

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 603
*BARBADOES STREET CEMETERY AND SETTING– 389 AND
391 BARBADOES STREET, 351 AND 357 CAMBRIDGE
TERRACE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 19/12/2014

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.

The Barbadoes Street Cemetery and Sexton's House is of high historical and social significance as 'one of the oldest cemeteries in Canterbury and as the earliest designed cemetery in Christchurch' (Conservation Plan, p. 128). A large number of the city's early pioneers are interred here, in areas assigned by denomination (Anglican, Catholic & Dissenters; the latter including Presbyterians, Baptists, Rationalists, Salvationists, Brethren, and Christian Israelites). The cemetery was designated in Edward Jollie's survey plan of Christchurch in 1850 and tenders for its enclosure 'with a ditch and bank' were called for by the Canterbury Association in April 1851 (*Lyttelton Times* 19 April 1851, p. 1). The first burial took place in the same month and the last occurred in October 1959, although ash interments were permitted until the early 1970s. The cemetery was officially classified as a closed cemetery under the Reserves Act in 1983.

Among those interred in the cemetery are John and Jane Deans, early settlers of Riccarton, Bishop Harper, the first Anglican Bishop of Christchurch, Henry Jacobs, the first headmaster of Christ's College, and Dr Charles Barker, whose photographs are an important record of

the new settlement. A chapel in the Anglican section, built to the design of Benjamin Mountfort in c.1856, was demolished in 1955. Its stained glass windows are in the collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery. In 1861 a Church of England sexton was appointed 'to keep order and prevent disorderly conduct' (Conservation Plan, p.10). A cottage for the sexton was built in 1871 on the Cambridge Terrace frontage of the cemetery. This building was demolished and a new dwelling built on the same site in the 1920s (Conservation Plan, p. 30). The Barbadoes Street Cemetery Action Committee was formed to care for the cemetery in November 1976 and revived in the mid-1980s as the Barbadoes Street Cemetery Preservation Committee. In the early 1990s a Gothic-style timber and stone lych-gate was built at the Cambridge Terrace entrance to the cemetery. A Conservation Plan for the cemetery was prepared by Christchurch City Council in 2009.

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 Barbadoes Street Cemetery has high cultural and spiritual significance as a manifestation of mid-Victorian beliefs and practises relating to death, mourning, burial and commemoration. The cemetery also has spiritual significance as the resting place of the ancestors of many of the current citizens of Christchurch, and serves today as an evocative, representative memorial to all Canterbury pioneers.

The cemetery has cultural significance because it was established close to a pa or papa kainga of Tautahi and is believed to be the burial place of a number of early Maori residents of Christchurch (Conservation Plan, p. 36). The cemetery is held in high esteem by descendants of those buried in the cemetery, by genealogists and archivists, and by those members of the public who have fought for its preservation and cared for the cemetery over the years (Conservation Plan, p. 129).

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 Barbadoes Street Cemetery has architectural and aesthetic significance for its overall plan, which expresses mid-Victorian attitudes to religious division and cemetery design; its planting schemes; and for the diverse range of monumental masonry evident, denoting faith, Christian symbolism, social class and family history. The Mathias family gravestones are considered to be of 'exceptional aesthetic importance' (Conservation Plan, p.130).

Local architect Samuel Farr is associated with the cemetery as he was engaged by the Provincial Government in 1872 to draw up plans for the Dissenters' cemetery. Although his mortuary chapel is no longer extant, the cemetery also has some architectural significance in association with leading colonial architect Benjamin Mountfort, thanks to its inclusion in Bill Sutton's iconic New Zealand regionalist painting *Nor'-wester in the Cemetery* of 1950.

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 cemetery has technological and craftsmanship significance - evident in the diverse work of a number of different monumental masons in the Barbadoes Street Cemetery. 'The firms of Parsons, Mansfield, Tait, Silvester and Robertson were the principal early firms of stonemasons which executed gravestones and memorials erected in the cemetery' (Conservation Plan, p. 78). Those memorials that are still extant tend to be typical rather than exceptional, reflecting the 'full range of materials' used in 19th century Canterbury funerary monuments (Conservation Plan, p. 132). The cast-iron grave railings are also of craftsmanship significance.

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 Barbadoes Street Cemetery has high contextual significance arising out of its location within the city's original town belts (the Four Avenues), close by the River Avon. The cemetery is bisected by Barbadoes Street, with the Anglican section on the eastern side and the Catholic and Dissenters' sections on the west. The Conservation Plan notes that the reforming of Barbadoes Street in the 1970s may have created the impression that the road was now cutting through a unified cemetery environment, whereas the road was always integral to the cemetery's layout (Conservation Plan, p. 70).

The cemetery has contextual significance in relation to other historic cemeteries in the city - particularly the non-conformist cemetery at Addington, and the Barbadoes Street cemetery's public successor, Linwood. The cemetery also has significance in relation to the cohort of New Zealand's important early inner-city cemeteries, including Bolton Street in Wellington (est. 1840), Symonds Street in Auckland (est. 1841), and the Northern in Dunedin (opened 1872).

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 cemetery and setting are of archaeological significance because they have potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site prior to 1900. With its first burial dating to 1851, the Barbadoes Street Cemetery has considerable archaeological significance relating to the potential of the place to provide archaeological evidence about burial practices between 1851 and 1959. As it was laid out in the vicinity of both a Tautahi pa and 'The Bricks' landing place, established by the Deans family in the early 1840s, the cemetery also has archaeological significance for its association with pre-European Maori and pre-1850 European settlement activity.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Barbadoes Street Cemetery and setting has high heritage significance to the Christchurch District including Banks Peninsula and is nationally important. It has high historical and social significance as Christchurch's oldest cemetery; high cultural and spiritual significance as an expression of Victorian values, beliefs and practises relating to death, and the manner in which it commemorates the many Canterbury pioneers who lie there; architectural and aesthetic significance for its historic design and layout, and the contemplative landscape that exists today; craftsmanship significance for the diversity of tombstones that remain; high contextual significance in its key location on a major arterial route, adjacent to the Avon River; and archaeological significance for what the remains both above and below ground can tell us about Victorian burial practices and earlier activities in the vicinity.

REFERENCES:

Barbadoes Street Cemetery Information: Christchurch City Libraries

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/cemeteries/barbadoes/>

Barbadoes Street Cemetery Tour [June 2007]

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Cemeteries/Barbadoes/BarbadoesStreetCemetery.pdf>

Barbadoes Street Cemetery: Maps

<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Cemeteries/Barbadoes/maps.asp>

The Historic Cemeteries Trust of New Zealand – Occasional Newsletter No. 15, December 2008

http://www.nzconnectdirect.com/hcct_dec2008.pdf

Barbadoes Street Cemetery Conservation Plan [2009]

<http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/BARBADOES%20STREET%20CEMETERY%20CONSERVATION%20PLAN%20FINAL.pdf>

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