

## BOROONDARA CEMETERY, SYME MEMORIAL

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Original Use: Memorial  
Date of Construction: 1908<sup>7</sup>  
Architect: Arthur Peck<sup>8</sup>

DESIGNATION A  
CITATION NO.80



### HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Originally set aside for reserve purposes, a portion of a triangle of land situated almost in the centre of Kew, was proclaimed the Boroondara Cemetery in 1859<sup>9</sup>. The planning of the cemetery was carried out by J.F. Higgins of the Lands Department<sup>10</sup> and the first burial, at what was later to become one of Melbourne's historic landmarks, noted particularly for its memorials, took place on 12 March 1859<sup>11</sup>.

David Syme, political economist and publisher of the *Age*, died at his home, 'Blythswood', in February 1908<sup>12</sup>. He was buried at the Boroondara Cemetery where his impressive memorial was built from granite and copper<sup>13</sup>. The design is one of the most distinctive and scholarly pieces of monumental architecture in Melbourne, drawing on the Egyptian for its stylistic reference. It has a temple-like form with each of the columns having a different capital detail. These support a cornice that coves both inwards and outwards. In addition to the rectangle of columns, the tomb was given balustradings set between granite piers, that create porch spaces leading to the entrance ways.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Syme memorial is of significance as one of the most finely designed and executed pieces of monumental design in Melbourne, of particular distinction for the rarity of its Egyptian reference. The significance is enhanced by the status of David Syme.

## HERITAGE LISTINGS

HBR: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

GBR: N/A

RNE: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

National Trust: Classified No.1555.

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- 1 Clerehan, N., 'Three Tombs', in *Historic Environment*, Vol 2, No.4, 1982, p.24
  - 2 *ibid.*
  - 3 Barnard, F.G.A., *The Jubilee History of Kew*, p.104
  - 4 *ibid.*
  - 5 *ibid.*
  - 6 Rogers, D., *A History of Kew*, p.99
  - 7 Clerehan, *loc.cit.*