

# Newsletter

No. 30. November 2019

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## EVENTS

**Sunday 24 November, 2pm – 3pm. A Heritage Wairarapa event: Visit Fareham House, 80 Underhill Road, Featherston. HPW members are welcome to join our Wairarapa colleagues.**

## KARORI CAMPUS: A CASE OF “HERITAGE WASHING”



A bird's eye view of the former Karori Teacher's College. All the foreground buildings will be demolished. Karori Pool and School are in the background. (Image: Stuff)

At the beginning of November Ryman Healthcare announced it was going to demolish the [Waghorn and Gray buildings](#) at the former Karori Teachers' College. This means only three buildings – the Allen Ward VC Hall, the Tennant Block and the Oldershaw musical octagon will remain from the original Category 1 complex of some dozen buildings. In explaining the move Ryman's chief executive Gordon McLeod made the (unsubstantiated) claim that the buildings were unsafe to work

on. However, he pledged to replace them with a design ‘that will fit well with the character of the site’, a disingenuous commitment seeing there won’t be much character left to fit in with. Asked by the media to comment on Ryman’s plan, HPW said the token retention of three buildings did nothing to compensate for the loss of all the others. It’s akin to greenwashing (used to make a business appear more environmentally friendly than it really is) or in this case: “heritage-washing”.

The only thing that might have secured a better outcome was if Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) or the Wellington City Council had placed a Heritage Order over the site. This prevents property owners from demolishing a building(s) while the Order is in place and would have allowed more time to develop a plan that truly protected the site’s heritage values. Heritage Orders have been used to save buildings in the past (including the Public Trust Building and Premier House), but following (untested) legal advice that it might be forced to purchase properties with Heritage Orders over them, HNZPT has refused to employ the mechanism. Unless a heritage building is listed in a territorial district plan (Karori was not), its owner can demolish it and HNZ is powerless to prevent it. Ryman knew this and has acted accordingly.

HPW thinks the lamentable outcome at Karori raises two main issues. The first is the need for greater statutory protection of Category 1 places in New Zealand (a matter canvassed inside this issue). It should be the case that a Category 1 place has automatic protection from demolition or insensitive change. And second, we think HNZPT should consider withdrawing the Category 1 listing from the Karori campus because its integrity as a premier heritage place has been lost. Such a move will also demonstrate that it doesn’t countenance heritage washing.

### **Gisborne HPA conference – by Felicity Wong and Vivienne Morrell**



Conference delegates are welcomed onto the Whakato Marae of the Rongowhakaata iwi at Manutuke, and the Toko Toru Tapu Church, where Sir Neil Cossons delivered the keynote speech. (Images: Vivienne Morrell)

Historic Places Aotearoa’s AGM was held in Tairāwhiti/Gisborne recently against the backdrop of Tuia250, the controversial commemoration of Captain Cook’s first landing. The AGM was a joint event with ICOMOS<sup>1</sup> and many of the HPW committee members attended. Among the presentations were those of Geoff Daniels of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga about its work to strengthen protection for heritage (see more below), and from Claire Craig, the Deputy Chief Executive of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. In talking about “cultural identity” Claire welcomed the recent announcement that New Zealand history will be incorporated into the school curriculum. She noted that 80% of the heritage list however was representative of colonial history and that new categories provided in its Act for Wahi Tapu sites and Wahi Tupuna sites could be used more frequently. A recent example of using a combination of site listing categories was Ships Cove in the Marlborough Sounds.

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<sup>1</sup> ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is an international non-governmental organisation of heritage professionals engaged in the conservation of places of cultural heritage value and dedicated to the conservation of the world’s historic monuments and sites. <https://icomos.org.nz/>

Claire spoke of the work HNZPT is doing on “earthquake resilience” for its properties. It was taking a pragmatic approach to insurance and restoration. The reconstruction of the Lyttelton Timeball tower was an example where the community wanted to see the tower replaced as quickly as possible. Turning to government policy and legislation, Claire welcomed the new living standards framework<sup>2</sup>, into which heritage fitted well, and the upcoming review of the RMA as important developments to watch. Finally, Claire reported that HNZPT was aware that local councils needed help. HNZPT was gearing up its regional services and regional development efforts.

Another notable presentation was given by Dmytro Dizhur (sponsored by Mateen Bar and Pultron Industries). Pultron is a Gisborne firm that has collaborated with Auckland University to develop and test new and cheaper methods of strengthening two/three storey brick buildings. Pultron has another manufacturing site in Dubai and has a thriving business exporting its products overseas, but it seems less well known here. This presentation gave cause for optimism that older brick buildings could be strengthened cost effectively. Nigel Isaacs of HPW Committee also gave an interesting demonstration of how to date the age of a building by considering the building techniques and materials used.

There were lots of other great talks and attending the conference is an enjoyable heritage experience. It is also a chance to experience field trips to historic places in the region – on the Friday we were welcomed on to Whakato marae at Manutuke (Rongowhakaata iwi), had talks in Toko Toru Tapu Church (1913) and dinner in a marquee at Opou (1882/3, a Category 1 listed historic house). On Saturday afternoon we had a bus trip around Gisborne and the main conference dinner at the Marina Restaurant (originally built in 1886 but relocated and adapted).

## **Discussing Wellington’s built heritage – by Ben Schrader**

On 18 September I attended on behalf of Historic Places Wellington a talk organised by the Property Council New Zealand on the topic of Wellington’s built heritage. There were four speakers: local MP and associate Arts and Heritage minister Grant Robertson; Wellington property developer Maurice Clark; Wellington City Council planning manager Anna Harley, and earthquake engineer Win Clark. Grant placed built heritage within the government’s wellbeing framework. He said that the city’s historic buildings enhanced social capital and strengthened communities and this increased wellbeing. If what he meant by this seemed somewhat opaque, he was clearer about government support for heritage, encouraging building owners to access its \$23 million seismic strengthening fund. He acknowledged the challenge of securing insurance for heritage (and other) buildings in the city and said that if this problem continued the state might need to intervene. Grant concluded by saying that we ‘need to do everything possible to support heritage buildings’.



The property developer Maurice Clark was a speaker at the Property Council event. He stands outside his Public Trust Building, which he restored in the mid-2010s. (Image: Stuff)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>



Maurice Clark showcased some of the heritage buildings he had restored or refurbished, including Old Government Buildings, the Museum of Wellington, and the (former) Tower building. His driving impulse was his passion for built heritage. 'You really have to believe in historic buildings and restoring them', he said. He therefore got frustrated when some tenants saw heritage buildings like any other and resisted paying decent rents to support them. Maurice also mentioned two current projects: the restoration of the Chinese Mission Hall in Frederick Street and the refurbishment of the Oriental Bay Rotunda. The first will include a small park facing Taranaki Street, with new apartments behind, and the second will see the building's existing two stories collapsed into one with a redesigned Art Deco-inspired facade.

Anna spoke about how Cuba Street was central to Wellington's urban identity, revealing that 91 percent of residents thought heritage contributed positively to the city. She pointed to Leeds Street as an example of the economic benefits that can be derived from the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and argued more projects like these were needed. Anna confirmed that growth pressures would see some redevelopment of historic inner city suburbs because these areas had the best soils in terms of seismic and sea-level rise resilience. The 'city was naturally growing south' and places like Adelaide Road were ripe for residential intensification. But this would not mean the 'wholesale destruction' of existing heritage fabric, she said.



Anna said Cuba Street is part of Wellington urban identity. Win showed how masonry buildings could be strengthened to better resist earthquakes. (Images: Stuff)

Win explained how masonry buildings respond to earthquake shaking before showing some innovative structural techniques that can be used to strengthen them. This included fastening facades and parapets to a building's frame so they don't tumble onto streets. Another was installing carbon fibre and epoxy resin strips along a brick wall to absorb seismic energy. He thought most unreinforced buildings could be strengthened but this needed to be done before a large earthquake struck.

It was interesting to hear these different and complementary insights into heritage policy and practice. The Q + A session teased out further issues. One audience member said that complex planning rules and tight access to finance capital made it difficult to restore heritage buildings in the city. Unless 'you have deep pockets, it's too bloody hard', complained another. Maurice conceded that money was always a problem, but things were better than in the days of Michael Fowler – whose 1970s/80s mayoralty oversaw the destruction of hundreds of historic buildings. Asked what advice he'd give anyone thinking of restoring heritage buildings, Maurice said: 'you just have to love them'.

## **Strengthening heritage protection – by Felicity Wong**

For many months the Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga (MCH) has been gathering ideas about how to strengthen the protection for built heritage in New Zealand. This is welcome and both Historic Places Aotearoa and HPW members have contributed. Nigel Isaacs and Felicity Wong attended a recent meeting and here's what we said on behalf of HPA was needed:

### **Promotion and education**

1. Measures to incentivise building owners to protect their heritage buildings as well as penalise them for failing in their duty of care towards them. Incentives could include historic plaques on buildings and heritage awards, both of which would promote the national profile of heritage properties and owner pride in them.
2. Institute a regular heritage conference. This would help raise the profile of heritage and enable delegates to share ideas and become better connected and able to effect change and protection.
3. There is no document available that building owners can be given which gives them an overview of their obligations, legislation, funding available and other things. HPA could possibly put this together with a government grant.
4. Planners at Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) have a lot of power to shape District Plans and need knowledge about heritage. Some mechanism to upscale their knowledge regularly would be useful.

### **Funding**

5. Provide funding for heritage officers in the regional TLAs. Most smaller TLA's have no heritage staff or they have very limited knowledge. This is a major hindrance to protection.
6. Continue with Heritage Equip funding and Lotteries grants.
7. Tax incentives would be a game changer. We prefer deduction over depreciation as it will deliver real gains to building owners in a beneficial time frame.

### **Protection**

8. Automatic protection of heritage buildings/sites across the country, rather than leaving it to individual TLAs to decide protection measures. Having a classification system that is consistent across the country is also desirable.
9. Heritage Orders are not well understood, nor used at a TLA level. Additional support for understanding and using these orders is required so they are more commonly employed.
10. Demolition by neglect is a real issue, especially in regional areas. Higher requirements on building owners for the protection of building fabric would be good. At present TLA's only have the power to require upgrades (or demolition) for public safety or health. Their emphasis should be on protecting the building and securing repairs in a timely fashion.
11. Encourage private heritage trusts to purchase at risk heritage buildings – Christchurch is an example of this. How can we encourage more of this happening throughout the country? Could a loan funding facility be secured?

Meanwhile, although MCH is busy working on strengthening heritage protection, the Ministry for the Environment has been consulting the public on measures that could reduce protection. Its draft National Policy Statement on Urban Development will direct Councils to make room for residential housing intensification in high growth cities, including Wellington. HPW made a submission expressing concern about the proposal which would direct Councils to eliminate any rule in its district plan which stands in the way of development. Much of Wellington's inner suburbs are protected as "character areas". The main protection is that a resource consent is required to demolish a pre-1930 building. We said we don't agree that the Resource Management Act (RMA) can effectively be amended, to force development, by way of a policy statement. The draft policy needs to acknowledge that heritage protection is a matter of national significance under the RMA and must not be traded away for affordable housing, no matter how welcome an increase in affordable housing would be.

## **In brief**

### **Public Trust Hall opening**

Following 11 months of renovations the ground floor space in Wellington's magnificent [Category 1 Public Trust Building](#) on Lambton Quay was officially opened by the Prime Minister and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Jacinda Ardern, as the Public Trust Hall in October. The building's owner, Maurice Clark, said 'We are delighted to make available the Public Trust Hall and to provide Wellington with a sophisticated and central venue in a historically important and unique heritage building.' The space can cater for up to 300 guests.



The Public Trust Hall at its October opening (Image: McKee Fehl)

### Unveiling of First St Paul's Plaque

Funded by rented pews, the first St Paul's church in Wellington was situated behind The Beehive. A plaque to the church was unveiled on the site on 2 Nov 2019 by Valeria Whisker, Secretary of the Companions of Wellington Cathedral. HPW contributed to its funding together with the Friends of Old St Paul's. Jane Aim organised the plaque designed with the help of Brett McKay (Thorndon Society). Andrew Coleman, CEO of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, spoke at the event and Rev John McCaul gave the blessing.



Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga CEO, Andrew Coleman speaks at the unveiling of the first St Paul's Church plaque (Images: Felicity Wong)

### Grant for Albemarle Hotel

The Albemarle Hotel in Ghuznee St was awarded \$300,000 for seismic strengthening work in October Heritage EQUIP funding round. The government fund is administered by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage Manatū Taonga.



## Past Events

### 3 November, 3pm at Futuna Chapel Karori

Over 60 people listened to two interesting presentations. This event was co-sponsored by HPW and Futuna Trust. Our contribution was to provide the refreshments after the talks and we are pleased that many stayed to discuss the talks, socialise, meet new people and generally enjoy the Category 1 historic chapel.



Jamie, Sharon and Nick Bevin (Images: Vivienne Morrel)

**Jamie Jacobs** spoke on the limited support and broad ambivalence about the everyday architecture of mid-twentieth century suburban buildings, in America as well as New Zealand. Jamie is the Central Region Director for Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and is currently researching the mid-twentieth-century destruction and rebuilding of Te Aro, one of Wellington's earliest neighbourhoods.



**Architect Sharon Jansen** then spoke about a Nelson house alteration. Sharon outlined the restoration of this relatively unknown house by Ernst Plischke, which was built in Nelson for the Griffin family in 1961. Knowledge of the house only came to light in 2012, with the drawings found in the Nelson City Archives. The house was in a poor state, having had little maintenance over its years and an ungainly extension added to the face of the building in 1994. It has now been beautifully restored, but with some sympathetic updating. (Image: Interior of Nelson house originally

designed by Ernst Plischke. (Image: Paul McCredie)

## Upcoming Events



**Fareham House 24th November 2pm to 3pm**  
80 Underhill Road Featherston

A Heritage Wairarapa event – our members are welcome to attend. The owners of Fareham House have very kindly offered to open their house. The house dates from 1896 with various changes over the years. It was built for William and Lucy Barton of White Rock Station as a 'town house'. In 1944, the property was bought by the Crown and operated for c35 years as a special residential home for girls. A number of changes reflect this period. See our [website](#) for more information.