

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Shelter (Rotunda)

Project File No: 0905

Address: Eastern Park Geelong 3220

Approx. Date: 1916c

Integrity: Moderate

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 11a.22

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This small shelter/rotunda appears to have been constructed in the early years of the 20th century. It appears on the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust Drainage Plan for 1916, which further suggests its construction prior to that time. An aerial photograph taken in c.1925 clearly shows the rotunda in its present position.

This structure achieved considerable notoriety on Monday 27 January 1997 as the site of a fatal lightning strike, which killed a member of a Melbourne Church picnic party. The female picnicker was sheltering in the rotunda during a freak storm. Her husband also died at the site, after suffering a heart attack from shock. A small hole in the rotunda roof was the only visible evidence of the incident. A similar lightning bolt strike more than three years previously had struck the ground approximately 30 metres from the rotunda, blowing a hole in the ground.

Description

The shelter (rotunda) in Eastern Park, Geelong, is set in a well-treed landscape with northern views to Corio Bay.

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The small shelter is characterised by an octagonal plan with fixed timber seating on all sides except for two doorways. The unusual ogee form roof is clad in galvanised corrugated iron and is supported by heavy stop chamfered timber columns. The roof is also steel framed and steel tie rods are attached to the top of the columns to support the centre of the roof.

The small shelter has experienced some changes. The early timber finial at the apex of the roof is missing, as are brackets at the top of the columns. The capped timber balustrading - forming a herringbone pattern - has replaced an earlier timber capped vertical boarded balustrade.

Statement of Cultural Significance

The shelter (rotunda) in Eastern Park, Geelong, has significance as a moderately intact example of an early 20th century garden structure within a well-treed landscape and with views to Corio Bay. Built before 1916, the shelter appears to be in fair condition.

The shelter (rotunda) in Eastern Park is architecturally and historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the development of Eastern Park and associated garden structures in the early 20th century, and it demonstrates some original design qualities. These qualities include the octagonal plan with fixed timber seating on all sides except for two doorways, unusual ogee form roof clad in galvanised corrugated iron, heavy stop chamfered timber columns, steel framed roof structure, and the steel tie rods attached to the top of the columns to support the centre of the roof.

Overall, the shelter (rotunda) in Eastern Park is of LOCAL significance.

References

R. Aitken, 'Leisure and Pleasure Buildings of Geelong', B. Arch Thesis, Deakin University, 1980, p.124.

The Geelong Advertiser, 19 November 1895, 12 September 1896, 8 October 1896, 29 January 1997, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

Aerial photograph of the Botanic Gardens, c.1925, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

C. Dance, Geelong Botanic Gardens and Easter Park, Geelong Historical Records Centre.