

# ROYAL MELBOURNE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS



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1 royal melbourne zoological  
gardens royal park parkville  
rear giraffe house



H01074 royal melbourne  
zoological gardens royal park  
parkville elephant house plan



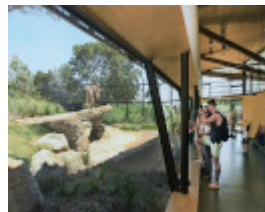
Entrance to Lion Gorge  
2017.jpg



Royal Melbourne Zoological  
Gardens Royal Park Parkville  
Elephant House



Royal Melbourne Zoological  
Gardens Royal Park Parkville  
Elephant House



Lion Gorge 2017.jpg



Lion Gorge 2017.jpg



Lion Gorge aerial view  
2017.jpg



Lion enclosure prior to  
demolition 2014.jpg



Lion enclosure prior to  
demolition, 2014.jpg



Lion enclosure prior to demolition, 2014.jpg



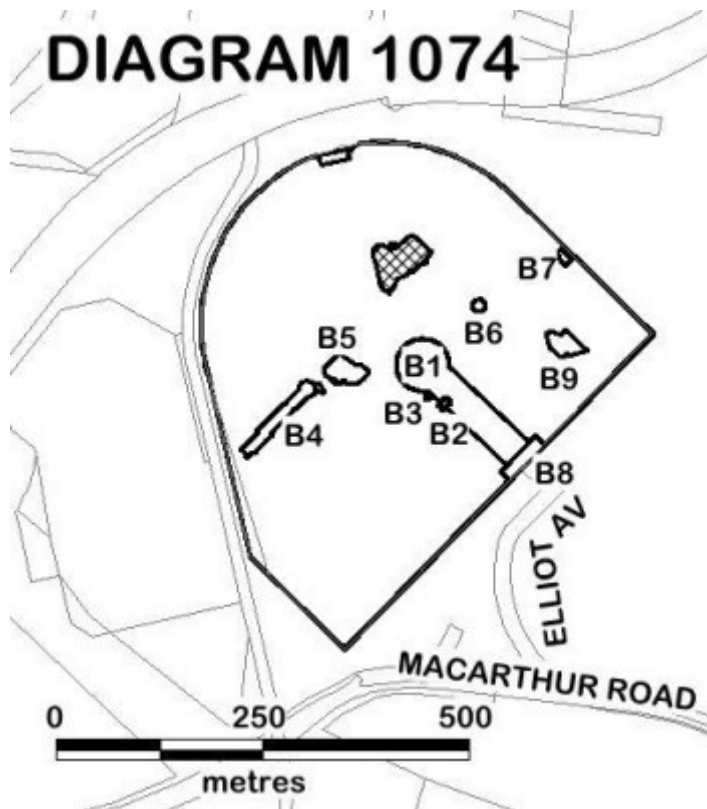
Lion enclosure prior to demolition 2014.jpg



Sign reinstated at new Lion Gorge enclosure 2017.jpg



Original sign reinstated at new Lion Gorge enclosure 2017 .jpg



ROYAL MELBOURNE ZOO EXTENT DIAGRAM 1074 (8 June 2017).jpg

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## Location

ELLIOTT AVENUE PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1074

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO364

HO822

HO823

HO824

HO830

HO831

HO826

HO825

HO828

HO829

HO827

## **VHR Registration**

May 23, 1996

## **Amendment to Registration**

June 8, 2017

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - February 22, 2023

### **What is significant?**

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens including the Formal Garden Layout and elephant statue; former Mandrill House; former Monkey House; Great Flight Aviary; Giraffe House and Enclosure; Octagonal Aviary; former Carnivores' Food Preparation Room; Perimeter Fence, and Front and Back Gates; and former Elephant House and Enclosure including the moat.

### ***History Summary***

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (now known as the Melbourne Zoo) is the oldest zoo in Victoria and Australia and opened in 1862. Prior to this, animals procured by the Zoological Society of Victoria were kept in rudimentary enclosures at Richmond Paddock opposite the Botanic Gardens. These animals were brought to Victoria to enrich the purses and sensibilities of its colonists - birds that would sing sweetly or consume fruit-eating insects, fish for the rivers, and game and grazing animals for bush and paddocks. The importation of animals from other countries was known as 'acclimatisation' and influenced the Royal Melbourne Zoological Garden's early development. The popularity of the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park in London (1826) also lent weight to its establishment, as did a drive to demonstrate civic development during the Victoria's growth after the gold rushes. In the first three decades following the 1870 appointment of director Albert Le Souef, exotic animals were procured for public display, entertainment became a central function and the Zoo and its attractive gardens were established as a major recreational and cultural feature in Melbourne. In the 1960s discussions around the world regarding the value and role of zoos led to a change in perspective within the international zoo community and Melbourne Zoo began to transform its presentation and treatment of animals. The present-day Melbourne Zoo continues to remodel and redevelop its facilities to better address its objectives of conservation, research and education.

### **Description Summary**

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens occupies a 22 hectare (55 acre) site in Royal Park. It contains significant buildings and features, including the

- . Formal Garden Layout and elephant statue: the area adjoining the Zoo's axial main drive - a principal feature of the early Zoo site design - beginning at its 'front' (Elliott Avenue) entrance and crossed by other paths perpendicular to it. These intersections are marked by circular garden beds, the north-westernmost one of which contains a statue of a rampant elephant;
- . Former Mandrill House: also known as the Orang-utan House, together with the adjacent
- . Former Monkey House: these two small buildings face the main drive. Both buildings have terracotta-tiled roofs, and feature large panels of wrought iron bars within red face-brick walls with rendered and painted column capital and sill details;
- . Great Flight Aviary: an approximately 120m-long steel mesh-clad tall structure of parabolic cross-section framed in steel arches and at its north-east end terminating in an elongated-spheroidal dome. It originally opened in 1934, and in 1980 re-opened following a fitout with new walkways and rainforest, wetland and scrubland environments;
- . Giraffe House and Enclosure: a partially-moated enclosure with perimeter buildings which feature ferro-concrete simulated natural rock surfaces. The shape of the largest building is apparently also based upon the topography of Mount Buffalo;
- . Octagonal Aviary: this building was initially occupied by monkeys before being used as originally planned as an aviary. Red face-brick piers support rendered and painted architraves and a segmented iron-framed domical roof. Large openings in four of its eight sides are enclosed with steel mesh.;
- . Former Carnivores' Food Preparation Room: gently suggestive of the Mediterranean, it features dark-grey rendered walls and a terracotta-tiled roof with wide eave and barge-end overhangs;
- . Perimeter Fence: the Zoo's perimeter is defined by a tall masonry wall, the Elliott Avenue-facing portion of which features chevron capping and panels of herringbone-patterned brickwork;
- . Front and Back Gates: the Zoo's 'Front' entrance on Elliott Avenue is a 1939 moderne-style building with upper-storey windows framed by stylised letters that form the word 'ZOO'. The subsidiary 'Back' entrance at the Zoo's northern end provides visitors with access from Royal Park railway station and Stop 25 on the 55 tram route; and
- . Former Elephant House and Enclosure, including the moat: the Elephant House's roof features four parallel asbestos-cement cranked barrel vaults. Decorative relief graphics on its parapet depict elephant heads, whose sinuous trunks echo the form of the roof.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people.

### **How is it significant?**

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is of aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria.

It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

#### **Criterion A**

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

#### **Criterion E**

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

#### **Criterion F**

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

#### **Criterion G**

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

#### **Criterion H**

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

#### **Why is it significant?**

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is historically significant as the oldest zoo in Victoria and Australia. It has had a clear and continuing association with the display of animals for education and public viewing since 1862. Melbourne Zoo demonstrates nineteenth-century Victoria's determination to provide progressive public institutions of an international standard despite its relative youth and isolation. [Criterion A]

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens demonstrates developing and evolving practices in the care, housing, display and interpretation of zoo animals since 1862. A number of its buildings and structures - such as the Octagonal Aviary (1928), the former Carnivore's Food Preparation Room (1930s), and the former Mandrill House and Monkey House buildings (both 1928) - demonstrate the changing philosophies which have underpinned the display and care of animals in captivity, and the ways in which those animals have been viewed and interpreted by visitors. [Criterion A]

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is aesthetically significant as a formally designed zoological garden landscape which has been appreciated and valued by the community since the 1860s. Its central entrance pathway with formal garden beds and tree plantings exemplify the zoo's nineteenth century design sensibility. The importance of its aesthetic qualities is demonstrated in the popularity of the place as a tourist destination over a long period for education and recreation purposes. For more than 140 years, the main drive held renowned mass displays of seasonal flowers, a horticultural tradition which has recently changed to feature displays of drought-tolerant natives. [Criterion E]

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is of scientific significance as a centre of zoological research and animal keeping in Victoria since its establishment in 1862. It contains animal enclosures which were highly innovative for the periods in which they were built, including the Great Flight Aviary (1934, redeveloped 1980), the former Elephant House and Enclosure (1944), and the Giraffe House and Enclosure (1913). These places demonstrate highly creative adaptations of materials and technology. The Zoo continues to deliver conservation and education programs that promote knowledge of and respect for animals and their natural environments. [Criterion F]

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is socially significant to the wider Victorian community. Generations of Victorians from metropolitan and regional areas have visited Melbourne Zoo since 1862. There has been a regular and long-term engagement by the community with this place for the purposes of learning and recreation, and it has been a popular destination for school excursions. The zoo is also regularly visited by national and international tourists. [Criterion G]

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens is historically significant for its association with the lives and works of three of its former directors. Albert Le Souef (1870 to 1902) and his son Dudley Le Souef (1902 to 1923) are internationally recognised for their pioneering contributions to the body of scientific knowledge regarding the care and display of animals. Alfred Dunbavin Butcher (1962 to 1987), chairman of the Board of the Royal Zoological Society of Victoria, began an ongoing process of transformation in which the design of and habitats within the Zoo's enclosures better accommodate many aspects of species' instincts.

[Criterion H]

## **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:**

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

#### General Condition 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.

#### General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

#### General Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

#### General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

#### General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

### Specific Permit Exemptions

#### Minor Works:

Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

#### Registered buildings and structures

#### Exteriors

- . Repainting all previously painted surfaces in the same colour scheme and paint type.
- . Repair and servicing of existing equipment and services including wiring, plumbing and fire services; equipment and components with moveable parts requiring lubrication including machinery, engines, water reticulation systems.
- . Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials, etc, and making good.
- . Installation or repair of damp-proof courses by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- . Maintenance of power or pipelines or other public services where this involves no alteration to the fabric of the place.

#### Interiors

- . Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring, provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

#### Landscape

- . The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, annual bedding displays, removal of dead and diseased plants (excluding trees), disease and weed control, mulching and maintenance to care for existing plants and lawns.
- . Removal of dead or dangerous trees and emergency tree works to maintain public safety and to protect significant buildings, structures and landscape, and the replanting the same species in the same location provided a tree removal report is submitted to the Executive Director within 21 days of the removal.
- . Repairs and maintenance to hard landscape elements, roads and paths, edging, gutters, steps, drainage and irrigation systems, fences and gates.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373 - 1996.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS 4970 - 2009.
- . Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services.
- . Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.

### Theme

#### 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates	1861,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ZOO, THE ZOO, MELBOURNE ZOO,
Hermes Number	4781
Property Number	

### History

#### Historical overview



The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (now known as the Melbourne Zoo) is the oldest zoo in Victoria and Australia and opened in 1862. Prior to this, animals procured by the Zoological Society of Victoria were kept in rudimentary enclosures at Richmond Paddock opposite the Botanic Gardens. These animals were brought to Victoria to enrich the purses and sensibilities of its colonists - birds that would sing sweetly or consume fruit-eating insects, fish for the rivers, and game and grazing animals for bush and paddocks. The importation of animals from other countries was known as 'acclimatisation' and influenced the Royal Melbourne Zoological Garden's early development. The popularity of the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park in London (1826) also lent weight to its establishment, as did a drive to demonstrate civic development during the Victoria's growth after the gold rushes. In the first three decades following the 1870 appointment of director Albert Le Souef, exotic animals were procured for public display, entertainment became a central function and the Zoo and its attractive gardens were established as a major recreational and cultural feature in Melbourne. In the 1960s discussions around the world regarding the value and role of zoos led to a change in perspective within the international zoo community and Melbourne Zoo began to transform its presentation and treatment of animals. The present-day Melbourne Zoo continues to remodel and redevelop its facilities to better address its objectives of conservation, research and education.

### **Chronological history**

(from National Trust of Australia (Victoria) website)

1857: Meeting held 6 October 1857 in St Patrick's Hall, Melbourne to form an ornithological society. Meeting proposes formation of a zoological society 'both for the purpose of science and for that of affording the public the advantage of studying the habits of animal creatures in a properly arranged Zoological Gardens'.

1858: Zoological Society reconstituted as a committee appointed by the Chief Secretary to administer the Zoological Gardens, then located in Richmond opposite the Botanic Gardens; Ferdinand Mueller appointed Director in August 1858.

1861: Committee disbands in favour of the newly formed Acclimatisation Society of Victoria; Zoological Gardens moves to present site in Royal Park. The 700 acre (approximately 280 ha) site of Royal Park had been reserved by Charles La Trobe in May 1859 (on the eve of his departure from Victoria) following efforts since 1844 by the Melbourne Council to have the area set aside. An experimental farm on 142 acres had been set aside in 1858 at the north-west corner of the site.

1861-62: The whole park area of about 223 hectares at Royal Park made over to the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria to accommodate its herd of alpaca llamas as well as some camels and antelopes which the government had placed in its charge. The successful attempt by EG Fitzgibbon, the Town Clerk of Melbourne, to resist the permanent reservation of this land, was only the first of a series of battles to prevent the whittling away of the parkland.

1861: Trustees appointed by the government enclosed an area of a little over 20 hectares near the centre as a zoological gardens. Albert Purchas, committee member of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, requested 'to peg out and properly define the ground to be fenced in'. Purchas gave his services gratuitously and in 1889 was officially appointed architect for the zoo buildings. His contribution to the committee lasted until his death in 1909. Competition for a design of the zoological gardens held in May 1861 attracts 7 entrants. Competition won by Alfred Lynch. Central path and water feature in north-east portion of site probably part of his plan. (p.81) The Lynch design possibly the basis of the 1875 published plan but de C has no evidence. (p.81). Paths laid down by A.A. Le Soeuf and Wilkie Brothers appointed gardeners. Camel sheds (formerly in the vicinity of the Burke and Willstree) transferred to the new enclosure, but alpacas and goats grazed outside in Royal Park during the day.

1870: Albert Alexander Cochrane Le Soeuf appointed Director, June 1870, and occupies position until his death in 1902.

1872 Influence of Le Soeuf felt in the renaming of the Acclimatisation Society as the Zoological and Acclimatisation Society of Victoria.

1875: Guide to the Zoological Gardens (with plan) published. Water feature shown in the north-east portion of site, probably the work described in 1863.

1875: Bear pit established at Melbourne Zoo, part of the 'modern zoo' tradition derived from Regent's Park, but out



of date by 1876(according to Le Souef). Containment was formed by a pit (rather than bars) and there was an element of entertainment (pole up which bears climbed). The pit was unsightly and unhealthy and was infilled in 1913.

1876: Reservation of Royal Park with the exclusion of the zoological gardens, the site of the later powder magazine and the proposed showgrounds site; in 1883 and 1884 these latter two were added to Royal Park.

1880: A. Le Souef travels overseas. Admission first charged at the zoo on 14 January 1880 with more widespread implementation of admission charges in 1881.

1881: Zoological and Acclimatisation Society Incorporation Act, No. 794, 1881.

1884: Railway line through Royal Park opened for traffic. In 1875 a plan had been prepared for a line of railway to enter the park at Flemington Road, opposite Dryburgh Street, pass around the east side of the Zoo, and enter Brunswick Street at the same point as the present line. The Railway Construction Act of 1880, which authorised the line, permitted a deviation of half a mile, but construction began in 1883 on the surveyed route: then plans were changed and a cutting formed from Flemington Road towards the Zoo was filled while construction of the present more westerly route began, involving the removal of the powder magazine but not the two associated cottages, which were subsequently occupied by employees at the Zoo. The railway was opened for traffic in 1884, when a new Railway Construction Act authorised the line which branches off to the north-east of Levers Street, as a part of the Outer Circle route (opened in 1889).

1888: Dudley Le Souef travels overseas and marries. On his return his father (Director, A.A. Le Souef) requests £500 for a new residence (possibly the one now occupied by FOTZ) - this residence was certainly erected by 1896 when it was shown on the MMBW plan.

1889: Horse drawn tram route constructed by the Melbourne Tramway & Omnibus Company Limited along the road to the Zoo from the intersection of Sydney Road and Gatehouse Street; these trams ceased in 1923. The tramway was also apparently constructed in 1889 along its present route from Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, across the park to the west of the Zoo, and on through West Brunswick to Bell Street, West Coburg.

1896 MMBW plan of the Zoo published and this shows considerable detail of layout.

1902: William Henry Dudley Le Souef succeeds his father as Director and serves until his death in 1923. Visit to Hagenbeck Zoo, Hamburg, by Dudley Le Souef.

1904: Annual Report includes 'Plan of the Gardens of the Zoological & Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, Royal Park, Melbourne'. 'The council endeavours, as far as able, to make the flower beds a distinctive feature, as they add so much to the attractiveness of the Zoological Garden. A long avenue of Pepper Trees has been planted ... intended to supplement a row of Sugar Gums, which are infested with woodborer'.

1907-08 Dudley Le Souef visits Hamburg Zoo

1913: First giraffes arrive at zoo, giraffe house erected. Giraffe house illustrated in Annual Report, c. 1924-25. Building altered several times and for a time used for a small circus run by the Freeman family.

c. 1916-17 Elephant yard established, probably on the same site as the later Elephant House.

1923: Death of W.H.D. Le Souef.

1924: Andrew Wilkie takes over as director, after having started at the zoo as a young gardener from the botanic gardens in the 1860s at age 14.

1926: Annual report: 'during the year the Council instituted inquiries in England, America and Germany with the object of ascertaining whether we can not, in time to come, make the Gardens more attractive to children by providing playgrounds on Continental principles. The matter will be considered during the coming year.'

1927: New parrot pavilion in course of erection mentioned in Annual Report; landscape gardener added to staff.

1927-28: Orangutan house erected. The adjacent and architecturally similar Monkey house was shown on the

c.1931 plan but probably erected at a similar period to Orangutan house.

1928 Octagonal house erected, initially occupied by monkeys instead of its planned use as an aviary.

1934: Australian section established by David Fleay and others.

1930s Food Preparation Room and veterinary complex erected (judging from architectural style).

1936 New Zoological Gardens Act proclaimed, Zoological Board of Victoria established as a statutory authority. Public Works Department now responsible for building program at the zoo.

1938-39 Perimeter fence, front and rear entrance buildings, children's playground, monkey island (now the seal enclosure) and the veterinary complex erected. Percy Everett, Chief Architect for Public Works Department, responsible for the design of many works. Flight aviary (after 1980 known as Great Flight Aviary) opened on its present site.

1940s Miniature 'Spirit of Progress' train 'one of the most popular amusements for children'.

1944 Elephant House erected, elephants located for a time in the Giraffe enclosure.

1952 Carousel installed at the zoo.

1963 Masterplan prepared by Garnet Alsop and Partners.

1967 New Zoological Gardens Act proclaimed.

1980: Great flight aviary re-opened with new rainforest, wetland and scrubland environments.

1984-85 Butterfly house and Bear enclosure developed.

1988-89: Masterplan prepared by internationally renowned zooplanner David Hancocks.

### *Key references*

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## **Assessment Against Criteria**

A, E, F, G, H

## **Extent of Registration**

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying the following places in the Heritage Register:

Number: H1074

Category: Heritage Place

Place Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens

Location: Elliott Avenue, Parkville

Melbourne City

All of the place encompassing the following buildings and features as shown on Diagram 1074:

B1 Formal Garden Layout and elephant statue (but excluding all lighting, water fountain, Peter Pan statue and garden signage, bollards, seating, fences and fixed garbage bins)

B2 Mandrill House

B3 Monkey House

B4 Great Flight Aviary

B5 Giraffe House and enclosure

B6 Octagonal Aviary

B7 Carnivores Food Preparation Room (but excluding the south-eastern wing)

B8 Perimeter Fence and Front and Back Gates

B9 Elephant House and Enclosure (including the moat)

But removing the former Lion Enclosure shown cross-hatched on Diagram 1074.

Dated 8 June 2017

TIM SMITH Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 23 8 June 2017 p.1095]

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*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/>*