

CATANI GARDENS



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Location

BEACONSFIELD PARADE AND JACKA BOULEVARD ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1805

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO348

VHR Registration

September 9, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 20, 1999

What is significant?

Catani Gardens comprise approximately 6 hectares of landscaped garden developed on foreshore reclaimed in the period from 1890 to c1916. The St Kilda Foreshore Trust Committee, set up in 1906 to reclaim and beautify the entire St Kilda foreshore, appointed Carlo Catani to design the Gardens as part of a larger foreshore plan extending to Point Ormond. The main landscaping and planting were completed by the late 1920s. The prime landscape feature of the Gardens is its extensive use of palms arranged in rows and grand avenues along principal axes of the Gardens, with secondary promenades of Monterey Cypress, and smaller pathways and specimen plantings (including the indigenous Coastal Tea Tree, Coastal Banksia, and She-Oak) adding interest and intimacy. Palms, lawns and paths dominate the Gardens, with horticultural displays apparently never an important feature. The planted lava rock retaining wall on the west side supports an embanked lawn, with bays of inbuilt bench seats facing the sea. Other early park furniture includes lava rock drinking fountains. Monuments in the Gardens include the Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain (1911), Captain Cook Monument (1914), and Cenotaph (1925).

How is it significant?

The Catani Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, architectural and scientific (horticultural) importance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Catani Gardens are historically important for their association with Italian born Public Works Department engineer Carlo Catani, who achieved widespread public recognition for his visionary schemes of public works including the Alexandra Gardens, Alexandra Avenue, and Lake Catani at Mount Buffalo. The Gardens also have historical significance as the major work in a foreshore development scheme which cast St Kilda as a fashionable seaside resort in the Continental manner. The European resort character of Catani's original design concept sets the Gardens apart from other foreshore schemes. The layout, planting and monuments evoke St Kilda's heyday as a resort for promenading, reflecting both Edwardian formality and the festivity of a seaside resort. The Gardens also have significance for pioneering a multi-government Trust purely for the purposes of foreshore beautification and leisure, paving the way for similar schemes, notably at Geelong's Eastern Beach Reserve.

Catani Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their outstanding collection of palms including three intact avenues of uniform sized Phoenix canariensis, and an exceptional stand of Washingtonia robusta. The Phoenix canariensis are believed to represent the greatest concentration of palms in a Victorian public garden.

Catani Gardens are of aesthetic significance for their seaside location, both reflected and enhanced through the extensive use of palms. Catani's palm landscape has since been extended, and palms have become a major theme throughout St Kilda. The combination of open lawns, pathways, vistas, specimen planting, walls, monuments and garden furniture all contribute to the aesthetic significance.

The monuments have historical and aesthetic significance. The Cenotaph, designed by GH Alsop and JC Aisbett with models by Paul Montford, memorialises those locals who served and died in World War I and expresses the trauma of those events. It is a notable example of the distinctive war memorial design deriving from British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens and distinguished by high quality craftsmanship, subtle design and setting. The Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain has aesthetic significance as a delightful folly and rare example of the Beaux-Arts style. It is the only known public piece in bronze by noted architectural designer and artist CA Irwin. The Captain Cook statue, a replica of the Sir John Tweed statue in Cook's birthplace Whitby, has historical significance as the major Victorian monument to Cook at that time.

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.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Landscape

- * The process of gardening, hedge clipping, removal of dead plants, emergency and safety works and landscaping in accordance with the original concept.
- * The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character.
- * Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard, Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373
- * Removal of plants listed as Noxious Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
- * Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, gravel paths and roadway, edging, fences and gates and gravel driveway.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.

Structures

- * Demolition, removal, repairs and alteration to modern playground equipment, barbeques and associated shelter and toilet facilities.
- * Maintenance and repairs to drinking fountains.
- * Roadwork maintenance and repairs to Pier Road.
- * Maintenance and repairs to seawall.

Construction dates	1911,
Architect/Designer	Catani, Carlo,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1997
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:

The Place: St Kilda, a Seaside Resort

From the very early years of Melbourne's settlement St Kilda has been a place of resort. It is recorded in early memoirs and painting as a delightful place for picnics. In 1846 the Royal Hotel opened on the sea front (on the Upper Esplanade) and an English Regency type seaside atmosphere was beginning to develop. By 1849 the beach was described as a favourite resort of young people. In 1858 the newly formed St Kilda Pier and Jetty Company built a commercial jetty which established a new foreshore focus for St Kilda. On each side of the foot of the pier two of Melbourne's famous nineteenth century social institutions established: Captain Kenny's Bathing Ship (mid 1850s); and Hegarty's Baths (1862).

The opening of Melbourne's first passenger railway line to St Kilda in 1857 consolidated the suburb's development as both an exclusive residential precinct, and a popular resort. By the end of the century grand mansions, hotels and substantial terraces had been constructed. Alfred Square, originally designated a customs reserve, was developed as a park reserve. However, despite Baron von Mueller's assistance with planting and landscaping the foreshore in 1861, by the end of the century the foreshore area remained largely in its natural state.

From about the 1890s to the 1920s St Kilda, popular with picnickers and bathers, developed a new attraction as an amusement area. The opening of a cheap cable-tram service to the Esplanade in 1888 is credited with unleashing droves of northern suburban excursionists upon the area. While St Kilda relinquished its title as Melbourne's most prestigious suburb to Toorak, its popularity as a seaside playground increased. People flocked to the beach and amusements such as the bandstands, dancing halls, open air theatres, and roller skating rinks. These concentrated on the Lower Esplanade, and at the eastern end of the Upper Esplanade, in the vicinity of Luna Park (1912) and the Palais Theatre. The present Palais Theatre is an early twentieth century successor of one of the many theatres established during this period, and dance halls such as the Palais de Danse. More ephemeral foreshore venues were flung up by the beach theatre troupes, the most famous of which were the "English Pierrots". The superb pavilion refreshment rooms on St Kilda Pier (1904) are another legacy of this period. Although St Moritz, bandstands, kiosks, the indoor and outdoor sea baths have recently been demolished,

it is St Kilda's surviving early twentieth century buildings which remain as its best-known emblems.

The early twentieth century was St Kilda's heyday, a period of exuberant and festive foreshore development. It was in this era, prior to the introduction of electronic entertainment in the form of radio and cinema - when "promenading" and street-life were the chief public entertainment - that the Catani Gardens were conceived and developed. Thereafter, the palm trees which characterised Catani's landscape scheme became one of St Kilda's most powerful images.

History of Place:

Public Improvements: the St Kilda Foreshore Committee, Reclamation and the Catani Gardens

The disembarkation of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York at St Kilda Pier upon their arrival in Melbourne for the opening of Federal Parliament in 1901, drew attention to the need to improve the image of Victoria's gateway for dignitaries. One consequence of this was that in 1905 the St Kilda Yacht Club replaced its club shed with a new two-storey wooden Clubhouse. It is likely that such concerns also encouraged the formation of the St Kilda Foreshore Committee.

In 1906 a deputation from the St Kilda Council approached the Minister for Lands, the Hon. John Murray, to discuss the suggestion that the whole of the St Kilda foreshore, from Fraser Street in St Kilda to Head Street in Elwood, should be placed under a joint Trust, the members of which should be representatives of the Board of Land and Works and the St Kilda Council. The Governor-in-Council appointed the St Kilda Foreshore Trust Committee in June of that year. The object of the St Kilda Foreshore Committee was the reclamation and beautification of the foreshore.

Reclamation of a small part of foreshore, between the pier and Kenny's baths (near the present Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron premises), had been commenced by the St Kilda Yacht Club in 1890. This area, subsequently part of the Catani Gardens but then known as Pier Lawns, was the site of the Club's first wooden Club shed in 1895. In 1899 the retaining wall to this area was rebuilt in the present bluestone piers (taken from the 1857 embankment on the Lower Esplanade). The initial work of the Foreshore Committee was to continue the construction of the bluestone wall to enable reclamation of the whole area towards Cowderoy Street to be used for a public recreation reserve. This was completed soon after 1911, when the Kenny Baths were demolished. Forty thousand loads of fill were used to reclaim this 16 acres (6.5 hectares) of sand hillocks and foreshore.

Catani Gardens: Design Concepts

The formation of the Foreshore Committee reflected a desire by Council to provide a civic framework and urban order to St Kilda's development, and reflected a perception that the foreshore was of national rather than local importance. The fundamental concept of Catani's plan for the St Kilda foreshore was to establish a European resort character.

An early proposal (1909) for this area provides an illuminating contrast to the eventual layout. Whilst the small 'Pier Lawns' area between the pier and yacht club was very similar to the present layout, the major part of the improvements would consist of two major spaces, one a large "Proposed Recreation Ground" and the other "Lawns". Essentially the path layout tracked the boundaries of these spaces, with other spaces simply infills between these features. Planting appeared to consist of trees for public shelter and adornment, arrayed along the boundaries of the two major spaces (except for one part of the sea frontage which was to be left open), or planted in stands in the intervening areas. There were no avenues or specimen plantings.

This concept would seem to have much in common with the public recreation grounds at contemporary bayside resorts such as Mornington, Sorrento, Queenscliffe and Portarlington. Large ovals and open spaces, with liberal plantings of trees such as Monterey Cypress for shelter and ornament, were prominent features of these seaside reserves. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century trips "down the bay", in the popular Bay Paddle Steamers (such as the Ozone, Hygiea, and Weeroona), were exceedingly popular for the annual picnics of industry, company, church, school, or even town groups. These reserves were designed to accommodate the hordes of excursionists who arrived on the bay steamers, or by train.

Within a few years however a very different plan was devised for the gardens. The essential elements of the design, attributed by the Foreshore Committee to Carlo Catani, were described in St Kilda By the Sea, 1913:-

"Generally, the plan adopted will follow that of the National Park at Naples, Italy, with broad avenues, and plenty

of shade trees, ample seating accommodation, paddling pools and shell sheds for the little ones, gymnasiums for the adults, up-to-date playgrounds for different classes of sport, and a long promenade for the summer girl to display her figure and dainty garments.”

Thus, while provision would still be made for picnickers and families by way of open spaces, shade trees, and recreational facilities, the new design would also have a larger vision:- the potential for the gardens to make a major and formal contribution to the beauty, and image, of the City of St Kilda. St Kilda would leave behind its parochial horizon, and be formally cast as a cosmopolitan and fashionable seaside resort, in the Continental manner. The gardens would become part of an integrated plan for the whole St Kilda foreshore.

Naples' Villa Comunale (National Park), originally designed as a royal pleasure gardens by architect Luigi Vanvitelli in 1778, was greatly extended in the 1870s by reclaiming a 100 metre wide belt of foreshore. The Catani Gardens would appear to have been modelled on this layout even to the extent of the mildly curvilinear shape of its seawall and reclaimed area, and certainly with regard to the semi-circular “bastions” which appear both at Naples and the Catani Gardens. Other similarities include the Villa Comunale's promenade along the sea-wall, and, parallel, the major axis of planting, which also uses palms as a dominant feature, together with a large amount of massed umbrageous planting, and elegant fountains and statues.

Contemporary foreshore developments in Cannes in France were also considered in the development of the St Kilda foreshore plan, as were recent developments in Nice. The use of palm avenues, and grassy lawns, may be attributable to such influences. The path layout of the Capodimonte gardens in Naples garden strongly resembles that employed for the Catani Gardens and St Kilda foreshore.

The original layout of the gardens was focused upon the site of the present rotunda (originally the Captain Cook Monument), which was the central point from which paths radiated. The main north-south axis was planted with an avenue of Canary Island Date Palms, which were also planted on two other pathways. On the beach side, the spokes were cut by a second pathway, planted with an avenue of Monterey Cypresses, parallel and very close to the main north-south axis. Most of the pathways were short, without avenue planting, and created small lawn areas, which would have added variety and intimacy to the park, and provided opportunities to establish statuary or specimen plantings as foci. They contrasted with the grand avenues. Zones of enclosure were provided by the lava rock wall-cum-garden beds facing Pier Road and the sea. These incorporated seating, and were enhanced and protected by clipped privet and mirror plants. Visual and physical access from the gardens to the sea was provided by several openings in the wall, the major one of which was situated close to the Garden's path focal point. Otherwise, the Garden featured some large specimen plantings on open lawns, with the avenues of Canary Island and Washington palms being the dominant and defining feature.

Carlo Catani and the St Kilda Foreshore

Carlo Catani (1852-1918) was an inaugural member of the St Kilda Foreshore Committee, and after his retirement from the public service in 1917, continued on the Committee as the Government representative. He was born at Florence, Italy, and completed his training as a Civil Engineer before emigrating to Australia in 1876. He joined the Department of Lands and Survey as a draftsman before transferring to the Public Works Department in 1878. In 1892 he was naturalized, the same year as he was promoted to Chief Engineer for Roads and Bridges, Harbor Works and Reclamation. His first major project was the drainage of the Koo-Wee-Ruup swamp, which was completed successfully with the benefit of his scheme of using unemployed married men who were offered small farms on the newly drained land. A new township in the area was named after him. His work in opening up of the Mt Buffalo Plateau is also memorialised by Lake Catani, which he had created by damming Eurobin Creek. Roads to Arthur's Seat and Mt Donna Buang were among his other public works. Catani was also concerned with the widening and improvement of the Yarra River upstream from Princes Bridge. He was responsible for the formation of Alexandra Avenue and its planting with elms, oaks and poplars, and upstream river works, including the picturesque Morell (Andersons Street) bridge. The laying out and planting of the Alexandra Gardens (notable for its palm trees) was executed under his direction.

Catani designed the St Kilda foreshore works all the way to Point Ormond, and the renaming of Captain Cook Lawns as the Catani Gardens is testament to the gratitude of the Foreshore Committee for this work. WH Allan, the secretary of the Committee, recounted that Catani "a landscape genius if ever there was one, [did] the engineering work, together with the beautification. What a man! His monuments are everywhere - at Buffalo, the Alexandra Gardens, St Kilda, Donna Buang...He saw possibilities to which others were blind. It would be hard to say to what enormous extent Melbourne is indebted to this artist...Expansive lawns and beautiful palms, vistas, eminences, and graceful curves, with none of your diamonds, crescents, and grave-like beds breaking the

lawns... "

To mark their appreciation of his art services so generously given for the city's beautification and advancement, the St Kilda Council commissioned the erection of a clock tower (the Catani Memorial Clock Tower, 1932) on the Upper Esplanade, which had been part of his original concept for the area. His bust is situated at the foot of the tower designed by Scheffle in the Italian Renaissance style, and now a St Kilda landmark. Another work which bears his name is the ornamental Catani Arch Footbridge (1916) on the St Kilda foreshore near the Stoke House restaurant (originally the Pavilion Tea Rooms). This bridge was originally named the Bridge of Sighs. It is appropriately built as a reinforced concrete arch (Catani had promoted the transition to reinforced concrete for bridge construction in Victoria), and with the lava rock walls, inbuilt seats, and shrub planting identical to that of the nearby Catani and O'Donnell Gardens. It was originally linked to the upper deck of the Tea Rooms, which were also part of the same 1916 works.

The Catani Gardens were the major part of an integrated design for the whole foreshore. An early plan clearly shows a new path system, of uniform style, from the Catani Gardens to the "Tea Pavilion" along the foreshore area. The plan of improvements also takes in the grassed slope between the Upper and Lower Esplanade, and the layout of the "Edward O'Donnell Gardens" on the Acland Street side of Luna Park. With the exception of the small portion in front of the former St Kilda Sea Baths, this layout remains today.

The Edward O'Donnell Gardens (named after a former St Kilda Mayor) also features the same raised perimeter embankments, lava rock-wall edgings with inbuilt seating, and associated hedge planting (*Coprosma repens*, Mirror Bush), as were used as Catani Gardens. The impressive feature of the O'Donnell Gardens is its exclusive and concentrated use of the same combination of palm plantings (Canary Island Date Palms, Mexican Washington Palms, and Jelly Palms) which are also the main features of the Catani Gardens. Apart from the rock-wall plantings, these palm species are used exclusively at the O'Donnell Gardens, and their concentrated and apparently largely intact layout, mature and good condition, and prominent location, constitute them as a St Kilda landmark. The O'Donnell Gardens also retains its original path layout. Over the past few decades the planting of mature species of Canary Island Palms along both the Upper and Lower Esplanade has extended the foreshore design concept, and provided a strong link between the Catani and O'Donnell gardens.

The sea reclamation and building of the Catani Gardens were the Foreshore Committee's greatest work. In 1933, fifteen years after Catani's death, the Committee noted that "we still work on his scheme". The date of construction of the O'Donnell Gardens is not known, but it is virtually certain that they were designed by Catani, even if not established until after his death.

The Catani scheme for the foreshore comprised a generally open and manicured area dotted with monuments and buildings of a diverse, celebratory and festive character. The exotic palm trees of the Catani and O'Donnell Garden areas powerfully enhanced this character. This palm tree theme has been taken up by the Council and is now the foundation of beautification and foreshore improvement schemes, and is a prime feature of St Kilda's image. Extensive new rows of (mature) Canary Island Date Palms have been planted in recent years along the principal foreshore roads.

The Development, Improvements and Historical Associations of the Gardens

The improved St Kilda foreshore, of which Catani Gardens was a prominent feature, continued to be used to welcome Royal visitors, who were transported from the Royal Yachts at the Port Melbourne berths to the St Kilda Pier by small vessels. This continued until the construction of Centenary Bridge at Port Melbourne in 1934 meant that Melbourne was no longer ashamed of its Station Pier gateway.

The original Catani gardens incorporated the pre-existing 'Pierrotland', the stadium built as a consequence of the success of the hugely popular English Pierrots. The Pierrots were one of the troupes of 'Beach Theatre' performers which had traditionally operated on the St Kilda foreshore. Pierrotland was a large octagonal structure, one of Melbourne's first open air Pavilion Theatres, with a capacity of 500. It was situated on the Beaconsfield Parade boundary of the gardens. After its demolition in 1926 it was replaced by an elaborate fountain, which was later removed from its circular lawn site; only some hedge plantings now remain.

The first part of the "Captain Cook Lawns", as the Catani Gardens were originally known, to be developed was the area between the Yacht Club and the Pier. The Sali Cleve fountain was installed in this part of the Gardens as early as 1911. After construction of the Pier Road retaining wall (c.1911) reclamation of the main northern area commenced. This reclamation and the Gardens lava rock-wall was almost completed by 1916. The Captain Cook

Memorial had been unveiled in 1914. Lava rock drinking fountains and electric lighting were installed by the 1920s. The War Memorial was unveiled in 1925. The planting of the gardens occurred northwards from the Yacht Club in several stages; a 1926 photograph shows the area south of the present rotunda well established, with some new plantings north of this.

The present Arts & Crafts and Functionalist style Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron building was built in 1926, the 50th Jubilee of the Royal St Kilda Yacht Squadron. It replaced the two-storey weatherboard construction of 1905.

In 1933 the Foreshore Committee looked back on the replacement of “a rather dirty and insanitary beach” with “rockeries, flower beds, hundreds of seats, red gravel paths, palms, ti-tree, honeysuckle, she-oak and other indigenous trees from Wilson’s Promontory, sea groynes to make the beach, shelter pavilions...” The main planting of the gardens were the palm species: *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm), *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Washington Palm), and *Butia capitata* (Jelly Palm). These were planted in rows, with the Jelly Palms and Mexican Washington Palms along Beaconsfield Road on the eastern boundary, and the Canary Island Date Palms providing avenues along three main pathways. The stand of Mexican Washington palms, and the avenues of Canary Island Date palms have become horticultural landmarks in Victoria, and models for the establishment of seaside plantings elsewhere. The Canary Island Date palms are said to represent the greatest concentration of this species within any Victorian (perhaps Australian) public garden.

Other main plantings were the *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress), which were planted in an avenue next to the main axis, with other isolated specimens. Other specimen plantings included the “honeysuckle” (Coastal Banksia) and ti-tree (Coastal Tea Tree) referred to above. Pichler and Smith state that these species were planted as representatives of the indigenous vegetation found in this area, and have scientific value as a gene pool. There are also plantings of Moreton Bay Figs and Cyresses. It is not known where the “flower beds” referred to were established; they do not appear to have ever been prominent elements of the Gardens.

Monuments in the Gardens

St Kilda’s “city fathers” were especially Victorian/Edwardian in using monuments to add an elevating moral dimension to the civic experience. They used statues to identify and celebrate worthiness, notably outstanding contributors to the nation or community. There was also the opportunity for public-minded citizens of means to make their own contributions to the “improvement and beautification” of the community; these statues were sometimes more festive and eccentric.

Captain Cook Statue

The Captain Cook memorial was unveiled in 1914 by the Governor, Sir Arthur Stanley, in the presence of notables such as the Lord Mayor and Mayors of adjacent municipalities, the President of the Commonwealth Senate, the Minister of Lands, the Chief Secretary, and other Members of Parliament. It is a replica of the Sir John Tweed statue on the West Cliff at Cook’s birthplace at Whitby, England. It represents the emergent nationalism of the Federation period.

The statue was donated by St Kilda philanthropist Andrew Stenhouse who lived in Beaconsfield Parade, and contributed various other items of public equipment in the area, such as seats and life-saving equipment. After his donation of the Captain Cook statue, the whole of which cost £1500, he became a member of the Foreshore Committee.

The monument was originally situated at the crossing of the main axes of the Gardens, which were originally named the Captain Cook Gardens after this focal point. In 1988 it was shifted to its present position, as the focal point of one of the original circular pathways near the entrance to the St Kilda Pier.

The statue appears to have been envisaged as the centrepiece or first installment of a collection of statues on a nautical theme, portraying the naval heroes of the British race - Bass, Cook, Drake, Flinders and Nelson. This idea was endorsed by the Governor, who, at the unveiling of the statue, declared that Captain Cook was “the supreme type of what British captains were”, and suggested that there should be “a line of statues of England’s worthies, extending along the foreshore”. The following year an attempt was made to persuade the Matthew Flinders Memorial Committee to place the statue of Captain Flinders, RN, on the St Kilda foreshore. St Kilda Council and Foreshore Committee were perplexed by the decision to place the statue in the middle of the city, in the shadow of St Paul’s Cathedral, despite their having offered some £700 for the purpose of locating it on St Kilda’s foreshore. Perhaps this setback marked the end of the idea for an avenue of naval heroes, for no further

such statues were erected. Still, in 1933, one of the suggested venues for Captains Cook's Cottage, transported from England by Russell Grimwade, was the Catani Gardens. The State Government determined that the cottage should be erected in the Fitzroy Gardens.

In 1928 the Historical Society of Victoria marked the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Captain Cook's birth with a gathering at the memorial. Professor Ernest Scott delivered an oration in the presence of many dignitaries, in which he declared that Captain Cook was the greatest navigator the world had ever seen.

Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain

The drinking fountain was donated to the City of St Kilda by Sali Cleve, a prominent St Kilda resident, mercantile broker and public benefactor. He arrived in Australia in the 1850s as a representative of Baron Rothschild. He established Cleve Bros. with branches in London and New Zealand and owned Cleves Bond, Melbourne. As well as making a public gift of a drinking fountain he also financed the elaborate landscaping (now disappeared) of the Cleve Gardens, St Kilda, donated a cottage to the Old Colonists' Association and a bed each to the Women's and Children's Hospital.

The drinking fountain was erected in April 1911 beside the Lower Esplanade (now Jacka Boulevard). The Foreshore Committee contributed about £260 to the cost. It was unveiled on 23 May 1911 by Mr Watt, Acting Premier. It was moved a small distance to its present location after the Lower Esplanade was widened in 1968. New plumbing was installed in 1994, but the bubblers are now removed and the fountain is presently non-operational.

The fountain was designed by Charles Adams Irwin, who arrived in Melbourne in the 1880s. Irwin is recorded as being responsible for the preparation of the drawings of the pulpit and interior wood furnishings for St Paul's Cathedral and the Metropolitan Gas Company's offices. In 1888 his design was accepted for the silver wedding gift from the women of Victoria to the Prince and Princess of Wales. The gift consisted of two flagons and a loving cup in silver, decorated with Australian animals and gems and was executed by Kilpatrick & Co. He spent the years 1893-1907 in England and on his return to Melbourne became well known as an architectural designer and perspective and colour artist.

The stone components of the drinking fountain were constructed by JP O'Rourke, Adamant Monumental Works, listed in the local directories in 1909 only. The bronze work was completed by James Marriot, listed in the directories for 1908-09 as an artistic metal worker & designer. Neither companies are listed after these dates, indicating that the work was completed two years prior to installation. It is a unique composition, finely rendered, and a delightful folly.

Cenotaph (St Kilda War Memorial)

Following World War One the Public Works Committee recommended to St Kilda Council that a memorial should be erected to its fallen servicemen and women. An estimated 3000 enlisted from St Kilda and approximately 200 gave their lives. In 1921 the Council held a competition for the design of the memorial. A suitable site had also to be chosen. Councillors made their selection by ballot between sites at the Town Hall, St Kilda Junction, Alfred Square, Point Ormond and at the foot of Fitzroy Street where the Cenotaph now stands. With an allocation of £3000 an impressive monument was clearly in mind.

Unlike most local war monuments this work appears to have been funded entirely by St Kilda Council, rather than by public subscription. The St Kilda Council had been noted for its vigorous support for the Great War, to the extent of refusing the local Christian Brothers College use of the Town Hall for its annual speech night in 1917, on the grounds that the "disloyal" Dr Mannix would be in attendance. Inscriptions such as Cr Edward O'Donnell's "Manhood and true citizenship" (O'Donnell Gardens memorial), and the Cenotaph's "The path of duty be the way to glory", depict the type of moral ideals which Council celebrated and liked to promulgate in public memorials.

A total of 31 designs were submitted and Council invited the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects to nominate judges. Three prominent Melbourne architects, Messrs Godfrey, Henderson and Hudson, were nominated by the RVIA. They awarded the 1st prize of £75 to GH Alsop and the 2nd prize to JC Aisbett. Because of Alsop's lack of architectural experience Aisbett was invited to assist in the execution of his design. There is some evidence to suggest that the job was from the office of Sale and Keage, the architectural firm with whom Alsop was working. The models for all the carving and bronze work on the monument were executed by Paul R. Montford, who may

also have worked for Sale and Keage. By 1925 Paul Montford was an established sculptor in Melbourne . He was responsible for many major public commissions in both Australia and Great Britain, including various war memorials. The successful tenderers for the monument's construction were HB Corben & Sons of Clifton Hill, with a quote of £2,645.

The War Memorial was unveiled on Anzac Day 1925 by the Governor General, Lord Forster, before a sizeable crowd. In thanking Lord Forster, the Hon. W.A. Watt, Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, lauded St Kilda as "the most patriotic of all Australian Cities". Wreaths were laid and the Last Post sounded.

In 1968 the Lower Esplanade was widened. This may have been the time that the modern stone retaining wall around the rear of the podium was built. The widening consumed a portion of the Cenotaph's forecourt, and it became dangerous for ceremonies to be held there with the speeding traffic so close behind the congregation. Eventually, in 1982, it was proposed to either move the Cenotaph to Alfred Square or construct a new monument there. After much deliberation by the Cenotaph Committee, one option being to demolish the existing monument to rebuild a new one, a new memorial was commissioned in 1984. Executed by Peter Schipperheyn, the new work in Alfred Square became the focus for Anzac Day ceremonies.

Changes in the Use of the Gardens

The demise of Pierrotland (1926) signified a more widespread shift in the nature of leisure, and consequently, the role and use of the Catani Gardens. The improvements in cinema began to have a dramatic impact on the viability of open air beach vaudeville venues from around the end of the First World War; at the time Pierrotland was demolished in 1926 the combination of 'the movies', and the plush new picture theatres which were beginning to be built, spelt the end of this type of beach entertainment.

The seeds of the St Kilda foreshore's decline were evident even in the period before the Second World War. In addition to the cinema, radio and gramophones provided a new alternative to public performances of 'live' music at beach bandstands, and there was a clear trend away from enclosed bathing at St Kilda's facilities. The increasingly widespread use of the motor car after the War provided new opportunities of outdoor pursuits farther away from Melbourne. Together with the introduction of television, this administered the coup de grace to the institution of promenading at St Kilda as a popular entertainment and recreation. While some of the bathing and amusement activities of St Kilda's foreshore held on, the area's heyday - the first few decades of the twentieth century - was over.

These changes in the patterns of recreation greatly affected the Catani Gardens. St Kilda pier, with its remarkable Federation tea-rooms, remained popular, but large crowds no longer promenaded along the Catani sea-wall. And the loss of Pierrotland robbed the gardens of one of its major attractions. The beach remained popular, but this was situated on the opposite side of the Pier, away from the Gardens.

In addition to taking people away from St Kilda, the rise of the motor car contributed directly to the marginalisation of the Gardens. The increase in traffic on Beaconsfield Parade has created an uninviting barrier between the Gardens and St Kilda.

The modern traffic has also had an impact on access points to the Gardens. The major pedestrian access point from Fitzroy Street/Upper Esplanade is now the concrete footbridge across Jacka Boulevard which enters the Gardens near the foot of the pier. The pier and the beach to the south are the predominant destination of most people who use the bridge. Further, the Yacht Squadron building obstructs the main part of the Catani Garden from visitors using this access point. Few tourists or promenaders venture into the main part of the Catani Gardens. The removal of the Captain Cook monument from the focal point of the main avenue in 1988, to its present position between the new pedestrian overpass and the pier, seems to reflect the shift in the use of the Garden. The Cook statue was replaced by a bi-centennial project bandstand/rotunda.

The Gardens are now used mainly for the barbecues and the children's playground at its north end. It is still a venue for special events, such as large community bicycle rides, or outdoor theatre; other more regular attractions include children's pony rides on weekends. St Kilda is a very mixed society, and the Gardens have had some unusual informal uses, including acting as home to marginalised and homeless individuals (one of whom made it his special pleasure to keep them clean) and the Koori people, who used it and the Cleve Gardens across the road as a camp. The modern rotunda, set within the magnificent avenue of palms, has attracted a number of uses, and is popular for weddings and wedding photographs.

The present restoration of the adjacent beach may well revive the popularity of the Gardens. However, widespread use of the Gardens as originally conceived - of attractive promenades with places for quiet sitting - has not survived the social changes of the past 80 years.

Changes to the Fabric and Design of the Gardens

The increasing traffic has also had a direct impact on the actual fabric of the gardens. In the mid 1970s Beaconsfield Parade was widened, and 1.8 acres (c.0.7 hectares) was shaved off the eastern boundary of the gardens. As a result of public protest, this was much less than had originally been proposed, and mainly confined to the southern end. While the Mexican Washington Palms were saved, 35 Jelly Palms along the edge of the road were removed, mostly relocated, some elsewhere in the Catani Gardens. Two remain beside the Beaconsfield Parade at the north end of the gardens; one is considerably smaller than the other, and they may have been replanted recently from some other location. Four Canary Island Date Palms which had recently been replanted next to these palms have not survived.

The survival of the magnificent Mexican Washington palms retains the outstanding landmark quality of the gardens. However, the removal of the Jelly Palms reduces the definition of the Garden's eastern boundary, which is open to the Beaconsfield Parade's heavy traffic.

The roadworks had an immediate impact on the Cenotaph, reducing its forecourt, making it dangerous for crowds to assemble at commemoration services. As a result the Catani Gardens Cenotaph is no longer used for Anzac Day services.

In the 1950s and 70s particularly, many paths within the Gardens were grassed over to reduce maintenance costs. This was also a reflection of the changing recreational needs at that time. Most of the intricate system of small paths around the present rotunda were covered.

Other recent works within the gardens have included the concrete footbridge across Jacka Boulevard from the Upper Esplanade, which detracts somewhat from the south-eastern corner of the Gardens. On the other hand, it provides a view of the area, including the Gardens, and is necessary given the heavy modern traffic. The Foreshore Cafe was built at its foot in 1991, in a style not unsympathetic to the precinct, and in the very corner of the Garden.

Other changes include the apparent removal of some minor plantings associated with the small path system. The avenue of Monterey Cypresses is substantially, but not completely intact. The unusual raised pathway between this avenue appears to be original, as terra cotta guttering pipes are still evident along this embankment. The shrub and hedge plantings along the rock wall have been allowed to grow wild, and many are in poor condition. They contrast to the neatly clipped hedge plantings of similar species on the O'Donnell Gardens rock wall.
Associated People: Carlo Catani, designer

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The Gardens have historical importance for their association with the Italian-born Victorian Public Works Department engineer and landscaper Carlo Catani, who achieved widespread public recognition for his visionary schemes of public works, which included the Alexandra Gardens and part of the Yarra Boulevard. Catani has both a town and a lake named after him in Victoria. He is further commemorated in St Kilda by the Catani Gardens, his major achievement in St Kilda, as well as the ornamental Catani Arch footbridge on the St Kilda foreshore, and the grand Upper Esplanade Catani Clock Tower, which incorporates a bust of Catani. These are rare honours, and unique for a Victorian public servant, and engineer. They are indicative of his notable contribution to Victoria's development.

The Catani Gardens' palm avenues, path system, seats and monuments represent the significance of promenading in Victorian and Edwardian period, and the height of this activity in St Kilda, Victoria's premier seaside resort of the time.

The Gardens are significant historically for pioneering a multi-government Trust purely for the purposes of foreshore beautification and leisure, paving the way for similar schemes, notably at Geelong's Eastern Beach Reserve.

The Cenotaph has historical importance for its associations with the First World War as it memorialises those locals who served and died in the World Wars, and is expressive of the social trauma associated with these events, and St Kilda Council's particular conservatism with regard to the Great War.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

The row of mature *Washingtonia robusta* and the *Phoenix canariensis* constitute a unique palm landscape.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The Gardens remain the highest concentration of palm planting in a public garden in Victoria. They are prominently located on a busy beachside road in Melbourne's most renowned seaside suburb.

The row of tall Mexican Washington Palms comprise a Victorian horticultural landmark. They are rare in Melbourne, of exceptional quality and have reached heights of over 20 metres.

The open lawns, pathways and monuments, together with other specimen planting, the long lava rock wall, and bluestone retaining wall with bastions, and period garden furniture also contribute to the aesthetic quality of the place.

The Cenotaph is a notable example of the distinctive war memorial design deriving from British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. It is distinguished by its high quality craftsmanship, subtle design and setting. The Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain, a delightful folly and rare example of the Beaux Arts style, is the only known public piece in bronze by noted architectural designer and artist CA Irwin.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1805 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Catani Gardens, Beaconsfield Parade and Jacka Boulevard, St Kilda, Port Phillip City Council.

EXTENT:

1. All of the structures marked as follows on Diagram 1805 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Captain Cook Memorial

B2 Sali Cleve Drinking Fountain

B3 Cenotaph, including granite steps and retaining wall.

B4 Bluestone Retaining Wall
B5 Lava Rock Wall with inbuilt seats
B6-B9 Lava Rock Drinking Fountain
B10 Bicentennial Rotunda

2. All the gravel paths marked as follows on Diagram 1805 held by the Executive Director:

P1 Paths

3. All the plants and avenues of trees

marked as follows on Diagram 1805 held by the Executive Director:

T1 Phoenix canariensis avenue x65
T2 Phoenix canariensis avenue x18
T3 Phoenix canariensis avenue x14
T4 Washingtonia robusta avenue x19
T5 Cupressus macrocarpa x19
T6 Cupressus macrocarpa x6
T7 Butia capitata x4
T8 Washingtonia robusta x3
T9 Ficus macrophylla
T10 Ficus platypoda
T11 Phoenix canariensis x8

4. All of the land known as Catani Gardens being land permanently reserved as a Recreation Reserve marked L1 on Diagram 1805 held by the Executive Director.

Dated: 2 September 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 36 9 September 1999 p.2067]

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/>