the end of the report. As a matter of convenience, the research notes on the history of the Gardens have been set apart as an appendix.

Grateful thanks must be expressed to the councillors and staff of the City of Fitzroy for their encouragement and help, and in particular to Cr. Margaret Righton, Mike Simpson, Director of Technical Services, and Ian Laurens, Superintendent of the Parks and Gardens Department. Members of the Fitzroy Open Space Advisory Committee provided valuable comments during preparation of the report and their contribution is acknowledged with thanks. A debt is owed to Frank Keenan O.B.E. and to John Neylan of the T.R.A.I. whose suggestions on horticultural and turf matters, respectively, were of much value.

Rex Swanson

Landform Australia Pty Ltd
39 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

1.0 SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) A program to reduce the clutter and restore the usable open space and scenic quality of the north-central section of the Gardens, reversing the harmful effects of railways occupation. This would involve:
 - Properly absorbing the old railway line back into the Gardens after relocating the bicycle path onto the existing path to the east. (See Section 2.1)
 - Demolition of the unused plant nursery facilities. (See Sections 2.1 and 3.1)
 - Eventual demolition of the house and relocation of the parks depot out of the Gardens. (See Sections 2.1 and 3.1)
 - Expansion and improvement of the Primary School play area. (See Sections 2.1 and 3.7)
 - Removal of the Ladies' Bowling Club facilities. Amalgamation of the two clubs to be considered. (See Sections 2.1 and 3.3)
 - Removal of the derelict fenced enclosures formerly used for floral displays. (See Section 4.3)
 - Some additional planting and the possible development of the central section with a small lake. (See Section 2.1 and 4.6)
- ii) A program to redevelop as parkland the National Can and Canterbury Timber sites, which were formerly a part of the Gardens, when this land becomes available. (See Section 2.2)
- iii) A program to develop the Bunge, Canterbury Timber and Martin sites as a future community sports and recreation centre if this land can be obtained. (See Section 2.3)
- iv) A basic tree maintenance program. (See Section 4.1)
- v) Improved standards of turf maintenance and irrigation. (See Section 4.2)
- vi) Improvements to the St Georges Road / Brunswick Street frontage, especially as regards the appearance of the Bowling Club. (See Sections 3.2, 4.3 and 4.6)
- vii) A tree planting scheme to improve the Alfred Crescent frontage. (See Sections 4.1 and 4.6)

2.0 PARKS AND RECREATION POTENTIAL OF RAILWAY LAND

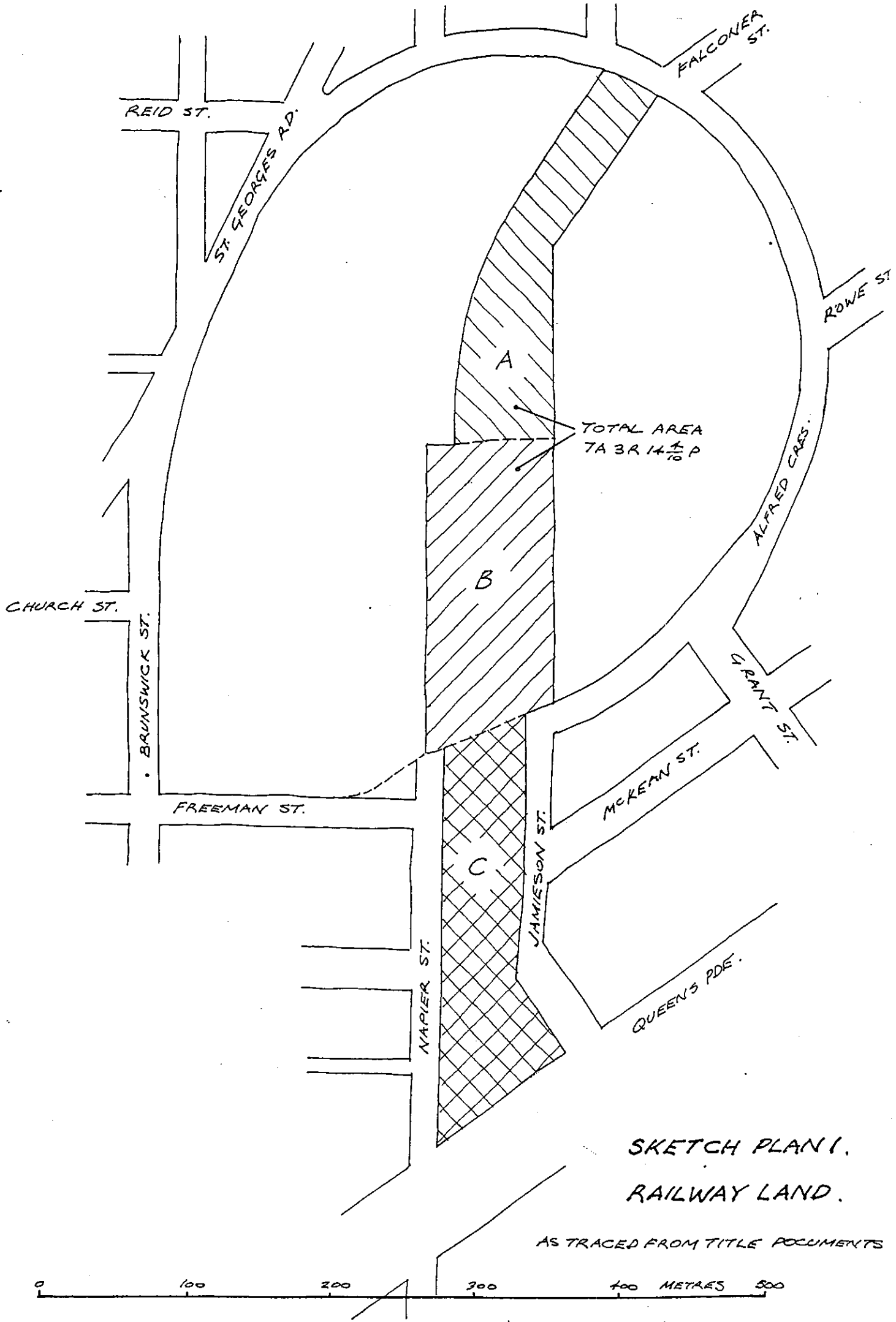
Construction of the railway branch line in 1888 was a calamity for the Edinburgh Gardens far greater than the mere loss of 8 acres of land, for not only did it sever the park into two less attractive and less useful halves (kept separate by tracks, fencing and hedges) but it destroyed most of the open space and recreational potential of the quietest and most secluded central portion of the grounds. The Gardens were invaded by noisy, grimy locomotives and rolling stock. The area excised from the southern end of the grounds became the site for railway station structures, dusty sidings and industry, the descendants of which still occupy the site today. These developments undoubtedly contributed to the decay of the surrounding residential area and would have led to a devaluation in general public appreciation of the park which seems to have slipped, at least in parts, to the status of public land suitable as a site for Council depots and other unattractively designed facilities.

Construction of the railway would have limited and distorted the improvement and planting program initiated by the Council and the Lands Department in 1883. After 1888 much attention seems to have been given to screen planting the railway fences and modifying the path system. It is a matter for conjecture what might have been done to improve the central portion of the grounds had the railway not been built. Improvements in other old Melbourne parks suggest that a decorative lake (Treasury Gardens, Carlton Gardens, Queen Victoria Gardens) or woodland area (Fitzroy Gardens) might have been developed.

The enormous potential for upgrading the Gardens once the railway was removed seems not to have been considered or evaluated in the Fitzroy Landscape Study of 1979. It is appropriate to do so here.

The railway land is considered below in three parts. (See Sketch Plan 1.) *Parts A and B were originally part of the Gardens and were owned jointly by Fitzroy and the Government under crown grants issued in 1882 and 1883. They were transferred to the Railways in 1888.* (This form of title is unusual. Most of the old Melbourne parks were not the subject of crown grants and have remained crown land, whereas the balance of the Edinburgh Gardens persists today in joint ownership under the original crown grants.) The Railway Line Working Party Report of 1986 recommends the eventual redevelopment of this land as open space, with transfer of ownership from the State Transport Authority to the Ministry of Conservation, Forests and Lands, apparently in the mistaken belief that it was crown land at the time of its transfer to the Railways as was probably the case with Royal Park. *It seems appropriate that Fitzroy should insist on recovering its former joint ownership of this land.*

Part C was never part of the Gardens, being private property and public road at the time of its resumption for the Railways. The Working Party Report recommends that the northern section be transferred to the Ministry of Housing for redevelopment as public housing, and that the southern section be sold off to industry. Fitzroy Council is opposed to this proposal and wishes to see the land redeveloped for parkland, community and recreational uses as an extension to the Gardens. The potential of this land for these uses is considered below.



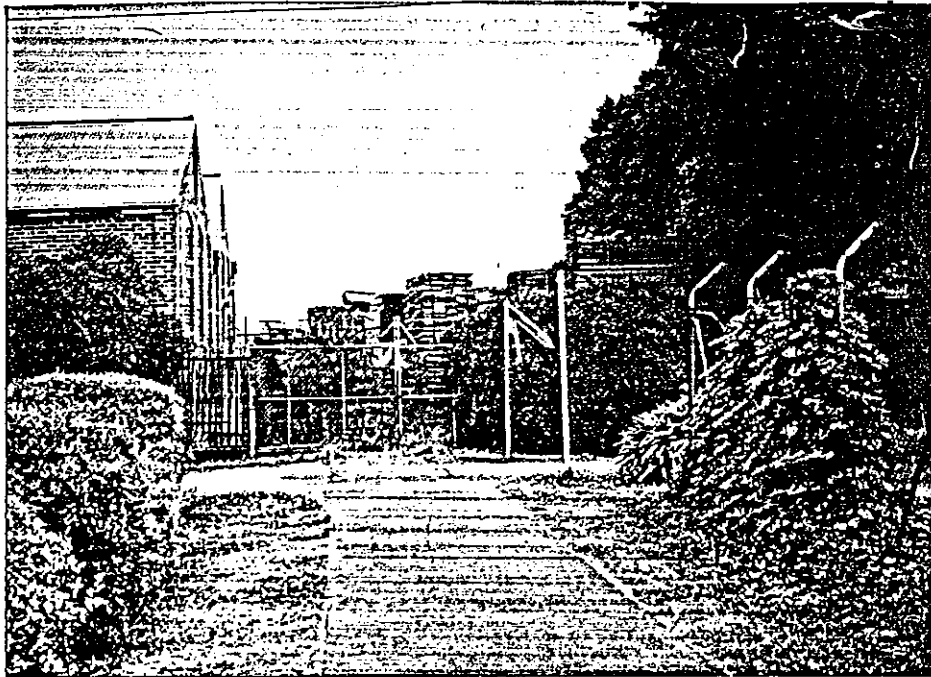
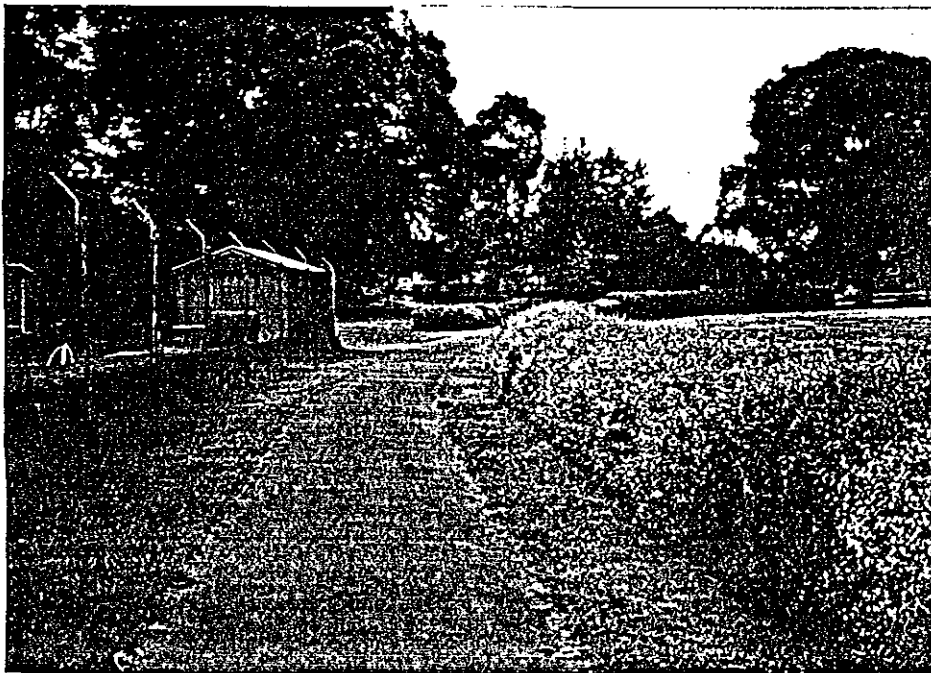


Plate 2 The former railway track, now paved as a little-used pathway for cyclists and pedestrians, terminates at the National Can and Canterbury Timber sites. These industrial sites occupy land that was originally part of the Gardens.
Plate 3 Looking north along the former railway track. The unsightly fences and structures of the Ladies' Bowling Club compromise the amenity of this important central area. Sections of privet hedge remain from railway days.



2.1 FORMER RAILWAY TRACK IN GARDENS (PART A)

The Working Party Report recommends that this land be developed as open space, but it has, in effect, already been incorporated back into the Gardens by informal agreement with the State Transport Authority. The Railways initially fenced off only a portion of the two chain wide reserve given to them in 1888 and the remaining land continued as parkland. In 1937 the fenced area was further reduced in width, by agreement between Fitzroy and the Railways, and the excess land was incorporated in the park. After the railway track was taken up in 1981(?) the subsequent redevelopment by the City was tentative - just a general clean-up, establishment of grass, and asphalt over the ballast for a new pedestrian/bicycle path. No trees have been planted. Ragged sections of the old privet hedge remain.

North of Alfred Crescent a path has been built along the old railway easement as far as Apperley Street. It is intended that this connection will eventually be improved as a landscaped pedestrian and cycle link between the Edinburgh Gardens and the strip of parkland connecting Royal Park and the Merri Creek.

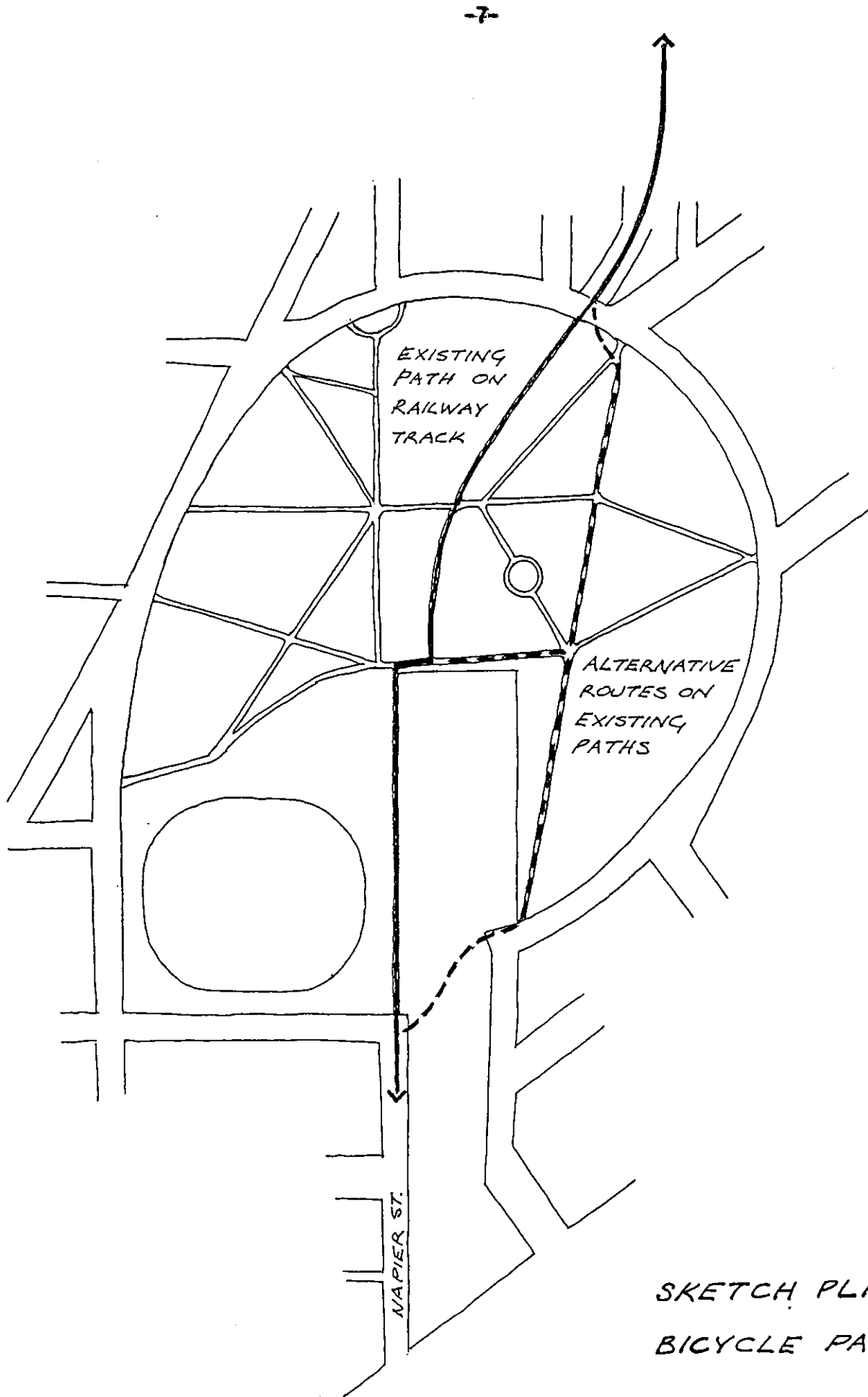
Within the Gardens the new path follows the sweeping reverse curve of the railway line which was excavated somewhat below natural surface levels and with a wide drainage swale down both sides. The path crosses Alfred Crescent at the railway crossing, which remains as a traffic hump. Two additional paths enter the park close to this point, producing a situation where one path is certainly superfluous and could be removed. The steam era is memorialized in the fine locomotive which has been set up for children's play nearby.

The opportunity should be taken to improve this section of the park by restoring its open space character to the pre-railway situation. Basic works to achieve this would involve relocating the bicycle route across to the existing path to the east (as shown on Sketch Plan 2) so that the bicycle path can be removed and the area filled to restore natural contours.

The possibilities for upgrading this area would be greatly enhanced if the parks depot (including the nursery and residence) and the Ladies' Bowling Club were relocated as recommended in Sections 3.1 and 3.3. Further improvements could include an enlarged school play area taking in the existing depot site. (The extra play area would be desirable in itself but it would also reduce the level of wear and tear on the turf which is at present quite acute.) To the south, the central section of the Gardens between the two main east west paths and the two main north-south paths could be redeveloped as a landscape focus for the whole park. As noted in Section 4.6, a lake would be an appropriate feature for this area. Replanting here should include advanced trees for the various gaps in the elm avenues along the main paths.

Recommendations:

- i) Relocation of the bicycle route (see Sketch Plan 2); removal of the railway path; filling and grading to natural contours; turfing and installation of sprinklers.
- ii) Removal of the depot, plant nursery and residence. (See Section 3.1)
- iii) Redevelopment of this area as parkland with an enlarged play area for the primary school.
- iv) Removal of the Ladies' Bowling Club. (See Section 3.3)
- v) Redevelopment of this area with a decorative lake or other landscape feature as the central focus for the Gardens. (See Section 4.6)
- vi) Replanting advanced elms to fill the gaps along the main paths.



SKETCH PLAN 2.
BICYCLE PATH.

2.2 INDUSTRIAL LAND IN GARDENS (PART B)

The Railway Land Working Party Report recommends that this area of about 4.2 acres (1.8 hectares) which was part of the Gardens prior to 1888, be redeveloped as open space. It is presently held under lease from the State Transport Authority as follows:

	<u>Lessee</u>	<u>Lease (per RLWPR)</u>	<u>Use</u>
West side	Canterbury Timber	30 year term Expires in 2002	Timber reprocessing and storage
Central section	Canterbury Timber	Believed to expire in 2002	Timber storage
East side	National Can	50 year term Expires 2021	Can manufacture and used can collection

The Working Party Report recommends that all industrial leases on railway land be allowed to run their full course. Disappointingly, *Fitzroy will have to wait 15 and 34 years, respectively, before these sites become available for redevelopment as parkland*, unless the funds can be found to buy out the lessees. In the meantime, neither of these industries is appropriate in contiguity with public parkland. National Can presents a reasonably neat exterior to the park, but it generates noise audible for a considerable distance as well as unpleasant paint fumes from time to time. Canterbury Timber is untidy to outward appearance as well as noisy when timber is processed. Both factories draw heavy transports to the area.

The beneficiary of this situation is the State Transport Authority which earns a rental income by leasing former parkland. It seems extraordinary that land resumed for a railway from crown granted public parkland should be tied up for such a length of time in industrial use after the railway has ceased to function. *Legal matters are beyond the scope of this study and it is suggested that the City of Fitzroy seek appropriate legal advice. There may, for example, be a case for the City to claim a joint share in the rental income over the life of these leases.*

It is sufficient for the purposes of this report to note that the land will become available for incorporation in the park at some later date, with the Canterbury Timbers site probably becoming available first. External examination of the structures indicates that it would not be appropriate to retain any of them for recreational purposes. It is recommended that the land be cleared for redevelopment as open space. The most desirable open space development should be assessed at a future date a few years in advance of hand-over of the National can site. One possible use could be as an additional sports ground for local schools.

Recommendations, phase one development, for the Canterbury Timber site:

- i) Demolition, clearing, filling and grading; establishment of turf cover and installation of an automatic sprinkler system.
- ii) Replanting of avenue trees along the main north south walk beside the Community Oval (where the avenue was removed in 1937). Thinning and clean up of the elms beside the tennis courts. Planting trees in peripheral areas.
- iii) Construction of a connection between Freeman Street and Alfred Crescent (either a pedestrian/cycle path or a local-traffic-only street, depending on local needs).

Recommendations, phase two development, for the National can site:

- i) Demolition, clearing, filling and grading to establish levels; establishment of turf cover and installation of an automatic sprinkler system.
- ii) Planting trees along the walks and in peripheral areas.
- iii) Redevelopment of the combined areas for active or passive recreation as necessary.



Plate 4 The former railway yard looking north past the pedestrian overpass to the Canterbury Timber and National Can sites. The area north of the overpass was resumed from the Gardens for Railway's use in 1888.

Plate 5 The former SEC briquette shed, now used as a timber store. If acquired, this building and the adjacent property would have potential for redevelopment as a sports and recreation centre set in a parkland extension of the Gardens.



2.3 INDUSTRIAL LAND BETWEEN GARDENS AND QUEENS ROAD (PART C)

This site covers about 3.5 acres (1.4 hectares) of the former station and siding and was never part of the Gardens. The Railway Land Working Party Report recommends transfer of the northern section to the Ministry of Housing for development of public housing, and continuation of the present industrial use and zoning at the southern end with eventual sale to private owners. Development for housing would involve removal of the railway footbridge. The land is presently held under lease from the State Transport Authority as follows:

	<u>Lessee</u>	<u>Lease (Per RLWPR)</u>	<u>Use</u>
West side (old briquette shed)	Canterbury Timber	30 year term Expires 2002	Timber storage
Central	Bunge Australia	12 year term Expires 1993	Warehousing
S-E corner	Martin & Co	Expires 1991	Hardware retailing

Much of the land around the buildings is derelict and dusty former railway siding which appears not to be subject to leasehold occupation. Some of this area is used for vehicular access and parking.

The principal improvements on the site are the former SEC briquette shed and the Bunge store. These buildings would have some potential for conversion for use as sports and recreation halls if the land were to be developed as a community sports and recreation centre. Internal clear spans and clear heights are the principal limiting factors.

The briquette shed has a clear span of 17.1 metres reducing to 16.2 at the southern end. Its clear height appears to be about 7.5 metres which is significantly less than the 9.1 metres needed for tennis, badminton, etc. at the level of international competition. Nevertheless, the building's dimensions would be sufficient for a sports hall containing two basketball courts to a recreational standard suitable for schools use, two tennis courts (after minor structural alterations) and areas for badminton, table tennis, gymnasium practice, etc. plus changing room and club room facilities. The building has a heavy timber frame construction that appears on brief examination to be in fair condition, but sections of the corrugated iron wall and roof cladding are in poor shape. Minimal improvements for use as a very basic sports hall would have to include concrete flooring with appropriate surfacing, repairs to wall and roof cladding, cladding of open wall areas, painting, lighting and internal fitting out. The building would probably be impossible to heat. Externally, the building is unattractive and its considerable bulk dominates the adjacent residential streets. Not much can be done to ameliorate this, although a decent paint job and a thicker belt of trees along Napier Street would help. The roadway in Napier Street could be made narrower to allow for additional landscaping.

The Bunge store is a good quality, modern, steel framed structure that appears to have an internal clear span of about 12 metres. This limits its potential to use as a recreation hall for badminton, table tennis, squash, bowls, archery, cricket nets, gymnasium practice, etc. plus changing room and club room facilities. Minimal improvements would have to include appropriate floor surfacing, lighting and fitting out.

The remaining land around the buildings would be suitable for development as recreational open space that could include a variety of facilities such as cricket nets, tennis courts, basketball courts, a children's playground, a barbecue area and adequate off street parking. A landscaped path system could link the Queens Parade frontage through to the southern end of the Gardens.

If this project were to proceed, it would be appropriate to reconsider the possibility of improved pedestrian access across Queens parade on the Napier Street alignment and, further south, a fly-over across Alexandra Parade. These have been considered in the past in the context of improvements to Napier Street as a pedestrian priority zone.

Recommendations:

- i) Further examination of the possibility of acquiring this site.
- ii) Further study of the capabilities of the site and buildings for redevelopment as a community sports and recreation centre set in a parkland.
- 11) Examination of the possibilities for improved pedestrian access across Queens Parade and Alexandra Parade on the Napier Street alignment.

3.0 COMMENTARY ON RECREATIONAL AND SERVICE FACILITIES

3.1 PARKS DEPOT, PLANT NURSERY & SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE

This service area is a most inappropriate use of prime parkland and has an adverse impact on the Gardens far greater than its area of about one acre would suggest. It occupies a prominent location in the well frequented north-central section of the Gardens that could otherwise be valuable open space. The complex appears to have grown over many years as a convenient adjunct to the original gardener's cottage that was built in the 1870s directly behind the present house. The railway easement formed its boundary on the eastern side until recent years. The boundary fences of chain wire mesh are an eyesore and have not been properly screen planted, allowing views to the stored machinery and untidy structures within. Most of the glasshouses and shadehouses are in need of extensive repair and the plants they contain are mostly pot-bound and degenerating. Because the depot serves the parks and street tree needs of all Fitzroy it draws a flow of council and employee vehicles in and out of the park. These pass beside the children's playground and pose a potential danger to the public. Lastly in this list of obvious problems, the depot confines the North Fitzroy Primary School play area with the result that the turf there is severely overstressed.

The area has served a number of functions:

- A parks depot with staff car parking, facilities for vehicle and equipment storage, maintenance workshop, administration office, staff change room and lunch room.
- Accommodation for the Parks Superintendent in an area where his presence would enhance security.
- A plant nursery with areas for growing on street trees to planting out size, plant propagating facilities for raising bedding plants to planting out size, and glasshouse and shadehouse facilities for the cultivation and display of potted plants.

The Superintendent has explained that plant raising activities have been more or less abandoned since the early 1970s when Council directed that the extensive displays of bedded flowers along Rushall Crescent, Alexandra Parade and in the Edinburgh Gardens should be curtailed in favour of increased efforts on street improvements over a wider area. At about the same time Council ceased to hold the traditional June mayoral ball which was the principal use for the extensive reserve of palms and other potted plants. Public open house displays of the glasshouses and shadehouses were subsequently abandoned. Some limited recent use has been made of the nursery beds for growing on smaller purchased plants and other trees to a modest size. We suggest that this is an uneconomic activity. Experience in Fitzroy shows that when planting out street and park trees the larger trees are the best since far less prone to vandalism. Fitzroy's parks department does not have the specialist horticultural knowledge and equipment needed to produce quality advanced trees at a cost comparable with that of commercial growers. The same argument applies to bedding plants should Council decide to re-introduce a limited amount of floral bedding in future.

It is apparent that Fitzroy does not need a plant nursery at all, now or in the foreseeable future, merely a small holding area for the temporary storage of purchased plants. Landscaping trees and plants should be bought from commercial growers or the MCC. Tubbed plants for functions should be rented from commercial suppliers or the MCC. (It is acknowledged that parks staff may oppose dismantling of the nursery in the hope that its function be restored at some later date.) Alternative uses that have been mooted in the past for the nursery, such as a school garden or a community garden, would be unsympathetic to the surrounding parkland and impractical to maintain.

The parks depot on the other hand is a necessary facility. It should desirably be located outside the Gardens but in an area of reasonable proximity. A site of about half an acre should be ample. Possible locations might be the Fitzroy Sand and Gravel site, a

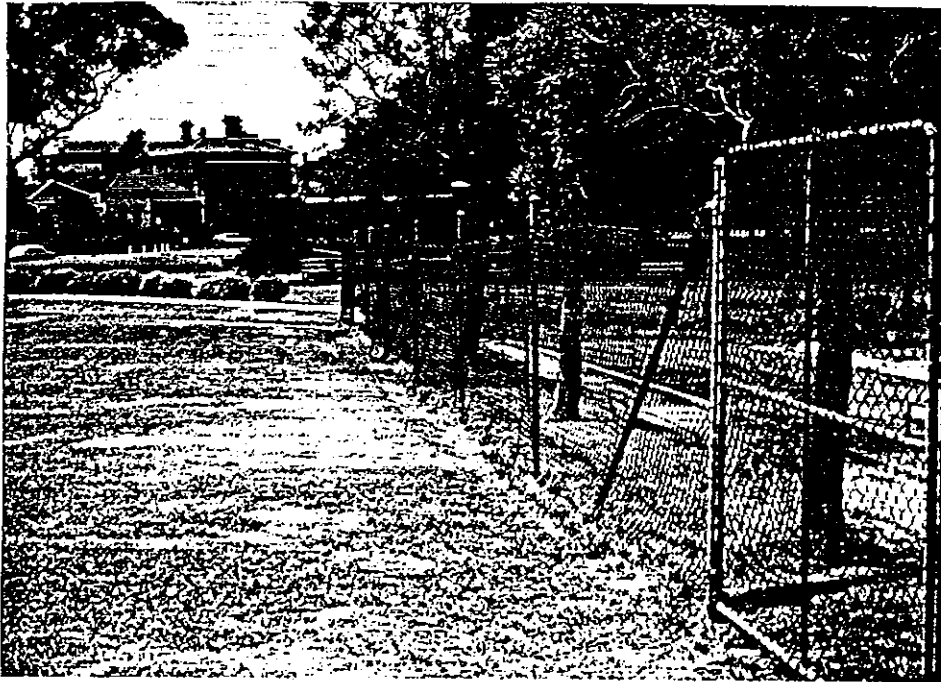
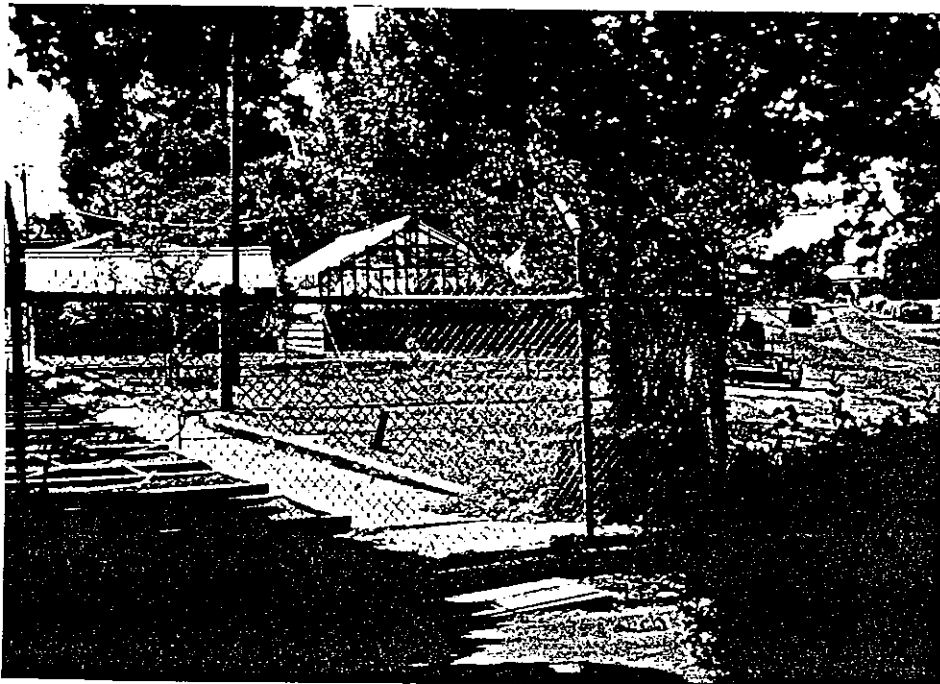


Plate 6 Untidy fences and structures of the depot intrude on this northern part of the Gardens, spoiling the view and limiting the extent of the school play area.

The steam locomotive, always popular with children, can be seen to the east.

Plate 7 The depot and nursery seen from the south. Removal of these facilities, and relocation of the path, would give the opportunity for attractive restoration of this area as parkland.



small portion of the Canterbury Timbers site at the intersection of Freeman and Napier Streets or the Martin & Co site on Queens Parade, but there are probably many other locations in the area that would be suitable.

The Superintendent's house appears to date from the early 1960s. Its suburban architectural style and materials (cream brick) are inappropriate for a structure in a nineteenth century park. The primary security function of the house is to deter theft and vandalism in the depot. Also, there are some advantages in having the Superintendent on site for the general night time surveillance and security of the Gardens. (This at some risk to the Superintendent and his family!) On balance it appears probable that the Gardens can get along without this facility as do several other comparable inner Melbourne parks. *It is suggested that if the funds can be found to relocate the depot then the house should also be demolished.*

Recommendations:

- i) Immediate demolition of the nursery facilities and realignment of the fences. Incorporation of the excess area back into the Gardens.
- ii) Demolition of the house and relocation of the parks depot to a suitable site outside the Gardens as soon as practicable. Restoration of the area as parkland. (See Section 2.1)

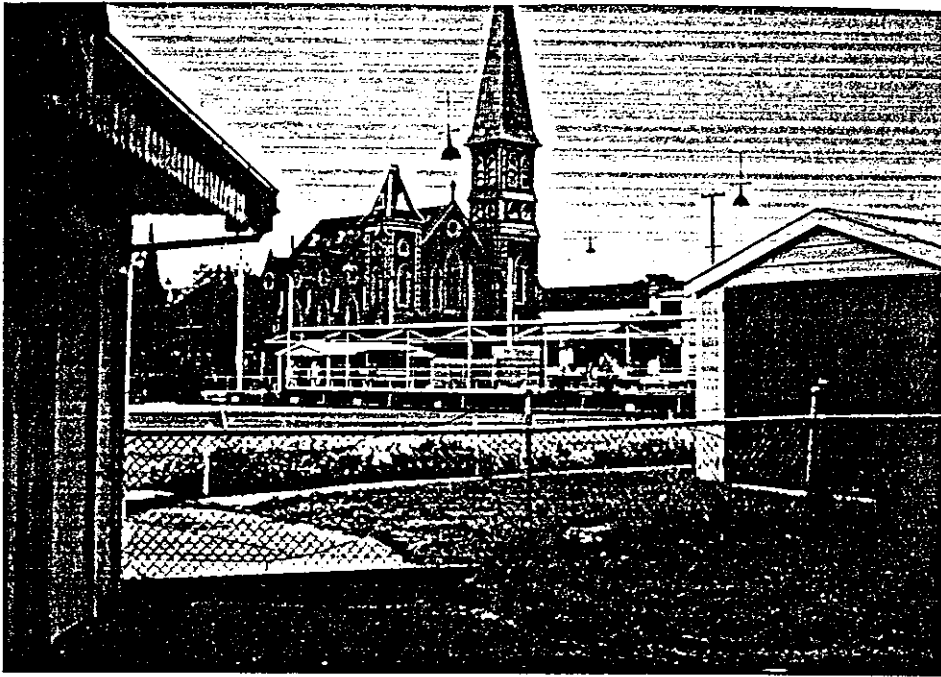
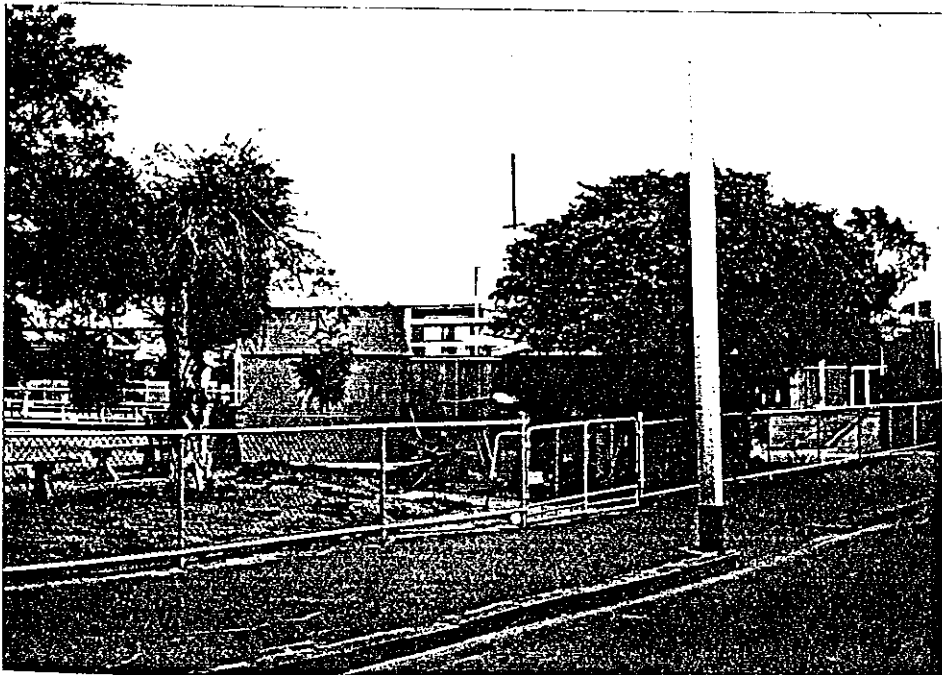


Plate 8 Untidy fences, gaudy paint colours, cheap storage structures and a general lack of screen planting all work to compromise the potentially attractive leasehold of the Fitzroy Bowling Club.

Plate 9 Junk, untidy storage facilities and poor quality landscaping in the Club's grounds mar this section of the frontage to St Georges Road, the principal street frontage of the Gardens.



3.2 BOWLING CLUB

The first bowling green on this site was set up by the Fitzroy Cricket Club in 1877. Today, the Fitzroy Bowling Club has a substantial, all-male membership and excellent recreational facilities that include two greens for a total of 16 links, plus a good quality, brick clubhouse with a manager's residence above. The site of 1a 2r 10p (0.65 hectare) is leased from the City of Fitzroy under a 21 year lease that expires on 21st of September 1989. (The rent is nominal but the club is rated. Recent improvements to the club were financed by loan moneys provided by the City and on which interest is paid.) The site is almost fully developed although there appears to be sufficient space in the north east corner to extend the green for an extra two links. These space restrictions have resulted in the modern clubhouse being built without a set back from the street, unfortunate for a park structure but about which nothing can now be done.

The greens are maintained in good condition and the floral edgings are well done. However, the peripheral areas are in poor shape and untidy giving an unfavourable impression from the outside. Lawn areas and the plantings of mixed shrubs and small trees are generally run down and unthrifty. A recently planted photinia hedge has failed in places. These are problems that would be easily solved by a little extra attention to watering and maintenance, plus appropriate replacement planting.

The greenery and bustle of the club make an important contribution to the interest and streetscape of Brunswick Street, but the view in is greatly marred by the collection of equipment and rubbish gathered together in the untidy and unscreened service area hard by the street. This area needs a thorough tidying up and reorganization, with attention being paid to adequate buffer planting. An area of concrete slab here should be removed so that planting can be put in to screen the metal store shed.

The sheet metal sheds, seats, shelters, tank and sheet metal fence call attention to themselves in gaudy shades of yellow, green, red and blue. The presentation of the grounds would be much improved if these items of external hardware were painted consistently in a less obtrusive colour, perhaps the buff used on the fascias of the new clubhouse, leaving the cheerful flower beds and canvas awnings to provide the colour interest on the site.

The new, one metre, chain mesh fence on Brunswick Street is neat and acceptable, particularly if it is eventually to be incorporated in a photinia hedge. The 1.2 metre fence within the park is older and run down, and should also be repaired and screen planted. An unsightly upper strand of barbed wire remains in places and should be removed.

With the 21 year lease coming up for renewal in two years the City is in a strong position to require a higher standard of external maintenance more appropriate to this visually prominent location. At the same time, in the interests of performance, it is suggested that the term of the lease be renewed for three years rollovers, which is the maximum period of lease that does not require the approval of the the Governor in Council under the Fitzroy (Edinburgh Gardens) Lands Act, 1967.

Recommendations:

- i) That Fitzroy require improved standards of maintenance and planting in those areas of the Bowling Club that are visible from the street or the adjacent parkland.

3.3 LADIES' BOWLING CLUB

Permission was obtained to build this facility in the Gardens in 1948. The founding members were a group of ladies who were mostly social workers employed in Fitzroy. Presumably the facility was needed because the established club had an all-male membership. Today, the majority of the members are said to come from further afield. An area of 1r 18p (0.15 hectare) is leased from the City of Fitzroy under a 21 year lease that expires on 15th of October 1990. (The rent is nominal but the club is rated.) The site extends into the railway land and this small additional area is under lease from the State Transport Authority. The principal improvements on the site are the clubhouse, a storage shed, two shelters, a green of six links and the boundary fence.

The club dates from the period that extended from the 1920s to the 1960s when public interest in simple open space values and passive recreation in the inner suburban parks declined in favour of more intensive sporting and institutional uses. Unfortunately, many of the facilities built in that period were poorly designed and insensitively sited.

Like the parks depot, the Ladies' Bowling Club presents an unattractive visual intrusion into the central open space of the park that was, perhaps, acceptable when it abutted the railway line but should now be reassessed. The enclosing chain mesh fence is a three metre, Pentridge horror topped with a triple row of barbed wire. (It is probably required for insurance in this secluded part of the park.) Peripheral areas between the green and the fence are poorly maintained and weed infested. The limited amount of fence line planting, mostly golden privet alternating with purple leaved plums, is a discordant element in the surrounding parkland. The green appears to be well maintained under an arrangement with the green-keeper of the adjacent club. (At the time of writing the ladies are using that club's facilities while repair work is carried out on their own green.) No attempt has been made to paint or screen plant the sheet metal storage shed. The clubhouse itself is a simple, timber frame building that has been faced with asbestos cement sheeting textured to resemble brickwork.

The club gives the impression that its facilities are not intensively used and that it lacks the membership and resources necessary to maintain the grounds to a standard that might reasonably be expected in a public park. This is a common situation among bowling clubs in the inner suburbs where the memberships tend to be elderly and in decline. Amalgamations are the obvious and practical answer although not always popular with the more conservative members. Facilitating this, the old all-male and all-female clubs are likely to come under pressure to open up their membership rules under equal opportunity legislation. In this case, with the lease coming up for renegotiation in less than three years, the opportunity presents itself to tactfully encourage amalgamation with the larger club (or another club outside the Gardens if the membership should so elect). A lot of the activity in the Ladies' Club takes place during week days so that their times should fit in without raising too many difficulties.

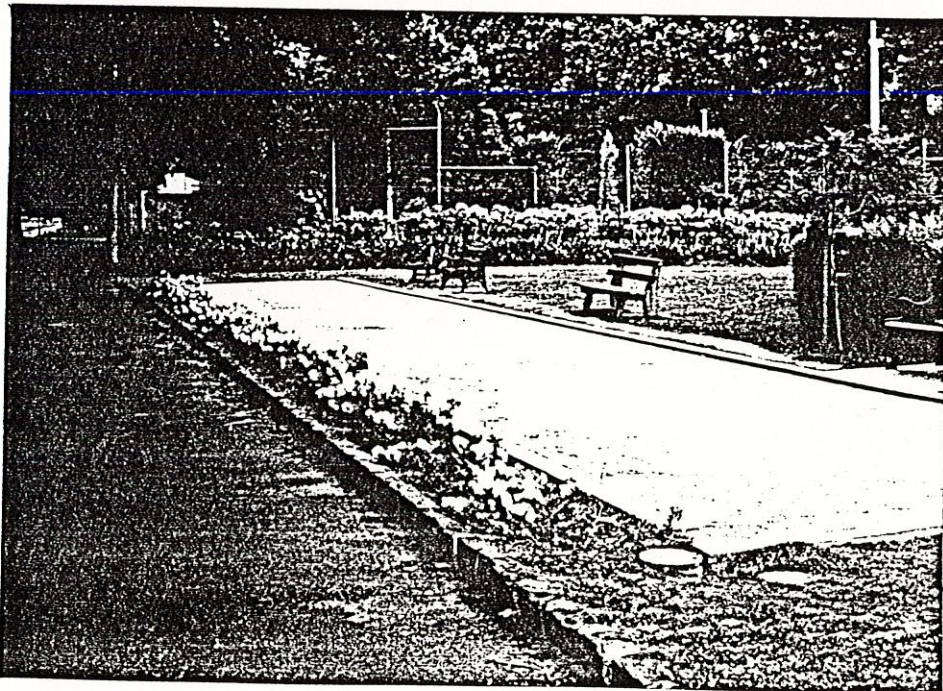
Recommendation:

- i) That Fitzroy initiate negotiations for removal of the Ladies Bowling Club facilities from the Gardens (perhaps by encouraging amalgamation with the larger club) so that the area can be cleared and redeveloped as parkland. (See Section 2.1)



Plate 10 Simple landscaping on land peripheral to the Tennis Club helps to ameliorate the impact of the fence and blend the Club into the park landscape. Planting should be strengthened on the southern and northern sides.

Plate 11 The adjacent bocce court. (Other grassed areas in the Gardens are also used for bocce.) The seating here is appropriately located, although perhaps a little too close to the court. In due course the Monier benches will be replaced.



3.4 TENNIS CLUB

The Fitzroy Tennis Club occupies a site of 3r 37p (0.41 hectare), a part of the old cricket club reserve. A formal lease agreement is not at present in force between the Club and the City, but rates are paid. Site improvements are principally the six en-tout-cas courts, the clubhouse and the enclosing fence. The club is unobtrusively sited in the area behind the grandstand and the mound; avenue elms and peripheral landscaping partly screen it from view.

The chain mesh fences are in fair to poor condition and additional external plantings of shrubs and climbers would be desirable to mask their appearance on both the northern and southern sides. The timber outer fence on the eastern side is somewhat untidy. A section of corrugated iron fencing on the south side is quite unsightly and should be replaced. The land outside the fence on the south side is not well maintained and has an accumulation of garbage, weeds and long grass. Within the fence, the small area of landscaping that is maintained by the club is in need of basic horticultural maintenance with particular attention to elm suckers.

The club is a good example of an intensively used sporting facility that has been intelligently sited and grouped with other sporting facilities to preserve the open space values of the surrounding parkland.

It is suggested that any future lease specify required standards for grounds maintenance, and that performance be encouraged by limiting the term to three year rollovers, which is the maximum period of lease that does not require the approval of the Governor in Council.

Recommendations:

- i) Additional screen planting outside the northern and southern fences.
- ii) Improved maintenance of peripheral areas.
- iii) That Fitzroy require improved standards of grounds maintenance by the Club with particular attention to fences.

3.5 COMMUNITY OVAL AND RELATED FACILITIES

The first oval on this site was constructed by the Prince of Wales Cricket Club after permissive occupancy over six acres was granted by the Lands Department in 1863. The Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club had been granted permissive occupancy of nine acres directly to the north in the previous year. When the two clubs amalgamated as the Fitzroy Cricket Club in 1872, activities centred on this ground and within a few years it became the only oval. The Fitzroy Football Club started here in 1883. Intermittent development of the grounds and facilities took place over the next few decades. The last major development before recent years took place in the late 1930s when the grounds were extended over the main north-south path on the Napier Street alignment. The path was relocated to the east.

The Community Oval and its related facilities were redeveloped and refurbished in the early 1980s to their present state by the City of Fitzroy (designer: Tract Consultants). The boundary walls and fences were demolished; earth banks were regraded and planted with trees; the late nineteenth century grandstand was restored; the site of the Football Club grandstand which had burnt down a few years earlier was landscaped; the timber entry pavilion was moved to the main through path; and the grounds and oval were extensively returfed and replanted.

Since it has already been the subject of a major improvement program and now provides a high standard sports ground facility, *the area has been agreed to be substantially outside the scope of the present master planning exercise.* However, there are two significant problems that should be addressed. The Superintendent has pointed out that the oval becomes severely water-logged during wet periods with the result that the ground has to be taken out of use for significant periods. It is apparent that the old agricultural-tile drainage field beneath the oval and the spoon drain around the periphery are no longer functioning. Council should be aware that a substantial investment will be needed to lay a new drainage field so that the ground can operate properly in winter.

The fences, hardware and signs of the Canterbury Timber yard are an intrusion on the eastern side. They should be screened by thickening up the planting on the mound beside the path with a belt of low growing, evergreen trees.

Recommendations:

- i) Replacement of the drainage system for the oval.
- ii) Additional tree planting on the eastern side to screen the timber yard.

3.6 SCHOOLS' SPORTS GROUND, BASKETBALL COURT AND CENTENARY PAVILION

The Schools' Sports Ground was constructed in the late 1940s after removal of the path to Grant Street as well as the 'mound' (an artificial hill used as a play area by local children) and several trees. The circular pond had been taken out some years earlier. The Centenary Pavilion, which contains changing room facilities, was erected in the City's centenary year of 1977. About eight local schools (some of them from outside Fitzroy) give the ground intensive use on weekdays and weekends, and of these, the nearby St Josephs and North Fitzroy Primary are probably the heaviest users. The staff at these two schools seem satisfied with the quality of the facility. Staff have suggested that padding on the existing goal posts would be a desirable improvement, and that soccer nets would be welcome.

At the time of writing (March) the turf appears to be in fair condition and summer irrigation appears to have been adequate. However, maintenance standards have been allowed to slip as an economy measure in recent years (no regular fertilizing, herbicide spraying or top-dressing) and this will certainly result in declining turf quality. The recommendations of the Turf Research and Advisory Institute should be followed. (See Section 4.2 and Appendix B.) Attention should be given to top-dressing and reseeding the numerous low spots. The Superintendent advises that an agricultural drainage field has not been installed under the ground but that it is well crowned and drainage has not been a problem in most years.

The Centenary Pavilion is a utilitarian structure built of similar bricks to the adjacent east wall of the Continental Can factory. Neither could be considered appropriate in the park landscape. Both invite the attentions of graffiti daubers. Limited plantings of screening shrubs and wall climbers (Boston ivy, creeping fig) would ameliorate the problem on the factory wall. All that can be done for the pavilion is to paint the walls below the verandah roof and repaint them as often as is needed. The toilets at the rear have no doors and have been vandalized. It would be desirable to install security doors and adopt the practice of locking the toilets at sundown.

The adjoining basketball court is also heavily used by school groups. The derelict iron fence beneath the pittosporum hedge at the northern end could be dangerous to players and should be removed.

Some weekend users of the pavilion are in the habit of driving their cars across the ground from Alfred Crescent in contravention of the Edinburgh Garden's Regulations. They should be discouraged from doing so by policing the grounds properly (fines, withholding use of the ground from the offending club) and by installing vehicle barriers along the street frontage. Vehicle barriers should fit with the landscaping improvements proposed for the Crescent. It is suggested that a raised kerb would probably be the most unobtrusive and satisfactory solution, with cast iron bollards at the entrances.

Recommendations:

- i) A turf maintenance program as recommended in Appendix B.
- ii) Soccer nets and padding to goal posts.
- iii) Screening shrubs and wall climbers to mask the walls of the factory.
- iv) Painting of the walls of the pavilion; repainting as necessary.
- v) Security doors on the pavilion toilets; these to be locked at night.
- vi) Removal of the iron railing by the basketball court.
- vii) Bollards and a raised kerb to block vehicle access from Alfred Crescent.

3.7 PRIMARY SCHOOL'S PLAY AREA AND CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

The play and sports area is used by the school for general lunch-hour play and supervised sports activities. It shows the signs of gross over-use in large areas of worn out or wire-weed infested turf. Installation of the Rainspray irrigation system here in 1986 has not reversed this deterioration. Extensive turf renovation work is needed (see Section 4.2 and Appendix B) and for satisfactory results this will probably have to be an annual procedure. The importance of the area justifies particular attention to fertilizing and weed eradication as noted. Ideally, the available area should be enlarged to reduce the pressure on the turf. This would be possible if the parks depot can be relocated as noted in Section 3.1. Some extension would be possible to the east if the old railway track area is redeveloped as recommended in Section 2.1.

School staff members have requested safety padding on the goal posts; also seating under the trees along the Crescent and some sort of safety barrier to the street frontage to stop children chasing balls directly onto the road. A low hedge or shrub barrier backed by wire fencing to discourage through passage would be suitable.

Grassed areas at the crossing should also be renovated and planted with shrubs and trees. The existing ash trees opposite the school are of poor quality and the street frontage here should be interplanted with new trees for their eventual replacement. Trees planted should continue the planting scheme suggested for the rest of Alfred Crescent. (See Sections 4.1 and 4.6.)

The children's playground is largely taken over by school children during the lunch break and at other times, with the result that younger children visiting the park under supervision have only limited periods of access. An additional playground would be desirable in the park at a location well removed from the school area. (One suitable location would be near the Rowe Street entry.) School staff have pointed out that some of the older items of play equipment here are of designs now considered dangerous (see-saws, the carousel). These should be replaced. Non-functioning equipment should also be replaced. The items of equipment that are located directly below the large gum and elm trees where branches could fall should be moved to an open area.

Recommendations:

- i) Turf renovation and maintenance as recommended in Section 4.2 and Appendix B.
- ii) Safety padding to goal posts.
- iii) Redevelopment of the street frontage with seating, additional trees and a safety barrier with planting.
- iv) Replacement of non-functioning and dangerous play equipment in the playground. Relocation of play equipment presently under trees.
- v) An additional playground for pre-school children in a different area of the gardens.

3.8 CHILDRENS' WELFARE CENTRE

In 1972 this brick structure was built to replace the original timber building that was located directly behind the present Superintendent's house. The old building appears to have been the original gardener's cottage of 1870s vintage. We are told that: 'The original timber health centre, sited in the middle of the Gardens, occasionally attracted undesirable characters, thus the new building was resited on the more public Alfred Crescent perimeter of the park'. (*A Centenary of Change. City of Fitzroy 1878-1978.*)

The building appears to satisfy its function. Its location hard on the street is less than ideal from the point of view of providing an attractive finish to the perimeter of the park, but the forward plantings of trees and shrubs do modify the otherwise stark outline of the structure. Some additional shrub planting would be desirable at the rear to screen the back wall. The starkness of the street wall could be ameliorated by planting climbers.

Recommendations:

- i) Additional screening shrubs planted at the rear and climbers to the front wall.

3.9 PUBLIC TOILET BLOCK, PEDESTRIAN SHELTER

Public Toilet Block:

The brick toilet block near the intersection of Alfred Crescent and St Georges Road was built in 1972 and is typical of the starkly utilitarian park structures of the post-war period that do so much to mar Melbourne's parks. It is clear that the selection of design and location were dominated by considerations of vandal-resistance, security and ease of access with very little thought being given to siting the building attractively in the landscape. The surroundings have been kept bare of planting to facilitate surveillance at night. It is questionable whether this should have been a consideration since it would be better practice to keep the building locked at night. However, nothing can be done to ameliorate the appearance of this building from the street since it abuts the paths on two sides. On the park side, some screening shrubs and wall climbers would be an improvement.

Pedestrian Shelter:

The brick pedestrian shelter near the Superintendent's house was erected in 1972 and replaced a charming, slate-roofed gazebo of Victorian vintage on the same site. Its design and materials and the lack of peripheral planting make it an unwelcome intrusion at this point. One wonders why it was ever thought necessary because today it seems to get very little use. Few parks departments see any value in covered seating of this sort today. It is suggested that the building be removed.

Recommendations:

- i) Locking of the toilet block at night.
- ii) Screening shrubs and wall climbers planted on the park side of the toilet block.
- iii) Removal of the pedestrian shelter.

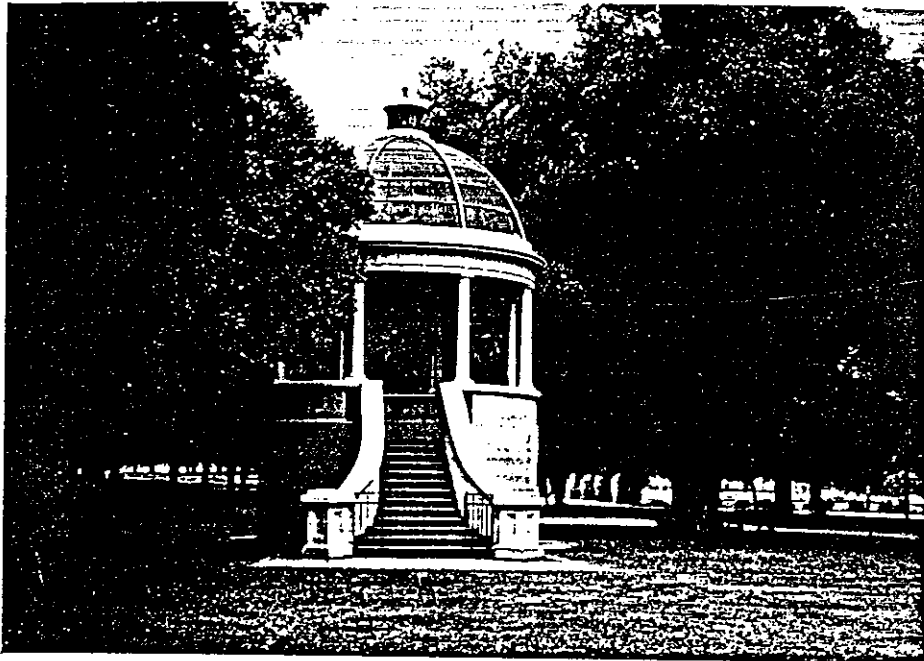
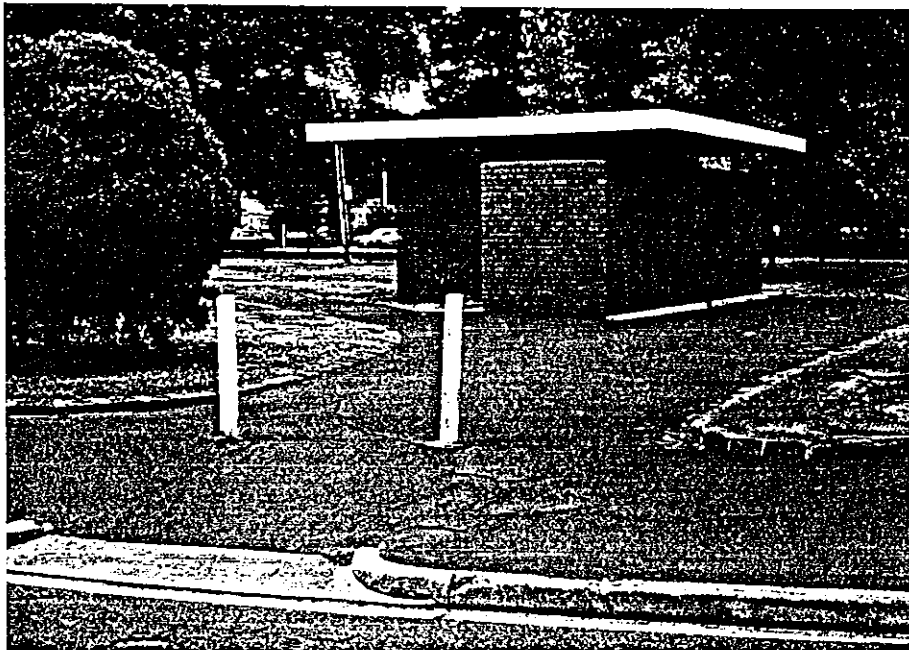


Plate 14 The bandstand rotunda is an attractive addition to the landscape near the St Georges Road frontage. As a war memorial and the only traditionally styled park pavilion remaining in the Gardens this structure deserves particular care.
Plate 15 The toilet block off Alfred Crescent is an unfortunate visual intrusion. Its design and location reflect a set of utilitarian concerns and not the need to fit the facility unobtrusively in the landscape as is appropriate in parkland.



3.10 MEMORIAL BANDSTAND

The band-stand rotunda was erected in 1925 as a memorial to those who served in the Great War. It is a handsome structure in the tradition of classical park architecture and contributes an item of visual interest to the park landscape, notably when viewed across the lawn from from St Georges Road. The original surrounding fence and flower beds have been removed.

The band-stand is significant both as a war memorial and as park architecture, meriting appropriate conservation measures. Unfortunately, it is always likely to suffer from the attentions of vandals, overnight sojourners and graffiti scrawlers. Strong internal and peripheral lighting, even strong spot-lighting, would be desirable to deter this. The platform should be cleaned out regularly and the walls painted as frequently as needed to obliterate the daubs. Care should be taken to ensure that the ground floor store room, presently used by the Bocce Club, is kept permanently locked.

Recommendations:

- i) Improved levels of lighting and appropriate maintenance measures.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS

4.1 TREES

There are about 380 mature trees in the Edinburgh Gardens. The large shade trees are its principal charm and the records suggest that most of them were planted in the ten years following 1883 when Fitzroy and the Lands Department implemented their jointly financed program of improvements. Today these trees are probably about a century old. *Given proper care, the majority should last another century.*

Most of the trees were planted in formal avenues down either side of the established paths, which was the usual practice in the smaller, early Melbourne parks. The intention was to develop the wide walks as attractive, shady retreats in summer. This combination of straight paths and parallel avenues of trees is very much in the centuries-old European tradition of formal gardening and town square design. (The effect is very different from the curving paths and informal groups of trees which are the design themes made popular by the English landscape school and which set the pattern in many of the larger parks created in the nineteenth century, such as the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens.)

A distance of about 30 feet (in some cases 33 feet or half a surveyor's chain) seems to have been adopted as the spacing for avenue trees in the Gardens. This is far too close for the long term development of the species planted and it was probably the original intention to cut out alternate trees after, perhaps, the first twenty five years. Thinning out trees in parks takes vision as well as courage and sometimes the task never gets done. It is noteworthy that the best elms in the Gardens are the ones at 60 feet spacings. However, most have been allowed to remain unthinned at thirty feet spacings and these are noticeably smaller in the butt, with crowded, disease prone crowns. *It is not likely that thinning out now could much improve the quality of these trees.*

There is quite a noticeable variation in the size and quality of trees in several of the avenues. It is thought that non-uniformity of the soil conditions is probably the principal cause. The soil in the Gardens varies from the shallow topsoil over heavy clay that is typical of the area, to depths of highly variable fill which is known to contain much ancient household refuse including considerable quantities of shells.

Some of the tree planting in the areas between the main paths also has a formal character. The rather unusual device of planting elms in circular rings was used and there appears to have been six of these tree rings at one stage. One surrounded the circular pond near Rowe Street and was mostly cut down when the playing field was built. Another seems to have been substantially removed to create the open space around the war memorial bandstand built in 1925. The three that survive more or less intact today have a curious, nordic quality.

Elms and oaks of various species predominate among the older trees and their presence establishes the essentially European quality of the park. This overwhelming dominance of two genera is most unusual for a Melbourne park of the period. There are almost no pines or cypresses, no araucarias, no old planes and no Moreton Bay figs, all park trees that were very popular here in the late nineteenth century. Palms are completely absent; the Gardens appear to have escaped the fashion for planting these and other sub-tropical exotics that prevailed in the early 1900s. There are very few native trees apart from the kurrajongs around Alfred Crescent. Nothing remains of the indigenous vegetation of the area except for two splendid red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) by the children's playground at the northern end. *It is quite likely that these two trees predate European settlement and every effort should be made to preserve them for their beauty and historic interest.* Listing on the Register of Historic Trees would be appropriate. They are a potentially valuable seed source from which to raise trees for native plantings in the area, such as the Merri Creek. (The author

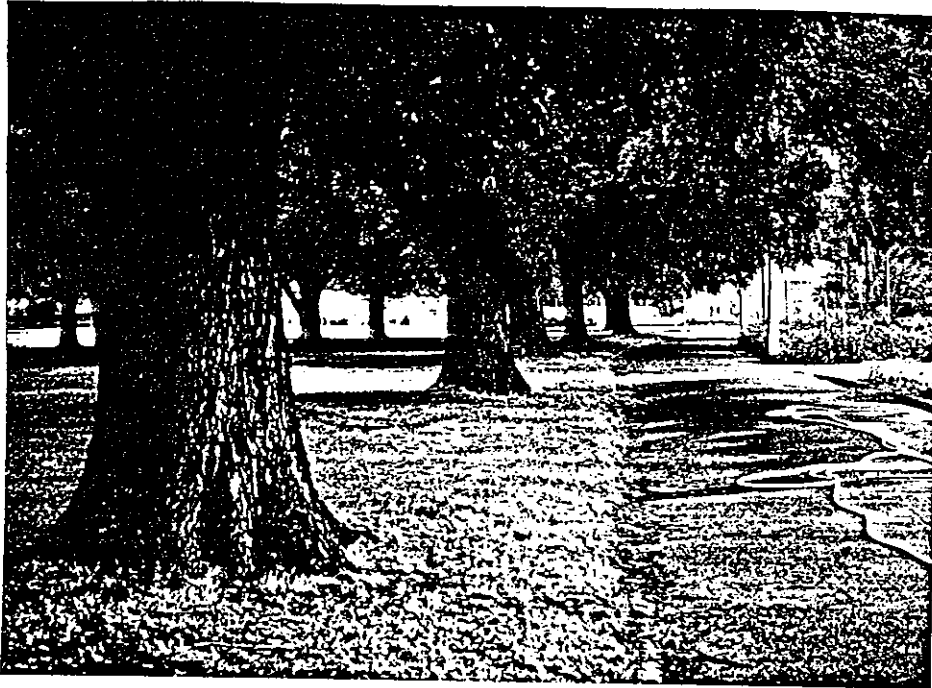


Plate 16 Its fine old elms are the principal scenic attraction of the Gardens. The large trees shown here are widely spaced at about 60 foot centres and may have been thinned out at an early date to permit their growth to a mature form. **Plate 17** These poorer quality elms at about 30 foot centres have not had the space to develop fully. The untidy pole and bracket lamp shown is the lighting detail used throughout the Gardens. It should be replaced by a simple standard.



is aware of only one other comparable red gum in Fitzroy.)

The species of the dominant trees in the Gardens are believed to be:

- English elm (*Ulmus procera*). Easily the most numerous tree and a great asset in the Gardens. There are many fine specimens with the characteristic tall, rounded crown, ascending branches and stout butt. As a parks tree it has the disadvantage of suckering wildly throughout the lawns. In old age it drops large branches without warning. It is highly susceptible to Dutch elm disease, as are the other two elms listed below, and for this reason *it would be prudent to refrain from using these trees so exclusively in future.*
- Wych or Scots elm (*Ulmus glabra*). A smaller and more spreading elm from Europe which is probably not as suited to our climate. Non-suckering. Comes into leaf late. Is easy to transplant as a large tree.
- Hybrid elm (*Ulmus X hollandica*). There are several hybrids between the wych elm and the smooth leaved elm but the one planted here could be 'Purpurascens'. It has buff-purple coloured new foliage in spring and can be seen as an old street tree in other parts of Fitzroy.
- English oak (*Quercus robur*). Present as an avenue of 23 trees along the southern Rowe Street walk. Two trees are missing. Not a highly successful species here but well established. Much of the apparent distress of these trees is being caused by possums eating the foliage for which they show a distinct preference. Measures should be taken to keep the possum population within acceptable limits
- Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) according to I. Earl but possibly the southern live oak (*Quercus virginiana*). Both species are evergreen. There are ten of these trees in three incomplete rows on the western side, presumably remnants of a more extensive earlier avenue planting. *Five of these oaks are superb, advanced specimens that are well worth particular care for the future.*
- Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneum*). Native to eastern Australia but not to the Melbourne area. Planted as a row around Alfred Crescent with the best specimens at the St Georges Road end. There are numerous gaps and the row peters out at the southern end.
- Southern mahogany gum (*Eucalyptus botryoides*). Native to Victoria and NSW but not to the Melbourne area. Of the seven old trees remaining, five are located along the railway reservation land and may be remnants of Railways Department planting.

A thorough report on the trees in the Gardens was prepared by I. H. Earl & Sons Pty Ltd in 1978. The state of health of each tree was described and a detailed prescription given for arboricultural maintenance. As well, some 120 trees including the complete avenue of English oaks and most of two avenues of elms were considered to be in such a poor state as to be fit only for immediate removal.

These recommendations on tree removal, which were estimated to cost about \$30,000 at the time, met considerable opposition from Fitzroy council and staff with the result that they were not put into effect. (Only seven dead or dying trees have been cut down since 1978!) Today, with the benefit of hindsight, they can be seen to be overly severe and to some extent a counsel of perfection. Most of the trees marked for removal are still in fair condition; some are flourishing. Why should this be so? The automatic sprinkler system that was installed throughout the Gardens at about the time the report was written has certainly helped by giving the trees the benefit of regular summer watering (except for the 1981-82 drought) and most have responded well with vigorous growth. Without doubt, the trees discovered to be diseased are still diseased, but they are probably less stressed and they continue to make a superb contribution to the tree canopy of the park.

A basic problem with these recommendations is that they appear to have been based on the premise that each tree should be an ideal, free standing specimen of its type. This is fine for

arboreta and botanic gardens, but in more typical city parks we are much more concerned with the overall aesthetic effect of groups of trees, as well as with public safety. Thus trees of quite poor quality can be accepted where they continue to make a contribution. This is particularly so for old avenue plantings where the removal of individual trees that are impossible to replace in kind will invariably spoil the regularity of a highly artificial landscape.

There can be no doubt that the trees, which are a valuable asset, need an extensive and ongoing amount of pruning and maintenance work to help them flourish in their second century. The Earl report recommended immediate work on about 180 trees which would have cost about \$60,000 at the time. Not surprisingly, council balked at this. To date, for lack of funds and direction only a small amount of the most necessary work has been carried out, mostly by outside contractors.

The recommendations for the more expensive and specialist tree work, such as pest control and cable bracing, while desirable, are likely to remain beyond the means of Fitzroy. But the City's recent acquisition of a travel tower should make a basic program of tree maintenance possible using council labour. This work should only be done under the detailed supervision of a horticulturalist who has the appropriate training - the trees are too important to be botched.

A basic tree maintenance program should aim to improve public safety while enhancing presentation and tree health. To maximize value for money the work should be done in the following sequence:

- clean-up of dead timber and unsafe branches in the trees along pathways and overhanging other areas where people congregate, such as the playground,
- similar work on the remaining trees throughout the park,
- more drastic shaping and crown reduction needed on some degenerating trees to recover vigour,
- cavity clean-out and filling.

The work should be done in winter when other garden pressures are reduced.

It should be noted that the recommendations made in Section 4.2 for upgrading the lawns in the vicinity of trees would also benefit the trees.

The need for replacement planting of trees in the Gardens is quite limited. Where gaps occur in the avenues (such as the two missing trees in the oak avenue) these should be filled in with advanced specimens of the same species bought in from commercial nurseries. Similarly, there is not much need for infill tree planting in the Gardens, other than the old railway reserve (see Section 2.0) and the frontage to Alfred Crescent where a double avenue of trees would be a significant improvement as noted in Section 4.6. Trees selected for these areas should be of species known to thrive in local conditions, and the predominantly deciduous, European quality of the existing tree mix should be respected. This does not mean slavishly sticking with the established species (ie. predominantly with elms) or doing without natives.

For Alfred Crescent, an avenue planting of deciduous shade trees down both sides of the street would be desirable. Within the park, an additional row of evergreen trees such as sweet pittosporum (already present at certain points) in line with the kurrajongs would give the needed sense of enclosure and finish. (See Section 4.6)

Recommendations:

- i) Established trees should be preserved wherever practicable.
- ii) A basic and ongoing program of tree surgery and maintenance should be carried out as noted.
- ii) New tree plantings should reinforce the established tree structure and reflect the European and urban quality of the Gardens.

4.2 LAWNS AND IRRIGATION

Fixed sprinkler irrigation and modern turf management techniques have made a high standard of turf an expected and achievable feature of city parks. Consistently green lawns with good cover are attractive and inviting. They recover quickly from periods of intensive wear.

Inspection of the turf in the Gardens shows that it is very variable between sub-areas, grading from the high quality maintained on the Community Oval to virtually non-existent over extensive areas beneath the larger trees. There are evident problems with soil compaction, wear, heavy shade, weeds, poor drainage and uneven irrigation that require attention. The Superintendent advises that in recent years the maintenance regime for lawns has been limited largely to mowing and watering; there are no established programs for fertilizing, herbicide spraying, top dressing or reseeding. In these circumstances a continued deterioration in the quality of turf is inevitable. Low standards of maintenance will produce a financial economy in the short term but they are incompatible with a program to upgrade the quality and overall presentation of the Gardens.

It is clear that basic turf repair and maintenance procedures are needed in the Gardens on a continuing basis. The specialist advice of the Turf Research and Advisory Institute has been obtained (see Appendix B) and this is commended to Council as an appropriate guide for future work.

Particular attention should be given to the large areas of unattractive and virtually unusable bare ground under trees. Getting a decent grass cover established in these situations is acknowledged to be difficult because of summer shade, soil compaction and competition from the fine feeder roots of elms which exhaust the soil. The general approach recommended by the TRAI has been tried by the MCC Parks Department and gives acceptable results. This involves fertilizing and seeding with a shade tolerant ryegrass and creeping red fescue mix after breaking up the surface crust with a reciprocating harrow. (Sprinkler heads must be clearly marked.) This work is done in late winter well before trees come into leaf. Temporary fencing is left in place for about six weeks. Subsequent mowing is set high (50mm or more) and the area is fertilized at least once a year. In the worst areas it is usually the practice to repeat this reseeding procedure every second year. The technique also benefits the trees through better soil aeration, improved penetration of water and the introduction of nutrients.

The other area of very unsatisfactory turf cover is the heavily used primary school play area, the importance of which justifies a special effort. Initial cultivation and reseeding work on bare patches as recommended by the TRAI is probably best done in the Easter school vacation (under the new four term system) with the affected areas being fenced off during the second term. It is important that the play area receive adequate irrigation to assist its recovery over summer, with the full herbicide and fertilizer application as noted. Subsequent cultivation and reseeding of bare patches should be done as necessary. Kikyu is present in parts of this area and it should be encouraged to spread.

The aim of irrigation in parks is to keep turf growing vigorously (ie. green) during the summer months by supplementing natural rainfall with the amount of water needed to balance transpiration and evaporation. In Melbourne this means an application of irrigation water equivalent to about 150mm of rainfall a month during the peak demand period of January and February in a typical summer.

The 'Toro' automatic sprinkler system through most of the Gardens was installed with Commonwealth funding about ten years ago. (The Community Oval has its own separate 'Toro' system that was installed more recently, and the primary school play area has a separate 'Spraymaster' system installed in 1985.) There are 33 stations with 8 to 13 spray heads each

and the stations are programmed to operate from the control box near the Superintendent's house. The pipes, spray heads and hydraulic control lines are plastic and prone to damage. (Better recent systems for parks use are electronically controlled.) Water is connected by three inch mains to both sides of the pipe network and the feeder lines to individual heads are said to be one inch pipe. The Gardens are rated for water at the lower night rate to take advantage of the automatic system.

It was a cheap system in its day and it has inbuilt design and technical weaknesses. The problem now is to make it function with maximum efficiency.

There appears to be two main difficulties. The first is an apparent failure to quickly repair components of the system that have been damaged or vandalized. This is a management problem requiring vigilance on the part of staff and prompt rectification. Council should ensure that the necessary plumbing skills are available, either by a staff appointment or by contract.

The second is an overall technical or design weakness of the system. There appears to be too many spray heads connected to certain stations (up to 13 instead of the more satisfactory 8), some heads have been spaced too far apart and pressure seems to be inadequate at certain points in the system. As a result, the system is usually limited to operating two stations at any one time, which fails to deliver the necessary quantity of water to all areas of the park under summer conditions. It is suggested that an irrigation consultant be retained to advise on improvements to the system and to operator techniques. For example, at relatively small cost it may be possible to:

- duplicate the supply lines to the worst affected, outlying stations,
- add another mains connection to the supply network at a point where pressure is low,
- rearrange the switching pattern so that stations operating at the same time are at widely separated parts of the network (ie. not drawing down in close proximity off a common feeder line as appears to be the case at present).

Recommendations:

- i) Basic turf repair and maintenance procedures carried out on a regular basis as recommended by the Turf Research and Advisory Institute. (See Appendix B.)
- ii) Specific procedures as noted to establish and maintain turf cover under trees.
- iii) Specific procedures as noted to improve turf cover on the Primary School play area.
- iv) Acquisition of the necessary stand-by plumbing skills (staff appointee or contractor) for speedy rectification of faults in the irrigation system.
- v) Appointment of an irrigation consultant to advise on operation, fine tuning and improvements to the irrigation system.

4.3 FLOWER AND SHRUB BEDS

The general practice of city parks administrators over the last few decades has been to progressively remove the old shrubberies and flower beds with a view to economies in maintenance labour, simplified mowing by gang mowers and better surveillance at night. At its worst, this produces a debased park landscape of lawns and trees dotted with unscreened structures and inadequately buffered from the surrounding streets. This is substantially the case with the Edinburgh Gardens, where very little shrub bedding and no flower bedding of significance remain today.

Nonetheless, the best modern parks use shrubs and limited amounts of floral planting to great effect. Shrub beds are important in the park landscape for screening and channelling views, directing foot traffic and creating sub-spaces. Flower beds are used in well considered ways to add interest and colour at the most important and highly visible locations: at entrances, around architectural features and other foci, and occasionally on the boundary to the street. (The nineteenth century gardening practices of herbaceous borders and isolated flower beds scattered about the lawns have substantially disappeared from public parks.)

Older residents remember the displays of massed cannas that were an eye-catching summer feature of the St Georges Road frontage of the Edinburgh Gardens. These appear to have been grassed over in the 1960s. Floral bedding remained a feature of the Gardens until the late 1970s when Council directed that it should be discontinued. Until then, the east-west walk directly north of the Canterbury Timber and National Can sites (formerly the railway station) was lined with flower beds, there was a flower bed around the Victoria memorial, another where the fountain had been, and various other smaller beds were spotted about.

Where they remain, these old flower beds now stand forlornly derelict. Increasing shadow and root competition from adjacent trees would make it hard to re-establish traditional bedded annuals in some of them. Their spray heads remain but have not been connected to the newer plastic pipe network which irrigates the park. In the past, most of these beds were fenced. Earlier fencing would have been iron hurdles. (A scrap remains by the basketball court.) More recent fencing was 1.2 metre high chain mesh, much of it now in poor condition where it has been retained along the east-west walk and around the Victoria memorial site. (The general practice has been to remove these protective fences from the beds in most of Melbourne's older parks. They were considered to be in the way and no longer necessary.)

On balance, there is little to be gained by reintroducing floral features at any of these locations. The fences, kerbs and piping should be removed so that the sites can be cleaned up, levelled and grassed over. The Victoria memorial site would make an excellent location for an architectural feature, such as a fountain or a piece of sculpture, if something suitable can be found in future. In the meantime it should be tidied up and developed with a simple landscape treatment: a few seats off the path, some small, shade tolerant trees and an underplanting of evergreen shrubs such as camellias. The pedestal could be temporarily retained.

Very little shrub bedding survives in the Gardens today although it appears to have once been fairly extensive. There is a mixed shrub and agapanthus border beside the tennis club which partly masks the fence but needs additional planting. Further along this walk, a row of oleanders, sweet pittosporum and coprosma, now virtually tree sized, makes a good screen to the National Can buildings.

The recently built, dwarf-conifer bed north of the Rowe Street entrance has to be considered a failure in a number of ways but primarily because it has no apparent purpose other than decoration. The planting concept is out of key with the surroundings and the scale is wrong for a public park. (This sort of planting of dwarf conifers is a very English idea best suited to the small scale of domestic gardens in cooler climates than our own!) The stone retaining wall adds

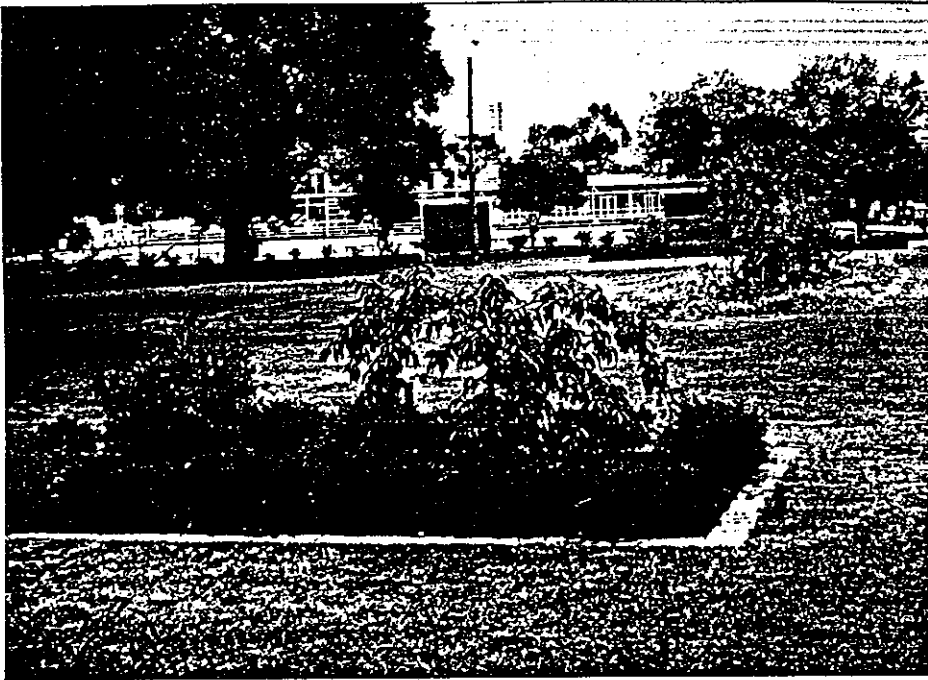
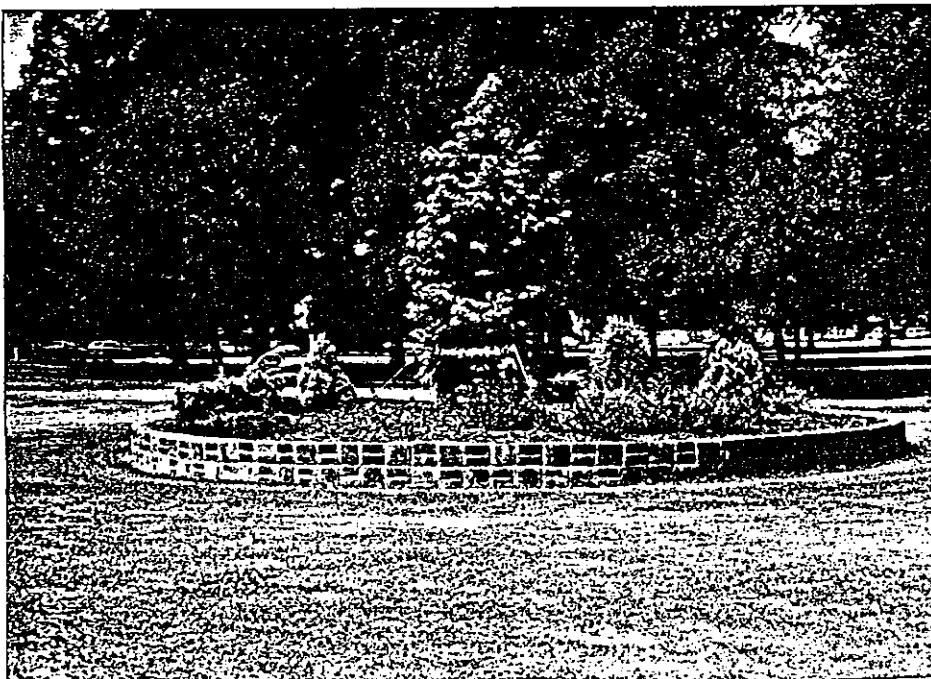


Plate 18 These shrub beds by St Georges Road have little visual impact and are ineffective as screen planting. They should be replaced with a bolder, more extensive boundary treatment as was maintained here until the 1960s.

Plate 19 The dwarf conifer bed near the Rowe Street intersection is an unsuitable decorative development that should be removed so that the area can be converted to lawn.



nothing and is an impediment to mowing. It would be preferable to remove the bed and level the area as lawn.

North of the Bowling Club some beds have recently been developed with mixed shrubs, perennials and dwarf weeping cherries in an attempt to smarten up the St Georges Road frontage. The intent is praiseworthy but the effect is a little half-hearted for this very visible area which needs the sort of a bold landscape treatment it appears to have had in the past. The area also needs planting to screen the interior spaces of the park from the street. (See Section 4.6) This is probably the only area of the Gardens where a substantial floral border is worth reviving, perhaps as the street-side edge of a series of shrub beds.

Bedded annuals, replanted two or three times a year, are usually not the most cost-effective way of introducing floral colour to a park today. Modern floribunda roses can be recommended as a cheaper and successful, low maintenance alternative. They are best massed in large, single colour groups. Good varieties can flower for eight months of the year if properly maintained and the plants last for several years. Winter colour can be added by underplanting with early bulbs. Some of the hardy perennials, particularly cannas, geraniums and day-lilies, are also very effective in mass plantings.

Recommendations:

- i) Clean-up, levelling and grassing over of all derelict flower beds after removal of fences, kerbs and piping.
- ii) Short term redevelopment of the Victoria memorial site with basic planting and seats. Possible long term development for a fountain or sculpture.
- iii) Removal of the dwarf conifer bed near Rowe Street.
- iv) Revival of a decorative floral border to the St Georges Road frontage, backed by beds of screening shrubs.
- v) Any floral plantings to be primarily of low maintenance and permanent plantings of floribunda roses or hardy perennials.

4.4 PATHS

The main path system which is the framework of the Edinburgh Gardens is entirely utilitarian in origin and reflects the through passage needs of pedestrians in the 1870s and 1880s. Gates through the fence around the reserve were built opposite the intersecting streets. It is probable that when the paths were formed up in the 1880s they simply followed the established foot tracks, albeit on straightened alignments. The main north-south path followed along the fence line of the Cricket Club enclosure and connected Napier Street through to Best Street in a straight line. (The section beside the Cricket Ground was moved east in the 1930s when the ground was extended.) The northernmost east-west path also followed an original fence line of the Cricket Club enclosure and connected through to Rowe Street, passing over the creek via a small bridge or culvert. The southernmost east-west path connected Watkins to Grant Street, also via a small bridge. After the underground drain replaced the creek and the railway had been built, the second north-south path which connects Falconer Street through to Jamieson Street was built more or less along the line of the filled-in creek.

The first set of regulations published for the administration of the Gardens (1883) contained the prohibition: 'All persons visiting or walking through the Gardens shall keep on the footpaths'. There was also a prohibition against lying on the grass. These transgressions were punishable by a fine of up to five pounds. Similar regulations applied in many of the other public gardens in Melbourne in the nineteenth century, but by the early 1900s they had mostly been repealed. Their lasting result has been a legacy of wide walks designed to accommodate benches and the crowds of people who thronged the parks on Sundays and summer evenings. Thus the main through paths, which were the first to be formed up in the Edinburgh Gardens, have retained an average breadth of about 14 feet which today may seem excessive. The lesser diagonal paths are generally narrower at about 10 feet.

The path system in the Gardens has retained its late nineteenth century layout with very few changes. In the 1930s the path around the south-east frontage to Alfred Crescent was taken up. Recently, the paths behind the children's health centre have been simplified to adjust for removal of the fountain in the 1960s, and one of the two paths intersecting the Victoria memorial site has been taken up. An additional path, the new bicycle track, has been created over the old railway track. Probably the most significant change has been the removal of the main path to the Grant street entry in the 1940s to create the space for the Schools' Sports Ground. The foot track worn around the southern edge of this oval shows that the public still uses this connection and that a paved path here would be appropriate.

Formed path surfaces in the Gardens were probably gravel in the first instance, then coal tar asphalted and much later resealed with bituminous asphalt. Today, the bituminous path surfaces appear to be in sound condition with only minor exceptions.

Path edging details vary throughout the Gardens. A few sections of the older rock kerbing remain in some areas and concrete kerbing has also been introduced. Flush edging is more attractive and unobtrusive in parks. Kerbs obstruct the gang mowers and necessitate considerable hand labour to maintain a neat grass edge. Fitzroy has adopted the worthwhile practice of replacing them but the process has not been completed. The flush, basalt pitcher side drains that have been substituted are an excellent innovation, allowing mowers to trim to the paths and resembling the old spoon drains that remain in other areas of the park. This edging detail should be substituted wherever practicable.

Recommendations:

- i) A new paved path connecting to Grant Street around the southern end of the schools oval.
- ii) Replacement of path kerbs with the newer, flush, side drain detail wherever possible.



Plate 20 Left: one of the aluminium reproduction lamp standards set up for trial in the Gardens. Right: one of the electrified, nineteenth century, gas-lamp standards by the band-stand which are clumsily connected to power above ground.
Plate 21 Simple, unobtrusive, modern lamp standards of a type suitable for use in the Edinburgh Gardens. These ones are seen along the main walk of the Parliament Gardens.



4.5 LIGHTS, SEATS

Lights:

The consultant has been unable to determine the date at which lighting was first installed in the Gardens. The late nineteenth century records examined have no mention of lighting and it seems likely that gas lights were never installed. The present lights are mostly mercury vapour lamps cantilevered on SEC posts high over the paths where their illumination value is limited by the tree canopy. The untidy collection of posts and supply lines is not only unsightly, it has become a problem now that the SEC is tightening up on clearances between trees and power lines. Many of the avenue trees face the imminent threat of mutilation. Obviously, overhead wiring should be replaced with underground cabling as a top priority. A limited amount has already been installed.

Four reproduction lamp standards (maker: Melbourne Aluminium and Iron Lacework Pty Ltd, cost: \$461) supplied by underground cabling have recently been installed as a trial at points off the western frontage. These are modelled on the Collins Street lamps used by the MCC but they are smaller, more domestic in scale and made out of aluminium rather than cast iron. While they are an undoubted improvement on the other fixtures, eliminating the untidy posts and shedding light from a more appropriate height beneath the tree canopy, they introduce a fussy, false-historical detail to the park which is undesirable and unnecessary. It is questionable whether they will prove to be sufficiently robust in the long term. There are several alternative designs available that are simple and unobtrusive in design and more appropriate to present needs. One should be selected and used consistently throughout the Gardens to replace both of the existing types of lighting.

The three electrified, nineteenth century gas lamp standards that illuminate the bandstand area appear, from photographic evidence, to have been installed in the 1920s. They are probably worth keeping but should be supplied by underground cables and fitted out with more appropriate lanterns.

Paint colours used on lamp standards should be uniform and consistent with seating and the other items of park hardware. Black seems to be used in many cases at present, but it is suggested that a dark carriage green would be a more attractive substitute in the park setting.

Seats:

At present, two styles of seating are installed. The old, concrete-frame, Monier benches are either broken or approaching the end of their useful lives. They are by no means a visual asset in the Gardens and the sooner they can be replaced the better.

Recently installed seats have mostly been cast iron frame, Victorian reproduction benches that are permanently attached to concrete slabs to simplify mowing and frustrate theft. This type of seat appears never to have been very common in our nineteenth century parks and, like the lamp standards discussed above, its use here introduces an historical detail into the Gardens that could be considered spurious. (On the other hand, no pictorial evidence has been found which shows the sort of seating that was used here at an early date. Photographs from the 1920s show simple timber benches.) Since so many of these reproduction benches have already been installed, there would have to be a compelling reason for changing to a different design. On the plus side, they are readily obtainable, appear to be serviceable, are reasonably vandal-proof and do provide a late Victorian detail. On balance, it seems reasonable to stick with this design, using it consistently throughout the Gardens where additional or replacement seating is required.

Obviously, seating should be located with a view to minimizing clutter and where there is an

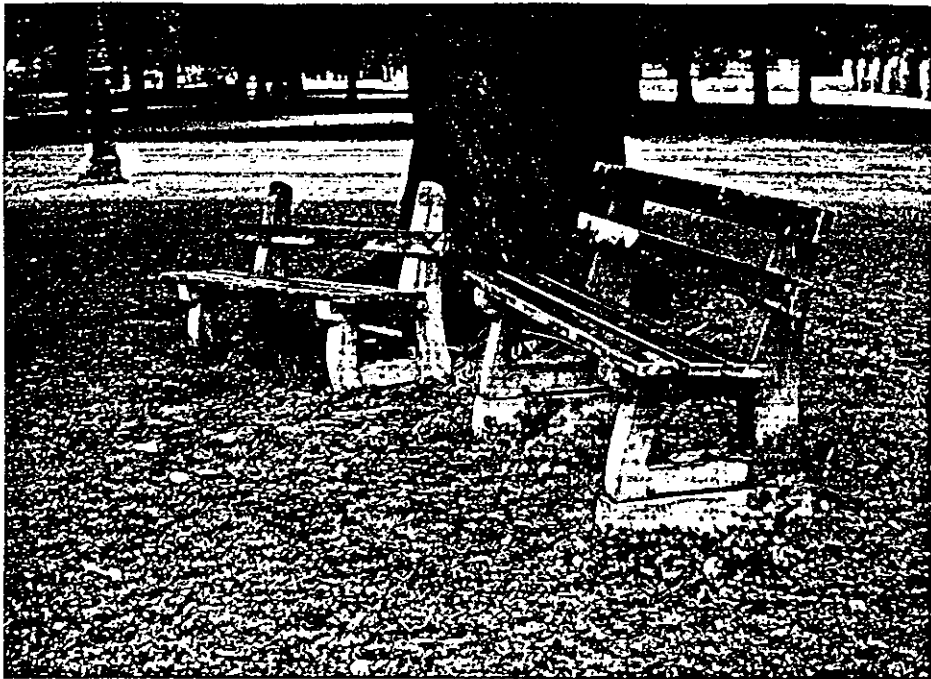


Plate 22 Obsolescent Monier benches are still common in the Gardens. They will eventually be superseded with the cast iron and timber reproduction benches shown below.

Plate 23 Cast iron, reproduction Victorian style benches have recently been installed along Alfred Crescent. These appear to get very little use. It is suggested that, in future, seats be sited in accordance with the guidelines given in the text.



apparent need. Some seats presently installed appear to be very little used and could be considered for relocation. Several additional benches would be useful around the children's playground, along the Alfred Crescent frontage by the primary school (as requested by staff) and along the principal east-west and north-south paths.

Greater care should be taken in future over the siting of benches and a few guiding principles are worth bearing in mind. As a rule, people feel most comfortable when park seats back against a wall, a tree trunk or a shrub bed. Seats should face an attractive view or an interesting activity. They should be spread around to take advantage of sunshine, particularly winter sunshine, as well as summer shade and they should generally be located well away from noisy peripheral streets.

Recommendations:

- i) Replacement of overhead wiring with underground cabling as a top priority.
- ii) Replacement of the bracket and reproduction lamp types with a modern lamp standard and lantern of uniform design.
- iii) Retention of the Victorian reproduction bench design. Relocation of benches from areas of little use. Installation of additional benches around the childrens' playground, by the primary school and along the principal paths. Siting of additional bench seats as per the guide-lines above.
- iv) Uniform paint colour to benches, lamps and other hardware. (Carriage green would be appropriate.)



Plate 24 For lack of suitable planting, Alfred Crescent fails to fulfil its scenic potential as an attractive residential crescent facing parkland. A formal, avenue scheme is recommended. The ineffective garden beds here should be removed.

Plate 25 Boundary planting on the St Georges Road frontage needs reinforcing with belts of screening shrubs to shelter the inner space of the park from the noise and clutter of the street. Some floral colour to the street would be desirable.



4.6 SCENIC AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The flat topography of the Gardens combined with the dominant pattern of planting, which consists largely of clear-bole trees at regular intervals along the paths, means that the Gardens are perceived as a series of grassy open spaces separated by belts of trees. Lack of ground hugging vegetation gives visitors relatively unobstructed views across several of these sub-spaces from any point, with the result that in the passive recreation areas there is little sense of seclusion and separation from the various school and sporting activities that may be taking place in other areas. It is unlikely that the Gardens were intended to have this very open character; it has probably resulted from a long history of modifications to the planting to simplify maintenance. There is a strong case for some discreet replantings of trees and shrubs to reinforce the separateness of the various sub-spaces. These should not be scattered about the lawns at random but grouped to complement the avenues.

The problem is particularly acute around the street frontages of the Gardens. The Gardens were originally fenced along the street lines and there were probably extensive shrubberies on the inside. These have long gone and today there are no effective visual barriers to the streets, so that noisy traffic, parked cars and building fronts of variable quality dominate the view from most positions. The St Georges Road frontage, in particular, needs redevelopment with beds of screen planting as noted in Section 4.3. A similar treatment should be continued around Alfred Crescent to the frontage overlooked by the North Fitzroy Primary School, where teaching staff have requested a barrier or low hedge to prevent children chasing balls directly onto the road.

It must be said that the present landscape treatment of Alfred Crescent fails completely to exploit the scenic potential of a sweeping residential crescent bordering parkland. On the east and south-east side the boundary planting of kurrajongs has been allowed to die out without replacement so that the park peters out as a wide expanse of lawn. This fine, wide street would be greatly improved by 'greening' with a row of shade trees down both sides. The trees would frame views in and out of the Gardens and clearly define the boundary when seen from the streets and properties facing to it. (See Section 4.1) Planting on the Gardens side should be reinforced with an inner row of lower growing evergreens in the general line of the kurrajongs. The traffic islands at the intersection with Grant Street should be similarly planted.

The park lacks any sort of central focus, a consequence of its long occupation by the Railways. The obvious natural focus should be the rectangular central space between the two main east-west paths and the two main north-south paths, but this area is at present partly occupied by the Ladies' Bowling Club and the bicycle track. In the event that these facilities can be relocated as proposed in Sections 2.1 and 3.3, the opportunity should be taken to completely redevelop this area. It would be hard to do better than build a water feature. A small lake, with a wooded margin and, perhaps, an island to encourage water birds to the area, would add a dimension of interest to the park that it totally lacks at present. (The Gardens, as noted elsewhere, had a substantial pond and a fountain in earlier years.) Peripheral plantings of predominantly native shrubs and trees would encourage other native birds to return.

Recommendations:

- i) A limited amount of tree and shrub planting located to reinforce the visual separation between the sub-spaces of the Gardens.
- ii) Screen plantings on the St Georges Road frontage. (See Section 4.3)
- iii) Barrier planting to Alfred Crescent opposite the school.
- iv) An avenue planting of deciduous trees on both sides of Alfred Crescent. On the Gardens frontage, a parallel row of evergreen trees. (See Section 4.1) Similar planting on the traffic islands by Grant Street.
- v) A decorative lake in the centre of the gardens if the Ladies Bowling Club and bicycle track can be relocated. (See Section 2.1)

5.0 COMMENTARY ON PARKS DEPARTMENT MANPOWER

A management audit of the effectiveness of the Parks and Gardens Department is well beyond the scope of this study. However, a few points concerning staffing have come to light during the course of the work and the consultant has been asked to record them.

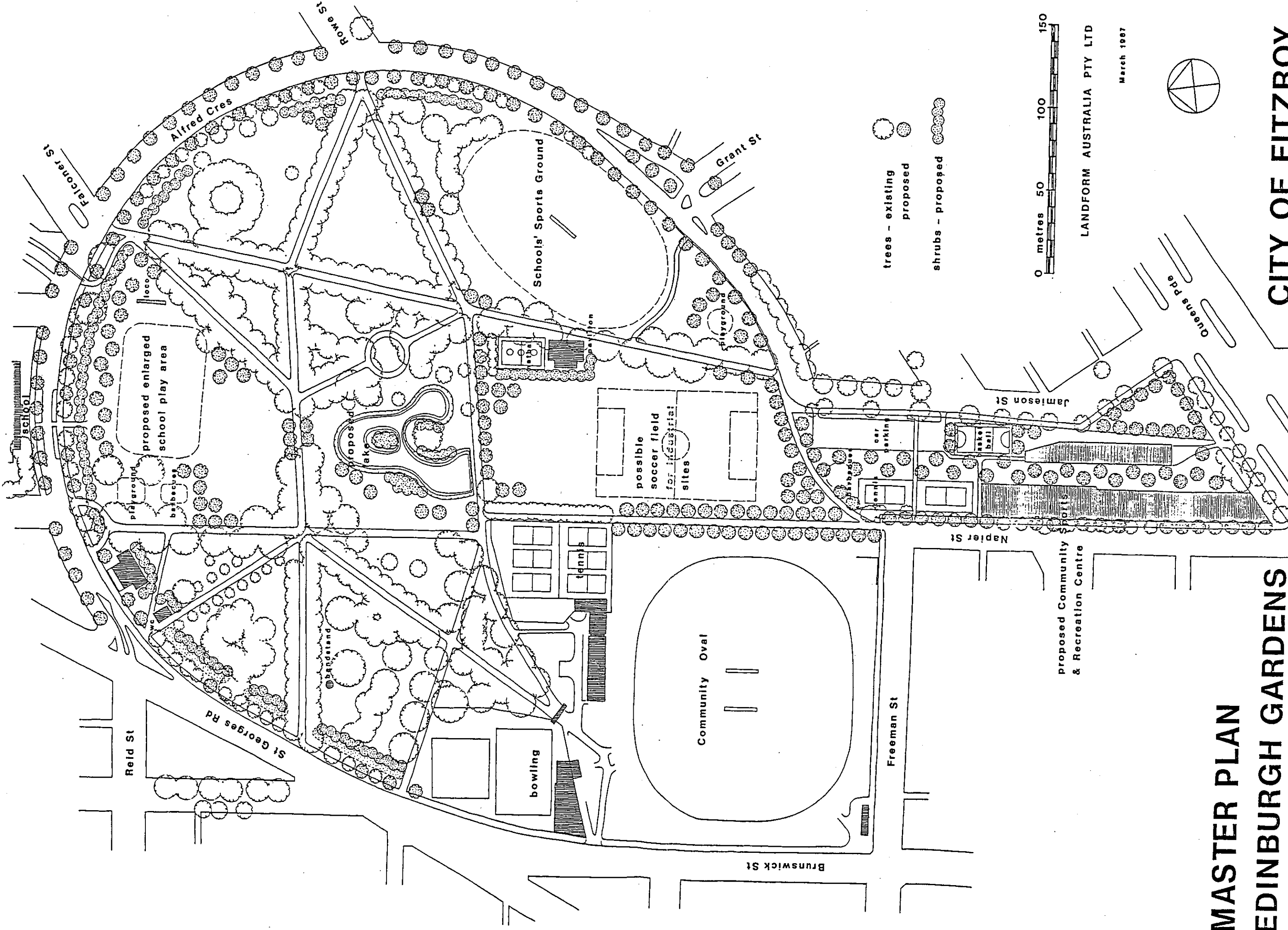
The Superintendent advises that he has a total staff of 22 men to carry out the maintenance and capital works programs on the city's street trees, street closures and parks. Of these, only two men are certificated gardeners and one an apprentice, which means that there is an overwhelming predominance of labourers. Advice has been sought from professional parks managers (including the Manager, M.C.C. Parks and Gardens Division) concerning a desirable balance between skilled and unskilled staff for a good standard of open space maintenance. Their advice has been that an effective city parks department today should comprise:

- approximately 40% certificated gardeners, including some with specialist training in tree maintenance, turf maintenance, etc.,
- approximately 20% gardener apprentices and specialist tradesmen such as vehicle mechanics, plumbers, etc.,
- approximately 40% labourers, caretakers, drivers, etc.

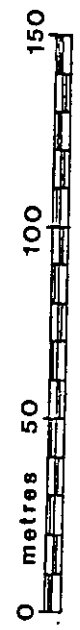
Clearly, Fitzroy falls well short of this ideal and probably not much can be done about it in the short term given M.E.U. constraints and the permanency of council employment. However, when the next vacancies occur on staff they should be filled with certificated gardeners to raise the percentage of qualified staff. As well, a qualified plumber should be recruited as soon as possible so that the skills are on hand to properly maintain the water supply and irrigation systems.

The Superintendent also advises that of his staff of 22 there would be an average of only 12 men turn up for work on a typical Monday to Friday in summer, leaving him grossly understaffed in what should be the season of peak activity. The aggregate of demands for annual holidays, plus sick leave, rostered days off, workers' compensation absences and leave without pay is concentrated on this period. This is a staff management problem that has obviously got seriously out of hand, and it remains the responsibility of management to work out a satisfactory solution.

As a palliative measure, it would make sense to take on additional temporary staff in summer (labourers, students, horticultural students) as is done in the European and American city parks departments. In the longer term, economies may be possible if advantage is taken of staff transfers and retirements to reduce the number of full time employees in the department.

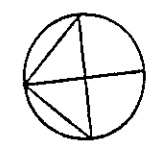


trees - existing
 trees - proposed
 shrubs - proposed



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March 1987



**MASTER PLAN
 EDINBURGH GARDENS**

CITY OF FITZROY

APPENDIX A - NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE EDINBURGH GARDENS

Summarized from correspondence, maps and other documents in Crown Lands Management Branch file Rs. 360 for the Edinburgh Gardens, Ministry of Conservation, Forests and Lands. Explanatory comments are in italics.

1859

First Fitzroy Council request to Crown Lands Dept. for a reserve for public recreation. Seven acre triangular site between Heidelberg Road, Reilly Street (*now Alexandra Parade*) and Smith Street is temporarily reserved for public recreation (6 acres 1 rood) and public baths and wash-houses (3 roods).

10.1.1862 and 19.2.1862

Fitzroy Council requests an alternative site of 50 acres for public recreation in North Fitzroy. Suggests an oval site 20 chains in diameter and 29.25 chains long with its flat side aligned along the Yan Yean Tramway (*later renamed St Georges Road*). See Map 1. The site straddles a creek running north-south (*today an underground main drain*). There are two ponds and a few scattered trees. (*It is possible that the two large red gums at the northern end of the Gardens today are remnants of this original tree cover.*) The site also includes the rifle butts used by the Collingwood Volunteers (*apparently its first recreational use*).

The reasons for choosing this site and plan shape are not explained.

22.2.1862

The site is reduced in area to 38a 3r 26.5p by Clement Hodgkinson, Deputy Commissioner of Land and Works (*the leading figure in the planning of Melbourne's early park system*) who directs that the southern half circle of the reserve be moved back to clear the future extension of Brunswick Street.

This fixed the location of the future Edinburgh Gardens at the intersection of St Georges Road and Brunswick Street. Also fixed the half circle shape of the northern end of the Gardens, soon to become the inside edge of Alfred Crescent. The southern half circle was soon obliterated when the boundary there was squared up on the grid of the new Freeman, Langton and Brunswick Streets.

28.3.1862

Temporary reservation of new site and revocation of 1859 reservation is Gazetted.

25.9.1862

Collingwood Commercial Cricket Club is given permissive occupancy of 9 acres of the reserve at the intersection of Brunswick street and St Georges Road; also given permission to fence.

9.7.1863

Prince of Wales Cricket Club is given permissive occupancy of 6 acres of the reserve directly south of the C.C.C.C. See Map 2.

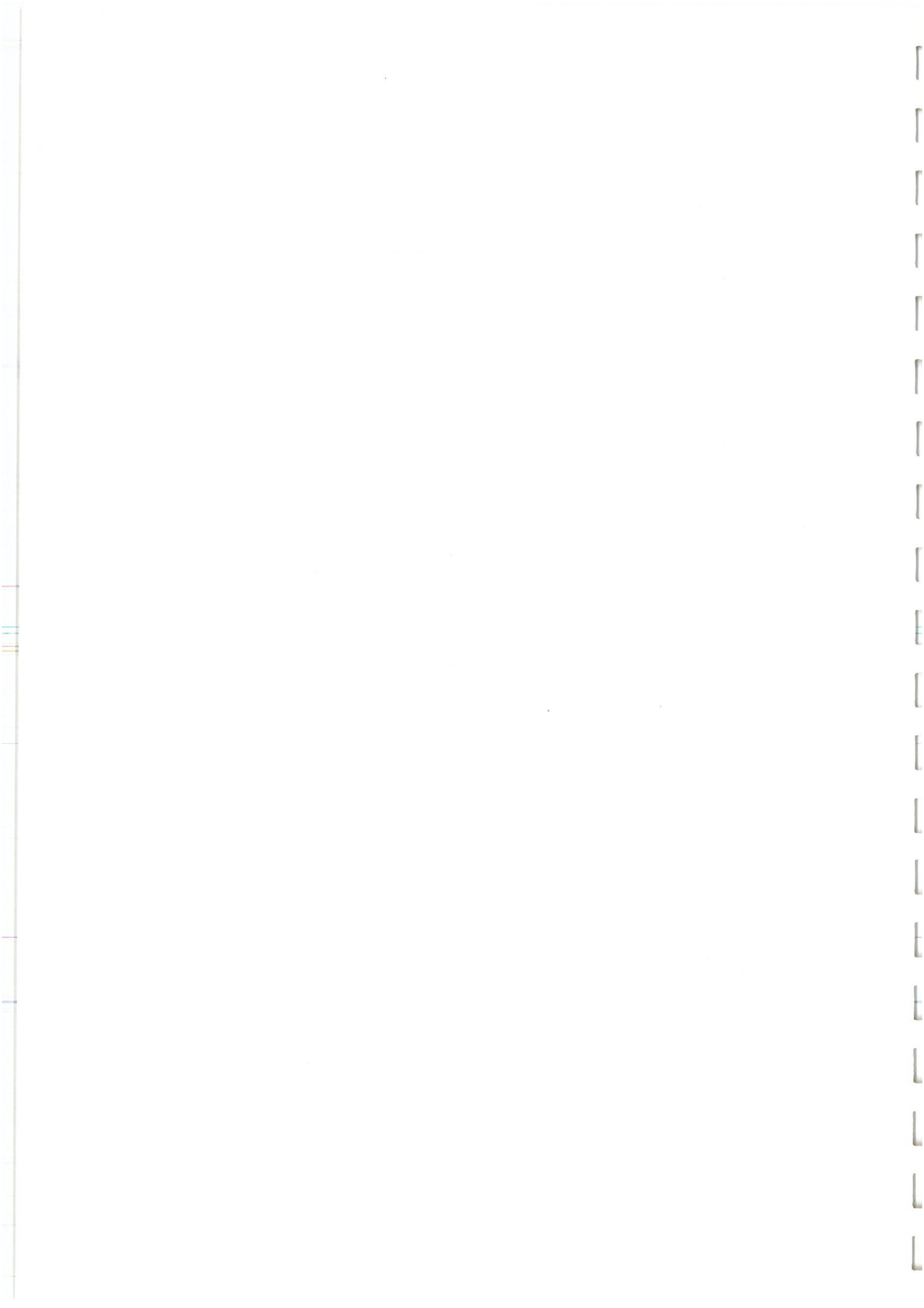
1872

The two cricket clubs amalgamate to become the Fitzroy Cricket Club and receive permissive occupancy for the combined site of about 15 acres.

The Club's subsequent activities centred on the southern cricket ground which survives today as the Fitzroy Community Oval.

26.7.1876

Departmental memo refers to the reserve as the 'Duke of Edinburgh Gardens'. (*Queen Victoria's younger son had visited Melbourne in 1867 and the reserve appears to have been unofficially given his name, later simplified to the 'Edinburgh*



Gardens.) Memo states that the Fitzroy Cricket Club has to date expended about £450 on fencing, planting, sowing, building, etc. on the area occupied by it. 'The remainder of the grounds is merely enclosed by a post and two rail fence at a cost of £90, and the land so enclosed is utilized by the Fitzroy Council for grazing purposes.'

3.10.1877

Fitzroy Cricket Club requests permission to charge admission for up to four days a year. The letter details improvements made by the Club. 'Since the reserve was made into a Cricket Ground (some 12 years ago) about £2,000 have been spent on it.' The letter is accompanied by a sketch map [see Map 3] and records the division of the grounds as follows:

- 1st Division. Ladies' Reserve and Pavilion. 'This reserve is fenced & planted with Trees, Flowers & a Fountain erected in the centre of one of the Flower Beds.'
- 2nd. The Playing Ground. This is encircled by a foot-path and running track.
- 3rd. The Bowling Green, started 'Some two months ago ...' (*The present bowling club occupies the same site and is the descendant of this original facility.*)
- 4th. The Remainder of the reserve, including the northern ground which is referred to as the 'Practice Pitch'.

The letter also records a 'Residence for Caretaker'. (*Map 4, dated 1883, shows that this house was built on the same site as the present head-gardener's house.*)

22.10.1877

Regulations Gazetted for management of the area occupied by the Cricket Club (14a 3r 23p) and appointing a Committee of Management composed of members of the Club.

2.9.1878

Regulation Gazetted appointing Fitzroy Council the Committee of Management for the balance of 28 acres. (Total area now 42a 3r 23p.)

9.4.1881

Fitzroy Council writes opposing the proposed excision of 2 acres of the Gardens east of the Prince of Wales Cricket Ground for a State School site. A subsequent letter notes that '.. the scheme of drainage for the greater part of Fitzroy North runs through the said land ...'

Subsequently, the Department of Public Instruction acquired the present school site on the north side of Alfred Crescent.

1.8.1881 and 9.8.1881

Railway Department writes requesting excision of a strip of land for a railway reserve. Request lapses.

This original line was intended to run east-west; the line built a few years later ran north-south.

24.10.1881

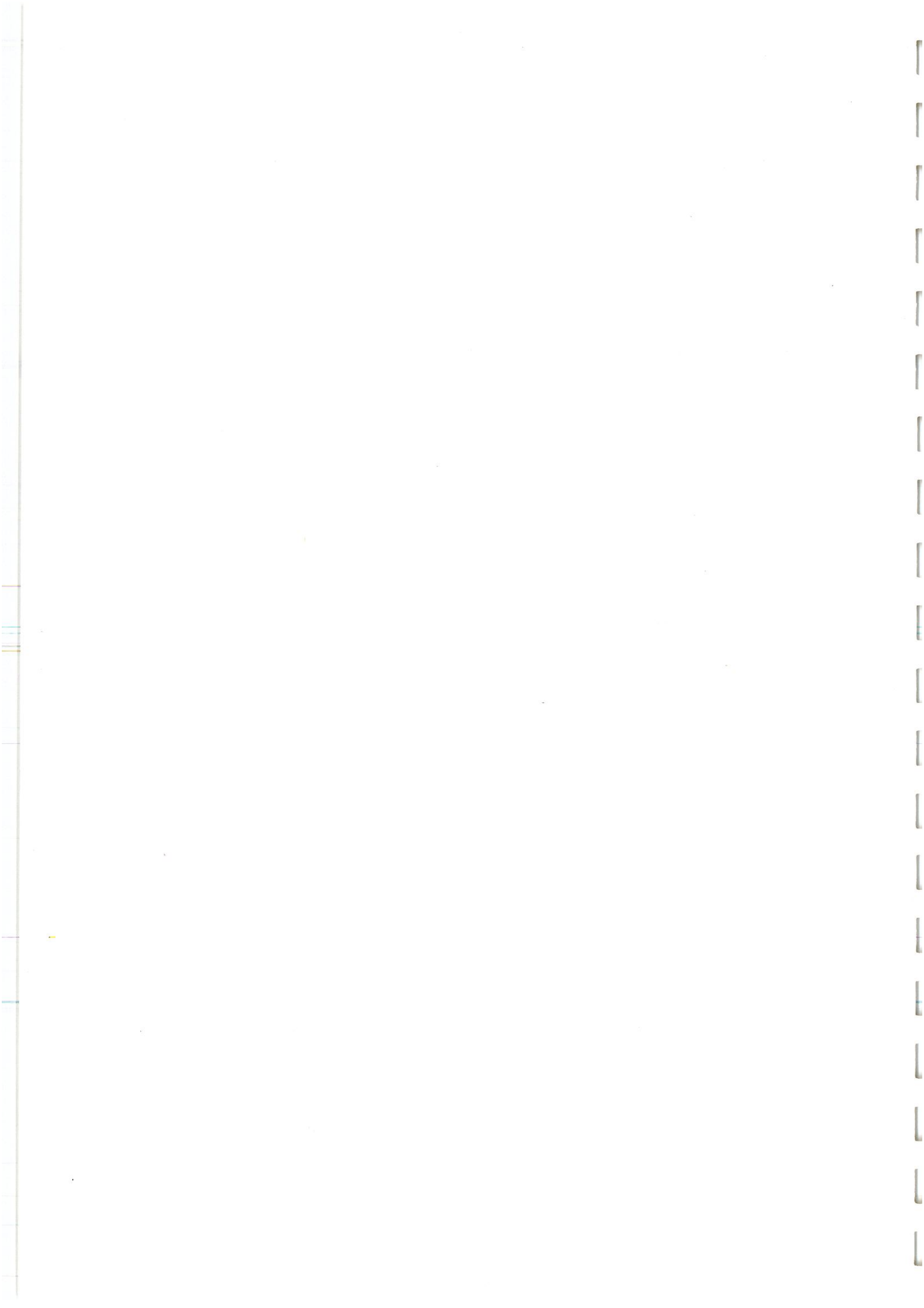
Southern portion of the Gardens (33a 3r 23p) permanently reserved, Gazetted 28.10.1881. Northern portion (7a 3r 37p) not permanently reserved until 19.6.1883, Gazetted 22.6.1883. (Total area now 41a 3r 20p)

By this stage Alfred Crescent had been continued around the south-east boundary between Grant and Groom Streets with a resulting loss of area from the Gardens.

12.4.1882

Crown grant for southern portion (33a 3r 23p) issued to the Board of Land and Works jointly with the Mayor, Councillors and citizens of Fitzroy as '... a site for a public park and gardens for the recreation and amusement of our subjects and people ...' (Vol. 1368, Fol. 273446)

Crown grant for the northern portion (now amended to 8a 0r 17p for a total area of 42a 0r 0p) issued 19.6.1883. (Vol. 1480, Fol. 295990)



These crown grants reserved to the Crown all rights in minerals as well as rights for public roads, canals and railways.

22.6.1883

Fitzroy Council agrees with the Board of Land and Works (ie. the Crown Lands Dept.) to each contribute £250 per annum for five years from 1.7.1883 for the improvement and maintenance of the Gardens, the expenditure to be controlled by a Committee of Management appointed jointly. (A separate Committee of Management continues to administer the cricket ground and bowling green area.)

Serious development and planting of the Gardens appears to have started from this date. Large sections were raised by filling with garbage and street manure, giving rise to shrill public complaints. Extensive areas were trenched for the disposal of night-soil, a measure believed to improve the land prior to planting but also saving the Council the cost of cartage further afield. The creek was filled in and an underground culvert installed somewhat to the west. The creek's old route is marked today by the north-south path and avenue of trees on the eastern side of the Gardens.

It is probable that the fine plantations and avenues of elms and oaks that survive today were planted in the 1880s. The best of these appear to be Ulmus procera (the English elm), Ulmus x hollandica 'Purpurascens' (the purple leaved hybrid elm), Quercus robur (the English oak), and Q. virginiana (the southern live oak). Most of the other trees appear to be of more recent planting.

A Lands Department map dated May 1883 [Map 4.] records developments to that time and shows the unfenced northern oval, the main southern oval, bowling green, pavilion and gardener's dwelling, all fenced, as well as the fence and gates around the boundary of the Gardens. The main path system which persists today was already established along routes which clearly reflect the practical, through-traffic needs of pedestrians rather than a garden designer's aesthetic predilections. The two east-west paths, one from Rowe Street, the other from Grant Street, crossed the natural barrier of the creek via two small bridges. These two crossing points persist today as intersection points in the path system. The main north-south path ran beside the cricket ground in the line connecting Best Street and Langton (now Napier) Street. Later paving and avenue plantings confirmed the permanency of these main paths. Diagonal paths and decorative garden beds were added to fill in the interspaces.

10.8.1887

A deputation of citizens waits on the Minister for Lands asking for the immediate stoppage of the Council depositing garbage, rubbish and dead animals in a portion of the Gardens.

Dr. Crook: 'The danger to public health cannot be estimated.'

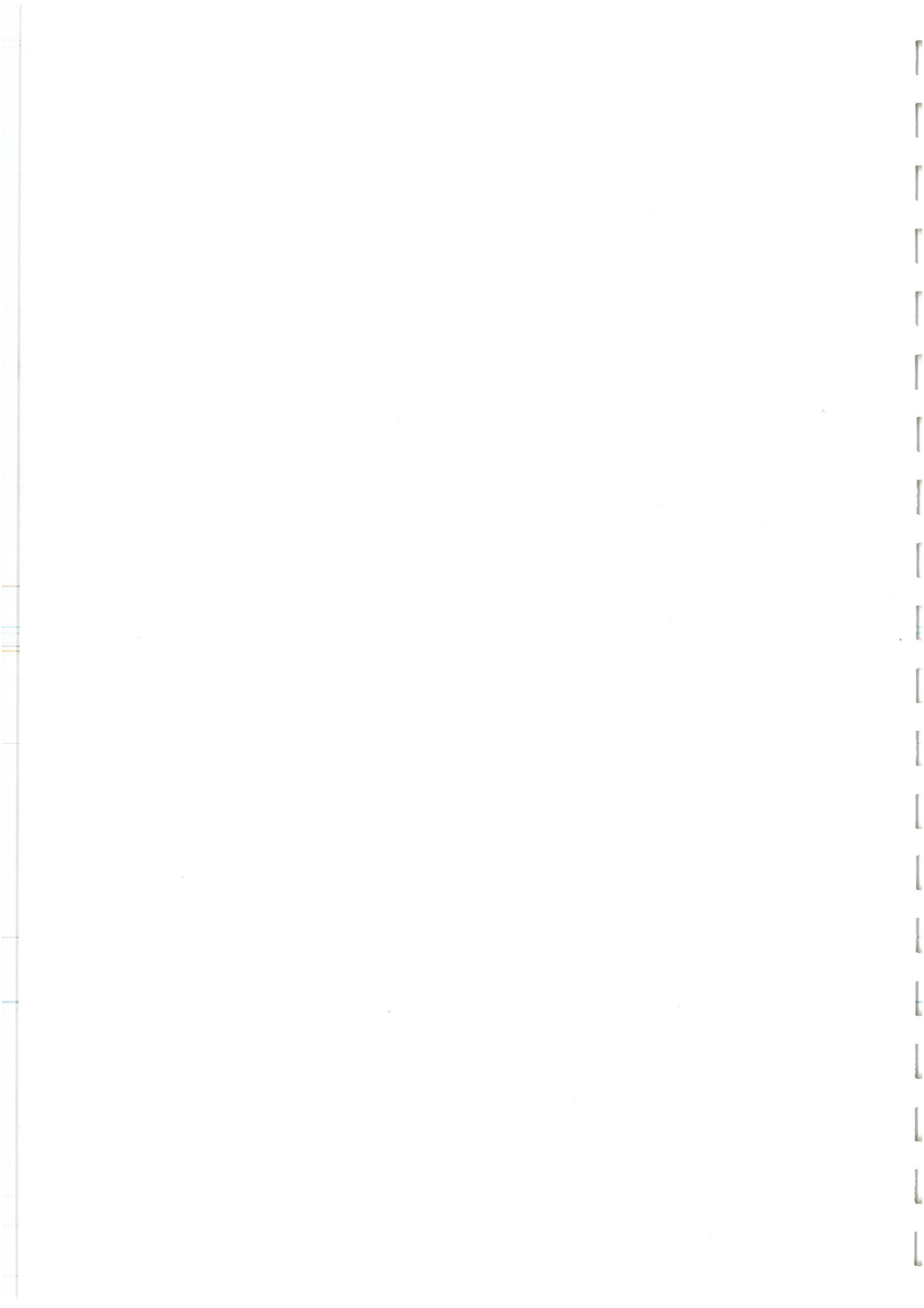
Councillor Britten: 'Only 7 horses have been buried in the Gardens during the past 6 years and none of them less than 4 feet below the surface.' 'The Central Board of Health have served notices on the Council to fill in the drain.'

The Minister directs that the work must cease.

7.9.1887

Petition of citizens asks for removal of certain fences erected by the Committee of Management which impede free access across the northern ground. Also asks '... that paths should be made from one gate to another for the accommodation of pedestrians' and notes that '... paths already worn by the feet of pedestrians...'

Maps show that within the next few years this part of the Gardens north and east of the bowling green was developed with paths and trees.



17.8.1887

Surveyor General reports on inspecting Gardens. Recommends removal of obstructing fences. But favours continuation of use of the gardens for rubbish disposal: 'From what can already be seen as the effect of the operation of the trenching and manuring the results achieved by the managing committee in the improvement of the grounds considering the small amount at their disposal is something remarkable.'

22.6.1888

The Gardens are subdivided to transfer a portion of the land to the Railways Commissioners. (Vol. 2044, Fol. 4087030) *Subsequently, the rail line and station were built.*

18.10.1888

Education Department writes advising of closure of North Fitzroy School because of the smell and health risk caused by the depositing of rubbish in the Gardens by Fitzroy Council.

14.3.1889

Fitzroy Council and Board of Land and Works agree to continue joint management arrangement for another 5 years from 1.7.1888 contributing annually £250 each.

In 1892 the recession forces the government to reduce this to £200 per annum.

Annual reports prepared by the Committee of Management for several years from 1892 are on file and give details of expenditures. These are signed by A. A. Bannerman as Acting Curator. In 1892-93, £3/15/- was spent for 5000 hawthorn 'quicks'; more were bought in subsequent years. *It is apparent that extensive hedges of hawthorn were a feature of the Gardens. These were certainly used to screen the railway land and were probably planted in other locations, perhaps even along the peripheral fence. None survive today.*

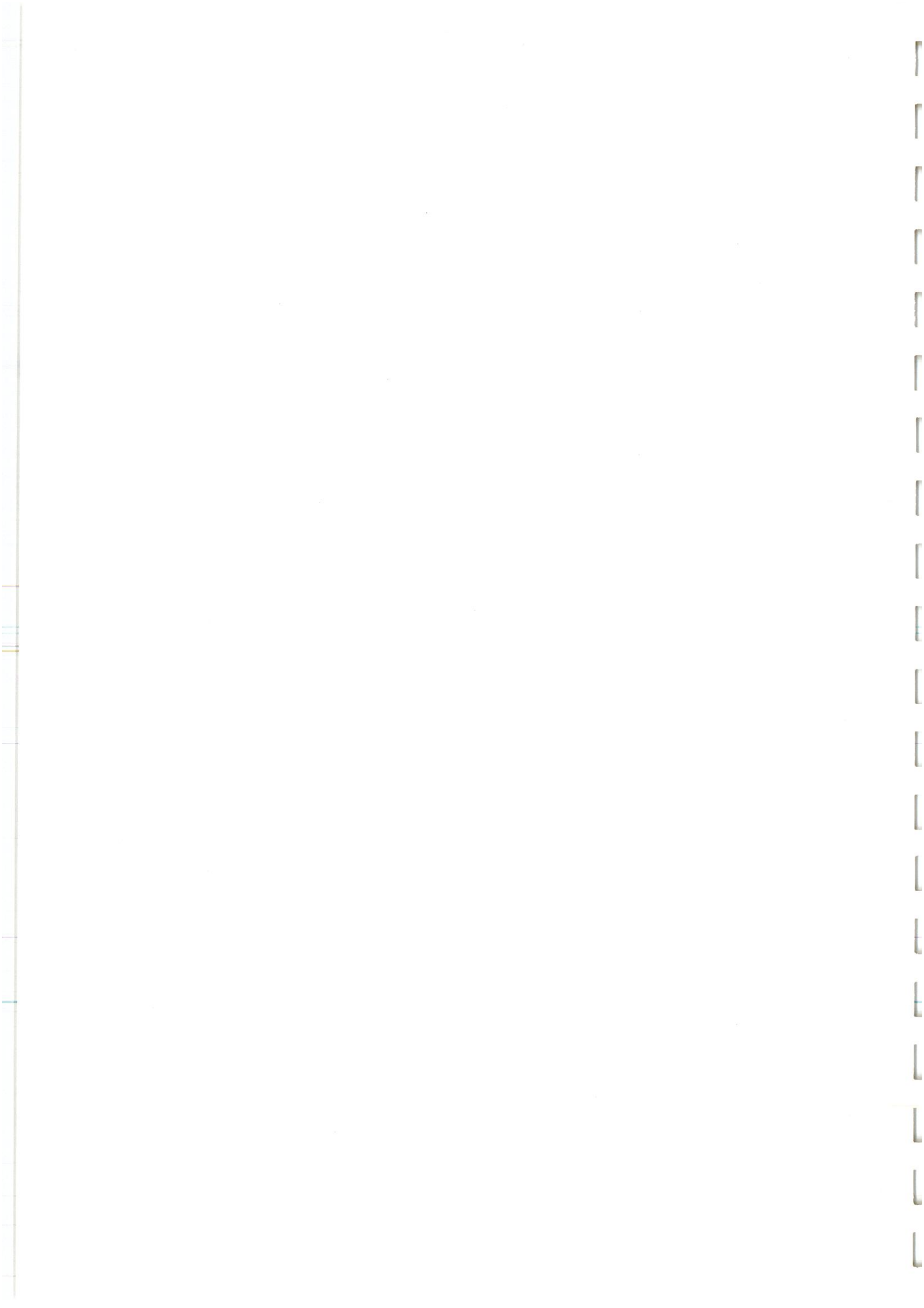
In 1894-95 the Committee began the practice of 'selling grass' for revenue, *i.e., harvesting hay, a common practice in other Melbourne parks at the time. This practice appears to have been continued for many years, indicating that the turf must have been quite rough by modern standards.*

In 1894-95 the street water from Rowe Street was carried into the Gardens and used for watering the eastern side for which reticulated water was not available. *It is probable that the large circular pond built adjacent to Alfred Crescent was used to store this storm water.*

M.M.B.W. Maps 29 (1894) and 50 (1900) record most of the ground features of the Gardens at the turn of the century, including the new railway station, rail line and level crossing, and a fountain at the northern end. *(This may have been the fountain once located in the Ladies' Enclosure of the Cricket Ground.)* See Maps 5 and 6.

A map of the northern suburbs, circa 1905, shows additional diagonal paths, avenue plantings, several circular garden beds, the circular pond in line with Rowe Street, and the gardener's cottage with a substantial yard to the rear *(probably a service yard where the present service yard and nursery facilities now stand)*. See Map 7.

By the early 1900s the Gardens had taken very much their present form. Developments since then have mostly involved expansion of the cricket ground facilities, which became important as the home ground of the Fitzroy Football Club, and erection of other sporting and public facilities. These latter included the band stand, a statue to Queen Victoria (now missing), the toilet block, the children's health centre, the children's playground, the tennis club, the Ladies' Bowling Club, and the hockey field and changing rooms on the eastern side. (The northern end of this ground covers the former site of the circular pond). It is probable that the external fences, other than those around the cricket ground,



were removed in the 1920s, the period when most public parks were 'opened up' in Melbourne. In recent years many flower beds and shrubberies have been eliminated to simplify maintenance. Fixed sprinkler systems have been installed over large areas to the great benefit of the lawns and the canopy of mature trees.

2.10.1917

The Lands Department withdraws from direct participation in the management of the Gardens and Fitzroy Council is appointed a Committee of Management. Gazetted 10.10.1917.

3.12.1926

Fitzroy Council's proposal to extend the cricket ground to the east, involving removal of the fine avenue of elms along the north-south path beside the railway land, is bitterly opposed in the press and by local citizens. The Minister for Lands forbids their removal. The issue resurfaces from time to time.

9.3.1938

Fitzroy Council informs the Lands Department that the trees have been removed as '... an eyesore and a danger...' Also the trees '... adjacent to the Tennis Courts were throwing shadows on the playing arenas and the roots were also a continuous source of trouble.' Refers to the '... floral decorative strip along the pathway north of the playing arenas from the Brunswick Street entrance eastwards ... which could not be continued to the end of the Courts as desired because of these trees.' Recent improvements described include incorporation of disused Railway land on each side of the line after removal of the hedges and picket fences. Also removal of the footpath on the eastern and southern side abutting Alfred Crescent and its conversion to grass.

27.8.1945

The vicar of St Lukes Church and several other citizens write opposing the Council's plan to build a large playing field in the south east section of the Gardens. It is suggested that this might be used for Sunday football and lead to '... the commercialization of Sport and its attendant evil of Gambling'. Council later reduces proposed sports ground to a size more appropriate for children's play.

20.8.1948

Lands Department approves of the establishment of a ladies' bowling green in the Gardens.

12.12.1967

The *Fitzroy (Edinburgh Gardens) Lands Act, 1967*, approved:

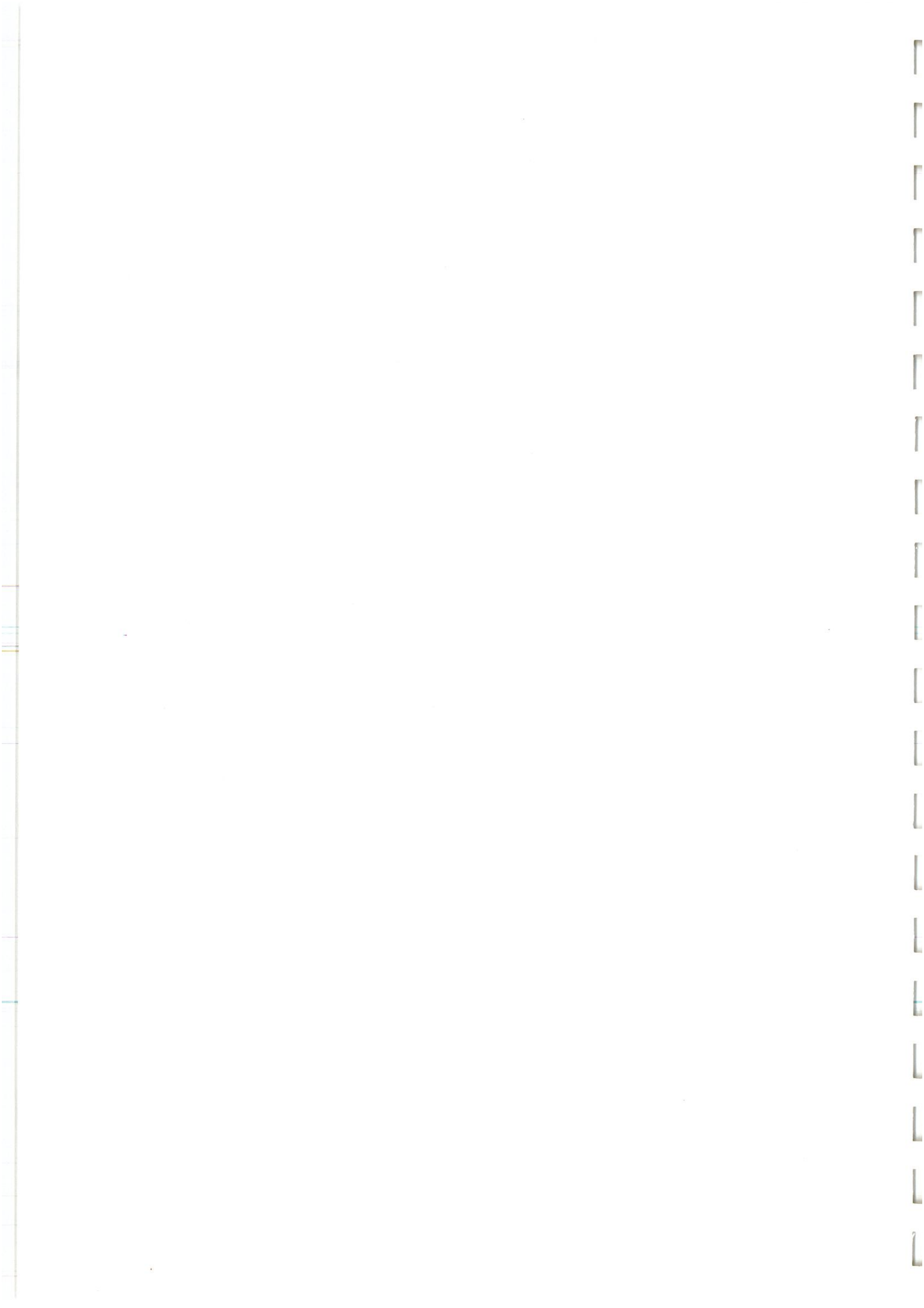
- closes a small portion of Freeman Street and incorporates it in the Gardens,
- appoints corporation of Fitzroy as the committee of management,
- permits corporation to lease the sites occupied for bowling (two), tennis, cricket and football for up to 21 years (subject to the approval of the Governor in Council if the term exceeds three years).

6.10.1977

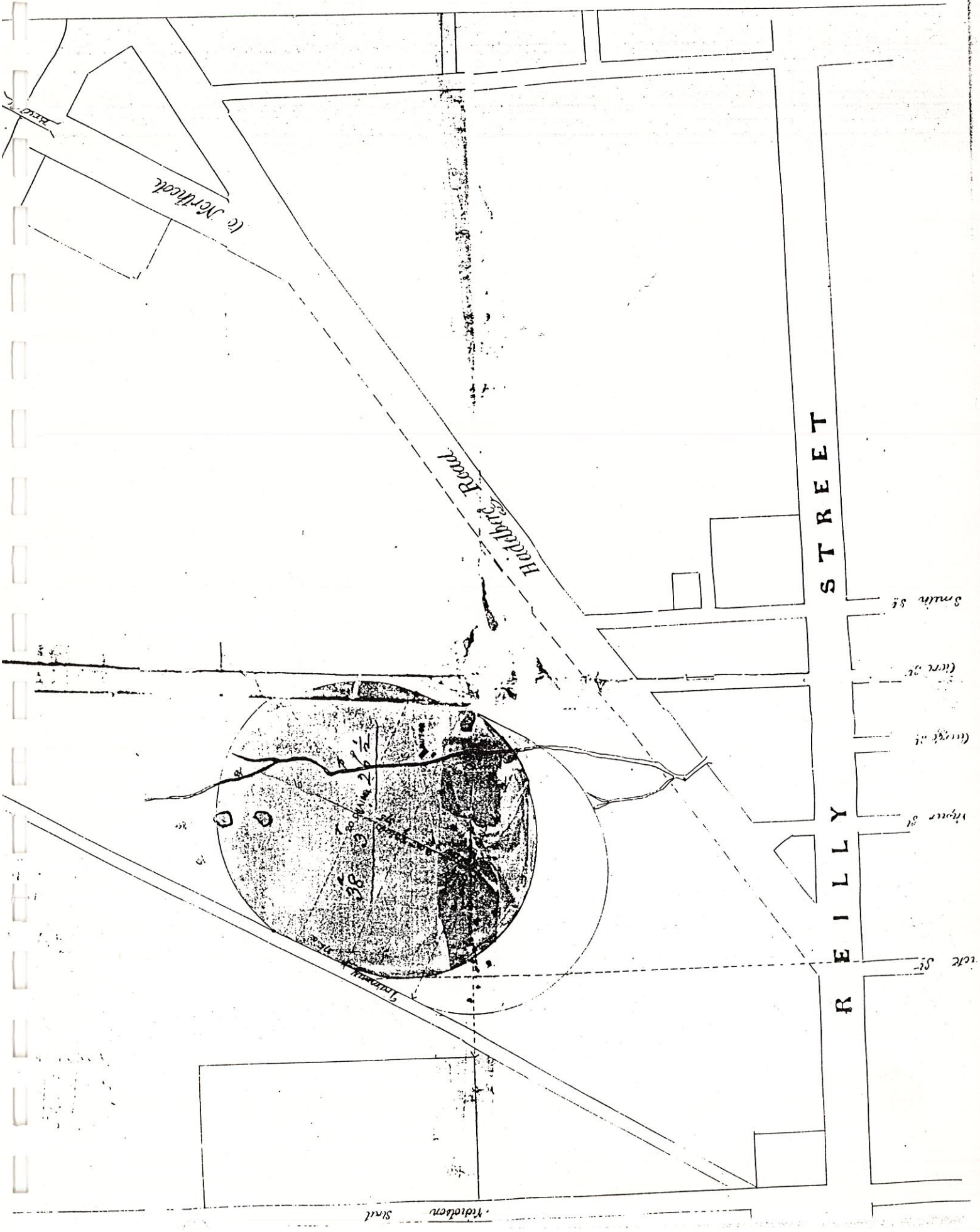
Memo from Lands Department's landscape architect details condition of the Gardens, in particular the Cricket and Football area where most buildings are in a derelict state. 'The Football Club stand, recently destroyed by fire, has been largely demolished ...'

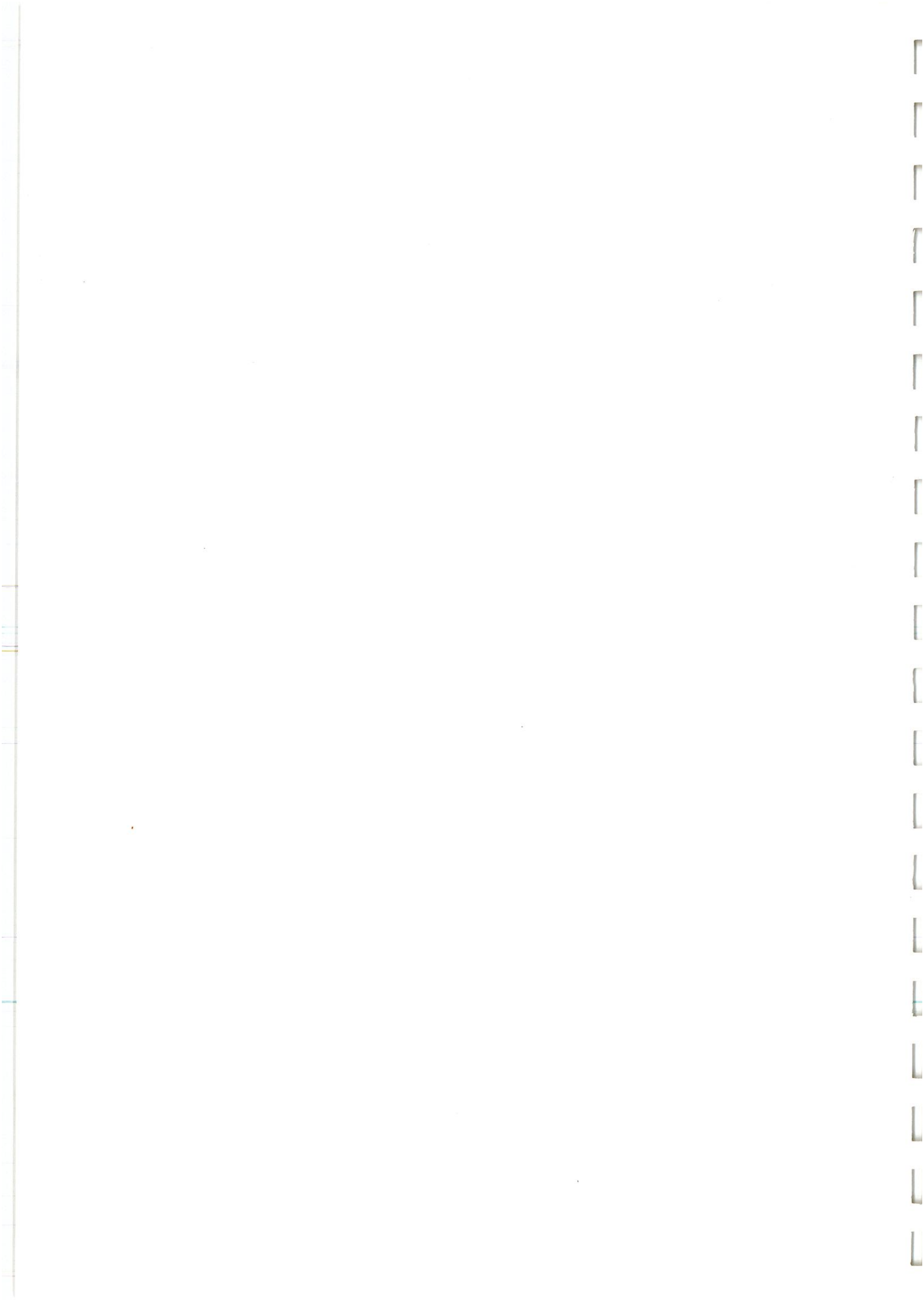
11.3.1980

The City of Fitzroy writes seeking the Minister's approval for its proposal '... to redevelop the Football/Cricket Ground as a community use facility designed to achieve the optimum use of this public open space asset by the maximum number of Fitzroy residents, schools and sporting organizations.' Cost of the works to be approximately \$500,000 over four years.



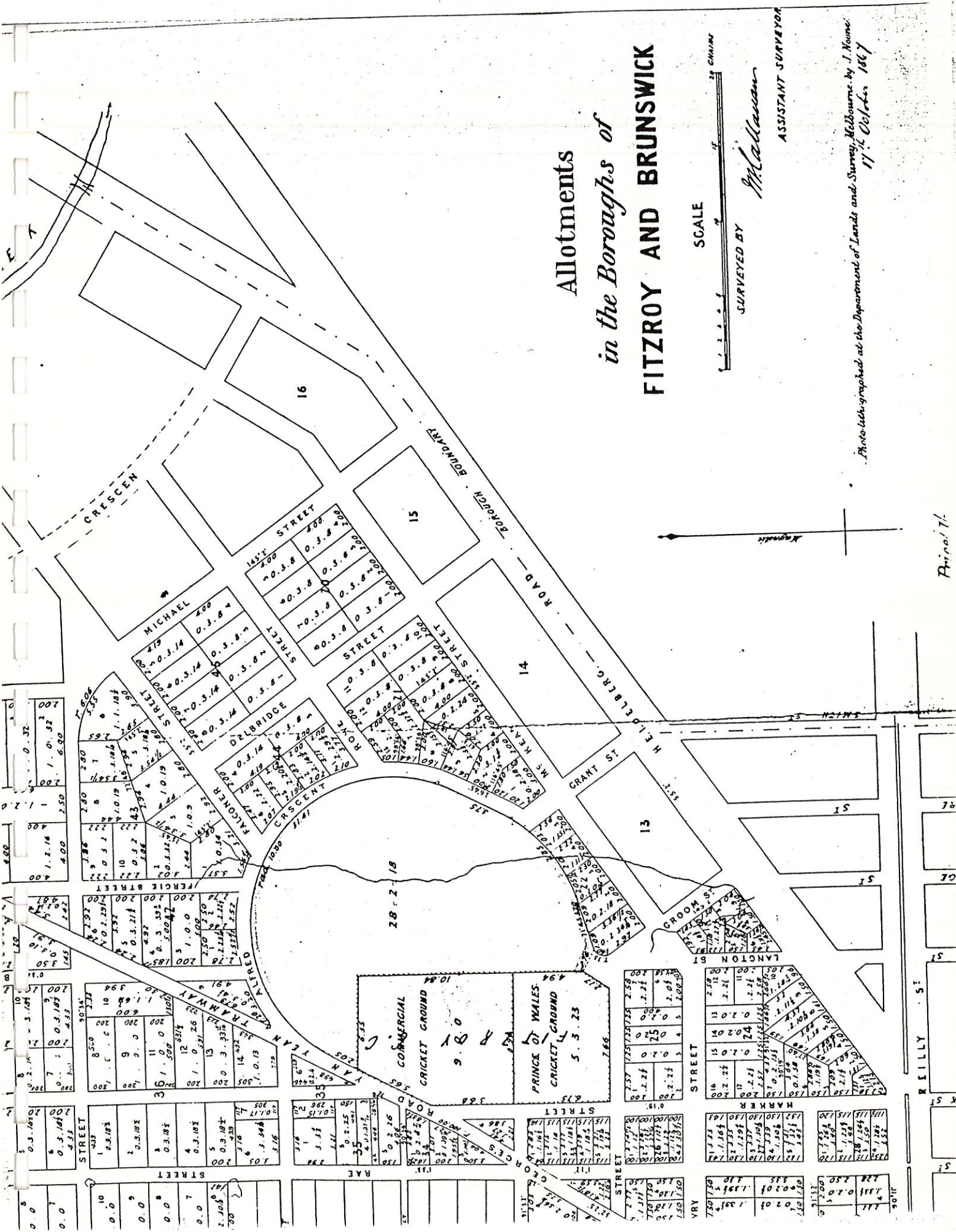
Map 1. Portion of a Lands Department sketch map of February 1862 showing the original outline of the Fitzroy recreation reserve as modified by Clement Hodgkinson. (Scale reduced.)





Map 2.

Portion of Lands Department lithographed map F99 of Fitzroy and Brunswick, October 1867, showing the recreation reserve with its two cricket grounds. (Scale: 1 inch equals 8 chains.)



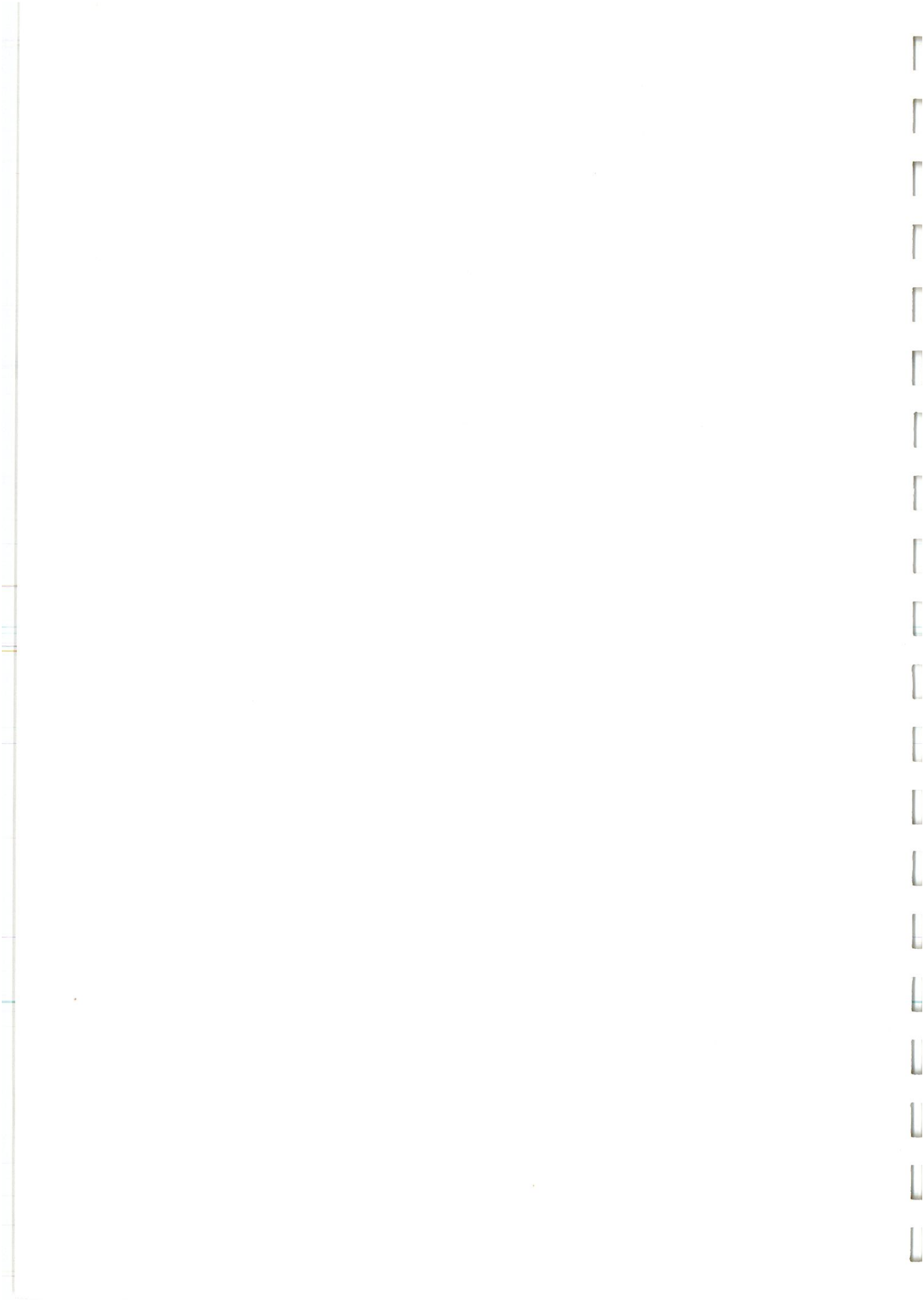
Allotments
in the Boroughs of
FITZROY AND BRUNSWICK

SCALE
1" = 8 CHAINS

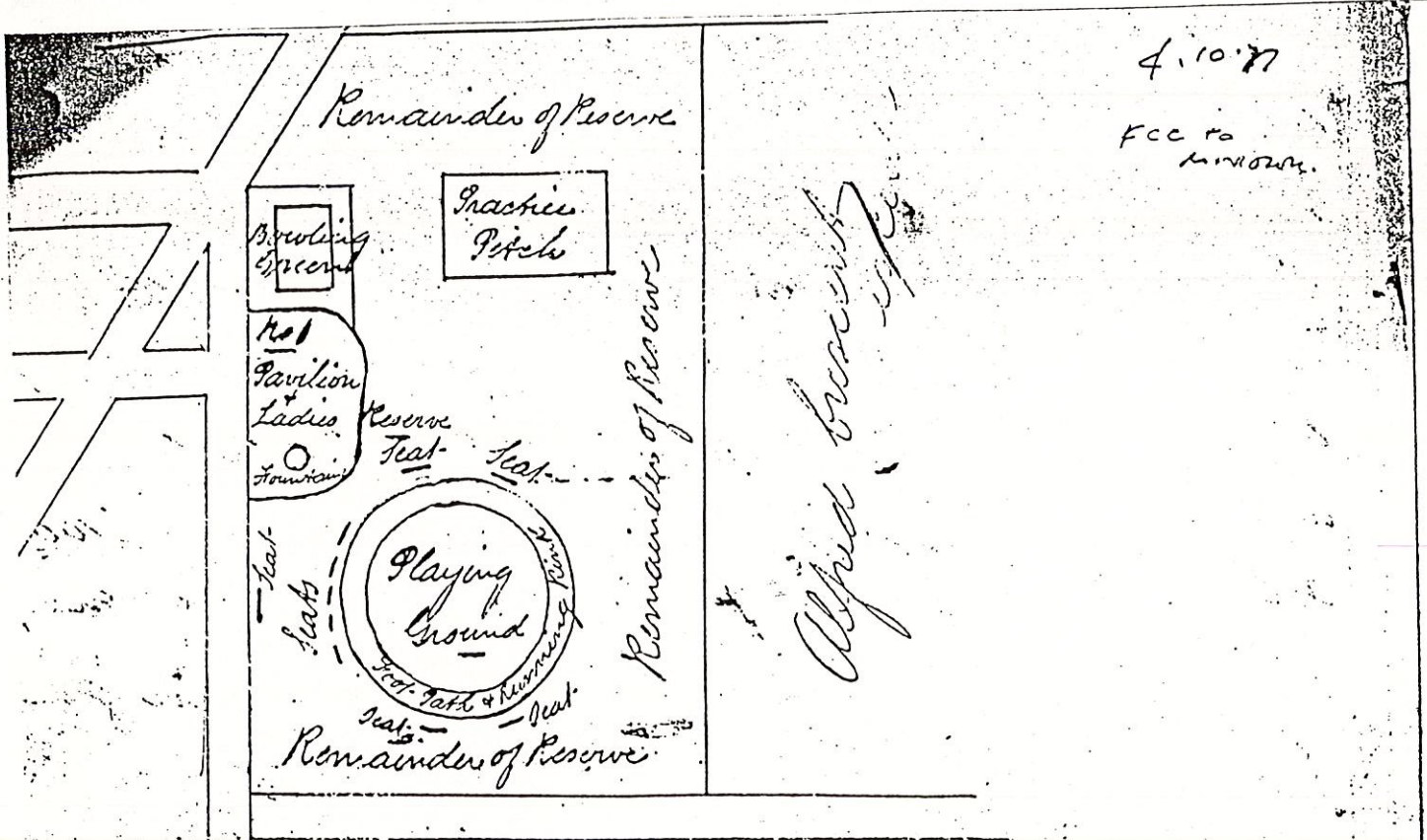
SURVEYED BY
J. McCallum
ASSISTANT SURVEYOR

*Photo-lithographed at the Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, by J. Hume,
17th October 1867*

Printed



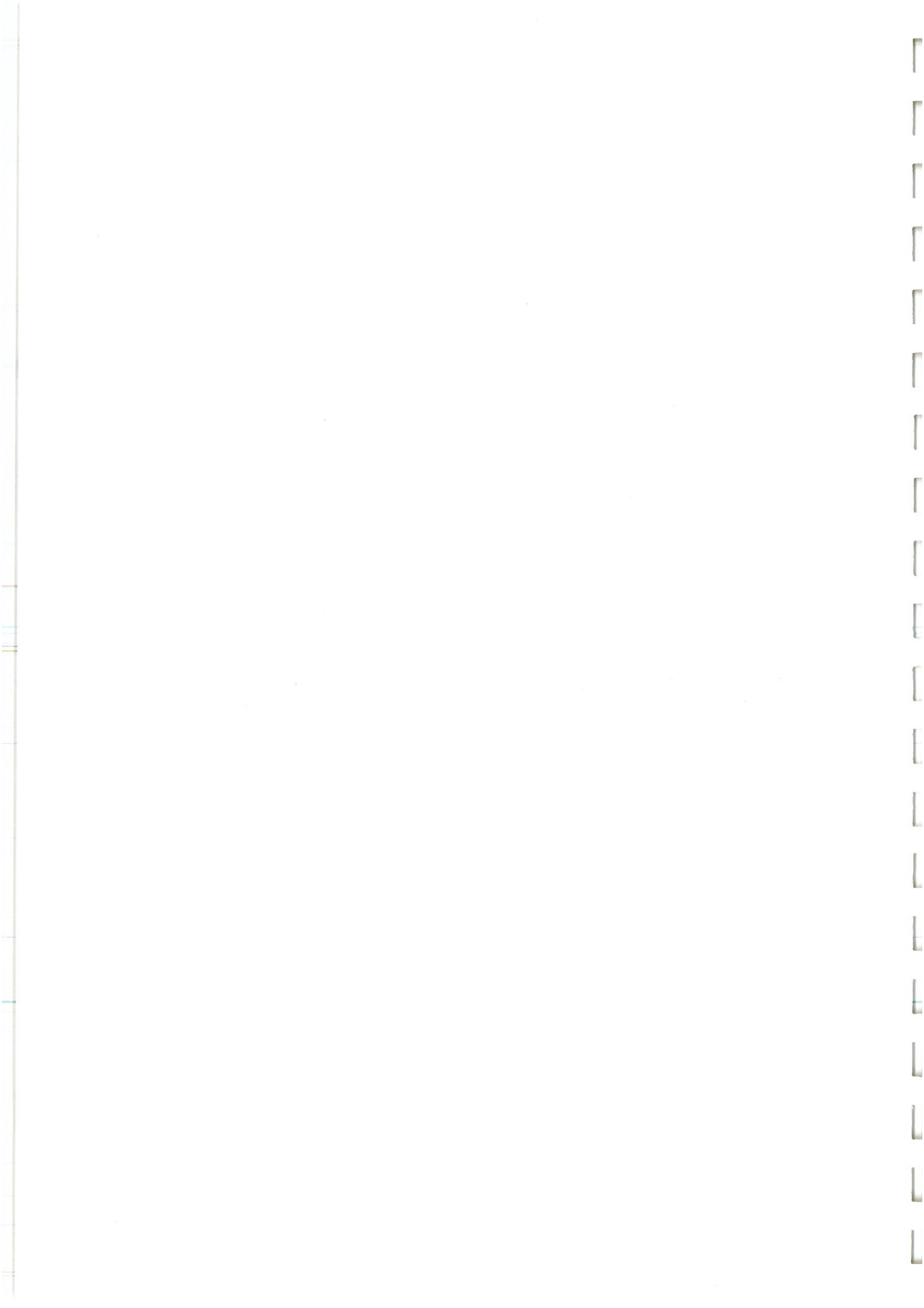
Map 3. Sketch map of portion of the reserve included in the Cricket Club's letter to the Minister for Lands, 4 October 1877. (Not to scale.)



Reserve Ladies Reserve & Pavilion

This Reserve is fenced & planted with Trees, Flowers, & a Fountain erected in the centre of one of the Flower Beds, there is also erected besides Pavilion a Residence for caretaker who we pay an annual salary of £50, for looking after the whole Reserve & keeping same in order, & effecting such improvements as we from time to time are able to make. — Our Revenue amounts to about £75 per year, derived from annual subscriptions of members, those over 20 years paying £1.1.0 & those under 20 years 10/6, the balance between £52 + £75 being spent in materials for use of Players, Water for use of ground, & sundry improvements. — Since the above Reserve was made into a cricket ground (some 12 years ago) about £2000 have been spent on it. — Some two months ago we started a Bowling Green.

except on days when an International —
 Intercolonial — Club and all other important



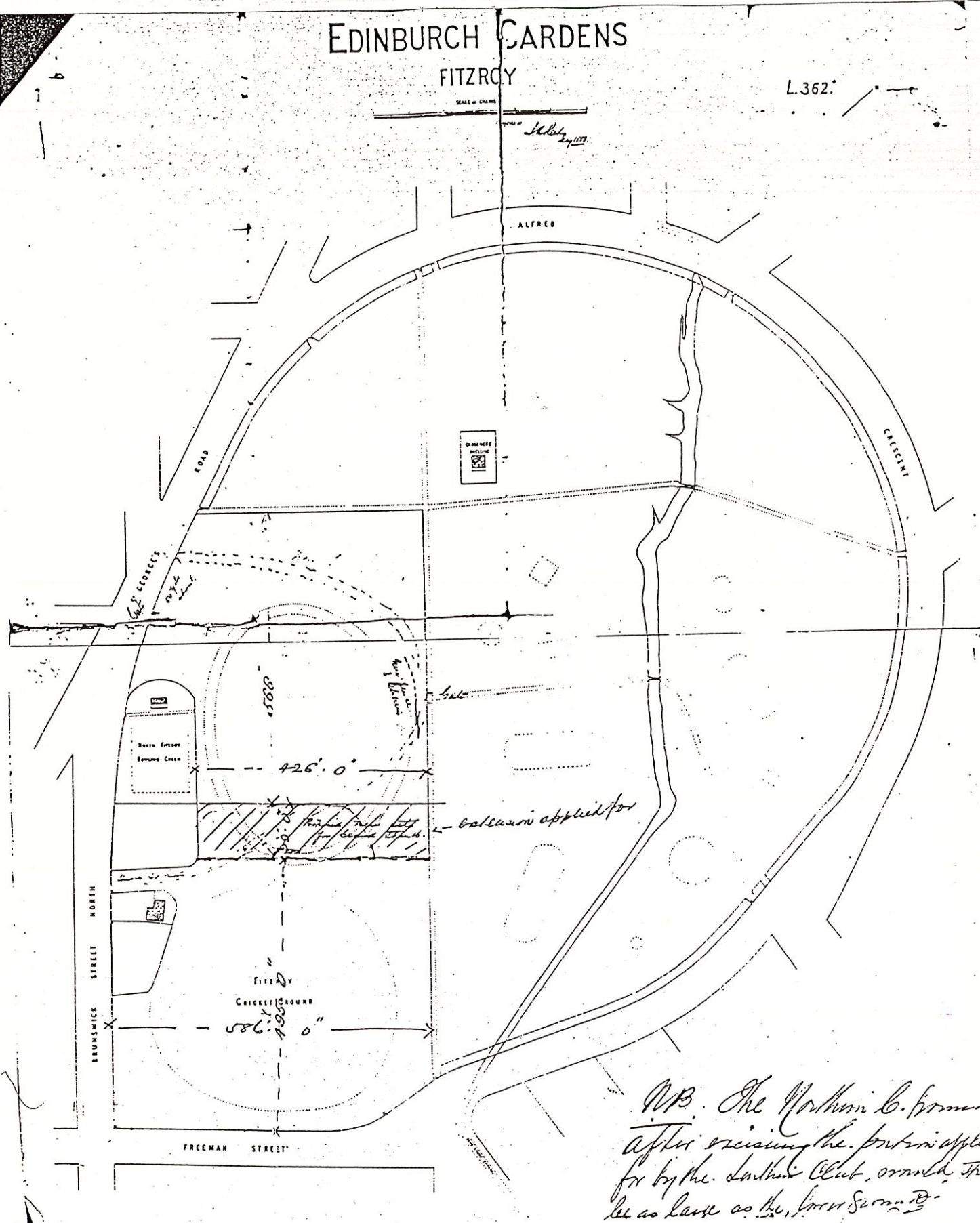
Map 4.

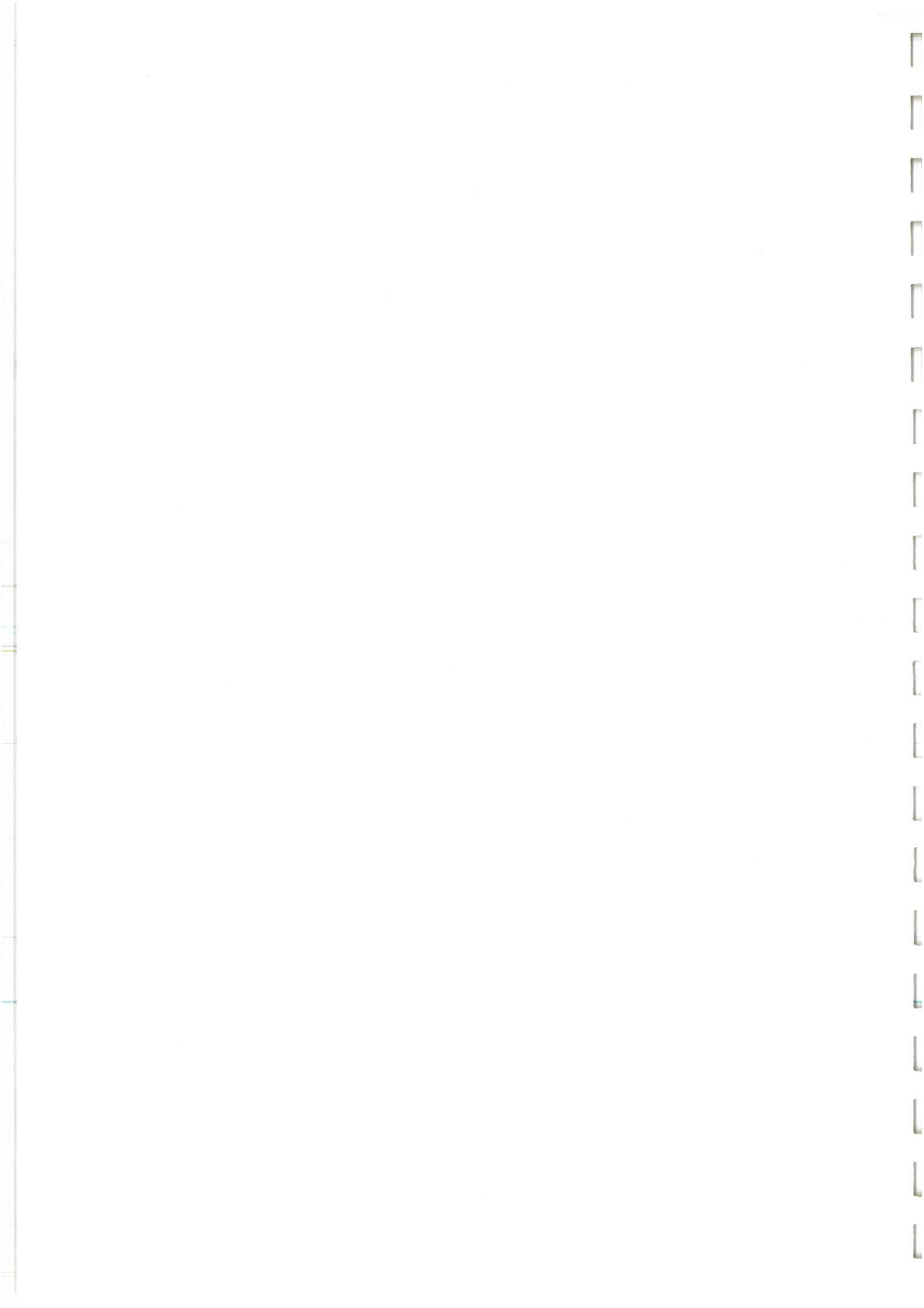
Lands Department lithographed map of the Edinburgh Gardens dated May 1883 with annotations of 1887. (Scale reduced.)

EDINBURGH GARDENS

FITZROY

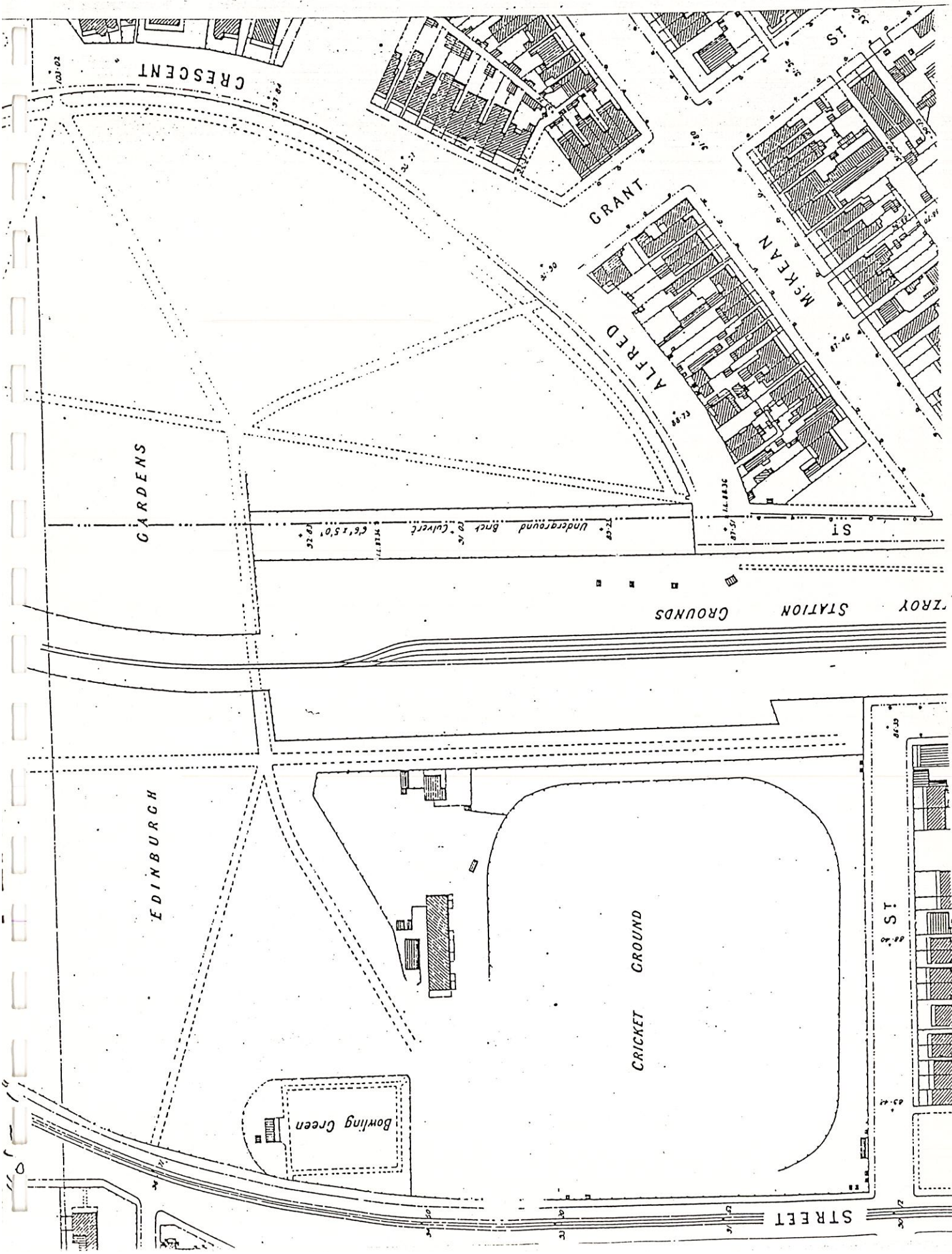
L. 362.

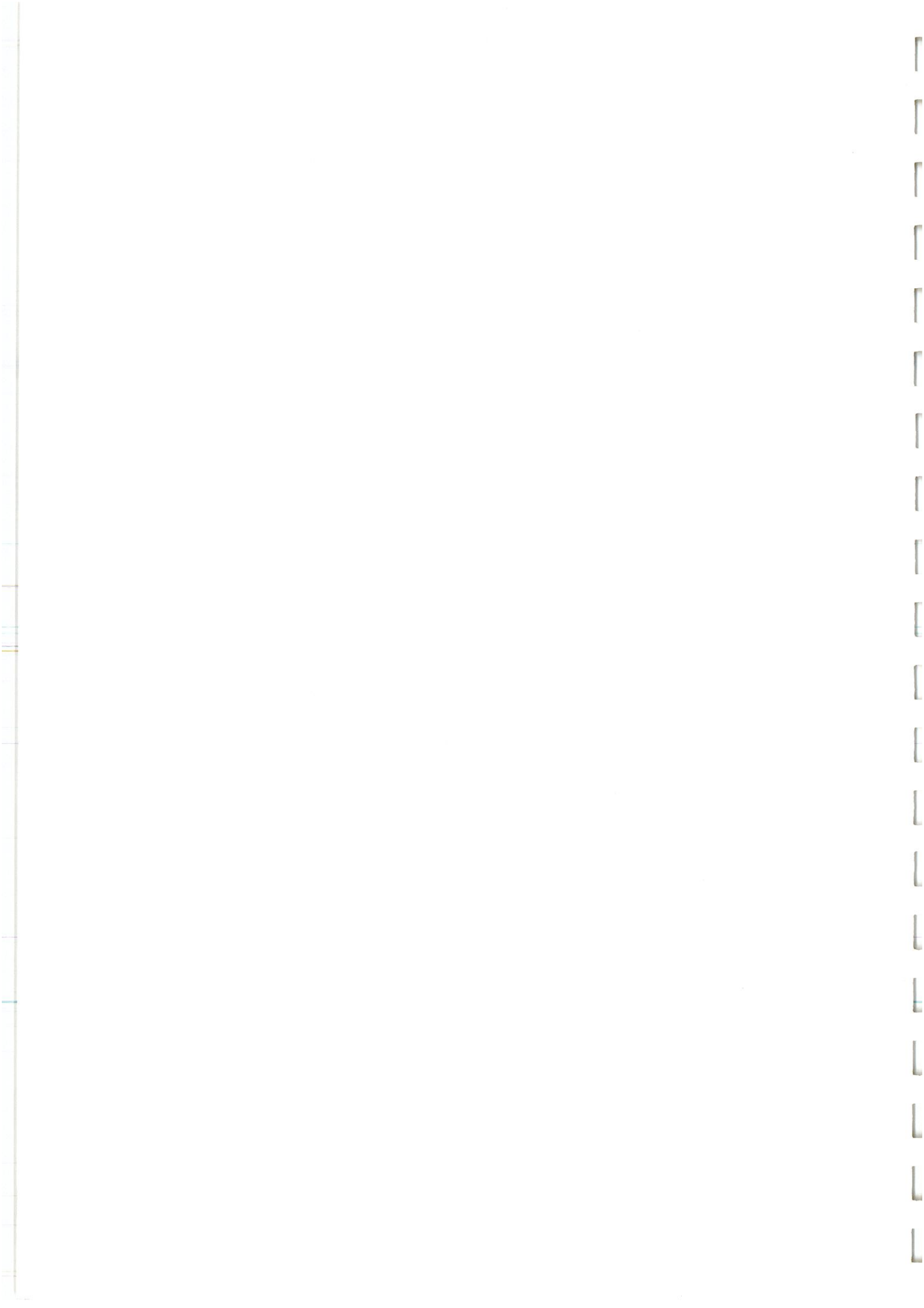




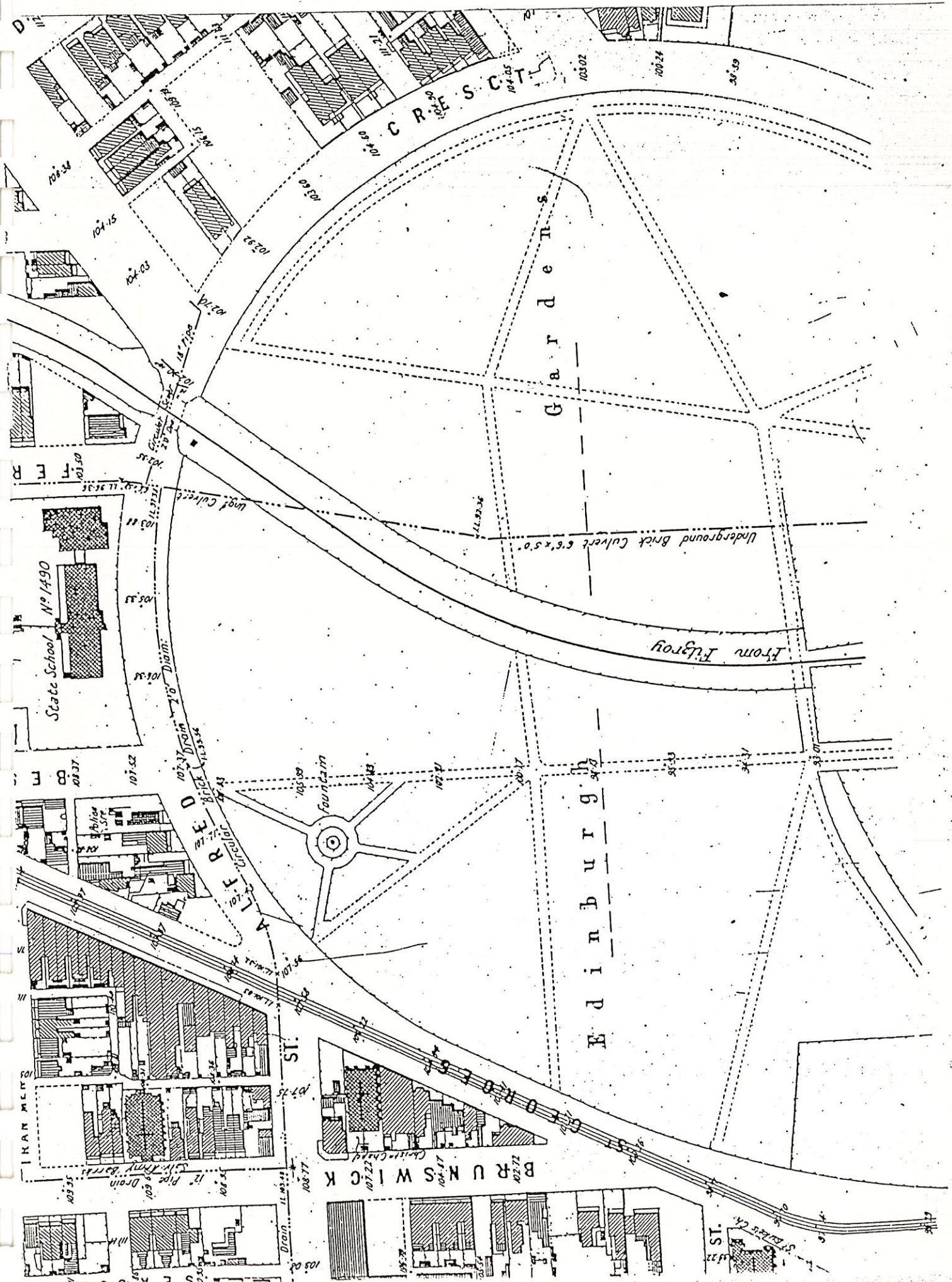
Map 5.

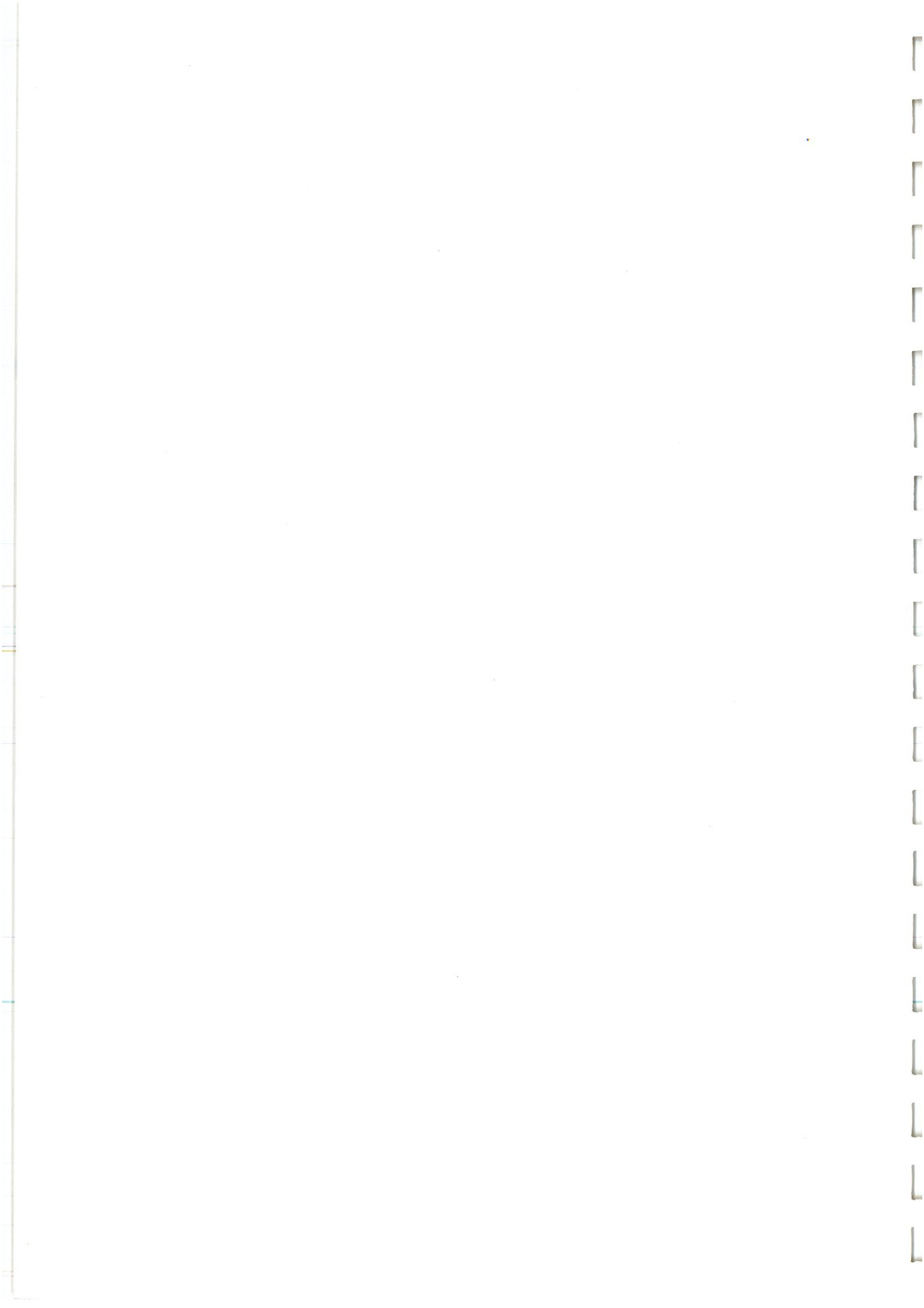
Portion of MMBW Plan 29 (1896) showing the southern end of the Gardens. Note that damage to the original copy has erased the details in the north-west corner of the Cricket Ground. (Scale: 1 inch equals 160 feet.)





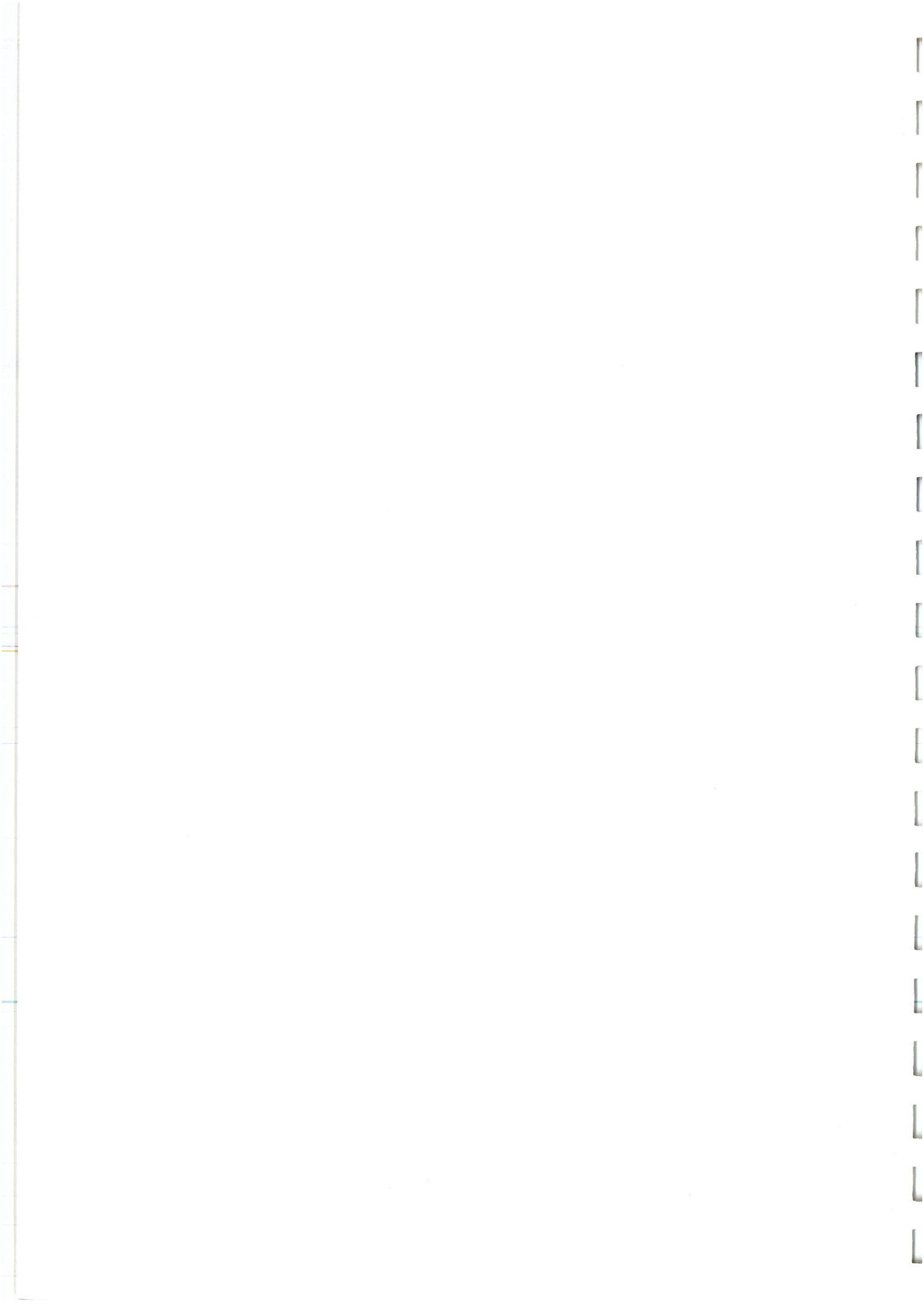
Map 6. Portion of MMBW Plan 50 (1900) showing the northern end of the Gardens.
(Scale: 1 inch equals 160 feet.)





Map 7. Portion of an unidentified map of the Northern Suburbs, circa 1905, showing details of the Edinburgh Gardens. (Scale: 1 inch equals 10 chains.)





APPENDIX B - REPORT FROM TURF RESEARCH AND ADVISORY INST.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs



February 12 1987

Mr R Swanson
Landform Australia
39 Brunswick Street
FITZROY VIC 3065

Reference No. JN:JT:1191

Dear Sir

INSPECTION OF EDINBURGH GARDENS ON THE 9th FEBRUARY 1987

On my recent inspection of the Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy, the following observations and recommendations are made with regard to the turf quality throughout the gardens.

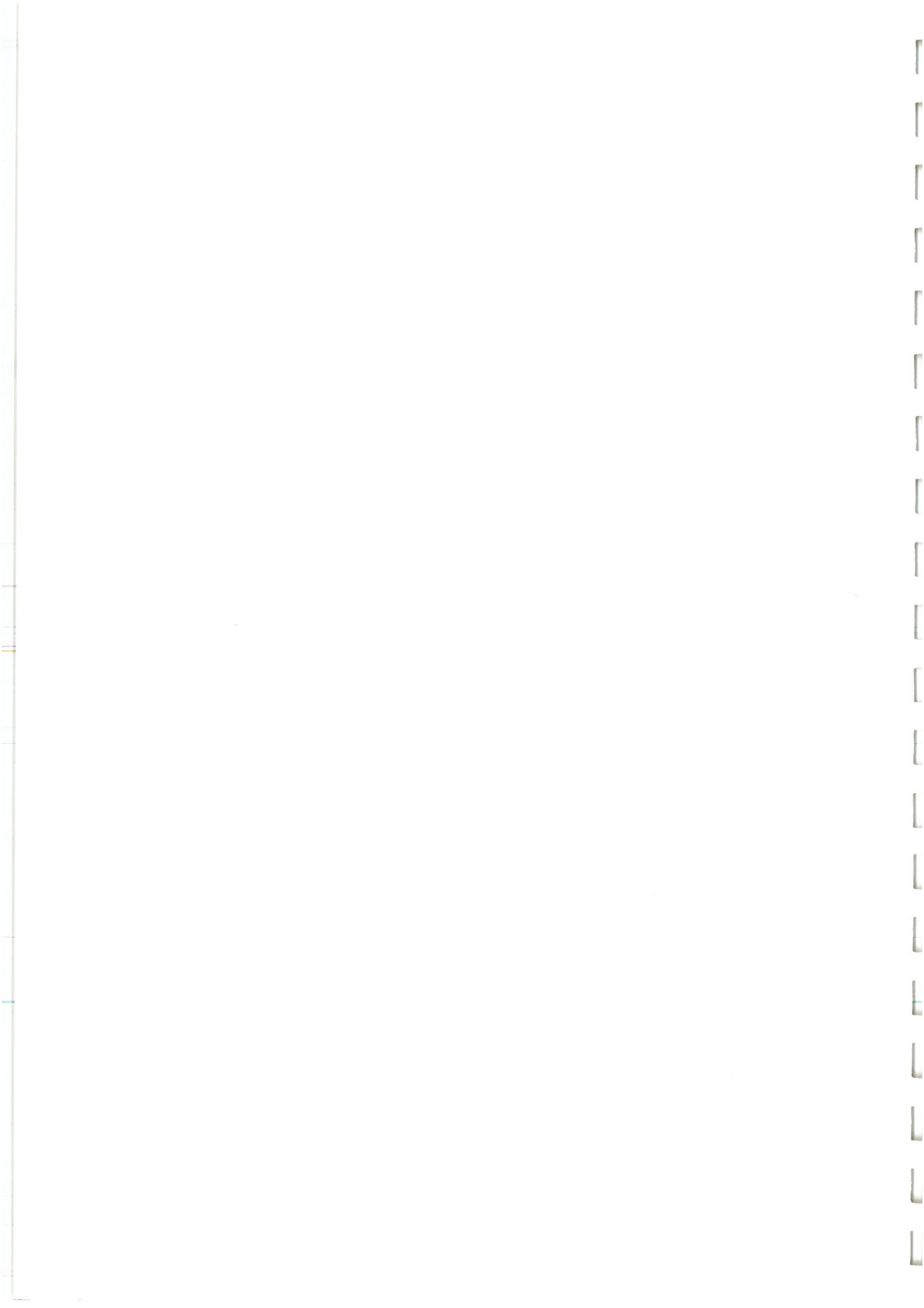
1. SMALL SPORTSFIELD OPPOSITE THE FITZROY PRIMARY SCHOOL

This small sportsfield has a patchy turf cover consisting of kikuyu, wineweed, flatweeds, ryegrass as well as large bare areas. The soil is a hard, compacted clay. This ground obviously receives very heavy wear from the students at the primary school and consequently requires a good fertiliser program, regular watering, annual weed control and overseeding as required.

As the kikuyu is spreading throughout the ground I would suggest that this be encouraged. Kikuyu runners or plugs can be taken and planted into the bare areas. The kikuyu will wear very well and has good recovery. However, it will go into winter dormancy, at which time any wear incurred will not recover until the following spring. It is therefore important that good growth is promoted in the summer and early autumn so that there is minimum damage during winter.

The following program is suggested for the area;

1. Cultivate bare areas and plant sprigs of kikuyu. This needs to be done from September through to April.
2. In the autumn use a broadleaf herbicide containing MCPA plus Dicamba to eliminate the flatweeds and wire weed.
3. Fertilise in the early autumn with an NPK fertiliser such as Pivot 900 at 300kg/ha. In the spring fertilise at 250kg/ha with an NPK fertiliser. Fertilise with ammonium nitrate at 90kg/ha on two occasions during the summer.



2. OVAL

The oval has a reasonable turf cover consisting of kikuyu, clover and ryegrass. The oval has a series of surface undulations that would hold water during the winter months. The oval requires heavy harrowing, topdressing and oversowing with ryegrass. The harrowing will open up the surface and permit the topdressing soil to bind with the existing soil. Some of the undulations are deep and may require several topdressings to reach the required level without smothering the existing grass.

This oval receives heavy use and requires an adequate fertiliser program. The following program is recommended;

autumn: Pivot 900 or similar at 350kg/ha
winter: Ammonium Nitrate at 90kg/ha
spring: Pivot 900 at 250kg/ha
summer 2 applications of ammonium nitrate at 70kg/ha application.

The oval is infested with flatweeds and requires similar treatment to the previous sportsfield. The ground can be oversown in autumn, after the flatweeds have been sprayed, with Victorian perennial Ryegrass at 100kg/ha.

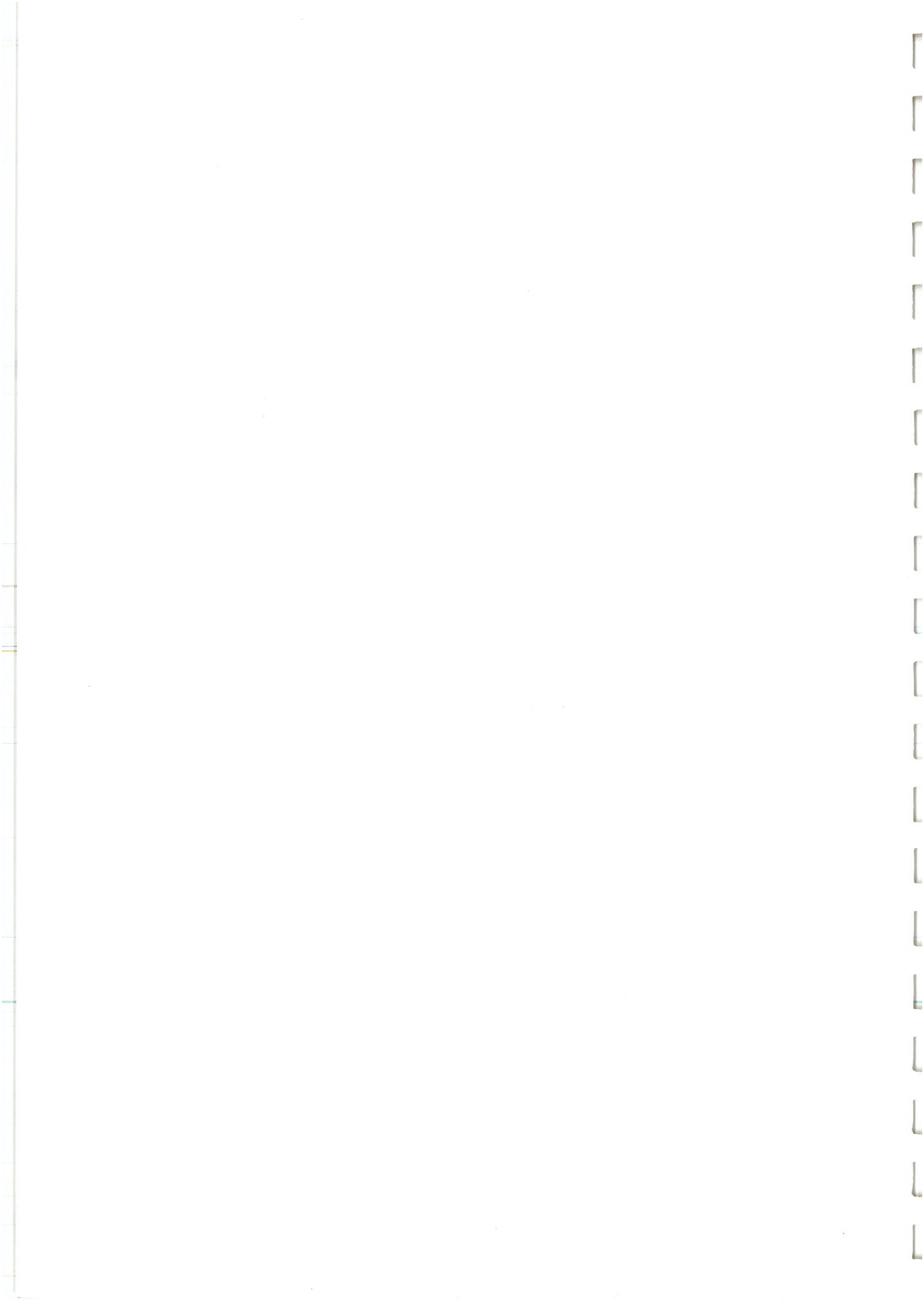
3. GENERAL GRASSED AREAS UNDER TREES

The trees in the park provide a dense shade cover. The area under the trees has a very poor grass cover and the soil is compacted. It will be difficult to maintain a substantial turf cover under these conditions, regardless of the grass type. The area under the trees requires rotary hoeing, a seed bed prepared, a fertiliser added and then sown with a 50:50 mix of ryegrass and creeping red fescue at 4kg/100m².

To avoid putting excessive stress on the grass growing under the trees it will have to be mown at no less than 50mm. Low mowing will eliminate the creeping red fescue which is shade tolerant but will not tolerate low mowing. Also, by allowing the grass to grow higher it will be better able to withstand any wear it receives. Fertilising twice a year with Pivot 900 at 200-300kg/ha will help maintain the turf.

4. GENERAL GRASSED AREAS - OPEN POSITION

The grassed areas that in an open position with few trees have a good cover of ryegrass, kikuyu and clover. Regular mowing, fertilising and watering will be sufficient to maintain these areas. Fertilise these areas at 200-300 kg/ha of Pivot 900 twice a year.



- 3 -

5. PLAYGROUND

The playground presently does not have a grass cover but consists of river washed sand over a compacted base. If a grass cover is to be considered then the area requires deep rotary hoeing and then planted with kikuyu. A watering system would be required to at least get the kikuyu established. As we discussed, it will not be possible to maintain a grass cover under the swings, etc. because of the excessive wear.

If you have any queries please contact the Institute.

Yours faithfully



J. NEYLAN
TURF RESEARCH OFFICER

