

# PLAYGROUNDS IN METROPOLITAN PARKS



Waterways and Parks Division

March 1986

FINAL DRAFT

PLAYGROUNDS IN METROPOLITAN PARKS

WATERWAYS AND PARKS DIVISION  
METROPOLITAN PARKS

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March 1986

INDEX		PAGE NUMBER
1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	OBJECTIVES	3
3	EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS	4
4	PROPOSALS	6
	A Yarra Valley	6
	B Dandenong Valley	9
	C Maribyrnong Valley	10
	D Point Cook	12
	E Werribee	13
	F Summary of Proposals	14
5	APPENDICES	
	1 References	17
	2 Existing Playgrounds	18
	3 Examples of other playgrounds	38

FINAL DRAFT

PLAYGROUNDS IN THE METROPOLITAN PARKS

1 INTRODUCTION

This report is concerned with the findings of an internal review of the playgrounds in the Metropolitan Parks. This review, which has taken place over 1985, has involved extensive discussions with both head office and field staff of Metropolitan Parks as well as external groups including the Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria and the Department of Sport and Recreation.

The purpose of this report is to provide a framework and guidelines for improvements to the existing playgrounds and the development of new play opportunities throughout all Parks.

The report deals with both informal play opportunities and the formalised equipment based playgrounds. Both are considered important, however, more detail has been given to the playgrounds due to the design and cost implications.

The report is concerned with play opportunities for people of all ages with particular attention given to opportunities for young children.

Against a growing public awareness and concern for childrens play, particularly in regard to safety aspects over the last few years, it was decided in early 1985 to carry out a review of the existing play opportunities within the Parks.

Play is an integral part of a child's development. Children are particularly attracted to the 'countryside' character of the Parks by their desire to have contact with nature and the potential to have diverse adventurous play experiences.

The user groups are approximately defined as follows:

Toddlers	-	0 - 3 years
Juniors	-	4 - 9 years
Seniors	-	10 - 18 years
Adults	-	18 years plus

Broad guide estimates of costs and priority in terms of implementation timing have been indicated against each proposal.

Priority	1 - 1 year timing
	2 - 3 years
	3 - 5 years

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The general objective is to provide a diverse range of playgrounds and play spaces within the Parks for the enjoyment of people of all ages.

Specific Objectives are:

- 1 To cater for individual, group and family play.
- 2 To cater for all age groups (toddlers, juniors, senior, adults).
- 3 To cater where appropriate for children and adults having differing abilities.
- 4 To segregate facilities for varying age groups and users.
- 5 To provide as priority within most picnic areas small playgrounds for the juniors who are the main user group of structured play equipment.
- 6 To provide one major playground catering for all age groups in selected main Parks.
- 7 To encourage the motor, social, cognitive and creative development of children by provision of play facilities.
- 8 To provide special play opportunities, particularly informal bush play, which are generally not available in other parks.
- 9 To provide safe and well maintained playgrounds consistent with Australian Playground Safety Guidelines.
- 10 To provide where appropriate theme playgrounds based on the historical or natural features of the area.
- 11 In bush parkland areas, to utilise natural materials and existing natural features where appropriate to complement the surrounding landscape. To provide unstructured layouts that extend play opportunities beyond provided equipment.
- 12 In formal parkland areas, to provide more high quality durable, active and colourful play equipment in more structured layouts and landscaped settings appropriate to the area.

### 3 EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS

Development of the Parks over the last five years has concentrated on the provision of basic facilities such as access roads, parking areas, major picnic facilities, multi-purpose trails, and extensive land improvements and restoration of nature conservation areas.

The provision of playground facilities has concentrated on mainly standard off-the-shelf kit equipment to cater for the main user group, the juniors, and has been located in the main picnic areas for ease of supervision by adults.

Two innovative custom-designed theme playgrounds have recently been developed namely the maritime theme at the beach recreation area, Point Cook, and the gold mine theme at Westerfolds, both catering mainly for juniors.

Other recent play/recreation facilities include bike hire in Jells, Westerfolds and Brimbank and a fun and fitness track at Westerfolds.

A wide range of informal undefined play and recreation opportunities are available in the open-grassed play areas, the walking trail systems, the 'bushed' areas and wetlands for all age groups. These opportunities include: team games, bike riding, walking, kite flying, exploring, role play etc.

Most older equipment has been upgraded and/or modified to meet current safety standards. A comprehensive maintenance schedule has been recently developed to ensure that all playgrounds are maintained to a safe, healthy and neat standard.

A summary of the main general comments received regarding the existing playgrounds and play spaces are as follows:

- 1 The Parks should provide special play opportunities, particularly informal bush-play, which are generally not available in other parks throughout Melbourne. More emphasis to be given to natural play opportunities.
- 2 There should be more opportunity for creative play not just physical play.
- 3 Priority to be given in new picnic areas to play facilities for juniors, who are the main users of structured playground equipment.
- 4 Play facilities and opportunities should be provided for the other age groups (toddlers, seniors and adults) particularly seniors.
- 5 Family play should be encouraged with a range of equipment.
- 6 Expand some playgrounds to provide segregated areas for different age groups.
- 7 Develop playgrounds within the context of recreation facilities within whole Park and the region. The scope and extent to reflect Park capacity.

- 8 Provide more stimulating play settings to most existing playgrounds and generally provide more diversity. Playgrounds to harmonise with park setting.
- 9 Improve microclimate conditions of playgrounds in regard to shade, shelter and drainage.
- 10 Consideration be given to some equipment in the playgrounds that can be also be used disabled children as well as abled children. Provide better disabled access to some playgrounds.
- 11 There may be conflict of interests between play opportunities and nature conservation in bush areas.
- 12 More use to be made of natural features and materials.
- 13 Consideration to be given to concessions/sponsorships.
- 14 Develop a heirarchy of play areas throughout the Parks and within each park sub area.

4 PROPOSALSA YARRA VALLEY (Page 19)

There are a number of existing junior playgrounds in the picnic areas of Banksia, Birrarrung and Westerfolds. Proposals for Yarra Valley include: improvements to most existing junior playgrounds, improvement of disabled access, some senior and adult equipment and encouragement of family play; minor new play areas at Yarra Flats and major new playgrounds at Westerfolds and Birrarrung.

1 Yarra Flats

This area provides a minor picnic area at the north end, extensive nature conservation and bushland areas, grazing areas and linear trails. There is no junior playground in picnic area. No senior facilities are recommended as this area has only a minor picnic area. The existing bush terrain and trails provide play opportunity for seniors and families.

(a) New Playground, Picnic Area (Page 19)

A small junior playground is proposed for the picnic area at the north access near Banksia Street.

Facilities to include: long slide following existing slope; crawl tunnels; use of existing grass slopes for rolling etc; cluster of log horses/cows; low profile cubby house; fallen tree logs; all facilities to be generally of natural materials, low profile and built into existing land form, with access paths suitable for the disabled. Consideration in design to be given to possible flooding.

Cost \$30,000, Priority 2

2 Banksia Park

This is a major picnic area and is very popular. There are four existing junior playgrounds in the picnic areas. Their number and distribution is considered adequate for the capacity of the park. There is little senior equipment other than the large rocker see-saw. Proposals include improvements to some of the existing equipment and extensions to encourage family play. The existing open areas, river vegetation and trail system provide play opportunities for seniors in this park.

(a) Existing playground, south area (Page 20)

No improvements other than general maintenance is recommended to this log junior playground. Present access is adequate by existing pathways.

(b) Existing playground, adjacent Pond (Page 20)

It is recommended that the existing kit boat-like equipment be adopted as a theme for this small junior playground. New facilities to include - revamp existing structures in a boat theme; a small jetty from boat to waters edge; cubby house; modification of spring equipment to fish and or boat shapes. small sand pit for toddlers. This pond is presently popular with children and families for informal play for wildlife and water contact. Improvement of access is not considered necessary due to distance from existing paths and present flat grades of surrounding grassed areas.

Cost \$20,000, Priority 3

(c) Existing playground, north arm east side (Page 21)

This junior standard kit fort playground is rather limited and some additional equipment such as a slide, balancing logs, fallen tree log, access path, scrambling nets would provide more play opportunity.

Cost \$10,000, Priority 1

(d) Existing playground, north arm west side (Page 21)

This junior log and rock playground should similarly be modified and extended to provide more play opportunities. Facilities recommended include: removal of rocker horses which are out of character; lowering of height or relocation of some climbing logs which are too close to rocks; a crawl pipe tunnel; a slide following slope; log cubby house and lookout tower; small sand pit enclosed with logs for toddlers.

Cost \$20,000, Priority 2

3 Birrarrung

This small park provides mainly a picnic area with one small junior playground, a circular trail system and small wetlands areas. The Trails, open spaces and bush-areas provide play opportunity for Seniors and adults.

(a) Existing playground, picnic area (Page 22)

This junior playground is of standard kit equipment. It is considered very limited and the play setting is flat and not at all stimulating for children. This playground should be removed or relocated elsewhere.

Not costed, Priority 2

(b) New playground, picnic area (Page 19)

A "Great Australian Playground" theme has been suggested incorporating the "flat Central Australian like terrain" within the main picnic area enclosed by the existing trail system.

Facilities to include sub-themes of different parts of Australia such as mounds for the Dividing Range; large boulders for Ayers rock and the Olgas; brick maze for Melbourne City etc. The existing equipment could be relocated within this overall playground. This playground could provide a unique educational play experience.

The existing circular trail system is very popular with cyclists. Perhaps consideration could be given to a clay trail off the main trail in a meandering alignment over some minor mounds to provide an informal BMX trail. This could be incorporated to the above proposed playground.

Cost \$100,000, Priority 3

4 Westerfolds Park

Westerfolds is a major park offering extensive picnic areas, bushland areas; visitor centre, and trail system. There are two junior playgrounds in the park. The trail system, open spaces and bush-areas and fun and fitness trail provide opportunities for Seniors and adults. Bike hire is available and canoe hire is under consideration.



(a) Existing playground, Ridge picnic area (Page 23)

This recently constructed playground provides mainly junior facilities based on a gold mining theme with a train. It is very popular and the natural log materials are most appropriate to the rural setting. No improvements are required at this stage.

(b) Existing playground, south-gate picnic area (Page 24)

The existing tree logs are well used by juniors and seniors for informal play as well as a meeting area for possum prowls.

Improvements recommended include additional small horizontal tree logs for sitting space (for possum prowls); mulching of surface particularly around high logs; scrambling net; possible log bridge to connect old trees.

Particular care should be taken not to cut into the large trees due to their apparent historical significance.

Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.

(c) New playground, Middle creek area (Page 19)

A new major playground catering for juniors, seniors and families is recommended near Middle creek to serve both the Middle creek and the southern half of the Ridge picnic areas. The theme to be challenge.

Facilities to include long slides following existing slopes; rope or log bridge(s) across Middle creek; flying fox; swing ropes; possible relocation of the fun and fitness trail equipment to a fitness activity centre; steps; scrambling nets; fallen tree logs; crawl tunnels; additional tree and shrub planting for bush-play; cubbies, lookout tower.

Materials should be natural where possible with no plywood or bright colours.

Cost \$75,000, Priority 3.

(d) Other facilities in Westerfolds

Consideration should be given to relocating the fun and fitness equipment into one area as an activity centre as above. The trail is apparently not well used. If relocated in one area, the equipment can also be used as a general playground. It would cater for most ages.

Consideration to be given to a horse and cart rides and or pony hire.

B DANDENONG VALLEY (Page 25)

There are a number of junior playgrounds in Jells and one at Nortons located in the picnic areas. Proposals include general improvements to the play setting of some of these playgrounds; a new playground in Jells; some senior equipment to existing playgrounds to encourage family play and improved access for the disabled.

Consideration should be given in the future to play facilities in the planning of at Koomba area and the Shepherds Road depot.

1 Jells Park

Jells is a major park providing extensive picnic areas, visitor centre, wildlife lake, nature conservation areas, open space, playing fields and trail system. All main picnic areas have a junior playground. Their number and distribution is considered adequate for the capacity of the park. There is little senior equipment. The trail system, the open spaces, lake edge and bush areas are considered to provide opportunity for informal play particularly for the seniors as well as families.

Proposals include some senior equipment, improvement to some play-settings, a new senior playground at Jells south.

Consideration to be given to paddle boat or canoe hire in Jells Lake.

(a) Existing playground, Pines picnic area (Page 26)

This is a popular junior playground of standard kit type construction. It is recommended that a spring rocker see-saw be added adjacent area for family play and seniors and an access path for disabled.

Cost \$5,000, Priority 1

(b) Existing playground, Stringybark picnic area (Page 26)

This playground is popular with both juniors and some seniors. Equipment is of kit-type construction in an attractive mounded setting. An additional spring rocker see-saw would encourage more family play. Some additional tree planting should be considered for shade a sand pit for toddlers, and improved access path for disabled.

Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.

(c) Existing playgrounds, Jells south picnic area (Page 27)

There are two small separate kit-type play facilities in the picnic areas catering for juniors. Improvements to include low mounds, crawl tunnels, tree planting, tree logs, and tree house cubby house to provide a more stimulating play area.

Cost \$30,000, Priority 2.

(d) New playground, Jells south oval area (Page 25)

A fun and fitness activity centre is recommended to be located between the two ovals near the existing trail. This facility could be used by all ages and families as a fitness centre and general playground particularly by large groups using the adjacent ovals.

Cost \$30,000, Priority 3.

2 Nortons Park

Nortons is a minor picnic area with walking trail connecting into Shepherds Bush area. There is one small junior playground in the picnic area. There are no senior facilities, however, as the park is small it is perhaps not necessary to cater for all ages to any great extent.

(a) Existing playground, picnic area (Page 28)

This small junior kit-type playground is limited in its play opportunities. The present site is poorly drained.

It is recommended that the equipment be relocated to higher ground towards the carpark but built into the western side of the hill overlooking the picnic area. Additional new facilities to include a lookout tower, scrambling net, crawl tunnel and slide. Some fun and fitness equipment could be added nearby to cater for senior adults and family play.

Cost \$20,000, Priority 2.

(b) New playground, Shepherd Road depot area (Page 25)

It is recommended that the future use of the ex Shepherds Road Treatment Plant be investigated. One possible use could be a adventure type playground with opportunity for children to construct things. This could be done under a co-operation/shared basis with Waverley Council.

Not costed, Priority 3

C MARIBYRNONG VALLEY (Page 29)

Existing playgrounds are provided in the picnic areas of Brimbank Park at this stage of the development of the Park. Horseshoe Bend area is not considered an appropriate area for structured playgrounds in the Childrens Farm area.

1 Brimbank Park

Brimbank park has a number of junior playgrounds in the picnic areas. The extensive trail system, open spaces, and vegetation along the river offer play opportunities particularly for seniors and adults. There is no senior play equipment in the park.

Bike hire is operating and canoe hire is proposed.

Proposals include general improvements to the play settings of most existing playgrounds; the provision of some senior equipment, a new small junior playground in the Spine area, and improved access for the disabled.

(a) Existing playground, picnic area, south of Carpark A (Page 30)

This playground consists of junior kit-type equipment in a flat landscape and is rather limited in scope. It is proposed to provide a low mound with bridge, crawl tunnel and slide to provide a more stimulating play setting. Other facilities to include scrambling nets, and a senior spring rocker see-saw, and access path.

Cost \$25,000, Priority 1.

(b) Existing playground, picnic area corner Park Drives A and B (Page 30)

It is recommended that Fort Bennet be relocated from its present potentially hazardous site adjacent Park Drive B to the playground (a) above. This fort is also in need of repairs.

Not costed, Priority 1.

(c) New playground, Spine picnic area, north of Carpark A (Page 29)

The Spine is a new small picnic area being developed along the old ridge track north of Carpark A and is some distance from other play facilities and separated by roads.

It is recommended that a small junior play area be provided central to this area. Proposed facilities to include low lookout tower, slide and cubby house enclosed by a stone sitting/climbing wall to integrate with existing new stone walls. Some facilities could be provided that can also be used by disabled children due to proximity to visitor centre and parking.

Cost \$30,000, Priority 2.

(d) Existing playground, river flats below Spine (Page 32)

This is a small junior playground consisting of spring rocker equipment. As the equipment is brightly coloured and visible for some distance along the river flats where development is minimal it is suggested that they be repainted in more muted colours.

Cost \$300, Priority 1.

(e) Existing playgrounds, picnic area below Carpark B (Page 31)

There are two small separated areas of junior kit-type equipment in this area. The structures are brightly coloured and visible from some distance along the river trail. It is recommended that this equipment be repainted in muted colours.

The large playing field provides opportunity for ball games by seniors.

Cost \$500, Priority 1.

A water theme play has been suggested in this area and would be an attractive and popular feature, however, the considerable capital outlay and maintenance commitment requires much further investigation and consideration. An excellent example of such a facility is attached in Appendix 3.

(f) Existing playground, picnic area, Carpark C (Page 32)

This is a small junior playground of kit-type equipment set in a flat landscape. It is recommended to improve the play setting by construction of mound with bridge and crawl tunnel, climbing logs, cubby-house or mound, tree planting and a flying fox on sloping ground adjacent the playground for the Seniors.

Cost \$25,000, Priority 2.

(g) New playground Green Gully/Taylors Creek area (Page 29)

The rugged terrain and bushy vegetation in the old quarry provide a good opportunity for informal bush-play. The existing minor tracks in the area could be utilised for a challenge-type trail for older children and families with slides, steps and ladders on slopes, swinging ropes, log or rope bridges, crawl tunnels, short flying foxes and scrambling nets. Extent of facilities is dependent on the style of the development of this area of the park.

Cost \$75,000, Priority 3.

D POINT COOK (Page 33)

A playground is provided in the Beach recreation area. The other areas of the park such as the Homestead precinct, Spectacle Lakes and RAAF Lake are sensitive areas and formalised play areas are not appropriate.

1 Beach Recreation Area

This area provides a range of play opportunities including a formal playground and ball games in the picnic area, swimming and general water play at the beach for all age groups and families.

(a) Existing playground, picnic area (Page 34)

The existing playground which is developed on a marine theme is well used by juniors and some younger seniors.

The addition of a large spring-rocker see-saw adjacent to the playground would provide an opportunity for seniors and families. More seating is necessary. Additional shade and windbreak planting and brush wind screens are recommended.

Cost \$10,000, Priority 1

(b) Proposed Jetty, beach (Page 33)

The proposed jetty would broaden the play opportunity and provide swimming, fishing and access to deeper water free of seaweed.

Not costed, Priority 3.

(c) New playground, picnic area (Page 33)

The provision of a small fun and fitness activity centre has been suggested for the picnic area. This should be located near but segregated from the existing junior playground to provide both fitness type equipment and general play equipment for seniors and adults.

It is recommended that one fun and fitness centre be built in the Parks to test its popularity before proceeding with several. The beach picnic area or Jell south would be ideal locations.

Cost \$25,000, Priority 3.

E WERRIBEE PARK (Page 35)

Werribee Park provides a range of experiences including the Historic Mansion, and Gardens, Zoo, Golf Course, Safari trails, bike riding, Friendship Farm, Model train rides, picnic facilities, walking and equestrian activities.

1 Picnic area

(a) Existing playground, picnic area (Pages 36, 37)

There is some existing pine-log play equipment in the main picnic area. The equipment and the setting is very limited in play experience opportunities. The adjoining bush area provides some opportunity for informal play.

Consideration should be given to the removal or relocation of this equipment and the design of a junior playground in this picnic area. The new equipment should be of natural tree log materials and be low profile to sit into landscape.

It is considered that no senior equipment is necessary at this stage as there is adequate other attractions.

Design should proceed once this area is confirmed to remain as a picnic area.

Cost \$50,000, Priority 2.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

## PLAYGROUNDS IN METROPOLITAN PARKS

A      YARRA VALLEY      (Page 19)1      Yarra Flats

- (a) New playground, picnic area - small junior playground proposed. (Page 19). Cost \$30,000, Priority 2.

2      Banksia

- (a) Existing playground, south arm - no improvements to junior facilities. (Page 20)
- (b) Existing playground, adjacent pond - revamp small junior playground in boat theme. (Page 20). Cost \$20,000, Priority 3.
- (c) Existing playground, north arm east side - add additional junior and senior equipment. (Page 21). Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.
- (d) Existing playground, north arm west side - add additional junior facilities. (Page 21). Cost \$20,000, Priority 2.

3      Birrarrung

- (a) Existing playground, picnic area - demolish and re-use equipment elsewhere. (Page 22). Not costed, Priority 2.
- (b) New playground, picnic area - develop junior/senior playground in Australian theme. (Page 19). Cost \$100,000, Priority 3.

4      Westerfolds

- (a) Existing playground, Ridge picnic area - no improvements to junior playground. (Page 23)
- (b) Existing playground, south-gate picnic area - add further logs etc for junior playground and meeting area for possum prowl. (Page 24). Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.
- (c) New playground, Middle creek picnic area - new junior/senior playground proposed in a challenge theme. (Page 19). Cost \$75,000. Priority 3.
- (d) Other facilities suggested relocation of fun and fitness trail to an activity centre in playground (c) above; trail; horse and cart rides;

B DANENONG VALLEY (Page 25)

1 Jells

- (a) Existing playground, Pines picnic area - add minor senior equipment. (Page 26). Cost \$5,000, Priority 1.
- (b) Existing playground, Stringybark picnic area - tree planting and additional senior equipment. (Page 26). Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.
- (c) Existing playground, Jells south picnic area - general improvements to setting plus additional junior equipment. (Page 27). Cost \$30,000, Priority 2.
- (d) New playground, Jells south picnic area - proposed fun and fitness activity centre. (Page 25). Cost \$30,000, Priority 3.
- (e) Other facilities - canoe hire to Lake.

2 Nortons

- (a) Existing playground, picnic area - relocate and revamp junior playground with possible fun and fitness equipment. (Page 28). Cost \$20,000, Priority 2.
- (b) New playground, Shepherds Road Depot area - develop in part as an adventure playground. (Page 25). Not costed, Priority 3.

C MARIBYRNONG VALLEY (Page 29)

1 Brimbank

- (a) Existing playground, picnic area, south of Carpark A - improve play setting and revamp junior playground. (Page 30). Cost \$25,000, Priority 1.
- (b) Existing playground, picnic area corner of Park Drive A and B - relocate Fort Bennet to playground above. (Page 30). Not costed, Priority 1.
- (c) New playground, Spine picnic area north of Carpark A - proposed small junior playground. (Page 29). Cost \$30,000, Priority 2.
- (d) Existing playground, rivers flats below Spine - repaint muted colours. (Page 32). Cost \$300, Priority 1.
- (e) Existing playgrounds picnic area below Carpark B - repaint muted colours. (Page 31). Cost \$500, Priority 1.
- (f) Existing playground, picnic area, Carpark C - improve play setting and add additional, junior and senior equipment. (Page 32). Cost \$25,000, Priority 2.
- (g) New playground Green Gully/Taylor's Creek area - propose junior/senior playground on challenge theme. (Page 29). Cost \$75,000 Priority 3.
- (h) Other facilities - canoe hire.



D      POINT COOK      (Page 33)1      Beach Recreation Area

- (a) Existing playground, picnic area - improve setting, some senior equipment. (Page 34). Cost \$10,000, Priority 1.
- (b) Proposed Jetty, beach - develop. (Page 33). Not costed, Priority 3.
- (c) New playground, picnic area - propose small fun and fitness activity centre for seniors and adults. (Page 33). Cost \$25,000, Priority 2.

E      WERRIBEE PARK      (Page 35)1      Picnic Area (Pages 36, 37)

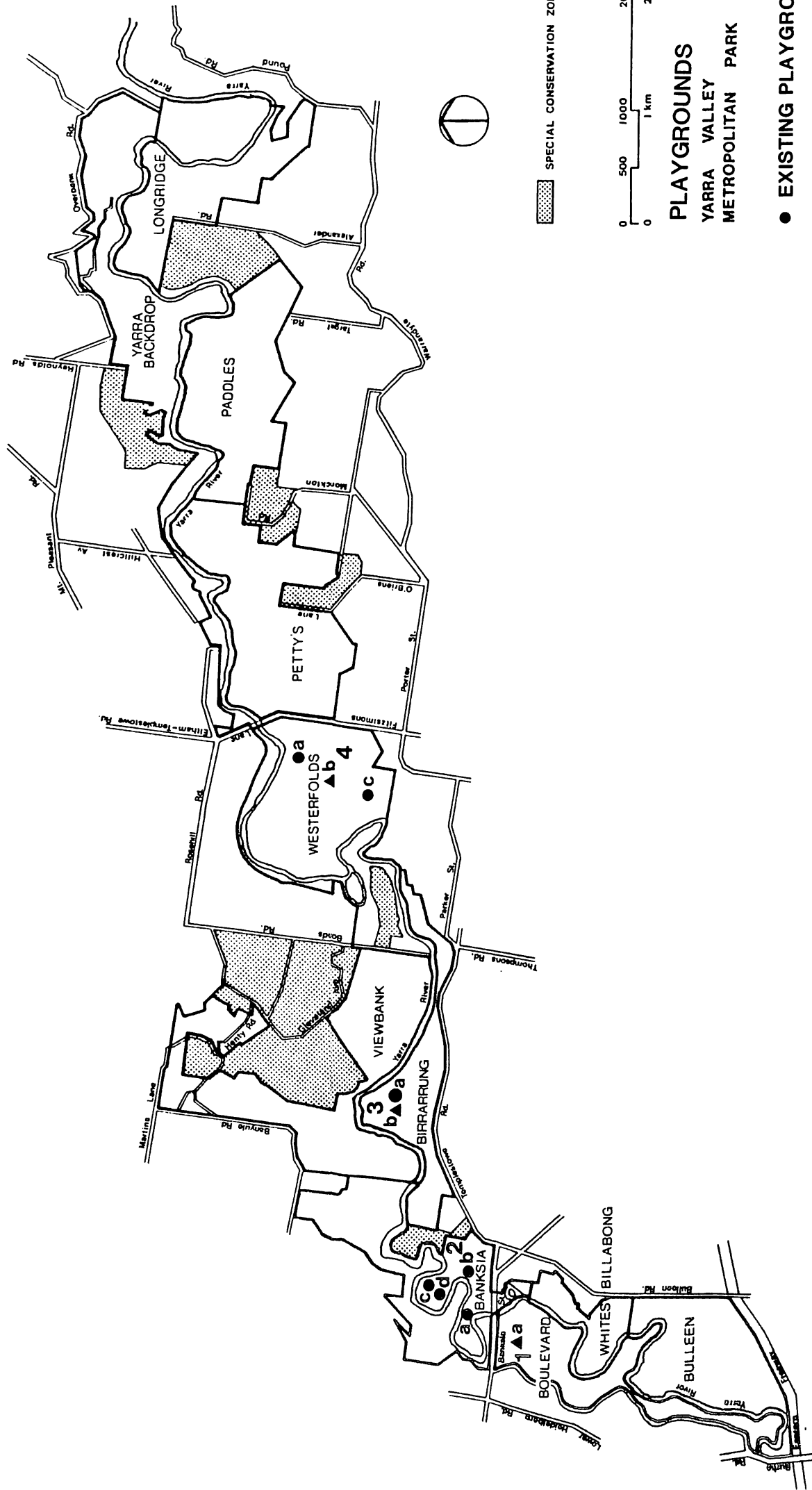
- (a) Existing playground, picnic area - remove existing equipment and possible reuse into a new junior playground. Cost \$50,000, Priority 2.

APPENDIX 1REFERENCES

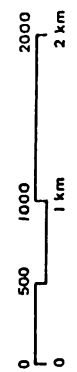
The following recently published references are recommended for guidelines, ideas and general information for design of playgrounds.

- (a) "Play Without Pain", Jill Root, 1983  
Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia
- (b) "Providing for Childrens Play in the Countryside"  
T. Cochrane Associates, 1984  
Countryside Commission for Scotland and the Forestry Commission
- (c) "Playgrounds - An Australian Planning and Construction of Victoria",  
1984  
The Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria
- (d) Standard Association of Australia Codes.
  - AS 2155 - 1980: "The Setting of a Playground and the Installation and Maintenance of Equipment"
  - AS 1924, Part 1: "Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use. Part 1 - General Requirements".
  - AS 1924, Part 2: "Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use. Part 2 - Design and Construction Safety Aspects".
  - AS 2555 - 1982: "Supervised Adventure Playgrounds. Guide to Establishment and Administration".

APPENDIX 1 - EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS



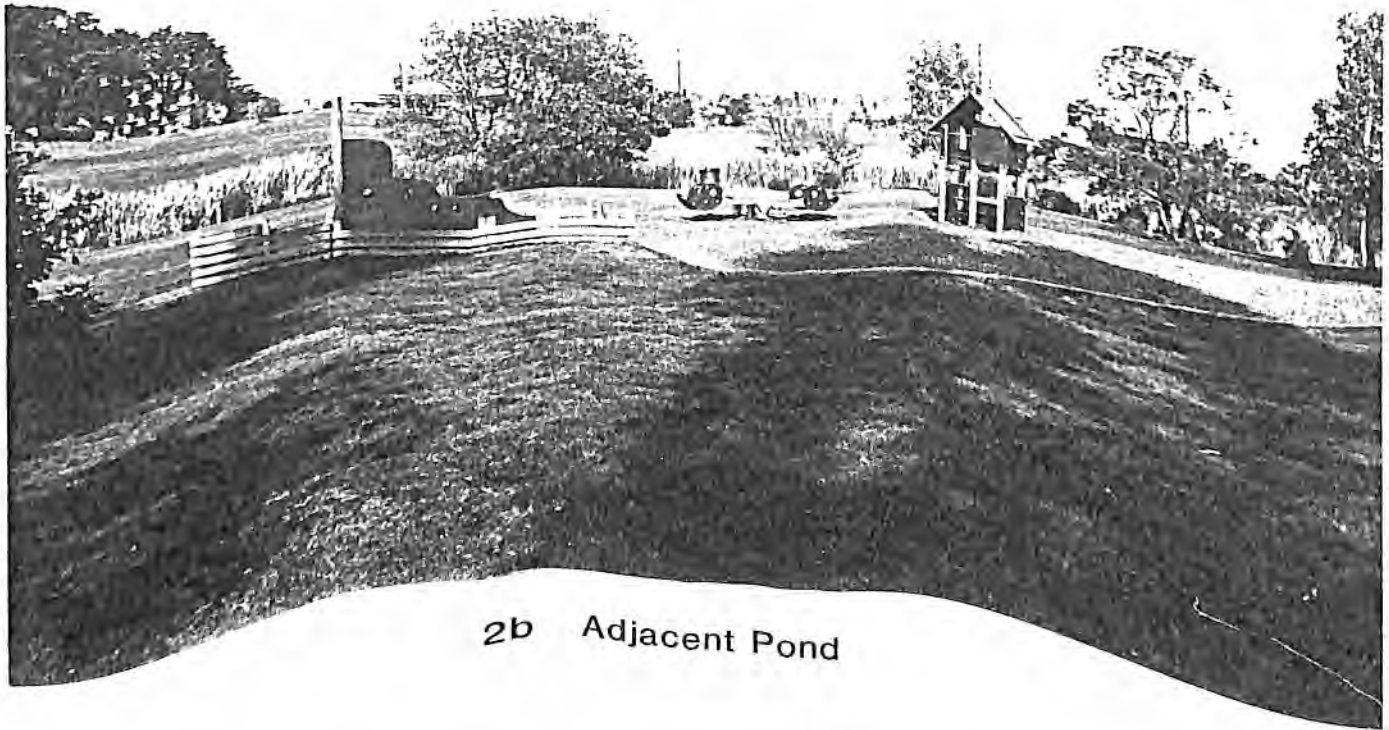
 SPECIAL CONSERVATION ZONE



**PLAYGROUNDS**  
**YARRA VALLEY**  
**METROPOLITAN PARK**

- EXISTING PLAYGROUND
- ▲ NEW PLAYGROUND

BANKSIA



2b Adjacent Pond

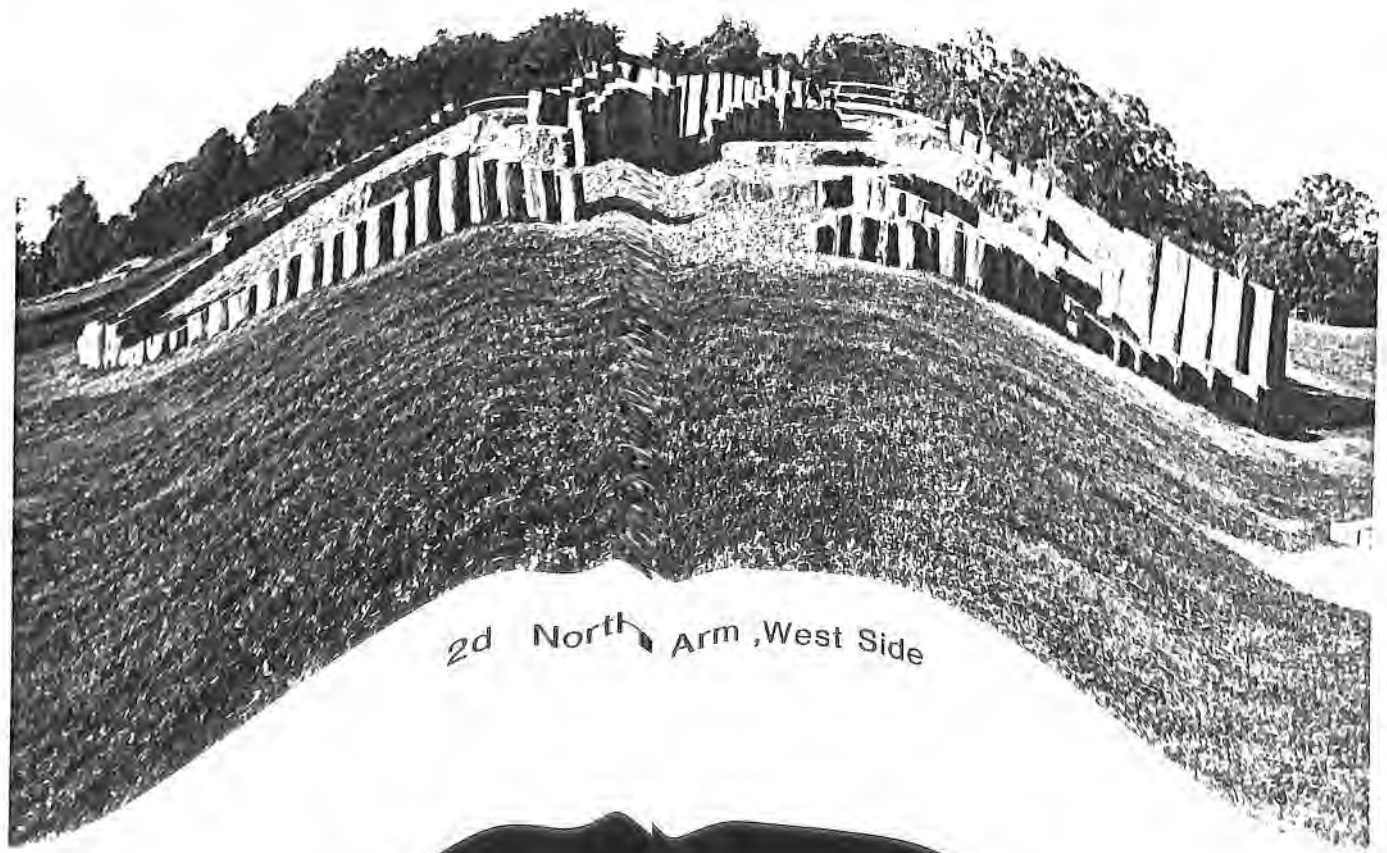


2a South Arm

BANKSIA



2c North Arm, East Side



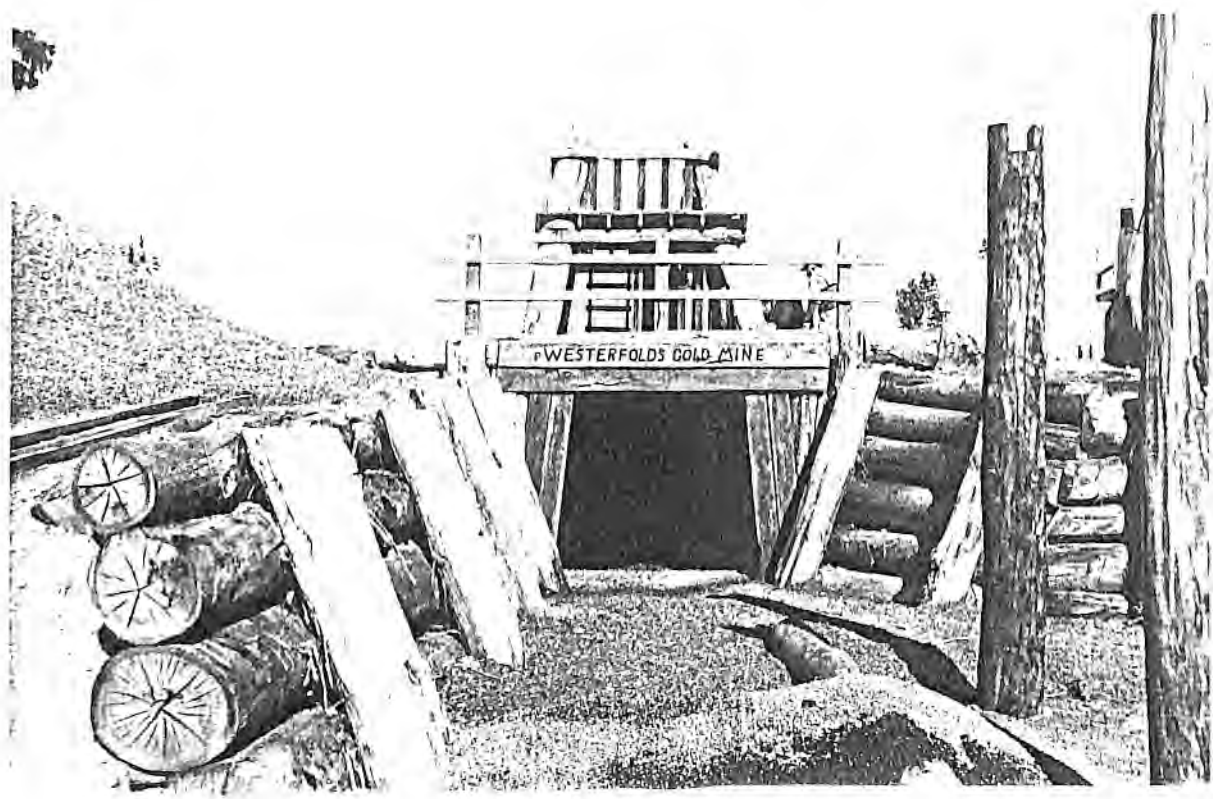
2d North Arm, West Side

## BIRRARRUNG

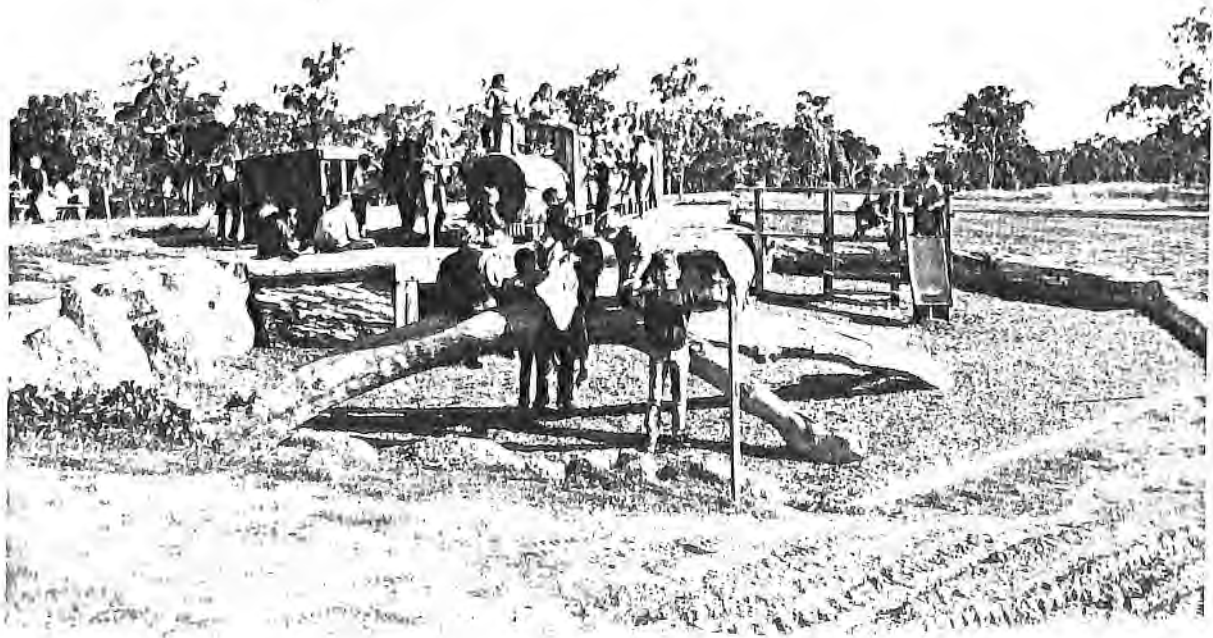


3a Picnic Area

# WESTERFOLDS



1a Ridge Picnic Area

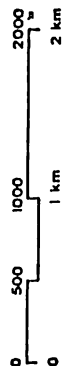
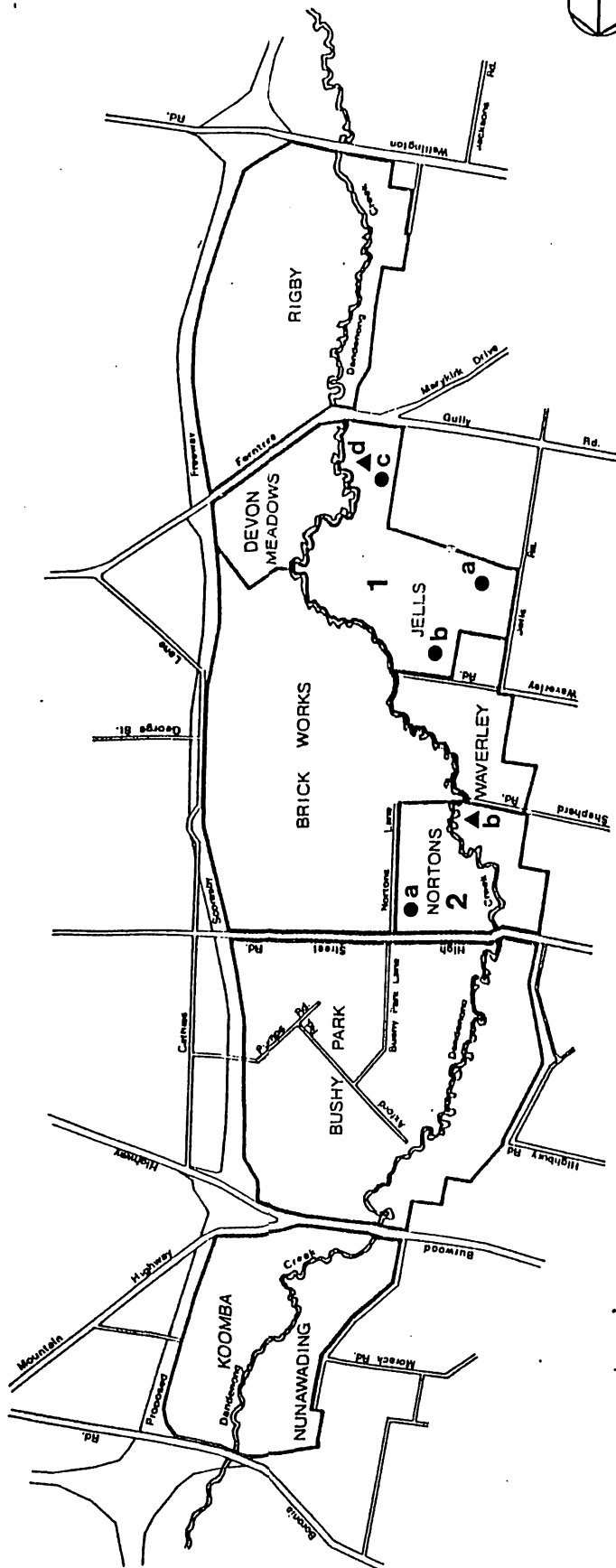




# WESTERFOLDS



1c South Gate Picnic Area



**PLAYGROUNDS**  
**DANDENONG VALLEY**  
**METROPOLITAN PARK**

- EXISTING PLAYGROUND
- ▲ NEW PLAYGROUND

# JELLS

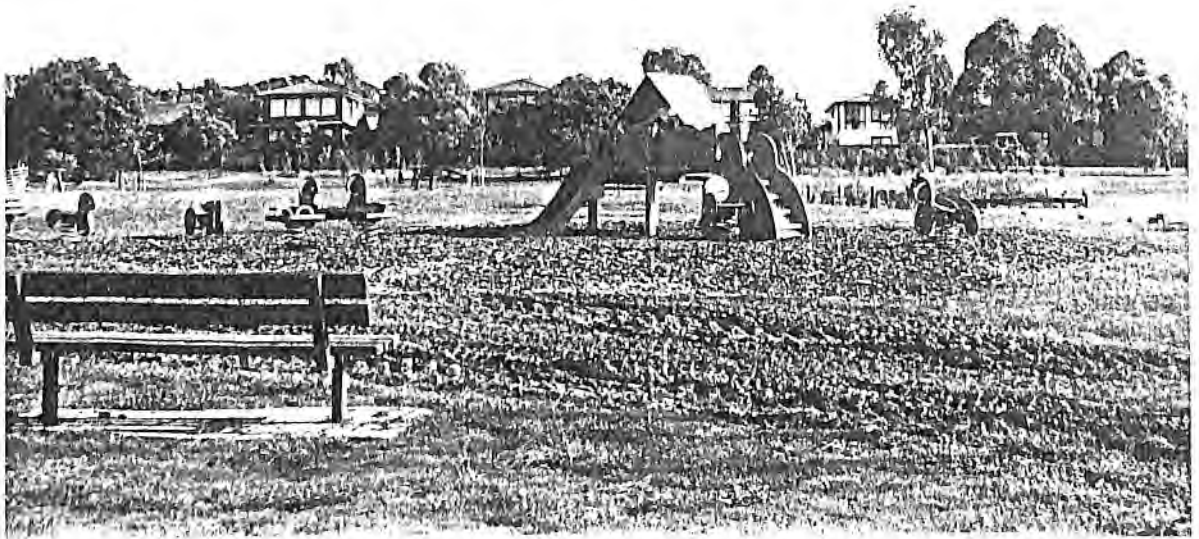


1a Pines Picnic Area



1b Stringybark Picnic Area

# JELLS



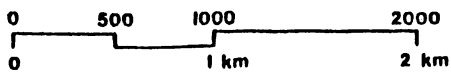
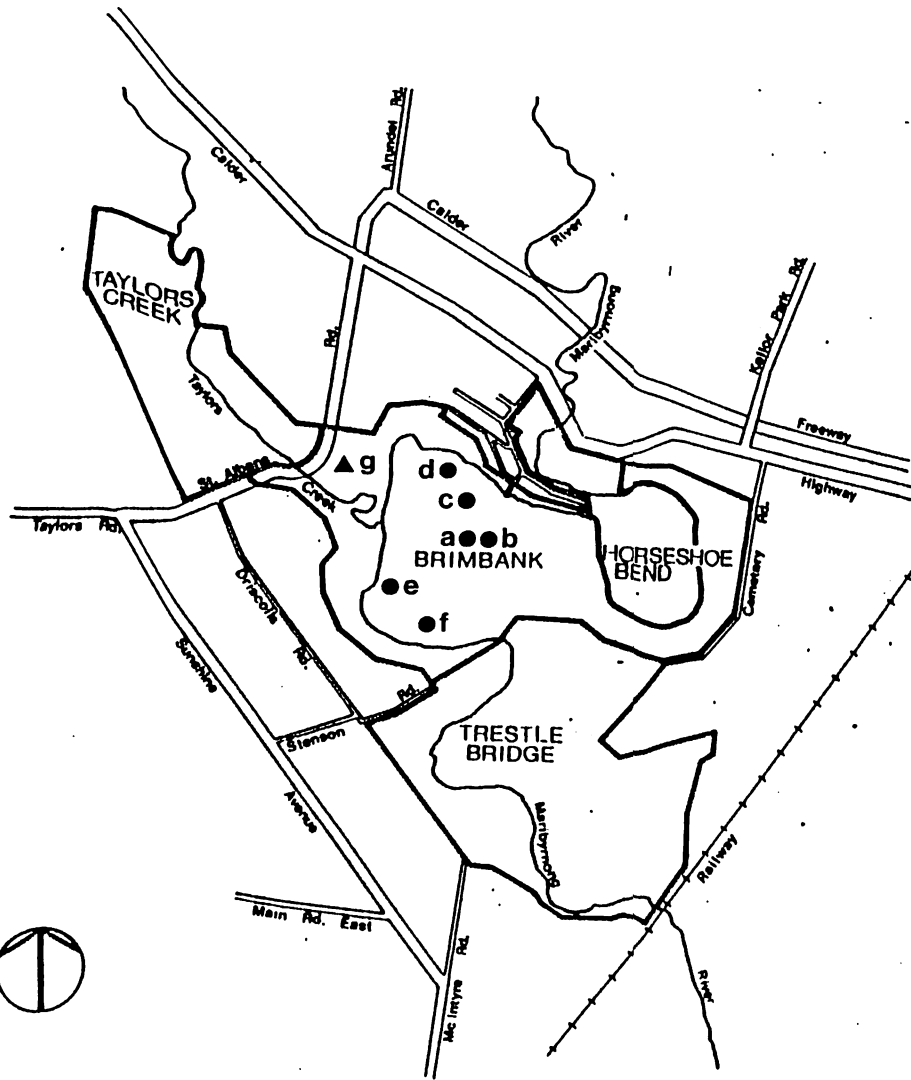
1d Jells South Picnic Area



# NORTONS



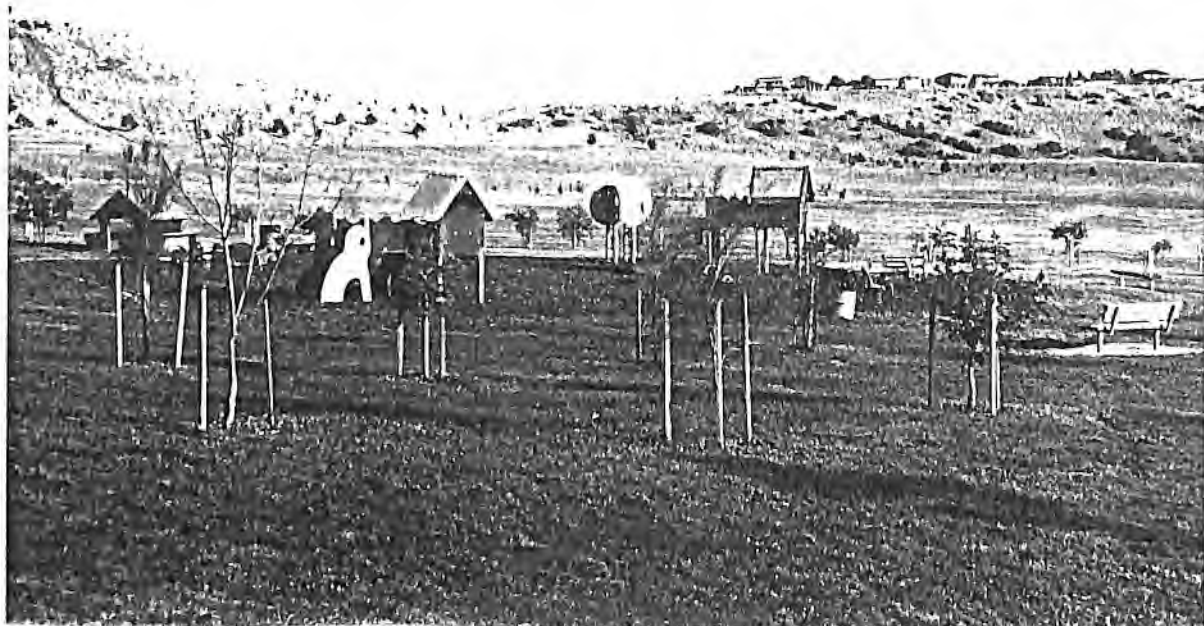
2a Picnic Area



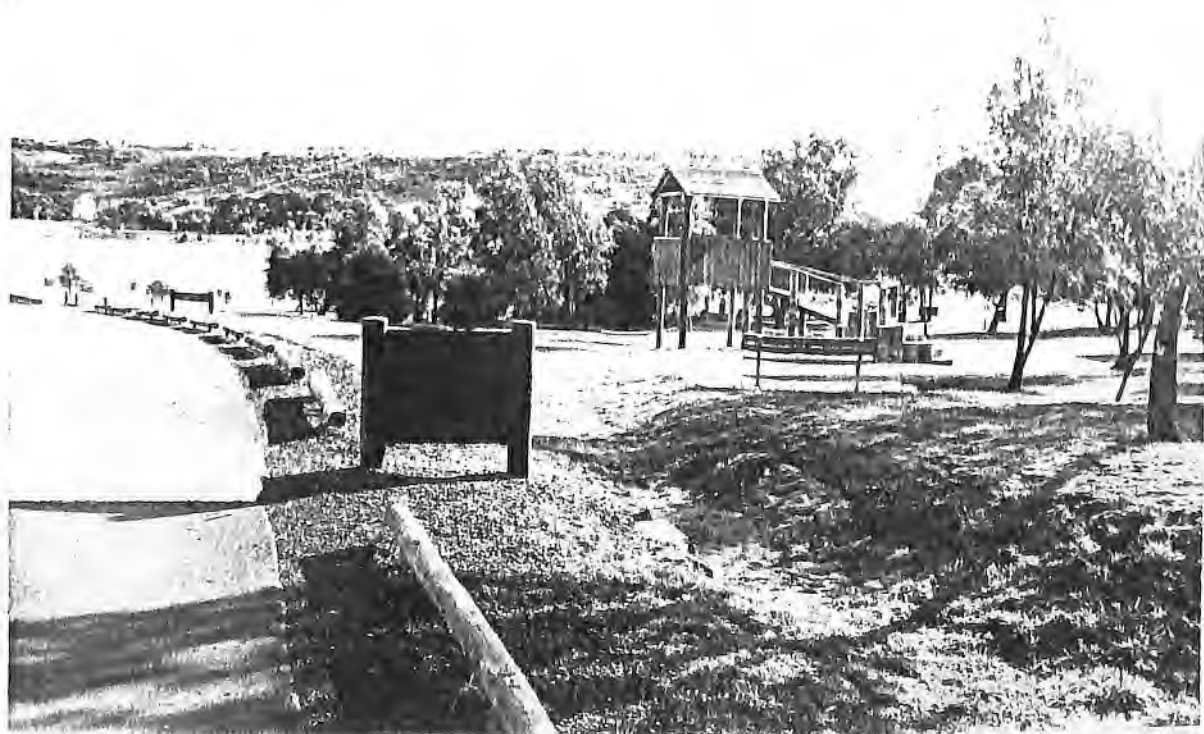
**PLAYGROUNDS  
 MARIBYRNONG VALLEY  
 METROPOLITAN PARK**

- EXISTING PLAYGROUND
- ▲ NEW PLAYGROUND

# BRIMBANK

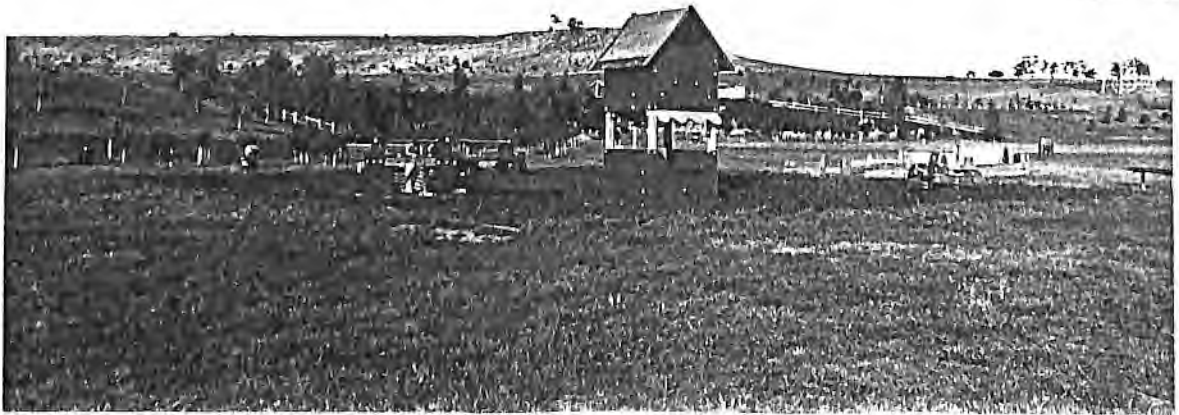


1a Picnic Area , South of Carpark A



1b Picnic Area near Intersection of Park Drive A & B

BRIMBANK

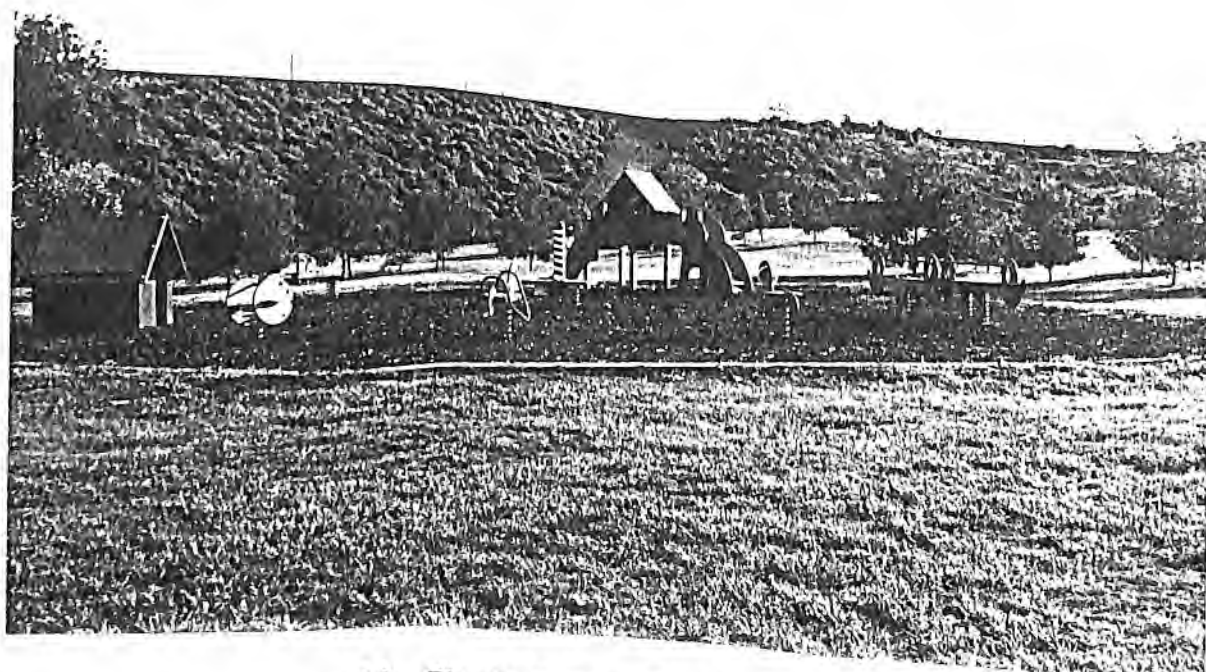


1e Picnic Area below Carpark B





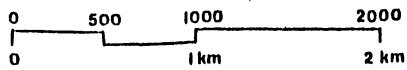
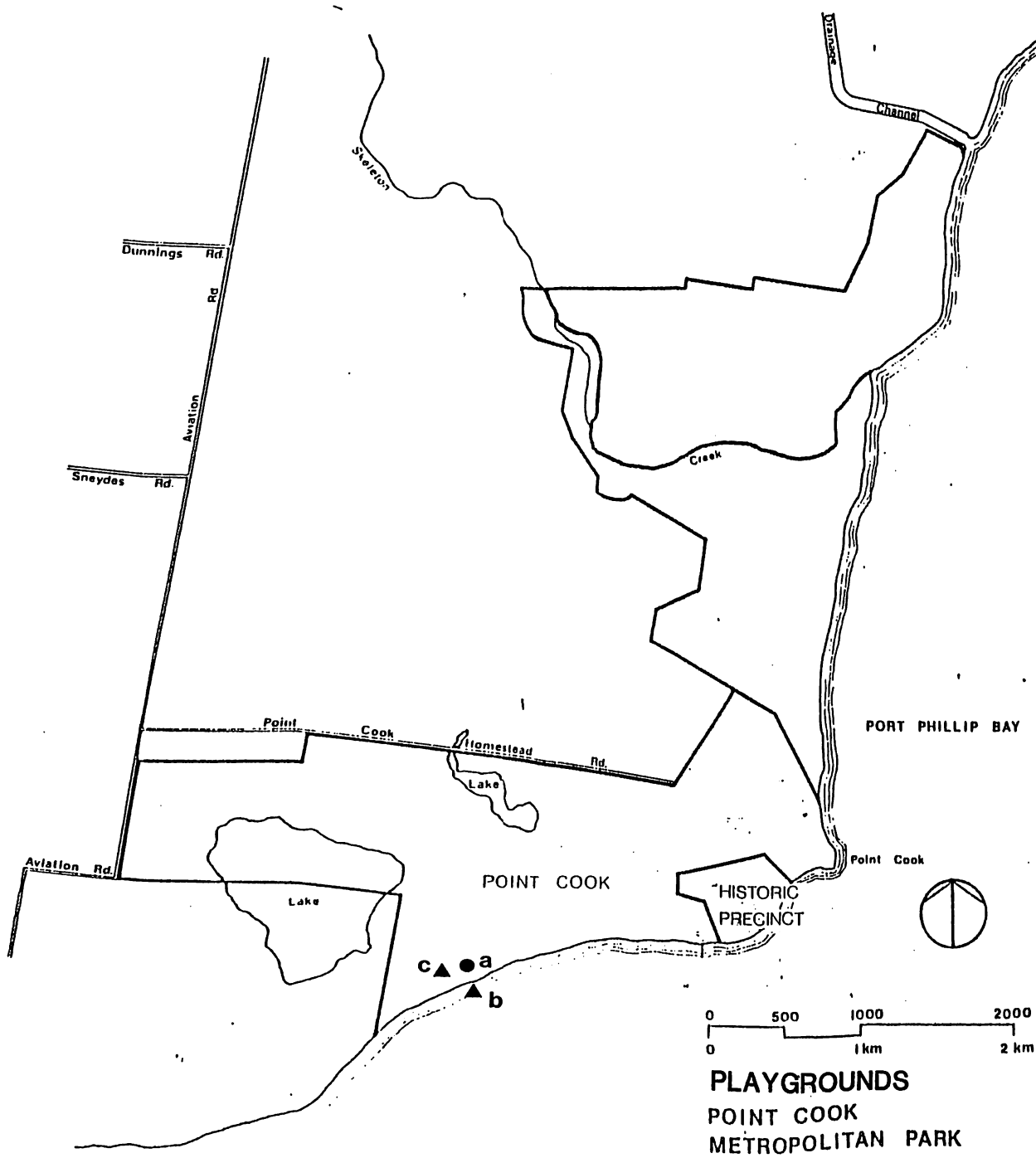
BRIMBANK



1f Picnic Area , Carpark C



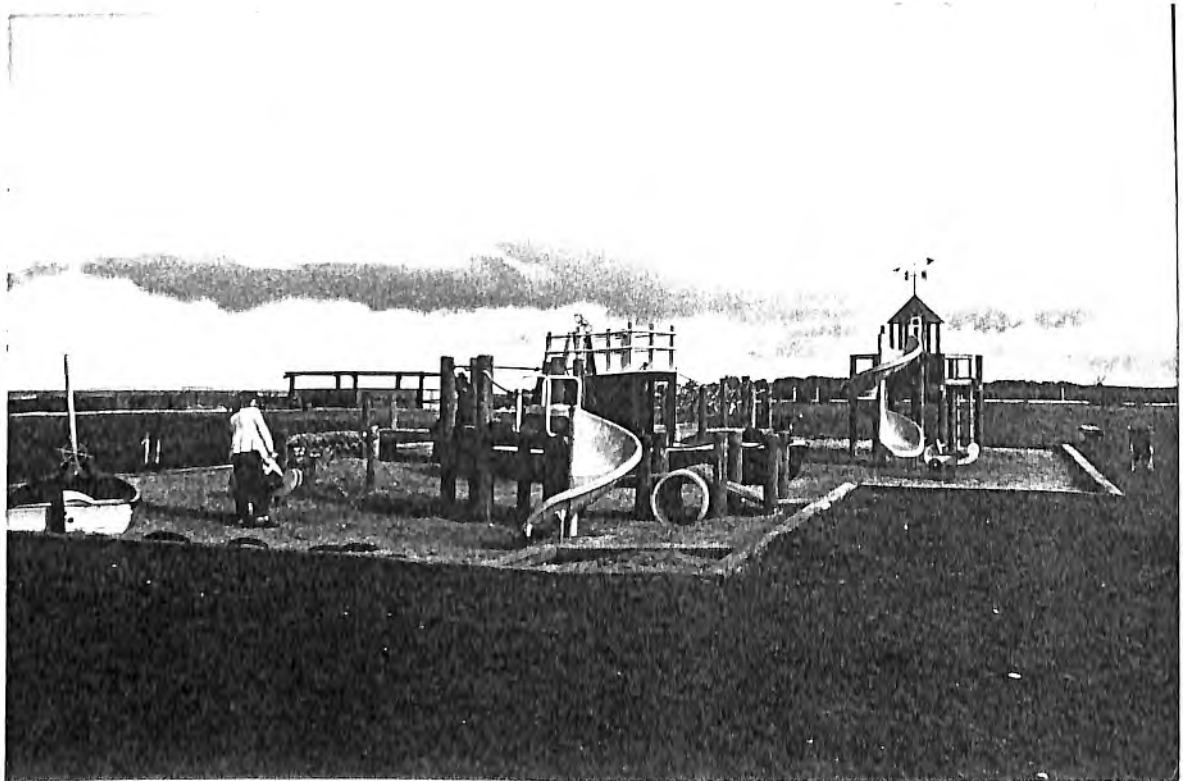
1d River Flats below Spine



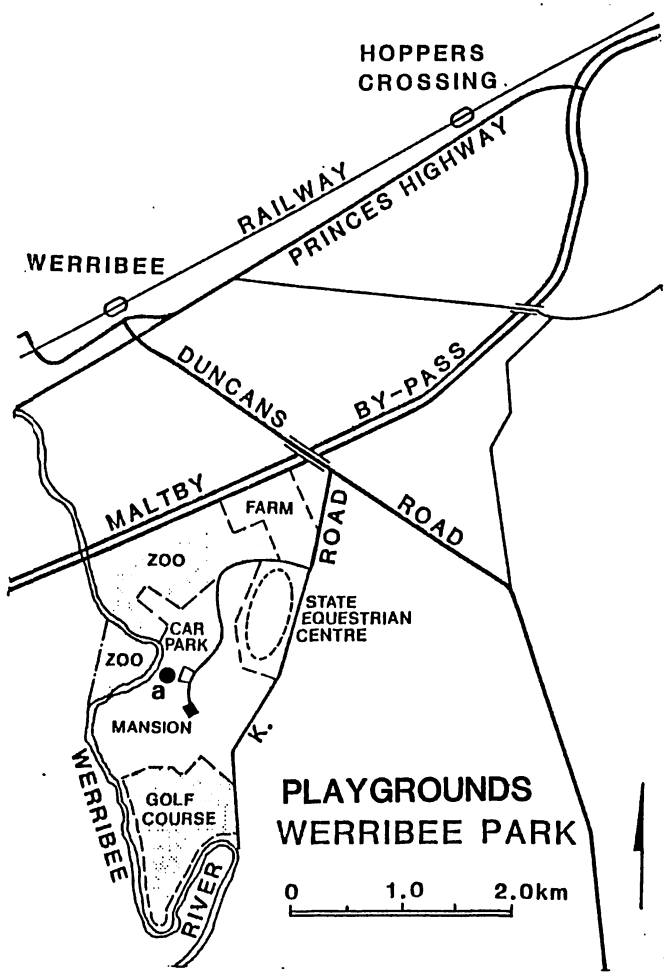
**PLAYGROUNDS**  
POINT COOK  
METROPOLITAN PARK

- EXISTING PLAYGROUND
- ▲ NEW PLAYGROUND

POINT COOK

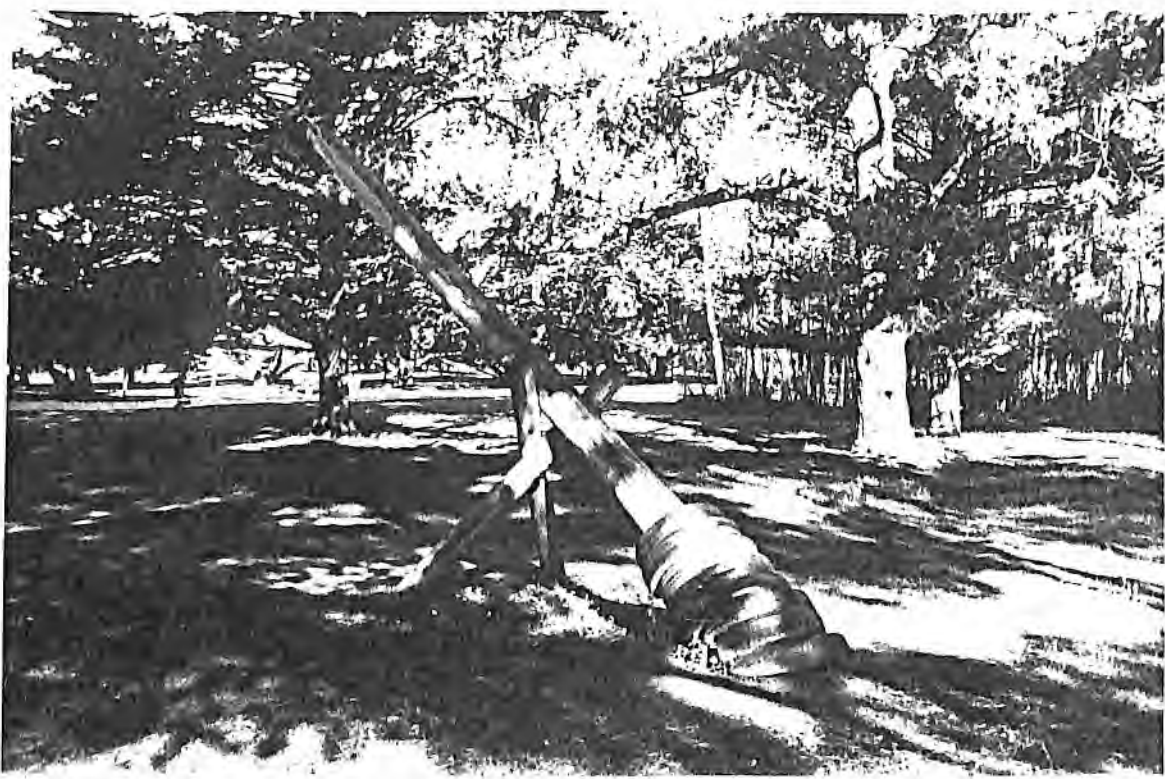


1a Picnic Area , Beach



● EXISTING PLAYGROUND

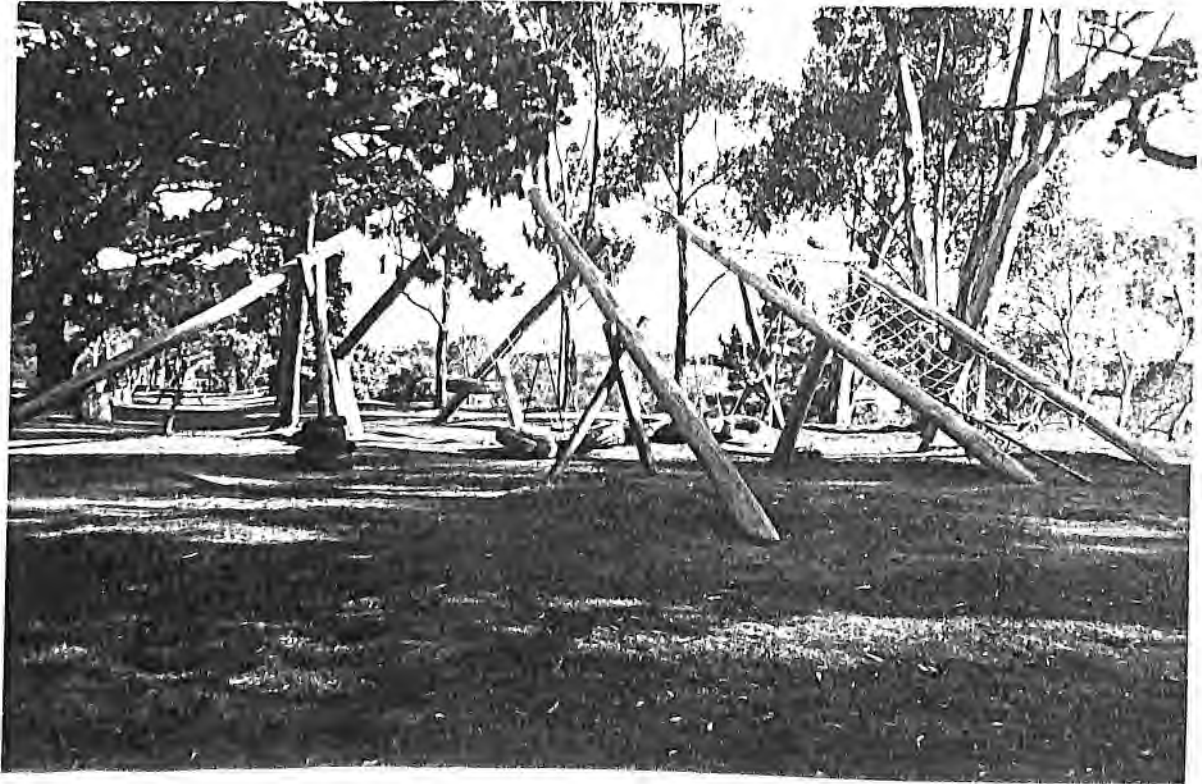
# WERRIBEE



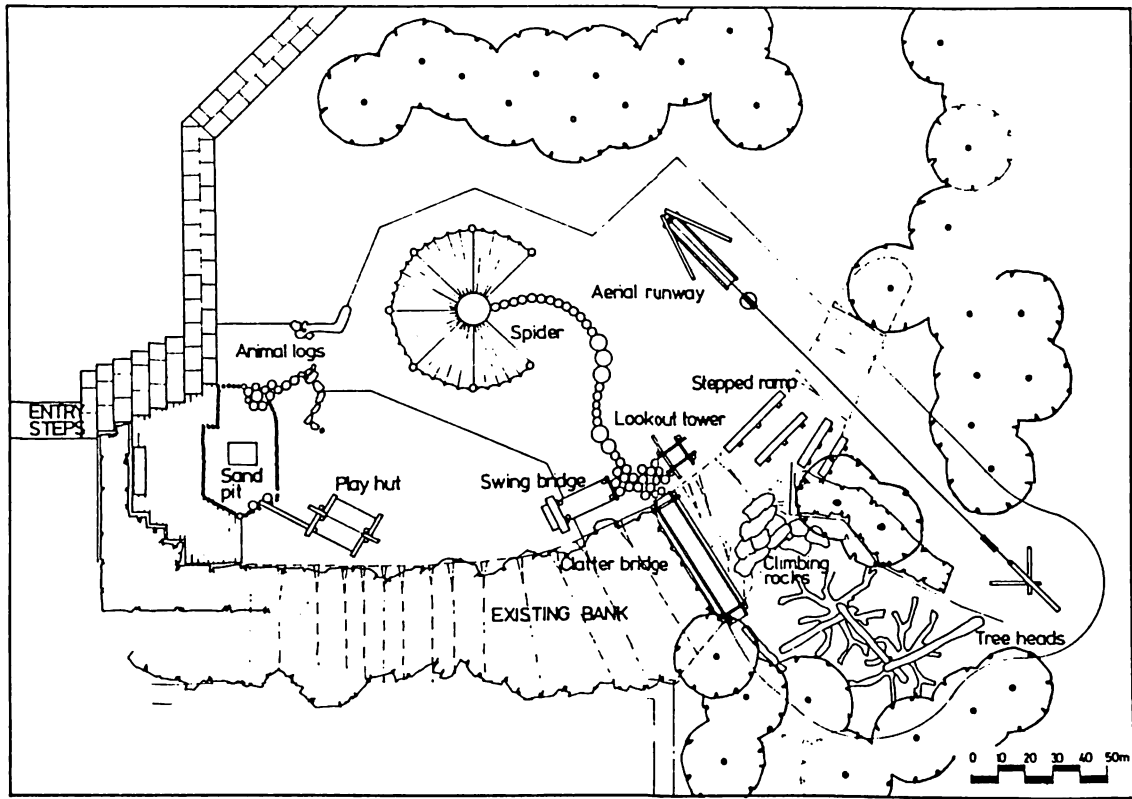
1a Picnic Area



WERRIBEE

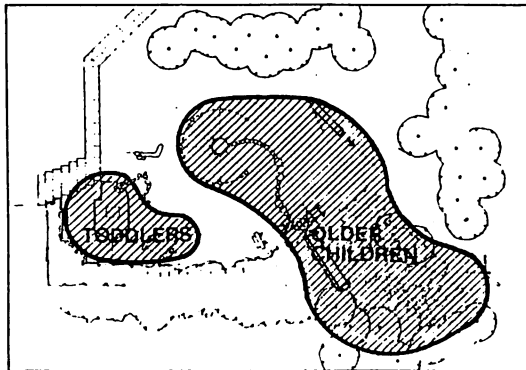


1a Picnic Area

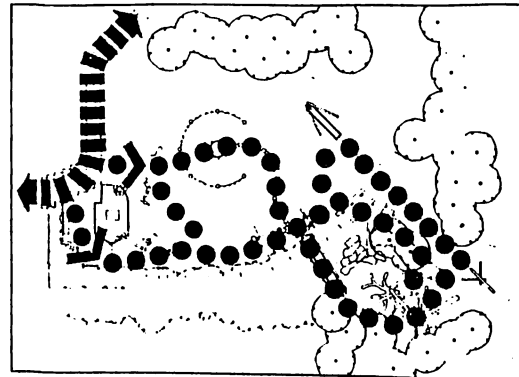


Overall layout

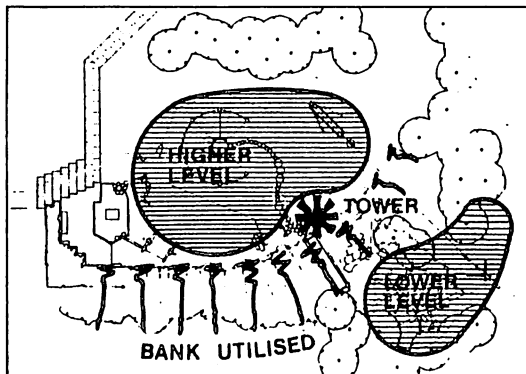
Part of the process of Site Design has been illustrated here with reference to a play area designed for an exhibition site. Space requirements, planting, aesthetics, ambiguity, change, and requirements for disabled should also be considered.



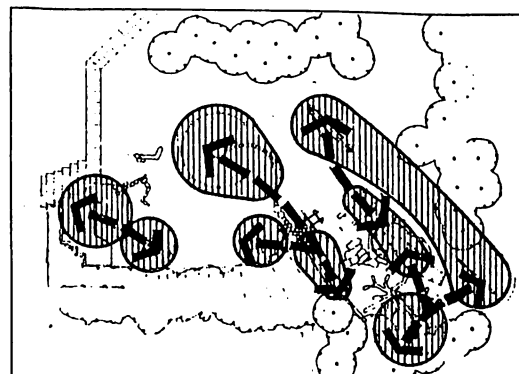
Age



Linkage



Landform



Circulation

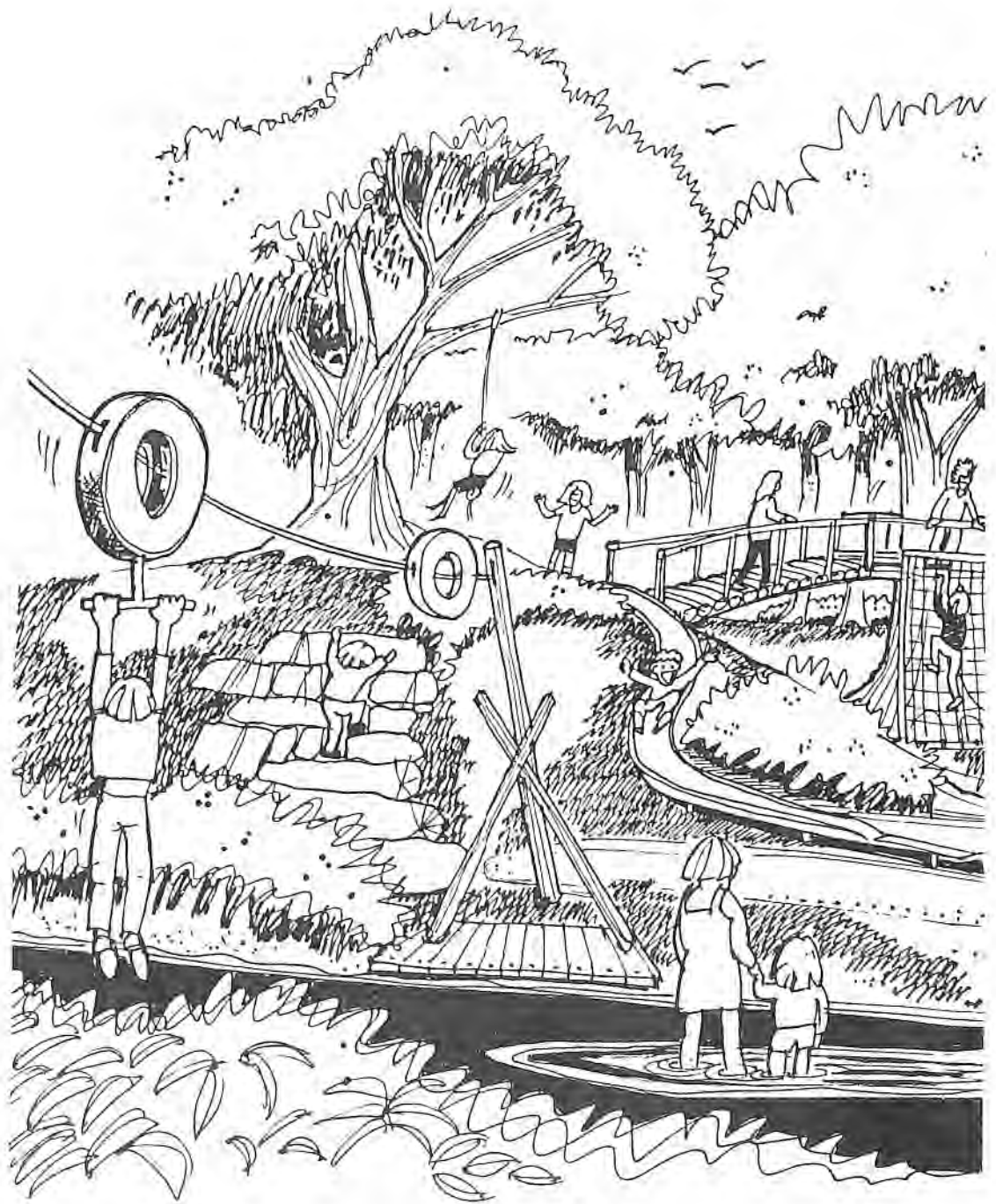
Analysis of adventurous play area

**EXAMPLES FROM**

'Providing for Children's Play in the Countryside'

T. Cochrane and Associates.

Countryside Commission for Scotland and the Forrestry Commission

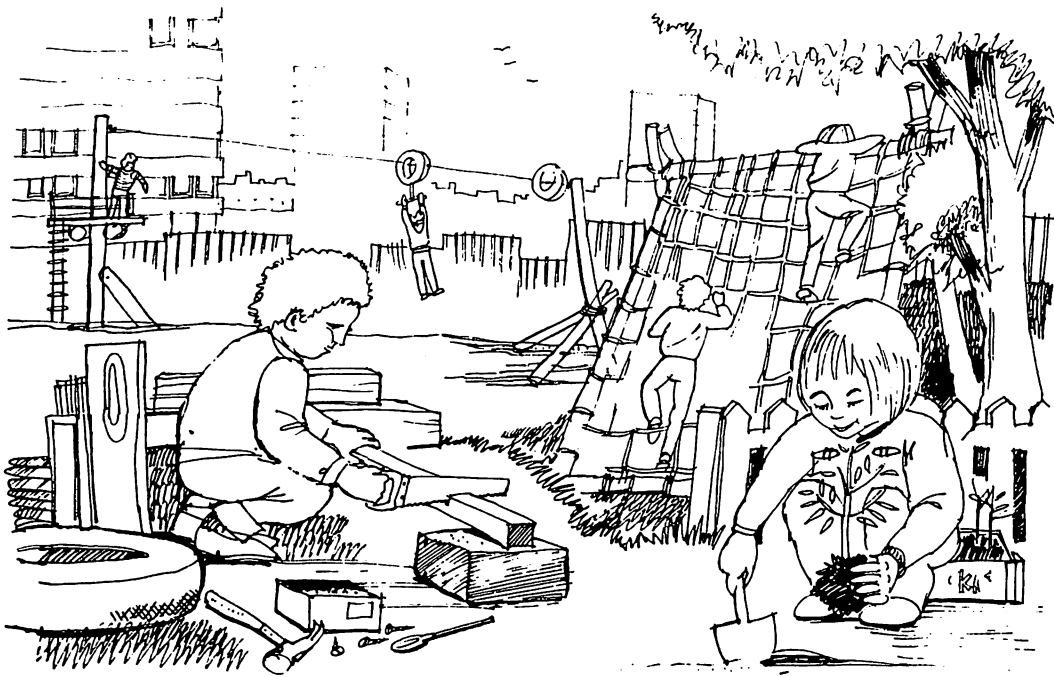


*Idealised adventurous play area with use of natural features and linkage of play equipment*





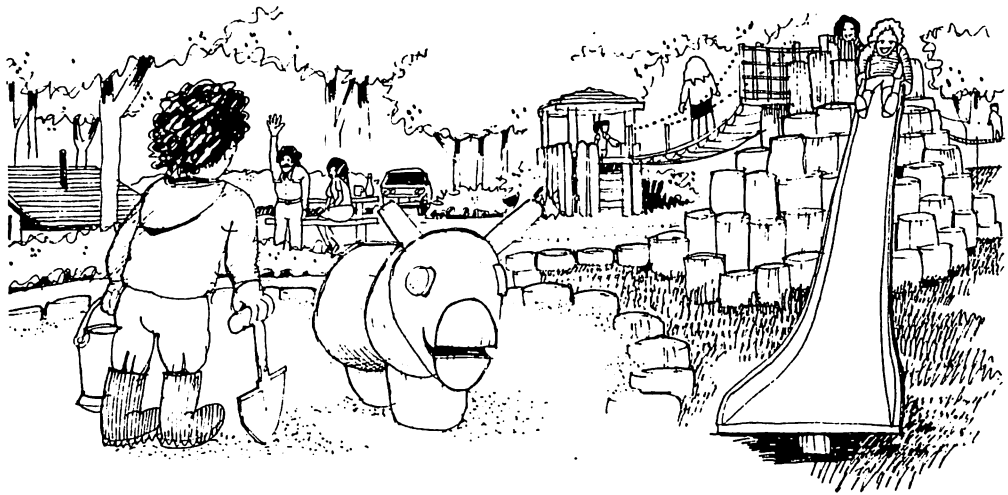
Well-designed mixture of adventurous play and nature area on forest edge



*Adventure Playground*



*Nature Area*



## PLAY IN VICTORIA PARK

by *Simon Rendel*

This scheme designed by the GLC Landscape Division for the Department for Recreation and Arts, demonstrates a commitment for children's play which is unusual in Britain.

In recent years the Greater London Council (GLC) has devoted considerable resources to new playgrounds in its parks. There are important reasons for this investment. First, there has been a general policy objective to provide new facilities for children and young people in the inner city; second, the existing parks need new facilities if they are to continue to attract the public (the existing playgrounds are highly traditional and have declined in parallel with other park features in the inner city); third, as a metropolitan authority the GLC has been able to provide playgrounds of a larger scale than those in

district or local parks, attracting visitors from a radius of several miles. The new playground in Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets, fulfils both objectives and is a departure from conventional playground design.

The design and siting of the playground is based on three main principles: that it should be appropriate to the historic landscape and conservation area, that it should provide green areas within the site and that the layout itself should present intrinsic play opportunities (in other words it is not just a collection of 'facilities'). Various locations were considered, including some existing playgrounds, but an early decision was made on a site in the centre of the park which had historic associations with active recreation. It has a number of advantages: it is almost completely surrounded by mature trees; it was in a state of dereliction but toilets and other services were available on the site and the area is

large enough (about three and a half acres) for the playground to be conceived on a considerable scale with extensive areas of planting and grass. This was important because there is an unfortunate tendency for such playgrounds to become vast tarmac spaces to accommodate the pressure of thousands of summer visitors on fair weather days.

The decision to use such a large site is justified by the heavy use to which it has been put. The result is a much richer play experience in which the landscape itself plays a full part. It can be 'explored', grass slopes are used for picnicking and dramatic views are exploited.

No rigid design philosophy has been employed — both timber and steel, hexagonal, cubic and curving forms and many different surface materials have been used to suit the particular needs of different parts of the site. But a distinct and unified character has still emerged.



■ View south-west across the park

well as an unexpected route across the site. Three items of play sculpture have been used: two GRP 'hippos' and a specially commissioned bronze piece 'once a Jolly Bagman'.

### Construction

The site was formerly occupied by a 19th century mass bathing lake one metre deep and later by oval paddling pools. Original timber shelters from the bathing lake era have been retained or repositioned to suit the new layout. Excavations for the sunken landing area revealed a number of further concrete floors to the lake and an unexpected perched water table which required additional drainage.

The new paddling pools are constructed in granite setts which form snaking banks containing the water. This is circulated, chlorinated and discharged into the top pool by two three metre high fountain jets. A screeded concrete floor gives a safe non-abrasive surface.

The ravine is built on a hardcore platform out of wire mesh gabions filled with crushed hardcore. This enabled the formation of steps of varying heights and depths, creating a visually interesting as well as physically

challenging feature. After allowing a short period for settlement the gabions were sprayed with concrete under high pressure, leaving a coarsely textured but extremely strong coat over the structure. The surface is a sprayed mix of sharp sand and cement (gunite) giving a less abrasive finish and softening the pale, stark colour of the concrete. No movement joints were included — the structure has survived a hot summer in 1984 and a very cold winter and the minimal cracking is probably due to slight settlement rather than temperature changes.

The seven metre high, 30° bank for the slides is founded on a deep concrete toe beam. Hardcore, faced with a layer of lean-mix concrete at one-metre intervals to minimise settlement, forms the core. The surface is laid on a reinforced concrete base and is made up of alternate bands of exposed aggregate concrete and brick, contoured to accommodate the bends on the 'S'-shaped slide.

Wherever areas are well-contained, safety surfaces consist of 10mm pea shingle. It has proved effective and as a cheap, inert material should give fewer problems to maintenance staff in the long term than the proprietary products. Children amuse

themselves by rattling the pebbles down the slides — a totally unforeseen play experience. Elsewhere proprietary safety surfaces and coarse bark have been used.

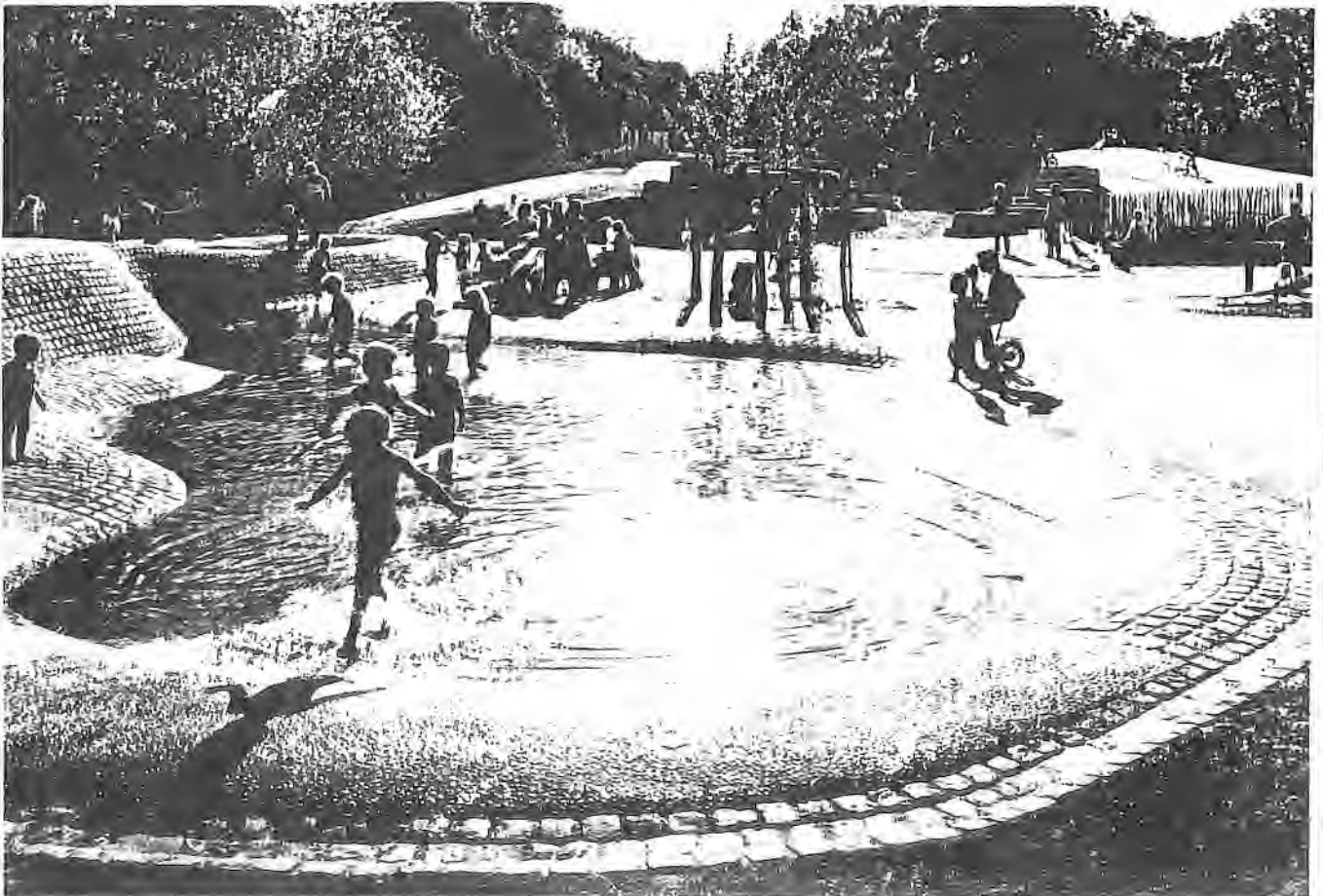
The playground was opened in March 1985 since when it has received consistently heavy use from visitors from a wide area of London. During the school term parties of children visit the playground regularly. So far vandalism has been confined to incidents of unauthorised entry at night.

If value for money can be gauged by popularity, the investment of £450,000 has been justified by the excellent public response. The scheme was financed jointly by the GLC and a 75 per cent urban and grant from the Hackney Partnership Fund. In 1985 the scheme won the Tower Hamlets Design Award for environmental improvements ■

*Simon Rendel is acting principal landscape architect with the GLC.*

### Acknowledgements

*Project landscape architect: David Cummin; Project team: Jenny Spencer and Marie Burns; Building architect: Joe Hurley; Sculpture: Brian Yale; Main contractor: Wyevale Landscapes; Clerk of Works: Robin Slaney; Quantity surveyor: Ken Coleman.*



■ Paddling pools and ravine



■ Prams!

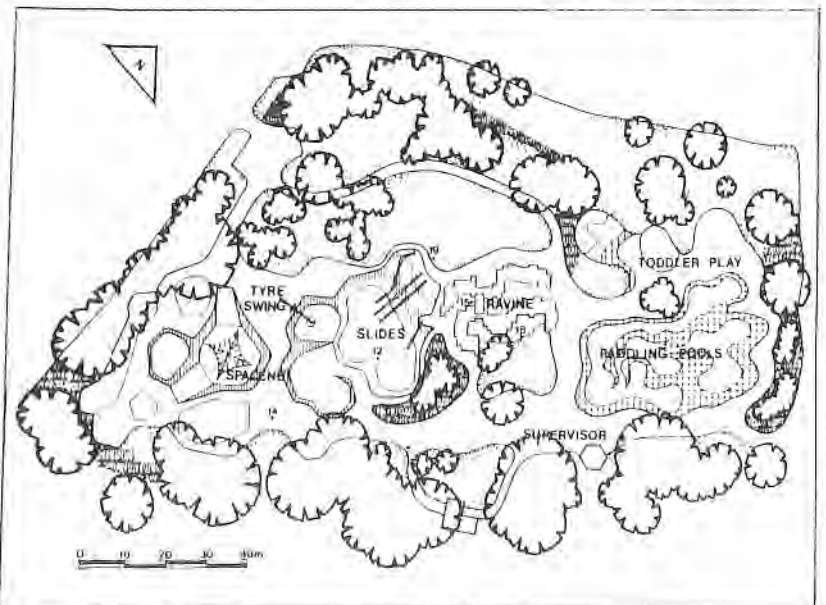
### Supervision and safety

Some confusion arose at the planning stage over the designation of the playground following casual references to an 'adventure playground'. The running costs of an adventure playground are very much higher because of the need for intensive supervision and regular supplies of new materials to develop skills as well as encouraging play. Although 'adventurous' in design, the new playground employs only two supervisors to prevent trouble and to deal with cuts and bruises. Supervision and fencing meet the approval of parents, who appreciate the controls which keep out dogs, bicycles and older teenagers, creating a safe and enjoyable environment for young children. Despite the need for safety, many of the features are capable of presenting a real challenge to children.

The hexagonal supervisors' building, providing good facilities for staff, is timber clad on a brick base under a tiled roof. The broad timber steps on the three front faces provide a partially shaded platform for sitting and quiet play.

### Play features

A large slide mound in the centre of the site sits comfortably in the landscape, balanced in scale by a sunken landing area. The



■ Layout

mound is flanked to the east by a multi-level paddling pool with linking rills. To the west, changes of level are used imaginatively to give enclosure or emphasis to individual items of equipment such as the space net and the huge cantilevered tyre swing. Equipment for children under seven is set back within

one of the main grass areas with a good south aspect. Parents can sit or sun bathe without losing sight of their children.

One of the more unusual features of the site is an artificial ravine carved out of the mound and surmounted by an ornate timber bridge. This acts as a climbing feature as

well as an unexpected route across the site. Three items of play sculpture have been used: two GRP 'hippos' and a specially commissioned bronze piece 'once a Jolly Bagman'.

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