



PART THREE:

CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural Heritage Assessment⁹⁵

General Approach

The cultural significance of a place, object or building comes from an appreciation of its physical character and from an understanding of its associations over time with persons and events. The collective analysis of all of these features provides a measure of the nature and scope of its significance. In the case of Waikumete Cemetery this involves an analysis of the overall significance of the place as well as the contribution to that significance made by its many individual parts.

The value of Waikumete does not rest with one period alone, but rather in an accretion of artefacts, structures and landscapes over the whole span of its development. In addition, each denominational portion of the Cemetery and the old Crematorium site, in whole or part, could stand alone as having cultural significance on an aesthetic, scientific, social or historic basis.

While the historic portions of the Cemetery have considerable cultural heritage values, the entire Cemetery has wider contextual significance as the second largest cemetery in the Southern Hemisphere.

Method of Assessment

Primary evidence has been gathered from site investigations in which the quality and condition of the various parts of the site have been noted on base plans compiled from aerial photos and plans. Discussions have been held with individuals and organisations interested in the site. There has been no intervention in the site fabric as part of the assessment. Photographs were taken as a record during the investigation.

Assessment of Cultural Heritage Values

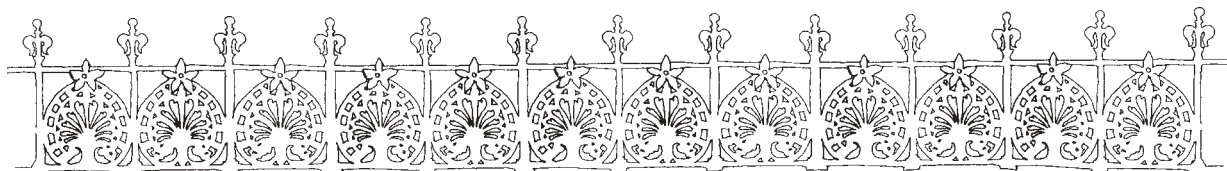
The general approach used is adapted from the method proposed in J.S. Kerr's *Conservation Plan* with reference to the *ICOMOS NZ Charter*. This Charter defines an item of cultural heritage value as "possessing historical, archaeological, architectural, technological, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual, social, traditional, or other special cultural significance associated with human activity".

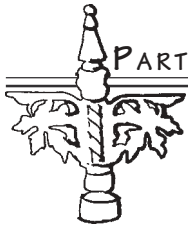
Primary criteria for assessment of the cultural significance have been developed with reference to *Cemeteries: Our Heritage* by the National Trust of Australia, 1992. These criteria examine heritage values as expressed under a range of headings including the following:

- Historical / associational
- Archaeological
- Social
- Artistic or creative
- Scientific or technological
- Architectural design
- Genealogical
- Religious
- Setting
- Landscape
- Botanical
- Representativeness

The study considered it especially relevant to include the "associations" criterion proposed by J.S. Kerr because of the involvement of people or organisations in the development of the site, and especially the self-evident associations over time with the lives of those interred in the Cemetery.

⁹⁵ Much of the information in this section is from Clough and Associates, 1999.





Every grave and every memorial is an intrinsically significant heritage feature. Each section of the Cemetery, although determined by administrative convenience, may be significant for its association with a section of living society, but is otherwise undifferentiated in its heritage value. Every part of the site has, by definition, cultural heritage significance.

There are a number of discrete features within the Cemetery that have evident individual significance due to their architectural and aesthetic qualities, rather than association with individuals or events. These include the Sexton's Cottage, the Chapel, the Crematorium, and the north-east Gates.

Although the range of items to which individual significance can be ascribed is very small, their collective significance is high. Waikumete Cemetery is itself an artefact, being made up of a very large number of distinct elements to which it is neither practicable nor proper to attach individual importance.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance

Waikumete Cemetery was established as an alternative to the spatially limited Symonds Street Cemetery. Opened in 1886, it now provides a significant historic, cultural, natural and aesthetic resource.

Historical / Associational Significance

Waikumete Cemetery was established as a result of the need to provide for additional burial space to cater for the growing needs of early Auckland and the inability of Symonds Street Cemetery to be able to expand due to pressures on surrounding land for housing.

It is the second largest cemetery in the Southern Hemisphere and the largest cemetery in New Zealand. Waikumete provides an insight into the evolving ethnic and religious composition of Auckland over the last century and, as such, is a tangible manifestation of the social history of Auckland, documenting the cultural and religious diversity of the New Zealand community since 1886. Individuals of all denominations are buried here, including some of Auckland's early pioneers and founding families, political leaders, industrialists, poets, soldiers and sports people. Their epitaphs represent an important social and historical record.

Waikumete may also have been, in its early days, the only cemetery in the country to be so heavily dependant on rail transport that it had its own railway station (this requires further investigation).

Design/Technical

The outstanding aesthetic quality of Waikumete's monumental masonry is part of a set of monumental masonry without parallel elsewhere in New Zealand. This includes cast and wrought-iron work and other types of craftsmanship as fine examples of craft processes reflecting social attitudes to death and fashion in funerary ornamentation since 1886. Many of these masonry techniques are no longer practiced and, as a result, the Cemetery plays an important role as a museum of monumental masonry.

Constructed features include the Mortuary Chapel and associated buildings (Sexton's House), Mausoleums and memorials, which are examples of design and architectural skills unique in themselves or which display a high degree of technical accomplishment and represent changes in social burial customs since 1886.

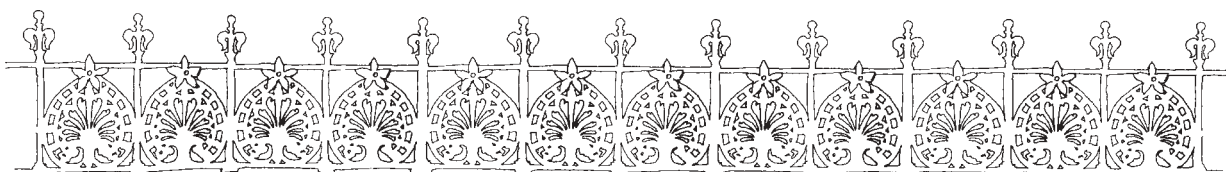
Archaeological

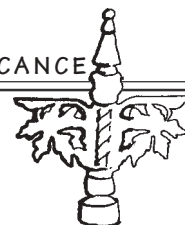
The archaeological significance of a place relates to the extent to which it can or could provide historical information through archaeological techniques such as stratigraphic (study of various soil/rock layers) excavation and materials analysis. Features of archaeological value at Waikumete include the grave sites, monuments, paths, roads, the site of the original Jewish Prayerhouse, and the sub-surface remnants of now demolished structures such as the old Crematorium.

Spiritual/Cultural

Burial practices vary from culture to culture but are fundamental to all. Cemeteries also have considerable spiritual significance as the formally designated resting place for a community's dead. Monument design, inscriptions, and the layout of the Cemetery are physical manifestations of spiritual meaning, with different approaches being perceptible between various denominations and cultural groups.

Not only does Waikumete provide burials for many different cultural groups and religions that are not otherwise





provided for in the northern part of the North Island, its long association with a number of these groups has created a strong sense of place and ownership.

Equally important is the role of the various commemorative plantings and memorials to specific groups of the wider community who have been significantly affected by particular events. These include the influenza epidemic of 1918, the two World Wars, and the Erebus disaster.

Aesthetic

The park-like layout of some areas of the Cemetery accords with the Victorian notion of burial in a garden setting as a means of assuaging the sense of grief inevitably associated with the loss of loved ones. Hedges and fences provide a sense of enclosure and separation from the outside world. The design and layout of sections such as the soldiers' areas provide opportunities for contemplation and solitude. They are a quiet haven away from the outside world for those still living to commemorate those that have fallen.

The park setting also provides a visual break from the surrounding landscape of residential and commercial properties and provides opportunities for people to enjoy the panoramic views to Auckland city and the Waitakere Ranges.

Aesthetic values also relate to its size and relief in the urban landscape. Waikumete Cemetery is the largest area of public open space in urban Waitakere.

Community and Genealogical

The Cemetery is the burial place of a large number of notable individuals, original family members of many cultural groups, as well as a number of founding families of Auckland. It also includes a number of commemorative plantings and memorials to individuals and key events. These events have personal links to many people in the community and the memorials are visited on a regular basis.

As well as being significant to the families of the deceased, the Cemetery is also an important place for passive recreation. Its value to the community is indicated by the formation of the Friends of Waikumete in 1995. The Friends undertake a wide range of work in the Cemetery including guided tours, annual open and clean-up days, historical research, the production of brochures and small publications, and the maintenance of the Wildflower Sanctuary.

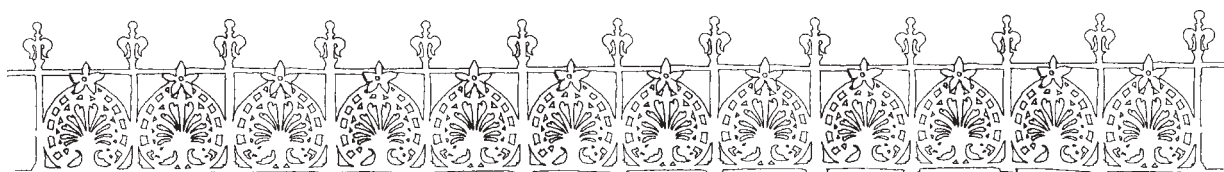
Educational

Much of the history of Auckland, and West Auckland in particular, can be told through the stories of the individuals buried in the Cemetery, who provide an insight into the types of people that moulded Auckland into the city that it is now.

Grave designs, monuments and epitaphs provide insight into the various fashions associated with funerary ornaments and the types of materials, local and imported, that were used in their construction.



Original entrance gates to cemetery





The formal layout of the early parts of the Cemetery, based on religious denominations separated by walking tracks and avenues of trees, stands as a living testament to a style of cemetery design that has been replaced by lawn developments with minimal ornamentation and graves flush with the ground.

Many people visit the Cemetery to trace their genealogical roots and the place is, and will continue to be, an important research resource of major archival importance for Auckland's history.

Landscape and Setting

The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value⁹⁶ (see Appendix 13) outlines the importance of conservation planning associated with historic artefacts. Waikumete Cemetery, as one of the oldest and largest cemeteries in New Zealand, has an important place within the historic places of New Zealand.

Given that the Cemetery is predominantly a landscape feature as compared to built form, the historical landscape elements provide vital evidence and are representative of the historical values of the Cemetery. As outlined in the previous sections, the landscape history of the Cemetery is representative of not only the history of the Cemetery itself, but of broader social history and changes within the Auckland region through the years. These historic landscape features, therefore, need to be conserved according to the principles outlined in the Charter.

With regard to the historical landscape features of the Cemetery, the broader setting, layout and remnant plantings provide the most tangible evidence of historic character. As much of the historical evidence of the landscape history relates to planting, the degree of intervention on the conservation of the features will be variable.

Flora and Fauna

Waikumete Cemetery contains the largest area, within Waitakere City, of moderately to highly significant gumland forest remaining in the Tamaki Ecological District. As such, this should be actively managed. Five of the native plants recorded within the Cemetery are threatened and there are a number of other areas of native vegetation which warrant protection, either as a result of their role as wildlife corridors, or due to their historical associations with plantings undertaken in commemoration of loved ones buried in the Cemetery.

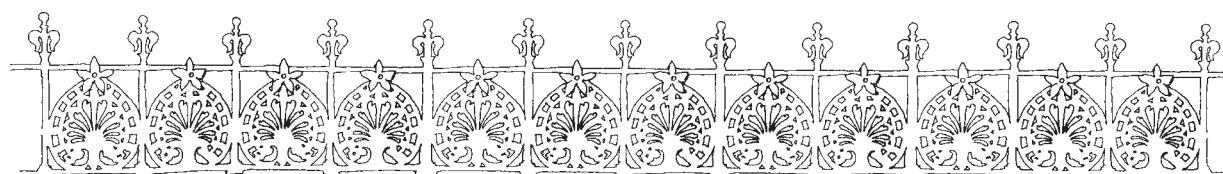
There are also a number of exotic plantings that have either local or national significance. These include the 30 species of eucalypts, some of which are over 100 years old, and the many species of naturalised wildflowers which collectively make up the largest collection of these plants in the world outside their home countries.

A number of other exotic trees and plants in the Cemetery are a significant association of species traditionally utilised in cemeteries of the Victorian era, with many having strong associations with loss and death.

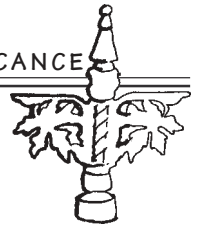
Cultural Heritage Significance of Different Parts of the Cemetery

Item/Area	Description	Significance Ranking
Early East Areas (Anglican A-E, Wesleyan A-C, Non Conformist A-B, Roman Catholic A-B and Public A)	Traditional cemetery form, grave sites predominately constructed between 1886-1900. Graves also categorised as Archaeological Sites under the Historic Places Act.	High
Early West Areas (Anglican F-H, M&N, 1-3, Wesleyan C-E, Presbyterian C-F, Roman Catholic C, Paupers/Flu Epidemic Area and Non Conformist C-E)	Traditional cemetery form, grave sites predominately constructed between 1900-1940.	High

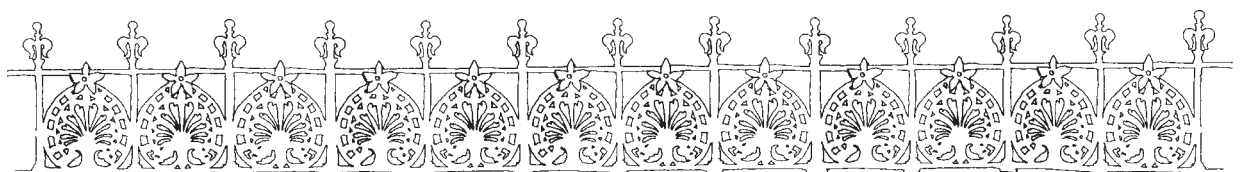
⁹⁶ ICOMOS - New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value sets out the principles to guide the conservation of places of cultural heritage value in New Zealand.



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Item/Area	Description	Significance Ranking
East Armed Services Area (Service Persons A-G, Navel Men)	Service persons graves from WWI.	High
Cenotaph / WWI Memorial	Constructed in 1921 to honour those who died in the First World War of 1914-1918. Adjacent to it is a memorial built in 1963 to commemorate the 57 servicemen of the Auckland province who lost their lives in and around NZ during World Wars I and II and have no known graves.	High
Original Entrance Gates	Gates brought from Victoria Park.	High
West Armed Services Lawns (Service Persons K, R, C, J-M, Service Persons Ash Lawn, Merchant Navy A-C)	WWII and later burial sites.	Moderate
Site of Old Crematorium	Remains of foundations of the old Crematorium and associated pohutakawa plantings.	High
Old Hebrew Area (Hebrew A)	Traditional cemetery form grave sites predominately constructed between 1886-1900. Graves constructed prior to 1900 also categorised as Archaeological Sites under the Historic Places Act.	High
Site of old Jewish Prayerhouse	Grassy area site of old Jewish Prayerhouse. No physical remains. Site also categorised as Archaeological Site under the Historic Places Act.	Moderate
Mausoleum Area (Magnolia Way, Narcissus Drive, Orchid Rise)	Currently a group of 40 mausolea (with 2 under construction as at Dec 2002), built between 1942 and the present. Corban Mausoleum of high individual significance as it was the first to be constructed.	Moderate
Modern West Area (Protestant A-C, Presbyterian D, Anglican J-L, Wesleyan F, Liberal Jewish, Muslim, Roman Catholic Lawn B, Roman Catholic D-E)	Traditional cemetery form, grave sites predominately constructed after 1940 to the present day.	Moderate
Crematorium and commemorative gardens	New Crematorium and Chapels built 1951, Crematorium Ash Lawn and Erebus Memorial.	Moderate
Eastern berm and lawn areas incl. new Hebrew Prayerhouse (Hebrew Berm, Roman Catholic Lawns A & C, Protestant Lawns A-E, North Lawn E)	Modern burial areas reflecting modern cemetery form, gravesites predominately constructed after 1950's to the present day.	Low
Western berm and lawn areas (Urupa, Western Berms, Western Lawns, Westview Lawn, Protestant Berms A & B, Roman Catholic Berms A & B)	Modern burial areas reflecting modern cemetery form, gravesites predominately constructed after 1950's to the present day.	Low





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Item/Area	Description	Significance Ranking
Mass graves, hospital and paupers grave sites - modern west area	Unmarked graves.	Moderate
Rubbish dumping trench - early west area	Located to the north of Anglican M and N, below paupers' graves in the gully between Ixia Street and Eucalyptus Avenue - partly dug over.	Moderate
Glenview Road Cottage	Also know as the Beach Road Cottage and the Foreman's house, moved from 109 Beach Road Te Atatu to Waikumete in 1917. Moved from its previous site in Waikumete to its current location in 1979.	High
Chapel of Faith-in-the-Oaks	Original mortuary chapel constructed in 1886. Listed by Historic Places Trust.	High
Sexton's House	Original Sexton's house built in 1886. Office added 1919.	High
Toilets - Acmena Avenue and Kowhai Road	Brick toilets.	Low
Works Shed	Maintenance works shed and associated storage area.	Low

Table Six: Cultural Heritage Significance of Different Parts of the Cemetery

