

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- *Palmerston Park is located in Dartry, about one kilometre to the south of Rathmines village in the south-western suburbs of Dublin city. It was once part of the demesne of Rathmines Castle, which was built in the sixteenth century.*
- *The Battle of Rathmines was fought in the vicinity of the castle between Royalist and Commonwealth troops during the seventeenth century.*
- *The castle was removed in the mid-nineteenth century when the area began to be laid out with fine redbrick villas, aided by the introduction of a tramline in 1878.*
- *Some of the finest examples of Victorian residential architecture in Dublin surround the park, where the street names such as Temple and Palmerston, recall former owners of the land.*
- *The park was enclosed following protracted negotiations between the Rathmines & Rathgar Urban District Council and the local residents in 1891. William Sheppard designed the current park layout; he was responsible for the similar park scheme found at Harold's Cross.*
- *A fine example of a late-Victorian municipal park landscape, the park remains to this day, a much-used public amenity for the local community.*
- *William Sheppard came to Ireland in the early 1870s, working first for another renowned landscape gardener, Ninian Niven. He was responsible for public parks and private gardens in and around Dublin.*
- *Historic photographs and map evidence confirm that the park as found today is largely intact, and unaltered in its late-Victorian character except for a loss of definition following decades of growth.*
- *A number of tall Corsican pines, along with other mature deciduous trees, appear to predate the layout designed by Sheppard in 1891.*
- *Palmerston Park survives in a very good state of preservation with its original path layout retained. However, it is somewhat overgrown and the park furniture and structures have suffered from neglect.*
- *The park retains its original wrought iron railings, which enclose the entire perimeter of the park and define a north-south path that divides the park into two main areas.*
- *The park benches feature original cast iron branch supports, but most of these have been reassembled from the circular benches that were located around the park, and which were an integral part of the intended layout.*

- *The pond, rockery, waterfall and public toilets are integral parts of an extensive park structure that was intended both as the centrepiece of the landscape design as well as providing facilities for its enjoyment.*
- *During the last few years, the pond, rockery and waterfall have been almost completely covered with shredded garden waste to a depth of up to two metres. This was a pragmatic decision taken in order to address the health and safety issues posed by its condition and persistent attempts to access it.*
- *The public toilets located behind the pond provide support for the water chute. While filled with rubbish and debris, the interiors show little sign of decay as they have remained well-ventilated through the doors and rooflights.*
- *The simple but nicely-detailed park shelter is an original feature that is badly overshadowed by a tall pine tree. The roof of the lean-to attached to its south side is in very poor condition.*
- *Over the course of the twentieth century other structures have been added to the park including an ESB substation located off a path close to the west side of the pond and a sizeable park depot located to the east of the shelter but quite well-hidden in the trees.*
- *Neither of these buildings is attractive but both are well screened, and with careful remodelling the depot structure might possibly serve as a tea rooms and toilet, should an alternative depot be established in a nearby location. The children's playground in the eastern corner of the park was re-designed in 2012, and is now a well-appointed and popular public amenity.*
- *A number of new items of park furniture have been installed, together with new signage, which do not sit comfortably with the surviving original detail and this should be replaced in future restoration plans.*
- *The existing dense laurels do not encourage biodiversity and should be replaced with suitable native species carefully chosen to encourage bird and insect life.*
- *Much of the planting has become over-dense and over-scaled and some thinning back of mature trees and shrubs is necessary for the long term health of the park flora and to permit sufficient light into the pond when restored.*
- *The more open and less formal east side of the park has the potential to host open-air public functions and events that form part of the cultural calendar of the city.*
- *With sensitive conservation, there is the potential to significantly improve the wonderful qualities of this historic place.*