

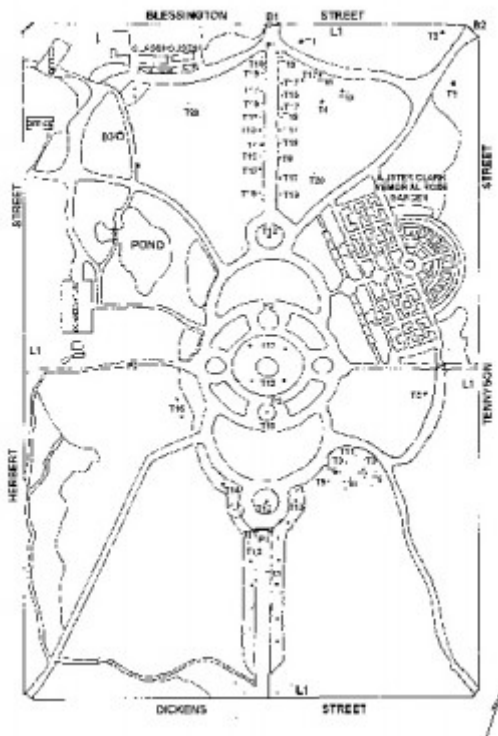
# ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS



ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS SOHE 2008



1 st kilda botanic gardens entrance jh may 1998



st kilda botanic gardens plan

## Location

55 BLESSINGTON STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1804

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO344

## VHR Registration

October 14, 1999

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 5, 1999

### What is significant?

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens of 6.4 hectares were permanently reserved in August 1860. The original formal or geometric design for the Gardens was prepared by Tilman Gloystein c1860 and despite many alterations, particularly between 1940-45, it retains elements of the original layout and early features. The principal source of plants for the establishment of the gardens was the Royal Botanic Gardens under the directorship of Ferdinand von Mueller. Mueller appears to have assisted in the supervision of planting and attended the opening ceremony. The Gardens' first curator was well known nurseryman, George Brunning. The Gardens contain striking landscape features which remain intact from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods, in particular the Blessington Street gates (1918) and St Kilda City Gardens gates (c1950), the Levi Pavilion, a hexagonal timber pavilion built as a gift from the Levi family (1928), the central north-south axial avenues between Blessington and Dickens Streets (c1860), including the unusual alternating palm avenue, and the central crescent shrubberies and bedding displays. Striking axial vistas are achieved through the central axis which survives unaltered from the period of the Gardens' original layout (1860). The Gardens also contain the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden (1950, redeveloped 1985).

### How is it significant?

St Kilda Botanical Gardens are of historical, aesthetic, scientific (horticultural) and social significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have historical significance as one of Victoria's earliest botanical gardens and along with Williamstown, as one of only two suburban botanic gardens established in the 19th century in Victoria. They also have historical significance as one of the few surviving formally designed botanical gardens in Victoria. The Gardens are also significant for their strong early associations with Ferdinand von Mueller and early nurseryman George Brunning. The Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden has historical significance as the state's largest memorial to noted Australian Rosarian Alister Clark.

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have aesthetic significance for their fine design featuring an axial plan with avenues leading to a circular centrepiece. The brick gutters and bluestone rock edges reinforce the intricate design. This central area is a fine example of formal Victorian garden layout with its circular lawn and surrounding beds of floral displays and is a rare feature in Victoria. The palm avenue, an unusual combination of *Phoenix canariensis* and *Washingtonia robusta*, and the ornamental cast iron gates provide a striking and dramatic entry

to the Gardens from Blessington Street. The Gardens are also significant for the built and vegetation features which survive from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-war periods.

The Gardens have scientific (horticultural) significance for their unusually large collection of rare and unusual mature trees and for their role in perpetuating the tradition of Edwardian municipal gardening displays. The Gardens have an outstanding collection of mature trees, some of which are rare in cultivation and some the finest of their species in Victoria. Such trees include *Ulmus pumila* which is extremely rare in cultivation in Victoria, a pair of *Cassine crocea*, *Phillyrea latifolia*, *Olea europea* subsp. *africana*, *Celtis occidentalis* and an important collection of palms, including the rare *Jubaea chilensis* and *Phoenix sylvestris*.

The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have social significance for their long and continuous association with the people of St Kilda. It is valued as a place of recreation by the citizens of St Kilda and the wider community, who since the 1860s have flocked to this and the many other attractions of St Kilda, Melbourne's most famous seaside resort.

## 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:

General Conditions:

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.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

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

Landscape:

- \* The process of gardening, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works and landscaping in accordance with the original concept.
- \* The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character.
- \* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.
- \* Removal of plants listed as Noxious Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- \* Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, structures, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems beyond the canopy edge of listed trees.
- \* Plant labelling and interpretive signage.

Entrance Gates and Levi Pavilion:

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance.

Construction dates	1860,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ST KILDA BOTANIC GARDENS,
Hermes Number	2410
Property Number	

## History

Contextual History:

History of Place:

In 1857 the final boundaries of the new municipality of St Kilda were proclaimed and the first council elected. Two years later, the council made its first moves towards establishing a botanical garden. The elite status of St Kilda as a seaside resort was firmly established by the 1850's. Popular attractions such as the pier, promenades and sea baths and various entertainment facilities stimulated the development of other recreational facilities such as the Gardens, reflecting the civic pride of an exclusive and popular municipality

First moves to establish the gardens September 1859

In February 1860, the Department of Lands and Survey confirmed the grant of land which was gazetted on 1st August 1860.

Council also applied for and received a Government grant to assist in constructing a fence around the reserve. This substantial iron picket fence, six feet high, enclosing the whole area was completed by September 1860.

At around the same time, a deep deposit of red gravel was discovered below the surface of the reserved site. The road building program in the locality made this material very valuable and the metal was used to surface a number of nearby streets. The pit is thought to have been filled later with the municipality's rubbish. The site of the gravel pit is shown as 'clay hole' in the south-east corner of the gardens in the 1897 MMBW plan and it seems that the location of the pit clearly influenced the layout of pathway systems to or from this date.

Design of the gardens

At the same time as the gravel was being removed (September 1897) a competition for the overall design of the gardens was held. The winner was a Tilman W Gloystein of Lonsdale St, however, no drawings of the original design appear to have survived. The nature of the design and the extent to which it was implemented in 1860's - 1870's also remains unclear.

Features of the design included a carriage drive of nearly a mile, and formal geometric lines producing a "most elaborate and tasteful design presenting indubitable evidence of an intimate and correct acquaintance with it's true principles of landscape gardening"

Construction Phase

The council proceeded only gradually and it seems money went principally into funding the fence, planting, layout and construction of pathways.

Gloystein tendered successfully to lay out the garden according to his plan for 20 pounds and by early 1861, a substantial amount of work was completed, including planting, trenching, fencing and cartage to a value of over 700 pounds.

In 1861, nurseryman George Brunning was the first gardener/curator appointed to oversee works at the site. Brunning resigned 1862 and was replaced by William Glover.

The principal source of plants for the new gardens was the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, as it was for Victoria's other botanical gardens. Under the directorship of Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, first Government Botanist and then Director of the Gardens (1857 - 1873), plants were supplied to newly established gardens all over Victoria. The newly formed St Kilda City Council made contact with the Royal Botanical Gardens as early as 1859, when Mueller wrote to the town clerk saying he would be happy to supply "such plants as could be spared for planting in the Municipality". In May or June 1861, the first plants were delivered from the Royal Botanical Gardens to be planted in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. Mueller also appears to have been on hand to "supervise its council on its proposed planting operations".

In November 1861 a fete celebrating the opening of the gardens was attended by a crowd of two thousand, including Von Mueller.

In 1867, William Glover was sacked by the Gardens' Planting Committee which was dissatisfied with a lack of progress. The committee decided to tender out the management of the gardens. and despite opposition from some local residents and some members of the Planting Committee, the contract was let to George Orr for 90 pounds.

#### Development 1870 - 1900

Excepting the 1897 MMBW plan which shows a reasonably clear picture of the development of the gardens, very few visual images of the gardens have been found for this period. In 1897, the gardens were connected to reticulated water and by 1900 the gravel pit was filled. General improvements, including the provision of extra seating and the purchase of 50-60 'valuable roses' from Messrs Brunning and Son, nurserymen of Brighton Road St Kilda, were carried out.

#### 1900 - 1945

Between 1900 - 1945, a significant number of changes and improvements were made in the gardens. Layout and detailing of pathways were changed considerably in this period, so that by 1940, the original three-sided diamond path system shown on MMBW plans, thought to have been part of Gloystein's original design had been removed. In its place, a number of new paths were developed, leaving the axiality and symmetry of the original plan to be expressed by north-south avenues off Blessington and Dickens Streets, the central features and the two curved wings running off the Blessington St entrance. In September 1918, the construction of double gates and two single gates to Blessington Street was noted in the Surveyor's report. In 1928-29, a hexagonal timber pavilion was constructed in the north-west corner of the Gardens, erected as a gift to the City of St Kilda in memory of Mr and Mrs Alfred Levi. This period saw the planting of a considerable number of eucalypts. Many of these still survive in the southern sections.

#### Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden

A major alteration to the Gardens was made in 1950 with the establishment of the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden, a major new landscape feature in the north-western section of the Gardens.

One of Australia's best known horticulturalists and arguably its greatest rosarian, Alister Clark was born in 1864 at Bright.

From 1886 - 1949 he lived at his home Glenara, Bulla, just north of Melbourne. Clark was a foundation member in 1900 of the National Rose Society of Victoria and bred new rose varieties such as 'Lorraine Lee', 'Black Boy', 'Sunny South', 'Nancy Hayward and many others. These were well regarded in internationally and grown widely throughout Australia.

In 1936, he was awarded the coveted Dean Hole Gold medal by National Rose society of Britain. As well as roses, Alister Clark developed many new varieties of daffodils. He was a fine sportsman, excelling at golf, polo and horse racing and was Chairman of the Moonee Valley Racing Club from its foundation in 1917.

Development of the Alister Clarke Memorial Rose Garden.

When Alister Clark died in early 1949, the National Rose Society of Victoria began efforts to have a rose garden established as a memorial. The society was assisted by other horticultural and sporting societies and a public appeal for funding was launched. The society approached St Kilda council and it was agreed that a garden of 2.5 acres (or 0.25 ha) in the north east section of the garden would be established. The decision was undoubtedly influenced by Mr NT Scoble, curator of the gardens at the time and member of the executive committee of the National Rose Society of Victoria. A number of the rose varieties planted were those developed by Clark. By the late 1970's, the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden was in poor condition. It was redeveloped with a new layout and new plantings in 1985.

Gardens development 1950 - 1995

Relatively few changes to the layout of the Gardens have occurred in the period 1990-1995, except for a straight gravel path with a concrete dish drain edge from corner of Herbert and Dickens St to centre of the garden. Hedges on the Blessington and Tennyson street boundaries were and the entire site enclosed by a chain mesh fence in 1967. In 1968, a new brick veneer Curator's residence constructed in the North west corner on the original location of Curators Lodge but on a diagonal axis. The 1970's saw expansion of the nursery and parks and gardens depot included construction of a new glasshouse.

In 1979, St Kilda multicultural Festival was established. This is still an annual spring event held in the Gardens.

In 1983, a Masterplan was prepared and as a result of its recommendations, significant developments took place. These included the re-development of the Alister Clarke Memorial Rose Garden, (1985), relocation of the children's playground and construction of a lake in its place, and the construction of a glass conservatory of 392 square metres housing Australian rainforest plants.

In 1993, a new toilet block was built south of the conservatory.

Associated People: George Brunning; Ferdinand von Mueller

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

St Kilda Botanical Gardens have historical importance as one of the earliest botanical gardens in Victoria and, with Williamstown, as one of only two suburban botanic gardens established in the 19th century in Victoria. They also have historical significance as one of the few surviving formally designed botanical gardens in Victoria. The Gardens are also significant for their associations with Ferdinand von Mueller and early nurseryman George Brunning. The Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden has historical significance as the state's largest memorial to noted Australian rosarian Alister Clark.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The Gardens are aesthetically significant for their fine design featuring an axial plan with avenues leading to a circular centrepiece. This central area is a fine example of formal Victorian garden layout with its circular lawn and surrounding beds of floral displays. The palm avenue, an unusual combination of Phoenix canariensis (Canary Island Palms) and Washingtonia robusta (Cotton Palms), and the ornamental cast iron gates provide a striking and dramatic entry to the Gardens from Blessington Street. The Gardens are also significant for the built and vegetation features which survive from the Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-War periods.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

The Gardens are scientifically (horticulturally) significant for their unusually large collection of rare and unusual

mature trees and for their role in perpetuating the tradition of Edwardian municipal gardening displays. The Gardens have an outstanding collection of mature trees, some of which are rare in cultivation and some the finest of their species in Victoria. Such trees include *Ulmus pumila* (Siberian Elm) which is extremely rare in cultivation in Victoria, a pair of *Cassine crocea* (South African Olives), *Phoenix sylvestris* (Indian Date), *Phillyrea latifolia*, *Olea europea* ssp. *Africana* (South African Olive), *Celtis occidentalis* (Nettle Tree) and *Jubaea chilensis* (Chilean Wine Palm).

#### Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The Gardens are socially significant for their long and continuous association with the people of St Kilda. It is valued as a place of recreation by the citizens of St Kilda and the wider community, who since the 1860s have flocked to this and the many other attractions of St Kilda, Melbourne's most famous seaside resort.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1804 in the category described as a Heritage place:

St Kilda Botanical Gardens, Blessington Street, St Kilda, Port Phillip City Council

#### EXTENT:

1. All of the structures marked as follows on Diagram 1804 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Blessington Street gates  
B2 St Kilda City Gardens entrance gates  
B3 Levi pavilion

2. All of the landscape features and paths marked as follows on Diagram 1804 held by the Executive Director:

P1 Formal north-south path  
P2 Formal east-west path  
P3 Circular paths and beds

3. All the plants marked as follows on Diagram 1804 held by the Executive Director:

T1 *Alectryon subcinereus*  
T2 *Celtis occidentalis*  
T3 *Olea europea* subsp. *Africana*  
T4 *Phillyrea latifolia*  
T5 *Ulmus pumila*  
T6 *Phoenix sylvestris*  
T7 *Jubaea chilensis*  
T8 *Butia capitata* x3  
T9 *Phoenix canariensis* x3  
T10 *Trachycarpus fortunei* x2  
T11 *Chamaerops humilis*  
T12 *Phoenix canariensis* x5  
T13 *Cupressus torulosa* (avenue x11)  
T14 *Koelreutaria paniculata*  
T15 *Cassine crocea* x2  
T16 *Araucaria heterophylla*  
T17 *Washingtonia robusta* x9  
T18 *Washingtonia filifera*  
T19 *Phoenix canariensis* x11  
T20 *Ficus macrophylla* x2

4. All of the land known as the St Kilda Botanical Gardens being Crown Reserve P360946, permanently reserved for Public Park and Recreation Purposes marked L1 on Diagram 1804 held by the Executive Director.

Dated: 7 October 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 41 14 October 1999 p.2263]

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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/>*