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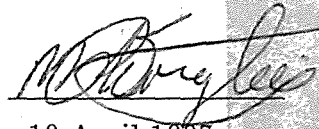
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THE EVOLUTION OF IDEAS
AND PRACTICE CONCERNING
THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S
PLAYSPACE

(with a special reference to
New Zealand and Palmerston North)

A Thesis Presented In Partial
Fulfilment Of The Requirements
For The Degree Of Master
Of Philosophy In Social Science
At Massey University.

Martin Paul Wrigley

March 1987

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore the historical processes underlying the allocation and use of public space for children's play in nineteenth and twentieth century industrial society and examine how the processes have influenced the New Zealand situation.

The form of publicly provided playspace in New Zealand borrows extensively from overseas ideas and practices. The origins of playspace were a response to the conditions existing as a result of industrialisation in the late nineteenth century. The convergence of two streams of thought; the first the use of play as a tool for social integration of migrant children in the United States; and secondly the development of an urban parks system to alleviate the industrial blight of the cityscape in the United Kingdom; led to the establishment of recreation standards for the provision of children's playspace. The transportable nature of these ideas and practices resulted in children's playgrounds developing in New Zealand between 1920 and 1970 in a largely similar way. During this same period ideas concerning child constructed playgrounds and safety were evolving overseas. Such ideas when adopted in New Zealand have influenced the appearance and internal design of New Zealand playgrounds. However, in terms of function and form these changes have only been superficial.

Within New Zealand the social mechanisms for determining the allocation and design of playgrounds has constrained the use of playgrounds often to the disadvantage of different societal groups. The thesis concludes with a review of this issue.

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