

4. PARK OF REMEMBRANCE

Officer responsible
Greenspace Unit Manager

Author
Suzanne Weld, Greenspace Landscape Planner, DDI 941-8490

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the landscape design for the proposed Park of Remembrance on the riverbank north of the Bridge of Remembrance.

The Bridge of Remembrance is an important feature of Christchurch and is particularly significant to the Avon River corridor. The Council has already agreed that the park space just north of the bridge on the riverbank between the Avon and Durham Street (August 2003 report) could be developed in the future as a Park of Remembrance. The development of the Park of Remembrance will enable commemorative plaques to be located without cluttering the Bridge of Remembrance and detracting from its presence as an important architectural structure within the central city.

BACKGROUND

Recently staff met with members of the RSA to discuss how Henry James Nicholas, a World War I Victoria Cross recipient from Canterbury, could be recognised within the city. The two other VC winners, Charles Upham and Jack Hinton, each have a plaque on the front of the Bridge of Remembrance with additional commemorative features within the Canterbury area. The idea of a Park of Remembrance was suggested as a logical progression from the bridge which could in time become cluttered with commemorative plaques unless alternative sites are identified and planned now. In November last year a new tree was planted in the park area to commemorate the New Zealanders who lost their lives in Malta. It is proposed that the new park could acknowledge future overseas peacekeeping activity.

More recently another request has reached the Greenspace Unit to recognise a recipient of the Military Medal. Current consultation with the RSA has identified the need for criteria to determine who and what services are commemorated on the Bridge and in the Park.

A brief has already been prepared for the commemorative artwork and at the same time Greenspace staff have commissioned a landscape concept plan from City Solutions to show how the Park of Remembrance might be developed. Ideally the landscape architect from City Solutions should collaborate with the selected artist from an early stage in the development of the artwork and the scheme for the park. This has been written into the brief for the artwork.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation on the artwork has only occurred between Council staff, representatives of the RSA and the French Consulate but the park proposal could be highlighted within the Avon River (Central City Strategy), which will be available for public comment by the end of February. A landscape concept plan is now available for comment and will be included in the draft Avon River (Central City) Strategy soon to be released for public comment.

THE PROPOSAL

The landscape concept plan (attached) indicates four possible sites where the artwork will be clearly seen and well-connected and in view of the Bridge of Remembrance. Four sites have been chosen to give the artist more flexibility in developing a design for the artwork.

Key features of the plan are:

- Retention of the large specimen trees in the area, including the Gallipoli Oak
- Upgrading the paths, widening and realigning them slightly to define a park space
- Creation of a wide memorial walk which connects the paths and lies in an east-west direction visually connecting the river and the central city with the former King Edward Barracks site. The memorial walk is a potential site for the laying of future commemorative plaques.
- Upgrading the planting, path and stairs down from the Bridge of Remembrance to engender a greater sense of entrance to the park space - the walls abutting the path down to the park could also support plaques.

BUDGET

There is no line item budgeted in the current Annual Plan for this project. It is anticipated that the artwork will be funded by the RSA and then gifted to the city. Once the artwork has been designed on-going costs for its maintenance which will need to be covered by the Greenspace Unit can be determined.

Cost estimates for Remembrance Park have been prepared by City Solutions and are as follows:

Full plan with memorial walk	\$36,600.00 (Excl GST)
Plan with no memorial walk	\$24,600.00 (Excl GST)

Both estimates include costs for tree work, new footpaths, the memorial wall, new seating, planting, some lawn reinstatement, some maintenance and design and contract administration fees. This would be funded from our existing Inner City Riverbanks Upgrading funds

CONCLUSION

The Park of Remembrance is a timely proposal which if developed in conjunction with the Henry James Nicholas artwork will set the scene for the management of future commemorations. The RSA is keen to develop criteria as to what commemorations occur in the area in the future. In the meantime the Park can be developed alongside the creation of the Henry James Nicholas commemorative artwork so that a fully integrated feature is developed on the Avon River bank.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the proposed landscaping plan be approved in line with the overall proposal.
 2. That City Solutions staff work alongside the appointed artist from an early stage to ensure the artwork is fully integrated into the park design.
 3. That the process for the selection of the artwork be in line with the Art in Public Places Policy (2003).
 4. That the proposed plan with a memorial walk be approved and the RSA congratulated on its contribution to this project.