

# GARDEN DESIGN USING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS – A HISTORY

Stuart Read

Australian Garden History Society

18<sup>th</sup> c. Europe saw our plants  
as wonders:

Parkinson's *Banksia serrata*,  
Bank's *Florilegium*, 1770

Kew BG & others growing Oz  
plants 1771+; selling 1774+;

1788+ Banks > Lee &  
Kennedy, Hammersmith...

Josephine had her *Banksia*  
*repens* painted in 1810...

1830s Cheltenham,  
Gloucest'sh.BG – all native



# The bush: enemy or source of wonder?

- ▣ Pragmatic nature of earliest gardens: no nurseries
- ▣ Learning from Aboriginals – foods, poisons, fibres;
- ▣ Enjoying the local flora & fauna in season;
- ▣ Pretension and design came later: showing off?



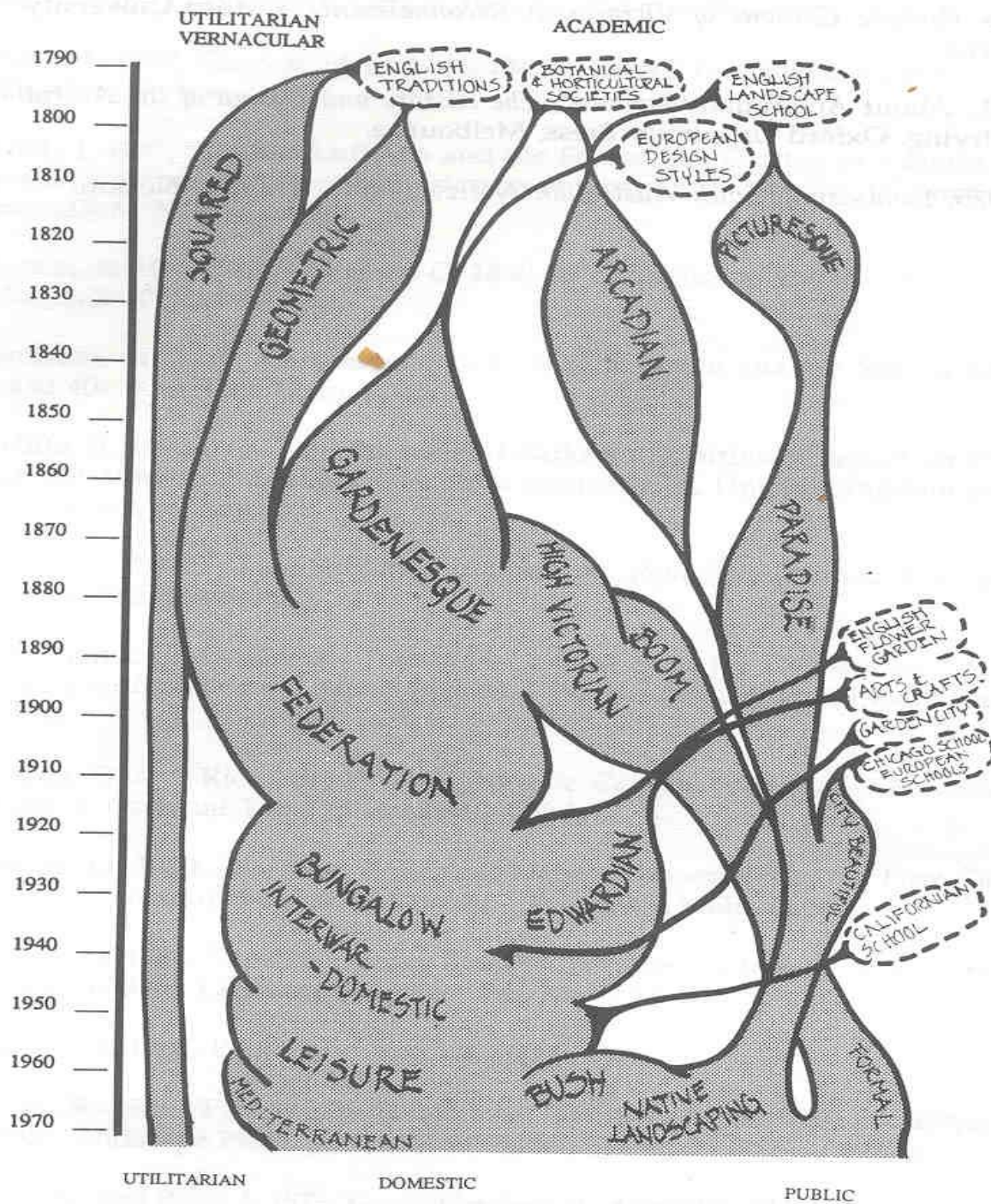


**Remove/retain?: eucalypts for shelter & frame  
in gardens, stock routes, graveyards...**



# Design is? & why it may matter

- ▣ Range of types (landscapes/ parks/ gardens)
- ▣ “ eras - creation / changes (fashion)
- ▣ “ reasons - function / ornament
- ▣ Built elements – walls, steps, paving, ornament
- ▣ Planted elements - trees, shrubs, climbers...
- ▣ Sustainability – shelter, food, fibre, solace, meaning



# Plants as clues: does a historic garden contain:

- ▣ remnant natives / original / early plantings;
- ▣ rare / uncommon plant species;
- ▣ fine examples of particular specimens;
- ▣ typical plants from era made/ region? Or a later era(s)?



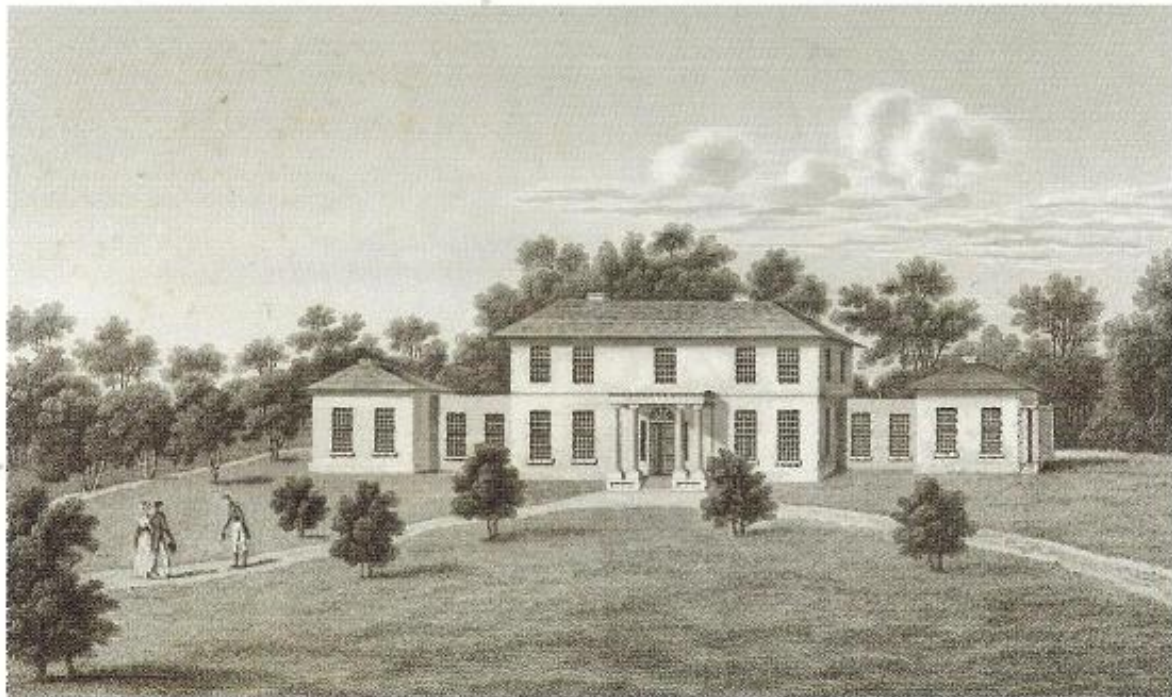
c.1799-1800 Johnston's  
*Annandale* farm drive

– first such use?

Navy's loss was the  
garden's gain!



Keeping up  
with the  
Macquaries...  
the 'landscape  
style' -  
remaking the  
Domains for  
pleasure &  
display

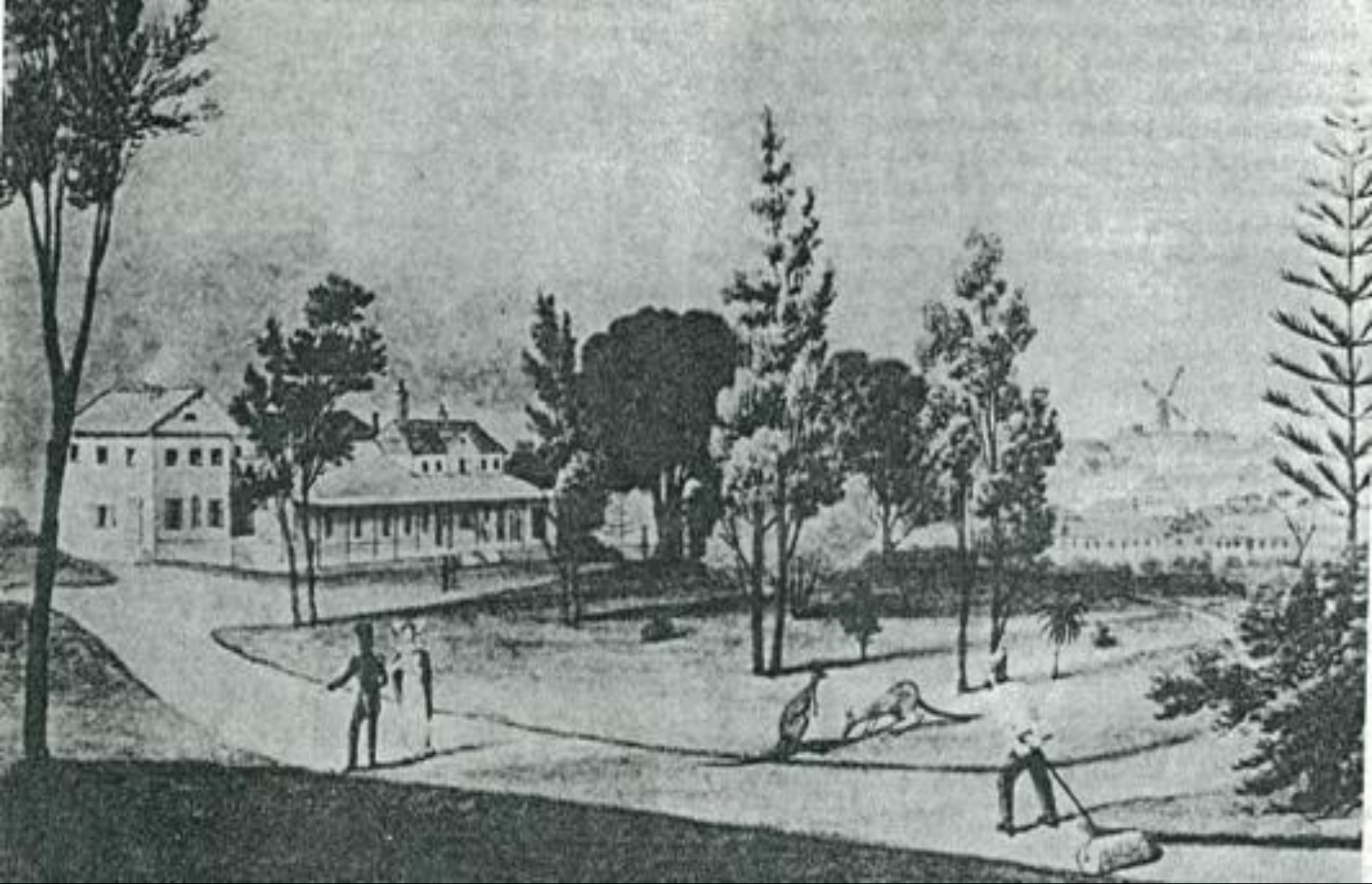






Influence of Governors: pre 1788 gums, 1788-1855 park layout and features, *Parramatta* Domain (from 1855 a public park)

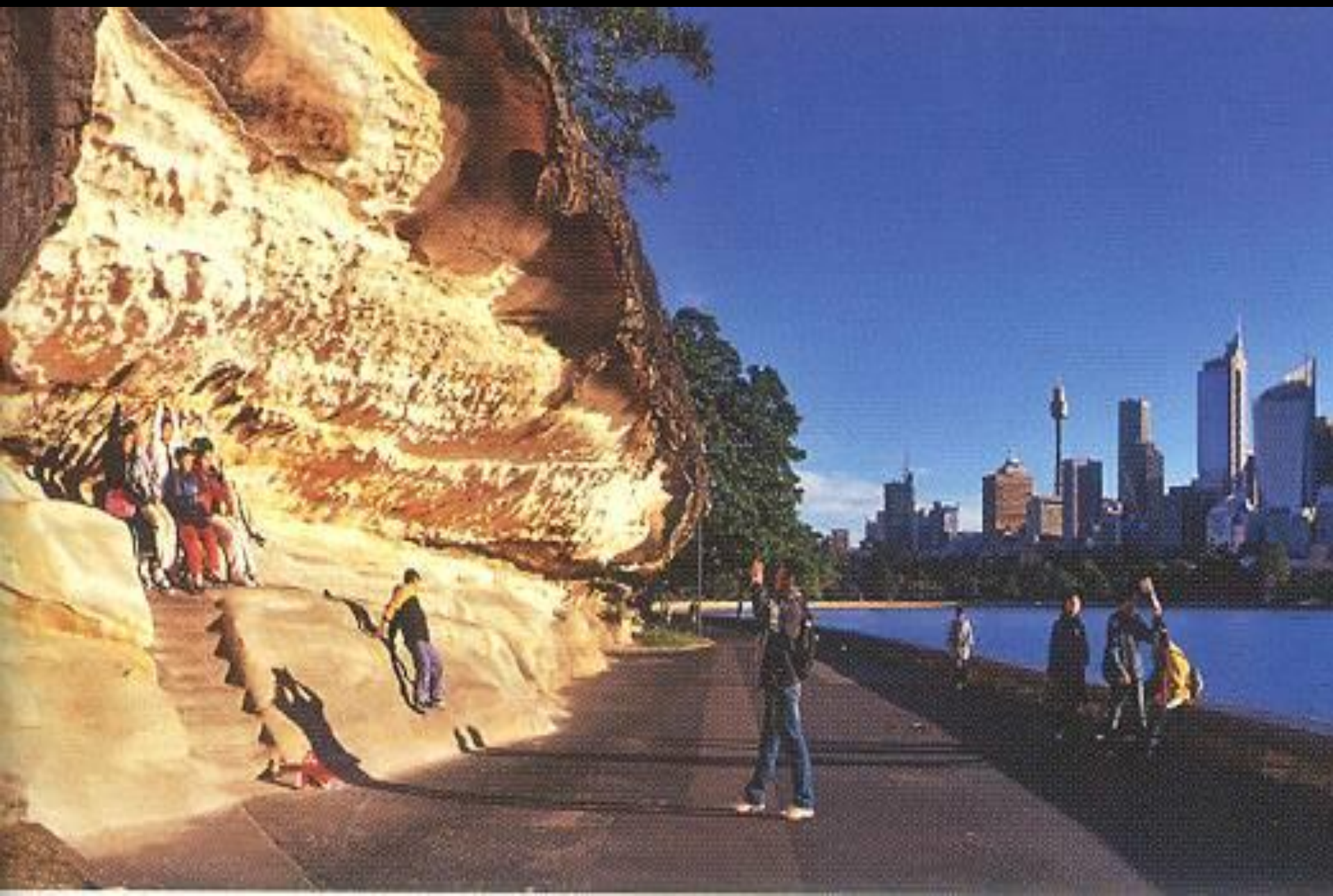




Govt. Hse. Garden, Sydney, 1830 (Earle) – note trophy  
Norfolk Island pine, casuarinas, *Xanthorrhoea* & kangaroos



**'Better' public allowed 'in' 1810s/30s – daytime strolls ...**



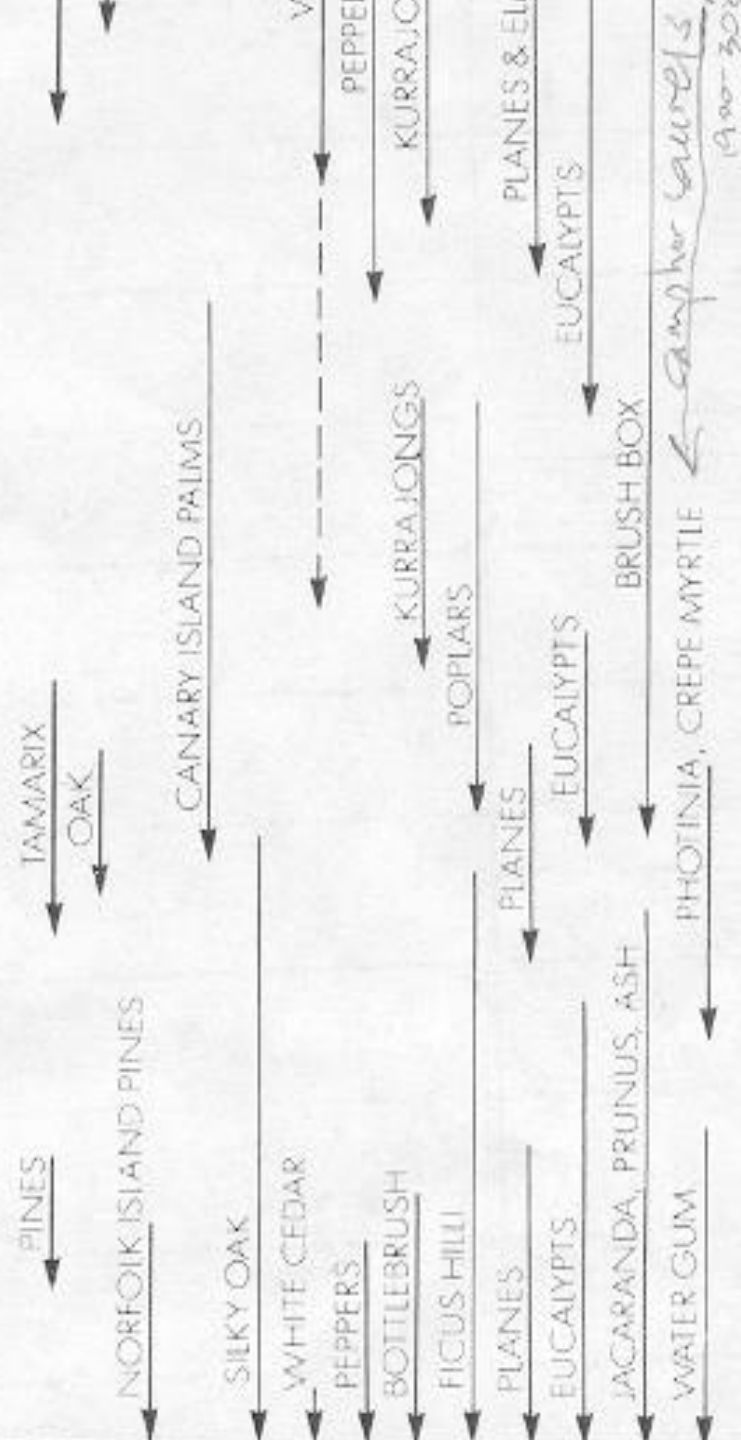
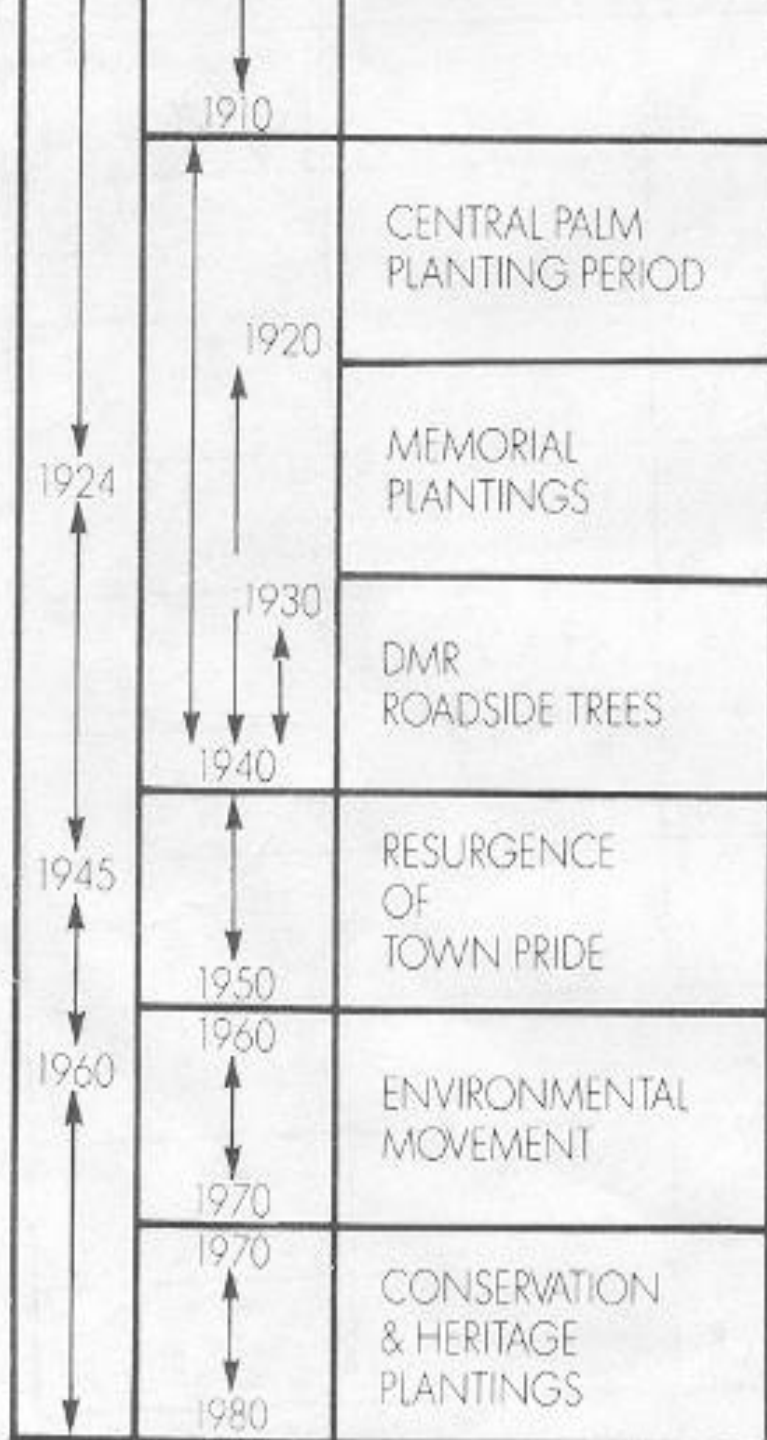
# APPENDIX 3: CHRONOLOGY OF STREET TREE ERAS AND THE EXTENT OF SPECIES USED IN NSW

ERA	PERIOD	AVENUE/STREET TREES	PERIOD OF SPECIES
1786 ↑ 1848 ↑ 1896 ↑ 1910	1788 ↑ 1830	PRIVATE AVENUES	<div>GUMS</div> <div>OLIVE</div> <div>CITRUS</div> <div> <div>PINES</div> <div>OAK</div> <div>NORFOLK ISLAND PINES</div> <div>MORETON BAY FIGS</div> <div>SILKY OAK</div> <div>WHITE CEDAR</div> <div>PEPPERS</div> <div>KURRAJONGS</div> <div>POPLARS</div> <div>NIES &amp; ELMS</div> </div>
	1830 ↑ 1850	Trees outside important buildings PUBLIC AVENUES Private Avenues	
	1850 ↑ 1870	SHADE TREES IN TOWNS Stock reserves jetties, inns, markets	
	1870 ↑ 1880	FIRST MUNICIPAL STREET TREE PERIOD	
	1880 ↑ 1910	SECOND MUNICIPAL STREET TREE PERIOD	

\* 1820s - 1850s NSW  
1860s - Old Kings School, Parramatta  
"Lamb House"

weeds  
1900-1903 \*





Rural pragmatism: c.1810 *Cox's cottage*, Mulgoa -  
reinstated white cedars, angophoras...





Persons of 'taste'- appreciation for the exotic, nature  
& established 'character'- the Lowes' *Bronte* , 1820s+







Science & connections: Macleay's *Brownlow Hill*: 19<sup>th</sup> c. gentry farm symbolism and mix - native conifers, kurrajongs, silky oaks...



*Glenlee, Menangle: typical homestead 'marker' conifers*







J.C.Loudon estate advice – summit / slope for homestead



# Entry avenue of gums, *Denbigh*, Cobbitty, c1850







1840s \$\$ Adelaide – 1 pyramid or 2? Informal w/in formal boundary became the norm

1838 Loudon promoted formality to tame 'wild state'



Craze for conifers:  
Norfolks, hoops,  
kauris (1820s+),  
Bunya pines,  
*Araucaria bidwillii*  
to NSW 1848  
exported to the  
world...  
& Beechworth



Mueller, Moore,  
Guilfoyle & Maiden  
palette: sub-tropical  
rainforest trees &  
especially figs:

*'fantastic monster of  
the forest' ...'covered  
in orchids'*(Guilfoyle)

- Moreton Bay; Port  
Jackson; Hill's...





Blacket's *Ficus  
microcarpa* 'Hillii'  
double avenue,  
Sydney  
University-City,  
1871





# Palm crazy: RBG Lower Garden, including natives...





1840s/70s+ Ferns &  
ferneries:

*Cunningham's obelisk,  
Palm Grove, RBG Sydney*

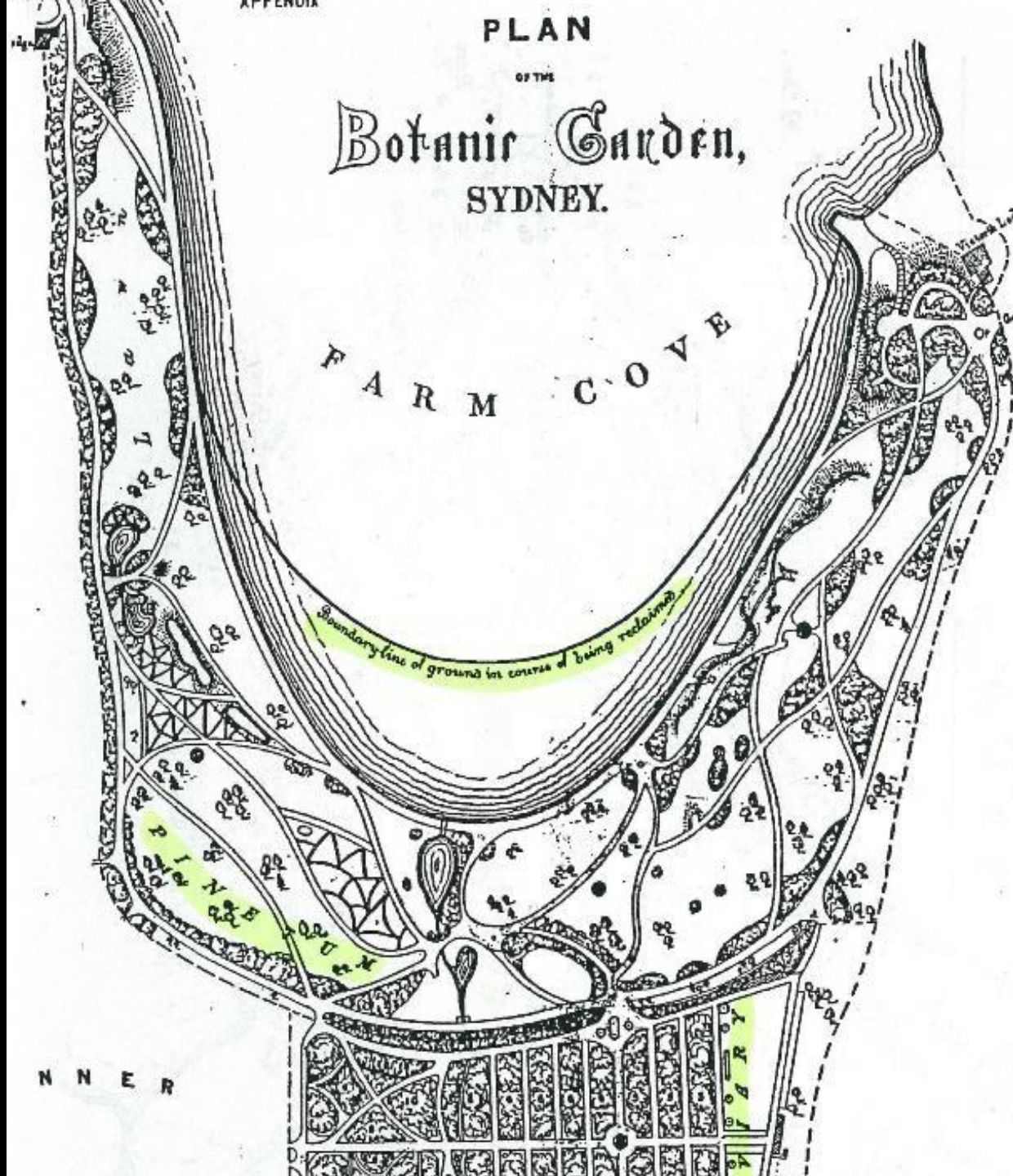
1870s: Von Mueller  
planting blue gums in  
Melbourne Streets  
1890s gone: elms...

Gums popular bedding  
and pot plants in UK





1870s-90s:  
Moore fills  
Farm Cove  
with the  
*Gardenesque*...  
extending  
Domain walks







Public parks & open spaces – formal & informal layouts, mix of plants including natives '*sent out*' (Moore/Maiden)



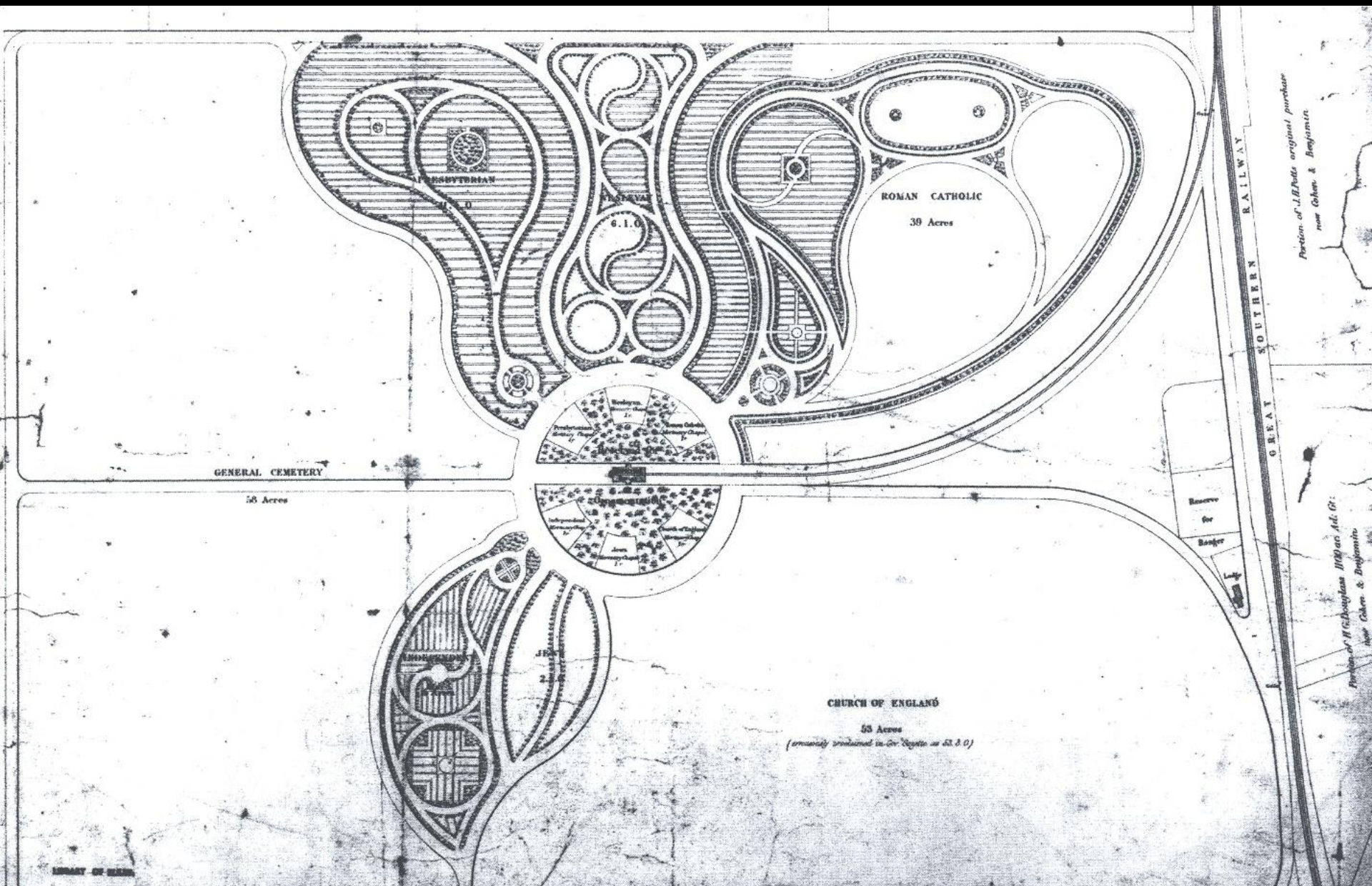


Guilfoyle's UWS Richmond –  
mixed entry avenue , *Alphitonia*  
*excelsa*, *Araucaria*, *Brachychiton*





## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS







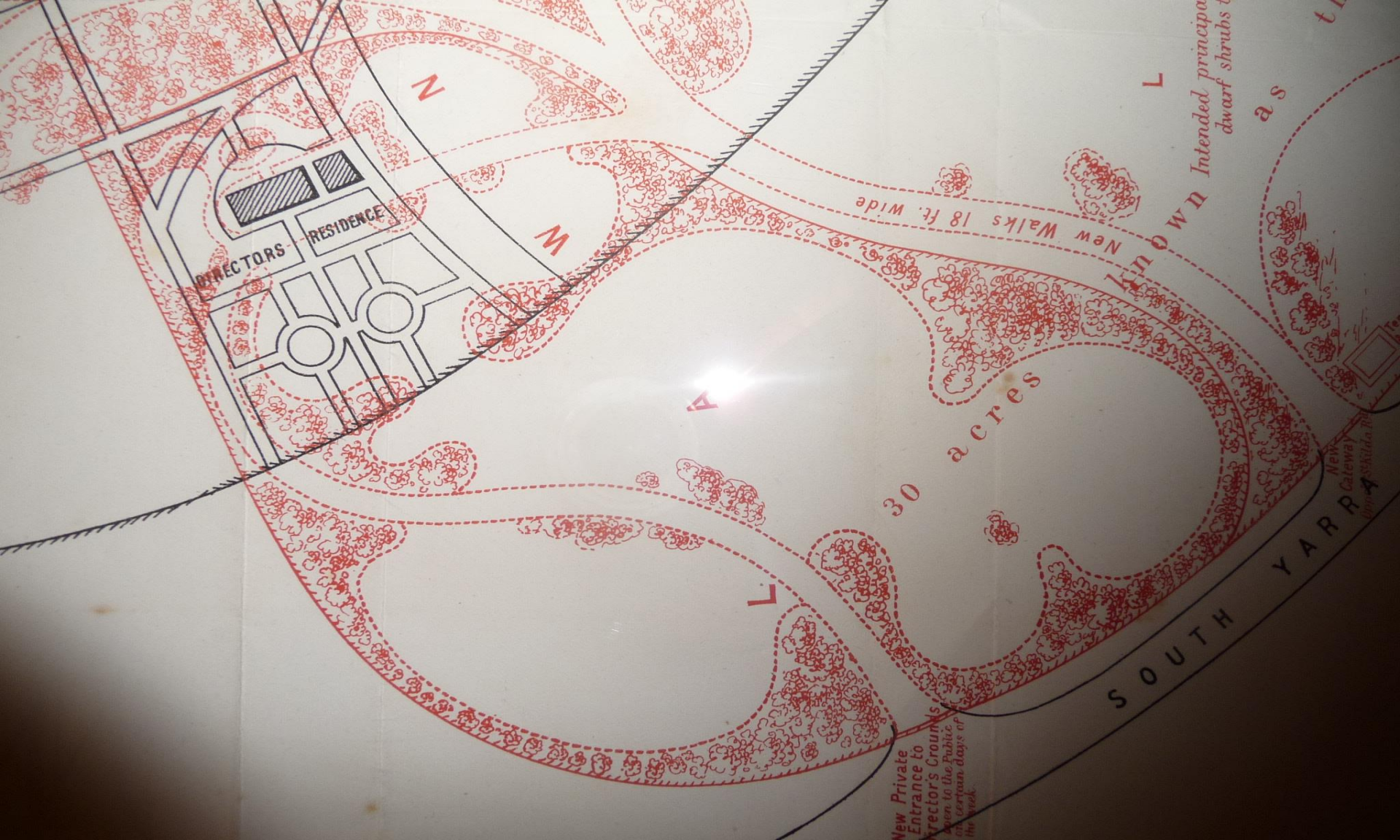
**Great exhibitions & 'expo' gardens –  
*Sydney's Garden Palace, 1879: 'hot spot'***





**Victorian 'dreaming': Beechworth's 1862 loss!**





Guilfoyle (in red) 'Gardenesquing' Melb. BG., 1870s,  
Australian border 1887, fern gully influential

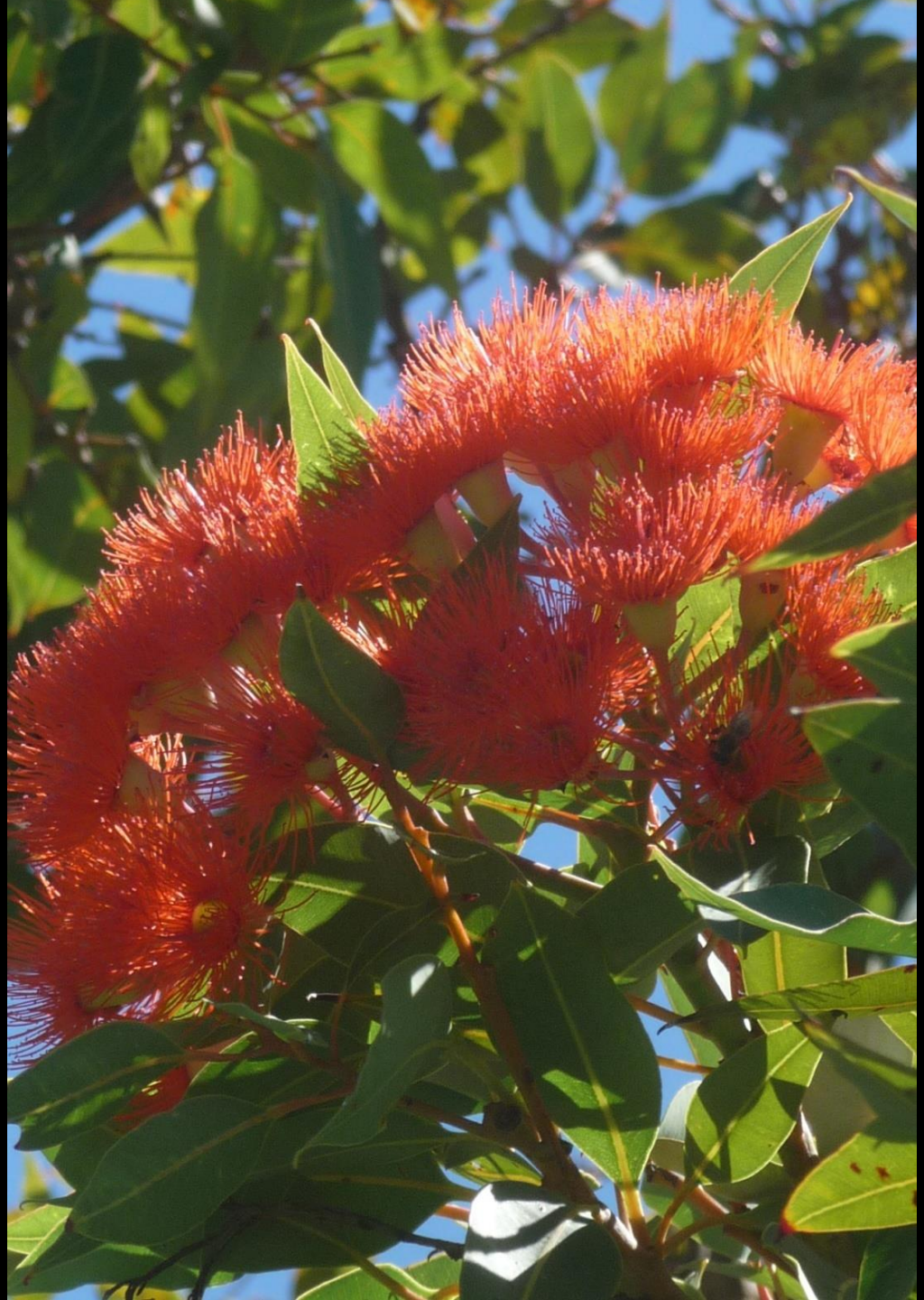


red-flowering gum,  
*Corymbia ficifolia*  
SW WA > the world,  
1880s:

*'a blaze of fire in  
nature...could dazzle  
the eye in flower'...*

(Guilfoyle)

also popular inter-war







Artists and early calls for conservation – Ellis Rowan's  
Sydney wildflowers, 1887 – rising public awareness





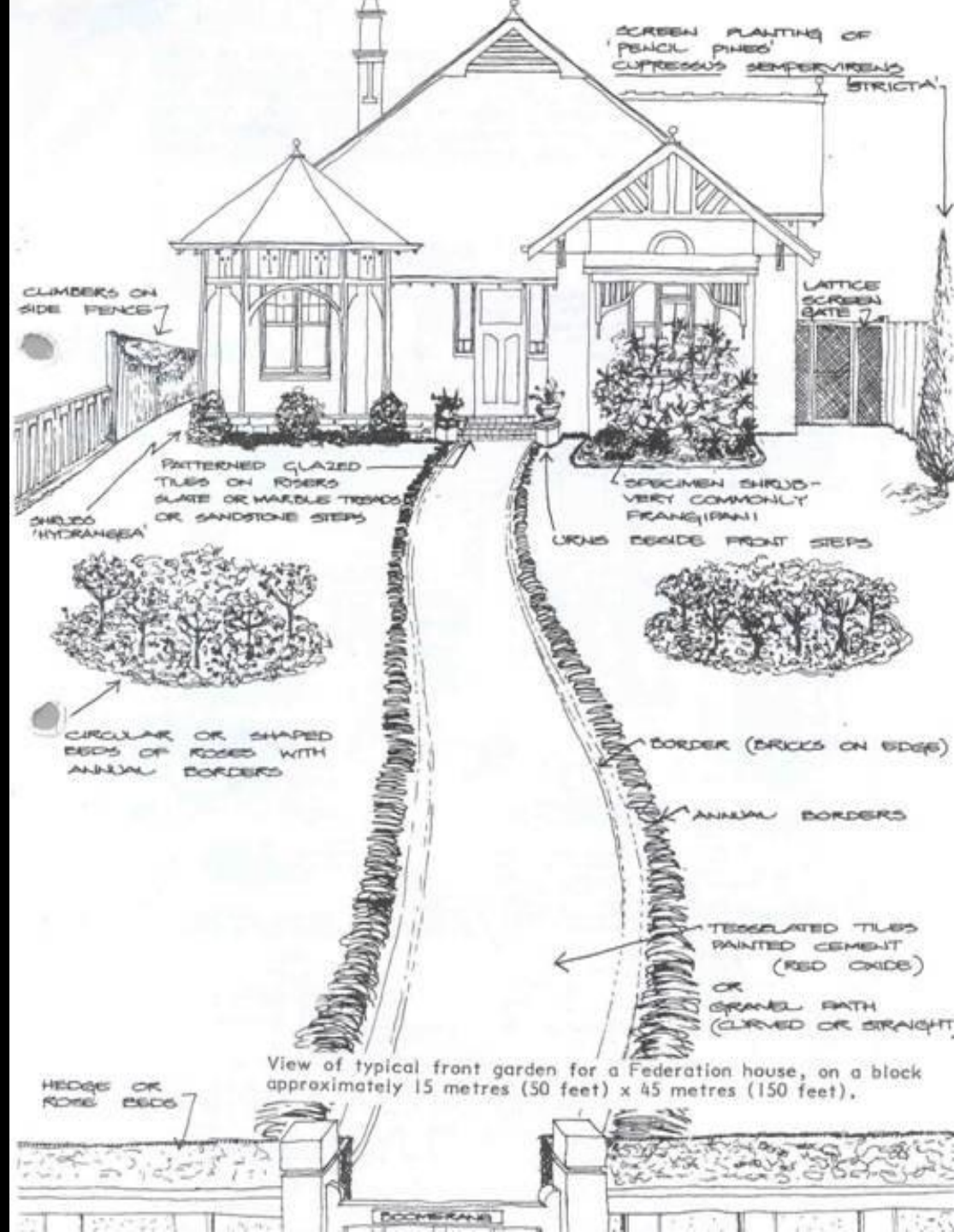
Early (native) street trees by community lobbying, c.1903



Federation era  
gardens –  
nationalism...  
1890+ Arbor days  
1910+ Wattle days  
Wattle v Waratah?

Suburban spread  
democratising...

A typical villa  
garden is within  
reach...





Federation  
gardens mix  
native & exotic  
subtropical plants.

1892 H.A. James'  
*Handbk. Of Austn.*  
*Hort...* – chapter  
on Aust'n. Plants



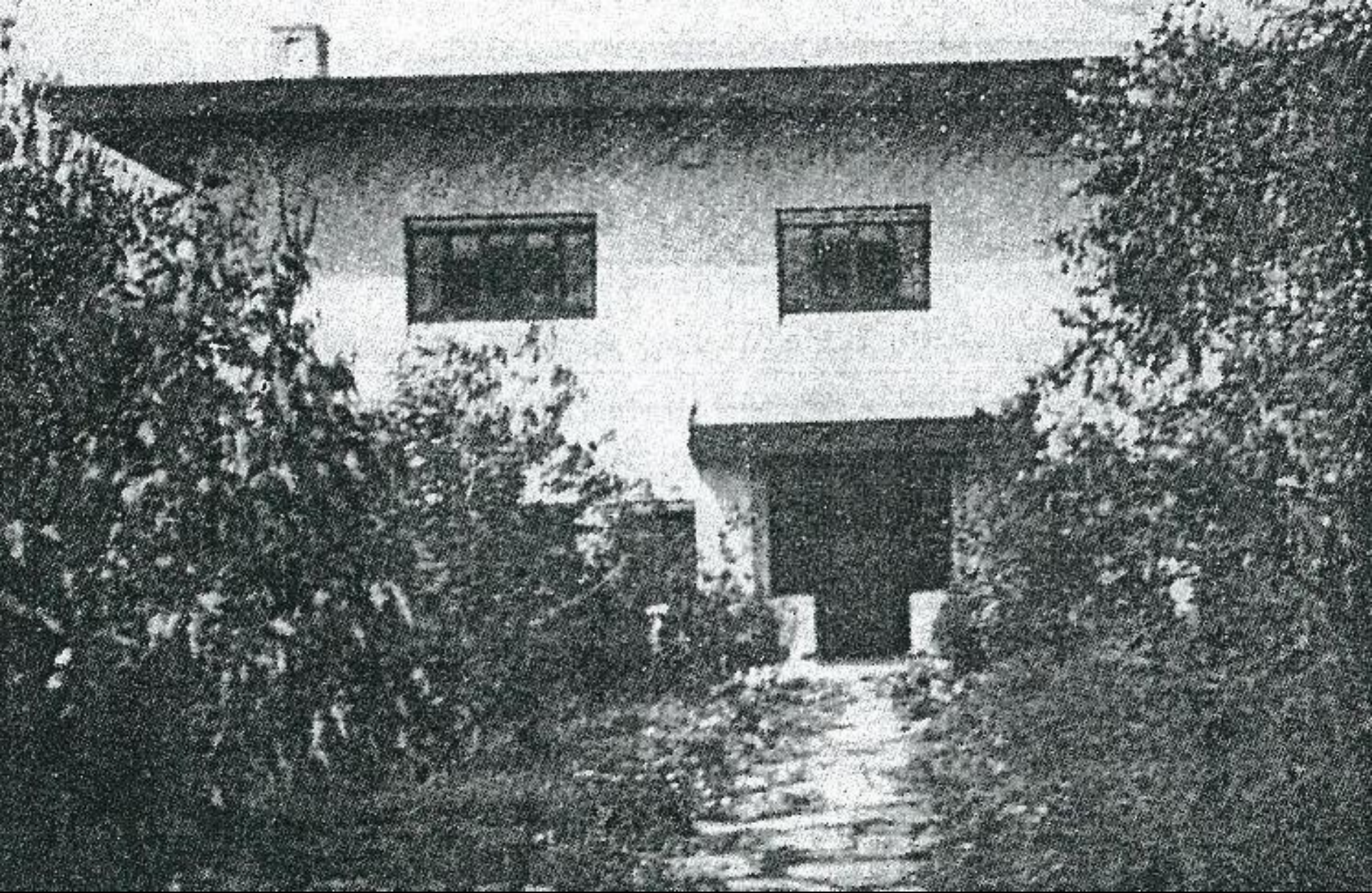
# Arts & Crafts gardens:

## Debating Formal v Informal/natural design?

- ▣ influence of (UK) writers Morris, Ruskin, Webb, Blomfield  
Robinson's 1870 '*Wild Gardening*' & lobbying (anti-carpet-bedding) >1930s;
- ▣ Guilfoyle advocating 'wild'/natural gardens 1870s+;
- ▣ His 1911 '*Australian Plants Suitable for Gardens, Parks...*'
- ▣ 1903/4 Debate: formal v informal: Vic. Inst. of Architects.
- ▣ Arch't. Walter Butler v hort. educator & designer Charles Bogue Luffman;
- ▣ Luffman's 1903 *Principles of Gardening for Oz* our 1st to trace a history of garden design.
- ▣ Maiden's 1904 *Forest Flora of NSW* – horticultural potential...







Desbrowe-Annear's *Broceliande*, Toorak, 1919

- ▣ 1901 *Maranoa Gardens*, Balwyn ‘bush gardens’
- ▣ 1904-15 Mrs Welch’s “*Wattle Park*” - native gdns, Melb.;
- ▣ Designers took lead - Oakden & Ballantyne’s *Illabarook*, Toorak (1909), retained gums & wattles;
- ▣ Desbrowe-Annear’s *Ballangeich* (1911)- sugar gum plantation screening ‘wilderness’ & *Broceliande* (1919) all-native, Toorak





Bede-Dalley's c1880 *Bilgoela*, Sydney (seen in 1920)



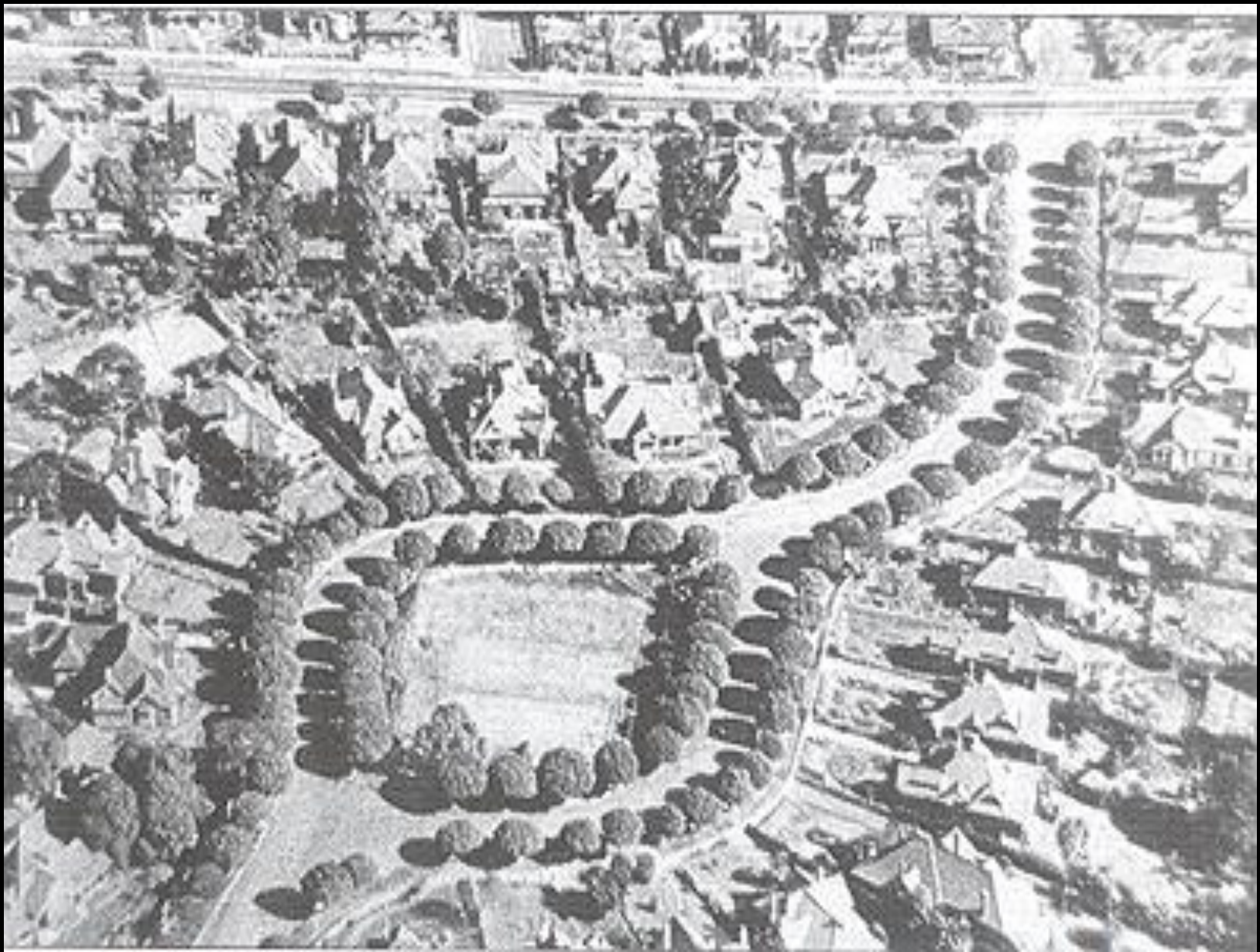


**Ferneries & Bush Houses – 1840s+: 1880s-1930s**  
*A.A.Cole's ½ hours in the Austn. Bush House, 1922*





Italianate influence: *Yaralla*, Concord West (Sulman);  
terraces, stairs, statues, grottoes, shady walks...



*Appian Way, Burwood: brush box utopia*





ubiquitous brush box – many miles from rainforest!



# **‘Suburban dream’: bungalow gardens for all: Rising nursery trade & magazine advertising...**







*Reade's Colonel Light Garden Suburb, SA, 1921*

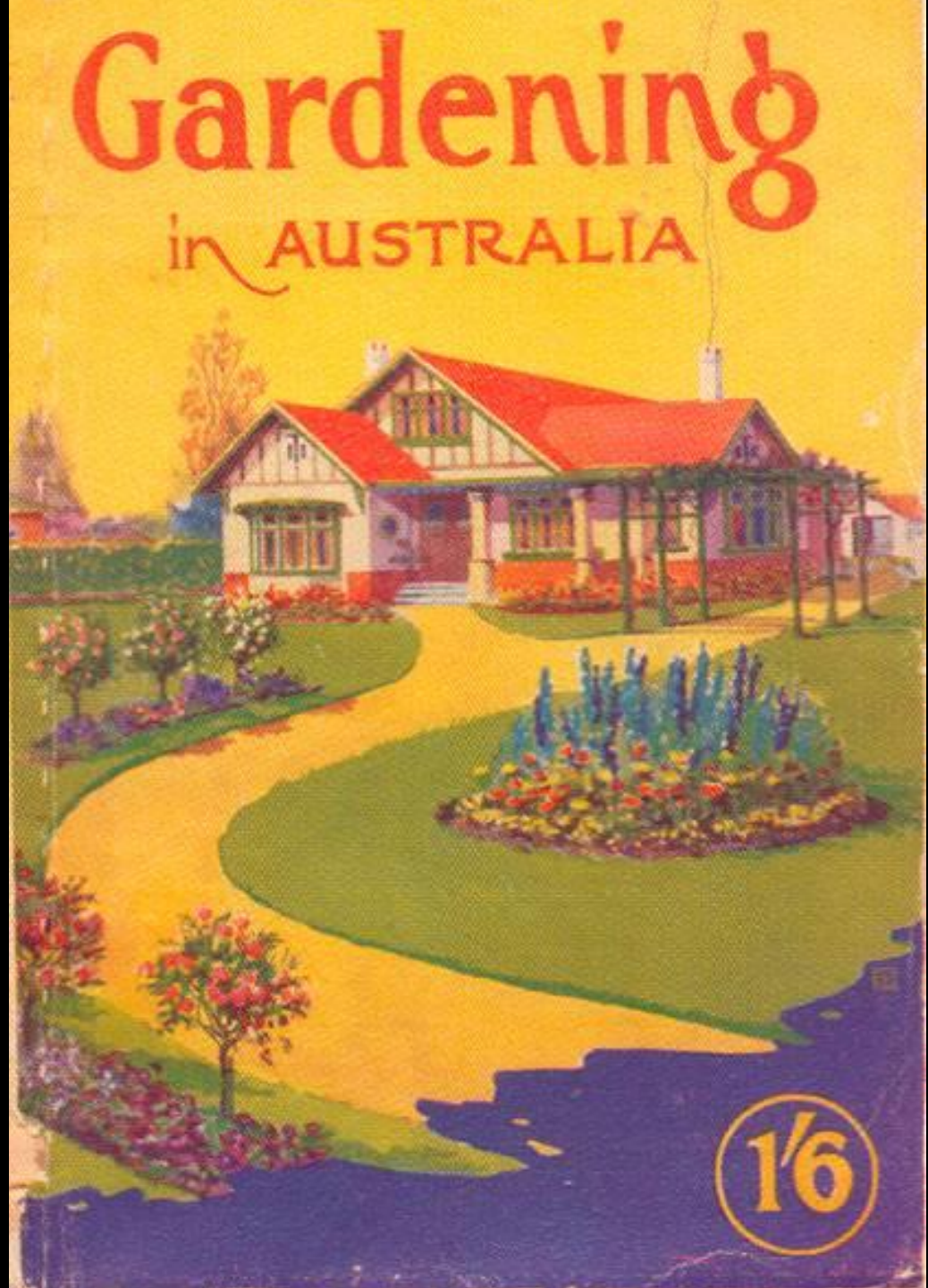




**Greener suburbs: with some natives: lily-  
pilly trees, Col. Light Garden Suburb**



Common wisdom:  
popular garden  
guides  
EE Pescott, 1926:





War Memorial  
Avenues, some  
native - *King's  
Park, Perth*







Formal use: Elisabeth Murdoch/Edna Walling's drive,  
*Cruden Farm*, Langwarrin, Vic., 1920s+



Bush modernism:  
artists focus on  
wildflowers/bush -  
Heysen, Preston et al  
WA flora...

1938 Thistle Harris'  
*Wildflowers of  
Australia*







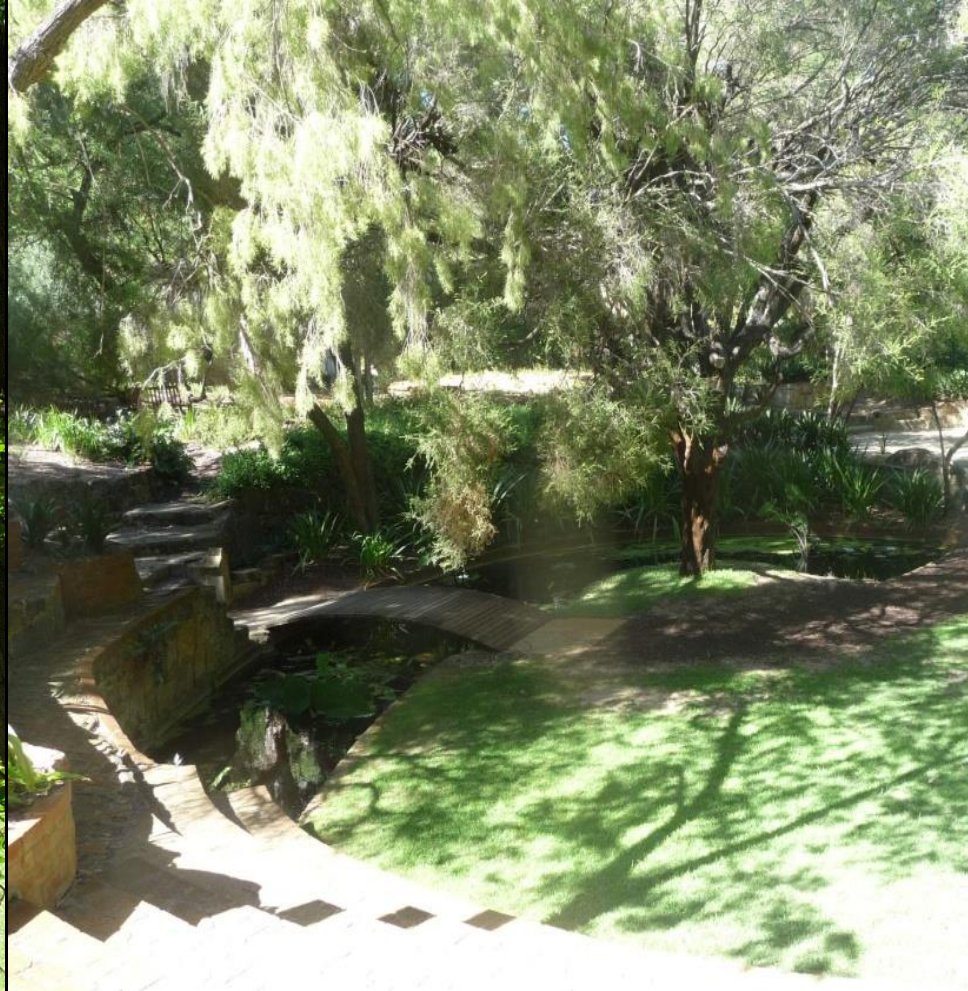
Writers' influence: May Gibbs's books inspired by *Nutcote*, Neutral Bay, (1925+) - its 'Old Man Banksia'





...& architects: Wilkinson's *Greenway*, Vaucluse  
retaining & celebrating *Angophora costata*





& talented gardeners  
using natives: Oliver  
Dowell, University of  
WA, 1930-46



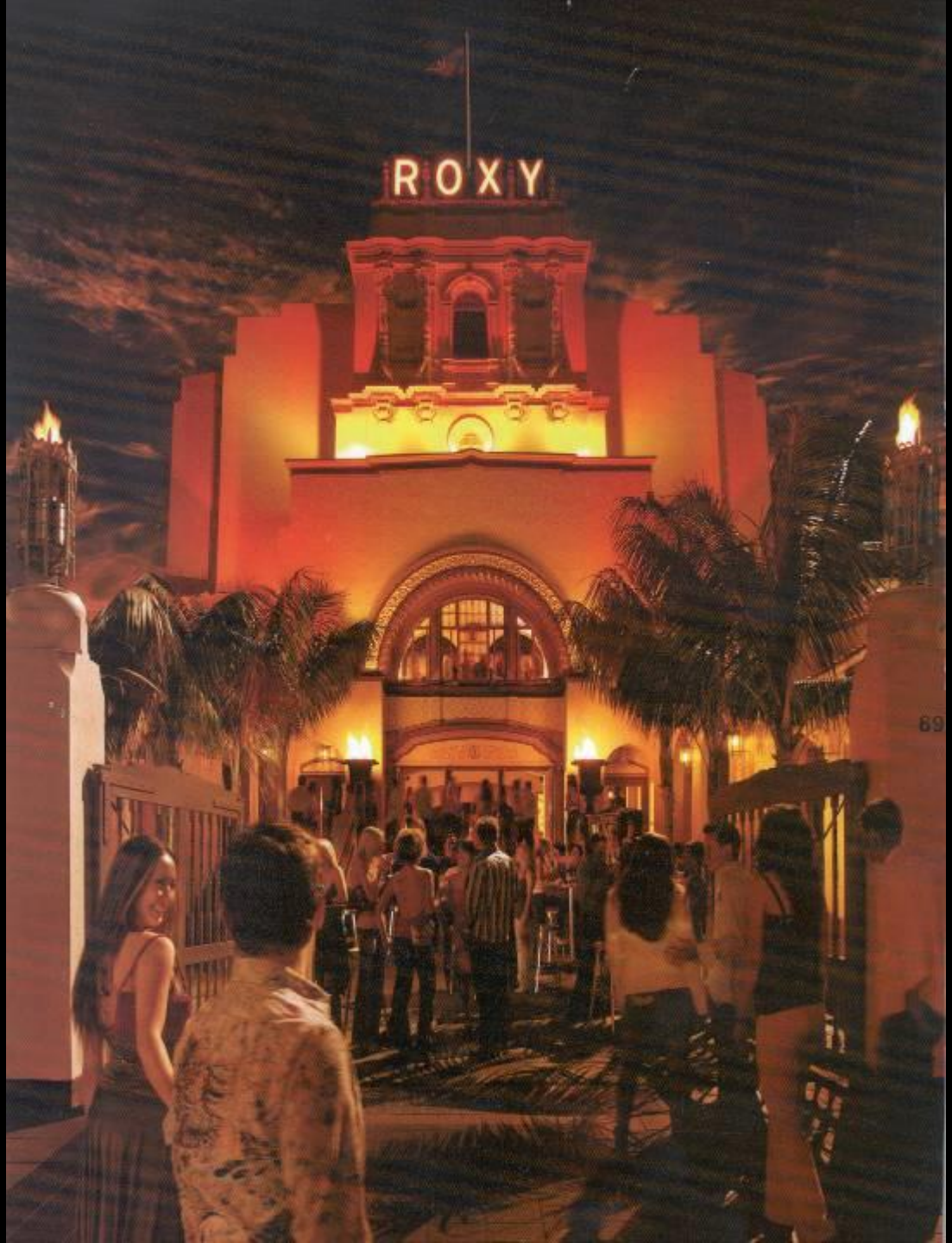
Practicality: white cedars on a Bathurst street, 1930s+?  
good scale and sun-in-winter... (more of this, please!)





Hollywood  
films,  
magazines...  
USA /S.Pacific  
images

Lord Howe  
Island palms,  
Parramatta



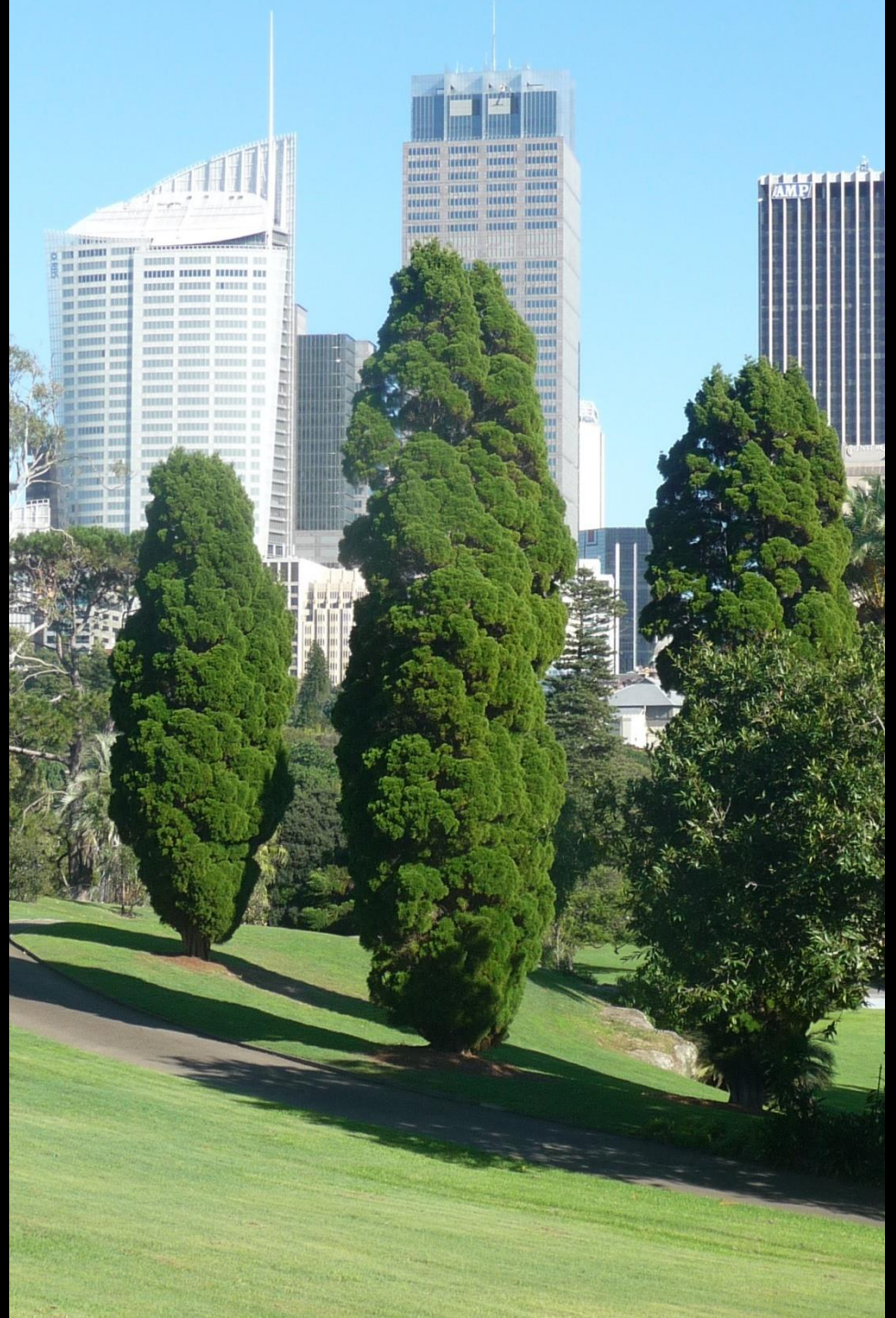


Santa Monica on  
Rose Bay–  
Vaucluse garden  
NB: *Cyathea* tree  
ferns





State Govt. influence,  
formality: native  
cypress pines  
popularised 1930s  
- hospitals, court  
houses...





## Early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> c. designers use natives:

- ▣ Walter Burley & Marion Mahony Griffin (1910s-'30s);
- ▣ Edna Walling ('20s-'70s);
- ▣ Max Shelley ('20s-50s);
- ▣ Jocelyn Brown ('20s-'50s);
- ▣ Paul Sorensen ('20s-'80s);

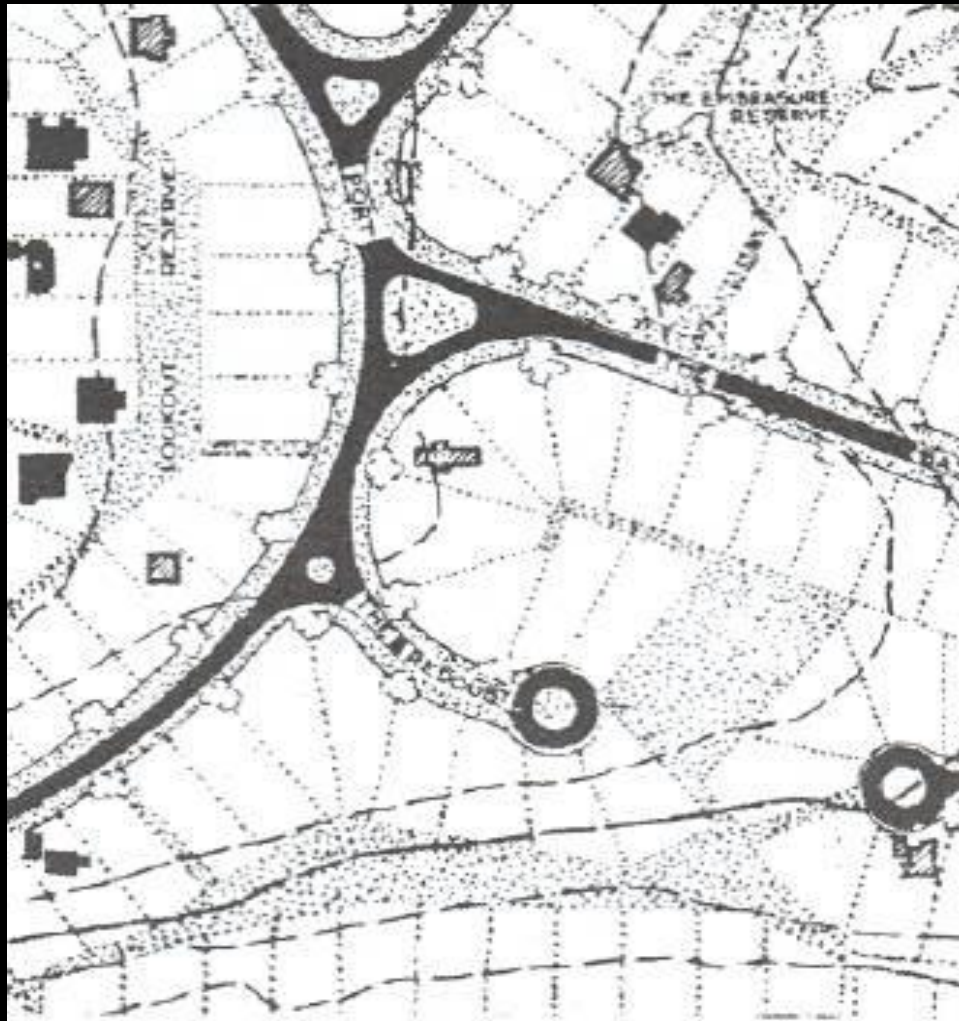


At home  
(*Pholiota*)/  
influencing the  
public:  
Walter & Marion  
Griffin, NSW & Vic.  
1917 Newman  
College, Melb.'s  
all-native plan...

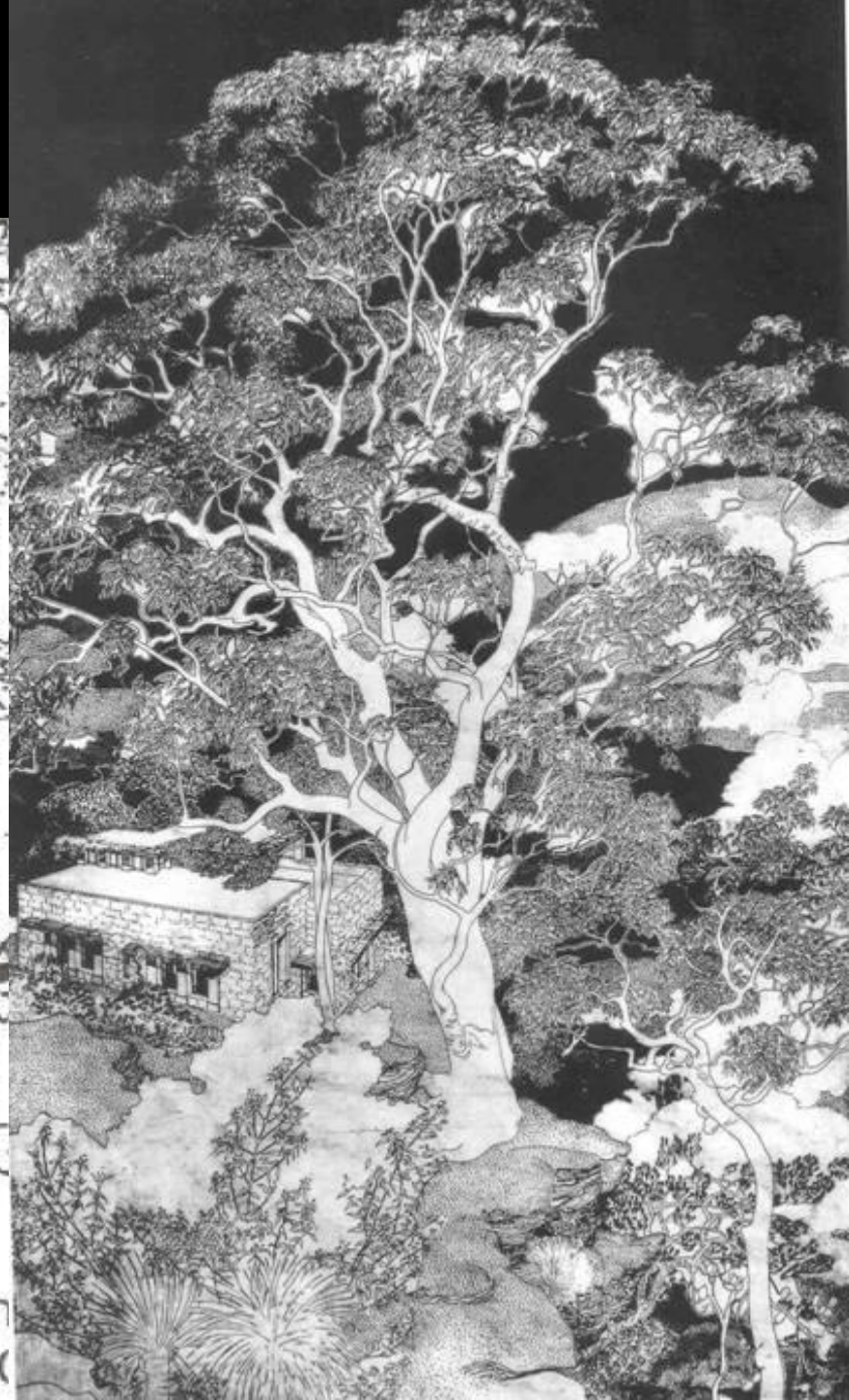




# C'crag: small houses & st.s, big blocks, more nature



Detail from plan of Castlecrag and  
prepared in 1932 by GSDA, the C





**Nicholls/  
Griffin plan  
AHB, 1931:  
50% natives:  
acacias, ferns,  
Agonis,  
Callistemon,  
Xmas bush,  
gums...**



18. *Berberis Wilsonii*.
19. *Bougainvillea brasiliensis*.
20. *Bigonia capitata*.
21. *Brachychiton acerifolius*.
22. *Buddlea madagascariensis*.
23. *Buddlea Veitchiana*.
24. *Callistemon lanceolatus*.
25. *Callistemon phoeniceus*.
26. *Callitris cupressifolia*.
27. *Clematis montana*.
28. *Cestrum elegans*.
29. *Ceratopetalum gummi-ferum*.
30. *Chacizema ilicifolium*.
31. *Chianthus puniceus*.
32. *Ceanothus divaricatus*.
33. *Cydonia japonica*.
34. *Crataegus crenulata*.
35. *Cocconeaster Simonsii*.
36. *Convolvulus mauritanicus*.
37. *Cuphea ignea*.
38. *Doryanthes excelsa*.
39. *Doryanthes Palmeri*.
40. *Eucalyptus citrodora*.
41. *Eucalyptus rubida*.
42. *Eucalyptus Stricklandii*.
43. *Eucalyptus torquata*.
44. *Echium candicans*.
45. *Enostemon obovatus*.
46. *Erica cruenta*.
47. *Erica hybrida*.
48. *Erica Webbleyana*.
49. *Ficus minima*.
50. *Gaura Lindheimeri*.
51. *Gazania splendens*.
52. *Genista aetnensis*.
53. *Genista fragrans*.

J.M. (Numarkah).—  
ning that would give a nov  
2/3 retail (postage, twop



# *Interwar Gardens*

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*A guide to the history, conservation and management  
of gardens of 1915 - 1940*

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THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NSW)  
PARKS AND GARDENS CONSERVATION COMMITTEE



AGHS / NSW  
National  
Trust  
publication  
2003



**Designers:**  
**influential via**  
**magazines:**  
**Edna Walling:**  
**1920s-70s**  
**Vic., NSW, Qld.,**  
**SA, *A'n.Home***  
***Beautiful***







Walling's *The Australian Roadside* published 1952,  
...increasing use and love of Australian plants in her plans





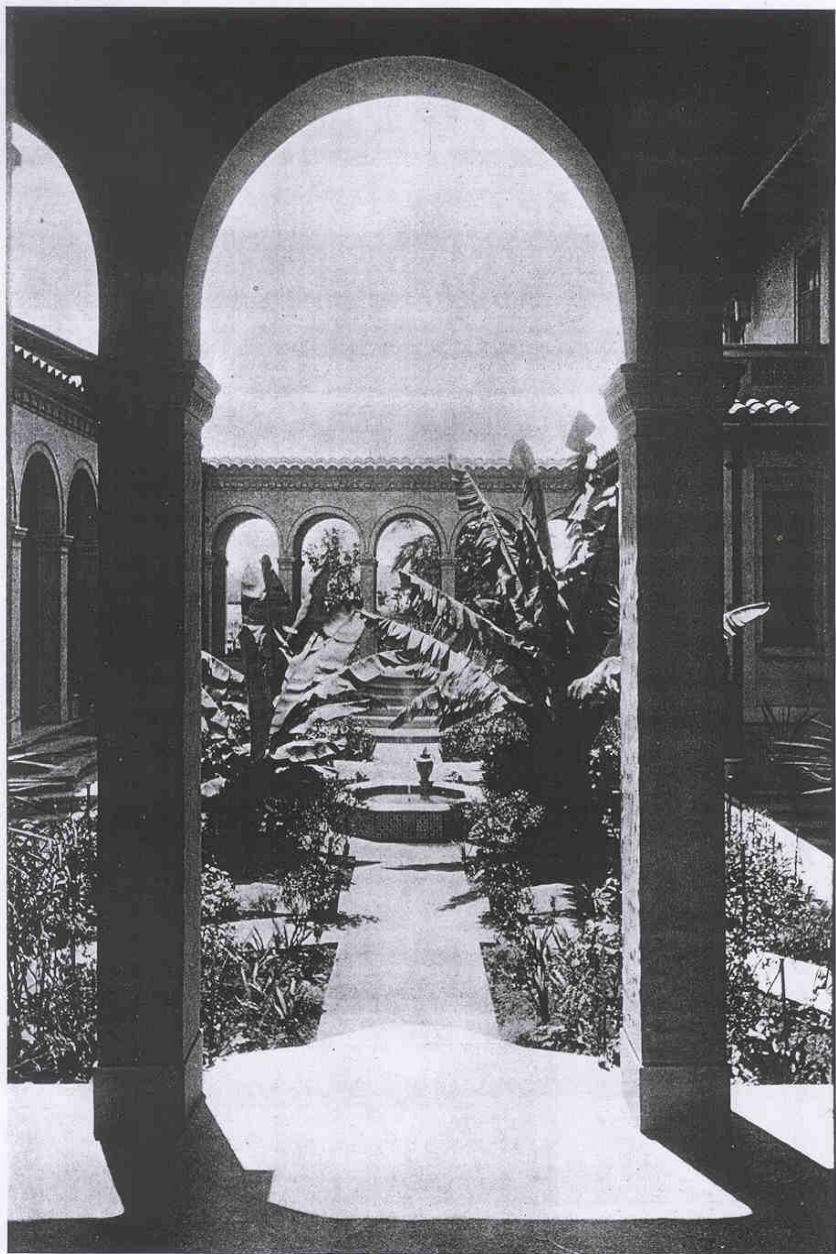
*Millamolong (1937), C.West features local gums (T. Dixon)*



Max Shelley,  
1920s-50s,  
NSW & SA  
*Garden Gossip,*  
*Home...*







[CAZNEAUX.

The Cloister Garden

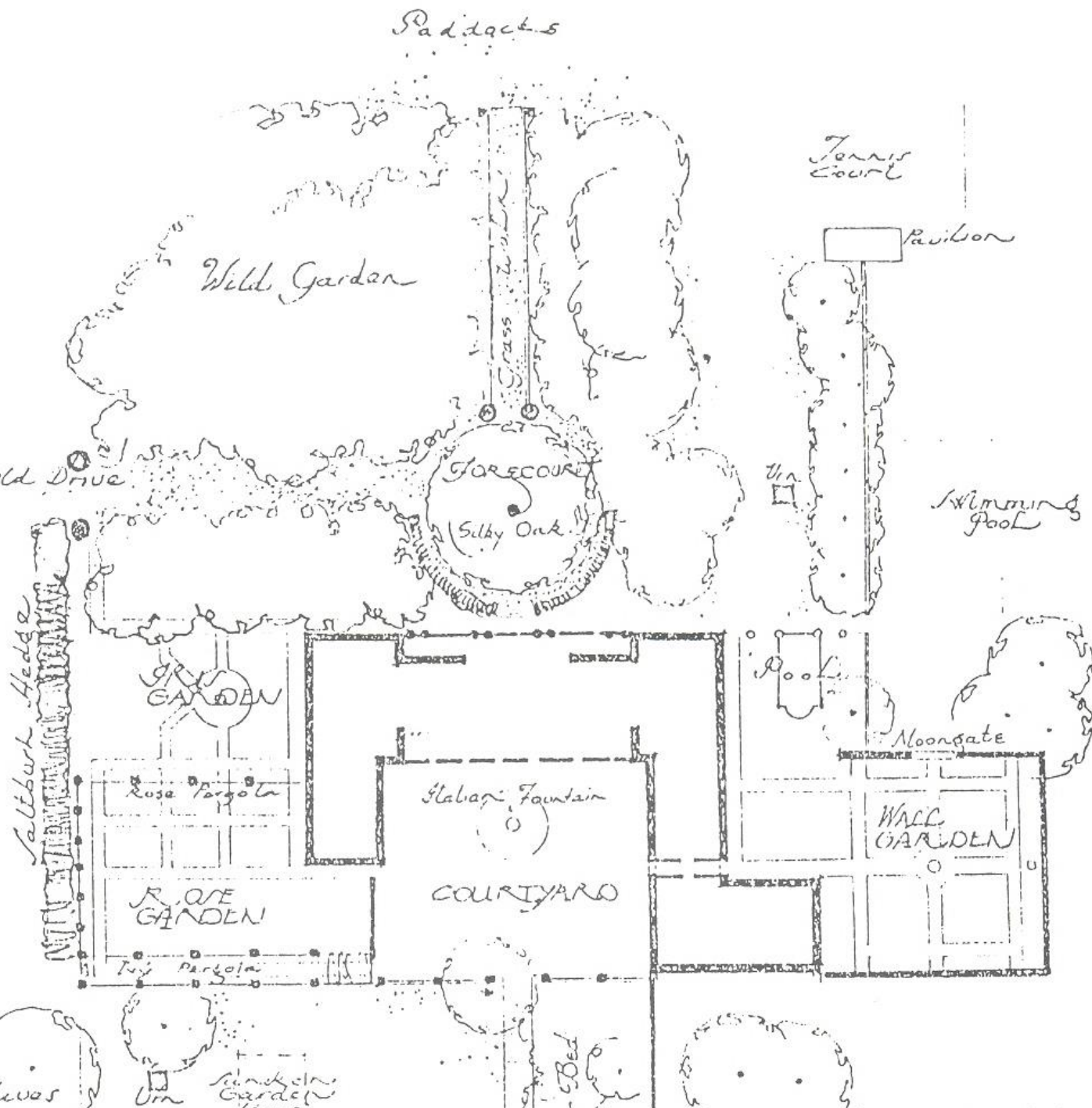




Jocelyn Brown,  
*'Home'* 1939-41,  
1920s-70s gardens,  
NSW, Qld.







*St. Aubins,  
Scone,  
1940s –  
silky oak  
forecourt  
feature,  
wild  
garden...*





*Checkers*, near Orange, 1950s

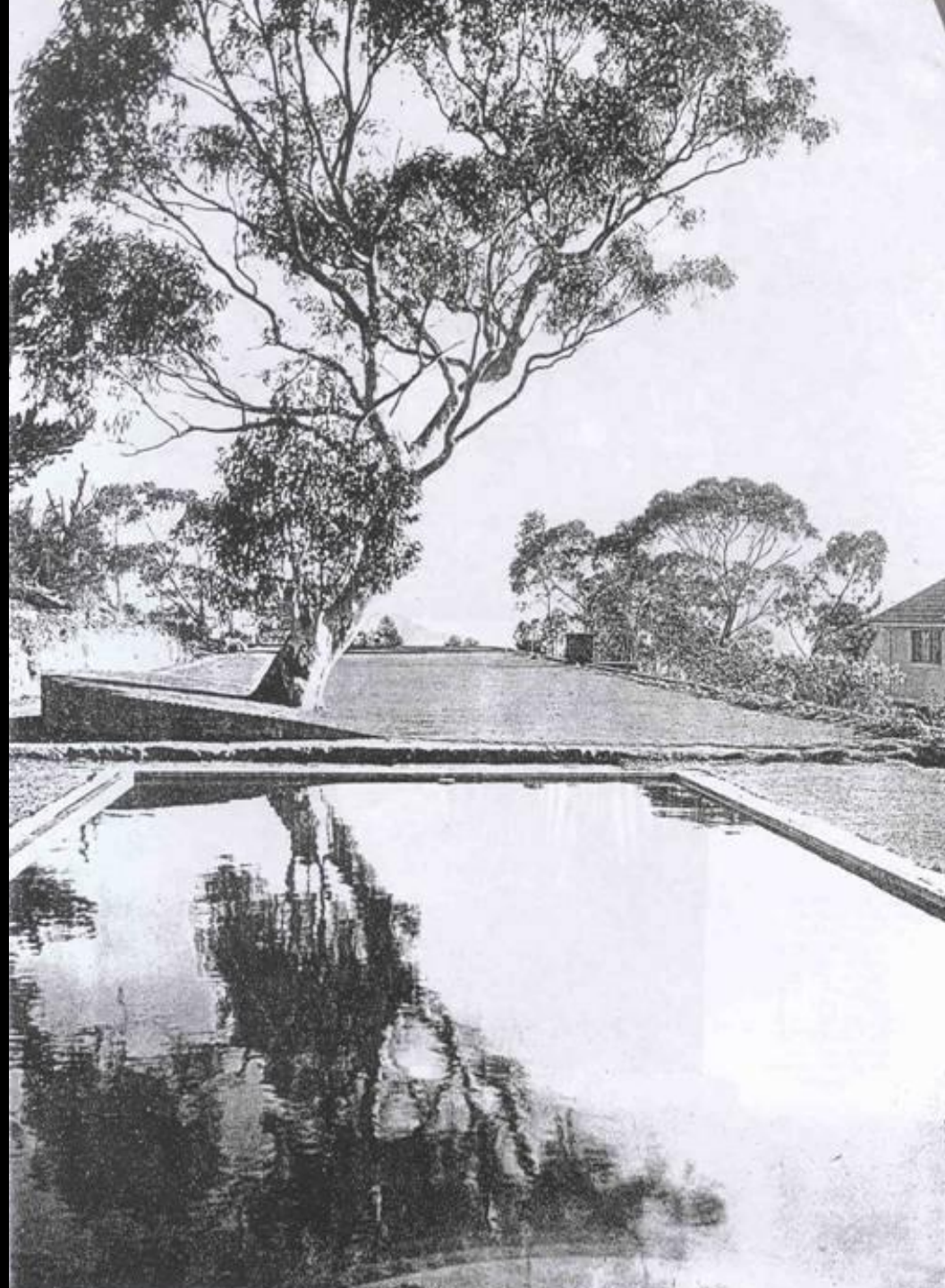
Modernism & local species



Paul Sorensen  
(1920s-83)  
NSW







*Everglades, Leura:*  
modernist gum?

& the rise of  
swimming pools...





*Invergowrie and Cherry Dell, Exeter – 1930s-40s & 1960s*



## Key mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> c. designers using natives:

- ▣ Kath Carr ('40s -'99);
  - ▣ Betty Maloney & Jean Walker ('60s-'00s);
  - ▣ Bruce McKenzie ('60s-now)
- 
- ▣ Ellis Stones ('71, *Aust'n. Garden Design*);
  - ▣ Glen Wilson ('75, *Landscaping w/ Ozn. Pls*);
  - ▣ Allan Correy ('50s-'00s);
  - ▣ Gordon Ford , Alastair & Margo Knox (");
  - ▣ Paul Thompson ('02, *Aust'n. Plant'g.Design*)



**Kath Carr,  
1940s+  
Walling / Bligh  
tutored...**





*Goonawarra, 1950s?, Sn.Tablelands (pic.HKF)*



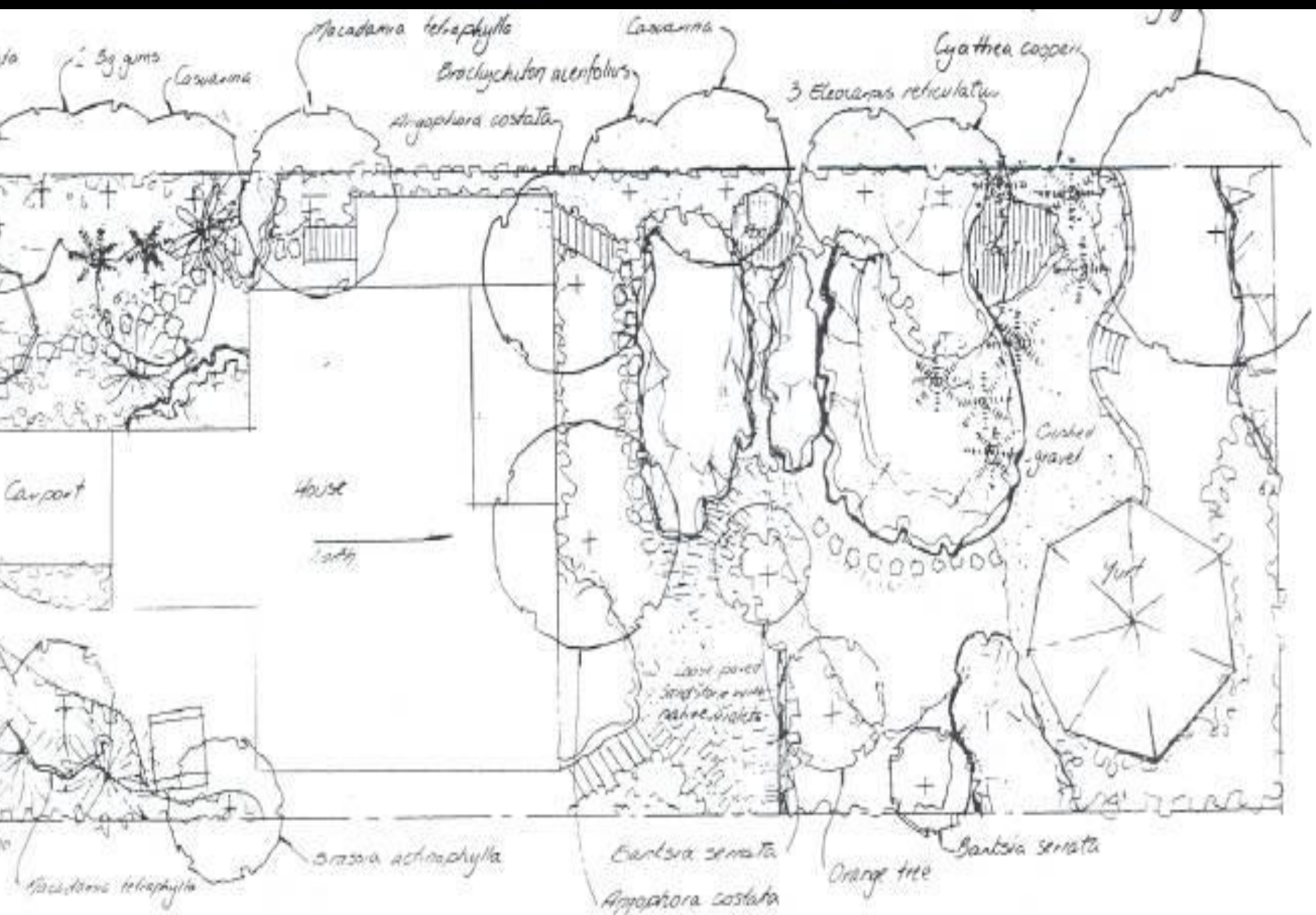




Betty Maloney garden,  
French's Forest, 1955+  
'bush garden' on a tiny lot

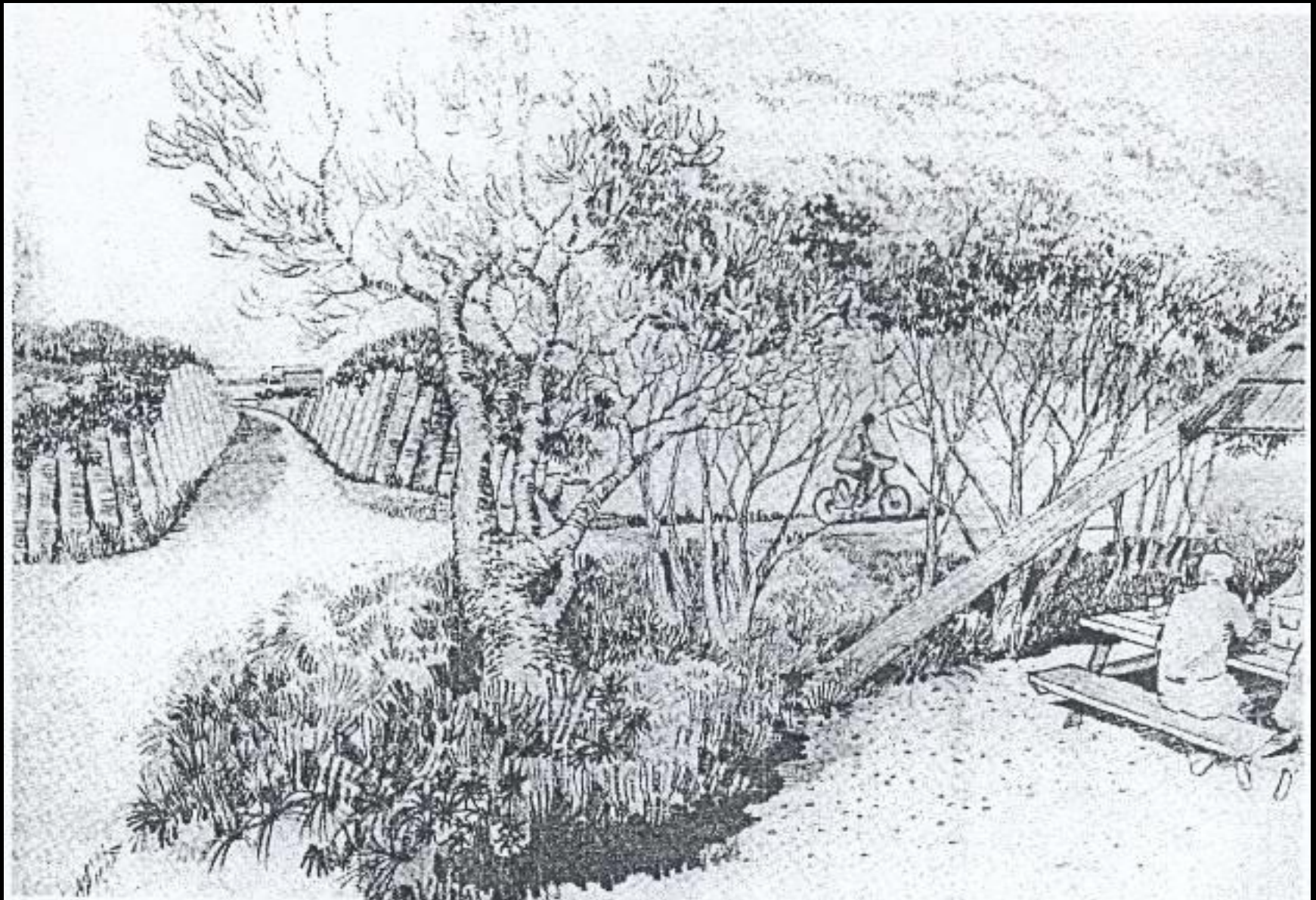


# Jean Walker's garden, Balgowlah, 1960s+





# Bruce McKenzie: Sir Joseph Banks Pk., Botany, 1981 post-industrial reclamation and 'natural' parks



Designed by Bruce MACKENZIE and illustrated in Landscape Australia (1991) with the artist's permission.





Renewal: natives on the farm... *Bringenbrong*





*Only one in the street: Brook garden, Canberra, '70s+*





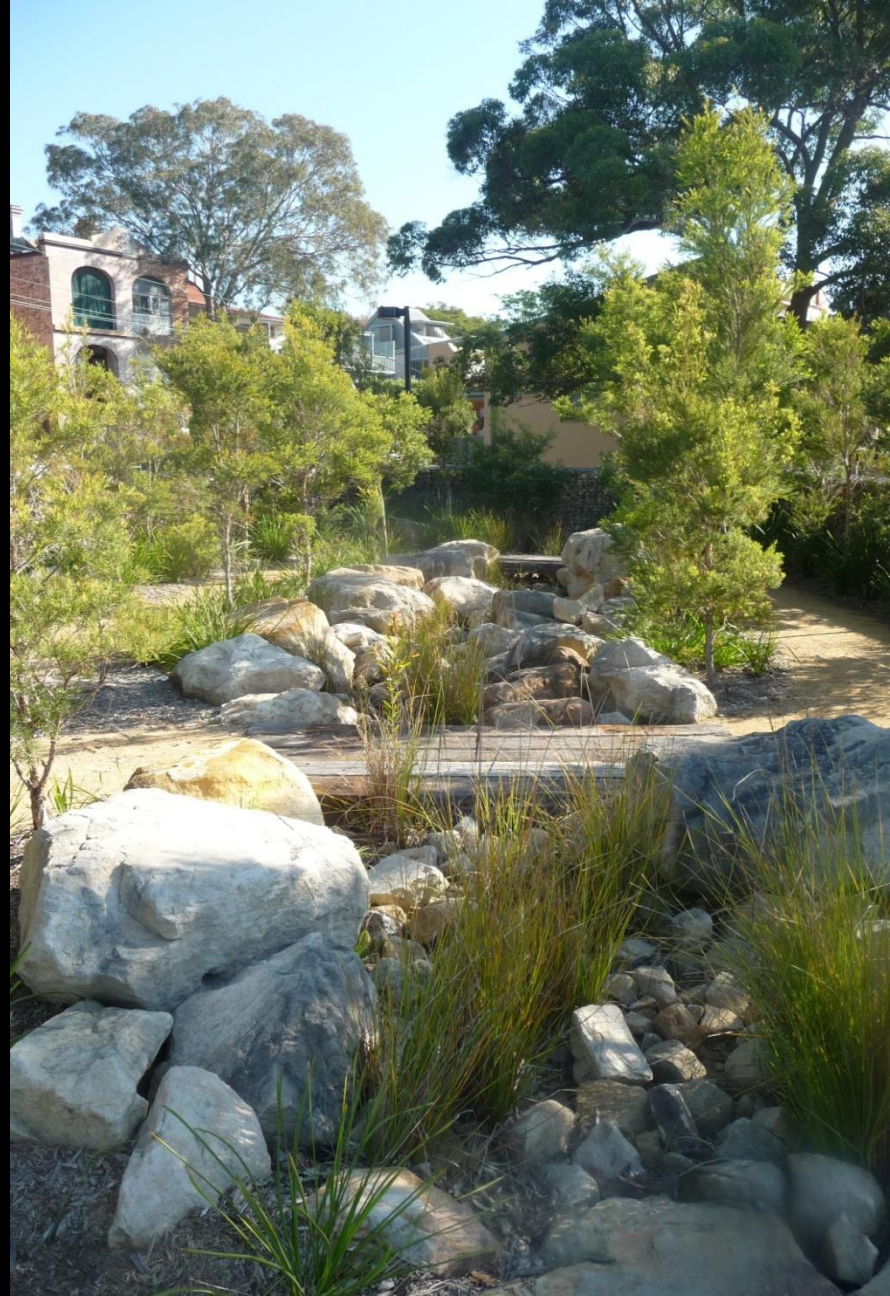
**Nationalism: sculpture Garden, Ntnl. Gallery,  
1970s+, Harry Howard & Associates**





*Renewal: Bicentennial Park, Glebe: 1988 Hill's figs added to 1880s scheme of Moreton Bay figs*





Post-ind'l. parks: '70s McKenzie; '05 McGregor Coxall





*Bentley, Chudleigh, Tas., hawthorns & elms out  
local eucalypts (*E.amygdalina*) & banksias in...*





*Bentley: creek  
revegetation 'riffle' &  
bog plants, lake (2)*







*Australia's Open Garden Scheme – influencing, copy ideas, Waterfall Cottage, Bayview, 1984+ rainforest setting, spp.*



## Heritage of the future | 2002

New outer suburbs carved out of rural paddocks are creating a rich lode of gardening—and architectural—heritage for future generations. This is as it has always been in Australian cities. It is just the time delay between development and veneration that is narrowing. Of course this elapse only exists for those on the outside, beyond contemporary taste. To insiders, these new outer urban gardens replete with roll-out turf and pop-up sprinklers are the Gardenesque delights of their heart's desire.



& next?

Lush  
gardens  
leafy streets

...or this?



# Future greens? Paperbarks, 1: Council, 0!

**4** Waiting lists are spilling out into the street from virtually every private school in the Eastern Suburbs — Patrick McCann

## Ankle-biters plan to bring the council to its knees

Rob Bates

WAVERLEY Council felt the full force of the Young Turks at Wee Care Kindergarten, Bondi Junction, yesterday, when 29 itty-bitty activists handed mayor Sally Betts a petition with 44 signatures opposing the planned removal of trees in Waverley Park.

The council had planned to chop down the trees to make way for the new Waverley Pavilion, but Wee Care's owner, Ruth Weinstein, said the children were opposed to this decision.

"We've been talking about conservation and the environment, so we told the children that this might happen and they were really upset," Ms Weinstein said. "I think it was an important lesson for the children that they have a voice and that part of their social responsibility is to talk about things that upset them and







**Pram slalom, Mona Vale - flexibility to retain trees...**



Others have no problem using our plants  
Barcelona's *Parc Clot* eucalypts & CBD street kurrajongs





# Street tree labelling , Barcelona pavements





Regionalism -  
sophisticated, locally-  
attuned design:

*Jean Marie Tjibaiao  
cultural centre, Noumea*

endemic *Araucaria  
columnaris*, palms,  
*Dracaena*





Back to the 1890s/  
1920s? A better way of  
living, closer to nature  
and place, with plants &  
design an active part?





# Smarter suburbs? New street / local trees: Little Bay







**Mt. Tomah BG showing  
formal uses of natives...**







**RBG Cranborne – ideas for home gardens**



**XERIC GARDENS**, from the Greek *Xeros* (dry), promoting water-efficient horticulture, have tended to be the exception in Australia, rather than the rule. The earliest gardens were for the production of food and other useful items and it was

The nineteenth-century obsession with scientific discovery and fascination with all things exotic saw a boom in plant collecting and exhibiting. Displays of weird and wonderful xerophytic plants were set up in numerous public and



The planting and maintenance of this recent coastal garden on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula reflects contemporary trends in XERIC GARDENING, wholly appropriate to this exposed and informal setting

**Future gardens will be smarter, more local, less thirsty: *Karkalla*, Mornington Pen., Vic**





**Marion Blackwell's garden, Perth (all endemic)**





**Smaller trees for small gardens? Dwarf spp., cv.s**





‘90s roof garden replanting natives, W’loo



# — • THE OXFORD COMPANION TO • —

## AUSTRALIAN GARDENS

Open Garden Scheme

AGHS Bidwill Nurseries

Arbor Day Plant breeding Drainage

Bailey family Schomburgk Banksia

Bateman Vegetable Banks

Robert Brown Despeissis Cactus

Soil Cemetery Playground

Cottage gardens Botany



Amalie Dietrich Ecology

Blue Mountains Eucalyptus

Film Picturesque Floriculture

National Rose Society

Music Camellia Brunning

Grasses Arts and Crafts

Loudon Walter Hill

Hydroponics Climate

Entries on wild/ bush/ natural gardens, nature strips...



- Education
- Research
- Publishing
- Conservation
- Funding projects
- Lobbying
- Bi-monthly journal
- Annual Conference
- Fun outings
- Lectures and Seminars
- Branches in all states

[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

AUSTRALIAN  
**GARDEN  
HISTORY**  
SOCIETY  
SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1988 to bring together people with an interest in promoting our valued gardens, parks and cultural landscapes.

We encourage an approach to gardens and gardening from the "three histories": historical, social, literary and artistic perspectives. Our members are involved in research, education, writing articles for our bi-monthly magazine, occasional papers and books, and a wide range of social activities.

Visit our website at [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

There are eight branches covering all states and territories. The Sydney and Northern NSW Branch has 480 members and an active program of garden visits, talks and evening local shows. For more details ring toll free 1800 079 666 or email [info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au](mailto:info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

Why not join us today?

Old Mill Terrace, Road Gardens, Conservations of Mount, Sydney

Rose Gardens, Botanic Gardens since 1900-1910

The Gate House, Greenbank, The King's School

Green Nook House

Visiting Salisbury Court Uxilla

Harvesting potatoes

Busy place at Bella Vista

Edenwood lady enjoying her glasshouse

Page from Tynes Annual 1918

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Visions & Voices  
THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY  
1988-2003



## Photos & sources:

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- ▣ Nicholls collection, National Library of Australia
- ▣ NSW State Library pictorial collection
- ▣ Helen Proudfoot, *Gardens in Bloom: Jocelyn Brown & her Sydney gardens of the 1930s & 40s*, 1989
- ▣ Richard Ratcliffe, *Australia's master gardener – Paul Sorensen*, 1990