

Locality: YARRAM
Place address: COMMERCIAL ROAD (ROAD RESERVE)
Citation date 2016
Place type (when built): Soldiers' Memorials
Recommended heritage protection: Local government level
Local Planning Scheme: Yes
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): Yes
Vic Heritage Register: No

Place name: Yarram Soldiers' Memorials



Architectural Style: Inter War Classical
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 the level of Government legislation.

What is significant?

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials, on the Commercial Road median strip, Yarram, including the whole of the land shown on the map, the memorial structures on the site, fence, the landscape setting and potential to yield archaeological data, is significant.

How is it significant?

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials are historically, socially, aesthetically and scientifically significant at a local level to Wellington Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials are **historically significant at a local level**. They are located on their original site, on land in the central road reserve of Commercial Road. They are significant for the erection of memorials in recognition of the soldiers from the district who served in WW1, WW2, and several other conflicts, identified on each of the memorials. (Criteria A & D)

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials are **socially significant at a local level** for the volunteers who raised funds and organised the design and unveiling of the monuments, and for the Anzac Day and other remembrance services held there over the past 95 years until present day. (Criteria A & G)

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials are **aesthetically significant at a local level** for the WW1 and WW2 monuments, which are symmetrically placed, facing north along Commercial Road, and constructed of high quality materials such as granite and bluestone in a finely balanced design. The construction of the WW2 and later conflicts monument is designed to harmonise with the WW1 monument, as it is constructed of similar materials and colours, which is particularly significant, as this is unique in Wellington Shire and rare in Victoria as it visually creates a harmonious, strong and dignified memorial over a period of 30 years. (Criteria B & E)

The Yarram Soldiers' Memorials are **scientifically significant at a local level** for the work of the artisans with stonemasonry skills, which are now rarely used for new monuments. It also has potential to yield archaeological evidence in the land around the monuments. (Criteria B, C & F)

Statutory Recommendations

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

External Paint Controls	Yes, including cleaning
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	Yes, fence
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

**Yarram Soldiers' Memorial
Commercial Rd (median strip), Yarram**

Project: Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study
Client: Wellington Shire Council
Author: Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd
Date: 15/5/16

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 Yarram Soldiers' Memorial is located on the central road reserve of Commercial Road, at the intersection of Yarram Street. The soldiers' memorial was unveiled at its current location on 10 August 1921. The monument cost 500 pounds, with an additional 50 pounds for a fence (YDHS).

The memorial comprises a central marble statue of a digger, standing in the symbolic funereal position, with his rifle held upside down (Monuments Australia). The digger stands on a large pedestal, listing the names of soldiers from the Shire of Alberton who 'gave their lives for the country' and 'to the men who offered service' in World War I, on the north and south sides of the pedestal. At the base of the World War I memorial is a recently erected plaque that commemorates those Australians who participated in the various twentieth century conflicts. To the rear (south) of the digger is a memorial consisting of two granite pillars connected by a low granite wall, honouring the fallen of World War II from the district.

In April 1923, the *Australasian* (21 Apr 1923:51) published photos of memorials in various states, including that of Yarram, before the celebration of ANZAC Day (Figure H1). The photo showed the Yarram Soldiers Memorial with the digger soldier standing atop the pedestal, which clearly had the inscription on its west side (it did not appear to have a list names on the front of the pedestal at this date). The pedestal stood on a stepped base (the ground level has since built up so paving meets the top step). The memorial was surrounded by an elaborate fence consisting of handmade, short quarry faced granite/bluestone obelisk posts linked with a metal chain. A photo dating to the same period (c1923) (Figure H2) showed the memorial also had the inscription on the west side of the pedestal (and still no names listed on the front) (SLV). The fence formed a square-shaped sacred space close to the memorial, which appeared to be the only barrier from the road.

In 1929, the names of 74 soldiers were placed on the monument (YDHS).

A photo dating to 1947 (Figure H3) showed a wide median strip with concrete kerbs enclosing grassed land, plant beds and trees, had been constructed along the centre of the road by this date. The elaborate fence enclosing the sacred space had been removed for these works, and the memorial was now surrounded by a grassed area and plant beds at the north and south ends, with no fence (SLV). The height of the ground had been raised above the height of the stepped base by this date. The soldiers' names were listed on the front (north side) of the pedestal, and a flagpole stood in front of the memorial.

A photo dating between 1947 and 1954 (Figure H4) showed that the World War II memorial (two pillars connected by the low wall) had been erected by this date. At this time the monument was sitting in a grassed area of concrete kerbed reserve with no other landscaping and no fence. A photo dating to c1969 (Figure H5) showed that the memorial and road reserve remained unchanged since the 1947-1954 photo (SLV).

In 2015, the section of road reserve is bound by a simple factory made metal post and chain fence, allowing entrance from the north. A rosemary hedge and flagpole are located at the north end, followed by the World War I digger memorial and World War II memorial, all set in a variety of post 1950s pavers. To the rear (south) of the memorials is a rose garden. The digger statue has been damaged from inappropriate cleaning methods.

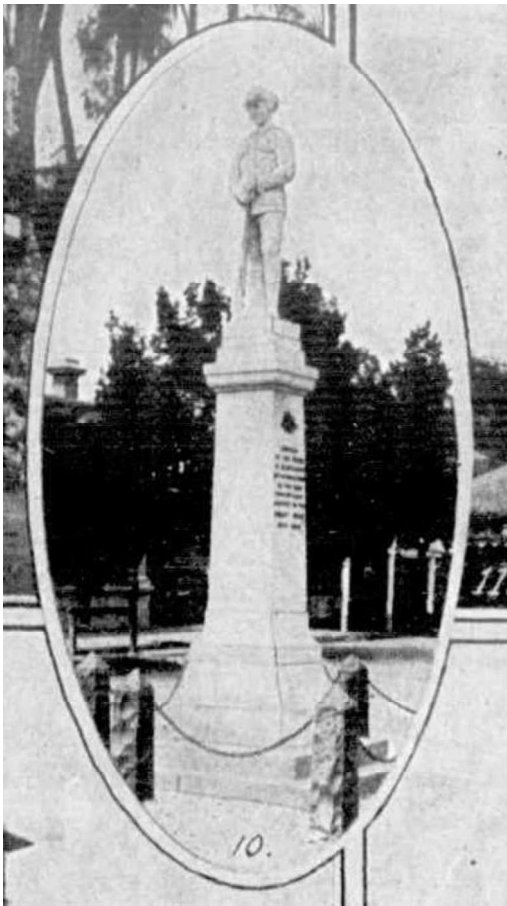


Figure H1. A photo of the memorial as published in a newspaper in April 1923 (*Australasian*, 21 Apr 1923:51).



Figure H2. The Soldiers' monument c1923 (SLV).



Figure H3. The memorial in 1947, with the flagpole (SLV).



Figure H4. Photo dating between 1947 and 1954, after the erection of the World War II Soldiers' monuments (SLV).



Figure H5. The memorial c1969 (SLV).

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

Monuments Australia, 'Yarram War Memorial', <<http://monumentaustralia.org.au/display/34091-yarram-war-memorial>>, accessed 25 January 2016.

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, 'Commercial Road, Yarram, South Gippsland / Alan K. Jordan'; Image No: a08033; Accession no. H32492/5879; Accession no. H91.330/4591, <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>>, accessed 25 January 2016.

Yarram & District Historical Society (YDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Cate Renfrey, Nov 2015. Including the booklet 'Heritage Trail along Commercial Road, Yarram'.

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 Yarram Soldiers Memorials are an impressive group of large monuments that have the landmark presence in the main street of Yarram, that they were designed to have. The WW1 memorial is composed of a substantial bluestone stepped plinth (inappropriately concealed by 1940s road works, when road levels were raised and red bricks and concrete pavers installed), very tall polished (Harcourt?) granite pedestal, surmounted by a digger sculptured in marble.

The WW2 monument is an impressive post war design which has respected the original WW1 design by using matching polished granite. Unlike many additions to original WW1 memorials which are usually much less impressive and visually unrelated, the Yarram Memorials illustrate the successful achievement of two designs which are subtly different, and of their era, but when viewed together sit harmoniously as one. This is aesthetically significant.

Recently a small (matching) granite stone with a modern brass, paint and laquer plaque as been put in front of the WW1 memorial. A flagpole is also in front of the memorial (blocking a clear view of the digger); one has been there since the road works were done in the 1940s.

The lead lettering is painted black, and it is in good condition, as are the metal decorations, and the granite, however the marble soldier has been damaged by 'acid washing' (see Fig D1).

The original fence of hand made quarry faced stone obelisks and chain, has been removed, possibly due to the road works in the 1940s. For many years there was no fence at all. A more recent fence of white painted metal bollards (corroding) supporting a white painted chain, has been installed around the monuments.



Figure D1. Detail of the damaged 'sugary' surface of the digger, particularly visible in this photos, on the edges of the hat and ears.



Figure D2. Detail illustrating the inappropriate dominance of the large area of 'recent' red brick.



Figure D3. Illustrates the design of the WW2 monument, good condition of the polished granite, and black painted hand cut, lead lettering.



Figure D4. Detail of the polished granite surface, and hand cut black painted lead lettering, all in excellent condition.

Sources

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

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.

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 statues on pedestals are in Yarram and in Sale, and both are very different in design. The Yarram one is still located on its original site (a significant heritage feature), however, the Sale one has been relocated to the forecourt of the Civic Hall.

The Yarram Soldiers Memorial is the only memorial with a statue of a digger in Wellington Shire, although there are several others in Victoria. The Yarram memorial is the only one with such an aesthetically harmonious and significant addition to the WW1 memorial, to commemorate WW2 and other conflicts. Most commonly, towns in Victoria put small plaques onto the WW1 monuments to commemorate other conflicts, or added aesthetically different memorials in and around the WW1 monument.

According to Rowe (2008 Vol 1:17), one of the most common forms of commemorating the contribution and sacrifice of those who served in the Second World War was to add to an existing First World War memorial, usually in the form of an additional plaque or inscription, or possibly additional features, such as a memorial wall or war trophies.

Sources

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

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 memorials in this original location.
- 1.2. Ensure all future roadworks and landscaping works respect the original location of the monuments and manage developments which make it practical and safe to leave them there.
- 1.3. Retain a backdrop of mature large trees such as the existing ones in the median strip to the south.
- 1.4. Do not put advertising signs or facilities such as a toilet block near the site, to retain the dignity of the memorials.
- 1.5. Retain clear views to the monuments from the streets.
- 1.6. Do not put signage in the view lines to the monuments.
- 1.7. New memorials should be placed to the side of the WW1 monument, outside the existing concrete apron, not in front of it, and they should be designed to fit harmoniously with the existing WW1 and WW2 monuments by being lower, similar colours and materials.

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. 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. acid washing dissolves marble, which cannot be undone, sand and water blasting removes the stonemasons skilled decorative works, the polished surfaces, lettering and details.
 - 2.2.1. Unfortunately, the statue of the digger has suffered severe damage due to incorrect cleaning of the smooth sculptured marble (this damage is typical of acid washing), which now has a sugary appearance (see Fig D1).
- 2.3. Memorials are meant to develop a patina of age to imbue them with a sense of timelessness, and gravity of the memories. They are not meant to look bright, white and super clean, apart from when they were built.

3. Restoration

- 3.1. The marble statue appears to have been acid washed in the past, and now has dissolved fragments of marble, as acid has soaked into the stone, continuing the damage. The sugary surface provides crevices for dirt, algae and lichen.
 - 3.1.1. This damage cannot be undone, but ongoing damage can be slowed using the following method (from Jenny Dickens, Senior Conservator Her Vic):
 - 3.1.1.1. Cleaning Marble Memorials Methodology**
 - 3.1.1.2. Clean off windblown dirt with a small amount mild detergent in water, sponges and paint brushes. Followed by rinsing in clean water. No scrubbing. Suitable detergents are hand dishwashing liquids (**Not** dishwasher detergents).

- 3.1.1.3. Apply a quaternary ammonium compound like 'Wet and Forget' or 'D-2 Biological Solution' Use NSW HO's recommendations (below) of painting on the solution and leaving it for 4-6 weeks before brushing with a stiff hair brush. No scrubbing with wire or stiff nylon bristle brushes.
<<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/tagbiologicalgrowths.pdf>>
 - 3.1.1.4. This method is a lot better because the 4-6 weeks allows the plant life to die and the roots to shrink and dry up. So the removal is a lot easier and less likely to damage the stone.
 - 3.1.1.5. Application of Lime Water
 - 3.1.1.6. A small amount of lime water would improve the appearance and strengthen roughened areas of marble. But if the marble still has its original low gloss polish it will be dulled by the lime water. Lime water should only be used on grey areas. These will be a bit grainy and rough and would benefit from the lime water. The white areas will not. So it should only be applied after all the cleaning is done and only to the roughened areas. See image below of an original low gloss marble surface – this type of surface does not need lime water.
 - 3.1.1.7. How to make lime water <<http://www.hometrainingtools.com/a/making-limewater-solution-science-teaching-tip>>
 - 3.1.1.8. Calcium hydroxide is called slaked lime or hydrated lime so it should be easy for stone masons to get. They should only use the clear solution and not the deposit at the bottom of the jar. They should not slosh lots of the solution around on the sculpture.
 - 3.1.1.9. Wet the brush and wipe of excess and brush onto roughened areas only. Allow to dry for a few days to allow the lime to develop before applying more - only if needed. Don't build up a thick layer on the surface. One application is probably fine.
- 3.2. When road works are planned in the vicinity of the monuments (perhaps for traffic calming with nibs to create a single lane on either side of the monument), investigate enlarging the 1940s concrete edged island so that larger numbers of people can attend memorial services without spilling onto the road.
 - 3.2.1. Importantly, take this opportunity to lower the ground to the original level and expose the stepped bluestone plinth, and remove the more recent inappropriate red bricks and concrete pavers (Figs H1 and H2 show the base that should be revealed).
 - 3.2.2. Do an archaeological survey when the recent bricks and pavers are removed to reduce the ground level (do not expose the concrete footing as has happened at Briagolong and Stratford).
 - 3.2.3. Install a light grey exposed aggregate concrete surface at the original ground level.
 - 3.2.4. Ensure any concrete does not touch the stone of the monuments by inserting 10mm x 10mm grey polyurethane seal over a zipped Ableflex joint filler around the stone plinth, to protect the stone from concrete adhering to it and to allow expansion joint movement and prevent water from seeping below the monument.
 - 3.3. Consider relocating the 1940s flagpole further to the side of the monument so that the view of the digger is not broken by the pole; also relocate or ground the power pole which is right behind the memorial, and currently competes with the beauty and sanctity of the memorial, and is visually intrusive. If the monument is lit, use uplighting rather than an intrusive power pole.

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
- Useful-resources-and-contacts
- War-Memorials.