

NAME: 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, WILLUNGA

CURRENT USE: Avenue of White Cedar trees

FORMER USE: Avenue of White Cedar trees

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: Initially planted in c.1915-16

LOCATION: St Peters Terrace, WILLUNGA

LAND DESCRIPTION: Section 248, Hundred of Willunga

OWNER: City of Onkaparinga

RECOMMENDATION: Local Heritage Place



'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, Willunga (GGA, 2022)

NAME: 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, WILLUNGA

DESCRIPTION:

Approximately 14 White Cedar trees (*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*) located to the north side of the street between Main Road and Kell Street. The avenue was initially planted in 1915-16 as a commemorative row for local soldiers then fighting in the First World War.

It is recommended that 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, Willunga be included on the South Australian Heritage Register as a Local Heritage place.

A delineation of significant historic fabric is provided in the Extent of Listing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, Willunga is of significance as an early example of WWI commemorative planting in South Australia, possibly among the earliest identified surviving examples in Australia. The avenue was planted in 1915-16 by local Willunga residents in celebration and commemoration of the contribution of local citizens to events of the First World War.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (As defined in Section 67(1) of the PDI Act 2016):

a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area; being a historically-significant, early surviving example of a WWI commemorative avenue planted by local citizens in 1915-16; among the earliest such identified examples of plantings in South Australia and possibly in Australia.

b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area; the 'Avenue of White Cedars' was planted by local Willunga residents in 1915-16 as a commemorative planting for active soldiers in the First World War, demonstrating the local community's recognition of the district's substantial contribution to this significant world event.

g) in the case of a tree, it is of special historical or social significance or importance within the local area; being an important example of WWI commemorative planting dating to 1915-16, among the earliest surviving examples identified in South Australia and Australia, representing the Willunga district's celebration and commemoration of their local citizens' contribution to the First World War.

RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales

2.7 Remembering past generations and the fallen

2.8 Significant local trees and plantings

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The heritage values of the 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace, Willunga do not appear to have been identified or assessed as part of any previous heritage survey.

Submitted as one of several botanical nominations by the National Trust of SA Willunga Branch, a history of the 'Avenue of White Cedars', St Peters Terrace was provided. This history identified that the planting, now consisting of 14 white cedars, was initially planted between 1915-17 as a commemorative memorial for local soldiers fighting in the First World War. In addition to a commemorative row of pine trees in St Andrews Terrace (described as now removed) the white cedars were planted by members of the local public as part of Arbor Day celebrations. Supplied by the Conservator of Forests, the National Trust has identified that the St Peters Terrace avenue of white cedars is among the earliest examples of commemorative planting relating to the events of the First World War in Australia, if not currently the earliest identified surviving example.

Current research aligns with historical findings; newspaper articles indicate the row of St Peters Terrace white cedars was initially planted in 1915 in association with the row of pine trees in St Andrews Terrace, now removed. Historical newspaper articles provide further context:

Considerable interest was centred in the Arbor Day proceedings to-day. A large number of people took part in the work. The Progress Association has been devoting special attention to tree-planting, and appointed a sub-committee (Rev. T. Wood and Messrs. R. T. Hitchcox) to co-operate with the public school authorities, in arranging the Arbor Day tree-planting programme. A 'patriotic' row along the west side of St. Andrews Terrace, in honor of the brave fellows who have gone from this district to fight for King and country was planted...Trees were set in honor of Lieutenant J. S. Malpas, Sergeant P. G. Malpas, Privates F. Tregilgas, H. Cornelius, C. Fitzpatrick, W. Whittington, F. Whittington, W. Jacobs, L. Jacobs, S. Jacobs, Stanley Mills, J. Hender and John Fridlington. (Willunga, Southern Argus, Thu 26 August 1915).

It would appear that there was either insufficient plantings or insufficient space on St Andrews Terrace on Arbor Day to commemorate all of the local district's active soldiers. As such, a second avenue was planted on St Peters Terrace in September 1915 to commemorate four additional soldiers not represented in the St Andrews Terrace row, as described below: *"On Saturday last a row of white cedar trees, obtained from a Conservator of Forests, was planted along St. Peter's-terrace, four of them, in honor of the recruits for whom trees were not available on Arbor Day. These are Harold Jackson, Oliver Norman, Edwin Paterson, and Marshall Waye. Members of the Progress Association did the work and will provide the tree-guards."* (Willunga, The Advertiser, Mon 13 Sep 1915, p.11).

The row of White Cedars was completed in the following year, as described below: *"When the pine row was finished (in St Andrews Terrace) a few trees were put in to complete the white cedar row along St. Peter's Terrace..."* (Willunga, The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser, Fri 21 Jul 1916, p.3).

It would appear that only the first four white cedars in St Peters Terrace were intended to specifically commemorate local citizens with the remainder planted in the following year to 'complete' the row. It would appear that this activity was also applied to the row of pines in St Andrews Terrace, which was later described as having approximately 60 trees in total. The St Andrews Terrace commemorative row was removed in 1952 for road widening and were replaced by flowering plum trees. Commemorative name plaques were originally located on all the memorial plantings of both rows, now removed. It is unclear now which of the current trees are the initial four commemorative plantings.

Comparative analysis provided by the National Trust suggests that the surviving Avenue of White Cedars, St Peters Terrace, Willunga is among the earliest examples of WWI-related

commemorative plantings in Australia, if not the earliest surviving example. The accuracy of this claim is however difficult to verify without exhaustive investigative research, though the 1915-16 St Peters Terrace, Willunga planting certainly appears to be amongst the earliest identified surviving examples.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all surviving '*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*' White Cedar trees to St Peters Terrace, Willunga, located to the north side of the street between Main Road and Kell Street.

It should be noted that botanical specimens have a limited lifespan and require regular maintenance, including pruning etc., to ensure the long-term health and safety of the tree. All efforts to ensure the survival of the trees for the complete duration of their natural lifespan should be undertaken. No actions should be undertaken that would compromise the trees' natural lifespan.

It is recommended that a regular inspection schedule should be adopted and maintained to ensure the trees remains a safe and viable heritage element for the property upon which they are planted. Where re-planting is required, matching '*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*' White Cedar specimens should be introduced for continuity purposes.

REFERENCES:

[National Trust - White Cedar \(*Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*\) \(trusttrees.org.au\)](https://www.trusttrees.org.au/), accessed 28/4/2022.

Willunga, Southern Argus, Thu 26 August 1915

Willunga, The Advertiser, Mon 13 Sep 1915, p.11

Willunga, The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser, Fri 21 Jul 1916, p.3

SITE MAPPING:



Site of 'Avenue of White Cedars' St Peters Terrace, Willunga: red hatching denotes location of white cedar trees on the north side of St Peters Terrace, stretching between Main Road and Kell Street (Planning SA SAPPa)

OTHER IMAGES:



c.1915-16 White Cedar trees located to the north side of St Peters Terrace, looking north-east (GGA, 2022)