

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated 08/04/20

HERITAGE COUNCIL VICTORIA **CAROUSEL**



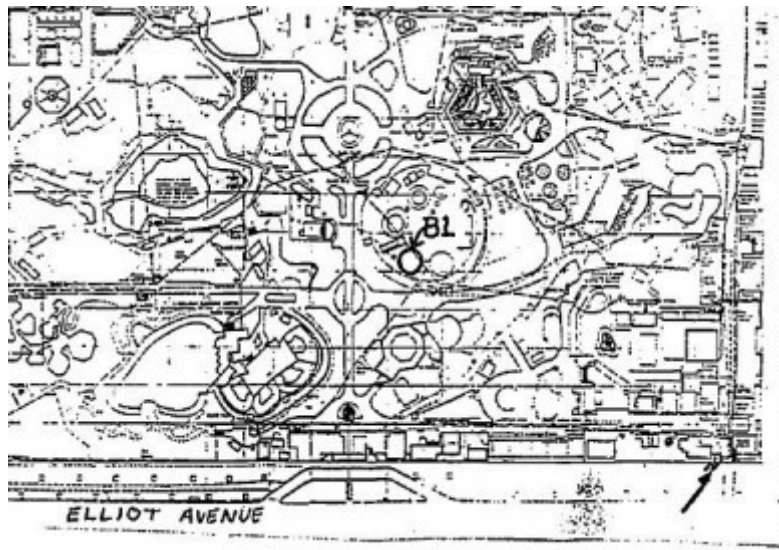
CAROUSEL SOHE 2008



1 carousel H1064 march 1997



Sylvia Briggs Riding the Zoo
Carousel_ Image supplied by Sylvia's
Grandaughter, Feauina Sullivan



h01064 plan h1064

Location

ROYAL MELBOURNE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, ELLIOTT AVENUE PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1064

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO363

VHR Registration

February 15, 1996

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 18, 2000

What is significant?

The Carousel was imported to Australia from London in 1886 by John and Margaret Briggs. It was purchased for touring around country Victoria. The structure was originally demountable for visits to fairs, a long English tradition which climaxed in the early twentieth century when sometimes up to 100 Carousels and other whirling rides dominated market towns and fairgrounds. Some of the Victorian localities are commemorated in the painted scenes decorating the outer rounding board, and the inner panels, for example 'Swan Hill show 1897'. The manufacturer of the Carousel is believed to have been Tidman of England and the horses probably were supplied by Lines although some may be by Orton and Spooner. The Carousel retains its original steam power mechanism although it is now driven by electric motor. The Carousel consists of three rows of horses which are modelled in a rather rigid and formal posture. There are also two replica fibreglass elephants, which make an appropriate addition to the current zoo setting of the Carousel. The clock-wise rotation of the horses was a typically English feature of the Carousel. The Carousel has been a permanent attraction at the zoo since 1952.

How is it significant?

The Carousel is of historical, social and technological significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Carousel is historically significant as an extremely rare and substantially intact example of a nineteenth century Carousel. Fewer than two hundred Carousels are known to survive world-wide, the majority of which are in America. The Carousel, through its close association with the Briggs and Freeman families, and by paintings which adorn its structure, demonstrates the nature of travelling fairs and fairground entertainment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Carousel is a rare survivor of the way of life of travelling fairs. The craftsmanship and styling of the carved horses is representative of nineteenth century British production, which was generally more realistic than the flamboyant American examples, such as those at the Luna Park Carousel.

The Carousel is socially significant for its associations with the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens. The ride forms a representative type of entertainment to be found at the Zoo for much of the later part of the twentieth century.

The Carousel is technologically significant for retaining its original steam powered mechanism and steam

generating equipment. The Tidman centre engine is a very rare example of its type. This nineteenth century application of steam power to a fairground attraction was a technological innovation.

Construction dates	1886,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	MERRY-GO-ROUND,
Hermes Number	4738
Property Number	

History

History of Place:

(from National Trust file G45 on Trust's website: <http://nattrust.australia-online.com.au>)

The carousel, although installed in 1952, now demonstrates the emphasis on leisure from this phase and was complementary to the elephant walk. The carousel/merry-go-round is English and was constructed before 1886, when it arrived in the colony. It features stilted horses, like rocking horses, which were typically English as was the clock-wise motion of the horses. The structure was originally demountable for visits to fairs, another long English tradition, which climaxed in the early twentieth century when sometimes up to 100 carousels and other whirling rides dominating market towns and fairgrounds. There is also a long tradition of Gipsy family involvement in fairs. Mr and Mrs Briggs imported the carousel originally, and toured it around country Victoria. Some of the localities are commemorated in the painted scenes decorating the outer rounding board, and the inner panels e.g. 'Swan Hill show 1897'. The carousel is still operated by 'Briggs and Freeman entertainments and is not owned by Zoo. Other carousels/merry-go-rounds which survive in Australia are as follows:

Victoria: Luna Park (USA, 1913); Wittingslow Amusements have two demountable merry-go-rounds, one from the 1880s and the other 1947.

New South Wales: Kale's (England, c.1880); there are also two demountable merry-go-rounds still operating in New South Wales.

South Australia: Baxter's Carousel (c.1905)

Australian Capital Weninger's Steam Riding Gallery (1913, local origin but with Territory: German horses)

Western Australia: Perth Zoo (c.1880)

The carousel at Melbourne Zoo is well maintained and the repaint the horses and other parts are repainted periodically in garish but suitably ornate colours. The carousel is an early example of its kind, relates to the leisure tradition at the zoo and forms a notable example of folk/naive art

Associated People: Tidman

Briggs & Freeman

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 1064.

Carousel, Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens, Royal Park, Parkville, City of Melbourne.

(To the extent of

1. All of the structure marked B1 on Plan No. 605871/2, signed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.)

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G6 15 February 1996 p.373]

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 data owner.

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