

Newsletter

No. 6. November 2013

In this issue:

- 🕒 Harcourts Building Goes Another Round
- 🕒 Hutt Civic Centre Buildings At Risk
- 🕒 Our 2013 AGM
- 🕒 Petone Plan Change
- 🕒 Wallaceville Church
- 🕒 Architectural Symposium
- 🕒 Forthcoming Events
- 🕒 Historic Places Aotearoa Meets in Christchurch
- 🕒 Wellington's Open Spaces

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TRIPS AND EVENTS

Architectural Symposium
6th December 2013 – See Page 4

Harcourts Building Goes Another Round

The long-running case of Harcourts building on Lambton Quay continues. The owner's application to demolish this Category One 1928 office building was turned down by independent commissioners who dealt with the original application. This decision was appealed to the Environment Court, and that court upheld the commissioners' decision and disallowed the appeal.

We were very encouraged by the Court's clear decision which agreed with the reasoning in the commissioners' decision. However, this is not the end of the matter.

The owners have now appealed to the High Court to have the Environment Court's decision overturned. This latest appeal is on points of law only. As in the earlier appeal, Historic Places Wellington is unable to take part in this case. However, Historic Places Trust and the Wellington City Council will be opposing the appeal. The hearing is to take place sometime in the first half of 2014.

Hutt Civic Centre Modern Movement Buildings



Town Hall and Clock Tower

Conservation architect **Ian Bowman** led a walk and talk around this group of buildings for HPW members on 6 October. Ian has made a study of Modern Movement buildings in Lower Hutt for the City Council, and has produced a booklet on the best 20 of these. (Copies are available from the library). Ian talked about St James Church, the Memorial Library, including the Little Theatre, the Town Hall and Administration Block and the Horticultural Hall, all designed

using the Modern Movement principles, although Stripped Classical Art Deco influences are visible.

These are a unique set of buildings in New Zealand set within their own gardens and have been recognised by classification as an Historic Area on the HPT Register. (See Register entry 7520 for more information.)

Ian has studied these buildings in depth and his talk was most informative and interesting. All those on the walk thoroughly enjoyed it.

We have been aware that the Hutt City Council were considering options for the buildings because of earthquake strengthening requirements but it was nevertheless a shock to learn of the Council's decision taken soon after the elections to demolish the Town Hall and Horticultural Hall and replace these important architectural statements with a modern building. This is possible as there is no legal protection for the buildings in the Council Plan despite the fact they are recognised both nationally and internationally as being significant. We are working with HPT to see what can be done in this difficult situation.



HPW Group admiring the architectural details around this entrance

Our 2013 AGM

Our second annual meeting was held on 12 September in the Museum of Wellington City and Sea. Thirty-five members attended.

Before the formal business members heard a presentation by **Brett Mason** of the Museum on plans for its redevelopment. Members were pleased to hear that the museum would be enhanced while retaining its essential role of telling the capital city's story.

Most members of the committee were available for re-election. We welcome a new committee member **Ian Jolly** who was formerly a member of the NZHPT's Auckland Branch Committee. **Graeme Ross** stood down from the committee after some years as a member of both our committee and before that the NZHPT Wellington Branch Committee. Graeme originally came to the Committee as the representative of the Hutt City Council, and we thank him for his contributions.

The committee members elected are:

Deborah Cranko; John Daniels; Peter Dowell; Nigel Isaacs; Ian Jolly;
Ruth Mansell; Joanna Newman; Tania Warburton; Priscilla Williams

Historic Places Aotearoa meets in Christchurch

The annual general meeting of **Historic Places Aotearoa** (HPA), the national body to which our society is affiliated, took place in Christchurch on 16 November. The national body focuses on heritage issues at national level, and also provides a centralised membership service to member societies.

The meeting discussed concerns over HPA's incomplete national coverage, its effectiveness in dealing with national issues, and the membership system. HPA is an all-volunteer operation and delegates acknowledged that much is expected of its officers.

The meeting agreed to set up a group to review HPA's objectives, structure, and functions, and develop proposals for change. These will be considered at a special meeting in Wellington in the first half of 2014.

Wellington's Open Spaces

Our city is well endowed with open spaces and natural areas which are enjoyed by many Wellingtonians. Earlier this year the City Council initiated a review of its policies for open spaces. Historic Places Wellington made a submission to the review, seeking better recognition of the heritage values in these spaces. The review report responded by recommending new actions under the heading:

Need to protect important historic sites within the open-space network, as follows:

3.6.1 Ensure that valuable archaeological sites and historic features are protected from current and future developments (including through the planning process) and are not overly compromised by sport, recreation and environmental activities;

3.6.2 Make our cultural and historic heritage evident in the protection, design and use of open spaces;

3.6.3 Ensure that signs, brochures, websites, apps and other information provide good descriptions of historical and cultural features around our open spaces;

We welcome this enhanced recognition of heritage values, and we will work with the Council to implement them.

Petone Plan Change

Our May newsletter reported on Historic Places Wellington's submission to Hutt City Council's Plan Change 29, which had been potentially damaging to the **Jackson Street** heritage retail area. This submission was consistent with about 250 others from local groups and individuals. The Commissioner's final recommendations were accepted by Hutt City Council on 17 September, and then publicly notified on 24 September, upholding the most important points made by community and heritage submitters. **Petone Planning Action Group** has lodged an appeal that aims to tidy up some technical aspects of the wording in the plan changes as well as seek some further refinement of the associated Design Guide. The mediation process should be able to resolve the appeal. No other appeals have been lodged. Overall, we consider that the whole process has been constructive and satisfactory for community and for heritage.

Wallaceville Church – Heritage at Risk?

Built by the local Presbyterian community in 1893, the **Wallaceville Church** is a well-known feature of the scenic **Whiteman's Valley** area of Upper Hutt. According to the booklet "One Hundred Years of Worship", the church, which seats 108, was built by **Mr Whitcher** of Petone for the princely sum of ninety seven pounds.

Back in 1893 it was intended the church should be the hub of the surrounding area. By 1983 it was clear this was no longer the case and the church eventually passed into private ownership in 2002.



Since then the church has been well maintained and operated as a venue for wedding and other life celebration ceremonies. It remains virtually unchanged from when it was first constructed. Even the iron gates depicted in the photograph above are said to original.



Despite being an important part of Upper Hutt's early heritage and a well preserved example of late 19th century country church architecture, the church is neither listed on the NZHPT Register or as a heritage building on the Upper Hutt City Council District Plan.

In October 2013 the church, along with its surrounding acre of land, was put up for sale. While it is hoped any new owners will continue to maintain the church in its current condition and operate it as a wedding venue, its lack of official heritage protection leaves the church vulnerable to a more uncertain future. At present there is little to stop the church being modified into a residential dwelling, moved off site or even totally demolished.

Architectural style spreads its wings: New Zealand architectural history in the 1880s

Date: Friday 6th December 2013

Venue: School of Architecture, Victoria University, Wellington

Convener: Christine McCarthy (christine.mccarthy@vuw.ac.nz)

This symposium is one of a series of annual meetings examining specific periods of New Zealand architectural history. Papers cover a range of interesting topics about architects, building methods and social conditions of the period.

Symposium fee: The cost of the symposium (including proceedings) will be \$60, to be collected on the day of the symposium. Additional copies of proceedings will be available on the day for a cost of \$20.

Registration due: Monday 2nd December 2013

Conference: Friday 6th December 2013

Forthcoming events

The year's events will end with the symposium outlined in the paragraph above. Your committee is now planning next year's events and hope that during the summer months the first outing will be an exploration of the historic sites on the Miramar Peninsular. Advice on this will be to members by email.

We should like to plan some more extensive out of town activities so are seeking a volunteer who would be willing to organise these. If you would like to help, or have ideas for activities please contact us.

Membership and Charity Status

There has been a delay in arrangements for renewing subscriptions but we hope most are now up to date. Don't forget that donations given to HPW qualify for tax exemption. Our **registration number is CC49481** and details of HPW are available on the Charity Commission website **www.charities.govt.nz** We welcome new members so please tell your friends about us.

Editor – Priscilla Williams