

BRITANNIA ROAD RESERVE, LEEDERVILLE



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Britannia Road Reserve
Other names	
Place type	Urban Park

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	17976
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 12 Sep 2006

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	41 Britannia Rd
Locality	Leederville
Survey	
Vol/folio	
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>This place had aesthetic value as a open space providing a contrast to the adjacent freeway and the densely developed urban area.</p> <p>The part Lake Monger Reserve has possible Aboriginal heritage significance as well as historical post-settlement significance.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the former Commonwealth Games held in Perth n 1962 which lead to a program of development of facilities in the metropolitan area.</p> <p>The reserve was associated with Lake Monger and its several roles in the lake system across the north of Perth.</p> <p>The reserve has social value as an aesthetically pleasing public space that is highly valued by the community.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Park/Reserve
Current use	Park/Reserve
Other use	Farming/Pastoral

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1930
Walls	N/A
Roof	N/A
Architectural Style	N/A
Physical description	The part of the Lake Monger Reserve east of the Mitchell Freeway remains in the City of Vincent. It is an open parkland with plantings remaining from before its severance by the freeway. At its northern end is the now disused cycling Velodrome, erected for the 1962 Commonwealth Games, in the Postwar Functionalist style, utilised in all of the Games venues.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Lake Monger, known as Galup to the Noongar, was the site of the mandjar, or fair, where people met to barter a wide range of goods.

Following European settlement, John H. Monger acquired 200 acres of Perth shire Location Ae abutting the south side of Lake Monger. To the east and southeast of Lake Monger was situated the estate of William Leeder. In the 1890s the land of these two estates was subdivided for residential and garden lots. West of Oxford Street, the rich swampy ground was occupied with market gardens and dairies.

In 1902, the Lake Monger Board was set up to manage the lake and on 19 June 1903, Lake Monger was declared Class A. Reserve 8731 for public park and recreation. The lake was a popular picnic, boating, and fishing spot, but the reserve only covered the lake area itself. There was no public land on its banks, and even some of the lake was privately owned. It was planned to acquire some of the surrounding land and develop it as a reserve, but acquisition of land at the eastern end of the Lake was not achieved until the late 1920s, due to lack of funds.

Chinese market gardens continued to operate in the area while discussions progressed about the future of this landholding. By 1928 the gardeners were gone and by 1930 some 120 acres of land had been bought by the Perth City Council to be developed as part of the Lake Monger Reserve.

Fifty acres of this land was swamp, to be reclaimed by dredging silt from the lake bed. Dredging works commenced on 13 May 1932, with celebrations which involved a swim through Leederville, a canoe race involving Leederville, Wembley and Mount Hawthorn Boy Scouts, and a series of bonfires.

In 1936, the reclaimed land, which had been filled with silt, rubbish and street sweepings, was top dressed with 7,000 cubic yards of sand acquired during the levelling of the Girton Street Reserve, North Perth (now Les Lilleyman Reserve. Girton Street was the original name for the section of London Street between Woodstock and Green Streets). Three lines of trees were to be planted as part of the development of the Reserve.

Britannia Oval was developed on part of the reclaimed site, and there has been some residential development, with 20 lots released in 1956.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In the late 1960s, the construction of the Mitchell Freeway through the area created a barrier between the reserve and the lake. A pedestrian footbridge was constructed across the freeway in the early 1980s to reinstate some form of access.

The former Commonwealth Games Velodrome, which is located within the Lake Monger Reserve, was purpose built for the Empire (Commonwealth) Games in 1962. Previous to the Commonwealth Games, Perth had 'almost no sports facilities of international standard', had never staged a major international sporting event on such a scale, and thus faced a huge challenge for a city of less than 500,000 people. The City of Perth perceived the Games as 'an opportunity for enhancing a reputation for goodwill and hospitality on an international plane'. Almost £4 million would be spent on preparations for the Games, 'much of it on permanent new facilities', including the Commonwealth Government spending £1 million on raising Perth Airport to international jet standards, and Fremantle Harbour Trust completing 'one of the world's most modern sea passenger terminals' to cater for Games visitors.

Perry Lakes Stadium, the Beatty Park Aquatic Centre, and the Canning All Weather Rowing Course were among the larger enterprises built for the hosting of the VII British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Other purpose built facilities included the boxing stadium, also at Perry Lakes, and the subject Velodrome east of Lake Monger in Leederville. A Games Village for accommodating visiting competitors and officials was built at City Beach, on land donated by the City of Perth, valued at £200,000.

The area in which the Velodrome is located was originally the old council depot site that was used to stable the night cart horses. The Velodrome was constructed circa 1959 and officially opened on 14 March 1959. The Velodrome was a permanent structure used for cycling race with a concrete curved circular track around an infield area, which was a replica in shape and size of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics cycling track. The track length of the Velodrome is 333 metres and the standard race distance is 1,000 metres. The original stand accommodated 3,600 seats and standing room allowed for about 2,000 people. The Velodrome is located at the north east corner of the Lake Monger Reserve. The main entrance of the Velodrome is off Britannia Road, the clubhouse, grandstand and change rooms are located to the south and south west of the Velodrome track

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A number of alterations and additions have been undertaken over the years to the Velodrome. Circa 1960, a brick change room was constructed to the south west of the track. The plans show that the concrete cycle track, including the circular track, the finishing line mark on the track and the judges' movable stand were still intact at this time. The original grandstand was modified circa 1973 with new steel balustrades, ceiling, windows and the installation of air conditioning units. The existing club facilities, which are located to the east of the grandstand, were constructed circa 1985 which accommodated function areas, a lounge and an office.

Floreat Athena Soccer Club moved to the Velodrome in 1985. In 1998 Evangelos and Despo Litis donated \$150,000 to the club and the stadium was renamed E & D Litis Stadium. More recently, the Velodrome contains two grandstands: the original Eleni grandstand and a more modern stand in front of the clubrooms. Although the banked tracks of the Velodrome have been grassed over, their shape is just evident, and they create an attractive surround for the football pitch in the middle. The original cycling tunnel has been left intact for players to use to and from the change rooms and is a prominent feature of the ground.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards showcase the changes from the empty looking land in 1953 to the early 1960s when the tracks and grandstands are built. By the 1970s fencing and pitch markings are visible. The distinct change in the pitch grounds is seen by the turn of the 21st century. These photographs also indicate that the form and extant of the building facing Britannia Rd and the building to its immediate south-east have changed little since their construction in the 1960s. Though the grandstands have visually changed throughout the years, these two structures have not.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION	
Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic Development Cultural Life: Recreation - Sport Social Services: General Social Services
Associations	
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

