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# RESERVE - MERRI PARK SPORTS GROUND



Merri Park Sports Ground, St Georges Road

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## Location

33 ST GEORGES ROAD, NORTHCOTE, DAREBIN CITY

## Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO196

## Heritage Listing

Darebin City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### *What is significant?*

Merri Park at St Georges Road, Northcote was granted as a park in 1909, and permanently reserved in 1927. Part of the park's permanent reservation was the negotiation of use rights with the (then proposed) adjacent Northcote High School. The school continues to use the site today. Improvements were made to the park around 1909, although it is unlikely that any evidence of this phase remains. Later improvements included the construction of a gateway and sign, fronting St Georges Road.

The stone entrance gateway constructed as part of the inter-war improvements to Merri Park is significant.

Later additions, including the recently constructed recreation facilities and landscaping are not significant.

*How is it significant?*

Merri Park at St Georges Road, Northcote is of local historic significance to Darebin City.

*Why is it significant?*

Historically, Merri Park is significant for the historic association of part of the site with the former Inebriates Retreat, operated by Sumner from 1873 to 1891. Historically, Merri Park is also significant as one of the earliest areas acquired by Council for parks and reserves between 1907 and 1933, and for the evidence it provides of Council's objective to provide open space in the interests of the health and recreation of present and future citizens of Northcote, as well as of later programs of beautification that coincided with the jubilee celebrations of the City of Northcote. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2)

Heritage Study/Consultant Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011;

Construction dates 1909, 1927,

Hermes Number 27143

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Merri Park is located on the west side of St Georges Road, adjacent to Northcote High School. It is roughly triangular in shape, its east boundary formed by St Georges Road, north boundary by Sumner Avenue, and the northwest to southeast diagonal boundary formed by Merri Creek.

The entrance to Merri Park is defined on the St Georges Road boundary by a stone gateway with mild steel geometric rails and sign, the detail of which includes the name of the park (in upper case lettering) dating from 1937. A plaque at the base of the southern main pier has the following inscription:

*ERECTED TO COMMEMORATE THE OPENING OF / MERRI PARK SPORTS GROUND / A. V. PETERS. J. P.  
/ MAYOR 1937*

The main piers retain remnant fittings which may once have supported lighting. Two symmetrically placed circles on either side of the lettering 'Merri Park' may once have supported the former Northcote Council's crest (as seen at Penders Park). The style, fabric, size and form of the gateway is similar to gateways to other Darebin parks, in particular those within the former City of Northcote, created at a similar time (presumably in association with the 1932-33 jubilee celebrations and coincident beautification programs which gave the city's parks a unified identity (Penders Park, Oldis Gardens, Batman Park, for example), and demonstrating civic pride.

Eucalypts of varying ages for the dominant tree palette of an otherwise relatively open site.

Merri Park now includes sporting facilities and a play area as well as conservation areas along the Merri Creek boundary. The park is used all year by a variety of sporting clubs, including baseball, cricket and AFL Auskick, and by Northcote High School during and after school hours ([www.darebin.vic.gov.au](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au)).

*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/>*