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Name: Penguin Memorial Library and Obelisks
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 10933
Municipality: Central Coast Council
Date Listed: 18/04/2007

Location Addresses

81 MAIN RD, PENGUIN 7316 TAS

Title References

Property Id

6759843



Untitled

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Setting: The Penguin Memorial Library at 81 Main Road Penguin is set within the Esplanade reserve overlooking Penguin Beach. The building is set back from the street amidst lawns to the south, west and east and to the north there is strategically placed seats and pergola to provide privacy, shelter and views to the ocean. A short distance to each side of the Library building is a tall masonry monument - one being a memorial to community participation in the Boer War and one being a memorial to community participation in the Great War (First World War). Each is surrounded by a small area of paving and plinths to lay wreaths. The setting of the Library and memorials is confined by commercial development to the east but open to the Esplanade reserve in the west, with its playground and garden areas, and open to Penguin Beach in the north, albeit via a steep embankment down to the sand.

The presence of cafes, bakeries and milkbars in the adjoining commercial areas results in the reserve areas around the Library being a popular venue to pause and enjoy food and drink.

Description: The Penguin Memorial Library at 81 Main Road Penguin built in 1954, is a Post War library of single storey rendered masonry construction, with attached clock-tower on street frontage and a curved verandah overlooking the sea to the rear. Stylistic features demonstrated include a parapet form, shallow pitch roof, building form, wall materials layout and proportion of windows, materials, style and material of doors. The building exterior appears to be predominantly intact. Notable changes include the addition of a transparent barrel vaulted awning and the replacement of windows/doors with aluminium sashes. Internal modifications have been undertaken to expand the Library area, which now occupies the whole premises.

History: A public library service has existed in Penguin since c1880 and the first municipal service was established in 1944. The existing Memorial Library was constructed in 1954. It represented an unusual combination of community service functions - aside from the overall symbolism as a memorial, it included a clock tower, half of the building served as the public library and half was for the use of the Red Cross and incorporated a Mother's Rest Room and place for female social interaction. It is one of only two memorial libraries in Tasmania, the other being at Currie on King Island. According to Sir Ronald Cross, the Governor who opened the Library, the building was the 'first municipal building' in Penguin. Penguin was one of the first municipalities to join the State Library scheme. The Penguin Council altered the building in 1966 and 1973. The Boer War Memorial and Flagpole at front of building had originally been located on the triangular median strip at the junction of Deviation Road and Main Road. In the early 1900s the commercial and social centre of the township was on the land behind Beecraft Point in the vicinity of 2-44 Main Road. Following the winding down of the port, the centre shifted toward the present location of the Library. Thus by the 1920s the decision was made to establish the Great War Memorial at the new centre, and it is believed the Boer War Memorial was relocated to its present site at the same time.

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

The Penguin Memorial Library and adjacent War Memorials at 81 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance as it is important in demonstrating the evolutionary pattern of the Central Coast district. The place encompasses the group of built objects that reflect the Australian approach to commemorating and honouring those who served in wars across the late C19th and entire C20th, and remains the site of remembrance services throughout the year.

The development of a memorial to the Second World War and Korean War as a municipal facility rather than another obelisk, reflects the social attitudes in the immediate aftermath of the war being focussed on building a new world and escaping memories of the war. With the passage of time, social attitudes change and the need for commemoration increases along with a general interest in those who served and the events of war.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

The Penguin Memorial Library is of historic cultural heritage significance an unusual public structure that was designed as a memorial, a library, a clocktower and a place of social interaction for women. It is one of only two buildings in Tasmania that incorporated the functions of war memorial and municipal library .

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

The Penguin Memorial Library is of historic cultural heritage significance because it is important as a public building in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of cultural places. The library has the ability to demonstrate the principal characteristics of post war architecture styles, being a particularly fine and predominantly intact example.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

The Penguin Memorial Library and adjacent War Memorials at 81 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance as a highly symbolic and spiritual place associated with the commemoration of Australian servicemen who served and lost their lives in various wars or minor conflicts across the late C19, C20th and C21st. For the local community, the place has additional community values as a place of public gathering and interaction.

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.