When Edward LaTrobe Bateman designed Fitzroy Gardens as a slice of Arcadian England for Melbourne society in 1856, he could not have foreseen the evolution the Gardens would see during Melbourne's history and development. The differing layers of trees, plants, fountains and artefacts in the Gardens reflect events and ideas important to Melburnians.

As we release this Master Plan Review Discussion Paper for consultation, Melbourne is tentatively emerging from the longest drought in modern history. Far from an anomaly, long term weather patterns are telling us we need to get used to hotter weather and more extreme storm events. At the same time, we are experiencing record population growth with increased use of the city's public spaces.

For many, Melbourne is defined by its peaceful garden paths and waterways lined by grand elms. Climate adaptation is a critical consideration if we are to retain these valuable assets. The City of Melbourne will continue to protect the city’s natural and cultural heritage, and future planning with the community is integral toward achieving this goal.

The ultimate goal of this Discussion Paper is to recognise and protect the unique attractions of Fitzroy Gardens, for the use of this and future generations. By applying horticultural expertise and new technologies, managed water use and plant selection will adapt the garden to a changing climate.

Relaxing, beautiful and historic: Melbourne’s gardens are a source of great admiration and pride for the city’s visitors and citizens. The City of Melbourne is calling for feedback on the proposed future plans for Fitzroy Gardens to ensure they continue to be Melbourne’s premier gardens.

I commend this Discussion Paper to you. Please take the time to consider this document, outline your suggestions and forward them to the City of Melbourne before 21 May 2010.

We value your input.

Message from the Lord Mayor of Melbourne

Robert Doyle
Lord Mayor
1.1 Introduction

Melbourne is widely known for its generous and beautiful parks and gardens. However, Fitzroy Gardens – with its tree-lined avenues and broad array of horticultural and built features – is the park most people readily identify as unique to Melbourne. It is the City of Melbourne’s premier garden.

People have many different memories or experiences of Fitzroy Gardens. Some people remember it fondly as a place they visited as a child or as the setting for a wedding or family reunion. Others know the gardens as a place where they have lunch or as part of their journey to work or to a sporting event in the nearby sports precinct.

1.2 Context

Fitzroy Gardens is situated between central Melbourne’s parliamentary precinct in the central city, and East Melbourne and Jolimont. Major hospitals and churches border the gardens on its west, north and east sides. Along with Treasury Gardens immediately to the west, Fitzroy Gardens is a popular destination for visitors to the city as well as city workers who use the gardens during their lunch break and when travelling to and from work. Residents of East Melbourne and Jolimont also identify strongly with Fitzroy Gardens as part of their neighbourhood.
While accessible on foot from the central city, Fitzroy Gardens is also well served by Jolimont Railway Station, trams along Wellington Parade and cycling routes along Albert Street to the north, and Wellington Parade to the south. A bus stopping zone on Lansdowne Street is well used by tour buses to bring visitors to the gardens.

Fitzroy Gardens is part of the green ring of open space around Melbourne’s CBD, originally set aside by Governor Charles La Trobe in the 19th century. Other parks and gardens in this ring include Yarra Park, immediately to the south, the Domain, Flagstaff Gardens and Carlton Gardens. Together these open spaces are an important legacy for Melbourne, and make a significant contribution to liveability within the city, and to the overall image of Melbourne.

1.3 Management

Set aside as a public reserve in 1848, Fitzroy Gardens was officially named in 1862. The site is permanently reserved as public gardens, with Committee of Management status vested in the City of Melbourne. This means the City of Melbourne is responsible for the management and daily maintenance of, and capital investment in, the gardens.

The Crown Land Reserves Act 1978 (Vic) and the Melbourne Parks and Gardens (joint Trustee Reserves) Regulations 1994 underpin decisions made about the care, protection and management of the gardens.

Fitzroy Gardens was included on the Victorian Heritage Register in 1998. This listing means the gardens’ heritage values need to be recognised and appropriately managed. In 2008 an updated Conservation Management Plan for the site was completed, with the recommended policies and conservation directions outlined in that plan underpinning the proposals in this discussion paper.
1.4 The need for a revised Master Plan

The City of Melbourne developed a Master Plan for the Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens in 1996. The values and principles in that plan are re-stated here (in a slightly amended form to focus on Fitzroy Gardens only):

The continuity of uses of Fitzroy Gardens since its establishment makes the gardens particularly important to Melbourne. The design of the gardens has reflected its use, with a basic landscape structure supporting these fundamental uses, but with details changing in response to more fashionable influences, has helped maintain this significance over time.

The most basic aim of the master plan is to support the Gardens’ ongoing role and use into the future, in accordance with the purpose of the reserve and their cultural significance.

General objectives affecting all aspects of the Gardens are outlined below.

Recreation and Use

- Develop the Gardens for passive recreation, encompassing a wide range of activities and interests and responding to current use patterns; provide for other uses only as these may enhance the Gardens’ primary passive recreation role
- Develop the landscape itself as a recreational facility, integrating features providing for specific recreational uses with the basic landscape structure and character of the Gardens
- Support and promote use by a wide range of people including local residents and workers, and visitors from the metropolitan area, interstate and overseas; support use of the Gardens by all age groups with particular concern to provide for children.

Conservation of cultural heritage

- Ensure that the physical development and improvement of the landscape maintains the role of the Gardens as a significant public recreation space by suiting contemporary uses, ideals and expectations
- Respect the Garden’s importance as a place associated with the city’s history and the nearby Government and institutional precinct
- Maintain the integrity of the landscape by basing any development in its existing underlying design and structure.
Aesthetic
- Enhance the visual character of the landscape as a fundamental means to provide for passive recreation
- Develop a place of distinctive character, unique to and within Melbourne, which enhances the image and identity of the City of Melbourne
- Provide visual relief from the surrounding urban environment.

Horticulture
- Maintain the Gardens in a manner which supports their role
- Ensure that maintenance of the gardens reflects the highest of horticultural standards
- Maintain a relatively stable landscape, actively managing to ensure gradual change and renewal over time and ensuring that a stock of mature trees is maintained as a significant feature of the landscape.

Access
- Maintain free public access to all parts of the Gardens except those necessary to keep secure for maintenance and services, and at all times
- Improve means of access and entry into and within the Gardens for all people including those with disabilities
- Promote use of the Gardens to increase their value as a public amenity.

For the past decade, decision-making about the gardens has been based on recommendation in the Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens Master Plan 1996, in conjunction with Fitzroy Gardens’ heritage listing.

However, the City of Melbourne now faces a number of new issues and opportunities relevant to the gardens, and has decided to revise and update the current Master Plan.

While the broad principles in the 1996 Master Plan remain strong, concerns about climate change and water security mean an additional principle covering environmental management needs to be added to the 1996 objectives:
Environmental Sustainability

- Incorporate the issues raised by climate change predictions into future Master Planning for the gardens.

Four new key issues and opportunities are considered in detail in this paper. They are:

- The challenge of water security and the need to plan for the future management of landscapes and climate change adaptation
- Limited infrastructure for visitor services
- Changes in the way the City of Melbourne’s parks and gardens are maintained
- Heritage management obligations.

The principal areas of Fitzroy Gardens affected by these issues and opportunities are:

- The Rill (the central water course) and Fern Gully
- The depot area
- The café precinct.

The City of Melbourne commissioned a number of background reports to inform the issues being considered in this discussion paper (see Section 6 for a list of the reports).

It is proposed that Fitzroy Gardens continue to be a public garden serving visitors’ passive recreational needs, catering primarily for a metropolitan, state, national and international catchment, and that the values and principles outlined above continue to be the basis upon which major decisions are made.

Recommendations about future facilities and activities outlined in this discussion paper are all shaped by these objectives. For this reason, any proposals to increase services or infrastructure solely to meet local recreational needs or to provide facilities for active recreation are not included for discussion. Other open spaces in the area can generally provide for these needs.

Any proposals Melbourne City Council adopt as a result of this discussion paper will replace recommendations for the same areas outlined in the 1996 Master Plan.

1.5 Your input

You are invited to consider a range of proposals for future changes to Fitzroy Gardens. In some cases there is a clear preference for what needs to be done but in many cases several options are presented for consideration and debate.

Included at the end of this discussion paper are a series of questions to help you develop your response. However, if you believe important issues have been overlooked which are important to the future of the gardens, we would also welcome your comment on these matters.

Council will review all comments received and develop a draft Master Plan outlining all of the preferred options for Fitzroy Gardens. Public submissions on this draft Master Plan will be invited and a final Master Plan will then be put to Council for adoption.

You can contribute to this discussion paper by sending your written response to:

Fitzroy Gardens Master Plan Review Discussion Paper
Urban and Parks Design Branch
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
MELBOURNE 3001 VIC

Email: parkplanning@melbourne.vic.gov.au

The closing date for all comments on the discussion paper is Friday 21 May, 2010.
Information days

The City of Melbourne will hold two information days and guided walks in Fitzroy Gardens to explain the proposals contained in this discussion paper:

Thursday 6 May 2010

Information stand from 8am to 2pm. Guided walks at 9.30am, 12.30pm and 5.30pm

Saturday 8 May 2010

Information stand from 9am to 12 noon. Guided walk at 9.30am and 11am.

The information stand will be located north east of the Conservatory.

All walks will start outside the rear entrance (northern end) of the Conservatory, and take about one hour. The same information will be covered at each session.
Plan 0
2.1 Purpose
To restore the key element of water to Fitzroy Gardens and provide an alternative water supply that has regard for site constraints, capital cost and water benefits.

2.2 Background
Water is a defining element of the Fitzroy Gardens’ landscape. Sloping down from both the east and west perimeter, the central spine of the gardens features the Fern Gully and Rill, based on a natural drainage line running north to south. In addition to this feature, the gardens have six fountains and two ponds, which all need water to be shown to their best advantage. All of these features are designed to use potable water as either the main or supplementary water supply.

The introduction of water restrictions has severely limited the amount of water available to the gardens, resulting in significant negative effects. The Rill is now an intermittently-flowing water line, fountains are dry or on limited operation, and stagnant water is often evident in the ponds. Irrigation restrictions have also resulted in an overall decline in the health of the trees, turf and garden plants. The landscape values and the visitor enjoyment of the gardens have in turn been reduced as it has not been possible to present and maintain the gardens to the same horticultural standards applied in the past.
The City of Melbourne has been investigating opportunities to improve water security in Fitzroy Gardens, particularly through the capture, storage and re-circulation of stormwater for garden use. The drainage line in the Rill and Fern Gully presents one collection opportunity, as does the network of stormwater pipes both in and around the gardens precinct. Recently a stormwater diversion and gross pollutant trap were installed near the northern pond to allow more water to flow into the Rill and Fern Gully via a nearby stormwater pipe. While this is beneficial, it cannot deliver enough water to support a continual flow of water to the whole feature.

If the depot footprint was rationalised (refer Section 5), space would be available to implement a more comprehensive water supply solution. Two proposals for how this could be done are outlined in sections 2.3 and 2.4 overleaf.

Key issues for consideration include the cost of developing the systems and the potential water returns achieved from each arrangement. These matters are addressed in the discussion for each option.

On-site issues that any stormwater re-use system will need to address include the need for harvested water to be suitable for re-use in a public environment, and the limited space available for water storage.

Treating stormwater for re-use involves a system for filtering and cleaning the water such as a wetland or bioretention system (raingarden).

Both options presented in this discussion paper propose use of a bioretention system, simply because a wetland would require twice as much space as a bioretention system to achieve the same level of water cleaning and filtering. The site’s limited size means sufficient space is not available to install a wetland.

Bioretention systems (raingardens) are shallow areas filled with soil such as sandy loam that help filter out stormwater pollutants. To assist the filtration process they are planted out with vegetation that can endure changeable water levels. In nature, plants such as rushes and reeds perform this function. In the Fitzroy Gardens, plant material more in keeping with the gardens’ current landscape character may be sourced and used instead.

Some minor modifications to the Rill and Dolphin Fountain may also be required to successfully implement the water capture and re-use schemes. These issues are discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.

The other major on-site issue guiding these proposals is the amount of space available for water storage. As the gardens require little water over winter, but a lot of water over summer, storage capacity needs to be maximised (although it can never meet peak demand). The gardens’ heritage and landscape values mean underground water storage is the preferred outcome for the site. Cost and space restrictions will limit the amount of storage that is able to be provided.
Two main discussion options for water recycling and re-use on the site are:

2.3 Option one – East Melbourne stormwater collection (Plan 2)

This option involves using the stormwater system in and around Fitzroy Gardens to collect and store a larger amount of stormwater.

A number of stormwater pipes run immediately south of the gardens and converge under Jolimont Road, near Wellington Park. This option proposes to link two pipes immediately south of the depot at Wellington Parade, and re-divert the stormwater into a very large underground storage tank in the current depot area. Water would be pumped through a small bioretention system, then into a holding tank, and finally link into the irrigation system in the Fitzroy and possibly Treasury gardens.

Under this scheme the storage tank would be 4 ML, a size estimated to provide an average of 70 per cent of the Fitzroy and Treasury gardens’ water demand.

The benefits of this scheme are:

- A water recirculation system for the Rill and Fern Gully would operate without the need to use potable water
- A substantial amount of potable water used in the gardens would be substituted with stormwater, benefiting the Fitzroy and possibly Treasury gardens.

The limitations of this scheme are:

- Due to the large underground storage requirement, the cost of this system would be substantial, and may require additional funding from outside the City of Melbourne
- Due to the size and scope of the works, care would be needed during construction to ensure there was no unintended impact on the gardens
- When complete, the storage tank would be located under depot infrastructure, and while this is not an issue for the depot proposal outlined in this paper, it may limit future development on the site.
2.4 Option two – Fitzroy Gardens stormwater collection (Plan 3)

Using water runoff from within the gardens and the streets immediately to the north, the Rill would function as a water collection funnel, with a new cleaning and storage system established in the eastern quarter of the current depot area.

This option would include the creation of a bioretention system (raingarden) of approximately 250m² and a storage area of 2.5mL either under or immediately south of the raingarden.

The stored water would be pumped back for re-use in the watercourse and to irrigate Fern Gully.

The benefits of this scheme are:

• A water recirculation system for the Rill and Fern Gully would operate without the need to use potable water.
• Up to 20 per cent of the gardens’ current annual irrigation demand would be met (in this case it is proposed to be used for Fern Gully, but could be directed to other horticultural needs).
• The cost to install and run the system would be well within the City of Melbourne’s financial and management capability.

The limitations of this scheme are:

• A substantial amount of the gardens’ irrigation demand would still need to be met via the potable water system, as is the case now.
3.1 Purpose
To ensure the qualities and values that make Fitzroy Gardens special are retained and enhanced.

3.2 Background
The Fitzroy Gardens contain many beautiful landscapes, views, trees and vegetation.

This discussion paper proposes a number of landscape changes including: an increase in the public garden area; small adjustments to accommodate the stormwater re-use plan; identification of priority projects to enhance the heritage presentation and understanding of the place; and an ongoing program of tree and vegetation renewal.
3.3 A new garden area (Plan 4)

The proposed new garden area would be located at the eastern end of the current depot. This area was part of the gardens until the 1960s, when it was reallocated for depot purposes. The original creek line continues through this space, but is currently accommodated in a stormwater drain.

The new garden would be created through a reduction in the size of the current depot (see section 5 for more detail). This area would provide opportunities to establish new landscape and horticultural features, enhance the visitor experience of the gardens, and house proposed new visitor facilities.

The detailed design and layout of this space would largely be determined by the water re-use, visitor services and childrens’ play options adopted by Council.
3.4 Proposed changes to the Rill and Fern Gully

3.4.1 Modification or removal of the Dolphin Fountain (Plan 5)

The Dolphin Fountain was installed in 1982 and is currently in very poor condition. A significant number of the decorative metal creatures adorning the fountain have been damaged or removed since water restrictions were introduced, as public access to the fountain became easier.

The current water flow arrangement between the pond and Dolphin Fountain should also be modified to reduce the risk of injury. At present, when the fountain is operating, a spray jet curves from the fountain to the pond, which visitors are able to walk through. However, the concrete path under the jet often becomes slippery.

Council could either modify the existing fountain’s hydraulics so that the water flow is confined to the fountain itself, or remove the fountain and surrounds altogether and reinstate the pond edge outline.

3.4.2 Increase in vegetation in the Rill

The bluestone channel, which forms the Rill between upper Fern Gully to Hotham Walk Bridge, is currently bare of vegetation. The nitrogen load and quality of water in the Rill would be improved by deliberately planting aquatic plants such as rushes and sedges in gaps in the bluestone and on the immediate banks.

This kind of planting would not require any part of the channel to be removed, but it would improve the feature’s present appearance. Although not essential to the implementation of either of water recycling scheme, it would also be a positive contribution to the overall level of water quality in the gardens.
3.4.3 Extension of the Fern Gully feature (Plan 6)

It is proposed that Fern Gully and the Rill be extended so that a continuous landscape link is created along the central garden spine. This would integrate the current Fern Gully at the gardens’ southern end with the proposed new garden area.

To achieve this, the size of the garden at the rear of Cooks’ Cottage would need to be modified, a new watercourse constructed and associated landscaping and planting work undertaken south of the current Fern Gully.
3.5 Heritage conservation projects (Plan 7)

Like all living landscapes, Fitzroy Gardens has changed and developed over time, but evidence of many different layers and time periods can still be identified in the gardens today.

The Scarred Tree, which pre-dates the development of the gardens altogether, is of major cultural significance because it shows how Aboriginal people used the local area and acknowledges the natural vegetation on the site before it became a public garden. As land manager, the City of Melbourne has an obligation to conserve and protect this artefact, and we work with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to do so.

Fitzroy Gardens’ Victorian Heritage Register citation suggests three phases of development that have most influenced its character, and that any remaining structures or landscape features from these eras should be conserved or managed appropriately.

In summary, the three historic phases of importance are:

- **Nineteenth century origins** (approximately 1840-60s) when the gardens were first established. Features still remaining from this period include the pathway layout, the elm avenues, the Fern Gully and Rill concept, the bandstand and Sinclair’s Cottage.
- **Turn-of-the-century** (approximately 1890-1910) which saw the introduction of palms and sub-tropical planting styles, the flower beds along Hotham Walk and the lawn areas – all of which are still evident in the gardens today. The first kiosk was built (since replaced), the depot moved from the centre to the southern end of the gardens and the Mound created on the site of the former depot.
- **The inter-war period** (approximately 1925-45) saw a greater emphasis on lawns and floral display, the introduction of new statuary such as those at the Clarendon Street entry to Hotham Walk, the development of the Conservatory and Cooks’ Cottage and the construction of the Propagator’s Cottage.
A total of 20 built items and 29 landscape features and trees are listed in the heritage citation. The Conservation Management Plan 2008 identifies a number of improvements and conservation actions to ensure the heritage values and fabric of the gardens is conserved and adequately managed. Not all of these are urgent. In this discussion paper we identify the highest priority projects, and propose to undertake these works over the next few years.

Of the 15 proposed actions, public comment is particularly sought for two:

No 6 – Sinclair’s cottage improvements

A local group currently has temporary use of the rear garden at Sinclair’s cottage for community gardening activities. The proposal in the discussion paper is to develop a new landscape plan for the front and rear garden of the cottage, which interprets the original layout of the cottage garden. Community gardening may be compatible with a new layout, however it would take a different form to the current configuration.

As community gardening is a relatively new use in Fitzroy Gardens, Council will need to decide how this activity fits in with the overall objectives and vision for the gardens as a whole.

No 14 – Cabman’s Shelter.

This building is thought to be one of many located on Melbourne’s streets at the turn of the 20th century. The building was relocated to Fitzroy Gardens at some point and is currently located in the depot and used for storage.

It is proposed that the shelter be given a more public location: either re-located onto Lansdowne Street near the bus parking area, or in the proposed new garden area, if a suitable use for it can be found.

A summary of all proposed heritage conservation projects is found in Table 1 and are marked on Plan 7.
## Table 1. Heritage Conservation Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fern Gully</td>
<td>Complete a plant inventory to identify significant plants. Upgrade sprinkler system and undertake infill planting when water supply is available. Replace existing pine bridges with a design sympathetic to the setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mound and upper lake</td>
<td>Undertake a plant inventory to identify significant plants, and develop planting plan. Remove red paving edge section and reinstate gravel edge. Infill planting when water supply is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hotham Walk</td>
<td>Retain lawn edge, ribbon planting and shrub backdrop along the walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grey Street Walk</td>
<td>Complete a plant inventory to identify significant plants. Repair existing 19th century vase fragments as required. Record vase artefact by way of photos and drawings for future reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Garden entries</td>
<td>Develop consistent decorative planting style for entry garden beds: Albert Street and Hotham Walk entrances are first priorities. Maintain to a useable and well-presented standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sinclair’s Cottage</td>
<td>Develop heritage maintenance plan. Retain existing significant exterior and interior fabric. Undertake conservation works to cottage and outbuilding. Develop new landscape plan for front and back garden that reconstructs or interprets the original garden layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Grey Street Fountain</td>
<td>Retain and conserve the fountain as a water feature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Band Pavilion</td>
<td>Develop heritage maintenance plan to guide future maintenance and conservation works.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9   | Rotunda               | Develop heritage maintenance plan to guide future maintenance and conservation works.  
|     |                       | Investigate plan for reinstating a garden setting around the rotunda.         |
| 10  | Propagator's Cottage  | Retain and conserve original internal and external fabric and form.          |
|     |                       | Develop heritage maintenance plan to guide future maintenance and conservation works. |
| 11  | Conservatory          | Retain and conserve original internal and external fabric and form.          |
|     |                       | Develop heritage maintenance plan to guide future maintenance and conservation works. |
| 12  | Boy with Urn Fountain | Investigate options for water supplement mechanism.                          |
| 13  | River God Fountain    | Investigate options for water supplement mechanism.                          |
| 14  | Cabman's Shelter      | Relocate to Lansdowne Street frontage or into the proposed new garden area to allow greater public visibility. |
3.6 Tree replacement and renewal (Plans 8 and 9)

A healthy tree profile has a mix of trees of various ages – new trees, young trees, mature trees and declining trees – which ensures a garden undergoes a constant process of renewal. Against these criteria, Fitzroy Gardens has an over-representation of mature and declining trees, with approximately 300 trees in the gardens nearing the end of their productive life. The rate of decline is accelerating due to the drought.

These trees are in major avenues, lawns and garden beds, and include deciduous trees, conifers and palms. They are all important to the gardens and need to be nurtured, yet plans also need to be made for their eventual replacement.
In recent years, a significant tree-replacement program has been implemented along three avenues in the gardens. This type of programmed replacement needs to continue and address both tree avenues and specimen trees.

Although a significant tree renewal and replacement effort is required, the Conservation Management Plan 2008 also recommends the balance of total tree cover in the gardens be consistent with the overall tree numbers evident in the gardens over a long period of time. Any planning for new trees needs to accommodate open lawn areas in the gardens, which are widely used and enjoyed. Plan 8 shows the proposed balance between ‘woodland’ and ‘open’ areas to be employed across the gardens when tree replacements are planned.

Plan 9 indicates the next avenues in need of replacement based on current arboricultural assessments, and a priority area for development of new and replacement trees is also identified.

The implementation of these proposals over the next decade will lead to a healthier tree profile for the Fitzroy Gardens into the future.
4.1 Purpose
To create an enjoyable experience for visitors through the provision of information and support services that are appropriate to current visitor numbers and in a manner sympathetic to the overall presentation of Fitzroy Gardens.

4.2 Background
It is estimated that between 2.5 and 3 million people visit Fitzroy Gardens each year.

The gardens attract a wide range of visitors, from people who walk through or stop by frequently to ones who visit annually, local residents, those attending weekend weddings, and tourists who come by bus to see attractions such as the Conservatory and Cooks’ Cottage.

Recent data from the 2009 Parks Satisfaction Survey of Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens shows the vast majority of visitors to these gardens (77 per cent) live in metropolitan Melbourne, and work or study in the City of Melbourne. The main reasons these visitors go to the gardens are to relax, have a break, to pass through (e.g. to Jolimont Station or the MCG) or to eat lunch. This data is consistent with similar surveys done in previous decades and points to the significant passive recreation experience the gardens provide.

The gardens are also well used on the weekends for weddings (135 in 2007), wedding photography and family picnics with most of these visitors also coming from metropolitan Melbourne.

An increase in overall resident numbers in the municipality, together with a projected four per cent increase in tourism to Melbourne over the next decade, points to the likelihood of a modest increase in overall visitor numbers to the gardens in the coming years.
4.3 Play and imagination

While Fitzroy Gardens is visited by a wide range of people, it seems to have a particular resonance with people who first visited as a child. Features such as the Fairies’ Tree and the Tudor village were created with the children of Melbourne in mind and have been an inspirational space for many over generations. This connection is continued today through activities such as the Summer Fun in the City program, concerts and fairy story sessions held in the gardens every January.

Council has a strong commitment to ensuring the gardens continue to cater for children. Activities, signage and programming are important elements which will continue to be used to enhance children’s enjoyment of the gardens. The gardens currently contain a small playground, located on the south side of the Grey Street walk. This playground was created in 1970s, and it is not recommended the footprint of this playground be increased.

In the inner Melbourne area major playgrounds are provided at Birrarung Marr and Carlton Gardens, and local playgrounds can be found in Powlett Reserve, East Melbourne and Yarra Park. The recently completed Children’s Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens in the Domain provides a completely different play experience through engagement with a designed, enclosed and supervised garden at a child-friendly scale.

Contemporary recreation research indicates that public spaces that engage and stimulate children – which they can access and move through – allow children to play in different ways each time they visit regardless of their age and ability. As already acknowledged in the principles for the Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens Master Plan 1996, it is the combination of the landscape and specific features within it that provide the setting and inspiration for play activities, whether it be games of imagination, exploration and discovery, playing alone or with others, staying in one place or more active play.

The new garden area at Fitzroy Gardens provides the opportunity to enhance the play experience in the gardens. Council has developed three concepts for this area, each option providing a different yet complementary play experience to nearby children’s play facilities.

Following are images and plans that illustrate these three proposals. The focus of the proposals is children up to the age of about 12.

At this stage comment is sought on the basic proposals – a final design for Fitzroy Gardens would be completed at a later date depending on the proposal that is adopted.
4.3.1 Option one
- Maze (Plan 10)

A maze-based concept. A similar style of play activity was designed by the City of Melbourne in 2008 for its sister city in Tianjin and could be reduced in size to fit the space available in the new garden area.
4.3.2 Option two  
- How things work (Plan 11)

Children have a natural curiosity to actively explore, ask questions, make connections and understand their world. The integration of play objects along the theme of key concepts in science and engineering complement the stormwater harvesting infrastructure on site. Examples of play objects that could be included are ones where manipulation or observation activities assist in illustrating the principles of concepts such as distortion and bending, displacement of matter, flotation, energy and force. Specialist science museums such as Questacon in Canberra and Scienceworks in Melbourne are based on this idea, but in an indoor and supervised setting. Under this option, play objects would need to be suitable for installation in a public parkland setting.
4.3.3 Option Three  
- Play journey (Plan 12)

A ‘beginning point’ for a play journey through the gardens, which would start near either a café or visitor centre and lead into the rest of the gardens. This concept is based on the idea of playable space and could include an active challenge progression (such as rope bridges or a climbable rock wall) and identified spaces for focal points on the journey (such as a starting point or a sand play area). The journeying part of the concept could be signified through a sculptural element or signage.

Plan 13 shows how the ‘playable elements’ in the current gardens could link into this journey beyond the proposed new garden area to the current playground, via the Rill, Tudor Village and Fairies’ Tree.
Plan 13

Tudor Village (retain as current)

Enhance potential play opportunity through new artwork on ground.

Water Fall (existing)
Will operate with water from the new recycling system.

Timber Bridge (replace with different style)

New garden area including elements of interest to children.

Playground (retain as current)

Fairies' Tree (retain as current)

Rill Path (existing)
Modify shrub planting to enhance the sensory experience at a child's level.

Eastern Gardens of Cooks' Cottage (existing)
Extend the Rill south into former depot site to extend the play journey.

PLAY JOURNEY INTO CURRENT GARDENS

SCALE: 1:2000

0 20 40 60 80 METRES
4.4 Visitor services

Another sub-group of visitors to the City of Melbourne are those attracted to the ‘tourism precinct’ in the south-west corner of the gardens, where Cooks’ Cottage and the Conservatory are located. Approximately 300,000 visitors per year fall into this category and they are nearly all tourists – either from other parts of Australia or overseas. Their visits are generally short-duration stays, with the majority arriving in organised groups. Generally these visitors do not go to other parts of the gardens. The small physical size of both the Conservatory and Cooks’ Cottage also puts a limit on the number of visitors who can access these attractions at any one time.

The City of Melbourne funds staff and operational costs for a visitor service, which is primarily focussed on Cooks’ Cottage. Fitzroy Gardens is also the only park or garden within the municipality to have a visitor service or a café. The gardens have had a kiosk or tearooms since 1908, with the current facility constructed in 1963. During the colder months the number of patrons using the café is modest. A limited number of after-hours functions are held to supplement its base income stream.

Under the terms of the Crown land regulations, activities and services in the gardens need to be ancillary to its main purpose – a garden. This means services that support visitors are acceptable, but other uses that have nothing to do with the gardens are not allowed.

The current visitor facilities and services offered in Fitzroy Gardens are consistent with this approach but they were designed for another era and would benefit from renewal. The reorganisation of the current depot site provides the opportunity to consider this issue.

Three options for reorganising visitor services are presented here for discussion. It is not the intention of these proposals to bring in new attractions, or to significantly alter the gardens’ existing visitor numbers, profile or uses. The proposals outlined below are simply to bring the gardens’ facilities up-to-date with current standards and ensure economically sustainable operations.

The 1908 Kiosk in Fitzroy Gardens, demolished in 1963.
4.5 Option one – new visitor centre and café (plans 14 and 17)

This option would see the creation of a new visitor centre on the northern edge of the current depot site. The purpose-built centre would provide information and displays about the gardens, coordinate entry to Cooks’ Cottage, sell merchandise, and manage and support group tours. A covered space for group programs and assembly and new toilet facilities would also be provided.

Immediately south of the visitor centre, a new café would be created by modifying and adapting the existing heritage-listed workshop building. It is envisaged the café would focus on garden visitors, and would not be designed with after-hours functions in mind.

The current café and ticket box next to Cooks’ Cottage would be decommissioned and removed. The merchandise currently housed in the stable of Cooks’ Cottage would be relocated to the visitor centre.

The area where the current café stands would be converted into a picnic area and lawn. Temporary refreshment facilities (e.g. mobile vendors or a temporary kiosk) could be set up in the gardens during warmer months, on weekends or during Summer Fun in the City activities.

The benefits of this scheme are:

• All visitor services would be in the same precinct, with the potential for a steady year-round customer base for the café
• Visitor facilities would be modern and a wider range of guided activities could be offered in the gardens
• The number of delivery vehicles travelling through the gardens would be reduced, due to the facilities being relocated to the service area
• Provides an option for a summer or ‘on demand’ secondary refreshment location.

The limitations of this scheme are:

• The absence of a refreshment facility in its centre may weaken the gardens’ central focus
• Concentrating all visitor services in one precinct may not appeal to some garden users.
Plan 14

**NEW VISITORS CENTRE & CAFE**
**OPTION 1**

**KEY**
- GRASS
- NEW BUILDINGS
- HERITAGE LISTED STRUCTURES
- DEPOT AREA
- NEW WATER COURSE
- BIOTRETENTION AREA
- NEW LANDSCAPED AREA
- EXISTING TREES
4.6 Option two – new visitor centre and renewed café (plans 15 and 17)

A new visitor centre would be created by modifying and adapting the existing heritage-listed workshop building for that purpose. As discussed previously, it would provide information and displays about the gardens, coordinate entry to Cooks’ Cottage, sell merchandise, and manage and support group tours. A space for group programs and assembly and a new toilet facility would also be provided.

All additional space available in the depot area would be landscaped and integrated into the gardens.

A new café would be built on the site of the current café. There are two options for rebuilding presented here. One option is for a smaller café for garden visitors that is not designed to accommodate functions. A second option is for a café rebuilt on the same site with the capacity to provide the same level of services and functions as the present facility.

The benefits of this scheme are:
- The café stays in the location familiar to visitors
- There is a larger garden area available in the former depot site.

The limitations of this scheme are:
- Visitor facilities are spread out, limiting access to refreshments for some user groups
- Delivery vehicles would still need to travel through the gardens to reach the café.
4.7 Option three – integrated visitor services facility (plans 16 and 17)

This option would see the creation of one building in the former depot area for all visitor services. It would contain the visitor centre, toilets and a new café of a size equivalent to the current café.

To accommodate this facility, it is proposed the workshop building be demolished. The current café would also be demolished, and the area converted to a picnic and mobile refreshments area.

The benefits of this scheme are:
- All visitor services would be in the same precinct, with the potential for a year-round customer base for the café and the capacity for functions
- Visitor facilities would be modern and enable a wider range of guided activities in the gardens
- The number of delivery vehicles travelling through the gardens would be reduced, due to the facilities being relocated to the service area
- Provides an option for a summer or ‘on demand’ secondary refreshment location.

The limitations of this scheme are:
- The absence of a refreshment facility in its centre may weaken the gardens’ central focus
- Concentrating all visitor services in one precinct may not appeal to some garden users
- It would involve the removal of a building (workshop building) listed on the Heritage Register citation.
Plan 17

**CAFE RELOCATED TO DEPOT AREA WITH NEW PICNIC AREA CREATED (REFER TO VISITOR CENTRE OPTION 1 & 3)**

**NEW CAFE IN CURRENT LOCATION AT A REDUCED SIZE (REFER TO VISITOR CENTRE OPTION 2)**

**NEW CAFE IN CURRENT LOCATION AT EQUIVALENT SIZE (REFER TO VISITOR CENTRE OPTION 2)**

**PAVILION CAFE AREA OPTIONS**

**KEY**
- GRASS
- HERITAGE STRUCTURES
- GRANITIC GRAVEL
- EXISTING CAFE AREA
5.1 Purpose
To renew the depot infrastructure in Fitzroy Gardens so as to support and improve the efficiency of horticultural maintenance services.

5.2 Background
In recent years the City of Melbourne’s maintenance and service delivery systems for parks and gardens have changed significantly. In the past maintenance services were essentially ‘place-based’, whereby each garden had a depot providing a range of services specifically for that garden. Current systems focus on operational flexibility and efficiency and make greater use of mobile maintenance teams and the buying-in of specialist services when required. A network of larger regional depots and smaller satellite facilities suit this operational model and existing facilities have gradually been adapted to match these new arrangements.

In many gardens (such as Carlton and Flagstaff gardens) older-style depots have been replaced with smaller depot sheds. These smaller sheds are essentially the network’s satellites, with larger regional services based at Fitzroy Gardens.

This discussion paper proposes that regional depot services remain at Fitzroy Gardens but the depot be reconfigured to reduce its overall footprint while remaining an adequate size to function as the major depot for the Fitzroy, Treasury and other city gardens.

Depot services do not need to be located in a park or garden. However, if the Fitzroy Gardens’ depot was not on-site, it would need to be somewhere else – on land either rented or purchased by the City of Melbourne or by a service contractor. Such an arrangement would lead to an increase in both the standing costs of the service, as well as the operating costs, because maintenance vehicles would need to travel greater distances, increasing the overall time required for tasks.

The Fitzroy Gardens’ depot has been on its current site since 1900 but expanded in size several times over the years. The depot’s current layout and facilities are at least 30 years old, with many facilities in need of renewal. Some of the structures in the current depot area are included as part of the Victorian Heritage Register citation. These include the Propagator’s Cottage, the 1920s glasshouses, the original works shed and the rubble wall enclosing the current depot on the west and south sides. Any changes to the depot area need to consider the future use, preservation or adaptation of these features.
5.3 A reconfigured depot (Plan 18)

It is proposed the depot’s footprint be reduced by way of a new layout and facilities, including the removal of six non-heritage listed glasshouses currently on-site. These glasshouses were formerly used for propagating flower and shrub stock for the municipality’s gardens and for the decorative displays in and around Melbourne Town Hall, as well as for propagating and growing-on plants for Conservatory displays.

Today most plant stock is brought in from specialist growers, and the glasshouses are under used. They are only used for the development of Conservatory plants, which could easily be purchased from specialist growers and brought to the gardens for displays, as required.

A limited amount of glasshouse space is still required for minor plant propagation and as a plant holding area, but at a much reduced size. The heritage-listed 1920s glasshouses could either be repaired and upgraded, or rebuilt on the same footprint, and would be sufficient for this requirement.

With the other glasshouses removed, a reconfigured depot – approximately half the size of the current depot area – could be located at the south-west end of the current site and provide regional depot services. The balance of land made available as a result of this rationalisation could become part of the gardens again.
Plan 18

KEY

- GRASS
- **RECONFIGURED DEPOT AREA**
- **HERITAGE-LISTED STRUCTURES**

RECONFIGURED DEPOT LOCATION

SCALE 1:1000

0  10  20  30

30 METRES

N
Key reference documents

John Patrick Pty Ltd/Lovell Chen
Tract
Victorian Heritage Register
Cardno Richards
Design Flow
City of Melbourne

Fitzroy Gardens Conservation Management Plan 2008
Feasibility Assessment – Fitzroy Gardens Tourism Precinct 2009
Fitzroy Gardens (H 1834)
East Melbourne Parks and Gardens Stormwater Re-use Systems 2009
Fitzroy Gardens Stormwater Harvesting 2009
Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens Master Plan 1996
Discussion questions

This discussion paper outlines a number of possible changes to areas of Fitzroy Gardens. You can contribute to the discussion paper by answering the questions below:

1. Do you support the creation of a new garden space in the east section of the current depot area?

2. Of the two water recycling options proposed, which one do you prefer and why?

3. What do you think of the proposal to remove or renovate the Dolphin Fountain?

4. Do you support extending the Fern Gully?

5. Do you think the continuing use of the rear garden at Sinclair’s Cottage for community gardening activities complements the overall plan for the gardens?
6. Where would the Cabman's Shelter best be located?

7. What are your views on the three possible play options suggested for the new garden area?

8. Of the three visitor service options proposed, which one do you prefer and why?

9. Do you have a preferred location for the café?

10. Are there any other landscape elements or horticultural features you would like to suggest for consideration in the new garden area?

11. Is there anything further you would like to add, that is important to the future of Fitzroy Gardens?

Please send your response to:
Fitzroy Gardens Master Plan Review Discussion Paper
Urban and Parks Design Branch
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
MELBOURNE 3001 VIC
Email: parkplanning@melbourne.vic.gov.au

The closing date for comment is Friday 21 May, 2010
Do you have a question for the City of Melbourne?

Phone 03 9658 9658
TTY 03 9658 9461

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03 9280 0718 Ελληνικά
03 9280 0719 Bahasa Indonesia
03 9280 0720 Italiano
03 9280 0721 閩語
03 9280 0722 Soomaali
03 9280 0723 Español
03 9280 0724 Türkçe
03 9280 0725 Việt Ngữ
03 9280 0726 All other languages

Please provide written feedback to:

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