

3. NEW PLAQUE – CITIZENS’ WAR MEMORIAL, CATHEDRAL SQUARE

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The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee an application from Mr Earle Crutchley, to install a plaque on the Citizens’ War Memorial (Cenotaph) in Cathedral Square to commemorate the involvement of the Merchant Navy in World Wars I and II.

APPLICATION

On 12 May 2002 Mr Earle Crutchley presented a proposal (copy enclosed) to the Parks and Waterways Unit, to install a plaque on the Citizens’ War Memorial commemorating the four Services who fought in both World War I and World War II, the services being Army, Navy, Air Force and the Merchant Navy.

Mr Crutchley’s application is based on the need to inform the youth and public of New Zealand of the inestimable value of contribution and service given by the Merchant Navy in the two World Wars, before the old veterans pass away. England has now elevated the Merchant Navy to the fourth force, to be equal with the other three forces of Army, Air Force and Navy.

The plaque he wishes to have installed is made of cast bronze, and measures 470mm x 200mm. The plaque reads ‘The Combined Services’ and also consists of the four service emblems (copy attached). Mr Crutchley’s proposal is to situate the plaque on the west-facing foundation of the memorial, either above or below the existing wording (pictures attached).

BACKGROUND

Since May 2002, Mr Crutchley has distributed information regarding his application to numerous people seeking support for his proposal. He has received a lot of support from various groups and individuals within our community.

To date he has received written support from the following:

- Mayor Gary Moore,
- New Zealand Historic Places Trust,
- New Zealand Merchant Navy Association (Lyttelton Branch),
- Royal New Zealand Naval Association,
- Jim Anderton MP,
- Gerry Brownlee MP,
- Ron Mark MP,
- Mr T D Scanlon (ex-President Christchurch RSA),
- Papanui Returned Services Association,
- Sumner-Redcliffs Returned Services Association,
- Paparua Returned Services Association,
- New Brighton Returned Services Association,
- Frank Mugford QSM – JP.

To date, no formal written support has been received from the New Zealand Army or the New Zealand Air Force, but Mr Crutchley has been keeping them informed of progress, with no opposition received from either service.

BASIS FOR REQUEST

The Merchant Navy has been elevated to the fourth force in England, in effect, to be equal with the other three forces. Mr Crutchley feels that New Zealand should heed and adopt this in a similar vein and give due recognition which has been missing for the last 57 years, the record of their achievements having always been understated.

The casualties in the British Commonwealth of the Merchant Navy, which included New Zealand, were:

Dead	33,730
Missing (presumed dead, wounded and POW)	12,993
TOTAL	46,723
Ships sunk	2,447

The Citizens' War Memorial has been chosen as the most suitable site as this memorial is dedicated to lives that were lost during both World Wars only. Mr Crutchley also feels that this site would be preferred to the Bridge of Remembrance, as this already has numerous plaques attributed to a number of wars that have taken place. The Merchant Navy only took part in World War I and II.

The main ANZAC Day dawn service is also held at the Citizens' War Memorial and it seems applicable to have this plaque sited at this location so the younger generation will be able to gain some knowledge of the services which were part of these wars.

HERITAGE PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

As this is a Group 1 site, advice has been sought from the Christchurch City Council Heritage Planners and they report as follows:

"The Citizens' War Memorial in Cathedral Square is listed as a Group 1 heritage item in Appendix 1, Part 10, Volume 3 of the Proposed City Plan. It is also registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga as a Category II Historic Place. As an alteration to a listed heritage item, the installation of the plaque would be a Discretionary activity and would require a resource consent.

The Citizens' War Memorial was designed by sculptor W T Trethewey in collaboration with architects Hart and Reese as a World War I memorial in 1933. The project began in 1920 with the formation of the Citizens' War Memorial Committee, but was delayed by 13 years of negotiations over a site for the memorial which was funded by public subscription. Finally the Cathedral Chapter offered the use of land to the north of the Cathedral for the memorial. The memorial was the last World War I memorial to be unveiled in New Zealand when it was dedicated in June 1937. The inscription reads: "In grateful remembrance of the sons and daughters of Canterbury who fell in the Great War 1914-18. Give peace in our time O Lord." After the second World War two inscriptions were added on either side of the original, simply with the dates 1939 and 1945.

The memorial has considerable cultural and spiritual significance as a memorial to all those Cantabrians who died in both World Wars. It is comprised of six figures flanking a central cross mounted on a Portland stone base with concrete foundations. The sculpture is highly symbolic. The figure seated in the centre with outstretched arms, in an attitude of resignation and sacrifice, is symbolic of the mothers of the Empire grieving for their sons. On the right, facing the Cathedral, is St George in armour, representing valour or protection; on the other side, holding a torch, is Youth. Next to St George is Peace, holding an olive branch and a dove, and alongside is Justice, blindfolded and holding scales. The figure at the top showing the sword being broken was at first called Victory, but the War Memorial Committee decided against this and it has no name. This figure is in fact breaking the 'sword of battle', which is symbolic of peace, rather than of the triumphant victory of battle.

The memorial has a strong message of peace and grief, rather than a triumphant celebration of victories in battle, and it is an all-inclusive monument in memory of all those Cantabrians who fell in the two World Wars, with no distinction between the different forces involved. Perhaps because of its nature, the monument has become known as the cenotaph, which is an empty tomb, or a monument to someone buried elsewhere.

The character of this memorial is very different to the Bridge of Remembrance, the city's other WWI memorial, which was erected in 1924. As the bridge was crossed by all troops as they left the King Edward Army Barracks before leaving Canterbury on their way to war, it was considered an appropriate site for a World War I memorial. A Roman Triumphal arch, featuring sculptural work and inscriptions spans the bridge. In Roman times, triumphal arches celebrated and commemorated the victories of specific emperors and specific battles through sculptural relief and inscriptions. The Bridge of Remembrance celebrates the victories of the two World Wars and identifies specific battles. In more recent times, memorials to Charles Upham and Jack Hinton have been added to the arch in the form of bronze roundels, and plaques commemorating different units have been added to the sides of the bridge and seating area. A Naval Memorial drinking fountain has also been added to one side of the bridge. A plaque commemorating the Merchant Navy of World War I and II was installed on the bridge in 1995. It features the symbol of the Merchant Navy and reads: "Dedicated to all personnel of the allied Merchant Navies who served with honour and courage in World War I and II. From the beginning to the end heroes all."

As I understand it, both the Bridge of Remembrance and the Citizens' War Memorial are the focus of Anzac Day and other war commemoration ceremonies and occasions.

It is acknowledged that the Merchant Navy's role in both World Wars should be recognised on an equivalent level with the Army, Navy and Air Force, and I think the proposed design for the plaque effectively achieves this. However, in terms of heritage principles, the proposed plaque would be incompatible with the nature of the Citizens' War Memorial and would be more in keeping with the character of the Bridge of Remembrance. The addition of a plaque on the Citizens' War Memorial would be intrusive on the simple and contemplative nature of the statuary group, base and the present inscription, which is very generalised. If the plaque were to be installed level with the paving in the base of the memorial, this impact would be somewhat lessened; however, it is the nature of the plaque proposed that I consider to be at odds with the original conception of the memorial, rather than its physical presence on the memorial.

The present Merchant Navy plaque on the bridge of Remembrance, while it successfully commemorates the war efforts of the Merchant Navy, does not indicate their status as the 'Fourth force'. The present plaque on the Bridge of Remembrance could be altered, added to or replaced with a plaque that better commemorates the role of the Merchant Navy in both World Wars. There are also other options on the bridge and arch for a more prominent placement of a plaque or alternative memorial. As the Bridge of Remembrance commemorates other conflicts subsequent to the two World Wars, it could be specified on the plaque that the Merchant Navy was involved in World War I and II to avoid any confusion. The addition of a plaque on the Bridge of Remembrance would also require a Resource Consent as an alteration to a Group One listed Heritage Item in the City Plan.

In conclusion, considering the history and character of the Citizens' War Memorial, I consider the installation of the proposed plaque to be incompatible with its character and intent, and would have difficulties approving any resource Consent application to do so on heritage grounds. However, I do believe that those who have fought and lost their lives for our country need to be recognised in a manner that fully acknowledges their contribution, and totally support the alternative option of installing the plaque or an alternative memorial on the Bridge of Remembrance".

SUMMARY

Mr Crutchley's proposal obviously has support and from the perspective of recognising the achievement of the Merchant Navy it has considerable merit. However, the Heritage Planners would like to see the current memorial retained in its present state without any plaques attached and suggest the Bridge of Remembrance as a more appropriate site.

Taking into consideration the divergence of opinion for the appropriate location of the plaque, it is suggested that a small working party of Council staff and representatives of the Committee evaluate the options to come up with an appropriate solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

Staff

Recommendation: That a small working party of appropriate Council staff and representatives of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee evaluate the options to come up with an appropriate solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

Chairman's

Recommendation:

1. That a plaque and memorial policy be addressed through the Council's Art in Public Places policy.
2. That a small working party comprising the Committee Chair and Councillor Pat Harrow work with appropriate Council staff to consider the options of siting the Merchant Navy plaque in Cathedral Square and provide a suitable solution.