
Wattle Park Complex

Location

Riversdale Road,, BURWOOD VIC 3125 - Property No B4615

Municipality

WHITEHORSE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0904

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 23, 2007

The Wattle Park Chalet and other structures form a unique tramways authority complex in Australia and are of national significance. Wattle Park is the only known remaining example in Australia of a pleasure park established, owned and operated by a transport authority with the dual aim of promoting its transport services and providing a recreational facility for the public.

The buildings and structures are architecturally significant for their consistent rustic style that is in keeping with the nature of the park, and they remain intact in their original form. The Chalet, which is designed in the English domestic style after Sir Edwin Lutyens, is possibly a unique example of a building constructed by a public utility largely from discarded materials, such as bricks and slate paving from redundant cable tram engine houses and timber from disused cable tram sheds.

The design of the buildings and the layout of the grounds are an important work of A G Monsborough, the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board's second architect (1912-1938), who was responsible for the design of many buildings during the formative years of the electric tramways system, which is regarded as one of the largest in the world.

The park and buildings are socially significant for their role as the playground of sporting organizations and community groups and for fostering leisure activities and tourism. The chalet, which has operated continuously since 1928 as a cafe, dance hall and reception venue, is the only remaining example of a number of cafe/entertainment venues constructed in Melbourne by tramway authorities and local councils at tram termini, to stimulate tramway traffic and generate income. It is thought to be the only cafe/dance hall/reception venue dating from the 1920s which remains operational in its original form.

The Wattle Park complex is historically important for its associations with the Hawthorn Tramways Trust, which had the foresight to purchase the land in 1916 for the purposes of a park. The Trust was the first of the suburban authorities to run electric trams into the city of Melbourne proper, and this led to the success of Wattle Park, which was situated at the Trust's outer suburban terminus. Intense development of Wattle Park did not occur until the land and the Hawthorn Tramways Trust line was taken over by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway in 1920. The rapid establishment of facilities during the late 1920s was fostered by Alexander Cameron, the Board's first chairman who was regarded as the father of the electric tramways in Melbourne. The name and theme of the park reflect the strong national fervour of the early decades of this century - wattle being an Australian national emblem.

Included in the Classification are the Parklands, Stables (c.1860 now Works Depot); Curator's Office (c.1920s); Curator's Cottage (1932); Tram Passenger Waiting Shelters (1929); Main Driveway Fencing (1929); Clock Tower (1948); Fountains; Picnic Shelters (made of W-Class tram bodies of the 1920s); Tennis Player's Shelters(1934).

Classified: 15/06/1991

The whole complex is also a Classified Garden- G13147

Hermes Number 66901

Property Number

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>