

## Section 5.0

# ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

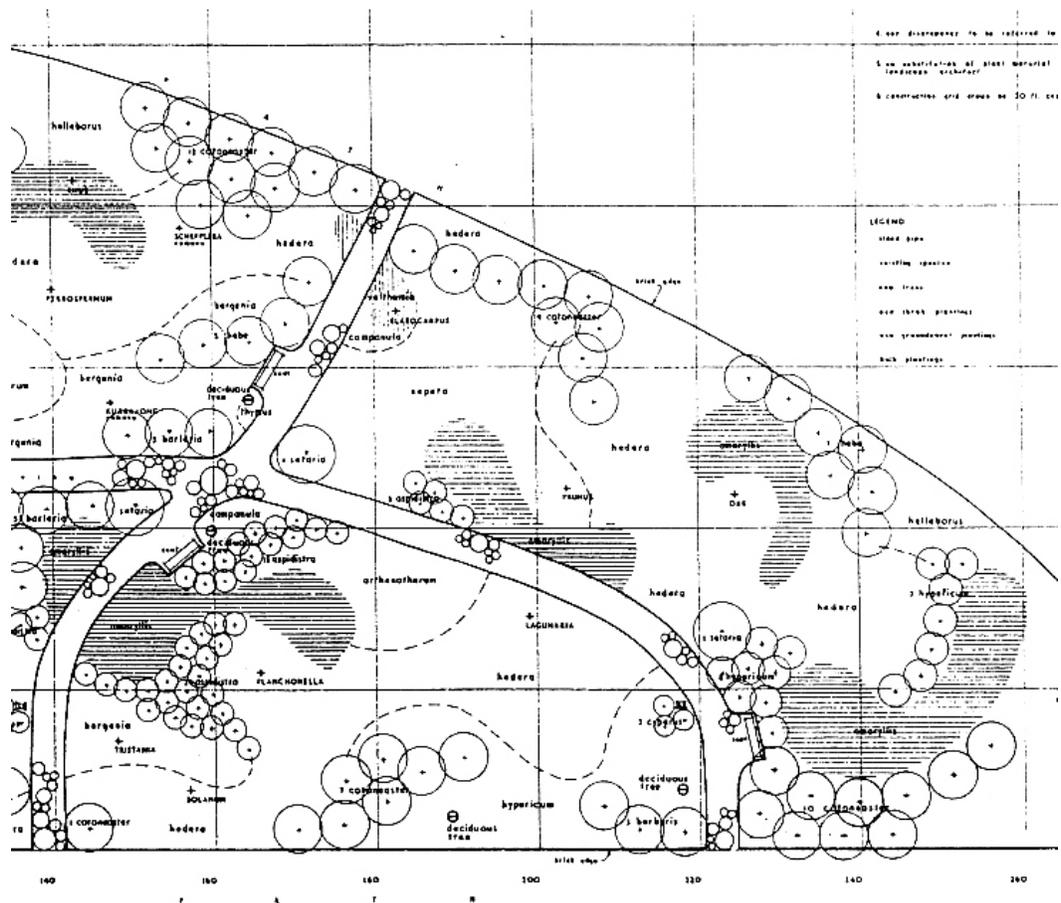


Figure 5.1 Extract of Western Wild Garden landscape design prepared by landscape architect Allan Correy in 1964.

## 5.1 KAURNA / ABORIGINAL VALUES

In terms of Kaurna and Aboriginal cultural significance to the place, anthropologist Norman Tindale first described the Kaurna tribe as occupying the Adelaide plains and consisting of several groups of people or 'hoades' (Tindale 1974, p.213; Tindale 1987, pp.5-13), thereby geographically locating the Kaurna country and epithet 'Kaurna'.

William Wyatt first used the term Kaurna when describing the tribal associations of 'Encounter Bay Bob' (Wyatt 1879, p.24), but its origins may lie in 'Bob's association with the Kouandilla district of the Adelaide tribe' (Wyatt 1879, p.23). Cowandilla is a contemporary derived nomenclature applied to a tract of the northern Adelaide plains. There appears to have been several districts within the larger 'Adelaide tribe' territory which spread from the Gawler River in the north to the Willunga basin in the south flanked by the Mount Lofty escarpment to the east (Hemming 1990, p.126-142). When interviewed in 1927 Ivaritji claimed that she belonged to the '*Dundagunya* tribe' which is probably a corruption of the contemporary name *Tandanya* that Tindale ascribed as occupying the area encompassed by the City of Adelaide (Gara 1990, p.64; Tindale 1987, p.10). The term *Tandanya* refers to a site south of Adelaide associated with the Red Kangaroo Dreaming, and Tindale claims the Tandanya clan of 'Kaurna' was named after the Red Kangaroo and that their main totem was the emu (Hemming 1990, p.137). The general acceptance of the term Kaurna occurs in the early 1970s following the acceptance of this term in Tindale's *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (1974).

Since earliest post-contact settlement, colonial administrators have sought to shift indigenous people away from the Adelaide Parklands as part of the dispossession process (Hemming 1998, p.18). Notwithstanding these attempts the Adelaide Parklands continued to be used for activities associated with traditional life for the Kaurna (Hemming 1998, p.20). As the vegetation removal process occurred on the Adelaide plains, the Kaurna and other indigenous peoples were forced to live in locations where available shelter, fire wood and materials for camping and hunting remained. Areas around and within the present Zoo, Botanic Garden and Botanic Park locations were occupied for the site of camps, 'corroborees' (*Palli* or *Kuri*), ceremonies, burials and other activities and culturally viewed as significant (Hemming 1998, p.21), although many of these activities reputedly happened in these localities prior to European settlement (Hemming 1998, p.23). Contemporary adaptations of 'corroborees' were performed for the public on the old Exhibition Grounds site on Frome Road and during these visits the performers camped in the Botanic Park (Doreen Kartinyeri, Neva Wilson and Lindsay Wilson pers. comm. 1998; Hemming 1998, pp.23, 50; SSLM B24437). Edward Snell recorded on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1850, the regularity of corroborees near the Hackney Road Bridge (then called the South Australia Company's Bridge): 'there was a display of fireworks at the government house in the evening and the blacks had a corrobory at the Companies mill' (Griffiths 1988, p.112).

Botanic Park was according an important camping venue for Aboriginal and Kaurna peoples from the late 1840s to the late nineteenth century (Gara 1990, p.9) especially as the area retained much of its original vegetation. The 1865 Townsend Duryea panorama photographs confirm this vegetation cover, and von Guérard sketches of camp sites and Aboriginals in the Botanic Park in 1855 support this conclusion. Von Guérard recorded the landscape as covered in a thick upper-storey of eucalypts and numerous encampments of a range of different Aboriginal peoples. The Headmaster at St Peters College, in adjacent College Park, also recorded this activity in 1855: 'in May the Aborigines camped in the Parklands ... and held corroborees which were clearly visible and audible from the upper front windows of the school' (Carroll and Tregenza 1986, pp.52-53). Lucy Hines, in the 1850s, also observed that 'the zoo was at the back of the gardens and we walked out from the back gates into virgin scrub and timber, a favourite camping ground for the Blacks' (*Register*, 15 December 1926).

The River Torrens (*Karra Wirra Parri* or *Tanda:njapari*) was an essential economic and sustenance conduit and place for the Red Kangaroo Dreaming. It is believed that *Tarnda Kanya* – the 'red kangaroo rock' – was located on the present site of the Adelaide Festival Theatre (Amery 1997, p.4). An early resident of Adelaide, Thomas Day, recollected Kaurna residency along the River Torrens:

*Women and children spent most of their time at the Torrens river – children bathing and practicing with spear and small waddy – Women crab[b]ing and going in the river with a net bag and picking up cockles. I have seen them go down – And I thought they would never rise again. They got many cockles And rose again on the other side after being under water A long time. The river torrens was A chain of water holes very deep When not in flood. It was full of timber Very dangerous to go amongst. Their time was also employed making mats, nets an rope clothes lines ... They would then sell or exchange for food from the settlers ... [sic].* (Day, 'Memories of the Extinct Tribe of Cowandilla, 1902', probably relating to the period prior to 1847, in Hemming 1998, p.43).

*Ivaritji* ('Princess Amelia' Savage/Taylor) (c.1840s–1929), daughter of *Parnatarya* 'King Rodney' (*Ityamaiipinna*) and *Tankaira*, was almost certainly the last person of full Kurna ancestry. Rodney was one of the leading Kurna men of the Adelaide plains. *Ivaritji*, as recorded by Daisy Bates in 1919, stated that her father's principal waterhole was the Main Lake in the Botanic Garden that she called *Kainka wira* (Gara 1990, p.82; Hemming 1998, p.51). John McConnell Black, in interviews with *Ivanitji*, obtained a vocabulary of about 70 Kurna words, and listed *Kainka wira* as meaning 'eucalypt forest' pertaining to the North Adelaide area (Gara 1990, p.82; Black 1920, p.81; Hemming 1998, pp.19, 29).

A dead, hollow River Red Gum in the Botanic Garden was historically used as a shelter by Kurna people (Lewis O'Brien pers comm. 2003; Doreen Kartinyeri pers comm. 1998).

W.A. Cawthorne records the Dreaming story association of a 'She Oak' *Allocasuarina* sp. specimen in the Parklands near the present Zoo location. 'It was devoutly believed that a certain man was transformed into a sheoak tree, the one that stood a little way above the old Frome Bridge. In fact, every island, cape and point are transformations of one kind or another' (Cawthorne, *The Advertiser*, 16 April 1864).

Human remains were found during the construction of the new deer park in the Zoo in 1914 (*The Advertiser*, 7 August 1914: 14), and human remains were also uncovered in the Old Botanic Garden on the site of the current zoo or northern edge of Botanic Park in 1856. Barbara Best recounts that 'On Sunday morning, Mr George Francis of the Botanical Gardens, was surprised by his children bringing into the house a skull and one of the arm bones of a human being. On making enquiries, he ascertained that they were found on the south bank, opposite the Old Garden, about three feet [0.9 m] beneath the surface ... exposed ... by falling in ... (off) the bank for the river' (Best 1986, p.66; Hemming 1998, p.51).

Key points from this analysis are that:

- The landscape of the Botanic Garden and Botanic Park was previously the country of the Kurna community, and much of this area has associations to their Red Kangaroo Dreaming;
- Botanic Park may have been a favoured Kurna camping ground before European contact, with the River Torrens waters and banks providing a rich food source;
- *Ivaritji* claims that the Main Lake in the Botanic Garden was called *Kainka wira* and has formal associations with her father and his Kurna tribe;
- Kurna, and subsequently an amalgam of South Australian tribes, camped on the Botanic Park precinct regularly, and have occupancy associations to the place and its now elderly living or senescent River Red Gums;
- The Western Entrance precinct and Botanic Park was the site of numerous 'corroberries' prior to and subsequent to European settlement of the Adelaide plains; and
- It is probable that any excavation activities in the Botanic Park may uncover Kurna or Aboriginal remains.

## 5.2 AESTHETIC VALUES

Adelaide Botanic Garden is a place with strong aesthetic values by virtue of its progressive development and design paralleled by growth and maturation of vegetation. It is especially for:

- Development of its initial design from 1855-65;
- Extension and embellishment from 1865-91; and,
- Maturation of vegetation for display, accent and experience.

Such qualities imbue an atmosphere of a mature nineteenth century botanic garden, including the use of designed vistas, Gardenesque character settings, and the strong incorporation of Australian vegetation into the Garden's composition.

In particular, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of exceptional aesthetic significance for:

- The unique translation of early to mid-nineteenth century British and European influences in the Francis plan, including formality, symmetry, Gardenesque stylistic principals, and the Main Walk (including its extant and planned vistas);
- The engagement of Schomburgk's 1874 plan that reinforced, strengthened and expanded designed vistas in the Garden and Park having regard to mid-nineteenth century European design concepts;
- The unique spatial configuration of the Botanic Park cross-axis design in Schomburgk's 1874 plan for events and aesthetic presence;
- The Gardenesque qualities within the Garden in the apparent conscious display of specimen trees and the jewel-box-like placement of buildings and statuary;
- The lake system, one of the earliest ornamental lake systems created in Australia, that engenders an 'oasis' quality; and,
- The unique retention and incorporation of mature indigenous Australian tree specimens throughout the Garden, and the significant historical commitment to the display of Australian flora as an integral part of the aesthetic of the Garden.

Additionally, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of high cultural significance for:

- Its composition within Colonel William Light's attributed Adelaide town plan and as a valued component of the larger Adelaide Parklands and the North Terrace cultural precinct;
- The use of fountains as an aesthetic embellishment to the Garden;
- The role and presence of the Main Walk, Araucaria Avenue, and the Moreton Bay Fig Walk as significant designed visual axes;
- The extant nineteenth-century public domain character of Botanic Park, within its 'carriage drives' and its designed spaces that have not been severely compromised by twentieth century landscape renovations;
- The exceptional collections of visually distinct cacti and succulents, cycads, and Madagascan plant specimens, together with highly aesthetic collections of Australian moist forest trees, bromeliads, conifers, economic plants, Mallee/arid species and palms that are positioned throughout the Garden individually or in masses that reinforce the Gardenesque character;
- The engagement of Modernist and twentieth-century Romantic design principles in discrete areas in the Garden that do not distract from its wider historical and Gardenesque character;
- The significant jewel-box-like structures and extant statuary within the Garden that accent plant display, heighten the cultural aesthetic of plants, and are seemingly integrated within the larger landscape.

## 5.3 HISTORIC VALUES

Adelaide Botanic Garden is a place with strong historic values by virtue of its progressive development and design, and its engagement with architecture and statuary. It is especially for:

- It's landscape design character and form;
- It's collection of period and contemporary buildings, structures, statuary, gates, fountains, etc., that complement and reinforce the landscape design; and,
- It's display of a significant living collection historically that has been drawn from exploration, propagation and exchange around the world.

Such qualities result in a significant historical composition to the Garden, and recognises the prominent historical role its directors and Board have played in creating a venue and embellishing it with period iconographic features.

In particular, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of exceptional aesthetic significance for:

- The historical landscape design extant evidence that points to the early design development by Francis in his plan, and the subsequent developments foreshadowed by Schomburgk in his 1874 master plan;
- The cohesiveness of the overall integration in a Gardenesque landscape design style and qualities of the Garden irrespective of tenure of director and Board;
- The design integration of Botanic Park with the Garden in spatial forms and plantings;
- The significant collection of period and contemporary buildings, structures, fountains, statuary, creek formation, and the tradition of ornamentation in the Garden; and,
- The ornamental lake system, one of the earliest examples extant in Australia today, that draws consideration to natural drainage lines but has crafted a series of aesthetic spaces within the Garden.

Additionally, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of high aesthetic significance for:

- It's position and spatial relationship to Light's attributed Adelaide town plan;
- It's position and spatial composition within the larger Adelaide Parklands;
- The accomplished implementation of Modernist and twentieth-century Romantic design principles into the Western Wild and Mallee gardens;
- Structures in the Garden that have enabled gardening under glass, a prominent feature of the Garden's nineteenth century development; and,
- The tradition and use of fountains in the Garden, coupled with the extant examples today.

## 5.4 SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

Adelaide Botanic Garden is a place with strong social and spiritual values by virtue of its spatial location with the Adelaide Parklands and its historical engagement with the Adelaide plains and the South Australian community. It is especially for:

- It's role as a long-standing venue for Adelaideans and South Australians to enjoin in individual and group recreational activities and events;
- It's spiritual role as a landscape to partake of its character, strength, mystery, colour, smell, that enriches personal memories and associations;
- It's presence and contributory role within the symbolism of the Adelaide Parklands;
- It's role as a long-term venue for community engagement, recreation, and education about its living collections;
- It's spiritual role as a venue for Kaurna and Aboriginal associations, meanings, knowledge, and activities that recognises their occupancy of this landscape.

Such qualities result in an important social venue containing past and contemporary cultural meanings and values directly associated with the celebration of culture, and its association with spirit, place and the future.

In particular, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of exceptional social and spiritual significance for:

- The meanings and associations it holds for the Kaurna and Aboriginal communities in both the Garden and Park;
- The social meanings and associations it holds for Adelaide residents as a long-standing venue for passive recreation directly associated with an ornamental park-like setting.

Additionally, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of high social and spiritual significance for:

- For the Park as a historical venue for political, social, and cultural gatherings for both Kaurna and European alike, to discuss and debate issues, ideals, rhetoric and doctrine; and,
- It's social relationship to and role within the Adelaide Parklands;
- It's cultural relationship to and position as an integral part of the North Terrace cultural precinct, allied to the overall historical development of the social culture of the state.

## 5.5 SCIENTIFIC VALUES

Adelaide Botanic Garden is a place with strong scientific values by virtue of its living collections, and its long-standing pursuit to engage in and display its research and inquiry. It is especially for:

- It's exceptional living collections of cacti and succulents, cycads and Madagascan species, and it's high valued living collections of Australian moist forest flora, bromeliads, conifers, economic plants, Mallee/arid species, and palms;
- It's continual engagements in exploration, propagation, and display of plants and their qualities, reinforced by its extensive significant herbaria and library collections.

Such qualities result in a significant place that hosts a diverse and wide-reaching collection of scientific values, specimens, documents, and information that inform, engage inquiry, and have historically hosted a spirited engagement with research and inquiry.

In particular, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of exceptional scientific significance for:

- The retention and incorporation of mature indigenous Australian species within the Garden and the Park, and the development of an extensive Australian flora collection under Francis and Schomburgk that has been supported and enhanced by successive directors and Boards;
- Structures in the Garden that have enabled gardening under glass, a prominent feature of the Garden's nineteenth century development;
- The Araucaria Avenue as a distinctive feature and collection of *Araucaria columnaris* and *Araucaria heterophylla* representing one of the oldest surviving avenue plantings of this genus in Australia;
- The Australian forest as one of the oldest continuously themed Australian-plant gardens internationally; and,
- The exceptional collections of cacti and succulents, cycads and Madagascan plants in the Garden.

Additionally, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of high scientific significance for:

- The high use of Australian flora in the Garden and Park throughout representing a commitment, a tradition, and a concern to embrace and understand the Australian landscape's vegetation communities;
- The important collection extant in the Mallee Garden as a representative of an Australian plant community;
- Species that represent Schomburgk's engagement with Australian trees;
- Schomburgk's Australian arboretum collection and precinct; and,
- The highly valued collections of Australian moist forest plants, bromeliads, conifers, economic plants, Mallee/arid plants, and palms in the Garden.

## 5.6 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Adelaide Botanic Garden is a place of diverse and steadily evolving cultural significance, especially for:

- Development of its initial design from 1855–65;
- Extension and embellishment from 1865–91; and
- Maintenance and complementary development under subsequent directors, particularly where such developments have evolved within the strong physical and conceptual framework of the Garden.

Such qualities are imbued in the fabric of the place itself as well as the activities that it generates.

In particular, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of exceptional cultural significance for:

- Retention of mature specimens of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and for the significant commitment to the propagation and planting of Australian flora since the inception of the Garden with the dedication of specific garden areas for the exclusive growth of Australian plants, initially demonstrated by Francis (in his planting of four circular beds), and continued by Schomburgk (with the planting of the extant Australian Forest) and Lothian (with the establishment of the Mallee Garden).
- The Francis plan, with its unique translation of early to mid-nineteenth-century British and European influences, particularly the rococo and Gardenesque styles, to an Australian context, remnants of which are the Main Walk (including its planned vistas, symmetrical plantings, statuary, and location of the Owen Fountain); the Francis Lawn; the tradition of a Gardenesque character; and the concept for, and initial formation of, a system of lakes.
- Schomburgk's 1874 master plan, for its reinforcement of designed vistas and for the incorporation of mid-nineteenth-century European design concepts. These were manifest in the layout of Botanic Park and the creation of discrete compartments within the Garden devoted to differing horticultural, botanical and scientific concerns. Schomburgk's design contribution is principally demonstrated in the spatial arrangement of the Garden to the north of Main Lake, including Fig Tree Avenue, individual compartment gardens (including the former Class Ground, Experimental Garden, and Rose Garden); the Australian Arboretum, the Palm Grove, the Palm House, the Museum, and Araucaria Avenue.
- Retention of Gardenesque qualities, principally apparent in the display of specimen trees and the jewel-box like placement of Schomburgk's individual buildings and embellishments (Palm House, Museum, location of the Victoria House, and statuary).
- The tradition of gardening under glass, a prominent feature of Adelaide Botanic Garden from its earliest years, is of exceptional historic and aesthetic significance in an Australian context. The surviving landmark Palm House has an integral role in providing the High Victorian quality to the Garden and is a rare example of this building type worldwide. Other significant aspects of this tradition survive from the flowering of the Victoria Lily, which gave the Garden a signature focus in the 1860s to the construction of the Bicentennial Conservatory.
- The tradition of ornamentation, an integral component of Adelaide Botanic Garden from its earliest years, enhances the High Victorian qualities of the Garden, making it an exceptional example of a botanic garden in this decorous style.

Additionally, Adelaide Botanic Garden is of high cultural significance for:

- Use of Australian plants generally throughout of the Garden, a tradition maintained by all directors of the Garden, and for the concerted effort placed in an education program promoting native plants for domestic and civic use.
- The accomplished implementation of Modernist and twentieth-century Romantic design principles within the established layout of the Garden, manifest in the Western Wild Garden and Mallee Garden.

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- For the significant role and position the Garden and the Park play in the overall City of Adelaide plan of survey as prepared by Light and the Adelaide Parklands as a symbolic town planning model and as a green belt to the city.
- For the historically instrumental role the Park has played as a venue for political, social, and cultural gatherings for both Kaurana and European alike, to discuss and debate issues, ideals, rhetoric and doctrine, a role that it continues to perform today as a venue for quasi-religious and socio-musical entertainment and critique;
- For the historically instrumental role the Garden has played in directing, advancing and communicating botanical education, experimentation (including economic botany), and botanical research (including the State Herbarium) to the community;
- For continuing to engage in and display ornamental furniture and statuary exemplary of the period in botanical and aesthetic settings.
- For the creation and conservation of a major ornamental lake system within the Garden that distinguishes its design and spatial character from other Australian botanic gardens, and continues to display a keen sense of engagement with water or lack of water as a theme.
- For its continuing high standard of maintenance, appropriate to the central place the Garden holds in South Australia's cultural heritage and reflecting the high public regard for the place.
- For its links with the pre-European phase of South Australian history, recalled through continuing meanings to local Aboriginal peoples, as well as through several surviving eucalypts and general location of water courses and other bodies of water (see below).
- For its integral link with an associated herbarium and library, exemplifying the continuing scientific importance of the institution and represented by many items having close historic links with those prominent in South Australian botany and horticulture.
- As an integral part of the development of Adelaide as a colonial city, especially in concert with kindred cultural and scientific institutions located along North Terrace, formed an important hinge to the city's 'cultural boulevard'.
- For the outstanding beauty of its landscape attributes; such attributes include links with natural features, links with contiguous parkland, combination of natural landforms and constructed features, the structure of landscape forms (including paths, lawns, beds and clumped planting, specimen trees, vistas within the Garden, contribution made by significant works and structures), contrast of colour, foliage size, habit, and seasonal appearance of plants.

## 5.7 RELATED STATEMENTS OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ADELAIDE PARK LANDS

### 5.7.1 Kaurna Cultural Significance

In 1998 the following Statement of Cultural Significance pertaining to the Adelaide Parklands, was prepared and endorsed by numerous Kaurna leaders, as part of the consultation process for the preparation of the [Adelaide] *Park Lands Management Strategy Report: Directions for Adelaide's Park Lands 2000-2037* (1999) by Hassell.

The Kaurna Statement of Cultural Significance was prepared through consultations with members of the Kaurna Community conducted by Steve Hemming and Rhondda Harris. (Hemming 1998, p.ii). It is quoted here since the Adelaide Botanic Garden and Botanic Park are integral parts of the Adelaide Parklands, and Kaurna values are integral to the Adelaide Botanic Garden and Botanic Park.

*Tarndanyungga Kaurna Yerta*

*This is the Red Kangaroo Dreaming place of the Kaurna people. It was an important place for the Kaurna long before the City of Adelaide was established. The Adelaide Park Lands and Squares are part of this place and hold special cultural significance for us—the Kaurna people.*

*The setting-up of the City of Adelaide and its Park Lands deprived our ancestors of the responsibility for maintaining crucial, culturally meaningful places. On the Park Lands the Kaurna have suffered to the present day as a result of this dispossession. Invasion has meant continuing alienation, oppression and harassment for us and other indigenous people. These injustices have been planted out on the Adelaide Park Lands.*

*The Park Lands have many culturally significant places. These places should be preserved from further encroachment.*

*We, as Kaurna people, must walk on these places to maintain our cultural strength.*

### 5.7.2 Post Colonial Cultural Significance

As part of the [Adelaide] *Park Lands Management Strategy Report: Directions for Adelaide's Park Lands 2000-2037* (1999) by Hassell, Donovan & Associates (1998) were commissioned to review the post colonial cultural heritage of the Adelaide Park Lands and prepare a preliminary assessment of this heritage. The statement prepared reads:

*The Adelaide Park Lands are of immense significance. They are an essential component of William Light's plan of the City of Adelaide, which remains a prime example of 19<sup>th</sup> Century town planning ideas and has had a profound influence throughout South Australia and the world. The essence of the plan remains intact and continues to give Adelaide its particular character and identity.*

*The Park Lands include places of great heritage significance because of their identification with major developments associated with the history of the City, and the State, from colonisation to the present.*

*The Park Lands continue to be a place of great cultural value to people and are a defining aspect of Adelaide's special character.*