



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.

11.1. AESTHETIC VALUE*

While *Esplanade Reserve* displays the framework of the Paradise style in the selection and arrangement of planting, modifications to the place have introduced the more eclectic elements of the Plantsman's Gardens style. (Criterion 1.1)

The 1928 kiosk is a fine example of the Federation Arts and Crafts style, composed of interlocking octagonal forms with elliptical arched windows. (Criterion 1.1)

The variety of planting and landscape features at *Esplanade Reserve* provide a range of aesthetic and spatial qualities which are valued by the community for their enhancement of the urban environment. (Criterion 1.3)

Esplanade Reserve is a broad expanse of public open space, enclosed by some mature plantings which frame the view of the place. The Moreton Bay figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) on Barrack and William streets are of particular importance as they represent early avenue plantings. (Criterion 1.3)

Esplanade Reserve together with the Narrows Interchange, Supreme Court Gardens and Langley Park, collectively define the southern edge of the city and provide contrasting qualities in the stretch of open space adjacent to the river. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

This place is considered to be of very high historic value within the entire City of Perth for the following reasons:

Esplanade Reserve was part of a major work of reclamation carried out along the river foreshore to create public park lands, and was a result of the attitude that developed in the 1870s and 1880s, that squares and parks were needed to improve the quality of city life. (Criterion 2.2)

Esplanade Reserve was the site of the proclamation of self-government for the State in 1890, and has been the site of the Anzac Day parades and services since 1916. The Perth Exhibition was held at *Esplanade Reserve* in 1881. (Criterion 2.2)

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.

The place is important historically as a traditional rallying point for public protest marches. (Criterion 2.2)

Esplanade Reserve is the site of the Allan Green Conservatory which commemorates the State's 150th anniversary of foundation. (Criterion 2.2)

Esplanade Reserve is the site of the Alf Curlewis Gardens, named in memory of a long-serving Perth City Councillor. The kiosk was named the Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre in 1985 after the Perth Councillor who took a strong interest in child care and family issues. (Criterion 2.3)

Esplanade Reserve is associated with Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs, whose memorial has stood on an adjacent site on the foreshore since 1940, and is the saluting base for Anzac Day services. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The place has the potential, through archaeological investigation, to provide information about the management of land reclaimed from the Swan River. The place may contribute to comparative analyses which can be derived from adjacent sites reclaimed for different functions and at different times. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Esplanade Reserve is highly valued for both social and cultural associations, as a venue for sporting activities, special events, performance and memorial services, as well as for its function as a public forum. (Criterion 4.1)

Esplanade Reserve provides a protected 'green space for city workers, residents and visitors and, in more recent years, has provided for greater enjoyment of this space with the addition of the Alf Curlewis Gardens and the Allan Green Conservatory. (Criterion 4.1)

The kiosk on *Esplanade Reserve* has occupied its site since 1928, and is of significance to various sections of the community. Originally designed for use as a tea room, it has been occupied by Annabella's Nightclub (1977-1980), Salvation Army youth drop-in centre 'The Converted Duke' (1982-1985), and Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre (1985-1998). It was also a regular meeting venue for various service clubs in the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion 4.1)

Esplanade Reserve contributes significantly to the Perth community's sense of place. It has existed since 1880, and links the river with the city. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Esplanade Reserve is representative of the nineteenth perception of the importance and desirability of public open space close to the city and river which has continued through to the present day. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Esplanade Reserve is in good condition. The standard of presentation and maintenance of the grounds and structures are high and is reflected in the floral displays and the well kept lawn area. Many of the mature trees are suffering from the effects of continuing road works and old age. Remedial work or replacement planting need to be considered to conserve landscape features of the park.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Esplanade Reserve has high integrity. Although the specific activities at the place have been modified through the twentieth century, the place has operated continuously as a recreation ground since it was established in 1880. Everyday use of the park is now more passive, providing opportunities to relax rather than accommodating the more active sporting pursuits of earlier periods.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Esplanade Reserve has moderate authenticity. The general character of the large grassed area and rows of mature trees remains but many of the sporting pavilions and facilities have been removed. Riverside Drive separates the park from the river so that water based recreational facilities are no longer directly available. The park layout was revised in the 1970s and new structures and landscape features have been introduced.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Graduate Architect and Anna Chauvel, Landscape Architect. Additional research has been compiled by Jacqui Sherriff, HCWA staff.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Esplanade Reserve was established in 1880/1, as a Paradise style park for the recreational use of the people of Perth. The place, with an area of 4.8ha, is bounded by The Esplanade on the north, Barrack Street on the east, Riverside Drive on the south and William Street on the west. Buildings and structures extant are the kiosk and change rooms (1928; currently known as the Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre), Hobbs Memorial (1940), Alf Curlewis Garden structures (1972) and the Allan Green Conservatory (1979).

Within a few years of the initial European settlement of Western Australia, a large area of the Swan River foreshore was set aside as a 'Government Domain for the purposes of parkland and government buildings. The land extended along the foreshore from Barrack Street to Point Fraser, near Heirisson Island. Although the land was set aside in Arrowsmith's plan of 1833, the following year much of it was subdivided for residential purposes, leaving only the area between Barrack Street and Lord Street (now Victoria Avenue) as public open space.'

In June 1845, after the Agricultural and Vineyard Societies of Western Australia proposed the establishment of a 'Horticultural Garden in Perth, an area of the Government Domain was set aside and proclaimed 'Stirling

I Gordon Stephenson, *The Design of Central Perth: Some Problems and Possible Solutions — A study made for the Perth Central Area Design Co-ordinating Committee*, University of Western Australian Press, Nedlands, 1975, p 10.

Gardens'.² By the 1860s, Stirling Gardens was a popular resort for the people of Perth and weekly performances by the band of the Metropolitan Volunteers, which began in August 1863, sustained popular use of the Gardens

As Perth developed, recreational use of the foreshore and river increased. In April 1862, believing it ought to encourage 'moral amusements and manly sports', the Perth Municipal Council agreed to the use of part of Bazaar Street, to the west of the William Street jetty, as a practice wicket for the town's cricket club.⁴ Use of the river frontage continued, with the establishment of the Western Australian Rowing Club boatshed and jetty, located between Pier and Barrack streets, in 1868. The first designated recreation ground in Perth was set aside in 1873 in Wellington Street, East Perth, on what is now known as Wellington Square.⁵ However, it was not heavily used until the 1890s when residential development of the area increased.⁶

By the mid-1870s, many prominent Perth residents were concerned with promoting the civic improvement of their city. These concerns found voice in the newspaper editorials of the day, which highlighted appreciation of Perth's natural assets, early planning errors and the long-term needs of city residents. The lack of public open space, central to the town and close to the river, was a recurring concern.⁷

An article in the *Inquirer* in April 1875, calling for the creation of a recreation ground, proposed that the area between the William and Barrack Street jetties be used for such a purpose:

Once more, what do the citizens of Perth say to a recreation ground? It cannot be said that we want no out-door recreation... True we have no large smoky city to crawl from before we can imbibe the fresh air, or sniff the breeze, as some have. We want no Recreation Ground on that account. But we do require a piece of ground where we may walk decently, in defiance of vexatious hillocks of sand, and pass an hour without constantly experiencing those extreme ups and downs which we endeavor on such occasions mentally to flee from... We want a Recreation Ground in the immediate neighbourhood of Perth... We require such a place close at hand. What would London, Paris, Vienna or any other European capital, give to have at their doors such a situation as we have in the vicinity of our two jetties? Were a Recreation Ground formed between William Street jetty and the one known as Cole's [Barrack Street jetty], the citizens would have something to be proud of, and something from which they would derive great benefit and pleasure.⁸

2 Considine & Griffiths Architects with Robin Chinnery Historian, 'Stirling Gardens, Perth: Conservation Plan', prepared for the City of Perth, December 1997, pp. 5-19. Although the gardens started off well, they fell into decay in the mid-1850s after a period of private lease. Stirling Gardens was returned to public use in 1858. Also in 1845, a large parcel of land was set aside for public recreation to the east of the central business district at Claise Brook. However, this was largely unused due to its distance from the town centre and later became the Western Australian Cricket Association Ground and Gloucester Park. See Australian Institute for Urban Studies, 'Perth's Foreshore: a creative challenge Proceedings of a seminar held at Perth Concert Hall on 24 November 1990', East Perth, 1991, p. 50.

3 Considine & Griffiths Architects, op. cit., p. 19.

4 Stannage, C. T. *The People of Perth: A social history of Western Australia's capital city*. Perth City Council, 1979, p. 157.

5 *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 8 July 1873, p. 163.

6 George Seddon & David Ravine, *A City and its Setting: images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1986, p. 123.

7 Ibid.

8 *Inquirer*, 7 April 1875, as quoted in Seddon & Ravine, op. cit., p. 125.

As there was clearly a desire to have a recreation area closer to the city centre, the Perth Municipal Council opened discussions with the Colonial Secretary about the possibility of filling in the ground on the foreshore between the Barrack and William street jetties for use as a recreation ground.⁹ Although the Public Works Department had begun reclamation of the area in 1873, dredging silt and shell from the Swan River, work was 'spasmodic'. Reclamation of the area began in earnest in the early 1880s, with soil removed through the levelling of St George's Terrace.¹⁰

On 31 March 1880, the partially reclaimed land, officially Reserve 423 and known as the New Recreation Ground, was handed over to the Perth Municipal Council by deed of grant 'for the free recreation and enjoyment of the people forever'.¹¹ Stephenson suggests that the reclamation for the New Recreation Ground was a 'subconscious effort' to replace the waterfront park as laid out by Arrowsmith in 1833.¹²

Despite a shortage of funds, the Council allocated £1,000 for work on the New Recreation Ground. As a drain from Sherwood Street, which had previously emptied into the river, deposited its contents over the partly reclaimed, swampy ground, it presented a sanitary risk, as well as an unpleasant odour. To solve the problem, the Council closed the drain with sand infill carted from the foot of Mt Eliza.¹³

The place officially became known as the Esplanade Recreation Ground in 1885.¹⁴ In its original form, the Esplanade Recreation Ground ran from The Esplanade (previously Bazaar Terrace) down to the Swan River. It soon became the centre of outdoor recreation for Perth residents. This was accentuated by the completion of the Perth-Fremantle railway in the early 1880s, which saw the focus move away from the river as the prime transport route. From this time, the river was seen more in terms of recreation as part of a parkland setting for the city.¹⁵

The Esplanade Recreation Reserve became the venue for gatherings, displays, exhibitions, rallies and sporting functions of every type over the years. The first major event was the Perth Exhibition, held over six weeks, in November/ December 1881. A 10,000 square foot timber and iron structure, was built by prison labour to house the display of overseas products.¹⁶ The following year, an athletics carnival, attended by some 2,000 people, was held to celebrate the 53rd anniversary of the colony.¹⁷

After the Perth Yacht Club erected its clubhouse off the Esplanade Recreation Ground foreshore in 1881, and the Recreation Ground became a popular gathering place for watching the Club's regattas on the river.¹⁸

The first structures built on the Esplanade Recreation Reserve were the pavilion and grandstand in 1885, at a cost of £235 /0/ 0.¹⁹ The Metropolitan

9 *ibid.*; Maps, 1838, showing the area prior to reclamation; 1889, showing the area after creation of Esplanade Reserve.

10 Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Menagh, C. E. 'The Esplanade - link to WA's history', *The West Australian*, 29 November 1978, p. 7.

12 Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

13 *The West Australian*, 7 June 1881, p. 3.

14 *The West Australian*, 11 February 1885, p. 3.

15 Heritage and Conservation Professionals, 'Supreme Court Conservation Plan', 1998, p. 53.

16 Menagh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

17 *The West Australian*, 2 June 1882, p. 2.

18 *The West Australian*, 15 November 1884, p. 3.

19 Menagh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Cricket Club occupied rooms with lockers and 'shower bath' in the pavilion.²⁰ Recreational use of the area increased with the establishment of tennis courts, cricket pitches and bowling greens at *Esplanade Reserve*.²¹

In the mid-1880s, there was much talk in the local press regarding the desirability of establishing 'botanic gardens' in Perth. With regard to the success of the reclamation for the Esplanade Recreation Ground, further reclamation of the Swan River was proposed:

With the spaces between the town and the Barrack Street jetties, and between Barrack Street and Government House jetties, filled in, with the police station removed, and the two old barns, which have done duty as Court Houses, pulled down, a ground might be obtained which would greatly beautify the city, and from its central position and easy accessibility, would do much to promote the comfort and recreation of the people...No gardens in the back swamps would be of half the same use to the people, nor as half the same ornamentation to the city.²²

This was a recurring theme in newspaper editorials and correspondence from the mid-1880s to the 1930s.²³

An editorial in *The West Australian* on 9 December 1886 provided the first public proposal for an integrated park setting for Perth Water. It proposed that public parklands be established around Perth Water, from Mill Point in South Perth along to the Causeway, west to incorporate the Recreation Ground (*Esplanade Reserve*) and along the northern shore to the William Street jetty. Many subsequent planners, including William Bold, W E Boas and John Oldham took up this theme.²⁴

In response to these popular calls for the provision of public open space, major reserves were set aside for parkland and recreational purposes in and around the city c. 1900. These included the extension of the Mount Eliza reserve in 1890 (170 ha had originally been set aside in 1871 as 'Perth Park; the area became Kings Park in 1901), Queens Gardens, East Perth (1899), Third Swamp (Hyde Park; 1897), the Zoological Gardens, South Perth (1898), the WACA (1900), and Barrack Square and Supreme Court Gardens (1903).

River reclamation continued east to Victoria Avenue in 1904-5, creating *Barrack Square*, and following World War One, major reclamation of the Swan River was undertaken for both aesthetic and practical purposes. Reclamation through rubbish disposal and large scale dredging and filling between Barrack Street and Bennett Street was completed by 1921.²⁵ This reclamation included the formation of *Langley Park*.

The establishment of parks was closely linked to wealth, with the result that Perth did not begin to develop a comprehensive system of parks until after the gold rushes of the 1890s. The local concern for the provision of developed

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- 20 PCC file 'Use of wickets on Esplanade Reserve/Weld Square,' August 1895-July 1898. I believe the pavilion and grandstand were one and the same thing. It was usual practice to have rooms underneath a grandstand and there is no evidence of any other structure on the place that would have filled this role.
- 21 'Central Perth Foreshore Study: Draft Final Report', prepared by the Central Perth Foreshore Study Group, June 1987, p. 14.
- 22 *The West Australian*, 7 March 1882, as quoted in Considine & Griffiths Architects, op. cit., p. 22.
- 23 Heritage and Conservation Professionals, op. cit., p. 162.
- 24 As discussed in Seddon & Ravine, op. cit., p. 123.
- 25 Heritage and Conservation Professionals, op. cit., p. 57; Stephenson, op. cit., p. 7. Between 1900 and 1960, approximately 200 acres of river and swampy foreshore were added to the City of Perth's landholdings.

open space was prompted by the planning ideals of the City Beautiful and garden suburb movements and coincided with the general increase in affluence that accompanied the Western Australian gold booms of the late 1800s.²⁶ Public parks were also a response to environmental and public health concerns and were the only public provision for outdoor recreation at the time.²⁷

Meanwhile, *Esplanade Reserve* continued to be a popular recreation and celebratory venue. For example, the granting of responsible government to Western Australia was proclaimed at *Esplanade Reserve* in 1890, and was witnessed by 6,000 people.²⁸

Further recreational facilities were also established in the Reserve or adjacent to its foreshore from this time. In 1895, the Perth Bowling Club premises, of timber and iron construction, were built on the northern side of *Esplanade Reserve*.²⁹ Wanda Tennis Club courts and clubhouse were constructed next to the bowling greens. The Perth Flying Squadron clubhouse was built to west of Perth Yacht Club in 1890, and in 1897, the Perth Baths were built on the eastern side of the Reserve.³⁰ The early plantings of the avenues of Moreton Bay Fig trees and Canary Island palms within *Esplanade Reserve* were done in 1898.

The place was also a major venue for organised sport. The three cricket pitches were in constant demand, and Australian Rules football, rugby, soccer, lawn bowls, tennis, quoits, croquet, polo, lacrosse, baseball and women's hockey were all played on a regular basis.

Many military parades and reviews have been held at *Esplanade Reserve* and the major Anzac Day service and march past has been held there since 1916. In 1940, the Hobbs Memorial was erected on the south side of Riverside Drive in honour of Lieut General Sir James Joseph Talbot Hobbs, and since that time, the Memorial has been used as a saluting base at subsequent Anzac Day services. The Anzac Day parade and service at *Esplanade Reserve* traditionally draws a large crowd. In 1954, during their Australian tour, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh reviewed 10,000 ex-servicemen and women at *Esplanade Reserve*.³¹

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- 26 Heritage and Conservation Professionals, op. cit., p. 55. Western Australia followed British trends with regard to the establishment of parks and recreation areas. Until the early nineteenth century domain lands and government gardens fulfilled the role of parklands. With the growth of industrialization, however, the middle-class desired 'idealised landscapes at the edge of their fast growing towns,' but it was not until 1844, that the first government-funded public park was laid out in London. While British parks tended to be placed on poor land in established towns, the relatively new Australian towns were able to develop their parks in prime city locations. See Ramsay, Juliet, *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A classification and assessment method for the register of the National Estate*, Australian Heritage Commission, 1991; Chadwick, George F. *The Park and the Town*, Architectural Press, London, 1966.
- 27 Chadwick, op cit., p. 377; Richards, Oline, 'A fairer Athens & a freer Rome: Historic public gardens in Perth, WA' *Heritage Australia*, Winter, 1982, pp. 66-69.
- 28 Stannage, op cit., p. 210; photographs, 1890.
- 29 Menagh, op cit.; photographs, 1942; MWSSDD sewerage plan, sheets 21& 22, 1944.
- 30 Menagh, op cit.; Battye Library photographs 1889-1910, 7096B, 6969B, 5323B/1796 & 1289. The Perth Baths were superseded by Crawley Baths and were demolished in 1920; the Clubhouse survived until much later. See Savvas, Adrian & Gaylard, Geoff, *160 Years of News from The West Australian*, South Australia, Savvas, 1993, p. 59; Photographs, 1960s, BA690/228 & 1945.

31 Menagh, op cit.; *The West Australian*, 9 April 1971, p. 9.

Works to improve the amenity of *Esplanade Reserve* continued into the 1920s, with the removal of the old grandstand in 1928, to make way for a refreshment kiosk, public conveniences, and change rooms, which were built at a cost of £5,991.³²

In the 1920s and 1930s, improvement of the Swan River foreshore continued to be a concern for both State and local governments. The passing of the *Swan River Improvements Act 1925* was designed to:

authorise the reclamation of land along the shores of the Swan River in the vicinity of East Perth, Maylands, Burswood Island, Victoria Park and South Perth, the improvement of the river channel near such shores, and the construction of roads along the river front of such reclaimed land.³³

In moving the second reading, the Minister for Works stated that:

When the work is completed it will have the effect of removing the present nuisance [odourous algae growth in thick mud], enhancing the value of adjacent property, and making Perth the first city in the Commonwealth in point of beauty...³⁴

In 1934 / 5 and 1936/7, the Lord Mayor of the City of Perth's report proposed that the land in front of the boat shed and wharves between William and Mill streets be reclaimed for a drive to Mount Street, providing both a scenic drive and a city bypass. Continuing the theme, in 1936, the South Perth Roads Board conveyed a conference of representatives from local authorities to co-ordinate foreshore reclamation, mosquito eradication and general improvements on both sides of the Swan River from the Causeway to Fremantle.³⁵

Work on the northern foreshore involved reclamation works between Barrack Street and the Causeway and the laying of Riverside Drive in 1937.³⁶ Riverside Drive, gazetted a public thoroughfare on 16 February 1940, effectively cut *Esplanade Reserve* from the foreshore and caused the removal of many businesses from the area.³⁷ This was exacerbated in the late 1950s when Riverside Drive was widened to take traffic to and from the Mitchell Freeway and Narrows Bridge interchange. At this time, concern was expressed about the view that greeted people as they entered Riverside Drive. The old sports facilities on *Esplanade Reserve*, in particular the Perth Bowling Club building which was now 70 years old, were seen to be in poor repair.³⁸

Nevertheless, recreation continued to be prominent among foreshore activities and land associated with the construction of Riverside Drive provided extensive open space. The City of Perth prepared a plan for *Langley Park*, an area of open space designed to accommodate 'the bowling green and tennis enclosures from the Esplanade Recreation Ground', hockey grounds and space for basketball, baseball, a children's playground and park.³⁹ To the

32 'Council's work in 1928', *The West Australian*, 21 January 1929, from PCC newspaper scrapbook October 1915-December 1930.

33 As quoted in J S H Le Page, *Building a State: The Story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829-1985*, Water Authority of Western Australia, Perth, 1986, p. 415.

34 Ibid.

35 Stephenson, op.cit., p. 57.

36 Riverside Drive was completed in 1937 as part of the 'city by-pass' proposed by the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (1930).

37 Australian Institute for Urban Studies, op. cit., p. 56.

38 *The West Australian*, editorial, 3 August 1965, p. 6.

39 Stephenson, op. cit., p. 56.

west of *Esplanade Reserve*, a White City Amusement Park was established amongst the jetties and docks, but was removed following public pressure.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, reclamation works elsewhere along Perth Water between the 1930s to the late 1950s involved the reshaping of Herrison Island (1930s), the filling in of Millers Pool on Mill Point, South Perth (1935), and reclamation of the foreshore along the peninsula to Mends Street (1935). Filling also occurred near the Causeway to establish McCallum Park (1934).⁴¹ The reclamation the South Perth foreshore and the subsequent establishment of Sir James Mitchell Park, which was completed in 1960/ 1, was one of the last major reclamation works undertaken on the Swan River.⁴²

During the Depression of the 1930s and during recent times of social unrest, *Esplanade Reserve* has been used as a rallying point for protesters before they marched through the city streets. Open air religious meetings, band concerts, picture shows, and political meetings were held on *Esplanade Reserve* from the 1930s into the 1970s, by groups as diverse as the National Revival Crusade, Campaigners for Christ, Loyal Orange Institution, Braille Society, Missions to Seamen, Australian Communist Party, Australia-Russia Friendship League, Perth Fortress Silver Band, Perth Advent Band, Highland Pipe Band, Westralian Marching Girls and Campaign against Nuclear Energy. In more recent years, the place has been used for Red Blanket Family Fun Day, Public Service Games, New Years Eve Concert, Festival of Perth events, display of the yacht Australia IL Peace Banner display, ethnic and cultural displays, a Beach Boys concert, set down place for animals in the Agricultural Society parade, and for motor shows, to name just a few.⁴³

Esplanade Reserve was also the place for 'soap box' speakers on Sunday afternoons. Originally the speakers stood on boxes, tables and chairs to air their views, but in late 1944, a brick and concrete platform for concerts and orchestral performances measuring 24 feet (7.25m) by 18 feet (5.5m), was built 'abutting from existing dressing rooms' at a cost of £242.⁴⁴ From this time, the concert platform and a temporary wooden stand erected near Riverside Drive, could be used by speakers. Speakers had to reserve the stand for their speeches and later, in the 1960s, they had to supply scripts of their speech to the Perth City Council when making their booking.⁴⁵ Topics were generally political and made for some heated debate with listeners.

In the late 1960s, these sports clubs were relocated to Ozone Reserve on the eastern side of Plain Street, and new brick clubhouses were constructed there.⁴⁶ In 1971, K. Hunter, Director of Parks and Gardens, released his new design for *Esplanade Reserve*. In this design the open area available for sport was reduced from 13 acres (5.2ha) to less than 5 acres (2ha) with the remainder of the area taken up by 'passive recreation' facilities such as gardens, walkways and seating. The Hobbs Memorial was to be moved to the northern boundary with a dais in front of it where the Anzac Day ceremony could be held.⁴⁷

40 Australian Institute for Urban Studies, op. cit., p. 55.

41 Ibid., p. 54.

42 Le Page, op. cit., p. 494.

43 PCC File 1901371 'Esplanade Concert Platform'; Files 78177, 29/84, 8000332, 1901372/3719 'Use of Esplanade Reserve.'

44 PCC File 1901371/3058.

45 PCC File 1901371/3058.

46 PCC File G13/10, 'Bowling Greens - Langley Park.'

47 *The West Australian*, 18 March 1971, p. 6.

The plan met with strong opposition from the RSL, who did not favour moving the Hobbs Memorial and wanted *Esplanade Reserve* kept 'as a city square where crowds could assemble.' The Associated Sporting Committee also opposed the plan, wanting more open space left. A rally was held to save *Esplanade Reserve* from the proposed redevelopment.⁴⁸

A revised plan allowed 10 acres (4ha) for sport and 3 acres (1.2ha) for passive recreation. The Hobbs Memorial remained where it was.⁴⁹ The cost of redevelopment was \$57,000, and included work to raise the level of *Esplanade Reserve* by 9-12 inches (20-30cm) to prevent the flooding which sometimes occurred in winter due to the high water table.⁵⁰

Gardens planted on the site of the old bowling club were named in memory of Alf Curlewis, a Perth City Councillor from 1954 to 1969, and Deputy Mayor for nine consecutive years. Alf Curlewis was also a member of many committees and organisations such as Rotary, Legacy, WA Heart Foundation, Festival of Perth Committee, Metropolitan Market Trust and Metropolitan Planning Authority. He was made CMG in 1968, and for many years he had an office at the bottom of Howard Street overlooking that part of *Esplanade Reserve* where the garden named after him is sited. The garden incorporates a pergola, paving and a speakers rostrum which were constructed at a cost of \$29,219 by K. R. Stewart P /L.⁵¹

The speaker's rostrum was an initiative aimed at encouraging the use of *Esplanade Reserve* for political rallies in place of Forrest Place as the latter venue presented policing problems. However, while its use as a public forum was encouraged, Perth City Council hoped the area would not make a return to soap box debates.⁵² Following the redevelopment of *Esplanade Reserve*, it was recommended that the place no longer be used for regular sporting activities but only for training and exhibition matches.⁵³

In 1979, a conservatory was constructed and planted at a cost of \$200,000, as a sesquicentenary memento. Known as the Allan Green Conservatory, it is planted with a tropical garden and is open to the public seven days a week. William Allan McInnes Green (1896-1972) was born and educated in Adelaide. He served in World War One, worked as a draughtsman for South Australian Railways until 1928, designer for Adelaide City Council until 1934, and assistant engineer and architect for City of Launceston, until 1937, when he was appointed building surveyor for Perth City Council. In 1945, he succeeded W. E. Bold as Town Clerk, and held that position for 21 years, until the age of 70. In 1963, he was appointed CMG, and this tenure was extended to 1966.⁵⁴

It was said that his will lay behind every important decision...He was either the designer or the adviser for every building constructed by the city council between 1944 and 1966 ... and was Western Australia's most experienced, qualified and versatile local government officer.⁵⁵

48 *Sunday Times*, 4 April 1971, p. 30.

49 *The West Australian*, 19 March 1971, p. 9; 9 April 1971, p. 9; 20 April 1971, p2; 18 May 1971, p.2.

50 Menagh, op cit.

51 PCC File, 1901380/3028, Alf Curlewis Gardens.

52 *ibid.*

53 PCC File 78177, 'Use of Esplanade.'

54 *Australian Dictionary of Biography 1940-1980*, MUP, 1996, Vol. 14 pp. 318-319.

55 *ibid.*

Originally appointed to restore credibility to the position of Town Clerk following a Royal Commission into his predecessor, Green was known for a tough, no-nonsense style of operation. He oversaw the commissioning and adoption of Prof. Gordon Stephenson and J.A. Hepburn's plans for Perth, which have shaped the city's development since 1955, and took a leading role in overseeing building projects for the 1962 Commonwealth Games.⁵⁶

Since the 1970s, the original Paradise style of *Esplanade Reserve*, has taken on a Plantsman's Garden style, with many and varied types of plants being added to the gardens in the place.⁵⁷ Coupled with this is the inclusion of native plants, indicating both an awareness of these as being better suited to the climate and soil, and an acceptance of place, in contrast to the desire to be elsewhere which is paramount in the Paradise style.⁵⁸

The original Paradise style is still clearly apparent however, and will survive. More palms have been added over the years, and young Moreton Bay Figs have been planted to take the place of the hundred year old trees when the time comes to remove them. *Esplanade Reserve* is the most popular of the foreshore parks for city workers, residents and visitors who come to relax and enjoy the river views, or take some exercise.⁵⁹

In the early-1980s, the Perth City Council initiated a study of the foreshore between the Narrows Bridge and the Causeway. The Perth Central Foreshore Study (draft final) stated that:

The Foreshore landscape of the central city is one of the most important features on the river system and provides central Perth with a unique image and amenity. ⁶⁰

The foreshore reserves, including *Esplanade Reserve*, were identified as being of 'civic importance', while the strategy acknowledged '...the supreme importance of the river and parkland foreshores setting of the city. In the grandest sense the foreshore is the city's front garden..⁶¹ In the Study, *Esplanade Reserve* was designated 'special events and recreation', while *Langely Park* was designated 'Recreation — passive and active'. ⁶² The stated aim of the strategy was to 'foster greater recreational use' of the foreshore areas through the provision of a wide range of attractive and functional spaces.

In 1998, a plan was developed entitled 'Centenary Gardens' to 'reflect the heritage and culture of Perth and Western Australia.' Various ideas were considered by Council, including a children's pathway through the city with links to *Esplanade Reserve* and the Museum of Childhood, and the refurbishment of the kiosk which could house the Museum.⁶³

Kiosk (Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre), Change rooms and Public toilets

56 ibid.

57 They use whatever is on hand in the Council nursery, in fact.

58 Ramsay, op cit., pp. 22-23; analysis based on physical evidence.

59 ibid.

60 'Central Perth Foreshore Study: Draft Final Report — Summary', prepared by the Central Perth Foreshore Study Group, June 1987.

61 ibid.

62 ibid.

63 PCC File P1014542; Telephone conversation with Kay Smith, PCC, by Irene Sauman, 13 July 1998, Memo HCWA File 3850; *West Australian*, 15 July 1998, p. 1 & 6.

Constructed in 1928, the kiosk operated for many years as a tea room. With the redevelopment of *Esplanade Reserve* in the early 1970s, the change rooms and public toilets were redesigned internally.⁶⁴

In 1977, Perth City Council leased the kiosk and change rooms to Gary Thompson Holdings who converted the place into Annabella's Nightclub. Work costing \$240,000 was carried out and included structural improvements of 'a run-down building'. However, residents in Lawson Towers on the other side of The Esplanade complained continuously about the noise level and problems caused by people leaving the venue when it closed at 3 am. Complaints continued, despite \$30,000 spent on sound proofing the nightclub. Perth City Council was caught between trying to get people into the city and the desire of residents for a quiet life. There were also doubts as to whether a nightclub was the proper use of a Class A Reserve. Consequently, the lease for Annabella's was not renewed in 1980.⁶⁵

In 1982, the Salvation Army leased the kiosk for use as a centre for young people. Known as 'The Converted Duke', the place opened on 12 November 1982. Rental was charged at \$150.00 a week and the Salvation Army spent \$25,000 establishing the centre.⁶⁶

In 1985, six months before their three year lease was due for renewal, the Salvation Army was asked to leave to allow the kiosk to be taken over by the Council's Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre. The Centre had to relocate from the NML building, which was to be redeveloped. Perth City Council paid the Salvation Army \$27,000 for fixtures and early termination of their lease. The Day Care Centre opened in the kiosk on 2 August 1985, after the place was refurbished.⁶⁷ The following year, the kiosk and change rooms were reroofed by Bristle Clay Tiles, of Caversham, at a cost of \$28,000.⁶⁸

The Day Care Centre was named after Florence Ellen Hummerston (1889-1983), who was the first woman elected to the Perth City Council. She was a councillor from 1951 to 1965, and involved in community affairs for over 40 years, supporting such organisations as National Fitness Council, Wanslea Children's Home, Meals on Wheels and the TB & Chest Association of WA.⁶⁹

The Florence Hummerston Day Care Centre closed during the first quarter of 1998, due to 'insufficient use,' and tenders were called to lease the building. The only expression of interest received by Council has been from Edith Cowan University Museum of Childhood. Their application is under consideration.⁷⁰

Sir Talbot Hobbs Memorial

A memorial to Lieut General Sir James Joseph Talbot Hobbs, KCB KCMG VD, was erected on *Esplanade Reserve* in 1940. Hobbs had arrived in Western Australia in 1887, and set up practice as an architect, eventually forming the partnership of Hobbs, Smith and Forbes in 1904. He was involved in the design and construction of many public buildings in Perth and Fremantle. Hobbs combined his architectural profession with a military career, rising from a member of the Volunteer Artillery in Surrey at the age of 19, to Lieut

64 PCC File 119/80.

65 *ibid.*

66 PCC Files 395/83 & 407/91.

67 PCC file 407/91.

68 *ibid.*

69 Battye Computer Catalogue biographical notes.

70 Telephone conversation with Vic Fuller, PCC Property Department, by Irene Bauman, 13 July 1998, Memo, HCWA File 3850.

General in command of the Australian 5th Division in World War One. He was also involved in youth organisations and Legacy, and was a member of the Council of Anglican Schools.?

Following his death in 1938, the Hobbs State Memorial Fund was established. A competition to design a memorial was won by A. B. Winning of the architectural firm Hobbs, Winning Associates. The statue itself was designed by E. F. Kohler, and cast in bronze by Premier Engineering Company. It was unveiled on Armistice Day, 11 November 1940, by Lieut General Sir James Mitchell.⁷² Later that year, the memorial was landscaped with crazy paving and garden beds. A pencil pine was planted on each side of the statue and a palm behind.⁷³

The site for the Hobbs Memorial was chosen by the Hobbs State Memorial Fund, and approved by the Perth City Council. Chairman of the Fund was Brigadier General A. J. Bessell-Browne, and C. W. Court was the Fund secretary. The site selected was 'south side of Riverside Drive, equidistant between Barrack and William Street, facing the city.'⁷⁴ The Memorial is used as a saluting base during Anzac Day services. In the late 1960s, when Riverside Drive was widened, the Hobbs Memorial became isolated on the median strip. A proposal in 1971, to move it to the northern side of *Esplanade Reserve* was rejected by the RSL.⁷⁵

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Esplanade Reserve is a public park in the central business district of Perth, encompassed by The Esplanade, Barrack Street, Riverside Drive and William Street. Established as a Paradise style park in 1880, the function and layout of the place have been modified so that the park is now more representative of a Plantsman's Garden style.⁷⁶ It occupies a predominantly flat site which has a gentle rise towards the city to the north. Medium rise commercial buildings line the north side of The Esplanade with the higher office buildings in St. George's Terrace forming the backdrop to *Esplanade Reserve* when viewed from the south. The major portion of the reserve is lawn with some perimeter planting and a collection of structures concentrated along the northern boundary. These landscape elements are laid out to screen the noise and view of the city and to create private spaces for city workers to 'escape' to. The extent of lawn stretching towards the river, which has limited everyday functional use, acts as a contrasting, but balanced foreground to the central business district of the city. *Esplanade Reserve* contributes to the long expanse of infill projects which extend from the Narrows Interchange to the Causeway. This stretch of landscaped parks and gardens helps to define the southern edge of Perth City and are of interest for their individual characteristics created by differing functions and periods of construction. The infill used at *Esplanade Reserve* sustains a higher quality of planting than the more sterile Langley Park.

Landscape features across the northern portion of the reserve include the Allan Green Conservatory to the west; the shade structures and park furniture in the central Alf Curlewis Gardens; and former kisok to the east.

71 Watts, Owen F. 'Lieut General Sir James Joseph Talbot Hobbs, 1864-1938, KCB, KCMG, VD,' Teacher's Higher Certificate thesis, 1963, bound typescript.

72 *West Australian*, 25 September 1940.

73 PCC File 1359/52, Site of Hobbs Memorial.

74 *ibid.*

75 *The West Australian*, 9 April 1971, p. 9.

76 Ramsay, *op cit.*, pp. 17 & 23.

The central grassed area of *Esplanade Reserve* is bordered by mature tree perimeter planting along Barrack and William streets. Tree planting along the Riverside Drive boundary is restricted to the corners, opening the park up to the south and allowing a strong visual connection to the river and the Talbot Hobbs War Memorial, located in the median strip of Riverside Drive. The William Street freeway on-ramp and Riverside Drive act as a physical barriers to the river, impeding pedestrian access from the park.

Pedestrian entry to *Esplanade Reserve* from The Esplanade is defined by the 'Alf Curlewis Gardens' sign located opposite the *West Australian Club* (c.1971). Square red brick columns at the top of a set of stairs, support a timber beam on which the name is inscribed. The remaining portion of this level change, of approximately five risers, along The Esplanade boundary is taken up by a low embankment which is treated with garden bed and steps. A limestone retaining wall at the western end of the north boundary borders the garden bed behind the conservatory.

The dominant vegetation at *Esplanade Reserve* includes the perimeter planting of mature trees and palms, garden beds and ornamental trees in the Alf Curlewis Gardens, the tropical garden in the conservatory, and the climbing plants on the main shade structure.

The collection of trees are a diverse mix of introduced species, ranging in age from 100 years to recent planting. The oldest specimens are the Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) located directly behind the conservatory and along William Street, Barrack Street and the eastern edge of Riverside Drive to form the east and west boundary of the park. Moreton Bay Figs (*Fiats macrophylla*) have been planted midway along Barrack Street, along the perimeter of Supreme Court Gardens, to create an avenue effect, framing the view to Barrack Square. A second row of figs have been planted c.1995, directly behind the mature figs in anticipation of the death and removal of the latter. The figs along William Street visually screen the freeway on-ramp from the park.

Along the western edge of Riverside Drive there is a row of mature Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) and two Hills Weeping Figs (*Fiats hillii*)

Along The Esplanade, near the kiosk, there are remnants of an alternating avenue of Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) and Cabbage Tree Palms (*Livistonia attstralis*) and located in the parking bays is a row of Port Jackson Figs (*Fiats rubiginosa*). There is a mature Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) located directly in front of the entry into the male toilet. Planted at the entry of the building are two *Cupressus arizonica*. Also around the building is a Port Jackson Fig (*Fiats rubiginosa*) and Senegal Date palm (*Phoenix reclinata*).

A variety of tree species have been planted throughout Alf Curlewis Gardens. Older trees (over 20 years) include Judas Tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*), Natal Cherry (*Dombeya natalensis*), New Zealand Christmas tree (*Nleterosiderous excelsoir*), Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*), Golden Shower (*Senna fistula*). Recently planted trees (up to 20 years) include Queensland Kauri Pine (*Agathis robusta*), Cocos Palms (*Arecastrum romanzoffianum*), Bottlebrush tree (*Callistemon sp*), Native frangipanni (*Hymenosportun flavum*), Desert Ash (*Fraxinus excelsoir*), Dragon Tree (*Dracaena draco*), Manchurian Pear (*Pyres ussuriensis*), Liquidamber (*Liquidanzber styraciflua*), Golden Honey Locust (*Gleditsia tricanthos*) and Ginkgo (*Ginkgo bilbo*).

The garden beds are planted with shade tolerant shrubs with annual flower borders. Purple Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) has been grown over the main shade structure.

A native garden bed has been planted on the corner of The Esplanade and William street, c.1997. It includes large transplanted Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) and Cycads (*Macrozamia riedlei*) amongst a variety of native groundcovers and large moss rock boulders.

The tropical garden, in the Allan Green Conservatory, was planted in 1980. It contains a selection of palms including Spiny palm and Golden cane (*Chrysalidocarpus Intescens*), ferns, bromeliaeds, epiphyte orchids and popular ornamental indoor plant species.

Constructed in Late Twentieth-Century Late Modern style, the Allan Green Conservatory is a pyramid structure with concrete walls at ground level and an aluminium space frame above.⁷⁷ The space frame is clad with glazing which features prominent vertical mullions. Plaques commemorating the laying of the foundation of the conservatory in 1979, and the official opening the following year, are located on either side of the entrance doors in the east elevation.

The kiosk is a rendered brick building with a tiled roof. Composed of interlocking octagonal forms, the structure is predominantly single-storey, but a central octagonal core rises above the roof providing additional upper level accommodation internally. Elliptical arched windows, located in the facets of the octagons, form a strong element in the overall composition which is representative of Federation Arts and Crafts style.⁷⁸

A prominent feature of the Alf Curlewis Gardens is the shade structure forming the entry to the gardens and the conservatory. It is constructed of red brick square columns and walls with painted timber beams spanning the walkway. Around the Allan Green Conservatory are three smaller structures constructed of the same materials. A brick dais for a speaker's rostrum is located in the Alf Curlewis Gardens and faces towards the large grassed area.

Service driveways from William and Barrack streets to the conservatory and day care centre, are sealed with red coloured bitumen embedded with laterite pebbles and generally finished at the edge with a flush concrete kerb. The driveway leading to the Allan Green Conservatory has been extended with black bitumen to create a turning area.

The footpath along Barrack Street is paved with Perth City Council grey 400 by 400 millimetre concrete pavers. A standard grey concrete slab footpath extends along The Esplanade and around the kiosk and small diagonal path into the park from the Barrack Street intersection. A variety of red brick paving has been used at the entry points, steps and paths within the Alf Curlewis Gardens and along the northern part of William Street.

The park furniture includes a number of steel frame and jarrah slat free-standing park seats and park benches, as well as benches fixed to the shade structures; play equipment and a treated pine shade structure associated with the daycare centre; rubbish bins; drink fountain; and painted bollards.

77 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 .pp. 260-263

78 *ibid.*, pp. 140-143.

There are three styles of fence used in the park. These include an anodised aluminium mesh fence around the kiosk; an aluminium pool fence, with a loop top, around the trees in the parking area along The Esplanade; and a barrier consisting of red brick piers and painted steel RHS or timber rail, along the northern edge of the Alf Curlewis Gardens returning into the park at the entry points to form the balustrade to the steps.

Standard Perth City Council street lights are used to light the roads and footpath along Barrack street and The Esplanade. Standard Western Power poles and light fittings are used along the other street frontages. Within the park tall light fittings are used around the perimeter of the lawn area.

There have been significant physical changes at *Esplanade Reserve* since the place was first established in 1880. These changes are well documented by the photographs and maps through which it is possible to trace the development of the place.⁷⁹ Features which are no longer extant include the grandstand, sporting pavilions and grounds and the jetties, yacht club and baths which extended into the Swan River. The construction of Riverside drive in the 1960s effectively cut the park off from the river depriving the place of water based recreational facilities. The redevelopment of *Esplanade Reserve* in the 1970s introduced new structures in the Alf Curlewis Gardens and the later Allan Green Conservatory. As a result, everyday use of the place is of a more passive nature than the organised sporting activities of earlier periods. The kiosk has served a number of quite disparate functions including public toilets and changing rooms, nightclub, community facility for the Salvation Army and most recently as a day care centre. The place is currently unoccupied.

Esplanade Reserve is in good condition. The standard of presentation and maintenance of the grounds are high as reflected in the floral displays and well kept lawn area. Many of the mature trees are suffering from the effects of continuing road works and old age. Remedial work or replacement planting needs to be considered to conserve landscape features of the park.

13. 3 REFERENCES

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* This involved a competition for a design concept for the City of Perth foreshore, including *Esplanade Reserve* and *Langley Park*.

'Central Perth Foreshore Study: Draft Final Report', prepared by the Central Perth Foreshore Study Group, June 1987.

Gordon Stephenson, *The Design of Central Perth: Some Problems and Possible Solutions — A study made for the Perth Central Area Design Co-ordinating Committee*, University of Western Australian Press, Nedlands, 1975.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could be undertaken into the results of an archaeological excavation on the Esplanade Reserve carried out as a UWA practical course in 1998. This was headed by Dr Gaye Naughton and a report was produced

79 A number of local publications have reproductions of photographs sourced from Battye Library and Perth City Council collections, illustrating development of The Esplanade, for example Seddon, G. & Ravine D. *A City and its Setting. Images of Perth, Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1986.

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