Melbourne
Leader

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Urbane jungle's garden

It was almost turned to concrete. But fortunately a grand East Melbourne garden has survived to be enjoyed by all this weekend.

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Picture: ANDREW HENSHAW
N22ME104

Secret garden throws open the gates

OFFICE towers may loom in the distance, but within Bishopscourt's boundaries remains a peaceful, green oasis not often revealed to the public.

Until this weekend that is, when Bishopscourt's gates swing open as part of Australia's Open Garden Scheme.

The heritage-listed East Melbourne property was to be subdivided for sale by its owner, the Anglican Church, two years ago.

But the sale bid failed thanks to the efforts of Australian Garden History Society members who ensured Heritage Victoria also opposed the move.

Society president Helen Page said society members worked hard to restore and maintain the garden and prove to the church it was worth keeping.

''You can see the high-rise buildings of the city centre, yet it's so peaceful,'' she said.

Ms Page said Bishopscourt, which is 150 years old this year, was the last house and garden in the City of Melbourne still in its original form.

Bishopscourt house has been the official residence of Melbourne's Anglican Archbishop since 1853.

The original garden design by Charles Swyer remains and includes pergolas, broad lawns, wood walks and several spectacular trees. Bishopscourt, at 120 Clarendon St, will be open from 10am-4.30pm, Saturday and Sunday.

Entry costs $5, with food and plants for sale.



Australian Garden History Society president Helen Page prepares Bishopscourt's garden for the open weekend. N22ME104