

# STRATHFIELD-HOMEBUSH DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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2 September 2019

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## Homebush War Memorial

In reply to your correspondence regarding the potential relocation of the Homebush War Memorial. This letter is drafted in response to the Council resolution (102/19) at the meeting of 6 August 2019 which states that 'the residents/community, RSL Cumberland sub branch and Strathfield Homebush Historical Society be consulted with regard to the possibility of the War Memorial being moved'.

The Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society does not support moving the Homebush War Memorial to another location for the following reasons:

- The Burra Charter advocates that places of cultural significance should be changed as little as possible to retain significance and that relocation is unacceptable unless necessary to its survival, which is clearly not a consideration in relation to the Homebush War Memorial.
- The Homebush War Memorial is heritage listed on Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and in accordance with the LEP, proposals to move the item will require a heritage impact statement, assessment and issue of development consent.
- Major works have been undertaken in the last five years to stabilise the Homebush War Memorial at its current site. Relocating the memorial is likely to be expensive. Relocation after significant stabilisation works have been carried out would appear to be a waste of public money.
- Bringing the two memorials together does not seem to serve any purpose other than avoiding a temporary road closure for a few hours for the ANZAC commemoration. On the few occasions when a ceremony is held at Davey Square, it involves a temporary road closure for a few hours. Temporary road closures are common for many other civic events in Strathfield and are inexpensive in comparison to the costs involved of assessment, consent, development and implementation of relocation and landscaping etc.
- The two monuments, built in c1920 and 2015 respectively, are significantly different in style, period, materials, height etc. There is little commonality between the monuments and it is unlikely that the two monuments would be compatible if relocated.

## Background and heritage status

This memorial was originally built by the Homebush Patriotic Association, via subscriptions, to commemorate the residents of the Homebush Council area who served in World War 1. Homebush Council was located on Strathfield Council's northern boundary, which was north of the railway line

at Homebush and Flemington. Management of the monument transferred to Homebush Council in 1921, and subsequently to Strathfield Council following the Council merger in 1947.

The memorial was originally sited near the corner of Parramatta and Wentworth Rd (now Park Road) Homebush but transferred to a small section of Davey Square, which is a traffic island located between Rochester St, Coventry Rd and Beresford Rd. This site became known as Davey Square Memorial as distinct from Davey Square, a park located opposite the memorial on Rochester Street. The relocation of the memorial in 1978 was at the instigation of the then Homebush RSL Sub-Branch due to concerns about increasing traffic on Parramatta Road and the likelihood of an accident and/or damage to the memorial.

Recognition of further war conflicts in Korea and Vietnam were added to the memorial site, which occurred after the Council merger, but no names were inscribed from conflicts after WWI.

While some of the context of the original monument has been lost due to the relocation to Davey Square from Parramatta Road, resulting in the memorial being located in the suburb of Strathfield, not Homebush, and the loss of the original base and footings, the monument is recognised for its aesthetic and cultural significance to the local community and is listed as a heritage item at its current location on Council's Local Environmental Plan. The statement of significance (1986 SHI item 116) states:

*'....The memorial is of local significance for its historical associations and as a visible reminder of the past. It is an excellent axial element in the streetscapes at the junction of Coventry, Rochester and Beresford Roads'*

The listing notes the significance of the memorial monument but also its contribution to local streetscape and landscaping at its current location.

In accordance with the Strathfield Local Environmental Plan (Section 5.10), movement of a heritage item requires heritage impact assessment and development consent.

The Society considers that the significance of the memorial would be diminished if moved from its current location. The memorial is located in a prominent and highly visible position, it has a sense of place and sited in an attractive landscape setting. The memorial attracts community interest and commemorates the service and sacrifice of local residents in World War 1 and subsequent conflicts.

The new memorial erected was erected in 2015 in Davey Square Reserve. This memorial was built to accommodate plaques which were previously sited on the entry pathway to the former RSL sub branch at 32 The Crescent Homebush. The entry to the former club was listed as a heritage item on Strathfield Council's LEP as Homebush Memorial Park. The statement of significance states:

*'This memorial planting in memory of fallen comrades in World War 11 was opened on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1947. The landscape items are arranged as an alley with roses, lawns, cypresses to each side of the axis. It is of local significance as a memorial to the local men who died during the war'*

The new memorial in Davey Square is not heritage listed, though some of the landscape elements referenced in the statement of significance for the Homebush Memorial Park at 32 The Crescent were transferred to Davey Square albeit in a different setting. The Memorial Park is currently listed as a heritage item on Strathfield Council's Local Environmental Plan, though it is currently in a degraded condition being adjacent to a development site. The condition of the memorial park is of some

concern. Also of concern is the condition of the new monument appears to either be affected by vandalism and graffiti attacks or deterioration of the brickwork.

Yours faithfully

MICHAEL NICHOLLS

PRESIDENT