

Section 6.0

CONSERVATION POLICY



Figure 6.1 Photograph of the Duck Pond as featured on the cover of Telstra White Pages 1997/98 Adelaide. Photograph: Andrew Craig.

6.0 CONSERVATION POLICY

6.1 OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

In developing a Conservation Policy for Mount Lofty Botanic Garden a major input is the consideration of the heritage values—or *cultural significance*—of the *place*. The thematic analysis and assessment (Section 3.0), analysis and assessment of individual components and collections (Section 4.0), and overall assessment of cultural significance is contained in Section 5.0. In particular, the cultural significance provides several obligations that must be addressed in the Conservation Policy (section 6.0).

In summary:

- Most of these relate to the evolving development of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden from 1948 to the present;
- Some are continuous, especially on-going patterns of use;
- Many are linked by their relationship to the overall development of the designed landscape;
- Some are isolated and relate to individual components (especially hard landscape features, such as buildings); and
- Obligations vary for each component.

The translation of the Statement of Cultural Significance, as it relates to the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden concluded previously, into tangible opportunities and constraints includes the following:

- Recognition of the outstanding cultural significance as a major determinant in future development of the place;
- Retention of the medium-established use as a botanic garden, especially in light of the evolving nature of this use reflecting wide social and scientific concerns, and recognition of this as the main determinant in management and future development of the place;
- Recognition of the diverse and steadily evolving significance, qualities imbued in the fabric of the place itself as well as the activities that it generates;
- Acknowledgment that future developments outside the Garden may jeopardise the cultural significance of the place, and although potentially beyond the powers of the Garden to control, these should be scrutinised and where necessary opposed in an attempt to minimise adverse impacts; and
- Acknowledgment that rankings of cultural significance (listed in Sections 3.0 and 4.0) will form the basis for any conservation actions or future developments.

The following policies are drawn upon the following operational and cultural assumptions:

- That there will be a continuing association between the Garden and the Board of Adelaide Botanic Gardens;
- That public access to the Garden will continue to be provided much as it is now;
- That the management of the Garden will remain within the management of the Board;
- That there is a need to prepare and implement a landscape master plan that addresses objectives of establishing a landscape design vision for the Garden at the same time as incorporating contemporary societal expectations as to the management of the landscape;
- That master planning aims should look towards enhancing the visual and botanical qualities and attributes of the Garden, while respecting its role as a living collection venue within a dynamic landscape within the larger Piccadilly Valley-scape.

6.2 OWNER/MANAGER'S NEEDS AND RESOURCES

6.2.1 The site and its management

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is managed under 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. The Board approves the final Conservation Study and Master Plan and the Plans will then form current policy of the Board.

The *Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978* establishes the basis for planning and management of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. The *Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2004-2007* establishes the Vision, Mission and over-riding Principles for the Garden; and articulates the goals and initiatives of the Garden.

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide also are part of and contribute to the open space network of Adelaide and its hinterland. As part of Colonel William Light's vision for parklands around the inner city of Adelaide, the Adelaide Botanic Garden (including Botanic Park) also link closely with the Adelaide Park Lands and the protection of the landscape of the City. Similarly, 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*

6.2.2 Assumptions for future conservation management

The assumptions for future conservation management actions recognise that:

Role: The Garden is viewed as a major repository for cool temperate trees, flowering shrubs and groundcovers, and this role should be enhanced further with strategic expansion and strengthening of key plant collections, and quality documentation of these collections.

Use: the Garden has a primary multi-faceted botanical and cultural role, but also has a major contributory role in enhancing the escarpment landscape of the Piccadilly Valley and Mt Lofty Ranges. Both traits should be addressed and incorporated into a master plan;

Public Access: the Garden has historically experienced relatively unrestricted public pedestrian access and limited vehicular. This practice should continue;

Cultural Program: the Garden has no defined role in hosting and enabling cultural activities, as a venue for cultural and community events and in hosting permanent and temporary exhibitions. A policy is needed;

Educational Use: Tours of the Garden continue to today by Friends and staff. There is a need to enhance the literature and interpretive materials for visitors that addresses information about the history and botanical significance of the Garden.

6.2.3 Conservation context

The Board, following the completion of the *Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Conservation Study* (2006), needs to philosophically recognise its obligations under relevant state and local heritage provisions and the conservation philosophy of the Burra Charter under which both the *Study* (2006) and the Charter were prepared and formulated.

Thereby, conservation processes should be made in accordance with the Burra Charter. Intervention in the fabric of the place limited to that necessary to carry out the process.

An appropriate landscape conservation policy or management plan should be prepared and adopted for the future of the Garden to maintain existing mature planting and to rejuvenate with similar species where required. As the Garden is predicated upon a particular landscape design informed by two main landscape styles, no recommendation has been made to restore the Garden to accord with the original plan although inspiration and reference of its strategies and rationale are appropriate.

6.2.4 Links with the Site Master Plan

This Conservation Study has been commissioned concurrently with the *Adelaide Botanic Gardens Master Plan* (2006), prepared by Taylor Cullity Lethlean. For this reason, the conservation policy and conservation actions in the current Conservation Study have been presented in a manner that permits flexibility in the way these are implemented. There is also an emphasis on heritage values in the development of the conservation policy on the understanding that wider management issues are being treated in the Master Plan. Perhaps the most important nexus between the two reports is the manner in which the rankings of cultural significance and consequent conservation actions of the Conservation Study can be directly incorporated into the treatment of individual components and collections in the Master Plan.

6.2.5 Recent works and current proposals

Recent development scenarios for improving public interpretation facilities should draw reference to the intent of the original 'Report on the Development of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden' (1965), and in particular quantifications of cultural significance set out in this *Conservation Study* (2006).

6.2.6 Funding

The Board should seek additional and specific funding support from the state Government to enable the implementation of conservation works and actions contained in the Study and any associated Landscape Management Study.

6.2.7 Aspirations

Aspirations for the Garden are set out in the assumptions for future conservation management actions

6.3 PHYSICAL CONDITION

The Garden is composed of both hard landscape elements (such as paths, fences, and buildings) and soft landscape elements (such as trees, lawns, beds and shrubberies). Whilst conservation of hard landscape elements is well understood, the conservation of the soft landscape elements is not so widely appreciated or codified. Of necessity, organic elements such as plants grow and eventually die; this poses very different management problems for management than those encountered with historic buildings. Some of the trees in the Garden are mature, with some senescent (over-mature) requiring removal and possible replacement in the future. Indeed, many important trees and plants have been removed over the last century and a half. These aspects have greatly influenced the preparation of this conservation study.

6.4 EXTERNAL FACTORS

6.4.1 Heritage recognition

National

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is not included in the recently established National Heritage List as administered by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment & Heritage and the Australian Heritage Council.

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is included on the former Register of the National Estate previously administered by the Australian Heritage Commission.

State

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is not listed on the State Heritage Register under the *Heritage Act 1982*. This means that any works proposed for the site need not be submitted to the Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Heritage for approval or advice. Many of the trees in the Garden are indirectly subject to the Significant Tree provisions contained in the *Development Act 1993* as administered by the *Adelaide Hills Council Development Plan* (2005).

The Garden has an obligation under state legislation to address water management and land management imperatives that seek appropriate and sensitive uses and actions, and address obligations under the *Onkaparinga River Catchment Management Plan* (2003).

The Garden is not classified by National Trust of Australia (South Australia) prior to the gazettal of the state *Heritage Places Act 1993*. No significant trees are included in the Significant Tree Register administered by the National Trust of South Australia.

Local

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is not listed on any Local Heritage Register as contained in the *Adelaide Hills Council Development Plan (2005)*.

6.4.2 Legislative controls

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is governed under normal development control provisions contained in state legislation and is spatially and functionally defined under the *Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act 1978*.

No specific Acts or Regulations pertain to the Garden other than the *Arthur Hardy Sanctuary (Alteration of Boundary) Act 1989*.

The Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is allied with and philosophically contained within the Adelaide Hills Park Lands or *Yurribilla*, and is an important contributory component of the overall Adelaide Hills Park Lands. It is bound by general provisions contained under the state *Development Act 1993* and specific provisions under the *Adelaide Hills Council Development Plan (2005)*.

6.4.3 Community needs and social context

Community needs expect unrestricted and minimal regulated access to the Garden. Existing and historical social values expect and respect this relationship. The Garden is identified as a particular venue for distinct passive recreational and botanical study activities and functions, the purpose of which is reinforced by the nomenclature and principle role of the place, although both Correy and Lothian originally envisaged a wider public role for the place.

6.5 CONSERVATION POLICY**6.5.1 Level of significance**

Policy: That Mount Lofty Botanic Garden be recognised as a place of *cultural significance* at local, state and national levels, depending upon the attributes embracing aesthetic, historic, botanical/horticultural and social values.

Rationale: This level of cultural significance is demonstrated in the history, analysis, and assessment in the Conservation Study (Sections 2.0 to 5.0) and should be formally acknowledged by those responsible for the *place*. Acceptance of the Conservation Study is essential to the successful implementation of the recommendations contained within.

6.5.2 Use

Policy: That the medium-established use of the place as a botanic garden be maintained, with the *cultural significance* of this on-going use and its evolving nature being the main determinant in management and future development of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden.

Rationale: The use of Mount Lofty Botanic Garden as a hills botanic garden is the most important aspect of the place, and this should be formally recognised when dealing with heritage aspects of the place.

6.5.3 Diversity and evolution of cultural significance

Policy: That Mount Lofty Botanic Garden be recognised as a place of diverse and steadily evolving *cultural significance*, especially for the development of its initial design from 1948-65, its changes and re-crafting following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires, and its subsequent maintenance and complementary development, especially where such developments have

evolved within the strong physical and conceptual framework of the Garden; such qualities are imbued in the *fabric* of the *place* itself as well as the activities which it generates and serves.

Rationale: It is important to consider all the constituent areas and components of the Garden and to recognise that their evolving history has contributed to the cultural significance—tangible and intangible—of the *place*. The significance of the various developments is discussed in Sections 3.0 to 4.0 of the Conservation Study, and are summarised in the Statement of Cultural Significance (Section 5.0).

6.5.4 Appropriate conservation processes

Policy: That the rankings of cultural significance in the *Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Conservation Study* (2006) form the basis for any actions within the Garden, with the following conservation processes applicable to each ranking:

- exceptional cultural significance: *conservation*: essential as a high priority
- high cultural significance: *conservation*: essential
- contributory cultural significance: *conservation* desirable
- no appreciable *cultural significance*: retention or removal depending on other priorities
- intrusive: removal or alteration to minimise adverse impacts
- alteration or loss which have jeopardised cultural significance: *reconstruction* desirable

Rationale: The rankings of cultural significance are given in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of the *Conservation Study* (2006) and represent a soundly based analysis and assessment on all available evidence. The conservation processes (highlighted here in italics) are defined as follows:

- *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after the place so as to retain its cultural significance.
- *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of the 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 the place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- *Reconstruction* means returning the place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

6.5.5 Conservation policies

Fabric and Setting: that conservation actions respect the layout, planting and development of the Garden as summarised and discussed in Section 5.0.

Use: That management of the Garden respect traditional uses, especially where these include public appreciation of the *place*.

Interpretation: That interpretation of the Garden be seen as integral with the interpretation of the *place* overall, be based on the cultural significance of the Garden, and be communicated in an unobtrusive manner.

Management: That an integrated approach to management be instituted that reflects the overall significance of all component elements of the *place* and respects traditional management techniques and horticultural regimes.

Future Development: that conservation actions be regarded as a major new contribution to management of the Garden. That opportunities of development presented by conservation actions be met with imaginative and contemporary solutions respectful of contemporary landscape design practice and horticultural skills.

Adoption and Review. that any Master Plan arising from this Conservation Study, and in particular its Statement of Conservation Policy, be formally adopted by those responsible for the Garden management and implemented as funds and circumstance allow. That any Master Plan be reviewed every five years, or on the general acceptance of significant new physical or documentary evidence, and/or significant changes in attitudes to the management of the Garden.