



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION**

### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 2.1 Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants
- 2.4.2 Migrating to seek opportunity
- 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries
- 6.2 Establishing schools
- 8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sports
- 8.1.3 Developing public parks and gardens
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 8.10.1 Making music
- 9.7.2 Remembering the dead

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 101 Immigration, emigration & refugees
- 102 Aboriginal occupation
- 302 Rural industry & market gardening
- 402 Education & science
- 405 Sport, recreation & entertainment
- 406 Religion
- 407 Cultural activities

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is a good example of an urban park laid out mainly in the Inter-War City Beautiful style, including a tennis court complex, with many fine mature and adolescent trees scattered over most of the park's area, generally in an undulating lawn setting. (Criterion 1.1)

Lee Hop's Cottage is a representative example of a simple Federation Bungalow style cottage, restored and put to an adaptive re-use. (Criterion 1.1)

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* reveals vestigial evidence of its pre-history as a lake through its landform, together with indications of early

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• For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

subdivision through mature trees such as the Moreton Bay Fig Trees, and its evolution as a park through its sequence of plantings from pre-settlement to the present. (Criterion 1.1)

The mature Norfolk Island Pines at *Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites*, and to a lesser extent the Port Jackson Fig Trees and Moreton Bay Fig Trees, are notable in the urban context and are a local landmark. (Criterion 1.3)

## **11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* provides archaeological evidence of human occupation and evolution of the place from use by Nyungar people prior to 1829 European settlement through to the 1870s, as a gathering place for Nyungar people in the early colonial period, and thereafter its dense and varied history, including use of much of the area by first British and later Chinese market gardeners taking advantage of the former wetlands, together with more legible evidence of its subsequent development as a park and recreation area. (Criterion 2.1)

From 1915 to 1917, Palmerston House (formerly located on site; now demolished) was owned and occupied by the Presbyterian Church, for the newly established Presbyterian Ladies' College. (Criterion 2.1)

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* reflects phases and activities of historic importance from prior to European settlement in 1829, through the early contact period, 1870s consolidation and expansion when Lake Henderson was drained, sub-divisions and Chinese immigration, and development of parks in the City of Perth in inter-war and post World War II periods. (Criterion 2.2)

The tennis courts at *Robertson Park* are home to the Western Australian Tennis Veterans. (Criterion 2.3)

The site of Little Shule, in the northeast section of the park, is associated with the Perth Jewish Association, having housed their synagogue from 1918 to 1973. (Criterion 2.3)

The AIDS Memorial at *Robertson Park*, dedicated to those who have died from this disease, is the first such memorial in Perth. (Criterion 2.4)

## **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is held to be important by archaeologists as a potential research site, teaching site, type locality and reference or benchmark site that may yield information about Aboriginal occupation of the wetland area pre and post European settlement, materials and construction techniques employed in the construction of the convict built timber drain, and information relating to the occupation and use of the place for various purposes, in particular farming and market gardening as practised first by British and later by Chinese gardeners, from the 1870s to 1920s. (Criteria 3.1 and 3.2)

## **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is valued by the community for social, cultural and aesthetic reasons, as a valued recreation area and community asset, including the tennis courts and the AIDS Memorial. (Criterion 4.1)

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is valued by the community of the Town of Vincent, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Municipal Heritage Inventory and by vigorous efforts of the community favouring extension of the parkland rather

than alienation of the bottle yard site, and the continued interest and involvement evident in community consultation relating to the place. (Criterion 4.1)

Some Nyungar people claim a spiritual association with the chain of lakes north of central Perth of which the former Lake Henderson was a part. (Criterion 5.1)

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* contributes to the community's sense of place as a local park on Fitzgerald Street, large tennis centre off Fitzgerald and Randell Streets, and the three Moreton Bay fig trees at the north-east are landmark trees off Palmerston Street. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1. RARITY**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* has significant potential for further archaeological investigation and offers the opportunity to examine activities from pre-settlement to the present. The site offers a complex and diverse range of activities for examination and is highly accessible for study. (Criterion 5.1)

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is unusual in the Perth context where most parks were created as single reserves and have changed little in terms of the cadastres. *Robertson Park*, by way of contrast, has been an evolving and growing park, with additional land being acquired over an extended period. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is representative of an evolving urban park, overlaying and replacing a range of other historic activities including pre-settlement topography and activities, convict built drainage, market gardening, and a variety of construction activities and sequences of planting. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* has been built up over time in an ad hoc manner. There have been significant tree losses over time and some poor tree management in the past, but the remaining elements are well maintained generally and many of the archaeological sites noted in the documentary evidence are protected by being well covered. The park is in a constant state of change and upgrading by degree, with elements being replaced when required, tree surgery being carried out, and conservation works to items such as Lee Hop's Cottage. Some Port Jackson Figs are in poor condition and have not responded to treatments including mulching and pruning.<sup>1</sup> Some elements such as the grass court perimeter fencing are in poor condition. On the whole the place is in good condition.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The land now included in the curtilage of *Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is the product of a continuing process of acquisitions. The range of uses that were part of this land have been simplified over time to the extent that the acquisitions have consolidated the park and reduced the complexity of the place. While park uses are intact, other uses have been removed leaving behind an archaeological record. In terms of the use of the place as a park, however, its integrity remains high.

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<sup>1</sup> Email to HCWA from Hannah Eames, Senior Heritage Officer, Town of Vincent, 1/12/2003

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* has undergone numerous changes in its time, including its gradual expansion. Though there is an authentic archaeological record and part of the lake's form is legible in the topography, the landscape and buildings, playing surfaces and furniture have been subject to numerous changes and replacement. Generally the place retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Philip Griffiths, Architect. Landscape Evidence based on information contained in the Hyde Park Precinct Group's (HPPG) Improvement Plan for Robertson Park, with the analysis of the plantings drawn from the work prepared by John Viska, Chairman, WA Branch of the Garden's History Society, contained in Chris Hair's, *The Evolution of Robertson Park and its Neighbourhood*, September 1997.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* comprises a filled in lake, a tennis club with all weather and grass courts, children's play areas, Lee Hop's Cottage, former Bottle Yard, Halvorsen Hall, AIDS Memorial, open grassed areas and groups of tree plantings representing an extensive period of the park's history. The park contains evidence of activity since before European settlement to the present. In a number of reports, the park has been described in sections including the Tennis section (north-west), Cathedral section (west), Cottage section (south west), Women's Field section, Central section, Entry Avenue section (off Palmerston Street), Palmerston House section, and Little Shule section (north-east).

Following the foundation of Perth on 12 August 1829, the townsite of Perth was laid out between Mount Eliza and Heirisson Island, facing the Swan River on the south, and with a chain of swamps and lagoons to the north. This included the area that European settlers later named Lake Henderson, which was known to Indigenous peoples as Boojoormelup.<sup>2</sup> Part of this area would later become *Robertson Park*.

From the 1840s, land to the north of the original townsite began to be taken up for farmlets and market gardens when drainage of the wetlands made the fertile swampland available for agriculture. In early 1850, Lake Henderson was the site of a ceremonial gathering of more than 300 Aboriginal people from up to 200 miles away.<sup>3</sup> In the 1860s, photographs of Lake Henderson show its original form with native vegetation, together with Nyungar people who frequented the area in this period.<sup>4</sup>

Photographs of Lake Henderson in 1868 show flora typically associated with the wetlands of the Bassendean Sands, including Paperbarks, Flooded Gums, Sheoaks, Banksias and Wattles.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Information from DOLA Geographic Services. Cited in Hocking Planning & Architecture Lee Hop's Garden (site), Lee Hop's Cottage, Halvorsen Hall, Robertson Park, North Perth Conservation Plan for the Town of Vincent, December 2000, p. 6. Robertson Park is referred to as Boojoormelup throughout 'Report on an ethnographic survey of the proposed development at Robertson Park, Town of Vincent, WA' (Stuart Fisher & Associates, October 2000). This information was gathered through archival research, consultation with Aboriginal Elders, Native Title Claimant Groups and other relevant organisations. On the basis of this documentation the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee determined that Boojoormelup was a site within the meaning of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (DIA Site 17849). See also 'Report on an ethno historical investigation into the Aboriginal heritage of the Town of Vincent for the Traditional Aboriginal Places Heritage Trail' (Rodney Harrison, January 2000).

<sup>3</sup> *Inquirer* 23 January 1850, cited in Report on an ethnographic survey of the proposed development of Robertson Park, prepared by Stuart Fisher and associates for the Town of Vincent, October 2000, p. i.

<sup>4</sup> A.H. Stone, 1860s, Battye Library 21483P, reproduced in Seddon, George and Ravine, David *A City and its Setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986) p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Battye Library Pictorial Collection, 21483P and 21448P.

By the 1870s, the city centre of Perth was consolidated on the earlier grid, and there were about 800 houses accommodating some 4,600 people.<sup>6</sup> In 1872, to facilitate the draining of Lake Henderson, the City of Perth acquired Lots N45, N50, Y248 and Y232, which became Reserve 21.<sup>7</sup> The land in this area was divided into 1.2-acre lots. In 1873, James Fox acquired Lot Y229, where he built his first dwelling, and Lots Y230 and Y231. He established market gardens on the lots, which would later become part of *Robertson Park*, as would the adjoining Lot Y232.<sup>8</sup> Circa 1877, timber drains were built by convicts under government supervision, with the cost of materials met by the owners of the land. Perth City Council became responsible for the maintenance of the drains.<sup>9</sup> The western portion of the drain remained an open ditch, which was gradually infilled. In 2000, it was reported that as this 'provided an obvious place for residents and market gardeners to have dumped their refuse before the instigation of regular council rubbish removal', this portion of the drain was 'likely to contain significant archaeological deposits' relating to use of the area prior to the establishment of the tennis courts in the late 1920s.<sup>10</sup>

In 1877, a map shows the lots in the lake area, with Fitzgerald, Randell, Palmerston and Newcastle Streets, and the drainage reserve. Some market gardens were already established, an activity that continued in the area of the future *Robertson Park* to the mid 1920s.<sup>11</sup> Circa 1880, Fox built a new dwelling on Lot Y230, (later 186 Fitzgerald St.). He continued to occupy his lots to 1891, when he sold Lots Y229 and Y230 to John Chipper, who leased them for market gardening during his ownership. By c.1884, market gardens were established on the other lots fronting Fitzgerald Street, at Lots Y227, Y228, Y233 and Y234, worked by gardeners of British origin.<sup>12</sup> All these sites have considerable potential archaeological value as some of the earliest sites used for market gardening by European settlers in the lakes area, and subsequently worked by Chinese market gardeners. They have remained relatively undisturbed, as they were converted to park and recreational use from the 1920s.<sup>13</sup> From the mid 1890s, the Western Australian Gold Boom resulted in a huge increase in population and led to a building boom in Perth. With considerable expansion of residential and commercial areas to the north, east, and west of the city, many of the large Perth Town Lots were sub-divided. In September 1895, attention was drawn to the 'neglect' of some of the few open public recreation spaces in Perth,

6 Campbell, Robin McK. in Pitt Morrison, Margaret, and White, John (Eds.) *Western Towns and Buildings* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1979) p. 104.

7 Hocking Planning & Architecture Lee Hop's Garden (site), Lee Hop's Cottage, Halvorsen Hall, Robertson Park, North Perth Conservation Plan for the Town of Vincent, December 2000, p. 7.

8 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit.

9 Report of City Engineer, in City of Perth, SROWA AN 20/5 Acc. 3054 Item 252/1907, 1 July 1907.

10 Report of an archaeological survey of Robertson Park Prepared by Kathryn Przywolnik and Rodney Harrison, with contributions by Shane Burke of the Centre for Archaeology, University of Western Australia, for the Town of Vincent, November 2000, p. 19.

11 Hair, Chris 'The Evolution of Robertson Park and its Neighbourhood' an extract from Hyde Park Precinct Group Inc Proposal for a Robertson Park Improvement Plan, September 1997, p. 14 and p. 56; and Map 87C, Batty Library. Note: Market gardening in the vicinity continued into the late 1940s, at what is now known Dorrien Gardens. (ibid.) Randell Street was named after George Randell, Chairman of Perth City Council, 1873, MLA (1875-78), Mayor of Perth (1885), and MLC (1897). Palmerston Street was named after Lord Palmerston, Britain's Secretary of the Exchequer.

12 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit.; City of Perth Rate Books, 1886-1894; and Plan, 1884, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997.

13 Archaeologists Gaye Nayton and Shane Burke, telephone conversations with Robin Chinnery, July 2003.

and it was recommended that the Council look to provide the necessary 'breathing spaces' for the growing populace.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1896, J.G. Braithwaite (b. 1865, Hornsby, Yorkshire) took up his appointment as municipal gardener for the City of Perth. A qualified journeyman gardener, he had emigrated to Victoria in 1889, where he worked as head gardener on estates near Melbourne.<sup>15</sup> As Perth's City Gardener until his death in 1936, he was responsible for the laying out and planting of most of the City's parks and gardens, including *Robertson Park*. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, improvements were made to the city's parks and gardens and streets were planted with various species of foliage plants. Trees selected as best suited to the climate and surrounding conditions included Eucalypts, Pepper trees (*Schinus molle*), Wattle (*Acacias*), *Grevilleas*, *Stercullius*, *Jacaranda*, Willow (*Salix*) and Cypress (*Cupressus*). Braithwaite established nurseries at Victoria Park, Trafalgar Road, East Perth, to provide plants for these purposes.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s, there was a new wave of Chinese immigrants to Western Australia, some of whom turned to market gardening. The market gardens around the city came to be almost exclusively operated by Chinese immigrants, and hence were known as the Chinese gardens. Two of the earliest Chinese gardeners in the area which later became *Robertson Park*, were Lee Lock (Lee Nam Lock), who leased land owned at the corner of Fitzgerald and Randell Streets in 1896, and Sam Wah, who leased Lot Y244 in 1897.<sup>17</sup>

In 1897, a Sewerage plan shows the area of the future *Robertson Park*, with various drains and sewers including the 1870s works. To the south of Palmerston House, the largest building in the area, are three smaller dwellings fronting Palmerston Street, north of the drain. There are several buildings near the intersection of Palmerston and Randell Streets, and a small dwelling and associated outbuilding at the corner of Randell and Fitzgerald Street. There are two further small dwellings fronting Fitzgerald Street.<sup>18</sup>

By 1900, the City Council was responsible for 14 reserves in Perth, a total area of 136 acres.<sup>19</sup> In 1900, a map of Perth shows the sub-division of Lots Y227 and Y228 into smaller lots, and the street line of Carrick Street (renamed Stuart Street, c. 1927-28, as a western extension of the existing Stuart Street) from Fitzgerald Street east to Palmerston Street.<sup>20</sup> By 1902, much of the area of the future *Robertson Park* was being worked by Chinese market gardeners, who leased the land, including Lots Y229 and Y230, which had been acquired by Dr Daniel Kenny, medical practitioner, a substantial investor in real estate.<sup>21</sup> These gardeners included Ah Hong, Lee Hop, Ah Wing, Lee Leene (leasing land,

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14 *Inquirer* 13 September 1895, p. 8.

15 *West Australian* 29 August 1925, p. 6.

16 City of Perth Mayor's Reports, 1896-1936.

17 City of Perth Rate Books, 1896-98; and Atkinson, Anne (Compiler) *Asian Immigrants to Western Australia 1829-1901 The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* Vol. V (UWA Press, Nedlands, 1988) p. 198. Note: The dwelling fronting Fitzgerald St. was separately leased. (City of Perth Rate Book)

18 Perth Sewerage PWDWA 5647 SROWA Cons. 1647, 1897.

19 'Beautifying Perth' news cutting, no details, 20 June 1934.

20 City of Perth, Tax Map, 1901.

21 City of Perth Rate Books, 1902; and Stannage, C.T. *The People of Perth* (Perth City Council, Perth, 1979) p. 232.

previously leased to his brother, Lee Lock), Ah Quing and Ah Kem.<sup>22</sup> Stables and two houses were built at the corner of Randell and Palmerston Streets.<sup>23</sup>

By 1912-13, Perth was considered to be 'fairly well provided with "lungs" — Russell, Weld and Delhi Squares, Queen's Gardens, public gardens, and various other open spaces for recreation', when W.E. Bold, City of Perth Town Clerk (1901-44), who espoused the City Beautiful model, proposed a 'green belt' around the city.<sup>24</sup> On his recommendation, from 1913, the City purchased and reclaimed the inner city market gardens for conversion to parks and reserves, including land for the future *Robertson Park*.<sup>25</sup> In 1913, Bold initiated Perth's first purpose built children's playground at the Stuart Street Reserve, at the corner of Stuart and Lake Streets,<sup>26</sup> which was officially opened on 16 September 1916.<sup>27</sup> This reserve continues in 2005 to function as a children's playground, with modern play equipment and some plantings likely to date from the World War I era, and is located diagonally opposite the Bottle Yard section of *Robertson Park*. It was the forerunner to the later development of *Robertson Park* and other parks developed in the City of Perth in the interwar period in which areas were specifically set aside and equipped for children. Trees growing in the area of *Robertson Park* which may date from around this period include the Flame trees in Stuart Street.<sup>28</sup> In 1914, portion of Perth Town Lot Y241 and survey Lot 1, fronting Randell Street, and the adjoining Lot 2 fronting Palmerston Street were transferred to City of Perth for the proposed *Robertson Park*.<sup>29</sup> Some of the land continued to be leased to Chinese market gardeners through into the late 1920s, and the stables and dwelling also remained for some years.<sup>30</sup>

By 1917, Carrick Street had become a made road. There was a dwelling at the corner to Fitzgerald Street, the lot to the east being owned by F.H. Middleton, where he operated his general engineering and safe manufacturing business. Robertson and Moffat Stables fronted Randell Street, near the Palmerston Street corner. Among the residences built on the lots fronting Palmerston Street was that of Bela Makutz.<sup>31</sup> Makutz (b. Hungary, 1857, arr. Melbourne, 1882, arr. Murchison, Western Australia, 1893) had successfully established his business as a general ironworker and safe manufacturer in Perth from 1895.<sup>32</sup> In 1917, for the first time the City of Perth Mayor's Report mentioned *Robertson Park*, which is presumed to have taken its name from the aforementioned Robertson.<sup>33</sup> In the 1920s, following sub-division of the larger lots, residences were built at street nos. 99 to 109 Palmerston Street.<sup>34</sup>

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22 City of Perth Rate Books, 1902. Note: For further information on these Chinese gardeners, refer to Atkinson, Anne (compiler) op. cit., pp. 40-42, 48, 93-94, 198-199. It should be noted that spelling of Chinese names varies considerably, eg. Lee Leene per the Rate Books was Lee Lune.

23 City of Perth Rate Book, 1901-02; and Plan, 1902, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997.

24 Battye, J.S. op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 538.

25 Stannage, C.T. *The People of Perth* (Perth City Council, Perth, 1979) p. 298, and pp. 316-317.

26 Stannage, C.T. op. cit., p. 298.

27 *West Australian* 18 September 1916, p. 5. Note: Further research would be necessary to establish the later history of the Stuart Street Reserve.

28 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 16.

29 Certificates of Title Vol. 598 Fol. 163 and Vol. 45 Fol. 99 respectively.

30 City of Perth Rate Books, 1913-18; and Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 13.

31 City of Perth Rate Books, 1917-28; Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 14 and p. 60; and Plans, 1917 and 1929, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997.

32 Battye, J. S. op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 742.

33 City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1917.

34 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15.



By the mid 1920s, 'good provision' for park areas had been made in Perth. Street tree plantings in a number of the earlier streets were South Australian sugar gums. West India coral tree, Queensland Box trees, Kurrajongs, Moreton Bay and Port Jackson figs, white cedar, Remarkable and Maritime pines, were extensively used in parks and streets, including *Robertson Park* and surrounding streets, as the place was developed in the interwar period.<sup>35</sup>

By 1933, the area of *Robertson Park* had been increased to 11 acres 38.2 perches, comprising the western portion of Perth Town Lot Y245, with right of carriage way over the adjoining lot fronting Palmerston Street, the eastern portion of Perth Town Lot Y228, Perth Town Lots Y229 to Y234 inclusive, and the western portions of each of Perth Town Lots Y241, Y242, Y243 and Y244.<sup>36</sup> The park was considered 'an outstanding example' of the City Council's policy of 'transforming unsightly areas into places of public recreation'.<sup>37</sup> The 'well laid out', excellently maintained tennis courts (est. from 1926), and the proximity of the children's playground to the courts were praised by a South Australian visitor, who noted 'the idea came from Adelaide' but it had been improved upon by grass planting rather than being gravelled as in Adelaide.<sup>38</sup> In 1937, *Robertson Park* was said to be 'One of the most attractive areas in the city', 'brilliantly illuminated' at night, and more popular each year with tennis players, as indicated by steady annual increases in revenue.<sup>39</sup> The children's playground is remembered as one of the largest and best-provided playgrounds available in the interwar years.<sup>40</sup>

There was little change to *Robertson Park* from the 1930s to 1970s. A 1954 Sewerage plan shows *Robertson Park* with the 1928 tennis pavilion overlooking the tennis courts, laid out parallel to Randell Street, with 12 tennis shelters. It shows the playground area and equipment, the theatrette, and to the north-west a small bitumen area off Fitzgerald Street. The brick cottage at 176 Fitzgerald Street is shown with brick and galvanised iron outbuildings, and at the rear, two brick closets that serve the park. The brick dwelling at 170 Fitzgerald Street is shown, with various outbuildings to the east and north-east. On the adjoining lot to the east, fronting Stuart Street, is a brick and galvanised iron building. There are a number of buildings at the bottle yard, mostly of galvanised iron construction and others of brick. In Palmerston Street, to the north of the bottle yard, are two brick residences, the entry way to the tennis courts, two brick residences, the former Palmerston House and the Little Shule (shown as a church), each with their associated outbuildings, and the lot at the corner of Palmerston and Randell Streets is shown as vacant land.<sup>41</sup>

In 1965, an aerial photograph shows *Robertson Park*, with mature street trees along the Randell and Fitzgerald Street boundaries. The street trees along Palmerston Street and the southern portion of the Fitzgerald Street boundary are more sparsely planted, contrasting with the dense and more mature plantings along the central portion of the boundary to Stuart Street, and the park area adjacent to the rear of the bottle yard. The three Moreton Bay fig trees to the west of the Palmerston House site form a dense canopy at the eastern side of the

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35 'A Visit to the West: Interesting Notes by Mr. J. F. Bailey' in *West Australian*, no details, 1926.

36 Certificate of Title Vol. 1077 Fol. 518.

37 *West Australian* 2 June 1933.

38 News cutting from *Daily News* May 1933.

39 *West Australian* 12 January 1937.

40 Ron Daves, former local resident, phone conversation with Clare Schulz, 31 August 2005.

41 Metropolitan Sewerage City of Perth, SROWA Cons. 4156 Item 89, 1954.

park. The Port Jackson fig trees and Box trees (1930s) are mature plantings in the playground area.<sup>42</sup>

From the early 1970s, *Robertson Park* was extended by removal of existing buildings on land acquired at earlier periods by Perth City Council and the incorporation of additional land.<sup>43</sup> (See sections below for details.) In 1985, the City of Perth Town Planning Scheme was gazetted, in which the *Robertson Park* street block was zoned for Parks and Recreation.<sup>44</sup> In 1990, it was recommended that Robertson Park and the immediate area including the buildings opposite the park in Randell, Palmerston and Stuart streets, be designated a 'Precinct/Conservation Area'.<sup>45</sup> The park was considered 'significant as one of the large inner urban areas of North Perth', with 'a number of heritage structures and plantings... related to the park's recreational facility, including the tennis pavilions and the figs in the children's playground.'<sup>46</sup>

In 1993, a report identified the portion of the western side of Palmerston Street that backed onto *Robertson Park* as a possible opportunity for the improvement of open-space requirements in the Vincent area.<sup>47</sup>

On 7 and 11 April 1995, *Robertson Park* was transferred from the City of Perth to the Town of Vincent.<sup>48</sup> In 1995, the park was included in the Town's Municipal Heritage Inventory.<sup>49</sup> The Draft Tree Inventory included the row of Ironbark trees in the centre of the park, and the three Moreton Bay fig trees at the north-west. A single remnant indigenous Flooded Gum at the south-west corner of the park, on sloping ground believed to have been part of the original bank of Lake Henderson, is believed to date from the pre 1870s period. In 1997, Robertson Park Improvement Plan recommended this tree be included in the Inventory.<sup>50</sup>

In 1997, Hyde Park Precinct Group Inc. developed a proposal for a Robertson Park Improvement Plan. Proposed changes included increasing the boundary set back along Fitzgerald Street from Randell Street to the southern side of the existing car park, re-locating the existing playground equipment, and a proposed AIDS memorial for a site at the south-eastern corner of a remembrance lawn to the south of Lee Hop's Cottage. Aboriginal groups had been consulted as part of an ethnographic survey, and the plan shows Danjanberup Walk running east to west from the old bottle yard site to the Robertson Park Lawn, whilst the existing car park to the south was to be removed. The area around the former site of Palmerston House, shown as Ormiston House foundations, was to be known as Ormiston Gardens, with a proposed playground and picnic area at its north-eastern portion. The Little Shule is shown, commemorating the former synagogue. The plan also shows a proposed half court basketball court at the

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42 DOLA Aerial, 1965, reproduced in Hair, Chris op. cit.

43 Hair, Chris op. cit., pp. 16-17.

44 City of Perth Town Planning Scheme, 1985, cited in Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 62.

45 D'Arcy, R. 'Report on the Heritage Places of the Hyde Park Precinct' Vol. 1, for the National Trust of Australia (WA).

46 D'Arcy, R. 'Inner Metropolitan Heritage Survey - Hyde Park Precinct' Vol. 2, 'Building Information Forms' for the National Trust of Australia (WA), quoted in Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 22.

47 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 64.

48 Certificates of Title Vol. 598 Fol. 163, Vol. 952 Fol. 83, Vol. 1031 Fol. 829, Vol. 1077 Fol. 518, Vol. 1389 Fol. 497, and Vol. 1462 Fol. 551.

49 Town of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory, 1995.

50 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 14 and p. 23. Note: The only other such example of a surviving Flooded Gum of similar age was located in nearby Hyde Park. (ibid.)

south, adjoining Danjanberup Walk.<sup>51</sup> By mid 2003, only the AIDS Memorial had been implemented.

In the late 1990s, and through 2000-01, the Town of Vincent commissioned various projects relating to *Robertson Park*, including archaeological studies of the Bottle Yard site, an ethnographical study, and a detailed process of documentation and consultation was undertaken in relation to the proposed improvement and development of the park, for which the Town won an Innovation Component Award in the WA Municipal Association's Best Practices in Local Government Awards in 2001, for the procedures and practices put into place.<sup>52</sup> In July 1999, John Hyde, Mayor of Vincent declared that *Robertson Park* was 'set to become one of the most significant and unique parks in Perth'.<sup>53</sup>

In August 2000, the Aboriginal Affairs Department advised the Town of Vincent that the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee had determined that Lake Henderson was not an Aboriginal site in terms of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1972.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently, it was determined to be a significant site and was listed on the Permanent Register on 12 December 2000. The site covers the area bordered by Randell, Palmerston, Stuart and Fitzgerald streets, as per the cadastral plan for *Robertson Park*.<sup>55</sup> The Town of Vincent ensured archaeological monitoring of the site when work was undertaken for the AIDS Memorial in 2001.<sup>56</sup>

An early 21st century aerial photograph shows *Robertson Park* after the street trees along Randell and Fitzgerald Streets and most of the street trees fronting Palmerston Street to the south of the entry avenue had been removed. There are fewer trees in the playground section and their canopy is less dense than as seen in the 1965 photograph, and the number of trees along the eastern boundary to the Bottle Yard section has been reduced.<sup>57</sup>

Whilst some archaeological investigations have been undertaken already at *Robertson Park*, including intensive investigation of the bottle yard site, there is considered to be further potential in regard to the use of the area by Nyungar people before and after European settlement, and that early sites around the foreshore of Lake Henderson may be of significance. The former market gardens are also potential archaeological sites that may yield evidence of occupation of the place by European market gardeners in the period from c. 1870, and by Chinese market gardeners from c. 1900 to the late 1920s. The presence of a complete farm site at *Robertson Park* that was worked first by European and then by Chinese gardeners is considered to be quite rare, and has considerable to exceptional archaeological potential. Although archaeological investigations undertaken to date have not found any evidence of the timber, convict built drain, some remains may yet be located, and would be of very high significance. The potential archaeological sites that are considered most vulnerable are the areas around the banks and lake edges, which may also be subject to erosion.<sup>58</sup>

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51 Hair, Chris op. cit., Introduction and Map of Robertson Park, Town of Vincent, 1997.

52 *Guardian Express* 20 November 2001, p. 4.

53 *Voice News* 16 July 1999, p. 3.

54 Cited in Report on an ethnographic survey op. cit.

55 Peter Randolph, Dept. of Indigenous Affairs, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 15 October 2003. Note: DIA Site Identification No. 17849.

56 *ibid.*

57 Aerial photograph, n.d. Courtesy Town of Vincent.

58 Gaye Nayton, Archaeologist, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 29 July 2003.

In 2006, *Robertson Park*, including the tennis courts, continues in use as a recreational park.

### **Robertson Park Tennis Club (Tennis Section) and Entry Avenue section**

In 1922-24, work began on the establishment of the first six tennis courts at *Robertson Park*. The stables at the corner of Randell and Palmerston Streets were removed. A cyclone wire fence was erected and, from the entrance at Palmerston Street, an avenue, 15 metres wide, was symmetrically planted with Date Palms, Wedding Bush, Brown Pines and smaller species. The courts, laid out obliquely to the street grid, were officially opened in 1926. They were known as the City Council Lawn Tennis Gardens or Municipal Lawn Tennis Courts.<sup>59</sup> At this period, the park's area was around 9.5 acres.<sup>60</sup>

In 1926, three acres at the northern portion of the reserve were filled, levelled and planted with couch grass, towards the development of an additional 20 tennis courts and a proposed children's playground.<sup>61</sup> In 1927, filling for the new tennis courts was completed, and two thirds was planted with couch and reticulated by November. Further work, including erection of a pavilion, was delayed to allow sufficient time for consolidation of the ground.<sup>62</sup> In 1928, filling was completed, and the whole area was planted with grass, other than four courts, which were to be gravelled and electrically lit for night play. The new tennis courts were aligned to the road system. A pavilion was erected to the west, closing off the axis to the new Women's Playing Field at the south.<sup>63</sup> In 1929, a photograph shows the tennis courts and the new pavilion.<sup>64</sup>

In the mid 1930s, seven new tennis courts were established, bringing the total to 42. The cost of laying out and constructing the courts, the pavilion and the pumping station was £4248.<sup>65</sup> The extension of the courts separated the original entrance avenue, and eventually Fitzgerald Street became the main entry.<sup>66</sup>

In 1982, a new tennis pavilion was built on a site to the south-east of the original pavilion, which was removed.<sup>67</sup> In 1990, the remaining three lawn courts in the southern section of the courts were replaced with two new hard courts and a new car parking area, widening the access way between the southern and northern sections of the park.<sup>68</sup> Three of the 12 tennis shelters were removed as part of these works. In the early 1990s, the tennis courts were leased out.<sup>69</sup> In 1998-2000, Tennis Veterans of Western Australia expended \$170,000 on upgrading the 38 court tennis centre, including levelling and re-planting 12 of the 24 grass tennis courts and establishing 14 synthetic courts (six had recently been converted from grass) at a cost of \$83,000.<sup>70</sup>

In December 2000, it was proposed that 'A magnificent two storey tennis facility' be built at *Robertson Park* at an estimated cost of \$500,000 to \$1 million, as part

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59 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 16.

60 Parks and Reserves; and City Gardener's Report in City of Perth Mayor's Report, 1926.

61 *ibid.*

62 City Gardener's Report in City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1927.

63 City Gardener's Report City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1928.

64 *Souvenir of the City of Perth, 1829-1929.*

65 *West Australian* 12 January 1937.

66 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 16 and p. 61.

67 *ibid.*, p. 17.

68 *ibid.* p. 64.

69 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 17.

70 *Voice News* 16 December 2000, p. 5, 15 April 2001, p. 9, and 22-27 April 2001.

of the upgrade for the International Veterans' Tennis Championships in Perth in 2003; however, the proposal was not implemented.<sup>71</sup> In April 2001, it was announced that *Robertson Park* would be a major venue for the International Tennis Federation's over 55 World Veterans' Tennis Championships in January 2003, with around 700 players competing from about 70 countries.<sup>72</sup> In spring 2001, 12 of the 24 grass tennis courts were laser levelled before re-planting. It was hoped have the courts ready for the Catholic Games in late December.<sup>73</sup>

### **Cathedral section**

In late 1917, the City of Perth Mayor's Report noted that provision had been made at *Robertson Park* for a number of building blocks that would front the new park; however, this was not implemented.<sup>74</sup> 'Ample provision' had been made for the children 'in the way of playgrounds and in several of these grounds the designs provide for wading pools, such as are to be found in many American playgrounds'.<sup>75</sup> This design was probably influenced by Bold's visit to the United States, as he had a keen interest in the city's parks and establishment of the playgrounds at Stuart Street and at *Robertson Park*.<sup>76</sup> The proposed playground was not implemented until the late 1920s, when approximately 2.5 acres of the area set aside for this purpose, to the north of 176 Fitzgerald Street, was filled, graded and planted.<sup>77</sup> Tree plantings were predominantly Port Jackson figs, Box Trees and Norfolk Island Pines, planted in a cathedral-shaped plan (hence the reference to it as the Cathedral section). Queensland Box Trees were planted the length of the nave and two rows of Port Jackson figs planted to define the aisles on either side. At either end, rows of exotic trees provided botanical variety.<sup>78</sup>

In 1933, a photograph shows the well-equipped playground with young Port Jackson fig trees and Box trees, the Women's Field, across to Palmerston Street and the mature Moreton Bay fig trees at the rear of Palmerston House.<sup>79</sup>

In 1940, a timber and iron building was built near the playground as a theatrette for the Little Citizens' League, as shown on a 1954 Sewerage plan.<sup>80</sup> The Little Citizens' League had been founded on 18 January 1924 by Mrs A.E. Joyner, in memory of her daughter Barbara. Its policy was 'to broadcast love, joy and fellowship throughout the world by means of service to others'.<sup>81</sup> The League is reported to have been linked with the Kindergarten movement,<sup>82</sup> and in 1939 it established the Little Citizens' Library, also in memory of A.E. Joyner's daughter Barbara. The League was disbanded in 1963.<sup>83</sup>

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71 *Voice News*, 10 December 1999, p. 8 and 16 December 2000, p. 5, and 22-27 April 2001. Note: In December 1999, the proposal was to add a second storey to the existing building, to accommodate a lounge, dining room and catering area. (ibid, 10 December 1999)

72 ibid, 22-27 April 2001.

73 *Voice News* 15 September 2001, p. 6.

74 City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1917.

75 City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1917.

76 Stannage, C. T. *The People of Perth* op. cit., p. 300.

77 City Gardener's Report City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1928.

78 Hair, Chris op. cit., pp. 16-17.

79 Photograph Perth City Council, City of Perth Local History Collection.

80 Information from John Bentley, City of Perth Band, in Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 15; and Metropolitan Sewerage City of Perth SROWA Cons. 4156 Item 89, 1954.

81 Private Archives, Battye Library, MN 1008 Acc. 3388A

82 E-mail correspondence from Robin Chinnery to Clare Schulz, 5 November 2003, on HCWA file P8705.

83 Private Archives, Battye Library, MN 1008 Acc. 3388A No information has been located regarding the League's use of the hall as a children's theatre.

From 1947, the building was used by the City of Perth Band, which also practised marching in the park on Sunday mornings. The Band had formed in 1898, as the Perth Federal Band, based at Wesley Church. In 1905, after the Church acquired an organ the Band was no longer required there, and a brass marching band was formed as the City of Perth Band.<sup>84</sup>

In 1970, F.H. Ferguson built a new headquarters for the City of Perth Band in the centre of the park at a cost of \$25,705. Of brick construction, it comprised practice hall, kitchen, men's and women's toilet facilities, band store, and garden store, with a bricked paved area opening from the practice hall.<sup>85</sup> The name Halvorsen Memorial Band Hall was proposed in honour of the family of this name, who had been closely involved with the band. William Alroe Halvorsen and his brother, Harrie, had joined in 1919, with William serving as Conductor in 1930-34, and Harrie in 1945-71. Harrie was credited with being the driving force behind the revival of brass bands after World War II. Commissioner of the ABC (1956-67), he was awarded a MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for services to music. The proposed name was amended to Halvorsen Hall, which was officially opened by the Premier, Sir Charles Court, Band Patron for 20 years, and the Lord Mayor of Perth, Sir Thomas Wardle on 28 November 1970. From 1 January 1971, the Band leased the Hall for 21 years, at a peppercorn rental.<sup>86</sup> Halvorsen Hall is reportedly 'the only such purpose built facility in Perth.'<sup>87</sup>

In late 1991, the lease of the Hall was not renewed, and the Band continued to lease it on an annual basis. In 1992, the north wall of the Hall was extended by 1.38 metres, at the Band's expense.<sup>88</sup> Unable to secure a long-term lease from the Town of Vincent, and wishing to maintain links with the City of Perth, the Band vacated the Hall when premises in Perth became available at Queen's Gardens in 1999.<sup>89</sup> In August 1999, expressions of interest in the Hall were invited, and from May 2000, it has been leased to a group of artists.<sup>90</sup>

Whilst the Cathedral section has been subject to change through time, including replacement of playground equipment, it is significant for the continued use of this area as a children's playground for more than 70 years. So far as is known, there is no definitive study of children's playgrounds in Perth to provide comparative information relating to this aspect of the place.

### **Lee Hop's Cottage section**

In 1903, a four-room brick cottage was built on Lot Y229. In 1904, the earlier residence (demolished c. 1928-29) was numbered 236 Fitzgerald Street. The first occupant of the new cottage was Lee Hop (b. Canton, 1860, arr. 1886), who had earlier leased land for market gardens in Railway Parade, East Perth.<sup>91</sup> Hence,

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84 John Bentley op. cit.

85 Floor plan, City of Perth Band Headquarters, City of Perth, in Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., pp. 48-49.

86 ibid, pp. 16-18; and Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 62. Note: William Halvorsen was Musical Director of the Goldfields Musical Society and Goldfields Orchestral Society; and served as Director of Posts and Telegraphs from 1951 to his retirement in 1958. (Hocking Planning & Architecture, ibid, p. 18.)

87 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 7.

88 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 17.

89 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 7.

90 Correspondence etc. in Working Group Lee Hop's House 176 Fitzgerald Street, Perth, Town of Vincent File PRO 126 Res. 00231.

91 City of Perth Rate Books, 1903-09; and Atkinson, Anne (Compiler) *Asian Immigrants to Western Australia 1829-1901 The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* Vol. V (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1988) p. 196; and Stannage, C. T. *The People of Perth* op. cit., p. 222. Note: In 1911, shanties in the market gardens occupied by Lee Hop & Co. were condemned as unfit for occupation.

the cottage is now known as Lee Hop's Cottage. By mid 1907, the area of the Chinese market gardens was around 18 acres, and Sing Tong, Ah Ping, Ah Howe, Chen Hoy, Tye Lung and Kow Kee, were trading from there as Hop Lee & Co.<sup>92</sup> By 1910, the earlier dwelling had been re-numbered 186 and the cottage (1903), occupied by Hop Lee, was 176 Fitzgerald Street (as in 2003).<sup>93</sup>

In 1914, Lots Y229 and Y230 were transferred to the City of Perth.<sup>94</sup> The market gardens continued to be leased to Chinese market gardeners. In 1917, Hop Sing, Ah Sing and Hong Lee were leasing the land. The latter occupied the cottage at 176 Fitzgerald St. through to the late 1920s, when Wong Maw, became the last of the Chinese market gardeners to occupy it and to work the adjoining market gardens.<sup>95</sup> By the late 1920s, few Chinese market gardens remained. Commonwealth immigration restrictions had prevented further Asian immigration in the 20th century. Southern European market gardeners were entering the industry and would come to predominate in the interwar and post-WWII period, before a further influx of Asian market gardeners in the late 20th century, after the demise of the White Australia policy.

In 1927-28, the cottage at 176 Fitzgerald Street was renovated for use as quarters for the caretaker of *Robertson Park*.<sup>96</sup> From the late 1920s to early 1990s, the cottage accommodated the caretaker or groundsman at the park.<sup>97</sup>

In 1927, the City of Perth resumed part of Lot Y228, previously worked by Chinese market gardeners, for the extension of *Robertson Park*.<sup>98</sup> On 20 December 1932, portions of Perth Town Lot Y228, being Lots 4, 7 and 10, were transferred to the City of Perth.<sup>99</sup> Thereafter the existing buildings and the engineering works were leased to tenants, including the residence at the corner of Stuart and Fitzgerald Streets where Mrs Bromfield continued to live in the 1930s.<sup>100</sup> In 1940, City of Perth established a children's library in the residence, and it served this purpose to 1972, when it was demolished along with the other buildings to make way for further expansion of the park.<sup>101</sup>

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(Correspondence, City of Perth, SROWA AN 20/5 Acc. 3054 Item 64/1937). In 1916, Lee Hop was recorded as working on Soon Hing's garden at Swan Street, Queen's Park, as was Lee Hoon (sometimes recorded as Lee Hon), also Cantonese, who had arrived in WA in 1898. Lee Hon was recorded at Soon Hing's garden 1913-23. (ibid, p. 195.)

92 Correspondence etc. City of Perth, SROWA AN 20/5 Acc. 3054 Item 252/1907, June-July 1907. Note: Chinese names were sometimes reversed in the various records, including Rate Books.

93 City of Perth Rate Books, 1908-10 and 1928-29; and Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 71.

94 Certificate of Title Vol. 45 Fol. 99.

95 City of Perth Rate Books, 1917-29; and Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 14 and p. 71. Note: In the Rate Books some names were reversed, thus Hong Lee and Lee Hong may be one and the same person. Refer to Atkinson, Anne (Compiler) op. cit., for Lee Hong (p. 195), Sing Hop (p. 250) and Ah Sing, (pp. 78-80). Atkinson records numerous Chinese who are known to have worked at market gardens in Fitzgerald Street, including Wong Cue Kee, in 1916. (ibid, p. 283.)

96 City Gardener's Report in City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1928. Note: Works carried out by F. E. Brock included tuck pointing the front and side walls and the chimney stack, removal of the earlier iron wash-house and shed, and erection of a new brick wash-house and shed beside a brick w. c., near the rear boundary fence, addition of a verandah on the north side, and erection of a 6 ft. high timber paling fence to enclose the cottage and rear yard from the public area of the park. James Imray was the first caretaker to occupy the cottage. (ibid; Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 13 and p. 30)

97 ibid; and *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1929-49.

98 City of Perth Rate Books, 1927-29; and Plan, 1929, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997.

99 Certificate of Title Vol. 1031 Fol. 829.

100 *West Australian* 12 January 1937.

101 Hair, Chris op. cit., pp. 16-17.

In the 1950s, works to the caretaker's cottage included a brick garage, built by Harris and Chinnery in 1954; and in 1955-58, replacement of the corrugated iron roof with a tile roof, and re-pitching of the verandahs; removal of the lath and plaster ceilings in the two front rooms and the hall, and electrical re-wiring; and renovation of the bathroom. In 1963, the rear verandah was removed and a sleepout addition made at the south-western corner.<sup>102</sup>

A proposal to widen Fitzgerald Street required demolition of the caretaker's cottage and the nearby library, and a public meeting considered the possible re-development of *Robertson Park*. Due to this uncertainty, there was little maintenance on the buildings in the 1960s-1970s.<sup>103</sup> In 1974, alterations were made to the cottage, as per plans showing the sleepout and bathroom at either end of the rear verandah, and to the rear again, a new verandah, w.c., and steps leading from the end of the new verandah down to the rear yard.<sup>104</sup>

In the early 1990s, after the tennis courts were leased out, a resident caretaker was no longer required, and the cottage at 176 Fitzgerald Street was vacated. The yard was utilised to house Perth City Council's work vehicles.<sup>105</sup> In December 1997, the cottage, now known as Lee Hop's Cottage, was included in the Municipal Heritage Inventory for the Town of Vincent.<sup>106</sup>

In 1999, a structural and maintenance report on Lee Hop's Cottage outlined works necessary to enable it to be leased to tenants. In December 2000, Hocking Planning & Architecture completed a conservation plan of Lee Hop's Garden site, the cottage and Halvorsen Hall, which concluded that the documentary and archaeological research for Lee Hop's Garden was 'rare, if not unique, and demonstrates the potential to further investigate the location and nature of market gardening during the late colonial and gold boom periods in Perth.'<sup>107</sup>

In April 1999, it was announced that an AIDS Memorial would be built at *Robertson Park*. The proposed memorial, measuring 15m across and including an area for contemplation and prayer, was to be located off a pathway near Lee Hop's Cottage, towards the south-west corner of the park. The Town of Vincent agreed in principle, and allocated \$3000 towards the cost.<sup>108</sup> A previous approach to have the memorial located in the City of Perth was unsuccessful. The Town of Vincent was approached for a memorial location and Mayor John Hyde, CEO John Giorgi, and Democrat Senator Brian Grigg were supportive. *Robertson Park* was offered as a location and the project was seen as the first investment in the park's upgrade. The location was within the City of Perth boundary and satisfied the Immunodeficiency Foundation of Western Australia in this respect.<sup>109</sup> In 2001, the proposed memorial was realised, the first such memorial in Perth. The project was 'assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts and fundraising events, with financial or in kind contributions from business and the Town of Vincent', the latter being recognised as a significant contributor and major donor, and the Australian

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102 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 15 and p. 30.

103 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 15.

104 Building Envelope Pt. Y 228 No. 176 Fitzgerald Street, City of Perth, 31 May 1974; and Caretaker's Quarters, Misc. 130, City of Perth, 1973, in Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 15; and *ibid*, p. 35.

105 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 17.

106 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 23.

107 Hocking Planning & Architecture op. cit., p. 7.

108 *Voice News* 23 April 1999, p. 3.

109 Gary Giles, telephone conversation with Philip Griffiths, 18 August 2003.



Council for the Arts as the major funding body.<sup>110</sup> The Memorial was designed by Rodney Glick, Diego Ramirez and Kieran Wong, and was erected at *Robertson Park*, to the south-east of Lee Hop's Cottage. On 1 December 2001, it was officially dedicated by Alan Blackwood and Gary Giles, Memorial Initiator and Project Co-Directors. At the eastern wall the dedication reads IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WHO HAVE DIED FROM AIDS AT HOME, INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS. WE SHALL NOT FORGET.<sup>111</sup>

In 2002-03, Architect Alice Steedman supervised restoration and conservation works to Lee Hop's Cottage carried out by students from the Nyoongar Kadadjiny Kulark Kart Central TAFE Aboriginal programme centre, in an on-the-job vocational programme, a joint initiative by the Department of Training and Employment Aboriginal Services Branch, Central TAFE and the Town of Vincent, described as 'a truly collaborative effort which united the indigenous and non-indigenous communities.'<sup>112</sup> In 2003, a landscape plan prepared by Alice Steedman has been implemented, including planting a new rose garden, a new lilly pilly hedge, and new lawn areas. New herringbone brick paving was laid at the south-west and new brick stairs at the north-west adjoining either end of the front verandah.<sup>113</sup> The standard roses planted are Iceberg (1958), Bonica (1981), and Mathias Meilland (1985).<sup>114</sup> The cottage will serve as the home office of Great Mates WA, an organisation that assists disadvantaged and at-risk youth.<sup>115</sup>

### **Women's Field section and Bottle Depot section**

From the early 1900s, some sites in the Palmerston, Fitzgerald and Stuart streets area were put to industrial uses. In the period 1905-1917, behind three houses fronting Palmerston Street, Perth and Fremantle Bottle Exchange Ltd opened a bottle yard, which was taken over by West Australian Glass Manufacturers Limited in the 1920s. The site became known as the Old Bottle Yard, and was later purchased by the City of Perth for the expansion of *Robertson Park*.<sup>116</sup>

In the 1920s, Middleton General Engineering and Safe Manufactures were established in premises on Lots 7 and 10, fronting Stuart Street, later utilised by other engineering firms. Industrial use of these lots continued until 1964.<sup>117</sup>

In the late 1920s, the Women's Playing Field was laid out at *Robertson Park*. Located to the east of the playground area, this sports playing area was laid out

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110 AIDS Memorial, site visit, Robin Chinnery, 29 July 2003.

111 *ibid.*

112 Town of Vincent File PRO 1490; *Guardian Express* 27 August 2002, p. 5; and *West Australian* 23 August 2003, p. 60. Note: The works included restoration of the interior and exterior of the cottage, repairs to the verandah, including replacement of the timber floor, selective demolition of the fire damaged rear section of the building, and the garage, rebuilding of the rear section to include provision of bathroom facilities at either end of the rear verandah, which was enclosed with weatherboards, with a central section, about 6m wide, left open, and with stairs to the ground centrally placed. It was established that during the early 20th century, when the cottage was occupied by Chinese market gardeners, the entrance hall had been painted red and the kitchen green, so these rooms were repainted in those colours. Recollections of the garden in the late 1940s, including plantings of pink and white rose bushes, 'similar to Icebergs', adjacent to the verandah, and neatly kept, waist height, lilly pilly hedges on the west, north and east side, influenced decisions for landscaping and recent plantings at the cottage garden. (Town of Vincent File PRO 1490)

113 Landscape Plan for Lee Hop's Cottage 176 Fitzgerald Street for Town of Vincent, Alice Steedman Architect, March 2003.

114 Site visit, Robin Chinnery, 29 July 2003; and *Botanica's Pocket Roses* (Random House Australia, 2000) p. p. 414, p. 175, and p. 573.

115 *West Australian* 23 August 2003, p. 60.

116 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15 and p. 71; and City of Perth Rate Book, 1928-29.

117 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15.

in a square, planted on three sides with a row of Box Trees, and a Norfolk Island Pine at each corner. On the fourth side, the tennis pavilion was aligned with the centre axis of the playing field.<sup>118</sup> In the late 1990s, the Women's Field remained intact other than the loss of some Box trees on the eastern side and intrusion of the carpark at the northern end. No longer used for formal sports, it was 'the favourite area for the informal playing of sports'.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1970s, a row of Ironwood Trees was planted along the *Robertson Park* boundary to the Bottle Yard.<sup>120</sup>

In 1983, a study of open spaces in the residential areas of Perth commissioned by the City of Perth identified the Bottle Yard adjacent to *Robertson Park* as a possible site that might be suitable and which was likely to become available for the future extension of the park.<sup>121</sup> On 10 November 1987, Perth City Council agreed to purchase the bottle yard site, being portions of Lots Y245, Y246 and Y247, from the Swan Brewery Company Limited for \$876,000. The transfer was registered on 8 April 1988.<sup>122</sup> In 1989-90, the buildings on the site were removed, with the bitumen area retained for possible future re-use in community recreational facilities that might be established on the site.<sup>123</sup>

Following establishment of the Town of Vincent, the Town Planning Scheme No. 1 proposed that the Old Bottle Yard site be zoned for Parks and Recreation.<sup>124</sup> In 1996, a Business Plan commissioned by the Town of Vincent examined the possible real estate potential of the Bottle Yard site, which was referred to as 'Robertson Park Surplus Land'.<sup>125</sup> The Hyde Park Precinct Group objected to the proposed sale of the land, and also submitted a petition signed by 262 people who similarly objected. It was argued that the land was 'potentially very useful for recreational purposes', and it was proposed that an overall study of the *Robertson Park* area be undertaken prior to any decision on the fate of the site.<sup>126</sup> In October 1996, the Town resolved to carry out such a study, and to delay the proposed sale of the site for 12 months.<sup>127</sup>

In February 2000, after five years of community consultation, the proposal to subdivide the bottle yard site was defeated. The Town of Vincent Council agreed to convert 60% of the site to parkland, and to improve *Robertson Park*. The balance of the site was to be residential lots, which were to be sold, with the proceeds to be used for the redevelopment of the park. The Council planned to obtain funds from the Urban Waterways Trust and other sources for work on the Claisebrook drain, which passes through the park.<sup>128</sup> The Town asked for public comment on the Robertson Park Improvement Plan including the proposed

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118 City Gardener's Report City of Perth, Mayor's Report, 1928; and Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 17.

119 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 20.

120 *ibid*, p. 17.

121 'Perth Public Open Space Study' City of Perth, 1983, cited in Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 62.

122 Minutes, Perth City Council, City of Perth, 10 November 1987; and Certificates of Title Vol. 1462 Fols. 548, 550, and 551.

123 Plan, 1997, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997; and Hair, Chris op. cit., pp. 63-64.

124 Town of Vincent, Town Planning Scheme No. 1, Hyde Park Precinct, p. 12, cited in Hair, op. cit., p. 64.

125 'Business Plan, Proposal to dispose of land, Lots Y246, Part Y246, and Y247, cnr. of Palmerston/Stuart Streets, Perth' Town of Vincent, 1996, cited in Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 65.

126 Hyde Park Precinct Group 'Submission on the Proposal by the Town of Vincent to Dispose of Land: Lot Y246, Part Y246 and Y247', 1996, cited in Hair, op. cit., p. 65.

127 Town of Vincent, letter to Chris Hair, October 1996, in *ibid*.

128 *Guardian Express* 15-21 and 22-28 February 2001, p. 4.

design a wetlands lake and an urban forest area at the western portion of the bottle yard section.<sup>129</sup>

In 2001, an archaeological investigation at this site yielded a considerable collection of bottles and some other European materials relating to occupation of the area. No evidence was found of the convict built timber drain.<sup>130</sup>

In June 2001, it was reported that a local environmental group, the Claisebrook Catchment Group, was set to return *Robertson Park* 'to a more natural state', with the creation of a small wetland area near the site of the old bottle yard. The Town of Vincent and the Lotteries Commission jointly funded the \$5000 project.<sup>131</sup> Implementation was deferred until further funding was obtained in 2003, when the Town of Vincent received \$32,270 in funding from the Swan Catchment Urban Landcare Program (SCULP) for the project. Jointly funded by the Swan River Trust and Alcoa, SCULP, in its fifth year of operation, had previously granted \$20,000 for the rehabilitation of Smith's Lake in 1999. The proposed wetland, 20-30 metres across, will be seasonal, as were the original wetlands at Lake Henderson. Plans were being prepared in readiness for public consultation.<sup>132</sup>

In January 2002, the Town of Vincent decided to sell the bottle yard site as a single lot, and new plans were drafted for public comment. It was estimated the sale would realise around \$1.7 million, of which \$500,000 was earmarked for the upgrading of the park.<sup>133</sup> In February, it was reported that local residents had 'savaged' the Council's efforts to market and sell the site.<sup>134</sup> In August 2002, the Council accepted an offer of \$2.1 million for the site; however, as at July 2003, the land had not been transferred.<sup>135</sup> In August, the Town received a report on the collection of bottles retrieved in the archaeological investigation of the site.<sup>136</sup> The report recorded the collection and highly recommended that it be kept together as a collection and the artefacts be preserved for future research.<sup>137</sup>

### Central section

In 1934, Perth City Council purchased land to the east of the Women's Field, adjoining the bottle yard and the avenue from Palmerston Street to the courts.<sup>138</sup>

In the 1980s, between the central car park and the hard tennis courts, two large groups of Eucalypts were planted, mainly Spotted Gums, Ironwoods and Peppermints, along with numerous shrubs. As part of Perth City Council's policy at that period of introducing compact groups of eucalypts to the city's park to reflect the fashion for native plants, the saplings were planted en masse, mostly no more than 300mm in height. It is believed that the north-eastern group may also have been intended to serve 'as a defining element to the park edge and to screen the large power lines along Palmerston Street'.<sup>139</sup> Most of the 1980s

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129 *Voice News* 19 February 2000, p. 3 and 15 April 2001, p. 9.

130 Archaeological Investigation in the Old Bottle Yard, Robertson Park, A report to the Town of Vincent, prepared by Dr Alistair Paterson, Dr Joe Dortch, Juliet King and Stuart Rapley, Centre for Archaeology, University of Western Australia, for the Town of Vincent, 18 May 2001, pp. 32-33.

131 *Guardian Express* 5 June 2001, p. 11; and *Voice News* 2 June 2001, p. 9.

132 *Voice News* 8 March 2003, p. 3.

133 *ibid*, 26 January 2002, p. 2.

134 *ibid*, 16 February 2002, p. 3.

135 *ibid*, 7 September 2002; and Hannah Eames, Town of Vincent, conversation with Robin Chinnery, August 2003.

136 *ibid*; and Hannah Eames, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, August 2003.

137 Hannah Eames, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 16 October 2003.

138 Plan, 1946, Hyde Park Precinct Group Proposal for the Improvement of Robertson Park, 1997.

139 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 17.

plantings survived, and had grown to a height of around 6 metres by 1997, with an expected full height of about 30 metres. Additional plantings in the area of *Robertson Park* in the same period included Bottle-Brush as street trees in Palmerston Street, replacing the earlier Eucalypts.<sup>140</sup>

### Palmerston House section

Between 1875-90, two large residences, in expansive grounds, were built in Palmerston Street (later numbered 106 and 123), named Lakeside and Palmerston House.<sup>141</sup> The latter, the largest residence in the area, was owned by Edward Keane in the late 19th century. Keane (b. 1844, England, arr. from Victoria 1882, d. 1909, Perth) was a successful railway contractor, manager of Midland Railway Company, MLC Geraldton (1886-89), MLC Perth (1889-90), MLA Geraldton (1890-91) MLC Eastern Province (died before he could take his seat, 1904) and Mayor of Perth (1891-92). Keane's Point, where he owned 16 acres, is named after him.<sup>142</sup> Some of the older surviving trees at the north-east corner of *Robertson Park*, including three Moreton Bay fig trees, are remnants of the early tree plantings at Palmerston House.<sup>143</sup>

In 1907, a private school, Ormiston College, was established at Palmerston House. It was purchased by the Presbyterian Church in 1915, and renamed Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC). In 1917, PLC re-located to a new site in Cottesloe, and thereafter the former Palmerston House was converted for use as a nursing home. It remained in private ownership until 1965, when it was purchased by City of Perth at a cost of £15,000, for the expansion of *Robertson Park*.<sup>144</sup> Portion of Perth Town Lots Y242 and Y243, three roods eight perches in area, was duly transferred in July 1965.<sup>145</sup> Subsequently, the buildings were removed from the site, and the park extended to Palmerston Street. Several mature trees were retained, including the three large Moreton Bay fig trees, two Pepper trees, three Lilacs and a Mulberry tree.<sup>146</sup> It is considered that the immediate area around the foundations of Palmerston House are most likely to contain archaeological deposits associated with the use of the site prior to 1907.<sup>147</sup>

### Shule section

In August 1917, Perth Jewish Association purchased a portion of each of Perth Town Lots Y241 and Y242, being Lot 3 and part of Lot 4, fronting Palmerston Street, which would become part of *Robertson Park* in the 1970s.<sup>148</sup> A period of turmoil in the Perth Jewish community in the period, 1907-09, led to the formation of a second orthodox congregation, which was incorporated in 1909 as the Perth Jewish Association. This coincided with an inflow to Western Australia of Yiddish speakers, a number of whom joined this growing congregation, which had its headquarters at the Protestant Hall, in Beaufort Street, Perth. During the World

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ibid.

141

Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15.

142

Black, D & Bolton, G., p.109; *The West Australian* 23/2/1897, p.2a-c; Simpson, R. p.21. .

143

Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15; and Perth Sewerage PWDWA 5647 SROWA Cons. 1647, 1897.

144

Hair, Chris op. cit., pp. 15-16 and p. 59; City of Perth Rate Books, 1905-1959; K. Hunter, Director of Parks and Gardens, to Town Clerk, City of Perth, in City of Perth, *Robertson Park*, 3 February 1965; and Certificate of Title Vol. 952 Fol. 83.

145

Certificate of Title Vol.952 Fol. 83.

146

Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 15.

147

'Robertson Park a survey for archaeological sites' op. cit.

148

Mossenson, David *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew The History of the Jews of Western Australia* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1990) p. 98.

War I period, the Association continued to grow, and Sabbath services were transferred to a dwelling in Palmerston Street, prior to purchase of the aforementioned land on which to build a synagogue. In June 1918, the foundation was laid, and the single storey brick building, to accommodate 250 worshippers was duly built. It came to be known as the Little Shule, and played an important role in the life of the Jewish community.<sup>149</sup> In the 1960s, Perth Jewish Association ceased to operate, and, in 1968, the remaining members decided to transfer the Little Shule to the Perth Hebrew Congregation. In September 1973, the Little Shule was sold to the City of Perth at a cost of \$19,600, for the further expansion of *Robertson Park*.<sup>150</sup> The buildings were duly removed, leaving only the street crossover to the former car park area as an indicator of the site's former use.<sup>151</sup> The site was planted with trees on the north and east sides, with an open area at the centre, for use as another informal playing field.<sup>152</sup>

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* comprises a filled in lake, a tennis club with all weather and grass courts, children's play areas, Lee Hop's Cottage, former Bottle Yard, Halvorsen Hall, AIDS memorial, open grassed areas and groups of tree plantings representing an extensive period of the park's history. The park contains evidence of activity since before European settlement to the present. In a number of reports, the park has been described in sections including the Tennis section (north-west), Cathedral section (west), Cottage section (south west), Women's Field section, Central section, Entry Avenue section (off Palmerston Street), Palmerston House section, and Little Shule section (north-east). For convenience and consistency the physical evidence follows this convention after dealing with contextual evidence. The tennis courts and areas to the south are the dominant features of the park. Generally the park areas are laid out in the Inter-War City Beautiful style,<sup>153</sup> with subsequent overlays from the 1970s, 1980s, and the early 21st century.

*Robertson Park* is located north of the City of Perth 1.5 kilometres from the city centre, to the east of the important northern distributor road Fitzgerald Street, set in a mixed commercial and residential area. To the west the uses are a mix of residential, commercial uses, together with some institutions (Italian Club), while the northern side is predominantly residential property dating from the late 19th century to the present. The eastern context is similar, with a small number of substantial houses within the mix of predominantly modest residences. The southern side is surrounded by former industrial buildings (former Maltings and Honey Pool buildings), converted to residential and office use. Though there are several residential developments that date from the late 20th century, the predominant form of housing form is from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

*Robertson Park* is bounded by Fitzgerald Street to the west, Randell Street to the north, Palmerston Street to the east, and Stuart Street to the south. The vast majority of the area is built on the filled Lake Henderson. The edge of the former lake is not readily discernible. However, there are contours near to the rear of the

149 Ibid, pp. 60-62, pp. 79-80, pp. 97-98

150 Ibid, pp. 193-194; and Certificate of Title Vol. 1389 Fol. 497. Note: The foundation stone and other artefacts were removed and stored for future incorporation in the Congregation's new synagogue in Mount Lawley, and the proceeds of the sale helped finance the new building. (ibid.)

151 Hair, Chris op. cit., p. 16.

152 Ibid, p. 20.

153 Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991. p. 21.

former Shule and Palmerston House sites that are vestiges of the lake's edge, together with a hint of contouring off Fitzgerald Street in the south-west corner of the park that give some indication of the lake's presence. There is no surface evidence of the market gardens mentioned in the documentary evidence. Similarly there is little evidence of the former bottle yard above ground.

*Robertson Park* is not a uniform landscape, but rather comprises a number of separate areas with a range of different characters relating to a range of distinct uses, as noted above. Open grassed ground and the tennis club take up by far the largest area.

### **Robertson Park Tennis Club (Tennis Section)**

The tennis club occupies almost all the northern corner of the site, stretching along half the Fitzgerald Street frontage and three-quarters of the Randell Street frontage. The tennis club divides into 24 grass courts to the north, tennis club and pro shop at the centre of the court, flanked by two sets of four all weather courts east and west and a further six all weather courts to the south. There are concrete footpaths along the Fitzgerald Street side and a narrow grass verge along the Randell Street side, and neither of these verges have street trees.

The grass court comprises 24 courts fenced in with galvanized steel poles and link mesh fencing to the perimeter, and a similar style of fencing separating the northern and southern courts. There is evidence of at least two previous generations of fence of a similar construction on the Randell Street property line. There is no separation between courts laterally. Along the centre line of the courts, there are brick and tiled gabled roofed shade shelters. The northern courts are marked out and in playing condition with mobile net stands for each court. The southern courts are not marked out at present. To the western end of the courts, an area has been fenced off for material storage, grass clippings and the like. The courts are unlit.

The clubhouse (1982) and pro-shop are located to the south of the grass courts, centrally located on the east-west axis. It is a simple brick and tiled gambrel roofed building with aluminium framed joinery, orientated along the east-west axis to allow views across the playing surfaces. The entrance to the complex is via a concrete slab path from the western car park, between the all weather courts, and a small grassed area immediately around the entrance. To the south of the clubhouse, a metal framed and clad shed has been placed for equipment storage.

There is a set of six all weather courts to the east and west of the clubhouse and a further set of six immediately to the south. There are set on raised planes retained by masonry walls, with black finish tubular framing and link mesh around the perimeter. The courts are lit by pole-mounted luminaries. There are no special plantings associated with the tennis section.

There is no obvious surface evidence of previous iterations of the court arrangements or facilities.

### **Cathedral section**

The cathedral section is located on the western boundary and takes in an open park setting, with a car park for the tennis club at the northern end, together with a children's play area, Halvorsen Hall near its southern end and a collection of mature trees. The topography slopes gently away from Fitzgerald Street and the street edge is delineated by a low galvanized steel and link mesh fence, with gates to the car park. The car park runs along the east-west axis and the

cathedral tree plan passes through it, with parking arranged to suit the trees. The cathedral tree plan is simple and comprises a rectangle of plantings made up of Port Jackson Figs (*Ficus rubiginosa* 1920s), Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle* grown from 1870s but extant specimens probably 1920s), Norfolk Island Pines (*Araucaria heterophylla* 1920s), a Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora* 1920s), Cape Lilacs or White Cedar (*Melia azederach* grown from 1870s but extant specimens probably 1920s), a Coral Tree (*Erithryna sykesii* 1910s), a small group of Box Trees (*Lephostemon confertus* 1920s), and a Brachychiton (*Brachychiton hybridum* 1920s). The understorey is grassed, except for the Port Jackson Figs where grass has been removed along the tree canopy drip line and the ground mulched. Many of the trees in this section are mature and date from some of the early development of the park, while others have been severely pruned and are misshapen. Some Port Jackson Figs are in poor condition and have not responded to treatments including mulching and pruning.<sup>154</sup> Overall this section is a pleasant green environment and the impact of car parking is very low.

There is a children's playground that appears to have been installed in the 1990s in the north-east corner of this section.

Halvorsen Hall is located in the southern part of the section. It is a very simple brick and tile building designed in the Late Twentieth Century Sydney style, with its free compositional style, low pitched tile roofs, asymmetrical massing, skillion roof geometry, solar orientation, exposed roof construction and paved fore court. The immediate area around the hall is paved with concrete slabs. The building and pavings are stained from bore water overspray.

Plantings associated with this building include cacti and New Zealand Christmas Trees (*Metrosideros excelsa*).

The hall is laid out with a large centrally located room that was designed as a band practice room and is now used as an art studio. This area is flanked by stores to the west and a kitchen and toilets area to the east.

### **Cottage section**

This section is located in the south-west corner and contains open lawns, Lee Hop's Cottage and the remains of the outside toilet, the AIDS memorial, vestiges of the lake's edge, and tree plantings.

The ground slopes away from both Fitzgerald and Stuart Streets, and there are fences along part of both streets. The difference between the levels in the street and Lee Hop's cottage indicate that Fitzgerald Street has been built up considerably since the time of construction of the cottage.

Lee Hop's Cottage (1903) is located in against the western boundary, at the northern end of this section. The remaining evidence comprises the cottage and the base to an outside toilet. The immediate environs of the cottage have been landscaped as part of the recent conservation works, with a new front fence, retaining wall along the street frontage and brick paving to the margin between fence and street. There are new plantings associated with the cottage including roses (*Rosea spp.*) and Syzygium.

The cottage is a simple rectangular plan four-room cottage, constructed in brick with hipped roof that extends over the verandahs in a broken back format. Lower walls are tuck-pointed and upper walls are covered with rough cast render. There is a centrally located front door flanked with single pane double hung sashes. As

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<sup>154</sup> Email to HCWA from Hannah Eames, Senior Heritage Officer, Town of Vincent, 1/12/2003

the ground falls away towards the rear of the house, there is a balustrade to part of the side verandah and to the rear, with a set of timber steps down to ground level. Timber posts and timber verandah floors have been installed as part of the conservation works. The cottage is generally in good repair.

To the immediate south of Lee Hop's Cottage, there is a set of brick construction steps flanked by a rendered brick retaining wall, which would appear to be all that remains of Mrs Bromfield's house above ground level.

The AIDS memorial is located in the south-west corner of the site and comprises an arc shaped polychrome concrete brick shaped wall, set with commemorative plaques, a paved forecourt and a rectangular reflective pond in the form of a raised tank made of the same polychrome concrete bricks, with a metal rim to the water body. The rear of the wall comprises a revetment made up with random coursed coffee rock and this in turn is surrounded by pea gravel contained by an in situ laid concrete kerb. Tufted grasses punctuate the pea gravel plateau. A bed of bamboo has been placed in a formal strip along a line extending from the north side of the memorial.

There is a screen of bottlebrushes between the memorial and the cottage, a Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*), which is possibly remnant vegetation, an Italian Poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'* 1920s), a young Norfolk Island Pine, a Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*), and one or two Box Trees. Along the Stuart Street boundary, Flame Trees (1920s) make up the verge plantings. The street boundary is delineated by tanalith treated pine poles.

This area contains street furniture such as pole-mounted luminaries that would appear to be from the 1970s and timber batten clad refuse bins.

This area has a combination of the old and the new, of historic building and planting and conservation. It is generally in good condition

### **Women's Field section**

This section is located at the centre of the southern boundary on Stuart Street, and runs in a rectangular shape all the way to the Tennis section. It is a large expanse of grassed area, with a car park located in its northern section, the bottle yard to its east and groups of trees around its perimeter. The western edge is more or less delineated by a line of Norfolk Island Pines (1920s) and Port Jackson Figs of the Cathedral section, with a mixture of young plantings associated with the car park that includes Spotted Gums (*Eucalyptus maculata* 1980s), Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon* 1980s), and a Peppermint Gum (*Eucalyptus nicholi*). Other plantings along the edge of the bottle yard boundary include a small number of trees such as Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle*), Box Trees, and some self-sown Bottle Brushes (*Callistemon viminalis*). Flame Trees (1920s) make up the verge plantings.

Generally this section remains in use for leisure and informal sport, and apart from the loss of some of the tree screen on the eastern boundary is relatively intact and in good condition.

### **Bottle Depot section**

This section is isolated from the rest of the park by patches of fence and by its nature. All buildings and bitumen paving have been removed and the level of excavation suggests that contaminated soils have been removed. Some clean fill has been brought to the site. While the site is as yet undeveloped as part of the park, a number of grasses have established themselves, together with self-sown



Wattle (*Acacia spp.*), Castor Oil (*Rucinus communis*), Bottle Brushes, and young gums. Flame Trees continue along the southern boundary in Stuart Street.

This section is in poor condition and detracts from the presentation of the remainder of the park.

### **Central section**

The Central section is visually contained by residential development to the east, together with the Entry Avenue section, the Tennis section, the Women's Field section and the Bottle Yard section. It is a small area that is largely taken up with the bitumenised access road, a small amount of lawn and native plantings including Spotted Gums (1980s), Ironwood (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon* 1970s), Blue Gums (1980s), and some Cape Wedding Bush (*Dombeya burgesiae* 1920s) along the eastern boundary. It is a transitional space dominated by a carpark, with the trees providing the only visually pleasing elements. No surface evidence of the convict construction drain or features that might suggest its presence are visible in the Entry Avenue, Palmerston House or Shule sections of the site.

### **Entry Avenue section**

This section comprises a centrally located road with marginal plantings in a generous verge which include Cape Wedding Bush, Canary Island Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*), Oleander (*Nerum oleander*), Grevillea (*Grevillea spp.*), Hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp.*), and Melaluecas. Many of these plantings date from the avenue's early period of development, and it retains a high degree of integrity as an entry and authenticity in terms of its layout and backbone of plantings.

### **Palmerston House section**

This section may contain archaeological evidence of the house that once stood in this location, but is now essentially park land that slopes away from Palmerston Street with a mixture of plantings that includes three Moreton Bay Fig Trees (*Ficus macrophylla* 1870s) that were part of the grounds of the house, a Mulberry Tree (*Morus nigra*), Cape Lilacs and Blue Gums (1980s). The area also contains a sand pit and children's play equipment. The area is a pleasant informal space that flows naturally into the adjoining Shule section on the north-east corner.

### **Shule section**

This section may contain archaeological evidence of the synagogue, but now it is simply open parkland, with lawns and perimeter plantings of young gums including Blue Gums (1980s) and Spotted Gums (1980s). The area is quite open and lends itself to leisure and informal sport.

## **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

In the pre European settlement period, Nyungar people frequented the wetlands north of the Swan River, including the area that later became *Robertson Park*. They are known to have continued to frequent this area after European settlement through into the 1860s, and possibly into the early 1870s, when the wetland was drained. Due to the highly developed and built-up nature of most inner city areas in Perth, many Aboriginal sites have been destroyed or built over. In comparison, *Robertson Park* has been relatively little disturbed, and there is potential for archaeological research.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Report of an archaeological survey of Robertson Park ... op. cit., p. 23; and telephone conversations with Shane Burke and Gaye Nayton op. cit.

In the second half of the 19th century, draining of the wetlands at the north of Perth opened up the area to market gardening, first by market gardeners who were predominantly British in origin, who were replaced by Chinese gardeners in the late 19th and early 20th century, who were in turn replaced by market gardeners of southern European origin. Fragments of the 1870s, convict built timber drain may remain beneath the land at *Robertson Park*, possibly up to three metres below the surface, and if such remains were located, they would be unique in Perth.<sup>156</sup>

In the 20th century, the market gardens in the inner urban areas ceased to be worked. In the World War I and interwar periods, numerous Chinese gardens were acquired by the City of Perth, with the aim of extending the City's parks and gardens. Subsequently, the former market gardens were laid out as parks and gardens, playing fields and tennis courts. Dorien Gardens and Birdwood Square were among them, and, in common with some areas of *Robertson Park*, may have potential archaeological significance. However, because the area at *Robertson Park* was initially farmed by British settlers from the 1870s, and subsequently by Chinese gardeners, it is considered to be more significant as a potential research site that may reveal important evidence of the material culture and different gardening practices of the respective occupants.

In the period 1922-25, *Robertson Park* was one of the first recreational areas to be laid out with tennis courts by the City of Perth. The success of this enterprise set an example for future endeavours, including that in Leederville, at the eastern end of Monger's Lake, where the City of Perth gradually acquired land which had previously been Chinese market gardens, a poultry run and a dairy, and, after the necessary earthworks, established 14 tennis courts in 1935.<sup>157</sup> With 38 tennis courts, *Robertson Park* also became one of the largest such centres established by the City of Perth. Due to the extensive filling and levelling in the 1920s and 1930s, the tennis court section of *Robertson Park* probably has less archaeological potential in relation to the use of the area for market gardening than the area of the Women's Field and the former children's playground area and the area around Lee Hop's Cottage. Excluding the tennis court section, the areas of *Robertson Park* formerly utilised for residential, commercial and industrial purposes may also have archaeological potential to contribute to projects that examine the changes through time. The land in most urban parks has not been utilised for such a wide range of uses prior to becoming parkland, and is unlikely to have similar potential for archaeological research.

The development of *Robertson Park and Archaeological Sites* is unusual in the Perth context where most parks were created as single reserves and have changed little in terms of the cadastres. *Robertson Park*, by way of contrast, has been an evolving and growing park, with additional land being acquired over more than 60 years.

#### 13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Archaeological Investigation in the Old Bottle Yard, Robertson Park, A report to the Town of Vincent, prepared by Dr Alistair Paterson, Dr Joe Dortch, Juliet King and Stuart Rapley, Centre for Archaeology, University of Western Australia, for the Town of Vincent, 18 May 2001.

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<sup>156</sup>        *ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>157</sup>        *West Australian* 13 April 1935.

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### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research will be necessary to document many of the British and Chinese market gardeners associated with the area in the 19th and 20th centuries through to the late 1920s. Surveyors' Fieldbooks that preceded the 1897 and 1952 Sewerage plans may yield useful information relating to buildings in the area. It should be borne in mind that many of the structures erected in the period 1870-1928 were timber and iron, and may have been quite ephemeral in nature and may therefore not appear in these documentary records.

Correspondence etc. in City of Perth records may yield further information about the Little Citizens' League.

Construction date of the tennis court shelter sheds.