

Objections to relocation of Manchester Cenotaph



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Status: Immediate release

Starts

War Memorials Trust has considerable reservations over the recently approved proposals for the relocation of the grade II* listed Manchester Cenotaph.

The Trust has been involved in discussions prior to the approval and have today contacted Manchester Council and Manchester Evening News to repeat our concerns following the disappointing decision by the Department for Communities and Local Government earlier this month to approve the plans.

Our concerns over these proposals to move the Cenotaph include the loss of the group value between the Cenotaph and St Peters cross as well as the site more widely. Lutyens originally designed the memorial for this specific site and expressed a wish for the cross to remain in its location. Relocation could lead to damage of the memorial or pose a threat to the longevity and structural integrity of the memorial.

One of the main reasons given for the relocation in the application documents is the restrictions posed on Remembrance Services by the position of the 1992 tram stops. However, Remembrance Services have had to function around the use of the area for trams from the time of erection and the form of services is naturally subject to change. As such, this alone cannot be considered a suitable reason for the relocation of a nationally important memorial as the public benefit would not seem to outweigh the harm caused. As the new location is on a corner, this area will still be affected by paraphernalia relating to the tram route and therefore will only provide a slightly improved situation from the current location. Often much simpler steps such as closing the site to traffic during services can make access more straightforward.

The application documents did not explore alternatives to relocation, such as alteration to the later 1992 tram platforms, to address the current issues relating to the tram routes. It is not necessary to relocate the memorial to provide an enhanced setting for it or to improve the situation for the holding of Remembrance Services. In addition the necessary repair and conservation works to the memorial can be undertaken without the relocation of the Cenotaph.

The second justification is the new tram works proposed for St Peter's Square. However, these are yet to be approved. This element causes significant concern as there has been insufficient evidence supplied to show that the tram works can only go ahead if the Cenotaph is relocated. In addition the drawings submitted are misleading as they do not include the new tramlines and paraphernalia which these plans will involve and which will affect the new site of the memorial. The proximity of these items means that the new proposals are unlikely to achieve the access improvements and facility for quiet contemplation at the memorial which has been so heavily weighted as a reason for the relocation.

Ends

Contact

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Images

The image sent with this news release should be credited to War Memorials Trust. A higher resolution version is available on request.

Notes to editors

1. War Memorials Trust is an independent registered charity. Established in 1997 due to concerns about neglect and vandalism it works to protect and conserve war memorials. It provides advice, information and administers grants schemes that assist the repair and conservation of war memorials across the UK. As a charity the Trust relies on voluntary contributions to undertake its work. Supporters include annual and life members, donors, charitable trusts and corporate contributors.
2. War Memorials Trust provides grants that can assist repair and conservation of war memorials. Contact the Conservation Team to discuss eligibility on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org or download an 'Expression of interest form' from www.warmemorials.org/grants/.
3. War Memorials Trust provides a free advisory service to anyone with a war memorial enquiry. Specialist Conservation Officers are available on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org.
4. Details of grants made can be viewed on the Trust's Grants Showcase www.warmemorials.org/search-grants/. You can search by area, scheme, value and type of work.