

# FLAGSTAFF GARDENS



FLAGSTAFF GARDENS  
SOHE 2008



h02041 01 flagstaff gardens  
separation and pioneers  
monuments 0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens 01  
0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens 02  
0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens 03  
0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens  
court favourite 0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens king  
st edge 0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens  
pioneers memorial 0803 mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens  
separation monument 0803  
mz



h02041 flagstaff gardens  
sundial 0803 mz



Flagstaff Gardens Bowling  
Club



Flagstaff Gardens Fig Tree  
and Stage



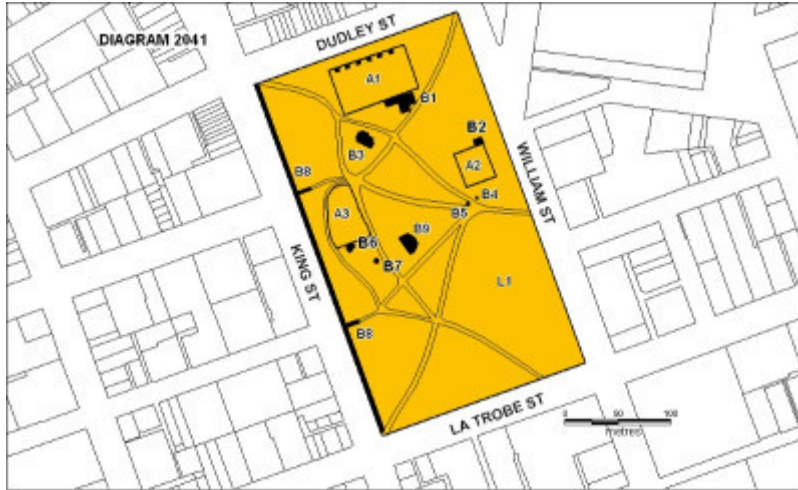
Flagstaff Gardens King St  
Edge 2002



Flagstaff Gardens Tennis  
Court



Flagstaff Gardens View to the  
West



h02041 flagstaff gardens plan

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## Location

KING STREET AND WILLIAM STREET AND LA TROBE STREET AND DUDLEY STREET WEST  
MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2041

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO793

## VHR Registration

March 25, 2004

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 1, 2004

What is significant?

Flagstaff Hill including the Flagstaff Gardens occupies an elevated position to the north west of Melbourne's CBD. Consisting of 7.7 hectares, it was originally called Burial Hill by the European settlers and was used as Melbourne's first burial ground in the 1830s. Later used as a signal station between 1840 and 1857, and then as a magnetic and meteorological observatory under Professor Georg von Neumayer between 1857 and 1862, the hill is a significant archaeological site. In 1862 the site was established as a public garden. Designed in an informal gardenesque style by the Deputy Surveyor General Clement Hodgkinson in 1865, and later redesigned by John Guilfoyle in the 1890s, the garden contained numerous trees of scientific and aesthetic importance, many of which remain today. The current appearance of the gardens reflects changes made between the 1890s and the 1920s although the original pathways are still evident as are several of the original tree plantings. Although the character of the gardens has changed since the 1860s, the current appearance reflects a diverse cultural landscape that is rich in horticultural, historic and social meaning.

How is it significant?

Flagstaff Gardens and Flagstaff Hill are of aesthetic, archaeological, historical, scientific (horticultural) and social significance to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

Flagstaff Hill is of historic and scientific importance. Between 1836 and 1837, it was the site of Melbourne's first burial ground. Seven burials took place there and as there is no evidence that the bodies were exhumed the site probably has archaeological potential. Between 1840 and 1857 the site was used as a signal station with flagstaff. It was used to communicate with a similar station at Point Gellibrand at Williamstown. Flags flown from the flagstaff indicated shipping arrivals in the Bay and shipping lists were posted on a bulletin board near the station building. Accordingly the hill was a regular gathering place for Melburnians of all classes. The flagstaff and signal station became redundant following the introduction of the telegraph, however the site was then used as a meteorological and magnetic observatory between 1857 and 1862. Established under the supervision of Bavarian scientist Georg von Neumayer, the observatory played a significant part in the development of scientific knowledge in the colony. The footings of the signal station and the observatory buildings probably still exist and would be a significant archaeological deposit.

The Flagstaff Gardens is of scientific (horticultural) and aesthetic significance. Established as a public garden in 1862, the Flagstaff Gardens was designed in the gardenesque style in 1865 by Assistant Commissioner for Crown Lands and Survey, Clement Hodgkinson. Unlike the Fitzroy Gardens, also designed by Hodgkinson, the Flagstaff Gardens was a more informal style. Its path layout was determined in part by the site's topography but also by the location of the Victoria Market in the north-east corner. Some of the original 1860s path layout remains but the current layout reflects changes made between the 1890s and the 1920s. The central path from the main entrance in William Street to the crown of the Flagstaff Hill has disappeared but most of the path that originally crossed the gardens from the corner of King and Latrobe Streets towards the Victoria Market still exists. None of the original statues exist but there is a sundial from the nineteenth century, albeit whose base was reconstructed in 1947, and a sculpture, The Court Favourite, from the 1930s.

There are many fine individual specimens of trees in the gardens including a Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*), located on the south side of the William Street entrance, from the first stage of planting in the nineteenth century and which is amongst the largest of the species known in Victoria. There are also significant specimens from the twentieth century including a Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) and a Chinese Parasol tree (*Firmiana simplex*). The *Ginkgo biloba* is one of the State's finest and largest, and is growing in a prominent position in the garden of the caretakers cottage. The only larger and older *Ginkgo biloba* in Victoria is in the Geelong Botanic Gardens, which was planted in 1859. The *Firmiana simplex* is rare in Victoria and this tree is also the largest known in the State.

As well there are a variety of significant specimen trees including elms, oaks, Moreton bay figs, Canary Island pines and River Red Gums. The *Corynocarpus laevigatus* is uncommon in Victoria and this tree is the largest known specimen in the State. The two Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*) have important landscape and historical significance due to their association with Melbourne's first cemetery. These trees were commonly planted in cemeteries due to their symbolism.

The Flagstaff Gardens is of landscape and horticultural significance due to the avenues of elms (*Ulmus procera* and *U. x hollandica*) lining the pathways through the Gardens and elm rows along the north, north east and southern perimeter of the gardens. The elms are common landscape element in all of Melbourne's nineteenth century gardens and boulevards. The trees are numerous and have grown to a large size and are an important feature of the urban character and provide outstanding autumn colour. Melbourne now has some of the finest European elms in the world and these are of increasing international significance as Dutch Elm Disease has killed most of these species in the northern hemisphere. The deciduous elms, poplars and English oaks contrast dramatically with the evergreen conifers, eucalypts, Moreton Bay Figs and palms to provide an outstanding landscape. The two *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* (Sugar Gum) in the north eastern corner have grown to a great size and are an important landmark in the landscape.

Flagstaff Hill also has social significance as place of recreation and celebration. The existence of the various monuments on the crest of the hill reflects the importance of the site in the popular imagination. In addition, the hill was a natural gathering place in the early years of European settlement because of the views it offered over the Bay. Furthermore, with separation from New South Wales in 1850, the hill was a focus of celebrations with bonfires being lit and other festivities taking place there. In 1950 a monument was built to commemorate these original celebrations.

The Flagstaff Gardens has been the less respectable component in the city's collection of public parks. Accordingly its social significance is different from the Carlton, Fitzroy or Treasury Gardens. In the 1930s it was observed that if the Fitzroy Gardens was the city's drawing room then Flagstaff Gardens was its kitchen. Earlier in the century it was also perceived to be the most notorious of the public parks as a site for illicit activities. This informality and diversity of public behaviour has distinguished it from other city gardens and also is an important part of its character today. The bowling club, playground and tennis courts contribute to its continuing recreational and informal character. To an extent its character has also been defined by its position on the west side of the city close to the Victoria Market, working class residential areas, industry and Yarra wharves.

## 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 the Executive Director 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 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 approved 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 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 declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

#### **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.

#### **Landscape Maintenance**

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



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

\*The process of gardening; watering, top-dressing, fertilising, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants and disease, emergency and safety works and weed control necessary for the continued health of plants. Landscaping and planting to retain the existing landscape character, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species or other significant landscape features.

\*Pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material, not exceeding 20% of the crown of the tree within a period of two years.

\*Tree surgery by a qualified horticulturalist or tree surgeon necessary for the health of those plants.

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

\*New or replacement planting which conserves the landscape character, elm, oak, avenues and rows.

\*In the event of the loss of any tree specified in the Extent of Registration, replanting with the same species of tree as that removed.

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

\*Vegetation protection and management of the possum population.

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

\*Maintenance and replacement of play equipment to meet Australian Standards; Playground equipment for parks, schools and domestic use AS 1924; Playgrounds - Guide to siting and to installation and maintenance of equipment AS 2155; and Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements and test method AS 4422.

\*Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.

#### 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.

#### Minor Works

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.

## Buildings Exterior:

The following activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

- \*Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \*Painting of previously painted walls, posts, and roofing in the same colour.
- \*Treatments to stabilise and protect timber structures.

## Building Interiors (tennis pavilion & caretakers cottage)

The following activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

- \*The alteration of the interior walls, surfaces and services is permit exempt except where that alteration has an affect on the exterior.
- \*Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \*Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of hoods, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \*Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of existing kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \*Installation, removal or replace of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

## Sculpture & monuments

The following activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995:

- \*The maintenance of sculptures and monuments through the use of professional contractors where damaged elements are repaired on a like for like basis. Sculpture elements may have protective coatings removed and applied to metal surfaces.

In accordance with s92(3) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, permit exemption issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria on 4 January 2023 (P37337):

- Installation of temporary events and structures (for events with a permit from the City of Melbourne) for up to 14 calendar days inclusive of bump in and bump out.
- The following temporary event infrastructure can be installed for all events:
  - The installation of temporary structures, such as marquees, tents, market stalls, display cases and furniture, gazebos, and shipping containers.
  - The installation of temporary freestanding services associated with events, including generators and associated service cabling.
  - The installation of temporary freestanding audio-visual and broadcasting equipment, including temporary staging, flooring, rigging, screens, speakers, lighting and associated infrastructure.
  - The erection of temporary freestanding scaffolding towers, projectors and infrastructure associated with lightshows and projections onto, or into airspace within the extent of registration of registered places and objects.

- The installation of temporary freestanding artworks.
- The installation of freestanding temporary recreation and entertainment facilities, equipment and structures, such as jumping castles, amusement rides, and sporting equipment.
- The installation of temporary decorations, such as decorative lights, bunting, tinsel, cut floral arrangements, freestanding garden beds and the like.
- The installation of equipment and infrastructure associated with firework, laser and drone displays.
- The parking, installation and operation of temporary micro-tenancies, such as food trucks and coffee carts.
- The installation of temporary furniture, including tables, desks, chairs, umbrellas and the like.
- Installation of temporary portable toilets.
- Installation of temporary operational, promotional, directional and wayfinding signage.
- Installation of temporary surveillance systems.
- The erection of freestanding fencing structures associated with temporary events.
- The following exemption conditions apply to all events:
  - Works and activities must be entirely reversible, and not involve damage to, or removal or disturbance of, early or original fabric , including landscape features such as historical planting schemes, paths and ground-surface masonry, built structures (including interiors and exterior elements), or historical archaeological remains.
  - Temporary structures and associated elements exempted must be freestanding and not involve new penetrations into or affixings to early or original fabric.
  - There must be no subfloor/subsurface/excavation works or activities.
  - Cabling and associated service conduits must not be affixed to early or original fabric.
  - Outdoor temporary structures must not be positioned within a structural root zone, or within two metres of garden beds.
  - Works or activities within tree protection zones must be in accordance with a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - Outdoor temporary structures are exempt within tree protection zones only if works and activities are undertaken in accordance with a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - In tree protection zones the method of affixing temporary outdoor structures to the ground must be in accordance with advice provided by a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - Any works or activities involving the attachment of temporary decorations, artworks or lights to trees must be guided by a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - Plant and equipment access must use existing paths and access routes where possible. Existing paths and access routes must not be damaged, widened or extended.
  - Tree canopy and fragile surfaces such as turf, soft landscaping, timber flooring and ground surface masonry (excluding concrete or asphalt), must be protected from temporary structures and associated installation activities (for example the use of sleepers, boards, track matting or other ground protection). Vehicles must not use access routes through floorboarded, decked or tiled locations.
  - All works and activities must comply with the internal and external engineering and loading requirements of the place.
  - Any area(s) impacted by works and activities must be fully remediated to its previous condition within 28 calendar days of removal of temporary structures.
- This specific exemption prevails over the general exemptions for temporary events and structures.

Construction dates        1840, 1862,

Heritage Act Categories    Registered place, Registered archaeological place,

Hermes Number            1841

Property Number

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## History



Within the semi-circle of public gardens around central Melbourne, the Flagstaff Gardens was the least respectable part. Less sophisticated than Kings Domain or the Botanical Gardens, less formal than the Fitzroy Gardens and lacking the stately context of the Carlton or Treasury Gardens, the Flagstaff Gardens has a very different history from Melbourne's other public gardens. Its history has to a large extent been shaped by its position close to the Victoria Market and the Yarra wharves, as well as its proximity to the more industrial and more working class residential areas to the west of the city. But more important has been its topography. The hill, which rises 15 metres, was what determined the initial function of Flagstaff Hill as a look out and also the informality of its garden design. Originally close to the administrative and business centre of the town and bounded by King, William, Dudley and La Trobe Streets it was an important site for communication between the harbour and the town and it was a vantage point where Melburnians of all classes gathered

Flagstaff Hill within the Flagstaff Gardens is the only surviving hill of the two that dominated the small settlement of Melbourne in the 1830s. The other hill, that has since been levelled beneath the Spencer Street railway yards, was Batman's Hill situated near the corner of Spencer Street and Flinders Lane. (presland) But it was this small rise, to the north of the town, that became known as Flagstaff Hill and also became an important look-out point, gathering place and site for scientific observation in mid- nineteenth century Melbourne. To the north there were views of the Macedon Ranges and to the south Hobsons Bay, Williamstown and the You Yangs beyond. The site chosen for the settlement of Melbourne was a major ceremonial and gathering point for tribes within the Kulin nation. No doubt the uses that Europeans made of the place that became Flagstaff Hill were similar to the uses that local aboriginal tribes had made of it for thousands of years. Unlike other public gardens around the centre of Melbourne, the present form of the Flagstaff Gardens, as a public garden and site for recreation, evolved naturally from its function as a meeting place. Its attraction as a meeting place was in turn determined by its topography. The site remains a tangible and significant topographical link with the early history of early colonial Melbourne.

Europeans first used Flagstaff Hill as a burial site. Russell's survey of 1837 refers to it as "Burial Hill. Between 1836 and 1837, seven people were buried there, three of whom were children. As there is no evidence to suggest that the bodies of the seven were exhumed, it is likely that these graves still exist. After 1837, the cemetery was moved to the current site of the Queen Victoria Market.

From 1840, the hill developed as the communications centre of the small settlement. Business and government were located close by during this period so the hill played a central role in the administration of the developing colony. Although less evident today, it provided an important visual link with Hobson's Bay and Williamstown at a time when communication technology was confined to the use of coloured flags, telescopes, a flagstaff and a time ball. In 1840 a flagstaff and signal station were established on the hill. Different coloured flags were displayed to announce the arrival and departure of ships as well as their country of origin. A yellow and a blue and white pennant for example would indicate that a ship was from South Australia. Most Melburnians knew the meaning of at least twenty different flags (blainey). In addition there was a ball that was placed on different parts of a yard to indicate whether the arriving vessel was a ship, barque, schooner or steamer. A time ball was also used to indicate midday.

In 1854 an electric telegraph was established between Melbourne and Williamstown. Although technological change led to the redundancy of the signalling station, the building then became the site of the colony's first observatory and meteorological station in 1857. The signal staff was adapted for use as a part of the meteorological station and a further four buildings constructed. By the early 1860s, Melbourne's rapid growth around the area of west Melbourne had made the site ineffective as an observatory, so in 1861 the observatory was moved to the Domain. Today Flagstaff Hill remains significant as the site of the first magnetic observatory in the colony and for its association with Professor Georg Neumayer, the Bavarian scientist who established the observatory.

Apart from the uses already mentioned, the hill was important as a gathering place. In the 1850s a noticeboard displayed daily shipping movements, and it became a popular destination for Melburnians to check for shipping arrivals. Superintendent La Trobe rode there each morning with his secretary to scan the arrivals board and it was also a favoured destination on summer evenings for locals. Celebrations marking Victoria's separation from New South Wales took place there, as did a ceremony celebrating the opening of Melbourne's first Exhibition Building in 1854.

The 1860s marked a change in how the site was used. Local residents requested that the government develop the site as a recreation reserve as the area had become an eyesore. It was being used as a rubbish dump and it was also dotted with gravel pits that filled with water and the carcasses of dead animals. Work began on creating

new gardens in 1862. The Flagstaff Gardens was one of several gardens that were created at this time around the city, the others being the Fitzroy, Carlton, Treasury and Alexandra Gardens as well as the Kings Domain. Unlike the Fitzroy Gardens, also designed by Hodgkinson, the Flagstaff Gardens was a more informal style. Its path layout was determined in part by the site's topography but also by the location of the Victoria Market in the north east corner.

The current landscape owes less to Hodgkinson's design and more to later curators who culled trees, created lawn vistas and introduced garden beds into the design. Some of the original 1860s path layout remains but the current layout reflects changes made between the 1890s and the 1920s. For example the central path from the main entrance in William Street to the crown of the Flagstaff Hill has disappeared but most of the path that originally crossed the gardens from the corner of King and Latrobe Streets towards the Victoria Market still exists. There are many fine individual specimens of trees in the gardens including a Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) from the first stage of planting in the nineteenth century. There are also significant specimens from the twentieth century including a Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) and a Chinese Parasol tree (*Firmiana simplex*). As well there are a variety of significant specimen trees including elms, oaks, Moreton bay figs, Italian cypresses, Canary Island pines and River Red Gums. The elms in particular are of increasing international significance as Dutch Elm Disease has killed most of these species in the northern hemisphere

The Flagstaff Gardens has been the less respectable component in the city's collection of public parks. In the 1930s it was observed that if the Fitzroy Gardens was the city's drawing room then Flagstaff Gardens was its kitchen. Earlier in the century it was also perceived to be the most notorious of the public parks as a site for illegal activities. This informality and diversity of public behaviour has distinguished it from other city gardens and also is an important part of its character today. The bowling club, playground and tennis courts contribute to its continuing recreational and informal character. To an extent its character has also been defined by its position on the west side of the city close to the Victoria Market, working class residential areas, industry and Yarra wharves.

#### SOURCE: CONSERVATION STUDY

Known as Burial Hill until 1840, the 7 hectare (17 acres) Flagstaff Gardens was stripped of all its vegetation and top soil, and parts were quarried and later used as a tip. In the early 1860's when work on the Fitzroy Gardens was well under way, residents of West Melbourne petitioned the president of the Board of Lands, Charles Duffy to proclaim the reserve for recreation. Duffy agreed to the residents' request and the government's plans to subdivide Flagstaff Hill were abandoned.

Clement Hodgkinson, Assistant Commissioner for Crown Lands and Survey prepared plans and by April 1862 a program of improvements had begun under his supervision. Hodgkinson was responsible for overseeing the development of all government administered parkland, which included the Fitzroy Gardens, Treasury Gardens, Alma Park and many others.

The gardens were permanently reserved on 13th June 1873 and remained in the care of the Lands Department until 1883 when they were jointly managed with the City through the Committee of Management of Metropolitan Parks and Gardens. In 1917 the City assumed sole responsibility for management.

In 1878 the Melbourne Bowling Club gained approval to use a one acre site fronting Dudley Street. By the early 1880's the gardens landscape featured a flourishing canopy of gums and pines, and weeping willows which lined the drain in the south-east corner.

Around the turn of the century, many over mature trees were removed and flower beds formed in the lawns. A children's playground was opened in 1918, the first in Melbourne's park system. In 1921 the timber cottage in the south-east corner was demolished and in the following year the present brick residence was constructed at the northern end. In 1924 the tennis courts were opened, 1948 a wading pool installed (removed 1963), 1965 the bowling greens were extended amid much controversy, 1966 the crib wall along King Street completed and in July 1978, the Stanley Gibbons Rose Garden was planted.

While the Flagstaff Gardens have experienced a number of changes over the years, it still retains part of its 1865 path layout, elm lined paths and mature trees, flower beds and important structures and monuments. The gardens played an important part in the development of Melbourne and history of Victoria.

#### **Extent of Registration**

## NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 2041 in the category described as a Archaeological/Heritage place:

Flagstaff Gardens, King Street, Melbourne, Melbourne City Council.

### EXTENT:

1. All of the land shown L1 on Diagram 2041 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the areas shown as:

A1: Bowling Green

A2: Tennis Court

A3: The Hilltop

on Diagram 2041 held by the Executive Director.

3. All the structures shown as

B1: Bowling Club and Shelter Sheds

B2: Tennis Pavillion

B3: Caretakers Cottage

B4: Court Favourite (Sculpture)

B5: Sundial

B6: Separation Monument and Flagstaff

B7: Pioneers Memorial & 'Another View' installation

B8: Bluestone Retaining Wall and Steps

B9: Outdoor Stage

on Diagram 2041 held by the Executive Director.

4. All the trees and palms, including avenues, rows and individuals growing in the Flagstaff Gardens including the following species:

*Cedrus deodara*

*Cupressus sempervirens*

*Corymbia citriodora*

*Corymbia maculate*

*Corynocarpus laevigatus*

*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*

*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*

*Ficus macrophylla*

*Firmania simplex*

*Ginkgo biloba*

*Phoenix canariensis*

*Pinus canariensis*

*Populus alba*

*Populus deltoides*

*Populus x canadensis 'Aurea'*

*Prunus pollardii*

*Quercus ilex*

*Quercus robur*

*Schinus areira*

*Tilia x europaea*

Ulmus x hollandica  
Ulmus procera

Dated 19 March 2004

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

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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/>*