
**PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT - CONCEPT DESIGN CENOTAPH
SQUARE AND PARLIAMENTARY STEPS**

1. Purpose of report

This report provides an update on the progress and conclusion of the concept design phase for the Parliamentary Precinct preferred project (Cenotaph and surrounding Square, including Parliamentary Steps) and seeks approval for key initiatives for improvement of the public domain in this area. The recommendations are illustrated in the attached sheets.

2. Executive summary

The Concept Design for the Cenotaph Square and Parliamentary Steps proposed substantial public space improvements in the Parliamentary Precinct, delivering on the objectives of the Capital City Initiative and the Central City Framework '2040 Smart Capital'. The main initiative for renewal is located around the Cenotaph, which will reinstate the memorial itself as a prominent city monument.

The project will create a ceremonial space around the Cenotaph to be used for the ANZAC ceremony and also create a city square to be used by locals and visitors alike throughout the year. The proposed project is programmed to be completed in time for the ANZAC Centenary commemoration in 2015.

The other component of the concept is the creation of a new pedestrian connection between Parliamentary Grounds and the area around the Cenotaph. A new grand staircase is intended to open up this corner between the Beehive and the Cenotaph by traversing the six metre height difference and creating a 'Capital' place that will link the two iconic structures and create a more direct and legible way up to Parliamentary Grounds.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information including the attachment with Concept Design information and plans;*
- 2. Agree with the four key initiatives in the Concept Design in principle;*
- 3. Agree that (A) the Square, (C) the Stream and (D) the Memorial should proceed into Detailed Design and Construction phase;*

4. *Agree that (B) the Steps should proceed into Detailed Design and Construction phase after agreement with Parliamentary Services and approval by the Office of the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives.*

4. Background

The Capital City Initiative sets out the vision and objectives for our capital. A key part of the initiative is the development of a high quality physical environment that matches and reflects the seat of government and its symbolic importance, repositioning the capital in the minds of all New Zealanders. Specifically for Parliament Grounds, the Capital City Initiative seeks to create a precinct that knits better with the rest of the city and conveys a shared ownership and connectivity. The grandeur of Parliament Buildings is currently not reflected in the surrounding spaces. The Initiative indicates that paving, landscaping and public space design surrounding Parliament might be upgraded, so their quality matches the status of the institution.

The Central City Framework '2040 Smart Capital' makes further recommendations towards a more open and welcoming Parliamentary Precinct and the need to greatly improve connectivity

The Urban Design team investigated six options for potential projects in the Parliamentary Precinct and reported to SPC 11 April 2013. As a result of that work, a preferred project was chosen for the "forecourt" of Parliament. This involved significant improvements to the public space between the Cenotaph and the Landing Site on the corner of Molesworth Street. However, given the more recent and significant investment in the Landing Site at Molesworth Street we do not consider that this space should be included in the current project.

The focus of the project is on the area around the Cenotaph which is currently in a cluttered state and does not represent the importance of this monument or the entrance to Parliament. The area appears more like the rear of Parliament than the front and is in need of substantial improvements in order to restore the open space around the Cenotaph monument, improve the connections with Parliament Grounds and create a ceremonial and inviting space. The scope therefore includes the area between Bowen Street, Lambton Quay, the main entry gate to Parliament Grounds at Lambton Quay and the edge perimeter wall of Parliament Grounds itself. The proposal does not encroach on any of the surrounding road spaces but does encroach partly on Parliamentary Grounds, (see 'consultation'). The proposed project is programmed to be completed in time for the ANZAC Centenary commemoration in 2015.

The four key initiatives are recommended to achieve the objectives as set out above and improve the public space around the Cenotaph:

- A. **The Square: Clearing the space around the Cenotaph of all visual clutter including most of the present landscaping/earth mounds. Introducing a new surface with paving of quality materials that will**

create an open, accessible and inviting space for events and for leisure while spatially and symbolically reinstating the prominent feature of the square - the Cenotaph, as an iconic and solemn Wellington memorial.

- B. **The Steps: Constructing a Grand Staircase between the upper level of the Parliament Grounds at the Beehive and the lower level of the Cenotaph square space.** This involves replacing the existing narrow stairs along Bowen Street, a connection that is currently hard to find and to navigate. The proposed steps will create a generous open connection between the Beehive and the City providing a backdrop to the formal setting of the Cenotaph. The steps will create a place to linger for locals and visitors alike and will greatly contribute to an intrinsic Capital City image.
- C. **The Stream: The old stream, the Wai Piro, is indicated on several historic maps to have flowed originally along where Bowen Street currently is.** The concept design includes making reference to the stream as part of the experience of the new square space. This will be developed in the detailed design phase as a public art work and will be closely integrated with the urban design of the open space and compatible with the events function of the Square. An innovative water feature will potentially form a focal point in the urban experience that will reintroduce and expand on the narrative of the natural landscape in combination with the old foreshore landscape along the south edge of Parliament Grounds.
- D. **The Memorial: With the upgrade of the open space around the monument and de-cluttering of the immediate setting, the concept includes work on the Cenotaph itself.** This will be consistent with the advice set out in the recently drafted Conservation Plan for the monument (WCC June 2013). The work includes removing the large adjacent tree, replacing the broken base granite cladding and (if appropriate and respectful of the heritage character) replacing the existing concrete and clay pavers in the monument terraces with a natural stone material.

5. Discussion

Initiative (B) the Steps is entirely located on Parliamentary Grounds and realisation is dependent on approval by Parliamentary Services and sign off by the Speaker. In addition, the project budget is not sufficient to include this and funding will be required from Parliamentary Services if it is to be realised. We are currently engaging with Parliamentary Services to seek their approval and funding for inclusion of the Steps concept in the total project. While they are committed to an 'Accessible Parliament' and are positive about the concept they have to balance this with the need to provide security and control access to Parliament.

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

Initial consultation has been undertaken on the Concept Design with Council teams and key external stakeholders including those involved in the ANZAC Day Ceremony, Centenary Commemoration, Parliamentary Grounds and Mana whenua. The following external groups have been included in these discussions: Parliamentary Services, RSA National, RSA Wellington, Port Nicholson Trust, Ngati Toa Representatives, Internal Affairs, New Zealand Defence Force, Wellington Sculpture Trust, Historic Places Trust, Accessibility Advisory Group (Accessible Environment and transport subgroup) and the City Centre Framework Reference Group.

The intention is to have a second round of stakeholder meetings during the Detailed Design phase.

5.2 Financial considerations

The Long Term Plan has incorporated \$1.5M for the Parliamentary Precinct during years 2012/13 and 2013/14. Currently the project has a reduced budget of \$1.16M as a result of reallocating budget to cover potential shortfalls in other capital works projects. (Approved reprioritisation of funding, report SPC committee 11 April 2013: 'Public Space Development Update', section 5.3)

After preliminary costing the current budget allows for initiatives (A) the Square and (D) the Memorial to be included in the works and partly (C) the Stream. Initiative (C) the Stream is not included in the preliminary costing exercise because the detail is yet to be developed. We have had initial conversations with the Wellington Sculpture Trust regarding the opportunity for an innovative artwork, integrated in the Square design (possibly a water feature) and funding for this is reliant on the contribution of the Sculpture Trust.

The project budget is currently not sufficient to allow for initiative (B) the Steps to be included and will need funding from Parliamentary Services to be realised. (See 'discussion').

5.3 Climate change impacts and considerations

Not applicable.

5.4 Long-term plan considerations

Future maintenance and operational cost to be offset through service agreements with Parliamentary Services regarding the staircase on Parliamentary Grounds. A Conservation Plan is being prepared by WCC Parks and Gardens around the Cenotaph Memorial. The structural maintenance initiatives that are listed in the report are to be part of ongoing maintenance by Parks and Gardens and are not included in the Parliamentary Precinct project.

5.5 Heritage and Memorials

The Draft Conservation Plan for the Cenotaph (WCC 30 June 2013, Cochran and Murray Conservation Architects with Michael Kelly, Heritage Consultant)

clearly indicates the monument has lost its former prominent setting and pristine condition as a result of the maturing trees and general cluttering of the surrounding area. The proposal for the Square is to significantly improve the monument and its surroundings so that it is restored to its former glory and 'Splendid Isolation' as it is described in the Draft Conservation Plan.

6. Conclusion

The project is currently on track for completion by April 2015. Actual construction will need to start after ANZAC day 2014 and be completed before ANZAC day 2015.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

The proposal supports Council's overall vision of Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital. The Concept Design for the Cenotaph Square and Parliamentary Steps proposes substantial public space improvements in the Parliamentary Precinct, delivering on the objectives of the Capital City Initiative and the Central City Framework '2040 Smart Capital'. The main initiative for renewal is located around the Cenotaph, which will reinstate the memorial itself as a prominent city monument.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The Long Term Plan has incorporated \$1.5M for the Parliamentary Precinct during years 2012/13 and 2013/14. Currently the project has a reduced budget of \$1.16M as a result of reallocating budget to cover potential shortfalls in other capital works projects. (Approved reprioritisation of funding, report SPC committee 11 April 2013: 'Public Space Development Update', section 5.3)

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3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The proposal is to be located on the old foreshore which Mana Whenua regard as important. The site is on the former shoreline and waka used to moor there prior to reclamation. The Port Nicholson Trust has been approached and consulted with. They are supportive of the proposal.

4) Decision-making

This is a decision to proceed to detailed design and construction. The decision affects the initiatives as discussed in the Concept Design outline.

5) Consultation

Initial consultation has been undertaken on the Concept Design with Council teams and key external stakeholders including those involved in the ANZAC Day Ceremony, Centenary Commemoration, Parliamentary Grounds and Mana whenua.

The following external groups have been included in these discussions: Parliamentary Services, RSA National, RSA Wellington, Port Nicholson Trust, Ngati Toa Representatives, Internal Affairs, New Zealand Defence Force, Wellington Sculpture Trust, Historic Places Trust, Accessibility Advisory Group (Accessible Environment and transport subgroup) and the City Centre Framework Reference Group.

The intention is to have a second round of stakeholder meetings during the Detailed Design phase.

6) Legal implications

n/a

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report recommends spatial initiatives which are consistent with existing WCC policy, Wellington Towards 2040 and the Capital City Initiative.