

# YARRA PARK



Yarra Park view towards Punt Road from north west  
July 2009



Yarra Park avenue of elms  
across north of site July 2009



Yarra Park scarred tree 1.  
July 2009



Yarra Park scarred tree 2.  
July 2009



Yarra Park Cabman's shelter.  
July 2009



Yarra Park commemorative  
plaque for avenue of oaks.  
July 2009



Yarra Park drinking fountain  
July 2009



Yarra Park electrical  
substation July 2009



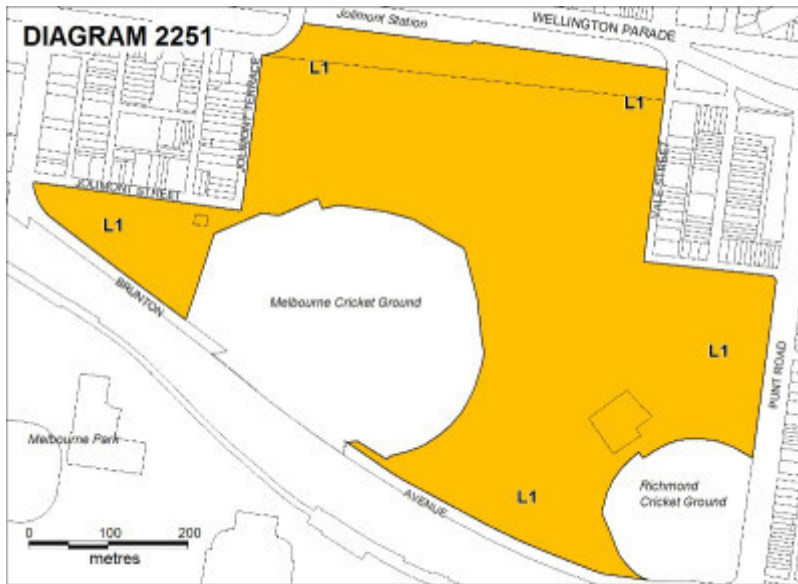
Yarra Park view towards  
MCG. July 2009



Yarra Park view from north  
east corner. July 2009



plan of Yarra Park 1867 from  
DSE files



yarra park plan.jpg

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## Location

WELLINGTON PDE AND PUNT RD AND VALE STREET AND JOLIMONT TERRACE AND BRUNTON AVE AND JOLIMONT STREET EAST MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2251

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO194

## VHR Registration

May 13, 2010

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Yarra Park, East Melbourne is bordered by the southern boundary of the railway reserve adjacent to Wellington Parade, Vale Street, Punt Road, Brunton Avenue, Jolimont Street and Jolimont Terrace. This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people.

Yarra Park was part of a proposal to surround the city of Melbourne with a ring of parks and gardens. This is largely credited to Charles La Trobe, who was appointed to govern the Port Phillip District in 1839, and responded to instructions to make sufficient land available for public purposes. The result was an inner ring of gardens, including the Fitzroy, Treasury, Parliament, Alexandra and Royal Botanic Gardens and the Domain, and an outer ring including Yarra, Albert, Fawkner, Princes and Royal Parks. The former were generally designed spaces, intended for passive recreation, while the latter were developed in a less sophisticated manner for both active and passive recreation.

Yarra Park developed on the Government Paddock which was east of the adjacent Police Magistrate's Paddock. This land, of some 157 acres, was recommended for reservation in 1862. It became known as Richmond Park before being temporarily reserved and renamed Yarra Park in 1867. It was not permanently reserved until 1873.

A network of paths developed through Yarra Park, along desire lines. The first of these, from Punt Road to Wellington Street, were established as early as 1852. These grew in complexity as north-south pathways were developed, as the sporting venues grew in popularity and the railway stations were established at the park's boundaries. These pathways generally continue to be used. Yarra Park has been used for the provision of parking for sporting events since the 1920s and continues to be used in this manner.

The place has associations with a number of people and groups of importance in Victoria's cultural history such as the mounted police force, Police Magistrate William Lonsdale, Governor Charles La Trobe, surveyor Robert Hoddle, and Clement Hodgkinson, who designed the park's plantings and pathways in 1873.

Yarra Park contains a mixture of open space with turf and trees. Avenues of trees, probably from the late nineteenth century, line many of the paths. Significant plantings include Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) and remnant indigenous trees, in particular two scarred River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

Structures on the site include an electrical substation (1938), two drinking fountains at either end of Brunton Avenue (1938) and a commemorative Olympic plaque in Brunton Avenue (1959).

How is it significant?

Yarra Park is of historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Yarra Park is historically significant as part of the system of parks that Governor Charles La Trobe envisaged surrounding Melbourne. His vision was to establish a city set within public open space, reflecting nineteenth century planning mores. The park has further significance as it is the result of the first application in Victoria of the reservation of a large open area for public/government use. It was set aside as a reserve within Robert Hoddle's first Town Reserve Plan for Melbourne in 1837 noted as 'Government Reserve' and then shown in more detail in Hoddle's 1843 Plan of North and South Melbourne as 'Government Paddock'.

Yarra Park is historically significant as the 'village green' for Melbourne and for its role in the development of Australian Rules Football, being the place where the earliest games were played in 1858.

The park is an important Aboriginal ceremonial, camping and contact site that retains evidence of Aboriginal use, such as the scarred river red gums.

Yarra Park has significant historical associations not only with Governor La Trobe but also with early Police Magistrate William Lonsdale, the mounted police force and Clement Hodgkinson, whose design allowed for active and passive recreation.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

**General Conditions:** 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. **General Conditions:** 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. **Note:** All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. **General Conditions:** 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. **Note:** The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. **General Conditions:** 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. **General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

#### Minor Works

**Note:** Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

#### Landscape

\*Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings and structures, fountains and monuments, steps, paths and gutters, drainage and irrigation systems, edging, fences and gates.

\*The process of gardening; mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety garden works.

\*New or replacement planting which conserves the historic landscape character including specimen trees, avenues, rows, shrubberies, beds, and lawns.

\*Management of trees in accordance with *Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373*.

\*Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems outside the canopy edge of significant trees.

\*Vegetation protection and management of the possum and rabbit population.

\*Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

## Regular Site Maintenance

The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

\*Regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

\*The maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials.

\*Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing.

\*Repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation.

\*The replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

## Fire Suppression Duties

The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

\*Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

\*Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected; Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

## Weed and Vermin Control

The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

\*Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values.

## Public Safety and Security

The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

\*Public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

\*The erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features.

\*Development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional.

#### Signage and Site Interpretation

The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

\*Signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

\*The erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items.

\*Signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place.

\*Signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place; Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation.

#### Temporary event exemptions (see Hermes event X6858):

The following works as part of a temporary event of up to three weeks duration (including assembly and disassembly) associated with the AFL Grand Final, Melbourne Marathon, Boxing Day Test or New Years Eve, where any affected areas of the Park are made good to match the condition of the Park prior to the installation of the temporary elements:

. Marquees and tents (lightweight structures) which are weighted down with sand bags or water tanks and avoid the requirement for driven metal stakes which could impact on tree roots.

. Marquees, tents, stages, amusement rides and the like which are located no closer than three metres from the base of a tree.

. Catering, vendor and toilet vans which are located on existing hardstand and paved/asphalted areas and pathways.

. Temporary structures, amusement rides, catering, vendor and toilet vans and the like located on turf areas which are placed on a protective surface (board or track mats).

. Fencing, furniture and other small scale items placed on turf or hard stand areas which do not require fixing into the ground.

The Executive Director must be notified of the following;

. When and where the event took place

. The extent of damage, if any, to Yarra Park

The works undertaken to rectify affected areas of the Park.

Construction dates 1852,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 114751  
Property Number

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

A proposal to encircle the city of Melbourne with open land of parks and gardens resulted in the establishment of several large reserves for public purposes and recreation. These included the Botanic Gardens, South Yarra (reserved from sale in 1845); Alexandra Gardens, Queen Victoria Gardens and Kings Domain (reserved as public parkland 1854); Royal Park (gazetted 1854); Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens (reserved as public parks in 1849) and Yarra Park, which was initially envisaged by La Trobe as stretching east along the Yarra River from Swanston Street to Punt Road, and north to Wellington Parade, the extension of Flinders Street. This open area of about 240 acres was to be set aside for the recreation and amusement of the inhabitants of Melbourne but with control maintained by the government, as detailed by La Trobe in 1850.

Despite reservations of many parks in the 1860s, the boundaries of many have been diminished (including Albert, Royal and Yarra Parks), land has been reduced by the granting of portions to sports clubs on a permissive occupancy tenure (including Princes and Yarra Parks) and roads and railways have caused diminution (including Royal, Princes and Yarra Park).

### CHARLES JOSEPH LA TROBE (1801-1875)

(information from Helen Botham. *La Trobe's Jolimont*, 2006)

La Trobe arrived as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales in October 1839. He came as a cultured, artistic man of high moral and religious ideals and had a fervent desire to imprint his influence on the developing colony. Melbourne at the time was largely a primitive settlement and he established the Jolimont estate (named after a country house in Switzerland where he had spent time tutoring) for himself, his Swiss wife and daughter. He had been advised that there would be no official house provided for him, so he brought a prefabricated house with him from England, and this was erected on the north-west corner of the Government Paddock (now Yarra Park). He acquired the land (12.5 acres) at auction in June 1840 and the original four roomed cottage became the nucleus of the house the family resided in for fourteen years.

When La Trobe returned to England in 1854 he was dependent on the investment he had made at Jolimont. The cottages were initially rented, however the land was subsequently subdivided and sold. A plan of the Jolimont Estate drawn in 1865 shows the dense subdivision that occurred at this time. La Trobe's cottage (VHR 1076) was relocated to the Domain in 1963.

### HISTORY OF PLACE

A plan drawn by Surveyor Robert Hoddle in 1837, shows two large, adjacent tracts of land, east of Melbourne, labelled the Police Magistrates Paddock and the Government Paddock. Yarra Park was developed on the latter, which was further from the city of Melbourne. These ran from the northern boundary (now Wellington Parade) south to the Yarra River. It also shows an area set aside for future ownership by then Superintendent Charles La Trobe in the north-west corner of the Government Paddock.

From 1836-39, Captain Lonsdale, Police Magistrate of Port Phillip, occupied a house on the Police Magistrate's Paddock to the west of La Trobe's land. The first mounted police arrived from Sydney in 1838 and this whole

area was reserved to graze their horses. A feeding shed was constructed on the Police Paddock in 1839. Six acres at the corner of Wellington and Punt Roads were used as Police Barracks and a gaol.

The first part of the land permanently alienated from the reserve was 12 ½ acres already mentioned at the north-west corner of the Government Paddock. This was purchased by La Trobe himself and used as his official residence. Known as Jolimont, it was subdivided and sold after he left Victoria in 1854.

A plan of Melbourne of 1852 shows the Yarra Park area as being heavily timbered. It also shows La Trobe's land fenced off, Police Barracks in the north-east corner and two paths leading diagonally across the site from Rowena Parade and Swan Street in the east to Wellington Parade in the north. These paths, which reflect the routes taken by early settlers in Richmond, remain today.

In 1853 the Melbourne Cricket Club was granted permissive occupancy of nine acres and the Richmond Cricket Club six acres in the Government Paddock at Richmond, for their playing fields. In 1858 the first Australian Rules football matches were played in the vicinity of the MCC grounds.

In 1858 the director of the Botanic Gardens, was given 33 acres at the southern end of this Government Paddock for use as Zoological Gardens. This was relocated to Royal Park in 1861 due to the cold, swampy conditions, and the former site became the Friendly Societies' Gardens and sports grounds.

In 1862 it was recommended by the Board of Land and Works that the remaining portion of this land, some 157 acres and known as Richmond Paddock, be reserved for public recreation. In 1867 it was temporarily reserved and named Yarra Park. In 1873 Yarra Park was permanently reserved and vested in the Board of Land and Works, conjointly with the City of Melbourne.

Yarra Park however has suffered fragmentation of its whole over the subsequent years. In 1859 a railway line was opened from Princes Bridge to Richmond, cutting diagonally through Richmond Paddock. This effectively alienated the north and south portions of what was to become Yarra Park.

To the south of this railway line, a public road was made through Richmond Paddock as an extension of Swan Street Richmond west to the Yarra River in 1861. This had been requested as early as the mid-1850s by Richmond residents. Officially opened in 1875, this road served to further dissect Yarra Park.

A proposal to construct a second railway line along the northern boundary of Yarra Park was made in 1887. This was constructed along the southern side of Wellington Parade, encroaching on Yarra Park and opened with a stop at Jolimont in 1901. The railway lines continued to expand and by 1959 a total of approximately 12 acres had been excised from Yarra Park for railway works.

The dissection of Yarra Park effectively created two, even three, separate parks. The southern-most section comprised the Zoological Gardens reserve and the Lonsdale Cricket Ground, with the former becoming the Friendly Societies' Gardens then the Amateur Sports Ground and Schools' Oval. The latter became Gosch's Paddock, after William H Gosch, who used it to graze horses in the late 1800s. This section of Yarra Park was dramatically altered and increased in size when the Yarra River was straightened between 1894 and 1904.

The section of Yarra Park between the railway line and the Swan Street extension contained a bowling green to the east and the Scotch College Cricket Ground to the west, shown in a plan of 1879. The latter was originally used by the Press Cricket Club, and was used by Scotch College until the 1920s.

By 1867, the section of Yarra Park to the north of the railway line contained the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Richmond Cricket Ground, the property Jolimont in the north-west corner, and the Police Barracks and Government Reserve in the north-east corner. A footbridge was provided over the railway line. In 1873 land at the north-east corner of the Police Barracks was granted to the Education Department and the following year a State School was built.

By 1879 a network of paths had been well developed providing thoroughfares between Richmond, East Melbourne and the city beyond. They were generally first developed as a result of Richmond residents and their desired routes into the city. They grew in complexity as they met the needs of East Melbourne residents moving south, and the wider community wishing to access sporting venues. They have also been generated by the location of Richmond and Jolimont stations on the park boundaries. The unplanned development contrasts with the designed layout of paths in the Fitzroy Gardens, bordering the wealthier East Melbourne. The main north-south path in 1879 was an extension of Powlett Street, East Melbourne to a footbridge across the Yarra River.



The paths shown in 1879 continue to be used today, with only some minor realignments made. An aerial photograph of 1945 shows many of these paths lined by trees.

In 1881 land immediately west of the school site was subdivided into residential allotments as Yarra Park Subdivision.

The admission of vehicles into Yarra Park was originally not permissible. As early as 1913, regulations outlined in the *Argus* for the 'Care, Protection and Management of Yarra Park' specified that no motor vehicle could be driven in the park. By the late 1920s parking was permissible at Yarra Park and this continues when parking is required for sporting events.

In latter times Yarra Park's boundaries have been reduced, particularly in the southern section, due to the construction of the south eastern freeway, City Link Tunnel, the National Tennis Centre and the adjacent arena.

## REFERENCES

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National Heritage List

## Plaque Citation

Yarra Park was part of an early vision by Charles LaTrobe to surround the city with parks. It developed from the 1850s as an informal park, containing sporting facilities and open parkland.

## Extent of Registration

1. All of the land comprising Yarra Park to the extent marked L1 on Diagram 2251 held by the Executive Director and comprising part of Crown Allotment 2B Section 19C Parish of Melbourne at East Melbourne, and all of Crown Allotments 2019 and 2037 Parish of Melbourne at East Melbourne.

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*