Victorian Heritage Database Report

Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens

Location:
Lot 2 Sherbrooke Road, SHERBROOKE VIC 3789 - Property No 58673

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number:

Listing Authority: HI

Heritage Overlay Number: HO16

Statement of Significance:
RNE 100526 Indicative place (Burnham Beeches including Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden)
National Trust (Victoria) G13027

What is Significant?
Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens, Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke.

How is it Significant?
The garden is of state scientific (horticultural) historic, social and aesthetic significance and important for its association with designer Hugh Linaker.

Why is it Significant?
Of scientific (horticultural) significance as a 'plantsman's garden' with collections of mature specimen plants and trees. While the garden does not contain the same range as the original planting it has a fine collection of conifers, mature indigenous trees (notably Eucalyptus Regnans) and exotic shrubs.
RNE criteria A.3, B.1

Of historic significance as the major component of a property (Burnham Beeches) created by the vast wealth of pharmacist Alfred Nicholas between 1929-39. Its creation reflected the popularity of hill station retreats amongst the wealthy at that time.

The buildings and structures within the garden are also significant as part of the original garden layout. RNE Criteria A.4, B.2

Of social significance as providing employment for local people in its creation and upkeep during the depression. The garden reflects the historic and continuing horticultural pursuits (both ornamental and agricultural) undertaken throughout the Dandenong Ranges since first colonial settlement.RNE criterion A.4

Of aesthetic significance for the overall designed landscape which is bold in its conception. The steep terrain is controlled through terraces, paths and water features; by the predominant planting of large trees and shrubs and by the bold use of stonework in rockeries, walls, paths and water features.RNE Criterion E.1.

Of significance because of its special association with Alfred Nicholas and his family and their 'Aspro' empire and with designer Hugh Linaker best known for his landscape schemes for the Melbourne Shrine and Domain. RNE Criterion H.1.

Description

The site is too large for a thorough site visit and the following description has been drawn from The National Trust (Victoria) listing G13027 and from the RNE indicative listing 100526 which is based on:. [6] Lewis,N., Aitken, R. 'Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens Conservation Analysis and Conservation Policies' for the Department of Conservation and Environment 1991.

The Alfred Nicholas Memorial gardens comprise a vast constructed landscape and is typical of a hill station garden of the period. The 13ha garden is almost half the size of Melbourne's Royal; Botanic Gardens.

While not displaying the same range as the original planting the garden still has a fine collection of conifers, mature indigenous trees (notably Eucalyptus Regnans) and exotic shrubs.

Buildings and structures are retained from the original garden layout. These include the gates, stone walls, boathouse, Blackfish Pond outlet, brick enclosures (presumably for compost), paths and steps.

The main drive is approached through an impressive entry with wrought iron gates suspended from large stone pillars. To the left of the entry drive the planting comprises indigenous Eucalyptus Regnans interplanted with Cryptomeria, Japonica, Ulmus Xhollandica Purpurescens, Acer Saccharinum, Pittosporum Eugenioides var, Fagus Sylvatica, Acer Pseudoplatanus, Ul;mus Glabra Lutescens, Picea Sitchensis, Thuja Plicata, Thujopsis Dolabrata var, Acer Negundo and Cedrus Deodara. These trees have an understorey of kalmia, rhododendron and azalea.

Closer to the house, ornamental ponds are on either side of the drive and a road link connects the entry drive with the main lake. Stone paved paths encircle the ponds and small bridges cross the water. Again, there are plantings of mature Eucalyptus Regnans and exotics.

The dividing line between the Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens and the Burnham Beeches property is marked by a cyclone wire fence. The original flight of steps runs perpendicular to the terraces. The terraces on the east side of the fence are dominated by trees rather than low plants. A stone retaining wall divides the terraces from the main drive to the lake and within the terraces, rockwork creates planting pockets.

The main drive to the lake is augmented by two secondary tracks. Pedestrian paths also cross the area creating a wide range of routes to choose from. The dominant tree planting in this area is: Eucalyptus Regnans and Acacia Melanoxylon with other specimen trees.

The lake is the best maintained area of the garden and forms a focus for the design. To the west is a terraced garden with some of the most consistent rock walling found in the garden. To the south-east is a waterfall; to the south public toilets and to the east a section of cleared bushland.

The Blackfish pond is about 50m from the lake and is fed by a small creek which runs along the northern boundary of the property. A timber jetty extends from the south-eastern edge of the pond to its centre.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Yarra Ranges - Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2000
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	YARRA RANGES SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	115090
Property number	58673

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online