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# Johnstone Park

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## Location

Mercer & Gheringhap Streets, GEELONG VIC 3220 - Property No G13099

## Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

## Level of significance

State

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 9, 2004

Johnstone Park, set aside in 1848, reduced to its present boundaries in the late nineteenth century and partially re-landscaped to a prize winning scheme by architects Percy Everett and Laird and Buchan in 1916-26, is of Statewide cultural significance:

- for the manner in which the boundaries of Johnstone Park permit the original Hoddle plan of Geelong (1838) to be appreciated; Johnstone Park is used as a buffer in the wedge between his town and suburban/rural allotments, the alignment of the park's north and south boundaries reflect Hoddle's scheme to site the township between parallel parts of the bay and Barwon River, and its topography is formed by the original creek/drain/dam which lay between the town and suburban/rural allotments;
- as an integral part of an institutional precinct which contains a wealth of buildings and works constructed as part of the development and growth of Geelong; these include the Geelong Town Hall (1855, 1915-17), railway line to Melbourne (1853-57), Telegraph Office (1857-58), St Georges Presbyterian Church (1861), Manse (1864-65) and McPhillimy Hall (c.1930s), Reformed Presbyterian Church (1862), Temperance Hall (1870s, demolished c.1978 and facade re-erected), former Baptist Chapel (18??), former United Presbyterian Church (18??), Mechanics Institute (18??), Geelong Railway Station (1879, 1892), the former Gordon Technical College (1887 and later buildings), Court House (1870s, reworked 1937 to form Court House and Police Station), Geelong Post Office (1890s), Geelong Art Gallery (1915 and later extensions), Peace Memorial Foyer (1919-26), VRI Hall (1930s?), Telephone Exchange (1940s), and Free Library (1959);
- for its planting from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; three trees are listed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees - *Ginkgo biloba*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Fastigiata' and *Ulmus minor* 'Variegata' - other trees of note include an avenue of *Brachychiton populneus*, a *Cercis siliquastrum* and two 'Lone Pines' (*Pinus brutia*) and *Phoenix canariensis* palms planted as part of Everett's scheme;

- for its complementary relationship with the adjoining Town Hall, Art Gallery and Peace Memorial Foyer; these buildings assist in delineating the historical demarcation between Public Park and Town Hall/municipal purposes reserve; their classically-derived architecture enhances the City Beautiful influence in Everett's landscaping scheme (only partially implemented), and they provide an architectural boundary befitting this inner city park;

- for its retention of a bandstand (1919) of outstanding architectural importance and a feature which was also a major determinant of the reworking of the path layout of the park in the first quarter of the twentieth century; as well as other monuments such as the Medici urns (rare examples of nineteenth century metal garden urns), King George V statue, Stitt Jenkins fountain (one of the earliest extant drinking fountains in Victoria) and King Memorial

- for the path layout of the northern section derived from Everett's competition scheme of 1916 (notably the axial east-west boulevard, north-south path and loop path west of the bandstand), and the path layout of the south-western section, which recalls the late-nineteenth century history of the park; and

- for its aesthetic values, derived in large measure from the topography (which is a direct result of the early land form of the creek valley), focus of the major buildings and containment of views; the topography also demonstrates reclamation schemes over many years, especially along the northern and eastern edge and contributes to the 'sunken garden' effect of the northern portion of Johnstone Park;

The Belcher memorial fountain, located in the roundabout north-east of Johnstone Park was formerly located in Johnstone Park (1927-56) and is therefore related in its significance. As an object, the fountain is significant in its adoption of the classically-derived Choragic Monument of Lysicrates which complements other classically-derived elements of the Johnstone Park design; the fountain tells of the aspirations and allusions fondly imagined by Geelong worthies of the nineteenth century; is one of only two known examples of this design in Australia; is a fine example of the work of Derby founders Andrew Handyside and Co.; and is now a central feature of one of Australia's early traffic roundabouts.

Hermes Number 70214

Property Number

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*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/>*