

EREBUS DISASTER MEMORIAL SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Draft Report

Prepared for Manatū Taonga: Ministry for Culture and Heritage

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Introduction

The Mt Erebus accident, on 28 November 1979 which claimed 257 lives, is one of New Zealand's worst peacetime disasters and one of the worst aviation accidents in the Southern Hemisphere. At present there is no major public memorial, where all 257 names of the people on flight TE-901 are listed together, although there are a number of smaller memorials: a commemorative cross and sculpture at Scott Base Antarctica; designation of the crash site as an Antarctica special protected area; a memorial and garden of remembrance at Auckland's Waikumete Cemetery for the 16 unidentified passengers and the 28 passengers who were never found; a cherry tree and plaque also within Waikumete Cemetery for the 24 Japanese passengers; a small memorial to the crew members at Auckland International Airport; a memorial window at St Stephens Anglican Church in Whangaparaoa; a memorial bench at the Lower Hutt Rose Garden; a memorial window and book of remembrance at Auckland's St Matthew-in-the-City church; and a sculpture at Air New Zealand Auckland headquarters.

The National Erebus Memorial, 'the Memorial' is intended to honour the lives of those who died and to provide a place to pay respect to all 257 crash victims, in time for the 40th anniversary of the crash in 2019. It will be a place of local, national and international significance. Manatū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) is committed to advancing the memorial in Auckland for the 40th anniversary and has undertaken a site selection process to identify a potential site. MCH has contracted Boffa Miskell to undertake an assessment of a potential site for the location of the Memorial and to make a recommendation with respect to this site. The site identified by MCH is located within Dove Myer Robinson Park in Parnell, Auckland.

This report documents the assessment process for the identified site and makes a recommendation as to the desirability of that site for the Erebus Memorial. The criteria used for the assessment are based on criteria developed for, and used in, the evaluation of potential sites for the Canterbury Earthquake Memorial in Christchurch. Boffa Miskell personnel were also involved in that site selection and evaluation process. The criteria have been slightly modified given the slightly different circumstances of the two memorials and their context / city location.

Field Assessment

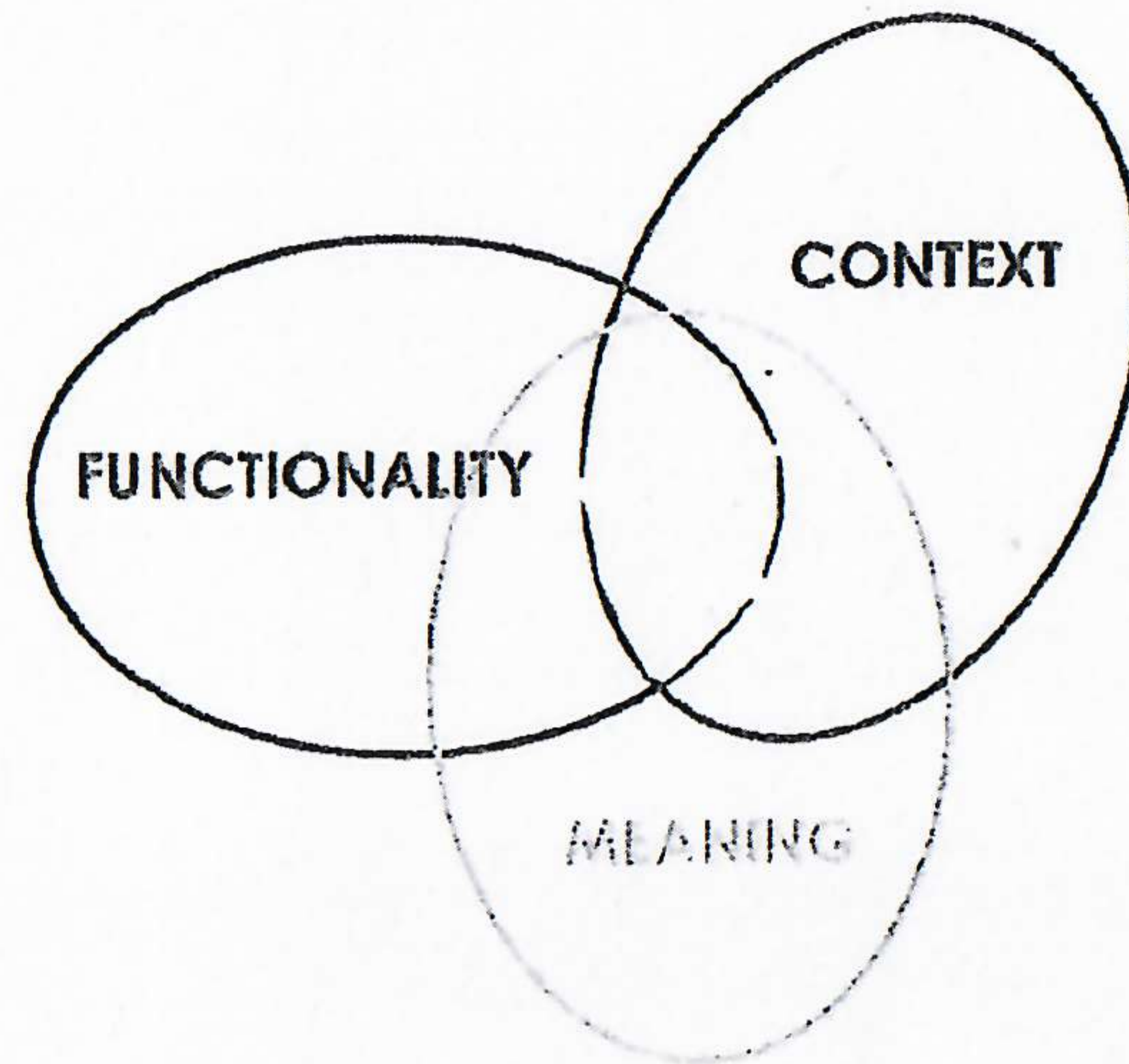
The field assessment was undertaken on Wednesday 16 August 2018.

The criteria used for the assessment of the identified site for evaluation and their descriptors are set out in Table 1 below. The criteria are grouped under three categories; Functionality, Context and Meaning.

Table 1: Erebus Memorial: Site Assessment Criteria:

FUNCTIONALITY	
Accessible:	A location / site that is accessible - so people can easily get to it (Public transport / vehicular access) and that can be designed to have universal access.
Flexible:	A flexible space allowing for formal and informal events, accommodate significant numbers as well as creating a more private, intimate experience.
Safe:	Avoidance of threats and perceived threats from adjacent structures or landforms (including natural disasters, crime, ...)
CONTEXT	
Co-location:	The extent to which larger gatherings can utilise adjacent spaces particularly if the site itself is restricted. Co-location can mean a smaller Memorial site could be workable / appropriate.
Adjacencies:	Compatibility with existing and potential future adjacent development / activities.
Relevance:	A site that is located somewhere that is conceptually connected to the function or purpose of the memorial.
MEANING	
Sensitivity:	A site that is not affected / compromised by cultural or social sensitivities.
Own Meaning:	A site that can develop its own meaning and significance over time, rather than a site which already has a fixed meaning / symbolism or known significance.
Amenity:	Whether the site has connection to features that enhance the setting - views, water, trees, shelter, aspect.

Table 1



A preferred / recommended site will best meet all of the assessment criteria in the three categories – functionality; context and meaning.

Matters for Design:

- The Memorial should be a contemplative space, providing opportunity for private reflection.
- The Memorial should be set within an open space, although one with the potential for a focal point.
- The Memorial should feel safe night and day and not be overwhelmed by adjacent development.
- The Memorial should be potentially meaningful for all people, not just for those affected or for one part of the community.

Site Assessment

A site within the wider area of Dove Myer Robinson Park, Parnell is being considered by MCH as having the potential to accommodate the Erebus Memorial. Dove Myer Robinson Park is more commonly known as 'The Parnell Rose Gardens' and is a popular visitor attraction in central Auckland. The rose gardens include display beds with some 5000 bush roses, the main rose season is between October and April. The park also connects to Judges Bay where sand replenishment has occurred, creating a popular summer beach / parkland destination adjacent to the salt-water Parnell Baths. The park is home to some of the oldest Manuka trees and the largest Pohutukawa in Auckland, which sits defining the western edge of the identified potential Memorial site.

The site is shown in the aerial photograph below.



The site was assessed against the set of criteria as set out above and a site visit undertaken to verify and confirm the spatial qualities of the site identified.

The assessment adopts a four-level scoring system of: poor, adequate, good and excellent for each of the nine criteria, three in each of the categories being Functionality, Context and Meaning.

Site Description	The site is located in an internal location on the eastern slopes of the park, overlooking Judges Bay. It consists of an open lawn area oriented north and east surrounded by groups of well-established and good quality mature trees.
Functionality	
Accessible	The site is located close to both the main carpark within Dove Meyer Robinson Park and the carpark for the adjacent Fred Ambler

Adequate	<p>Lookout. The site is not universally accessible from the car parks, but it does have multiple good paths / routes for able bodied people. One accessible route from the driveway with parallel car parking below the 'Parnell's on the Rose Gardens' function centre in the reserve could be provided. The part of the park within which the site is located is not one of the more heavily trafficked locations.</p> <p>There is one bus route, the 703 along Gladstone Road with the Inner Link and Crosstown 4 buses using Parnell Road. The tourist 'hop on hop off' bus also has the park as a destination.</p>
Flexible Adequate	The site's lawn area is approximately the area of two tennis courts, so a decent size. The vegetation surrounding it, provides a sense of enclosure that would also make the space suitable for individuals/more intimate groups.
Safe Adequate	The site is open and visible during the day and located in a park that has a good level of local community and specific destination public use. It is close to the rose gardens, which are a prime attraction within the wider park, and the activity of Parnell's on the Rose Gardens function centre. The site is not overlooked or sufficiently adjacent to roads to have a high level of passive surveillance.
Context	
Co-location Good	This part of Dove Myer Robinson Park already contains multiple small-scale memorials. The clustering of memorials would seem appropriate given each has its own discrete context and function. The proposed space is reasonably well defined, and sufficiently separated from other memorials.
Adjacencies Adequate to Poor	<p>Already a location of multiple small memorials. Unlikely to be compromised by adjacent development.</p> <p>Some effects on the appropriateness of location are likely due to proximity to Tamaki Drive/Rail/Port/Helipad which generate considerable ambient noise (road traffic) and infrequent (helicopter movements / rail), loud noise that reduces the sense of quiet reflection.</p> <p>The adjacent Judges Bay and Rose Gardens can both be highly active and noisy which could at times be incompatible.</p>
Relevance Poor	While the location is not controversial or offensive/disruptive, there is no apparent connection of the site to the Erebus historical attributes / event. Furthermore, the site overlooks Judges Bay and Waitemata Harbour, which have no significance to the event. In

	this respect the memorial would sit remote from any conceptual relationship to the event.
Meaning	
Sensitivity Poor	<p>The Parnell Rose Gardens and the function centre, which sit within Dove Meyer Robinson Park, are frequently used for community events such as the Parnell Rose Festival, weddings and celebrations, and are a destination for tour buses / coaches. There is potential incompatibility with an Erebus Memorial in this identified location.</p> <p>Cultural significance of the site needs to be understood through consultation with mana whenua.</p>
Own Meaning Adequate to Poor	<p>It may be difficult to establish unique identity for the Erebus Memorial on a site that already well known and popular in the community as the Parnell Rose Gardens. It is also a well-used local reserve and provides access to Judges Bay with its associated tidal beach and recently upgraded facilities.</p> <p>There are multiple memorials within the vicinity. Clustering of the memorials could support this location. The site within the park is sufficiently separate and large to accommodate a further memorial.</p>
Amenity Adequate	<p>The site enjoys a high level of outlook and spatial amenity / quality, with mature trees, open space and views. However, noise from the adjacent Port, rail, heliport and road are significant, frequent detractors to an otherwise tranquil location.</p> <p>There is also potential noise from events and public use of the reserve and beach, particularly in the summer months, that would further detract from the amenity as a memorial site.</p>

Overall scores:

Poor: two, Adequate to Poor: two, Adequate: four, Good: one.

Summary and Recommendation

In summary, the proposed site within Dove Myer Robinson Park, is a complex site where multiple existing remembrance functions coupled with the park's known identity as 'The Parnell Rose Gardens' and its use for a wide range of community celebrations could compromise its potential to develop a new memorial identity. Furthermore, the ambient noise from Tamaki Drive and the Port and the frequent loud detractors of the railway and heliport are at odds with the desire for a place of remembrance, contemplation and reflection.

There is no obvious or logical contextual relationship or significance between this site and the Erebus disaster. The many smaller Erebus memorials exhibit a strong relationship between event and place, therefore it is appropriate that a new memorial demonstrates a similar sensitivity and understanding.

The site is, however, physically capable of accommodating a memorial, being generous in size, well defined and having reasonable accessibility. It has an attractive surrounding context with a high level of aesthetic qualities. The only detractor in respect to amenity is noise, which is potentially disruptive.

The Erebus flight TE-901 departed from Auckland Airport, in Mangere. The landscape connection is with the Manukau Harbour rather than the Waitematā Harbour. As there is a desire to have a memorial for all those who perished, it may be more appropriate to identify a location closer to Auckland Airport, with a view over Manukau Harbour that has a connection and symbolism to Flight TE-901. This could be viewed as a destination in its own right and a true place for reflection and remembrance.