CITY OF BALLARAT

CITY OVAL MASTER PLAN

Draft Summary Report

Proudly working with and for our community



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this project is to be located, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Morton+Co Architects is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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Ballarat VIC 3350
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Vision

Aims & Objectives

The new Master Plan will establish a clear strategic direction for planning, facility provision, site development, and future programming opportunities within the City Oval precinct. It will ensure the provision of suitable, equitable, and contemporary facilities for user groups and the wider community. A key objective is to enhance this important community asset while preserving its sporting, social, environmental and heritage values.

The Ballarat City Oval precinct currently supports a range of sporting groups and provides facilities for Australian Rules Football, netball, lawn bowls, athletics, and AFL umpiring. The City Oval site is a place of great social and cultural significance for the broader community due to its central location and close proximity to Lake Wendouree. In addition to its sporting functions, the precinct also hosts a number of community events including markets and festivals.

As part of the masterplanning process, a range of components have been reviewed to assess their condition and suitability for current and projected community needs. These include heritage management, building locations and design, surfaces and infrastructure, vehicle and pedestrian movement, car parking, fencing and lighting, passive recreation opportunities, accessibility, female-friendly facilities and multifunctional uses. Consideration has also been given to shared public facilities, enhanced landscape, asset renewal and rationalisation, and the interface with surrounding residential and community infrastructure.

The City Oval Master Plan process has included a comprehensive review of existing documentation, as listed in the Appendix, including community engagement reports, the Recreation Infrastructure Plan 2024-2039, other key strategic documents, land ownership details, overlays, and previous masterplanning relating to the site.

Key aspects of the masterplanning process have been categorized under the following headings:

1. Stakeholder Engagement
2. Site Assessment
3. Heritage
4. Design Guidelines
5. Connections
6. Opportunities
7. Master Plan
8. Implementation

History

Indigenous History

The area surrounding Lake Wendouree lies within the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people, part of the broader Kulin Nation. Wadawurrung Country extends across a large area of central and western Victoria, including parts of present-day Melbourne, the Bellarine Peninsula, Geelong, Ballarat, and surrounding regions. Lake Wendouree was a seasonal camping place for the Wadawurrung people, particularly during summer, where they actively managed the landscape and its natural resources, including the reed beds around the lake. The area holds strong cultural and historical significance as part of the long-standing connection between the Wadawurrung people and their Country.

Gold Rush & Colonisation

In 1837, settler Archibald Yuille established a pastoral run called 'Ballaarat' near the swamp later known as Lake Wendouree. In 1851, gold discoveries at Buninyong and Clunes sparked the beginning of one of the richest gold rushes in the world. Ballarat quickly grew into a major mining town of the Victorian Gold Rush era, attracting thousands of people seeking wealth.

However, by the second half of the 19th century, gold became harder to find and less profitable, forcing Ballarat to adapt in order to survive. Large areas of former mining land and crown allotments became available, encouraging the development of schools, churches, and other important institutions, as well as new residential areas. Unlike many other Victorian gold-mining towns, Ballarat successfully diversified its economy and continued to prosper throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.



Ballarat First Survey, W S Urquhart 1852
Source: VPRS 8168 P0005 FEAT 665A

Development of the Football Ground

Before becoming the City Oval, the site was part of the Royal Saxon Gold Mining Company, which operated deep lead quartz mining during the Gold Rush era. The land was leased from Thomas Bath, a prominent Ballarat businessman and property investor who retained ownership until the land was subdivided. A portion of the site was later purchased by the council to establish the City Oval

Mining operations on the corner of Sturt and Pleasant Streets did not heavily disturb the land in the area known as "Saxon's Paddock" which was then able to be used for sporting activities. In 1876, the Ballarat Star newspaper reported that Thomas Bath had granted the Ballarat Football Club access to the "Saxon's Paddock" for future matches. The ground was considered highly suitable because of its close proximity to the town centre.

Founded in 1860, the Ballarat Football Club is recognised as the third-oldest continuously operating football club in Australia. The club transformed the paddock into a proper football venue by clearing and levelling the ground at its own expense and constructing an early spectator stand, although this original structure no longer survives. The arrangement continued under a lease from Thomas Bath until the council purchased the land around twenty years later and formally established the City Oval. Football matches at the ground became extremely popular, with crowds of up to 8,000 spectators attending games. The City Oval remained the home of the Ballarat Football Club until the club relocated to Alfredton in 1994.

Council Ownership

During the late 1870s, discussions began within the Ballarat City Council about purchasing Saxon's Paddock. Local newspapers reported ongoing debates over whether the council should spend a large amount of money acquiring the land and developing sporting facilities. Some argued that the land could instead provide economic benefits to the city through residential development, with housing built and leased to generate income.

Supporters of the purchase, however, believed the site should be preserved as a public recreation space. They argued that the paddock already played an important role as a sporting ground and community gathering place, particularly for young people and local football clubs. This vision ultimately prevailed, with the council deciding that the long-term civic and social value of recreation facilities outweighed the potential financial returns of housing development.

In 1897, the Ballarat City Council officially purchased Saxon's Paddock with the ambition of creating ***"one of the best recreation grounds in the colony."*** (Ballarat Star, 28 July, 1897)

Following the purchase, the ground was renamed City Oval. The next year, architects Clegg, Kell and Miller designed the grandstand that still stands at the venue today. Under council ownership, the City Oval became an important centre for sporting and community events throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries and continues to serve as an active community venue in Ballarat.



City Oval Precinct - 1933 Aerial
Source: City of Ballarat



Ballarat Goldfields Map by Asa Letourneau
Source: VPRS 8168 / P0002

User Expansion

Over time, the City Oval developed into more than just a football ground, becoming one of Ballarat's most recognisable community and sporting venues. A wide variety of organisations and clubs made use of the facilities and open space, with activities including cricket, lawn bowls, cycling, and croquet. The oval also hosted many community gatherings and public events such as fire brigade competitions, carnivals, concerts, and picnics, helping establish the site as a major social and cultural centre for the city.

Cricket was among the earliest sports played regularly at the ground. From 1875 the site hosted matches involving numerous local clubs, including Central, Soldiers Hill, Ballarat City Club, Ballarat Imperial, South Imperial, Waverley and Royal, the Press Cricket Club, and the Butchers. These matches drew local crowds and reinforced the paddock's growing importance as a sporting venue.

In the early 20th century, women in Ballarat campaigned for greater access to the city's expanding sporting infrastructure, feeling excluded from many of the facilities available at the time. This led to the establishment of the Ballarat Croquet Club in 1913. New croquet lawns were created at the site, along with club facilities and a "handsome pavilion." The croquet lawn was officially opened on 14 November 1914, providing women with opportunities to participate in organised sport and social recreation.

Lawn bowls also became an important activity at the City Oval precinct. In 1921, campaigns began to convert part of the park into a bowling green, leading to the creation of the City Oval Bowling Club as a male-only club. A decade later, in 1931, the City Oval Ladies Bowling Club was established and competed in statewide competitions alongside the men's club. Over time, the club evolved into a mixed organisation, reflecting broader social changes within the community.

Beyond organised sport, the City Oval hosted a wide range of entertainment and community events throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. Religious and cultural organisations regularly used the grounds, while concerts featuring visiting musicians and vocalists attracted large audiences. The site also became known for major public celebrations and spectacles, including fireworks displays, community carnivals, circuses, and picnics. Among the most famous attractions to visit the oval was Worth's Wild West Show, which brought large-scale entertainment to Ballarat and further strengthened the City Oval's role as a central gathering place for the community.

The City Oval precinct continues to evolve as an important community space into the 21st Century. In 2024 the Intercultural Garden was established at the corner of Sturt and Pleasant Streets. This community place further reinforces the City Oval's role as Ballarat's civic heart, by creating a permanent and inclusive space where cultural identities are celebrated, traditions are shared and community life is enriched.



Postcard: Band Contest, City Oval - Ballarat
Source: Gold Rush Collections 83.8283



Final For The Highland Day Ballarat Sent By J. Keith
Source: Gold Rush Collections 078.80



"Great National Eisteddfod"
City Oval, 1912.
Source: Gold Rush Collections # 900820



Unidentified football team, City Oval, Ballarat
Photographer: Charles Edward Boyles, c.1940-1950s
Source: SLV H2008.122/51

Heritage

City Oval Precinct

The City Oval precinct is located within **Heritage Overlay HO164** of the City of Ballarat Planning Scheme and is recorded as historically significant at local level.

> *"The Precinct is recognized and highly valued by the local community for residential, educational, religious, and recreational reasons. The City Oval, home to the Ballarat Football Club and including the grandstand, tennis and croquets clubs, is of considerable social significance. It was originally the site of the Royal Saxon Company's mine and has been used for recreational activities since the 1850s."*
>
> - WEST BALLARAT HERITAGE PRECINCT STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FROM THE BALLARAT PLANNING SCHEME

The Broader Precinct

The City Oval is part of a broader precinct that reflects the strong civic pride and urban beautification programs that shaped Ballarat during the 19th century. Wide streets, tree-lined avenues, parks, gardens, and substantial public institutions enhanced by major avenue plantings and durable bluestone infrastructure were features that helped create Ballarat's distinctive character as a grand provincial city.

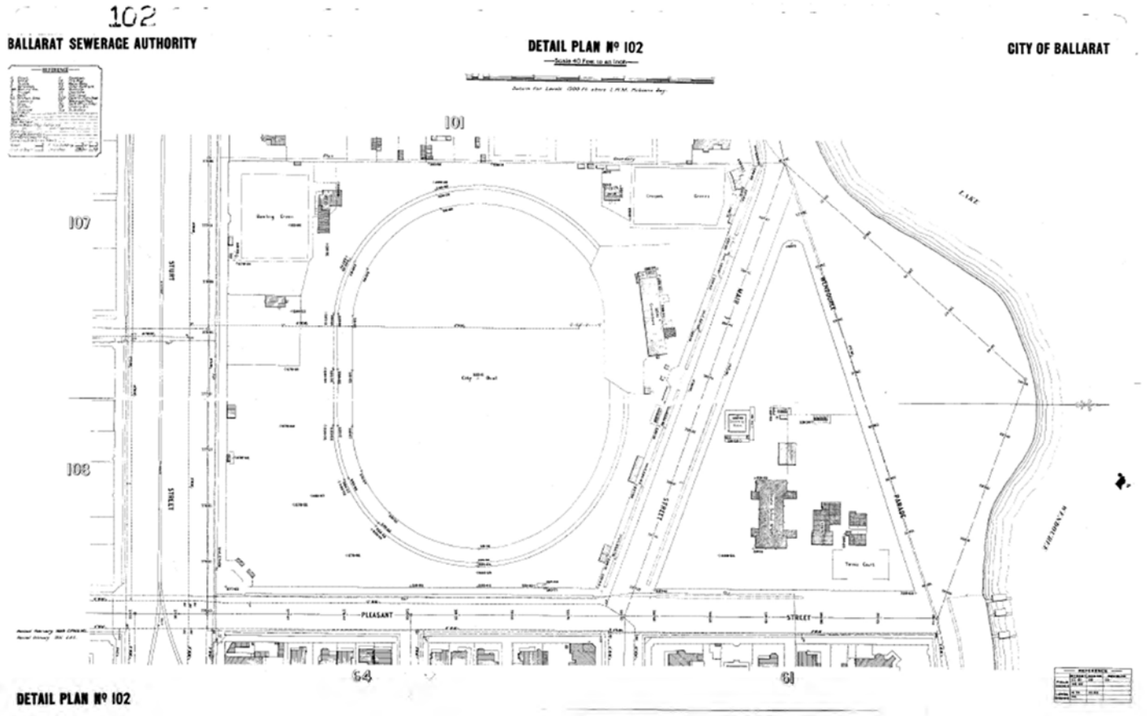
Developed from the 1850s onward, the site is historically significant because it connects several important themes in Ballarat's social, architectural, and urban development, linking the city's gold mining origins with its later civic and recreational growth.

Heritage Management

It is proposed that Heritage Management / Heritage Impact Statements are to be undertaken as they apply to any future upgrade developments for historic buildings, landscape and infrastructure on the site.

Heritage and effective heritage management underpins the development of the Master Plan. Protecting and prescribing significant elements of this historic site (including natural and built environments) is fundamental to the future vision for this precinct. Thus ensuring that valuable assets and cultural landscapes are maintained for future generations.

Refer to **Heritage Advisor Assessment** in the Appendix - which includes the following historic infrastructure on site:



City of Ballarat Sewerage Plan, 1931



'The First Greens Opening Event in 1922'
November 14th 1922
Source: City Oval Bowls Club via Ballarat Times



The City Oval Bowling Green, Ballarat VIC
Rose Stereograph Co, c.1920-1954.
Source: SLV H32492/8531

Grandstand

Construction: 1898

Heritage Overlay: HO108

The City Oval Grandstand was constructed in 1897-98, soon after the Ballarat City Council took ownership of the City Oval site. Designed by the architectural firm Clegg, Kell and Miller, the grandstand reflected the council's ambition to create one of the finest sporting venues in the colony. The foundation stone was laid on 13 September 1897 by outgoing mayor Alexander Bell, who declared that the ground was intended to become "second to no sports ground in the Colony" and believed the investment would eventually repay the council through its success and popularity.

The grandstand quickly attracted praise for its scale and quality. Newspaper reports at the time described it as a handsome structure superior to most sporting grandstands in Melbourne outside the Melbourne Cricket Ground enclosure.

Today, the City Oval Grandstand remains one of the most elaborate surviving Victorian-era grandstands in the state and is recognised for its historical and architectural significance. It is particularly noted for its distinctive roof design, with 'pagoda style' lanterns and tall cast iron column supports. The rear of the grandstand features two timber framed stairs and is finished with corrugated galvanised sheeting. The grandstand is protected under an individual Heritage Overlay (HO108) and is also listed on the National Estate Register, reflecting its importance as a landmark in Ballarat's sporting and architectural history.

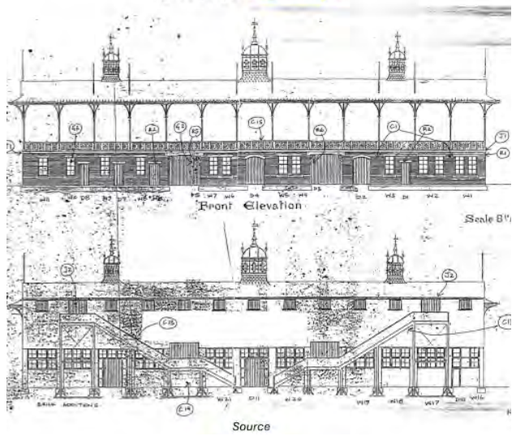
> ***"The Ballarat City Oval Grandstand is one of the most elaborate and impressive surviving grandstands in Victoria. Its elegant curvilinear roof with pavilions and supporting iron structure is significant in terms of both architectural design and technical accomplishment.***
>
> ***In comparison with the modest stand at the Eastern Oval it is an eloquent expression of west Ballarat's dominance over the eastern part of the city.***
>
> ***The Grandstand is a strong landmark in an essentially flat residential area. It has a scenic relationship and a recreational relationship with the adjacent Lake Wendouree."***
>
> - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FROM THE NATIONAL ESTATE DATABASE



City Oval Grandstand



Grandstand at the City Oval, Ballarat (1967)
Source: Victorian Collections 10604



Grandstand Elevations, 1898
Original Elevations of Grandstand by Clegg, Kell & Miller Architects, held by the City of Ballarat

Bowling Clubhouse

Construction: c. Late 1920s - Early 1930s

Established as a Mens only club in 1921

Joined on the site by a Ladies club in 1931.

This single gabled roofed building is a moderately intact example of an inter-war era community built recreation building in Ballarat and should be retained and protected.

The Bowling Clubhouse has been developed and altered over the years however this existing building presents significant scope for upgrade and improvements relating to accessibility, female friendly facilities and improved amenities. Potential redevelopment and expansions could include:

- Improved clubrooms
- Function spaces
- Storage
- Amenities



Bowling Clubhouse

Croquet Cottage

Construction: c. 1910s - 1920s (no confirmed date)

Croquet Club established in 1913.

Croquet Lawn was formally opened in November 1914.

This single storey, weatherboard Edwardian-style building is in good condition with some original features intact. It is proposed that this building should be retained and protected.

The Croquet Cottage has potential to be enhanced through restoration / refurbishment and improved landscaping treatment to provide:

- Potential (gatehouse) identity at this location
- Netball facilities
- Storage



Croquet Cottage

Former Ladies Bowling Clubhouse

Construction: c. 1930's (no confirmed date)

Ladies Bowling Club founded in 1931.

This single storey timber framed building is in reasonable condition, however, has been substantially altered over the years. For this reason, it is supported that this does not need to be retained, however with the appropriate treatment and creative adaptive use, this may potentially be adapted to an open pavilion offering shade, shelter and highlight pedestrian links to the City Oval precinct.



Former Ladies Bowling Clubhouse

Bowling Club Drinking Fountain

Construction: c. 1940's (no confirmed date)

The painted cast-steel drinking fountain at the entrance of the Bowling Club remains in reasonable condition through showing some surface rust. Recommended that this be retained, repaired and protected.



Bowling Club Drinking Fountain

Entrance Gate Posts & Ticket Boxes

Construction: c. 1890's (no confirmed date)

The four timber gate posts and two single storey ticket boxes are in good condition. The ticket boxes present as an intact example of Edwardian era stadium architecture. It is recommended to retain the posts and boxes.

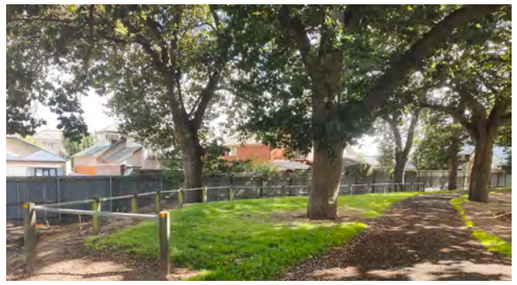


Mair Street Entrance Gates & Ticket Boxes

Landscape / Trees

A range of deciduous exotic trees (inc. oaks and elms) have been established throughout the precinct over the years.

This creates an impressive, encircling landscape feature that contributes significantly to the character of the oval and precinct.



Landscape: existing trees & pathway

Boundary Fences

Construction: c. Mid-1900s (no confirmed date)

A corrugated galvanised sheeted fence is located along the Mair Street frontage. It is recommended that a section of the fence be retained, however there is opportunity for other sections to be removed to enhance visibility, connection and open up the precinct to facilitate improved circulation.



Mair Street Boundary Fences

Paths & Pavement

Construction: c. Various (no confirmed date)

The paths and pavements at the City Oval site have existed in various forms and materials across the sites history. Due to inconclusive heritage information, it is suggested the paths may be altered to support the precinct Master Plan and further improve the pedestrian experience and improve paths of travel across the site.

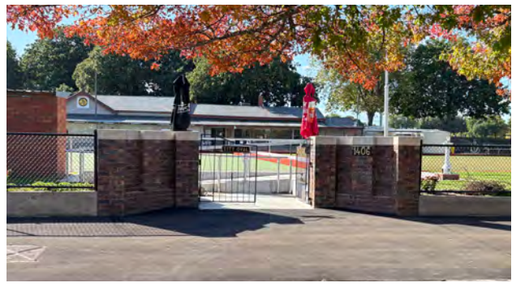


Landscape: existing trees & pathway

Bowling Club Gates & Fence

Construction: c. 1930's (no confirmed date)

Brick gate piers, steel gates and chain wire fence with rendered base form Sturt street entry to the Bowling Club. It is recommended that these be retained.



Bowling Club, Entry Gates (Sturt Street)

Shade Structures

A range of mid-century shade structures exist across the site, all in varying conditions. The opportunity exists to remove / upgrade these structures to facilitate improved shade and seating opportunities throughout the precinct.



Shade Structures, Bowling Club

Stakeholder Engagement

Phase One of the development of the City Oval Precinct Master Plan involved the City of Ballarat undertaking a stakeholder engagement process with the following user groups:

- Redan Football Netball Club
- Greater Western Victoria Rebels
- Ballarat Football Netball League
- Ballarat Football Umpires Association
- Ballarat Athletics Club
- City Oval Bowls Club
- Ballarat Cricket Association
- Meals on Wheels
- Children's Think Tank
- Pleasant Street Primary School
- Ballarat Clarendon College
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council

Stakeholder Comments

Individual sessions were held with all key internal and external stakeholders (for further information please refer to the **City Oval Master Plan Precinct Phase One Engagement Report).** Below is a summary of the findings made by the City of Ballarat from this process:

Tenant Clubs

Tenant clubs and organisations identified the following key elements to be considered within the Master Plan.

Accessibility & Inclusivity

- Significant concerns about steep terrain and poor access for mobility-impaired users.
- Need for accessible paths, distributed public toilets to service all parts of the reserve including bowls, and female-friendly change rooms for netball and football umpires.

Sporting Infrastructure

- Upgrades to netball change rooms, umpire facilities, goal netting and two-storey coaches' boxes.
- Addition of second netball court has been noted as a priority for stakeholders.
- Saxon House was identified as a crucial central multi-use hub for league administration, clubs, events, and community functions and should be prioritised for shared use for football, netball, athletics, and umpires to optimise space and cost.

Heritage & Character

- Preservation of heritage and prioritising maintenance of heritage facilities.
- Beautification of fencing and landscaping to enhance aesthetics.

Traffic, Parking & Safety

- Congestion at entry / exit points; turning circles, and pedestrian zones.
- Removal of vehicle access in front of grandstand and Saxon House for safety.
- Improved lighting for security and pedestrian safety.

Event Activation & Community Use

- Desire for markets, concerts, and social events to activate the reserve year-round.
- Passive recreation spaces (playgrounds, pump tracks, seating, shelters).
- Improved power supply for events (food vans, screens, audio sound systems).

Shared Use & Collaboration

- Strong support for shared clubrooms and multi-purpose spaces for all clubs to use.
- Opportunities for summer activation (athletics, AFL 9s).
- Partnerships between clubs for co-location and cost-sharing.

Amenities & Comfort

- Additional and upgraded public toilets across the site.
- Tiered spectator seating, shaded areas, and water fountains.
- Greater reserve access from key surrounding areas such as Lake Wendouree through to Sturt Street.
- Waste management improvements and secure storage for equipment.

Notes

- The Ballarat Cricket Association's request for installation of a turf wicket has been noted; however, priority is proposed for alternate summer activation options. (Junior cricket activation may be further supported through the use of three pitches across the oval.)
- Request for second netball court noted - proposed hardcourt extension in preference.



Internal Departments at City of Ballarat

The following is a summary of conclusions along the key themes identified:

Access and Connectivity

- Improve traffic flow by upgrading entry / exit points to reduce congestion.
- Enhance pedestrian access by reducing fencing and improving crossings.
- Ensure safe and compliant pathways linking key areas (e.g., Intercultural Garden, Saxon House, public toilets).

Facility Rationalisation and Upgrades

- Consolidate outdated and non-compliant buildings.
- Upgrade Saxon House as a central multi-use hub for clubs and community.
- Provide compliant change rooms for umpires and netball players.

  Note: aligns with the City of Ballarat Recreation and Infrastructure Plan 2024-2039.

Community Activation and Year-Round Use

- Shift the main usage of the precinct from solely organised sport to broader community participation and recreation.
- Introduce family friendly zones, shaded play areas, and passive recreation spaces.
- Increase summer activation through usage such as athletics, markets, and events.

Heritage and Environmental Stewardship

- Preserve heritage listed structures (grandstand, façades) and significant trees.
- Integrate heritage principles into design and storytelling.
- Green hardstand areas and create walking loops connected to Lake Wendouree.

Safety and Amenity

- Relocate and upgrade public toilets for accessibility and safety.
- Install security lighting for paths and car parks.
- Improve passive surveillance through design changes.

Parking and Circulation

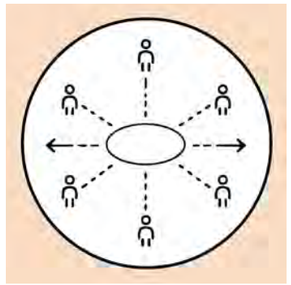
- Address parking pressures with formalised internal parking and green buffers.
- Explore options like partial road closures to Mair Street to expand green space.

Tenancy and Storage

- Formalise tenancy agreements for all clubs and seasonal users.
- Provide adequate storage for all tenant clubs and facilitate access to shared social spaces.

Design Guidelines

A number of key design principles have been developed through the Stakeholder Engagement process. These have been further refined as ‘Design Guidelines’ for the masterplanning process.



Connectivity & Access

Community connections, visibility and community access to be enhanced beyond the immediate precinct, encouraging increased connection, integration and accessibility.



Identity & Character

Build upon the existing identity and character of the City Oval Precinct with sensitivity and creativity to enhance this unique community asset.

Heritage & Natural Environment

Ensure that the heritage of the precinct, including both built and natural environments, is acknowledged, respected and retained with sensitivity.



Facilities / Infrastructure

Rationalisation of existing infrastructure on site to reduce, repair and re-use, and any new infrastructure to be carefully considered to inspire community appreciation for evolving historic precincts.

Sustainability

The sustainability vision extends beyond “do no harm”, to positively contribute to the surrounding environment and ecosystems by implementing sustainability measures across the precinct.



Diverse & Multi-use

Infrastructure and spaces to provide a diverse mix of gender equitable, family friendly facilities, opportunities and shared experiences.

Play & Recreation

Provide opportunities for inclusive, natural play and hardcourt recreation areas that complement the precinct’s built and natural environment.



Public Toilets

Provide strategically located public amenities to support accessibility, gender equity and visitor comfort.

Lighting & Amenity

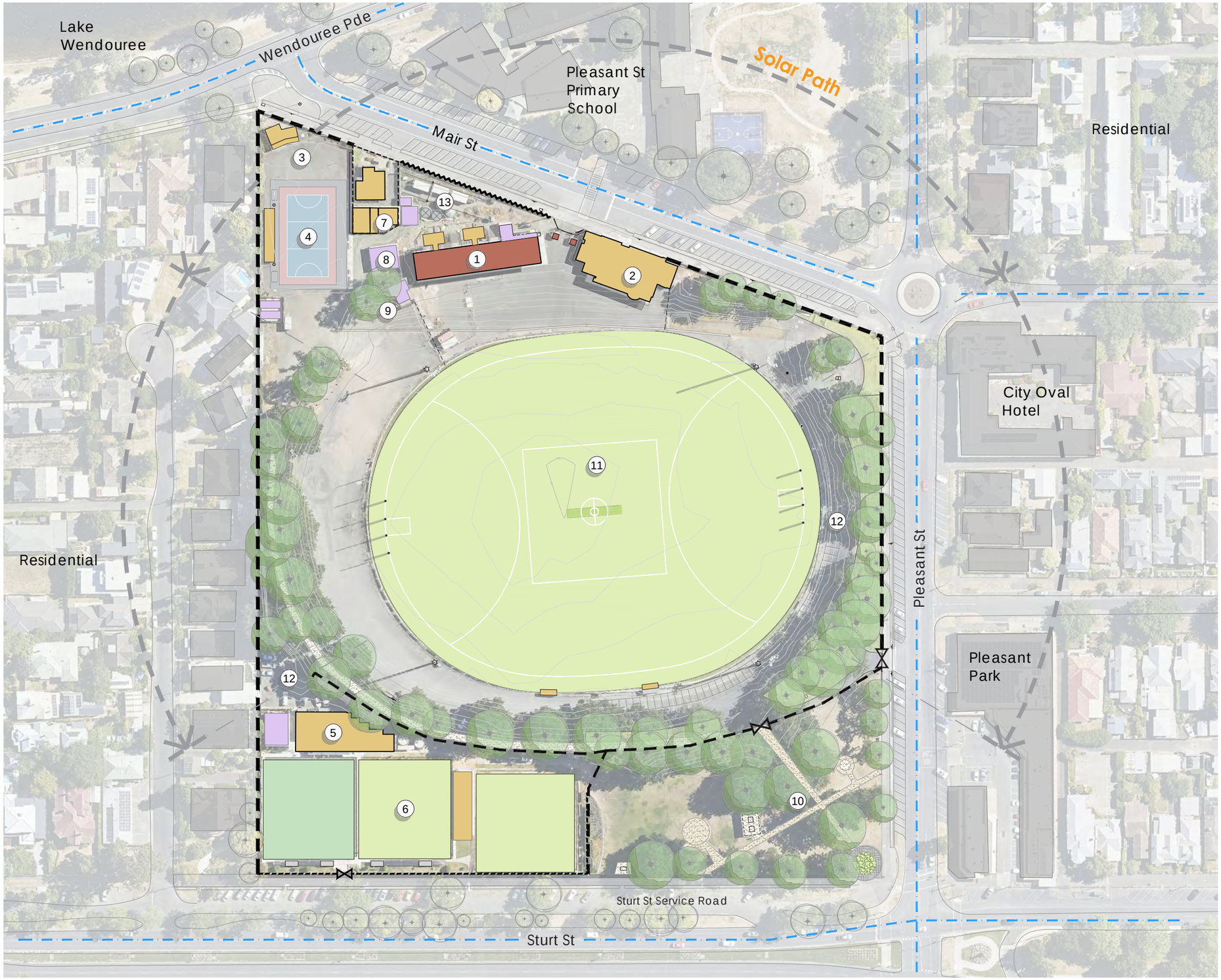
Enhance site lighting and public realm amenity, including consideration of extending existing lake track lighting to improve public safety and visitor experience.



Traffic / Parking

Improve vehicle circulation and site access, strengthen pedestrian and vehicle delineation, and formalise parking arrangements to support safety, efficiency, and legibility.

Site Assessment



LEGEND

- 1 Grandstand
- 2 Saxon House
- 3 Croquet Cottage (Netball Change)
- 4 Netball Facilities
- 5 Bowling Club
- 6 Bowling Greens & Pavilion
- 7 Former Residence
- 8 Public Toilets
- 9 Timekeeper & Canteen
- 10 Intercultural Garden
- 11 Oval
- 12 Existing Parking
- 13 Redundant Fire Track & Shedding
- Trees / Landscaping
- Existing Fencing & Gates
- Key Roads

Existing Conditions



Heritage Grandstand & Ticket Boxes



Former Residence on Mair St (Meals on Wheels)



Existing trees + bitumen adjacent Netball Courts



Existing pedestrian path along west side of the site



School Crossing on Mair Street



Existing Timekeepers Box, Canteen & Public Toilets



Bowling Club, existing green & shelter



Intercultural Garden, seating, shelter



Saxon House



Netball Court & Croquet Cottage



Bowling Club



Football Oval

Connections



LEGEND

Analysis of key community connections, visibility and circulation in and around the City Oval Precinct to enhance accessibility, integration and safety.

Pedestrian Connections
Identifying primary thoroughfares and community connections to key areas outside the City Oval Precinct. Enhance the experience of walkers, joggers & spectators by formalising a dedicated trail around the precinct.

Pedestrian Zones
Key areas of pedestrian-only, multi-purpose zones, enhancing safety & spectator experience. Improve public lighting, paths and ground surfaces to promote accessibility and visitor experience.

Vantage Points
Key vistas of the City Oval Precinct to be emphasised by informal gathering points, showcasing views of the heritage Grandstand and Oval.

Traffic Flow
Identifying key vehicle entry & exit points, circulation points in & around the oval, and key service vehicle paths. Creation of pedestrian & shared zones around these flow lines to reinforce safe behaviours.

Vehicle / Shared Zones
Formalisation of vehicle circulation zones to promote safe & predictable movements throughout the precinct. Incorporation of shade & shelter surrounding the oval.

Opportunities

1 Grandstand

The historic grandstand requires further restoration and refurbishment works to truly showcase this impressive heritage building.

Restoration works to include structural and fabric audits, continued maintenance, repair to deteriorating elements, painting, weatherproofing and removal of outdated elements that detract.

Potential further refurbishment to include:

- Umpire Changerooms
- Storage and services
- Improved safety and accessibility
- Improved spectator viewing





2 Saxon House

The existing Saxon House Building provides excellent opportunity for potential redevelopment and expansion - which would assist in the significant rationalism of outdated buildings on site.

Redevelopment and expansion with potential to include:

- Function spaces
- Clubrooms Canteen
- Public Toilets
- Timekeepers
- Admin Spaces
- Storage
- Integration with Grandstand Terracing
- Improved spectator experience (seating / shelter)





3 Bowling Club

The existing Bowling Clubhouse present significant scope for upgrade and improvement relating to accessibility, female friendly facilities and accessible amenities. Potential redevelopment and expansion could include:

- Improved clubrooms
- Function space
- Storage
- Amenities





4 Bowling Greens

Potential infrastructure upgrades to include:

- Improved lighting
- Shade + shelter





5 Croquet Cottage

The Croquet Cottage presents as one of the few original buildings on site.

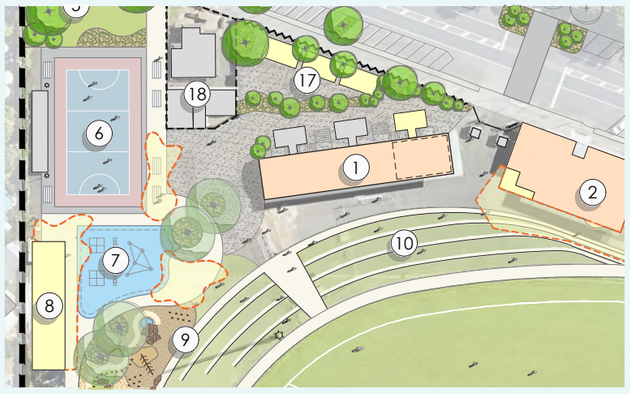
This unassuming but evocative cottage may be enhanced through restoration / refurbishment to provide:

- Potential (gatehouse) identity at this location
- Netball facilities
- Storage





Netball Precinct



6 Netball Facilities

Further develop the existing Netball court for improved player and spectator experience. Facility upgrades to include:

- Improved access & visibility
- Improved spectator seating / shelter
- Shade structures / shelter





7 Hardcourt Extension

Additional hard-court surface adjacent to netball court.

- Multi-purpose
- Training / practice
- Children's play





8 Netball Change & Public Toilets

Potential for a new purpose-built facility to deliver:

- Netball Change rooms
- Public toilets (gender equity / family friendly)
- Improved shelter / shade
- Storage





9 Environmental Play

Opportunity for dedicated, inclusive, nature based play spaces that complement precinct landscaping.

- New child play areas
- Inclusive play
- Adventure / discovery
- Passive play







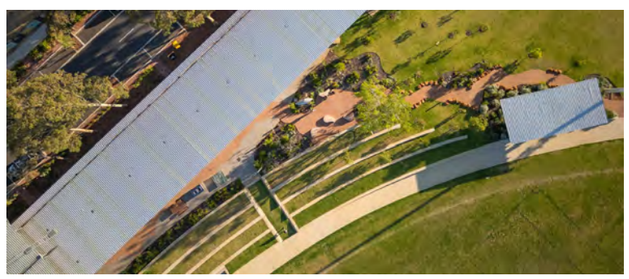


10 Grandstand Terracing

Enhance spectator experience, address site levels & embrace history by installing contemporary grandstand terracing that reflects former stepped level change at this location.

- Provide dedicated connection between Grandstand & Oval
- Enhance Spectator Experience
- Provide cohesive paving / landscape between the historic Grandstand & Saxon House





11 Spectator Lawn

Topography provides opportunity for enhanced spectator viewing

- Spectator lawn
- Improved shade / seating opportunities
- In conjunction with road improvements, promote pedestrian usage over vehicle parking



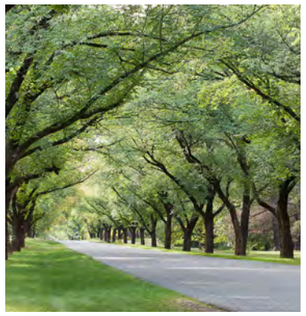


12 Enhanced Shared Zone Circulation

Promote increased pedestrian movement and pathways through and around the precinct by:

- Reducing potential for pedestrian / vehicle conflict
- Formalise parking areas
- Incorporate seating / shade areas in oval perimeter parking



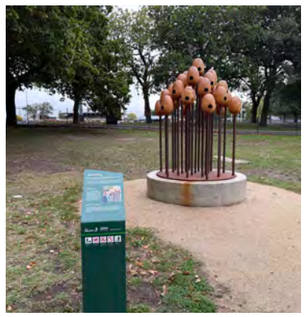


13 Precinct Identification

Improve the identification of the City Oval precinct for locals & visitors alike, with enhanced entry signage and opportunities for art installations at key focal points.

Key locations highlighted for precinct identification to include:

- Precinct signage / wayfinding
- Public art opportunities
- Interactive art
- Meet + Greet
- Shelter + shade
- Footpath integration with landscaping
- Shade & Shelter Pavilions





14 Intercultural Garden

Continuing development of the Intercultural Garden as a cultural hub for informal & organised community usage, including improved amenities, landscaping and event spaces.

Continuing improvements may include:

- Additional BBQ & Shelter
- Development of Performing Arts space
- Enhanced precinct identification
- Landscape integration with Sturt St





15 Precinct Wide Improvements

Improve and beautify the City Oval Precinct as an inclusive and accessible community space that enhances user / visitor experience and community connections.

Improvement works to include:

- Fencing replacement / removal
- Landscape enhancement
- Improved pedestrian pathways
- Drinking fountains, bike parking
- Seating / shade
- Public lighting
- Signage / wayfinding









16 Oval Infrastructure

Opportunity to improve sporting facilities on the oval to expand user participation and improve spectator safety.

- Permanent goal posts
- Goal post netting





17 Services & Storage

Opportunity for a dedicated back-of-house space for storage.

- Retain section of corrugated iron fence - as heritage reference and screen to services area
- Provide additional storage service areas screened by landscape elements





18 Former Residence

This existing former residential building is currently occupied by the Meals on Wheels service.

This is an important strategic location within the precinct, however, it is proposed to retain this building at this stage for the Meals on Wheels service.



19 Rationalising Infrastructure

A key component of this Master Plan is the rationalisation of existing infrastructure.

Assessment of existing buildings / infrastructure has identified a number of outdated and non-compliant buildings for potential removal based on Master Plan objectives.

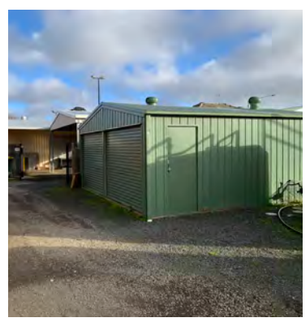
- Toilet block
- Canteen & Timekeeper

These buildings while currently serving a purpose, detract from the historic significance and character of the precinct. The adoption of the key opportunities identified in the Master Plan would facilitate the removal of these buildings as part of the rationalisation process, as funding and operational requirements allow.









Master Plan - Draft



LEGEND

1. Grandstand
2. Saxon House
3. Bowling Club
4. Bowling Green & Pavilion
5. Croquet Cottage Landscaping
6. Netball Court Facilities
7. Hardcourt Extension
8. Netball Change & Public Toilets
9. Environmental Play
10. Grandstand Terracing
11. Spectator Lawn
12. Enhanced Shared Zone Circulation
13. Precinct Identification
14. Intercultural Garden
15. Precinct Wide Improvements
16. Oval Infrastructure
17. Services & Storage
18. Former Residence

- Pedestrian Pathways
- Landscape
- Refurbishment
- New Works
- Shelter & Shade

Implementation



LEGEND

Precinct Wide Improvements
A number of precinct-wide improvements have been identified that are not reliant on sequencing or staging of the proposed capital works components. It is proposed that these be undertaken as funding and operational requirements allow.

- Fencing Replacement / Removal
- Intercultural Garden Continued Improvements
- Improved Pedestrian Pathways
- Wayfinding
- Seating / Shade
- Public Lighting
- Drinking Fountains
- Bike Stations

Capital Works Improvements
Capital Works projects phasing is proposed in accordance with the following strategic sequencing requirements as funding and operational requirements allow.

1

Phase 1 - Netball Precinct
- Netball Change, Public Toilets
- Netball Spectator Seating & Shade
- Hardcourt Extension
- Environmental Play

2

Phase 2 - Saxon House Refurbishment / Development
- Timekeeper
- Canteen
- Function Spaces
- Clubrooms
- Public Toilets

3

Phase 3a - Grandstand - ground floor
- New Umpire Changerooms
- New Storage & Services Facilities

Phase 3b - Grandstand Restoration
- Spectator Terracing
- Removal of Redundant Buildings

4

Phase 4 - Croquet Cottage
- Cottage Restoration / Refurbishment
- Precinct Identification Development
- Key Landscaping Opportunities

5

Phase 5 - Bowls Club refurbishment
- Improved Clubrooms & Amenities
- Function Spaces
- Shade & Shelter

Future Phases
Subject to funding availability & operational requirements
- Turf Wicket (incl. infrastructure)
- New Two-Storey Coaches Boxes
- Behind goal netting

Implementation

This Implementation Outline is informed by, and aligns with, current City of Ballarat Strategies, Recreation Infrastructure Plan 2024-2039 and further findings of this Master Plan.
Timeframes have been considered based on effective sequencing of the proposed works, however these are dependent upon Council budgets / funding and operational requirements.

	0 - 5 Years	5 - 10 Years	10 - 15 Years	Future Phases
Precinct Wide Improvements • Fencing Replacement / Removal • Intercultural Garden Continued Improvements • Improved Pedestrian Pathways • Wayfinding • Seating / Shade • Public Lighting • Drinking Fountains • Bike Stations				
Capital Works Improvements				
Phase 1 - Netball Precinct • Netball Change, Public Toilets • Netball Spectator Seating & Shade • Hardcourt Extension • Environmental Play				
Phase 2 - Saxon House Refurbishment / Development • Timekeeper • Canteen • Function Spaces • Clubrooms • Public Toilets				
Phase 3A - Grandstand - ground floor • New Umpire Changerooms • New Storage & Services Facilities				
Phase 3B - Grandstand Restoration • Spectator Terracing • Removal of Redundant Buildings				
Phase 4 - Croquet Cottage • Cottage Restoration / Refurbishment • Precinct Identification Development • Key Landscaping Opportunities				
Phase 5 - Bowls Club Refurbishment • Improved Clubrooms & Amenities • Function Spaces • Shade & Shelter				
Future Phases Subject to funding availability & operational requirements • Turf Wicket (incl. infrastructure) • New Two-Storey Coaches Boxes				

Appendix

1. Reference Documents

City of Ballarat planning and strategic documents referenced:

- Ballarat Strategy 2040
- City of Ballarat Community Vision 2025-2035
- Council Plan 2025-2029
- Recreation Infrastructure Plan 2024-2039
- Community Infrastructure Plan 2022-2037
- Active Ballarat Strategy 2019
- Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018
- Fair Access Policy 2024
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031
- City Oval - Engagement Report
- Ballarat Open Space Strategy 2008
- Intercultural Plan
- Public Toilet Strategy
- Existing Master Plan documentation
  - Inc. Intercultural Garden - Final Concept Plan 2023 (Plot Landscape Architects)
- Background History of City Oval Site - April 2024 (Silberberg Consulting)
- Heritage Impact Statement - Grandstand Change Room Refurbishment 2024 (W Jacobs)
- Relevant sporting associations and governing bodies strategic plans and facility planning guidelines
- Gender Impact Statement - City Oval Master Plan and Changeroom upgrade

2. Heritage Advisor Assessment

Refer following.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
The Oval Large level, mostly grassed unfenced area (described as a paddock), roughly oval in shape.	 *Figure 1 1934 aerial*  *Figure 2 Current aerial*	In 1876, Thomas Bath allowed the Ballarat Football Club to access the Royal Saxon Paddock, the former mine site. The club subsequently cleared and levelled the land to create a football ground. In 1897, Ballarat Council undertook ground works to form spectator banks as well as for cycling and running. Since 1876, the Oval has been used for a range of activities, including football, cricket, polo, lacrosse and hurling, picnics, carnivals, military parades and ceremonial events.	The size of the oval varied. It was generally longer and wider up to the 1980s. The oval was also defined and fenced in different ways at different times depending on the need and use.	The grassed open area is significant to the City Oval site as it survives as the evidence of the site's range of historic recreational and ceremonial uses. The exact size and shape are not significant as its size and shaped have varied over time.	Retaining the centre of the site as an open grassed area is recommended as it best evokes the former recreational, civic and ceremonial uses, but maintaining the precise size and shape is not essential. The significance of the oval is best expressed as a largely unobstructed open space with minimal built elements, except where required for its function and safe use, such as lighting, fencing and sporting infrastructure (such as goal posts). Advertising signage should be minimised.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
The Grandstand. Brick ground floor with timber boarded doors and double hung timber windows. The brick base supports the timber framed seating all sheltered under a curved iron and timber framed roof, featuring 3 'Pagoda-style' lanterns, supported on tall cast iron columns. The rear (north façade) features 2 timber framed stairs and is finished with corrugated galvanised sheets.	 *Figure 3. Current front*  *Figure 4. Undated, likely 1910s*	Built in 1897-8, funded by Ballarat Council and designed by Clegg, Kell and Miller.	It is generally in good condition with some structural movement, some minor external alterations. Recently, a comprehensive refurbishment was undertaken along with alterations of two of the three internal ground floor bays.	The 1898 Grandstand is • One of the most elaborate and impressive surviving grandstands in Victoria • significant for architectural design and technical accomplishments • an eloquent expression of west Ballarat's dominance over the eastern part of the city • a strong landmark. • represents a scenic and recreational relationship with Lake Wendouree (Source: Victorian Heritage Database (VHD))	Retain the Grandstand, its historic appearance and publicly accessible use. Minimise external and internal alterations. In particular, no substantial alterations and additions to the main South façade as well as to the East and West Ends. Minor additions can be made to the utilitarian rear North façade as long as the façade's first floor and the stairs are not removed or encumbered.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
The entrance gate posts and ticket boxes Four large sections of painted timber gate posts alongside two single storey ticket boxes with curved corrugated sheeted roofs, scalloped roof ends and painted weatherboard walls.	 *Figure 5 Current front*  *Figure 6 Current rear*	No construction date confirmed. Similarity between the design of the ticket boxes and the Grandstand strongly suggests construction in 1898.	Good condition. The four gate posts stand alone. No 1890s gates or fences have survived.	The historic ticket boxes are rare, intact examples of Edwardian-era stadium architecture.	Retain the posts and boxes and their appearance and minimise external and internal alterations. Make repairs where necessary.
The boundary fences 6' to 9' high corrugated galvanised sheeted fence supported on a galvanised pipe frame along most of the Mair Street boundary. A range of modern steel framed wire mesh fences elsewhere within and around the City Oval site.	 *Figure 7 Current front, Mair Street boundary fence.*  *Figure 8 Current rear, Mair Street boundary fence.*	In 1897, Ballarat Council fenced the whole site with a 9' red gum framed corrugated galvanised sheeted fence. No information has been found to confirm changes to the fence and its extent since its construction.	Reasonable condition. The current Mair Street fence may not be the 1897 fence as its posts are not timber but are circular galvanised steel, and the fence sheets are fixed with mostly mid-20th Century roofing nails and screws.	The existing corrugated galvanised sheeted Mair Street fence may not be significant as an original feature as it may have been rebuilt in the 20th Century and may just feature some original 1897 sheets.	Without accurate historical information, a cautious approach is recommended, that most of the corrugated galvanised sheeted fence should be retained with a new supporting structure if needed to evoke the original fence (subject to further research). New openings can be made as long as up to 2/3rds of the fence is retained.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
The croquet "Pavilion' or Clubhouse A single storey painted weatherboard clad Edwardian style building with a prominent south facing front verandah.	 *Figure 9 Current front*	Ballarat Croquet Club was founded in 1913, and the Croquet Lawn opened in 1914. No date is recorded for the construction of the Croquet "Pavilion" Clubhouse, but its architecture suggests 1910s to 1920s. The club included more croquet greens, located between Tennis and Grove Streets which were taken up for residential development, date not confirmed.	Good condition with almost all its original external features except for its verandah floor, replaced with concrete. The original roof sheeting, likely shorter 6' long corrugated galvanised steel sheets, appear to have been replaced with modern galvanised full length sheets.	The City Oval Croquet "Pavilion' Clubhouse is an intact example of an Edwardian-era community built recreational building. The City Oval Croquet "Pavilion' Clubhouse is similar to, but smaller, than the Western Croquet Clubhouse built in 1913 in Ballarat's Western Oval. Also, the City Oval Croquet "Pavilion' Clubhouse has lost its close association with the croquet courts that the Western Croquet Clubhouse still retains.	This significant building should be retained, protected and provided with an on-going meaningful use that balances its former historical use and a new practical use.
The former Men's Bowling Clubhouse, now the Bowling Clubhouse Long low single storey pitched roofed and gabled timber framed building featuring painted timber external	 *Figure 10 Current front*	The City Oval Bowling Club was established as a male-only club in 1922. No date is recorded for the construction of the Clubhouse, but its architecture suggests early 1920s.	Good condition with original roof form, barges and eaves along with its overall footprint. Some original windows have survived. The clubhouse has some mid 20th Century windows and doors.	City Oval Bowling Clubhouse is a moderately intact example of an Inter-War-era community built recreational building in Ballarat. Possibly the only Men-only bowling clubhouse built in Ballarat.	This significant building should be retained and its use maintained. In particular, its 1920s footprint and roof form seen from the bowling greens should be kept with its roof gables and barges, as well as any

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
joinery, windows and doors.	 *Figure 11 Current rear*		The exterior has been reclad with vinyl cladding and modern galvanised roof sheeting fitted. No comment is offered about the Clubhouse's interior.	The City Oval Bowling Club is now only one of two similar clubhouses that are contemporary with the founding of their club along with: • The earlier Buninyong Bowling Club founded 1873 which still features its small original 1874 clubhouse, but alongside a larger modern clubhouse. And contrasted with: • Ballarat Bowling Club, Ballarat East was founded 1864 but features an altered and modernised mid-Century clubhouse. • Ballarat North Bowling Club Soldiers Hill was founded in 1896, but features a	surviving 1920s windows. Ideally the modern vinyl cladding should be removed and the clubhouse re-clad with painted weatherboards. Single storey additions are possible to the building's rear.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
				much-altered c1930s clubhouse. • Victoria Bowling Club, Ballarat East was founded 1907, but features a 1960s Clubhouse. • Sebastopol Bowling Club was founded in 1944, but features a large modern Clubhouse. • Former City Bowling Club, Eyre Street amalgamated with Former Servicemen's Memorial Bowling Club in 2004. The site now houses the Ballarat Bridge Club. • Central Wendouree Bowling Club formed when the Central Bowling Club and the Wendouree	

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
				Bowling Club merged in 1990, and a new clubhouse was built. • The former Servicemen's Memorial Bowling Club existed on Creswick Road but was amalgamated with the Ballarat City Bowling Club in 2004. The site now features housing.	
The Former Ladies Bowling Clubhouse. Long low single storey hipped roofed timber framed building featuring painted timber external joinery, windows and doors.	 *Figure 12 Current rear*  *Figure 13 Current end and front*	In 1931, the City Oval Ladies Bowling Club was founded. No date is recorded for the construction of the Clubhouse, but its architecture suggests it was built after 1931 and before WWII.	Good condition with original form and footprint. It is not intact as few original external features survive. The exterior has been reclad with vinyl cladding and modern galvanised roof sheeting has been fitted. No comment is offered about the Clubhouse's interior.	The former Ladies Clubhouse survives as possibly the only Ladies-only clubhouse built in Ballarat. However, the building has been altered and only its location, its smaller size and simpler form survive in comparison to the mens-only clubhouse. These features are evidence of its hierarchy	The substantially altered building does not need to be retained if its role as Ballarat's possibly only Ladies-clubhouse is conveyed. For example, how the building tells the storey of the club's original hierarchy and how the storey can be convey by other means, such as physical interpretation of the building's

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
				second to the mens-only clubhouse. The location, size and form are evidence of the original building and its function.	function and social role, The interpretation should not merely rely on signage.
The Bowling Club Sturt Street entry gates, fence and planter beds Brick gate piers, rendered caps, painted steel gates alongside a chain wire fence with a rendered brick base that retains a planting bed.	 *Figure 14 Current piers and gates*  *Figure 15 Current fence*	No date is recorded for the construction of the piers, gates, fences and beds. The fence frame, the entry piers, gates and planter bed, which contained the former hedge, and perhaps the shrubs behind the hedge, appear to have been designed together. Despite no definitive historical evidence found to date, the assembly may date from the 1930s-1940s based on the design of the entry piers and gates.	Good condition and sound structure. The gate piers, the gates, the fence frame and parts of the rendered base seem to be original. Sections of the chain wire have been replaced. In 2025, the fence's Tapestry Hedge* was taken out. The hedge appeared to be part of the design and comprised a pattern of plant species, including Photinia Robusta and Privet. *Tapestry hedges are made up of a range of different plants, chosen	The following Ballarat Bowling Clubs still retain their purpose-built entries and fences: • City Oval, piers, gates, fence, planter and some planting. • Central Wendouree, just the gates. • Former City Bowling Club now Bridge Club, Eyre Street, piers, gates fence and planter bed. The entry arch now describes the Bridge Club. • Sebastopol Bowling Club, just a base	Although the Sturt Street entry gates, fence and planter bed have not been formally assessed and recognised for its contribution to the heritage significance of the site, it is recommended that the assembly should be retained and protected. It is also recommended that the Tapestry Hedge should be regrown.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
	 *Figure 16 Tapestry Hedge in Feb 2018*		for foliage colour, texture, flowers, berries and fragrance and were popular from the 1920s to the 1950s.	wall and planter beds. The City Oval Bowling Club still retains the most comprehensive and intact purpose-built entry and fence, despite the loss of the Tapestry Hedge in 2025.	
The Bowling Club drinking fountain	 *Figure 17 Current*	No date is recorded for the construction of the drinking fountain. The plaque advises that the fountain was presented by JM Hoskins President 1944, but the fountain could have been cast later and/or moved.	Painted cast steel drinking fountain bolted to a brick base. Reasonable condition, some surface rust. The fountain was not tested to confirm if it still operated.	No other similar drinking fountain was found as part of research for this advice.	It is recommended that the drinking fountain should be retained, repaired and protected as it is likely to have some community esteem, if not heritage significance.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
Trees, range of exotic deciduous trees, including oaks and elms. Some conifers are recorded in historic photographs, but none survive.	 *Figure 18 Current example tree*	Historical documents advise that 140 trees were planted around the ground in 1899, but there is no detailed information to confirm which trees.	Most trees appear to be healthy with little structural concerns or dieback.	No survey has been undertaken to verify which trees survive from the reported 140 trees planted in 1899. Trees planted in 1899 and up to the 1940s would have heritage significance. Trees planted from the mid-20th Century would have amenity value instead.	Confirm which trees survive from the reported 140 trees planted in 1899 up to the 1940s which would have heritage significance. Protect and retain trees that have heritage significance and include ground works that retain a healthy soil and ground water conditions and interpret the trees original planting rationale and ground conditions.
Paths and pavements Historically, City Oval featured a range of formed and unformed paths and pavements, gravel, asphalt and concrete.		There is no conclusive historical information about early paths and pavements and if any late 19th or early 20th Century paths and pavements survive.	No comment offered	No survey has been undertaken to verify if late 19th or early 20th Century paths and pavements survive.	No recommendation offered for the paths and pavements themselves, except that the original paved gathering areas and paths of travel within and across the site should be maintained, not obscured or confused but highlighted.

Feature and description	Photo	History	Condition and intactness	Relative significance within City Oval	Recommendation and comments
Shade shelters A range of shelters feature throughout the City Oval site, all date from mid 20th Century.		No date is recorded for the construction of the any shelters, but all appear to date from mid 20th Century.	A range of conditions	No relative significance as most date from mid 20th Century.	No recommendation offered

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