

PARKS AND SPORTSGROUNDS.

A number of reserves were created within the town of Armidale by surveyor Galloway. Some of these became parkland namely Reserve No 8 (Central Park), Reserve No 45 (Lambert Park) and a reserve between Dangar and Marsh Streets along the creekland. Reserve No 2 was set aside for a market square and a major part of the reserve for a commissioner's residence later became MacDonald Park. The northwestern corner of the reserve for the race course became the Armidale Memorial Sportsground.

The Public Parks Act 1854 empowered the government to appoint trustees to protect and preserve flora and maintain parklands. The Municipalities Act 1858 and 1867 empowered councils to draft by-laws for the provision of public recreation. The Lands for Public Purposes Acquisition Act 1880 vested parks in the Minister of Public Works as trustee but recognised councils as suitable authorities to control parks.

At a council meeting on 14 November 1893, council took action to appoint a committee to manage a number of parks then known as East, West and Central Parks. In May 1894 the position of a park keeper was discussed at length and John Sullivan tendered £2 12s 6d per month for Central Park and £2 10s for the West End Park. He was appointed full time caretaker to the three parks in July 1900 so that 'the whole of his time and attention (can) to be devoted to parks'.¹ In April 1902 council again took action to call applications for the position of caretaker of the parks at a salary of £75 and H. Morgan was appointed in May. He resigned in November 1904 and was replaced by Richard Hiddens appointed at a salary of £75. Two years later, council granted an increase in wages of 5 shillings per week and in May 1908 the salary was increased to 7 shillings per day.

Council was informed in April 1902 by the Under-Secretary for Finance and Trade that £40 was available for improving the parks. Ald. Claverie thought that the money should be spent on laying water onto the parks. Some aldermen also felt that water could be laid on for a fountain in Central Park and the Murray Memorial could be used to advantage in a fountain. Three hundred trees arrived from Gosford Nursery in June 1902 to be planted in public parks and streets and aldermen 'hoped they will thrive better than the previous parcel'.² However that December council had to apply to the fire brigade for the use of hoses and the services of the firemen to water trees in the parks at a cost not to exceed 50s.

The inspector of nuisances was empowered and directed to impound stock from parks in June 1905.

A visitor to Armidale was quoted in the *Armidale Express*, 28 March 1912. The visitor commented that Mayor Curtis was an authority on horticulture and 'hoped that he will move the council to make both parks in Armidale a little more attractive than they are'.

¹ Council minutes, 10 July 1900.

² Council minutes, 14 June 1902.

Mr Lane MLA informed council 'the Government had granted £8 for the maintenance of the local Parks. Last year's grant was £20'.³ In May 1916 the Lands Department sought details of all parks in view of the Minister proposing to place all subsidised parks under the control of municipal and shire councils. The town clerk provided the following names- Central, East End, West End, Sportsground and Albion Park. By November 1922 there were six parks and recreation grounds within the Armidale municipality including the racecourse with an approximate area 116 acres, or 5.45 per cent of the total area.

The Wattle Day League applied for the planting of wattle trees in the parks in August 1923 but the general purpose committee recommended no action be taken to plant them. This was in contrast to action taken in May 1941 when groups of wattles were planted in Drummond Park. The Armidale and District Horticultural Society formed in 1929, supervised the work.

As a result of a meeting, five Armidale Protestant ministers presented a petition to council in January 1932 seeking a referendum on Sunday sport. Council sought clarification from the ministers and asked them to define Sunday sport. Doubtful of its powers to prohibit such sport, council planned to hold a referendum on 20 February 1932. Following receipt of a letter from Mr Bluett, Secretary of the Local Government Association, which stated 'the Council had no power to forbid Sunday sport on areas not under its immediate control'⁴ the referendum was cancelled.

The Horticultural Society helped supervise much of the work for the dole in the parks in 1933 particularly in the East End and Central Park. In February 1939 council approached the society to assist council in the planning of parks and the society formed a sub-committee to confer with council when required. With the offer of assistance from the society, council promised to establish a nursery at the rear of the council chambers in August to raise flowering plants. By October, the flower nursery had been constructed and the first lot of seedlings were transplanted in Central Park's flower garden in November whilst seedlings were also planted in the East End Park in December. Council took action in January 1940 to set aside £250 to employ a gardener and thanked the society for its support. In November 1943 council again sought advice of the society in regard to the improvement of parks and gardens.

In the 1930s the state government of the day recognised the value of trees. In February 1936 the Department of Labour and Industry notified council that a special committee consisting of representatives from the Departments of Labour, Local Government, Main Roads, Agriculture and Public Works had formulated a system of co-ordination of tree planting. Consequently the Minister 'directed that all shire and municipal council in the State who had adopted the emergency works relief, be requested to submit to the

³ *Armidale Express*, 31 March 1916, p.6.

⁴ *Armidale Express*, 12 February 1932, p.4.

Department a programme of tree planing to be included in the schedule of approved works ...'⁵ Council agreed to co-operate.

During July 1941 over 300 trees were planted in various parts of the municipality. These included: Drummond Park with several varieties of 160 wattles in groups and clumps; Albion Park six flowering peaches, two purple flowering hawthorns and one flowering plum; Harris park and creek near the gasworks, twelve golden willows and fourteen poplars. The tree planting was supervised by the president of the Horticultural Society whilst Mr Monckton of the city baths provided a large number of trees.

Work in the parks was restricted during the war and in December 1943 council moved that a qualified gardener be appointed in 1944. The Department of Manpower refused the appointment because of the demands of the war effort. Following a recommendation from the town and beautification committee, council appointed a gardener in February 1946. However the gardener T.C. Madrick resigned in August 1947 in protest against the amount of vandalism in the city's parks. In October council decided to establish its own nursery for trees and shrubs and to appoint a head gardener.

The annual meeting of the Horticultural Society in October 1944 determined to seek the co-operation of the Armidale and District Progress Association, Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to request the Mayor, Ald. L.E. Dawson convene a public meeting to form a town beautification committee. Representatives of the Horticultural Society, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce and Progress Association met on Wednesday 15 November at the Armidale Literary Institute to form the Armidale Improvement and Beautification Committee (Armidale I.B.C.). The aims were:

to boost Armidale and capitalise its natural advantages, (2) to suggest means whereby the council would be able to financially carry out the work of beautification and improvement and (3) to show that such expenditure would be warranted and profitable from a civic, business and health viewpoint.⁶

The Mayor Ald. D.D.H. Fayle agreed to call a public meeting and convened such a meeting on 18 April 1945. The public meeting urged council to adopt a policy of beautification and improvement as well as revalue unimproved capital values to provide adequate finance for the improvement and beautification of the city. Following recommendations from the Armidale I.B.C. two years later, 'council decided to affiliate with the Forestry Advisory Committee' and to ask the improvement and beautification committee 'to produce the master plan'⁷ in February 1947.

The building, health and general purposes committee recommended in January 1954 that control of parks and gardens be transferred to the beautification committee. Two

⁵ *Armidale Express*, 5 February 1936, p.2.

⁶ *Armidale Express*, 20 November 1944, p.4.

⁷ *Armidale Express*, 19 February 1947, p.8.

weeks later council decided to appoint a head gardener with botanical experience. In 1964 council agreed to the appointment of a street tree planting committee consisting of some members of the Armidale I.B.C. and aldermen. Council also agreed to the imposition of a special rate for beautification.

A recreation and playing fields advisory committee was formed as a result of a public meeting held in 1966. A meeting on 22 September determined the terms of reference for the committee. Two years later, it presented a draft report in September 1968 and a final report in November. It recommended that a special rate be established in the annual budget for recreation development in the city. In 1968 a budget of \$5000 was allocated and ten years later \$288 000. This later budget included acquisition of lands, development of fields, parks and gardens maintenance; work in the Mall; playground equipment and plant maintenance. It did not include expenditure on the swimming pool.

In a report to council in February 1975, the city engineer David Hegarty stated that the five year total for the period from 1971 to 1975 recreation expenditure from council funds was \$541 176 against a total road construction vote of \$521 749. This period was a peak year of recreation development and demonstrated the importance council placed on such expenditure. During that period a specialist groundsman Allan Brooker was appointed in 1971 and a full time assistant groundsman in 1976.

In October 1972 the Armidale I.B.C. released a fifteen page report on parks and open space in Armidale. It reported on the state of each existing park in Armidale. President of the committee stressed the need 'to maintain strong ties with council's recreation and playing field committee as this committee and the A.I.B.C. had parallel aims'.⁸ A report on 'Present and Future Needs of Playing Fields and Associated Facilities to the Year 1985' was also presented to council in July 1975.

In 1968 there 12 hectares of recreational land in Armidale. Ten years later there were 26 hectares with 7 hectares nearing completion and 8 hectares allocated for equestrian clubs. This meant there was now a total of 41 hectares with another 59 hectares which had been zoned for future open space.

In January 1995 council adopted a policy for Local Place Naming. Any proposal for the naming of places such as parks or reserves was to be approved by the Geographical Names Board of N.S.W. under the provision of the 1966 Geographical Names Act. By October the City Council listed the following as open spaces:

Category	Park
Significant Bushland Areas	Arboretum Beadle Grove
Significant Area Parks	McDonald Park and Drummond Park
Generic Bushlands	Lambs Avenue Cemetery Reserve

⁸ *Armidale Express*, 30 October 1972, p.3.

Creekland west of Markham Street	Burgess Street and BonaVista Reserve
Creekland east of Markham Street	Elizabeth Park 1 and 2, Niagara Street
	Albion Park
	Curtis Park
Significant Area Sportsfields	Lambert Park
Sportsfields	Bruce Browning park
	Harris park
	Wicklow Ovals

Other areas included Neighbourhood Playgrounds; Parks for General Community Use and Drainage Reserves.

Albion Park.

Alderman Wilson informed council in June 1903 of Frederick R. White's proposal to purchase land in Beardy Street along Dumaresq Creek adjoining Allingham's mill 'and to present the same to the Council, to be held by the latter in trust as a public watering place for all time to come'.⁹ In the dry summer of 1902 waste water from the railway engine sheds had supplied water for travelling stock at this spot. Council accepted the offer and the land was vested in council for this purpose.

A sum not exceeding £10 was allocated in May 1904 to be spent on ornamental trees for this portion of land and on the camping reserve along creeklands between Marsh and Falconer (sic) Streets. In December council selected the name Albion Park for this area and in June 1908 council, approved an iron gate for the entrance to the park, at a cost of £2. A fence was also constructed to protect the watering area from travelling stock.

Fifty rails and three posts were taken from the saleyards stock in the town hall yard for fencing repairs to the park in March 1920 but Ald. Curtis asked the mayor in August 1928 to take steps to have the fence removed. The fence was removed by the end of January 1929.

In April 1934 tenders were called for the removal of two trees and in June 1936 council took action to plant additional trees in the park. Two dozen flowering peach trees were planted in August 1939. Swimming pool manager, Thomas Monckton sought mutual cooperation with council to develop Albion Park in August 1943. The building and health committee recommended that he be given full care, planning and control of the area in September. He offered to supply and plant trees and shrubs if council could give occasional help with labour and material. That December, he was authorised to control the park for a period of five years in the planting and care of shrubs and trees.

Tree replacement was in progress in July 1946. Then in November 1964, the Dumaresq Creek Improvement Committee reported that members, assisted by the Armidale Rotary Club, had planted replacement trees. The *Armidale Express*, 18 November 1964 described in detail the trees planted under the scheme.

⁹ *Armidale Express*, 26 June 1903, p.2.

Armidale Aborigine's Reserve.

Following a request from the Association for the Assimilation of Aborigines, council agreed to install playground equipment at the reserve in December 1961.

Aboretum.

In July 1882 the mayor informed council 'that Mr Chard, the District Surveyor, had recommended a reserve of 100 acres (40 hectares), near the Summer House Hill as a park for inhabitants of Armidale'.¹⁰ An area of thirty acres was gazetted as a public reserve on 7 August 1882. An area (Reserve No. 761), bounded by Perrott and McLennan Streets was also set aside for a plantation. Parts of the original reserve, south of Kentucky Street were later used for other public purposes mainly including the establishment of Armidale High School.

During council discussion in July 1916 about town planning and the planting of trees in streets, Ald. Hawke felt that the land below Soudan Hill 'should be aligned and made a model suburb'.¹¹ This position was supported by the *Armidale Express* but not acted upon by council.

The Local Government (Amendment) Act 1945 extended the power of local government to establish and manage community forests. A special grazing lease applied to the area now known as the Aboretum and the Armidale I.B.C. wrote to council in October 1945 seeking to have the lease cancelled. Council supported the move. By May 1946 the Armidale I.B.C. had formulated plans for 'a community forest on the reserve land adjoining the highway near the High School'.¹² The plan included the planting of a forest of English and other exotic trees.

Council endorsed the proposal of the Armidale I.B.C. in June 1946 for a community forest and took action to apply to the Department of Lands for the dedication of sections 64, 65, 66, 160, 162 and 163. In September council successfully opposed three applications for a special lease of the area but in December council adopted the town planning and beautification committee's recommendation that a joint meeting be held with the citizen's beautification committee for the commencement of the community forest proposal.

The Department of Lands informed council in January 1947 that permissive occupancy of portion 704 and other lands for the proposed community forest would be offered to Frederick Charles Stanley. The letter also stated 'unless some definite programme of development of the area is submitted ... within 12 months ... consideration will be given to the leasing of the land for a term of years'.¹³ The Armidale I.B.C. decided in February to prepare a master plan and meet with the beautification committee of council to finalise details of the scheme.

¹⁰ *Armidale Express*, 21 July 1882, p.4.

¹¹ *Armidale Express*, 28 July 1916, p.2.

¹² *Armidale Express*, 27 May 1946, p.6.

¹³ *Armidale Express*, 22 January 1947, p.4.

The works committee recommended 'immediate action be taken to plough and fence the area bounded by Kentucky, O'Dell, Hargrave and Perrott-streets for use as a nursery for later planting in a community forest'.¹⁴ In June land along Kentucky Street between O'Dell and Perrott Streets was ploughed in by council workmen in preparation for the community forest. That month, the I.B.C. announced details of the plan to involve the community in the planting of native and deciduous trees.

In the winter of July 1947 portion of the public reserve near the Armidale High School had been fenced and ploughed with council assistance. In February 1948 the District Surveyor sought council's views on a proposed addition to the Armidale High School of part of Reserve No. 1334 for a public park. It was this area which was set aside for a community forest. Council approved part of the community forest, that is portion 704 to be transferred to the Armidale High School grounds in March. In the following spring, members of the Armidale I.B.C. assisted by Armidale High School boys 'planted about 70 trees in the forest area and several hundred trees in the nursery'.¹⁵

The Armidale Community Forest was officially inaugurated on Saturday 14 August 1948 when the community tree planting ceremony was held as an Arbor Day exercise in the forest area. Council arranged the digging of the holes and for facilities to water the trees and Mayor Ald. D.D.H. Fayle planted the first tree. The planting of trees was supported by such alderman as W.H. McBean and in August he stated at a council meeting:

I am looking forward to the day when Armidale will be spoken of ... as a city of beautiful trees. I can see this coming because of the variety of trees we are planting all over the place.¹⁶

Because of the loss of trees that summer, the secretary of the Armidale I.B.C., Alwyn Jones requested council connect 'water to the community forest area fronting the New England Highway'¹⁷ in June 1949. Council would not connect a water supply but suggested 'the committee approach the Railway Department for a supply from its line to the pressure tank'.¹⁸ In June 1950. the Chamber of Commerce attacked council for neglecting beautification of the city despite the work of the city engineer, J.D. Browne. They claimed half of the trees planted in the community forest had died because of the lack of co-operation by council.

The 1950 Town Planning report recommended that the present community forest in sections 163 and 166 be extended to embrace the area bounded by Kentucky, Niagara, Galloway and Butler Streets. At the time the town plan described the area as a

¹⁴ *Armidale Express*, 28 May 1947, p.8.

¹⁵ *Armidale Express*, 2 July 1948, P.3.

¹⁶ *Armidale Express*, 18 August 1948, p.13.

¹⁷ *Armidale Express*, 22 June 1949, p.15.

¹⁸ *Armidale Express*, 6 July 1949, p.3.

community forest of 43 acres used mainly for grazing purposes. A small portion in section 66 was used for a tree nursery.

The area at the south east corner bounded by Butler and Galloway Streets was gazetted for future public requirements for a park on 11 February 1955. Council also took action to make available the Crown Land for home sites in February on the southern side of New England highway opposite the Armidale High School. The Minister for Lands advised council in April 1955 that land bounded by Galloway, O'Dell, Kentucky and Butler Streets would not be used for residential purposes.

The project proceeded very slowly because of the shortage of finance and the project was later taken over by a special arboreum committee of council. 'The Beautification Committee was responsible, however, for the retention of the area as an area as a public reserve in the face of strong pressure to open it up for subdivision'.¹⁹

In June 1959 council considered that the land below Soudan Hill, South Armidale should be re-zoned for residential purposes. Concerned about the development, the editor of the *Armidale Express*, 5 June 1959 commented: 'Perhaps, it is just as well that Armidale has an Improvement and and Beautification Committee, otherwise the city would soon be without parks!' A number of organizations including the Armidale I.B.C., Tourist Bureau Committee, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Apex Club and Horticultural Society objected to the proposal. A call emerged for the immediate development of the arboretum and botanic gardens as proposed by the Armidale I.B.C. in the reserve dedicated in 1882.

R.H. Anderson the chief botanist and curator of the Sydney Botanic Gardens visited the site in August and met a delegation of Armidale citizens to discuss the establishment of a regional section of the Royal Botanic Gardens. A deputation to council later that month outlined a plan by R.H. Anderson as part of a scheme to decentralise the National Botanic Gardens at Sydney. It was based on the plan developed by the Armidale I.B.C. The proposal to develop an arboretum and botanic gardens received the support of council in November when the Minister for Agriculture also promised support.

Professor L.D. Pryor, Professor of Botany at the National University and curator of the Garden City of Canberra outlined the financial implications and staff requirements to the Armidale Community Development Association in April 1960. Despite the call by the professor to legally establish the gardens, no action was taken and the matter of housing was again debated by council in October 1961. Consequently the Armidale I.B.C. offered to immediately develop the reserve.

The *Armidale Express*, 16 March 1962 announced 'another attempt to secure part of the site of the proposed arboretum for housing'. The decision taken by council in May 1962 to ask the Department of Lands to release part of the public land on the southern side of

¹⁹ A. Jones, 'Fifty Years of Beautification and Tree Planting in Armidale', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, No. 37, pp.129-134.

the highway for building purposes again brought a protest from the Armidale I.B.C. The editor of the *Armidale Express* supported the stand and commented:

We hope that before the Department or the Minister (acting on his own initiative), grants the request, he will give interested parties the opportunity of stating a case against the alienation of any more Crown Land within the City boundary.²⁰

In November 1962, council agreed to the appointment of a group of trustees by the Minister for Lands provided a representative of council was made one of the trustees. The Lands Department informed council in October 1963 thirty-two acres of land on the New England Highway in South Armidale have been zoned in principle for a botanic garden and arboretum'. Despite this move, council again voted in October to zone the land B-class residential in its interim town plan and approved the construction of homes on two thirds of the proposed arboretum and botanic gardens site. Because of concern expressed by some aldermen involving the possible cost of a garden, the Armidale I.B.C. stated in November 1963 'an arboretum and botanical gardens on the Soudan Hill slopes could be "confidently developed independently of City Council finance"'.²¹ Despite protests by the Horticultural Society and the Armidale I.B.C., council re-affirmed its decision that month.

In October 1964 an important statement was issued by the district surveyor, C.C. Bradley that influenced the future development of the arboretum. He stated:

Major changes in circumstances during the last five years, especially the extension of the city boundaries and the unexpected release for settlement of an area of about 370 acres adjoining the city boundaries and formerly reserved for the old hospital incline me without prejudice to sympathetically view representations that the arboretum site be preserved for beautification.²²

Members of the N.S.W. Nurseymen's Association visited Armidale in November 1965 but a trust still had to be appointed. The area of land, Reserve No. 85802 to the north of the highway bounded by Butler and Kentucky Streets, was gazetted for Public Recreation and Botanic Gardens on 20 May 1966. The roads within the arboretum site were closed and the Armidale I.B.C. promised in July to support the seven member trust when formed. The Minister for Lands, Mr Lewis asked the committee in November to recommend citizens for the trust.

Trustees appointed in May 1967 for the Armidale Botanic Gardens Trust included: W.R. Scott (chairman), Dr. B.N. Richards (secretary) and Messrs R.D.H.Fayle, D.A.

²⁰ *Armidale Express*, 18 May 1962, p.1.

²¹ *Armidale Express*, 6 November 1963, p.2.

²² *Armidale Express*, 21 October 1964, p.4.

Hewitt, E.J. Hilder, R.W. Berman and H.J. Wissman. By August, the trustees for the 31 acre reserve at South Armidale agreed that the plan should provide for:

a lookout and picnic sites; representative plant communities (both native and exotic); native species in approximately the original condition of the reserve; footpaths and walking tracks; no roads; enlargement of the existing dam for aquatic plants and animals, and rockeries and lawns where suitable'.²³

By October 1968 delay had occurred in development of the arboretum because 'the soil distribution of the 30-acre block ... has turned out to be exceedingly complex'.²⁴ This soil analysis was need for planning of the park.

Once a Board of Trustees was established, the trustees commissioned Ron Margules and Associates (Landscape and Forestry Consultants) in 1969 to draw up a development plan which was paid for by a group of interested citizens. Professor John McGarity also prepared a soil study. Some initial plantings were undertaken and water pipes laid into the area for watering.

The trustees denied in April 1970 there were any plans to develop the area for organised sport. In May the trustees announced their intention to meet with the Minister for Lands, Mr Lewis in June and discuss development plans. In July the trust chairman announced that work was to begin shortly on stage one of the botanic gardens site. The trust had been granted \$5000 by the State Government for each of the next three years for development work. This stage involved:

provision of parking space near the northwest corner, ground preparation and sowing of grass for an informal play area, similar preparation and sowing for an irrigated lawn section, and fencing and erecting windbreaks on the western and southern boundaries'.²⁵

In 1973 and 1974 the trust employed people under the RED scheme with jobs including site preparation and blackberry control. Lack of funds curtailed the trustee's activities and arrangements to hand over trusteeship to the City Council commenced in 1977. On 18 May 1979, council took over the area as trustees. Since then no further plantings were made but at a council meeting of 17 March 1980, council resolved to adopt the landscape plan prepared on behalf of the trust as a basis for future development. The first priority was to be the planting of the north easter sector fronting the New England Highway and in 1981 a water main with irrigation outlets was laid throughout the eastern area.

²³ *Armidale Express*, 2 August 1967, p.4.

²⁴ *Armidale Express*, 4 October 1968, p.14.

²⁵ *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1970, p.5.

A public meeting held on 27 May 1982 at the council chambers considered the development of the arboretum and the council meeting of 21 June resolved to form an advisory committee. Members included a council representative, vice-chairman of council's tree planting committee and representatives of the society for growing native plants, the former botanic garden trust, the Forestry Commission and the park's superintendent. The plan of development for the arboretum was formally adopted by council in August. An arboretum awareness day was held on 1 August 1982, Arbor Day and a large number of individuals and community organisations attended. A further day was held on 7 August 1983. Council unsuccessfully applied for a grant under the National Tree programme in 1983. By January 1984 the Lions Club had erected a flag pole and fund raising schemes, awareness days and working bees were held.

Initially the arboretum committee submitted a modest proposal for preliminary work in the aquatic gardens as a Bicentennial project. This plan was amplified to become the \$266 000 Armidale Bicentennial Arboretum Plan which was launched by the N.S.W. Premier Mr Neville Wran, on 10 August 1985. The arboretum was officially opened on 8 October 1988 by the vice-chairman of the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council, Thelma McCarthy AM. By that stage the sixteen hectare site included aquatic gardens, waterfall, senses garden for the disabled, community wall constructed by members of the community, native gardens, exotic gardens, New England flora bed, walking tracks, lookout, picnic shelter and toilet facilities. The project involved service clubs, schools, business houses, individuals and the City Council. The total cost of the project was financed by the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council (\$200 000); council (\$17 000) and community effort (\$54 000).

The senses garden was totally funded and constructed by community groups including Armidale High, Dumaresq Lions, Armidale Garden, Sandon County, Apex, Quota, and Rotary Clubs. The community wall was funded by the N.S.W. Arts Council and the public who donated bricks carved by community members. Council constructed the toilet block with special funding. The aquatic garden, designed by John Wrigley, was funded by a major part of the bicentennial grant. The native gardens, designed by Mrs Maria Hitchcock were constructed in stages by students from The Armidale School and Technical and Further Education using an unemployment grant. The lookout was funded and constructed by the Rotary Club as their major bicentennial project. The exotic gardens were designed by Mrs Marilyn Pidgeon with the bulbs being donated by the Leitch family.

Autonomy Park.

Situated at the corner of Elm Avenue and Queen Elizabeth Drive, this park was named by November 1962 to mark the autonomy of the University of New England. Established by Dumaresq Shire, the grove of trees at the entrance to the University was planted by noted personalities. In January 1956 there were seven vacant spots for trees and the Governor of New South Wales planted two trees on 2 March. Other trees were allocated to the Hon. D.H. Drummond MHR; the Hon. R.J. Heffron; the Forster family; the first warden of the University and the first graduate.

In July 1967 council received a bequest of £200 from the late Dr. P.D.F. Murray, a Reader in Zoology at the University of New England. The bequest was used to develop the small triangular area of land at the junction of Elm Avenue and Claude Street. It was also suggested by a council committee that the area be called the Dr Murray Memorial area or Dr Murray Memorial Park.

Barney Street Playground.

Following a proposal by Sergeant E.F. Bunt of Allingham Street, Armidale for a playground and supported by some forty nearby residents, council referred the proposal to the city engineer for report in September 1950. The block was undersized and petitioners promised to maintain the block if developed by council.

Beadle Grove.

Early in 1976 university lecturer Professor N.C.W. Beadle donated land at the corner of Lynches Road and Markham Street to the council for development as parkland. Since that date, the planting of native trees in this parkland has been completed by working bees by a partnership between the Armidale City Council, Armidale Tree Group and Greening Australia.

In late 1954, he was appointed the Foundation Professor of Botany at the newly independent University of New England. He died at Guyra on 13 October 1998.

Broughton Place.

Council took action in January 1936 to approach the Department of Justice and ask if it will allow council to erect a public convenience on this land but permission was refused. The Public Works Department approved demolition of fencing around the Armidale Court House and the erection of a tourist sign board in April 1945 and in May, council agreed to co-operate with the Church of England with planned celebrations of the first service in Armidale. The Justice Department was then asked by council in May 1945 to dedicate a small piece of land in the grounds as close as possible to the site of the service. In August council approved a building plan for a memorial cross in the court house grounds to commemorate the first Christian church service held in Armidale on 12 October. The grey granite celtic cross was dedicated on Friday 12 October 1945 and was witnessed by 'a large crowd, including clergymen from all parts of the Diocese of Armidale'.²⁶

The Chamber of Commerce requested council in June 1952 to convert the piece of land on the court house corner into a rest park. That month, J.A. Sutherland, a Teacher's College lecturer introduced concept plans to the Armidale I.B.C. for the area to be submitted to council.

The 1963 Local Government Centenary committee initially named this area Centenary Park but it was re-named Broughton Place in October 1963 when work began on remodelling this small area of land. It was named after William Grant Broughton, a

²⁶ *Armidale Express*, 12 October 1945, p.8.

former Anglican Bishop of Australia who conducted New England's first church service there.

Council negotiated with the the Department of the Attorney General and of Justice to have an amenities block built adjacent to the Court House in April 1974 as part of the mall project. Permission was refused in May and council appealed to David S. Leitch, MLA in August. Leitch invited the Hon. J.C. Maddison, Minister for Justice to visit Armidale and 'discuss the excellent proposal of improving the Mall and the Court House property'²⁷.

New toilets were constructed by council adjacent to the courthouse and opened on 8 December 1981.

Central Park.

Reserve No. 8 was dedicated on 24 February 1874 and formally proclaimed on 31 May 1887 but it was not until July that council became trustees of the park. 'The delay in having the new by-laws gazetted was caused through the Parks within the Municipality not having been proclaimed under the Public Parks Act'.²⁸

In May 1874 council allocated £6 for stumping and clearing the reserve. The tender was awarded to Breen and Diffelo and the work was completed to the 'entire satisfaction of the Improvement Committee' in June. Twelve months later a grant of £40 was obtained for the suitable enclosure of the reserve and aldermen voted £100 to be set aside for 'fencing, trenching and otherwise improving' the area. The tender to fence the reserve for 11s 5d per rod was awarded to a Mr McKinlay in July 1875 and he was given two months to complete the work. In August, the reserve 'was enclosed by a wire fence with a view... to being planted with ornamental trees'.²⁹ The 12 October council meeting was informed McKinlay had finished the fence with post and rail and some wire. Two weeks later, A. Cunningham finished painting the fence. McKinlay was awarded a tender for £7 to place additional wire on the fence in February 1876 and the work was completed in April.

By October 1875, gaol prisoners were working on the reserve and council was paying Warden Caldwell 6s per day for every three prisoners. A tender of B. Naughten for the construction of five gates at £13 was accepted and he was given one month to complete the work. The work was completed in November.

At the council meeting on 4 July 1876, Ald. Low asked if council was going to ornament Reserve No. 8 or use it as a grass paddock as he had seen horses and cows in it frequently. The inspector of nuisances was instructed to impound any stock. Council was informed in August the late Mr Naughten had presented a sun-dial to council to be

²⁷ 'The Mall 1974-1975', Armidale City Council Files, T1/2 55A.

²⁸ *Armidale Express*, 19 July 1887, p.5.

²⁹ *Armidale Chronicle*, 19 August 1875, p.2.

placed in one of the reserves. In September £4 4s was allocated for the sun dial to be inscribed and placed in the centre of the reserve.

In June 1877 council decided to advertise alterations to wickets in the reserve and £15 was voted for trenching and planting trees. Initially George Wood's tender for £6 for the wicket work was accepted and he was given two weeks to finish the work. But the tender of G. Nixon of £6 10s was accepted in September and he finished the contract for the wicket gates by erecting hinges or wings to the four gates in October. That month, council decided to procure more wire to repair the fence surrounding the park.

In March 1878 tenders were called for digging holes and planting trees. T. Flannagan's tender for sinking holes at 3s each was accepted in April and he was given six weeks to complete the job. Ald. Low asked about trees for the reserve in June 1878. Mr Proctor replied he had been twice to the Botanical Gardens in Sydney to see about them from Mr Moore, director of the Botanical Gardens in Sydney but was unable to see him. Mr Moore replied to correspondence in June concerning trees for the reserve.

In August 1878 council was informed that trees received from Mr Bayley have been planted in the reserve. That month, a case of trees from the curator of the Botanical Gardens was received and planted. However in July 1879 council was informed that many of the trees planted in 1878 had died. That month Mr Samuel Purchase of Parramatta Nursery had presented council with thirty six very fine young trees for the reserve. It was moved that the improvement committee be authorised to have the trees in the reserve properly fenced and secured.

In May 1880 £5 was voted for clearing trees in the reserve and fencing of a few trees with larger enclosures. That October an additional £5 was voted for timber enclosures to protect the young trees. A reward of £5 was offered for the conviction of anyone destroying young trees in the reserve in December and the town clerk was instructed to write to the Armidale Superintendent of Police asking him to allow police to look after young trees wherever possible.

A letter from the Department of Lands in April 1881 informed council £150 had granted for improvement to the reserve. The Department also requested the appointment of three trustees to spend the money. At the meeting on 30 August, council voted an additional sum of £100 to be added to the government grant.

In February 1882 council discussed the opening of gates for 'foot passengers'. A letter from Mr Moore from the Botanical Gardens informed council in May it would get a share of trees for the reserve. Council was also notified by the Department of Lands that £150 had been granted for improving the reserve and Messrs Moore, Trim, Simpson, Tysoe and Drew were appointed trustees to expend the money. The town clerk was instructed to again write to Mr Moore seeking trees for the reserve as soon as possible.

The *Armidale Express*, 6 June 1882 announced Brother Francis Gatti 'has volunteered his services in looking after the plants and has been sent to Sydney to select 400 trees'.

Brother Gatti was a Capuchin lay brother who was attached to the nearby Roman Catholic Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Joseph. He sought an additional £100 for the park in July. That money was voted by council and council also received news at the meeting on 18 July 1882 the trees from the Botanical Gardens were 'on the road'. That October the mayor submitted a report to council on how £100 from council and £150 from the government had been expended. A further letter from Brother Gatti in November asked for another man to labour in the reserve for two to three weeks as well as the necessary tools.

By April 1883, Brother Gatti had selected some trees in Sydney to replace the dead ones in the reserve. He also wanted a man to weed the reserve but this work was not possible until another grant was received by council. Mr Proctor MLA applied for £150 in May 1883 and in June the grant was awarded.

The improvement committee recommended two lamp posts be placed in the centre circle of the reserve in July 1885. These gas lamps were ignited in November and the *Armidale Express* commented, 'there need no longer be any hesitation in taking advantage of this convenient thoroughfare on dark nights'.³⁰ In August 1898 council took action to keep the lamp burning in the park all night.

Ald. Trim drew attention in January 1886 to some 'gentlemen' stepping on the wire around the reserve to get over the fence rather than going through the gates. In June Brother Francis requested the installation of another gas lamp in the park. The *Armidale Express*, 7 September drew attention to the work of Brother Francis and commented 'the park is just now looking beautiful; trees and shrubs are donning the fresh green livery of spring, and the grass plots are becoming thickly carpeted with a luxuriant growth'. By December there was trouble at the reserve and notice was given that anyone trespassing or damaging the reserve will be prosecuted.

In March 1887 council announced that the reserve will be cleared when the government grant was received. Greatly concerned at the 'wanton and uncivilised conduct of a set of turbulent youths', Brother Gatti wrote to the *Armidale Express*. The letter was published 'to utter a remonstrance against the reckless destruction of public property in Armidale Park'.³¹ In July Brother Gatti was again trying to forbid public meetings in the reserve and council agreed unanimously to this action until new by-laws were passed. That month, council received information from Treasury that £100 was available for improving the park. Further trouble again arose in October about public meetings.

In January 1888 Brother Gatti requested further money for the park and the town clerk was instructed to apply for the usual £100. The correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 17 February noted the destruction in the park and the broken wires in the fence. It was noted, 'the Park appears to be in a neglected condition, and the newly elected aldermen might stir in this matter'. Brother Gatti again asked for money in that month to clear the

³⁰ *Armidale Express*, 27 November 1885, p.4.

³¹ *Armidale Express*, 17 June 1887, p.2.

park. Council allocated £25 for the work and announced tenders were to be called with Brother Gatti to supervise the work.

In a move to encourage contract work council called tenders for work in the park. The *Armidale Express* felt that Brother Gatti had selected men 'who thoroughly understood their business' and concluded, 'We trust the Borough Council may see fit to rescind the resolution passed'.³².

In October 1888 council received information from the Department of Lands granting £50 for the reserve. Council allocated £10 7s 6d for painting and H. Osborne was also making six seats at £1 15s per seat. An account from Brother Gatti for £25 6s 8d for work done in the park was presented to council meeting on 10 June 1890. That November council paid him £11 3s 8d and he was voted a further £10 by council in December for his services during many years in laying out and keeping in order the reserve.

In March 1890 the council minutes referred to the reserve as Armidale Park but at a special meeting of council on 6 December 1892 the name Central Park was apparently used for the first time.

Following the death of Brother Gatti in November 1891, there was an attempt to have a public monument erected in the park. Initial plans for such a monument included a band rotunda and later a fountain. A public meeting presided over by the Catholic Bishop Torreggiani eventually decided on construction of a mortuary chapel in the Catholic section of the Armidale cemetery. The chapel was blessed on Sunday 6 November 1892.

In 1893 questions arose about management of the park. In August the *Armidale Express* correspondent questioned the pruning that had taken place in the park. It was claimed that there was severe lopping of the trees.³³ Two weeks later a letter by Peter Dean appeared in the *Armidale Express*, 8 September 1893, outlining his role in the planting of the park before the work of Brother Francis Gatti. He claimed that Brother Gatti did not plant the outer belt of trees because following unsuccessful attempts by council to plant trees, he informed several members in the early 1880s 'that the only way to make the planting a success was to trench the ground at least twelve feet wide and twenty inches deep'. Dean claimed he supervised the work undertaken by contractors and planted the outside trees with his 'own hands'. He planned to plant deciduous forest trees in the inner belt but because of public duties then Brother Gatti, with little knowledge of forest trees took over the work. Despite Gatti's wrong decisions, there was no justification to 'warrant the indiscriminate hacking of the trees'.

By September 1893, J. Sullivan was appointed caretaker to the parks including West End, Central Park and East End.

³² *Armidale Express*, 2 March 1888, p.4.

³³ *Armidale Express*, 25 August 1893, p.5.

In August 1894 two trees were removed from the centre of Central Park and replanted in the West End park. Four holes were to be trenched for shade trees at the corners. That same month, council decided to erect a lamp in place of a dying tree. In November alterations at the park were discussed including alterations to the gates and painting of the fence round the park. The work was undertaken by James Axtell for £12 and completed in January 1895. A sum of £1 was then allocated for painting of a fence around the inner circle in the park.

The correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 18 October 1895 directed the attention of council 'to a number of trees along the Dangar-street boundary ... which are evidently dying from being overcrowded'. In August 1898 trenching was being carried out and in October the *Armidale Express* again drew council's attention to work required on the gates in the park. But the correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 10 January 1899 was still waiting for the new gates to emerge.

The Fire Brigade approached council in July 1900 asking council to vote on which park should have the South African War Memorial, dedicated to the Armidale boys, erected. Council decided not to vote on a possible site but was prepared to consider an application for a memorial in one of the parks. The Fire Brigade applied for permission to erect a band stand in the park in November 1900. The site was to be selected by the promoters and council on Saturday 17 November. Council asked the local member to apply for a government subsidy. At the meeting fifteen citizens resolved 'the centre of the Park is the most suitable site for proposed Band Stand'.³⁴ The mayor placed the request before council and some aldermen felt the matter should be postponed until designs were prepared and submitted. Five aldermen did meet with the citizen's committee to determine the position of the stand but council 'decided it was not desirable that the bandstand should be erected in the centre of the park'.³⁵

The Fire Brigade captain T. Webb submitted plans for the proposed band rotunda in June 1901. That month permission was granted to have the building erected on a vacant spot on the southern side of the park opposite Dr. Wigan's residence in Rusden Street. With £120 at hand, the Fire Brigade and Citizen's committee found it necessary to modify plans for the rotunda by July. A saving of £50 was made by modifying the foundations, rails and by using corrugated iron instead of lead or tiles.³⁶ The *Armidale Argus*, 26 October 1901 published the list of names to be placed on the memorial and Captain Webb invited residents to contact him in the event of errors or omissions.

Council agreed in February 1902 to the brigade's request for the installation of gas to the rotunda. Following an inquiry from the Fire Brigade concerning the position of trustees, council replied that they were trustees for parks and improvements so no other trustees could be appointed. But council had no objection to a committee being appointed without affecting council's rights to look after the band rotunda. The band

³⁴ Council minutes, 17 November 1900.

³⁵ *Armidale Express*, 30 November 1900, p.2.

³⁶ *Armidale Express*, 30 July 1901, p.4.

rotunda, gaily decorated with festoons of red, white and blue was opened on 17 March 1902, St. Patrick's Day. The rotunda, encircled by a guard fence consisting of posts, twisted bars and chains was unveiled by Mrs F.J. White of Saumarez. The ceremony was preceded by a procession watched by many spectators. Flags flew from buildings, the Royal Australian Artillery and Armidale Bands Band played, the 4th Regiment marched as did the Public School cadets. Once the ceremony was concluded a further procession took place and the Irish National Association held a monster annual demonstration.

In June 1902 council received an application from a Citizen's Coronation Committee to erect a flagstaff in the park on Coronation Day and hold a demonstration in the park and entertain children of the district. Council agreed to erection of the flagstaff and demonstration but not to the children's entertainment in the park.

A deputation comprising Monsignor O'Connor, W. Drew and S.J. Kearney submitted a plan for a Dr Murray Memorial to council in August 1902. Permission was granted to carry out proposed alterations and to place the memorial in the park if they choose. Dr William Murray, a former mayor was born in Limerick, Ireland in September 1848. Educated at Scotland and Ireland, he graduated from Dublin University as a doctor and later became a member of the College of Surgeons, England. He arrived in Armidale about 1885; became mayor in 1893 and served as a member of numerous sporting and community organisations. He died at Herbert Park on Sunday 14 February 1897.

The question of looking after the Murray Memorial was left until after its erection but council thanked the committee for taking matter in hand to improve the memorial. Following further correspondence from S.J. Kearney concerning the memorial, council thought that Central Park was the most suitable place with the site to be selected by council. The mayor and Aldermen Hawke and Watson were directed in August to meet the committee. A sub-committee met council in September and decided on a site near the band rotunda. The mayor reported to council the plan was smaller than the one earlier presented to council but would serve its purpose to be 'an ornament in the park'.³⁷

Council received a letter from the Fire Brigade in March 1903 handing over to council the Memorial Band Rotunda. Council passed an unanimous vote of thanks to the Fire Brigade and all citizens involved because it was a 'very handsome ornament to the Park'.³⁸ A letter of thanks was sent to Captain Webb for his great energy and the success of the whole affair was due to his efforts. At the same time, a letter from Captain Webb submitting the names of gentlemen willing to form a committee to care for the rotunda was tabled: R. Richardson, S.J. Kearney, W. Curtis, G. Hardy, G.F. Nott, C.H. Weaver, T. Webb and the mayor. Council approved of all names but excluded the mayor.

³⁷ Council minutes, 9 September 1902.

³⁸ Council minutes, 24 March 1903.

Council decided in June 1903 that two flower beds near the band rotunda should be enclosed with a fence. In July action was taken to extinguish the light in the park at the same time as street lamps. Council decided to erect swings in the park in October but because of the tender price of £8 4s 6d from J.H. Buckley, only one was erected. He was paid £2 15s in November to erect the swing.

Ald. Kearney suggested in May 1908 the thinning and pruning of the trees and the placing of gates in the park for perambulators. The caretaker, Mr Hiddins supervised an overhaul of the park and by September 1912, it was reported 'dead trees have been removed, and young ones substituted, the central plot has been fenced ..., new seats have been installed, and a general renovation effected'.³⁹ New gates were erected in the Central Park by Dyke and Bliss and the *Armidale Express*, 27 June 1913 commented: 'Now the fence around the picturesque enclosure requires a good coat of paint'.

Council supported the parks gardener's request for the installation of water for the newly planted trees and shrubs in August 1918. After November action was taken to form a community committee to establish a civic war memorial. The secretary of the Armidale and District Sailors and Soldier's Executive committee informed council in October 1921 that a tender had been accepted for the erection of a fountain memorial in the park. Council agreed to level the site in readiness for the memorial. A design by L.C. McCredie was accepted, W.C. Partridge became the contractor and local supervision of the memorial was entrusted to Armidale architect, R.N. Hickson. The cost was estimated to be £1140 and £350 was allocated for the engraving of some 850 names. The memorial was prepared in Sydney whilst local work involved the completion of the concrete bed, installation of plumbing and final assembly of the monument.

Not all residents were impressed by the memorial. The correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 29 August 1922 stressed the need for lighting the memorial and early in September the Armidale Electric Supply Company offered to light the band rotunda and memorial. In the critical comments made by the aldermen about the memorial, Ald. Stephens said 'the less the memorial was illuminated the better'.⁴⁰ Despite the feeling council agreed to one powerful light. Later, the correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 4 May 1923 congratulated council on the park improvement scheme but commented 'its only blot is the unsightly war memorial'.

The unveiling ceremony was held on Saturday 21 October 1922 at 5 p.m. and conducted by the Governor, Sir Walter Davidson. 'The memorial fountain was draped with the Union Jack' whilst 'other flags and bunting hung from Brother Gatti's trees'.⁴¹ Wreaths were placed on the monument, the fountain was started, the Last Post was played and Bishop Wentworth-Shield gave the benediction. The *Armidale Express*, 24 October

³⁹ *Armidale Express*, 17 September 1912, p.4.

⁴⁰ *Armidale Express*, 8 September 1922, p.3.

⁴¹ L.A. Gilbert, 'Armidale Central Park and its Monuments', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, No. 27, March 1984, p.85.

1922 recorded 'an announcement by the Governor that "there would be no school on Monday" was received with whole-hearted approval by the children'.

In April 1923 the general purposes committee, chaired by Ald. Piddington proposed the removal of the big pine trees on the boundaries and their replacement by a low ever green hedge. The gravel, on which most of the existing beds were composed, was to be removed for street making. Following the presentation of a petition signed by a number of Armidale residents later that month, the motion to remove the trees was rescinded.

Approval was granted by council in November 1922 to place war guns near the junction of the south east and north east park entrance from Faulkner Street. During 1924, three war trophy guns were mounted in the park. But in May 1949, Ald. D.D.H. Fayle supported on behalf of the works committee a number of beautification recommendations including the removal of the war trophies 'as they had outlived their significance'⁴².

Council decided in March 1925 to instal four new lamps in the park at a cost of £30 13s 8d.

A former alderman and mayor of Tamworth, W. Green visited Armidale in November 1927. He acknowledged Armidale as a city of learning and culture and stated 'the most beautiful thing in Armidale is the Central Park'. He asked whether Armidale citizens realised the beauty of the spot because in the park he noticed evidence of neglect; namely, the ugly fence devoid of paint and the lack of flower plots. He appealed to aldermen to kindle civic pride 'by starting a beautification campaign and putting in a little preliminary work in the way of city adornment'.⁴³

The Universal Rests Company was granted approval in June 1928 for the placing of twelve chairs in each of the Central and West End Parks with the company 'to keep all the chairs in good order and connection' with the Council indemnified 'against any possible risk of accident'.⁴⁴

In July 1929 council considered the removal of twenty aged trees from the park. Aldermen felt the large trees offered shelter to the park and reduced the number to ten. Thus the *Armidale Chronicle*, 17 July 1929 announced tenders were now to be called for the 'removal of 10 aged scraggy pine trees'. In April 1934 tenders were announced for the removal of a further seven trees.

Armidale and District Horticultural Society asked permission from council in September 1931 'to have name-plates attached to the trees in the park, as is done at Public Schools throughout the State'.⁴⁵ Following the society's request, council

⁴² *Armidale Express*, 11 May 1949, p.13.

⁴³ *Armidale Express*, 25 November 1927, p.6.

⁴⁴ *Armidale Chronicle*, 20 June 1928, p.3.

⁴⁵ *Armidale Express*, 9 September 1931, p.2.

installed a three quarter inch water service with a stand pipe. Council also decided to set aside £25 to extend the water pipes and provide four additional hose tops.

By January 1935 the old fence surrounding the park was described as 'unsightly' and 'an eyesore' and A. Ewen's offer to council of £2 for the timber and its removal 'without cost to the council'⁴⁶ was accepted in March. The fence was replaced by a six feet wide grass border. Following personal representation by the Hon. D.H. Drummond, the Minister for Lands Mr Buttenshaw authorised a grant of £25 towards the cost of the contemplated work within Central Park in June 1936. By October, the boundary fence and the gates at the four exit fences had been removed from the park.

Following the request of the Country Women's Association, council took action 'to erect a ladies rest room in Central Park, facing Tingcombe-street, to a plan drawn by the city engineer, at an estimated cost of £100'.⁴⁷ Tenders for the construction of a brick ladies convenience were called in October 1938 and it was completed at a cost of £65 in November. Council received a further letter in February 1944 requesting the building of a C.W.A. rest room in the park. It seems that there was some dissension within the movement as that month the secretary Mrs Walton, dissociated 'the association from the letter'.⁴⁸

As part of precautions for war, council announced in February 1942 that trenches were to be constructed in the park. The digging of trenches by voluntary labour in schools and parks led to expressions of concern by council in October 1942. Many were in danger of collapsing and were breeding mosquitoes because of rain.

Council decided in May 1948 that a men's lavatory of brick construction should be erected in the park at a cost of £100. Council announced details of the new toilet block in December 1969 for the toilets to be set in a garden setting. Estimated to cost \$4500, the new block designed by R.J. Magoffin and Son, was installed on the site of the present block. The toilets were renovated in 1988.

Attention was drawn to the possible rarity of the pine trees within the park and in June 1949 Mrs G.L. Davis, senior lecturer in Botany at the New England University College commenced the work of identifying trees in the park. Several years later, Dr B.N. Richards, Senior Lecturer in Botany at the University of New England told the Armidale I.B.C. in February 1967 'Central Park represents one of the finest collections of conifers in Rural NSW'.⁴⁹ In March 1968 council adopted a recommendation from the tourist bureau to provide name plates for the trees in the park.

Concrete kerbing of the park was completed in January 1950. By August the park was cleared of felled timber and some dead wattle trees. In June 1951 aldermen expressed

⁴⁶ *Armidale Express*, 6 March 1935, p.6.

⁴⁷ *Armidale Express*, 14 September 1938, p.7.

⁴⁸ *Armidale Express*, 23 February 1944, p.11.

⁴⁹ *Armidale Express*, 17 February 1967, p.21.

concern about condition of the park and Mayor W.P. Ryan informed council that applications had been called for the position of park gardener. The caretaker of the park A. Jackson was congratulated by council in March 1952 on the state of the park.

Despite the euphoria of the approaching Royal Visit to Australia, a proposal to change the name of the park to Windsor Park was defeated by six votes to four at a January 1954 council meeting.

An avenue of trees was planted in Tingcombe Street in 1956 to mark the centenary of responsible government in New South Wales. The Governor, Sir Eric Woodward unveiled a plaque in November 1963 as part of the centenary celebrations of the Armidale Municipal Council. The plaque recorded the significance of the trees. A report on additional parking in Tingcombe Street was presented by the city engineer in April 1959. Council approved the plan to remove all the trees and shrubs along the edge of the park in June 1960 and tenders were called for the removal of three large pine trees fronting Tingcombe Avenue in July. Strong opposition to the removal of the trees planted for the centenary in 1956 arose in September 1960 and council decided not to remove and replant them. In February 1962 council took action to set aside £350 to prevent parking in the park by constructing a barrier kerb along the northern side adjacent to Tingcombe Street. This action was taken 'to prevent the conversion of Central Park into a general parking ground for motor vehicles'.⁵⁰

Council sought permission from the Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. to remove the pencil pines surrounding the war memorial in January 1959.

A proposal to place an illustrated map in the park was put to a meeting of the Armidale Tourist Bureau in September 1959 and a sub-committee was formed to investigate.⁵¹ The tourist map in the park was handed over to the city on Saturday 14 May 1966. The contour model was constructed by the Geography Department at the university, members of the Art Society painted the contour map whilst the Jaycees constructed the housing.

Council approved the placement of an electrical sub-station opposite the Bishop's House in the park to boost the Dangar, Rusden, Jessie and Barney Streets block in March 1963. At that stage, an alternative site within Cinder's Lane was rejected. Following an expression of concern by the Bishop, the decision was unanimously rejected a month.

A monument made of blue stone and erected by animal lovers in Armidale with the help of the Lions Club was unveiled on Saturday 19 June 1965. Designed by the late Tony Harris, it was erected in memory of the late Reverend Reginald Arthur Harris by the Armidale Branch of the Animal Welfare League. Reverend Harris was born in Singleton about 1881, graduated in Arts from Sydney University in 1902 and was trained for the Anglican ministry in St. John's College, Armidale in 1903. He served at

⁵⁰ *Armidale Express*, 28 February 1962, p.4.

⁵¹ *Armidale Express*, 18 September 1959, p.6.

Inverell, Grafton, Manly, Walgett, Manilla and was vicar of Guyra from 1927 to 1941. During his retirement in Armidale, he lived near Central Park and died on 28 July 1964, aged 83 years. He and his wife were active members of the Armidale Animal Welfare League.

By October 1968 the public was subscribing towards the construction costs of a crib in the park. Construction of the crib was undertaken by the Armidale Lions Club with volunteer bricklaying; bricks and tiles donated by the Armidale Brick and Pottery Company and concreting donated by Permewans and G.T. Cochrane and Company. Although it was completed that year, Mayor Ald. Failes appealed to the public in December 1969 to help eliminate the debt on the figures for the crib. The total cost was \$2660 and there was still \$1000 outstanding at that stage. The Christmas display assembled each year includes 'Austrian wood-carved figures procured some years ago at the suggestion of Dean Evan Wetherell'.⁵² The nativity scene was renovated by the Lions club in December 1987.

A proposal to transfer the tourist bureau building to the park led to an expression of concern by the *Armidale Express*. The editor commented the park 'belongs to the public and should not be used for anything but public recreation'.⁵³ Two weeks later the town clerk R.A. Browne reported to council the cost of new tourist bureau and operation of such building would be determined by conditions imposed by the Department of Lands. But the plan received little support by aldermen.

The HMAS Armidale Memorial built to honour the men who served on the corvette of that name in World War, was dedicated on Sunday 3 December 1988. Prime movers of the project were Michael Bedford, president of the New England sub-branch of the Naval Association and committee member, Ken Roper. A small brass plaque was attached to the brick wall acknowledging their efforts in getting the memorial built for the sub-branch of the Naval Association. The three sided brick memorial has round port holes reminiscent of a ship, with a white flagstaff at the rear. Brass plaques record details of the ship and dedication of the memorial as well as the lists of those sevicemen who survived the sinking and those who died.

It was designed by Michael Bedford and Ken Roper and built by Don Armitage of Armidale. Fred Coaldrake prepared the plans and council donated land for the memorial in the park some fifty metres from the corner of Faulkner and Tingcombe Streets. The R.A.N. Corvette Association (N.S.W.) supported the project and various business assisted by donating materials including: concrete and sand (P.J. and C.M. Ducat); steel (Obieco Industries) or gave their labour as did Charlie Rudd at the Phoenix Foundry at Uralla who made the brass plaques. An Armidale Company supplied the bricks at cost.⁵⁴

⁵² Gilbert, 'Armidale Central Park and its Monuments', p.86.

⁵³ *Armidale Express*, 14 March 1969,p.2.

⁵⁴ K. King, 'HMAS Armidale, The Memorial', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, No 36, April 1993.

Civic Park.

The area north of Dumaresq Creek along Kirkwood Street between Dangar and Faulkner Streets was notified as a reserve for Public Recreation and notified on 12 October 1913. The area north of the Dumaresq Creek was notified for Public Recreation on 15 March 1935. The civic parkland bounded by Faulkner, Dangar and Dumaresq Streets was announced as a general plan by council for the development of the creeklands in July 1969. Plans to remove the willows along Faulkner and Dangar Streets and replace them with lindens and claret ash led to an outcry by the Armidale I.B.C. in July 1970.

In March 1974 a committee made of members of the recreation and playing fields and creek land advisory committees proposed the establishment of a civic park based on a plan developed by Dr R. Davidson of the CSIRO in Armidale. At that stage, 'the tentative name for the proposed development' was 'The Armidale People's Park'.⁵⁵ The name of the park later became Civic Park. Heavy rain caused some damage to the new park early in January and February 1976. However this damage did not prevent the opening of the park by the Hon D.A. Arblaster MLA, Minister for Culture, Sport and Recreation on 10 April.

Development of the park for \$70 000 was a government and community effort: \$10 000 came from the Lands Department; \$35 000 came from the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Armidale community raised \$25 000. Plans were developed by Dr Bob Davidson in 1975 as a passive recreation area. Civic Park was the second stage of a three part development. The first stage was the Wicklow Oval and the third stage was Elizabeth Park to be developed in co-operation with the Armidale Junior Rugby League.

Mayor Ald. Rosemary Leitch planted a Golden Dearda in the park in October 1988 as part of the Armidale City tree planting committee's Bicentennial plantings. The Australia Day ambassador, Garth Welch planted a Golden Elm in the park as part of the 1991 celebrations. As part of the 1992 Australia Day celebrations, the Australia Day ambassador Henri Szeps planted a magnolia tree in the park.

Creeklands

Ald. Higinbotham called council's attention to the state of the Dumaresq Creek near Trim's bridge in August 1903. Trim's bridge was located midway between the present Stephen's Bridge and Faulkner Street. Although the area was a quagmire, the matter was dropped after discussion. In January 1905 the mayor moved a notice of motion that steps be taken to improve the condition of the low lying land between Marsh and Falconer (sic) Streets and that Trim's bridge be moved because of its effect on water flow in the creek. Aldermen spoke against the motion and the mayor withdrew it but council decided to ask the Public Works Department to submit a proposal through their office for drainage of the creek. Still concerned about the drainage of the creek in November 1907, council decided to ask the Dumaresq Shire engineer to report. In

⁵⁵ *Armidale Express*, 27 March 1974, p.1.

January 1908 shire engineer T.G. Spencer, presented two schemes to council to improve the creek and in February council adopted his first scheme for improvements from Falconer (sic) Street to Spencer's paddock.

Five years later, the sanitary committee recommended to council in June, that 'this Council request the Hon. Minister for Lands to vest all that part of Dumaresq Creek, lying within the boundaries of this municipality of Armidale, in this Council'.⁵⁶ In July council requested that certain land near the Dumaresq Creek be vested in council as a public reserve. The Lands Department was not prepared to support the action because the land was almost wholly alienated. 'It was not deemed expedient to interfere with allotments fronting O'Dell-street, which had been measured for auction, or the area held under permissive occupancy by the Armidale Golf Club'.⁵⁷ The Minister for Lands had approved a small reserve between sections 45 and 46 being set aside for public recreation.

Mayor William Curtis commenced planting of willows along the creek in July 1916; an action endorsed by council. In January 1919 the general purposes committee recommended that the district surveyor be asked to define council's position in regard to obtaining control over the the creek bed between Marsh and Markham Streets so that council may be guided by plans to improve the creek. Council received advice in June that the creek was controlled by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission but the Department of Local Government also informed council that the commission had no objection to the work being carried out. In September council moved to approach the Lands Department to have the road passing the drill hall to the creek closed. The road had been resumed in 1897 because the military authorities proposed to erect a building almost on the road.

At the end of the World War One, a grant was obtained for the employment of returned soldiers to straight, clean out and face the banks with rocks. A considerable length of the creek was treated in this way by September 1919. Two tenders were awarded in May 1922 to extend the reclamation work on the creekland behind the gasworks to the Markham Street bridge. The work included straightening and clearing the creek to prevent water backing up across Beardy Street and entering the gasworks.

A committee of citizens was formed in November 1927 as a result of a public meeting called to beautify the environs of the Marsh Street bridge. Council was to be asked to dedicate Reserve Nos. 54077 and 54078 as a public park. At the same time, a correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 15 November 1927 supported a possible park with shade trees and garden plots 'and just above it a properly constructed weir 'to prevent flooding and provide a public swimming resort.

In July 1930 negotiations commenced with owners of private land facing the Dumaresq Creek. Lambert Ltd. and L'Amie, owners of land between Jessie and Dangar Streets were prepared to donate their land to council. A major part of the plan was to widen

⁵⁶ *Armidale Express*, 27 June 1913, p.3.

⁵⁷ *Armidale Express*, 17 October 1913, p.6.

and strengthen the channel between Markham and Marsh Street bridges to overcome silting of the stream. Council applied for a grant from the Unemployment Relief Council in August to carry out work in the Dumaresq Creek. Work for eighty men was provided by means of the unemployment relief allocation received from the state government in January 1931. At the time council was gradually acquiring the creek frontage by purchase or gift.

In January 1933 council took action to earmark £500 'for the purpose of putting a channel in the creek bed east of the Marsh-street bridge'.⁵⁸ A concerned ratepayer claimed that work should undertaken at Albion Park where the creek was 'in a disgraceful and dangerous condition'. It had 'almost encroached on to Beardy-street and the Markham-street bridge is being rapidly filled up. A big flood could shift the bridge'.⁵⁹ A violent storm occurred one week later on Sunday 22 January 1933. Flood waters reached Mallaby's soap works whilst flood waters surrounded the gasworks and baths. 'Beardy-street between Allingham and Markham streets, was completely inundated'.⁶⁰ The footbridge leading to the baths was again swept away but the component parts were recovered.

Relief works by fifteen men, supervised by the chairman of the works committee Ald. W.G. Piddington, commenced work on the creek near Albion Park in February 1933. Five hundred pounds were provided by the Commonwealth Unemployment Relief Council for work east of the Markham Street bridge to straighten and deepen the channel. Soil from the work was used to raise the low Beardy Street footpath opposite the baths and to fill the lower levels of the adjoining parklands. In May, council received news that a further grant of £500 could not be made available. By December 1933, 'a sum of £500 was spent on creek improvements. £250 being a Relief Work Grant by the Government, and £250 a loan to Council at 3 per cent'.⁶¹

Council approved of a proposal by the health inspector, L. Brown for an extensive beautification scheme for Dumaresq Creek in May 1935, and it was decided to apply for relief labour to undertake the work. In November 1938 the president of the Town Planning Association recommended to council construction of 'a small concrete drain in the bed of the creek to carry the normal flow of water'.⁶²

During the 1930s more willows were planted along the creekland and by January 1936 the trees were plentiful along the creek in the vicinity of Taylor, Faulkner and Dangar Streets. In January 1930 Ald. Ashton drew attention to the need for special treatment of the creek. He said the 'the beauty of the creek and its surroundings will be a great asset

⁵⁸ *Armidale Express*, 11 January 1933, p.7.

⁵⁹ *Armidale Express*, 16 January 1933, p.4.

⁶⁰ *Armidale Express*, 23 January 1933, p.4.

⁶¹ *Armidale Express*, 22 December 1933, p.4.

⁶² *Armidale Express*, 21 November 1938, p.10.

to the town'.⁶³ By November 1944 the creek had been improved by cutting away sand bars between Marsh and Dangar Streets.

More than seventy residents attended a public meeting in the council chambers on Friday 22 November 1946 to plan sports areas for the city. The meeting decided to appoint a committee of two representatives of each sports organisation to make recommendations to a public meeting and urge council to take necessary steps to resume the land fronting both sides of Dumaresq Creek, and any other area considered necessary. That December, council took action 'to resume and control all creek lands from Niagara-street to Canambe-street for sport and other purposes'.⁶⁴ A special council meeting a week later, deferred resumptions until council was informed of the wishes of the public meeting executive committee.

The Armidale I.B.C. asked council in February 1947 whether a plan had been developed as yet for the creekland and asked council 'to submit any such scheme to the committee as the area ... forms an important part of the committee's plans for city beautification'.⁶⁵ A public meeting in May 1947 passed the following resolution requesting council acquire, over a period of years, all areas of land adjoining Dumaresq Creek, from Niagara-street to Douglas-street and to acquire the land immediately east of Rugby League Park (Section 174) and proceed to develop it as a central sports area. A month later, negotiations for the land along the Dumaresq Creek for a sports area commenced.

B.N. Weekes, a planning officer of the Department of Local Government, visited Armidale in September 1948 to discuss with civic leaders the implications of the Town Planning Act. He commented that the Dumaresq Creek 'represented the finest of raw material for parklands ... Planning of these areas now would save costly resumptions for recreation and sports areas in the future'.⁶⁶

The mayor expressed his hopes of acquiring creeklands for park areas and playing fields in his 1948 annual report. The *Armidale Express* called for the planned development of the creeklands in August 1949 and in April 1950, land near Armidale Park was 'purchased to provide additional playing fields for £2000'.⁶⁷ E.C. Ferrier, the assistant town planner in New South Wales visited Armidale and met with the Armidale town planning committee in May. His purpose was to discuss the Town Planning Act but in doing so also referred to the features of the town. He felt that development along the Dumaresq Creek should be restricted in order to create a green belt and added, 'I do feel that something should be done to straighten the creek and to scour out the snags and siltation'.⁶⁸

⁶³ *Armidale Express*, 15 January 1930, p.6.

⁶⁴ *Armidale Express*, 11 December, 1946, p.5.

⁶⁵ *Armidale Express*, 19 February 1947, p.8.

⁶⁶ *Armidale Express*, 17 September 1948, p.3.

⁶⁷ *Armidale Express*, 19 April 1950, p.15.

⁶⁸ *Armidale Express*, 31 May 1950, p.8.

A major flood during June 1950 silted the creek and following only half an inch of rain on Tuesday 11 July the creek again rose suddenly and broke its banks. At the same time, Thomas G. Monckton, manager of the swimming pool, outlined in detail the problems confronting the creek in a letter published in the *Armidale Express*, 12 July. He claimed, 'we are now suffering in Armidale from 20 years of inattention and neglect of the waterways'. The Chamber of Commerce also expressed concern to the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission concerning the matter of floods in the Dumaresq Creek. The commission promised that the local officer, Mr Davidson would meet with the chamber. In October the chamber asked council to consider acquiring all lands along the creek for the purpose of developing park lands, gardens and playing fields. That month the council town planning committee drew up preliminary plans to re-align the Dumaresq Creek east of Marsh Street in order to control flooding. Ald. T. Monckton attempted to persuade council to spend £5000 on improving the creek but the proposal was rejected in January 1951. At that stage council owned the area at crossings and some adjoining land to the centre of the creek but the other land was privately owned.

In January 1951 the works committee submitted a report that 'proposed flood control of Dumaresq Creek is still under consideration; the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission is to be approached'.⁶⁹ Council took action in February to invite an experienced officer from the commission to Armidale and officers from the commission arrived in May 1951 to inspect the Dumaresq Creek in Armidale as well as the section of the creek which flowed through the university. The report was tabled with council in August and a finding was 'major flood control work on Dumaresq Creek is not warranted'.⁷⁰ Council recommended that £2000 be set aside in the 1952 estimates for cleaning Dumaresq Creek and for construction of low-level crossings at Dangar and Faulkner Streets. In June 1952 the city engineer J.D. Brown reported on cleaning operations in the creek involving centre drain construction at Harris park and the approaches to Stephens Bridge.

During the life of the council from 1951 to 1953, council acquired twelve acres of land for parks and playgrounds. In February 1954 the Armidale Ex-Servicemen and Women's Club offered to donate land at the rear of the club's area for an extension of the park and recreational areas in the vicinity provided soil from the 'creek bed was used to raise the level of the remaining land adjoining the clubhouse'.⁷¹ Council accepted the land and council also acquired three-quarters of an acre of land at the rear of the Ex-Servicemen's Club in November for development as parkland. The land formerly belonged to the Department of Education. The zoning of the acre site owned by the club divided council in July 1958 because the town plan zoned the land as Open Space. Council zoned the land as commercial on the casting vote of the mayor.

⁶⁹ *Armidale Express*, 17 January 1951, p.4.

⁷⁰ *Armidale Express*, 11 August 1951, p.3.

⁷¹ *Armidale Express*, 5 February 1954, p.8.

The Armidale I.B.C. was granted permission in July 1954 to meet with 'the Town Planning Committee to discuss the proposal to beautify Curtis Park and the Dumaresq Creek area'.⁷² In his review of the town plan for Armidale, city engineer J.D. Brown reported in September less than 20 per cent of Dumaresq Creek frontage is under council ownership. Z.J. Buzo, a consultant engineer and a member of the Armidale I.B.C. presented a plan in November 1955 on the conversion of the Dumaresq Creek. He said: 'A town planning scheme should make the most of this feature both from the point of view of land utilisation and beauty'.⁷³

Water Conservation and Irrigation Conservation officers visited Dumaresq Creek on 21 March 1956 and the town planning committee recommended the rezoning of all low lying land along the creek 'Non Urban B' in April 1956. This prohibited all building in this area. Two years later, council deferred a decision in July 1958 on the creekland because the survey had not been examined in relation to planning proposals.

A sum of £10 000 was set aside by council for the de-siltation of the Dumaresq Creek in February 1957. The Water and Irrigation Commission informed council in May 1958 'it had no authority and no funds for a grant to the Council for carrying out drainage works in and adjacent to Dumaresq Creek'.⁷⁴ That month, a £25 000 unemployment grant application was presented to the Minister for Conservation to clear the Dumaresq Creek as a flood mitigation scheme. Two months later, the minister sought information about whether the application was for drainage purposes or flood mitigation.

In September 1959 council announced a £5000 scheme to reduce the danger of flooding in Dumaresq Creek. The scheme involved two stages: the first from Stephens Bridge to Kennedy Street to cost £2000 from council estimates and the second upstream to Jessie Street to cost £3000 from loan funds. The work involved widening the water course, straightening the acute bends, removing thirty willow trees and placing excavated soil on the low lying land. The scheme was formally adopted in November. Work on creek widening between Marsh and Faulkner Streets was underway by contractor Scifleet by June 1961. Council was informed the contractors had purchased dragline equipment and could now complete work on both sides of the Marsh Street bridge. At this stage council had set aside £800 for the work and council also announced plans to make a start between Kennedy and Douglas Streets. Tenders for desilting of 3600 feet of the creeklands east of bridge were called in October.

The Armidale I.B.C. protested vigorously in September 1962 against the proposal to build a block of flats in the creek area at the corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets. Council rejected the appeal and approved their construction. The flats were inundated by floodwaters in May 1963 when the biggest flood since 1949 occurred.

⁷² *Armidale Express*, 23 July 1954, p.13.

⁷³ *Armidale Express*, 30 November 1955, p.3.

⁷⁴ *Armidale Express*, 16 May 1958, p.12.

In February 1963 the Armidale Rugby League requested a pedestrian crossing over the Dumaresq Creek between the Rugby League Park and Jessie Street. Council could not include the request in this year's programme.

On the evening of Saturday 2 March 1963, Professor Dennis Winston, Professor of Town and Country Planning at Sydney University addressed a meeting of about fifty residents at the Technical College on the beautification of the Dumaresq Creek area. He commented, 'the most important thing to do at present ... was to secure the land for the development as an open green, treed strip, under a formal Town Plan'.⁷⁵ The group continued to meet and a Dumaresq Creek committee was formed.

On Friday 19 July 1963, the town engineer of Cooma described the town's improvement of its creek at a meeting held at the Armidale Technical College. At the same time, the Department of University Extension was conducting a series of classes on various aspects of Armidale's development. An invitation was extended to the public to attend an open forum class on 20 August and an extensive report appeared in the *Armidale Express*, 21 August 1963. Two features of an improvement scheme presented were: creation of a lake west of Stephen's bridge and a 10 chain-wide green belt along Dumaresq Creek to the New England University. As well as members of the public, representatives of the Armidale City Council, Dumaresq Shire Council, the Lands Office and the University of New England attended. The university assistant registrar said, 'detailed plans had been prepared for the past 18 months for the whole campus but the creek area had not been finalised although the University did have 200 willow trees'. He added 'a start had been made on beautifying the creek on the western side of Booloominbah Road, but it would be some years before plans were made for the creek on the eastern side'.

Initially council considered a proposal to develop a scenic drive from the corner of Markham and Beardy Streets parallel to the creek to the university. The city engineer, P.G. Agnew presented a report on a proposed scenic driveway between Armidale and the University of New England in October 1963. However, the engineer reported in March 1964 a more practicable proposal would be to establish this land as parkland and to develop Donnelly Street as the scenic drive.

On the motion of the Mayor, Ald. L.S. Piddington 'rejected a motion to zone as parkland all land along Dumaresq Creek between Marsh and Faulkner Streets'.⁷⁶ Later council, did adopt parkland zonings for most of the creekland within the city. This decision meant development of a green belt along Dumaresq Creek.

Following the near record flood in January 1964, engineer P.G. Agnew presented a report on prevention of flooding of the low-lying parts by Dumaresq Creek in February. Based on the scheme adopted by council in November 1959, the £100 000 scheme suggested: purchasing a dragline excavator; allocating sufficient funds for its continuous operation; accepting the gas-works offer to assist; inviting interested

⁷⁵ *Armidale Express*, 4 March 1963, p.6.

⁷⁶ *Armidale Express*, 2 October 1963, p.3.

organisations to contribute and seeking a government subsidy. In May 1964 council commenced a creek clearance scheme in May costing £13 000 based on the earlier design program. At that stage the *Armidale Express*, 18 May commented: 'Council had applied for a £5,000 loan, a grant from the Water Conservation Department, and a £ for £ subsidy from the State Government to finance the work'. In December the Armidale Rugby League Club offered to sell land it held near the swimming pool to council. The club requested £100 as a sale price for the land opposite the Allingham junction with the creek in January and the town clerk R.A. Browne was asked to report on the area, value and rating of the land.

In February 1965 council provisionally set aside £10 000 on its loan list for the next financial year for Dumaresq Creek desiltation. Engineering design plans for cleaning and straightening Dumaresq Creek on the eastern side of the city were completed in April. The area involved the creek between Marsh Street and the bridge in Cook's Road. Town clerk R.A. Browne revealed that council had spent £1500 on acquiring land and had £500 left from a previous loan. Plans were now to be forwarded to the Water Conservation and Irrigation together with an application for assistance. The plan 'showed the creek was to run in a wide horse-shoe shaped bend which would swing north from Stephen's Bridge'.⁷⁷ The plan also required compensation for loss of agricultural land by De La Salle College and other smaller land owners.

Council asked the Public Work's Department and the Dumaresq Shire to approve replacement of the Cook's Road bridge over Dumaresq Creek by a concrete causeway 'to get the full benefit of ... desiltation work upstream'⁷⁸ in August 1965. The shire rejected the request because the present bridge built in 1948 by R.K. Lindsay had replaced a causeway which had been flooded many times each year.

A council committee decided in October 1965 that Armidale Ex-Services Memorial Club should be given a ten year lease of Dumaresq creekland behind the club for parking. The club intended to beautify the area with shrubs and tree planting for use as parking and a playground for children. In July 1966 the club informed council it was not prepared to go ahead with lease of the land for parking. But in April 1970 council agreed to lease the creekside land between the club and Dumaresq Creek facing Dangar Street for \$1 a year provided the club bitumen seal and line mark the car park and beautify the creek and Dangar Street frontage.

In January 1966 two scientists from the University of New England and a soil conservationist surveyed the Dumaresq Creek catchment to find out how its land use affected Dumaresq Creek siltation, flooding in Armidale and siltation of Dumaresq Dam. A summary of the report appeared in the *Armidale Express*, 7 April 1966 and the scientists Dr. D.J. McConnell, Mr R.W. Berman and Mr N.H. Monteith believed '£10,000 should be spent on erosion control on the farms and properties in Dumaresq'. The Mayor Ald. L.S. Piddington expressed disappointment because the report was not

⁷⁷ *Armidale Express*, 30 April 1965, p.15.

⁷⁸ *Armidale Express*, 18 August 1965, p.3.

made available to council before publication in the *N.S.W. Soil Conservation Service Journal* and the *Armidale Express*.

In May 1966 the Armidale I.B.C. expressed its strong opposition to the principle of realigning the creek. The creeklands sub-committee opposed the plan by council to straighten the Dumaresq Creek and allow commercial development on the flood plain. At the same time it supported 'the acquisition of creeklands for playing fields, general open development and beautification'.⁷⁹ The committee again expressed its concern to council that month about soil being dumped on land near Dumaresq Creek close to the Faulkner and Dumaresq streets intersection because it could affect flood flows and levels.

Plans by council to widen the creek with a £250 000 scheme brought criticism from the Armidale I.B.C. and the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee in June 1966. The latter committee had been formed by council in 1964. The committee consisted of: four aldermen and four members of the I.B.C. with the town clerk and city engineer attending in an advisory capacity. Its duties were to assess the problems of flooding, siltation of the creek and its tributaries as well as submit recommendations for development of the flood plains. Mr N.H. Monteith, Senior Lecturer in Agronomy and Dr H.J. Harrington, Associate Professor of Geology at the University of New England supported the stand taken by the I.B.C. and condemned council's scheme. Following a further visit by two engineers from the Irrigation Commission, they confirmed council proposals for the widening and re-alignment of the creek in August. However the commission announced it was prepared to receive objections from the Armidale I.B.C. Council also considered submissions from the two Armidale committees on Monday 22 August 1966.

At the meeting the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee presented its report entitled: 'The Dumaresq Creek Development Statement'. This statement emphasised the importance of Dumaresq Creek and made suggestions about the future use of the flood plain. Consequently there was a shift in policy on the part of council and it was decided to defer a final decision until a further meeting was held with the Armidale I.B.C. A University of New England lecturer, Mr Robert F. Warner of the Geography Department at the University of New England and an ecologist Dr Rob L. Davidson, were elected to a four man delegation to represent the committee in discussions with council. At the same time, Mr Warner presented a detailed report on the Dumaresq Creek to the Armidale I.B.C.

Council agreed to offer £2000 to the University for a Dumaresq Creek flood mitigation study scheme in August 1966. In November council asked the university to carry out the survey in conjunction with the Water and Conservation Commission. That month, the advisory committee also recommended to council 'that all creek lands zoned open space should be acquired by Council before any scheme was adopted'.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *Armidale Express*, 6 May 1966, p.3.

⁸⁰ *Armidale Express*, 18 November 1966, p.17.

By December 1966, council had decided to replace the Cook's Road bridge by a causeway as part of its flood mitigation scheme and to ask the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission to expedite their reply to Council. Council reassured the Armidale I.B.C. that there would be no expenditure on the Dumaresq Creek works until the commission's report had been examined by the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee and a report presented to council. The I.B.C. met with a senior officer of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission on 19 December 1966 in Sydney to discuss the issues concerning the Dumaresq Creek.

Council met with a four man committee of R. Berman, Prof G.J. Butland, R. Warner and J. Hilder from the Armidale I.B.C. in February 1967. That month, a Water Conservation and Irrigation Commissioner engineer visited Armidale to inspect the Dumaresq Creek. He also inspected council's plans for flood mitigation work. At the same time, the Dumaresq Creek and Floodplain Advisory Committee prepared an alternative to the City Council's scheme when Dr R.L. Davidson tabled a plan. In April Mr R. Warner reported three measuring gauges had been placed in the creek at three points to record stream flow. The town planning committee formed in 1954 came up with a plan in April that had one central feature, open space along the banks of Dumaresq Creek. On 4 May, members of the committee met council and reports were submitted to council and the Water Conservation Commission on the nature of the creek. In May council's plans for rezoning 'Open Space'; land acquisition; cost of annual maintenance and amounts of subsidies expected from the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission were made available to the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee.

The proposal to erect a dwelling and bus depot on a low lying site in Taylor Street near the creekland was rejected by council on the grounds that it did not conform with the zoning in the interim town plan. The developer appealed to the State Planning Authority (S.P.A.) but the application was opposed not by council but the Armidale I.B.C. The S.P.A. rejected the proposal. A dispute also arose with the Armidale I.B.C. concerning the proposed building of a motel between the Wicklow Hotel and Stephen's Bridge.

The Armidale I.B.C. considered an idea from the Armidale Rotary Club in August 1967 to form an independent trust to raise funds to buy and develop creek lands as parks and recreation ground. At the same time, council's playing field advisory committee was also considering the raising of funds and in September, the I.B.C. adopted the concept of an independent trust.

The Department of Main Roads informed council in October 1967 it was prepared to contribute towards the Dumaresq Creek channel improvement scheme if the scheme was adopted by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. The proposal to drain the creeklands on the eastern side of Stephens Bridge in November caused great concern to the Armidale I.B.C. But the decision was made to ask the Commission to go ahead with the scheme. The *Armidale Express*, 17 November 1967 commented: 'In doing so, Council had by-passed its own Dumaresq Creek Flood Plain Advisory Committee, which had met a few days earlier, and on which the I.B.C. has four

delegates'. The I.B.C. immediately lodged its protest to the commission. By early December, the committee had arranged a petition of over 3000 names, contacted the Minister for Local Government Mr Morton and forwarded a series of objections to: the State Planning Authority; the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and the Department of Lands. At the same time, the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee submitted a second report to council. This report assessed the issue of floods and siltation of the creek and made recommendations for development of the creek and flood plain.

Council developed a drainage scheme which involved the alignment and widening of the creek and construction of levee banks. The Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee presented arguments against the proposal to construct a channel or drain in January 1968. The report said under no circumstances should the topography of the creek be altered by cut and fill operations. The Minister for Conservation, J.G. Beale rejected council's application for construction of a big drain scheme in February and in March the Recreation and Playing Fields Advisory Committee congratulated council on its intention to abandon the proposed creek scheme. Following the alleged dumping of fill on the flood plain and a complaint by the Armidale I.B.C., the minister ordered an inspection of the entire area of the creek by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission in June. In July Mr Beale informed council an 'improvement scheme should not entail any major realignment except immediately downstream of the Stephen's Bridge'.⁸¹ That month, council decided to reallocate the \$22 000 held for Dumaresq Creek to \$16 000 for removal of the works depot in Marsh Street and \$6000 for the bitumen sealing of the causeway in Taylor Street. In August a further extensive report was presented to council by the Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory Committee.

During May 1968 work was undertaken to desilt a section of the creek downstream from the Dumaresq Street crossing near the gasworks.

In August 1968 the Armidale I.B.C. asked council to launch a public appeal to acquire open space land along Dumaresq Creek. A month later council agreed to hear the plan and Professor G.J. Butland presented the case on behalf of the committee. The committee supported the Flood Plain Advisory Committee and offered its support for a creeklands acquisition scheme. There was some reluctance on the part of aldermen because of the financial pressure of Malpas Dam, the filtration plant and expansion of the sewerage scheme but in November, council agreed to the formation of a committee to plan an appeal for funds for the creeklands. Council nominated Aldermen K. Jones, P. Poggioli and E.M. Wilson to meet with four nominated members of the Armidale I.B.C. including Professor G.R. Butland, Dr. H. N. Richards, Mr D.D.H. Fayle and Mr. F. Treatt.

The newly elected council elected in December 1968 made an early move on creekland acquisition. That month, council accepted the recommendation of the joint open space committee to launch an appeal for the acquisition of creeklands at a public meeting in

⁸¹ *Armidale Express*, 12 July 1968, p.8.

February 1969. The appeal was launched on 6 February and 'donations totalling \$2331 were promised within a few minutes of the end of the enthusiastic public meeting'.⁸² At the meeting, Mr Chris Rologas promised four acres between Dumaresq Street and Dumaresq Creek east of the Wicklow Hotel. In April, the Minister for Public Works offered 'a grant of \$90,000- \$30,000 for three years- on a \$ for \$ basis for the purchase of creeklands for public recreation purposes'.⁸³ In May, another Armidale resident Mr H. Stahlut donated two acres of land on the western bank of Dumaresq Creek near Claude Street.

Council announced sporting complexes for development of the creeklands in July 1969. Areas which included: the area between Marsh and Douglas Streets south of Dumaresq Creek; the area between the intersection of Martin's Gully with Dumaresq Creek between Donnelly Street and Dumaresq Street eastwards to Dumaresq Creek at Elizabeth Park. The area east of Stephen's bridge meant the closure of Kirkwood Street from Douglas Street to the creek. The administrator of Parks and Reserves informed council in August that acquisition of the flood plain for development as recreational and sporting complexes could proceed within three months. Twelve months later, the *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1970 announced plans for new recreational areas including development of the creeklands for sporting areas.

In February 1970 council established priorities for the acquisition of land for the open space creeklands appeal and in that month nearly twenty landholders had agreed to sell sections of their land along the creek to the N.S.W. Lands Department. Nearly seventy landholders were involved in ownership of the land and the Armidale Land Board was 'given permission to proceed with "some hard and fast" negotiations to acquire the Dumaresq Creek floodplain land'.⁸⁴

Mayor Ald. Failes revealed to council in July that following a meeting with the Under-Secretary for Lands Mr Sinclair, it was hoped that the appeal fund may receive a first-year subsidy from the State Government of \$26 000. However the Department of Lands rejected an approach by council in September to seek an extension of time to raise the matching amount of \$90 000 over the three year period.

Members of the Armidale I.B.C. and the Creeklands Appeal Committee criticised council in August 1971 concerning three recent decisions concerning changes to open space zoning of the floodplain. Dr. Davidson, a member of both committees said: 'For council now to make ad hoc decisions exempting small areas and rezoning them as residential or commercial ... is morally indefensible'.⁸⁵ But the Mayor Ald. Failes defended council's action.

⁸² *Armidale Express*, 7 February 1969, p.6.

⁸³ *Armidale Express*, 28 April 1969, p.1.

⁸⁴ *Armidale Express*, 17 April 1970, p.15.

⁸⁵ *Armidale Express*, 18 August 1971, p.1.

Although there were planned cutbacks in the loan allocation, council was prepared to provide additional funds to assist in the creeklands acquisition scheme in January 1972. In February council decided to possibly provide up to \$18 000 to purchase creekland and four blocks with cottages on the corner of Dumaresq and Dangar Streets. At that stage \$38 600 was 'needed to complete the scheme'.⁸⁶ A wind-up of the creeklands appeal was held on 29 April with a carnival held at Harris Park.

By June 1971 the concept of a scenic drive, the Kirkwood Parkway had been introduced as part of the creeklands scheme. In March 1972 council's building and development committee recommended the Kirkwood Parkway in principle and referred the proposal to the Dumaresq Creek Floodplains Advisory Committee and the Armidale I.B.C. It was considered that the parkway should be a scenic driveway along the northern bank of Dumaresq Creek rather than a major traffic route. At that stage the editor in the *Armidale Express*, 28 April 1972, commented: 'Development of Dumaresq Creeklands ... is an imaginative move to make the most of the city's natural beautiful setting and to provide playing fields and parklands on a grand scale'.

A proposal for a cycleway between the University of New England and the town centre was presented to the State Planning and Environment Commission by council's development committee in May 1978. The Member for Armidale, Mr W. McCarthy opened the new section of the creeklands cycleway linking Markham Street and the University of New England on Sunday 26 April 1981. The opening was followed by a community cycle ride along the cycleway and west along the Old Inverell Road. At that stage the cycleway committee was also preparing a submission for the construction of cycleway east past Harris Park, through Civic Park, under Stephens Bridge and alongside the soccer fields.

In November 1974 council received a federal grant of \$35 000 to cover the cost of development of the creeklands area and construction then commenced. Council applied in March 1976 for a special grant of \$9654 for flood restoration works in the city's parks and gardens.

An exersite station was installed as a Bicentennial project in 1988 and council accepted the offer of the Australian Guarantee Corporation's Fitness Campaign. The station contained fifteen different exercise stations grouped together in an area of about 100 square metres. The station was valued at \$8000 whilst the installation was met by the city at a cost of \$2000.

Curtis Park.

The area of land between Marsh and Faulkner Streets and north of Dumaresq Street was notified for public recreation on 13 August 1920 and assigned in 1922. The Lands Department was asked by council to dedicate the present public recreation reserve as a public park to be known as Curtis Park in December 1927. The late William Curtis was a former Armidale mayor well known for his community services. A further area was vested in council as trustees and gazetted as a reserve for public recreation on 15 March

⁸⁶ *Armidale Express*, 14 February 1972, p.1.

1935 and in October 1936, the Chamber of Commerce congratulated council on improvements completed at the park.

An area of land fronting Dumaresq Street to the Dumaresq Creek was dedicated for military purposes on 9 June 1897. An area of land at the corner of Faulkner and Dumaresq Streets was acquired by the Commonwealth Government for Defence Purposes on 16 December 1915. At the time the land included a drill hall worth £300. The road leading to Trim's bridge was closed and gazetted on 16 March 1920. Both of these areas became part of present day Curtis Park.

In September 1932 David Little, an Armidale engineer presented to council plans for the improvement of the creek between Marsh and Dangar Streets. Council took action to recommend that a sum of £200 be set aside in the 1933 estimates for widening the channel, planting a hedge and erecting fencing. A further plan was presented in November for beautification of the area between Markham and Marsh Streets.

Dumaresq Creek improvement work continued in March 1936 and it was reported 'the channel above the Stephens Bridge should soon be finished'.⁸⁷ By July 1936, bank stone terraces were under construction to be later used as flower beds and the Horticultural Society forwarded a sketch plan of the proposed beautification scheme. City engineer Botham reported in August : the planting of sixty trees; the planting of willow trees by Mr Curtis and the donation of palms for the rockeries and a garden seat by him and the donation of rock plants and shrubs for the rockeries by Mrs Weaver, an Armidale resident.

In May 1941 council recommended that £30 be set aside in the estimates for the construction of swings, monkey pole, see-saw slippery dip and sand pit.

The Dumaresq Creek between Marsh and Dangar Streets was improved by cutting away sand bars in November 1944. In September 1945 the town planning and beautification committee was granted permission to plant poplars at approved places between the willows along the creek from Marsh to Jessie Streets. That month, Mayor D.D.H. Fayle asked the town planning and beautification committee to examine the possible purchase of land on the southern side of the creek to enlarge the park. At the same time, the Armidale Rotary Club offered sponsorship of playgrounds in the city and district to council. The estimated cost was £200 and involved a public appeal for funds. The club acted quickly and launched the movement with a donation of £25 in October whilst the Chamber of Commerce and Horticultural Society immediately pledged their support. Council was officially informed by the Armidale Rotary Club of the opening of a playground fund and plans for Curtis Park that month. At the same time, council commenced action to obtain land for additions to the park. In December council received a cheque from the Armidale Rotary Club for £150 as first payment for a children's playground in the park. Equipment purchased and installed on the initiative of the Rotary Club was handed over to council on Sunday 15 June 1947. By that stage,

⁸⁷ *Armidale Express*, 1 April 1936, p.7.

the club had already subsidised an East Armidale playground and was willing to subsidise a West Armidale playground £ for £ up to £50.

The 1950 Town Plan showed an area of three acres with a children's playground constructed near Faulkner Street but the remainder of the park was used for casual recreation. In October 1950 the Armidale Chamber of Commerce asked council to move the children's playground away from the park because of flooding. Council approached the Rotary Club in June 1951 to discuss the possible moving of the equipment. The club had donated the equipment and suggested that it be left where it is until the town planning committee had completed plans for Dumaresq Creek. The North Armidale Progress Association suggested moving the equipment to the north side of the creek but in November council decided not to move the playground equipment.

The planning committee altered the camping site to 'Open Space Recreation' in April 1956 and the new camping ground opened on Wednesday 29 August 1956. The new ground contained hot water showers, electric lights in buildings, laundry, clothes hoist and kitchen with an open fire and four small gas cookers. The entrance to the new ground was from Dumaresq Street. A start was made with the erection of a new £500 brick toilet block in October 1958 and council hoped to make further improvements with a £1500 loan. In November 1962 council recommended to the incoming council the construction of a new amenities block at a cost of about £12 000. Two years later, the health surveyor was critical of the 'lack of adequate washing and lavatory facilities and outdated cooking equipment'⁸⁸ and the problem of dust arising from the unsealed roads. At that stage the one acre site provided spaces for about forty caravans.

Following a report by the health surveyor, D.M. Crawford in April 1965, council determined the caravan park is in the best possible site and there is no need to go looking for others. The report showed the land incorporating the area occupied by the works depot and the combined area showing a layout of sixty one caravan sites. Roads in the park were designed to provide an entrance in Dumaresq Street near the present entrance and an exit for north bound traffic through the council's work depot site into Marsh Street. Estimated to cost £7000, recommended improvements included several new amenity blocks providing an additional seven W.C.s, showers, basins and laundry.

The building, health and general purposes committee recommended in December 1966 that the 'City Council's works depot in Marsh Street, near Stephens bridge should be shifted as soon as possible so the caravan park could be extended and improved'.⁸⁹ At that stage council had bought land in Mann Street, West Armidale adjacent to the Main Roads Department for a new works depot.

Council agreed in May 1966 to investigate new sites for the park. A proposal emerged in January 1967 for the tourist bureau to take over the caravan park. The bureau recommended that council institute a private trust to administer the caravan park in March. At the same time, the Armidale I.B.C. condemned the conditions at the park

⁸⁸ *Armidale Express*, 2 December 1964, p.4.

⁸⁹ *Armidale Express*, 7 December 1966, p.19.

and suggested that the park should be moved from its present site. The *Armidale Express*, 7 April 1967 supported the suggestion and commented, 'the present caravan park has been makeshift ever since Council agreed to accept it in exchange for the site now occupied by the telephone exchange'. However council rejected the suggestion that a new site be found.

That June, town clerk R.A. Browne presented a detailed report on the park. He informed council the land was Crown land; £6000 had been invested in the park and formation of a trust would require approval of the Department of Lands. An alternative to council control was the possible formation of a local committee of management under the Local Government Act to administer the park on council's behalf. Again in November a motion to close the park and convert it to a picnic area and car park was defeated.

The Department of Lands informed council in January 1968 that it was unable to offer financial assistance for the erection of an amenities block on the reserve because funds were already committed. In May a report from the improvement and beautification committee that the park be moved was shelved by council. However council decided to remove the works depot near Stephen's Bridge almost immediately. In November council sought a meeting with the State Administrator of Parks and Reserves for a grant to establish an amenities block in the park. Despite the difficulties with finance, small improvements were made at the caravan park by converting the kitchen into a laundry and the planting of twenty small trees during 1968.

In March 1969 the city health surveyor Don Crawford presented a plan for a total of eighty six caravan sites on the enlarged area of land between Dumaresq Street and Dumaresq Creek. This plan was based on the removal of the works depot and the demolition of five cottages on the western side of the park. Two weeks later, the Department of Lands informed council it 'should abandon this reserve as a caravan park site, and seek an alternative area, sufficient in size to conform to modern standards for development as a high-grade tourist resort'.⁹⁰ Similarly the Armidale I.B.C. believed council 'should leave the tourist caravan business to private enterprise, but should provide a separate caravan for itinerant tradesmen'.⁹¹ Despite the concerns, council decided to proceed with its plan unless the Lands Department could provide Armidale with an alternative site for a caravan park.

In January 1970 council decided to shelve plans to double the size of the park until after discussions with Dumaresq Shire concerning city boundary extensions. The three stage plan estimated to cost over \$50 000 provided for an amenities block and about ninety caravan berths. At that stage the Lands Department was investigating alternative sites. The Armidale I.B.C. renewed efforts in May to persuade council to remove the caravan park. Council took action in July to support efforts by an Armidale business person, A.J. Chappel to develop a private caravan park. In December 1971 the Armidale I.B.C. reaffirmed its opposition to the city caravan park continuing on its present site. Council

⁹⁰ *Armidale Express*, 26 March 1969, p.1.

⁹¹ *Armidale Express*, 9 April 1969, p.22.

was not prepared to allocate funds for the park in January 1972 for improvements because of the debate over a possible move to a new site. By February council announced it was considering alternative sites for the park. The caravan park closed just before Christmas 1973 and the area returned to the Department of Lands. The town clerk announced in February 1974 it will not re-open and the city council had no plans to establish a public caravan park on another site.

Under the 1975 RED scheme, work was carried out on the section of the creek to lay basalt stone between Stephens Bridge and Faulkner Street. A rest area was constructed at the creeklands near Stephen's bridge in 1976 and playground equipment was added to the park in 1981. In 1988 council installed additional playground equipment to complement development and construction of the Visitor's Tourist Centre and nearby Coach Station.

Drummond Park.

Following a suggestion of the Hon. D.H. Drummond, MLA, council applied to the Lands Department in April 1931 for approximately 50 acres of Crown lands bounded by Donnelly, Jessie, Newton and Markham Streets to be reserved for landscape and scenic park purposes. Reserves No. 62678 and 62785, an area of about 46 acres, were gazetted as from sale and lease on 3 July 1931. The park was named after the David Henry Drummond who was the MLA for Northern Tablelands from 1920-1927; for Armidale from 1927-October 1949 (resigned) and Minister for Education from October 1927-November 1930 and May 1932-May 1941. He served as the Federal Member for New England from 1949 until his retirement in 1963.

The park of forty six acres was dedicated in 1931 and council made trustees. The area of Reserves No. 62784 and 62784 were notified from sale and lease on 3 July 1931. An area was also vested in council as trustees in the *Government Gazette*, 9 July 1936. Other areas were gazetted on 6 November 1959 and 9 July 1976.

The Armidale Newspaper Company applied in July 1935 for lease of about two acres in the Drummond Reserve. The company suggested the erection of a radio transmitting station on the south-east corner would enhance the area's value and employment would be generated by the station's construction and general maintenance. At that stage the area was reserved for public purposes but 'had not as yet been placed under the control of the council'.⁹² Consequently council offered no objection and two months later the Minister for Lands endorsed the recommendation of the Armidale Land Board for a period of lease for 28 years. Plans were prepared for the station and it was announced tenders were to be called in the next few days in September 1935. In April 1956 the planning committee recommended that the site of Station 2AD be zoned 'Open Space-Recreation' to ensure that when the present building went, there would be no further building. The special lease for the area was withdrawn on 6 November 1959.

⁹² *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1936, p.6.

The Minister for Lands approved 'the sum of £40 ... for the improvement of Scenic Park, North Armidale'⁹³ in July 1937. That month an invitation was extended to the Horticultural Society to plan improvements for the area in conjunction with the city engineer with the money to be spent on the "Look Out" area in levelling, provision of seats, shade trees and grubbing of suckers.

The Hon. Colin Sinclair, Minister for Lands informed council a grant of £40 had been paid to the credit of the council in July 1938. Eighty pounds was now held in trust for the work. The council grader commenced work in Jeffrey Street near the radio station 2AD to construct a road to the park and in August it was proposed to tar the road leading to the lookout. Criticism emerged because of the clearing that had taken place but Ald. M.H. O'Connor commented residents 'of our city will be more than satisfied with this park in a few years'.⁹⁴ The city engineer informed council that guards had been placed around selected trees. The editor in the *Armidale Express*, 5 October 1938 commented: 'Properly handled, a beautification scheme would make Drummond Park a pleasing and lasting memorial of the council's earnest desire to serve the ratepayers' Following a visit to Armidale in November, the president of the Town Planning Association recommended to council the planting of massed groups of trees on the lower side, and another clump of trees on the crest of the hill.

The Armidale and District Tourist Bureau asked council of its intentions to improve Drummond Park in December 1939 and was informed 'that improvements to the park were on the Council's programme'.⁹⁵ The general purposes committee reported to council in May 1941 and recommended the grubbing of trees, and the planting of wattles under the supervision of the Armidale and District Horticultural Society. In July 1941, 160 wattles of several varieties were planted. Additional wattles, brooms and kurrajongs were planted in Drummond Park by July 1946. In August council decided to apply for a grant from the government's improvements fund for a circular scenic road through Drummond Park.

The Armidale branch of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women asked council in April 1946 to have Drummond Park 'converted into building blocks for ex-service personnel'.⁹⁶ The legion was informed council had no power to take over a public park. At a Chamber of Commerce meeting held in November 1946, Lloyd Piddington moved that portion of the park be subdivided into building blocks for ex-servicemen. The chamber rejected the suggestion 'but decided to refer it to the Armidale Improvement and Beautification Committee for a recommendation'.⁹⁷ The West Armidale Progress Association supported a further proposal by L. Piddington to subdivide part of the park bounded by Jessie, Jeffrey, Markham and Donnelly Streets in

⁹³ *Armidale Express*, 7 July 1937, p.7.

⁹⁴ *Armidale Express*, 23 September 1938, p.3.

⁹⁵ *Armidale Express*, 11 December 1939, p.4.

⁹⁶ *Armidale Express*, 17 April 1946, p.8.

⁹⁷ *Armidale Express*, 6 December 1946, p.6.

January 1949 and requested council subdivide Drummond Park. D.H. Drummond MLA opposed the move and council refused the request in February.

The Armidale Apex Club announced its plans to improve the look-out area in the park in April 1948. Council agreed to meet with the club and discuss the proposals and promised to assist with tree planting. In June 1949 the club announced plans for a monument to four Apexians in the form of a Memorial Lookout. The four Apexians, Bruce Oliver, Allan Edwards, Consett Davis and Frank Hurley had lost their lives in the Second World War.

The 1950 Town Planning report recommended that Drummond Park be reserved for the cultivation and preservation of Australian Flora and Fauna. Scenic roads and footpaths were also to be constructed in the park to provide a circular drive to the present look-out point from Donnelly Street. In July 1950 a number of questions concerning the provision of recreation areas in North Armidale were sent by the North Armidale Progress Association to council. A major question was, 'Could the area of Drummond Park be defined, and what is the plan for its development?'.⁹⁸ In April 1951 the association took action to plant trees on the northern side of Jessie and Faulkner Streets thus making a scenic drive to the lookout.

The Armidale I.B.C. and North Armidale Progress Association protested against council's proposal that the park be utilised for building purposes in April 1951. A protest by the Chamber of Commerce against housing proposals in the park was also forwarded to council in May. The *Armidale Express*, 7 May 1951 supported the organisations and commented 'existing parklands are an asset, and not a liability'. Further concern was expressed in June by the chamber because a reply had still not been received. Council advised the chamber in August that the inauguration of a tree planting scheme in Drummond Park would be investigated and in September, the Minister for Lands, Mr Renshaw, 'refused Council's request for a curtailment of the park'.⁹⁹ A week later the Armidale Apex Club appealed to the public for donations of money, trees and shrubs for the park. The club announced it wanted to level the lookout; plant a number of trees as a war memorial and build a rockery. At that stage the club had built a stone wall on the southern edge of the lookout and planted a number of shrubs on the northern edge.

Council announced its intention to spend £25 of a Jubilee grant in planting a row of poplars on the northern side of Donnelly Street in the park in March 1952. The Armidale I.B.C. announced in November 1952 'the committee was preparing a 10 year plan for the development of Drummond Park'.¹⁰⁰ Council approved a ten year programme for the beautification of the park in October 1955. The first stage included the development of a look out area, the planting of cotoneasters, a rockery, pathway and lawns.

⁹⁸ *Armidale Express*, 5 July 1950, p.12.

⁹⁹ *Armidale Express*, 12 September 1951, p.6.

¹⁰⁰ *Armidale Express*, 10 November 1952, p.6.

The Governor of N.S.W., Lt. General Sir John Northcott was welcomed to the Apex Lookout at Drummond park on Friday 2 March 1956 to officially open the lookout. He was greeted by a guard of honour from the Hunter River Lancers, city aldermen, shire councillors and members of the Apex Club. During the ceremony the Hon. D.H. Drummond referred to the occasion when the late 'Mrs Ella Hickson brought him to the spot ... pointed out the magnificent view, and suggested it should become a public park'.¹⁰¹ D. Fayle, president of the Armidale Apex Club explained 'the nature of the memorial- the four Lombardy poplars commemorating the four Aexians who did not come back from active service, and the construction of the Look-out'.

In February 1957 council proposed to alienate a 132 foot wide strip of land along the lower side of the park, involving eight acres to provide twenty six building blocks fronting Donnelly Street. At the time reasons for the decision were not given but the announcement lead to a very critical editorial in the *Armidale Express*, 22 February 1957. Concerned about the lack of opposition within council and describing the proposal as 'official vandalism' it concluded:

Every civic organisation should forthwith enter a vigorous protest against the Council's move, and if the aldermen remain adamant, then a protest meeting should be organised, and a direct approach made to the Minister for Lands to prevent this civic crime.

Not surprisingly, opposition did arise and later council stated that one of the reasons for the decision was 'to provide cheap housing sites for newly-married couples who cannot afford the current market prices for existing vacant housing sites'.¹⁰² Criticism of the proposal lead to an informal meeting of aldermen and organizations including the Apex Club, Chamber of Commerce, Armidale I.B.C. and the Armidale branch of the A.L.P. who met at the lookout on Wednesday 20 March. Of these organizations, only the A.L.P. supported the concept. Again the *Armidale Express*, 25 March 1957 criticised the proposal and wrote: 'a survey of the city area, ... reveals the existence of much land that can be used profitably, and until this disappears there should be no encroachment on park land'. In April the Department of Lands queried council's proposal to develop the area fronting Donnelly Street for housing.

A new plan for Drummond Park was presented to council by Armidale Apex Club members D. Murray, D. Fayle and J. Hilder in August 1958. 'They brought with them a coloured plan of the Park showing the roads, paths and other sections, and a plaster model showing the roads and contours'.¹⁰³ At the meeting, council rejected the proposed housing plan and resolved that the area fronting Donnelly Street be zoned 'Open Spaces- Open Spaces Recreation'. Support for the concept also came from the Armidale I.B.C., the Horticultural Society and the Rotary Club. Work on the park

¹⁰¹ *Armidale Express*, 2 March 1956, p.1.

¹⁰² *Armidale Express*, 6 March 1957, p.4.

¹⁰³ *Armidale Express*, 13 August 1958, p.2.

began in September 1958 as members of the Armidale Apex and Armidale I.B.C. planted 100 cypress trees, 100 red and 100 yellow pyracantha berry bushes for a windbreak along the western side of the park.

The Apex Club presented a detailed report to council in July 1959. To that date approximately about 30 chains of road had been constructed; 25 acres below the high level road cleared of standing timber; 40 chains of fencing erected and the northern side of the park fertilized from the air. The first three rows of a wind break planted along the western side in 1958 included: 150 torulosa pines (*cupressus torulosa*) and 400 Evergreen Hawthorns (*Pyrocantha* species) It was also planned to plant about 500 trees that winter and chisel plough, harrow and sow with suitable grasses about 25 acres of the park. The top section of the park was to be preserved as an Australian section. The cost of the plantings were met by collecting waste paper in Armidale and by August 1959 the waste paper had 'paid for £400 worth of trees which have been planted'.¹⁰⁴

Following a recommendatation from council to the town planner to report on the re-zoning of the southern side of the park as a residential area, the Armidale I.B.C. again strongly protested in April 1960 against the proposal. The president, A.E. Gentle wrote: 'we ... re-affirm our opinion ... that there should not be any alienation for other purposes' and these lands are 'essential for the proper development and beautification of our City, more particularly since the recent approval of the extension of the City boundaries'.¹⁰⁵ The editor of the *Armidale Express*, 4 April commented, the instruction 'means complete repudiation of its promise to allow the Park to be developed by responsible civic organisations'. The Apex Club also expressed its opposition to the proposal and informed council it had spent £950 on improvements to the park and had expended 2180 hours of member's time.

In August 1960 council received a further report from the Apex Club informing council that 500 trees had been planted in the park and another 500 were to be planted. That month, council agreed to a suggestion by the tourist bureau that a grant be sought for the scenic drive for forming and eventual sealing. Further work on improving the park by the Apex Club took place in September. Levelling work in the north west corner was undertaken by R. Belfield and an area was prepared for trees to be planted on the western side at a later date.

In February 1961 council selected the Memorial Grove in Drummond Park in memory of John Whan. He left £50 to the City for Drummond Park and tree planting with £50 to be handed over by the Apex Club. In March news was released of a recommendation by a council committee to the town planner P.G. Agnew to convert the southern side of Drummond Park to housing. Not surprising, angry letters to the editor appeared and the Chamber of Commerce again expressed strong opposition. Members were angry because a similar proposal appeared two years ago. Following letters from the Apex

¹⁰⁴ *Armidale Express*, 17 August 1959, p.7.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from A.E. Gentle, president of the Armidale I.B.C. to the Armidale City Council, Town Planning Committee, 11 April 1960, No 3590, Box 148C, File No T1.

Club and the Armidale I.B.C., aldermen reassured the public in April that council 'has every intention of leaving it in its present form'.¹⁰⁶

The city engineer, P.G. Agnew estimated the cost of providing a permanent surface for the Apex Lookout at £875 in May 1962. This included earthworks, gravelling, tar priming and bitumen sealing. Council accepted the estimate and agreed to consider the work for next year's budget. Council also decided to ask the Department of Main Roads to declare the scenic drive as a tourist drive. Estimated cost of providing drainage and a permanent surface was £1730. That month, a bulldozer working under the supervision of Jack Hilder, chairman of the Drummond Park committee cleared scrub from the old 2AD site to the north eastern corner of the park. The council grader also completed levelling of the 2AD area. At that stage the north-western area was being prepared for tree planting next spring.

By October 1962 the Armidale Apex Club had cleared thirty acres of scrub in the park, sown it to grass, formed two roads running east to west, planted 1500 trees and an avenue of 220 pyrocantha. Since the Apex Club of Armidale took over the administration and planning of Drummond Memorial Park, three thousand trees and shrubs had been planted by November 1965 and a retaining basalt wall erected at the lookout. To fund this work, the club regularly collected waste paper and sold it.

Crown land adjoining the western boundary of Drummond Park was zoned for housing by the City Council in its interim Town Plan in October 1963. At the time the land was mainly unused with an 'abandoned gravel pit, a stone crushing plant and a concrete-mix works'.¹⁰⁷ The Lands Department had recommended that the area be zoned open space and that it be added to the park.

Following the death of David H. Drummond in the Armidale and New England Hospital in June 1965, the D.H. Drummond Memorial Committee set out to honour his memory and raise funds for that purpose. The committee had been formed in 1964 for that purpose and some fund raising had taken place prior to his death. Plans for the complete landscaping of the lookout overlooking Drummond Park were presented to the committee on Tuesday 9 November 1965. 'The Committee approved designs for a simple, triangular column, thirty feet high, to be erected as a dominating feature on the summit in memory of the outstanding public services of David Henry Drummond'.¹⁰⁸ The executive of the N.S.W. Country Party offered to donate a bronze plaque for the column in January 1966. Armidale architects Maggoffin and Sons were employed and the tenders for the column (\$3470) and the apex entrance pillars (\$1166) were awarded to Armidale builder, P.J. Knudson. The plaque on the Drummond Memorial Committee was unveiled by the Premier of N.S.W. Mr R. Askin on Saturday 6 August.

¹⁰⁶ *Armidale Express*, 13 April 1960, p.2.

¹⁰⁷ *Armidale Express*, 30 October 1963, p.13.

¹⁰⁸ *Armidale Express*, 10 November 1965, p.8.

The Department of Local government granted council \$500 in May 1966 to seal the memorial lookout area. An estimated \$2462 was allocated in June by the City Council, the State Government and the Apex Club on bitumen sealing and kerbing and guttering. Council also reconstructed the turn around area and the County Council replaced the wooden poles by steel poles at the look out.

Members of the Armidale Apex Club planted 700 trees and shrubs in Drummond Park in August 1967. To that stage 1000 trees had been planted as windbreaks and in display conditions. Cost of the plantings was being met from the proceeds of a newspaper collection in the city. The club also announced that a row of hibiscus was to be planted on each side of the road between the entrance arch and the look-out whilst other trees including wattles, bottlebrush, tamarish, gums and grevilleas were to be planted mainly below the lookout. To recognise the work of the club, council announced in May 1970 the scenic lookout would be called the Apex Memorial Lookout.

In May 1971 the Armidale I.B.C. called for the preservation of the wooded knoll on the western side of Drummond Park to be preserved as part of the park. The knoll formed part of the crown reserve formerly used for quarrying and contained snow gums, which 'were rare in the Armidale district'.¹⁰⁹ Council forwarded the request to the Lands Department seeking support.

At the same time, an organisation which aimed to encourage school children to be actively involved in their environment called INSPECT adopted the area formerly Cochrane's Quarry. The organisation was launched in February 1972 and INSPECT stood for Inquiry into the State of Pollution and Environmental Conservation by Thoughtful People. The group leader at that time was Katherine Boyd, then a Fifth Form student and an approach was made to district surveyor Jim Bradley and council for dedication of the land. As a result of these negotiations, the Crown Land was eventually added to Reserve No. 82136 for Public Recreation (Drummond Park). Interested citizens, businesses, various government departments and council provided technical assistance and machinery. A fence was established in October 1976 and 150 trees and home grown seedlings were planted in November.

By January 1977 council had recently filled in the dam built by George Cochrane to supply water to the stone crusher. The crusher was originally used by council to crush basalt for road making and was dismantled in 1970. Apart from the planting of native trees and shrubs, INSPECT announced its intention in January 1977 to create an adventure playground and council took control of Drummond Park from the Alex Club on Sunday 27 February.

East End Park (MacDonald Park)

In March 1889 council agreed to the Department of Land's request to become trustees of the proposed park in the Reserve for the Commissioner's Residence. In June council was granted control temporary control over Reserve No. 9016, known as part of the

¹⁰⁹ *Armidale Express*, 5 May 1971, p.5.

Commissioner's Reserve. The area became the East End Park and later MacDonald Park.

The former commissioner's premise and ground recently occupied by G.E. Smith were rented by G.K. Hosmer to commence on 19 January 1891; £57 4s rental to be paid monthly in advance. That month, council decided to erect a 1000 gallon at the premises. Three years later in June 1894, council decided to remove by auction the yard and shed encroaching on Brown Street. In March 1895, council took action to place a roof on an outbuilding at a cost of £11 15s by the tenderer Mr Hosmer. The leasee G.K. Hosmer sought a reduction of rent for the property in September and that month, council discussed the rental and considered the pulling down and re-building of the stables. In October council approved the fencing of the park, house and stables and the tender of Thomas Morrissey was accepted for £127.

In May 1892 council decided to plant trees in the park that season and in February 1894 concern was expressed about straying stock in the park. A group of local Armidale residents including A. Crossman, F. Braund, W. Drew, H.W. Lane, H. Weaver, S.A. Donnelly and the local member of Parliament Edmund Lonsdale, petitioned the Borough Council in November to have the park placed in the hands of private trustees. Council objected to the petition and the *Armidale Express*, 16 November 1894 supported the stand taken by council:

In deciding not to allow the East End Park to be enclosed and used exclusively as a sports ground, the Council have acted in a manner that must commend itself to the ratepayers generally, and more especially to the ward in which the park is situated.

Council accepted the tender of T. Morrissey for fencing the park in December 1895. By January 1896 it was found that the survey lines in the park were defective and the district surveyor was asked to properly define the line. That month the survey was completed, the gates were removed from the centre of the fence line and placed at the corner and the fence was painted. In April G.K. Hosmer threatened to give notice for leasing the house and his offer of 15s per week was accepted. Council also determined to sell the old fence. Hosmer made an offer for rental of the house in August 1897 but new tenders for renting the house were called in September and £5 was allocated for repairs to the house.

By June 1898 council had a credit balance of £58 14s 8d for the park. The number of extra gates opposite the Armidale School was reduced to one in August whilst the general purposes committee also recommended the construction of three extra gates. At the same time council called tenders for trenching the ground as preparation for the planting of trees. Ald. Claverie suggested such action should be taken 'so as to make it a beauty spot like the Central and West End parks'.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ *Armidale Express*, 12 August 1898, p.4.

In June 1900 council decided to have thirty loads of manure carted into the park and by September improvements to the park included the provision of fences, planting of trees and the construction of seats. Tenders were called for 100 yards of soil at a probable cost of £5 in October. Council announced in June 1902 that a small wicket gate will be erected close to the big gate at the south side entrance to the park. In April 1903 council announced further improvements with the news that swings were to be placed in the East, Central and West End Parks.

In May 1904 it was decided to remove the old fence of about three chains enclosing the 'East End Park House'. New wire fencing would be placed across the front of the house and the remainder of the old fence repaired. In July it was found that the fence around the house was beyond repairs and a new fence was to be constructed. Council announced a number of improvements in August: an eight wire fence was to be erected around the house; the old shed was to be moved to a more suitable position on the south-east corner of the enclosure and horses were to be prevented from running loose in the parks without council authority. In December council announced tenders were to be called for the erection of a fence to separate tree beds in the East End Park from the park proper for the purpose of letting grass rights for £10. This proposal led to a petition signed by fifty ratepayers against the leasing of the East End Park for agistment purposes. Ald. Geldard tabled a notice of motion in February 1905 rescinding the motion to fence the trees and let the park for agistment purposes.

In May 1905 the general purposes committee determined that paths be formed diagonally from corner to corner and a branch path be formed from the Armidale School gate to the main path at a cost of £12 10s. The committee also determined to alter the gates to stop stock from entering at a cost of 30s. Two weeks later the tender of S.H. Bower was accepted for the supply of gravel and formation of the paths.

In May 1906 council allocated £20 for demolishing the skillion and repairing the old kitchen in the park residence. A further £10 was set aside for repairs to the house in October 1907.

Following the impounding of a cow in the park, council decided in July 1905 that the park should be enclosed with a cattle proof fence. A gas lamp was placed in the centre of the park at a cost of £14 in August 1906. Permission was given in November to chip a cricket pitch with the general purpose committee to supervise the selection of the site. Ald. Kearney suggested gates at the park for perambulators in May 1908. In December action was taken to fence off the border beds and call tenders for grazing rights to make the park suitable for recreation purposes and raise funds for future improvements.

The council clerk sought advice from the council in June 1908 because the occupant of the house had refused to pay rent or leave the house. The matter was left in the hands of the mayor. That December council allocated £15 and announced that border beds in the park would be fenced off. Tenders were also called for grazing rights to make the park suitable for recreation purposes and to raise funds for future improvements. In October 1912 council announced that tenders will be called for the erection of four new gates at a probable cost of £10.

Council decided in November 1915 to inform the occupants of the house that the building was to be vacated at the end of the year; tenders were to be called for the purchase and removal of the house and outbuildings and new double gates were to be purchased for the park. Such demolition did not take pace and in August 1916, A. Harris applied for rental of the house in the park for 5s per week. The issue was referred to a special committee to consider the question of the cottage because of a number of the alderman still felt it should be demolished. The house was not demolished and was advertised for 10s per week in September 1916. Twelve months later, the Lands Department informed council in September 1917 that it had no objection to demolition of the residence provided that the money was expended in improving the park. Council acted quickly and that month, Ald. J.B. Fitzgerald announced that the building materials from the recently demolished former commissioner's residence had been sold. 'In all £103 was realised, the roofing iron alone bringing up to 7/- per sheet'.¹¹¹

Council approved the calling of tenders for six seats in August 1918. Ald. Lamb also announced a more ambitious scheme with 'the provision there of a playground for children on the lines of the Domain in Sydney'.¹¹² Council was informed by Mr Lane MLA that the cost of playground requisites in the Domain was unobtainable in October 1918. Tenders were called for erection of swings in East and West End parks in February 1919.

The Lands Department informed council in June 1919 that the park would be vested in the council by notice under section 3 of the Public Trusts Act 1897 once parliament was re-assembled. The East End Park was dedicated as a reserve for public recreation on 26 September. Once the park was dedicated, council was appointed trustees and given the power to deal with trespassers.

By November 1921, £85 10s was available in the Government Savings Bank for the park. Ald. Lamb moved that a playground be constructed in the park with the work to be left in the hands of the general purposes committee. In the debate he said: 'the project had been defeated when he brought it up a couple of years ago'.¹¹³ Water was laid onto the park in July 1922; a water service from Barney Street and one from Brown street. A site was selected for swings in August swings costing £85 were then erected. With the commencement of electricity in Armidale, an electric light was provided in the park in August 1923.

The Armidale and District Horticultural Society presented a plan to council prepared by the secretary Guy A. Whitelaw in July 1933. The plan provided for a row of trees along each of the four boundaries and also skirting the existing diagonal pathways to form a Maltese Cross. The design called for the planting of approximately 400 trees and 600

¹¹¹ *Armidale Express*, 28 September 1917, p.6.

¹¹² *Armidale Express*, 3 August 1918, p.4.

¹¹³ *Armidale Chronicle*, 30 November 1921, p.8.

shrubs. In each section of the cross recreation areas would be set aside at a later stage for tennis courts, a croquet lawn, a bowling green and children's playground. Council approved the plans in August. The Unemployment Relief Council also informed council in August that it had forwarded the grant application to improve the park to the Department of Labour and Industry. That month, council received news that the Minister Mr Dunningham had approved funds for work to be carried out in the park under the 'work for the dole' system. Thus much of the work was eventually carried out in the park under the direction of the Society to plans designed by the secretary, G.A. Whitelaw.

In April 1934 contact was again made with the Horticultural Society concerning tree and shrub planting. That month the laying of water pipes commenced and the secretary of the Society sought assistance and donation of plants from J. Plante, Glen Innes; F. Ferguson and Son, Hurstville; L.R. ? and son, Ermington and Hazlewood Bros., Epping for the park in April 1934. The Minister for Education, D.H. Drummond was 'enthusiastic about the proposal to convert East End Park into an arboretum'.¹¹⁴

The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Main authorised a donation of six of each of the following trees to the scheme: Cootamundra wattle, Maritime pine, pinus insignis, ceratonia, quercus densiflora, willow, engoina poplar, golden poplar and oriental plane'.¹¹⁵ That month, the Horticultural Society opened a public appeal for funds and by 30 May 1934, £27 5s had been donated with Armidale City Council donating £20. In June Mr Drummond notified council of a grant of £40 and suggested the amount be set aside for a new fence. Three weeks later, council allocated £40 to the laying of water and part payment of trees and shrubs. A number of unemployed men were engaged in digging holes supervised by council and the secretary of the society, Guy A. Whitelaw in July.

The Minister for Lands, the Hon. E.A. Buttenshaw advised council in May 1935 that approval had been given for a grant of £50 each for improvements of East and West End parks. Council sought permission to have the grant amended to £75 for the East End park and £25 for the West End and Mr Drummond approached the minister on their behalf in August. Tenders were called that month for the supply and erection of ten chains of fencing with post rails and five wires and the contract for fencing in Douglas Street was awarded to W. Golden. Once permission to expend £75 on the park was granted, the decision was taken to renew the whole of the fence and to extend the contract 'to complete 10 chains along Brown-street and 10 chains down Taylor-street'.¹¹⁶ W. Golden was released from his contract in November to fence the park because he was 'unable to secure the necessary timber from the mills'.¹¹⁷ The contract was then awarded to Mr Cook.

¹¹⁴ *Armidale Express*, 30 April 1934, p.4.

¹¹⁵ *Armidale Express*, 4 May 1934, p.4.

¹¹⁶ *Armidale Express*, 27 November 1935, p.3.

¹¹⁷ *Armidale Express*, 13 November 1935, p.7.

By January 1936 the area had been drained and laid out; trees and shrubs planted. The pencil pines were replanted by council in August 1939 in the positions chosen by the Horticultural Society. However by March 1944 much of the park was in a state of disrepair.

The Armidale Lawn Tennis Club proposed in June 1946 that council should erect tennis clubs in the park and rent them to the club. The matter was referred to council officers and a number of council committees. Council decided in July not to approve an expenditure of £3000 on the courts or alienate any portion of its public parks for private purposes.

The city engineer, J.D. Brown reported in June 1946 that flower beds had been prepared for planting and forty five holes were ready for planting of replacement trees and shrubs. The trees included six Woymouth pines, six ulmus (chinesis) and three amples. The replacement work was completed in July. By the end of November, 3000 annuals had been planted in the park whilst 1500 had been planted in Central Park. The town planning and beautification committee recommended the removal of the fence at the park in February 1949 and this work was underway in June.

The 1950 Town Plan referred to the area of 10 acres as East Armidale Park used for recreational purposes only. A children's playground was placed at the southern boundary of the park.

In April 1952 council announced that the park was now to be known as Macdonald Park. The naming was based on research carried out for a booklet published for the 60th anniversary of the municipality and the name was formally advertised in May. But in July 1963 the Armidale Historical Society reminded council of its decision to erect a plaque in the park during the period T.G. Monckton was mayor. Council agreed to the society's suggestion that the plaque might be a centenary project. The Governor of N.S.W., Sir Woodward unveiled the plaque in the park in November to commemorate Commissioner Macdonald, the first Land Commissioner who came to New England and established a base at Armidale in 1839.

In June 1953 provision was provided in the 1954 estimates for a convenience at East Armidale Park. Swings were also to be erected as soon as blacksmithing staff was available.

The recreation and playing fields advisory committee advised council in October 1973 that work was about to begin at the park. Developments were to take place at the western triangle of the park because of the wind shelter and work included: a 27 inch concrete path for tricycle use; a bean stalk climber; a playhouse; small swings and a type of monkey bar. Stage 2 involved provision for older children including a large moon rocket and picnic tables and seating. The vice-chairman of the committee, Mrs J. Slade hoped suggestions would be made to help emphasise the historical significance of the park and assistance would be given by public donation. The Armidale Junior Council also promised to assist.

Plans for the toilet block were drawn by city engineer David Hegarty and submitted to council in September 1976. The council meeting on 7 February 1979 received a report that picnic tables had been placed in the park and frames erected for three of the five items of playground equipment.

In 1981 it was planned to plant 130 trees in the park due to increased usage and in 1984 play equipment was installed in the park.

The N.S.W. Bicentennial Council provided funds to finance construction of a shed to house the display of a wool wagon in Macdonald Park and the construction of a large machinery shed at Hillgrove's Rural Life and Industry Museum to house relics and machinery. The projects were completed at a cost of \$48 000 funded by the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council (\$30 000) and the City Council (\$18 000). Opening of the wool wagon shelter in Macdonald Park took place on 13 August 1988.

East Armidale Playground. (Situated at the intersection of Mann and Chapel Streets)

The East Armidale Progress Association launched a project in March 1946 for a recreation ground at East Armidale and an agreement was reached with the municipal council in April. Council was prepared to purchase allotments 10, 11 and 12 of section 147 in Chapel Street for £65 provided the association spend £50 on improvements. In the following month, the Armidale Rotary Club agreed to subsidise the association £ for £ to the extent of £40 for the purchase of playground equipment.¹¹⁸

In August 1946 the association submitted a plan of improvements to the recreation area including fencing, the planting of trees and shrubs, laying down of a practice cricket pitch, the setting up of playground equipment and the erection of a hall and lavatory accommodation. Council approved the proposed lay out of the playground and promised to construct a sandpit and instal a bubbler drinking fountain. Working bees were organised to fence the boundaries and the secretary of the association F.A. Lewis, informed council in October that £80 was available for the purchase of swings, a log swing, giant strides and a slide. By the end of November, the work of fencing the playground was completed. Donations of trees and timber had been received whilst S. Burton erected two brick gate posts and orders placed for purchase of the playground equipment. The present hall was moved onto the parkland in November 1947 from the showground where it was used as a barracks during World war Two. The Minister for Lands provided a grant of £15 for maintenance and improvements in April 1949.

In 1950 the Armidale Town Plan indicated that the East Armidale playground (area 1 acre) was situated at the intersection of Mann and Chapel Streets and contained a child's playground, assembly hall and a tennis court. The East Armidale Association asked council in April 1951 to consider the erection of a public convenience at the playground and in May council decided to place a sewerage service for the playground on the 1952 estimates.

¹¹⁸ *Armidale Express*, 15 May 1946, p.8.

Approval for construction of another tennis court by the Progress Association was granted by council in June 1954 and council also agreed to grade an area of land sufficient to build the court. A proposal by the association to plant forty trees around the playground was approved by council in June 1959 and improvements to the tennis courts were made in 1964.

The hall was placed in the park at the end of the war during a time of shortage of building materials. Because of the circumstances involving the East Armidale Progress Association, the hall reflects the role of such organizations seeking the provision of cultural and sporting facilities for their Armidale community.

Elizabeth Park.

Council approved the purchase from the Manuel Estate of between seven to eight acres of creekland at the corner of Butler and Dumaresq Streets in April 1951. The purchase price paid was £300. Named after Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 11, the name was assigned to this park along the creeklands in Butler Street in 1956.

In July 1966 the recreation and playing fields advisory committee recommended that the park should be developed 'partly by closing a short section of Butler Street- so there will be three more hockey or soccer fields on the ground'.¹¹⁹ In August the committee recommended the moving of the main soccer field further west and establishing three junior soccer fields on the northern and eastern sides of the main field. Based on the recommendations, council constructed a concrete cricket pitch at the park at an estimated cost of £110 in October. In December 1967 the New England Cricket and the Armidale Junior Soccer Associations announced that they will jointly contribute towards the cost of levelling another soccer field and to improve the cricket outfield there.

The western extension of this park was announced by council in the overall development of the creeklands in July 1969. That December, council announced its intention to develop eight fields in the park. Three cricket fields were also to be developed there.

In July 1976 council considered plans to re-align Dumaresq Creek so that the Armidale Junior League Club could build an amenities block at the park but council shelved the proposal in August. That month council decided to site the controversial block on the northern side of the creek slightly east of Butler Street. Engineer Hegarty also announced a footbridge would be built to service the fields. Twelve months later, the recreation and playing fields advisory committee recommended in September 1977 the construction of the amenities block in the next loan program.

The advisory committee meeting held on 7 November 1979 received a report that two new concrete pitches have been placed at Elizabeth Park North and Lambert Park. In 1988 the temporary amenities block was transferred from the Lynches Road Park.

Harris Park.

¹¹⁹ *Armidale Express*, 29 July 1966, p.5.

A bequest from the estate of Dr Walter Eli Harris provided the sum of £104 for the purchase of three acres of land comprising lots 3 and 4 bounded by Dangar, Kirkwood and Jessie Streets from T. Lambert Ltd. The land was purchased for £120 and the balance was paid in 1932. In February 1932 council adopted the name of Harris Park for the land. Dr Harris was born in 1876 died in 1924 and was buried in the Church of England portion of the Armidale cemetery.

In January 1936 the Armidale Cycle Club applied for permission to use Harris Park as a track for cycling. Council approved the plan but could offer no financial assistance.

The New England Women's Hockey Association applied for exclusive use of the park in June 1939. Council granted the association use of the park but was not prepared to allow the association to have sole use. At that stage, council could not promise to effect any improvements on the ground but the association took a lease of the area. The secretary of the association, Miss M. Kent Hughes appealed to council in October 1941 to help restrict grazing stock on the park because the association intended planting trees and shrubs there. Council could not provide a fence but promised to take steps to prevent stock straying on the enclosure. Ald. L.E. Dawson hoped that 'some public-spirited citizen might even donate (a hedge) as had been done to Market Square'.¹²⁰ New England Rugby League was granted permission by council to fence the boundary to the park along Allingham Street in September 1944.

Council was informed that the association 'intended to assist the Armidale Beautification Committee by planting trees'¹²¹ in May 1945. Two years later the association applied for further improvements but in May 1947 council informed the association that it could not provide water or sewerage at present. In November the association again advised council 'of a desire to have the playing area ... top-dressed and more effectively drained, and offered £10 towards the cost of the work'.¹²²

By February 1948 a basketball court was also installed at the park and in April 1954 council decided to submit plans for a sports oval at Harris Park to the National Fitness Council. The Town Plan was altered to show the extension of Harris Park across to Kirkwood Street in April 1956.

Following applications from sporting bodies for more sportsgrounds, council took action in May 1955 to call a round table conference to discuss their planning.¹²³

Permission was granted by council in May 1960 to the New England Women's Hockey Association to erect a bubbler as a memorial to Mrs Lillian Savage in May 1960. The Mayor Ald. P.G. Love unveiled a plaque on a water fountain to the memory of Mrs Savage on Saturday 25 March 1961 and the fountain was blessed by the Very Rev.

¹²⁰ *Armidale Express*, 22 October 1941, p.4.

¹²¹ *Armidale Express*, 16 May 1945, p.8.

¹²² *Armidale Express*, 26 November 1947, p.15.

¹²³ *Armidale Express*, 20 May 1955, p.13.

Dean E. W. Wetherell. Mrs Savage's involvement with the sport began in 1935 when she was elected patroness of the Hockey Association in 1935; a position she held until her tragic death in a car accident on 26 November 1959. Earlier that month the association suggested to council that the name of Harris Park be changed to the 'Savage Memorial Oval'.

By January 1965 council was considering purchase of the land between the hockey field at Harris Park and the Rugby League Park. That month, the Dumaresq Creek improvement committee supported the proposal and made several suggestions about development of the area. In November council announced the purchase of the land for sports fields is to be considered by the city council when it is preparing its loan programme for next year. In December council allocated \$4 000 for purchase of the land. Most of the land between Harris Park and Rugby League Park was offered to council by the owner T. Kelaher for \$8400 in April 1966 but council deferred a decision until it was aware of loans money being available.

The Recreation and Playing Fields Advisory Committee was formed in 1966 after a public meeting of private individuals and representatives of various sporting interests. The first meeting of the committee was held on 7 June 1966 and the mayor outlined the terms of reference. The committee was to be advisory and 'the life of the Committee would be to December, 1968' but 'no finances, either Revenue or Loan, were available for the Committee's purposes'.¹²⁴ The committee recommended a number of improvements to the various Armidale sporting areas by July and including that immediate steps should be taken 'to acquire the land between Rugby League Park and Harris Park to provide additional soccer and hockey fields'.¹²⁵

The committee also recommended in November 1966 the raising of interest-free loans to purchase the creek land and land in North Armidale. In December the committee recommended the raising of debentures to purchase this land and in February 1967 the committee suggested to council it be empowered to raise interest-free loans to buy land. The committee wished to buy land to be developed as playing fields. In 1968 council acquired land between Jessie Street and Rugby League Park and between Kirkwood and Dumaresq Streets. This land was described as lot 2 being part of former lots 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8A of section 174. An application was made to the Geographical Names Board in May 1968 to have the name of Harris Park also assigned to this area.

The Recreation and Playing Fields Advisory Committee announced development of Harris Park and the adjoining Kelaher land 'as a sports centre to the highest degree possible and improvement of the other publicly owned playing fields is a part of the immediate objective'.¹²⁶ Improvements for players and spectators was also recommended at Elizabeth Park, Lambert Park and other centres particularly the

124 Armidale City Council File, A Meeting with Representatives of Sporting Bodies, Tuesday 25th June, 1968, Recreation and Playing Field Reports, History 1968-1972, 323 20C.

125 *Armidale Express*, 29 July 1966, p.5.

126 *Armidale Express*, 28 January 1968, p.17.

provision of amenities blocks at Harris and Elizabeth Parks. Following council's receipt of the report, the city engineer K.O. Gentle announced possible plans in April 1968 for the development of two full size hockey fields on the eastern side of Harris Park at an estimated cost of £2850. The extension of the area was confirmed in July 1969. A post and rail fence was constructed by November to prevent car hooligans from driving onto the field. In December council announced its intention to develop six fields in the park and one cricket field. Hockey was to be mainly developed in the park.

The advisory committee recommended the construction of a change and toilet facility at Harris Park on the Kirkwood Street side between the old cottage and closed portion of Jessie Street in July 1975. In September 1977 the committee recommended that \$300 be provided for the construction of cricket pitches at Harris Park and Watson Park with voluntary labour to be supplied by the New England Cricket Association and further funds to be allocated in 1978 to complete the project.

In 1984 the athletics track was widened at the park.

Kathy Partridge Oval.

Part of Harris Park was named the 'Kathy Partridge Oval' to honour the achievements of Kathy Partridge, an Armidale sports person who played as the goal keeper in the Australian Women's Hockey Team which won a gold medal at the xxiv Olympic Games held at Seoul 1988. At the opening ceremony held on 19 October 1988, she presented the gold medal to the council.

Lynches Road Park.

In May 1969 a council sub-committee recommended the acquisition of recreation land in the Kelly's Plains Road area. Major earthworks were completed in this park in 1981 and in 1983 it was opened for sporting use. New toilet and change-room facilities and kiosk were constructed at a cost of \$59 000 in time for commencement of the netball season in 1988. Other works in this area included irrigation \$6600 and provision of netball sockets at a cost of \$3000. This park is now an area of 2.7 hectares developed for cricket and eighteen netball courts. All weather netball courts were constructed in the 1990s.

Market Square.

Reserve No. 2 bounded by Faulkner, Dangar and Dumaresq Streets was set aside by surveyor James Galloway in 1849 and was variously known as the market square and market reserve. The Municipalities Act 1858 granted councils powers to regulate markets but there was little effort by council to establish a market on the site. In time the area was used for other purposes and later dedicated as a parking and camping area for tourists. Today it contains parking areas, a parking station and a band room.

An initial move was made by Ald. Naughten in April 1869 to allocate £100 for the erection of a public pump in the market square but the motion lapsed. But four months later in August, the improvement committee was called upon to have plans and specifications prepared for a well and pump.

On 12 October 1869 council passed a motion to have the market square vested in council. This was approved on 8 November. Reserve No. 2 was dedicated as a market reserve on 15 August 1871 and the council meeting on 7 July 1874 received the deeds of the market reserve and town hall sites. By November the inspector of nuisances inquired whether teamsters could camp and light fires in the market square.

The improvement committee recommended fencing of the market square and the provision of a pump and other appliances in May 1876. Two weeks later, £150 was voted for fencing the reserve, sinking a well and procuring a pump. James Burn's tender for fencing the square was accepted at 9s 6d per rod in June but he was granted an extension of time to complete the work two months later. This tender fell through and Thomas Starr was given three months to complete the fence at 12s per rod in March 1877.

Tenders for the pump and sinking the well were not called until November 1876. Lasseter and Company were to supply the pump for £30 and the tender of Charles Forster for £38 5s was accepted for sinking the well. Two months was granted to complete the work. By March 1877, the well was down 39 feet but with no water found and approval was given to go another ten to twelve feet. The well was down to 51 feet in May and approval was granted to drive another twenty feet. Forster was granted a six weeks extension in June to complete the work at £2.2s per foot. Problems arose as rock was encountered and in September it was down to 67 feet in rock. But one month later it was revealed the well was completed and 'now has 42 feet of water'.¹²⁷ The pump was then placed on the well and thirty feet of additional piping purchased.

Although Reserve No 2 was referred to as a market square, markets were never established on this site. However on a number of occasions aldermen raised the possibility. In November 1866 Ald. Ross announced that he was in favour of a market and weighbridge to assist farmers. That December, he again called 'attention to the propriety of the Council soon taking steps in favour of establishing a market'.¹²⁸ Serious consideration was given to a major construction involving the erection of a market house and weighbridge to cost £400 in April 1877. The motion was lost on the mayor's casting vote but council did seek information from Maitland, Bathurst and Maitland concerning market houses and weighbridges. Again at the council meeting on 22 March 1887, Ald. Brown presented a plan for proposed markets.

It was not until March 1920 that council established a public market for the sale of commodities other than for cattle. The market was to be held on the town hall land facing Faulkner Street on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Large gates were planned for the reserve in Moore and Dumaresq Streets in May 1877 but this was amended in June for the gates to be placed in Faulkner and Dangar Streets. Mr Harper's tender for the construction of similar cedar gates as at the racecourse was accepted for £12. Once the fence was completed by Mr Starr at a cost of £62 6s in

¹²⁷ Council minutes, 16 October 1877.

¹²⁸ *Armidale Express*, 15 December 1866, p.2.

August, tenders were then called for the grazing rights of the reserve and Mr McDonald's tender for twelve guineas was accepted. He lost the grazing rights because he had not paid rent and R.C. Smith's tender of £15 10s was accepted in September 1878 with the amount to be paid in advance. In October 1879 A. Rothschild's tender for grass rights for £16 1s was accepted. Council continued to let the reserve for grazing and tender rights were let to W. Canning for 12 months for £15.15s in October 1883; McKinlay and Taylor in January 1890 for £12; A.T. Caldwell in January 1891 for £20; John Kickham in January 1893 for £12; Mrs Wade in January 1894 for £13; John Kickham in May 1895 for £8.

In November 1879 a petition was presented drawing council's attention to the need for repairs to the town pump. J. McDonald was paid £17 for repairs to the town well in September 1880. In April 1882 the improvement committee recommended a new town pump with handle for £25 and one week later the vote for the new town pump was raised to £75. The committee also decided to take all necessary steps to procure a suitable pump on 30 May 1882.

In October 1882, '£100 was voted for a new well and tanks, to be sunk in the North-West corner of the Market Reserve'¹²⁹ with tenders to be called immediately. Grass was to be let for £5 15s to William Canning subject to the above area being required for the well. In the same month C. Gallagher's tender for sinking the well was accepted and he was given one month to complete the well providing the work was undertaken to the satisfaction of the improvement committee. Trouble was encountered with the well owing to hard rock. The decision was taken to suspend the work in November with two trial holes to be sunk to see if water could be found without going through blue rock.

Gallagher was instructed to sink the well another ten feet in January 1883. Thirty pounds was also voted to fixing the pump. The new well at the market square was inspected in March and aldermen recommended 'it be filled in level to the surface and the old well bailed and windlass erected on it and pump repaired so as to be useful to that end of the city'.¹³⁰ The question of sinking another well was allowed to stand over for two or three weeks until the government had a fair trial at sinking their well near the brewery. The old well was examined and found to be clear with 22 feet of water in it. Action was taken to repair the old pump and the council meeting on 10 April was informed the pump on the well was now working. But at the council meeting on 16 October the improvement committee reported: 'spending more money in repairing the town well pump would be wrong, and recommend that windlass, rope and bucket be provided instead'.

The *Armidale Express*, 8 July 1887 reported a letter was received from Department of Lands:

¹²⁹ *Armidale Express*, 6 October 1882, p.2.

¹³⁰ Council minutes, 6 March 1883.

asking for the deeds of the Market Reserve and Cattle Sale Yards to be returned, in order to have those places brought under the Public Parks Act. The council clerk was instructed to return the deeds.

Action was not taken and in September 1889 a further letter was received from the Department of Lands asking for the cancellation of Deeds of Grant of the market square and site of saleyards in order to have them brought under the Public Parks Act. It was carried unanimously that the mayor do so and fix the corporation's seal. Further correspondence was received from the Department of Lands concerning the deeds in October and the council clerk was instructed to reply, stating that 'the Council still held the right of using the land for the purpose named'.¹³¹ The dedication was revoked and Reserves No. 12260 and 12261 were reserved from sale for markets on 30 August 1890. Reserve No. 12260 was 1 acre, 3 roods and 30 perches whilst No. 12261 was 3 acres, 3 roods and 20 3/4 perches. The Borough Council was appointed temporary trustees on 30 September.

Urgent and necessary fence repairs around the square were carried out in February 1891. Tenders for new gates and repair of fences were called in February 1899.

Section 2, allotment 6 where the present Police Station is located was notified for police purposes on 21 December 1898. In November the Department of Public Works announced that tenders for a new lock-up will be called shortly.¹³² The *Armidale Argus*, 22 December 1900 described 'the new lock-up ... has received its finishing touches, and is now ready for occupation by the keeper, and less willing inmates'. In June 1911 the Lands Department asked if council 'had any objection to permitting half an acre ... to be appropriated for a residence for the sergeant of police and a quarter of an acre for the purpose of placing animals (exhibits in court cases) in temporarily'.¹³³ Council had no objection and this further part of the reserve for police purposes was notified on 10 January 1912.

In March 1904 council discussed a more profitable use of the reserve. A council committee directed the mayor to obtain plans and specifications for the possible construction of swimming baths in the square. In July a grazing lease was granted to Mr Houquet for a further 12 months but he was informed council may cancel the lease if council needed the reserve. In July 1906 J. Murtagh was awarded grazing rights for £12. Ten years later R.C. Simpson had grazing rights in May 1916 for £10 10s.

In June 1906 a letter was received from J.P. Bonnar, secretary of the Citizens Band Committee asking permission to erect a practice room in the corner of the square nearest to Messrs J. Richardson and Company. The new bandroom was completed in August 1906. In July 1894 the town band had requested the erection of a band hall in the town hall paddock or market reserve. At that stage, council could not help but

¹³¹ *Armidale Express*, 1 November 1889, p.4.

¹³² *Armidale Express*, 21 November 1899, p.4.

¹³³ *Armidale Express*, 26 June 1911, p.3.

offered no objection if an application was made for a site on the reserve next to the Volunteer Orderly Room in Dumaresq Street.

The district surveyor of the Lands Board informed council in December 1929 that the market square reserve was under the control of the council and there was no objection to the ground being used as a parking and camping area. Council immediately set aside £150 in next year's estimates 'for the provision of a parking area, conveniences and other improvements, fencing, lighting, etc provided a suitable lessee is established'.¹³⁴ Council also commenced negotiations with the N.R.M.A. to convert the reserve into a parking area. Tenders for fencing the square were called in April 1930 and Ald. S.C. Wilson offered to donate the cost of a hedge in May.

The parking and camping area Reserve No. 61765 was notified on 21 March 1930 and council was appointed and gazetted trustees of the reserve on 13 June. The area was one acre, three roods and eight perches. The improvements to the camping and parking areas were completed in November. The area comprising about three acres was now enclosed by a high chain wire fence and inside were rows of pines presented to the town by Ald. Wilson. The ground was entered by means of an artistically designed double gates with handgates provided for pedestrians. At the official opening on Wednesday 12 November before an audience of over 200, Mayor Watson claimed 'Armidale was the first town or city in New South Wales to provide a camping and parking area on such a large scale'.¹³⁵

In January 1931 council was informed that the area could not be leased to a private individual until departmental approval had been given and the full conditions of the lease gazetted. Council made the reserve available in May for the Armidale evicted unemployed under the control of the general purposes committee. Water and sanitary services were made available free of charge with gas to be paid for.

Armidale police constable Hopkins and his wife were managing the camping area by January 1936. Gas was provided in a kitchen with tank water for drinking, electric light and town water laid on for washing clothes and cars. The presence of the State Monier Pipe Works in the north eastern corner detracted from its full usefulness as a camping area but the area was surrounded with a high pine hedge which ensured privacy. By December, council had spent about £600 in fencing and other conveniences at the park. Two years later, water, sewerage, shower baths and five gas grillers were installed by council in December 1938, each with its own gas meter.

In March 1937 Ald. L.E. Dawson moved that a distinctive name be given to the area and a correspondent in the *Armidale Express* recommended the area be called Watson Park in recognition of the community services rendered by Ald. W.H. Watson of almost forty years. This name was given to Railway Park in Butler Street and the name 'City Parking and Camping Area' was adopted in April 1937.

¹³⁴ *Armidale Express*, 14 December 1929, p.7.

¹³⁵ *Armidale Express*, 14 November 1930, p.3.

The Country Women's Association request for part of the area as a room site was approved by council and placed before the Minister for Lands in August 1939. The Minister for Lands could not dedicate Crown Land for such purposes but an application for a special lease of 28 years could be applied for. At the court case in December, the Armidale Land Board recommended the application by the C.W.A. Association for a special lease of an area of thirty and a half perches, at an annual rental of £1 be granted. The association never took up the offer and later built rooms in Beardy Street.

Numerous changes occurred to the reserve in the 1940s. Council offered no objection to the application by the Armidale band to the Lands Department in May 1941 to revoke an area in Dangar Street from the reserve. Slit trenches, financed by Ald. H.J. Robinson were dug for air raid shelters in the square in February 1942 as a war preparation measure. By May 1949, police buildings in Faulkner Street on the eastern side of the area were under construction by Armidale builder, Peter Knudson. The buildings were the inspector's residence, sergeant's residence, police station and garage block.

By June 1949 the cypress hedge around the square was rapidly dying. The Armidale I.B.C. recommended the hedge be replaced by ornamental trees and the conversion of 'the unused area of land in that block to an open park'.¹³⁶ Two weeks later, council announced its intention to preserve the hedge and to develop the western end of the reserve as a parking area.

At a meeting of the Armidale Chamber of Commerce in June 1950, J. Savage senior, criticised council over the state of the market square. Some time previously the chamber suggested to council that the area should have been developed into a park but the reply from council was that 'the square was to be used as a parking area'.¹³⁷ The chamber recommended the removal of dead trees and the hedge around the square. At this stage the eastern side of the area was dedicated for camping and the western side for parking. The proposal outlined by the chamber was passed onto the works committee and in July council announced its intention to open the western end of the square as a parking area with the eastern portion to continue as a camping reserve. Council accepted the recommendations in April 1951 that the camping park be extended through to Dangar Street with the same frontage as in Faulkner Street; that two extra conveniences be constructed and that electric light outlets be provided for caravans.

In December 1953 council announced hot showers, operated by gas slot meters were to be installed at the camping area at a cost of £701. Council approved considerable expenditure on the camping area including the appointment of a part-time caretaker, the provision of a brick incinerator and the installation of bulkhead lighting in January 1954. The Returned Services League, Legacy and the Ex-Services Club applied to the council in March for lease of part of the parking area in Moore Street as a site for a club building. The application was referred to the town planning committee but council refused to alienate the public land at a council meeting held on Monday 5 April.

¹³⁶ *Armidale Express*, 22 June 1949, p.15.

¹³⁷ *Armidale Express*, 5 June 1950, p.4.

Negotiations between council and the Post Master General's Department over the transfer of the caravan park to the diagonal corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets commenced in 1951. The possibility of the camping area being moved from its present site to a new one was mentioned to council in June 1953. Then in February 1954, a tender for demolition of the drill hall at the corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets was called and the *Armidale Express*, 23 June 1954 announced 'the old Dumaresq Street drill hall will shortly be moved to a new site' to become a social centre for the Postal Institute behind the proposed telephone exchange at the corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets. This land was acquired by the Commonwealth Government for postal purposes and gazetted on 15 July. But council expressed concern in September about legal delays by the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor in transferring the old drill hall site which council wished to convert into a new camping site.

In May 1955 council decided 'against developing another site as the camping ground for the present, and to have existing facilities moved to new sites on the present camping ground'.¹³⁸ This was to enable the P.M.G's Department to commence construction of a new telephone exchange. Council applied to the Minister for Land in October 1955 for £600 as compensation for loss involved in the exchange of land. The changeover to the new park at the corner of Dumaresq and Faulkner Streets was made during 1956 and the Lands Department was paid £2390 for the land. But a dispute arose involving the Department of Lands and the money paid by the P.M.G. as council sought compensation for construction of a new fence at the park. The pipe works at the corner of Faulkner and Dumaresq Streets was finally replaced by the telephone exchange building which was occupied by the District Telephone Office in January 1957.

The outgoing council recommended in December 1956 that bathing and toilet facilities should be increased, stand pipes installed and the paling fence continued at the northern end. A council sub-committee was appointed in September 1958 to inspect the camping area and report. The committee recommended construction of a new men's toilet block and the planting of hedge to replace the paling fence. In October a start was made with the erection of a new £500 brick toilet block in the camping area. 'It was sited in front of the old block and included two shower recesses, w.c. washbasin, and power point for electric razors'.¹³⁹ In December 1961 the city health surveyor, R.E. Esdaile reported to council that it may have to consider extending the area of Armidale's caravan park before very long. He said that since 1956 takings had increased by 250%.

In the 1960s pressure was brought to bear on council to change the function of the area and in June 1960 alderman voted against the removal of the band room to the north eastern corner of the reserve. Council also voted against the suggestion by Ald. A.R. Monley in August 1961 that part of the parking area be let to an oil company. City engineer P.G. Agnew reported in March 1964 that council was considering a proposal for the development of the Moore Street parking area. This proposal provided for automatic toll gates, fencing and surfacing. Then in March 1968, Ampol Petroleum

¹³⁸ *Armidale Express*, 1 June 1955, p.6.

¹³⁹ *Armidale Express*, 15 October 1958, p.8.

applied to council for the leasing of part of the reserve at the corner of Dangar and Dumaresq Streets for a service station. Council sought permission from the Minister for Lands, Mr Lewis for the development to take place in April but acting on advice from the Land Board Office, the company was later advised that the reserve is zoned 'Special Use (Car Park)' and the 'only development which may be carried out on the land is car parking'.¹⁴⁰

In December 1972 the Chamber of Commerce asked council to expedite an elevated car park 'on the north side of Beardy Street, between Marsh and Faulkner Streets'.¹⁴¹

Memorial Sportsground.

The *Armidale Express*, 6 March 1896 announced that 'delegates representing the cricketers, footballers, and cyclists of Armidale met the trustees of the Armidale racecourse with a view to securing a portion of the racecourse reserve for a permanent sports ground for the city'. The conference decided to apply for seven or eight acres of land in the north-western corner of the course bounded by Douglas and Dumaresq Streets under the control of trustees. In June 1896 the trustees of the Armidale racecourse received a communication from the Lands Department concerning the 'proposed resumption of a portion of the racecourse, and the rededication of it as a sports ground'.¹⁴²

No action had been taken by January 1899. The *Armidale Express*, 10 January 1899 reported that meeting was held in March 1896 because 'an uncertainty existed as to the racecourse being retained for any length of time'. The correspondent appealed to the organizations to take action because in the event of the Government resuming the racecourse, the city would be 'without a ground open to the public for recreation purposes'.

It was in November 1894 that council had refused a petition from Armidale residents to create a sportsground in the East End Park.

At the council meeting on 3 March 1903 a letter from S.J. Kearney was tabled with resolutions from a recent public meeting. The meeting sought council's support for an application to the Minister for Lands for the dedication of 40 acres of land (comprising part of reserve No. 1334) for a sports ground for recreation purposes. Council decided to meet on the ground and view portions asked for with the sports committee before reaching a definite decision. The meeting took place on Friday 13 March.

In April 1903 council approved the granting of an area of 13 acres (portion 49 and part of portion 50) being set aside in the West End for a sports ground. In October E.J. Curtis, W.D. Solomons and others petitioned council for a special lease of portion of the

¹⁴⁰ Armidale City Council Files 54 E, Town Planning T1 prior to 1969.

¹⁴¹ *Armidale Express*, 4 December 1972, p.4.

¹⁴² *Armidale Express*, 5 June 1896, p.5.

temporary commons as a cricket recreation ground in October 1903. Council had no objection.

At the council meeting on 8 November 1904 permission was granted to J.J. Rafferty secretary of the sports committee to use water on the new embankment on the sports ground at a rate of 1 shilling per 1000 gallons. The trustees organised a Grand Continental in aid of the sports ground funds on the King's Birthday, Monday 14 November on the sports ground. The United Friendly Societies of Armidale held their first annual sports demonstration on that occasion. About 1000 attended and the *Armidale Argus*, 19 November 1904 reported 'the ground was in excellent order'. A cycling track costing £70 had been installed. An area of 9 acres and 30 roods was re-dedicated as an Athletic Sports Ground on 24 December 1904.

In 1908 the council assessed 'the unimproved value of the sports ground at £500, on which the rates amounted to £8 8s 8d per year'.¹⁴³ Trustees of the athletic sports ground appealed against the rates on the ground it was exempt because the area was dedicated to the public as a sports ground.

The Local Government Department informed council in February 1921 that it considered the local sports ground was ratable and considering the trustee's neglect of their duties, recommended council 'should approach the Minister, requesting cancellation of the trust, and to place the ground under the control of the Council'.¹⁴⁴ In that way the payment of rates could then be enforced. Two weeks later, the finance committee of council reported that the matter of the trusteeship should be deferred.

By March 1921 a Sportsground War Memorial Committee had been formed and appealed to members of the public to assist in the White City Carnival designed to raise money for the committee and the band. The carnival was presented for a week in the market square (Faulkner Street entrance) during the show week. Once finance was available the secretary of the sportsground committee J. Laurence, approached the Jockey Club for the possible sale of the leger grandstand. Initially the club rejected the approach in March but later the decision was reversed and the foundation of the grandstand, purchased from the Armidale Jockey Club was constructed in June 1921. Bricks for the grandstand were donated by Armidale builder G.F. Nott and the labor provided free by S. Burton, H. Dixon, J. Turner and R. Clutterbuck. By the end of July the grandstand was nearing completion; a tender had been let to J. Dento for new fencing. The *Armidale Express*, 22 July 1921 announced at the end of the football season, 'the grounds will be levelled, while further ornamental trees will be planted'.

By September 1921, rates were outstanding on the sportsground but council took no further action because the government had nominated new trustees.

In December 1922 the New England Cricket Association met trustees of the ground to discuss the state of the ground to enable Inter-District cricket to be played there. By that

¹⁴³ *Armidale Express*, 24 July 1908, p.4.

¹⁴⁴ *Armidale Express*, 25 February 1921, p.2.

stage the association had installed a cricket pitch and despite the shortage of funds, the trustees promised to improve the playing surface.

In July 1923 the entrance to the sports ground which was part of the Armidale War Memorial scheme was being constructed under the supervision of G.F. Nott.

By November 1924 action had been taken to improve the dilapidated grandstand; sportsmen had taken an interest in the trust; the ground was included as part of the soldier's memorial scheme and £1000 worth of improvement had been completed. But at a meeting of the Sports Ground trustees held on Wednesday 12 November 1924 was informed 'that the Armidale Municipal Council had applied to have this ground placed under its control'.¹⁴⁵ Big improvements at the ground were proposed by the securing of an overdraft of £100 at the Australian Bank of Commerce on several guarantees of the trustees. But action was deferred because of council's action. The action to have the sportsground and the racecourse vested in council as trustees failed because the Land Department was not prepared to support the move.

In January 1925 the Armidale Cycling Club announced that trustees of the sports ground were to be approached to seek permission for the installation of electric light at the ground. The *Armidale Chronicle*, 14 January 1925 congratulated the club and commented 'with electric light at the sportsground, no end of attractions could be provided in Armidale'.

In February 1925 it was reported that £177 was owing on rates from the sportsground and council took action to write the sum off.

The trustees unsuccessfully applied for the free use of the municipal grader to level the ground in May 1929. That same month the trustees informed the Rugby League that the ground would not be available because of the possible damage to improvements. The racecourse trustees made their ground available. In defending the action of the trustees, F. Lamb, chairman of the trustees pointed that £200 had been spent on ground improvements and owing to continual rain work was not completed until March.

V.H. Kenyon applied on behalf of the recently formed Armidale Greyhound Racing Association to the trustees of the Armidale sportsground in March 1932 to use the ground for racing. Use of the ground was granted for £208 per year.¹⁴⁶ Two years later, the Armidale Coursing Club and Mechanical Hare Coursing Club met in April 1934 to amalgamate. Their inaugural meeting was held that August.

In November 1932 the *Armidale Express*, 7 November 1932 stated its concern about the state of the A.I.F. sportsground. 'Nobody ... can escape the feeling of regret that the A.I.F. has been allowed to fall into its present condition of neglect and desuetude'. By July 1933 the trust was in debt with little chance of income; the New England Rugby

¹⁴⁵ *Armidale Chronicle*, 15 November 1924, p.4.

¹⁴⁶ *Armidale Express*, 11 March 1932, p.4.

League had left permanently and the Cricket Association temporarily whilst the turf wicket was being installed.

By January 1936 improvements were being completed at the ground. The grandstand was being painted cream and green; improved lighting facilities were being installed and the bookmaker's stands were undergoing repair and renovation. A change window had been removed from the entrance gates to near the turnstiles and secretary' office.¹⁴⁷

In October 1936 Ald Dawson asked council to take control of the sportsground but the motion was defeated. The matter of rates was a contentious issue and the Department of Lands informed council in 1941 that rates should not be levied.

Trustees of the sportsground were informed in April 1942 that the Minister was to be gazetted as trustee. Two months later R.N. Hickson, on behalf of the trustees indicated that no objection would be raised to the suggestion. He indicated the trustees 'had decided to spend £150 on improvements to the cricket oval and £50 on seating accommodation'¹⁴⁸ and it was hoped that it would be carried out if council took control. Following a request from council, the Department of Local Government was 'prepared to ask for the resignation of trustees of the sports ground with a view of appointing the Council as trustee in their place'¹⁴⁹ in August. Council informed the Lands Department in September that council was willing to spend £200 after the war on the Memorial Sportsground.

An application from the Armidale Charity Coursing Club to council for use of the Soldier's Memorial Sportsground in December 1943 again raised the issue of trusteeship. To that date council had not been legally notified of its control but members of council met members of the coursing committee and the trustees of the ground. The trustees were prepared to hand over to council money held in trust for improvements at the ground. By that stage, the Cricket Association had laid down a turf cricket pitch but it was in a state of disrepair.

Early in February 1944 it was announced that the sportsground was now under City Council control and that month, council representatives met the ex-trustees, the Cricket Association and the Mechanical Hare Coursing to consider hiring of the sportsground. The former trustees of the Memorial Sports Ground paid £276 1s 11d into a trust fund and requested council 'spend £150 on ground improvements, and gave £50 on seating'.¹⁵⁰ Council also agreed to meet representatives of the Charity Coursing Club to consider terms of tenancy and draw up an agreement. In March council leased the ground to the club for forty race meetings and forty trials.

¹⁴⁷ *Armidale Express*, 29 January 1936, p.2.

¹⁴⁸ *Armidale Express*, 17 June 1942, p.6.

¹⁴⁹ *Armidale Express*, 12 August 1942, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ *Armidale Express*, 23 February 1944, p.5.

By April 1946 the ground was used by clubs for cricket, athletics, rugby union and coursing. In August the New England Union expressed concern about presence of the greyhound racing posts and fences because it interfered with the size of the ground. Council acknowledged the need for a sportsground for cricket and for rugby union but were not prepared to take action on the racing equipment.

By February 1948 a turf wicket had been laid by the Cricket Association following an appeal to the public for finance. Concerned at the condition of the wicket that month, council asked that Cricket Association representatives meet with council. During that year, some work was carried out at the ground and by January 1951 there was some levelling of the ground and the construction of some mounds outside the oval.

The *Armidale Express*, 13 April 1956 appealed to council to create a 'decent sportsground' and 'replace the dilapidated (memorial) gate and loose sheets of galvanised iron that have for long disfigured this section of the city'. That December, the outgoing council recommended that the triangular portion of the ground at the corner of Douglas and Dumaresq Streets should be improved and the iron fence replaced by a chain link one.

By June 1959 some clashes had occurred between sporting bodies using the sportsground. Greyhound races took place on the same day as cricket was played and a dispute arose about the location of bookmaker's stands and the use of amplifiers.

On Sunday 29 April 1962, an army truck bound for the showground pulled into the area by mistake and demolished the Memorial Gates. That May the fence along Dumaresq Street was removed but no further action was taken concerning the gates. Because 1963 was Armidale's centenary year, the local branch of the Returned Soldier's League approached council in March concerning the damaged memorial gates. Council promised to take up the matter again with the Department of Army. In September it was announced the Armidale City Council and Armidale R.S.L. are to meet 'to design and cost of the new gates'.¹⁵¹

It was not until February 1966 that work commenced on the new memorial gates on a new site. The R.S.L. was to make £116 available to meet the balance of the cost and council agreed to complete kerbing, guttering and roadworks. Although it was hoped to have the gates finished by Anzac Day, they were not dedicated until Saturday 17 December by the State President, Sir William Yeo. 1966 was a significant year because it was the 50th anniversary of the R.S.L. The flanking walls were built of Gosford sandstone and built by voluntary labour and the gates were designed by local R.S.L. officials and made by Mr W. Bartimote.

That December the Chamber of Commerce president, Ald. K. Jones described the sportsground 'an absolute disgrace'.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Armidale Express*, 25 September 1963, p.8.

¹⁵² *Armidale Express*, 9 December 1963, p.2.

In January 1964 the chairman of the Greyhound Racing Club intimated to council that the Charity Coursing Club licence might not be received unless dog-racing had sole occupancy of the ground. The *Armidale Express*, 31 January asked 'the City Council not to perpetuate an unsatisfactory position by yielding to the demands of one authority'.

The Dumaresq Creek improvement committee presented a plan to council in January 1965 for developing the sportsground racecourse site into one sports area. The plan was presented in reply to council's request 'to comment on its (council's) proposal to purchase land north of Dumaresq Creek for hockey fields'.¹⁵³ Plans to develop the sports ground as a number one oval were hinged on the moving of the Charity Coursing Club's dog track to another site. Preliminary negotiations were already underway at that stage.

Following publication of newspaper articles and letters and a request from the Armidale Chamber of Commerce, a public meeting was called and on Thursday 5 May 1966. Eighty residents attended and the editor of the *Armidale Express*, 6 May 1966 commented: 'in effect the meeting, by its very size, gave the City Council a mandate to press ahead with the provision of such (recreational) areas'. The meeting recommended the formation of a committee consisting of council representatives and citizens to investigate and recommend the city's recreational requirements.

As part of the development of new recreational areas, a general proposal to relocate the coursing club at the sportsground was made in July 1970.¹⁵⁴ But the club remained and following complaints received from the Rugby Union about greyhound racing interfering with matches, council called a meeting of sportsground users in May 1971. 'Representatives of council, the Charity Coursing Club, the Cricket Association and the Rugby League agreed ... that the city needed a first-class sporting area and the sportsground could supply this need'.¹⁵⁵

By June 1971 users of the ground were agreed that it should become Armidale's premier sporting ground. However a proposal by the New England Rugby Union in February 1974 to re-develop the ground as a sporting complex initially received little support from council. Following further consideration of the plans and suggestions by the recreation and playing fields advisory committee, the health, recreation and general purposes committee recommended that an application be made to the Minister for Tourism and Recreation for a grant to redevelop the sportsground. The committee approved a redevelopment plan drawn up by council's architects, J.J. Maggofin and Sons in April and recommended that council apply for a \$127 000 grant from the Federal Government.

¹⁵³ *Armidale Express*, 13 January 1965, p.14.

¹⁵⁴ *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1970, p.6.

¹⁵⁵ *Armidale Express*, 2 June 1971, p.24.

In April 1976 the Armidale sports complex committee applied for a \$30 000 grant to cover half of the cost of stage one of the sportsground redevelopment. The first stage involved the removal of the greyhound track to allow room for two football fields, five turf wickets and a 400 metre athletic track. The old grandstand was planned to receive a face-lift. It was not until Saturday 3 December 1977 that a new greyhound track was opened on the racecourse reserve at the corner of Grafton and Canambe Street. The complex was made available following a grant of \$60 000 and a loan of \$6000 from the Racecourse Development Fund of NSW to the Armidale Greyhound Racing Association.

The sportsground was redeveloped at a cost of \$128 000 in 1988. The re-development included renovation of the grandstand together with provision of spectator facilities, referee's room, picket fence, paving and landscaping and the provision of a fully equipped Kiosk sponsored by City Gas. Work was carried out under the supervision of council staff and some contractors. The ground was officially opened by former test cricketer, Doug Walters MBE on the occasion of Toohey's Country Challenge cricket match.

Neighbour Parks (North Armidale)

By March 1969 a park site at the end of Hawke Street was being developed by the Ben Venue Progress Association. Council cleared, levelled and seeded neighbourhood parks off Rockvale Road, Chestnut Avenue and Robina Crescent in 1981.

North Armidale Recreation Reserve

The Borough Council took steps to secure a park for North Armidale and in August 1897 resolved 'that the Member of the district be requested to apply for a park in the North End of the City'.¹⁵⁶ The population was increasing in that area because a number of homestead leases had been taken up and a Public School was required there. Following the application by council for a recreation ground, the matter was referred to the district surveyor for a report. In October 1899, the Under Secretary for Lands:

replied that the Department did not think there was any need for providing Armidale with any more recreation grounds at present, but that the matter would be duly considered when the subdivision of Crown Land about Armidale is under consideration.¹⁵⁷

A meeting of North Armidale residents met in the Armidale School of Arts in June 1908 to consider the best means of improving the recently gazetted reserve. A sub committee was appointed to apply for a government subsidy, to lay out grounds and clear an oval. Council agreed to assist by granting the fences on the ground now forming boundaries on three sides, following a request from T.G. Ashton, secretary to

¹⁵⁶ *Armidale Express*, 13 August 1897, p.4.

¹⁵⁷ *Armidale Argus*, 14 October 1899, p.3.

the trustees. 'The writer added that the trustees were going to fence the fourth side, and improve the reserve by tree-planting, clearing an oval and erecting a pavilion'.¹⁵⁸

The Dumaresq Shire provided a report on drainage of the reserve in November 1909 and he recommended each council bear half the cost. The trustees were granted permission to lay water on to their tennis court in February 1912 and by June 1913, the general committee had completed a number of improvements to the ten acre reserve. The *Armidale Express*, 3 June 1913 reported: 'Trees have been planted all round, and flower beds pleasantly laid out, while a neat band rotunda, a tennis court, a cricket pitch and football field are all in evidence'.

Following a suggestion from the Hon. Drummond MLA, council applied for the declaration of the land as a reserve. In July 1931 council received notification of about forty acres as a scenic park and reserve. The land was gazetted in 3 July as Reserve No. 62784. The old schoolsite at North Armidale was gazetted and vested in the trustees of the reserve in February 1933. During his previous term of office, D.H. Drummond, Minister for Education had promised the site provided the trustees gave four acres to the Ben Venue school. This meant the loss of the park and tennis courts in the short term.

In August 1948, the Ben Venue Parents and Citizen's Association asked the Dumaresq Shire to defer leasing the park at Ben Venue as it would prove an ideal recreation area. Because the lease had been granted, the shire agreed to contact the leasee to seek a compromise. The North Armidale Progress Association was formed in April 1950 and in May the association applied to the Dumaresq Shire for seven acres adjacent to Ben Venue School for use as a recreation centre. The association also announced its plan to build tennis courts and other facilities. In October the association announced further details for the area including three more tennis courts, a hockey field, cricket pitch, two bowling greens, two basketball courts, children's playground, dressing shed and recreation hall. A contour map for the land behind the Ben Venue School, prepared by Dumaresq Shire engineer R.K. Lindsay, was presented at the association's meeting in November 1950.

Originally the land was under trusteeship to be used as a recreation centre but was taken over by the Dumaresq Shire because of the death of the former trustees. By July 1952 the Progress Association was laying a cricket pitch in the reserve with the aid of the shire. A children's playground was also under construction with the aid of the Armidale City Council and donations by Misses E. and M. Scholes and timber by J. Kiefer. Trees were cleared from the area in November.

Approval was given by the Department of Lands in December 1958 for the naming of the North Hill Tennis Club courts as the Sports and Recreation Park. It was named after Bruce Browning of Dumaresq Shire at the suggestion of the tennis club. After thirty five years service as a councillor, Bruce Browning retired from the Dumaresq Shire in November 1962. For many years, he was a former deputy-shire president and shire

¹⁵⁸ *Armidale Express*, 12 June 1908, p.4.

president in 1940. He gained the military medal in the 1914-1918 War and was a grazier in the district since boyhood. He died on 28 July 1966.

In July 1963 council promised the Ben Venue Progress Association that suggested improvement including hockey and cricker field would be considered in the estimates for 1964. In December council announced that a conference of the soccer and cycling clubs, Ben Venue Progress Association, vice-chairman of the beautification committee and city engineer would be called to consider proposals for the Bruce Browning Park. Plans for cricket, hockey and soccer fields in the park were announced in March 1964 and the cycle club withdrew its application because of the lack of room. Following a meeting with the Ben Venue Progress Association, the Cricket and Soccer Associations, council decided to apply for a grant for the fields with council to provide 'toilets, trees and shrubs, and levelling and drainage'.¹⁵⁹

In June 1965 action was taken to secure a \$1000 loan and a Lands Department grant to carry out improvements for a hockey field and toilet block.¹⁶⁰ By January 1966 a hockey field was under construction at the park at the corner of Erskine and Taylor Streets at a cost of £800. Council also planned to build a £700 block in the park. Following a recommendation from the recreation and playfields committee, council constructed a concrete cricket pitch there in October at an estimated cost of £110. In July 1970 an announcement was made that it was hoped to secure a greater use of the park for a recreational area.

Playground (Douglas and Jeffrey Streets)

Following council's request, the Housing Commission approved the dedication of allotments 25, 26, 27 and 28 at the corner of Douglas and Jeffrey Streets for recreation purposes in September 1957.

Playground (Kennedy and Kentucky Street)

Following an offer by the Land's Department, council accepted trusteeship of land at the corner of Kennedy and Kentucky Street for use as a children's playground in October 1969.

Rotary Park.

In April 1949 it was adopted that this triangular piece of land, at the corner of Niagara Street and Uralla Road be temporarily placed under the control of the Armidale Rotary Club for improvement and beautification as a park with council to provide fencing. The 1950 Town Plan reported that Rotary Park, an area of three acres, is situated in section 63 at the intersection of State Highway No. 9 and Main Road No. 124. Gardens and trees had been set out and planted in the form of a Rotary symbol and the remainder of the section was to be used as picnic grounds. Ald. Wilson asked that the rusty wire fence around the park be replaced or removed in March 1962. The area was set aside for a plantation and notified as a public recreation area on 9 November 1962.

¹⁵⁹ *Armidale Express*, 11 March 1964, p.15.

¹⁶⁰ *Armidale Express*, 4 June 1965, p.17.

Railway Reserve.

In December 1931, council approached the Railway Commissioners to take over maintenance of the small park opposite the station 'owing to the smoke and soot having frustrated all attempts at beautifying'¹⁶¹ it. In reply the Department of Railways informed council that an expenditure of approximately £100 had been incurred for the erection of a suitable Arris rail fencing at the request of council. Council decided to meet with the department.

By November 1953 more than half of the trees and shrubs in the reserve opposite the station were dead or missing. In August 1963 members of Armidale's tree planting committee planted ten pin oaks on two traffic islands opposite the railway station.

Watson Park.

The opening of the railway to Armidale occurred in February 1883 and the council minutes of 2 September 1884 referred to a 'railway park'. In June 1905 the under Secretary for Lands informed council the Lands Department was about to resume the land adjoining the railway line between Butler and Brown Streets to allow council to form a street. Council did not object to the closure of the road and enclosure of the land near the railway station by the Department of Railways in March 1921. At the same time, aldermen felt that railway employees could make a 'nice park' there and Ald. Webb suggested that two wicket gates for the convenience of the public should be erected.¹⁶² He also felt that the provision of such an area might lead to the railway picnic being held there for 2000 people.

The general purposes committee recommended in August 1928 that an application be made to the Lands Department for the reserve near the railway station at the corner of Brown and Butler Streets be proclaimed a reserve for public recreation and placed under the control of council. The area was notified for public recreation on 25 January 1929. In April 1933 council approached the Railway Commissioners to take over responsibility for maintenance of the park but they were not prepared to do so. Thus council decided not to take any further action at present beyond maintaining the park in reasonable order. The park was referred to as Railway Park but in June 1945 the beautification committee recommended it be called Watson Park after the late W.H. Watson. Watson was a former mayor of Armidale and an alderman for a number of years.

The Armidale I.B.C. submitted its first recommendation for the reserve to council in June 1945. A detailed plan for the railway reserve was submitted to include: covering of an open drain; planting of trees inside the boundary fence to deaden noise and reduce dust from the railway engine sheds; construction of a children's playground at the western end; construction of a park fence; trees to be planted in Brown and Butler Streets and trees to be planted along the railway line to the overhead bridge. Council was prepared to present the plan to the Railway Commissioner on his next visit to Armidale. Council approved the construction of 'a new fence similar to that at the A.

¹⁶¹ *Armidale Express*, 23 December 1931, p.3.

¹⁶² *Armidale Chronicle*, 9 March 1921, p.3.

and N.E. Hospital' and for grading to 'be carried out at an estimated cost of £100¹⁶³ in September 1945.

By April 1946 the park was being prepared for tree planting in accordance with a design prepared by the Armidale I.B.C. One hundred and four trees were ready in June and fencing and the planting of plane trees were completed in July.

The Railway Commissioner was not prepared to erect a park fence as requested by council in January 1947 because there was a roadway between Watson Park and railway property but he was prepared to maintain the existing fence in a stock-proof condition. In a meeting with the Commissioner J.T. Harrigan in February the mayor asked for assistance in providing the cost of covering the drain' in the park so that it could be used as a cricket ground. In reply the commissioner drew attention to the £750 paid towards the cost of draining Butler, Barney and Markham Streets in October 1895. He reminded council the contribution had been made on the 'distinct understanding that payment of the amount mentioned constituted full discharge of any further obligation on the part of the department'.¹⁶⁴ The aldermen regretted the attitude of the railways towards the council in its effort to beautify that part of the city occupied by the railway.

The town planning and beautification committee recommended the removal of the fence in February 1949 but the Armidale I.B.C. requested council to reconsider its decision in June.

The 1950 Town Plan showed that the park was used for recreational purposes only. Trees had been planted and a cricket oval was to be formed later. Council agreed to provide a sports field at the park provided 'there is evidence that a sports field ... would be used'.¹⁶⁵ At the time, Ald. McGrath described the park as an "eyesore".

In June 1954 the Armidale I.B.C. suggested council replace dead trees in the park and that plane trees be planted along the railway line instead of pine trees. A proposal by the head gardener, F. Shillings to enclose the open drain was referred to the beautification committee in May 1955. It was in January 1930 that the school principal W.F. Hatfield suggested that council enclose the open drain in the park and offered council soil from the school to complete the work. Council found in March 1957 'that an overflow from a drain of (the) railway property was making the park unusable'.¹⁶⁶ Arrangements were made with the railways to have the drain cleared.

Following an approach to council concerning the park, the Armidale I.B.C. was asked to prepare a beautification scheme in May 1961. The committee recommended the planting of tall green trees; chinese elms or deodars at the western end. In March 1964 the Armidale I.B.C. suggested council plant forty trees but the suggestion was rejected.

¹⁶³ *Armidale Express*, 10 September 1945, p.12.

¹⁶⁴ *Armidale Express*, 14 May 1947, p.8.

¹⁶⁵ *Armidale Express*, 11 March 1953, p.10.

¹⁶⁶ *Armidale Express*, 6 March 1957, p.7.

At that stage council was considering a proposal to develop a concrete plant between the railway station and the park but in May council decided to reconsider its decision on the proposal because forty people had complained by petition about the possible dust, noise and traffic nuisance. By the end of May Pioneer Concrete (Armidale) Pty. Ltd. had moved their £30 000 project to Niagara Street and commenced construction of the plant on a fourteen and a half acre site there.

As part of the development of new recreational areas, plans were announced in July 1970 for securing greater use of Watson Park.¹⁶⁷

West End Park (Lambert Park).

Following Alderman Butler's suggestion in July 1886, the council clerk was requested to write to the Minister for Lands asking that section 45, including half an acre marked on the plan for a pound, be vested in council for a public park and an application was also to be made for fencing the reserve. The *Armidale Express*, 9 July 1886 supported the concept and suggested a cricket ground for the centre and the planting of trees round the park. It was felt that there was 'a large population at the West End who would be benefitted' as the 'more active business part of the town' spread 'gradually towards the railway station'. In August, the West End Cricket Club asked council to prevent traffic from crossing the reserve and cutting up their cricket ground, but council decided to take no steps until enquiries were made. District surveyor Finley prepared a report on the reserve and the Minister for Lands approved the request for a public park. Council was informed by letter dated 26 October 1886.

Two years later in July 1888, council received further correspondence from the Under Secretary of Lands. At that stage there were no deeds for the reserve but there was sufficient information to dedicate the area. Council allocated £60 for fencing the park in September and the town clerk was instructed to write to the government for a grant. Council received a grant of £50 in November and the town clerk was instructed to apply for a further £150 in February 1889. The *Government Gazette*, 12 February 1889 vested section 45, an area of 6 acres, 2 roods and 20 perches in council and council became trustees for the public recreation and cricket ground on 12 March. In November, the Department of Lands provided £75 to the municipal council for improvements at West End Park. In the following week tenders were called for fencing the park with sawn timber and wire similar to Reserve No. 8. Initially the tender was awarded to T. Nixon but A.P. Cunningham was awarded the tender in December. In April 1890 tenders were called for grazing rights in the park and John J. Trim was awarded the rights to the grass in May for £4.

Fifty pounds was voted as an advance to the park for trenching and planting trees by council in conjunction with Brother Francis Gatti's design in February 1891. In the following month the plan for planting the park was approved with the addition of other trees to be planted against the boundary fence. Tenders were to be called immediately. In March J. Gardiner was appointed to trench the West End Park at 8d. per cubic yard to be completed by 1 June. In May tenders were called for supplying and delivering

¹⁶⁷ *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1970, p.6.

manure to the park under the supervision of Brother Francis. Permission was also granted to him to select trees from the Sydney Botanical Gardens.

The West End park was handed over to Brother Francis for planting trees in July 1891. He was also empowered to make the required drains under the supervision of the works committee. The government trees arrived in August and because they were too small for planting, Brother Francis was voted £15 to purchase more trees. He was paid £22 17s for the purchase of trees and labour planting in October. Trees were received from Shepherd's Nursery by Brother Francis Gatti 'in lieu of those received from the Botanical Gardens'.¹⁶⁸ Three months later, the *Armidale Express*, 11 December 1891 commented: 'the trees planted in the West End Park, are, as a rule growing nicely'.

In November 1891 the government made £75 available for the park but in January 1892, council expressed concern about the removal of gravel from the park. Paths were constructed in the park in March 1893. By August trees in the park were being mutilated and council took action to erect signs offering a reward of £5 for conviction of the offender. Council decided to allow the experiment of having sheep graze the park in September but stock were to be looked after. In November council appointed a committee to manage the East, West and Central Parks. That month aldermen again expressed concern about noxious weeds and vandalism and careless behaviour. Twelve months later, trees were still being destroyed. Concern was expressed at the council meeting on 22 January 1895 about the grass and it was determined to cut it as 'often as funds permit'.

Fourteen new trees were required for the park to replace failed and destroyed ones by September 1895. However the weather was extremely dry and it was recommended that no trees should be planted at present. That month discussion took place concerning a fence for the East and West End parks. Requests were made by the correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 14 January 1896 for a lamp to be placed in the centre of the park and for the provision of seats for West Armidale residents. Council voted against the installation of the two lights but agreed that the fence around the park should be painted.

By August 1897, the caretaker J. Sullivan had undertaken work including the filling-in of the gravel pit along the Beardy Street boundary and a certain amount of levelling. Trees and shrubs were growing and the correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 20 August 1897 commented 'in two or three years time West End Park will be one of the beauty spots of the city.' It was also felt that the recreation ground must become a popular rendezvous as council 'has wisely decided to keep the centre free so that it can be used for out-door sports, such as cricket, without the risk of damaging the tree and shrubs'.

The *Armidale Argus*, 23 October 1900 reported the park 'just now is looking first class, and is fast becoming one of the city's beauty spots'. At the same time, the

¹⁶⁸ *Armidale Express*, 11 September 1891, p.5.

correspondent pointed out the need to stake the 'pine and other ornamental trees in the enclosure' because of the prevalent westerly winds.

Council decided in October 1902 to place a gas lamp in the centre of the park at a probable cost of £20 although the lighting committee pointed out the danger of being broken because of the proximity to the cricket pitch. Ald. Higinbotham suggested in May 1905 the vacant land opposite the hospital could be included in the park and the mayor promised to make inquiries. In May 1908 Ald. Kearney suggested placing gates in the park for perambulators. Dyke and Bliss provided an estimate for repairs to the gates and fence at a cost of £15 in June 1913.

The secretary of the New England Cricket Association asked council in June 1922 to make improvements at the oval by altering the position of the two western gates to permit construction of a proper cricket oval. By November improvements at the park had made this area more fitted to a cricket ground and in March 1923, the association asked council to instal a concrete cricket pitch with the association to meet costs over four years. But by November 1928 the condition of the ground prevented cricket being played there. At that stage council was not in a position to improve the ground to allow cricket there.

In January 1925 over thirty trees were destroyed in the park when the gardeners burnt off the grass. A number were also destroyed by similar means in the East End Park. Six new park seat were ordered by council in March 1925 at a cost of £2 each; five for West End and one at the Albion Park. Following expressions of concern by West Armidale residents in November 1928 about the park, council took action in December to provide a bubbler. Twenty pounds was also allocated for the construction of a galvanised iron urinal structure in the park in January 1929.

Various sports were played in the park. The Armidale High School was granted temporary use of the park as a football field in May 1929. The New England Women's Hockey Association applied for use of the park as a hockey field in April 1934. The application was granted provided there was no interference with the cricket pitch. The West Armidale Hockey Club was granted use of the park in May 1937.

The Minister for Lands approved a grant of £50 each for improvements of the East and West End parks in May 1935. That August council sought permission from the minister to spend £75 for the East End park and £25 for the West End. By September, council had laid a concrete wicket in the park and in thanking the council, F.A. Antill, president of the New England Cricket Association asked 'that the electric light post be shifted from the playing area'.¹⁶⁹ Council offered no objection provided that the post was removed at the association's expense.

By March 1936 council used the front portion of the Armidale and New England Hospital grounds as a dumping ground for road metal. V.N. Murray of O'Dell Street suggested that council should subdivide the West End Park and use the proceeds to

¹⁶⁹ *Armidale Express*, 18 September 1935, p.8.

beautify the area fronting the hospital. Described as a fly in the ointment and 'apart from a few persons who occasionally lounge in the shade of the pines, it serves few others, except as a cricket ground'.¹⁷⁰ In July Ald. T. Monckton drew attention to the dilapidated fence around the park and asked if council would consider the advisability of demolishing it. Two weeks later, council decided to demolish the fence and stack the timber and wire in a storage shed for future use as required. The park fence was removed in October 1936 and the area graded over and levelled off. With the improvements, Ald. Monckton felt that the park would make an ideal sportsground.

The West Armidale Hockey Club was granted use of the park in May 1937. Plans for the construction of separate public conveniences were submitted and approved by council in August. The structures were to 'be placed about 40 or 50 yards apart in the south-east portion of the reserve'¹⁷¹ screened by camphor laurels.

The West Armidale Progress Association pressed for the provision of a children's playground in February 1942. Because of the war effort, council was not prepared to 'consider beautification schemes or park improvements and children's playgrounds'.¹⁷² Not to be deterred, the association asked that unsightly trees at the park be removed in May 1943.

By August 1944 the New England Cricket Association used the park for cricket. The New England University College applied to use the park as a playing field for men's hockey in April 1946. Consequently the Progress Association 'decided to approach cricket and hockey bodies with a view to making a combined effort for the development of an oval at the park'¹⁷³ in October 1947. That month, the association opened a public subscription. The Armidale Rotary Club promised to subsidise the association £ for £ after £50 had been raised by the people for the playground. In November, 'the association sought permission (1) to remove all old and dangerous pine trees; (2) build a children's playground; (3) picket off the cricket oval'.¹⁷⁴ The Progress Association met with the Cricket Association in December to develop the park as a possible site for first grade cricket. Council was also asked by the Progress Association to lay water pipes into the oval.

The Progress Association formed a sub-committee in February 1948 to draw up a master plan for the park and seek a subsidy from the Rotary Club for a children's playground. In March council was asked to replace the pines cut down from the park and council agreed to make the playground equipment for the park. The sub-committee also reported that the estimated cost of erecting a picket fence around the cricket oval would be about £120. Children of the West Armidale Public School planted trees, supplied by council, in the park in conjunction with the Progress Association in July.

¹⁷⁰ *Armidale Express*, 13 March 1936, p.4.

¹⁷¹ *Armidale Express*, 18 August 1937, p.4.

¹⁷² *Armidale Express*, 1 July 1942, p.8.

¹⁷³ *Armidale Express*, 27 October 1947, p.6.

¹⁷⁴ *Armidale Express*, 26 November 1947, p.15.

By that month, timber for fencing the cricking ground had been supplied. Some trees were removed to improve light and a site selected for the playground on the eastern side of the park well away from the cricket oval.

Council received £30 from the sale of timber removed from the park and donated the funds to the Progress Association in October. Later that month, working bees were organised by the association to effect major changes at the park. Volunteers, including members of the New England Cricket Association erected an oval fence; the council workshops constructed playground equipment whilst Armidale Rotary Club offered £50 towards the cost of the equipment. The Cricket Association also requested costings from the Progress Association 'as support for a request to the N.S.W. Cricket Association for a grant towards a turf wicket at the park'.¹⁷⁵ By November, the West Armidale Progress Association was erecting a picket fence at the oval estimated to cost £300 and again asked council to lay water pipes to the oval because of the application for a turf wicket. In June 1949, the city engineer reported to council that improvements to the West End oval have commenced and the fence round the East End Park was being removed.

The 1950 Town Planning showed that the West Armidale Park, an area of six acres contained a children's playground and a turf wicket. It was in January 1950 that council gave permission to the New England Cricket Association to construct a turf wicket in the park. Financial assistance was not available but council stated it might be possible for the engineer to cooperate with the use of plant from time to time. By August thirty shrubs had been planted and twenty nine shrubs and three trees were planted in the park in September 1951. However in February 1952 council was asked by Ald. W.P. Ryan to expedite the supply of playground equipment promised some three years earlier. The West Armidale Progress Association was defunct by November 1955 but they had achieved the transformation of the park into an attractive sporting area.

Ald. Ken Jones recommended that the name Lambert be perpetuated by a road or park in July 1967. Lamberts had been in Armidale since 1885 and was shortly to change its name to Permewans, a Victorian-based chain store. Council gave the name Lambert to West Armidale park because of the families contribution to sporting and commercial progress of the city. The name was selected at a council meeting on Monday 31 July. In October the Geographical Names Board asked council to provide a biographical outline of the Lambert Family so that it could decide whether the name should be assigned to West Armidale Park.

Three dead and dying pine trees were removed from the park by council in October 1970; one on the Rusden Street side and two on the Beardy Street side.

In 1985 council spent \$14 000 on an irrigation scheme.

Wicklow Oval.

¹⁷⁵ *Armidale Express*, 29 October 1948, p.6.

Council decided to place a practice cricket pitch in the paddock east of Stephen's Bridge in November 1951. A concrete practice wicket was constructed on council's land near the Stephen's Bridge in 1953. The Wicklow Club, named after the nearby Wicklow Hotel was granted use of the oval for its home ground in September 1956 provided it assisted with mowing as it had done in the past.

It was at the meeting held on 6 February 1969 to launch an appeal for the acquisition of creeklands that Armidale businessman Chris Rologas promised four acres between Dumaresq Street and Dumaresq Creek at the rear of the Wicklow Hotel. The development of this area east of Stephen's Bridge was part of the plans announced by council for the creeklands in July. These plans necessitated the closure of Kirkwood Street from Douglas Street to the Dumaresq Creek. The name Wicklow Oval was used by 1969 and in December, council announced plans for the development of eight fields. In addition three cricket fields were to be established there but mainly soccer was to be developed at the oval.

A development plan for the oval showing five sporting fields costing \$7000 was presented to council in October 1970. Some willows were to be removed and engineer Gentle was asked to prepare sketch plans for a lavatory and change block. In November 1974 construction work was underway on Stage Two of the oval involving levelling by earth-moving machinery. By December the amenities block on the Armidale and District Amateur Soccer Association Wicklow Oval complex was under construction. Construction was slow because the work was undertaken by voluntary labour and \$11 200 was made available through the RED scheme. Part of the money was also used to construct a walkway under Stephen's Bridge to connect Curtis Park and the oval. Stage Two of the complex was available for the commencement of the 1976 soccer season.

In 1981 council planned to plant sixty trees and thirty shrubs at the oval. Lighting was provided at a cost of \$30 000 in 1985. Storage sheds were completed in the 1995-1996 financial year.

Park North.

Annual lease for the Benevolent Asylum- corner of O'Dell and Donnelly Streets.

Park- North Public Reation notified 3 July 1931.

Numbers 63-68 Public Park notified 7 August 1882. Also see reserve 60 and 61.

Taylor and Brown Streets- proposed reserve for Park and Public Reception

Reserve Square No. 67 notified 7 August 1882.

Section No. 45- Department of Lands vested in Council as Trustees for public recreation and cricket ground (Gazette 12 February 1889)

27 October 1891- proposal that the police paddock police magistrates and surveyor's paddocks be resumed and cut up and sold forwarded to the Minister for Lands (See Armidale Express, 1 December 1891)

Council Minutes.

Central Park (Reserve No 8)

Reserve No. 8 was dedicated on 24 February 1874 and formally proclaimed on 31 May 1887. Date assigned 1890?(Information from Geographical Names Board File)

Council meeting 5 May 1874- £6 approved in stumping and clearing reserve south of Tingcombe Street.

Council meeting 26 May 1874- Tender of Breen and Diffelo to clear reserve for #4/10/- - one month allowed.

Council meeting- 16 June 1874. Breen and Diffelo had completed reserve to 'entire satisfaction of the Improvement Committee'.

Council meeting 16 June 1875- grant of £40 voted for suitable enclosure of Reserve No. 8. Then motion for £100 to be set aside for 'fencing, trenching and otherwise improving'.

Council meeting 27 July 1875- Mr McKinlay to fence the reserve for 11/5 par rod- two months to complete.

By October 1875, gaol prisoners were working on the reserve and Council was paying Warden Caldwell 6/- per day for every three prisoners. (Council meeting 5 October 1875)

In August 1875, the Reserve 'was enclosed by a wire fence with a view... to being planted with ornamental trees' (Armidale Chronicle, 19 August 1875, p. 2)

Council meeting 5 October 1875. Tender of B. Naughten for five gates at £13 accepted. One month to complete.

Council meeting 12 October 1875. Mr McKinlay finished fencing- a fence of post and rail with some wire.

Council meeting 26 October 1875. A. Cunningham had finished painting the fence.

Council meeting 16 November 1875. Mr Naughten had finished the gates.

Council meeting 29 February 1876. Mr McKinlay given tender to put wire around the reserve for £7. Council meeting 18 April 1876. Mr McKinlay finished his contract.

Council meeting 4 July 1876. Ald Low wanted to know if Council was going 'to ornament ' Reserve No. 8 or use it as a grass paddock as he had seen horses and cows in it frequently. Inspector of Nuisances advised to impound any stock.

Council meeting 29 August 1876. The late Mr Naughten had presented a sun dial to council. To be placed in one of the reserves.

Council meeting 6 September 1876. Suitable stand for £4.4.0 to be placed in the centre of the Reserve and inscribed for the late Mr Naughten for his services as Mayor and Alderman- to take the sun dial.

Council meeting 26 June 1877. Alterations to wickets in the reserve to be advertised in next Express. £15 voted for trenching and planting trees.

Council meeting 18 September 1877. Tender of G. Nixon? for erecting hinges or wings/ to four gates . Accepted for £6.10.0. and finished by the meeting held on 16 October 1877.

Council meeting 26 March 1878. Tenders called for digging holes and planting trees. Council meeting 16 April 1878. T. Flannagan's tender for sinking holes at 3/- each accepted. Six weeks to complete the job.

Council meeting 4 June 1878. Ald Low asking about trees for the reserve. Mr Proctor replied he had been twice to the Botanical Gardens in Sydney to see about them from Mr Moore but unable to see him. To write 5 June 1878.

Council meeting 2 July 1878. Letter from Mr Moore, Director of the Botanical Gardens about trees for the reserve.

Council meeting 6 August 1878. Trees received from Mr Bayley have been planted in the reserve. Council meeting 20 August 1878. Case of trees from curator of the Botanical Gardens have been received and planted.

Council meeting 1 July 1879. Many of the trees planted in 1878 have died.

Council meeting 22 July 1879. Mr Samuel Purchase? of Parramatta Nursey had presented the Council with 36 very fine young trees for the reserve. Letter of thanks to him. Moved that Improvement Committee be authorised to have the trees in the reserve properly fenced and secured.

Council meeting 18 May 1880. £5 voted for clearing trees in the reserve and fencing of a few trees with larger enclosures.

Council meeting 12 October 1880. £5 voted for timber enclosures to protect the young trees.

Council meeting 21 December 1880. Reward of £5 offered for conviction of anyone destroying young trees in the reserve and Town clerk to write to the Superintendent of Police asking him to allow police to look after young trees wherever possible.

Council meeting 3 May 1881. Letter from the Department of Lands; £150 granted for improvement to the reserve and requesting three members to be Trustees to spend the money. Council meeting 30 August 1881. Council voted sum of £100 to be added to the Government grant.

Council meeting 28 February 1882. Discussion about opening gates to the reserve for 'foot passengers'.

Council meeting 9 May 1882. Letter from Mr Moore at the Gardens saying Council would get share of trees for the reserve. Letter from the Department of Lands saying £150 granted for improving the reserve and Messrs Moore, Trim, Simpson, Tysoe and Drew to be trustees to expend the money. Received through Mr Proctor M.L.A.

Council meeting 30 May 1882. Town Clerk to write to Mr Moore to send up trees as soon as possible for the reserve.

Council meeting 11 July 1882. Letter from Brother Gatti asking for £100 more the reserve. Sum to be voted at next meeting to complete the improvements as all but £6 of grant expended.

Council meeting 18 July 1882. Mr Moore of the Botanical Gardens stating trees for the reserve 'on the road'. £100 voted to complete the improvements.

Council meeting 31 October 1882. Mayor submitted report on how £100 from Council and £150 from the Government had been expended.

Council meeting 21 November 1882. Letter from Bro. Francis Gatti asking for another man for the reserve for 2-3 weeks and also to get whatever tools required.

Council meeting 10 April 1883. Brother Gatti had selected some trees in Sydney to replace the dead ones in the reserve.

Council meeting 8 May 1883. Brother Gatti wanting man to weed reserve but not possible until another grant.

Council meeting 29 May 1883. Mr Proctor M.L.A. had applied for £150.

Council meeting 19 June 1883. Letter from Mr Proctor M.L.A.- £150 for the reserve.

Council meeting 7 July 1885. Improvement Committee recommends two lamp posts in the centre circle of the reserve.

Council meeting 12 January 1886. Some 'gentlemen' stepping on wire round reserve to get over fence rather than going round through gates.

Council meeting 7 December 1886. Trouble with the reserve. Notice given anyone trespassing or damaging will be prosecuted.

Council meeting 8 March 1887. The reserve to be cleared when Government grant received.

Council meeting 5 July 1887. Brother Francis Gatti trying to forbid public meetings in the reserve- agreed unan. until passing of new bye-laws. Council meeting 18 October 1887. More trouble about public meetings.

Council meeting 24 January 1888. Letter from Brother Gatti requesting money for the park. Town Clerk to apply for the usual £100.

Council meeting 28 February 1888. Tenders to clear the reserve to be dispensed with.

* *Armidale Express*, 2 March 1888, p. 4; 17 February 1888- tenders for the park; destruction of the park.

Council meeting 23 October 1888. Dept of Lands letter giving £50 for the reserve.

Council meeting 11 March 1890. Painting Armidale Park (Reserve 8), £10.7.6. and making six seats for the park. H. Osborne £1.15.0. per seat.

Council meeting 10 June 1890- account from Brother Gatti for £25.6.8 for work done in the park.

Council meeting 11 November 1890- Brother Gatti paid £11.3.8 for work done in the park.

Council meeting 9 December 1890- Brother Gatti voted £10 for Council for his services during many years in laying out and keeping in order No. 8 reserve.

Meeting 6 December 1892- Central Park term used for first time?

Armidale Express, 25 August 1893, p. 5 lopping of trees in Central Park;

Armidale Express, 8 September 1893, p. 5- destruction of trees in the park.

An letter by Peter Dean appeared in the *Armidale Express*, 8 September 1893, outlining his role in the planting of the park before the work of Francis Gatti. He claimed that Brother Francis Gatti did not plant the outer belt of trees because following unsuccessful attempts by the council to plant trees, he informed several members in the early 1880s 'that the only way to make the planting a success was to trench the ground at least twelve feet wide and twenty inches deep'. Dean claimed he supervised the work undertaken by contractors and planted the outside trees with his 'own hands'. He planned to plant deciduous forest trees in the inner belt but because of public duties then Brother Francis, with little knowledge of forest trees took over the work. Despite Gatti's wrong decisions, there was no justification to 'warrant the indiscriminate hacking of the trees'.

Photo-copied, see interesting letter by Peter Dean concerning his role and the planting of trees in Central Park.

By September 1893, J. Sullivan was appointed caretaker to the parks including West End, Central Park and East End.

Council meeting 14 August 1894- lamp to be erected in place of the dying tree in Central Park.

Council meeting 27 November 1894- Central Park Gates alterations being mooted and painting of the fence round the park. Council meeting 11 December 1894; fence painted and gates altered by Jas. Axtell for £12- done satisfactorily and paid (Meeting 8 January 1895)

Council meeting 22 January 1895- fence round inner circle in park to be painted for £1.

Armidale Express, 18 October 1895, p. 2- re trees in Central Park.

By January 1899, the correspondent in the Armidale Express was still waiting for the new gates for Central Park to emerge. (Armidale Express, 10 January 1899, p. 5)

Council meeting 24 July 1900. Fire Brigade and Council to vote on which park to erect a memorial 'of the Armidale boys at the South African War'. Council not to vote but consider applications for memorial in one of the parks.

Council meeting 13 November 1900- Fire Brigade applied for permission to erect Band Stand in the Central Park- granted. Council to meet promoters on Saturday 17 to select a spot. Moved letter be written to member to apply to Government for subsidy.

The Fire Brigade applied for permission to erect a Band Stand in Central Park in November 1900. The site was to be selected by the promoters and the council on Saturday 17 November. Council asked the local member to apply for a government subsidy. (Council minutes 13 November 1900)

Council meeting 17 November 1900. Central Park discussion. Fifteen citizens resolved 'the centre of the Park is the most suitable site for proposed Band Stand'. Mayor to place request before Council.

Council meeting 27 November 1900. Central Park discussion- whether centre of park best place for stand, and whether matter be postponed till designs prepared and submitted.

Five aldermen met with the citizen's committee to determine the position of the stand but the council 'decided it was not desirable that the bandstand should be erected in the centre of the park'. (Armidale Express, 30 November 1900, p.2)

Council meeting 11 June 1901. T. Webb submitted plans for proposed Band Rotunda in June 1901. Permission 'was granted to have the building erected on a vacant spot on the southern side of the park opposite Dr. Wigan's residence' in Rusden Street. (Council minutes 11 June 1901).

With £120 at hand, the Fire Brigade and Citizen's Committee found it necessary to modify plans for the rotunda. A saving of £50 was made by modifying the foundations, rails and by using corrugated iron instead of lead or tiles (Armidale Express, 30 July 1901, p.4)

Council meeting 14 February 1902- Public opening of Band Rotunda 17 March 1902. Letter re appointment of Trustee for Rotunda- future consideration. Central Park fence needs repairs.

Council meeting 25 February 1902- Application by Fire Brigade for Council to lay gas to the Band Rotunda. Armidale Express, 28 February 1902, p.4- council agreed to the Fire Brigade's request for the installation of gas to the rotunda.

Council meeting 11 March 1902 letter from Fire Brigade re Trustees. Council replied that they were Trustees for Parks and improvements so no other Trustees could be appointed. But no objection to Committee being appointed without affecting Council's rights to look after Band Rotunda.

Council meeting 24 June 1902- application from Citizen Coronation Committee to erect a Flagstaff in Park on Coronation Day and hold Demonstration in the Park and entertain children of District. Council happy with Flagstaff and demonstration but not to children's entertainment in Park. (Council meeting 8 March 1904. Band Rotunda Committee asked to take over Flagstaff under same conditions as Band Rotunda)

Council meeting 12 August 1902- Deputation Monsignor O'Connor, W. Drew and S.J. Kearney) submitted plan for Dr Murray Memorial- permission granted to carry out proposed alterations and to place it in Central Park if they choose. Question of looking after Memorial left until after erection. Thanked Committee for taking matter in hand to improve Memorial.

Council meeting 26 August 1902- Letter S.J. Kearney re Dr Murray Memorial- Council thought Central Park most suitable place, on site to be selected by Council. Mayor, Aids Hawke and Watson to meet Committee. Sub Committee met Council Committee and decided on site in Central Park. Mayor said plan smaller than one presented to Council but would serve purpose to be an ornament in the Park.

Council meeting 24 March 1903. Letter Fire Brigade handing over to Council the Memoria Band Rotunda. Unanimous vote of thanks to the Fire Brigade and all citizens involved 'vey handsome ornament to the the Park'.. Letter of thanks to Captain Webb for great energy- success of whole affair due to Mr Webb's efforts. Letter from Mr Webb submitting names of gentlemen to form Committee to care for Rotunda. A?

Richardson, S.J. Kearney, W. Curtis, G. Hardy, G.F. Nott, C.H. Weaver, Webb and Mayor. Council approved of all names but excluded Mayor.

Council meeting 9 June 1903- two flower beds near Band Rotunda be enclosed with fence.

Council meeting 14 July 1903- light in Central Park to be extinguished at same time as street lamps,

Council meeting 13 October 1903- swings to be erected in parks. Council meeting 27 October 1903- J.H. Buckley, tender for swings #8.4.6. accepted for one swing only in Central Park, as many aldermen felt price was excessive. Council meeting 10 November 1903- Buckley paid £2.15.0 for erecting swing.

Council meeting 26 May 1908- Ald Kearney suggested thinning and pruning trees and placing gates in the park for perambulators.

Market Square.

Council Minutes.

See 6 April and 21 April 1869.

Market Reserve dedicated 15 August 1871.

An initial move was made by some aldermen to allocate £100 in April 1869 to the Improvement Committee for the sinking of a well in the Market Square but the motion lapsed. Four months later, plans and specifications were prepared for a well and pump. 12 October 1869 motion to have the Market Square vested in Council.

Dedicated 15 August 1871

Council meeting 7 July 1874- deed of Market Reserve and Town Hall received by Council.

Council meeting 24 November 1874. Inspector of Nuisances inquiring whether teamsters could camp and light fires in the Market Square.

Council meeting 2 May 1876. Improvement Committee recommended fencing of the market square and providing a pump and all other appliances.

The Improvement Committee recommended fencing of the market square and the provision of a pump and other appliances in May 1876. Two weeks later, #150 was voted for fencing the reserve, sinking a well and procuring a pump. James Burn's ? tender for fencing the square was accepted at 9/6 per rod in June 1876 but he was granted an extension of time to complete the work two months later.

Tenders for the pump and sinking the well were not called until November. Lasseter and Company were to supply the pump for £30 and the tender of Charles Foster for #38.5.0 was accepted for sinking the well. Two months was granted to complete the work. By March 1877, the well was down 39 feet but with no water found. Approval was given to go another ten to twelve feet. Problems arose as rock was encountered and it was not until October it was revealed 'the town well now has 42 feet of water'. (Council meeting, 16 October 1877) The pump was placed on the well and thirty feet of additional piping purchased.

Council meeting 16 May 1876. £150 voted for fencing the reserve and sinking a well and procuring a pump. Council meeting 20 June 1876.

Council meeting 20 June 1876. James Burns? tender to fence the square accepted for 9/6 per rod. Three months allowed. Council meeting 15 August 1876. Granted an extension of time for fencing the square.

Council meeting 21 November 1876. Question about sinking well in the square as dry season coming on. Tenders to be called.

Council meeting 5 December 1876. Lasseter and Company to supply pump for well for £30. Tender of Mr Chas Forster to sink the well for £38.5.0 accepted. Two months for completion.

Council meeting 20 March 1877. Down 39 feet with well but no water. Permission to go another 10 or 12 feet.

Council meeting 20 March 1877. Thos Starr's tender of 12/- per rod to fence the Square accepted as previous tender fell through. Three months to complete.

Council meeting 4 April 1877. Discussion of major work of erecting a Market House and Weighbridge- £400?. Lost after long discussion on Mayor's casting vote.

Council meeting 1 May 1877. Well now 51 feet. Tenders to drive another 20 feet. Recommended by Improvement Committee and approved. Chas Forster to do this at £2.2.0. per foot; six weeks. Large gates to be erected in the square in Moore and Dumaresq streets.

Council meeting 19 June 1877. Amendment for the gates. To be placed in Faulkner and Dangar Streets.

Council meeting 31 July 1877. Mr Starr almost finished fencing. Tenders to be called for grazing the square. Two single gates to be erected in cedar, same as at racecourse in the square.

Council meeting 7 August 1877. Mr Starr had finished fencing the square; cost £62.6.0. Mr Harper's tender for gates of £12 accepted. Mr McDonald's tender for the reserve for £12.12.0. accepted.

Council meeting 21 August 1877. Well down to 58 feet in rock. Council meeting 4 September. Harper has finished gates. Town well down to 67 feet in rock.

Council meeting 16 October 1877. Town well now has 42 feet of water. Pump to be placed on it and thirty feet of additional piping to be purchased.

Council meeting 3 September 1878. Mr McDonald had not paid rent. Town Clerk to collect it nad new tenders for paddock put out.

Council meeting 17 September 1878. Mr R.C. Smith's tender of £15.10.0 for grass accepted. (To be paid in advance)

Council meeting 21 October 1879. A.? Rothschild's tender for grass for 12 months for £16.1.0 accepted.

Council meeting 4 November 1879. Town pump needs repairing. Petition to Council.

Council meeting 31 August 1890. £12 for repairs to the Town Pump.

Council meeting 7 September 1880. Mr J. McDonald paid £17 for repairs to the Town Well.

Council meeting 4 April 1882. Improvement Committee recommended new town pump with handle for £25.

Council meeting 11 April 1882. Vote for new town pump raised to £75.

Council meeting 30 May 1882. Improvement Committee to take all necessary steps to procure a suitable pump.

Council meeting 3 October 1882. £100 voted for new well and tanks to be sunk in the north west corner of the square and tenders to be called immediately. Grass to be let for £5.15.0 subject to area being required for well.

Council meeting 17 October 1882. C. Gallagher's tender for sinking well accepted. Supplying bricks and getting supply of water to the Improvement Committee's satisfaction. One month to complete.

Council meeting 21 November 1882. Trouble with well owing to hard rock. Work to be suspended for present and two trial holes to be sunk to see if water could be found without going through the blue rock.

Council meeting 16 January 1883. C. Gallagher instructed to sink well 10 feet deeper.

Council meeting 23 January 1883. £30 voted for fixing pump.

Council meeting 6 March 1883. New well on Market Square inspected. Rec. that it be filled in and old well bailed and windlass erected on it and pump repaired so as to be useful to that end of the city. Question another well stand over for 2/3 weeks or until Government have had fair trial at sinking their well near the brewery.

Council meeting 3 April 1883. Town well cleared and 22 feet of water in it. Pump could be repaired for £5.10.0 by Mr E. Collins.

Council meeting 10 April 1883. Pump on well working.

Council meeting 2 October 1883. Mr W. Canning has grazing rights for 12 months for £15.15.0.

Council meeting 16 October 1883. Town well pump still a problem. Improvement Committee proposed a windlass and rope instead.

Council meeting 1 December 1885. T. Rampling's tender of £8.10.0 for grazing rights.

Council meeting 30 November 1886. J.B. Fitzgerald's tender of £10.0.0 for grazing rights.

Council meeting 22 March 1887. Ald Brown places on table a plan for proposed markets.

Council meeting 5 July 1887. Letter from Department of Lands asking for deeds of the Market Square and the cattle Sale Yards to be returned in order to have those places brought under the Public Parks Act. Deeds to be returned.

Council meeting 10 September 1889. Letter from the Department of Lands asking for cancellation of Deeds of Grant of Market Square and site of saleyards in order to have them brought under the Public Parks Act. Carried unanimously that Mayor do so and fix Corporation's seal.

Council meeting 29 October 1889. Deeds of Market Square and Saleyards. Letters from Dept. of Lands and council reply. Still have right to use them for purpose designated.

Council meeting 21 January 1890. McKinlay and Taylor's tender for grazing rights accepted for £12.

Council meeting 13 January 1891- Grass in Market square A.T. Caldwell for £20.

Council meeting 24 February 1891- urgent and necessary fence repair around the Square carried out.

Council meeting 24 January 1893; John Kickham has grazing rights in the square for £12.

Council meeting 23 January 1894; grazing rights Mrs Wade for £13.

Council meeting 14 May 1895; grazing rights John Kickham for £8.

Council meeting 24 July 1894; request for erection of the Band Hall in Town Hall paddock or Market Reserve. Council could not help but no objection if application made for site on reserve next to the Volunteer Orderly Room.

Tenders for new gates and repair of fences were called in February 1899. (Armidale Express, 28 February 1899, p.8)

In November the Department of Public Works announced that tenders for a new lock-up will be called shortly. (Armidale Express, 21 November 1899, p.4) The Armidale Argus, 22 December 1900 described 'the new lock-up ... has received its finishing touches, and is now ready for occupation by the keeper, and less willing inmates'.

Council meeting 22 March 1904- Committee to enquire into more profitable use of the Square in accordance with Resolution of 23 February. Council in committee directed Mayor to obtain plans and specifications for construction of Swimming Baths in the Square.

Council meeting 12 July 1904. Lease of the Square to Mr Houguet for further 12 months but Council may cancel if needing reserve.

Council meeting 26 June 1906. Letter from J.P. Bonnar, secretary of the Citizens Band Committee asking permission to erect a practice room in the corner of the square nearest to Messrs J. Richardson and Company.

Council meeting 24 July 1906- tender of J? J. Murtagh for £12 accepted for grass rights to the Square.

In June 1911 the Lands Department asked if the Council 'had any objection to permitting half an acre ... to be appropriated for a residence for the sergeant of police and a quarter of an acre for the purpose of placing animals (exhibits in court cases) in temporarily'. (*Armidale Express*, 26 June 1911, p. 3). Council had no objection. Note action not taken.

R.C. Simpson offered a sum of £10 10 0 as grazing right for Market Square for the ensuing 12 months. (*Armidale Express*, 12 May 1916, p. 6)

Professor John Sharpham,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources and Planning),
University of New England,
Armidale 2351.

Dear Professor Sharpham,

Following our recent discussion concerning the Dumaresq Creek beautification plan, I wish to draw the committee's attention to the work that I have been undertaking in reference to the History of Local Government in Armidale.

As part of my research, I have been surveying the numerous editions of the *Armidale Express* for various aspects of history. Consequently I have found references to the past work of the University of New England, Armidale City Council and Dumaresq Shire Council concerning the principles of Town Planning and the Dumaresq Creeklands. I feel that my research could form an important foundation for the beautification plan because representatives of the various organizations would be made aware of planning work that has been undertaken in the past. I am only too willing to discuss in more detail with you or the committee, the findings of my historical research.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Wilson (Lecturer in History)

Parks and Creeklands of Armidale.

In 1849 Surveyor Galloway set out various reserves within the Armidale township and these became sites for public buildings and also parks. Reserve No 8 became Central Park; the reserve for the commissioner's residence became East End Park and later Macdonald Park and Reserve No 45 became West End Park and later Lambert Park. Part of the area near the Dumaresq Creek and between Marsh and Dangar Streets was also dedicated as a small reserve. Other major areas later set aside for public recreation included the Aboretum and Drummond Park. Much of the work in developing the parks was undertaken by individuals such as Brother Francis Gatti and later by organizations including the Armidale Horticultural Society, the Armidale Improvement and Beautification Committee, a Tree Advisory Committee and the various Creeklands Advisory Committees.

Albion Park.

Alderman Wilson informed council in June 1903 of Frederick R. White's proposal to purchase land in Beardy Street along Dumaresq Creek adjoining Allingham's mill 'and to present the same to the Council, to be held by the latter in trust as a public watering place for all time to come'. (Armidale Express, 26 June 1903, p.2) In the dry summer of 1902 waste water from the railway engine sheds had supplied water for travelling stock at this spot. Council accepted the offer and the land was vested in council for this purpose.

A sum not exceeding £10 was allocated in May 1904 to be spent on ornamental trees for this portion of land and on the camping reserve along creeklands between Marsh and Falconer (sic) Streets. In December council selected the name Albion Park for this area and in June 1908 council, approved an iron gate for the entrance to the park, at a cost of £2. A fence was also constructed to protect the watering area from travelling stock.

Fifty rails and three posts were taken from the saleyards stock in the town hall yard for fencing repairs to the park in March 1920 but Alderman Curtis asked the mayor in August 1928 to take steps to have the fence removed. The fence was removed by the end of January 1929.

In April 1934 tenders were called for the removal of two trees and in June 1936 council took action to plant additional trees in the park. Two dozen flowering peach trees were planted in August 1939. Swimming pool manager, Thomas Monckton sought mutual cooperation with council to develop Albion Park in August 1943. The building and health Committee recommended that he be given 'full care, planning and control' (Armidale Express, 5 September 1943, p.6) of the park. He offered to supply and plant trees and shrubs if council could give occasional help with labour and material. That December, he was authorised to control the park for a period of five years in the planting and care of shrubs and trees.

Tree replacement was in progress in July 1946. Then in November 1964, the Dumaresq Creek Improvement Committee reported that members, assisted by the Armidale Rotary

Club, had planted replacement trees. The *Armidale Express*, 18 November 1964 described in detail the trees planted under the scheme.

The Arboretum

An area of thirty acres was gazetted as a public reserve on 7 August 1882. During discussion in July 1916 about town planning and the planting of trees in streets, Ald. Hawke felt that the land below Soudan Hill 'should be aligned and made a model suburb'. (*Armidale Express*, 28 July 1916, p.2) This position was supported by the *Armidale Express* but not acted upon by council.

The Local Government (Amendment) Act 1945 extended the power of local government to establish and manage community forests. The Armidale Improvement and Beautification Committee (I.B.C.) presented to council a plan to include the planting of a forest of English and other exotic trees in October 1945. It was not until June 1947 that land along Kentucky Street between O'Dell and Perrott Streets was ploughed in by council workmen in preparation for the community forest. That month, the Armidale I.B.C. announced details of the plan to involve the community in the planting of native and deciduous trees. Members of the committee assisted by Armidale High School boys planted about seventy trees in the forest area and several hundred trees in the nursery in July 1948.

The Armidale Community Forest was officially inaugurated on Saturday 14 August 1948 when the community tree planting ceremony was held as an Arbor Day exercise in the forest area. But many of these trees were lost because of water shortages. The 1950 Town Planning report recommended that the present community forest be extended to embrace the area bounded by Kentucky, Niagara, Galloway and Butler Streets. At the time the town plan described the area as a community forest of 43 acres used mainly for grazing purposes.

The area at the south east corner bounded by Butler and Galloway Streets was gazetted for future public requirements for a park on 11 February 1955. But in June 1959 council considered that the land below Soudan Hill, South Armidale should be re-zoned for residential purposes. The *Armidale Express* and various community organizations expressed their opposition.

R.H. Anderson the chief botanist and curator of the Sydney Botanic Gardens visited the site in August 1955 and met a delegation of Armidale citizens to discuss the establishment of a regional section of the Royal Botanic Gardens. A deputation to council later that month outlined a plan by R.H. Anderson as part of a scheme to decentralise the Botanic Gardens at Sydney. The proposal to develop an arboretum and botanic gardens received the support of council in November when the Minister for Agriculture also promised support. Despite the promises, no action was taken and consequently the Armidale I.B.C. offered to immediately develop the reserve in the 1960s.

Two further attempts were made in 1962 to develop housing on the southern side of the highway and again opposition developed. In November 1962, council agreed to the

appointment of a group of trustees for a botanic garden and arboretum by the Minister for Lands provided a representative of council was made one of the trustees. Members of the N.S.W. Nurseymen's Association visited Armidale in November 1965 but a trust still had to be appointed. The roads within the arboretum site were closed and the Armidale I.B.C. promised in July to support the seven member trust when formed. Trustees for the 31 acre site were appointed in May 1967. Some delays occurred but a development plan was drawn up and some initial plantings made in 1969.

The trust chairman announced in July 1970 that work was to begin shortly on stage one of the botanic gardens site. The trust had been granted \$5000 by the State Government for each of the next three years for development work. The *Armidale Express*, 10 July 1970 reported the 'provision of parking space near the northwest corner, ground preparation and sowing of grass for an informal play area, similar preparation and sowing for an irrigated lawn section, and fencing and erecting windbreaks on the western and southern boundaries'.

Lack of funds prevented much development work although some work was carried out under the RED scheme in 1973 and 1974. Council took over the area as trustees in May 1979. In the following year council determined the first priority was to be the planting of the north eastern sector fronting the New England Highway and in 1981 a water main with irrigation outlets was laid throughout the eastern area.

A public meeting held on 27 May 1982 at the council chambers considered the development of the arboretum and the council meeting of 21 June resolved to form an advisory committee. An arboretum awareness day was held on 1 August 1, Arbor Day and a large number of individuals and community organisations attended. In 1983 council unsuccessfully applied for a grant under the National Tree programme.

Initially the arboretum committee submitted a modest proposal for preliminary work in the aquatic gardens as a Bicentennial Project. This plan was amplified to become the \$266,000 Armidale Bicentennial Arboretum Plan which was launched by the N.S.W. Premier Mr Neville Wran, on 10 August 1985. The arboretum was officially opened on 8 October 1988 by the vice-chairman of the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council, Thelma McCarthy AM. By that stage the sixteen hectare site included aquatic gardens, waterfall, senses garden for the disabled, community wall constructed by members of the community, native gardens, exotic gardens, New England flora bed, walking tracks, lookout, picnic shelter and toilet facilities. The project involved service clubs, schools, business houses, individuals and the City Council. The total cost of the project was financed by the N.S.W. Bicentennial Council (\$200,000); council (\$17,000) and community effort (\$54,000).

The senses garden was totally funded and constructed by community groups including Armidale High, Dumaresq Lions, Armidale Garden, Sandon County, Apex, Quota, and Rotary Clubs. The community wall was funded by the N.S.W. Arts Council and the public who donated bricks carved by community members. Council constructed the toilet block with special funding. The aquatic garden, designed by John Wrigley, was funded by a major part of the bicentennial grant. The native gardens, designed by Mrs

Maria Hitchcock were constructed in stages by students from The Armidale School and Technical and Further Education College using an unemployment grant. The lookout was funded and constructed by the Rotary Club as their major bicentennial project.

Autonomy Park.

Situated at the corner of Elm Avenue and Queen Elizabeth Drive, this park was named by November 1962 to mark the autonomy of the University of New England. Established by Dumaresq Shire, the grove of trees at the entrance to the University was planted by noted personalities. In January 1956 there were seven vacant spots for trees and the Governor of New South Wales. Lieut.-Governor Sir John Northcott planted two trees on 2 March during a visit to Armidale. Other trees were allocated to the Hon. D.H. Drummond MHR; the Hon. R.J. Heffron; the Forster family; the first warden of the University and the first graduate.

In July 1967 council received a bequest of £200 from the late Dr. P.D.F. Murray, a Reader in Zoology at the University of New England. The bequest was used to develop the small triangular area of land at the junction of Elm Avenue and Claude Street. It was also suggested by a council committee that the area be called the Dr Murray Memorial area or Dr Murray Memorial Park.

The cemetery

The first cemetery was established within the grounds of the Armidale Public School but a new cemetery was approved in 1861 and dedicated on 2 July 1863. It was located on the Gostwyck Road and is still in use today.

The Catholic section of the new cemetery was consecrated in May 1891 and the *Armidale Express*, 18 September 1891 reported: 'for some time past, the R.C. Cemetery has been undergoing improvements, under the direction of Bro. Francis, who has had the grounds neatly laid out and choice pines and shrubs planted, giving this last resting-place of the dead a picturesque aspect'. It was Brother Francis Gatti who developed Central Park and the West End Park. Following his death on 5 November 1891, a public meeting presided over by Bishop Torreggiani decided on a mortuary chapel within the grounds of the Catholic section of the cemetery. Tenders for the chapel were called in June 1892 and completed in September.

In 1922 Ald J.A.T. Webb proposed the development of a memorial avenue with public assistance to lead to the cemetery and lists of names of possible donors were published in the *Armidale Chronicle*, 27 May and 17 June 1922. He offered to have a memorial avenue formed from the overhead bridge to the cemetery in July and asked permission to plant trees up to Galloway Street. Council also agreed to allow a select committee of citizens with the mayor acting as a representative to select suitable trees. Council set out to establish a permanent record of the donor of each tree in the Memorial Avenue in October 1929 to be kept at the council chambers; to renumber the trees and to request donors to renew painting on the metal labels. Ten years later in July 1939, J. Laurence, deputy town clerk drew attention to the need for attention to the name plates, tree guards and some trees in the avenue.

Central Park.

Reserve No. 8 was dedicated on 24 February 1874 and formally proclaimed on 31 May 1887. Council became trustees in July. In council minutes it was referred to as Reserve No. 8; Armidale Park and in December 1892 the name Central Park was used for the first time. During the euphoria of the approaching Royal Visit, a proposal to rename the park as Windsor Park was defeated six vote to four in January 1954.

In the 1870s the park was stumped, cleared and enclosed by a post and rail fence with some wire to keep wandering stock out. In 1878 trees were received from the Botanical Gardens in Sydney but these died. Grants were obtained from the Department of Lands and in April 1881 council received £150 for improvement to the reserve. Brother Francis took control of the park in the 1880s and much of the design features of the park that we see today was the result of his work. Further trees were obtained from the Botanical gardens and the park surround was planted with pine trees. Following the death of Brother Francis in 1891, council appointed a caretaker to the parks including West End, East End and Central Park in September 1893..

In February 1967 a Dr. B.N. Richards, senior lecturer in Botany at the University of New England said 'Central Park represents one of the finest collection of conifers in rural N.S.W.)

At various times council resisted proposals to build an electrical sub-station (1963) and a Tourist Bureau building (1969). Council actually approved the sub-station opposite the Bishop's residence in Dangar Street but no alderman was prepared to support the original decision after receiving a letter from the Bishop.

Today one can see a number of memorials within the park: the Band Rotunda constructed as a result of work by the Fire Brigade (Boer War); the Fountain constructed by a citizen's committee (World War One); a monument to Dr. Murray (a former mayor of Armidale); a monument to the Rev. H.A. Harris erected by the Animal Welfare League; the trees in Tingcombe Avenue planted to commemorate Local Government and the HMAS Armidale Memorial dedicated to the men who served on the corvette of that name in World War Two.

The Creeklands.

Flash flooding frequently occurs in the Dumaresq Creek. There was some housing built in the area following European settlement but the area was mainly used for agricultural purposes. Extensive wooden fences were constructed and early photographs show that all trees were cleared along the creek land. Thus what we see today are twentieth century plantings. In July 1916 Mayor William Curtis planted some willows along the creek and these plantings continued along the creek during the 1930s.

Throughout last century, there was frequent reference to the drainage problems of the creek in council minutes and newspapers. The construction of early bridges created problems during floods and in the early part of this century action was taken by council to overcome these drainage problems. Discussion of such problems raised the issue of ownership of the creek. It was found that decisions about the creek involved the Water

Conservation and Irrigation Commission, the Lands Department, council and individual owners.

Grants were received for the employment of returned soldiers in the 1920s and the depression unemployed in the 1930s to straighten and widen the creek. In 1946 a public meeting was held to consider the provision of sports areas and council was asked to resume land along the creek. At the same time the Armidale I.B.C. asked for the creekland to be beautified. State Government town planners suggested in 1950 that council should develop green belt land at the same time that council was considering the Armidale Town Plan. In the early 1950s council began to acquire some creekland and during that decade action was taken to develop a flood mitigation scheme. In 1963 a Dumaresq Creek committee was formed; university scientists investigated silting and flooding of the creek and a Dumaresq Creek and Flood Plain Advisory committee was formed in September 1966. Consequently detailed proposals were prepared.

In 1967 council accepted the concept of an independent trust to purchase creeklands and the scheme was launched in August 1968. The Department of Public works offered a grant of \$90,000 over three years on a dollar for dollar basis. At the same time council adopted various plans for sporting complexes along the creeklands. In 1974 further funds were received from a Federal grant to develop the creeklands; a cycleway leading to the university was opened in April 1981 and an exersite was installed as a Bicentennial project in 1988.

Other parts of the creekland included the development of Curtis park (formerly a caravan park); Harris Park; Cathy Partridge Oval; Elizabeth Park and the Wicklow Oval.

Drummond Park.

Following a suggestion of the Hon. D.H. Drummond, MLA, council applied to the Lands Department in April 1931 for approximately 50 acres of Crown lands bounded by Donnelly, Jessie, Newton and Markham Streets to be reserved for landscape and scenic park purposes. The park was named after David Henry Drummond who was the member of State Parliament for Northern Tablelands from 1920-1927; State Member for Armidale from 1927-1949 and Minister for Education from 1927-1930 and 1932-1941. He served as the Federal Member for New England from 1949-1963.

At various stages part of the present day park was leased as sites for 2AD (south eastern corner) and a quarry on the western side near Markham Street. Initially in the 1930s the Department of Lands approved grants for development of the park. But concern arose about early clearing by council and in July 1941, 160 wattles of various varieties were planted by council.

The 1950 Town Planning Report recommended that the park be reserved for the cultivation and preservation of Australian flora and fauna. But throughout the 1950s and 1960s the land was seen as an area for housing and applications were made in 1946, 1949, 1951, 1957 and 1960. The move was vigorously opposed by community groups, members of the public and the *Armidale Express*.

Initially plans were developed by the Armidale I.B.C. but later taken over by the Apex Club. The lookout was developed by the club and opened in 1956. Four lombardy poplars were planted in memory of four Apexians killed in World War Two. The Apex Club continued this work and in conjunction with the Beautification Committee planted 100 cypress trees as well as 200 red and yellow pyracantha berry bushes for a windbreak alongside the western side of the park in September 1958. Plantings by the club continued and by April 1960 had spent £950 on improvements at the park.

Council agreed to the development of a scenic drive in 1960 and in 1961 the Memorial John Whan drive was developed. In 1966 the memorial lookout was sealed and the column and plaque commemorating the work of D.H. Drummond was unveiled. In May council decided to call the scenic lookout the Apex Memorial Lookout in recognition of Apex's work. The park was formally handed over to council by the club in 1977 and the plantings that you see today are the result of the Apex Club's work.

East End Park (Macdonald Park)

In March 1889 council agreed to become trustees of the commissioner's paddock following a request from the Department of Lands. At that stage, there was a house, stables and a shed which encroached on Brown Street. The house and grounds were initially rented to an Armidale resident but in the 1890s council carried out improvements to the park. Disputes arose with the occupier of the house on a number of occasions and many aldermen felt that the house should be demolished. This demolition took place in September 1917.

The park was dedicated as a reserve for public recreation on 26 September 1919 and in the 1920s water was laid onto the park; swings were constructed and an electric light installed. In July 1933 the Armidale and District Horticultural Society presented a plan to council. Council approved the plan and the formal nature of the plantings date from this proposal. The plan called for the planting of 400 trees and 600 shrubs with trees to be provided on the boundaries and also skirting the existing diagonal pathways. Grants were received from the Unemployment Relief Council and the society members supervised work undertaken in the park 'under work for the dole scheme' in 1934. A public appeal was made for funds to pay for the plantings.

During the 1940s annuals were planted in various gardens and in June 1949 the fence around the park was removed. In April 1952 council announced that the park was now to be known as Macdonald Park. But it was not until the 1960s that the plaque was unveiled to commemorate Commissioner Macdonald, the first Land Commissioner who came to New England and established a base at Armidale in 1839. Ironically Macdonald did not establish his base in the park.

Playground equipment was installed by the 1950s and much of the present equipment was installed in the 1970s and 1980s. Picnic tables were provided as well as picnic tables and toilet facilities. The N.S.W. Bicentennial Council provided funds to finance construction of a shed to house the display of a wool wagon the park. Opening of the wool wagon shelter in Macdonald Park took place on 13 August 1988.

Graham Wilson

Chairman of the Armidale Branch of the National Trust.

April 1997.

Watson Park.

The opening of the railway to Armidale occurred in February 1883 and the council minutes of 2 September 1884 referred to a 'railway park'. In June 1905 the under Secretary for Lands informed council the Lands Department was about to resume the land adjoining the railway line between Butler and Brown Streets to allow council to form a street. Council did not object to the closure of the road and enclosure of the land near the railway station by the Department of Railways in March 1921. At the same time, aldermen felt that railway employees could make a 'nice park' there and Ald. Webb suggested that two wicket gates for the convenience of the public should be

erected. (Armidale Express, 9 March 1921, p.). He also felt that the provision of such an area might lead to the railway picnic being held there for 2000 people.

The general purposes committee recommended in August 1928 that an application be made to the Lands Department for the reserve near the railway station at the corner of Brown and Butler Streets be proclaimed a reserve for public recreation and placed under the control of council. The area was notified for public recreation on 25 January 1929. In April 1933 council approached the Railway Commissioners to take over responsibility for maintenance of the park but they were not prepared to do so. Thus council 'decided not to take any further action at present beyond maintaining the park in reasonable order'. (Armidale Express, 5 April 1933) The park was referred to as Railway Park but in June 1945 the beautification committee recommended it be called Watson Park after the late W.H. Watson. Watson was a former mayor of Armidale and an alderman for a number of years.

The Armidale I.B.C. submitted its first recommendation to the council in June 1945. A detailed plan for the railway reserve was submitted to include: covering of an open drain; planting of trees inside the boundary fence to deaden noise and reduce dust from the railway engine sheds; construction of a children's playground at the western end; construction of a park fence; trees to be planted in Brown and Butler Streets and trees to be planted along the railway line to the overhead bridge. Council was prepared to present the plan to the Railway Commissioner on his next visit to Armidale. Council approved the construction of 'a new fence similar to that at the A. and N.E. Hospital' and for grading to 'be carried out at an estimated cost of £100' (Armidale Express, 10 September 1945, p.12) in September 1945.

By April 1946 the park was being prepared for tree planting in accordance with a design prepared by the Armidale I.B.C. One hundred and four trees were ready in June and fencing and the planting of plane trees were completed in July.

The Railway Commissioner was not prepared to erect a park fence as requested by council in January 1947 because there was a roadway between Watson Park and railway property but he was prepared to maintain the existing fence in a stock-proof condition. In a meeting with the Commissioner J.T. Harrigan, the mayor asked for assistance in providing the cost of covering the drain' in the park so that it could be used as a cricket ground. (Armidale Express, 12 February 1947, p.8) In reply the commissioner drew attention to the £750 paid towards the cost of draining Butler, Barney and Markham Streets in October 1895. He reminded council the contribution had been made on the 'distinct understanding that payment of the amount mentioned constituted full discharge of any further obligation on the part of the department'. (Armidale Express, 14 May 1947, p.8) The aldermen regretted the attitude of the railways 'towards the council in its effort to beautify that part of the city occupied by the railway'. (Armidale Express, 14 May 1947, p.8)

The town planning and beautification committee recommended the removal of the fence in February 1949 but the Armidale I.B.C. requested council 'to reconsider its decision'. (Armidale Express, 22 June 1949, p.15)

The 1950 Town Plan showed that the park was used for recreational purposes only. Trees had been planted and a cricket oval was to be formed later. Council agreed to provide a sports field at the park provided 'there is evidence that a sports field ... would be used'. (Armidale Express, 11 March 1953, p.10) At the time, Ald. McGrath described the park as an "eyesore".

In June 1954 the Armidale I.B.C. suggested council replace dead trees in the park and that plane trees be planted along the railway line instead of pine trees. A proposal by the head gardener, F. Shillings to enclose the open drain was referred to the beautification committee in May 1955. It was in January 1930 that the school principal W.F. Hatfield had suggested that council enclose the open drain in the park. At that stage he offered council soil from the school to complete the work. Council found in March 1957 'that an overflow from a drain of (the) railway property was making the park unusable'. (Armidale Express, 6 March 1957, p.7) Arrangements were made with the railways to have the drain cleared.

Following an approach to council concerning the park, the Armidale I.B.C. was asked to prepare a beautification scheme in May 1961. The committee recommended the planting of tall green trees; chinese elms or deodars at the western end. In March 1964 the Armidale I.B.C. suggested council plant forty trees but the suggestion was rejected. At that stage council was considering a proposal to develop a concrete plant between the railway station and the park but in May council decided to reconsider its decision on the proposal because forty people had complained by petition about the possible dust, noise and traffic nuisance. By the end of May Pioneer Concrete (Armidale) Pty. Ltd. had moved their £30 000 project to Niagara Street and commenced construction of the plant on a fourteen and a half acre site there.

As part of the development of new recreational areas, plans were announced in July 1970 for securing greater use of Watson Park. (Armidale Express, 10 July 1970, p.6)

West End Park (Lambert Park).

Following Alderman Butler's suggestion in July 1886, the council clerk was requested to write to the Minister for Lands asking that section 45, including half an acre marked on the plan for a pound, be vested in council for a public park and an application was also to be made for fencing the reserve. The *Armidale Express* supported the concept and suggested a cricket ground for the centre and the planting of trees round the park. It was felt that there was 'a large population at the West End who would be benefitted' as the 'more active business part of the town' spread 'gradually towards the railway station'. (Armidale Express, 9 July 1886, p.4) In August, the 'West End Cricket Club asked council to prevent traffic from crossing the reserve and cutting up their cricket ground, but council decided to take no steps until enquiries were made'. (Armidale Express, 20 August 1886, p.4) District surveyor Finley prepared a report on the reserve and the Minister for Lands approved the request for a public park. Council was informed by letter dated 26 October 1886.

Two years later in July 1888, council received further correspondence from the Under Secretary of Lands. At that stage there were no deeds for the reserve but there was sufficient information to dedicate the area. Council allocated £60 for fencing the park in September and the town clerk was instructed to write to the government for a grant. Council received a grant of £50 in November and the town clerk was instructed to apply for a further £150 in February 1889. The *Government Gazette*, 12 February 1889 vested section 45, an area of 6 acres, 2 roods and 20 perches in council and council became trustees for the public recreation and cricket ground on 12 March. In November, the Department of Lands provided £75 to the municipal council for improvements at West End Park. In the following week tenders were called for fencing the park 'with sawn timber and wire' similar to Reserve No. 8. (*Armidale Express*, 29 November 1889, p.4) Initially the tender was awarded to T. Nixon but A.P. Cunningham was awarded the tender in December. In April 1890 tenders were called for grazing rights in the park and John J. Trim was awarded the rights to the grass in May for £4.

Fifty pounds was voted as an advance to the park for trenching and planting trees by council in conjunction with Brother Francis Gatti's design in February 1891. In the following month the plan for planting the park was approved with the addition of other trees to be planted against the boundary fence. Tenders were to be called immediately. In March J. Gardiner was appointed to trench the West End Park at 8d. per cubic yard to be completed by 1 June. In May tenders were called for supplying and delivering manure to the park under the supervision of Brother Francis. Permission was also granted to him to select trees from the Sydney Botanical Gardens.

The West End park was handed over to Brother Francis for planting trees in July 1891. He was also empowered to make the required drains under the supervision of the works committee. The government trees arrived in August and because they were too small for planting, Brother Francis was voted £15 to purchase more trees. He was paid £22 17s for the purchase of trees and labour planting in October. Trees were received from Shepherd's Nursery by Brother Francis Gatti 'in lieu of those received from the Botanical Gardens'. (*Armidale Express*, 11 September 1891, p.5) Three months later, the *Armidale Express* commented 'the trees planted in the West End Park, are, as a rule growing nicely' (*Armidale Express*, 11 December 1891, p.5)

In November 1891 the government made £75 available for the park but in January 1892, council expressed concern about the removal of gravel from the park. Paths were constructed in the park in March 1893. By August trees in the park were being mutilated and council took action to erect signs offering a reward of £5 for conviction of the offender. Council decided to allow the experiment of having sheep graze the park in September but stock were to be looked after. In November council appointed a committee to manage the East, West and Central Parks. That month aldermen again expressed concern about noxious weeds and vandalism and careless behaviour. Twelve months later, trees were still being destroyed. Concern was expressed at the council meeting on 22 January 1895 about the grass and it was determined to cut it as 'often as funds permit'.

Fourteen new trees were required for the park to replace failed and destroyed ones by September 1895. However the weather was extremely dry and it was recommended that no trees should be planted at present. That month discussion took place concerning a fence for the East and West End parks. In January 1896 requests were made by the correspondent in the *Armidale Express* for a lamp to be placed in the centre of the park and for the provision of seats for West Armidale residents. (*Armidale Express*, 14 January 1896 p.5) Council voted against the installation of the two lights but agreed that the fence around the park should be painted.

By August 1897, the caretaker J. Sullivan had undertaken work including the filling-in of the gravel pit along the Beardy Street boundary and 'a certain amount of levelling'. Trees and shrubs were growing and the correspondent in the *Armidale Express* commented 'in two or three years time West End Park will be one of the beauty spots of the city.' It was also felt that the recreation ground must become a popular rendezvous as council 'has wisely decided to keep the centre free so that it can be used for out-door sports, such as cricket, without the risk of damaging the tree and shrubs'. (*Armidale Express*, 20 August 1897, p.4).

In October 1900 the *Armidale Argus* reported the park 'just now is looking first class, and is fast becoming one of the city's beauty spots'. (*Armidale Argus*, 13 October 1900, p.4) At the same time the correspondent pointed out the need to stake the 'pine and other ornamental trees in the enclosure' because of the prevalent westerly winds.

Council decided in October 1902 to place a gas lamp in the centre of the park at a probable cost of £20 although the lighting committee pointed out the danger of being broken because of the proximity to the cricket pitch. Ald. Higinbotham suggested in May 1905 the vacant land opposite the hospital could be included in the park and the mayor promised to make inquiries. In May 1908 Ald. Kearney suggested placing gates in the park for perambulators. Dyke and Bliss provided an estimate for repairs to the gates and fence at a cost of £15 in June 1913.

The secretary of the New England Cricket Association asked council in June 1922 to make improvements at the oval by altering the position of the two western gates to permit construction of a proper cricket oval. By November improvements at the park had made this area more fitted to a cricket ground and in March 1923, the association asked council to instal a concrete cricket pitch with the association to meet costs over four years. But by November 1928 the condition of the ground prevented cricket being played there. At that stage council was not in a position to improve the ground to allow cricket there.

In January 1925 over thirty trees were destroyed in the park when the gardeners burnt off the grass. A number were also destroyed by similar means in the East End Park. Six new park seat were ordered by council in March 1925 at a cost of £2 each; five for West End and one at the Albion Park. Following expressions of concern by West Armidale residents in November 1928 about the park, council took action in December to provide a bubbler. Twenty pounds was also allocated for the construction of a galvanised iron urinal structure in the park in January 1929.

Various sports were played in the park. The Armidale High School was granted temporary use of the park as a football field in May 1929. The New England Women's Hockey Association applied for use of the park as a hockey field in April 1934. The application was granted 'provided there was no interference with the cricket pitch'. (Armidale Express, 18 April 1934, p.6) The West Armidale Hockey Club was granted use of the park in May 1937.

The Minister for Lands approved a grant of £50 each for improvements of the East and West End parks in May 1935. That August council sought permission from the minister to spend £75 for the East End park and £25 for the West End. By September, council had laid a concrete wicket in the park and in thanking the council, F.A. Antill, president of the New England Cricket Association asked 'that the electric light post be shifted from the playing area'. (Armidale Express, 18 September 1935, p.8). Council offered no objection provided that the post was removed at the association's expense.

By March 1936 council used the front portion of the Armidale and New England Hospital grounds as a dumping ground for road metal. V.N. Murray of O'Dell Street suggested that council should subdivide the West End Park and use the proceeds to beautify the area fronting the hospital. Described as a fly in the ointment and 'apart from a few persons who occasionally lounge in the shade of the pines, it serves few others, except as a cricket ground'. (Armidale Express, 13 March 1936, p.4) In July Ald. T. Monckton drew attention to the dilapidated fence around the park and asked 'if council would consider the advisability of demolishing it.' (Armidale Express, 8 July 1936, p.4) Two weeks later, council decided to demolish the fence and stack the timber and wire 'in (a) store shed for future use as required'. (Armidale Express, 5 August 1936, p.7. The park fence was removed in October 1936 and the area graded over and levelled off. With the improvements, Ald. Monckton felt that the park would make an ideal sportsground.

The West Armidale Hockey Club was granted use of the park in May 1937. Plans for the construction of separate public conveniences were submitted and approved by council in August. The structures were to 'be placed about 40 or 50 yards apart in the south-east portion of the reserve' (Armidale Express, 18 August 1937, p.4) screened by camphor laurels.

The West Armidale Progress Association pressed for the provision of a children's playground in February 1942. Because of the war effort, council was not prepared to 'consider beautification schemes or park improvements and children's playgrounds'. (Armidale Express, 1 July 1942, p.8) Not to be deterred, the Progress Association asked that unsightly trees at the park be removed in May 1943.

By August 1944 the New England Cricket Association used the park for cricket. The New England University College applied to use the park as a playing field for men's hockey in April 1946. Consequently the Progress Association 'decided to approach cricket and hockey bodies with a view to making a combined effort for the development of an oval at the park' (Armidale Express, 27 October 1947, p.6) in October 1947. That

month, the Progress Association opened a public subscription. The Armidale Rotary Club promised to subsidise the association £ for £ after £50 had been raised by the people for the playground. In November, the association sought permission (1) to remove all old and dangerous pine trees; (2) build a children's playground; (3) picket off the cricket oval. (Armidale Express, 26 November 1947, p.15) The Progress Association met with the Cricket Association in December to develop the park as a possible site for first grade cricket. Council was also asked by the Progress Association to lay water pipes into the oval.

The Progress Association formed a sub-committee in February 1948 to draw up a master plan for the park and seek a subsidy from the Rotary Club for a children's playground. In March council was asked to replace the pines cut down from the park and council agreed to make the playground equipment for the park. The sub-committee also reported that the estimated cost of erecting a picket fence around the cricket oval would be about £120. Children of the West Armidale Public School planted trees, supplied by council, in the park in conjunction with the Progress Association in July. By that month, timber for fencing the cricking ground had been supplied. Some trees were removed to improve light and a site selected for the playground on the eastern side of the park well away from the cricket oval.

Council received £30 from the sale of timber removed from the park and donated the funds to the Progress Association in October. Later that month, working bees were organised by the association to effect major changes at the park. Volunteers, including members of the New England Cricket Association erected an oval fence; the council workshops constructed playground equipment whilst Armidale Rotary Club offered £50 towards the cost of the equipment. The Cricket Association also requested costings from the Progress Association 'as support for a request to the N.S.W. Cricket Association for a grant towards a turf wicket at the park'. (Armidale Express, 29 October 1948, p.6) By November, the West Armidale Progress Association was erecting a picket fence at the oval estimated to cost £300 and again asked council to lay water pipes to the oval because of the application for a turf wicket. In June 1949, the city engineer reported to council that improvements to the West End oval have commenced and the fence round the East End Park was being removed.

The 1950 Town Planning showed that the West Armidale Park, an area of six acres contained a children's playground and a turf wicket. It was in January 1950 that council gave permission to the New England Cricket Association to construct a turf wicket in the park. Financial assistance was not available but council stated 'it might be possible for the City Engineer to cooperate with the use of plant from time to time'. (Armidale Express, 18 January 1950, p.13) By August thirty shrubs had been planted and twenty nine shrubs and three trees were planted in the park in September 1951. However in February 1952 council was asked by Ald. W.P. Ryan to expedite the supply of playground equipment promised some three years earlier. The West Armidale Progress Association was defunct by November 1955 but they had achieved the transformation of the park into an attractive sporting area.

Ald. Ken Jones recommended that the name Lambert be perpetuated by a road or park in July 1967. Lamberts had been in Armidale since 1885 and was shortly to change its name to Permewans, a Victorian-based chain store. Council gave the name Lambert to West Armidale park because of the families contribution to sporting and commercial progress of the city. The name was selected at a council meeting on Monday 31 July. In October the Geographical Names Board asked council to provide a biographical outline of the Lambert Family so that it could decide whether the name should be assigned to West Armidale Park.

Three dead and dying pine trees were removed from the park by council in October 1970; one on the Rusden Street side and two on the Beardy Street side.

In 1985 council spent \$14 000 on an irrigation scheme.

Wicklow Oval.

A concrete practice wicket was constructed on council's land near the Stephen's Bridge in 1953. It was at the meeting held on 6 February 1969 to launch an appeal for the acquisition of creeklands that Armidale businessman Chris Rologas promised four acres between Dumaresq Street and Dumaresq Creek at the rear of the Wicklow Hotel. The development of this area east of Stephen's Bridge was part of the plans announced by council for the creeklands in July 1969. These plans necessitated the closure of Kirkwood Street from Douglas Street to the Dumaresq Creek. The name Wicklow Oval was used by 1969 and in December, council announced plans for the development of eight fields. In addition three cricket fields were to be established there but mainly soccer was to be developed at the oval. The name Wicklow was taken from the nearby Wicklow Hotel, formerly the Albion.

A development plan for the Wicklow Oval showing five sporting fields costing \$7000 was presented to council in October 1970. Some willows were to be removed and engineer Gentle was asked to prepare sketch plans for a lavatory and change block. In November 1974 construction work was underway on Stage Two of the oval involving levelling by earth-moving machinery. By December the amenities block on the Armidale and District Amateur Soccer Association Wicklow Oval complex was under construction. Construction was slow because the work was undertaken by voluntary labour and \$11 200 was made available through the Regional Employment Development scheme. Part of the money was also used to construct a walkway under Stephen's Bridge to connect Curtis Park and the oval. Stage Two of the complex was available for the commencement of the 1976 soccer season.

In 1981 council planned to plant sixty trees and thirty shrubs at the oval. Lighting was provided at a cost of \$30 000 in 1985. Storage sheds were completed in the 1995-1996