



The Voice of Heritage

Newsletter

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CONTACT US

Our new email address is wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

TRIPS AND EVENTS

Cuba Street Heritage Tour – 29th January
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SEE PAGE 4 FOR DETAILS

Heritage New Zealand Bill

Mention was made of this significant bill in our first newsletter. Since then the Government has introduced further important and worrying amendments by way of a Supplementary Order Paper (SOP). These changes include replacing the current "Register" of historic places with a "Record"; this with associated changes will turn the Register into primarily a source of information, not a tool for protecting the places listed. The SOP also proposes a new National Historic Landmarks List of 50 places only of "outstanding national heritage value" and puts qualifications on what can be listed.

Historic Places Wellington (HPW) and Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) are making submissions on the SOP, focusing on the downgrading of the status of the Register/Record, and on the very restricted nature of the List. Details of the SOP and the original Bill can be found on www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation. We hope you can publicise this development which is of serious concern for the future of NZ heritage.

Harcourt's Building

This Category 1 landmark building on the Lambton Quay/Grey Street corner is the subject of a resource consent application by the owner to demolish the building and replace it with a tower block. Although built to the highest standards of its day, Harcourts has recently been declared an earthquake-prone building, and remedial works will be required if it is to be preserved. If the owner's application is allowed and demolition is granted for this Category 1 building, this is likely to have a profound effect on heritage not only in Wellington, but also in setting a negative precedent for heritage buildings around New Zealand.

HPW has recommended to the City Council:

- ① that the application be declined.
- ① that all options for retaining the building in or near to its existing form be further explored and discussed.
- ① that if preserving the building in its existing form proves impracticable, consideration be given to allowing a redevelopment retaining the most significant heritage features of the building.



Submissions to the Council have closed. The hearing starts on 10 December and will be an important test case.

Historic Places Wellington annual meeting

The first AGM of our society was held on 17 September. We had a good turnout of 38 members and friends. The Chairman's report was published in our first Newsletter. The financial report showed that 170 members had joined, and that funds stood at \$17,520 including funds from the former Branch Committee.

Three new members were added to the committee listed in our previous newsletter. These were **Deb Cranko**, Director of Cranko Architects, **Nigel Isaacs**, Senior Lecturer in the School of Architecture at Victoria University, and **Ruth Mansell**, who is active in Petone community and conservation groups. The meeting ended with a talk by Councillor **Iona Pannett** on the serious problems and challenges facing heritage buildings in the city. We are fortunate that Iona is a strong voice for heritage on the City Council.

Historic Places Aotearoa meets in Wellington

Subsequently the 2nd Annual General Meeting of HPA was held in Wellington on 10 November. This is the national body to which HPW is affiliated, the President being Anna Crighton from Christchurch. A great deal of effort has gone into setting up a national membership system and other administrative matters. HPA has so far been able to attract affiliation from societies in six regions: Tairāwhiti (Gisborne), Wellington, Canterbury, Mid-Canterbury, South Canterbury and Central Otago. The bulk of members are from our region and membership recruitment in other regions has been modest.

Two motions put forward by HPW were not supported by the meeting and will not proceed further. These motions, which were carried at our AGM in September, sought a change of name to Historic Places Aotearoa New Zealand, and a system of weighted voting to recognise the contribution of the larger regions. The meeting ended with reports from regional chairs and a discussion on the future role of the national organisation. HPW has some unease about aspects of HPA's performance to date and hope it will evolve into a more effective organisation.

Submission to Hutt City Council on Plan Change 29 - Western End of Petone.

HPW submitted on this proposed Plan Change, considered to have deleterious effects on the Jackson Street Historic Area, which is registered by the NZ Historic Places Trust. The Plan Change proposes to open up adjacent areas to the west for retail development, which could compete with the small businesses in the historic buildings, and have a serious effect on the viability of the Jackson Street Historic Area. Our submission seeks reconsideration of the proposed plan change so as to limit the scale and types of retail use allowed in Area 2. This is consistent with submissions from local groups such as Petone Historical Society, Petone Planning Action Group, and over 200 individuals. HPW will speak to the submission at the Hearing.

Proposals for two new registrations

HPW has been consulted by the Historic Places Trust on two proposed registrations. Both are "deficient" ones in that they were noted previously but the formal process had not been completed. One relates to the **Telephone Box in Post Office Square, Wellington** which is a rare surviving example of a Kiosk 2 style telephone box designed by British architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1924. Manufactured from 1926 to about 1936, only 1700 of these cast iron structures were made and now only two or three may exist in New Zealand. Our example is not perfect (the glass panels are missing and the door is not a K2 design) but it is still working. Worth a visit. HPW supports the recommendation of Category 2 for this little gem.



Former Sexton's Cottage – Bolton St Memorial Park

The other proposal relates to the **Sexton's Cottage** (Former), **Bolton Street Memorial Park**, which is recommended for Category 1. This is probably the oldest house in central Wellington, built in 1857 with modifications in 1885. Its attractive exterior of pit-sawn shiplap weatherboards and salt-box gable roof can be viewed from Bolton St but the interior, which has been somewhat modified for modern living, is not currently available for public access. That it has survived city developments is due partly to luck and partly to writer **Margaret Alington ONZM** who wrote the history of the cemetery "Unquiet Earth". Margaret, who died recently aged 92, led much of the work in preserving the historic cemeteries during the motorway era. For more information on this subject visit www.boltoncemetery.org.nz

A vanishing landscape

Kapiti - an area rich in stories of travel by foot, horseback, coach and railway - is at risk of damage to its history by road travel. Most people are aware of the compromises and threats to the important Takamore urupa north of the Waikanae River. The groups working to minimise the damage deserve our full support.

Perhaps less considered is the impact of the Transmission Gully section of the highway, especially at its northern end. Here it will cut through an area rich in Maori and settler history. Te Puka on the alluvial fan was a cultivation area of the Ngati Haumia people of Wainui kainga. After the sale of Wainui Block to the Crown in 1859 it became part of the land farmed by the Smith brothers, extending over the summit of Paekakariki Hill. There is a rich assemblage of farm buildings of all kinds, including homestead and woolshed. A concrete expanse, directly in line with the proposed road, marks where in 1942-3 the US Marines transport park and bakery were situated and a large structure on the hillside was installed as a fuel depot though never used.

With the goodwill of the present owners it is hoped that a careful record of the present landscape can be created before it is changed forever, and that appropriate preservation and conservation measures can be set in train.

Afternoon Tea at Chevening

HPW recently ran two tours for its members to Chevening Apartment building on Salamanca Rd. This is a beautifully restored apartment building designed by Llewellyn Williams and built in 1929. The tour included a talk on the recent strengthening work and a detailed film about it. Many thanks to **Susan Price**, the owner and current occupant, **Judy Siers**. This outstanding renovation by Studio of Pacific Architecture has won two awards, most recently a Wellington Architecture Heritage Award.

Photo:

Judy Siers (on left) and Susan Price at afternoon tea at Chevening.



Fever Hospital, Mt Victoria

In October, three members of the HPW committee visited the Fever Hospital with the **Chief Executive of the SPCA, Iain Torrance**, hoping to arrange a visit for members before SPCA moves in. As major work is required to strengthen the buildings, a visit for a large group is unlikely to be possible, but we still hope to arrange a special visit for members at some stage. We were very encouraged to hear how the SPCA intends to preserve the heritage and make much of the building accessible to the public. The SPCA is very keen to hear from anyone who has experiences or stories relating to the building's time as a hospital, or from people interested in helping them research and interpret the history for the public. Please contact program.manager@wellingtonspca.org.nz. The hospital was opened in 1920 to treat infectious diseases, later tuberculosis and chest diseases. It is a fascinating building and the SPCA'S occupation of it will be a great asset.

Suzanne Aubert's Crèche

Boarded up and abandoned-looking on a cleared site, **Suzanne Aubert's** crèche beside the Basin Reserve awaits removal by the New Zealand Transport Agency to a neighbouring site adjacent to the Memorial Park. Approval has not yet been granted for the construction of a motorway flyover, but NZTA is using the extraordinary powers granted under the recently introduced National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) Empowering Bill to move the crèche in advance of that approval. Meantime, movement of this Category 1-registered building, which marks the site of Mother Aubert's mission of caring for the needy in Wellington, will result in the loss of its connection with the location it has occupied since it was opened in 1914.

Former US Marines Hall in Titahi Bay

This building was constructed in 1942 as part of the **US Marine camp in Titahi Bay**. It is the last structure left of those buildings purpose-built during WWII for the eight marine camps strung along the coast north of Wellington and has high architectural value as well as historical and cultural values. **The Porirua Little Theatre** which has been in this building since 1970 has had to vacate because of its poor condition and the council is currently considering its future including possible demolition. There are those in the local community prepared to contribute funds and materials to repair and renovate the building to its original condition. It is listed on the PCC Historic Heritage schedule #HHB019. HPW has been asked to write in support of its retention. For further information contact rubob@xtra.co.nz

Red-stickered Buildings

Of those buildings in Wellington whose red stickers were expiring and thus facing possible compulsory demolition, some are Council listed buildings but are not necessarily of heritage interest. Three are certainly worth attention, namely the **Adelaide/Tramways hotel in Newtown**, **Erskine College/Chapel in Island Bay** and the **Karitane Hospital** in Melrose.

Cuba Street Heritage Tour

The older low-rise buildings along this street contribute to the area's historical character and have been attracting recent attention because of their earthquake-risk status. VUW's School of Architecture has mounted an imaginative design on the street's potential development.

On Tuesday 29 January 2013 there will be a tour of Cuba Street guided by the following senior staff from the School of Architecture:

Andrew Charleson - author of "Structure as Architecture" and "Seismic Design for Architects"

David Kernohan - author of "Wellington's Old Buildings" and "Wellington's New Buildings"

Nigel Isaacs - researcher, writer and broadcaster on the history of NZ building technology

Meet at the VUW School of Architecture, 139 Vivian Street at 5.30pm. This will be a walking tour, so come prepared for up to 2 hours of footpath walking. At the finish, we will have a meal in one of the many reasonably priced Cuba Street cafes. The walk will proceed, rain or shine, so do dress for the weather on the day. No bookings required. **No charge but members only please.**

Tour of Mair Buildings in March 2013

We are arranging a Sunday afternoon visit to look at the **Stout Street Departmental Building** currently undergoing renovation and possibly another nearby 1930s building designed by John T Mair, Government Architect.

Numbers will be limited for this visit. More information in the next newsletter.

Communicating with members

Our quarterly newsletter goes to all members, by email to most and by post to those who do not use email. Communications at intervals between newsletters (such as reminders of tours or urgent heritage news) are sent by email only. We regret that time and finance limit our ability to post more often than quarterly to those with postal addresses only.

Please feel free to share items in this newsletter with friends or contact groups, though in most instances our tours are limited to members only. To suggest items or for feedback on our material, contact us on wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz