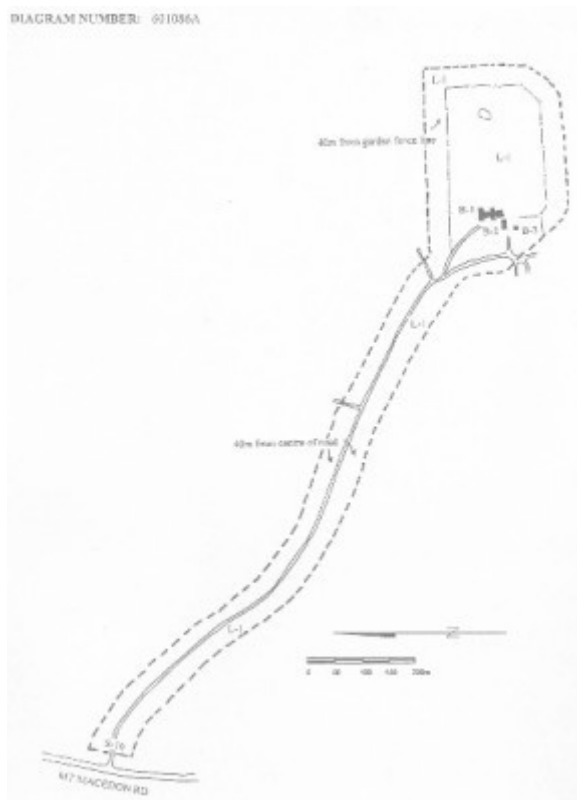


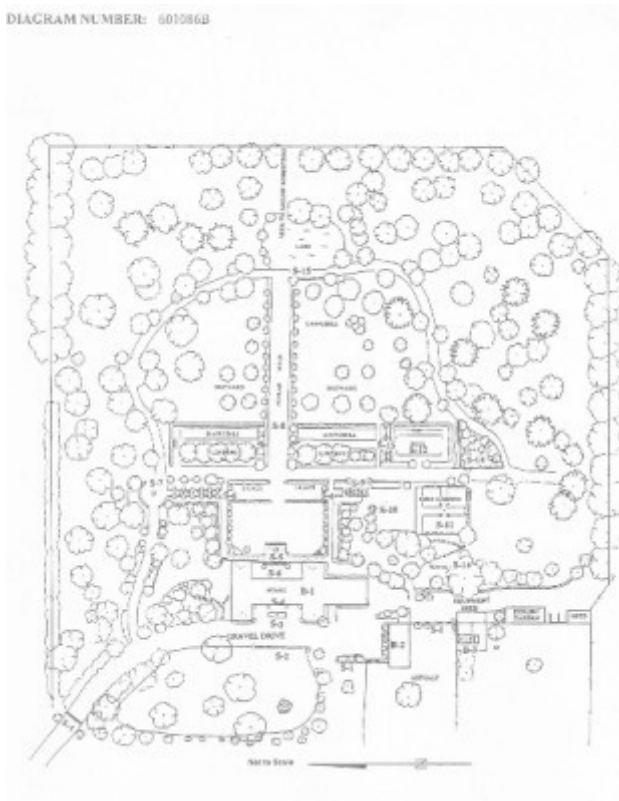
# BOLOBEK



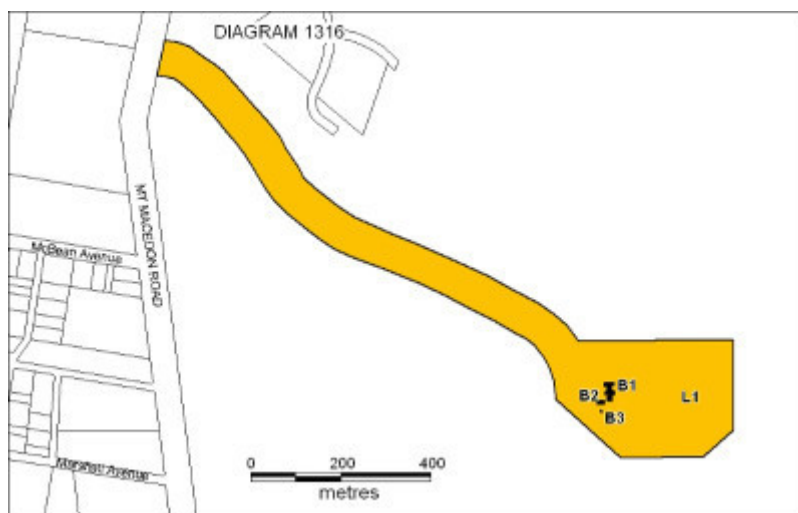
1 bolobek mount macedon  
road macedon garden steps  
nov1996



h01316 bolobek plan a



h01316 bolobek plan b



h01316 bolobek plan 1316

## Location

370 MOUNT MACEDON ROAD MACEDON, MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

## Municipality

MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1316

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO249

## VHR Registration

May 22, 1997

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 13, 1999

The property known as Bolobek occupies parts of two former pastoral runs, Turitable and Wooling which were settled from 1839. In 1911, the property and adjoining land was purchased by Oswald Syme, son of the David Syme owner and editor of the Age newspaper. He renamed the property Bolobek and on a new site built a three story mansion and established a magnificent garden of 5 acres including half an acre of orchard. There was a 9 hole golf course, croquet lawn, tennis court and swimming pool. The trout hatchery site was flooded to form Syme's lake.

After Syme's death, his descendent Mrs Nancy Neill sold Bolobek in 1969 to (Sir) Robert Law-Smith, Company Director of Qantas and BHP, and grazier. The Edwardian brick house was demolished and a single story house designed by John and Phyllis Murphy was erected in 1970. Joan Law-Smith, author, artist and gifted plantswomen removed trees and created a garden of geometrically shaped compartments with three main axes paths radiating from a central square shaped lawn adjacent to the house and a grand vista framed by Italian Poplars towards Mount Robertson.

Bolobek is of aesthetic, architectural, historic and horticultural importance to the State of Victoria

Bolobek is of outstanding aesthetic importance for its quality design, artistry and plantmanship, the creation of garden spaces and views and the combination of plant forms with an emphasis on foliage and white flowers and bark. Features of the garden are; sundial, Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'*) avenue framing the vista to Mount Robertson, ornamental lake, marble statue and crab-apple (*Malus 'Golden Hornet'*) walk, pool and figure, wisteria pergola, Small-leaved Linden (*Tilia cordata*) row Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) rows, Bhutan Cypress (*Cupressus toruloma*) and Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*) hedges, walled rose garden and sundial, dovecot, deciduous lawn, naturalised bulbs, woodland planting and stone lined channels and paths. The Macedon Road gateway, and the undulating and curved gravel driveway and avenue planting of Southern Mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryoides*) is a significant landscape feature and of an outstanding aesthetic quality.

Bolobek is of historic significance as an outstanding example of a modern formal garden style incorporating geometrically shaped compartments, axial paths with terminal features, and for the axial associations with the house and room plan. The garden is important for demonstrating a creative design style as an overlay on an earlier garden layout. Bolobek is also significant for its ownership by one of Victoria's leading businessmen and the creation of the garden by Joan Law-Smith, a gifted plantswomen and garden designer, artist and writer.

The house designed by John and Phyllis Murphy, is of architectural importance. It is a simple yet elegant and well-mannered house, designed to reflect the symmetry of the garden and to maximise the views of the garden

from the house. The use of white bagged brickwork to the house, garage and fence, silvergrey-stained timber, and grey slate roof and white gravel courtyard also fits well with the predominantly white planting theme of the surrounding garden. The garage and gateway are also simple yet elegant.

The garden is of horticultural interest for the cultivation of many plants rarely grown in Victoria, especially woodland species, *Primula auricula*, *Aquilegia flabellata*, *Gunnera manicata*, *Hosta sieboldiana*, *H. undulata*, *Trillium graniflorum*, *Anemone* spp., *Lilium* spp. and bulb species and cultivars, outstanding collection of roses and deciduous trees, *Quercus palustris*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *F. sylvatica* f. *purpurea*, *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Amelanchier canadensis*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Tilia cordata*, *Ulmus* x *hollandica*, *Populus alba*, *P. nigra* 'Italica', *Betula pendula* and the uncommon *Nothofagus fusca*. The glasshouse and cold frame enabled the cultivation of tender and imported plants.

## 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:

#### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the *Heritage Act 1995*)

The process of gardening and maintenance to care for trees, shrubs, hedges and planting themes.

Replanting to retain the landscape themes and character.

Emergency and safety works to the garden, plantings and structures

Repairs, conservation and maintenance to the hard landscape elements, structures and ornaments, roads (excluding main drive) and paths, water features, drainage and irrigation system.

Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.

Removal of plants listed as State Prohibited Weeds and Regionally Prohibited and Regionally Controlled Weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1995*.

Removal of vegetation to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures.

Repainting of previously painted surfaces with the same colour.

Works to the interior of the house.

Works to the interior of the gate house.

Repair, conservation and maintenance to the main drive including minor regrading and regravelling but not including realignment or change of surface material.

Construction dates	1970,
Architect/Designer	Murphy, John & Phyllis,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1970
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

The Mount Macedon gardens are an important collection of gardens which are based on the establishment of estates established by the British in the Himalayas to escape the summer heat. In Australia, gardens were established at Toowoomba in Queensland, Mount Wellington in Tasmania, Mount Wilson in New South Wales, Mount Lofty in South Australia, and at Mount Dandenong and Mount Macedon in Victoria .

In the early 1870s parcels of land ranging in size from 4 hectares became available, and by the 1880s most of the land had been sold for summer retreats for Melbourne families. The hill station gardens took advantage of the climate and soil conditions to establish gardens which were planted with an extensive collection of species and represented small botanic gardens.

Notable hill station gardens include; Alton, Ard Choille, Braemar House, Duneira, Durrol and Hascombe, and other gardens in the area include; Cameron Lodge, Ard Rudah, Forest Glade, Huntly Burn, Dreamthorpe Drusilla, and Sefton, and unfortunately some of these gardens were damaged in the 1983 bushfire

Two gardens, more accurately described as homestead gardens, Bolobek and Flint Hill which lay on the plains below the slopes of Mount Macedon, owe their origin to a pastoral history, in addition to being retreats for Melbourne businessmen. While constructed on relatively flat land, these two gardens exhibit similarities with hill station gardens, and contain extensive plant collections, rhododendrons, deciduous trees and conifers, garden structures, water features and stone work. Both gardens have a major recent redevelopment overlay, designed by skilled owner gardeners.

Other gardens which have been modified around older homesteads and gardens include, Mount William at Willaura, Seven Creeks at Euroa, Murrindindi Station at Yea, The Union at Woolsthorpe, Woollongoon at Mortlake, and Cruden Farm at Langwarrin, part of which was designed by Edna Walling in 1929-30, and has been continuously developed over the past 60 years by its owner, Dame Elizabeth Murdoch .

History of Place:

Bolobek occupies parts of the Turlitable and Wooling pastoral licences. Wooling was settled by William Robertson who was persuaded by John Pascoe Fawcner to leave Hobart. He arrived in 1837 and purchased a block in Collins Street and opened a drapery and tailoring business for two years. In 1840 he moved to an area on the east side of the Kerrie Creek and occupied a pre-emptive right of 640 acres with lease hold land extending along the foot of the Macedon Ranges from Mt Towrong to Riddell and right up the range as far as Mt Charley. The run of 2560 acres was stocked with sheep and cattle .

Robertson erected on his property the first saw mill to be operated in the colony. It was water driven and stood at the end of what is now known as Syme's lake. The iron work was imported and the construction and erection cost £300. The homestead was built about 1840 from local timber and erected on bluestone footings brought from Footscray by bullock wagons, and was still in reasonable condition in 1928. A 9 acre orchard and 4 acres of kitchen garden was established. Robertson was a member of the Zoological and Acclimatisation Society and established the first trout hatchery in the Port Phillip District. It was through his efforts that brown trout were placed in Jacksons Creek, Wooling Creek and Riddell's Creek during 1860 . Wooling was the showpiece of the district; the neat homestead and out buildings, the beautiful gardens, orchard and vegetable patch .

As there was no cemetery in the district, 19 members of the family and staff are buried on the property in a small cemetery [Wooling Cemetery is now on another property], including William Robertson who lived to be 97 years and was the last buried. An old willow at Wooling was raised from a cutting from the resting place of Napoleon at St Helena. The property was bought by Mr Hedderwick in 1894 .

Mr Oswald Syme, son of David Syme, owner and editor of the Age newspaper, purchased the property in 1911 and called it Bolobek. The property of Mr Mann whose homestead was destroyed by fire in 1851 was later purchased by Syme. The property was now 3,000 acres and became famous for its stud flock of Romney Marsh and fat cattle. Syme built a three story mansion and established a magnificent garden of 5 acres including half an acre of orchard. There is a 9 hole golf course, a croquet lawn a tennis court and a swimming pool. Many of the plants were grown for their foliage. Robertson's trout hatchery was flooded to form Syme's lake. The Symes were keenly interested in the local Horticultural Society and exhibited blooms from the garden and opened the garden to the public during show time .

After Mr Syme's death, his daughter Mrs Nancy Neill became the trustee and she eventually sold the property to Mr and Mrs R Law-Smith in 1969. The Edwardian brick house was pulled down and a new house built on the same site. The cellars were filled in and the drive relocated to the west side above the cellar. Soil was imported to adjust the levels at the front of the house following the removal of the original drive. Mr E. H. Hammond well known landscape contractor was employed to construct the driveway, bluestone steps, retaining walls and install drains.

Joan Law-Smith gives a detailed account of the development of the garden at Bolobek over a 20 year period in The Garden Within and writes;

In Childhood I had always loved the exotic species in our family garden, but it was during time spent in England, in my early teens, that I lived near some woods in Hampshire and walked on primroses (or rather, tried not to) which were growing in drifts under trees not yet in full leaf. It seemed a wonderland; there was never any doubt, from that time on, what trees and plants I wished to grow.

Bolobek was purchased by the Siddha Yoga Foundation in July 1992 for about \$5.75 million, after it had been unsuccessfully auctioned in 1990 for \$8 million. Field House built by the Law-Smith's in about 1990 on part of the property was also bought by the Yoga Foundation about a year after it had purchased the main property . The property was placed on the market in 1994 and purchased by Macedon Investments Pty. Ltd. as trustee for Macedon Gateway Estate Pty. Ltd ( Mr A Hadid) in August 1995 .

Sir (Richard) Robert Law-Smith, Kt. cr. 1980, C.B.E. 1965, A.F.C. (1914-1992)

Robert Law-Smith, business and grazier, son of W. Law-Smith of Adelaide, was born on the 9 July 1914, educated at St Edward's School, Oxford and Adelaide University, and Squadron Leader in the R.A.A.F. from 1940-46. He was a board member of many major Australian companies: Qantas Airways, Director since 1956 and Vice-Chairman since 1961; Broken Hill Pty Co Ltd, Director since 1961; National Bank of Australasia Ltd, since 1959 and Vice-Chairman 1968-79. Married Joan Darling on the 7 February 1941 . Robert died in October 1992.

### Joan Law-Smith

Joan Law-Smith is regarded as one of Australia's leading gardeners, having created one of Australia's finest private gardens at Bolobek during a 21 year period, from 1970 to 1991. Joan is an accomplished plantswoman, author and artist. She has established three gardens, the first (1940-50s) at Koolomurt near Harrow in the Western District which is owned by her daughter and features sweeping lawns and specimen trees around the homestead. During 1991 and 1992 she created her third garden at Field House on a portion of land to the north of Bolobek. This was planted in a formal style with box hedges, plants in tubs and an ornamental pond. She sold the property in 1992.

Joan's interest in botany was assisted by Jean Galbraith, a noted botanist, field naturalist and author, who gave her correspondence lessons, and she received painting lessons from Paul Jones of Sydney, who is Australia's finest flower artist. When asked if she was trying to be original when creating gardens, she responded by saying; "No, that's something that never entered into my thinking. I just wanted to plant the things I loved to look at, to grow and draw. There was no other motive than that". Joan visited gardens in America, purchasing lead planters and figure of a boy in San Francisco, Professor Waterhouse at Eryldene in Sydney, which influenced her choice of cement tubs, and Japan prior to purchasing Bolobek. During a visit to England a marble statue of a girl was obtained and from the world famous garden, Sissinghurst in Kent, which has a number of similarities with Bolobek; an emphasis on white flowers, garden rooms and hedges, the garden influenced her display of roses in a walled garden and the iron rose arbour.

Joan has written four books, which include delicate water colour illustrations, horticultural and practical common-sense gardening advice. These books include, A Gardener's Diary (1979), Gardens of the Mind (1976), and The Uncommon Garden (1983), published by the Women's Committee of the National Trust. In 1991, The Garden Within was published which records the making of the garden at Bolobek, the plantings and seasonal changes. The proceeds from the sale of this book assisted in funding the irrigation system at Como.

When serving as a member of the Maud Gibson Trust at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens she wrote in 1984 a comprehensive guide; The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, which is superbly illustrated and is the latest published guide. Since 1990, Joan Law-Smith has been patron of the Australian Garden History Society.

### John and Phyllis Murphy

John and Phyllis Murphy started their architectural practice in 1950, and continued working together until they retired in 1982. Their most well known work is the former Olympic Swimming Stadium in Batman Avenue completed for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Other work included numerous school projects such as Fintona, although these were usually additions such as library or science wing. In the later years their practice concentrated on conservation. Phyllis Murphy's preference was for what she describes as well-mannered buildings, which functioned well and were elegant. She did not see the need for a strong individualistic statement with every building they designed. John and Phyllis worked jointly on projects with both being involved in the designs. Phyllis Murphy is currently a partner with Barbara Wilding in Paperhangings.

John and Phyllis Murphy were among the first architects in Victoria to work on restoration of historic buildings and their work in this field was well recognised.

The involvement of two women in the creation of this place is noteworthy.

## Extent of Registration

1. All the land marked L1 and structure marked S16 gateway, on Diagram 601086A held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Vol. 8790, Folio 056.
2. All the buildings marked B1 house, B2 garage, and B3 glasshouse and coldframe, marked on Diagram 601086B, held by the Executive Director.
3. All the following garden structures and features marked on Diagram 601086B, held by the Executive Director:  
S1 timber gates and brick fence;  
S2 bluestone steps;  
S3 pool and lead statue;  
S4 concrete tubs;

S5 sundial;  
S6 concrete and slate block pavers on the two level patio and pathways;  
S7 marble statue and brick paving;  
S8 iron gates;  
S9 Wisteria pergola;  
S10 dovecot;  
S11 walled Rose garden, sundial and brick paving;  
S12 swimming pool;  
S13 Rose arbour;  
S14 stone paths, water channel, seat and ponds;  
S15 stone paving.

*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/>*