the main hall, at a quote of £3,500, and the annexes for £6,323-10s. Two hundred men began work in February 1888.

2.9.2  \textit{John Beeler's Decorative Scheme}

American-trained artist, John Clay Beeler, who painted over a great deal of Mather’s original work, designed what was probably the most flamboyant of the three principal schemes which were painted in the Exhibition Building. Beeler’s scheme was generally florid and embellished, dominated by reds, blues and golds. The political message was similar in content to that of 1880: ‘\textit{Victoria welcomes all nations}’, which was painted over the north entrance to the Grand Avenue of Nations, where Victoria was exemplified by a female figure with outstretched arms standing upon a globe supported by two griffins. Up in the dome, in black outlined gold letters on a turquoise blue ground, was inscribed ‘\textit{The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof}’.

The dome was the centrepiece of the design which, like Mather’s scheme, again took up the sky theme, where the riches and glory of the British Empire were symbolised by radiating gold rays. Further down, the four corners of the Empire: Great Britain, India, Canada, and Australia, were represented by shields in their proper colours. Below the top of the dome were pink, white, shaded-gold and grey canopies, through the openings of which appeared a representation of the sky. Above the top cornice were arched drab-grey panels, ornamented with ivory-white vases, scrolls and ferns all being underlined by the cornice, highlighted in old gold, vermillion, Quaker grey and vellum. Beneath the windows were maroon panels embellished with ornamental scrollwork in French greys and gold, and eight female heads.

Apart from its rich decoration, the dome contained a rich panoply of figures, with female allegories of the four seasons on the spandrels, heads of Australian pioneers and explorers including Cook, Phillip, Flinders, Tasman and Bass on the upper section of the piers. Below these were giant figures, 12-13 ft (3.6-3.9 m) high, representing Commerce, Science, Art, Music, Architecture, Sculpture, Manufactures, Industry, Poetry and History. On the inner face of the arches were tableaux representing Agriculture, Viticulture, Industry and Art, Mining and Pastoral Industries. Similarly populated, was the western end around the organ where the false ceiling above the concert hall was coffered with painted blue panels, featuring portraits of the great composers, while Fame and Literature occupied the walls.

The work was finished in May 1888, well within time, and the Executive Commissioners were delighted with the results. They apparently did not flinch when the final bill came to £18,195 for all the buildings inside and out. After this mammoth painting effort, Beeler still found time to enter a design for ceilings and walls in the Upholsterer’s and Decorator’s Section of the Exhibition.

2.9.3 \textit{Changes to the Carlton Gardens}

At the conclusion of the first Exhibition in April 1881 the vast temporary annexes in the North Garden were demolished and subsequently the Committee of Management (newly formed in 1882, with representatives from the Lands Department and the City Council\textsuperscript{61}) had set about restoration of the gardens. The North Garden in this period was described as a ‘broken up surface abounding in deep excavations, heaps of broken bricks, glass, scraps of iron, and other rubbish, and generally overgrown with noxious weed’\textsuperscript{62}. Trees were planted in the central area in about 1882\textsuperscript{63}. The work of the Committee of Management in the initial years reflected Clement Hodgkinson’s presence on the Committee. Large quantities of street
manure were brought in and buried. Paths were laid out in ‘broad gravelled avenues, as convenient lines of communication across the garden between Melbourne, Carlton and Fitzroy’. They echoed the previous crossed diagonal pattern used by Hodgkinson in most of the government gardens. Paths were lined with avenue trees as thoroughfares through the site, much as Hodgkinson had created at the Fitzroy Gardens. There were no new beds or borders of shrubs; plantings were dominated by elms, oaks, Moreton Bay figs and plane trees.64

The new scheme was short lived, however, with the announcement of the forthcoming Centennial International Exhibition when the Trustees prepared to take control over the site once again. Even larger than the first Exhibition, the 1888-9 Centennial Exhibition’s display buildings, as noted above, crammed the North Garden to the footpaths of Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets (see plan at Figure 39). A timber caretaker’s cottage, located in the northern section of the gardens, was removed to allow for construction of the temporary buildings. Hodgkinson’s lake in the north-west of the site was also completely encircled by the buildings. Some of the trees planted in 1882 were removed and replanted in other gardens.65

The MMBW plan of the late 1890s indicates an east-west fence line aligned with the promenade, separating the South Garden from the parterres (‘flower plots’), terrace and Hochgürtel fountain (see Figure 13, Appendix D). The fence was erected in 1888 for the Centennial Exhibition to allow a public link between Fitzroy and Carlton at all times.

Figure 28 The extent of the temporary annexes in the North Garden for the 1888 Exhibition.
Note surviving beds at bottom of image (parterres and scroll) from the 1879-1880 scheme.
Source: Reproduced from the Australasian, 4 August, 1888.
2.10 Opening the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition

The 1888 Centennial International Exhibition opened on 1 August 1888. On the night before the opening, hundreds of artisans, labourers, exhibitors, exhibition staff, the General Superintendent and even the Commissioners, ‘worked as one man’ to clear away a pile of debris and to bring chaos into order before 9.00 am. At 10.00 am the doors opened to a perfect and tranquil scene inside. Like its earlier counterpart, a grand procession was held, followed by the performance of a cantata that had been written especially for the event.

The 1888 Exhibition was in fact similar in most respects to its predecessor of 1880, although it ran for a shorter period of time – from 1 August 1888 to 31 January 1889. Again, there was an ‘Avenue of Nations’ and, at 1,100 feet (335m) in length, it was almost one-third longer than it had been at the 1880 Exhibition. Although the Victorian display was still by far the largest, the French contingent was considerably smaller than it had been in 1880, owing to a forthcoming exhibition in Paris.

This time around, it was the German Court that was the second largest display, with no fewer than 85 exhibitors. Numerous previously unrepresented nations also had courts at the 1888 Exhibition, including substantial displays by Canada and Austro-Hungary, and smaller ones by New Guinea, Borneo and others.
Another innovation was a number of courts that were thematic, rather than national. These included the Armament Court, which became particularly popular, and several ‘Educational Courts’ which represented the educational institutions of the colonies. Unlike the 1880 Exhibition, it was open both day and night, and was electrically lit, with the capacity of 1 million candle power being achieved throughout.

In the picture galleries, reflectors were used to increase the illumination on the walls, which were brilliant, while the remainder of the space stayed dim.

The Centennial International Exhibition closed, somewhat earlier than expected, in January 1889. There had been a sharp decline in attendance over the preceding months, and it was generally considered that the exhibition had not been as successful as its predecessor in 1880. Certainly it had been a financial disaster, with the Commissioners reporting a loss of more than twice what had been anticipated. With the onset of the depression of the early 1890s, it became only too apparent that the Centennial Exhibition marked the end of an era, not the beginning of one, and there would be no thought of any further International Exhibitions for a very long time.

Westgarth Fountain

One notable aspect of the opening festivities of the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition was the presentation of a memorial fountain by William Westgarth, one of Melbourne’s early pioneers (Figure 29). The elderly Westgarth, who had returned to England in the 1850s, made a nostalgic pilgrimage to the Centennial Exhibition and marked the occasion by presenting a drinking fountain to the people of Victoria. Its modest inscription reads: ‘To Victoria from one of her earliest colonists in pleasant remembrance 1840-88’.

Sculpted from granite in Aberdeen, Scotland, it is of immense aesthetic interest in its willowy and unnatural depictions of embracing kangaroos and lively emu heads functioning as water spouts. The emus were sculpted from models cast in the London Zoo; its base of a standard design included bowls for dogs. It was installed in a prominent position directly in front of the porch to the eastern nave where the dispensation of reportedly iced water on a hot summer day was no doubt appreciated by visitors and canines alike (the fountain was later relocated, see Chapter 4).

2.11 After the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition

After the closure of the Exhibition in early 1889, the Exhibition Trustees again relinquished control over the North and South Gardens and the temporary exhibition structures in the North Garden were demolished. The restoration of the North Garden was then handed back, initially at least, to Nicholas Bickford. Bickford reported that ‘the present condition of the gardens couldn’t be worse: heaps, pits, holes, ditches and gullies; excavations to fill up and hillocks to level’. Paths were re-laid and the whole area dug over, levelled and replanted using much the same layout as in 1882. Oaks, elms, planes and Moreton Bay figs were the predominant plantings during this period and many survive today with a tree maturity which appears equal to those planted for the 1880 Exhibition some 10 years earlier.

Initiating the restoration of the North Garden was Bickford’s last major project before retiring at the end of 1890; John Guilfoyle began work as the new Curator of Metropolitan Parks and Gardens in January 1891. His first major task was continuing the clean up of the devastated gardens; he also introduced carpet bedding and floral displays. This was all done under tight financial control, not least of all due to the straightened circumstances of the 1890s.
Depression, and amidst drought conditions and continuing vandalism and misuse of the gardens by local residents. A replacement caretaker's cottage (brick structure) was built next to the north-western gates. This became Guilfoyle's residence, and has from this time been known as the Curator's Lodge.

Security of the gardens was also imperative. The Carlton Gardens had become a haven for (and subject to the attention of) thieves, vandals, and on a number of occasions, suicides. These activities were focussed in the South Garden, which had been left open during the evenings since 1890.

In 1890 the new Act of Parliament vesting the Exhibition Building and central 20.5 acres in the Trustees, resulted in the permanent division of the North and South Gardens. The area was then to be known either as the Exhibition Reserve (central area of approximately 20 acres at this time, increased in the mid-1990s to accommodate the new Melbourne Museum) or Exhibition Gardens. Attempts by the Trustees to turn the Exhibition Building complex into a self-funding entity, continued to impact on the layout of the site.

With regard the Exhibition Building, after removal of the temporary structures, the building returned to its largely previous form incorporating the Eastern and Western Annexes. In 1890, a sports oval and bicycle track were introduced to the quadrangle between the annexes, although bicycle races had been held on the site as early as 1882. A grandstand/pavilion and other associated buildings were constructed around this new feature, and crowds of up to 6,000 were drawn to races. By 1896 about two acres to the north of the cycle track were excised from the control of the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Committee, to allow for expansion of facilities and access for bicycles. After 1901, however, the popularity of major cycling events waned, and crowds dwindled. The sports oval remains evident in site plans and aerial photos until well into the 1940s, as indicated in the images in Appendix D, although the plan of the oval changes.

2.12 The Twentieth Century

Substantial changes to the Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens were made during the twentieth century, initially in preparation for the opening of the first Australian Parliament in Melbourne. Other changes occurred as a result of changing social needs, as well as reflecting impacts of both the First and Second World Wars. More recently, in the 1990s, the State Government initiated the establishment of a new museum and exhibition space in a central location. The Carlton Gardens was selected, on a site immediately north of the Royal Exhibition Building, with the new Melbourne Museum opening in October 2000.

2.12.1 1901: the Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament

Perhaps propitiously, twenty-one years after it was first opened in 1880, the interior of the Exhibition Building underwent another major re-decoration in association with the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament, one of the most significant events to be held in the Exhibition Building. In preparation for this event, at which the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York were to be present, the building was appropriately fitted out. It was the largest building in Australia, and the only building which could accommodate the large number of people who were to attend. A dais was constructed in the Great Hall inside the southern entrance, along with a special vestibule and corridor for the visiting royalty. Six artists were invited to prepare decorative schemes for the building's new interior, and the contract was awarded to John Ross Anderson.
The Opening of Parliament took place on 9 May 1901 (Figure 31). In front of an audience estimated at between twelve and fifteen thousand, the Governor-General led the Duke and Duchess of York to the dais while the orchestra played the national anthem. The members of the new Commonwealth Parliament, seated in the northern transept, were led into place immediately in front of the royal dais by the Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. Prayers were read, and then the Duke stepped forward to read the commission from his father, King Edward VII. Parliament was officially declared open, and the Duchess pressed an electric button which gave the signal for a message to be instantly sent to England to relay the news.

At the opening of Parliament, the interior was a riot of colour with copious quantities of banners, flagged trophies of the Union Jack, and alternately placed Royal and Australian shields. Swathes of Roman gold satin were crossed between each pilaster by a floral wreath. 'Dead' green and lavender muslin, festooned with wheat-ears bound with convolvulus and scarlet poppies, hung like punkahs from the ceiling, creating an 'al fresco' atmosphere. The centrepiece was the Royal dais decorated by W H Rocke and Co., Melbourne's leading furnisher (Figure 30). It was a sumptuous vision of royal crimson carpet with a gold diaper pattern, and a neutral green and crimson felt on the seating platforms which rose behind. Behind banks of fresh flowers and ferns, was a Royal blue velvet dado, pleated with upright panels of crimson silk, and edged with white enamel mouldings and gold satin. The flat backdrop behind was in vieux rose silk, embellished with the Royal coat-of-arms 'in a florid setting'. The outside of the building was also illuminated with electric lights (see Figures 55 and 56 in Appendix F). Subsequently the new Federal Parliament occupied the Victorian State Parliament House in Spring Street, until the new Federal Parliament House was opened in Canberra in May 1927. State Parliament moved to the Western Annexe of the Exhibition Building.74
2.12.2  *John Anderson’s Decorative Scheme*

John Ross Anderson’s work at the Exhibition Building in 1901 was considered to be one of the finest examples of his work. The decorative scheme of 1888 by his former employers, Beeler and Davies, was completely obliterated. Their bold colour scheme of red, white, blue and gold was over-painted by a warmer and more sober scheme of browns, reds and greens as was befitting a solemn and momentous occasion.

Like the previous two schemes, the dome was decorated to represent the sky in blues and golds, and as the scheme proceeded downwards, it became richer and darker with leathery terracottas and deep greens predominating. The dome again became the billboard for propaganda with four mottoes, inspired by Horace and the Stoics, being painted beneath the windows - *Carpe diem* (‘Make the most of the day’ or more popularly if incorrectly ‘Seize the day’), a theme which is very much part of the Exhibition Building’s history, *Dei gratia* (‘By the grace of God’), *Aude sapere* (‘Dare to be wise’) and *Benigno numine* (‘With benign power’). Beneath the mottoes was a garlanded frieze, containing the bounteous products of agriculture with recognisable melons, apples, pears, pomegranates and grapes, a theme reinforced by pairs of overflowing cornucopia on the flat arches between the spandrels. Centrally placed are four female heads, reminiscent of Beeler, which were originally painted on canvas and which have been reconstructed from Anderson’s cartoons as part of the restoration. Also painted on canvas, in the pendentives (triangular sections of vaulting between the rim of the dome and each adjacent pair of the arches supporting it), are allegorical figures of Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Hercules, which caused the *Argus* to admit that
Their symbolical place in the Commonwealth scheme may not be too obviously apparent, but they may perhaps be taken to typify Australian strength and swift intelligence, combined with a manly appreciation of beauty, love, and war.75

On the arches are complementary pairs of lunettes representing 'Peace' and 'War' and 'Federation' and 'Government'. 'The Arts Applied to Peace', and 'The Arts Applied to War' are set on clouds in a gleaming sky, heralding a new golden age for the young nation. On the north arch is 'Peace' which features Minerva, the lion of war asleep at her feet, and about whom are grouped sylph-like personifications of Literature, Painting, Husbandry and Agriculture. Opposite is 'War', where Minerva rides her chariot through storm clouds into battle, accompanied by attendant Amazons. Over the western nave is 'Federation' with Britannia, enthroned above a shield of the Union Jack, welcoming the six federated states as virgins, each bearing a shield emblazoned with the state coats-of-arms. Around the piers are half-draped figures, floating in mid-air above the clouds, representing the four seasons, Night and Morning, and Justice and Truth. All the figure work was done by notable artists Gordon Coutts, George Dancey, and Signor Nerli.

The scheme in the nave and transepts continued the dome theme, with a sunlit sky against which blue rafters and stencilled trusses stood out. Anderson's concept, particularly his design for the trusses, appears to derive from J G Crace's scheme for the 1862 London Exhibition. Beneath the windows were richly coloured panels festooned with laurel swags, below which the golden glow continued with a warm green down the columns.

2.12.3 Changes to the Gardens

Prior to the opening of Federal Parliament in the Exhibition Building in May 1901 the landscape at the entrance to the temporary Parliament in the centre of the Western Annexe was altered, with a fountain introduced to the garden roundel (see Figure 50 in Appendix F). The existing serpentine path system from the 1879 design was overlaid with a circular entrance feature facing Rathdowne Street. New trees may have been planted at this time, possibly including the large gum, which is extant at the Rathdowne Street entrance to Museum Victoria. Figure 52 in Appendix F indicates raised ornate parterres in the South Garden, which may have been planted for the opening of Parliament. Figures 74 and 75 in Appendix F also indicate palms planted in the South Garden in the 1930s and 1940s.

The annual funding for all public gardens in the City of Melbourne was cut from £6,000 to £4,000 in 1891 and it was many years before the budget was restored.76 Between 1901 and 1914, there was little in the way of development or works to the Carlton Gardens, save for removing some trees in poor health, including alternate trees in the Plane Avenue. Arbor Day was also instituted during this period, and local schools came to plant trees each year.77 A report in 1919 by the Town Clerk stated that 13 of 26 acres in the Carlton Gardens were in poor condition, the result of a combination of staff shortages during the First World War and a lack of funding and adequate resources. It was not until the following decade that any significant development occurred within the site.

2.12.4 The Development of Regular Exhibitions

In the first decade of the twentieth century, privately-run exhibitions became increasingly common at the Exhibition Building. But like their nineteenth century counterparts, they were still mostly held as one-off events.
Figure 32  The Victorian Motor Exhibition, 1912.
Source: Reproduced from Leader, 7 September, 1912.

Figure 33  The 'House with No Walls' at the 1939 Home and Building Exhibition.
Source: Reproduced from Australian Home Beautiful, April 1939.
Figure 34  Concert given by American tenor, Richard Crooks, in 1936.  
Source: Reproduced from *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne*.

Figure 35  The Exhibition Buildings in the late 1950s, showing Migrant Resource centre temporary accommodation.  
Source: Reproduced from *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne*. 
The ‘All Australian’ exhibitions, first held by the Australian Natives Association (ANA) in 1905, were among the first such events to be held regularly. With their displays of locally-manufactured goods, these exhibitions were still strongly rooted in their nineteenth century counterparts. Nevertheless, they were popular, successful, and became an annual event, thus pointing the way to the future. In 1912, the first motor show was held at the Exhibition Building (Figure 32) but hopes of establishing it as a regular event were soon dashed by the onset of the First World War. A similar fate befell the ANA exhibitions, but they commenced again from 1917. Momentum for regular exhibitions picked up in the 1920s. The first new-style Melbourne International Motor Show was held in 1925, and thereafter became an annual event. The ANA shows culminated in the Centenary All-Australian Exhibition, staged in 1934 to mark one hundred years of settlement in Victoria.

The Exhibition Building was also the first home of the Australian War Museum, later the Australian War Memorial. It was located in the northern part of the Eastern Annexe. The first exhibition opened on 20 August 1921, and the museum remained there until January 1925. The offices of the War Memorial also remained in the building for some decades more (see Figure 14, Appendix D).78

The expansion of local industry and enterprise after the Second World War brought with it a rapidly increasing interest in, and demand for, exhibitions. The Australian Industrial Fair was held in the Exhibition Building in 1949 and subsequently gave rise to a number of similar shows over the next few years, such as the ‘Made in Australia’ Exhibition (1952) and the First Australian Industries Fair (1955). Interest in the developments in vehicle technology resulted in a motor shows becoming larger and grander affairs. The first of the ‘new’ motor shows were held in 1949, and these were complemented in the 1950s with the emergence of boat shows and caravan shows.

By far the most significant post-WWII development in exhibitions was the home shows. Although two home shows had been held at the Exhibition Building in the 1930s, they had been intended as one-off events. The huge housing boom of the late 1940s led to a public thirst for knowledge of the latest developments in housing styles and labour-saving devices. A result of this was the Red Cross Modern Home Exhibition, which opened at the Exhibition Building in 1949. Organised by a panel that included architect Robin Boyd, the highlight of the exhibition was a full-sized modern home, the ‘House of Tomorrow’, which was equipped entirely with Australian-made goods, and ably demonstrated what the everyday home-builder could aspire to (Figure 33). This exhibition subsequently led to a proliferation of similar events, most of which became annual or regular events at the Exhibition Building in the 1950s and 1960s. They included the Jubilee Homes and Better Housekeeping Exhibition (from 1951), the Ideal Homes Show (from 1956) and the Building Industries Fair (from 1962). While the popularity of home shows began to abate by the late 1960s, it was revived in 1972 with the advent of the ubiquitous Sun International Home Show.

2.12.5 Official Occupations of the Building

Before it was chosen as the venue for the Federal Parliament opening ceremony in 1901, the Exhibition Building was considered as a possible home for the Parliament itself. After inspecting the entire complex, the Western Annexe was deemed to be the most suitable potential location. Renovations commenced before an official decision had even been reached, and the annexe was fitted out with offices, committee rooms and a pair of chambers to the design of the government architect, J H Marsden. In a somewhat roundabout fashion, however, and as noted above, it was decided that the new Federal
Parliament would take over the existing State Parliament House in Spring Street, and that the State Parliament would relocate to the renovated Western Annexe at the Exhibition Building. The latter was subsequently taken over by several government agencies, including the Country Roads Board, Motor Registration Branch, and the Transport Regulation Board. Although the office spaces were in poor condition and became notoriously crowded and inefficient, the bureaucrats remained there for several decades.

During the flu pandemic of 1919, part of the building was also briefly used as a hospital.

Considerably briefer than the use by State Government departments, but no less intrusive as far the Trustees were concerned, was the wartime occupation of the Exhibition Building. Officially requisitioned under the conditions of the National Security (General) Regulations, it was intended to use the building as a barracks and training facility for RAAF personnel. After minor renovations in early 1941, the RAAF No 1 School of Technical Training relocated to the Exhibition Building from its former home at the West Melbourne Technical School, and remained there until the unit disbanded at the end of 1945. Originally occupying only the Great Hall, the RAAF gradually took possession of the surrounding parts of the building. The grand concert hall in the western transept became the RAAF recreation room, and was the venue for numerous concerts to entertain the troops. Temporary kitchens, bathrooms and other structures were erected in the open space to the immediate north of the building, and the concrete area to the south and east were used for drilling and parades.

The site was also used to house migrants (as a Migrant Reception Centre) in the immediate post-WWII period, with the first migrants arriving in 1949. The temporary accommodation huts, flanked by the Eastern and Western Annexes, are illustrated in Figure 35 above and in the images at Appendix D, including Figures 21 and 22.

2.12.6 Decline of Cultural Events

Musical and theatrical performances, which had been an auspicious part of the building’s existence in the 1880s and 1890s, were to become increasingly less common in the decades that followed. Highlights included concerts given in 1904 by Ada Crossley, and in 1907 by Nellie Melba, who was in Melbourne to visit her ailing father, David Mitchell, who had erected the building almost thirty years before. The Melbourne Philharmonic Society Choir staged its Christmas Oratorio at the Exhibition Building in 1911, and subsequently made regular use of the premises over two decades. By the 1930s, the frequency of concerts at the Exhibition Building had abated somewhat. There were musical events associated with the Centenary Celebrations in 1934, and a farewell concert by the visiting American tenor Richard Crooks in 1936.

As part of a war-related fundraising effort in late 1939, the Exhibition Building became the venue for a two-week season of Hiawatha, a choral pageant with music by British-born composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the so-called ‘Black Mahler’. His score, originally written as a cantata in the 1890s, formed the basis for a dramatised version that premiered in London in 1924, with Australian singer Horace Stevens in the lead role. The 1939 Melbourne production, in which Stevens reprised his role, was an even more elaborate version, with full staging, costumes and choreography. It was one of the most extravagant musical concerts ever to be staged at the Exhibition Building in the twentieth century, and, ironically, one of the last.

After the Second World War, the frequency of concerts declined further. The once-famous Fincham Organ, which had been damaged by years of neglect and vandalism, was reduced to
a shell in 1947 when its remaining internal components were removed by the Fincham Company as spare parts for other organs. A number of local and touring orchestras still made use of the building in the late 1940s, but such events soon petered out by the 1950s. Yehudi Menuhin held a concert there in 1951, and an orchestra performed there as part of the Queens’ Coronation celebrations in 1953. By the time the remaining structure of the Fincham Organ was finally dismantled in 1965, the Exhibition Building had been almost completely forgotten as a venue for musical and dramatic performances.

While formal concerts in the main part of the Exhibition Building had practically ceased by the 1950s, it was during that decade that another part of the building became, almost accidentally, a highly popular venue for live music of a somewhat different kind. In 1951, the Western Annexe was remodelled as a ballroom in preparation for a visit from Princess Elizabeth, which was cancelled due to the sudden death of the King. However, the Trustees decided to retain the ballroom fitout, and rent it out as a commercial venture to cover the costs of the renovation. Dubbed the ‘Royale Ballroom’, it soon became one of the most popular venues in Melbourne for all manner of social functions, including public dances, private receptions, and the annual balls for countless clubs and societies. But even this was a relatively short-lived venture. From the early 1960s, there was a sharp decline in the demand for such events, and the Royale Ballroom closed at the end of the decade.

2.12.7 The Changing Building – Demolition & Development

The increasing number and frequency of exhibitions in the post-WWII era provoked the strongest interest in the physical development of the Exhibition Building. A new generation of Trustees saw the potential benefits in upgrading the complex as a world-class exhibition centre and there was a push for redevelopment. An opportunity for this occurred suddenly and unexpectedly in 1953, when the famous Aquarium was destroyed by fire. The question of rebuilding it was ruled out almost immediately, and the site was instead used for the erection of a basketball stadium for the 1956 Olympic Games.

Further redevelopment was hindered by the fact that parts of the building were still occupied by government tenants. To overcome this, the conditions of the Victorian Exhibitions Bill were amended in 1957, whereby the Trustees were given the ability to grant licenses for occupation of the building and to erect new buildings.

One of the first initiatives of the Trustees in this new capacity was the redevelopment of the old Western Annexe, which had been gradually vacated by the occupying government departments in the late 1950s. The southern portion of the annexe was demolished in 1963, and a new exhibition annexe was erected. Designed by Meldrum and Partners, the Trustees’ official architects, it took the form of a vast concrete building, and provided an additional 60,000 square feet of exhibition space (see Figure 88, Appendix F). The northern portion of the Western Annexe was subsequently demolished in 1967. In the late 1970s, the push for redevelopment coincided with the approaching centenary of the Melbourne International Exhibition. The Eastern Annexe, which had fallen into disrepair since the closure of the Royale Ballroom in the late 1960s, was finally demolished in 1979. In its place, a new exhibition annexe and administration building was erected, again designed by Meldrum and Partners. The original proposal, a concrete structure with a large stained glass window, was rejected in favour of a somewhat controversial, and generally subsequently hated, design which featured a building clad entirely in mirrored glass panels (also known as Centennial Hall, illustrated at Figure 84, Appendix F). A modern fountain, donated by the Grollo family,
was installed in front of the new building, and the surrounding gardens were replanned, based partly on the original 1880 landscaping layout and including the French Fountain.

Throughout its long history, the Royal family had visited and officiated at ceremonies in the Melbourne Exhibition Building. However, it was not until 1980 that the building was officially named the Royal Exhibition Building in a ceremony opened by Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II on 1 October 1980.

2.12.8 Restoration & Reinstatement of the Exhibition Building

While its redevelopment was in full swing in the 1970s, the Exhibition Building was added to the Victorian Register of Government Buildings, thus bringing it under the provisions of the (then) Government Buildings Act (1972). The demolition of the Eastern Annexe in 1979 stirred concerns about the heritage significance of the building, and the Government Buildings Advisory Council commissioned a conservation analysis in 1983. The report, completed by architectural historian Allan Willingham, was followed by an extensive survey of the building to determine what conservation work was required. Internally, the floor was badly worn, and the respective decorative schemes of 1880, 1888 and 1901 had been almost completely obliterated by subsequent overpainting, most recently in battleship grey with pink primer trusses. Externally, the dome was in poor condition, and many original elements, including parapet urns, light fittings and ventilators, were missing. In short, a century of neglect, vandalism and inappropriate *ad hoc* additions had finally caught up with the building.

An extensive and ongoing programme of renovation was commenced in the late 1980s, subject to the availability of Government funding. In 1992, the exterior of the dome was completely refurbished, including the re-gilding of the cupola. Another major project was the reinstatement of the interior decorative scheme. The work itself was preceded by considerable research and physical investigation to determine which of the three schemes – 1880, 1888 or 1901 – should be reinstated. The decision to restore and reinstate Anderson's 1901 scheme was eventually arrived at due to the fact that this was the most intact of the schemes, including the allegorical tableau, although there was some fragmentary evidence of the earlier schemes. From a conservation perspective it was also not seen as appropriate to remove the intact decorative treatment relating to Federation and the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament, in order to (potentially) reveal and reinstate the earlier 1880 or 1888 schemes. The 1901 scheme had also been in place for nearly a century.

2.13 1990s: Building a New Museum

In 1993 the Victorian Government embarked upon a major development project for the Exhibition Reserve, with the Royal Exhibition Building identified as the centrepiece of the new Melbourne Museum campus. The c.20 acre Exhibition Reserve was increased on its north side (i.e. excised land from the North Garden) by an additional two acres to accommodate the extra footprint of the Museum building (see Figure 2). The development, through to the late c.2000, also incorporated the total demolition of the unsympathetic reflective glass exhibition annexes erected in the 1960s and 1970s, the restoration and reinstatement of the Westgarth Fountain, and the restoration of the French Fountain and Hochgürtel Fountain. The removal of the annexes additionally provided for the conservation and restoration of the north façade of the Royal Exhibition Building (see Figure 36 & Figure 37). The new Museum Victoria building was constructed on the area covered by the car park.
Figure 36  Late 1990s image of the north elevation, showing condition after removal of annexe.

Figure 37  Another late 1990s image of the north elevation, after removal of the annexe.
The building and surrounds were designed by Melbourne-based architectural firm Denton Corker Marshall, selected from an international competition which attracted over 100 entrants.

The decision to build a new campus for Museum Victoria also meant that interpretive and curatorial resources could be directed towards the protection and promotion of the historic building and its heritage. Accordingly, in 1996, the *Museums Act* (1983) vested the general control, administration and management of the Exhibition Reserve land, including the Royal Exhibition Building, in the Museums Board of Victoria. Museum Victoria currently manages all aspects of the operations of the Royal Exhibition Building, including its program of commercial exhibitions, trade fairs and public events.

### 2.13.1 Changes to the Gardens in the 1990s

Changes to the gardens in this period included, in addition to the removal of some vegetation and landscape elements to accommodate the new facility, planting trees in the East and West Forecourts of the Royal Exhibition Building to create an interface with the Melbourne Museum. In the later 1990s the old Grollo Fountain was dismantled and placed in storage. Other changes are detailed in Chapter 4 and Appendix C and include modification of the ponds and removal of garden beds.
2.14 Creators of the Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens

2.14.1 Edward La Trobe Bateman (1816-1897), Garden Designer

Born in Lower Wyke, Yorkshire, England in 1816, Edward La Trobe Bateman was the first cousin of Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875) and the nephew of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820), the first professional architect in the USA. As his biographer, Anne Neale notes, prior to his arrival in Australia in 1852, Bateman was known primarily as an illuminator, providing the chromolithography for at least three 'lavishly illustrated' gift books published by the architect and designer Owen Jones (1809-1874).

Bateman may have been encouraged to migrate to Victoria by his cousin, Charles Joseph La Trobe. From his earliest days in Victoria, Bateman appreciated the native flora, as well as the rustic simplicity and ‘unconsciously picturesque’ early settlers’ houses and gardens. He exhibited illustrations in Melbourne between 1854 and 1869. Ferdinand von Mueller regarded Bateman's work very highly, commissioning scientific illustrations for Kew Gardens, London. When he realised the limited scope to earn a living as an artist in Australia, Bateman turned to garden design.

Public and institutional gardens designed by Bateman in Victoria include the separate Botanic or System Garden within the grounds of the University of Melbourne (1855-64), Williamstown Botanic Gardens (1856), Fitzroy Square (now Gardens) (1856-7), and the Carlton Gardens (1856-57). A scheme for St Vincent Gardens (1857) is attributable to Bateman, as is a landscaping scheme for the Wesleyan Methodist Church complex in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. In 1864 he prepared a scheme for the grounds of the proposed new Government House, Melbourne, in association with Joseph Reed’s architectural design, but neither was executed.

In Victoria, Bateman also designed private gardens for some of its well-known residents. Commissions included gardens for Captain and Mrs George Ward Cole (1854); Flemington House for Hugh Glass (1856-65); Barragunda, Cape Schanck for the Howitt and Anderson families (1856-66); and Heronswood, Dromana, for Professor W E Hearn (1864-69). In 1867 Bateman was contracted to design and lay out the extensive grounds at Chatsworth, near Wickliffe in Western Victoria, for John Moffatt when he was severely injured in a buggy accident. His right arm was paralysed, though he suffered sufficiently to see to the laying out of the grounds of Devonshire House, Hawthorn, for Thomas Lambert. The original garden layout at Ripponlea is also attributed to Bateman.

Bateman returned to Britain in 1869 and settled on the Isle of Bute, Scotland. Despite ill-health, he designed at least fifteen gardens in Scotland before his death on Bute in 1897.

2.14.2 William Sangster (1831-1910), Horticulturalist

Born in Inverness, Scotland in 1831, William Sangster migrated to Melbourne during the gold rush of the early 1850s. He had previously worked in the ‘celebrated gardens of Hamilton Palace’ in Scotland. By mid-1853 he was working at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens under fellow Scot, John Dallachy. After a brief sojourn in 1854 to work as gardener at Mount Pleasant, he returned to Melbourne to work as gardener and overseer of the Como Estate. Sangster’s biographer believes William Sawrey Gilpin’s work, Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening, (1832) influenced his design for both Como and Rupertswood.
Sangster left Como in mid-1856 to join William Taylor’s nursery, which was thereafter known as Taylor and Sangster’s Nursery, located in Toorak. It appears Taylor carried out the major work of propagating while Sangster was engaged in landscaping and design. Some of the gardens he is known to have designed include Como, Manderville Hall, Devorgilla, Studley Park, Victoria Gardens, Prahran and alterations to Rippon Lea. He also undertook the rearrangement of the Carlton Gardens in 1880. Sangster was not only a private gardener, but was also a member of the Board of Inquiry into the Administration of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens (1870-71) which resulted in a ‘greatly enhanced emphasis on landscape design’ at the gardens.85

Taylor and Sangster’s nursery was a major prize winner at the Horticultural Society of Victoria’s shows, being outstanding for its collection of conifers, azaleas and cut flowers, which often numbered fifty varieties. In the 1870s the nursery began showing camellias with great success. At this time they also established a branch of the nursery in Mount Macedon as a cool-climate extension of their Toorak nursery. Taylor spent considerable time propagating rhododendrons, and the choice included 124 hybrid seedlings as well as 200 two-year old plants.

Following Taylor’s death in 1892, Taylor’s children inherited his share of the nursery. After Sangster’s death in 1910, his share of the nursery went to his daughter, Jane Yates Sangster, who acquired the whole of the nursery in 1912 and continued to run it successfully until 1930.

Betty Hutton, his biographer, notes that Sangster’s obituary stated that he was ‘for many years the leading landscape gardener in the state’, and ‘with William Guilfoyle his only rival in the design field’ the claim has some justification, especially given Sangster’s extensive list of clients.86

2.14.3 Clement Hodgkinson (1819-1893), Surveyor & Land Manager

Born in Southampton in 1819, Hodgkinson qualified as a surveyor and railway engineer in 1839 before migrating to New South Wales where he initially became a pastoralist; from 1842 he took up his profession as a surveyor. However, in 1843, and following the death of his wife, Hodgkinson returned to England. In 1845 he published an account of his experiences in Australia, *Australia, from Port Macquarie to Morton Bay*. Following his return to England, from 1844 to 1851 he worked as a railway engineer in England and on the Continent.

Hodgkinson decided to return to Australia in 1851. He sailed for Melbourne and early in 1852 he joined the Survey Office as a draftsman, and here he began a successful career as a surveyor. He rose from the ranks of draftsman and was successively surveyor in charge of the Melbourne Survey District, Acting Surveyor-General and, in 1858, Deputy Surveyor-General of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.87 In 1861 he became Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey. He was, in the words of his biographer, historian Ray Wright ‘the colony’s most influential land manager ... Hodgkinson shaped the cultural landscape of Victoria’.88

In 1873 Hodgkinson, who was ‘overworked and beset by acute administrative problems’ at the time, reluctantly accepted the additional role of Inspector General of Metropolitan Parks, Gardens and Reserves. In this role he reworked La Trobe Bateman’s original plan for the pathway system of the Carlton Gardens. He resigned from the post in 1874, due to accusations of mismanagement. This did not end his association with the Carlton Gardens,
however; he became a member of the newly constituted Metropolitan Parks Committee, which drew up a restoration scheme in 1882 to be implemented by the Curator.89

Hodgkinson is most widely known for his supervision of the landscaping designs for the Treasury, Fitzroy and Flagstaff Gardens, and Alma Park, East St. Kilda.

2.14.4 Nicholas Moysey Bickford (1822-1901), Gardens Curator

Bickford joined the Victorian Public Service in 1855 as a member of Clement Hodgkinson’s survey party. In 1857, when Hodgkinson assumed responsibility for parkland development, Bickford was appointed senior park ranger. As his biographer, Georgina Whitehead notes, ‘The two men developed a close association: Bickford acted as Hodgkinson’s eyes and ears.’90 He was appointed Crown Lands Bailiff for Melbourne in 1865, and Inspector of Metropolitan Bailiffs and Overseer of Parklands in 1872. When he took over parkland management in 1874 he ‘did not inherit Hodgkinson’s power or authority’ but followed his mentor’s precepts faithfully.91 In 1882, when thirteen reserves previously under colonial government control were given the title of Metropolitan Parks and Gardens, Bickford was appointed their curator, responsible to the managing committee representing the Lands Department and Melbourne City Council. He retired in 1890 after sixteen years managing Melbourne’s city parks and gardens.92.

2.14.5 John Austin Guilfoyle (1852-1909), Horticulturalist

Guilfoyle replaced Bickford in early 1891 with as noted previously his first major task being the clean up of the northern section of Carlton Gardens and the introduction of carpet bedding and floral displays. He was the younger brother of William Guilfoyle and the son of Michael Guilfoyle, a Sydney landscape gardener and nurseryman. Guilfoyle worked in Queensland and South Australia, with botanical excursions to New Guinea and the Solom Islands, before being employed by Bickford.93

2.14.6 Reed & Barnes, Architects

Joseph Reed (1823-1890) was born in Cornwall. Travelling to London, he became articled to architect Thomas Bellamy, and may also have worked with Sir Charles Barry. Reed then became ‘clerk and architect’ to a wealthy peer with a country estate, but the promising association was cut short when the peer died in 1852. Suddenly short of work, Reed migrated to Australia the following year. Only a few months after his arrival in Melbourne, Reed won the competition to design the Public Library, and this was soon followed by important commissions for the Bank of New South Wales in Collins Street and the Geelong Town Hall. These were designed in a conservative Classical Revival style which typified Reed’s work of the 1850s.

In 1862, Reed went into partnership with Frederick Barnes (1824-1884). Soon after, he left Australia for an extensive tour through Europe, during which time he saw a great deal of local architecture which informed his later work in Australia. Significantly, Reed was in London for the 1862 International Exhibition, and would have seen the vast new exhibition building that had been designed by Francis Fowke. In Italy, Reed was particularly inspired by the mediaeval brick architecture of Lombardy, and he introduced the style to Melbourne in subsequent designs for the Collins Street Independent Church (1866), St Jude’s Church of England, Carlton (1866), and Frederick Sargood’s mansion, Ripponlea, in Elsternwick (1868). The ability of Reed and Barnes to work ably in a variety of architectural styles became
further evident in the 1870s. The firm designed the Exhibition Building in an Italian Renaissance idiom, the celebrated Wilson Hall, at Melbourne University, in the Gothic manner, and Ormond College, also at Melbourne University, in the Scottish Baronial style.

In 1883, Frederick Barnes retired, and two young architects, A M Henderson and F J Smart, were admitted as partners. Joseph Reed became increasing less involved in the activities of the practice. He married for the second time in 1885, and travelled overseas extensively before returning to Australia, where he died in 1890. That same year, his partner A M Henderson withdrew from the firm after a disagreement, and was replaced by Norman Peebles. The firm later became Bates, Peebles and Smart, then Bates, Smart and McCutcheon, and it currently survives as Bates Smart Pty Ltd. In the decades since Joseph Reed’s death, the firm lost little of its prestige. It continued to act as architects to the State Library and the University of Melbourne, with two particularly notable achievements being the domed Reading Room (1911) and the new Wilson Hall (1952-56) at those respective institutions.

2.14.7 David Mitchell (1829-1916), Builder

David Mitchell (1829-1916) was born in Scotland, and became apprenticed to a master mason at the age of seventeen. He emigrated to Australia in 1852, and initially worked as a mason, building a modest house for himself in Burnley Street, Richmond. After a brief sojourn to the Bendigo goldfields, he returned to Richmond and established his business as a building contractor. Mitchell married in 1856, and erected a more substantial house to replace his earlier home. He and his wife had ten children; one daughter, Helen Porter Mitchell, became better known as opera singer Dame Nellie Melba.

In 1856, Mitchell won the masonry tender for the first St Patrick’s Cathedral in East Melbourne. Before retiring from building over forty years later, he was responsible for the erection of many large and important buildings in Melbourne, including the Menzies Hotel in William Street (1857), Scots’ Church in Collins Street (1873-74) the Presbyterian Ladies College in East Melbourne (1874) and the Masonic Hall in Collins Street (1888). The Exhibition Building, completed in 1881, was by far his largest and grandest undertaking.

As well as a thriving contracting business, Mitchell was also engaged in the manufacture of building components. His factory in Richmond initially commenced with brickmaking in the late 1850s; after Mitchell began quarrying limestone at his property in Lilydale he began also to manufacture ‘Adamant’ plaster and Portland cement. During the Depression years of the early 1890s, Mitchell retreated to his Lilydale property, where he established factories for the manufacture of cheese, butter, bacon, ham and soap. After retiring from building in 1899, Mitchell concentrated on these business interests, as well as a number of vineyards and station properties that he had acquired throughout Victoria. He died in 1916.

2.14.8 John Robert Mather, Painter & Decorator

John Mather was an artist who emigrated from Scotland in 1878 and within two years of his arrival in the colony received a commission to design a scheme for the interior of the Melbourne Exhibition Building. The reason for the choice of this little known new arrival, with no apparent background in the decoration of buildings, are unclear, although in later life he became a well known and influential artist in the colony. Major painting work by Mather was undertaken at Government House in early 1883 and at Mandeville Hall, Toorak. He became the Curator of the Melbourne Museum in 1893.94
2.14.9  **James Paterson, Foreman Decorator**

The firm of Paterson Brothers variously comprised Charles Stewart, James and Hugh; it was established by Charles and James in 1876. James was born c. 1852 in Dundee and served his apprenticeship with Purdie, Bonnar and Carfrae, said to be the most eminent house painters and decorators in Scotland. He came to Australia in 1873 and began working in the painting and decorating industry where his first recorded work is the execution of Mather’s scheme at the Exhibition Building. He may have also worked with Mather at Mandeville Hall. However, the Exhibition Building contract undoubtedly set the firm on the path to success, and his next commission was Exhibition Commissioner Thomson’s mansion, Kamesburgh in Brighton, where he worked with Charles. They soon established a reputation for ‘skilful and artistic decoration’ which they never lost. Subsequent commissions included Villa Alba, Kew, the Parliamentary Library, Melbourne Town Hall and Her Majesty’s Theatre, Ballarat.

2.14.10  **John Ross Anderson, Decorator**

Born in Aberdeen in 1862 and trained in London, Anderson was a third generation decorator. After arriving in Sydney in 1882, he worked initially for Signor Lorenzini and later for John Clay Beeler on the decoration of the Criterion Theatre. Later he moved across to Sydney’s most prestigious firm of decorators, Cottier Lyon and Wells, and was sent to Melbourne to assist in the decoration of the ES&AC Bank. Anderson briefly returned to Sydney to work on Her Majesty’s Theatre and then moved back to Melbourne to take up a position with the Paterson Brothers. This was relatively brief tenure, and in 1888 he moved across to the rival firm of Beeler and Davies. This is of particular interest in that it suggests that Anderson may have had a hand in the Beeler and Davies scheme for the Exhibition Building in 1888, prior to his work there in 1901. Anderson established a reputation for himself throughout Australia as a colourist and designer and had examples of his work in most major public buildings in the capital cities.

2.14.11  **John Clay Beeler, Painter**

Beeler was born in Cooperstown, Otsego County in New York State. His father was connected with Heath and Milligan of Chicago, who were then the leading manufacturer of painters’ requisites in the American west. At sixteen, he returned to New York and studied at Columbia College and the famous art schools of Cooper Union. Later he became a pupil of G G Garoboldi, then recognised as the finest decorative artist in the United States. He joined L W Seavey who had a worldwide reputation for photographic backgrounds and theatrical work, an area in which Beeler specialised after his establishment in Australia. He was also a keen sketcher from nature, and a water-colourist. His work was described as being ‘better known and more freely admired than that of any other single decorator in Australia’. Along with such figures as Samuel Mouncey, the Paterson Brothers and later John Ross Anderson, he was responsible for the decoration of a large number of major public and private buildings in Melbourne and Sydney during the 1880s. His other works include the Hawthorn Town Hall and sections of the Melbourne Town Hall, Government House and the Eastern Hill Fire Station.

Prior to his partnership with Davies, he was in partnership with Mouncey under the name of Mouncey and Beeler, decorative artists of 95 Collins Street East. This address was also that of John Mather for most part of the 1880s. It appears that around the time of his partnership with Davies, John Ross Anderson joined the firm after having worked for the Sydney firm of decorators Lyon Wells Cottier and Co and for the Paterson Brothers.
Anderson’s position in the firm at this time was that of manager in charge of decoration and it is likely that he had a hand in the work on the Exhibition Building.

2.14.12 *Denton Corker Marshall, Architects*

The firm of Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) was formed in 1975. John Denton (born 1945 in Suva), Bill Corker (born 1945 in Melbourne) and Barrie Marshall (born 1946 in Melbourne) all began architecture together at the University of Melbourne in 1963. After various incarnations with former partners prior to 1975, and the opening of a Canberra office in 1973, the firm gained direction with the competition-winning design for the Melbourne Civic Square (1976-80, demolished 1998). In 1980, the practice expanded again, this time in partnership with Yuncken Freeman, Hong Kong.98

Competition entries brought DCM a finalist’s place in the design of Australia’s new Parliament House and, in 1981, the commission for 1 Collins Street (in association with Robert Peck YFHK Pty Ltd), as well as the new Australian Embassy in Beijing. The firm’s work has been characterised by ‘careful contextual and programmatic responses’, explained by Philip Goad as ‘an architectural vocabulary that fosters the tradition of abstraction in modernism and bold architectonic formalism’.99 DCM have also developed their firm’s expertise to embrace landscape, interior and urban design.

Since 1985, DCM has operated alone, without architectural associations, subsequently operating offices in Sydney, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Hanoi and Warsaw. DCM designed the Australian Embassy in Tokyo and, in Sydney, the Museum of Sydney and Governor Phillip and Macquarie towers. In Melbourne, they have been responsible for four major skyscrapers, the Adelphi Hotel, the Exhibition Centre, the ’Gateway’ to Melbourne at the Flemington Road entry to the Tullamarine Freeway, and the new Melbourne Museum in the Carlton Gardens.

In 1996, the RAIA Gold Medal was awarded to Denton Corker Marshall in a rare departure from the architectural association’s tradition of awarding the prize to an individual.100
Figure 39  Site and building plan for the 1888 Exhibition
Source: Centennial International Exhibition, 1888-1889 Official Record