

3.0 ADELAIDE PARK LANDS & SQUARES

3.1.9 Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A



Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A**Historical Overview: Site Context**

Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A encompasses land surrounded by the River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, Hackney Road (Old Company Bridge), North Terrace and Frome Road that is variously vested in the management of the Board of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide (Adelaide Botanic Garden + Botanic Park), the Board of the Adelaide Zoological Gardens (the Zoological Garden), the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the universities of Adelaide and South Australia, and the Corporation of the City of Adelaide. These land holdings are external to and not included in this Assessment Study (2007). This leaves a portion of land vested in the Corporation on Frome Road formerly used as a car parking area that is presently subject to soil remediation measures in anticipation of its transformation into an additional tract of Park Land. This report chapter draws upon content and information from the *Adelaide Botanic Garden Conservation Study* (2006) when discussing the historical use and occupancy of this area.

This portion of land has been more recently being termed the ‘Western Approach’ by the Board of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, the Corporation, and the University of Adelaide, so this toponym is adopted for use in this Chapter for ease of identification. Although, the area was also been known as “Park 11A” prior to the adoption of this toponym. It is envisaged that a re-naming of the land will occur once the park land is re-opened to the public.

Arising from Light’s plan, Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A consists of a semi-rectangular block of land bounded by Frome Road, Botanic Park, Adelaide Botanic Garden, University of Adelaide, and University of South Australia managed lands. The land sits within the larger Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11. Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A has also historically never carried a clear Park # designation.

Historical Overview: Aboriginal Associations

Hemming records several specific references to Kurna sites or Aboriginal activities, pre-contact or post-contact, for Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A (Hemming 1998) that rotate around occupancy of Botanic Park and the Adelaide Botanic Garden lands. Because these are interwoven around the Kurna and Aboriginal use and occupancy of the lower portion of this precinct the following discussion reviews the Park and Garden at the same time as the ‘Western Approach’.

The ‘fringe dweller’, Tommy Walker, was known to have frequented and camped in the East Park Lands in the second half of the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding this generalised reference, Hemming concludes correctly that the watercourse would have been directly associated with Kurna use and occupancy along Botanic Creek and especially in the waterhole that has been reinvented as the Main Lake for the Botanic Garden (Hemming 1998, pp. 21, 55).

In terms of Kurna and Aboriginal cultural significance to the place, anthropologist Norman Tindale first described the Kurna tribe as occupying the Adelaide plains and consisting of several groups of people or ‘hoades’ (Tindale 1974, p. 213; Tindale 1987, pp. 5-13), thereby geographically locating the Kurna country and epithet ‘Kurna’.

When interviewed in 1927 *Ivarijji* (‘Princess Amelia’ Savage/Taylor) (c.1840s–1929), daughter of *Parnataya* ‘King Rodney’ (*Ityamaiipinna*) and *Tankaira*, claimed that she belonged to the ‘*Dundagunya* tribe’ which is probably a corruption of the contemporary name *Tandanya* that Tindale ascribed as occupying the area encompassed by the City of Adelaide (Gara 1990, p. 64; Tindale 1987, p. 10). The term *Tandanya* refers to a site south of Adelaide associated with the Red Kangaroo Dreaming, and Tindale claims the *Tandanya* clan of ‘Kurna’ was named after the Red Kangaroo and that their main totem was the emu (Hemming 1990, p. 137). The general

acceptance of the term Kurna occurs in the early 1970s following the acceptance of this term in Tindale’s *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (1974).

Since earliest post-contact settlement, colonial administrators have sought to shift indigenous people away from the Park Lands as part of the dispossession process (Hemming 1998, p. 18). Notwithstanding these attempts the Park Lands continued to be used for activities associated with traditional life for the Kurna (Hemming 1998, p. 20). As the vegetation removal process occurred on the Adelaide plains, the Kurna and other indigenous peoples were forced to live in locations where available shelter, fire wood and materials for camping and hunting remained. Areas around and within the present Zoo, Botanic Garden and Botanic Park locations were occupied for the site of camps, ‘corroborees’ (*Palti* or *Kuri*), ceremonies, burials and other activities and culturally viewed as significant (Hemming 1998, p. 21), although many of these activities reputedly happened in these localities prior to European settlement (Hemming 1998, p. 23). Contemporary adaptations of ‘corroborees’ were performed for the public on the old Exhibition Grounds site on Frome Road—the ‘Western Approach’—and during these visits the performers camped in the Botanic Park (Doreen Kartinyeri, Neva Wilson and Lindsay Wilson pers. comm. 1998; Hemming 1998, pp. 23, 50; SSLM B24437).

Edward Snell recorded, on 24 May 1850, the regularity of corroborees near the Hackney Road Bridge (then called the South Australian Company’s Bridge):

... there was a display of fireworks at the government house in the evening and the blacks had a corrobory at the Companies mill [sic.] (Griffiths 1988, p. 112).

Botanic Park was according an important camping venue for Aboriginal and Kurna peoples from the late 1840s to the late nineteenth century (Gara 1990, p. 9) especially as the area retained much of its original vegetation.

The 1865 Duryea panorama photographs confirm this vegetation cover, and Eugen von Guérard’s sketches of camp sites and Aboriginals in the Botanic Park in 1855 support this conclusion. Von Guérard recorded the landscape as covered in a thick upper-storey of *Eucalyptus* ssp. and numerous encampments of a range of different Aboriginal peoples.

The Headmaster at St Peters College, in adjacent College Park, also recorded this activity in 1855:

... in May the Aborigines camped in the Parklands ... and held corroborees which were clearly visible and audible from the upper front windows of the school (Carroll & Tregenza 1986, pp. 52-53).

Lucy Hines, in the 1850s, also observed that “the zoo was at the back of the gardens and we walked out from the back gates into virgin scrub and timber, a favourite camping ground for the Blacks” (*Register*, 15 December 1926).

The River Torrens (*Karra Wirra Parri* or *Tanda:njapari*) was an essential economic and sustenance conduit and place for the Red Kangaroo Dreaming. It is believed that *Tarnda Kanya* – the ‘red kangaroo rock’ – was located on the present site of the Adelaide Festival Theatre (Amery 1997, p. 4). An early resident of Adelaide, Thomas Day, recollected Kurna residency along the River Torrens:

Women and children spent most of their time at the Torrens river – children bathing and practicing with spear and small waddy – Women crab[b]ing and going in the river with a net bag and picking up cockles. I have seen them go down – And I thought they would never rise again. They got many cockles And rose again on the other side after being under water A long time. The river torrens was A chain of water holes very deep When not in flood. It was full of timber Very dangerous to go amongst. Their time was also employed making mats,

nets an rope clothes lines ... They would then sell or exchange for food from the settlers ... [sic]. (Day, 'Memories of the Extinct Tribe of Cowandilla, 1902', probably relating to the period prior to 1847, in Hemming 1998, p. 43).

Ivaritji was almost certainly the last person of full Kurna ancestry. *Parnatitya* 'King Rodney' (*Ityamaipinna*), her father, was one of the leading Kurna men of the Adelaide plains. *Ivaritji*, as recorded by Daisy Bates in 1919, stated that her father's principal waterhole was the Main Lake in the Botanic Garden that she called *Kainka wira* (Gara 1990, p. 82; Hemming 1998, p. 51). Botanist John McConnell Black records, in interviews with *Ivanitji*, obtained a vocabulary of about 70 Kurna words, and listed *Kainka wira* as meaning 'eucalypt forest' pertaining to the North Adelaide area (Gara 1990, p. 82; Black 1920, p. 81; Hemming 1998, pp. 19, 29).

Historical Overview: Post Contact Associations

In 1836 the Colony of South Australia was established and during the summer of 1836-37 Colonel William Light undertook his survey of the Adelaide plains. His plan (1837) included the first site for a botanic garden included in plan on an island in the River Torrens (in Tulya Wodli/Park 27) far from the present site. The present site was fixed upon in 1855.

The South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society occupied land on Frome Road now comprising the 'Western Approach' from 1844. Visitors entered the land via a gate from the Frome Road Bridge. The first show of the Society was held in 1844, in a group of tents in a "the extensive, beautiful and umbrageous paddock between North Terrace and Frome Bridge" now termed the 'Western Approach'. The Society was instrumental in advocating the reservation and establishment of the Botanic Garden on its present site. They erected an Exhibition building in 1859 and continued to use the site for show purposes until 1925. An 1845 watercolour of the agricultural show gives an impression of the area in a relatively raw state. An 1860 engraving of the exhibition building, proposed in 1856 and erected in 1859 with a government grant of £2000, shows the nature of tree cover.

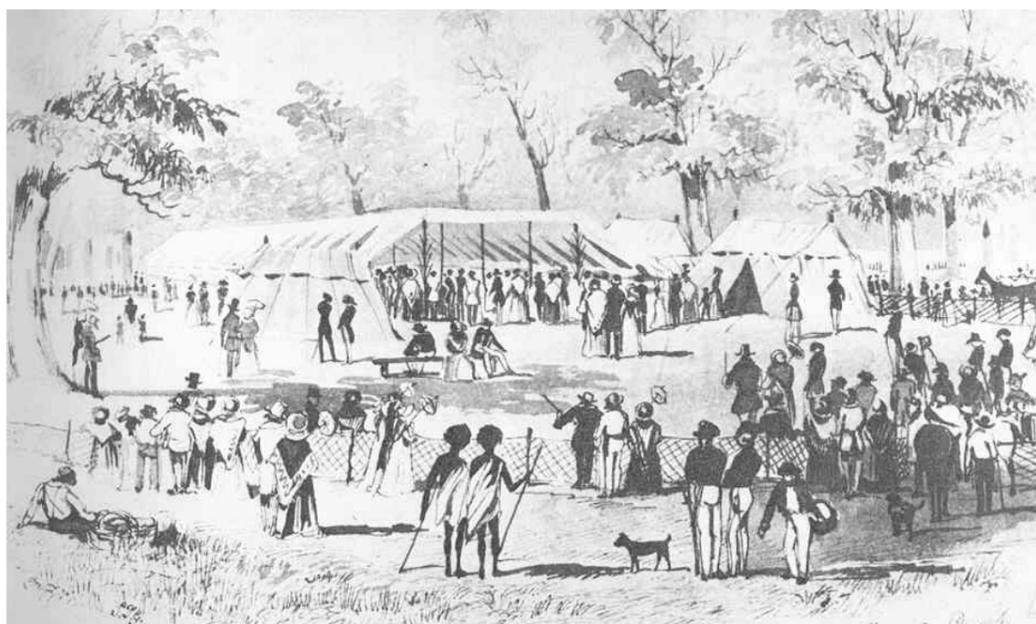


Figure
Gathering of the South Australian Agricultural & Horticultural Society on the Frome Road land in 1844. Note the mature *Eucalypt* spp trees, and the Aboriginals in the foreground.

In 1853 the fourth site for a botanic garden, at the north-west corner of Frome Road and North Terrace, was approved by the colonial Governor following agitation by the South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society. This site was rapidly superseded by a fifth site, the current site, for a botanic garden. This site was formalised following application by the Society in 1854. The boundaries of site were surveyed and adjacent hospital land excluded from area sought. This survey thus delineated the present boundaries of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, the Hospital, and the 'Western Approach' land except a series of annexes and alignments in the 1930s-40s.

George Francis (1800-65) was appointed inaugural superintendent of Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1855. He made rapid progress in designing and laying out the Garden, including the development of the Top and Main Lakes, and Main Walk. A residence was also erected for director. The Adelaide Botanic Garden opened to the public on 4 October 1857; its initial development focussed on southern section of the site.

A permanent masonry Exhibition Building was erected on the showgrounds site – the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land in 1859. The first show was held in building in 1860. The first corrugated iron fence was erected along the Frome Road frontage by the Society, and in 1868 the Building was extended.

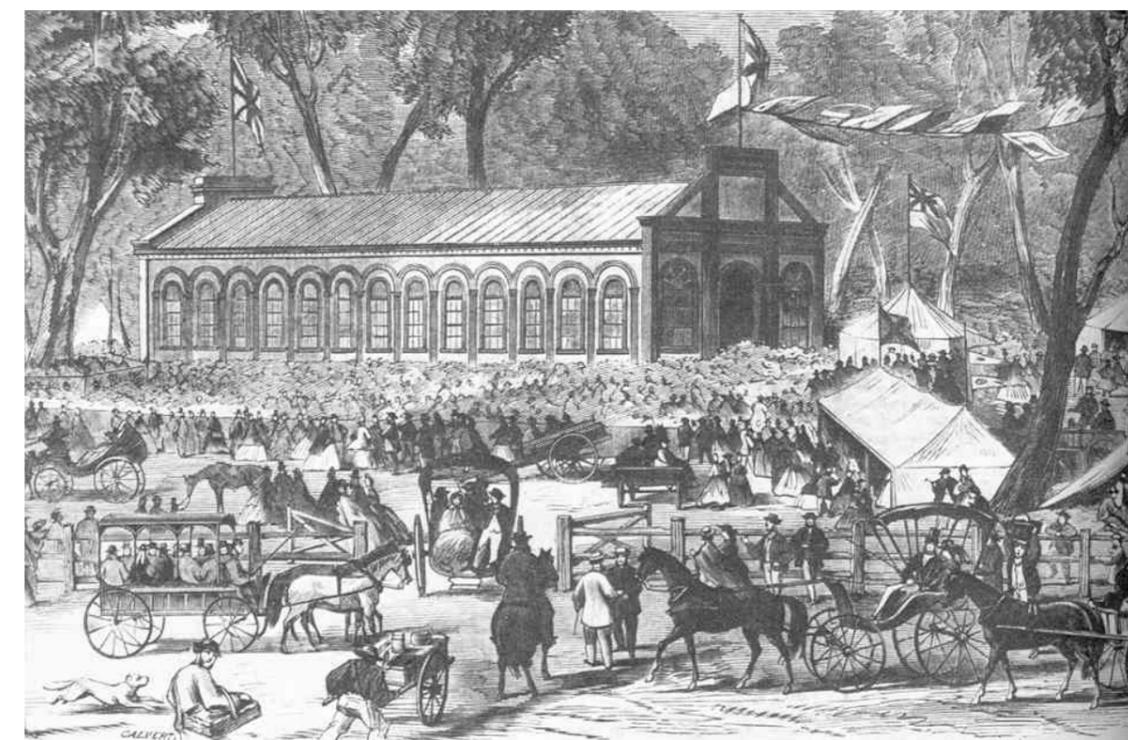


Figure
The South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society exhibition hall on the Frome Road land, from an engraving in 1860.

In 1860 the *Botanic Gardens Act* was enacted, placing the Garden under a Board of Governors and upgrading the position of superintendent to 'director'. During 1873 director Dr Richard Schomburgk commenced works to establish and plant over ensuing years forming a complementary park-like space north of the Garden. In 1874 he prepared and published a Plan of Adelaide Botanic Garden, including Botanic Park, depicting existing conditions as well as

several projected improvements; Schomburgk revised this plan in 1890. The 1874 plan shows the Garden terminating at boundary with Exhibition Grounds, implying the existence of a gate at this point, possibly developed earlier under the Schomburgk directorship. The identical arrangement is still shown on a 1928 plan prepared by director John Bailey.

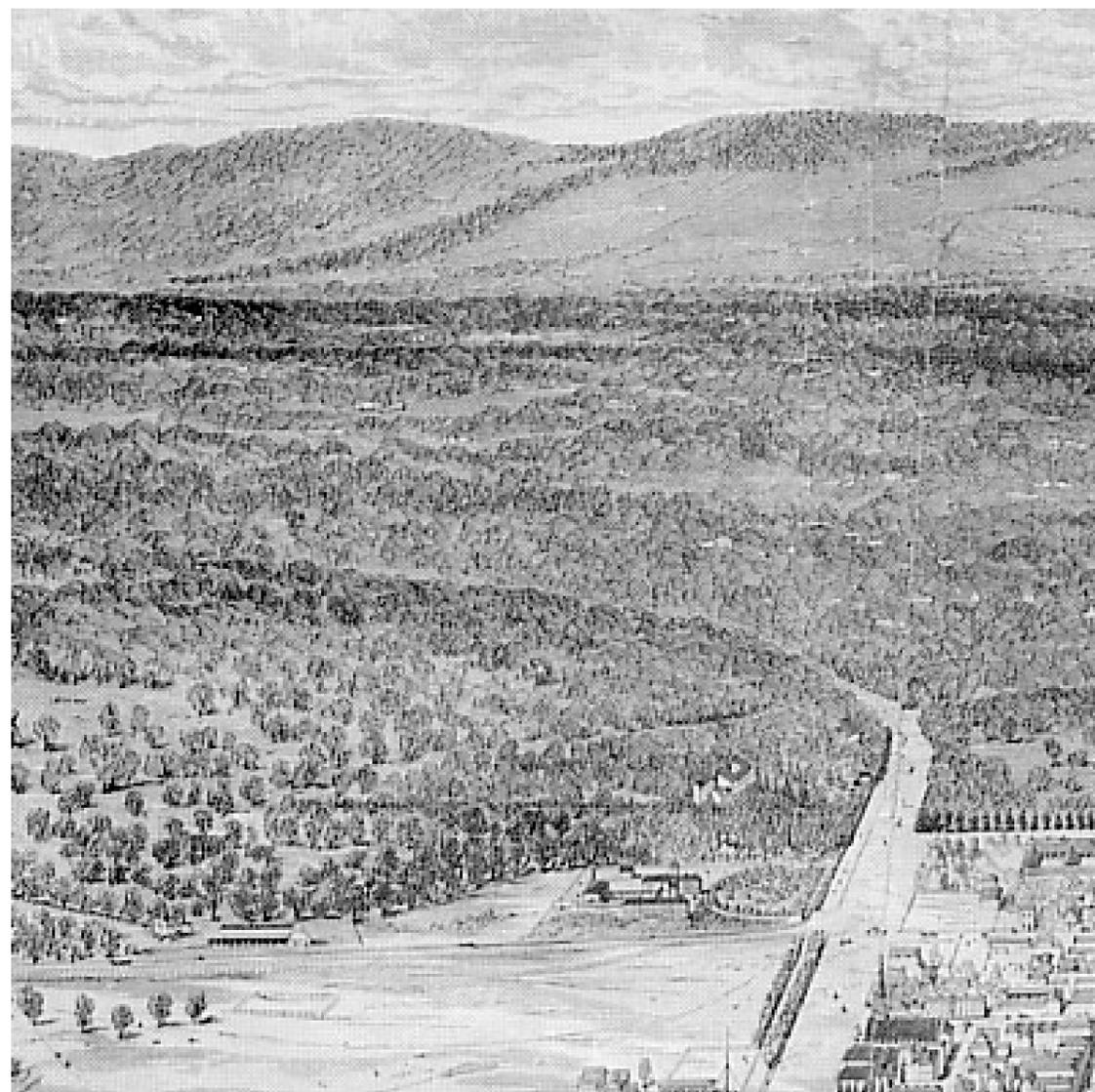


Figure
Extract of a lithograph published in the *Australasian Sketcher* of the East Park Lands, 10 July 1875. Note the Adelaide Hospital on the corner of North Terrace and Frome Road. To the front left is the Society's Exhibition Building and a further smaller building in a relatively open paddock on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land.



Figure
Extract of a lithograph published in the *Illustrated Sydney News* of the East Park Lands July 1876. Note the extensive edge plantings that had been established around all three East Park Land blocks, the scattered internal plantings had also been undertaken, and the scatter of extant and new plantings on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land.

Adelaide Botanic Garden, which was hoping to obtain the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land. The Board wrote:

The Botanic Garden Board protests the action of the Government in proposing to hand over the Old Exhibition Ground for the purpose of an isolation hospital, and enters its emphatic protest against such a suggestion. The Board again brings before the Government their often repeated application for this site as a necessary and suitable one for the much needed extension of the garden.

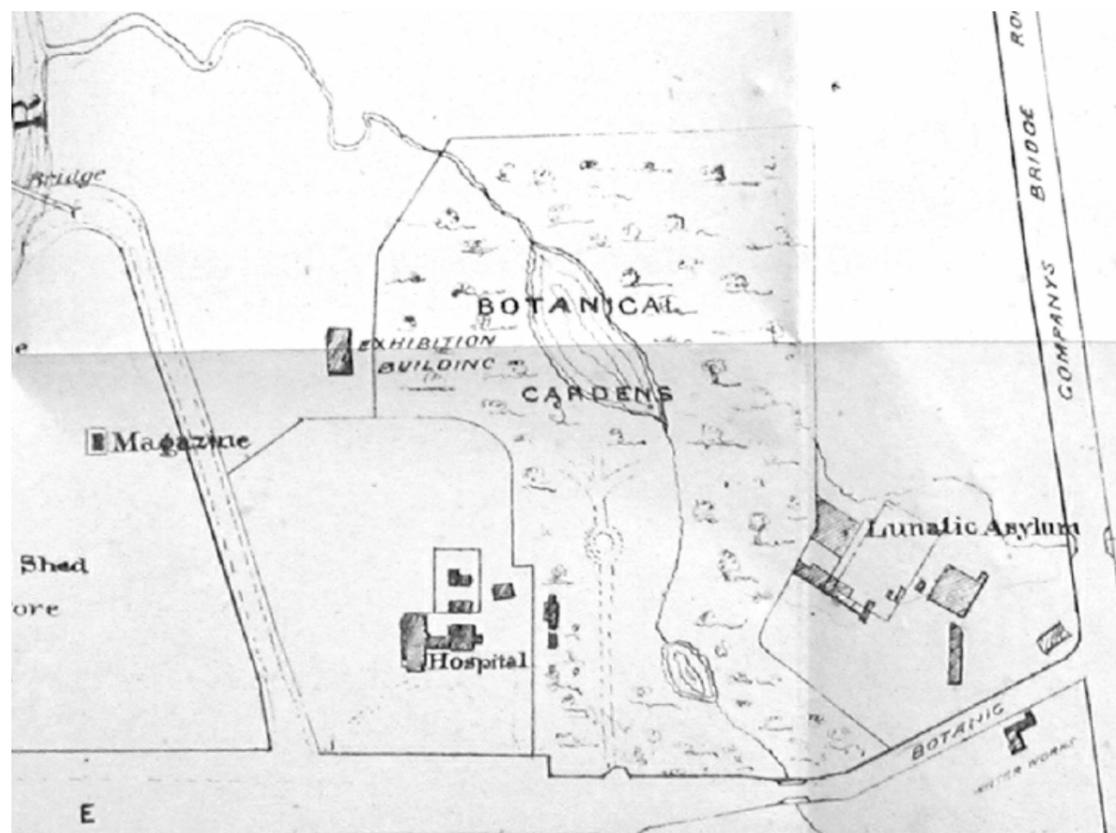


Figure
Extract of plan of North Terrace from *Boothby's Almanack* (1874) recording the position of the Society's rectangular north-south aligned Exhibition Building on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road/Park 11A land.

In commissioning John Ednie Brown to review the Adelaide Park Lands, as set out in his *Report on a System of Planting the Adelaide Park Lands* (1880) no reference was drawn to the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land as it was under the control of the Society at that stage.

In 1883 the Zoological Gardens was established in north-western portion of Botanic Park, excising land from the Park. Progressively zoological exhibits were relocated from the Garden to newly dedicated facility. An additional strip of land was ceded from Botanic Park to Zoological Gardens in 1886.

A much larger and more conspicuous building was erected for the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition, celebrating Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887, fronting North Terrace west of Frome Road

In 1894 Botanic Park was formally dedicated to the Board of the Adelaide Botanic Garden under new *Botanic Garden Act*.

In 1895 the last agricultural show was held in the old Exhibition Building on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land, as the 1887 Exhibition Building was now being used and the Society was occupying a large portion of the present lower University of Adelaide land. In 1919, the now redundant former Exhibition Building was proposed as an isolation hospital during the great influenza epidemic; a suggestion strongly opposed by the Board of the

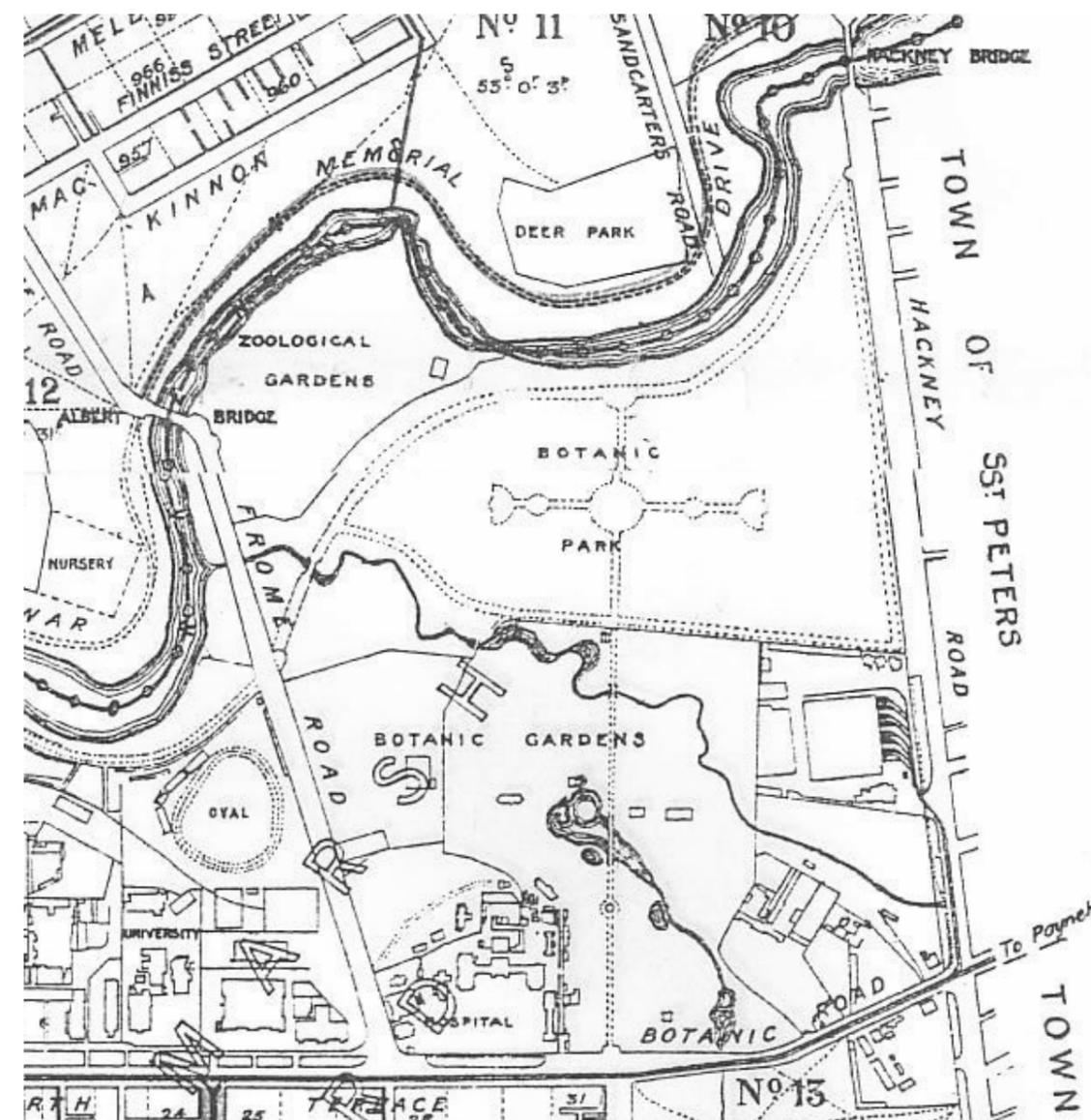


Figure
Extract of a *Plan Showing Improved Pavements*, 14 November 1927, an engineering plan prepared by the Corporation detailing road pavement surfaces dated 1927. The plan delineates the Society's land (forming largely the Tainmundilla/Frome Road/Park 11A land), the old Exhibition Building rectangular footprint with eastern annexe together with a further building fronting Frome Road. The main showgrounds are indicated on the western side of Frome Road – "Oval" – on the present University of Adelaide site. Source: ACC Archives.

During the 1930s the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land was used as an informal recreation ground by Adelaide Technical High School. Because of this use, a new corrugated iron fence was erected in 1936 along the Frome Road frontage. A proposal was also mooted in State parliament to erect a new Adelaide Boys High School on the site as part of the State's centenary celebrations. Following this proposal, land was excised from western side of the Garden in 1937 and ceded to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Education Department in exchange for adjoining land to the west, part of the former Lunatic Asylum at the corner of Hackney Road and North Terrace. In the same year, the vacant former exhibition land, the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A, was divided between the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Education Department but no development appears to have occurred.



Figure
Extract of an aerial photograph of metropolitan Adelaide depicting Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A in 1936 the use of the land, including the University of South Australia Reid Building allotment, as a recreation sporting oval with a large semi-square shed to the south-east of the oval. Compare this aerial with the adjacent oblique aerial photograph of the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A to see that nature of the development of the land. Source: University of Adelaide Archives

During 1939-45 the land was used as military storage yard. Various minor sheds and structures apparently constructed only details of these works are limited, but they are extant in a 1947 aerial photograph. Plans were discussed for the development of University residential colleges on the land in 1942 but this proposal was refused by the State government as it was "proposed to retain the land for the time being for the present valuable purpose it is fulfilling, namely a 'breathing space' and a playground for the school, and for YMCA members." In 1945 there was a proposal by the School of Mines & Industries for the acquisition of the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land for use as extensions to their School noting the "urgent need for ground space for the future extension of the School of Mines", and a similar proposal for the extension of medical school facilities by the University of Adelaide. The University was successful in gaining 2.03 ha of land from the State government "near the Hospital for anatomy purposes" with the balance being still set aside for use as open playing space for the Adelaide Technical High School. In 1946 additional land (0.41ha) was ceded to the University of Adelaide to enable

a "slightly larger anatomy building and road access", and the land was gazetted to the University of Adelaide.

In 1950 the Adelaide Technical High School operations and facilities were shifted to Glenunga and now forming the Glenunga International School. Some 1.11ha, of the remaining land, was set allocated to the Education Department and gazetted as a School Reserve which comprises the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land. Old buildings on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A site, including the old Exhibition Building, were at this time being used as a training centre for the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. The buildings were subsequently re-used as a Motor Trade School. In 1957 the balance of the land was dedicated to the School of Mines & Industries and now forms the land occupied by the University of South Australia's Pharmacy School. In 1965 Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land was part-gazetted as a reserve to the Public Buildings Department. The Reid Building, the School of Pharmacy to the present University of South Australia, was erected on the northern section in 1968. The remaining area rededicated as a Hospital Reserve following the transferral of the Automotive Trade School to Kilkenny.



Figure
Extract of an aerial photograph of Adelaide taken by D Darian Smith looking westwards over the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A block. Note the use of the land as a sporting oval, the series of six tennis courts along its southern perimeter, the extant large Hall to the left that appears to have been the former Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society exhibition building first erected on the land, and the use of the Botanic Garden fenceline as a waste and equipment storage area. Source: D Darian Smith Collection, Atkins Technicolor.



Figure
 Aerial photograph of the Adelaide Hospital complex, looking northwards, in c.1955, depicting old buildings on the 'Western Approach' land together with a recreation oval. Note the series of north-south aligned sheds on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A/ land. It has been suggested that this series of sheds may have incorporated the original Society's Exhibition Building because of the condition, glazing used and alignment of the structure. Probably taken by D Darian Smith. Source: ABG Archives.



Figure
 Aerial photograph of the Adelaide Botanic Garden in the foreground, the Royal Adelaide Hospital to the left, and the University of Adelaide in the middle-ground. Note the recreation oval and associated shed structures on the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land. Probably taken by D Darian Smith. Source: University of Adelaide Archives.

Johnston & Elphinstone (1983) did not identify any merit to the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land.

In 2005 Taylor Cullity Lethlean were contracted to provide design concept proposals for the re-development of Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A for the Adelaide Botanic Garden. These design were prepared at the commencement of soil remediation works by the Corporation prior to the transfer of the land to the Garden. The design sought to reinforce a hypothetical axial line first proposed by architect Walter Bagot in the 1920s when he designing the Barr Smith Library and the lower campus of the University of Adelaide. But it also creates a 'western entrance' to the Garden that many directors had previously sought to create or formalise.

Preferred Design Option
(Plan)



Figure
Preferred landscape design option as prepared by Taylor Cullity Lethlean for the redevelopment of Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A following soil remediation works by the Corporation. Source: Taylor Cullity Lethlean.

Amery (1997; 2002) did not propose any specific toponym for the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land. But Amery (1997; 2002, p. 270) proposed the toponym *tainmundilla*, which roughly translates as ‘mistletoe place’, to Tainmundilla/Park 11 generally.

Today the Tainmundilla/Frome Road Park/Park 11A land consists of an expansive bitumen car park, dotted with irregularly planted Lemon-scented Gums (*Corymbia citriodora*), Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), and Spotted Gums (*Corymbia maculata*). There are no structures or evidence of the original showground or Exhibition Building use.