

WAR MEMORIAL TOWER, MATURE PLANTING  
AND PARK,  
ELTHAM-YARRA GLEN ROAD,  
KANGAROO GROUND.

**BUILT:**

1925-26<sup>1</sup>  
CIRCA 1974 FIRE SPOTTER'S  
ROOM CONSTRUCTED ON  
TOP OF THE TOWER<sup>1</sup>

**THEMES ILLUSTRATED BY THIS PLACE:**

THIS PLACE DOES NOT  
ILLUSTRATE ANY OF THE  
MAJOR THEMES OF THE  
SHIRE'S HISTORY. THE WAR  
MEMORIAL TOWER IS A  
ONE-OFF STRUCTURE

**BASIS OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

SOCIAL  
HISTORY  
ARCHITECTURE  
LANDSCAPE  
STREETSCAPE

**DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

**EXTENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

ALL OF TOWER, SANDSTONE  
BUILDING, MATURE EXOTIC  
SITE PLANTING, SITE AND  
ADJOINING SITES TO A  
RADIUS OF 150 METRES

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

REGISTER OF THE NATIONAL  
ESTATE

LOCAL PLANNING PROTECTION

War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.

*OLD PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE TOWER, BUT  
PRIOR TO THE INSTALLATION OF THE MAIN METAL PLAQUE FIXED ABOVE  
THE ENTRANCE ARCH (ELHPC NO. 406)*



## War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen Road Cont.

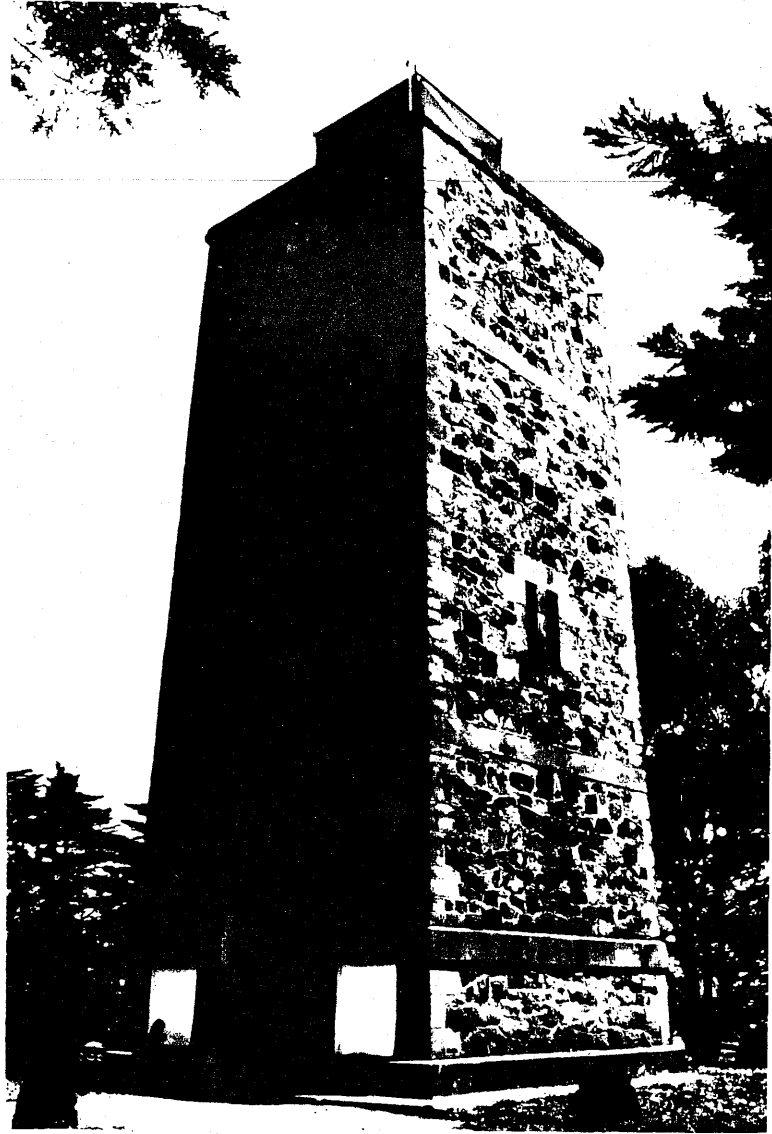
## CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower is one of Victoria's most unusual war memorials and commemorates those Shire residents who died in the First and Second World Wars. The initial idea came from a sketch by artist Harold Herbert and prominent Architects Stephenson and Meldrum designed the local sandstone structure. Situated on the highest point in the area, the tower has a panoramic 360° view. The Monterey Cypress windbreak which surrounds the park is visible from many parts of Kangaroo Ground and environs. From the late 1940s the tower has also played a significant role as a fire spotter tower. The other sandstone building is an early or original part of this reserve.

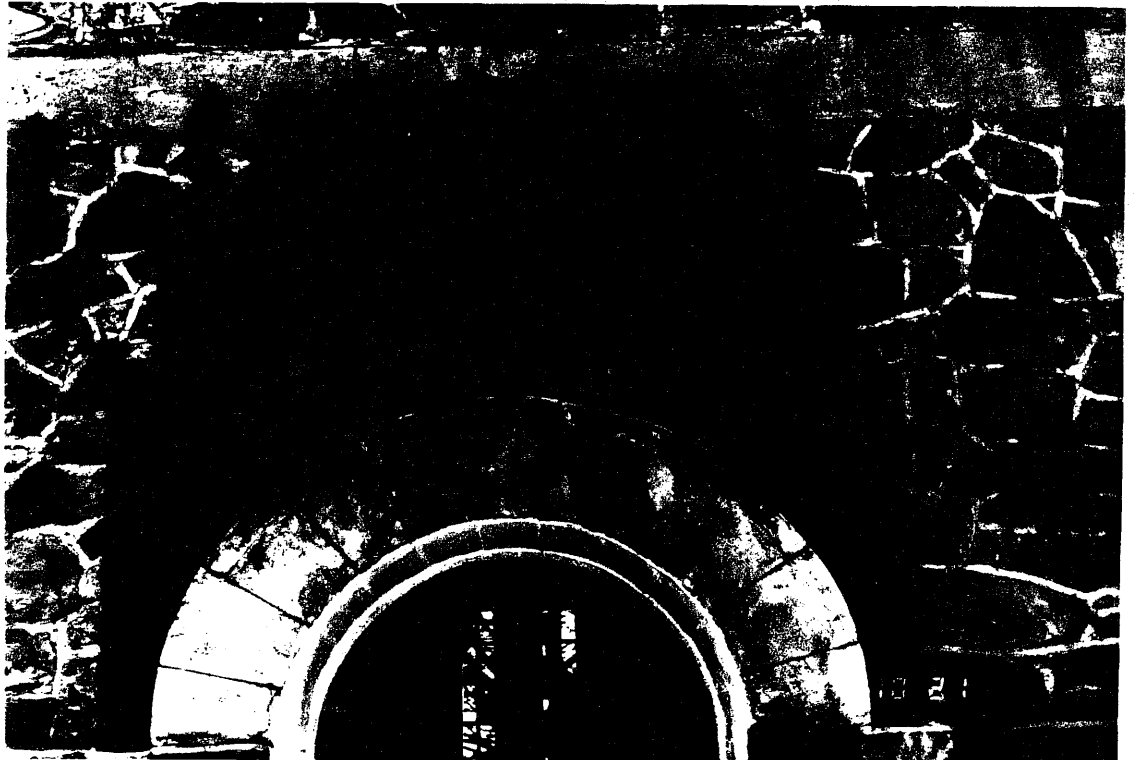
## HISTORY:

Original Use:	War memorial and lookout tower <sup>1</sup>
Later Use:	War memorial, lookout and fire spotter tower <sup>1</sup>
Original and Later Owner:	Shire of Eltham <sup>1</sup>
Architects/Designers:	Stephenson & Meldrum <sup>1</sup> (From a sketch by Harold Herbert)
Builder:	G. Rousell of Mordialloc <sup>1</sup>

The present tower, a local landmark, stands on the site of Kangaroo Ground's first war memorial, a stone cairn built after the First World War. In 1925, a public committee was formed and public donations were received to replace the cairn with a tower built in the style of the old English and Scottish watch towers. The Architects, Stephenson and Meldrum, designed the tower free of charge from a sketch by the artist, Harold Herbert. Professor William Osborne donated the stone from his nearby property, Kangaroo Hall. The tower was reinforced with concrete, faced with sandstone rubble, concrete quoins and dressings; the contractor was G. Rousell of Mordialloc.<sup>1</sup> The tower was unveiled on 11 November 1926 by the Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven, with a 1914-18 war honour plaque. The committee then entrusted the care of the tower and grounds to Eltham Shire Council.<sup>1</sup>



*BELOW DETAIL OF THE METAL PLAQUE SHOWING THE ORIGINAL MAIN SECTION AND ADDED 1939-1945 PLAQUES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ARCH*



War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.

Later, the Shire built a caretaker's cottage, which was dedicated on 16 November 1951 by the Victorian Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks; at the same time an additional plaque was dedicated honouring those who died in the 1939-45 war.<sup>3</sup>

By 1948, the tower had become a fire-spotter tower. This led to controversy in the late 1960s and early 1970s over the construction of a spotter's cabin on top. This was completed c.1974.

DESCRIPTION:

Tower

Style traditional ornamental structure.  
Design one-off.  
Plan square.  
Multi-storeyed.  
Walls local sandstone faced concrete.  
Roof flat concrete slab.  
Features are the design, memorial plaques, ground floor door, openings, the adjacent stone building and the mature site planting.

Sandstone Building

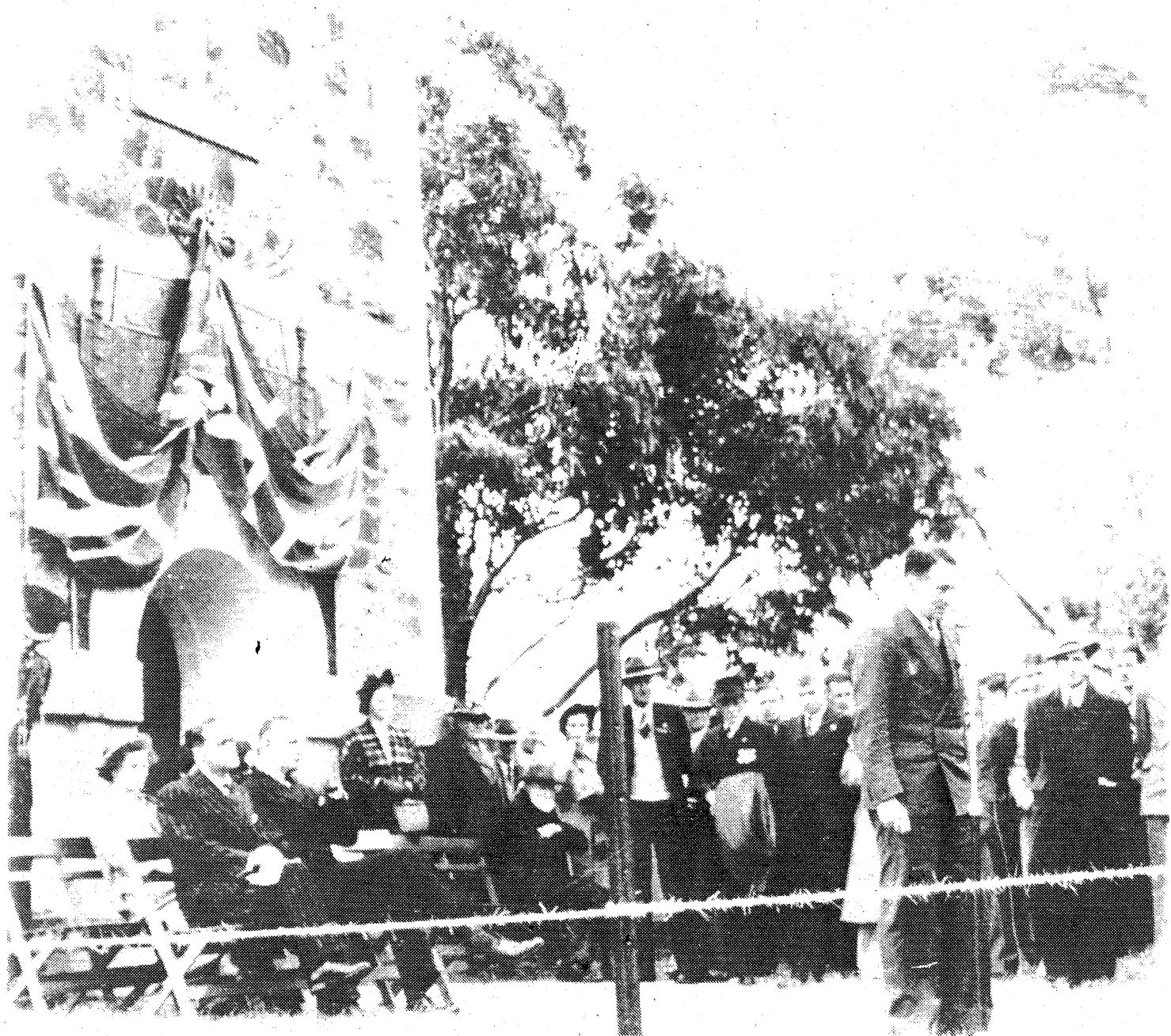
Style a-stylar.  
Design utilitarian.  
Plan rectangular.  
Single storied.  
Walls apparently solid sandstone.  
Roof gabled.  
Features are the utilitarian nature of this service building and its role as an original/early component of the site.

Planting

The War Memorial Tower is centrally positioned on the highest point of the site and surrounded on all sides by Monterey Cypress trees (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). The park itself consists of a very simple treatment with a gravel vehicle access road through a grassed area with various trees dotted around the lawn. Tree species include: Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), *Eucalyptus botryoides*, *Pittosporum undulatum*, *Quercus robur* and *Livistona australis*.

War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.

*DEDICATION OF THE 1939-1945 WAR MEMORIAL ON 16 NOVEMBER 1951  
BY THE GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA. SIR DALLAS BROOKS  
(ELHPC NO. 410)*



War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.

SOURCES:

1. Marguerite Marshall, Eltham Shire, pp. 40-41 (with full-page illustration); Miles Lewis, Australian Architectural Index.
2. ELHPC no. 406 - photograph of the tower at the end of its construction and prior to the installation of the metal plaque above the entrance. The tower was 'unveiled' on 11/11/1926.
3. ELHPC nos. 410 (dedication of the tower) and 414 (refreshments in a hall), both taken on 16 Nov. 1951.
4. ELHPC nos. 415 and 416, views of the surrounding countryside from the tower, not dated; no. 415 shows the site planting.

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES:

Tower

Keep tower intact.

The fire spotter's cabin detracts from the tower and over time should be removed and replaced with another facility, such as a new tall tower associated with the fire control section at the Kangaroo Ground Hall. An alternative would be to construct an aesthetically appropriate new structure on top of the war memorial tower, though it would of course distort the original design.

Regular maintenance as necessary.

Ensure water is not causing the decay of the tower.

When repainting use original colours and placement.

Planting

The park presently appears to be suffering from a low level of management and has the potential to be far more appealing if greater attention were given to this. The lawn areas need attention and many of the trees appear to have been insensitively lopped.

The site planting has its greatest value when viewed from a distance. The Monterey Cypress windbreaks are the major components of this distant view and they should be carefully maintained and the same species replanted in the event of death.

War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.



REFRESHMENTS AT THE DEDICATION IN 1951  
(ELHPC NO. 414)



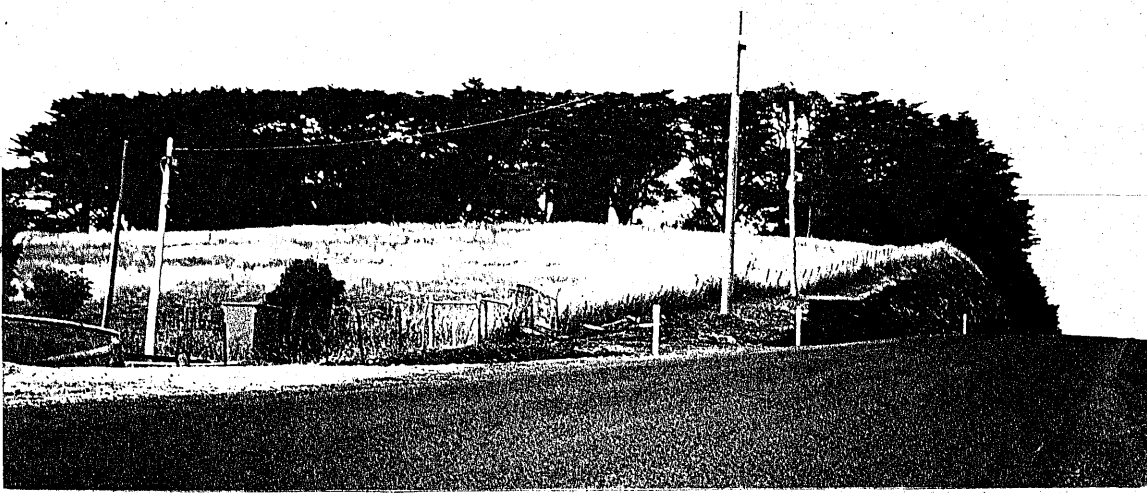
War Memorial Tower and Other Components, Eltham-Yarra Glen  
Road Cont.

Site as a whole

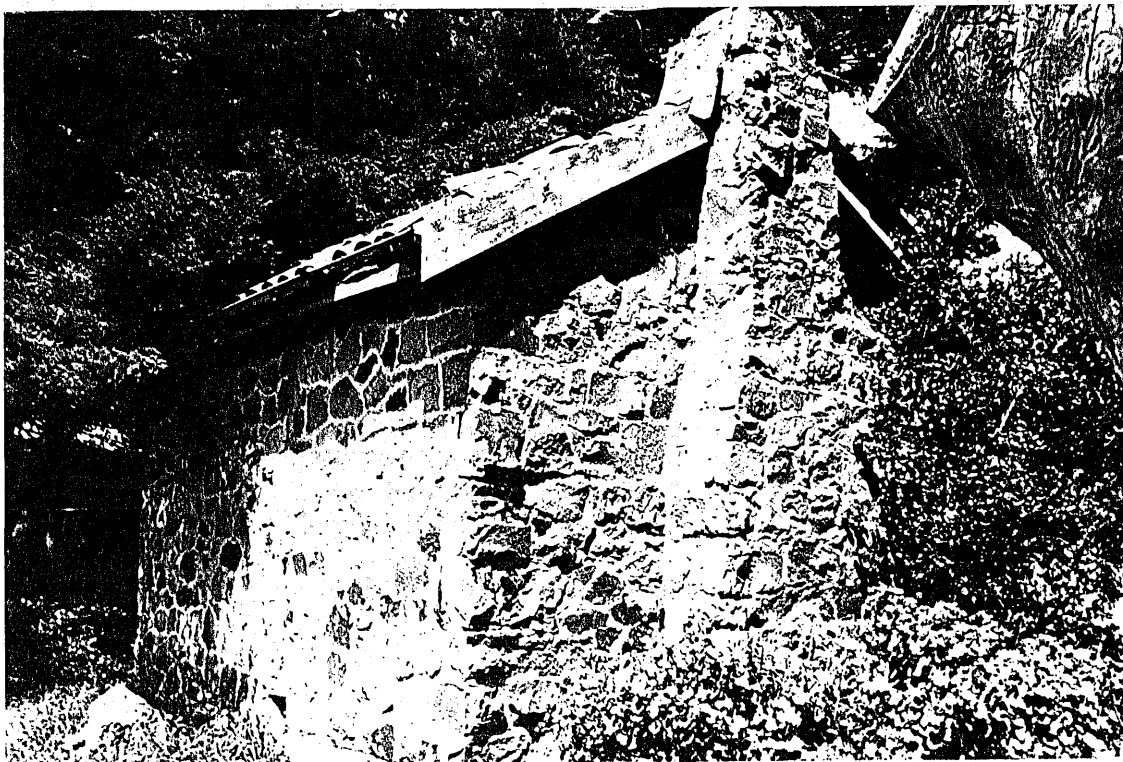
The site management and facilities in the park should be reviewed, with the aim of upgrading roads, signage, visitor amenities, tree management, lawns and planting.

*BELOW VIEW FROM THE TOWER SHOWING THE TOPS OF THE TREES PLANTED  
AROUND THE SITE (NOT DATED) (ELHPC NO. 415)*





MONTEREY  
CYPRESS  
TREES  
ARE  
PLANTED  
AROUND  
THE SITE  
ON THE  
BOUNDARIES



SANDSTONE  
BUILDING  
ON THE  
SITE - ITS  
ORIGINAL  
FUNCTION  
IS NOT  
KNOWN