



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 7.7.3 Going to war
- 8.8 Remembering the fallen

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 501 World wars and other wars

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Nedlands War Memorial is a simple example of a war memorial in the Inter-War Art Deco style. It is particularly notable for the distinctive octagonal shaped light at its apex. (Criterion 1.1)

The position of *Nedlands War Memorial* in a prominent location, and the selection of motifs that adorn it, are perpetual visual reminders of the impact of the loss of life endured in conflicts in World War One, World War Two, Korea, Borneo, Malaya, and Vietnam. In particular, the light can be considered to represent a torch, which in this context is a symbolic reminder of the eternal need to continue the struggle of the fallen, and to continually remember the sacrifice of those who have fought in war. (Criterion 1.1)

Nedlands War Memorial has aesthetic value for its contribution to the landscape in which it is located, being the central figure in an open setting at the edge of an embankment overlooking Melville Water, surrounded by substantial residences. (Criterion 1.3)

Nedlands War Memorial is a readily identifiable landmark at the intersection of two relatively busy roads, close to frequently used recreational areas. (Criterion 1.3)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Nedlands War Memorial commemorates the fallen from conflicts in World War One, World War Two, Korea, Borneo, Malaya, and Vietnam; and represents the impact the loss of life in these events had on local communities and the State. (Criterion 2.2)

The construction of *Nedlands War Memorial* demonstrates the growth and foundation of the community identity of Dalkeith during the 1920s and 1930s. (Criterion 2.1)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Nedlands War Memorial is highly valued as a venue for ANZAC Day and Victory over the Pacific Day commemorations, which occur annually across the world in April and August respectively. The Returned Services League also organises for local schools to participate in a separate annual ceremony prior to ANZAC Day each year, in which students are encouraged to conduct research and give a presentation. (Criterion 4.1)

Nedlands War Memorial is highly valued by the community of Nedlands and Dalkeith, the Nedlands sub-branch of the Returned Services League, and past and current military personnel. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Nedlands War Memorial is rare as the only war memorial constructed with a commemorative light in Western Australia. (Criterion 5.1)

Nedlands War Memorial is relatively rare as a war memorial constructed during World War Two as most war memorials were constructed before or after World War Two. (Criterion 5.1)

Nedlands War Memorial is one of the few remaining sites used to commemorate Victory over the Pacific Day. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Nedlands War Memorial is a representative example of the monumental memorials of World War One. (Criterion 6.1)

The column form, flagpoles, commemorative gardens and dedicatory inscriptions of *Nedlands War Memorial*, are representative design features of war memorials. (Criterion 6.1)

The symbolic motifs are characteristic figurative expressions used to indicate remembrance, honour, nationalism, sacrifice and the eternal need to continue the struggle of those who have lost their life in conflict. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Overall, *Nedlands War Memorial* appears to be in fair to good condition, although some fabric requires maintenance.

Paint has peeled from the west and north faces of the pedestal; there are some chips on the top tier of the dado and at the top of the column; fine cracks can be seen on the plinth; a larger crack is on the north face of the plinth; the lower step

of the plinth is chipped in places, especially at the corners and the centre of the south-east face.

The grass and more recent plantings are in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Nedlands War Memorial retains a high degree of integrity. It continues to be used for the purpose for which it was built.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Overall, *Nedlands War Memorial* retains a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

Nedlands War Memorial was originally unpainted, and is now painted concealing the original stonework. The pedestal has been painted with a waterproof coating, completely concealing the original stone. The column was painted without the waterproof additive so the texture of the stone is still visible beneath the surface.

The configuration of the surrounding roads and the traffic island on which *Nedlands War Memorial* is sited has been substantially altered since the memorial's construction, reducing the size of the island. Original plantings have been removed. The existing landscaping no longer reflects the landscaping of the 1940s when *Nedlands War Memorial* was constructed.

Plaques, a sword on the column and a plaque with a 'rising sun' insignia have been added. Other additions include a manhole, two flagpoles, four lights at ground level, paving in the shape of a Celtic cross, a power supply box, and rosemary bushes. These do not diminish the authenticity of the place.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This document is based on 'Conservation Plan: Nedlands War Memorial' prepared for Nedlands City Council by Kelly Aris in January 1997; with supplementary information provided by students of Curtin University, supervised by Penelope O'Connor; and with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to 'Conservation Plan: Nedlands War Memorial' prepared for Nedlands City Council by Kelly Aris in January 1997.¹

The following supplementary information has been prepared by students at Curtin University of Technology:

The population of Nedlands was significantly involved as a community in the wartime efforts of both the First and Second World Wars. World War One resulted in substantial local enlistment with ten percent of the male population serving with the 11th, 16th, 28th and 44th battalions, this being a substantial proportion of the small 3000-person population.²

By 1939, the population of Nedlands having reached over 13,000, there was again a rush to enlist for service in World War Two. The Royal Australian Air Force benefited greatly and Nedlands became synonymous with Catalina flying boats, having two bases in the Crawley-Nedlands area by 1941.³

As with other localities, the war years were difficult times for the residents of Nedlands; rations were stringent and the threat of air raids was a constant concern both locally and nationally. Shop windows were boarded up and sandbagged, street lamps were subject to brownouts and the 'constant blackouts made life miserable at night'.⁴ In addition, the identification of post offices and street signs were removed.⁵

In July 1939, an article in *Splinters*, the official journal of the Returned Services League Nedlands Sub-branch, announced the intent of the Nedlands Roads Board to construct 'a small garden and place a light at the corner of Birdwood Parade and Waratah Avenue'.⁶ Rapid population growth coupled with the division of Claremont and Nedlands into two municipalities had led to the view that a local war memorial was needed. Negotiations took place between the Roads Board and the RSL Sub-branch and it was agreed that the garden and light proposed for Waratah Avenue would meet the need for a local war memorial specific to Nedlands, as this extract from *Splinters* elaborates.

At the conclusion of the Great War a memorial was erected at the corner of Bay View Terrace and Stirling Highway, Claremont, and it will be remembered that at that time the greater portion of Nedlands was but virgin bush and the total population just over 3000, while today there is a population of just over 16,000. As a result of this and the district being contiguous with the Claremont Municipality it contributed to the erection of the Memorial at Bay View Terrace which is dedicated to the memory of soldiers

1 Aris, pp. 1-10

2 Aris, p. 1

3 Williams, A.E., *Nedlands: From Campsite to City* (City of Nedlands, Nedlands, 1984), p. 172

4 Williams, p. 173

5 Letter from City of Nedlands to HCWA dated 23 November 2005, P file 13617

6 *Splinters* (July 1939), p.3; see also Aris, *op. cit.*, p. 2

and sailors from Claremont. However as a result of our representations for the erection of this Memorial Light the present edifice was erected.⁷

The Nedlands community was very active in raising wartime funds. Benefit fairs and concerts were common, some raising as much as £4000 for organizations like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the YMCA.⁸ The local RSL Sub-branch were always greatly involved in fundraising, in 1940 they petitioned their members to raise £10 towards the cost of the bronze plaque at the base of *Nedlands War Memorial*.

Nedlands War Memorial was used for ANZAC Day celebrations for two years after its construction,⁹ after which the ceremony shifted to other parts of Nedlands (including the Windsor Theatre, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and the Nedlands Road Board Office)¹⁰.

The foreshore across Birdwood Parade from *Nedlands War Memorial* was used by the army between 1941 and 1945 as a training area and placement for anti-aircraft gun.¹¹ Birdwood Parade was named after the senior Australian army Commander in France in World War One, Sir William Birdwood.¹²

In April 1958 an additional plaque was unveiled in a dedication ceremony commemorating those lost in World War Two. An article in *Splinters* headed 'Nedlands War Memorial' details the proposed plaque and announces the unveiling.

A new plaque to commemorate the fallen of the 1939-45 War, will be installed on the east side of the base...the new plaque will be similar to the 1914-18 plaque. The installation, the cost and the finishing of the cement base of the memorial has been made possible by the generosity and co-operation of the municipality of Nedlands. It is proposed, on Sunday afternoon, 20th April, at 3 p.m., that an unveiling and wreath laying ceremony will take place, to the memory of the men and women of our districts, who gave their lives in the 1939-45 War.¹³

Evidence is unclear as to when ANZAC Day ceremonies recommenced at *Nedlands War Memorial*, but it has been assumed to be approximately 1989.¹⁴

In June 1994, *Nedlands War Memorial* was included in the Art Deco Society Survey of Significant Buildings. In July 1995, Nedlands City Council considered a request to relocate *Nedlands War Memorial* by the Nedlands sub-branch of the RSL. The move was part of an upgrade of *Nedlands War Memorial* proposed by the RSL to take advantage of funding made available by the Federal Government's 'Australia Remembers' scheme. The reason given for the move was the possible traffic hazards posed by using a memorial located on a traffic island for ANZAC Day services. It was proposed to construct a new memorial out of granite in the Peace Memorial Rose Gardens.¹⁵ Nedlands residents were surveyed, and voted overwhelmingly to reject the proposal in favour of continuing to hold ANZAC Day services at *Nedlands War Memorial* and block off the roads for the duration.¹⁶ The following year, the landscaping, in particular the shape of

7 *Splinters* (May 1940), pp. 1-2

8 Williams, p. 175

9 *West Australian* (24 April 1941), p. 5; *West Australian* (24 April 1942), p. 7

10 e.g. *West Australian* (24 April 1943), p. 4; *West Australian* (24 April 1945), p. 3

11 Birch, Helen, *A Guide to Historical Military Sites in the City of Nedlands* (Nedlands City Council, 2005), p. 13

12 Birch, p. 11

13 *Splinters* (April 1958), p. 1

14 Arrowsmith, Douglas (15 April 2005) Secretary of the Nedlands RSL

15 Nedlands City Council Minutes (11 July 1995), pp. 16-19

16 Nedlands City Council Minutes (13 December 1995), pp. 30-31

the traffic island on which the monument is sited, and the road configuration around *Nedlands War Memorial*, was altered.

In 1996, the Nedlands sub-branch of the RSL submitted a proposal to upgrade *Nedlands War Memorial* to the council. The proposal covered seven key areas: laying brick paving around the memorial; modifying the reticulation system; relocating the power box; installing flower beds around the memorial; installing a polished granite sword motif (representing sacrifice) and a rising sun motif similar to the Kings Park memorial; installing soft lighting around the memorial; and moving the overhead power line underground.¹⁷

To better consider the proposal, Nedlands City Council commissioned conservation architect Kelly Aris to write a conservation plan in September 1996.¹⁸ Her report was in favour of most of the proposed changes, with the exception of the proposed motifs, stating that no embellishments should be added to the design, except possibly on the lowest tier of the dado.¹⁹ In 1997, Nedlands Council adopted Aris's conservation plan, however the RSL continued to argue for the addition of the sword and rising sun motifs.²⁰ They succeeded in this request, as these motifs were added soon afterwards.²¹ The upgraded memorial was re-dedicated, with its additions, on 9 March 1997.²²

Since 1997, there have been extensive changes to both *Nedlands War Memorial* and the surrounding environment. The road layout has changed substantially after being identified as an accident 'black spot' and receiving funding for alterations.²³ Today, the memorial is no longer situated on an island, as Waratah Avenue has been blocked off and now meets Birdwood Parade at a T-junction.²⁴ There have been minor changes to the road signage. Other changes include the relocation of the power box and the removal of overhead wires.

Nedlands War Memorial was included in the Nedlands Municipal Inventory on 15 April 1999 and given a high-level of protection.

Today the continuing military connection with the City of Nedlands is reflected in the proportion of land within the Nedlands area dedicated to army activity. Swanbourne Rifle Range, Campbell Barracks, Seaward Village (army personnel housing) and Irwin Barracks in Karrakatta account for ten percent of the area of Nedlands, not to mention the two hospitals Hollywood Repatriation General and Lemnos Hospital in Graylands for returned servicemen with mental illness. This rich military culture provides the context for *Nedlands War Memorial*.

In 2005, *Nedlands War Memorial* continues to be used for ANZAC Day services and wreath laying ceremonies are held at this location, organised by the local Returned Services League. Local parliamentarians, civic dignitaries, guest speakers, as well as members of the public, attend the ceremony.²⁵ The

17 Nedlands City Council Minutes (11 June 1996), pp. 8-9

18 Nedlands City Council Minutes (17 September 1996), pp. 54-55

19 Aris, Kelly, *Conservation Plan: Nedlands War Memorial* (January 1997), pp. 42-44

20 *Claremont-Nedlands Post* (4 January 1997), p. 11

21 *Claremont-Nedlands Post* (2 February 1997), p. 32

22 *Claremont-Nedlands Post* (2 March 1997), p. 45

23 E-mail correspondence with Nedlands City Council (5 May 2005)

24 See attached plan

25 Interviews with members of the RSL

ceremony is held in the morning, so that attendees have time to join in the larger event in the city afterwards.²⁶

In a separate ceremony, held as close to ANZAC Day as the school term will allow, the Returned Services League holds a service focused around the participation of the four local primary schools in the area.²⁷ The guest speakers include important members of the community and two year-seven students from each of the Dalkeith, Hollywood, Loreto and Nedlands Primary Schools. After speaking on conflicts from each of the wars recognised on the plaques on the side of the memorial, the students are invited to lay wreaths on the memorial as a symbolic and traditional gesture. The RSL flag is also raised and lowered by army cadets as part of the service.²⁸

Nedlands War Memorial is also one of the few remaining sites used to commemorate Victory over the Pacific (or V-P) Day,²⁹ an annual event sometimes, although not often in Australia, referred to as Victory over Japan (or V-J) Day, to commemorate the surrender of Japan and the end of World War Two.³⁰

Nedlands War Memorial is a pertinent and symbolic reminder in the landscape of the community's debt to those who have died in conflict. The memorial light has come to represent not only a significant local landmark but 'the undying flame of service and sacrifice'³¹ given by so many of its residents in World War One, World War Two, Vietnam, Korea, Malaya and Borneo.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to 'Conservation Plan: Nedlands War Memorial' prepared for Nedlands City Council by Kelly Aris in January 1997.

The following supplementary information has been prepared by students at Curtin University of Technology:

Reconfiguration of the surrounding roads has meant the memorial is no longer situated on a traffic island, as Waratah Avenue has been blocked off and now meets Birdwood Parade at a T-junction.³² There have been minor changes to the road signage.

The relocated power box is constructed of the same brick as the paving, and dominates the view of *Nedlands War Memorial* when approached from the west along the pathway.

The paving is in a herringbone pattern and has been positioned to form a stylised Celtic cross. The paving is in good condition.

The lighting comprises of four white lamps contained within white wire-mesh cubes, placed at the edge of the paving in the northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest corners of the memorial.

26 Telephone conversation between HCWA staff and Douglas Arrowsmith, Secretary of the Nedlands Sub-branch of the RSL, 7/2/2006.

27 Telephone conversation between HCWA staff and Douglas Arrowsmith, Secretary of the Nedlands Sub-branch of the RSL, 7/2/2006.

28 Interviews with members of the RSL

29 Roberts, Lillian, (15 April 2005) Consult General to Nepal and long time resident of Nedlands

30 Wikipedia online encyclopaedia, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-J_Day .

31 *Splinters* (May 1951), p. 1

32 See attached plan

The rosemary hedging, which was planted after 1997, is in reasonable condition but has grown slightly unevenly around the memorial. It does appear to be regularly maintained.

The polished granite sword and rising sun motif are on the west face of the Memorial.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Other war memorials currently on the State Register of Heritage Places include *Canning War Memorial*, Cannington (1921), *Esperance War Memorial* (1924), *Monument Hill & War Memorials*, Fremantle (1929), *Fallen Soldier's Memorial*, North Fremantle (1923), and the various memorials associated with Kings Park, including the *State War Memorial*.

While *Nedlands War Memorial* is the only memorial in Western Australia that incorporates a light, there are a number in other states. It was not unusual for Boer War memorials to be in the form of a light standard or to include a light at the top. Examples are the Queanbeyan Boer War Memorial, NSW (1903)³³ and the South African War Memorial, St Kilda, VIC (1905)³⁴. Other examples can be found at Echuca VIC, Blayney NSW, Casino NSW, and St Helens TAS.³⁵ An example of a World War I memorial incorporating a light is at Brocklesby, NSW (1919).³⁶

Nedlands War Memorial is rare in Western Australia as a war memorial incorporating a light. It is likely to be rare in Australia as the only Art Deco style memorial bearing a light.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Aris, K. *Conservation Plan, Nedlands War Memorial, Waratah Avenue and Birdwood Parade Nedlands*. Prepared for City of Nedlands (January 1997).

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

33 Register of the National Estate, 17387

34 Register of the National Estate, 10055

35 All information courtesy of Michael Southwell-Keely, private correspondence (9 April 2005)

36 Further details can be found at <http://www.skp.com.au/memorials/pages/20145.htm> [consulted 20 May 2005]