From wasteland to parkland:
a history of designed public open space in the City of
Perth, Western Australia, 1829 - 1965

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Abstract

Looking at the satellite picture of Perth, Western Australia, on the weather report each night, the most striking image is the amount of green space in and around the central city, and adjacent to the Swan River. Generally, the development of such open spaces is attributed to the deliberate insertion of nature into the city, to counteract concerns about the decadence and decay of the city. Parks are viewed, not as part of the urban fabric, but as interruptions to it.

Yet Perth, although a capital city, is a small city, an administrative hub, with little manufacturing or industry, and a dispersed population. Nature itself is already on the doorstep. Why then does Perth have the parks that it does? What have been the factors influencing their introduction and development?

Using archival sources (including files, maps and plans), newspaper articles and published reports of inquiries and commissions, I look for evidence of ideas about the role of nature in the city, and for the reasons given for the establishment and development of parks. I argue that parks, rather than being intrusions into the urban landscape, are synonymous with the city, an integral part of the urban fabric. Parks and gardens are developed in response to a variety of urban pressures, as tools for the development of the city, and to elevate the status of the city. They provide places for the education of a physically healthy and moral citizenry, through the use of didactic spaces such as landscape parks and botanic gardens, and through the use of utilitarian spaces such as sporting grounds, ovals and reserves.

More than tools for the physical and moral education of the citizens, parks become symbolic of the city, even icons for commemoration of the community and celebrations of city status.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD;
due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;
the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.
Acknowledgements

I blame my mother for this. Had she not encouraged me to return to University to undertake further study in history, I would not have started on this path.

My father, who died many years ago, was a firm believer in the Peter Principle. I hope I have not yet reached my level of incompetence.

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Abbreviations:

AJCP – Australian Joint Copying Project, a microfilming project undertaken to identify Australian material held in British archives.
Acc. - Accession
Battye - J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History.
Col. Sec. – Colonial Secretary’s Office.
Cons. - Consignment
Convict Fin. Bd. – Convict Finance Board.
Comptroller – Comptroller General’s Office, head of the Imperial Convict Establishment in Western Australia.
KP Bd. – Kings Park Board.
Lands – Department of Lands and Surveys, Surveyor General’s Office, etc.
Health – Department of Health, Public Health Department.
PCC – City of Perth, Perth City Council, Perth Town Trust.
Police – Police Department
Premier – Premier’s Department, Department of Premier and Cabinet.
Town Pl. Bd. – Town Planning Board.
State Gdns Bd. – State Gardens Board.
SROWA – State Records Office of Western Australia.
Works – Public Works Department, Department of Public works and Labour.
Figure 1: *Heaven and earth*, Leon Pericles.
Source: Courtesy of Leon and Moira Pericles.
Introduction - The Nature of the City

It would not be too heroic a claim to say that urban open space is an integral part of Australian culture. Expectation of such spaces, and community ownership of these spaces have become integrated into the psyche of urban Australians as part of their baggage of ‘rights’.\(^1\)

Can the arrangement of park trees regulate public movement and pleasure?\(^2\)

Situated on the riverine estuary known as Perth Water, nestled under the limestone ridge of Mt Eliza, the City of Perth has, almost from its foundation, been known as pretty. Reflected in the water, the City basks in more hours of sunshine than any other Australian capital, enjoying an enviable outdoor lifestyle. In form, Perth is something like a suburban house, with the river and the foreshore parkland providing a street and verge, or nature strip, for the city. Behind and to the side are the formal gardens of Queens Gardens, Hyde Park and Kings Park, as well as the grassed areas set aside for games, and the undeveloped bush of Kings Park.

Perth is, according to historian Tom Stannage, ‘a garden city’, an assessment based on the parks, reserves and gardens that encircle the city proper (see Appendix A, fig. 32).\(^3\) Paradoxically, two others, George Seddon and David Ravine, question what they perceive to be:

the most distinctive and puzzling feature of Perth…the lack of any central parkland equivalent to Hyde Park/the Domain/the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, and the even more generous inner parklands of Melbourne and Adelaide…\(^4\)

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In this thesis I seek to identify the parks and reserves that exist and the purpose behind their creation, as well as examining lost or missed opportunities. A familiar argument is that parks are refutations or refuges from the city, an argument that Leon Pericles has gently satirised in his painting, *Heaven and earth* (see fig. 1). I argue instead that parks and gardens are signifiers of 'the city', and are perceived as direct evidence of civility and civickness. Urban parks and gardens are as much technological constructs as the buildings that surround them, designed in a way that uses and moulds nature and natural elements, according to socially and culturally defined constraints and paradigms, to educate and stimulate those who pass through or use those spaces. I discuss the major influences on the development of these parks - the desire for a moral and improving society, concerns about sanitation and disease, and the growing influence of leisure time and leisure activities, as well as an awareness of the development of landscape parks and botanic gardens elsewhere.

I argue that parks are used in two ways, which I call the didactic and utilitarian use of parks. They provide avenues for the inculcation of moral and social behaviours, and for the amelioration of larrikinism and anti-social behaviours. They are used didactically, through botanic gardens and landscape parks, to educate the population through exposure to information about plants, aesthetic design and the thoughtful placement of public art and memorials, and as utilitarian venues for accepted physical activities, such as team sports, and more practically based programs for alleviating moral and social problems.

Perth is worthy of study largely because it perceives itself as being peripheral, both geographically and in a broader cultural and political sense, first as part of the Empire, and more latterly as part of the Australian Federation. This sense of being on the outskirts, always looking in, allows ideas that are seen as a central feature of the metropole to be more easily identified, because of the anxiety about them. With respect to the city proper, its small population, and role as an administrative and governmental centre, with limited manufacturing, provide a contrast with ideas of the imagined city, overcrowded and polluted. Perth's open spaces are a crucial part of the social, cultural and environmental fabric of the city.


**Literature review**

William Cronon and his multidisciplinary study group examined ideas of nature in the collection of essays entitled *Uncommon Ground*. Nature, says Cronon, is ‘a profoundly human construction’, a comment that is echoed in other urban history and historical geography literature.\(^5\) The city is a cultural landscape, a site where, by definition, the landscape is ‘designed and created intentionally by humans’ and which has ‘an active social role in contemporary society’.\(^6\) Our ideas of what makes a city are imbued with this idea - that nature can be ‘tamed’ and utilized, the ultimate expression of civilization. Carolyn Merchant discusses the role of nature in the city in her essay in *Uncommon Ground*,\(^7\) examining the idea of first and second nature, which she traces back to the philosopher Virgil. In the Virgilian universe, nature to nation takes place in 4 stages,

(1) death and chaos, a world filled with presocial ‘wild’ peoples (winter), to (2) birth and the pastoral, in which people grazed sheep on pastured lands (spring), to (3) youth or farming by plowing and planting gardens (summer); to (4) maturity, or the city (Rome) in the garden (fall).\(^8\)

In this paradigm, the city and its infrastructure epitomise civilization, with the ‘garden’, a pastoral and agricultural landscape, its natural setting. John Dixon Hunt also discusses the idea of second and third nature, tracing the concept back to the sixteenth century Italian philosophers Jacopo Bonfaddio and Bartolomeo Taegio, who in turn traced the idea of second nature back to

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\(^8\) Ibid. p. 138
Cicero.⁹ Cicero’s second nature was a cultural nature, where man deliberately altered nature. According to Hunt, first nature is that which is untouched or ‘pristine’, second nature includes land affected by agricultural practice and human habitation, while third nature is the area where nature and art are incorporated together. Third nature spaces are civic and civilised, have been carefully designed and planted, and incorporate structural elements such as statues and artwork, and, for Hunt, enclosed gardens are their epitome. He sees parks as falling into the category of second nature, being generally less designed than gardens, an interpretation that this thesis to some degree seeks to challenge. Though often less visually organised than a garden, a park, even a ‘natural’ park such as national park, is nevertheless the product of intensive design and construction, in which ideas about nature and culture are negotiated and defined.

Merchant examines some of the historical bases for these ideas, specifically about Eden and the Fall, and the way in which Enlightenment thought attempted to recover Eden, and thus a pure human society, by reinventing Eden through the ‘improvement’ of nature - ‘Science and technology offered the means of transforming nature; labor in the earth, the means of saving human souls’.¹⁰ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ‘improvement’ ethos, expressed variously in the writings of John Locke, James and John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, for instance, resulted in a belief that societies and environments could be modified and altered through direct interventions, such as acclimatisation and rigorous enforcement of specific rules, and through subtler means, such as aesthetic and physical education to the betterment of all.

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The question of the ‘improvement’ of nature, which links back directly to the agricultural and botanic paradigms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is one of the key tenets of Richard Drayton’s wide-ranging discussion of the role of Kew Gardens in the establishment and expansion of the Victorian British Empire, *Nature’s Government*.\(^{11}\) In a study of Empire and colonialism, Drayton’s cultural background of British Guiana seems to allow him an external perspective a British writer might not be able to achieve. Drayton examines the role of Kew Gardens both as an agent of empire, and also as the logical inheritor of the Christian myths of Eden and paradise. Drayton argues that the biblical injunction to Adam to cultivate and name the plants in the Garden of Eden, and in the world, became embedded in European and particularly British ideas about nature, and the role of man in controlling it. One effect was to see the cultivation of the land as ‘improving’ it, taking it from unproductive wilderness into the fruitfulness of agriculture. Similarly, the nature of man could be improved through contact with ‘improved’ nature.

Discussions about nature, specifically linking botanic gardens to the Eden myth, are also found in the works of John Prest and Richard Grove.\(^{12}\) Like Drayton, Prest concentrates on Britain and Europe, but is more detailed on the Renaissance and early modern period. In this period Prest argues, as does Drayton, that the religious significance of nature is the key to the development of botanic gardens, rather than any scientific or economic interests. Grove’s environmental history examines not just the history of ideas and attitudes to land and nature on the European continent, but also the impact of these ideas on native floras such as those of Mauritius. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra points


Out in his essay on the role of Spain in the development of natural history and science in the sixteenth century, that a concentration on the development of the Kew network has skewed the English speaking world’s understandings of botanic garden networks, and understandings of the history of the natural sciences.\(^\text{13}\)

Studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be similarly anglocentric. It is relatively easy to find studies of both Banks’ and the Hookers’ Kew-based empires, ranging from Peter Gascoigne’s assessment of the role of Sir Joseph Banks in science and the British bureaucracy, to McCracken’s portmanteau *Gardens of Empire*.\(^\text{14}\) Drayton’s masterful overview of Kew identifies some of the other gardens and botanic networks, of which those in the French and the German states are also significant. In Australia, the connections between Kew and the Botanic Gardens at Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide have been well researched, but research into the connections between the Germanic botanists and botanic garden directors, Richard Schomburgk in Adelaide and Ferdinand Von Mueller in Melbourne, with their native lands, and scientific communities is relatively recent.\(^\text{15}\) In understanding how botanic gardens come to be recognized nationally and internationally, the development of networks between the various gardens is of crucial importance. Links between the Australian colonies in botanic science, natural history and agricultural societies have also been under-played, although there is no doubt that the various colonial bodies corresponded and exchanged information on a regular basis.

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\(^\text{15}\) With regards to Mueller, the extensive Mueller correspondence project provides evidence of these connections. See R.W. Home, ed., *'Regardfully yours': selected correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998 - 2002).
Introduction

Just as parks were evolving throughout the nineteenth century, so too were the cities. Industrialisation led to large-scale movements of populations from rural to urban centres, but urbanisation itself was also a key factor in concentrating populations in core urban centres. At the beginning of the nineteenth century only one city, London, had a population of more than one million. By the end of the century, sixteen cities had similar populations, and many more were experiencing unprecedented growth. By the end of the twentieth century, over 500 cities had populations over one million, and many of those had populations in excess of ten million. In coping with the intense pressures of such population growth, city visionaries and planners struggled to balance ideals of the city with the realities of urban growth.

It has been often been said, chiefly in the American literature, that because parks provide access to nature and are often cited as providing a much needed respite from the rigours of urban life, they are therefore a contrast to, or even a repudiation of, the city. However, a body of literature has begun to critique the urban vs rural discourse, ranging from Denis Cosgrove to Paul Machor. Cosgrove argues that although the theme of a ‘receding frontier of...
open land that produced a new and more perfect society’ is well entrenched in American culture, American analysis fails to recognise that societal change was ‘moving along a trajectory already being described within Europe itself.’

Rather, says Cosgrove, the city itself became a ‘natural form’ in English planning thought in the eighteenth century, and the spread of the English and gardenesque styles occurred because they were ideally suited to urban development. American discussions of the introduction of the ‘gridiron’ in American town planning have tended to suggest that the grid was, in effect, a type of democracy in action.

Paul Machor argues, rather, that the grid system, which he traces to Puritan ideas of a New Jerusalem and to Thomas More’s *Utopia*, was an attempt to domesticate and civilize the land. He points to Sylvia Fries’ argument that the rectangular shape of the ideal Puritan townsite may have been developed from descriptions of the New Jerusalem in the Old Testament. As Yi-fu Tuan discusses in *Topophilia*, the idea and ideal of the city is at least as old as ideas of paradise and utopian nature. The city is civilization, a symbol of transcendence, of human achievement, and traditionally a centre of worship and of government. Although the rhetoric of rational recreation and other movements saw the city as being compromised by increasing industrialisation and manufacturing, ideals of the city as a symbol of nationhood and of government survived.

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Wisconsin Press, 1987). This point has also been made by Matthew Gandy, who notes, ‘the idea of a radical separation between nature and cities is a powerful current running through Western environmental thought...’. Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and clay: reworking nature in New York city* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England; MIT Press, 2002), p. 7. Henri Lefebvre also criticised the tendency to discuss parks as examples of nature, and hence inimical to the city, seeing it as ‘a theme that which has been used and overused, hyperinflated and extrapolated’. Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, (Blackwell Publishing, 1996), p. 118.

19 Cosgrove, *Social formation and symbolic landscape*, pp. 170 - 173.
20 See, for example, David Schuyler, *The new urban landscape*.
In his assessment of the history and development of Viennese parks and gardens, Roy Rotenberg argues that governments, whether municipal or colonial, use the design and development of public gardens and parks as a way of making statements about the meaning of urban space.\textsuperscript{23} Many of these meanings are derived from the ideas about nature and the city previously discussed, and central to this thesis. Various elites, economic, political and aesthetic, compete to ensure that their images of the urban, statements about cities and planning, are included in the public spaces created. Rather than creating a totally new space, or abolishing and redesigning an old space, Rotenberg recognises that ideas about the city and about space are layered over each other or in some way integrated to create a new language about public space and ultimately about the city.\textsuperscript{24}

Max Nankervis has identified the fallacy of the nature/urban dichotomy in the Australian context, seeing Australian parks as attempts to reflect on and refine concepts of the city rather than the country.\textsuperscript{25} English and European models, which developed from private estates and parks, are often associated both with the landowners (usually royalty and the nobility) and their landscape designers. Settled comparatively recently, the settlers brought with them these ideas and traditions, transplanting them to foreign soil, so that, in the nineteenth century, the municipal park, in Europe, America and Australia, became a major part of the expected urban form. While Melbourne and Sydney developed strong industrial, mercantile and manufacturing bases, other cities were less industrialized.\textsuperscript{26} By the 1901 census, Perth had the smallest percentage of any Australian city engaged in industry and manufacture. It also lacked the urban density of other cities, with a population of just over 184,000 for the whole of the

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{25} Nankervis, ‘Our urban parks: suitable pieces of real estate’.
state, and approximately 27,000 in the metropolitan area. By 2001, the state population had risen to over 1.9 million, and the population of the greater urban area, approximately the same size as Greater London (see Appendix A, Fig. 35), was slightly more than 1.3 million people. Of these, only 10,000 people live in the municipality that is the City of Perth.27

Monique Mosser discusses the role of urban parks in creating and encouraging conformable and improved behaviour, in the introduction to the comprehensive collection of essays, *The history of garden design*.28 According to Mosser, Walter Benjamin first coined the term ‘central park’, which was:

first and foremost a piece of urban equipment. Its original aim was to raise moral and hygienic standards. The park was an instrument at the service of the city and it functioned along clearly established lines: having provided a well-equipped area of green open space available to all, it demanded that those who used it behaved in a disciplined fashion and conformed with certain standards.29

In her essay on parks in England and America, in the same collection, Alessandre Ponte states that most park historians identify botanic gardens as a major influence on the design and use of public open space. In addition to the botanic garden paradigm, Ponte cites the landscape park and the pleasure ground as alternative design paradigms for landscape public open space.30

A key work in understanding and identifying the historic basis to which park and landscape designers refer when developing or designing parks has

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been *The Park and the Town* by George Chadwick. Written in 1966, *The Park and the Town* provides an overview of park development in Britain. Chadwick provides some historic background to the development of publicly open parks in the 1830s, including discussion of the opening of the grounds of private houses for ‘open days’, the pleasure ground movement which provided landscaped space as an entertainment for a fee, and the limited opening times and social restrictions of certain other English parks. He clearly identifies the role of government in providing parks as part of a growing interest and concern with social reform. His analysis of gardening style and theory, and the growing professions of landscape architect and town planner, provides a useful aesthetic history and is of great benefit in identifying styles of park and garden design. Susan Lasdun followed with a detailed assessment of the Royal Parks, while Helen Conway’s later work on British municipal parks provides good comparative and contextual information in which to examine the growing interest of local authorities and regional governments in the provision of public open space as a recreational and aesthetic resource.

The history of American park design has an extensive literature, ranging from discussions of urban park design, to the history of the National Parks movement. Like Chadwick and Conway’s overviews of English park development, Galen Cranz’s *The politics of park design*, seeks to identify trends in park development across the United States. Cranz, a sociologist, is particularly interested in park use and its impact on park design, and her work contributes to discussions on the recreational nature of parks in a changing leisure environment. There is a large body of work on the development of

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national parks, and on the environmental and aesthetic traditions of the US, from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau to more recent cultural heritage assessment, of which Dolores Hayden’s *The power of place* is considered a pre- eminent contribution. In addition, a large number of texts from early park designers such as Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted, have been collated and are available in a number of published sources. Individual urban parks have also been extensively analyzed, with a concentration on New York’s Central Park, although the most recent is Terence Young’s analysis of the history of Golden Gate Park.

Young looks at the influence of four social values on park development, identifying that park advocates saw parks as part of ‘an improved urban environment … would secure residents a better future, by altering both the

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material and behavioural aspects of their lives...”38 He argues that this was done in two distinct phases, one succeeding the other. The first was the Romantic, with an undifferentiated picturesque landscape, and the second the Rationalist, with spaces for each activity. I argue instead that the recreational reserve and landscape park are not designed for different purposes, but are different expressions of the same purpose; the creation of a healthy, moral and educated citizenry, and their development was contemporaneous with each other.

These American sources tend to be inward-looking, with only a brief gloss on the influence of principally British gardens, mostly through the influence of Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the English-born landscape gardener who worked with both Downing and Olmsted. There is often an emphasis too, on the role of landscape design and town planning in reinforcing the egalitarian, republican and democratic nature of American society.39 David Schuyler, for example, has pronounced the urban landscapes formed under their influence as ‘one of the most creative and enduring contributions to civilization undertaken in nineteenth century America.’40 Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, the urban park movement had a much broader stage than merely America. Alessandre Ponte discusses the apparent contrast between the American democratic ideals, and European ideas of moral improvement, and decides that there is no conflict in ideals, but rather that both viewpoints are about the civilising roles of public parks and gardens.41

The study of parks and gardens in the Australian context is, by comparison with other countries such as America and England, more limited.

38 Ibid., p. xii.
39 Cosgrove, Social formation and symbolic landscape; Machor, Pastoral cities: urban ideals and the symbolic landscape of America.
41 Ponte, 'Public parks in Great Britain and the United States: from "a spirit of place" to "a spirit of civilisation".'
There are no overviews, like those of Chadwick or Cranz, unless one counts the Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens, or Richard Aitken’s recently produced Gardenesque, an exhibition and associated book based on the extensive gardening collections of the State Library of Victoria. The chief concern of both these works is gardens and gardeners and, despite the ambit claims of Aitken’s main work as Australian (he was also an editor of the Companion), on the East coast of Australia. This is understandable in relation to Gardenesque, due to the nature of the material used, but may indicate a lack of research into gardening and park history in other parts of the country, resulting in comparatively shorter entries in the Companion.

There is also a tendency for ‘Australian’ in such overviews to be used in a very narrow manner, possibly dating from the 1890s ‘Australian natives’ movement in Victoria and New South Wales. While historically understandable it is geographically incorrect, and can lead to considerable frustration. Worse than being ignored is the practice of deliberate exclusion of colonies, principally Western Australia and South Australia, as has happened in Finney’s Paradise revealed, a study of natural history societies in Australia, or a broader study such as Hoffenberg’s Empire on Display. The reasons stated are often that Western Australia did not develop or have the type of institutions studied, and is therefore not germane to the study at hand, but no attempt has been made to find out why such institutions did not develop, or if they developed, as I would argue, in a different form. When the thesis is that a development or institutional

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43 According to the publisher’s blurb, Gardenesque is a ‘ramble through more than 200 years of Australian gardening and garden making’. http://www.mup.unimelb.edu.au/catalogue/0-522-85127-4.html. While dealing with gardening themes that may well be Australia wide the book actually makes little attempt to contextualise gardening in the ‘magic triangle’ of Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, within broader Australian experiences and environments.
form is typically Australian, such a lack of debate and assessment must inevitably undermine the validity of the study.

Similarly, most histories of botanic gardens in Australia credit the Botanic Garden at Kings Park as being Western Australia’s first botanic garden. However, as Dorothy Erickson and Robyn Taylor noted in their heritage assessment of the Park and Botanic Garden, there have been numerous attempts at such a garden in the colony.\textsuperscript{45} It is therefore important to identify why these attempts have been overlooked or disregarded, when similar attempts in Victoria and New South Wales have been recognised in the research literature.

The majority of Australian park histories produced to date are journal articles, such as those in the \textit{Australian Journal of Garden History}, or promotional publications featuring large format photography. Two exceptions to this style are \textit{Civilising the City} by Georgina Whitehead and \textit{Centennial Park: a history}, by Paul Ashton and Kate Blackmore.\textsuperscript{46} In \textit{Civilising the City}, the author seeks to draw attention to the ‘[Melbourne] gardens’ clear sense of purpose, as demonstrations of civility, for and by the public that uses them’ which she does in the first half of the book.\textsuperscript{47} In this she looks at the background and interests of key players in the parks development, and the legal and political background in which the parks were designed. Ashton and Blackmore seek to identify the disparities between the American and English industrial environment with that of Colonial New South Wales. In addition to this contextual work, the authors examine the legal framework of park development in New South Wales, and

\textsuperscript{45} Dorothy Erickson and Robyn Taylor, ‘A thematic history of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth, Western Australia: prepared for King’s Park and Botanic Garden.’ (Perth, Western Australia: King’s Park and Botanic Garden, 1997).

\textsuperscript{46} Paul Ashton and Kate Blackmore, \textit{Centennial Park: a history} (Kensington: New South Wales University Press; Centennial Park Trust, 1988); Georgina Whitehead, \textit{Civilising the City: a history of Melbourne’s public gardens} (Melbourne: State Library of Victoria in association with the City of Melbourne, 1997).

\textsuperscript{47} Whitehead, \textit{Civilising the City: a history of Melbourne’s public gardens}, viii.
research Sir Henry Parkes' family background and his visits to the United Kingdom to provide some insights into his motivations for promoting the park.

Like Whitehead, Ian Hoskins' thesis on Sydney's Domain and Botanic Garden emphasizes the civilising role of gardens, a theme he has expatiated further in a number of articles. Hoskins' research into Sydney parks, notably the Domain and Centennial Park, reveals contemporary concerns about the morality of public spaces and ways in which the behaviour of both men and women were regulated. This control could be exerted overtly, through the use of park rules and the presence of police and park rangers, or more discreetly by the installation of lights, designed to inhibit immoral behaviour. Hoskins looks at women as users of parks, but sees men, not as users, but as preventing use through their role as legislators, superintendents and curators. This in a sense privileges men, by accepting implicitly that men, in their role as workers and professionals, operated in a way which excluded any discussion or interfacing with women, in their domestic or social support roles.

Pauline Payne, by way of contrast, chose to emphasize the scientific role of botanist Richard Schomburgk in his development of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Several histories of Australia's major botanic gardens, Royal Melbourne and Sydney, have also been undertaken. The influence of their directors, notably Ferdinand Von Mueller, William Guilfoyle and in Sydney, John H. Maiden, has also been subject to considerable attention.

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48 Ian Hoskins, *Cultivating the citizen: cultural politics in the parks and gardens of Sydney, 1880 - 1930.* (PhD, University of Sydney, 1996).
49 Ian Hoskins, 'Marking time: history and identity in Sydney's Centennial Park', *Studies in the history of gardens and designed landscapes* 2, no. 1, Spring. (2001); Hoskins, *Cultivating the citizen*.
50 Hoskins, *Cultivating the citizen*.
Paul Fox’s biography of six Victorian gardeners, not only examines their contribution to the horticultural world in which they move, but also alludes to the environmental and aesthetic paradigms in which they worked. He makes the point that the gardeners he studied worked within a common worldview that allowed the transformation of the environment through the importation of plants from around the world.

Histories of Perth, by Tom Stannage and, more recently, Jenny Gregory, pay considerable attention to the layout of the city and to recreation within it, including its parks. However, they are assessed in terms of the physical growth of the city, and in Gregory’s case as part of an intensive analysis of city planning. George Seddon has also written several books and essays in which the physical environment of the city is an important theme. Written in conjunction with David Ravine, his A city and its setting is his most intensive analysis of the city, which uses Kings Park as a launching point for an analysis of the city below, but which, curiously, does not examine the park itself.

Within Western Australia, a number of student papers have used Kings Park as a subject, and the centenary of the Park in 1998 could have been the occasion to launch a more substantial and analytical work. In keeping with the Park Board’s concern for its botanic role, the centenary saw the production of a botanic work, and the most authoritative works to date, other than histories of the city itself, consist of a heritage plan and a Master’s thesis on one proposed development. Other parks have been accorded even less attention, unless as

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55 Jenny Gregory, A city of light: a history of Perth since the 1950s (Perth, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2003); Stannage, The people of Perth: A social history of Western Australia’s capital city.
56 Seddon and Ravine, A city and its setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia; Erickson and Taylor, ‘A thematic history of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth, Western Australia: prepared for King’s Park and Botanic Garden.’; Keith Howard, A pool in the Park? Why not?. (Research essay, University of Western Australia., 1984).
part of a broader study, normally more geographically or architecturally aligned than historical.

Erickson and Taylor’s heritage assessment provides a brief outline of the development of Kings Park, with an overview of early parks, from the appointment of James Drummond as Government Gardener c.1830, through the declaration of a park in 1871, to the establishment of the Park in 1895, under the control of Premier John Forrest. They describe ‘Forrest’s grand vision of lakes, landscaped lawns and gardens punctuated by exotic foliage’ which is the first known plan to develop the area, but fail to identify whether or not Forrest’s vision could be seen within a lineage of park design, or if it was a purely local vision produced from local stimuli. Nevertheless, in writing the history the authors clearly identify a major theme, that of:

continued conflict between those who would make a landscaped pleasure park for popular recreation and those who wanted to see more respect for indigenous flora and fauna. After the demise of the founding fathers, the shift changed from what types of planting to be used to beautify the parkland to defining what types of recreation could or could not be located in the park...

The conflict between park designers and park users was the central concern of Keith Howard’s Master’s thesis *A pool in the Park? Why not?*, and in my own essay on the design for Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth. Howard’s thesis used the ‘letters to the editor’ very effectively in his analysis of the Kings Park Pool debate. The writers of these letters either clearly identified themselves as members of the partisan groups within the debate, or were previously unaffected members of the public writing in response to matters that

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57 Erickson and Taylor, ‘A thematic history of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth, Western Australia: prepared for King’s Park and Botanic Garden.’
58 Ibid., p. 11.
59 Ibid.
60 Lise Summers, ‘“A pleasing panorama”: a story of conflict between planners and community expectations in the design of Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth’ (paper presented at the Images of the Urban Conference Proceedings., Sippy Downs, Qld; Sunshine Coast University College, 1997); Howard, *A pool in the Park? Why not?*. 18
deeply affected them. The rhetoric of the debate is clearly expressed in some well-chosen quotes from this source. Although Howard clearly wishes to know how so few amateurs, however energetic, could overturn the desires and planning of the professionals, he seems to find more questions than he answers.

A close study of these sources, read and analysed within the broader historical context outlined earlier, provides opportunities to identify the currency, or otherwise, of particular ideas and concepts about nature, culture and the physical and ideological construction of the city in general, and of the relationship between the city and citizens of Perth and its parks in particular.

**Thesis design and methodology**

What have been the principal factors behind the development of urban parks and gardens in the City of Perth? What social and cultural tropes and paradigms were available and accepted by the citizens, and how has this changed over time? To answer these questions I examine what is required of a botanic garden, and how such gardens achieve recognition. I also investigate to what extent the need for sports grounds and other forms of recreation and entertainment precluded or overtook the quest for a botanic garden.

This thesis looks at the parks and gardens in the City of Perth, the capital of Western Australia, as defined by the boundaries of the original townsite (see fig.4 and Appendix A, fig.32). This study area is slightly larger than the boundaries of the current municipal body, extending north by several streets, taking in Stirling Gardens in the centre of the city, Kings Park, Queens Gardens, Russell and Weld Square, Harold Boas Gardens (or Delhi Square as it was originally known), Hyde Park, Perth Oval and the Claisebrook Inlet. It also incorporates the extended foreshore, including Langley Park, the Esplanade and the Supreme Court Gardens.

Although landscape design is a feature of the study, it is not an analysis of landscape architecture or garden designers. Similarly, although the changing recreational needs of the city’s growing population materially affected the way in which parks and reserves were used and designed, this is not a sporting history. Rather, it examines public urban open spaces because they provide specific evidence of social hegemonies within the broader society, groups and
communities of interest that were responsible for the development and construction of the parks. The thesis examines the way in which ideas about nature, the city and the role of nature in creating the city and an urban society are expressed, both on the ground and in discussions about the city and nature.

The study of public parks and gardens falls within the ambit of garden history, itself a sub-genre of environmental history. Environmental historians have generally tended to concentrate on broader and often agrarian or ‘wild’ landscapes. It is a subject taken up by David Harvey in *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Harvey argues that much environmental history is ideologically driven, with ideas of ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’ often requiring the absence or exclusion of human factors, other than as modifiers of an environment, rather than inhabitants of it:

> The distinction between built environments of cities and the humanly modified environments of rural and even remote regions then appears arbitrary except as a particular manifestation of a rather long-standing ideological distinction between the country and the city. We ignore the ideological power of that distinction at our peril, however, since it underlies a pervasive anti-urban bias in much ecological rhetoric…

Within the Australian environmental historiography, almost without exception, the terms landscape, nature and the environment are used to refer to agricultural and pastoral areas, national parks and bush areas. They are seldom used to discuss towns, urban and suburban or even coastal zones, and yet, as Andrea Gaynor and others point out, these are also environments and ecologies. This point is picked up by Stephen Dovers, in his introduction to *Environmental history and policy: still settling Australia*. Dovers calls for a

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From wasteland to parkland

Introduction

similar volume on urban environments, looking at the role of stormwater drains and roads, citing the fact that most Australians live in urban areas, and noting the importance of understanding infrastructure to questions of sustainability and environmental change. Libby Robin and Tom Griffiths have similarly noted the lack of urban environmental history, although they recognise that urban histories often have an environmental dimension. In seeking to identify the difference they note that 'while there is much science for the bush, the city's wisdom comes from engineering and from architecture and planning, not ecology', and that in Australasia engineering and technology have not been the subject of environmental history.  

In this context then, this thesis has both an urban and an environmental subject, but does not take an ecological approach. Rather, following John Mackenzie's injunction for environmental history, I look at a range of factors, evaluating ideas about the environment, and thus their impact on the development of parks and gardens, in light of changing understandings about culture and society.  

I use a narrative framework to explore these understandings, that is, a broadly chrononological discussion of the development of parks in the city, in the context of state, national and international debates about parks, city and nature.

According to most sources, Perth did not develop a botanic garden until the 1960s. However, within the archival sources there is strong evidence that on several occasions during the nineteenth and twentieth century, botanic gardens were either established, as such, or that particular spaces were developed along botanic garden lines and regarded, locally at least, as botanic

gardens. The quest for a botanic garden provides the narrative backbone, and is a central subject of the thesis.

Attitudes to land have changed significantly over time, with the majority of Perth’s now valued parks and gardens being sited on land that was previously viewed as ‘wasteland’, as reflected in the title of the thesis. Not only does this title reflect changing attitudes to land, but also refers specifically to a key site in the thesis, the land at Mount Eliza, later Kings Park, and Perth’s eventual botanic garden.

The chapter titles reflect ways in which behaviour can be characterised, or refer to ideas of physical or moral health. A key theme is the way in which landscape has been used didactically, to educate the public as a means of moral improvement in the nineteenth century, and for ecological and environmental education in the twentieth century. Along with this intellectual role, the parks and gardens of Perth have been used as physical examples of the way in which nature itself can be ‘improved’; initially through the transformation of the land from wilderness into acceptable agricultural and urban environments, through to the re-establishment of native vegetation via wetland redevelopment and native gardens. The requirements of the growing emphasis on recreational and leisure time, following the introduction of the eight hour day, coupled with movements such as rational recreation saw parks and gardens being used to educate and improve the population through approved activities – a utilitarian use of space. The growing popularity of new leisure activities such as croquet, lawn tennis and football, as well as the more traditional cricket and athletics, meant competing demands for space. Another utilitarian use of space for moral improvement also led, in the twentieth century, to the employment of subsidised labour to create parks and gardens, both for didactic and utilitarian purposes.

In Chapter 1, Base nature, I examine the basis for the foundation of a colony at Swan River. The chapter is set within the context of the earlier botanic empire building of Sir Joseph Banks. Although the land had been visited, and dismissed, by earlier explorers, James Stirling looked for and found a potential botanic paradise. Once permission to settle at Swan River had been granted, Stirling appointed James Drummond, who had 20 years experience at the Cork Botanic Gardens, as Colonial Botanist. The chapter examines the way in which
land was set aside for agriculture and for the purposes of recreation, both viewed as part of the function of a botanic garden, and argues that the mindset of the period enabled the colonists to perceive land as malleable and mouldable, capable of becoming anything desired of it.

The establishment of botanic gardens in Australia, many of which dated from the 1850s, is discussed in the context of botanic garden networks, and interest in botany in Western Australia, in the chapter Better nature. With the cessation of transportation in 1868, and the establishment of Representative Government in 1870, anxieties about the role of the city, and its comparative status with those at the metropoles of London, Sydney and Melbourne become increasingly apparent. More specifically Chapter 4 – Better Nature looks critically at the role played by Governor Frederick Aloysius Weld, and his colonial administration, in responding to these and other pressures by setting aside land for recreation and other reserves, thus establishing the site of the majority of Perth’s parks and gardens. I examine the growing debates in favour of other didactic spaces, such as libraries and museums, and the importance placed on these institutions as civilizing influences, particularly in light of the colony’s twenty years of convict transportation. Western Australian’s extreme sense of isolation is discussed as a contributing factor to calls to make the city seem more urban and urbane. Again, the growing need for space for rational recreation creates conflicts and compromise in creating the types of parks and gardens best suited to the largely male population of the colony.

These anxieties are discussed in the chapters, Civil nature and Natural Capital, as are debates regarding control of the reserves between the Colonial and municipal administration, and the ways in which they are used and regarded. Natural Capital also examines the role of parks in ideas about city status, following the establishment of Responsible Government in 1890. The colony’s first Premier, Sir John Forrest, immediately set aside land for a park worthy of a capital city on Mt Eliza. The development of the park, and particularly its design and function, and the role of the park as a stage for socially approved behaviour are further discussed in Chapter 7 – Designing nature. The further development of the foreshore is contrasted with Kings Park, and tensions between the local and state governments, each with a different vision of the city and its potential, is discussed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10. The
use of parks as sites of commemoration and city identity is a recurrent theme in these final chapters.

Moral and social control and a new form of utilitarian use of landscape space, the use of day labour to ameliorate the effects of the Depression, and the continuing debate about access and use of public land are the subject of Chapter 8 – *Natural refinement*. These topics are again examined in the final two chapters – *Sustaining nature* and *Restoring nature*. The increasing influence of women in politics, and a nascent environmental awareness, also become crucial factors in debates about urban parks leading to the creation of a botanic garden at Kings Park in 1965, and is discussed in Chapter 10 – *Restoring nature*.

**Evidence**

This study has largely been undertaken through archival and library research, examining the language used consciously and unconsciously to reveal ideas about nature and the city in debates about, and planning for, parks and gardens.

The principal sources for Western Australia are the records of the Colonial Secretary’s Office, in which can be found memoranda and administrative details for designing, running and promoting some of the State’s major parks and gardens, as well as the letters of settlers and residents who wrote to the Colonial Secretary, either to commend or complain about initiatives, or to suggest measures of their own. The minute books, and files of the Kings Park Gardens Board are available. Records of the State Gardens Board can be found within the broader range of files and records of the Premiers Department and Department for Conservation and Land Management, and their predecessors. City of Perth minutes and files contain information about the development and management of Council parks, and the reports of the council Gardener are also available. Archival sources provide evidence of official policies and actions, but they also provide unexpected insights into the processes and thoughts behind such actions, often through annotations and emendations on the original files. They also provide, through the letters, petitions and submissions, evidence of the way in which the community responded to, rejected or promoted official policies and procedures, and the
effects of popular agitation and widely held beliefs and understandings on the
official process.

The printed records of the State’s parliamentary process, including the
Western Australian Votes and Proceedings and the Parliamentary Debates, and
the State’s legislation provide a statutory framework for the research, while the
reports and studies of town planners at local and State level show how the
legislation worked in practice.

The Public Works Department records include plans and correspondence,
as do the records of the Surveyor General’s Office and its successors. The
records of the Western Australian Town Planning Board and its successors,
become an important twentieth century resource, as do published reports.

Personal papers are held in the J.S. Battye Library of Western Australian
History, which is the specialist library for published Western Australian material.
Contemporary newspapers often give a populist view, or those of particular
segments of society, through the publication of editorials and letters to the
editor. Similarly, newspaper reports of activities associated with the design or
opening of parks and gardens provide an insight into the use of such spaces,
and the prevailing concerns relating to layout, function, form and design.
Brochures and other publications provide an insight into the sorts of things park
visitors were expected to require, as well as indications of the sorts of things
park designers thought they needed to include. Photographs and paintings also
provide insights into the way the sites were used and viewed, as well as
providing visual evidence of the way they were designed.

This thesis examines the development of specific urban parks in Perth,
Western Australia, with an eye to the history of park design elsewhere, including
botanic gardens, private estates and public leisure grounds, a growing
environmental awareness and the influence of the new town planning
profession. Archival sources provide the meat of this thesis and evidence for its
central contention – that parks are integral to ideas about the city, negotiating
the apparent divide between nature and culture, and providing a key
mechanism for the creation of a civic and civilised society. Through the study of
Perth’s parks and gardens can come a better understanding of the design of the
city, in a national and international context, and a greater knowledge of interaction between governments, professionals, individuals and communities.
Chapter 1 – Base Nature

Unlike Sydney or Hobart, established as penal colonies, or Adelaide, established in 1834 to create a social utopia, the Swan River appears to have been settled for largely economic reasons. Its key proponent, James Stirling, argued vehemently for its establishment on the grounds of its proximity to markets such as India, where he believed an expatriate population sought access to ‘Homelike’ society and products, and to transportation routes to India, China and Europe. The principal exports were to be agricultural and horticultural. In establishing the colony, Stirling and his civil staff were guided and directed in their work by a legal and administrative framework established in England, which they were expected to enforce in a wholly different environment.

This chapter examines the cultural, physical and legal background in which the city of Perth was initially established. James Stirling, the first Governor and principal proponent of the colony, and his fellow settlers held a number of preconceptions and expectations about the way in which an agriculture settlement could be undertaken and the role of botany within it, assumptions that are explored in this secton. The soil, vegetation and climate of the city, as well as its physical layout, are also discussed as they were critical to the degree in which design elements and paradigms succeeded, failed or were modified to meet the existing conditions. I identify the basis for the setting aside or reservation of land in the original town plan establishing that requirement as integral to the creation of new settlements in the early nineteenth century. Finally, I examine the phrase ‘public utility, health and

enjoyment’, a key reason for the establishment of public open space that clearly links the creation of parks to an urban ideal.

George Seddon argues that, ‘although they have a physical substrate, landscapes are also a cultural construct.’ All landscapes are culturally defined, and created, either through deliberate action or through the way they are interpreted, remembered, described and used. David Spurr notes that the words for culture and colonization are both derived from the Latin term *colere*, meaning to cultivate, inhabit or take care of a place. Colonization involved a requirement to develop the land in a way that met Western ideas about land-use, agriculture and economy. In the dominant colonial culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where land was not developed in a recognisable manner, such lack of appropriate utilisation gave colonists a right to cast their imprimatur upon the land. Not only could land be effectively uninhabited, or at least not recognisably inhabited, if not cultivated, but it could also be viewed as formless, able to be divided and allocated in any number of ways. This way of looking at land, as a vast malleable resource, was the key to global botanical franchises; franchises were sought to reinforce the reach and power of the British Empire and, from a more commercial vantage point, by large trading companies such as the British East India Company.

The role of these imperial designs in subordinating space and peoples has most clearly been identified by Jane M. Jacobs, who saw that:

The cartographic exercise within the colonisation process depended upon a technique (and a hope) of representing a stable and knowable reality in what were unknown lands inhabited by unknown peoples

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It was a simple yet powerful tool, which placed control over the land in the hands of surveyors and Land Offices. Settlers and colonisers were required to wait for the land to be surveyed, allocated and assigned, while Aboriginal uses and claims to land were completely disregarded, as though they had never existed.\textsuperscript{5}

George Seddon has commented that the transformation of the Australian landscape led to one more closely resembling the England of home, noting that ‘the English settlers who came to Australasia for the most part did not like what they saw.’\textsuperscript{6} Paul Fox argues instead that the ideals of colonists and settlers was not to create a new England, although they used a palette of plants familiar to them, but rather was the result of a world view which saw nature as malleable and interchangeable.\textsuperscript{7} Thomas Dunlap has described this process of transformation throughout British colonies, including America, as developing from a ‘casual looting’ of the world’s biota, to a systematic exploitation.\textsuperscript{8}

In addition to co-opting land that appeared in some way familiar, comfortable territory, the settlers sought to recreate aspects of British and European rural and urban landscapes which most appealed, both aesthetically and economically. Soft fruits, vegetables and flowers from England; vines and olives from the Mediterranean; fences, roads and stone walls were the tools with which they remodelled their environment.

\textit{Establishing the Swan}

Stirling, a career naval man, lived at a time when the natural world was being explored, explained and exploited to a degree not previously seen. The

\textsuperscript{5} For a further discussion of the role of imperialism as articulated through its settlement and planning practices see Ibid..
\textsuperscript{6} George Seddon, \textit{Swan River landscapes} (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1970), p. 16.
\textsuperscript{7} Fox, \textit{Clearings: six colonial gardeners and their landscapes}, Introduction.
classification system of Linnaeus, the voyages of discovery by Banks, and a host of others, filled the newspapers, and attracted the attention of a broad range of English society. Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin’s grandfather, wrote an epic poem extolling the wonders of Linnaeus’ classification system. Sir Joseph Banks, seeking to establish a premier botanic collection, was able to enlist the services of at least six seamen, and thirty-four civil and military offices as well as professional and amateur collectors to source the material that would eventually result in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Exploration, exploitation and the sheer wonder of an exploding scientific universe were the key motivating factors for these collectors, and the potential financial benefit an added, but not insignificant, bonus.

Economic botany, or the exploitation of plants for economic benefit, had been a key platform of Sir Joseph Banks while Director of Kew Gardens, and was to be further developed and expanded by his successor Sir William Hooker. Earlier New South Wales and other British colonial governors had assisted Banks and were to work similarly with Hooker. When Stirling visited Sydney in 1827 he had the opportunity of seeing for himself the gardens at Sydney Cove and Paramatta, which abundance had been noted by several other visitors. The fertility and economic importance of the East coast having been so amply demonstrated, it seemed only logical (in a world view which could so completely imagine all space as one) that similar results could be found on the then ‘unoccupied’ west coast.

Although Stirling himself does not appear to be connected with Banks, he was well acquainted with other, private, collectors, most notably James Mangles. Mangles and his brother had substantial acclimatization gardens and

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were well acquainted with other collectors, gardeners and nurserymen at all levels of society. In later years, Mangles was an enthusiastic supporter of several London parks, offering to source and provide exotic ducks and other water birds to 'improve' at least one park.¹⁰

Stirling had met Mangles, also a naval captain, while serving in France during the years 1818 to 1819, and had later married James's cousin Ellen. In her biography of Stirling, Pamela Statham-Drew discusses the closeness of the Mangles family, and the way in which many of Stirling's interests were aligned with those of his wife's extended family.¹¹ Through his Mangles connections, Stirling would have been aware of the Agri-horticultural Society of India (established 1820) and of the Botanic Gardens established by the British East India Company in order to improve agriculture in the region, and test the commercial viability of certain imported crops. Appleyard and Manford, in their history of the settlement of Western Australia, note that Stirling had been close to his father-in-law, also James Mangles, a shareholder of the East India Company, and speculate that Stirling and Mangles senior must have discussed the possibility of a west coast settlement, including its likely commercial significance.¹²

*Imagining the Swan*

The chosen site for this potential botanic gold mine was land that had not previously been formally claimed by Britain. Earlier explorers had typically dismissed the coast and the Swan River as sandy wastes, unlikely to be

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productive. Only James Stirling and the New South Welsh botanist sent to assist him, Charles Fraser, thought the soil and climate suitable for settlement. Stirling's and Fraser's extravagant claims for the potential of the area can be read, as they later were by disgruntled settlers and potential investors, as shameless hyperbole, or they can be seen in the context of previous ideas about the region. In his essay, 'Upside Down and Inside Out', John O'Carroll refers to amnesias of imagination, in which historians' perceptions about colonisation have been contextualised basically from the point of settlement/discovery by the British. The reality of Swan River's environment and the subsequent disappointment experienced by the settlers has tended to overshadow the ideological and idealised paradigm from which Stirling and Fraser drew, and which subtly influenced the way in which their surprisingly positive report was received, both officially and in the public imagination.

The first known European to sight Australian soil was the explorer William Jansz in 1606, sailing on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, which at that time had a monopoly on trade with the so-called 'Spice Islands'. Australia, or some continent or landmass, had long been thought to exist in the Southern Hemisphere, and was frequently imagined as possessing vast potential for...
trade and minerals, as well as unusual cultures and societies. Paul Arthur’s essay on the way in which Australia, or rather the Antipodes, had been viewed, identifies two predominant models for the region, one of which he characterises as ‘hell on earth’ in which the most fantastic and horrific monsters and societies are placed in story, map and essay on a vast and shadowy land in the Southern hemisphere.\(^\text{17}\) The other model, and one which seems to have clearly influenced discussions and perceptions of Australia, and which can be seen in Stirling’s and Fraser’s reports, was that of ‘an earthly paradise’.\(^\text{18}\) In this view the antipodes, and by extension Australia, possessed sweet breezes, luxuriant plant life and the potential for unlimited mineral and agricultural bounty, either found in nature or through agriculture.

Stirling was initially disappointed in the West Australian coast, his remarks imitating those of earlier explorers:

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\text{[T]he coast we were about to explore presented nothing attractive, the monotony of its outline, and the dusky hue of the meagre vegetation it supported at once accounted for the sterile and hopeless character attributed by early navigators to this region.}^{\text{19}}
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It was only on Stirling’s arrival at his long awaited destination that he began to describe the land more positively, writing of ‘the richness of the soil, the bright foliage of the Shrubs, the Majesty of the surrounding Trees..., made the scenery around this spot as bieutiful [sic] as anything of the kind I have ever witnessed.’\(^\text{20}\) Fraser and Stirling noted in their exploration deep alluvial soils along the banks of the river, along with fresh water streams and a mild climate, such that; ‘it (Swan River) appears to hold out every attraction that Country in a

\(^{17}\) Paul Longley Arthur, 'Fantasies of the antipodes', in *Imagining Australian space*, ed. Ruth Barcan and Ian Buchanan (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1999).

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Lt General Darling, 10 October 1826, Alice Hayes, 'Letter to Earl Bathurst', *Swan River Papers* (Acc. 58, SROWA).

\(^{20}\) James Stirling, 18 April 1827, 'Narrative of operations', *Swan River Papers* (Cons. 58, 1, SROWA).
State of nature can possess.\textsuperscript{21} So taken was Stirling with the country he had found that he ventured to suggest that it be named, ‘...”Hesperia” indicating a country looking towards the setting sun.’\textsuperscript{22} The Hesperides, from whom the name is derived, were the three daughters of evening who, in Greek myth, guarded the golden apples which Aphrodite gave to Hippomenes to help in his race against Atlanta and which Heracles stole. In some versions of the myths the garden of the Hesperides was held to be located in Arcadia. By his choice of name, Stirling was clearly placing the Swan in the realm of earthly paradise, and a productive and agricultural paradise at that.

Stirling had characterised the first few miles of the river, not as river, but as an embayment of the sea as far as the entrance to the Canning River and Point Fraser. This assessment enabled him to carry his expectations forward, and create some of sort of transitional space between the ‘hell on earth’ of the coast, and the verdant paradise he was now describing. Stirling’s own description of the country between the coast, and what later became the site of Perth, is consistent with the sandy and sterile reports of previous explorers. It is only in the upper reaches of the river, beyond Melville and Perth Water, that Stirling’s paradisiacal descriptions develop.

The trope of an earthly paradise was not only expressed in writings about the Swan, but came also into artistic expression in the drawings which were later used to support the case for the settlement at Swan River. From the sketches made during the visit by the expedition’s artist, Frederic Garling, and the accompanying surgeon, Frederick Clause, Garling and others later created fertile and romantic vistas.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Like the View of Swan River above, showing an idealised vista of the estuarine Melville and Perth Waters, these paintings identified an idyllic and pastoral, even Arcadian, space, well watered and verdant, in keeping with the established norms of landscape art and design at the time. Plants and animals were portrayed in a manner that rendered them both alien and familiar, exciting the imagination, while the Aboriginal presence demonstrated the land’s fitness for human habitation.

**Designing a town**

If Stirling and Fraser imagined a lush paradise, the reality, unfortunately, was closer to the dull, barren and sandy reports of earlier explorers. Geologically speaking, Australia is an old country, and Western Australia is the oldest part. The earth and rocks in the State date from the Precambrian, Palaeozoic and Mesozoic periods: from the formation of the globe to 70 million years ago. The Swan River itself lies on an ancient plain of limestone and sand, characterised as the Bassendean and Karrakatta sands, which are

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lateritic soils, from which many of the nutrients required for intensive agriculture have been leached long before (see Appendix A, fig. 36). The alluvial soil so praised by Fraser extended only along the banks of the river, while the mild climate seems to have been an unusually moist and clement summer. Although Perth has an average rainfall of 858 millimetres a year, the majority of its rain falls in the months of June to August. The temperature ranges from 2 degrees Celsius on winter nights, to 42 degrees in the long hot summers. Winter frosts are not unknown. The Swan and its tributary, the Canning, are the only major rivers to cross the plain and, as Stirling identified, are part of an estuarine river system. The river is salty or brackish for much of its course, affected by the tides and being refreshed with fresh water only during the winter months. Sharks and dolphins are found in the waters of the Swan near the City of Perth.

In the early years the presence of springs and wells were essential to ensure a water supply. The majority of Perth’s drinking water is now drawn from dams in the foothills surrounding the Perth plain and from large underground aquifers. Ground water, used for watering gardens, is heavily mineralised, with a strong sulphurous odour, so much so that the ubiquitous brown staining on adjacent buildings can identify places using ‘Bore water’. The soil is not only nutrient poor, but can also dry out to such an extent that it becomes water repellent.

For the members of the official colonising party, arriving nearly two years after the initial survey, their first days ashore were anticlimactic. Stirling, through his self-confessed ‘over confident pilotage’ ran his vessel, the Parmelia, aground in sight of the promised land. Sailors, settlers, luggage and all were

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24 For further discussion of Perth, and Western Australia’s geological past, see Seddon and Ravine, A city and its setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia; J. Gentilli, ed., Western Landscapes (Perth, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1979).
26 James Stirling, 7 September 1829, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, (M731, Reel 2, AJCP).
forced ashore on nearby Garden Island. Owing to the disaster that had overtaken the official party, only minimal preparations had been undertaken before the first vessels of private settlers arrived. Anticipating the clement weather and balmy days of Stirling and Fraser’s description the colonists, arriving in the winter months, faced instead heavy drenching rains and bitterly cold winds. The only shelter was in the vessels in which they had arrived or in makeshift camps, first on Stirling’s Garden Island, and later on the beach at Fremantle. For these settlers, Stirling’s golden apples appeared wizened and sour.

Figure 3: View at Swan River, Mary Ann Friend, c. 1830.

Source: The colonial eye

Despite these setbacks, Stirling and his officials soon set about establishing the essential infrastructure for the colony. One of the first steps was to designate the new colony’s first town sites:

On our Arrival here with the Expedition the imperfect Knowledge which I had of the Country was of Course soon extended and it was found in consequence that a Town at the Mouth of the Estuary would be requisite for landing Goods, and as a Port Town, while another sufficiently high on the River to afford easy Communication between the Agriculturalist on the Upper Swan, and the Commercial Interests at the Port would lend much to the speedy occupation of that useful District. In selecting a site for the Purpose, the present Position of
Perth seemed to be so decidedly preferable in Building Materials, Streams of Water and facility of Communication, that I was induced on these grounds to establish the town there.27

The chosen site was at the edge of Perth Water, at the point that Stirling had previously recognised the mouth of the Swan River, and where the more fertile land that Fraser and Stirling had identified commenced. Thus the site and name of the eventual state capital was chosen. The port was named Fremantle, after the young naval officer who had preceded Stirling to the Swan, and whose presence had done much to alleviate the difficulties the settlers had faced on arrival. A third, market, town, named Guildford, was to be established on the Upper Swan (see Appendix A, fig 33 for these and other towns laid out between 1829 and 1870)

But before the towns could be properly surveyed or laid out, and while the Surveyor – General, John Septimus Roe, was still undertaking the survey of Cockburn Sound and the anchorages available,28 the colony was overtaken by the earlier than anticipated arrival of the first free settlers. Intoxicated by increasingly imaginative reports and articles on the proposed colony, based in part on Stirling and Fraser’s initial survey and Garling’s aesthetically pleasing artworks, potential settlers and land speculators in England were swept up in an hysteria of settlement known as Swan River Mania, or Fever.29 The consequence of this fever, and early arrival, meant that rather than having parcels of land already surveyed and ready to claim, as had been intended,

27 Ibid.
28 Roe was a naval surveyor, and had participated in the original survey of the West Australian coast, carried out by Captain Philip Parker King, on board the Mermaid, between 1817 and 1822. In applying for the post of Surveyor-General, Roe had anticipated being able to extend his knowledge of the coastal waters. John Septimus Roe, Roe family papers (Acc. 563A, Battye Library).
29 See the discussion in J.M.R. Cameron, Ambition’s fire: The agricultural colonization of pre-convict Western Australia (Nedlands, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 1981), Chapt. 4. Also in Appleyard and Manford, The beginning: European discovery and early settlement of Swan River, Western Australia, pp. 143 - 147., and D. Markey, More a symbol than a success: foundation years of the Swan River colony (Bayswater, WA: Westbooks, 1977).
land was surveyed and allocated in a hurry. Rather than the calm imposition of a colonial tool outlined by Jacobs, the result was a contentious procedure which, combined with the reality of Perth’s climate and soils, provided the impetus for continued dissension and debate about land ownership and use.

Laid out in a grid (Fig. 4), the design of Perth has led certain historians, such as George Seddon and David Ravine, to argue that the layout is similar to that of Edinburgh New Town, with which Stirling was probably familiar. However, Linda Brockett argues convincingly that the grid pattern was much used in British colonisation for the simple reason that ‘it is... easy to survey and adapt to different environments’. Based on the ‘Grand Modell’, developed for Freetown in Sierra Leone in 1794 by Granville Sharp and modified by William Oglethorpe for Savannah, the grid became the dominant design for Australian towns during the 1830s and 1840s. Accompanying Stirling were members of the 63rd Regiment, whose Lieutenant Robert Dale, assisted Roe with the surveying work. Brockett identifies the Royal Engineers as key proponents of the grid system in far-flung British outposts, a thesis supported by Helen Proudfoot in her examination of early Australian town planning, and it seems most likely that both Roe and Dale were aware of the system and identified it as the most expedient course of action.

Bounded on the South and East by the Swan River and the North and West by an extensive lake system, the original layout of Perth was thus more regular than aesthetic (see fig. 4). However, although Stirling had chosen the

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33 Ibid; Brockett, 'The Imperial imprint: British Colonial Towns'.
site on the basis of expedience the beauty of the capital’s location soon also became apparent:

The Town of Perth is at present the capital of the colony, and the site of it is well chosen - it is situated on the North Bank of the Swan River, having a picturesque little mountain at its Western extremity, named Mt Eliza...  

Stirling had originally thought to establish the Government Domain on Mt Eliza, overlooking his little kingdom, but lack of funds, and difficulties with transportation, led him to favour a more central location near the heart of the townsite, overlooking Perth Water, and designed by Roe as a large open space along the river. An initial single central square, Victoria Square, was soon augmented by the planning of Albert and Russell Squares, the first to the West of the town, the second to the Northwest. Victoria Square, situated on a height within the townsite, was destined for the Church of England, but was rejected in favour of a location closer to the administrative seat of power, and suffered a diminution of its dimensions before being accepted by the Catholic Church. Russell Square was eventually to become a residential square, while Albert Square had disappeared by the 1850s. Its replacement, Delhi Square, was more a triangle than a square, and even closer to the western outskirts of the town. A large space of approximately eighteen acres on the eastern edge of the town was set aside by Roe, ‘for public recreation and amusement’, and was used for horse races and fairs in the early years of the colony.  

34 Col. Hanson, *Perth Gazette*, 12 January 1833.
35 ‘Recommendation to Governor’, Surveyor General's Office, (Cons. 5000, Item 4, SROWA).
Figure 4: Townsite of Perth, c. 1838, showing the rectangular layout of the town. The grid takes in land that is under the Swan River or in swamps and lakes, while leaving large patches as vacant or ‘waste’ land.

Source: A. Hillman, surveyor. (Surveyor General’s Office, item 288, Cons. 3868, SROWA.)
Public utility, health or enjoyment

In combination with the grid model of townsite planning, regulations and instructions to surveyors ensured that all the requirements for a new town, including churches, schools and roads were in place. The regulations ensured that the land could be divided and allocated to certain purposes, but they did not say which land, or how much land needed to be allocated for which purpose. The land laws and regulations upon which the settlement was founded provided the framework in which they worked. In developing the settlement, that framework was to be augmented and ornamented within a developing aesthetic of townscape and landscape planning that had origins in the discussions then taking place in England, Europe and America, rather than being created within the context of the environment in which the settlers now found themselves.

The requirement for reserving spaces for recreation and other public purposes had been included in the regulations and instructions issued to new colonies such as Swan River, wherein the Surveyor-General was to report to the Governor:

what particular lands it may be proper to reserve.... as places fit to be set apart for recreation and amusement of the Inhabitants of any Town or Village or for promoting the health of such Inhabitants... or which it may be desirable to reserve for any other purpose of public utility, Health or enjoyment...\(^{36}\)

These instructions, which were reissued in 1831, were in turn derived from those issued to Darling in New South Wales in 1826.\(^{37}\)

The concern for clear identification of public land reflected the results of following a complex and at times acrimonious debate about reserved land in

\(^{36}\) Secretary of State, Colonial Secretary's Office, 'Despatch', Correspondence Received (Cons. 36, 19, SROWA).

\(^{37}\) "Secretary of State - Despatch", Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, vol.19, SROWA).
New South Wales, as they had been communicated to England, while the direction to set aside land for Health reflected a growing concern about the effect of urbanisation, and overpopulation in metropolitan areas.

Prior to the nineteenth century, public open space, in England at least, had consisted principally of market squares, plazas and courtyards in villages, town and cities. Spaces on the outskirts of settlements, such as commons, were exactly that, areas of land owned or used in common, with ownership vested in a municipal body, or corporation, such as a guild. They were places for grazing cattle and sheep, agisting horses, supplementing the small lots of land in the town given over to the production of fruit and vegetables. With the rise of factory towns and the industrial revolution, came a mass movement of population from the rural areas to urban centres, creating problems and challenges not previously seen in traditional cities and town. Many workers were housed in long terraces or estates, on even smaller lots, with little or no space for gardens. The process of Enclosure, in which commonly held land, often characterised as waste and usually adjoining towns and villages, was privatised, led to loss of rights of access to these lands, on which activities such as picnics, sportsdays, fairs and carnivals had been held. Conversely, enclosure and improvement of land could lead, through education and example, to the ‘improvement’ of the lower classes and native cultures, as Peter Gascoigne argues - ‘The ideal of improvement not only offered the possibility of

40 Conway, People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain, pp. 23 - 24.
greater wealth and self-sufficiency for Britain but also provided some moral veneer to soften the crude realities of imperial expansion.\footnote{Gascoigne, \textit{Science in the service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the uses of science in the Age of Revolution}, p. 169.}

In Europe, as in England, the majority of landscaped public open spaces were originally land owned by the various monarchies and landed families, and developed by them to provide landscaped settings for their various houses and palaces. Access to them by the public had initially been limited to one or two days a year, then specific holidays, and finally to certain hours over weekends and eventually through the week. As well as restrictive hours, an entry fee was often charged and required or expected standards of dress and behaviour meant that in reality only a small portion of the population had access to these places. Gradually, however, the rules were relaxed and a larger portion of such lands was made accessible to the public.\footnote{Chadwick, \textit{The park and the town: Public landscape in the 19th and 20th centuries}; Lasdun, \textit{The English park: Royal, private and public}; Rotenberg, \textit{Landscape and power in Vienna}.} The rationale behind these changes was varied, with Emperor Josef II of Austria explaining, when he opened his Augarten Place garden to the public in 1775: ‘If I only wanted to associate with people like myself, I’d have to go down into the imperial crypt.’\footnote{Rotenberg, \textit{Landscape and power in Vienna}, p. 81.} This remarkably frank and frivolous remark obscures much of the thinking behind such moves, that by allowing all walks of life to walk together the civilised and socialised classes would ameliorate and improve the manners and bearing of those less fortunate. In a sense, this followed on from the concept of the botanic or paradise garden as a book for the better understanding of God. The moral or improving nature of the gardens was now to be seen through the more ‘civilised’ behaviour of the lower classes, demonstrating an awareness and appreciation of approved aesthetic and social values.

By the 1820s John Claudius Loudon, one of the premier landscape writers of his time and publisher of the influential \textit{Gardener’s Magazine}, was calling for
the establishment of more publicly accessible open spaces. Primarily concerned with parks established under Royal patronage, ‘Royal Parks’, Loudon was also promoting the benefits of parks established by municipal corporations and similar interest groups, such as the Guilds and Corporations of London. Loudon followed the philosophies of Jeremy Bentham and the Utilitarian movement, which incorporated an analysis of the role of government in achieving ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ through appropriate actions or inaction. Bentham’s book, *The introduction to the principles of morals and legislation* in which the ‘greater happiness’ principle was first discussed, was published in 1789. His philosophical theories were taken up and modified by James and John Stuart Mill and others, gradually gaining influence through the early 1800s, and becoming most influential in the years around Bentham’s death in 1832. The creation of public open space was an appropriate action for government to take in creating happiness. Loudon passed on these ideals in his magazine, and voluminous writings. Several of the Swan River’s settlers and administrators were subscribers.

At the same time as Stirling was preparing for his colonisation of Swan River, Loudon was preparing for a tour of Europe, recently ravaged by war with Napoleon. In the post-Napoleonic era, the opening up of Europe to travel led to the discussion of new ideas - social, cultural and botanic. During his tour, to which he had invited Stirling’s in-law James Mangles, Loudon noted the availability of public spaces, ranging from the opened gardens of Emperor Josef II to the broad avenues of Paris and the parks of Germany. The boulevards and

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44 Lasdun, *The English park: Royal, private and public*, pp. 139 - 141.
avenues provided a ‘breathing zone’, a metaphor that was to echo in gardening and public health literature for decades to come. The concept of ‘breathing places’ was first applied by William Pitt to the then closed Royal Parks and repeated in 1808 by William Windham in the British Parliament.\(^4\) Loudon made the concept a keystone in his essay, ‘Hints for breathing Places for the Metropolis, and for country towns and Villages, on fixed Principles’, published in 1829.\(^4\) The trope of parks as the ‘lungs of the city’ thus came to be firmly embedded in any consideration of what was needed to define a city or a town.

The Europeans themselves, who found the parks of England limited, echoed Loudon’s admiration for the European mode. Parks in England, said one contemporary writer, ‘were kept for the nourishment of game rather than human beings’, reflecting their ancient development as hunting grounds for the rich and powerful, rather than as open spaces for public and civic enjoyment.\(^4\)

Areas set aside for purposes of ‘public utility’, such as ‘breathing spaces’, were often designated as ‘waste ground’. Richard Drayton has identified that ‘the verb ‘to improve’ which we use in the sense of ‘to ameliorate’ or ‘to perfect’, originally meant to put to a profit, and in particular to enclose ‘waste’ on common land.’\(^4\) It is important in this discussion to understand that the term wasteland does not refer to land that is unproductive or otherwise barren. Rather waste is what is left over after land has been allocated for all the various purposes - building lots, garden allotments, church and school reserves, roads, drains and the like. It was not unlike the fallow land that had been a key feature of early strip farming methods, waiting its turn for use. In the exploitative

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\(^4\) Simo, *Loudon and the landscape: From country seat to metropolis, 1783 - 1843*.

paradigm of the time, the very existence of land that was not open for sale and
development, was in itself a waste.

In Perth, Fremantle and Guildford, waste land provided timber, clay for
bricks, stone, grazing land, and room for growth. It could not be used for
farming or building, until it had been surveyed and a purpose defined by the
government of the day. Not all settlers agreed with the policy of setting aside
land in this manner, and as townsiteland in Perth became scarcer the
dissidents grew more vocal. In editorials in the Western Australian newspaper,
The Inquirer, Francis Lochee, a barrister and newspaper proprietor, complained
about the extent of the waste lands, demanding that these ‘wild and unoccupied
lands’ be released for sale.50

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s land was set aside by Proclamation,
printed in the Government Gazette and in the local papers, for public purposes.
The use of Government Notices, also printed in the Government Gazette and
the local newspapers, dictated the way in which these lands could be used,
although they tended to recognise practices already in place, rather than create
new practices. Any protection for a particular use was nevertheless precarious
as previous gazettals could be overturned and a new use proclaimed.

Government notices and proclamations notwithstanding, there were
developments in local legislation that provided an alternative frame work for the
creation of parks, and certainly for their management and design. The creation
of Road and Town Trusts and legislation for Town Improvements, similar to
those created in the Eastern Colonies at around the same time, provided a
mechanism whereby management and control of specific areas could be taken
out of Government control and handed over to the management of citizens.51

50 Francis Lochee, ‘Editorial’, The Inquirer, 4 November 1840; Francis Lochee, ‘Wastelands’,
The Inquirer, 14 October 1840.
51 Improvement to Towns Act, 4&5 Vic. 18; Perth Improvement Act, 22 Vic. 10; Perth
Improvements Act; Roads and Streets Act, 4 &5 Vic. 16; Town Improvement Act, 14 Vic. 15;
Town Improvement Act, 14 Vic. 26; Town Improvement Act, 19 Vic. 2.
By standing for the various Boards and Trusts so formed, they demonstrated their interest in the areas in which they lived or owned land:

The Acts for the regulation of the duties which devolve upon the Trustees of Roads and Towns, whereby the formation of roads and the improvement and beautifying of the towns are placed entirely in the hands of the public, as the most competent judges of what is best suited to their own comfort and convenience...\footnote{Governor’s Address to the Legislative Council, 30 September, 1841, The Inquirer, 6 October 1841.}

These developments mirrored in part the legislative development of England, where the Municipal Corporations Act was passed in 1835, the General Enclosure Act in 1845 and the Public Health Act in 1848.\footnote{Conway, People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain.} All three pieces of legislation were influential in the development of public space in England, by providing municipal authorities with particular powers, providing for the protection of already available open space, and legislating for the creation of other areas. Within the Western Australian context no specific legislation to set aside parks and reserves existed, and none was created until the 1890s. Nevertheless, a system of parks and reserves was established, and land set aside for public recreation.

\textit{Imagining the Swan II}

English writers and poets had, in the late 1700s, promoted contact with nature as a purifying and spiritually uplifting experience. Writers such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Browning, promoted a rural and agricultural idyll. In the ethos of romantic poetry, contact with such nature reinvigorated soul. While Wordsworth lived in the Lake District, and others had experience of an idealised nature through visits to the country, others were principally urban writers, and many, as Jeremy Burchardt explains, had little or no awareness of
the backbreaking labour associated with the rurality they were espousing.\textsuperscript{54}

Landscape gardeners and designers such as Paxton, Richard Payne Knight, Uvedale Price and Humphrey Repton incorporated these Arcadian and rural fantasies into the landscapes they designed, rather than copying the sublime and awe-inspiring nature that was the subject of landscape artists. Writing in 1816, Repton explained the difference: one landscape was suited for animals, gypsies or bandits; the other was for ‘man in the highest state of civilisation and refinement.’\textsuperscript{55}

Opportunities to enjoy nature were scarcely missing from the Swan River experience. There was, if anything, almost too much nature. In attempting to cope, settlers concentrated on matching what they saw to the civilised nature of the Romantics, and to the designed spaces created by Repton and his ilk:

The Governor has built a little Cottage Ornée.... and it is difficult to imagine a more beautiful situation.... The site is chosen at a turn of the River.... and the land in front of it being all meadow land, very beautifully studded with forest trees, you may without much effort of imagination, conceive yourself placed in the midst of a Gentleman's park at home.\textsuperscript{56}

They failed to realise that the ‘park like’ landscapes they most admired were the result of thousand of years of intervention by the Aboriginal peoples they both ignored and sought to displace. English parks had developed from the grassed, sparsely treed grounds created by the nobility for deer to graze in so that they might be hunted more effectively; Aborigines had fired the land for generations, creating the open grassy spaces preferred by the kangaroos and emus they hunted. Where settlers, who saw and defined space through a cultural focus on agriculture and economic development, identified the land as

\textsuperscript{56} Col. Hanson. \textit{Perth Gazette}, 12 January 1833.
barren; Aboriginal people identified the land in terms of Dreamtime spirits who provided food and shelter for its people. For the English settlers the aesthetic of open grassy land combined with expectations about the nature of the soil to be found in such locations led to the co-option of traditional hunting grounds. Such co-option led to the increasing dislocation of the Aboriginal peoples from their land, eventually resulting in the banning of Aboriginals from the centre of town, and the establishment of curfews. Aboriginal people were to be found in the colonially approved Native Establishment at the bottom of Mt Eliza, or were to become viewed as nuisances infesting vacant land and reserves on the outskirts of town, classed with their multitudinous dogs as on a par with finding snakes on the same land. Clearing and burning the scrub was, in both instances, the only way to deal with the problem, by denying both snakes and Aboriginals the opportunities for food and shelter.

Paradigms of the grid and of terra nullius were intellectual tools that empowered planners and surveyors. Proclamations and notices were the legal tools by which that power was demonstrated. The physical reality of the Australian continent challenged that power, and the assumptions of settlers and planners alike. The land, the vegetation, the animals and, above all, the inhabitants were foreign to anything the colonists had previously experienced. It was Other, and since it could not be assimilated, or built around as had happened with social and cultural Others in India, Indonesia and America, it needed to be transformed.57

The way in which land was set aside for Perth’s early parks and reserves was thus a product of the imposition of the British colonial townplanning grid over the alien landscape of the Swan River, and the underlying tropes of the moral role of nature, and its interchangeability. It paid little heed to topography,

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57 The concept of Otherness is drawn from the work of Edward Said. Linda Brockett and Robert Home have discussed the way in which colonial entities enclosed and isolated native or vernacular cities within colonial developments. Home, Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities; Brockett, 'The Imperial imprint: British Colonial Towns'.

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but was the result of a mindset that saw land in terms of its usefulness, principally as agricultural land, but also in terms of the resources it could provide. Stirling’s visualisation of the Swan River as an agricultural paradise, based on his ‘imperfect knowledge’ did not survive contact with the real landscape, although it was not given up without a struggle, as discussed in the following chapters. The trope of a resource-rich hinterland, which could fuel the engines of Empire through exploitation of those resources, continued as the dominant force for the development and exploration of the Swan River colony and of Western Australia. In addition, new waves of settlement brought with them their own foundational cultural concepts, which modified and supplemented the cultural concerns of the 1820s. Ideas about the role of nature in the city, and its influence on the creation of a civil and civilised populace continued to affect decisions about the use of public space. However, the continued lack of understanding of the physical environment remained as a significant challenge in creating these imagined colonial spaces.
Chapter 2 – Settled nature

According to historian Alessandra Ponte, three key influences are most commonly cited as the basis for park design and use.¹ These influences are the botanic garden, the landscape park and the pleasure garden. As Robyn Chinnery recognized in her heritage assessment of Stirling Gardens in central Perth, the quest for a botanic garden has been a consistent theme in Western Australian garden history.²

This chapter identifies key botanic garden paradigms that could have provided a basis for the development of a Western Australian botanic garden in the early to mid nineteenth century, a significant tool for the progress of an agricultural settlement. The investigation then examines two major attempts to create such a garden, using the nursery or acclimatisation model, and the principal landscaped public space in the colony in the years before the introduction of penal transportation. It will be argued that a lack of civil resources was compounded by a changing discourse about the colony’s development, so that the pre-eminence of agriculture espoused by Stirling and the first settlers gradually faded in favour of pastoralism, timber cutting and an increasing expectation that Western Australia too would benefit from mineral wealth. This lead to a diminution in the significance of the botanic garden model, and an increasing emphasis on the recreational and socially improving role of public parks and gardens within the colony.

The relationship between the settlers and their environment was based on the same values that saw land as formless, waiting to be developed, discussed in the previous chapter. According to Thomas Dunlap, settlers saw ‘species as

¹ Ponte, 'Public parks in Great Britain and the United States: from "a spirit of place" to "a spirit of civilisation"'.
things on a neutral background’, which could be exploited for the benefit of the colony and of Empire. The development of the Linnaean taxonomic system allowed naturalists and others to connect species across space and time, creating ‘pieces’ of nature, which could be transferred from one site to another, transforming the land as they did so, because their similarities could be so easily established. In identifying similarity, difference was overlooked. Certainly, Australian botanists and naturalists were as keen to establish Australian species overseas, and to identify agricultural potential for Australian plants, as they were to introduce European, Chinese and African products to Australia, expecting that taxonomically similar species would flourish equally, regardless of locale.

**Botanic garden paradigms**

John Prest and others have linked parks, and especially botanic gardens, back to the trope of a paradise and to the quest for the Garden of Eden. The quest for the location of the Garden of Eden was subsumed by attempts to recreate the Garden through the development of botanic and zoological gardens wherein all God’s creatures could be, as commanded in the Bible, named and identified. The book of nature and the book of God could be seen to be one and the same thing. Garden design also took on concepts of paradise, derived from the Persian word for an enclosed garden, hidden behind walls, and co-opted by the Church to describe an inner sanctum or place of peace, where souls could be tended like plants. In the view of the garden as Paradise, the garden also had a didactic role, which allowed those who entered

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it to view the face of God, by presenting the many works of God. The two concepts, of Eden and Paradise, became entwined and the enclosed garden became both an allegory for the lost Garden and represented a sanctuary from the wilderness without. To enter a garden, and particularly a botanic garden, was to learn to read about God through nature.

The period of the Enlightenment saw changes in understandings about the relationships between God, Man and nature itself. Where Paradise had been seen as purely botanic, new descriptions of Paradise and, consequently, earthly attempts to imitate or reflect it, increasingly included animals, through zoological collections, and geology, through mineral collections, many of which became encompassed within garden design. Botanic gardens grew so large, and tried to encompass so much, that it was no longer possible to view the whole world in one garden. Rather, as Richard Grove notes, whole islands, like Mauritius, became gardens themselves. As a consequence of the continuing Edenic overtones, the islands’ indigenous inhabitants were perceived as ‘noble savages’ and the islands as Paradises, surrounded not by walls but water. The ‘discovery’ of a fifth continent, following exploration around the coast of Australia, was more easily accepted into eighteenth century theological and cosmographical thought than would have been the case a century earlier.

While the paradisiacal and Edenic garden was creaking under the strain of exploration and exploitation, a second model was being developed as a foundation for botanic gardens. Based on early physic gardens such as those at Oxford and Chelsea, these gardens were created to provide medicinal and beneficial plants for use in the treatment of disease. Like the Edenic model, there was a strong theological basis to these early gardens, through ideas

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6 Ibid., pp. 51 - 55.
7 Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600 - 1860*.
8 Ibid.
9 Prest, *The Garden of Eden: the botanic garden and the re-creation of Paradise*, Chapt. V.
about the effect of particular plants on disease. Concepts of similarity or sympathy and the science of signatures were used to identify plants that mimicked or represented diseases or human organs in the hope that they would have some effect on the things they resembled. God had written on the plant to say how it should be used, if one were able to read his handwriting. Universities and hospitals grew plants in order to study their effects and thus learn more about God. Over time doctors and pharmacists, in particular, were trained in the cultivation and use of plants as medicines, and with the changes in understandings about God and nature, these gardens became more associated with health and with scientific and agricultural experimentation and analysis rather than theology.\(^\text{10}\)

By the late 1700s this fundamental interpretation of the beneficial nature of plants, both physically and spiritually, combined with the idea of the whole world as a vast global garden in which plants could be exchanged, cultivated and transported. Thus the French in their early exploration of the Australian coastline, for example, sought to establish garden plots where they could both resupply expeditions and test the suitability of various plants as commercial crops.\(^\text{11}\) The Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope, using both imported plants and local botanico-medical knowledge to maintain good health in visiting sailors, developed one such garden. During the late eighteenth century the Botanic Garden at the Cape provided ships with a chance to obtain fresh fruit and vegetables, with a consequent reduction in disease.\(^\text{12}\) The British East India Company, in its heyday, employed over 800 surgeons and doctors,


\(^{11}\) Tony Fawcett, 'Tasmania's first gardener [The French gardener, Felix Lahaye, established a garden at Recherche Bay in Tasmania in 1792]', *Australian Garden History* 18, no. 2 (2007).

\(^{12}\) Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600 - 1860*. 
many in roles such as medical officers or as supervisors of plantations and botanic gardens. The British Empire, under the aegis of Joseph Banks, continually sought for new crops, new markets and developed agricultural and botanic gardens that both identified and cultivated new plants, plants that were then transplanted into other gardens throughout the Empire with an eye to the development of new cash crops.

Richard Drayton argues that, by the mid 18th century, various monarchs increasingly saw the connection between God and nature, a connection that they, as an exercise of their divine right and to reinforce their closeness to God, needed both to understand and control. Accordingly, they underwrote scientific excursions, such as Cook’s first voyage to view the transit of Venus, and Russian expeditions to the Arctic, and developed museums, zoos and botanic gardens to further encourage the study of the natural world. Kew Gardens and the Jardins des Plantes in France were both developed in this period.

Kew was developed on the site of Queen Charlotte’s gardens, and continued to be first and foremost a garden in which the Royal family could express their ideas about the world through aesthetics. Kew Gardens under Banks’s superintendence became the notional, if the not the actual centre, of his botanic empire; a place from which he was able to supervise the work of his protégés, and into which he put examples of their expeditions and discoveries, examples that helped maintain the Royal domain over nature. Yet on Banks’s death in 1820, the Gardens reverted to being essentially a Royal pleasure garden of no more than 10 or 11 acres, into which the public had certain, limited, rights of access.

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13 Ibid., p. 10.

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Following Sir Joseph Banks’ death in 1820 the botanic empire had suffered from the loss of its most vocal and influential supporter and, it can be argued, its creator. Without Banks’ efforts to gain support and patronage the various gardens that had been created to provide the Empire with its trade goods diminished. 16 Many even disappeared entirely. 17 By the time that Stirling’s colonists passed through Cape Town the Dutch East India Company’s gardens were also in decline. 18 A third model, which focused on aesthetic appreciation of the plants in the garden, rather than on the plants themselves, was beginning to take ascendancy.

The Nursery garden

To aid the settlers in procuring young Fruit trees and other valuable Plants I have within a few days commenced a Nursery Garden under the direction of the Naturalist, who came out with me from England. Earlier than this the Establishment of this valuable Institution appeared to be doubtful.... 19

Of the early colonists, 49 men out of the 1305 counted in the first census undertaken in 1832 had named themselves and their families as agriculturists. 20 Only three individuals had named themselves as gardeners. 21 The majority of colonists were labourers and indentured servants brought out on 6 and 7 year contracts to assist the agriculturists in taking up land in the new colony. By the

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17 McCracken, Gardens of Empire: Botanical institutions of the Victorian British Empire.
18 Ibid.
19 James Stirling, 28 June 1832, Despatch 13, Governor’s Establishment, Despatches to the Secretary of State (Acc. 390, 1, SROWA).
20 Ian Berryman, A colony detailed: the first census of Western Australia, 1832 (Perth, WA: Creative Research, 1979).
21 Ibid.
Census report of 1861, 3196 men out of 6603 gave their occupation as agriculturists and graziers. A further 1241 were identified as ‘other labourers’, a category which included farmhands and shepherds.

To assist the settlers, James Drummond, who had been appointed as Colonial naturalist without salary, was expected to study the soil and conditions of the colony and test the suitability of various plants as potential cash crops. Drummond was well suited for the task. Born in Edinburgh, both he and his brother Thomas were well known throughout the Botanic Empire. Thomas was one of Banks’s and, later, Sir William Hooker’s collectors and during his career collected in North America, Canada and the Arctic.\footnote{Ray Desmond, \textit{Dictionary of British and Irish botanists and horticulturists; including plant collectors, flower painters and garden designers} (London: Francis and Taylor Ltd and the Natural History of Museum, 1994).} James was initially employed as a gardener in Edinburgh, before becoming the curator of the Botanic Gardens in Cork, a physic and acclimatisation garden established by the Royal Cork Institute in 1803 for their exclusive use.\footnote{James Britten, \textit{A biographical index of deceased British and Irish botanists} (1931); Rica Erickson, \textit{The Drummonds of 'Hawthornden'} (Osborne Park, Western Australia: Lamb Paterson, 1969), p. 1.} He was a correspondent of John Claudius Loudon, and a member of the Linnaean Society (as was the Surveyor General, John Septimus Roe).

By 1828 Drummond was in need of a job, the Cork Gardens having been closed that year for want of funding.\footnote{Eileen McCracken, 'The Cork Botanic Gardens', \textit{Garden History: the journal of the Garden History Society} VIII, no. No. 1 (1980).} Drummond had both practical gardening skills and was familiar with classic and evolving theories and techniques in botany, including Linnaeus’s classification scheme, as well as having a keen eye and experience with collecting, drying and preparing botanic specimens. Drummond probably also had some interest in animals and mineralogy, as did all good naturalists of the period.

While Drummond was unfunded he was not without support. Loudon wrote of Drummond’s adventure to Swan River in the \textit{Gardener’s Magazine},
and Drummond was allowed to bring plants and seeds from the defunct Cork Gardens. In addition, the foundation settlers brought with them nine boxes of plants and seeds provided by the English Horticultural Society, which included fruit trees, vines and vegetables, and £4 of seeds purchased for the colony.\textsuperscript{25} Included in the purchases were varieties of lettuce, cabbage, peas, beans, turnips, spinach and carrots, as well as herbs such as basil, savoury, marjoram and thyme.\textsuperscript{26} Commodore Schomberg, Naval Commandant of the Cape of Good Hope and a supporter of the Swan River colony, may have also provided additional fruit trees and supplies, possibly from the remnants of the earlier Dutch horticultural garden which by this time had fallen into decline.\textsuperscript{27}

Drummond had not had much success with these plants in the fifteen months preceding Stirling’s announcement of the Government Garden. His first garden was developed almost immediately after coming ashore in June 1829 on Garden Island after Stirling had run the \textit{Parmelia} aground. The plants Drummond had protected so carefully on the long voyage out, both the remnants of his earlier garden at Cork and the donations from the Horticultural Society, were planted swiftly in an attempt to revive them from immersion in salt water. When the colony was established on the mainland several months later, Drummond sought to transplant the plants to their new home only to have the move prevented by the Government Storekeeper, John Morgan, who felt that the plants now came under his purview.

The establishment of the Government Gardens in 1831 and the official sanction of the Governor seemed to indicate that Drummond’s gamble in coming to the Swan River was beginning to pay off. In addition to the Gardens and the revenue therefrom, Stirling promised an annual salary of £100, and

\textsuperscript{25} Erickson, \textit{The Drummonds of 'Hawthornden'}.  
\textsuperscript{26} Colonial Secretary’s Office, \textit{Correspondence received} (Cons. 36, Vol. 364, SROWA).  
\textsuperscript{27} A little known letter from Stirling to Schomberg is located in the archives of Kew Gardens, where it is caught up amongst other correspondence not related to either correspondent. In the letter Stirling thanks Schomberg for his kind interest, and gives details of the colony’s progress. ‘Australian Letters’, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, (AJCP).
provided a small cottage in the grounds of the Garden, which were situated adjacent to Stirling’s Government House. Drummond saw this at first as a positive factor in the establishment of the gardens, as ‘the men employed in it were continually under the Governor’s eye.’

Sadly, the good times did not last long. Drummond’s salary was not approved of by the powers in England, and was therefore not payable out of the Treasury Chest. Relations between the two men remained cordial, so that Stirling was able to write, in 1832:

Mr Drummond’s Appointment as Naturalist without Salary took place in England for purposes of a Scientific Nature.... He is a very skilful and careful Person well calculated to set an example of judicious Cultivation and likely with a little encouragement to introduce and propagate useful Plants. I therefore recommend his Continuance as Naturalist or Botanist and that a small Salary of £100 a year should be conferred upon him, on Condition of his exerting himself for the Purposes aforesaid, or that the Colonial Government be authorized to grant him from Time to Time small sums as Premiums, on his rendering corresponding benefits to the Public in his particular Department. Should it ever be intended to maintain a Public Garden here, it would be advisable to place him in charge of it with a salary.

In the interim, Drummond and Stirling appear to have made some sort of deal, in which Drummond was to lease the Government Gardens and use the sale of fruit and vegetables to fund both his family and his research. It was not enough.

While the Government Gardens had the laudable aim of providing seed and cuttings, as well as experimenting with viable crops, it was not the only such garden in the colony. George Fletcher Moore wrote extensively of his

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29 Stirling, ‘Governor (Cons. 390, vol. 1, SROWA)’.
31 In the first colonial census, conducted in 1832, 169 individuals and families, out of 1305, listed themselves as agriculturists. This figure does not include members of the Civil Establishment such as Roe, Drummond and Stirling who gave their government occupations. Only six listed...
own experiments of with potatoes, wheat, and fruit trees while fellow agriculturist William Tanner told of his gardening experiment in his letters home.  

By the 1840s the papers were full of advertisements of properties for sale or lease, many of which boasted fine vegetable gardens or fruit orchards as an added incentive for sale. Moore told his family of the time that his expectations of financial reward for his vegetables were thwarted by the untimely advent of Captain Irwin’s (then Lieutenant Governor) own produce on to the market, and it seems likely that the Government Gardens and Drummond, suffered similar disappointments. Advertising Jaffa peas and Kaffir Corn for sale, Drummond was at the mercy of his very limited market.

One of the crucial challenges faced by the settlement, that has materially affected Western Australia’s sense of place, was its physical isolation. Separated from the other Australian colonies by the vastness of the arid interior, the treacherous waters of the Great Australian Bight, and infrequent intercolonial shipping, and from other markets by equally vast ocean spaces, fragile vessels and capricious weather, the colonists had no one to sell their products to except each other. Stirling’s original proposals had focused on potential markets in India and China, but these were chimeras and failed to eventuate. More importantly, the basis for the original settlement was, as Stirling said, by way of:

…an experiment in Colonization on a New Principle. The Expences [sic] incurred in the Transport of Settlers to their Place of Destination,

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themselves as gardeners. Berryman, *A colony detailed: the first census of Western Australia, 1832.*


33 Moore, *Diary of ten years eventful life of an early settler in Western Australia and also a descriptive vocabulary of the language of the Aborigines.*

in the Operations of Agriculture…were to be defrayed out of their own Funds…\textsuperscript{35}

In other words, the settlers were expected to pay their own way, and to have sufficient money to allow them to purchase the means for their survival from other settlers and colonies until they were established. The period of time involved could be up to two years. As Manford and Appleyard, Cameron and Markey have identified, the majority of settlers, whether they were land speculators, indentured servants, or colonists seeking a new life, were unable or unwilling to provide such a backup fund.\textsuperscript{36} Many early colonists sank all their savings into goods and stock, because land was issued based on the value of goods shipped to the colony. Unaware of the realities of farming the land to which they were emigrating, colonists applied for thousands of acres of land, based on the paradisiacal agricultural tropes found in Stirling’s, Fraser’s and others description of the Swan. Similarly, the underlying tropes of Eden and botanical gardens fuelled an expectation that plants and animals could be transplanted across hemispheres without difficulty.

Stirling saw the economic basis of settlement as an experiment, but it appears to have been one that the British Imperial Government was not adverse to trialling. Founded on a shoestring and with unreal expectations as regards its financial basis, its climate and its products, the colony struggled to survive. Few of the settlers had any experience with agriculture, particularly on the grand scale envisioned. To compound the colony’s early problems, the Imperial government changed the rules relating to land acquisition within a few years of the original settlement. Concern at the effect on the colony saw Stirling

\textsuperscript{35} James Stirling, 26 January 1830, Despatch to Secretary of State in Alison Hayes, \textit{Swan River Papers} (Cons. 58, Vol. 1, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{36} Appleyard and Manford, \textit{The beginning: European discovery and early settlement of Swan River, Western Australia}; Cameron, \textit{Ambition’s fire: The agricultural colonization of pre-convict Western Australia}; Markey, \textit{More a symbol than a success: foundation years of the Swan River colony}. 


being sent back to England in 1832 to put the point of view of the settlers. During Stirling’s absence the colony was under the control of Lieutenant Governor F.C. Irwin, whose produce as a settler and agriculturist competed with Drummond’s and others, and who may have been less sympathetic to Drummond than Stirling.

On his return to Western Australia, Stirling made a crucial decision about the location of the Government Domain. The first location had been considered temporary, with Mt Eliza a favoured candidate for the permanent site. Stirling now favoured consolidating the temporary site next to the river, including the land occupied by the Government Gardens. Established without proclamation or legal status, except for the ubiquitous ‘public purposes’ proviso, the land on which the gardens were located, like the top of Mt Eliza, was continuously under threat of reassignment from ‘waste land’ to some other purpose. The land and the gardens were surveyed and valued and an offer made to Drummond. He refused. Both Drummond and Stirling appear to have been motivated largely by economic and financial considerations. Stirling did not want to expend any more of the limited Colonial funds than absolutely necessary.

Pamela Statham-Drew has argued that Stirling was motivated by personal economic considerations, using the re-development of Government House in a scheme to obtain additional personal funds. By offering Drummond a salary at his own expense, and taking on the gardens he gained both gardens and gardener. Drummond on the other hand foresaw both loss of future income in return for current stability, and loss of control. A man of rather volatile temper, Drummond appears to have suffered some form of nervous breakdown.  

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37 Statham-Drew, James Stirling: Admiral and founding Governor of Western Australia, p. 257.
38 Ibid.
40 George Fletcher Moore wrote to James Mangles that ‘the poor fellow’s mind was a little disturbed about the time he was removed from the Government Garden (word obscured); his mind soon regained its tone(?) and he now lives in the country happily with his family’. 21
was required to withdraw from managing the gardens, although an attempt was made to ensure the employment of his son-in law, Michael Clarkson, in his place. In the end, the negotiations saw the loss of the gardens as a public space and the splitting up of the plants, so that neither party really benefited.

Figure 5: Survey of Nursery gardens, 1834
Source: Colonial Secretary’s Office. (Cons. 36, Vol.34, fol. 53, SROWA.)

The privatization of the Nursery Garden, and its incorporation into Government House, meant that the colony was denied the infrastructural support it required for full development of its agricultural industry. Drummond’s practical expertise was now at the service of his family rather than the colony, and although his personal links with the established botanic networks

December 1835, Mangles, ‘Letters, etc. Botany, Gardening, Seeds, Horticulture, The Parks, etc: Letterbooks.’ Ellen Stirling, in another letter to Mangles, was to characterise Drummond as ‘a little warm’.
continued, they too were no longer at the service of the government. The land within the Government Domain was still occasionally referred to as the Government Gardens, but with the change in Governors (Stirling was replaced by John Hutt in 1838) access to the Garden seems to have become more limited, while the land reserved next to the Government Domain on the eastern side had become a wasteland literally as well as legally. Nevertheless, the colony continued to expect agriculture, and the exploitation of native botanic products, to be major sources of income.

The Western Australian Agricultural Society, formed in 1830, consisted of many of the more established, and establishment, figures of colonial Society. Drummond and Roe were members in their capacity as landowners, as was Francis Lochee, editor of the rambunctious Inquirer, local surgeon Dr Harris, and Richard Sholl, later Resident Magistrate of the ill-fated Camden Harbour settlement far to the north of the Swan. Other members included Mr Nash, George Fletcher Moore, and W.G. Meares. Another agricultural society, based in York, was established in 1840 with a similar membership and eventually superseded the original. Within these societies committees could be formed, and were, to investigate certain problems, such as the identification of plants poisonous to sheep, or to lobby for particular facilities, such as a new Government Garden.

Lochee and Moore were, like Drummond, Irish expatriates. Both were men of letters; Lochee producing the second newspaper in the Colony, and Moore, appointed first Civil Commissioner, and later Attorney General, writing a diary of his experiences which was published first in serial form in the West Australian, and then as a book. They were, by the evidence of their writing, keen gardeners and agriculturalists, and Moore had a good eye for botanic and other specimens, sending examples home to his family, and also supplying
James Mangles with scientific samples. Lochee mentioned in his editorials two of the premier gardening books of the period, Cobbett's *Gardener* and Loudon’s *Gardening*, indicating his interest in their writings and providing evidence that contemporary gardening and landscaping works were available in the colony. Nash too, appears as an amateur botanist, although Drummond said little in his praise, possibly because Nash was one of the first to express interest in the Government Gardens after Drummond lost his lease on it.

**The Government Gardens**

A proposal to lease the Gardens was made in 1839, and was followed by similar calls over the next few years, all arguing for the value of the gardens for agricultural and economic botanical benefit. The Perth and Guildford based Western Australian Agricultural Society had been in communication with the London based Horticultural Society (which had provided Drummond with nine boxes of seeds and plants) and other overseas societies regarding the development of botany, agriculture and horticulture. A sub-committee to draw up a list of useful plants ‘which it is desirable to introduce into the colony’ was created in 1841. Experimental plots had been developed by a number of members, and small cash rewards for the successful propagation of particular plants established, but with the loss of the Nursery Garden there was no longer a central, public site. In January 1842 the Agricultural Society reported that:

> By the return of the Champion from India we have received some valuable seeds, carefully selected, which the Agricultural Society of Calcutta have kindly furnished to us. It is to be regretted that there is not in the colony, under the auspices of the government, a garden,

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41 Moore, *Diary of ten years eventful life of an early settler in Western Australia and also a descriptive vocabulary of the language of the Aborigines*, p. 50; Mangles, 'Letters, etc. Botany, Gardening, Seeds, Horticulture, The Parks, etc: Letterbooks.'

42 *The Inquirer*, 7 July 1841.

43 'Agricultural and horticultural Society meeting', *The Inquirer*, 13 January 1841.
conducted by a skilful superintendent, for the preservation of seeds and plants. 44

Drummond was prompted to write in defence of his actions seven years previously, and to raise the subject of public versus private ownership of the space.45 With the introduction of this topic into the debate Drummond was tapping into the new paradigm for the provision of public recreational and leisure space within botanic and other landscaped spaces. There can be no doubt that the colonists had access to the literature in which these matters were discussed, and that they themselves debated issues of social equality both privately, and in the pages of the two major newspapers of the colony. Drummond was sufficiently sure of his audience to include public space as a significant matter when stating his case for control of the Gardens.

This concern followed from a number of British parliamentary inquiries into the social disorder resulting from the increasing urbanisation of the country. The findings and recommendations of these Inquiries saw an increased interest in, and demand for, public parks, gardens and walks. The Select Committee ‘appointed to consider the best Means of securing Open Spaces in the Vicinity of Populous Towns, as Public Walks and Places of Exercise, calculated to promote the Health and Comfort of the Inhabitants’, in 1833, included such luminaries as Lord Viscount Duncannon, Mr Lamb, Mr Thomas Attwood and Sir Oswald Moseley.46 The results of these inquiries, reported to the British Parliament in June 1833, demonstrated that there was too little public or social activity available to working class families. The provision of Public Walks would provide healthful recreation and exposure to ‘fresh air’, the oxygen forming

45 Drummond, ‘Unpublished letter to the Inquirer’.
properties of plants having recently been discovered. In addition, they would be in the presence of their ‘betters’ and would, by imitation, learn to behave more like them, thus becoming more amenable to middle class values and mores:

the advantages which the Public Walks (properly regulated and open to the middle and humbler classes) give to the improvement in the cleanliness, neatness and personal appearance of those who frequent them. A man walking out with his family among his neighbours of different ranks, will naturally be desirous to be properly clothed, and that his Wife and Children should be also.

Others in the colony were associated through their previous occupations, social and moral beliefs and familial ties, with the British cultural milieu then promoting the use and development of public open space. Stirling’s connections with the Mangles family and Loudon have already been discussed, but others too had similar links at different levels of English society. One such colonist was Henry Willey Reveley, for example, whom Stirling had engaged at Cape Town as Colonial Architect. Reveley’s father had designed Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, his stepfather was John Gisborn, a moral and political reformer, and his father-in-law was Copley Fielding, a member of the Royal Academy of Arts. Reveley had close ties to the British arts and literary communities, and it seems likely that his mother and friends kept him informed of current debates during the years he was in Cape Town and later Swan River. Reveley left the colony in 1838, but following his return to England he corresponded with his near neighbour H.C. Sutherland, the Colonial Treasurer, and included discussion of the new colony in Adelaide, founded on reformist principles by Benthamite followers. Clearly, Reveley and his colleagues enjoyed debating a range of topics, and it is important not to confuse physical isolation with cultural or intellectual isolation.

In Swan River the need for physical activity and fresh air to improve the health of the lower classes was obviated, but the social and cultural improvements identified by the various Select Committees were important. Owing to the lack of finances, and the isolation felt by the settlers, the ‘demon drink’ was becoming an increasingly vexed question, as was the upstart attitude displayed by some of the workers:

Indentured servants become Masters, No matter what damage they do, how careless they are, sober or drunken, idle or industrious, impudent or respectful, well or ill, you must keep them and satisfy every demand on the instant....

The inculcation of ‘civilised’ attitudes, through the promotion of suitable activities and the control or prohibition of others, less suitable, would be seen in the coming years as a key to creating a more amenable working class.

Nor were Western Australian colonists alone in importing British urban ideas for control and civility to the bush and small urban settlements of Australia. In Sydney, as early as 1811, a picturesque carriage road to the South Head of Sydney Harbour had been constructed by Governor Macquarie to provide ‘civic participation and community of interest’ among the disparate social groups of Sydney society.

Thirty years later, and just five years after the establishment of Melbourne, members of the Melbourne Town Council wrote to Superintendent LaTrobe:

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

Moore, *Diary of ten years eventful life of an early settler in Western Australia and also a descriptive vocabulary of the language of the Aborigines*, p. 142.

Faro, ‘To the Lighthouse! The South Head Road and place-making in Early New South Wales’: p. 110.
cherished, there the employer sees his faithful servant discharging
the higher duties of a Burgess, as a Husband, and as a father.  

These higher duties could only be performed in a space in which strength
of mind and character, rather than strength of body, were the requisite tools for
enjoyment.

In Western Australia, frustrated by the lack of progress in either leasing or
obtaining access to the garden or a similar lot, a group of like-minded
individuals, including chief magistrate W.H. Mackie, and Francis Lochee,
formed the Perth Vineyard Society. They wrote to the Governor on 5 April
1845, providing a plan for land on the western boundary of the Government
Domain, ‘the Crown Reserve.... known as Stirling Square’ which they wanted to
convert ‘into a Public Garden’. The plan included that ‘by some Official Act...
the reserve in question... be exempted from Sale and exclusively and
permanently appropriated to the Purposes of a Public Garden’, reiterated in the
fourth goal, ‘that a formal and official reservation of the intended site and
dedication of it to the proposed object should be made’. The purpose of these
clauses was to ensure that the Trustees were not legally vested with the land,
ostensibly to keep it in public hands, but also to minimise any risk of taking on
associated debt. A committee was to be formed to report formally to the
Colonial Secretary and, although it was to remain a public site, funding was to
be from personal and private contributions only. Finally the committee would be
authorised to erect ‘any of the structures usual in Public Gardens, such as
Gardeners Lodges, sheds for the protection of Exotics, etc....’  

His Excellency, ‘highly approve(d) of the entire plan and arrangements’ contemplated.

52 Quoted in Whitehead, Civilising the City: a history of Melbourne’s public gardens, p. 1.
53 ‘Trustees for converting into a Public Garden the Reserved Plot of Ground in the town of
Perth Western Australia known as Stirling Square’, Perth Vineyard Society, (Acc. 319A, Battye
Library).
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
Public gardens had been gazetted at Albany in 1840, and on June 13, 1845 ‘the portion of land.... being a part of “Stirling Square”, situate (sic) in the Town of Perth, [was] reserved and set apart as a Public Garden.’ In gazetting the gardens, the then Governor, John Hutt, not only answered his critics but also placed the further management of the gardens firmly in their hands. A Trust was established, which included all the major civil servants, a representative of the Anglican Church, the law and town residents, and also the loquacious Francis Lochee, in whose journal the criticism had first appeared.

The new Public Gardens, now located in Stirling Square, seemed the appropriate place for both an experimental or nursery garden, and a pleasure or promenade ground. Unfortunately, gazettal of a garden did not necessarily equate to allocation of funding and, indeed, the self-funding nature of the proposal (clause 5) had to have been a crucial factor in the Governor’s acquiescence.

Immediately following the gazettal of the grounds the Trustees advertised for a tender to fence the grounds, and three months after first writing to the Governor the Trustees met again to approve a plan for the design of the garden. Lack of funding, which was to have been obtained via subscription, again delayed the development of the site, demonstrating that the project was not as generally popular as they had hoped. Unable to proceed through lack of funds, and citing the high cost of labour in the colony, the Trustees reported to the Colonial Secretary that:

the only practicable mode of overcoming that obstacle is... to lease the site to some Individual or Individuals of that Class whose Capital is their labour.... Of course, any such plan would be made to include the leading and Original object of making the Site in Question as soon as possible conducive to the pleasure and convenience of the Public.

57 West Australian Government Gazette, 13 June 1845
In order to render the site more alluring the Trustees signed a contract in 1846 for the construction of a Gardener’s Lodge, of a ‘most unique design…’ (prepared by James Austin, the Government Architect), using money lent by the Colonial Government for the purpose. The contribution by both Government and private industry was seen by at least one member of the intellectual elite, the editor of the *Perth Gazette*, as a promising sign for the future, an indication that the project was to be ‘conducted with energy and liberal support’.

Almost immediately the Trustees received applications from intending lessees, and in August 1846 a lease of ten years was signed with Henry Laroche Cole, one of Perth’s first true entrepreneurs, and member of the Agricultural Society. Cole was on the Perth Town Trust, had established a jetty and clayed Perth’s streets. He undertook to carry out a garden design approved by the Trustees. A draft plan had been designed, possibly by Mackie (the name is somewhat obscured) and approved by the Trustees. If Mackie designed the plan, as seems likely, then the moral and social improvement role of the gardens is increased. Transgressions against Drummond’s gardens had been discussed in the press, which had clearly been in favour of stronger and harsher penalties than otherwise. Four ‘urchins’ had been before the magistrates, in 1833 for example, for trespassing and stealing fruit from the Government Gardens, two of whom had been placed in the stocks. The Gazette had hoped that future transgressions would be ‘prosecuted vigorously.’ The new plans invited the public into the grounds, provided they behaved appropriately.

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60 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
The site was to be divided into a public walk or promenade and a nursery. Cole’s lease required him to establish such fruit bearing and ornamental plants as were provided to him by the committee; to provide a clayed walk six feet around the site, and two ten feet broad across the length and breadth of the nursery; and to provide access to the nursery to the members of the Trust Committee and their workmen ‘at all reasonable times and hours’. Although the ‘leading and Original object’ had been to make the site ‘as soon as possible conducive to the pleasure and convenience of the Public’, the Trustees chose to limit the right of access to ‘all others duly authorised by them.... at such times and hours and upon such terms as to the said Committee shall seem right; and all such profits derivable from permission to use such walk shall be received by the Committee’. The moral, educational, and improving nature of the gardens would be reserved for those deserving, and capable, of appreciating it. In addition, they might be expected to pay for the privilege.

The Committee was not unaware that these restrictions did not altogether sit comfortably within the rhetoric of public walks, and the moral and social improvement of the masses. They defended their actions however, by citing their responsibilities to their tenant, Cole, a member of the Agricultural Society, and for the plants and structures within the garden. Moral and societal concerns needed to be palliated by economic and social realities.

Following the leasing of the Public Gardens to Cole in 1846 the Horticultural and Vineyard Society, otherwise known as the Trustees, attempted to meet their aims of providing a venue for genteel recreation and a horticultural nursery. They raised funds for the project through subscriptions, and Francis Lochee published a small pamphlet (not located), the proceeds of which were contributed to the Trustees’ coffers. Interested parties donated roses and oak

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64 31 July 1845, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence forwarded (Cons. 49, Vol. 22, SROWA); ‘Trustees (Acc. 319A, Battye)’.
65 ‘Trustees (Acc. 319A, Battye)’.
trees, which were to be planted in the publicly accessible area of the Garden.\textsuperscript{66} Within a year they seemed to be well on their way:

> On warm summer days, the tired official may be allured from the monotonous avocations of his musty office, to saunter away an hour in this prettily situated garden...\textsuperscript{67}

While the public promenade was proving acceptable to the populace of Perth, the gardens were not providing Cole with sufficient income and it came to be seen as an inappropriate site for the nursery garden. The social benefits of the garden had greater weight with the general population than the economic benefits perceived by its founders. Halfway through Cole’s ten year lease, the garden’s Managing Committee were to draft a letter to the Acting Colonial Secretary advising him of the:

> apathy which the Public has evinced for the original design of a Public Botanical or Nursery Garden on the above site, and the decided preference which it appears to entertain for the conversion of that site into a safe and convenient place (for) exercise and recreation for themselves and their families....\textsuperscript{68}

Given the lack of support, including financial support, the Society felt it better to leave the subject of the Botanic Garden until ‘public resources or private liberality be more adequate’.\textsuperscript{69} They further noted that the current site lacked both suitable soil and shelter, both from the sun, and the sea breeze, for such a garden but that, ‘as a general resort for exercise to the families of the Townspeople, a more central and convenient site could scarcely be found....’\textsuperscript{70}

Despite the committee’s concerns and recommendations no immediate action was taken, but with the expiry of Cole’s lease the then Governor sought immediately to remove Stirling Square from the control of the Trustees, and return it to Colonial management. Cole’s ability to provide practical gardening

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Stannage, \textit{The people of Perth: A social history of Western Australia's capital city}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{68} Trustees of the Horticultural and Vineyard Society, ‘Trustees (Acc. 306A, Battye)’.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
expertise and advice must be questioned. Colonel Irwin, the Acting Governor, had written to William Hooker in 1848, asking for simple pamphlets and detailed instructions for growing some of the economic botany crops promoted by Hooker, owing to the ‘total absence of persons competent by profession or personal experience to give really practical instruction upon such subjects…’

In addition, Cole seems to have been taken up in the latter years of his lease with a number of other projects, such as establishing a racecourse and negotiating a lease for land at Claise Brook, to the North East of the city, where an abattoir was to be located. With the economic viability of the Nursery Gardens in doubt, he sought to diversify, leaving the Public Walk as the premier purpose of the Stirling Square site. A government appointed supervisor, I. Fitzcook, replaced Cole in 1856. J. Murray replaced Supervisor Fitzcook in 1858, and the following year, Enoch Barratt, a convict who had received his Conditional Pardon only the year before, took up the post.

Not only had the garden been ‘shamefully neglected and mismanaged while in Cole’s occupation’, but the exercise of municipal power, seen in the thriving Town Trusts, was not as yet to be trusted with the colony’s recreation. This point had been made as early 1851 when the Governor, Captain Fitzgerald, had acceded to a request that a public recreation ground be fenced to provide a clearly defined site ‘for public Amusement generally, but decline[d] vesting the same in Trustees or alienating it irrevocably from the Crown’. With respect to the Public Gardens, ‘His Excellency [was] extremely anxious that the Government should regain possession of it’.

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71 ‘Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Irwin to Sir William Hooker’, 12 September 1848, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, Australian letters (M781, AJCP).
73 Colonial Secretary to Vineyard Society, 26 November 1855 in ‘Trustees (Acc. 319A, Battye)’.
74 Colonial Secretary, 15 December 1851, Colonial Secretary’s Office, ‘Letter 572’, Correspondence forwarded (Cons. 49, Vol. 31, SROWA).
75 Colonial Secretary to Vineyard Society, 26 November 1855 in ‘Trustees (Acc. 319A, Battye)’.
Perth’s first public park, created by subscription as were many of England’s early municipal parks, was to be taken up by the Government and be administered by it, rather than by the Town Trust or the Trustees. In England the move towards public open space had commenced when Royal Parks such as St James’s Park and Hyde Park, originally the King’s own gardens, were opened to the public.76 The first attempt in Western Australia, Drummond’s Botanic Garden, had been subsumed into the Governor’s Domain, the reverse of the opening of the Royal Parks. In establishing the Public Walk at Government Gardens and appointing a Committee of Trustees to administer it Western Australia was in advance of similar moves in the Home Country. The assumption of control of Stirling Square by the Colonial Government mirrored in part a practice in England whereby private philanthropists created open spaces that were then acquired or controlled by the local municipality.

While London had the Royal Parks, there were few public landscaped spaces for recreation and promenading in the rest of the country. The majority of landscaped spaces in the 1830s and 1840s were in private hands, or like the Cork Botanic Garden, accessible only to subscribers. Recreation for the masses took place on the commons that edged the towns and cities, wasteland, which like Stirling Square itself prior to the Gardens, could be enclosed, or sold, or redeveloped.

Although Swan River was by no means an urban environment, those who looked to the future anticipated a day when it would be a thriving metropolis. The towns of Perth and Fremantle were small, with only a small resident population. Many of the members of the Town Trusts, formed in 1841, and of the Gardens Trust, formed in 1845, had town residences but were also landowners, and were often absent from the towns proper as were their

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76 Chadwick, *The park and the town: Public landscape in the 19th and 20th centuries*; Conway, *People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain*; Lasdun, *The English park: Royal, private and public*.
servants. Loudon and others were writing of intensely urban and industrialised environments, rich in human, financial and horticultural resources. Perth was poor, agrarian and limited in its capacity to develop these facilities. Nevertheless, Perth was no longer merely an administrative centre: it was recognisably an urban development, with streets, neat fencing and attractive housing, epitomised in paintings and images such as that of Alexander Taylor in 1850 (see fig.7). The new Government Gardens represented an attempt to balance the needs and resources of the colony against the paradigms of a growing urban social discourse. Developed as a principally recreational space, the gardens became a didactic and civilising tool, encouraging appropriate behaviour and rewarding aesthetic tastes. The needs of the larger agricultural settlement had been subsumed by the immediate requirements of an urban society.

Figure 6: Perth from St George's Terrace, 1850. Alexander Taylor. Taylor’s painting shows a ‘pretty village’, looking towards Mount Eliza and the Narrows. Picket fences of jarrah timber were required by the Council to ensure that the streets were tidy.

Source: The colonial eye.
Chapter 3 – Improving nature

If the cause of the botanic garden was being lost in Western Australia in the 1850s and 1860s, it was enjoying a golden age, almost literally, in other parts of the continent, supported and guided by events in Europe and England, as well as America.\footnote{Gold was discovered in Victoria in 1851. Originally sparking an exodus of men from the adjacent colonies, many successful miners returned to their home states, taking with them the gold they had found, and creating new levels of prosperity Statham, ed., \textit{The origins of Australia's capital cities}. Western Australia, isolated from the remainder of the continent, lost men to the more prosperous states.} Not only botanic gardens, but municipal and city parks (such as Central Park in New York and Victoria and Battersea Parks in England) were also thriving in the new environment. An evolving movement aimed at improving physical health through organized recreation supplemented the continued promotion of aesthetic and scientific education through the study of plants and garden design.

This chapter examines the influence of transportation on the colony as a major instrument of social change, which was often the catalyst for the development of parks elsewhere to ameliorate perceived social and cultural problems, and to encourage the development of a moral and useful civic population and tries to determine why the botanic garden paradigm continued to fail. I discuss the development of other Australian botanic gardens as potential models for the redevelopment of the Government Gardens or for a new garden, and compares them with the Western Australian experience. An ongoing interest in natural history and botanical study among certain colonists and their supporters, exemplified in the visit to Western Australia by the eminent (and enthusiastic) algologist, William Harvey, could have facilitated the creation of

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\footnote{Gold was discovered in Victoria in 1851. Originally sparking an exodus of men from the adjacent colonies, many successful miners returned to their home states, taking with them the gold they had found, and creating new levels of prosperity Statham, ed., \textit{The origins of Australia's capital cities}. Western Australia, isolated from the remainder of the continent, lost men to the more prosperous states.}
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such a garden aided by the apparent availability of a large convict workforce. Finally, I look at competing models for the use of recreational and landscape space, and the influence of movements such as 'rational recreation' and 'muscular christianity' in identifying ways in which parks could contribute to a moral and civilised society.

Western Australia, which had lagged behind the other colonies in migration and development, enjoyed a period of relative prosperity until the 1870s, following the decision in 1848 to allow the transportation of convicts to Western Australia. Founded as a free colony, Swan River had had no convict labour to build the major facilities or to work as servants. The Agricultural Societies had long argued for the introduction of a scheme or schemes to provide additional labourers to the colony. Suggestions had ranged from the introduction of coolie labourers from India, to child migration and other assisted migration schemes, to finally, the introduction of convict labour. While the suggestion of child migration schemes was often couched in terms of the social and moral benefit to the children, arguments for transportation were clearly based on the economic benefits that could be perceived. During the 1840s the colonists, and the Agricultural Societies in particular, had supported the transportation of juvenile offenders from Parkhurst Prison, the so-called 'Parkhurst Boys' and had placed them with agriculturists throughout the colony. Less than 200 boys were sent to the colony, and a single Guardian of Juvenile Emigrants administered the scheme. A very small proportion of boys were in constant trouble with the law, and one was executed, but in general the scheme

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3 Gill, *Convict assignment in Western Australia*.
was deemed a success. Following on from this experiment the colonists petitioned, in 1848, that the colony be opened to full transportation, and in 1850 the first contingent arrived.

With convicts came the machinery of transportation, the officers and men who ran the convict depots and establishments, their wives and families, their pay and the Imperial funds that enabled the whole. Transportation further skewed Western Australia’s population gender imbalance. Where, in the 1830s to 1850s, women had been approximately one third of the population; this figure was closer to one tenth by the mid 1870s.\(^4\) By 1868, when transportation ceased, almost 10,000 male convicts had arrived in the colony. Nearly 1,000 of these applied for their wives and families to be sent out as assisted migrants. Retired members of the Army, Enrolled Pensioners, were sent out with their wives and families as guards on the convict ships and were granted land on arrival. A further 2,000 young women from poor and destitute backgrounds were encouraged to migrate to balance the genders in the colony. The colony’s population immediately prior to transportation had been about 6,000 men, women and children.\(^5\) Although the influx of men and money by no means equalled that of the ‘golden’ colonies, it was, in a limited way, a bonanza for Western Australia.

Transportation helped to remove some of the obstacles to expansion and colonisation that the colony had experienced, but it did not remove all of them. Nor were the funds associated with the convicts able to be spent in as free manner as the gold of Victoria and New South Wales. In fact, in 1851, the Convict Finance Board was established to strictly control the disbursement of

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\(^4\) Driesen, *Essays on immigration policy and population in Western Australia 1850 - 1901.*; Sandra Taylor, *Who were the convicts?: a statistical analysis of the convicts arriving Western Australia in 1850/51, 1861/2 and 1866/1868,* *Studies in Western Australian history, Vol IV* (1981)

Imperial funds, and to ensure that it was only spent on convict related matters. As the convict system grew and depots were dispersed across the colony, the Convict Finance Board found itself administering fewer and fewer Imperial funds. Between 1854 and 1860 Imperial expenditure dropped from £132,597 to £81,531. All applications for funding, such as allowances for special judicial hearings, administration of convict depots, rationing and quartering convict work parties and the like had to be submitted to the Board. Nevertheless, some occasional work seems to have slipped past them, as in the case of the drain through the Gardens, when both Wray, commanding the Royal Engineers, and Jewell, the Government Architect, agreed that the work should, without doubt, be funded through the Imperial Purse. No reference to an application for funding has been found in the records of the Board, although the work was done, and with convict labour.

Nor were the restrictions of the Convict Finance Board and the diminishing Imperial Chest the only reasons that the Gardens failed to benefit from the introduction of convict labour. Transportation, which provided in the first instance manpower, funding and a corps of trained engineers and designers, also proved to be an increasing tax on the colony, after the convicts left the Convict Establishment. Often these prisoners had spent considerable time in prison before being transported, particularly in the first few years of the scheme, arriving in Western Australia with their sentence nearly completed. Good behaviour on board the transports also contributed to a shorter period in confinement, and within months of arrival, many convicts were released on a system of probation, known as a Ticket of Leave. Almost all achieved a Ticket

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6 'Minutes', Convict Finance Board, (Cons. 1156, FB1, SROWA).
7 1861 Census return, printed in I.H. van den Driesen, Essays on immigration policy and population in Western Australia 1850 - 1901 (Nedlands, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 1986) pp. 223 - 230.
8 'Minutes', Convict Finance Board, (Cons. 1156, FB2, SROWA).
9 1856, Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 364, SROWA).
of Leave within two years of arrival, before finally achieving their Conditional Pardon, which entitled them to take up life in the normal community.¹⁰

While some convicts were able to find continued employment after their Conditional Pardon, like Enoch Barrett, who became the Government Gardener in the late 1850s; others were less fortunate. The convicts included men who had been convicted of crimes such as burglary, fraud and theft, as well as a smattering of court martialled soldiers. Some Chartists may have been transported, and a small group of Irish Fenians, including John Boyle O’Reilly, were famously transported and escaped from Western Australia.¹¹ Some were unable to lose the taint of their convict past, as architect and pleasure garden creator Thomas ‘Satan’ Browne, was to discover; while others, unable to find employment for themselves or their families in Western Australia, migrated eastwards.¹² So great was the migration movement that it evoked specific mention during the sittings of the House of Commons Select Committee on Transportation in 1861, when the number of men leaving the colony was said to be equal to the number of convicts entering it.¹³ Others still, unable to avail themselves of either work or the opportunity to leave, threw themselves on the resources of the colony, as paupers.¹⁴

It was in this context of an increased labour force and additional funding that the Stirling Gardens were finally transferred to Government control. Once the Perth gardens were back in public hands it might be expected that some

¹⁰ For more detail on the convict system in Western Australia, and the female immigration scheme established to manage the gender imbalance see Rica Erickson, The bride ships: experiences of immigrants arriving in Western Australia, 1849 - 1889 (Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 1992); Rica Erickson, ed., The brand on his coat: biographies of some Western Australian convicts (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1983).
¹² Erickson, ed., The brand on his coat: biographies of some Western Australian convicts.
¹³ Stannage, The people of Perth: A social history of Western Australia's capital city, p. 93.
¹⁴ From the mid 1850s on, a growing number of Western Australians were to seek ‘relief’ from the Colonial Government, as evidenced by the applications and recommendations registered by the Colonial Secretary’s Office.
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move would be made to appoint a botanist for the purpose of agricultural development at least, if not further study into the colony’s own potential botanic resources. However, as visiting algologist William Harvey noted during his visit in 1854, there was a lack of understanding generally of the scientific and economic value of botanic research, and little interest at the highest levels.¹⁵

Charles Darwin had dismissed the south west of Western Australia as being scarcely worth bothering with on his visit with the Beagle in 1838.¹⁶ Yet botanic specimens from the south west area were eagerly sought by collectors, almost from the establishment of the colony. Drummond and the Albany Resident Magistrate Alexander Collie, himself a botanist on the 1820s Beechey expedition to North America, had collected and sent specimens to Kew and other collections.¹⁷ The German botanist, Ludwig Preiss, had also collected in the area in the late 1830s.¹⁸ On an amateur basis, the celebrated botanical collector, Georgiana Molloy, exhibiting her mastery of the feminine and feminising study of natural history, had sent extensive samples to Kew.¹⁹ Molloy had been assisted and emotionally supported by the presence of the local cleric, Archdeacon Wollaston, himself a keen natural historian.²⁰ Although Wollaston preferred the study of insects to plants, his son shared some of Molloy’s passion, and the pair of them apparently provided her with conversation, both on the nature of nature, and on the nature of God.

¹⁸ Stephen D. Hopper, ‘Southwestern Australia, Cinderella of the world’s temperate floristic regions 2’, Curtis’s botanical magazine 21, no. 2 (2004).
Wollaston himself appears to have been a correspondent with William Hooker, and in 1854 became a crucial support for William Harvey. Harvey’s chatty letters to his sister, aunt and Professor and Mrs Asa Grey of Harvard, who were among his principal correspondents, provide interesting insights into the colony of Western Australia and into its botanic and scientific culture.  

Arriving in Albany in January 1854, Harvey wasted no time in contacting the Colonial Secretary, William Ayshford Sanford, forwarding a letter of introduction from Sir William Hooker, and ensuring that Wollaston’s name was included, to ensure his bona fides. Wollaston provided Harvey with introductions to the south west community, as well as arranging for the reception of Harvey’s things at his next port of call in Adelaide, in what Harvey mistakenly thought would be only a few months time. His original plan had been to stay for four months but it was closer to eight months before he left Western Australia. In that time, he studied at algae at King George Sound, spent the winter collecting seaweeds at Fremantle and Rottnest, and made the acquaintance of Sanford, the Comptroller General Hampton, and George Clifton of the Water Police, after whom he named several species, as well as collecting more generally with Drummond.

Like previous visitors to the West, and many of the early settlers, Harvey was unimpressed with the quality of the soil, both at King George Sound and later near Perth, finding it either sandy or boggy, and describing the land at South Perth as ‘a desolated Irish Nobleman’s Park – a sort of Castle Rackrent Domain where some fine trees were still standing in the neglected fields.’ Again, like many visitors, he was generally unimpressed with the society, finding it too far from anywhere and lacking occupation, other than excessive drinking.

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21 Ducker, The contented botanist.  
22 Letter to W.A. Sanford, 9 January 1854 in Ibid.  
23 According to Ducker, Harvey was so impressed with Clifton that he named a genus and several species after him, as well as dedicating the first volume of the Phycologica Australica to him. Ibid.  
24 Letter to Hannah, February 22, 1854 in Ibid.
'Idleness', he said, 'is the complaint of most of the residents, indeed except for a Naturalist I see little occupation.'\textsuperscript{25}

Although botany and natural history appeared to Harvey to be the most suitable occupation for the colonists, and he received encouragement from a select few, they did not generally share his enthusiasm, or understand his purpose in being there:

I wish much that I had brought with me a copy of the Phycologia, or some of my other Algae works, as the display of them to people here would be useful in showing them that some end was to be obtained by my labours – At present I seem to most rather an unaccountable traveller, pursuing what is not worth the time & expense…\textsuperscript{26}

During his journey from King George Sound, Harvey came across a party of convicts, in the care of David Scott, a gardener who had trained under Mrs Lawrence of the Royal Horticultural Society, and at Kew, under William Aiton.\textsuperscript{27} However, Scott’s horticultural skills were now in abeyance, rather than at the service of the colony. On arriving in Perth, Harvey was given some rooms at the public offices, which occupied one quarter of the Government Gardens. Significantly, he does not mention the gardens at all, which may well indicate the degree of neglect and lack of recognition to which they had been reduced.

Established under Stirling they had suffered over time from his failure to support them. Governor Hutt had seen the need for gardens in Perth, Fremantle and Albany, but had preferred that the colonists rather than the colony support the Perth project. By the time Harvey arrived, Governor Fitzgerald had ensured the continuance of the gardens by taking them once again under government control but he did little else to support them. Harvey’s description of the various colonial officials is illuminating. Sanford, the Colonial Secretary, was:

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. \textsuperscript{26} Ibid. \textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
sadly out of place here, being a much superior man to any that he has to work with, and not properly appreciated – He is a thoroughly conscientious, active, clear-sighted & rapid-minded man of the modern school…  

Henderson, the Comptroller General of Convicts, was also ‘very kind & has some taste for Natural History’, while the Governor, Fitzgerald, was ‘goodnatured, but weakminded.’

There was considerable dissent expressed by settlers in the Avon to using the convicts, whom they had petitioned for in 1847, in what they deemed frivolous projects. ‘The only work for the benefit of Perth by labour from the Convict Establishment has been some thirty or forty men for two or three weeks in clearing and laying out the Public Gardens’, was the complaint of a meeting of agriculturists in Toodyay, a town to the east of Perth where pastoralism was beginning to be developed with some success. What was needed, they felt, was a bridge over the nearby Avon River and a greater support for convict labour depots in the country.

Numerically and economically important, the pastoralists had a modicum of political power as well. The Governor had to listen when they spoke, and weigh their interests in the balance. Originally recruited from the ranks of second sons and upper class families, the Civil Service was increasingly becoming professional, and poor reports from the colonies could affect progress through the ranks. Parks and gardens, even nursery gardens, once deemed so essential to the agricultural development of the colony were now perceived to be a lesser priority than roads and bridges connecting the dispersed areas of the colony with Perth and Fremantle.

28 Letter, 18 April 1854 in Ibid.
29 Fitzgerald was more generally known for his autocratic manner than his weakmindedness. See, for example, Frank Crowley, Fitzgerald, Charles (1791 - 1887) (Melbourne University Press, 1966 [cited]; available from http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010361b.htm.
30 Perth Gazette, 9 January 1857.
31 Gascoigne, Science in the service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the uses of science in the Age of Revolution.
Botany, and natural history, although of interest to some in the colony, was no longer generally perceived to be of value to the colony.

**The new botanic empire**

Such was not the case elsewhere in Australia, or internationally, guided in significant measure by the redevelopment of Kew Gardens as the centre of vast botanic empire.\(^{32}\) On his appointment as Director of the Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1841, Sir William Hooker had taken over a small garden of 10 or 11 acres, with a limited annual budget. Thirty years later the Gardens would again be at a watershed in their development, but by then the Hookers (Sir William’s son Joseph had been appointed a Director of Kew in 1855) had extended the size of the gardens to 300 acres, with an appropriate budget, and a popular image far removed from its previous identity as a Royal estate only.\(^{33}\)

Hooker’s father had been an amateur naturalist and William inherited his interest and a fair degree of talent. In 1806 local naturalists had arranged a letter of introduction for Hooker to Sir Joseph Banks, and he became one of Banks’ protégés, being appointed in 1820 as Professor of Botany at the University of Glasgow.\(^{34}\) While at Glasgow he developed the extensive circle of correspondents, ranging from fellow academics and botanists to private collectors and amateur naturalists, that was to become a hallmark of his career and that of his son Joseph. It can be argued that it was this broad correspondence, the connections made and the ability to develop a community of interest that was responsible in many ways for the success of both Hookers. Similarly, the ability to link into a network of scientific exchange, whether through Kew or another scientific centre, was critical for the development of

\(^{32}\) Drayton, *Nature’s government*.; Donal P McCracken, *Gardens of Empire*.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.; Desmond, *Kew*.

scientific knowledge generally, and for the recognition of other gardens as botanic gardens.

The model that Hooker used for Kew Gardens was that of a recreational space, and one that continued its previous role both as a centre for exotic plants and as a distribution point for those plants as diplomatic gifts, on behalf of the government rather than the monarchy. As a recreational space, Kew Gardens competed with the other parks and gardens that were at that stage being newly created in London, both for money and visitors. Hooker’s vision of a botanic empire took Kew into another paradigm, one of colonialism and empire, and allowed him to seek new avenues of funding and patronage.\(^{35}\)

The development of Kew Gardens, as it gradually changed from a primary recreation space to a distribution centre, and eventually a scientific research centre with an educational, recreational role, was the complete opposite of Government Gardens at Perth. Started ostensibly as a research and distribution centre, trialling plants for introduction into Western Australia, it had become, in the popular view, a simple recreation park. The similarities were that by the 1850s both parks were viewed as providing for healthy recreation, the ‘lungs of the city’, and as morally and socially improving spaces, along the lines envisaged by the Committee on Public Walks.

The Hookers’ drive to recreate the Britannic Empire as a botanic empire is often seen as one of the key forces behind the development of new colonial botanic gardens, as both treasure houses of botanic curiosities and recreational spaces. Banks and the Hookers saw the principal purpose of a botanic garden as a centre for study and for the development of new crops for the markets of Empire and the kitchens and industry of Britain, but where Banks had been able to use his personal influence and patronage to expand the role of botanic gardens, William Hooker, in particular, had to persuade others to act on his

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\(^{35}\) Drayton, Nature’s Government.
behalf. His son Joseph benefited both from his father’s connections and from recognition of his and the Garden’s status within the botanic and scientific communities.

Banks had overseen the settlement of New South Wales and the development of the Colonial Gardens there was in line with his goals of developing an agricultural colony that would both feed itself and provide Britain with the raw materials it needed. His reach was limited somewhat by the influence of the various governors appointed to the colony. William Hooker’s reach appeared to become far more extensive, so much so that even where he had no real influence that influence was nonetheless feared. Richard Drayton argues that Hooker’s role in appointing colonial Supervisors has been overstated by Kew historians Desmond and Strong, and that, in many cases, Hooker had to work through the various Colonial Secretaries.\(^\text{36}\) Drayton’s argument is supported by the dismissal of Drummond, who had strong links with the botanic community in England through his connections with the Mangles, Loddiges Nursery, and his membership of the Linnaean Society. He was known to the Hookers, but still failed to retain or in the 1840s regain control of Stirling Gardens.

Another example is that of George Francis, the newly appointed director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, who, in 1855, wrote to Sir William Hooker begging that he not oppose Francis’ appointment (presumably because Francis was not one of Hooker’s proteges) as the salary was only £150 per annum.\(^\text{37}\) Hooker, in fact, had no power in this particular matter, although the experiences of New South Wales would indicate otherwise. Francis’ appointment, like those of other Australian Botanic garden appointments was a colonial, not an Imperial appointment, and Hooker should not have been able to alter the appointment

\(^{36}\) Drayton, *Nature’s government*.

even had he wanted to. Although the Hookers did not have the power to ensure the appointment of their candidates, there is ample evidence, including Francis’ letter, to demonstrate that their approval was both offered and sought, and that where conflicting appointments were made, as in Sydney, clear distinctions were drawn between the colonial and Imperial appointments.

In addition to Hooker’s difficulties with influencing colonial appointments, there may have been other, more subtle factors at play. In 1846, Hooker wrote to the Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Alexander MacLeay, regarding the position of Superintendent of the gardens there. Hooker was doubtful that an appropriate person could be found for the position. The salary was too low, and ‘the convict labourers of the Gardens and some other arrangements there are such as a scientific man or person of gentlemanly feelings cannot put up with…’

In fact, the Colonial Government appointed an ex-convict, John Kidd, to the position of supervisor of the gardens, somewhat to Hooker’s dismay:

Now it appears that a Mr Kidd is first [?] in, an old school-fellow of Mr J. Smith & a Convict !! or who was a convict. I have however individually no reason to find fault with him, he has sent voluntarily 2 excellent cases of plants…

Hookers’ antipathy towards convicts in general may explain, in part, why there was so little support for Stirling Gardens in Perth as a botanic garden from an Imperial perspective, once the government resumed control. Convict labour was used, when possible, to carry out capital works in the gardens, and from 1858 onwards, an ex-convict, Enoch Barratt, was placed in charge of the gardens.

If the Hookers’ had only limited influence on the development of a botanic garden in WA, a number of different models existed for the development of botanic gardens in other Australian colonies by the middle of the 18th century.

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38 William Hooker to Alexander MacLeay, 1846, Linnaean Society, ‘Correspondence’, (AJCP).
39 Letter from Hooker, 1 September 1845 in Ibid.
Of the three main colonies that Western Australians looked to for comparison and assistance - New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria - all developed major botanic gardens, either from a blank canvas as was the case in South Australia and Victoria, or from an earlier acclimatisation garden, as occurred in New South Wales. In Victoria, which benefited in particular from the discovery of gold in the 1850s, at least six Botanic gardens were developed between 1850 and 1870.40

The first gardens in New South Wales were established as fruit and vegetable gardens to provide for the needs of the convict establishment in the 1780s. Similar gardens were established in Hobart in 1818, and it is likely that Fraser was sent to Brisbane to establish a nursery garden there on his return from the Swan River.41

Sydney, like Perth, developed from a basic nursery garden or acclimatisation space and it is worth comparing the progress or lack thereof, of the gardens over the period from 1845 to 1860. The Sydney Gardens, early in their history, had enjoyed the support of the Governor and the Colonial Secretary, Alexander MacLeay, himself a protégé of Banks and a friend of Sir William Hooker. The Governor, Macquarie, had somewhat resented the interference of Banks in appointing Allan Cunningham as Imperial or King’s Botanist, and had in the months before Cunningham’s arrival appointed Charles Fraser to superintend the Government Gardens, ensure the collection and acclimatisation of Australian flora suitable for sending as gifts to foreign potentates, and manage the introduction of suitable exotic species to New South Wales. Despite Cunningham’s problems with the Governor, Cunningham and Fraser seem to have gone on well together, recognising each other’s skills

40 Lockwood, Wilson, and Fagg, Botanic gardens of Australia: a guide to 80 gardens.
and strengths.\textsuperscript{42} On Fraser’s death in 1831, Cunningham, who had returned to England some years before, was offered the post of Colonial Botanist in New South Wales. He passed it to his younger brother, Richard, and then proceeded to organise the transfer to New South Wales and the basis under which the Gardens would be administered. His concern was to make it a collecting and scientific garden, with minimal interference from the established bureaucracy. Surprisingly, many of his terms were met, and his brother proceeded to New South Wales. And then it all came undone. While out on a collecting expedition with a New South Wales survey team, Richard became disoriented, disturbed an Aboriginal encampment and was killed. Cunningham was again offered, and this time accepted, the post.\textsuperscript{43}

When instructed by the Botanic Gardens Committee to undertake instruction of convicts in horticulture, Cunningham felt that his position as botanist, and that of the gardens as a scientific institution was under threat. He resigned as a matter of principle. He was supported by the New South Wales colonists, and finally agreed to be reinstated as botanist only, leaving the gardens under the control of a Supervisor. Sadly, Alan Cunningham too died in 1839, only a few years after taking up the New South Wales position, and his collected specimens were returned to England.\textsuperscript{44}

In the following years, there was considerable debate about the role of the Sydney Gardens, both as the site of continuing economic botany research, as a food source for the Governor, and as a recreational space. Following Cunningham’s death, the gardens developed as a horticultural space, under supervisors appointed by the Colonial administration, first John Anderson and then John Kidd, an ex-convict. There was, however, a continuing call both at the Colonial and Imperial level for a botanist to be appointed, and in 1847 the

\textsuperscript{42} W G McMinn, \textit{Allan Cunningham: botanist and explorer} (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970); Gilbert, \textit{The Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney: a history, 1816 - 1985}.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
Colonial Government attempted to appease both the botanists and the horticulturists by appointing John Carne Bidwell as Director of the Botanic Gardens and as Colonial Botanist.\textsuperscript{45} In describing the appointment to the Western Australian Attorney General, the New South Wales Governor, Sir William MacArthur, said of Bidwell:

\begin{quote}
[he] is, besides being an excellent botanist, and man of general science, a very skilful horticulturalist – perfectly devoted to gardening in almost all of its branches. He will be most happy to open a correspondence with Western Australia…\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Bidwell’s reign was cut short, however, by the arrival of Charles Moore, who had been appointed by the Colonial Office on Hooker’s recommendation, and who was to create a clear identity for the Botanic Gardens, making it primarily a botanic garden, with the recreational aspect being largely transferred to the adjacent Domain, and newly created Hyde Park. By 1848, Moore had promulgated rules for the use of the Gardens, forbidding the removal or destruction of plants, but also smoking, and requiring decent dress and behaviour from those who entered it.\textsuperscript{47} When the local band requested permission to play, and entertain the patrons, the Garden Committee suggested the Domain as the more appropriate venue.\textsuperscript{48} Moore redesigned the gardens to contribute to the educational role, including beds arranged by classification schemes, and others that demonstrated plants that could be used for dyes, medicines and food. He commenced lectures in botany in 1851. For Moore, the educational role of the gardens went beyond the scientific into the aesthetic, commenting in 1856:

\begin{quote}
It is not by the acquisition of a vast number of species, or the crowding together of an endless variety of plants, possessing neither
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{45} Gilbert, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney: a history, 1816 - 1985
\textsuperscript{46} Quoted in Ibid., p. 69.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pp. 80 – 81.
beauty or value, that the public taste is improved, or the cause of education served.\textsuperscript{49}

From Moore’s day onward, the roles of the Domain, Hyde Park and the Gardens were more clearly defined, with the Gardens for rational and educational recreation, and the Domain and Hyde Park for more unstructured recreation and sports.\textsuperscript{50}

Melbourne too saw a conflict between the didactic and economic role of the botanic garden, and the public’s increasing interest in landscaped open space as place of recreation. From the date of settlement, there had been calls for sufficient open space to be made available for parks and gardens, even before housing land was surveyed and set aside.\textsuperscript{51} Significantly, Georgina Whitehead ascribes these calls to an understanding by the colonists that the city formed ‘part of a network of great European cities sharing a common culture’, of which public parks were a significant part.\textsuperscript{52} When the colony officially separated from New South Wales in 1851, and the colonists controlled their own expenditure, moves to develop the land set aside for such purposes could commence in earnest.

Land set aside for parks was, as with Western Australia, part of the wasteland of the Victorian colony. The future site of Fitzroy Gardens was bisected by a ravine, ‘an ugly eroded gully carrying stormwater and sewage south to the Yarra River’, while land at Flagstaff Hill was set aside for public space because the site was so steep as to make streets too expensive to develop.\textsuperscript{53}

The first sites set aside for a botanic garden in Melbourne were also far from the site of the town, with gardens eventually being established on the

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 81.  
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{51} Whitehead, \textit{Civilising the City: a history of Melbourne’s public gardens}, p. 2.  
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 4.
South bank of the Yarra in 1846. Little work occurred until the appointment of Ferdinand von Mueller as botanist in 1857, who undertook to establish a scientific garden. Mueller had first practiced as a pharmacist in Adelaide before taking on the Melbourne Gardens, bringing with him a technical and scientific education obtained in Germany, a prolific pen, and a taste for exploration. Within a decade he had laid out the Gardens on scientific principles, and established an arboretum and a pinetum. He was, above all, enamoured of trees, and sought to identify useful Australian Eucalypts that would also be ornamental. The trees were useful in medicines, furniture and ship building, as well as providing suitable specimens for street trees.

Unlike Charles Moore, Mueller’s concentration was on the scientific and collecting nature of the Botanic Gardens, and the development of an herbarium. The citizens of Melbourne disagreed. After an extended review of the management of the Gardens, Mueller was replaced as Director of the Gardens by the talented landscape gardener William Guilfoyle. Mueller retained his position as Colonial Botanist, but Guilfoyle took control of the gardens and under his management they became principally a site of aesthetic and horticultural education.

The most famous town planning solution of the period would arguably be that of Adelaide, known then as the City of Light; after Colonel William Light who prepared the first plan for the city. Established in 1836, under ‘Wakefeldian’ principles, the city layout was heavily influenced by the findings of Edwin Chadwick and the Committee of Public Walks. The twelve town commissioners were instructed by the Home Office to provide for ‘beauty and salubrity’, which the commissioners endorsed because the ‘spring to industry

54 Pescott, The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.
56 See Mel Davies, ‘Establishing South Australia’ in Statham, ed., The origins of Australia’s capital cities.
which occasional recreation gives; seems quite necessary to the poor as to the rich’. The solution was to surround the city with a green belt of parks and reserves for games such as football and cricket. Unfortunately, as Jim Daly identified in his thesis on the loss of public space in Adelaide, there was confusion on the part of the public as to the difference between a public walk and a garden. Even a botanic garden, especially as a research garden, implied a certain loss of rights of access by the general public.

Prior to the establishment of the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide in 1855 there had been three previous attempts. With the first, the land had been set aside but never occupied due to its tendency to flood. The second attempt, between 1837 and 1840, had been a commercial concern in the acclimatisation paradigm, where the gardener, like Drummond and Cole, was expected to make a living through selling his produce. The third, again an acclimatisation garden, was established in 1839 by Governor Gawler, and employed John Bailey. Bailey had previous experience with the great English nursery of Loddiges, which was well known among botanic collectors for its extensive collection of plants from around the world. Bailey was retrenched from the Adelaide gardens in 1842 due to the colony’s economic difficulties, and he took the plants to establish a private concern.

South Australia finally established the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1855, under the guidance of George Francis, a pharmacist. The appointment of Francis was a direct result of the earlier connection between physic and botanic gardens, a connection that included the development of a plant-based pharmaepia and the ‘science of signatures’, as detailed by Prest and

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58 Ibid.
59 Payne, Dr Richard Schomburgk and the Adelaide Botanic Garden.
Francis had been appointed in 1850, and had been expected to live off the proceeds of the garden, which he too was unable to do. The Horticultural and Agricultural Societies had sought the garden as a necessary adjunct to their activities, but as with Melbourne, there was a strong rhetoric about the role of gardens in cities. A botanic garden, like a museum, a library, or an English cathedral gave the city its status, and it was this, more than its role as a nursery garden, that ensured the first budget vote for the formal establishment of the garden, and Francis’s continued occupancy.

Francis’s death in 1864 gave the South Australian government an opportunity to change the focus of the garden. In seeking a new Director, they concentrated on the practical applications of the gardens, a role that was most likely to meet the approval of the pastoralists and agriculturists who would vote for the gardens budget in the parliamentary estimates each year. Their final choice, Richard Schomburgk, was well fitted to meet both the expectations of the legislators and the general community.

Schomburgk, like Moore in Sydney, and Mueller in Melbourne, had extensive links to both the Kew and the European botanic networks. It was both Schomburgk’s botanic collecting skills and his practical experience as a farmer that ensured his appointment. Prior to migrating to South Australia in 1864 he had accompanied his more famous brother, Robert, on a botanising expedition to British Guiana in 1822, to which they returned in 1840 and again in 1844. On one of these expeditions Robert discovered and took samples of the Victoria Regina lily, a plant Richard was to make peculiarly his own in South Australia, and use to great effect in promoting the gardens as both a research and recreational space.

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62 Payne, Dr Richard Schomburgk and the Adelaide Botanic Garden., pp.1, 32
63 Ibid.
Lacking a Schomburgk, Mueller, Guilfoyle or Moore, any requirements for botany and natural history advice that Western Australia might have could only be addressed through visits such as those of Harvey, and later Von Mueller from Melbourne, or by seeking advice from Kew, Melbourne or Sydney. While various officials expressed a desire for a Botanic Garden, they also complained of a general apathy towards the idea. If nature was to play a part in the city, it would not be as a scientific or educational tool, but would have to be presented in a different guise, one that would receive a better reception from the governing class and would resonate with the general populace.

Previous generations had perceived land as female, shrouded and mysterious, encouraging explorers in its own seduction and subsequent revelation, colluding through its presence in its own exposure. Once exposed, identified, known, and thus possessed and controlled, the land was then available for a range of activities such as farming, mining and town planning. But the study of nature could also be feminizing, even domesticating. In the mid 19th century, British intellectual Ada Lovelace’s Unitarian doctor encouraged her to study natural history rather than maths, as being more suited to her feminine intellect. Similarly, Charles Kingsley, author of The Water babies, felt that it was of greater value to young women to study natural history, and to use aquaria, than it was to study needlework and embroidery. Not only was study and exposure to nature appropriate for women, it was also considered a

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65 Ryan, The cartographic eye: how explorers saw Australia.


generally domesticating and civilising influence. As Terence Young demonstrates in his discussion of the early American parks, men needed the civilizing effects that parks and green spaces provided, even though this was considered inferior to the domestic refuge that women created in their own sphere.

Ideas about the city and the nature of urban society had to contend with the perceptions of vagrancy, hooliganism and unemployment. A new vision for parks and gardens in Perth was beginning to emerge, one that was linked to the moral and educational role of the gardens, along the lines of Kew Gardens and the Royal Botanic Gardens in New South Wales, and with the designed landscaped space rhetoric of parks like Regent’s and Hyde Park in London, and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

**Changing Voices**

Peter Bailey has identified how the translation of agricultural workers to industrial workers, and the break down in the traditional rhythm of the agricultural calendar led to a ‘sour impatience with the plebeian culture as morally offensive, socially subversive, and general impediment to progress.’

During the 1850s and 1860s concern was being expressed about the types of amusement available to the working classes with journalists such as Henry Mayhew in London and Hugh Shimmin in Liverpool writing about drunkenness, etc.

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69 Young, *Building San Francisco’s Parks, 1850 - 1930*.
70 Susan Martin has explored the politics of the domestic and feminine garden, as opposed to the masculinely designed spaces of Victoria’s public gardens. Martin, ‘The gender of gardens: the space of the garden in nineteenth-century Australia’.
gambling and poverty. Under industrialisation working hours were longer, driven by the requirements of the market than of the seasons, and leisure time was more clearly regulated and delineated, in both time and space. Pubs, which had been the social centre of the community, providing a meeting place for clubs and societies, were transformed into ‘gin palaces’, with workers spending Sundays getting drunk and recovering on Monday. The unofficial holiday of ‘St Monday’ cut into productive time, and was seen as a threat to the further growth of industrialisation. Mind and body were tied together, with cleanliness and morality being intertwined. A dirty environment would lead to moral degradation and vice versa.

Rational recreationists attempted to provide leisure activities that would better fit the working class for their roles: activities that included both a moral example and healthy activities for the body and the mind.

Libraries, museums and parks provided access to alternate recreation sites. Philanthropist Joseph Strutt gave land for an arboretum at Derby, to ‘wean people’ from ‘brutalising pleasures’, such as drinking, gambling and boxing. Robert Peel, in addition to establishing the modern police force, contributed £3,000 to the establishment of a park in Manchester, for similar purposes. In Western Australia, Governor Fitzgerald laid the foundation stones for a Mechanics Institute at Fremantle in 1851, and at Perth the following year. Other recreational activities such as cricket and football provided

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74 Simo, Loudon and the landscape: From country seat to metropolis, 1783 - 1843; Anthony Delves, 'Popular recreation and social conflict in Derby, 1800 - 1850', in Popular culture and class conflict, 1590 - 1914, ed. Eileen and Stephen Yeo (1981); Theresa Wyborn, 'Nothing better than the dirt and dust of streets and highways': the making of Manchester’s first public parks, 1833 - 1865 (PhD, University of Melbourne, 1999), pp. 163 - 166.
75 Bailey, Leisure and class in Victorian Britain: rational recreation and the contest for control, 1850 - 1885, p. 39.
organised and structured activity, activity that was originally seen as a ‘rational, even spiritual, recreation.’

The late 1860s saw an increase in the number of ‘rational’ amusements available to the citizens of Perth, such as cricket, croquet and tennis, but their own awareness of their isolation and the skewed population in favour of males contributed to an increase in attempts to ameliorate the situation. Conversely, there were still plenty of opportunities for less ‘civilized’ recreation, whether swimming naked in the Swan, or diving off the Perth jetty, or participating in ‘rural sports’ days such as those put on by the publican of the Horse and Groom

[Figure 7: Playing croquet at Government House, c. 1860
Source: Unknown photographer. (BA608/50, Battye Library).]

Ibid., p. 125.
Hotel. Activities included footraces, handicap races and hurdles, as well as 'rare tumbling in Sacks, and old English Sports.'

The greater priority in the decade between 1860 and 1870 would be to cater for the growing recreational needs of the colony. The struggle for the minds and artistic sensibilities of the colonists was subsumed by the greater need to provide, simply, room to play in. A recreation reserve had been established on the eastern edge of the city, but many writers in both the newspapers and official correspondence referred to both its distance from the town proper, and the walk through the sand that was required to reach it. Known as the Cricket Ground, the area was largely uncleared and had no footpath between it and the town site proper. Throughout the 1860s the Cricket Club constantly sought either Government or Town Council assistance to improve the ground, often on a quid pro quo basis. They would for example, offer to clay the surface, if the Town Council gave them permission to use clay from the nearby brick pits. The Council in turn, would offer to make certain improvements if the Government vested the land in the Council. Additionally, they sought to create a new space, one that would provide a marching ground for the newly formed Military Volunteers, a parade space for the Pensioner Guards, a cricket field, athletics oval and football ground, closer to the centre of town. The logical space, apparently, was on land reclaimed from the river. It was a strictly utilitarian space, with the Government Gardens at Stirling Square continuing to meet the aesthetic recreational needs of the colony with its carefully tended squares of grass and, from 1863 onwards, the occasional concert by the Volunteer Band.

In other societies the competition was largely between two similar forms - the botanic garden or the landscape garden; or between competing types of

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77 'Advertisement', *The Inquirer*, 16 December 1868.
recreation – active versus passive – as park and social reformers endeavoured to include sportsgrounds and playing fields into the landscape park. In Western Australia, the competition was soon to be between the civilizing and educational nature of a botanic garden, with its potential to assist the colony financially through the scientific development of useful plant species; versus the immediate health and recreational benefits of a recreation reserve suitable for cricket and the growing number of football codes, all aimed at curbing animal spirits and providing organized and manly activities for Perth’s growing larrikin population.

Figure 8: The new Recreation Ground at the foot of Barrack Street, between 1870 and 1880.
Source: Malcolm Uren collection (BA1116/51, Battye Library)
Chapter 4 - Better nature

Transportation to Western Australia ceased in 1868, although the legacy of the convict system both in terms of infrastructure and gender imbalance continued to affect the development of the colony. A new governor, Frederick Aloysius Weld, arriving in 1869, pushed for Western Australians to be able to elect their own representatives to Parliament, and chaperoned the introduction of Representative Government in 1870. With the cessation of transportation, and the establishment of Representative Government, anxieties about the role of the city, and its comparative status with those at the metropoles of London, Sydney and Melbourne become increasingly apparent.

This chapter examines the growing debates in favour of other didactic and utilitarian spaces, such as libraries and museums, football ovals and cricket fields, and the importance placed on these institutions as civilizing influences by the culture of the day, particularly in light of the colony’s twenty years of male transportation. The paradigm of rational recreation, as it developed in Britain in the 1850s, created conflicts and compromise in creating the types of parks and gardens best suited to the largely male population of the colony. Western Australian’s extreme sense of isolation is discussed as a contributing factor to calls to make the city seem more urban and urbane.

Flora Australis

The call for a Botanic Garden, and a major new recreational space, in Western Australia was revived in 1869 with a call from Flora Australis in the Inquirer. The author included arguments for both economic botany, and the civic status of the city in his masterful letter. The letter identified native flora as a concern, something that both Mueller and Schomburgk were also trying to raise as concerns in their colonies. Damningly, the author contrasted Western Australia, a colony of the great British Empire, unfavourably with other less fortunate societies:

In a nursery not only for our own flora, but that of neighbouring colonies, England and foreign parts, we are altogether behind every other civilized country. In heathen countries – say Japan, we find
beautifully arranged nurseries and gardens, some of them little less inviting than Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne...†

More, the Botanic Gardens would, ‘stand as a memorial of the day and generation of its founders.’‡ In making his case Flora Australis referred to one of the best known landscape gardens in Australia, Fitzroy Gardens, but he followed up by suggesting that the Western Australians call, not on William Guilfoyle of the Fitzroy Gardens, but Dr Von Mueller of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens for assistance. The design ethic was to be that of a landscape park but the purpose was undoubtedly education and improvement.

Following on from Flora Australis’ letter, the call for a botanic garden gradually grew in intensity. The Perth City Council had been busy in establishing ‘useful’ street trees along the major routes through the town, such as mulberries and ‘neem’ trees;§ and there was a recurrence of general interest in economic botany, and acclimatisation. Crucially, the inhabitants of Perth were also extremely conscious of their isolated position, far from other Australian colonies and from the acknowledged civilised centres such as London and Paris, and of their status as a convict colony. It was this sensitivity that was to give the debate an additional edge.

Perth residents were mortified then, in March 1870, by a report published in Melbourne’s Argus by a ‘Special Correspondent’ and reprinted in the Perth Gazette and Western Australian Times. Written by a Mr Chamier, a young visitor who had come with a Victorian civil engineer to examine the harbour at Fremantle, itself a subject of considerable debate, the article was scathing of the Stirling Gardens and the colonial government:

the ‘Square’ or public gardens, which is a very small patch of grass with a few young trees – useless for the purpose of affording shade.

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† Flora Australis, 'Botanic Garden', The Inquirer, 21 July 1869.
‡ Ibid.
§ ‘Minutes 1870 - 1878’, City of Perth, Minutes - Council (Cons. 2826, Vol. 3, SROWA). In fact, Lt Col. Bruce wrote in April 1870 to say that the trees were in fact Bakayun or Melia sempercirens. Perth Gazette, 15 April 1870.
Here the ‘youth and beauty’, in the shape of babies and nursery girls disport themselves in the cool of the afternoon, but I am sorry to say that other pleasure grounds there are none. There are no shady walks near the town; no refuge from the painful glare of the sun, or the heat of the sand. In that respect, both as regards the attraction of the place and the social wants and comforts of the inhabitants utter negligence has prevailed on the part of a paternal Government.

*In a land so much cut off from the sources of modern civilisation* [emphasis added], where free immigrants are scarce, and where travellers are so rarely seen – in a land where the inhabitants show the utmost indifference to the march of the events in the great world around them, where they are careless of business, which cannot be said to thrive, and uninterested in politics, there is nothing to excite, to amuse, or to fight about. Under these circumstances, the people – hardly pressed it must be admitted – seek for consolation in that panacea of all the ills of life…. Judging from the loud harmonies that emanate from the grog-shops of the town, and the long list of cases disposed of in a summary manner by the police magistrate every morning, it would appear that they ‘imbibe’ of it pretty freely. 4

In responding to Chamier’s report, the *Perth Gazette* highlighted the comparison between Perth and other colonies, and the lack of any of the key signifiers of civilisation – a museum, library, public park or botanic garden. 5 This lack was:

a notable landmark to judge by as to how far behindhand we are with the rest of the world, in all that in the present age marks the progress of intelligence and civilization… 6

The only facility provided for such civilised activity was the newly built Perth Town hall, opened in June 1870. In commending the building, James Lee Steere, leader of the Legislative Council, had characterized Western Australia

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5 The Metropolitan Museum of Art was established in 1870 to improve the tastes of New Yorkers and educate them about art. Bequests to several colonial museums and art galleries, from the 1870s onward, had had similar educational goals. John Poynter, *Mr Felton’s Bequests* (Melbourne, Vic: The Miegunyah Press, 2003).
The opening of the Perth Town Hall was seen as a remedy. It was a theme picked up by the new Governor, Weld, who congratulated the colony on its achievement with the hall, and hoped that the colonists:

may live to see this little city, so beautiful already by its natural advantages, made worthy of this its principal edifice, by the erection as time, means, and occasion may serve, of other public buildings and private mansions and places of business, by the improvement of its streets, by efficient sanitary [sic] arrangements calculated to utilize not waste its sewage, by its continued adornment in planting fresh avenues, and by the formation of botanical gardens and of other places of public recreation in its vicinity…

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Figure 9: Frederick Aloysius Weld

Weld, who had previously been elected the first Premier of New Zealand in 1864, had overseen that country’s move to Responsible Government. Weld’s own experience as a settler and an agriculturalist seemed to give him cachet with the landowning fraternity, a status that overcame any apparent difficulty that his strong Catholic connections may have created in the Protestant

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7 ‘Governor's Address on opening of Town Hall', Perth Gazette, 3 June 1870.
8 Ibid.
echelons of Western Australian society (Anglican and nonconformists alike). He was assisted by Frederick Palgrave Barlee, an Anglican and Freemason, who had come to Western Australia in 1855 as Colonial Secretary to then Governor, Arthur Kennedy; replacing the natural historian, William Sanford. Barlee too appreciated natural history and was a regular correspondent of Frederick von Mueller in Melbourne, and occasionally also wrote to Sir William Hooker. Barlee and Weld made a formidable team, with apparently similar interests and goals for Western Australia, among which was the promotion of agriculture as a means of colonial development.

It was goal that others shared. The Inquirer was particularly keen to promote agriculture and in 1870 reprinted Richard Schomburgk’s report from the Adelaide Gardens to the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures, detailing the productive use of plants. The accompanying editorial statement noted that:

we consider it a duty of our Government to foster and encourage the cultivation of many of these commercial plants, and for the introduction of others, to establish a garden with a competent director, where plants, cuttings and seeds should be procured for cultivation by the settlers at a low price...

Historians M.P. Cowan and R.W. Shenton have argued that the British Imperial government followed John Stuart Mill’s precepts regarding the role of

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9 One of Weld’s uncles was a cardinal, and one of his nephews was a Jesuit cardinal. Weld himself was made a Knight of the Roman order of Pius IX. http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/w/weld.html
11 Many of the letters received by the Colonial Secretary’s Office from Mueller during Barlee’s occupation are marked as having a private reply. Some of Barlee’s correspondence with Mueller is reproduced in Home, ed., ‘Regardfully yours: selected correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller’. Barlee’s correspondence with Hooker while in Australia and later as Governor of Trinidad, can be found in the archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.
12 ‘Richard Schomburgk’s report to the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures’, The Inquirer, 7 September 1870.
13 Ibid.
government, particularly in its colonial administration.\footnote{M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton, \textit{Doctrines of development} (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 40 - 57.} Mill, who developed his economic theories in the nineteenth century, and who was himself an experienced colonial administrator for the British East India Company, saw the role of government as supporting industry through the provision of infrastructure such as roads, canals and bridges, rather than becoming involved in industry itself. Throughout the early colonial period, successive governors sought to provide incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to develop industries and markets, which would provide employment and benefit to the colonists, rather than establishing such markets themselves. However, in his analysis of Colonial and Imperial Exhibitions, Peter Hoffenberg has posited that Colonial governments were more likely to provide financial support for institutions like the Exhibitions, libraries and museums than Imperial Governments, because they recognized that these were intrinsically unlikely to gain financial support from a free market.\footnote{Hoffenberg, \textit{An empire on display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War}, p. 86.}

Weld himself was keen to establish a botanic garden, writing to Joseph Hooker at Kew in 1871, of ‘what little attempts I can myself make at acclimatisation in my own garden’. There was insufficient funding in the colony he felt, for a proper garden, plus a strong sense of apathy, indeed, antipathy to gardening in general. ‘[T]o turn rams, goats or horses into a garden is a thoroughly well established West Australian practice,’ he wrote, ‘the sight of which stirs up my indignation very frequently in my rides about this country.’\footnote{Frederick Weld to Joseph Hooker, 5 Sept, 1871. ‘RBG, Kew (AJCP, M734 - M748)’.}

Nevertheless, he felt that eventually he would be able to get a vote for acclimatization of plants, and would then be in a position to approach Kew more formally. He expressed similar sentiments in both 1872 and 1873, even though

\footnote{Frederick Weld to Joseph Hooker, 5 Sept, 1871. ‘RBG, Kew (AJCP, M734 - M748)’.}
there were clear calls in the papers for just such a thing.\textsuperscript{17} Possibly, Weld was concerned about the cost of a garden and was putting Hooker off politely. Alternatively, Weld may have been principally interested in native Western Australian flora, with a view to scientific development, while the focus in Western Australian society was on the importation of exotics, social manipulation and a more aesthetic sensibility.

Nevertheless, Weld encouraged agricultural experimentation, with a view to increasing the colony’s exports and thus generating some much needed income. Not only would the crops provide income, but certain selected crops might also have an additional social benefit, by providing work for the indigent and poor of the colony. Teresa de Castro has analysed the attempts by the Benedictine monks of New Norcia, some 135 kilometres north of Perth, to develop coffee and coconut plantations.\textsuperscript{18} De Castro postulates that Bishop Salvado, who led the experiments, was motivated by the scientific zeal of the period, as well as an economic imperative. In looking to coffee, De Castro notes that the monks were well supplied with a crucial resource, manure, for the growing of the coffee, but is silent on the means by which the crop would be brought in. It is doubtful that Salvado expected his small group of monks would work the plantation; rather he would have looked to the Aboriginal community under the monks’ care. Coffee picking and processing would have seemed well within their skills, particularly that of the women who were already known to be the gatherers in the Aboriginal society. Coffee picking would provide a means by which Aboriginal people could be trained as useful, participating members of

\textsuperscript{17} Ferdinand Von Mueller, who was compiling a Flora of Western Australia, confirms this apathy. In December 1871, he wrote to Frederick Barlee, ‘In candour, I must confess that I feel somewhat disappointed with the scantiness of contributions of plants from your country, and the paucity of amateur collectors.’ Ferdinand von Mueller, ‘Reprinted letter from Ferdinand von Mueller to Frederick Palgrave Barlee, Colonial Secretary for Western Australia’, \textit{The Inquirer}, 27 December 1871.

the colonial economy, just as the native populations of Ceylon were being integrated into the British Empire.

Similarly, other crops of value to the colony for economic reasons had the potential to benefit the colony socially as well. The silkworm plagues of Italy, which devastated the silk industry in the late 1860s, came to be seen, in Western Australia and in other Australian colonies, as an opportunity too good to miss. A mulberry plantation and sericulture establishment seemed the ideal project to test the way in which a garden, such as that proposed by the Inquirer would work. Moreover, the mulberry could be planted, not just in plantations, but also as street trees, enhancing the general mise en scene, providing shade in summer, and fruit and work for the poor.\(^\text{19}\) The City Council had been planting mulberries and a tree they believed to be the Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) since the early 1860s.\(^\text{20}\)

Some experiments in sericulture appear to have been conducted privately, with a sample of silk being sent from the colony to the Melbourne Exhibition sometime before 1871, where it gained an honourable mention.\(^\text{21}\) Sericulture had been promoted in a number of colonies by Charles Brady, of New South Wales, who wrote extensive articles on the subject, which were received by the Colonial Secretary in 1870, and then later reprinted in the newspapers, detailing the level of return even a poor man could expect if he and his family raised silkworms and mulberries on an acre of land.\(^\text{22}\) The work was generally perceived to be light, unskilled and astoundingly remunerative. The government requisitioned a work party of convicts to commence trenching the ground at Claisebrook, previously set aside for a Botanical garden, in early

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\(^\text{19}\) ‘City Improvements’, *Perth Gazette*, 28 January 1871.

\(^\text{20}\) ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 2, SROWA)’. The Neem tree is an extremely useful, non poisonous plant, used in chemicals and as a natural disinfectant. The tree planted by the Council was by all accounts, not the Neem tree, but the poisonous Cape Lilac or White Camphor (*Melia azaderach*). In North America, where it is known as the Chinaberry, it is rapidly reaching the status of noxious weed.

\(^\text{21}\) ‘City Improvements’.

\(^\text{22}\) Inquirer, 7 April 1871; 5 May 1871
1871, under the direction of Police Sergeant William E. Dale.\(^{23}\) Dale was ubiquitous in both layers of government, serving as a policeman and acting as Inspector of Nuisances to the Perth City Council. In addition, Dale also became Superintendent of the Government Gardens. Dale eventually resigned from the Police force in December 1873, having taken up the additional post of Supervisor of the Poor House and the Immigrant’s Depot, while still remaining in charge of the Gardens.\(^{24}\)

**Figure 10: Claisebrook, c. 1861**

*Source: Unknown photographer. (26520P, digital ID 001331D, Battye Library).*

\(^{23}\) Comptroller General, (Cons. 1156, C53, SROWA). Dale’s antecedents, like those of many in the story of Perth’s parks, are somewhat obscure. He does seem to have been a member of the Royal Horticultural Society, or at least able to obtain some of their publications, forwarding, for example, an extract from the Horticultural Register, on sericulture, to the *Inquirer* in August 1871.

\(^{24}\) His many jobs proved difficult for his employers to keep track of. The Council, being advised of his resignation as a policeman, assumed, incorrectly, that Dale would also wish to finish with the position of Inspector of Nuisances and dismissed him from the post. Dale responded, dismayed by the sudden dismissal and requesting three months pay in lieu of notice.
Despite some danger from duck shooters, for whom the undeveloped swamp land surrounding the brook provided ideal hunting (see above), the party completed its work by June 1871, and 100 posts for the site were requisitioned by Dale, and provided by the Convict Establishment.\footnote{Colonial Secretary to Comptroller General, 8 July, 1871, Comptroller General (Cons. 1156, C53, SROWA).}

By the end of June, 1871:

Acting upon the advice of the Surveyor General, who is a strong advocate for more extensive cultivation of the white mulberry to encourage sericulture, some thousands of cuttings have been planted in the neighbourhood of Claisebrook by the Government. The nursery which has been placed under the care of the experienced propagator Mr Dale, is already showing signs of its soon becoming useful…\footnote{‘Sericulture’, \textit{Perth Gazette}, 21 June 1871. \textit{The Inquirer}, 19 June 1871, specified some 17,000 cuttings.}

Brady’s reports were again reproduced in 1873 as a printed paper in the Western Australian Votes and Proceedings.\footnote{‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)’} The sericultural experiment was one of several schemes wherein the government provided limited support, through the provision of resources and expertise, but left the full development and exploitation of the opportunity to entrepreneurs, offering only a limited prize to the first to succeed. The first to cultivate grain, or export a certain amount of raw silk would have received a prize of £500. The first to discover a mineable quantity of gold in the colony would likewise receive a similar sum. Frederick Barlee, as a member of the Legislative Council, and Weld’s right hand man, had attempted to authorise increased expenditure on the plantations at Claisebrook, through a motion in Council:

\footnote{Colonial Secretary to Comptroller General, 8 July, 1871, Comptroller General (Cons. 1156, C53, SROWA).}

\footnote{‘Sericulture’, \textit{Perth Gazette}, 21 June 1871. \textit{The Inquirer}, 19 June 1871, specified some 17,000 cuttings.}

\footnote{‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)’.}
Figure 11: Caretaker's cottage, Victoria Park
Source: Public Works Department. (Cons. 1647, item 00817, SROWA)
[I]n the opinion of this House, the soil and climate of this Colony are peculiarly qualified to promote the growth of the Mulberry… and in order to place this industry on a firm and practical footing, His Excellency the Governor be authorised to expend such sums as may be necessary to form one or more Mulberry Plantations on a small scale, and to temporarily to secure the services of a person more thoroughly conversant with the science of Sericulture to those who may desire to pursue the industry…  

The somewhat disingenuous motion (the small mulberry plantation was already now two years old) was passed 10 votes to 5. The ‘conversant person’ was presumably to be Charles Brady. In reality, Sergeant J. Clayton, late of the Pensioner Guards, was appointed to the Silkworm establishment to be built at Claisebrook.

Again, Clayton’s background in either sericulture or gardening is difficult to trace. Clayton was in charge of importing ‘grain’ (silkworm eggs) and ‘educating’ them; that is, raising them from worms to cocoon. To do this he needed a specially built cottage or ‘manangerie’, which could be kept warm, and an unlimited supply of mulberry leaves. It was in this area that it was thought that paupers, invalids, women and children could initially be employed. The latter two groups could potentially be drawn from a proposed lockup for ‘female offenders and ragamuffin ‘larrikins”, who would be punished, and even rehabilitated, ‘by exacting labour – coercive, yet light, of course…. Later, they would be taught to ‘educate’ the worms themselves, learning to also reel the silk off the cocoons.

The initial plan was not to weave the silk and export it, but instead to send unreeled cocoons and reeled silk to European manufacturers. Clayton was in contact with a French silk manufacturer to whom he sent samples, from

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28 Hon. F.P. Barlee, 10 July 1873, Ibid.
29 Brady had been promoting sericulture in all the colonies since at least 1862. J Dingle, Silk production in Australia: a report for the Rural Industries Research and Development Council [PDF] (Rural Industries Research and Development Council, 2000 [cited 08/08/2005]).
30 'Editorial', The Inquirer, 8 February 1871.
approximately 1874 – 1879; and the colonial government approached Mrs Bladen Neill of the Victorian Ladies’ Sericultural Company for her expertise and contacts.\(^{31}\) Mrs Bladen Neill had established a silkworm farm, near Mt Alexander in Victoria, on land handed over by the Victorian government for the purpose.\(^{32}\) The Sericultural Company was a co-operative, designed to give employment to women and children. Through Mrs Neill the West Australian colony was able to send samples of silk to Manchester, where it was woven and dyed as a gold satin banner. Despite good reports from Manchester, and a successful display of the banner at the Paris Exhibition, there were a number of problems with the scheme. The silk industry in Europe was based on seasonal workers and the manufacturers were not set up to take silk out of season. Then too, the quality of silk, while good, was not sufficiently good to compete with normal supply, and again the change of seasons affected the quality of the reeling (it was too cold to reel good silk by the time the cocoons arrived).\(^{33}\) To crown matters, Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for the Pebrine disease that had been plaguing the European suppliers.\(^{34}\)

\(^{31}\) Extensive correspondence about sericulture and reports from England and France are to be found in the correspondence of the Colonial Secretary’s Office. See, for example, ‘Col. Sec. (Cons. 36, vol. 364, SROWA); ‘Sericulture’, 10 August - 23 November 1872, Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 717, SROWA); ‘Sericulture’, 24 December 1875, Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 811, SROWA); ‘Sericulture’, January - November 1877, Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 879, SROWA).

\(^{32}\) Dingle, *Silk production in Australia* ([cited]); Maria Nugent, ‘Women's employment and professionalism in Australia: histories, themes and places’, (Australian Heritage Commission, 2002). The Bladen Neills were also members of Victoria's Kalizoic Society.

\(^{33}\) ‘Col. Sec. (Cons. 36, vol. 811, SROWA).

\(^{34}\) Sadly, the disease also wiped out many of Australia’s fledgling silkworm farms. In a colony where manufacture, rather than exporting of a primary resource, was more common, silk may indeed have become another Australian industry. See Dingle, *Silk production in Australia* ([cited]), for a brief history of sericulture in Australia, and a discussion on how it can be introduced into modern Australian practice.
**Planting street trees on sanitary grounds.**

At the same time as the Mulberry plantation was being developed, there was a growing debate about other sites in the town, for the purpose of botanic gardens and active recreation. The first call to arms for a botanic garden or public recreation space had been *Flora Australis*’s letter, taken up by the *Inquirer*. The *Perth Gazette* followed in December 1870 with a call from *Pro Bono Publico*, an ardent cricket fan, who bemoaned the lack of suitable facilities in Perth for cricket. An esplanade had been successfully completed in the port city of Fremantle, and provided that townsite with an adequate cricket ground. Perth’s cricketers, despite their attempts to improve the Recreation Ground to the East of the city, languished behind Fremantle both in facilities and wins. The introduction of a steam dredge in the Swan River to create a greater draft for boats stimulated *Pro Bono Publico*’s imagination.

![Figure 12: Plan of barge for steam dredge](source)

Source: J.S. Roe. (Surveyor General’s Office, Cons. 3844, item 238, SROWA).
The spoil from the barges could be used as fill, which:

would grow almost anything and would be especially favourable for
the growth of couch grass. So that there would be no difficulty in
forming a good cricket ground which would be useful for all open air
entertainments, parades, and sports, and by the planting of rows of
willows and other trees delightful shady walks might be formed…

Moreover, ‘undoubtedly the encouragement of manly and healthy recreation
and exercise does much to counteract vicious habits and propensities….’,
providing the citizens of Perth with a site well suited to the moral improvement
of their society.

The City Council was extremely anxious to obtain sites for both a botanic
garden and a recreation ground. The cricket ground and recreation site at the
eastern end of the town [later Wellington Square] was still proving difficult to
maintain, and unpopularly distant from the main settlement. The Recreation
Ground being created on the foreshore (with silt from the dredge, as proposed
by Pro Bono Publico, and included in townsie plans for the period - see
Appendix A, fig.34 ) was still very much a work in progress, and Mt Eliza,
although useful as a rifle range, and a good walk for the exercise conscious,
was in some ways even further from town than the cricket ground. And none of
the sites were under council control. In a series of letters, from 1863 onwards,
the Council continually pushed to have certain reserves created and vested with
them. The principal area requested was at Third Swamp, on the northern edge
of the townsie plan.

The council felt that Third Swamp was preferable to the Claisebrook area
for a botanic garden, due in part to the freshwater available in the swamp
(suddenly elevated to the status of lake in the Council’s minutes). They wrote

35 Pro Bono Publico, Perth Gazette, 2 December 1870.
36 Ibid.
37 2 December 1870, 'PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)'.

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again in May 1871 requesting the reservation of 50 acres at Third Swamp, and in June, Weld replied:

that should application be made for the purchase of it it would probably be sold, but if not he saw no objection why it should not be left for a City reserve, although ClaiseBrook [sic] appeared to him all that would desired for a botanic garden…

The *Perth Gazette* too had its doubts about the desirability of the swamp, attributing the council’s preference to the site to a case of self-interest on the part of individual councilors, who may also have been involved in property speculation. According to the Gazette, “‘Third Swamp” being cultivated for a botanical garden [will] improve the property of some of the members of the Municipal Council. Each for himself again.’

Not only was the Council set to benefit, but the ground itself was deemed too far from town. ‘What a delightful drive – through the bush to our Botanical Gardens!’ Their preference was for a smaller block, some 15 acres, shortly to become available for purchase in Stirling Street.

At the same time, Weld was looking at setting aside more land for drainage, a project that had commenced in 1854, to protect the citizens of Perth from the unhealthy effects of swamp air. Craig Colten has described how New Orleans, built on a series of perpetual swamps, drained and filled the swamps to create land for the city. In Western Australia, the swamps were seasonal, flooding during the autumn and winter months from April through August, and then drying out, sometimes completely, during the dry, hot months of January to March. During drought periods the swamps were little more than grassy depressions, with sulphuric ooze covered by a veneer of dry mud. They attracted mosquitoes and midges. Cholera epidemics in France and England,

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38 5 May 1871 and 23 June 1871, Ibid.
40 Ibid.
and America, in the late 1840s had drawn sanitizing attention to the areas in which they started – often in poor and crowded quarters of the city, near water sources such as swamps, ponds and wells.\textsuperscript{42}

Investigation into the phenomenon was increasingly professionalized, using the compilation of statistics, and broad reaching Parliamentary Inquiries. Several competing theories were put forward, but the one that was the most successful, because it placed disease of the body with moral disorder, and lack of cleanliness, was ‘miasma theory.’ Miasma theory held that under certain conditions, the atmosphere itself could become malignant, polluted by the smells and odours of decomposition.\textsuperscript{43}

Edwin Chadwick, the social reformer and Poor Law Commissioner, had, in his 1842 Report on Sanitation, directly connected foul air, caused by lack of proper refuse removal, to not only disease and mortality, but also to moral and social degradation:

- That the younger population, bred up under noxious physical agencies, is inferior in physical organization and general health to a population preserved from the presence of such agencies.

- That the population so exposed is less susceptible of moral influences, and the effects of education are more transient than with a healthy population.

- That these adverse circumstances tend to produce an adult population short-lived, improvident, reckless, and intemperate, and with habitual avidity for sensual gratifications.

- That these habits lead to the abandonment of all the conveniences and decencies of life, and especially lead to the overcrowding of their homes, which is destructive to the morality as well as the health of large classes of both sexes.


That defective town cleansing fosters habits of the most abject degradation and tends to the demoralization of large numbers of human beings, who subsist by means of what they find amidst the noxious filth accumulated in neglected streets and bye-places.  

Chadwick and others believed strongly that through access to clean water for drinking and cleaning, and by the removal of human waste, suspended in water via drains and sewers would not only improve the physical health of the population, but with exposure to clean air, would contribute to moral and social improvement as well. John Snow was able to map outbreaks of the disease in London in the 1850s, showing the relationship with water, but the cause of the disease was not fully identified until the 1860s, and the bacteria was not cultured until 1883.

In Western Australia, the need to create land, and to provide sewage led to an increase in the desire to drain the swamps, via drains into waterways such as Claise Brook. But in dewatering the city, and removing these sources of water, the city was without large potable water sources. The stream at Mt Eliza (now named after Governor Kennedy) provided water for the Stanley Steam Brewery, and some for the city, but not enough for the cricket ground, recreation reserve, or the mulberry plantation. A civic-minded citizen, Mr J. Browning, had donated £50 for a fountain to the Council, but without a reliable source of water, or indeed a suitable venue, the money would be held in trust. The matter was to bubble under the surface for a decade before work commenced. In the meantime, swamp and well water remained the two major sources of water for the inhabitants, and needed to be protected.

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45 Hamlin, *Public health and social justice in the age of Chadwick, 1800 - 1854*.

46 Donald Cameron and Ian G. Jones, ‘John Snow, the Broad Street pump and modern epidemiology’, *International Jounal of Epidemiology* 12, no. 4 (1983).
Weld was very concerned that Perth had limited access to fresh water and other resources, such as water and timber, for the town’s development. In 1871 he directed the Surveyor General to have a reserve of some 430 acres surveyed on Mt Eliza. Third Swamp too was to be reserved, not as a botanic garden, but as a reservoir for the city.\(^{47}\)

The City Council too were concerned about the need for reserves, generally for recreation, and wrote to Weld in 1872 asking that additional reserves be set aside and vested in them for management.

In their selection they identified the land around the newly built Town Hall, which Weld had recently opened, on the corner of Hay St and Barrack St, and only one block north of the Government Gardens site; a botanical garden site to be established around Tea tree reserve in the North east, which would include or have a cricket ground adjacent to it; a public garden at Third Swamp, with Second and Third Swamp to be partially drained; a clay pit; a public park on the Mt Eliza reserve; and for ‘Health, Recreation, River and City improvements… the whole of the space on the riverside from the Government House jetty to Mill St jetty, taking in the shallow water as far out as the heads of each and intermediate jetties...’\(^{48}\) Despite their persistence they were to go away empty handed. Weld was clearly motivated to remove this land from the influence of the Town Council.

Weld’s establishment of reserves in 1872 were designed more to identify areas that might be required for the future physical development of Perth, rather than its social development. The reserves included swamps and creeks that could be used for drainage, and water supplies for the city, and areas where

\(^{47}\) The reserve at Mt Eliza was regazetted in 1873, due to a ‘technical error’ in the original gazettal. ‘Papers relating to parks and reserves for public purposes in Perth, 1872 - 1880’, Surveyor General’s Office, (Cons. 5000, 39/4, SROWA).

\(^{48}\) ‘Reserves file’, Department of Lands and Surveys, Correspondence (Cons. 5000, 39/4, SROWA).
timber and stone for buildings were located, such as on Mt Eliza. As a result of these concerns, Weld set in train the mechanisms to create eleven new reserves in the Town, thus fixing many of the sites that were to become parks in later years (as shown in Appendix A, fig 32). However, the protection was not always absolute, particularly where control had been vested in the City. One reserve, block Y232 on the northern outskirts of the city, had been reserved for drainage – that is for the city to direct its storm water to the reserve. Nevertheless, shortly after its reservation, and vesting in the Council, the Council was happy to allow the land to be leased for agricultural purposes for a period of five years. On another such reserve, the lessee, Mr Stokes, had refused to clear or maintain the drain, resulting in flooding in the streets in the winter months. The Council proposed to resume the land and offer the lease to someone more amenable to the town’s needs. Throughout the 1870s the control of drains and drainage reserves, plagued the council. A report from the Inspector was read in April 1874, and in July the following year, the Council were advised by the Colonial Secretary of a despatch from the Secretary of State raising concerns about the unsanitary nature of the city, as reported by Dr Shaw.

Weld left Western Australia in 1874 leaving the colony and the capital all the richer for his reservation of lands and support of cultural institutions such as the Town Hall, as well as his support of representative government, and the promotion of intercolonial communication through the development of the telegraph. Frederick Barlee, having finally found a Governor who supported his endeavours, also left for long service leave in 1875, and did not return.

Following the departure of Weld and Barlee, the nature of the reserves was once more up in the air. The Mulberry plantation, as well as street trees

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49 Ibid. In a memo copied into this file, Weld is recorded as being concerned about the amount of drainage of swamps surrounding the townsite and the probable effect on the city’s limited water supply.

50 5 July 1875, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)’.
had been the subject of vandalism, while the popular performances of the band in the Government Gardens caused concern that dancing would lead to damage to the plants. Nursery girls and layabouts had transformed the place of quiet contemplation for the tired official into a place of assignation.

**Victoria Park – municipal and imperial nature.**

With Weld’s departure, the Perth City Council were able to approach the new Governor, William Robinson, for the access to the reserved lands they had sought before. Robinson was much more amenable to the Council’s request, promising them the land adjacent to the Mulberry Plantation, now named Victoria Park.\(^{51}\) It is possible that in naming the park reference was being drawn to the park of the same name, created as a Royal Park thirty years earlier, in 1845. Victoria Park in England was one of a new breed of landscape park, and at the start of a new park movement. Hazel Conway’s study shows that between 1840 and 1860, one new park was being created every year, and occasionally two, but from 1860 to the mid 1880s, the rate of park creation increased enormously.\(^{52}\) However, although more parks were being created the size of the parks was generally smaller, sometimes being less than an acre, where previously the parks had often been 10 acres and more. These parks were the direct result of the work of the Select Committee on Public Walks, which had identified the potential health and social benefits of landscaped open space, in line with Enlightenment discoveries about the role of plants in replacing oxygen in the air.\(^{53}\) The first Victoria Park had been developed following the presentation of a petition bearing 30,000 names to the Crown. The petition had been instigated following the release of the first Annual Report of the Registrar General, which had shown that life expectancy in East London was far less than that of West London. William Farr, who presented the report,

\(^{51}\) Conway, *People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain.*
\(^{52}\) Ibid., Appendix 2.
\(^{53}\) Taylor, *The vital landscape: nature and the built environment in nineteenth-century Britain.*
clearly identified the lack of fresh air and access to green recreational space as a significant factor in the reduced life expectancy.\(^{54}\) The park, although a Royal Park, was from the beginning open to the public,\(^ {55}\) although it was reportedly hard to find.

That the citizens of Perth were aware of the moral and social influence ascribed to such landscape parks, is indicated by the valedictory address given on Robinson’s departure in 1877 by Mayor George Shenton, who said:

I am sure that in expressing my own sense of appreciation of your Excellency’s exertions to promote the moral, social and intellectual welfare of our city, I am expressing the feeling of every citizen in Perth. Nor can I allow this opportunity to pass without bearing testimony to your Excellency’s efforts to provide for us a suitable recreation ground – Victoria Park, at Claisebrook – which had your Excellency remained with us for the usual term of office, you would have had the pleasure of handing over to the citizens.…\(^ {56}\)

Robinson’s vision for the new Victoria Park appears to have been that of a horticultural and botanic garden, and it was this that directed its development even after his departure. A Curator, J.L. Burns was appointed, and local horticulturists were asked to donate specimens. One donor, Mr A.W. Leitch, donated 30 pelargoniums, four fuschias, six misenbranthemums, as well as two boxes of violets and five ‘small pine apple plants.’\(^ {57}\) William Dale, as supervisor of the Government Gardens, both at Barrack St and at Claisebrook, received mangoes and litchees from India, which he distributed to the Governor and the gardens, as well as to select private citizens.\(^ {58}\) Parties of local

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\(^{54}\) Farr, who had originally supported the miasma theory of disease dispersal, was instrumental in 1866 in supporting John Snow’s theory about the role of contaminated water in cholera epidemics.

\(^{55}\) Conway, *People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain*.


\(^{57}\) J. Burns, 31 January 1878, Colonial Secretary’s Office, ‘Victoria Park’, *Correspondence received* (vol. 899, SROWA).

\(^{58}\) William Dale, 10 May 1878, Colonial Secretary’s Office, ‘Victoria Park’, *Correspondence received* (Cons. 36, vol. 899, SROWA).
prisoners were used as the labour to clear the land and create paths; a task they were also doing for Sgt. Clayton in the Mulberry Plantation. Clayton complained that the many visitors to the plantation were raising dust which was coating the leaves and creating extra work for him, as the leaves had to be washed before they could be fed to the worms. Burns found the prison parties almost useless, and was also unhappy with the rate of progress in developing the park and ensuring his pay. William Dale too was unsatisfied with the rate of progress at the park, although he believed that Burns was ‘a good and careful gardener’, recommending that, ‘something better than being merely caretaker of the Park might be found for him.’

Although landscape parks and botanic gardens were promoted, and viewed, as contributing to moral and social improvement for the society as a whole, individual behaviour did not necessarily conform to the expectations of the park proponents. Ian Hoskins has noted that the Domain and Botanic Gardens in Sydney were known to be places where loose women, and vagrants camped at night, and generally had an unwholesome reputation. Charles Moore’s regulations for the Botanic Gardens, including night closure, forced vagrants out of the Gardens and into the Domain. In England, the Cremorne Gardens and other pleasure gardens promoted their rural, bucolic nature as natural, healthy recreation sites during the day, but the night time activities of some garden goers eventually caused them to fall into disrepute, making them more readily targeted for redevelopment as the City of London’s need for residential land grew. The Government Gardens, fenced and closed at night, did not attract vagrants, and the worst offences committed were by people climbing the fences to use the gardens as a short cut, or to steal the fruit. It

59 William Dale, 18 May 1878, Colonial Secretary’s Office, ‘Victoria Park’, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, vol. 899, SROWA).
60 Hoskins, Cultivating the citizen.
therefore came as a considerable shock when, in 1878, it was reported that John Burns, ‘the person in charge of the Government Gardens at Claisebrook, and allowed to occupy the ornamental cottage there, has lately conducted himself in a highly improper and disgraceful manner’. While looking for an absconding prisoner (possibly employed in the gardens preparing the soil, laying paths and drains), the police had heard loud noises from the cottage. On their approach to the cottage, the door had burst open and two men had leapt out. One, a pauper and employed as Burn’s cook, had been captured and arrested for being out after curfew, and inside was evidence of drink, the scourge of Western Australian society. Burns himself was discovered in bed with a woman, the wife of a prisoner employed in the gardens. The pauper cook was charged and given one month’s hard labour. Burns was dismissed from his job, without charge. This was, apparently, an isolated incident. The decadence described by Hoskins, and ascribed to Cremorne and other pleasure gardens, was, in general, missing from descriptions of recreation spaces in Western Australia. Decadence was found in grog shops and among larrikins, and the park could be, as Chamier had noted nearly a decade earlier, a civilising force.

The park was still to be handed over to Council by September 1878, the date of Burns’ disgrace, but it was once again on the agenda of both the Council, and the Colonial Executive. Ord, the new Governor, proposed to vest both Victoria Park and the Mulberry Plantation in the Council as recreation reserves. Moreover, based on the works in hand to finish the park, he was willing to sweeten the deal with a £200 annual grant for upkeep of both sites. The Council was willing to take the £200 but by February of the following year, had decided to spend the money on the new Recreation Ground (later known

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62 5 September 1878, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 527 (1878 - 1883), Subject 301, SROWA).
63 Surveyor General, 24 May 1878, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 899, SROWA).
as the Esplanade) being formed from the submerged land at the foot of Barrack St. In a minute of March 1879, the Council resolved that expenditure on the Mulberry plantation and Victoria Park:

would not at the present time conduce to the benefit of the City or the comfort or the enjoyment of the Citizens. But that were such money expended in levelling the ground known as the new recreation ground, … in conveying and placing soil upon the shell and planting couch grass, a Recreation Ground would be formed available for all purposes of amusement and easily accessible to the majority of the Citizens….  

However, a resolution to approach the Governor to see if the first grant of £200 could be put towards the recreation ground instead generated considerable debate, rather than agreement and the meeting was adjourned. A fortnight later the Council had still received no definite word from the Governor about the vesting of the land, and the motion to redirect the funding to the new Recreation Ground was withdrawn. It was another month before the offer of transfer was formally received and by that stage some of the Councillors had developed cold feet about the whole project. Would they receive sufficient funding to offset the cost of maintaining the land? Was it really their job to provide and maintain recreation grounds, at the cost of road maintenance? Councillor Smith had the answer:

[He] considered this a very handsome offer on the part of the Government, and one he never thought they would have made. He deemed the mulberry plantation a most valuable gift, and one which would eventually be a source of great profit to the city. He considered that he was not elected merely to make roads and pathways and drains, but to promote the general wealth, health and recreation of the citizens…

Councillor Stone agreed.

The transfer of Common Lands, attached to the City, followed in May 1879 but by November 1879 the Council had yet to receive the fees simple for the

\[64] 'Minutes 1887 - 1892', City of Perth, Minutes - Council (Cons. 2826, Vol. 6, SROWA).

\[65] 'PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)'. 
recreation land. They had already invested in mulberries and other trees for street trees and the new recreation reserve, but were unable to effectively prevent cattle from trespassing on Victoria Park, as they were not the owners of the land. More, they were receiving requests from one of the Cricket Clubs and the Perth Yacht Club for certain improvements to be made on the new Recreation Ground, but they were uncertain what the fees simple would allow them to do.

*Whose recreation reserve is it anyway?*

Although both the new and old recreation grounds, the Esplanade and the Cricket Ground, were all public spaces, controlled by either the Council or the Colonial Government, this was not always evident to those seeking to use the spaces. The cricket club had after all, invested considerable time, money and resources in ensuring that the cricket ground was fenced and clayed, and had continued to lobby the Council to ensure that access through the town via clayed footpaths rather than sand was provided. This was exemplified in a letter to the Council from a resident, G.A. Letch, read at a meeting on 7 March, 1873, ‘enquiring if the Recreation Ground [sited near the Causeway] was open to the public generally as a place to play or belonged exclusively to the Perth Cricket Club.’

The question had arisen due to a large hole that appeared in the grounds, the result of a well being dug by the Perth Cricket Club. The Council agreed that the hole was dangerous, and needed to be either filled in or completed. The question was, who would complete the well? If the Cricket Club, would that give them additional rights of access to the ground, or preferential treatment, to the detriment of another cricket club, and the population at large? It was proposed that the Council contribute to the costs, as

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67 5 and 8 March 1879, Ibid.

68 ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)’.
the improvement of the ground would benefit all, and that they ‘frame certain Rules and Regulations for the guidance of the Clubs so as to prevent either jealousy or misunderstanding for the future.’

Other problems plagued the recreation ground, which was all too clearly far more accessible than other public spaces. The recreation ground was unfenced, in marked contrast to the Government Gardens, which were not only fenced, but also locked at night. Mr Randell, who had proposed the rules and regulations, was clearly concerned to ensure control of the ground, and in 1873, proposed a row of poles be placed along the boundary of the ground to protect the ground, ‘which was being cut up by equestrians exercising their horses upon it.’

The 1873 Council was also concerned that the heritage of the site and the colony be respected and refused a request from the Volunteers, who were now using the ground for a parade ground, to remove a sheoak tree. The tree, certain councillors protested, ‘was not in the way, moreover it reminded them of the early history of the colony when it was the favourite landing place for the Old Settlers upwards of 40 years ago and the Council resolved to spare the tree.’

Two years later, the tree was removed, Councils being fickle things, and at the mercy of the elected members. The case of the tree indicates how quickly the fate of public spaces could change with the change of councillors.

The Volunteers were not just present in the new Recreation Grounds. Since 1863, the Band had performed in the Government Gardens, raising money for uniforms and equipment by playing popular pieces in the summer months. In addition to a Parade Ground, they requested a Drill Hall and, in July 1875, requested that one be included in the Government Gardens. The Governor of the day, Robinson, was amenable to the suggestion, but the

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69 18 April 1874, Ibid
70 'PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 3, SROWA)'.
71 7 November 1873, Ibid.
Council was concerned about the location, and felt that they could perhaps kill two birds with one stone. The Horticultural Society, which had been seeking assistance in obtaining a regular space for its annual flower shows, could provide £25 towards the building, provided it was suitable for holding their shows, and the Volunteers would pay £10 per annum for its use…

Frugal as always, the Council and the Government were keen for multiple, although sometimes mutually exclusive, uses of a single site to develop.

It was this frugality which guided the Council in the late 1870s when the question of use of the soon to be vested lands was raised. Keen though the Perth Cricket Club was to assert its claims to the new Recreation Ground, the Council had to bear in mind the needs of the other Cricket Clubs, and of other recreational associations and activities. The Commissioner of Crown Lands may have assured them that they might think of themselves ‘as already being in possession’ of the sought reserves, but without the fees simple in their hands, the Council was reluctant to act. And their hesitation proved valid. When they were finally received, in April of 1880, after close examination it was found that the Council ‘had no power to grant any portion of the Recreation Ground for the Exclusive use of the Club…’, and both the Cricket Club and Yacht Club were written to and advised of the same.

Governor Ord left in April 1880, having followed through with Robinson’s original generous offer vis à vis Victoria Park. By handing it over to the Municipal authorities Ord preceded its English counterpart by a decade in moving it from Crown to Municipal control. In the illuminated address delivered to him on his departure the Council thanked him:

most heartily for the great boon which you have afforded to the citizens in making over in fee simple for ever, more than 60 acres of valuable land, for their health, recreation and amusement. These pieces comprise the Victoria Park, the mulberry plantation, and the

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
cricket ground – all valuable for the special purposes originally intended. The piece of reclaimed cricket ground, of about 15 acres, by the river side is so centrally and pleasantly situated as certainly to be deserving of improvement by such means as planting trees etc, and we hope here long to see it an ornament to the city, as well as a suitable place for general recreation…

The majority of sites of the current major parks and reserves of the City had been set aside as reserves by 1872 for a variety of different purposes, including the health of the city through drainage and water reserves, the mental and physical health of the population through recreation, and for the economic development of the colony. In developing these reserves ideas about the role of economic botany had been overlain by ideas about the role of botanic and landscape gardens in creating a morally and socially improving urban environment. The Colonial government’s concern for the economic development of Western Australia had been, in part, given over to the City to assuage their concerns about lack of recreational opportunities to counter the alcoholism and larrikinism endemic in the city.

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74 Newspaper report, laid on the table of the Perth City Council, 1 April 1880. 'PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)'.

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Chapter 5 - Civil Nature

With the transfer of the Mulberry Plantation, Victoria Park and associated reserves to the City Council, Perth’s reserves were now split in two, with approximately half in the City’s hands and the other half, including the fully planted Government Gardens, and the undeveloped, bush spaces of Mt Eliza, Russell and Weld Squares, in the Colonial Government fold. While the bush was acceptable (even approved of) surrounding the city: within its borders this was not the case. Within the city, nature was controlled, ordered and regulated, much as the citizens were supposed to be. It was both useful and ornamental, hardworking and refined: nurturing rather than natural. The development of recreation grounds, suitable for activities such as cricket and football, and for Military Volunteers who would defend the Empire, provided a structured environment for the development of useful, team playing citizens who understood their roles. Botanic gardens and landscape parks provided aesthetic and scientific education, and through the influence and implementation of regulations, created an homogenizing, even improving set of standards for decent dress and behaviour.

This chapter further discusses the development of the recreation ground in Western Australia, as a tool for civilization, and of attempts to establish a botanic garden for economic botany. A third paradigm, that of the landscape garden, also associated with moral and social improvement, was becoming increasingly influential, in line with trends in America, Britain and Australia, and the first attempts to introduce this style of park into Western Australia are discussed at the end of the chapter.
Creating the civilised city

Ex–policeman, and Inspector of Nuisances, William Dale, had believed that the key recreational space for the city would become Victoria Park, writing in May 1878, some time prior to the handover to the City Council, that:

The Park is likely to become popular with the Citizens, being easily approached both by the River and by the Road and when the trees that are now planted (many of which are very valuable) grow up it will afford a cool and pleasant retreat in Summer.¹

Dale also foresaw the Gardens obtaining a prominent role in the outdoor lifestyle that was to become, in the late twentieth century, a cornerstone of Perth’s cultural development – ‘It is also admirably adapted for Sunday School picnics and all other outdoor amusements’.²

The transfer to the council had not been made without some concern in the administrative echelons of the Colonial Government. The Council’s attempt to transfer the £200 promised for Victoria Park to the recreation ground had caused a warning to be issued that the transfer was made on the basis that the grounds were to be ‘well kept up in a proper manner and in an orderly condition…’³ The Council had been forced to defend their intentions for the land, asserting that ‘the Councillors, one and all, disclaim the remotest idea of selling or disposing of these lands’.⁴ Even the transfer of the new recreation ground had raised concern, with the Crown Commissioner for Lands and Surveyor General, Malcolm Fraser, warning that, ‘on no account should this be alienated as it is impossible to say now for what purposes the reclaimed land may in the future be required for.’⁵ This concern over the appropriate use of the land, and the concern that the Council might sell off the land or use it

¹ Dale, ‘Col. Sec. (Cons. 36, vol. 899, SROWA)’.
² Ibid.
³ ‘Lands (Cons. 5000, file 39/4, SROWA)’.
⁴ ‘Lands (Cons. 5000, file 39/4, SROWA)’.
⁵ Ibid.
inappropriately, extended to concerns that in reserving the land for the ‘amusement and recreation’ of the population, the emphasis would be on amusement.

Amusement in this case meant something along the lines of the Pleasure Grounds of London’s Cremorne and Vauxhall Gardens. In New York, German style Beer gardens and other entertainments had fulfilled similar roles, while Terence Young has described how such gardens met the recreational needs of San Franciscans, prior to the development of Golden Gate Park. These gardens had included entertainments such as balls, mazes, dining pavilions, carousels and other amusements, as well as the restorative exposure to nature so sought by Victorian moral reformers. Yet these parks had always been balanced delicately as being approved and frivolous, or immoral and licentious. Approved by day they had, by the mid 1800s, obtained reputations for vice and immoral conduct during the night hours. Vauxhall Gardens, dating from 1661, had closed in 1859, while the far more recent Cremorne Gardens enjoyed a brief but dazzling run between 1843 and 1877. An attempt by ex-convict, Thomas ‘Satan’ Browne (so named for his eyebrows, rather than his crime), to develop a pleasure garden on the foreshore opposite the city, in South Perth, was greeted less than enthusiastically by Perth’s moral hegemony. The death of two young Volunteers, who drowned while returning from the Gardens, also did nothing to improve the way in which the Gardens were regarded. The concern was that the frivolous nature of such parks would not counter or ameliorate the licentiousness and larrkinism they saw in Perth society, but

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8 Conway, *People's parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain.*

rather encourage it. The transfer of Victoria Park to the Council raised similar concerns.

Anxious to prove that the Victoria Park would meet the civilizing needs of the city, and that the physical improvements carried out by the Colonial Government before the transfer would be maintained, the Perth City Council resolved that one of the first things they would need would be a caretaker for the Park. They also decided on Park Rangers:

(say one member of Council from each ward) in whom these lands for the time being might be vested and controlled. They would then report from time to time, any necessary repairs and improvements which they might deem desirable.¹⁰

Four such rangers were appointed, the cottage at Victoria Park was repaired and occupied rent-free by Council labourer, Mr Harries, and the buildings at Claisebrook rented to a Mr Bunny. In addition to taking on the reserves and ensuring their maintenance, the Council undertook its now regular program of street planting, using trees from the Mulberry Plantation, and others provided by Mr Polak from the Government Gardens. Polak also provided trees and landscaping expertise for the beautification of the Recreation Ground. The civilized city was at last underway.

Making a civilized city was not inexpensive. From Drummond’s nursery garden to Victoria Park, Western Australia had never really expended much money on the development of recreation grounds. Drummond’s ‘most desirable’ gardens had been largely created with assistance from the military accompanying the original colonial settlement, with casual labourers earning between 2/6 and 5/6 per day.¹¹ The Government Gardens had quickly been placed in private hands through the lease to Henry Laroche Cole, and had then been maintained with convict labour and funds. The Mulberry Plantation and

¹⁰ 16 July 1880, 'PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)'.
¹¹ ‘Cash Accounts’, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence received (Cons. 36, Vol. 882, SROWA).
Victoria Park too, had been created with minimal funds and labour provided by prisoners and paupers. Even the new Recreation Ground, between the jetties, was created using fill obtained from the dredges that were providing navigable channels through the shallow waters of the Swan River. The most generous offer to date had been the £200 for finalising Victoria Park. The Council now proposed to raise a loan of £6,000 of which £5,000 would be spent on streets and associated works, and £1,000 on the Recreation Ground. It was, perhaps, too much. There was immediate opposition from within Council, with one councillor, Mr Vincent, objecting that the Recreation Ground had no ‘reproductive’ potential – it was not capable of raising revenue. Councillor Stone, in a tradition going back to the development of Regent’s Park in London, countered by arguing that:

> once this ground was put in order and became a place of public resort, a large number of residences would be erected in the neighbourhood, the assessments upon which would increase the revenue of the municipality.

In a repeat of the 1878 debate about the expenditure and the role of the Council in providing recreation versus streets and sewers, discussed previously, streets were now espoused as proving the civilized nature of the city. Stone and Smith stood firm for the Council’s role in providing recreation space. Smith reiterated his sentiments of the previous debate, saying:

> I consider that the proposed expenditure upon this ground would be among the most desirable and praiseworthy things we could do, affording as it would, a means of healthful recreation for the citizens, for all time…

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12 1 October 1880, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)’.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid. Stone’s vision would not be fully realised until the Recreation Ground had essentially disappeared and a new development at East Perth was commenced in the 1990s.
15 Ibid.
16 3 December 1880, Ibid.
Smith’s rhetoric notwithstanding, the Council’s December estimates for the following year showed that without the loan there would be no additional expenditure on the Recreation Ground other than the Government’s £200 grant, and £50 for the remainder of the reserves and gardens. The moral argument was not enough. Park proponents turned now, not to the moral health of the city, but its physical health. Councillor Richard Roach Jewell, also Government Superintendent of Works and a talented architect, advised the Council that the park represented a sanitary risk, possibly because of a well nearby, or simply because, as lowlying land, it was often inundated or swampy. Councillor Scott attempted to link the two, saying that the current condition of the ground was:

positively calculated to engender disease, and in order to render it innocuous, and at the same time afford the citizens a healthful means of recreation it was proposed to spend £1000 on improving it...\(^\text{17}\)

Some doubt was expressed at how suddenly the ground had become a health risk, but Scott, himself a medical officer, quickly responded by pointing to the earlier, 1870s, health reports written by Dr Shaw, and more recently by himself and Dr Waylen. By March 1881, the City Surveyor was asked to prepare plans and specifications for the proposed improvements, and tenders called for in early April. No tenders were received. The matter was again raised in June 1881, and further tenders called for. The council had received one offer from ‘Satan’ Browne, which was not proceeded with, and the matter was becoming increasingly urgent. Finally, a contractor named Elsegood was appointed, and work commenced on filling and flattening the recreation ground, but at a cost of considerably less than £1000.

At the same time the new Recreation Ground was getting increased attention, and was viewed as a suitable venue for a wide variety of purposes. Messers Joubert and Twopenny, for example, approached the Council in

\(^{17}\) 14 December 1880, Ibid.
October 1881, to ask for permission to use the ground for a Colonial Exhibition. 18 Western Australia had been involved in several international and intercolonial exhibitions, most recently in Melbourne, and they were perceived as a valid way of promoting the colony and its products. The council was in two minds about the question. One side, believing that the Exhibition would bring economic investment to the city and its surrounds, was happy for the exhibition to proceed, provided the exhibition organizers restored the ground following its use, and carried insurance. The other side was concerned that such a use would, like the exclusive application of the Cricket Clubs, deny citizens a right of entry to grounds set aside for their recreation. 19 Joubert and Twopenny’s application had once more raised concerns about public right of access to recreation grounds.

It was a concern that was to continue to plague the Council. In addition to the Exhibition idea at the new Recreation Reserve, the Cricket Clubs, the Horticultural Society and the Turf Club were to be joined by the Football Association and the Western Australian Athletics Club in seeking specific land that could be set aside to meet the needs of their members. Applications were also received from local residents, including dairymen, to allow their cattle to graze the grounds. Cattle, like sheep, would keep the grass cropped and provide manure for fertilizer. 20 Already the Police Horses were providing manure for the Government Gardens, and the Council needed access to similar

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18 The exhibition, based largely on exhibitors from Adelaide, ran from November 1881 to January 1882.
19 31 October 1881, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)’.
20 Although Mr Budding had patented his lawn mower in 1830, the year after the colony’s foundation, the machine was heavy and expensive. Cows, or preferably sheep, ‘fleecy foragers’, were a more common mode of grass maintenance. Turf was often scythed and then swept, a labour intensive task. Tom Fort, The grass is greener: our love affair with the lawn (London: Harper Collins, 2001). Even in the 1930s, sheep were still being considered to maintain the lawns at the University of Western Australia, and the central cricket oval was smoothed by a horse drawn roller. George Seddon and Gillian Lilleyman, A landscape for learning: a history of the grounds of the University of Western Australia (Perth, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2006).
inexpensive sources. In order to be seen as even handed, this at least could be placed out to tender, although a few months later, the potential public danger saw the rejection of a further application to graze cows on the Cricket Ground.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Healthy bodies and civilised minds}

Keeping a healthy body was becoming easier, although the stresses of managing the competing demands of the various clubs, and the general population were not so easily dealt with. A request by the Western Australian Athletics Club to rent the Recreation Ground for their annual athletics carnival, and to charge an entry fee, once more opened the debate about public rights of access to the ground.\textsuperscript{22} As the Council had determined three years earlier, they could not vest the land in any one association, but a short-term lease or rental agreement seemed feasible. Councillor Osborne objected that this would, even for one day, deny the public rights of access to the ground free of charge. After much debate, including a motion that the Athletics Club be not allowed to charge a fee, the council agreed to allow the rent, and the entrance fee. The conditions were that the Council would itself receive 25\% of the takings, and that the fees be limited to sixpence per adult and half price for children under twelve.\textsuperscript{23}

The following month the Yacht Club also applied for the new recreation ground, on the same principle as the athletics day, for its annual Regatta. Again, entrance fees were problematic for the councillors; compounded by a concern that refreshment and other booths would be allowed on the ground.\textsuperscript{24} Within a few months, the Council was again accepting an application from the

\textsuperscript{21} 6 July 1883, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)’.
\textsuperscript{22} 5 October 1883, ‘Minutes 1883 - 1887’, City of Perth, Minutes - Council (Cons. 2826, Vol. 5, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{23} 10 October 1883, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} 2 November 1883, Ibid.
Metropolitan Cricket Club, to charge an entry fee ‘in the event of the Albany Cricket Club coming up to play a match….’

Possibly the Council had approved this latter request because they had only just voted against a far more ambitious proposal from the same club. In this earlier request, the Metropolitan Cricket Club had applied for permission to lease a portion of the new Recreation Ground for their use for three years, ‘to have a good cricket pitch for cricketing purposes for the club and exclusive right to same….’ They had attempted to soften the impact of their request by saying that they would allow other groups and the general public to use the area, if it did not injure the pitch. The councillors had again been divided, with Councillors Burt and Sholl apparently seeing the benefit of the maintenance of the ground being carried out by the club. The final vote had been 3 to 7 against the motion, with the majority of councillors clearly agreeing with the ubiquitous Councillor Smith that this would shut out the public. A similar request for the old recreation ground met with a similar response.

At an annual meeting of ratepayers a year later, the matter was clearly still not resolved; ‘Mr Joseph Hillman asked whether the Council had power to grant the use of the Recreation Ground to any club or society.’ The matter was to be debated in parliament.

Not only the new Recreation Ground, but other Council controlled reserves were also targeted by the acquisitive associations. The Turf Club sought permission to ‘clear portions of the Cricket Ground and to lay down a track of the same with sawdust in order to allow owners of horses to exercise them thereon…’ The damage caused by horses being exercised on the old Recreation Ground had previously concerned the Council, and this seemed to

25 7 March 1884, Ibid.
26 7 November 1883, Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Annual Ratepayers meeting, Tuesday 11 November 1884, Ibid.
29 10 July 1885, Ibid.
be a way of ameliorating the damage. The Cricket Clubs had also renewed their requests for land to be allocated to their exclusive use and, in November 1885, the Mayor recommended setting aside of a portion of the recreation ground for their use. A special meeting was called, and a subcommittee to consider the matter appointed.

At the special meeting held to discuss the Cricket Clubs’ request, the Mayor advised there might be a legal option that would allow the Council to lease the land for an exclusive purpose. However, he also read a letter from the Secretary of the Football Association, expressing the concerns of the Association at the potential loss of access to the ground. The committee therefore decided that the lease could go ahead, with provision in the rules of the lease to allow alternative uses.\textsuperscript{30}

With a portion of the Recreation Ground set aside at last, the Cricket Association wasted no time in asking for a concrete pitch to be installed on the leased land. The Football Association responded almost as swiftly, claiming the new pitch would be dangerous, and interfere with football. The Council agreed and a new removable pitch was agreed to. At the same time, the Turf Club was advised that as they had the majority of use of the old Recreation Ground it was up to them to clear it of weeds, and six months later were granted exclusive use of the track at the grounds.

The establishment of a Bathing House nearby further enhanced the new Recreation Ground, although the lack of clothing and larrikin behaviour of young men enjoying the facility was cause for concern.\textsuperscript{31} Curiously, in providing a physical outlet for the young men of the town in which cleanliness was a goal, standards of morality and decency, rather than being reinforced as Charles Kingsley and other moralists might have argued, were now at risk. Accordingly, the Council formed a sub-committee to determine suitable rules and regulations.

\textsuperscript{30} 25 November 1885, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} 18 February 1884, 5 December 1884, Ibid.
for the Bathing House. A day was set aside exclusively for women, no bathing was to take place on Sundays between 8am and 7pm, and bathing drawers were to be worn. Thirty-two Twenty years later, in 1902, Sydney would also attempt to restrict nude bathing through the introduction of a bath house, with separate times for women. Thirty-three Where the introduction of special times for women was seen as preserving modesty in Western Australia, Ian Hoskins has argued that Sydney was more concerned with expanding its clientele.

Following the success of the Bathing House, the Council contemplated the construction of a Gymnasium. Tenders were called, but they exceeded the £20 the Council thought such a facility would be worth, and the Council’s Supervisor of Works was instructed to do what he could with the resources to hand. Thirty-four With these facilities the physical recreational needs and wants of the community seemed well on the way to being met.

Figure 13: Perth foreshore from the Weld Club. Jubilee celebrations, 1887
Source: Malcolm Uren collection (BA116/57, Battye Library)

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32 Ibid.
33 Hoskins, *Cultivating the citizen*, pp. 56 - 57.
34 ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 5, SROWA)’.
The popularity of the new Recreation Ground showed that the foresight of earlier Government administrations was at last being borne out. The ground was closer to the centre of the town and, as predicted, more accessible. Moreover, its proximity to the river and lack of expensive horticultural embellishments leant itself to a range of activities such as the Regatta Day celebrations. The military band too, had asked that they be allowed to play on the new Recreation Ground, as the Government Gardens were to be shut up at night, and to charge a fee.

The Band had previously been granted the right to raise a small subscription fee when playing in the Government Gardens, where they had played in the summer months since 1863. Their first appearance had been greeted warmly, although some concern had been expressed that ‘some little unsteadiness might have been anticipated on the part of the juveniles, but order was effectually kept by the police, and all passed off well.’

Each year that the Band applied for permission to play in the park it was granted, despite concerns that the crowds and dancing might lead to damaged plants. The failure of the band to appear in December, 1869, was noted by Ophelia who wondered if a subscription for the Band would be in order. The band returned to the Government Gardens in 1871, and again the question of a subscription was raised, as well as that of a suitable performance space, such as a bandstand or pavilion.

The band’s performances, which included a selection of popular music, attracted a crowd ‘which was more numerous, than select, and which was confined rather to the multitude than to the more aristocratic and fashionable…’ The lack of refinement in the crowd caused concerns that larrikins and juveniles, climbing trees for a better view, would damage the trees and that other members of the crowd, ‘enjoying that recreation “after labour”’

37 'Local News', *The Inquirer*, 1 February 1871.
38 *Perth Gazette*, 24 November 1871
might vandalise the park.\textsuperscript{39} In the following decade the Band continued its annual performance, even when the Volunteers were disbanded due to lack of suitable officers, with permission from the various Governors. When the Volunteers were unable to play in 1877, due to a lack of instruments, the local Good Templar Band played instead.

The application of the Volunteer Band to charge a fee on the Recreation Ground was agreed to, although the Mayor, George Randell, had proposed instead that the Council provide them with a subscription. The Band played for three months on the Green, as it was also known, and the question of a suitable venue was again raised. It was proposed that by a combination of Council funding and public subscription that facilities to further improve the Recreation Ground be provided, through the erection of a pavilion.\textsuperscript{40} Although some difficulty was experienced with the public subscription (only £70 was raised, and was not handed over in a timely manner) the new pavilion was in place by March 1885. With this facility the ground would be well suited to its purpose as a place of physical and musical recreation.

\textbf{Government gardening}

There was a continuing concern that the educational and economic benefits that could be provided by something like a botanic garden were still lacking. The Government Gardens, under the supervision of William Dale, and maintained by the convict Enoch Barrett were, by the mid 1870s, examples of the gardenesque style, with ornamental beds and walks (see figs.14 and 15). Barrett also took on responsibility for Victoria Park, where the ‘competent gardener’, J.L. Burns, had been disgraced in 1880, and Joseph Polak was appointed as acting gardener to take over the Government Gardens. Polak, described as an ‘ornamental gardener’, was also keen to develop his economic

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid; \textit{Orpheus, The Inquirer}, 30 October 1871.
\textsuperscript{40} ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 5, SROWA)’. 
botany skills and applied in August 1880 for permission to act as a seed collector.\textsuperscript{41} Where Hooker may have had some concerns about the role of convicts in Botanic Gardens, Polak’s relationship with Barrett appears to have been good, as he arranged with Barrett to substitute for him while on collecting duties, ‘if approved’.\textsuperscript{42} The role of the gardens as a centre of plant exchange continued in a cursory manner, with other Colonial governments both in Australia and elsewhere requesting and sending seeds and plants for acclimatisation.\textsuperscript{43} However, the main role of the gardens was as an ornament to the city.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Public_gardens_surveyed_1878.png}
\caption{Public gardens, surveyed 1878.}
\label{fig:public_gardens}
\end{figure}

\footnotesize
\textbf{Source:} Public Works Department (Cons. 1647, item 56, SROWA)

\textsuperscript{41} 6 August 1880, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 4, SROWA)’.
\textsuperscript{42} ‘Government Gardens’, Colonial Secretary’s Office, \textit{Correspondence} (Cons. 527 (1878 - 1883), Subject 471, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
Polak’s reign was shortlived. He had continually asked for his appointment, and his salary, to be confirmed. As a new broom, he had already identified the need for a glasshouse, to protect various seedlings. The cost of the glasshouse had been estimated at £70. His request had been forward to William Dale, and £100 had been placed on the estimates for ‘acclimatization’ and £50 for the Government Gardens. Polak himself was allowed to live in temporary quarters in the Supreme Court and when, in June 1881, he was asked to leave the quarters, Dale had recommended that he receive a lodging allowance until suitable quarters had been built. Less than a month later, on 14 July 1881, Polak was dismissed, ‘for no fault, but with a view to reduction of establishment.’44 The cost of civilized nature was beginning to tell.

Polak had been the victim of a commission into Government expenditure, which had expressly inquired into the financing of both the Government Gardens and the Government Domain.45 In his evidence to the Commission Polak had advised that he felt that he had not enough to do in the gardens. Given his activities laying out recreation grounds, collecting seeds and raising street trees, Polak was either a man not afraid of hard work, or someone who saw an opportunity to improve his lot. If the latter, he failed. The Commission itself was happy to appoint Polak to administer to both the Government Gardens and the Domain, at a salary of £100 per annum and ‘with the lodgings at present occupied by the Caretaker Government Domain.’46 The Governor, William Robinson (who had returned for a second term), was less amenable:

I am not prepared to appoint the present Gardener of the Public Gardens to be also Caretaker of the Government Domain. Mr Polak appears to have stated that, as Head Gardener, he has not enough to do, but it does not follow that he would be qualified for the peculiar

44 Ibid.
45 ‘Finance Commission’, 19 January 1881, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence (Cons. 527 (1878 - 1883), Subject 1377, SROWA).
46 Ibid.
duties of Caretaker, for which as a matter of fact, I do not consider him qualified…⁴⁷

Rather than appoint Polak, the Governor’s choice, Mr Hall, caretaker of the Government Domain, was appointed. Robinson, as a later minute makes clear, was unimpressed by the parsimony of the Legislative Council inspired Commission, and may have worked to ensure that the proposed savings would have to be reassessed at a later date.

Within a year the state of the Government Gardens had deteriorated. William Dale, still nominally in charge, took with him George Phillips, a member of the Colonial Government and like Dale a keen horticulturist, to view the Gardens and report on their condition. Phillips, who had previously acted as Colonial Secretary and Colonial Treasurer, and who enjoyed the post of Chief Clerk, ‘observed with regret the generally neglected state of the flower beds, and potted plants and shrubs…’, and offered to remove some of the more choice specimens in an endeavour to preserve them.⁴⁸

Robinson agreed to the removal, but in a stinging minute to the Colonial Secretary, Baron Lord Gifford, wrote:

This is exactly what I expected would be the case. It is quite certain that prisoners will never keep the public gardens in decent order until someone is placed in charge of them who can give more time to the work that Hall can. Hall, as I intimated in my minute on that report of the Commission, has quite as much to do as he can manage at Government House, and I am not at all prepared to let the work there go to the wall for the sake of the public garden which ought to be maintained separately at public expense… [T]he failure of the present arrangement will have to be mentioned at the Legislative Council and a salary provided for a gardener, who will really take an interest in the place…⁴⁹

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⁴⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁸ Colonial Secretary's Office, Correspondence (Cons. 527 (1878 - 1883), Subject 1486, SROWA).
⁴⁹ Ibid.
In the Legislative Assembly in August 1883, George Randell, Councillor and one time Mayor of Perth, took up the matter. Once more raising the question of a Botanic Garden, Randell said, with rhetoric familiar from that of *Flora Australis* a decade earlier:

In all the Australian colonies, except this, efforts were being made, by the establishment of botanical gardens and other means, to introduce, and distribute to those who apply for them, such foreign productions as were likely to flourish in colonial soil: and they all knew how much these gardens enhanced the attractiveness of the towns and cities where they were established, and at the same time contributed to the enjoyment of the inhabitants. Anything which tended to render the city of Perth more attractive in this way he felt to be a question of colonial or national concern…  

Randell’s plea for an attractive national or colonial city, contributing to the economic and recreational health of its inhabitants, struck a chord with his fellow legislators and the sum of £200 was placed on the estimates for the purposes of acclimatization. A new Governor, Frederick Napier Broome, was keen that the money be spent appropriately, and appointed a small committee to determine the best way of spending it.  

Dr Alfred Waylen, President of the Horticultural Society, and a keen acclimatiser, headed the Committee. During the colony’s brief experiment with sericulture Waylen had taken several thousand mulberry trees to grow at his property. Waylen was assisted by George Randell, who had first called for the botanic garden, and by George Phillips who had rescued the wretched plants from the Government Gardens nearly two years earlier.

Unsurprisingly, given the nature of the Committee, they recommended that:

owing to the small sum voted it would not be advisable to open up new ground for the formation of a Botanical Garden, but that the

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50 Parliament of Western Australia, 'Western Australian Parliamentary Debates’, ed. Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly (Perth, Western Australia: Government Printer).
51 ‘Acclimatisation of plants - Committee to consider question of,’ Colonial Secretary’s Office, *Subject files* (Cons. 527, 1884/948, SROWA).
Grounds known as the Public Gardens should be again brought under cultivation, with the addition of a glasshouse, and other improvements, without which it would be futile to introduce or attempt to propagate new or rare plants.\textsuperscript{52}

Polak and Dale were vindicated.

The role of the gardens as a centre of botanic exchange and economic botany were once more viewed as a key component of its function, linking the gardens to other centres of botanic exchange and botanic science. The gardens would need an experienced nursery gardener, ‘able to put up specimens of Horticulture for exchange with other parts of the world’, under the supervision of a committee. The gardener would need to ‘reside on the spot’.\textsuperscript{53}

Of the £200 on the estimates, £150 would be spent on the glasshouse, and £50 on shrubs and trees. An additional amount would have to be placed on the vote for the immediate employment of a gardener.

The proposal met with muted enthusiasm on the part of the Colonial Secretary, now Malcom Fraser, previously the Surveyor General, who recommended that:

There should be a large sum asked for and the people’s little garden may be made to adorn the City of Perth…. The time for immediate action has arrived. A few weeks and the winter’s rains will set in….\textsuperscript{54}

Broome responded, asking, ‘Should not an Act be formed vesting ‘the people’s little garden’ in trustees, who could manage it properly and have due control?\textsuperscript{55} A cogent question, given that the only real basis under which land could be reserved was for public purposes, much as had been the case under the original 1826 Instructions.

In addition to its rediscovered role of economic botany, the gardens would have a role as a civilizing and educating force, although this was framed as a

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
matter of protecting the Legislative Council’s investment as well as an act of social improvement, and requiring definitive rules, rather than relying solely on observational education - 'For the proper upkeep of the Gardens rules would have to be formed to regulate the admission of the public…' \(^{56}\) Peter Bailey has argued that recreational reformers ‘rejected the osmosis of example setting and adopted an autocratic manner’ wanting to control and regulate recreation and leisure, more and more strongly from the 1860s onward. \(^{57}\) Certainly, the behavioural model had not been as successful as idealists would have hoped. Bailey and Wyborn suggest that this is the result of class tension, and a rejection of bourgeois and middle class values by the working classes, although Wyborn has also noted that the instructive art included in the parks of Manchester needed to be in forms already understood and accessible by those at whom it was aimed. \(^{58}\)

From deciding how the money was to be spent, the Committee of Inquiry soon found themselves the *de facto* Garden Committee in practice, and as Fraser had recommended, lost no time in advertising for suitable gardeners. Demonstrating that Western Australia was not without horticultural expertise, at least seven applicants applied for the new post of Government Gardener. Enoch Barratt had left the colony in 1881, returning some time later to assist his son William develop a commercial nursery on the outskirts of town, but Joseph Polak applied, as did Thomas Hall. At least two of the applicants cited George Shenton as an employer, son of the pharmacist and himself a keen horticulturist, demonstrating the esteem in which his gardens were held, while others had experience in other colonies, including India. \(^{59}\) The successful

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\(^{56}\) Ibid.


\(^{58}\) Ibid; Wyborn, ‘Nothing better than the dirt and dust of streets and highways’: the making of Manchester’s first public parks, 1833 - 1865.

\(^{59}\) George Shenton, the pharmacist, died in 1867. His son, also George and later Sir George, inherited Shenton’s pastoral and mining interests, and became an active member of the Perth
applicant, Isaac Huddart, had experience in Victoria including laying out the new
cemetery in Ballarat, and may well have worked with William Guilfoyle, or
Western Australia’s favourite, Ferdinand von Mueller.60

Figure 15: Swan River and the foreshore c. 1880. The Government Gardens, showing
their gardenesque design, are in the centre of the photograph, while the eagerly sought
after new Recreation Ground is seen to the right. Evidence that reclamation was
continuing can be seen in the central midground, behind the Supreme Court.
Source: Unknown photographer. Malcolm Uren collection. (BA1116/56, Battye Library)

Had Huddart remained at the gardens there may well have been some
interesting developments in the layout of the gardens, and possibly with other
gardens in the area. Unfortunately, his health quickly declined in the quarters
he was given at the Public Offices, which themselves took up one quarter of the

City Council, and later the Legislative Council, where he was President between 1892 and
1906. Sir George owned, and maintained, an extensive property in Crawley, which was
eventually the site of the University of Western Australia.
60 ’Col. Sec. (Cons. 527, 1884/948, SROWA)’.
gardens. The room was ‘low and ill-ventilated’ and was used for not only planting and propagating duties, but also as ‘a cooking, living and sleeping room.’

Huddart resigned due to ill health in January 1886. The search turned immediately to a suitable replacement, and the Committee, clearly aware of the rising esteem in which the Melbourne Gardens were being held, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, saying:

there is not a fitting man in the Colony to fill Mr Huddart’s place, and would ask you to be good enough to telegraph to the Curator of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens – Mr Guilfoyle – relative to an intelligent middle aged undergardener, who should have a knowledge of floriculture and propagation of plants…'

Joseph Polak and Joshua Chambers, two local gardeners, also applied. It is not known if Guilfoyle replied, but Chambers was soon appointed to the job. The salary was seven shillings a day, with £36 lodging allowance, the increase having been agreed to when it was thought that they would need to attract a gardener from Melbourne. Chambers was to be assisted by John Watts, who may already have been working in the garden, as he was given an extra shilling a day between the time of Huddart’s resignation and Chamber’s appointment.

Prison labour was also expected to be a major resource for the garden. Funding was increased in 1885, because of a lack of prison labour (Mr Lee Steere saying in the Legislative Council that the lack of labour was due to a lack of drunks in the colony!). The tension between the Government Gardens and the Government Domain due to their close location and competition for funding, which had led to the original running down of the Government Gardens, continued to be evident in debates about expenditure on both, and even in the distribution of the manure from the Police Horses. Previously, the manure had been solely for the Governor’s garden, and it required the Governor’s

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAPD', 5 August 1885.
64 Colonial Secretary's Office, Unregistered correspondence (Cons. 1816, 1887/407, SROWA).
intervention to get one load in three for the Government Gardens. In addition, in late 1884 the Governor had taken £40 from the estimate for the Government Gardens for the upkeep of the Government Domain.\textsuperscript{65}

Not only did the Committee have difficulty in retaining and housing a gardener and in maintaining funding, but their lack of proper authority particularly when it came to framing rules for the gardens also became a problem. As Broome had noted, an Act was required to give the committee or Board of Trustees control over the Gardens. The Committee had carefully scrutinised the Victorian 1869 Land Act, which was the relevant legislation for the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and Fitzroy Gardens, and the rules of the South Australian Botanic Garden, framed under that colony’s Botanic Gardens Act, No. 8 of 1863.\textsuperscript{66} Both sets of rules provided for hours of opening, forbade treading in the flower beds or destroying the plants, required dogs to be banned and children to be accompanied, all without profane language and with a decent standard of dress and behaviour. The new rules for the Government Gardens, reflecting these ideals and, like them, promising a penalty for contravention, were forwarded to Malcolm Fraser in January 1885 with the proviso that he would need to identify ‘any law under which they can be enforced.’\textsuperscript{67}

Fraser approved the plan for the proposed regulation but, as he advised Broome, ‘the Waste lands Unlawful Occupation Act of 1872 won’t help...’ and nor would the Land Act. There was no Act for gardens as in South Australia and Victoria and therefore:

\begin{quote}
the managing body has no status except by appointment by the Governor to manage a vote. To meet the case without delay I earnestly suggest that these proposed rules be printed and posted at Garden gates by Command and [issued] by Colonial Secretary...\textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{65} ‘Government Garden Vote 84. Reports overdraft of.’ Colonial Secretary’s Office, (Cons. 527, 1884/6607, SROWA).

\textsuperscript{66} ‘South Australia - Botanic Garden of Adelaide - Act No. 8 of 1863 of South Australian legislature - regulating’, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Subject files (Acc 527, 1885/224, SROWA).

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
He urged that a Bill to meet the requirements be drafted urgently, and in the meantime asked if there were no British Legislation that might, quite literally, fit the Bill. Regardless of the lack of legislation supporting the regulations they were approved by the Legislative Council and posted in the Gardens.

Despite the approval of the regulations there was considerable debate about the opening hours when the question of finance for the renewed garden was raised in August 1886. The vote for 1886 was a massive £619, a much greater sum than had ever previously been voted.\textsuperscript{69} Like the Perth City Council and the £1000 for the Recreation Ground, there was some concern that the money was being frittered away on unessential purposes. Where the City Councillors felt that roads came before recreation, the Legislative Council on the other hand felt that the recreational needs of the colony were more important than botanic and horticultural acclimatization, at least in the City. Mr Lee-Steere asked after the hours of opening, ‘It was now closed at 5 o’clock – just the time when people would care to go in and enjoy a walk.’\textsuperscript{70} Mr Parker said that, ‘…it was no use calling it a public garden and shutting out the public. He thought the garden ought to be called an experimental garden rather than a public garden.’\textsuperscript{71} Mr Sholl agreed that it was very expensive for such a garden, and felt that it was a shame that some of the funding would go towards the Government Domain.\textsuperscript{72} Nevertheless the funding was approved.

The discovery of Gold in 1885 and the subsequent gold rush to the Hall’s Creek area, in the North of the Colony, may perhaps have provided a fillip to Western Australia’s normally stringent economic policy. The discovery of gold not only changed the focus of Western Australia’s economic policy but also significantly affected Western Australia’s already male dominated population.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{69} 25 August 1885, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{72} 25 August 1886, Ibid.
\end{itemize}

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During the years following transportation, a dedicated program encouraging female migration and natural increase had ameliorated the male imbalance generated by the influx of convicts. The balance of males to females had, by 1884, achieved a ratio of 132 men to 94 women, the closest ratio achieved in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{73} Within three years the population ratio for the colony had again returned to a significant imbalance in favour of men. Given this imbalance, the colonists sought to provide a more refined and civilizing environment, and parks were acknowledged tools in the armoury. Terence Young has demonstrated that similar concerns were influential in the thinking of San Franciscans who promoted park development following the Californian gold rushes.\textsuperscript{74}

Certainly, the Legislative Council and the Perth City Council seem to have been encouraged to spend money on parks and reserves in an unprecedented manner. The discovery of gold, even though the subsequent rush was short lived, provided a sense that the colony was at last on its way to financial security. This in turn allowed a number of other projects, including some acclimatization projects, to be undertaken, such as the establishment of a Pinetum at Rottnest Island, twelve kilometres west of the port of Fremantle.

Given this change in the fortunes of the colony it might be expected that the colonists would again raise the question of a true botanic garden. Certainly those outside the colony felt that this was an opportune moment to raise the topic. Mr D. McAlpine, an experienced botanist, armed with a letter from Sir Joseph Hooker and Baron von Mueller, wrote inquiring if the Government would consider his appointment as Government Botanist. Malcolm Fraser noted in his memo to Governor Broome, ‘As in duty bound I place this before Your Excellency but presume we shall go beyond “Geology” yet in Science. “Botany”

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Driesen, Essays on immigration policy and population in Western Australia 1850 - 1901.
\item Young, Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850 - 1930.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
will no doubt follow eventually.\textsuperscript{75} Similarly, when von Mueller wrote in 1889, suggesting the services of marine biologist, Dr Von Lendenfeld, Fraser annotated the letter, ‘Geology and mineralogy are two branches of Sciences useful immediately to us, but a grand work on Medusah and sponges will not profit us at this date.’\textsuperscript{76}

It seems a fortunate thing that William Harvey had not attempted his algological studies with this later Colonial Secretary.

\textit{Imagining the foreshore}

Rather than botany being promoted, it was instead the turn of the new form of public open space, the landscaped public park, which the colonists would now seek to incorporate into the fabric of the city. The British park movement was well underway, with the majority of urban parks being created in the decade between 1875 and 1885, although as Hazel Conway notes, America had acquired more park space per head of population.\textsuperscript{77} Starting with Olmsted’s and Vaux’s design of New York’s Central Park as a naturalistic landscape in the 1850s, such parks were being established in major cities across America, a movement described by David Schuyler as ‘one of the most creative and enduring contributions to civilization undertaken in 19\textsuperscript{th} century America’,\textsuperscript{78} an endorsement that is equally as valid for other park movements derived from the same British and European sources. At the same time, Haussmann and Vincennes had redesigned Paris incorporating parks and gardens into the city proper, as Nicholas Green argues, ‘as concentrated enclosures of wholeness, moral as well as physical’, a process in which the

\textsuperscript{75} Malcom Fraser, Colonial Secretary's Office, 'D. McAlpine application’, \textit{Correspondence} (Cons. 527, 1887/2694, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{76} Ferdinand von Mueller, 28 January 1889, Colonial Secretary's Office, 'Services of naturalist Dr von Lendenfeld - Do Govt require’, \textit{Subject files} (Cons. 527, 1889/453, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{77} Conway, \textit{People's parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain}, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{78} Schuyler, \textit{The new urban landscape: the redefinition of city form in nineteenth century America}. 
creation of ‘nature [was] not antithetical but integral to the living-out of metropolitan culture.’\textsuperscript{79}

In Western Australia, the first attempt at a municipal, landscape park had been Victoria Park, but with the transfer from colonial to municipal control the park had suffered from a lack of a consistent program of works. In fact, by 1888, the Council was allowing Alexander Forrest to depasture sheep there and on the old Recreation Ground.\textsuperscript{80} John Claudius Loudon had encouraged the use of sheep, ‘fleecy foragers’, in maintaining the lawns of private parks, but this was a far more agricultural purpose: others had wanted to agist horses on the same properties, but had been denied.\textsuperscript{81} The Government Gardens was too small for a landscape park, and continued as a formal, gardenesque design. The new Recreation Ground, on the reclaimed land between the two jetties, was simply a large flat space, enhanced by the pavilion, but it was this site rather than the other two that provided that impetus for the next development in Perth’s parks and reserves. As has been discussed, the cricket and football associations were extremely anxious to gain access and control of space dedicated to their various needs. With the successful reclamation of the new Recreation Ground there was no need to stop merely between the jetties. Rather the whole foreshore now provided a space where the dredges could create a new pallet of reclaimed fill on which such spaces could be drawn. The Director of Public Works, Mr Wright, was anxious to prove himself equal to the task.

The plan, described as the ‘Proposed New Cricket Ground and public garden’ (see Fig. 16) represented a sophisticated attempt to integrate the needs of both the cricketing and football associations, as well as a new botanic

\textsuperscript{79} Green, \textit{The spectacle of nature: landscape and bourgeois culture in nineteenth century France}, pp. 72, 75.
\textsuperscript{80} ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 6, SROWA)’.
\textsuperscript{81} Fort, \textit{The grass is greener: our love affair with the lawn}, p. 78.; ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 6, SROWA)’.
garden, all within the overarching form of the landscape park.\textsuperscript{82} As Hazel Conway has pointed out, there are three ways in which active recreational space, such as cricket grounds and football fields, came to be incorporated into public parks.\textsuperscript{83} They could be dealt with separately, as had been the case previously in Western Australia; laid out adjoining each other, as happened in Adelaide, or they could be incorporated into the park, as Olmsted and Vaux did with New York’s Central Park. This latter was by far the most sophisticated solution. The 1887 plan not only integrated the three forms but also linked it with the Government Gardens through the use of serpentine paths (see fig. 11).

While the Commissioner of Public Works was quick to accept accolades from the public via the medium of the local press, it is doubtful that he was in fact the architect of the plan.\textsuperscript{84} There are three possibilities – two are the surveyors who were temporarily employed on the job, Mr Ross and Mr Owen, and the other was a new architect and draftsman, George Temple-Poole, signing himself at that time as just Poole. Unfortunately, no Works files or other documentation has been discovered to definitely identify the author. A sum of £300, which would have seemed lavish only a decade before, had been placed on the annual Government Vote, but the work did not eventuate, and the plan was taken back into the Public Works Department, to be resurrected some twenty years later.

\textsuperscript{82} 'Proposed new cricket ground and public gardens', Public Works Department, \textit{Plans - Architectural and Engineering} (Cons. 1647, 38, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{83} Ponte, 'Public parks in Great Britain and the United States: from "a spirit of place" to "a spirit of civilisation".'
\textsuperscript{84} 'The new athletic ground', \textit{West Australian}, 26 February 1887.
Figure 16: Proposed new cricket grounds and public gardens, 1887. The original plan is approximately six feet long, hand coloured and folded. (This image was taken using a hand held camera and is the best copy available.)

Source: Public Works Department. (Cons 1647, item 38, SROWA)
The citizens of Perth had their anxieties somewhat assuaged when another visitor to Perth, far more complimentary than Mr Chamier of Melbourne wrote, in March 1887:

Perth is a well laid out city, most of its streets running at right angles, while it is liberally supplied with breathing spaces in the shape of recreation grounds, public gardens and parks….

Poised to take advantage of the newly discovered mineral wealth they now knew they could lay claim to, and working ever closer to achieving the status of a Responsible Colony, in line with the other Australian colonies, Perth citizens decided to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee with a library, museum and art gallery. Landscape parks, like botanic gardens, would have to wait their turn to be achieved. With the new Recreation ground finally developed, and a number of other recreational spaces reserved and identified, the city was at last taking form as an urban and urbane space. The last years of the nineteenth century would take the city into a space that was urban and urbane, proudly Imperial and consciously Australian.
Chapter 6 - Natural Capital

By the last decade of the 19th century Western Australia was at last moving not only towards financial independence but political independence too. It had been a long twenty years from Representative Government, before the colony was finally able to claim the status of Responsible Government, something granted in the 1850s to all its sibling colonies, both older and younger. The move to Responsible Government also came at a time when the various colonies were considering a move towards Federation and even more independence from Britain. Federation conferences had been well attended by Western Australian politicians, and when Federation finally occurred, Western Australia’s first Premier became a member of the first Federal cabinet. Yet Western Australia was a reluctant participant in the Federation movement, and Imperial sentiment within Western Australia remained strong, tinged with a growing sense of Australian uniqueness and unity. Ties with the Empire had been emphasised during the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, and the call to arms for the conflict in South Africa met with a strong Australian and Western Australian response.

This chapter will discuss the way in which changing identities were reflected in the debates about the role of parks, gardens and recreation reserves in ideas about the form and status of the city. In this chapter I explore the way in which parks were used to symbolize ideals of not just civilised nature, but of civilisation generally and of Empire, nation and city status specifically.

For Western Australia, the years following Responsible Government and around Federation included some pivotal changes in the way the city saw itself and its recreational spaces. Landscape parks, the third form identified by Ponte, that had been so influential in the form of recreation space in England, America and the redevelopment of Botanic Gardens in the other colonies, were finally introduced in a complete form into Western Australia. Not one but three major landscape parks were developed in this period. Major playing fields for cricket and football were also developed, as sporting codes were developed and refined. Botanically, too the colony made some decisions about the way in
which agriculture and horticulture were to be supported at the public level, that were to have a continuing influence.

Anxieties about status as a city (and a colony), which had long been part of the Western Australian psyche, were not restricted to Western Australians alone. Melbourne and Sydney both competed, and compete, with each other as Australian metropoles, and at the centre of Empire, London and Paris were undergoing similar anxieties, as Tori Smith and Claire Hancock demonstrated in their essays in the collection *Imperial Cities*.¹ Both Smith and Hancock noted that the civic fathers of both cities expressed anxiety about their status as cities, *vis à vis* each other, and sought to redress the imbalance through public works, displays and promotions. Londoners were concerned that they had nothing to match the redevelopments of Paris which had created suitable avenues and boulevards for displays of civic and imperial pomp and pride, while conversely Parisians worried that their city lacked the *gravitas* of a centre of business like London, to the extent that it was perceived not as the capital of France but of tourism. Isolated at the periphery of both the British Empire and the Australian colonies, Western Australia looked to the metropoles of Empire and Australia for comparison and urban models.

*The People’s Park*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, in 1887, had provided the impetus for the establishment of a combined library, art gallery and museum, through the desire to provide a suitable memorial. What could be more befitting a colony of the great and civilized British Empire than a clear declaration of that status through such an institution?

Street trees and gas lights too, as well as footpaths, had been identified as promoting a civilized atmosphere, and calls to clear Russell and Weld Squares, two early reserve sites on the north of the city, and plant them with trees or convert them to public markets attested to both a growth in the town itself and a confidence that the colony’s economy was at last improving. Although some projects, like the extended reclamation of the foreshore, had been shelved and even the museum suspended while a suitable site and extra funding were identified, Western Australians expected great things of the future.

Proclamation of their new democratic and elective status was made by Governor Robinson, returning for his second term as Governor, on the 21 October 1890, and was celebrated with games on the new Recreation Ground. (The leasing of the grounds to the Sports Committee had been unanimously approved). Under Responsible Government, the elected representatives of the colonists (based on a limited franchise determined by gender and property status) were at last able to determine their own priorities for government legislation and expenditure. The patriarchal dominance of the Governor and the Colonial Office was effectively limited. The changed priorities were shortly to be reflected in the debates of the new bi-cameral parliament.

The City Council soon noted that the change in status required improvements in the city and requested permission to raise its rates, to enable it, under the proposed new Municipalities Act, to spend increased amounts on ‘the laying out and upkeep of … Municipal squares and gardens, the planting of trees….’ Pointing to other City Councils, for example Adelaide, it was said that municipal funds were matched pound for pound by the Colonial Government. The Mayor, Edward Keane, presented a memorial to the inaugural Premier, John Forrest, stating that:

2 13 October 1890, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’.
3 July 1891, ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 6, SROWA)’.
It is by the capital that strangers and visitors are accustomed to judge a colony, and according to the impressions they derive from their acquaintance with it they usually regulate their opinions of the resources of the country, and draw their conclusions as to the energy and progressive disposition of its people.⁴

More funds needed to be retained in the capital for the ‘sources of recreation, cultivation and amusement which cannot but ought to be obtained at home…’.⁵

The newly elected Premier, John Forrest, replied the following day, 18 July, that the finances of the colony had much improved with the discovery of gold and coal. With this bounty, not only had the government paid for the insurance of the Town Hall, but had provided a garden:

which, though not large, is kept up at some expense; there are numerous reserves and parks. The Government has given – I don’t know whether everyone is aware of it – 1000 acres for a park at my suggestion at the top of Mt Eliza, which will in time be a boon and a source of enjoyment for the city.⁶

Forrest, born and bred in the South west of Western Australia, at Picton near Bunbury, and an experienced explorer and surveyor, was symbolic of the colonists’ new status. A native West Australian, Forrest was nonetheless experienced within Colonial Government, and had been recognized at an Imperial level via the publication of his exploration diaries and reports through the Royal Geographic Society, of which he was a member. Prior to standing for Parliament, Forrest had worked in the colonial government, rising to the rank of Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1883. A memo from Forrest, as Commissioner of Crown Lands and probably dating from August 1890, had recommended that an additional 500 acres be added to Weld’s 432

⁴ 17 July 1891, Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ John Forrest, 18 July 1891, quoted in Ibid.
acres. The Governor (or more likely the Administrator, Sir Malcolm Fraser, himself a surveyor) had approved the proposal, with an annotation about a ‘Park belt’ (although the full annotation has been obscured over time). Forrest’s vision for Mt Eliza resulted in the doubling of Weld’s original reserve on the Mount, and derived, in part, from Forrest’s own admiration for Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, and his newly established Centennial Park.8

Parkes himself was the son of a gardener who had worked in private estates in England, and had a keen understanding of landscape design and British municipal park development.9 Parkes had a vision of a park that would be open and accessible to all classes of society, one which, according to Paul Ashton and Kate Blackmore, was designed to have a “‘refining and an elevating” effect on the masses.’10 Developed in the 1880s to celebrate the foundation of Australia, the park specifically celebrated the foundation of New South Wales and the east coast colonies that derived from it. More generally though, as Ian Hoskins has identified, the park was a potent symbol of the consolidation of European based ‘civilization’ in Australia.11 Forrest too, sought to celebrate and confirm the British and Imperial status of the Western Australian colony, and its capital.

Sydney’s Centennial Park, situated on a former water reserve, and at some distance from the city proper, had been the subject of a design competition that attracted 46 entries. Only one of the entries had met the budget of £150,000, and was deemed altogether unsuitable.12 Western Australia, although improving financially, was unable to meet even a tenth of

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7 ‘Reserve 1720. Kings Park Reserve’, Lands Department, Files - general (Cons. 4080, 1890/1521, SROWA). The file jacket is dated 8 August 1890 and is in a state of disrepair, obscuring some of the annotations.
8 Hoskins, ‘Marking time: history and identity in Sydney’s Centennial Park’; Hoskins, Cultivating the citizen.; Ashton and Blackmore, Centennial Park: a history.
9 Ashton and Blackmore, Centennial Park: a history, p. 39.
10 Ibid., p. 51.
12 Ashton and Blackmore, Centennial Park: a history.
that sum. Forrest prudently asked for only £2000 in the estimates before the Legislative Assembly, for his newly named Perth Park, a name that reflected the glory it was to bring to the capital and the inclusiveness of his intentions. Even this was too much.

In the Estimates debate of 23 February 1892, the sum of £2,000 had been put up for the establishment of an Observatory, also to be sited near Mt Eliza. Faced with a possible large debt due to problems with an ambitious railway project, developed by the Midland Railway Company, parliamentarians were anxious to restrain spending to practical matters – an Observatory was deemed ‘ornamental’. Mr Canning, of the Legislative Assembly, then struck to the heart of the matter, debating the need for such a large park in such a small city, argued that the sum for the Perth Park should be struck out for the same reason. More, he doubted how popular it would be:

He was sure that if this park were now formed it would be made use of by but a very small portion of the population, situated where it was, and unapproachable only through a heavy sandy road.\(^\text{13}\)

Ex Perth Councillor, Mr Parker, agreed that none of Perth’s inhabitants would want ‘to go up that enormous hill.’\(^\text{14}\) He adverted to the fate of Victoria Park, indicating that the Government had already wasted money on parks no one would go to, and referred instead to an 1891 scheme to reclaim land at the bottom of Mt Eliza, a scheme that had also been mentioned by Mr Richardson in the course of this same debate.

Mr Molloy responded by not only looking to the aesthetic and recreational needs of the city, but also brought in the sanitary argument – ‘These were about the only available park lands we now had as lungs for the city....’\(^\text{15}\) The Premier, Forrest, asked to identify how the money could be spent, replied:

\(^{13}\) 23 February 1892, Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAPD'.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
This park was capable of the greatest amount of improvement. There might be magnificent drives extending many miles throughout the area, with ornamental walks, ponds with swans and ducks floating on the water, and altogether this park might be made an attractive resort for all the people of Perth on holidays and Sundays. The Government wanted to do for Perth what was done for, he might say, every city throughout the world.  

Debate resumed the following day, with MLA Mr Quinlan having visited the site, and finding there ‘one of the most beautiful views that could be afforded’. He also noted the other attraction – ‘the soil of this proposed park was as good as any about Perth… It was really good sand.’ Other parliamentarians agreed, although the size and cost of the park were a continuing concern. Rather than develop the whole site, one enterprising MLA recommended that the park be divided in two, with one half developed along the lines proposed by Forrest, and the other sold as residential land, with the resultant income for the park (much as Regent’s Park had been developed in the first half of the century in England). But in the end the cost proved too much, and with other recreational funding before the Assembly, for the new Recreation Ground and to improve the Cricket Ground, the bush vote, solidly against improvements in Perth, won out. Only the Cricket Ground was to be funded.

Forrest was perhaps not as disappointed in this initial failure as might be anticipated. The cricket ground too, was close to his heart, and like the Park, emblematic of Imperial ties. The land sought, reserve 27A, had been set aside for botanic gardens in 1873, and for a Government Domain as early as 1853 (possibly considered as a site for the redevelopment of Government House at that time).

16 Ibid.
17 24 February 1892, Ibid.
Forrest, during his surveying years and later, had collected specimens for von Mueller, and his wife, Margaret Elvire Hamersley, was an amateur watercolourist who often painted wildflowers. Despite this botanical pedigree, Forrest was quite willing to put aside any claims for the botanic gardens in favour of cricket. Possibly Forrest could see how cricket would meet the needs of Perth’s highly masculine population, providing appropriate recreational outlets almost immediately. The lease was signed in 1893, assigning control to Forrest and two others, as Trustees for the Association.

Forrest had laid the groundwork while Commissioner of Crown Lands, negotiating a 999-year lease for the West Australian Cricket Association, which had brought the feuding Cricket Clubs together in 1889. Forrest, as a Trustee for the Cricket Association, had not hesitated to use his connections in promoting the Association’s interest to the Governor:
Cricket has laboured under great disadvantages through not having a ground specially reserved for it and if his Excellency is able to grant this lease, it will give new life to the Great English game.\(^{18}\)

This description of cricket as the quintessentially English game derived directly from ideas about rational education, and the role of physical recreation in particular, that had developed in Britain in the mid-Victorian period. Novelists and social reformers Thomas Hughes (\textit{Tom Brown’s Schooldays}) and Charles Kingsley (\textit{The Water babies}) promoted the idea of the body as a temple to God, a trope that, like ‘lungs of the city’, has continued into modern parlance. Where muscular Christianity promoted the cult of the body as a form of divine worship, the broader recreational paradigm promoted the ideal of ‘manliness’, expressed in increasingly codified sports.\(^{19}\) Athleticism was equated with chivalric virtues. Not only were such sports manly, they were also patriotic, celebrating traditional English values and training young men in team behaviour, teaching them both to respond to commands, and the ability to give commands if required. Referring to these ideals, it was noted in support of the Cricket Ground application that, ‘the battle of Waterloo [was] won on the cricket fields of England’.\(^{20}\)

Nevertheless, botany was not entirely forgotten. At the same time as Forrest was attempting to obtain funding for a large ornamental park on the western edge of the city, and for cricket, Parliament was also considering more botanically useful works – an Experimental Farm and the establishment of an Agricultural School. The colony had experienced a downturn in the sale of its

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{20} 24 February 1892, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’.}

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agricultural products, the colony’s principal source of income, in 1886 and 1887. Governor Broome had instituted a Commission of Inquiry into ‘the present condition of Agriculture in this colony’, in September 1887. Although the Garden Committee had been involved in acclimatization of plants from the mid 1880s, with a view to establishing new agricultural opportunities, none of the committee members were appointed. The Commission consisted of parliamentarians H.W. Venn, E.R. Brockman, A.R. Richardson, J.H. Monger and Walter Padbury.

They presented their report to Parliament on 20 March 1891, after over three years of study around Western Australia. The report noted that the original decline was not unique to Western Australia, but had been common across Australia. What they did find was that:

the agricultural and horticultural pursuits of this Colony have not reached those advanced stages in the growth and variety of special products that have been attained in the other Colonies. The chief cause of this may be found in the want of knowledge and special education in these branches…\(^{21}\)

They called for more attention to be paid to forest products, a reflection of the increasing market for jarrah and karri timbers that had opened in Britain, for structural timbers and road construction, and for a greater exchange of economic plant materials.

Curiously, although they were aware of, and often sought advice from, the botanists situated in the botanic gardens of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, the Commissioners recommended the establishment of an agricultural school and a Bureau, but did not consider a botanic garden. This emphasis on a separate agricultural institution does not reflect events elsewhere. Richard Drayton ascribes the development of a British Imperial Agricultural Department, in the late 1890s, to the growing influence of economic

\(^{21}\) 20 March 1891, Papers laid before Parliament, 1891 – 1892, ‘WAVP’
botany at Kew, which had been developed in the previous decade under the auspices of William Thiselton Dyer.\textsuperscript{22} In particular, he points to the development of the analysis and assistance provided to the West Indian sugar industry as being instrumental in the creation of both the British Department of Agriculture, and the subsequent provision of Agricultural Departments in colonies throughout the Empire, all benefiting from and related to the scientific research provided by Kew. It may have been that the Committee felt that the research role of a botanic garden was, to some extent, carried out by the Government Gardens. Certainly the Garden Committee was still active in controlling the gardens, and in both receiving and distributing specimens. However, the Government Gardens were also viewed as a source of plants and flowers for official functions and charitable occasions, and it was for this role and its function as a landscape park that the Gardens were best known.\textsuperscript{23} The result was the establishment of West Australian department that developed independently of the Government Gardens or the establishment of a Botanic Garden.

Despite the difficulties for agriculturists described in the Report, and an annual Parliamentary Question in both the Legislative Council and the Assembly on the subject, no Agricultural Bureau was founded in the colony until 1894.\textsuperscript{24} Like the Park and the Observatory, funding for the Bureau was deferred while the matter of the Midland Railway Company was being considered. But the agriculturists, like Forrest and his park, were not to be

\textsuperscript{22} Drayton, \textit{Nature’s government}, pp. 250 - 259.
\textsuperscript{23} Colonel Phillips wrote in December 1892 that, ‘[t]he run upon the garden for flowers and plants for Parliamentary and other official and public Entertainments has been so great, that there are but a few left.’ ‘Miss Humble to Col. Sec. Letter requesting flowers for Bazaar at Wesleyan Manse’, 2 December 1892, Colonial Secretary’s Office, \textit{Correspondence} (Cons. 1816, 76, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{24} See debates in the Legislative Assembly, 14 September and 21 December 1893, Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAPD'. Printed paper A9, 1894, Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAVP'.
denied, and in 1894 funds for a Secretary and an Agricultural Bureau were considered in the yearly estimates.

Forrest also finally achieved funding for his park in 1894. He returned to the Assembly the following year, with the £3,000 still unspent and with a further £5,000 on the Estimates for the Park. Challenged as to the use of the original and the additional funds, Forrest explained that the extra money was required to build a road to the Park. ‘What was the use of a Park without a road leading to it?’

Figure 18: Perth 18/19 (2). Suburban allotments. Plan showing the original 1872 boundary and Forrest’s extended boundary. Also shown is Forrest’s road along the scarp.

Source: Lands and Surveys Department. (Cons 3868, item 333, SROWA)

25 17 July 1895, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’.
The original tender for the road had exceeded the whole of the original grant, and so the project had been deferred until the road could be funded separately. The road, he said:

would certainly be one of the finest drives in the whole of Australia, commanding magnificent views, and he believed that it would be very much valued by the citizens of Perth and by others who visited the colony.  

Certain of the country members were concerned that the project represented a coup for the Perth City Council, who were also well represented among the elected members of the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly, they accused, was virtually controlled by the City Council. Forrest countered that this was an important work for the whole of the colony, and was challenged by George Randell, himself a former Mayor of Perth and member of the Garden Committee, to say why. Forrest's answer encompassed a vision of the city that would compare favourably with other colonies and would provide much needed work for the growing population of unemployed:

We want to make the city attractive, so as to keep people here when they came here. The great complaint at the present was that there was nowhere you could go to, or nothing worth seeing, about Perth… It was a very necessary work… not only to the present inhabitants of Perth, but also to those who would come after us, who would be able to drive along a road commanding such a beautiful panorama as could not be seen anywhere else in Australia.

Forrest returned to the Parliament in September 1895, to secure his vision, this time by presenting a Bill for the better management of parks and reserves. In presenting 'his small Bill', Forrest again compared Western Australia with the other colonies, 'as well as other parts of the world'. The legislation was similar to that found elsewhere, 'and the necessity has arisen for

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 John Forrest, Second reading speech, 12 September 1895, Ibid.
having the same statutory powers here... The Assembly acquiesced, with only minor changes. Country MLA Mr Sholl requested that the number of parliamentarians on any Board be restricted, to reduce the risk of the Estimates vote being stacked, while Mr Traylen wanted to ensure that the Boards would be able to include zoos as suitable uses of parkland.

In the Legislative Council, the Hon. E.H. Wittenoom assured the members that Municipal rights would not be affected, and presented the Bill on its merits for making ‘towns and their surroundings as attractive as possible. In order to carry this out, it is desirable that our parks and reserves should be got into as a high a state of cultivation as can be... With little debate the Bill was passed on 3 October, 1895. A temporary Park Committee, which had included both John and his brother Alexander Forrest, also a surveyor, and Mayor of Perth; John Hackett, editor of the West Australian; B.C. Wood, MLA; editor of the *Daily News*, Perth Councillor and fellow parliamentarian, Arthur Lovekin; and the ubiquitous Col. Phillips of the Government Gardens Board, soon became the Perth Park Board. Alexander Forrest alone was not appointed. Malcolm Fraser, the Colonial Secretary, became Board Secretary, who was in turn replaced by Mr Kelly.

Under the newly proclaimed Parks and Reserves Act, the Board had considerable powers. In addition to Mr Traylen’s zoos, they could fence the land, build dams, and issue licences for the depasturing of animals and the removal of sand, gravel and timber. They were also charged to:

- otherwise improve or ornament such parks or reserves, and do all such things as are calculated to adapt such parks and reserves to the purposes of public recreation, health and enjoyment...

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Legislative Council, October, 1895, Ibid.
32 Ibid.
That the Park was essentially a landscape park, based on the expanding genre of such parks, is emphasised in the minutes of the Board through such things as the Board’s ambivalence to the role of local botany in such a park, dating from their first meeting. ‘A discussion then took place as to leaving a certain amount of the natural flora as being undisturbed but nothing definite was settled.’

Work on the park commenced with a staff of 7 and an overseer, Campbell, early in 1895. The *West Australian*, under Hackett, constantly promoted the park:

The work of forming a park on the top of the Mount has now been in progress for about eighteen weeks, and is being carried out systematically and economically. The land has many natural advantages and could easily be converted into a delightful pleasure ground. The work has been placed in the hands of Mr Alexander Campbell, a gardener of considerable reputation, who was, we are informed, in charge of Government works of a similar nature in Victoria, and who has previously laid out a number of landscape gardens in England.

The *Daily News* too, promoted the park, and both reported on the planting of a Memorial Tree, a Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria excelsa*) by Forrest in August 1895. The tree, reported the *West Australian*, was ‘a symbol of new life coming to the colony’. The *Daily News* saw the planting as symbolic of the whole park, which formed the ‘lungs of the city’, and:

not only marked the signs of the material progress of the colony, but it showed that something was being done to assist in the promotion of those intellectual and refining influences, which did so much to build up a community.

33 'Minutes', Kings Park Board, *Minutes* (Cons. 1363, SROWA).
34 'Perth Park', *The West Australian*, 22 May 1895.
35 Ibid., 9 August 1895.
36 'The Perth Park - planting of the memorial tree', *Daily News*, 10 August 1895.
The new People’s Park would provide for the physical, moral and intellectual health of the city and its inhabitants, and was symbolic of the success of the colony as a whole.

Such symbolism could also be represented more physically. Arthur Lovekin suggested that emus and kangaroos be introduced to the park, and memos were sent out via Phillips and Kelly’s police connections to Constables around the colony. Constable Whiteside, (No. 65), advised that ‘Mr Thomas Merrick, JP, farmer of ‘Sunnyside’ [near Broomehill] is willing to procure a pair of ‘Emu’ thoroughly domesticated for the sum of £3’.37 A similar memo was received from Constable Foulkes at Katanning, and several other offers of Emus, and one of Kangaroos were received. However, Hackett was concerned that Emus, no matter how domesticated, were ‘somewhat dangerous’, while Forrest could see the kangaroos escaping or being killed. The idea did not progress.38

The first two years of park development were largely confined to fencing and clearing the land and in preparing the road through the Park. Deciding on the fencing took up the first two meetings of the Board. The Park was to be fenced with jarrah pickets along the populated parts of the northern, western and eastern boundaries, and with galvanized wire along the remainder. Three sets of gates were installed, near the newly established railway suburb of Subiaco, at the top of the Mount opposite the Observatory (also finally funded), and on Fremantle Road at the base of the scarp. A series of turnstiles was also installed. The road contractor was refused permission to quarry for road base within the Park, despite the previous use of Mt Eliza as a quarry for building materials, but the problem of both clearing and grubbing the trees on either side

37 Constable Whiteside to Kings Park Board, 22 July 1898, ‘1897 - 1902. Expenditure’, Kings Park Board, Files - general (Cons. 5458, 6, SROWA).
38 A few years later the Board would ask Forrest to apply for six deer from Windsor Great Park. Their request was turned down on the grounds that a newly formed Acclimatisation Society (which shared many of the same Board members) had also requested deer for the soon to be created Zoological Gardens, across the river at South Perth.
of the road resulted in the decision to properly clear the trees to provide a basis for a new, replanted avenue. 39 As a result of this decision, the park staff was able to successfully petition for an increase in wages from six shillings to seven shillings a day.

Aesthetics also dictated the expansion of the Park. The Board sought additional land along the top of the scarp overlooking the city, ‘in order that the view of Perth Water and the city might not be obscured…’, thus ensuring the maintenance of one of the city’s most famous vistas. 40 The connecting road to the Reservoir was closed, ultimately providing a small road with a limited number of residences from which the same view could be obtained, and one of Perth’s most desirable addresses, Bellevue Terrace. The newly created Water Works Board, attempting to provide a second reservoir to meet the City’s rapidly expanding needs, not only lost its connecting road but was also confined to its original boundaries within the Park. Not all landholders were amenable to the resumption of their land, and several court cases dragged on into the twentieth century.

A limited amount of ‘improvement’ had been carried out by the end of 1896. The Supervisor, Alexander Campbell, had been asked to submit a plan, which the Board considered but did not fully approve.41 To aid in developing their vision for the park the Board sought the assistance of Daniel Feakes, the Government Gardener. Feakes had arrived in the colony in 1886 and

39 ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
40 George Seddon and David Ravine examine the development of the city from this perspective, utilising over 150 years of art and photography, nearly all taken or made on the same site. Seddon and Ravine, A city and its setting: Images of Perth, Western Australia.
41 It has been asserted that both John Forrest and Government Architect, George Temple Poole, developed the first plans for the park. Ray Oldham, George Temple Poole (1856 – 1934) (Australian National University, 2006 [cited 8 August, 2006]); available from http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/blogs/A110263b.htm; Erickson and Taylor, ‘A thematic history of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth, Western Australia: prepared for King’s Park and Botanic Garden.’. No evidence to date has been found to confirm either attribution, and it is far more likely that the park had no overall plan, but that parts were developed as required by Campbell and later Feakes.
commenced as a labourer in the Gardens by 1887. Little is known of Feakes’s antecedents, although his family later believed him to have been trained at Kew.\footnote{Both Feakes’s and the convict gardener Barratt’s families ascribe their ancestors’ gardening success to an education or experience at Kew, which is an indicator of the status of both the gardeners and the Gardens by the mid twentieth century in Western Australia. The employment and training of gardeners in other institutions, and even the possibility of employment in private establishments either locally or in England, appears to have had no resonance with popular conceptions of how good landscape gardeners were trained in England in the nineteenth century.} No evidence of this has been located, and it may well be that Feakes was to a large extent self-trained.

Based at the Government Gardens, Feakes acted as adviser to the Park Board, cycling to the Park on a Board-provided bicycle every day to oversee the landscaping works. He designed and planted a fern grove, in keeping with the dominant landscaping aesthetic of the day, arranged quotes and designed the circular carriage road, which later formed the basis of the drives through the park. He also ordered plants and manure, and lent Government Gardens’ equipment. The park staff were not under his control, but under a separate supervisor. In addition to assisting with Feakes’ landscaping work, they reported on unauthorized cutting of timber, wandering livestock and tried to prevent visitors from picking the wildflowers.

The road to the park had been declared open in August, 1897, with Forrest taking the opportunity to compare it favourably with the smaller, and perpetually under resourced, Government Gardens which ‘owing to the limited means of access to it, it had practically been closed to many people.’\footnote{‘Road thru’ Perth Park declared open’, \textit{Daily News}, 23 August 1897.} Almost immediately, the subject of access to the new park, for women and children especially, became a topic of discussion between the Board and the surrounding municipalities.

The Rosalie Progress Committee on the park’s south eastern border wanted the local Subiaco Council to get both Rokeby Road extended to the park boundary, and the Board to provide a pathway to meet it. They felt that
this would provide a path through the Park to the water, and would assist ‘ladies and children’ to pass through the ‘dense scrub’. To ensure that the park would be protected, the Board had decided in late July, 1897 to ask for a constable to be appointed, ‘for the purpose of preventing damage on the work now being carried on under Mr Feakes supervision…’\textsuperscript{44} An unidentified newspaper clipping, found in the Board’s minutes, summarised the Subiaco perspective:

a track for bricks to the reservoir, a rail and wire fence, and a policemen to chase the children out of the primeval bush in case they pull the flowers.\textsuperscript{45}

Other municipal representatives requested more paths, from Crawley and the city, or wider turnstiles, for nursemaids with heavy perambulators, and women and children in general. It was clear, deep sand and primeval bush notwithstanding, that the park was becoming the premier site for civilised and domesticated recreation.

Access to the park was a continuous thread for the Board. Forrest’s original road soon proved attractive not just for promenaders but also for carriages, cars and wagons, even omnibuses. It had been intended to gravel the road with blue metal, but the Public Works Department decided not to proceed with this, despite the Board’s protest. Difficulties with the contractor too, involved the Board and the Works Department in conflict throughout 1897 and 1898. Despite this, in 1898:

Sir John Forrest pointed out the desirability of surveying a new road through the Park, and it was resolved that under his direction, a surveyor be engaged to layout a road starting from the lower entrance gates and running across the SW corner of the Park…\textsuperscript{46}

Almost immediately the town of Subiaco asked for a road through the park from the Subiaco border, and other suggestions were received. Although the

\textsuperscript{44} 29 July 1897, Kings Park Board, 'Minute Books', (Perth, WA: SROWA).
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} 'KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)'.

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Board was happy with a survey by Lands and Survey staff, guided by the experienced ex-Commissioner of Lands, they were less sanguine about the Public Works Department and went to tender independently for a road contractor. Rather than a road across the South West corner, the new road became a generous circular drive taking in the whole of the park.

The Water Board had approached the Park Board for additional land for a second reservoir in 1897. (Land for the first reservoir had been reserved in July 1890, prior to the gazettal of the park in September of that year.) The Park Board had been reluctant to give up additional land, and it was eventually determined that the reservoir would fit within the original reservation. Any additions to the park, including fencing for the park and a tennis club, a caretaker’s lodge for the park or water meters for the Water Board, all needed to be ‘ornamental’ and approved by the Board. The Water Board must have been a little put out when, for example, their proposed plans for a cottage near the reservoir in the park, were knocked back because the cottage was deemed insufficiently ‘ornamental’, even ugly.47

Work on the reservoir commenced shortly before the construction of the circular road started, and the Park Board was able to negotiate for assistance in getting materials to the park. The road and reservoir construction required a special tramline to be constructed, for the transportation of building materials and gravel quarried in the Darling Ranges. Each carriage was hauled from the Darling Ranges to Subiaco by the Railways Department, and then hauled over the tramway by horse drawn teams. The Fremantle Harbour Workshops provided the special tramway crossings required. The weight of the gravel caused difficulties with the brakes on the carriages, which needed constant repair from the strain. One brakeman had an arm amputated when a brake failed, and another was squashed, resulting in abdominal injuries and continued poor health. Despite the difficulties, including limits on the amount of gravel that

47 Ibid.
could be quarried, or trucks offloaded by the Railways Department to meet their own requirements, the road was completed in October 1901.

Development of the land at the base of Mount Eliza as terraced garden space (called unimaginatively, the Terraces) provided another way for visitors to access the civilised landscape of the park. This was improved by the development of a serpentine path up the Mount to the Pavilion, a design that possibly owed as much to safety considerations as it did to landscape aesthetics, and by the development of a jetty on Perth Water, opposite the Terraces. As has been noted earlier, local municipalities were anxious for their ratepayers to have access to the park and to the river at Crawley. The Board was asked to develop pathways, and accede to the widening of roads on the border of the park, as well as install turnstiles and gates to improve access.

Although the park was perceived as a pleasure ground, an essential conflict between the park as landscaped space and recreational facility did and could produce conflict. With over 1,000 acres under their control, the Board was forced to consider a range of suggestions for the park, from 20 acres for a polo ground, a tennis ground for nearby residents, to a children’s hospital. Such
suggestions were always considered with an eye to the amount of control the Board could retain, the implications under the Act, and the amount of resources required or offered. The polo group were offered 12 acres, but wanted 20 and were rejected. The tennis group were eventually successful, with the establishment of the Kings Park Tennis Club in 1899. Part of the park was given over as a school oval to the Perth High School in 1897, as part of government negotiations for a suitable site for the eventually funded Observatory, and in exchange for land near Crawley Bay. It was envisaged that the newly exchanged land might eventually be developed as a formal entry to the park, and a road, named Park Road, was gazetted.

In April 1898, the Board was approached by St Paul’s Sunday School to allow a picnic to take place in the grounds, near the Pavilion. The purpose was central to the civilising and domesticating role of the park, but the physical reality caused anxiety. Secretary Kelly advised the Board that, ‘they are likely to do very great damage – particularly in the case of children who would doubtless scramble over the new laid turf, etc…’

Colonel Phillips and Hackett agreed, but Lovekin dissented. ‘I think people should be encouraged to picnic in the park. I cannot see what harm will be done around the Pavilion with the caretaker in attendance…’

Vandalism and damage to the park was a real concern. Band performances contributed significantly by increasing both the number of visitors to the Park, and the chance of damage to the grounds or trees, but were liked by a range of Perth society, and were perceived as eminently civic and improving. The Trades and Labour Council wrote in 1898 requesting that band performances be allowed on Sundays as, ‘this would tend to popularise the Park, and would confer a great boon upon those of our population who are

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48 ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, Files - general (Cons. 5458, 2, SROWA).
49 Ibid.
unable to provide music for their own homes.\textsuperscript{50} To control the damage, the constable was dispensed with and a residential caretaker, Cecil Foss, appointed instead. So seriously did Foss take his duties that when he was ill with chicken pox in 1899 his wife wrote to ask the Board to appoint an assistant, as Foss was unable to sleep due to worry about the park.\textsuperscript{51}

Nor were just the formally landscaped parts of the park subject to damage. Children and adults pulled or picked the wildflowers, despite not only the presence of Subiaco’s despised constable, and Foss, but the remainder of the park staff. At a meeting of the Board in October 1897, the Secretary, Kelly, was:

instructed to communicate with the Crown Law Department with a view to ascertaining whether By-law No. 4 deals with the ‘plucking of flowers’, if not that it be so amended as to make the clause perfectly clear on the point…\textsuperscript{52}

Despite being reassured on the point, Kelly had cause to write to Forrest, in August 1898, seeking permission to prosecute ladies who had been caught picking the flowers, and who had received a warning the previous year. Forrest, perhaps anxious to encourage the use of the park (and understanding the flower picking impulse) demurred. The ladies were again warned, and other prosecutions, of presumably neither ladies nor gentlemen but suspected commercial pickers, were allowed to act as a warning.\textsuperscript{53}

Australian native plants generally, unlike their American counterparts, had yet to find their place in the received aesthetic of spreading, leafy branches and rolling grassy swards, expressed in European and American Parks, and in Sydney’s Domain, Hyde Park and Centennial Park, Melbourne’s Fitzroy

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 6, SROWA)’.
\textsuperscript{52} ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
\textsuperscript{53} Kelly, 10 August 1898 in ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 2, SROWA)’. 
Gardens or Adelaide’s green belt. The banksias, jarrahs and tuarts of Mt Eliza were almost as far from that aesthetic as could be imagined. Nevertheless, any work by the contractors creating Forrest’s ‘fine drive’ or by the Water Board, who were creating a reservoir for the City within the Park, carried either the proviso that no trees were to be removed, or that large trees were to be protected. Over the next few years, the acceptable model for the park reflected an increasing use of native vegetation, driven both by economic necessity, but also by a growing appreciation and sense of a vernacular landscape aesthetic. This aesthetic, although derived from English landscape models, and being broadly driven by picturesque and later gardenesque concerns, easily incorporated plants, and especially trees, from the wider botanic world that late 19th century collecting had made available.

Discussion of the role of native flora may have been one of the first items addressed by the Board, but the need for appropriate by-laws was not far behind. At the second meeting a set of by-laws, probably based on those developed by Phillips for the Government Gardens a decade earlier, which in turn owed much to South Australia, were keenly debated. Sadly, the discussion itself is not reported in the minutes: only the tone of the debate remains. Although, as has been demonstrated in earlier chapters, the concepts of recreation, health and enjoyment had changed considerably from the 1829 regulations for the public use of land, the terminology, and even the practices recognized by the Act and its regulations had not changed as much. In a culture that now recognized organized leisure time and a range of leisure activities the regulations that the Board created were still somewhat limited. Rather than freely accessible by the people, the Perth Park, and others like it, were valuable assets that had to be protected. The Park Board could, and did, 

54 Those plants that had, such as the Queensland figs, or some of the Eucalypts promoted by Mueller, were of spreading habit and were to become a staple of Australian landscaping.
55 Park employees were themselves granted an eight hour day in March 1897.
set generous hours for the opening of the park, but they did so in combination with a set of rules that rigorously defined the conduct of those who used the park during the opening hours. The type of sports and gymnastics and the days on which they could be played, could be set and limited. Other traditional recreations, such as horseracing, including training, and shooting, which the site had previously been used for, were also considered and proscribed.

**Creating the healthy city**

Active recreation, such as cricket and athletics, did not suffer from being controlled within the Park, as alternative sites were also being developed within the city’s boundaries. Sporting Associations benefited in 1893 from the passage of a Bill that enabled sporting associations to borrow money ‘to improve their lands’.\footnote{28 September 1893, *Western Australian Votes and Proceedings* (Perth, Westen Australia: Government Printer), vol. V, p. 968.} Forrest, commending the Bill to the Legislative Assembly, referred to the ‘manly nature’ of such games,\footnote{Ibid.} reinforcing the notion that cricket was perceived as meeting the recreational requirements of the population, while at the same time directing and moulding these masculine energies into socially approved modes of behaviour. As the second reading speech noted, the Bill was primarily formulated for the benefit of the Cricket Association, which had felt left out of a similar Act, passed the previous year. The Association’s expenditure on its site, some £15,000, was highly regarded, both from the perspective of the attractiveness of the site and its potential to improve and promote the city:

> When the ground was handed over... it was nothing more than a swamp, and no one ever thought of going there; but now it is a pleasant place to go to, and the Association wish to further improve it. Until we have a suitable ground, it is hardly likely that we shall have the cricket teams from the neighbouring colonies visiting us....\footnote{Ibid., 28 September, 1893, Vol. V, p. 968; Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAVP'.}
Not only was organized recreation benefiting, but other rational recreational forms were increasingly important in the considerations of Parliament and the City Council. Healthy recreation required a healthy city and concerns about sanitation and health, including the ubiquitous trope of the city’s lungs, was high on the agenda. Of particular concern was the land along the river foreshore from Fremantle to Perth. The emphasis on the provision of leisure space, for activities such as picnics, athletics, cricket and yachting, reflected the evolution of both recreation needs and the spaces required for these activities. Western Australia’s entrenched anxiety vis à vis comparison with other cities was also a factor. Mr E.G. Henty had first raised the matter in the Legislative Council in September 1894, with a motion that ‘large reserves of land for public use, on the frontage to the Swan River and estuary, should be secured by the Government as soon as possible.’

Henty noted the number of reserves on the northern, Perth side of the river, but pointed to the dearth of reserves on the south side, which had only just begun to be developed. Perth could pride itself on its estuary, ‘portions of it being quite equal to some parts of Sydney Harbour, of which we hear so much…’

The Colonial Secretary, Stephen Parker, concurred, including a hope that:

the river will become one of the most popular and healthy of our health resorts, and I can imagine no more healthy occupation for the young men of this city than rowing and sailing on our magnificent Swan river…

The motion was referred to the Legislative Assembly, where John Forrest noted that it was an unusual practice for the Council to refer a motion to the Assembly, instead of the other way around. He was also concerned about the wording of the motion, in particular that the Government be required to act ‘as soon as possible’, which he feared would lead to the immediate expenditure of

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59 Legislative Council, 26 September 1894, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
large sums of money. While the Assembly agreed that urgency was not required, the tone of the debate strongly supported the idea of more reserves on both sides of the river. In a suggestion that would be reflected in town planning recommendations of the 1950s, Mr Illingworth called for the reservation of a ‘chain or two along the water side... all along between Perth and Fremantle’. The motion, amended to remove the contentious timeliness factor, (probably to Forrest’s relief, as the funding required would have been in competition with Perth Park) was put and passed.

Low-lying land, along the river and in the inevitable swamps, was perceived as providing both health risks and sites of opportunity. The City Council not only petitioned Parliament for more sites and development of recreational grounds, but also developed and sought funding for their own projects. The first of these was to be the redevelopment of the brick pits adjacent to the newly granted Cricket Grounds, and for some twenty years previously, both an eyesore and a health hazard:

the pits... become filled with stagnant water and receive the drainings from nearby cowsheds and pigstyes, as well as refuse from the houses round, and emit a strong odour.\(^{63}\)

The opening of the Perth to Bunbury railway in 1892 prompted the Council to consider closing the pits, presumably because they could now access an alternative source of clay.\(^{64}\) As always, they turned first to the Colonial Government and sought funding for some remedial works, mostly fencing the grounds. Three years later they were more ambitious, and in January 1896 the City Surveyor reported on his visit to the Brickpits, in the company of the Government Gardener, Daniel Feakes. The two of them had grand visions including ‘tree planting, footpaths, embanking, Bridges, etc’, in short, all the

\(^{62}\) Ibid.

\(^{63}\) Colonial Surgeon, Colonial Secretary’s Office, ‘1st Annual Health Report’, Correspondence Received (Cons. 36, 804, SROWA).

\(^{64}\) ‘PCC (Cons. 2826, vol. 6, SROWA)’.
paraphernalia of a romantic garden in the picturesque style. Estimated initially
to cost £1000 (revised to the very exact estimate of £1761.10.6) the Council at
once turned to the Government for both the full £1000 plus an additional £250
for a Keeper’s Quarters. With the Government’s coffers slowly filling with
income from the goldfields at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and the Midland
Railway problem dealt with, funding was granted in 1897.

The Council appointed a sub-committee of two, Councillors Hurst and
Wilson, to consider the best way to spend the funds. On the recommendation
of the City Engineer they ‘engaged the services of Mr Farris [of New South
Wales], Landscape Gardener, to carry on and supervise improvements on the
Brickfield Reserve.’\footnote{Minutes - Works Committee’, City of Perth, Minutes - Works Committee (Cons. 2903, 2, SROWA).} Farris took the original concept and developed a fantasy
of ponds and grottoes, ‘built for the pleasure and convenience of the public.’\footnote{Ibid.} Unsurprisingly, the works required more than the original estimate and the
Council again turned to the Government for support. But they could only go to
this well once, and the request was rejected. Using Council funds, East Perth
Park, or the Brickfields Reserve, as it was also known, was finally opened to the
public on 9 October 1899, by the then Mayor, Alexander Forrest, becoming one
of the jewels in the city’s crown and the site of choice for many of the city’s
official functions. Mayor Brookman gave the first mayoral Garden Party there
two years later, in 1901.
Even with the development of the new Recreation Ground, the Cricket Association ground, the Brickfield reserve, and even the languishing Victoria Park and Plantation, there was nevertheless a perception that the city was underdeveloped in terms of open and recreational space. Promenading was still seen as a healthy and civilizing activity, and in 1897 the Council voted £150 for the improvement of Lord St, in the eastern part of the town, including levelling, planting of street trees and the introduction of seats, following a letter requesting the same from ratepayer R.D. Hardie. Ratepayers in the North Ward of the city, and in West Perth, were more ambitious, sending a delegation in 1896 and in 1897 to ask for not just a promenade, but a park and recreational reserve of their own. One of the sites they identified as meeting their needs

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67 Ibid.
was that of Third Swamp which, like the Cricket Grounds and even the Brickfields, had earlier been seen as a potential botanic garden. The other was land which had been set aside for subdivision as a residential area by local entrepreneur William Loton, but which was now perceived as low lying, and therefore ‘a menace to the public health, and … a disfigurement to the city.’\(^69\) Again, the trope of lungs for the city was invoked, and the citizens of North Perth, the editor of the *West Australian*, and even the Commissioner for Lands, Mr Richardson, all felt it was land ‘which was eminently capable of improvement of in the way of beautiful gardens.’\(^70\) However, the purchase price was far more than the government could or would afford, and the option to buy lapsed. Third Swamp, reserved by Weld in 1872, was simply felt to be more cost effective.

Although the Council had a very clear idea about what it had wanted to achieve with the Brickfields Reserve, debate about the use of other parks and reserves under its control was to become more heated as the decade wore on. The sheer number of potential uses had grown from cricket, athletics and promenading to include all types of football, including rugby, soccer and the newly established ‘Australian game’ developed in Melbourne, bicycling, tennis, croquet and even lacrosse. One of the concerns of the 1896 delegation regarding Third Swamp, for example, had been that the land might be granted to a specific association or club, without consideration of the requirements of the nearby residents. A file note identified that the ‘chief fear was that the land around the swamp might be given to the WA Bicycling Club for a track.’\(^71\)

Cricket and football in particular clashed, as both required access to often the same large grassed open spaces, with concerns about the maintenance of wickets and access to grounds for practice games and matches. As the

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\(^{69}\) ‘Reserve for a Park, North Perth - Deputation re’, Department of Lands and Surveys, (Cons. 541, 1897/311, SROWA).

\(^{69}\) ‘Lands (Cons. 541, 1897/311, SROWA)’.

\(^{70}\) Ibid.

\(^{71}\) ‘Lands (Cons. 541, 1896/8902, SROWA)’.
masculine population of Perth swelled due to the influx of gold mining hopefuls, so did the number of clubs and associations, with Government Departments, businesses and even electoral wards fielding their own football and cricket teams at junior and all the other grades. Nor was competition between them limited to conflict between the codes, or even to match time, and it was sometimes less than civilized.

The Telegraph Messenger’s Cricket Club, playing on Weld Square in 1898, wrote indignantly to the Council that, despite possessing ‘a permit granted to us by your clerk on a printed form from the Council’, they had been abused both physically and verbally by the Telephone Cricket Club.\textsuperscript{72} The Telephones, although only practising and not playing, ‘through [sic] away [the stumps] and said that if we don’t go they would take and give us a lashing all the time swearing and using most insulting language…’\textsuperscript{73} Cricket and football were played on the Esplanade, Weld and Delhi Squares and the old Recreation Ground (renamed Wellington Square in 1898). The Junior Cricket Association complained that the pavilion on the old Recreation Ground was dilapidated with ‘every pane of glass, in every window… smashed to pieces.’\textsuperscript{74} The Western Australian Football Club similarly complained that the Council had leased the pavilion on the Esplanade to another club, depriving them of the premises, and demanding the return of a punching bag hanging in the pavilion. The Council responded by limiting the number of grounds on which games could be played. Russell and Delhi Square were fenced and paved in 1898 and 20 garden seats placed in Russell Square and 10 in the East Perth Park, a move that emphasised their more passive recreational role. Other parks were similarly refined.

\textsuperscript{72} 5 March 1898, ‘Use of wickets on Esplanade Reserve/Weld Square’, City of Perth, (Cons. 2501, File 19, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Letter to Town Clerk, 20 November 1897, Ibid.
The increasing size of the Western Australian Cricket Association ground (henceforth known generally as the WACA), had in part made the Council’s decision possible. As early as 1896 the Association had asked for the reserve boundaries to be redrawn, cancelling part of reserve 1547, and giving them both Perth lot 410 (their original lease) and lot 411 for Junior cricket. They also were given the land in fee simple, cancelling the 999-year lease. Forrest, in his role as Premier, had endorsed the recommendation to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, saying, ‘I think they ought to have it – it will be a boon to the citizens as time goes by’. The Commissioner, in reply, questioned the loss of the botanic gardens reserve, and asked if the cricketers could use less land. It was not to be, and the Association was granted an additional five acres on 4 January 1897. In May of that year, they wrote again, requesting the remainder of reserve 1547. The Association had itself identified the land as not being suitable for a garden, promising that the land ‘will be made an ornament to the city’, a sentiment echoed Forrest who said that the Trustees (of whom he could speak with personal authority) were ‘doing their best to make the place a ground worthy of the city’. By 1899 the WACA had three of the original Botanic reserve lots - Lots 403, 410 and 411, or nearly two thirds of Reserve 27A.

By the end of the 19th century the city of Perth looked to be well on its way to having all the amenities of a civilised and urbane city, one that was fit to take its place in the newly formed Australian Federation and the Empire. The WACA and Perth, now Kings, Park, the new Recreation Ground, Queens Gardens and Third Swamp, all contributed to the aesthetics of the city, meeting the population’s requirements for a range of recreational spaces; meeting the underlying expectations and tropes of ‘breathing spaces’ and rational recreation. The landscape park and sporting reserve, standing in for the pleasure ground of Ponte’s analysis, were well established as models for the

75 ‘Lands (Cons. 4811, 1889/2587, SROWA)’. 
development of public open space: only the botanic garden was yet to achieve a similar status and role. The Government Gardens provided some of the functions of such a garden, being used for horticultural display and distribution, with some minor experimental plantings, a role that was more and more taken by the newly formed Agricultural Department and the Conservator of Forests.
Chapter 7- Designing nature

‘The grand old Duke of York, he had 10,000 men
He marched them up to the top of the hill and he marched them
down again.’

Western Australians greeted the start of the new century, and the new Federation, in the knowledge that they were at last economically secure, with an increasing population and an urban setting that was gradually coming to match their perceptions of what was required of capital cities. Federation brought with it the promise of national defence, important in the light of the recent South African conflict and reassuring as Russia and Japan moved to open conflict. It also brought the promise of improved communication with other states and capitals, through the growing telegraph network and a proposed transnational railway line. More generally, the new century saw the formulation of ambitious plans for the maintenance of moral and civil societies, where newly idealised cities would again take on a civilising mantle, rather than being seen as sites of degradation and pollution.

In this chapter I discuss the development of Kings Park as a site of memorialisation and commemoration. Through carefully chosen artistic memes, memorials encouraged the development of a moral and socially responsible population, and reinforced attachments to Empire and Commonwealth. I further argue that the development of parks in the city was related to ideas of city status, and through the ongoing work at Kings Park, and in new work along the foreshore, contributed to a sense of the city, and by extension, the State, as equal to any other in the Commonwealth. Concerns about the physical and mental health of the citizenry, reflected in debates about sanitation and access to morally and educationally stimulating nature, also contributed to the design and development of the parks. As access to appropriate forms of nature, civil and civilising, became more common, so too did concerns about appropriate modes of access.
Memorialising the city

When visiting Western Australia on their 1901 Federation tour, the Duke of Cornwall and York (and his Duchess) had something less than 10,000 men. The Royal couple had presided at the opening of the first Federal parliament in Melbourne, and were now on their way home. The program for the Duke and Duchess drew attention to the City's growing number of cultural institutions and functions, each carrying all the hallmarks of an urban and civilised city, proud to call itself a full member of the Federation and of the Empire – the Zoological gardens, the library, art gallery and museum, as well as testimonial dinners and speeches. A choir of several thousand school children, and their families and friends, greeted the Duke and Duchess at the top of Mt Eliza, where commemoration and memorialisation were further enhanced by renaming the park, Kings Park, in recognition of the accession of the Duke's father, Edward VII, to the throne. The name itself was also a signifier of the relationship between the new State and the Empire and a symbol of the status of the city as a capital within the Empire. At the same time, the main drive was named Princess May Drive, in honour of the Duchess. At the same time, the Duke was to lay the foundation stone for Perth's first war memorial, commemorating those who had gone on the South African campaign, and the first public sculpture of any description in the city.

Not all thought that the Park was the most suitable site for the memorial, and it was an unusual move for the period. Manchester did not put a major sculpture of this nature into a park until 1895, and Terry Wyke has identified that generally such memorials and public sculptures were placed, not in parks, but in public squares, helping to define them as civic spaces.¹ In reporting the Royal Visit in July 1901, the afternoon paper, Lovekin's Daily News, questioned the placement of the memorial in the park, where only a few might see it. But both

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the *Daily News* and the more establishment *West Australian* recognized and responded to the significance of the memorial and the Duke’s call for more such memorials:

> It is a great and noble thought, and one that should commend itself not solely to the people of this State, nor only to the Australian nation, but also to the furthest corner of the British Empire. Each State, each colony, and each integrated portion of Great and Greater Britain should have its own everlasting record of those who shed their blood to preserve that which makes the Empire and empire, namely its unity, its oneness.  

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From wasteland to parkland

Prior to the establishment of the Fallen Soldiers memorial, Perth had been almost totally bereft of civic art, other than through the cemetery. The morally improving role of cemetery art had been a key factor in the establishment of landscape cemeteries such as Mount Auburn near Boston in the early 1800s, and in suggestions for similar cemeteries in England around the same time.\(^3\) Classical statuary too, tastefully displayed in private and public parks, had long been lauded for its aesthetic didacticism, teaching the poor and uneducated both history and art. In her thesis on Manchester’s public parks, Theresa Wyborn discusses how sculpture in private gardens and collections was appreciated by those educated in understanding art and art history.\(^4\) Public sculpture needed to be more inclusive, more easily and readily interpreted, using well understood and generally appreciated artistic cliché and modes. Designed by Pietro Porcelli, an immigrant stonemason and sculptor, the War memorial expanded the sculptural rhetoric, citing both classical imagery and connecting to ideas of Empire, and of brave and noble sacrifice for the greater good.

In a further demonstration of Imperial commemoration, endorsing Perth’s place and right to take its place in the pantheon of Imperial cities, a statue of Queen Victoria, designed by F.H. Wilkinson and donated to the state by Mr Allen H. Stoneham of London, was placed in the park in 1903. The statue was not unique - a similar one was erected in New Zealand, and over thirty statues to Victoria were erected in England, where it had been argued that a statue was the only form of lasting commemoration.\(^5\)

Stoneham had some very strong and definite ideas about how the Western Australian statue was to be displayed. It had been held, uninsured, in

\(^3\) Taylor, *The vital landscape: nature and the built environment in nineteenth-century Britain*.  
\(^4\) Wyborn, *'Nothing better than the dirt and dust of streets and highways': the making of Manchester’s first public parks, 1833 - 1865*.  
\(^5\) Eales, reporting on progress, 6 August 1903, in *'Statue of Her late Majesty presented by Mr Stoneham'*; Kings Park Board, *Files - general* (Cons. 5458, 9, SROWA), and Smith, *'A ‘grand work of noble conception’*.  

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Fremantle while Stoneham’s preferred architect, Mr Eales of Fremantle, prepared designs for an appropriate plinth. Eales proceeded to erect a shed for the statue in the park in May 1903, without Board sanction, a procedure that Hackett, as Chairman of the Park Board, had protested when first mooted in March of that year, believing that the statue, if it was to be erected in the Park, should be under the Board’s authority and control. Eventually, Eales and the Board were able to come to agreement on a mutually approved design, one that would cost an additional £220, and for which they asked Stoneham to pay. Hackett, writing on behalf of the Board, was able to advise Stoneham both of the agreed design and of the proposed program for the statue’s unveiling:

The Governor will unveil the statue, and the Premier and Chief Justice, will, I trust, give addresses on the occasion. All the troops in Perth will be paraded under the command of Lt-Col. Ricardo. It will be a really beautiful addition to our city. Four old cannons, two of them Waterloo guns, were presented to the State many years ago, and have been lying at Fremantle. These are to be brought up and arranged on the statue on platforms of their own. They will add greatly to the interest and attraction of the memorial…  

The guns had been provided through the actions of Lt-Colonel Ricardo, the West Australian Commandant. Ricardo paid to have the rotting carriages rebuilt, and his gesture was ‘heartily commended.’ In addition to the plinth, on which eight stonemasons were employed, and the guns, a series of flagpoles stretching from the park to the nearest suburban primary schools was also planned. The costs, however, proved too much, especially when the amount required for the plinth more than doubled to £475. The Board, rather than Stoneham, eventually paid for the work and for Eales’s fees.

Two of the guns were made in 1739, and their antecedents were not well known, although the age of the guns indicated that they could well have been used at Waterloo. The other two had been made in 1843 and were believed by

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6 ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 9, SROWA)’.
7 ‘7th Battalion guns in Park’, Kings Park Board, Files - general (Cons. 5458, 15, SROWA).
Ricardo to have possibly been used in the Crimea.\(^8\) The campaign was significant to Western Australians, particularly those who were descendants of the Convict Pensioner Guard, many of whom had been veterans of the Crimea. Guns were also to be added to the Fallen Soldiers Memorial. By making the gift, Ricardo was placing the Waterloo, Crimea and the South African campaigns alongside each other, as exemplars of the ties between Empire and Western Australia. Hackett was also able to assure Stoneham of the value of his gift, to the colony and the Empire:

I shall send you a full account of the ceremony, and believe me, we all feel deeply indebted to you for your kindness. It is acts such as these which help forward the imperial feeling, and make the truest son of Australia feel himself no less truly a son of the Empire.

The Park’s status as a site of commemoration for the State was confirmed with a decision to memorialise George Leake, the first Premier of the new century, who died after only six months in the role. Leake was a well-respected member of parliament, and had worked as solicitor general, and been a municipal representative. His sudden death in June 1902, at the age of 46, was a blow to the higher echelons of Perth society. Leake’s memorial, designed by artist James Linton, was a fountain, a more practical memorial than the statue of Victoria or the Porcelli designed South African memorial. It was indeed a combination of form and function, a design feature that hinted at the emphasis on beauty and utility that was to mark both the Garden City and City Beautiful movements.

**Paying for nature**

Although the Park was increasingly being recognised for its aesthetic qualities and ability to contribute to the cultural and civil status of the city, this recognition was not reflected financially. Water, despite a deal struck with the

\(^8\) Ricardo, 18 February 1903 in Ibid.
Water Board for water in return for land for the reservoir, was the Park’s major expense. In addition there were established staff costs, and the Board had several expensive bills for the Queen Victoria statue and for the roads. Early in his term as Premier, Leake had headed an Inquiry into the Park Board, and specifically into the construction of the Circular, or May, Drive. It seems likely that Leake had been, in effect, an undercover agent for the Board, and his public inquiry was designed to head off or short circuit a more extensive criticism. In February 1902, John Hackett had written to Leake with a list of possible questions, and Leake had responded a week later with an official request for answers to those same questions. In responding formally, Hackett was able to raise publicly the commitment of the Board, and their dissatisfaction with both the Railway Department on the Circular Drive, and with the Public Works Department on the earlier Park Road.

Hackett was also able to use his newspaper, the *West Australian*, to make the point that the Park and its Board were over stretched and under funded. The Board had been asked to consider several different applications for a portion of the park to be set aside, for purposes such as a polo ground (some 12 to 20 acres), a golf course and a children’s hospital. A full discussion of the golf course proposal was included in the *West Australian*, along with a report that it was expected the Board would reject the proposal:

> as their hands are full at the present. You will see that in Parliament determined attacks are made upon the Board and their operations. To be saddled with further expenditure and find that expenditure not allowed by Parliament would add immensely to their difficulties.

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9 John Hackett to George Leake, 1 February 1902. George Leake, Premier, to Perth Park Board, 8 February, 1902. ‘Perth Park Board. Asking for certain information re expenditure etc.’ Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1496, 1902/390, SROWA).

10 John Hackett, Chair of the Kings Park Board, to Premier Leake, 13 February 1902. Ibid.

11 Newspaper clipping, January 1903. ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, *Files - general* (Cons. 5458, 4, SROWA).
Despite these attempts to publicise their difficulties and, through public opinion, improve their lot, the Board was unsuccessful. By 1903 Feakes was recommending that tenders be called for the sale of deadwood and removal of some of the trees from the Park.\(^{12}\)

Feakes may have had two purposes in mind. The first would have been the threat of bushfire, and the Park suffered from a major bushfire in January 1904, possibly deliberately set. Removal of deadwood would have reduced the severity of any fires, and indeed Feakes was reasonably sanguine about the 1904 fire, saying, ‘I consider the damage done is not of a serious nature. I think it will prove to have done a considerable amount of good in the near future…’\(^{13}\)

Ranger Foss agreed, believing that ‘after the first rains the Park will look beautiful with flowers’ and that vermin, ‘of all kinds’, had been removed.\(^{14}\)

The second purpose was more personal. Feakes had applied for an honorarium of £50 in 1901, citing his significant contribution to the Park and the Board:

When you call to mind the rough state in which the Park was at the time I took its transformation in hand (some four and a half years ago) and then look at it now, I am sure you will admit it is a work you, as the Committee, and I, as your executive officer, have every reason to be proud of. It is a work of no small magnitude and importance, and the new drive, which was carried out under my personal supervision, will, I think, compare favourably with any work of the kind in any part of the world...

I can honestly say I have done my utmost… to bring the Park into line with similar pleasure grounds in the Eastern States.\(^ {15}\)

Unsurprisingly, Feakes was granted his honorarium.

The following year, Feakes not only expected to receive an honorarium but requested that it be paid quarterly. He was also being reimbursed for his

\(^{12}\) Memo from Feakes, August 1903, Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Feakes to Board, 22 January 1904, ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, Files - general (Cons. 5458, 5, SROWA).

\(^{14}\) Foss to Board, 14 January 1904, Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Feakes to Board, 11 November 1901, ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 6, SROWA)’.
tram tickets between the Government Gardens and the Park. However, the Board was no longer entirely satisfied with Feakes’s contribution. Although Feakes was generous in providing plants for the park, and lending equipment, such as a turf roller, he also tended to view the two accounts as interchangeable. Ranger O’Gorman queried an account for the use of manure and superphosphate in the park in 1904, which was annotated by Kelly, the Board Secretary, ‘Members present decided nothing to warrant charge being formulated against Feakes’.  

Feakes’s problems had started a few months earlier. During the Public Service Commission Inquiry of 1903 – 1904, allegations were made against the administration of the Government Gardens. Henry Daglish raised the matter in Parliament, asking whether an Inquiry into the Gardens would be conducted and, without naming anyone, implying that Feakes was implicated in maladministration. Feakes was named during debate on the Estimates of that year, when it was asked if he or his undergardeners had been accepting private gardening commissions. The Kings Park honorarium was identified as an appropriate reimbursement, but the Premier confessed:

There had been a practice in the past for gardeners employed in the public gardens to work occasionally for other people. It was an improper practice and had been stopped…

By April 1904, Feakes was being discreetly replaced. Kelly, the Board Secretary, advised Feakes that, ‘For some time past the question of appointing an officer who should permanently reside in the Park… has received the attention of the Board…’ J. Sheath was appointed as Superintendent, with a salary of £4 per week and a residence. However, Feakes was asked that ‘the works upon which you are at present engaged – the Fern Gully, ornamentation

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16 ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 5, SROWA)’.
17 Legislative Assembly, 14 October 1903, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAPD’, p. 1570.
18 Legislative Assembly, 10 November 1903, Ibid., p. 1991.
19 Kelly to Feakes, 28 April 1904, ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 6, SROWA)’.
of the Butts, and the Crawley pathway – should be pushed on under your
direction. Hackett congratulated Kelly on his adroitness; ‘I fancy we shall be
able to give a title to Feakes of an honorary character to save what he calls his
reputation…’

Enjoyment of the Park also required additional infrastructure. Ranger
Cecil Foss had raised the urgent need for ‘a place of accommodation’ for
gentlemen visitors to Kings Park in 1903. Nor was this the only form of relief
required by visitors. A tea room had been established near the Terraces (see
Fig. 17). Another was constructed near the Subiaco end of the park, and
leased to a Mrs Cummings, in January 1906, on the condition that the rooms
were open between:

2.30 and 5.30 at least, excepting the day is so very wet as to
preclude visitors from going to the park. On Wednesday, Saturday
and Sunday afternoons the Tea room, of course needs special
attention…

Within nine months, though, the Board was receiving complaints that the
rooms were shut during the afternoon, or open only briefly. By March 1907, Mrs
Cummings was in arrears on her rent, complaining that:

not having made anything out of the said Tea Room, in fact having
made a great loss pecuniarily besides giving up a year of my
valuable time, I am quite unable to pay for the balance asked for…

Not only had she been unable to get customers, but had suffered from two
robberies:

Instead of asking me for anything your Board should recompense me
for my loss of time and the goods stolen, and I feel sure that the
gentlemen composing the Board will if these matters are fully
explained, accept my view.

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20 Ibid.
21 Hackett to Kelly, nd, Ibid.
22 'KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 4, SROWA)'.
23 Kings Park Board to Mrs Cummings, 10 September 1906, 'New Tea rooms - Subiaco end of
Kings Park', Kings Park Board, Files - general (Cons. 5458, 15, SROWA).
24 Mrs Cummings to Board, Ibid.
25 Ibid.
The lease was then issued to a Mr Robinson; on condition that he sold ‘products at local prices’ and that ‘intoxicating beverages [sic] are not of course permitted to be sold.’ Without liquor, Robinson too was asking for a reduction in rent, and a reduction in opening hours. In August 1908, Mrs Dhue and Wilkinson offered to take over the lease on a month’s trial, providing they could sell pictures and fancy goods. A month later, Mrs Dhue withdrew, and Mrs Wilkinson, in an undated letter, complained that she was unable to gain access to the Tea room as Mrs Dhue held the keys and would not give them up. ‘Also she is on the verge of insanity through starvation (her own fault) having destroyed over £3 of goods at Tea Rooms’. Mrs Wilkinson too was giving up, and the lease passed to Mrs Purdie, who withdrew in December 1908.

Despite these difficulties or perhaps because of them, the Board determined that new Tea rooms should be constructed in 1908. Calls for a design were issued on 18 May 1908, with responses required no later than 16 June of the same year. A 20-guinea prize was offered for successful architect. Designs ranged from formal octagonal designs with Doric columns, or Romanesque friezes, to a ‘modernized Bungalow style’. In keeping with the practice of the day, a number of designs were submitted under a *nom de plume*, although this had not been a requirement of the competition. The choice of

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26 Board to Robinson, August 1907, Ibid. Although Mr Robinson had not been allowed to sell liquor in Kings Park, the lessee of the Esplanade Kiosk clearly hoped that the Perth City Council would be more amenable, and wrote requesting a wine licence in April 1909. Clearly an entrepreneurial type, the Council was also forced to advise, in 1911, that the practice of charging ladies to use the ‘accommodations’ at the kiosk would result in the Council reciprocating with sanitary fees and pan charges. 20 April 1909 and 16 January 1911, ‘Minutes - General Purpose committee’, City of Perth, *Minutes - General purpose committee* (Cons. 2893, 3, SROWA).
27 Robinson to Board, December 1907 and 11 March 1908, ‘KP Bd (Cons. 5458, file 15, SROWA)’.
28 Ibid.
29 Mrs Dhue to Board, 20 September 1908, and Mrs Wilkinson to Board, nd, Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, *Files - general* (Cons. 5458, 13, SROWA).
names - ‘Coolness and Comfort’, ‘Cicero’ and ‘Pliny’ - spoke to the design elements that were expected to appeal to the Board. ‘Coolness and comfort’ appealed to the pastoral and passive aspects of Park recreation and could not ‘but afford great comfort to every visitor when quietly viewing the surrounding beauties of this wonderful panorama of the City of Perth and its Swan River.’ ‘Pliny’ and ‘Cicero’ evoked the cultured and civilising aspect of the Park. Yet it was the cost of the designs that became the determining factor, with letters being sent to several architects, implying that they were the successful designer, and asking them to confirm that the costs of the design could be restricted to £300. The, apparently unnamed, design by Mr McMullin won the day.

**Landscaping the healthy city**

Just as the Government had been concerned with developing recreational space, so too had the City Council. The City was constantly seeking control over the recreational spaces of the city, while at the same time asking for Government assistance to manage them. The growth of the city meant that those same concerns about distance to recreational spaces that had dictated the original reclamation in the 1860s had played their part in encouraging the development of recreational space in areas that had previously been deemed too far from the centre of population.

The City Council had started to develop Third Swamp, renaming it Hyde Park after the parks of the same name in London and Sydney, but had been unable to get copies of the titles vesting the land with them. It was a problem not just with Third Swamp, but also with Delhi Square right on the western edge of the city, and with Queens Gardens. The Town Clerk, Petherick, had written in 1899 requesting the copies on the basis that both Hyde Park and Delhi Square had been ‘considerably improved by the City Council.’ The Under
Secretary for Lands replied that a difficulty with the survey of Hyde Park was delaying the transfer. Part of the street reserve for Hyde Park, it transpired, included land belonging to George Throssell, the Member for the country seat of Northam, and the second premier of Western Australia.\(^3\) Throssell was happy to give up the land, and the street was named in his honour. At the opposite south east corner, the park was lessened by the arc of Irene St, which with Lincoln and William Sts, bounded a small block belonging to the House of Mercy, for which a transfer was also required.\(^3\)

The Council was also seeking additional finances from the State Government to assist with maintaining the recreation reserves for which it had or expected to receive the title. Reserves were expensive to create and maintain. Fencing the south and west portions of Hyde Park at been estimated at £500, and in 1898 they received a tender of £774 to finish clearing the park.\(^3\) They had requested permission to send a deputation to the Premier, in November 1899, to discuss the management of parks ‘whereby the reserves may be maintained conjointly by the Government and the Council, as exists in the Eastern Colonies.’ Unsurprisingly, their request led to a flurry of telegrams enquiring as to the veracity of the claim. Adelaide, Hobart and Brisbane received no direct contribution, with Brisbane noting that the Government maintained the Botanic Garden, while Sydney and Melbourne received grants and funding. The response to the Perth City Council, rejecting the idea on the basis that Perth Park was maintained by Government plus some grants, was sent less than a fortnight after the request was received.\(^3\) Undaunted, the Council applied in March 1900, for £1000 specifically for Hyde Park. The

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\(^3\) George Throssell became Premier in February 1901, but resigned in May the same year, retiring to the backbenches.
\(^3\) 'Re lot Y232 - 1897. Town Hall site - Town of Perth Grantee but no Deed issued', Department of Lands and Surveys, (Cons. 4697, 1897/5795, SROWA).
\(^3\) 25 July 1898, 'PCC (Cons. 2903, vol. 2, SROWA)'.
\(^3\) 'Request from Perth City Council for deputation to discuss management of Parks and Reserves', Premier's Department, Files (Cons. 1496, 1899/1969, SROWA).
Premier was unable to comply with their wishes. Forced back on their own resources, the Council developed the parks in their control in a piecemeal fashion, often responding to the demands of individual interest groups, whose different ideas of park use and development would lead to conflict.

In addition to Third Swamp the Council was engaged in discussion with William Loton for part of his land, situated between the old Claisebrook site and Third Swamp, and quite possibly the land in Stirling Street that had been identified in the 1870s as a possible botanic garden site. The Loton site, sited on the slope below Loton’s house, ‘Dilhom’, was unsuitable for housing as the lower part of the land was swampy, and Loton leased it out as market gardens. Loton himself was a member of the Legislative Council, a well-known businessman and real estate developer. He was also generous, and given to good works. He had first tried to sell the land in Stirling Street in 1897 when the question of a recreation reserve for the north of the city had been initially raised. His asking price of £12,000 was considered too high and the matter lapsed.\(^{36}\) The matter was raised again in 1901, and negotiations between Loton and the Perth City Council were taken up in 1904. The land was transferred as a Trust to the City Council in October 1904 for the sum of £8,500, on condition that ‘the said land should be held by us in perpetuity as and for a public park and recreation ground and for no other purpose.’\(^{37}\) William Bold, the Town Clerk, was later to claim credit for negotiating the transfer.\(^{38}\)

At the same time, works were also being undertaken on the river, to make Perth civilised and urbane; a city in truth, able to take its place on the world stage, both aesthetically and economically. A continuing discourse within the city about additional recreational space for sports such as cricket and football

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\(^{36}\) ‘Lands (Cons. 541, 1897/311, SROWA)’.


(those games banned from Kings Park), combined with a similar discussion of the role of the river as a transport hub and a recreation site, led to a reinterpretation of the original 1887 foreshore reclamation plan in 1904.

The intention to reclaim the land had clearly been in the minds of the Public Works Department and the Department of Lands and Surveys for sometime. The Surveyor General, Harry Johnston, raised the problem of who was to control reclaimed lands, identifying their clearly artificial and constructed nature, in a memo to the Under Secretary for Lands, in 1899 following an application for the vesting of a new reserve below the Government Gardens in the Public Works Department:

I do not think for one moment that officers of this Department would look upon reclaimed lands as ordinary Crown lands and deal with them as such, but would in all cases, when it was proposed to deal with any such land, refer to the Public Works Department before definite action was taken.39

Johnston was also concerned that the reclaimed part of Perth Water, which was not used for wharfs and businesses, might be vested in the Municipality or some other body as recreation space, noting that this was something the city already possessed adequately. (It should be noted that the City of Perth and the Department for Lands were enjoying a dispute about whether or not the title for various reserves had been vested in the City as had been agreed.40 It is likely that Johnston’s comments reflected some of these tensions.) The Under Secretary of Works agreed, but saw defence of the site in a slightly different light. ‘We should be’, he said in a memo to the Under Secretary for Lands, ‘in a better position (standing as it were, in the first line of defence) to repel the attacks of the City Council than you would be…’41

Although both Departments had visions of the city which encompassed

39 ‘Our Botanic Gardens’.
40 ‘Land (Cons. 4697, 1897/5795, SROWA)’.
41 ‘Reserve 5957 Lot 564 Reclamation near William St’, Surveyor General, Subject files (Cons. 541, 1898/6860, SROWA).
increased business through shipping, concern over control of the reclaimed land divided them, a division not helped by a Cabinet decision on 22 February 1899 (signed by Forrest) in favour of Lands. Works had not been invited to submit their view to Cabinet by Lands, a lack they made pointed reference to both at the time, and when the topic was again raised in 1901.

As the Undersecretary for Works had foreseen, the City Council did indeed have plans for the foreshore, including the extension of William St, with suitable tree plantings, to the foreshore. Mayoral candidate W.G. Brookman had included a vision of a combined Government Gardens and Government Domain, open to the public, in his 1900 electoral platform. Both Lands and Works, despite their differences over control of the land, recognized the foreshore as a site for wharves and businesses. It was not necessarily a vision shared by their elected masters; the Minister for Lands, Mr Moran, greeted a delegation from the City of Perth regarding the proposed reclamation with a similar vision to that of Brookman. In Moran’s eye were twin bridges at Barrack and William St, connecting with the developing suburb of South Perth over the broad Perth Water. He, as Brookman had before him, regretted that the redevelopment of the Supreme Court at the bottom of the Government Gardens prevented the gardens from linking to the river, even commenting that, ‘thus extended they would certainly have proved of greater use to the people…’

For Moran perhaps, the moral and social benefits of access to nature acted as a preventative, and one that was preferable than the more extreme judicial cure.

Not only could access to nature provide a moral preventative, but the proposed reclamation works were also promoted as a physical preventative for disease. During the 1890s, the colony and the city had been experiencing a number of cases of typhoid; and the condition of the river, and the sewage

\[\text{\bibitem{Ibid.}}\]
which flowed into it, were clearly identified as a cause.\textsuperscript{43} Sewage, and its effluvia, had long been a concern for the city, from the problems with the drain in the Government Gardens in the 1850s, through to the Health reports of the 1870s, and the redevelopment of the Brickfields. William Bold, Town Clerk of Perth from 1901 to 1944, described Perth at the turn of the century as, ‘…a city of smells, and we used to say that even if blindfold we could tell our whereabouts by the particular aroma we encountered at each street corner.’\textsuperscript{44} A new comprehensive plan for the disposal of sewage throughout the suburbs and the metropolitan area was proposed during the 1903-1904 parliamentary session. Of particular concern was the disposal of sewage into the river at Perth. Layers of raw sewage were found on the mud flats fronting the river, which were exposed at low tide and during the summer months.

Since 1896 the Government had been dredging Perth Water to clear or deepen channels for shipping, to improve the river as a mode of transportation. Despite the obvious benefits of an improved waterway, and deeper channels, the dredging was not entirely popular with river users.\textsuperscript{45} Dredging exposed the muddy bottom of the river, which raised concerns that the ‘previously silver sands’ had been converted to sludge by the accumulation of household waste in the river since settlement. It was also thought that dredging would

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Stannage, \textit{The people of Perth: A social history of Western Australia’s capital city}, pp. 251 - 253. Vera Whittington has identified that during the 1890s the level of deaths of typhoid in Western Australia made the colony the holder of an unenviable title. Previously, Victoria had been known as the colony with the most typhoid deaths, but in 1895 Western Australian statistics showed that 357 deaths in every 1,000 were caused by typhoid, while Victoria’s peak rate in the same decade, in 1898, was a mere 47.1 in 1,000. Vera Whittington, \textit{Two fevers, gold and typhoid: a social history of Western Australia during the decade 1891 - 1900 under the particular influence of these and other related factors, people and events} (Bentley, WA: V. Whittington, 1986).
\item Bold, ‘Bold papers (Acc. 638a, Battye)’.
\item The dredge, although moored fore and aft, tended to drift slightly, and the dredge pipe itself was a hazard to navigation. Some small claims for compensation were made and paid, but the claims of the owner of the \textit{Hinemoa}, which sank to the bottom of the river after squalls, were not so well received. In his statement of claim, Mr Henrique said that the dredge pipe had dragged over her, causing the sinking. The Supervisor of the dredge retorted that the pipe had indeed passed over the \textit{Hinemoa}, but only after she had already been on the bottom for some time.
\end{enumerate}
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exacerbate the risk of typhoid. Conversely, reclamation, which included the construction of stonewalls bordering the foreshore, would ameliorate the problem, both by covering the effluent and protecting the foreshore from further inundations. More, the reclamation would contribute valuable space for the civilising mission.

Concerns over sanitation and appropriate sewage disposal had been behind the development of several model town plans in England, and had been influential in the formulation of reformer Ebenezer Howard’s *Cities of Tomorrow*, and the Garden City movement. Although the West Australian plans did not directly reference either the earlier town plans, or Howard, many of the same concerns were expressed, both in managing the sanitation process, including landscaping, and in the perceived moral and physical benefits.

In his proposal for using the spoil from dredging to reclaim the foreshore, the Engineer in Chief, C.S.R. Palmer wrote:

the areas formed will be invaluable for recreation and other purposes, and I was particularly struck, during recent visits to Melbourne, by the use made by crowds of people of every class and degree of the grounds which Victoria for some years has been steadily forming and improving on the South bank of the Yarra

Responding to the proposal, the *Western Australian* endorsed Palmer’s vision:

It is not often that there comes such an opportunity to the Works Department of combining a work not merely of utility, but of necessity, with a gift of unusual beauty.

The ‘reclamation’ process itself, a form of ‘wharfing out’, involved the construction of barriers behind which the fill was placed – fill which included not

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46 'Queens Gardens, Perth', (Perth, WA: Battye Library, c.1910); 'The health of the city', *The Western Mail*, 14 January 1905.
just the dredged mud, but street sweepings, including sand and horse and cattle droppings, and rocks to provide a base.\textsuperscript{49} Where jetties existed, they were simply covered by the fill, rather than being removed (leaving a legacy of rotting timbers and sudden voids to be discovered during construction work in the late 1990s). \textit{Eau de Cologne} complained that an annual build-up of saltwater levels in the river, left the dead and rotting carcasses of ‘Cobblers’ (\textit{Cnidoglanis macrocephalus}) and other fish species trapped behind the barriers and under the jetties.\textsuperscript{50}

Not only was the process smelly and unattractive, but the thickness of the river mud, and the age of the dredge, also made the dredging difficult and contributed to delays. Delays led to concerns about costs and funding. A. Bell, Engineer in Charge of the work, was constantly concerned that funding would be reduced, and frustrated by the difficulties. The interest of various lobby groups did not help:

\begin{quote}
I have several times put forward in my own memoranda that the dredging and reclamation in Perth Water could be done for considerably more than 20 per cent under present cost, if due course were not interfered with by specific requests of local bodies and deputations, and if the dredging appliances were more up to date.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

Despite these difficulties the first part of the reclamation work was largely completed in early 1906, and a number of men employed on the works were dismissed. This, too, was contentious, and Bell received an anonymous letter

\textsuperscript{49} For a complete discussion on the various processes of reclamation, including ‘wharfing out’, see Nancy S. Seasholes, \textit{Gaining ground: a history of landmaking in Boston} (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003). Seasholes prefers the term ‘landmaking’ for the process of filling, but I use ‘reclamation’ in this context, as it was the one used at the time.

\textsuperscript{50} Newspaper clipping, Letter to the Editor of the \textit{West Australian}, 25 October 1905. ‘PWD (Cons. 689, 1906/334, SROWA)’. The Cobbler mating season runs from around August to December. The fish prefer sandy bottom and weeds for their burrows. Dredging, which clearly disturbed the sand and brought up the mud below, would have contributed to the deaths. Department of Fisheries, \textit{Conservation of Fish Species - Cobbler (Cnidoglanis macrocephalus)} ([cited 23 November, 2006]).

\textsuperscript{51} Memo from A. Bell, to the Assistant to the Engineer in Chief, 1 January 1905, ‘PWD (Cons. 689, 1906/334, SROWA)’.
accusing him of targeting particular workers and dismissing them for spite. Bell was forced to defend himself and his foreman, Carlin, advising that some men had been dismissed for failing to work to standard, and the remainder due to the completion of that phase of the work.

A new phase was about to begin – landscaping the desolate mud flats created by the fill. Bell had a clear idea of what he wanted, and what he felt was required. The sophisticated serpentine paths and lakes of the 1887 plan were abandoned, partly because funding for the reclamation was reduced, and partly because Bell, combining beauty and utility, felt that a more linear arrangement, particularly at Barrack Square, was more appropriate to the movement of people. Bell advocated the use of ‘palms and other dwarf ornamental plants’ for the Square, which he laid out geometrically. ‘Beyond, along the river drive, there will be shade trees on either side in a double row on each footpath…’ In a further statement of Imperial sentiment, the revised plan for Barrack Square resulted in the popular nomenclature of the site as either Union Jack or Flagstaff Square.

The shading and aesthetic role of the trees along the drive were of particular importance. Concern had been raised that the trees needed to be salt resistant, due to their location and the quality of the soil from the reclamation:

At a conference that was held between the late Minister (Mr Wilson), Hon. Dr Hackett, and the Engineer-in-Chief on the 17th April with regard to matters concerning foreshore improvements, this matter of trees was one of those that was discussed; and the Under Secretary subsequently telephoned to me that it was particularly desired by Hon. Mr Wilson that it should not be lost sight of.

52 Memo from A. Bell to Engineer in Chief, 26 April 1905, Ibid.
53 A.D Bell, Engineer in charge to Assistant to the Engineer in Chief, 21 May 1906, Ibid.
For advice on the trees and the landscaping, Bell applied to Daniel Feakes, at the Government Gardens. Feakes’s influence had been on the wane, ever since his dismissal from Kings Park. At the Government Gardens, where he had responsibility for both the Government Gardens and Government Domain, he had been more directly under the eye of the Colonial Secretary, and the Governor. As Robinson had twenty years previously, in January 1906 the Governor, Bedford, argued that the arrangement vis à vis the Domain was unsuitable, even going so far as to say that Feakes was obstructive. Within a week, control of the Domain had been ‘entirely’ removed from Feakes, with a separate budget of £50 for the Domain. Six months later, a separate vote of £603 for the Domain was proposed, with a consequent decrease in the amount for the Government Gardens.55

The Government Gardens too, were potentially subject to another external influence. The Legislative Assembly had, since 1890, been housed in the public offices in the administrative quadrant of the gardens, but in 1904 a new Parliament House was constructed overlooking the city on the slope leading to Mt. Eliza and the Assembly moved. The offices were taken over by the Agricultural Department, formed in 1897, replacing the short lived Agricultural Bureau, formed in 1895. Almost as soon as he was appointed, the new Director, Alexander Morrison, had written to Thiselton-Dyer at Kew Gardens, opening the communication lines and promising the official exchange of botanic material that had been missing for the previous seventy years. Morrison established a small herbarium in the Department, and the opportunity existed for the Government Gardens to become in truth a botanic garden, a centre for scientific study and research, rather than remaining as simply a gardenesque landscape. Although this did not occur, Morrison and the Forest Commissioner,

appointed at around the same time, became the perceived experts on appropriate trees and plantings, with the Forestry Nursery at Hamel in the South West providing seeds and trees in the place of the Government Gardens. Feakes was now responsible for providing floral tributes, ballroom decorations and the like, while the Agricultural and Forest Departments took on greater responsibility for providing plants, both commercially and for street trees and parks.

Given the concerns exercised at the highest levels about Feakes’s over-controlling supervision and possible fiscal improprieties, the decision to involve Feakes in the foreshore landscaping must be put down to his landscaping ability and his gardening expertise. Even when discussing the removal of Feakes from supervision of the Government Domain, the point was made that no further layouts were required, and hence Feakes’s talents would not be used. The influx of men and money brought about by the development of the goldfields had increased the number of architects and gardeners in the State, many of whom were regarded as both able and talented. Yet Feakes retained an aura of authority, which he attempted to assert fully. The unwelcome attention and the loss of responsibility had its consequences. When Bell asked Feakes, on behalf of the Governor, in August 1906, if trees could be planted screening Government House, the reply was not conciliatory. The ground, said Feakes, was too wet, and would need extra soil. After further discussion, Bell was advised that Feakes:

was not prepared to go so far as to say that the planting of these extra trees would detrimentally affect the general appearance of the foreshore but that from a professional point of view he could not recommend it as it would break up his design which he claims to be on lines adopted by the best landscape gardeners of the day.  

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56 Memo from Carlin to Bell, 23 August 1906, ‘PWD (Cons. 689, 1906/334, SROWA)’.  

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Despite Feakes’s misgivings, the trees were planted.\(^{57}\)

Further reclamation works were undertaken along the foreshore in 1909, this time taking in the land under Mt Eliza, and the islands at the other end of Perth Water, near Pt Fraser. As in 1899 and 1902, the proposals were the subject of much debate by the City Council. The 1909 foreshore development again raised concerns about Council control of the foreshore among Government Departments, and a concern about lack of consultation for a space they wished to ultimately control, by the Council. At a meeting of the Council’s general purpose committee on 23 June, 1908 it was:

Resolved that a letter be sent to the Government asking for a definite reply in regard to the action they intend taking re the foreshore around Mounts Bay Rd, and asking them to submit a plan of the islands, as the Council cannot agree to same until the approval of the citizens has been obtained.\(^{58}\)

A month later, on receipt of a letter from the Public Works Department enclosing a plan, the proposals were approved, and the reclamation was able to proceed without additional controversy. Having exerted the Council’s right to be involved in discussions about the design of the foreshore, Bold followed up, in September 1909, by requesting that the title for Barrack Square and other reclamation work be included in the titles for the Esplanade, and vested in the City Council.\(^{59}\) The fears of the Lands and Works Departments that the foreshore would be wholly given over for recreation seemed about to come true. In effect though, the foreshore became a mishmash of Crown land, Council control and private ownership.

\(^{57}\) The trees had been made available from the Government nursery at Hamel. The first Conservator of Forests, John Ednie Brown, had established the nursery in 1897.

\(^{58}\) ‘PCC (Cons. 2893, vol. 2, SROWA)’.

\(^{59}\) 7 September and 16 November 1909, Ibid.
Accessing the civilised city

Putting aside concerns about finances and control over land, the *West Australian*, and Sir John Hackett, proclaimed Kings Park, ‘A National Garden’ in an article in January 1905. With sweeping hyperbole it accentuated the role of the Park and its connection to the Swan River in transforming the City of Perth into a city of worthy of the name through access to appropriate and civilised nature, a nature contrasted with the wilderness beyond:

To imagine the city without its river and park is to open up a very cheerless prospect; to picture it with the river and not the park is to denude the Swan of its most striking adornment; to study the capital with both these priceless natural gifts, however, is to be impressed with the existence of a metropolis no less favourably endowed than any other in Australia…. A transcending gem in the imposing setting of the river, the Mount unadorned was a thing of perpetual beauty, but the lily for once has been successfully painted…. Arriving at the summit…a panorama unexcelled in Australia lies before the delighted beholder. Below are flowering terraces, sloping lawns, fairy grottoes, and shaded bowers…. Behind, a suggestion of the bush primeval presents the seduction of shaded walks, canopies of foliage, delightful arbours, and an inspiring silence.  

Forrest’s road to the Park had proved exceptionally popular, and taking visitors to see the view from the scarp rapidly became part of the accepted round of social activities for tourists and city dwellers alike. Traffic soon became a real problem in the park, not least because of the effect of car tires on the loose blue gravel road, but also because of the speed of some motorists:

Only recently a car rushed into the park travelling at about 30 miles per hour and very nearly injured two lady pedestrians. The car, not withstanding that the driver saw what had occurred, continued at this high speed and the Superintendent, who witnessed the occurrence, was unable to stop or identify it.
So heavy was the traffic, that the Board was forced to undertake a number of measures to restrict it, both by providing a speed limit within the park and by passing a by-law requiring vehicles accessing the park to pay an annual licence. The Royal Automobile Club (RAC) objected to both measures on the grounds that only cars were affected and not other vehicles, sending a deputation to the Premier in May 1907. Despite their objections, the by-laws remained in place, although they were not as effective as might have been hoped. Sir John Forrest’s driver was accused of dangerous driving, for example, in 1915, when he was taking ‘Madame Melba’ through the park.62

Other places of recreation were also popular with the citizens of Perth, and as with Kings Park, that access caused problems. Gramophone parties in Queens Gardens caused damage to the lawn, and Cadets drilling in Wellington Square somehow managed to cut open one of the hoses used to water the grounds. On the Esplanade, the Tennis club complained that the cricket balls kept flying on to the grounds and requested that Cricket Club erect nets around their pitches. Training racehorses on Wellington Square was forbidden, because they cut up the grass and caused difficulties for sports teams, although horses could be grazed, for a fee, at the Mulberry Plantation, and cattle were pastured in Delhi Square. Children in Hyde Park were at risk from the fast moving cyclists of the Cycle Club and the cricket balls of the Hyde Park Cricket Club and the Church Games Association.

Despite the presence of a cycle club, two cricket clubs and the occasional football game, it was the domestic and feminising role of Hyde Park that was to become the dominant factor in its development. Not all exercise was deemed appropriate or healthy. There were concerns that femininity and athleticism should not, or could not be, combined.63 Tennis, replacing croquet, although an active form of recreation, was deemed as suitable for young women as cricket

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62 ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5458, file 12, SROWA).
63 ‘PCC (Cons. 2893, vol. 2, SROWA)’. 
and football were for young men. Swimming, with the suggestion of inappropriate attire, and the question of mixed bathing, was more problematic; although several young women were praised for their mile long swims in the Swan in the mid 1900s. Young women were cautioned to exercise in moderation, so as not to appear unfeminine. Queens Gardens and the Esplanade, as well as the Kings Park Tennis Club provided spaces where feminine, healthy active recreation could take place.

The ratepayers of the East Ward of North Perth saw Hyde Park as a domestic recreational space, like Queens Gardens and Kings Park, suitable for use by women and children. Gentle walks and picnics and paddling in the ponds were appropriate domesticating and feminine activities, eclipsing sport. For these users, fountains and ornamental lakes were the appropriate accoutrements of the landscaping. They wanted white swans on the lake and ‘little silver and gold fish’ in the fountain. Others, also promoting the use of the park as a domestic space, complained that the ornamental lakes were not conducive to children paddling, referring to ‘the treacherous and slimy bottom, which in places acts similar to quicksand’, and asking for a special paddling area. Still others felt that the children were not adequately controlled, and did not appreciate the park as they should, and would probably have applauded the actions of the ‘brutal’ gardener who kicked a seven-year-old boy into the pond, where he had been catching the fish. Despite the conflicts in how they were to be used, the ornamental lakes, with walking paths, became the key features of the park, causing the removal of the Hyde Park Cricket Pitch in 1909 and a growing number of complaints about ‘reckless and dangerous’ cyclists in the park.

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64 See for example, the Western Mail in October 1904.
66 Complaint re fountain, 8 January 1907, Ibid.
67 East Perth ratepayers, 2 December 1907, Ibid.
68 1908, Ibid.
Park use could also conflict with other moral and socially improving activities. Access to the parks on Sundays was a matter for delicate negotiation. The Kings Park Board received applications for Sunday School picnics, and in November 1904, Abbot W. Manning applied for permission to hold an ‘open air meeting’ for the Church of Christ. The Salvation Army had applied a month earlier for two days in the park. ‘I might say that the idea is to have a Band Festival and meeting in the afternoon… and take up a collection at the gates’, wrote Brigadier Alfred Harris. The application was approved on condition that the collection was taken up outside the gates.

Sabbatarianism, the concern that the Sabbath should be kept as a day of rest, had been a substantial influence on the rational recreation movement of the 1860s in Britain, and remained an abiding concern. It affected decisions about what entertainments could be put on, on a Sunday, ranging from plays to sport. A decision by the Colonial Secretary to allow a play to be performed was castigated because it was deemed insufficiently religious, while the charging of admission fees for sport in the goldfields led to extensive newspaper reportage, including interviews with prominent churchmen on the role of recreation on Sundays. The consensus decision appeared to be that sport, in moderation, was appropriate in the context of rest and recreation, but was inappropriate if it was commercialised, or if the emphasis changed from recreation to competitive sport. The City Council, which by 1908 introduced by-laws to allow for the collection of entrance fees to parks and reserves for football and cricket, banned the use of parks and reserves for games on Sundays the same year following complaints, and asked the police to assist in enforcing the ban.

In the Government Gardens, permission for the bands to play and for an admission fee to be charged needed to be sought from the Colonial Secretary,

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69 ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 4, SROWA)’.
70 ‘Sport on Sunday’, The West Australian, 15 September 1904.
71 23 June 1908, 21 July 1908, ‘PCC (Cons. 2893, vol. 2, SROWA)’.
regardless of the day of the concert. The reasons given for collections ranged from the Bush Fires Relief Fund, to better uniforms or instruments, or to create a benefit fund:

Several important members of the band are out of work, and have had sickness to contend with, and it is proposed to give this concert with a view to assisting them.\textsuperscript{72}

For bands to perform on Sundays, the collection had to be voluntary, a police presence was required and the Colonial Secretary required a copy of the play sheet. An appropriate program featured popular yet classical tunes, such as Collingwood, Lucretia Borgia, A soldier’s life, The village blacksmith, The Martyr of Antioch, and The Coldstreams, closing with God save the King. Applications were generally for Tuesdays and Thursdays during the summer months, requesting permission to charge a silver coin admission fee. Failure to pay the fee was taken seriously by the band members and supporters who would forcibly eject non-payers. Those complaining about the fee and their expulsion to the police were advised that because it was not a Sunday, no breach of the law had occurred and no action could be taken on their behalf.\textsuperscript{73}

A decision to ban band performances in the Goldfields by the Colonial Secretary led to a Question without Notice in the Legislative Assembly. In questioning the decision, J.M. Hopkins, the member for Boulder, highlighted the recreational activities available in the city:

Unlike the people living in the capital and metropolitan area those residing in the Eastern Goldfields had not, he said, the comfort of the more pleasant home surroundings. For instance, people in the metropolitan radius had the privilege of spending their Sundays either on the river or in a trip to the islands. The Perth Zoo and Kings Park were open to the public, and there were ways of pleasantly spending Sundays and Sunday evenings.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{72} ‘Government Gardens re erecting poles for electric lighting at concerts. Includes 1359/1906, Perth City Band.’ Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence (Cons. 752, 1906/5069, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{73} Report of P.C. Allison, 5 April 1906, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} ‘The Legislative Assembly’, The West Australian, 9 November 1904.
The Colonial Secretary advised that the problem was whether or not an admission fee was being charged, rather than a voluntary collection being made. Other members of the Assembly pointed to the ambiguous nature of many of the entertainments identified by Hopkins, where entertainments such as band performances were included in the admission ticket to the Zoo, or on the pleasure boats on the Swan.\textsuperscript{75}

Even though collections on Sundays were supposedly voluntary, band members were not above publicly ridiculing those who were listening to the music, or who had entered the grounds without paying. The police frowned on any positive action to ensure payment, but the verbal abuse was also deemed inappropriate, and was eventually referred to the Colonial Secretary who threatened to withhold permission. Damage to plants caused by a larrakin element could also result in band performances being banned, and permission for Sunday collections being withheld. But the very choice available to city dwellers worked against this being an effective threat.

Sunday concerts were held in His Majesty’s Theatre, built the previous year, with a vocalist singing light operetta and selections of Gilbert and Sullivan, and in other theatres and venues. Unfortunately, ‘an objectionable element collect[ed] in the gallery’, and permission was sought to charge sixpence to keep them out. Any funds collected would be donated to charity.\textsuperscript{76} When permission to hold concerts in the Government Gardens was refused following considerable damage to plants, the organisers firstly pointed to a successful concert and fundraising venture for the Carnarvon Castle shipwreck, and promised that no concert would be held until after 4 p.m. ‘to avoid interfering with the Sunday Schools.’ Still denied permission, they simply moved to the Exhibition Hall, where they also had ‘pictures’. Finally, a concert was held on

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} May 1906, ‘Col. Sec. (Cons. 752, 1906/5069, SROWA)’.
29th September 1907 at the Theatre Royal, with only verbal rather than written permission.

While Hopkins was detailing the pleasures available in the capital, city dwellers had been undertaking an annual pilgrimage to the country. Sabbatarians had been actively against the introduction of ‘Flower excursion trains’ in the 1890s, because of the requirement for train drivers and conductors to work, and each year raised similar concerns. Despite this, the trains were highly popular, and were applauded generally for providing access to forms of nature, not apparently available in cities, which were increasingly being seen as a contrast to urban and suburban lifestyles. Yet the nature that was sought was still to some extent conceptualised as rural and Arcadian, the sort of nature that landscape parks in particular had attempted to imitate and improve. As more and more of the population became based in the city, the realities of country, and especially agrarian, life were more and more mythologized. The West Australian, in 1904, reported that:

> It is not unnatural that a period of town life should develop a fondness for the peace and quiet of rural scenes, or that the latter, in their turn, should create a desire for the more strenuous, if less healthy pursuits of the city....
> The Government has been blamed in a few quarters for allowing [the trains] to take place on Sunday, but, on the whole, it has been warmly and deservedly commended for its enterprise. There is no project better worthy the attention of a Ministry than the promotion of what relates to the health and happiness of its people.77

In this context, the development of the foreshore, with the twin goals of alleviating typhoid and beautifying the city, the work at Kings Park and the Council’s pursuit of more and more recreational space, catering to a range of requirements, could only be beneficial and approved.

John Maiden, the Director of the New South Wales Botanic Garden, certainly approved the result of the changes to the foreshore and Kings Park

77 'Editorial', The West Australian, 17 September 1904.
when he arrived in Perth for a collecting trip in mid 1909, and depicted in a painting of the same period by local artist, John Campbell. According to Maiden’s biographer, Lionel Gilbert:

he was very impressed by the city, more especially its geographical setting, its excellent ‘Zoological Gardens’ and the wonderful Kings Park for which ‘Sir John Forrest’s name is blessed.’ Whereas ‘on a former visit’ (in 1900) ‘the banks of the Swan River were undefined and insanitary’, there had been a remarkable transformation...\(^78\)

When Australia had federated, Perth had been content to see itself as at last an equal with the other States and capitals. The redevelopment of the foreshore and the development of other public space, especially the moral and commemorative space of Kings Park, contributed to a moral and civilised society, with a citizenry aware of their role in the Federation, and more than capable of contributing on an Imperial scale. Now, a mere decade later, Perth was to move along a path where it felt itself capable of becoming not just an equal with the cities in other parts of the Federation but, by virtue of the advantages of its location, one of the great cities of the world, able to benefit from, and demonstrate the virtues of, the rapidly developing discipline of town planning.

Figure 22: Perth, from Kings Park, by John Campbell, c. 1909
Source: Courtesy of the Holmes à Court Gallery.
Chapter 8 – Natural refinement

The shallow fringes of the Perth Water have been embanked and reclaimed, and are now in course of planting, and each vernal season makes the river front more beautiful, combining with the wooded cemetery hill in the east and the forest crowned hills and bluffs of Mount Eliza in the west, with its preserved indigenous flora, to form a notable feature of fine national and capital amenity.¹

John Maiden’s first visit to Perth, in 1900, had been during his return trip to New South Wales from England, where he had been interested in debates on the development of parks, and of ideal cities. He travelled with his family on the Rome, on which Sir John and Lady Forrest were also passengers. Given the interest both Forrest and Maiden had in the development of parks (Maiden felt that access to parks should be an inviolable right for the people), and the interest all three had in the botany of the State, it is fascinating to speculate on what conversations might have been had. The year of his second visit to Perth, 1909, he prepared a submission to the Royal Commission on Sydney Improvement on the design and development of parks, and in particular on the planting of appropriate trees.²

Meeting to discuss the design of Australia’s ideal new capital in 1901, just prior to the opening of the first Federal Parliament, Australian architects, engineers and surveyors had looked to Britain, Europe and the New World for

² Gilbert, The little giant: the life and work of Joseph Henry Maiden, 1859 - 1925, p. 226. Maiden was particularly keen to promote the planting of palm trees, ‘called the Queen of Trees.’ The Director of the Perth Zoological Gardens, Ernest Le Souef, for one, shared Maiden’s enthusiasm for palms.
ideas. The Royal Society of New South Wales also addressed the topic with a paper by George Handley Knibbs, delivered in September 1901, which looked at ideas of planning and ideal cities. Across the Atlantic, the Senate Park Commission, headed by James McMillen, met to plan the redevelopment of America’s national capital, Washington. A tour of select European capitals provided examples of the benefits of classical architecture that, in the eyes of the committee, complemented the growing village improvement movement, combining beauty and utility to create an urban environment that would mould its inhabitants. America’s City Beautiful movement and England’s Garden City contributed to conceptions of an idealised city in which ‘the fusion of artistic design and rational physical improvement targeted… nationalism, citizenship, social cohesion and quality of life.’ These ideals were to prove as important for a state capital as for the nation, and in a city where the mantra of isolation was to become a dominant theme in its discourse, perhaps even vital.

As with these national and state capitals, the future development of Perth, including its parks and gardens, was being actively debated. Maiden’s visit fed into a discussion on the form of the city and the role of parks within it. Throughout the period discussed in this chapter, a range of schemes to create a city eminently suited to its role as a capital would be proposed. Almost all of them involved the establishment of new parks and gardens, or the reuse of already established parks. Beauty and utility were to be the watchwords of city visionaries.

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6 Freestone, ‘From city improvement to the city beautiful’, p. 31.
7 Western Australians frequently contextualise the city of Perth as the ‘most isolated city in the world.’ Honolulu also claims the same honour.
At the same time, the main purpose of Maiden’s 1909 visit was to collect new specimens for the New South Wales Botanic Gardens and to re-open botanic exchange between the two States. Ever since the Government Storekeeper, John Morgan, had commented in the early years of the colony on the prettiness of the native flora it had been an abiding leit-motif in the recreational activities of the colony, from walks on Mt Eliza to picnics in the bush. Awareness of the beauty and uniqueness of the Western Australian flora had slowly developed with the colony. Changes in leisure patterns, and the growth of organised leisure activities, in particular the development of tourism, saw the transposition of this awareness into a new kind of economic botany. But the bushland, and native flora, had more than economic value; they had a growing social and cultural value. The extensive bushland of Kings Park, once seen as ‘eminently capable of improvement’, was now to provide an avenue by which this value could be clearly linked to the identity of the city and the State. At the same time, the city below was being laid out in an increasingly formalised manner, with concerns about the placement of a civic centre, government buildings, and continuing river reclamation.

Planning the civilised city

Local government authorities in Western Australia had been involved in a series of discussions and even acrimonious debate about the role of municipalities in providing for the populace, dating from 1906. As a result, they had joined together to create a representative body, the Municipal Authorities Association, in 1909. But a vision of the municipalities around Perth joining together in a single municipality, known as Greater Perth, also began to gain weight. In 1911, Perth City Councillor, Jack Ochiltree, himself an architect, called for a joint committee of the city and related suburban councils to
formulate a scheme or schemes for the improvement or remodelling the city and its suburbs from traffic, aesthetic and sanitary points of view.\textsuperscript{8}

Ochiltree’s motion derived principally from recent concerns about the location of a new transnational railway, itself an outcome of the original agreements of Federation. The city’s current railway station was viewed by some as blocking the natural development of the city northwards, towards the swamps. Deemed a barrier in the first years of Perth’s development the swamps were now subject to the authority of drainage and reclamation, and were more likely to provide impetus to growth, rather than impede it. Announced in the local papers, 25 July 1911, Ochiltree’s call resonated with those who had been considering the city’s development from a broader perspective, and also with those concerned about the railway's impact on the amenity of the city. Poole responded immediately with a letter to the editor, outlining both the perceived restriction of the current railway site, but also ‘an opportunity to recast the whole thing, and to make a planning consonant with the city’s requirements, with provision for the city’s future extension and improvement.’\textsuperscript{9}

A month later, the \textit{West} announced a public lecture at the museum entitled, \textit{Perth as it should be}, by George Temple Poole.\textsuperscript{10} With the governor in attendance and a ‘large audience’, Poole presented:

some suggestions for redeeming the city of Perth from its present unattractiveness, for saving it from a chaos, and providing in some degree of foresight for its future of distinction…. Perth possessed considerable promise of becoming a great city, but he contended that before it could spread its wings, according to the modern science of city development, certain changes must be effected in its very midst… To all cities had come a sometime opportunity for purification and new birth. To Perth had now come the time for that purification and birth.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{The West Australian}, 25 July 1911.
\textsuperscript{9} George Temple Poole, ‘The city railways’, \textit{The West Australian}, 29 July 1911.
\textsuperscript{10} ‘Perth as it should be: lecture by Mr G.T. Poole’, \textit{The West Australian}, 26 August 1911.
The new science of city development to which Poole referred had developed from the ideas of the Garden City movement in England, and the American City Beautiful. The British garden city movement commenced with the publication in 1898 of Ebenezer Howard’s *To-morrow*, republished and slightly amended in 1902 as *Garden cities of to-morrow*. Generally, planning historians have linked back to Howard’s own reading of Benjamin Ward Richardson’s 1875 book *Hygeia, a city of health*, dedicated to Edwin Chadwick, and J.S. Buckingham’s, 1849, *National evils and practical remedies: with the plan for a model town*. Both Richardson and Buckingham were concerned with proper drainage of the city, reflecting contemporary concerns about sewage and sanitation. Howard too was reacting to the perceived sanitary and moral degradations of the industrialised modern city. Howard’s principal purpose was to develop ‘decent, healthy communities designed to foster genuine social interaction….’

Not all of Howard’s influences were British, as he had spent some time in America in the 1870s. Howard’s American influences included the Quaker movement, spiritualism and the environmentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and were shared by a growing number of American planners and civic improvers. In the year after *Cities of Tomorrow* was published, an American author, Charles Mulford Robertson published *The improvement of towns and cities*, in three parts. In this book Robertson combined and emphasised the roles of beauty and utility in improving the urban and municipal landscape. Like the Garden City, the City Beautiful movement also attempted to ameliorate the effects of industrialisation and overcrowding by reasserting the ideal of the city; a city of natural and manmade beauty. The city became not only the cause of moral and physical decay of the previous century, but also the tool for

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From wasteland to parkland

redressing the decline, through significant investment in beautifying the urban environment.

![Garden City Model](image)

**Figure 23: Garden city model, Ebenezer Howard**

*Source: Garden cities of tomorrow, Ebenezer Howard.*

*To-morrow and Cities of To-morrow* became the foundation works for a Garden Cities movement established in both Britain and in the colonies. New Zealand and Australian city advocates embraced the ideas, although it has been argued that they took on the physical and planning aspects of Howard's work without taking on or fully understanding his social agenda.\(^{12}\)

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The rhetoric used by Poole in his 1911 lecture used the language of beauty and utility promoted by City Beautiful advocates. Poole's plan called for a new civic centre, and the transformation of Perth ‘into a beautiful city… made worthy of the magnificent site which it had the privilege of occupying.’ He also called for the reservation of a:

belt of open country… running in more or less of a circle at a radius of five miles from the heart of the city. Such a girdle would… provide an everlasting playground and health resort for the people of the metropolitan area.\(^\text{14}\)

The concepts of a civic centre and of an open girdle or greenbelt for the city were to become ubiquitous themes in debates about the city's development.

From striving to be considered as an equal, Perth was now being discussed as capable of taking a pre-eminent position as a capital city, worthy of the name by position and planning. Town Clerk William Bold prepared a comprehensive plan for the City Council in November 1911. Introducing his plan, he noted that Garden City ideas were best suited to the development of new suburbs and developments, but that the City Beautiful movement had been developed specifically for the reclamation and renovation of already established cities. Unfortunately for Bold, his report was held over during the Council elections, and never adopted. The \textit{West Australian} also raised the subject of city development, and an overarching plan in its edition of 20 December 1911, when it published a plan drawn up by architect James Hardwick, dated August 1911, and his explanatory text. In the article Hardwick advanced many of the themes outlined by Poole, including the need for a government and citywide perspective on planning. Like Poole, Hardwick emphasised the considerable natural advantages enjoyed by Perth, which could place it, not in parallel with its Australian counterparts, but as ‘one of the most beautiful cities in the Southern

\(^{13}\) 'Perth as it should be: lecture by Mr G.T. Poole'.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
As with the other two plans Hardwick’s grand plan was never adopted, although ideas within them, particularly the development of a riverside drive and the sinking of the railway, would resonate in planning discussions for decades to come.

Part of the problem with these plans was that they called for a level of cooperation between City and State that did not exist, and for a significant increase in funding, particularly for parks and reserves. Nevertheless, an awareness of town planning principles, and the Garden city movement in particular, was to become a significant factor in the planning of suburbs, parks and reserves on the outskirts of the city. When New Zealander Charles Reade arrived in Western Australia in 1914 as part of an Australasian tour promoting town planning, he was enthusiastically welcomed. Similarly, British delegates to the first Australian Town Planning Association meeting were well received when they called in at Fremantle on their way home in early 1914.

Bold was a particularly vocal proponent of town planning, and in 1914 he not only assisted in the planning for Reade’s tour, but also persuaded the City Council to send him on a tour of England and America, to look at public administration and public planning. He arrived in London just in time for the Imperial Health and Town Planning Conference. Bold also attended the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association Conference in July, where he was the only Australian delegate, and was taken on tours of various model suburbs including Letchworth, Port Sunlight, Bourneville and Wavertree. He visited Belfast and Dublin, where Patrick Geddes escorted him around the town planning exhibits there. Bold had intended to visit Cologne and Berlin but martial law was declared on the very date he had booked for his departure to the Continent. Instead, he went to America, where he studied Chicago,
Kansas, Denver, New York, Washington and San Francisco. While there he was once more impressed by the importance of children's playgrounds, by the use of boulevards and parkways, and the openness of many American parks, many of which, like parks in Paris, were unfenced.

On his return Bold urged immediate work on the development of a 'City Plan, as it seems to me that this is the key-stone of the arch of successful municipal effort.'\(^\text{17}\) He pointed to the problems arising from delay in the development and especially the implementation of such a plan, saying that the failure to implement the Wren plan for London had caused many difficulties, but that the development of Washington, D.C. provided a shining example of what could be done.\(^\text{18}\) For Bold, the key aspects of town planning provided for access to open spaces, municipal provision and control of recreational facilities, and the combination of utility and beauty. Despite his enthusiasm and drive, the effect of the Great War was to create the very delay Bold had argued against. Young men, trained to athleticism and team skills on the cricket fields and football ovals of Fremantle and Perth, and inspired by the call to Empire embodied by the South African memorial and the statue of Victoria, marched to war, leaving the State and the nation bereft.

While labour and resources for the implementation of town planning and other schemes remained unavailable, the war did not prevent planning as such from taking place. In fact, planning both at a broad and very specific level went on apace. Perth had a concentration of Garden City and City Beautiful advocates, many of whom attended the Australian Town Planning Conference in Adelaide in 1917. Western Australian delegates included surveyor William Allnutt Saw, President of the newly formed Town Planning Commission of Western Australia, A. W. Berryman and William Bold from the City of Perth,  

\(^{17}\) William Ernest Bold, 'Report on Tour round the world', (Perth City Council, 1914).
\(^{18}\) Clearly, Bold's guides in Washington had played down the L'Enfant plan of 1791 and concentrated on the McMillen Commission of 1901.
W.E. Wray (Mayor of Fremantle), J.H. Eales and G.H. Parry.\textsuperscript{19} Saw gave a paper on the Greater Perth scheme, while Poole, who was not a delegate, prepared a paper for conference, which although not read at the Conference was included in the official conference proceedings.\textsuperscript{20}

In the paper, Poole expressed, through a powerful polemic, many of the themes he had raised in 1911. In contrast to the commonly accepted rhetoric of nineteenth century in which the city is generally seen as degrading and demoralising, an affront to nature, Poole returned to earlier visions of the city, where the city is clearly identified as an ideal. For Poole, nature was an intrinsic part of the ideal city, with a role and part to play. He again raised the potential of Perth as a pre-eminent city, 'notable among the cities of the continent', by virtue of its location, but was clearly frustrated by the lack of progress:

A city is one of man’s greatest achievements or one of his greatest sins.

A city is poetical, stirs the imagination. It is close to the spirit of man. One of man’s masterpieces, a masterpiece of his invention, an expression of his moral and intellectual life, a work of foresight and sustained ambition. If it be not all of these it is one man’s greatest sins: it is a failure.

The metropolis of Western Australia has no claims to superlatives of perfection nor of condemnation. As a builded and equipped city – it is mediocre....

A city is one of man’s greatest achievements or one of his greatest sins.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} 'Official volume of proceedings of the First Australasian Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition' (Adelaide, 1917).
\textsuperscript{20} For the full text of Poole’s paper, see Appendix D.
\textsuperscript{21} Poole, ‘Paper 18: The metropolis of Perth’.
Imagining Kings Park

Not only were parks and parkways for health and recreation under consideration, but so too were the development of new didactic spaces, with the concept of a botanic garden, or botanically educational spaces, again under consideration. Concerns about plants being plucked, roots and all, by wildflower excursionists, as well as commercial exploitation of ferns for gardens and other plants for floral arrangements, had led to the development of legislation to protect certain native plants in 1912. Almost immediately Police and local shires reported difficulties with identification – the schedule provided the Latin names only of the protected flora. It was suggested that a series of posters showing the proscribed plants be prepared, and as samples of the plants were needed for the printer to prepare the necessary artwork, it was recommended that they approach the Kings Park Board, there being ‘no doubt that specimens of the flowers could be obtained from the …Board.’ In fact, as Mr Kelly, the Secretary, pointed out, several species, including the leschenaultia and boronia, were not native to the area. Nevertheless, the association between the Park as custodian or at least an authority on the state’s native vegetation was clearly established.

The more traditional association of the Park with exotic plants, and particularly trees, was also to be strengthened. An early suggestion that the Park be used as an arboretum had fallen by the wayside, although a small plantation of pine trees had been established at the Subiaco end of the park in 1906. A 1909 suggestion that avenues of shade trees be planted, carefully arranged in blocks to provide variegated foliage and contrast, had been diminished to a simple instruction to the gardener to plant trees ‘as will best

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22 ‘Hon. Premier. Native Flora Protection Act - to be administered by Minister for Lands.’ Premier's Department, (Cons. 1657, 1913/4205, SROWA).
23 Ibid. It was also noted that if posters of the flowers were produced they could easily be used for promotional material for domestic tourism to ‘flower excursion resorts’, and also to promote the State on an international scene, such as the Panama exhibition.
afford the desired change of colouring in foliage from that prevailing in the indigenous trees in the Park'.

In 1916, the Conservator of Forests, Charles Lane Poole, recommended that the State undertake the construction of a number of arboreta, both in the districts and in Perth. ‘While travelling with the Hon. Minister [of Mines], I brought to his notice the lack of an arboretum near Perth. The gardens close to the Post Office [Stirling Square] contain a few trees of interest to which the public can go and see the appearance of the various species.’

Arboreta would educate the public through labelling and naming of species and provide facilities for economic botany research. The most immediately apparent appropriate site appeared to be on the grounds of the newly formed University of Western Australia, on George Shenton’s old grant at Crawley Bay. Botany would again be a cornerstone of the site.

Although both Lane Poole and the Mines Department could see the logic of the proposed site, their approach to the University Senate generated no response. Frustrated, the Secretary recommended to the Minister for Mines, Phil Collier, that perhaps Kings Park would be a suitable site – ‘... the establishment of this plantation would not, I think, detract from the value of the Park to the public; indeed it would be of great interest to the public and of educational value.’

Collier was not just the Minister for Mines, and therefore of Forests, but was also on the Kings Park Board and duly put the request to his colleagues. The Board were concerned only over who would control the arboretum once established, and advised that ‘it has for many years been a dream of the Kings Park Board members to establish something of the kind.’

Approval was given for the preparation of a site, which would include a plantation of trees, eighty different species in all, each species planted in a

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24 'KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)'.
25 Lane Poole to Secretary of Mines, 20 April 1916, 'Conservator of Forests. Selection of sites for arboreta in each district.' Wood and Forests Department, Files - registered (Cons. 934, 1916/0152, SROWA).
26 Secretary of Mines to Phil Collier, 22 August 1916, Ibid.
27 Robinson to Secretary of Mines, 23 December 1916, Ibid.
square of 144 trees, twelve by twelve, and a park space, where specimen trees would be laid out in a more aesthetically pleasing manner. More than that, if planted, the trees could be sold, once they grew, for timber - a form of continuing endowment. The 1906 plantation had only recently been felled, providing an income of over £100.

Finance had been a significant struggle for the Board for almost a decade. The major expense of water had been somewhat ameliorated, first through the sinking of a well near the Terraces for the Park Board, and subsequent sale of water to the City Council.\textsuperscript{28} The Water Board had then undertaken to provide the park with water on condition of an additional 6.4 acres being vested in the Water Board for another reservoir, and control of the water from the well. As with the previous reservoir, the Kings Park Board retained the right to approve the design and style of fencing and any buildings, but the matter of revesting the land seems not to have excited much debate (possibly because the terms provided them with substantial financial relief).\textsuperscript{29} But the sale of firewood, licence fees for taxis and buses, and rent from the tearooms (when it could be collected) were not sufficient to replace or even relieve the need for a continuing yearly substantial vote. The Park Board were competing with other similar institutions, including the Zoological Gardens across the river at South Perth (established in 1898), the Government Gardens and Government House Domain, and the Observatory, for funding. The Perth Zoo, in particular, had similar goals and objectives, both stated and implied, to the Park, and was well promoted and received.

The Park also had a more fundamental problem – financial mismanagement. During an audit of the Board’s finances, it was revealed that the long-term secretary, Kelly, had, since 1910, routinely failed to bank the take.

\textsuperscript{28} Forrest had undertaken the survey for the well site, accompanied by reporters, and had not forsaken the opportunity to remind the public both of his credentials as an explorer and surveyor in opening up the colony, but also of his role and vision for the park.

\textsuperscript{29} ‘Agreement with Minister of Water and Kings Park Board’, (Cons. 6888, 2, SROWA).
from the tearooms and other small accounts. Kelly pleaded strain and overwork and the amount lost was small, but the damage to the Board’s reputation was already done, and the Board was unable to retain Kelly. George Temple Poole, already a member of the Board, took over as Secretary on a temporary basis. The Colonial Treasurer, James Gardiner, suggested that the Park and other reserves might be better managed if they were under the control of the Town Council (which would then have become responsible for the majority of park expenses). William Loton, who was Mayor of Perth at the time, had been recently appointed to the Board, but this proposal would provide a much greater tie to the city. Bold, who was financially cautious, wrote to the Board on 23 May 1918, requesting details of the Park’s normal expenditure, for consideration by the Council. Not unsurprisingly, the Council was less than enthusiastic about taking on the massive task of administering the Park. Nor were the Board enamoured with the idea of giving up control and autonomy to the Council. Finally, in July, 1918, the President of the Board read a letter from the Premier ‘expressing his surprise that the Government had addressed to City Council [sic] with suggestions to take over the control of the Government Parks, including the Kings Park… there is no intention on the part of the Government to ask that the present control should be altered…’

Despite their difficulties, the Board was keen to carry on as normal. One key object was to recognise the end of the war in an appropriate manner, one that would both extend the Park’s landscaped vistas, and fit with contemporary ideas of Empire and commemoration. Arthur Lovekin, editor of the Daily News, long time Board member and Chairman, suggested an avenue of honour, and

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30 Kings Park Board, 25 July 1918, ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
31 Ibid.
32 LE Shapcott, The State Gardens Board: twenty years progress and policy. (Perth, WA:: The State Gardens Board., 1939); ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
33 ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
34 Ibid.
promised to pay for the preparatory work. The decision about the species of trees for the avenue was also largely in Lovekin’s hands. A few years earlier he had visited England and obtained from Queen Mary (previously Princess May) some oak seedlings from the park at Windsor for just such an avenue in Kings Park. Eleven of the trees had survived and it was now proposed that these trees, with their link to Empire and Royalty, would be the basis for the new avenue.

To determine the cost of the avenues, Lovekin applied to Robert Robinson, the Minister for Forests and himself a member of the Park Board, for trees from the State Nursery, established in the South West by the Wood and Forests Department, and to Brunnings, the Victorian nurseryman. The trees he sought, approximately 2,000 of each, included English Oaks (*Quercus robur*), Kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneus*), ‘Prunus pissardia’ [sic], Camphor laurels (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*). Robinson replied two days later that the State Nursery could supply Portuguese rather than English Oaks and the Blackwoods almost immediately, for a cost of 3d per tree, and that if the Board wished to wait, both the Camphor Laurels and the Kurrajongs could be supplied, for free, the following year. Not only did Robinson offer to supply the trees, but he provided advice on how to plant them, and within another two days had supplied a list of his own, preferred, species including Jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) and Cape Lilacs (*Melia adezerach*). More, he felt that ‘there should also be some representative Western Australian trees, and there is no reason why a few of our own native trees should not be planted….’ In

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35 Ibid.  
36 Ibid.  
37 Lovekin to Robinson, 8 August 1918, ‘Correspondence’, Kings Park Board, *Files - unregistered* (Cons. 5458, 8, SROWA).  
38 Robinson to Kings Park Board, 10 August 1918, Ibid.  
39 Robinson to Board, 12 August 1918, Ibid.
an avenue representing Western Australians the mix of species and origins seemed somehow appropriate.

The program involved members of the public buying a tree to represent their loved one, and for a plaque to be placed at the foot of the tree. To aid in selection, sample trees were placed at the gates of the Park. Even so, some people wanted to provide their own tree, either because they liked a different species, or thought it would reduce the cost. Some applicants wanted to put several names under the one tree, again for reasons of economy. Both approaches were rejected. The Boy Scouts Association also requested that all Boy Scout trees be placed together, but this could only occur if the various families involved chose only one or two species, to enable block plantings. Despite these difficulties, the first trees were planted on 3rd August 1919. Queen Mary sent a telegram, and the Salvation Army played.\textsuperscript{40}

The Board was also keen to memorialise one of its own, and so provide the second civic memorial in the park. John Forrest died in September 1918, on a voyage to England to be elevated to the peerage, depriving the Board and the Park of their most vocal and most ardent supporter. Forrest’s vision of a landscaped park along the lines of the Centennial Park and other major landscaped spaces had only partially come to fruition, but his had been the driving force for many of the amenities of the Park, and he was quite clearly the architect of its success. More, his role as first Premier of the Colony and in Federation demanded that a memorial of a ‘national characteristic’ be raised.\textsuperscript{41} As far as the Board could determine, the planned plaza and possible statue proposed by the City had some ‘merit as civic proposal’ but did not the meet the

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} ‘KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)’.
required national status.\textsuperscript{42} This would be achieved if Forrest too had an avenue of trees, leading to a statue to be erected in the park.\textsuperscript{43}

The Honour Avenue was to be the first of a number of memorials to be placed in the park, confirming its role as the premier commemorative space of the city. Rabbi Freedman had approached the new Secretary of the Board, Lionel Boas, also Jewish, with a proposal for a memorial representing the Jewish community in March 1919. The Kings Park Rifle Club followed in April 1919, and a memorial for members of the 10\textsuperscript{th} Light Horse was proposed in 1920. Not only was the Board receiving applications for memorials, but a number of shires and organisations wrote asking for advice on suitable trees and memorial layouts. Both the Jewish memorial and that of the 10\textsuperscript{th} Light Horse were approved as suitable additions, but the Rifle Club and other small organisations were rebuffed, the Board having developed a policy of ‘no small memorials’ (undoubtedly to prevent the Park becoming almost a defacto cemetery, although it was later to be described as exactly that).\textsuperscript{44}

A State Memorial committee, headed by Sir William Lathlain, was established in 1924 and started collecting funds for a suitable architectural memorial, although contributions remained low. Possibly the success of the Honour Avenue and the smaller memorials had diminished the urgency of the appeal. There was also, as Ken Inglis discusses, considerable debate about the most appropriate form of memorial, a debate that was being echoed across the country.\textsuperscript{45} Premier Phil Collier favoured a utilitarian site, such as a hospital, while Arthur Lovekin favoured a far more symbolic structure, one that would again confirm the role and the nature of the city:

\begin{quote}

\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Forrest’s statue was designed by Bertram McKenral, an Australian sculptor living in England and his avenue consisted of Sugar gums (\textit{Eucalyptus cladocalyx}), a species native to South Australia.
\textsuperscript{44} Kings Park Board, 16 January 1920, ‘Fallen Soldiers Memorials. War Memorial’, Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5458, 50, SROWA).
When I left Perth on a holiday I knew the supreme efforts that had been made...to raise money for the erection of a national war memorial in Perth, the capital city of Western Australia... When I was on the continent I saw most elaborate war memorials. I was chagrined at the thought that we in Perth had nothing of that description to commemorate the memory of the men who went to war and made the supreme sacrifice in order to secure our safety.\(^{46}\)

Lovekin’s suggestion was that the body of an unknown Western Australian soldier be repatriated and placed in the keystone of a great arch forming the entry way to Kings Park. Lovekin’s vision for the park and the memorial was both grander and more Imperial than that of his fellow board members, parliamentarians and the War Memorial committee itself, and a simple stone obelix, designed by Talbot Hobbs, was instead chosen. Although there had been some discussion about the site, with sites at Fremantle and Perth being suggested, it seemed almost inevitable that Kings Park would become the ultimate choice. As Inglis notes; ‘Where in the civic landscape were memorials best placed? …The best site was the most prominent and accessible.’\(^{47}\) Kings Park was clearly the most prominent site. Despite some concerns that the limestone cliffs might crumble or slip, as had occurred further round the mount some years previously, a site was eventually chosen, on the headland overlooking the Narrows. It fortuitously bore a passing resemblance to the cliffs at Anzac Cove, thanks largely to early limestone quarrying.\(^{48}\) It was also just near the rifle butts, established in the 1860s, where the Pensioner Guards and Volunteers had for many years practiced musketry and honed the skills that had been passed on to the young men of both the South African and Great Wars.

\(^{46}\) Lovekin in the Legislative Council, 3 December 1926, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAVP’.

\(^{47}\) Inglis, Sacred places: war memorials in the Australian landscape, p. 122.

\(^{48}\) Inglis, Sacred places: war memorials in the Australian landscape, p. 122.
Practical morality

While the Board was demonstrating its effectiveness as an independent body in managing the State’s premier commemorative site, the Treasurer’s ‘efficiency drive’ had resulted in the formation of a new parks and gardens authority to manage the cricket fields and football ovals of the foreshore - the State Gardens Board, under the Parks and Reserves Act, 1895. The new Board, which came into being on 15 December, 1920, was ‘given control of all the Government foreshore from the Causeway to the Narrows, including Supreme Court, Government House, and Stirling Square.’ It was a one-person entity (later expanded to two, with the appointment of C.G. Morris, Secretary for Lands), under the control of the Under Secretary to the Premier, Louis Edward Shapcott. Shapcott’s own credentials appear to have been more in the administrative and financial fields than in horticulture, having come to the Premier’s Department from the Department of Mines. A self made man, Shapcott had educated himself in an eclectic range of subjects at night school. Born in country Victoria, he arrived in Western Australia in 1897, working as a points cleaner with the Government Railways. He was a teetotaller, a pillar of his church, a keen photographer, and a supreme bureaucrat. His skills and dedication are revealed in a humorous ‘letter of recommendation’, written by the Acting Premier and then Minister for Mines, Phil Collier, on the occasion of Shapcott’s application for the post of Under Secretary. In it, Collier commends Shapcott for his diplomacy and ability to obtain funds where none existed, noting:

In diplomacy I have known him to succeed in extracting five shillings from a penniless widow that came to appeal for a free pass to a job

49 Shapcott, The State Gardens Board: twenty years progress and policy.
50 Ibid. The Government House Domain was again re-integrated with the Government Gardens in 1921, under the State Gardens Board, following a Public Sector Commission report into its management.
in the backblocks… ere he leaves your presence run your hands through your pockets. It is a wise precaution, easily accomplished, and should you find that you have missed anything have him immediately arrested, then you can write and pur [sic] out your soul in thankfulness to me for this timely hint…\textsuperscript{52}  

Although Shapcott, and Morris, exercised control over a wide range of reserves, with a view to establishing a connected chain of reserves along the river foreshores, there seems to have been no integrated plan for their development. Administered centrally, each was developed and landscaped independently, a far cry from the ideals of the town planning movement. From the Government Gardens and foreshore reserves in 1920, Shapcott was soon applying for and receiving control of reserves in Nedlands and Crawley, and became responsible for the development of a new Caves Reserve, many miles north of Perth at Yanchep. While the development of Yanchep, and later the John Forrest National Park in the Darling Ranges, occupied much of Shapcott’s energy and attention, the metropolitan reserves were not forgotten. Autocratic and dictatorial, Shapcott’s single-minded pursuit of his goals led to conflict with those who either controlled land he wished to administer under the State Gardens Board, or adjacent areas. Shapcott’s agenda was, from the start, to control and develop these and other reserves, ensuring that the best result was achieved through minimal expenditure, and using every means at his disposal.  

Shapcott was clearly seeking to use control of the land to control the behaviour of those who used it. In writing to the Minister of Works and the Engineer in Chief of the Harbour and Rivers Department in 1921 regarding the reserves at Crawley and the Perth foreshore, Shapcott raised his concerns about:

[boats] littering the foreshore, throwing bottles and rubbish in the waters close in shore, and other practices which need firmly repressing… You will agree that we need to start right, more

\textsuperscript{52} ‘Personal papers - L.E. Shapcott’, 1914 - 1917, Premier's Department, (Cons. 5081, File 1., SROWA).
especially by cleaning up this place and then preventing it from being spoilt by unwarranted licence and vandalism.\textsuperscript{53}

His solution was to vest control in the Gardens Board:

it is not much use having a good set of regulations for Crawley with a special constable on shore while power remains to the boating and fishing fraternity to play fast and loose on the river...\textsuperscript{54}

In much the same way he took over several other reserves, and in 1929 applied for full control of the Government House gardens, citing problems from the previous year’s ‘Movie Ball’, and the fact that the two gardens exchanged labour and materiel on a regular basis:

Under these circumstances, it would be just as well as if we controlled it properly and assumed the status to which we are rightfully entitled. We could then apply our regulations – prevent liquor being brought into the Ballroom, control the traffic, order the elimination of any undesirable or unlawful feature, while at same time observing the Governor’s wish in every respect.

Highlighted in the file is the comment, ‘the transfer will, of course, authorise the Board to use the rentals as provided by the Parks and Reserves Act, 1895.’\textsuperscript{55}

Almost immediately after gaining control of the Government Gardens, Shapcott, always eager to promote charitable events and fundraising, approved of a Sunday Concert by McMahon’s Band in the Government Gardens.\textsuperscript{56} In a stiffly formal letter, the Acting Undersecretary, Colonial Secretary’s Office, advised the Bandleader that such performances were in contravention of the

\textsuperscript{53} Shapcott to Minister for Works, nd, Conservation and Land Management, (Cons. 5712, Ibid.).
\textsuperscript{54} Shapcott to Engineer in Chief, 30 March 1921, ‘Swan River - Mounts Bay - Crawley Foreshore - desirability of cleaning up and of vesting some control in Premier’s Dept.’ Department of Public works and Labour, (Cons. 689, 1921/1254, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{55} Shapcott to Premier, 3 July 1939, ‘Government House Gardens. Control of by State Gardens Board’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1703, 1929/303, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{56} Shapcott had been offered the role of Vicepresident of the Band in January 1920 but had declined. ’L.E. Shapcott. Semi - private file’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1657, 1920/69, SROWA).
Police Act, which had been amended in 1913 to provide for control of such events, following the controversies of the previous decade. Shapcott was similarly advised of the breach of rules and, with respect to the hand over of control of the Gardens that:

I thought there might be saying some confusion in connection with band entertainments... my object in communicating with you is to request that, in future, your arrangements with bands be restricted to the use of the grounds.\(^{57}\)

In a characteristically insouciant reply, which must have infuriated those outside Shapcott’s admittedly wide and influential circle, Shapcott simply said:

I should have advised you sometime ago that I discussed this matter with your Hon. Minister and he agreed to delegate to me his authority to control all concerts on Sunday evening in the Government Gardens and Foreshore. I propose notifying the police from time to time of any instance wherein this permission is granted. I am sure you will find this work satisfactorily.\(^{58}\)

When reminded that collections could only be authorised for charitable purposes, Shapcott, whose commitment to charities and charitable activities was very real, and very practical, confirmed this commitment, saying that, ‘Sunday entertainments should not be lightly permitted, and that only charity, or the building up of an aid to charity justifies permission.”\(^{59}\)

Shapcott’s practical support of charities was to take him almost immediately into conflict with many of the more conservative groups in Perth, organisations that might otherwise have supported him. One of the sites the Board now controlled was the small triangle of reclaimed land, adjacent to the Esplanade and Barrack Square, which had first excited the attention of the Undersecretaries of Lands and Works in 1901, when it was proposed for

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\(^{57}\) Undersecretary, Colonial Secretary’s Office, to Shapcott, 7 March1921 ‘Sunday entertainments - charges for admission’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1496, 1921/87, SROWA).

\(^{58}\) Shapcott to Undersecretary, 11 March1921 Ibid.

\(^{59}\) Shapcott to Undersecretary, Colonial Secretary’s Office, 16 March1918 Ibid.
reclamation. Gazetted as reserve 5957 it was vested in the State Gardens Board in 1921 for the purpose of ‘public amusement’, and known as Carnival Square. On it were to develop sideshows, a Ferris wheel and other fairground amusements.

Figure 24: ‘White City, June 1926’. Carnival Square, or ‘White City’, at the bottom of William Street. The Esplanade is to the left, and the building on the right hand side, opposite the entry to Carnival Square, is the Perth Customs House.

Source: Weekend News ‘Flashback’ series, Battye Library

This was a true pleasure ground, and like the English pleasure grounds of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was soon the subject of public censure, while at the same time gaining popular approbation. Each summer, between 1921 and 1929, Shapcott would lease the grounds to various

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60 ‘Lands (Cons. 541, 1898/6860, SROWA).’
61 Conway, People’s parks: the development and design of Victorian parks in Britain; Nead, Victorian Babylon; Howell, ‘Victorian sexuality and the moralisation of Cremorne Gardens’.
charities, such as the Silver Chain Nursing Association and the Young Australia League, which would hold weeklong fairs and carnivals, known generically as ‘White City’. In between these fairs, Mr D.N. Martin, who maintained the equipment and ran the sideshows, leased the grounds.

On the one hand the site provided entertainment and excitement; on the other it was felt to encourage poor behaviour and larrikinism. An application from the Chair of the Foundling Home Appeal to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, in 1923, that a corroboree be staged at the square was, for example, rejected. The Protector felt that trips to the city left his charges open to risks of infection and severe colds and more particularly, that it would only unsettle his adult charges at Moore River, even though ‘they, or the majority, are of good behaviour’.  

62 The Young Australia League (YAL), a muscular Christianity-like society under the direction of J.J. Simons, wrote in 1924 suggesting a boxing match with members of the visiting American Fleet, be staged in the square, with the entire proceeds ‘to be devoted to the reduction of a debt incurred in connection with the YAL Memorial building.’  

63 In line with Shapcott’s commitment to charity, or the ‘building up of an aid to charity’ the application was approved.

The biggest opposition came from those who opposed the use of gambling, such as lotteries and ‘spinning jennies’, to raise funds for charities. A Bill to amend the Criminal Code Act was introduced in Parliament in September 1921, aimed specifically at allowing lotteries and art unions for the purposes of charity. Opposing the amendment, which was defeated, Mrs Edith Cowan, Western Australia’s first woman parliamentarian, said:

   We ought not to get down to such a low level that we can take care of our poor and our sick and our wounded soldiers, and our children


63 ‘Visit of British fleet. YAL - boxing contests at Carnival City suggesting’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1703, 1924/118, SROWA).
who need air, only by offering a quid pro quo in the shape of gambling.\textsuperscript{64}

She was equally firm in catechising the Colonial Secretary as to who held the lease on Carnival Square, and whether or not he was aware of gambling being conducted, often with ‘young people and children… in the various charitable appeals held from time to time in Carnival Square?’\textsuperscript{65}

A separate Lotteries Bill, ‘solely for the purposes of legalising charitable lotteries’ was introduced in 1924 and again defeated.\textsuperscript{66} The question of ‘White City’ was again raised, this time with the Minister for Justice, who replied, somewhat weakly, that ‘certain methods had been adopted for ‘White City’ for the purpose of obtaining funds for commendable purposes’, noting that the ‘City’ had ‘public approval and patronage.’\textsuperscript{67} Annette Davis has argued that the public who approved of ‘White City’ were generally the working class, while those opposed to it were of the judiciary, senior public servants and the like, committed to preserving the status quo.\textsuperscript{68} Yet gambling was, and had been, a normal recreational activity, and was endemic in the Western Australian community. Mrs Cowan and her colleagues were not maintaining the status quo, but seeking to exert a morally improving hegemony. In this light, the fate of ‘White City’ was as obvious as the site of the War Memorial.

A.O. Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, similarly disapproved of ‘White City’, not so much for the gambling, as for the entire morally damaging potential of the site to his charges. He persuaded the Governor, in March 1927, to declare the City of Perth as a prohibited area for Aboriginals, citing ‘White City’ as his premier concern:

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\textsuperscript{64} Cowan, Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1921, Parliament of Western Australia, ‘WAVP’.
\textsuperscript{65} Cowan, Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1921, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Legislative Assembly, 19 December 1924, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Annette Davis, ‘Good times for all? Popular entertainment and class consciousness in Western Australian society between the Wars.’ \textit{Studies in Western Australian History} XI (1990).
'White City' unfortunately has for some time past attracted half-caste lads and girls leading to all sorts of undesirable assignments and complications. The young men are being permitted to indulge in boxing contests, rough riding, etc., very much to their detriment...  

Under the prohibition the police were authorised to remove any Aboriginal or half-caste person from the city, if they could not demonstrate that they were employed, or had a valid reason to be in the city. It was a campaign fraught with difficulty, as the police appeared to generally believed that there was no valid reason for the prohibition, stating that those aboriginals visiting ‘White City’ were:

well dressed [and] kept to themselves collectively.... I see no reason why the pleasure and amusement they obtain by visiting this place should be curtailed or restricted.  

It was not an assessment Neville agreed with, wanting all aboriginals to be removed from the area. When advised by the Commissioner of Police that police could only stop people who were not lawfully in town, he recommended that aboriginals in or around ‘White City’ be charged with loitering.

The campaign against ‘White City’ reached its zenith in 1929, the State’s centenary year, with a recommendation that a Royal Commission be held into ‘White City’. The main problem was the gambling, and its apparent demoralising influence on the general population, although Neville’s prohibitory measures would have reinforced those concerns. The Royal Commission motion was supported by organisations such as the Women’s Service Guild, the National Council of Women, the Mother’s Union, and the Cambrian Society.

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69 A.O. Neville to Under Secretary, Chief Secretary’s Department, 23 February 1927, ‘City of Perth - prohibited area’, Chief Protector of Aborigines, (Cons. 993, 1927/0038, SROWA).
70 Copy of Police Report by Constable W. Culmsec, dated 10 February 1928 and forwarded to Neville by the Commissioner of Police. Ibid.
71 A.O. Neville to Commissioner of Police, 15 February 1928, Ibid.
72 Commissioner to Neville, 7 March 1929 and Neville to Commissioner, 11 March 1929, Ibid.
73 Davis, ‘Good times for all? Popular entertainment and class consciousness in Western Australian society between the Wars.’ pp. 70 - 72.
Faced with such opposition, the Labor government announced the closure of ‘White City’ in May 1929.\textsuperscript{74}

If Shapcott’s practical support of charity through an entertainment precinct met with condemnation, his method of maintaining and ‘beautifying’ reserves under State Gardens Board control met with more general approval. Identifying very early on that the largest cost in creating and maintaining parklands was in the labour required for upkeep and layout of the reserves, Shapcott was to institute a very practical form of moral improvement. Using government ‘sustenance’ and relief funds, Shapcott utilised a work force of unemployed and seasonal workers. Collier had alluded to Shapcott’s credentials for this sort of work in his ‘letter of recommendation’ and Shapcott’s voluminous semi-personal files contain literally hundreds of letters either asking for assistance or thanking Shapcott for providing it.

‘Relief’ work, as it was known, had been available as a form of social support long before Shapcott came to power. Many of the immigrants in the 1890s who had failed to find gold, either in the ground, or through selling goods and services to successful miners, had relied on a form of ‘relief’ for brief periods of time. Often this had been in the form of temporary payments to wives and families, or a requirement to attend at the Poor House, where temporary work might be available. Following the war, returned servicemen, unable through physical or mental injury to find work were more and more asking for similar forms of relief. Inglis has argued that returned service men were ‘encouraged to think of themselves as an aristocracy’,\textsuperscript{75} but the reality of relief and sustenance work created instead, as Jill Roe describes, two classes of welfare citizen, with the returned servicemen being the upper class, but still

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.: p. 72.
dependent on handouts and assistance. A scheme for the resettlement of soldiers was commenced, and in providing sustenance work for seasonal and unemployed men, preference in employment was generally given to married men and returned soldiers. An Institution for disabled servicemen was established on the reclaimed ground below the Supreme Court, where they could enjoy the facilities of the city, in a more contemplative environment than in the central city.

Shapcott’s force of relief workers and day labourers had been engaged in major planting and landscaping works, principally along the foreshore, the Esplanade and Stirling Square. As the State’s centenary celebrations approached, Shapcott was eager to promote the gardens, as ‘in a great measure the history of this Square is an index to the history of the development of this State.’ More than that, he was happy to promote the State Gardens Board, advising L. Lucas in Brisbane, who was writing a history of botanic gardens in Australia, that the Board had undertaken:

a vigorous policy of development. The area of Government Gardens, previously 4 to 5 acres was increased to 15 acres, while very considerable stretches of territory were planned and planted with avenues of palms, clumps of trees and massive herbaceous growth. Immense improvements have been effect in this period in the quality of the collection contained, duplicates of old specimens having been removed, and a vast number of new specimens secured from all over the world, have been secured.

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77 Bold, at the City of Perth, also provided work for returned soldiers, ordering in 1923 that no gardeners be employed on Saturday or Sunday, other than disabled soldiers at a rate of one shilling and eight pence per hour. The following year, he required that returned soldiers be given employment preferentially. ‘City Garden Report March 1919 to 1922’, Perth City Council, Files - registered (Cons. 3459, 1922/200, SROWA); ‘City Gardeners reports and instructions. 1922 - 1924’, Perth City Council, Files - registered (Cons. 3459, 1924/336, SROWA).
79 L. E. Shapcott to L. Lucas, 7 October, 1927 in Ibid.
From wasteland to parkland

The *West Australian* was pleased to concur, identifying the reclamation as ‘several acres of untidy waste grounds’ that had ‘been transformed into a garden that should be dear to all citizens of Perth.’\(^{80}\) Shapcott considered the grounds in the light of a botanic garden, although the *West* was slightly more critical of the gardens. Nevertheless, the *West* agreed with Shapcott that the grounds had at last reached their maximum potential:

> on warm still nights, when crowds assemble on the illuminated lawns the purpose of the gardens as a pleasure resort for the people of Perth is assuredly fulfilled.\(^{81}\)

While Shapcott was achieving wonders through his use of relief labour and somewhat controversial fundraising efforts, the Kings Park Board was continuing to struggle. The Honour Avenues required considerable water and fertilizer, and although the Returned Services League helped out by paying for or providing fertilizer, the established costs associated with the park, including labour costs, continued to rise. The Water Board had also complained about the amount of water being wasted in the park, often through vandals turning on irrigation taps or breaking them off, and had threatened to reduce or totally ban the provision of water to the park unless matters improved. A severe drought in 1920 - 1921 exacerbated the problem, leading to the loss of many exotic species, including many of the Honour Avenue trees. The Board had either to buy water or increase the number of rangers in the park to prevent continued water losses. The number of cars and vehicles had also continued to rise, with associated damage to the roads, and the Board had, on occasion, had to close the park to vehicles because of the condition of the roads.

By 1926 the Board had instituted desperate measures. They had approached the Premier for permission to change the by-laws and, as a result, announced the introduction of an annual vehicle toll to be paid to the Board.

\(^{80}\) Clipping from *West Australian*, dated 17 November 1928 in Ibid.

\(^{81}\) Ibid.
Speaking to the Legislative Assembly on 15 December, Hon. H. Seddon had referred to the measure as a ‘Dark-age Toll system’. The following day, the Hon. W.J. George asked if the income from general traffic fees could be provided to the Board, to ‘leave the people’s park open to the poor equally with the rich?’. Unsatisfied by the response that the traffic income could only be distributed to Local Governments, he returned to the subject in August 1927, by asking that the Board’s vote be increased so that the toll could be abolished. The answer was no. In fact, the original estimate of £3,000 was reduced to £2,000, and only raised by £400 after debate.

The indefatigable Arthur Lovekin responded in September 1927 by introducing the Traffic Amendment Bill, which was brought in specifically to eliminate the toll. Under Lovekin’s amendment, the Traffic Act would be amended to allow distribution of funds to the Park, as had already occurred with several other major roads, including the Causeway. Introducing the Bill, Lovekin admitted that the toll was ‘odious’, but it seems likely that in this instance he was motivated less by concern about public rights of access, and more by the effective boycott of the Automobile Club. Because members of the Club refused to drive through the park, the Board had raised only £200, instead of the estimated £1,400. George was much firmer on the public’s right of access, and during the Second reading of the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, not only continued to assert their rights, but castigated the House for the Board’s vote. ‘The general grant given to the board is one of the most miserable sums that appear on the Estimates, and disgraces them every year.’ Perhaps in tacit recognition of both the principle and the sentiment, as well as the more obvious power of the Automobile Club, the Bill was passed in both Houses.

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82 Legislative Assembly, 16 December 1926, Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAVP'.
83 Legislative Assembly, 29 September 1927, Ibid.
Despite the increase in funding promised by the Act, it was in reality only a very small sum, and the Board still needed to find alternative sources of income. More plantations were planned, and the Park Superintendent, Mr Heath, lucked on to a possible source of income. While walking through the park, Heath noted a patch of high grass, which was lush and green despite lack of water. Believing that it might have potential within the Park, Heath collected some samples, and it was soon identified as veldt grass, a South African native used for stock feed.\(^{84}\) Within weeks articles in agricultural and farming journals featured Heath and his discovery, promoting the sale of the roots from the Park for £1 per bag.\(^{85}\) By July 1927 the Board had raised £158.

But the Board required a more consistent stream of income. Leasing some of its land for commercial recreational use such as tearooms was, as Shapcott had demonstrated, one way of creating such an income. They already had a small income from the leases for the Kings Park Tennis Club and Bowling Club, but they now anticipated something far more commercial. At the base of the cliff, facing onto Perth Water and the city, the Board owned lots L5 and L6. They had been compulsorily acquired for the purpose of providing land for a bore and pipe through the cliff, and had been leased out to a Chinese gardener. The land was low-lying and swampy, and home to slugs, snails and mosquitoes. The Board had sprayed with kerosene in order to reduce the insect nuisance, but reclamation was a much more permanent solution, particularly if someone else carried out the work. The Board had been approached for the use of the land, with the promise of an income stream of £100 per annum.\(^{86}\)

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\(^{84}\) Veldt grass had also been found at the University campus at about the same time. William Somerville, a Senator of the University, said in his reminiscences that it was believed to have come from some packing. Seddon and Lilleyman, *A landscape for learning: a history of the grounds of the University of Western Australia*, p. 82. Whether it first took hold in Kings Park or the University, the University was faster to identify it as a pest, while the Park was still seeing it as a potential saviour.

\(^{85}\) 'Veldt grass', Kings Park Board, (Cons. 6162, 6/1, SROWA).

\(^{86}\) Parliament of Western Australia, 'WAVP'.
In order to achieve their goal, the Board felt it necessary to get a Bill introduced into Parliament to allow the land to be leased. It was almost immediately opposed, largely on the basis that this was allowing public grounds to be used for private purposes. The Hon. W.H. Kitson, M.L.C., expressed concern that this was a measure that would make the Park ‘artificial’. \(^ {87}\)

Lovekin was immediately on the attack in a long and impassioned speech, citing his long years of service on the Board, and rephrasing the Board’s original policy, which he now said was:

that the park should be reserved as the heritage of the people forever, and that no portion of it should ever be parted with; also that it should be utilised for the enjoyment and recreation of the people.\(^ {88}\)

In Lovekin’s view the lease of the lots was entirely consistent with this policy. The land would be leased, not transferred, and therefore was not being parted with, and the proposed use was also entirely in keeping. Dismissing concerns about the park being ‘artificial’ Lovekin, revising Forrest’s vision of a landscape park, said that while the original purpose of the Board had been for the park to ‘remain as a reserve for our native forest’, the idea had proved ‘quite impracticable’.\(^ {89}\) Population pressure had made the risk of fire both more likely and more frightening. Had it not been for a program of fire breaks, and the ‘artificial park’ on the edge of the park, ‘there would be no virgin bush in the park at all’.\(^ {90}\) While Lovekin acknowledged that some people liked the bush:

There are others who like a different form of enjoyment in the park. If hon. members desire to know the views of the vast majority of the people who go to the park, they should visit it on a Sunday and see the thousands who congregate not in the seclusion of the thickets but on the clear spaces the Minister refers to as the ‘artificial portions’ of the park.\(^ {91}\)

\(^{87}\) Ibid., 19 September, 1927, p. 781.  
\(^{88}\) Ibid., 19 September, 1928, p. 787.  
\(^{89}\) Ibid.  
\(^{90}\) Ibid.  
\(^{91}\) Ibid.
Referring to comments that the tennis club and the bowling club prevented members of the public from using the facilities, unless they had paid a subscription, Lovekin was equally adamant. The clubs took up only 6 acres of the park, and if anyone complained that they were unable to walk on the grounds, they were merely being selfish. The presence of the clubs simply allowed for a wider range of recreation in the park:

I am sure my fellow members of the board agree with me that if we could get more of those sportsgrounds distributed through portions of the park where a useless poor type of bush exists now, it would be of benefit to the whole community. It would provide our youths of today with further means of indulging in healthful recreation and exercise and that would be to the advantage of the people generally... Why people should be so keen on having the total area under bush I cannot see, because they do not use it.  

Despite his eloquence and passion, the Bill was defeated.

While Lovekin clearly appreciated the value of ‘good’ bush, by which he meant wildflowers and majestic jarrah and tuart trees, his vision for the park was, in truth, more aligned to that of Forrest, than to that of people like Kitson. However, where Forrest had seen the park as symbolic of the status of the city as a capital, Lovekin clearly saw it as providing an avenue to demonstrate links with and support for the Empire. Lovekin’s heritage was Imperial, not natural. He had already provided symbols of Empire through the ‘Royal Oaks’, and was now pleased to announce a range of other activities that would again reinforce the link. Three ‘little vines’ from Hampton Court were being established in the park, and he had recently released thrushes into the park. He also alluded to a project to bring ‘Peter Pan’ and a little of Kensington Gardens to the park.

Throughout 1927 the Rotary Club of Western Australia had been raising funds to bring a replica of the famous ‘Peter Pan’ statue to the State. In seeking

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92 Ibid., 19 September, 1928, p. 788.
93 Ibid., p. 790.
public donations the Rotarian’s pamphlet had said that the statue ‘would inculcate a love of art in the children of our State.’ More than that, it would ‘create and foster an Empire Spirit’ and would ‘help to place Perth as the leading Capital City of the Commonwealth in Empire Sentiment.’ These were aims that Lovekin wholeheartedly embraced, envisaging an almost complete replica of the original grounds. He had imported suitable trees to replicate the plantings at Kensington Gardens, and proposed the construction of a small lake to duplicate the effect of the Serpentine. He had been unable to persuade Ernest Le Souef, the Director of Perth Zoo, to approve releasing English deer in the park (Le Souef thought they were too dangerous for the public), but while visiting Japan he had seen some small deer that could be in an enclosure near the statue for children to pat. By making the bush ‘Never-never land’ children could be taught not to enter it for fear of getting lost. Despite his avowed support of the natural heritage of the park Lovekin saw nothing wrong with a message.

Lovekin’s enthusiasm led to conflict with Rotary. They wanted a site some distance from the main lodge, believing that the site proposed by the Park and Lovekin, between the lodge and the nursery, was inappropriate. Their chief concern was the ugly fence dividing the nursery from the park, a fence Lovekin offered to replace himself. The proposed park site near a recently established playground had direct supervision from the Lodge and would ensure that children were protected. Lovekin, in particular, was concerned that a number of children had been assaulted in the park in recent times. In increasingly bitter letters, Lovekin and the Rotarians were unable to come to a compromise, and in a last ditch attempt to mend matters, his fellow board members intervened,
calling a meeting at Lovekin’s house with Rotary to discuss the matter. His fellow members clearly did not disdain Lovekin’s Imperial sentiments, even sharing them to some extent. Despite their best efforts, neither side agreed to yield, and the statue was eventually installed in Queen’s Gardens, where its messages of Empire and art, and the ‘spirit of Rotary’ reinforced that site’s domestic didacticism.

It was a decision applauded by the newly formed Municipal Town Planning Commission, which fully endorsed the sentiments of Rotary. ‘Peter Pan’ provided an easily understood aesthetic message, suitable for improving and educating the youth of the city:

This gift exemplifies the value of statuary in its finest sense, in as much as, whilst being a thing of beauty, it perpetuates the spirit of youth, and itself plays so large a part in the lives and imaginations of the children.

The Commission, which was a commission of inquiry, represented the culmination of town planning ideals and energy from the previous two decades. It had been formed following extensive lobbying by the municipalities and the Town Planning Association, formed in 1916. Headed by architect and Perth City councillor Harold Boas, whose brother Lionel Boas was Secretary to the Kings Park Board, the Commission consisted of three other municipal councillors, town planners C.H. Klem and W.A. Saw, architect J.M Tail, and H.G. Atwell, the Perth City engineer. It was empowered to inquire into a wide range of matters, including the provision of amenities and opens space throughout the metropolitan area. Just as Bold, Poole and Hardwick, had argued in the years before the Great War, the Commission promoted the ideals

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97 Ibid.
98 According to Mr Nicholson, representing the Park Board, the ‘spirit of Rotary’, ‘denoted all sorts of love and affection: everything that tends to goodwill and happiness among the peoples of the earth.’ Ibid.
of the City Beautiful, although it recognised that, since the war, town planning had become more utilitarian and practical. Yet it felt that the ideals of beauty and utility still had a role to play, as Poole had suggested a decade and a half earlier, perhaps even more so as the State struggled to cope with the first impacts of the Great Depression:

The cultural and aesthetic side, however, is still vital to necessary development and perhaps more than ever, seeing that the exacting needs of the times are inclined to make us neglect those things essential for the welfare of man’s soul for those only of the needs of his body.

Given an almost ideal setting, Perth and its suburbs give hopes for a great city in the future – the true City Beautiful – providing we are wise in our generation and lay the foundation on sound lines.\(^\text{100}\)

In providing those foundations the development of the foreshore, and the further refinement of Kings Park, would play a crucial role.

\(^{100}\)Ibid.
Chapter 9 – Sustaining nature

Describing the State’s Centenary parade through the streets of Perth in 1929, Geoffrey Bolton argued that:

much could be told about the Western Australian community from what it thought important to display in its procession... To head the parade the committee chose none of the works of man, but ‘tableau representing the flora of the State’. This was not just a pretty piece of sentiment ... Wildflowers and bush were an integral part of growing up in Western Australia.¹

The bush was also an integral part of the city. The indigenous vegetation of other colonies, notably eucalypts and conifers, were used as street trees and in arboreta, while the parks and reserves used elements of nature from around the globe, domesticating the Empire much as gardeners in England were doing. Picnics and enjoyment of the bush surrounding Perth formed a regular part of the Perth social activities. Alfred Hillman, an officer with the Volunteers and employed by the Western Australian Bank, enjoyed walks in the bush surrounding the city, taking visitors for walks to Mt Eliza during the wildflower season, something that Perth citizens had enjoyed for many years.² Sophia Phillips, daughter of the original Surveyor General, John Septimus Roe, wrote, in September 1855, of a range of activities for the month; including attending church, visiting friends, preparations for a Bazaar, a Ball at Government House, visiting Fremantle with relatives for a week, and driving in the dog cart.³ The following year, at the same time, she enjoyed a wedding, with a ‘handsome dejeuner erected by Papa in the backyard’ and a week later took a drive to

² Hillman, ed., The Hillman Diaries 1877 - 1884: the personal diaries of Alfred James Hillman for 21 December 1877 to 24 April 1884 with a foreword by Bentley Hillman.
Toodyay, noting the ‘bush lovely with flowers’, on the way.⁴ A decade later, her daughter Fanny also enjoyed the bush, taking a walk to the cemetery in East Perth one Sunday in August 1867, accompanied by ‘R. Johnstone, L. Clifton, Amy, Jessie and Mary Leake, Mr Lawrence and Mr Barlee…’ She also took walks to Mount Eliza, and to the Limekilns estate on the north-eastern side of the city.⁵ While Lovekin had seen the potential of ‘Never-never land’ to tell the story of loss in the bush, for many Western Australians the bush of Kings Park was becoming a precious resource: possibly underused, but not undervalued. Western Australian flora, appreciated for its aesthetic beauty, refused to be refined and civilized, proving difficult to cultivate in a domestic situation.

Richard Drayton and others have ascribed one impetus for the foundation of botanic gardens, and of the landscape parks that were becoming a feature of urban cities and societies, to a desire to create a refuge from the alien nature of the colonies.⁶ Within the confines of the garden or park, argues Drayton, ‘exotic nature was, literally, put in its place in a European system.’⁷ In England, the exotic was domesticated and the Empire recreated in the gardens of Home. David Cannadine has similarly argued that the role of Britain in the Empire was to domesticate the foreign and the exotic, while the Empire sought domesticity by importing what was known.⁸ But both were doing the same thing, creating a vision that integrated the known with the exotic, using nature as a vast palate of plants, animals and resources, which could be integrated into the final expression of civilization, the city.

In this chapter I discuss the way in which access to nature, either through employment projects, or as a background to commemoration, contributed to the moral and social development of the city. I also trace the increasing value

⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Drayton, *Nature’s government*.
⁷ Ibid., p. 183.
placed on native vegetation in the heart of the city on the one hand, and discussions highlighting the continued use of controlled, even exotic, nature as a link to Empire and Commonwealth on the other.

**Practical morality**

Even by the 1930s, Perth was not an urban centre totally divorced from the truths of its rural heritage. Although cows and pigs had been largely removed from the central city, dairies were situated across the river in South Perth and Victoria Park and in the suburbs surrounding the city. Horse drawn drays and carts continued to be a familiar sight in the city until the 1950s, and the Department of Agriculture grazed sheep in the Government House Domain, until their removal to the University of Western Australia, around the river, at Crawley. As Bolton outlines in his history of Western Australia during the Depression, rural and urban communities in the State were closely linked through family and business ties. The State’s earlier reliance on mining income had been replaced in recent decades by a re-concentration on agriculture, and the impact of the Depression, which resulted in a sudden decrease in the price of wheat and other exports, was felt across the State at all levels of the community.

When the effects of the Depression began to be felt, Shapcott undertook a massive program of sustenance and relief work, using his previous experience and contacts, and establishing the State Gardens Board as a de facto employment agency. The resultant scheme, ‘would afford the workman a return for his labours, keeping him self-respecting, lift him above the taint of charity, and the results of his work would remain as a permanent asset to the State.’

Using his personal influence and commitment to practical solutions, Shapcott set up a partnership with local businessman, Charles McNess. McNess, an

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9 Bolton, *A fine country to starve in.*
ironmonger and property owner, and, like Shapcott, a self made man, seems to have been an unlikely sort of philanthropist. Already known for minor charities and benefits, he rose to the challenge of the Depression, providing over £25,000 in two years for various programs to relieve unemployment and the effects of poverty. In the years following 1930 he was instrumental in providing funding for the development of two National Parks, and a central component of the State Housing Commission scheme, all through Shapcott. Under Shapcott’s aegis, ‘The Zoo, public gardens, public foreshores, Keane’s Point, Point Walter, and many other large domains, all benefited from the scheme and activity thus promoted.’ Together with local shires and the Unemployment Bureau Shapcott provided work, giving preference where possible to married men with families.

While Shapcott’s motives were pure, his methods were, as always, not entirely appreciated. The Kings Park Board, seeking to employ men on similar conditions, advised that they had no funds to make up the difference between the minimum wage and the government approved sustenance rate. ‘The Gardens Board is able to make good the difference from the McNess donation, the Trotting Association donations, etc. The park has no such means,’ wrote Lovekin to Premier Mitchell in 1930. Appealing to Shapcott for assistance, they were told that the men would simply have to work to sustenance rates, with Shapcott suggesting that they work ‘broken’ or partial hours. Scaddan, the Minister for Works and Labour, was unimpressed. Lovekin and the Board could employ men to do just enough work to be covered by the rates, but he would

12 ‘Premier (Cons. 5761, 1939/623, SROWA)’.
13 A. Lovekin to J. Mitchell, 20 September 1930 ‘Unemployment relief. Arrangements for providing men for clearing work at King’s Park’, Premier’s Department, (Cons.1496, 1930/760, SROWA).
14 L.E. Shapcott to J. Scadden, memo, 23 September 1930, Ibid.
not be a party to such an arrangement. ‘It is altogether wrong to suggest that a man be given work on bare sustenance.’\textsuperscript{15} Scaddan’s righteous indignation proved a powerful force, and Shapcott eventually agreed to allow a partial rebate to the Board from the McNess Fund, for a three week ‘special project.’\textsuperscript{16}

Other measures too were undertaken to provide relief and support. The Kings Park Board forewent its usual income from the sale of firewood from the park in 1928, establishing instead several woodlots at the entrances to the park, and working with local government and charity groups and a truck provided by the Main Roads Department to provide loads of timber to the needy.\textsuperscript{17} From 1930 onwards, sustenance workers, under the supervision of a qualified feller, also undertook the gathering of timber. But as the immediate impact of the Depression diminished this program became more controversial, with concern for the trees over-riding concern for individuals, and in 1932 the \textit{West Australian} carried an article defending the practice - demonstrating that the timber was cut from damaged limbs, and that close inspection of the trees would reveal vigorous new growth.\textsuperscript{18} Although this part of the article was supportive of the Board’s management, the remainder of the article was not, representing a major change in the relationship between the paper and the Board.

\textit{Landscaping the natural city}

Debates about the use of the park were increasingly common. The Women’s Service Guild had written to the Kings Park Board in 1935 recommending that the Park ‘be made a sanctuary for the preservation of as many species as possible of the wildflowers of the State, from all over State,

\textsuperscript{15} J. Scaddan, memo, 26 September 1930, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} ‘Firewood from King’s Park for unemployed’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1496, 1929/189, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{18} Newspaper clipping, 18 January 1932, Ibid.
and especially any variety in danger of extinction.' On one hand, the Park Board were keen to protect the natural bush, although they were not solely concerned with preserving it as a evidence of local species. On the other hand, there was also the understanding, bequeathed from Forrest, that the park was representative of the city as a great city, and an urban centre, a role which demanded more that it be more than a wildflower sanctuary.

Some, such as W.A. Saw, tried to combine the tensions between the landscaped and natural parts of the park. Saw wrote to the Government Forest Conservator for suitable trees for Forrest’s honour avenue in 1931, not ‘of the species as is usually planted in streets, but something unique, picturesque and beautiful, in keeping with the setting of the park and of the late Lord Forrest, who has been termed Western Australia’s noblest son.’ Kessell, who joined the Board the following year, advised that the number of trees which could be planted was ‘limited by the unfavourable soil conditions’, and recommended planting lemon scented gums. ‘The glistening white trunks with the sparse, light green foliage would, I think, make a striking avenue effect…’

It was a dichotomy the Town Planning Commission had identified, but not resolved:

Kings Park, with its 1,000 acres of virgin bush and wildflower shrubs in the heart of Perth, are gifts due to the foresight of our early pioneers and statesmen. It is for us then to protect and preserve these great gifts and to do our bit towards the needs of health and recreation of the generations to come.

19 Women’s Service Guild to Kings Park Board, 13 August and 31 October, 1935 ‘Kings Park Board. Nursery and seed’, Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5538, 2/7, SROWA).
21 S.L. Kessell to W. A. Saw, 2 September 1931, Ibid. Kessell’s assessment of the quality of the soil reflected the growth in the study of soils and nutrients, and a greater understanding of Western Australia’s soil deficiencies, and is in marked contrast to the 1890s assertions that the sand of King’s Park was particularly good sand, capable of growing anything.
22 Ibid.
While noting the Board’s stated policy of preserving the bush, and identifying the lack of consistent funding for the park, the Commission nevertheless recommended that, ‘the park could be much more popularised by adding to the natural beauties other means of attracting the public.’\(^{24}\) It was a message repeated in 1931, when Mr Shields of the Town Planning Association, in deputation with the Town Planning Institute and the Women’s Service Guild, called on the Board to protest against the leasing out of ‘A’ class, or permanent, reserves. While the Women’s Service Guild, represented by Mrs Farrelly, were anxious to ensure the preservation of the natural flora, Mr Shields and the Town Planning Association were far more pragmatic. They recognised that reserves were required ‘within easy reach of the city and especially along the foreshore of the river…. Kings Park would not be so attractive except for the drive and other improvements…’\(^{25}\)

The Board itself used similar language in its 1932 report, in which it repeated sentiments similar to those expressed by Lovekin three years earlier. The park, at just over 1,000 acres, ‘affords considerable scope for development and improvement along organized lines.…’\(^{26}\) Funding was, as always, the problem that prevented fuller development of the park. Nevertheless, a bridle track was being developed through the park, and there were two major projects underway to enhance the park and its surrounds – the widening of Mounts Bay Road and the inclusion of three park-like bays in the scarp along the river, and the development of a 15,000 seat concourse for the War Memorial for Anzac Day and other services.

The development of the War Memorial clearly linked the park to the city and the State, providing a clear statement of its representative role for Western Australians. But it too was problematic. Those who came to view the Memorial

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\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 96.
\(^{25}\) 19 October 1931, ‘Lands (Cons. 1569, 1890/1521, SROWA)’.
\(^{26}\) Extract from 1932 Annual Report, Ibid.
were not necessarily those who came to look at the city. The Memorial site attracted crowds of visitors during the increasingly important Dawn service, and the Board struggled to provide them in the small area around the memorial. A new concourse designed by the new Town Planning Commissioner, David Lomas Davidson, would allow greater access to the site.

In discussing the progress of the designs, Davidson raised the problem of the conflict of uses:

As a returned soldier I am personally averse to the Memorial being used as tourist outlook and hang-over for those who pay greater attention to the view than the symbol of sacrifice and memory.27

To restrict access to the Memorial proper, Davidson recommended the installation of an ornamental fence and gates. But Davidson’s concourse also aroused criticism. The Western Australian Historical Society complained that the new concourse involved the removal of the rifle butts, 'a memorial in themselves… Had they been left, their historical significance would have served to enhance the value of the War Memorial…'28

27 D.L. Davidson to Trustees of the State War Memorial, 5 September 1932, 'King's Park Board - General Correspondence with - Concourse', Town Planning Board, (Cons. 955, 1932/378, SROWA).

Figure 25: Landscaping the War Memorial, 1933, showing the proximity of the butts to the Memorial.

Figure 26: Removal of the rifle butts, 1933.
Source: West Australian Newspapers photographic collection, Battye Library
Others complained about the ‘wanton destruction of native trees’ along the road leading to the memorial: those very tuarts and banksias that had been retained by Campbell and Feakes because of their attractiveness and shade, and required to be left by the road works in 1901. The *West Australian* warned strongly of what might yet come:

the concourse has been constructed at the expense of what was one of the most picturesque parts of Kings Park. Not only were the old rifle-buts interesting historically, but the high knoll at the point of Mt Eliza, graced with trees, was a distinctive feature... The scheme appears to have been put in hand without sufficient consideration, and serves as a reminder that when further inroads upon the natural beauties of the park are contemplated, the utmost care should be taken to see that change really means improvement.

By change the paper meant a scheme to widen Mounts Bay Road at the base of Mt Eliza, using spoil taken in part from ‘overhanging’ cliffs, which had developed as part of the overall foreshore reclamation project.

Lovekin had made the proposal in 1928, in his role as Parliamentary member, after he had been visited by a delegation concerned about the growth of algae in the river, particularly near the City Baths, and the consequent health concerns. Writing to Collier in 1928, Lovekin advised that he had visited the site with W.A. Saw and Heath, the Park Superintendent, and that the location of the Baths was ‘another example of engineering stupidity.’ Lovekin was also concerned that a small bay on the ocean side of the Swan Brewery was often

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31 The original Baths had been built at the end of a pier opposite the Esplanade. These baths were the second set of baths in the river, and had been constructed at Crawley in 1908 following much debate their location. The King’s Park Board had objected to the original proposed location near the Narrows, and the Board’s own jetty, as it would allow Park visitors to see into the Baths.

32 A.Lovekin to Phil Collier, 7 February 1928, ‘Hon. A. Lovekin, MLC. Proposal to widen Mounts Bay Road by means of material from overhanging cliffs in Kings Park.’ Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1496, 1896/103B, SROWA).
clogged with algae, which he had cleared on a regular basis, at his own expense, ‘to prevent the odours arising from annoying visitors to the park.’\textsuperscript{33} Lovekin ascribed the growth of algae to a number of factors, including a fall in the river tide, a lack of run off and an increase in sewage. His solution would widen the road around the river, remove the health risk of the algae and eliminate the possibility of the limestone cliff collapsing on to the road.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure27.png}
\caption{Proposed reclamation at Swan Brewery and extension of Riverside Drive, 1890s – 1930s. Base plan surveyed by G.W. Leeming, 1895, with subsequent annotations in red.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Source:} Lands and Surveys. (Cons. 3868, item 346, SROWA)

\textsuperscript{33} Newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 7 February 1928, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} There had been a number of cases of ‘slippage’, including a major slip in 1908 that resulted in damage to the Terrace tea rooms.
The road widening was mentioned in January 1929, as part of the planning for the centenary celebrations, although there were concerns that the tramway would need to be removed, as would the Brewery. Concern grew from what structures might be removed, to the potential damage to the cliff face itself the following year, when the Town Planning Association voted to protest against the use of the cliffs, believing it would create an 'eyesore for years to come.' It was obviously not a unanimous vote, however. Using photographs of similar excavations into the cliff face nearer the Brewery, Town Planning Commissioner, D.L. Davidson demonstrated how the 'scars' might be revegetated or even extended to form more terraces. 'If it was not desired to continue the terrace treatment, and if funds were available, an open-air theatre of the style adopted in early Greece... might be constructed.'

City Engineer, H.G. Atwell, favoured 'small parkland retreats' to break up the 'hard unbroken wall of cliffs from the Brewery southward.... The native trees and foliage...could be replaced to advantage by trees and foliage of more shady and ornamental type.' The use of the cliffs for fill was a more suitable and cheaper alternative to dredging, and those who opposed their use did so from a 'misguided sentiment without consideration of the wonderful possibilities for improvement by suitable treatment.'

The Kings Park Board approved the Perth City Council’s plan, including three terraces, in August 1932, with the work to be undertaken as soon as possible, 'in order to provide work for the unemployed during the remainder of the winter.'

Those who were coming to see the park as the principal repository of the city’s natural heritage argued against the work, and for the protection of the

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36 D. L. Davidson, Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 King Parks Board, 'KP Bd. (Cons. 1363, Minutes, SROWA)'.

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native flora.\textsuperscript{40} As with the firewood argument, the role of the unemployed no longer provided for an automatic approval of the project. Indeed, it was argued that reclamation through dredging would ‘provide plenty of work without the unsightly destruction of nature’s scenery.’\textsuperscript{41} The \textit{West Australian} argued that:

the impairing of the natural beauty of the Kings Park hillside would be a heavy price to pay... the covering of great scars with flower beds or exotic trees would create a picture quite out of keeping with its setting.\textsuperscript{42}

And others, like Mary Farrelly of Mounts Bay Road (undoubtedly also Mrs Farrelly of the Women’s Service Guild), objected strenuously to the project, not just because of its impact on the environment, but because, as Kitson had argued only a few years earlier, it represented a challenge to the idea of public access and public ownership:

Both the mountain and the river belong to the people, and no group, however, influential should be allowed to whittle away this heritage with the consent of the citizens.\textsuperscript{43}

While the government, Boards and Council were generally not yet prepared to debate rights of access with the greater public, they were more than anxious to debate who controlled the land involved. As usual, the City Council was the agency seeking the rights of control. The Council was concerned about the division of ownership of land along the foreshore, between the Council and the State Gardens Board, and, in December 1933, proposed that they take over control of the whole foreshore.\textsuperscript{44} As an incentive, the Council would construct a riverside drive, much like the ones proposed in the 1911 schemes for Perth, and

\textsuperscript{40} See, for example, a letter by \textit{Nature}, newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 13 April 1932 'Premier (Cons. 1496, 1896/103B, SROWA)'.
\textsuperscript{41} 'Ducit Amor Patrææ', newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 30 August 1932, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 31 August 1932, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 2 September 1932, Ibid.
would undertake to maintain the foreshore gardens. In arguing for the transfer of control, the Council had suggested that, ‘if State Gardens Board control continues, the question of revenue from the land would be too greatly stressed.’

Echoing earlier concerns about the alienation of ‘A-class’ reserves and public land, they were also concerned that some inappropriate use of the reclaimed land had been allowed, including the enclosure of the tennis courts at the Esplanade, and the construction of a building for the Repatriation Department on land below the Supreme Court.

Even though the matter of control had not been resolved, the Works Department issued notices to quit to tenancies on reclaimed land near Barracks Square, mostly boat builders and lighterage businesses, advising that the land would required for the purposes of beautification. The State Gardens Board also had similar tenancies, and both the Board and the Department commenced renewal of leases on a monthly basis.

The matter was raised again in the middle of 1935, with the West Australian reporting that the Council had frequently asked for control, but had always received a ‘negative result.’ In supporting the idea, the West, once again using the language of the City Beautiful, argued that, ‘[t]he construction and beautification of a riverside drive… will add greatly to the attractiveness of Perth.’

Due to the tensions evident in letters to the editor, and in various articles from 1934 and 1935, the Minister of Works, James Keneally, proposed that both Council and representatives of Government form committees to independently investigate the matter and then meet to discuss their results.

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45 Notes, 4 December 1933, ‘Swan River - control of Foreshore from Crawley to Causeway and construction of Riverside Drive’, Public Works Department, Files - General (Cons. 689, 1933/1082, SROWA).
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 ‘Town Pl. Bd. (Cons. 955, 1935/129, SROWA)’.
49 Newspaper clipping, West Australian, 14 May 1935, Ibid.
The Government’s committee included the Under-Secretary for Works, and D.L. Davidson, while the Council’s committee naturally included Bold. The Council continued to recommend the transfer of most of the foreshore, but the Government’s committee decided that forty acres should remain with the Government, mostly through the Department for Works, with fifty-nine acres being vested in the Council. The State Gardens Board would retain eleven acres for gardens, parking and organised sport. Shapcott weighed into the argument, asking that revenue stream of the State Gardens Board be protected, especially Carnival Square and other existing leases. He also hit back at the Council, saying, ‘I am not enamoured with the idea of transferring Supreme Court [gardens] to an authority which has repeatedly sought to erect public conveniences in Stirling Gardens.’

Owing to difficulties in drawing all the interested parties together, a meeting was not held until November 1935, nearly two years after Bold had raised the matter. At the meeting the Department for Works, queried what exactly the Council proposed to do by way of road works and improvements. Davidson, a member of the Committee, had already queried the Council’s proposed plan, writing to Bold in March 1935, that ‘the Town Planning Board does not agree with the project as illustrated [in the Council’s Year Book], and that the proposal of your Council is not only wasteful of Crown lands but dangerous to the public.’ He was equally dismissive of a proposal to alter and repair the river wall, put forward by the City Engineer, J. Stevenson Young, the following year. Young, noting that there had been ‘considerable criticism’ of the straight river front (the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission had said in 1931 that its design had been ‘a source of amazement to some aesthetic minds’), proposed a series of gently arched projections into the river for parking

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50 L.E. Shapcott as reported in the West Australian, 27 November 1935, 'Works (Cons. 689, 1933/1082, SROWA)'.

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areas and boat landings. Davidson rejected them, arguing that would not ‘materially improve the aesthetic appearance’ of the foreshore when viewed from Kings Park, demonstrating that site’s growing significance as the vantage point of the city.  

Despite Davidson’s aesthetic concerns, and Shapcott’s revenue concerns, the foreshore committee agreed, in October 1936, to the transfer of control of the majority of the foreshore to the Perth City Council. In return the Council was to construct a riverside drive and develop parks, gardens and recreation areas within ten years of the agreement being signed, while the Works Department would undertake the reclamation work and would ensure that all buildings on the foreshore, other than some approved boatsheds and the Barrack Square jetties, would be removed within five years. Shapcott retained an area, still to be fully reclaimed and landscaped, near the Causeway, which he leased out for the erection of advertising hoardings, as well as some part of the islands at the Causeway. Davidson was appointed to a joint design committee, which would ensure that the plans for the reclamation would be uniform across jurisdictions.

Work was to begin almost immediately, and it was expected that part of the labour force would be men on unemployment relief. But by April 1937 the Council was still waiting for confirmation of the transfer, and by 11 May were reporting to the papers that the delay was contributing to unemployment, as well as financial difficulty due to the fact that they had borrowed £15,000 to finance the work. Three days later, the West was applauding the Government’s

52 D.L. Davidson to J. Stephenson Young, 28 May 1936, Ibid.
53 D.L. Davidson to Minister for Works, 23 October 1937, Ibid.
54 A portion of the islands were owned under freehold, but the rest were controlled, or had been created by the Works Department, through the dredging and reclamation works. Morris, as Under Secretary of Lands, had requested the transfer of control to the State Gardens Board, in August 1931. ‘Swan River. Heirrison Island - control of by SGB’, Public Works Department, (Cons. 689, 1931/776, SROWA).
55 Newspaper clipping, West Australian, 11 May 1937, ‘Works (Cons. 689, 1933/1082, SROWA)’.
decision to vest the land in the Council. Davidson, the following day, reported that all councils were working on the greater reclamation proposals, for which the Mounts Bay Rd work, from the Narrows to Crawley, provided a model. More than that, the City and the State were again leading the way in beautifying and promoting the city:

I can confidently say that no other community in the commonwealth during the last half-century has sanctioned so large an expenditure on a work simply for convenience and beauty.\(^{57}\)

By August 1937 the Council had completed road works from the Causeway to William Street, and were looking forward to the work extending to Mounts Bay Rd, past Barrack Square, and the aggregation of boat builders and other commercial concerns, west of the Square:

It is hoped that the time will soon arrive when the whole of the riverfront will be beautified with natural Australian flora and the skyline of the City will be architecturally harmonised thus adding to the charm of our already beautiful city.\(^{58}\)

Although Davidson liked the landscaping work of the Council, he still did not approve of the plan for the Riverside Drive, as it would cut in half one of his proposed park areas. The boat builders and lighterage companies too were beginning to vocalise their objections to the project, complaining that although they had been on monthly rentals since 1934, the most recent events had come as ‘a great shock.’\(^{59}\) Ever since Stirling had identified the river as the principal means of transport from Fremantle to Perth, goods for Perth had been shipped up the river in shallow draught vessels. The railway had made some inroads into the trade, but it was the redevelopment of the foreshore that ultimately


\(^{57}\) Newspaper clipping, *West Australian*, 15 May 1937, Ibid.

\(^{58}\) Notes for opening speech, August 1937, ‘Works (Cons. 689, 1933/1082, SROWA)’.

spelled its end. Not only would the removal of the buildings cause financial difficulty, but, if the lighterage businesses in particular were closed, it would result in the closure of the Perth Customs House. Both the unions and the Chamber of Commerce were adamant that ‘the practical should be considered as well as the beautiful.’

One business, MacIlwraith and MacEachern, submitted a proposal to W.E. Bold to remain on site, which he dismissed as merely a ‘pretty picture’ rather than an actual plan for redevelopment.

Figure 28: ‘Proposed rearrangement of shipping accommodation - Perth wharves...’, Machearchan and Mcllraith, 1937

Source: City of Perth, file 1937/946 (Cons. 689, SROWA).

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Davidson and his colleague, Tindale (who had also been on the Government’s foreshore committee), also attempted to link beauty and utility. In their report, they argued that:

We have a magnificent River with unlimited possibilities for beautification, but use and beauty must go hand-in-hand, and, in both connections, we should avail ourselves of the facilities which nature has provided. We are a utilitarian people.\(^{61}\)

They recommended that a potential site for the boat builders would be on the land vested in the State Gardens Board near the Causeway. Shapcott, on application, was unwilling to allow the businesses to relocate, as the hoardings on the site brought in a small income. Shapcott was also not averse to twisting the knife, writing as Secretary to the Premier to the Under Secretary of Works in December, 1937 and requesting that he try to find a home for the various boat clubs that were also affected by the reclamation project. ‘Personally, I did not intend to move these people until a spot had been set aside on which they could be located and where they could operate.’\(^{62}\) Shapcott eventually allowed several boat builders to relocate to the Causeway end of the foreshore.

The lighterage business to Perth ceased in August 1938, and the use of trucks for goods from Perth to Fremantle was trialled. By the end of 1939, only two boat builders remained, Laurence and Rann. Laurence was eventually evicted, but Rann was allowed a stay of execution, because he was building the new State Ferry and needed deeper water to launch her.

Shapcott’s use of foreshore land for commercial purposes continued to offend the Council. In 1938 Shapcott offered to lease the land near the Causeway and Carnival Square to the Council for a period of ten years at £2

\(^{61}\) Davidson and Tindale, 14 August 1937, Ibid.
\(^{62}\) L.E. Shapcott to Under Secretary, Works, 29 December 1937, Ibid.
per week, but his offer was declined. When a new tender for Carnival Square was advertised, as ‘Crystal Court’, Shapcott advised that he thought a garage or tea rooms would be required. The Hon. Mr Bolton, MLC, argued that Shapcott was again allowing its use as an amusement centre:

Here again the Government has broken an agreement with the City Council that the site would be an open parking space. Mr Shapcott had created Crystal Court as it now was. Whether the place would eventually develop into a White City only time would tell.

Councillor Raphael, noting the limited membership of the Board, proposed a private member’s Bill, to ensure representation of the Council on the Board. The West carried an article in July 1939, with the headline, ‘Dictatorship by Mr Shapcott.’ In it the Council complained they had been unable to get Shapcott to remove the hoardings by the Causeway, and that the temporary boatsheds allowed by Shapcott were unsightly. Shapcott retaliated that ‘the small remaining number of hoardings upon unreclaimed wasteland is not a serious detriment for the time being, more especially as they provide a measure of revenue for the improvement of public domains.’

Shapcott’s point was well made, if somewhat hypocritical. In applying for control of the eastern end of the foreshore in 1933, he had promised to plant ‘grass, trees, and shrubs and make the corner look vastly more presentable.’ Although sustenance workers had cleared the area, very little real landscaping work had been undertaken on the recently reclaimed portion of the foreshore.

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63 Newspaper clipping, *West Australian*, 28 April 1938, 'Swan River - control of foreshore from Crawley to Causeway - construction of Riverside Drive', Department of Public works and Labour, Files - general (Cons. 689, 1937/1894, SROWA).
64 Ibid.
65 Newspaper clipping, *West Australian*, 15 November 1939, 'Works (Cons. 689, 1937/946, SROWA)’.
66 'Works (Cons. 689, 1937/1894, SROWA)’.
67 Newspaper clipping, *West Australian*, 4 July 1939, 'Works (Cons. 689, 1937/946, SROWA)’.
68 Ibid.
Indeed, when complaints about ‘potholes’ in the foreshore were referred to the Department of Harbour and Lights they replied that, owing to the type of fill used in the project, ‘spontaneous combustion occurs in patches during the summer months’, leading to depressions, or ‘potholes’ being formed. The decaying algae had been replaced by the use of parts of the foreshore, on both sides of the river, as a rubbish tip, and the risk of disease replaced by the risk of a sprained or broken ankle.

With the declaration of war in September 1939, all plans to landscape the area were put on hold. Across the suburbs, reserves and ovals were being trenched to provide shelters, and deny access to enemy planes. John Watson, Secretary of the Kings Park Board, and Superintendent of the Park, who had been appointed in 1938, wrote to Shapcott, as Chairman of the Air Raid Precautions Committee, recommending the use of Kings Park as a giant shelter during air raids: ‘It is recognised that a complete ‘black out’ is the most effective foil to air attack by night and this is afforded over 1,000 acres in the Park, while by day the protection from observation that is given by natural vegetation is abundant.’ Shapcott agreed that the park was ideal for such a purpose, but quite how it could be achieved was never discussed. Residents in nearby apartments sought for, and were granted, permission to establish their own shelters in the park in 1942.

More practically, Kings Park continued in its didactic role, with the establishment of an air raid shelter in the park, manned by volunteer wardens. Two shelters, a trench shelter and an Anderson air raid shelter, were constructed in the park, and camouflage netting was used, to both demonstrate the use of the netting, and ‘preventing children from clambering over the shelters and dislodging the sand.’ Notices of the shelters were included in the

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70 Engineer, Harbour and Lights, 25 February 1938.
71 J.E. Watson to L.E. Shapcott, 4 September 1939 'Air raid shelters', Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5458, 63, SROWA).
72 Report to Board, 20 January 1941, Ibid.
newspapers, and Watson reported hundreds of visitors had come to view the shelters on the first Sunday. Within a matter of months, the Board was concerned by the apparently neglected condition of the shelters, which were no longer manned. Volunteer wardens from Subiaco were rostered on, but the Board took on responsibility for maintaining the shelters, closing the trench. When the shelters were dismantled in 1945, the Board requested permission to reuse the materials from the shelters, citing their work in maintaining them.

Where, in 1914, planning and work on the city had continued despite the declaration of war and the subsequent mobilisation of men, the Second World War created an almost complete hiatus in the normal life of Australia. Goods and services were set aside, industries converted, and planning concentrated on the war effort. Unaesthetic buildings for airforce trainees now replaced the previous unaesthetic buildings for boat builders; but the aesthetically curious ‘straight front’ remained. Always envisioned as a didactic and fully landscaped site, the foreshore became, through a mixture of intransigence, poor timing, and confused management, a singularly utilitarian space.

Figure 29: Aerial photograph by Stuart Gore of ‘Reclamation Island’, Heirrisson Islands and the foreshore, 1935, showing the ‘aesthetic’ front, before the construction of Riverside Drive.
Source: Stuart Gore collection  (BA575/239, Battye Library)
Chapter 10 – Restoring Nature

Just as the declaration of war had caused an hiatus in planning and work on the city, the declaration of peace resulted in a blossoming of ideas and plans. Neither Bold’s nor Poole’s ambitious plans for the city had come to fruition, and the Council was increasingly frustrated by the lack of overall planning for both Government and other civic buildings. The development of Forrest Place in the heart of the city had led to the placement of two significant national buildings on the site (the Bank and the Post Office), but the Council itself suffered from cramped and uncomfortable conditions, while the State’s bureaucracy was divided between a concentration of public buildings opposite Stirling Square, and the Art Gallery, Museum and Library, situated on the other side of the despised railway. In seeking new homes, the use of certain major public open spaces was reconsidered.

Opportunities to promote the city on the international stage, through the Empire Games, led to conflict about the role and nature of Kings Park, with ideas of appropriate recreation and the value of the indigenous flora at the heart of the argument. In this chapter I trace the growing tensions between visions of Kings Park as the premier site for the State’s botanic heritage, and those of the city as a tailored, landscaped space, which were eventually resolved through the first official opening of an Australian botanic garden specifically devoted to native flora. Other tensions, between didactic and utilitarian uses, active and passive recreation, were less easily resolved. Neither use supplanted the other, although they remained firmly separated, resulting in the development of complementary, rather than integrated, spaces.

Reimagining the city

Various schemes had been proposed to enable the construction of a Council civic centre, or Government precinct, or both, from at least 1901. Such schemes had always included support from both the government and the Council, either through cash funds, or the allocation of land. In 1922, the opportunity to buy a significant block of land in the city, Sir Henry Lefroy’s property ‘Cambray’, overlooking the Esplanade (and White City), enabled Sir
William Lathlain, Mayor of Perth, to raise the idea of Civic Centre yet again, using the now familiar rhetoric of Perth’s potential:

When we see the many handsome buildings that are being erected by citizens, I feel that the time has arrived when the Council should undertake the erection of a building for civic purposes, which would be worthy of Perth and its beautiful surroundings…. We should endeavour to visualise what Perth will be in the very near future and plan for the requirements of a great city.¹

The possible purchase of ‘Cambray’ was presented to Council and to the Premier, Sir James Mitchell, as having Boll’s endorsement. It was also a much better solution than the alternative – the use of Weld Square. ‘I am strongly opposed to the taking of any reserves from the people. Weld Square is a Class “A” reserve, and cannot be infringed without a special Act of Parliament.’² Mitchell agreed. ‘The site is an admirable one whether considered from the viewpoint of beauty or utility.’³ Despite his enthusiasm, no funds were forthcoming and the scheme lapsed.

In 1946, with even greater crowding, the Council was again compelled to take action, holding a competition for the design of a new civic centre, and an inquiry into the best site.⁴ In keeping with national and international examples (from Chicago’s iconic plan of 1909, to that of North Sydney, for example, which had looked at civic centre in 1944), such a centre would include offices, a concert hall or auditorium, and civic spaces. It would be, as Margaret Park identified in her history of the North Sydney centre, ‘a centre, a heart, a place where residents and workers gather and a place of cultural importance to the community.’⁵ Where North Sydney saw a bold office tower, Perth saw a series

² Ibid.
³ Sir James Mitchell, 12 April 1923, Ibid.
of low rise tower blocks set in an open, yet urban, landscaped space. Bold and Davidson, both on the committee, preferred the Esplanade:

If the Esplanade is a people’s demesne (or domain) like Sydney Domain, then in our opinion the area between the Repatriation Department [below the Supreme Court] and the Causeway is more than sufficient for organised sport and for use as a forum…

The Esplanade would provide a ‘site of prominence, accessibility and distinction unique in Australia.’ The majority of the committee disagreed, retaining the Esplanade as a recreational space. It was used as a site of protest, where Union rallies would congregate and, with the establishment of a memorial to General Sir J. J. Talbot Hobbs on the site in 1940, and the annual Anzac Day parades, it was increasingly associated with military and national sentiment. Instead they recommended that the new buildings be placed at the corner of Stirling Square, occupied by the Agriculture Department, and with the possible resumption of the Government House Ballroom site. Again, the plans were shelved while debate over the land continued.

The foreshore reclamation was also on the agenda, with the plans to rebuild the Causeway and to tidy up the islands at the end of the foreshore. Shapcott and Morris had applied for control of the islands in 1931, but had been advised that three of the islands were in private hands. Only the island ‘immediately abutting the causeway on the north and the new island…created by Mr Stevenson Young’s operations’ were crown land. The Works Department, as they had historically, laid claim to the reclaimed land, but were not averse to vesting it with the Gardens Board, although they did express some surprise, as it was too low-lying for a plantation and a known mosquito site. So dubious were they about the potential that they did not effect the

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6 Langer, ‘Town Hall site’.
7 Ibid.
9 Under Secretary, Works and Labour to C.G. Morris, 20 August 1931, ‘Works (Cons. 689, 1931/776, SROWA)’.
transfer until Shapcott wrote the following year with regard to the ‘hoarding rents’ on the islands being sent to the Board, and did not otherwise pay much attention to the question of actual ownership, allowing cows to graze without Shapcott’s permission in 1940.\(^{10}\)

Shapcott retired from the State Gardens Board, and the Premier’s Department, in 1941, and the Board became wholly based in the Lands Department. Its responsibilities were now largely the John Forrest National Park, and Yanchep, and sites such as Point Walter and Crawley, and the Government Gardens at Stirling Square, with only a minor interest in the foreshore. Shapcott had acceded to the Council’s request that they be allowed to lease the foreshore in June 1938, and had even agreed to extend the lease from five years to ten, proving the Council’s point that with Shapcott, income was the key to access:

The City Council are willing to lease the land from the State Gardens Board…; to fill it in, make it park land, and pay us £2/-/- per week for it. This will get rid of the hoardings, we will be the gainer in revenue, they will be happier, and we save a fair amount of expense on maintenance, and allay criticism generally.\(^ {11}\)

At the end of the ten year lease, the new Board agreed to vesting the land in the Council, creating Langley Park under Council control in December 1948.

Ownership and control of the land in the river became more of a concern when the owner of the three private islands, Mr A.L Ballantyne, died in 1945. The land as it existed did not have much value, but if included in the Swan River Improvements would be ‘considerably improved thereby.’\(^ {12}\) Despite problems with the estate, including a continuing mortgage, the land was compulsorily acquired in October 1945. Planning for the landscaping of the islands included the by now almost inevitable suggestion that the site could be used for a botanic

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\(^{10}\) Ibid.  
\(^{12}\) Memo, 13 September 1945, ‘Works (Cons. 689, 1931/776, SROWA)’.
Placing a botanic garden

Where earlier discussions about establishing a botanic garden in Perth had included both the scientific and economic research aspects of such a garden, what appeared to be intended now was a botanic garden as simply an aesthetic and educational landscaped garden. An herbarium had been established in 1897 by Alexander Morrison as part of the Department of Agriculture and another had later been established by the Department of Mines, of which Forests had been a part.13 Following considerable debate and discussion, the two collections had been amalgamated under the Director of Agriculture in 1928.14 Economic and scientific research was being undertaken by the Agriculture Department and the Department of Woods and Forests, at the nursery at Hamel, and on experimental plots around the State, including land in Stirling Square and the Government Gardens.

Shapcott had readily identified Stirling Square as a botanic garden in 1927 when preparing for the State’s centenary publications. However, when approached by the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens to identify the State botanic garden in 1937, he preferred to identify it as a ‘rest park’.15 Possibly the form accompanying the Brooklyn request helped to clarify his thoughts, as the only possible response to questions about whether or not the Square had an arboretum, research arm or educational program, was no. By 1946, the gradual

13 Alexander Morrison to William Thiselton-Dyer, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG), 26 February 1898 ‘RBG, Kew (AJCP, M734 - M748)’.
14 David Rivett, CEO of Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to Sir Arthur Hill, RBG, 14 August 1928, Ibid.
15 L.E. Shapcott to C.Stuart Gager, Director of Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, 24 March1937 ‘State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/972, SROWA)’.
encroachments of the Agricultural Department, as well as the plans of the Council for its new civic centre, meant that its premier status was being gradually eroded.

The Government House Domain too was under threat. Just as the Council sought to develop a civic centre, so too was the State Government anxious to develop a similar centre for Government purposes. The Titles Office and the Agriculture Department, containing land title deeds and type specimens from the Herbarium were identified as inadequate structurally, and as extreme fire risks. Like the Council they had investigated various sites, and like the Council, had identified a site near the river as the ideal situation. Their original chosen site was a strip of land on the St George’s Terrace side of the Government Domain, on the opposite house of Government House to Stirling Square, but this soon evolved into a full eight acres on the eastern side of the Domain.¹⁶ The area involved, described as a ‘wasteland’ and liable to flooding, had been used as a nursery area by the State Gardens Board since 1937, and included some experimental plots from the Agricultural Department.¹⁷ With the recommencement of planning and development following the war, the State Gardens Board became anxious to re-site its nursery and three glasshouses it had established on the site.

They approached the Perth Zoo for a site for the glasshouses in July 1947, but were unable to secure a commitment from them. Others were also

¹⁶ ‘Excision of portion of Government House grounds (about 4 acres) for crown purposes (Public building)’, Premier’s Department, (Cons. 1496, 1932/396, SROWA).
¹⁷ Parliamentary committee report, 25 January 1940, Ibid.
seeking the Domain site, in the interim before the proposed redevelopment for Government purposes. Without a site to move to, the State Gardens Board was under considerable pressure, and in association with the Government Botanist, Charles Austin Gardner, commenced a search for a suitable site, examining properties in the northern suburbs of Mt Lawley and Maylands, and the southern suburb of Bull Creek, as well as considering Kings Park. Of all the sites, Gardner, and the Secretary of the Board, Shedley, much preferred the one at Mt Lawley, a thirteen-acre government reserve set aside before the war for a Home for Mentally Deficient Girls. Not only would it provide a home for the nursery and the glasshouses, but by obtaining the adjacent freehold land, Gardner and Shedley believed it would also be appropriate for a botanic gardens.

Figure 30: Plan showing area of Domain proposed for the Government centre.  
Source: Premier’s Department (Cons 1496, 1932/396, SROWA)

The Heirisson Island site was not even considered.

The Board’s approach to the Department of Public Works for the Mt Lawley site was not greeted with enthusiasm:

your Board some three months ago asked for three to five acres of land in lieu of the one acre it at present temporarily occupies, whereas now it desires to take over thirteen acres of valuable land

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plus an additional area of adjoining land for prospective use as a botanical garden.\textsuperscript{18}

Their request that any relocation be at no cost to the Board, and potentially borne by the Works Department, was also frankly dismissed. Within months the Board was advised that the land at Mt Lawley was still required by the Health Department, and the search for a new site, this time with the idea of a botanic garden firmly entrenched, began again. Rather than looking for a small thirteen to twenty acre site, the Board now wanted much more.

Their search seemed over in April 1948 when they discovered 250 acres of land at Reabold Hill, a part of the City of Perth’s endowment lands to the west of the city. Containing undulating hills and two lakes, ‘capable of vast improvement… which would be a wonderful natural asset’ the site was ‘ideally suited for the purposes of botanical gardens.’\textsuperscript{19} The Board immediately approached the Council with a view to taking it over, and seeking sole control of the area if it was approved. So certain were they that this was the ideal site, and that their purpose would benefit the whole community that it was something of a shock when the Council rejected their proposal, citing concerns about the need for stormwater runoff to be directed to the lakes, and the need for flat ground for sporting ovals. In this instance, the utilitarian needs of the local ratepayers were considered more important than the didactic wants of the broader community. Attempts by the Board to meet with the Council were rebuffed, such meetings serving ‘no good purpose.’\textsuperscript{20}

Undeterred, the Board continued to press for the use of the Reabold Hill site. Nor were they averse to using outside expertise to make their case for them and on 12 August 1949, the \textit{West Australian} carried an article by Sir

\textsuperscript{19} Hobson, Managing Secretary of State Gardens Board, notes re visit to Reabold Hill, 26 April 1949, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} City of Perth to State Gardens Board, 8 July 1949, Ibid.
Edward Salisbury, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, entitled ‘Preserving the State’s native flora.’ Salisbury, who was visiting Perth at the head of a nine member British delegation bound for a Commonwealth science conference in Adelaide on plant nutrition, praised the diversity of the State’s flora and expressed concern that the lack of a botanic garden put their preservation at risk. Responding to Salisbury, the Chair of the State Garden’s Board, H.E. Smith, detailed the search for a site, naming Reabold Hill as the ideal solution and describing the Council’s rejection of the proposal. Other articles followed in other papers, and the Board was soon receiving suggestions for alternative sites, mostly small and privately owned. The most appropriate, a large property in the Darling Ranges, was rejected due to its distance from the city. For the Board, botanic gardens and cities were inextricably linked.

There was a growing sentiment that what the state needed was not just a formal botanic garden, in the established exotic nursery sense, but one that included a reserve for the collection and preservation of Western Australia’s dwindling native flora. Awareness of the potential loss of wildflowers had been prompted initially by concerns that plants were being ‘pulled’ for domestic consumption. Loss of wildflowers had prompted the development of the Native Flora Act, 1912, and had led to an amendment to the Act in 1933 and 1938, with a number of additional plants being added to the schedule. Shapcott’s earlier identification of Stirling Square as a botanic garden in 1927 had rested on a newly introduced ‘systematic attempt to secure something like a comprehensive collection of Western Australian indigenous plants with which various parts of the State are wonderfully rich.’

R.H. Miller, Director of the Tourism and Publicity Bureau, raised a further alarm in July 1949:

21 Newspaper clipping in Ibid.
22 L. E. Shapcott to L. Lucas, 7 October, 1927, ‘State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/972, SROWA)’. 
Last spring this Bureau received an unprecedented number of requests from Horticultural Societies and other bodies outside of Western Australia for the supply of wildflowers.... I feel that the present uncontrolled system of collection must inevitably result in completely denuding many of our beauty spots.\textsuperscript{23}

Miller’s letter raised further concerns about commercial exploitation of wildflowers on the one hand and the loss of potential tourist attractions on the other. To this was now added an increasing sense of loss as bulldozers cleared acres of land to accommodate the growth of suburban Perth.

Even as new domestic and suburban spaces were being created, the women of the State, who had traditionally been excluded from park management and debates, were becoming more and more concerned about them. No longer were parks to be seen as alternate sites for domesticating and civilising the largely masculine population, or as the didactic landscape in which women and children passively formed part of an agreeably domestic scene. Instead, women were anxious to be actively involved in their management. As early as 1929 the Women’s Service Guild had attempted to nominate a woman to the Kings Park Board, such as Mrs Emily Pelloe who was ‘a great lover of natural history and an authority on the wildflowers of Western Australia’.\textsuperscript{24} Shapcott had responded to this initial approach by advising that:

the Government considers the interests of women are not neglected by Boards composed entirely of men...My previous letter was not intended to imply any objection to the appointment of Mrs Pelloe... but an objection to the appointment of any woman\textsuperscript{25}

Similar approaches had been made in 1936 by the Women’s Temperance League, and again rejected.

\textsuperscript{23} R.H. Miller to Mr Hobson, Secretary, State Gdns Board, 1 July 1949, 'Native Flora Protection of - general', State Gardens Board, (Cons. 7028, 1942/1008, SROWA).
\textsuperscript{24} Marjorie King, Secretary, Women’s Service Guild, to Premier, 19 March 1929, 'Lands (Cons. 4080, 1890/1521, SROWA)'.
\textsuperscript{25} L.E. Shapcott to Women’s Service Guild, 26 July 1929, Ibid.
Not only were there no women represented on the Boards governing the city’s parks, but there were also no women, other than Queen Victoria, represented in them. Pietro Porcelli had not used any of the normal feminine representations of war, peace or liberty in his design for the South African memorial, and no other memorial in the park, as Ken Inglis has identified, was feminised in any way, nor were they to be.\textsuperscript{26} When Australia’s first female parliamentarian, Edith Cowan, died in 1932, the National Council for Women eventually decided on a site in Kings Park, at the main gates, for a memorial. Given Cowan’s pioneering political status, it seemed only appropriate that she should take her place with Leake and Forrest. The Board did not agree – either with the site or Cowan’s status, rejecting the proposal on the grounds that only National memorials should be placed in the grounds.\textsuperscript{27} Not unnaturally, this response was greeted with a somewhat hostile reaction. Rather than pursuing the argument the Committee moved to an alternative site, the circular exchange immediately opposite the gates. The Cowan memorial, unveiled in 1934, represented not just Cowan, but the status of women as both outside of, and gatekeepers to, the didactic space of the Park.

As gatekeepers, other approaches, such as Edith Cowan’s prolonged attack on Carnival Square in Parliament, and the writing and media campaigns of women such as Mrs Farrelly regarding Kings Park and Mounts Bay Road were far more effective. It was as gatekeepers that \textit{Ixia} had addressed them in a letter to the editor in 1934, regarding the loss of wildflower species:

> The preservation of the wildflowers that have brought fame to Western Australia rests largely with the women of the State. They must learn to control themselves when tempted by the colourful lure of bush blooms and refrain from wholesale picking, and then discourage their menfolk and children from making unwieldy offerings reckless vandalism... It is against human nature to resent the delight

\textsuperscript{26} Inglis, ‘Men, women and war memorials’.

\textsuperscript{27} Edith Cowan Memorial Fund to Kings Park Board, 20 October 1932, 'KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 50, SROWA)'.

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of children in gathering wildflowers, but proper maternal counsel can teach even the very young the need for plucking only a few blossoms to please mother or teacher.\textsuperscript{28}

And it was as gatekeepers, having taken Ixia's charge to heart, that the Women's Service Guild, and others, came out to defend Kings Park against an incursion into the natural space, and to promote its use as a botanic garden.

The botanic garden question had again faltered after Sir Edward Salisbury's visit, but regained momentum in 1954. Two matters, both regarding Kings Park, were under debate. The first had been proposal by the Lord Mayor of Perth, and Park Board member, Sir Thomas Meagher, that an aquatic centre be established in the Park, in the twenty acres near Thomas St Lovekin had identified as degenerate bush. The other was the suggestion that the Park itself be the site of the new Botanic Garden. The first was fought out in the newspapers of the day, with the Women's Service Guild, the Country Women's Association and the Naturalist Society, violently opposed to the idea. The other appeared only occasionally in the papers and publications, but was just as strongly discussed.

At heart was the essential question of what a park was, and the purpose of Kings Park, in particular. The Park Board had continued to struggle with the dichotomy of its role in preserving native flora and its status as Perth's premier designed didactic space. This status had been reinforced following the cessation of war, when the Park had once more become the focus of the memorialisation effort. Where the Great War committee had struggled to raise funds, the reverse was true in 1946. 'In no other state capital', reports Ken Inglis, 'did custodians of public memory find such energy.'\textsuperscript{29} The form of the memorial was already set – an extension to the obelisk, and the creation of

\textsuperscript{28} Newspaper clipping, \textit{West Australian}, 6 July 1934, 'Flora and fauna - Press clippings general', Premier's Department, (Cons. 1496, 1931/303, SROWA).

\textsuperscript{29} Inglis, \textit{Sacred places: war memorials in the Australian landscape}, p. 390.
more honour avenues. This time the trees were native Australian species, such as Saw and Kessell had provided for Forrest. This was partly due to the loss of many of the exotic species during the drought years of the 1920s (the Board blamed the Water authorities for forcing them to use mineralised bore water) and to the increasing interest and association of Australia with its own flora. Both the public and the Board saw this use of the Park as entirely appropriate.

Meagher and the Board also believed that the introduction of an ‘aquatic centre’ was entirely in keeping with the original recreational role of the park, bearing in mind the reasons for its establishment in 1890. Defenders of the park as wildflower sanctuary even invented a new trope (based to some extent on Lovekin’s restatement of the Park’s purpose thirty years earlier): that Forrest had established Kings Park to ensure that future generations would have access to, and appreciate, the bush of the capital ‘a hundred years hence’. Those opposed to the pool believed that the siting of the pool in the Park would be ‘a betrayal of a trust.’

Daisy Rossi, Mrs George Temple Poole, leant weight to the argument, both through her association with Temple Poole and in her own right as a wildflower artist of note, when she said that the Park had traditionally been ‘regarded as an inviolable indigenous park.’ Opponents also revisited the concerns of the 1920s, that allowing part of the park to be leased for particular activities would prevent public rights of access. Meagher’s proposal, even though it was a lease arrangement like the Tennis Club and Bowling Club, would be the ‘thin end of the wedge’, so that the Park would eventually be taken over by a range of non-recreational activities, including hospitals, medical schools and universities.

Where the Board had welcomed Meagher’s suggestion of an aquatic centre, which would provide income and an attraction for an out of the way and

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30 West Australian Women’s Parliament to King’s Park Board, September 1954, ‘Newspaper clippings’, Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5458, 38, SROWA).
31 Cited in letter from D.L. Serventy to Kings Park Board, 15 November 1954, Ibid.
difficult to manage part of the park, they were far less welcoming of the suggestion of a botanic garden. Following increased concerns about the loss of wildflowers, the State had finally convened a crisis conference in May 1954 to consider how the State’s emerging wildflower tourism dollar could be protected. Gardner, representing the State Gardens Board, detailed the need for floral reserves but also pushed for a Botanic Garden. Shedley, also of the Gardens Board, described the fruitless search for a suitable site, and pushed for Kings Park as a possible alternative. The members of the conference agreed. Following the conference, the State Gardens Board wrote to various government agencies emphasising the need for a wildflower nursery, and to the Kings Park Board outlining their suggestion that an area, of around 200 acres, ten times that required for the pool, be set aside as a wildflower nursery. Watson replied on behalf of the Board, advising that they believed the nursery idea was impractical, due to the poor soil and lack of water in the park. From being capable of growing almost anything in the best sand, the park should now only be used to grow only the limited number of species that could survive the poor conditions. Fifty acres would be sufficient for this limited project.

Part of the debate revolved around the way in which the Park and the bush areas, specifically, were managed. Fire had been identified as a cause of degeneration of the bush since the 1930s and park supervisor, John Watson, had been responsible for the introduction of broad firebreaks throughout the park, including under the trees of the Honour Avenues. The effect, to the casual visitor, was to set the avenue trees apart from the natural bush. Vince Serventy, representing the Naturalist Society, was critical of these fire management techniques, recognising that fire was a necessary trigger for regeneration. Both the women’s guilds and the Naturalist Society also believed that the flora in the park was at risk from the veldt grass that, rather than being the financial saviour of the park originally envisaged, had rapidly become a pest species. These concerns were critical in both the pool and the botanic gardens debates, creating a movement to argue for a change in both the purpose and the management of the park.

For Serventy, the Park should have been managed primarily as a wildflower preserve, and overseen by a botanist or naturalist. Watson, not unnaturally, was extremely defensive of his work in the park, and prepared
extensive annotations and responses to all of the criticisms. The Board too faced intensive criticism, culminating in the introduction in November 1954, of a private members Bill, seeking to replace the Board’s ability to authorise construction and development of new facilities with a parliamentary process of approval. Defending the Board, the Minister for Lands, Mr K. Hoar, pointed out that the best way of avoiding the influence of pressure groups, which the Women’s Service Guild had raised as a concern, was to:

appoint men of such quality and outstanding characteristics as far as love of nature is concerned that the things you are talking about could not happen. We have such a Board now.\textsuperscript{32}

Parliament, on the other hand, consisted of eighty or so people, many of who had little knowledge of the issues involved, and who were therefore ripe for influence by such pressure groups. Despite Hoar’s eloquence, the Bill, slightly amended so as to allow the Board leeway for the construction of facilities such as lavatories was eventually passed, and the Board’s absolute authority over the park diminished.

Meagher returned to the fray in late 1956. The city had recently bid for, and been awarded, the right to hold the 1962 Empire Games. In order to host the games, the city needed new sporting facilities, including an aquatic centre. Various sites were nominated for the required stadia, including the Council’s property at Reabold Hill, now known as Bold Park. Just as the Gardens Board had repeatedly nominated Bold Park as their preferred site for a Botanic Garden, so Meagher clung to the Kings Park site, announcing that the City Council would spend £250,000 placing a pool in Kings Park. At the same time, the idea of Kings Park as the site for a botanical garden was gaining popular momentum, although there were those who thought that either John Forrest

\textsuperscript{32} Notes of Women’s Service Guild deputation to Minister Lands, Mr K. Hoar, 26 November 1954, Ibid.
National Park, or Perth Zoo were also potential contenders. Mrs K.G McNeil of Kellerberrin wrote to Minister Hoar, forwarding clippings that discussed the loss of wildflowers, while the Country Women’s Association, Bunbury branch, suggested Kings Park as a wildflower botanic garden in an article in the West.

Kirwan Ward, a local columnist, summarised the ensuing debate in February 1957:

> Everyone, from Mother-of-ten, to the honorary secretary of the Lemonade-for-the-Larrikins League, has had their say. Should we jealously preserve Kings Park as a vast veldt-grass nursery for the perpetual delight of the people? Or desecrate the entire 950-acre wilderness with a 50-metre pool?

In a move that amply demonstrated both their point, and that of Minister Hoar, regarding the power of pressure groups, the Women’s Service Guild arranged a petition that ensured that Kings Park would remain a ‘veldt-grass nursery’, and got thirty sitting members of parliament to sign it. It effectively stifled debate, and ensured that no Bill to enable an aquatic centre would be put or passed in the 1957 session of parliament.

Nonetheless, the Park Board took a request from the City Council that they allow a 99-year lease of 28 acres and, after converting it to 20 acres for 21 years, forwarded it to the Minister for Lands to take to parliament. With only three years to go before the Empire Games, Charles Court, member for Nedlands, presented the Kings Park Aquatic Centre Bill to Parliament in October 1959. In arguing the case for the Bill, Court noted both the fact that the new parliament allowed the Bill to be considered, and that Bold Park had been suggested as alternative site. In arguing against Bold Park, he foreshadowed

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34 Mrs K.G. McNeil, 19 May 1957 and newspaper clipping, West Australian, 16 August 1957, 'State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/186, SROWA)'.
35 Newspaper clipping, West Australian, 'Peepshow', 20 February 1957, 'KP Bd. (Cons. 5458, file 38, SROWA)'.

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the Botanic Garden argument, suggesting that the flora was similar in both sites, and that Bold Park at least was unaffected by veldt grass. The Council would develop Bold Park as a park, effectively compensating the State for the loss of 20 acres of ‘degenerate bush’ in Kings Park. Mr J.W. Manning, representing the opposition to the Bill, repeated both the threat of alienation of public property, and the status of Kings Park as ‘a wonderful heritage’.

If the park is developed as a botanical reserve for native flora, with the emphasis on natural bushland, we will have a tourist attraction which will be of tremendous value to Western Australia.\(^{36}\)

Manning, and those who shared his vision, won. There would be no pool in the park.

The Botanic Garden idea had generated much less debate, in public at least. Using arguments familiar from *Flora Australis*, the Western Australian Naturalists had written to the Premier in 1954, urging the establishment of botanic gardens, which could ‘rightly be considered as a sign of cultural awareness.’\(^{37}\) Comparisons were also made with other capital cities, a point addressed by a Special Correspondent in May 1957:

Perth, capital of a State renowned for its natural flora, is the only city in Australia and one of the few cities of any size in the world which does not have botanic garden... Flora-lovers should stop mourning the loss of 20 acres in Kings Park, and start to investigate the possibilities of safeguarding the State’s unique heritage.\(^{38}\)

The Royal Society, too, pleaded that ‘there was an urgent need to establish a Botanic Garden’ to protect native flora.\(^{39}\) Responding to the Royal Society’s plea, the Premier, A.R.G. Hawke asked the State Gardens Board, now the National Parks Board, to convene a Botanic Gardens Committee. Mrs McNeil approved. H.E. Smith, the chairman, provided a proposed list of

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37 W.A. Naturalists, 12 April 1954, ‘State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/186, SROWA)’.
38 Newspaper clipping, 17 May 1957, Ibid.
39 Copy of letter, Royal Society to Premier, 20 September 1957, Ibid.
members in October, 1957, recommending the Town Planning Commissioner and representatives for the University, the National Parks Board, the Royal Society, Perth City Council, the Local Government Association, the Horticultural Society, the Women’s Service Guild, and the Tree Society. Hawke accepted the list with only two changes, removing the Women’s Service Guild, and requiring only a representative of the Town Planning Commission, rather than the Commissioner himself.

Invitations to attend the Committee were issued and responses started to trickle in at the end of January 1958. On the 28 January the Perth City Council wrote to Smith, declining the invitation, on the grounds that the provision of a botanic garden was a state responsibility, which was duly reported in the West on the following day.\(^{40}\) Charles Gardner also replied on 10 February 1958, regretting his inability to attend the conference, due to the fact that he had not been invited. Smith hastily rectified the matter, seeking permission for Gardner’s inclusion from the Minister for Lands, and Gardner was able to be included in the first meeting, at which a number of subcommittees were formed, to identify why a botanic garden was required, and where it could be placed.\(^{41}\) After studying eighteen sites, the sub-committee reported that there were only two of sufficient size, Kings Park and Reabold Hill. Kings Park had poor soil and no water either for cultivation or ornamental purposes, although by ‘making use of river views some attractiveness could be given to a garden.’\(^{42}\) Reabold Hill, by contrast, had much to recommend it.

The sub-committee considering the role of a botanic garden identified that, as a result of the garden, rare plants would be preserved, recommended that the herbarium be included, and that the pharmacological benefits of the native

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\(^{40}\) Perth City Council to National Parks Board, 28 January 1958 and newspaper clipping, West Australian, 29 January 1958, Ibid.  
\(^{41}\) H.E. Smith to C.A. Gardner, 28 February 1958, Ibid.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
botany be further studied. They also linked the gardens to the Empire Games, identifying a new field of economic botany:

the establishment of a central botanic garden would allow unusual and rare native plants to be grown and displayed to attract tourists. The effect could then well be that the tourist would be stimulated to see something further of this fascinating flora by visiting recreation parks in rural area situated within easy motoring distance of the city.\(^{43}\)

Despite the preference for Reabold Hill, the Committee finally recommended, in their report of 22 April 1958, that the most appropriate site for such a garden was Kings Park. The Kings Park Board had not been involved in any part of the process.

Just as the Committee prepared their report, a new player entered the field. Landscape architect John Oldham, employed by the State Housing Works, published his scheme for creating a ‘giant botanical garden’, utilising not just Kings Park, but the whole of the foreshore, the University grounds and the Parliament House grounds. Included in the design was land recently reclaimed from the river for a bridge across the river at the Narrows. The site had been identified as a potential landscape park in 1955, by yet another Metropolitan Town Planning review, this time headed by the influential town planner Gordon Stephenson, and J. A. Hepburn. Stephenson and Hepburn had proposed the reclamation, of approximately 19 acres, as part of their overall transportation scheme, on the familiar sounding grounds that it:

would improve the flow of water in the river. The land gained would replace an expanse of shallow water which is more or less stagnant for a great part of the year.\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\) Ibid.

Hepburn and Stephenson had made very few recommendations with respect to open space in the city proper, other than to commend the amount of land available in the heart of the city, and to suggest, cautiously, that development of Kings Park would be no bad thing. The most contentious recommendation, and one that seems to have been happily ignored, was to return to Stirling’s original scheme and move Government House to Kings Park.

Oldham’s plan, despite some obvious administrative flaws, was a vision that captured the public’s imagination. Combining the areas in an overall plan was something which had been discussed since 1911, but Oldham’s link to the Botanic Gardens made it much more attractive – not just a town planning scheme, but a plan that would assist ‘men and women to turn their children into intelligent citizens’ by ‘surrounding them with a sense of beauty and harmony.’\textsuperscript{45} Hawke took both Oldham’s proposal and the Botanic Gardens Committee to Cabinet for consideration.

Although Oldham’s plan had popular support, there were others who dismissed it as a ‘scheme for beautifying the city’, and not a true botanic gardens scheme at all. Recognising finally that Western Australia was the only state without a botanic garden, those who wanted a research and educational facility began to push for a garden along the lines of those at Melbourne and Adelaide. The University too, was pushing for the Botanic Garden to be more than a landscaped didactic space, such as that identified for Heirisson Islands. The Agricultural Department had established some experimental beds in the State Gardens nursery in 1946 for pharmacological experimentation, and the Government Chemical Laboratory had undertaken some basic research. By 1958, A.M. Moir, the Minister for Mines, was advising the Minister for Health that:

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{45} Rose Skinner, Perth, newspaper clipping, West Australian, letters to the editor, 1 September 1958, ‘State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/186, SROWA)’.
our laboratory has recently done some work on the drug possibilities of local plants. As we are purely a Chemical Laboratory our operations are limited, more or less, to extracting and we can not do any medical testing of these extracts. As there are considerable possibilities of drugs being obtained from our local plants I am anxious, if it is possible, to have this work undertaken.\footnote{46}

While the government was unable to fund a lab especially for the purpose, the Commissioner for Public Health was soon to advise that the University of Western Australia was also seeking to establish a pharmacological lab for other research, and by combining the two purposes, they might jointly be able to justify funding for just such a lab. This approach was confirmed in February 1959, when the University wrote to confirm that:

the University endorses as well worth while the proposed flora investigations, and indeed is of the opinion that the investigation should take place forthwith as it understands that some of the interesting flora has already become scarce and may become practically extinct with a short while.\footnote{47}

It was an approach that touched on sensitivities. Protecting and investigating the flora for its potential for medical benefits, even if ultimately unsuccessful, was something that needed to be done, from a ‘humanist approach’.\footnote{48} The Royal Society, too, in phrasing eerily reminiscent of much earlier discussions about the Aboriginal people of Australia, encouraged consideration of the botanic garden not as ‘a place where the last sad vestiges of native flora would be preserved, but [as] a centre of vigorous research.’\footnote{49}

Seeking costs from Adelaide and Melbourne, the new State Government was appalled to learn that such gardens would require staff, paid at professional

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\begin{itemize}
\item[A.M. Moir, Minister for Mines, to Minister for Health, 16 May 1958, 'Health - Native flora - Investigation into pharmacological properties of,' Public Health Department, (Cons. 2488, 1958/767, SROWA).]
\item[S.L. Prescott, Vice Chancellor, University of Western Australia, to Linley Henzell, Commissioner of Public Health, 3 February 1959, Ibid.]
\item[Linley Henzell to the Hon. R. Hutchison, 27 April 1959, Ibid.. The Wellcome Chair in Pharmacolical Research was approved and filled in November 1962.]
\item[Bruce Lawson, 'Some native plants may soon die out', The West Australian, 24 July 1958.]
\end{itemize}
and professorial rates, and a budget far in excess of any previous expenditure on gardens. Trying desperately to mend matters, a deputation including Professor J.B. Grieve, of the University, Dr Millington of the Agricultural Department, and Mr Shedley, representing the Royal Society, met with the Minister Kelly, who had taken over the Lands portfolio. Emphasising that native flora could be the focus of the new botanic gardens, with exotics perhaps added later, they argued that a Native Botanic Garden could be established in Kings Park at far less cost than would be required to create something like Melbourne or Adelaide anew. ‘Wildflowers are always associated with Western Australia and yet we are the only State without a Botanic Garden. They are a very definite tourist attraction.’

Millington and Grieve both pushed the benefits of research, and noted that savings could be made if the post of Director of the Botanic Gardens was combined with that of Government Botanist, by taking over the Herbarium. Kelly thanked his guests, but advised that he did not believe that the ideas put forward would meet the public expectations for a botanic garden. More, what they proposed could be met by Kings Park, ‘if they had the finance.’ But such finance was not, and had not been, forthcoming.

Just as they had done in 1951, the forces for a botanic garden appealed to external expertise. Dr W. S. Stewart, Director of the Los Angeles Botanic Gardens arrived in Western Australia on a Fulbright scholarship in July 1959. Appealed to on the question of a botanic garden, he advised the West on 25 July, 1959 to use Kings Park and defeat the bulldozer. Premier Brand was not discouraging, but advised that, ‘Government help for such a project here would be limited by financial restrictions.’ A month later, supported by visiting scientists for the ANZAAS meeting, Stewart recommended that one hundred

50 Report of meeting between Mr Kelly, Mr Shedley, Professor Grieves and Dr Millington, 2 February 1959, ‘State Gdns Bd. (Cons. 1068, 1942/186, SROWA)’.
51 Report of meeting between Mr Kelly, Mr Shedley, Professor Grieves and Dr Millington, 2 February 1959, Ibid.
52 Newspaper clipping, West Australian, 25 July and 29 July 1959, Ibid.
53 Newspaper clipping, West Australian, 29 July 1959, Ibid.
acres of Kings Park be set aside for a botanic garden featuring native flora, ‘the first native plant garden in Australia.’

Now, the unusual nature of the garden, and the lower costs associated with its establishment, made it not an oddity but unique and a definite coup for Western Australia. Finally, in October, 1959, Minister Bovell put the idea of a one hundred acre botanic garden, featuring only Western Australian flora, and located in Kings Park, to Cabinet for approval and in December of the same year, the West was pleased to report that the plan was finally approved. The Board would again be restructured with the appointment of a professional botanist as Director, and a separate Superintendent of Gardens, replacing John Watson who was due to retire in 1960.

John Beard, an English botanist who had worked in Natal for some years, arrived to take up the post of Director, in September, 1961. Two years later, plantings of the Botanic Garden commenced. The garden was to be open to everyone, with no fences. Over a thousand species were put into cultivation. Arthur Fairall, the new Park Superintendent, designed a watercourse that included space for the Park’s first recognition of Australian women, the Pioneer Women’s fountain. In the months leading up to the official opening, contacts from botanic gardens around the world were invited to a three-day wildflower exhibition and an ANZAAS symposium, featuring a tour of the southwest region so appreciated by Harvey over one hundred years earlier. At the official opening, on 4 October 1965, the Chair of the Kings Park Board, Sir Thomas Meagher asked, rhetorically:

For what exact reason or reasons is the Botanic Garden being established? Is it purely for embellishment of Kings Park? To provide a draw for tourists? Or to do something important towards the conservation of Western Australia’s flora?  

\[54\] ‘Official opening of Botanic Gardens’, Kings Park Board, (Cons. 5584, Item C, SROWA).

\[55\] Ibid.
In answering himself, Meagher said, ‘We have given you a garden, but to our sorrow we do not feel we have, as yet, contributed effectively to conservation.’ Stirling and Drummond’s dream of a nursery garden had finally become a reality, much changed by time and circumstance. Rather than raising exotic species for agriculture, the new garden celebrated Western Australia’s own previously untamed botanic diversity, successfully integrating it into the city, and enfolding it in the mantle of civilised and domesticating nature.

John Oldham’s vision for a landscaped park linking the foreshore and Kings Park was eventually created in the 1970s, in a more modest form, on the land reclaimed in 1959 for the Narrows Bridge and Freeway interchanges. Using techniques that owe much to Olmsted’s and Vaux’s Central Park, Oldham integrated pedestrian and vehicle access to the site, but it seems to lack any basic purpose, or connection to the city. Delhi Square was recreated as Harold Boas Gardens, again in the 1970s, and is a popular site for weddings and other personal commemorations, as are Kings Park, Hyde Park and Queens Gardens. Two new reserves, Birdwood Square and Robinson Park, were developed on drainage reserves as active recreation sites. Wellington Square continues to be a recreation reserve, while Russell Square has become overtly didactic, with Greek names for all the paths, reflecting the influence of one cultural community in the Northbridge area. Claisebrook and Victoria Park became East Perth and Haig Park, rundown and unappreciated, until redeveloped in the 1990s. Claisebrook is now the centrepiece of an ambitious urban renewal project, educating those who visit it through a range of public art about aboriginal use, the local environment and the site’s own history. Weld Square by contrast, partially reclaimed for a major urban transport project and then expanded by metres of grass, lacks any purpose other than as greenspace – a lung for the city.

Ibid.
Kings Park and the other landscaped sites of Hyde Park and Queens Garden have remained determinedly didactic sites, educating the public in aesthetics, environmental issues and botany through exposure to art, landscaping and flora. Kings Park in particular continues to be the City’s and the State’s premier site of commemoration, with the installation of the Bali Memorial high on the scarp near Bellevue Terrace. Conversely, the foreshore remains a contested utilitarian site, with a bowling green and baseball games being the main continuing use. Carnivals and circuses, including Rally Australia and an annual fireworks celebration, the Skyshow, are also a continuing, if peripatetic presence, while the recent construction of the Perth Convention Centre and the creation of wetlands and reedbeds near Pt. Fraser provide echoes of ‘White City’ and the 1887 foreshore plan.
Conclusion – The city of nature

Why does Perth have the parks that it has? What were the factors influencing their design and development? In attempting to answer these questions, I have looked for evidence of international and national paradigms for the development of parks. In studying Perth, a city with minor secondary industry, small population and a physically challenging natural environment, we can study how these ideas are played out in the way the city developed, reflecting ideas of and about the metropole, whether Imperial or Federal, and about cities in general.

It is evident that the requirement for land for recreation was identified as central to the development of settlements and townsites from an early period, both for Perth and elsewhere. Land was set aside from the very beginning of settlement to ensure that the citizens of the town and later the city were able to avail themselves of space for recreation, to provide for ‘purposes of public health, enjoyment and utility’. The trope of parks as lungs for the city, or as breathing spaces, and for access to fresh air, has been as pervasive as the air itself. The city itself is organic, and like the human body, needs to be kept physically healthy. A city without green open space is an unhealthy city.

But it needs more than just green open space; it needs space that has been designed to meet specific criteria. Parks not only provide for the physical health of the citizenry, they provide spaces for moral and social education, domesticating and civilising. Developed at the same time as the modern city, they were tools for creating the ideal city. Over time, they have contributed to the development of an increasing environmental awareness. They have provided venues for commemoration and memorialisation, and provided icons of and for the city.

In the development of parks, and specifically in the design and function of the parks, the economic, political and cultural environment is as significant, if not more so, than the flora and geography in which they are placed. In Western Australia, a traditional lack of government funding has often resulted in pragmatic choices, allowing the development of Stirling Square under private control, and then retaining it principally as a recreational rather than a research space. The design of the ‘aesthetic’ front of the foreshore, and Barrack Square,
rather than the exotic botanic garden envisaged in the 1880s, or the fringing native vegetation of Temple Poole’s or Davidson’s visions, were dictated by engineering rather than aesthetic criteria. Similarly, the city’s botanic garden is a native garden, in part because it was viewed as the cheaper alternative, and as the solution to broader economic and environmental concerns, related to tourism.

Contemporary social and cultural values about the city, recreation and the environment are reflected in the types of parks developed. One impetus behind the development of many of Perth’s parks seems to have been to create an illusion of a land greener and more lush, and to compensate for the realities of sand, grey green foliage and lack of shade. More than that, the presence of a park clearly distinguished a mere clearing in the bush in which some houses were placed, and a town. ‘Parks were.... expressions of civilisation itself.’ According to Michel Foucault, such spaces are not Utopias but heterotopias, spaces where the influences of a society of a culture are reflected and inverted. Perth parks were, and many still are, heterotopias of European plants in a hostile environment.

The natural environment was seen in the nineteenth century as mouldable and malleable, and as a vital economic resource. While the purposes to which land was put can be traced to British social and cultural theory of the period, the way in which it was instituted seem somewhat different. In designing and planting the parks, most commonly in a style derived from English landscape gardens, Drummond, Feakes, Campbell and Sheath were not mimicking English gardens, but were using a complex palette of plants - including roses, rhododendrons and other species that had been introduced into English

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1 Hoskins, 'Marking time: history and identity in Sydney's Centennial Park'.
gardens from India, China and Japan. Stirling Square, for example, was largely planted with useful Mediterranean plants such as olives and grapes, with only a few oaks and roses, while street trees including Cape Lilacs, blue gums and mulberries were planted for both their shade giving foliage and their potential as medicinal or food crops. Similarly, a plantation of mulberries at Claisebrook was planted, not for eating, but for silkworms to export to the Italian silk market. Of all Perth’s landscaped spaces, Queens Gardens and Hyde Park seem the most likely to be representative of England, and even that may be open to reconsideration, in that they are very similar to other Australian parks of the same period, and as such should be considered as an expression of a particular vernacular interpretation of landscape park design.

By the twentieth century, native environments were identified as unique and fragile, although there was a continuation of the mouldable frame of reference in that nature was still seen as needing ‘improvement’, not by the introduction of species from exotic overseas locations but by the introduction of species that were believed to be part of the whole Australian environment. This idea has only recently been replaced by understanding that environments and ecologies can be very geographically very small. Uniqueness rather than eclecticism is being celebrated.

If Australian environmental history is largely scientific, then this study indicates that the development of botanic gardens, and their contribution to Australian science needs to be further explored. The technological and engineering feats of reclamation, road building, even gardening have been only lightly touched upon in this thesis and are worthy of further investigation. Similarly, an in-depth study of the changes to the river, and the effects of dredging and reclamation would be worth further research.

The feminine and domesticating role of nature has been discussed, but studies of the influence of the women’s movement on environmental history has tended to be focused in the period after the 1960s, and influenced by American literature, after the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*. However, it is apparent that concerns about nature and the environment were core tenets of the West Australian, and probably Australian, women’s movements from the 1920s onwards, and this too needs further discussion and debate.
This study has concentrated on the central city, rather than on the broader metropolitan area. Having identified the influences in the city, it would be of interest to see how well these ideas translate to the development of parks in the outer metropolitan area, or to examine the influence of city parks, both in form and function, on suburban reserves and recreation areas. This is an area that has been addressed in architectural and town planning histories, but has yet to be addressed in social or environmental history. Suburban reserves, like city parks, have been the setting for sporting and other histories, not the subject. Conversely, further study of the central city could now focus on how well the parks fulfilled their ostensible purposes or to discuss how they may have become inverted, sites of immoral and uncivilised behaviours.

Parks are as central to the idea and structure of the city as are roads and buildings. They play as important a role in physical health as drains and sewers, and are as important in educating and civilising the citizen as any library, museum or art gallery. Parks and gardens, which involve natural elements such as grass, trees and water, are nonetheless some of the most intensively constructed and artificial spaces in the city, with concomitant impacts on the environment of the city. More recently, they often reflect the new morality of contemporary environmental concerns – moving from ‘breathing spaces’ combating the miasmas of industrial development, to recreated wetlands and ‘nature’ corridors offsetting carbon emissions and providing didactic spaces for lessons about the environment and nature.

Perth is, as much as any city, a city of parks and gardens. The reservation of land at Mt Eliza and the reclamation of the foreshores has provided for a greater proportion of land in the city being set aside for recreation than in many other cities. It has not one but several central parks if, by central park, Monique Mosser’s definition is used – that is, that it is a tool of the city, requiring certain behaviours as a quid pro quo for access to it. Looking at Seddon and Ravine’s examples of the Sydney Domain and Melbourne gardens, Kings Park, Queens Gardens and Hyde Park were created in the same mode, while Stirling Gardens, created as a nursery or acclimatisation garden, took on many of the same values as those cited. Even physically, Stirling Gardens provides recreational space at the heart of the city, only metres from the General Post Office, and the surveying zero point of the city. Yet the call for a
central park, or a centralised park, is in 2007 once again on the agenda. Clearly, more work needs to be done on ideas about city spaces, and their relationships to each other, in popular understandings.

In Western Australia, Kings Park and the foreshore are more than merely tools; they are icons for the city, symbols not just of city status, but of the city itself, closely tied to the way the city represents itself and is represented. I would argue that the same holds true for major parks and cities around the world; that parks even act as metonyms for the city. Politically, parks have been more likely to be promoted and developed if they can be related to either specific social or moral arguments, or can be used to boost the status of the city and the state. In the introduction I used Leon Pericles work, *Heaven and earth* (Fig. 1) to illustrate the difficulties with the concept of parks as intrusions into the city fabric. Another Pericles’ painting, *As it was, as it is and always will be*, painted on commission for a recent development of an administrative centre to the north of Perth, the City of Joondalup, amply illustrates the argument of this thesis: parks are integral to ideas about the city. They are tools for moral order, and symbols of statehood, nation or empire.

Parks are not so much about ideas of nature as they are about ideas of civilisation - city and nature combined.
Figure 31: As it was, as it is and always will be, Leon Pericles.
Source: Courtesy of Leon and Moira Pericles.
Appendix A

Maps and plans

Figure 32: Plan of Perth, c. 1900. Areas coloured pink are reserved land.
Source: Lands and Survey, Cancelled Public Plans (Cons. 5698, items 1381 and 1382, SROWA)
Figure 33: The colony of Western Australia, c. 1839.
Source: Lands and Surveys, Historic plans (Cons. 3423, item 202, SROWA)
Figure 34: Townsite of Perth, c.1870
Source: Public Works Department (Cons. 1647, item 822)
Figure 35: Metropolitan Region Scheme 2007
Source: Western Australian Planning Commission
Fig. 36 Soil and vegetation map from the 1955 Hepburn and Stephenson plan (plate 4). Perth is in the 'jarrah consociation' and the soil is characterised as ‘excessively drained deep yellow sands’. Source: Stephenson, Gordon, and J.A. Hepburn. ‘Plan for the metropolitan region…’
Appendix B

Governors and Administrators of Western Australia, 1829 - 1965

1828-1839: - STIRLING, Captain Sir James
1839-1846: - HUTT, John
1846-1847: - CLARKE, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew
1847-1848: - IRWIN, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Chidley (Administrator only)
1848-1855: - FITZGERALD, Captain Charles
1855-1862: - KENNEDY, Sir Arthur Edward
1862-1868: - HAMPTON, John Stephen
1869-1875: - WELD, Sir Frederick Aloysius
1875-1877: - ROBINSON, Sir William Cleaver Francis
1877-1880: - ORD, Major-General Sir Harry St George
1880-1883: - ROBINSON, Sir William Cleaver Francis
1883-1889: - BROOME, Sir Frederick Napier
1890-1895: - ROBINSON, Sir William Cleaver Francis
1895-1900: - SMITH, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Gerald
1901-1902: - LAWLEY, Captain Sir Arthur
1903-1909: - BEDFORD, Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham
1909-1913: - STRICKLAND, Sir Gerald
1913-1917: - BARRON, Major-General Sir Harry
1917-1920: - ELLISON-MACARTNEY, Sir William Grey
1920-1924: - NEWDEGATE, Sir Francis Alexander Newdigate
1924-1931: - CAMPION, Colonel Sir William Robert
1948-1951: - MITCHELL, Sir James
1951-1963: - GAIRDNER, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles
1963-1973: - KENDREW, Major-General Sir Douglas
Appendix C

Premiers of Western Australia, 1890 – 1965

1890 – 1901: FORREST, Sir John
1901: THROSSELL, George
           LEAKE, George
           MORGANS, Alfred Edward
1902 – 1904: JAMES, Sir Walter Hartwell
1904 – 1905: DAGLISH, Henry
1905 – 1906: RASON, Sir Cornwaite Hector
1906 – 1910: MOORE, Major-General Sir Newton James
1910 – 1911: WILSON, Frank
1911 - 1916: SCADDAN, John
1916 – 1917: WILSON, Frank
1917 –1919: LEFROY, Sir Henry Bruce
1919 – 1919: COLEBATCH, Sir Hal Pateshall
1919 - 1924: MITCHELL, Sir James
1924 – 1930: COLLIER, Phillip
1930 – 1933: MITCHELL, Sir James
1933 – 1936: COLLIER, Phillip
1936–1945: WILLCOCK, John
1945 – 1947: WISE, Frank Joseph Scott
1947 – 1953: McLARTY, Duncan Ross
1953 – 1959: HAWKE, Albert Redvers George
1959 – 1971: BRAND, Sir David
Appendix D

George Temple Poole, 1917, ‘The metropolis of Western Australia’

A city is one of man’s greatest achievements or one of his greatest sins. A city is poetical, stirs the imagination. It is close to the spirit of man. One of man’s masterpieces, a masterpiece of his invention, an expression of his moral and intellectual life, a work of foresight and sustained ambition. If it be not all of these it is one man’s greatest sins: it is a failure.

The metropolis of Western Australia has no claims to superlatives of perfection nor of condemnation. As a built and equipped city – it is mediocre.

The City of Perth and the Port at Fremantle, with the suburban towns and municipalities of Guildford, Leederville, Subiaco, Claremont, Cottesloe, Victoria Park and Queen’s Park, occupy a site of rare beauty, hygienically suited to be the seat of a large population.

The landward horizons, bounded by the blue and purpling hills of the Darling Range, and the west by the waves of the Indian Ocean, with the riverine system of the Swan and Canning Rivers spreading wide and ample in its midst, it has an amphitheatre without compeer [sic] on this continent.

It has an equitable climate. The meteorological mean averages give a barometer of 30.02, a shade temperature 64 with a diurnal range of 18°, radiation 50, humidity 62-52, evaporation 66.37, rainfall 33.23 falling in 117 days.

The prevailing direction of wind during the winter months is in the morning from around the east quarter, and in the afternoon around the south-west quarter, and in the summer months from the east and south-east quarter in the morning, and the south-west quarter in the afternoon.

These observations, in the latitude 31.57 south and longitude 115.51 east, connote a fine sunny climate, slightly lacking in a keen nipping quality of cold, but conducive to the maintenance of a high standard of general public health, as, with the exception of a short time, a few days in the summer solstice, the days are perfectly agreeable and of tolerable temperature and regularly cooled.
a few hours after noon by refreshing south-west breezes from off the Indian Ocean.

The range of its panoramic view, well seen from many eminences, is varied and contains every element of nature’s bounty, including distant hill ranges, undulating valleys, sinuous rivers widening into wide and commodious bays, forest and park lands, gleaming waters of lakes half disclosed by bushy wooded banks.

Bountiful rains fall at seasons of vernal need, convenient hill catchments make adequate conservation of supply easy of attainment, and in addition there is available for coarser purposes an artesian supply from a basin of unlimited extent.

With rivers in the midst and the ocean nearby, it is superfluous to say that natural drainage is good, and the assistance required of engineering works is of the simplest extent. And even the deep drainage and the sanitary sewering of the area has no difficulty beyond the capacity of very ordinary engineerin to surmount. The origin and cause are known of the indifferent success which has attended the plant of the biological resolving and disposing sewerage works, and the amending and completing of this installation are well within the capacity of experts and the means of the community.

The constituent municipalities of the metropolis are –

Perth City – Governmental, distributing and residential.
Perth, North – Residential.
Perth, South – Residential.
Leederville – Residential.
Subiaco – Industrial and residential.
Fremantle – Port of shipping, commercial.
Fremantle, East – Residential.
Fremantle, North – Industrial.
Claremont – Residential.
Cottesloe – Residential.
Guildford – Residential.
Midland – Residential.
Victoria Park – Residential.
Queen’s Park – Rural industries.
The area within municipal boundaries is 29,326 acres, and the population 124,306 persons. There are 24,000 dwelling houses, 22 million pounds of ratable property of an annual value of £1,200,000, subject to the incidence of rates of from 1/9 to 2/6 in the pound.

Extra municipal, that is the Road Board Districts within the metropolis, have an area of 466 square miles, an unimproved value of £1,820,000, a rating of from 2d. to 4½d. in the pound, and a population of approximately 13,000 persons. The total population of the metropolitan area is, therefore, between 137,000 and 140,000.

The municipalities are owners of considerable areas of endowment lands, and operate some of the activities of the civil service, among those being lighting plants at Perth (the electric side of which will soon be superseded by a State central power station) at Cottesloe, Guildford, Claremont, and Fremantle; markets at Fremantle and Perth, tramways at Fremantle, but in respect of a number of these municipal services the State has undertaken or acquired, in some instances intrusively, the provision and operation of the metropolitan requirements, prominent instances being water supply and sewerage and the city tramways and ferries, while the Central cemetery is administered [sic] by a board of trustees. The Harbour at Fremantle, also, and very properly so, is national and administered by a trust.

The civic mind and intention is to resume control, in citizen interest, of these metropolitan services, and throw off the State department tutelage under which municipal government for some time has been existing, and in many instances suffering.

In retrospect it is seen that the sites of the Port Fremantle and the town of Perth, the seat of government, were proclaimed in 1829, and in 1856 were fully endowed with civic organisation.

The men of 88 years ago who did so well in cannily selecting from so wide an unoccupied field this site for the future metropolis, did also comparatively well in the laying out of the town plans of Fremantle and Perth. The former (Fremantle) has a chess board nucleus with middle focal line on the Light House Hill, lying approximately E.N.E. therefrom, and with diagonal lines N.N.E parallel to and touching the banks of the river mouth. On the other side the ocean front is hugged by a curved esplanade with the cross streets giving on to it and a parallel main street eastward. The latter (Perth) a dozen miles distant,
also has a chess board nucleus, with the main lines W.N.W., E.S.E, and the cross roads thereto. The main street, on the west, has Parliament Hill as its focal point, with a fan-shaped disposition of roads to the hilly contours. At the east end there is a diagonal and curved development on the hill overlooking the islets in the upper part of Perth water.

The town plots were large – three-quarter acre and whole acres in extent in the central town, and five acres on the outer parts. The lay-out being in general terms conceived of as a garden city with main view to the amenities of an official seat of government, with very little expectation of the needs of traders or manufacturers.

The roads, connecting the port to the city, and to the contemporarily settled Guildford, were located with but indifferent care, and were generally one chain wide, without any foresight of the needs of main roads. The roadways inland were in similar neglect and of similar inadequacy. There is no doubt that this inattention to the connecting roadways of port and city was in consequence of the traffic being more conveniently river borne. The water highway was open, the land highway required costly building. The land highways were negligible and neglected.

In 1878 the railway connecting port and city was built by way of the tongue of land lying between the ocean and Swan River, and eastward to Guildford and the settled eastern districts. The location was admirable in some sense, but unfortunately was made to enter the city, traverse the city and leave the city without consideration of urban traffic or convenience, and achieving a complete and disastrous severance of the south from the north of the city. The development and extensions of the city have grown up about this ill-located railway in wasteful and unpleasing confusion.

This rude severance of the city by the railway is the blot on the plan, and the anxiety and trouble of the civic authorities and of those who would undertake improvements and the planning of works to meet the requirements of the growing city, improvements and enlargements which would be feasible, in fine development, but for this railway severance.

In 1910 – 11 the public mind became seriously and sustainedly directed to such improvements, and to the will to regenerate and redeem the metropolitan area and more particularly the city from the slovenly by-ways into which she had fallen, and to the need to amend and lay out afresh with foresight, to
From Wasteland to parkland

accommodate the requirements of the future greatness of the metropolis, of which some flickering visions were beginning to be understood.

A plan was published with schemes of arterial roads within the city, joining to main country roads, devious streets were rearranged in directness and convenience, culs-de-sac were planned to open to thoroughfares, park and public gardens were linked to the needs of the neighbourhoods, and a belt, half a mile wide, with an approximate radius of $4^{1/2}$ miles was found to be available of rural and slightly improved lands, to form a parkway encircling the Greater Perth, linking up in its twenty mile course many of the beautiful and extensive public reserves belonging to the towns and suburban areas, including the Ngurgenboro and Mongers Lakes, as well as the upper reaches of the Swan and Canning. The belt was not closed, the two ends being respectively at the Recreation Reserve, Point Walter on the Swan, and the other on the ocean face of the city Endowment Lands.

These Endowment Lands, which lie westward of the city, comprising an area of 2,243 acres, with a sea frontage of five miles, all within six miles from the Perth Town Hall, were designed in this plan to be laid out as an extension of the city, as a garden suburb for residential purposes with a seaside, watering, pleasure town on the ocean front. The main approach road system provided an avenue on the Hay Street line, and two parkways issuing respectively on the north from a confused and complicated area at Leederville, which would be replanned, and on the south from populous Subiaco, where Rokeby Road touches the King’s Park. The resumption of improved private property entailed by the project is relatively inconsiderable.

The City Council has this year taken a first specific step towards the realization of the this project by acquiring by purchase an intervening area (Perry’s land) of 1,290 acres, which added to the endowment lands makes 3,533 acres, a sufficient area for a complete and characteristic extension of the city, in broad lines of fine lay-out. The land comprises a succession of wooded hills and valleys, the undulations being rather confused from a road maker’s point of view, with consolidated sand dunes on the coastal parts.

The City Council has surveyed and made preliminary road location and selected a 280 foot limestone hill, situate on the chord of the radial development of the town area as the site of a specially afforested park. This hill (280), as indeed do many other hills and ridges, affords a vantage ground for viewing the
amphitheatre of the metropolis, superior and more open than even that afforded by Mount Eliza in King's Park. The prospect from this hill gives the varied features of the valley of the Swan with the surrounding hill ranges in the land distances from S.E. to N.E: In the west, a mile distant, the ocean with Rottnest and Carnac and other islets merging to the horizon. South-ward the port and roadstead of Fremantle, with the harbor and sea moles and crowded shipping. Three miles S.E. the 1,000 acres of dark wooded heights of the King's Park. Three or four miles southward the Oceanside and riverside suburbs of Cottesloe and Claremont, with Point Walter's upland forest across the river. Five miles away in the N.E. the gentle declivities of Mount Lawley, terraced with homely red roofs. A little south of east, and five miles away, the tower of the Town Hall, with, spread about it, the comparatively closely built city. And in the middle and from end to edge of the amphitheatre, embosomed in the midst of this varied terrain, lie the lake-like expanses of the Perth and Melville waters, and the wide bays and long reaches of the Canning and Swan rivers. Avoiding comparison with fair prospects nearer home, one might assert that a traveller with the mental adjustments of a miniature painter, and memories of the charms of Como and Nice, strangely combined, would find this scene worthy of pause and admiration.

Town planning as a specific and associated activity of the citizens began in 1913, when a conference was held of representatives of the City Council, the Institute of Architects, the Institute of Surveyors, Chamber of Commerce, Builders and Contractors’ Association and other bodies, to consider matters affecting the replanning of Perth and its environs.

On the 18th July, 1913, the Hon. the Premier was requested to appoint a Royal Commission for the purpose of enquiring into the remodelling of Perth and to prepare a city improvement plan for the metropolitan area. The Premier advised that the first step should be to obtain legislative power, and that a bill would be drafted and submitted to Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

In the Government default to take action, steps were taken by the Conference to prepare a bill, and after the return from Europe and America, whither he had travelled commissioned to enquire in cognate matters, the Town Clerk (Mr W.E. Bold) was requested to draft a measure which would meet the requirements of the State. The draft was in due course submitted to the Conference and finally approved and placed in the hands of the Premier.
Un fortunately neither the “earliest opportunity” of the Hon. Premier nor the “convenient season” of his successor has arrived, and the Town Planning Association is still a persistent petitioner in the antechambers of ministers, buoyed by unfaltering trust that the sun of a convenient season may soon arise.

In this connection (the preparation of the public mind and will to organise for town improvement), it should be mentioned that in March, 1916, the Conference of Town Planners was dissolved and the Town Planning Association of Western Australia was inaugurated in its stead.

The need of town plan is recognised, but the public awaits the sanction and powers to be derived from the promised legislative act. In many directions, however, the improvements have been planned, and some carried into effect by the civic authorities. Several streets have been organised and widened, cul-de-sac have been opened out, market garden areas within the city precincts have been resumed and brought into urban sanitary condition and laid out as open places. Several small areas have been newly planned, and gardens, playgrounds for children with gymnastic equipment and wading pools, provided for all the residential areas requiring them. The several open spaces, town parks and recreation grounds, which the municipalities of the metropolis possess in very ample number, and the two or three naturally beautiful lakes near the city, have been brought to organised control and redeemed from a neglected condition, and made good for the citizens’ using.

The shallow fringes of the Perth water have been embanked and reclaimed, and are now in course of planting, and each vernal season makes the river front more beautiful, combining with the wooded cemetery hill in the east and the forest crowned hill and bluffs of Mount Eliza in the west, with its preserved indigenous flora, to form a notable feature of fine national and capital amenity.

The citizens of the metropolis have adopted an axiomatic definition of civic failure, and in its reverse find a code and standard of desirable attainment:-

It were a failure, however well organised, to cheapen production, to profit manufactures, dealers or consumers, or advantage the money thrift of the industrious, if these desiderata are obtained at the cost of the mental or moral health or happiness of the citizens.
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It were a failure, however effective may be its provision for transport or interurban communication, if the aspect of its places be degraded, its thoroughfares squalid, or the recuperative quality of repose destroyed.

It were a failure, however full or overflowing its money coffers, if an equal measure of sunshine and cleanliness, educational and recreative opportunity, be not accessible to all in their several needs, be they leisured or worker, strenuous labourer or contemplative student, poor or wealth endowed.

A city is one of man's greatest achievements or one of his greatest sins.

A sustained emulation in the sanction of a recognition of this essential humane rule will make the metropolis of the great Western State notable among the cities of the continent.
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