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# Portland Botanic Gardens

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## Location

Gleneleg Street, PORTLAND VIC 3305 - Property No G13020

## Municipality

GLENELG SHIRE

## Level of significance

State

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 17, 2005

Portland Botanic Gardens, reserved in the mid-1850s, developed by William Allitt to a plan of Alexander Elliott, and reduced to approximately its current extent by the turn of the century, is of State cultural significance:

- as an early and representative example of a nineteenth century regional botanic garden, a garden type best exemplified in Australia by the collection of such gardens created in colonial Victoria; typical characteristics of provincial botanic gardens found at Portland include a curator's cottage, plantings of specimen trees, wide range of plants, areas of intensive horticultural interest (especially floral displays represented by the bedding of dahlias), range of horticultural environments (including a glasshouse) and a documented supply of plants from other colonial botanic gardens and horticulturists; Portland Botanic Garden is of particular note historically as one of the first three botanic gardens developed in Victoria (the others being Melbourne and Geelong);

- for its links with Alexander Elliott as designer and William Allitt as inaugural curator; both were recent British emigrants with considerable horticultural and landscape design experience; for Elliott, the project was a stepping stone to his more celebrated role as long-time head gardener at the University of Melbourne, and for Allitt, his tenure was a brief flowering as one of the pioneers of botanic gardens in Victoria;

- for its design and layout, still reflected in the surviving path system and placement of major features; this layout is based on the squared layout of traditional experimental/trial grounds and systematic gardens, and is both befitting for this type of garden and rare in the Australian context;

- for its collection of plants, characteristic of late nineteenth century Victorian gardens as well as some rarities such as *Wigandia caracasana*, *Rhus viminalis* (African Sumach), *Buddleya lindleyana* (Butterfly Bush) and *Ceanothus pinetorum*;

- for its retention of an important mid-Victorian curator's cottage; this is a simple picturesque cottage redolent of designs in contemporary pattern books, is distinctive for its basalt construction, is a superb and intact example of a rare building type, retains much of its interior detail intact, and clearly marks the main entrance to the garden;
- for the manner in which this site, located immediately beyond the closely settled township area of the 1840s, links with the Burswood property (developed by early gardens committee member Edward Henty), and also forms an integral part of the colonial government infrastructure of Portland (still represented by many public buildings and reserves); links with local maritime history are represented through the lifeboat display, a feature of the garden for over eighty years; and
- for its social value to the local community as a public garden, popular throughout its history and still well patronised by residents and visitors alike.

Hermes Number 70208

Property Number

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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/>*