

Proposal to Nominate for an EHRP Marker.

Proposed EHRP Category	Marker Nomination.		
Item Name:	Caversham Grand Prix Track / RAAF Caversham		
Other/Former Names:	Caversham Air Strip Caversham Racing Circuit Caversham Signal Station Middle Swan Aerodrome		
Locality:	Brabham / West Swan		
Address:	Harrow St West Swan		
Co-ordinates	-31.838011007885896, 115.98071811431932		
Current Owner:	Department of Communities / WA Government		
Original Owner:	Department of Defence		
Current use:	Vacant pending redevelopment		
Former use:	Air Strip / Signal Station / Racing Circuit		
Proposed use:	TBA		
Item Condition:	Intact / Abandoned		
Designer:	Public Works Department (WA) to Department of the Interior / US Navy Specifications		
Builder:	Main Roads Department (WA) / Commonwealth Dept of Works		
Started:	1942	Completed:	1943 (airstrip) 1950 (racing circuit) 1969 (signal station)
History: (100 to 600 words)	<p>In February-March 1943, a Fleet Air Arm Aerodrome for the US Navy at Middle Swan was constructed of gravel with three intersections runways, the main runway being 5000 ft (one mile) long, with Stage 2 sealing to be completed within six months. In December 1943, consequent to an alteration in policy, works on Fleet Air Arm Aerodromes under construction in Western Australia were temporarily curtailed. Work at Middle Swan was restricted to completion of the following: priming of the 132° runway, clearing of approaches and on either side of runways, and gravelling to the taxiways between hide-outs 9 and 10, essential drainage work, and construction of fencing.</p> <p>During the war, Fleet Air Arm Aerodrome Middle Swan was little used as</p>		

	<p>most pilots preferred to use the aerodrome at Guildford, which was only five miles to the south and had more facilities.</p> <p>In 1946, the WA Gliding Club began using Caversham for gliding which continued during the 1950s only surrendering their lease in late December 1961.</p> <p>Following the war, the WA Sporting Car Club, rapidly re-organised and arranged to hold a race meeting on a make-shift circuit at Caversham Aerodrome on Sunday, 7 April 1946, in aid of the Maimed and Limbless Ex-servicemen’s Appeal. Special train and bus services were arranged for spectators, who anticipated watching the racing at up to 100 miles per hour (m.p.h.), with the final event being a 40-mile race ‘around hairpin bends’ and ‘a mile of straight stretch of a smooth surfaced runway’. Motor cyclists who participated at the meeting ‘declared that the course was the best they had ever ridden on, and a high standard was maintained’; and a ‘huge’ crowd of 60,000 people saw Clem Dwyer win the Victory Grand Prix. It is believed to have been ‘probably the first’ held outside Western Europe following the end of the war, and the first in Australia after peace was declared.</p> <p>In the late 1950s, and early 1960s, race meetings were often held at Caversham Raceway on Monday public holidays including Foundation Day in 1960, when there was a six hour Le Mans race and the Australian Grand Prix in 1957 and 1962.</p> <p>Large crowds attended most of the race meetings at Caversham, which were a popular attraction to local residents, including many from the Yugoslav community, and car racing enthusiasts from the wider community.</p> <p>In 1961, the Car Club advised it wished to extend its licence for a further three years and requested consideration be given to allowing Sunday meetings. An area of about 214 acres at the east, including the 1^o runway, continued to be leased to the Club until late 1968.</p> <p>In 1968, the RAAF commenced construction of a Radio Receiving and Transmitting Station with completion of all installations, including the aerial farm, anticipated by June 1969. The Station was required to be of operational standard, but it was envisaged that its primary role would be to provide a back-up station in the event of failure or over-load of RAAF facilities. In 2000-03, Caversham Signal Station was decommissioned.</p>
<p>Description: (100 to 600 words):</p>	<p>The former Fleet Air Arm Aerodrome Middle Swan comprises three former gravel runways and associated taxiways constructed by Main Roads in 1942/43.</p> <p>The eastern runway and dispersal area which is sealed was converted to</p>

	<p>a car racing circuit in the early 1950s, retains some remnants of structures erected in the 1950s-60s.</p> <p>In 1968-69, RAAF Caversham Signal Station was built at the place, including a signals tower, an operations building, a garage/powerhouse building, a pump house and a POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) store, and an aerial farm, with a residence built as married quarters in 1970.</p> <p>Relatively cleared areas, with some re-growth vegetation, remain in proximity to the runways, and similarly around the antennae sites, while much of the larger area retains its indigenous vegetation, including red gums, jarrah, banksia, acacia, sheoaks and paper barks.</p> <p>Overall, the evidence of the aerodrome is in fair condition, the racing circuit in fair to poor condition, and the elements of the signal station in fair to poor condition.</p>
Engineering Significance:	<i>Refer Section 2.4 in 'An Engineer's Guide to the Conservation of Australia's Engineering Heritage'</i>
Webpage Summary: (200 to 300 words)	<p>Caversham Airfield, also known as Middle Swan Airfield was an airfield constructed at Caversham, Western Australia during World War II and was the only parent aerodrome constructed for the U.S. Fleet Air Arm in this State during this period, with only two others constructed in Australia, and is one of only a small number of all-weather aerodromes with three or more intersecting runways constructed in Australia in the 20th century;</p> <p>The place is the only World War Two aerodrome known to have been utilised as a car racing circuit in the post-war period and played a very significant role in the development and growth car racing in this State in the post-war period.</p> <p>Caversham Motor Racing Circuit became Western Australia's premier motor racing venue and was particularly notable as the venue for the Victory Grand Prix in 1946, the first such even held outside Western Europe and the first in Australia after World War Two, Six-Hour Le Mans endurance races from 1955 to 1968 and Australian Grand Prix in 1957 and 1962.</p> <p>The airfield was also an integral part of the development and growth of gliding in this State from 1946 to 1961</p> <p>It demonstrates the skills and achievements of Main Roads (WA) in road making as applied aerodrome construction during WWII and is valued by the community for social and cultural reasons, including those in the wider community who recollect the Caversham Raceway period</p> <p>Its remaining material, including runways, aerial mast stays block bases,</p>

	signal buildings, and racing circuit and associated remnant structures all contribute to an understanding of the physical requirements of a Fleet Air Arm aerodrome, and subsequent uses such as a racing circuit and lastly a RAAF Signal Station.
Engineering Themes:	Defence, Transport – Air, Transport – Road
Heritage Listing:	Place #16807 Heritage Council of WA: Fleet Air Arm Aerodrome Middle Swan (fmr) (Caversham Air Strip, Caversham Racing Circuit, Caversham Signal Station, Middle Swan Aerodrome) determined by as below threshold 23 Mar 2007
References:	https://inherit.dplh.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/b6370822-06c9-44a3-885b-c94b63cbb9be https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caversham_Airfield https://vintagesportscarclubofwainc.wildapricot.org/CAVERSHAM-HISTORY

Proposed by:	Perry Beor		
Contact Phone & Email:	perry.beor@bigpond.com	0419196288	
EHA Branch Chair:	Perry Beor	Approval Date:	5 May 2026