

Building:	Wattle Park	Significance:	A
Address:	1012 Riversdale Road, Burwood	Melway May Ref:	60 K3
Building Type:	Various	Construction Date:	1928 onwards
Architect:	Chalet, Curator's Cottage: A G Monsborough	Builder:	Unknown



Intactness:

G[x] F[] P[]

Condition:

G[x] F[] P[]

Existing Heritage Listings:

Victorian Heritage Register [x]
 Register of the National Estate [x]
 National Trust [x]

Recommended Heritage Listings:

Victorian Heritage Register [x]
 Register of the National Estate [x]
 Heritage Overlay Controls [x]

The following information enlarges upon that contained in Andrew Ward's *City of Box Hill Heritage and Conservation Study*. That study contained individual datasheets for the chalet, passenger shelters, curator's cottage, former stables / curator's office and fountains. Brief individual citations are given for these elements. Citations for other elements are contained in the *Wattle Park Heritage Conservation Plan* by Allom Lovell & Associates with John Patrick Pty Ltd (1993), from which information contained in this datasheet is generally derived. This datasheet does not discuss the landscape elements and plantings in the park.

The following buildings associated with Wattle Park are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register:

- Tram Waiting Shelter, corner Riversdale and Warrigal Roads
- Tram Waiting Shelter and Rockery, Riversdale Road
- Playground Shelter
- Tram Body Picnic Shelter
- Band Rostrum
- Chalet
- Toilet Block
- Memorial Clocktower
- Tennis Court Shelters
- Disused Toilet Block
- Curator's Office [Former Tram Shelter]
- Former Homestead Outbuilding [Stables]
- Curator's Cottage

History

Wattle Park was officially opened to the public on 31 March 1917. The land had been acquired by the Hawthorn Tramways Trust (later the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board) and developed as a recreation facility in conjunction with the opening of the electric tram route along Riversdale Road, first to Warrigal Road, then to Elgar Road. The Park remained under the ownership of the M&MTB until 1983, then by its successors, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (1983-89) and the Public Transport Corporation (1989-1991). In 1991, ownership and management was transferred to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, later known as Melbourne Water, who managed parks as Melbourne Parks and Waterways. The Park is now managed by Parks Victoria.

The land, which was part of Crown Portions 41, 42 and 43, underwent agricultural development from the 1860s. The entry drive off Riversdale Road recalls the original drive to the homestead of Charles Goyder, whose had established a property known as Udimore Lodge, near the site of the present curator's cottage.

Chalet

The Chalet was constructed in 1928 to a design by the M&MTB architect, A G Monsbrough. It was built in order to provide meals and entertainment for the increasing number of visitors to the park. The Wattle Park Chalet was officially opened on 30 July 1928 to coincide with the extension of the tramline along Riversdale to Elgar Road, the north east corner of the park. Since then it has operated continuously as a cafe, dance hall and reception venue for parties, weddings and special functions.

Monsbrough also designed the Board's building associated with the expansion of the tramway system during the 1920s and 1930s and including the M&MTB's head office at 616 Little Collins Street and a stone cottage in a similar style to the Chalet at Erith Lane, Kalorama. He died in office in 1938.

Curator's Cottage

Built in 1932, this cottage includes a bluestone wall and some of the footings of the earlier [Frederick Goyder] homestead building, which was on or near the site. These, and other materials, were recycled when the building was constructed.

Curator's Office

Designed by Leonard J Flannagan as a tram passenger waiting shelter for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust in 1912, the shelter was transferred to Wattle Park between 1927 and 1932. This building is thought to be one of the first, if not the first, electric tram shelters in Melbourne.

Former Stables

The stable building is a remnant of the former [Goyder] farm. Ernie Downs has reported that in the 1930s it had a ramp for use by the horses and that the steps and doors were added later when it became used for human occupation.

Fountains

The "Lily Pond" appears to be a part of the original master plan for Wattle Park. It was created from the old dam near the former homestead, when reticulated water was laid on and the park sewerred.

The pond contains two fountains. The smaller of the two was originally located in the north garden of the chalet: both fountains were present in the pond by 1935.

Description

Wattle Park is a large metropolitan park covering 55 hectares which, at the time of its establishment, was located on the rural outskirts of Melbourne. It contains areas of natural bushland, isolated exotic species and plantings, sporting facilities, including an oval, golf course and tennis courts, two creeks including Hercules Creek, a lily pond and fountains. The principal buildings and several of the structures on the site are predominantly constructed from random rubble basalt or brick, with slate or terracotta tiled or shingled roofs. The subsidiary buildings are generally constructed from timber with corrugated galvanised steel roofs. The buildings erected by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in the 1920s, including the chalet (1928), curator's cottage (1932) and tram passenger shelters (1928) form a distinctive and picturesque group, even though they are sited in various areas of the Park which have no direct visual connection.

Chalet

The chalet is a large double storey building with a Y-shaped plan. It is constructed from painted brickwork with exposed clinker dressings and stone quoins. It has a gabled slate roof and random rubble basalt tapered chimneys. The windows are steel casements. The original external doors were ledged and braced, with vertical boarding and glazed highlights with decorative wrought iron grilles. The principal entrance is located within a low-walled forecourt. The original entrance porch led to an entrance hall off which are located the cloak rooms. Beyond the hall is the main reception area which leads through to an enclosed loggia and terrace and the garden beyond. On either side of the reception area are two diagonally placed wings, one containing the servery, kitchen, kiosk and office and the other containing a two bedroom flat with a living room, kitchen, bathroom and laundry.

Curator's Cottage

The curator's cottage is a small single storey brick cottage, L-shaped in plan and with a gabled slate roof at the front and a galvanised corrugated galvanised steel skillion at the rear. It was originally designed with exposed clinker brick dressings. The windows are steel casements. The facade has a central arched opening flanked by timber casement windows.

Curator's Office

The curator's office, a former tram shelter, is a small timber structure adjacent to the north elevation of the former stables. It has a Dutch gable roof supported by decorative timber brackets. The original Rubberoid roof cladding has been replaced with galvanised corrugated galvanised steel. Windows are pivot sashes.

Former Stables

The former stables building is a small single storey brick structure with a bluestone plinth. It has a hipped corrugated galvanised iron roof with raked eaves, and casement windows with bluestone sills.

Fountains

the larger of the two fountains has three tiers, with six grotesque fish at the base, three birds supporting the upper tier, and is unpainted. The upper tier ornament is missing. This fountain is identical to one in the front garden of 64 Churchill Street, Surrey Hills. The smaller fountain is simpler, single tier with a round bowl.

Passenger Shelters

The passenger shelters are small rectangular structures of random basalt rubble with arched side windows and hipped roofs clad in terracotta shingles.

Significance

Wattle Park is of outstanding historical, aesthetic and social significance.

Wattle Park is the only remaining example in Australia of a comprehensively developed pleasure park established, owned and operated by a transport authority with the dual aim of promoting its transport services and providing a recreation facility for the public.

The present nature of the grounds and the structures strongly reflects the stewardship of the park by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board between 1920 and 1983. It is significant that the layout of the park and its buildings and structures still strongly reflect their 1920s form.

The name and theme of the park reflect the strong nationalistic spirit of the early decades of the twentieth century, reaching a peak during World War One. The celebration of Wattle Day and the on-going planting of wattle trees is evidence of an increasing awareness of indigenous Australian flora and fauna.

The buildings and structure within Wattle Park have been specifically designed in a consistent style in keeping with the nature of the park. Together, they provide an interesting example of the combination of Arts and Crafts Style buildings with the low-key landscape design style of the 1920s.

The Wattle Park chalet is the only remaining example of venues of its type dating from the 1920s and still operational in its original form. It is a possibly unique example of a building constructed by a public utility from discarded and recycled materials.

Together with Royal Park and Studley Park, Wattle Park is one of the three major inner Melbourne parks which retains a natural bush setting.

Chalet

The Wattle Park Chalet is probably a unique example of a new building constructed by a public utility from second-hand materials; bricks from demolished cable tram engine house chimneys, stonework from disused dry stone walls beyond Melbourne's western suburbs, and roofing slates from the Yarra Bend Asylum. It was built by the M&MTB's own staff. The chalet forms the principal architectural element in a group of similar picturesque buildings and structures responsible for the present distinctive character of Wattle Park. The chalet has considerable social value and has assumed the status of an icon as a place where celebrations were frequently held.

Curator's Cottage

The cottage is one of the early park buildings. Architecturally, it is typical of Inter-War houses designed in the picturesque English cottage style, many examples of which can be found in the suburban area surrounding Wattle Park. As an individual example, it is undistinguished, however, within the context of the park it is important for its stylistic relationship to the chalet.

Curator's Office

The curator's office was one of the first, probably the first, electric tram shelter in Melbourne. While it has been removed from its original site with the consequent loss of some of that significance, its significance as a tramways shelter has also been enhanced through its siting in a Tramways park.

Stables

The stables building is a remnant of nineteenth century development in the area. While architecturally it is of slight importance with little evidence of stable use being visible, it continues as a link to the earlier rural development of the site. However, within the wider context of other nineteenth century stables buildings within Victoria, it is an insignificant example.

Passenger Shelters

The waiting shelters marks early entrances to the park. They are two of the original structures erected on the site by the M&MTB. While more substantial than the general range of waiting shelters, they are demonstrative of a particular building type which is becoming increasingly rare.

Fountains

The lily pond and fountains form an historically important and picturesque landscape element which is integral to the park.

Source

Andrew C Ward & Associates. *City of Box Hill Heritage and Conservation Study*. 1990.

Additional Information

Allom Lovell & Associates with John Patrick Pty Ltd. *Wattle Park Heritage Conservation Plan*. 1993.

Heritage Victoria Citation, No. H 904.

