

3.7 Environmental Sustainability

Management of all parks and gardens requires significant resource inputs of water, chemicals and energy. Management of gardens also generates significant quantities of waste.

Community expectations to reduce water use and manage gardens in a more sustainable manner have increased in recent years. Council's commitment to more sustainable management of its parks and gardens is outlined in *Growing Green - An Environmental Sustainability Plan for the City of Melbourne's Open Space and Recreational Facilities*.

There is strong community support for the principle of either reusing stormwater or using recycled water in the Carlton Gardens, if feasible.

Policy recommendations relating to environmentally sustainable management are:

- i) That a water management plan be developed for the Carlton Gardens to minimise the use of water while ensuring the health of the trees and adequate maintenance of garden beds and lawn areas.
- ii) That the root zone areas under trees be mulched as required for tree health, in a pattern which reflects and interprets the historic bed layout associated with the tree avenues.
- iii) That tree, garden bed and grass species be selected, where possible, to achieve minimum watering requirements, while ensuring compatibility with the heritage values of the Carlton Gardens.
- iv) That alternative water sources to mains water, such as use of stormwater or recycled water, be explored for irrigating the Carlton Gardens and for supplying the fountains and lakes. Infrastructure associated with use of this water should be unobtrusive.
- v) That improved storm water management systems be developed for the Carlton Gardens.
- vi) That waste recycling facilities be provided for users of the Carlton Gardens and waste, including green waste, produced from management of the Gardens be minimised.
- vii) That the possum population in the Carlton Gardens be managed so that it does not exceed the Gardens carrying capacity. The feeding of possums should be discouraged and vegetation should be protected from possum damage as required.

viii) That all native wildlife in the Carlton Gardens (such as native birds) be managed sensitively.

ix) That tree pests and diseases be controlled using biological controls, where available.

3.8 Interpretation

Raising community awareness and developing interpretation programs for the Royal Exhibition Building and the Carlton Gardens are major challenges following the listing of the site on the World Heritage List. It is therefore expected that an interpretation strategy will form a major component of the future management plan for the whole site. Development of the interpretation strategy will require the involvement of all parties, including the Australian Government, Heritage Victoria, Museum Victoria and the City of Melbourne.

Current interpretation of the Carlton Gardens and Exhibition Reserve is provided by Museum Victoria, with tours of the Royal Exhibition Building and the Golden Mile Heritage Trail and recent installation of signage. Little or no interpretation has been developed specially for the Carlton Gardens.

The historic nature of the site as a whole lends itself to the development of an interpretation program which could cover both the historical and botanical features of the Carlton Gardens as well as the Royal Exhibition Building. Such a program is strongly supported and is complementary with all the recommendations of this Master Plan, providing that such a program is unobtrusive and does not compromise the everyday pleasure of visiting the Gardens.

Recommendations relating to interpretation of the Gardens are:

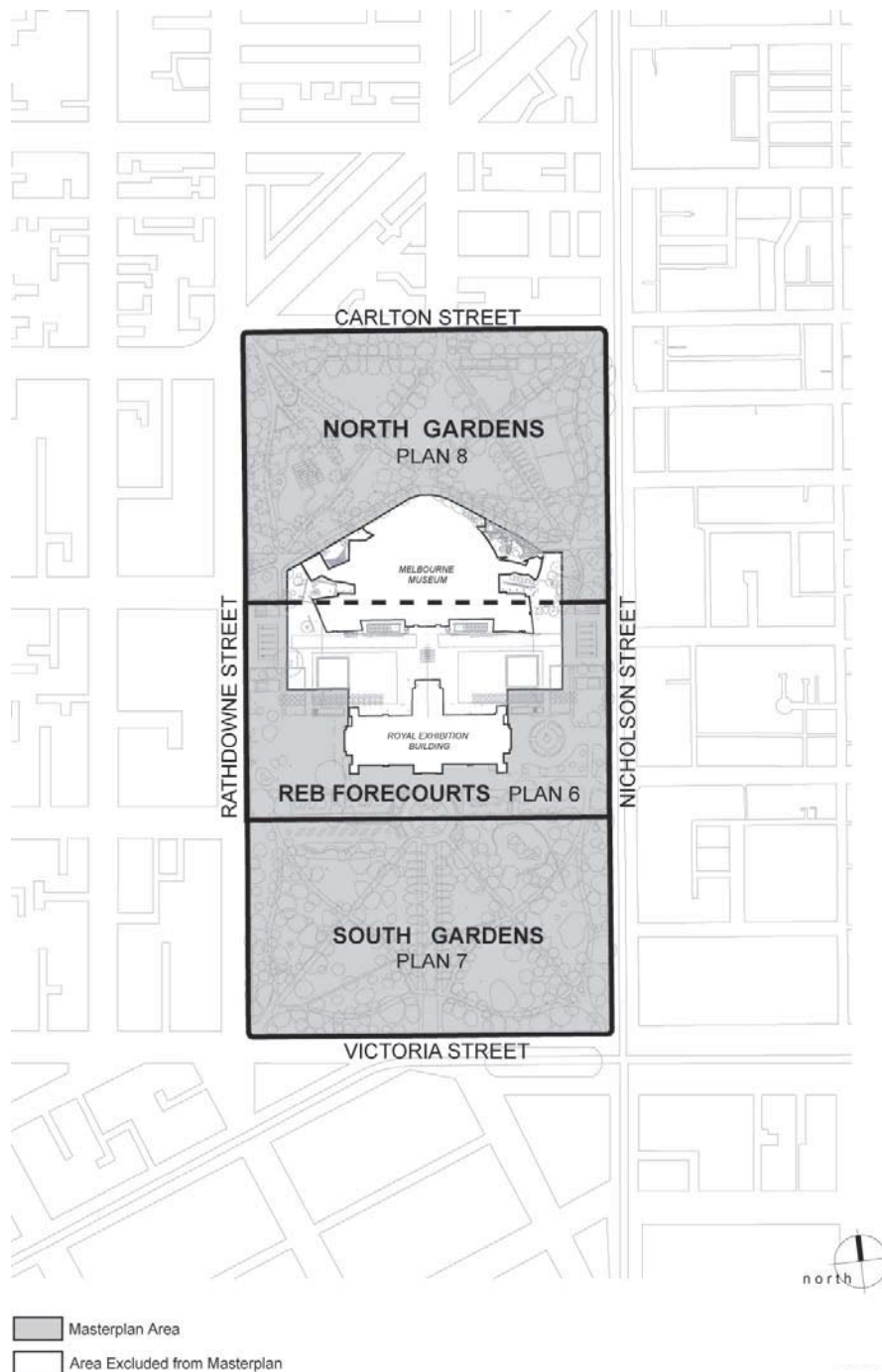
- i) That interpretation of the Gardens is undertaken within the framework of an overall interpretation plan prepared for the whole World Heritage listed site and its location within an urban setting.
- ii) That such a plan considers signage, brochures, explanatory literature, self-guided tours and tours conducted in conjunction with tours of the Royal Exhibition Building and an overall tourism strategy. This could include the possible use of the Caretaker's Cottage (see 3.4 Uses and Activities: Uses, recommendation (i)).
- iii) That interpretation of the site recognises the long occupation of the original inhabitants and its significance to the Aboriginal community.
- iv) In the interim, an information brochure be developed in conjunction with Museum Victoria.

4. Garden Precincts

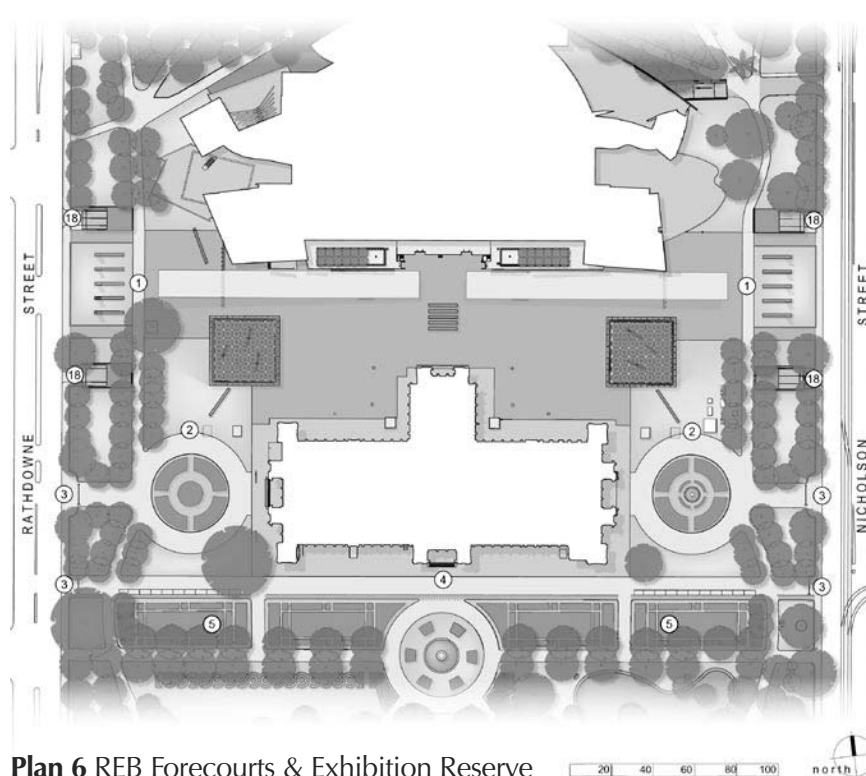
For the purpose of this Master Plan, the site comprising the Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Building forecourts is considered as three separate precincts (refer **Plan 5**):

- The Royal Exhibition Building forecourts — south, east and west
- The South Carlton Gardens
- The North Carlton Gardens

In this section these precincts are considered independently with separate but complementary recommendations. Many of the proposals outlined below require further historical research and should be considered in this context.



Plan 5 Garden Precincts



Plan 6 REB Forecourts & Exhibition Reserve

1. New North - South Connection

Create a landscape connection and a pedestrian link between north and south gardens. Increase tree planting and green space aligned with the perimeter of Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets.

2. Eastern and Western Forecourts

Improve major forecourts to the REB by reconstructing the German Circle in a manner consistent with the 1880 design. Continue to accommodate REB loading requirements within forecourts, and limit bus drop off and parking to the western forecourt. Investigate possible relocation of carpark vents to allow for the completion of the northern arcs of the turning circles.

3. Forecourt Vehicle Entries

Improve entrances to the Exhibition Reserve at Rathdowne Street and Nicholson Street.

4. REB Southern Forecourt

Progressively remove carparking from building frontage. Replace asphalt adjacent to building with suitable new material, adjust grades, and address drainage to restore setting to the southern forecourt.

5. Parterre Garden

Reconstruct large scale formal planted beds. Where archival material exists use this information as basis of new planting scheme to compliment the setting of the REB southern forecourt and to meet sustainability principles.

18. Carpark Entries

Upgrade pedestrian priority at all vehicular entries to the gardens.

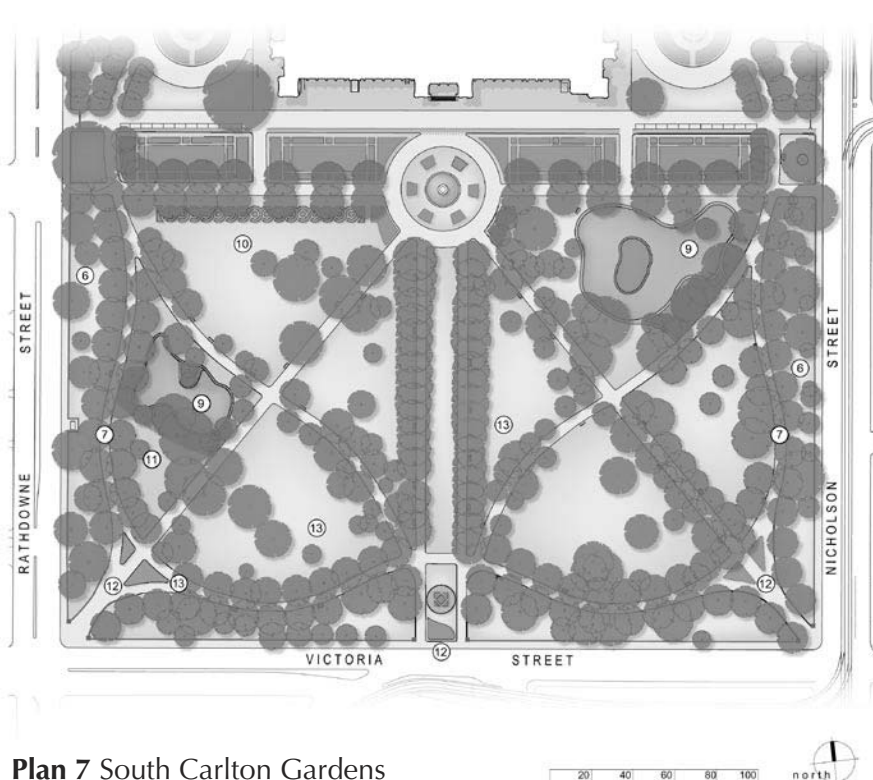
4.1 Royal Exhibition Building Forecourts (Refer Plan 6)

The south, east and west forecourts of the Royal Exhibition Building form its immediate surrounds and the setting for the building, which are key components of the site's World Heritage status. The south forecourt comprises the promenade, garden beds south of the promenade and the Hochgurtel fountain and was the original main entrance to the Royal Exhibition Building. However, today the area is degraded, not pedestrian friendly and the promenade is used for car parking. The west end of the southern forecourt slopes towards the building draining stormwater into the basement of the building.

The east and west forecourts originally played an important role as major entrances to the Royal Exhibition Building and provided a connection between the North and South Carlton Gardens. The east forecourt has retained its original French Circle in an altered form but the west forecourt has lost almost all its original layout.

Recommendations in relation to the forecourt areas are:

- i) To reconstruct, as far as practical, the appearance of the south, east and west forecourts to provide a setting for the Royal Exhibition Building reminiscent of the 1880–1901 period.
- ii) To reconstruct, as far as practical, the southern forecourt as a grand pedestrian promenade. This should involve removing a strip of asphalt abutting the southern wall of the Royal Exhibition Building and replacing it with grass, ground cover plantings or more appropriate hard surfacing. It should also involve progressively removing car parking from the vicinity of the southern entrance.
- iii) To reconstruct the garden parterre beds in a layout consistent with those that existed in the period of significance (between 1880 and 1901), using historical and archaeological evidence.
- iv) To create a landscape connection on the eastern and western frontages between the North and South Carlton Gardens. This should include:-
 - Establishing perimeter tree plantings parallel to Nicholson and Rathdowne Streets



6. Lawn and Perimeter Tree Planting

Replant in the Perimeter and some lawn areas, using species to be determined.

7. Avenues – South Gardens

Progressively restore avenue planting, balance replanting with protection of significant views to REB.

9. Lakes

Undertake archaeological investigation to determine original edge of lakes and feasibility of reconstruction. Replant edges and islands with species which to open views to REB.

10. Chain Walk

Remove chain walk and associated shrub planting and restore lawn surface. Investigate archival records to reconstruct original decorative garden beds south of the melia walk.

11. Peace Garden

Simplify the Peace Garden and integrate into garden setting.

12. Garden Entries

Construct formal garden beds and / or create interpretive built features for the Rathdowne, Nicholson and the Victoria/ Spring Street entries.

13. Pathways

Reinstate curved path; remove short cut path and restore lawn surface.

Plan 7 South Carlton Gardens



- Maintaining suitable pedestrian access to Melbourne Museum.
- Providing enhanced pedestrian links from the North and South Carlton Gardens
- Retaining surviving significant trees
- Exploring ways to reduce the visual impact of visual elements of Melbourne Museum such as car park entrances on the western side of Melbourne Museum
- Providing for current exhibition loading and unloading requirements
- Upgrading the pedestrian entrances to the Exhibition Reserve from Nicholson Street and Rathdowne Street
- v) To reconstruct the German Circle in the west forecourt based as much as possible on historical and archaeological evidence.
- vi) To limit bus movements and bus parking to the west forecourt associated with reconstruction of the German Circle.

4.2 South Carlton Gardens (Refer to Plan 7)

The South Carlton Gardens were laid out as the southern setting for the Royal Exhibition Building for the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition. The fabric of these gardens, including the Grand Allé of Plane trees extending from Victoria Parade to the Hochgurtel fountain, remains largely intact from that era.

Recommendations relating to specific elements of these gardens are:

- i) That all existing original pathways be retained. However, the diagonal 'desire line' pathway, not being part of the original path layout, should be removed.
- ii) That the original curve pathway, linking the pathway parallel to Victoria Parade with the one parallel to Rathdowne Street, should be reconstructed.
- iii) That the south-east and south-west Garden entries be enhanced with planter beds constructed to reflect the 1880 design.

- iv) That the original 'goose neck' entrance to Victoria Street be interpreted through a suitable ground-level design element or plantings.
- v) That further investigation from historical records and archaeological evidence be undertaken to determine how much the shape and size of the two lakes in the South Carlton Gardens has changed since 1880. If the original layouts can be clearly established, then consideration should be given to re-establishing the original outlines. The impact on existing plantings, especially trees, would need to be carefully considered prior to any work being carried out. A new and more appropriate edge treatment based on historical evidence should be developed for the lakes. Planting on the islands and around the lakes should be rehabilitated in line with 3.3 Fabric, Features and Planting: Garden Beds, recommendation (ii).
- vi) That the bed forming the original rose garden be reconstructed and planted with species selected in line with 3.3 Fabric, Features and Planting: Garden Beds, recommendation (ii). This may require the removal of existing diagonal garden beds.
- vii) That the chain walk garden bed be removed and the area returned to lawn in line with the Gardens' original layout.
- viii) That the Peace Garden be reorganised by removing shrub plantings and installing a new plaque conveying the peace message. A specimen tree similar in form and leaf shape to the Bodhi tree should be planted at the site.
- ix) That avenue tree planting be undertaken as indicated on Plan 3, and in line with the recommendations in 3.3 Fabric, Features and Planting: Trees.



4.3 North Carlton Gardens (Refer to Plan 8)

The North Carlton Gardens were re-established in 1890 following the 1888 Centennial Exhibition when temporary exhibition buildings covered most of the area. The fabric of the North Carlton Gardens has not been significantly altered since 1890 but some features have been added, including tennis courts, a maintenance depot and playgrounds. These community facilities largely reflect the role of the North Carlton Gardens in providing for local community use.

Recommendations relating to elements of the North Carlton Gardens are:

- i) That all pathways be retained.
- ii) That consideration be given to restoring the original alignment of the pathway parallel to Carlton Street at its western end adjacent to the Curator's Cottage. This would require:
 - Works to be carried out without impacting on the health of the mature trees in the area
 - Part of the iron hurdle fence and gate to be relocated to the northern side of the extended pathway
 - Part of the iron hurdle fence from the southern isolated garden bed to be reused around another garden bed
- iii) That the remaining section of fence, the gate and the bluestone plinth near the north-west corner be protected and restored. This will require removal of the Bhutan trees, which should be replanted and managed as a hedge if research determines that they were planted between 1880 and 1901.
- iv) That the significant external and internal fabric of the Curator's Cottage and outbuilding be conserved and maintained to a high standard. See 3.4 Uses and Activities; Uses, recommendation (i) for recommended uses of the lodge.
- v) That the planting and layout of the garden surrounding the Curator's Cottage be managed to ensure that they retain a style appropriate for their setting.
- vi) That the existing works depot be removed and a new garden maintenance facility be provided on the site behind the Curator's Cottage. This may require reduction in the size of the backyard of the cottage. The existing depot site should then be restored to parkland.