

# PART ONE: BACKGROUND

## 1.1 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### 1.1.1 Location

The location and physical relationship of the three parks covered by this Management Plan, and the Observatories / Cable Car terminus area is shown in Figures 1, 2 and 5.

Full legal descriptions of the three parks are contained in Appendix 1.

### 1.1.2 Topography

The three parks are located on the southeast side of the Pipitea Stream valley, which was formed by displacement along the nearby Wellington Fault. The Wellington Botanic Garden comprises an area of comparatively sheltered, level ground in the valley bottom adjacent to Glenmore Street, backed by steep slopes that rise southeast to exposed ridge tops. The Carter Observatory, Observatory Reserve and Cable Car terminus area are located at the top of the main ridge, overlooking the city. The main ridge descends north to an artificial platform occupied by Anderson Park and the Lady Norwood Rose Garden. Beyond this, the Bolton Street Memorial Park follows a spur, truncated by the Wellington motorway, down to the central city.

The original landforms have been extensively modified in places. Pipitea Stream is now mainly piped underground to make way for Glenmore Street but flows for a short distance through the Wellington Botanic Garden. Anderson Park was formed by levelling part of the main ridge and filling a former gully. The Magpie, Glenmore and Soundshell Lawns were formed in a similar way.

### 1.1.3 Soils

Soil types are Paremata silt loam, Korokoro hill soil and Makara hill soil. These are low fertility soils with a high clay content and low pH.



#### 1.1.4 Climate

Wellington has a cool temperate climate, with persistent, sometimes salt laden winds influenced by the proximity of Cook Strait. Shelter provided by the varied topography and mature pines on the hilltops, especially at the Wellington Botanic Garden, has created microclimates where more species can grow than would be possible on a more uniform and flat site.

#### 1.1.5 Vegetation

At the time of European settlement Tinakori Hill was densely forested but there was less of this tall forest cover in the area now occupied by the three parks. Coastal broadleaf and/or podocarp broadleaf forest was found mainly in the damper gullies of the Wesleyan Reserve land, and on the south face and parts of the north face of the Magpie Hill/Glenmore slopes. The valley now occupied by Anderson Park was probably also forested as a large matai is known to have been there. The remainder of the reserve land, including the Salamanca slope and cemetery, was clad mainly in tall kanuka / manuka shrubland which, from its height, would have been at least 90 years old.

Although the tall forest species did not survive, significant remnants of the original native forest remain in the Wellington Botanic Garden. Areas of secondary native bush are now regenerating in the gullies at Bolton Street Memorial Park.

Both botanic gardens now contain extensive introduced plantings including formal displays and plant collections at the Wellington Botanic Garden and 'old world' semi-naturalised garden plants from the nineteenth century at the Bolton Street Memorial Park. Historic conifers are a dominant feature in both botanic gardens.

#### 1.1.6 Wildlife

Birdlife tends to be sparse at the Bolton Street Memorial Park, due to inadequate food sources and nesting sites and the presence of domestic predators, but is more plentiful in the Wellington Botanic Garden. Introduced bird species are most visible. Species that have small territories like blackbirds, songthrush, house sparrow, dunnock (hedge sparrows) and chaffinches are present year round and species with larger territories like the white-backed magpie, starlings and rosella parakeet use parts of the Garden. (The magpie is now regarded as a pest due to its aggressive tendencies.)

The principal native species are the fantail, greywarbler and tui. The Wellington Botanic Garden is an important breeding habitat for the greywarbler and tuis from the Karori Reservoir area visit in spring. Kingfishers come to the Garden in summer, and sometimes breed, but migrate north in winter. Kereru have been regularly sighted in the Garden over the past few years - perhaps as a result of possum control and increased food source.

Brown skink (*Oligosoma zelandicum*) have been sighted at the Bolton Street Memorial Park and ornate skink (*Cyclodina ornata*) at the Wellington Botanic Garden<sup>1</sup>. Based on the habitats present in the Gardens and the distribution of other lizards in central Wellington four other species are likely to be present though there are no recent confirmed sightings<sup>2</sup>. These are:

- copper skink (*Cyclodina aenea*);
- common skink (*Oligosoma nigriplantare*);
- common gecko (*Hoplodactylus maculatus*); and

<sup>1</sup> *Distribution of Reptiles in Wellington Conservancy, with a key to lizard species,* Colin Miskelly, Department of Conservation, February 1995.

<sup>2</sup> *Personal comment, Dr Colin Miskelly, Department of Conservation, 1998.*

- forest gecko (*Hoplodactylus granulatus*).

All six species are protected under the Wildlife Act. (See Appendix 2 for habitat requirements.)

The New Zealand glow worm (*Arachnocampa luminosa*) occurs on damp shaded banks in the Wellington Botanic Garden and is an attraction for visitor groups.

The native forest areas and certain exotic plants are important to wildlife, particularly birds.

## 1.2 HISTORICAL OUTLINE

### 1.2.1 Maori Settlement

Prior to European settlement the Maori communities of Te Aro, Kumutoto and Pipitea occupied the area which was to become the town of Wellington. In 1840, when the original site planned for European settlement in the Hutt valley was deemed unsuitable, the European settlers “proceeded to lay out the new city over pas, cultivations and burial sites as though they did not exist.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1847, a parcel of land, later to become part of the Wellington Botanic Garden, was given to the Kumutoto Maori in compensation for the land taken in 1840. The map from the McCleverty Award deed,<sup>4</sup> shows a cultivation in the vicinity of the upper Cable Car / Upland Road area. This land, comprising approximately 52 acres, was purchased back by the government in 1851 and was then included in the Wesleyan land, which became part of the Botanic Garden in 1871.

### 1.2.2 Wellington Botanic Garden

*‘The Botanic Garden, Wellington - A New Zealand History 1840-1987’* by Winsome Shepherd and Walter Cook is a comprehensive and well-researched account of the Wellington Botanic Garden’s establishment and development. Published in 1988 to mark the centenary of the Wellington City Council’s administration of the Garden in 1991, it is recommended reading for anyone wanting to find out more about the Garden.

#### Establishment

In 1839 the Directors of the New Zealand Company made provision for a Town Belt during the planning of Wellington. Land for a Botanic Garden was allocated to 13 acres of the Town Belt alongside what is known as Glenmore Street today. In 1869 the Botanic Garden Act was passed and management of the Garden was entrusted to a Board under the auspices of the New Zealand Institute, the forerunner of the Royal Society of New Zealand. James Hector was appointed Manager of the Garden in 1868.

In 1891 the Wellington Botanic Garden Vesting Act dissolved the Botanic Garden Board and vested control in the Wellington City Council. The Act contained a provision that the original 13 acres in the 1869 Act be maintained as a botanic garden in perpetuity. An additional provision was made for the Government to use 6 acres as a site for an observatory. The Dominion Observatory was established on the site in 1907 but the land was not declared an Observatory Reserve until 1962.

The Carter Observatory, located on a separate site, originated when C. R. Carter bequeathed 2,240 Pounds to the New Zealand Institute in 1896 for building an observatory. Ambiguities in his will and disagreement over who should receive the

<sup>3</sup> *Wellington Town Belt Management Plan, Background Report 3, European History,*” page 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Department of Survey and Land Information Deed Register Volume 1,* page 306.

money delayed any action until 1938 when the Carter Observatory Act was passed.

### **Development**

The Botanic Garden went through an early period of formation and expansion followed by a long period of maintenance with comparatively minor changes.

During the 1869-1891 period of administration by the New Zealand Institute the Garden developed to meet three identifiable but overlapping needs:

- i) For Government - a trial ground for examining the economic potential of plants, particularly forestry species.
- ii) For scientists - a garden for the study and collection of indigenous flora and the establishment of exotic plants.
- iii) For the public - a place of recreation and enjoyment.

The Garden Reserve underwent intensive development:

- it was fenced and mapped,
- paths were formed and named,
- the Sound Shell lawn was levelled and laid out as a Teaching Garden,
- areas of native forest were ringed with trees to provide shelter,
- plants were labelled, and
- extensive plantings made on ridges and along the Main Drive and around what was then called the lily pond.

It was a well formed and cared for Botanic Garden when, in 1891, the Wellington Botanic Garden Vesting Act was passed and control passed to the City Council. At the time of the passing of the Vesting Act there were, however, three major issues facing the Garden:

- Spread of gorse in the Garden;
- Broken fences;
- Lack of funds.

With the Garden under Wellington City Council control, all development had to be funded by the ratepayers. Mr Gibb continued as Head Gardener under the new administration. Public use of the Garden increased with the establishment of the Kelburn Cable Car in 1902 and introduction of tramways up Glenmore Street in 1904.

Gibb retired in 1901 and George Glen became the Head Gardener. In 1904 he was made Superintendent of the Baths and Reserves Department, a position in which he was to remain until his retirement in 1918. The huge task of filling and developing the Anderson Park Gully as a Recreation Ground was carried out. Many of the earlier plantings of trees in the Main Garden were removed and the area was extensively replanted, including magnolias along the Bamboo Path. A ti tree arch spanned the entrance path in Hector's Teaching Garden. The Teaching Garden, with parterre plantings dating from 1880, was retained until 1910, after which it was gradually replaced by a rose garden. This area is now the Sound Shell lawn.

J. G. Mackenzie was the first Director of Parks and Reserves from 1918 to 1947. Under his directorship the Garden saw its two biggest changes:

- the completion of the Anderson Park extension which was completed in 1934, and



*Hector's Teaching Garden, (undated). Alexander Turnbull Library*

- the development of Magpie and Glenmore Lawns, requiring a ridge in the south-west section of the garden to be levelled and used to fill an adjacent gully.

Mackenzie also worked closely with Leonard Cockayne to establish Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum (now Otari-Wilton's Bush.)

Edward Hutt succeeded Mackenzie in 1947. The most publicly visible event that occurred during his directorship was the transformation of the Anderson Park extension into the Lady Norwood Rose Garden, which was opened in 1953. The Begonia House was also built and a Peace Garden established.

In 1965 Ian Galloway replaced Hutt as Director of Parks and Recreation. Most of his work involved maintaining the existing plantings and buildings but visitor and staff facilities were also improved. The waterfall was built, and the herb and succulent gardens established. It was during this period that the Wahine storm struck, which destroyed a large number of the mature trees. The highly successful 'Summer City' festival at the Dell and Anderson Park was established in 1979, bringing increased public use of the Garden.

In 1983 an Interpretative Centre was established in the Winding House that had previously housed the engine for the cable car. This centre contained botanical, horticultural and historical displays and information relating to the Botanic Garden. The Centre was closed in 1987.

In 1986 Richard Nanson succeeded Ian Galloway as Director. There were several significant achievements under his directorship:

- initiating and planning the 1991 Centennial of City Council management of the Garden;
- the Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden (now Gardens) was established in 1989;
- the first comprehensive management plan for the Garden was produced in 1990;
- a new Education and Environment Centre (The Treehouse) was built above the Main Garden in 1991. This provides a visitor information centre, education facility, staff offices and headquarters for the New Zealand office of the World

Wide Fund for Nature.

In 1991 Mike Oates was appointed Curator of the Botanic Gardens of Wellington. During his curatorship, several new developments took place:

- the Centenary of Wellington City Council management of the Garden, including the Floriade Festival;
- the Cable Car lookout area was redeveloped in 1995;
- the Duck Pond area was redeveloped in 1997;
- the Botanic Gardens of Wellington Advisory Board, responsible to the Botanic Gardens Curator / Manager, was established in 1997. (See Appendix 3 for an outline of the Board's functions.)
- the Botanic Garden Playground was redeveloped in 2001.

A summary of key events that have occurred in the history of the Wellington Botanic Garden is contained in Appendix 4.

### 1.2.3 Anderson Park

Anderson Park was the result of expansion of the city to the north. During the 1880's and 1890's Councillor Anderson began leading pressure to build a recreation ground in Thorndon as all the recreation grounds were then located to the south and too far distant for residents in the expanding northern suburbs. The opening of the Cable Car in 1902 and the expansion of the Kelburn and Northland suburbs brought even more people into the area north of the central city.

After many years of indecision about a suitable site and difficulties with raising the necessary money, the long-proposed site at the south-west end of the Bolton Street Cemetery, was finally agreed to. This comprised two blocks of the cemetery (Public Cemetery No 5 and Church of England Cemetery No 3) which had been under the control of the Botanic Garden Board since 1875 by way of a 'goodwill' agreement with the Cemetery Trust. This agreement was further formalised in 1891 with the closing of the Cemetery to further burials and the vesting of the Botanic Garden in the Wellington City Council.



Anderson Park, c1910. Alexander Turnbull Library

In 1906 a loan of 8,000 pounds was raised, with the Mayor noting that there was to be “no unnecessary delay in putting in hand the work of making the proposed new recreation ground at Sydney Street.”<sup>5</sup> Fifty-five graves had to be disinterred but public pressure was such that protest about the disinterments was overcome. The recreation ground was formed by filling part of a valley beside the Wellington Botanic Garden, a considerable undertaking at the time.

Anderson Park was completed in 1910. In addition to the sports ground a small children’s playground was also developed after the reserves committee approved a development scheme for it in 1919. The deep gully that was left behind the Park was used as a tip until it was filled in the early 1930’s. This involved extensive recontouring, drainage and stormwater disposal. The extended park was used for sports fields until the Second World War when it was used for an American Marine Camp. It then returned to sports use until the Lady Norwood Rose Garden was developed and the sports area was reduced to its present size. The Park was gazetted as a Recreation Reserve in 1980.

#### **1.2.4 Bolton Street Memorial Park**

*‘Unquiet Earth’* by M. H. Alington contains a complete and detailed history of the Bolton Street Cemetery (now Bolton Street Memorial Park) and of the early history of Anderson Park when it was part of the cemetery. It is a valuable reference for anyone interested in finding out more about these parks.

#### **The Colonial Years**

When Captain William Mein Smith, Chief Surveyor of the New Zealand Company, arrived at Port Nicolson in January 1840, he carried detailed instructions for the laying out of the new town. Amongst them was a request that he provide “ample reserves for all public purposes such as cemetery...botanical garden...” etc.

Approximately 7.3 ha between Bolton and Sydney Streets were duly set aside as a cemetery and were available for use when the town sections were given out in July 1840. This was to be the town’s only burial ground apart from a small area to the south for Roman Catholic burials.

When Bishop Selwyn arrived in 1842, he wished to consecrate a portion of the cemetery for burials of members of the Church of England, as had been done in Auckland. A locally appointed land board made him a grant that included the portion already in use for all burials, regardless of creed. The Bishop’s request subsequently met with strong opposition from those whose deceased relatives lay in the ground to be consecrated, to which they themselves, when deceased, would not be admitted. After seven years of sometimes bitter controversy, agreement was reached, and the cemetery was divided into three.

In 1851 a title was issued for the Church of England portion in Bolton Street, together with some reserved land further to the west for expansion. The Jewish community received its title in 1852. The public portion, accessed from Sydney Street, was not given a title until 1860. Three separate boards of trustees administered the three cemetery areas until February 1<sup>st</sup> 1892, when the entire cemetery was closed to all burials except those of certain next of kin. Control passed to the Wellington City Council where it has remained ever since. (The map in Figure 3 shows the divisions within the cemeteries that were established for the different religious communities).

#### **Encroachments**

Since 1859 boundary encroachments to the original 7.3 ha cemetery have reduced the area to 2.4 ha. In 1859, 4046 square metres on the south side of Bolton Street

<sup>5</sup> *Council Minute Book 18, page 466, 467/7 9/8/1906.*

were given over to the Church of England for a parsonage. In 1868 an area of 303 square metres was made available for a time service observatory. This was dismantled in 1906 to make way for the Seddon Memorial, which was erected in 1909.

In 1885 the formation of Glenbervie Road (now Upper Bowen Street) from the entrance to the public cemetery in Sydney Street through to Tinakori Road took land from all three cemetery areas although no graves were disturbed. The Public Cemetery Reserve land to the west was closed in 1891, and the remains of 55 burials were reinterred to enable the formation of a recreation ground for Thorndon (now Anderson Park). In 1928 a small area adjacent to the Sydney Street entrance, and larger strips near Tinakori Road, were taken for the Bowen Street extension. No graves were disturbed during this work.

#### **Effects of the Wellington Motorway**

In 1960 proposals were being formulated to extend the Wellington Urban Motorway through the Bolton Street Cemetery. As the public became aware of these proposals, considerable opposition was generated and in 1964 the Bolton Street Cemetery Preservation Society was formed with the objective of preventing the despoilation of the cemetery. Three authorities – the Wellington City Council, National Roads Board and Ministry of Works – were involved in the advancement of plans for the motorway but the City Council was responsible for the final decision. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1967 to allow construction work to proceed. Work commenced in 1968 and progressed through the seventies to its completion in 1978. The severing of the Bolton Street Cemetery by the motorway destroyed 1 ha of historic site and necessitated the reinterment of approximately 3700 graves. The integrity and character of the Bolton Street Cemetery had been



*Bolton Street Cemetery, 1977. Evening Post Collection*

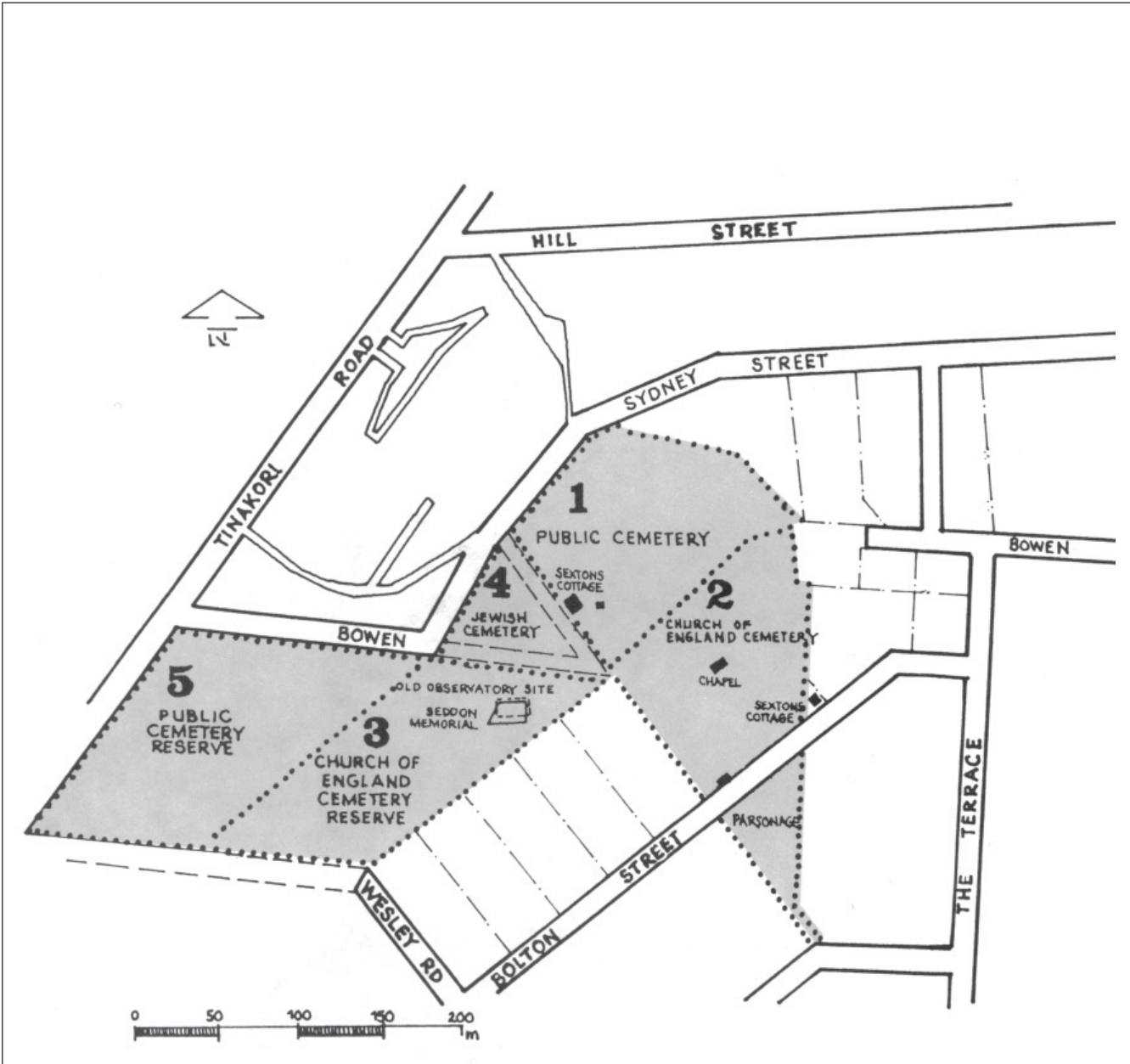


Figure 3: Bolton Street Cemetary C.1852:  
 Showing Areas of Grants for Public,  
 Jewish and Church of England Use

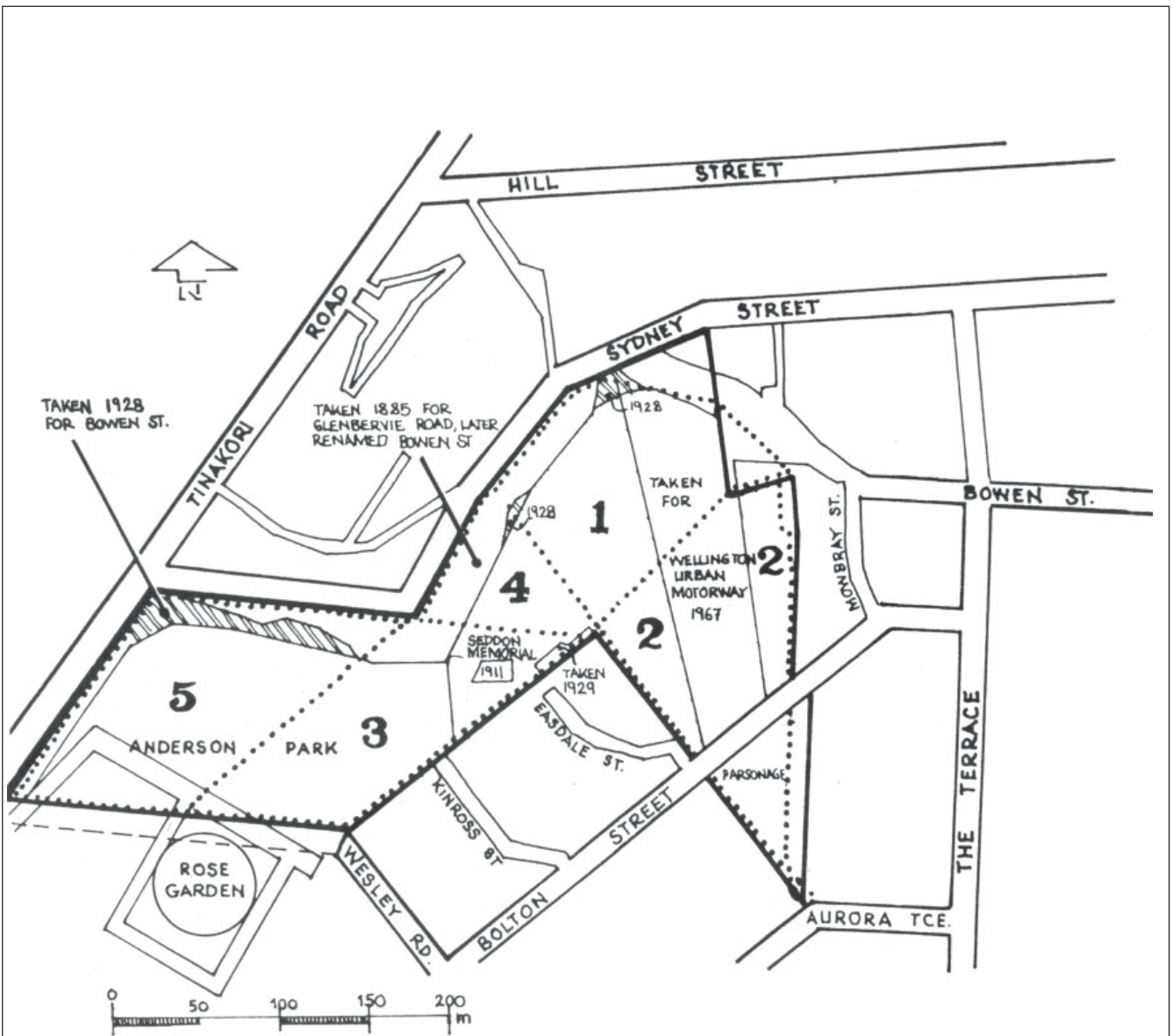


Figure 4: Bolton Street Memorial Park Encroachments

severely compromised.

To ameliorate some of the motorway impacts, the National Roads Board agreed to provide a connecting link between the two portions of the bisected cemetery. This was to be a piazza or wide platform over the motorway but initial work was subsequently abandoned in favour of a small footbridge.

In 1965 the National Roads Board agreed to give a 0.4 ha block of land bounded by Bowen, Mowbray and Bolton Streets to the City to make up for the loss of approximately 1.5 ha of land taken for motorway purposes. The National Roads Board did not acquire the land and subsequently indicated that it could not afford to purchase it. After much debate the National Roads Board gave the Wellington City Council \$500,000 to assist with the purchase of the site and provided an additional \$50,000 to upgrade the Mortuary Chapel.

A commercial development on the land was subsequently proposed. In 1987 a plan for a 12 storey office building and a 6 storey underground carpark with the Memorial Park on its roof was approved by the City Council, the Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery and the Historic Places Trust. The rooftop area was leased to the Council for a period of 999 years from 1989 with perpetual rights of renewal and a \$1 annual rent, if demanded, which is not subject to review. The project was completed in 1990 and the National Roads Board funding was used in the development of the Memorial Park and replication of the Mortuary Chapel (now Memorial Chapel.)

Three buildings have been associated with the Bolton Street Memorial Park. Both the Church of England section and the public section of the cemetery had their own Sexton and a cottage was built for each in 1857. The Church's cottage still stands in Bolton Street adjacent to the Memorial Park and was restored in 1978. . The Public Sexton's cottage, which backed onto the north-eastern boundary of the Jewish section of the cemetery, was demolished in 1908.

A new church was built in Mulgrave Street replacing the St Paul's on the Government Reserve. This meant that a chapel was required for funeral services in the church cemetery. A simple building based on a design by Frederick Thatcher was erected in December 1866. Some of the timber from the dismantled first St Paul's was used in its construction. In the early years of this century, its use began to decrease and by 1922 it was so derelict that a decision was made to demolish it. The Early Settlers and Historical Association worked for six years to save the chapel and in 1928 achieved its goal. Subsequent repainting and repairs kept it standing until it was dismantled for the motorway in 1969. Unfortunately, the original could not be reconstructed due to general deterioration and, instead, a replica was built on the roof plaza adjacent to the cottage on the same axis as the original chapel. It now contains memorial and interpretative material.

### **Historic Significance**

The Memorial Park is an Historic Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and a Heritage Area under the District Plan. It is historically significant for a number of reasons.

- Together with Mount Street (Roman Catholic Cemetery) it was the first Wellington burial ground. It commemorates many early pioneers such as Edward Gibbon Wakefield and John Plimmer.
- It has wide historical links in commemorating notable leaders such as Richard John Seddon, Harry Holland, Samuel Parnell and James Edward Fitzgerald.
- It is a good example of a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century cemetery with its memorials of

stone, iron and wood forming an irregular vertical profile made up of slabs, pedestals, statuary, crosses, artificial mounds of stones, etc. (Refer H. L. White's 'Monuments and their Inscriptions', London 1978).

- The number and variety of fences surrounding the graves are of particular significance. They are comparatively rare within New Zealand and, quite apart from their historical value, are extremely attractive for their combination of wilding plants and wrought iron work.

