

INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

CITATION

Name of Place: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

LOCATION OF PLACE:

South Eastern slopes of Black Mountain, Clunies Ross Street, Acton, Canberra. Annexe at Jervis Bay (already Classified)

Section and Block Suburb: Block 1332, Acton

Area bounded by: Perimeter of developed gardens (40 hectares)

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

Historically the design and development of the Gardens have close association with Lindsay Prior, influential Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Australian National Botanic Gardens possess scientific, historic, social and aesthetic significance.

The Gardens are devoted to indigenous plants from each Australian State and Territory, and form the largest collection of Australian native flora in the world.

Their presence increases knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia's plant heritage by establishing a national collection of living and herbarium specimens of Australian native flora and closely related plants for study, display and interpretation.

Historically the design and development of the Gardens have close association with Lindsay Pryor, influential Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.

The Gardens have become a haven for many native birds, and provide bird watching opportunities.

The Gardens provide recreational facilities which are enjoyed by many thousands of visitors, local and overseas, and its aesthetically pleasing setting offers panoramic views of the National Capital.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with s.54(1) of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

Conservation : There is a need for legislation to establish the Gardens with a legislative framework and a plan of management addressing masterplanning, carrying capacity, bush fire protection and management.

Any action relating to these requirements is development for the purposes of the Act and will require approval prior to undertaking the activity. To undertake development without such approval may be an offence.

Requirements Relating to the Building

1.1

Requirements Relating to the Setting

2.1

2.2

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Council recommends that the following actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place. They are made as recommendations and have no legal effect.

1.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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| 1. | date | Draft citation considered by ACT Heritage Council at Meeting (number) |
| 2. | date | Draft citation released for public comment |
| 3. | date | Revised citation for ACT Heritage Council Meeting (number) |
| 4. | date | Gazetted in an interim Heritage Places Register |

Attachment A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

The Australian National Botanic Gardens are a national collection of Australian native plants. The gardens comprise 90 hectares on the lower slopes of Black Mountain in Canberra (40 hectares are planted and 50 hectares on the steeper slopes are for development). An annexe of 80 hectares is located at Jervis Bay Territory near Nowra on the NSW South Coast. These gardens contain 90,000 live plants representing about 6000 species, including 1573 rare and threatened species with 47 endangered species. In Canberra the plants are arranged in several ways :

TAXONOMIC Sections - containing species of the same plant group;

ECOLOGICAL Sections - containing plants that grow in similar environments;

and in other sections - plants requiring similar soil conditions are grouped together.

Feature areas of the gardens are :

The Rainforest Area, simulating the humid environment found in different latitudes along eastern Australia;

The Rock area provides a range of soils with differing moisture and drainage needs in raised pockets to enable viewing of small plants

The Hawkesbury Sandstone Section has been planted with species of flora from the Sydney basin;

The Mallee Scrubland provides four different Mallee communities in specially prepared soil. Mallee, the multistemmed species of the Eucalyptus which dominates the vegetation of a large area of arid southern Australia;

The Eucalyptus Lawn is planted with a selection of the 6000 species of Eucalyptus;

The Banksia Centre Garden is an education centre showing design concepts to make gardening easier for the disabled, and displaying plants evoking response to the senses.

The Visitor Information Centre provides exhibitions and information about growing native plants.

The Herbarium houses pressed, dried plant specimens. The herbarium, the nursery and the glasshouse are not open to the public

Bird Habitat. The wide variety of Australian plants provide habitat for many Australian bird species and has become a significant bird watching area.

2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:

3. BACKGROUND:

A large botanical garden was included in the original Walter Burley Griffin plan for Canberra, but due to other more pressing priorities no steps were taken at that time to initiate development. In 1933 the Advisory Council for the Federal- Capital Territory recommended to the Minister for the Interior that a start be finally made on the Gardens. A detailed report on the proposal- was made by Dr B T Dickson, Chief of the Division of Plant Industry with the CSIR and Mr A E Bruce, Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in the Department of the Interior. This report, known as the Dickson report was signed on 4/11/35 and formed the basis upon which the present Botanic Gardens are founded. It recommended as "full a representation as possible of Australian flora". The site chosen did not coincide with the Burley Griffin continental arboretum and botanical reserve, which in fact stretched from the lake foreshore to Black Mountain Peninsula to Sullivan's Creek, and up the eastern slopes of the mountain to the quarry near O'Connor.

The Dickson report was duly studied, and a survey of the site and estimate of costs made, then the Second World War intervened.

In 1944 Mr L D Pryor succeeded Mr J P Hobday who had in turn succeeded Bruce as Superintendent. He recommended that the Dickson Report be adopted, and in early 1945 laid the foundations of development of a herbarium (which was implicit in the Dickson Report). By September 1945 Pryor had recommended that an immediate start be made on the proposed Gardens, but it took several years to resolve problems relating to definition of the site and acquisition from lessees.

Pryor had in the interim visited many overseas botanical gardens, being greatly impressed with three in particular

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, California, from which he derived the concept of setting aside part of the garden for collection of native flora solely;

The Botanic Garden of Gotenburg, Sweden, where the great diversity of ecological collections impressed him to resolve that such a collection should be included in the Canberra project;

The Heather Garden in the Royal- Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh as a fine example of an ecological collection.

On 12 September 1949 there was an official tree planting ceremony to mark the formal commencement of the Garden. The Prime Minister, Hon J Chifley and the Director General of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Sir Edward Salisbury, officiated. It was held on a site near the present entrance.

Dr E Gauba (formerly Professor of Botany at Teheran Agricultural Faculty) was appointed to accelerate the development of the herbarium, and to collect living plants or seeds for the new Garden. Progress was slow, due to difficulties in tending young plants in Canberra's harsh climate. This problem was resolved in 1951 when an annexe was established at Jervis Bay, with the express purpose of cultivation of frost tender plants.

Pryor's concepts of the Botanic Gardens were founded in the Dickson Report, and his own local and overseas experience, with his main aim to develop a large botanical collection for scientific and cultural study. When he resigned in 1958 to become the foundation Professor of Botany at Canberra University College (later the ANU) he was succeeded by Mr D W Shoobridge. Shoobridge adhered to and strengthened Pryor's concepts, and was aware of the need to develop both the garden and the herbarium as a national project.

The Gardens, although not finished, were open to the public in September 1967.

The name of the Gardens was changed from the Canberra Botanic Gardens to the Australian National Botanic Gardens on 21/12/78 denoting its national significance.

Dr Robert Boden was appointed Director of the Gardens in July 1979, until 1989 when Dr Roger Hnatiuk became Acting Director.

4. RELEVANT PRINCIPAL NATIONAL HISTORIC THEMES:

Historically the design and development of the Gardens have close association with Lindsay Prior, influential Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.

5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991

Under Section 56 the criteria for the assessment of the heritage significance of places are:

- (i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure, or representing a new achievement of its time;**
- (ii): a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**
- (iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest;**
- (iv): a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;**
- (v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type;**
- (vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class;**
- (vii): a place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history;**
- (viii) a place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes;**
- (ix) a place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for district occurrences of species;**
- (x) a place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements; or**
- (xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site.**

6 REFERENCES:

Author Title date publication

Australian National Gardens, Annual Report 1989/88

DCT, National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, Australia, October 1980