

MASTER PLAN AND PRECINCT DESCRIPTIONS

MOUNT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

9.0



KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

**STRATEGIC RESPONSES
AND ACTIONS**

**MASTER PLANS
AND
PRECINCT DESCRIPTIONS
AND PROJECTS**

9.1 Overall Principles and Masterplan

The Master Plan for Mount Lofty Botanic Garden builds on the inherent characteristics of the site topography and its natural and human-made plantings. Like Adelaide Botanic Garden, the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Master Plan is significantly influenced by the BGA strategic directions, in particular the intent to establish the organisation as a major scientific and cultural institution in the State.

Within the three driving forces behind the Plan, the following issues are of particular importance:

ACCESS

The design and provision of an easily comprehensible path network is critical to the enhancement of the visitor experience in the Garden. Along with the consolidation and intensification of thematic plantings and interpretative media, the improved path system will assist in making the collections and key messages more accessible.

REGENERATION

While all aspects of the garden are considered in the light of their regenerative qualities, the remnant forest in particular requires management intervention for it to contribute significantly to the fulfilment of Garden objectives and enhanced visitor experience.

SUSTAINABILITY

As with Adelaide Botanic Garden, the enhancement of sustainability through horticultural practices, water use, increased biodiversity and plant conservation, along with improved communication of these key messages to the wider community is a prime consideration of the Master Plan.

The master planning of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is guided by the following set of site planning principles derived from the existing landform and vegetation patterns, and the BGA Board's vision for the Garden's future.



GARDEN STRUCTURE

Enhance and accentuate the basic structure of alternating forest ridges and garden gullies.



Two NODES

Develop visitor facilities at and near the upper and lower car parks.

CONTOUR WALKS

Develop a network of readable looped contour paths which provide visitors with a choice of distance and experience.



GULLY WALKS

Enhance existing gully walks and create an immersive garden experience for each.





FOREST REGENERATION

Manage the remnant forest to maximise regeneration and biodiversity.



THEMATIC GARDENS

Develop a strong overall theme for the non-indigenous collections and intensify the visual, horticultural and interpretive quality of all garden displays.

Upgrade Staff Carpark

Swing Bridge

Native forest regeneration

Quarry Site Sold

Lothian Platform redevelopment

Arthur Hardy sanctuary enhancement

Display Gardens

Visitor Facility

Ephemeral Wetlands

Boundary and Nursery screen planting



Contour path system

Display Garden enhancement within all gullies

All access path

Swing bridge



Site Master Plan

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden

9.2 Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precinct Descriptions

In analysing the Garden, precincts of common activities, plantings or history have been identified. For all precincts, various design options were considered during the Master Planning study, and the most appropriate outcome recommended.

Within each precinct, projects have been proposed which address the issues, objectives and strategic responses. The projects represent clusters of actions proposed in the previous section of this study. Each project is assigned a priority that reflects the urgency and magnitude of the issues addressed and the project's relationship with overall BGA objectives and goals. Priority timeframes are nominated according to the following scale:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| (H) High Priority | i.e. 1-5 years |
| (M) Medium Term Priority | i.e. 5-10 years |
| (L) Longer Term Priority | i.e. 10+ years |

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.1 LOWER GARDEN

The lower garden along with the adjacent lakeside precinct is the most accessible sector of the Garden. This area is also overlooked by the visitor facility which is the primary location for gaining information about the Garden's attractions. The building is sited to take advantage of views to the Piccadilly Valley and the adjacent lake.

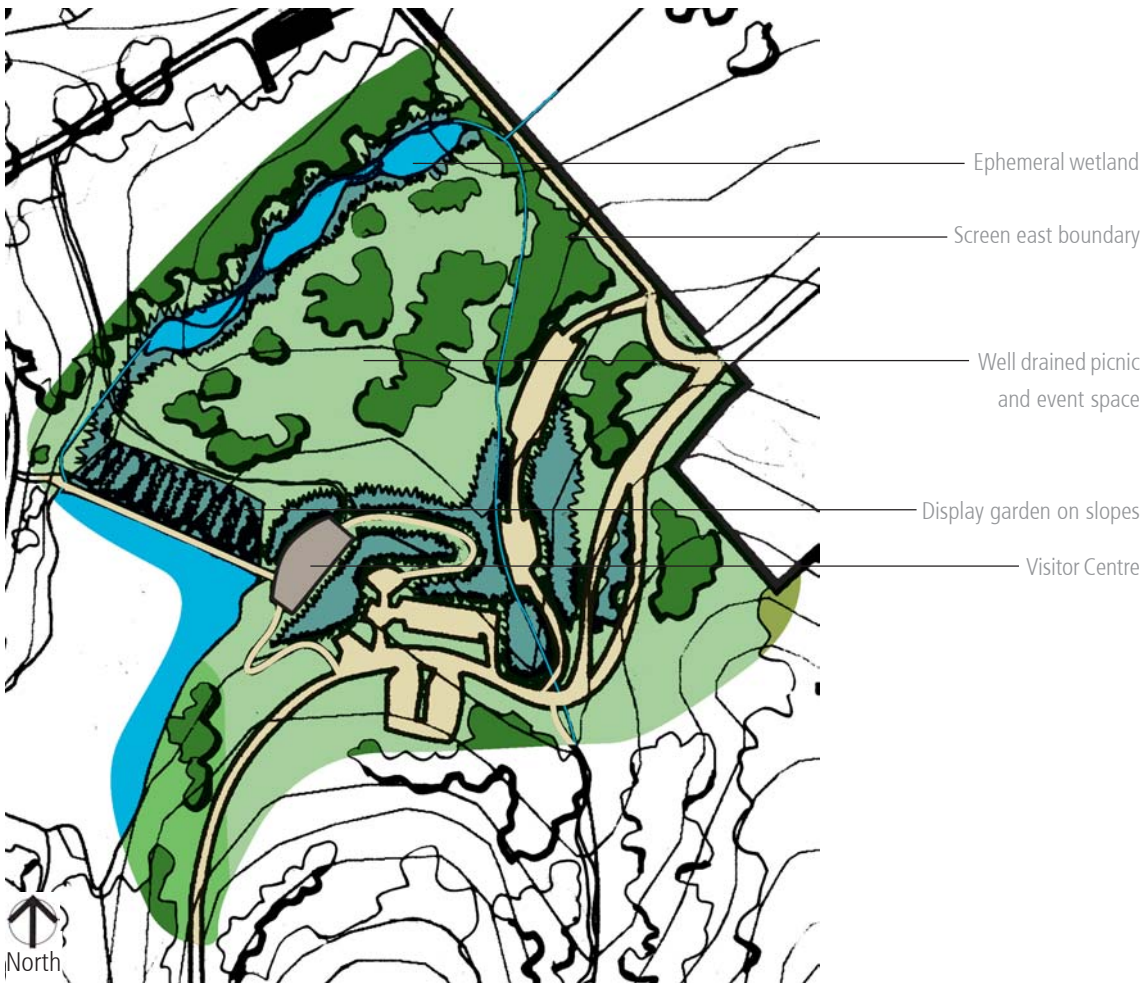
A concentrated series of ephemeral wetlands lead from the dam overflow to the low point near the adjoining property to the east. By providing improved drainage, the lower arboretum is more accessible throughout the year and is therefore utilised for picnics and organised events.

The proximity of the car park and visitor facility makes the lower garden an important part of most visitors' experience. The opportunity is therefore taken to utilise the prominent slopes of the dam wall, and below the lookout and the drop-off area, to highlight plant species which support the BGA objectives. These are developed in a manner which provides a striking visual display.

Projects:

- Ephemeral wetlands and associated drainage (M)
- Display garden on slopes (M)

Lower Garden



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.2 ARBORETUM

The Arboretum provides an open canopy throughout the area with mown grass beneath. In flatter areas, this provides an ideal location for picnicking, strolling, small social gatherings and recreational activities. The area below the car park lookout is utilised for major events.

Arboretum planting is increased in density around the Nursery, Upper Depot and Administration Complex to maximise screening of these facilities. Similarly, the east boundary and service road are screened from view.

The staff carpark is upgraded to cater for large public events and the access road is widened to allow two-way movement.

The Lothian Lookout in the upper arboretum is renovated and open to the public at all times.

Projects:

- Lothian Lookout renovated (M)
- Progressively upgrade existing depot buildings and design new buildings to achieve a high level of fire safety (M)
- Staff carpark upgraded and access road widened (M)

Arboretum



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.3 O'LEARY LAND

The O'Leary land to the east is recognised as a future development site with high potential to display focus collections such as flowering trees and flowering perennials in mass displays, and Australian and New Zealand cool temperate plants.

Projects:

- Carry out review of opportunities to expand focus collections on O'Leary land (M)

O'Leary Land



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.4 LAKESIDE PRECINCT

The Central Lake is the focal point of the Gardens, being at the confluence of the majority of the gullies. The Visitor Facility is sited adjacent the north-east corner of the lake to take advantage of lake and valley views and access across the dam wall to the west gully gardens.

This building houses interpretive material and important information regarding bushfire awareness and procedures.

A fully accessible path system circumnavigates the lake predominately utilising existing roads, providing excellent views both up into the gully display gardens and down and across the lake. Lookout points are located on the east and west ends of the dam wall.

The lake edge is accessible in the north east corner near the Visitor Facility and lower carpark, and at the south end.

The sloping banks between the encircling path and the lake edge are ideal settings for a small number of sculptures visible both at close range and from across the lake.

Planting around the lake edge maximises vignettes to the water and beyond from a variety of locations along the encircling path.

Projects:

- Visitor facility (H)
- All access path (H)
- South lake edge access (M)

Lakeside Precinct



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.5 NATIVE FOREST

The Stringybark forest, which is situated predominantly on the ridgelines of the Garden, performs an important function. Firstly it provides a visual frame for the display gardens in the adjacent gullies. Secondly, it provides an invaluable resource for the interpretation of the indigenous flora of the region.

Through careful management, the biodiversity of the forest is enhanced and the health of those trees on side slopes above exotic plantings is improved. Fire risk is managed through a program of prescribed burns, targeted maintenance and the establishment of boundary fire breaks in strategic locations.

Contour walking trails traverse the forest fingers bringing visitors into close proximity with the vegetation.

Investigate improved integration and connectivity between Somerset Rocks and the rest of the Garden. If this is not possible then consider divestment of this land.

Projects:

- Improved signage and wayfinding system (H)
- Contour path system (H)
- Explore options for improved connectivity to Somerset Rocks (L)

Native Forest



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.6 EAST-WEST GULLIES

The three east-west gullies fan out from the Duck Pond. The central gully hosts Rhododendron specimens which form a focus collection within the Gardens. This extends from the Upper Carpark to the main lakeside path. This valley is, therefore, a key connector between the upper and lower sectors of the garden.

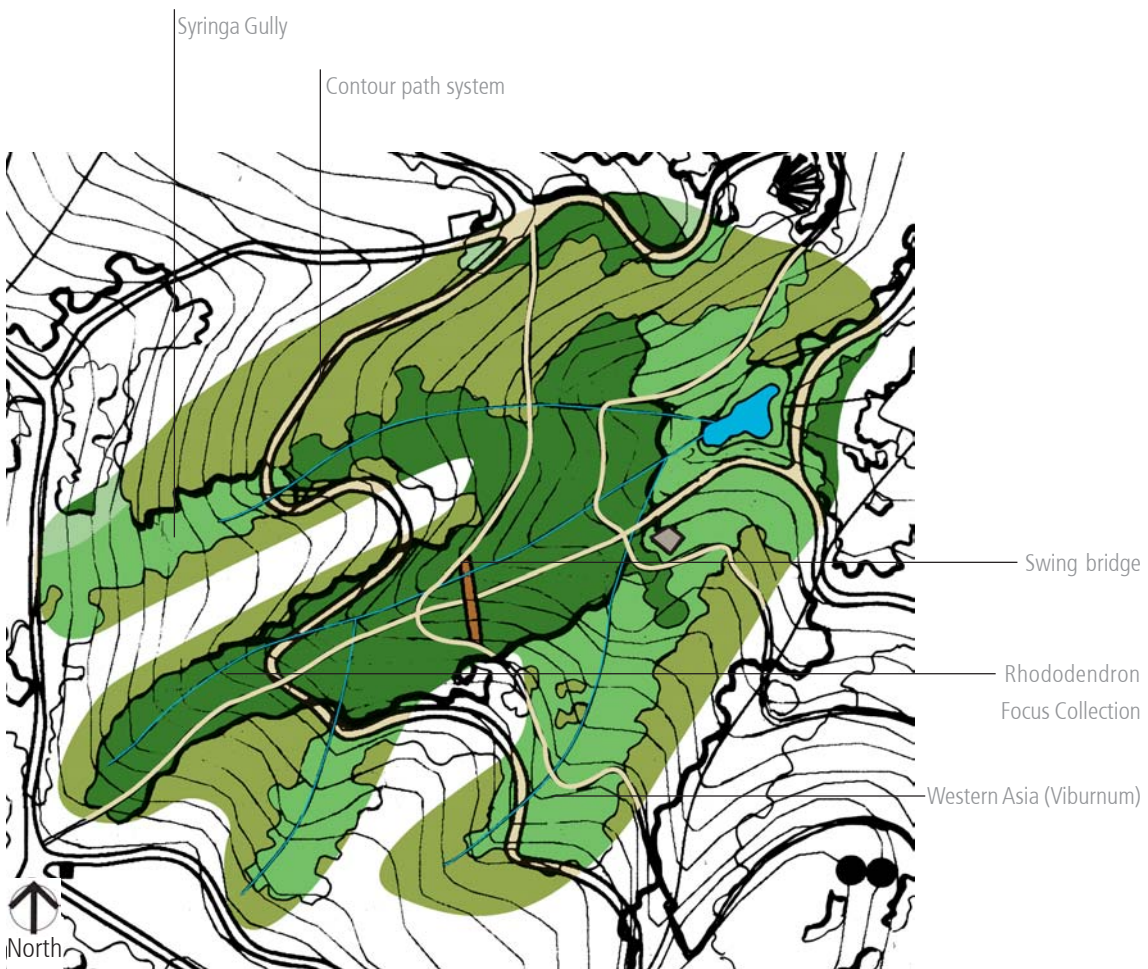
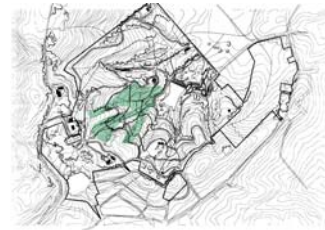
Its steep main path crosses the network of contour trails providing visitors with an opportunity to move up or down the slope. Midway up the valley a swing bridge crosses between the adjoining ridges. This is one of the two such bridges which provide a striking view of the gullies and their display gardens.

Shelters and seating along the length of the gullies provide opportunities to rest and take in both the vegetation in close proximity and the longer views up and down the valley.

Projects:

- Contour path system (H)
- Improved signage and wayfinding system (H)
- Reduction and management of native re-growth to maximise fire resistance (H)
- Swing bridges (M)

East-West Gullies



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.7 NORTH-SOUTH GULLIES

A series of five gullies running north-south from the upper main ridge down to the main lake and lower garden house collections from South America, Temperate Africa and New Zealand as well as Magnolia and fern species. Within the fern gully the Tree Ferns are developed as a Focus Collection.

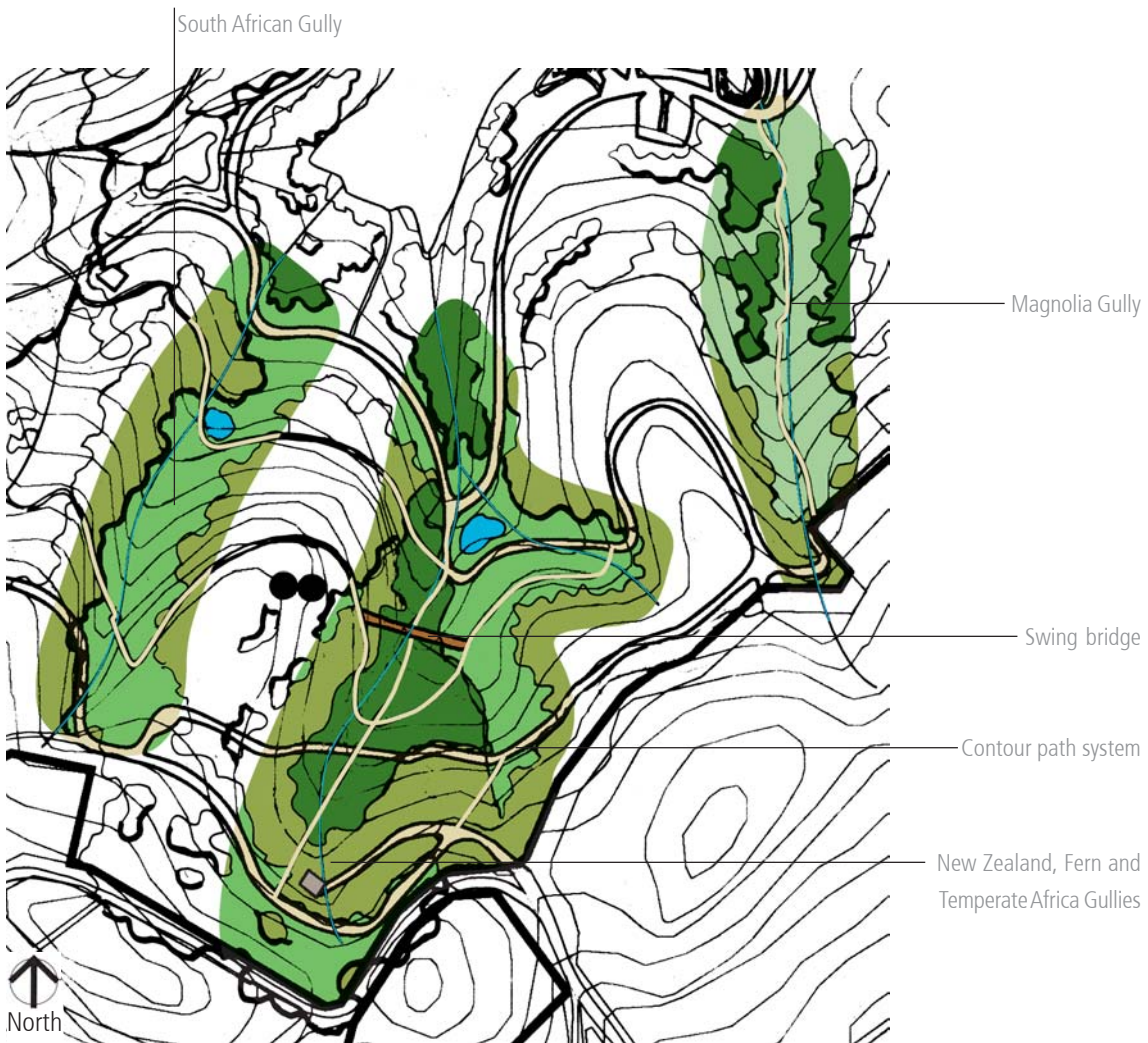
Major paths run up the Magnolia, South American and Fern Gullies. These cross the contour trails which traverse the gullies and ridges in an east-west direction.

Maintenance of the forested ridges highlights the distinctive landform of the Garden and gully collections below. A swing bridge crossing the Fern Gully provides excellent views up and down the valley and to the fern garden below.

Projects:

- Contour path system (H)
- Improved signage and wayfinding system (H)
- Reduction and management of native regrowth to maximise fire resistance (H)
- Swing bridge (M)

North-South Gullies



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Precincts

9.2.8 SOUTHERN SLOPE

The upper southern slopes of the Garden are easily accessible from the upper car park. A path takes visitors into the 'Arthur Hardy' sanctuary where excellent views are possible down into the southern Fleurieu Peninsula. Picnicking and recreational activities are catered for under the collection of cool temperate Australian trees.

The quarry site is sold.

A path through the Dwarf Conifer Collection links with the upper contour path network of the north slopes, thereby bringing the south slope gardens into the overall Garden path system.

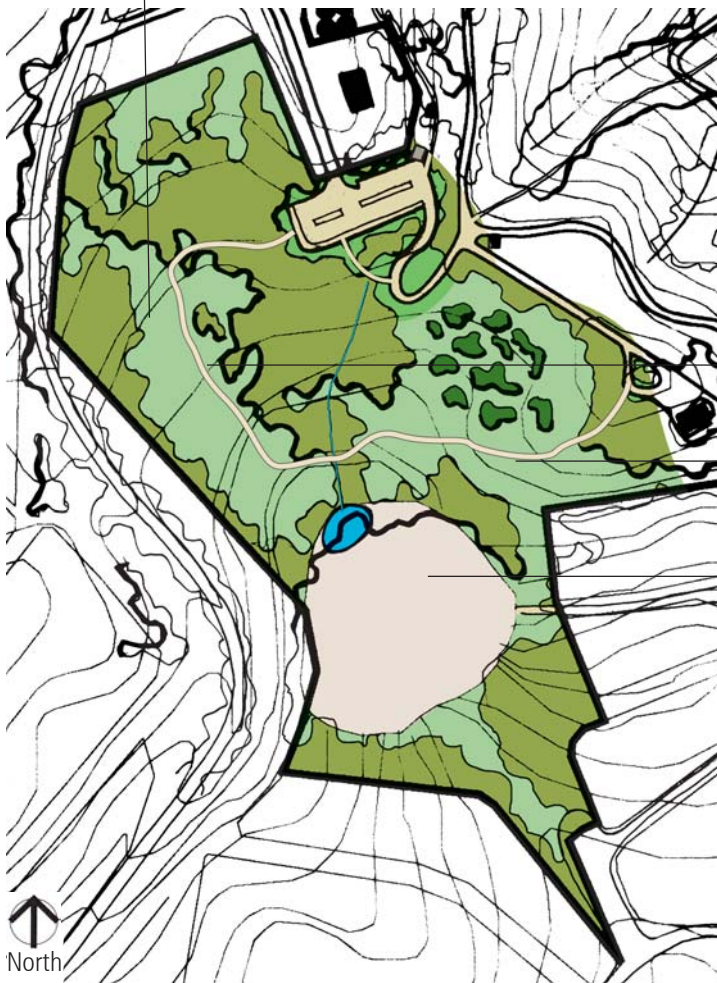
Projects:

- Overturn dedication on Arthur Hardy Sanctuary (H)
- Quarry divestment (H)
- Arthur Hardy land enhancement and development (M)

Southern Slope



Arthur Hardy land developed as recreation and collection space



Path to Arthur Hardy land

Linking path

Quarry site sold