

**TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** South Canterbury War Memorial  
**ADDRESS** Timaru Botanic Gardens, 20 Queen Street, Timaru  
**PHOTOGRAPH**



(A McEwan, July 2018)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** HHI33      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2078 / 2  
(at time of assessment) Former No. 17

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Pt Lot 1 DP 11137

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2501122900AA

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1925

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Herbert Hall, architect; Messrs Parkinson Ltd,  
contractors

**STYLE** Classical column

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Fluted Corinthian column mounted on stepped base; topped by a wreath, orb and cross. Semi-circular paved forecourt with memorial walls on either side.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Basalt (lower base), granite (upper base), marble (column), bronze (orb & cross).

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Replacement of original commemorative plaque with one commemorating 'the Great Wars', plural (post-WWII). Addition of plaque commemorating service in Korea, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam; also Combined Services plaque (date unknown). Memorial walls erected (1997.) Forecourt paved (c.2000?).

**SETTING**

The war memorial is set within a paved forecourt on the south side of Queen Street, directly opposite the southern end of Memorial Avenue. The backdrop of the memorial is the Timaru

Botanic Gardens; the Timaru Public Hospital is located to the east. A memorial to the South African (Boer) War is located at the northern end of Memorial Avenue (heritage item # 18). The setting is limited to the immediate environs of the memorial, rather than the land parcel as a whole. It is noted that the Heritage NZPT list entry excludes the 1997 memorial walls from the extent of setting.

## **HISTORY**

Discussions about the erection of a war memorial in Timaru commenced in October 1918, before the peace was finally declared on 11 November of that year. Initially the Returned Soldiers' Association proposed that the memorial should take the form of a building that would function as the organisations' headquarters, where they could provide support and social opportunities for returned servicemen. This idea had been rejected by mid-1919 in favour of a more economical and commemorative memorial. By 1920 the site of the memorial was under discussion, with a plot opposite the Hydro Hotel being the favoured out of nine possible locations. Failure to secure the Hydro site led to the need to find a new setting for the memorial. The Botanic Gardens was finally approved in February 1924 and Charles Street was subsequently renamed Memorial Avenue in August 1925 to acknowledge the memorial's placement. The memorial was completed by July 1925 and it was unveiled on Armistice Day (November 11) of the same year. It was announced on 19 April 1926 that the bronze memorial tablet would be unveiled by the Minister of Defence on ANZAC Day. In 2013 a project was launched by the South Canterbury Museum and local genealogists to create a database of all those South Canterbury people who served in World War I, as part of the nationwide WW100 commemorations.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The South Canterbury War Memorial has high historic and social significance for its association with the region's commemoration of World War I, and later conflicts, and the proliferation of ornamental war memorials that were erected throughout New Zealand in the 1920s. It is directly connected to the people, their families and descendants, whose names are inscribed upon the memorial walls flanking the column.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The South Canterbury War Memorial has high cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. The memorial has commemorative significance and remains the focus for local ANZAC Day commemorations. Panels on the memorial walls flanking the memorial column list the names of 875 WWI servicemen, 497 WWII servicemen, and one name each for the Korean, Malaysian and Vietnam conflicts.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The South Canterbury War Memorial has architectural significance as an example of the work of noted Timaru architect Herbert Hall. The column form was intended to evoke the triumphant columns of classical antiquity and more recent exemplars such as Nelson's Column (1840-43) in London. Hall also designed St David's Pioneer Memorial Church at Cave (1930) and the Chateau in Tongariro National Park (1928). The memorial combines Christian and classical iconography.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The South Canterbury War Memorial has craftsmanship significance for the quality of its construction and detailing. The bronze cross was made in London to the architect's design. Prominent monumental masons Messrs Parkinson & Co of Auckland were awarded the contract to build the memorial in August 1923.

## CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The South Canterbury War Memorial has contextual significance as a local landmark within the environs of the Timaru Botanic Gardens and in close proximity to Timaru Hospital. The scheduled South African (Boer) War memorial at the other end of Memorial Avenue (heritage item # 18).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the memorial post-dates 1900, any potential archaeological significance of the site would likely relate to its earlier use and development. The botanic gardens date to 1864 and were recognised as a Garden of National Significance in 2014.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

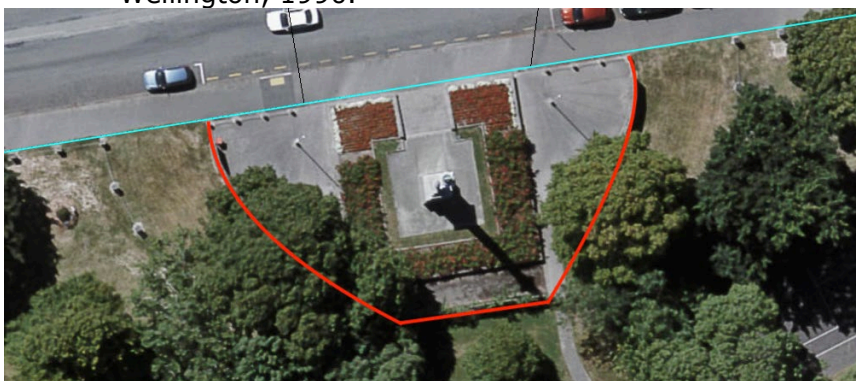
The South Canterbury War Memorial has high overall heritage significance to Timaru, the district of Timaru, and the South Canterbury region as a whole. The memorial has high historical and social significance for its association with the local men who died serving in foreign wars and high cultural significance given its commemorative purpose. The South Canterbury War Memorial has architectural significance for its design by noted Timaru architect Herbert Hall and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its construction and detailing. The South Canterbury War Memorial has contextual significance as a landmark within the Timaru Botanic Gardens and its site may have archaeological value in light of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development of the gardens.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

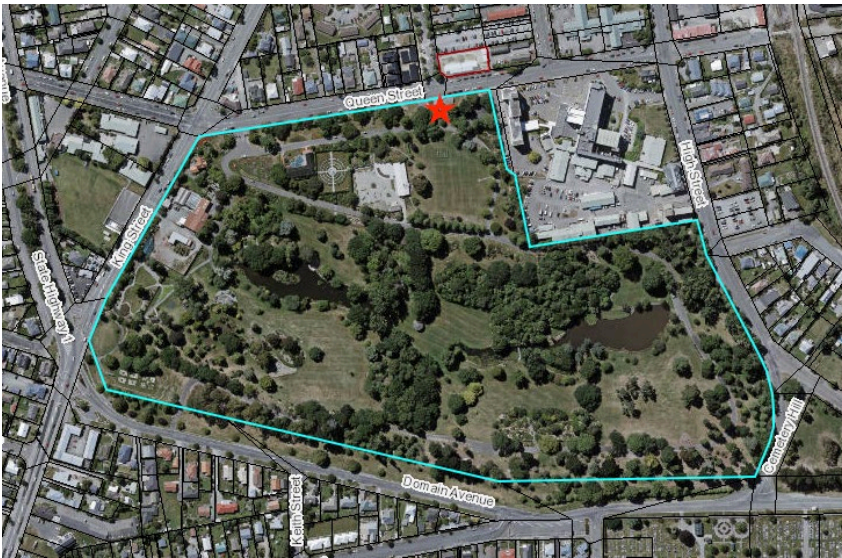
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## REFERENCES

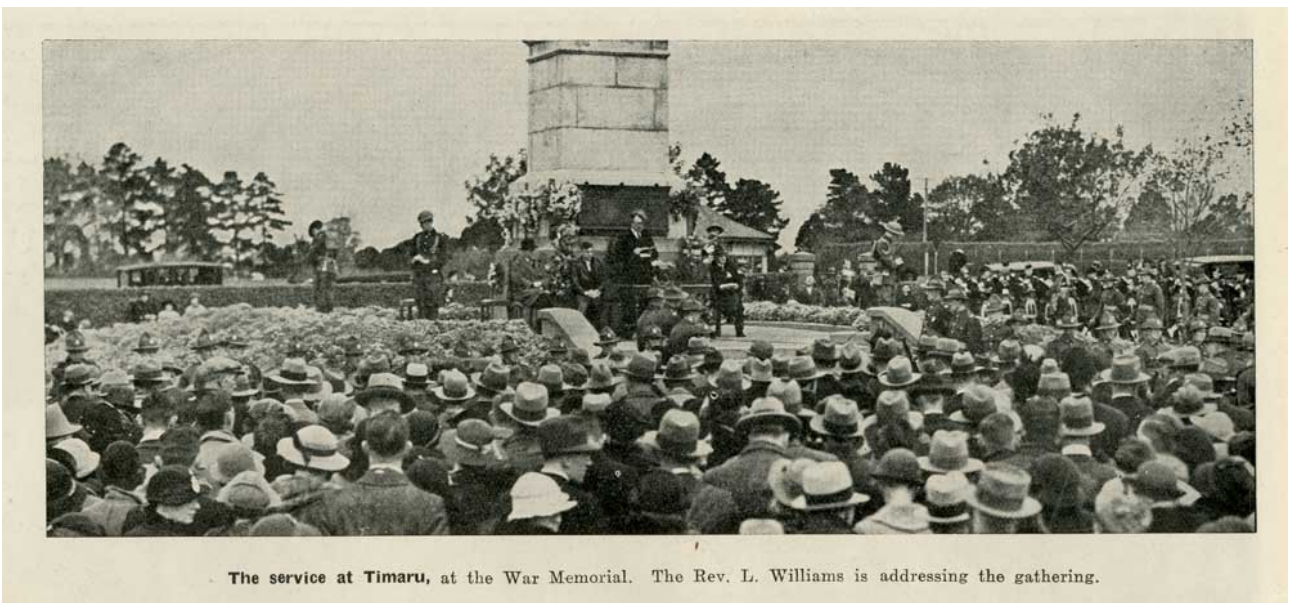
- *Timaru Herald* 8 October 1918, p. 2; 28 May 1919, p. 2; 15 November 1919, p. 2; 13 December 1919, p. 2; 20 December 1919, p. 2; 21 February 1920, p. 2; 27 March 1920, p. 2; 11 May 1920, p. 2.
- *Press* 25 August 1923, p. 4; 5 February 1924, p. 11; 1 June 1925, p. 3; 10 July 1925, p. 3; 19 April 1926, p. 6.
- *NZ Herald* 25 August 1923, p. 9; 21 May 1924, p. 8.
- *Evening Post* 11 July 1925, p. 6.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2078>
- <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/timaru-war-memorial>
- <http://www.stuff.co.nz/timaru-herald/news/9037908/Database-to-honour-WWI-dead>
- JM Morgan 'Sites of Memory - Memorialisation in the Landscape' MSc thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch 2001; available online.
- C Maclean & J Phillips *The Sorrow and the Pride – New Zealand War Memorials* Wellington, 1990.



Extent of setting, limited to immediate setting, 20 Queen Street, Timaru.



Location of South Canterbury War Memorial in context of Timaru Botanic Gardens, Queen Street, Timaru.



The service at Timaru, at the War Memorial. The Rev. L. Williams is addressing the gathering.

ANZAC Day 1936. *Auckland Weekly News* 29 April 1936, p. 46. AWNS-19360429-46-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.