



**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 325
*LATIMER SQUARE AND SETTING – 1 LATIMER SQUARE,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 15/12/2014

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.

Latimer Square has high historical significance as a public square with a long association with recreation and civic events in the central city. It was a feature of the original town plan for Christchurch, surveyed by Edward Jollie in 1849-50. The Square was named for Hugh Latimer, who was burned at the stake for his Protestant beliefs on 16 October 1555 as one of the so-called Marian or Oxford Martyrs. Cranmer Square was named for another of the Marian Martyrs, Thomas Cranmer, and originally Cathedral Square was to have been named for another, Nicholas Ridley.

Until the 1880s, Latimer Square served as one of the city's main recreational spaces, being used for sports events, horse racing, the Agricultural and Pastoral Show, volunteer militia parades, fairs and other entertainments. In 1885 the square was cut in two for an extension of Worcester St and the laying of a tramline through the centre. The landscaping was made more formal from about this time, with the addition of a band rotunda (removed 1894), lamp standards, diagonal paths and plantings. Use of the square also became more formal, passive and localised, as a venue for promenading and picnics, although public gatherings continued through the 20th century, including a civic reception for the Prince of Wales in 1920. It also served as the public 'meet and greet' area for the recent visit by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge where they also played a brief game of cricket with local children.

During WWII, air raid trenches were dug in the square to offer protection to nearby workers and residents (1941-42). The road through the square was officially stopped in 2006. Latimer Square was used as a triage station after the 22 February 2011 Canterbury earthquake because of its close proximity to the CTV building. A sculptural work, *Spires* by Christchurch artist Neil Dawson was erected in Latimer Square in 2013.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.

Latimer Square has high cultural significance for way in which its name signifies the relationship between the founders of Christchurch and the Church of England (Anglican Church). The Square's cultural significance is enhanced by its historic recreational use and as a place of assembly and commemoration, particularly in regard to the 2011 Canterbury earthquake.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

Latimer Square has architectural and aesthetic significance as an important functional and ornamental feature of Jollie's plan for Christchurch, which overlaid the flat plain of the new settlement with a typical nineteenth century town planning grid form broken up by four public squares (Cathedral, Latimer, Cranmer and later Victoria,) two access roads on ten diagonal and the sinuous form of the River Avon. Mature perimeter trees, lamp stands and a double 'Union Jack' pattern of paths give the square a sense of formality and symmetry. Latimer Square features a number of scheduled trees around the perimeter of the north and south sectors and in the south eastern sector it features the sculptural work, *Spires* by Christchurch artist Neil Dawson.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.

Latimer Square has technological and craftsmanship significance for its Hoon Hay or Halswell stone pedestal and cast iron lamp standards, the first of which were donated by Mayor Charles Ick in 1880. The second dates to 1916, at which point both were electrified and the sculptural work, *Spires* by Christchurch artist Neil Dawson was erected in 2013.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail;

recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.

Latimer Square has high contextual significance as a defining feature of the central city and for its relationship to the buildings that surround it. The square consists of two sections, divided by the former route of Worcester Street, each of which is bisected by straight and diagonal paths with a central lamp standard. The whole space and the former course of Worcester Street are bordered with mature trees, which predominantly date from the 1880s and 1890s, with some infill plantings dating to 1913 (Beaumont, p. 79). The square is located on the urban fringe east of the city centre. Surrounding the square are residential, commercial and public buildings that originally dated from the 1860s onwards. Most have been demolished following the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes, the Christchurch Club (1862) remains and to the south of the site is the transitional Anglican ('Cardboard') Cathedral. It also has contextual significance for its relationship to Cranmer Square which mirrors it to the west.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.

Latimer Square is of archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past public space design, and human activity on the site, including pre-1900. The square has been actively in use as a public space since at least 1852.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Latimer Square is of high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, especially for its rarity value as a 19th century public park exhibiting a very high level of authenticity (Beaumont, p. 96). It has high historical and social significance as an open space city feature that dates to the founding of Christchurch. Latimer Square has high cultural significance for its name, which embodies the Protestant Church of England (Anglican) values of the city's founders, and for the role it played following the 22 February 2011 earthquake. It has high architectural and aesthetic significance as one of the city's defining open space features and technological and craftsmanship significance for its 1880 and 1916 lamp stands and in the south eastern sector it features the sculptural work, *Spires* by Christchurch artist Neil Dawson.. Latimer Square has high contextual significance in relation to the features of the square itself, especially its mature trees, and its relation to other central-city squares. The square has archaeological significance in view of the date at which it was set aside and for its continuous use since the early 1850s.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage files – Latimer Square

'The Squares of Christchurch' Christchurch City Libraries

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/earlychristchurch/squaresofchristchurch.asp>

CCC Central City Heritage Guide

<http://www.christchurch.org.nz/publications/CCCHeritageGuide.pdf>

Louise Beaumont 'Historical Investigation - Latimer Square, Christchurch' (for CCC, July 2013)

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PLEASE NOTE THIS ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF WRITING. DUE TO THE ONGOING NATURE OF HERITAGE RESEARCH, FUTURE REASSESSMENT OF THIS HERITAGE ITEM MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFLECT ANY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.

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