SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS STUDY

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NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NSW)

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES		2
1.0	**INTRODUCTION**	4
1.1	OVERVIEW	4
1.2	STUDY AREA	4
1.3	FUNDING AND PROJECT TEAM	4
1.4	METHODOLOGY	5
1.5	FORMAT OF THE REPORT	5
2.0	**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**	6
2.1	19TH CENTURY ATTITUDES TOWARD PLAY	6
2.2	OVERSEAS INFLUENCES	6
2.3	SYDNEY'S FIRST PLAYGROUNDS	7
2.4	1918-1945	9
2.5	1940S TO THE PRESENT DAY	12
2.6	AUSTRALIA'S ADOPTION OF THE NEW IDEAS IN PLAYGROUND DESIGN	13
2.7	SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS FROM THE 1940S TO THE 1960S	14
2.8	TYPICAL SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS OF THE 1970S AND 80S	17
3.0	**SAFETY CONCERNS AND RISK MANAGERS**	18
4.0	**CURRENT SITUATION- SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS**	20
5.0	**RECOMMENDATIONS**	22
BIBLIOGRAPHY		23

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1 LETTER SENT TO LOCAL COUNCILS

APPENDIX 2 PLAYGROUNDS IN CITY PARKS

APPENDIX 3 PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ADVERTISEMENTS 1937-9

APPENDIX 4 PLANS OF PLAYGROUNDS

APPENDIX 5 PHOTOGRAPHS OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

APPENDIX 6 'Cyclone' PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT CATALOGUE

APPENDIX 7 PLAYGROUND STANDARDS

APPENDIX 8 LGA PLAYGROUND SAFETY STUDY

APPENDIX 9 NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL'S PLAN OF MANAGEMENT -PLAYGROUNDS

ILLAWARRA REGION LANDSCAPE SURVEY

CORRECTIONS:

1. P.10 In S.P.A.1d, 3rd para, 4th line, insert 'reserves', ... but more reserves are needed to protect ...

2. Ps.19,20,21,50 Illawarra flame should read Illawarra fig.

3. P.23 Delete 'high' insert 'rich'. S.L.U., 4th para, 1st line ... today the rich agricultural land ...

4. P.30 Following Joadja, add 'Budderoo N.P. N.P.& W.S.' Following Badgers Lookout, add 'Extension to Morton National Park','Budawang Range & Tianjarra plateau'.

5. P.51 Delete 'granite' insert 'granitic'

6. P.52 Add 'of Landscape' (Ref. R.B. Litton,Aesthetic Dimensions of Landscape.)

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Phillip Park- 1 inch Scale Details of Fittings for Gymnasium, Sydney City Archives CRS 5691 T1123

Fig. 2 a Plan of Lance Playground and 2 b as featured in the *Playgrounds Association of New South Wales* publication from 1913.

Fig. 3 Plan for a Roundabout, Sydney City Archives, PO 452

Fig. 4 Detail for Equipment at Prince Alfred Park, 1924, Sydney City Archives, CRS 569, T1117

Fig.5 Plan of the Playground and Activities, Frank Saywell Memorial Kindergarten at Moore Park, Council of City of Sydney, Annual Report 1933

Fig. 6 Advertisement for 'Playmaker' equipment, *Parks and Playground Movement Annual Report*, 1938

Fig. 7 Adventure Playground, Endrup, Denmark, Lambert and Pearson, *Adventure Playgrounds*, pp. 97-101.

Fig. 8 Weston Park, Yarralumla. ACT. c.1972

Fig. 9 Eltham Playground, Eltham Victoria, 1996

Fig. 10 Flying foxes at Kambah Park, ACT, c.1995

Fig. 11 Plan for a playground, Young Lane, Redfern, Sydney City Archives CRS 684: P240/1

Fig. 12 Proposal for a playground in Erskineville, Sydney City Archives CRS 684:P445/3

Fig. 13 Plan for a Rocketship, Erskineville, Sydney City Archives CRS684:P445/5

Fig. 14 Plan for a Jet Plane, Erskineville, Sydney City Archives CRS 684: P445/6

Fig. 15 Aeroplane Bronte Park c.1993

Fig. 16 'Mother and Child', Anita Aarons, Phillip Park, 1997

Fig. 17 Harry Seidler, Housing Commission Flats Rosebery, Photo: Max Dupain, *Constructional Review* 1970, p.56

Fig. 19 Adventure Playground Equipment Advertisement

Fig. 20 Anger over removal of Play Equipment, *Northern Herald* 27.10.94

Fig. 21 A typical selection of Ausplay Equipment

Fig. 22 Milson Park equipment now replaced with Ausplay

Fig. 23 Play equipment in Children's Playground, Grasmere Reserve, North

Sydney before repairs, January 1989.

Fig. 24 Play equipment now removed from Tunks Park, North Sydney.

Fig. 25 Merry-go-round, Elkington Park, Balmain

Fig. 26 Enmore Park Rocket

Fig. 27 Helen Street Reserve, Lane Cove Municipality

Fig. 28 Apex Reserve, Lane Cove Municipality

Fig. 29 Hughes Avenue Reserve, Parramatta Council

Fig. 30 Plane, Beresford Park, South Grafton 1995

Fig. 31 Butterfly, Mac Donald Park, Armidale, 1995

Fig. 32 "Rescue Our Rocket" campaign, Blackheath,*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3.11.97

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of this report is to outline a brief thematic history of play equipment in public parks in Sydney, and to identify and record relevant items of heritage significance. Playgrounds are part of the social history of the community, they tell us much about attitudes to children and to the resources we are prepared to devote to their wellbeing, and as such should be considered an important part of our heritage.

The study came out of the concern of the authors at the rapid disappearance of older style play equipment from many parks, and its replacement with a bland uniformity across the majority of Sydney parks. This has been due to a number of factors: changing fashion - the desire for something new; changes in the philosophy of play; as well as economic considerations such as construction and maintenance costs, but it has been driven primarily by the concern of Councils, regarding their legal responsibility in the case of playground accidents. This follows a trend, well established in the United States, where litigation is increasingly resorted to, and has led to an emphasis on safety at the expense of the challenge that playgrounds were expected to offer in the past.

While it is not proposed that Councils retain playgrounds that are unsafe, or fail to provide the recreation opportunities that present day users seek, a case can be made for the retention, or where necessary the modification, of some older style equipment. This is particularly relevant in parks with heritage significance, and is an approach which has been adopted by some Sydney Councils. As a result of this study, undertaken in 1996-7, two pieces of playground equipment in the Sydney area are recommended for classification by the National Trust. They are a modified rocket in Enmore Park, Enmore and a merry-go-round in Elkington Park, Balmain.

1.2 STUDY AREA

The study area was broadly defined as the Sydney Metropolitan area. Areas which were assessed as worthy of closer consideration included Lane Cove, North Sydney, Sydney City, Leichhardt and Marrickville Council areas. Some examples of playground equipment were photographed in country areas for comparative purposes.

1.3 FUNDING AND PROJECT TEAM

This study has been funded by the NSW Department of Planning as part of its Heritage Assistance Program with assistance given by the National Trust of

Australia (NSW).

The study was undertaken by Barbara van den Broek, landscape architect and Colleen Morris, landscape heritage consultant in 1996-7.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

A literature search was conducted at the following libraries: the Mitchell Library, Sydney City Council Archives, the Libraries of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, the University of Sydney, Royal Botanic Gardens, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Ryde TAFE and Lane Cove Council, and from recreation publications, such as those of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation (RAIPR).

Letters were sent to the Parks Departments of 41 Local Authorities within the Sydney area, see Appendix 1 for a copy of the letter and a list of the Authorities concerned, regarding the existence of 'older style' play equipment remaining in their municipality. 'Older style' was defined as that preceding the present day standardised moulded plastic and steel equipment currently favoured by councils.

Replies, either by phone or letter, were received from 26 Local Authorities. Many had begun, or were well into, a program of replacement of older equipment, but some had some remaining items which appeared to fall within our definition of 'older style' equipment, the most promising of these were followed up with site visits. Given the nature of the time and financial constraints, it was not intended to prepare a full inventory , but to visit what was hoped to be a representative sample of playgrounds with older style equipment.

1.5 FORMAT OF THE REPORT

The report begins with a brief thematic history of play equipment in Sydney, from the earliest records, which have been found, up to the present day. In view of the fact that many of the ideas, and the theories behind them, came from overseas, or from the other Australian states, particularly Victoria and the ACT, reference is made to some of these influences which may have affected the choice of equipment, and the design of the playgrounds. The report concludes with the results from the brief survey of older style play equipment in parks in the Sydney metropolitan area, and with some recommendations for future action, including advice to councils regarding the possible heritage value of older style play equipment, and proposals to ensure that there is some record of this and where possible retention of some examples.

2.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 19TH CENTURY ATTITUDES TOWARD PLAY

The evolution of playgrounds and play equipment is connected to nineteenth century attitudes toward education and the lifting of the moral tone of the general public. These attitudes paralleled philosophies involving the promotion of gardening for the lower classes, including children, which were inspired by early nineteenth century writers such as the utilitarian Jeremy Bentham. Shaw (1979) discusses a number of influences which affected school playgrounds among them the "Surplus Energy Theory" of Herbert Spencer (Shaw 1979 p. 32) and suggests that this theory contributed to the physical form of playgrounds. Although it can be argued that the 'gymnasium' arrangement of equipment could be related to this theory, equipment such as maypoles and swings had earlier precursors.

2.2 OVERSEAS INFLUENCES

An English landscape gardener, Joshua Major, included areas for athletic games such as archery, quoits, bowls, gymnasia, see-saws and climbing poles as early as the 1840s in parks he designed in Manchester. Chadwick(1966, p.99) argues that this was not Major's own idea as the Manchester Committee which ran the design competition won by Major had required the competitors to provide playgrounds and space for games. Despite these early innovations, "provision for sports in the parks was largely ad hoc until 1880, when the idea of the sports park was introduced" (Elliot 1986, p.212). In that year two parks, West Park, Wolverhampton, and Stamford Park, Altrincham were opened and the latter contained playgrounds in addition to areas set aside for cricket, football, croquet and lawn tennis.

Developments in Britain are often seen to be the major influence on the Australian condition, however, other countries particularly the United States, influenced progress here. Maiden, in his *Botanic Gardens and Domains Report 1902 for the Year 1901* (p.25), while explaining that the By-laws could be interpreted as prohibiting outdoor games , announced:

> "There is also a little football, but next to cricketing, the climbing of trees, posts, rails and fences, seems to be the chief delight of the small boy. Sometimes the tree, and sometimes the boy comes to grief. Bearing in mind this propensity of youngsters to climb, and to give occupation and amusement to them, it has been decided to fix up a juvenile gymnasium of the kind so popular on the Continent of Europe, in England, and America, to be fitted with swings, trapezes, see-saws, parallel and horizontal bars, and ladders of rope and wood. This will be an innovation for Australia."

Anderson (1914, p.11) states that sand-pits were in some Berlin parks in the 1880s.

This idea was copied in America where the first playground, established in 1887 was a "sand garden" in Boston (Newton 1971, p.622) and by 1889 the first open-air gymnasium with track and pool, 'Charlesbank', in Boston, designed by the firm of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, was established. Typically, in line with Victorian ethics, it was for men and boys, its counterpart for women and girls commencing construction in 1890. This segregation of the sexes in playgrounds was universal and continued well into the twentieth century. Playgrounds, many of them designed in the Olmsted office, and open-air gymnasia rapidly became part of American city life and by 1900 " a dozen cities... had playgrounds of sorts"(Newton 1971, p.623), sand gardens (sand-pits) being common, some playgrounds consisting of this feature alone.

2.3 SYDNEY'S FIRST PLAYGROUNDS

The 'Gymnasium' of the Domain was enclosed by a low picket fence and well shaded by trees. With a caretaker in attendance it was open from early in the morning until sunset and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were reserved for women and children only. The equipment, a combination of an adaptation of indoor gymnasium equipment and older elements such as swings, was described by Maiden in his 1902 paper *The Parks of Sydney*, which noted that almost identical equipment had been installed in Centennial Park. Reference to this equipment was also made in the 1903 Annual Report of the Botanic Gardens and Domains:

> 'The apparatus consists of 4 chain swings, one from an elevation of 13 feet, and two smaller ones of 6 feet, for young children; one inclined plane or sliding plank, two see-saws, and two giant strides, of 8 chains each; two trapeze bars, one series of 5 Roman rings, two horizontal ladders, two parallel climbing uprights, six horizontal bars of different altitudes, and four sets of parallel bars, all various heights, one climbing mast or flagpole, 30 feet, and one sand-box for young children. There is also a shelter or watch-house...' (Annual Report of the Botanic Gardens and Domains. 1903,p.27)

Some of this equipment is similar to that depicted in a publication on School Architecture by E.R. Robson (illustrated Shaw 1979, p.35). What model or prototype Maiden and the staff of the Botanic Gardens used is unclear however the inclusion of the sand-box is of interest in relation to American examples of the time. Unruly behaviour and safety, two issues, particularly the latter, which have become irrevocably associated with playgrounds were mentioned in early reports. It is remarkable, given the size of the equipment, that in the first six months of the Gymnasium operation there were only three accidents reported - one, however, a fatal one. Of greater interest is that the report states that accidents were far fewer than those previously occurring in tree-climbing.

The Gymnasium acquired a new feature in 1905 described as a substitute for a merry-go-round, a 'wheel-push-round'.

'An old cart wheel was set horizontally on its own axle and fitted perpendicularly into a solid block of stone sunk in the ground. The spokes and rim were then boarded over to a width of 8ft. 6in diameter, forming a flat revolving platform without seats. On this disc the youngsters sit, or lie or roll, and there are always some volunteers to do the pushing business....as it is raised only 15inches from the ground, and there is plenty of clean sand to fall upon, there have been no accidents during the six months of its existence.'(Annual Report 1906)

Maiden's establishment of Gymnasia in the Domain and Centennial Park probably inspired a desire by the Sydney City Council to establish more such facilities throughout the municipality. In spite of a lack of control of the city's parks until 1903, Barley(1995) cites a resolution by the Council in 1902 to investigate the possiblity of establishing more playgrounds with the formation a Parks and Recreation Committee to report on the matter and to specifically look at Prince Alfred Park as a potential site. The use of the terms 'gymnasia' and 'children's sand playgrounds' in the Council proceedings implies that American examples were being followed to some extent.

Phillip Park was also seen as a potential site for a playground and drawings of Gymnasia for Phillip Park, signed J.H.M dated 30.8.07, very similar to that described by Maiden are held by Sydney City Archives (Fig.1). Although the initials are the same as Maiden's, they are dissimilar to Maiden's usual signature and are most likely those of a James H. Merriman, a council employee. Barley(1995) states that the Town Clerk reported in the same year that arrangements were made for its establishment but to what extent plans were implemented is unclear. Later Council reports indicate that playgrounds were established in some unspecified areas in 1909 and again in the 1920s.

A number of authors (Shaw 1979, Cuneen 1980, Barley 1995) discuss emerging twentieth century attitudes toward playgrounds. Shaw discusses ideas which were a flow-on from 19th century English attitudes and their implementation in Australian school playgrounds. Barley emphasises middle-class attitudes toward working-class children as social 'Other' and playgrounds as their potential saviour.

The Playgrounds Association of New South Wales was formed c.1913 and although a short-lived association it succeeded in having some impact on the wider community. The first report of the association discussed issues of health and safety as the prime advantages of playgrounds and cited the example of the Lance Playground in Millers Point, adding that a playground was more than a place for exercise in safety,

" It is a place for moral discipline, a school of manners, a training place for future citizens, and to mothers who love its sweet surroundings it is a continual object lesson"(Playgrounds

Association 1913).

These lessons in "social virtue"(Anderson 1914, p.7) necessitated the employment of a Director to supervise the playground and this became the emphasis in the development of playgrounds from the 1920s onward. The secretary of the Playgrounds Association, Maybanke (Mrs Francis) Anderson worked tirelessly, speaking to other bodies such as the Conference of the National Council of Women. The Association, despite its demise in 1918 due to a lack of interest during wartime, succeeded in prompting the establishment or imminent establishment, of five playgrounds each made by different bodies- the Lance at Miller's Point, Victoria Park, Wentworth Park, Moore Park and Prince Alfred Park. In contrast to the earlier gymnasia, the equipment at some of these was minimal (Fig.2) relying on the the sandpit and the creativity of the 'Director'.

Although the bulk of information available is concerned with the later supervised playgrounds, parks in suburban areas were being equipped with 'gymnasiums'. Petersham Council, for example, gained an area in Stanmore expressly to provide space for both a park and playground and in 1912 equipped it with swings, see-saws and seating.

2.4 1918-1945

After World War 1 there was great discussion on the exact amount of space to be reserved for parks and playgrounds. Increasingly the distribution of playgrounds became a town planning issue with Bold (1918, p.154) using examples from the United States. A number of unsupervised playgrounds were established and equipped by the Sydney City Council throughout the municipality, however vandalism precipitated the frequent need for repairs,and in some cases removal, of play equipment.

More successful were those established by the City Council and run as kindergartens, Moore Park and Victoria Park being examples of this. It is significant to note that some provision of shade was considered important with both of these playgrounds including roofed over sand heaps. In 1922 particulars of playgrounds under control of the City Council indicate that shelter sheds were a common element. Typical equipment (Appendix 2) included see-saws, swings, parallel bars, roman rings,a slippery dip and ladder and trapeze. The round about was a notable absence at this stage although a 1926 drawing for one exists in the Sydney City Archives (Fig.3). Drawings from 1924 of the proposed horizontal bars, parallel bars, swings and trapeze for the girls' playground at Prince Alfred Park show the equipment of the period which would become part of the standard for all playgrounds (Fig 4).

By 1926 this standard was (Layton, 1926):

1 set of swings and trapezes (4 swings and 2 trapezes)
1 set of parallel bars
1 see saw
1 set of horizontal bars:-
    2-3ft 10in high
    2-5ft 6in. high
    1-7ft high.
Sand Pit and 1 Joy Wheel-3ft 6in. radius.

The Parks and Playground Movement was formed in 1930 from a number of smaller bodies and Cuneen discusses this movement, particularly the activities of C.E.W. Bean whose concern for playgrounds was "related to their [his] concept of Australian nationalism and the assumption that environment has a great effect on character." (Cuneen 1980, p.117) These nationalistic tendencies paralleled movements overseas where the general fitness of the community reflected the ability of a country to defend itself in the event of war. In line with this drill or fitness training came a perceived need for 'play-leaders' and supervised playgrounds. The National Council of Women of New South Wales, associated with the Parks and Playground Movement, became the major influences on the form of playgrounds during this period.

The most useful document and most significant contribution by the Parks and Playground Movement which appeared during this period was the 1932 *Basic Report on the present and future requirements of the Parks and Playgrounds in the Sydney Metropolitan District.* Again, the social value of parks and playgrounds and their positive character-moulding influences and the need for supervision were reiterated. Sydney City Council entered into an arrangement with the Kindergarten Union to provide the necessary supervisors for a number of playgrounds and on 22nd December 1932 the co-operative scheme was opened at the Frank Saywell Memorial Kindergarten Building at Moore Park. The council's Annual Report for 1933 included a plan of the playground and pictures of the action in the playground (Fig 5). In the following years playgrounds were opened at Camperdown and Phillip Park. Supervised playgrounds, with trained play-leaders, became a matter of serious civic pride with a commemorative booklet even being issued at the opening of the King George V playground at The Rocks. The National Fitness Council reported in 1941 that apart from Sydney City Municipality, two other municipalities in New South Wales, North Sydney and Woollahra, provided trained leadership at some of their playgrounds.

These supervised playgrounds enabled the regulation of the health and discipline of children in crowded city areas. Athletic Proficiency was standardised

to determine the physical and mental ability of the children and proficiency Certificates were issued as rewards. The local medical officer even used the playgrounds as a place for immunisation. In many respects they fulfilled the same role as many 'After-Care Centres' do in the 1990s and by 1946 a training course was established for Playground Supervisors through cooperation with the University of Sydney .

By the 1930s equipment had changed from being composed chiefly of timber to one of metal pipe construction. Catalogues of equipment from this period are almost impossible to find. One Cyclone catalogue held by the Mitchell library is from a later period c. 1948 (Appendix 6). Material held in Sydney City Archives suggests that advertisements from England were sent to the Council. An English publication, *The Journal of Park Administration, Horticulture and Recreation* to which the Botanic Gardens subscribed from 1937, contains numerous advertisements and illustrations of equipment (Appendix 3) from the firms Spencer, Heath & George Ltd of Middlesex; B. Hirst & Sons Ltd, Halifax; and C. Wicksteed& Co. (1920) Ltd, Kettering. The last of these did write to Sydney City Council promoting their equipment (Wicksteed 1928). One Sydney manufacturer R.B.C. Herbert of St. Leonards, inserted an advertisement for 'Playmaker' equipment in a 1938 report of The Parks and Playground Movement, asserting that they were the 'Originator of Modern Playground Pool and Gymnasium Equipment in Australia' (Fig 6).

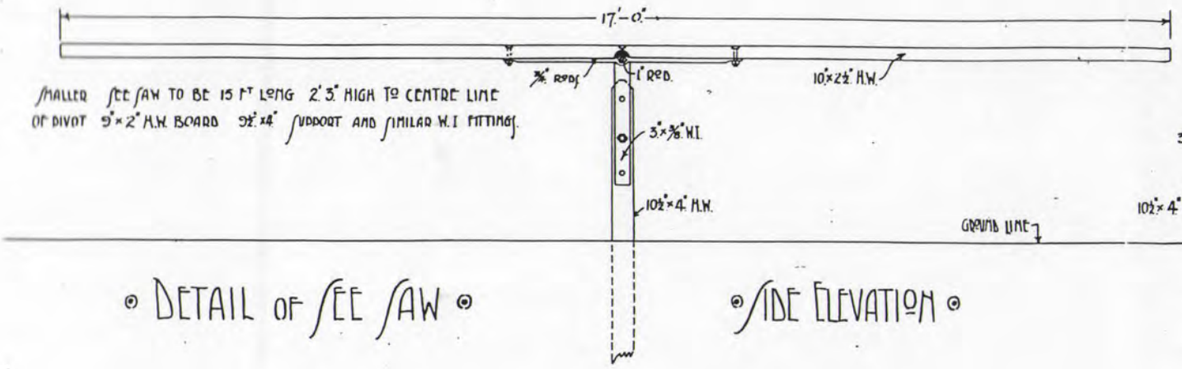
The City Engineer's Department Annual Report for 1933 (p.21) describes the outdoor equipment at Moore Park as consisting of

' modern galvanised iron pipe frame with cast malleable clamp fittings and ball bearings, it comprises the following units-

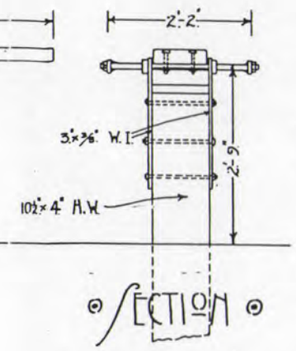
1 set Travelling Rings
1 set Flying Rings
2 sets Senior Swings
1 set Junior Swings
1 set See-saws
1 Gymnasium Frame, including Horizontal Bars, Flying Rings, Climbing Ladder and Metal Slide.
1 set Parallel Bars
1 Jungle Gym."

It is of interest to note that a report by the Parks and Recreation Department in July 1966 indicates that much of the above equipment was still in use. Other playgrounds included climbing ropes, chain climbing ladders, sliding poles and giant strides. (S.C.C. Annual Report 1936).

1 INCH SCALE DETAILS OF FITTINGS FOR GYMNASIUM PHILLIP PARK

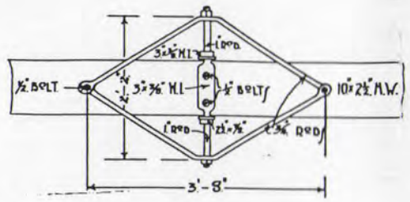


DETAIL OF SEE SAW



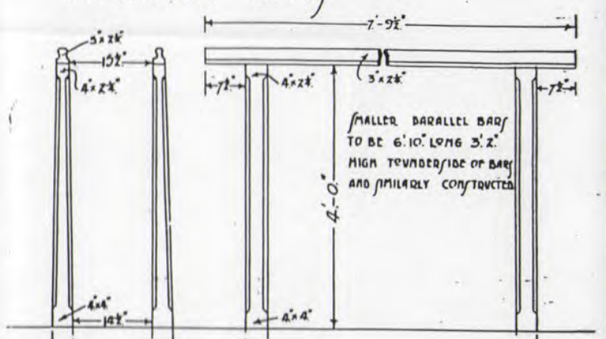
SIDE ELEVATION

SECTION



PLAN LOOKING UP

PARALLEL BARS



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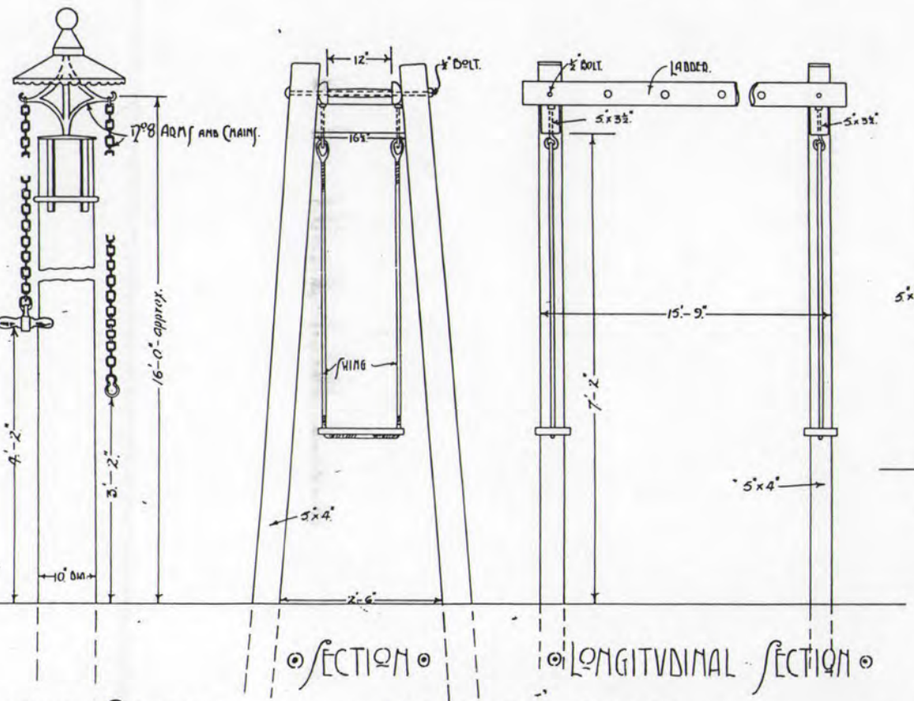
SIDE ELEVATION

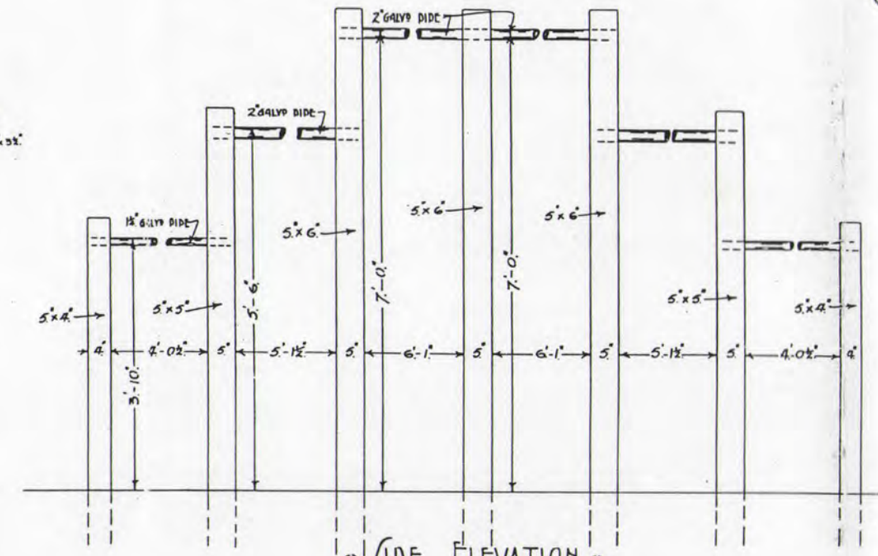


SECTION

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

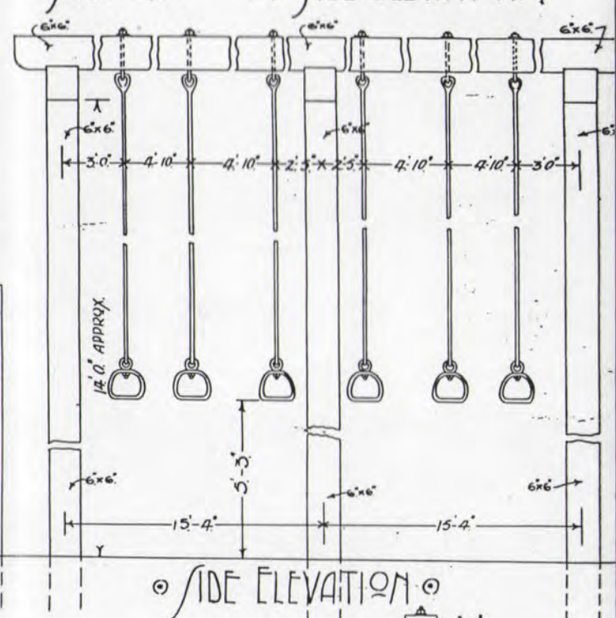
GIANT STRIDE

HORIZONTAL LADDER



SIDE ELEVATION

DETAIL OF HORIZONTAL BARS



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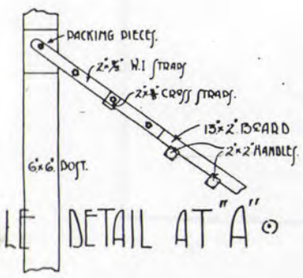
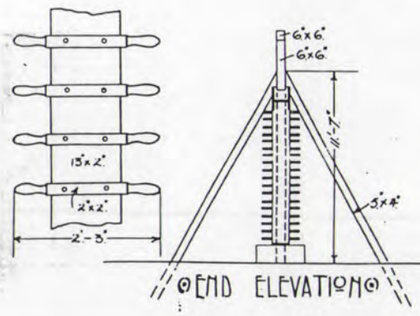
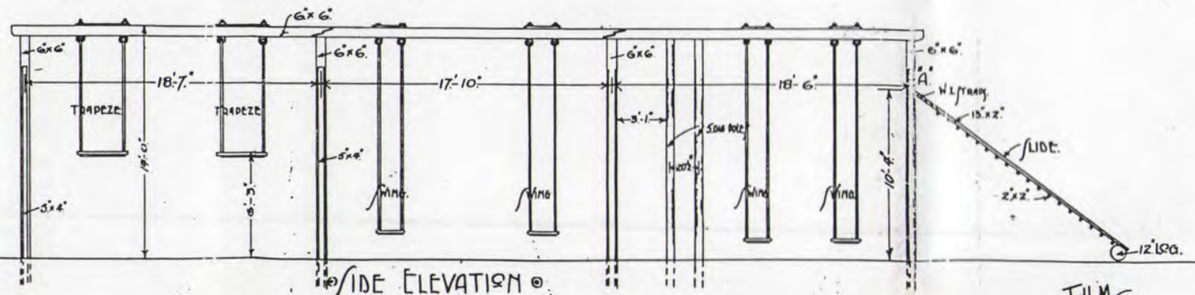


1" SCALE DETAIL AT "A"



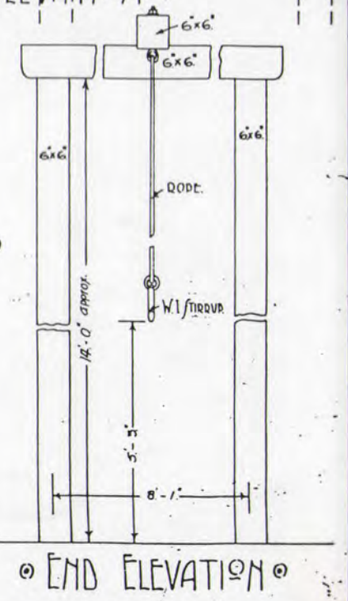
END ELEVATION

¼" SCALE DETAILS OF SWINGS AND TRAPEZE



SIDE ELEVATION

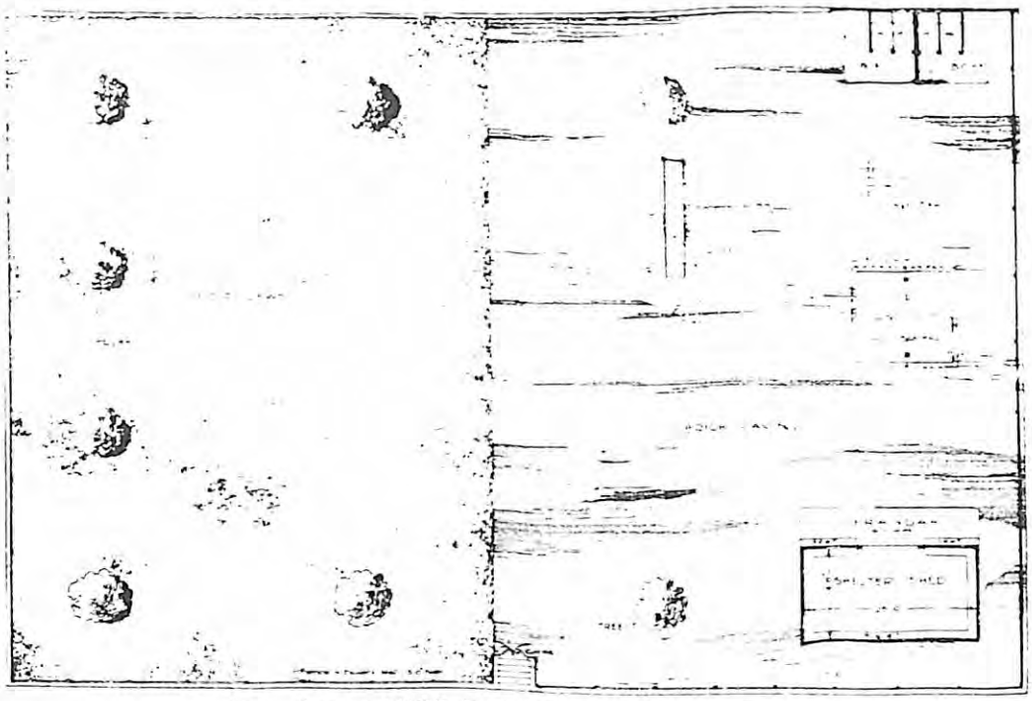
DETAILS OF ROMAN RINGS



END ELEVATION

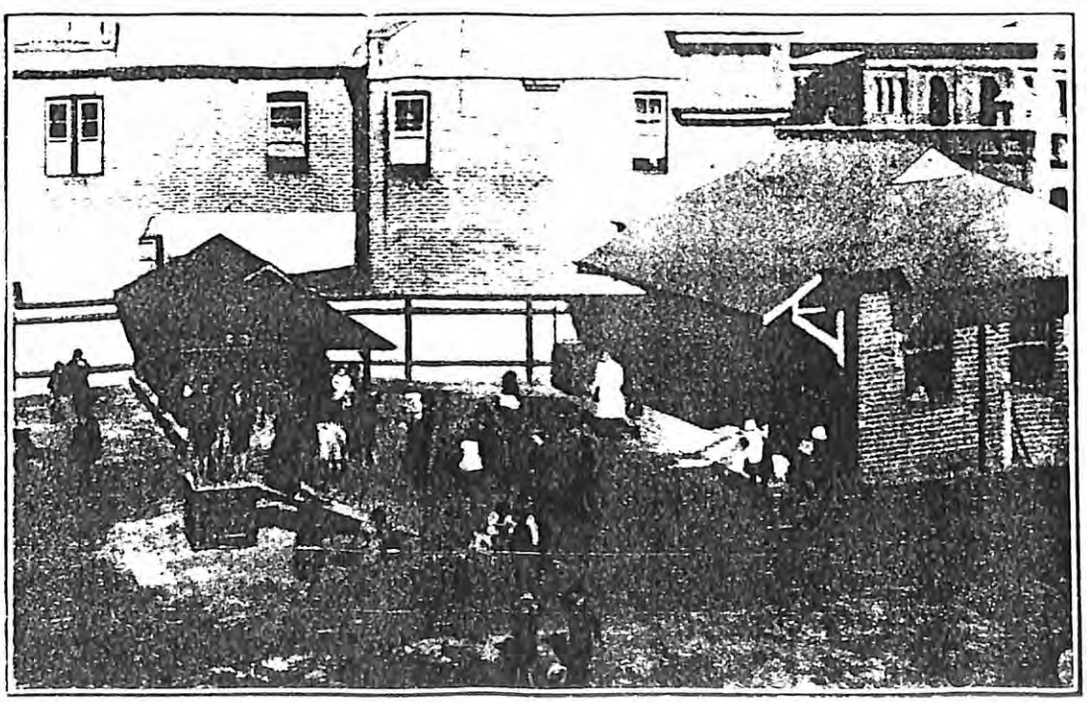
J.H.M 20.8.7

Fig. 1

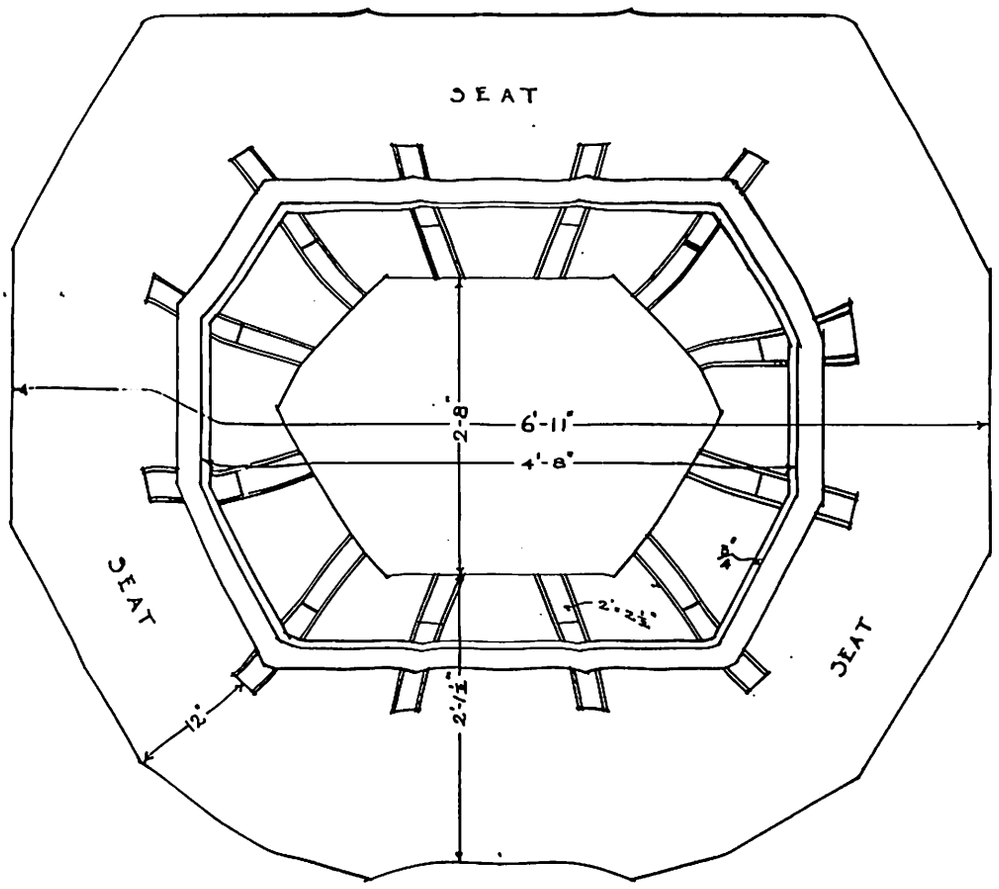


Plan of the LANCE PLAYGROUND Millers Point.

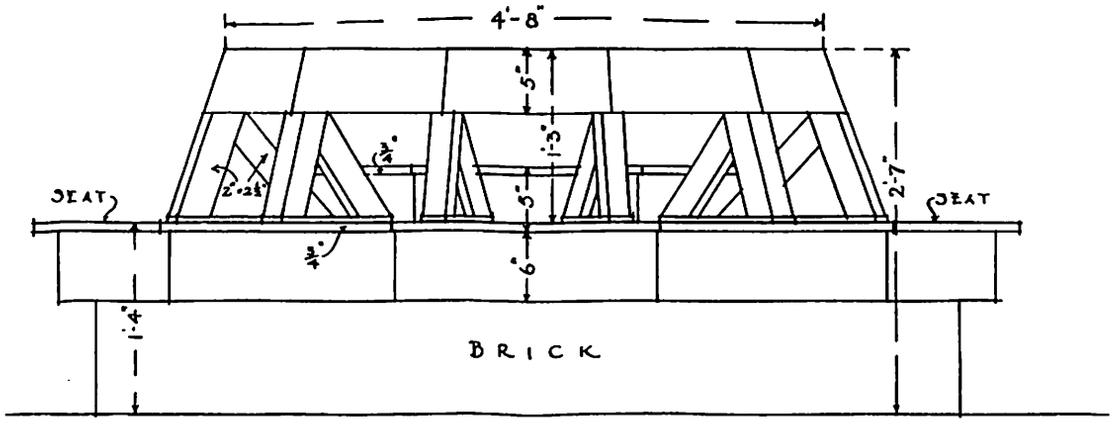
Fig. 2 a (above) Plan of Lance Playground and 2 b (below) as featured in the *Playgrounds Association of New South Wales* publication from 1913.



Portion of the LANCE PLAYGROUND



PLAN

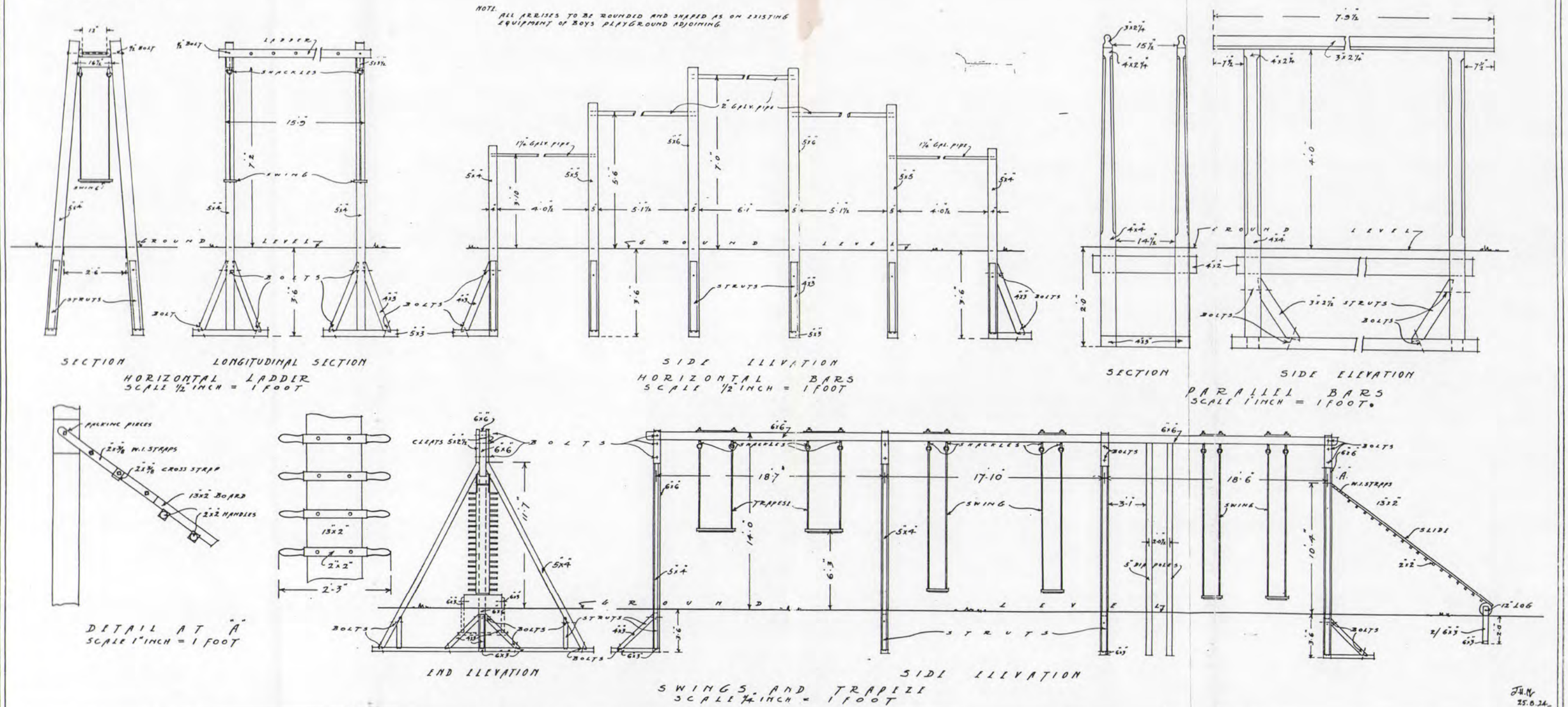


ELEVATION

ROUNDABOUT
CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND
SCALE ~ ONE INCH = ONE FOOT

Fig. 3 Plan for a Roundabout, Sydney City Archives

DRAWING Nº 2.



NOTE. ALL BOLTS SECURING TIMBERS TO BE 5/8" DIA. GALVANISED COMPLETE WITH NUTS AND WASHERS.

177

GIRLS PLAYGROUND ⟷ PRINCE ALFRED PARK
DETAILS OF EQUIPMENT
SCALES :: ONE INCH :: HALF AN INCH :: QUARTER INCH = ONE FOOT

23/9/24.

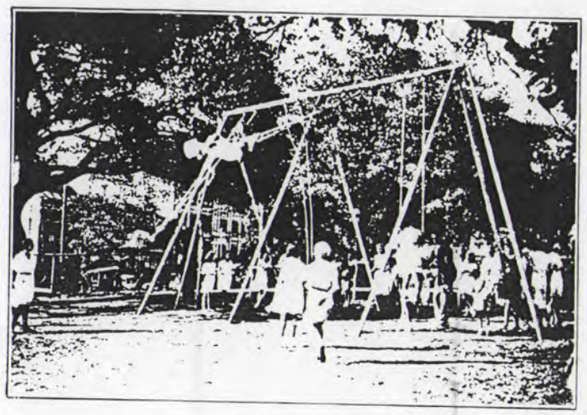
R. H. Brodrick.
City Surveyor

Fig. 4 Detail for Equipment at Prince Alfred Park

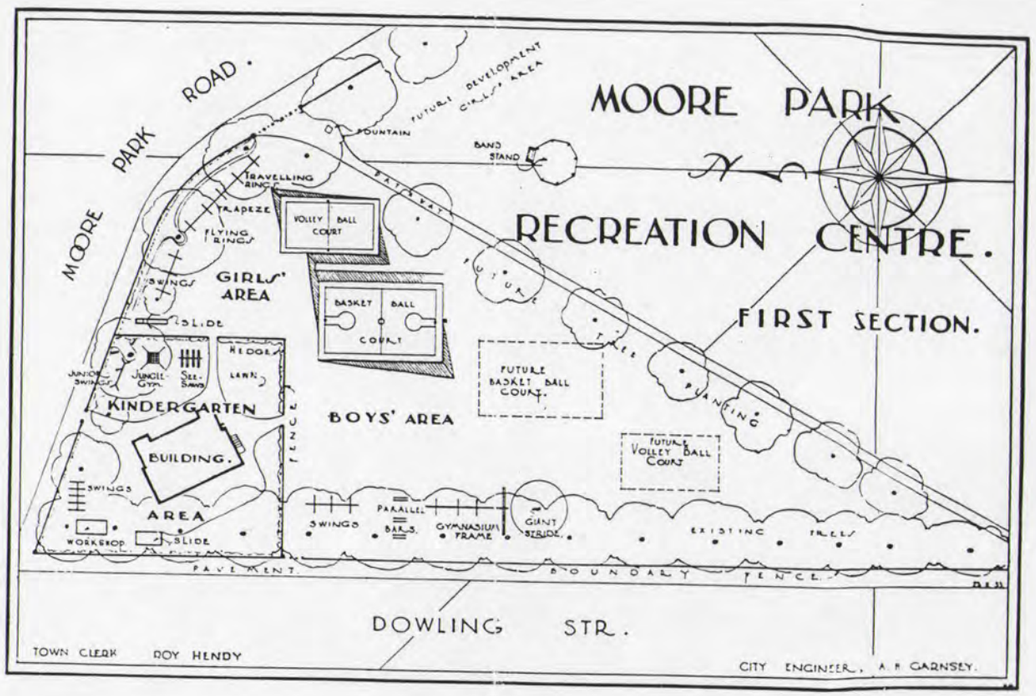
See-saws and Jungle Gym for Juniors.

Girls' Gymnastic Squad.

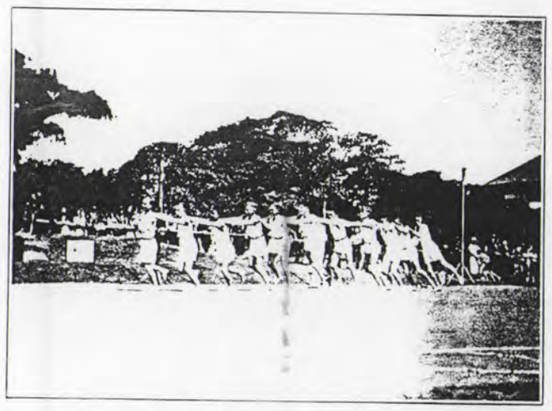
Games amongst the Juniors.



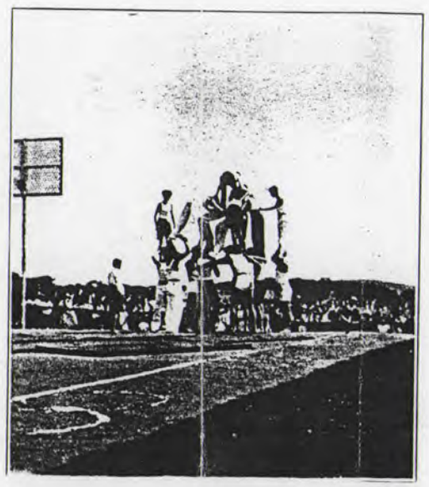
Girls' Swings.



Giant Stride, Boys' Slide and Gymnasium Frame.

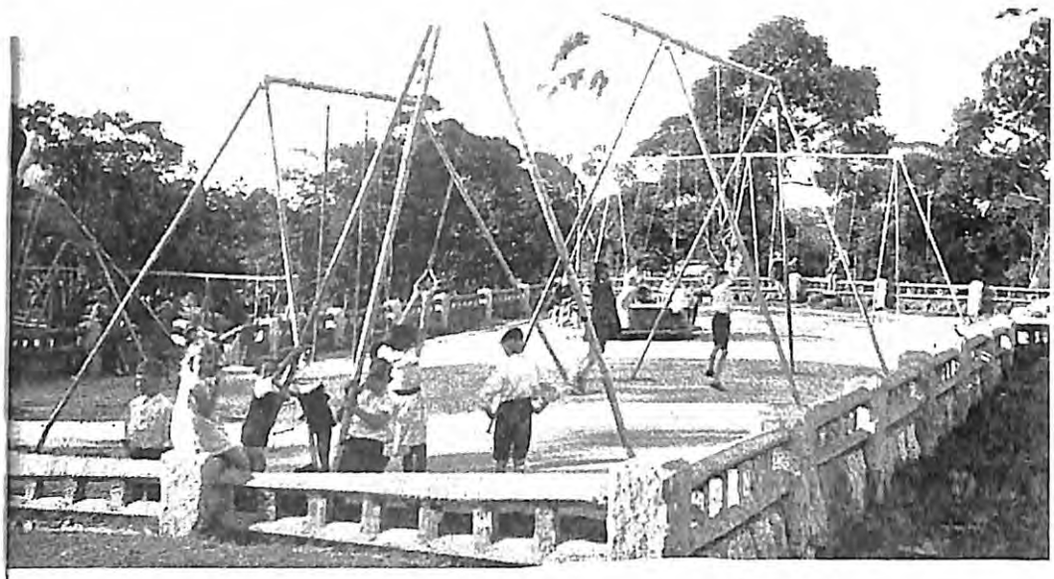


Boys' Athletic Troupe.



Boys' Basket Ball Teams.

Fig.5
Plan of the Playground and Activities,
Frank Saywell Memorial Kindergarten at Moore Park



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WEAR ELIMINATED — MAINTENANCE ELIMINATED.
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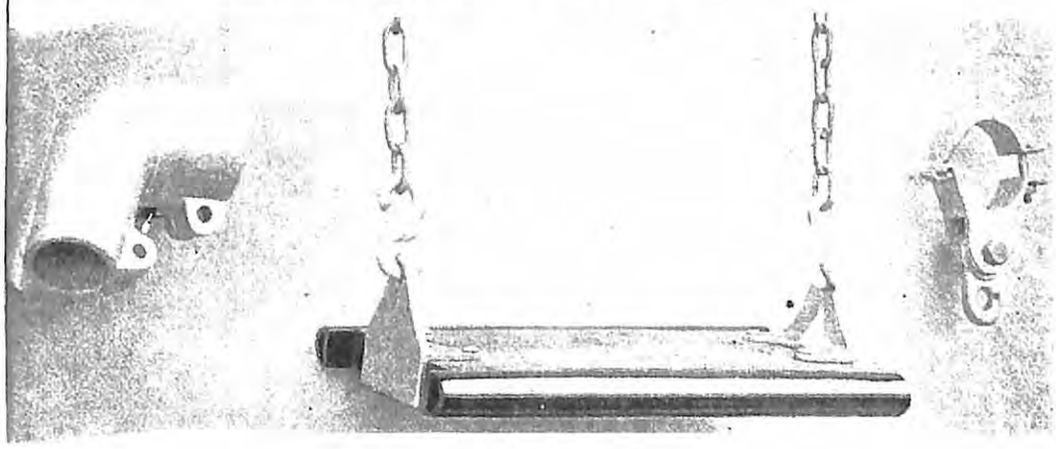


Fig. 6 Advertisement for 'Playmaker' equipment.

The most useful publication in assessing the type of equipment available by the end of this period is a publication by the Department of Health in Canberra, *Children's Playgrounds.* Due to an increase in playground supervisors there was not as much emphasis on large quantities of apparatus, although the selection of equipment according to the age group needs, and its placement in the playground, was considered important. The inclusion of specifications for the construction of suitable play equipment was aimed at providing local government authorities with a ready reference. In addition to a brief history of the Playground Movement in New South Wales, the publication provides ground plans for a number of the playgrounds established in the Sydney City area (Appendix 4) and photographs of playground equipment (Appendix 5).

2.5 1940s TO THE PRESENT DAY
Changing attitudes to play - Overseas influences

A radical change ocurred in playground design in Europe in the 1940s, later spreading to Britain and the United States. The playgrounds which were developed were known as adventure playgrounds (the terms junk or constructive playgrounds were also used). The reasons behind the change had to do with the improved understanding of child development and subsequent changes in the philosophy of child rearing.

Other important factors were the advent of the Second World War, and in the years following the war, the increasing development of high rise housing in Europe and Britain. During the war there was greatly reduced building activity, as most resources were devoted to the war effort, but it was a time for reflection, for thinking and planning for a better future. There was a renewed interest in town planning, reflecting the interest in planning as a process, and the advent of town planning as a profession, during and following the first world war. Planning was given a higher priority, and parks and playgrounds were the beneficiaries.

The original term adventure playground referred to a supervised playground, consisting primarily of waste construction materials and with a common theme of enabling children to develop their own play spaces - with adult help when necessary - in a free and permissive atmosphere. (Fig. 7)

> "The inspiration came from Denmark where the Emdrup Playground was opened in 1943, during the German occupation. Professor C.T. Sorenson, the famous landscape architect, had made many beautiful playgrounds in the City but was impressed that the children seemed to prefer messing around in junk yards and building sites and developing their own brand of play with the waste objects they found there ---- he started the Emdrup waste material playground in a new housing estate outside Copenhagen." (Hurtwood 1964, p.9)

The English playground reformer, Lady Allen of Hurtwood, visited the playground at Emdrup and played a large part in the promotion of adventure playgrounds in Britain. She summarised their significance as follows:

> Adventure playgrounds are perhaps the most revolutionary experiment we know for absorbing interest and releasing energies of young people. Children the world over have a deep urge to experiment with earth, fire, water and timber. They need to be masters of the materials at hand and be free to move them around to suit their own desires and to create their own seeming chaos. They delight to work with real tools, to use them in their own way and at their own pace without criticism or censure. (Hurtwood, as quoted in Brett, Moore and Provenzo, 1993)

Playgrounds in the United States appear to have changed very little during the early postwar period.

> "Traditional designs established in the early part of the century were largely copied and repeated. It was not until the mid 1960's that the new concepts of playgrounds began to develop as a result of a larger urban reform movement." (Brett Moore and Provenzo, 1993).

The playgrounds which did develop in the 60's were what have been referred to, in the above publication, as designer playgrounds, where architects and landscape architects have taken some of the ideas developed in adventure playgrounds - tunnels, earth mounding and the use of natural materials - and combined these in linked play, where children can move freely from one play experience to another. These were not generally supervised playgrounds, although a number of supervised playgrounds were constructed in the United States in the 1960's and in following years.

The environmental movement of the 60's reinforced the trend to natural materials - wood, rocks, water and plants - there was more appreciation that nature, in the form of hills, valleys, streams and woodlands, could be used as part of the play experience.

2.6 AUSTRALIA'S ADOPTION OF THE NEW IDEAS IN PLAYGROUND DESIGN

Development of the new playground ideas in Australia followed a predictable pattern. In the 1940's, Australian playgrounds generally, had fixed metal equipment - slides, see saws swings etc. - on level, cleared sites. There were some supervised playgrounds in the inner areas of the capital cities, but there was little change in the design of the playground or the type of equipment used, in both the supervised and unsupervised playgrounds, until the late 1960's and early 70's, when the new ideas began to have some influence.

During the 1970s *Australian Parks,* the journal of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation, featured a number of articles on the use of natural

materials, such as logs, the use of play sculpture and how water could be used in the playground, but there was not the same acceptance of the idea of creative play, where children could manipulate their own environment. An interview reported in *The Canberra Times* (9-8-72) with Margaret Hendry, Senior Landscape Architect with the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), gives some of the reasons for this,

> "---- children here (in the ACT) are able to dig in their own gardens and build cubby houses. Most are able to keep pets and they are usually taken on country picnics where they can light a barbecue fire and have some contact with nature."

The NCDC developed a number of playgrounds which were pioneers in Australian playground design, one example is Weston Park in Yarralumla, planned in 1968 and completed in the early 1970's. The playground used a combination of log climbing equipment, a cave, forts, tree houses and a shallow lake for paddling and, apart from some later additions, remains very little changed. (Fig. 8)

There have been examples of the European model of adventure playground in Australia, from time to time - mainly in Melbourne, and generally developed for the early high rise Housing Commission Estates - however most Australian playgrounds, referred to as adventure playgrounds have merely exchanged one form of fixed equipment for another, and are in no way comparable to the original concept.

Over the last 5 or 10 years a number of community based play grounds have been developed in Melbourne's outer suburbs, these have been largely American inspired, but the organisation of the projects, donation of materials and labour have been local community based. The playground at Eltham consists of a large open roofed structure containing various levels of decks, steps, ropes and poles for running, climbing, sliding and hiding (Fig. 9).

There are a number of other playgrounds, designed and built in various parts of Australia, which have had an influence on Australian playground design in general - the playground in Kambah Park, a suburb of Canberra, which features flying foxes, senior swings and various sliding and climbing structures, including a climbing net (Fig. 10).

2.7 SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS FROM THE 1940s TO THE 1960s

Playgrounds in Sydney, from the 1940s to the 1960s remained relatively unchanged, they typically featured several fixed pipe frame structures - swings, slides and see-saws, with perhaps a steamroller - on level and cleared sites. The emphasis was on physical fitness, the release of surplus energy and the

Fig. 7 Adventure Playground, Endrup, Denmark.

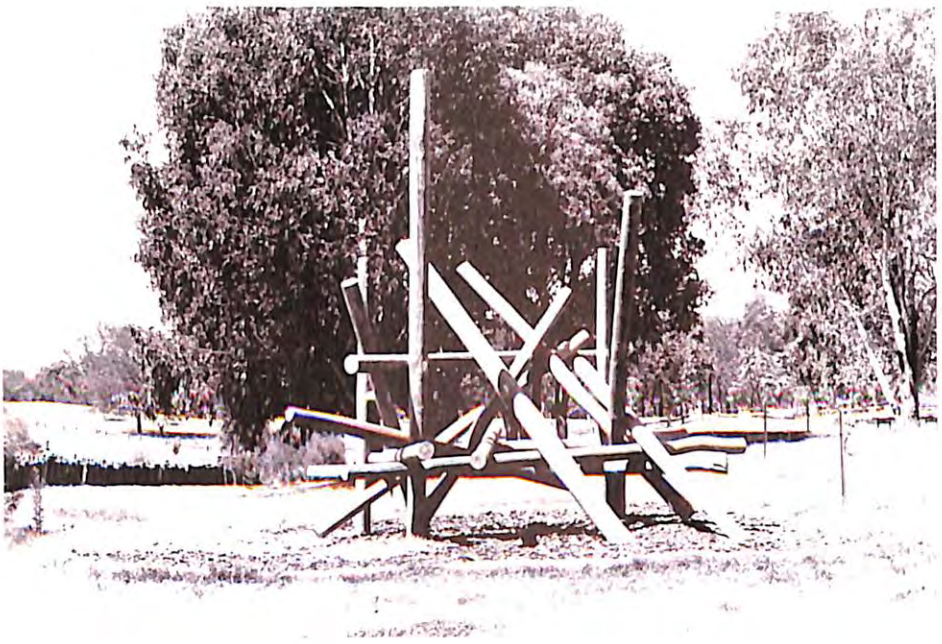


Fig. 8 a, b, and c.
Weston Park,
Yarralumla. ACT.
c.1972

Fig. 9 Eltham Playground, Eltham Victoria, 1996

Fig. 10 Flying foxes at Kambah Park, ACT, c.1995

development of gross motor skills. There were still several supervised playgrounds in the inner city, and these included field houses for indoor activities, areas for games and for apparatus such as swings, slides, etc. A standard town planning text *Town and Country Planning* (Brown and Sherrard, 1951 p.159) described how a playground should be set out:

> 'A fully developed playground should provide for the segregation of the children according to age groups, and except for the youngest there should be sex segregation. The main subdivision of the area should provide for (a) a free play area which should contain a field house, (b) an area for apparatus such a swings, slides etc. and (c) space for organised games such as basketball.'

Various attempts had been made to introduce overall planning in Sydney, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (1948) had advanced various proposals for increased open space, including play space, but due to rising land values and lack of funds many of these were not acted on. In October 1968, the State Planning Authority of NSW released its *'Sydney Region Outline Plan'* - a broad strategic plan designed to cope with the projected population increase from an existing 2.7 million to 5.5 million by the year 2000. Open space proposals ranged in size from large areas of regional open space to 3 different types of children's play areas, referred to as :

Playlots, approximately a building block in size and comprising simple safe apparatus with a Playhouse, open space for running and a paved area for wheeled toys.

Playgrounds of 1-3 acres which were to include space for ball games, equipment for pre-school and school aged children, an 'adventure' playground, Natural Features area, paddling pool and sand pit, a shelter and a play leaders office.

Playfields of 10-12 acres up to 20-30 acres if combined with a park and including facilities for various sports and for picnicking.

The inclusion of buildings in the Playlots and Playgrounds suggests that the planners assumed a continuation of the practice of supervised playgrounds - these had almost completely ceased in Sydney by this time. The use of American terminology, such as the term playlot, suggests the continuing influence of American experience in the recreation field.

There appears to have been little change in the play equipment used in Sydney parks and playgrounds until the late 1960s and early 70s, but there was earlier recognition that changes were taking place elsewhere : A report by the Sydney City Council City Engineer. (5-10-48), based on a trip he had undertaken to Europe and the United States, stated that he was impressed with much of what he saw,

> "---- a number of very attractive and well supervised playgrounds. in Stockholm", and in New York - "large pipes through which children could crawl ---- provision of a dead tree, stripped of all its leaves and branches --- in a corner of a Swedish playground --- in the same playground a number of tree stumps of different heights and diameters, packed closely together --- ." and in another playground in Stockholm " an old truck purchased at a junk yard."

It is difficult to find direct evidence of how these new ideas, which so impressed the City Engineer, were implemented. A plan prepared in 1954, for a small park in Young Lane Redfern (Fig. 11), obtained from the Sydney City Archives, shows a conventional layout of swings, jungle gym, slide and roundabout, and similar equipment was nominated for the Gowrie Street playground in Newtown, on a plan, dated 1961. A very different design was prepared for Knight and Flora Street Erskineville, this plan, dated 1965, gives details of two proposed play structures, a jet plane and a rocket, (Figs.12-14) to be purpose built for the park, but there is no evidence that these were ever built, they are certainly not there now.

There were similar structures (possibly built in the 1960s) in some Sydney parks. An aeroplane, constructed out of pipe and intended to stimulate imaginative play, was at Bronte Park until quite recently (Fig.15), and a variety of similar structures, such as carriages, also constructed out of pipe, were in parks in Blacktown and Penrith until at least the 1980s. It is not possible to say, whether these were all purpose made, or supplied from playground manufacturers, due to the difficulty in obtaining catalogues of the period. At Blackheath in the Blue Mountains play equipment constructed by engineer Mr Dick West was recently removed for safety reasons. Mr West constructed over 30 rockets which were installed in parks over NSW (SMH 3.11.97)

Another unusual type of play item, a play sculpture, was constructed at the Phillip Park Playground in 1951 (Fig. 16). A research project on the Phillip Park Recreation Centre (Barley, 1995) gives the following description:

> 'In 1951. Anita Aarons produced and installed a reinforced concrete playground structure at the Phillip Park Playground. Variously called "Mother and Child" and "Playground Sculpture", the work is reminiscent of Henry Moore's fluid male forms. It was designed to be played upon and played around. The philosophical basis for its installation was that if children were exposed to cultural influences such as art, sculpture and drama, they would have a better chance to succeed as adults.'

There is a reference to the existence of this sculpture in *Construction Review* of February 1970, in an article devoted to play sculpture. There is also a reference to a Harry Seidler designed sculpture, 'a maze of curved concrete masonry walls which can be entered by crawling through a long pipe' in a play area attached to the Housing Commission flats in Roseberry (Fig.17). The architect designed, or

sculpture inspired playground was a new approach to playground design , most were still in the hands of engineers and still involved the traditional gymnastic style of equipment.

Lane Cove Council Engineer's Report (May, 1965) provides evidence of the type of play equipment considered suitable at the time. The Parks and Cultural Commitee was requested by the council to find a suitable site "as a playground for young children up to 4 years of age by installing playground equipment suitable for this age group." The suggested equipment was set out by the engineer:

Nursery swing
Junior slide
Self propelling swing
Climbing frame (small)
Swinging boat

The above list shows that little had changed in the intervening years, at least in Local Government, and that new ideas in children's play had yet to take hold.

2.8 TYPICAL SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS OF THE 1970s AND 80s

In the 1970s and 80s there was considerably more variation in playground design and equipment in Sydney parks and playgrounds than in previous years. This was due to a number of factors - overseas influences; the increasing recognition of the importance of play; the environmental movement and its stress on the beneficial effects of nature and natural materials - rocks, water and trees; and the increasing amount of local and imported playground equipment available.

Some Sydney Councils took advantage of these changes while others kept their playgrounds virtually unchanged. Photographs (from a thesis, prepared in 1973 as part of the B. Arch degree at Sydney University by Michael Stuart) show the layout and equipment of the 10 playgrounds located in the suburb of Malabar, part of the Randwick Municipality. The playgrounds generally contain swings and monkey bars, with some featuring see-saws, slides and roundabouts (Fig. 18).

Many Councils adopted the new 'adventure playground' equipment, marketed as such by manufacturers of the time (Fig 19). The use of the word adventure signifying the use of a new material, namely logs, and in many cases used in a fairly un-adventurous way.

Information collected from the Playground Equipment section of the Yellow Pages directory in 1984 (van den Broek, 1984) advertised imported equipment, from Sweden, Denmark and the US, consisting of structures made up of vertical poles of pressure treated pine or steel, with decks made from timber or steel, some with waterproof bonded ply panels, fibreglass slides and nylon ropes. Some

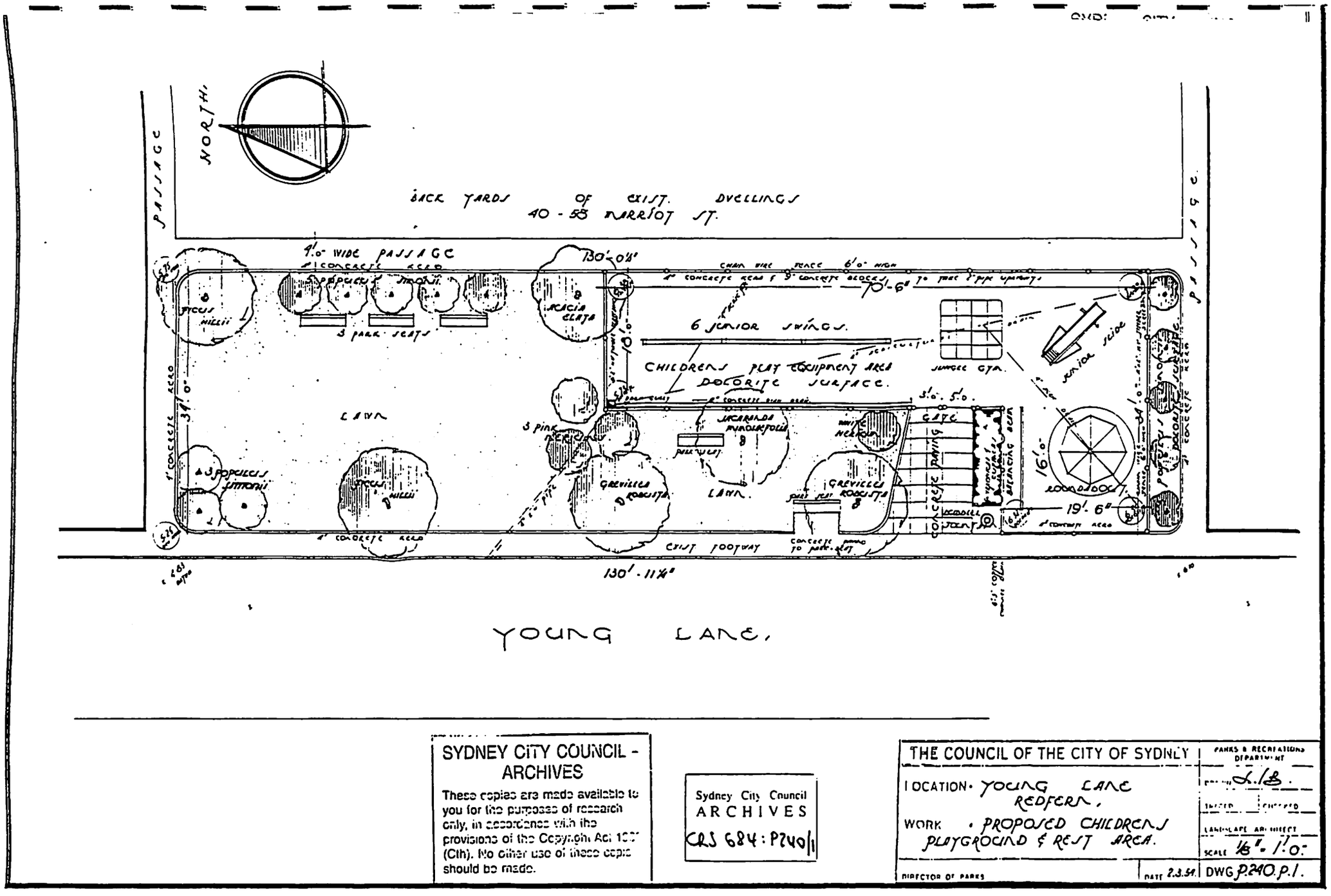


Fig. 11 Plan for a playground, Young Lane, Redfern

Fig. 12 Proposal for a playground in Erskineville

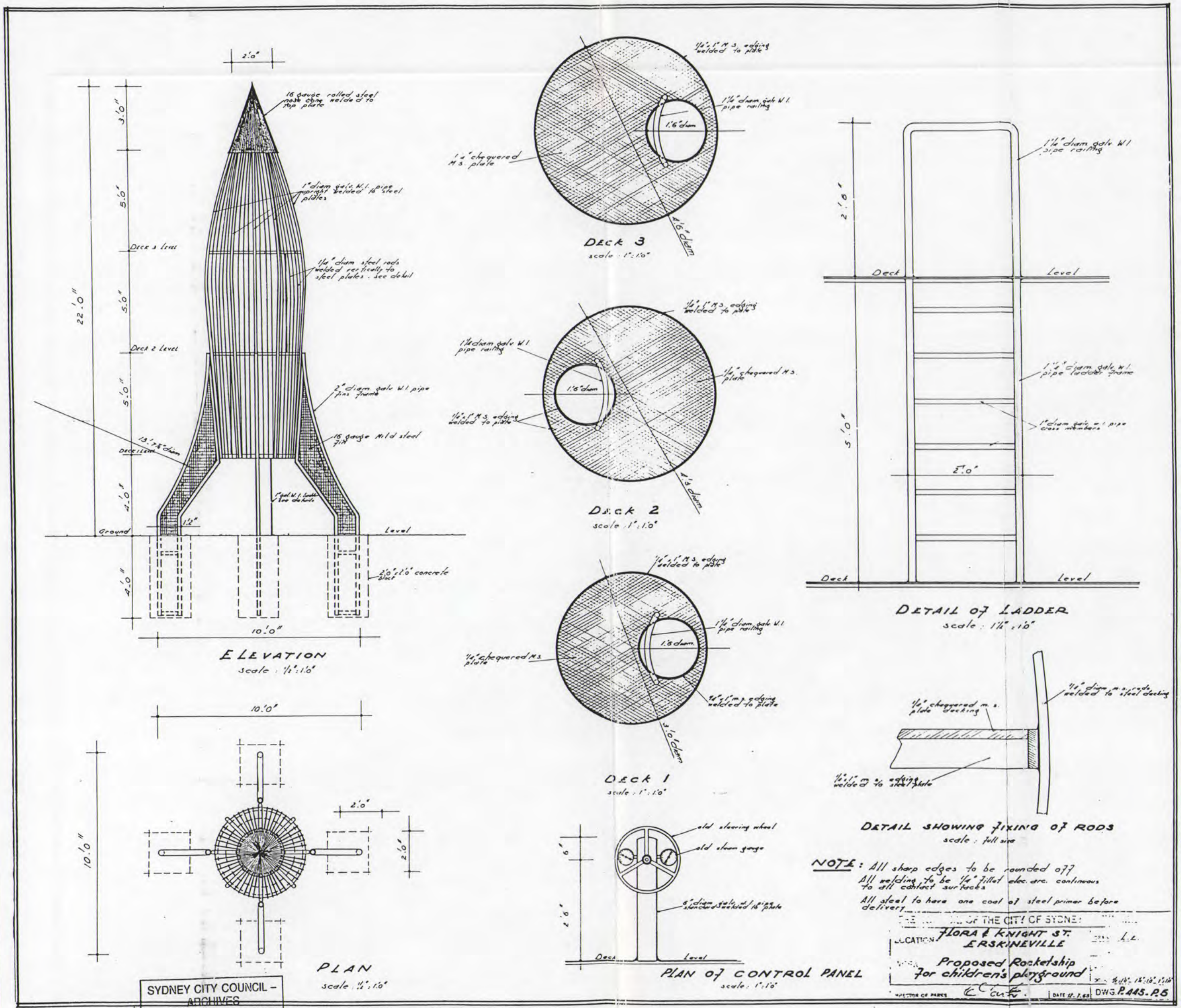
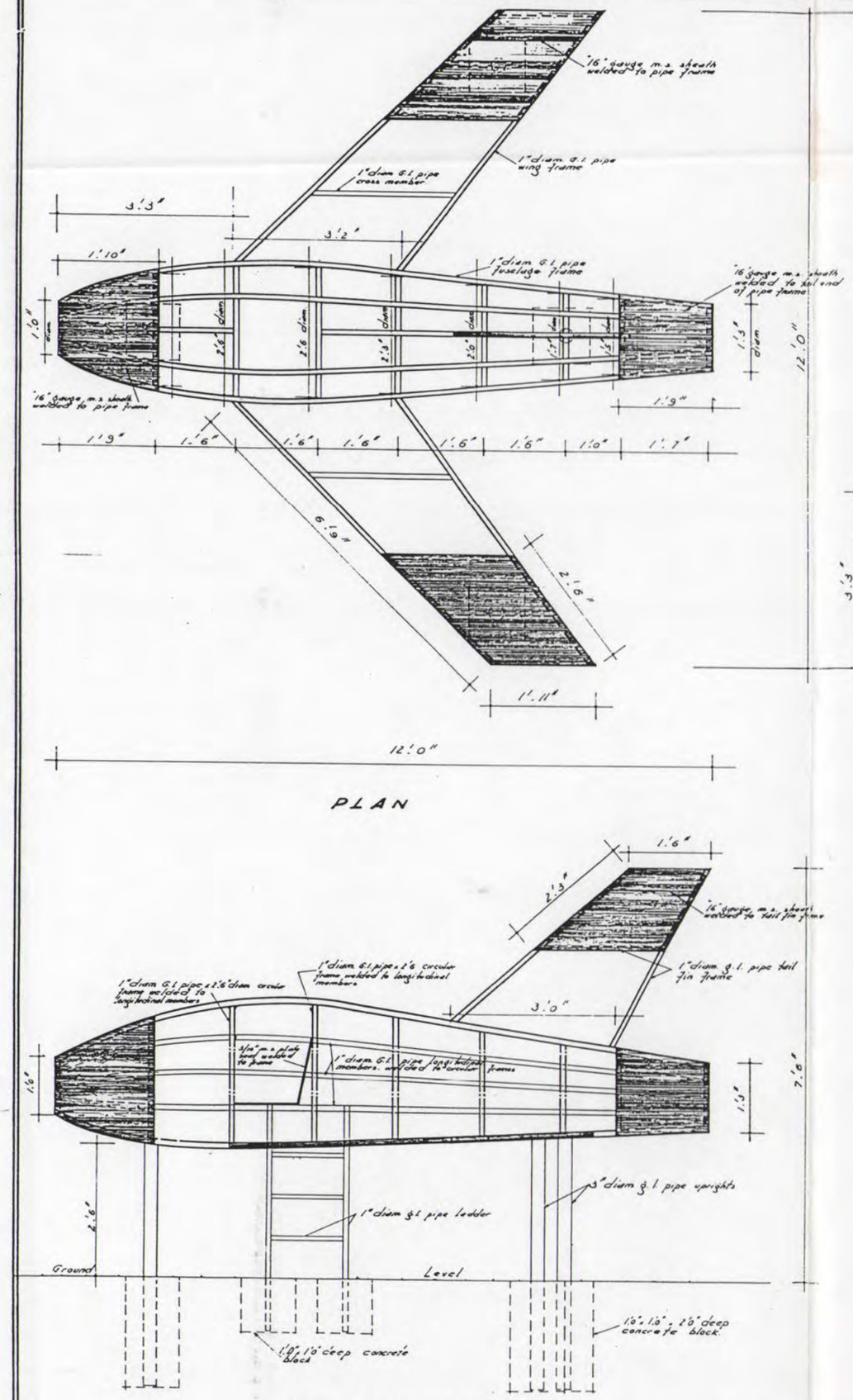
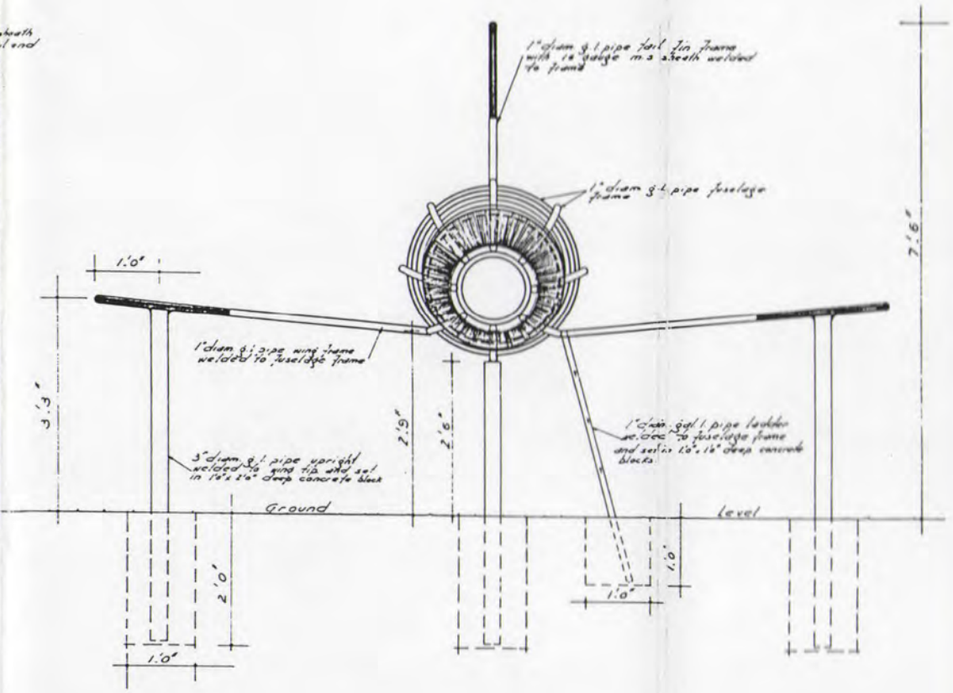

ELEVATION
scale : ½":1'0"
DECK 3
scale : 1":1'0"
DECK 2
scale : 1":1'0"
DECK 1
scale : 1":1'0"
DETAIL OF LADDER
scale : 1½":1'0"
DETAIL SHOWING FIXING OF RODS
scale : full size
PLAN
scale : ¼":1'0"
PLAN OF CONTROL PANEL
scale : 1":1'0"
NOTE: All sharp edges to be rounded off
All welding to be ¼" fillet elec. arc. continuous to all contact surfaces
All steel to have one coat of steel primer before delivery
FLORA & KNIGHT ST.
ERSKINEVILLE
Proposed Rocketship for children's playground
DWG. P.445. P.5

Fig. 13 Plan for a Rocketship, Erskineville



PLAN

SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

NOTE
All welding to be ¼" fillet a.b.c. arc. continuous to all contact surfaces
All sharp edges to be rounded off
All steel to have one coat of steel primer before delivery

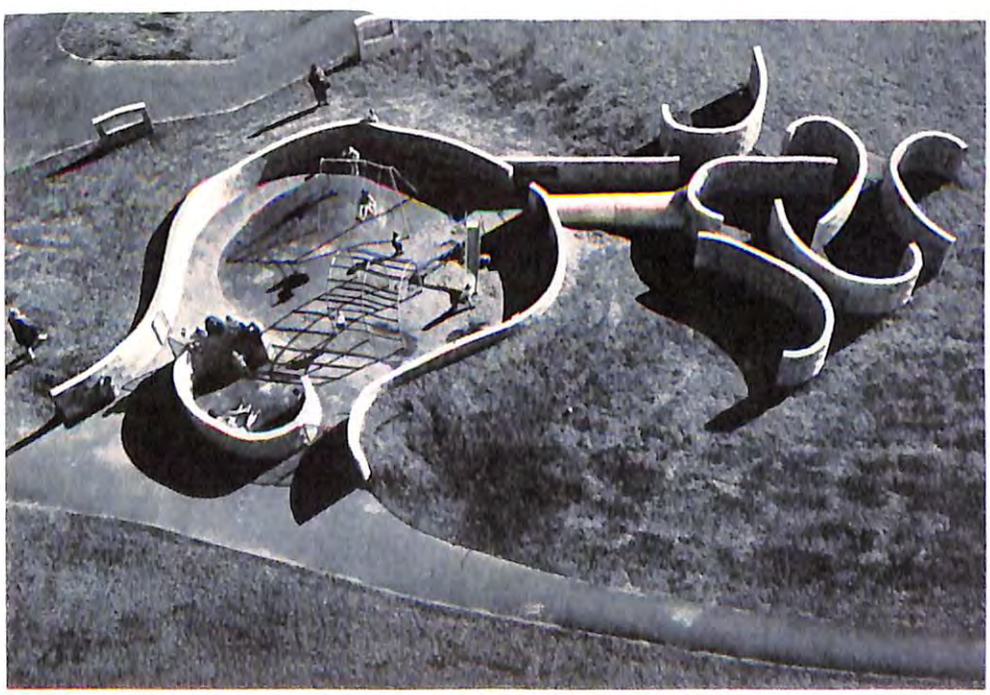
KNIGHT & FLORA St
ERSKINEVILLE
Proposed "JET PLANE" for children's playground
SCALE 1" = 1'0"
DWG P445.P6

Fig. 14 Plan for a Jet Plane Erskineville

Fig. 15 a, b, c.
Aeroplane
Bronte Park
c.1993

Fig. 16 (above) 'Mother and Child', Anita Aarons, Phillip Park, 1997

Fig. 17 (below) Harry Seidler, Housing Commission Flats Rosebery,
Photo: Max Dupain, Constructional Review 1970, p.56



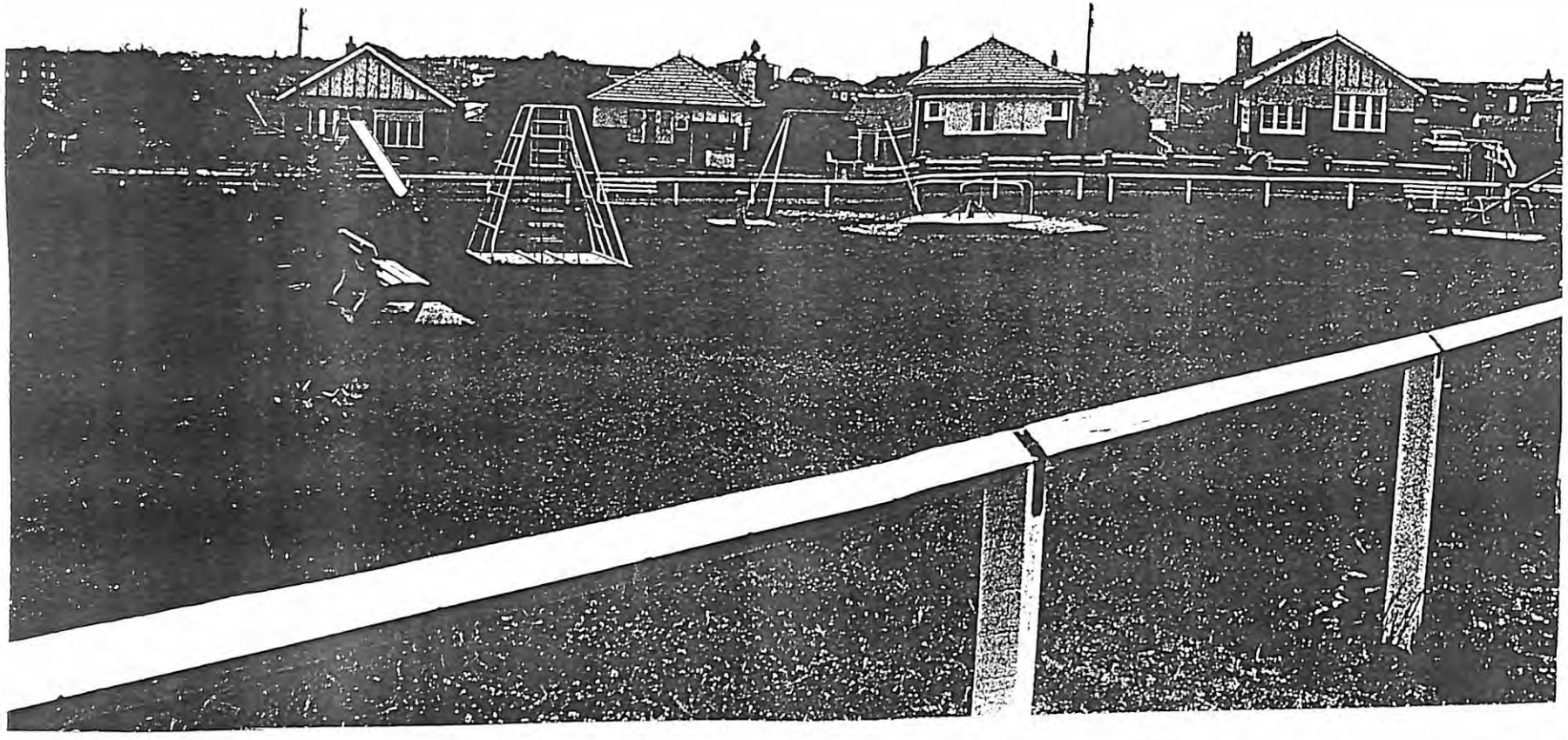
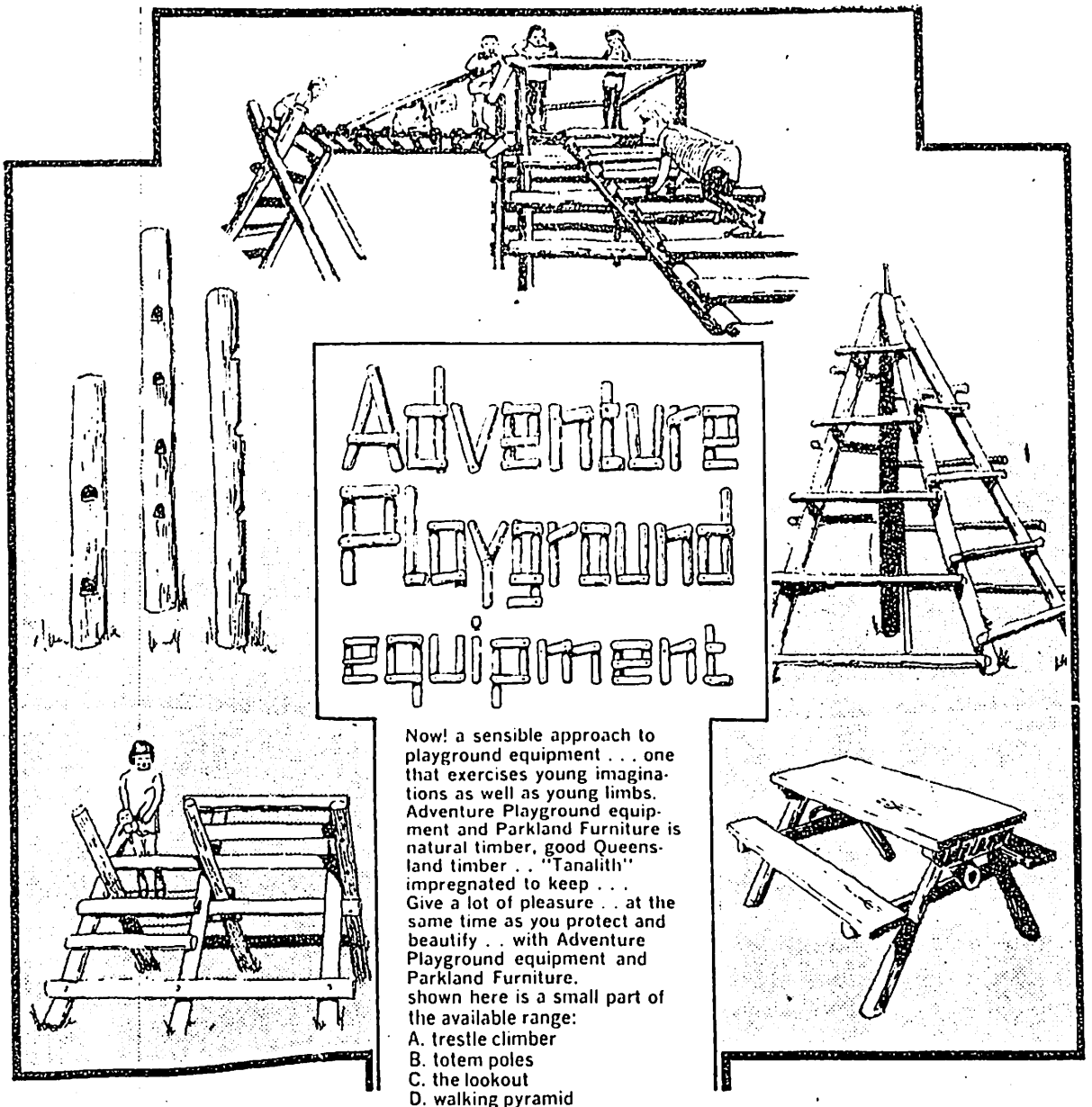


Fig. 18 Play Equipment, Randwick Municipality, Michael Stuart, B. Arch (Syd.) 1973



The Sunday Mail Family Section, June 16, 1974

Fig. 19 Adventure Playground Equipment Advertisement

of these were manufactured or assembled in Australia under licence. Local products were modified versions of the same style of equipment made from square cut pine, pine logs, with galvanised steel or log handrails and in some cases particle board panels. Many of these materials had only limited life, and many have been subsequently replaced, however the designs, particularly of the more expensive imported variety, have become the standard design for many councils.

3.0 SAFETY CONCERNS AND RISK MANAGERS

Safety has been a major issue in playground design since about the 1980s. In 1983 The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia published *Play Without Pain* (Root, 1983). This document drew attention to the dangers which were inherent in playgrounds and made recommendations for improving safety.

Following on from this the Standards Association of Australia (SAA) produced a number of Australian standards governing playground equipment in parks, schools and domestic use, as well as guidelines for supervised adventure playgrounds. In 1989 the SAA released an updated draft standard, DR91167. Public comment on the draft was considerable, so much so that the draft was withdrawn for further consultation (Stranger, 1996). In 1996 the Standards Association produced the first of its new standards, AS/NZS 4422, 1996 *Playground Surfacing Specifications, Requirements & Test Methods* (Appendix 7) and followed by AS 4486.1 *Playgrounds, Playground Equipment, Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation* in 1997 .

During this period there have been a number of Conferences held on the subject of safety. Many councils now employ risk managers to advise them of problems which may arise, and for which they may be considered negligent and subject to legal action. This has resulted in the removal of much equipment, and in some cases confrontation with parents and /or children, over individual items such as rockets (Fig. 20). It has also had the effect of limiting innovative design(but that is not the subject of this report).

A publication *Local Government Playground Safety Issues* (Corkery and Riordan, 1994, p.18) prepared for the NSW Department of Health discusses the problems facing local government

> ' --- many public playgrounds still contain play equipment installed in the 40s and 50s - galvanised pipe structures, some still available in equipment catalogues, that are recognised to be non-conforming with the existing play equipment standards.'

The report summarises findings from a survey of all 180 NSW councils carried out in 1993 by the consultants. There was a 60% response rate to the questionnaire and in answer to the question:

'Which of the following describes the design of most of the play equipment in your council's playgrounds?' one third of responding councils identified the first category.

- old fashioned, single structures of galvanised iron pipe
- timber/pine logs in single structures or connected
- contemporary plastic and powder-coated aluminium, arranged in connected structures

In October 1994, the NSW Department of Health funded the Kidsafe Safety Project. The basic aim was to collect baseline data on playgrounds in NSW. A randomly selected sample of 240 playgrounds, containing 862 items of equipment, was used for a survey *The LGA Playground Safety Study.* For results from the survey and recommendations refer Appendix 8. In October 1996 a follow up document *Phase 11: Recommended Action Plan Following the NSW Local Government Playground Safety Study.* A number of more detailed recommendations were made including examining and auditing all existing equipment and removing all undesirable (dangerous) equipment.

4.0 CURRENT SITUATION - SYDNEY PLAYGROUNDS

The limited survey of older style equipment in Council parks, conducted for this report, was confined to the Sydney Metropolitan area and its main focus was the identification of relevant items of heritage significance. Information gained from the survey, from field visits and from discussion with Playfix, a firm set up to advise Councils on bringing playgrounds up to standard, it appears that many councils are well into a program of replacement of metal jungle gyms, see-saws and slides, and log structures, (roundabouts and rockets having been previously replaced or modified).This equipment is being replaced with the type of design shown in Figure 21, - much of it produced by a single manufacturer.

A total of 41 Local Authorities were contacted by letter, 26 of these replied, 22 by mail and 4 by telephone. A few councils supplied detailed lists of equipment, some including dates of construction, and in some cases photographs and catalogues were also supplied, (catalogues were generally less than 10 years old). The following playgrounds / parks, summarised below, are used as examples to give an indication of the present situation, they in no sense constitute an inventory, being only the result of photographs supplied by councils or from brief visits to selected locations.

- Milson park, North Sydney - metal swings, slides etc. replaced with Ausplay equipment (Fig. 22)
- Grasmere reserve and Euroka/Anerum street playground, North Sydney - log play equipment replaced with Ausplay equipment (Fig. 23)
- Tunks park, Cammeray - log play equipment replaced with purpose designed playground (Fig. 24)
- Bronte Park, Bronte - aeroplane replaced within last three years (Fig. 15)
- Elkington Park, Balmain - merry-go-round retained but fixed in position (Fig. 25)
- Enmore Park, Enmore - rocket modified by closing access to upper levels (Fig. 26)
- Helen Street Reserve, Lane Cove - retention of log play equipment (Fig. 27)
- Apex Reserve, Tambourine Bay road - steamroller and metal equipment retained (Fig. 28)

- Hughes Ave. Reserve, Curtis Oval, Upjohn park and Darcy Road Reserve, Parramatta - retention of log and metal equipment (Figs. 29)

Included in the above list are some examples of how older play equipment can be modified to achieve contemporary standards. These include the merry go round at Elkington park, retained but permanently fixed in position, probably the only one of its type still in a park in Sydney, and the rocket in Enmore Park, made safer by preventing access to the two upper levels.

There are a number of examples of log play equipment, including the parks listed in Parramatta, and several parks in Lane Cove, including the Helen Street Reserve, an award winning park in its time. (The park was designed by Harry Howard and Associates, Architects and Landscape Architects, and completed 1973-1975. The park was given a Merit Award Category C by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects in 1978.)

One of the difficulties in retaining timber equipment is its inherently short life, however the better examples should be recorded as recommended in Section 5.0.

Residents angered by removal of playground equipment

By JO ARBLASTER

Popular playground equipment in a Willoughby park has been removed by council workers because it did not conform with safety standards.

Local residents are angry that play equipment in Muston Park has been torn up and disposed of after providing entertainment to children for more than 20 years.

The rocket ship and elephant frame were removed from the park in Penshurst Street last week without consultation with local residents or park users.

Mr Alastair Spate and his wife, Sandra, live nearby and take their three children to Muston Park regularly.

Mr Spate said: "Mothers come [to the park] from all over because of the variety of its equipment and its position."

But Willoughby Council's open space manager, Ms Julie Whitfield, the items "do not conform with safety standards.

"You cannot have structures that form entrapment where an adult cannot reach a child," she said. "If someone happens to get hurt, you have got to be able to get them out."

The rocket ship had been a popular attraction in the park for close to 25 years, as had the elephant frame, which Ms Whitfield said had developed "corroded feet".

Mrs Spate said she was disappointed the equipment had been removed.

"The children enjoyed playing on it and I feel what all this is doing is taking responsibility away from the parent and putting it in the hands of local governments.

Mrs Spate said it was up to parents to decide which equipment their children could play on.

Ms Whitfield said she was surprised there had been complaints about the removal of the equipment. "Council make the decisions on behalf of the community," she said. "People may like the thing but if it doesn't conform to safety standards, it still has to be a decision made by the broader community, not just one or two people."

Equipment was removed from another Willoughby Park last week. Two swings were taken from Bales Park in Stanley Street and the council has no immediate plans to replace them. Ms Whitfield said the reason for their removal was the seats were in the form of fibreglass animals with heavy galvanised pedals.

"Swing standards these days say that the seats have to be composed of rubberised material so that if they hit someone in the face, [people] do not sustain damage."

Sohtaka Kikuchi, 4, of Neutral Bay, playing in Bales Park.

Photograph by ELIZABETH DOBBIE

Fig. 20 Anger over removal of Play Equipment, *Northern Herald* 27.10.94

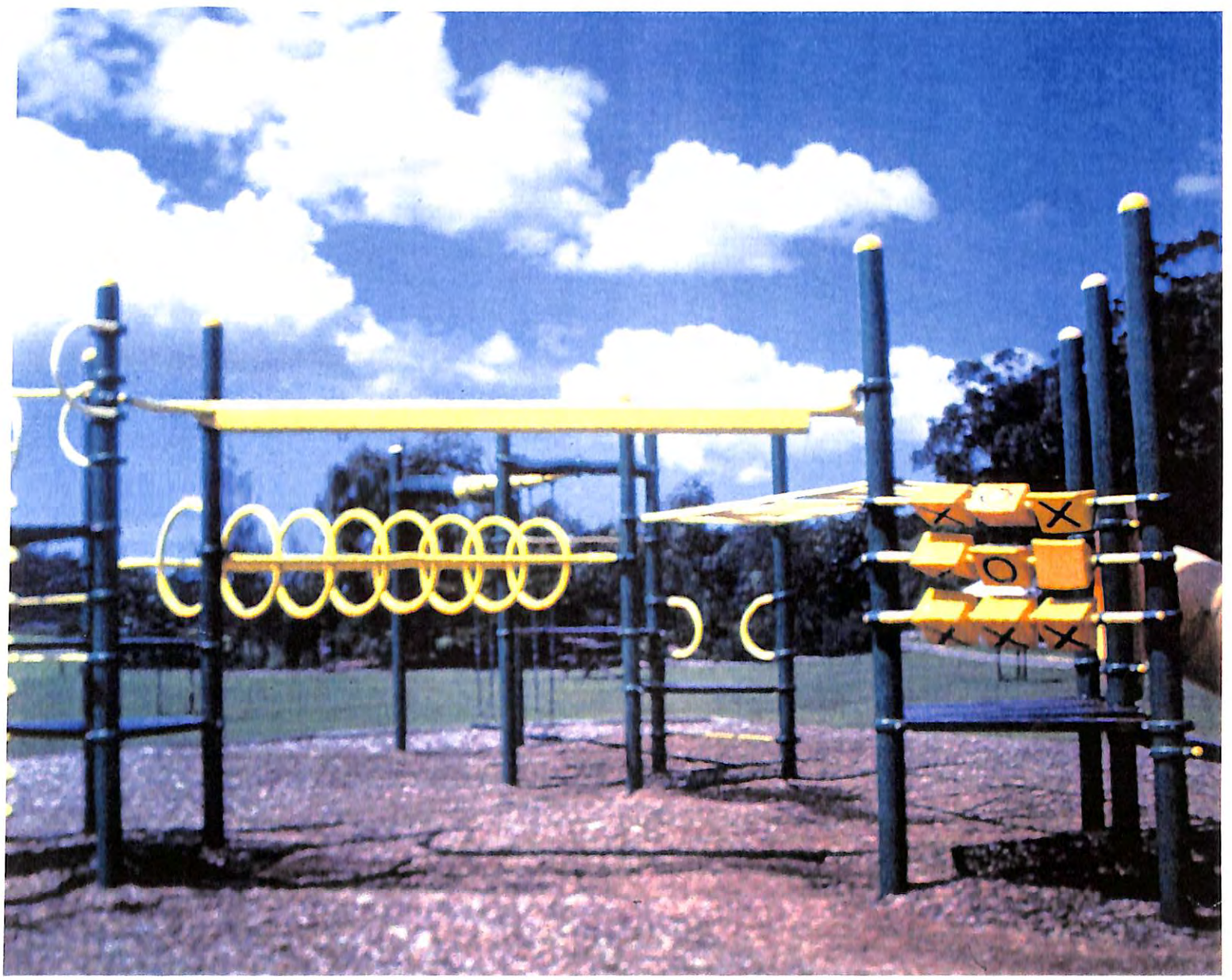


Fig. 21 A typical selection of Ausplay Equipment

Fig. 2 2 Milson Park equipment now replaced with Ausplay -northern side of the park (left-hand side) and southern side (right-hand side).

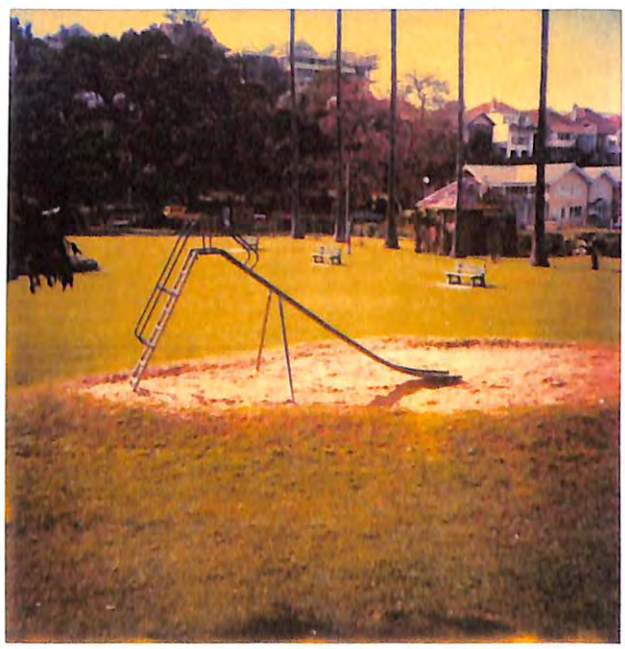


Fig. 23 Play equipment in Children's Playground, Grasmere Reserve, North Sydney before repairs, January 1989.

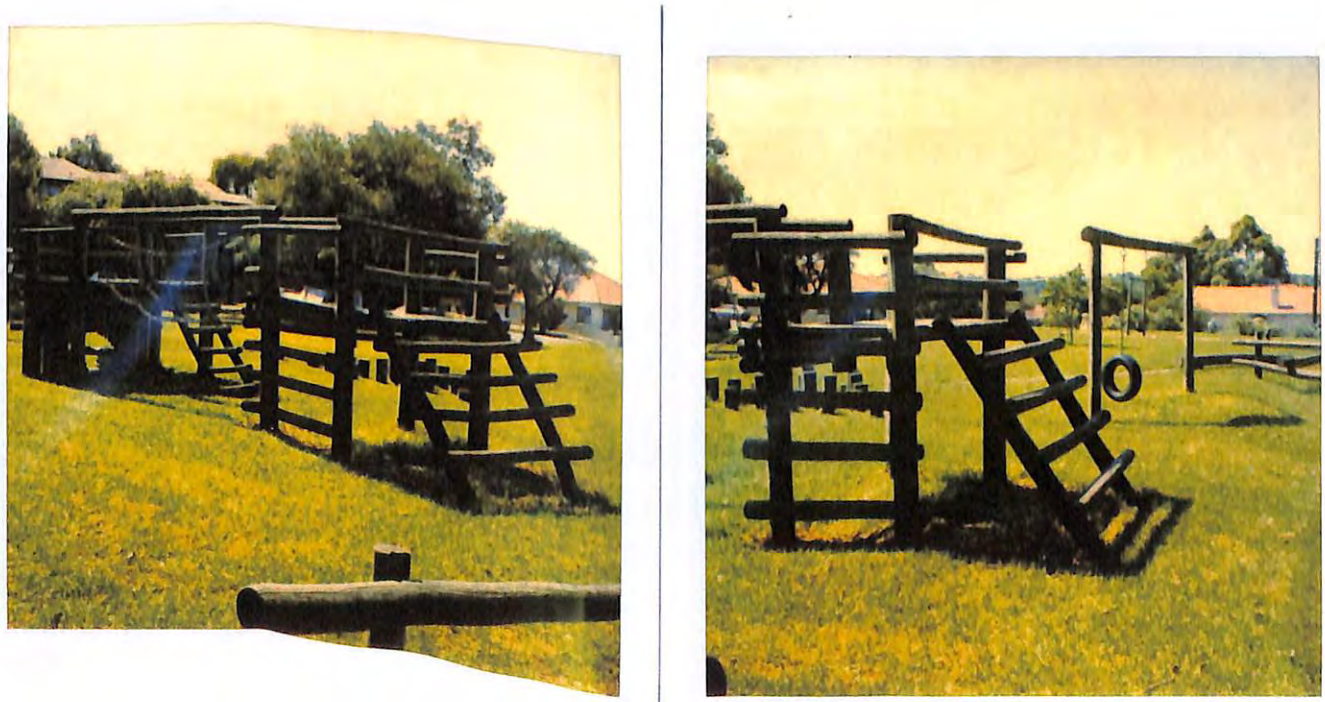


Fig. 24 Play equipment now removed from Tunks Park, North Sydney.

Fig. 25 (above) Merry-go-round, Elkington Park, Balmain

Fig. 26 (below) Rocket, Enmore Park, Enmore.

Fig. 27 (above) Helen Street Reserve, Lane Cove Municipality

Fig. 28 (below) Apex Reserve, Lane Cove Municipality

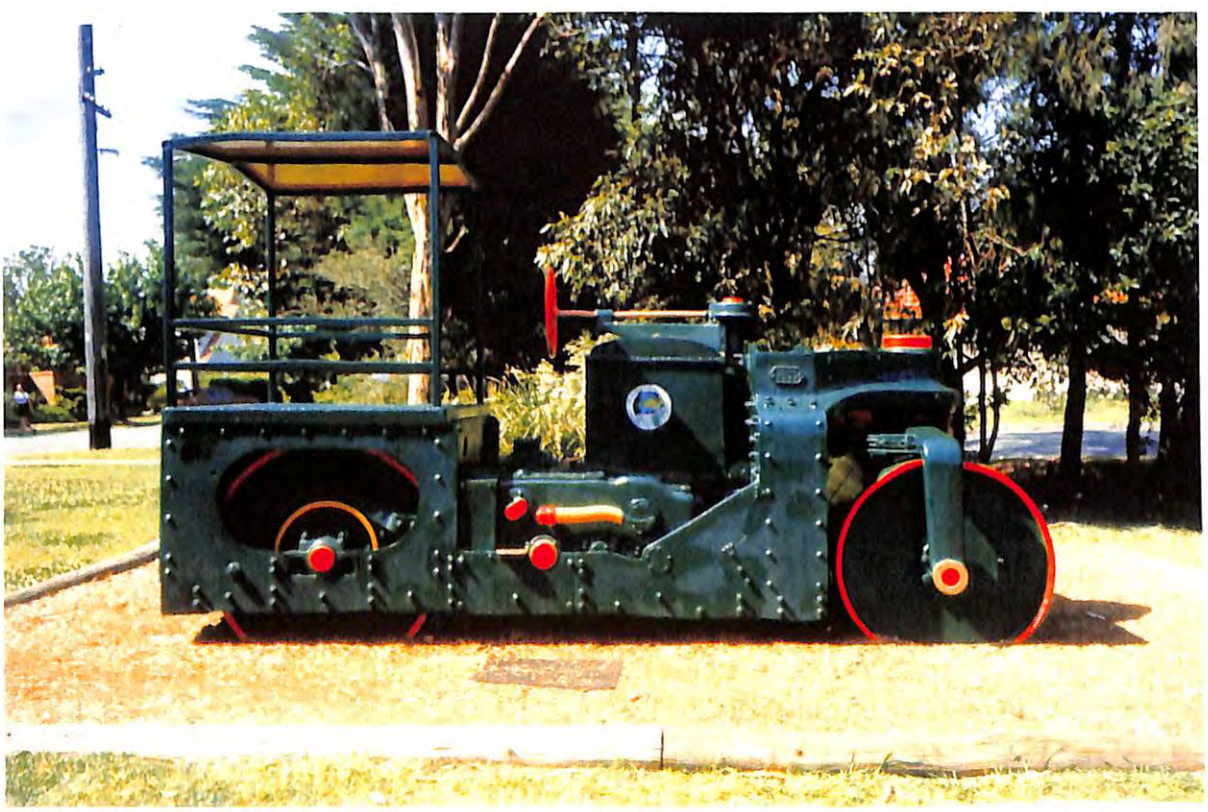


Fig. 29 Parramatta Council
Hughes Avenue Reserve (above) and Darcy Road Reserve

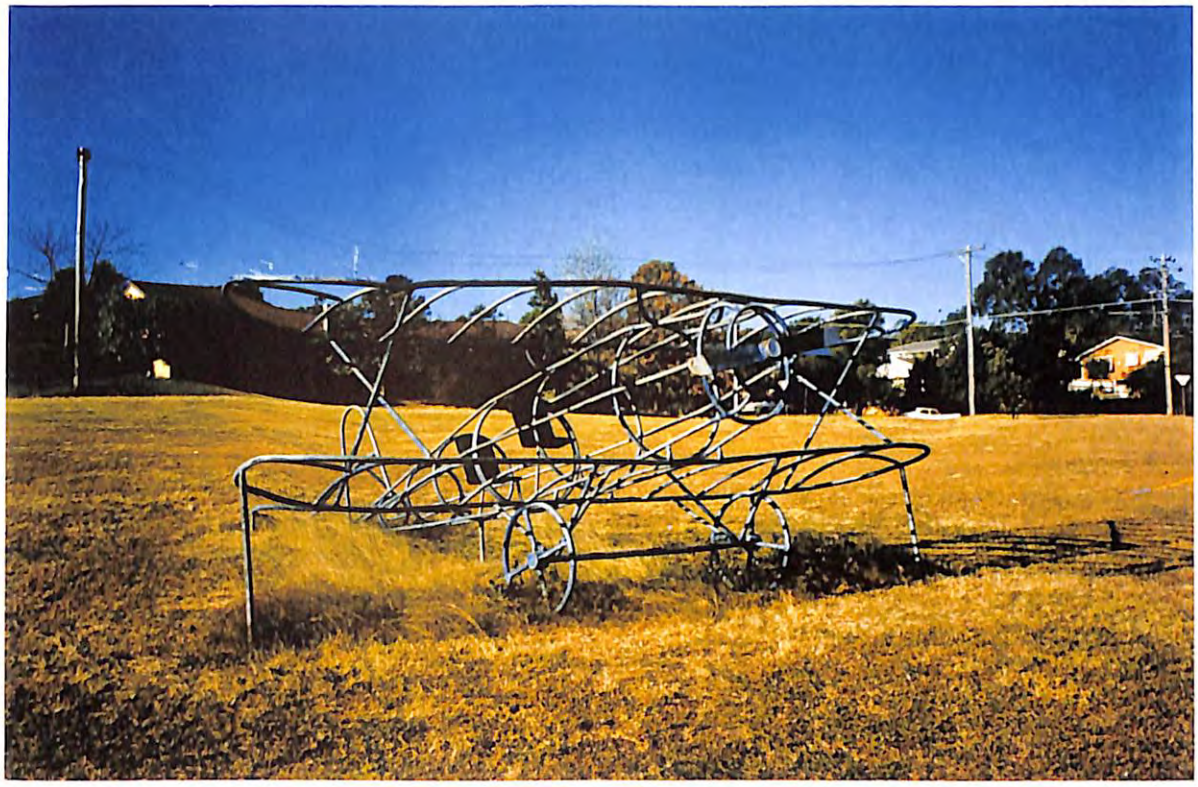
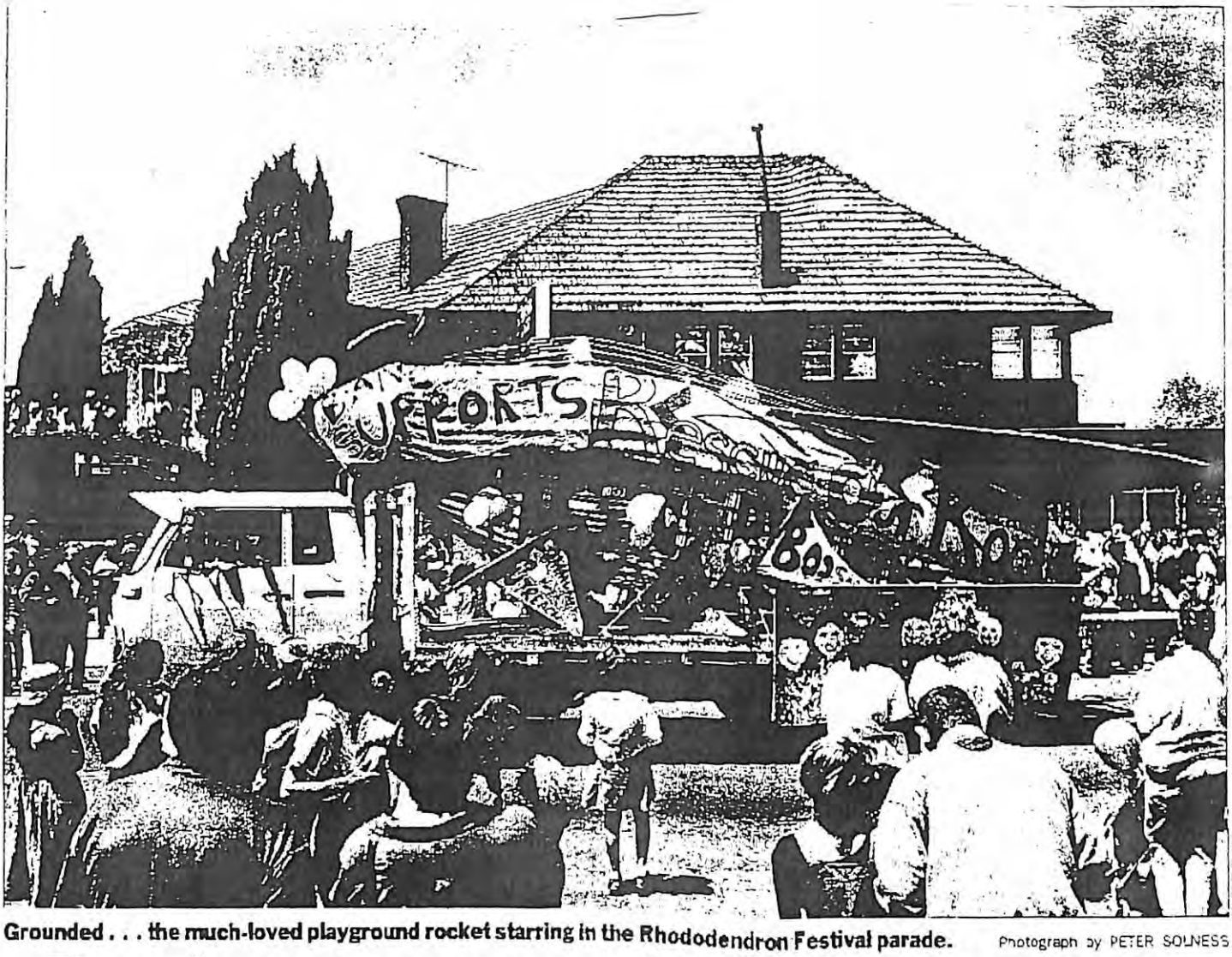


Fig. 30 (above) Plane, Beresford Park, South Grafton 1995

Fig. 31 (below) Butterfly, MacDonald Park, Armidale, 1995



Grounded . . . the much-loved playground rocket starring in the Rhododendron Festival parade. Photograph by PETER SOLNESS

Rocket rescue mission blasts off

By GREGG BORSCHMANN

It could have been May Day in Russia in the middle of the Cold War – but no, this was Blackheath in the Blue Mountains on a sunny spring day.

It's not often that you see a giant rocket paraded down the main street of any Australian town, especially a rocket so loved that the crowd cheered and clapped as it passed.

It happened on the weekend as part of the 45th annual Blackheath Rhododendron Festival.

The eight-metre rocket is now the centre of a campaign by the Blue Mountains community to create a working Children's Heritage Playground which would be unique in Australia.

The rocket even had its own army of foot soldiers, handing out pamphlets pronouncing it as "The Last of its Kind".

For almost 40 years, the rocket was the centrepiece of an unusual playground in Blackheath that came to be known to locals and visitors alike as Rocket Park.

Quite apart from the famous rocket – which was built by the Blue Mountains Council in the early 1960s – the park had other remarkable fantasy playground items such as The Old Woman's Shoe, The Stagecoach, The Submarine, The Sputnik, The Tiger Moth Biplane, Dino the Dinosaur, The Old Car, Gulliver The Clown, and The Endeavour (made in 1970 to celebrate the Bicentenary of Captain Cook's voyage of discovery up the east coast of Australia).

Apart from that first rocket and the submarine, they were all made in Blackheath by an engineer, Mr Dick West. During the 1960s and '70s, a new piece of equipment commissioned by the Blackheath Rotary Club and made by Mr West featured each year on a float as part of the Rhododendron Festival and was then installed in the local Memorial Park.

The playground equipment and the rockets took over Mr West's engineering business. He made more than 30 similar rockets which went all over Australia, as far as Adelaide, Broken Hill, Moree, Sydney and the Central Coast.

Many of the rockets were installed in Sydney – at Botany, Dolls Point, Marrickville and Willoughby.

Because the equipment does not meet current Australian safety standards, all the rockets have either been removed or blocked off and the big slides taken away.

The City of Blue Mountains Council removed the Blackheath equipment in May. Since then, the community has organised a "Rescue Our Rocket" campaign, which aims to restore and reinstall the historic pieces.

Mr West was at Saturday's Rhododendron Festival parade. "I was standing there quietly in the crowd having a good chuckle. There were people all around me saying, 'It should have never been taken out in the first place'.

"Whenever I used to travel, when people asked me, 'Where do you come from?', when I said Blackheath, they all knew it as the place that had the pool and wonderful playground equipment," he said.

A Rescue Our Rocket committee member, Ms Lulu Bull, said: "These playground pieces won a place in the hearts and minds of people all over NSW. We have a chance to re-create a heritage that will be unique in Australia. What we have here in Blackheath is now the last of its kind."

Fig. 32 "Rescue Our Rocket" campaign, Blackheath, Sydney Morning Herald, 3.11.97

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of actions should be taken to ensure that the heritage value of older style play equipment is recognised and that relevant items be identified and recorded, and where possible retained. Specific recommendations are as follows:

Consideration be given by the National Trust to:

a) listing the modified rocket Enmore Park, Enmore and the merry-go-round Elkington Park, Balmain.

b) preparing a pamphlet or brochure to advise councils of the possible heritage significance of older style play equipment in their parks. Advice should include descriptions of equipment, and information as to whether items can be modified to present standards. This is particularly relevant in view of recent changes to the Local Government Act, (Appendix no. 10) which requires councils to prepare plans of management for all Community land, under their control.

c) extending the survey of playground equipment to country areas of New South Wales, to identify further items of heritage significance. Play structures in country NSW have been noted in the course of this study at Grafton (Fig. 30), Armidale (Fig. 31) and the Blue Mountains (Fig. 32).

d) making recommendations to an appropriate organisation (such as the Powerhouse Museum or a sympathetic council) that a collection be made of specific items of equipment, for example rockets and roundabouts.

e) recording and/or documenting items, where collection is not possible or desirable. This documentation could extend to old play equipment catalogues, plans of equipment, photographs and copies of council records of purchase and construction.

It is not the intention of these recommendations to compromise safety in any way. Equipment which has been shown to be dangerous, such as plank swings, boat swings and maypoles should be removed. Rockets and roundabouts, which are unsafe and cannot be modified to meet current standards should also be removed. However there should be some recognition that this style of equipment has been in public parks for a considerable period of time, and has constituted the main public play outlet for several generations of children. The preceding recommendations are made in the hope that this small part of our social history be retained for the information of future generations.

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APPENDIX 1 LETTER SENT TO LOCAL COUNCILS

Barbara van den Broek, Landscape Architect,
Colleen Morris, landscape consultant,
15 Hampton Street,
Balmain, 2041

Town Clerk,
North Sydney Council,
PO. Box 12
North Sydney, 2059

Attention: ....., Division of Design and Technical Services

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We are undertaking a study of the evolution of playground design and play equipment prior to the more recent developments such as 'Ausplay' and would appreciate some information from you on the following:

Playgrounds in which older types of equipment are still in use in your area,

Any old catalogues or photographs or records of installation you may have of older style equipment.

We would very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Barbara van den Broek
Ph: 810 8670

Colleen Morris
Ph: 660 0573

Ashfield Council (Ph. 797-0222)
Dennis Hatton
Parks Department Manager,
PO. Box 1145,
Ashfield, 2131.

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Auburn, 2144.

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Manager Works and Properties
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Bankstown, 2200.

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Parks and Reserves Manager,
Engineering Services,
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Mascot, 2019.

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Manager Operations,
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Campbelltown, 2560.

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Parks Engineer,
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Engineering Services,
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Drummoyne Council (819 6555)
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Pittwater Rd
Dee Why, 2099.

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Coordinator, Parks and Recreation,
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Bondi Junction, 2022.

Wollondilly (046 771 326)
Ross Wignell
Building and Recreation Department
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Picton, 2571.

Woollahra (391 7000)
David Halsey
Technical Services,
PO. Box 61
Double Bay, 2028.

APPENDIX 2 PLAYGROUNDS IN CITY PARKS

Sydney Town Clerks Office Minute Paper
26.7. 1922
Sydney City Archives CRS 34 TC2990/22

MINUTE PAPER

20/7/1922.

Town Clerk's No.

Subject:

PLAYGROUNDS IN CITY PARKS.

The Vice-Chairman,
Health & By-Laws Committee.
SYDNEY.

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that the Children's playgrounds in the City Parks under the control of the City Council are as unde: Particulars as to area and cost of equipment are furnished.-

MOORE PARK Dowling and Fitzroy Streets (Kindergarten Ground)

Area - 108 ft x 93 ft.

Equipment - 1. Shelter Shed. 1 Roofed over sand heap 20' x 10'
2. See Saws. 1.Slippery Dip, and
6. Small Swings

COST - £600/-/-

PRINCE ALFRED PARK -

Area - 168 ft x 135 ft.

Equipment - 2. Giant Strides, 6 Horizontal Bars.
2. Trapeze. 4 Swings, 1 Slippery Dip and Ladder
1. Shelter Shed, 3 Parallel Bars.
2. See Saws. 6. Roman Rings,
2 Over-head Ladders and Swings.

COST - £330/-/-

VICTORIA PARK (Kindergarten Ground)

Area - 312 ft x 285 ft. (Triangle)

Equipment - 1. Pavilion. 1.Roofed over Sand Heap.
Lavatories 4. Baby Bubbling Fountain 18" high.
12 See Saws 1. Slippery Dip.

SYDNEY.

MINUTE PAPER

Town Clerk's No.

Subject:

(2)

VICTORIA PARK (contd)

6. Small Swings.

Cost. - £580/-/-

CAMPERDOWN PARK.

Area - 249 ft x 72 ft.

Equipment - 1. Giant Stride. 6. Roman Rings.
2. Overhead Ladders. 4 Small Swings
2. See Saws, 2 Trapeze.
3. Parallel Bars. 2 Swings.
6. Horizontal Bars. 1. Slippery Dip and Ladder.
1. Shelter Shed.

Cost - £370/-/-

OBSERVATORY HILL

Area - 165 ft x 84 ft.

Equipment - 1. Shed. 2 Parallel Bars.
1. Overhead Ladder. 4. Swings.
2. Small Swings. 1 Slippery Dip and Ladder.
2. Trapeze. 6 Horizontal Bars.
2. See Saws. 4. Roman Rings.

Cost - £420/-/-

Yours faithfully,

DEPUTY TOWN CLERK.

APPENDIX 3
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ADVERTISEMENTS 1937-39
The Journal of Park Administration, Horticulture and Recreation.

The Journal of
PARK ADMINISTRATION
Horticulture & Recreation

PRICE: ONE SHILLING (Post Free)

Vol. I No. 9 FEBRUARY, 1937

The Journal of

PARK ADMINISTRATION

Horticulture & Recreation

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE INSTITUTE OF PARK ADMINISTRATION

Vol. 1 No. 12 MAY, 1937 PRICE: ONE SHILLING (Post Free)

The Journal of PARK ADMINISTRATION Horticulture & Recreation

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE INSTITUTE OF PARK ADMINISTRATION

Vol. 2 No. 10 MARCH, 1938 PRICE: ONE SHILLING (Post Free)

Botanic Gardens

The Journal of

PARK ADMINISTRATION

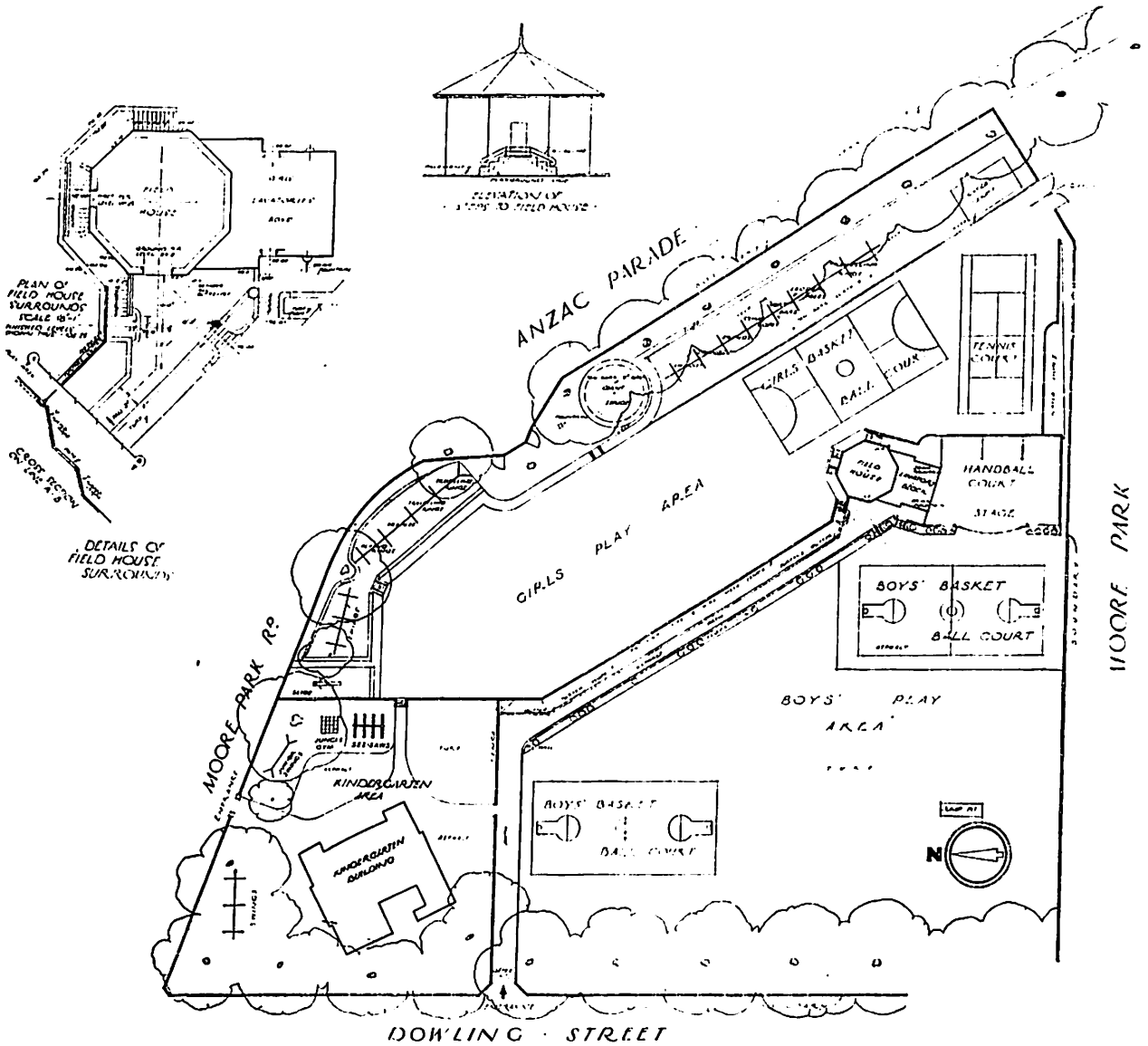
Horticulture & Recreation

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE INSTITUTE OF PARK ADMINISTRATION

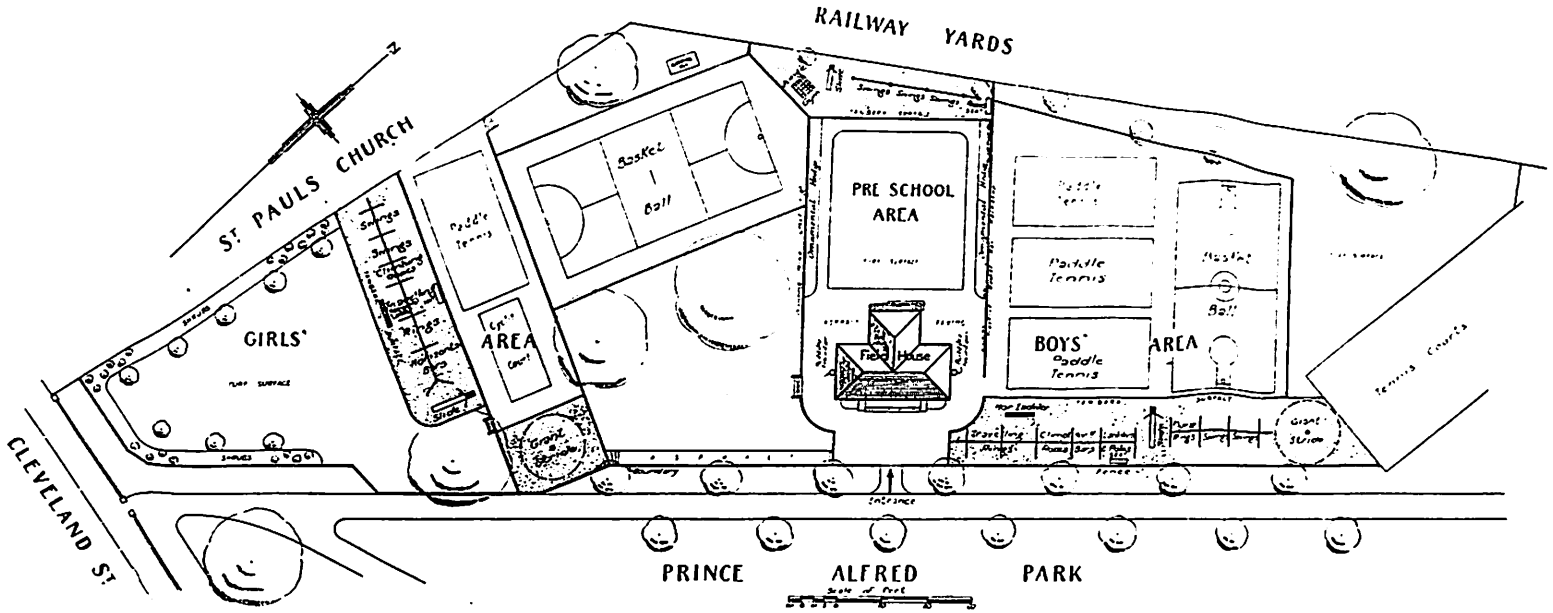
Vol. 4 No. 5 OCTOBER, 1939 PRICE: ONE SHILLING (Post Free)

APPENDIX 4 PLANS OF CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

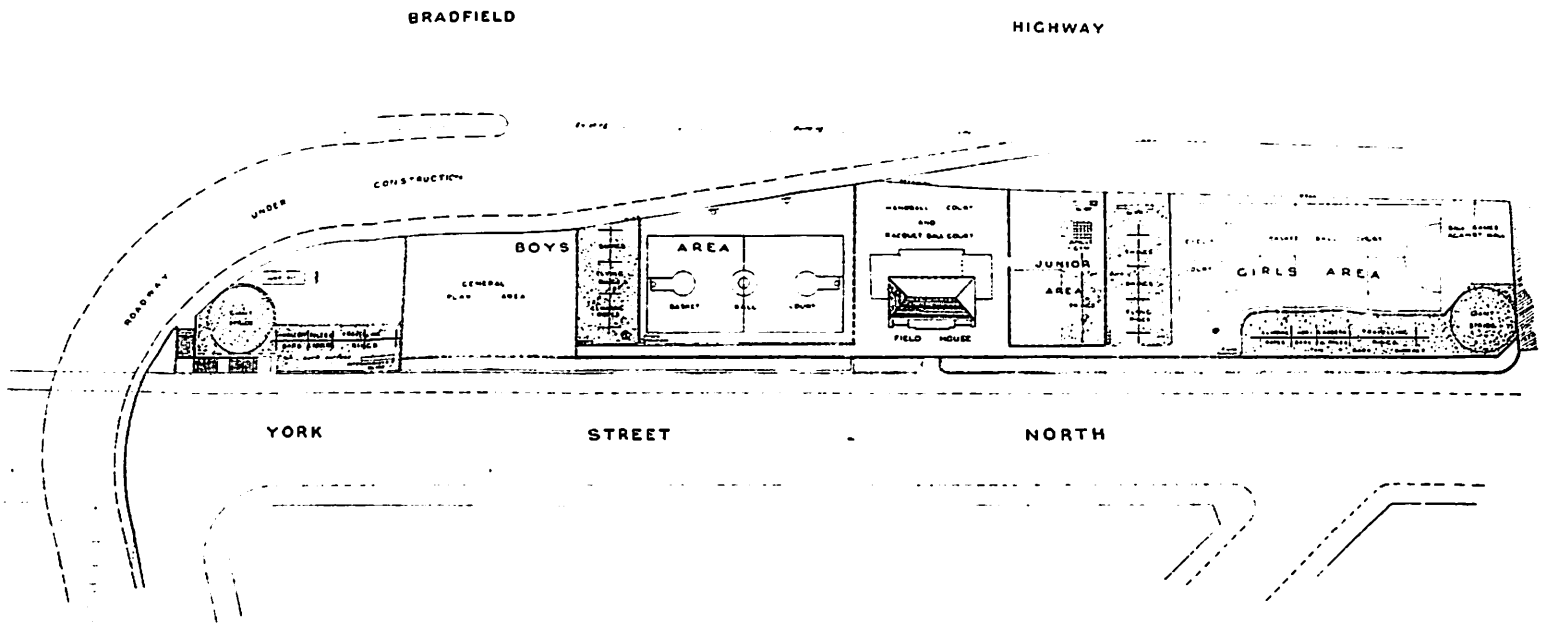
From: ***Children's Playgrounds*****, Department of Health, Canberra, ACT c.1945**



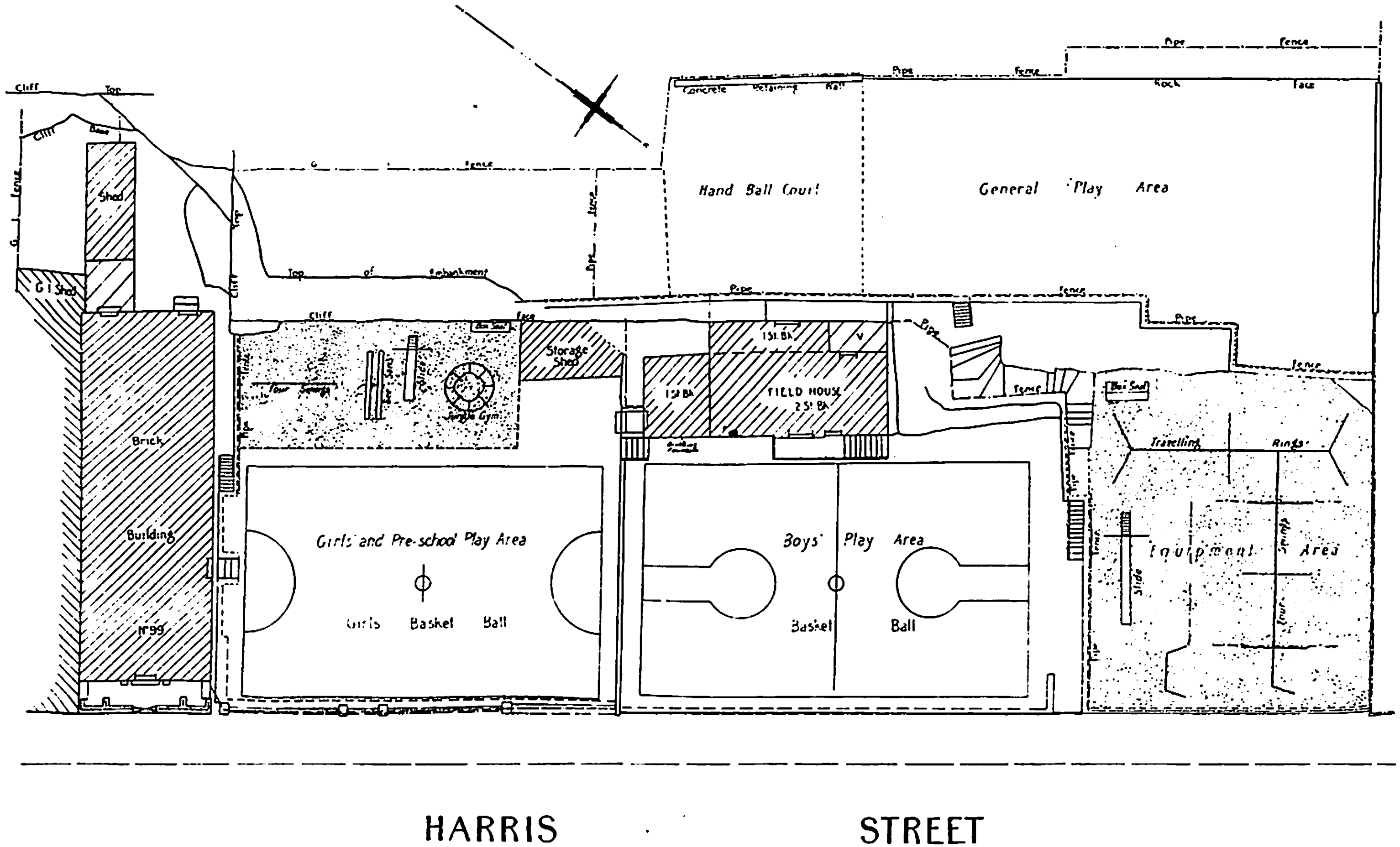
Moore Park Children's Playground.



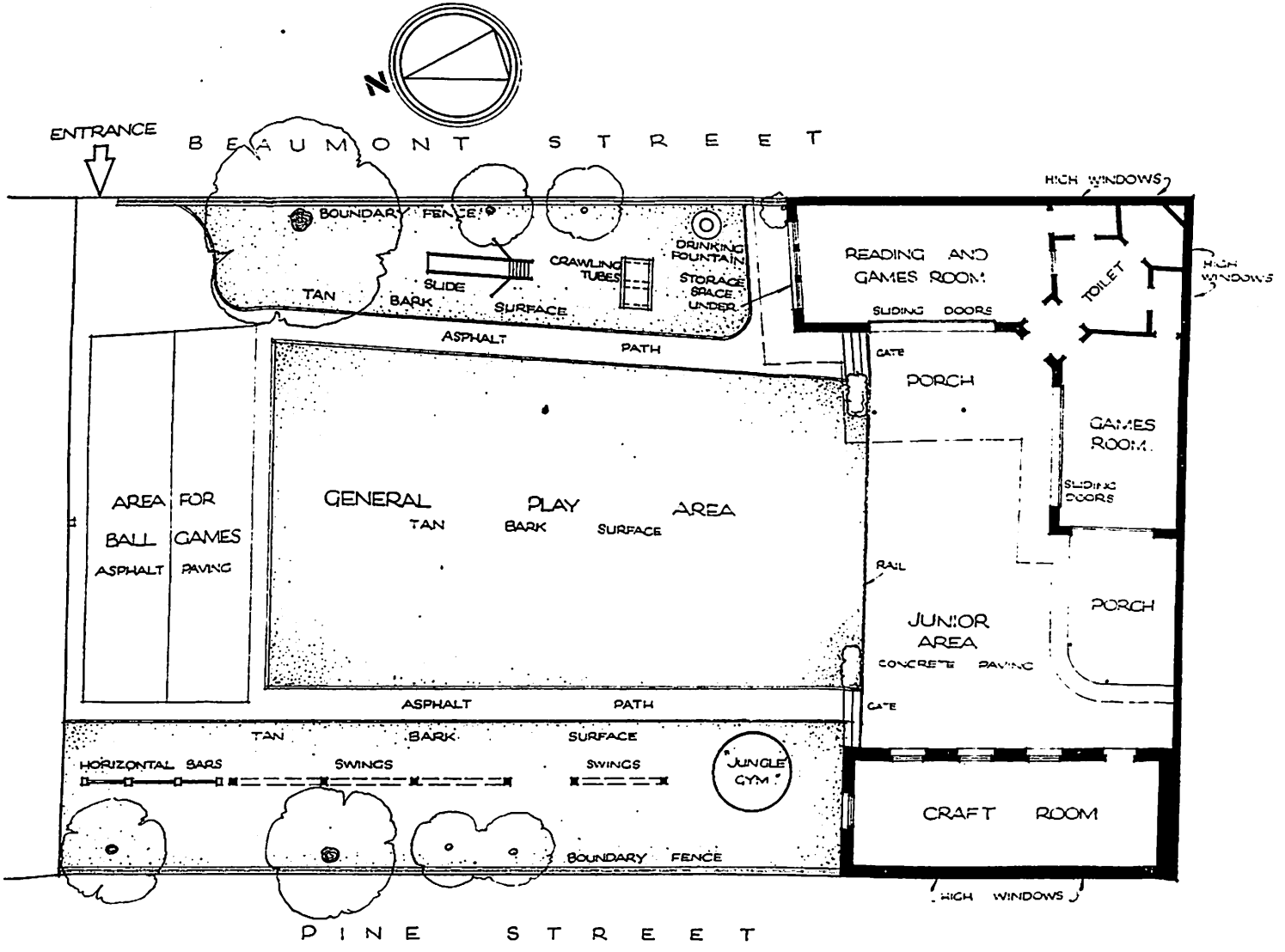
Coronation Playground.—Prince Alfred Park.



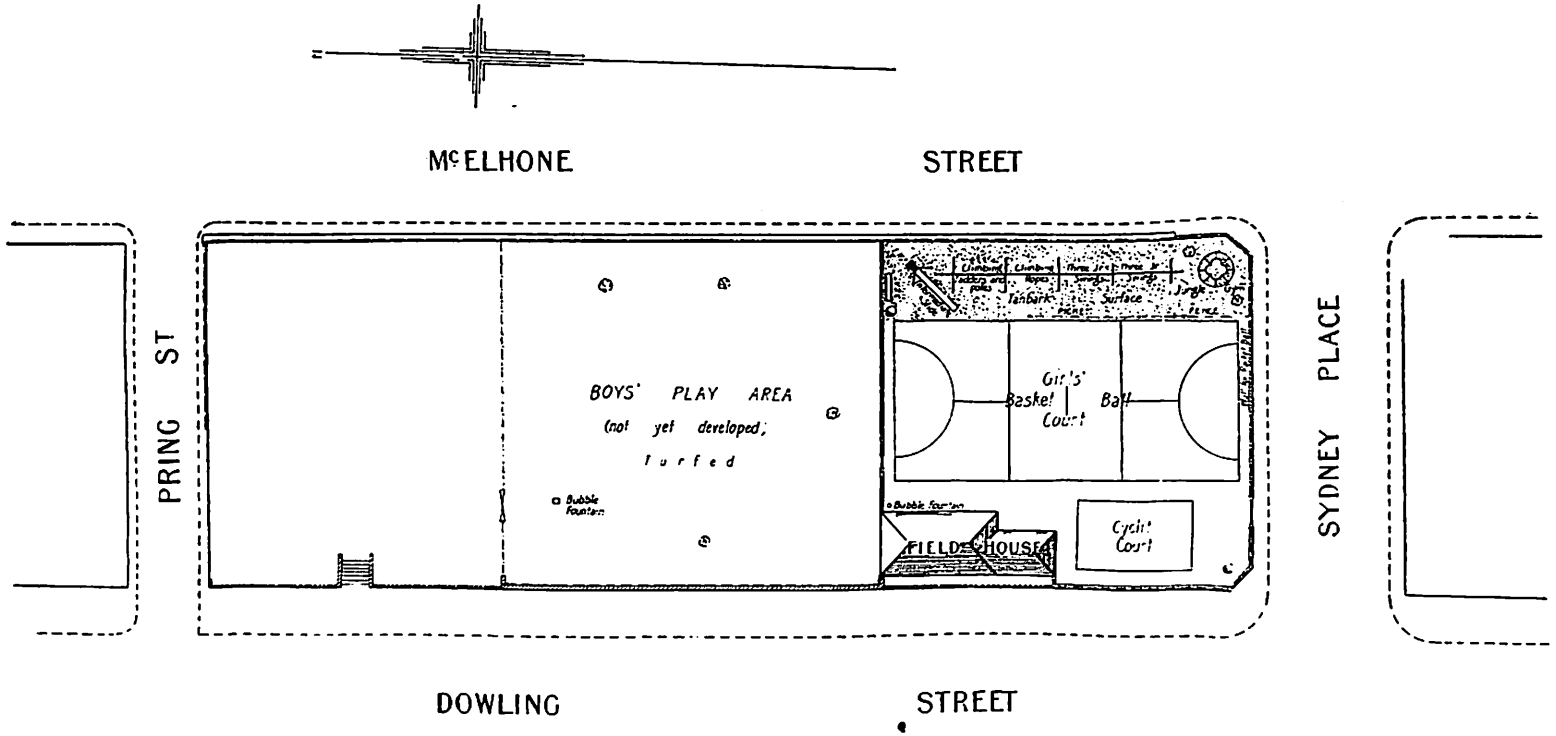
City of Sydney.—King George V. Memorial Playground.



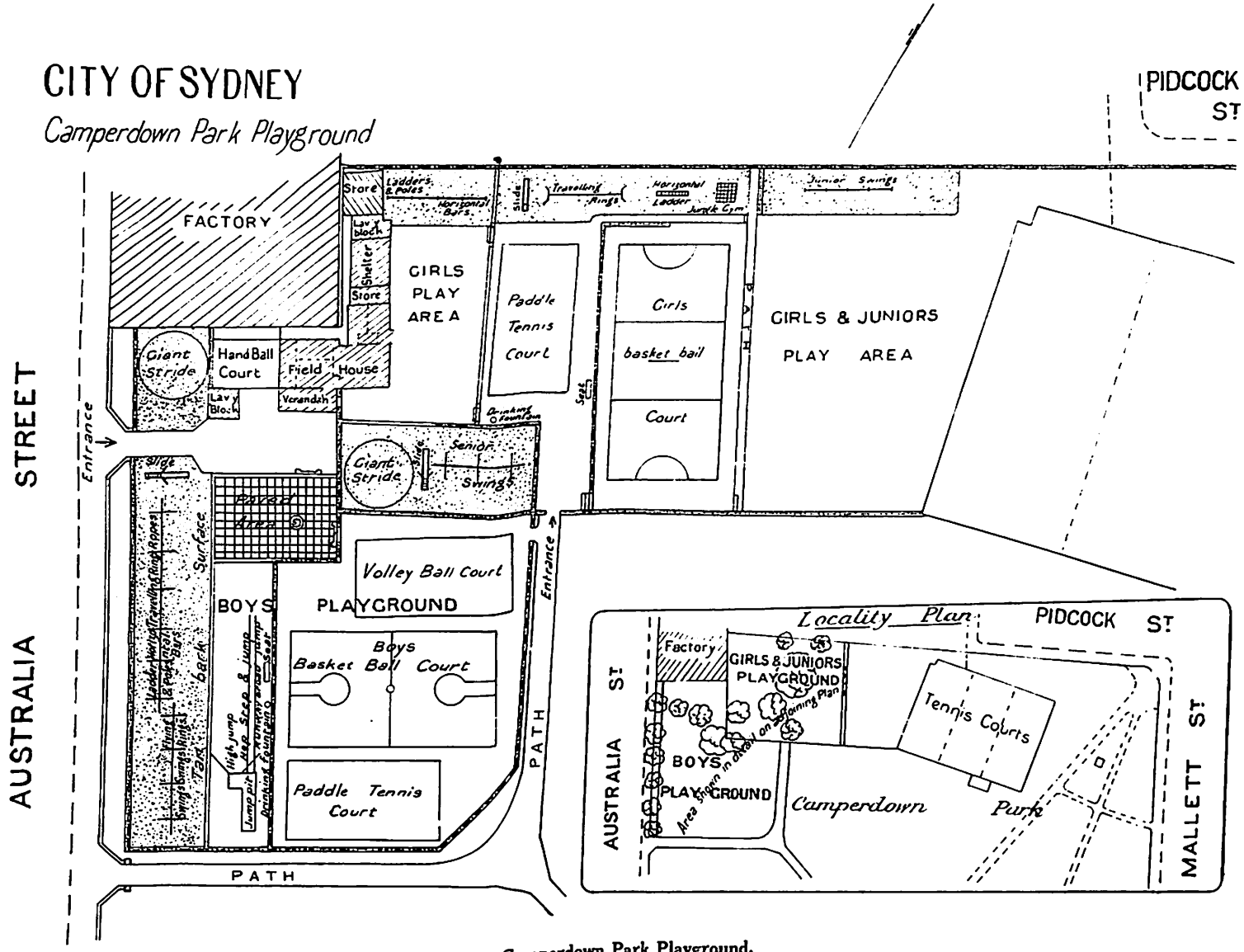
Maybanke Playground.—Harris-street.



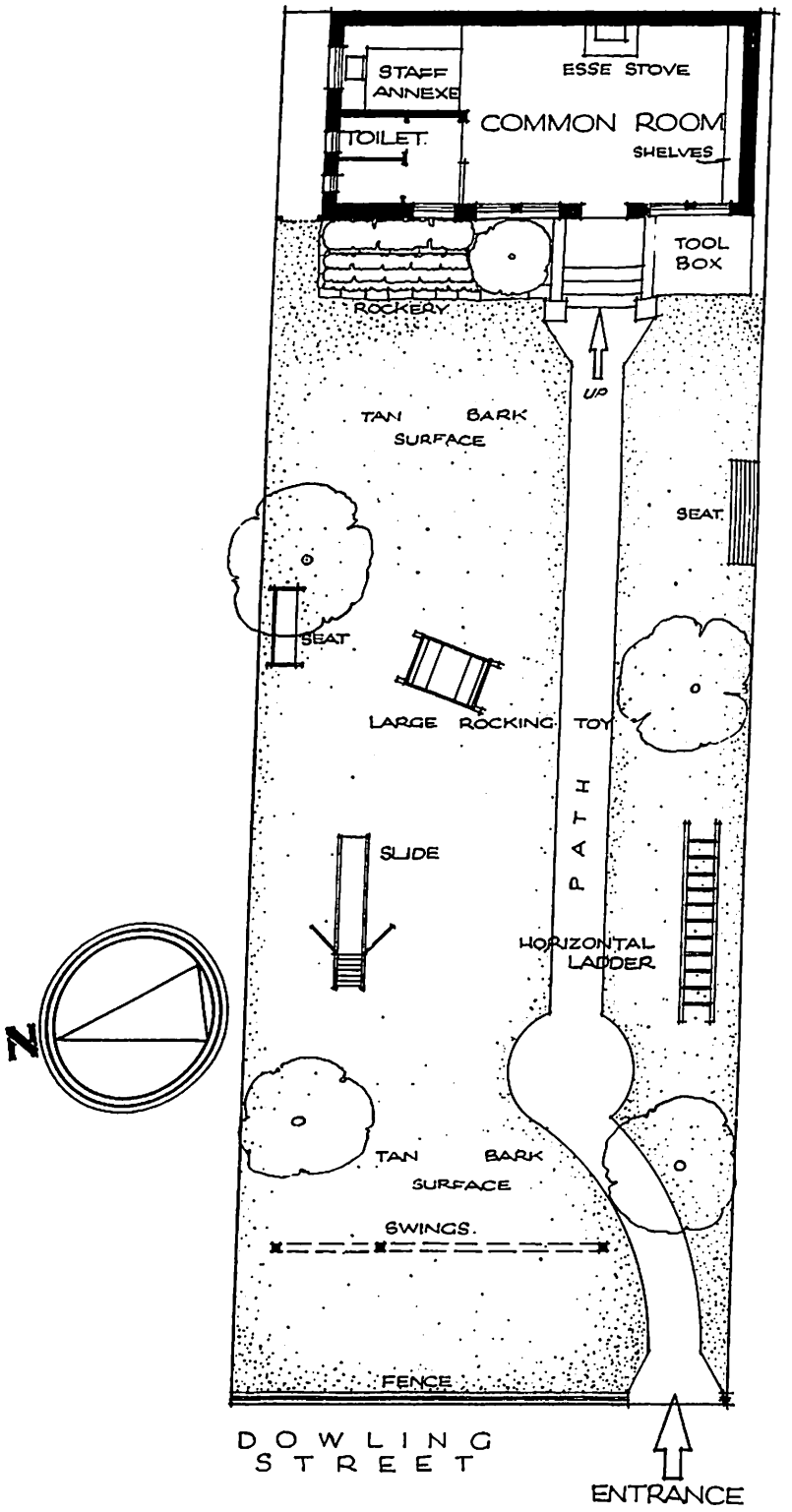
Municipal Council of Sydney.—Pine-street Playground.



Woolloomooloo Playground.



Camperdown Park Playground.

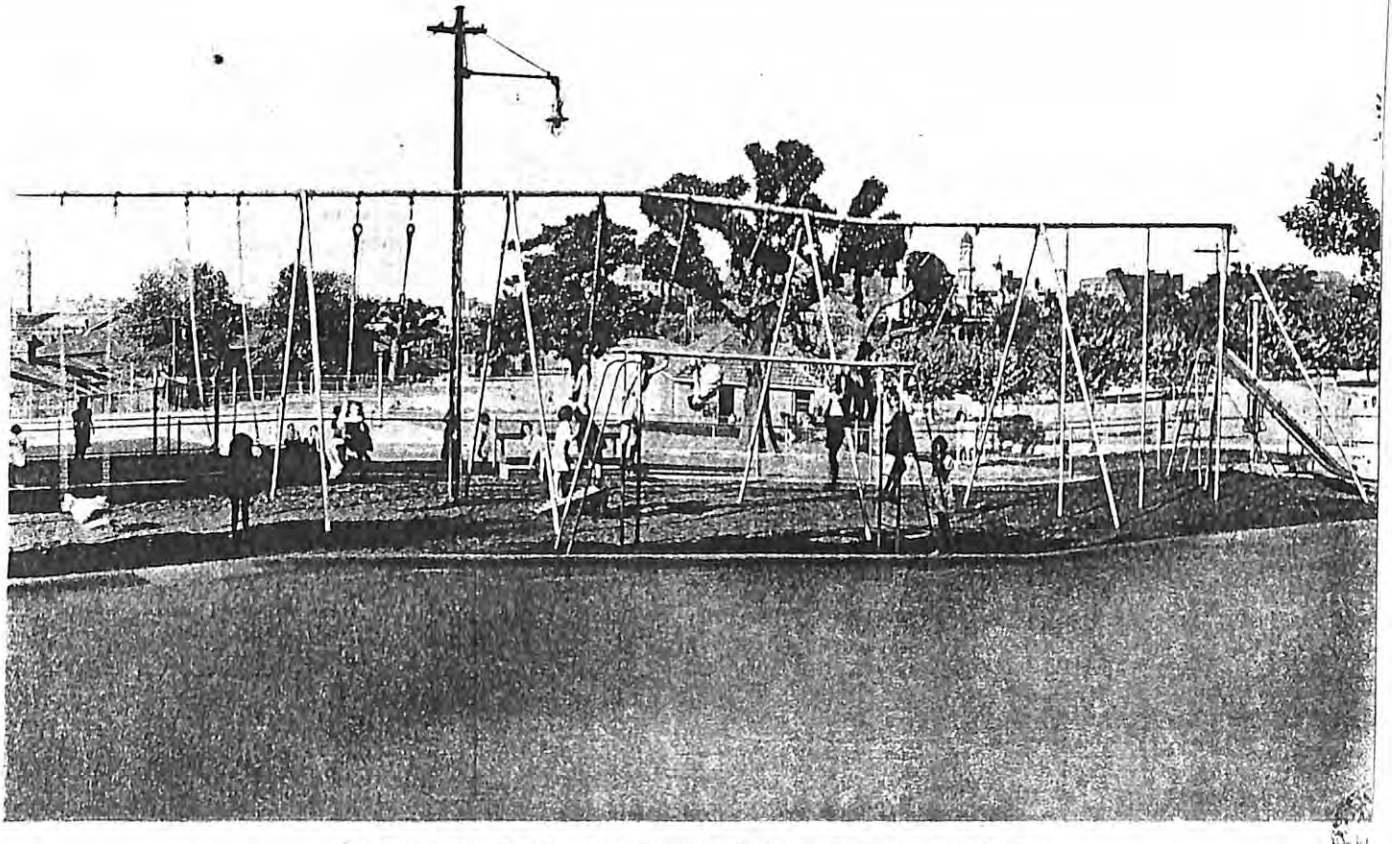


No. 226 Dowling-street Playground.

APPENDIX 5 PHOTOGRAPHS OF PLAYGROUNDS

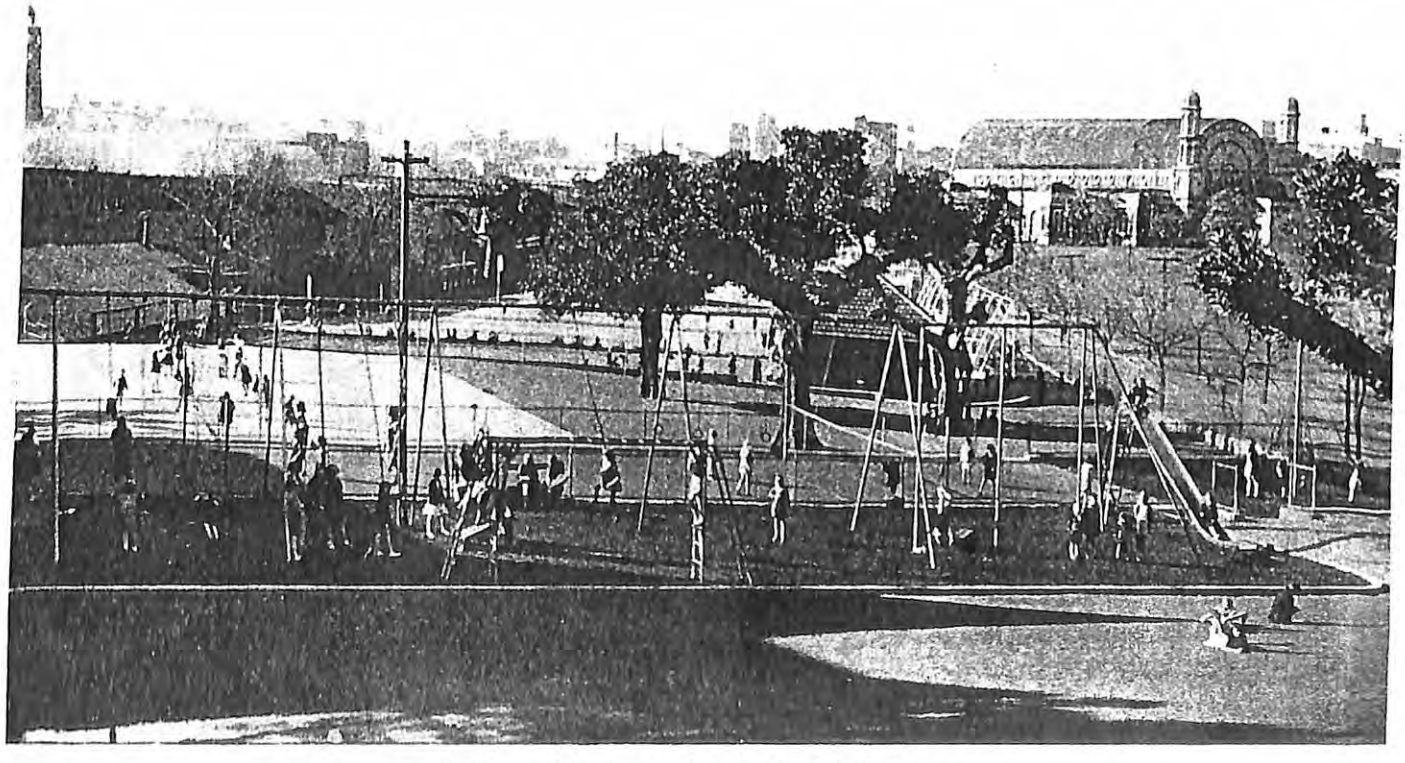
From: ***Children's Playgrounds,*** **Department of Health, Canberra, ACT c.1945**

The Coronation Children's Playground, Sydney.—View of Boys' Section.

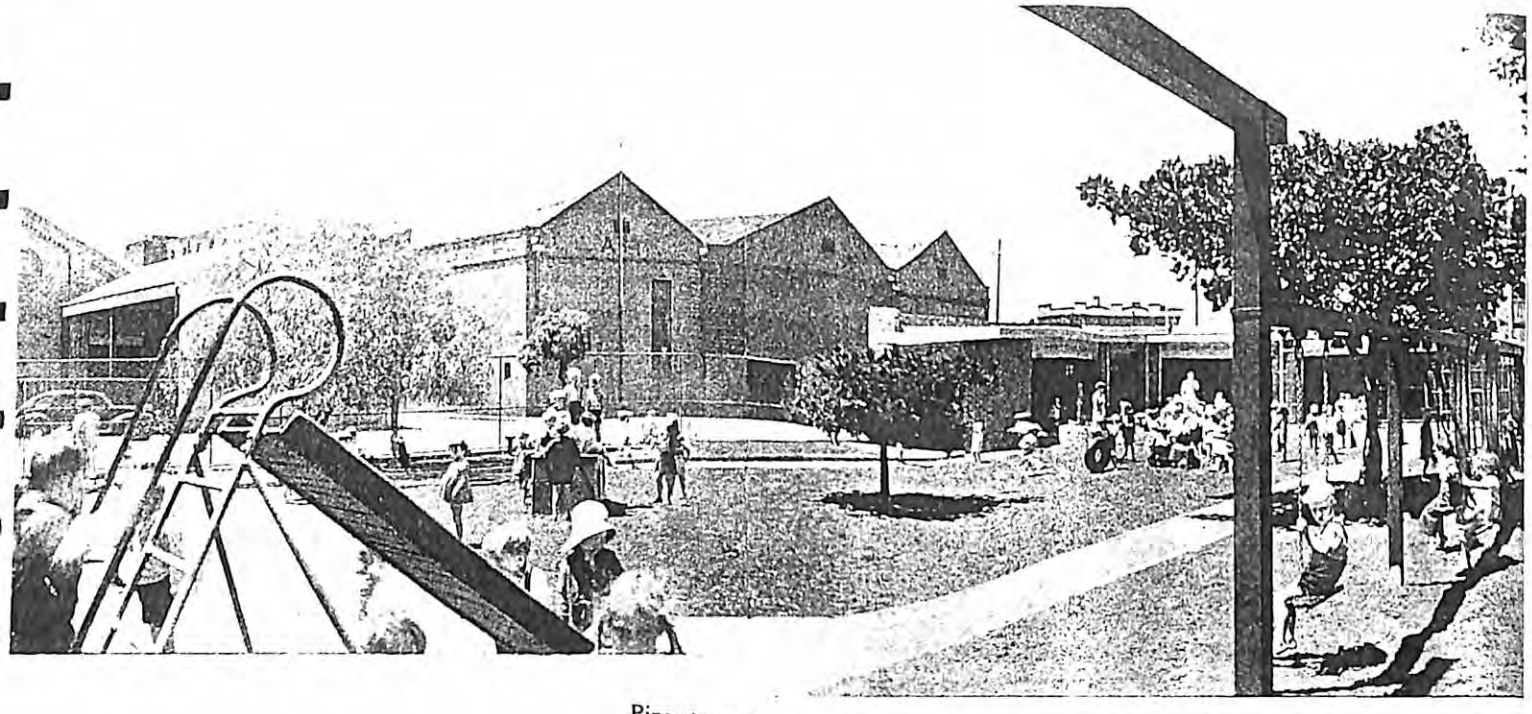


The Coronation Children's Playground, Sydney.—View of Girls' Section.

Camperdown Park Playground, Folk Dancing.—Group Senior Girls. Sydney.

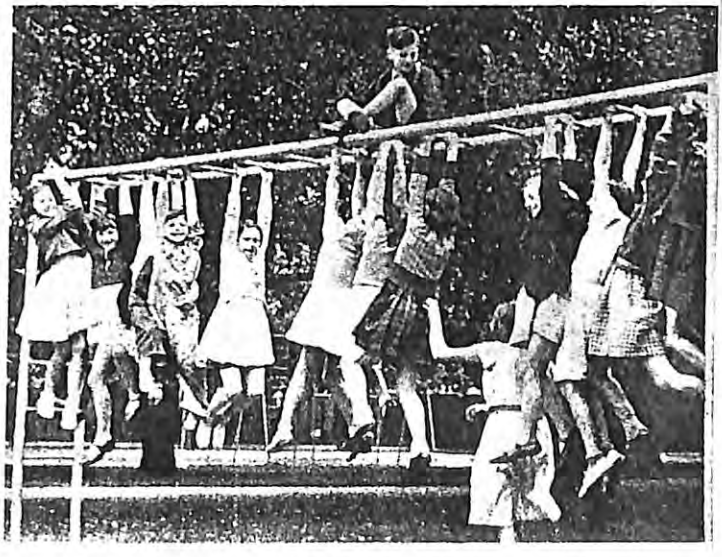


Coronation Playground.—Prince Alfred Park, Sydney.



Pine-street Playground, Sydney.

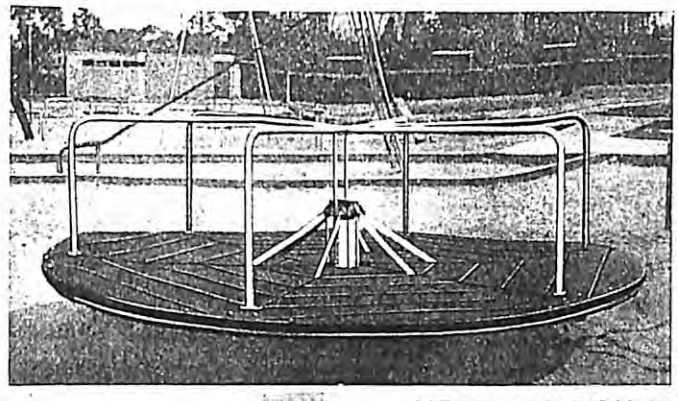
Boys' Section. Showing Climbing Ladders and Sliding Poles. Coronation Playground, Sydney.



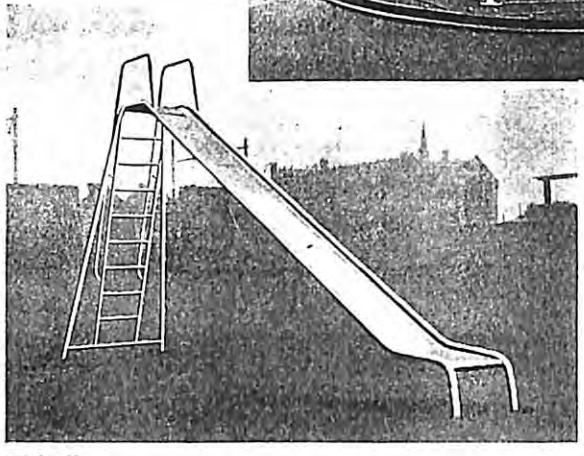
The Horizonal Bar.—Exhibition Playground, Melbourne.

APPENDIX 6 'Cyclone' PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT CATALOGUE, undated, c.1948
Source: Mitchell Library

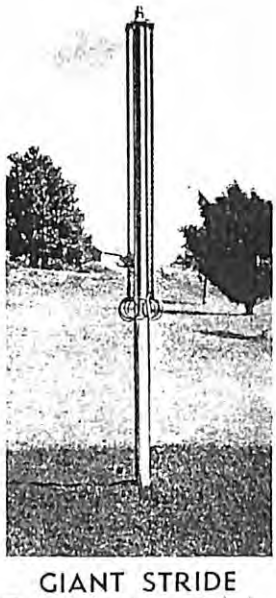

HEALTHY RECREATION
"Cyclone"
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



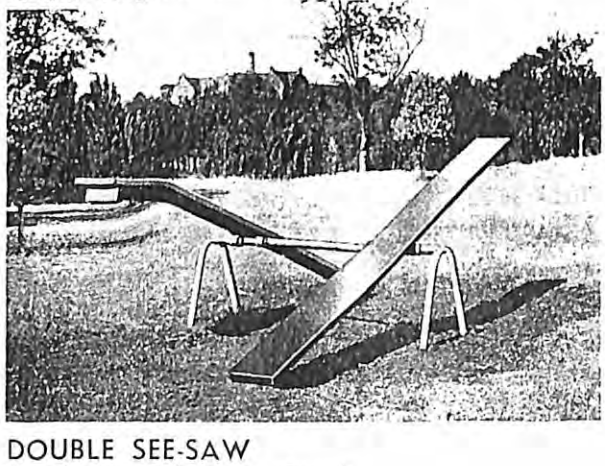
MERRY-GO-ROUND
Diameter 10 ft Spindle is mounted on a steel base with provision for bolting into concrete



SLIDE
Height 8 ft. 8 in. at ladder end.
Overall length 16 ft.



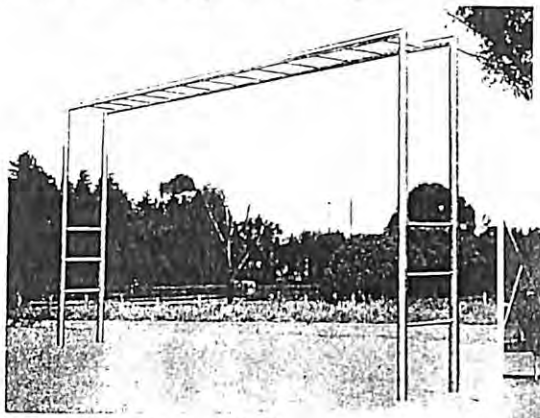
GIANT STRIDE
12 ft. high, chains 7 ft. long with 6 in. diameter rings.



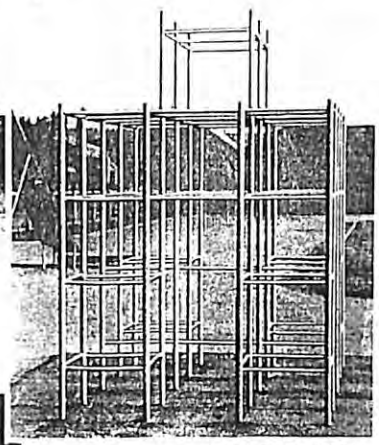
DOUBLE SEE-SAW
Top bar is 6 ft. long. Boards 12 ft. long and 12 in. wide

"CYCLONE" PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT is the ideal medium for providing healthy recreation for children. Installed in Municipal Playgrounds, School Grounds, or in the grounds of private homes, it helps to keep children safe, happy, and healthy. Each unit is electrically welded into one solid whole, and, as a result, is practically everlasting, and cannot be damaged even by the roughest of usage.

Brochure giving full specifications, with erection and maintenance information, will be sent free of charge, on request.



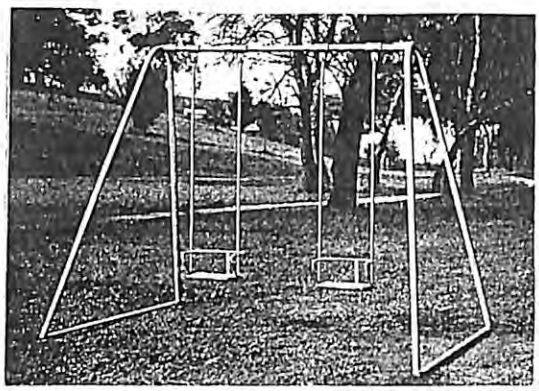
HORIZONTAL LADDER
16 ft long, 7 ft 6 in high



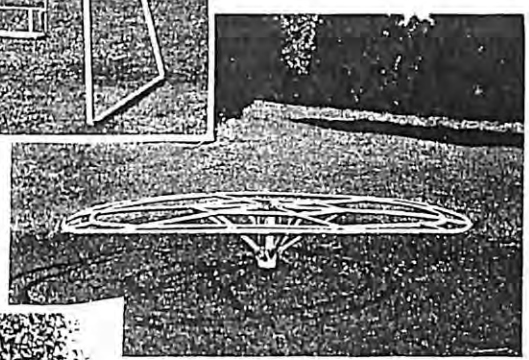
JUNGLE GYM
6 ft high at sides, 6 ft wide

SWINGING BOAT
6 ft. 3 in high, 7 ft 3 in long, 4ft. wide at ground level

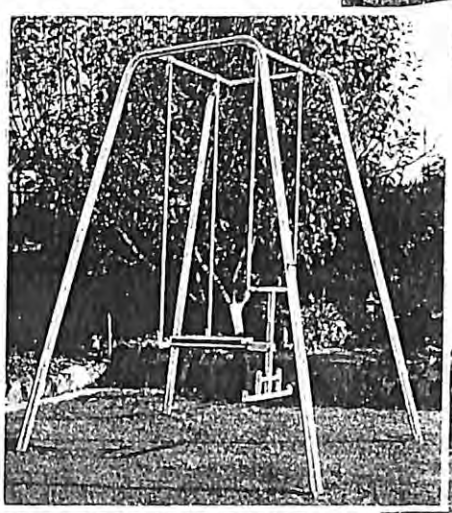
CLIMBING TOWER
Height 7 ft. 6 in., width at ground level 6 ft 6 in.



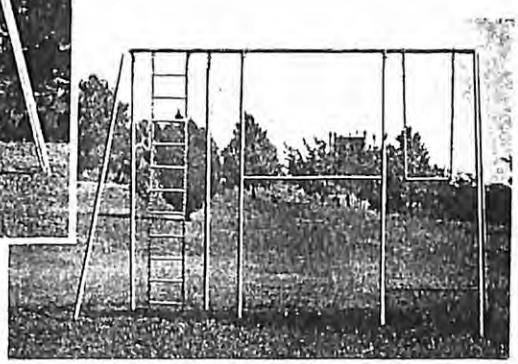
NURSERY SWING
6 ft. 6 in high, 6 ft wide, with a 9 ft. base



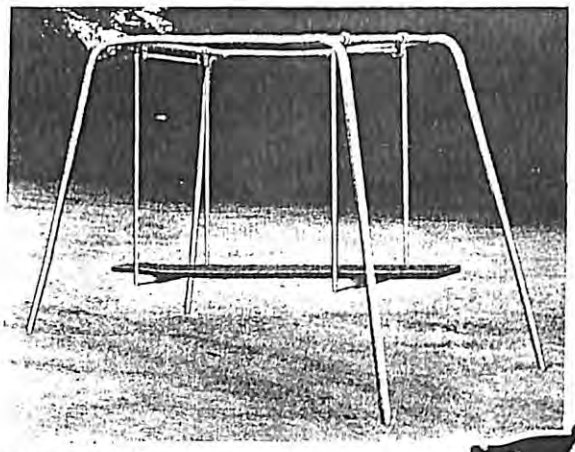
JOY WHEEL
Diameter of wheel is 10ft. Spindle is mounted on a steel base, with provision for bolting into concrete



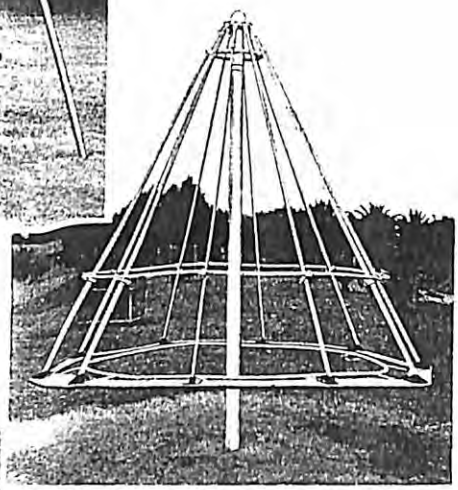
SELF-PROPELLING SWING
Suitable for children up to the age of 10, and can be operated by the smallest child



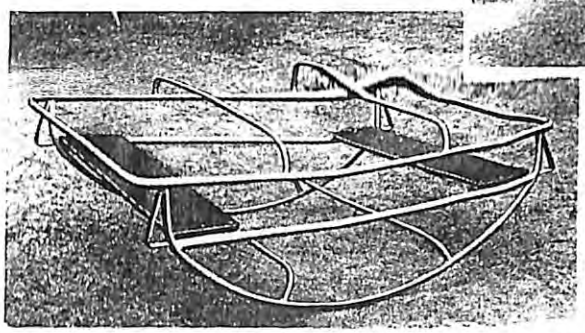
GYMNASTIC COMBINATION
Unit is 14 ft. 6 in. wide, and when erected, top bar is 10 ft. from ground level.



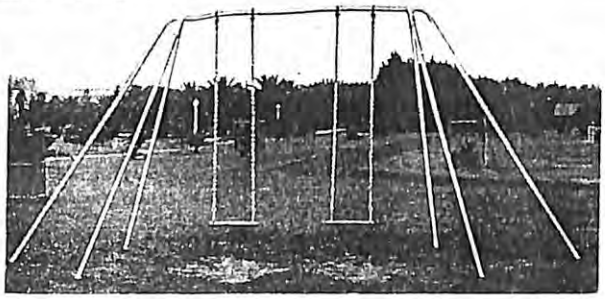
LOG SWING
6ft. high, 6 ft long, 4 ft 9 in wide at ground level Board is 9ft long.



OCEAN WAVE
11 ft high and 11 ft 6 in in diameter



ROCKER BOAT
5 ft long, 3 ft wide Seating accomodation for six children



DOUBLE SWING
Legs 13 ft. apart at ground line, height 10 ft. Chains are galvanized and are suspended from ball bearing clamps.

Illustrated Booklet sent on request.

APPENDIX 7 PLAYGROUND STANDARDS as at 1997

Standards Association of Australia
1The Crescent
Homebush 2140
Tel: 9746 4812
Tel: (02) 9746 4600 (sales)
Fax: (02) 9746 3333

The Standards Association of Australia has issued the following standards relating to Playgrounds and Playground Equipment.

AS 4486.1- 1997
Playgrounds and Playground Equipment, Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation.

AS/NZS 4422- 1996
Playground Surfacing, Specifications, Requirements and Test Methods.

AS 1924, Part 1-1981
Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use.
Part 1- General Requirements

AS 1924, Part 2-1981
Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use.
Part 2- Design and Construction: Safety Aspects

AS 2155-1982
Playgrounds: Guide to Siting and to Installation and Maintenance of Equipment

AS 2555-1982
Supervised Adventure Playgrounds: Guide to Establishment and Administration.

While Standards are not legally binding they are generally recognised in industry as best practice and by the courts as complying with the "duty of care".

APPENDIX 8 LGA PLAYGROUND SAFETY STUDY
Types of Equipment
Recommendations

6.5 Types of equipment

Table 4 shows in summary the types of equipment found in the 240 playgrounds in the eight AHS/RPHU. There was a total of 862 pieces of equipment, the most popular equipment being swings (27.3%), followed by slides (14.7%) and spring rockers (13.3%).

Table 4. Types of Equipment

Types of equipment	Pieces of Equipment	Percentage
Swings	235	27.3%
Slides	127	14.7%
Spring Rockers	115	13.3%
Painted plastic coated steel composite structures	91	10.6%
See saws	82	9.5%
Climbing wall/sets	54	6.3%
Koppers log composite structures	44	5.1%
Other types of equipment	32	3.7%
Overhead apparatus	18	2.1%
Boat/cradle swings*	12	1.4%
Roundabouts*	12	1.4%
Old Machinery*	12	1.4%
Plank Swings*	7	0.8%
Chin up bars	4	0.5%
Bridges	3	0.3%
Crawl tunnels	2	0.2%
Rockets*	2	0.2%
Maypoles*	2	0.2%
Total	862	100.0%

* *Dangerous equipment*

9.0 Recommendations

On the basis of this study's findings, the following recommendations should be considered.

1) Councils should remove all dangerous equipment immediately.

2) Councils should examine and audit all equipment, especially relating to safety so that equipment can be modified.

3) Councils should install and maintain impact absorbing materials under and around equipment. Materials chosen must have test results from an acceptable university test facility or meet internationally recognised requirements.

4) Councils should develop a policy for maintaining and replacing impact absorbing materials to the required depth.

5) Councils should have a policy for the selection and installation of playground equipment.

6) Councils should ensure that height of equipment is reduced and adequate safe fall zone areas are installed around equipment.

7) Greater collaboration should take place between Local Government, Kidsafe and AHS/RPHU in reducing the risk of playground injuries.

APPENDIX 9 NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL'S PLAN OF MANAGEMENT - PLAYGROUNDS

The Local Government Act (1993) requires councils to prepare Plans of Management for all Community land (including parks and playgrounds) under their control. This means that councils are now required to prepare an inventory of all the land they own, and to ensure that it meets current standards. Many councils have chosen to prepare a single generic plan to cover all the playgrounds in their area.

An example of this is North Sydney Council, which has prepared a plan with a series of management objectives, proposed actions and performance indicators, set out in a matrix, see below. While the document is commendable in most respects, the only mention of heritage is a reference to consider the site history, (under the comments section of the matrix), in relation to the proposed action of 'developing theme playgrounds incorporating genuine items in appropriate locations.' North Sydney has a number of playgrounds in parks which have high heritage value, including St.Leonards Park and Clark and Watt Parks, it is to be hoped that alterations to playgrounds in similar parks will be handled with sensitivity.

EQUIPMENT

Issue	Objective	Action	Comments	Priority	Performance Indicators	References
Play Equipment	To establish and maintain an up-to-date inventory of all existing playground equipment.	Compile inventory and record changes as necessary to keep it up-to-date.	Playground inventory to include for all equipment: type of equipment, manufacturer, general condition, age of equipment, any hazards, cost of maintenance.	CP/O	Up-to-date inventory produced and maintained.	
	To determine the usefulness of existing play equipment.	Monitor usage of existing play equipment by undertaking inspections.	Staff undertaking regular maintenance checks could be utilised for this task. Check: Wear patterns under equipment and count number of playground users.	O	Regular inspections undertaken.	
	To determine the most appropriate locations for new play equipment.	Carry out investigations necessary to identify areas of need.	Eg Census information and community surveys.	ST	List of areas of need compiled.	
		Identify suitable potential sites for new play equipment.	Consider: access for local residents, size of site, intrusions such as heavy traffic etc.	ST	List of suitable sites compiled.	
		Prioritise sites according to identified community needs.		ST	Priorities determined.	
	To provide new play environments which are interesting, challenging and more adventurous than is currently the case.	Identify playground sites where a variety of genuine items such as small boats could be incorporated.		ST	List of suitable sites compiled.	

Issue	Objective	Action	Comments	Priority	Performance Indicators	References
Play Equipment (Cont)		If feasible, develop theme playgrounds incorporating genuine items in appropriate locations.	Consider: site history, proximity to suitable features (eg train-lines), natural situation (eg foreshore areas) etc.	O	Number of new playgrounds incorporating genuine features installed.	
	To continue to provide an attractive selection of manufactured play equipment in appropriate locations to cater for children of various ages.	Provide equipment primarily designed for 3-12 year olds in appropriate locations.	Use census information and user surveys to determine dominant age groups in different areas.	O	Selection of appropriate equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations. Usage levels of new playgrounds.	
		Select and install play equipment which is both attractive to children and which does not detract from the overall aesthetics of the park or reserve in which it is situated.		O	Usage level of new playgrounds. Positive feedback from the community.	
	To determine whether there is a need to provide play equipment suitable for disabled users.	Investigate community needs.	Obtain information from Community Development Division of Council.	ST	List of needs prepared.	
		Determine appropriate play equipment and investigate opportunity to integrate equipment suitable for disabled users with existing equipment or proposed equipment if a need is identified.		ST	Investigations complete and recommendations made.	
Play Equipment (Cont)		Install play equipment suitable for disabled users in appropriate locations if required.		MT/O	Equipment installed. Levels of usage. Positive feedback.	