

**Locality:** STRATFORD  
**Place address:** TYERS STREET  
**Citation date** 2016  
**Place type (when built):** Soldiers' Memorial Park, Memorial, Gates  
**Recommended heritage protection:** Local government level  
Local Planning Scheme: Yes  
Vic Heritage Register: No  
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

**Place name:** Stratford Soldiers' Park and Soldiers' Memorial



**Architectural Style:** Interwar Classical WW1 Obelisk Monument  
**Designer / Architect:** Not known

## Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H is the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with level of Government legislation.

### *What is significant?*

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Fallen Soldiers' Memorial on Tyers Street, Stratford, including the whole of the land, the monument on the site, the park gates and Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) are significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Fallen Soldiers' Memorial is historically, socially, aesthetically and scientifically significant at a local level.

### *Why is it significant?*

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Fallen Soldiers' Memorial is **historically significant at a local level**. It is significant for the erection of memorial obelisk and gates and supporting piers, in recognition of the soldiers from the district who served in WW1, WW2, and several other conflicts, as identified on each of the plaques. The Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) is a recent planting and represents a Lone Pine in association with the memorial. (Criterion A)

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Fallen Soldiers' Memorial is **socially significant at a local level** for the volunteers who raised funds for the memorial obelisk and gate and piers, and for Anzac Day and other remembrance services held there over the past 95 years until present day. (Criteria A & G)

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Soldiers' Memorial is **aesthetically significant at a local level** for the WW1 obelisk monument facing Tyers Street, constructed of high quality materials such as granite and bluestone, the park setting, the Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) near the memorial that represents a Long Pine, and the memorial gates and piers at the Tyers Street entrance. (Criterion E)

Stratford Soldiers' Park and Soldiers' Memorial is **scientifically significant at a local level** for the work of the artisans with stonemasonry skills which are now rarely used for new monuments. (Criteria B & F)

## Statutory Recommendations

This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme to the extent of the title boundary as shown on the map.

External Paint Controls	Yes, including cleaning
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes
Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	Yes
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	Not assessed

## Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



### KEY

- Recommended for Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

### Stratford Soldiers' Park and Soldiers' Memorial Tyers St, Stratford

Project: Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study  
Client: Wellington Shire Council  
Author: Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd  
Date: 12/2/16

## History

### Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes from the *Wellington Shire Thematic History* (2005):

8. Governing and administering:

- 8.7 War and Defence

9. Developing cultural institutions and way of life:

- 9.2. Memorials

The following is based on information taken from the *Wellington Shire Thematic Environmental History* (Context 2005:45-6):

Memorials are erected throughout the Shire in honour of pioneers and district explorers, significant events and people, and those who served in world wars and other conflicts.

The soldiers' memorials that are spread throughout the Shire show the impact that the two world wars, and subsequent conflicts, had on so many communities and families within the Shire. It must be remembered that while commonly referred to today as 'war memorials', these memorials were originally erected in honour of, and to commemorate, the soldiers and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The memorials were often funded by the community and erected with great community pride, in honour of the locals who died or served and returned.

The group of Rosedale memorials comprises two soldiers memorials and an Angus McMillan memorial. Among the names listed on the soldiers memorials are those of James Wilfred Harrap and Ernest Merton Harrap, brothers from Willung who were killed on the same day at the battle for Polygon Wood near Ypres in 1917. Listed on the Briagolong soldiers' memorial are the names of six Whitelaw brothers, three of whom were killed on active service and one who died later from wounds received. A memorial to their mother, Annie Whitelaw, was erected at her grave in honour of her sacrifice, and to all mothers of sons who served at the front. Soldiers' memorials also remain at Maffra, Stratford and Yarram, to name a few. While St James Anglican Church in Heyfield stands as a Soldiers' Memorial Church. There are also remnants of avenues of honour. The pine trees at Stratford lining the route of the former highway were planted as a memorial to soldiers who served in the First World War. Many of the memorials also have plantings, such as a lone pine, planted in connection with the memorial.

Among the many other memorials in the Shire are those to district pioneers. The cairns erected to Angus McMillan and Paul Strzelecki in 1927 follow their routes through the Shire and were part of an orchestrated campaign of the Victorian Historical Memorials Committee to infuse a sense of history into a landscape that had no ancient monuments.

The struggle for road access in isolated areas is remembered by a cairn dedicated to the Country Roads Board, erected in 1935 at the intersection of the Binginwarri and Hiawatha roads. Transforming a landscape from dryland grazing to irrigated pasture is symbolised by a dethridge wheel mounted on a cairn on the Nambrok Denison estate. A memorial is planned at site of the West Sale Holding Centre to commemorate the migrants who came to settle in postwar Australia. Bronze plaques, designed by Sale artist Annemieke Mein and on display in Sale, document the contributions of several famous Gippslanders, including singer Ada Crossley and writer Mary Grant Bruce.

## Place history

The 1923 Stratford War Memorial was moved from its original position in Dixon St and is now located within the Soldiers Memorial Park, located on lots 8 and 9 (section 4, Township of Stratford), fronting Tyers Street. The park, dedicated in 1953 to commemorate those who served in various conflicts, comprises public facilities, mature trees, a playground, the memorial obelisk and memorial gates. The memorial gates, located at the main entrance to the Park fronting Tyers Street, were erected c1953 by the Stratford Returned Soldiers League. A recent photo of the gates (Figure H1) showed that the brick piers supporting the iron gates were face-brick with the plaques facing Tyers Street (piers since rendered and painted, and an arch bearing the words 'Memorial Park' has been installed above) (*Gippsland Times*, 9 Jun 1949:2; Monument Australia).

The Stratford Citizen's Committee appealed for funds for the erection of a soldiers' memorial from 1923 (*Gippsland Times*, 18 Jun 1923:5). In November 1923, the Fallen Soldiers Memorial was unveiled by Brigadier-General Forsyth (*Gippsland Times*, 6 Nov 1924:3) at its original location on Dixon Street (Figure H2). It was dedicated to the Shire's servicemen who served in World War I, including the three Mitchell Brothers. Later plaques were late added to in memory of those who served in, World War II, followed by the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The memorial was probably relocated to its current location with the opening of the Memorial Park in 1953. The granite obelisk is almost identical in design to the central (WW1) obelisk at the Briagolong Memorial (SDHS).

A Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) was planted recently as part of the renovation of the park, representing a Long Pine. It stands to the south of the memorial. A flagpole stands to the north of the memorial.



**Figure H1. Earlier photo of the park gates when they remained face-brick; date of photo not known (Monument Australia).**



**Figure H2.** Early photo dating to the unveiling on 2 Nov 1924, of the Stratford Fallen Soldiers Memorial. Note the fence without a gate for access to lay wreaths. Also note the level of the ground (crushed white gravel?) hides the foundation concrete, which was incorrectly exposed in recent works (SDHS, ID No. 04003-28VSFH).

### Sources

Context Pty Ltd (2005), *Wellington Shire Heritage Study*, and vol 2: 'Wellington Shire Heritage Study Thematic Environmental History', prepared for Wellington Shire Council.

*Gippsland Times*

Monument Australia, 'Memorial Park, Stratford', <<http://monumentaaustralia.org.au/>>, accessed 4 Jan 2016.

Stratford & District Historical Society (SDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Judy Richards and Linda Barraclough, provided Nov 2015 & May 2016.

## Description

This section describes the place in 2016. Refer to the Place History for additional important details describing historical changes in the physical fabric.

The 1923 obelisk memorial is now at the Raymond Street end of the 1953 Memorial Park, which also comprises 1953 Memorial Gates and face brick Piers (recently rendered and painted), a Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) representing a Lone Pine, landscaping elements, vegetation and trees. The park also serves as an active multipurpose park with public facilities and playground.

The monument has been symmetrically positioned at the northern end of the park, but it faces towards Tyers Street. There are very recent landscaping works including a large circular concrete apron around the Obelisk, and three paths radiating from the apron, but none of them provide a formal processional route directly to the front of the Obelisk. The Obelisk does not face the 1953 memorial gates which are entered off Tyers Street, but further south. There was, until very recently, a circular landscaping element directly in from the 1953 gates which would be the usual place to position the monument relative to the gates, and perhaps it was located there some time ago.

The memorial gateway was originally constructed in 1953 in the post war style of unpainted brick piers with decorative wrought iron gates. There is a pair of vehicle entry gates in the centre and two

pedestrian gates either side. Recently the piers were rendered and painted and an over arching trussed metal sign reading "Memorial Park" constructed over the top of the vehicle gates.

A Himalayan Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) was planted recently, representing a Long Pine, during the renovation of the park. It stands to the south of the memorial. A flagpole stands to the north of the memorial.

**Figure D1.** The granite obelisk in its 'recent' setting. It sits on a square granite pedestal, which in turn is on a faceted granite base, and is further elevated on two bluestone steps. The concrete foundations were not meant to be seen and hence the unfortunate appearance of the low quality materials and seeping salts at the base of this magnificent monument. The exposed aggregate concrete apron was constructed c2014.

**Figure D2.** The 1953 Memorial Gateway facing Tyers St, with four brick piers (originally unpainted but now rendered and painted), 4 black metal gates and the recent Memorial Park trussed arch.

**Figure D3.** The concrete foundations were meant to be concealed below ground level, (Fig H2) now show salts leaching out from the base. There are two levels of bluestone steps above the concrete, some with (lime) mortar missing from the joints, the granite faceted base with names (e.g. GALLIPOLI) incised by hand into the stone and painted black, and a modern brass painted plaque attached to the vertical face. On the square granite pedestal there are the names of soldiers hand cut in lead and painted black. The dark patches seen in the granite stone are natural impurities. The back of the monument has names of soldiers from WW2.

**Figure D4.** An aerial view in 2012 shows the 1953 gates half way along the Tyers St boundary, and the path directly from them to a circular feature. The 1923 obelisk memorial was set in a square sacred space with two informal paths split from one, to go to the two north corners of the park along The 2014 Aerial shows the recent renovation of the park with the concrete paths and circular concrete apron around the memorial.



**Figure D1.** The granite obelisk in its existing (recently constructed) setting.



Figure D2. 1953 Memorial Gateway (altered 20140 facing Tyers St.



Figure D3. Detail of the concrete foundations, bluestone steps, names ( eg GALLIPOLI) incised into the granite, and names on soldiers in lead. Modern bronze and painted plaque.



Figure D4. Aerial views in 2012 (left) and 2014 (right). Note concrete paths added in 2014.

### Sources

All photos taken in 2015 by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd as part of Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study.

Aerials provided by Wellington Shire Council.

## Comparative analysis

In Victoria, 1,366 monuments that were erected to commemorate various conflicts, were recorded in the study by Rowe (2008), however, less than 9% of these have protection with a Heritage Overlay.

### Obelisk

In Victoria, 250 monuments are in the form of an Obelisk, as recorded in the study by Rowe (2008 Vol 1:61): "The most popular war monument erected after the Boer War and First and Second World Wars is the obelisk. Defined as a 'monolith, square on plan, tapering slightly towards the top, which terminates in a pyramid', obelisks were originally 'associated with the sun, were both phallic and gnomons, and were symbols of continuity, power, regenerations, and stability.' A politician after the First World War described the memorial obelisk as having both secular and spiritual significance in its shape: 'its upright form spoke of the upright character of these men, their actions and noble deeds should taken them like its column heavenward and upward.'"

Fewer war memorials were erected after WW1 and a number of these were functional structures such as gateways as seen at Stratford, schools, parks, swimming pools and buildings. Most of the world war one memorials were updated with plaques, as at Stratford, to remember world war two and later conflicts.

In Wellington Shire there are numerous memorials, but only 9 are monuments to commemorate conflicts, of which 2 are obelisks, 2 are flagstaffs on low cairns, 1 drinking fountain, 2 statues on pedestals, 1 pillar-cenotaph, and 1 obelisk-cenotaph. The two obelisks are very similar in design, which is unusual, with some variation in the wording and decorative features.

#### *Gates and Piers*

The gates at Stratford were one of 146 memorial gates in Victoria, most without arches above, as at Stratford (the arch constructed recently). According to Ken Inglis (cited in Rowe 2008:1,65) memorial arches were considered and rejected by a number of committees who decided that triumph was not the message they wanted their monument to transmit. When people did choose an arch they gave it, more often than not, the character of an entrance to a park as at Stratford, or sportsground, with gates attached, prompting rhetoric not about winning but about crossing a threshold from peace to war. Arches actually proclaiming Victory are rare (Rowe 2008:1, 241).

#### *Parks*

The Stratford Memorial Park is one of 42 parks in Victoria, which were either laid out as war memorial parks or reserves, or existing parks that were renamed as commemorative reserves after the First World War, and particularly after the Second World War. There are some parks associated with commemorating those soldiers who served and died in the Boer War, and other wars of the 20th century. Unlike Gardens (e.g. Briagolong) which were more aesthetically refined, sometimes being fenced in and featuring flower beds and landscaping and possibly entrance gates, parks were more places for active recreation rather than quiet, aesthetic contemplation.

#### *Sources*

Rowe, David (2008), Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, 'Survey of Victoria's Veteran-Related Heritage', Vols 1-3.

Curl, J.S. (1991), *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1991, p.242. cited in Rowe 2008.

## Management Guidelines

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. They also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant. The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive and a pragmatic approach will be taken when considering development proposals. Alternative approaches to those specified in the guidelines will be considered where it can be demonstrated that a desirable development outcome can be achieved that does not impact on a place's heritage integrity.

### 1. Location and Setting

- 1.1. Retain the 1953 formal entry gateway along Tyler Street.
- 1.2. Provide new landscape works to include a formal path directly in line with the front of the monument rather than the current situation which requires a memorial procession, during a memorial service, to walk up one of the angled paths to the side of the monument and then to walk around the recent circle to the front.
- 1.3. Retain a sacred space, such as the circle of exposed aggregate concrete, or reconstruct the former square space around the monument. Conceal the concrete footing.
- 1.4. Retain clear views to the front of the monument from Tyler Street.

- 1.5. Do not put any signs, or directional signage, e.g. 'Memorial Park', in the view lines directly in front of the monuments as seen from Tyler Street.
- 1.6. New memorials should be placed to the side of the stone memorial, outside the existing circular concrete apron, not behind or in front of it. New memorials should harmonise with the WW1 memorial rather than contrast, unless they are visually separate (not seen in the same view as the WW1 monument).
- 1.7. Provide a backdrop of memorial trees between the monument and the house directly behind it.

## 2. Care and Maintenance

- 2.1. Refer to the Resources list below. These were written by Jenny Dickens, Senior Conservator, Heritage Victoria. They are in plain English, well illustrated and have very important instructions to avoid irreparable damage from using modern methods and products. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.
- 2.2. The biggest risk to memorials is permanent damage by the use of cleaning materials, agents and methods. E.g. Sand or water blasting will remove some stone and sand blasting in particular will destroy the original highly skilled hand cut names, and this is serious damage which cannot be undone.
- 2.3. Memorials are meant to develop a patina of age to imbue them with a sense of timelessness, and gravity of the memory. They are not meant to look bright and super clean, apart from when they did when they were built.
- 2.4. This memorial has been cleaned and new concrete apron and paths inserted, therefore, no specific works are urgent.

## Resources

The following fact sheets contain practical and easy-to-understand information about the care and preservation of war heritage and memorabilia commonly found in local communities across Victoria. They can be downloaded at <<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/victorian-veterans-virtual-museum/preserving-veterans-heritage/preserving-war-heritage-and-memorabilia>>:

- Avenues-of-honour-and-other-commemorative-plantings
- Finding-the-right-conservator-tradespeople-and-materials
- General-Principles
- Metal-objects: including swords and edged weapons
- Useful-resources-and-contacts
- War-Memorials.