



The Voice of Heritage

Ashburton District Council,
P O Box 94,
Ashburton 7740,

Attn: Planning Team

<sent via email to: info@adc.govt.nz>

9 November 2022

Re: Proposed Relocation of Heritage Item 107 (Boer War Cenotaph) from Baring Street East to Baring Square West (LUC22/0115)

To whom it may concern,

Historic Places Mid Canterbury discussed at our recent committee meeting, the Council's proposals to relocate the heritage scheduled Boer War Cenotaph from Baring Square East to Baring Square West, as part of the proposed redevelopment of Baring Square East.

Whilst our preference would be to see this cenotaph retained in its current established context, we acknowledge that the cenotaph has been relocated previously (circa 1978, as part of a previous redesign of the square) and that the proposal to relocate it to Baring Square West (adjacent to the WW1/WW2 Cenotaph, where remembrance services are held), will maintain a similar setting as a public ceremonial war memorial.

Historic Places Mid Canterbury therefore does not object to the relocation of the Cenotaph from Baring Street East to Baring Square West, as described in the Resource Consent application (LUC22/0115).

We agree with the conclusions reached in the Heritage Impact Assessment.

We would like to point out that the architect responsible for the design of this cenotaph is the renowned Christchurch architect Samuel Hurst Seager (1855–1933), who is described in *Te Ara, Encyclopedia of New Zealand*: "...Seager did more to advance the art of architecture than any other New Zealander of his generation." (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s8/seager-samuel-hurst>). Whilst Seager is acknowledged in the submitted *Heritage Impact Assessment*, it is noted that the cenotaph is "...not of note in its architectural merit" (pg 11). We disagree with this assessment. It is our opinion that the cenotaph does have architectural merit due to the connection with Seager and his particular architectural speciality relating to memorial structures:

"Seager campaigned for improved aesthetic standards in First World War memorials, organising a travelling exhibition of model designs in 1920 and writing a government report on war memorials. As official architect of New Zealand battlefield memorials he spent much time abroad from 1920 to 1925. The memorials, designed in 1921 and executed in the following years, include those at Longueval and Le Quesnoy in France, Messines (Mesen) in Belgium and Chunuk Bair at Gallipoli. Each is distinguished by careful siting and austere simplicity of design." *Te Ara, Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s8/seager-samuel-hurst>).

Our committee feel that it is crucial that the relocation of the cenotaph does not compromise the *mana* of the existing cenotaph and its setting, and that its reinstatement in Baring Square West should take place without delay, immediately following its deconstruction.



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We would recommend conditions be added to the consent to ensure that the cenotaph relocation and reconstruction is completed within 3 months of deconstruction and that the rebuild of the base and plinth is undertaken to a suitably high build quality, as is the contextual setting surrounding the repositioned cenotaph. The cenotaph's new setting and relationship with its surroundings should be of at least the same, or better quality than its current setting, so as not to diminish the cultural and heritage values of the structure and setting any further.

We would also recommend that all expected costs for the relocation, including for the landscaping works to the setting around the cenotaph, earthquake strengthening, etc., are fully explored, costed up and budgets confirmed and committed to by Council, prior to any deconstruction works starting - to ensure that the rebuild is completed, as described in the application.

Above all, we implore the council to show the greatest respect for this important memorial and what it represents to the local community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nigel Gilkison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Nigel Gilkison,

NZCD (Arch), BAS, MA Urban Design

Deputy Chair, Historic Places Mid Canterbury

cc: Stewart Fletcher (stewart@fletcherconsulting.co.nz)