

WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS



WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS SOHE 2008



1 williamstown botanic gardens palm avenue ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens at clarke statue ac2 apr1999



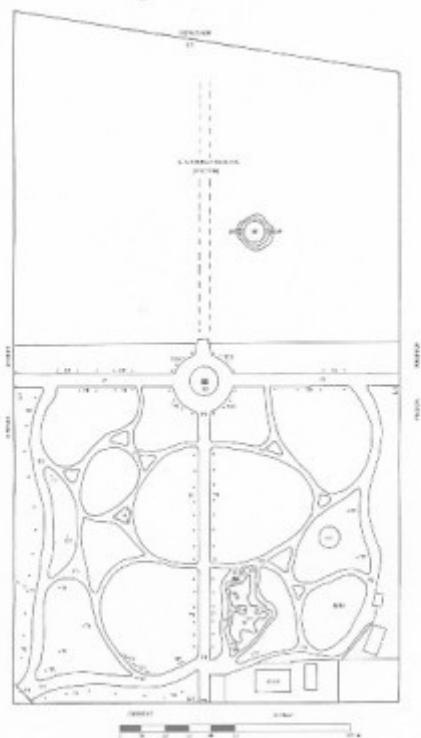
williamstown botanic gardens drinking fountain ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens entrance gates ac2 apr1999



williamstown botanic gardens golden elm lawn ac2 apr1999



h01803 plan

Location

97 OSBORNE STREET WILLIAMSTOWN, HOBSONS BAY CITY

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1803

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO238

VHR Registration

August 19, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 1, 2000

What is significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens of 4 hectares was permanently reserved in 1856 as a public park and botanic garden. The creation of the gardens was largely due to the efforts of the citizens of Williamstown who lobbied the Williamstown Council to persuade the State Government to set aside the land and then contributed to its early development through the donation of plants. Plants were also donated by Ferdinand von Mueller, first Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Daniel Bunce, first curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The gardens were designed by Edward La Trobe Bateman c.1858 and Williamstown municipal surveyor William Bull implemented the design, with significant alterations in the north east corner and the creation of a large pond by S. Thake, curator from 1899-1912. The gardens feature structures and design characteristic of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, including cast iron entrance gates relocated from Fairlie in South Yarra in 1907 and repaired in 1987, a marble statue of AT Clarke, local MLA (1891), a rustic pond (1904), a drinking fountain to commemorate the jubilee of the municipality (1906) and rock, timber and concrete edged paths and garden beds from the 1860s. The layout of the gardens is virtually intact from c.1907 and typifies the geometric layout of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens, with the design providing a major external vista to Hobsons Bay and a variety of picturesque internal vistas.

How is it significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, scientific (horticultural) and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are historically important as one of Victoria's earliest and most intact botanic gardens and along with St Kilda, one of only two suburban botanic gardens established in the 19th century in Victoria. They are one of seven botanic gardens established in Victoria between 1846 and 1856. They are significant for the retention of the geometric layout typical of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens. The gardens have considerable significance for their strong association with eminent 19th century landscape designer Edward La Trobe Bateman and for their early connections with Ferdinand von Mueller and Daniel Bunce.

The Gardens are aesthetically significant for their excellent design and for the remarkably elegant execution of that design within a small, flat site. Important facets of the layout are the major north-south and east-west axes, the vista to Hobsons Bay, the impressive central palm avenue, the major focal point around the AT Clarke statue, and the deliberately enclosed nature of the site which enhances the wide variety of internal views and spatial experiences within the framework of the formal layout. The striking palms (*Washingtonia robusta*, *Phoenix canariensis* and *Butia capitata*) with their different forms and colour, provide a dramatic and contrasting landscape character against the evergreen and deciduous background. The strikingly intact Victorian layout, early tree plantings, the palms, the pinetum and the pond, structures and herbaceous and woody plantings from the Edwardian period all contribute to the picturesque landscape.

The Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their collection of plants, particularly the dominating palm and conifer themes and the large quantity of plants remaining from the Edwardian and Victorian periods. The *Crinum asiaticum* is rare in cultivation. The 19th century pinetum, densely planted with a collection of conifers displaying interesting forms and foliage, is significant as an enclosed dark, evergreen space forming an effective windbreak for the Gardens in their coastal setting. It features a central avenue and two outside rows of *Cupressus macrocarpa*, a row along the south boundary and a *Pinus halepensis* row along the east and west boundaries.

The Gardens are socially important for their long and continuous relationship with the citizens of Williamstown, who were largely responsible for their creation and early development and who continue to use them as a place of recreation.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
- Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Landscape:

- * The process of gardening, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works and landscaping in accordance with the original concept.
- * The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character.
- * Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.
- * Removal of plants listed as Noxious Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- * Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, memorial plaques, gravel paths and roadways, stone and concrete edging, fences and gates.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems beyond the canopy edge of listed trees.
- * Plant labelling and interpretive signage.

Statue:

- * Minor repairs.

Drinking fountain:

- * Minor repairs.

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Construction dates | 1856, |
| Architect/Designer | Bateman, Edward La Trobe, |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place, |
| Other Names | WILLIAMSTOWN BOTANICAL GARDENS, |
| Hermes Number | 1908 |
| Property Number | |

History

Contextual History:

In Melbourne moves to establish a botanic garden were made in the early 1840s, with Batman's Hill earmarked for the purpose. A small committee headed by Superintendent La Trobe looked at alternative sites for a garden and in December 1845 La Trobe recommended the present site in the Domain and appointed the first Committee of Management. These gardens were the forerunner to a number of smaller botanic gardens that were set up over the next forty years. During the 1850s gardens based on those in Melbourne were established in several country areas including Geelong, Portland and Bendigo. Provincial botanic gardens were created in nearly every country town and city of any consequence. These gardens ranged in size from 20 acres (8 hectares) to 150 acres (61 hectares). Land was usually set aside more as a result of public pressure rather than any official government policy. In recognition of the increased community demand for botanic gardens in the early 1850s, Government legislation was passed to provide for municipal and borough councils to make by-laws for the establishment of

botanic gardens.

In combining scientific endeavour with a pleasing design and passive recreation, botanic gardens were seen to promote notions of 'civilisation' and moral improvement, and as such, were considered a great asset to Victoria's provincial towns in the 1850s. Hamilton and Geelong had reserved land for public gardens in 1850, and Portland had botanic gardens by 1851. An 1854 plan of White Hills (Bendigo) indicates a reserve for Botanic Gardens. Williamstown gardens were set aside 1856, Malmesbury gardens in 1857, and Ballarat and Kyneton followed in 1858, with Daylesford (Wombat Hill) in 1861. Castlemaine gardens were reserved in 1860.

History of Place:

The first land sales in Williamstown took place in 1837. By late 1855, agitation began within the local community for a botanic garden site to be set aside and following a petition to the government from the residents, a ten acre site on the southern foreshore was marked out by March 1856.

A recently discovered report in an 1857 issue of London journal *The Athenaeum*, and a reprint of the same article in the Melbourne newspaper *The Argus*, 26 March 1857, confirm that Edward La Trobe Bateman prepared the design for the gardens sometime in 1856.

During the period 1856-1860, the main activity in the gardens centred on the development of garden beds and construction of the path system. Considerable tree planting was undertaken to establish windbreaks. By April 1859, the design had been laid out by municipal surveyor William Bull and a gardener appointed to carry out planting. Paths were laid down with shell grit. Plants, cuttings and seeds were donated by the local community as well as Ferdinand von Mueller, recently appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Daniel Bunce, Curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

On 2nd January, 1860 the gardens were opened to the public with apparently little ceremony and by 1865, appeared to be too small to accommodate the influx of local and other visitors coming for day excursions to the seaside suburb. Following petitions from the Williamstown Council, the government reserved additional land for the gardens in 1865 and 1878 so that by 1878, the original ten acre reserve (comprising the gardens and pinetum), had doubled to include what is now known as Fearon Reserve, named after a local sea pilot and sporting identity Captain James Fearon.

Between 1867-70, the southern section of the gardens (now the L.A Parker Reserve), was densely planted with conifers, particularly pines and cypresses to form the pinetum, the plantings of which remain relatively intact today. Recent attempts have been made to continue the tradition of conifer planting in this area.

On 18th July 1891, a statue of local MLA A.T. Clarke was erected in a circular plot at the intersection of the major axial paths. During the last decade of the 19th century, a fernery and aviary were erected. A rotunda was to be re-erected in the pinetum in 1901, to allow football to be played in the adjacent reserve (Fearon Reserve). The new site was possibly the volcanic rock mound and steps still located in the pinetum.

Until the MMBW mapped the gardens in 1894, little evidence regarding the appearance or layout of the gardens is available. The plan shows the La Trobe Bateman design of two major axial paths crossing at the Clarke statue, a perimeter path and minor pathways encircling lawns and garden beds, several buildings, including the 1892 triangular aviary, a shade house and a small cottage. The distinct demarcation between the ten acres set aside in 1856 (gardens proper and pinetum) and the 9 acres 2 roods and 19 perches reserved in 1865 and 1878. ((Fearon Reserve) is clearly shown.

1900-1920 Rejuvenation of the Gardens

A major turning point in the development of the gardens occurred in May 1899 with the appointment of S. Thake as curator. Little is known of Thake's background, though during his period with the council, he was an active committee member of the Williamstown and District Horticultural Society.

Major changes during Thake's curatorship included construction of a small ornamental lake or large pond, (completed 1904), a new caretaker's cottage (north-west corner, 1907), and reorganisation of the north-east corner with the demolition of the old curator's cottage and erection of new gates (1907). These gates had originally been located at the corner of Acland and Anderson, South Yarra at 'Fairlie'. Other changes included the placement of four canons (1906, removed late 1960's) and construction of a granite drinking fountain in 1906 to celebrate the jubilee of the municipality.

Thake's employment in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens ended in September 1912 when he resigned to take up a similar position with the Albert Park Trust. W. Crowe took over as curator following Thake's resignation. At this date, the gardens had achieved the layout which exists today. Around c. 1915 the central palm avenue was planted. It was replanted with the same palm genus (*Washingtonia*) in 1987 assisted by a Bicentennial grant. The southern section of the gardens (Parker Reserve) comprised an extensive pinetum.

The employment of Edwardian municipal gardening techniques continued for lengthy periods in an unbroken tradition under each successive curatorship from Crowe who served under Thake to the present. It is this phenomenon and the lack of any significant changes to the layout of the gardens from 1907, which accounts for their remarkable Edwardian authenticity today.

Associated People: Edward Latrobe Bateman, designer.

S Thake, curator

Ferdinand von Mueller, Director of Melbourne Botanic Gardens

Daniel Bunce, curator of Geelong Botanic Gardens

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The Williamstown Botanic Gardens are historically important as one of Victoria's most originally intact botanic gardens and for their display of the geometric layout typical of Victoria's earliest botanic gardens. They have historical importance for their association with eminent 19th century landscape designer Edward La Trobe Bateman and for their early connections with Ferdinand von Mueller and Daniel Bunce.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The gardens are aesthetically significant for their excellent design and for the remarkable execution of the design on a small, flat site. The intact Victorian layout, early tree plantings, the palms, the pinetum, and the pond, structures and herbaceous and woody plantings from the Edwardian period all contribute to the picturesque landscape.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

The Gardens are important for their scientific (horticultural) value particularly for the dominating palm and conifer themes and the large quantity of plants remaining from the Edwardian and Victorian periods. The *Crinum asiaticum* is significant as it is rare in cultivation. The 19th century pinetum, densely planted with a collection of conifers displaying interesting forms and foliage, is significant as an enclosed dark, evergreen space forming an effective windbreak for the Gardens in their coastal setting.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The gardens are socially important for their long and continuous relationship with the citizens of Williamstown and as a place of recreation.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1803 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Osborne Street, Williamstown, City of Hobsons Bay.

EXTENT:

1. All the structures marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Entrance Gates (1907)
- B2 A. T. Clarke statue (1891)
- B3 Drinking Fountain (1906)
- B4 Flagpole
- B5 Pond
- B6 Eight iron stanchions
- B7 Four metal hoops
- B8 Open Air Bandstand
- B9 Four iron stanchions

2. All of the paths marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

- P1 Main Path
- P2 Path (north-south)
- P3 Paths

3. All the plants marked as follows on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director:

- T1 Washingtonia robusta avenue x 28
- T2 Washingtonia robusta stand x 5
- T3 Washingtonia filifera
- T4 Washingtonia robusta x 4
- T5 Phoenix canariensis row x 7
- T6 Phoenix canariensis row x 12
- T7 Phoenix canariensis row x 4
- T8 Butia capitata x 2
- T9 Ulmus procera avenue x 15
- T10 Ficus macrophylla x 16
- T11 Crinum asiaticum
- T12 Cupressus sempervirens (wide form)

4. all of the land known as the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and the L. A. Parker Reserve (pinetum) being Crown Reserve RS 2076, permanently reserved for Public Park and Recreation Purposes marked L1 on Diagram 1803 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 5 August 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 33 19 August 1999 pp.1915-1916]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>