
Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens

Location

Elliott Avenue, PARKVILLE VIC 3052 - Property No G13008

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 4, 2005

Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens, established as a public zoological garden in 1861, continuously developed and still in use for its original purpose, is of State cultural significance:

- for its historical links with the Zoological Society of Victoria and the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria (and their successors); these institutions provide an understanding of key aspects nineteenth century society and attitudes to environment in Victoria and are now demonstrated by the placement and location of the zoo at Royal Park, as well as in documentary sources such as the library of books and reports held at the zoo and manuscript and printed records of the activities of such societies;
- for the manner in which the zoo demonstrates the development of Melbourne and Victoria's major cultural, scientific and educational institutions and activities in the mid nineteenth century, institutions and activities made possible due to the extraordinary surge of development in the wake of the gold rushes of the 1850s; in this respect the zoo can be linked with the University of Melbourne, the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, the Melbourne Public Library, the National Museum of Victoria (and its successors), the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne's major network of parks, and the major exhibitions held at the Exhibition Buildings;
- for its historical link with Le Soeuf family, through first director Albert Le Soeuf and succeeding director Dudley Le Soeuf; this family was amongst the most important influences on the development of Australian zoos;
- for its rich diversity of cultural features which exhibit distinct chronological periods of development and the manner in which it demonstrates the history of zoo development in Australia through physical evidence, especially the link between the confined site of the zoo and the surrounding parkland which once housed large herds of animals; remnants of the early phase of development including formal layout of the main axis and a range of traditional cages which recall nineteenth century attitudes towards the housing of animals in zoos

(octagonal aviary, Orangutan and Monkey Houses, Elephant House); Hagenbeck-inspired buildings (especially the Giraffe House) of the early twentieth century, a range of architecturally flamboyant buildings and structures of the 1930s and 40s (Giant Flight Aviary, Entrance Building, perimeter fence), compartmentalisation of activities (residential precinct, management precinct, leisure activities (especially the Carousel), animal enclosures and cages;

- as a zoological garden, one of few examples of this type of place in Australia and the leading example in this state; attributes include the combination of layout, formal plantings, buildings and structures, range of habitats and animals; the garden demonstrates design characteristics which clearly differentiate the different periods of development such as the influences of Albert Le Souef and the late Victorian era with its penchant for specimen trees, floral bedding and zoomorphic sculptures (evidenced by the main entrance layout and circuses); the influence of Dudley Le Souef and the zoo design of the early 1900s, with its themes of simulated natural settings, the era of public works management with its emphasis on distinctive architectural styles, and recent developments which place stress on recreated habitats;
- for its mature tree plantings, including a remnant River Red Gum and many outstanding individual specimens;
- for its representative range of animal cages and enclosures, an unusual building type and now demonstrated by very few extant examples in Victoria;
- for its scientific significance in the area of research, conservation and education;
- for its remarkable range of aesthetic and sensory qualities, including visual, aural, and olfactory; which alter according to time and place across a wide time range from hourly to yearly;
- for their contemporary social significance as a major Melbourne cultural institution, of interest to locals and visitors alike; in this regard the place is comparable to the Museum of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria and Exhibition Buildings/Carlton Gardens

Hermes Number 70231

Property Number

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/>