MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY

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CEMETERY SOHE 2008

1 melbourne general
cemetery college crescent
carlton general view jun1986

Before Photographs -
Reference F3900 2014

After Photographs -
Reference F3900 2016

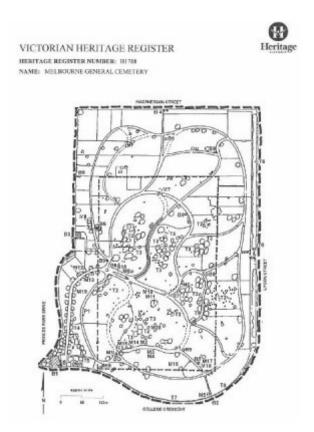Before Photographs -
Reference F3900 2014

During Photographs -
Reference F3900 3015

After Photographs -
Reference F3900 2016

During Photographs -
Reference F3900 2015

melbourne general cemetery.JPG

Location

COLLEGE CRESCENT CARLTON NORTH, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1788

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO799

VHR Registration

June 17, 1999

Heritage Listing

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 16, 2024

What is significant?
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/strict.dtd">

The Melbourne General Cemetery was established in 1850 pursuant to an act of the New South Wales parliament. Designed by Albert Purchas, surveyor and architect, it was opened in 1853 and is one of Melbourne's most visited and loved sites. The cemetery expanded in 1859, closed in 1903 and reopened in 1927. The cemetery is centrally located, one kilometre north of Melbourne's central business district and contains unique evidence of Victoria's colonisation. Its features include various chapels, a recent mausoleum, funerary ovens, rotundas,significant trees and shrubs, gatehouses and a myriad of pathways laid out in a serpentine formation. Throughout the twentieth century the cemetery experienced a severe lack of maintenance through various periods of decline, its lowest being the 1950s. The cemetery trustees resigned en masse in 1978 and were replaced by a temporary trust consisting of three Health Commission officers. In 1980 The Necropolis, Springvale was appointed the trustee of the Melbourne General Cemetery to oversee its management and maintenance.

How is it significant?
The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical, social, aesthetic, scientific and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?
The Melbourne General Cemetery is of historical importance due to its significant contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and its first modern cemetery. Much of Victoria's colonial history can be traced through the headstones, memorials and monuments commemorating the lives both of prominent citizens and the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of Victoria.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of social importance due to its representation of early burial practices, reflecting both the hardships faced by those seeking their fortunes in the goldfields of Victoria and also the opulence of the more affluent members of society such as wealthy landowners and members of parliament. Its social significance is also genealogical, as cemetery records as well as inscriptions on the gravestones themselves can assist greatly when searching for a unique insight into the history of past Victorians. It is also a clear representation of cultural attitudes, technology, skills of craftsmen,use of materials and also the high mortality rate experienced particularly through the 1850s.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of aesthetic importance due to the meticulous planning of architect Albert Purchas (1825-1909), and botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) who were responsible for the formal and romantic layout of the cemetery and also the plantings of exotic and indigenous species of flora. The headstones ,rotundas, memorials, chapels and other examples of funerary art collectively form

a major visual element. Distant views from the elevated site as well as views into and within the cemetery contribute to its significance.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of architectural importance due to the presence of many typical cemetery buildings and structures of high architectural quality such as the gatehouse, two chapels, a funerary oven and eight rotundas. The headstones and memorials are also important architectural features for their unique design characteristics and craftsmanship.

The Melbourne General Cemetery is of scientific(horticultural) importance for the presence of traditional cemetery plantings such the Italian cypress (Cupressus sempervirens) and the pepper tree (Schinus molle) and for the presence of a rare long leafed Indian pine (Pinus roxburghii).

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions here.

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions
1. All alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or

building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

General:
* Interments, burials and erection of monuments, re-use of graves, burial of cremated remains, and exhumation of remains in accordance with the Cemeteries Act 1958 (as amended) provided such burials or works occur in areas of the cemetery originally designated for this purpose. Locations (for the works listed above) which will require permit approval include but are not limited to roadways and rotundas.

Stabilisation, restoration and repair of monuments.
* Emergency and safety works to secure the site and prevent damage and injury to property and the public.
* Monument works undertaken in accordance with Australian Standard AS4204 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments
* Demolition, alteration or removal of buildings and monuments not specified in the extent of registration.
* Painting of previously painted structures provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Exterior to Buildings B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7 & B8:
* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
* Repainting of previously painted surfaces in the same colours.

Interior to Buildings B1, B5, B6, B7 & B8:
* Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Layout and Landscaping:
* Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings and structures, ornaments, roads and paths, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems.
* Maintenance of roads and paths and gutters to retain their existing plan layout.
* The process of gardening and maintenance to care for the cemetery landscape, planting themes, bulbs and shrubs, and removal of dead plants.
* Management of plants in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees.
* Removal of plants listed as State Prohibited or Regionally Controlled Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
* Replanting to retain the existing landscape theme and character.

Construction dates	1860,
Architect/Designer	Purchas, Albert,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	4254
Property Number	

History

HISTORY OF PLACE
Following Melbourne's formal recognition as a city in 1849, its population escalated with the discovery of gold in surrounding regional areas. An act was passed in NSW parliament in 1850 covering the establishment of cemeteries, and as a result the Melbourne General Cemetery was opened in 1853. Designed by Albert Purchas (1825-1909) this cemetery is a fine example of both formal and romantic planning, styles that were popular during the mid 19th century. In 1859 the 39.5-acre site was extended to 101 acres when additional crown land surrounding the site was reserved for cemetery use.

After decades of mismanagement, vandalism and a severe lack of maintenance, the Melbourne General Cemetery was closed on 31 December 1903 following malpractices of the trustees and the last of the burial plots were sold off in 1904. The Fawkner and Springvale cemeteries were then established over the time leading to the reopening of Melbourne General on 1 November 1927 when the trustees were able to convince the government that they should resume the sale of burial plots.

Between 1853 and 1922, the Melbourne General Cemetery received a number of exhumed bodies from the Old Melbourne Cemetery which originally occupied the site of the existing Victoria Markets after the Melbourne City Council declared it closed by proclamation in 1851 due to a lack of space. A total of 914 bodies were exhumed following years of neglect and they were then distributed between Fawkner Park Old Pioneers Section, Booroondara, St. Kilda, Cheltenham and Melbourne General Cemeteries.

The original gatehouse and other associated buildings at the existing west entrance were demolished in the 1930s and the materials then used to construct the existing Tudor Revival gatehouse, offices and residence in the southwest corner when the burial area was extended by 6 acres towards the end of 1933. This was made possible by the passing of a special act of parliament and hence the total area is now 101.44 acres . The University of Melbourne and the Housing Commission considered acquisition of the land in the post-war period, during which time the condition of the cemetery continued its decline, at its worst in the 1950s due to lack of funds and some poor parliamentary decisions . The 1970s saw newspaper accounts of the alleged removal of bodies, associations with narcotics trading in the area and reports of organised crime . Interments had been carried out to insufficient depth and as a consequence, second burials for other family members were not possible.

During the mid-1960s a mausoleum was constructed in the Catholic area of the cemetery. This work proved to be very controversial as it was thought at the time that the interment of bodies within the structure would be against health regulations. Following a lengthy court battle in 1965, the trustees were prevented from using it and in 1974 all bodies were removed from its walls and the structure demolished. In 1996 another mausoleum was constructed and is presently in use.

In 1979 the Victorian Government amended the Cemeteries Act, appointing the Springvale Necropolis as trustees to oversee the maintenance and general management of the cemetery from 1 January 1980.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A
The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object

The Melbourne General Cemetery is historically significant due to its contribution to the city as both its oldest existing cemetery and first modern cemetery.

Criterion B
The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

The Melbourne General Cemetery contains many memorials and monuments commemorating the lives of prominent citizens, squatters and also representatives of the everyday men and women who contributed to life in the early days of the City of Melbourne.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

The Melbourne General Cemetery contains a detailed social history of the colonisation of Victoria. Genealogically, the cemetery holds an abundance of information regarding burial practices and lifestyles throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Criterion D
The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of place or object

Criterion E
The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

Albert Purchas and Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller were responsible for the early layout and plantings throughout the cemetery. Being of serpentine layout, the cemetery is a fine example of romantic and formal planning techniques that were popular during the 19th century. The picturesque planting formations were intended to give the cemetery a more park-like feel.

Criterion F
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

The rare Long Leaved Indian Pine (Pinus roxburghii) is centrally located within the cemetery grounds, and is an exceptional example of this rare species. Clumps of Pepper Trees (Schinus molle var.areira) and Italian Cypress (Cupressus sempivirens) also contribute to the significance of the cemetery.

Criterion G
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

The cemetery contains over one million gravesites and memorials commemorating the history of Melbourne's colonisation. These are of great assistance when assessing our early social history.

Criterion H
Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1788 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Melbourne General Cemetery, College Crescent, Parkville, Melbourne City Council.

EXTENT:

1. All of the buildings and structures marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the

Executive Director:

B1 Gatehouse and Gates at Southwest Corner.
B2 South Gate.
B3 West Gate.
B4 North Gate.
B5 Jewish Chapel.
B6 Roman Catholic Chapel. B7 Chinese Funerary Oven.
B8 Elvis Presley Memorial.

B9 Rotundas (8).
B10 Early Drinking Trough.

2. The mature trees and plantings (except for those which have been self sown within graves and pathways or are otherwise not integral to the planned landscape scheme) marked as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

T1 The Indian Long Leaved Pine *(Pinus roxburghii)* located in Church of England M compartment.
T2 The clumps of Italian Cypress *(Cupressus sempivirens)* in Church of England compartments A-G, I, K, L-S, EE, FF; Roman Catholic compartments, A-D, H, I, K-P; and Presbyterian compartments A-H and I.
T3 The clumps of Pepper Trees *(Schinus molle var. areira)* in Church of England A-G, K, L-S, W compartments; Roman Catholic A-D, H, I, K-P, DD compartments; Presbyterian A-H, K compartments; Baptist A & B compartments; and Other Denominations B compartment.
T4 The avenue of Liquidambars *(Liquidambar styraciflua)* on Entrance Avenue.
T5 The Magnolia *(Magnolia grandiflora)* in the Prime Minister's Garden.
T6 The row of Monterey Cypress *(Cupressus macrocarpa 'Horizontalis Aurea')* along the east boundary.
T7 The hedgerow of Karo *(Pittosporum crassifolium)* along the south boundary.
T8 The hedgerow of Californian Privet *(Ligustrum ovalifolium)* along the southeast boundary.
T9 The Elm trees *(Ulmus sp.)* along Fourth Avenue.

3. All of the Cemetery Reserve, forming part of *Crown Parcel P361478, Allotment 1 of 118B, Crown Land Reserve Rs 8466, Township of Carlton at Jika Jika (2796B), Municipality of Melbourne (C).*

4. All the paths, roadways and gutters marked as P-1 on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director.

5. All of the monuments and memorials as follows on Diagram 1788 held by the Executive Director:

M1 Burke & Wills
M2 Major General Sir Robert Nickle
M3 W. J. T. Clarke

M4 Sir William John Clarke
M5 Jewish Memorial in the Shape of Branched Candlestick
M6 Derrimut
M7 John Pascoe-Fawkner
M8 Peter Lalor
M9 Sir John O'Shannessy
M10 John Alexander Burnett
M11 Sir Robert Hoddle
M12 James Henry Scullin
M13 Walter Lindrum

M14 Sir Charles Hotham
M15 Sir Redmond Barry
M16 Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke
M17 Sir Isaac Isaacs
M18 Jewish Soldiers Memorial
M19 Vergona Monument
M20 Ensign Vere Pennefather and Dr Macaulay

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 24 17 June 1999 pp.1426-1427]