

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Geraldine War Memorial

ADDRESS Talbot Street, Geraldine

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr J Wilson, September 2018)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. New **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Section 357 Town of Geraldine

VALUATION NUMBER 2475154900

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1922

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Cecil Wood, architect

STYLE Celtic cross

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Celtic cross mounted on rectangular shaft set upon three-part base with two-step surround. World War I and II inscriptions on central section beneath cross. Additional names of servicemen from both wars on lower base.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timaru bluestone (basalt), concrete.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Addition of names of local WWII servicemen (post-1945). Additional names relating to WWI and WWII service added to lower base (c.1998).

SETTING

The war memorial stands within a grassed reserve on the east side of Talbot Street immediately to the south of St Mary's Parish Hall. The memorial is set against a treed backdrop and is adjacent to a walking path providing access to the Waihi River. A random rubble stone bench is located close to the memorial, which is across the road from the Geraldine Library and council service centre. The asphalt footpath is extended at the site to provide access to the memorial. The extent of setting is the land parcel on which the memorial is located.

HISTORY

The Geraldine Soldiers' Memorial Committee decided at a meeting in March 1920 to erect a taller version of the Celtic cross memorial that had already been designed by Christchurch architect Cecil Wood. The cross was erected, after some delay, in early 1922 and officially unveiled on ANZAC Day of the same year. About 1500 people were reported as having attended the unveiling by the local MP TD Burnett; this was believed to be the largest gathering in Geraldine to that date. Previously the site had been earmarked for a new fire brigade shed but the brigade gave up their claim on the site so that it could accommodate the district war memorial. 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. The Geraldine memorial continues to be the focus for local ANZAC Day commemorations.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has historic and social significance for its association with the district's commemoration of World War I and II and the proliferation of ornamental war memorials that were erected throughout New Zealand in the 1920s. The memorial is directly connected to the people, their families and descendants, whose names are inscribed upon it. Somewhat unusually the ranks of the fallen soldiers are given, contrary to official policy which was that all service personnel had made an equal sacrifice and so should not be divided by rank.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. The memorial has commemorative significance and remains the focus for local ANZAC Day ceremonies.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has aesthetic significance as a Celtic cross designed by preeminent Christchurch architect Cecil Wood (1878-1947). Wood trained in the office of Frederick Strouts and attended classes at Canterbury University College. After working in London and practising for a time in partnership with Samuel Hurst Seager, he established his own practice in 1909. Wood appears to have been chosen to design the Geraldine memorial because of his prior association with the Tripp family of Orari Gorge Station. Wood also designed Racecourse Hill homestead (1912), the Hare Memorial Library (1916) and Memorial Dining Hall (1923-25) at Christ's College, and the Dobson Memorial in Arthur's Pass (1935-7). St Paul's Anglican Church at Tai Tapu (1930-1) is a notable example of Wood's ecclesiastical architecture.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has craftsmanship value for the quality of its stone construction and ornamental detailing. The maker of the memorial is currently unknown.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has contextual significance as a local landmark in close proximity to St Mary's Anglican Church and vicarage (heritage items # 105 & 104) and the former Geraldine Town Hall (heritage item # 108).

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.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Geraldine War Memorial has overall heritage significance to Geraldine and the district of Timaru as a whole. The memorial has historical and social significance for its association with the local men who served and died in World War I and II and cultural significance given its commemorative purpose. The Geraldine War Memorial has aesthetic significance as the work of leading Christchurch architect Cecil Wood and craftsmanship value for the quality of its construction and detailing. The Geraldine War Memorial has contextual significance as a local historic feature; its site may have limited archaeological value in view of the memorial's age.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Temuka Leader* 16 March 1920, p. 3; 20 March 1920, p. 3; 1 April 1920, p. 3; 10 April 1920, p. 3; 15 April 1920, p. 3; 19 April 1921, p. 3; 26 April 1921, p. 2; 16 March 1922, p. 2; 23 March 1922, p. 3; 27 April 1922, p. 2; 4 July 1922, p. 2.
- *Timaru Herald* 11 February 1920, p. 5.
- *Press* 27 April 1922, p. 3; 14 May 1945, p. 6.
- <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/geraldine-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, [opposite 80] Talbot Street, Geraldine.