

## Werribee Satellite Aerodrome



1 werribee satellite aerodrome mar00 pm1



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome feb2003



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome2 feb2003



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome3 feb2003



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome4 feb2003



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome site1



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome site2



H01884 werribee satellite aerodrome site3



aerodrome plan

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## Location

PRINCES HIGHWAY (GEELONG ROAD) WERRIBEE and FARM ROAD WERRIBEE, Wyndham City

## Municipality

WYNDHAM CITY

## Level of significance

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## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1884

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO7

## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome was constructed in 1942 on land leased from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works in 1940. It served throughout the Second World War as a satellite to the nearby Point Cook and Laverton RAAF airfields. The aerodrome consisted of five timber trussed hangars, a workshop building and an area of accommodation and administration buildings. The airfield was grass with no formed runways. In 1952 the

land, including the buildings was returned to the MMBW. Only the hangars and workshop building remain. The hangars are unique in Victoria being the only examples of a type of timber truss design originating in the United States and using steel sheer connectors to produce clear spans of 130 feet (39.6m) and 96 feet (29.3m). The design, produced by the Allied Works Council and adapted to use unseasoned Australian hardwoods, was first employed at the much larger United States Army Air Force base at Tocumwal NSW. At Werribee only one of the five hangars was of the larger 130? span. Timber was used for these buildings because of the shortage of other building materials and because the type was well understood by American engineers on the Allied Works Council. After 1942 this method of construction of aircraft hangars was abandoned in Victoria in favour of the prefabricated steel ?Bellman? type hangars of which scores remain throughout the State. The Werribee buildings, are clad in corrugated iron and asbestos cement, have concrete floors and aprons, and full height sliding doors. They have been used since the 1950s as storage by Melbourne Water and are in reasonable condition considering their age and method of construction.

How is it significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome is historically and architecturally significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome is of historical significance as an example of the many temporary airfields that were constructed across Australia in the early years of the Second World War, particularly after the entry of the Japanese into the war.

The aircraft hangars at the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome are architecturally significant as unique examples of their type in Victoria. The trusses which provide the large clear span required for aircraft are unusual for being fabricated from relatively short lengths of (initially) unseasoned Australian hardwood joined by patented TECO steel sheer connector plates. This technology of expediency, especially in the case of Hangar 1, produced the largest clear span timber trussed building seen in Victoria. Later hangars such as at Tottenham RAAF Stores Depot utilised nailed arches to achieve a similar span.

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Other Names HANGARS 1 AND 2 AND WORKSHOP,

Hermes Number 125305

Property Number

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## Veterans Description for Public

The Werribee Satellite Aerodrome, on the Princes Highway, was constructed in 1942 on land leased from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) in 1940. It served throughout the Second World War as a satellite to the nearby Point Cook and Laverton RAAF airfields. The aerodrome consisted of five timber trussed hangars, a workshop building and an area of accommodation and administration buildings. The airfield was grass with no formed runways. In 1952 the land, including the buildings was returned to the MMBW. Only the hangars and workshop building remain.

The hangars are unique in Victoria being the only examples of a type of timber truss design originating in the United States and using steel sheer connectors to produce clear spans of 130 feet (39.6m) and 96 feet (29.3m). Hangar 1 especially provides an example of the largest clear span timber trussed building seen in Victoria. Later hangars such as at Tottenham RAAF Stores Depot utilised nailed arches to achieve a similar span.

The design, produced by the Allied Works Council and adapted to use unseasoned Australian hardwoods, was first employed at the much larger United States Army Air Force base at Tocumwal NSW. At Werribee only one of the five hangars was as large as 130 feet in its span. Timber was used for these buildings because of the shortage of other building materials and because the type was well understood by American engineers on the Allied Works Council. After 1942 this method of construction of aircraft hangars was abandoned in Victoria in favour of the

prefabricated steel Bellman type hangars, of which scores remain throughout the State. The Werribee buildings, are clad in corrugated iron and asbestos cement, have concrete floors and aprons, and full height sliding doors. They have been used since the 1950s as storage by Melbourne Water and are in reasonable condition considering their age and method of construction.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the buildings (including concrete aprons) marked as follows on Diagram 1884 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Hangar 1  
B2 Hangar 2  
B3 Workshop

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1884 held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 10446 Folio 721 .

*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/>*