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HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT **for the**

Conservation Strategy to Dismantle, Restore and Relocate the Traill Fountain, Geelong Botanic Gardens

**H2095 Eastern Park and Geelong Botanic Gardens
[S2 Traill Fountain]**



*Traill Fountain in the Geelong Botanic Gardens c1930
(source : George Jones, Growing Together)*

Date: 22 July 2026

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1.0 Introduction

Frontier Heritage has been commissioned by the City of Greater Geelong to assist with establishing a Conservation Strategy for the Dismantling, Restoration and Relocation of the Traill Fountain over a 5 year period.

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by Frontier Heritage to accompany a Heritage Permit application for approval of the Conservation Strategy and implementation of Stage 1 of the Strategy which is to dismantle the fountain and place it in storage.

2.0 Location

The Traill fountain is located in the Geelong Botanic Gardens (refer to *figure 1* below), in a densely planted section of the gardens. The fountain is between parallel paths that run north west to south east in the central section of the gardens and it is south east of the Hitchcock fountain which features on the central axis through the gardens.



Figure 1 – Geelong Botanic Gardens map with entrances identified and location of Traill Fountain

approx.
north

3.0 Statement of Significance

The following Statement of Significance for Eastern Park & Geelong Botanic Gardens (H0880) is reproduced in full with the sections specific to the Traill Fountain [S2] highlighted in bold.

What is significant?

Eastern Park at Limeburners Point Geelong is approximately 90 hectares of public parkland used for recreational, botanical and horticultural activities and includes the Geelong Botanic Gardens, the Geelong Bowling and Croquet Clubs and several playing fields. The Park abuts Limeburners Point Kilns (H1288) to the north and east and Eastern Beach Reserve (H0929) to the west. The park landscape is characterised by open grasslands and mature trees dominated by conifers and Sugar Gums and views across Corio Bay.

The Crown Reserve land of Eastern Park was set aside as a Botanical Reserve in 1851. Daniel Bunce, first curator of the Gardens (1857-1872), planned botanic gardens for the entirety of the reserve. He created an intricate pattern of pathways

and a lake towards the southeast corner (filled in 1929), initiated the planting of conifers as the dominant species in the park and formally laid out the parallel paths and beds of the nursery in the centre of the reserve. Whilst curator Bunce used the Botanic Gardens to propagate and distribute exotic and indigenous plants to other botanic reserves then being established in Victoria including White Hills in Bendigo (H1915) and Williamstown (H1803). Bunce was also responsible for the early designs of the Colac and Camperdown Botanic Gardens. The Gardens second curator, John Raddenberry (1872 -1896) simplified Bunce's original design for pathways and concentrated the botanic gardens in Bunce's nursery area at their present location. The planting of conifers in the park was continued by Raddenberry and his successors.

The area now known as Geelong Botanic Gardens is 3.6 hectares of intensely cultivated gardens laid out along an east-west axis in a shallow valley in the centre of Eastern Park. At the core of the Gardens are the parallel paths and beds established by Bunce in the 1860s for the systematic and scientific planting of the original botanic nursery. This design was subsequently utilised by Raddenberry who constructed a large greenhouse with fountain and ponds over the central garden bed along the axis of the original nursery in 1885 (removed in 1957). The Botanic Gardens is dominated by mature 19th century tree plantings, including rare exotic species, alongside more recent plantings.

*There have been a number of changes to the extent of the Botanic Gardens although the 19th century core has remained intact. The western boundary of the Gardens was extended in 1959 for the creation of the rose garden, conservatory and decorative gates (designed by Evald Borge Hansen) were added to the new western entrance in 1964. Further extensions of the southern boundary were made in 1990, incorporating open grassland and trees of Eastern Park. In 2001 a 21st Century Garden was created on the western boundary, further extending the area of the Gardens. Within the Botanic Gardens are a number of purpose-built structures including a 19th century sunken Pit glasshouse designed to retain a consistent temperature through subsurface construction of its lower portions, the A L Walter Conservatory (1964) and the Florence E Clarke Geranium Conservatory (1972). Several landscape features and structures have been moved to the Gardens from elsewhere including the First Customs House (H0185), erected in Geelong in 1838 and moved to the Botanic Gardens in 1889; the former Cabmen's Shelter, erected in Geelong in 1905 and moved to the Gardens in 1988; the Hitchcock Fountain (1904) and Urns (1904) and **the Traill Fountain, all moved from Market Square to the gardens in 1912**; and four Japanese bronze cranes erected at St Albans, Whittington (H0741) in the 1870s and brought to the Gardens from Eastern Beach in 1968.*

The original extent of Eastern Park has undergone a number of changes, notably the excising of 1.6 hectares in the southwest corner for the Geelong High School in 1914. The pathways and drives have been partially lost and are today marked by rows and avenues of trees or modified to accommodate vehicular traffic and the creation of the 21st Century Garden, however the major elements of the 19th century pathway design remain including the circular parking area in the northwest of the park providing views across Corio Bay. Eastern Park contains a number of structures and landscape features built for the park and brought from elsewhere. These include the Superintendent's residence (1942), adjacent to the remains of the original curator's cottage (1854); a rotunda, erected in its present location by 1916 but possibly dating to the turn of the century; the former Ladies Kiosk, erected in Market Square in 1904 and relocated to Eastern Park in 1929; a bronze memorial

statue of Queen Victoria, erected in Market Square in 1904 and relocated to Eastern Park in 1912; and the concrete pedestal of a now lost sculpture of the Laocoon, presented to the gardens in 1864.

How is it significant?

Eastern Park and Geelong Botanic Gardens are of historical, scientific (botanical) and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria, as well as significant for their rarity and uniqueness, potential to educate or illustrate and ability to exhibit the principal characteristics or representative nature.

Why is it significant?

Eastern Park and the Geelong Botanic Gardens, is of historical significance as the second earliest botanical reserve, created only five years after Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens (H1459). Eastern Park and the Geelong Botanic Gardens are also historically significant for their association with noted horticulturalist Daniel Bunce, the Garden's first curator from 1857-1872 who was a pioneer in Australian plant identification and propagation.

*Geelong Botanic Gardens is historically significant as an intact example of a 19th century scientific approach to systematic planting for a botanical garden; for the early design and the layout of parallel paths and beds, in place by the 1860s under the curatorship of Daniel Bunce; for the planting character and informal layout of the surrounding sections and the remnant water features that reflect the later more picturesque approach developed by curator John Raddenberry (1872 -1896). Eastern Park and the Geelong Botanic Gardens are of historical significance for the Queen Victoria Avenue of *Ulmus minor* 'Variegata' (Variegated Elm) planted in 1897, which is the earliest known planting of this cultivar in Victoria and commemorates the Silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria.*

*Eastern Park is of scientific (botanical) significance a representative example of a mid-Victorian public park, with surviving carriage drives lined with conifers and tree plantings relating to its first decades of development; these include some rare and outstanding individual specimens such as *Pinus torreyana* (Soledad Pine), *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo Pine), *Pinus quadrifolia* (Mexican Stone Pine), *Eucalyptus baueriana* (Blue Box), *Acer monspessulanum* (Montpellier Maple), *Cupressus goveniana* (Gowen Cypress), *Cupressus macnabiana* (Macnab Cypress), *Juniperus excelsa* (Grecian Juniper), *Araucaria columnaris* (Cook's Pine), *Cupressus torulosa* (Bhutan Cypress), *Harpephyllum caffrum* (Kaffir Plum), *Picconia excelsa*, *Xanthorrhoea* sp. (Grass-tree).*

*Geelong Botanic Gardens is of scientific (botanical) significance as an early outstanding example of a regional botanic garden, one of a network created in colonial Victoria that are characterised by a wide range of plants; **a picturesque, landscaped design incorporating water features and decorative structures**; a contrast between open lawns and densely planted shrub beds and areas of intensive horticultural interest. Geelong Botanic Gardens is also of scientific (botanical) significance for its collection of plants characteristic of late 19th century gardens and representative of more specialised plants groups befitting the scientific role of a botanic garden, and for some outstanding individual specimens. These include *Scolopia brownii* (Gunstock Wood), *Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair Tree), *Prumnopitys andina* (Plum Fir), *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Sierra Redwood), *Wigandia caracasana*, *Quillaja saponaria* (Soap-bark Tree), *Fagus sylvatica* f. *purpurea* (Purple Beech), *Jubaea chilensis* (Chilean Wine Palm), *Actinostrobus pyramidalis* (Swan River Cypress-pine), *Picconia excelsa*, *Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum),*

Agathis robusta (Queensland Kauri), *Podocarpus elatus* (Plum Pine), *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Leopoldii' (Variegated Sycamore), *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine) row of 12 trees, *Ficus platypoda* var. *angustifolia*, *Brachychiton discolor* (Queensland Lacebark), *Alnus acuminata* subsp. *glabrata* (Evergreen Alder), *Cassine crocea* (African Holly), *Brachychiton x roseus* subsp. *roseus* (Hybrid Flame Tree), *Juniperus thurifera* (Incense Juniper), *Juglans nigra* (Black Walnut), and *Corynocarpus laevigatus* (Karaka).

Eastern Park is aesthetically significant in forming a picturesque landscape of open grasslands and mature trees, individual and in avenues of contrasting forms, foliage and colours, and views across Corio Bay.

*Geelong Botanic Gardens is of aesthetic significance for its highly ornamental character derived from the mature plantings, the vistas within the gardens, the physical and visual protection afforded the Gardens by their being at the centre of Eastern Park, and the collection of features such as the former Gate Lodge, Superintendent's residence, Cabman's Shelter, kiosks, **fountains**, urns, statues, and timber and iron seats that contribute to the ornamental design of the garden landscape.*

4.0 Heritage Conservation Assessment and Conservation Management Plan

An 'Eastern Park and Geelong Botanic Gardens Strategic Plan – Heritage Conservation Assessment and Conservation Management Plan' (CMP) was prepared in January 2008 by Lorraine Nadebaum of John Patrick Pty Ltd for the City of Greater Geelong.

The recorded historical details in the CMP pertaining to the Traill fountain note that it was relocated from Market Square, Geelong in 1912¹ and that the fountain was restored in 2001².

The assessment of significance of hard landscape elements identifies the fountain as being of primary significance with a management policy to 'retain and conserve'. At the time the CMP was written, the required works were listed as 'maintenance' only.

The specific policy³ for the Traill fountain states:

Traill Fountain

1. *Retain and conserve the Traill Fountain in its current location.
The fountain serves [as] a folly in the garden possibly owing [to] its awkward location south of the central axis of the garden.*
2. *Perform ongoing and routine maintenance consistent with conservation of heritage fabric and in keeping with best practice.*

The CMP includes appendices with datasheets for the hard landscape elements within the park and botanic gardens. Appendix A.12 Traill Fountain describes it as:

A tall and elegant concrete fountain of graceful proportions, comprising a square base surmounted by two-tiered pedestal and basin forms with decorative motifs of dolphins, swans, acanthus leaves, an urn and a semi-clad woman. The fountain is painted off-white/ cream and sits within a small round pond. It is awkwardly

¹ page 28

² page 33

³ page 85

positioned to the south of the central axis of the garden, possibly as a result of the former location of the Raddenberry fernery.

In 2001 the fountain was restored with funds from the Commonwealth Government obtained through the efforts of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

The Traill fountain is noted as an ‘important and elegant ornamental features of the early (but not original) gardens’ and it ‘demonstrates the decorative elements and tastes of early 20th century civic ornamentation and the role of provincial public gardens as venues for pleasure and recreation’.

The datasheet lists both the integrity and condition of the fountain as being ‘good’.

5.0 Existing Condition of the Traill Fountain

The current condition of the Traill Fountain is poor. Various decorative pieces of the pressed cement fountain have fallen off including a section of one of the dishes. The fountain pond and pedestal base has sunk on one side such that the structure is now unstable and at risk of tilting further and potential collapse. A barrier has been placed around the fountain (construction fencing) to prevent access and protect the public from the potential of falling parts or collapse of the fountain.

The fountain has not been functional for some time. In 2023 a preliminary *Structural Condition Assessment* was undertaken by P J Yttrup & Associates and a *Condition and Remedial Works Report* prepared by Andrew Patience.

There is real concern that the condition of the fabric of the fountain is rapidly deteriorating in its current unstable and non-functional state.

6.0 Proposed Works

Due to lack of immediate funding for the anticipated substantial conservation works that will be required to be undertaken to the fountain, the City of Greater Geelong propose to implement a Strategy Plan that will address the immediate rapid deterioration of the fountain fabric (by dismantling it and placing it in storage) followed by a staged process for the restoration works and relocation of the Traill fountain over a five-year period.

Conservation Strategy Plan

The Conservation Strategy (Frontier Heritage, updated 7 July 2026), that is the subject of this Heritage Permit application provides the details of a staged project program over a 5 year period with the end result being a fully restored and functional Traill Fountain being reinstated in a new location within the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Stage 1 Dismantling and storing the Traill Fountain. [2026]

The first stage of the strategy is proposed to be implemented immediately to address the accelerated decay of the fabric due to its current condition. The scope includes the dismantling of the fountain and the placement of the dismantled sections of the fountain in secure storage. The methodology

and storage details are documented in Appendix A of the Conservation Strategy Plan.

Stage 2 *Detailed condition assessment and Documentation of Restoration Works [2027]*

The second stage of the strategy is to commission a Heritage Architect and Structural Engineer (and Hydraulics Engineer if required) to review the 2023 reports and undertake a detailed inspection of the stored pieces of the Traill Fountain and to document the required works for the full restoration and relocation of the fountain. This stage will also include obtaining necessary permits (Heritage Permit Condition submission and possibly Building Permit) and to seek quotes from suitably qualified contractors for the works. At the end of this stage, the City of Greater Geelong will then know the funding that will be needed for the restoration and relocation works.

Stage 3 *Part 1 of the Construction Implementation [2028]*

Ideally, the restoration works of the fountain and its relocation to the new site would be undertaken as a single project. However, if funding for the whole works isn't available in one financial year, it is possible to split the construction works into two parts with minimal financial impact. This first part of the works could include the construction of the pond and fountain plinth, along with the necessary water and power infrastructure at the new site.

Stage 4 *Part 2 of the Construction Implementation [2029-30]*

If available funds don't allow for the construction works to be undertaken in a single package (ie. stages 3 and 4 combined), this last stage of the strategy would be implementing the documented works for the restoration of the Fountain including the structural and hydraulics works. The fully restored and functioning fountain would then be installed on the plinth (constructed in Stage 3) in the new location in the Botanic Gardens.

Options considered

Initially the intent was to provide some structural support to the fountain in its current location until the required works were identified and documented and funding could be sourced for its restoration. This option proved inadequate due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the heritage fabric would continue to decay at a rapid pace; structural support in the current location would potentially require frequent monitoring and adjusting due to the unstable foundations and it is most likely that the fountain would need to be disassembled anyway when the restoration works are implemented to install the structural stability to the fountain shaft and to replace the pipework for the water supply system within the fountain shaft.

The option to reinstate the restored fountain in its current location was also the original intent. However, with further consideration of the problems associated with the current location, and in discussion with Geelong Botanic Gardens staff who are currently reviewing masterplan options, an alternate site within the gardens was investigated.

7.0 Information to support an assessment against sections 101(2) and 101(3) of the Heritage Act 2017

Impact of the proposal on the cultural heritage significance of the place or object

The impact on the cultural heritage significance of the Traill Fountain will ultimately be positive in that it will be fully restored and reinstated to a new, more appropriate setting and it will again be operational as a functioning fountain.

There will be some short-term negative impact to the broader heritage place in that the Traill Fountain will be dismantled and placed in storage for a length of time.

Inevitably, and unavoidably there will be some negative impact with the loss of original fabric when the fountain is dismantled and during the restoration works, however, this is far outweighed by the positive heritage outcomes of a fully restored operational fountain.

A further short term negative impact could result from the need to stage the project over a 5-year time frame.

Reasons why the proposed works should be supported.

1. General

If the proposed works are not supported and granted a permit the Traill Fountain will continue to rapidly deteriorate and ultimately the structure will collapse. These works need to begin now so that the scenario of the structure being beyond repair and restoration does not eventuate.

2. Dismantling and storing the Fountain

Not only is this component of the scope of works required to provide the applicant with time to source restoration funding, but it is also considered necessary to dismantle the fountain to adequately assess the current condition and enable structural augmentation of the fountain shaft and modifications or replacement of the water reticulation system through the fountain. As noted in the historical background section of the Conservation Strategy for the Traill Fountain, there have been problems with both the structural integrity and the water reticulation system of the fountain from as early as two years after it was originally constructed in Market Square, Geelong. Repairs and restoration works that have been undertaken to the fountain to date have not adequately addressed these fundamental issues.

The storage facility is a secure, watertight modern concrete tilt slab building in nearby Breakwater, operated by the applicant, the City of Greater Geelong. The

site is accessed via locked gates off Boundary Road and the storage facility with swipe key card entry available to limited staff only. Security cameras at the facility have recently been installed. A section of the store will be cordoned off for the Traill Fountain sections that will each be secured on pallets. Refer to the storage facility plan in Appendix A of the Traill Fountain Conservation Strategy.

3. Relocating the Fountain to a new site within the Geelong Botanic Gardens

The current location of the Traill Fountain is not the original location – the fountain was initially constructed in Market Square, Geelong in 1904 and moved to the Geelong Botanic Gardens in 1912. Hence, the specific location of the fountain within the Geelong Botanic Gardens is not of primary significance and its relocation will not impact on the broader significance of Eastern Park & Geelong Botanic Gardens within which the Traill Fountain is one of the listed structures.

The current location of the fountain has proven to be problematic with unstable fountains (possibly due to tree roots nearby) and maintenance issues due to excessive leaves and debris fouling the pond and drainage system and restricted access to the fountain due to path widths and adjacent garden beds. The proposed new location will not have these issues.

It is also noted that the ‘Eastern Park and Geelong Botanic Gardens Strategic Plan – Heritage Conservation Assessment and Conservation Management Plan’ (CMP) states that the Traill Fountain is more of a garden folly due to its awkward siting within the Botanic Gardens. The proposed relocation of the fountain will rectify this situation as the new location is an open and clear grassed area more appropriate for a functioning fountain enabling distant clear views etc.

4. Restoration and Reinstatement 5-year plan

The staged program should be supported as a means to achieving a comprehensive assessment and appropriate restoration scope of works with funding allocated to provide for the best outcome for the future of the Traill Fountain. The condition of the fountain is such that undertaking any patch repairing of the heritage fabric at this stage would be futile as it will not address the underlying significant structural issues. The staged 5-year program will enable time to investigate options and undertake testing as required to ensure that the necessary structural and hydraulic interventions can be undertaken with the least impact on the heritage values of the fountain.

As the cost of the restoration works is unknown and will only be known when the scope has been determined and documented, a staged program is necessary for the applicant to establish what funding is required and to get the funding included in Council’s budget.

8.0 Summary of impacts and conclusion

The impacts on the heritage significance of the Traill fountain from the proposed 5 year Conservation Strategy will be overwhelmingly positive at the completion. The currently fragile, dilapidated and structurally unsound fountain will deteriorate beyond restoration if these works are not commenced in the near future.

There will be some negative impact, however, it will be short term. In the short term, the fountain will be removed from the site and placed in storage pending full assessment, documentation and restoration works.

The positive impacts are that ultimately the fountain will be fully restored and made functional. The new location within the Geelong Botanic Gardens proposed for the fountain is also considered a positive heritage outcome. As noted in the CMP, the current location is awkward and consequently the fountain is displayed more as a garden folly than an operational fountain, and the fountain has already been moved (in 1912) from its original location in Market Square, Geelong. The new location will present the fountain in an appropriate setting with clear ground around it and vistas to it.

Recommended conditions and staging

It is recommended that the proposed staging of the works as outlined in the Conservation Strategy and this Heritage Impact Statement be granted a Heritage Permit, and that Stage 1 works, as detailed in Appendix A of the Conservation Strategy be approved in the permit.

Due to the exact location for temporary storage within the City of Greater Geelong's storage facility at Breakwater having not been confirmed to date, a condition requiring submission of a sketch plan and details of protection within the facility be submitted and approved by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, is recommended.

It is also recommended that Stages 2 -5 are addressed in the permit conditions where documentation for each stage should be submitted and approved by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria in the appropriate time frames identified in the Conservation Strategy.

end of report.