
Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain



Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain, Hobsons Bay Heritage Study 2006

Location

132 Nelson Place WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain, designed and constructed in 1876 by Walter Macfarlane & Co with a base constructed by Harry Bliss, at 132 Nelson Place, Williamstown.

How is it Significant?

The Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

The Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain has architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it Significant?

The significance of the Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain is described by Heritage Victoria as follows:

The Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain is architecturally significant as the earliest known memorial drinking fountain in Melbourne and one of the earliest in Victoria. It is also significant as one of the most ornate drinking fountains in Victoria and as a rare surviving example of an imported cast-iron drinking fountain. A number of similar ornamental fountains manufactured by Walter Macfarlane & Co of Glasgow were imported into Australia in the nineteenth century, but only one other example is known to exist in Victoria. The other example, the Henderson Drinking Fountain, North Melbourne, lost its original pedestal and basin in the 1950s.

The drinking fountain is aesthetically important as a fine example of Victorian decorative street furniture with elegant columns, richly ornamented arches and dome and elaborate carved figures.

The drinking fountain has historical significance for its associations with the Reverend George Wilkinson, Anglican minister at Holy Trinity, Williamstown who was also a temperance advocate and homeopath. The fountain also has strong historical associations with the temperance movement, a powerful religious, political and social force in Victorian society.

Heritage Study/Consultant Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Hermes Number 22194

Property Number

Physical Description 1

The Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain is described by Heritage Victoria as follows:

The cast-iron drinking fountain stands on a bluestone plinth made by monumental mason Harry Bliss in a corner of Commonwealth Reserve. The elaborate canopy comprises four columns rising to form arches with decorated mouldings, encircling ornamental shields, one of which reads 'Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain 1875', inscriptions on two sides of 'Keep the pavement dry', and carvings of griffins, all surmounted by a richly decorated dome culminating in a crown. The pedestal and basin are also highly decorative, including carved reptilian creatures on the pedestal. The original copper water beakers were removed about 1935 and presently the fountain has two stainless steel taps.

Integrity

Integrity and condition

Integrity - High. Condition - Good.

Physical Description 2

Context

Prominently located at the corner of Nelson Place and Syme Street, the Wilkinson Memorial drinking fountain contributes to the historic nineteenth century character of Nelson Place and the Commonwealth Reserve.

Historical Australian Themes

Developing cultural institutions and ways of life; Creating public landscapes

Physical Description 3

Associations

Williamstown City Council, Melbourne Harbour Trust, Rev. George Wilkinson, Walter Macfarlane & Co.

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/>