

HC

WAR MEMORIAL TOWER, PLANTING & PARK

NAME: WAR MEMORIAL TOWER, PLANTING & PARK

TYPE: MEMORIAL, TREES, PARK

SITE NUMBER: 24

ADDRESS: ELTHAM-YARRA KANGAROO GROUND  
GLEN ROAD

MELWAY MAP: 271 G10 DATE: 1925-26, c1974

PLANNING SCHEME OVERLAY: External paint controls

Tree control  Outbuilding control  Internal alteration control

HERITAGE VALUE: METROPOLITAN

**STUDY CRITERIA:**

SOCIAL, HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, STREETScape

**STUDY THEMES:**

**ASSOCIATIONS:**

Shire of Eltham; Stephenson & Meldrum; Harold Herbert

**HISTORY:**

BUILT: 1925-26 {1}, c1974 FIRE SPOTTER'S ROOM CONSTRUCTED ON TOP OF THE TOWER

Original Use: War memorial and lookout tower {1}

Later Use: War memorial, lookout and fire spotter tower {1}

Original and Later Owner: Shire of Eltham {1}

Architects/Designers: Stephenson & Meldrum {1}

(From a sketch by Harold Herbert)

Builder: G. Rousell of Mordialloc {1}

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. {1} 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. {1}

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. d3a.

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.

**DESCRIPTON:**

Tower

Style traditional ornamental structure.

Design one-off.

## WAR MEMORIAL TOWER, PLANTING & PARK

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.

The tower resembles a similar but later rubble stone memorial tower in the Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn.

### 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*'.

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower is of metropolitan significance:

- as one of Victoria's most unusual war memorials;
- for its commemoration of those Shire residents who died in the First and Second World Wars.
- For its associations with the designers, artist Harold Herbert and prominent architects Stephenson and Meldrum;
- for its illustration of the skilled use of local sandstone;
- For the landmark quality or prominence of the tower and Monterey cypress, situated on the highest point in the area;
- For a significant role as a fire spotter tower from the late 1940s, making it one of the older towers used for this purpose in the State .

The sandstone caretaker's building is locally significant as an early part of this reserve and a visually complementary element to the tower.

### EXTENT OF DESIGNATION:

ALL OF TOWER, SANDSTONE BUILDING, MATURE EXOTIC SITE PLANTING, SI

### SITE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES:

General guidelines apply: conserve designated elements, including maintaining and preserving significant parts, restoring missing significant elements where evidence allows

### Tower

### REFERENCES:

*WAR MEMORIAL TOWER, PLANTING & PARK*

---

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;
5. G Butler & Associates, 'Camberwell Conservation Study 1991',