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# Botanic Gardens Precinct Hamilton

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## Location

HAMILTON, Southern Grampians Shire

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

This area has regional significance because of its associations with the Hamilton Botanical Gardens, regarded during the last century as 'one of the beauty spots of the colony'. In a sense Hamilton started officially with the Police Camp in what was to become Martin Street. Like Church Hill, this became a prestigious residential area and was a focus for many prominent business and professional men who built fine residences there. It is the site, too, of the town's earliest state school, which replaced an earlier timber national school, the town's first school building.

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|---------------------------|---|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Southern Grampians - City of Hamilton Conservation Study, Timothy Hubbard with Carlotta Kellaway & Michael Looker (plus Francis Punch), 1991; |
| Hermes Number             | 24244   |
| Property Number           |   |

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## Physical Description 1

The Botanic Gardens is the focus of this area which is also dominated by the regularity of the street grid. It is surrounded by mostly residential buildings and their gardens acting in support and as a buffer from the rest of the

city. The major exception is the group of public buildings, especially the Court House, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church complex. Certain residential buildings stand out, specifically the former Police Magistrate's house at 24 Thompson Street, Kilorua, the Napier Club, and The Gables. The latter two being two-storied are particularly dominant but they are still subservient to the fully mature trees of the Gardens. The Botanical Motel is located on a key site and while not intruding on the Gardens makes no real contribution to the area.

There is a considerable fall in the land away from Church Hill towards the Lutheran Church. This is critical for the views out of the Botanic Gardens. Hamilton is very lucky that there has been no serious intrusion by surrounding development and no compromise of the distant skyline, the great and irretrievable loss of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

Except on the Thompson Street side and for one third of the Martin Street side there are no made footpaths around the Gardens. There is a variety of fences and hedges the most important of which is in French Street. There are street trees, *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, in Kennedy Street between the Botanic Gardens Depot and French Street. They have been heavily pruned and detract from the Gardens. In Martin Street there are some *Prunus serrulata* cvs., Flowering Cherry, which are trivial compared with the mature plantings of the Gardens. The worst intrusion are the powerlines.

On the other side of the road from the Gardens all of the streets have plantings except for French Street. In Kennedy Street there are *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, which are appropriate and in good condition. In Martin Street there are *Prunus serrulata*, Flowering Cherry, which are in good condition but are not as appropriate as a larger tree would be. The idiosyncratic bush roses - in concrete rings - outside the State Offices are too eccentric to lose. In Thompson Street there are more *Prunus serrulata*, Flowering Cherry, but in poor condition with gaps.

The most definite entrance to the Gardens, and the one which should remain so, is the set of cast iron gates at the corner of Thompson and French Streets. The second most important is at the corner of French and Kennedy Streets. The third, which is rivalled by the entrance near the toilets, is opposite the Lutheran Church. A much stronger link should be created between the Botanic Gardens and the Ornamental Tree Planting Reserve, now known as Victoria Park, in Martin Street and to a lesser extent with Kennedy Oval.

On one of the power poles in Thompson Street opposite the toilets in the Gardens there is a sign commemorating the "Jaycee Yulunga Streets and Garden Competition Winner South Zone". Also in Thompson Street on the other side of the road from the Gardens, there is the best example of bluestone guttering and crossovers in this area and possibly anywhere in Hamilton. The view out of the area from Thompson Street to the south is well terminated by distant planting. All the streets are happily empty of much of the paraphernalia found in metropolitan suburbs. For a detailed list of materials see Appendix 8.7.

*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/>*