

Mission, Vision and Objectives

The 3.5-hectare north-eastern section that you have been asked to prepare a plan for is a small sub-section of the 25-hectare Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum site; however, a Mission, Vision and Objectives will apply to the entire place, so they need to be carefully considered and negotiated with stakeholders (i.e. stakeholders in the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum, rather than people with vested interests in seeing the place managed for their own personal or commercial gain).

As key community stakeholders, we expect to be asked during the consultation process: What is your vision for this place? We have spent the last 10 years working towards the conservation and improvement of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum. We have not been acting in a vacuum. The information, which may be new to you, has been the basis for our actions. We would expect to be consulted about any mission, vision and objectives that might be formulated to direct future development.

Plants suitable for a picturesque landscape

There is mention in your presentation of a plant palette for a picturesque landscape. There is no such thing. The palette of plants should be as wide as those suitable for the growing conditions (apart from plants excluded for environmental reasons). Guilfoyle might be associated with particular plants, which he repeatedly used, but as the director of Melbourne's botanic gardens he embraced all kinds of plants for serving scientific as well as aesthetic purposes. His tree lists for Camperdown contained indigenous, other Australian and exotic trees, gymnosperms and angiosperms, evergreen and deciduous trees, and trees of a variety of colour, form, origin and appearance.

British references

It is unfortunate that the presentation places so much emphasis on Westonbirt Arboretum, places and people from British garden history, and plants from the northern hemisphere. None of this is particularly relevant to an arboretum in south-western Victoria. Of course there have been historical influences, but the conditions, plants, horticultural management, fashions and traditions in the UK are not really relevant to what happens here. It would be a retrograde step if Council were urged to plant an Acer glade, for example, or to focus on autumn colour.

Guilfoyle himself was an Australian garden designer and botanist, with well-understood influences from the landscapes and plants of northern New South Wales, the South Pacific and the southern hemisphere, and a well-documented appreciation of Australian plants.

Interpretation of Guilfoyle's intent

I gather that most of the material you presented was the result of your research into the background of the place and Guilfoyle's design principles and intent, rather than the material you plan to put to Heritage Victoria.

Heritage Victoria will not be looking for you to provide your own speculation as to the nature of Guilfoyle's plan. Your speculation about his 'wings being clipped' is improbable and unnecessary. We don't know about the design brief he was given. It might be claimed by some that the place was designed to have planting around the perimeter with grazing in the barren space (which was not barren, but had trees sparsely planted throughout) but unless the perimeter planting and individual trees were fenced, which they appear not to have been, that would seem unlikely. Guilfoyle did mention the possibility of having 'milch cows' to manage the grass; however, a few milch cows in the 19th century would have been a vastly different and less damaging proposition than a herd of young steers today.

The issue of grazing cattle might have been raised in meetings of subsequent management committees; it might even have been suggested that it could be a revenue-raising practice. (I realise there are still people who would make this argument for keeping cattle in this place for their own personal benefit.) However, the fundamental purpose of the reserve was to be a park for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. The whole purpose of Scott's reservation as a public park was to save this beautiful place from the pastoralists who had their sheep and cattle running all over every corner of the Western District.

I don't agree that plants weren't installed because of Camperdown's remoteness or because there was difficulty in transporting plants. Plant material and seeds were easily transportable to Camperdown, as they were to many other country towns. Von Mueller and Bunce were known to have distributed thousands of plants to places as remote as Albury, Sale, Portland and Horsham. Camperdown was accessible by train by 1883.

I agree with you that it might have been difficult to establish trees with limited resources available for their care and watering, even with the pumping system installed to enable irrigation from the waterhole. Whether or not plants were planted and didn't establish or whether they weren't planted at all is irrelevant. Anyway, the plan was intended to be implemented over time as resources became available. It would be no surprise if resourcing a public park never became a council priority. We can speculate about why the place is not more densely planted, but it is only speculation. The point of the current exercise is to build upon what is there and develop an arboretum that is relevant to the local community and visitors today and into the future.

Early on, you explained your intention to add an 'additional layer' to the original design of Guilfoyle. This sounds like a good idea. You would not be altering what is there, attempting to imagine what Guilfoyle might have done or creating your own version of his plan based on Hamilton or Melbourne's botanic gardens. You would simply be adding further planting to enhance the space as a place for public enjoyment, learning, community building and visitor attraction in the 21st century. This is what has been happening in many other historic regional botanic gardens across Victoria. Planting in a picturesque landscape style, with plants in groups, rather than individually dotted through the site, would not only be in keeping with the original layout, but would be economically sound. It might be difficult to establish and care for trees planted individually, but less so when large areas can be mulched and planted, and mowing and edging can be more cost-effectively managed.

Heritage Victoria will not be wanting to limit the planting of trees in the Arboretum to what might once have been planted on the basis of Guilfoyle's plan. They will be seeking to ensure that your plan retains the character of the place and protects the values for which it is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, i.e. scientific/botanical – protecting existing trees and ensuring that succession planting retains the character of the place; aesthetic – framing long and short views across the site and the wider landscape; and historical – protecting the associations with Guilfoyle. A more intensive planting of trees in the Arboretum could certainly be done while protecting all of those values.

There is no need to argue that the place has been a park and should now be turned into an arboretum. It is already an arboretum. It was listed on the VHR in 2011 as the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. There is no question of it not being an arboretum. All that it needs is a new plan that enhances its appearance and functions as an arboretum for the present and future, while protecting its heritage values.

(Incidentally, there was mention of a previous title of Royal Park being a reflection of Guilfoyle's role as director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The RBG didn't become 'Royal' until 1958.)

Nil significance

Referring only to the communication towers under the heading 'Nil Significance' is a little disingenuous, when the glaringly obvious feature of nil significance is the caravan park. This area of the Arboretum may be 'out of scope' for this project, but its impact is definitely in scope. Even though it has been permitted to operate on the basis of existing use rights, Heritage Victoria understands that it degrades the whole place and deters visitors.

Until the caravan park is relocated, any Mission, Vision and Objectives put forward for the Botanic Gardens and Arboretum will lack credibility and the messages received by visitors will lack coherence. It will not make sense to give careful consideration to the protection and enhancement of heritage values in the north-eastern section of the Arboretum, while continuing to allow the caravan park to degrade the heritage values, and especially the trees and views in the area it occupies.

Certainly there should be no proposal to plant a bank of trees to screen the caravan park from view. This would give the false impression that the caravan park is a separate place, rather than being part of the Arboretum. This was John Hawker's advice as the heritage horticulturist for Heritage Victoria.

Planning should have regard for the eventual relocation of the caravan park.

Implementation

Your report to Council should note that in order for any plan to be implemented for the Arboretum it will be necessary to have staff with the knowledge, skills, support and resources to identify, source, plant, establish and manage trees and botanical collections.

Tree selection and planting

As we mentioned at the meeting last week, we began gathering trees for planting in the Arboretum in 2013 when the CBGA Trust was established. Council provided funding for the purchase of a number of trees, which were selected according to the original Guilfoyle lists. They were planted in pre-existing cattle guards where previous planting attempts had failed. Mayor Gstrein assisted. This was the best that could be done as there was no talk of removing cattle. In fact, by 2014 the grazing arrangement that had been informally in place for many years was formalised with a three-year lease. We were assured by the Mayor that the arrangement would only be for three years; however, the lease was extended for two further terms (a total of nine years) before it was agreed to return the place to public access.

Over time we have gathered trees from various sources: some we have propagated, others have come from John Hawker as the heritage horticulturist for Heritage Victoria, and from specialist tree growers and other botanic gardens and private and public arboreta. We have had to dispose of a large number of trees (many unusual and difficult to source), which became too pot-bound to be successfully planted.

Perhaps you can appreciate the urgency we feel about planting now rather than waiting yet again for several more years, and disposing of more trees, before anything is put in the ground. It may be years before the precarious process of planning and resource allocation might finally allow planting to start.

It should be possible for you to identify mulched planting areas early in the planning process, so that trees can be planted sooner rather than later. Design and construction of paths, picnic lawns, shelters and the car park could be worked out while trees are growing. The defined areas for planting could be sprayed and mulched as a first stage in the implementation of the plan. There would be little cost associated with planting and there would be the added cost benefit of reducing the area that needs to be mowed regularly.

The following are lists of trees planted and trees held by the Trust:

- Trees planted at the start of the restoration project, starting in 2013
- Trees planted on the northern border as part of the Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grant project
- Trees planted to commemorate specific events
- Trees held by the CBGA Trust (of various stages of growth)
- Trees acquired, which had to be discarded as unsuitable for planting after an extended time (for information only)

Trees planted at the start of the restoration project starting in 2013

Brachychiton populneus

Cedrus deodara (2)

Maclura pomifera 'Wichita'

Pinus canariensis (3)

Pinus halepensis

Pinus radiata (2)

Pyrus calleryana 'Aristocrat'

Quercus ilex (8)

Quercus robur

Quercus suber (2)

Tristaniopsis laurina (2)

Trees planted on the northern border as part of the Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grant project

Agathis australis

Brachychiton discolor

Calodendrum capense

Ceiba speciosa

Olearia paniculata (2)

Pinus patula

Quercus engelmannii

Quercus robur

Vitex lucens

Stenocarpus sinuatus

Trees planted to commemorate specific events

Araucaria bidwillii Planted by the Mayor Chris O'Connor to commemorate 20 years of Corangamite Shire, 2014

Hesperocyparis macrocarpa 'Horizontalis Aurea' (2) Planted by Professor Tim Entwisle CEO of RBGV and John Hawker former heritage horticulturist at HV to commemorate the 150-year anniversary of the CBGA (and to meet HV replacement permit conditions), 2019

Araucaria montana Planted by Minister Gayle Tierney MLC to commemorate the reopening of the Arboretum, 2022

Trees held by the CBGA Trust (of various stages of growth)

Acer cappadocicum
Agathis australis
Agonis flexuosa
Araucaria columnaris (6)
Brachychiton bidwillii
Brachychiton rupestris
Burchellia bubalina
Calodendrum capense (4)
Elaeodendron croceum (11)
Eriobotrya japonica
Eucalyptus preissiana
Eucalyptus synandra
Exbucklandia populnea
Gleditsia caspica
Jubaea chilensis (2)
Libocedrus plumosa
Livistona australis (4)
Maclura pomifera
Meryta sinclairii (2)
Nothofagus moorei (2)
Olearia paniculata (2)
Picea chihuahuana (4)
Pittosporum bicolor
Prumnopitys ladei
Pseudolarix amabilis (4)
Quercus 'Freefall' (3)
Quercus 'Macedon'
Quercus coccifera subsp. *calliprinos*
Quercus engelmannii (2)
Quercus lobata
Quercus petraea
Quercus robur

**Trees acquired, which had to be discarded as unsuitable for planting after an extended time
(for information only)**

Albizia julibrissen

Araucaria angustifolia

Araucaria araucana

Araucaria bidwillii

Araucaria cunninghamii

Brachychiton australis

Brachychiton discolor

Callitris preissii

Castanospermum australis

Catalpa bungei

Cercis siliquastrum

Dais cotinifolia

Davidia involucrata

Ficus macrocarpa

Hesperocyparis forbesii

Hesperocyparis lusitanica 'Glauca Pendula'

Hesperocyparis macnabiana

Hesperocyparis macrocarpa f. *aurea*

Phytolacca dioica

Pinus pinea

Podocarpus totara

Quercis ilex

Quercis robur

Quercis suber

Quercus agrifolia

Quercus douglasi

Quercus rubra

Quercus rugosa

Schottia brachypetala

Ulmus procera (La Trobe Elm)

Vitex lucens

Widdringtonia sp.

x*Chitalpa tashkentensis*