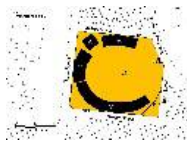


Victorian Heritage Database Report

VICTORIA PARK



Location:
LULIE STREET ABBOTSFORD, YARRA CITY

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H0075

Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO352

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

Victoria Park is a former Australian Football League (AFL) ground acquired for use as a municipal reserve by Collingwood Council in 1882. The Collingwood Football Club played at Victoria Park from 1892 to 1999 and continued to use the ground as its base until its move to Olympic Park in 2005. The Collingwood Cricket Club made the ground its home from 1906 to 1996.

When the area of land along the Yarra River known as Dight's Paddock was sold in 1878 to Edwin Trenerry for a housing subdivision, Collingwood Council negotiated the acquisition of 10¼ acres of the land for a recreation reserve in return for spending £250 per acre towards street-making. The small triangular park at the corner of Bath and Turner Streets was originally part of the reserve. A covenant was placed on the land prohibiting the sale of the reserve to private individuals. Local cricket and football clubs used the reserve from the early 1880s.

Collingwood Football Club was formed in 1892 and the Council undertook works at Victoria Park to meet the standards necessary for the Victorian Football Association (VFA). Collingwood was admitted as a member of the VFA and played its first game at Victoria Park against Carlton on 7 May 1892. The major VFA clubs broke away and formed the Victorian Football League (VFL) in 1897 with the two leagues running their own competitions although the VFL (renamed the AFL in 1990) became the pre-eminent league. Collingwood was a founding member of the VFL. Its first game in the new league was against St Kilda at Victoria Park on 8 May 1897.

Architect, councillor and supporter William Pitt designed the first of the grandstands built at the ground in 1892. This was later demolished, as have other earlier pavilions and stands including a 1900 Ladies Pavilion and a 1909 Members Stand designed by architect Thomas Watts.

The Ladies Pavilion made way for the Ryder Stand in 1929, built with funds raised by the Collingwood Council including money from the Government Relief Fund which provided employment for local sustenance ("susso") workers. Designed by architects Peck & Kemter, the steel-framed concrete stand with cantilevered roof was named after cricketer Jack Ryder. The stand was shared with the Collingwood Cricket Club. The stand housed Collingwood Football Club facilities including administrative, training and club rooms and the players' race to the ground. A red brick wall with patterned brick panels is at the rear of the stand facing Abbott Street.

The facilities at Victoria Park expanded throughout the 20th century reflecting changes and developments in the Collingwood Football Club. In 1956 the club was granted a forty year ground improvements lease, thus becoming one of the few VFL clubs with control over development of its ground. A number of major works followed as a result of the club's greater control.

In 1940 Collingwood became the first league team to form a social club and the first to obtain a liquor licence for its social club room, which opened in April 1941. The social club rooms were originally under the Ryder Stand. The Social Club Stand (S A Coventry

Pavilion), built in 1959 to a design by architects Robert McIntyre & Associates, has been substantially altered and extended. A glassed-in viewing area incorporated into the S A Coventry Pavilion in 1989, was named the Bob Rose Stand.

Other major works at the ground took place during the 1960s including a new stand for the outer (general admission) area, the R. T. Rush Stand, designed by McIntyre and McIntyre, completed in 1966 and named after Bob Rush, one of Collingwood's longest serving players and officials. The outer area in the south and east of the ground had comprised a large grassed embankment and concrete terraces. The terraces were demolished and new ones included in the new structure. The concrete cantilevered stand with steel girders provided cover for up to 10,000 spectators and had kiosks installed in the concourse. The Sherrin Stand, named after the well-known Collingwood family and the largest capacity members' stand at the ground, was built in 1969 to a design by Peter McIntyre & Associates. The steel-framed concrete and brick cantilevered stand accommodated the visiting team, as well as umpires and police, in the undercroft. The stand was extended by about a third in 1977-78 at its southern end providing 1000 additional seats and players' and umpires' rooms. Private boxes were added in the 1980s. The west elevation to Lulie Street cantilevers over the brick rear of the stand and has a pronounced arc form overhanging the street with black and white stripe painted metal cladding.

Other important elements at the ground are the oval, grassed embankment and walls, the main scoreboard and time clock, distinctive signage, entrances and exits, ticket boxes and turnstiles. The grassed embankment in the outer area extends from the east end of the Rush Stand to near the east end of the Ryder Stand. It dates back to 1892 although its original extent was reduced when the Rush Stand was built in 1966. The highest part of the embankment at the Trenerry Crescent end is traditionally associated with Collingwood supporters and known as "One Eye Hill". The concrete wall along Turner and Bath Streets was built in the 1920s. The brick wall along Abbott Street with patterned brick panelling appears to be contemporary with the 1929 Ryder Stand. The Lulie Street brick wall was built in 1957. There are a number of entrances, exits, turnstiles and ticket boxes, including the main entrance to the outer reserve at Lulie and Turner Streets, 1957; and members' exit with turnstile along Lulie Street installed in the 1960s.

Although supporters and initially the Collingwood Football Club itself resisted pressure from the AFL to move from Victoria Park, the club eventually agreed to play major games at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from 1993. Collingwood played its last game at the ground against the Brisbane Lions in August 1999. Victoria Park was renamed Jock McHale Stadium and continued as Collingwood's training, social club and administrative base until the club moved to Olympic Park in 2005.

How is it significant?

Victoria Park is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Victoria Park has historical and social significance for its associations over a period of 112 years with the Collingwood Football Club, one of the best known sporting clubs in Victoria. The Collingwood Football Club has been one of the most successful and popular league football clubs in the history of football in Australia. It was one of the eight founding members of the VFL in 1897 and has been influential in the development of the football code and in the evolution of the distinctive culture of football following in Victoria. In addition it inspired a play, The Club, by David Williamson in 1977 and the subsequent film which used Victoria Park as a backdrop. Collingwood's use of Victoria Park is one of the longest associations at the VFL/AFL level and, apart from Carlton at Princes Park, the longest period of time a league team has played at its original home ground. The ground and many of the elements such as the stands and the embankment have great value to Collingwood Football Club supporters who continue to regard it as the spiritual home of the club.

Victoria Park has historical significance for its associations with notable figures in Victorian sporting history including Bob Rose, Syd and Gordon Coventry, Jock McHale, Bob Rush, Lou Richards, the Sherrin family, and cricketers Keith Stackpole and Jack Ryder. Some of these figures have been commemorated in the naming of stands. The club also had a strong association with businessman and Collingwood supporter John Wren who provided financial help to many players particularly through the Depression.

Victoria Park has historical significance for its associations with the Depression era. The Ryder Stand remains as a tangible link with this period in Victoria's history which had an enormous impact on people's lives, in particular in Collingwood, one of the hardest hit of Melbourne's suburbs during the Depression. The Collingwood Football Club, league premiers between 1927 and 1930, played a major role in the lives of many men, women and children, providing a source of pride and pleasure during a time of great hardship.

Victoria Park has historical and social significance for its associations with the Collingwood and Abbotsford area. The Collingwood Football Club is rich in the tradition of local working class identification and Victoria Park's location in the industrial and residential heart of the Collingwood area symbolises the centrality of the football club to the lives of generations of Collingwood supporters. In a wider sense it shows how important league football clubs were as social and cultural cohesive forces in local communities.

The stands and walls at Victoria Park are of architectural significance as representative examples of facilities at a suburban league ground. The scale, extent and strong visual presence of the Sherrin Stand from both inside and outside the ground and the sweep of the Rush Stand concrete terraces are particularly evocative features integral to an understanding of the use of Victoria Park as a major league ground. The fortress-like appearance of the walls demonstrates the need to control access and maintain security at league grounds.

Heritage Study / Consultant	
Construction Date Range	1892 -

Architect / Designer	McIntyre & McIntyre, McIntyre, Robert & Associates, McIntyre, Robert & Associates, Peck & Kemter
Municipality	YARRA CITY
Other names	
Hermes number	12655
Property number	

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to [Planning Schemes Online](#)