

According to Francine Gilfedder, large collections of mature exotic trees, mostly planted in the nineteenth century, are very rare in Victoria. There are relatively few in large private gardens (the collection of trees, especially conifers, at Alton, Mt Macedon, is recognised as very rare) and even fewer in public reserves outside of botanic gardens. There are a number of National Trust properties with large gardens but they do not contain such an extensive range of exotic trees. Victoria has a number of provincial botanic gardens in addition to the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens but these are essentially collections of plants and designed features and built elements, rather than collections of mature exotic trees. The collection of trees at Daylesford (botanic gardens and water reserve) is possibly the only similar one but it is less extensive. There are no arboreta of mixed exotic trees that can be compared with the collection of trees at Kew Cottages.

In terms of the landscape design, much has been lost with the physical separation of ownership of the Cottages from Willsmere and the unsympathetic placement of buildings, car parks et al, in the development of the Cottages. However many striking landscape features remain eg. extensive use of avenues of oaks, etc.; use of contrasting foliage eg. groups of different species of Araucarias.

It would seem that the only comparable exotic landscape in Victoria is that at Willsmere, of which the Kew Cottages landscape is derived. This is of State significance but you would need to check with the NTA and Heritage Victoria. The historic landscape and collection of trees at Kew Cottages are, according to Francine Gilfedder, potentially of State significance.

5.2.1.4 Component sites

Appendix 4 provides an assessment of significance for the site as a whole against the Heritage Victoria Criteria. This can at this stage only be regarded as a preliminary assessment as further historical research, architectural and horticultural assessment is required to refine the assessment. The individual components of the site contribute to its overall significance to a greater or lesser extent. Those components which can be identified as of primary or contributory importance have been identified below with a preliminary assessment of their individual significance.