

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED HERITAGE DESIGNATION, SOUTH BURNABY CENOTAPH,
6749 NELSON AVENUE**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the implementation of the communication and community engagement work outlined in Section 4.0 of the report titled “Proposed Heritage Designation, South Burnaby Cenotaph, 6749 Nelson Avenue”, dated June 22, 2023, be authorized.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on June 22, 2023, received and adopted the *attached* report providing Council with an update on work to investigate the advisability and feasibility of protecting the South Burnaby Cenotaph at 6749 Nelson Avenue through a Heritage Designation Bylaw, and seeking authorization to implement the communication and community engagement work outlined in the report.

On behalf of the Community Heritage
Commission,

Councillor D. Tetrault
Chair

Councillor R. Lee
Vice Chair

TO: COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION (CHC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **PROPOSED HERITAGE DESIGNATION, SOUTH BURNABY
CENOTAPH, 6749 NELSON AVENUE**
PURPOSE: To provide Council with an update on work to investigate the advisability and feasibility of protecting the South Burnaby Cenotaph at 6749 Nelson Avenue through a Heritage Designation Bylaw, and to seek authorization to implement the communication and community engagement work outlined in this report.

REFERENCES

Address: 6749 Nelson Avenue
Legal: Lot 1 District Lot 152 Plan BCP38905

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Community Heritage Commission forward this report to Council and request that Council authorize the implementation of the communication and community engagement work outlined in Section 4.0 of the report.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

Under Section 611 of the *Local Government Act*, provision is made for the designation by bylaw of property that "...has heritage value or character..." The intent of a designation bylaw is to protect a unique heritage feature, which may include a building, structure, or landscape feature.

Section 612 of the *Local Government Act* specifies the formal procedures for the designation process, which includes preparation of a report identifying the heritage value and character of the resource, a public hearing, and notification of all persons with a registered interest in the property and its occupants.

Protection of heritage resources is supported by Burnaby's *Official Community Plan* (1998), specifically Goal 12.2.

2.0 BACKGROUND

At its June 10, 2021 meeting, the Community Heritage Commission (CHC) directed staff to investigate the advisability and feasibility of protecting the South Burnaby Cenotaph at 6749 Nelson Avenue through a Heritage Designation Bylaw (*Attachment 1*).

A review of designation of the cenotaph was subsequently included in the Heritage Program 2-Year Work Plan for 2022-2023, which was received for information by the CHC at its November 18, 2021 meeting and advanced to Council for its information at its December 6, 2021 meeting.

A review of the significance and heritage character of the South Burnaby Cenotaph was completed by Schuek Heritage Consulting, which included preparation of a Statement of Significance in December 2022 (*Attachment 2*).

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 South Burnaby Cenotaph

The South Burnaby Cenotaph was constructed by the City of Burnaby with financial support from the Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans (ANAVETS) Canada Pompier Unit 314, who advocated for its development. It was installed in 1988 at the corner of Imperial Street and Nelson Avenue. The South Burnaby Cenotaph is a five-sided column, approximately 4.6 m (15 ft.) tall. Its polished rose granite panels commemorate the soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War, Second World War, and Korean War. The monument and surrounding plaza were designed by Burnaby Park Designer Heather Sarsfield, and it was manufactured by J.B. Newall Memorials. It serves as the South Burnaby site for Burnaby’s official Remembrance Day ceremonies.

3.2 Statement of Significance

Section 612 of the *Local Government Act* requires that a report authorizing preparation of a Heritage Designation Bylaw identify the heritage value and character of a resource. Statements of Significance are a widely accepted heritage management tool used to identify heritage value and character.

A Statement of Significance was prepared for the South Burnaby Cenotaph to assist with evaluation of the resource for protection through a Heritage Designation Bylaw (*Attachment 2*). The statement notes that the cenotaph has “strong historical and cultural values for its association with and commemoration of soldiers who have lost their lives in...World War 1, World War 2, and the Korean War” as well as aesthetic and social values.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As cenotaphs have a high level of value to the community, and specifically to veterans and their families, staff are recommending community engagement activities to solicit input on protection of the South Burnaby Cenotaph through a Heritage Designation Bylaw, and on the content of the Statement of Significance. The following engagement activities would be implemented, with the authorization of Council:

- Notification of the of the City’s consideration of designation of the South Burnaby Cenotaph to the following groups:

- Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS), Pompier Unit 314; and
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 83.

- Notification would include an invitation to meet with members of each organization to discuss protection of the resource through a Heritage Designation Bylaw and to review the content of the Statement of Significance. Notification would be sent within two weeks of Council’s authorization.

- A drop-in information booth at the site of the South Burnaby Cenotaph or in a nearby civic facility for interested community members to review the content of the Statement of Significance and comment on the protection of the resource through a Heritage Designation Bylaw. The drop-in session would be held following meetings with members of the ANAVETS Pompier Unit and Royal Canadian Legion Branch 83. It would be communicated through the City’s website, a newspaper advertisement, and the City’s social media channels. Mailed invitations to veterans would be considered in consultation with local veterans organizations.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Costs associated with community engagement are included within the operating budget of the Planning and Development Department. Provisions for the care and maintenance of the South Burnaby Cenotaph are already included within the City’s operating budget.

Respectfully submitted,

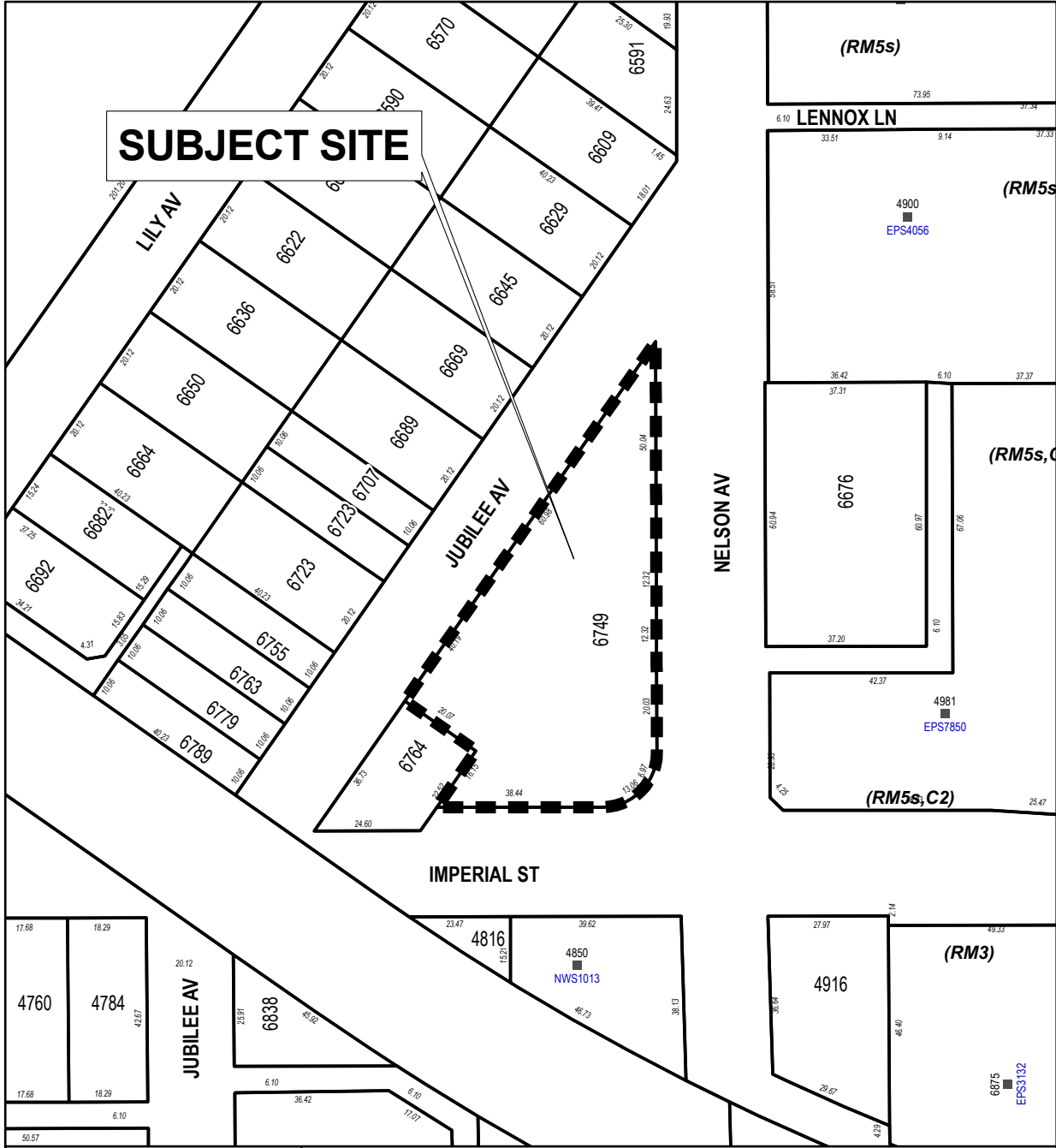
E. W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Sketch 1 – (Location Map)
- Attachment 2 – (Statement of Significance)

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Lisa Codd, Planner 2, and reviewed by Lily Ford, Planner 3, Carl Isaak, Director Community Planning, Denis Nokony, Director Cultural Services, Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development, Mary Morrison-Clark, General Manager Parks, Recreation, and Culture.



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Date: MAY 02 2023

scale: 1:1,500

Drawn By: RW

6749 NELSON AVENUE

 Subject Site

Statement of Significance

South Burnaby Cenotaph

6749 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby, BC

December 2022

Description:

The South Burnaby Cenotaph is a five-sided column, approximately 15 feet tall, faced with polished rose granite panels, and set on a base comprised of low-rise steps. It is located in Bonsor Park at 6749 Nelson Avenue at the corner of Imperial Street and Nelson Avenue in the Metrotown area of Burnaby, B.C.



Heritage Values:

Installed in 1988 and designed by Heather Sarsfield (Parks Designer with the Municipality of Burnaby) and manufactured by J.B. Newall Memorials Ltd., the South Burnaby Cenotaph has strong historic and cultural values for its association with and commemoration of soldiers who have lost their lives in three of the wars that took place in the Twentieth Century: World War 1, World War 2, and the Korean War. According to the Royal Canadian Legion: “The memorials and cenotaphs serve as gathering places for ceremonies on Remembrance Day, and for other Remembrance milestones throughout the year. They are important symbols of our commitment to honouring and remembering the sacrifices of our Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, peacekeepers, as well as their families and communities. Unlike monuments, which are structures that pay tribute to the achievements, heritage, or ideals of a person, group, event or time in history, war memorials and cenotaphs are built to honour and remember those killed in conflicts. War memorials help us to never forget.”¹ The Cenotaph’s community value is evident in the flowers and notes left at its base in remembrance of family members who have served, some with names and dates and some with the name of the war in which those loved ones fought.

The Cenotaph has aesthetic value for its contemporary design, in particular for the polished rose granite panels, some with etched maple leaves. The polished surfaces are slightly reflective, which is both symbolic and aesthetically pleasing. Two of the panels on the front (northwest) side have etched words in them which are very meaningful. One panel identifies that the cenotaph is “In Memory of our Fallen Comrades”, lists the three wars, and includes a portion of the poem “For the Fallen” written by Robert

¹ The Royal Canadian Legion website, page “Memorials and Cenotaphs”
<https://www.legion.ca/remembrance/remembrance-all-year/memorials-and-cenotaphs>

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) and published September 21, 1914. Above these words, on the same panel, is an etched Cross. The panel directly below states that the Cenotaph is dedicated to “The Veterans of Canada By the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, Pompier Unit 314, Burnaby, B.C.”

The Cenotaph has further aesthetic value for the design of the plaza (also by Heather Sarsfield) in which it is situated. The Cenotaph is the focal point of the plaza which has two distinct sections: a lower ceremonial area and an upper more informal area. The approach to the ceremonial area from the sidewalks provides a transition from everyday life to an area of tranquility and even reverence. The pathways around and through the plaza, the benches and trees around the perimeter and the concrete entry markers provide another layer of structure and transition to the plaza. Additionally, the mature trees that ring most of the perimeter of the plaza provide colour and beauty, particularly when the leaves turn in time for Remembrance Day services in November.

There is cultural value in the general location of the Cenotaph, in a large triangular-shaped lot bordered by Nelson Avenue, Imperial Street, and Jubilee Avenue. All three street names have historic references to Great Britain and have historic and cultural significance for the City of Burnaby.

The Cenotaph has strong social value for being a gathering place and focal point of remembrance throughout the year and most especially on Remembrance Day. It is an important neighbourhood landmark, a visual gateway to this urban park, and a place of quiet amidst a busy city intersection. Of unexpected social value is that the Cenotaph also features in the on-line game called “Pokémon Go”, where it is a ‘gym’ for players. It was listed as a heritage inventory resource on the Heritage Burnaby website in October 2013.

Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the South Burnaby Cenotaph include:

A high profile location in Bonsor Park in Metrotown.

The original form, scale and massing as expressed by its height of 15 feet and five-sided shape that tapers to a smaller diameter at the top.

The design of the Cenotaph, in particular the:

- Height and shape.
- The top of the Cenotaph is cut at an angle.
- Extra vertical concrete walls on two sides, formed into bench shapes.
- Stepped base that reflects the design of the Cenotaph.
- Polished rose granite panels, some with engraved maple leaves.
- Etched panel of rose granite, with the words: “In Memory of Our Fallen Comrades. World War 1 1914-1918 - World War II 1939-1945 - Korea 1950-1953. They shall not grow old, as we that

are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them.” and above these words, an etched Cross.

- Etched panel of rose granite with the words: “This Cenotaph is Dedicated to the Veterans of Canada by the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada. Pompier Unit 314, Burnaby, B.C.”.
- Polished gray granite plaque attached at the east corner of the base, on an angle stating: “This plaza is dedicated to the citizens of Burnaby. Funded by the Province of British Columbia, Army, Nave & Air Force Veterans in Canada Pompier Unit 314, The Corporation of the District of Burnaby.”.

The way the plaza has two different levels, which contributes to the sense of transitioning from a more public space to a more intimate space.

The way that the Cenotaph sits tucked against the steps between the higher and lower sections of the plaza.

Integrated benches around the perimeter that help define the space.

Concrete entrance markers at the corner of Imperial St. and Nelson Ave.

Deciduous trees around the perimeter of the plaza.

Background Material

Context

The South Burnaby Cenotaph is located in Bonsor Park in the Metrotown neighbourhood of Burnaby, British Columbia. This portion of Bonsor Park is a large triangular property bounded on the south by Imperial Street, on the east by Nelson Avenue and on the northwest by Jubilee Avenue (a limited access road used primarily for parking). The Cenotaph is in the very southeast corner of the property. The South Central Youth Centre is on the northwest side, a basketball court is in the north corner, and there are some privately-owned commercial buildings in the southwest corner of the property. The rest of the property is grassy with walkways/paths.



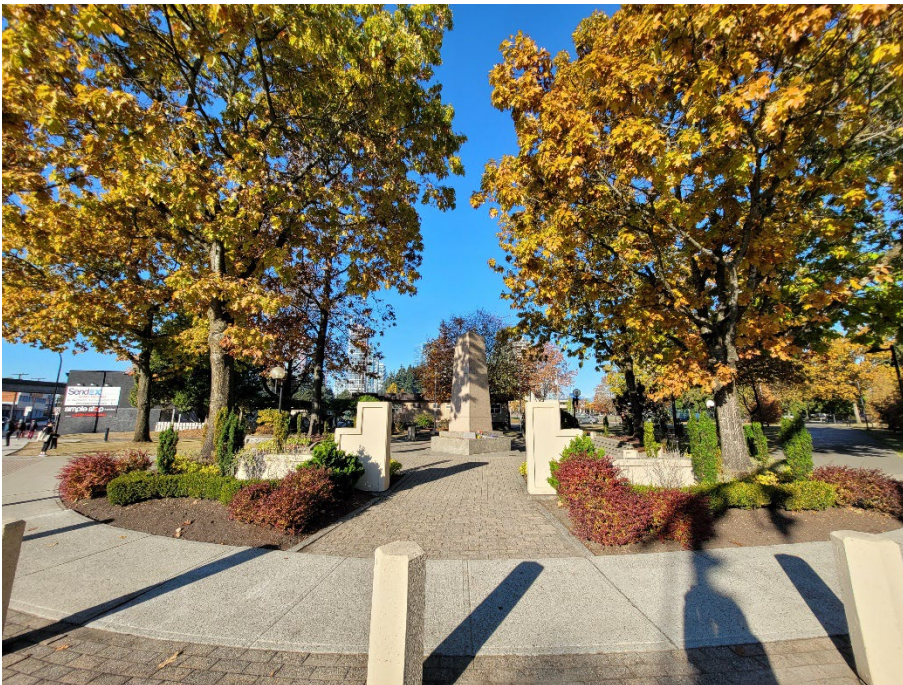
*Area where cenotaph is located identified with a red circle.
Image courtesy of Google Maps.*

Photographs of the Cenotaph (November 2022)

Photographs by the author.



View of the Cenotaph and plaza, looking southeast towards the intersection of Imperial St. and Nelson Ave. Note the ring of mature trees around the perimeter.



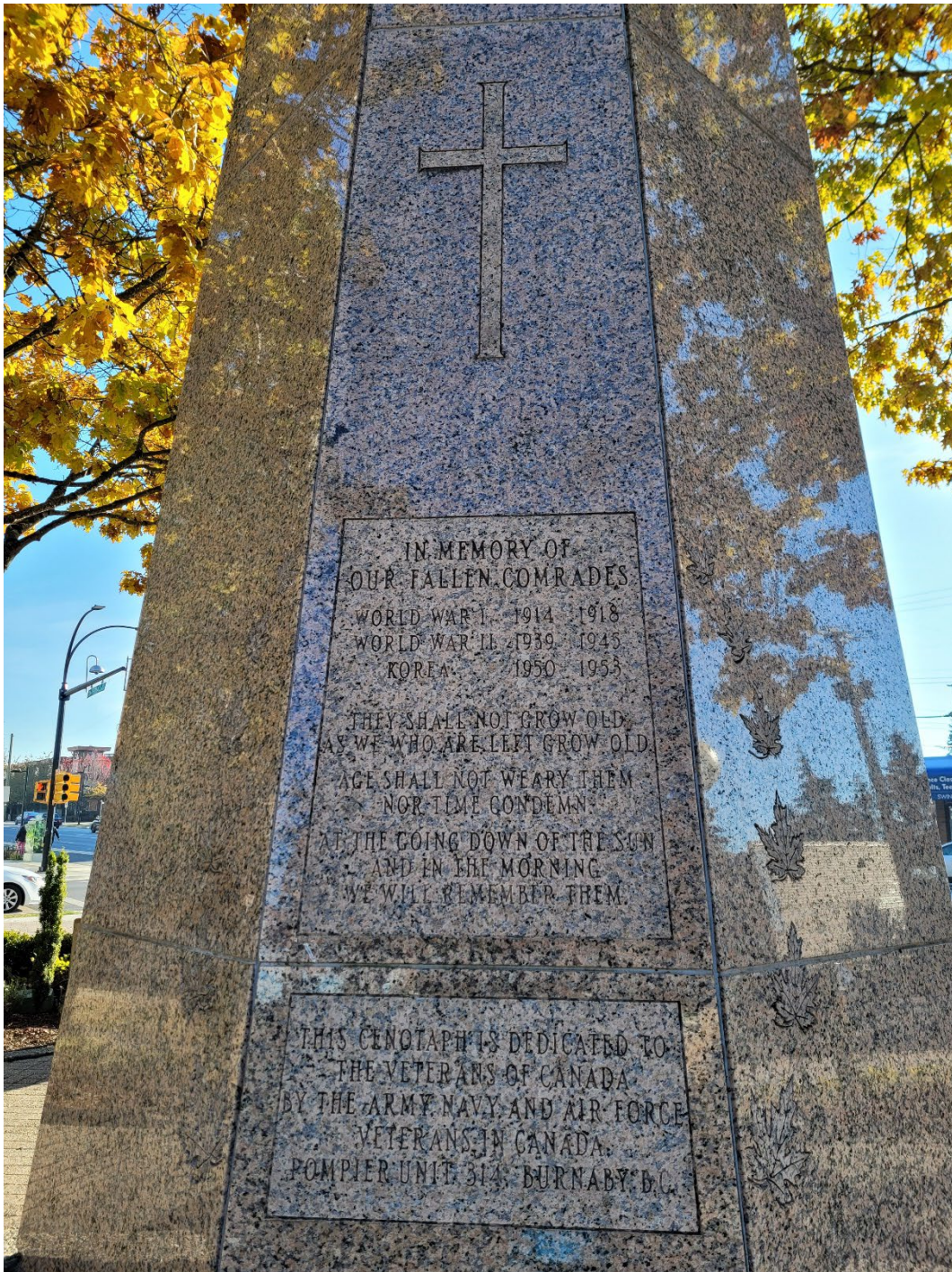
View of the Cenotaph and plaza, looking northwest, along the formal entryway.



View of the Cenotaph and plaza, looking northeast. Note the curving walkways.



Closer view of the Cenotaph and plaza, looking southeast towards the intersection of Nelson Ave and Imperial St.



Close-up view of the Cross and the etchings on the Cenotaph. Also visible are the engraved maple leaves.



Upper left shows the granite plaque dedicating the plaza. Also shown are examples of remembrances left at the Cenotaph.



Image of the Cenotaph, found on the website: "We Will Remember War Monuments in Canada World Wide Web Site". Possibly shortly after installation in 1988. Note the new tree in the background.



Same view of the Cenotaph Nov 2022. Note that the tree in the background is now fully mature.

The Cenotaph

The South Burnaby Cenotaph is a five-sided column comprised of polished rose granite panels with caulked joints and which sits on a stepped concrete base. The design of the Cenotaph and its associated landscape is attributed to a member of staff, landscape architect Heather Sarsfield, who was a parks designer with the (then) Municipality of Burnaby. In 1988, the site was landscaped and the cenotaph installed in Bonsor Park at the corner of Imperial Street and Nelson Avenue, with the address of 6749 Nelson Avenue. The Cenotaph commemorates those lost in World War One, World War Two, and the Korean War.

According to a Burnaby Council report dated May 30, 1988, the construction of a cenotaph in South Burnaby had been under consideration since the 1950s, when the Council at that time put aside \$6,000. These funds were put in a statutory reserve fund in 1979 and in 1981, the proposal for a cenotaph at Bonsor Park was given approval in principle. All of Burnaby's Veteran's organizations were consulted which resulted in a general agreement that there could be a total of three cenotaphs in the city: one in North Burnaby, one in South Burnaby and one at a central location. The work was set aside until 1986, when the Army, Navy and Air Force Veteran groups brought the idea back for Council consideration, stating that they would like to see a cenotaph placed in Bonsor Park. "The location at the corner of Imperial and Nelson in Bonsor Park is felt to be easily accessible and a high profile area proximate to Burnaby's Metrotown hub."² At their meeting on May 30, 1988, Council approved the concept as presented and allocated a budget of \$105,600, of which the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans Canada Pompier Unit 314 contributed approximately \$45,600.³

The concept for the cenotaph, its design and location, was to have three functions: it would be an entry gate to Bonsor Park, it would be a place of ceremony and it would be a community icon – "an easily identifiable landmark that becomes part of all communal consciousness"⁴.

The following page is an excerpt from the May 30, 1988 Council report, in which the design intention of the cenotaph is described.

²Report from the Director of Recreation and Cultural Services to the Municipal Manager, May 20, 1988 presented to City Council May 30, 1988, p. 1.

³ Ibid p. 4.

⁴ Ibid.

As a park gateway - this project becomes an important "cornerstone" in the solidification of Bonsor Park. It will, in future, be a major entry point to the park and the casual open space area - east of the sports fields. As such, the concept strives to make it a very bold visible entry that is easily identifiable from the main avenues of approach. Gateways mark the boundary. As a park plaza, it will function as a node of activity with pedestrian movement organized to pass through the plaza. The main paths converge on the plaza to identify with the entry and the cenotaph as a landmark.

The plaza itself is designed to accommodate small crowds, public gatherings and small events. Designated by a framework of stairs it suggests an informal amphitheatre - becoming a place to gravitate to. The plaza is subdivided into two halves - the 'lower plaza' being the main congregation area promoting social interaction, the 'upper plaza' a transition area where individuals can pause, able to observe the plaza's daily life without necessarily being open to participating.

The 'corner foyer' functions as a transitional buffer zone from the street. Bollards delineate it from the curb. This area serves as a meeting place, incidental seating can occur on the 'gateway' walls.

Landscaping frames the plaza precinct providing a horticultural display that is to buffer users of the plaza. It is intended that while this buffer is desirable - it is not to be enclosing. Planting will be an overall maximum height of 3-4'. The proposal at this time is to mass plant roses - (depending on availability) making this a special horticultural feature which in turn adds to the imageability of the site.

As a place of ceremony this concept sets up the 'lower plaza' as a special place, an inner sanctum. It is important that the cenotaph maintain the spiritual roots and connections to the past. This meaning is intensified through the progression of areas people pass through to approach the cenotaph. The transition from the street: from the 'corner foyer', through the upper plaza to the lower plaza, provides a feeling of arrival through a change of enclosure and view which enhances the reverence and tranquility of the ceremonial area.



The concept provides a very functional space for public assembly. The hard surface plaza improves use in wet weather, the stairs serve as tiers for increased vantage points. The paths around the circumference of the plaza provide an overflow area for extended crowds as well as handicapped access for those not able to negotiate the stairs. The open grass area that meets the northeast set of stairs also accommodates a potential overflow. The design has carefully provided this expandability in order to maintain an appropriately sized plaza that will not seem too large and empty on those non-ceremony days.

The cenotaph itself is the focal point of the plaza and the icon commemorating the soldiers of both world wars and the Korean war. The memorial deviates from the traditional form slightly, identifying these three wars by three separate faces on the front side. This trinity gives a more refined sculptural line making our cenotaph individual and unique. The original 10' high concrete memorial has been enlarged to a height of 15' and will be faced with a distinctive polished granite. This will heighten its prominence while making it a more contemporary, sophisticated focus, one that is in keeping with this high profile location. Granite is the most durable material that could be used. It will help to establish this cenotaph and plaza as the special place that it is. The use of a high quality material is indicative of our civic pride in the country's achievements and our role in world history. Appropriate wording will be engraved into the granite.

As an easily identifiable landmark, the cenotaph will be visible from the Nelson and Imperial intersection and should be seen from Bonsor Recreation Complex as well - vegetation cover depending. This concept utilizes forms, materials, colours, etcetera that will be consistent with the larger park as well as integrated within the specific cenotaph plaza site.

./..

The following excerpt is from Iredale Architecture’s report: “City of Burnaby Civic Monuments Assessment Report”, December 22, 2020, prepared for the City of Burnaby. (Pages 4/5)

<p>2. South Burnaby Cenotaph (6749 Nelson Avenue)</p>	
<p>It is a five sided polished rose granite veneer monolith with concrete base. It appears to be near-new and in very good condition. The polished slab is constructed with a caulk joint, we suspect it's a hollow structure, i.e.: a frame structure.</p> <p>There appears to be no damage, or maintenance required at the present time.</p>	
<p>Except for a questionable duplex receptacle mounted into the face of the stone step at the base of the Cenotaph that may need some maintenance or removal.</p>	

Appendix A: Definitions

The following definitions of heritage value are quoted directly from the “Canadian Register of Historic Places: Writing Statements of Significance” guide:

Aesthetic value refers to the sensory qualities of a historic place (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting) in the context of broader categories of design and tradition. A place may have aesthetic significance because it evokes a positive sensory response, or because it epitomizes a defined architectural style or landscape concept. Visual aesthetic value is typically expressed through form, colour, texture or materials. It is possible for historic places to have other aesthetic values as well, such as auditory ones. Historic places with aesthetic significance may reflect a particular style or period of construction or craftsmanship, or represent the work of a well-known architect, planner, engineer or builder.

Historical and cultural values are sometimes combined and refer to the associations that a place has with past events and historical themes, as well as its capacity to evoke a way of life or a memory of the past. Historical or cultural value may lie in the age of a heritage district, its association with important events, activities, people or traditions; its role in the development of a community, region, province, territory or nation; or its patterns of use. Historical or cultural value can lie in natural or ecological features of the place, as well as in built features.

Scientific value refers to the capacity of a historic place to provide evidence that can advance our understanding and appreciation of a culture. The evidence is found in the form, materials, design and/or experience of the place. Scientific value can derive from various factors, such as age, quality, completeness, complexity or rarity. Scientific value may also be present when the place itself supplements other types of evidence such as written sources, such as in archaeological sites.

Social value considers the meanings attached to a place by a community in the present time. It differs from historical or cultural value in that the value may not have an obvious basis in history or tradition and relates almost entirely to the present time. Social value may be ascribed to places that perform a key role within communities, support community activities or traditions, or contribute to the community’s sense of identity. Places with social value include sites that bring the community together and create a sense of shared identity and belonging.

Spiritual value is ascribed to places with religious or spiritual meanings for a community or a group of people. Sacred and spiritual places could include places of mythological significance, landscape features associated with myth and legends, burial sites, rock cairns and alignments, fasting/vision quest sites etc., places representing particular belief system(s) or places associated with sacred traditions, ceremonial practices or rituals of a community/group of people.⁵

⁵ Historic Places Program Branch, “Canadian Register of Historic Places: Writing Statements of Significance,” Parks Canada, November 2006, pp. 12-13.

Appendix B: Bibliography and Sources

City of Burnaby Staff Reports

From Director of Recreation and Cultural Services to Municipal Manager May 20, 1988
presented to City Council May 30, 1988.

Google Maps

google.com/maps

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. American Vernacular Architecture: Buildings and Interiors 1870-1960. W.W. Norton & Company Inc. New York/London, 2009.

Historic Places Program Branch, "Canadian Register of Historic Places: Writing Statements of Significance," Parks Canada, November 2006.

www.historicplaces.ca/media/5422/sosguideen.pdf

The Royal Canadian Legion website, page "Memorials and Cenotaphs"

<https://www.legion.ca/remembrance/remembrance-all-year/memorials-and-cenotaphs>

"Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada", Second Edition, 2010

www.historicplaces.ca

"We Will Remember": War Monuments in Canada World Wide Web Site

<https://www.cdli.ca/monuments/bc/burna4.htm>