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City of Johannesburg
Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

IMMOVABLE HERITAGE INVENTORY FORM

Name of Site: Cenotaph

Other Names (if any):

Erf No.: RE 5109 (previously R/E 12)

Street Address: Harrison Street, between President, Market and Simmonds Streets.

District/Province/Region: Gauteng, Johannesburg.

Ownership: City of Johannesburg

Site Type: War Memorial

State of Conservation:

Good. The granite is in good condition with virtually no stress cracks. In 2004 the monument was restored and its surface revitalised.

Description:

The Cenotaph is constructed of grey granite with inscriptions v-cut into the stone. It occupies the center of the eastern portion of Beyer's Naudé Square.

“While it is very tall and beautifully finished the Cenotaph fails to impress. It is not sturdy enough to form a visual bond between the City Hall and the Library, and it does not stand out well enough against its immediate environment to make a powerful statement ...” (Van der Waal)

History:

On 10 October 1926, the Cenotaph was unveiled by the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone. The monument is a replica of the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, designed by Edwin Luytens. It was hoped that the memory of the Great War would somehow prevent such slaughter from happening again. The day after the Market Square ceremony, a leading article in *The Star* expressed the hope that if the two memorials would “strengthen our determination to prevent as far as is humanly possible, the repetition of the tragedy, then the War would not have been a waste of precious lives”.

But 21 years later on 18 February 1947, *The Star* carried a picture illustrating one of the ironies of history: a mason preparing the stone of the Cenotaph for the dates of another world war! The stone mason was chiseling away the inscription 1914-1919 to make place for the dates of another bloody conflict – the Second World war of 1939- 1945. The inscription was replaced by the words, “*Our Glorious Dead, 1939-1945*” and the dates 1914-1919 were placed higher up on the Cenotaph under the inscription “*Erected to the memory of the men of Johannesburg who laid down their lives in the Great War*”. During the Royal visit of April 1947, King George VI unveiled new inscriptions commemorating those who had died in World War 2.

At the time of the construction of the Harry Hofmeyer Underground Parking in 1966, the Cenotaph was removed. After completion of the work in 1968, the Cenotaph was returned to its site west of the City Hall, where memorial services resumed in its vicinity.

In 1968 the idea of moving the Cenotaph was mooted to the area east of the City Hall, but the National Monuments Council was opposed: “The historical significance of the Market Square as the heart of the City explains its location. The Cenotaph relates to the

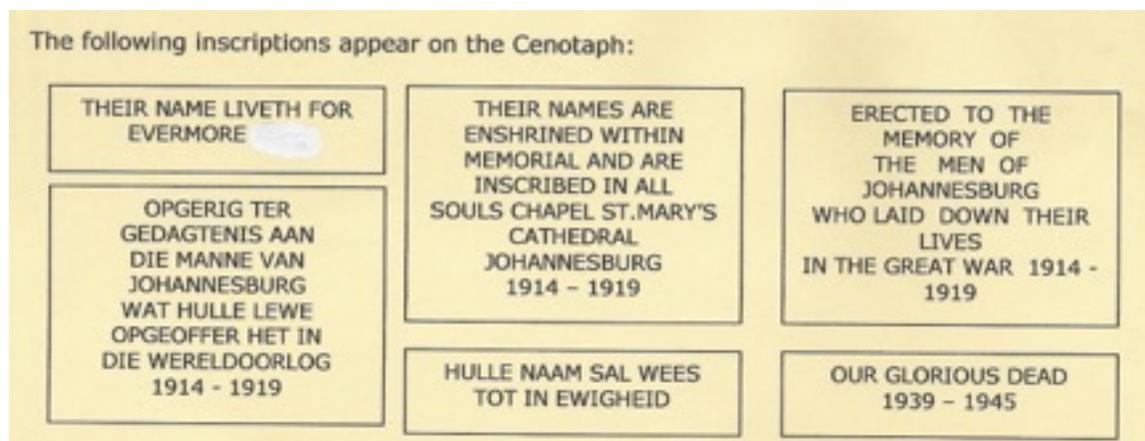
western facade of the City Hall which was an important entrance to the Mayoress's parlour. It is also the reminder of the City's participation in the First and Second World Wars".

In 1996 the Cenotaph was rededicated in honour of all South Africans who died in wars and conflicts, including the struggle for democracy.

Statement of Significance:

The Cenotaph is an inclusive war memorial, having been rededicated to all South Africans who died for freedom in all wars and conflicts. For over eighty years, the Cenotaph has been the venue for military parades and commemorations. Since the monument's inception in 1926, it has been the focal point for the annual National Remembrance Sunday Service, the main memorial service of its kind in South Africa. The Cenotaph is a prime commemorative site by virtue of its prominent location in the city's civic and historical heartland; its long historical associations; and the acceptance it has gained in the post-apartheid period among war veterans from all sections of the population.

Inscriptions:



In 2006, a new panel was inlaid on the western side of the Cenotaph, with the following inscription in polished letters:

THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG HONOURS
ALL THOSE WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE
IN ALL WARS, BATTLES AND ARMED STRUGGLES
FOR FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND PEACE
IN SOUTH AFRICA

10 NOVEMBER 2002

Legal Status (Decree/Act):

Protected under Section 37 of National Heritage Resources Act: “Public monuments and memorials must, without the need to publish a notice to this effect, be protected in the same manner as places which are entered in a heritage register ...”. As the Cenotaph is older than 60 years, it is also protected in terms of Section 34 of the same Act.

Authority Responsible

City of Johannesburg. The Cenotaph also falls under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Use: War Memorial

Documentation/Research

Photos Maps Site Plans Others.....

Source(s) of Information

- Bruwer, J.J. 2002. *Heritage Survey: Johannesburg Central City Area.* Phase 1 Vol. 2.
- Van der Waal, Gerhard-Mark. 1987. *From Mining Camp to Metropolis: the buildings of Johannesburg, 1886-1940.* Johannesburg: Chris van Rensburg.

Name & Address of Recorder:

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Position:

Deputy Director: Immovable Heritage

Signature

Date