

ATTACHMENT A

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**TRAM SHEDS WWI MEMORIAL
SUMMARY INFORMATION AND IMAGES**

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JUNE 2017**



Tram Sheds WWI Memorial current location and setting. Leichhardt Bus Depot

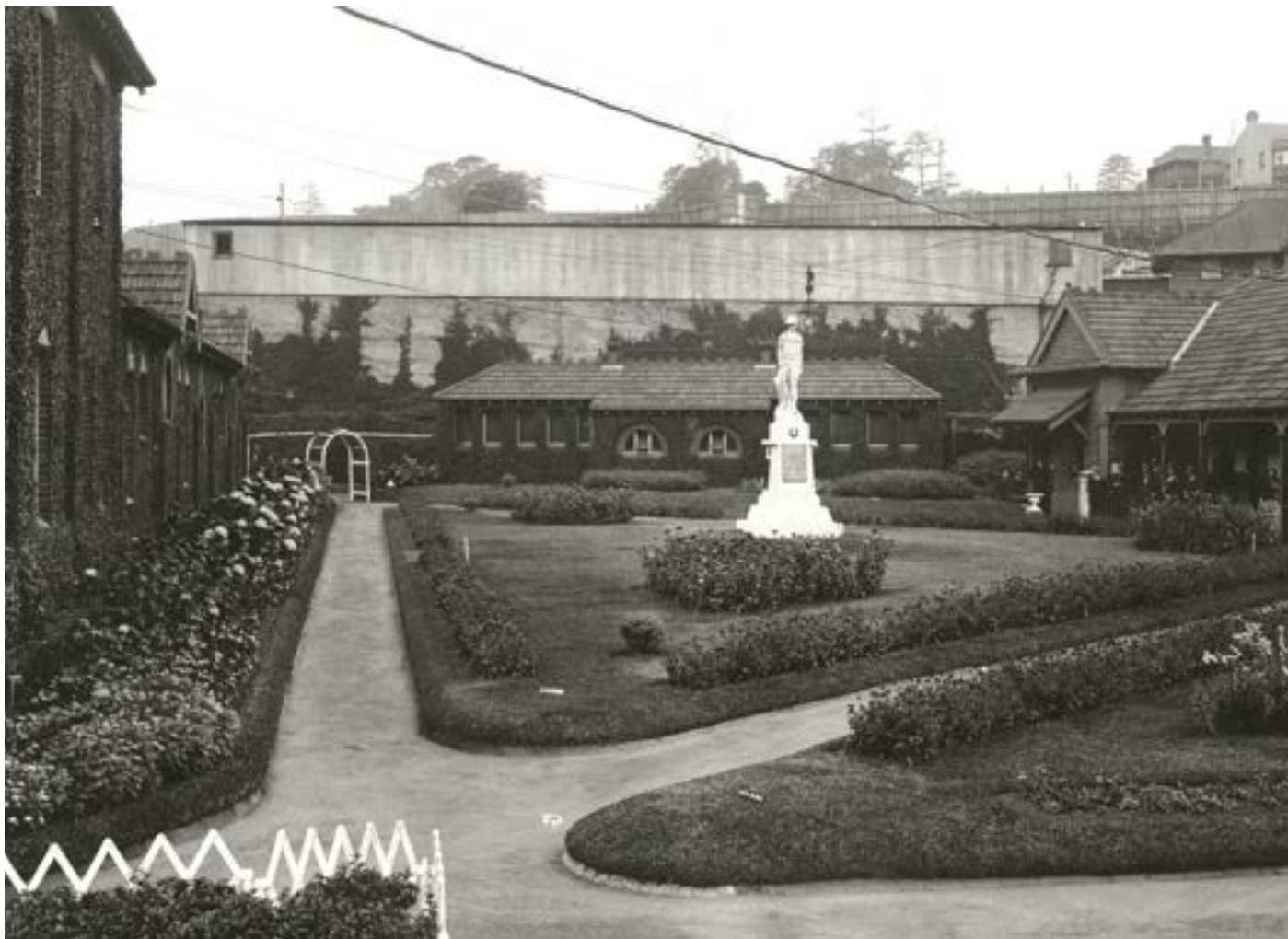
DESCRIPTION

The 'digger' statue in cast cement or stonelite (an early quartz/cement composite) set on a low dark red brick base to which three copper plaques are attached, two of which list the names of the fallen workers from the Rozelle Tramways Depot. The whole of the sculpture has been painted white, with evidence of multiple coats having been applied in layers.

The statue depicts a young male soldier dressed in battle-ready uniform of World War I, with rolled-up sleeves and open collar, and the iconic felt hat at the everyday 'brim down' position as it was worn to protect from the sun on the battlefield. The whole ensemble is accurate, and the gun with bayonet fixed held by the figure may be genuine in part.

The statue remains intact, however the original masonry monumental plinth has been replaced by a smaller brick pier on a slightly wider base to which the beaten copper list of the fallen has been affixed by bolts.





Tram Sheds WWI Memorial original setting Rozelle Tramway Depot

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Rozelle Tram Sheds were built in 1904 for the stabling and maintenance of trams on the inner-west routes. The depot was operational until the closure of the tram system in 1958 and its replacement by buses which were based at the depot at Leichhardt.

The sheds were used for various small-scale uses until the 1980s when they were used for storage, but became increasingly vacant and were rapidly vandalised. The sheds and the adjacent Harold Park trotting track have recently been redeveloped as a major residential development, with the sheds being adaptively re-used for retail and dining.

The Tramways were a major employer and many workers from each depot enlisted in WWI. Losses were significant and deeply felt by workmates. The tram workers had a strong tradition of acknowledging the death of any colleague and the early memorialisation of the war at Rozelle is consistent with this pattern.

By 1916, the statue of the digger had been commissioned from local Irish-born sculptor Edwin McGowan (1883-1959) and was unveiled in the

southern garden of the depot on 26 November 1916, only months after Gallipoli and Fromelles and still two years before the war was over.

The Rozelle Tramway Depot, when operating, was a good example of the early 20th century workplace, with facilities such as ornate gardens planted and maintained by the staff that were the subject of regular garden competitions with other depots. The garden at the Rozelle Tramway Depot was of particularly notable quality, being arranged with paths and beds leading the eye to the memorial statue which provided a strong focus for the composition and plantings. The garden won the Inter-Depot Garden competition in both 1926 and 1928. In recent years this garden has been reinterpreted as part of the City's upgrade of public space at Harold Park.

The Rozelle Tramway Depot was decommissioned in 1958 as part of the closure of Sydney's tram network and all staff were transferred to the Leichhardt Bus Depot. The statue was also relocated to the depot and placed at the main entrance adjacent to the control office, where it remains today.



Harold Park public space, including Rozelle Depot Rose Garden Interpretation

SIGNIFICANCE

The Tram Sheds WWI Memorial is unique. Although the inclusion of a 'digger' figure became one of the most popular devices on memorials of the WWI period, McGowan's work was only the second to be installed in Australia, and was the first to be designed and carved here.

Edwin McGowan's work was carved in the months immediately after Gallipoli and Fromelles, and installed in 1916, only seven months after the first memorial of any type, an obelisk and water fountain in Balmain (April 1916), followed by an obelisk in Wickham, near Newcastle (May 1916). The first recorded memorial with a figure was also in Newcastle, near the post office, which had its statue imported from Italy. It was unveiled on 18 September 1916, only weeks before the memorial at the Rozelle Tramway Depot.

The 'digger' figure at Rozelle is particularly notable for its informal character, and is very different from the hundreds of later works that feature a formally posed soldier or officer in full uniform and a position of reflection. This later standardisation was due in part to the strict guidelines established by the Public Monuments Advisory Board, established in response to the number of these 'reflective' works of mediocre sculptural quality.

McGowan's work pre-dated the prescriptive requirements of the Public Monuments Advisory Board, and he created a sculpture that is clearly dedicated to the everyday soldier, whilst demonstrating a sophisticated level of understanding of the principles of classical sculpture.

The Tram Sheds WWI Memorial is also the first substantial memorial to be erected as a workplace memorial by subscription by the colleagues of the fallen.

Given the above, the Statement of Significance states that the 'Historical', 'Historical Association', and 'Aesthetic Significance' values of the Tram Sheds WWI Memorial are high and have the potential to extend beyond the boundaries of Leichhardt (now Inner West Council) and Sydney City areas.

Regarding the proposed relocation, the Statement of Significance states that the historic and aesthetic heritage values of the Memorial are strongly associated with the place of its original installation, the former Rozelle Tramways Depot. Although a Memorial is not usually considered an item of movable heritage, it is relocatable, as borne out by its relocation to the bus depot in the 1950s, and further relocation could be appropriate providing that the new location reinstates or enhances the identified heritage values of the Memorial and the place being considered for re-siting.

The historic and aesthetic values of the Former Rozelle Tramway Depot (a listed heritage item in Sydney LEP 2012) include its setting, and the Memorial formed an important part of this setting. Relocation of the Memorial to the reinterpreted garden area of the former depot would therefore also be a sympathetic conservation outcome that would facilitate the interpretation of the memorial in context and also an appreciation of the lived history of the Depot.

The Statement of Significance further directs that the relocation option would only be appropriate if proper and sophisticated siting, interpretation and protection from harm can be ensured.



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Information in this Summary from:

Condition Assessment Report on the Tram Sheds World War I Memorial for City of Sydney July 2016 by Sydney Artefacts Conservation

Statement of Significance - Heritage Data Form. WWI memorial to the workers at the (former) Rozelle Tramways Depot. March 2017. Prepared by Robyn Conroy Heritage Planner.