

Wellington Waterfront Memorial and Commemorative Plaque Guidelines

WATERFRONT MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE OBJECTIVE

To ensure memorials and commemorative plaques maintain the special character of the waterfront and contribute to public understanding of its history.

Explanation

Any new addition to the waterfront needs to memorialise waterfront-specific events and make a positive contribution to the already high quality harbour and visual environment. This can be achieved where there is an authentic and demonstrable connection. The waterfront is a sensitive location where distraction, visual clutter and proliferation of unnecessary or unrelated memorials or commemorative plaques are to be avoided.

ASSESSING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF A MEMORIAL OR PLAQUE

- 1 Both authenticity of connection and relevance of location are important.
- 2 To maintain and enhance the special character of the waterfront, memorials and commemorative plaques should be:
 - a) directly related to the waterfront and its history, and
 - b) relevant to their specific setting, that is, located where there is a suitably strong connection with the person or event being commemorated.Authenticity of connection should be able to be demonstrated with documentary evidence.
- 3 Where the above criteria for installation on the waterfront are not met, a memorial or plaque might be considered if the memorial or plaque:
 - a) will assist public understanding of the history of the wider city and the waterfront is the optimal location within the city; and/or
 - b) adds a layer of richness that can be compellingly demonstrated to contribute the unique quality and character of the waterfront; and/or
 - c) is appropriate to the civic and recreational functions of the waterfront.
- 4 There should be a compelling case for inclusion of every memorial or plaque.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Once it has been decided that a plaque is appropriate on the waterfront:

- 1 Locate any memorial or commemorative plaque where it:
 - adds to rather than detracts from its setting and the public experience of that setting;
 - accurately informs public understanding of the history of the waterfront and the events that have happened here; and
 - where possible, is consistent with the location of memorials and/or public art on the waterfront.
 - 2 Maintain the visual integrity and amenity of public open space and waterfront buildings. Achieve this by:
 - Relating the size and proportions of memorials and plaques to the architectural modules and composition of host buildings or structures.
 - Positioning and aligning memorials and plaques in a manner which is consistent with the composition of buildings and adjacent public spaces, including:
 - centering within structural bays
 - conforming to existing symmetry or rhythm
 - continuing existing vertical or horizontal datums
 - acknowledging lines of symmetry
 - Ensuring trademarks or names or marketing logos of any kind are not placed on or around any memorial or plaque.
 - 3 Ensure memorial plaques are subtle and complement other similar elements on the waterfront.
 - 4 Treat memorials and plaques consistently in any given location, matching the size, number, position and construction of existing similar elements as far as possible. Once an approved precedent has been set, all subsequent memorials or plaques should generally conform to this theme or type.
 - 5 Ensure clarity and legibility of text and any image and suitable physical robustness
 - 6 Apply criteria for public art selection if the memorial or plaque is better characterised as a work of public art.
 - 7 Ensure that design approval is formally confirmed prior to construction of the plaque.
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following text is for reference only, and is not part of the Wellington Waterfront Memorial and Commemorative Plaque Guidelines:

Extracts from the Wellington City Council Commemorative Policy (February 2006)

6. COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

6.1 Plaques on commemorative furniture

Plaques on commemorative furniture are permitted and the conditions for installing commemorative plaques are outlined below:

- *Plaques on commemorative furniture are designed and fitted by the Council and will be of standard size of 100mm x 250mm.*
- *The sponsor will be responsible for the costs of the plaque and the costs of attaching the plaque to the furniture.*
- *The Council will carry out the plaque attachment.*
- *The Council will maintain the seats but the plaque remains the responsibility of the sponsor.*

6.2 Other types of Plaques

Generally plaques which are not attached to benches will not be permitted within parks and reserves. This is to ensure that the natural character of the park is not unnecessarily cluttered and to limit maintenance problems.

Plaques are permitted in the following cases:

- *In recognition of visits by royalty, heads of state and other dignitaries, commemoration of international, national and local events and other events of a civic nature which are considered appropriate for formal recognition*
- *In recognition of an important historical figure or person associated with the area*
- *In recognition of the opening or unveiling of the park or major facility on the park.*
- *The location of the plaque will ensure maintenance and safety issues are avoided and the amenity of the park is enhanced.*
- *A plaque or sign which outlines the history of the park may be permitted, however the recording of the history of a park or reserve will generally be in the form of a sign rather than a plaque.*

Extracts from the Wellington City Council “Public Art Policy” (2003)

1.4 Objectives of the Public Art Policy

The primary objective of Public Art Policy is to increase the *amount, quality and diversity* of public art in Wellington city. The Policy also has secondary objectives, which are to:

- Excite the imagination of the community and increase its understanding, enjoyment and involvement in public art
- Reinforce the unique identity of Wellington as an Arts Capital
- Integrate public art into the infrastructure and natural environments of the city in order to enhance public spaces Acknowledge the cultural diversity of contemporary Wellington, and the Māori and Pakeha heritage of historical Wellington
- Raise awareness of public art and promote opportunities for increasing the amount of art that is accessible to the public either visually or physically in Wellington City.

2.3 Guidelines for Acquisition, Commissioning or Accepting Gifts of Public Art

Where Council wishes to commission a work of public art, or perhaps run design competitions for public art, it will work with the Wellington Sculpture Trust, utilising the already established processes of the Trust to commission works. From time to time the Council is also offered works of art for display in public places, on both a temporary or permanent basis, sometimes without recognising the ongoing liability that the Council may be entering into, for example in terms of maintenance, repair or public safety issues. In considering commissioning or accepting gifts of public art, the Council will make decisions based on the following guidelines:

Meeting the objectives of the Public Art Policy

Primary consideration should be given to the objectives of *quality* and *diversity*. Diversity should be taken to mean diversity of culture and of type of art (for example sculpture versus functional art; 'European art' versus 'indigenous art'; temporary versus permanent). Consideration should also be given to the secondary objectives of the Policy.

Cost of Maintenance & Installation

The costs of maintenance over a 10 year period should be estimated and assessed, along with an indication of the expected life of the artwork. Maintenance and installation costs should be reasonable in relation to the value of the art work, and affordable within operational maintenance and installation budgets.

Safety

Public art is, more often than not, physically accessible to the public. Art works therefore need to be both physically robust and safe to members of the public. Issues of safety are of primary concern.

Artistic Merit & Quality of the Work.

Art works will and should be the subject of debate as to their artistic merits. Bearing in mind the primary objective of gaining *quality* and *diverse* public art, regard should be had to:

- the anticipated public response and interaction
- accessibility to the public
- the degree to which it reflects Wellington's heritage and/or contemporary culture
- expert judgement as to the merits of the art work
- the degree to which its artistic merits will be sufficiently enduring to justify the costs associated with its adoption.

Materials

Council may draft and publish more prescriptive guidelines for the types of materials that should be used in the construction of public art, bearing in mind issues of durability, maintenance, public safety and location.

Involving Council's Treaty Partners

In making decisions about accepting, locating or commissioning public works of art, the Council will consult with its Treaty Partners as appropriate.

Consultation with Communities

Where possible, decisions regarding public art works should involve consultation with the relevant local community.

Special Reason

Sometimes an offer of a gifted public art work will come from an individual or organisation where the relationship with Council requires broader relationship issues and sensitivities to be considered and consulted on in weighing up whether to accept a gifted public art work.