

COMMEMORATION, MEANING, AND HERITAGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIALS.

INTRODUCTION

A significant recent feature of Australian cultural life has been the rise of commemoration manifest in new monuments and memorials devoted to war remembrance. Examples of this are the new Australian War Memorial in London opened in November 2003 and the extensive addition to Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance in the same year. In Western Australia commemorative keenness has been apparent in large and impressive memorials such as the HMAS Sydney Memorial in Geraldton (November 2001) and the controversial Mandurah War Memorial completed in April 2005. Further, there has been a steady stream of local memorials, including the East Victoria Park Memorial covering the Royal Australian Regiment and the planned Catalina Memorial at Crawley on the Swan River. While recent memorials have been constructed to commemorate civilian tragedies, such as the Bali Bombing in 2002, the majority of new memorials still commemorate wars or associated events.

Ken Inglis observes that when he began his gargantuan survey of Australian war memorials in 1983 he did so in the belief that that war commemoration in Australia was in decline and would wither.¹ By the time his work was completed twenty years later there had been a resurgence of commemorative life that shows no sign of abating. This rise has been fuelled by the memorial pilgrimage of many Australians to Gallipoli in 1990 on the seventy fifth anniversary of the Anzac landings and the *Australia Remembers* campaign of 1995 which sought to celebrate and commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. The *Australia Remembers* celebration was a controversial but successful consciousness raising effort by the Keating Government to promote the idea of an independent national identity forged in war. Through empowering communities to run their own events, under the umbrella of a national celebration, local urban and regional communities were free to express their own "deep-felt sentiments" and to come up with their "own ideas about the war and its meaning in contemporary Australia"² Momentum has been maintained in Western Australia by recent programs such as the Western Australian war memorial survey run by the Anzac Day Working Group in the Premier's office in collaboration with the W.A. branch of the Returned and Services League (RSL). Alongside this is the increasing numbers of young backpackers who visit Gallipoli as a "spiritual experience".³ There are many reasons for the resurgence in commemoration in Australia and not least has been concern about our national identity and the drive for a 'national story'.⁴ This concern has chiefly coalesced around Anzac Day commemorations and the revival of Anzac in the national imagination.

War memorials have been the physical focus of commemoration in Australia since the South African war of 1899-1902. However it has been memorials to the First and Second World Wars that have dominated the Australian landscape - lately joined by those commemorating Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam and the Gulf War. At last count the joint State Government and RSL register included 270 memorials. Despite this effort the list is primarily a simple database and there have been few academic studies of the war memorial phenomenon in Western Australia.⁵

To answer this deficiency academics from Curtin University and the state branch of the RSL have proposed a joint project to uncover the community meanings of war memorials and to re-locate them as significant heritage. The project arises out of a concern that there is a dearth of academic study on Western Australian memorials and that this study will help to promote community understanding of memorials and commemoration. There is also a parallel concern by the RSL on the need for public education of the role of memorials as instruments of citizenship and their future treatment and conservation. At present there is no uniform informed framework for the management of war memorials in Western Australia resulting in some memorials receiving less than sympathetic treatment.

Importantly the study asks - what are the connections between the material characteristics of Western Australian war memorials and practices of memorialisation? Are there specific and local emotional relationships between memorials and community or individual practices of remembrance? Have these changed over time as the meanings of these memorials change? The project also asks how the design and symbolism of war memorials relate to these issues given that there is traditionally an intimate association between the architectural and decorative symbolism of memorials and the messages they are meant to convey. Furthermore, the project has outcomes that will provide local and regional communities with practical strategies for understanding, appreciating and conserving their local memorials. This paper provides an overview of the conduct of the project, its proposed theoretical framing and how this might work in practice using a local memorial, the Canning Memorial, as a case study. The Canning memorial is part of a larger pilot study involving two other related memorials, the Victoria Park war memorial and the Victoria and Queens Park RSL Sub-branch war memorial. The pilot study was initiated to help refine the proposed methodology and the memorials were basically chosen for convenience – they are all in relatively close proximity to each other, maintained by the same RSL sub-branch and offer an interesting ground for study. This pilot study is still in progress and not all material has yet surfaced although enough to present a coherent story.

The project has progressed to the stage of a submitted proposal for an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant entitled *Remembering the Wars: Community Meaning of Western Australian War Memorials*. In Australia, linkage grants are awarded to partnerships between universities and industry or outside partners who, with significant government contribution, share some of the cost of the research. Whether the grant application will be successful is in the hands of the ARC. Regardless, both parties to the partnership are committed to the research.

THE PROJECT

As mentioned previously the purpose of the project is to understand how the material characteristics and planning of Western Australian war memorials were shaped and conditioned by the values of nation and community. It examines how the national values of Anzac were undercut and reinforced by localised notions of grief, loss, citizenship and memory which were invested in the conception, siting, design and use of memorials from the Great War to Vietnam. We propose to do this through examining changing community meanings of commemoration and the processes through which communities achieved consensus in the design and use of their memorials.

Our investigation takes into account the converging relationships between community remembrance and commemoration; the political processes under which consensus was (or sometimes not) achieved; the authority of groups like the RSL and national commemorative agendas; the role of artists and architects in commemoration and the ongoing relationship of the descendants of returned soldiers and community members to the memorials. Of central importance to our study is the development of an understanding of the significance of national and regional identity against immediate personal desires to memorialise the dead. This will provide a background to understanding why communities erected the memorials they did, what meanings were attributed to them, the practices that surround them and what meanings they may now carry.

Besides gaining a deeper understanding of memorials as purposefully designed objects and their community meaning, the project proposes to use this knowledge to generate strategies for local communities to appreciate and conserve local memorials as important heritage. As previously mentioned, it is an unfortunate consequence of recent enthusiasm that some memorials have been subject to less than ideal conservation treatment. Conversely neglect and poor local planning decisions have, in some cases, damaged the environmental context of memorials.

To limit the research our project will primarily focus on monumental memorials that have ritualistic purpose. In Australia – as elsewhere in the British Commonwealth – there were other forms of commemorative objects including honour boards which recorded the names of those that served –

usually hung in a local office or hall – and buildings that were accorded the title of ‘memorial’ such as a memorial library or hospital wing.

In physical terms the project will require archival research and oral histories of people who have had contact with their memorials. Forty memorials state-wide have been chosen for assessment. These have been selected through criteria of geographic distribution, design typology, ethnic or political intent, age and diverse settings. Memorial age ranges from 1917 to 2003. The chosen distribution is also affected by the tendency of memorials to concentrate around more populated regional areas and because many districts built memorial buildings and used honour boards rather than ceremonial memorials. From this sample, ten memorials will be chosen for in-depth study. These will be the most promising sites for richness of research material, comparison and representative of the diverse processes of memorial building. The RSL with over 130 local sub-branches state-wide, provides an exceptional network with which to engage the community in the study. However, in order that the project rests on firm academic grounds the study is supported in a framework of previous commemorative work and methodology which it also seeks to extend.

THE FRAMEWORK

Australian war memorials are a unique type of heritage. Unlike most other built heritage they are not rooted in ‘place’ but rooted in a collective memory for a distant place and event that may have had profound effects for a local community. As such, however, they do make a ‘place’ and are deliberate and evocative mnemonics in a present landscape that evokes and celebrates the past. However memory and representations of the past are also political matters. Heritage is often born in conflict and tensions raising the questions – whose heritage, whose memory and under what doctrinal conditions? As Brett observes “...[heritage] representations, even in the most benign cases, are never neutral.”⁶ This applies equally to war memorials. In this context, ideas about memory are crucial. Jay Winter remarks that memory and commemoration are part of a world wide phenomena. There is a ‘memory boom’ that is at the heart of many commemorative projects, many of which seek to provide a point of stability as a response to the threats posed by globalisation and national security issues.⁷ In the Australian context, forms of collective remembering such as those around the Anzac tradition coalesce around notions of national identity and indicate the status of memory in a culture which shares a layered – if sometimes uneasy – relationship with history writing and personal memory.⁸

As Tanja Luckins indicates, it is not helpful to frame a study on a singular definition or “knowing” of what memory was and is. Memory and memorialisation is a complex and fluid process which is sometimes located in cultural forms themselves. As she argues, there are subtle shifts between experience and memory that sometimes change, negate or strengthen commemorative memories across generations.⁹ Therefore our project rests in the broad realm of collective memory theory to assist analysis of the meaning of memorials to communities over time. Originally proposed by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925 it has evolved as a set of ideas that memory is in part a social phenomenon and not purely a psychological one. Collective memory theory stresses the socially shared representations of the past rather than its institutional and political uses. In this context history is “constructed out of memory – traces, oral tales, written narratives and repetitive rituals with high emotional value for participants”.¹⁰ There are many complexities surrounding the notion of collective remembrance, with ambiguity and contestation at the heart of the process.¹¹ In this context Pierre Nora argues places like war memorials are sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) whose purpose is to “...stop time and block the work of forgetting ... to immortalise death, to materialise the immaterial...”¹²

In particular, we will use and develop the key work of Alex King on British memorials of the Great War.¹³ Traditional responses to the study of memorials stress the architectural symbolism used to convey ideas and emotions – associations such as the cross to convey sacrifice or the funerary connotations of the cenotaph and obelisk. King has approached the problem of the meaning of war memorials by acknowledging that – beyond traditional symbolism - there is difficulty in connecting the design and planning of war memorials with the original intentions that they were meant to convey. However, he notes that despite the fact that they were the sites of contested, multiple and ambiguous

meanings a united public observance emerged. He argues that to make adequate sense of memorials it is superficial to just reveal the meaning of underlying symbolism, and that it is also necessary to “describe the process by which people came to see meaning in them.”¹⁴ Local interpretations were *elaborations* of the symbols where these elaborations were contingent on specific environments.¹⁵ The creation of memorials was a reconciliation of conflicting communal intentions and desires - a creative process that resulted in new meanings for traditional memorial forms. The production, use and continuing use of memorials have been the focus of collective activity which has not itself proposed making sense of war but has allowed an opportunity for people to express ways of attributing meaning to them. Hence by examining the relationship of community participants in commemoration and the institutional power applied in forming and managing these relationships it is possible to analyse war memorials as a cultural and creative activity. King’s work is to be taken a step further by exploring the connections between memory practices and the material characteristics of memorials in Western Australia through the notion of ‘cultural biography’ to analyse the life history of memorials and their settings. Originally proposed by Igor Kopytoff this approach seeks to establish how objects are invested with meaning through social interaction.¹⁶ “The central idea is that, as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other.”¹⁷ The present significance of an object is the accumulation of a life history of associations with people and events to which it was connected. In this context the meaning of an object, such as a memorial, is a product of its political, social and physical environment and a change in environment results in a change in meaning. Following a memorial through its life history may help to uncover changes in meaning and the relationship of the memorial to community memory practices and the physical aspects of the memorial and help recognise “the role of material culture in the (re) creation of the social identities of people”.¹⁸

With this background in mind the following section seeks to briefly describe the cultural biography of one particular memorial in the pilot study as a case study. In particular, this biography stresses the connections between the design and setting of the memorial, and its social life and uses.



CANNING MEMORIAL IN ITS ORIGINAL POSITION
 Photograph attributed to Judy Hadely (n.d.) - Courtesy Canning
 Districts Historical Society Collection

THE CANNING WAR MEMORIAL

As with many community war memorials, this memorial was initiated at grassroots level by the local branch of the Returned Servicemen’s Association who approached the Queens Park Road Board in 1919 suggesting a permanent memorial to the fallen be erected. Whilst there was a general national movement of war memorial construction it was left to local communities to initiate and pay for their memorials. However, in many cases, such as at Canning, it depended on particular personalities to get things moving and the debates over the form of memorialisation were usually dominated by

organisations such as the RSL or RSA and local councils peopled by businessmen and other civic elite. This was also the experience in Britain and New Zealand.¹⁹ At Canning, a committee comprising members of the Returned Soldiers Association (RSA) and the Road Board was formed and the committee went about ‘gathering information on the subject’.²⁰ Fundraising became a wider community affair through the holding of dances, balls and concerts in the Canning Town Hall on the Albany Road. These were organised by local women reinforcing the view that, as in other parts of Australia and in New Zealand and it was women who engaged most closely in fundraising for memorials.²¹

The foundation stone was laid by the governor Sir Francis Newdegate in February 1921 and the memorial completed soon after. It was constructed from Donnybrook stone to the design of architect and engineer Robert Henry Burnside Downes.²² The memorial was in the form of a gate structure punctured by a pointed arch with the tablets containing the names of those from the district that had died mounted either side. Over the top of the arch in large relief on both sides of the memorial were the words “Lest We Forget”. The arch was located outside the Canning Town Hall on the same axis as the front door, but some distance from it, so that patrons of the Hall would walk the path to the door through the arch. Later two machine gun trophies were mounted on the top of the arch. Trophies were captured guns and other war paraphernalia used as militaristic decoration on Australian war memorials. These were distributed through the Australian War Museum Committee and state committees in recognition of a community’s war effort.

The form of the memorial as an arch was an interesting choice especially since the memorial was to the fallen and did not include all those who had enlisted like many other Western Australian memorials. The enlisted and fallen were commemorated on an honour board placed in the entry lobby of the adjacent hall.²³ Unfortunately in the sparse evidence found so far, no record of debate over the chosen form or indeed over whether the memorial could have been utilitarian building has been found. Firm evidence on whether it would have been unusual in Western Australia that little debate occurred will remain largely unknown until the full project gets underway. However other Australian and New Zealand studies suggest that conflict over memorial siting and form was fairly common.

Oline Richards suggests this is a “victory” arch however I feel that this is unlikely.²⁴ The design of the memorial and its status as a memorial to the fallen indicates a more sombre purpose and imagery. This interpretation is supported by the trend at this time to design memorials that avoided glorifying war or presenting a gloating image. D. N. Jeans points out that memorials evoked deep feelings in the Australian community about the appropriate forms that would carry messages into the “symbolic future”. In order to avert community friction memorials tended to be rather bland, generally avoiding overt religious symbolism or the glorifying of war.²⁵ This also appears to be the experience in the parallel war memorial phenomenon in Britain where war memorials were open to conflicting interpretation and where any sign of aggression or gloating could attract harsh criticism.²⁶ New Zealand also chose to generally downplay the more bellicose and jingoistic memorial designs, instead emphasising both pride and sorrow.²⁷

Jeans comments that memorial forms chosen by communities were subject to more “...complex meanings beyond the conventional arches, obelisks and marble soldiers.” The Canning memorial may be seen as triumphal only in terms of heroism and the victory of memory over death. The arch in this case functions as a gate. Gates were sometimes employed as memorials to represent the gates through which the fallen passed through into the hereafter.²⁸ The power of this symbolism is also attested by Tania Luckins in her study of the gates at Woolloomooloo. These were the timber gates to the wharf at Woolloomooloo which were popularly known as “the gates of memory”. It was through these gates that soldiers had marched on their way to the transport ships in the First World War. To many mothers and wives this was the last time that they saw their menfolk and they were treated as a memorial. On Anzac Day they became the focus of mourning and attention, being festooned with flowers and ribbons, sprigs of rosemary and cards with personal messages to the loved ones that had passed through the gates as soldiers.²⁹

The shape of the arch may have some religious symbolism as a form of Gothic arch but the whole assembly, with its plain flat pilasters, has a Moorish air which might appropriately refer to the foreign climes where the soldiers fell. In its original setting it had an intense didactic purpose and situated so that people passed under the large words "Lest We Forget" in both directions. In this context the arch was a constant reminder of the sacrifice of those listed on the tablets.³⁰

The local Roads Board appeared to be content to maintain the memorial and there was no real threat to it except the cattle which managed to get over the small chain fence protecting the structure. In 1926 there were additions to the Canning Town Hall decreasing the distance between the Hall and the memorial. The extensions also coincided with extending the function of the Hall to serve as a picture theatre. Little changed over the years except that the machine guns were removed from the structure in 1940, ostensibly for security purposes. After the Second World War there was dissatisfaction with the location of the arch. Its close proximity to the Hall was interfering with Anzac Day services and there was minor damage by vandals.³¹ Apparently some of the damage was being caused by the patrons of the picture theatre. Young lovers were smooching against the memorial and the constant rubbing was erasing the soldier's names. Besides the damage, the local RSL considered that this was disrespectful and not an appropriate way to treat a memorial to the fallen.³² It was felt that the time had come to find it a new home.



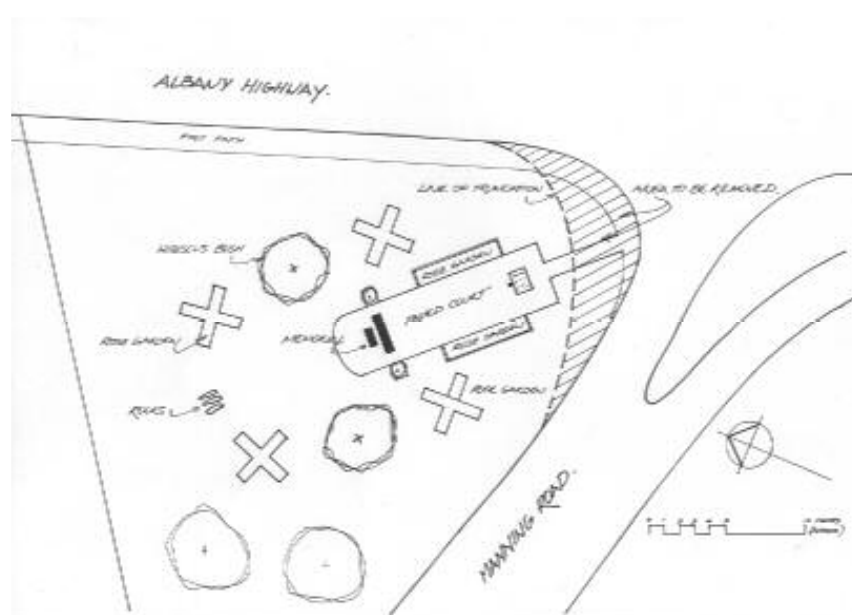
CANNING MEMORIAL IN NEW LOCATION.

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A memorial fund was set up and the community including local businesses and groups such as the Boy Scouts moved into action led by the RSL. A site on the corner of Albany Highway and Manning road was chosen. This was land originally resumed by the Main Roads Department for truncation purposes. In what appears to have been a significant community based effort, the memorial was disassembled and removed to the new spacious location. Here it was placed on a diagonal axis with the corner of the land facing the junction of the two roads. In front of the memorial a large apron of paving was constructed with rose gardens on each side and a flagpole at the far end on the axis. A small structure to the rear of the memorial was erected to hold tablets inscribed with the names of those who had been killed in the Second World War. The first Anzac service was held in 1956. Over the years the gardens around the memorial were faithfully tended by the local council and the RSL and developed with further trees, land and rose gardens.³³

Since 1956 the memorial has continually attracted one of the largest Anzac day gatherings outside the Perth War Memorial in Kings Park and appears to have been a well kept and loved memorial. All seemed well until one day in September 1992 when the State Energy Commission dug a hole in the turf on the site in preparation for further roadwork that would have meant a substantial reduction of the memorial land. The Main Roads Department had plans to truncate the corner but had unfortunately failed to discuss this with the RSL.

The community was naturally angry about the proposal and the RSL was aggrieved that they had not been consulted and that holes had already been dug. It was revealed that the ashes of ex-servicemen and their families had been scattered in the rose bushes and over the lawns. The RSL considered this sacred and consecrated ground. Besides, the truncation would remove so much land as to make Anzac Day services very difficult. It was claimed that "...dignitaries would be isolated on a median island, tribute bearers would be in the middle of a busy road and wreaths would lie in the gutter".³⁴ The Main Roads Department denied the circulated rumours that they had plans to knock down the memorial and apologised for not contacting the RSL but were not going to back off that easily. The Department was reported as saying that they were sorry about the process but the land was theirs and they were going to take 12 metres of it which would not require the memorial to be removed. "I can only suggest that if the ground is hallowed with ashes we will remove the turf and replant it somewhere."³⁵



PLAN OF THE CANNING MEMORIAL SITE.

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The local RSL was incensed and voted unanimously to take "any steps necessary to stop work proceeding".³⁶ Others waded into the fray including the Canning and Districts Historical Society and their patron local MLA Graham Kierath. The Federal MP Kim Beazley also championed the cause and commissioned his own study on whether the truncation was necessary at all. Letters of complaint were sent to the Premier Carmen Lawrence by the person who uncovered the plan, cemeteries historian Mrs R. A. Watt. A large petition was sent to Parliament. Eventually the Main Roads Department abandoned its planned truncation and settled for a slight modification that actually increased the land on which the memorial stood.³⁷ If the truncation had proceeded, it could have had serious consequences for the memorial, its recognition as sacred place and its ability to function as a serious focus of commemoration and heritage object.

The design and planning of the memorial was important for proper observance of Anzac Day rituals and as a setting for an object that represented the mourning of the district. In both locations of the memorial – outside the Canning Town Hall and in its present situation - the idea of an appropriate setting and the proper ceremonial observance of Anzac Day became threatened. In its first location outside the Town Hall it was reasonably certain that the memorial could be moved without significant loss of ritual utility although its role as a gateway might have been compromised. At the new site it gathered a new accrual of symbols in a prominent landscaped setting with trees and rose gardens that emphasised the symbols of regeneration. Within this landscape, the memorial was given a formal and sensible setting with a large apron in front so that there could be a respectful approach to the memorial with participants lining both sides. The truncation would have removed enough land to make this difficult as participants would not be able to congregate at the head of the apron before proceeding in procession to lay the wreath at the foot of the arch. The setting of the memorial and its

gardens would also have been damaged through its close proximity to the corner and reduction of visual impact. In its present setting the memorial is set back from the roads and appears as a contemplative and uncanny landscape amid the cacophony of commercial buildings and car yards.

These aspects are important if the memorial is to retain its power as a sacred place with meaning and presence in the current landscape. Furthermore the potential removal of land was seen as blatant disrespect for the place as commemorative site. The community was angry because the memorial had significance and the proposed works would have changed the setting of the memorial and its power and utility to provide for ritual. It would also have meant that even with the added sanctity of burial the memorial was not valued as heritage by the wider Western Australian community. In this respect the support that the memorial received signifies that the grassroots aspect of Anzac is still a force to be reckoned with.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the objectives of the memorials project the cultural biography of the Canning War Memorial reveals a number of interesting aspects. One of the most important is that the memorial was, and still is, a grassroots enterprise underpinned by the continuing phenomenon of Anzac. Another important point is that there has always been a clear relationship between the physical characteristics of the memorial and its setting and the community that uses it.

A feature of the biography so far is the lack of recorded conflicts over the original design and siting of the memorial. Documents on this area of its history are sparse so that it cannot be said for certain that there were no arguments or political directions. Although the memorial was part of an Australia wide memorial building phenomenon and the larger landscape of national Anzac values, at Canning it had community roots. Sarah Tarlow eschews the claim that memorials were purely the effect of nationalism and that, at a general level, most people were more interested in commemorating loved ones. National forms of commemoration were supported by communities and were not *imposed* by national agendas.³⁸ This view appears supported at Canning where money for the memorial was secured by the community, as was the design through a local architect who may have given his services on an honorary basis.³⁹ The memorial was a grassroots enterprise with support throughout its history coming from the community even if that community was often represented by vocal, influential and self interested groups such as the RSL.

In the original planning of the arch, its purpose as a gateway through which one passed, supported by the words writ large “Lest We Forget”, is obviously stated. Also, the symbolism inherent in the memorial was probably that of a entrance to the ‘other side’ offering a dual symbolism for the living and the dead. This was a departure from the traditional imagery of arches as triumphal structures and is an ‘elaboration of the symbol’ recognised by Alex King.



**ANZAC DAY 2005 AT THE CANNING
MEMORIAL**

J Stephens 2005

What the cultural biography of Canning memorial shows so far, is that there has been a strong relationship between the physical characteristics of the memorial as an arch memorial to the fallen, its siting and its meaning/message to the community. These aspects are highlighted by the relocation of the memorial to the new site and further highlighted by the recent threat to its setting. Removal of the memorial to the new site appears to have been done to avoid physical damage to the structure and damage to its meaning through an inappropriate use and setting - indicating that the community still had significant emotional investment in the structure. Also, communal remembrance practices such as Anzac Day were rendered more difficult in its location in front of the Town Hall endangering commemorative relations between the community and the physical memorial. The new site on corner of Manning Road and Albany Highway fostered a significant change in meanings. In its new setting it took on a much clearer ceremonial function. It was still an arch/gateway but not one that physically encouraged passage through it. The brick paved apron delineated by rose gardens either side clearly marked its ritualistic function and emphasised the memorial as an object of commemorative focus. The formal rose gardens and precisely placed trees that grew up around the memorial reflected new meanings to do with order and regeneration and increased its dramaturgical potential.

This dramaturgical potential is emphasised in the use of the place for Anzac Day ceremonies. As a ritualised place of performance there is no mistaking its purpose, unlike many other Western Australian memorials that have gradually been hemmed in by roads and built works to the point where no ritual of meaning is possible. Canning Memorial is transformed from Henri Lefebvre's passive representational space into a dynamic landscape of ideology and what Brian Osborne calls an "ideologically charged site" closely tied to the ideals of nation and citizenship that Anzac conveys.⁴⁰

Intimate connections between the community and the material characteristics of the memorial highlighted by the biography are demonstrated by its continuing function as a well attended ceremonial space and by the vigorous defence of the memorial and its spaces when challenged by the authority of the Main Roads Department in 1992. This indicates that the memorial still has particular meaning for the community that use the place. When community commemorative practice was in danger by the actions of the Main Roads Department the relationship between those practices and the physical setting of the memorial was protected. Anzac Day and the concept of Anzac is still a potent phenomenon in Australian life which has the power to motivate Australians in peace and war.⁴¹ Although the memory of the original soldiers it was intended to honour may have faded, the memorial still operates as a physical focus of remembrance and identity which is further charged by each ceremony held at the place. In this sense the memorial place is being continually "reconstructed in the context of the present."⁴² The memorial is now experienced as an interactive theatre that, reinforced by the formal arrangement of its elements, is a stage set for commemorative drama connecting material characteristics and commemorative practice.

A significant factor in the layering of new meanings is the practice of interring the ashes of ex-servicemen and their families in the gardens. This is an interesting development since it enhances the idea of sacredness. During the truncation furore the WA manager of the Australian War Graves Office revealed that since the Subiaco War Grave site (the official war cemetery) could not hold ashes, many ex servicemen asked that their remains be scattered at the war memorial in their district.⁴³ The interring of ashes has occurred at a few memorials in the metropolitan area and it adds an interesting dimension to the war memorial as a sacred place. As Ken Inglis reveals, war memorials in Australia have become sacred places in their own right through the phenomenon of Anzac and its linkages to Australian identity. Applied to war memorials the term is not new. It is often invoked when memorials are under threat and owes its arguments to similar claims by Aborigines for their sacred places.⁴⁴ The ex servicemen from the Victoria and Queens Park RSL Sub-branch indicated that they were also inspired by Aboriginal claims of sacred places in their defence of the place - especially since the ground had been scattered with the ashes of diggers and their families.⁴⁵ In this context the Canning memorial takes on the added role and meaning of a war cemetery - a landscape that could be considered twice sacred and a landscape that morphs from a memorial into a shrine.

Questions remain about what this new understanding of the memorial may have on the continued significance of the place as a heritage site and its conservation. It is clear that the present arrangement of the elements of the site produce an authoritative landscape. Even in its current setting amid the detritus of commercial properties it has a powerful presence. In this instance it is not only the memorial that must be protected but the spirit of the landscape as well.

At this early stage in the project we can say that the methodology has sound potential but could be refined in practice by making more detailed connections between commemorative practice and the physical characteristics of memorials, their settings and the idea of the sacred. Also the way that new meanings can attach themselves to established formal memorial landscapes. Studies on the two other memorials in the pilot study previously mentioned, of which the Canning Memorial is a part, have revealed quite different biographies and relationships between commemorative practice and the material characteristics of these places. Under these conditions the project promises to reveal the rich tapestry of commemoration in Western Australia and perhaps provide a better understanding of the intimate connections between the community and their memorials.

ENDNOTES

- 1 K.S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001, p.9.
- 2 Matthew Allen, 'Forgetting and Remembering: The Contradictions of Australia Remembers 1945-1995', in *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War Two*. Jenny Gregory (ed), Nedlands, University of Western Australia Press, 1996, p.284. For further research on 'Australia Remembers 1945-1995' also see Liz Reed, *Bigger than Gallipoli: War History and Memory in Australia*, Perth: UWA Press, 2004.
- 3 Bruce Scates, 'In Gallipoli's Shadow: Pilgrimage, Memory, Mourning and the Great War', *Australian Historical Studies*, April 2002, No.119. p.8.
- 4 Reed, *Bigger than Gallipoli*, p.121.
- 5 K.S Inglis in 'Sacred Places' mentions a number of Western Australian memorials but does not provide focus on the state's experience. The only serious study has been by Oline Richards, *War Memorials in Western Australia*, Como, Oline Richards, Heritage Consultant and The Heritage Council of Western Australia, 1995 and Oline Richards, 'The empty tomb: Memorials to World War II in Western Australia', *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War Two*, Jenny. Gregory (ed), Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1996.
- 6 David Brett, *The Construction of Heritage*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1996, p.2.
- 7 Jay Winter, 'The memory boom in contemporary historical studies', *Raritan*, 21, No.1, pp52-66, 2001, p54.
- 8 Paula Hamilton, 'The knife edge: debates about memory and history, in K. Darian-Smith and P. Hamilton (eds), *Memory and history in twentieth-century Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.20.
- 9 Tanya Luckins, *The gates of memory: Australian people's experiences and memories of loss and the Great War*, Perth: Curtin University Books, 2004, p.18.
- 10 Annette Hamilton, 'Skeletons of Empire: Australians and the Burma-Thailand railway' in K. Darian-Smith and P. Hamilton (eds), *Memory and history in twentieth-century Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.92.
- 11 Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan argue for the more specific term 'collective remembrance' rather than 'collective memory' when discussing war commemoration. Jay Winter, and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework'. In Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999, p.9.
- 12 Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire'. *Representations*. 26(Spring, 1989), pp.7-24, 1989, p.19.
- 13 Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The symbolism and politics of remembrance*, Oxford: Berg, 1998.
- 14 King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p.11.

15 It is acknowledged that there may be differences in these elaborations between Britain at the centre of empire and Western Australia at the edge. However the framework provided by King highlights and celebrates those differences between communities and the memorials that resulted, which is a quality useful to the study.

16 Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things' *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Arjun Appadurai (ed), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

17 C. Gosden and Y. Marshall, 'The Cultural Biography of Objects'. *World Archaeology*. 31(2):, pp. 169-178, 1999, p.169.

18 G. MacGegor, 'Making sense of the past in the present: a sensory analysis of carved stone balls'" *World Archaeology*. 31(2):, pp. 169-178, 1999, p.259

19 King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* and C. Maclean and J. Phillips, 1990, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*. Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, p.91.

20 Queens Park Road Board Minute Book 1919-1921, Local Library Collection, Riverton Library, pp.15-16

21 Inglis, *Sacred Places*, p.131 and Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride*, p.92

22 Canning Road Board Minute Book 1922-1926,. Local Library Collection, Riverton Library, p.192.

23 This honour board is now in the Victoria Park and Queens Park RSL Sub-branch building in Cannington.

24 Richards, *War Memorials in Western Australia*, p.9.

25 D. N. Jeans, 'The First World War Memorials in New South Wales: Centres of Meaning in the Landscape', *Australian Geographer*, Vol.19 No.2, pp.259-67., 1988, p.261.

26 King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 206, D. N. Jeans also notes this criticism of certain memorials in NSW.

27 Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride*, p.72-73

28 Jeans, 'The First World War Memorials in New South Wales', p.265.

29 Luckins, *The Gates of Memory*, p.178.

30 Arches have been employed in other Western Australian Memorials such as at the Collie War Memorial Park where it is a gateway into the park. It similarly has names of the fallen on both sides of the arch structure.

31 F.G Carden, *Along the Canning: A history of the City of Canning*, Perth: City of Canning, 1968, p.163.

32 Interview with John Parker, President of the Canning Districts Historical Society at Woodloes, Cannington, Friday 8th April 2005.

33 There is very good evidence that the block of land behind the memorial was obtained in the years to 1992. This extra land appears in Main Roads Department traffic survey drawings (8th September 1992) held in the National Trust Canning War Memorial file. Early photographs of the memorial show the fence line behind the memorial is much closer than now. This is an area that needs more research.

34 Mrs. R.A. Watt, a National Trust cemeteries historian was reported as saying this in the *Canning Times*, 12th September 1992. It was Mrs. Watt that initially alerted the RSL to the Main Roads intentions.

35 Sue Emmett (Reporter), *The West Australian*, Tuesday 6th October 1992.

36 *The Canning Times* 12th September 1992.

37 Letter from the Premier to Mrs Watt, 23rd November 1992, National Trust File, Canning War Memorial.

38 Sarah Tarlow, 'An Archaeology of Remembering.: Death, Bereavement and the First World War,' *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, Vol.7, No.1(1997), pp.105-21, p115.

39 Richards, 'The empty tomb', p349.

40 B. Osborne, 1998, "Constructing landscapes of power: the George Etienne Cartier monument Montreal". *Journal of Historical Geography*. 24(4): p. 413-458, p.434&452.

41 G. Seal, 2004, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology*. Queensland University Press, St Lucia Queensland, p.viii.

42 B. Osborne, "Constructing landscapes of power", p.432.

43 Sue Emmett (Reporter), *The West Australian*, Tuesday 6th October 1992.

44 Inglis, *Sacred Places*, p.441.

45 Interview with Bob Hill and Manuel Jiminez, Canning Districts - Victoria Park RSL Sub Branch, 6th February 2005.