

3.0 ADELAIDE PARK LANDS & SQUARES

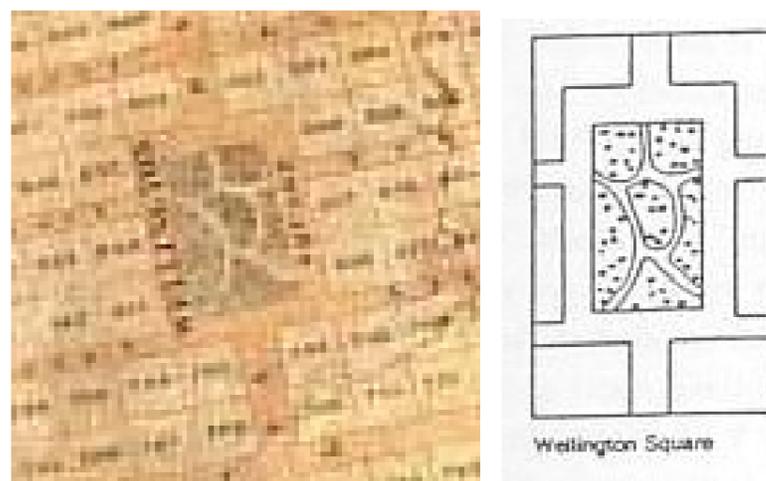
3.1.34 Wellington Square Report



Wellington Square

Historical Overview: Site Context

Wellington Square exists as rectangular square, or village green, as originally envisaged and laid out by Colonel Light in his 1836 survey 'Plan of Adelaide'. It was named on 23 May 1837 after Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, British general and statesman, and victor at the Battle of Waterloo, who is credited with securing the passage of the *South Australia Foundation Act* through the British House of Lords. Colonel William Light, a member of the Street Naming Committee, had briefly served under Wellington as a junior staff officer. No change to this surveyed plan has occurred thereafter.



Figures

Left: Plan of Hindmarsh Square as portrayed in the 'Plan of the City of Adelaide 1836' as prepared by Colonel Light. Source: ACC Archive.
 Right: Abstracted plan of Hindmarsh Square as portrayed in the 'Plan of the City of Adelaide 1836' as prepared by Colonel Light, indicating Light's theoretical garden design and pathway system for Hindmarsh Square. Source: Russell 1992, p. 3.

Historical Overview: Aboriginal Associations

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

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 municipality. 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* spp?), 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 Gardens/Pangki Pangki/Park 28, 1,000 in Wellington Square, and 500 in the Brougham Gardens/Tandotittinga/Park 29 (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 Wellington 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. This is the first record of conscious landscape design works and planting activities in the Squares, 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).

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 29 fruit-bearing species remaining in the Brougham Gardens/Tandotittinga/Park 29, some 5 specimens in the Palmer Gardens/Pangki Pangki/Park 28, some 19 specimens in Wellington Square, some 8 specimens in Hindmarsh Square, some 14 specimens in Light Square, and 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 these 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.

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 to 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* ssp] and Gum-tree [*Eucalyptus* ssp] ...” 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)).

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, which also included a discussion about his works in Wellington 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* ssp] along the whole of the fence. I intend to provide and plant 3,000 trees and shrubs, these being acacia [*Acacia* ssp?], almond [*Prunus dulcis*], olive [*Olea europaea*], gums [*Eucalyptus* ssp], poplars [*Populus* ssp], cypress [*Cupressus* ssp] and others, laburnum [*Laburnum* ssp], honeysuckle [*Melaleuca* ssp], willows [*Salix* ssp], Spanish broom [*Spartium junceum*], aloes [*Aloe* ssp], cactus, geraniums [*Geranium* ssp], roses [*Rosa* ssp] 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* ssp] 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* ssp] 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. 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* ssp), Roses (*Rosa* ssp), Cork Oaks (*Quercus suber*), Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), and Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina* ssp) (Register 1863).

It has postulated that a fountain was reputedly positioned in this 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 but documentation on Wellington Square is extremely scarce. 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 (*Brachycton populneus*) and 6 Cassia (*Cassia bicapsularis* syn. *Cassia candolleana*). It is unclear whether Council 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).

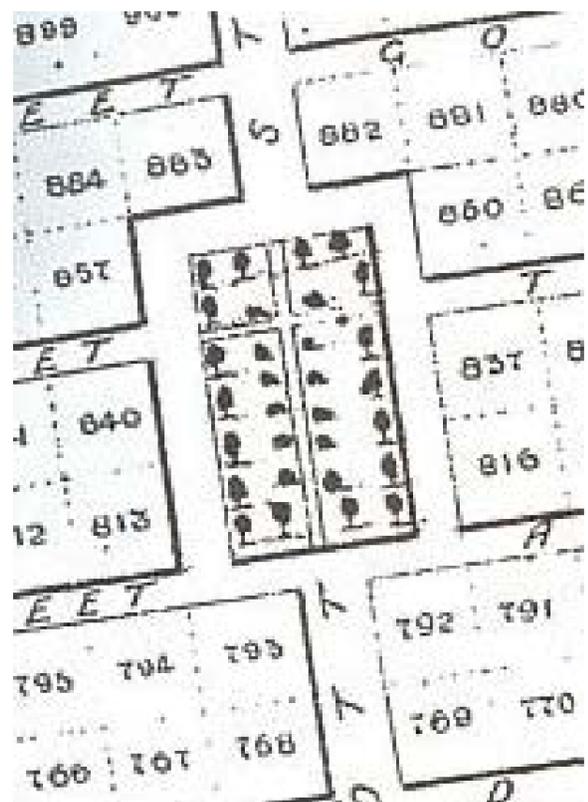


Figure
Extract from the Map of Adelaide prepared by the City of Adelaide City Surveyors Department dated 11 February 1865 that depicts Wellington Square as a large rectangular park with the present cross-pathway and a regimented order of tree planting. Source: ACC Archives.

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 William Pengilly was faced with removing the old post and rail fencing to enable the contractors to proceed. Mayor [Sir] Edwin Smith witnessed the erection of the ornamental cast iron palisading but also had to deal with public criticism of the Corporation’s expenditure of 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 in the municipality by early 1881. Costs for the palisading and its erection were for Wellington Square £1,589 14s 6d (*Annual Report* 1879-80, p. 82; 1880-81, pp. 110-111; 1881-82, pp. 34-35, 41).

While the debate about palisading was continuing City Gardener Pengilly was busy tree planting in the Squares. During 1881-82 he planted 175 trees in Wellington Square. 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).

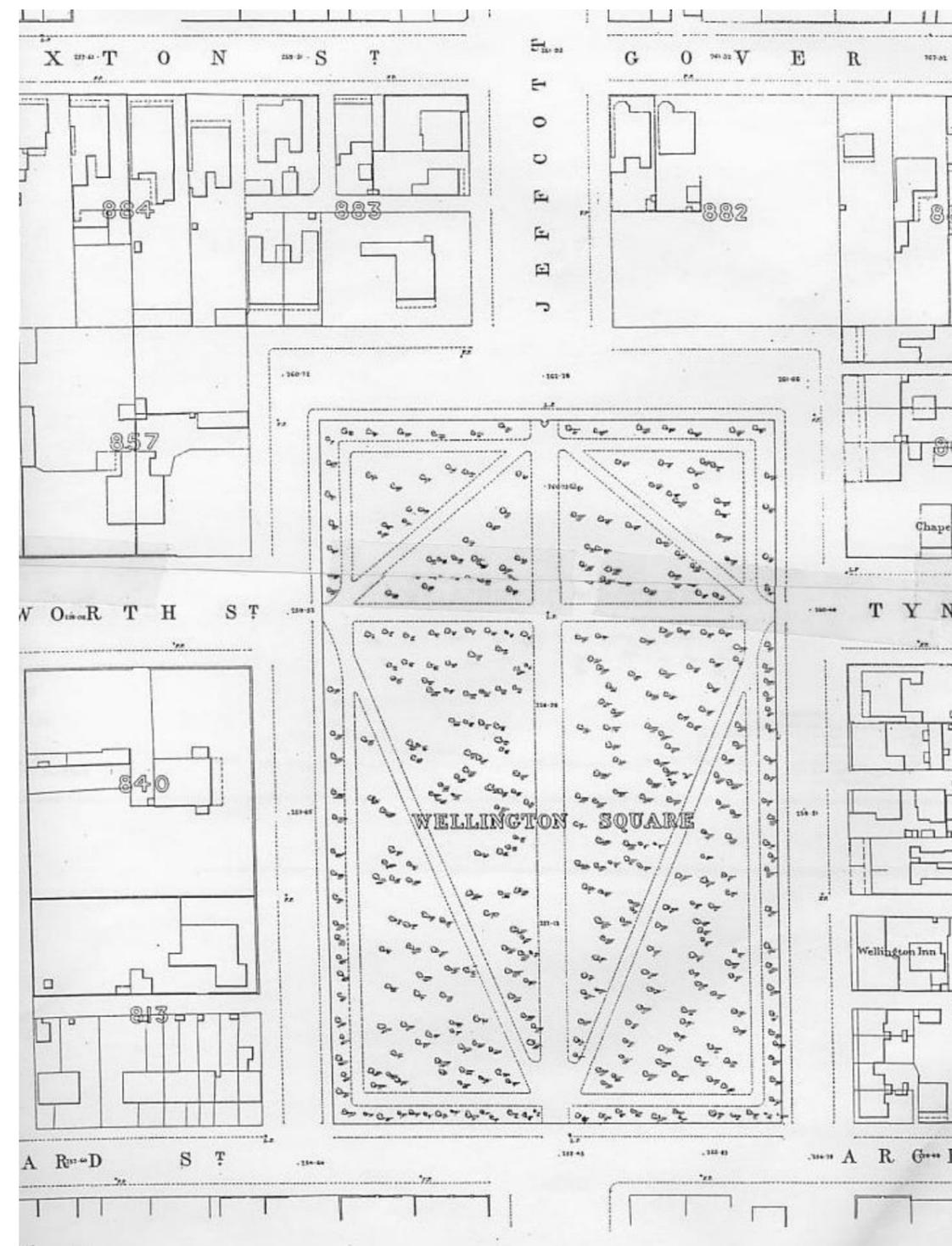


Figure
Extract of Smith’s Survey of the City of Adelaide in 1880 depicting Wellington Square. The detail in this image is quite pronounced. Note the formal pathway system in a union jack configuration, the lack of a central fountain in the Square, the extensive planting including specific locations as devised and undertaken by Francis and O’Brien, and the strong ceremonial north-south and east-west promenades through the Square. Source: ACC Archive.

In commissioning John Ednie Brown to prepare a *Report on a System of Planting the Adelaide Park Lands* (1880), under Mayor Bunday, there was no attempt to include the Squares in this

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investigation. This perhaps indicates the quality of landscape that was extant in the Squares that George Francis and William O'Brien had established; Pengilly was charged with Squares and garden development and maintenance but also had jurisdiction over the Park Lands (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 [Sir] 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. 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. Newly appointed City Gardener John W Hayes in 1886 reported on these acts of vandalism and that the gardens and trees in the Squares were also "in very good order" (*Annual Report* 1883-84, p. 50; 1885-86, pp. 48, 111-112).

Under Patterson and Hayes several minor landscape works were executed in each Square in the 1880s. During 1887 the water service was renewed in Wellington Square due to rust corrosion of the pipes. Hayes perceived that this work would "enable the grass to be kept green throughout the summer and materially improve the appearance of the square. 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." Wellington 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, pp. 40-41; 1889-1890, p. 77; 1894-95, p. 64; 1896-97, p. 69).

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

<i>Dequetteville Park</i>	30	14
<i>East Park Lands (between Old Race Course and North Terrace)</i>	26	13
<i>Hindmarsh Square</i>	8	Hindmarsh
<i>Light Square</i>	14	Light
<i>Whitmore Square</i>	6	Whitmore
<i>West Terrace</i>	112	22, 23, & 24
<u>Total</u>	<u>873</u>	

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

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 32 trees were removed from Wellington 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 Council. 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).



Figure
 Photograph of the former Primitive Church on the corner of Wellington Square and Tynte Street viewed from the Square in c.1890-1900. Note the cast-iron palisading mounted on stone plinths together with the two different heights of the painted bollards at the entrance to the Square. To the far left is also a bylaw sign. Source: MLSA, Gall Collection, as published in *The Heritage of the City of Adelaide* by Marsden et al (1990), p. 315.

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” (*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. 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* spp), Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), and Pepper Trees (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*). These tree species were grubbed and lopped in Wellington Square, two new 6m diameter flower beds were established, and extensive flower bed manure and aeration works undertaken. 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 high tree guards around them due to vandalism (*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: 54 chains in Wellington Square at £51/10/8. Wellington Square was fenced by the end of 1901. 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 Edwin 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 men 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).

By 1903 Pelzer was starting to plant trees and shrubs in Wellington Square. He first planted some 32 shrubs in the Square in 1903. Considerable trenching was undertaken in 1908 (*Annual Report* 1903, p. 44; 1908, p. 44).

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’s 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 (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 [sic] (*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 municipality. Because of the laying of electric-car tracks, the Squares would have to be remodelled and the Corporation viewed that the Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) should contribute to “pay a fair proportion” of the costs. Wellington Square was little affected by these discussions probably because the commercial stretch of North Adelaide had embraced O’Connell Street as its focus (*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 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 users on weekdays and weekends. For Wellington Square, an average of 2,500 to 3,500 adults were recorded per month, and some 1,500 to 2,000 children per month (*Annual Report* 1909, pp. 45-46).

But remodelling works appears to have been low priority for Wellington Square. Instead, Pelzer could only undertake trimming and lopping of large trees in the Square due to the location of telephone wires. Finally in 1913 Pelzer was given permission to fell 30 “large overgrown Moreton Bay fig trees” (*Ficus macrophylla*) in the Square and to replant in their position 29 False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia* ‘Bessoniana’) and two wattle trees (*Acacia* ssp). This was a major undertaken and would have extensively opened up the Square visually and to the impact of the weather (*Annual Report* 1912, p. 98; 1913, pp. 49, 62, 64).

In April 1913 Alderman (later Lord Mayor) Lewis Cohen first proposed the removal of all iron palisading fencing around the Squares and Gardens in the municipality requesting Lord Mayor (later Sir) J Lavington Bonython to consider what options were viable. Mayor 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 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).

The removal of the Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) trees from Wellington Square clearly opened upon the Square and left it with a sense of openness. Mayor Allen Simpson noted this impact but also recorded that more tree removal works and a complete landscape design was needed, perhaps hoping that the Corporation who vote the suitable funds in the next budget. His thoughts echoed those of Pelzer earlier of the need to remodel the Square in terms of its plantings and pathway design (*Annual Report* 1914, pp. 74, 80). These thoughts were:

*An inspection of Wellington Square, North Adelaide, will reveal it as a reserve much in need of improvement. At present there are too many large trees, such as peppers [*Schinus aeria* var *molle*] and pines [*Pinus* ssp], in the square, the result being that the lawns have no chance of thriving. These trees should be thinned out and the grass replanted. Running through the reserve from north to south is a tar-paved footway, 25 feet wide [7.6m], in the middle of which are four flower beds. The attractiveness of the place could be considerably enhanced by increasing the number and size of the beds, so that pedestrians might walk on either side of what would be a continuous and beautiful floral centre and a veritable feast of colour. The pathway as it exists at present is far wider than is necessary for the traffic requirements, and it presents too straight an appearance. The art of the landscape gardener is required in Wellington Square with its hungry lawns and intersecting bands of almost unrelieved and inartistic footways. Given an expenditure of £400, and the square would be transformed out of all knowledge and become one of the chief beauty spots of Adelaide* (*Annual Report* 1914, p. 74).

Despite this plea, Pelzer continued with minor planting works and also installed “swing perambulator bars” around the Square to enable “invalid chair” access. The Pepper (*Schinus aeria* var *molle*) pedestrian avenues leading from Jeffcott to Molesworth and Tynte Streets were extensively lopped in 1915 by Pelzer, and iron hoops placed around the four large flower beds. Three False Acacias (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) trees had to be removed the following year due to the effects of a severe drought. Additional thinning of the Pepper (*Schinus aeria* var *molle*) tree avenues occurred in 1917. By 1921 these flower beds were obviously causing a maintenance problem, and Pelzer removed them and tar-dressed the former beds. A “large, leaning Pine” (*Pinus* ssp), probably a Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*), was also felled (*Annual Report* 1914, pp. 74, 80, 83; 1915, pp. 66, 69; 1917, p. 41; 1921, p. 36).

In 1922 Pelzer drew an overview of 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 aeria* 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 and Pine (*Pinus* ssp) and Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) in Wellington Squares 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.

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 is 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).

Orchard was immediately requested to bring forward a remodelling plan for Wellington Square for Corporation consideration. Orchard proposed a complete remodelling “to comply with present requirements” as established by Pelzer. These works included the felling of 26 of the present 46 trees in the Square, and re-grassing the Square. The Corporation approved these works in June 1936, and Orchard proceeded with the works quickly that included the removal of the iron palisading fencing, removal of perimeter pathways and border shrubbery, the felling of “many old pines” (*Pinus* sp) and “the whole surrounding ploughed, graded and grassed down to the roadside kerb. Six display beds of cannas (*Canna* sp) have also been put in” (*Annual Report 1935-36*, p. 36; 1936-37, p. 21). Unfortunately Orchard does not indicate what tree species he was felling, where, and what species he was replacing them with. Despite these works,

Councillor FC Lloyd brought forward a resolution seeking the removal of “certain” Pepper (*Schinus aeria* var *molle*) trees in the Square, and the Corporation approved the motion to fell 38 Pepper (*Schinus aeria* var *molle*) trees. This work was promptly actioned by Orchard. There were apparently 215 trees growing in the Square at this time (*Annual Report 1938-39*, p. 27).



Figure
Extract of a 1936 aerial photograph of metropolitan Adelaide illustrating the scope of mature tree cover in Wellington Square, the tramline and the very evident north-south and east-west pathway systems with the former planted in young ornamental trees probably by Orchard. The pedestrian circulation system within the Square is obscured by the tree canopies. Source: University of Adelaide.

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 recharged the Parks & Gardens Committee and undertook a tour of all the Squares with City Gardener Benjamin Bone. There are no recorded

recommendations for Wellington Square but it is clear that Bone undertook a major renovation to or “rehabilitated” the Square and not simply select tree removal and lawn top-dressing that happened at most of the Squares (ACC Minutes of Parks & Gardens Committee, 17 November 1944). By 1952 the Committee had concluded:

Wellington Square which was rehabilitated in the year 1946, at present is regarded as being highly satisfactory. This is principally due to the fact that the number of trees present permit the lawns to be properly established and in consequence the aesthetic appearance of the remaining trees can be more readily appreciated, as the lawns provide a very satisfactory setting (ACC Parks & Gardens Committee Minutes 17 April 1952).

In 1968-69 the Corporation undertook the construction of a new toilet block in Wellington Square. The new toilets incorporating a storage area were costed at \$7,000 for construction (ACC Archives File No F.230/E).

The *City of Adelaide Heritage Study* (1981) recommended, following an extensive assessment of the built heritage and landscape heritage of the City, that Victoria, Light and Wellington Squares be registered on the South Australian Heritage Register. At this time only Victoria Square was recognised, having been listed on the Register of the National Estate. However, no registrations on the South Australian Heritage Register have occurred (Russell 1992, p. 6). The study also identified two tree specimens, a Pink Kurrajong (*Brachychiton x populeo-acerifolius*) specimen (J&E TA.49) located in the northern end of the Square, and a Sandarack Gum Tree (*Tetraclinis articulata*) specimen (J&E TA.50) located in the north-western corner of the Square, as possessing heritage merit, of which both exist today.

Amery (1997; 2002, p. 270) proposed the toponym *Kudnarto* to Wellington Square which honours the “first Aboriginal woman to marry European,” ‘Mary Ann Adams’, but the Corporation has yet to adopt this recommendation. *Kudnarto* means ‘third born if a female’. *Kudnarto* was from the Crystal Brook district and married European settler John Adams on 27 January 1848 at the Waymouth Street Registry Office (Amery & Williams 2002, p. 272; Draper et al 2005, pp. 48, 94-95). Amery (1997, pp. 3, 4) has summarised the life of *Kudnarto* as:

Kudnarto was from the Crystal Brook area in the north of Kaurana country. She had been living with a shepherd, Tom Adams, for a year and a half before he applied to the Protector, Matthew Moorhouse for permission to marry in mid-1847. They were finally married in January 1848. Kudnarto was about 16 years old at the time. Before they did marry, however, Kudnarto attended the “Native Establishment School” in Kintore Avenue for “initiation into the arts of domestic life and household duties”. In fact, she taught her illiterate white husband to write. Kudnarto and Tom Adams had two sons, Tom and Tim Adams born in 1849 and 1852. Unfortunately, Kudnarto died young in 1855. She would’ve been only about 23. Following Kudnarto’s death, Tom Adams and his two sons were left destitute as land allocated to Kudnarto was resumed by the government. Tom was forced to leave his two children at Ponindie. Many Kaurana people alive today trace their ancestry to Kudnarto.