
Ballarat Botanic Gardens



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Location

Wendouree Parade, BALLARAT VIC 3350 - Property No G13057

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 20, 2008

Ballarat Botanic Gardens, developed from 1858 on a 98 acres site (granted to the Ballarat City Council in 1885) and maintained in continuous use to the present, is of State cultural significance:

- as a fine and perhaps the best known example of a provincial botanic garden in Australia, a garden type best exemplified in Australia by the network of such gardens created in colonial Victoria; typical characteristics of provincial botanic gardens found at Ballarat include a carriage drive (part of Wendouree Parade), distant vistas across Lake Wendouree, open lawn areas planted with specimen trees, areas of intensive horticultural interest, formal avenues, horticultural buildings such as the shade house and conservatory, embellishments such as garden buildings, fountains and statuary, and a location in proximity to a township developed during the mid-nineteenth century
- for its early layout (shown in plans of 1868 and 1873) and the manner in which this strongly linear form has been retained throughout ensuing development; the principal attributes to survive from the early layout are the alignment and prominence of Wendouree Parade, main north-south path (extending almost to Carlton Street in the south), the roundel (on the Giant Redwood Avenue), the north-south path (parallel to the Giant Redwood Avenue), several east-west paths, some semblance of the curved paths which link the main north-south axes, the concentration of horticultural activities in the central portion of the gardens (with the focus for horticultural buildings at the northern extremity of this precinct, near the fernery), the use of the lake shore for leisure/recreational activities, the relatively open areas to the north and south which act as a buffer for the main portion of the gardens, and the relationship between the gardens and the lake;
- for the manner in which the layout, planting and development reflect different phases in the history of the gardens, none of which have departed so radically from the original plan that the significance of the place has been jeopardised;
- for the continuity over a long period of traditions and themes such as avenues (from Giant Redwood to Prime Ministers), bedding displays, floral displays (especially begonias), use of circular motifs in plan form, recreational use of gardens, statuary (late nineteenth century to present), bequests and high maintenance standards;
- for its collection of plants (especially trees, ferns and conservatory plants), characteristic of nineteenth century and early twentieth century Victorian gardens both in the choice of species and the mode of arrangement; many of the trees are individually significant on account of their size, form, rarity in cultivation and age; as a group the trees form the backbone of the early layout and their character both individually and in groups is a major component of the aesthetic significance of the gardens;
- for the fine demonstration of long established horticultural techniques such as ribbon bedding and cultivation of tuberous begonias (now relatively rare);
- historically for its close and ongoing link with the acclimatisation and zoological gardens movement; this is demonstrated by many of the trees and plants in the gardens, as well as by the trout hatchery;
- for its complementary relationship with Lake Wendouree and features such as Lake Lodge, the Almeida Pavilion and Fairyland; taken together, the botanic gardens and lake form a precinct of outstanding aesthetic, historic and social significance, of special importance in the history of tourist, recreation and leisure;
- for its retention of, and landscaped setting for, a diverse collection of horticultural and recreational buildings, structures and works; these include the Statuary Pavilion (itself of outstanding national significance as a rare and intact nineteenth century pavilion with original statuary), Lake Lodge, Almeida Pavilion, statuary throughout the gardens, conservatory, fernery, fountain, cast iron drinking fountain, remains of early entrance gates, picnic shelter, bandstand and pergolas;
- for its considerable aesthetic significance derived from the mature trees, the splendour and richness of horticultural displays, vistas within the gardens, vistas along avenues (especially the Giant Redwood Avenue), vistas across Lake Wendouree to the skyline silhouette of the gardens, vistas looking to Lake Wendouree from the gardens, the placement of embellishments within the gardens (especially statuary and the absence of large or intrusive buildings in the neighbourhood; the aesthetic significance is enhanced by the comparatively large size of the gardens (especially when taken together with Lake Wendouree) which permits long vistas, and the contrast provided by diverse environments such as the conservatory, the open landscaped areas, the fernery, Fairyland and the open woodland areas to the north and south of the gardens;

- for its ability to demonstrate an understanding of Ballarat's civic pride, especially in the nineteenth century; this importance was based on wealth derived from the richness of Ballarat's goldfields and the means in which this was channelled into civic and cultural enhancement, funded by both the public and private purse; this is exemplified by bequests such as Thomas Stoddart's gifts of sculpture, memorialised structures the tradition of commissioning busts of Australian Prime Ministers and the recently-opened Robert Clark Horticultural Centre;
- for its considerable social value; this is derived from its status as one of Victoria's best known and most visited provincial gardens; its use as a venue for the long-running Begonia Festival, for its conservatory facilities and for the complementary setting of the gardens and the lake; and
- for the retention of a rich collection of documentary material which enhances an understanding of the significance of the garden and assists in interpreting this cultural significance to visitors, managers and those working in the garden.

File note 23/06/2010 : Includes Adam Lindsay Gordon Cottage.

Other Names	Botanic And Public Gardens Reserve, Allotment 2A Of Section Suburban C, Township Of Ballarat, Parish Of Ballarat, County Of Grenville,
Hermes Number	70192
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

DESCRIPTION

The site of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens stretches from Carlton Street on the south to Gregory Street on the north, and from Gillies Street on the west to Wendouree Parade on the east. The area between Wendouree Parade and the Lake, although today considered more part of the lake surrounds than the botanic gardens proper, is nevertheless an integral part of the site and was included in the original reservation. The north and south boundaries are largely residential, whilst to the west is a considerable extent of institutional development, notably the Lakeside Hospital (which was developed around the former Ballarat Industrial School). These factors - lake frontage, residential development and institutional buildings on large sites - combine to form a low scale buffer around the gardens, a critical aspect in the appreciation of the place. Conversely, looking across the lake, the towering conifers of the gardens provide a dramatic backdrop.

The core of the gardens is contained in an area between the works area/nursery (in the north) and the trout hatchery (in the south). To the north of this area is an open area with space for sporting activities, surrounded by park-like plantings of trees, mainly conifers. At the north is the site of the former zoological section, until recently marked by remnant cages. Closer to the works area, a road leads off Wendouree Parade to connect with Gillies Street and this passes a large and impressive picnic shelter (1904), with an elegant concave iron roof supported on slender columns. To the south of the Trout Hatchery is another area of park, bisected by an avenue of trees, the continuation of the main Giant Redwood avenue. This area too has open areas used for sporting activities and in general the land at both north and south of the main gardens forms a critical buffer both in spatial and visual terms.

The layout of the main garden is governed by four main north-south axes - Wendouree Parade, the Giant Redwood Avenue, the Prime Ministers Avenue and a path running along the western boundary parallel to Gillies Street. The two central avenues are particularly strong elements, with the massive sequoias forming arguably the most prominent elements in the gardens. The Prime Ministers Avenue, although far lower in scale, has a strong focus with its regularly spaced busts and avenue of chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum* and *A. x carnea*);

together these two avenues form the main thoroughfares for most visitors. East West links are made via the fernery, a new path to the conservatory, a path at the head of the Giant Redwood Avenue, a path linking two circular features, and finally a path with arbors near the Trout Hatchery. All these paths have different characteristics - the fernery is a winding path through the lathed building; the path to the conservatory runs through an open lawn area where bedding displays are prominent; the path at the head of the Giant Redwood Avenue is curved and marks the start of a more densely treed area; a further path joins two large circular beds, one for floral displays and the other a Sensory Garden (1993); and the southern path runs below arbours clad with creepers. The garden has finely mowed lawn set with trees, flower beds, statuary, structures (both ornamental and horticultural) and several dedicated display gardens (dahlias, rockery, sensory). Prominent trees include the aforementioned *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coastal Redwood), *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine), *Araucaria heterophylla* (Norfolk Island Pine), *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut), *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar), *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress), *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *E. ovata* (River Red Gum and Swamp Gum - some presumably remnant indigenous), *Eucalyptus globulus* subsp. *globulus* (Blue Gum), *Fraxinus* spp. (Ash), *Picea abies* (Norway Spruce) and *P. sitchensis* (Sitka Spruce), *Pinus ponderosa* (Western Yellow Pine), *Pinus radiata* (Radiata Pine), *Populus alba* (White Poplar), *Ulmus* sp. (Elm), *Quercus cerris* (Turkey Oak), *Quercus robur* (English Oak), *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Giant Redwood or Wellingtonia), *Taxodium distichum* (Swamp Cypress), *Ulmus glabra* 'Exoniensis' (Exeter Elm) and *Vitex lucens* (Puriri). Many trees in the gardens are memorialised.

The northern end of the central core is dominated by the statuary pavilion and the new conservatory (part of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre). The statuary pavilion is an elegant octagonal building of prefabricated metal components, large panels of glazing having coloured glass margins, and a light iron roof topped by a lantern. The pavilion houses an original display of statuary, with the central group 'Flight from Pompeii' as the highlight. The new conservatory (1995) is a striking glazed building with faceted panels set at an angle forming a long space of triangular cross section. This conservatory and its displays continue a long tradition of floral/horticultural displays at Ballarat Botanic gardens. To the north of the fernery is a small timber cottage, once the home of poet Adam Lindsay Gordon.

To the east of Wendouree Parade is a strip of land which serves both lake and gardens. Adjacent to the main point of entry to the gardens is Lake Lodge, a decorative brick refreshment room of cruciform plan, still serving its original purpose. Slightly south is the Almeida Pavilion, originally for amusement machines, but now an open shelter. North of Lake Lodge is an area known as fairyland, part of the lake margin with overhanging willows, narrow paths and an enclosed, intimate character (compared with the bold floral displays and wide expanses of lawn in the gardens). South of Lake Lodge is a park-like area with a bandstand (1922) and other shelters, playground equipment and car parking areas. Wendouree Parade itself is entered at north and south through large stone pillars and a tram runs along the roadway for the length of the gardens.

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/>