

# MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY

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## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

College Crescent, Carlton North

September 2024

Prepared for



SOUTHERN  
METROPOLITAN  
CEMETERIES TRUST

Prepared by

LOVELL CHEN

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

This report was prepared on the lands of the Wurundjeri people who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years. The Melbourne General Cemetery is also located on Wurundjeri Country. We acknowledge their stories, connection to land, water and culture which is embedded in Country, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We also acknowledge the contemporary connections to the Melbourne General Cemetery that may be held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This report includes a post-contact history that forms only a small part of the ongoing story.

## Quality Assurance Register

The following quality assurance register documents the development and issue of this report prepared by Lovell Chen Pty Ltd in accordance with our quality management system.

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## Referencing

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**Cover image** A contemporary view within the compartments of the Melbourne General Cemetery, looking east to the Dandenong Ranges





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Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

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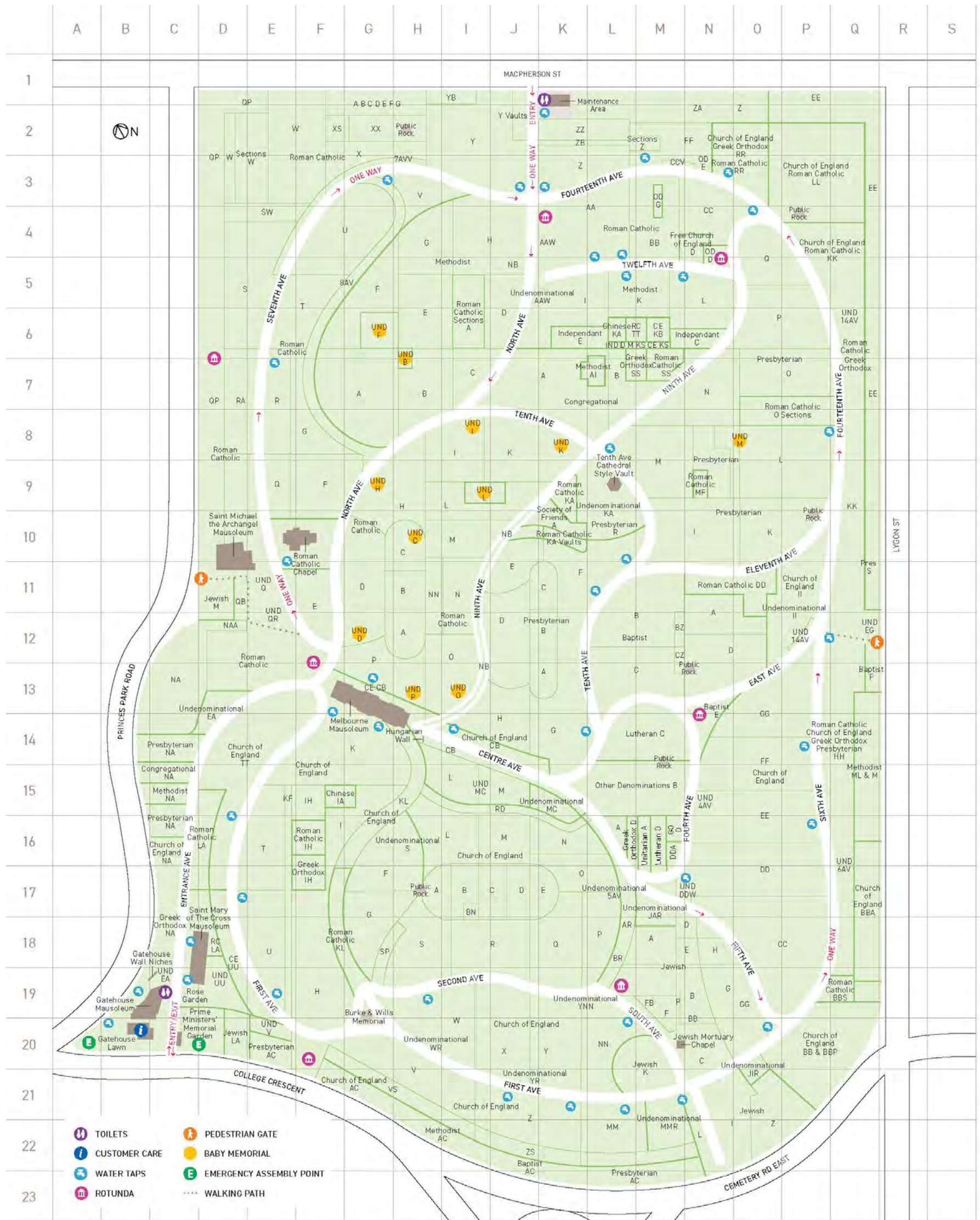
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Figure 1 Overview and major built elements and features of the Melbourne General Cemetery







**Figure 2** Melbourne General Cemetery Directory Map  
 Source: Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and brief

This Conservation Management Plan for the Melbourne General Cemetery has been prepared for the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT). We respectfully acknowledge that the Melbourne General Cemetery is located on Wurundjeri Country.

#### Melbourne General Cemetery

The Melbourne General Cemetery (MGC) is a 43 hectare (106 acre) site located in Carlton North, 1.5 km (1 mile) north of Melbourne's CBD. Today the cemetery is bounded by Cemetery Road East and College Crescent (south), Lygon Street (east), Hardy Reserve and Macpherson Street (north), and Princes Park Drive (west) (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). Reserved in the 1850s, the cemetery retains aspects of its original layout and character as a Victorian funereal landscape, while now accommodating approximately 300,000 burials. Beginning in the 1990s, several modern mausolea buildings were added to the site.

#### Heritage registration

Melbourne General Cemetery is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as a place of historical, social, aesthetic, scientific and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

As a registered place, the MGC is subject to the provisions and statutory requirements of the *Heritage Act 2017*, including a requirement to seek approval for most types of works within the place by way of a heritage permit issued by Heritage Victoria. Further detail is provided at **Sections 1.0 to 1.8** describing the statutory requirements that apply to the place under the Heritage Act as well as other legislation.

#### Conservation Management Plan purpose and objectives

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) can serve as an important guiding document to long-term management, strategic and capital planning, project design and permit application processes, and ongoing maintenance of a heritage place. While the CMP has no specific legal status under Victorian legislation, CMPs are important reference texts that describe the history, physical features and significance of heritage places, and statutory authorities (Heritage Victoria, the Heritage Council of Victoria and local planning authorities) will often give considerable weight to the research and policy recommendations they provide.

The updated *Melbourne General Cemetery CMP (2023)* has been produced to review and refine the analysis and policies provided by the first *Melbourne General Cemetery CMP (2014)*, which it now supersedes. The 2014 document was prepared for SMCT by Lovell Chen with subconsultants John Patrick Landscape Architects and Andrew Long & Associates.

The principal objectives of the CMP are to provide:

- Information and analysis which clarifies the heritage significance of the MGC and how this significance is reflected in the physical form and other characteristics of the cemetery site and its major built features, trees and landscape
- Guidance to SMCT and statutory and funding authorities to promote heritage conservation and planning for appropriate future works and development, having regard to the MGC's heritage significance. The CMP has been prepared on the basis that the MGC will remain an operational cemetery accommodating limited new burials and other memorials for the foreseeable future.



## 1.2 Statutory heritage recognition and implications

The MGC has been recognised in the Victorian Heritage Register as a place of heritage significance to the State of Victoria, and is subject to statutory requirements under the *Heritage Act 2017*. The cemetery is also listed in the Heritage Overlay to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. A summary of each listing and key requirements arising from them is provided below.

### *Heritage Act 2017 (Vic)*

The Heritage Act provides a legislative framework for the protection and conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance in Victoria. The Act applies principally to places and objects of non-Indigenous origin, as Aboriginal cultural heritage is the subject of separate legislation and statutory requirements established under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006.

The Heritage Act establishes the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), which serves to identify and protect heritage places and objects that are of significance to Victoria. A separate list, the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI), identifies known archaeological sites and establishes requirements which protect both listed and unknown archaeological sites of significance. The requirements of the Heritage Act are administered by the Heritage Council of Victoria, an appointed public body, and by Heritage Victoria, an agency of the Victorian government, which each have various powers established under the Act.

The Act establishes obligations for owners of registered heritage places and objects, and offenses and penalties for failure to abide by the Act's requirements, such as undertaking works without a permit, failing to maintain a registered place or object, disturbance of protected archaeology without a consent, and failure to abide by an order of the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

### *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)*

The Melbourne Planning Scheme is established and administered under the Planning and Environment Act. The scheme includes a Heritage Overlay (HO) at Clause 43.01, which identifies places of local and state significance (the latter by way of their inclusion in the VHR) and establishes planning permit requirements for types of works and activities which would occur within a place which is subject to the Heritage Overlay. The listing of VHR places within the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay is principally for administrative and information purposes, as no planning permit is required under the HO for VHR places except in the case of a proposal for subdivision (Clause 43.01-4).

Melbourne General Cemetery is listed in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as HO799; the mapped area of HO799 matches that established in the VHR extent of registration for the place.

While the HO's permit requirements apply only at the MGC in the case of subdivision, planning permit requirements continue to apply under other parts of the planning scheme, including:

<b>EXCEPTIONAL TREE REGISTER (ESO1)</b>	One tree within the MGC is identified on the Melbourne Exceptional Tree Register; works within the TPZ of this tree and any proposed lopping or removal requires a planning permit.
<b>ZONING</b>	Public Use Zone – Cemetery/crematorium. Pursuant to the zoning requirements, particular uses and development require a planning permit.

A town planner should be consulted to confirm the planning permit requirements that may apply to proposed works within the place.



### 1.3 Registered heritage place

Melbourne General Cemetery is included in the VHR as place number H1788.

The extent of registration as gazetted in 1999 and shown on the gazetted Diagram 1788 (**Figure 3**) includes all of the following:

**LAND** All of the Cemetery Reserve, forming part of Crown Parcel P361478, Allotment 1 of 118B, Crown Land Reserve Rs 8466, Township of Carlton at Jika Jika (2796B), Municipality of Melbourne (C).

**IDENTIFIED BUILDINGS**

- B1 Gatehouse and Gates at Southwest Corner.
- B2 South Gate.
- B3 West Gate.
- B4 North Gate.
- B5 Jewish Chapel.
- B6 Roman Catholic Chapel.
- B7 Chinese Funerary Oven.
- B8 Elvis Presley Memorial.
- B9 Rotundas (8).
- B10 Early Drinking Trough.

**IDENTIFIED ROADS, PATHS AND GUTTERS** All paths, roadways and gutters marked as P-1 on Diagram 1788

**IDENTIFIED MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS**

- M1 Burke & Wills
- M2 Major General Sir Robert Nickle
- M3 W. J. T. Clarke
- M4 Sir William John Clarke
- M5 Jewish Memorial in the Shape of Branched Candlestick
- M6 Derrimut
- M7 John Pascoe-Fawkner
- M8 Peter Lalor
- M9 Sir John O'Shannessy
- M10 John Alexander Burnett
- M11 Sir Robert Hoddle
- M12 James Henry Scullin
- M13 Walter Lindrum
- M14 Sir Charles Hotham
- M15 Sir Redmond Barry
- M16 Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke
- M17 Sir Isaac Isaacs
- M18 Jewish Soldiers Memorial
- M19 Vergona Monument
- M20 Ensign Vere Pennefather and Dr Macaulay

**IDENTIFIED  
MATURE TREES  
AND PLANTINGS**

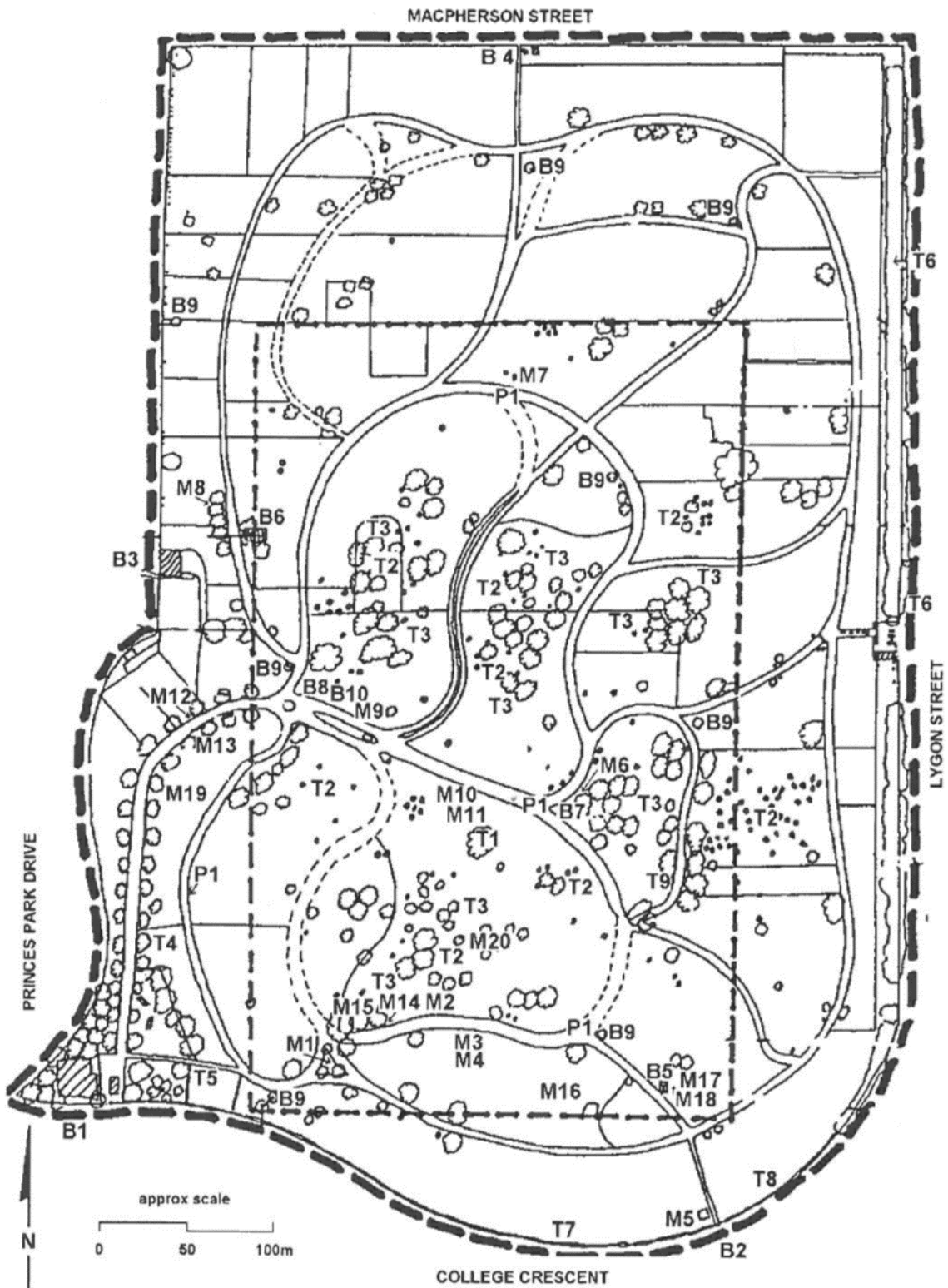
- T1 The Indian Long Leaved Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) located in Church of England M compartment.
- T2 The clumps of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempivirens*) in Church of England compartments A-G, I, K, L-S, EE, FF; Roman Catholic compartments, A-D, H, I, K-P; and Presbyterian compartments A-H and I.
- T3 The clumps of Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle* var. *areira*) in Church of England A-G, K, L-S, W compartments; Roman Catholic A-D, H, I, K-P, DD compartments; Presbyterian A-H, K compartments; Baptist A & B compartments; and Other Denominations B compartment.
- T4 The avenue of Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) on Entrance Avenue (noting that this planting has been removed).
- T5 The Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) in the Prime Minister's Garden.
- T6 The row of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Horizontalis Aurea') along the east boundary.
- T7 The hedgerow of Karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) along the south boundary.
- T8 The hedgerow of Californian Privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) along the southeast boundary.
- T9 The Elm trees (*Ulmus* sp.) along Fourth Avenue.

Heritage Act considerations apply to other elements of the place and are not restricted to the listed elements identified in the VHR registration. A heritage permit or other approval from Heritage Victoria is required for most works within the place, including works which would change or remove elements which are not identified in the list above.

**Section 3.0** of this CMP updates the heritage significance assessment for the MGC in light of its current condition, available historical information and the contemporary standards and practices for assessment of VHR places that have been established by the Heritage Council of Victoria and Heritage Victoria in the decades since the MGC was included in the VHR. Based on this assessment, elements of heritage significance are listed and mapped at **Sections 3.4, 3.5** and **3.6**, this includes a number of significant trees and built features not listed in the VHR registration. The significance of some listed elements of the place has been contextualised in the reassessment, with some features being identified as having a 'Contributory' value rather than an intrinsic significance; in some cases, these features may be managed in a different way to those identified as 'Significant'.

A Statement of Significance for the MGC is maintained by Heritage Victoria and published on the Victorian Heritage Database; the statement published by Heritage Victoria dates to the 1999 registration. The place's VHR registration, including attached exemptions and policies, and the Statement of Significance published by Heritage Victoria are reproduced at the end of this CMP as **Appendix A**.

In consideration of the updated assessment of significance described above, a revised Statement of Significance for the MGC has been developed as part of this CMP and is included at **Section 3.7**. This updated statement should be referenced in ongoing management of the MGC, and in planning and assessing the impact of proposed works and developments at the place. Based on the findings of the 2024 CMP, the statement included here is now the most recent and accurate statement of the place's heritage values, and Heritage Victoria should be encouraged to adopt this statement or to update the published statement to reflect these findings.



**Figure 3** Extent of VHR registration  
Source: Victorian Government Gazette

## 1.4 Heritage permits

Under the Heritage Act, most physical works and alterations within a VHR registered place (including removal, relocation, demolition, damage or despoiling, development, alterations or excavation) require approval by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria in the form of a heritage permit, except where an exemption from permit requirements has been legally granted under the Act.

<b>Process and timeframe</b>	The heritage permit application process is administered by Heritage Victoria; the Act establishes a 45 business day statutory timeframe for the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria determine to approve or refuse the permit (the clock can be stopped or extended in various circumstances).
<b>Application requirements</b>	<p>A heritage permit application will typically include drawings and other documentation which describes the proposed works, a heritage impact statement, and the payment of an application fee. In some cases, application can be made to the Heritage Council to waive the application fee.</p> <p>When planning works for which a heritage permit application will be required, consultation with a suitably qualified heritage consultant and other specialists is often recommended. A heritage consultant can assist an applicant to confirm the application requirements, review proposed documentation, develop heritage conservation works, assess the project's potential heritage impacts and its consistency with the requirements of the Heritage Act and the policies recommended in this CMP, and to provide design advice to mitigate or manage potential detrimental impacts to the significance of the heritage place.</p> <p>For complex proposals, pre-application meetings are typically held with Heritage Victoria officers prior to lodgement to brief the proposed works and identify potential considerations and areas of interest from Heritage Victoria's perspective which can be addressed in the application.</p>
<b>Public notice period</b>	Where a proposal has the potential to pose harm to the significance of the place, the Act requires a public notice period (typically 14 days) and consideration of public submissions. The statutory planning authority is also treated as a referral authority under the Act and may make a submission.
<b>Determining the permit</b>	The Heritage Act requires the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria to consider the impact (harm) of proposed works to the heritage significance of the registered place. The Act also establishes other considerations which may apply to the determination, including the impact of a permit refusal on reasonable or economic use of the place, or on the statutory functions and duties of a public authority.
<b>Permit Conditions</b>	<p>Heritage permits are typically granted with conditions, which may require the submission of finalised documentation for endorsement, plans which ensure the protection of the place and its elements (such as trees) during the approved works, delivery of heritage interpretation or other works and guarantees. Conditions are often tailored to the specific risks or impacts of a proposal, where further mitigation is deemed to be required to ensure that the works do not harm the significance of the place.</p> <p>The conditions which are applied to heritage permits are often more specialised or address the provision of documentation or actions broader than those typically addressed by the conditions of a town planning permit.</p>
<b>Appeal</b>	Permits which have been refused may be appealed to the Heritage Council. Appeal may also be made to amend the conditions of an approved permit.

## 1.5 Heritage permit exemptions

The Heritage Act establishes several categories and processes by which a permit exemption may be granted for minor works within a registered heritage place. These works are usually of a minor or typical nature which are considered to have no potential to harm the place's heritage significance.

**s.90 exemption (religious)** An exemption is provided in the Act for the purposes of religious services or rites.

**s.91 exemption (subdivision)** Exemption is provided in the Act for works or activities included within a permit of subdivision, where this was referred to the Executive Director as a determining referral authority under the Planning and Environment Act

**s.92(3) exemption**  
**Specific permit exemption** s.92(3) allows the owner of a registered place or object to make **an application for permit exemption** to Heritage Victoria for particular works or activities. If granted, approved works may be undertaken without a heritage permit.  
This is a streamlined application to approve proposed works or activities (described or documented in the application). No application fee applies. The Executive Director must determine if the proposal has the potential to impact (harm) the heritage significance of the place; where there is a potential for impact, a heritage permit must be applied for.

**s.92(1) Standing, place specific permit exemptions** Standing permit exemptions are usually established for individual VHR registered places by a determination of the Heritage Council to identify projects, works and activities which are specific to that place and for which a heritage permit is not required. These can be updated by way of an application to amend the registration.

As the standing permit exemptions for most places were adopted prior to the publication of the General Permit Exemptions, there is often an overlap between standing permit exemptions and the new general exemptions. However, there are often more specialised exemptions granted for works to specific buildings and elements of a place, or to facilitate the ongoing operation of the place.

Standing permit exemptions for the MGC are organised in five categories, refer to Appendix A for the list of works for which a standing exemption is granted:

### **General**

- A number of works in accordance with the Cemeteries Act 1958 (now superseded by the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act), subject to conditions

### **Stabilisation, restoration and repair of monuments**

- Lists emergency and repair works to monuments
- Also allows demolition, alteration or removal of buildings and monuments not specified (numbered) in the extent of registration

### **Exterior to Buildings B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7 and B8**

- Lists minor repairs, maintenance and repainting; further exemptions for exterior works may be provided through the *General Permit Exemptions*, refer below

### **Interior to Buildings B1, B5, B6, B7 and B8**

- Lists minor interior works within five buildings; further exemptions for other types of interior works may be provided through the *General Permit Exemptions*

### **Layout and Landscaping**

- Lists various minor maintenance works to roads, paths, fences, gates and infrastructure, weed removal, gardening and replanting subject to conditions.

s.92(1)  
**General Permit Exemptions**

A comprehensive list of minor works has been published by Heritage Victoria for which permit exemptions are granted subject to various conditions, the current document is the *General Permit Exemptions* (Heritage Victoria, August 2024) and is available for download through the Heritage Victoria website. It includes a variety of works and activities under fourteen categories:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Maintenance and cleaning</b>        | <b>8. Cemeteries and burial sites</b>           |
| <b>2. Minor repairs</b>                   | <b>9. Vegetation and landscape management</b>   |
| <b>3. Painting and wallpapering</b>       | <b>10. Temporary events and structures</b>      |
| <b>4. Internal fitouts</b>                | <b>11. Signage</b>                              |
| <b>5. Testing, survey and exploration</b> | <b>12. Transport operations (rail and road)</b> |
| <b>6. Services</b>                        | <b>13. Agricultural operations</b>              |
| <b>7. Safety and security</b>             | <b>14. Traditional owners' rights</b>           |

Many ordinary works at the MGC qualify for exemptions granted under the General Permit Exemptions. Planners and managers should refer to the General Permit Exemptions to determine if proposed works or activities qualify for an exemption.

Where the applicability of an existing permit exemption to planned works is unclear, clarification should be sought from Heritage Victoria or with the help of a suitably qualified consultant. When undertaking works under an exemption, other requirements of the Heritage Act continue to apply.

## 1.6 Management of monuments and memorials

Under the provisions of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act*, SMCT is not responsible for the maintenance and repair of monuments, whether historic or contemporary. Rather, this responsibility lies with the holder of the right of interment. The Act identifies the role and responsibilities of cemetery trusts in ensuring the safety of monuments and in managing any risk to the public. These provisions include the dismantling and disposal or the repair of the monument in certain circumstances, if the trust chooses and where the holder to the right of interment cannot be located.

The Act limits the actions of the cemetery trust in maintaining memorials to specific circumstances.

For memorials where the holder of the right of interment can be located, SMCT may order the holder to undertake repairs where they have 'failed to maintain the memorial in a safe and proper condition' and, where this order has not been complied with, to undertake the repairs and seek to recover the costs from the rights holder. However, the Act restricts 'safe and proper condition' to dangerous conditions and noxious fumes. Many conservation works need to be undertaken prior to an unsafe condition existing in order to maintain memorials of historical value at the site.

Where the holder of the right of interment cannot be located, SMCT may undertake to maintain, repair or restore any memorial subject to the approval of the Secretary and that funds other than the trust funds are used to fund the repair. Public and private grants can be used under the Act to achieve the restoration of historical memorials at the MGC which fall into this category.



## 1.7 Aboriginal heritage, cultural values and associations

The land, waterways and high ground now occupied by the MGC are situated within the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nations. Historical accounts tell us the high ground north of the Melbourne settlement continued to be visited and cared for by Wurundjeri people and visitors from the other Kulin nations, in the years immediately following European settlement at Melbourne.

European contact, the establishment of Melbourne and the Colony of Victoria, and finally reservation and development of the MGC beginning in the 1850s represented a profound disruption of Indigenous society, values, and the cultural use and management of Country at this place.

Early European colonists recorded the use of the hills and Country now occupied by the MGC, Princes Park and Royal Park as camp grounds and corroboree sites by Aboriginal visitors during the 1840s and 1850s. However, Wurundjeri and Kulin Nations people's use and care for Country and their freedom of movement across it were rapidly undermined by the expanding European settlements, enclosure and transformation of the land, laws restricting Aboriginal people's movements and other freedoms, and violence inflicted by squatters, settlers and colonial police.

Despite this ongoing displacement, Aboriginal people continued to visit and make associations on the north side of Melbourne. For instance, from the 1850s through the 1880s, Kulin people dealt with a series of colonial officers and facilities which had been established in Royal Park, making a variety of new relationships and associations to that site.

During the same period, as a public cemetery the MGC was the burial site for individuals from the Kulin nations, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had come to Melbourne and Victoria from more distant Country. The cemetery includes the grave and monument erected to honour the Bunurong leader Derrimut, and colonial era burials of other Kulin people who resided around Melbourne and at the Coranderrk Aboriginal Station near Healesville. Derrimut's Grave is identified in the VHR registration for the place as Monument M6, and has also been listed in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR). Other burials within the MGC which have cultural values and associations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may be unmarked or unrecorded.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have resided at or visited Melbourne and its surrounding suburbs since the nineteenth century have formed their own relationships and associations with the site. The cemetery is also close to places and landscapes in surrounding suburbs which include pre-contact cultural heritage and more recent historical and cultural values and associations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These include nearby parks and gardens, as well as places in Fitzroy, Carlton and other suburbs which have been important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing at or visiting Melbourne in recent times.

Wurundjeri people remain the stewards and protectors of the Country that includes the MGC. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for the area which includes the MGC. WWCHAC should be consulted when considering works, activities and initiatives which may impact or address Aboriginal cultural heritage and cultural values at the place.

A recommendation respecting future recognition and reconciliation with Aboriginal heritage and cultural values is included in **Section 4.5 (Policy 6)**.



## 1.8 Summary of statutory and legislative frameworks

Legislation	Summary
<i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for the management and operation of cemeteries and crematoria and repealed the Cemeteries Act 1958.</li> <li>s.12A requires that Cemetery Trusts ‘have regard to ... the heritage values (if any) of the public cemetery for which it is responsible.’ s.24(3)(c) requires a Trust to comply with the Heritage Act when considering changes to distribution of land to religious denominations, communities or other groups.</li> </ul>
<i>Heritage Act 2017</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for the protection, management and conservation of places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register, and archaeology including unidentified archaeology of 75 or more years old.</li> <li>Requires permits or another form of approval from Heritage Victoria for all buildings and works within the site, other than where these are specified as permit-exempt.</li> <li>The provisions of the Heritage Act do not control the use of a place, only the physical impacts required to undertake the use.</li> </ul>
<i>Planning and Environment Act, 1987</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a framework for planning, use, development and protection of land.</li> <li>The Melbourne Planning Scheme applies to the MGC, and identifies the zoning for the site and any applicable overlays. The MGC is identified as a Public Use Zone – PUZ5 Cemetery/crematorium (Clause 36.01-6) and is subject to the heritage overlay (Clause 43.01). A tree within the cemetery is subject to the Environmental Significance Overlay (Clause 42.01, Schedule 2).</li> </ul>
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.</li> <li>Establishes a register of Aboriginal sites and includes approval requirements for particular activities.</li> <li>One registered Aboriginal cultural heritage place is located within the MGC site and a second registered place is situated outside of but immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the cemetery. Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity as defined under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i> include 50 metre buffers around registered places; a cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) may be required within these areas of sensitivity.</li> </ul>
<i>Disability Discrimination Act, 1992</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intent of this Act is to eliminate discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability, ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are equitable before the law with the rest of the community and promote recognition and acceptance of equal rights of those with disabilities.</li> <li>Discrimination under this Act can arise in relation to the provision of access to a place (s.23). At the MGC this would apply to access to buildings and structures and within the cemetery on roadways and paths.</li> </ul>
Building Code of Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BCA intends to achieve national standards in the areas of safety, health and amenity. As applicable to the MGC, this document addresses the national regulations in construction for access and egress and safety of structures.</li> </ul>
<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Act requires employers ensure employees’ safety in the work environment. As applicable to the MGC, there are potential risks to employees from injury in an unsafe work environment. For example, risks arise from the condition of elevated monuments, trees, roads and paths, and buildings.</li> </ul>

## 1.9 Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

SMCT was established in 2010 under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act as a Class A cemetery trust, a public not-for-profit body which is governed by a board of trustees appointed by the Victorian government. That Act establishes the trust's structure, functions, obligations, management powers and responsibilities, and other requirements, including reporting requirements to the Minister for Health.

SMCT is responsible for the operation and management of the MGC and eight other cemeteries and memorial parks in metropolitan Melbourne, with a total land area of 379 hectares.

### Managing a heritage cemetery

Under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act [s. 12A(2)], SMCT must have regard for the MGC's heritage values, the cultural values and religious values of the community, and for its obligations to fund the perpetual maintenance of the nine cemeteries under its management. At the MGC, SMCT is responsible for management of the public infrastructure, roads, paths, landscaping and buildings, and for the site's general operation.

The MGC and many other cemeteries managed by SMCT are considered to be in a 'perpetual' maintenance stage. As most spaces have been sold or licensed at these sites, opportunities to raise revenue from sale or tenure of burial and memorial spaces are constrained, while the trust remains responsible for maintaining the site in perpetuity. Operations and maintenance must be funded from SMCT's financial reserves, with limited opportunity to secure public grants for specific works.

Historically, the financial reserves established through initial sales at the MGC and other public trust cemeteries proved insufficient to fund ongoing maintenance. Although SMCT's reserves have been supplemented by development of new cemeteries in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, pressure to limit operational costs remains a key challenge which affects conservation and management of MGC and the trust's other heritage cemeteries.

### Landscape and infrastructure

SMCT is responsible for the maintenance of grounds, landscaping, roads and path infrastructure at the MGC. The condition of the cemetery landscape as it exists today is the result of a number of extremely impactful twentieth century decisions that occurred under previous trust managers before SMCT's establishment, and which responded in their own way to the critical challenges that arise from perpetual maintenance of a 43-hectare cemetery with limited operating revenues and perpetual costs.

Much of the historical landscape of the MGC has been lost, reallocated to twentieth century burials or eroded during the decades in which herbicide spraying was a primary maintenance tool. Opportunities to reinstate historical landscape features such as formal tree plantations, or to improve tree canopy cover across the cemetery are extremely limited as almost all free land area within the site has been given over to burials. At the MGC today, it is essential to conserve remaining landscape features and areas (such as the central landscapes within compartments) of historical significance, and to develop new management strategies that serve to improve the quality of the landscape more broadly.

To this end, SMCT has developed and implemented a pilot programme called **Project Cultivate** which seeks to restore living groundcover within some of those areas which have been badly impacted by historical herbicide use and erosion. The programme commenced in 2023 and utilises indigenous plant selections consistent with the native vegetation which was historically recorded in the cemetery as late as the 1980s. The aims of the programme are laudable, and should be extended to other cemetery sections impacted by loss of groundcover and corresponding drainage and erosion issues. This initiative, which has shown good early results, is referenced in various locations in the current report.

Extensive deficits of backlog maintenance affect the physical infrastructure of the MGC, including its fencing and gates, smaller roads, and the extensive secondary path system within the gridded burial compartments. The extensive nature of much of this infrastructure appears to vastly exceed that which can reasonably be maintained through the trust's annual operations budgets and ordinary capital works planning.

As of 2024, SMCT is working to resolve extensive condition issues affecting the perimeter fencing as a priority, stemming from a series of external events which damaged sections of fence as well as the Main Gate. Urgent fence and gate works at the first three locations alone will require millions of dollars to complete, and do not address other sections of fence where minor damage and deterioration has been accumulating over many decades. As detailed below, an updated (2023) *Condition Assessment and Maintenance Plan* was prepared in conjunction with the CMP to understand the current condition of significant buildings and structures within the MGC, and to prioritise repair and remediation works to these features. Various urgent works have been initiated by SMCT to implement the recommendations of that assessment.

Further work by SMCT is needed, both to improve its own asset management planning and to make necessary representations to Department of Health and other relevant authorities within the Victorian Government about the funding and funding models necessary to resolve both the MGC's deferred maintenance burden and the ongoing, lifecycle investments that will be required to conserve the heritage significance of this public cemetery.

### Monuments

In most circumstances SMCT is not responsible for individual burial sites, headstones and monuments. Maintenance of these sites and features is the responsibility of individual holders of the deeds of right which were purchased from the trust. At the MGC, a number of larger buildings and monuments are similarly the responsibility of religious organisations or other bodies, and are not managed or maintained by SMCT.

The only exception to this division of responsibility is in instances where SMCT believes that a monument or place of interment is not in a 'safe or proper condition' (s.106 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, 2003*). In such cases, under the terms of that Act, SMCT may carry out repairs or make good the grave or headstone, although there is little to no funding available to do this. Because interments were generally sold and protected by legislation in perpetuity, many burial sites are no longer actively maintained by descendants of the original rights holders and are in deleterious condition.

Conservation and management policies in this CMP focus on the elements, aspects and management considerations at the MGC for which the Trust is responsible. While the heritage registration for the place generally recognises this distinction, a number of buildings and monuments are identified as significant features within the place which are the responsibility of other parties.

A detailed analysis of individual graves, monuments and memorials is beyond the scope of this report. This CMP acknowledges the significant features identified in the VHR extent of registration, however it is recognised that there are limits to the policy guidance which can be provided to support conservation and management of features outside of SMCT's responsibility. **Policy 30** and **Policy 31** in **Section 4.11** recommend that SMCT engage other relevant parties within government and in civil society to secure support for the assessment and conservation of historically significant monuments at the MGC.

### Perpetual maintenance and building conservation

In practice, it appears that under the current funding model, there has often been insufficient funding available to support proactive maintenance and best practice conservation of the MGC's significant

buildings and built fabric. SMCT has taken steps over the last few years to plan and implement a number of critical and priority works at the MGC, however there remains the sense that the full backlog of deferred maintenance and rectification works cannot be implemented at a pace sufficient to redress existing disrepair and tackle new issues as they emerge.

In considering its own statutory authority as well as the obligations that apply under the Heritage Act, it is incumbent on SMCT to improve its asset management processes and forward planning to ensure that state-significant features of the MGC are conserved. As part of this, there is a need to provide clear and ongoing evidence to the Department of Health and other relevant parties of the scale and nature of the conservation and maintenance requirements at the MGC, and to seek funds and authorities that support effective management of these assets.

There is a need for SMCT to make better and more effective use of all existing funding pathways, including the special grant programmes for heritage cemeteries that are administered by the Department. However, SMCT should also liaise on an ongoing basis with senior public managers to pursue a long-term special funding stream to support maintenance of state-significant heritage assets in Victoria's public cemeteries. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Victorian government to identify a sustainable funding model to maintain historically significant perpetual care cemeteries, or if one cannot be identified, to alter the legal framework that prevents the resale of rights of interment within existing burial spaces. **Policy 9 (Section 4.6)** provides further recommendations with respect to state government liaison to address the shortfalls in funding required to maintain the MGC.

## 1.10 Conservation Management Plan structure and companion documents

### Melbourne General Cemetery CMP (2023) (this document)

As noted above, the CMP for the MGC provides detailed information and policies to guide the conservation of the heritage significance of the place.

This CMP broadly follows the principles set out in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (2013)*, adopted by Australia ICOMOS on 31 October 2013, to assist in the conservation of heritage places. It also has regard for the Practice Notes associated with the Burra Charter (2013), and *The Conservation Plan, A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance*, prepared by James Semple Kerr (National Trust, 2004).

For readability and ease of reference, the current document is organised in five sections, with additional supporting information provided in a series of appendices.

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	This section introduces the CMP and provides an initial reference point for using this document as well as for the statutory heritage requirements which apply to the MGC.
<b>2</b>	<b>The Place</b>	A short-form history and physical description of the MGC.  The history, characteristics and features of the MGC is relevant to an understanding of its significance and contemporary condition, and provides important context for policies, planning and management decisions which may affect the future of the site.  It can be read as an introduction to the heritage place, as well as to inform the rationale for the assessment of the site's significance and for the recommended management and conservation policies.

<b>3</b>	<b>Significance</b>	This chapter provides a summary of the previously assessed heritage significance of the place (as recognised in its VHR registration) and updates this assessment to current information and best practices.
<b>4</b>	<b>Management Framework (Policies)</b>	<p>The management policies provide a framework for conserving the heritage significance of the MGC and for managing issues, conditions, operational challenges and emerging requirements and strategic considerations which have the potential to influence the conservation of the site and its values in the future.</p> <p>Each policy consists of a brief overarching recommendation or objective, and is followed by further information which provides a background and rationale for the policy and considerations which may be relevant for future decisions.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Conservation recommendations (Datasheets)</b>	<p>Significant elements of the place are addressed in this section in the form of individual datasheets which provide more detailed historical and physical information and recommendations to support their long term management and conservation.</p> <p>Non-significant elements (modern features and fabric which have not been ascribed a heritage value) are addressed on a more limited basis.</p>

Two companion documents have been prepared which accompany the updated MGC CMP, these are detailed below.

#### **Melbourne General Cemetery Condition Assessment and Maintenance Plan**

In conjunction with development of the updated CMP, a Condition Assessment and Maintenance Plan for significant built features within the MGC was prepared by Lovell Chen. The assessment documents a visual audit of the physical condition of buildings and built elements of heritage significance within the MGC which are under the management of SMCT, and provides maintenance, repair and rectification works recommendations categorised on a priority basis (Urgent, Priority A and Priority B).

The Condition Assessment has informed the findings and conservation policies of the CMP, and where relevant the two documents should be read in concert.

#### **Melbourne General Cemetery Heritage User Guide**

In conjunction with adoption and finalisation of the updated CMP, a Heritage User Guide will be prepared for the MGC. The purpose of this brief document is to provide a concise reference to understand the heritage values and statutory responsibilities that apply to the MGC, and to point the manager to further information where required in the CMP and from other sources.

When planning major works or changes within the place, the Heritage User Guide serves to provide an initial source of guidance and road map to managing the heritage values and obligations at the place. After referring to the Heritage User Guide, many queries, works and projects will require follow-up review of the CMP's information and policies, and some may require the engagement of specialist advice from a Heritage Consultant (and other relevant professionals) and consultation with Heritage Victoria.

## 1.11 Heritage management policies

The following management policies are established under this CMP to guide management and conservation of the heritage significance of the MGC. A rationale and considerations for implementation of each policy are detailed in **Section 4.0**.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW (Section 4.5)		Pg
<b>Policy 1</b>	<b>Adoption and implementation of conservation management plan</b>	<b>92</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt the MGC CMP as a key reference for future planning and management decisions at the place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 2</b>	<b>Integration of the CMP into operational and strategic planning</b>	<b>92</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include review of the MGC CMP objectives, policies and priorities within SMCT's regular operational, programme/budget and strategic reviews.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 3</b>	<b>Induction and awareness activities</b>	<b>92</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide relevant heritage inductions and resources for staff and contractors.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 4</b>	<b>Expert advice and skills</b>	<b>93</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek specialist heritage advice before proposing or undertaking actions or works that are likely to have an impact on the heritage values and significant physical elements of the place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 5</b>	<b>Review of the CMP</b>	<b>93</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the status and fit-for-purpose of the MGC CMP on a five-year basis and when preparing to undertake major change.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 6</b>	<b>Aboriginal cultural values</b>	<b>93</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the Registered Aboriginal Party to understand and manage cultural values at the MGC.</li> </ul>	
<b>CEMETERY OPERATIONS (Section 4.6)</b>		
<b>Policy 7</b>	<b>Planning and allocation of new burial sites</b>	<b>94</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an internal assessment procedure (checklist) when considering the allocation of new burial sites within the MGC.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 8</b>	<b>New internal and external uses of the site and buildings</b>	<b>95</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support new and updated uses of the MGC and its buildings where these are compatible with the place and fund physical conservation works.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 9</b>	<b>Funding and fundraising</b>	<b>96</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with government the need to facilitate and fund the conservation of historically significant elements of the place, including buildings, infrastructure and historically significant monuments</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 10</b>	<b>Public interpretation</b>	<b>96</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding to support the development and implementation of a site-wide heritage interpretation plan.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 11</b>	<b>Use and public access</b>	<b>97</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the use of the place as a public cemetery.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 12</b>	<b>Risk management</b>	<b>97</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential risks associated with the Melbourne General Cemetery and develop an appropriate risk management strategy.</li> </ul>	

## DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE SITE (Section 4.7)

<b>Policy 13</b>	<b>Adaptation and use of Gatehouse</b>	<b>98</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain use of the Gatehouse, including adaptation works to achieve compliant access and fit-for-purpose internal spaces.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 14</b>	<b>New buildings and structures</b>	<b>99</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siting, form, height and design of any new development should have regard for heritage significance and the development's potential impacts.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 15</b>	<b>New in-ground burials and alternative memorials</b>	<b>100</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The addition of new burial spaces to any part of the MGC should not have an adverse physical or visual impact on significant elements</li> <li>• Outside of existing burial compartments, new burials and other memorials should be planned carefully and designed to conserve the MGC's heritage significance.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 16</b>	<b>Archaeology</b>	<b>104</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek specialist advice and consult with Heritage Victoria prior to undertaking subsurface excavations in non-burial areas.</li> </ul>	

## CONSERVATION OF BUILDINGS AND BUILT ELEMENTS (Section 4.8)

<b>Policy 17</b>	<b>Significant buildings and structures</b>	<b>105</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant buildings and structures should be retained and conserved in accordance with the policies in this CMP.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 18</b>	<b>Maintenance and conservation works</b>	<b>105</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake the urgent and priority works identified in the <i>Melbourne General Cemetery Condition Assessment</i> (Lovell Chen 2023).</li> <li>• Establish an annual inspection and maintenance program, including provision within capital works budgets for conservation and repair of significant elements.</li> <li>• In the absence of an annual capital works program, undertake a new Condition Assessment of significant buildings and structures on at least a five-year basis.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 19</b>	<b>Conservation and care of significant fabric</b>	<b>106</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All future conservation and other works to significant fabric should be carried out in accordance with the principles of The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.</li> </ul>	

## CONSERVATION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (Section 4.9)

<b>Policy 20</b>	<b>Layout and circulation</b>	<b>107</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain the original features and presentation of the cemetery's historical layout, including its serpentine road network and the formal gridded layout of internal compartments and secondary paths.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 21</b>	<b>Road materials</b>	<b>107</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain surface treatment of the serpentine road network as asphalt, retain bluestone picher and brick drainage channels to roadways where these survive.</li> <li>• Repair or replace deteriorated secondary path surfaces and drainage systems.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 22</b>	<b>Compartment and road signage</b>	<b>110</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve cast iron signage identifying compartments, road names and other features within the place.</li> </ul>	



<b>Policy 23</b>	<b>Barrier free and safe access</b>	<b>110</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve the heritage significance of historical structures when designing visitor access and safety improvements within the place.</li> </ul>	
<b>TREES AND LANDSCAPE (Section 4.10)</b>		
<b>Policy 24</b>	<b>Significant trees and landscape features</b>	<b>115</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve significant trees and landscapes identified in this CMP.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 25</b>	<b>Tree management</b>	<b>115</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage significant trees in a manner consistent with best practices for heritage trees and with the Australian Standard AS4970</li> <li>• Adopt risk management strategies that limit pruning impacts to significant trees</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a Tree Management Plan for the site.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 26</b>	<b>New tree planting selections</b>	<b>116</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select new tree planting species to reinforce the characteristic diversity of the Victorian cemetery landscape and support ecological / environmental objectives.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 27</b>	<b>Boundary hedges and screening plantings</b>	<b>118</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the site boundaries to maintain characteristic qualities of the cemetery landscape, including a sense of enclosure and protection from adjacent roadways.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 28</b>	<b>Groundcover vegetation and gardening</b>	<b>120</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote ecologically and contextually appropriate groundcovers that contribute to the MGC's aesthetic qualities and support conservation of the heritage place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 29</b>	<b>Rockeries</b>	<b>122</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a restoration and adaptation programme that provides a sustainable purpose and funding to conserve the MGC's four historical rockery features.</li> </ul>	
<b>MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS (Section 4.11)</b>		
<b>Policy 30</b>	<b>Heritage significance of monuments and memorials</b>	<b>125</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage funding agencies and statutory authorities to survey and assess monuments and memorials of potential historical significance.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 31</b>	<b>Condition of significant monuments</b>	<b>125</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With external funding partners, facilitate condition reviews and priority repairs of identified significant monuments and memorials on at least a five-year basis</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy 32</b>	<b>General maintenance of graves, monuments and memorials</b>	<b>126</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to rights holders on the maintenance of graves, monuments and memorials, including Heritage Act responsibilities where required.</li> </ul>	
<b>RECORDS (Section 4.12)</b>		
<b>Policy 33</b>	<b>Records management</b>	<b>127</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain historic paper-based records in an archivally appropriate storage facility.</li> <li>• Index, digitise and support sustainable online access to MGC historical records.</li> </ul>	
<b>AMENDMENTS TO VHR REGISTRATION (Section 4.13)</b>		
<b>Policy 34</b>	<b>VHR registration amendment</b>	<b>127</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an application to amend the VHR registration to update this statutory instrument to reflect the current condition and assessed significance of the place.</li> </ul>	

## 1.12 Previous reports

As noted, the updated CMP is based principally on the *Melbourne General Cemetery CMP* (Lovell Chen, 2014), as reviewed and supplemented with additional research, analysis and site investigations.

The 2014 CMP reviewed and referenced a variety of historical and analytical sources, including the findings of two previous management plans:

- *Melbourne General Cemetery, South Western Section, Conservation Management Plan* (Bruce Trethowan, May 2003)
- *Melbourne General Cemetery, History and Recommendations, Volume 1* (Gerner & Sanderson Pty Ltd, February 1988).

## 1.13 Limitations

### Aboriginal cultural heritage and cultural values

The updated CMP addresses the historical heritage of the MGC as a registered heritage place which is the subject to statutory controls under the Heritage Act.

The updated CMP does not provide policies or recommendations to address the statutory requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, or the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and cultural values which may be present within the MGC.

#### *Aboriginal Heritage Act requirements*

The 2014 CMP incorporated within its appendices a brief memorandum (Andrew Long & Associates, February 2014) which described the implications and requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act within the MGC. While advice contained in the ALA memo may continue to apply, the memorandum itself is not considered to be current and does not form a part of the current CMP.

At least one site within the MGC is the subject of statutory listing and requirements under both the Heritage Act and Aboriginal Heritage Act, this is understood to be Derrimut's Grave.

- Although this monument is not under the direct management of SMCT, it is noted for information that where works or activities are considered which may impact on this grave site and monument, specialist advice should be sought to guide management of this site under both the Heritage Act and Aboriginal Heritage Act, including engagement with the Registered Aboriginal Party and other parties with an association to this burial site.

Other Aboriginal cultural heritage sites may be registered through the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR), or may be added to the register in future.

Preparation of updated advice with respect to the statutory requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act were beyond the scope of the MGC CMP update project.

A qualified specialist should be engaged by SMCT to prepare updated advice where this is required to ensure that works and activities at the MGC are consistent with the statutory requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act. This may include instances where a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) or other actions or approvals are required by legislation.

SMCT should maintain this independent advice on file, as well as records pertaining to any registered Aboriginal cultural heritage sites which are located within the MGC.

### *Recognition and management of cultural values*

**Section 1.7** recognises the Aboriginal history and recorded and potential cultural values of the MGC; reference is made to relevant considerations pertaining to cultural values in other sections of the updated CMP.

A brief description of the history and recorded and potential Aboriginal cultural values at the MGC and in the surrounding area has been included based on published sources; this account is presented for information, to provide context to the European significance of the site as recognised under the Heritage Act, and to encourage the initiation of a more detailed engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values at the place.

Consultation with Traditional Owners and investigation of the site's cultural values were beyond the scope of the CMP update project.

**Policy 6 (Section 4.5)** recommends that SMCT consults with WWTOAC as the Registered Aboriginal Party in respect to cultural values at the MGC, and to seek the opportunity to partner with Wurundjeri and other relevant parties to undertake a more detailed engagement with the cultural values of the place.

### **Historical research**

Consistent with the *Burra Charter* approach, the 2014 CMP undertook historical research in order to gather information about the place sufficient to understand its heritage significance, principally from published secondary sources; this information was considered to remain generally current.

It was beyond the scope of the CMP update project to undertake extensive new research or to reassess the history of the place except in limited cases where clarification was needed to better inform a specific area of consideration with respect to the management policies and conservation of the place.

Historical information presented in the updated CMP has been reformatted from the 2014 document, and has been extended to include the site's operational history through 2023.

### **Analysis of individual graves and memorials**

It is beyond the scope of this CMP to address the history or physical characteristics of individual graves and memorials at the MGC. The vast majority of the many thousands of graves and monuments within the cemetery are the subject of broad permit exemptions and are not treated as having a specific (intrinsic) heritage significance requiring management under the Heritage Act.

Twenty-one monuments are identified in the VHR registration for the MGC, these monuments are treated as significant and heritage permits may be required for works to them. However, these monuments are generally not under the management of SMCT due to the legislated and contractual relationship between the trust and the original purchasers of interment rights within the cemetery. Although reviewed in overview, no specific assessment or advice has been provided for the management of these monuments, some of which require or have recently been the subject of conservation works funded and undertaken by other parties.

The approach adopted for the MGC's graves and memorial sites is to recognise that they contribute collectively to the historical value and experience of the cemetery as a heritage place, alongside the site's formal planning, layout, landscape elements and buildings and structures. Detailed research has been undertaken by various parties on individual graves and memorials, much of it facilitated by SMCT personnel, however a more comprehensive account and analysis of the MGC's burials, monuments and the people they memorialise is not known to have been prepared. Such work has the potential to deepen public understanding of the history represented and embodied by the MGC, and to inform new



directions for the statutory authority and the state government in valuing, managing and supporting the operation of the place in future.

#### Historical archaeology

Archaeological testing was not undertaken in the preparation of this report.

Human remains associated with burials at the site are the subject of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, other historical archaeology (comprising deposits of 75 years and older) is the subject of controls under the Heritage Act. Works should be halted and specialist advice should be sought if suspected historical archaeology is encountered where a consent to disturb has not been granted under the appropriate legislation.

Matters pertaining to Aboriginal cultural heritage are discussed in preceding limitations to this report.

**Figure 4** (over) Two contemporary views of the cemetery from a central corridor of the Melbourne Mausoleum, looking north and south











## 2.0 THE PLACE

### 2.1 Melbourne General Cemetery today

Located to the north of the Melbourne CBD, the 43 hectare (106 acre) site of the MGC is bound by Lygon Street to the east, Macpherson Street to the north, Princes Park Drive to the west and College Crescent and Cemetery Road West to the south. The site is relatively flat excepting a low rise in the topography to its north-east. It is in a high position relative to the Melbourne CBD, offering clear views to the Dandenong Ranges to the east and to Northcote and Clifton Hill in the foreground.

Opened in 1853, the MGC has always been managed as a public trust. In 1980, the Trust of The Necropolis at Springvale became trustees for the MGC through an amendment of the then-Cemeteries Act. In 2010, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) was created, which manages nine cemeteries across the south-east section of metropolitan Melbourne.

There are approximately 300,000 burials in the cemetery, including graves with monuments, headstones and plaques, unmarked public and infant sections, and modern mausoleum and wall niches developed in recent decades.

The MGC today attracts diverse visitors, including holders of burial rights, commuters, and the local community. Visitors use the cemetery for recreation, exercise, and as a shortcut between Carlton North, Princes Hill and Parkville. The local community has a strong appreciation for the peace and quiet of the cemetery, and takes pride in its history and heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The MGC retains aspects of its initial development in the mid-nineteenth century, including its road network, a few early buildings and structures, and aspects of a planted landscape and built features installed episodically from the 1850s to 1890s. Following an extended period of closure at the beginning of the twentieth century, parts of the cemetery were substantially altered in the 1930s to facilitate its reopening for new burials, a project that included the construction of an elaborate new Gatehouse and main entrance gates to College Crescent.

Through the middle decades of the twentieth century, cemetery managers had continued to reclaim parts of the cemetery grounds and road network to create additional burial spaces that could be sold to fund the site's operations, a process that reduced the integrity of its nineteenth century layout and landscaping. Accompanying those changes, the nature of public visitation also changed with the shift to private automobiles. When a change in legislation allowed above-ground burial in Victoria, a series of four new mausolea were constructed from the 1990s to 2010s along the western edge of the site, close to existing services at the main entrance and on Princes Park Drive.

The site today evidences each era of development and consolidation. Aspects of the cemetery's Victorian concept (**Figure 32**) remain evident and accessible, which others exist in a remnant form or have been lost to the subsequent alterations required to continue to accommodate further burials and to respond to periods of consolidation, funding shortfalls, mismanagement and closure. Other aspects of the cemetery have evolved organically, and others may appear in future. The stands of Italian Cypress and Funeral Cypress which are such a striking feature of the landscape of the MGC were not planted by the cemetery trust but by individual funeral parties, a legacy of Victorian-era memorial practices.

A broad description for the site as a whole is provided in this chapter. More detailed descriptions for individual elements are included in the Conservation Datasheets in **Section 5.0**.

**Figure 5** (over) View along an inner compartment walkway towards a stand of Italian Cypress trees







## 2.2 Cemetery layout and infrastructure

The MGC was laid out to plans prepared in 1853 by the architect and surveyor Albert Purchas, who emigrated to Melbourne in 1851 and would maintain a long relationship to the MGC, later serving as the trust's Secretary. Purchas was a prolific designer of churches and commercial buildings, also served as Chairman of the Boroondara General Cemetery trust and on the executive of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects.

The MGC was laid out in the garden landscape tradition which had been popularised by new commercial cemeteries in London and Paris, with a curvilinear system of roadways bounding a largely rectilinear arrangement of burial compartments, plots and foot paths. The serpentine layout of the roadways was consistent with English gardening traditions, with new sections of the cemetery repeatedly revealed as the visitor travelled along the curved roads and found their way to new intersection.

A roughly fifteen metre planted buffer on the inside boundary of the cemetery was set aside on the Purchas plan; this and even larger areas along the eastern boundary to Lygon Street and in the north-west and north-east corners had extensive tree plantations, however as with other original features of the cemetery these buffers were reclaimed and surveyed for additional graves in the c. 1930s. Despite the surveyor's careful management of cemetery's road network and compartment infrastructure, there appears to have been relatively little in the way of a formal planting plan or intent to accompany this arrangement, and with few exceptions the trees that survive from Victorian-era plantings represent a relatively broad set of characteristic species distributed across the site.

### Road network and visitor infrastructure

The road system generally followed the existing natural topography of this upland site, with most roads skirting local high points within the site. Although the sinuous road network appears maze-like today, the arrangement was efficient: from the original entrance gate on the west side of the cemetery, only one or two turns was needed to reach a given compartment in any part of the cemetery, making it easy to give and remember directions. Drainage was provided by bluestone pitcher channels at the road edge, with drains also running across compartments in some areas. Later, many roads would be rebuilt with concrete kerb and channel, with bluestone channels retained on a few remnant sections.

The original entrance drive extended up the west side of the cemetery to a turning circle and gates immediately in front of what is now the Melbourne Mausoleum, an arrangement which fed visitors and funeral processions immediately onto Centre Avenue or one of a half dozen other circulating drives. The entrance was relocated in the 1930s, with a new gatehouse and entry gates reconstructed near the southwest corner of the cemetery on College Crescent. These alterations were designed to make space for additional burials which would recapitalise the cemetery following a several-decade closure. Additional roads were closed and infilled within the cemetery during this period as well, and later a section of Centre Ave would be closed in the 1990s to accommodate the construction of the Melbourne Mausoleum. All these changes undermined the simplicity of the original access arrangement, as some areas now require a much more convoluted travel path in order to reach them from the main entrance.

Accompanying the road network was a nineteenth century system of visitor infrastructure to provide amenity, shelter and wayfinding for individual visitors and funeral processions which for decades would have arrived at the site either by horse and cart or on foot. Visitor lodges were constructed at the main (west) entrance, the south-east gate and the north gate to Macpherson Street. Public conveniences (toilets) were also provided at several of these entrances. Within the site, a series of simple rotunda shelters stood at many of the road intersections. An elaborate early drinking trough realised in an architectural style also stands near the cemetery's original entrance.



**Figure 6** Original western entrance to the cemetery with stone administration building and original iron lodge, prior to the construction of the main gatekeeper's lodge in 1869  
Source: State Library of Victoria



**Figure 7** Visitor lodge and entry from the South Gate, 1903  
Source: As reproduced in Don Chambers, *The Melbourne General Cemetery*, 2003, p. 180



## Compartments

Compartments within the cemetery were assigned on a denominational basis to seven Christian sects and the Jewish faith, with a few areas reserved for people of other denominations. The Jewish compartments and mortuary chapel are located in the south-east with a nearby gate to Cemetery Road, said to have been provided by agreement with local religious leaders of the day.

While most space within compartments was allotted and sold to private purchasers, the cemetery trust initially retained public areas within compartments assigned to each denomination in order to accept pauper and infant burials, usually at the centre of compartments the farthest distance from a roadway (i.e. the least desirable sites for private buyers). Many of these public sites remain legible today; they have no compartment paths and relatively few standing monuments or masonry burial enclosures within areas of open lawn and stands of trees. Some of these sites have 'public rocks' and plaques with individual or collective memorials.

Major and minor paths were laid throughout the compartments to provide access to individual grave sites. These have suffered from drainage and erosion issues, ground heave and other forms of deterioration over time. Most paths have been surfaced and resurfaced with various materials over time, including bluestone, brick, terracotta, gravel, asphalt and concrete. While some areas are in good condition, it is evident that for long periods it has been physically or financially impractical to repair and maintain minor paths within many of the site's compartments.

Compartments and road intersections were marked with distinctive cast iron signage (**Figure 8**) in the Victorian era, many examples of which survive across the site. Some areas are marked with simplified cast iron signage in several styles, likely developed and installed during the twentieth century.



**Figure 8** Original cast iron road signage (left) and compartment signage (right)

### Administration and maintenance areas

At its opening, the original arrangements for maintaining and administering the MGC were basic, consisting of a hastily erected timber lodge at the original main entrance, supplemented the following year with two iron lodges imported from England. Over time, additional buildings would be erected at this entrance, including an ornate office building and a gatekeeper's residence. Some equipment and stockpiling likely occurred around this entrance, at the other entry lodges to the North, East and South, as well as in undeveloped areas of the cemetery.

Twentieth century MMBW plans show a fenced area in the south-east (behind the South Lodge) that was almost certainly a works area, and several other fenced enclosures within the site whose purpose is not known. In the 1930s-1950s, reclamation of parts of the cemetery grounds for new burial spaces assumed most of these maintenance spaces and required the removal of the original entrance complex. A new maintenance facility was then established behind the west gate (current site of the Saint Michael the Archangel Mausoleum).

In the 2010s, SMCT built a new maintenance shed adjoining the north gate to replace the previous facility, which was removed for construction of the mausoleum.



**Figure 9** Contemporary view of the Gatehouse and Waiting Shelter

## 2.3 Buildings and structures

In the Victorian period, the MGC was developed with a suite of buildings which served the operational needs of the cemetery trust as well as visitors and funeral parties.

The main operational complex of that era was located at the original main entrance gate on the west side of the cemetery, accommodating the sexton's office, mortuary chapel, visitor lodge and a gatekeeper's residence. The buildings there had been developed progressively, from an initial timber lodge to two iron lodge buildings ordered from England, to an ornate bluestone office building with a clock tower. The office and remaining lodge building were demolished in the 1930s to move the main entrance to College Crescent and open additional burial space within the cemetery reserve, however elements of the office building are said to have been salvaged and reused in the new Gatehouse at the south end of the site. The residence was retained for some time after, before being demolished in the 1950s and replaced with grave sites and a small maintenance facility.

Visitor lodges and public conveniences were originally erected at the other entry points to the cemetery (north, east and southeast), and a series of ornamental rotundas were constructed by the nineteenth century cemetery trust at strategic points to provide shelters for visitors and funeral parties within the site. Two denominational funeral chapels were eventually erected by religious authorities within the cemetery. Of all the nineteenth century buildings, only the Rotundas and Chapels were retained over the course of the twentieth century, along with the cast iron fence and ornate gates to the north and southeast entries, and the new Gatehouse at College Crescent.

### Boundary fence and gates

The perimeter of the MGC is defined by an ornate cast iron palisade fence on a bluestone plinth.

The primary public access to the cemetery is gained via the main decorative cast iron entry gates (**Figure 10**), located to the south of the site at Cemetery Road West.

Secondary gates are located to the south-east (**Figure 11**), west and east (**Figure 12**) and north boundaries. The south-east and north gates feature castellated cast iron piers and decorative gates while the west gate is constructed of sandstone in a Tudor Revival design with a steel turnstile entry. The east gate was replaced in 2015 with a new motorised gate that provides DDA compliant access.

A nineteenth-century sandstone and marble drinking trough (**Figure 13**) is located adjacent to the original western entry of the cemetery at the junction of North and Centre Avenues. Constructed of sandstone and marble on a bluestone base, the highly decorative trough features tripartite pointed arch recesses with a shallow trough to the base. The trough no longer retains fonts or is functioning.

### Gatehouse

A bluestone gatehouse (**Figure 9**) with sandstone dressings and castellated tower was constructed in the south-west corner of the site in 1935 to replace the earlier offices and residence (**Figure 6** and **Figure 7**) at the original entrance gate further north. A matching waiting shelter stands across from the Gatehouse entry porch, just inside the main gates.

The main two-storeyed section of the gatehouse houses the administrative rooms, minister's room and entry porch at the base of the tower with residence upstairs. To the rear, a single storeyed section also contains the residence with separate entry. The gatehouse is set within a simple landscape, with a small lawn area to the south and west of the building and perimeter garden beds. The front fence is constructed of random rubble stonework, divided by pyramidal capped piers into evenly spaced bays.





**Figure 10** Main entrance gates (1930s), with Waiting Shelter and Gatehouse behind



**Figure 11** South-east Gate





**Figure 12** Secondary gates: (left) West Gate (built c. 1930s); (right) East gate entry (built c. 2010s) from Lygon Street



**Figure 13** Infrastructure: (left) Cast iron palisade perimeter fence on bluestone plinth; (right) Early Drinking Trough at original (west) main entrance (now adjoining Melbourne Mausoleum)

### Rotundas (Figure 14)

The octagonal rotundas are a significant feature of the cemetery landscape, offering shelter for visitors throughout the site. Four stand on brick bases (type A), and four have corrugated iron panels (type B).

### Denominational facilities and chapels (Figure 15)

Two early chapels are located on the site: the Jewish Mortuary Chapel (1854) and the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel (1871). The Jewish Mortuary Chapel is located on South Avenue in the Jewish burial compartment in the south-east of the cemetery. It is a small stuccoed brick chapel on a stone plinth in the Gothic style; with a marble water font on the western façade. The Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel is located on North Avenue, presenting as a substantial bluestone chapel in the Early English Gothic style. The Chapel sits within an asphalt courtyard, at grade to the south and east, and lawn. To the west is a raised flagstone paved area within a low bluestone perimeter wall above the subterranean crypt.

A Chinese funerary oven is located at the corner of Centre and Tenth Avenues. One of two original funerary ovens, it is installed on a low bluestone plinth inside a fenced enclosure. To the west of the enclosure is a stepped granite and bluestone altar with inscribed headstone. The gable-roofed pavilion over the enclosure was added in recent decades to protect the original oven.

### Mausolea (Figure 16)

Four mausolea were built in 1997-98, 2004, 2011-12 and 2018 to expand the burial spaces available in the cemetery. The earliest of these, the Melbourne Mausoleum, is located at the original western entry to the cemetery and replaced a much smaller mausoleum constructed earlier on this site. It is constructed of bluestone with limestone dressings with a slate gable roof. The three later mausolea are of contemporary designs and materials; the architectural treatments of the Gatehouse Mausoleum (2004) and St Mary of the Cross Mausoleum (2011-12) to either side of the Entrance Avenue are particularly noteworthy. The Saint Michael the Archangel Mausoleum (2018) is the most recent such building to be constructed at the site.

The St Mary of the Cross Mausoleum incorporates a substantial below ground space accessed by a freestanding elevator. This Mausoleum replaced an earlier columbarium; remains within the earlier niches were reinterred in a new columbarium of seven granite walls standing to the north of the Gatehouse Mausoleum along the perimeter fence west of the Entrance Drive.

### Rockeries and arbours

Several constructed rockeries (grottos) embellish locations within the cemetery, consisting of bluestone boulders joined with cement. There are two large rockeries north (Figure 30) and south (Figure 61, Section 4.10) of the present Melbourne Mausoleum (opposite the former cemetery entrance), with smaller rockeries at two other sites. All of these rockeries are likely to have originally incorporated small water features which were fed from the reticulated water network, however these have not been retained. Today the rockeries principally feature succulent plantings.

As part of the 1930s reopening and reconfiguration of the cemetery entrances, two steel-framed arbours were erected over East Avenue near the East Gate, which at the time operated as a vehicle entrance. These arbours remain in place and are planted with ornamental grapevines.

### Maintenance facilities

A new steel-clad maintenance building (c. 2017) is located to the east of the north gate entry. Public toilets amenities are also located in the maintenance area.





**Figure 14** Rotundas: (upper left) Rotunda 8, type A; (upper right) Rotunda 4, type B



**Figure 15** Denominational facilities: (upper left) Jewish Mortuary Chapel; (upper right) Catholic Mortuary Chapel; (bottom left and right) Chinese Funerary Oven within modern shelter enclosure



**Figure 16** Mausoleums: (top) Melbourne Mausoleum; (middle left) Gatehouse Mausoleum; (middle right) Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum (lower left) Saint Michael the Archangel Mausoleum; (lower right) Maintenance Building at North Gate



## 2.4 Trees, gardens and landscape

Ornamental landscaping was an essential component of the planning and marketing of the Victorian era cemetery. Commercial garden cemeteries developed in the England in the early nineteenth century were developed to supersede the chaotic and noxious condition of venerable churchyard cemeteries, presenting order, cleanliness and the prospect of a peaceful repose through landscaping familiar to the Victorian public. Some of the first so-called garden cemeteries of the 1830s were developed within the picturesque structure of former estate gardens, however purpose-designed cemeteries were soon under development incorporating systems of organisation for more efficient land use and maintenance.

The influential English landscape designer J.C. Loudon had advocated in 1843 for a simplification and formalisation of cemetery landscapes, moving away from the naturalistic clumps of trees of the English tradition towards an infrastructural approach. Loudon advocated efficient grids for grave sections and burial plots, and roads lined with solemnly spaced trees, including a preference for conifers.

The new Melbourne Cemetery Trust adopted many of the modernisations pioneered by English commercial cemeteries and advocated by Loudon, and received planting advice from Melbourne's Botanic Gardens curator, Ferdinand von Mueller. Von Mueller provided detailed notes and supplied hundreds of trees and shrubs, which the Trust supplemented with commercially sourced trees. Exotic conifers (Pines, Cypressess and Cedars) predominated in the Trust's early 1850s-1860s plantings, with other selections including exotic broad-leaved trees and cultivated native Australian trees of the colonial era like Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*), and some Eucalypts.

Further plantings would be established in the 1870s, supervised by colonial surveyor and landscape curator Clement Hodgkinson, who introduced avenues of deciduous Elms and Oaks consistent with those he established in Melbourne's parks and gardens. Native trees such as Southern Mahogany Gum (*Eucalyptus botryoides*), Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and Norfolk Island Hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonia*) may date to this latter period of Victorian management.

An 1890s photograph of the southern boundary of the cemetery (**Figure 17**) shows a deep border of mixed trees at College Crescent. Behind this border, stands of Italian Cypress can be seen establishing in the southern compartments, planted on individual burial plots as a funeral custom.

Remnant native trees can be seen in the background of the 1890s photograph; in less utilised sections indigenous trees and groundcovers were only disturbed late in the cemetery's Victorian development or after its 1920s reopening. A 1952 oblique aerial photograph of the north-west corner of the cemetery (**Figure 20**) shows remnant native trees and natural groundcover in a section of the cemetery that had remained reserved through the cemetery's closure and was only given over to burials in the 1950s. Scrubby gums, wattles and groundcovers, similar to the landscape character of the adjacent Royal Park, held on for decades in some northern sections, before giving way to new burial spaces in the 1950s. Even after compartments were filled in, wherever plots were not actively gardened they were soon colonised by self-sown grasses and groundcovers (**Figure 18** and **Figure 19**). A 1983 survey by the Government Botanist would report numerous self-sown native and exotic plants holding on in the cemetery a few years after intensive use of herbicides began in 1980. Constant spraying over the next decades would result in the loss of most of these groundcovers on the site.

In 2023, SMCT launched a new planting initiative at MGC called Project Cultivate, which aims to reverse damage caused by decades of herbicide spraying. Reestablishing native groundcover plants on barren sections of the site, the programme seeks to reduce herbicide use and associated drainage problems and erosion, and increase native biodiversity within the cemetery.



**Figure 17** c. 1890 photograph of the southern boundary, with mixed plantation of specimen trees on boundary, stands of Italian Cypress in burial compartments, and native gums at far right  
Source: State Library of Victoria



**Figure 18** Graves surrounded by self-sown vegetation at the northern end of the cemetery, 1922  
Source: *Herald*, 1922, p. 3



**Figure 19** Older grave sites surrounded by grasses and shrubs at the MGC, c. 1940  
Source: State Library of Victoria



**Figure 20** 1952 oblique aerial photograph from north-west; the undeveloped section in the north-west corner retained native vegetation (wattles and perhaps gum trees) and ground cover  
Source: State Library of Victoria

**Figure 21** (over) Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), a native tree often planted in the Victorian era







### Notable trees

Many features of the early planted landscape of the cemetery were lost during the twentieth century, or have only endured on a remnant basis. Due to accommodations made for additional burials in the mid-twentieth century, there is little prospect of reestablishing tree plantations on these Victorian principles in most parts of the site. However, the remnant trees provide important evidence of historical planting selections and of the characteristics and distribution of trees in the site's Victorian memorial landscape and often have an intrinsic value as large mature specimen trees in the cemetery landscape.

Some mature trees have been specifically recognised at the MGC (as is the case with the unusual Long-leaved Indian Pine, [Figure 22](#)), however many other historical trees are not recognised in the existing VHR registration but which are of significance and should be managed as heritage features of the place. A detailed list of historical trees of significance with the MGC is included in [Section 3.5 \(Table 2\)](#).

Most mature trees within the cemetery contribute to the perception of the cemetery landscape as a historical and memorial place, and evidence the details of the original broadscale planting of the site in the Victoria period albeit in a fragmentary, remnant form. These include exotic conifers, broad-leaved trees, and native gums and evergreens which were largely established in the nineteenth century.

Screening plantings (hedges and boundary rows) also contribute to the landscape of the cemetery, ameliorating its interfaces to surrounding roadways. These plantings were established in the 1930s to replace the original Victorian era tree plantations.

New trees have been established in recent years in the limited gaps left in the cemetery's dense burial pattern; these plantings continue to include a mix of native and exotic trees, and have been informed by the City of Melbourne's Future Urban Forest project and other similar research which has sought to identify climate change-ready tree selections. Other recent changes have included the removal of the c. 1930s avenue of Liquidambar trees (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), an identified tree feature within the VHR extent of registration, and their replacement with Ginkgo trees (*Ginkgo biloba*).



**Figure 22** (left) Long-leaved Indian Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*); (right) the native Southern Mohogany Gum (*Eucalyptus botryoides*)



**Figure 23** Stand of Italian Cypress trees, most planted by individual burial parties in the Victorian era (a few have self-sown in the more recent past)



**Figure 24** Stand of Peppercorn trees, planted in open landscape areas within the interior of compartments throughout the cemetery



## Landscaped areas

Early and evolved tree plantings and landscaping are found in central compartment areas which have had a history of use as public sections (for pauper and infant burials), maintenance and stockpile sites, and continue to be used today for the spreading of ashes and other memorial activities (Figure 24). Many of these sections contain ‘public rocks’ and other common memorials (Figure 25); a few other artefacts of the historical cemetery such as an early lawn roller can also be found at these sites.

Today these central compartment areas are a key remaining feature of the cemetery’s designed landscape (due to removal of most other planted areas to accommodate new burials), and are critical to the public experience and use of the cemetery landscaping. Many of these compartments are planted with Peppercorn trees, while a few have stands of native trees planted historically or more recently.

Other than the garden enclosure to the 1930s Gatehouse, the few formal garden areas within the site are generally of recent origin, these include:

- Prime Ministers’ Memorial Garden
- Memorial Rose Garden
- Native border north of Presbyterian Compartment L (west of Fourteenth Ave, north of Eleventh Ave).

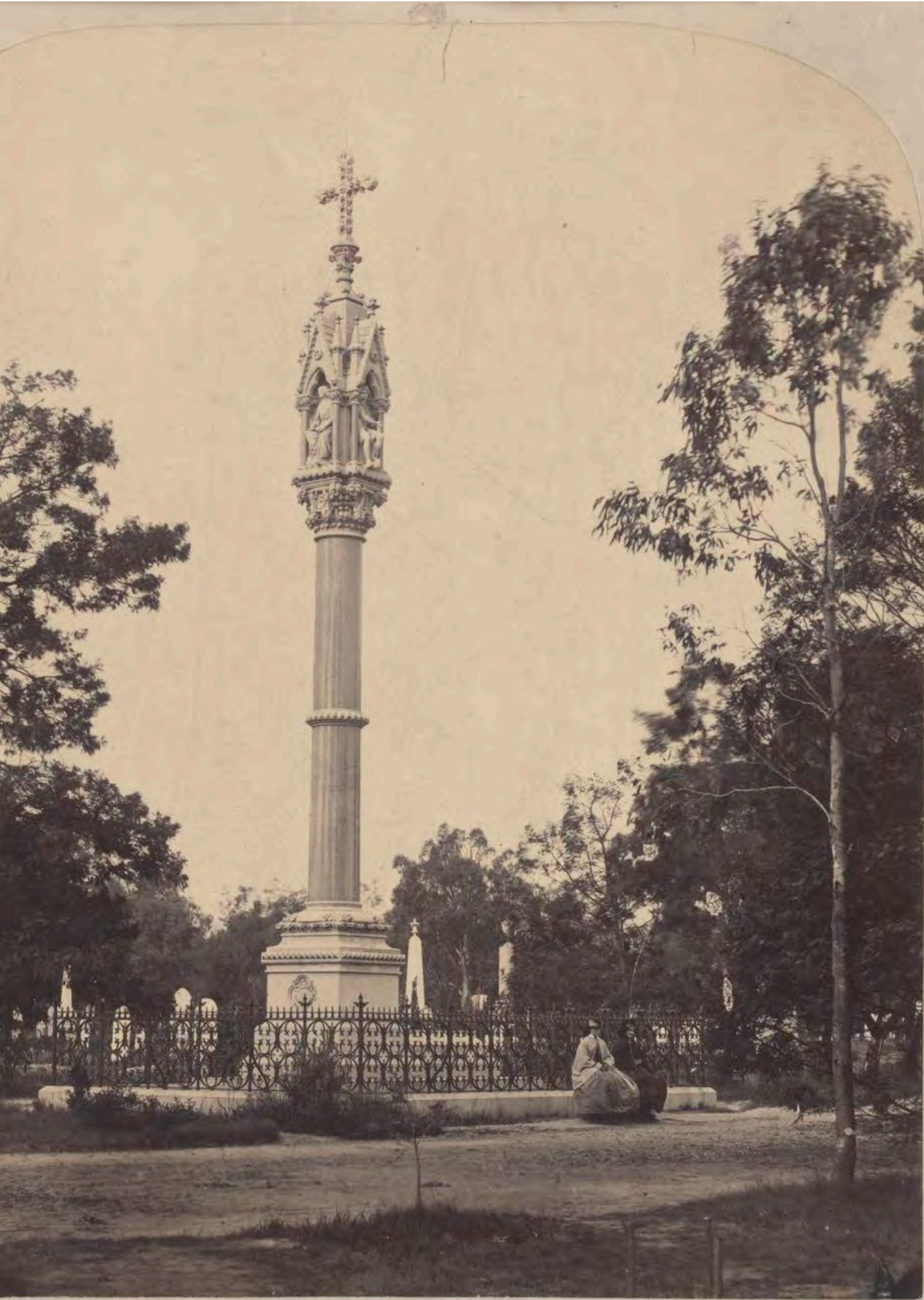
As noted above, for most of the cemetery’s history its developed burial compartments sported eclectic groundcover consisting of remnant native vegetation, plantings introduced by mourners, and self-sown regrowth of indigenous species, exotic pasture grasses and weedy herbs and shrubs. In the late twentieth century, new staffing models and enforcement of statutory requirements to manage weeds led to the extensive use of chemical herbicides and the loss of living groundcover from much of the site.

This process altered the visual quality and characteristics of the cemetery’s historic landscape, and led to physical degradation of the site through erosion of topsoil, damage to monuments, paths and infrastructure, and poisoning of valued trees. The site’s 1999 heritage registration occurred at the midpoint of four decades of intensive herbicide use at the place. In 2023, SMCT began a new programme to reestablish indigenous groundcover on some degraded sections of the MGC, a project that will reduce herbicide use and drainage problems, and may eventually be extended to other degraded compartments within the cemetery.



**Figure 25** (left) c. 1980s native tree planting in interior landscape of Catholic Compartment H; (right) Memorial rocks and plaques in public sections of compartments

**Figure 26** (over) c. 1868 photograph of the newly installed monument to Sir Charles Hotham, first Governor of the Victorian Colony



Sir Charles Hotham's Monument.  
Melbourne General Cemetery



## 2.5 Monuments and memorials

The MGC features a substantial number of notable internments and monuments to early pioneers and leaders as well as later notable figures in Melbourne's history such as businesspeople and politicians.

20 monuments and memorials are included on the Victorian Heritage Register listing for the site, including monuments to early colonial leaders like Sir Charles Hotham and John Pascoe Fawkner, the Bunurong leader Derrimut, the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition, and notable twentieth century memorials which include both public monuments like the Holocaust memorial and private monuments with distinctive designs, including those for the Vergona family and the world champion billiards sensation Walter Lindrum.

A memorial to Elvis Presley (1977) was established at the large rockery immediately north of the Melbourne Mausoleum, commissioned by the Elvis Presley Fan Club of Victoria.

The Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden, located to the east of the main entry gates, was opened in 1996 to house the remains of prime ministers and their spouses; it currently has four graves. Entrance to the garden is through a timber and glass gatehouse. A gravel path leads to a fountain and memorial wall commemorating the service of all past and current prime ministers. Inside the garden is a lawn with large specimen trees.



**Figure 27** Sir Charles Hotham memorial with recently restored capital



**Figure 28** (left) Derrimut memorial; (right) John Pascoe Fawkner's monument



**Figure 29** Stone obelisk of the Burke & Wills memorial, behind Fig trees in a triangular island area





**Figure 30** Elvis Memorial and large rockery north of the Melbourne Mausoleum



**Figure 31** Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden





**Figure 32** 1850s Albert Purchas Plan for the MGC, with annotated amendments  
 Source: Public Records Office Victoria

## 2.6 Historical development and evolution

This history has been reformatted and updated from the 2014 MGC CMP. *The Melbourne General Cemetery* (Don Chambers, 2003) is understood to have been an important reference for that document.

The first official cemetery in Melbourne had opened in 1837, on a ten acre site now occupied by the car park of Queen Victoria Market.<sup>2</sup> The cemetery was surveyed into denominational sections, with the Jewish community granted burial ground in 1844 and the Quakers in 1847, joining Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Wesleyans and Baptists at the site.<sup>3</sup> With the growth of Melbourne by the late 1840s the cemetery site was seen to be 'in dangerous proximity to the inhabited portion of the city'.<sup>4</sup> This was recognised as a problem by the Melbourne Town Councillors, who moved that another portion of land be set aside for a 'future cemetery of the city'.<sup>5</sup> New South Wales law, which governed the Port Phillip District, required that the cemetery be set at least one mile away from the city's boundary. A plan by surveyor Robert Hoddle of June 1849 and a letter of July 1849 from Superintendent La Trobe referring to a site 'due North one mile from the North Town Boundary' indicates that the current site had been chosen by this date.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1851, 27 acres (approximately 11 hectares) was reserved for a general cemetery. The land was to be divided amongst the denominations, with ten acres (4 hectares) set aside for the Church of England, eight acres for the Catholic Church, four acres for the Presbyterian Church, two acres for the Wesleyan Church and one acre each for Jewish Burials, Society of Friends (Quakers) and other denominations.<sup>7</sup> The provision of areas for Baptists and Independents increased the size of the cemetery to more than 32 acres (approximately 13 hectares). In mid-February 1851, the first cemetery trustees were appointed. R W Pohlman, David Ogilvy, Robert Smith, Henry Jennings and John Sullivan all held positions on the Denominational School Board, and each represented a different denomination on the cemetery board.<sup>8</sup> Fencing of the cemetery site was underway by September 1851, but negotiations with authorities delayed the opening of the cemetery. Although church figures raised concerns about the lack of available space at the Old Melbourne Cemetery, the new cemetery did not open until 1853.

### Initial development

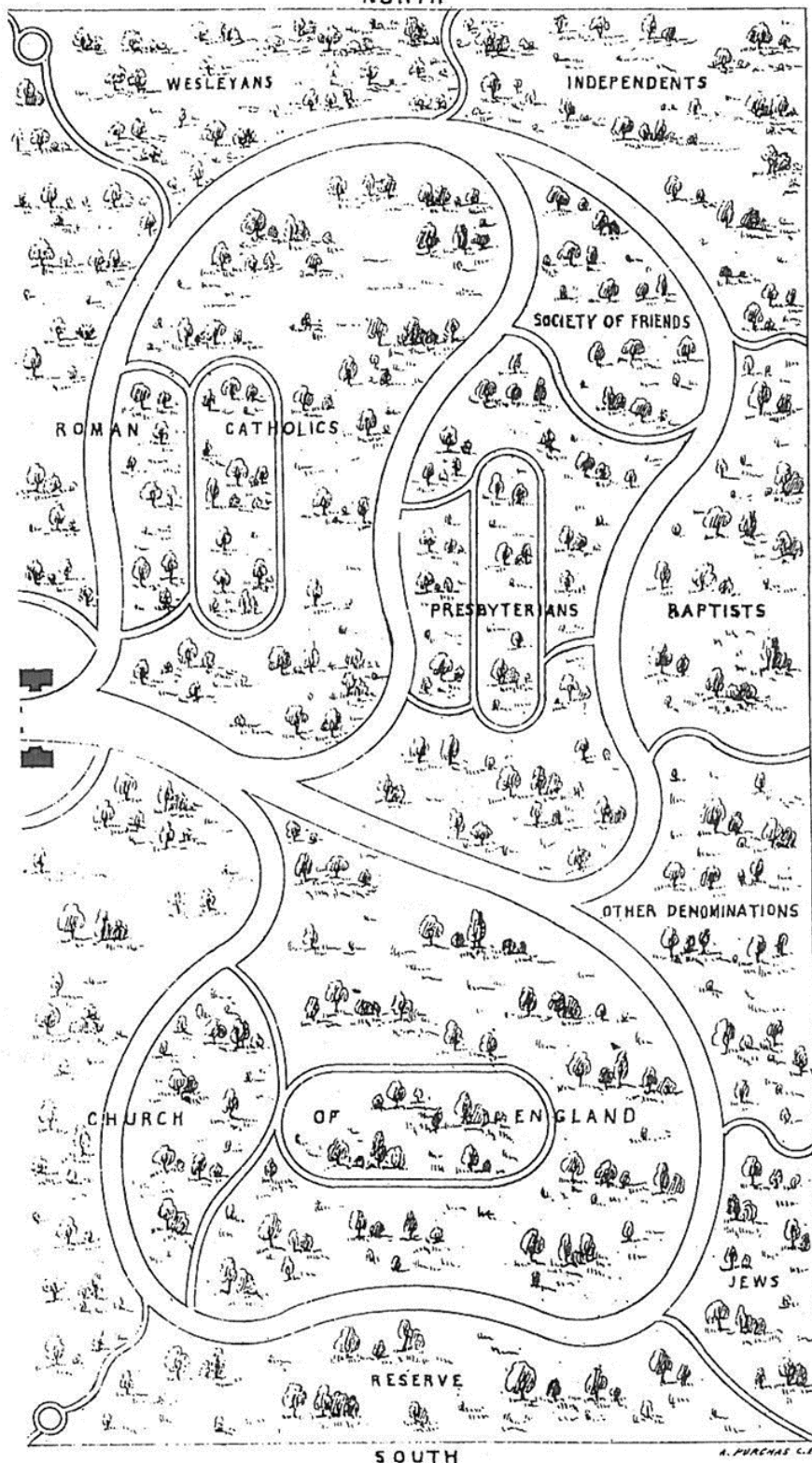
A design of the cemetery was completed by engineer and surveyor Albert Purchas in early 1852. Purchas was subsequently appointed to the position of engineer-secretary and was the cemetery's first paid employee.<sup>9</sup> Purchas remained a key figure in the management of the cemetery, and held the role of secretary until his death in 1909, and also held a trustee position at the Boroondara Cemetery.<sup>10</sup> Plans for a temporary timber lodge and mortuary chapel building were drawn up in August 1852, whilst an order for iron lodges and entrance gates was made by the trustees in May 1853.<sup>11</sup>

The sharp increase in population that accompanied the Victorian Gold Rush raised concerns about the size of the original reservation, and an expanded reservation was created in early 1853. The resulting rectangular reserve was of approximately 60 acres (24 hectares), nearly double the 1851 allocation.<sup>12</sup>

The MGC's own 'Rules and Regulations' were published in the *Government Gazette* of May 1853.<sup>13</sup> That Gazette also carried the notice that the cemetery would be open for burials on 1 June 1853. However, the first burial at the cemetery, that of John Alexander Burnett of St Kilda, took place on 28 May 1853. The first female burial was Jane Bell on 10 June 1853.<sup>14</sup>

An official plan of the cemetery by Purchas produced in 1854 (**Figure 33**) shows the cemetery as a rectangular site, with the main entrance and temporary office buildings situated at the centre of the western boundary. The cemetery was laid out with curving roads and pathways dividing the cemetery into sections for the different denominations. Internal roads were constructed from the mid-1850s.<sup>15</sup>

PLAN OF THE MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY.  
NORTH



**Figure 33** 1854 illustrated plan of the MGC, showing areas reserved for different denominations within the 1853 rectangular reservation  
Source: Reproduced from Don Chambers, *The Melbourne General Cemetery*.





Figure 34 Revised plan of the MGC, c. 1860  
Source: State Library of Victoria

In August 1858, an Order-in-Council expanded the cemetery to 100 acres (40 hectares), with the new reserve gazetted in 1860.<sup>16</sup> This expansion created the curved southern boundary at College Crescent and Cemetery Road, and the entry through Princes Park known as Cemetery Crescent.<sup>17</sup> The extended cemetery site, with entrance buildings, can be seen in a plan produced by Purchas in 1860 (**Figure 34**), which maintained the serpentine road layout. The trustees called for tenders for the construction of two cottages of three rooms and a kitchen in January 1861;<sup>18</sup> the sexton's residence was located at the south-east entrance and the gardener's cottage at a northern entry from Macpherson St.<sup>19</sup>

In early 1866, Albert Purchas advertised for tenders for the construction of six octagonal shelter sheds (rotundas).<sup>20</sup> The work was awarded to Carlton builder John Pigdon at a cost of approximately £150 for each shelter.<sup>21</sup> These ornamental rotundas were located at the intersections of pathways and offered a place of respite within the cemetery grounds. A grand fountain at the main entrance was planned in this period.<sup>22</sup> In the late 1860s, architect Charles Webb designed new iron entrance gates and a bluestone administration lodge to be located on the northern side of the entrance (**Figure 6**). The original iron gatekeeper's lodge on the south of the main entrance was removed in 1868, and in 1869 tenders were called for the construction of the new bluestone gatekeeper's lodge in 1869.<sup>23</sup> The cemetery's first timber fence was replaced with iron palisades set in a bluestone plinth between 1872 and 1877.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Planting and gardens*

Formal planting of the cemetery took place from 1857, and the government botanist and director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, was approached for advice on tree species. Mueller continued to advise the cemetery through the 1860s, a decade in which the major planting of the site was undertaken.<sup>25</sup> In July 1860, Mueller outlined his conclusions for the species of plants and trees to be used at the cemetery. He suggested that pine trees be adopted 'as the most suitable trees for planting cemeteries,' to be planted in the grounds along the fences as a double row. Mueller recommended cluster pines (*Pinus Pinaster*) for the eastern and southern boundaries for their 'hardy nature and comparatively rapid growth', Himalayan Cypress for the western boundary and Japanese Cypress for the northern boundary.<sup>26</sup> Within the cemetery grounds, plots of 'miscellaneous shrubs and trees' were to be planted, with species of pine to be dominant. Mueller anticipated that the trustees would also like deciduous trees included in the planting scheme, though he 'did not think their effect [was] an agreeable one in our zone of evergreen vegetation.'<sup>27</sup> He suggested that elms, oaks, poplars and planes, amongst other species might be substituted into the scheme he had outlined. At their meeting of 3 July 1860, the trustees adopted Mueller's proposal, including the use of deciduous trees, and requested Mueller inspect the planting being undertaken at his convenience as a 'great favour'.<sup>28</sup>

In 1861, the *Argus* noted that 'Melbourne possesses a cemetery, which, in a few years, in point of picturesque beauty, will be inferior to few in the mother country'.<sup>29</sup> The Royal Botanic Gardens supplied 9547 plants by 1871; these were supplemented from commercial sources. The trustees noted that 'the large and valuable collection of plants received from Dr von Mueller [had] greatly contributed to the present satisfactory appearance of the cemetery'.<sup>30</sup>

After Mueller was replaced as director of the gardens by William Guilfoyle in 1873,<sup>31</sup> the trustees resolved in 1875 to request the services of surveyor Clement Hodgkinson, recently retired as assistant commissioner and secretary of the Board of Lands and Survey.<sup>32</sup> Hodgkinson produced a report 'relative to ornamenting the cemetery and its approaches, and embellishing the reserves, roads, walks, and avenues with additional trees, shrubs and flowers,'<sup>33</sup> recommending 'considerable alterations and additions' to the plantations in the cemetery. The trustees appointed him as the curator of the cemetery,<sup>34</sup> an appointment that would be extended to 15 years.<sup>35</sup>

### *Burials and denominational buildings*

With 30 burials recorded in its first month of operation, the cemetery's sexton was placing orders for between three and eight new graves daily by mid-July 1853.<sup>36</sup> By 1860, approximately 18,000 burials had taken place at the new cemetery, of which 7,146 were infants.<sup>37</sup> The burials of several prominent Victorians were also held at the cemetery soon after its opening. The death of Sir Charles Hotham, the Governor of Victoria, in December 1855 saw the construction of a prominent memorial in the new cemetery. Initially set among modest and unadorned burial plots, the tall stone column was for decades the tallest structure at the site (**Figure 35**). In September 1864, a huge block of granite arrived at the site for the memorial to explorers Burke and Wills who were buried at the cemetery. Funded by the government, it remained incomplete in 1870, lacking a fence and nameplates.<sup>38</sup> The funeral of Richard Heales, the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey and former Premier, attracted a large crowd in June 1864, with the arrival of his coffin at the cemetery accompanied by 200 vehicles.<sup>39</sup> The Bunurong leader Derrimut was buried in the 'other denominations' section after his death in 1864 under a sandstone monument erected by white settlers.<sup>40</sup>

The first denominational building constructed at the cemetery was the Jewish Mortuary Chapel of 1854. Its original siting was at the south-east edge of the cemetery, before the expansion of 1858-60. Although there was no official Jewish representation on the cemetery trust until 1858, the trustees had readily granted permission for Jewish graves to be aligned north-south in 1854.<sup>41</sup> In April 1867 the first stone was laid of the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel in front of a crowd of approximately 100 people. The bluestone chapel, built to guard against the 'inconvenience of performing religious services in the open air' was the second denominational building at the site, and comprised crypt, nave and a porch.<sup>42</sup> Although tenders were advertised for the building's erection in June 1868, it appears work did not proceed until 1870-71.<sup>43</sup> The first burial took place on 30 June 1871. Also in June 1871, it was reported in the *Argus* that the cemetery had 'received another ornament', with the newly opened mortuary chapel noted to be 'an elegant structure'.<sup>44</sup> The building was described as comprising:

... a painted porch, enriched with carved finials, which leads into a lofty open-roofed chapel, lighted by four trefoil-pattern windows ... The style is Gothic [and] the architect of the chapel is Mr J B Denney.<sup>45</sup>

On 2 December 1888, the Most. Rev. T J Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne, laid the foundation stone for further additions to the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel, including the hydraulic ram used to lower coffins to the level of the crypt. The chapel was extended to accommodate larger funerals, with a new sanctuary, vestry and porch. The vault was also increased in size.

Chinese burials were located in the 'other denominations' section at the east of the cemetery, and the rites associated with funeral ceremonies caused some concern for the trustees, who were not initially convinced the setting off of fireworks was for religious purposes. In 1866, the trustees received an application to construct a tower for 'burning sacrifice papers', but deferred making a decision until further information had been received. In July 1867, a decision on another application for a 'Chinese mortuary building' was also deferred.<sup>46</sup> It was not until 1872 that the standoff ended when the Public Works Department raised no objections to the proposal to build a funerary altar and the trustees granted permission. A mortuary altar and two funerary ovens were constructed in the southern part of the cemetery.<sup>47</sup>





**Figure 35** Melbourne Cemetery in 1858, with the Sir Charles Hotham memorial at left and a number of new graves  
Source: State Library of Victoria



**Figure 36** Delivery of the block of granite for the Burke and Wills memorial, 1864  
Source: Charles Nettleton collection, State Library of Victoria

### Early public controversies and initial closure

By the late 1870s residential development had surrounded the cemetery, and closure of the cemetery was raised.

The passing in 1854 of the *Municipal Institutions Establishment Act*, which provided for local councils, and the *Public Health Act*, enabled local authorities to have responsibility for public cemeteries.<sup>48</sup> Smaller suburban cemeteries were subsequently established in Williamstown (1857) and Boroondara (1858); the St Kilda cemetery had been proposed as early as 1851, and was officially opened in 1855. The Coburg cemetery was opened in 1860, and the site for a cemetery in Box Hill was gazetted in 1873.<sup>49</sup> Corresponding with contemporary thought on public sanitation, these cemeteries were set further away from the densely populated areas of the city than the General Cemetery. In the 1870s and 1880s, sites in both Frankston and Springvale were considered for a new metropolitan cemetery where bodies could be transported by train.<sup>50</sup>

During this period, the *Argus* criticised the management of the cemetery, which it described as ‘something bordering anarchy’ in which sanitary reforms had been brought to a standstill. The cemetery ground itself was an ‘orderless wilderness’.<sup>51</sup> The city health officer, meanwhile, noted in 1878 that ‘from a sanitary point of view ... the most urgent reason [for closure] was that the cemetery was now surrounded by a large population.’<sup>52</sup> The diminishing space at the site was also becoming an issue, and the health officer noted that there was a custom ‘to place a number of bodies in the same grave, to have shallow graves, and to keep the graves open two or three days until the full complement of bodies was obtained’.<sup>53</sup> The same officer reported in 1879 that ‘here it is the custom to make the graves only 7ft deep, and to allow four coffins, one on top of the another, to be placed in each’.<sup>54</sup>

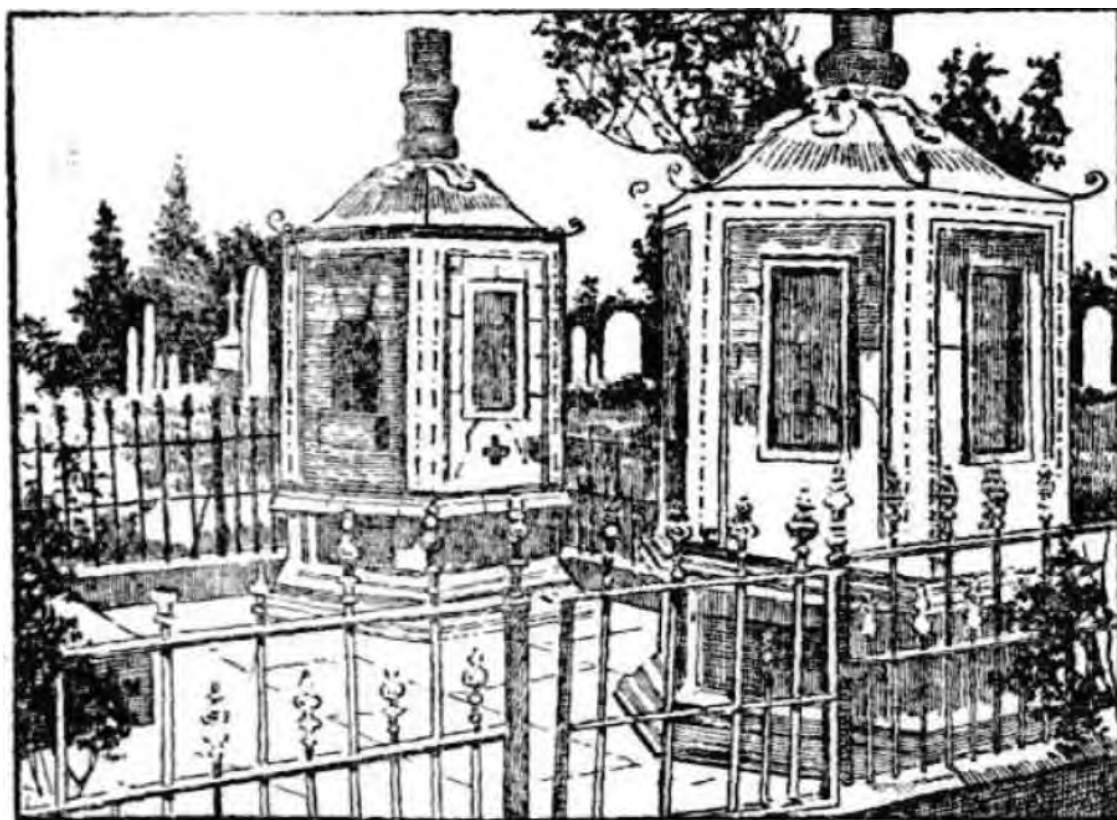
In 1887, crowds attending football matches at Princes Park used the MGC as a shortcut, with reports that ‘the monuments, graves, fences, and plantations were frequently damaged, the cemetery gates burst open, [and] hearses and mourning coaches nearly capsized’.<sup>55</sup> In response, the trustees erected gates at the south end and a fence in the north-west corner of the site with a gate to be locked in the event of football matches or large public funerals. The landscape of trees and monuments attracted strollers, and was ‘reputedly frequented by young lovers on Sabbath afternoons’.<sup>56</sup> Melbourne’s growing population also brought with it concerns that the cemetery would soon be full and that cemetery revenue would fall as a consequence. By the 1890s vacant burial plots were becoming scarce.<sup>57</sup> The trustees responded by using any available space for new graves, including gardens and open spaces, which gave rise to further concerns about health issues and the competence of the trustees.<sup>58</sup> By 1902, grave sites were situated as close as eleven feet to the northern and western boundaries.<sup>59</sup>

In the early twentieth century, discussions regarding the cemetery’s future became more pressing as the Board of Health investigated the state of cemetery and the trustees endeavoured to find additional space for burials.<sup>60</sup> In late 1903, the sale of new grave sites was ordered to be discontinued by 30 March 1904.<sup>61</sup> The Board reasoned that the closure was necessary due to the overcrowding of the site, and the closure allowed the newly established Springvale (1901) and Fawkner (1906) cemeteries to become established.<sup>62</sup> The cemetery publicised that sales would ‘cease absolutely’ at the end of March, resulting in what was termed a ‘boom’ in the purchase of allotments.<sup>63</sup> By 31 March, every available allotment had been sold. Allegations were soon raised that a ‘ring’ of undertakers had purchased large numbers of plots, giving them the ‘power to charge exorbitant rates for allotments’.<sup>64</sup> Secretary of the trustees, Albert Purchas, denied the claim, stating that the undertakers had no advantage over public applications, and that ‘no who wanted an allotment ... was prevented from securing it.’<sup>65</sup> Regardless, undertakers had secured between 300 and 400 of the last remaining plots, and were able to charge higher rates for burials in the now-closed cemetery.<sup>66</sup>

With the fall in revenue and onsite staff numbers following the closure, the condition of the cemetery grounds began to deteriorate. Letter writers to the *Argus* noted the ‘state of neglect’ and ‘condition of chaos and decay’ of the site, with paths left unweeded or in a state of disrepair, and monuments unmaintained.<sup>67</sup> The impacts of a 1908 heatwave highlighted the lack of gravediggers at the site, and gardeners were recruited to take on the task as the volume of burials increased sharply.<sup>68</sup>

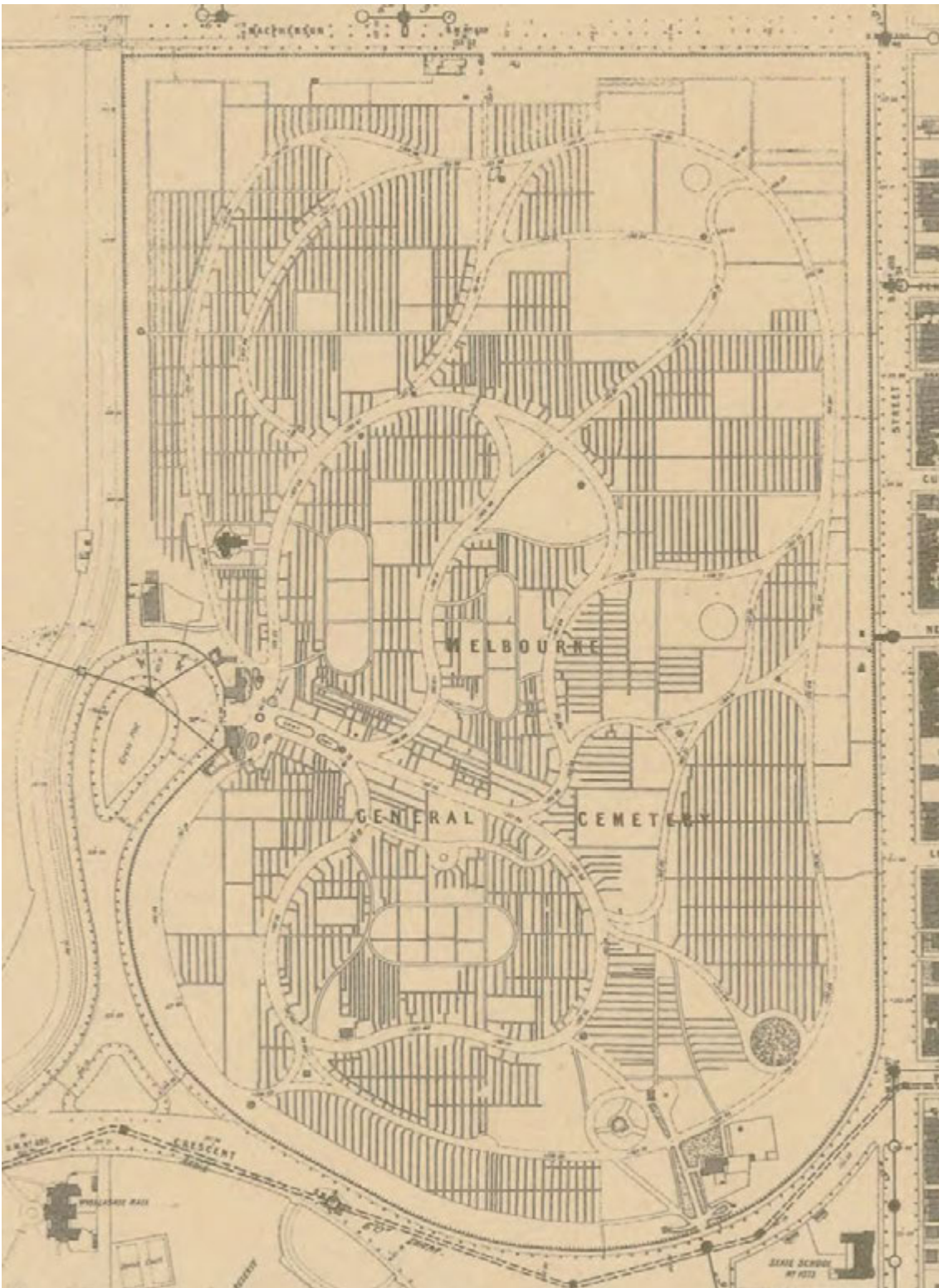
By the 1920s, the site comprised over 100,000 graves holding almost 254,000 bodies, and was visited by 250,000 people each year.<sup>69</sup> Letters to the editor of the *Argus* bemoaned the ‘state of neglect’ of the cemetery,<sup>70</sup> and a 1922 article in the *Herald* described headstones ‘submerged’ in weeds and rubbish dumped at the northern end (Figure 18).<sup>71</sup>

Without the funds to carry out necessary maintenance and works at the cemetery, the trustees appealed to the Board of Health in mid-1927 that they be again permitted to sell gravesites.<sup>72</sup> The Acting Chairman and Sanitary Engineer of the Board subsequently visited the cemetery to investigate the possibility of reopening the cemetery. After ‘everything was explained [and] every question answered’, the Acting Chairman indicated reopening would be supported, despite reservations from the Sanitary Engineer.<sup>73</sup> Negotiations between the trustees and the Minister of Health were undertaken in late 1927, with the price of new grave sites to be made available fixed at £10.<sup>74</sup> The trustees were also bound by the condition that graves were to be no closer than 10 feet to Macpherson Street, the Princes Park boundary and College Crescent and 40 feet to Lygon Street.<sup>75</sup> The government gazette of 2 November 1927 carried notice of the reversal of the order to stop burials in new graves, permitting the right of burial in 2,500 allotments which had not previously been sold.<sup>76</sup> At their next meeting, the trustees expressed their satisfaction with the success of the work of the previous thirteen months.<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 37** Sketch of Chinese funerary ovens at Melbourne Cemetery, c. 1903  
Source: *Sunday Times*, 15 March 1903, p. 9





**Figure 38** MMBW 160' to 1" plan no. 30 (1896), showing the layout of the cemetery just before its initial closure  
Source: State Library of Victoria

### Reopening and new developments

From the 1927 reopening of the cemetery until the 1970s, the layout of the site underwent a number of changes.<sup>78</sup> In effort to find more burial ground, five minor internal roads had been divided up for new allotments.<sup>79</sup> As noted by historian Don Chambers, the severe unemployment of the early 1930s enabled the trustees to gain concessions for the use of the cemetery land which would have been impossible in the preceding decades, ensuring its continued operation.<sup>80</sup> In exchange for permission to use previously contested land for burial purposes, the trustees were to put the extra revenue earned into hiring employees to undertake infrastructure and maintenance additional works. The prospect of alterations to the cemetery providing additional employment for the Depression era government was apparently used to great effect by the trustees.<sup>81</sup>

By late 1931, in an effort to find more space for burials, plans were developed to incorporate part of the entrance road for burials.<sup>82</sup> In February 1932, the Minister for Public Health was invited to a meeting of the trustees, at which the proposal was presented. The plan comprised altering the alignment of the road from College Crescent to the main entrance on the west side of the cemetery by moving the existing fence line further west. This would create space for an additional 3,500 graves and the trustees argued the revenue from their sale would fund necessary works on roads, pathways and buildings.<sup>83</sup> Although it was initially proposed to only alter part of the entrance, this was soon revised to propose that the whole of the entrance roadway becoming cemetery land.<sup>84</sup> The establishment of the entrance at College Crescent gave the trustees the opportunity to remove the road turntable and parking at the western entrance, thereby increasing the capacity of the cemetery.<sup>85</sup> With some revisions, an application was submitted in November 1932, and the City of Melbourne agreed to allow the whole of the original entry area to be incorporated into the cemetery site.<sup>86</sup> The new entrance to the cemetery was to be at the south-west corner from College Crescent. As part of the works, the bluestone gatekeeper's lodge and office building were demolished, and a replacement administration and residential building was constructed at the newly created main entrance on College Crescent (**Figure 39**). The buildings were designed by architects Gawler and Drummond and were constructed with reused materials from the demolished buildings by Clements Langford.<sup>87</sup>



**Figure 39** Undated photograph of 1934-1935 entrance and administration building  
Source: Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

The poor condition of the MGC continued as a public concern throughout the 1930s. At a meeting on 9 February 1933, city councillors criticised the dilapidated state of the cemetery.<sup>88</sup> While the main drives were well maintained, other paths had broken asphalt, and were overrun by grass and weeds, with rubbish, mounds of earth ‘and other unsightly heaps’ observed.<sup>89</sup> In response to accounts of bird trapping in the cemetery, in 1938 it was added to a list of proclaimed sanctuaries for native game.<sup>90</sup>

The *Melbourne General Cemetery Land Act* of 1933 placed restrictions on the use of land close to the boundary fences for grave sites, with a space of thirty feet from the Lygon Street fence, twenty feet from the College Crescent fence, and ten feet from the Macpherson Street and much of the Princes Park boundaries.<sup>91</sup> The new layout of the cemetery can be seen in a plan of 1936 (**Figure 40**). Princes Park Drive was created along the outer edge of the alignment of the original entrance drive, and Entrance Avenue was established from College Crescent to join with Central Avenue where the original entrance buildings had located been. Either side of this new avenue was new burial ground, which was laid out to a design by Tuxen and Miller from 1938.<sup>92</sup>

Combined with the alterations to previously restricted land along Lygon Street, land for over 4,500 new graves was opened up in 1937.<sup>93</sup> This change in entrances and the removal of the buildings at the west of the cemetery can be seen in the 1945 aerial photograph at the end of **Section 3.0**.

#### Post-war development

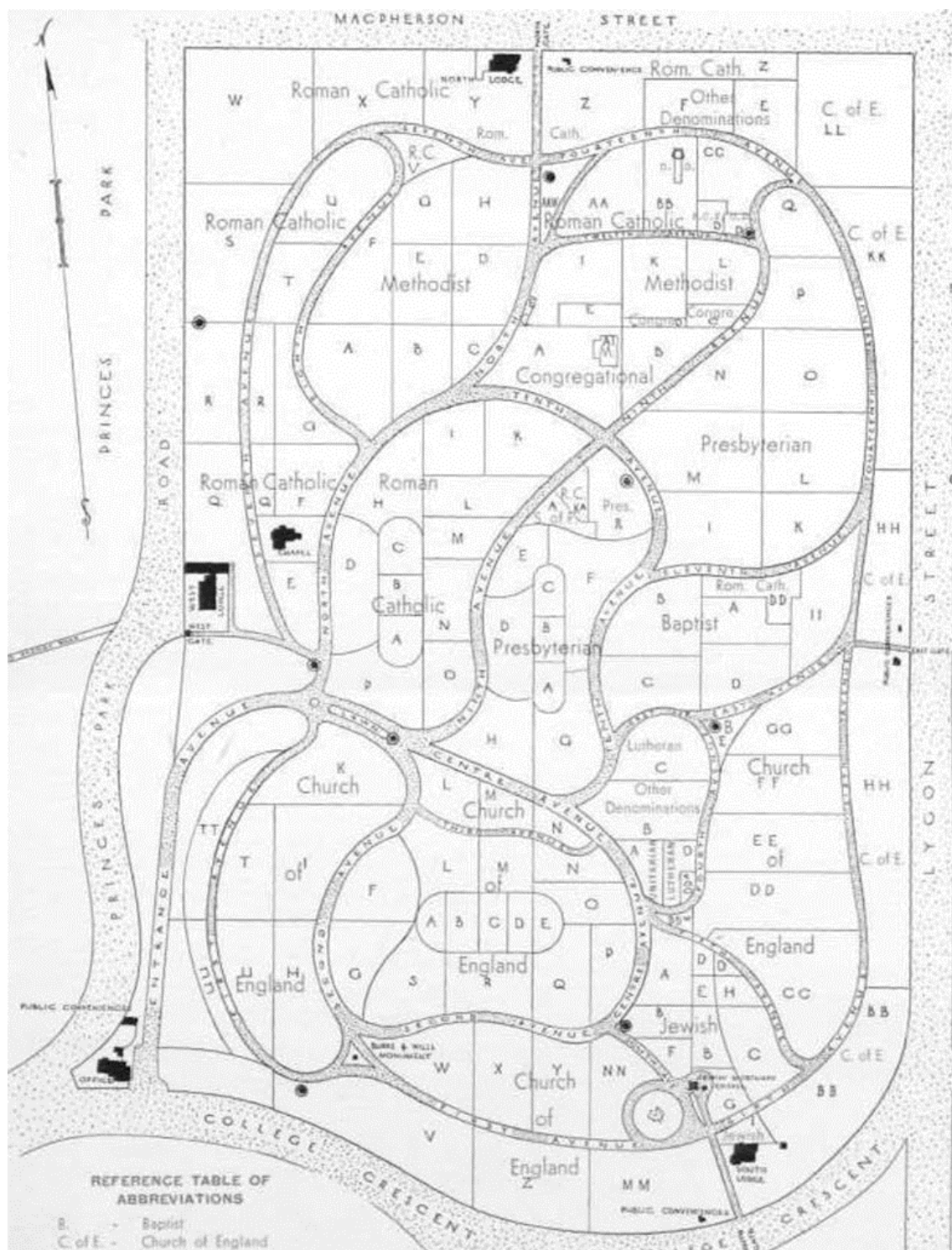
The cemetery faced decline during the 1950s, as the income from burials could not cover the increased cost of the operation of the site.<sup>94</sup> With postwar influxes boosting Melbourne’s population, availability of space was again an issue. Further burial land was opened up in the 1950s, with the reclamation of former ‘pauper’ ground near Lygon Street<sup>95</sup> the start of a common practice to reallocate these public sites and appropriate other garden and lawn space for graves.<sup>96</sup> New monuments increasingly reflected the changing demographics in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, associated with the arrival of large numbers of southern European migrants.<sup>97</sup> From 1957, vaults constructed for Italian families were increasingly installed along old roadways and roadside verges.<sup>98</sup>

Agitation for a crematorium to be constructed at Carlton gained momentum during World War II. Trustees struggled to find a site within the cemetery for such a structure, with the early Chinese burial section initially suggested, despite a ban on crematoriums at the site under the cemetery legislation.<sup>99</sup> Chinese burial customs were still practised in that part of the cemetery, with food offerings placed on graves and the funerary ovens used to burn papers and incense.<sup>100</sup> Trustees also faced opposition from the Springvale and Fawkner cemeteries (which had crematoria), and the proposal was put on hold.

Land adjacent to College Crescent, which had been designated as a lawn area in 1933, was granted to Jewish authorities for use as a traditional monumental burial ground. The West Lodge building was demolished in 1958, creating space for additional burials, as did the demolition of the South Lodge two years later. The North Lodge was demolished later in the 1960s, the last of these visitor facilities to disappear from the site.<sup>101</sup> Roadside verges were used for Catholic and Jewish graves and family vaults, and clumps of older trees were removed to allow old burial grounds to be reused, and to rid the cemetery of ‘surplus vegetation’ to ease the maintenance burden.<sup>102</sup>

A memorial rose garden was developed in c. 1952 near the main entrance by contractors E F Cook & Sons;<sup>103</sup> in the early 1960s a brick columbarium was added in the adjacent space; both provided for the memorialisation of cremated remains. In 1964, Barravecchio Bros. and S Interlandi were granted permission to build a mausoleum near the original entrance (the current Melbourne Mausoleum site;<sup>104</sup> this would be demolished in the 1980s after the High Court of Australia found mausolea illegal.<sup>105</sup>





**Figure 40** Layout of the MGC in 1936, following the relocation of the main entrance and administration facilities to the south-west corner of the site  
 Source: *The Melbourne General Cemetery, 1936*

Aging buildings and facilities were also demolished as part of a general maintenance program of the post-war period. After health authorities criticised the condition of toilet blocks in 1953, toilets at the South Gate were removed in 1960 and new facilities constructed at the East Gate in 1969 and at the North Gate in the early 1970s. These were officially opened in 1972.<sup>106</sup> In the mid-1970s, renovations were undertaken on the 1934-35 administration block and attached secretary's residence. Following a vandalism attack in 1976, the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel underwent restoration works.<sup>107</sup>

The management of the cemetery reached a crisis point in 1978, with charges laid against three staff, including the cemetery manager, and a lack of confidence by the government in the trustees, which resulted in the subsequent resignation of the entire board.<sup>108</sup> As an interim measure, officers of the Health Commission were appointed trustees in September 1978.<sup>109</sup> From October 1978, the cemetery no longer allocated new rights of burial. With the passing of the Cemeteries (Melbourne General Cemetery) Bill of 1979, responsibility for the MGC passed to the Springvale Necropolis trust in 1980.<sup>110</sup>

Upon taking over the management of the MGC, the Springvale Necropolis faced a variety of financial and legal issues more complex and expensive than initially anticipated. A single government assistance grant of \$89,000 was given, but without revenue from burial right sales and with aging infrastructure, the Necropolis was in a difficult financial situation.<sup>111</sup> Legal issues related to reclaimed 'pauper ground' saw an amendment to cemetery legislation passed in 1981, allowing more than one coffin per right.

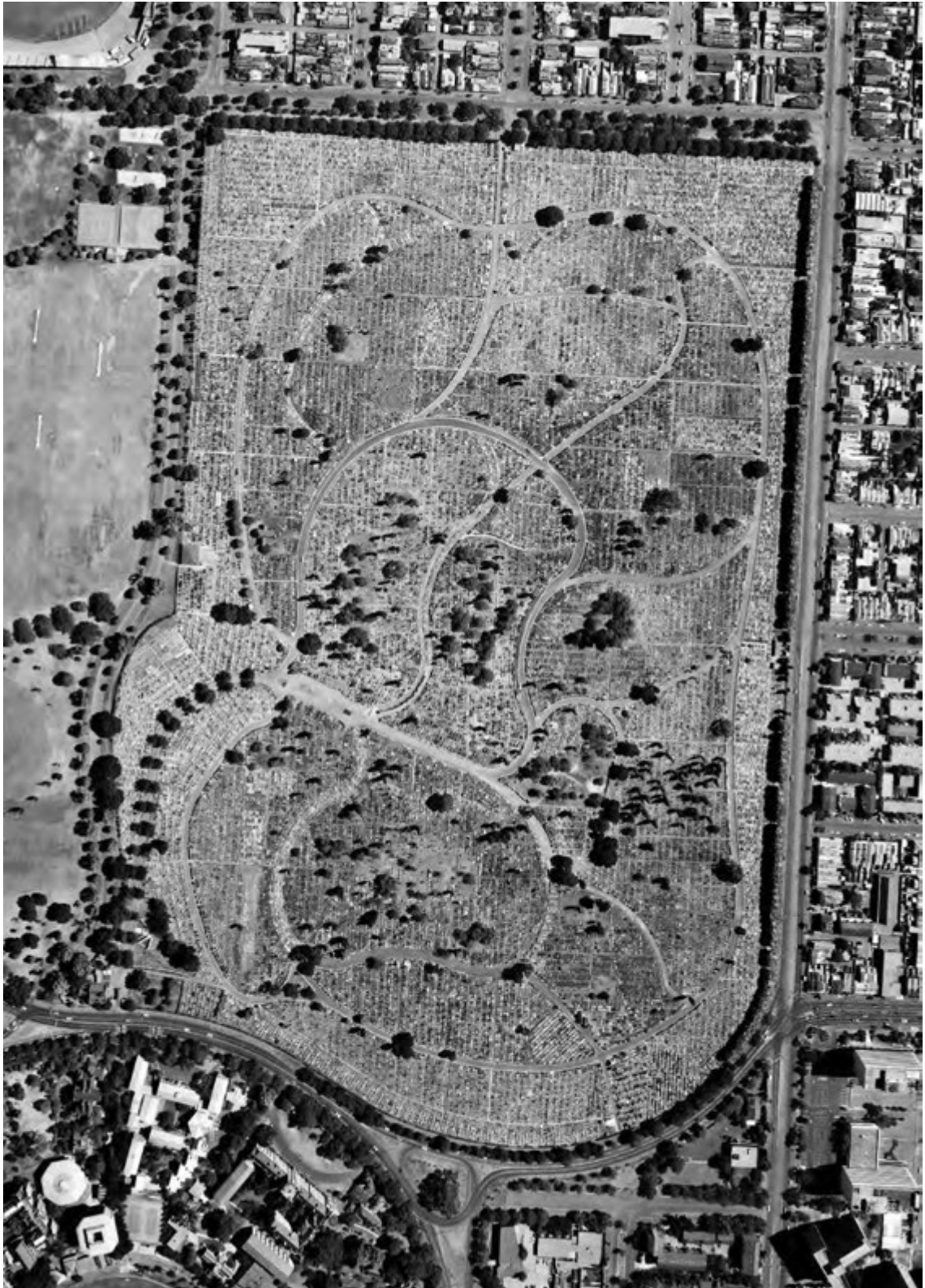
A 1984 aerial photograph of the cemetery (**Figure 41**) shows the development which had taken place in the post-war period, including occupation of the former western entrance by graves, along with areas along Lygon Street and in the cemetery's north-west and north-east corners.

A number of new structures were added to the cemetery in the 1990s. The Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden was established after the lack of a suitable memorial for Sir Robert Menzies came to the attention of the then Victorian Premier, Jeff Kennett. The garden opened in 1996 at a ceremony attended by then Prime Minister John Howard,<sup>112</sup> consisting initially of a decorative wall honouring all Australian prime ministers, and the interred ashes of Menzies and his widow, Pattie. Later, the interred ashes of Sir John Gorton, and a symbolic memorial to Harold Holt, lost at sea, were placed in the garden. Original July 1995 working drawings for the garden were produced by Spaces Pty Ltd of Armadale.<sup>113</sup>

Following the State Government's 1994 amendment of the *Cemeteries Act* to reintroduce above-ground burials, a mausoleum was constructed from 1997 on the western side of the cemetery between Centre Avenue and the juncture of First, North and Entrance Avenues; it is known as the Melbourne Mausoleum. Designed by the US-based Ingraw Construction Company, it had space for 1416 caskets; this scale aroused protests about the suitability of such a large building in the historic cemetery.<sup>114</sup> Upon completion in 1998, income from burial sales was possible for the first time since the 1980 takeover.<sup>115</sup> Its slightly curved plan form follows the alignment of Centre Avenue and occupies what was formerly a lawn median and a public shelter (rotunda) site.

In 1996, the Hotham Monument was removed to storage at Springvale due to structural issues in the 16-metre tall column.<sup>116</sup> In 1999, the cemetery was added to the VHR in recognition of its heritage significance to Victoria.<sup>117</sup>





**Figure 41** Detail, 1984 aerial photograph showing the MGC  
Source: Lands Victoria Historical Aerial Photography Collection, Landata, SERV



### Contemporary history

Access to burial rights at the cemetery again became scarce in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and the few new releases attracted much publicity. In 2002, the first sale of gravesites since 1978 was held, with people queuing for days in the lead up to the release date in March 2002.<sup>118</sup> Soon after, the *Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2003* was passed by the State Government to govern the operation of Victoria's cemeteries and crematoria.

Three additional mausoleums were built in the 2000s-2010s. The first of these, the Gatehouse Mausoleum, was built in 2004 adjacent to the gatehouse on College Crescent on land that originally functioned as a service yard to the gatehouse. Designed by Harmer Architecture, it included space for 618 burials.

In February 2010, ten of the fourteen major cemetery trusts were consolidated into two primary metropolitan cemetery trusts for Melbourne: the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT), formed around the trust for the Necropolis at Springvale, and the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT). Already managed by the Necropolis trust, the MGC became part of SMCT.

A third mausoleum was constructed in 2011-2012 opposite the Gatehouse Mausoleum. Also designed by Harmer Architecture, the Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum was the first in Australia to offer both above and below ground crypts. In March 2012, 1077 allotments in the building were released for sale. Italian migrants were reported to comprise 90% of the waiting list, and the most expensive double crypt was made available at a price of \$72,450. The cemetery expected to earn \$20 million from sales at the mausoleum, located near the main entrance.<sup>119</sup> Remains originally housed in the 1960s columbarium on the site were reinterred in new niches to the north of the Gatehouse Mausoleum.

In 2015, the Age reported that only a five-year stock of gravesites remained available at the MGC.<sup>120</sup> The 1970s east gate, courtyard and toilets were demolished in 2015, replaced by a new gate and more burial space along the eastern boundary.

In May 2018, a fourth mausoleum was constructed, named after Saint Michael the Archangel, on Seventh Avenue on the western side of the cemetery. The only double-storey mausoleum built by SMCT, it was designed by Webb+ architects to house 690 crypts.

Restoration of the Hotham Monument began in 2018, after two decades in storage. Works were mostly completed by 2023, supported by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) heritage restoration appeal. The tabernacle remains to be restored.

Growing community interest in local open spaces and ecology spurred the creation of volunteer and lobbying groups with a focus on restoring a green landscape to the MGC. From August 2021 to September 2024, SMCT entered into an agreement with the Princes Hill Community Centre's (PHCC) Greening the Cemetery gardening group. The group held monthly volunteer working bees, supported by SMCT, to improve the MGC landscape by weeding, mulching and planting in approved areas.<sup>121</sup> Community engagement and educational activities continue at MGC with local primary and secondary schools, universities and members of the local community attending planting and weeding sessions supported by SMCT at different times of the year.

In 2023, SMCT commenced its own pilot project (Project Cultivate) to plant local native grasses, flowers and groundcovers at the MGC, with the aim of achieving a successful model to reestablish beneficial groundcovers on currently bare earth which would suppress weeds, managed runoff and create a biodiverse environment within the cemetery.<sup>122</sup>

**Figure 42** (over) Native groundcovers planted in newly mulched areas near the North Gate in 2023







### 3.0 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This chapter provides an overview of the heritage significance and values of the MGC as reflected in its VHR registration. It draws on the historical information and physical analysis found in the preceding chapters.

#### 3.1 Overview of heritage significance

##### Historical value [Criterion A]

The MGC is significant as Victoria's first major metropolitan cemetery, developed to a central plan and incorporating 'modern' features and characteristics introduced in public and commercial cemeteries in Britain and France in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

These features had been influenced by changing economic and public policy imperatives for burial grounds, including nascent public health considerations, by Victorian aesthetic tastes and moralities, and by evolving landscape design influences, most recently the intervention of the English landscape gardener JC Loudon who encouraged that these new garden cemeteries which were being developed on the naturalistic lines of the English picturesque traditional embrace greater formality and regularity.

The MGC reflects these influences in its form and features, incorporating:

- The curviform layout of a Garden cemetery, with a serpentine road system and other picturesque elements, albeit altered in the early twentieth century in order to create new burial spaces
- Intensively subdivided compartments and plots to maximise in-ground burial spaces, and remnant features of the formal nineteenth century infrastructure of the place, including visitor amenities (as retained in the set of Rotundas), Jewish and Catholic mortuary chapels, and a system of cast-iron signage identifying compartments and roadways.
- An evolved landscape of remnant tree plantings which are reflective of several distinctive nineteenth century influences rather than a single planting plan
- An extensive collection of nineteenth century monuments and memorial features, into which new burials have been accommodated since the cemetery's 1930s reopening.

The MGC is also an evolved place which has undergone substantial changes throughout its operating life. Some of these changes created significant features, while others had ramifications which reduced the site's overall integrity to its valued nineteenth century form and landscape character.

The 1930s reconfiguration and reopening of the cemetery included the construction of a new gateway complex at College Crescent. While the reopening of the cemetery had negative repercussions for the integrity of its Victorian-era design, the elaborate gateway and Gatehouse designed by Gawler and Drummond is recognised as a historically significant feature which rearticulated the Victorian principles of the cemetery's original development era. Other 1930s features such as screening hedges and boundary tree rows, and the metal arbours on East Avenue, are of lesser value.

Further, the MGC contains important monuments and memorials commemorating both notable local individuals and important international events. The MGC is the burial and memorial site for a large number of notable individuals who influenced the early development of Melbourne and Victoria, including prominent squatters, politicians, merchants and public officeholders, and their families.

The cemetery almost immediately became a notable site for public memory in the colony, incorporating the public-facing monuments of early colonial leaders as well as those built as public gestures to honour other figures. In this latter category can be included both the oversized monument to the ill-fated Burke



and Wills expedition, the modest grave enclosure and monument to the Bunurong man Derrimut, and almost forgotten memorials, such as the grave and monument to Melbourne's first postal officer.

The cemetery also includes tens of thousands of grave sites and monuments dedicated to the more ordinary migrants and their descendants who were participants in the rapid expansion of the Victorian colony following separation from NSW, the Victorian Gold Rush, and the Boom period.

Reopened in the 1930s, the MGC has continued to accept burials from the diversifying population of Melbourne and its suburbs, as well as responding to national and global events. The MGC also came to again represent a notable site for the construction of public memorials of resonance to the Melbourne community, including monuments to the victims of the Holocaust and to Hungarian freedom fighters, the American singer Elvis Presley, and the Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden which serves as the burial place for four ex-PMs and serves to memorialise all the Country's officeholders since Federation.

Together, these monuments offer a record (alongside those of other metropolitan cemeteries) of the people and perspectives which have had the importance, resonance, power and resources to receive or erect substantial monuments in this prestigious location.

#### **Potential to yield information [Criterion C]**

The MGC has been recognised for its potential to yield further information of significance to an understanding of the history of Victoria.

In the written and decorative content of its physical monuments, accompanied by detailed paper records, the cemetery is a vast archive and cultural repository reflecting on the lives and values of hundreds of thousands of Victorian residents (and their survivors and descendants). Paper records include sexton's books, burial registers, burial instructions and the like; these records are regularly consulted by SMCT staff to assist with family and genealogical queries from around the world, as well as the continuing active operation of the cemetery itself.

The cemetery is also a vast archaeological place, containing the interments of several hundred thousand people, many from the colonial period. While these burials are the subject of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act and are only exhumed today in limited circumstances, the archaeological potential of the MGC's burials to provide information on the colonial-era population has previously been recognised. With the passage of time and changing public considerations with respect to buried remains, future generations may determine to accept and undertake studies that would seek to understand and collect the vast information stored within the Cemetery's burial plots.

### **3.2 Comment on other qualities and values**

#### **Aesthetic interest**

The MGC has notable aesthetic qualities, particularly as expressed in its extensive collection of monuments and in experiential characteristics of its evolved landscape. While these qualities are unlikely to merit state-listing in their own right under the VHR's Criterion E (aesthetic significance), they are an important part of the Cemetery's recognition and public appreciation and experience as a heritage place and civic landscape; the aesthetic interest and intent of the MGC also contributes to and forms part of its historical significance under Criterion A.

When the MGC was included in the VHR in 1999, aesthetic significance was included among the reasons for its significance. Since 1999, the criteria and threshold tests for inclusion in the VHR have become more rigorous; in the case of the test for aesthetic value (Criterion E), this has meant that the threshold for state-level significance under this criterion is now much higher. While many of the elements of the

cemetery have particular aesthetic characteristics that give them interest, and the landscape of the cemetery can be visually striking, these characteristics are not considered by the authors of the updated CMP to meet today's test for aesthetic significance at the state level.

The aesthetic qualities of the MGC changed dramatically in the twentieth century. Of particular note is the impact of the cemetery's reopening in the 1930s and the conversion of most of the historically landscaped areas within the site into additional areas for burials. The expansion of burials had a far-reaching impact on the original Victorian characteristics of the cemetery as a public landscape; the original density, composition and layout of tree plantings within the site does not survive today and cannot be restored as the locations of these plantings are now largely occupied by burial allotments.

An additional change that had a substantial impact on the aesthetic traditions of the cemetery was the adoption of chemical herbicides in weed management within the place, beginning about 1980. This change, driven by labour constraints and evolving public and regulatory expectations, radically transformed many parts of the site, which were converted from a century of naturalistic overgrowth to barren rises devoid of grass, shrubs or flowers. Chemical management is also likely to have resulted in the loss of trees in some parts of the site, either due to herbicide poisoning or because erosion of the unprotected topsoil compromised growing conditions for established trees. Although the initial impacts may have been gradual, over time herbicide spraying had a deleterious effect on the physical integrity and aesthetic qualities of the cemetery landscape.

Since 2023, SMCT has begun a project to restore native groundcovers to some degraded sections of the site; in addition to environmental objectives, the Project Cultivate plantings serve to improve the general perceived condition of these areas and the aesthetic qualities that support public appreciation of the cemetery's historical significance.

### Scientific interest

When the MGC was included in the VHR in 1999, scientific significance was included among the reasons for its significance, referring to the inclusion of traditional cemetery plantings as well as an unusual tree species within the landscape of the cemetery. The VHR Criteria and Threshold Guidelines subsequently adopted by the Heritage Council of Victoria do not include a criterion for recognition of scientific significance, although other criteria (such as rarity or the potential to yield information) may address aspects of the values formerly recognised under the concept of 'scientific value'.

Today, the principal scientific interest that can be recognised for the cemetery is the information contained in its physical and paper archive, as well as in its archaeological potential. This is best recognised under Criterion C, as discussed above.

Most tree plantings within the cemetery, including the plantings of Italian Cypress and Peppercorn Tree mentioned in the 1999 statement of significance, are common plantings in Victoria and can be considered today to be unlikely to hold any notable scientific interest. Although not of scientific value, these trees form a part of the historical significance of the cemetery and its remnant landscape. In particular, the Italian Cypress trees evidence nineteenth century funereal traditions and stem from plantings established by mourners during that period; for this reason, the stands of Italian Cypress are considered to be Significant within the place.

One rare planting is present within the cemetery, this is the Long-leafed Indian Pine tree, which is properly recognised as contributing to the historical significance of the remnant tree plantings within the cemetery landscape. This tree is also the subject of planning controls under the Melbourne Planning Scheme's Exceptional Tree Register, which recognises its rarity. Although a rare tree species in the

context of Melbourne and Victoria, the tree is unlikely in its own right to meet the threshold test for heritage significance at the state-level under the relevant Criterion B (rarity).

### Social interest

Having accepted more than three hundred thousand burials since its opening in the 1850s, the MGC has ties to families and descendants across Victoria, Australia and the world. While many people with ties to the site may never visit, or may visit once or twice in a lifetime to locate the grave of an ancestor, many others return to the site regularly to visit and maintain the graves of relatives and loved ones. The MGC also has several active communities of interest in its local context of Parkville and Carlton North, including community planting and advocacy groups.

While none of these characteristics are unusual for a major cemetery in an urban area, it is reasonable to consider that they may be accentuated by the age, size and physical characteristics of the MGC, which may give this cemetery a greater sense of 'place' and community interest than a smaller Victorian-era community cemetery or by a modern lawn-style cemetery in a suburban area. The MGC is a large-scale and important part of the historical landscape of Melbourne, and one that continues in use for the purpose by which it was reserved at the beginning of the 1850s.

The 1999 statement of significance recognised the cemetery's 'social importance,' listing a number of characteristics which would be principally understood today as components of its historical significance (Criterion A) or its potential to yield information (Criterion C). Since then, the assessment of social significance in Victoria has evolved substantially, with the Heritage Council adopting not only the VHR Criteria and Threshold Tests but also specific guidelines for the assessment of social significance. The MGC has a generalised public interest, particularly to residents of Melbourne's inner suburbs, and at times a heightened community interest may be evoked at the site. This is an interest that would apply to any major public facility, and is not a marker of social significance.

While the MGC itself does not have social significance, it should be noted that there may be individual monuments, memorials or areas which could meet the threshold for recognition. Detailed investigation and assessment of areas of potential social significance within the site was beyond the scope of this updated CMP, however a brief comment is provided to describe an example of how this value could apply within the site. For social significance to exist under the Heritage Act and current assessment criteria, the association must be sustained in the present, the attachment must be strong and with a particular community or cultural group, and evidence must exist that the social value is one that resonates across the broader Victorian community, as part of a story that contributes to identity.

As an example, the Jewish compartments of the MGC have the potential to meet the tests for recognition of social significance, if their social attachments are sustained in the present day. The Jewish compartments and associated features, including the Jewish Mortuary Chapel and south-east gate, were originally laid out to specific requirements of the colonial-era Jewish community at Melbourne. The identity of these areas was later enriched with major public memorials to WW1 Jewish servicemembers and to the victims of the Holocaust, and the compartments as a whole evidence a time depth of these associations and public expressions of mourning of the Jewish community at Melbourne. This value may resonate broadly, expressing the experience and contributions of an important migrant community to Victoria's identity in both the colonial and post-war era.

However, the extent to which this association is a contemporary value meeting the requirements for social significance under VHR Criterion G is not known. Few burial spaces remain available within the MGC's Jewish compartments, and the new mausolea constructed on the west side of the site have been designed to appeal to other communities. The locus of the Jewish community in Victoria has shifted over time towards more suburban locations, and today the community's more public memorial



practices and expressions may be more regularly associated with suburban cemeteries, particularly in the south-east. Both the Necropolis Cemetery at Springvale and the adjoining Chevra Kadisha Cemetery have extensive Jewish burial sections, monuments and memorial gardens which provide a contemporary expression of memorial activities which were once concentrated at the MGC. As a result, these sites may be more relevant to the community today than the MGC's historical compartments and monuments.

### 3.3 Assessment against VHR criteria

The following short format assessment summarises an assessment against the current VHR Criteria and Threshold Guidelines, as published by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

**Criterion A**  
Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The Melbourne General Cemetery has a clear association with the development of modern systems of burial in nineteenth century Victoria, and with the pattern and evolution of customs associated with burial and mourning. Despite more than a century of alterations, the MGC provides extensive evidence of the form, features and landscape treatment that attended the first modern cemetery to be built at Melbourne.

The scale of the cemetery and its association with a cross-section of Victorian society from the 1850s to its initial closure in 1904 meant that the MGC evidences this association in Victoria better than most other cemeteries of the same period.

**Criterion A is satisfied.**

**Criterion B**  
Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Unlikely to apply.

**Criterion C**  
Potential to yield information that would contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history

The Melbourne General Cemetery in both its physical fabric and documentary archive has the potential to provide further information of significance to Victoria.

This potential exists in the inscribed monuments that accompany the cemetery's estimated 300,000 burials, along with the extensive burial records and other archives associated with the place. As the central cemetery for Melbourne through much of the colonial period, this potential extends to the archaeology of the site as embodied in its buried population and associated grave goods and deposits. **Criterion C is likely to be satisfied.**

**Criterion D**  
Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

The Melbourne General Cemetery was the most central, elaborate and extensive cemetery of Victorian-era Melbourne, incorporating an extensive collection of buildings and infrastructure for administration, circulation and public visitation, as well as an extensively planted landscape reflecting the latest advice on cemetery design and the involvement of major figures in colonial-era surveying, botany and landscape design.

In its original form, the MGC would have been highly expressive of the characteristics of a 'modern' Victorian cemetery as realised in a Southern Hemisphere colony. However, from the 1930s to the 1960s the MGC was intensively altered to accommodate new burials and rationalise operating costs, resulting in the removal of most of the original buildings, alteration and infilling

	<p>of the road system, and wholesale removal and fragmentation of the cemetery's original landscape plantings.</p> <p>As a consequence, the ability of the MGC to express the features and characteristics of this class of place has been degraded. While nineteenth century buildings, features and characteristics remain that contribute to the cemetery's historical significance under Criterion A, they no longer form a clear view of the original characteristics of the cemetery in the Victorian period.</p> <p>Criterion D is unlikely to be satisfied.</p>
<p><b>Criterion E</b> Importance in demonstrating particular aesthetic characteristics</p>	<p>The Melbourne General Cemetery has an extensive collection of aesthetically striking and well-resolved buildings, structures and monuments, as well as remnant tree plantings and landscaped areas which hold visual interest. The cemetery landscape as a whole is visually distinctive, and gives rise to experiential qualities that may be valued by some visitors.</p> <p>However, there is no evidence that the MGC has received critical recognition or wide public acknowledgement of its aesthetic qualities. The place is considered unlikely to meet the threshold test established by the Heritage Council of Victoria, which is the modern baseline for registration on the basis of aesthetic value.</p> <p>Criterion E is unlikely to be satisfied.</p>
<p><b>Criterion F</b> Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement</p>	<p>Unlikely to apply.</p>
<p><b>Criterion G</b> Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons</p>	<p>Criterion G is unlikely to be satisfied by the MGC at the whole-of-place level.</p> <p>It is possible that individual elements or areas (i.e. monuments and denominational compartments) may meet the requirements and threshold for recognition under Criterion G.</p>
<p><b>Criterion H</b> Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons of importance in Victoria's history</p>	<p>Through its extensive personal memorials the MGC has associations with many distinguished and notable people who have influenced Victoria's history, including political leaders, government officials, business people, artists and explorers. However, these are by their nature monuments and memorials, and do not relate to a direct interaction between the person and the place.</p> <p>Several important figures also contributed to the development of the cemetery through its layout, the design of buildings and the provision and design of landscape plantings and other details of the place. However, all of these figures, including architect and surveyor Albert Purchas, botanist Ferdinand von Mueller, and surveyor and landscape designer Clement Hodgkinson are associated with many other sites which have endured with greater integrity than the extensively altered MGC. All are appropriately associated with other places which have been included in the VHR.</p> <p>Criterion H is unlikely to be satisfied.</p>

### 3.4 Significance of buildings and structures

Significant built elements are listed in **Table 1** and in **Figure 43**. Refer to **Section 5** for additional information and conservation policies for individual elements of significance.

#### Key

	Primary significance		Contributory significance		Not significant
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**Table 1** Index of significant and non-significant buildings and structures

Index number	Building / Structure	VHR Identified	Heritage significance
<b>Gatehouse</b>			
B1	Gatehouse (College Crescent)	B1	Significant
<b>Gates and fences</b>			
B1	Main gate and waiting shelter (College Cres / Entrance Ave)	B1	Significant
B2	South-east gate (Cemetery Rd / South Ave)	B2	Significant
	East gate (Lygon St)		--
B3	West gate (Princes Park Drive)	B3	Significant
B4	North gate (Macpherson St / North Ave)	B4	Significant
F	Boundary Fence (Cast iron palisades and bluestone plinth)		Significant
<b>Visitor shelters</b>			
B9	Rotundas (x8)	B9	Significant
B10	Early Drinking Trough	B10	Significant
	Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden Gatehouse		--
<b>Denominational buildings and facilities</b>			
B5	Jewish Chapel	B5	Significant
B6	Roman Catholic Chapel	B6	Significant
B7	Chinese Funerary Oven	B7	Significant
<b>Mausolea and columbaria</b>			
	Melbourne Mausoleum		--
	Gatehouse Mausoleum		--
	Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum		--
	Saint Michael the Archangel Mausoleum		--
	Columbarium walls		--



<b><i>Rockeries and arbours</i></b>			
B8	Elvis Presley Memorial and Large Rockery (N of Melbourne Mausoleum)	B8	Significant
11	Large Rockery (S of Melbourne Mausoleum)		Significant
12	Small Rockery (Centre Avenue / Tenth Avenue)		Contributory
13	Small Rockery (First Avenue)		Contributory
14	Steel frame arbours on East Avenue		--
<b><i>Roads, paths and signage</i></b>			
--	Serpentine road network	P1	Significant
--	Path and gutter network	P1	Contributory
--	Compartment and road signage (Cast iron)		Significant
<b><i>Maintenance facilities</i></b>			
	Maintenance Building		--

**Figure 43** (over) Significant buildings, structures and roadways at Melbourne General Cemetery; purple indicates significant features, yellow indicates non-significant modern buildings

**Figure 44** (over) Significant trees and landscape features, Melbourne General Cemetery; purple denotes significant features and areas, blue denotes contributory features and areas



# SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILT FEATURES

 SIGNIFICANT BUILDING OR ELEMENT

 CONTRIBUTORY BUILDING OR ELEMENT

 BUILT ELEMENT OF NO HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE





# LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE



SIGNIFICANT TREE OR TREE GROUP



SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE AREA



CONTRIBUTORY TREE OR TREE GROUP



CONTRIBUTORY LANDSCAPE AREA





### 3.5 Significance of trees and landscape features

The significance of trees and landscape features within the site is as historical elements which reveal the historical form of the cemetery landscape, as developed by the Cemetery Trust (with input from Ferdinand von Mueller, Clement Hodgkinson and others) and as influenced by the Victorian era burial practices adopted by the purchasers of bills of right to plots within the cemetery.

The remaining tree and landscape features of the site are categorised below, and their contribution to the significance of the place is reviewed. **Table 2** and **Figure 44** provide an index of significant tree and landscape features, as well as including other features currently identified in the VHR registration.

#### Individual specimen trees

Most mature trees at the site are reflective of plantings undertaken by the nineteenth century cemetery trust. Some additional plantings were likely undertaken in the 1930s as part of the cemetery's reopening.

Rather than reflecting a single plan, surviving trees are the result of the influence and advice of notable individuals including Ferdinand von Mueller (Curator of the Botanic Gardens) and Clement Hodgkinson (Surveyor, Parks and Gardens Curator for Melbourne), as well as the practicalities of developing, planting out and managing a site of the scale of the MGC.

These trees consist of a relatively diverse suite of exotic conifers and broad-leaved trees from the Northern Hemisphere, as well as a number of Australian native trees adopted into nineteenth century horticulture. While Hodgkinson appears to have influenced attempts to establish avenues of single species (i.e. Elms and Oaks) on some cemetery roads in the 1870s and 1880s, in most areas the tree plantations consisted of multiple species with no evident pattern.

Historical specimen trees are predominantly located along the roads (and former roads) and in a few parts of the western boundary, with only a few notable individual specimens located in compartments. Historical plantations on the southern, eastern and northern boundaries were generally removed as part of the opening of these areas of the cemetery to new burials from the c. 1930s to 1960s. A few specimens from this southern boundary plantation were retained in the south-west, for instance in the Prime Minister's Garden and adjacent to Rotunda 1.

A small number of specimen trees are individually identified with tree numbers (T1, T5 and T9) in the VHR extent of registration. However, many others are historical specimens of high quality which are significant in contributing to an appreciation and understanding of the historical landscape of the MGC.

#### Characteristic stands of Italian and Funeral Cypress trees

A common burial practice of the Victorian era was to plant an Italian Cypress (the 'pencil pine,' *Cupressus sempervirens*) or Funeral Cypress (*Chamaecyparis funebris*) above the grave. Many sections of the cemetery have extensive stands of these trees which were created organically by individual rights holders (and their descendants/mourners) in the nineteenth century.

Italian Cypress are the more common component of these stands, with smaller numbers of Funeral Cypress often found in the same areas. While there is evidence that Italian Cypress has been successful in self-seeding at the cemetery, many of the trees are mature specimens, and the stands have been a continual presence in the cemetery as recorded in historical photography.

The stands have been characterised as significant in this CMP, consistent with the VHR extent of registration which identifies these stands collectively as Tree T2.

<b>Characteristic stands of Peppercorn trees</b>	<p>Stands of Peppercorn trees are also a characteristic feature of the MGC landscape, located principally in open areas in the interiors of the site's compartments.</p> <p>Many of these areas are elevated, and appear to represent public sections where burials were accepted for paupers and infants without other rights to space within the site. These areas usually have relatively few grave enclosures, and often have modern 'public rocks' bearing memorial plaques.</p> <p>The stands are identified collectively in the VHR extent of registration as Tree T3, and this CMP characterises these stands as significant, along with the open areas within the compartment interiors with which they are usually associated.</p>
<b>Other stands of trees in compartment interiors</b>	<p>A few other interior areas have been planted with trees both historically and in the modern area. These include some mixed areas where exotic specimens are found in conjunction with the more typical Peppercorn trees (refer above), areas with older native Eucalypts, and several areas replanted since the 1970s with native trees.</p> <p>As with the stands of Peppercorn trees, these additional areas generally appear to represent public sections where burials were accepted for paupers and infants; they are usually elevated locations with few to no formal grave enclosures, and often have modern 'public rocks' bearing memorial plaques.</p> <p>Older trees (exotic conifers and large Eucalypts) are individually significant in these mixed stands. The more recent native plantings are not significant, but support the significance of these open compartment interiors as remnant landscape features.</p>
<b>Hedges and screening rows</b>	<p>Following removal of boundary tree plantations from the site during the 1930s to 1950s to create space for additional burials, an effort was made to establish narrower screen plantings along these boundaries.</p> <p>At the south end of the site, trimmed hedges were established of Karo (<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>), and Privet (<i>Ligustrum sp.</i>, reportedly California Privet) along the boundary to College Crescent and Cemetery Road. The Karo hedge (identified as T7 in the VHR extent of registration) remains in place in good condition, while the Privet hedge (T8) has been fragmented and remains only in a remnant form.</p> <p>Golden Monterey Cypress were planted on the eastern boundary to Lygon Street. It is unclear if the original intent was to maintain these as a trimmed hedge; they were allowed to grow into mature trees. This row is identified as T6 in the VHR extent of registration. In 2005, decline of the original trees necessitated their removal; Heritage Victoria required the replanting of a row of this species.</p> <p>Bhutan Cypress (<i>Cupressus torulosa</i>) were introduced to the northern boundaries of the site, also between the 1930s and 1950s, again to provide screening following the removal of the original tree plantations in this area. They are not identified in the VHR extent of registration.</p> <p>The introduction of these hedges and screening rows was a downgrade of the site's original landscaping to accommodate the reopening of the cemetery to burials. While parts of the hedging remains in good condition, other sections have been problematic to maintain: the Privet hedge has been progressively reduced, while the replacement Monterey Cypress row has not performed well.</p> <p>While some of these hedges and screen plantings are identified individually in the VHR registration, unlike remnant specimens of the older mixed tree plantations, the hedges are not historically important. This CMP assesses these hedges and screen plantings as contributory features which support the enclosure of the cemetery landscape from surrounding roadways, rather than as individual features of historical significance. This assessment may affect how these features are managed in future, and should be reviewed with Heritage Victoria.</p>

**Table 2** Index of significant trees and landscape areas

Index	Building / Structure	VHR Identified*	Assessed significance**
<b>Exotic conifers</b>			
PR	Indian Long Leaved Pine ( <i>Pinus roxburghii</i> ) • located in Church of England M compartment.	T1	Significant
CS	Italian Cypress ( <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> ) • Stands located in Church of England compartments A-G, I, K, L-S, EE, FF; Roman Catholic compartments, A-D, H, I, K-P; and Presbyterian compartments A-H and I.	T2	Significant
CF	Funeral Cypress ( <i>Chamaecyparis funebris</i> )		Significant
SS	Coast Redwood ( <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> )		Significant
PRA	Monterey Pine ( <i>Pinus radiata</i> )		Significant
PC	Canary Island Pine ( <i>Pinus canariensis</i> )		Significant
CA	Atlas Cedar ( <i>Cedrus atlantica</i> ) • Entrance Avenue opposite Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum		Significant
TP	Western Red Cedar ( <i>Thuja plicata</i> )		Significant
CT	Bhutan Cypress ( <i>Cupressus torulosa</i> ) • In roadside and grave site positions		Significant
<b>Exotic broad-leaved trees</b>			
SM	Pepper Trees ( <i>Schinus molle var. areira</i> ) • Stands located in Church of England A-G, K, L-S, W compartments; Roman Catholic A-D, H, I, K-P, DD compartments; Presbyterian A-H, K compartments; Baptist A & B compartments; and Other Denominations B compartment.	T3	Significant
MG	Magnolia ( <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> ) • In the Prime Ministers' Garden	T5	Significant
UP	English Elms ( <i>Ulmus procera</i> ) and Dutch Elms ( <i>Ulmus xhollandica</i> ) • along Fourth Avenue • other mature specimens	T9	Significant
QR	English Oaks ( <i>Quercus robur</i> ) x3 • Behind Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum		Significant
QP	Pin Oak ( <i>Quercus palustris</i> ) • In the Prime Ministers' Garden		Significant



Index	Building / Structure	VHR Identified*	Assessed significance**
PD	Cottonwood Poplar ( <i>Populus deltoides</i> ) x2		Significant
QS	Cork Oak ( <i>Quercus suber</i> )		Significant
FM	Banyan ( <i>Ficus microcarpa</i> )		Significant
WR	Cotton Palm ( <i>Washingtonia robusta</i> )		Significant
CCI	Camphor Laurel ( <i>Cinnamomun camphora</i> )		Significant
<b>Australian native trees</b>			
AC	Hoop Pines ( <i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specimen north of Saint Mary of the Cross Mausoleum</li> <li>Specimen in Church of England Compartment C</li> </ul>		Significant
FM	Moreton Bay Figs ( <i>Ficus macrophylla</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In vicinity of Burke and Wills Monument</li> <li>Other specimens</li> </ul>		Significant
EC	Sugar Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed Road south of Seventh Ave</li> </ul>		Significant
EB	Southern Mahogany Gums ( <i>Eucalyptus botryoides</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre Ave SE of Tenth Ave (x2)</li> <li>Closed road south of Seventh Ave</li> </ul>		Significant
CC	Lemon-scented Gum ( <i>Corymbia citriodora</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specimen at Undenominated M / Presbyterian L</li> <li>Specimen on southern boundary below Burke &amp; Wills</li> </ul>		Significant
CFI	Red-flowering Gum ( <i>Corymbia ficifolia</i> )		Significant
BA	Illawarra Flame Tree ( <i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specimen at Fourteenth Ave / North Ave</li> </ul>		Significant
BP	Kurrajong ( <i>Brachychiton populneus</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specimen in Prime Minister's Garden</li> </ul>		Significant
LP	Norfolk Island Hibiscus ( <i>Lagunaria patersonia</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four specimens, various locations</li> </ul>		Significant
LC	Queensland Brush Box ( <i>Lophostemon confertus</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nine specimens, various avenues</li> </ul>		Significant
AS	Lilly Pilly ( <i>Acmena smithii</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature specimens (x2) along North Avenue and First Avenue</li> </ul>		Significant
TL	Water Gum ( <i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i> )		Significant

Index	Building / Structure	VHR Identified*	Assessed significance**
<b>Hedges and screening rows</b>			
PC	Karo ( <i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i> ) hedge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>along south boundary to College Crescent and part of Cemetery Road East</li> </ul>	T7	Contributory
LO	Californian Privet ( <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>along southeast boundary to Cemetery Road East</li> </ul>	T8	Contributory
CMA	Golden Monterey Cypress row ( <i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i> 'Horizontalis Aurea') <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Row along the east boundary, replanted in c. 2004</li> </ul>	T6	Contributory
CT	Bhutan Cypress rows ( <i>Cupressus torulosa</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rows along northern and northwest boundaries</li> </ul>		Contributory
<b>Landscape areas</b>			
1	Gatehouse garden		Significant
Compartment landscaped areas			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church of England Compartment H</li> </ul>		Significant
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church of England Compartments A-E</li> </ul>		Significant
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other Denominations B / Lutheran C</li> </ul>		Significant
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presbyterian Compartment A-D</li> </ul>		Significant
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baptist Compartment B</li> </ul>		Significant
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roman Catholic Compartments A-C</li> </ul>		Significant
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roman Catholic Compartment L</li> </ul>		Significant
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodist Compartment B</li> </ul>		Significant
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodist F / Undenominated Compartment F</li> </ul>		Significant
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presbyterian M / Undenominated M</li> </ul>		Significant
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presbyterian Compartment K</li> </ul>		Significant
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church of England Compartment Q</li> </ul>		Significant
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jewish Compartment BB</li> </ul>		Significant
15	Prime Minister's Garden		Contributory

\* The tree feature identified as T4 (Avenue of Liquidambar on Entrance Avenue) in the VHR registration has been removed.

\*\* As re-assessed in the current CMP. Removal of any mature tree on the site is subject to Heritage Victoria approval, except where a permit exemption has been granted.

### 3.6 Significance of monuments and memorials

The following table provides an index of the monuments and memorials which are identified as significant features within the VHR extent of registration for the place, refer also to **Figure 45**.

Refer to **Policy 30 (Section 4.11)** for recommendations with respect to reviewing the significance of monuments within the place.

**Table 3** Index of VHR-identified monuments and memorials

Index number	Building / Structure	VHR Identified	Heritage significance *
	Elvis Presley Memorial	B8	Significant
	Burke & Wills	M1	Significant
	Major General Sir Robert Nickle	M2	Significant
	W. J. T. Clarke	M3	Significant
	Sir William John Clarke	M4	Significant
	Jewish Memorial in the Shape of Branched Candlestick	M5	Significant
	Derrimut	M6	Significant
	John Pascoe-Fawkner	M7	Significant
	Peter Lalor	M8	Significant
	Sir John O'Shannessy	M9	Significant
	John Alexander Burnett	M10	Significant
	Sir Robert Hoddle	M11	Significant
	James Henry Scullin	M12	Significant
	Walter Lindrum	M13	Significant
	Sir Charles Hotham	M14	Significant
	Sir Redmond Barry	M15	Significant
	Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke	M16	Significant
	Sir Isaac Isaacs	M17	Significant
	Jewish Soldiers Memorial	M18	Significant
	Vergona Monument	M19	Significant
	Ensign Vere Pennefather and Dr Macaulay	M20	Significant

\* Significance in this table has been attributed based on identification of this monument in the VHR extent registration; the heritage significance of these and other monuments within the place should be reviewed.



### 3.7 Statement of Significance

A statement of significance provides a concise summary of the heritage values which have been recognised for a place. A statement of significance was prepared by Heritage Victoria when the MGC was recommended for registration in 1999, and is published by Heritage Victoria in its Victorian Heritage Database.

The c.1999 Statement of Significance as currently published by Heritage Victoria is reproduced in this CMP alongside the gazetted heritage registration at **Appendix A**.

#### Recommended Statement of Significance (2024)

Following on previous recommendations included in the 2014 CMP, Heritage Victoria's Statement of Significance has been reviewed in preparing the updated 2024 CMP and a series of amendments have been recommended. These amendments are recommended to correct minor errors, to better recognise the Cemetery's significance as a layered cultural landscape, and to reference the site's research potential.

The reasons for significance have been reformatted to reflect the current VHR Assessment Criteria and Threshold Guidelines, as published by the Heritage Council of Victoria, and the reassessment of significance provided at **Sections 3.1, 3.2** and **3.3** above.

It is anticipated that both the old and newly recommended Statement of Significance may be referred to by Heritage Victoria in considering future proposed works and changes within the place.

#### WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

The Melbourne General Cemetery was established in 1850 pursuant to an act of the New South Wales parliament. Designed by Albert Purchas, surveyor and architect, it was opened in 1853 and is one of Melbourne's most visited and loved sites. The cemetery expanded in 1859, closed in 1904 and reopened in 1927. The cemetery is centrally located, one mile [1.6 km] north of Melbourne's central business district and contains unique evidence of Victoria's colonisation period. The cemetery in its entirety is significant as a richly layered cultural landscape. Its core elements include the internal circulation system of serpentine roads and rectilinear compartments, remnant ornamental trees and landscaped compartments, and the collection of graves, headstones, memorials and monuments. Additional features include various chapels, the Chinese funerary oven and altar, eight rotundas, gatehouse and waiting shelter, and the bluestone and cast iron fence. The physical monuments and paper archive that form a record of Victoria burials from the 1850s to the present day contribute to the site's significance.

Throughout the twentieth century the cemetery experienced a severe lack of maintenance through various periods of decline-and has been extensively altered since the 1930s to create new burial spaces to maintain operations at the site. After various preceding public trust arrangements, in 1980 The Necropolis, Springvale was appointed the trustee of the Melbourne General Cemetery to oversee its management and maintenance; a 2010 merger created the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust which administers the site today.

#### HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical significance to the State of Victoria.

### WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical significance due to its significant contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and its first modern cemetery. Much of Victoria's colonial history can be traced through the headstones, memorials and monuments commemorating the lives both of prominent citizens and the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of Victoria.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is also of historical significance due to its representation of early burial practices, reflecting both the hardships faced by those seeking their fortunes in the goldfields of Victoria and also the opulence of the more affluent members of society such as wealthy landowners and members of parliament. Its historical significance is also genealogical, as cemetery records as well as inscriptions on the gravestones themselves can assist greatly when searching for a unique insight into the history of past Victorians. It is also a clear representation of cultural attitudes, technology, skills of craftsmen, use of materials and also the high mortality rate experienced particularly through the 1850s.

The aesthetic qualities of the Melbourne General Cemetery contribute to its historical significance, including the meticulous planning of surveyor and architect Albert Purchas (1825-1909), remnant tree plantings reflective of Victorian traditions and the involvement of botanist Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) and later the surveyor and curator Clement Hodgkinson (1818-1893), and the headstones, rotundas, memorials, chapels, cypress trees and other examples of funerary art which collectively form a major visual element.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is also of historical significance for its collection of cemetery buildings and structures such as the gatehouse, gates, two chapels, and eight rotundas, which are expressive of aspects of its nineteenth century development and 1930s alterations. (Criterion A)

The Melbourne General Cemetery is also of significance for its potential to reveal important information about Victoria's history. This potential exists both in the physical fabric of the Cemetery, in its extensive collection of inscribed monuments and in its burials, and in the extensive paper records and materials associated with the place. (Criterion C)

### Recommended statement of significance (with changes indicated)

Below, changes made in this document's Recommended Statement of Significance (2024) are shown as compared with the c. 1999 Statement of Significance published by Heritage Victoria, with removed text in ~~strike through~~ and additional text **bolded**. Refer to the previous pages for the clean text version of the recommended statement.

#### What is significant?

The Melbourne General Cemetery was established in 1850 pursuant to an act of the New South Wales parliament. Designed by Albert Purchas, surveyor and architect, it was opened in 1853 and is one of Melbourne's most visited and loved sites. The cemetery expanded in 1859, closed in ~~1903~~ **1904** and reopened in 1927. The cemetery is centrally located, one ~~kilometre~~ **mile [1.6 km]** north of Melbourne's central business district and contains unique evidence of Victoria's colonisation **period**. **The cemetery in its entirety is significant as a richly layered cultural landscape. Its core elements include the internal circulation system of serpentine roads and rectilinear compartments, remnant ornamental trees and landscaped compartments, and the collection of graves, headstones, memorials and monuments.** Additional features include various chapels, ~~a recent mausoleums,~~ **the Chinese** funerary oven and altar, **eight** rotundas, ~~significant trees and shrubs,~~ gatehouse **and waiting shelter and a myriad of pathways laid out in a serpentine formation,** and the bluestone and cast iron fence. **The physical monuments and paper archive that form a record of Victoria burials from the 1850s to the present day contribute to the site's significance.**

Throughout the twentieth century the cemetery experienced a severe lack of maintenance through various periods of decline, ~~its lowest being the 1950s~~ **and has been extensively altered since the 1930s to create new burial spaces to maintain operations at the site.** The cemetery trustees resigned en masse in 1978 and were replaced by a temporary trust consisting of three Health Commission officers. ~~In~~ **After various preceding public trust arrangements, in 1980** The Necropolis, Springvale was appointed the trustee of the Melbourne General Cemetery to oversee its management and maintenance; **a 2010 merger created the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust which administers the site today.**

#### How is it significant?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of ~~historical, social, aesthetic, scientific and architectural significance~~ **historical significance** to the State of Victoria.

#### Why is it significant?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical ~~significance importance~~ **significance importance** due to its significant contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and its first modern cemetery. Much of Victoria's colonial history can be traced through the headstones, memorials and monuments commemorating the lives both of prominent citizens and the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of Victoria.

The Melbourne General Cemetery ~~Cemetery~~ **Cemetery** is ~~also of social~~ **also of social historical significance importance** due to its representation of early burial practices, reflecting both the hardships faced by those seeking their fortunes in the goldfields of Victoria and also the opulence of the more affluent members of society such as wealthy landowners and



members of parliament. Its **social historical** significance is also genealogical, as cemetery records as well as inscriptions on the gravestones themselves can assist greatly when searching ~~for~~ **for** a unique insight into the history of past Victorians. It is also a clear representation of cultural attitudes, technology, skills of craftsmen, use of materials and also the high mortality rate experienced particularly through the 1850s.

**The aesthetic qualities of the Melbourne General Cemetery contribute to its historical significance, including the is of aesthetic importance due to the meticulous planning of surveyor and architect Albert Purchas (1825-1909), remnant tree plantings reflective of Victorian traditions and the involvement of and botanist Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) and later the surveyor and curator Clement Hodgkinson (1818-1893), who were responsible for the formal and romantic layout of the cemetery and also the plantings of exotic and indigenous species of flora. and the hadstones headstones, rotundas, memorials, chapels, cypress trees and other examples of funerary art which collectively form a major visual element. Distant views from the elevated site as well as views into and within the cemetery contribute to its significance.**

The Melbourne General Cemetery is **also of historical significance architectural importance due to the presence of many typical for its collection of cemetery buildings and structures of high architectural quality such as the gatehouse, gates, two chapels, a funerary oven and eight rotundas, which are expressive of aspects of its nineteenth century development and 1930s alterations. The headstones and memorials are also important architectural features for their unique design characteristics and craftsmanship. (Criterion A)**

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of scientific (horticultural) importance for the presence of traditional cemetery plantings such the Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and the pepper tree (*Schinus molle* var. *areira*) and for the presnce **presence** of a rare long leafed Indian pine (*Pinus roxburghii*).

**The Melbourne General Cemetery is also of significance for its potential to reveal important information about Victoria's history. This potential exists both in the physical fabric of the Cemetery, in its extensive collection of inscribed monuments and in its burials, and in the extensive paper records and materials associated with the place. (Criterion C)**

**Figure 45** Memorials of significance and interest, MGC

**Figure 46** Composite image of two historical aerial photographs showing the MGC in 1945



# MONUMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEREST

VHR-IDENTIFIED  
SIGNIFICANT MONUMENT

SMCT-IDENTIFIED MONUMENT  
OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

\* A DETAILED SURVEY AND REVIEW OF MONUMENTS  
OF HISTORICAL INTEREST IS RECOMMENDED, WITH  
CONSIDERATION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS









## 4.0 MANAGEMENT POLICIES

### 4.1 Implications arising from significance

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. The values which contribute to this significance are summarised in **Section 3.0**.

This significance, as recognised and protected under the Heritage Act, has a number of important implications for SMCT as the site's public trust manager under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act. Within the limits of its legislated obligations and powers, SMCT is required to:

- Maintain the use of the site as a cemetery, accessible to the public.
- Retain and conserve the early layout of the site and associated public infrastructure including the overall form and layout of serpentine roads and rectilinear compartments, the set of public rotundas, the cast iron perimeter fence, and remnants of the system of cast-iron signage which was once deployed throughout the place.
- Retain and conserve significant heritage buildings and structures under its management, and within its legislated obligations and powers encourage the conservation of the significant denominational chapels and mortuary facilities which it does not manage.
- Within its legislated obligations and powers, encourage and provide support for the conservation of significant monuments and memorials on the site.
- Retain and conserve significant trees and landscape elements, and manage the landscape of the place to support conservation of its significant elements.
- Consider the archaeological potential of the site when planning and undertaking works.
- Support the ongoing interpretation of the cemetery and its use as a research archive.

### 4.2 Policy objectives

Recognising the place as a whole is significant, the focus of the management policy is to address the key aspects of the cemetery's layout, built form and landscape, within the applicable statutory frameworks and the powers and limitations of SMCT as a Class A cemetery trust. The policies also provide guidance on the approach to future adaptation and other works within the site, including the identification of areas and elements where change could occur without adverse impact on the heritage values of the place.

Consistent and successful application of the policies will:

**Maintain and conserve** the significant qualities and fabric of the site, including exerting influence on those issues and conditions which are beyond SMCT's obligations and powers to address directly;

**Ensure future works** to significant buildings, elements and landscape at the cemetery are undertaken consistent with **Burra Charter principles**, and in accordance with **statutory heritage requirements**; and

**Support sensitive planning** of future change at the site, including development, activities and works that support the long-term viability of site operations and maintenance of its core heritage values.

**Figure 47** (over) the 1930s Gatehouse, a building that requires reinvestment and new uses





### 4.3 Approach to heritage management

This conservation policy and management plan has been based on the assessed heritage significance of the MGC and an understanding of the heritage values and attributes that underpin that significance. The policy has been prepared with due consideration for relevant statutory frameworks, for operational and management issues and constraints and for the legislated obligations of the SMCT. The intention of the Conservation Policy is to provide direction, guidance and strategies for the conservation and management of the cemetery, and to inform how future change and development are considered and planned for.

The heritage significance of the MGC relates to its historical significance: to its historical origins and rich associations with the Victorian era, its standing as Melbourne's earliest public trust cemetery and as an early 'modern' cemetery in both the Victorian and Australian contexts, and its status as a far-reaching physical and paper archival record of life and death in Victoria. The aesthetic and experiential qualities of the cemetery landscape, although extensively altered and diminished by the century of change that followed the cemetery's reopening to burials in the 1930s, contribute to its historical significance.

These values apply to the place as a whole. The cemetery is understood as a cultural landscape and the whole of the place is of significance. The cultural values and associations are embodied in the layered fabric of the place in its entirety, including its serpentine layout, distinctive buildings, the extraordinary and evolving collection of memorials and monuments from all phases of its history, in its archaeological potential and in the mature trees and other landscape elements. Documentary materials associated with the place are also important.

Sensitivities attach to the management and condition of the cemetery, and it is a site that may be the subject of both local and more broadly held public interest as a major historical facility and public site near the heart of Melbourne. However, this interest is not considered to be of a level that is likely to be assessed today as a significant social value under the Heritage Act.

### 4.4 Management constraints

As public trust manager of the MGC under legislation, SMCT is responsible for its ongoing maintenance. Several issues that arise from the perpetual care and trust model applied to cemeteries, including:

- 
- 1 **Core business** for SMCT is the continued provision for interments and memorials, and facilitation of related activities, such as wakes, memorials and the like.
    - Historically, a key requirement supporting operation of the place has been the site's capacity to provide additional burial space. This led to conversion of roads, verges and other open ground within the original cemetery plan, and construction of new mausolea.
    - Without resumption of existing rights of interment, there is little further capacity within the site to accommodate new burials or burial structures.
- 
- 2 **Limited funding.**
    - Maintenance and operation of the site today must be funded primarily from SMCT's trust funds, as supported by cemeteries within the trust where burial spaces are available.
    - Limited additional public grants are available for projects which support maintenance within the cemetery.
-



## 3

**Scale of the maintenance burden.** The MGC is a site that requires significant resources and labour to maintain.

- Historically, the reduction of staffing and the search for more efficient operational models impacted the presentation and physical integrity of the place, first at the beginning of the twentieth century when the cemetery was closed to new burials, and again in the latter part of the twentieth century as revenue from the sale of interment rights again declined.
- The impact has been particularly acute for the cemetery's landscape. The original landscaping of the site was substantially reduced after the 1920s to create new areas for burials, while later reliance on chemical herbicides for weed control converted many parts of the site to 'moonscape' conditions and led to physical erosion and drainage issues.
- SMCT is not responsible for the maintenance of private monuments within the MGC, and cannot spend its own funds to repair these features. Many memorials of historical significance or of potential interest have fallen into disrepair as their connection to familial descendants or other rights holders has been lost.
- As noted above, SMCT is limited by legislation in both its capacity to raise funds and its ability to apply those funds within the place. Current management has provided 3 FTE staff at the MGC and is piloting new landscape management programmes like Project Cultivate.
- There is a continuing need to work with other government entities to find sustainable models to maintain the cemetery's operations and to fund heritage conservation.

## 4

**Management and project funding approach.** SMCT's approach to tracking, funding and implementing physical maintenance and conservation works at the site can be improved. This may require changes to how works are understood and integrated within existing management systems and funding streams, or upgrade of management systems to better address management of heritage assets.

- Current timeframes for redress of existing deferred maintenance and physical condition issues at the MGC fall short of best practice and may result in physical deterioration of significant elements.
- The serial nature of many outstanding maintenance issues would appear to support consolidation of the works to access grant-based funding, subject to funding support and availability of project management expertise within SMCT.

## 5

**Compatible uses for the place.** The identification of new compatible uses and activities on the site remains an important objective.

- This could include opportunities to house additional SMCT operations or other functions at the site, and other activities which have the potential to generate revenue or public funding streams to support the conservation and maintenance of the place.
- Remediation and upgrade of the Gatehouse to support full use of this building, through accommodation of new and expanded uses by SMCT and/or external users presents as a key priority. This building requires physical conservation and remediation works that can be supported through an appropriate business case for its long term use and occupancy.
- If in future the MGC were to once again close to new burials and monuments, the compatibility of other alternative uses of the site would need to be considered. Consideration of hypothetical future uses in such a scenario was beyond the scope of the current CMP; if in future there is a need to provide guidance to management of the place after closure, new policies and guidance should be prepared to support this transition.

**Figure 48** (over) A south-east compartment of the cemetery, looking towards Carlton





## 4.5 Implementation and review

### Policy 1

Adoption and implementation of conservation management plan

---

*Adopt the MGC CMP as a key reference for future planning and management decisions at the place.*

This management plan will be formally adopted by SMCT, and its requirements communicated to the Secretary of the Department of Health and other relevant parties.

The plan's findings and recommendations should be provided to Heritage Victoria to inform future statutory approvals and a potential amendment of the VHR registration to better reflect the condition and values of the site today.

All parties with management responsibility for significant buildings or monuments within the site should be advised of relevant findings and recommendations of the CMP and the associated Building Condition Assessments

SMCT will endeavour to ensure that its management systems, future budgeting and funding bids, and project design and delivery support implementation of the CMP objectives and policies.

### Policy 2

Integration of the CMP into operational and strategic planning

---

*Include review of the MGC CMP objectives, policies and priorities within SMCT's regular operational, programme/budget and strategic reviews.*

The statutory heritage significance of the MGC, and by extension the guidance and policies of the CMP, are a relevant input to operational, programme and budgetary reviews and to the strategic direction and decisions of the organisation.

Briefings, terms of reference, evaluation criteria and objectives for the organisations review processes should have appropriate regard for the heritage significance of the MGC (and other trust cemeteries) where this may be meaningfully affected by the outcome of the review.

### Policy 3

Induction and awareness activities

---

*Provide relevant heritage inductions and resources for staff and contractors.*

Inclusion of relevant heritage information within staff and contractor inductions will ensure that personnel are aware of the heritage significance of the place, statutory responsibilities, and the policies and other information provided by the MGC CMP, as well as who to contact for further information or guidance.

Where appropriate, SMCT will develop and socialise other information resources to support managers and front-line staff and contractors to manage the heritage values of the place, in the form of user guides, heritage information within asset management systems, integration of heritage responsibilities within policies and procedures, and other resources and technologies as can reasonably be made available within the organisation.



**Policy 4**

## Expert advice and skills

---

*Seek specialist heritage advice before proposing or undertaking actions or works that are likely to have an impact on the heritage values and significant physical elements of the place.*

Where technical advice is needed and where work on significant fabric is proposed, it is important to choose consultants and contractors with proven experience in the relevant field. This also applies to conservation works to significant fabric, save for routine maintenance, which again should be undertaken or supervised by suitably qualified or skilled practitioners.

Specialist input may also be required for the identification and eradication of any damage caused by pest infestations; rectification may involve repair to, or replacement of, damaged fabric.

**Policy 5**

## Review of the CMP

---

*Review the status and fit-for-purpose of the MGC CMP on a five-year basis and when preparing to undertake major change.*

SMCT should undertake an internal review of the CMP's status, currency and fit for purpose in informing current management to the frequency identified in the policy. This may involve a re-read by identified senior managers and consultation with front-line staff involved in maintenance, capital works and other activities that interact with the heritage values of the site.

The internal reviewers should reach a conclusion as to the current fit-for-purpose of the document, and their review findings should be documented internally.

Where a need to update the document is identified, SMCT should budget for and commission the preparation of the updated CMP from an appropriately qualified heritage consultant.

Where little change is proposed or undertaken to the operation and physical form of the place, and the document continues to satisfactorily inform the organisation, it is reasonable to consider that a period of 10 or 15 years may elapse before a requirement is identified to substantially update the document.

**Policy 6**

## Aboriginal cultural values

---

*Engage with the Registered Aboriginal Party to understand and manage cultural values at the MGC.*

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party for Country north of Melbourne, including the land assigned to the MGC.

The MGC includes at least one registered Aboriginal heritage (VAHR) site, is adjacent to another site outside of its boundary, and contains historical sites and associations that may be of cultural value to WWCHAC, to Bunurong Traditional Owners of the Port Phillip Bay region, and/or to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal people are the keepers of these values, and SMCT can only recognise and manage cultural values in partnership with Aboriginal people.

SMCT should commence a process with WWCHAC to establish relationships, build trust and understanding, and develop appropriate protocols and objectives for management of cultural values within the MGC. This process may result in the identification of additional sites of cultural value, as well as providing a new understanding of the history and cultural significance of the cemetery which may (where supported by Traditional Owners) form part of the narrative and interpretation of the MGC in

future. The process may also provide additional impetus and meanings for existing management initiatives, such as Project Cultivate's reestablishment of native groundcover plants to the site.

The City of Melbourne and State government have undertaken similar work in recent years for neighbouring areas in partnership with WWCHAC and other parties, including recent cultural values reports for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens and for the Parkville area (including Royal Park). Given the location, scale and the historical and contemporary importance of the MGC, reconciliation of the site's management with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values is an essential future action.

## 4.6 Cemetery operations

### Policy 7

Planning and allocation of new burial sites

---

*Implement an internal assessment procedure (checklist) when considering the allocation of new burial sites within the MGC.*

Planning and allocation of new burial sites should be undertaken with reference to the development recommendations of **Policy 15**. This can be informed by a checklist procedure.

The checklist should be based on the following short format list, should be integrated into operational decision-making and provided to all relevant staff. Where required, staff should be trained on the application of this checklist.

#### CHECKLIST

When identifying new burial sites, the following should be considered:

- Will the burial be proximate to identified significant or visually prominent monuments?
- Will the burial and headstone obscure and/or impact the view to monuments that are identified as significant?
- Will the burial be adjacent to significant trees as identified in the CMP, i.e. within the root zone/TPZ?
- Will the burial affect the physical fabric or presentation of historic structures, such as rotundas?
- Will the burial be within the curtilage of historic buildings, structures and monuments?
- Will the burial impact on historic pathway treatments or result in the obscuring of the original layout of the compartment?
- Will the proposed burial impact on historic drainage channel treatments, i.e. bluestone and brick channel?
- Is a permit required under the Heritage Act? (note this will only apply for burials outside traditional burial areas)
- Is there a potential for an archaeological impact?
- If the proposal is for a group of grave sites to be developed and then offered to the market, are the proposed layout, design and materials sympathetic to the location?

Responses to these questions and considerations will guide the decision to locate new burials and identify any particular processes or procedures that need to be followed.



Refer to **Policy 15** which addresses planning, site location and impact considerations for the siting of new burials, and specifically identifies areas and features within which new burials should not occur.

### Policy 8

New internal and external uses of the site and buildings

---

*Support new and updated uses of the MGC and its buildings where these are compatible with the place and fund physical conservation works.*

Where practical, SMCT will continue to explore and support compatible uses of the place.

Compatible internal uses of the place (such as offices, meeting facilities and other operational accommodation) can provide programme-based funding for maintenance and upgrade of facilities, particularly for the Gatehouse which is currently underutilised and requiring a number of important conservation and remediation works.

Compatible uses of the place by external parties (such as the letting of meeting rooms, office spaces, and events permits), licensing of guided tours and operation of minor tenancies (café or similar) can provide revenue to support maintenance and conservation of the site, as well as promoting visitation and appreciation of its historical significance.

Other existing or potential revenue sources which have previously been identified include:

- additional guided tours
- recreational activities
- hiring of venues, e.g. the Gatehouse and Prime Ministers' Garden, for private functions
- applying fees to research enquiries and activities
- hiring of the cemetery for use as a film location.

To the extent permitted by legislation, SMCT should endeavour to allocate revenues accrued from new uses of the place to support its ongoing heritage conservation.

Other partnerships can be developed which support in-kind contributions of labour or other services to the management of the cemeteries, as for instance is the case with community planting activities and other community-based organisation. However, such activities typically require commitment of internal management resources to effectively supervise and apply them to the site's maintenance needs, and must be viewed as a supplement to the site's necessary operational staffing, rather than allowing this to be replaced or substantially reallocated.

## Policy 9

### Funding and fundraising

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*Communicate with government the need to facilitate and fund the conservation of historically significant elements of the place, including buildings, infrastructure and historically significant monuments.*

From a heritage perspective, the provision of additional funding specifically directed to the conservation and repair of historic structures, infrastructure and monuments within the place would be a positive initiative and is supported by this CMP.

A number of key heritage elements of the MGC require conservation works alongside improvements to safe public access to the site. SMCT should pursue relevant grant-based funding from the Department of Health and other government stakeholders and authorities in order to restore the state of good repair of the site's heritage structures and landscape and to maintain their condition on an ongoing basis.

Improved support is needed from the Victorian government for the maintenance of the state's historically significant public cemeteries. Options appear to include the provision of new dedicated funding and implementation programmes managed elsewhere in government, alongside changes to legislation to create new sources of operational funding designed to assist trusts like SMCT to address the perpetual maintenance burden of Victoria's historic cemeteries.

Review and identification of monuments of public importance within the site (as recommended at **Policy 30**) and the prioritisation and funding of conservation works to these monuments (**Policy 31**) would also reinforce the heritage values of the cemetery and support a site of importance to Victorians.

Under existing legislation, SMCT has limited capacity to plan, identify funding and undertake works to private monuments. A suitable funding pathway and provision of authorities should be established to support identification and conservation of historically significant monuments in Victoria's public cemeteries, drawing on the expertise of state managers, SMCT's archivists and operational staff, and relevant third parties.

## Policy 10

### Public interpretation

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*Seek funding to support the development and implementation of a site-wide heritage interpretation plan.*

Communicating the cemetery's heritage values is important and has the potential to raise awareness and appreciation of the place in the community and to encourage governmental support for SMCT's strategic objectives and conservation obligations in managing the site.

SMCT has previously operated guided tours (attracting up to 1,500 participants each year), installed wayfinding signage which includes historical interpretation, produced brochures and installed interpretive panels and artefacts within the Gatehouse, noting that this building is not ordinarily open for public access. These activities should be maintained or reinstated (in some cases this could be done in partnership with external entities), however additional and modernised interpretation (including digital resources or apps) would support public visitation, potential income streams and appreciation of the history and contemporary importance of the cemetery. Once developed, the heritage interpretation plan should be reviewed on a five-year basis, and funding should be allowed for the renewal of interpretation materials.

**Policy 11**

## Use and public access

*Maintain the use of the place as a public cemetery.*

The cultural meanings and heritage significance of the MGC fundamentally rest on its ongoing use as a public cemetery. There is scope to introduce new uses on the site but the core use should remain. The maintenance of free and public access to the site is an importance aspect of this. While particular services and activities within the site could be subject to fees and charges, the cemetery should remain publicly accessible.

In addition, recognising the costs associated with maintenance of path systems, ready access to burial areas within the cemetery should as far as is possible be maintained to support the ongoing operation and functioning of the place.

**Policy 12**

## Risk management

*Identify potential risks associated with the Melbourne General Cemetery and develop an appropriate risk management strategy.*

Risks to heritage fabric associated with the MGC site can be categorised into two principal areas: risks of damage associated with natural events or failure of fabric and risks associated with human intervention.

Damage arising from the risk of natural events is likely to result from storm damage, particularly wind and rain. The most likely risks associated with fabric failure are flooding, due to blocked, burst or leaking rainwater goods and pipes, and fire. With regard to intentional damage the greatest risk is that of vandalism.

The following table identifies key risks at the site:

**Table 4 Risk assessment table**

Threat	Probability	Preparation/Response
Lack of repairs and maintenance (monuments and memorials)	High	For the most part, this is outside SMCT's control. Provide owners of Deeds of Right with information on the maintenance of memorials. Pursue options for funding and undertaking active conservation works to significant monuments and memorials.
Lack of repairs and maintenance (buildings and structures maintained by SMCT)	Low to moderate	Establish a programme of routine maintenance and active conservation works as required for heritage buildings and structures.



Threat	Probability	Preparation/Response
Vandalism, theft, destruction	Low to moderate	There is some potential for vandalism across the site, although this does not appear to be a major issue at present. No additional measures required in addition to the existing security arrangements. Review if required.
Fire	Low	Maintain fire services to habitable buildings.
Flood	Low	Maintain drainage systems across the site.
Storm damage	Always present	There is always a risk from storm damage. In the case of buildings, maintain roofs in good order, inspect fixings, inspect and maintain windows and doors in good order. Review management of trees to minimise risk of storm damage.
Damage from failing monuments	Moderate to high	Undertake periodical inspection to identify major risks and take action under s.106 of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act.
Damage to monuments and memorials from failing trees	Moderate to high	Review management of trees to minimise the risk of failing trees and falling limbs causing damage to heritage significant monuments and memorials.

## 4.7 Development within the site

### Policy 13

#### Adaptation and use of Gatehouse

*Maintain use of the Gatehouse, including adaptation works to achieve compliant access and fit-for-purpose internal spaces.*

Of the historical buildings at the MGC, the Gatehouse is the only building that can accommodate ongoing programme use provided that its condition and fitness for prospective uses is maintained. While part of the building houses the site office / visitor reception desk and a meeting room, the balance is currently underutilised, housing ad hoc offices and a few artefact displays.

A 1930s structure which has undergone relatively limited refits since its construction, the Gatehouse lacks compliant access under current standards, and has had water ingress issues in the recent past. It is essential to the long term conservation of this building that suitable operational uses are identified which support its ongoing maintenance; these uses will necessarily require a scope of compliance and upgrade works to adapt the building and ensure it is fit-for-purpose for these contemporary functions.

Within the Burra Charter, Adaptation is defined as ‘changing a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use’ (Burra Charter, Definitions 1.9). Adaptation works require careful consideration, design and management to avoid negative impact to the heritage significance of the place.

The Gatehouse can accommodate new or improved facilities, including updated meeting and catering facilities, fit for purpose offices and research spaces, and/or expanded visitor amenities. To do so, a series of compliance and conservation issues would need to be considered:

- DDA compliant access to and within the building, including the front entrance, secondary fire entrances, and the ground and first floor interiors, and the accommodation of these requirements without undue impact to original features and fabric which contribute to these building's perception and significance;
- Services and amenities upgrades, including design solutions to avoid impact to significant external and internal building fabric and finishes
- Overall compatibility of the proposed uses with the building form, internal layout and finishes.

#### Policy 14

##### New buildings and structures

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*Siting, form, height and design of any new development within the site should have regard for the significance of the cemetery and the development's potential impacts to heritage values at the place.*

The capacity of the MGC to accommodate new buildings or structures of any scale is extremely limited. Following the construction of four new mausolea from the 1990s to 2010s, there is little remaining space within the cemetery that can be feasibly developed without the exhumation and resumption of existing graves.

Consideration was given in the 2014 CMP to the potential for new development to be accommodated within the boundaries of the MGC. Following this, three of the four identified sites have been redeveloped, constituting the former Maintenance Building site near the West Gate (redeveloped as the Saint Michael the Archangel Mausoleum in 2018), the former Public Conveniences site east of the North Gate (redeveloped as a new Maintenance Building and public toilet) and the East Gate (reconfigured in 2015 with removal of the vehicle entrance and creation of additional in-ground burial spaces).

The remaining site identified in 2014 is the stockpile area in the Other Denominations Compartment B. This area is currently used in management and use of the place as a cemetery, accommodating stockpiling of excavated soil, construction materials and equipment.

Compartment B was allocated to burials in the original cemetery plan, and the 2014 CMP noted the possibility that this site contains Victorian-era burials, even if there are no surface monuments or grave enclosures providing evidence of this use. It is an open, landscaped area with a stand of Peppercorn trees, and presents as consistent with the treatment of a number of other interior compartment areas which contain burials or memorials, an existing rock for public memorials is located on its northern boundary. Any planned redevelopment of this area would need to consider the potential for human remains, as well as the significance of this compartment as a historical landscaped area within the cemetery. The risks and constraints posed by Compartment B, coupled with its likely distance from services and utilities makes it unlikely to accommodate substantial development in future, however landscape improvements and use of this area for alternative forms of memorial activities could occur.

In practice, the only notable space in which new development could apparently be contemplated is the memorial rose garden to the south of the St Mary of the Cross, provided that the rights to memorials in this garden provide for their future relocation and the resumption of this area for other uses.

### Policy 15

#### New in-ground burials and alternative memorials

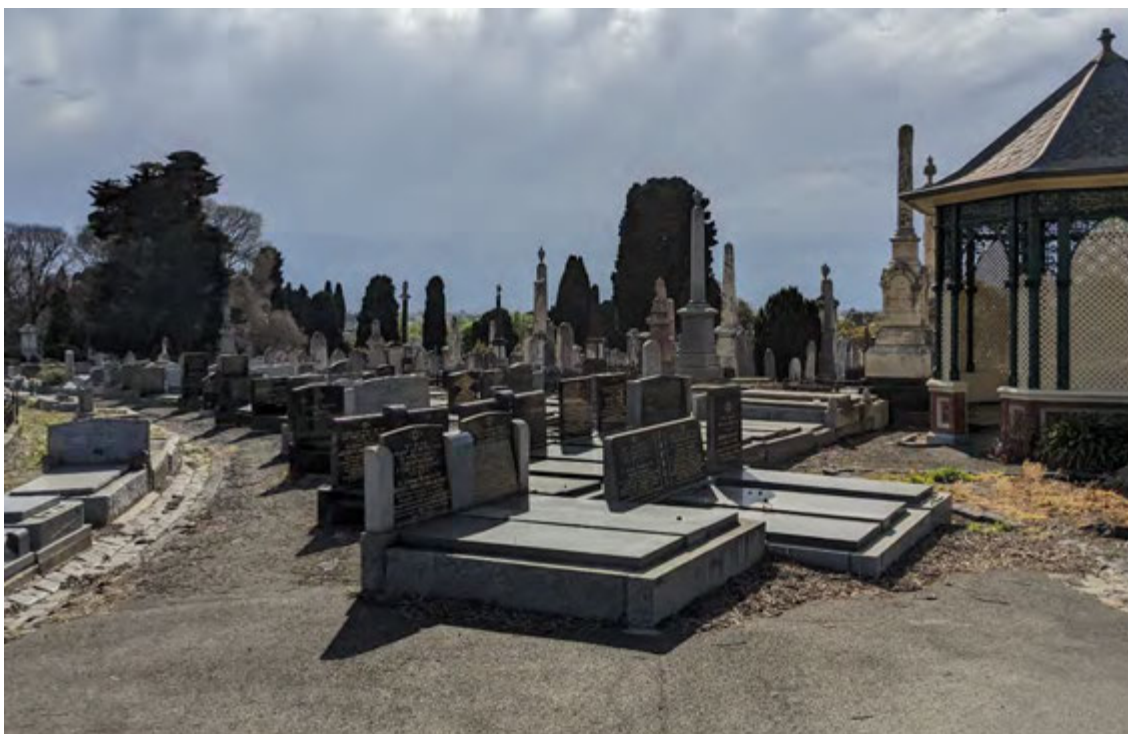
*The addition of new burial spaces to any part of the MGC should not have an adverse physical or visual impact on significant elements.*

*Outside of existing burial compartments, new burial spaces and other memorials should be planned carefully and designed to conserve the MGC's heritage significance.*

The ongoing use of the MGC for burials and memorialisation contributes to its significance and supports the maintenance and conservation of the place by providing operational income and staffing.

Due to the constrained nature of the site, creation of further in-ground burial plots outside the original compartments has been repeatedly undertaken since the cemetery's 1930s reopening. While creation of new burial areas has funded the operation of the cemetery, it has had a negative impact on the integrity of important aspects of the site's historical significance, including the cemetery's serpentine road network, historical landscaping and tree plantings.

Conversion of road verges and gate areas to burial spaces has also reduced the capacity of the site to accommodate other improvements, such as modern accessibility standards and drainage improvements, as well as the creation of alternative revenue uses which could also have supported ongoing operations and the physical conservation of the cemetery's built fabric and landscape features.



**Figure 49** Past infill burials occurred on parts of the serpentine road network, reducing the legibility and accessibility of the original cemetery layout as well as adjacent features like the Rotunda pictured here; if new burials are to occur at the MGC, they must be carefully designed to protect existing values and integrate more successfully into the site



The 2014 CMP identified a number of areas which could potentially accept new burials. Most of the areas identified in 2014 have since been configured for new burials, while the few remaining sites from the previous list are in challenging locations which have not been developed. The previous list is not reproduced here.

SMCT periodically reviews and investigates the status of unexercised rights of interment, and in some cases is able to offer these plots to new purchasers of right. Except where an unexercised right is in the immediate vicinity or curtilage of an existing structure or monument of heritage significance, or where it would impact a significant tree, resumption and reoffer of these plots within existing compartments is unlikely to impact the place, and burials within such plots are generally allowed for under the existing permit exemptions.

A heritage checklist has been prepared (refer to **Policy 7**) for the identification of new burial sites, in planning and developing new burial areas and in reallocating unexercised rights. In planning the layout of new in-ground burial areas, SMCT should consider the visual and aesthetic impacts of the works. Constraints on design and materials should be established where there is a need for new memorials to be sympathetic to the location and to surrounding historical features.

Sale of a burial plot provides a one-time revenue. Where parts of the site are currently unoccupied by in-ground burials, SMCT should continue to explore the relative economic returns of recurring revenue uses of the space as an alternative to the one-time sale of rights of interment. In particular, many parts of the MGC have the potential to accommodate cremation memorials such as memorial gardens and natural settings, in-ground memorial plaques, and rock, tree and seat positions which are consistent with the cemetery's historical characteristics. Establishment of cremation memorials can also serve to support conservation of adjacent features of heritage significance, and may be much less impactful than the creation of new physical burial plots in close proximity to existing features and structures.

#### **New burials and memorials, site-specific guidance**

**Serpentine road network** No further burials should occur within the central carriage areas of the serpentine roadway network.

- Previous works that closed roads and filled these with burials have led to the loss of elements of the original network, reduced its physical integrity and confused the historical value and presentation of the serpentine layout.
- Roads that have been filled in make foot travel in the cemetery more difficult and contribute to a sense of disorder and lack of care within the place.

Some sections of roadway have cross-sections wider than what is now required by vehicular traffic. In these sections, it is possible to consider a narrowing of the road cross-section to create verges which would accommodate both new tree planting and additional burials.

- Narrowing should be planned and designed holistically to maintain the quality of the road presentation and create an ordered layout of new burial plots and formal, regular tree plantings which respond to the original layout of the site.
- Where roads are narrowed, new kerbs, edging and drainage should be installed which is consistent with historical forms in the cemetery. Consideration should be given to maintenance and accessibility of compartment paths and Rotundas.
- Ad hoc addition of new burials within road verges and without concomitant tree plantings and other improvements should not occur.

A very limited number of road segments (i.e. 1-2) are already no longer effectively used for vehicular traffic due to previous changes. Within these areas, new in-ground burials could be accommodated provided that:

- Either the centre or both perimeters of the existing carriageway are maintained as open, paved walkway surfaces wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and mobility devices.
- New plots within the existing road segment are designated for ground plaques which are integrated with the paved surface, and no raised monuments are permitted in these areas.
- The original width and curvature of the roadway remains clearly legible and is not overwritten by the new plots.

<p><b>Vicinity of significant buildings and monuments</b></p>	<p>Burials in close proximity to registered buildings and significant monuments should not occur where they would have an adverse impact on the setting and/or presentation of these features.</p> <p>No burials should occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Gatehouse garden</li> <li>• In the South Gateway, including the waiting shelter and gates</li> <li>• Within a 1.0m curtilage of rotundas</li> <li>• Within the designed curtilage of the Jewish Mortuary chapel and Soldier's Memorial</li> <li>• Within the designed curtilage of the Burke &amp; Wills monument</li> <li>• Within the designed curtilage of the Jewish Memorial</li> <li>• Within a 1.0m curtilage of other significant/prominent monuments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rotundas</b></p>	<p>No burials or interments should occur within the Rotundas. The primary function of the Rotundas should be maintained as a public shelter; the introduction of private graves or vaults distorts this function, rendering uncomfortable the visitor's decision to occupy the Rotunda for shelter.</p> <p>New burials in the general external vicinity of the Rotundas (outside of the 1.0 metre curtilage) should be of low scale to maintain visual prominence of the historic structure and not impede visual access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear pathway access should be maintained to Rotunda openings.</li> <li>• Rotundas could be considered as settings for other types of memorial use, such as tribute/scatter plaques or perhaps the installation of secured cremation niches.</li> <li>• Memorial uses of Rotundas should be discrete and not interfere with public use and perception of the Rotunda as a public shelter within the cemetery.</li> <li>• Permanent fixtures and alterations should be designed to avoid harm to significant material fabric and ornamental features of the Rotundas.</li> <li>• The Brick Rotundas (Type A) are somewhat more suitable for incorporation of discrete memorials than the lightweight Cast Iron Rotundas (Type B).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gatehouse garden</b></p>	<p>No burials should occur in the garden south and west of the Gatehouse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While reconstructed in the 1930s, the gatehouse has been designed to be presented within a landscaped setting, separate from the cemetery's burials.</li> <li>• The Gatehouse's attached garden areas should be activated and utilised in conjunction with upgraded internal uses of the building.</li> </ul>

### Significant trees and Tree Protection Zones

No new burial or reallocated right to interment should require the removal of a significant tree.

Consideration should be given to potential impacts of excavation to root zones.

- No burials should generally occur within the tree protection zone of significant trees (as calculated by a qualified arborist), unless mitigation measures have been identified to ensure the retention of the impacted tree.
- Where burials are planned close to significant trees and landscape elements (refer to **Section 3.5**), tree protection zones should be identified. Arboricultural advice should be provided on the potential impacts prior to planning for or undertaking any new burials or reallocating unexercised rights within the TPZ of a significant tree.

### Interior of compartment landscaped areas

In the landscaped compartment areas, any creation of new burial plots would need to be carefully considered. While some scope of new burial options may be possible, particularly where there are a small number of existing burials, these sites are substantially constrained by historical uses and by the significance of their landscape features and characteristics.

Most of the landscaped compartment areas are believed to have accommodated public burials for paupers and infants, and all contain trees and open lawn areas which support landscape qualities contributing to the cemetery's historical significance. Many of these areas are currently used for the scattering of ashes, and contain public rocks or other cremation memorials.

Landscaped compartment areas should not be developed for further raised monument burial plots.

- With careful planning, it is possible that some of the lawn areas could accept in-ground burials in a lawn style, with memorialisation limited to a simple inground plaque.
- In preference, landscaped areas would be used for alternative forms of memorialisation that support their maintenance as landscape spaces populated by mature trees and other vegetation.
- These could include memorial gardens, scatter gardens and natural settings, rock and tree positions and public plaque memorials, and other memorial forms consistent with the qualities of the interior compartment landscapes.
- Where practical, the development of new memorials should be designed to support the maintenance of historical landscape characteristics of note, such as conservation of major mature trees, establishment of new trees and ornamental features consistent with the historical qualities of the cemetery, or the reestablishment of indigenous vegetation in a form consistent with the remnant native vegetation which endured on the site for many decades after its initial development.

### Rockeries

The remnant rockeries could be repurposed as group memorial sites to generate funding for conservation and reconstruction of these features.

- **Policy 29** provides further guidance in respect to this option.

The above guidance is provided to support planning and conceptualisation of new burial options within the MGC. All new burial and memorial facilities outside of existing allocated compartments will typically require some form of Heritage Victoria approval.



## Policy 16

### Archaeology

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*Seek specialist advice and consult with Heritage Victoria prior to undertaking subsurface excavations in non-burial areas.*

All relevant SMCT staff should be made aware of the requirements of the *Heritage Act* as they relate to archaeology. While there is a general exemption for subsurface activities associated with burials within areas originally designated for the purpose, all subsurface works outside those areas require a permit or permit exemption approval from Heritage Victoria.

Archaeology revealed outside of existing burial areas in the process of excavation or other works on the site is controlled under the Heritage Act (if 75 years of age or older) and is subject to consent processes administered under the Heritage Act. When archaeology is revealed during works at the place, all works must cease in order to notify Heritage Victoria and undertake investigations as deemed necessary. Works impacting the revealed archaeology can only resume with the consent of Heritage Victoria.

In the event that undocumented burials are encountered, standard procedures for the notification of the Coroner, Heritage Victoria and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria must be followed.

## 4.8 Buildings and built elements

### Policy 17

#### Significant buildings and structures

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*Significant buildings and structures should be retained and conserved in accordance with the policies in this CMP.*

While the Cemetery as a whole is of heritage significance, identified buildings and structures within the site have been identified in the extent of registration as being of particular significance. These are indexed in **Section 3.4**, and include surviving Victorian and 1930s buildings as well as the early gates and cast iron fence which stand on the cemetery boundary.

The retention and conservation of these buildings should be a priority in the future management of the place, and funds sought and allocated to support their conservation in a state of good repair and with integrity to their original design and material characteristics.

Specific advice and management recommendations for individual buildings is provided in **Section 5.0**.

### Policy 18

#### Maintenance and conservation works

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*Undertake the urgent and priority works identified in the Melbourne General Cemetery Condition Assessment (Lovell Chen 2023).*

*Establish an annual inspection and maintenance program, and provision on an annual basis within capital works budgets for active conservation and rectification of significant buildings and structures.*

*Where no annual capital works program has been established, undertake a new Condition Assessment of significant buildings and structures on at least a five-year basis.*

SMCT undertakes a routine maintenance programme within the cemetery, generally focused on an annual regime of minor repair and cleaning works. To achieve good outcomes from maintenance works, it is recommended that in addition to these minor works, structures are inspected on an annual basis to identify particular works or issues to be rectified. It is recommended that a works schedule is established with timelines for completion, and that sufficient funds are allocated to allow for rectification of identified issues with a calendar year.

A more active conservation works program focussing on the repair of damaged fabric and the replacement of missing detail to historic buildings and structures is also necessary to maintain the place, rectify previous periods of neglect, and conserve the significance of essential elements of the place.

Specific maintenance recommendations for buildings and structures have been identified in the updated *Melbourne General Cemetery Condition Assessment* (Lovell Chen, 2023).

Where conservation works are contemplated, they should be undertaken in accordance with Burra Charter principles. Reinstatement of missing details and other reconstruction works should be undertaken based on accurate information and preferably with specialist input. Many repair works if undertaken in this way can be executed under existing permit exemptions (refer **Section 1.5, Appendix A** and Heritage Victoria's *General Permit Exemptions* document), however some works such as structural reinforcement or replacement of original elements may require Heritage Victoria's specific approval.

### Policy 19

#### Conservation and care of significant fabric

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*All future conservation and other works to significant fabric should be carried out in accordance with the principles of The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.*

The proper care and conservation of heritage elements, fabric and landscape at the MGC should have regard for the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter), as adopted by Australia ICOMOS to assist in the conservation of heritage places.

The principles of the Burra Charter provide guidance on the conservation of places and elements of cultural heritage significance. The principles have informed the preparation of the conservation policies and guidelines included in this CMP.

#### Care of fabric

Management of maintenance will be key to the long term conservation of heritage fabric on the site. Such maintenance will require planning and the allocation of an appropriate budget. It should be tailored to the particular element and should be aimed at preventing or retarding deterioration. Broadly the approach to maintenance firstly should be to maintain and ensure that the significant original fabric does not deteriorate and secondly to maintain all existing fabric. Ad hoc repairs or patch-ups should be avoided.

#### Repair work

From a heritage perspective, repairs of significant buildings and structures generally should involve replacing 'like with like': i.e. the replacement of material (missing, deteriorated, broken, etc) with fabric to match the existing. Accepting this principle, it is also important to determine if the material proposed for replacement was appropriate in the first place (i.e. it may not be original). In some cases, the advice of a qualified heritage practitioner should be sought on this. Wherever possible, only actual decayed fabric of a heritage structure should be replaced, instead of the whole host element.

Repairs to significant structures should also, in preference, be carried out by appropriately skilled staff or contractors, and may require in some cases prior analysis of the composition of the fabric to be repaired/replaced (e.g. mortars, renders, surface treatments, etc).



## 4.9 Public infrastructure

### Policy 20

#### Layout and circulation

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*Retain the original features and presentation of the cemetery's historical layout, including its serpentine road network and the formal gridded layout of internal compartments and secondary paths.*

#### Road network

While infilling has previously occurred in a number of locations, the original layout of the serpentine roadway network remains discernible across most of the site and is a distinctive feature which contributes to the significance of the MGC.

Surviving sections of roadway should generally be retained, noting in some areas it may be possible to reconstruct the roadway with a smaller cross-section while maintaining the original (valued) alignment.

**Policy 15** identifies a limited number of existing closed roads where infill burials or other forms of memorial could be installed, provided that an improved approach to infill is adopted which conserves the value and legibility of the original road alignment.

#### Paths and gridded compartment layout

The remnant and often deteriorated condition of many compartment pathways does not support access, and the contribution of physical pathway materials to the significance of the place is considered in the current CMP to be limited. All paths are controlled under the existing VHR registration, and any proposed change to surface materials would require an approval from Heritage Victoria.

In considering the management of the minor paths, a key consideration is the maintenance of access into the burial areas. It is not practical to abandon sections of the path network, or to substantially fill these secondary paths with new burials that would obstruct existing plots.

Allocation of new burials with mandated flat markers (crypt stones, plaques or other embedded markers) may be possible in areas where existing paths are broad enough to be used as a burial and neighbouring grave enclosures are in satisfactory condition to allow adjacent excavations.

- Any use of the existing secondary path network for new burials, or other alteration to surface materials, should maintain trafficability as well as the legibility and aesthetic quality arising from the formal rectilinear grid layout of the interstitial paths and graves themselves.

### Policy 21

#### Road materials and drainage

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*Maintain surface treatment of the serpentine road network as asphalt (or revert to blue metal/gravel), and retain bluestone pitcher and brick drainage channels to roadways where these survive.*

*Repair or replace deteriorated secondary path surfaces and drainage systems.*

The survival of early road surfacing and infrastructure contributes to an understanding of the history of the place. Finished with an asphalt surface, much of the main serpentine roadway network retained an original bluestone pitcher channel edge treatment and this is the preferred presentation where the bluestone fabric remains. Where this has already been replaced with concrete kerb and channel, or where there is a need to achieve improved drainage or other objectives which support long-term conservation of the place, the use of modern kerb and edge details are acceptable. Alternate roadway

treatments in lieu of asphalt, such as reversion to blue metal or gravel, could be contemplated in the future where roads are not heavily used.

Where bluestone elements have been retained in sections of road which were previously infilled, these should be conserved as evidence of the original layout. Where channels form part of the drainage network for the site, they should be maintained in an operable condition. Where early surfacing treatments survive to secondary paths, these would in preference also be retained.

The material condition of secondary pathways is varied and makes only a very limited contribution to the historical significance of the place. Path materials are less relevant to the MGC's significance than the legibility of the original gridded system of compartments, secondary pathways and grave sites. Although maintenance and resetting of existing bluestone or brick masonry paths is preferred where practical, it is appropriate to propose replacement of deteriorated path surfaces with modern materials where the existing surface is unserviceable or removal would facilitate other drainage and landscape improvements.

Many paths have been impacted by erosion or other degradation; subject to funding availability these should be audited and rectified on a priority basis. Asphalt, brick, bluestone, gravel and concrete have all been used as historical pathway surfaces; material treatment of reconstructed and new paths should be guided by civil engineering advice, and should aim where possible to adopt consistent treatments within the same compartment or for primary vs. secondary walkways within the compartment.



**Figure 50** Drainage: (upper left) remnant three brick channel between graves (2014); (upper right) junction of concrete drains; (lower left) remnant three-pitcher bluestone channel; (lower right) remnant four-pitcher bluestone channel, with new graves infilling the roadway



**Figure 51** Paths and interfaces: (upper left) bluestone driveway from south-east gate leading to asphalt roadway, with brick channels; (upper right) bluestone pincer path; (lower left) remnant bluestone pincer path with deteriorating asphalt overlay; (lower right) new concrete path



## Policy 22

### Compartment and road signage

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*Retain and conserve cast iron signage identifying compartments, road names and other features within the place.*

Surviving cast iron compartment and road signage should be identified, retained and conserved.

The cast iron signage is a notable aspect of the site's historical significance as a Victorian-era cemetery. The signage survives in varying condition; many signs suffer from infrequent or neglected repainting as a corrosion prevention measure, or have suffered corrosion in the past. They require careful cleaning, treatment and repainting, and in some cases may require specialist repair or recasting.

Given the extensive number of surviving signs and their varying condition, there is a need to develop a considered conservation programme, including identification of supporting funding (e.g. special grants), development of a management strategy, confirmation of suitable repair methodologies and supervision of the work by a conservation specialist.

- It may not be practical to retain, repair and restore all existing signage within the site due to limited funds and the deteriorated condition of many existing signs
- A management strategy should be developed that combines:
  - Retention in situ of the best preserved and most relevant sign examples (such as those located near existing road intersections or major buildings and features),
  - Storage or artefactual display of a number of other restored signs where there is a preference not to reinstate them in situ, and for the purpose of maintaining a reserve of original signs against potential future losses to decay, theft or accident.
  - Documentation and disposal of signs which are no longer maintainable because of the extent of damage

The original paint scheme should be confirmed through paint sample analysis. It is known the colour coding of the compartments by religious denomination was used on some early maps and records, and this system may have extended to the physical wayfinding installed within the site. Alternatively, the signs may have originally been painted a consistent colour across the site; this would be confirmable through paint chip analysis from a sufficient number of sample sites (covering the breadth of the place and the original denominations to which compartments were assigned).

## Policy 23

### Barrier free and safe access

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*Conserve the heritage significance of historical structures when designing visitor access and safety improvements within the place.*

The cemetery currently does not have universal outdoor access throughout the site due to the nature and condition of roads and paths and an absence of kerb ramps throughout the place. The road system doubles as the primary pedestrian and cycling route through the site; while the secondary gridded path system can be used by pedestrians, it is not consistent in its condition and navigation in some areas is difficult.

As a major public facility, barrier free access would desirably be provided at the entrances and to key buildings and facilities within the MGC, including the Gatehouse, the four Mausolea, the Prime Ministers' Memorial Garden, and the Public Toilet at the North Gate.

Throughout most of the cemetery, shared use of the cemetery roads may continue to be accepted considering the low posted speed limits and good sightlines. However, there are specific areas of concern at entry gates, where the gate design and condition may pose a risk of unsafe conflicts between road users and pedestrians. At gates with historically significant features, alterations to achieve safe separation and barrier free access are likely to require change to original fabric elements of the place.

Directions for future feasibility investigations are suggested below.

**Main entrance (South-west Gate)** The main entrance (**Figure 52**) consists of side by side, one-way vehicle drives separated by a central pier (with the Waiting Shelter behind it), and foot gates to either side. The pedestrian entrances have swing gates that at the time this report was prepared were inoperable due to issue with the pavements underneath them, requiring pedestrians to share the vehicle entries. The pedestrian gates are narrow and would not meet minimum standard widths for accessible entrances.

- While the double vehicle entrance may reduce vehicle conflicts, there is limited distance between the public roadway on College Crescent and the gates. Vehicles often need to exit the public road at speed due to traffic conditions. The gate piers are solidly built and the view through the gates may be obscured by the various structures, reducing sight lines and increasing the likelihood of unseen driver-pedestrian-cyclist conflicts.
- As an interim measure, the pedestrian gates should be restored to an operable condition by correcting existing overpaved asphalt surfaces and repairing the swing gate tracks, allowing able bodied pedestrians to use these gates instead of the vehicle entries. However, these gates may not be accessible to all assisted mobility users due to their narrow widths.
- Consideration should be given to installing additional safety features to the driveway area, such as rumble strips or shared zone paving and signage.

**South-east Gate** This gate (refer to **Figure 11** in **Section 2.3**) is largely intact to its original historical condition. It occupies a narrow and underutilised access to Cemetery Road. Constructed to provide direct access into the cemetery's Jewish compartments, it now sees little use other than by commuter cyclists. A turnstile on the foot gate is kept locked, however the limited use by vehicle traffic means that the main gate functions as a barrier-free access point. Inside the gate there is refuge space along the drive towards the Jewish Mortuary Chapel.

- This gate should be retained in its current form, and should be actively conserved as the most intact example of the secondary entrance gates installed at the cemetery during the Victorian era.
- This gate could easily be closed to public automobile traffic by means of a removable bollard, while allowing it to be used by cyclists and pedestrians. This would help to protect the gate from accidental damage, while retaining the option to use the gate for a specific religious purpose or in case of emergency or maintenance requirements.

**North Gate** The North Gate (**Figure 53**) retains the c. 1870s decorative cast iron columns and cast iron palisade gates. Its context has been altered with the 1960s removal of the original public lodge west of the gates, the addition of graves to the road verge immediately inside the gates, and the construction of a new Maintenance Building immediately to the east which sits on a higher level to the driveway. This required construction of a ramp which blocks barrier free access from the foot gate (a standard swing gate) to the east of the vehicle gate. West of the vehicle gate, a turnstile gate sits on steps. Both foot gates are kept locked.

- Achievement of compliant access without vehicle-pedestrian conflicts appears difficult, and would require alteration to the foot gates and surrounding cast iron fence and bluestone plinth.
- As an intermediate measure, safety features could be installed to the driveway area, such as rumble strips or shared zone paving and signage.
- In the long-term, the chaotic nature of previous change in this area should be resolved. While the scale and location of the maintenance building is unfortunate, it will be a longstanding feature of this site.
- The historical gateway would need to be altered in order to achieve a more generous and safe entrance, this should involve careful design by a heritage architect and structural engineer to retain as much of the original gate fabric as possible, although items like the turnstile would almost certainly require dismantling.

#### West Gate

The West Gate (**Figure 54**) was constructed in the c. 1930s to create a single pedestrian gate replacing the original main entrance when this shifted to College Crescent. It consists of a turnstile inside a vaulted vestibule. The turnstile prevents barrier-free access at this location. There are cast-iron fences to either side, and a narrow walkway leads from the gate on the inside of the cemetery, with recent burials established right up to the edge of the walkway. Due to the grave locations, there is little to no opportunity to construct an additional barrier-free gate.

- Investigate removing and storing the turnstile and installing a conventionally operable gate either inside the vestibule or on the cemetery side.



**Figure 52** 2023 condition of entry gate at main entrance, with pedestrian gate locked closed; a similar condition exists for the 'Out' gates





**Figure 53** 2023 condition of North Gate entrance, with inoperable pedestrian gates and a narrow shared entryway with no refuge or safety measures inside the cemetery



**Figure 54** 2023 condition of West Gate; in ground gravesites to both flanks limit options for creating a new barrier free access while retaining the original turnstile

**Figure 55** (over) Old Cottonwood Poplar tree along the former Eighth Avenue in the north-west





IN MEMORY OF  
MURPHY  
LEVIN  
DUNN  
JAMES DUNN  
1878-1978

IN MEMORY OF  
PHILIP AND JANE CARNE  
PHILIP  
JANE  
1825-1895



## 4.10 Trees and landscape

### Policy 24

Significant trees and landscape features

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*Retain and conserve the significant trees and landscape features identified in this CMP.*

The original garden characteristics of the Victorian-era cemetery were severely compromised following the reopening of the cemetery for new burials in the 1930s. Despite this, the significance and aesthetic appeal of the cemetery today includes the many remnant mature trees, which reflect both intentional plantings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century cemetery trust as well as trees planted by mourners on individual burial sites. Together, these trees support public understanding of the historical development of the cemetery and contribute to its present value as a public landscape within Melbourne's inner suburbs.

Significant trees and landscaped areas are indexed at **Section 3.5**. The retention of these features within the place is a priority, and should be recognised in the planning of new works, burial sites and developments at the place.

Where new plantings or landscaping are required, they should have regard for the significant characteristics of the existing features, and for **Policy 26 to Policy 28** below.

### Policy 25

Tree management

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*Manage significant trees in a manner consistent with best practices for heritage trees and with the Australian Standard AS4970 Protection of Trees on Development Site*

*Adopt risk management strategies that limit pruning impacts to significant trees, including chaining off path access and creating mulched or chained exclusion zones.*

*Develop and maintain a Tree Management Plan for the site, consisting of an inventory of the existing trees (updated on a regular basis), recommendations for ongoing assessment and management, and guidelines for new tree plantings within the site.*

Trees should be managed by personnel with appropriate skills, and to standards which maximise the prospects for long-term retention. In particular, management of older trees should focus on retention; pruning should be conservative in nature and avoid progressive removal of the tree. Where assessment of an individually significant tree indicates a public safety hazard, consider alternative management such as exclusion areas prior to removing major limbs or taking other actions which compromise the tree.

A Tree Management Plan should be developed by suitably qualified professionals with relevant skills in tree and heritage landscape management, and include:

- assessment and accurate mapping of all existing trees
- recommendations for ongoing arboricultural maintenance and assessment, and thresholds for major interventions and tree removal.
- identification of new tree planting locations, and a list of species and cultivar selections consistent with **Policy 26**.



The Tree Management Plan should be supported by an active programme for the maintenance and replacement of existing trees and establishment of new specimens as required to:

- arrest the general decline in the quality of the cemetery landscape that occurred since the 1890s
- understand safe useful life expectancy of the existing tree population and plan for replacement
- ensure appropriate maintenance inputs are developed to prioritise retention of significant trees
- ensure new plantings support the heritage character of the place, as well as meeting general horticultural attributes, such as drought tolerance, propensity not to self-sow or sucker, natural structural attributes limiting requirements for ongoing pruning, and longevity
- identify new locations for tree plantings within the site, considering potential long-term impacts of trees on adjacent heritage fabric such as significant paths, infrastructure and memorials.

### Policy 26

#### New tree planting selections

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*Select new tree planting species to reinforce the characteristic diversity of the Victorian cemetery landscape and to support contemporary ecological and environmental objectives.*

A variety of native and climate-ready exotic tree selections should be selected for the site to support biodiversity and formal landscape character. Diverse tree selections have historical precedents either on this site or elsewhere in Melbourne, dating to the MGC's original Victorian era development. The characteristic trees of the MGC's historical landscape were:

- Mixed tree plantations along roads and boundaries, including exotic conifers and broad-leaved trees, and Australian native selections (broad-leaved trees, native conifers and gum trees)
- Memorial plantings on individual burials, predominantly of Italian Cypress with smaller numbers of Funeral Cypress, Bhutan Cypress, Western Redcedar and Arborvitae.
- Internal open areas within compartments, historically planted with Peppercorn Trees or left to indigenous regrowth (Eucalypts and Acacias).

While responding to current needs including biodiversity objectives and preparation for future climate change impacts, new trees should also be selected to reinforce the cemetery's historical characteristics. This should include selection of strong vertical forms, and both broad-leaved and coniferous trees.

While some avenues were planted with exotic deciduous trees in the 1870s and 1930s, this was never the primary treatment of the site, is not practical in most parts of the cemetery today (due to encroachment by burial sites) and is undesirable from a climate adaptation and resilience perspective. Instead, many evergreen sub-tropical native tree species were used as formal features in nineteenth century landscapes like the MGC, including Lilly Pillies (*Syzygium spp.*, *Waterhousea floribunda*), Proteas (*Grevillea hilliana*, *Macadamia spp.*), Figs (*Ficus rubiginosa*, *F. macrophylla*, *F. platypoda* and others), Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and Brachychitons (e.g. *Brachychiton populneus*, *B. acerifolius*, *B. discolor*). Gum trees also formed a part of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century plantings at the site, including plantation Eucalypts like Southern Mahogany Gum (*Eucalyptus botryoides*) and Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), as well as ornamental selections such as Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*), Red-flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*) and Smooth-bark Apple (*Angophora costata*).

**Figure 56** (over) Sugar Gum along the former Eighth Avenue in the cemetery's north-west







## Policy 27

### Boundary hedges and screening plantings

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*Manage the site boundaries to maintain characteristic qualities of the cemetery landscape, including a sense of enclosure and protection from adjacent roadways.*

The cemetery boundaries are planted with a mix of low hedges and tall rows of screening trees. The current plantings were established in the twentieth century following removal of the deeper original plantations for new burial areas. Maintenance of vegetated boundaries is an importance aspect of the MGC's historical management and perception as a special place / 'garden' cemetery, and for the site's present amenity given its surroundings include high-traffic arterial roads to south and east.

Although a number of these features are listed as significant trees in the VHR extent of registration, their significance is assessed in the current document to be contributory in nature. The current species selection and form of these plantings is not intrinsic to the historical significance of the place, and it is considered that these plantings could be replaced with alternative species and forms of boundary screening without impact to heritage significance. Any substantive change to the form of these features or replacement with an alternative species selection would require an application for heritage permit.

#### Monterey Cypress row

While current boundary plantings may continue to serve at the site for years to come, SMCT considers that identification of an alternative planting strategy for the east (Lygon Street) boundary is a priority.

Despite being just 15-20 years old, the condition and presentation of the replacement row of Monterey Cypress trees on this boundary does not present as satisfactory or in keeping with the valued presentation of the place. There is also a need to develop and undertake drainage improvements and structural rectification of the adjacent cast iron fence, a significant built element of the place.

The current Golden Monterey Cypress row was established following the 2005 removal of a c. 1930s row planting of the same species. The earlier row was a replacement for a deeper Victorian-era tree plantation of mixed exotic conifers interplanted with other specimen trees. It is not known if the 1930s trees were initially planted as a trimmed hedge in this constrained site, or were always to be full-sized.

By the early 2000s that row planting had entered into decline which compromised its appearance and integrity as a boundary feature. It was replaced like-for-like in the 2000s, due to the identification of the row as an element of significance within the VHR extent of registration. The replanting has not been successful; some trees failed early, and others suffer from Cypress Canker and other diseases likely exacerbated by seasonal damp and waterlogging on the lower eastern slope of the cemetery (**Figure 57**). There are currently dozens of trees missing from the row and more requiring removal, and SMCT arborist reports that it is difficult to secure replacement stock for what has become an unusual cultivar selection. The impact of Cypress Canker has been felt across many parts of the state, and this has discouraged demand for most Cypress selections, with farmers and homeowners electing to plant other types of trees in their boundary plantations and windbreaks.

If civil and structural works to the east boundary require removal of the trees, these should be designed to ensure sufficient rooting areas remain for reestablishment of screen plantings following the works. Use of alternative tree selections and planting strategies is supported by this policy, provided that the works maintain the contribution of a planted eastern boundary to the values of the place, that they are designed in consultation with Heritage Victoria and that a heritage permit approval is granted.





**Figure 57** Condition of the Lygon Street Cypress row, showing (top) loss of replacement trees planted in the 2000s and (bottom) examples of dying trees affected by Cypress canker



**Figure 58** Groundcover detail, 1858, with fresh graves and self-sown vegetation, Hotham Memorial at left, and native trees to rear



**Figure 59** Groundcover detail, 1868, same area, informal groundcover on road verges after initial development complete

## Policy 28

### Groundcover vegetation and gardening

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*Promote ecologically and contextually appropriate groundcovers that contribute to the MGC's aesthetic qualities and support conservation of the heritage place.*

The MGC occupies 43 hectares of sometimes sloping ground, wrapped around several local high points. While the hard surfaces of cover stones, footpaths and roadways extend across a high percentage of the site, there remain extensive areas of the cemetery which have the potential to support natural ground cover (often above burial plots that restrict the planting of larger trees). These include the central areas of a number of burial compartments which have been retained as grassed open spaces with large trees, as well as compartment sections where burial allotments without vault covers predominate. These latter areas were heavily impacted by herbicide use, and are the subject of SMCT's current Project Cultivate revegetation project.

Most ordinary groundcover planting and management activities are exempt from heritage permit requirements under the *General Permit Exemptions*, or in the standing permit exemptions included in the VHR registration for the MGC (**Appendix A**). However, the promotion of effective groundcover throughout the cemetery is a key heritage management objective which this policy addresses.

Groundcover is important to the heritage significance of the MGC for the following reasons:

- **Physical performance:** soil stabilisation, runoff and flooding/waterlogging reduction, erosion prevention (and protection of heritage structures and features such as paths, monuments, fences), and reduction of urban heat island effects
- **Aesthetic qualities:** supports public presentation of the cemetery and appreciation of the cemetery as a historical place, and contemporary sale of interment and memorial rights.
- **Ecological and social qualities:** supports public objectives and expectations for the MGC as a contemporary urban landscape and public facility.

#### Groundcover characteristics

There is not a necessity for groundcover plantings at the MGC to conform to any one characteristic period, category of origin or other heritage criteria. Historically, outside of certain formally planted gardens within the site, groundcover within the cemetery appears to have always been diverse, the outcome of many hands, evolving environmental pressures and changing cultural and funereal tastes over time. At the MGC, there appears to have always been a combination of natural, indigenous vegetation (both remnant and regenerating) and an eclectic and shifting variety of planted species representing the gamut of Victorian and twentieth century horticulture in Victoria. The 1983 vegetation survey mentioned elsewhere in this report captured the place at the height of its historic diversity.

As with the origin of the Italian Cypress stands within older parts of the cemetery, much of the planted groundcover within the cemetery has originated from the decisions of individual mourners and rights holders, who planted flowers, shrubs and trees within the plots on the basis of their individual meaning or contemporary tastes. Some plantings were long-lived and remain in place today, others were shorter-lived and disappeared as rightsholders and descendants ceased to maintain plots, and still others proved to be capable of thriving in the cemetery environment and spreading by seed, runner or suckering growth. Given the scale, environmental constraints and competing stakeholder interests at the MGC, diversity and resilience are likely to remain key characteristics of the groundcover into the future.

### Ornamental garden features

Intentionally designed ornamental plantings have also been a continuous feature of the cemetery landscape. During the Victorian period, and consistent with style advocated by Loudon and others, these ornamental features were focused on major public gateways and intersections: the original cemetery entrance that became Princes Park Drive, the replacement Main Gates and Gatehouse, and the reconfigured roundabout in front of today's Melbourne Mausoleum and various similar, self-contained features of the original cemetery layout seen on the 1896 MMBW plan (**Section 2.6**) (most later given over to burial spaces). Early photographs taken elsewhere in the cemetery tend to show compartments and road verges already dominated by informal groundcovers (**Figure 58** and **Figure 59**).

When Clement Hodgkinson was appointed as curator of the MGC landscape in the 1870s, he almost certainly implemented recommendations he had made to embellish the cemetery's 'reserves, roads, walks, and avenues with additional trees, shrubs and flowers.' Hodgkinson's appointment represented an intensification of the previous planting programme in response to growing criticism of the condition of the cemetery during that period, and a turn away from the efficient plantings advocated by Loudon and von Mueller. Given the nature of public gardens of the period that were also curated by Hodgkinson, it seems likely that these plantings included a greater use of ornamental shrubs in verge plantings, as well as expanded use of annual beds. During this period the first Charles Robinette-style rockeries may have been installed in the cemetery; decorative plantings of succulents were a feature of these rockeries, which are addressed separately at **Policy 29** below.

Today, ornamental garden plantings are best maintained and incorporated within the cemetery landscape at key public locations and as part of purpose-designed memorial gardens. Today, such plantings are maintained by SMCT with some involvement of Friends/Resident groups. There are limits to the extent that intensive formal plantings can be accommodated and sustained at the MGC, stemming from limited operating budgets and labour resources, the use of the vast majority of the land area for burial plots, and consideration of water use and other environmental limitations. There are also few opportunities to restore historical features that were removed or discontinued during twentieth century rationalisations of the cemetery.

**Public garden beds** Located at points of arrival and concentration within the site: Main entry gates and Gatehouse, entries to the modern mausolea, major intersections, and at other public infrastructure such as the Rotundas.

**Memorial gardens** Ornamental plantings integral to group memorial uses maintained by SMCT, such as the Rose Garden, Prime Minister's Garden, Elvis memorial, and the infants memorial in Undenominated Section M.

### Management strategy

As compared with smaller Victorian cemeteries which have been beautified in recent years by community groups, the scale of the MGC means that volunteer labour can only ever support a limited footprint of intensive garden plantings on the site. Consistent with the cemetery's original development plan, it is appropriate that ornamental plantings remain focused at points of public arrival and concentration, and in memorial features maintained by SMCT, and that the balance of the cemetery landscape is managed with mass planting and natural revegetation to restore and maintain vegetated cover (as being trialled under Project Cultivate).

**Policy 15** notes the opportunity for development of further alternative memorial facilities, including 'natural' landscape memorials as well as more traditional ornamental gardens.

**Policy 29** addresses management of the rockeries.



## Policy 29

### Rockeries

*Develop a restoration and adaptation programme that provides a sustainable purpose and funding to conserve the MGC's four historical rockery features.*

Four remnant rockery features are found in the lower part of the MGC; all are believed to date to the initial period of the cemetery's development from the 1850s through to its 1905 closure. Each is constructed of a mixture of stone and cement, with unknown internal reinforcement; they were designed to appear to be natural rock grotto features, a popular inclusion in both private and public gardens of the Victorian period.

It is likely that all of the rockeries were constructed during a second phase of cemetery beautification initiated by the original trust in the 1870s. The features are consistent with rockeries and grottos constructed by the specialty builder Charles Robinette at other major Melbourne sites, including the Botanic Gardens, various municipal gardens, and in the Domain Parklands and Alexandra Avenue.<sup>123</sup>

The large rockery later adapted as a memorial to Elvis Presley is identified in the VHR registration as building B-8 (**Figure 60**). Three other rockeries exist at the MGC: these consist of one other large rockery just south of the Elvis memorial (**Figure 61** and **Figure 62**), and two smaller rockeries located along roadways in the southern and central sections of the cemetery.

#### Significance and condition

This CMP identifies the two large rockeries as significant features of the place, based on their location at the original main entrance (they now flank the Melbourne Mausoleum), a c. 1890s photograph held by the State Library of Victoria which shows the southern rockery shortly after construction, and the associations and VHR identification of the Elvis rockery / memorial. The small rockeries are considered to be contributory, as they lack these associations and confirmed provenance, and are smaller features with limited detail supporting understanding of their original ornamental function.

All four rockeries are remnant features whose condition and integrity to an original designed form is considered to be substantially diminished. The large rockeries are known to have been designed as grottos with integrated water features; while the original design of the smaller rockeries is not known, their remnant forms also imply that they once contained fountains, pools, shelves or basins designed to circulate and hold water. In all cases, there has been an apparent loss of the original extent of the feature, particularly in terms of the footprint of the base of each rockery and the pools and planting niches they originally contained. Condition an erosion of the detailed stone and cement work designed to provide the impression of a natural grotto, and the loss of the integrated water features and filling of what remains of the original niches and pools with soil for planting.

#### Rationale and principles for active management

Without future intervention, the condition of these features and their historical value is likely to continue to decline. All four currently present as ruin or remnant features, and the loss of integrity is such that a restoration to their original condition is unlikely to be practical, achievable or desirable in the context of the cemetery as it exists today. Alternative strategies are required to maintain the heritage value of these features within the MGC today.

The following principles should be observed in a future management proposal for the rockeries:

- **Financial sustainability:** A use/purpose and source of capital and operation funding is required to maintain the rockeries as permanent features of the cemetery. Conversion of the three undedicated rockeries to memorial uses is a potential fundraising use that would support restoration and ongoing maintenance.
- **Conservation objective:** Restoration and adaptation works should seek to restore structural integrity and provide restored finishes and form consistent with the general intent of the original features. A faithful reconstruction is unlikely: evidence is limited, and the character of this type of period rockery differs substantially from current public tastes and expectations.
- **Adaptation concept:** Reimagining the rockeries for the twentieth first century appears the best approach to providing a long-term future for these historical elements and justifying the significant cost that would be associated with any form of restoration project.
  - This could include incorporation of native plants suitable for use in rock features, limited water components with an ecological objective (water source for birds and small animals), and incorporation of materials and techniques with a more modern reference point in naturalistic landscape designs (e.g. Ellis Stones- or TCL-influenced Australian native gardens).
  - Alternatively, it could also include maintenance of exotic planting programs using traditional or modern xeriscape succulent plants.
- **Heritage conservation principles:** The adapted rockery designs should seek to retain aspects of the original footprint, form, scale and massing of the original feature, the incorporation of recesses and grottos and the use of a mixture of stone and stone-like materials. Within that general envelope, incorporation of new materials (such as other types and formats of stone), modern building and structural techniques, and contemporary plant materials could be proposed.



**Figure 60** Large rockery north of Melbourne Mausoleum, converted to an Elvis Memorial in 1977





**Figure 61** c. 1890s condition of one of the large rockeries, believed to be the rockery located south of Melbourne Mausoleum  
Source: State Library of Victoria



**Figure 62** Remains of the southern large rockery today, showing the extensive loss of sections of the original structure, its fine geological details, and most of the lower water basins, coping and niches



## 4.11 Monuments and memorials

Monuments and memorials within the cemetery contribute to its historical significance to the State of Victoria. Most monuments at the site are not managed by SMCT but instead remain the responsibility of individual rights holders; SMCT's authority to direct funds or other resources to private monuments is extremely limited. Detailed consideration of individual monuments and memorials was outside the scope of the updated CMP, however a number of issues have been noted and general recommendations made in the policies that follow.

In accordance with the policies identified, SMCT should communicate with the Department of Health, the Heritage Council of Victoria, and Heritage Victoria, and with the responsible ministers to make clear the nature of the gaps in the existing registration and in the management and repair of monuments which may be of public value and heritage significance to Victorians.

### Policy 30

Heritage significance of monuments and memorials

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*Encourage funding agencies and statutory authorities to survey and assess monuments and memorials of potential historical significance.*

When the MGC was included in the VHR in 1999, twenty one individual monuments were listed within the extent of registration, while broad permit exemptions were provided for the balance of the tens of thousands of other monuments at the place. It is unclear how the listed monuments were selected; they include a number of historically notable early colonial figures, as well as a few twentieth century public memorials or distinctive individual or family monuments. It is unlikely that the current complement of registered monuments is appropriate to or representative of the historical significance of the site and the public interest in preserving significant features of the place under the Heritage Act.

A detailed review of the MGC is required to identify monuments of public interest and potential heritage significance. This survey should assess the monuments' individual historical associations and values, as well as their potential to contribute to an expanded understanding of the significance of the MGC. It should also consider other values where relevant, such as Aboriginal cultural values. The terms of reference for this review should be developed through engagement with Heritage Victoria on both the assessment design and the implementation of findings through an amendment to the VHR registration.

### Policy 31

Condition of significant monuments

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*With external funding partners, facilitate condition reviews and priority repairs of identified significant monuments and memorials on at least a five year basis.*

Currently, SMCT approaches matters of conservation involving monuments on a reactive basis, based on either an immediate safety concern or interest from community groups in undertaking the restoration of a monument within the site. While this is consistent with SMCT's statutory duties and limitations under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, it means that monuments of historical significance may fall into disrepair due to a lack of internal oversight and external interest in their repair.

Even where an active interest in funding and organising conservation works is identified, such as with recent work to the Hotham monument, extensive work is required by SMCT to attempt to contact potential rights holders to the monument prior to seeking Department of Health approval to undertake the repair using alternative funding streams. The nature of these funding streams is limited, and SMCT's

statutory limitations mean that repairs are only undertaken where the condition of a monument has become a threat to safety.

This reactive approach to physical conservation of major monuments is not consistent with the site's heritage registration and with heritage best practice. There is a need for SMCT, the Department of Health and Heritage Victoria to work collaboratively to determine a more appropriate management strategy and funding source for private monuments of significance at the site. Facilitated by SMCT, these partners should fund and implement a recurring condition assessment programme for the significant monuments at the MGC, including priority repair works to conserve these significant features.

Recommendations for conservation and repair works to monuments and memorials should be based on the following and be guided by an understanding of their historic and aesthetic values:

- monuments and memorials should be selected on the basis of their level of significance and the urgency of the required repair works
- prior to undertaking any works all relevant permissions are required to be sought from the holder of the right of interment
- the works should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter and with specialist input (conservators/contractors) as required.

### Policy 32

General maintenance of graves, monuments and memorials

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*Provide information to rights holders on the maintenance of graves, monuments and memorials, including Heritage Act responsibilities where required.*

Responsibility for maintaining graves, monuments and memorial is with the holder of the right of interment, likely to be families of the deceased.

It is recommended that a general information sheet be prepared setting out the preferred approach to the management and maintenance of monuments.

The information sheet should also outline SMCT's obligations under Section 106 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, 2003* related to ensuring the safety of individual monuments. It should also identify the monuments to which Heritage Act obligations apply.

Where practical, information should be transmitted to rights holders on the basis of updated contact information.

SMCT should endeavour to specifically confirm and maintain current contact information for rights holders of the twenty monuments identified in the VHR extent of registration, and identify alternative management arrangements where no surviving rights holder can be identified or contacted.

## 4.12 Records

### Policy 33

#### Records management

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*Maintain historic paper-based records in an archivally appropriate storage facility.*

*Index, digitise and support sustainable online access to the MGC historical records.*

The cemetery holds an extensive collection of historic paper based records that include Sexton's burial registers, deeds and burial instructions which are of considerable significance. These records require storage in a suitable facility that ensures their ongoing protection from potential risks, such as fire or water damage, and maintains the records at a consistent temperature. Most of the records are currently stored on site within the gatehouse, with some records located at Springvale Necropolis; however, a more suitable location should be identified to ensure the protection of the collection. Part of the collection has been lodged with the Public Records Office Victoria and these are only accessible at the Victorian Archive Centre at North Melbourne, such as cemetery trustees' records.

While it is understood that the records are used in the day to day operation of the cemetery, it is recommended that SMCT undertake a program for the sequential digitisation of individual records. This action would limit physical damage on the paper based records through continued use and, in the future, enable access to this wealth of information via the web. As part of a digitisation program, SMCT should explore the accessibility of records from the existing MGC website.

## 4.13 Amendments to the VHR registration

### Policy 34

#### VHR registration amendment

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*Prepare an application to amend the VHR registration to update this statutory instrument to reflect the current condition and assessed significance of the place.*

The VHR registration for the MGC, as gazetted in 1999, is almost twenty-five years old, and no longer conforms to current heritage assessment practices and registration formats as developed and adopted by the Heritage Council of Victoria and Heritage Victoria. The Statement of Significance for the place, as published and maintained by Heritage Victoria is of similar age. The 2014 CMP identified a small number of errors and anomalies in the VHR documentation and recommended their rectification along with adoption of additional minor works exemptions within the standing permit exemptions for the place. These changes have not occurred.

Both the VHR registration and Heritage Victoria's published statement of significance should be updated to adopt a contemporary assessment against the VHR criteria and threshold guidelines, recognise the significance of additional features of the place while de-emphasising the contribution of lesser features (i.e. 1930s boundary plantings), and to provide better guidance for the future management of the place and assessment and determination of future permit exemptions.

While Heritage Victoria has a programme to review and update VHR registrations on a rolling basis, there are more than two thousand registered places, with only a few dozen places amended each year. Without the intervention of SMCT, the MGC registration may be unlikely to receive a review and amendment for years to come. This poses statutory risks for future management and planning decisions at the place, and may influence sub-optimal outcomes for planned works, such as works being considered for the eastern boundary of the site where undue significance is ascribed to the Monterey



Cypress plantation. As noted above, the existing registration also does not appear to have been based on a thorough, contemporary assessment of the historical significance of monuments within the site, and this is contributing to a failure to address these features through public policy, funding and mandated interventions which are outside of SMCT's control or authority.

The updated CMP has further refined an understanding of the site's significance and significant elements. SMCT should consider commissioning a heritage consultant to prepare a formal application to amend the VHR registration for the MGC to reflect this modernised assessment of its significance and elements, and to encourage Heritage Victoria and other parties to address the other outstanding issues noted above.

Such an application would include the preparation of a recommendation report, including a formal assessment against the modern VHR criteria and threshold guidelines, recommended statement of significance, proposed new registration diagram and written extent of registration, permit exemption policy and permit exemptions. The amendment could also include identification of additional monuments and memorials of historical significance (refer to **Policy 30**) or the removal of references to specific monuments from the extent of registration of the place. In preference, this would be informed by further assessment of the significance of monuments at the MGC which was beyond the scope of the 2024 CMP update.

If the VHR registration is amended as proposed, the CMP should be updated to record and reflect these changes to the site's registration and statutory requirements.

## 5.0 CONSERVATION DATASHEETS

Short datasheets have been provided for each significant built element of the place, as identified in the VHR extent of registration and in the significance assessment at **Section 3.0**.

For each element, a brief history and physical description is provided, alongside summary recommendations for conservation and adaptation works (where relevant). These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the 2023 Condition Assessments report, and any more recent conditions reports prepared in future.

For some elements of the place, further specific recommendations have been provided within the overarching policies detailed in **Section 4.0 (Policy 1 - Policy 34)**.

### SECTION CONTENTS

- 5.1 Gatehouse
- 5.2 Main (South) Gate
- 5.3 South-east Gate
- 5.4 West Gate
- 5.5 North Gate
- 5.6 Perimeter Fence
- 5.7 Rotundas (Brick plinth)
- 5.8 Rotundas (Corrugated panels)
- 5.9 Early Drinking Trough
- 5.10 Jewish Mortuary Chapel
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- 5.12 Chinese Funerary Oven
- 5.13 Elvis Memorial
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- 5.15 Serpentine Road Network
- 5.16 Paths
- 5.17 Drainage Channels
- 5.18 Cast Iron Signage

BUILDING NAME Gatehouse

DATASHEET **5.1**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1935



Figure 1  
Gatehouse viewed from south side of College Crescent, set behind the random rubble stone wall

Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 2  
Gatehouse viewed from the west with wrought balustrade in the foreground

Source: 2014 CMP





Figure 3 Gatehouse viewed from the east, with waiting shelter to the left



Figure 4 Garden bed to the south and west of the gatehouse, looking north-west  
Source: CMP, 2014



Figure 5 View of gatehouse from west with adjoining columbarium walls to the left



Figure 6 View of gatehouse from south-west showing small gate and pathway

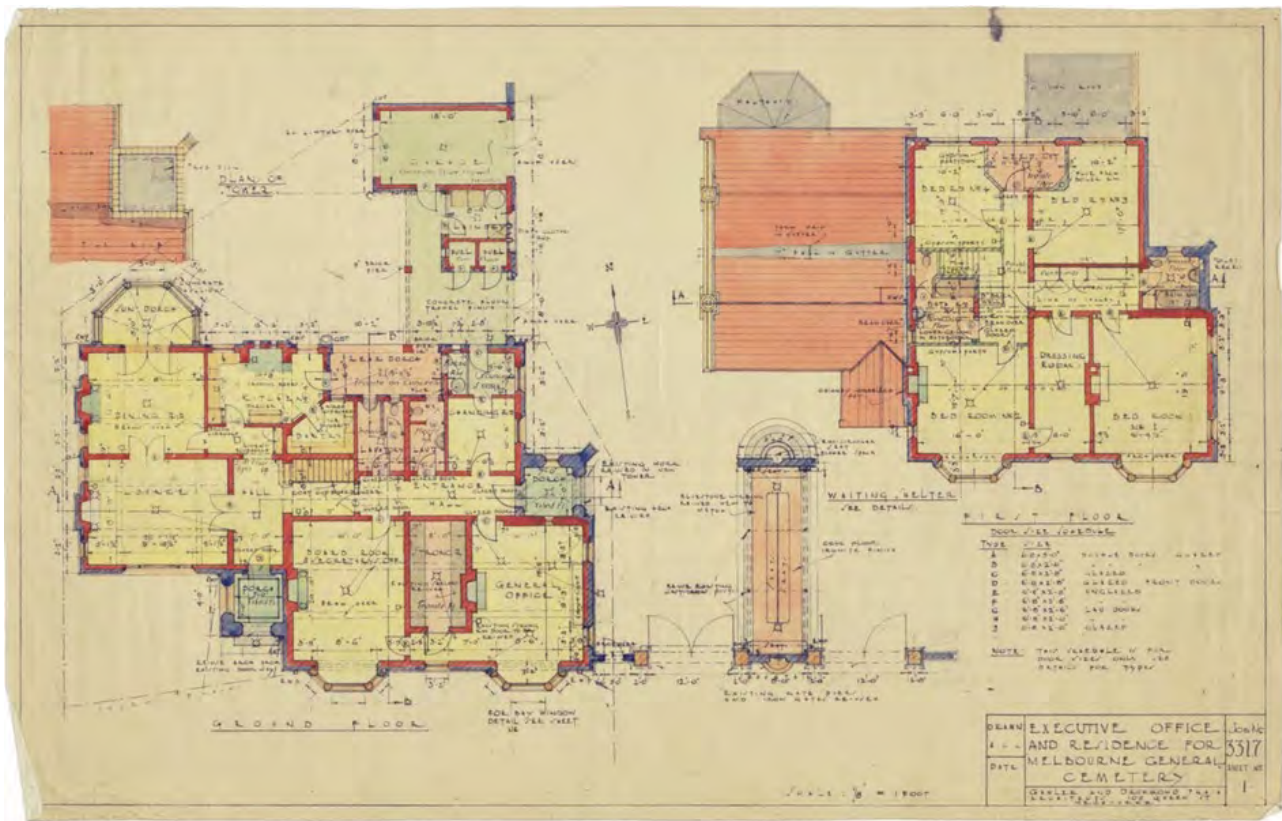


Figure 7 Plan of the gatehouse prepared by Gawler and Drummond Architects showing the ground and first floors of the gatehouse and waiting shelter, c. 1933  
Source: MGC archive

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

In the early 1930s, plans were made to extend the burial area of the cemetery to include areas occupied at that time by the approach driveway with turning circle, main gates, visitor lodge and main office. A new gatehouse was then constructed in the south-west corner of the site, completed by 1935. The gatehouse was designed by architect John Gawler, practising at the time as Gawler and Drummond. The buildings were designed to a pattern similar to that of the former main gates complex and using materials obtained from the site.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A two-storey gatehouse with castellated tower bluestone complex in the Gothic (Christian) style with sandstone dressings. The main gable roofed two-storeyed section accommodates the administrative rooms, minister's room and entry porch at the base of the tower with residence upstairs. At the rear, a single storeyed section also contains the residence with separate entry. To the north, public toilets and associated rooms are provided in a similar style. The doorway openings are four centred Tudor and the window openings flat arched with drip moulds. A clock face is provided in the tower and oculus vents decorated with quatrefoil motifs are located in the parapeted gable ends.

The gatehouse and its original context were altered for the construction of the Gatehouse Mausoleum c. 2004. A canted sunroom to the west side of the north elevation and a garage/laundry and fuel store and its roof connecting to the east side of the gatehouse were demolished. A shallow gallery protected by a glazed skillion roof now stands to the north of the gatehouse.

The gatehouse is set within a simple landscape, with a small lawn area to the south and west of the building and perimeter garden beds. Garden beds to the inside of the boundary fences are contained within a low bluestone wall and feature low scale plantings. A narrow garden bed is located to the front of the building. A diagonal path leads from a small gate at the southwest corner to the entry of the gatehouse.

The front fence is constructed of random rubble stonework, divided by pyramidal capped piers into evenly spaced bays. Between the bays is a simple wrought balustrade with vertical palisades capped with spears, horizontal rails and a four-circled motif. The pathway gate features the circle motif and a scroll led top rail.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retain and conserve the significant fabric and setting of the Gatehouse.</li><li>• Conservation works to the Gatehouse should focus on the maintenance and repair of significant fabric. Refer to 2023 condition assessment for specific works. Maintain the gatehouse within its existing landscaped setting.</li><li>• Undertake scoping and design work to east entry to building to upgrade entrance to be DDA accessible. Carefully consider further internal access and services improvements to provide compliant access and suitable servicing for uses which can sustain maintenance of the building.</li></ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adaptation of the Gatehouse for updated or alternative uses should seek to minimise impact to the heritage fabric of the gatehouse.</li></ul>

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BUILDING NAME Main gate

DATASHEET **5.2**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1935



Figure 1  
Landscaped entry  
and gates as  
viewed from south

Source: Google  
Streetview



Figure 2  
Waiting shelter  
viewed from  
north-east with  
gatehouse behind



Figure 3  
Northern view of  
gates, pillars and  
waiting shelter

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

In 1932 the cemetery trustees decided to redesign the entire south-west corner of the cemetery and to create a new entrance off College Crescent. As a part of this work, the main gate lodge and main gates were to be rebuilt at the new entrance, to the design of the architect J S Gawler. The new College Crescent gates, using components relocated from the former west gate, were opened in July, 1935.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The main gates to College Crescent are inset and consist of two vehicular accessways ('In' and 'Out') flanked by two pedestrian gateways. Each gate is carried on sandstone pillars with bluestone bases having pinnacles with Gothic (Christian) decoration. A central shelter situated between the vehicular gates has parapeted gable ends in bluestone with sandstone copings, recessed lancet arched panels flanked by twisted colonnettes with Corinthian capitals, and the words 'The Melbourne General Cemetery' facing south and a drinking fountain facing north. The shelter has a terracotta tiled gable roof with timber seats and diagonally lined timber screen wall, the roof being supported by cast iron columns with distinctive Gothic inspired brackets.

## POLICY

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### Conservation

- The 2023 condition assessment identifies a number of priority works to address the current physical condition of the gates.

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### Adaptation, management and future works

- Currently the pedestrian gates are kept closed, forcing pedestrians to use the vehicle lanes to enter and exit the site. Correction of issues with the pavement beneath the gates is required to restore them to an operable condition.
  - The pedestrian gates do not present a compliant width for mobility devices. While they should be reinstated to an operable condition, additional traffic calming should be installed to improved the safety of the vehicle lanes as a shared access.
-

BUILDING NAME South-east gate

DATASHEET **5.3**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1860s



Figure 1  
South-east gate  
viewed from the  
north

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

The castellated gates date to the 1860s.

By c. 1933 the South-east gate was served by the south lodge with associated fenced yards and a teardrop shaped garden and path to the east of South Avenue, garden areas, and public conveniences to the west of South Avenue.<sup>1</sup> By c. 1936 the arrangement of pathways and gardens had been altered, though the lodge remained. The south lodge was demolished in c. 1960 to make way for further burials in the Jewish compartment.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The South-east Gate facing Cemetery Road East consists of a single bluestone paved vehicular accessway flanked on either side by pedestrian gates. The vehicular gate pillars are faceted cast iron with castellated tops and Gothic decoration. The vehicular gates are double palisaded richly decorated cast and wrought iron with lower panels covered by quatrefoil decoration and having two similar friezes. The pedestrian gates have been understood to have sustained a degree of previous alteration.

## POLICY

### Conservation

- Retain and conserve.
- The 2023 condition assessment provides detail on priority conservation works for the cast iron gate fabric.

### Adaptation, management and future works

- The South-east Gate is substantively intact in its context, and should be conserved with minimal interventions.
- For safety, the gate could be closed to public automobile traffic by way of a removable bollard, allowing it to continue to function for pedestrians, cyclists, service and funerary access.

<sup>1</sup> MMBW 160' to 1" plan no. 30 surveyed in 1896, 1933 edition.



BUILDING NAME West Gate

DATASHEET **5.4**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1935



Figure 1  
West cemetery  
gate viewed from  
the east



Figure 2  
West cemetery  
gate viewed from  
the west showing  
sandstone arched  
opening and  
wrought turnstile



Figure 3 Northern view of gate and enclosure



Figure 4 Southern view of gate

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Constructed in c. 1935, the west gate manages access to the cemetery from the Princes Park side of the cemetery. The adjacent West Lodge was demolished c. 1958.<sup>1</sup>

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The west pedestrian gate is not original fabric. It consists of a buttressed sandstone archway (Tudor, four centred), dressed, with rough hewn stone coping and turnstile having Lancet arch motifs. Constructed from a mixed palette of sandstone, presumably salvaged from buildings demolished on site, the gateway sits on a low bluestone plinth. The turnstile and enclosures to the north and south are detailed in wrought steel, painted green. The western archway aligns with the perimeter palisade fence.

## POLICY

<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve.</li> <li>• Refer to 2023 condition assessment for nominated conservation works.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The West Gate does not provide compliant access to the site. In future, barrier free access may be required for pedestrians entering and exiting the site to the west.</li> <li>• The confined nature of the path and gate at this location limit options for resolving this. It may be that removal of the existing turnstile and replacement with an operable gate that provides compliant access may be required. A heritage permit would be required.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Don Chambers, *The Melbourne General Cemetery*, Hyland House Publishing, Flemington, 2003, p. 224.



BUILDING NAME North Gate and associated structures

DATASHEET **5.5**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1860s, c. 1970s & c. 2017



Figure 1  
North gate  
showing  
castellated piers  
with gates open  
with c. 2017  
maintenance shed  
on left



Figure 2 Eastern pedestrian gate



Figure 3 Western turnstile pedestrian gate



## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Located to the centre of the northern cemetery boundary along Macpherson Street, the north gate originally housed the north gate lodge to the west of North Avenue, and small public conveniences to the east of the Avenue. The area dedicated to the northern cemetery entry has diminished over time, with a hedge to the east side of the lodge and part of the lodge yard being appropriated for burials in 1949.<sup>1</sup> The bluestone north lodge was demolished c. 1968. The highly decorative cast iron gates and turnstile were constructed in the 1860s.

By the 1970s the north gate was redeveloped to the east side of North Avenue, with the western area previously occupied by the gate lodge taken over for burials. The area was redeveloped again c. 2017 with the erection of a maintenance building to the east of the gate.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The north gate was formerly identical to the south-east gate but is slightly different owing to minor changes noted below.

The north gate, facing Macpherson Street, consists of a single vehicular accessway flanked on either side by pedestrian gates. The vehicular gate pillars are faceted cast iron with castellated tops and Gothic decoration. The vehicular gates are double palisaded richly decorated cast and wrought iron with lower panels covered by quatrefoil decoration. The pedestrian gates has sustained previous alterations, with the western turnstile contained within an original iron enclosure and the eastern gate substantially altered.

The twentieth century structures located at the north gate were redeveloped c. 2017, and include a steel-clad maintenance building incorporating a toilet block.

The roadway is finished in asphalt with concrete kerb and channel.

## POLICY

<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The original cast iron components of the North Gate should be conserved; refer to the 2023 Condition Assessment for prioritised works recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The North Gate is problematic from a safe access perspective. Conditions have been worsened by the ad hoc nature of previous changes associated with the accommodation of additional burials along North Avenue and the construction of the Maintenance Building.</li> <li>Traffic safety measures should be developed to improve safety within the single shared lane which accommodates two way automobile traffic, bikes, pedestrians and assisted mobility users.</li> <li>Modifications to the gates may be required to support safe public access to this location. Original fabric should be conserved to the extent practical, however elements of the gate, including the existing pedestrian gates, the vehicle gates and location of the piers, may need to be altered to support a well-designed solution to this area.</li> <li>A heritage permit would be required.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Don Chambers, *The Melbourne General Cemetery*, Hyland House Publishing, Flemington, 2003, p. 226.

**BUILDING NAME** Perimeter fence**DATASHEET 5.6****CONSTRUCTION DATE** c. 1871

Figure 1  
Perimeter fence  
with hedge as  
viewed to the  
south along  
Cemetery Road  
East

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

A timber boundary fence had been erected during the 1850s, and extended in 1857 to embrace extensions to the initial land grant for the cemetery. This timber fence was progressively replaced with a boundary fence of iron palisades set in a low bluestone wall between 1872 and 1877. The work has been said in previous management plans to have been to a design by Morgan Jageurs. Jageurs and Son were masons of Royal Park and were responsible for many private monuments within the cemetery.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The perimeter fence consists generally of a 2.07 to 2.73 metre high palisade iron fence having substantial original portions but with considerable alterations. The original fence design consists of spears with quatrefoil sections and a frieze decorated with quatrefoil panels, the principal supports being at regular intervals and distinguished by twisted ('barley sugar') shafts with decorated stays having quatrefoil sections. The continuous plinth is of bluestone, rough hewn with a fine sawn coping.

## POLICY

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- Conservation**
- Retain and conserve the significant fabric of the historic bluestone and cast iron perimeter fence.
  - Conservation work to the perimeter fence should seek to reconstruct missing details to plinth and palisades. Where required, recast new elements to match historic detail.
  - See 2023 conservation assessment for detail of works.
  - In some areas, works to the footings of the fence are required to address previous displacement. These works require the involvement of a structural engineer with understanding of conservation requirements for heritage structures.
- 

- Adaptation, management and future works**
- Opportunities to adapt the perimeter fence are limited. As a long, serial feature, there is some scope for the careful creation of new openings to improve safe public access to the site. This would require a heritage permit.
-



BUILDING NAME Brick rotundas

DATASHEET **5.7**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From c. 1866



Figure 1  
Rotunda no.1 on  
First Avenue



Figure 2  
Rotunda no.2 on  
South and Second  
Avenues



Figure 3  
Rotunda no.3 on  
Tenth Avenue



Figure 4  
Rotunda no.8 on  
Entrance and  
North Avenues



## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

In early 1866, Albert Purchas advertised for tenders for the construction of six octagonal shelter sheds (rotundas). The work was awarded to Carlton builder John Pigdon for approximately £150 for each shelter. These ornamental rotundas, provided for visitors, were located at the intersections of pathways.

A fifth rotunda was located at the east end of the lawns in Central Avenue, but was demolished some time after November 1955. The brick rotundas are alternatively described as ‘Summer houses’.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The four brick Type A rotundas are constructed of red brick and a tessellated tile base, featuring cast iron barley twist columns, extensive decorative cast iron lacework enclosing the internal of the rotunda and slate roofs. The floors are finished in tessellated tiles, with a render finish applied to the internal face of the brick upstands. Type A rotundas feature an enclosed eave, clad in suspected asbestos sheet.

The four Type A rotundas are located at: First Avenue (no.1); South and Second Avenues (no.2); Tenth Avenue (no.3) and Entrance and North Avenues (no.8). Interment rights were previously sold within Rotunda 3; the Rotunda floor was replaced with new tiling surrounding a polished covering stone bearing inscriptions of the private memorial.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve the fabric, settings and presentation of the four rotundas.</li> <li>• Conservation works to the rotundas should focus on the maintenance and repair of significant fabric. Refer to the 2023 condition assessment for detail of works.</li> <li>• Refer to <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> for general guidance on the maintenance, care and conservation of significant buildings and features within the place.</li> </ul>
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<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rotundas provide shelter to visitors and could also be used for ceremonies without physical alteration.</li> <li>• The setting and presentation of the rotundas should not, in preference, be further compromised by the introduction of new burials in close proximity. In considering new burials in proximity the potential visual impact of new monuments and memorials should be considered. Refer to the policies in Chapter 4.</li> <li>• Burials within the rotundas have a physical impact and also distort and restrict their use as visitor infrastructure. Further use of the rotundas for individual burials is not supported.</li> <li>• <b>Policy 15</b> considers that the use of the Rotundas for more discrete memorials (scatter or tribute plaques, or perhaps cremation niches) could be considered.</li> </ul>
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BUILDING NAME Corrugated clad rotundas

DATASHEET **5.8**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From c. 1866



Figure 1  
Rotunda no.4 at  
East and Fourth  
Avenues



Figure 2  
Rotunda no.5 at  
Twelfth and Ninth  
Avenues



Figure 3  
Rotunda no.6 at  
Fourteenth and  
North Avenues



Figure 4  
Rotunda no.7 west  
of Seventh Avenue

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

In early 1866, Albert Purchas advertised for tenders for the construction of six octagonal shelter sheds (rotundas). The work was awarded to Carlton builder John Pigdon for approximately £150 for each shelter. These ornamental rotundas, provided for visitors, were located at the intersections of pathways.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

There are four identical rotundas, designated type B in this study, and occupying secondary sites within the cemetery. They are octagonal on plan, the pyramidal corrugated iron clad roofs being carried on twisted ('barley sugar') cast iron columns with plain capitals and lancet arched iron work with quatrefoil motifs and cusping forming archways and eaves brackets. The low perimeter walls are corrugated iron clad and the concrete floor is tiled with a bluestone margin. Fixed metal bench seats are supported off the columns. The roof structure is exposed and of angle iron with metal tie rods to a central strut. The roof is surmounted by an unusual iron 'flag'.

The four Type B rotundas are located at: East and Fourth Avenues (no.4); Twelfth and Ninth Avenues (no.5); Fourteenth and North Avenues (no.6) and west of Seventh Avenue (no.7).

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve the fabric, settings and presentation of the four rotundas.</li> <li>• Conservation works to the rotundas should focus on the maintenance and repair of significant fabric. Refer to 2023 condition assessment for detail of works.</li> <li>• Refer to <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> for general guidance on the maintenance, care and conservation of significant buildings and features within the place.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rotundas provide shelter to visitors and could also be used for ceremonies without physical alteration.</li> <li>• The setting and presentation of the rotundas should not, in preference, be further compromised by the introduction of new burials in close proximity. In considering new burials in proximity the potential visual impact of new monuments and memorials should be considered. Refer to the policies in <b>Chapter 4</b>.</li> <li>• Burials within the rotundas have a physical impact and also distort and restrict their use as visitor infrastructure. Further use of the rotundas for burials is not supported.</li> <li>• <b>Policy 15</b> considers that the use of the Rotundas for more discrete memorials (scatter or tribute plaques, or perhaps cremation niches) could be considered. In the case of the corrugated iron rotundas, the opportunity to incorporate memorials of this nature is more limited due to their lightweight construction.</li> </ul>

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BUILDING NAME Early drinking trough

DATASHEET **5.9**

CONSTRUCTION DATE Nineteenth century



Figure 1 Front view of drinking trough showing stepped sloping roof, triple arched opening and marble insert for fonts and bluestone plinth (facing west)



Figure 2 Detail of marble trough to the southern arch  
Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 3 Rear view of trough showing remnant water pipes and vegetation



Figure 4 Side view of trough showing adjacent rockery

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

The early sandstone and marble drinking trough is located adjacent to the original western entry of the cemetery at the junction of North and Centre Avenues. Chambers describes its function as appearing 'to have held drinking fountains and perhaps also functioned as a horse trough'.<sup>1</sup> The lower marble-lined troughs are quite shallow and narrow, and would appear to more likely to function as drainage for the fonts above.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A tall rectangular plan form structure, the early drinking trough is constructed predominantly of sandstone with lining to the interior and basin in white marble. The trough features a stepped sloping roof projecting beyond the structure, with a rolled stone ridge and coved eaves. The western elevation features a tripartite pointed arch opening supported on marble colonettes. The projecting arch moulding terminates at foliated bosses to the northern and southern ends. The sandstone block work is chamfered at each corner. The recessed trough is lined with white marble and the basins at the bottom of the trough are formed by upwardly angled sections of marble notched into the adjacent colonettes. While no longer retaining faucets or fonts, the rear walls of the troughs retain a single outlet hole. This corresponds with the water pipes located to the eastern side. The entire trough rests on a bluestone plinth with a bevelled edge. To the eastern side of the plinth is a single drainage outlet.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retain and conserve the early drinking trough</li><li>• Conservation works to the early drinking trough should focus on the maintenance and restoration of stone finishes.</li></ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should there be a desire in future to restore function to the drinking trough, this should be designed in a way that limits impact to original ornamental detail. Works should ensure that trough drainage is functional. Based on historic evidence, such as photographs, or other identified examples, the original fonts could be reconstructed, supplemented by modern fountain heads. Any adaptation works to the trough should be designed by an architect with heritage conservation experience.</li></ul>

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<sup>1</sup> Don Chambers, *The Melbourne General Cemetery*, Hyland House Publishing, Flemington, 2003, p.92.

BUILDING NAME Jewish Mortuary Chapel

DATASHEET **5.10**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1854



Figure 1 Jewish Mortuary Chapel, viewed from the east



Figure 2 West elevation of Mortuary chapel



Figure 3 North elevation of Mortuary chapel



Figure 4 South elevation of Jewish Mortuary Chapel



## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

The Jewish congregation erected the first substantial mortuary chapel at the cemetery in 1854. As early as 1855, the brickwork was showing signs of wear and the Trustees insisted that it be rendered. The chapel seating was for a period the most pleasant of the chapels, it being located in a landscaped setting on South Avenue.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A small stuccoed brick chapel on a stone plinth with parapeted gable ends, in the Gothic style, the north end being relieved by a blind lancet arch with drip mould and the south with a lancet arched window with tracery. The roof is slated, and double doors located within a four centred Tudor archway face South Avenue.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retain and conserve the significant fabric and setting of the Jewish Mortuary Chapel.</li><li>• Conservation works to the Jewish Mortuary Chapel should focus on the maintenance and repair of significant fabric. Refer to 2023 condition assessment for specific works. The marble water font to the western facade requires repairs to match existing stone. Ensure water connection to fountain is in working order.</li><li>• Regular maintenance of the marble water font should include careful cleaning.</li></ul>
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<b>Management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Chapel is understood to be managed and maintained by the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation or a related organisation.</li><li>• The SMCT should proactively communicate with the Congregation to confirm its ownership of rights to the Chapel, discuss management responsibilities under the Heritage Act and Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, and bring to attention any observed condition issues and any other management matters which may affect conservation and retention of the Chapel.</li></ul>
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BUILDING NAME Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel (managed by CAM)

DATASHEET **5.11**

CONSTRUCTION DATE 1871



Figure 1 The Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel showing the eastern entry porch



Figure 2 Chapel viewed from the south-west



Figure 3 Eastern porch and courtyard looking to the north-west



Figure 4 Low bluestone perimeter wall to the flagstone courtyard and raised ventilation shaft with decorative wrought grate to the crypts

### HISTORICAL FUNCTION

In 1861 plans were initially prepared for a Catholic chapel with burial place for clergy, but work did not begin until 1870-71 under the architect J B Denney. The chapel was extended in 1888 to accommodate larger funerals, with a new sanctuary, vestry and porch. The vault was also increased in size.

The crypt was extended in May 1951. In 1976 the chapel was partly destroyed by fire.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A substantial bluestone chapel in the Early English Gothic style with entrance porch, apsidal sanctuary, and cruciform plan. A subterranean crypt is served by a hydraulic ram and is partly barrel vaulted with the remains of Catholic clergy contained in inscribed compartments. The interior of the chapel is austere, and decorated with wall tablets, the walls being plain stuccoed. The exterior is relieved with stone dressings and has a steeply sloping slated roof whilst the symmetrical front elevation is surmounted by a sandstone belcote. The Chapel sits within asphalted courtyard, at grade to the south and east, and lawn. To the west is a raised flagstone paved area contained within a low bluestone perimeter wall, above the crypt. The stonework wall features axed finished faces with smooth margins and sloping coping. Ventilation shafts to the crypt are located at the apex of angled insets to the perimeter wall.

Undated recent works have resulted in an extension to the paved courtyard to the north of the Chapel. The rectangular courtyard is paved with asphalt and contained within a low concrete perimeter wall. Raised ventilation shafts formed in concrete with stainless steel grates are located to the perimeter along with painted cast iron bollards atop concrete plinths.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve the significant fabric and setting of the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel.</li> <li>• Conservation works to the Roman Catholic Mortuary Chapel should focus on the maintenance and repair of significant fabric. Refer to 2023 condition assessment for specific works.</li> </ul>
<hr/>	
<b>Management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chapel is understood to be managed and maintained by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne or a related organisation.</li> <li>• The SMCT should proactively communicate with the Archdiocese to confirm its ownership of rights to the Chapel, discuss management responsibilities under the Heritage Act and Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, and bring to attention observed condition issues and any other management matters which may affect conservation and retention of the Chapel.</li> </ul>

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BUILDING NAME Chinese funerary oven

DATASHEET **5.12**

CONSTRUCTION DATE c. 1872



Figure 1 Chinese funerary oven to north-west of enclosure  
Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 2 Stone altar and inscribed headstone  
Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 3 West view of the enclosure showing the rear of the funerary oven  
Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 4 Modern shelter structure with rendered wall to east of enclosure

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Chinese funerary ovens are used in traditional burial practice to provide offerings to the spirits of the dead and symbolic assistance in the passage of departed souls to the afterlife. Paper money, messages and incense are burnt in funerary ovens. A mortuary altar and two funerary ovens were constructed in the southern part of the cemetery in the 1870s; only one of the two original ovens remains.

Examples of brick funerary ovens, or towers, are found in several Victorian cemeteries including Beechworth, White Hills (Bendigo) and Maldon.



Figure 5 Chinese funeral ovens, as photographed in the 1960s  
Source: State Library of Victoria (J Collins photograph)

### BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Chinese funerary oven is a rendered brick hexagonal tower with a sloping roof. It features a burning chamber with an arched opening and an oven enclosed with a cast gate beneath. Applied decoration is limited to the stepped base, partly concealed by the concrete floor finish, rolled chamfers to the junctions of faces and acanthus leaves capping the roof. The oven is contained within a square plan enclosure, bounded by a low cast iron palisade fence with gates to the north and south, on a low bluestone plinth. The east wall of the enclosure is a rendered wall featuring a central curved form with a spherical finial. The wall returns to the north and south for a short distance. The oven is located at the north-east corner of the enclosure. To the west is a stepped granite and bluestone altar with inscribed headstone. A gable roofed pavilion was constructed over the site in recent decades, with brick piers and tiled roof on an exposed timber frame, with lattice between the piers. The floor is finished with a concrete slab.

### POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve the Chinese funerary oven.</li> <li>• The Funerary oven and altar is understood to be managed and maintained by a Chinese community organisation.</li> <li>• The SMCT should confirm the organisation responsible for erecting the pavilion structure and proactively communicate with this organisation to discuss management responsibilities under the Heritage Act and Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, and to bring to attention any observed condition issues and other management matters which may affect conservation and retention of the funerary oven, altar and rendered enclosure.</li> </ul>
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**BUILDING NAME** Elvis memorial

**DATASHEET 5.13**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE** 1977



Figure 1 The Elvis memorial located in the northern rockery adjacent to the Melbourne Mausoleum, viewed from the west



Figure 2 View of the rear of the northern rockery and Elvis Memorial, with the Melbourne Mausoleum visible in the background

**HISTORICAL FUNCTION**

Commissioned by the Elvis Presley Fan Club of Victoria, the memorial features a marble cenotaph inscribed with images of the singer, vases and a descriptive plaque. The memorial was unveiled shortly after Presley’s death in 1977. The memorial is located in the northern rockery, a remnant of an ornate nineteenth-century rockery.

**BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

A tripartite black granite cenotaph and podium with gilded highlights and script. The central panel of the cenotaph features two stylised images of Elvis Presley on white granite with flanking vases. Located within the curve of the rockery, the cenotaph is surrounded by a succulent garden.

**POLICY**

**Conservation**

- Retain and conserve the Elvis Memorial.
- The SMCT should identify the current responsible party for the Elvis Memorial. If no party can be identified, an alternative source of funding should be identified for the maintenance of this memorial.

**Adaptation, management and future works**

- None identified.



BUILDING NAME Rockeries (Grottoes)

DATASHEET **5.14**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From c. 1880s



Figure 1  
Rockery to the north of the Melbourne General Cemetery Mausoleum including the Elvis Presley memorial



Figure 2  
Rockery to the south of the mausoleum





Figure 3 Small rockery remnant on the south side of First Avenue



Figure 4 Small rockery at Centre and Tenth Avenues



Figure 5 The Rockery Melbourne General Cemetery c. 1892-1900  
Source: State Library of Victoria

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Ornamental rockeries were constructed within the site during its Victorian heyday, perhaps soon after the arrival of reticulated water from the Yan Yean water scheme. The MMBW plan of 1896 indicates a number of stone rockeries throughout the cemetery site. The substantial rockeries located at the original western cemetery entrance are retained, though in a reduced form. Two smaller rockeries have been retained in other locations along the road network. A small rockery is also said to have been located near the south gate, though this was removed in c. 1938.

The design of the rockeries has been attributed to Charles Robinette, a skilled craftsman of rockeries and fountains who was patronised by William Gilfoyle and other notable Melbourne landscape designers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is likely that all originally contained reticulated water fountains. They survive as fragmentary remnants; reduced in size, no longer plumbed, and lacking much of their original fine 'rock' details.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The remaining rockeries are constructed of bluestone boulders of various sizes that are joined with cement to imitate natural grottoes. Structurally, the rockeries are formed around steel pins embedded within the structure to enable the creation of projecting layers, caves and stalactites. Rockeries were also water features, though none of the extant examples now operate as fountains. The rockeries retain succulent plantings which formed a part of their original presentation.

The landscaped garden bed, stone wall and rock garden dates to a later period of design, and features bluestone boulders as the background of a shrub based garden design. Midway along the garden length is a curved bluestone pitcher wall and timber seat.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve where practical.</li> <li>• Refer to 2023 condition assessment for specific works.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The integrity of the rockeries is highly compromised and does not reflect their original details and design intent. As such, it is appropriate to consider an adaptive reconstruction which improves their physical condition, restores aspects of their original character or conceptual intent, and provides opportunities for sustaining uses, such as the activation of these remnant features as new memorial gardens.</li> <li>• Refer to <b>Policy 15</b> and <b>Policy 29</b> for further guidance</li> </ul>

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BUILDING NAME Roadways

DATASHEET **5.15**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From mid 1850s



Figure 1 Roadway retaining original bluestone channels

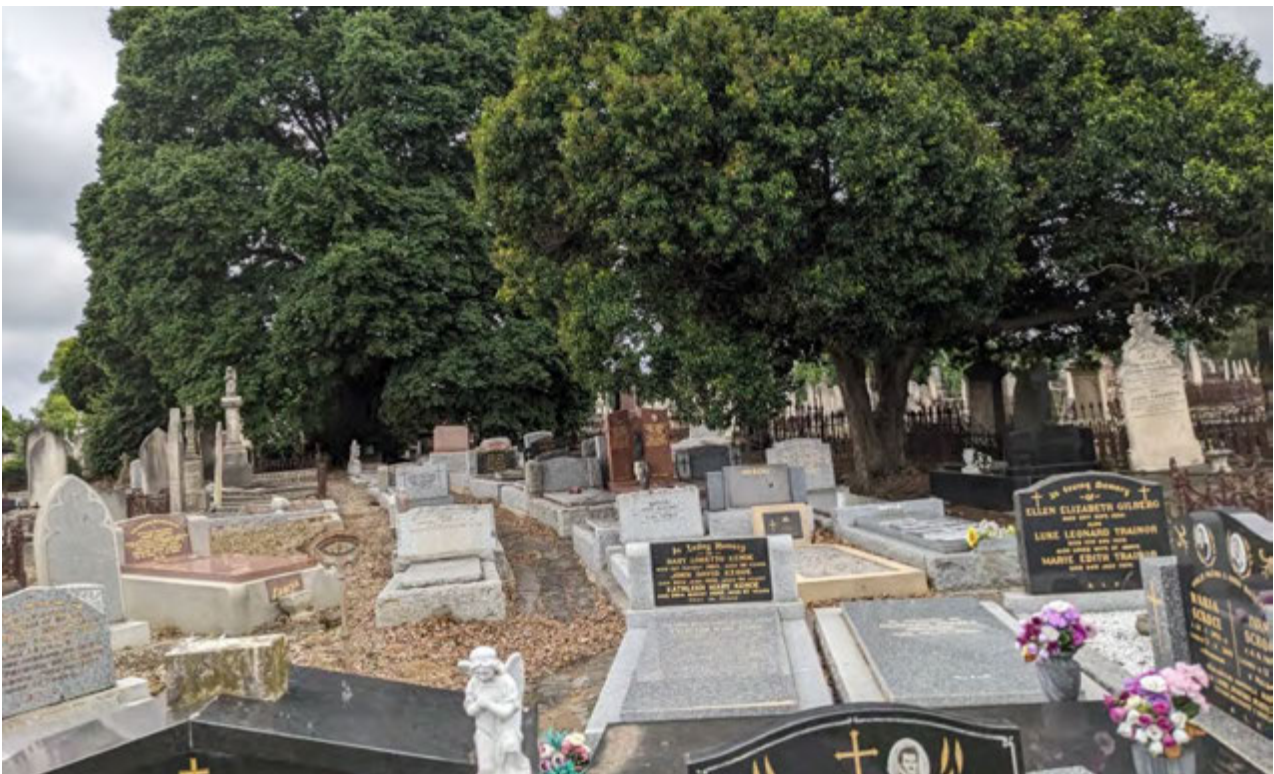


Figure 2 Former Eighth Avenue roadway, filled with burials

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

The roadway network was established to provide access within the cemetery. Laid out in a serpentine pattern by Albert Purchas c. 1854, the roadway was extended by c. 1860 with the gazettal of the extended reserve. Historical evidence suggests that a variety of treatments were used to finish the roadway surface, with early photos indicating a gravel or stone topping near the original western entry lodge. Early roadways features bluestone drainage channels and these are evident today. However, today, the roadway finish is predominantly an asphalt surface.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The main serpentine roadways are finished in asphalt, excepting the areas where the roadways have been infilled with burials. While the historic channel treatment is bluestone pitcher channel, modern kerbs and channel are constructed of concrete. Lesser used sections of roadway, including those infilled with burials, retain a deteriorated asphalt finish.

## POLICY

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### Conservation

- Retain and conserve the surviving serpentine road network.
  - Retention of the serpentine roadway network in its historic layout is key to maintaining the site's heritage values. Retain the historic presentation of the roadway with an asphalt surface. An alternative treatment of blue metal/gravel could be introduced if required for areas of roadway which are little used.
  - Locally resurface areas where asphalt is failing or damaged, and ensure sufficient transitions between different finishes.
- 

### Adaptation, management and future works

- In general, the remaining segments of the serpentine road network should be retained.
  - Some localised segments are wider than necessary, and could be reconstructed to provide a narrower road surface and generate land for other uses, such as new tree plantings or burials. Where this is proposed the existing road alignment and centrelines should be retained.
  - Further infilling of currently active roadways should not occur. Where roadways have already been effectively abandoned due to previous change, the policies provided in Section 4 should guide any design for infilling or other uses of these areas, and steps taken to ensure the original road alignment remains legible and trafficable by foot or personal mobility device.
  - Refer to **Policy 15**, **Policy 20** and **Policy 21** for further guidance.
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BUILDING NAME Paths

DATASHEET **5.16**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From mid 1850s



Figure 1 Remnant bluestone paver path with asphalt overlay



Figure 2 Brick path remnant with deteriorating asphalt overlay west of Second Avenue (2014 CMP)



Figure 3 Brick path with terracotta channel west of Sixth Avenue looking west (CMP 2014)



Figure 4 Gravel path east of Fourth Avenue looking west (CMP 2014)

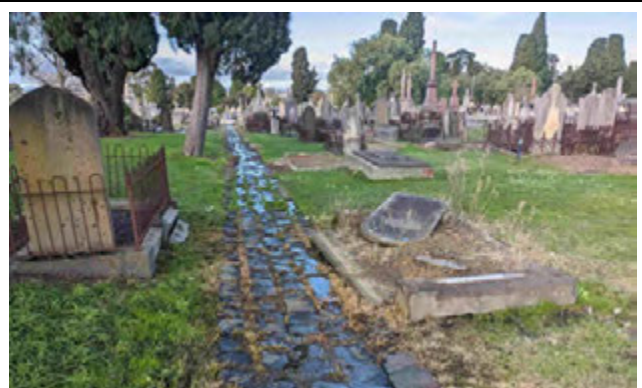


Figure 5 Bluestone path

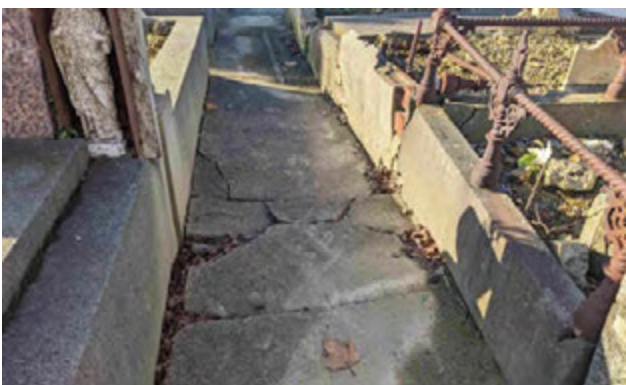


Figure 6 Deteriorating concrete path



Figure 7 Asphalt path



## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Paving treatment has varied throughout the history of the cemetery’s operation. Early paths were finished in gravel and asphalt though by the mid century paving was being replaced in concrete. Brick paths dating to 1876 were constructed using paving bricks sourced from Brunswick Brickworks . Six brick paths, possibly dating to the mid nineteenth century development of the cemetery, were identified in the 2014 CMP as being located in compartment RC QB, in what was formerly the landscaped perimeter of the cemetery.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Paving across the cemetery varies, and includes materials such as bluestone, brick, gravel, asphalt and concrete. Asphalt appears to have been laid over early gravel paths and can be found in the earlier developed areas of the cemetery. Brick paved pathways are evident, though there only a few have been identified, particularly from the earlier phases of cemetery development. These paths are laid with bricks in a lengthwise formation, crowned and with terracotta drainage channels to their edges. Examples of these paths have been covered with asphalt. Later brick paths are found to the western side of the cemetery. Bluestone pitcher pathways can also be found within the cemetery grounds. Asphalt has been laid over one example. For the most part, paving to the smaller interstitial paths of the cemetery has been replaced with concrete. These are mostly found in the eastern and western burial areas.

## POLICY

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<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain early brick and bluestone paths where identified.</li> <li>• There is no current requirement for the active conservation of path surfaces throughout all areas of the place, which would drastically exceed annual capital maintenance budgets. Where paths exhibit applied surface treatments, such as asphalt, this can be left to erode due to the ongoing effects of exposure and wear, but there is similarly no requirement to actively maintain or remove this surface.</li> <li>• Where repair works are required to provide reasonable access through the site, reinstate missing/damaged surfaces with new to match existing. Brick masonry paths can be taken up and relaid using existing bricks, sourcing matching bricks from salvage to match the existing as practical.</li> <li>• Paths should be cleaned periodically of vegetation and debris. However, paths throughout the site have been extensively damaged by runoff and other physical issues, a problem that has been exacerbated by modern chemical herbicide treatments which removed most living vegetation from the site. It is hoped that current pilot projects to regreen the cemetery will assist with reducing uncontrolled runoff and other drainage issues at the site.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None identified.</li> <li>• Refer to <b>Policy 20</b> and <b>Policy 21</b> for further guidance.</li> </ul>

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BUILDING NAME Drainage channels

DATASHEET **5.17**

CONSTRUCTION DATE From c. 1853



Figure 1 Remnant four-pitcher bluestone drainage channel



Figure 2 Bluestone three-pitcher drainage channel to the west side of Ninth Avenue looking towards the MGC Mausoleum



Figure 3 Remnant section of three brick channel between graves  
Source: 2014 CMP



Figure 4 Apricot three brick channel to the west side of South Avenue  
Source: 2014 CMP

## HISTORICAL FUNCTION

Developed with the serpentine roadway and pathway network, the channel system drained the undulating cemetery site. The drainage channels were originally in bluestone, and presented with the historic road and path treatments such as gravel and tar and brick. It is possible that the brick and terracotta channels may date to a later period of development.

The formerly extensive network remains in part, with the bluestone channel removed and replaced by concrete kerb and channel. The remaining bluestone drainage channels are predominantly of the three-pitcher type, with examples of four-pitcher drainage found on Second and Eleventh Avenues.

## BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Bluestone drainage channels of three and four pitcher types located to the edges of the serpentine roadway network. Pitchers are misaligned and filled with vegetation and debris, rendering them non-functional. The drainage channels appear to have not been designed with a kerb, though there is an example of upright bluestone edging to Eleventh Avenue. In several locations, concrete has been laid over the channel surface, at the edge of grave alignments.

Three-brick channels, in red and apricot brickwork, and terracotta pipe channel to the edges of paths and roadways, with bricks laid lengthways. These drains were mostly filled with vegetation and gravel in 2014, and did not appear to be functional.

Lengths of retained channel are located at:

- Second Avenue, north-south alignment (Compartment: Church of England H) and east-west alignment to both sides of roadway.
- East Avenue, (Compartment Baptist C), to both sides of roadway.
- Fourth Avenue, (Compartment Lutheran C) to both sides of roadway.
- Ninth Avenue, to both sides of roadway alignment, excluding short sections to north end.
- Twelfth Avenue, to both north and south of roadway alignment.
- Eleventh Avenue, to north and south of roadway alignment with rock edging.
- Eighth Avenue, to both sides of former roadway. A small section of brick channel is located to the north end.

Further survey work may reveal additional drainage channels and pathways featuring historic treatments.

## POLICY

<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and conserve the significant fabric of the historic bluestone drainage channels.</li> <li>• Clean out channels of vegetation and debris and clean down to ensure sufficient drainage.</li> <li>• Conservation work to the bluestone drainage channels should focus on the maintenance of fabric, including reinstating missing or damaged bluestone and brickwork with new to match existing as required to restore function.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation, management and future works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little to no opportunity for adaptation or replacement of the bluestone drainage channels.</li> <li>• Remove concrete overlays to drainage channels and restore original channel condition when roadworks are undertaken.</li> <li>• Refer to <b>Policy 21</b> for further guidance.</li> </ul>



BUILDING NAME Cast iron signage for compartments and roads

DATASHEET **5.18**

CONSTRUCTION DATE Various, from c. 1853



### BRIEF PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Cast iron compartment signage, featuring an elliptical panel framed and detailed with foliated brackets, and a decorative post supported by four projecting legs secured with a cast iron collar. Raised script in the panel identifies the individual burial compartment. Many are in poor repair, with delaminated paint, surface corrosion and loss of decorative details; some have been buried in soil and concrete paving, others uprooted and laid on the ground.

Roadway signage also exists with a different design, likely of later origin (e.g. later 1800s or 1930s). This consists of a plain rectangular signage panel atop a simple flat post. The signage panel extends to a semi-circle at the connection with the post, and is topped with a trefoil splay feature.

### POLICY

<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain historic compartment and road signage.</li> <li>• Where elements are damaged or missing, recast brackets to match existing.</li> <li>• Brush back all evidence of corrosion and repaint in original colour scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a program for strategic management of the cast iron signage (refer <b>Policy 22</b>)</li> <li>• This program should address the large number of signs, their varied condition, and available restoration methodologies and funding, as well as the lifecycle cost of ongoing maintenance.</li> <li>• If approved by Heritage Victoria and implemented, this should be designed to retain a certain number of signs in original positions, salvage a additional signs as artefacts and a source of future replacements, and dispose of the most damaged and redundant examples.</li> </ul>

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- 118 *Age*, 27 April 2002, p. 6.
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- 120 *Age*, 15 September 2015, p. 13
- 121 Princes Hill Community Centre, 'Greening: The Summary', Princes Hill Community Centre, 2022, <https://princeshill.org.au/?p=949>, accessed 13 September 2023.
- 122 Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, 'Project Cultivate', SMCT, 2023, <https://smct.org.au/project-cultivate>, accessed 26 September 2023.
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**APPENDIX A:  
VHR GAZETTAL AND  
VICTORIAN HERITAGE  
DATABASE ENTRY**

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Australian Map Grid co-ordinates E185 N188 on 1:25,000 Map Sheet No. 8124-3-4 Mount Samaria.

2. The outlet tramway formation, and all Crown land on each side of it for 20 metres, from where the tramway commences at the mill site (E185 N188 on 1:25,000 Map Sheet No. 8124-3-4 Mount Samaria) to its terminus at the top of the three-railed incline (E198 N199 on 1:25,000 Map Sheet No. 8124-3-4 Mount Samaria).

3. All of the Crown land including the concrete lowering gear foundations, boiler remains, gear wheels, surface artefacts and any other remains of timber transport activity within a 100 metre radius of a point with Australian Map Grid co-ordinates E198 N199 on 1:25,000 Map Sheet No. 8124-3-4 Mount Samaria.

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director



**Heritage**  
VICTORIA

**Heritage Act 1995**

**NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1825 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Washington Winch, Nugong, Via Swifts Creek, East Gippsland Shire.

**EXTENT:**

1. All of the Crown land including the Washington triple drum winch engine, boiler, water tank, head and tail spars, steel cables, skyline carriage, fall block and any other remains of sawmilling or timber transport activity within a radius of 200 metres of the point with Australian Map Grid co-ordinates E786 N809 on 1:50,000 Map Sheet No. 8423-N Omeo-Bindi.

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director



**Heritage**  
VICTORIA

**Heritage Act 1995**

**NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1806 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Residence, 42 Wallace Avenue, Toorak, Stonnington City Council.

**EXTENT:**

1. All of the building marked B1 on Diagram 608555 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 608555 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 4838 Folio 528.

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director



**Heritage**  
VICTORIA

**Heritage Act 1995**

**NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1788 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Melbourne General Cemetery, College Crescent, Parkville, Melbourne City Council.

**EXTENT:**

1. All of the buildings and structures marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Gatehouse and Gates at Southwest Corner.
- B2 South Gate.
- B3 West Gate.
- B4 North Gate.
- B5 Jewish Chapel.
- B6 Roman Catholic Chapel.

- B7 Chinese Funerary Oven.  
 B8 Elvis Presley Memorial.  
 B9 Rotundas (8).  
 B10 Early Drinking Trough.

2. The mature trees and plantings (except for those which have been self sown within graves and pathways or are otherwise not integral to the planned landscape scheme) marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

- T1 The Indian Long Leaved Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) located in Church of England M compartment.  
 T2 The clumps of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) in Church of England compartments A-G, I, K, L-S, EE, FF; Roman Catholic compartments, A-D, H, I, K-P; and Presbyterian compartments A-H and I.  
 T3 The clumps of Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle var. areira*) in Church of England A-G, K, L-S, W compartments; Roman Catholic A-D, H, I, K-P, DD compartments; Presbyterian A-H, K compartments; Baptist A & B compartments; and Other Denominations B compartment.  
 T4 The avenue of Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) on Entrance Avenue.  
 T5 The Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) in the Prime Minister's Garden.  
 T6 The row of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa 'Horizontalis Aurea'*) along the east boundary.  
 T7 The hedgerow of Karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) along the south boundary.  
 T8 The hedgerow of Californian Privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) along the southeast boundary.  
 T9 The Elm trees (*Ulmus sp.*) along Fourth Avenue.

3. All of the Cemetery Reserve, forming part of Crown Parcel P361478, Allotment 1 of 118B, Crown Land Reserve Rs 8466, Township of Carlton at Jika Jika (2796B), Municipality of Melbourne (C).

4. All the paths, roadways and gutters marked as P-1 on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director.

5. All of the monuments and memorials as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive

Director:

- M1 Burke & Wills  
 M2 Major General Sir Robert Nickle  
 M3 W. J. T. Clarke  
 M4 Sir William John Clarke  
 M5 Jewish Memorial in the Shape of Branched Candlestick  
 M6 Derrimut  
 M7 John Pascoe-Fawkner  
 M8 Peter Lalor  
 M9 Sir John O'Shannessy  
 M10 John Alexander Burnett  
 M11 Sir Robert Hoddle  
 M12 James Henry Scullin  
 M13 Walter Lindrum  
 M14 Sir Charles Hotham  
 M15 Sir Redmond Barry  
 M16 Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke  
 M17 Sir Isaac Isaacs  
 M18 Jewish Soldiers Memorial  
 M19 Vergona Monument  
 M20 Ensign Vere Pennefather and Dr Macaulay  
 Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN  
 Executive Director



### Heritage Act 1995

#### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1522 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

Dights Mill Site, Dights Falls, Abbotsford, Yarra City Council.

#### EXTENT:

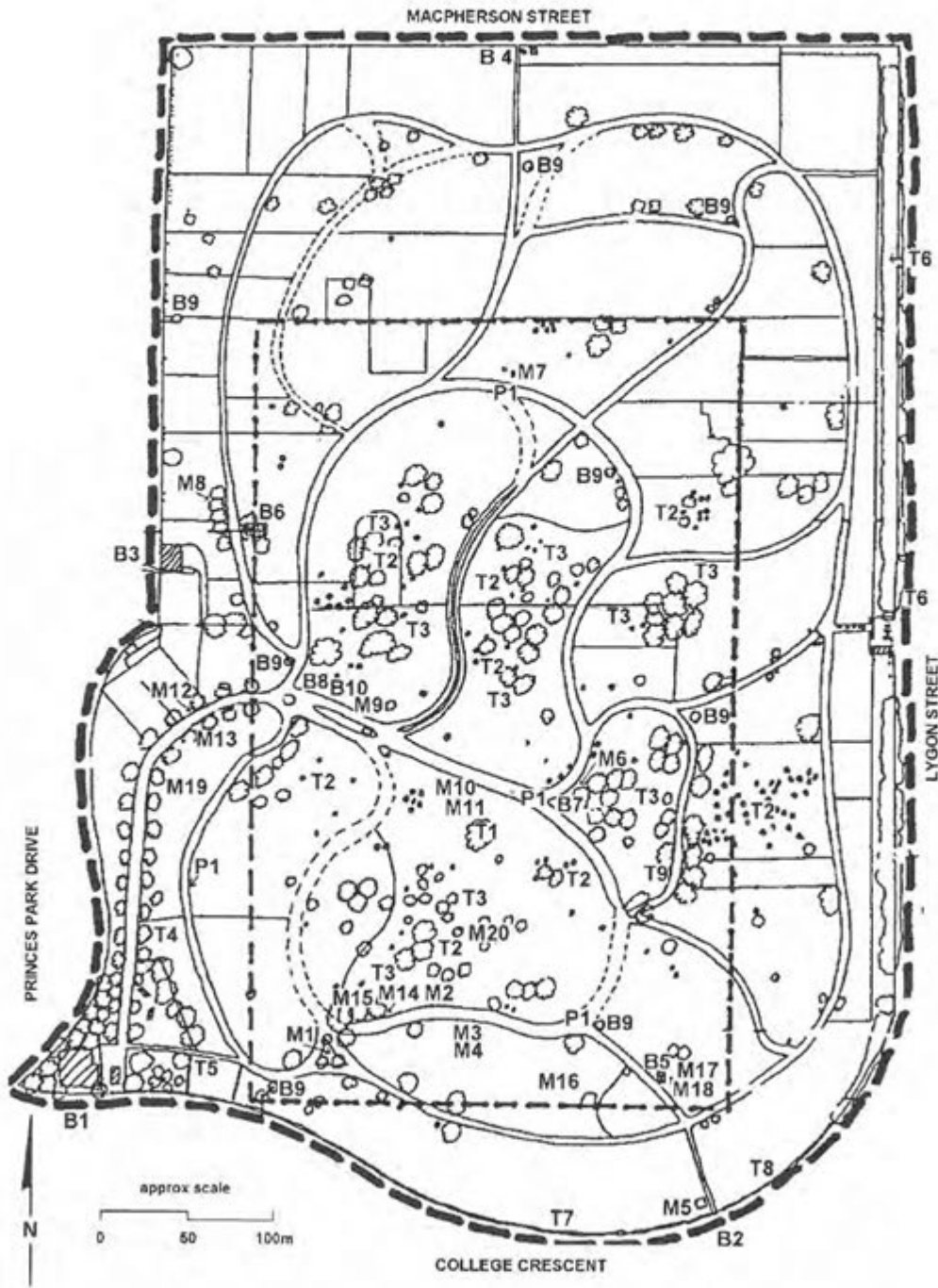
1. To the extent of: All the buildings being, B1 the Turbine House, B2 the Head Race, B3 the Tail Race, B4 the Retaining Wall and B5 the Weir on Diagram 601751 held by the Executive Director.



# VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

HERITAGE REGISTER NUMBER: H1788

NAME: MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY





## MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY



MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY SOHE 2008



1 melbourne general cemetery college crescent carlton general view jun1986

VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

HERITAGE REGISTER NUMBER: H1788

NAME: MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY



melbourne general cemetery.JPG



Before Photographs - Reference F3900 2014



After Photographs - Reference F3900 2016



Before Photographs - Reference F3900 2014





During Photographs - Reference F3900 3015



After Photographs - Reference F3900 2016



During Photographs - Reference F3900 2015

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### **Location**

COLLEGE CRESCENT CARLTON NORTH, MELBOURNE CITY

### **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1788

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO799

### **VHR Registration**

June 17, 1999

### **Heritage Listing**

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

## What is significant?

"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/strict.dtd">

The Melbourne General Cemetery was established in 1850 pursuant to an act of the New South Wales parliament. Designed by Albert Purchas, surveyor and architect, it was opened in 1853 and is one of Melbourne's most visited and loved sites. The cemetery expanded in 1859, closed in 1903 and reopened in 1927. The cemetery is centrally located, one kilometre north of Melbourne's central business district and contains unique evidence of Victoria's colonisation. Its features include various chapels, a recent mausoleum, funerary ovens, rotundas, significant trees and shrubs, gatehouses and a myriad of pathways laid out in a serpentine formation. Throughout the twentieth century the cemetery experienced a severe lack of maintenance through various periods of decline, its lowest being the 1950s. The cemetery trustees resigned en masse in 1978 and were replaced by a temporary trust consisting of three Health Commission officers. In 1980 The Necropolis, Springvale was appointed the trustee of the Melbourne General Cemetery to oversee its management and maintenance.

## How is it significant?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical, social, aesthetic, scientific and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.



# Why is it significant?

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical importance due to its significant contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and its first modern cemetery. Much of Victoria's colonial history can be traced through the headstones, memorials and monuments commemorating the lives both of prominent citizens and the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of Victoria.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of social importance due to its representation of early burial practices, reflecting both the hardships faced by those seeking their fortunes in the goldfields of Victoria and also the opulence of the more affluent members of society such as wealthy landowners and members of parliament. Its social significance is also genealogical, as cemetery records as well as inscriptions on the gravestones themselves can assist greatly when searching for a unique insight into the history of past Victorians. It is also a clear representation of cultural attitudes, technology, skills of craftsmen, use of materials and also the high mortality rate experienced particularly through the 1850s.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of aesthetic importance due to the meticulous planning of architect Albert Purchas (1825-1909), and botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) who were responsible for the formal and romantic layout of the cemetery and also the plantings of exotic and indigenous species of flora. The headstones, rotundas, memorials, chapels and other examples of funerary art collectively form a major visual element. Distant views from the elevated site as well as views into and within the cemetery contribute to its significance.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of architectural importance due to the presence of many typical cemetery buildings and structures

of high architectural quality such as the gatehouse, two chapels, a funerary oven and eight rotundas. The headstones and memorials are also important architectural features for their unique design characteristics and craftsmanship.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of scientific(horticultural) importance for the presence of traditional cemetery plantings such the Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and the pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) and for the presence of a rare long leafed Indian pine (*Pinus roxburghii*).

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### General Conditions

1. All alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### General:

\* Interments, burials and erection of monuments, re-use of graves, burial of cremated remains, and exhumation of remains in accordance with the Cemeteries Act 1958 (as amended) provided such burials or works occur in areas of the cemetery originally designated for this purpose. Locations (for the works listed above) which will require permit approval include but are not limited to roadways and rotundas.

#### Stabilisation, restoration and repair of monuments.

\* Emergency and safety works to secure the site and prevent damage and injury to property and the public.

\* Monument works undertaken in accordance with Australian Standard AS4204 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments

\* Demolition, alteration or removal of buildings and monuments not specified in the extent of registration.

\* Painting of previously painted structures provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

#### Exterior to Buildings B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7 & B8:

\* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

\* Repainting of previously painted surfaces in the same colours.

Interior to Buildings B1, B5, B6, B7 & B8:

- \* Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Layout and Landscaping:

- \* Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings and structures, ornaments, roads and paths, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems.
- \* Maintenance of roads and paths and gutters to retain their existing plan layout.
- \* The process of gardening and maintenance to care for the cemetery landscape, planting themes, bulbs and shrubs, and removal of dead plants.
- \* Management of plants in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees.
- \* Removal of plants listed as State Prohibited or Regionally Controlled Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- \* Replanting to retain the existing landscape theme and character.

Construction dates	1860,
Architect/Designer	Purchas, Albert,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	4254
Property Number	

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## History

### HISTORY OF PLACE

Following Melbourne's formal recognition as a city in 1849, its population escalated with the discovery of gold in surrounding regional areas. An act was passed in NSW parliament in 1850 covering the establishment of cemeteries, and as a result the Melbourne General Cemetery was opened in 1853. Designed by Albert Purchas (1825-1909) this cemetery is a fine example of both formal and romantic planning, styles that were popular during the mid 19th century. In 1859 the 39.5-acre site was extended to 101 acres when additional crown land surrounding the site was reserved for cemetery use.

After decades of mismanagement, vandalism and a severe lack of maintenance, the Melbourne General Cemetery was closed on 31 December 1903 following malpractices of the trustees and the last of the burial plots were sold off in 1904. The Fawkner and Springvale cemeteries were then established over the time leading to the reopening of Melbourne General on 1 November 1927 when the trustees were able to convince the government that they should resume the sale of burial plots.

Between 1853 and 1922, the Melbourne General Cemetery received a number of exhumed bodies from the Old Melbourne Cemetery which originally occupied the site of the existing Victoria Markets after the Melbourne City Council declared it closed by proclamation in 1851 due to a lack of space. A total of 914 bodies were exhumed following years of neglect and they were then distributed between Fawkner Park Old Pioneers Section, Booroondara, St. Kilda, Cheltenham and Melbourne General Cemeteries.



1930s and the materials then used to construct the existing Tudor Revival gatehouse, offices and residence in the southwest corner when the burial area was extended by 6 acres towards the end of 1933. This was made possible by the passing of a special act of parliament and hence the total area is now 101.44 acres . The University of Melbourne and the Housing Commission considered acquisition of the land in the post-war period, during which time the condition of the cemetery continued its decline, at its worst in the 1950s due to lack of funds and some poor parliamentary decisions . The 1970s saw newspaper accounts of the alleged removal of bodies, associations with narcotics trading in the area and reports of organised crime . Interments had been carried out to insufficient depth and as a consequence, second burials for other family members were not possible.

During the mid-1960s a mausoleum was constructed in the Catholic area of the cemetery. This work proved to be very controversial as it was thought at the time that the interment of bodies within the structure would be against health regulations. Following a lengthy court battle in 1965, the trustees were prevented from using it and in 1974 all bodies were removed from its walls and the structure demolished. In 1996 another mausoleum was constructed and is presently in use.

In 1979 the Victorian Government amended the Cemeteries Act, appointing the Springvale Necropolis as trustees to oversee the maintenance and general management of the cemetery from 1 January 1980.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion A**

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object

The Melbourne General Cemetery is historically significant due to its contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and first modern cemetery.

### **Criterion B**

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

The Melbourne General Cemetery contains many memorials and monuments commemorating the lives of prominent citizens, squatters and also representatives of the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of the City of Melbourne.

### **Criterion C**

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

The Melbourne General Cemetery contains a detailed social history of the colonisation of Victoria. Genealogically, the cemetery holds an abundance of information regarding burial practices and lifestyles throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

### **Criterion D**

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of place or object

### **Criterion E**

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

Albert Purchas and Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller were responsible for the early layout and plantings throughout the cemetery. Being of serpentine layout, the cemetery is a fine example of romantic and formal planning techniques that were popular during the 19th century. The picturesque planting formations were intended to give the cemetery a more park-like feel.

### **Criterion F**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

The rare Long Leaved Indian Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) is centrally located within the cemetery grounds, and is an exceptional example of this rare species. Clumps of Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle* var. *areira*) and Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempivirens*) also contribute to the significance of the cemetery.

#### Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

The cemetery contains over one million gravesites and memorials commemorating the history of Melbourne's colonisation. These are of great assistance when assessing our early social history.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1788 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Melbourne General Cemetery, College Crescent, Parkville, Melbourne City Council.

#### EXTENT:

1. All of the buildings and structures marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the

Executive Director:

B1 Gatehouse and Gates at Southwest Corner.

B2 South Gate.

B3 West Gate.

B4 North Gate.

B5 Jewish Chapel.

B6 Roman Catholic Chapel. B7 Chinese Funerary Oven.

B8 Elvis Presley Memorial.

B9 Rotundas (8).

B10 Early Drinking Trough.

2. The mature trees and plantings (except for those which have been self sown within graves and pathways or are otherwise not integral to the planned landscape scheme) marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

T1 The Indian Long Leaved Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) located in Church of England M compartment.

T2 The clumps of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempivirens*) in Church of England compartments A-G, I, K, L-S, EE, FF; Roman Catholic compartments, A-D, H, I, K-P; and Presbyterian compartments A-H and I.

T3 The clumps of Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle* var. *areira*) in Church of England A-G, K, L-S, W compartments; Roman Catholic A-D, H, I, K-P, DD compartments; Presbyterian A-H, K compartments; Baptist A & B compartments; and Other Denominations B compartment.

T4 The avenue of Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) on Entrance Avenue.

T5 The Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) in the Prime Minister's Garden.

T6 The row of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Horizontalis Aurea') along the east boundary.

T7 The hedgerow of Karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) along the south boundary.

T8 The hedgerow of Californian Privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) along the southeast boundary.

T9 The Elm trees (*Ulmus* sp.) along Fourth Avenue.

3. All of the Cemetery Reserve, forming part of *Crown Parcel P361478, Allotment 1 of 118B, Crown Land Reserve Rs 8466, Township of Carlton at Jika Jika (2796B), Municipality of Melbourne (C)*.

4. All the paths, roadways and gutters marked as P-1 on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director.

5. All of the monuments and memorials as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

M1 Burke & Wills

M2 Major General Sir Robert Nickle  
M3 W. J. T. Clarke

M4 Sir William John Clarke  
M5 Jewish Memorial in the Shape of Branched Candlestick  
M6 Derrimut  
M7 John Pascoe-Fawkner  
M8 Peter Lalor  
M9 Sir John O'Shannessy  
M10 John Alexander Burnett  
M11 Sir Robert Hoddle  
M12 James Henry Scullin  
M13 Walter Lindrum

M14 Sir Charles Hotham  
M15 Sir Redmond Barry  
M16 Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke  
M17 Sir Isaac Isaacs  
M18 Jewish Soldiers Memorial  
M19 Vergona Monument  
M20 Ensign Vere Pennefather and Dr Macaulay

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 24 17 June 1999 pp.1426-1427]

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*



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