



Description of Historic Place

The Red Deer Cenotaph is a war memorial on an approximately 2 square metre parcel of land on Ross (50th) Street. The cenotaph is comprised of a Tyndall limestone sculpture of a soldier surmounting a large granite pedestal.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Red Deer Cenotaph lies in its status as an early and excellent example of the work of sculptor Major Frank H. Norbury and as a landmark memorial dedicated to Canada's military veterans.

The Red Deer Cenotaph is one of the earliest and best known works of Major Frank H. Norbury, a skilled sculptor, decorated veteran, and major contributor to artistic culture in Alberta. Born in Liverpool in 1871, Norbury trained as a stonemason and worked on many buildings in his home city as a young man. Norbury emigrated to Canada after serving in the First World War, settling in Edmonton. A prominent artist, he served as President of the Edmonton Art Club, was a member of the Alberta Society of Artists, and wrote for the Edmonton Journal as their art critic for two decades.

Norbury received his first major commission in Canada from the Town of Red Deer in 1922. Norbury was commissioned to sculpt the figure of a soldier to commemorate the men and women from central Alberta who served in the First World War. The sculpture is an accurate representation of the dress kit of a Canadian soldier during the First World War. The soldier has been deftly carved to evoke a sense of suppleness and motion. The soldier's face emanates both weariness and a resolution of purpose, while his body twists westwards in a symbolic motion away from the ravages of European battlefields and towards home and peace.

The Red Deer Cenotaph is also valued for its status as Red Deer's most significant war memorial. Norbury's statue was mounted on a granite base designed by local architect

C.A. Julian Sharman and executed by Lachlan MacLean of MacLean Granite. The statue faces the location of the C.P.R. station where most of the soldiers departed for the battlefield. The Cenotaph was intentionally placed here on one of Red Deer's busiest streets to be a constant reminder of the sacrifices of the war veterans. This poignant memorial to Canadian servicemen and women was formally unveiled September 15, 1922 by Lord Byng of Vimy, Governor General of Canada. A copper tube containing two scrolls was placed inside the Cenotaph, one inscribed with the names of those who served during the war and the other with the names of those who had lost their lives in the conflict. The Cenotaph was rededicated in 1949 to include those who served during the Second World War. Another plaque was added in 1988 in memory of those who served and died during the Korean conflict.

Source: Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, Historic Resources Management Branch (File: Des. 2153), Red Deer City Archives.

Character-defining Elements

The heritage value of the Red Deer Cenotaph resides in the following character-defining elements:

- those elements reflecting its association with Frank H. Norbury, such as the Tyndall limestone sculpture of the unknown soldier, the large granite base,
- those elements reflecting its status as a memorial commemorating Canada's military veterans, such as its westward orientation on its original location and the plaques commemorating the two world wars and the Korean conflict,
- Copper tube with two scrolls inside the Cenotaph.