



Historic England

The Listing and Grading of War Memorials





Exeter City War Memorial: listed at Grade II* in 2014.

All war memorials deserve our respect, and all form important historical records. Many deserve to be included on the National Heritage List for England, available at www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list

Listed war memorials, like other structures, are graded:

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest. Just 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest. 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II*
- Grade II buildings are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them. 92% of all listed buildings are in this category

Front cover

Liverpool Cenotaph: relisted at Grade I in 2013.

Grading is a reflection of relative significance and may influence planning considerations, and can sometimes prioritise grant awards. Grade I war memorials are currently very few: Lutyens' Cenotaph in Whitehall; his monumental War Memorial in Leicester's Victoria Park; and the Liverpool Cenotaph by Lionel Budden and H. Tyson Smith are examples, but the numbers are starting to increase as an outcome of work relating to the centenary of 1914-18. These will possess exceptional levels of design interest, in terms of architectural or sculptural conception, and will be of the greatest historic interest.

Grade II* will be warranted for those memorials with an above-average level of special interest: they may be highly unusual in form or symbolism, or of a high level of artistic accomplishment. The designers, masons or artists do not have to be famous for this level to be achieved.

Grade II covers the large majority of listed war memorials. It is still a reflection of special interest and should not be regarded as in any way unimportant. It is a national designation, warranting inclusion within the National Heritage List for England.

Grading may be determined by a range of factors, including quality of design and execution; subject matter and symbolism; rarity; and historic importance. It is determined at a national, not a local, level.

Occasionally, a war memorial may be felt not to meet the threshold for listing. This is not a decision lightly reached, and Historic England has been welcoming to almost all applications for listing in recent years. Situations in which such a decision might be reached would include when a memorial has suffered considerable alteration or loss; extremely modest memorials which warrant local, not national, designation; later replacement memorials which do not feature sufficient original material; and modern memorials of modest character.



Kilmington War Memorial, Devon: listed at Grade II in 2015.



Historic England

We are the public body that looks after England's historic environment. We champion historic places, helping people understand, value and care for them.

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