

3.0 ADELAIDE PARK LANDS & SQUARES

3.1.35 Whitmore Square Report



Whitmore Square

Historical Overview: Site Context

Whitmore Square exists as one of six ‘town squares’ or village greens proposed by Light in his 1836 ‘Plan of Adelaide’. It was named by the Street Naming Committee after William Wolryche Whitmore, a British Member of Parliament who introduced the *South Australia Foundation Act* to the British House of Commons. No change to the Square’s configuration has occurred since the original survey.

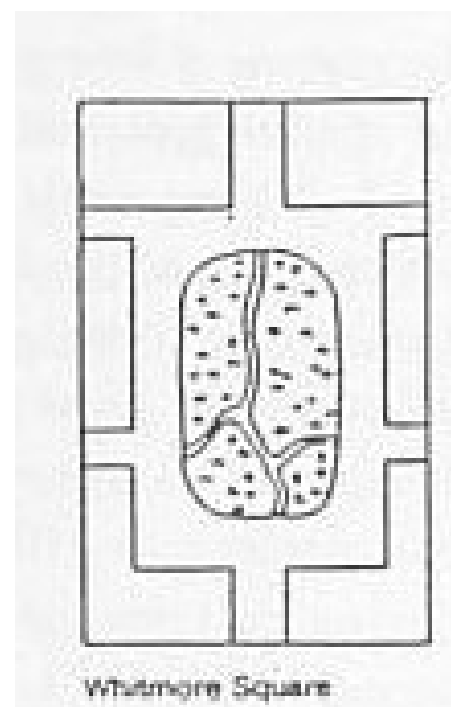


Figure
Abstraction of the design for Whitmore Square as proposed by Colonel William Light in his 1836 water-coloured ‘Plan of Adelaide’. Source: Russell 1992, p. 3.

Historical Overview: Aboriginal Associations

There are several specific references to Kaurna sites or activities, pre-contact or post-contact, for Whitmore Square (Draper *et al* 2005; Hemming 1998).

The West End of Adelaide was a popular residential venue for Indigenous people in the 1900s-1960s and from the 1920s to the 1960s Whitmore Square was a focus of Indigenous activities but not as popular as Light Square. These activities included a role as a central meeting place, as a gathering place, and as a drinking venue (Draper *et al* 2005, pp. 32, 97; Hemming 1998, pp. 58-59).

Historical Overview: Post-Contact Associations

In April 1854 the colonial government was petitioned by the Corporation for funds to fence, layout and plant all the Squares, including tabling specifications “for the fencing and planting the public squares &c in the City of Adelaide. These documents identify principally Victoria Square but it was clear from the specification that the intent applied to all the squares, as it detailed the number and species of trees to be planted, including specimens of *Acacia* spp (*Robinia* sp ?), almond (*Prunus dulcis*), olive (*Olea europaea*), “gum tree” (*Eucalyptus* spp), poplar (*Populus* spp), cypress (*Cupressus* spp), and others, with some 3,000 to be planted in Victoria Square, 1,500 each in Hindmarsh, Light, Hurtle and Whitmore squares, 500 in the Palmer Place Gardens, 1,000 in

Wellington Square, and 500 in the Brougham Place Gardens (State Records Office, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Correspondence, Town Clerk, Adelaide City Council, to Colonial Secretary, 29 April 1854, GRG 24/6/1310; Specification for Planting the Squares, 12 April 1854, ACC Archive SQ18540504).

Clearly Whitmore Square was included in these discussions and the planting program.

On 4 May 1854 the colonial government, through the Lieutenant Governor, acceded to this proposal and granted £2,000, in that time a considerable expenditure “for planting and ornamenting the squares of the city” to a level that “the Council may be enabled to carry out in a manner satisfactory to the Citizens of Adelaide” (Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, 4 May 1854, VS18540504; Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, 4 May 1854, GRG 24/6/1108).

Reputedly, over half of this money was expended on works in Victoria Square. A condition of the funds was that tenders would “be called for by advertisement for fencing and planting the squares of Adelaide in accordance with plans and specifications adopted by the Council.” Whether the contract was actually advertised in the newspapers is unclear, but horticulturist and later first director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden George Francis was the successful tenderer (Worsnop 1878, p. 121; *The Register*, 9 May 1854, p. 2).

In his “Tender for the Laying out and Planting the Public Squares &c of the City of Adelaide”, dated 18 May 1854, Francis proposed to undertake all layout and planting works in all the Squares and Gardens but excluded the fencing. He claimed that, “The whole planting may be completed in 5 months from the present time, provided the fencing be completed in 3 months & provided also that Victoria Square be done first” (Best 1986, p. 48; George Francis, “Tender for the Laying out and Planting the Public Squares &c of the City of Adelaide”, 18 May 1854, ACC Archives SQ18540518).

By September 1855 Francis reported that all these laying out and planting activities had been completed, with the Palmer Place gardens being his last venue. This is the first record of conscious landscape design works and planting activities in the Squares, including the Palmer and Brougham Place gardens, laying much of the spatial and planting framework that inaugural City Gardener William O’Brien obviously adopted and utilised when appointed to this position in 1865. It is also probable, given Francis’ self-promotional activities seeking the establishment of a botanic garden, that Francis used this tender as an opportunity to trial species as to their relevance to the soils, climate and conditions of the squares and gardens, as it is clear that he may have planted more specimens than required by the tender (Best 1986, p. 48; *The Register* 6 June 1855, p. 2; George Francis to ACC, Report on Palmer Place Improvement, 11 September 1854, ECR/0066BD4:01).

Olives (*Olea europaea*) appear as an under-current in this experimentation, preceding their *en masse* planting in plantations in the Park Lands, but clearly not a lot of specimens were planted in the squares and gardens. By 1886 Italian olive (*Olea europaea*) expert Paolo Villanis reported the existence of some 6 specimens in Whitmore Square. Villanis, an expert in olive (*Olea europaea*) propagation and cultivation makes no mention of the other Squares, so it is fair to say that by 1886 there were no olive (*Olea europaea*) trees in the other Squares and that O’Brien had reviewed and assessed their condition and integrity of retention within his parks and gardens development works (Correspondence, Paolo Villanis to Town Clerk, Report re Olive Plantations, 22 February 1886, TC 1886/465).

Discussions by the Corporation and the Mayors (Lord Mayors) about landscaping the River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri embankments as well as the Park Lands and Squares generally were commonplace from the mid 1850s onwards.

3.0 ADELAIDE PARK LANDS & SQUARES

These public debates and discussions appear to have been prompted by concerns from the colonial Governor about the overall aesthetic appearance of the Park Lands. For example, on 17 July 1855 the Colonial Secretary wrote the Corporation's Town Clerk expressing a desire "that something should be done to improve the present very unsightly appearance of most of the Park Lands near the Town; which he [Governor Gawler] thinks might be effected by the judicious planting of clumps of trees on half acres [0.2ha] or even quarter acres [0.1ha] in suitable positions; care being taken to fence such clumps with strong but neat fencing." Willingly, to assist these landscaping works, the Governor volunteered a budget of £400, "a sum sufficient to accomplish much, but not all that he wishes" which the Corporation eagerly accepted "at once to carry out His Excellency's wishes and propose to do so by means of competent gardeners [on] contracts to be obtained by advertisements in the usual newspapers, the works generally being performed under the supervision of the City Surveyor." With acceptance, the Governor imposed one condition requiring the appointment of an expert referee to monitor the works: "that some person should be nominated by himself to represent the Executive in this matter and to have a voice in the selection of the position of the several plantations and of the species of fencing to be made use of." The Colonial Secretary appointed horticulturist John Bailey, of Hackney Nursery, to this role. Unfortunately this scheme collapsed with the dissolution of the Legislative Council in August 1855 despite unknown authored sketch "on the subject of planting a Public Square" being sent to the Corporation on 9 October 1855, with correspondence from the Governor indicating that "the writer of the memorandum has indicated some most sensible and just views of Landscape Gardening..." The advice included a recommendation that, "in a climate like South Australia's and to avoid the inconvenience of having to wait years for effect, clumps should be formed of the Olive [*Olea europaea*], the Wattle [*Acacia* spp] and Gum-tree [*Eucalyptus* spp] ..." It is possible the plan author was Francis, more so than Bailey as there is no evidence of Bailey's plan drawing skills whereas the sketch the text is similar in style to Francis's hand (Letter, Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, ACC, 7 July 1855, GRG 24/6/1381 (1855); letter, Town Clerk, ACC, to Colonial Secretary, 2 August 1855, GRG 24/6/2505 (1855); letter, Town Clerk, ACC, to Colonial Secretary, 13 August 1855, GRG 24/6/2644 (1855); Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, ACC, 2 August 1855, GRG 24/6/1605 (1855); Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, ACC, 20 August 1855, GRG 24/6/1740 (1855) Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, ACC, 2 August 1855, GRG 24/6/2129 (1855) Colonial Secretary to Town Clerk, ACC, 2 August 1855, GRG 24/6/3289 (1855)).

While Francis, Bailey and Sheriff Boothby were predominantly planting olive (*Olea europaea*) trees in the Park Lands, City Gardener William Pengilly also undertook olive (*Olea europaea*) plantings in several areas. During 1872 he was planting them on in various Park Land blocks and Squares but makes no mention of any plantings in Whitmore Square. Villanis, in 1882, corroborated the existence of these plantings when he reviewed the state and condition of all the olive (*Olea europaea*) plantations in the Park Lands for the Corporation recording substantial olive (*Olea europaea*) groves in various Park Land blocks and Squares with 6 specimens extant in Whitmore Square (Letter, Paolo Villanis to Town Clerk, 13 July 1883, TC 1883/2224; *The Register*, 24 July 1883, p. 6; letter, Paolo Villanis to Town Clerk, 22 February 1886, TC 1886/465; letter, William Pengilly to Town Clerk, 16 July 1872, TC 1872/519 and 4 September 1872, TC 1872/622).

In February 1886 Villanis provided an inventory to the Corporation of "the number of olive trees presently bearing fruit in the Town Corporation ground," (note 'fruit bearing and not a total list of trees overall) excluding the Gaol enclosures:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of trees bearing fruit</u>	<u>Present Park</u>
Mann Terrace	27	7 & 8
Brougham Place	29	Brougham, 29
Palmer Place	5	Palmer, 28

Wellington Square	19	Wellington
Torrens Lake	119	26
Strangways Terrace	7	1
Mitcham Road [Unley Road]	84	19 & 20
Plantation bordering the Old Race Course	272	15
South East Park Lands (Old Race Course)	105	16
Dequetteville Park	30	14
East Park Lands (between Old Race Course and North Terrace)	26	13
Hindmarsh Square	8	Hindmarsh
Light Square	14	Light
Whitmore Square	6	Whitmore
West Terrace	112	22, 23, & 24
<u>Total</u>	<u>873</u>	

(Letter, Paolo Villanis to Town Clerk, 22 February 1886, TC 1886/465)

In recognition of the state of the garden system in the municipality prompted the Corporation to call for applicants for the position of City Gardener in 1854. William O'Brien was successful. An experienced Gardener born in c.1812 in Dublin, Ireland, O'Brien arrived in Adelaide in 1858 on the *Utopia*, and lived in North Adelaide. He died on 18 October 1884.

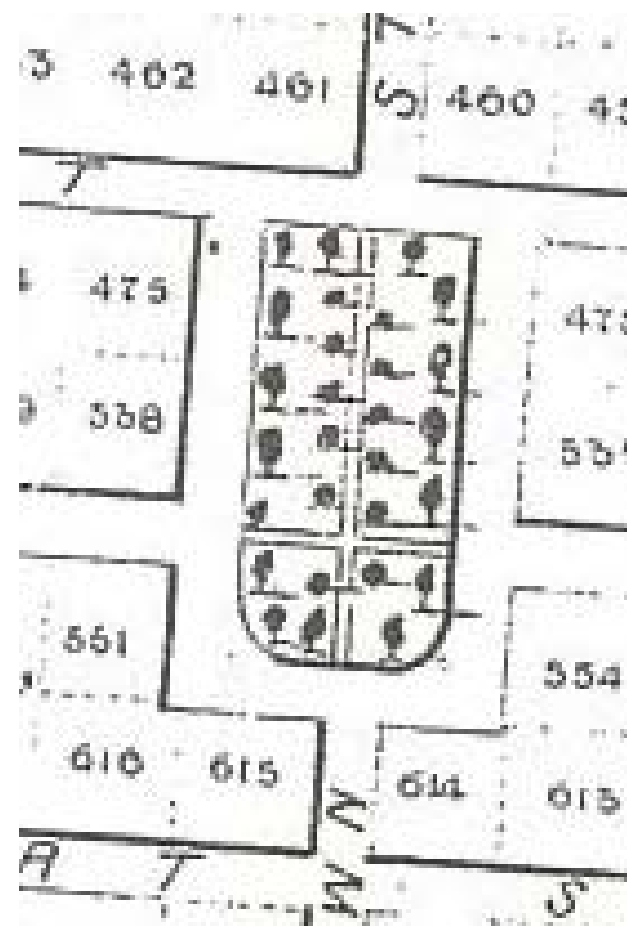
O'Brien's priority task upon his appointment was the condition of Victoria Square. He inherited a garden landscape with foundation plantings by George Francis but displaying evidence of a lack of care and maintenance. Further, the Square existed as two garden quadrants at this time; equal northern and southern quadrants. O'Brien wrote of his works in the Square as follows:

Contractors are to remove fences on both divisions of Victoria Square and replace them in the southern part with a post and wire fence. The northern division of Victoria Square is to be fenced by the Corporation with iron hurdles and gates which have been procured from Messrs Morewood and Rogers. The paths are to be 16 feet [4.8m] wide and gravelled. We will dig a border around the whole at a given distance with a fence on both divisions ready for trees and plants as per the plan. I will plant a hedge of sweet briar [Rosa spp] along the whole of the fence. I intend to provide and plant 3,000 trees and shrubs, these being acacia [Acacia spp?], almond [Prunus dulcis], olive [Olea europaea], gums [Eucalyptus spp], poplars [Populus spp], cypress [Cupressus spp] and others, laburnum [Laburnum spp], honeysuckle [Melaleuca spp], willows [Salix spp], Spanish broom [Spartium junceum], aloes [Aloe spp], cactus, geraniums [Geranium spp], roses [Rosa spp] and some bulbs. All the open spaces will be regulated and planted with grass seed. Hurtle and Whitmore Squares will be fenced in with post and rail. The rails to be taken from Victoria Square and new ones provided if required. I will also dig a border as in Victoria Square and plant a hedge of sweet briar [Rosa spp] and plant at least 750 trees and shrubs in each Square. Similarly for Hindmarsh and Light Squares. Wellington and Hurtle Squares will be fenced and a briar [Rosa spp] hedge put in as before and 1,000 trees and shrubs (Mayoral Reports, 4 May 1854).

This was an extensive and most detailed program of works for the first twelve months of his appointment, and unfortunately no plan exists to indicate his visions or his skill in horticulture and garden design. Despite these good intentions, O'Brien was hampered in the quality of his program due to the contractors. The gardens continued to deteriorate, and the walks became infested with weeds and were ill-maintained. He also sought from the Corporation a tree propagating area or plant nursery. Interesting, those species he did propagate were predominantly Australian species: South Australian Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*), Olive (*Olea europaea*), River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Willow (*Salix* spp), Roses (*Rosa* spp), Cork Oaks (*Quercus suber*), Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), and Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina* spp) (*Register* 1863).

By 1866 O'Brien was pleased to report:

*All trees are doing very well. All the roads and their adjacent forest belts are doing as well as can be desired. The view through the clumps and promenades of the city are highly creditable and will, I am told, contribute much to the health of the citizens. Light and Whitmore Squares which have always been so obstinate to cultivate trees in, have this year made a fine start. The ground which was brackish and sterile has been drained and improved and planted with olives [*Olea europaea*] which are now growing and promise to be quite successful. Fitzgerald and Evans, the two stationmen in these wards have been very vigilant in the capturing and impounding of goats, which were always so mischievous in these squares. The olive [*Olea europaea*] grounds at East Terrace, [and the] Moreton Bay figs [*Ficus macrophylla*] planted last winter in Wakefield Street are looking very brown due to the hot weather but are responding to watering. A new walk has been suggested for Victoria Square from the Post Office to the Government Printing Office (Mayoral Reports 6 May 1866).*



Extract from the 'Map of Adelaide' prepared by the Corporation's City Surveyor dated 11 February 1865 that depicts Whitmore Square. The image is virtually the same as today with a rectangular perimeter roadway arc-ing to the southern flank, a cross-axial pathway system and semi-regimented tree planting system. Source: ACC Archives.



Figure
Extract of Townsend Duryea's 1865 panorama photograph of Adelaide taken from the City of Adelaide Town Hall tower, in this instance looking south-west towards Whitmore Square and the heavily vegetated West Terrace Cemetery beyond. The Square appears as a large vacant tract of land to the upper right, with only the extant St Luke's Church visible in the far top right of the photograph. Source: History Trust of South Australia.

In 1865 Townsend Duryea took a panorama series of photographs of the municipality from the Town Hall tower. What is not discernable in the Townsend Duryea 1865 photograph is the fountain that was reputedly positioned in Whitmore Square in the middle to late 1800s. It is evident, by the implied graphic representations in the lithographic projections of the City of Adelaide published in the *Sydney Illustrated News* July 1876 and the *Australasian Sketcher* 10 July 1875, a fact collaborated in the 1880 Smith Survey of the City of Adelaide, that fountains may have been positioned in the central point in each Square. There has been little factual evidence to substantiate these graphic representations, and the only evidence of a pre-1900 fountain pertains to Hindmarsh Square.

Upon the invitation of the Mayor, City Gardener William O'Brien wrote to the Corporation on 19 August 1874 proposing "a list of Ornamental Trees suitable for planting in the Squares of the City." The list comprised: 2 Norfolk Island Pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*), 4 Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), 6 (*Grevillea robusta*), 6 Thuja (species unspecified), 6 White Cedars (*Melia azedarach* var *australasica*), 6 Kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneus*) and 6 Cassia (*Cassia bicapsularis* syn. *Cassia candolleana*). It is unclear whether the Corporation approved this list, and which Square it pertained to, but is likely that these were planted by O'Brien (Town Clerk's Docket 714 of 1874).

The state and condition of extant fencing around the Squares was subject to Corporation deliberations in the late 1870s. Mayor William Bunday consciously sought to remove the "old and decaying split post and rail fences from the City squares" and to erect "substantial and ornamental railings round these enclosures." Bunday saw it as a major aim of his tenure as Mayor and an important task for "beautifying the city". The City Surveyor prepared designs for

these cast iron ornamental railing fences, with a more elaborate palisading version for Victoria Square as distinct from the other Squares. Tenders were called for both designs and works awarded. Presumably City Gardener Pengilly was faced with removing the old post and rail fencing to enable the contractors to proceed. Mayor Edwin Smith witnessed the erection of the ornamental cast iron palisading but also had to deal with public criticism of the Corporation's expenditure on the palisading. His argument was that, "consistent with the end they had in view, a bold but neat palisading which adds so much to the appearance of the Squares, and to the ornamentation of the streets, and saves to the Corporation at least £2,000" was an investment well made. These palisades were erected around all five squares by early 1881. Costs for the palisading and its erection were: Whitmore Square £1,352 6s 6d (*Annual Report 1879-80*, p. 82; 1880-81, pp. 110-111; 1881-82, pp. 34-35, 41).



Figure
Extract from the *Australasian Sketcher* 10 July 1875 with an aerial perspective over the City of Adelaide, depicting Whitmore Square. Note the extensive tree planting, the pattern of tree planting that correlates with the axial and diagonal pathway system, and the trees arc-ing on the southern flank of the Square. Source: ACC Archives.

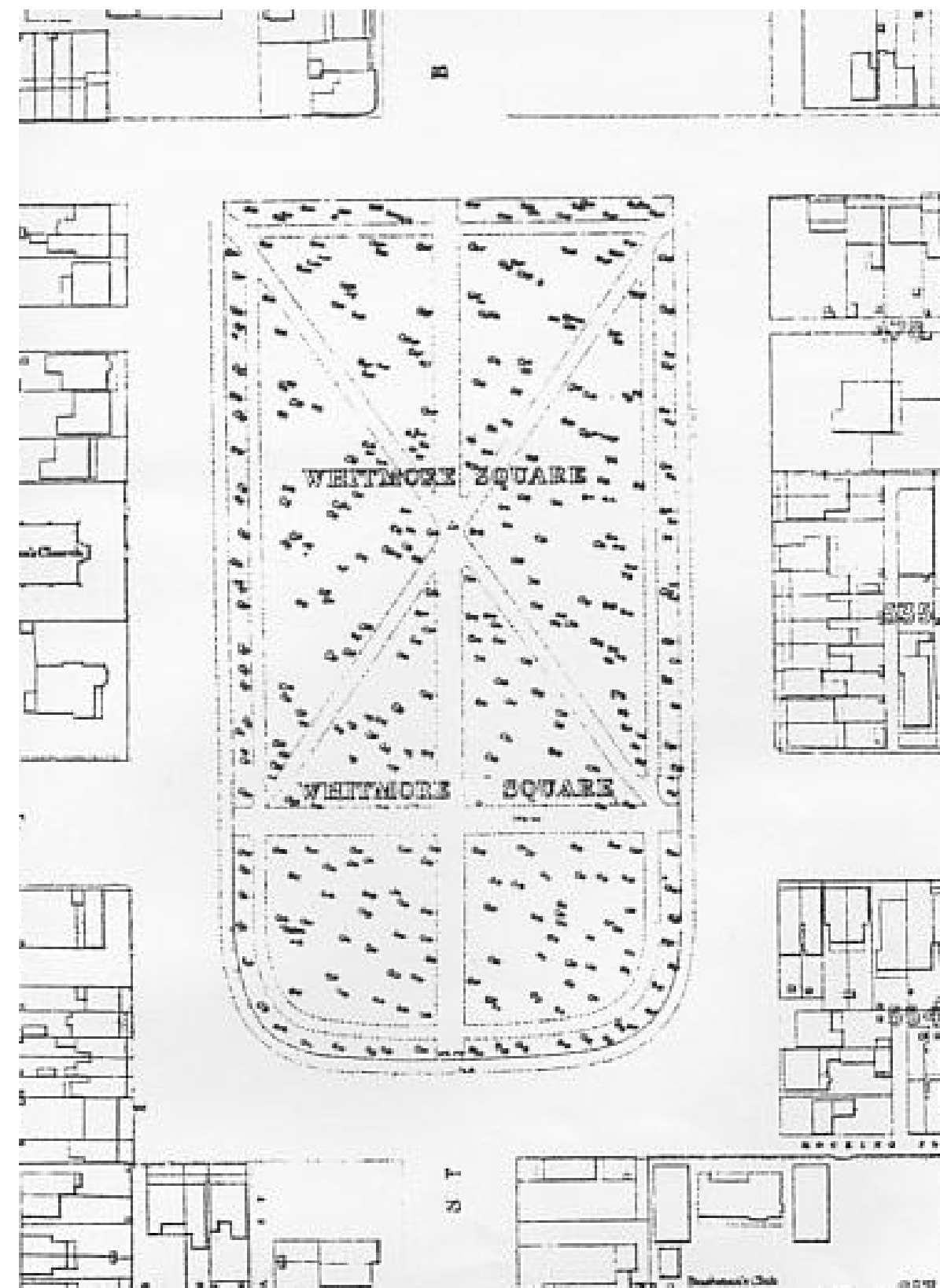


Figure
Extract from *Smith's Survey of the City of Adelaide*, 1880, depicting Whitmore Square in 1880. This is very detailed plan that illustrates the southern arc which lacks any evidence of plantings today, it indicates that there was no central fountain unlike most other Squares, the union jack pathway configuration and the inner perimeter pathways and the extensive nature of tree plantings in the Square. Note also that there was no horse-drawn tram service in this locality in 1880. Source: ACC Archive.

While the debate about palisading was continuing City Gardener Pengilly was busy tree planting in the Squares. During 1881-82 he planted 70 trees in Whitmore Square. In 1882-83 he planted an additional 30 trees in Light and Whitmore Squares. Unfortunately the nature of the species is not stated but his purpose was to plant new specimens and to replace “missing” trees (*Annual Report* 1881-82, p. 137; 1882-83, p. 135).

In commissioning John Ednie Brown to prepare a *Report on a System of Planting the Adelaide Park Lands* (1880), under Mayor William Bunday, there was no attempt to include the Squares in this investigation. This perhaps indicates the quality of landscape that was extant in the Squares that William O’Brien had established; Pengilly was charged with Squares and garden development and maintenance but also had jurisdiction over the Park Lands. Despite this it is clear the O’Brien was establishing tree plantations along several road corridors through the Park Lands. These fenced enclosures, planted with shelterbelt trees, included Glen Osmond Road, Bay Road (Anzac Highway), Port Road, and East Terrace. The scope of these works are illustrated in a ‘Plan of the City of Adelaide’ prepared by the City Surveyors Office on 11 February 1865. This plan appears to be more accurate than the tree shelterbelt representations that appear in the lithographic axiometric perspectives of Adelaide as published in the *Australasian Sketcher* and the *Sydney Illustrated News* respectively (Brown 1880; Plan of City of Adelaide, 11 February 1865, ACC Archives).

With John Ednie Brown’s appointment as ‘Supervisor of the Plantations’, upon the invitation of Mayor Edwin Smith in April 1882, Brown commenced foundational work in implementing parts of the *Report’s* (1880) recommendations. Pengilly was advised that Brown shall have “general supervision of the tree planting in the Park Lands” and to “render Mr. Brown every facility for this purpose ...” (Town Clerk’s Dept Outwards Letter Book, 1882/602/18). A fractious relationship occurred with Brown and Pengilly, and a specific incident over street tree plantings along Barton Terrace West prompted Brown’s resignation from this position in August 1882. While the Corporation sought to remedy the situation, continued disobedience and contrary activities by the City Gardener and his workforce eventually prompted Brown’s formal resignation on 1 June 1883. In his letter of resignation he wrote “I must for the sake of professional reputation, seek to be relieved of the responsibility.”

With this decision the Corporation determined to sack Pengilly, and therein had a serious of City Gardeners until such time as August Pelzer (1862-1934) was appointed City Gardener (1899-1934) in mid 1899.

Newly appointed City Gardener Richard Patterson in 1885 reported with “great pleasure” of the improvements effected in the landscapes of the Squares in his 1883-84 *Annual Report* to the Corporation. He also recorded that he had installed numerous “openings” in the palisades “to allow persons in charge of perambulators getting these vehicles into the Squares.” Despite this “some ill-disposed person or persons” caused considerable vandalism to the palisades in all the Squares over the 1885 Christmas holidays “especially to that round Hurtle Square.” Newly appointed City Gardener John W Hayes reported on these acts of vandalism and that the gardens and trees in the Squares were also “in very good order” in his 1885-86 *Annual Report* to the Corporation (*Annual Report* 1883-84, p. 50; 1885-86, pp. 48, 111-112).

Under Patterson and Hayes several minor landscape works were undertaken in each Square in the 1880s. A new water service was installed in the Whitmore Square in 1889 together with planting couch grass. In 1895 Hayes reported that all the Squares “... are looking very well; but all the paths should be bordered with bricks on edge to maintain the regular width of the paths and keep the public from destroying the borders.” Whitmore Square continued to be subject to acts of vandalism. Hayes was frustrated by often monthly acts of tree mutilation, tops of cast-

iron rail heads being broken off, and water troughs being severely damaged (*Annual Report* 1887-88, p. 41; 1889-1890, p. 77; 1894-95, p. 64; 1896-97, p. 69).



Figure
Photograph of St Luke’s Church in c.1890s as published in *The Heritage of the City of Adelaide* (1990) by Marsden et al p. 197. Note the cast iron palisade fencing around the Square with each post set on a stone foundation stone. Source: ACC Archives.

Behind these snippets by the City Gardeners was a progressive deterioration of the quality and management of the gardens in the Squares. This was brought to a head in 1897 when the Corporation established a Special Committee to inquire into the “whole working and management of the squares.” Following a series of meetings and site inspections to all squares, the Corporation determined a set of “drastic alterations” including tree removal works to be undertaken. Some 17 trees were removed from Whitmore Square concluding that the trees were either “dead, dying, or unsightly.” The Corporation also determined that proper arboricultural treatment was required of all trees in the Squares and that a gardener be specifically placed in charge of each Square reporting directly to the City Surveyor. Under this policy change the Corporation witnessed a change in the landscape quality of the Squares. At the same time the Corporation determined to establish a Parks & Gardens Department, appoint an experienced and qualified City Gardener, establish a tree nursery in Tulya Wodli/Park 27, and establish a “permanent Tree Planting Committee” under the Chair of Councillor William Ponder (*Annual Report* 1897-98, pp. 73-74).

A key to the success of these policy changes was the appointment of August Wilhelm Pelzer in mid 1899 to the position of City Gardener. It was a position that he held until 1932. A secondary key was the role of “indefatigable” Ponder who extensively enabled the actions and visions of Pelzer to be implemented enabling funding and political support within the Corporation. Ponder was passionate about trees and tree planting, and undertook research on

tree planting activities of various cities around the world including Washington DC, Paris, Cleveland, Sydney, etc. (*Annual Report* 1898-99, pp. 22-23).

Pelzer immediately set to work renourishing the Squares, and re-seeded the lawns with couch grass (*Annual Report* 1898-99, pp. 149, 150). In the flower beds were planted “Gaillardias, Petunias, Phlox, Zinnias, Stocks, Sunflowers, Cosmos, Allysums, Snapdragons, Pensetimonas, Geraniums, Canna, Centaurians, and Roses [sic.]” (*Annual Report* 1902, p. 30; 1903, p. 24).

Clearly the immediate works Pelzer set upon were strategic aesthetic improvements to the lawns, flower beds and trees of each Square, and also measures to delimit inappropriate human activities in the Squares. He extended the spread of couch grass lawns in all Squares, and proposed the erection of similar hoops in Whitmore Square “in order to break ... the habit of making these tracks.” Hoops were introduced to Whitmore Square in 1902. His conclusion was that he supported any Corporation engineering action that introduced “intersecting roads” to the Squares as it would “cause much of the pedestrian traffic to be diverted from the Square.” In terms of trees, he recorded his view that “all the Squares were overcrowded with trees” and that an urgent program of thinning and grubbing was needed to enable adequate light and air to the remaining trees and also enable good growth in the lawns. Species that heightened this problem were Pines (*Pinus* ssp), Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), and Pepper Trees (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*). Taking advantage of a donation of 100 Cotton Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) from parliamentarian and philanthropist George Brookman in early 1900, sourced from Henry Sewell’s Payneham Nursery, Pelzer scattered these specimens in various squares and reserves and then had to erect 1.5m tree guards around them due to vandalism. Several palms appear to have been planted in Whitmore Square. Pelzer also planted new shrubs on the pathway routes to the toilets in Whitmore Square (*Annual Reports* 1899-1900, pp. 292-294; 1901, pp. 9, 41).

In addition, the irregular movement of people across the lawns in the Squares caused Mayor Alexander Ware and Pelzer considerable angst as it characterised many of their regular reports to Council (*Annual Reports* 1899-1900, pp. 292-294; 1901, pp. 9, 41; 1902, p. 29).

A significant management issue in all Squares was dogs. The Corporation had become frustrated in finding measures of preventing dogs entering the Squares and fouling the flower beds. Mayor Ware observed that “the damage done by the ill-bred mongrel is quite equalled by that of the aristocratic canine; in both cases it is very discouraging both to the gardener and his men.” In 1900 Pelzer proposed an extensive fencing program that involved wire netting fixed on iron railings supported on jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) battens with self-closing swing gates. He provided costings for these works as follows: 30 chains in Whitmore Square at £46/8/6. All Squares were fenced by the end of 1901 and Whitmore Square was fenced in 1902. Pelzer painted the fencing in 1902 (*Annual Report* 1899-1900, pp. 106-107; 1901, pp. 9, 16; 1902, p. 20).

One of Pelzer’s first actions was also to review the existing regulation system applicable to the Squares and Park Lands. In 1900 he proposed to the Corporation, which they adopted, a revised and co-ordinate set of bylaws to enable the policing of the public. This was the first major review of these regulations and provided the foundation of the current version of bylaws. Signage advising these new by-laws was erected in 1901 (*Annual Report* 1899-1900, pp. 109-110; 1901, p. 44).

Mayor [Sir] Edwin Thomas Smith also accompanied Pelzer “at least once a week” in 1900-1901 inspecting all the gardens and reserves and reviewing the Departmental staff capabilities. This was quite a commitment of time by a Mayor. His conclusion was that:

... I can honestly bear out his [Pelzer’s] remarks that his staff has worked well during the year, and has been kept fully employed. The staff is now composed of a capable lot of men, and I am satisfied with the

“weeding out” process which I undertook some two years ago. I have also caused the mean to be shifted about occasionally, a process which has been found wholesome, and a corrective to any possible symptoms of stagnation.

In the City Gardener, Mr Pelzer, I am convinced that the Council possesses a very capable officer, who takes an abiding interest in his work (*Annual Report* 1901, p. 9).

From the mid 1900s onwards Pelzer commenced a slow renovation program in Whitmore Square. In 1906 he re-laid out the flower beds in “various shapes” and replanted them with “ornamental shrubs, cannas, and various herbaceous and other flowering plants” (*Annual Report* 1907, p. 61).

In the same period the Corporation’s attention also turned to the provision of children’s playgrounds. It was a topic that occupied the Corporation reports for the next 10 years as various playground proposals were discussed, debated, and Mayor Charles Glover started donating funds to permit the construction of such facilities. Pelzer was involved in these proposals as he had to design and playgrounds as well construct and plant the spaces. Alderman (and later Mayor) Isaac Isaacs first raised the topic in the Corporation’s Chambers on 13 January 1908 wherein it was carried:

That this Council take into consideration the advisableness of reserving portions of Hindmarsh, Hurtle, Whitmore, Light, and Wellington Squares and Plantations for Children’s Playgrounds, and provide the same with swings and other appliances for recreative purposes, and with that end in view the Town Clerk submit a report on Children’s Playgrounds to the Parks and Gardens Committee, having special reference to the provision made in Melbourne and Sydney, and as to the establishments in America, England, and the Continent of Europe (*Annual Report* 1908, p. 20).

While the Town Clerk prepared and submitted a report, the Corporation eventually proposed the location of playgrounds in the surrounding park lands and not in the Squares (*Annual Report* 1909, p. 49; 1910, p. 37; 1912, pp. 64-65; 1914, p. 71).

At the same time the Corporation was dealing with the installation of tramways through the City. Because of the laying of electric-car tracks, the Squares would have to be remodelled and the Corporation viewed that the Municipal Tramways Trust (MIT) should contribute to “pay a fair proportion” of the costs. Whitmore Square was little impacted by this transportation technology impact (*Annual Report* 1908, p. 21; 1909, pp. 47-48). Interestingly, Mayor Frank Johnson also stated, perhaps seeking advice from Pelzer, that:

The lawns in all the Squares require re-planting, and it would be good policy to have them laid out afresh. The garden plans in Whitmore, Light, Victoria, and Wellington Squares are antiquated and should be remodelled (*Annual Report* 1908, p. 21).

The suggestion that the Squares needed to experience extensive remodelling more likely came from Pelzer given his standing and expertise in the Corporation, and his desire to re-create the Squares subtly expressed in his *Annual Reports*. But there was also impetus from the volume of use of the Squares. During 1909 the Corporation undertook user surveys of the Squares recording people on weekdays and weekends. For Whitmore Square, an average of 2,000 to 8,000 adults were recorded per month, and some 2,000 to 9,500 children per month (*Annual Report* 1909, pp. 45-46).

Part of this renovation was prompted in 1909 with the laying of a tram track through the north-western corner of the Square. This excision necessitated the relocation of couch grass and one Cotton Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) elsewhere in the Square, and the planting of a new Kaffir

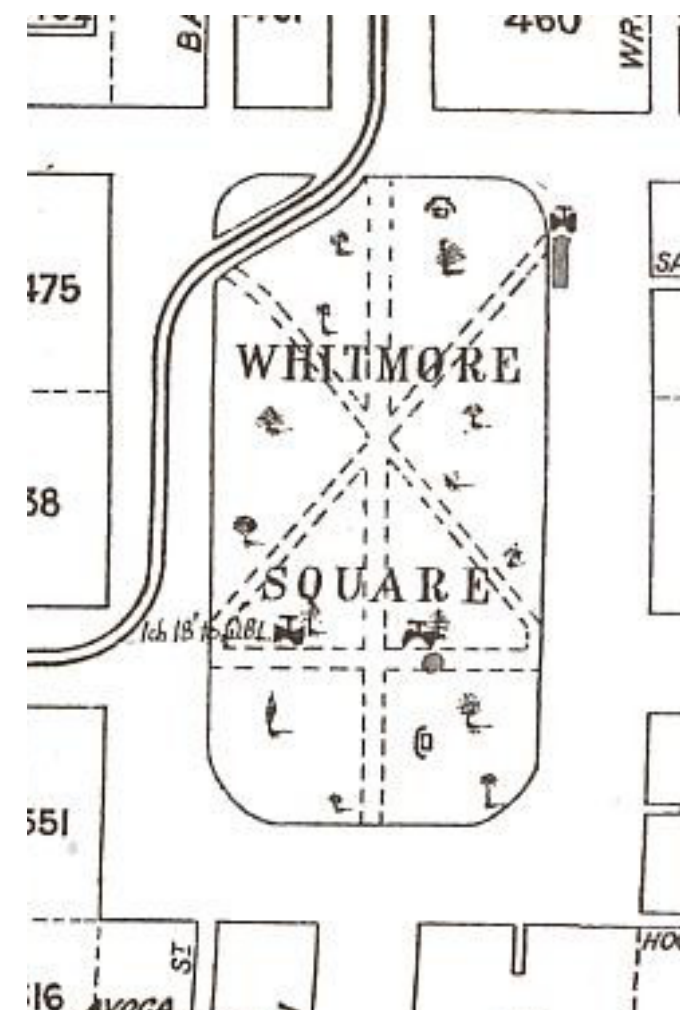
Apple (*Dovyalis caffra*) hedge along the new northern edge. The avenue of Pepper Trees (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*) connecting Wright to Sturt streets was extensively pollarded in 1912, and a storm-damaged elderly Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) replaced by a Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*) specimen (*Annual Report* 1910, p. 51; 1911, p. 64; 1912, p. 98).

In April 1913 Alderman (also Mayor/Lord Mayor) Lewis Cohen first proposed the removal of all iron palisading fencing around the Squares and Gardens in the City requesting Mayor John Lavington Bonython to consider what options were viable. Mayor Lavington Bonython replied, noting that the municipality's streets were still being used as stock routes for sheep and cattle, but also his sympathy with the aesthetic rationale behind the question, that:

1. The removal of the fences round Victoria, Hindmarsh, Hurtle, Whitmore, Light and Wellington Squares could not be considered at the present time on account of the large number of persons who kept cows within the City. ...
2. The removal of the fences round the above-named Squares was not within the bounds of practical politics at the present time, for the further reason that sheep were driven from the North Terrace Markets every week to the butchers' shops throughout the City and Suburbs, and if the fences were removed while such sheep-driving continued, the lawns inside the Squares would be ruined.
3. The same remarks, applied to the fences round the Reserves on North Terrace and the North Terrace Gardens generally. ...
5. The light palisading fences round the flower beds in the centre of Victoria Square were put there designedly about fourteen years ago; prior to that time the flower beds were trampled upon and ruined.
6. Last year the Town Clerk made an experiment by removing a small portion of the fencing round the North Terrace Gardens between the University Grounds and the Jubilee Exhibition Ground. The experiment proved to be disastrous, as within three months the lawn was practically ruined by persons making short cuts across it, and the Town Clerk had to have the fence replaced.
7. When the Abbatoirs were open, and the new Stock Markets at Gepp's Cross, it would be possible to remove the fencing round Victoria Square, because that locality was less affected by wandering cows, but if this should be done in the near future, it would most certainly entail the Council in heavy cost for dwarf walls to protect the outer edges of the lawns. The cost would run into approximately £1,500 at least (*Annual Report* 1913, pp. 53-54).

In conclusion Mayor Lavington Bonython recorded that "he was quite in accord ..." with Cohen "from the aesthetic appearance of the Squares ... yet he was constrained to counsel caution in a policy which would be costly and might lead to disaster in the Gardens which were such a source of pride to the citizens and delight to visitors." With this policy determination, the matter of the removal of the palisading did not re-surface until 1916 in various forms as proposals (*Annual Report* 1913, pp. 53-55; 1916, p. 32).

Throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s Pelzer undertook minor improvement works in Whitmore Square. In 1916 a portion of a Kaffir Apple (*Dovyalis caffra*) died due to a major gas pipe leak. Gas leaks and the subsequent poisoning of adjacent plants were common on the 1910s-20s. Additional thinning of the Pepper (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*) tree avenues occurred in 1917, and a new toolshed was erected in 1921 (*Annual Report* 1916, p. 44; 1917, p. 41; 1921, p. 37).



Figure

Extract of a *Map of Adelaide* prepared by the Corporation's City Engineers Department dated 1917 depicting the layout of the Square and the excision undertaken in the north-western corner of the Square to enable the construction of an electric tram line. The footprint of this excision exist today as no tree planting has been undertaken in the void once it was reclaimed by the Corporation back to the Square park. Note also the original axial pathway system with a minor union jack pathway system laid on top. Tree planting detail is conceptual only. Source: ACC Archives.

In 1922 Pelzer wrote an overview on the condition of the Squares generally noting that they were "well maintained" but still room for improvement if not remodelling. His concerns were with the style of the design, the "large, unsightly Pine (*Pinus* ssp), Pepper (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*), Lagunaria (*Lagunaria patersonii*), Moreton Bay trees (*Ficus macrophylla*) trees, etc.," that characterised the Squares and which were now "totally unfit for City Squares." Pelzer's desire was for large scale renovations, pointing the success of the mass removal of Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonii*) trees in Victoria Square and Pine (*Pinus* ssp) and Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) in Wellington Square that had "very much improved" the Squares. This argument was again re-stated by Pelzer in his 1927 *Annual Report* to the Corporation wherein he pointed to the "great number of ill-shaped, stunted trees," particularly in Light and Whitmore Squares, the need for palisade fence removal, and Square remodelling (*Annual Report* 1922, p. 26; 1927, p. 29).



Figure
Extract of a *Plan Showing Improved Pavements* in the City of Adelaide as prepared by the City Engineer dated 14 November 1927 that depicts the configuration of Wellington Square untouched by electric tram lines. Note the extant pedestrian system that accords with previous plans. Source: ACC Archives.

In October 1930 the Corporation called for tenders for the purchase and removal of the Whitmore Square palisade fencing (*Annual Report 1930-31*, p. 21).

On 29 February 1932 Pelzer retired and the Corporation commenced a reorganisation of the City Gardener's Branch (*Annual Report 1931-32*, p. 27). Following Pelzer's retirement a sequence of gardeners and a change of commitment to the gardens and the Park Lands appears evident throughout Adelaide notwithstanding the Centenary of South Australia celebrations in 1936 (*Annual Report 1935-36*, p. 37).

On 15 April 1935 the Corporation appointed A Stanley Orchard FRHS to replace Pelzer to the re-titled and relegated position as Curator of Parks & Gardens. Orchard brought to the position "theoretical and practical training and experience in England," with varied work experience in New South Wales in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, and Victoria. Orchard passed away suddenly on 15 March 1939 (*Annual Report 1933-34*, p. 33; 1938-39, p. 8).



Figure
Extract of a 1936 aerial photograph of metropolitan Adelaide illustrating the scope of mature tree cover in Whitmore Square, the tramline that dissected the north-western corner of the Square. The pedestrian circulation system within the Square is obscured by the tree canopies. Source: University of Adelaide.

Orchard was immediately requested to bring forward a remodelling plan for Whitmore Square for the Corporation's consideration. He proposed a complete remodelling "to comply with present requirements" as established by Pelzer. These works included, removal of the old pathway system and its replacement with a diagonal pathway system, retention of existing north-south and east-west pathways, consideration of covering over the existing open drain, the removal of 16 pines (*Pinus* spp), the felling of all Pepper (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*) trees, a new tree planting program, and the reconditioning of all lawns. The Corporation approved these works, including the removal of 86 trees, and the planting of 39 "English-ash" (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees (*Annual Report 1935-36*, pp. 35-36).

Orchard reported on the progress of these works in 1937 as follows:

In Whitmore Square the open drain previously existing there has been converted into a pipe drain, filled in and grassed over. A new footpath has been laid across the north-western corner, 86 trees removed, as authorized, and lawn areas reconditioned. The replanting of trees as replacements of those removed has yet to be carried out (*Annual Report 1936-37*, p. 21).

Unfortunately Orchard does not indicate what tree species he was felling, where, and what species he was replacing them with but the Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) no longer exist today.

Near the end of the Second World War, in late 1944, Alderman (later Lord Mayor) John McLeay turned the Corporation's attention to the quality of its Squares. The funds expended on the Squares had dwindled, many of the trees planted in the 1860s-70s and in the 1880s-1930s were aging or in poor quality, and much of the Squares had been appropriated for air raid construction and training purposes. McLeay invigorated the Parks & Gardens Committee and undertook a tour of all the Squares with recently appointed City Gardener Benjamin Bone. In terms of Whitmore Square the Committee recommended:

- ❖ *No finality reached. Alderman McLeay and Councillor Peet in favour of all trees being removed* (ACC Minutes of Parks & Gardens Committee, 17 November 1944).

Bone was also influenced by the policy directions of the Parks & Gardens Committee. In April 1952 the Committee reviewed the Square, on site, and concluded that "this square could be improved by the judicious removal of certain trees ... [and that] the lawns should also be top-dressed ..." (ACC Parks & Gardens Committee Minutes 17 April 1952). Again, in early 1953 the Committee undertook an on-site tour of each of the Square forming several recommendations as to tree, garden and lawn works. In terms of Whitmore Square the Committee concluded:

- ❖ *The regrading of the lawns to a more suitable height adjacent to the footpaths, together with the top-dressing of the lawns was approved of this Square.*
- ❖ *It was also considered the Square would be improved by the removal of trees ... [Norfolk Island Hibiscus] ... *Lagunaria Patersoni* 6 ... *Pepper Tree [Schinus aerea var molle]* 2 ... *White Cedar [Melia azedarach var australasica]* 1 (ACC Parks & Gardens Committee Minutes 31 March 1953).*

These recommendations appear to have been actioned.

Bone was very much influenced by the policy directions of the Parks & Gardens Committee as well as by the Town Clerk, Colonel William Veale. It appears that Bone unsuccessfully used this recommendation to propose a major renovation to the Square's landscape. As part of these works Bone first undertook an inventory of what trees existed in the Square. This list makes for interesting reading as it indicates what species Pelzer had planted in the Square in the 1890s-1930s. Why they were removed is not stated but it may be a mixture of reasons: age, health, disruption to avenue in design, disruption to new water service works, etc. The specimens include 29 Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonii*), 14 Pepper Trees (*Schinus aerea var molle*), 2 Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), 14 English Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), 2 White Kurrajong (*Brachychiton discolor*) 1 River Sheoak (*Casuarina verticillata*), 8 White Cedar (*Melia azedarach var australasica*), 8 Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), 6 Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), 2 Illawarra Flame Trees (*Brachychiton acerifolius*), 6 English Elms (*Ulmus procera*), 1 Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), 1 Pagoda Tree (*Sophora japonica*), 6 Southern Nettle Trees (*Celtis australis*), and 5 Olives (*Olea europaea*) of which 6 Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonii*), 2 Pepper Trees (*Schinus aerea var molle*), and 1 White Cedar (*Melia azedarach var australasica*) were recommended for felling and grubbing. As part of this tree grubbing, Council resolved to plant in their stead 4 Hill's Figs (*Ficus microcarpa var hillii*), 4 *Pittosporum* ssp, 1 Pink Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus x acerifolius*) and 1 Indian Coral (*Erythrina indica*) (ACC Archive, File 888/52, Report by Bone; Minutes of the Parks & Gardens Committee 20 July 1953).

During 1966 the Corporation considered recommendations to change various street names in the municipality. Originally, Morphett Street in nomenclature terminated at Whitmore Square, and Brown Street continued between the Square and South Terrace. Originally, Pulteney Street physically and in nomenclature terminated at Hurtle Square, and Brown Street continued between the Square and South Terrace. This matter arose again in January 1967 when the

Corporation was approving works to construct new fountains in Hindmarsh Square and Light Square wherein the Corporation considered naming these fountains Hanson and Brown respectively and to action the street name changes, with another option being that the new fountain proposed for Rymill Park be named the Sir Richard Hanson Fountain. In final deliberations the Corporation determined to proceed with the name changes and to erect plaques to honour Sir Richard Hanson and John Brown Esq in Hurtle and Whitmore Squares respectively (ACC Parks & Gardens Committee Minutes 23 January 1967; File No F.476; 299/66; 2218/63; Docket No 2076A/27).

Despite the interest of the Parks & Garden Committee in the 1950s little continuing interest in the quality of Whitmore Square persisted. The Director of the Parks & Gardens, Val Ellis, in 1967, summarised the condition of the Whitmore Square in positive light concluding that:

It is considered the standard of maintenance and presentation of Whitmore Square compares more than favourably with other Squares and road fringed gardens contained within the various Wards of the City. ...

Comment has been made on the unkerbed fringes of the lawn are of Whitmore Square, and whilst this point is conceded, it is considered the lawn edges of Light Square and the large bare patches within the lawn areas in both Hurtle and Hindmarsh Squares, are much more unattractive. ...

Again in contrast to Hurtle and Hindmarsh Squares, the existing tree plantings in Whitmore Square are considered well spaces and of good growth. The trees are a mixture of deciduous, evergreen and flowering varieties, providing ample shade in the hot summer months, colour at varying period during the year and penetration of winter sunshine.

*Horticulturally, the buttressed root formation of the Moreton Bay 'fig' [*Ficus macrophylla*] is most interesting, and the removal of the particular tree in Whitmore Square, or similar trees in any other park area should not be considered unless absolutely essential.*

Records show that a number of this particular variety of tree have been removed from the streets and parks of Adelaide, and care should be taken to see that the 'fig' tree should not be lost to the City's Park Lands.

The toilets in the Square have been repainted, and though these buildings are old and some of the walls are cracked, they are quite functional. By comparison, public gardens such as Wellington Square, Brougham Gardens and light's Vision, the latter of which draws considerable visitation by tourists, do not have toilet facilities of any kind.

Existing lighting in the Square is carried by both stobie poles and old style metal posts, the latter being of quaint character and deserving of retention. ...

Summarising it could be said that Whitmore Square could be greatly improved by the retention in width of the central and external pathways, possible modifications to the existing lighting and the replacement of the existing toilets with a more modern building. The appearance of the Square could also be enhanced by the introduction of water effects in the form of a fountain ... (Memorandum Val Ellis to Town Clerk, 6 December 1967).

The memorandum, although specifically discussing Whitmore Square, is interesting as Ellis was clearly seeking to conserve the existing Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) trees in the Square and to prevent the Corporation considering the removal of this species elsewhere in the parks and gardens. It may have arisen from a policy drive by Councillor Harvey in 1966-67 to

undertake a “re-development of Whitmore Square” which was partially linked to the erection of a plaque to honour John Brown Esq. (ACC Archive File No F.476; 299/66).

Harvey stated in a Corporation meeting, as part of deliberations as to the placement of the plaque, considerable concern about the condition of the Square, as follows:

Whitmore Square, I think, could well be called Cinderella Square because ... we find acres of scraggy trees that are obviously planted at random and badly in need of attention. Paths are of rough topping and they lead in all directions without any particular system about them and the lawn abutting the outside perimeter of the Square is very rough and uneven and have obviously never been boarded. The toilets are of an age that would make them eligible for reclamation by the National Trust and the fittings inside of them are similarly set up. Now the lighting posts – they are reeling at odd angles and there are small incandescent globes which give the park a very dark, eery and sinister look after dark and when you see the Police cars darting around in the Square you can't help feeling that this is a good setting for a Conan Doyle thriller. ... The huge gnarled roots of the Moreton Bay fig trees are jutting out all over the paths and the seats are unpainted and badly aligned and a rusty 44 gallon drum is chained to a post in the Square. ... These squares, I maintain are priceless jewels in the crown of this City, which is one of the most beautiful in the world. We have a Director here of great imagination and intellect and intelligence and each day parts of our City are being transformed into places of great beauty. For some reason or other this Square has been completely neglected and each day it gets worse (Councillor Harvey, Council Minutes 27 November 1967).

In 1968-69 the Corporation proposed the construction of a new toilet block in the approximate centre of Whitmore Square to a design by Dickson Platten Architects. The new toilets incorporating a storage area were costed at \$7,000 for construction but were not actioned (ACC Archives File No F.230/E). At the same time, an outdoor draughts or chess set was proposed and constructed in the Square that involved a 16 feet x 16 feet (4.8 x 4.8m) board of slate and white concrete slabs with galvanised iron draught pieces made by the Council plumbers (ACC Archives File No F54.25/75)

In 1973 the Corporation considered a further recommendation to erect a new toilet in Whitmore Square, but deferred the matter pending the recommendations of studies by Urban Systems Corporation. The design incorporated Carey Gully stone walling and a brown terra cotta tiled roof (ACC Archives Plan P.523; File F.230/G).

In 1979 the City Planner's Department, of the Corporation, considered Whitmore Square Precinct as an Action Project. The focus of the study was upon the residential content of the Precinct rather than the Square itself, although it was observed that the “Square ... is the main focus of the Precinct ... [and had been subject to] some additional planting ... this year” (Adelaide 1979, p. 10).

Amery (1997, p. 4; 2002, p. 270) proposed the toponym *Ivariti* for the Square. The name *Ivariti* honours *Ivariti*, or ‘Amelia Taylor’ or ‘Amelia Savage’, who was the daughter of *Ityamaiitpinna* or ‘King Rodney’. The name means ‘misty rain’ (Amery & Williams 2002, p. 272; Draper *et al* 2005, p. 48). Tom Gara (1990) has summarised the life of *Ivariti* as:

Ivariti (also known as Everety, Ivarity and Amelia) means “a gentle, misty rain” in the Kaurua language. Ivariti was born in the 1840s in Port Adelaide, and “lived her early life in the fringe camps around Adelaide and the ration depots in the hills and then found her way to Port McLeay and then Point Pearce. Late in life, after her marriage in 1920, she left Port Pearce and was able to lead a relatively independent life among the white community in Moonta, supplementing her husband's pension and her own rations with what she could earn from her handicrafts” (Gara 1990:100). She is often referred to as “the last woman of the Adelaide tribe”, and has been referred to by some Kaurua people as a

*legendary figure, “one spoken of in reverent tones.” Many of the older white residents of Moonta remember “Princess Amelia” with genuine affection; the little old woman, with dark skin, snowy white hair and a happy laugh, clearly created a lasting impression on the children and teenagers in the town during the 1920's” (Gara 1990:98-99). Ivariti eventually died on Christmas day in 1929 (Amery 1997:33) [sic.] (Draper *et al* 2005, p. 97).*

Currently Whitmore Square is an amalgam of Picturesque and Gardenesque planting styles as established by O'Brien and Pelzer, with a strong Victorian character due to the pathway system and the extant Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) trees.