

# ST KILDA BOWLING CLUB



ST KILDA BOWLING CLUB  
SOHE 2008



1 st kilda bowling club front  
across green



st kilda bowling club plan

## Location

66 FITZROY STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1913

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO366

## VHR Registration

March 15, 2001

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 3, 1999

What is significant?

The St Kilda Bowling Club (known as the Prince Alfred Bowling Club from the Royal visit of 1868 until 1882) was formed in 1865. A part of the land set aside from the remainder of Albert Park as an Alpaca Reserve in 1864, under the control of St Kilda Council, was reserved for bowling club purposes and the 150 foot green was laid and a high paling fencing erected. The green was opened with temporary club rooms on 11 November 1865 and the event commemorated by the planting of trees. The club catered for quoits, croquet and skittles in addition to lawn bowls.

A small symmetrical timber frame and weatherboard pavilion designed by architect Sydney Smith was built in 1876 facing the green but to one side. The jerkin head corrugated galvanised iron roof featured an iron ridge crest, timber fretwork decoration in the gables and a scalloped fascia. In front, a broad iron verandah with cast iron bracket supports ran between porches at either end.

A larger new timber building of 1926 featured nested half timbered gables over an entrance more central to the green, and long wings with verandahs either side. The 1876 pavilion was incorporated into the south west wing. The verandahs on both sides were later enclosed. In 1967-68 a large flat roofed brick hall, typical of the era, replaced half of the north east wing of the 1926 addition and extended towards the north east boundary. It featured a fully glazed front wall overlooking the green. In more recent years petanque became a popular additional activity at the club, and petanque pistes were introduced adjacent to Fitzroy Street and along the railway reserve boundary.

How is it significant?

The St Kilda Bowling club is of historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The St Kilda Bowling Club is of historical significance as the second oldest continuing bowling club in the State and in Australia. The club has operated continuously on this site from 1865 until the present. Though the only earlier club, the Melbourne Club at Windsor formed in October 1864, is still on its original site, its earliest buildings date from 1887. The longevity of the St Kilda club, and its adaptation to changing demands and prosperity, is manifested in the staged development of the club house. .

The 1876 pavilion of the St Kilda Bowling Club has historical significance as the earliest extant purpose built bowling club building in Victoria and Australia. The bowling green, though reduced in scale, is still on its original 1865 site. The layout of the green surrounds and surrounding paths and garden beds remains relatively unchanged from the peak period of the Club in the 1950s.

## Permit 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.

#### Exteriors of registered buildings

- \*Painting of previously painted walls and and roofing in the same colour.
- \*Treatments to stabilise and protect timber structures.
- \*Removal of existing external aerials, airconditioning, heating and water heating plant, plumbing and ducting .

#### Interiors or registered buildings

- \*Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that in the case of the 1876 building fabric, 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.
- \*Refurbishment of existing toilets and bathrooms including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \*Refurbishment of existing kitchens and bar areas.
- \*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.
- \*Installation, removal or replace of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and exit signs.

#### Non-registered buildings:

- \*Any internal works.

#### Landscape:

- \*The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character.
- \*Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.
- \*Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, asphalt and gravel paths and roadways, rock edging, fences and gates, other than in the Outdoor Chapel.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.
- \*Periodic renewal of the turf and subsurface of the bowling green.
- \*The erection and removal of temporary structures necessary for the staging of sports events..

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|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Construction dates      | 1865,             |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place, |
| Hermes Number           | 5493              |
| Property Number         |                   |

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## History

#### Contextual History:

Lawn bowls is one of Australia's most significant international sports with about 42% of the world's bowlers living in Australia and, of these, about a sixth are based in Victoria. Bowls is a significant sport for maintaining physical activity in later years. Indeed, the Kyneton club owed its origins in 1876 to a group of cricketers and footballers

who considered themselves too old for these sports and turned to a less physically demanding game.

The game of bowls had been played for centuries in Britain and was first played in Australia in Tasmania in 1845. These games were originally played at hotels which were also the first sites for bowls in Victoria when in 1860, four Melbourne hotels laid down greens. Victoria's first club, now Australia's oldest, was the Melbourne Bowling Club established in Windsor in 1864. Several other groups quickly followed and formed clubs at Fitzroy, St Kilda and Prahran in 1865. Clubs were also formed in country Victoria with Ballarat established in 1864, Learmonth in 1868 and a number of others in the goldfields during the 1870s.

The sport in the early days was beset by a division between clubs playing to the Scottish rules and those playing to the English rules and local variations such as the size of the greens. John Campbell introduced the Scottish rules, set out in Glasgow in 1849, when he started the Melbourne Bowling Club. These are now the basis for Australian bowls. The metropolitan clubs met in 1867 at the Bull and Mouth Hotel to agree to a standardised set of rules which would make inter-club competition easier. Further standardisation was needed when inter-colonial competition was initiated in 1880. The Victorian Bowling Association was also formed in that year and this body became the peak organisation for men's bowls in Victoria. The first instance of women playing bowls in Victoria is said to have been at Stawell in 1881, but their first club, the South Melbourne Cricket Club Ladies Bowling Club was not formed until 1899. Bowls is popular amongst women and, despite sharing facilities, women have their own peak organisation, although there are moves to integrate the separate associations. (Haig-Muir, Mewett & Hay 1999, pp. 35-37)

#### History of Place:

The St Kilda Bowling Club was formed at a meeting on 7 June 1865 and a provisional committee was appointed to find a suitable site for the club. E.T. Bradshaw, the town clerk of St Kilda who was also fortuitously the honorary treasurer and honorary secretary of the Bowling Club, wrote to the Board of Lands and Survey requesting him to permanently reserve for the Club a portion of the Alpaca Reserve situated near the railway station with a frontage of 205 feet and a depth equal to the railway reserve.

The reserve had been temporarily placed under the control of the Borough Council of St Kilda and as neither the council nor the Board of Land and Works objected to this proposal, the land was allotted in accordance with the original request. Fifty ratepayers signed a petition objecting to part of the park being appropriated for a bowling green, but predictably, given the composition of the club and the council, the objection was ignored.

The green was laid in June 1865 and a high paling fencing was erected. The green was opened on 11 November 1865 and the event commemorated by the planting of trees. The club rooms at this stage were temporary structures. The club catered for quoits, croquet and skittles in addition to lawn bowls. The club was officially opened by Prince Alfred in January 1868.

The architect Sydney Smith called for tenders on 4 September 1876 to build a pavilion at the St Kilda Bowling Club (known as the Prince Alfred Bowling Club from the royal visit of 1868 until 1882). The pavilion was a timber construction with corrugated iron, jerkin head roof and verandah. The 1876 pavilion survives at the south-western end of the present building complex.

Major additions were made to the pavilion in 1926. The designer is not clear. Mr G.W. Clausen was reported to have drawn the plans. The Annual Report of 1926-27 notes "the advice and services rendered by...Honorary Architect, S. W. Smith, Esq., during the year." The addition was a gabled timber structure with a corrugated iron roof.

In 1967-68 approximately one third of the 1926 additions were demolished and replaced with a brick hall with toilets and kitchen at the rear, a bar at one end and a wall of glass overlooking the green. The building permit application identified Rex McDermott as the "Superintending Architect or Engineer" without specifying which one. The Annual Report of 1968-69 names H. Wood as the club's honorary architect but his name does not appear on the drawings. The cost of the addition was \$24,000. (Neale & Sands 1999)

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

#### Criterion A

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

The St Kilda Bowling Club is of historical significance as the second oldest continuing bowling club in the State and in Australia. The club has operated continuously on this site from 1865 until the present. Though the only earlier club, the Melbourne Club at Windsor formed in October 1864, is still on its original site, its earliest buildings date from 1887. The longevity of the St Kilda club, and its adaptation to changing demands and prosperity, is manifested in the staged development of the club house

#### Criterion B

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

#### 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.

#### 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**

1. Part of the Club Building B1 and the Green G1 as shown on Diagram 1913 held by the Executive Director
2. The land as shown on Diagram 1913 held by the 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/>*