Location of proposed covered seating pavilion.

The Friends of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens are proposing to build a covered seat on the south east slope of the Gardens to utilise and commemorate a Sequoiadendron Giganteum, thought to have been an original donation to the Gardens by Baron von Mueller, which died and was felled in 2021. The milled timber will be the cladding for the little pavilion.

In 1983, the timber clad Trewhella seating shelter on the north west side of the Gardens was demolished. A photo of that structure is included in the application.

The change of location was decided upon for two reasons. Firstly, to focus on the loss of the historic and much loved tree. Secondly, the site of the lost tree overlooks an area of the Gardens which is a relatively open, “undefined” area but it attracts a good deal of attention because of the wonderful views it offers visitors. There is an unobstructed south eastern vista from a bare part of the slope that would create the link back to the western side of the Gardens that the CMP refers to. P 208

Since the demolition of the Trewhella shelter, that area of Gardens has been increasingly closed in by trees and understorey plants. The CMP P308-309 suggests a rebuild of that structure but the need for sheltered seating there is no longer an urgent one. The CMP also suggests that a picnic table and seats could be located there. Its endorsement of the desirability of local input into the seating structures is recognised in the use of the sequoia timber and local design and construction.

The importance of the hilltop site of the Gardens is highlighted in the CMP p255:

‘The splendid views afforded on the summit also typified the Sublime. Wombat Hill’s views were rapturously described in virtually all descriptions of the Gardens from its earliest days, and the 360˚ cyclorama available from the summit during the nineteenth century were made possible because of the Hill’s conical shape. Although this cyclorama today is achieved only by ascending the Pioneers’ Memorial Tower, selected areas in the Gardens continue to provide stunning views over the surrounding countryside. Views of Wombat Hill from the township are also particularly dramatic, and these too have been central to Daylesford’s identity since its earliest settlement. The initial view of the conical ‘hill’, densely clothed with the dramatic vertical spires and distinct foliage of conifers as seen from the township signals the site’s special character and invites exploration.’

The 2017 Master Plan designates the south eastern slope as part of The Garden of Views and constructing a covered seat would become a focus for more accessibility for visitors to what is currently an underutilised part of the site – but one with considerable potential.

So, with the change of site, it is hoped to link the lost wooden structure with the lost historic tree and to enable more of the hillside viewing aspects of the Gardens to be enjoyed.