

ANZAC Park Memorial Gates

LHR0081

Place details

Address/location	Broadwater parklands, marine Parade, Southport
Title details	12SP170654
Principle period(s)	1953
City of Gold Coast division	6
Other known names	ANZAC Park Memorial Gates
Area for protection	Memorial gates plus 2 metre heritage buffer and place in proximity
Place components	Twin gate pillars
Place category	Memorial
Context	In situ
Other listings	Queensland War Memorial Register
Register entry date	5 June 2018

Statement of heritage significance

The ANZAC Park Memorial Gates are a place of local heritage significance for its historic importance, rarity, potential to yield information and class characteristics as evidenced by, but not exclusive to, the following statement of heritage significance, based on criteria (a), (d), (e), (g) and (h) of the Gold Coast Local Heritage Register.

Criterion (a) Historic importance

The Anzac Park Memorial Gates were constructed in 1953 and previously contained the Roll of Honour for Southport and districts for World War I and II. The Anzac Park Memorial Gates formed part of the Southport War Memorial site (also relocated in 2010) and have been part of community commemorations between 1953 and 2010.

Unlike other memorials of the period, the construction of the gate pillars was funded by the South Coast Town Council.

Criterion (d) Class Characteristics

The Anzac Park Memorial Gates are representative of the design of a formal park and memorial reserve entrance structures from the early and middle twentieth century. They are also representative of the sub-class of monumental structure constructed to display memorial tablets and similar fixtures.

Criterion (e) Aesthetics

The Anzac Park Memorial Gates provide a tangible reminder of the parks former function as a place of World War I commemoration for the Southport community. They survive as evidence of the impact of this major historical event and have symbolic meaning for the community.

Located immediately adjacent Marine Parade, the gate pillars have been a landmark and part of the streetscape along the coastal road since 1953. The sandstone pillars are considered to be of a high standard of work.

Criterion (g) Special association with community or cultural group

As the former location of the Rolls of Honour for World War I and II, the Anzac Park Memorial Gates have a strong association with the local community as a place of past Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Criterion (h) Special association with particular person or organisation

The Anzac Park Memorial Gates have a special association with the Southport Sub-branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia. Construction of the gate pillars were the result of the advocacy and support of the sub-branch. As the former location between 1953 and 2010 of the Southport and district Rolls of Honour for World War I and II, the gate pillars have a lengthy period of continuous association with that organisation.

Image



Anzac Park Memorial Gates, Southport. Image courtesy of City of Gold Coast.

History

In 1914 the Southport Chamber of Commerce submitted plans to the Southport Town Council for the lease and transformation of Queen's Park, formerly part of a ti-tree swamp that was partially reclaimed in the mid-1880s.¹ The plans included the repairing of fencing, levelling of the enclosure, construction of sports and recreation facilities.² In just over a year community facilities such as a bowling green, croquet lawn and tennis courts had been completed and plans were afoot to draining and filling up, possibly from dredging spoil from the Nerang River³, the lower portion of the park.⁴ By 1921 provision had been made for an honour avenue of 52 acres (21 hectares) being planted and, on 12 November, seventeen trees, each with individual memorial plaque at their base, were planted in memory of those locals who had fallen during World War I.⁵

In 1922 the Southport Chamber of Commerce made preparations for Memorial Gates to be erected at the entrance of Honour Avenue. The memorial gate pillars had plaques commemorating the soldiers of the Southport district who served in World War I.⁶ This was the second war memorial for the area as the Southport War Memorial, located on Southport foreshore at the foot of Nerang Street, had been unveiled some months earlier.

The Governor-General of Australia, Lord Forster, was scheduled to visit Southport for a few days at the end of August 1922 and arrangements were made for him to officially open the gates to the honour avenue.⁷ In opening the gates, Lord Forster said that they should be held in high honour to the memory of those who fought in World War I.⁸

It appears that no future arrangements were made for the care of Honour Avenue and within a few short years the avenue was in a state of neglect. A number of palm trees were dead and the grass was overgrown. In June 1926, the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A commenced an effort clean up the site including replacement of the dead palms. The Southport War Memorial was also cleaned up by the Sub-branch at this time.⁹

To assist the Sub-branch in funding the clean-up work and replanting of Honour Avenue a public subscription totalling £11 was raised and a further £5 donated by The Southport Town Council. A former returned soldier was also employed by the R.S.S.I.L.A. to complete the work.¹⁰ Sub-branch expenses for the clean-up and tree planting were about £30 and, once completed, Honour Avenue was handed over to the care of the Southport Chamber of Commerce.¹¹

The following year the Chamber of Commerce requested that the Southport Town Council take over maintenance of Honour Avenue and tenders sought for maintenance of the avenue for 12 months.¹² Two tenders for the work were received, one for £18 and the other for £120 and, apparently without much consideration as why the large difference in price, the lower accepted.¹³ Additional works were carried out at Honour Avenue during 1928 with the Chamber of Commerce arranging for the gate pillars to be imbedded in concrete and the Town Council putting the road through the avenue in good order for parking purposes.¹⁴

In 1935 this avenue was upgraded to a trafficable road, the reasoning being that doing so would be a vast improvement to Queen's Park and fulfil the ideal of the avenue.¹⁵ Later that year maintenance of the trees along Honour Avenue again passed to the Southport Chamber of Commerce as part of a greater lease arrangement of part of Queen's Park.¹⁶ During 1938 the Town Council widened the gap between the memorial gate pillars so traffic could pass safely through.¹⁷

By 1940s the avenue and associated memorial features had, once again, fallen into some state of neglect. Among the complaints voiced at various times during the early years of that decade were that the area around the memorial gates were littered with rubbish, the memorial gates had been disfigured by election posters, the tablets in honour of the fallen at the base of the trees were almost unreadable and while the palm trees were now flourishing so too were the paspalum grass and other weeds. Maintenance of the grounds was largely limited to a mow of the grass leading up to ANZAC Day.¹⁸

The road along the avenue was at this time but an unformed road and it was felt that a run through by a grader along Queen's Park's tracks would make "a wonderful difference" or, alternatively, the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. had suggested a proper metal road be laid down with water channels and lighting.¹⁹

Following these complaints and observations, maintenance of Honour Avenue and the area of the memorial gates was carried out by the Town Council and was of a higher standard during the final year of World War II than previous.²⁰

However this state of affairs was not to last long and by 1946 the state of the condition of the avenue was once again the subject of complaint by the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. with a deputation being sent to Council about the matter.²¹ Assurances were made about the future maintenance of Honour Avenue by the Town Council to the Sub-branch deputation and it was noted that a proposal to develop Queen's Park was being investigated by Council and this would include Honour Avenue which would become the main entrance for Queen's Park.²²

At a meeting of the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. held during November 1946 discussions occurred amongst members about having only one war memorial location in Southport, that of ANZAC Park on the foreshore where the 'Digger' War Memorial was located, and that the memorial gates at Queen's Park be removed and re-located at the entrance of ANZAC Park. It was decided to write to the Southport Town Council informing that Sub-branch members had approved of the suggestion to relocate the memorial gates from Queen's Park to ANZAC Park.²³ At the same meeting the possibility of placing of marble tablets honouring the fallen of the most recent conflict on the lower portion of the 'Digger' Memorial at ANZAC Park, which had been relocated to its current location in 1938²⁴, was also raised.

In March 1947 the Southport Town Council decided to invite tenders for the construction of a gateway at ANZAC Park.²⁵ Re-use of the original memorial gates from Queen's Park still seem to be the preferred option. It is not known why the work in associated with this call for tenders was not undertaken at this time.

Over a year later the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. wrote to the Town Council asking for further advice regarding the removal of the pillars of the memorial gates at Queen's Park and re-erection at ANZAC Park. The outcome of a subsequent meeting was that the Town Council would provide memorial gates at ANZAC Park and the plaques at the foot of the trees in Queen's Park be replaced at the foot of the palms at ANZAC Park.²⁶

In 1951 the South Coast Town Council, which had been formed in December 1948 with amalgamation of the Southport Town Council, Coolangatta Town and Burleigh Heads (which had previously been part of the Nerang Shire Council), allocated an amount of £150 for the construction of memorial gate pillars at Anzac Park.²⁷

Early the following year plans were presented by Council to the Southport Sub-branch of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. for design of memorial gate pillars at ANZAC Park to replace those gates proposed to be removed from Queen's Park. The plans were met with 'warm approval' and proposal for the new entranceway 'well received' by the Sub-branch members.²⁸ In response, the South Coast Council returned the plans to Mr H Evans so as to develop the plans and specifications for the memorial entranceway in advance of calling for tenders for the construction work. No indication of when the work was to commence was indicated despite the Sub-branch inquiring as to this.²⁹ At the end of 1952 the Sub-branch wrote to Council to request the demolition of the Queen's Park memorial gates and that suitable gates be erected at ANZAC Park.³⁰

Following a request from the South Coast Council, the Sub-branch made a public request for the names, regimental numbers and units of all Southport members of the Services who gave their lives in the Second World War. These were to be inscribed on a roll of honour which would be incorporated in the new entranceway.³¹

In the expenditure on park maintenance and street cleaning 'returns' submitted to the South Coast Council in April 1953 it is noted that the sum of £171/8/10 had been expended on the Anzac Park Memorial Gates, being £137/6/10 for staff wages and £34/2/0 for supervision. No figures are provided for materials or other associated costs.³²

The new sandstone gate pillars at Anzac Park were designed with a 1920s-30s influence with Roll of Honour from both World Wars inscribed in five marble tablets set on the sides of both gate pillars.³³ Close inspection of the Rolls of Honour will reveal that the veins of the marble tablets for the World War I Roll of Honour is slightly different than that of the World War II Roll of Honour. This raises the possibility that the World War I Roll of Honour tablets are the tablets that were once fixed to the Honour Avenue gate pillars. If so, this would date these tablets to 1922.

In 2010, the Southport War Memorial was relocated further south along the foreshore as part of the redevelopment of the Broadwater Parklands. At this time the Anzac Park Memorial Gates were replicated at the entrance to the site of the relocated war memorial and the Roll of Honour tablets removed from the Anzac Park gate pillars and reinstated on the new replica pillars.³⁴ The original sandstone Memorial Gate Pillars today remain in place at Anzac Park.

Description

The Anzac Park Memorial Gates are located adjacent Marine Parade in Broadwater Parklands. Constructed of sandstone, the twin pillars are mirror images of each other, stand 2430 cm apart and are separated by a concrete path running in the direction of the Broadwater from Marine Parade.

The pillars are each approximately 3.8 metres high. The base of the pillars are approximately 1300 mm long each side and the pillar 'panels' each approximately 920 cm long. These measurements can vary by up to 20 mm, both within each pillar and between the two pillars.

Each gate pillar has four panels, one each side. Two of these panels on one pillar and three on the other pillar show evidence of where the Roll of Honour tablets were previously attached. These tablets were removed and

fixed to the new memorial entrance associated with the Southport War Memorial, which was re-located within Broadwater Parklands in 2010.

On the four sides of the base of each gate pillar are four crosses. The top of each pillar has a four-tier 'step pyramid' design. The bottom tier of each pillar has approximately the same dimensions as the base.

The sandstone gate pillars were originally unpainted but, after removal of the Rolls of Honours in 2010, were painted straw yellow. There has been some minor flaking of the paint in places on both pillars and the bases of each pillar show minor chipping of the sandstone.

Despite being commonly referred to as 'memorial gates', there is no evidence that gates were once attached to the pillars.

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