
Fawkner Crematorium & Memorial Park



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Location

1187 Sydney Road,, FAWKNER VIC 3060 - Property No B6039

Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The original Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park of 1906 covers an area of 115 hectares (284 acres). It was designed by Charles Heath, notable architect, surveyor, and the Secretary to the Board of Managers for many years. The first burial took place on 10 December 1906, a date considered to be the unofficial opening of the cemetery. Fawkner was unique in Victoria in being established as a 'municipal cemetery' and for its impressive spider-web plan with its radiating avenues. The cemetery is noteworthy for its wide range of funerary monuments, including the particularly significant pioneer memorials dating from the 1840s and relocated from the Old Melbourne Cemetery; mausolea; memorial gardens; landscaped lawns; the historic tearooms of 1934 and adjoining Garden of Remembrance of 1933-38 (extended 1950s); the Charles Heath fountain (c 1948); the Christian Waller mural; a restored mortuary train; and a large number of trees, plants and planting styles, including older specimens such as English and Algerian Oaks, Elms, Lombardy Poplar and Monterey Cypress.

How is it significant?

The Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park is significant for aesthetic, architectural, historic, social, scientific/technical reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant?

Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park, the major burial ground for the northern metropolitan area, is one of the most important cemeteries established in Australia in the early twentieth century. It contains a number of graves of early Melbourne pioneers, including John Batman, which form an unbroken sample of memorials from Victoria's foundation to the present day. These pioneer memorials are highly significant as the best and largest collection of physical reminders of the Old Melbourne Cemetery, the first official burial ground in Melbourne. They are among the earliest and most significant memorials in Victoria. Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park reflects the strong diversity of social and ethnic backgrounds of the northern suburbs in the variety of funerary monuments, burial practices and structures. Fawkner buries and entombs more people annually than any other cemetery in Victoria.

The unusual layout was designed by architect Charles Heath, who was a dedicated exponent of the garden cemetery movement and an innovative cemetery designer. Seven roads radiated outwards, the central road leading to the site of the original crematorium. The tearooms were also designed by Charles Heath, with strong input from his son Frank Heath, in 1934, concurrent with the additions to the adjoining Garden of Remembrance. The tearooms is one of the few remaining original buildings constructed to Heath's 1906 master plan for the cemetery, and with the adjoining Garden of Remembrance reflects the classical-inspired architectural theme which Heath had envisaged.

The cemetery, which was based on a 'modern' railway cemetery model, still has the railway line, and a rare surviving railway hearse car (restored and returned to the site), of the type used from 1906-1939 as a 'mortuary train', is displayed at the site.

The site is also of significance for the wide range of remnant native and exotic vegetation located in various parts of the cemetery, including many early plantings.

Classified: 28/03/2011

Hermes Number 114690

Property Number

Extent of Registration

Essentially the original 1906 cemetery (approximately 275 acres or 110 hectares) with some minor additions (Total: 284 acres or 115 hectares). The separate area to the north is not included.

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/>