Heritage Standard

Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Government of South Australia

Department for Environment and Water

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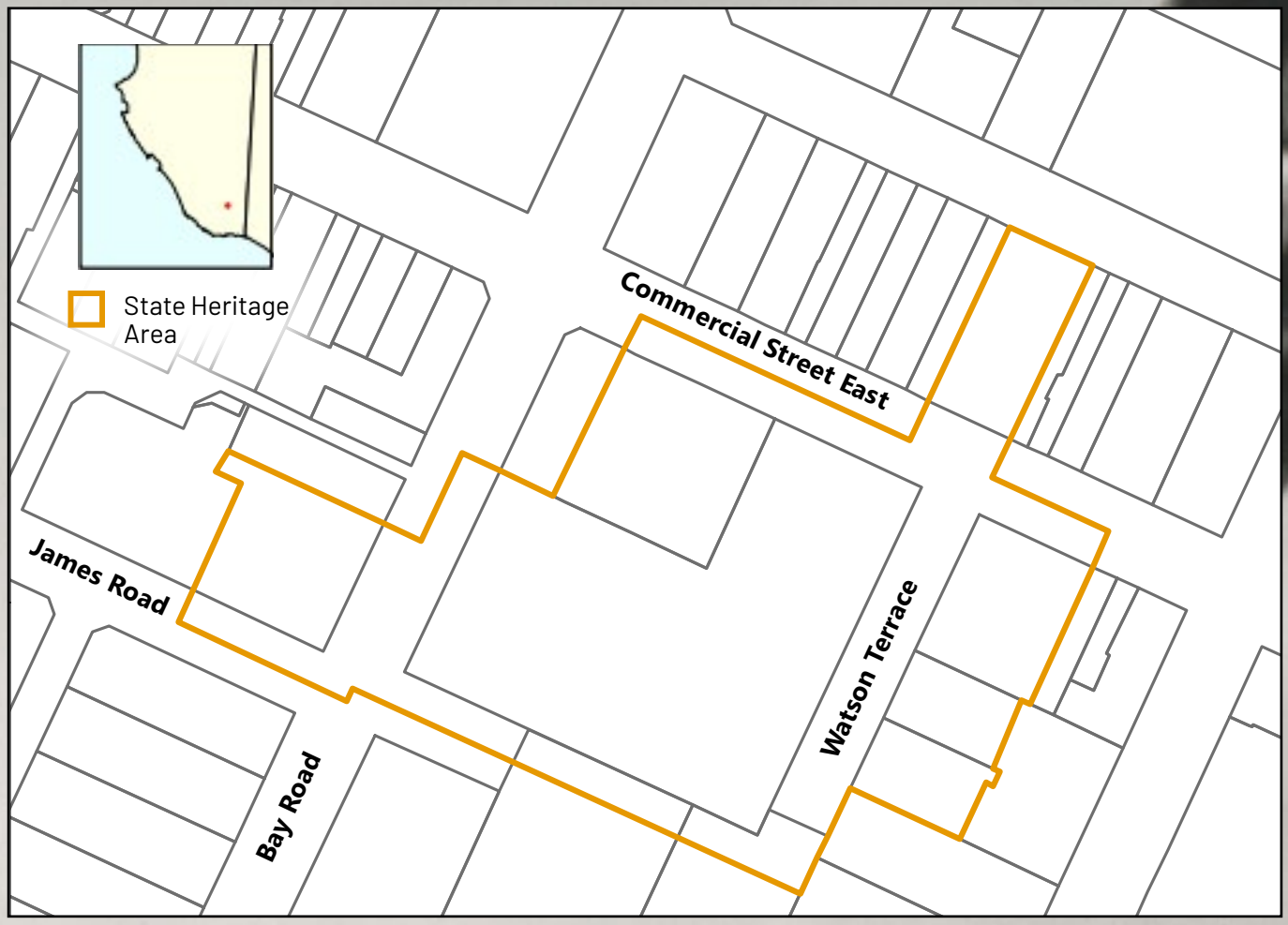
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This page: Jen's Hotel, Mount Gambier, c.1935, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B 20147.

Cover image: Cave Garden, Mount Gambier, c.1910, Les Hill Photographic Collection, MT1C16D00013288.


State Heritage Area
Commercial Street East
James Road
Watson Terrace
Bay Road


JENS
HOTEL
JENS HOTEL, MOUNT GAMBIER.
No 13

1. Background

1.1. Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area

South Australia's State Heritage Areas represent significant aspects of the State's rich natural and cultural heritage. Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre was designated as a State Heritage Area under the *Heritage Places Act 1993* on 2 August 2001. The designation ensures that future development of properties and open spaces within Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area are managed in a way that maintains the Area's heritage value.

1.2. Purpose of Heritage Standards

Heritage Standards are published in accordance with the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* and its Planning and Design Code (Code). They are a supplementary tool of the Code and are referenced in the State Heritage Area Overlay.

Proposals to undertake development within a State Heritage Area may be referred by the Relevant Authority to the *Minister responsible for administering the Heritage Places Act 1993*, for consideration of impact on the heritage values of the State Heritage Area.

The Relevant Authority decides if a referral is required. The State Heritage Area Overlay 'Procedural Matters (PM) Referrals', identifies the types of development in a State Heritage Area that require referral.

Officers within Heritage South Australia (Heritage SA) in the Department for Environment and Water are the Minister's delegate for advice on referred development applications. Generally, Heritage SA can support the proposal and direct conditions of approval, or direct refusal if heritage values are unacceptably compromised. The Heritage Standard forms a key part of Heritage SA's assessment of the heritage impact of referred development proposals.

The Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area includes several State Heritage Places listed in the South Australian Heritage Register. If proposed development involves a State Heritage Place or Object located within a State Heritage Area which is also independently listed in the South Australian Heritage Register, the policy of the Planning and Design Code's State Heritage Place Overlay will take precedence over that of the State Heritage Area Overlay.

The Heritage Standard is presented in three parts:

1. **Background** – the historical development of Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre and the principles that underpin the State Heritage Area listing
2. **Statement of Significance** – the South Australian Heritage Register listing and the context and description of the heritage values
3. **Heritage Standards for Development** – Principles and Acceptable Standards for development

1.3. History – Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre

Natural History (Thugi/Cave Garden)

The picturesque Thugi/Cave Garden, sometimes referred to as Mount Gambier Town Cave, is a sinkhole approximately 25m in diameter and 18m deep. The sinkhole was likely a soft-rock cave underneath the Holocene-aged (~5000ka) volcanic rocks and ash fall that overlay the entire Mount Gambier area. The cave most likely collapsed in on itself, exposing a permanent groundwater lake within the resulting geological feature, known as a cenote. A waterfall commonly forms during wet weather due to urban runoff.

Geological features exclusive to limestone landscapes, known as solution pipes, are exposed within the walls of the sinkhole. Solution pipes are a form of syngenetic karst, which are a special type of karst feature that form from soft and porous sediment at the same time as the karst is being cemented. The soft-rock's collapse exposed the pipes from under the younger volcanics. The solution pipes and limestone at Thugi/Cave Garden are recognised as the section type for Gambier Limestone and have exceptional scientific significance, as it enables contextualisation and comparison between the Gambier Limestone and other internationally important geological locations.

History (Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre)

Boandik/Bungandidj Country

The Boandik People are the traditional owners of the Mount Gambier region. Thugi is a place of spiritual and cultural importance to the Boandik with a closely associated dreaming story. The dreaming story tells of a Kaurna boy from Willunga who travelled to Warwar (Blue Lake) and angered a giant residing there. The giant chased the boy back to Willunga where the boy's father and 'great God of the Aboriginal People of that area', Nurrenderi, fought the giant. Defeated, the giant was chased back



This colonial sketch shows a view of Watson Terrace and the site of Jens Hotel as they appeared in the mid-nineteenth century Reproduction of a sketch, author unknown, 1856, State Library of South Australia,SLSA B 3068

to Boandik country. With no time to reach Warwar safely, the giant ran to Thugi where he still hides. Because of this history, Thugi has been recognised by the Boandik as a place for meetings and ceremonies.[1] The cave/sinkhole was also a source of fresh water, while the surrounding elevated area was an important winter camp site featuring 'strongly built waterproof huts, which were in the shape of a beehive, turfed over, and capable of accommodating six adults'.[2]

Early Colonial Settlement

On 3 December 1800, Lieutenant James Grant sighted and named Mount Gambier as he sailed along the coast. Decades later in 1839, brothers Stephen, Edward and John Henty travelled across land from Victoria and were among the first Europeans to explore the Mount Gambier area. Even before the arrival of Europeans looking for pastoral and agricultural land in this area, introduced diseases, notably smallpox, had already arrived from colonial settlements in the east and begun to decimate the Boandik People.

Settlement and the dispossession of the Boandik People from their country began in 1841, when pastoralist Stephen Henty erected a small hut and stockade on the western side of the cave/Thugi for his stockmen, as well as another hut near Valley Lake in the Mount Gambier Volcanic Complex. Henty likely chose to settle at these locations, without an occupation licence, due to the availability of freshwater, pasture and the site's elevated nature, which would have helped to minimise local flooding and inundation in this high-rainfall area.

On 6 March 1844, an occupation license for the land was granted to Evelyn Pitfield Shirley Sturt, Captain Charles Sturt's younger brother.[3] As a result, Henty lost possession of the land. Nonetheless, Henty, Sturt and others continued agricultural work in and around Mount Gambier and the area continued to develop. As Europeans moved to the South East, acts of frontier violence became more frequent and increasingly covert in nature. A local, permanent police presence was established in response. At first, the police used Henty's buildings, converting his abandoned hut into a police station in 1847, before replacing them with purpose built structures.[4]

As European settlement increased, a township began to develop, including the establishment of typical government and private facilities. During the mid-to-late 1840s, a post office and hotel were erected around the cave. The presence of water in the sinkhole led to an enterprising initiative by W.A. Crouch who cut steps in the wall of the sinkhole and installed a windlass. This enabled him to haul barrels of water to the surface, which he then sold to residents.[5] The sinkhole was used as a water source by European settlers until the 1850s, when other local wells were dug.

1 M. Jacquelin-Furr, M (2022), 'Thugi – Legend of the devil in the cave', Online video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAvBV5DplCg>

2 R. Foster, 'The Lower South East of South Australia', in: eds. Peggy Brock and Gara T., *Colonialism and its Aftermath: A history of Aboriginal South Australia*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2017, p. 201

3 David Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier: the development of a garden within the city by the crater', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, no. 27, 1999. pp. 60-75

4 Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'The Cave Gardens of Mount Gambier', *Australian Garden History*, 5:2, 1993. pp. 3-6

5 Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'The Cave Gardens of Mount Gambier', 1993, p.3



A group of local children at the Cave Garden with Post Office behind. Cave Gardens 1910, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B16467

'Gambier Town' was founded in 1854 by Hastings Cunningham, who purchased four town acres from Sturt on 21 October 1854. William Murray was engaged by Cunningham in July 1854 to re-survey part of Section 1103 into 123 allotments for private sale and to allocate a reserve on three acres. The Government Reserve the present-day Cave Garden, 'was not vested in Council until 1870'.[6]

Sections from Sturt's allocated land and the first sales of government land were held in 1860. The town was generally known as Mount Gambier by this time. Despite no longer being used as a water source, the cave remained the central point from which the town grew and developed. In 1856, the original police complex became Mount Gambier's first school, opening under the direction of Mr. James Smith, with 30 pupils enrolled.[7]

Government Structures

As the township grew, the colonial and local governments began to establish buildings on land adjacent to the sinkhole, establishing Mount Gambier's civic centre.

In 1865, the second Telegraph Office for Mount Gambier was built to the west of the sinkhole. The building was eventually combined with the Mount Gambier Post Office and was used for both postal and telegraph services from 1887. An extension to the building was added in 1906 and the site remained the post office until the 1990s, when it was upgraded for commercial use. The building demonstrates the evolving methods and widespread adoption of communication systems in South Australia. A signal mast at the Telegraph Office was used to announce the arrival of ships at Port Macdonnell and mail at Mount Gambier between 1883 and 1926,[8] but it is no longer extant.

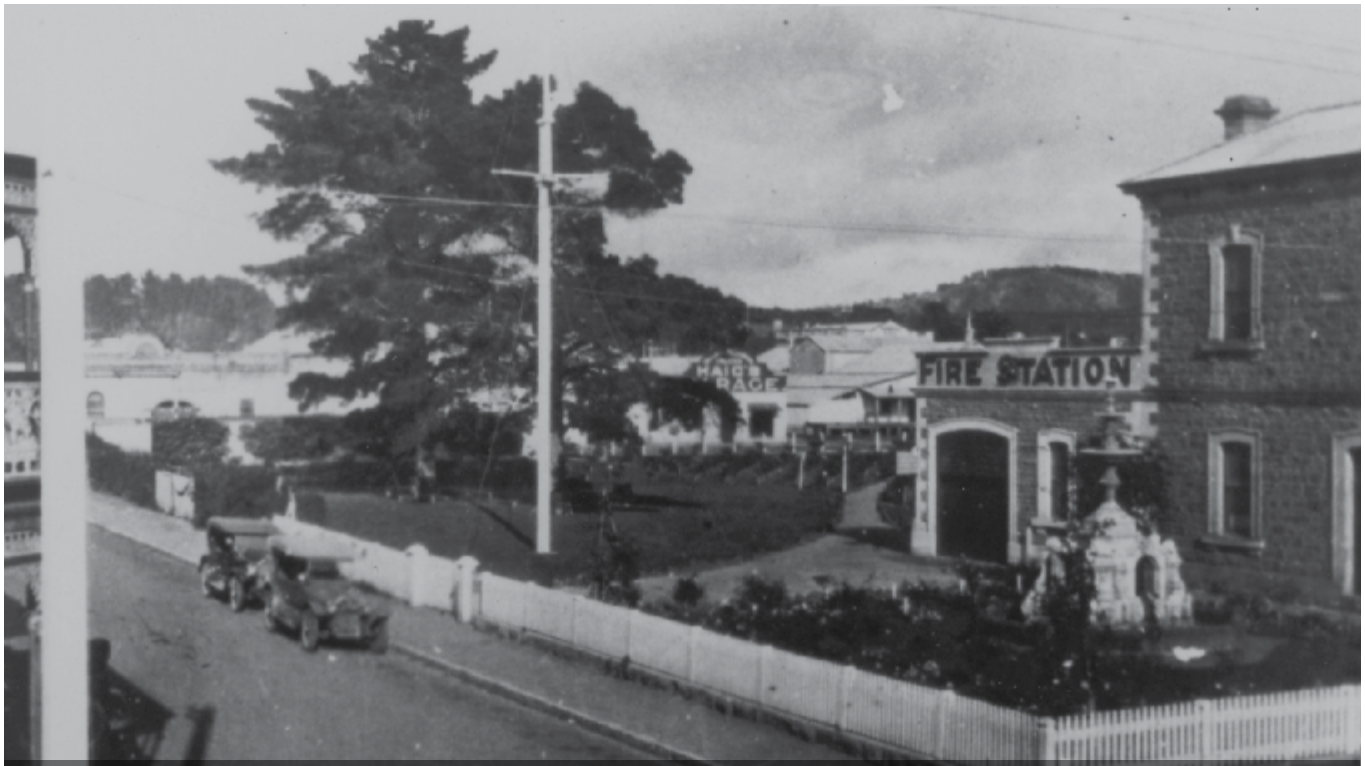
Mount Gambier Town Hall, designed by J. J. Barrow and constructed in 1882 is situated to the north of the sinkhole and is 'directly associated with the development and progress of local government in the town'.[9] The clock and tower were later donated and added in 1883 by Thomas Chute Ellis. A fire station was located at the back of the Town Hall until another was built in Sturt Street in 1955. In 1981, government activity ceased at the hall, which now houses various offices.

6 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999, p.61

7 Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'The Cave Gardens of Mount Gambier', 1993, p.3

8 Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'The Cave Gardens of Mount Gambier', 1993, p.4

9 McDougall and Vines, *Mount Gambier Heritage Survey Review*, Norwood: McDougall & Vines, 2007



View of the civic open space at the corner of Commercial Street East and Watson Terrace with the old Town Hall and former Fire Station. 1925, Les Hill Photographic Collection, Mount Gambier Library.



View looking north-west to Town Hall. 1895, Les Hill Photographic Collection, Mount Gambier Library, MT 24F19 D00011977



View of Commercial Street, looking west, c.1890, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B13430

Recreation and Social Facilities

In addition to administrative and infrastructural facilities, recreational and social amenities were also developed around the Thugi/Cave Garden for the local community. By the 1860s, the area was becoming known as a local picnic and beauty spot and became home to local sports.

Mount Gambier Institute was designed by W. T. Gore and openedin 1869. Designed The Institute functioned as a library and meeting hall. It is now recognised as 'one of the earliest public buildings constructed in the Commercial Street precinct.'[10] Extensions included the construction of a second storey and extra reading rooms, designed by W. R. Allison and completed in 1887.

The former King's Theatre designed by Thomas Hall, was another extension to the Institute and opened in 1907. The hall could hold 1,200 people and served as a cinema between 1926 and 1966. Live events were a regular feature until being discontinued in 1981. Thereafter, the building was remodelled as an art gallery.

10 McDougall and Vines, *Mount Gambier Heritage Survey*, 2007, p.35



Left: Illumination of the Gardiner Fountain for the 'Back to Mount Gambier' civic celebrations, tinted collotype, 1926, Les Hill Photographic Collection, Mount Gambier Library, MT 32A6 MG3107874

Below: The Gardiner Fountain showing the former Jens Annexe/Rubenkonigs Coffee Palace in the background, 1920. Les Hill Photographic Collection, Mount Gambier Library, MT 1C34 D00013324



As the township flourished, so too did local pride. In 1883, Captain Robert Gardiner gave the Town Council of Mount Gambier a cheque for £700 to spend however they wished. In 1884 after some deliberation the Council erected a fountain towards the north corner of the cave reserve. Costing over £600, the fountain was believed to be the 'first large marble fountain ever manufactured in Victoria'. It was constructed in Carlton, Melbourne, by stonemasons Messrs. A.A. Sleight & Co. of the Victorian Monumental Works,[11] shipped to Port MacDonnell, and erected on site by a team of four men.[12] The Gardiner Fountain was finally opened by the Mayor, Cr. A.F. Laurie, on 18 June 1884. Since the 'Back to Mount Gambier' celebrations in 1926, it has been regularly illuminated at night.

The first hotel on the Jens Hotel site, at the corner of Commercial Street East and Watson Terrace, was known as the Mount Gambier Hotel was established in 1847 by John Byng[13]. Known locally as "Black John" or "Black Byng"[14], he was originally from Nova Scotia, Canada, and was the son of a freed slave from South Carolina.[15] After arriving in Australia, he became a successful publican, running several hotels in Melbourne, Mount Gambier, and Kyneton. John Allen Mitchell took over the running of the Mount Gambier Hotel, following Byng's departure for Victoria. The third and most significant publican at the site was German settler, Johannes M. Jens, who purchased the Mount Gambier Hotel site in 1882 and built a new two-storey hotel in 1883-84, first named the Town Hall Hotel. Jens Hotel was expanded along Commercial Street East in 1904 and again in 1927, with the addition of a large, art deco styled wing with colonnade facing Watson Terrace. With its luxurious interior, Jens became an integral part of commercial and social life in Mount Gambier, and one of the leading hotels in South Australia, hosting prominent visitors to the district.

A two storey block of six shops was built in 1902 across the road from Jens Hotel on Commercial Street East Adolph Rubenkonig to a design by W. R. Allison Senior. The building was used as a 'coffee palace' associated with the

11 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999, p.62

12 'City Heritage Walk', City of Mount Gambier, 2020

13 not to be confused with the present-day Mount Gambier Hotel, on Commercial Street West

14 Please note, the language and terminology used reflects the context and culture of the time that would be deemed insensitive, inappropriate or factually inaccurate today

15 Jeffrey Atkinson and Andrew Roberts, David ''Men of Colour': John Joseph and the Eureka treason trials', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10:1 2012, pp.75-98



The opening of the Public Baths at Mount Gambier at the Cave Garden on January 31st, 1898, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B15849

temperance movement providing an alcohol-free venue and accommodation. In 1922, it was sold to Jens Hotel, and the upper storey became staff quarters.

The Cave and Garden

When the cave ceased being used as a water source, in the 1850s it became a part of the town's stormwater drainage system. As the township grew calls for improved caretaking and of the Thugi/Cave Garden began to appear in local editorials. The first appeal for the creation of a civic garden appeared in 1864.[16] In 1870, the cave garden was recognised as a 'public reserve' and hence placed under the care of the District Council of Mount Gambier West.

The beautification of the public reserve commenced in 1892, when Council began to care for plantings and also installed garden seats. The following year, 50 trees and flowering shrubs were planted by Fredrick Henstridge and W. C. J. Lockwood. Reflecting a desire to shape the garden according to contemporary 'picturesque' ideals, the first plantings inside the cave occurred in 1896, when a large tree fern from Victoria was planted.[17] At this time, the surrounding garden comprised an expanse of lawn and series of gravel paths, with trees planted around the perimeter and a cluster of pine trees to the south of the cave. Public baths, known as the Percy Browne Baths, were built in 1898 on the south corner of the garden, near Watson Terrace. The baths were demolished in 1953.

From the early 1900s until 1964, the Thugi/Cave Garden underwent three stages of landscape development.[18] The first stage was under the stewardship of Paul Frederick Krummell, who was the Honorary Curator of Parks and Gardens. During this period Krummell continued to improve the landscaping of the cave and sinkhole with the support of the local community, who donated their time, materials and plants. Planted beds of flowering annuals, perennials and



Mount Gambier Cave Garden under the stewardship of Paul Krummell. Fencing panels are used as informal retaining walls. Mount Gambier Cave Garden 1910, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B 55471.

16 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999, p.63

17 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999, p.63

18 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999, p.63



Postcard, showcasing the evolving role of the Cave Garden as a picturesque local tourist attraction; Jens Hotel is visible to the rear, c.1930, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B 44129



Cast iron lamp posts, fencing and paths. Cave Garden, Mount Gambier, 1896, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B 14706



Arbour, created using cast iron lamp post bases donated by Mrs Robert Hutton in 1933, DEW 2020

The second stage of garden development occurred between 1925 and 1945 under the supervision of William Denham Robinson. Robinson was awarded first prize of £105 for his design and philosophy in a competition to redesign the cave garden, in the lead up to the city's jubilee celebrations. and In1925, Robinson's work was completed in 1925 and described by a contemporary source as an 'informal Edwardian/Gardenesque and Mount Gambier planting' style garden. He was then appointed as Honorary Curator of the Garden in 1928.

A pergola, created from reclaimed gas street lamp posts of cast iron, was donated by Mrs Robert Hutton in 1933. William Robinson remained in the position of Honorary Curator until his death in 1945.

Robert William Robinson, William's son, took over from his father in 1945 and continued to maintain the garden until 1964. During this period, little change was made to the layout, though mature trees were replaced with modern day species during the 1960s.



Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden1930, Collection, Mount Gambier Library, MOUNT 1C56 D00013368

Little has changed since Robert Robinson's resignation and the garden still reflects the informal Edwardian/ Gardenesque style of the mid-1920s, as envisioned by William Denham Robinson. The most significant change to the Thugi/Cave Garden area occurred in the 1980s, with the building of the new Civic Centre for Mount Gambier at the south-eastern corner of the site. This new construction led to street closures at that intersection, with the creation of a new forecourt for the Civic Centre, with the addition of public sculptures, lighting and flagpoles.

The Thugi/Cave Garden and sinkhole occupies a central place in the history of Mount Gambier, forming the physical and civic centre of the township. From its earliest days, it was a focus for community celebration, tourism, and recreation; it was the town's 'civic square'.[19] The Cave Garden Reserve was confirmed as a State Heritage Place in 1995 and was later included in the listing for the larger area comprising the State Heritage Area in 2001. In 2022, a dual name for the place was agreed, adding the word 'thugi', meaning 'bullfrogs' in Bunganditj, the reclaimed language of the Boandik People.



Cave Garden, Mount Gambier, 1890, State Library of South Australia, SLSA B16461

19 Jones, 'The Cave Garden of Mount Gambier', 1999p.60

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2. Heritage Value

2.1. Statement of Significance (Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area)

Mount Gambier Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is of heritage value for the following reasons:

The Mount Gambier Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area (Thugi/Cave Garden) is at the heart of the initial 1854 subdivision of Mount Gambier. The civic and commercial centre grew outwards from the Cave Garden reserve, which was a valuable water source for early settlers. The town hall, institute, post and telegraph office and hotels and commercial buildings were all established by the early 20th century and provide a consistent built form streetscape around the Cave Garden reserve, illustrating the scale and administrative importance of the town in the South East of South Australia during this period. The Cave Garden surrounds a limestone sinkhole, which is a distinctive geological feature. Ornamental gardens were developed in the sinkhole in the 20th century, reinforcing the landscape character of the Cave Garden reserve for the town and visiting tourists.

(as entered on the South Australian Heritage Register, South Australian Heritage Council, 27 June 2024)

2.2. What is of heritage significance?

The Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden sinkhole is a significant geological feature which, from the town's earliest days, has provided a meeting place, direct access to drinking water, and a natural attraction for residents and visitors. A civic garden has been established over time around the cave, bordered by nineteenth and early twentieth century institutional and commercial buildings, making the site the central, civic place of Mount Gambier.

European settlement of Mount Gambier commenced in the mid 1840s, with a collection of small buildings erected near the sink hole, to take advantage of a ready water supply. The cave and sinkhole was also important as a meeting place for the Boandik People. "Gambier Town' was surveyed, and land sold in 1854. The cave garden reserve was established at this time, in the centre of the new town survey.

The township's key institutions were erected in close proximity to the cave and the area immediately surrounding it became the town's civic centre, featuring a police station, telegraph and post office, fire station, hotel, theatre and town hall and institute. The cave garden, created from the Government Reserve established around the cave, developed the cave's natural amenities as a public park and town square, creating a formal green landscape setting for recreation and a space for public celebration and commemoration. The garden layout and landscape features from the period 1900 – 1964 are of note, illustrating the planned intent to improve the civic amenity of the town for community recreation and visual amenity.

Features within the State Heritage Area which contribute to its heritage value include:

a. The sinkhole, as a geological feature, consisting of a collapsed limestone cave and groundwater lake.



View into the sinkhole from viewing platform within the Cave Garden, DEW 2024

b. The garden created around the sinkhole, known as the Cave Garden, established in the late nineteenth century and formalised 1900-1964, incorporating a range of garden features and plantings in different styles, including:

- formal beds and plantings;
- steps, paths and timber/ woven wire fencing
- community memorials and features including the arbour, rosary and wishing well



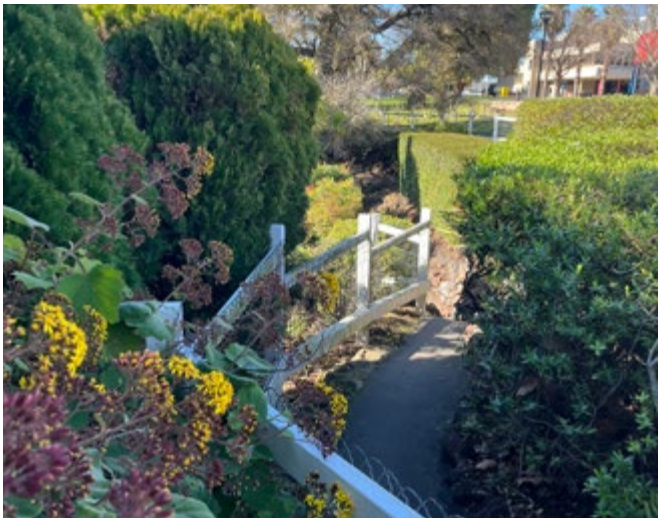
Cave Garden, DEW 2024



Remnants of the garden layout and plant selections reflect design and plant selections showcased by William Denham Robinson's 1925 design. It retains elements of earlier design styles and garden features, including picturesque rockwork,

DEW 2024

Continued



Curving paths, bordered by shrubs and informal hedges, in a naturalistic style as pedestrian routes within the Garden; timber post and wire fencing aids descent on the steep site, DEW 2024



The stormwater channel, constructed 1916 under the supervision of engineer F. N. Burchell, manages rainfall and urban runoff flows on the steeply sloping banks of the sinkhole; in rainy weather, a waterfall is formed, DEW 2024



Rock faced walls of Mount Gambier limestone rubble reflects the Gardenesque style, and adds a naturalistic feature to the garden's design, DEW 2024

Continued



The 1933 Arbour, with cast iron posts, frames one of the pedestrian entrances to the Cave Garden, DEW 2024



The rosary first created by Paul Krummell (c.1906-1910) and redesigned by William Denham Robinson in 1925. A variety of heritage and modern roses are planted, DEW 2024

c. Formal landscaped nature of the Cave Garden, featuring expansive lawn areas, flower beds and formal tree planting with mature exotic species – including palm trees and a mix of deciduous trees.

- road and footpath paving is minimised to maximise lawn and formal plantings.
- the space is a curated pedestrian park, with minimal vehicular through traffic.



Open lawn area of Cave Garden – note plantings, lawn and trees, DEW 2024

d. Gardiner Fountain: presented to the town by Captain Robert Gardiner (1884), of marble and cast iron with enclosing stone walls, set in the civic open space adjacent to the Town Hall, with formal garden beds, DEW 2024



Gardiner Fountain, DEW, 2024

e. Defined central civic space - a landscaped garden precinct, surrounded by a consistent perimeter of two storey scale civic buildings of the late 19th and early 20th Century



Enclosed corner of Cave Garden area, DEW 2024

Architectural features of heritage value to buildings surrounding the Cave Garden include:

- two storey scale buildings, or high single storey scale buildings
- buildings sited to street boundaries, clearly defining the civic edge of the space
- use of masonry in facades – mix of limestone, dolomite, face brick and render
- defined eaves parapets to buildings, with hipped roofs clad with CGI behind and featuring rendered chimneys
- porches, verandahs and ornate balconies facing the Garden
- deeply recessed, vertically proportioned windows and doors to facades of horizontal proportion



Mount Gambier Post Office (Former Telegraph Office), DEW 2024



Riddoch Art Gallery, DEW 2024



Town Hall/ Institute DEW 2024



Jens Hotel, view south-east from Commercial Street East, DEW 2024

3. Heritage Standards for Development

(Mount Gambier Thugi Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area)

3.1. Purpose of Heritage Standards for Development

Heritage Standards form a key part of Heritage SA's assessment of the heritage impact of referred development proposals by:

- providing a basis for assessment of heritage impact of development by Heritage SA Heritage Officers.
- Including heritage principles and location specific detail on how development can be undertaken to ensure heritage values are protected.
- proposing a minimum standard for development related solutions within the State Heritage Area.

Any future development within a State Heritage Area is regulated by the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act), and against the Planning and Design Code (the Code):

- each State Heritage Area is mapped as illustrated in the South Australian Property and Planning Atlas (SAPPA). A State Heritage Area includes both private properties and public spaces (including streets and reserves).
- the Code prescribes planning policy requirements for the assessment of development within a State Heritage Area through the State Heritage Area Overlay.

Any work (development) within a State Heritage Area is defined through the PDI Act as: *(Part 1(3)(e) Interpretation):*

"... - the demolition, removal, conversion, alteration of painting of, or addition to, the place, or any other work that could materially affect the heritage value of the place."

Work relates to changes to the exterior of a property within a State Heritage Area and could include repairs, additions, or new construction. Repairs are typically considered 'work' where they are significant in scope or have a large effect on heritage value. Exemptions to the definition of Development within a State Heritage Area are scheduled in the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017 – Schedule 5.*

It is the role of the Relevant Authority (typically the Local Council) to confirm if proposed work within a State Heritage Area is considered 'development' and therefore requires a development application (DA). In the first instance, contact your local council to ask if what you are proposing is considered development.

Proposals to undertake development within a State Heritage Area may be referred by the Relevant Authority to the *Minister responsible for administering the Heritage Places Act 1993*, for consideration of impact on the heritage values of the State Heritage Area.

The Relevant Authority decides if a referral is required. The State Heritage Overlay 'Procedural Matters (PM) Referrals', identifies the types of development in a State Heritage Area that typically require referral.

Officers within Heritage SA in the Department for Environment and Water are the Minister's delegate for advice on referred development applications. Generally, Heritage SA can support the proposal and direct conditions of approval, or direct refusal if heritage values are unacceptably compromised.

Proposed development to the exterior and interior of a State Heritage Place, within State Heritage Area, is separately prescribed by the State Heritage Place Overlay of the Planning and Design Code and is assessed in addition to the State Heritage Area assessment.

The Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is a place of geological significance, demonstrating the history and process of volcanic eruption in the Newer Volcanics Province of South Eastern Australia.

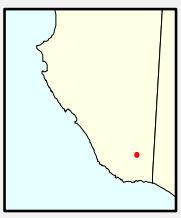
The State Heritage Area is also of significance as the location of the civic centre of the surveyed township of Mount Gambier, first established in the 1840s around the water supply in the sinkhole. Late 19th and early 20th Century civic and commercial buildings are located around the perimeter of the Cave Garden, a civic garden of lawns, exotic trees and plantings. The picturesque Cave Garden/ Thugi is valued as a place of recreation and the manicured 1900-1960s era designed landscape is of aesthetic value to the community.

Any future development is to conserve the character of the State Heritage Area and maintain its heritage values through:

- Protection of the site's geological feature – the limestone sinkhole and groundwater at the base.
- Management of the Cave Garden landscape, to retain the picturesque qualities of the Area established 1900-1960s – including trees, planting beds and extensive lawn areas. Garden features such as stone walls, seats, paths, steps, fences and the arbour are also of heritage value.
- Continuation of the inclusion of features/ memorials of civic value to the community within the Area.
- Retention and conservation of the surrounding civic and commercial buildings and fountain.
- Adaptation of existing buildings to ensure their long-term conservation and viability.

Mt Gambier Cave Gardens State Heritage Area





Legend

State Heritage Area

Produced by	Heritage SA Department for Environment and Water 81-95 Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000 https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/
Data Source	DEW/DIT
Compiled	3 July 2023
Projection	Lambert Conformal Conic
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Kms

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Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

3.2. Land use

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay – Alterations and Additions PO 2.2)

The Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden sinkhole is a significant geological feature which, from the town's earliest days, has provided a meeting place, direct access to drinking water, and a natural attraction for residents and visitors. The land surrounding the sinkhole was surveyed 1854. A civic garden has been established over time around the cave, bordered by 19th and early 20th Century institutional and commercial buildings, making the site the central, civic place of Mount Gambier.

European settlement of Mount Gambier commenced in the mid-1840s, with a collection of small buildings erected near the sink hole, to take advantage of a ready water supply. Prior to this, the cave and sinkhole was important as a meeting place for the Boandik People. 'Gambier Town' was surveyed, and land sold in 1854. The cave garden reserve was subsequently established in the centre of the new town survey.

The township's key institutions were erected in close proximity to the cave. The area immediately surrounding the cave became the town's civic centre, featuring a police station, telegraph and post office, fire station, hotel, theatre and town hall and institute. The cave garden, created from the Government Reserve established around the cave, is a formal green landscape setting for recreation and a space for public celebration and commemoration. The garden layout and landscape features from the period 1900 – 1960s are of note, illustrating the planned intent to improve the civic amenity of the town for community recreation and visual amenity.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.2.1. Land Use Land use within the Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is both civic and commercial in nature. The sinkhole reserve garden and adjacent established civic buildings facing Commercial Street East are key public facilities. 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings surround the sinkhole garden, forming the historic commercial centre of the city. Development **is to have regard to** the following:	
a. **Land use planning**	The Thugi/Cave Garden reserve is a public space and is retained as an open, recreation area. Civic building uses remain along the south side of Commercial St East, with open public space to the front and rear. Commercial development lining the far side of Watson Terrace, Commercial Street East and Bay Road is encouraged. Adaptive reuse of buildings is possible, if the external appearance from the street is maintained.

3.3. New buildings

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - Built Form PO1.1 to 1.5)

New buildings will not adversely impact on the identified heritage values and open space qualities of the State Heritage Area.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.3.1. Siting of new buildings The Thugi/Cave Garden reserve is an open formal garden landscape. Primary facades of existing civic buildings face Commercial St East. Commercial buildings all address streets and are high in density. New buildings **are to have regard to** the following:	Further buildings are not supported within Thugi/Cave Garden reserve and sinkhole.
a. **Street and side boundary setbacks** Thugi/Cave Garden reserve is significant as an open formal garden landscape. Civic buildings main façades address Commercial St East. Commercial buildings define the street edge of the Area.	**Civic buildings** – principal façade to face Commercial Street East. **Commercial buildings** – facades of new buildings to face principal roadway and be aligned on road boundary. Side setbacks not required.
3.3.2. Form and design of new buildings The form, scale and architectural features of existing civic and commercial buildings within the State Heritage Area associated with the late 19th and early 20th century are of heritage value, illustrating the establishment and growth of the city. New buildings **are to have regard to** the following:	Future pavilions within Thugi/Cave Garden reserve and sinkhole are to be open structures.
a. **Scale** The prevailing scale of civic and commercial buildings within the Area are consistently two storey in scale.	New development to match the consistent parapet scale of existing two storey buildings within streetscapes.
b. **Roof form and pitch** Roofs are typically pitched or concealed from view by façade parapets.	Roof forms and eaves profiles are to match traditional styles characteristic of the Area. Corrugated, galvanised finish sheeting preferred.
c. **Façade proportions and openings** Street facing commercial buildings are consistent in proportion in the streetscape, with ground floor, glazed shopfronts and vertically proportioned door and window openings to upper floor facades.	New buildings are to complement the proportions of existing two storey buildings. Street facing door and window openings are to continue the existing pattern of façade openings within streetscapes.
d. **Balcony verandahs** Existing balcony verandahs are a dominant element of heritage value within the commercial streetscape.	Balcony verandahs complement the scale and depth of existing structures to two storey buildings

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.3.3. Materials, finishes and colours The architectural features of buildings erected in the late 19th and early 20th century and Cave Garden landscape features 1900-1964 are of heritage value.	New development is to have regard to *Accepted Materials, Finishes and Colours* as scheduled in: *(Alterations and Additions) 3.4.3 Materials, finishes and colours*, incorporating those common to the era of heritage value of the State Heritage Area.

3.4. Alterations and additions

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO 2.1-2.2)

Additions and alterations to existing buildings within the Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area are not to visually dominate existing buildings or the surrounding landscape of heritage value. Any addition or alteration should complement the established building and its associated setting, without attempting to imitate architectural features, maintaining a clearly legible pattern of development.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.4.1. Site and location of additions Development to maintain the open landscape of the Thugi/Cave Garden reserve. Future alterations to existing buildings to maintain visual dominance of buildings within streetscapes. Development is **to have regard to** the following:	Further buildings not supported within Cave Garden reserve and sinkhole.
a. **Street and side boundary setbacks** Additions and alterations to repeat side setback of existing development, to retain historic legibility of development within the streetscape.	Development repeats the site setback common to existing surrounding development.
3.4.2. Design of additions The consistency in form, scale and architectural features of existing buildings within the Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is of heritage value, demonstrating the late 19th and early 20th century establishment and development of the city. Additions are to complement existing building form, maintaining a compatible distinction between old and new. Development **is to have regard to** the following:	
a. **Scale** Existing buildings of heritage value are predominantly two storey in height. The proportion of additions is to complement existing built form. The scale and bulk of new work should not dominate the old.	Additions to be two or single storey in height, lower than the eaves height of the principal building.

Principles	Acceptable Standard	
b. Roof form and pitch Civic and commercial buildings are consistent in roof form (typically a grouping of hipped roofs, (approx. 30-35 degrees), with eaves.	Roof form, pitch, span, ridge height, eaves detail and cladding to complement existing roof. Additions are to maintain legibility of original roof form. A break in the roofline between established building and addition is required. Verandahs are simple sloped roof structures. Chimneys to existing roofs are to remain and not be removed when roof cladding is updated.	
c. Façade Proportions and openings Street facing commercial buildings are consistent in proportion in the streetscape, with ground floor, glazed shopfronts and vertically proportioned door and window openings on upper floors.	Where visible from the public realm, additions to buildings are to complement the proportions of facades and openings of the existing building.	
d. Alterations to original building features The overall consistency in architectural features to buildings associated with late 19th and early 20th century period buildings are of heritage value.	Refer *[3.10 Conservation Works]* for further details. Exposed limestone, dolomite and brick walls are retained and not painted or render finished. Façade features and detailing, including windows and doors and verandahs are retained in the original configuration and material where in view of the streetscape.	
3.4.3. Materials, finishes and colours The architectural features of buildings erected in the late 19th and early 20th century and landscape features of the cave garden 1900-1964 are of heritage value.		
The design of alterations and additions **is to have regard to** the following:	**Acceptable**	**Not supported (where visible from street/ public space)**
a. Roofing and rainwater goods (new work)	• deep profile, corrugated, galvanised or 'colorbond' metal sheet (light or mid-grey tones) • galvanised or 'colorbond' (light or mid-grey) 'ogee', or 'half round' profile gutters • round galvanised or 'colorbond' (mid grey) metal downpipes. • scribed roof capping	• metal sheeting profiles other than traditional corrugated • zincalume finish • dark grey or black finish • square profile PVC, or metal, gutters & downpipes. • quad or 'd' gutters • roof tiles

Principles	Acceptable Standard	
b. Exterior walls (new work)	• face stone, brick or rendered masonry • deep profile, corrugated, galvanised or 'colorbond' metal sheet (light or mid-grey tones) • natural colour (white or stone colour) render; • painted weatherboard cladding – horizontal (150mm x19mm)	• square profile steel sheeting • zincalume finish • dark grey or black finish • concrete blocks • fibre cement sheeting • cement render • stone veneer facing • painting of previously unpainted masonry • unpainted/ exposed timber • vertical weatherboard
c. Proposed external doors and windows in view of the street	• timber framed doors to match building style • timber framed windows, vertically proportioned (sash or casement) • timber framed shopfront windows • timber shutters	• sliding doors/windows • aluminium-framed doors and windows. • horizontally proportioned and/ or large windows. • roller window security shutters
d. Exterior painting Note: the painting of unpainted external surfaces of existing buildings is not supported. Painting over existing painted signage of heritage value is not supported. Painting murals or advertisements on already painted external surfaces is considered signage see section 3.5.3.	• exterior painting using compatible paint colour schemes	Painting of unpainted external surfaces to existing buildings is not supported.
e. Balconies/ Verandahs	• posts of concrete, steel or timber of style to complement existing building and streetscape character • timber or iron brackets where evidence of existing original • flagstone, timber board, or plain concrete floors	
f. Fencing	• refer **3.5.2 Fences and Gates**	
g. Ancillary development	• Refer **3.5 Ancillary development**	

3.5. Ancillary development

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO3.1-3.4) – garages, carports, sheds, verandahs, solar panels, signage, fences

Ancillary development in Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre includes: carports, garages and sheds; fences and gates; signage; solar panels, rainwater tanks and other ancillary services. While such development is of a secondary nature, it may still have an adverse impact on the heritage value of the State Heritage Area if not managed appropriately.

Principles	Acceptable Standard	
3.5.1. Outbuildings (carports, garages and sheds) Existing outbuildings in Mount Gambier Thugi/ Cave Garden and Civic Centre are typically smaller, freestanding structures. Development **is to have regard to** the following:		
a. **Outbuildings: carports, garages & sheds**	Outbuildings are freestanding and sited behind existing buildings. Outbuildings are rectilinear in floor plan and constructed of stone, stone-coloured render, weatherboard or corrugated pre-finished colour/ galvanised steel sheeting. Roofs to be steeply pitched (25-30 degrees), gabled or hipped. Small-scale skillion roofs are acceptable where not in view from the street. Double car-width roll-up doors are acceptable only where not visible from the public realm. Freestanding or attached pergolas are sited to the rear of the building, or in a location to not visually dominate views of the Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area streetscape.	
b. **Pergolas and garden structures**		
3.5.2. Fences and gates Fencing contributes to the heritage character of the cave garden and sinkhole, within the Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre.	New fencing to reflect palette of materials evidenced in historic photographs, without compromising the heritage character of Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre.	
a. **Fences and gates (replacement or new)**	**Location**	**Accepted**
Open fencing styles, including timber pickets andmasonary, hooped steel post & rail.		masonary walls and open timber or metal fencing is acceptable. Views of and from features of heritage value should not be obscured. The visual character of the Thugi/ Cave Garden reserve is to remain open.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.5.3. Signage Signage to be designed and sited to avoid negatively impacting on views, vistas and visual amenity of the place.	
a. **Advertising signage**	Signage to not conceal or obstruct historic detailing or natural features, project beyond the building silhouette or skyline, or otherwise form the dominant visual element of a place or streetscape. Signage is restricted to traditional signage panel locations below roof level, such as parapet walls above verandahs, verandah fascias and infill end panels, hung from below verandah fascias painted on shop windows, modest free standing signage. Permanent LED screen type signs are not acceptable. Sign design to be based on external paint colours appropriate to the era of existing building and to not be dominant in the streetscape or setting.. Corporate colour signage is not acceptable.
3.5.4. Skylights	New or replacement skylights are to be low profile and located out of view of the public realm.
3.5.5. Solar Panels	Solar panels are to be: • located on roof planes not visible from the public realm and sited below the ridge • located on sheds, carports, garages, rear verandahs provided they are not visible from the public realm • If no other mounting location is possible, roof mounted solar panels on the side of a roof must be: • located at least 4 metres behind the front of the roof (but not on a corner site) • located as far as practical on the lower part of the roof, • arranged in a symmetrical group (not staggered) with a margin of visible roof edge around the group • black framed solar panels • sundry cabling, conduits, batteries and inverters should not visible from the public realm
3.5.6. Rainwater Tanks	Rainwater tanks are to be located underground or to the rear of properties to avoid adverse visual impact on the public realm.
3.5.7. Plant and ancillary equipment	Hot water units, water pumps and effluent systems are located to the rear of properties or underground. Air conditioners are not located on street façades and external air handling units are screened from view of the public realm. Roof-mounted units are located on rear roof planes and coloured to match roof sheeting Antennae and satellite equipment to be located out of view of the public realm.

3.6. Land division

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO4.1)

Land division refers to boundary adjustments and sub-division of allotments within the State Heritage Area.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.6.1. Land division characteristics The Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is of value as an illustration of the centre of the survey and establishment of the city of Mount Gambier. Development **is to have regard to** the following:	
a. **Land division** The established pattern of allotment size and orientation is to be maintained.	Any division of land or adjustment of boundaries should reinstate or maintain the 1854 initial land division layout and road configuration of the Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre area. Subdivision and amalgamation of land is inappropriate unless it supports the conservation of historic sites and structures. Subdivision of existing allotments to create additional allotments is not acceptable unless it can be established that the boundary alignment previously existed. Boundary adjustments to remedy boundary anomalies are acceptable where they are of a minor nature. Further subdivision of the Thugi/Cave Garden reserve area is not accepted.

3.7. Landscape context and streetscape amenity

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO5.1)

The landscape character of Mount Gambier Thugi/Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area is defined by the garden, sinkhole, civic buildings/ features and surrounding commercial buildings.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.7.1. Landscape character The Thugi/Cave Garden reserve comprises a naturally formed sinkhole with formal planting, surrounded by a civic garden established in the late 19th century and formalised 1900-1960s. The garden and sinkhole incorporate a range of garden features and plantings in different styles, including formal beds and plantings; steps, paths, rock walls/edging, timber/ woven wire fencing and community memorials. Further features of note include the arbour, fountain, rosary and a wishing well. A series of two storey civic and commercial buildings dating from the late 19th to early 20th century line the 1854 surveyed streets of the city and formally define the extent of the civic garden space. Development **is to have regard to** the following:	Actions involving the replacement or upgrade of public realm kerbing, footpaths, street trees, street furniture, lighting, and works on roads, including closed roads and reserves by a local council are typically not defined as development in the *PDI Act 2016*. These actions are not exempt from the definition of development in a State Heritage Area where works materially affect the heritage values and are not listed as exempt in Schedule 5 of the *PDI Regulations 2017*. As such works vary in scope, early discussion between Heritage South Australia and City of Mount Gambier is required. Where they are likely to have a significant or large-scale impact on heritage values, development approval and compatible urban design solutions are required.
a. **Visual Setting**	A landscaped civic garden, visually enclosed by a perimeter of late 19th and early 20th century civic and commercial buildings is maintained. An open space, landscaped garden is maintained, for public recreation, period garden qualities and commemoration. Buildings and other structures are open pavilions in design, to allow landscape appreciation.
b. **Views and Vistas**	Views and Vistas are contained within the precinct, defined by the built form edge of the civic space. The visual legibility of the rectilinear grid of Commercial Street East, Watson Avenue and Bay Road is maintained, reflecting the initial 1854 subdivision grid of the City. Views of the Gardiner Fountain as a landmark feature of the civic precinct are maintained. Sinkhole views around the perimeter are maintained.
c. **Services and infrastructure**	Services, pathways, visitor facilities and infrastructure (roads & carparks) are designed/ upgraded, but retaining 1900-1960s landscape features - garden edges, memorials, arbour. Open landscape is maintained. Sinkhole services allow interpretation of sink hole qualities without visual dominance. Streetscape services are underground.
d. **Vegetation**	Landscaping is maintained and enhanced, reflecting planting plans/ ideals of 1900-1964 period. Formal, exotic plantings are appropriate.

3.8. Demolition

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO6.1)

Demolition of features of identified heritage value, including buildings, structures, and public realm elements is not accepted.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.8.1. Demolition The form, scale and architectural features of existing identified buildings, structures and landscape features of the 1854-1960s era within the Mount Gambier Thugi/ Cave Garden and Civic Centre State Heritage Area are of heritage value. Development is **to have regard to** the following:	
a. **Demolition of buildings / structures**	Demolition of buildings or garden structures erected before the 1960s is not supported, unless: • the portion of any building or other feature is determined to not contribute to the heritage value of the State Heritage Area, or • the structural condition of the building represents an unacceptable risk to public or private safety and results from actions and unforeseen events beyond the control of the owner and is irredeemably beyond repair. Replacement buildings must have due regard to the *Principles and Acceptable Standards* of **3.3 New Buildings.**
b. **Demolition of structures, outbuildings and building additions**	Demolition of structures, sheds and other ancillary buildings within the State Heritage Area erected before the 1960s is not supported, unless removal does not adversely impact on the heritage values of the State Heritage Area. Any replacement buildings/structures must have due regard to the *Principles and Acceptable Standards* of **3.4 Alterations and additions** and **3.5 Ancillary development.**
c. **Demolition of public realm infrastructure**	Demolition and replacement of public realm infrastructure, including kerbing, stone walls, paths, services etc. is not accepted if heritage values are compromised.

3.9. Conservation works

(refer: State Heritage Area Overlay - PO7.1)

Conservation work to repair dilapidated building fabric is considered development where the works may materially affect the heritage values of the State Heritage Area. Getting the right advice is important, to save time, cost and to ensure the ongoing and appropriate management of buildings and sites.

Principles	Acceptable Standard
3.9.1. Conservation approach Existing building fabric of surrounding buildings, along with the landscaped garden, sink hole and garden features and infrastructure is of heritage value and is to be conserved and restored. Correct repair methods and maintenance ensure the longevity of buildings within the Area. The aim is to only repair as much as needed, so that building fabric which relates to the era 1850s-1960s is retained where possible, illustrating the features of heritage value. Conservation practices must avoid embellishing architectural details and adding features not common to the style and era of the building. The following conservation works may be deemed 'development':	
• roof, guttering and verandah repairs • chimney repairs – stabilisation, repointing • structural stabilisation • external wall repairs and repointing/ rendering • external timber repair • rising / falling damp repair • removal of paint finishes from external masonry surfaces and original timber/metal surfaces • repairs to historic fences • repair/stabilisation of fountain, arbour, well • repair of 1900-1960s era garden infrastructure- paths, decks, stairs, garden edging, plantings of significance.	Seek the advice of a Heritage SA heritage officer before undertaking conservation repairs to dilapidated building fabric. Works that are considered to materially affect the heritage values of the State Heritage Area require development approval. The Relevant Authority (City of Mount Gambier) in conjunction with Heritage SA, can provide advice confirming if works are likely to materially affect the heritage values of the State Heritage Area.

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Department for Environment and Water

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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