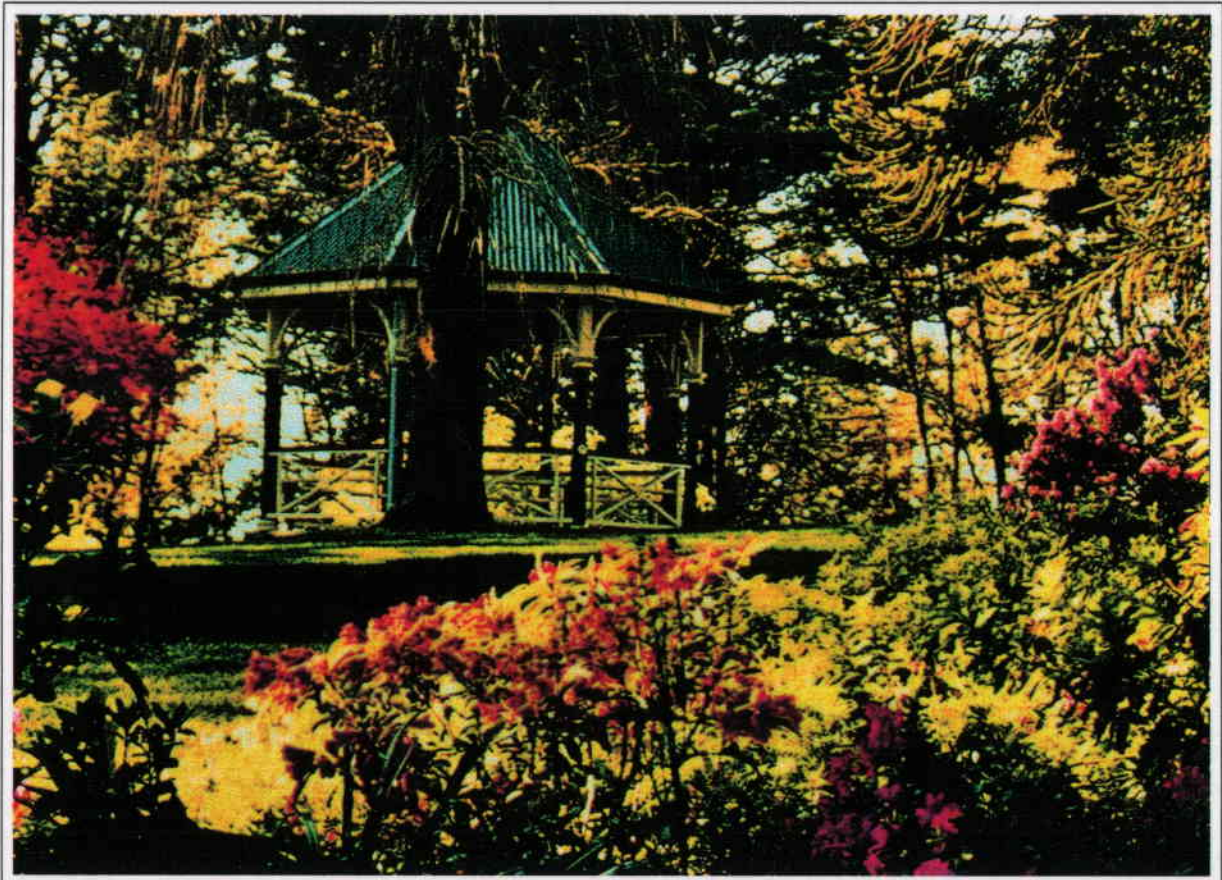


**Hepburn Shire Council**

**WOMBAT HILL BOTANICAL GARDENS  
DAYLESFORD**



**MASTERPLAN**

**CMA**

*Carl Mahoney and Associates*

**Hepburn Shire Council**

**Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens**

**Masterplan**

August 1999

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# Introduction

## Background

The Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens is an important asset for the Hepburn Shire. Established in 1863 as a "botanic garden and recreation ground"<sup>1</sup>, it was a popular attraction for residents and visitors until World War II. Ever since that time the popularity of the Gardens has declined. At the present time, its Begonia Festival is well known and patronised, but at other times it sadly lacks visitors.

Physically, the hill and its crown of vegetation forms a magnificent backdrop to Daylesford. But the Gardens must be brought back to life if it is to play a viable social, economic and cultural role in the future of Daylesford and its region. To do this requires ongoing planning and funding to assure the standard of facilities and maintenance that a first class attraction needs.

In 1995 the Daylesford and Glenlyon Council, with the aid of a grant from the National Estate Grants Program, commissioned Jill Orr-Young to prepare a Conservation and Development Plan<sup>2</sup> to determine the present and future needs of the Gardens in relation to those issues. This document, which was prepared during the local government amalgamation period, concentrated on the following areas:

- History and development of the gardens to the present time
- Assessment of the Gardens' cultural significance
- Conservation policies and development guidelines

Although it was originally intended to include a management plan component, the scope of work was modified during the progress of the study due to changes in the organisation of the Council's administrative structure.

In spite of the fact that no actual management plan was requested, many valuable strategic management recommendations were made in the Guidelines section of the report, relating to maintenance (depot, staff and equipment), plant acquisitions, plant records, accessions and Ornamental Plants Collections Association (OPCA) reference collections.

The current work was commissioned by the Hepburn Shire Council (successor to the Daylesford and Glenlyon Council and with a broader jurisdiction) to prepare a masterplan with the aim of bringing together past work and information in a physical plan for the Gardens and a strategy for its future management.

## Information

Information was obtained from a variety of sources.

A user survey was conducted by the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens during the period December 1998-January 1999, and the consultant would like to thank the volunteer interviewers for their hard work. The survey provided the following information from the users of the Gardens:

- Current use, interest and preference patterns.
- Comments and criticisms of the Gardens as they are now, and ideas for the future.
- Demographic and tourism characteristics in relation to future patronage and potential income generation.

The survey was subject to some practical constraints, explained in Appendix I, but produced results of value for the masterplan, because the responses generated very clear use and preference patterns.

Other information included personal knowledge and appreciation of the site, reports and other documents, and interviews and conversations in Daylesford and elsewhere.

The consultant wishes to thank all those who provided inputs and comments, and to mention in particular staff and contractors of the Council, including Gardens staff, members of the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, and Jill Orr-Young.

# The Masterplan

## Basis of the Plan

Out of the survey and other information, four issues very clearly emerged.

These are:

- *The need to improve the functionality of the Gardens.*

The free form questions of the User Survey (see Appendix I) gave a clear pattern of the wishes of visitors for functional improvements to the Gardens. These are addressed in the sections of this report dealing with masterplan elements.

- *The need to maintain its beauty and diversity.*

In the User Survey, the very high rate of interest in horticulture, environment, ecology and botany taken together, as well as the strong response to the beauty and tranquility of the Gardens, indicate that there is a need for the landscape and scientific value of the Gardens to be maintained. This is a keynote of the infrastructure scheme in the masterplan.

- *The need to generate income from patronage to help in its upkeep.*

The Gardens is expensive to maintain to the standards appropriate to the first class attraction it will become, and it also needs improvements. The Shire has a strict limit on spending for capital improvements and maintenance for its parks and gardens. This means that more resources will be required, and income sources such as sales and activities in the Gardens are needed. These matters are dealt with under Implementation.

- *The need for a practical guidance system for its ongoing management and improvement.*

Many people concerned with the Gardens have recommended or expressed the need for expertise in its ongoing management. This need is addressed in the Implementation section.

## Masterplan Elements

The Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens have submitted a statement of purpose for the Gardens which accords very well with the results of the User Survey, to which the key elements of the masterplan are directly related:

*To provide a picturesque and tranquil botanical garden setting for the passive recreation, enjoyment, information and education of the local community and its visitors. This will be achieved through the conservation, development and management of tree and plant collections and their surrounding environment.*

The infrastructure projects of the masterplan are designed to:

- Answer the needs expressed by survey respondents,
- Act in the spirit of the Friends' statement, and
- Provide a framework for the conservation of the Gardens.

Elements of the masterplan are arrayed here under the headings of the main responses to the free form questions of the User Survey, to demonstrate how the survey has provided a basis for the plan. These and other projects to improve the infrastructure and operation of the Gardens and facilitate their conservation are listed on the masterplan and described in following sections.

#### Road, Parking and Access Improvement

- A fully connected and logical walking system.
- Coach and car parking at the Gardens Centre.
- Improvements to parking for picnics, special events and the western lawn.
- Disabled access to buildings and most areas.

#### Better Direction, Signage and Publicity

- Map boards at entrances and strategic locations.
- Interpretative displays, materials, and guided walks.
- Signposts at path intersections.
- Road signs.
- Botanical and ecological tags for trees.
- Graphic displays for planting beds.
- Signage in Daylesford.
- Marketing and publicity strategy.
- Connections with tour operators.

#### Ideas related to the kiosk

- Building tearooms next to the residence.
- Relocating the maintenance yard.
- Providing parking for tearooms and outdoor events.

#### Provision of childrens' play facilities

- Installation of a play nook in the picnic area.



### Improvements to the tower

- Renovation to include a headquarters for the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens.
- Building an exhibition building.

### Restoration of the fern gully

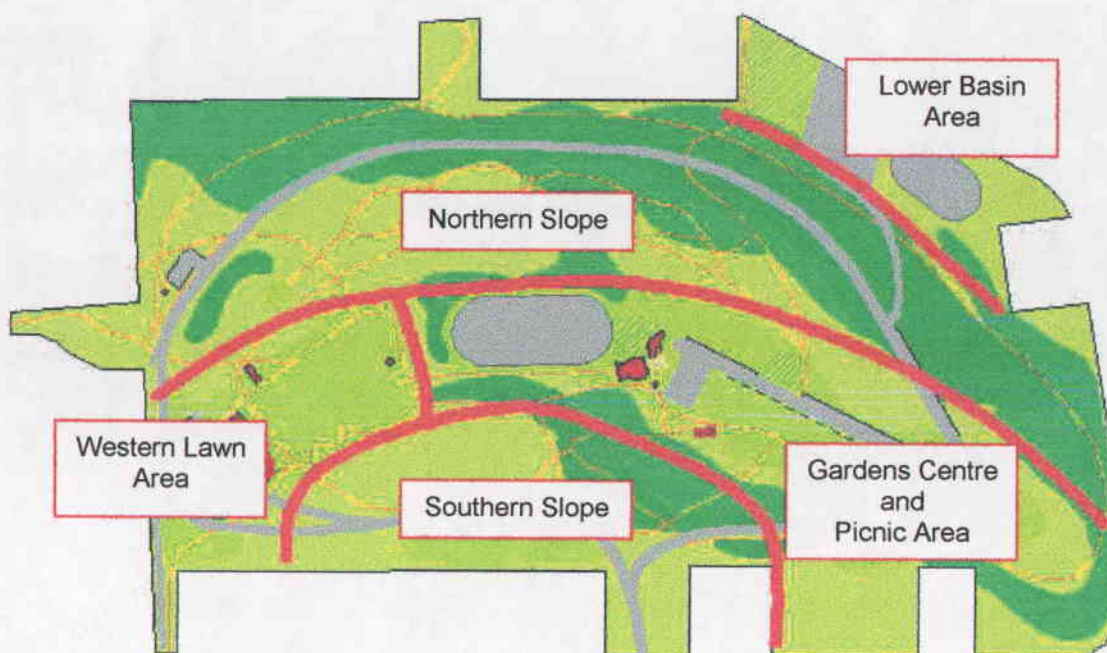
- As stated.

## The Physical Plan

The masterplan is illustrated on the following page. Because of the Gardens' extensive tree cover, the combined canopy is shown on an overlay. Key features are numbered and listed, and a legend to the slopes is included.

Much of the existing map base information based on old property mapping is inaccurate. Actual land boundaries are on a skewed axis, which meant that some boundaries are different from those shown on land use maps in current use. Topographic mapping based on airphoto interpretation is also inaccurate. The masterplan is based on a composite of the most accurate information available to the consultant.

The masterplan elements are explained in the following sections, grouped into the zones shown on the illustration below.



- 1 Convent Gallery entrance
- 2 View platform and parking niche
- 3 Wedding area
- 4 Ecowalk
- 5 Open to view
- 6 Open to view
- 7 Western lawn
- 8 House and tearooms
- 9 Car parking

- 10 New toilets
- 11 Rotunda
- 12 Upper basin
- 13 Connecting path
- 14 Rhododendron lawn
- 15 Fern gully
- 16 Fernery
- 17 Tower and Friends' Centre
- 18 Display building

- 19 Friends' Garden
- 20 Toilets
- 21 Picnic area
- 22 Cannon
- 23 Children's play area
- 24 Coach parking

- 25 Car parking
- 26 Car parking
- 27 Car parking
- 28 Events parking
- 29 Picnic area extension
- 30 New hedge
- 31 New service road
- 32 Pump house
- 33 Lower basin
- 34 New maintenance yard
- 35 Maze
- 36 New entrance



**SLOPES**

- Flattest
- 
- 
- Steepest

**MASTERPLAN WOMBAT HILL BOTANICAL GARDENS**



## Gardens Centre and Picnic Area

The viewing tower area at the top of the access road is the natural point of arrival of most visitors, whether they arrive by coach or car, and it is where they gain their first impression of the Gardens. A unique opportunity now exists for the establishment of a Gardens Centre at this point.

Every major national park and some of the more important botanic gardens have centres which serve as a headquarters for service staff and provide interpretive, scientific, orientation and activity information. The Gardens needs a centre of this kind because of its attractions for the visiting public (not the least of which is its role and importance as a botanical garden), a chronic lack of information about the Gardens at the present time, and the need for an increase in the number and variety of special events.

Central Highlands Water have offered to to co-sponsor a Gardens Centre in the tower area. This will involve:

- The repair and rehabilitation of the tower, including the enclosure of the space in its base to become an information and sales centre which can be operated by the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens and serve as their headquarters.
- The construction of a general purpose exhibition and activity building over the small water basin next to the tower, which must now be covered for health reasons.
- Provision of plant materials for landscape planting around the perimeter fence of the large basin.

Thumbnail sketches of the Gardens Centre, including the Friends' information centre and the exhibition building, are shown below.



**Southeast view of Exhibition Building with roof removed**



**Northeast view**



**Southwest view**



**Southeast view**

For larger images of the Gardens Centre and notes on its design, see Appendix II.

### The Pioneer Tower

In 1937, Edwin Peck, who was a teacher at Maryborough Technical College for 40 years, was appointed by the Council to design a viewing tower along the lines of the one he had built in Maryborough (see photo below).



Viewing Tower Maryborough 1934 Designed by Edwin Peck

The Maryborough tower is more expansive and elaborate than the Daylesford tower, with some Classical features. Although the towers are basically the same height, the Maryborough tower looks squatter because it has a much bigger viewing platform. Even the base of the tower looks out over the town, which gives its shape more meaning. It is an eclectic building with no features from its own period.

The Wombat Hill tower took eight months to build and was opened by the Governor of Victoria in November 1938. At that time it offered a 360<sup>o</sup> panoramic view, since not all the trees surrounding the lake had fully matured.

Although the tower has the same basic form as its Maryborough counterpart, its design is different in realisation. One significant difference is that it has a much smaller and more cramped viewing platform. The presumption is that it was based on the form of a lighthouse, which it very much resembles. It is a very utilitarian and eclectic design, and the only reference to the current Art Deco style of its own period consists of a few small decorative features below the platform and at the top of its columns.



At the present time, the view from the tower is better in the winter, when some of the trees have shed their leaves. In the summer, the only views that can be seen today are a distant view of the hills to the west of Daylesford, and a small window through which the abbatoirs can be seen to the north. Daylesford itself cannot be seen at any time of the year.

The ground floor shelter and first floor platform of the tower were designed to overlook the water reservoir to its west, which formerly doubled as an ornamental lake. There is no longer a lake, since the basin, which supplies the town with water, has had to be roofed for health reasons. The base of the tower now faces a metal roof and fence.

Although the tower has virtually lost its original function, it is still popular to climb. The enclosure and modification of its base was a suggestion from Heritage Victoria, and responds to the idea of returning it to total functionality, as outlined below.

The first function of the tower base is as an information centre. Currently, there is a general lack of information about the Gardens. A small pamphlet has been prepared, which is available at the kiosk. However, many visitors who enter the Gardens from the tower area do not know of the existence of the kiosk and are therefore unaware of the pamphlet. The advantage of having an information centre is that it can act as a horticultural, botanical and historic information resource, which greatly facilitates the educational role of the Gardens. Its historical content could include not only the history of the Gardens, but also the history of Daylesford and its water supply system and the natural mineral water aquifers that are supplied from Wombat Hill.

Its second function is to act as a home and operational base for the Friends of the Gardens. Since one of the main roles of the Friends is to participate in fundraising and publicity, it is logical for the Friends to operate the information centre and to sell plants and other items from the centre to assist in the promotion and upkeep of the Gardens.

Since many visitors will visit the Friends at the Gardens Centre, this gives the opportunity for a user survey to be continued on an ongoing basis and conducted in a consistent and statistically reliable format.

### **Exhibition Building**

The exhibition building is designed to house the tuberous begonia exhibition for the Festival (with the begonias being grown and prepared in the relocated cultivation house), and to be used continuously for other displays, exhibitions and special events. It is suitable for arts, historical or photographic exhibitions, travelling shows such as the Museum of Victoria's agricultural innovation display panels, or even activities such as chamber music concerts.

If displays and travelling shows are available in the Gardens and advertised in the town, it is a very good way to bring both local residents and travellers into the Gardens.

### **Friends' Garden**

The final component of the Gardens Centre in the plan is the Friends' Garden (19). This is a special garden that the Friends of the Gardens can tend and display as part of their role. It can also serve as an outdoor space where plants can be displayed for sale.

The Garden is located in the space between the west side of the tower and the upper basin. Part of this area has a row of trees with interlaced canopies above head height which can serve as a shaded sitting area for the Friends. It is designed to be accessible from the Friends' information centre, which opens directly onto it.

### **Cannon and Map**

The cannon, which is believed to have been a Victorian coastal defence weapon, was obtained by the Council from the Government Order Store in 1901. At the moment, the cannon is located in an insignificant and hardly visible position under trees to the north of the access road and is surrounded by a chainlink fence. It has been relocated in the masterplan in a prominent position (22) at the junction of the approach paths to the Gardens' Centre. This serves to orient visitors to the axis of the Centre. Its location in the middle of a public traffic area will also serve to discourage any mistreatment during the hours of the day when people are around. The fence should not be replaced at the new position.

The plan also locates a map of the Gardens on a board at the path junction near the cannon. This is a necessary orientation feature for arriving visitors.

### **Connecting Path**

One of the real problems that has existed so far in the Gardens is the lack of connection between its two ends. Many coach tourists do not even find out about the lawn area and its kiosk, because there is no signage and no direct connection. The access path on the southern side of the main basin provides an opportunity to move coach tour groups directly to the other end of the Gardens from the tower area after visiting the exhibition building.

Tour group drivers conduct their passengers on walking tours at other locations, but currently only use the Gardens for a convenient and attractive location for a lunchtime stopover. In the future there will be the facilities for them to conduct a tour of the Gardens.

The path requires landscape treatment to make it attractive. This could consist of creepers on the fence and shrubs at its base. The vegetation on the southern side of the path is already attractive. It has the advantage that it directly faces and ends at the western lawn. It needs an opening through the existing planting bed so that visitors can walk directly on to the lawn in dry weather. There is another and more picturesque and winding path which parallels the upper one and has the same general end points. This path is suitable for the return journey to the coach.

### **Picnic Area**

Both local residents (38%) and tourists (26%) interviewed in the user survey enjoyed picknicking in the Gardens, which is an important activity. Some people working in the town also come up to the Gardens to eat their lunch in the picnic area. This is the area to the north, south and east of the tower is the traditional picnic area – the main part of it being the lawn on the south side of the access road to the tower's east (21).

The area is extended in the plan to the southeastern corner of the Gardens, which has magnificent views over the countryside to the south and southeast and is not fully utilised at present. Although this area is slightly steeper than the main picnic area, it can also be equipped with picnic tables and will be very popular. Some land improvement is needed in the current landfill area below the spur, and to make this change easier to implement, parking is recommended on the eastern side of the circuit road (27).

The existing toilet building should be hidden with shrubbery, and better signage provided to show people where it is from all parts of the expanded picnic area.

More picnic tables and seating should be provided for the whole area so that it can be better used. This is a project that can be carried out by the community – probably via the service clubs.

As a result of the survey it was recommended that drinking water should be provided for picnickers in the form of both a fountain and a tap. This is a sensible suggestion. A strategic and practical location should be chosen for this facility.

The existing picnic shelter on the lawn is an uncomfortable and confined space to sit in, and is draughty when the wind blows. People nowadays routinely listen to weather forecasts before going on an outing, and do not plan a picnic if they think the weather is going to be bad. If it starts to rain while they are picnicking, they prefer to return to their cars and leave.

The shelter does not, therefore, serve a useful purpose and is very seldom used. It also spoils the sweep of the lawn along the line of the road and hinders the view to the southeast. For these reasons it should be removed. This recommendation was also made by Jill Orr-young.

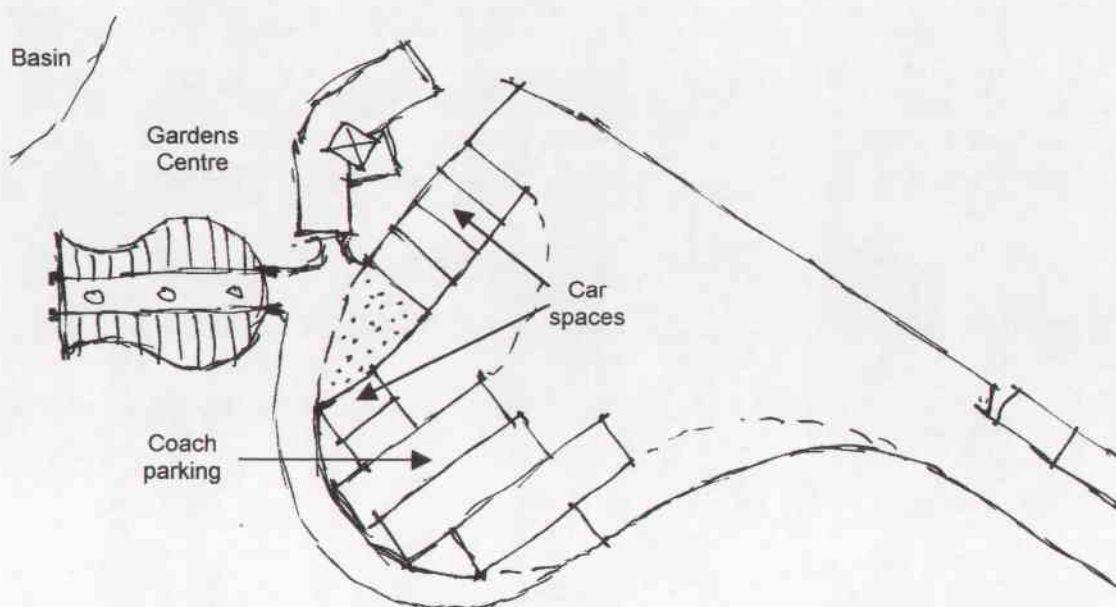
The survey results included a number of recommendations for a childrens' play area. This is suitable for a picnic area, because parents often want to supervise the play of their young children while on a picnic. It is not a new recommendation. Play equipment was installed near the reservoir in 1898<sup>1</sup>. A small area is therefore included in the plan (23) for this purpose to the east of the existing cannon site. The survey results suggested swings, seesaw and a sandpit be included.

There are four former house blocks on Central Springs Road which have been part of the Gardens for some time. Currently, this grassy hillside area is not used because it is not accessible. It has a hedge at the top flanking the circuit road, which is obstructing the magnificent view across the valley to the south. Opening this area to the view will be an attractive feature for the Gardens. The hedgerow at the top should be removed, seating placed at the top of the slope and a new hedge grown on the southern perimeter frontage to bar entry from the road.

### Parking

Parking in the tower and picnic area at the moment is somewhat confused. A curved turnaround at the tower end of the access road serves as both coach and car park, and vehicles park anywhere they can find a space. This arrangement needs improvement.

Better parking arrangements near the tower can be developed in a two stage process. It is anticipated that, with better marketing and publicity, more coaches may be in the Gardens concurrently. The sketch below shows the first stage, which provides parking for 3 coaches and 6 cars, relies only on bay marking and does not modify the existing turnaround.



Temporary Parking Improvements at the Tower Turnaround



The second stage is shown on the Masterplan (25), and involves modifying the turnaround (also giving more frontage space for the two buildings), which provides parking for 4 coaches (which are able to reverse) and 7 cars parallel to the northern side of the turnaround.

This parking strip also forms part of the picnic parking which includes another two strips – one on the Centre approach road (26) and another on the circuit road (27).

Special events parking arrangements involve temporary parallel verge parking (28) on the southern (picnic lawn) side of the Centre approach road.

## West Lawn Area

The western lawn area (7) contains the kiosk, rotunda, sloping lawn and begonia house. It has very attractive flower beds, and is much more domestic in character than the other parts of the Gardens, which are stately and parklike.

The winding formal path on its southern flank has been criticised. However, in its present form it reinforces the character of the lawn as a domestic garden enclave and enhances its spatial quality by giving it a sharply defined southern edge. It has two circular beds. The eastern circle is particularly effective visually, being constructed around and under the canopy of an attractive tree.

In any future planting schemes for the lawn, it is recommended that the domestic character of the space be reinforced, since the horticultural interests of visitors emerged very strongly in the survey and its quality as a beautiful and colourful enclave appears to be widely appreciated.

The backdrops of the lawn are stunning, and these tall natural enclosures make it a very suitable area for holding outdoor special events – for instance, sculpture exhibitions, ethnic dancing or horticultural fairs. In its present configuration, however, the lawn is not able to host special events, because the actual lawn area is constricted due to the present location of the begonia house.

As outlined above, the Begonia Festival can be hosted in the planned Gardens Centre in the future. This makes it possible to remove the existing building and use it for begonia cultivation. When this building and the adjoining raised bluestone bed are removed, and a little contour reshaping carried out, the lawn will regain the expansiveness it needs to be a usable open space for many events.

The small trees at the upper basin end of the lawn are very attractive and useful, and that part of the lawn is equipped with seating. The centre and lower part of the lawn near the kiosk, however, should be kept clear of trees so that natural sunlight on the lawn is retained and its character as an unobstructed open space is enhanced.

The western end of the Gardens has no toilet facilities. These have been requested by a number of local residents, and many people responding to the user survey. New toilets (10) are placed in the masterplan in a strategic location at the junction of pathways on the northern side of the lawn. This location is convenient to the whole of its western service area, and particularly for special events.

There is a path on its northern side which has been used as an access way for maintenance vehicles, and which peters out at its eastern end without connecting to the pathway between the rotunda and the basin. This is

reconnected in the plan, and is joined to the upper avenue and to the Daly Street entrance and the Convent Gallery.

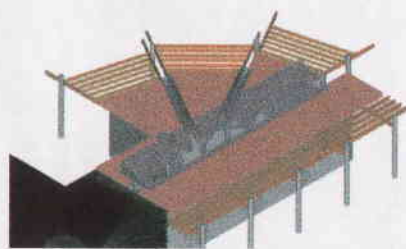
### **Tearooms**

The masterplan shows a tearooms adjacent to the existing house and kiosk (8).

Improvements and ideas related to the kiosk accounted for the third largest number of consistent responses in the free form 'Ideas for the Future' part of the user survey questionnaire. These include the upgrading of the kiosk to a tearooms, disabled access, better directions to the kiosk, better information that a kiosk exists, parking near the kiosk, devonshire teas and longer opening hours.

The information, direction and circulation issues should be dealt with first, and as a matter of priority. Assuming this has been done, the Gardens needs a facility that can handle more people than the present kiosk and provide a tranquil indoor and outdoor environment for enjoying rest and refreshment while visiting the Gardens. It is evident that there would be widespread support for an upgrade of the kiosk's ability to provide refreshments.

A tearooms can also provide space for some meetings, functions and events after hours, and its parking can be used for outdoor special events on the lawn in addition to its function of serving the tearooms. The extension of the present facility should not encroach on the lawn space. Therefore the feasibility of an upgrade of this kind depends upon the relocation of the maintenance yard currently adjoining the kiosk on its southwest side. This is discussed under its own heading below.



**View from the East**



**View from the West**

The thumbnails above show the new tearooms adjacent to the existing house. A terrace is planned to the southwest of the building. The space to the northeast facing the lawn is restricted due to the preservation of the ornamental garden at that location. The idea behind the design is to create a garden space both inside and out. This is done with planting beds appearing to penetrate through the glass walls, by covering the pergolas with climbing plants and by separating the roof into segments so that the enclosure is insubstantial and light can stream through the gaps.

### **Parking**

The parking area to the southwest of the tearooms (9) serves both the tearooms and the western lawn for special events. It is accessed from the circuit road. A disabled dropoff point is located at the entrance to the car park, because at the other end of the car park the slope becomes too steep and steps are needed to get to the tearooms. The paths from the car park join directly into the walking system so that it can act as a base for walking trips starting from the western end of the Gardens.

### **Maintenance Yard**

The maintenance yard serves the parks and gardens of the whole Hepburn Shire, and considering access and space difficulties, it is most inappropriate for it to continue to be located in the heart of the Gardens. Jill Orr-Young recommended its relocation, but this has not yet taken place.

The Council has stated that there is currently no land available for the relocation of the yard. Therefore a site has been shown in the masterplan in the northeast section of the Gardens land (34), which is not considered by most people to be an important part of the Gardens' fabric, and is not patronised by visitors except when they are in transit for walking, etc. This land fronts onto Hill Street opposite the railway yard. A new service road (31) is planned to link into the circuit road so that equipment can be brought into the Gardens by the shortest route.



## Northern Slope

### Convent Gallery Entrance

The Convent Gallery is an award-winning tourist attraction widely known in Victoria and other states. It is logical for the Gardens to be connected to this major drawcard. The owner is amenable to the connection and will hold literature for the Gardens. There is an existing gate, shown as 1 on the masterplan. A new path links this entrance into the walking system of the Gardens.

A major problem in the northwest area of the Gardens is that the only glimpses of Daylesford to be had are by the roadside at the top of the Daly Street entrance path, which looks out over the top of the Convent Gallery. At that point there is only space for one car to stop and look.

### Viewpoint

A viewpoint possibility has been identified (2) which can provide simple off-road parking for about 6 cars in a niche screened by existing shrubs. John Hawker of Heritage Victoria suggested removing an aging cypress tree at that point and erecting a viewing platform of about 6m height to look out over the top of existing vegetation.

The best solutions are often the simplest. It is recommended that the cypress tree be cut down to a height of about 8m and the remainder stripped of branches. Then the form can be studied to provide a natural, sculptural, economical and unobtrusive structure for a timber 'treehouse' type of viewing platform and steps.

The pulloff near the Daly Street entrance should be removed to prevent vehicles stopping there.

### Wedding Area

At 3 on the masterplan there is an area surrounded by tall trees where a former picnic shelter stood. This small natural enclosure forms a beautiful setting for weddings, which have been held there in the past. It is not suggested that weddings be held there exclusively. They can also continue to be held in and around the rotunda and in other parts of the Gardens. The area can be used either by preference or as an alternative venue when concurrent special events are being held on the western lawn.

### Ecowalk

An ecowalk (4) is shown on the masterplan with a looping series of paths connecting at both ends into the walking system, and is intended to form a circuit walk for people who are parked in the picnic area, at the tearooms or in

the Convent Gallery. This scheme has great educational potential. It would allow, for instance, school parties or tour groups to gain an appreciation of horticulture and botany by presenting plants and shrubs in communities.

Jill Orr-Young believes that selection can be made from plants which can grow well as an understorey between the tall trees of the avenues in that location. The materials chosen can fit with the theme of the Botanical Gardens. The pathway scheme for the ecowalk is designed so that it threads its way through existing vegetation along the contours, and no trees or shrubs need to be removed.

### **Lower Walk**

The lower walk is a long route around the northern perimeter of the Gardens. The walk, which currently peters out at its eastern end, is connected in the masterplan into a larger walking circuit of the Gardens. It is popular with Daylesford residents for walks, jogging and dog exercise. It has a mainly enclosed character until it overlooks the lower basin area on Hill Street, but delightfully opens up to surprise glimpses of view to the north in a couple of places along the way. It is suggested that scrub vegetation be cleared at these locations (5 and 6) to make the views more enjoyable.

More seating was requested in the survey responses. There are several natural alcoves along the retaining slope of the lower walk's south boundary. These are ideal places for bench seating.

### **Upper Avenue**

The upper avenue is an elm avenue typical of the drives and carriageways to homesteads and mansions in the Nineteenth Century. This approach was probably taken by the gardeners because they wished to mark and provide shade for the long contour-following paths that had to be developed to make the Gardens work. Elm avenues were introduced in the main as vehicle routes, but did become popular in inner urban parks and gardens in many western countries. They are most effective when they are straight, because the end is in sight.

The tall tree canopy of the upper avenue is pleasant, giving the feeling of a glade, but being long and regular it is boring to walk along. This, coupled with the fact that it has no proper ending at its eastern end at the moment, is no doubt why people are seldom seen on the route.

The circuit road is also an elm avenue, but is traversed quickly in a vehicle, and produces a more pleasant effect. Recommendations have been made to fill in gaps in the avenues<sup>2</sup>. The main proposition of the masterplan is to connect the upper avenue into the circuit routes of the walking system so that it generates pedestrian traffic.

### **Lower Basin Area**

The lower basin (33) and its pumphouse (32) form a component of Daylesford's water supply system. They are located on the flat area of the Gardens at the base of the hill. This area seems like a separate territory because it is physically isolated by its elevation from the rest of the Gardens. Apart from the water supply facilities, the land in this area is unused.

Two recommendations for the area are shown on the masterplan. These are outlined below.

### **Maintenance Yard**

The masterplan shows the relocation of the maintenance yard to the west of the lower basin (34). The yard should be removed from the western lawn area where it is now inappropriately sited (see Maintenance Yard under Western Lawn Area above). Although the land is perhaps not ideal, since some levelling would have to be carried out, at least it provides a site for the yard as long as it is needed in the future.

A new service road connecting into the circuit road may be required. This is shown on the masterplan (31).

### **Maze**

A maze was first mooted in 1905, when the Progressive Association applied to the Council to build one in the Gardens. It was not ultimately built because of the cost, but mazes were popular items at the time. This is still the case, although mazes today are somewhat of a curiosity. A maze constructed now would bring very welcome income to help with the upkeep of the Gardens. This is evidenced by the hedge maze at Redhill on the Mornington Peninsula, which is very popular with visitors and lucrative for its owners.

A site next to the maintenance yard (36) was selected for this feature of the masterplan. Its siting enables it to be physically separate from the rest of the Gardens and to handle visitors separately via a new entrance from Hill Street or by walking down from the Gardens via the path at its side, in which the entrance and exit to the maze are also located.

## **Southern Slope**

This area is on the southern slope of Wombat Hill to the east of the western lawn and the west of the main entrance. It contains the fernery, rhododendron lawn and an area of land with tall trees to the south of the circuit road near the main entrance.

### **Fernery and Fern Gully**

The fernery (16) is thought to have been implemented in a way similar to that envisaged in the Sangster plan of 1884. This makes it probably the only remaining link with that plan, except for the location of the caretaker's house. This may or may not be correct. It appears that the original fernery, established in the early years, was covered, because tenders were called for its re-erection in 1883, the year before Sangster was appointed. It is not known what influence Sangster might have had on that work.

Sangster's plan called for a winding path through the fernery on the east side of the central path from the southern main entrance. The current pathways do not follow that scheme. The path down the slope might have been established as a result of his concept, but it certainly did not follow the winding track he planned.

Currently, the path leading to the circuit road is not well used, and the path from the tower area to the rhododendron lawn is only used if visitors find it. It is an attractive idea to implement the original concept, but could disturb some very well established and beautiful plants and communities

The scheme of the present plan is to link the current fernery pathways into the integrated path system, and specifically, at the bottom of the fernery, to a new circuit path eventually joining into the upper avenue. The existing and new paths also link to the rhododendron lawn. This system makes it easier for visitors to discover and walk through the fernery.

It is also possible for a new path to be constructed through the middle of the fernery, with a northwest-southeast orientation and generally following the contours. This is not shown on the plan, since it would need very careful and detailed study before implementation.

The fern tree gully, with its decorative cascade and pond, was put in during the late 1880's using timber for its construction. It was renovated, with its material totally changed using volcanic stone from Mount Franklin, in 1902. It is also thought to have originally been influenced by Sangster, but the ensemble which remains was designed by Council staff.

Residents, tourists and the Friends all support the restoration of the fern gully, and Central Highlands Water has promised to consider this project for sponsorship. It has been recommended many times, and was included in the Jill Orr-Young report as a key recommendation.



### **Rhododendron Lawn**

The rhododendron lawn to the south of the upper basin (14), is not well used by visitors. It lacks variety and interest, and most of the time it is not on a through route. The masterplan connects it into the walking system, but it needs a walking system of its own. A contour following winding path structure would be suitable, but this has not been indicated on the masterplan because it needs detailed planning.

A path system would enable the lawn to be planted more densely with beds containing other varieties, including perhaps roses. Roses are best shown in a variegated environment, the best of which is probably the English style country cottage garden. Many rose gardens in Australia are overly formal and specialise in roses as a monoculture. Overseas visitors to the State Rose Garden at Werribee Park, for example, have remarked that this scheme does not show them at their best. On the other hand, the southern lawn gives the opportunity for a real showpiece of horticulture to be established.

## Circulation and Control

### Path System

One of the needs which has been brought out by the User Survey is for a system of connected paths, which the Gardens lacks at the moment. Walking was naturally found to be the most important activity to promote the enjoyment of the Gardens and learning about its botanical content.

The masterplan lays out an integrated system of paths designed to lead visitors around the spaces and features of the Gardens in a way which produces a memorable experience whichever way the visitor moves. The path system also gives a framework for the logical presentation of botanical features and landscape spaces.

Both local residents and tourists walk through the Gardens, and the system will help group tours to make maximum use of their time in seeing and appreciating its main features.

Several principles are at work in the design of the path system:

- The botanical and landscape structure of the Gardens will be defined, delineated and experienced by circulation ways.
- There is the potential for a great variety of circuit walks starting from car parks and important activity areas.
- All paths lead from somewhere to somewhere else, and all entrances connect to all others.
- Places to stop and rest can be properly planned, provided and equipped with seating.
- The ecowalk is connected to the main system at the two ends of its loop.
- Circuit road crossing is minimised and walking along the road is unnecessary

### Circuit Road

Most of the vehicle circulation and parking arrangements in the Gardens have been described above in relation to the areas served. This section deals only with the circuit road.

The road is used by very large coaches. They can only just make their turns around the curves of the road without damaging trees. They are a danger to strolling pedestrians and impose a heavy burden on the wear and tear of the road, and since the road is unsealed, they generate dust.

The coaches often only make the circuit of the Gardens and then pass on to other destinations on their tours without stopping. The Gardens is worth more of a visit than a non-stop drive. It is a valuable destination.

Therefore the following recommendations must be made:

1. The condition and dust control of the road should be addressed in stages – first by dust spraying, then compacted surfacing, and finally sealing when funding becomes available.
2. Tour operators must be approached in the course of the marketing program. Negotiations should be held to place the Gardens on the itinerary of tours and, rather than touring the road (which is detrimental to the Gardens), to give visitors the opportunity of visiting the Gardens Centre and kiosk/tearooms and spending the rest of their time appreciating the main features of the Gardens.

### **Direction and Security**

Having developed good circulation infrastructure, there would be no excuse for it not to have a good 'user manual'. In other words, proper direction and signage is necessary.

Map boards should be positioned inside all entrances and at key locations, such as the Gardens Centre and tearooms.

Small signposts should be placed at all path intersections to direct visitors to Gardens features. These should be clear, simple and unobtrusive – possibly ground hugging – in design.

There has been much discussion throughout the Gardens' history on the closure of entrances as a tool in the defence against vandalism. This does occasionally occur in the Gardens. It was first recorded in the depression era of the 1880's.

It is easy to close the main vehicle entrance to the Gardens after dark, and this has been done in the past. It is quite a good solution, since a vandal will not deliberately walk a long way with a torch for the purpose of damaging something or writing on a wall. So if vandalism should become a problem, this can be done.

## Conservation

The conservation aspects of the work to be done in the Gardens have been well and comprehensively covered in the Jill Orr-Young study. That work should form the basis of botanical conservation in the Gardens for the foreseeable future. There is no need to retrace that ground in this report, since the masterplan is intended to be complementary to it.

The infrastructure improvements described above as part of the masterplan all have one basic goal – to enable visitors to enjoy the Botanical Gardens. They have been planned primarily in relation to two of the needs expressed above which form the Basis of the Plan – that is, to improve the functionality of the Gardens and to facilitate the maintenance of its beauty and diversity.

The maintenance of the classical beauty and diversity of the Gardens (in other words, its conservation) can be therefore be seen in the framework of a new level of functionality which enables its enjoyment to be enhanced and its form to be reinforced.

In that context, the improvement projects have been carefully thought out to avoid doing damage to existing trees and plants. Only two trees have been recommended for removal, and these are both cypresses. One can be used to support the viewing platform (2), and the other is at the Gardens Centre near the upper basin. These were discussed with John Hawker of Heritage Victoria.



## Implementation

Implementing the masterplan involves three activities:

- Organising and carrying out the improvements contained in the plan.
- Promoting the Gardens to the local community and building it into the tourism industry.
- Managing conservation and maintenance in the Gardens.

These are discussed below.

### The Improvement Program

Funding options for the improvement program include funding applications for public sector grants and private sector sponsorship, work and sponsorship by service clubs and the community, and Council capital and operating funding. Some external sources require Council co-funding while others do not.

There are so many different options available today that must be investigated. What is clear is that there must be one person on the Council staff who is responsible for fundraising work and applications for the Gardens. This can either be the responsibility of the unit of Council to which the Gardens are attached or the staff member responsible for all funding applications – normally the Economic Development Officer.

The Friends of the Gardens also involve themselves in fundraising, and their input in putting the case to the service clubs and the community will be particularly useful.

### Major Projects

#### Gardens Centre

The Gardens Centre (see Gardens Centre and Picnic Area on p.6-10 above for details) is a comprehensive project that is currently underway, including costing. Central Highlands Water has agreed to co-sponsor it, and other funds need to be found.

Also in this category is the restoration of the fern gully, which is a linked project. Since the restoration work on that project will involve the provision of water, it seems a logical extension for a combined drinking fountain and tap, which was asked for in the survey, to also be the subject of a request to Central Highlands Water for sponsorship.

The relocation of the Cannon to its new position at the Centre is a later project that can probably be funded directly by Council.

### Western Lawn

The western lawn project is also a major project, involving:

- The construction of tearooms, new toilets and car parking
- Relocation of the maintenance yard and begonia house
- Minor alterations to the house
- Removal of the raised bed on the lawn
- Relevelling and landscaping

The construction and relocation components will undoubtedly have to be the subject of funding applications, while the others can probably be handled from Council sources.

The relocation of the maintenance yard also involves work at the new site and the construction of a new service road.

### **Community**

The involvement of local service clubs in both fundraising and work on site can help implement the improvement program.

The viewing platform, ecowalk, children's play area, maze, some landscaping work (particularly in the lower basin area) and the provision of picnic tables, barbecues, bench seating and some directional signage are suitable for the investigation of this approach.

### **Council Funding and Co-Funding**

Sources of funding for road improvements and parking arrangements in the Gardens, such as the parallel parking in the picnic area, parking niche for the new viewpoint, and coach parking and turnaround modifications should be investigated by the Council. This also applies to path forming and surfacing.

### **Maintenance Program**

Those planned items which could be included in the maintenance program include:

- Picnic area extension works in the southeast (29)
- The new hedge on Central Springs Road and removal of the existing hedge next to the circuit road (30)

- Grass parking on the south side of the Centre approach road for special events (28)
- Removal of 1m from a sleeper-edged bed for access to the wedding area (3)
- Opening views in two places on the lower walk (5 and 6)
- Planting restoration work related to any capital projects

### **Conservation Management**

Conservation management for a premier Botanical Gardens such as Wombat Hill is a highly technical process. There is a long-standing recommendation from a number of different sources for a Professional Advisory Group to be set up, who can advise Council on matters relating to botany, horticultural work and the management of plant collections and acquisition systems.

In addition, there needs to be either a Council staff member, contracted officer or volunteer who can manage the work on an executive basis and liaise with Gardens staff.

These two recommendations should be the subject of urgent consideration by the Council, since it is evident that:

1. There is no professional input to Council on the Botanical Gardens at the moment.
2. There is no-one on Council staff who can carry out the technical executive role.
3. Within the framework of a tight maintenance budget and time constraints, Gardens staff cannot cope with botanical and collection management.

### **Visitor Promotion**

“The publicity does not capture the magic.”

- *User Survey respondent*

The prime goal of the future management of the Gardens must be the maintenance and enhancement of its functionality and attractiveness. This in turn will depend upon its ongoing viability. In the current government economic mode, internal funding is in short supply, and for the upkeep of the Gardens an increase in patronage must be won. Marketing and promoting the Gardens is a necessary part of the process to return funds for this purpose.

The Gardens are exceptionally beautiful and are appreciated by a small group of devotees from far and wide, but information about the Gardens is not widely available to the tourism industry or the general public. Many people have lived in Daylesford for years and have seldom if ever visited the Gardens. Also, many visitors to the town know little or nothing about the Gardens, and most do not even know of its existence.

This is a sad state of affairs which cannot be allowed to continue. The following recommendations are made to assist the process of getting the Gardens on the map both locally and in the tourism industry:

- Fit the Gardens prominently into the tourism component of Council's ongoing economic development planning, and continue to develop and implement a strategy for marketing and the development of patronage.
- Negotiate with tour operators, as well as travel and vehicle hire agencies, to include the Gardens on tour itineraries and to direct independent travellers to the Gardens as part of their trips to the region. The Convent Gallery is already an independent attraction, and everyone who knows about the Gallery should also know the magic and wonder of the Gardens.
- Hold activities and events in the Gardens which can be widely publicised locally, in Melbourne and in other places. The Begonia Festival is well known in the region, but other events can be planned that are targeted to different visitor groups. In connection with these, work out which organisations and operators are to be targeted, and who is going to be asked to hold publicity and assist with marketing. This will vary for each type of event (music, fairs, horticulture/begonias, arts and crafts, etc.). Appoint an events coordinator, and a responsible person to manage each event.
- The new Gardens Centre will greatly facilitate fundraising by the Friends from sales to visitors.
- The maze in the lower basin area (35) will be able to be approached separately by means of the new entrance (36). It can therefore be operated by the Friends as an independent attraction. If the level of current maze patronage elsewhere can be taken as a guide, it will bring welcome revenue to the Gardens.
- Instruct the Visitor Centre staff to treat the Gardens as an important attraction.
- Install better signage in Daylesford directing visitors to the Gardens. No-one who has heard about the Gardens should have to ask where it is.



## References

- 1 Shire of Daylesford and Glenlyon (No author or date recorded)  
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- 3 Stevenson, Brenden 1983  
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**Appendix I**

**User Survey**

The User Survey conducted by the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens during the period December 1998 to January 1999 has produced some useful results, although it suffered from some unavoidable disadvantages, given the circumstances of its execution.

A quality statistical survey requires a consistent and planned approach to interview locations and times, and a method which carries out controlled sampling, except in the case of very small populations and controllable circumstances, where complete coverage of respondents could be attempted. None of these requirements were possible to meet in the case of the Gardens for the reasons given below.

There are five current points of entry and two major destination areas - the tower and picnic area in the east, and the kiosk and lawn area in the west – and there were not enough volunteers available during the pre-Christmas and holiday period to systematically cover key points and important times by strategically deploying interviewers. This made the survey virtually uncontrollable in terms of sampling technique.

The survey was conducted in the full knowledge of these disadvantages, because its most important results for the masterplan would be bulk or class indicators which could not be seriously marred by the lack of ability to cross-tabulate meaningfully. However, the market research aspects of the survey, useful in terms of producing a database for work on boosting patronage, will probably not be able to be fully realised, given the inconsistency of the data.

The survey produced information from 150 respondents – 29 residents and 121 visitors. The tables below describe the results of the survey question by question in three categories:

- Questions to local residents
- Questions to visitors
- Questions about visiting the Gardens

### Questions to Local Residents

Background questions to local residents concentrated on place and type of residence and transport/access to the Gardens.

| Place of Residence | No | %  |
|--------------------|----|----|
| Daylesford         | 12 | 41 |
| Hepburn Springs    | 4  | 14 |
| Other local place  | 7  | 24 |
| No response        | 6  | 21 |
| Total              | 29 |    |

| <b>Home in Locality</b> | No | %  |
|-------------------------|----|----|
| Permanent               | 17 | 59 |
| Second home             | 5  | 17 |
| No response             | 6  | 21 |
| Total                   | 29 |    |

| <b>Transport to Gardens</b> | No | %  |
|-----------------------------|----|----|
| Walking                     | 7  | 24 |
| Bicycle                     | 2  | 7  |
| Vehicle                     | 19 | 66 |
| Lift                        | 1  | 3  |
| Other                       | 0  | 0  |
| Total                       | 29 |    |

### Questions to Visitors

Background questions to visitors were about the origin, destination, mode and purpose of their travel.

| <b>State of Origin</b> | No  | %  |
|------------------------|-----|----|
| VIC                    | 104 | 86 |
| NSW                    | 3   | 2  |
| ACT                    | 1   | 1  |
| SA                     | 3   | 2  |
| TAS                    | 1   | 1  |
| QLD                    | 4   | 3  |
| WA                     | 2   | 2  |
| NT                     | 1   | 8  |
| Overseas               | 2   | 2  |
| Total                  | 121 |    |

| <b>Purpose of Visit</b>    | No  | %  |
|----------------------------|-----|----|
| Day trip                   | 53  | 44 |
| Business                   | 1   | 1  |
| Holiday                    | 41  | 34 |
| Visiting friends/relatives | 12  | 10 |
| No response                | 14  | 12 |
| Total                      | 121 |    |

| <b>Base</b>             | No  | %  |
|-------------------------|-----|----|
| Daylesford/H'burn Sprgs | 31  | 26 |
| Melbourne               | 23  | 19 |
| Sydney                  | 0   | 0  |
| Elsewhere               | 18  | 15 |
| No response             | 49  | 40 |
| Total                   | 121 |    |



| <b>Transport</b> | <b>No</b>  | <b>%</b> |
|------------------|------------|----------|
| Bicycle          | 1          | 1        |
| Own vehicle      | 55         | 45       |
| Rented vehicle   | 4          | 3        |
| Coach            | 1          | 1        |
| Train/bus        | 0          | 0        |
| No response      | 60         | 50       |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>121</b> |          |

| <b>Single Place Visit</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Daylesford                | 22        |
| Hepburn Springs           | 5         |
| Melbourne                 | 8         |
| Other place               | 7         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>42</b> |

| <b>On Tour</b> | <b>No</b> |
|----------------|-----------|
| VIC            | 8         |
| NSW            | 3         |
| ACT            | 0         |
| SA             | 2         |
| TAS            | 1         |
| QLD            | 0         |
| WA             | 0         |
| NT             | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>15</b> |

### **Questions about Visiting the Gardens**

These questions were designed to get information on which to base market decisions for all visitors.

Activities and Interests in the Gardens, although they belong in this category, have been placed in a separate category below for discussion purposes.

| <b>Party</b>     | <b>No</b>  | <b>%</b> |
|------------------|------------|----------|
| Alone            | 16         | 11       |
| Couple           | 42         | 28       |
| Family/relatives | 36         | 24       |
| Friends          | 17         | 11       |
| Special group    | 3          | 2        |
| Tour group       | 1          | 1        |
| No response      | 35         | 23       |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>150</b> |          |

| <b>Frequency of Visit</b> | No   | %  |
|---------------------------|------|----|
| First visit               | 37   | 25 |
| Times before...           | 1.4  |    |
| Times/week...             | 0.18 |    |
| Times/year...             | 1.6  |    |

| <b>Bring Others</b> | No |
|---------------------|----|
| Family/friends      | 68 |
| Visitors            | 43 |

| <b>Recommend to others</b> | No |
|----------------------------|----|
| Family/friends             | 73 |
| Visitors                   | 48 |

| <b>Reference</b> | No |
|------------------|----|
| Visitor centre   | 11 |
| Advertising      | 11 |
| Publicity        | 8  |
| Recommendation   | 21 |

### Activities and Interests

| <b>Activities</b> | No | %  |
|-------------------|----|----|
| Walking           | 38 | 25 |
| Walk dog          | 15 | 10 |
| Quiet time        | 42 | 28 |
| Picnic            | 45 | 30 |
| Drive only        | 7  | 5  |
| Sightseeing       | 67 | 45 |
| Other             | 8  | 5  |

| <b>Interests</b>       | No | %  |
|------------------------|----|----|
| Horticulture           | 54 | 36 |
| Environment/ecology    | 37 | 25 |
| Landscape beauty       | 30 | 20 |
| Tranquility/relaxation | 14 | 9  |
| Botany                 | 12 | 8  |
| Trees                  | 8  | 5  |
| Views                  | 3  | 2  |
| History                | 2  | 1  |

Responses to the Interests question have been combined with free form comments by the same respondents, because the latter contain unsolicited responses on complementary subjects not appearing in the formal question but in reality belonging to it. The responses on Interests and Activities taken

together build a composite picture of the key needs and preferences of visitors.

It will be seen that horticulture was the prime interest of visitors. This is not surprising, since many people in our population are keen gardeners. The next most important interest was in its environment and ecology, although the question may have been misunderstood by some respondents, who may have been referring to its visual rather than its ecological environment. If this is the case, then the response to the Gardens' landscape quality can be considered to be overwhelming. Allied to beauty, the tranquility and relaxing quality of the Gardens was important to some.

Botany was an interest, but not a major interest, of visitors. This accords with a User Survey conducted in 1995 by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne<sup>4</sup> for market research purposes. Most visitors were found to go there because it is a "nice place". This is certainly true of Wombat Hill.

In the Nineteenth Century botany was fashionable, and there was the additional factor of nostalgia for European vegetation. Nowadays, people find beauty and relaxation of greater importance in their search for relief from a more stressful and complex world.

This is not to say that we should not value the botanical aspect of the Gardens. On the contrary, if it is presented in the right way, it will stimulate interest in an area rather neglected by the general public.

History was not significant to users of the Gardens. Given the local enthusiasm for its historical background, it will be of great interest to all visitors if historical displays are available in the Gardens Centre.

### **Ideas for the Future and Comments**

These questions were asked in a free form format. Some answers indicated that there was not much discrimination between the purpose of the two questions. They have therefore been combined in the table below. The categories and frequency of responses are shown below.

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Road, parking and access improvement    | 26 |
| Better direction, signage and publicity | 23 |
| Ideas related to the kiosk              | 12 |
| Provision of childrens' play facilities | 9  |
| Improvements to the tower               | 8  |
| Restoration of the fern gully           | 7  |

Other responses related to more seating, water for picnicking, toilet facilities, plant ideas and maintenance quality. All suggestions have been dealt with under the appropriate headings of this report.

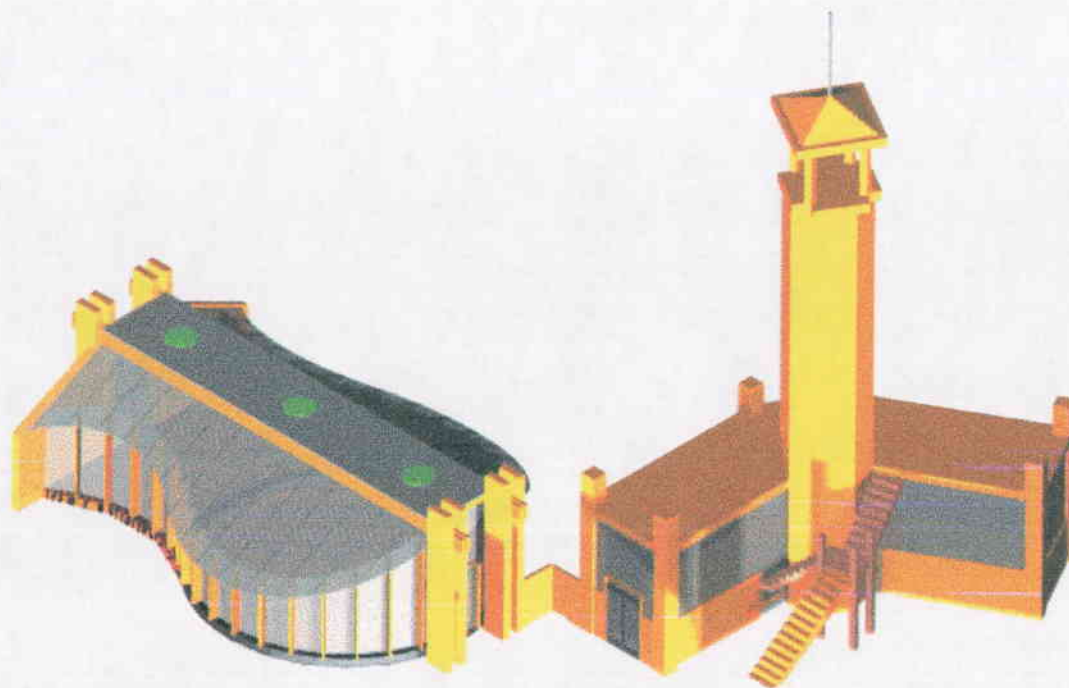
**Appendix II**

**The Gardens Centre**



## The Gardens Centre

This discussion in depth of the Gardens Centre continues from the general description of the Centre in Gardens Centre and Picnic Area starting on p.6 above.



**Gardens Centre from the East**

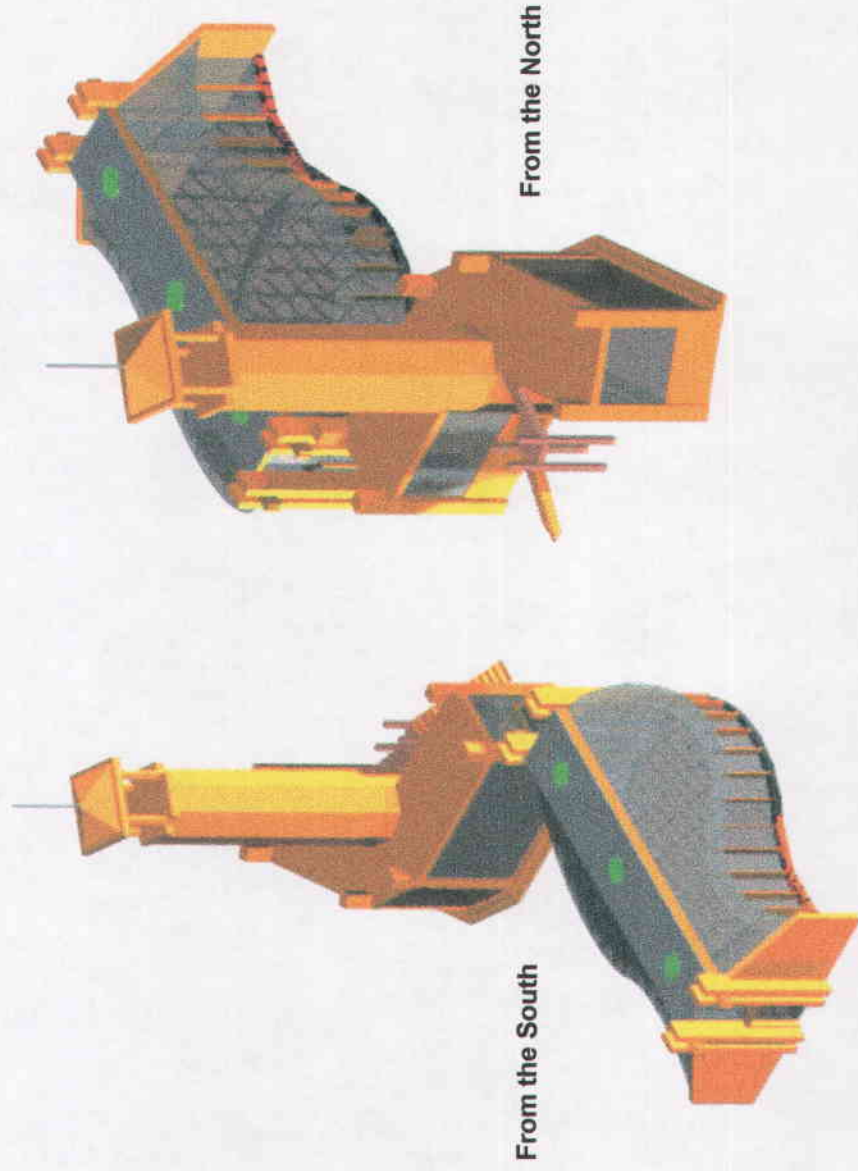
The Gardens Centre will play a central role in the transformation of the Gardens from being merely a “nice place”<sup>4</sup> to being an important Victorian destination from many points of view.

It will have the following functions:

1. It will provide general orientation to the layout and geography of the Gardens.
2. It will enable information dissemination by means of displays, literature and word of mouth, including the generation of depth of knowledge in such areas as:
  - Gardens layout and history.
  - History of Daylesford and the role of the Gardens in the life of the town.
  - Horticultural examples, locations and techniques.
  - Botanical and ecological science.
  - History, current technology, health and environmental protection aspects of Daylesford’s water supply system.
3. It will enable the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens, who are its mainstay of support, to have a permanent place to gather and talk, meet

and decide on action, bring visitors and friends, interpret and conduct tours of the Gardens, sell plants, books, postcards and souvenirs, and generally transmit their enthusiasm and love of the Gardens to the visiting public.

4. It will provide a place to house the Begonia Festival (which is only one festival that can be held), and to hold exhibitions, displays and events.



Two views of the Gardens Centre

The Centre is located at the entry point of most visitors to the Gardens, where coaches stop, where people working in the town have their lunch, and where most people touring in their own vehicle gravitate.

The Pioneer Tower is a landmark within the Gardens (it cannot be seen from the town) and forms the nucleus of the new Centre. It has unfortunately fallen into disrepair, but this will now be remedied.

The exhibition building next to it is designed to complement it visually and, without being of the same period, to be respectful to its neighbour. Its rendered masonry will be finished in the same colour as the restored tower, which is seen as a light, sandy brown. (The preliminary sketches do not show the true colour.) Its piers are the same height as the corner columns of the tower.

A small wall the same height as the screen walls in the base of the tower blocks access to the Friends' Garden to the west of the tower (see p.9). This

is because there are awkward projecting inspection pits at that point; because the space between the two buildings is narrow and cramped, being constrained by the closeness of the tower and the small water basin over which the exhibition building is built; and because the Friends' Garden will be under their control.

Disabled access is possible from all entrances of the buildings by means of a slight ramp in the approach paths to the general floor level of the tower base.

Entrances to both buildings is from a small hard surfaced area flanked with flower beds and framed by the relocated cannon and map board, bringing visitors through from the parking areas (see pp.9 and 11).

### **The Tower**

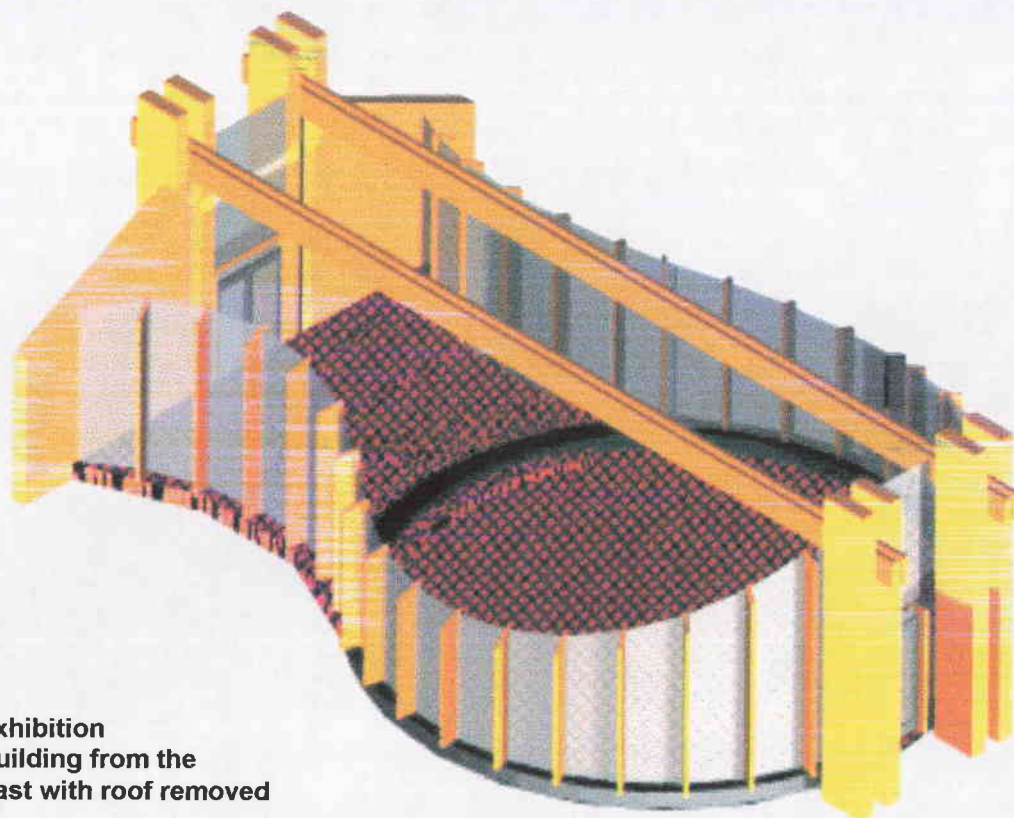
The history of the tower was outlined above (pp. 7-8). The modifications at its base were a welcome suggestion from Heritage Victoria, since they enable the tower to regain a valuable functional role in the Gardens.

The space in the base of the tower, being a shelter, is difficult to deal with. Its proportions are awkward, and the staircase to the first floor terrace is an obstruction. It is intended to truncate or remove the lower flight of steps to gain a clear internal space, and to rebuild it so that so that visitors can climb the tower directly from the front of the buildings. The sketch shows the new steps, with the old steps still in place to illustrate this point.

The drawings show the proposed whip antenna on the top of the tower. This feature actually completes its intended form, fulfilling the same visual function as the pole on the top of the Maryborough tower (see p. 7). There will also be the pole on the top of the Maryborough tower (see p. 7). There will also be a small Yagi antenna, which will be mounted unobtrusively on a standoff arm on the tower's west side to shield it from view in most directions. It is the same shape, but smaller in dimensions, as a UHF television antenna, and therefore will be hardly noticeable.



## Exhibition Building



Exhibition  
Building from the  
East with roof removed

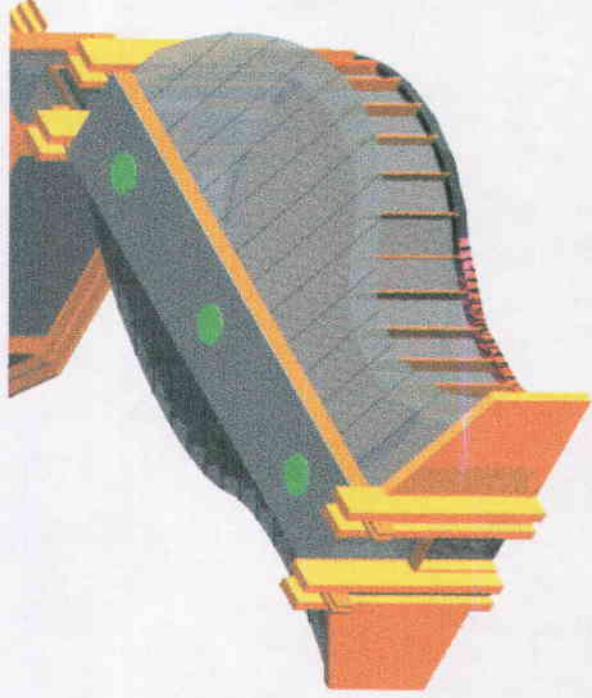
The exhibition building is oriented to be exactly at right angles to its nearest wing of the tower base. Its circulation scheme is organised so that visitors can enter from the car park, view an exhibit and exit along the main connecting path to visit the western lawn end of the Gardens.

It is built over the small water basin, which is to be covered for health reasons. The basin is 10m in diameter, and the building is 14m long and about 4.5m high. It is modest in size and scale, and designed to provide both visual links and contrast to the tower.

To prevent further load being placed on the basin's covering structure, its entire structure, reminiscent of a Japanese temple, consists of two parallel sets of timber beams spanning the length of the building. It has a tiled multipurpose floor, in which the outline of the basin is recognised as a feature.

The space in the base of the tower, being a shelter, is difficult to deal with. Its proportions are awkward, and the staircase to the first floor terrace is an obstruction. It is intended to truncate or remove the lower flight of steps to gain a clear internal space, and to rebuild it so that so that visitors can climb the tower directly from the front of the buildings. The sketch shows the new steps, with the old steps still in place to illustrate this point.





**Exhibition Building from the South**

Although the design is preliminary at this point, the options for ventilation, light and solar control have been carefully considered, as they are the key to its functional flexibility. It will be displaying begonias and other flowers and plants, and must provide good lighting and acoustic conditions for other displays and events. This dictates a variable permeability roof, and the sketches show the provision for roof ventilation. Adjustable ventilation will also be provided at low level to maintain a current of air when necessary.