

# Newsletter

No. 5. August 2013

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## JOIN US

To join Historic Places Wellington or learn more about Historic Places Aotearoa, go to [www.historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz](http://www.historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz)

## CONTACT US

Our email address is [wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz](mailto:wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz)

## TRIPS AND EVENTS

AGM 12 September  
Lower Hutt Civic Centre tour Sunday 6 October  
"Crofton," Ngaio Sunday 24 November  
Details on Page 4

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

**THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2013, AT 5.45 PM (*Refreshments from 5.15 pm*)**  
**AT THE MUSEUM OF WELLINGTON CITY AND SEA, QUEENS WHARF,**  
**WELLINGTON CITY**

The meeting will be followed with a talk by **Brett Mason**, Director of the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, about plans for new developments at the Museum. It has recently been named as one of the fifty best museums in the world and is a great heritage treasure for Wellington.

***Please bring this newsletter as it contains material for the meeting***

### Meeting Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2012 Annual Meeting\*
3. Chairman's report (see Page 2 of this newsletter)
4. Treasurer's report and financial statement\*
5. Election of Committee (see Page 3 of this newsletter)
6. Election of Honorary Reviewer
7. Proposed alterations to Rules of Historic Places Aotearoa, and Notices of Motion for Annual Meeting of Historic Places Aotearoa
8. Appointment of representatives to Historic Places Aotearoa Annual Meeting
9. Future activities
10. General business

*\* These papers will be circulated by email prior to the meeting.*

## **Chairman's report**

This is the second Annual Meeting of Historic Places Wellington, and it marks the end of our first full year in operation. It has been a busy and eventful year.

We have been kept busy with some important conservation issues, none more so than **Harcourt's Building** in Lambton Quay. This landmark Category One building has been declared earthquake-prone and the owner wishes to demolish it. If successful this action would have created a very adverse precedent for the future of many of our urban heritage buildings. HPW took a full part in the hearing on the resource consent application to demolish the building, which was declined. This was a major victory for heritage conservation and a great start for our organisation. The decision was appealed to the **Environment Court** which heard the case in late August. As explained below, we elected not to take part in the proceedings, but a Committee member Peter Dowell appeared as an expert witness for the Historic Places Trust.

We presented a submission to the panel hearing objections to the Hutt City Council's proposed plan change to allow new retail development at the western end of **Jackson Street in Petone**. This change could have a negative effect on the heritage retail area of Jackson Street. The panel requested further advice and design guidelines from the Council, which are still awaited.

HPW objected to an application by the Porirua City Council to demolish the **Porirua Little Theatre** building at Titahi Bay. This building was built in 1942 as a recreation hall for US Marines camped at the bay. After receiving many objections from community groups, the Council agreed to withdraw its application and seek proposals and support for retaining the hall.

We made a submission, along with Historic Places Aotearoa, to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee of Parliament on the **Heritage New Zealand Bill**. See below for details on the Bill as reported back by the Committee.

We planned a range of interesting and varied events during the year which have been well supported by members. Tours were arranged to Chevening Apartments, Cuba St, the Basin Reserve, two heritage office buildings, and the Fever Hospital. Talks were held on the Basin Reserve and on the Registration process.

Historic Places Wellington has continued to support Historic Places Aotearoa as our national organisation. We have provided advice and help with submissions on various matters. Peter Dowell represents HPW on the HPA Executive. HPA operates an informative website and processes membership matters for member societies. However, HPA faces some difficult issues in establishing a viable national organisation and encouraging the development of new regional heritage bodies to replace the old NZHPT branch committees. There is a need for HPA to become a more effective national heritage advocate and to develop a viable financial model for its operations.

The Committee has worked hard and effectively and I thank them on your behalf. I also thank members for their willing support and the interest you have shown. We cannot achieve our aims without the support of our members, and we trust that you will continue to show that support.

Finally, I would like to thank all our partner organisations, particularly the NZHPT Central Regional Office, for their support and encouragement during our first full year.

*John Daniels*  
Chairman

## **Charity Status**

The Committee is pleased to report that charity status for Historic Places Wellington has been approved. This means that donations given to HPW qualify for tax exemption. Our **registration number is CC49481** and details of HPW will be available on the Charity Commission website **[www.charities.govt.nz](http://www.charities.govt.nz)**

## **Current Committee**

John Daniels	Chair and General Policy. 04 9387971 <a href="mailto:jr.daniels@clear.net.nz">jr.daniels@clear.net.nz</a>
Tania Warburton	Legal issues
Peter Dowell	Treasurer and Property Sector Liaison
Joanna Newman	Advocacy and Registration, Mt Victoria issues
Graeme Ross	Hutt issues
Priscilla Williams	Registrations, earthquake-prone buildings, newsletter editor
Ruth Mansell	Minute secretary, Petone issues
Deborah Cranko	Architectural issues and advocacy
Nigel Isaacs	Building history and technical input
Heather Nelson	<i>Administration (outside committee)</i>
Anthony Dreaver	<i>Kapiti issues (outside committee)</i>

### **Our Committee**

We have a capable and hardworking committee, but as with any voluntary body there is always need for new members. If you're interested and would like to contribute please contact the Chairman (contacts above). The committee comprises a mixture of expert and lay people and you do not need specialised knowledge. Your time and interest in heritage are sufficient although we are especially looking for someone who could bring media and publicity skills to the committee.

## **Harcourts Building**

The future of the Harcourts (former T&G) building on Lambton Quay now lies with the Environment Court. The owner appealed to the Court against the decision earlier this year not to allow demolition.

HPW initially joined the proceedings as a party opposing the appeal. However, after carefully considering our position, the committee decided that we should not play an active part in proceedings, because of the risk of an award of costs being made against the society in the event of an adverse decision. The Wellington Civic Trust came to the same conclusion.

The parties opposing the appeal were the NZHPT and the Wellington City Council. Our committee member Peter Dowell appeared as an expert witness for the Historic Places Trust. The hearing took place in the week of 19 August and the decision is awaited.

## **US Marines Hall, Titahi Bay**

Our last Newsletter reported on our opposition to an application by Porirua City Council, the building's owner, for resource consent to demolish this building which was constructed in 1942-43 as a recreation hall for the U.S. Marines. HPW has since presented a submission opposing the Council's application. We are pleased to report that the Council has now withdrawn its application to demolish the hall until further consultations and investigations are carried out.

## **Heritage New Zealand**

Our submissions on this Bill (See Newsletter 3 for details) have been presented by committee members to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee of Parliament. The Committee reported back to Parliament in late June, and recommended a number of changes. These are still awaiting the Second Reading.

The more important changes recommended by the Committee are

- A change to "make clear the nature and extent of the Heritage New Zealand's advocacy role" by stipulating that it is limited to advocating its interests in a public forum or a statutory planning process in which it has standing under an Act. The full implications of this change are not yet clear, but they definitely signal a desire to limit HNZ's advocacy role.
- Allowing the Minister to appoint the chief executive of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage as special adviser to the board of HNZ. The committee says that this is to facilitate the flow of information between the Minister and the board on government policy issues. This change would reinforce the perception of HNZ becoming more of a Government agency than at present.
- Changing the title of the Register to "New Zealand Heritage List/Rarangi Korero". The proposed name change suggests a downgrade of the Register's status. On the other hand, the term "List" has international currency and is in line with United Kingdom terminology.

- Changes to aspects of the proposed National Historic Landmarks List which were criticised by HPA, HPW and others. Entries in the List could now include a landmark incorporating more than one building or site, such as an art deco precinct or the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. The Committee also recommends removing the limit of 50 places. The criteria for listing would remain, but the removal of the number limit, which would have undermined the credibility of the list, is a definite improvement.
- Requiring Heritage New Zealand to take reasonable and practicable steps to support new heritage groups formed to replace branch committees in the 12 months following enactment of the Bill. The Committee says that although some support is being given “there is concern that sufficient support might not be available.” The Committee was not prepared to recommend the transfer of members to a new membership structure. This means that the present NZHPT membership will continue with the new HNZ.

### **Basin Reserve**

In March, Joanna Newman gave a presentation on the history of the Basin Reserve to Onslow Historical Society and HPW members and a guided walk around the site. The former was full of historical images of the Basin and surrounds, while the latter gave members an opportunity to ‘feel’ the history in the peaceful atmosphere of the grounds on a sunny day. Both events were reminders of the significance of this site to the history of Wellington. Not only was it set aside for the citizens of Wellington as a recreation reserve from the early days of settlement, it is the third oldest cricket ground in the world and has hosted many events of historical importance over its life. Registered as an historic site by NZHPT and containing the category 2-registered Pavilion (Museum Stand), it is once more a focus of controversy because of roading plans. We are tracking closely the heritage issues involved, in consultation with HPT and other interested parties.



Entrance to the old cricket pavilion and cricket museum at the Basin Reserve, now closed and yellow-stickered.

### **Heritage Month**

The Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council has designated September as Heritage Month. For a programme of events visit the website [www.wrhpc.org.nz](http://www.wrhpc.org.nz)

### **The Registration Process**

HPW's mid-Winter talk was about HPT's registration process and was given by Ann Neill, Regional Manager, and Blyss Wagstaff, Heritage Adviser for Registrations. Among the interesting statistics revealed was that Wellington has a very high percentage of the Category One listed buildings. A good turnout of members and an exercise on how to prioritise nominations made for a lively evening.

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**Lower Hutt Civic Centre** This interesting group of heritage buildings has been in the news because of earthquake strengthening requirements. The conservation architect, **Ian Bowman**, has kindly agreed to lead a walk around the precinct. **Meet at St James Church, Woburn Road. 2.00pm Sunday 6 October.** The walk will proceed; rain or shine, so dress for the weather on the day. No bookings required. No charge but **members only please.**

**Crofton, Kenya Street, Ngāio** This house was built by **William Fox** in 1857 and is of special significance because of its age and its association with the four times Premier of New Zealand. The owners have generously offered us a viewing of the house on the afternoon of **Sunday 24 November**. Further details will be sent by email but please note that numbers will be limited and it will be strictly **only for members.**