

the town and contains a number of examples of elegant residences built for leading business and professional men, as well as retired squatters. The residential character is reinforced by gardens, several notable trees and important street tree planting. It is the social focus for prominent townsmen and Western District pastoralists and graziers.

### Recommendations

To conserve and enhance the special character of the Church Hill area it is recommended that:

- i the existing street plantings which date from before the Second world War be retained and extended in a comparable manner,
- ii traditional paving and guttering continue to be used including the absence of footpaths in some streets,
- iii a strict policy of minimal signage be followed,
- iv no non-residential uses should be allowed to compromise the essentially residential character of the area,
- v wherever possible the intrusion of powerlines should be minimised if they cannot be removed,
- vi the views out of the area should be enhanced by appropriate planting.

#### 5.2.2 UC1 Area B Botanic Gardens (Level 2)

### Description

The Botanic Gardens is the focus of this area which is also dominated by the regularity of the street grid. It is surrounded by mostly residential buildings and their gardens acting in support and as a buffer from the rest of the city. The major exception is the group of public buildings, especially the Court House, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church complex. Certain residential buildings stand out, specifically the former Police Magistrate's house at 24 Thompson Street, Kilorua, the Napier Club, and The Gables. The latter two being two-storied are particularly dominant but they are still subservient to the fully mature trees of the Gardens.

The Botanical Motel is located on a key site and while not intruding on the Gardens makes no real contribution to the area.

There is a considerable fall in the land away from Church Hill towards the Lutheran Church. This is critical for the views out of the Botanic Gardens. Hamilton is very lucky that there has been no serious intrusion by surrounding development and no compromise of the distant skyline, the great and irretrievable loss of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

Except on the Thompson Street side and for one third of the Martin Street side there are no made footpaths around the Gardens. There is a variety of fences and hedges the most important of which is in French Street. There are street trees, *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, in Kennedy Street between the Botanic Gardens Depot and French Street. They have been heavily pruned and detract from the Gardens. In Martin Street there are some *Prunus serrulata* cvs., Flowering Cherry, which are trivial compared with the mature plantings of the Gardens. The worst intrusion are the powerlines.

On the other side of the road from the Gardens all of the streets have plantings except for French Street. In Kennedy Street there are *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, which are appropriate and in good condition. In Martin Street there are *Prunus serrulata*, Flowering Cherry, which are in good condition but are not as appropriate as a larger tree would be. The idiosyncratic bush roses - in concrete rings - outside the State Offices are too eccentric to lose. In Thompson Street there are more *Prunus serrulata*, Flowering Cherry, but in poor condition with gaps.

The most definite entrance to the Gardens, and the one which should remain so, is the set of cast iron gates at the corner of Thompson and French Streets. The second most important is at the corner of French and Kennedy Streets. The third, which is rivalled by the entrance near the toilets, is opposite the Lutheran Church. A much stronger link should be created between the Botanic Gardens and the Ornamental Tree Planting Reserve, now known as Victoria Park, in Martin Street and to a lesser extent with Kennedy Oval.

On one of the power poles in Thompson Street opposite the toilets in the Gardens there is a sign commemorating the

"Jaycee Yulunga Streets and Garden Competition Winner South Zone". Also in Thompson Street on the other side of the road from the Gardens, there is the best example of bluestone guttering and crossovers in this area and possibly anywhere in Hamilton. The view out of the area from Thompson Street to the south is well terminated by distant planting. All the streets are happily empty of much of the paraphernalia found in metropolitan suburbs. For a detailed list of materials see Appendix 8.7.

## History

In some ways this part of Hamilton, because of the Police Camp which became the government office area, can claim to be one of the oldest in the region. It is only rivalled by the site of the original inn on the Grange Burn to the north-west of the city.

The Hamilton Botanical Gardens is one of many municipal Botanical Gardens, which were established in Victoria in the mid to late 19th century. A Botanical Gardens was planned for Hamilton at least from the 1860s. A large recreation reserve set aside in the original township plan became the site of the present Botanical Gardens. (282) William Ferguson, Victorian Inspector of Forests, is said to have prepared a plan in the 1870s. However the Botanical Gardens were not laid out and planted until the early 1880s when William Guilfoyle, Curator of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Melbourne and a dominant figure in garden design, was asked to draw up a new plan for Hamilton. (283) In 1883 an artificial lake was created (284) and, by 1895, the Botanical Gardens precinct was described as 'one of the beauty spots of the colony' (285)

The area around the Botanical Gardens became a prestigious residential area and many prominent townsmen chose to build their homes there, including J P Hamilton, Police Magistrate, at 24 Thompson Street (1873) and Dr David Laidlaw, Medical Superintendent at the Hamilton Hospital, whose residence, Eildon, built from the designs of Ussher and Kemp, at 34 Thompson Street, was acquired in 1939 by the Napier Club, a Hamilton women's social

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282 *Plan of the Town of Hamilton*, 1850, Featr. 5U, C.P.O., Melbourne.

283 Watts, p 54.

284 *Ibid.*, pp 43, 126; *Hamilton Spectator*, 8 December 1883.

285 *Weekly Times*, 4 May 1895.

club. (286) Kilora in Kennedy Street was built for the editor of the Hamilton Spectator.

The town's earliest and most notable state school, Hamilton State School No. 295, built in 1876 on the site of an earlier timber national school (the earliest school in Hamilton) also stands within the Botanical Gardens precinct at 42 Gray Street. (287)

### Statement of Significance

This area has regional significance because of its associations with the Hamilton Botanical Gardens, regarded during the last century as 'one of the beauty spots of the colony'. In a sense Hamilton started officially with the Police Camp in what was to become Martin Street. Like Church Hill, this became a prestigious residential area and was a focus for many prominent business and professional men who built fine residences there. It is the site, too, of the town's earliest state school, which replaced an earlier timber national school, the town's first school building.

### Recommendations

To conserve and enhance the special character of the Botanic Gardens area it is recommended that:

- i nothing should be allowed to intrude on the Botanic Gardens nor dominate the existing planting,
- ii nothing should compromise the views out of the Botanic Gardens including the existing skyline,
- iii no new buildings should be taller than one storey in the streets surrounding the Botanic Gardens,
- iv the variety of fences and hedges around the Botanic Gardens should be maintained and there should be no new footpaths adjacent to the Botanic Gardens,
- v adjacent to the Botanic Gardens, the row of *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, in Kennedy Street and the *Prunus serrulata* cvs., Flowering Cherry,

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286 Garden, p 223.

287 *Australasian Sketcher*, 28 October 1876.

in Martin Street should be removed and there should be no street trees planted adjacent to the Gardens,

- vi on the other side of the road from the Gardens, the row of *Sorbus aucuparia*, European Ash, in Kennedy Street should be retained and should be the model for street tree planting in the other streets,
- vii traditional paving and guttering should continue to be used,
- ix a strict policy of minimal signage be followed,
- ix no non-residential uses should be allowed to compromise the essentially residential character of the area,
- x wherever possible the intrusion of powerlines should be minimised if they cannot be removed,
- xi the views out of the area should be enhanced by appropriate planting.

### 5.2.3 UC1 Area C Gray Street Commercial (Level 2)

#### Description

The character of the Gray Street Commercial area is dominated by the strict street grid. Its main axis is Gray Street which soon took precedence in a commercial sense over the lower lying Lonsdale Street. It has remained the centre of Hamilton ever since. It had been almost completely built up by the 1900s, certainly to the street frontages but was not nearly so developed at the rear of the sites, access from the main streets being limited. This means that even now there are large areas, mostly devoted to carparking, behind the facades in Gray, Thompson, Lonsdale, Brown and Cox Streets.

Since the 1900s there has been steady redevelopment with a particularly important legacy surviving in the buildings from the 1930s. The most important change was prompted by the Council in the 1960s and is now generally regretted by everyone. The Council adopted a policy of removing post-supported verandahs. The early views of Hamilton which survive in photographs show clearly how important they were in creating the character of the commercial streets. It is important to distinguish