

# ROYAL PARK LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Second Stage competition entry by

Urban Initiatives Pty Ltd and Loder & Bayly Pty Ltd

GIVEN THE CONTEXT OUTLINED ON THE previous page we saw the design problem as one of attempting to reconcile resident and council concerns and yet at the same time progress beyond the values and answers of the 1977 landscape masterplan. We wanted Royal Park to move more towards the model of an Urban Park of the 1980s. An influence on our design was the statement of objectives and philosophy of the La Villette Paris competition which argued that symbols of the contemporary age should be incorporated in today's parks and that they must be made more relevant to the whole of a city's population, particularly teenagers, working people and other groups not usually catered for in parks. They argued that the modern urban park should function as the city does, at all times of the day/night, the week/weekend and both during winter and summer.

We believed that the size of Royal Park would enable us to synthesise many apparently conflicting objectives including —

- exotic/native
- local residents/regional use
- traffic/pedestrians
- sporting/passive
- ecological/horticultural
- commercial/non commercial
- noise/quiet
- unity/diversity
- history/future
- teenage/elderly
- able/disabled

We attempted, through design, to reconcile these conflicts and cater as much as possible for all people in the community. This is, after all, the nature of the city.

## Traffic circulation and parking

Our approach to traffic was to produce a cost effective set of measures which significantly reduced the impact of traffic on the park, yet one which was flexible in the long term and could be implemented soon, within council's resources. Our studies indicated that even partial covering of Elliot Avenue/MacArthur Road was likely to cost in excess of half the park development budget. Key proposals included:

- Closure of Elliot Avenue north as a desirable through route.
- Three lightweight pedestrian cycle overpasses two of which served as 'gateway' symbols at the major park entries
- Two roundabouts which help develop Elliot Avenue and MacArthur Road's parkway character and act as address points to all of the park's regional activities including the Zoo.
- Mounding along much of the major road to help integrate the overpass system and reduce traffic noise significantly.
- Parking was largely centralised to the east and west sides of the Zoo. This strategy enabled these central carparks to cater for visitors to most major park facilities and the Zoo. Management was simple, and collection of significant parking revenue was made possible.

## Pedestrian and cycle circulation

Extensive provision was made for recreation, cycling, walking and jogging in the park. A total cycle path network of 10 kilometres was provided including a simple loop circuit of 6 kilometres. A further pedestrian-only system of gravel paths was provided through the gardens. The cycle system catered for all the bicycle through routes in the Melbourne Bike Plan as well as local links and recreation.

## Park planting concepts

The planting design for the park proposed to integrate and express the three major influences on Melbourne's landscape.

**Firstly**, the vegetation which was indigenous to the site was proposed as the dominant canopy planting theme for the park, with species including *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *E. melliodora*, *E. leucoxylon*, *Casuarina stricta* and selected Acacias. These trees would be planted throughout the park in informal groupings, particularly around sports fields.

**Secondly**, deciduous trees were proposed for limited formal avenues and spaces in the park, particularly the main Zoo entry and its axis and some formal oval and avenue spaces. These plantings represent Melbourne's landscape development in the Victorian period and they would help integrate the park with its surrounding Victorian suburbs. Many of these plantings are already established in the park.

**The third** and more recent influence on Melbourne's landscape expressed in the park planting design is the edging of sporting fields and roadways with formally placed Australian native trees, especially *Eucalyptus maculata*, *E. cladocalyx* and *Tristania conferta*. These trees are well established and successful in the park and reflect a major planting style in Melbourne of the mid-twentieth century.

As these three planting influences of 'indigenous', 'exotic' and 'native horticultural' were developed, with canopy planting, we also proposed that they all be developed at various locations in the park as understorey and ground level planting. The southern sector of Royal Park, nearly twice the area of Melbourne's botanic gardens, allowed adequate space to develop areas of pure indigenous vegetation where they are least susceptible to people pressure. It also allowed adequate space for significant extension of the existing horticulturally inspired Australian native garden. This horticultural, or semi-botanical approach would have interpretive and interest value for the wider public and visitors to Australia.

In summary, our developed park planting concepts achieved unity, complexity and a high level of horticultural interest.

## Park activities and proposed new facilities

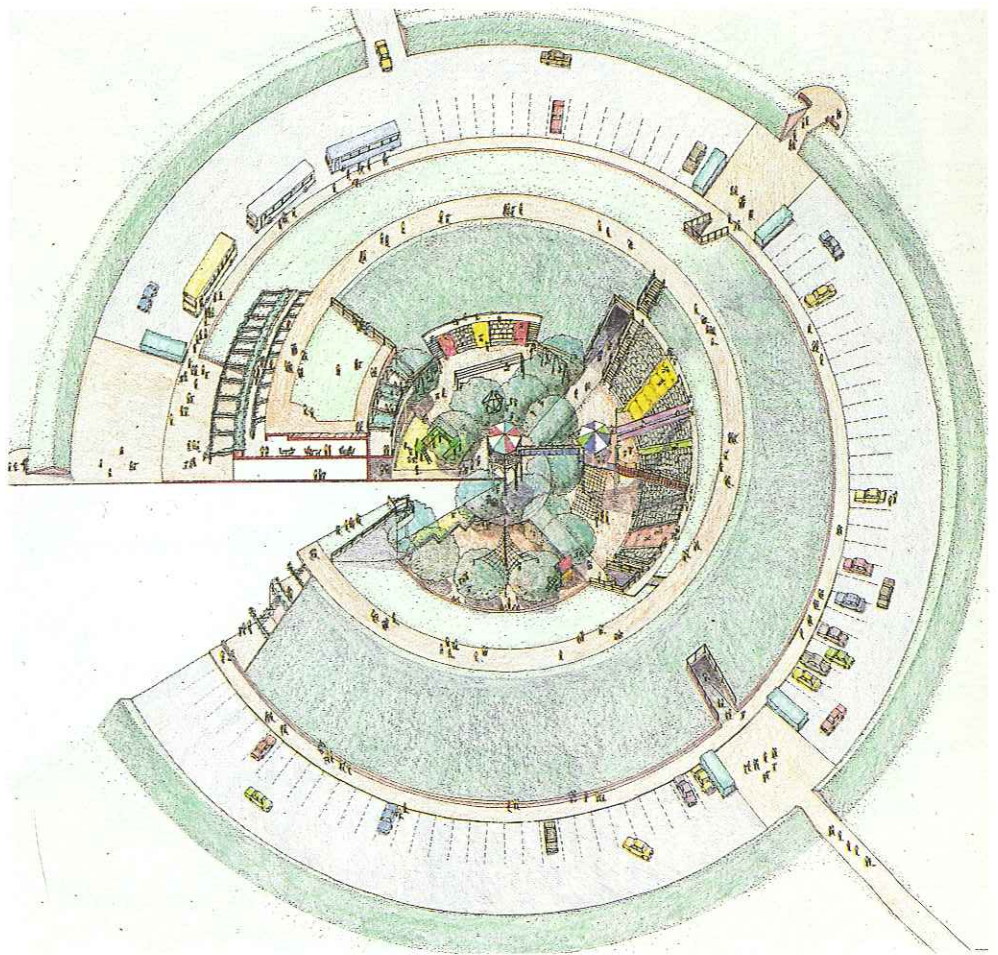
Two elements, the main Zoo entry and Royal Park mound, are illustrated on the following page. They are two of nearly thirty new park facilities which were developed and proposed to cater for many diverse interests and activities. Costing and programming also formed part of our Stage Two submission.

## Royal Park Mound

Located at the high point of Royal Park's great openspace, this mound is designed to have minimal visual impact on the park and yet to cater for existing and many new uses of this special site. Uses proposed include:

- A supervised playground for all children integrating play for disabled children with play for normal children.
- An upper level promenade.
- A restaurant or cafeteria which would have views of the city skyline and into the central play space.
- A Burke and Wills interpretation facility developing its relationship with the memorial cairn.
- Changing, toilet and club facilities for low grade sportsfields surrounding the mound.

An interesting aspect of the mound is the way human scale is sharply contrasted with that of the city and the sky.

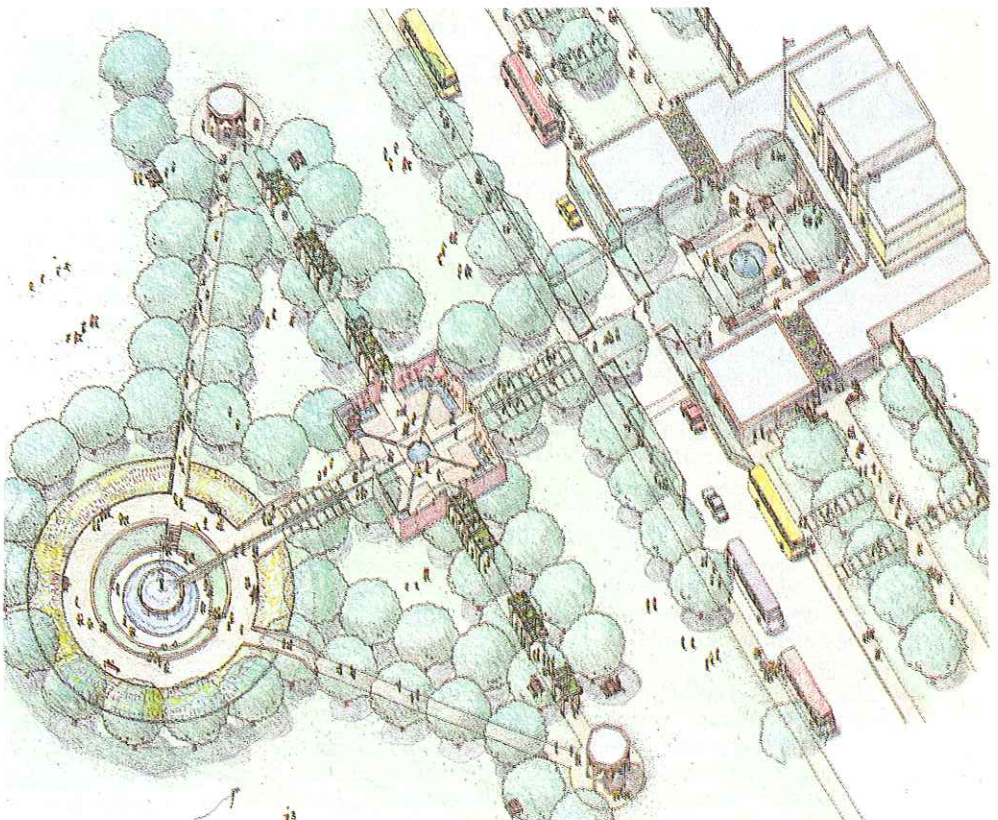


## The Main Zoo Entry

The generating idea behind this design is that of extension of the Zoo's strong formal garden axis out into the park.

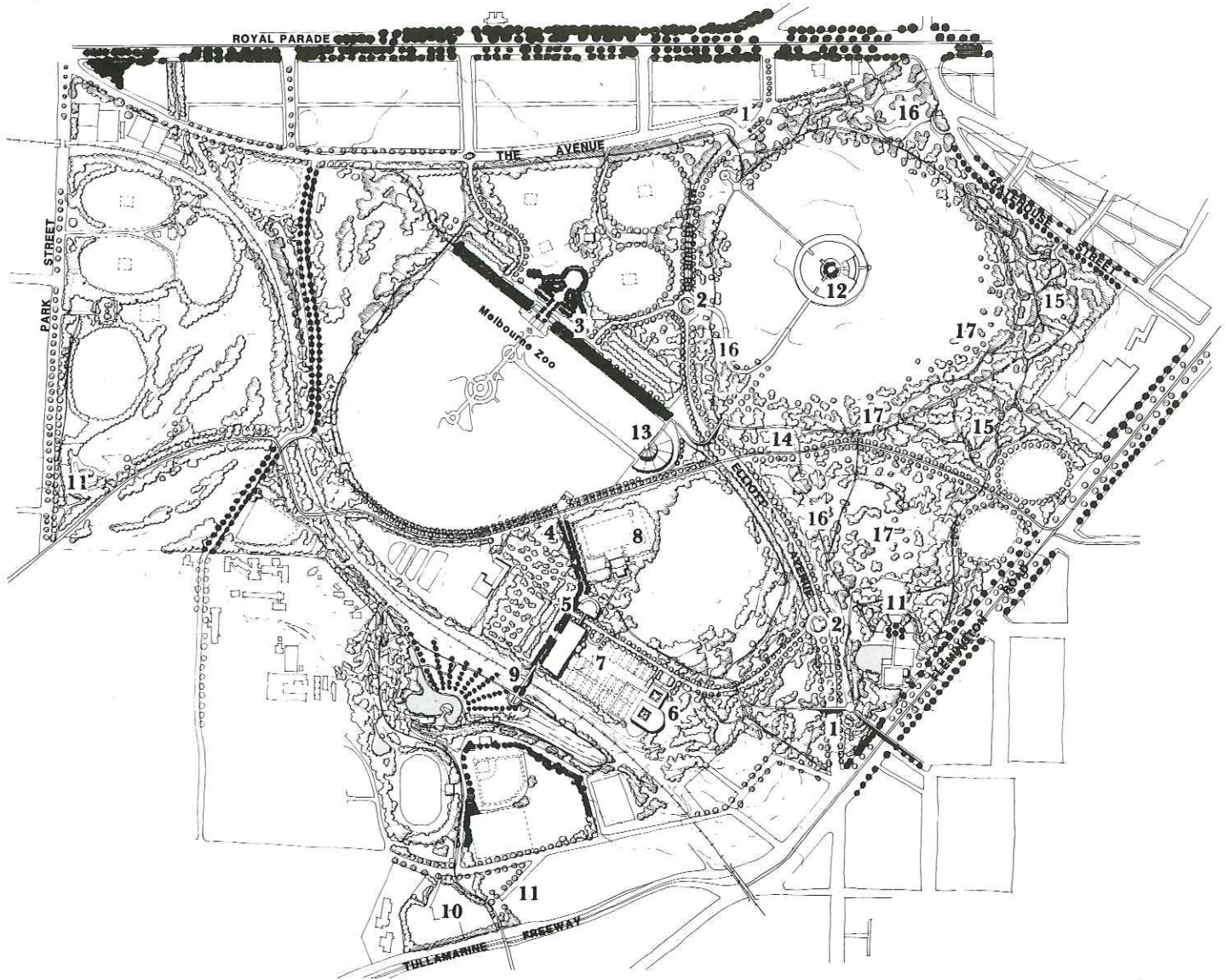
The Zoo forecourt accepts pedestrians approaching the entry along three tree lined walks. Buildings would provide souvenir sales, toilets, display and possibly a kiosk outlet. They are grouped around a fountain to provide shelter and a forecourt space.

The garden axis includes fountains, floral display and a walled space with water sculpture. This design idea is expressive of the history of the Zoo and surrounding residential areas.



**THE DESIGN TEAM**  
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## ROYAL PARK

### LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN COMPETITION Stage Two Submission



- 1. Park Entries**  
Mounding and pedestrian overpasses designed as 'gateways' to the park.
- 2. Parkway Roundabouts**  
Provide address points to all park facilities of regional attraction.
- 3. Main Zoo Entry and Carparks**  
Developed as an extension of the Zoo axis into the park. Pedestrian promenade and picnic areas.
- 4. New Western Zoo Entry and Major Carpark**  
900 car spaces cater for Zoo overflow and multiple use by other sporting and recreation facilities.
- 5. Park Interpretation, Kiosk and Cycle Hire Centre**
- 6. Park Leisure Centre**  
Replaces Anzac Hall and caters for conventional leisure centre activities like swimming, spa, sauna, gymnasium, club facilities and contemplative recreation like yoga, tai chi, relaxation, artwork display, music, library. Semi-buried building form.
- 7. Netball Complex**  
Rationalisation and limited extension of this state sporting centre to improve its appearance and integration with the park.
- 8. State Hockey Centre**  
The existing facility retained and enhanced.
- 9. Pedestrian Bridge Link and Sound Shell Amphitheatre**  
An ornamental lake with island sound shell for occasional outdoor theatre and music performances.
- 10. Relocation of Council Nursery**  
Freeway pedestrian/cycle overpass and allotment gardens for local community use are also located here.
- 11. Neighbourhood Parks**  
Playground, picnic and other facilities serving the specific local needs of residents in Brunswick, Parkville and North Melbourne.
- 12. Royal Park Mound**  
Replacement of the existing pavilion and carpark with a mounded complex including in addition, a viewing promenade, a special supervised play facility for disabled children, a restaurant with views to the city skyline, and a Burke & Wills interpretation centre. The complex is designed so that all cars and buildings are contained within the mound system.
- 13. The Park Aviary**  
An external animal and bird display managed by the Zoo and incorporating an upperlevel restaurant within the aviary.
- 14. Zoo Theme Adventure Play**  
A large scale robust playground incorporating artificial rocks and caves, climbing structures etc. derived from Zoo display techniques.
- 15. Theme Gardens**  
17 Australian native genera displayed in separate groupings with interpretation pavilions.
- 16. Native Garden**  
The existing horticultural native garden extended to the south side of Elliot Avenue/MacArthur Road.
- 17. Native Woodland**  
Areas of canopy and understorey planting recreating the sites indigenous cover.