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The pergola at the new Australian War Graves' Extensions at the Necropolis, Springvale, Victoria. The work was designed by Urban Initiatives, Melbourne landscape architectural practice.

Photo by Robert Pointon.

Die axiale Pergola in der erweiterten australischen Kriegergedenkstätte in Springvale, Melbourne. Gestaltung: Urban Initiatives – Melbourne landscape architectural practice.



The Australian War Graves' Extensions

at the Necropolis, Springvale, Victoria
By Bruce Echberg
in "Landscape Australia" 4/1989

All illustrations from "Landscape Australia" 4/1989.

Alle Illustrationen sind der Zeitschrift «Landscape Australia» 4/1989 entnommen.

The site

Springvale is a suburb towards the south eastern fringe of Melbourne, which has been developed since the 1950s. The Necropolis, also called Springvale Crematorium and Cemetery, parallels the suburb in its time of development and is Melbourne's largest cemetery, being almost the size of a small suburb in its own right. The Necropolis has maximum dimensions of about one and a half kilometres in both its north-south and east-west directions.

The Necropolis offers an interesting catalogue of building and landscape design styles over the past three decades. The maintenance of buildings and landscape of the Necropolis tends to be of quite a high standard, and landscapes are therefore often allowed to develop more or less as their designers intended.

The existing Memorial Gardens

The Office of Australian War Graves has tenure of a site near the centre of the Necropolis in which a Garden of Remembrance was developed during the early years of the Necropolis to commemorate Eligible Veterans.

It was decided that the existing memorial gardens in Victoria should be extended in one construction phase to provide wall space for an anticipated demand until the year 2000.

An important aspect of the design brief for the extension was the requirement that new works should "be an extension of the existing Gardens of Remembrance in design and general character so as to achieve a sense of unity and continuity with the existing and thus avoid any discrimination between new and old plaque positions".

Appreciating the design of the existing gardens is therefore important to understanding the design of the extension.

The existing gardens have a strong, simple axial plan. The short frontage to North road consists of a symmetrical single storey pavilion building which extends to each side of the facade with cream brick boundary walls. A single arched entrance into this building is on line with a straight vista which extends the length of the site and is terminated by a matching arched entrance through the perimeter wall. This axis or vista is emphasised by the provision of a wisteria

clad pergola through most of its length. Memorial plaques are arranged on wing walls which are regularly spaced and at right angles to the axis or spine. The entry building provides simple staff and public amenities and also accommodates a records room which visitors use to look up the location and other details of war veterans.

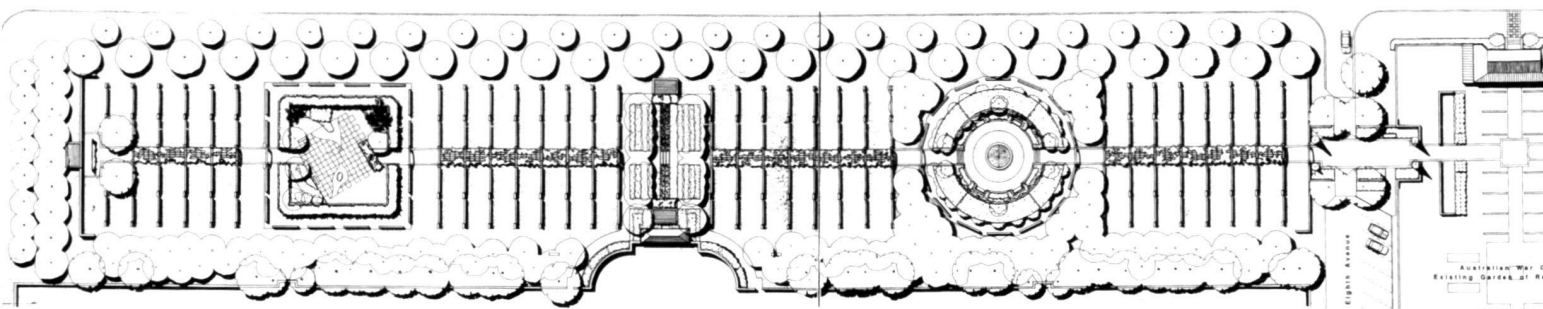
The main landscape elements of the existing gardens are lawns within the walled compound and the use of wisteria along the entire length of the axis. Garden beds planted with exotic perennials and roses are also a part of its landscape character but the horticultural diversity of this planting tends to be inconsistent with the strength of the overall site design.

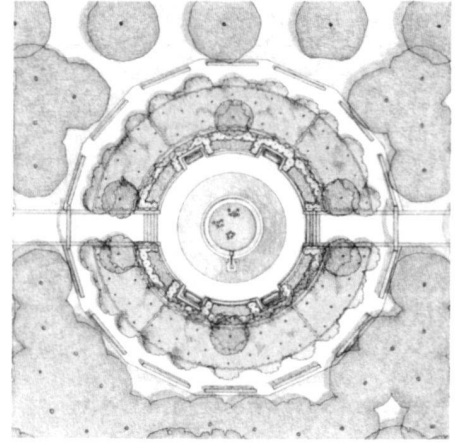
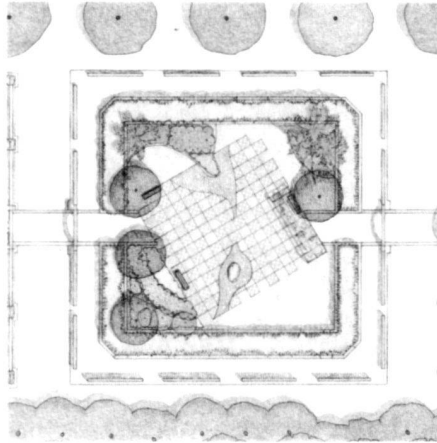
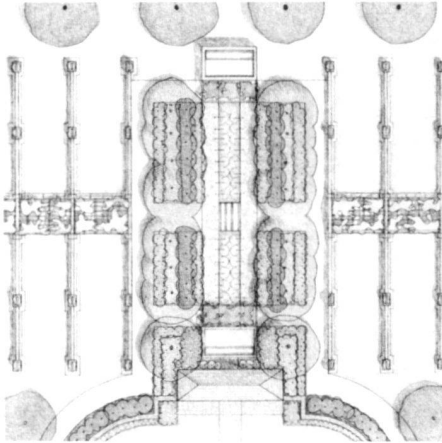
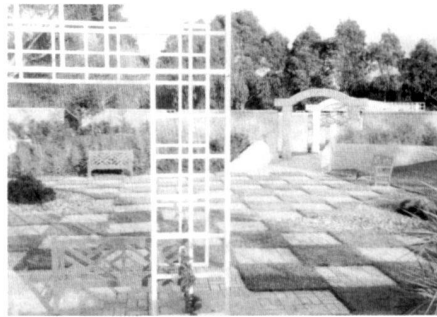
The design brief

Some aspects of the design brief have already been outlined. The formal brief and later constraints imposed by the Necropolis

Plan of the Springvale Necropolis, Victoria.

Plan der neuen und erweiterten Anlage in Springvale.





Central Garden. This garden has obvious Islamic references but it also has Australian overlay. The tile murals are an abstracted version of Australian desert and forest landscapes. Planting has also been limited to Australian species.

Der «Zentrale Garten». Im Design sind hier islamische Einflüsse wirksam geworden. Andererseits gibt sich der Garten auch betont australisch. Die Ziegelmauern werden als Abstraktion der australischen Wüstenlandschaft gedeutet. Die Bepflanzung erfolgte mit einheimischen Gewächsen.

The Asian Garden. This garden is designed within the geometry of a Square square. Planting within this garden is generally tropical (bamboo etc.).

Der «Asiatische Garten» wird von einem geometrischen Platzmuster beherrscht. Die Bepflanzung erfolgt mit tropischen Gewächsen, unter anderem mit Bambus.

The circular European Garden. The central space for the garden will become enclosed by the birches and the garden beds will be filled with roses and lavender.

Der kreisrunde «Europäische Garten». Er wird derart von Birken beherrscht sein. In den Beeten wachsen Rosen und Lavendel.

management are summarised as follows in point form.

- Provision of additional walls to accommodate 65000 plaques for war veterans.
- The layout and landscaping of the new site was to be consistent in design and general character with the existing gardens.
- Development of a design which reduced the monotony of such a large number of repetitive elements.
- Provision of additional maintenance works and equipment storage areas.
- Provision of parking spaces in Eighth Avenue for staff and visitor cars.
- Development of a design solution which had minimal visual impact on the recently planted avenue plantings of North drive.
- No entrances along this main site frontage were allowed by the Necropolis management and in addition they would not allow walls which limited views into the site from this side for reasons of security.
- New buildings were to be made as inconspicuous as possible and sympathetic with the existing environment.

The design approach

Early design concepts developed by the Department of Housing and Construction architects involved the idea of a long pergola-covered cross axis in a similar form to the final design "but modified by landscape elements to soften this formality". Formality in the early design proposals was "softened" by the introduction of two planted mounds at third points along the axis and a plaza with two free standing pavilion buildings and a central fountain. The plaque walls were to be staggered and some walls turned parallel to the axis.

Our appointment at this stage in the project allowed us the opportunity to review and modify these concepts as well as develop them.

The design proposal we developed pushed the concept back towards the simplicity and formality of the existing gardens. We argued that the long vista down the new axis should be reinforced rather than blocked, by mounds, partly because it allows everyone to

easily comprehend the site, but also because the extended length and proportion of the vista was a potentially exciting spatial experience. We suggested developing the three intervals along the axis as individual garden experiences. Each garden was intended to differ from the others in spatial qualities and symbolism. This was our way of creating diversity and interest within such a formal and repetitive framework.

Erweiterung einer australischen Kriegsgräberanlage

Die Springvale Necropolis bei Melbourne
Von Bruce Echberg
in «Landscape Australia» 4/1989

Springvale ist eine Vorstadt von Melbourne. Die Springvale Necropolis ist der grösste Friedhof von Melbourne. Er hat eine maximale Ausdehnung von 1,5 km in Nord-Süd- und Ost-West-Richtung. Die Gesamtanlage liegt in einem sanft wellenförmigen Gelände, die Kriegsgräberanlage jedoch auf einem flachen Areal.

Das Office of Australian War Graves hatte beschlossen, die bestehenden Memorial-Anlagen zu erweitern, um Raum für Mauerflächen zu beschaffen, die voraussichtlich bis zum Jahre 2000 genügen sollten.

Zur Entstehung des Projektes

Die Erweiterung der Kriegsgräberanlage – es mussten Mauerflächen für 65000 Gedenktafeln geschaffen werden – sollte die bereits bestehenden Gedenkstätten gleichberechtigt einbeziehen, so dass die Einheitlichkeit der Gedenkstätte gewahrt bleibt. Frühe Kon-

zepte, entwickelt durch das «Department of Housing and Construction Architects», sahen eine lange Pergola-Achse vor, wie sie jetzt auch verwirklicht wurde. Aber es war auch vorgesehen, diese strenge Achse aufzubrechen durch die Einfügung von drei bepflanzten Grabhügeln und einer Plaza mit freistehenden Pavillons.

Das nun zur Ausführung gelangte Projekt distanzierte sich von dieser Idee, indem es die strenge Axialität wieder in den Vordergrund stellte als das wesentliche optische Erlebnis der Anlage. Als «Interpunktion» wurden lediglich drei Sondergärten eingebaut, die den Gesamtdurchblick nicht behindern und so die Einheitlichkeit voll zur Wirkung kommen lassen.

Jeder Sondergarten unterscheidet sich vom anderen durch räumliche Qualitäten und sinnbildliche Darstellungen. Es sind diese Gärten der «Europäische Garten», der «Zentrale Garten» und der «Asiatische Garten». Sie bringen eine diskrete Vielfalt in die strenge Einheitlichkeit der Gesamtanlage.