

Victorian Heritage Database Report
Central Park, 14-28 Main Street, STAWELL



Location:

14-28 Main Street STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Recommended for Heritage Register

Statement of Significance:

Central Park Stawell, including the sports ground, old grandstand, cast iron entrance gates, memorial stone seat, sun dial and several monuments to individual runners of the Stawell Gift Grandstand has significance for its long-standing associations with the Stawell Gift, Victoria's premier and well-known short distance professional running race. The park was originally gazetted as a cricket ground in the c.1860s as a result of the large British population of diggers, but by 1894 the park was reserved for recreation purposes. The old grandstand has significance as a rare example of its type. Built in 1899 (a year after the Stawell Gift was first held at Central Park), the grandstand was designed by Kempson and Conolly of Melbourne. The grandstand was appropriately restored in 1991 and is reflective of the Federation era with its stop chamfered timber columns, half-hipped (jerkin head) roof, timber balustrading and timber column brackets.

Central Park is aesthetically significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates some important visual qualities. These qualities include the large open grassed sport ground, nearby old grandstand and the cast iron entrance gates, memorial stone seat, sun dial and several monuments to individual runners of the Stawell Gift (including the granite honour roll attached to the Hall of Fame building).

The Grandstand in Central Park is architecturally significant at a STATE level. It demonstrates original and rare design qualities of a Federation style. These qualities include the elongated half-hipped half-hipped (jerkin head) roof, timber roof trusses, stop chamfered timber columns having decorative capital moulds and solid timber brackets and the tiered timber seating. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the ground floor refreshment rooms clad in horizontal timber weatherboards with multi-paned timber framed windows and timber doors, central and flanking timber stairs, capped, visually permeable timber balustrade and the finials that adorn the roofline. The timber construction of the Stawell grandstand (for a late 19th and early 20th century grandstand building) is comparatively rare, with the only other known examples being the grandstands in Fitzroy (1888), Kingston (1902) and Benalla (1913).

Central Park, including the sports ground, old grandstand, cast iron entrance gates, memorial stone seat, sun dial and several monuments to individual runners of the Stawell Gift, is historically and socially significant at a STATE level. It is associated with the Stawell Gift, Victoria's premier short distance professional running race. The Stawell Gift emanated from a running race established by the Stawell Miner's Association after 1873, and from 1877 the Stawell Athletic Club held annual races at the botanical reserve on Easter Monday. From 1898, the Stawell Gift was held in Central Park, Stawell, and a year later in 1899 the Grandstand had been constructed to a design by Kempson and Conolly, architects, Melbourne. The Grandstand is recognised and valued by the community as an integral part of the Stawell Gift, providing sheltered seating for spectators to view the races. The sun dial and memorials are recognised and valued by the local community for their associations with the Stawell Gift and those who have participated. The cast iron entrance gates have social significance because they are recognised and valued by the Stawell community for commemorative reasons with those who fought in the Boer War (1899-1902).

Overall, Central Park, Stawell, including the sports ground, old grandstand, cast iron entrance gates, memorial stone seat, sun dial and several monuments to individual runners of the Stawell Gift, is of STATE significance.

Description

Central Park, Stawell is accessed through large elaborate cast iron gates off Main Street. The park includes a grassed sports ground flanked by an old timber grandstand, other brick grandstands (including the A.E. Hank Neil Stand), memorial stone seat, sun dial and several monuments to individual runners of the Stawell Gift. Also fronting Main Street as part of Central Park is the Stawell Gift Hall of Fame.

Cast Iron Entrance Gates

The gates consist of six cast iron piers, with the larger central piers servicing vehicular gates while the smaller flanking piers service pedestrian gates. The piers are elaborately designed, having incised panels and paterae and decorative cappings adorned with urns.

The central vehicular gates two plaques which read: "Erected to Commemorate the Patriotism of Those who from this Town and District Served in the Boer War 1899-1902."

Old Grandstand

The grandstand is situated in Central Park, Stawell, overlooking the sports ground.

The timber, Federation styled grandstand is characterised by a elongated half-hipped (jerkin head) roof that is supported by timber roof trusses, together with stop chamfered timber columns having decorative capital moulds and solid timber brackets. Below the tiered timber seating are the refreshment rooms clad in horizontal timber weatherboards with multi-paned timber framed windows and timber doors. The central timber stairs are apparently not original, but are reflective of the original design. The grandstand is also accessed by timber stands flanking each end of the structure. A capped, visually permeable timber balustrade is situated between the timber columns. Other early features of the design include the finials that adorn the roofline. The deep red

corrugated Colorbond roof cladding has been introduced.

Stawell Gift Hall of Fame

The Stawell Gift Hall of Fame building appears to have been constructed in the 1950s or 1960s. It is an unassuming flat roofed brick building with aluminium framed windows. Of importance associated with the Hall of Fame is Stawell Gift Winners Honour Roll constructed of red and black granite by Waites Robson.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Old Grandstand

The Victorian Heritage Register (from the Heritage Victoria website, 4 November 2003) includes 5 Grandstands of State significance. These grandstands are as follows:

Fitzroy Cricket Ground Grandstand, Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (H751)

Built in 1888 to a design by the architects N. Billing and Son, the Fitzroy Cricket Ground Grandstand is of architectural significance as a fine example of a 19th century timber grandstand at a major sports venue. It is of historical significance as possibly the oldest and most intact 19th century grandstand in the metropolitan area and for its enduring association over many years with inner metropolitan football and cricket, one of the few associated structures to have survived relatively intact.

This Grandstand appears to be similar in scale, and timber construction to the grandstand at Stawell, but it is earlier and the cast iron balustrading is more reflective of Victorian design.

Kingston Grandstand, Kingston-Allendale Road, Kingston (H1300)

The Kingston Grandstand was built in 1902 at the nearby Smeaton Showgrounds and was relocated to its present site in 1922 as a result of the relocation of the district's show. The timber grandstand, with its partly barrel vaulted and partly skillion galvanised corrugated steel roof, is of architectural significance for its unusual vernacular design and high integrity. It is historically and socially significant for its long associations with the Kingston Agricultural Show, one of Victoria's most famous country shows.

Similarly, the Stawell grandstand is of timber construction and is relatively intact. Compared to the Kingston grandstand, the building at Stawell consists of a more refined Federation design, being built three years earlier. The Stawell Grandstand also has considerable historical and social significance for its associations with the Stawell Gift, Victoria's premier and well-known short distance professional running race.

Grandstand, Bridge Street and Benalla Showgrounds, Benalla (H976)

The Benalla Grandstand was constructed in 1913, having a timber frame with a distinguished and elongated barrel vaulted galvanised corrugated steel roof and a rear half curved roof. It is divided into seven bays formed by chamfered timber posts and queen post trusses. The building is architecturally significant as a rare example of a surviving timber framed grandstand, barrel vaulted roof and elaborate cast iron valances.

The Stawell grandstand is also constructed of timber and survives as a rare example of its type. The Benalla grandstand is however slightly more elaborate, but the cast iron valance is more reflective of Victorian design, compared to the more Federation styled timber detailing of the Stawell building.

Glenferrie Oval Grandstand, 34 Linda Crescent, Hawthorn (H890)

Built in 1938 in an interwar Moderne style to a design by Marsh and Michaelson, the Glenferrie Oval Grandstand is a considerably later building than the Stawell grandstand and is therefore not readily comparable.

Queen Elizabeth Oval Grandstand, 88 View Street, Bendigo (H803)

This grandstand was built in 1901 in a Late Victorian Boom style to a design by J.R. Richardson, Bendigo Surveyor. It has architectural significance as a large, well-conceived and executed building and a good example of a comparatively rare building type in excellent condition. Construction of red brick and feature decoration cast ironwork from the Dunn and Redpath Foundry, it is a symbol of regional community aspirations in the late 19th century in Bendigo.

The Bendigo grandstand is a larger, more imposing and a more elaborate structure than the grandstand at Stawell. The design is more reflective of the Victorian era, as opposed to the Federation era of the Stawell building.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	112358
Property number	

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online