

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 607  
*BRIDGE OF REMEMBRANCE AND SETTING – CASHEL  
STREET BETWEEN CAMBRIDGE-OXFORD/ 75 AND 78  
CASHEL STREET, 97, 100, 101, 127 OXFORD TERRACE,  
CHRISTCHURCH***



**PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL 2016**

**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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance has high historical and social significance as it was erected to commemorate those from Canterbury who served in the First World War. At the suggestion of Lilian Irwin, and with some controversy attending a rival proposal to erect a sculptural memorial in Cathedral Square, the decision was made to construct a memorial bridge over the Avon River. This replaced an 1873 structure that was regarded as 'obsolete and dangerous' even before the war had commenced (*Sun* 11 February 1914, p. 8). A competition was held to choose a design for the memorial and it was won by the architectural practice of Prouse and Gummer, of Wellington and Auckland. The memorial was jointly paid for by the City Council, who paid for the substructure, and the War Memorial Committee, who raised the money to pay for the superstructure.

The foundation stone of the bridge was laid on ANZAC Day (April 25) in 1923. The bridge opened on Armistice Day (11 November) in 1924. One of the many plaques on the arch and its environs bears the inscription 'Erected by the citizens of Christchurch in grateful remembrance of the Canterbury's sacrifice, 1914-1919'. Panels relating to the Second World War were added in 1952. In 1992 a panel was added to commemorate those who served in conflicts in Asia between 1949 and 1975. Memorials to the service of other branches of the forces or individuals have also been added over the years.

In 1976 the Bridge was converted to pedestrian use only and it was officially reopened on ANZAC Day in 1978 by Captain Charles Upham. The bridge was damaged in the February 2011 earthquake and was closed for a period whilst a repair strategy was developed and implemented. In 2016 repair, strengthening and restoration of the bridge and memorial arch was completed and the bridge was reopened to the public.

### **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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance has high cultural significance as a community memorial to those who fought in the First World War and for its ongoing role as a site for commemoration. The bridge remains a venue for Armistice Day memorial services to mark the end of the First World War, as well as other significant commemorative events relating to the armed forces.

The Ōtākaro Avon River has cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu as a highly regarded mahinga kai area. The wider river area immediately to the north of the bridge sits within the scheduled Puāri Pā Ngā Tūranga Tūpuna as a site of Ngāi Tahu Cultural Significance in the Christchurch District Plan.

### **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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance has high architectural and aesthetic significance as it was designed by the leading inter-war architectural firm of W J Prouse and W H Gummer. Along with Grierson, Aimer and Draffin, Prouse and Gummer are considered by historian Jock Phillips to have 'made the greatest contribution to this country's memorials' (*The Sorrow & the Pride*, p. 114). Gummer achieved a national reputation for his structurally and stylistically advanced designs during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He designed several other war memorials, including the National War Memorial in Wellington.

The design of the Bridge of Remembrance is unique in New Zealand in that it consists of a memorial arch on a bridge. The monumental structure was designed in a restrained classical style and it recalls the triumphal arches of classical antiquity, as well as those temporary arches erected around New Zealand in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to decorate the procession of visiting dignitaries and peace celebrations. According to Jock Phillips, writing in *The Sorrow and the Pride*, the key design principle employed by Gummer at the bridge was the 30-degree angle, which was taken from the angle at which the bridge crossed the river.

As part of the three-year repair, strengthening and restoration programme steel columns were inserted inside the masonry columns of the arch and a 'rocking cellar' was added to the base.

The original 4 metre piles were replaced by 27-metre-deep piles to protect it in future earthquakes. Sculptural elements such as the lions were removed and restored before being returned to the strengthened structure, which was re-opened in 2016.

## **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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance has high craftsmanship significance due to the quality of the carving by noted Canterbury carver Frederick Gurnsey. Gurnsey carved the lions and other symbolic decorative elements on the bridge, including rosemary wreaths and laurel leaves. The use of rosemary on the memorial was inspired by the line in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* spoken by Ophelia: 'There's rosemary, that's for remembrance'. The bridge has technological significance due to its relatively early use of reinforced concrete that was faced with Tasmanian stone. The post-earthquake restoration has the capacity to reveal information on early 21<sup>st</sup> century seismic strengthening technologies and techniques applied in Christchurch.

## **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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance has high contextual significance due to its location spanning the Ōtākaro Avon River and its proximity to the site of the former King Edward Barracks, which was part of the justification for the siting of the memorial. The Bridge of Remembrance is part of a network of Victorian and Edwardian central city bridges. The bridge has landmark significance due to its bold design and scale, prominent location and alignment on Cashel Street, which is the central city's primary retail precinct, and as part of the wider cultural landscape of the river. The setting includes the riverbank with the mature trees, Remembrance Park, the statue of Sergeant Henry Nicholas and the views along Cashel Street towards the bridge, as well as part of the scheduled Ngā Tūranga Tūpuna which denotes Puāri Pā.

## **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.*

The Bridge of Remembrance and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900. The site has archaeological significance due to the activity on the site as part of a kāinga nohoanga (settlement) and wider mahinga kai area. There was a previous bridge on this site built in 1873, some archaeological evidence of which may remain.

## ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Bridge of Remembrance has high heritage significance to the Christchurch District including Banks Peninsula and is nationally important. It has high historical and social significance as a memorial to those from Canterbury who served in the First World War, the Second World War and later conflicts. The Bridge of Remembrance has high cultural significance as a focus for memorial events relating to the conflicts recorded on the monument and the setting has cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu as part of the wider scheduled Puāri Pā area scheduled as a Ngā Tūranga Tūpuna in the Christchurch District Plan. As a unique design within the cohort of New Zealand war memorials, the design by nationally renowned architect WH Gummer has high architectural and aesthetic significance due to its restrained classical style. The Bridge of Remembrance has high craftsmanship significance due to the quality of the carving by noted Canterbury carver Frederick Gurnsey. The scale and monumental design of the memorial give it high contextual significance heightened by its prominent location in the central city's primary retail precinct. The site has archaeological significance as part of a wider mahinga kai area and some archaeological evidence of an 1873 bridge on this site may remain.

### REFERENCES:

Bridge of Remembrance – Category 1 Historic Place, Heritage New Zealand List  
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/289>

Christchurch City Council Heritage files – Bridge of Remembrance

Christchurch City Libraries

<HTTP://CHRISTCHURCHCITYLIBRARIES.COM/HERITAGE/PLACES/MEMORIALS/BRIDGEOFREMEMBRANCE/>

Christchurch District Plan - 9.5.6 Appendices - Schedules of Sites of Ngāi Tahu Cultural Significance

First World War Memorials – New Zealand History

<HTTP://WWW.NZHISTORY.NET.NZ/WAR/INTERPRETING-FIRST-WORLD-WAR-MEMORIALS>

Jock Philips & Chris Maclean *The Sorrow and the Pride – New Zealand War Memorials* [Wellington, 1990]

Ngāi Tahu Atlas Kā Huru Manu, Puāri. (<https://kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>)

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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.

PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL HERITAGE FILES.