

Section 1.0

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1.1 Photo: Looking down a gully in 1977. Source: Noel Lothian.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report details a Conservation Study for the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden as part of a consultancy to the Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium. The study is a key component of a separate consultancy involving the preparation of a site master plan for the renovation and future management of the Garden, being prepared by Taylor Cullity Lethlean.

1.1.1 PROJECT BRIEF

The brief for the conservation study portion of this consultancy sought to:

THE SITE AND THE BRIEF

1. OVERVIEW

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide manages botanic gardens at Adelaide, Mount Lofty and Blackwood. The development of the Adelaide and Mount Lofty gardens has been guided by formal plans, however, these plans have been followed as much in the breach as in the observance, and now simply provide points of reference.

Whilst the botanic gardens are identified on Colonel William Light's Plan of Adelaide, Adelaide Botanic Garden was developed on the present site from 1855. William Francis' 1864 Plan and Richard Schomburgk's 1874 plan with further development in the 1886 Sketch of the Botanic Gardens and its Progress provides the context for the Adelaide Botanic Garden's landscape.

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden's plan dates from 1965 when Allan Corey completed a landscape concept, although the Gardens date from 1977.

Wittunga Botanic Garden in Blackwood, originally developed by the Ashby family, has never been committed to a formal Plan.

The history of botanic gardens is well known, evolving from medieval monastic herb and medicinal gardens to serve the Age of Enlightenment's scientific enquiry and imposition of order on nature through the science of taxonomy. The Age of Empire harnessed botanic gardens to explore the bioresources of new colonies and to acclimatise new cash crops. The Museum of Economic Botany in Adelaide Botanic Garden was established in context with this serious purpose, and was contemporary with economic botany museums in Sydney and Melbourne's botanic gardens. Richard Schomburgk significantly contributed to the development of South Australia's grain industry.

However, for most of the twentieth century, botanic gardens focussed on trophyism, with collections reflecting the botanical diversity and curiosity of expanding botanical horizons. By the end of the twentieth century botanic gardens acknowledged the absence of a serious and lofty purpose and have endeavored to restore their role as cultural and scientific institutions while conserving the complex and beautiful landscapes that are now at maturity. The focus for botanic gardens in the twenty-first century is outlined in Botanic Gardens' Conservation International's Agenda for Plant Conservation. However, the rhetoric for botanic gardens is well ahead of the reality, with most gardens paralysed by history and architecture.

Richard Schomburgk's 1876 high style Victorian Gardenesque landscape and attendant garden buildings and statuary are of international significance as a landscape composition. The living collections are also significant although as is typical for most botanic gardens collections, rather ad hoc. Whilst this landscape deserves to be effectively conserved and revealed, the Gardens' image remains in the nineteenth century. Imagine other cultural and scientific institutions with a similar focus - the Art Gallery or the State Library refusing to consider artworks or information post 1900.

Botanic gardens have so successfully anchored themselves in the nineteenth century that even considering botanic gardens as cultural and scientific institutions rather than as historic gardens characterised by a diverse living

collection is challenging, even to some of the gardens supporters. Indeed, even those within botanic gardens are likely to talk about conservation, education, recreation and science as the key strands of botanic gardens programs, or at best, will assert the relationship between plants, culture and environment as the nature of botanic gardens business. However, the starting point for botanic gardens, as for all cultural and scientific institutions is the exploration of ideas. Oxford Botanic Gardens was bold enough to carve their mission statement in stone on the archway leading into the Garden. Clearly the mission statement deserved stone and a durable language, in this case Latin, rather than the transitory fashionability of English – in translation Oxford's mission is 'To promote learning and glorify the works of God' – a lofty and worthy mission with no mention of plants, although clearly botanic gardens do work with plants. The mission stands scrutiny over three hundred years later because these are the two elements of meaning fundamental to scientific and cultural institutions. To suggest an art gallery is all about canvas, paint and bronze is about as helpful as suggesting a botanic garden is about plants – art galleries, like botanic gardens, are about ideas.

In the twenty-first century botanic gardens should be providing leadership in the debate about the relationship between Australians and the Australian environment.

1.1 Mount Lofty Botanic Garden

In 1948, the Board of the Botanic Garden accepted a recommendation that an area of land within the high rainfall region of the Mount Lofty Ranges should be acquired for a botanic garden. This garden would be used to cultivate temperate zone plants. The first 40 hectares were purchased in 1952 and with subsequent purchases, the Garden's current size is 97 hectares.

The original land use varied from cleared Stringybark Eucalyptus obliqua forest to silver lead mining and vegetable growing.

The early development took the form of established in-ground nurseries. The first planting at Mount Lofty did not formally occur until the 1960s. The area now known as Rhododendron Gully was the first area to be planted.

Landscape Architect Allan Correy prepared a Master Plan for the development of the Mount Lofty Garden in 1965. In the section "proposed planting zones" he suggested that "all major planting be carried out on an ecological basis within a framework of broad geographical regions". It was also suggested that while the bulk of the planting would be of flora from cool temperature regions, there would also be scope to cover alpine, sub-alpine and some warm temperate plants.

In 1984 'Ash Wednesday' bushfires burnt more than 50% of the Garden [sic, date should read February 1983]. A State Government grant was forthcoming to assist in the reconstruction process.

The Garden was opened to the public in 1977 and will celebrate 25 years in November 2002.

2.1 Conservation Study

The principle role of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide is as a contemporary scientific and cultural institution, rather than simply historic gardens. While Adelaide Botanic Garden is a significant historic garden, a key challenge for the Conservation Study and Site Master Plan process is the reconciliation of respect for the past and with the role of the Gardens in the future.

The primary focus for the Conservation Study is the Adelaide Botanic Garden, and while Mount Lofty Botanic Garden also requires a Conservation Study, it is expected the study for the Mount Lofty Garden will be more an inventory (and hence more limited) in comparison to the expectations for the Adelaide Botanic Garden.

A Conservation Study should include a review of: -

- (a) Existing natural, archaeological and cultural heritage sources and a bibliography relating to the Gardens estates*
- (b) Plans that illustrate the history of significant changes to the Gardens estates*
- (c) Principles and guidelines for the conservation of cultural heritage (including buildings, paths, hard landscape elements, living collections and landscape) in the context of the Gardens as a contemporary scientific and cultural institution;*

and result in the preparation of: -

- (d) *A Statement of Significance for each Garden identifying (and prioritising) heritage values in the context of the Gardens' role as a scientific and cultural institution*
- (e) *Recommendations for conservation works and management (or further conservation studies) for individual elements (eg Victoria House) and collections (eg statuary)*
- (f) *Documentation of the constraints and opportunities arising from the Statement of Significance and their impact on current operations and the Site Master Plans*
- (g) *Possible funding opportunities and partnerships*

1.1.2 AUTHORSHIP

Overall management of this Conservation Study and supervision of report production has been undertaken by Dr David Jones through Adelaide Research and Innovation Ltd, a research consulting arm of the University of Adelaide.

The Conservation Study has been prepared by David Jones (Director – Landscape Architecture Program, School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Urban Design, the University of Adelaide), and Richard Aitken (Director, Richard Aitken Pty Ltd) and Colleen Morris (landscape heritage consultant), as consultants in association. Jamie Nancarrow (University of Adelaide), Michael Queale & Nicolette Di Lernia (Grieve Gillett Ltd architects), and Tony Whitehill (Tree Advisory Services) have acted as sub-consultants, with assistance by landscape architecture students Poppy McNee, Adam Hopkins, and Grace Lin.

Although the study and report have been a collaborative effort, the following sections have been principally drafted as follows:

Introduction

- Richard Aitken and David Jones

Development of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden

- David Jones

Thematic analysis and assessment

- Richard Aitken (role of botanic gardens)
- David Jones (Landscape design)

Analysis and assessment of garden components and collections

- David Jones (landscape components)
- David Jones and Tony Whitehill (significant trees)
- Michael Queale and Nicolette Di Lernia (buildings and structures)
- Tony Whitehill (living collections)

Assessment of cultural significance

- Richard Aitken, David Jones, and Colleen Morris

Conservation policy and conservation actions

- David Jones and Richard Aitken

Mapping and report production

- Jamie Nancarrow and David Jones, with Poppy McNee, Adam Hopkins and Grace Lin

1.1.3 STUDY AREA



Figure: 1.2
Aerial photograph of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden in 2000. Source: Botanic Gardens Archives.

Mt Lofty Components

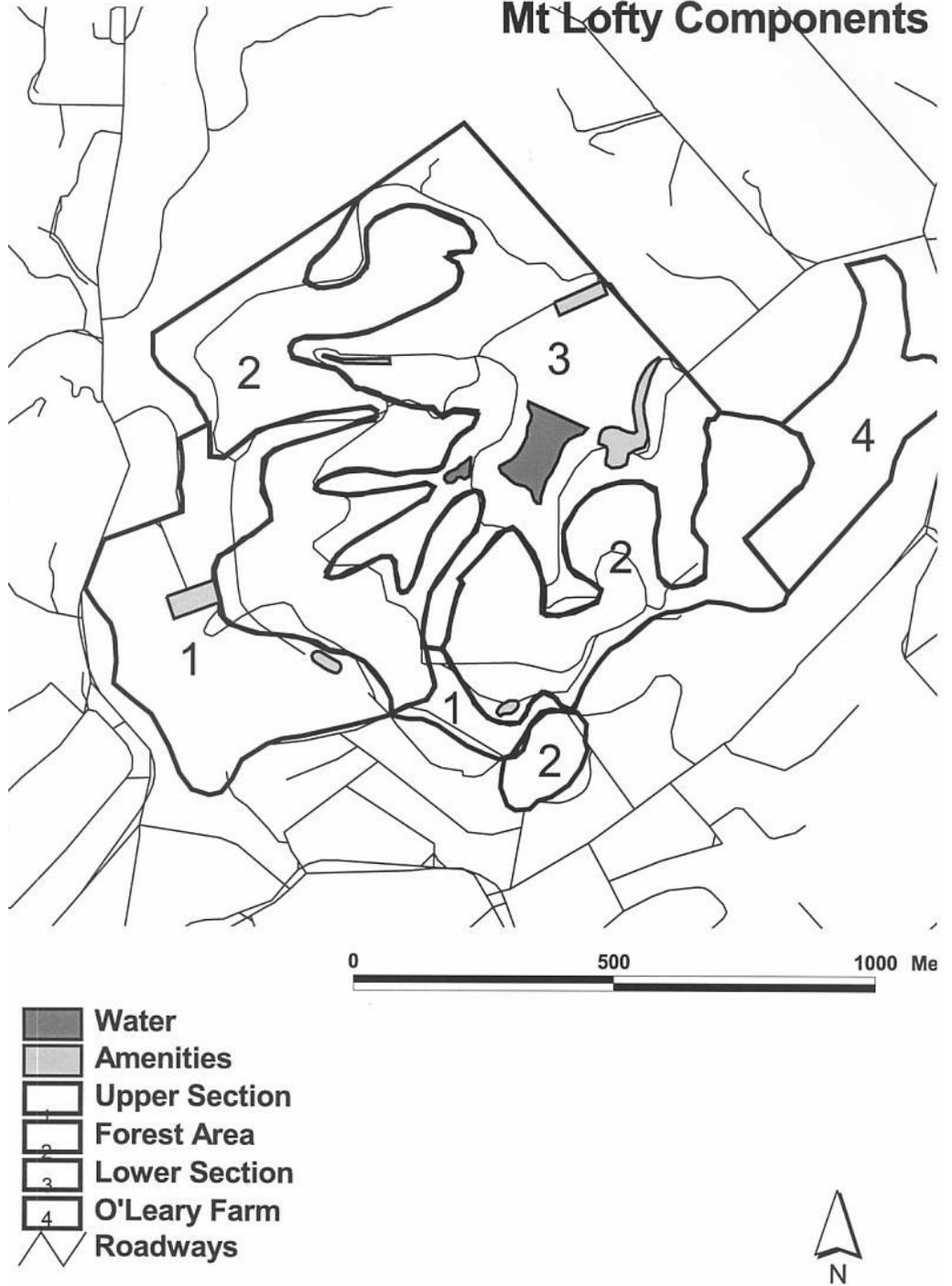


Figure 1.3
Component Areas of Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens identified in the Conservation Study

1.1.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide have provided great assistance in the preparation of this Conservation Study. We especially desire to thank Stephen Forbes (Director - Adelaide Botanic Gardens, and Director – Science & Conservation of the Department of Environment & Heritage) and Trevor Christensen (Manager - Scientific Services) for their advice and comments. Karen Dankiw (Information Services Manager) provided invaluable support, especially through unrestricted access to the Library with its great wealth of documentary collections, which was vital to the preparation of this Conservation Study. We are also grateful to Project Officers Neville Byrne (2003) and Russell Starr (2004-06) for their assistance. As well we desire to thank Tracey Bateman (Administrative Officer), David Forwood and Gemma Bevis (Communications Coordinators), Robert Hatcher (Horticultural staff), Stephen Kingdon (Technical staff), Thekla Reichtstein (Technical staff), John Sandham (Collections Development Officer), Holly Schleyer (Customer Services Officer), Chris Schutz (Manager, Hills Gardens), and John Schutz (Head of Gardens) for their assistance.

Thanks also to former Directors, Noel Lothian and Dr Brian Morley, and former staff members Brian McCallister, Tony Whitehill, Nigel Turner, Barry Dangerfield, Allan Correy, Graham Jones and Doug ‘Mick’ Field for their assistance.

Staff of botanic gardens and other specialised collections, including John Hawker (Heritage Victoria), Ann Herraman (Mount Lofty District Historical Society), Ross Ingram (Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, Sydney Botanic Gardens Trust), Ian Innes and Rob Smith (Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney), Wayne Williams (University of Melbourne Gardens Branch), Neil Jordan (Emu Valley Garden), David Roberts (Pirianda Garden and National Rhododendron Garden, Parks Victoria), and Ian Rossiter (Manager, Parks and Gardens, City of Ballarat), and Roger Spencer (Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne) have also provided assistance, especially with comparative aspects of cultural significance.

As well, we desire to thank Ian Barwick, Keith Davis, Fran De Garis, John Dwight, Helen Lloyd, Dr Andrew Lothian, Trevor Nottle, Jeannie Sim, Isobel Paton (Blue Gate Designs), Rainer Jozseps (National Trust of South Australia), Phil McNamara (National Trust of South Australia), Dr Pauline Payne, Dr Peter Bell, Ian Schomburgk, Lady Mary Downer, John Beswick (Transport SA), Phil Kersten (Transport SA), Mary Chapman (Australian Landscape Management, Vic), Neil Challenger (Lincoln University, NZ), Charlie Challenger (NZ), Graham Jones (City of Adelaide), John Sendy (Vic), David & Andrea Whibley, Ian Westergaard (NZ), Jane Rathjen (University of Adelaide), Melissa Coulthard (University of Adelaide), Sophie Thomson, Kevin Taylor and Simon Brown (Taylor Cullity Lethlean), and Nigel Turner for their assistance.

It is important to note that Allan Correy, author of the *Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Master Plan* (1965), was directly consulted and flown across from Sydney to seek an on-site understanding of the intent and rationale as to the Master Plan and the overall plan layout that was achieved. During 2004 Allan Correy had a stroke effectively incapacitating him. Doug ‘Mick’ Field who took over Correy’s position as landscape architect to the Board was also directly consulted by phone, email and correspondence.

1.2 METHOD

1.2.1 Terminology

This report uses terms which are widely accepted to those preparing conservation studies, but which may be unfamiliar to those involved with the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden and its management. These terms are defined here and then used throughout the report without further explanation.

- *Place* means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works together with associated contents and surroundings.
- *Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.
- *Fabric* means all the physical material of the *place*.
- *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*. It includes *maintenance* and may according to circumstance include *preservation*, *restoration*, *reconstruction* and *adaptation* and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.
- *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and setting of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.
- *Preservation* means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* and retarding deterioration.
- *Restoration* means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- *Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.
- *Adaptation* means modifying a place to suit proposed *compatible uses*.
- *Compatible use* means a use that involves no change to the *culturally significant fabric*, changes that are substantially reversible, or changes which require minimum impact.

These definitions do not necessarily treat scientific or botanical significance in the same light as a scientist or botanist may approach the subject, but reflect the emphasis of this report on an assessment of cultural significance.

To these we have added several further definitions specific to the place:

- *Original fabric and design*, refers to the pre-Correy design of the garden in 1962-65 during the Lothian directorship, including pre-existing features that were incorporated.
- *Early fabric and design*, refers to the *original fabric and design*, and subsequent development of the Garden to 2003 during the Lothian, Morley & Forbes directorships.
- *Garden* includes the whole of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden including the O'Leary estate.

1.2.2 Understanding the Place

Part A (Sections 1.0 to 5.0) of this Conservation Study comprises an understanding of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden through an assessment of the cultural significance of the place. The following information is typically collected in the assessment of cultural significance:

- Development sequence of the place and its relationship to the surviving fabric;
- Existence and nature of lost or obliterated fabric;
- Rarity and/or technical interest of all or any part of the place;
- Functions of the place and its parts;
- Relationship of the place and its parts with its setting;
- Cultural influences which have affected the form and fabric of the place;
- Significance of the place to people who use or have used the place, or descendants of such people;

- Historical content of the place with particular reference to the ways in which its fabric has been influenced by historical forces or has itself influenced the course of history;
- Scientific or research potential of the place;
- Relationship of the place to other places, for example in respect of design, technology, use, locality or origin;
- Any other outstanding factor relevant to an understanding of the place.

1.2.3 Rankings of cultural significance

In the analysis sections of this report (Sections 3.0 and 4.0) a detailed form of ranking using six categories has been adopted. This enables the various themes and components to be individually ranked to aid the overall assessment of the cultural significance of the place (summarised in Section 5.0) and also to assist in making future decisions about the place (see Section 7.0). The 'Rankings of Cultural Significance' are as follows:

- exceptional cultural significance
- high cultural significance
- contributory cultural significance
- no appreciable cultural significance
- intrusive
- alteration or loss which has jeopardised cultural significance

The main criteria have been the contribution a component makes to the development of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden and to the history of Australian botanic gardens generally, its association with significant people and events in South Australia, its intactness or integrity, its rarity, and its aesthetic qualities. Brief explanations of the six categories are as follows.

Exceptional cultural significance means that the component or element in question contributes in a fundamental way to the understanding of the overall cultural significance of Australian botanic gardens. It is of individual significance in its own right and intact. This ranking denotes components of national cultural significance.

High cultural significance means that the component or element in question contributes in a fundamental way to the understanding of the overall significance of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. It may also be of individual significance in its own right, and substantially intact. This ranking denotes components of statewide cultural significance.

Contributory cultural significance is assigned to components that are of minor merit in their right but nevertheless contribute to the overall composition and importance of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. It may also mean that the component has been altered so that it contributes in only a diminished way to the overall significance of the Garden. This ranking denotes components of local cultural significance. This category allows wide latitude in assessment as it forms a continuum from items of no appreciable significance up to those that fall into the category of high cultural significance.

No appreciable cultural significance means that the component does not contribute to the overall significance of the Gardens and nor does it have any appreciable cultural significance in its own right. It has been used where components do not jeopardise the cultural significance of the place (in which case they would be ranked as intrusive).

Intrusive applies to components that downgrade the cultural significance of a component or of the site as a whole. This intrusive impact is clearly distinguished from the previous category, which denotes a more neutral category (neither intrusive nor culturally significant).

Alteration or loss which jeopardises cultural significance is used to rank components which have undergone either major change or removal from Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, and this action has jeopardised the cultural significance of the Garden. Such components have a similar effect

to items that are intrusive, however the distinction between the two categories is that items ranked as intrusive are still extant, whilst items in the 'jeopardised' category are no longer present (in any appreciable form), and it is their *loss* that has jeopardised cultural significance.

The rankings are based on the analysis contained in this report and are the opinion of the authors.

1.2.4 Conservation Philosophy

A conservation philosophy appropriate to Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is developed (Section 6.0) and expressed through a Statement of Conservation Significance (Section 5.6) with accompanying Conservation Policies (Section 6.5). This is then translated into Conservation Actions (Section 7.0). The development of the Conservation Policy has canvassed the following issues:

- Establish or confirm the nature, extent, and degree of intactness of the significant fabric
- Investigate needs, aspirations, current proposals, available finance, etc., of owners and users
- Investigate other requirements and concerns likely to affect the future of the place and its setting including (a) federal, state and local government acts, ordinances and planning controls; (b) community needs and expectations; (c) locational and social context
- Survey the fabric sufficient to establish how its physical state will affect options for the treatment of the fabric
- Collect information about uses, sufficient to determine whether or not such uses are compatible with the significance of the place and feasible
- Collect comparative information about the conservation of similar places (if appropriate)
- Identify information which has been sought and is unavailable and which may be critical to the determination of the conservation policy or to its implementation

As part of the development of this conservation policy, key stakeholders have provided input regarding aspects such as needs, aspirations and current proposals. Where appropriate these responses have been used in the development of the Conservation Policy.

The foregoing material forms the basis of the Conservation Policy (Section 6.0). The Conservation Policy addresses issues relevant to the conservation and future use of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. These include:

- Level of significance
- Use
- Diversity and evolution of cultural significance
- Appropriate conservation processes

Section 7.0 contains a series of Conservation Actions that applying the Conservation Policy to the main themes (Sections 3.0) and Garden components and collections (Section 4.0). Each Conservation Action is given a priority as follows:

- Ongoing
- Short term (i.e. 1–5 years)
- Medium term (i.e. 5–10 years)
- Long term (i.e. over 10 years)

1.3 RELATED STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 'Mount Lofty Botanic Garden' is listed (21/10/1980) on the former Register of the National Estate as item 006574 (Place File No 3/03/025/0008) with the following statement of significance:

The area is of great aesthetic and scientific importance not only through the permanent preservation of natural stands of forest, supporting vegetation and associated birds and animals, but also the unique collections of exotic and ornamental trees, shrubs, and other plants established in a landscape setting. One of the gullies of native bushland retained in a pristine state contains the rare coral fern (Gleichenia). Unique in South Australia in displaying alpine and subalpine flora. (www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/search.html 12/05/2003)

The citation includes the following description of the place:

The area in the form of a crescent and high ridge from which descend eight ridges with associated creeks emptying onto comparatively flat country. The altitudinal range is from approximately 200ft to 1,500ft [60 to 457.2 m] at the base. The closed forest comprises the ridges and the top of the crescent. Being developed as Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, at the same time retaining half in closed forest for conservation and preservation purposes. Plant collections being established include alpine, sub-alpine and woody material from cool north and south temperate regions of the world, together with examples of high rainfall woody plants from eastern Australia. Plantings are approximately half completed. Additional plantings are made as material becomes available. (www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/search.html 12/05/2003)

1.4 NOMENCLATURE

The nomenclature of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden derives from a recommendation contained in the *Mount Lofty Annex Interim Master Plan Report* (1963) prepared and presented by Allan Correy. The Board, and the director Noel Lothian, considered this recommendation *inter alia* with others, and adopted this recommendation in 1963. Between 1956 to 1963 the place was officially known as the 'Mount Lofty Annex', and colloquially as the 'Annex'.

The change of name reflects Correy's recognition that the place needed to have a named presence, rather than being a utility annexure to the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Accordingly, Correy perceived that it was convenient and relevant to draw upon the 'Mount Lofty' locality as this geographical nomenclature identified its location and thereby the different nature of vegetation that it embraced.

1.5 LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is contained within the ambit of the *Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978*, which dedicates the land and sets forth its intent.

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide are managed by the State Government of South Australia through the provisions of the *Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978*. The Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium is responsible for administration of the *Act*. Under the *Act*, the Board has responsibility for four sites: Adelaide Botanic Garden (the subject of the current Conservation Study), Mount Lofty Botanic Garden (subject of a concurrent and complementary Conservation Study), Wittunga Botanic Garden, and the John Gould Kelly Memorial Experimental Plantation.

The *Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2004–2007* established a Vision, Mission, and Principles. The Vision is to 'Be an international leader in horticulture for sustainable landscapes, especially in arid and semi-arid environments.' The Mission is: 'To manage the natural and cultural assets and resources of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium advancing plant conservation and sustainable horticultural practices, and enriching society.'

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is a part of the Government's plan for a second generation of parklands surrounding Adelaide, and is already considered to be part of The Greater Mount Lofty Parklands Concept (*Yurrebilla*).

Policies and plans have been developed in the context of the *Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978*. The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide's *Strategic Plan 2004-2007* provides an indication of the Gardens' current priorities.

The Strategic Plan highlights the Vision, Mission and Principles: -

Vision

The Botanic Gardens & State Herbarium will be an international leader in horticulture for sustainable landscapes, especially those in arid and semi-arid environments..

Mission

On behalf of the people of South Australia, manage the natural and cultural resources of the Botanic Gardens & State Herbarium to advance plant conservation and sustainable horticultural practices, and to enrich society.

Principles

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide will:

- *respect horticultural and botanical knowledge and skills and seek to ensure that staff and community knowledge and skills contribute to a high level of horticultural and botanical endeavour applied to the living collections*
- *respect garden and landscape design knowledge and skills and seek to ensure that sound design advice contributes to a high standard of landscape aesthetics within the Gardens*
- *support programs with careful planning, sound marketing and appropriate evaluation, to promote public awareness and understanding of the Gardens' role, and to communicate with and be responsive to, visitors and stakeholders*
- *contribute to biodiversity conservation and scientific research through education and integrated plant conservation programs*
- *ensure that the Gardens' operations model effective environmental management to the community*
- *ensure that the Gardens can demonstrate improving effectiveness and efficiency in resource use*

Outcomes are expected in four broad areas: -

- *Plant Conservation*
- *More Sustainable Urban Environment*
- *Enhanced Community Benefits*
- *Tourism & Regional Benefits*

1.6 DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN: BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

Year	Director	• Event
-1836		• Kaurna and Peramangk occupancy of the country
1836		• Colony of South Australia established
1854		• Adelaide Botanic Garden fifth and existing site selected
1855-65	Francis	• Francis appointed Director
1855		• Arthur Hardy commences construction of 'Mount Lofty House'
1865-91	Schomburgk	• Schomburgk appointed Director
1880-90		• Adelaide Silver Hill Syndicate Silver Lead Mine mining operations at Mt Lofty
1891-1917	Holtze	• Holtze appointed Director
1917-32	Bailey	• Bailey appointed Director
1932-48	Greaves	• Greaves appointed Director
1937		• LG Bonython commences extensive market gardening activities
1939		• Arthur Hardy Sanctuary donated as a gift to the state government by Mrs Ethel Barton.
1940		• Arthur Hardy Sanctuary proclaimed, 11 July 1940
1948-80	Lothian	• Lothian appointed Director
1948		• Adelaide Botanic Garden Board accepts recommendation to establish a Hills Botanic Garden
1951		• Feasibility investigations for a Garden pointed to the need for private land acquisition
1952		• First land holdings, 42ha, purchased from the Estate of TS Backhouse • Tourist Bureau acquires Lot 52 (Somerset Rocks) of the Estate of TS Backhouse
1953		• Somerset Rocks National Pleasure Resort dedicated, 2 April 1953
1954		• Estate of TS Backhouse acquisition resolved. • Land gazetted for use as botanic garden, 25 November 1954
1958		• 'Mount Lofty Annex' nomenclature first used
1959		• First staff appointed and commenced work at Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, 20 July 1959; S Mason appointed as first 'Gardener-in-Charge' • First plantings established along the southern boundary of Campbell Avenue; collection of <i>Pinus</i> sp. • First nursery established
1960		• Three concrete water tanks erected to give reticulated water supply on site of present Lothian Lookout • Two storage sheds erected • Second nursery established to accommodate plants being received from Highways Department
1960-1963		• Plantings of Australian plants made along the southern boundary
1960-1965		• Plants obtained from properties affected by the South Eastern Freeway proposal in conjunction with Highways Department
1960-1973		• Water reticulation services and mains laid out
1961		• Regional Headquarters sheds erected • Allan Correy appointed Landscape Architect
1962		• Somerset Rocks National Pleasure Resort transferred to the Board • <i>Somerset Rocks Draft Master Plan</i> prepared by Correy • Third nursery established
1963		• An additional water tank erected at present Lothian Lookout • CSIRO Soil Survey completed • Use of 'Mount Lofty Botanic Garden' first adopted by the Board
1964		• 'Wittunga' donated to the Adelaide Botanic Garden Board
1965		• <i>Mt Lofty Botanic Garden Master Plan</i> completed by Correy • <i>Master Plan</i> adopted in principle by Board of Governors • Allan Correy resigns as Landscape Architect
1965-1968		• Main network of services roads established

1966		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model of proposed Garden commissioned and constructed • Doug 'Mick' Field appointed Landscape Architect • Field suggests the naming of Allan Correy Drive
1966-1973		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantings commence in Rhododendron Valley, and completed in 1973
1968		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden administration shifted to the present Administration complex • Fourth nursery established on Tarn Hill
1969-1974		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration Building complex established including Staff Amenity Building and the erection of new glasshouse, potting shed, garage, workshop and stores
1971		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doug 'Mick' Field resigns as Landscape Architect
1972		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two car parks formed and 2 toilets erected • Graham Jones appointed as Landscape Architect
1972-1975		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing of valleys commenced and plantings started
1973		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Hardy Sanctuary transferred to Mount Lofty Botanic Garden management • <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> discovered in Nursery No 1 • Crafers Quarry acquired from the District Council of Stirling
1974		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds from Extractive Industries Fund approved by Minister of Mines to fence and bench quarry and investigation work
1974-1977		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South-western section (north of quarry) cleared, grassed and planted with David Thomson donated collection of 900 miniature and slow growing conifers, <i>Erica</i> spp and Heathers • Duck Pond re-constructed
1975-1977		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment and gradual development of rock, alpine meadow and woodland garden
1976		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision made to open Garden in November 1977 • Funds obtained to undertake surfacing of internal roads and car parks, erection of 2 toilets, establishment of potable water supply, erection of Lothian Lookout, construction of 2 lakes (to be used for water supply), establishment of a two-way traffic entrance along Mawson Drive (off Summit Road) and the lower entrance from Lampert Road
1977		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bore drilled to augment water supplies • Plantings in the Garden now totaled approximately 20,000 specimens • Garden opened by State Governor, Keith Seaman OBE; 5 November 1977 • Collin Robjohns proposes the establishment of the Friends of Adelaide Botanic Garden at the opening ceremony
1978		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Lake constructed • <i>Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978</i>
1979		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitchell allotment acquired
1980		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount Lofty Botanic Garden listed on the Register of the National Estate (21/10/1980) • Ash Wednesday Fire, 20 February 1980
1981	Morley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morley appointed Director • Lothian Lookout and plaque opened by David Wotton MLA • Fern Gully commenced
1983		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Wednesday Fire, 16 February 1983 • Summer gazebo erected
1983-84		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major upgrade to irrigation infrastructure as a result of Ash Wednesday and government grant including the provision of 2 new bores and the installation of 4 new water tanks
1984		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Quarry rehabilitation commences • Mawson Drive <i>Liquidamber</i> spp <i>allée</i> planted • Old mines shaft entrances blasted
1987		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Guardian Figure' by Greg Johns commissioned and erected • Old Pathology Glasshouse relocated from University of Adelaide
1988		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between Sky and Earth by Greg Johns donated to Mt Lofty Botanic Garden • Sister City Japanese Flowering Cherry collection planted
1989		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arthur Hardy Sanctuary (Alteration of Boundary) Act 1989</i> • Bank SA Nature Trail announced

1994		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Balancing Peace' figure, by Greg Johns, erected • Main Lake first drained and cleaned • Des Kotz retires as Works Supervisor of MLBG • John Schutz appointed Curator of MLBG
1996		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collin Robjohns Gates by Greg Johns commissioned • Gates opened by State Governor, Sir Eric Neal, 15 September 1996
1997		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Schutz appointed Manager of MLBG
1999		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower car park extended and opened by Premier John Olsen
2001	Forbes	
2004-2005		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mt Lofty Botanic Garden Conservation Study</i> prepared by Jones, Aitken & Morris • <i>Mt Lofty Botanic Garden Master Plan</i> prepared by Taylor Cullity Lethlean
2004		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial service for Noel Lothian in Garden
2005		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shannon Architects prepare <i>Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens Visitor Facility Pre-feasibility Report</i>