

INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER

CITATION

Name of Place: AUSRTRALIAN AMERICAN MEMORIAL

LOCATION OF PLACE: Russell, forecourt to Defence Group Offices, Sir Thomas Blamey Square

Section and Block Suburb: Section 83, Part Block 1

Area bounded by: Blamey Square

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

- This memorial was planned from 1948 to express the gratitude of the Australian people to the servicemen and women of the United States for their contribution to the defence of Australia during the Second World War.
 - The competition for the design of a monument was won in 1950 by Richard M Ure and his design costed at \$45000. The monument included two murals at the base, one pictorially relating the story of US combat in the Pacific, and the other a profile map of the US in copper. These were omitted due to lack of funds. Although \$63000 was raised by public subscription, a Government injection of \$50000 was needed due to escalation of costs and the inflation of 1950-1955.
 - The memorial was completed for an opening ceremony performed by Queen Elizabeth II on February 16 1954.
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The memorial is symbolic of the debt of gratitude felt by Australians to the American service personnel for their assistance during the Second World War and the close ties which were established during the 1939-1945 war. The site approximated the intersection of the Municipal Axis and King's Avenue of Griffin's plan, an important nodal point which he had identified for a vertical element.

A striking feature of the skyline and a landmark for the Canberra community, the memorial is the focal point of a significant complex at the corner of the Parliamentary Triangle and adds to the symmetry of that complex.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with s.54(1) of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, the following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

Any action relating to these requirements is development for the purposes of the Act and will require approval prior to undertaking the activity. To undertake development without such approval may be an offence.

1. Requirements Relating to the Building

- 1.1
- 1.2

2. Requirements Relating to the Setting

- 2.1

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Council recommends that the following actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place. They are made as recommendations and have no legal effect.

- 1. Maintenance is to be ensured to preserve integrity.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

- 1. date Draft citation considered by ACT Heritage Council at Meeting (number)
- 2. date Draft citation released for public comment
- 3. date Revised citation for ACT Heritage Council Meeting (number)
- 4. date Gazetted in an interim Heritage Places Register
- 5. 5/10/89 Classified National Trust of Australia (ACT)

Attachment A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. DESCRIPTION:

Hollow octagonal column of steel framework sheeted with aluminium panels, sandblasted to a dull matt finish to give the appearance of stone. The column is topped with a sphere (bronze) surmounted by a stylised figure of the American eagle with its wings spread into a "V" shape ... symbolic of victory. At the foot of the column is a great bronze wreath above which is a commemorative tablet. Below the crest of the Commonwealth of Australia on the tablet is an inscription which reads "In grateful remembrance of the vital help given by the United States of America during the war in the Pacific 1941-1945". There is another small plaque on the column which reads "Richard M Ure, ARAIA architect, Crooks & Mitchell, Civil Engineers, Paul Beadle Sculptor, McConnell Building Co Pty, contractors".

Dimensions: Total height - 73m
Eagle and sphere - 11m

2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:

Condition is excellent, but on-going maintenance is to be ensured to preserve integrity.

3. BACKGROUND:

- This memorial was planned from 1948 to express the gratitude of the Australian people to the servicemen and women of the United States for their contribution to the defence of Australia during the Second World War. An appeal for funds was opened to the public in 1950 with the intention of small subscriptions from many. The Australian/American Association was invited to develop proposals for a suitable memorial (a bursary, a library, a monument etc) and submit them to the Commonwealth. The final choice was a monument.
- The competition for the design of a monument was won in 1950 by Richard M Ure and his design costed at \$45000. The monument included two murals at the base, one pictorially relating the story of US combat in the Pacific, and the other a profile map of the US in copper. These were omitted due to lack of funds. Although \$63000 was raised by public subscription, a Government injection of \$50000 was needed due to escalation of costs and the inflation of 1950-1955.
- The memorial was completed for an opening ceremony performed by Queen Elizabeth II on February 16 1954.

4. RELEVANT PRINCIPAL NATIONAL HISTORIC THEMES:

- To express the gratitude of the Australian people to the servicemen and women of the United States for their contribution to the defence of Australia during the Second World War.
- The monument included two murals at the base, one pictorially relating the story of US combat in the Pacific, and the other a profile map of the US in copper.

5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991

Under Section 56 the criteria for the assessment of the heritage significance of places are:

- (i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure, or representing a new achievement of its time;
- (ii): a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;
- (iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest;
- (iv): a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;
- (v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type;
- (vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class;
- (vii): a place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history;
- (viii) a place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes;
- (ix) a place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for district occurrences of species;
- (x) a place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements; or
- (xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site.

6. REFERENCES:

Author Title date publication

1. NCDC *Works of Art in Canberra* 1980
2. Archival files at Australian War Memorial
3. Archival files at Australian Construction Services