In addition to these beds, extensive fenced shrubberies were established throughout the South Garden as part of the works for the 1880 Exhibition, and rose beds were a major feature of the plantings. Photographs of these show dense plantings with a heavy emphasis on foliage texture, which is consistent with the style implemented by Sangster. These were located primarily at path junctions. Floral beds were also established on either side of the main plane tree avenue.

Whilst avenue plantings were to dominate the development of the North Garden in the 1890s, some garden beds were established in the vicinity of the Curators Lodge. Like those in the South Garden they were also enclosed by iron railing or picket fences.

Moves in the latter half of the twentieth century to open up the gardens, particularly for surveillance purposes, led to the removal of most of the garden beds throughout the site, with the exception of those in the vicinity of the Curator’s Lodge. The floral display beds on the south façade of the Royal Exhibition Building were developed as garden beds, presumably to reduce maintenance costs, and the configuration today varies from that visible from the late nineteenth century. The sunken floral beds below the Royal Exhibition Building terrace were reconfigured in 1972 into a series of diagonal beds. This appears to have been a restoration of an earlier scheme visible on aerial photographs from the 1920s. The garden bed to the south of this area is also visible on these photographs, and was most likely added in the early twentieth century.

The ornamental flowering beds that remain in the South Garden offer only a shadow of the original design by Reed and Barnes. Beds to the north of the east-west path have been replaced by lawns and mixed shrub borders, with only some of the floral and foliage diversity reflecting the late nineteenth century layout.

4.4.4 **North Garden & Specimen Trees**

The North Garden avenues were planted c.1890 under the direction of Nicholas Bickford and his successor John Guilfoyle. The plantings are apparently either a reconstruction or interpretation of a scheme attributed to Clement Hodgkinson and planted c.1882, which was largely obliterated by the construction of the 1888 Exhibition annexes. The avenues follow the alignment of the major paths through the area, forming a loosely symmetrical pattern in plan.

The most northerly and formal of these avenues is the straight promenade across the north of the site (Figure 64), which follows the alignment of a path introduced by Hodgkinson in the 1870s. The avenue is planted with Dutch elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*), which are of massive proportions.

Two other avenues cross the entire North Garden diagonally. The north-east to south-west avenue is planted with chestnut-leaved oak (*Quercus castaneifolia*). The avenue provides an effective over-canopy across much of its length, but one or two trees appear to have been removed in the vicinity of Rathdowne Street. The avenue on the opposite diagonal is planted with Dutch elms and is substantially complete save for several trees having been removed from the north-western extent of the avenue, which finishes well before the corner of Carlton and Rathdowne Streets near the lodge. The southern extent of both avenues passes within metres of the Melbourne Museum complex. Major root damage was inflicted on these trees, on the Museum side, during the construction works. Root remediation and major tree planting works were undertaken in 2001 to improve the health of these trees, and they appear to have substantially recovered.
Another two diagonal avenues intersect the site, radiating from the central section of the gardens on Carlton Street, to the two southern entry points. The avenue on the east side is planted with Plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*). Near the Works Depot, in the avenue’s most northern extent, the trees are planted at wide spacings. This may have been a realisation of John Guilfoyle’s 1916 proposal to remove every second plane tree from the South Garden Plane Tree Avenue. It is unclear when the removal was to take place. The plane tree avenue referred to may have been that in the North Garden and not the one in the South Garden. In the southern section the trees are closely spaced, forming a denser over canopy and providing a stronger sense of enclosure.

The avenue on the opposite diagonal on the west side of the gardens is planted with Grey Poplars (*Populus x canescens*) also reaching senescence. A replanting on the south-west side of this avenue with poplars occurred in 2006. The avenue’s integrity is strongest near Carlton Street where the trees are regularly spaced and provide good canopy coverage.

4.4.5 **North Garden Boundary Trees**

The layout of the North Garden in the 1890s was primarily based on extensive avenue plantings crossing the site, with little in the way of other ornamentation. Individual specimen trees were mainly planted around the perimeter of the site, forming loose boundary plantations. The spaces between the avenue plantations remained relatively free of in-fill plantings, with expanses of turf being the primary surface treatment in these areas. This is shown in aerial photographs and plans of the area from the early to mid-twentieth century (see Appendix D). Any mixed plantings were located along the eastern, western and northern boundaries, fulfilling the role of informal boundary plantations.

![East-west path in North Garden.](image)
Specimen and boundary trees are located along the three outside boundaries of the North Garden, with the majority of these located on the western side. Historically the reason for this was the presence of the ornamental lake in this area up until the 1930s, which would have broken an attempt to establish a formal avenue through the area. The boundary plantings currently consist of Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), *Corymbia citriodara*, *poplars* (*Populus x canescens*, *P. nigra* `Italica`) and pepper trees (*Schinus areira*) dating from the late nineteenth century development of the site, as well as more recent plantings of a smaller scale. These include sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) on the western boundary.

The plantings on the western boundary, particularly the figs and common oak (*Quercus robur*) are the most cohesive and majestic of the non-avenue plantings. A notable specimen within the North Garden is the brachychiton (*Brachychiton x excellens*), a hybrid between *B. bidwillii* and the Queensland lace-bark tree (*B. discolor*), and is rarely seen in Melbourne.

### 4.4.6 Bhutan Cypress Row

The Bhutan Cypress Row (*Cupressus torulosa*) formerly on the north boundary of the site adjacent to the Curator’s Cottage has recently been removed. This was due to impacts on the remnant iron fence. The latter is currently being repaired and will be reinstated. A replacement cypress hedge is being planted in this area of the site.
4.4.7  South Garden Tree Plantings & Boundary Plantings

Trees surviving in the South Gardens from the 1879/1880 plantings, associated with Sangster, include the avenue plantings (some of which have been substantially depleted) and a small but significant number of mixed tree plantings in the lawns.111

Early photographs of the South Garden, in the pre-1880 period, show plantings of what appear to be pines (Stone pines, Norfolk Island pines, Hoop pines, Canary Island pines), cypress, Blue Gums and also Lombardy Poplars,112 most of which are absent from photographs taken during the period of the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, suggesting they were removed by Sangster. Most histories in fact report that Sangster removed a large number of trees established on the site by Hyndman and Hodgkinson, and moved others to fit the new scheme.

The pair of Funeral cypress (Chamaecyparis funebris) near the western end of the Royal Exhibition Building façade is believed to date from the plantings for the 1880 Exhibition.113 Although assessed by the National Trust as being planted at around the turn of the century, the size of these specimens when compared with others planted throughout Melbourne at that time suggests a much earlier planting date.

Sangster’s planting choices along the avenues were often informal or unusual, for example mixing bunya pines (Araucaria bidwillii) alternating with bristle-tip oaks (Quercus acutissima) on the path in the east of the Garden. The mix of cedars (Cedrus deodara) with hoop pines (Araucaria cunninghamii) along the north-west south-east diagonal path in the west of the Garden is also unusual, although it has recently been noted that the cedars are not thought to date from the 1880 plantings, while the hoop pines are more likely to be associated with Sangster.114 The massive Moreton Bay figs (Ficus macrophylla) scattered throughout the South Garden are likely survivors from the 1880s period of development.

The three radiating paths forming the patte d’oie are more formally laid out and most likely to be genuine 1879-80 plantings. The central plane avenue, which has already been discussed, is the dominant feature within the South Garden. The path radiating to the south-west was planted with elms (predominant mature species is Ulmus procera) and was a sparsely spaced avenue intended to provide a framing effect to the path without constraining side views to the lawn areas; there were also sculptures along the paths. More recent plantings at closer intervals alter this aspect of the design.115 The path on the opposite diagonal, radiating to the south-east, is lined by a more regular row of London Planes (Platanus x acerifolia), Araucarias, and grey poplars (Populus x canescens), although it has been noted that the poplars may post-date the 1880 scheme.116

The grey poplars on the Rathdowne Street frontage appear to vary in age, and the plantings on Nicholson Street are a mixture of many different taxa. An avenue planting of predominantly common oak (Quercus robur) along the southern boundary, some of which are thought to date from 1880 based on their size,117 has been broken up by tree removals and is difficult to read as a uniform element, particularly with occasional occurrences of Dutch elm along the avenue.

Specimen trees are either the same taxa as used in avenue plantings, for example Dutch and English elms and oaks, or species not used en masse, such as Moreton Bay Figs (Ficus macrophylla). An interesting lawn grouping of trees is in the south-east corner, where there are three mature English elms and three Canary Island pines (Pinus canariensis) planted as two adjacent ccesses. It has also been noted that, based on the 1880s images, a significant
With the passing of time there are a number of gaps opening up in the tree strata of the South Garden. There is also evidence of poor arboricultural management techniques, and the introduction of new species inappropriate to the period of the site, such as a golden elm (Ulmus glabra 'Lutescens') in the south-west, a tree more strongly associated with the inter-war period. Many of the more recent twentieth century plantings are conspicuous for the lack of sensitivity in selection of taxa appropriate to the character of the South Garden. Some trees in the South Garden are also associated with the original layout of the site as designed by La Trobe Bateman and developed by Hodgkinson.

4.5 Carlton Gardens & Exhibition Reserve: Hard Landscape Elements

4.5.1 Layout & Path System

The original path system proposed in the 1874 plan of the gardens derives from the 1850s plan put forward by La Trobe Bateman. Hodgkinson’s 1874 plan reveals a carefully contoured informal but symmetrical scheme with a major east-west boulevard parallel with Moor Street (now Carlton Street). At the centre of the park the Dolphin Fountain provided the focus for four curving paths. A curving path system followed the perimeter of the park and was linked by short paths to ten entry points, located at each corner and at links to streets opposite.

Reed and Barnes’ 1880 plan obliterates much of the proposed scheme by building over the northern half of the garden, yet even here remnants of the earlier plan remains with the east-west boulevard, the eastern and western boundary pathway and some limited remnants of other paths still present. In the South Garden the proposed path layout was retained in part with curvilinear paths around the park margin and diagonal curvilinear paths from the Spring Street entry to both the east and west. Over this, a strongly geometric path system was established emanating from the Hochgürtel Fountain. These paths extended to the east and west, due south to opposite Spring Street (this was to become the Grand Allée) and to the Rathdowne and Nicholson streets junctions with Victoria Street, to the south-west and south-east respectively.

In the South Garden, the 1879 design remains as the dominant component of the path system and reflects the plan for the garden proposed by Reed and Barnes. However, the removal of small landscape areas near the Rathdowne/Victoria Streets corner and the addition of a diagonal north-east/south-west path across the garden from near the Rathdowne/Victoria Streets corner to the middle of the eastern half of the garden, represent changes. The paths are all surfaced with asphalt and are generally 4.5 to 5.5 metres wide, though the intrusive diagonal path is narrower and lacks a formal edge. At the eastern boundary, the east-west path parallel with the Royal Exhibition Building was extended to Nicholson Street prior to 1888. Tarring of the paths may have occurred after the 1880 Exhibition.

In the North Garden, most of the early path layout was obliterated by the 1888 Exhibition, although the east-west path at the north is a notable exception. The paths predominantly
relate to the 1890s reclamation of the site. The original east-west path parallel to Carlton Street has been modified, presumably when the Curator’s Lodge was built, deflecting the path to the south-west.

4.5.2 The Hochgürtel Fountain

The purpose of the fountain (Figure 67) was to provide a focus to the southern façade of the Exhibition Building, as this was the formal, and main entrance. The fountain was named after Mr Josef Hochgürtel of Cologne, Germany who won the design competition. While the fountain initially faced critical derision from some sources, notably the Melbourne Argus, there was a wider recognition that the fountain harnessed the romance of water for the benefit of the community, and specifically reminded visitors of ‘the power and grandeur of Melbourne’s great water supply, the Yan Yean’. A description of the fountain appeared in the Australian Sketcher. It was thirty-four feet high, rising out of a basin sixty feet in diameter and constructed of ‘the best Portland cement on a strong framework of stone and iron’. The Hochgürtel Fountain was extensively restored in 1995 by the City of Melbourne with Andrew Patience of Reuben Studios and Mulholland Decorators being the contractors and many of the minor sculptural elements were recast.

4.5.3 The Westgarth Fountain

The history of the Westgarth Fountain (Figure 68), which was installed for the 1888 Exhibition, is addressed in Chapter 2. It originally occupied a prominent position in front of the porch to the eastern nave, and was restored and reinstated in the 1990s to a position close to the Nicholson Street pavement because of the need for vehicular access to the East entrance to the Exhibition Building.

Figure 66 Late 1940s oblique aerial photograph, illustrating the avenue and path network. Source: Airspy series, State Library.
Figure 67  The Hochgürtel Fountain.

Figure 68  Westgarth Drinking Fountain.
Figure 69  The new Grollo Fountain.

Figure 70  View of the fernery, containing the fountain later known as the French Fountain.  
Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection.
4.5.4  **The Grollo Fountain**

A modern fountain donated by the Grollo family in 1980 (Figure 69), replaced a previous circular fountain and was installed in front of the new Melbourne Museum building to the north of the West Forecourt following the Museum’s completion.

4.5.5  **The French Fountain**

In contrast to the South Circle which contained the Hochgürtel Fountain, the East Circle at the Nicholson Street entrance was established as a sculpture court with a smaller fountain, known as the French Fountain, at its centre. This fountain dates from the 1880 Exhibition; it was later replaced by a fountain which was originally installed in the ferneries (for both exhibitions). This fountain, which is illustrated at Figure 70, was relocated to the Eastern Forecourt and refurbished in the early 1900s and was considered to be ‘a much more elegant model’ than the original 1880 fountain in this location.\(^{121}\) Elizabeth Willis describes the current French Fountain as follows:

> Three putti, winged children with dolphins on their heads, surround an urn which supports giant clam shells. There is an elegant acanthus leaf column that demonstrates the skill of nineteenth century craftsmen in the use of bronze for ornamentation.\(^{122}\)

4.5.6  **Colonial Square**

In the late 1880s, the city was celebrating its status as ‘Marvellous Melbourne’, the most dynamic city of the southern hemisphere. Life assurance companies, aware of the affluence of the city, were expanding into Melbourne at the same time.
In 1890, the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States of America, extended its business into Melbourne and purchased a rectangular block of land on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets. The block had been sold at the first land auction in June 1837. It was eventually known as 330 Collins Street. The Directors of the Equitable Life, in the spirit of the land and economic boom of the 1880s, wanted to erect ‘the grandest building in the Southern Hemisphere’, clearly reflecting the status of both the company and the city. Edward E Raht designed the building, and the contractor was David Mitchell (refer 2.11.5). The foundation stone was laid on 6 March 1893. Raht chose an ‘Americanised Renaissance’ style for the building, in keeping with the owners of the site. Innovative construction techniques were required for the seven storey building which rose to the height of 138 feet (42 metres). Once completed, the building dominated the streetscape.

Grey granite, quarried at Harcourt, near Mt Alexander (later Castlemaine) was used for most of the construction. However, pink granite from Cape Woolamai on Phillip Island was incorporated into the grand archway forming the entrance to Collins Street. Above the entrance was mounted bronze statuary, now outside the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne. A giant order of Corinthian columns was located between the third and fourth floors of the building. The Equitable Life Assurance Company occupied the site until 1923 when it was sold to the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society.

By the 1950s the maintenance of the building became a financial burden and, it was demolished in 1959. At the time, the building was not considered to be worthy of preservation; this occurred in an era of Melbourne’s history when many of the finest buildings were demolished within a context of the Melbourne City Council’s view of progress. Many of the original granite blocks of the Colonial Building were purchased privately, and some survived until 2000 when Museum Victoria acquired 25 of them and subsequently installed them (as ‘Colonial Square’) on the east side of the new museum.

The blocks are intended to give an indication of the scale of the construction and the superb workmanship that went into the stonemasonry. Most of the blocks on display are sourced to a particular feature: six pieces forming the northern cluster are from the upper floors of the building, the central cluster is made up of random pieces; and pieces of pink Cape Woolamai granite, from the portico, form the southern cluster. Named Colonial Square, the installation was largely sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank who took over Colonial Mutual when it
was de-mutualised in 1996.123 An interpretative panel indicates their former location on the building.

4.5.7 Ornamental Lakes

North Garden

An ornamental lake was established in the north-west section of the Carlton Gardens under the direction of Clement Hodgkinson in the 1870s. The lake featured a small island at its centre. This was one of a number of adaptations made by Hodgkinson to La Trobe Bateman’s 1857 plan. The siting of the lake at a high point in the Garden is thought to suggest it may have been used for irrigation purposes, as well as ornament.124 Although the 1888 Exhibition temporary buildings occupied almost the entire North Garden, and the size and boundary changed of the lake was changed at various times, the lake survived essentially intact until 1923 when it was paved with asphalt and converted to a children's wading pool. The pool was then filled during the 1960s to accommodate the children’s traffic school (also since removed, see Section 4.5.14 ‘Playgrounds’ below).

South Garden

Two other lakes were established within Carlton Gardens for the 1880 International Exhibition. They were located in the South Garden as feature elements within the grounds. The most northerly of these was established on the eastern side of the South Garden, just below the main promenade in front of the Royal Exhibition Building. The lake was created as a useful treatment for a quarry that would otherwise have had to be filled in. Sangster's plantings around the lake relied heavily on foliage texture, where extensive use of bold foliaged taxa was made, such as cabbage trees (Cordyline australis), New Zealand flax (Phormium tenax) and other species. The lake, like most areas of the South Garden, was encircled by an internal iron picket fence. It is not known exactly when the eastern lake in the South Garden was truncated significantly; it appears on plans as early as 1941 in its present, smaller form (Figure 73). It is likely that the basalt pitcher edge was introduced at this time. The view from the lake created an additional and enticing vista to the Exhibition Building.

The second lake was created on the west side of the South Garden, and was of a similar, informal style to the lake to its east. The layout of the western lake appears to be faithful to the original design, although it is perhaps slightly smaller in size. It is assumed Sangster was responsible for the design of this lake, which, unlike the other lake in the South Garden, was purpose built. The layout of both was an expression of Sangster’s love for the picturesque, which, contrasted with the formal path system designed by Reed and Barnes. The western lake has a closer relationship with surrounding trees, and for that reason is a more intimate and shady space (Figure 74). Much of the textural planting established by Sangster around the lakes has been removed and the presentation of the lakes is more formal. Both lakes are edged with basalt pitchers, and feature small islands. The western lake features an overflow chute on its southern side, which appears to be a later addition. The truncation of the eastern lake has altered its relationship with the surrounding vegetation. For example, two large Moreton Bay figs that would have once spread over the eastern side of the lake now provide shade to a lawn area. The island in the eastern lake is overgrown by (what appear to be) self-sown oaks and Danubian reeds (Arundo donax), which provide a softening element to the scheme.
Figure 73  The east ornamental lake in the South Garden.

Figure 74  The west lake in the South Garden.