



Managing an historic garden

Some helpful information

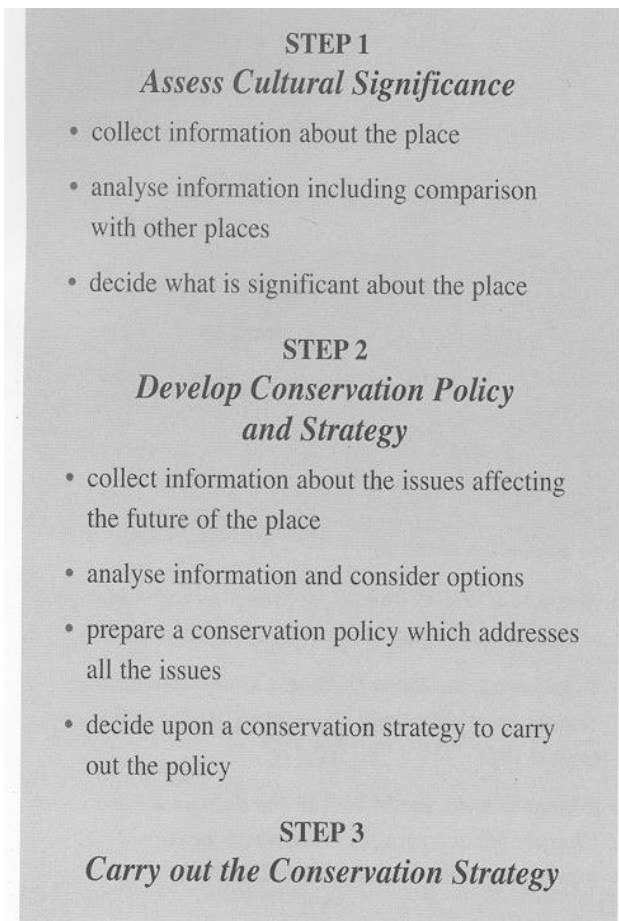
Stuart Read, July 2025



Bon Accord, Waverley, residence of J. E. Liardet, 1871, State library of NSW picture collection

You can't conserve what you don't understand:

- What matters / is significant? / should be kept?
- What can change / doesn't matter / isn't
- Layout to keep / design elements to keep
- ... plants of significance (typical, rare)...
- ... built elements of significance (" / ")
- Character – not wrecking historic 'feel': how?



STEP 1
Assess Cultural Significance

- collect information about the place
- analyse information including comparison with other places
- decide what is significant about the place

STEP 2
Develop Conservation Policy and Strategy

- collect information about the issues affecting the future of the place
- analyse information and consider options
- prepare a conservation policy which addresses all the issues
- decide upon a conservation strategy to carry out the policy

STEP 3
Carry out the Conservation Strategy

Step 1 is explained in the *Guidelines to The Burra Charter: Cultural significance* and Step 2 is explained in *Guidelines to The Burra Charter: Conservation Policy*.

<https://australia.icomos.org/resources/australia-icomos-heritage-toolkit/cultural-landscapes>

General information

- **National Library** images & records: www.trove.nla.gov.au
- **State Library** images & records: e.g. www.sl.nsw.gov.au
- **Your Council** – local heritage study (context), LEP inventory sheet for your garden
- **Caroline Simpson Research Centre & Library**: www.slm.com.au/research/
- **Australian Garden History Society**: www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au
- **National Trust of Australia**: www.nationaltrust.com.au
- **Magazines of the era**: nursery catalogues – see State and National Library catalogues
- **Online/pictorial histories**: these exist for many Sydney LGAs/suburbs and the AGHS Victorian Branch has produced several pictorial histories as well as books on specific gardens https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications-projects/#filter=.iso_66
- **Historical societies**
- **Heritage landscape architects/designers**: see, for example, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects <https://www.aila.org.au/>

NSW resources

- State Heritage inventory
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage/search-heritage-databases/state-heritage-inventory>
- Local Environment Plans (LEP) <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/local-planning-and-zoning>
- Your Local Council planner/heritage adviser/ tree or parks officer (if there is one)
www.COUNCILNAME.nsw.gov.au

Call Council staff/ Heritage NSW

- Ask for a copy of the LEP local heritage listing sheet – understand what and why your place is heritage-listed – does it include the garden – layout / front & back / trees?
- Prepare a heritage impact statement focussed on the heritage values of the place.

Western Australian resources

Information can be sourced from the AGHS WA publication, *A Guide to Conserving and Interpreting Gardens in Western Australia*

inherit WA: <https://inherit.dplh.wa.gov.au>

Landgate: Historical Aerial Imagery - <https://www.landgate.wa.gov.au>

Local Heritage Surveys (LHS): these focus heavily on the built form, with garden features or characteristics are overlooked

Contact previous owners/locals to ask for information about the garden. They may have photographs, which will enable accurate reconstruction of original features.

Victorian resources

Heritage website: www.heritage.vic.gov.au.