

HERITAGE

HE REO MO NGĀ TAONGA TUKU IHO

VOICES

2026 WINTER
NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC
PLACES
AOTEAROA

KIWIS SELECTED FOR SINGAPORE

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Participants and dignitaries at the opening of the Commonwealth Field School in Singapore. Photo / NUS



Elizabeth Pishief
HPA Chair

Hello everyone. Welcome to our belated Winter edition of Heritage Voices/He Reo Mo Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho.

Key things to note:

- [Blue Plaques](#)

- [ACHS 2026 Tūhono](#)
- [Aotearoa History and Heritage Alliance: Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- [AGM](#)

[Blue Plaques](#)

We have had our first group of nine plaques being made now and have another bunch to be determined by the 31 July. If Member Organisations are contemplating applying for

interactions with local landscapes that foster environmental observation.

It is possible to adapt the workshop to local communities, heritage practitioners or researchers. I hope many of you will find this interesting and be willing to participate. It is entirely anonymous.

The Rapid Check is based on conditional questions and is available through a browser-based application. The idea behind the Rapid Check and the workshop is that local observations and lived experiences constitute valuable forms of knowledge.

JAMES BLACKBURNE APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF NZIA

*Historic Places Aotearoa excitedly congratulates **James Blackburne**, former President and current Executive member of Historic Places Aotearoa, on his appointment as the 66th President of Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects.*

James, who hails from Tairāwhiti Gisborne and is a director of Architects 44, brings to this national role a deep commitment to architecture, heritage conservation and professional leadership.



Photo / Supplied

A Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects since 2005, he has contributed over many years to governance, advocacy and practice initiatives within the profession. His appointment recognises not only his standing as an architect, but also his long-standing service to the wider heritage community.

For Historic Places Aotearoa, James' presidency is a source of particular pride. During his time as HPA President, and in his continuing role on the Executive, he has been a strong advocate for the protection, care and celebration of Aotearoa New Zealand's historic places.

His work has consistently highlighted the importance of understanding heritage as a living

part of our communities connected to identity, memory, craftsmanship and place.

As President of Te Kāhui Whaihanga, James will help lead a professional body representing more than 4,000 members at a time when the built environment faces significant challenges, including climate resilience, quality housing, community wellbeing and the careful stewardship of our architectural heritage.

We wish James every success in this important role and look forward to his continued contribution to heritage advocacy, architectural leadership and the shared work of ensuring that the places we inherit are valued, adapted and passed on with care.

KIWIS SELECTED FOR SINGAPORE



Leah Crisp
HPA Executive Member

The group outside the freshly renovated Chin Woo Athletic Association building. To the left is HPA Newsletter Editor Leah Crisp, with fellow kiwis Jasper Lawrence and Nova Peterson. *Photo / NUS*

When one thinks of Singapore, the first image that springs to mind is usually some form of skyscraper made of glass and concrete, right? That is at least what this Editor was thinking of before she handed in her final Masters assignment and jumped on a ten-hour flight to an island she couldn't quite place on a map if she tried!

While there are certainly *a lot* of glass and concrete skyscrapers in Singapore, the heritage lovers out there will be very pleased to know that Singapore also has over 7000 heritage buildings in conservation areas across its 64 islands. The twenty-four students of the 2026 Commonwealth Field School were lucky enough to visit a few of these over a jam-packed two weeks – and you heritage lovers are now lucky enough to hear all about it!

Run by the National University of Singapore's Architectural Conservation Laboratory (NUS ArCLab) in conjunction with the Commonwealth Heritage Forum, the course was an intensive two-week programme covering a wide range of heritage conservation topics – from lime plastering through to LiDAR and stained glass conservation.

Many of the lectures and workshops were held in an 1880 townhouse in one of these historic conservation areas, which had been donated to the

University in 2022 for the purpose of conservation. It was an idyllic and perfect setting for hands-on heritage learning – even if the unfinished and very imposing government building across the road looked like all life had been sucked out of it!

Far from a walk in the park, or a holiday (as one may have hoped for), the Field School was a celebration of heritage skills and techniques – a symbolic passing of the flame according to Kelvin Ang, Director Conservation Management at Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore (URA), who stated that: "*Heritage is about keeping the flame alive, and in this case, the flame of knowledge and hands-on skills that are needed in the next generation to restore and maintain the treasures of the past for the future.*"

After India, Aotearoa New Zealand had the second strongest contingent of participants, with the University of Auckland also well-represented – all three were either current or recent students.

No time was wasted with the jam-packed first day including meetings with dignitaries – such as the Chargé d'affaires of the New Zealand High Commission, Keith Conway – a walking tour, site visit, and guest lecture on William Morris and SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings).

As part of the Commonwealth Heritage Forum's mission to develop hands-on craft skills, a team of expert craftspeople were brought over from the United Kingdom to teach the 24 participants from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Phillipines, Pakistan, and Fiji. The stained glass lecture and workshop with Helen Bower of Stained Glass Design & Craft – a 2001 SPAB Fellow – saw participants design and craft their own stained glass panel, after being inspired by the coloured glass of Singapore's St. Joseph's Church and the Church of St. Alphonsus.

Learning about lime was next on the agenda, and over three intense days, Group 1 mixed lime putty and sand the old-fashioned way in tubs and buckets – expertly supervised and instructed by Gaches Plastering's Will Gaches, a second-generation traditional plasterer. Having only ever heard about the lime cycle, it was epic to see it in person, albeit somewhat exhausting – there is a reason why mixers were invented!

Each participant did, however, find a new appreciation for the satisfying feeling of applying plaster to a wall, this Editor included! We finished the block by practicing some decorative lime plasterwork, with many displaying a strong artistic talent (this Editor *excluded*), before all the efforts of the last three days were chiseled clean off, ready for the next group!



The artists at work. *Photo / Waverly Wu*

This participant also found a new appreciation for those around the world – even our neighbours in Australia – who work in tropical conditions. With temperatures consistently in the 30s, and humidity above 80%, this Editor resigned to never complaining about the weather here ever again!

It was soon timber's turn, and 'timber frameologist' Joe Thompson of the Weald and Downland Living Museum (for all you keen-eyed *Repair Shop* watchers, that's where it is filmed) taught us all about wood's practical and tactical conservation, before letting us loose to craft our own mortise and

tenon join! What fun!



Leah with her mortise and tenon join in front of the NUS ArCLab. *Photo / Leah Crisp*

It wasn't all hard work though – to close the programme, participants and lecturers alike adventured over to neighbouring island Pulau-Ubin, an island complete with mischievous food-stealing monkeys and a gorgeous sea-side heritage building that made one wonder if they were in the British countryside instead!



Chek Jawa Visitor Centre *Photo / Leah Crisp*

Truly a terrific experience, the heritage skills programme provides an amazing opportunity to network with likeminded groups of heritage professionals from around the world, and discuss global challenges facing conservation.

Keep an eye on the [Commonwealth Heritage Forum](#) website for more opportunities like this!

‘STOP THE ROT’ OF BUILDING ONE - FORMER CARRINGTON HOSPITAL



Audrey van Ryn
Civic Trust Auckland

‘Building One’ at the former Carrington Hospital site, as captured in March 2026. *Photo / Sam Smith, Stuff*

Driving past a bunch of placard-waving protestors on a Saturday morning in central Auckland during the past few weeks, many motorists have been tooting their horns in support.

Since 30 May, Friends of Carrington Building One have organised these protests outside Building One (former Carrington Hospital) at 1/1-44/1 Carrington Road, Point Chevalier, to demand that the developers protect the building from water ingress and vandalism.



‘Demo against Demolition’ of Building One. *Photo / Allan Matson*

This Victorian style building was built in 1865 and has Category I (Heritage List Number 96) and

Category A status. For much of its life, it was a psychiatric hospital under various names, and later served as Unitec's architecture and design school for 27 years.

The Point Chevalier Social Enterprise Trust (now the Cachet Foundation), chaired by Chris Casey, proposed the transformation of Building One into an arts, creativity and wellbeing community hub. Their feasibility study was presented to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (now the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport) and Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau. It outlines spaces for 270 creative studios, rehearsal rooms, galleries, residencies, holistic well-being centres, community rooms, workshops, and youth and adult education programmes.

The rest of the site is being developed for around 4,000 new homes. The first dwellings were completed in late 2025, with the next stage due to be completed towards the end of 2026: a mix of terraced houses, low-rise and high-rise apartments.

MHUD had stated its intention to adapt Building One for reuse, as well as the pumphouse on the site. The ministry was responsible for the building until October 2025, when it handed over ownership to the developer, the Marutūāhu Ockham Limited No.6 Partnership.

During the five years the building has been empty, it's been deteriorating. More recently, tiles have been removed from the roof, resulting in severe water damage.

On 13 May this year, Auckland Council served the site's developers with a bylaw notice, requiring them by 13 July to secure all entry points and maintain barriers to prevent ongoing vandalism and weather damage. Failure to comply could result in prosecution and fines of up to \$20,000.

Local politicians Mt Albert MP Helen White and Auckland Councillors Christine Fletcher and Julie Fairey have expressed their concerns about the building. Helen White, during parliament's recent Scrutiny Week, raised the issue of the building's

neglect with Chris Bishop, who undertook to contact the relevant iwi about these concerns.

Civic Trust Auckland submitted on Private Plan Change 94, about the rezoning of the land for development. Our submission included the following: "CTA supports the precinct including policies that encourage the retention and adaptation of heritage buildings on the site, including the Former Oakley Hospital Building (Building One), as well as elements identified within the precinct We look forward to the adaptive reuse of Building One..."

CTA members have been present at all the protests.

HERITAGE LISTING — ARE WE DOING IT WELL?



Dorothy Pilkington
HP Hawkes Bay

This preamble foregrounds a response article written by Kerry Pollock of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, to address concerns related to heritage listings

On 20th June *The Post* newspaper ran an opinion piece written by Sophie Kahn, as owner of a home listed as a Category 1 heritage item on Wellington City Council's District Plan. Headlined "[How heritage law turns homeowners into involuntary curators](#)" Kahn writes that "[heritage listing does not simply restrict what you may do with your home-it obligates you. Permanently ... The external footprint of my home cannot be altered, not a window, not a roof material. Repairs and maintenance must meet prescribed standards, and use heritage materials. My land cannot ever be developed...](#)"

The house in question was designed by modern movement architect Ernst Plischke – one of the very first he designed after his arrival in New Zealand. Its heritage value was first formally recognised with a Category 1 listing by Heritage New Zealand in 2005, and thus, the inclusion of the property on the City

Council plan was a logical next step – but the way this came about is another issue raised in the *Post* article: "[The letter arrived in the post. No phone call beforehand, no email, no knock on the door... my home had been nominated for compulsory heritage listing ...](#)"

This is a modestly sized house that, as Kahn points out, in terms of comparative valuation as part of Wellington's housing stock is "an ordinary house owned by ordinary people". In her estimation the obligations and restrictions imposed by the heritage listing will cost her dearly, not only in regard to the maintenance and development aspects, but also in its impact in becoming "functionally uninsurable" and market value if the property is sold.

Kahn expresses the view that "If a building is of such extraordinary significance that its preservation justified overriding the rights of the owner, then society should also accept the financial obligations that follow – rates, maintenance, compliance, and the destruction of market value."

The article provides food for thought and debate ... [does heritage listing override the owner's rights?](#)
[Could the current listing process be improved in terms of owner involvement?](#)

Find the answers to some of these questions below.

KAHN'T DO ISN'T TRUE



Kerry Pollock
HNZPT

Kerry Pollock is an Area Manager for the Central Region.

Our nation's cultural heritage is unique and irreplaceable, forming the heart of our national identity. Heritage increases our shared understanding and appreciation of our diverse historical and contemporary realities. Its conservation uplifts cultural identities and personal wellbeing by valuing and making transparent our shared stories and recognising and reflecting different narratives. Heritage is a platform for economic growth and development through tourism and is part of the solution to the global climate crisis. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) is proud to work with individuals and communities to recognise and protect places that hold significance for all of us.

We see heritage buildings as living, malleable places that have a past, present and future. They are not treated like 'frozen museums', as stated by Sophie Kahn, current owner of the Category 1 historic place Kahn House, in a recent opinion piece published by *The Post* ('How heritage law turns homeowners into involuntary curators', 20 June 2026). Our expert advisors work with owners to come up with solutions that retain heritage values and ensure buildings are fit for modern use. We also provide local authorities with expert, pragmatic and

An exterior view of the front of the Kahn House which was photographed by Irene Koppel in 1941. Courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library Photo / Irene Koppel

free advice. Sometimes there is a contest of ideas and robust debate, but an outcome that all parties can live with is the end goal.

[Kahn House \(1941\)](#) is the first Wellington building designed by internationally renowned modern movement architect Ernst Plischke and the second he designed in New Zealand. It stands on its own merits as a significant building in our nation's architectural and cultural history. Kahn House's heritage value was first formally recognised in 2005, when it was entered onto the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero as a Category 1 historic place in a rigorous public process informed by expert advice and with the support of the then-owner.

In 2011 that owner applied to build a major extension which would have doubled the size of the house. HNZPT supported the consent application, noting that the design was sympathetic to the original building and enabled its long-term wellbeing and occupation. For unknown reasons, the extension was not built. If we received a consent application from the current owner for a similarly well-executed extension that did not detract from the building's heritage values, we would likely support that too.

It is in everyone's interest that heritage places can change and be future-proofed, which is why our country's heritage system allows for this. Contrary

to Ms Kahn's claims, changes to heritage buildings are provided for in the Wellington City Council District Plan historic heritage policies and rules. If a building is in the heritage schedule of a district plan (as Kahn House has been since 2024) then there are specific rules that govern changes. The test is to what extent the proposed changes impact the identified heritage values. Furthermore, significant changes to any building, heritage or not, must align with general district plan rules and the Building Act. In this sense, heritage buildings are no different to any other building. Rules are there to ensure buildings are liveable and safe, both for occupants and their neighbours. For our heritage places, specific rules are intended to ensure that the qualities that make these places special are not diminished or destroyed.

We often find that real estate agents highlight a building's heritage as a positive marketing point. Auckland realtors Barfoot & Thompson recently noted that well-maintained heritage properties command a premium price. Modern movement properties like Kahn House are highly sought after whether formally recognised as heritage or not. In 2024, the Sutch-Smith House in Brooklyn, another Plischke building, sold for just over \$2 million, a figure that exceeded its capital value.

A recent Wellington City Council survey of heritage building owners found that 75% of respondents

agreed or strongly agreed that heritage places contribute to Wellington's unique identity. 50% wanted to keep their buildings in the district plan's heritage schedule, 31% wanted them removed and 19% weren't sure. According to the council, 'owners were also generally positive or indifferent about the heritage listing's role in their decision to purchase'.

The system is not perfect. While heritage owners can get free conservation advice and access public funding, a regulatory and funding environment that more generously supports owners is desirable. Rates relief or consent fee waivers, for example, would immeasurably help owners to maintain and enhance their heritage properties. Better resourced contestable heritage funds and reinstatement of Heritage Equip, a special government initiative that helped private building owners to strengthen heritage buildings, would have the same outcome. Recent proposed changes to our earthquake prone building system designed to ease the financial burden on owners are a welcome step in the right direction.

Providing tangible benefits and ensuring equal treatment is fair recompense for the private property owners who care for our nation's heritage places. It is to be hoped that reform of our resource management system, currently underway, has that outcome.

BLUE PLAQUES



Elizabeth Pishief
HPA Chair

The London Blue Plaques were initiated by the Society of Arts in 1866 after Sir Henry Cole highlighted politician William Ewart's suggestion in 1863 that it would be good to mark places associated with famous people as a means to slow the destruction of heritage places across London. The first plaque the Society of Arts would erect was at the birthplace of Lord Byron in Holles Street in 1867, although the building itself was demolished in 1889. A plaque was erected later in 1867 to Napoleon III – with this the oldest Blue Plaque existing.



Photos / Stuff about London, English Heritage

Different colours and styles were used until after World War II when the blue roundel became the standard. There is no copyright over the Blue Plaque icon and people are free to use it however they wish.

The London programme is now run by English Heritage while Historic England runs a national programme. There is a push in English Heritage for greater diversification of the plaques with only 15% commemorating women. It is now possible to explore different groups by following themes such as London's Black history, or living with disability, or more than 100 years of London's LGBTQ+ history.

The concept of Blue Plaques has spread throughout the world. Canada has regional and municipal programmes, with Ontario's blue and gold heritage plaque initiative Canada's largest and oldest provincial programme. Its priority themes are indigenous heritage, human rights and equality, women's history, celebrations of diversity and identity, community leaders and innovators, environment and natural heritage. and sports and leisure. "Legacy" blue markers are also prominent in some cities.

New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia all have Blue Plaque programs. New South Wales has a unique and diverse heritage, and the plaques recognise a wide range of people and events, including Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Blue Plaques mark the route of the Freedom Ride Trail. On 12 February 1965, University of Sydney students hired a bus, hung a banner across the side and set off on a 2-week bus trip across New South Wales. It was led by Indigenous rights activist Charles Perkins, who went on to become the first Indigenous man to graduate from an Australian university.

The Freedom Ride was instrumental in raising awareness of racial injustice and building momentum for reconciliation action in Australia and contributed significantly to changes in Australians' attitudes towards Aboriginal rights. Subsequently, in 1967, more than 90% of Australians voted 'Yes' in a landmark referendum that gave Indigenous Australians full rights as citizens.

The Blue Plaques programme promoted by Historic Places Aotearoa and now supported by Awheronui Charitable Trust, was initiated by Nigel Gilkison, an urban designer when he was Deputy Chair of Historic Places Mid Canterbury and a member of the Timaru Civic Trust.

Our website says our goals are twofold: to feature a plaque on every unique and significant heritage building and site in New Zealand; and to create a virtual trail up and down the country that can be followed by everyone.

Currently, unlike most Blue Plaques programmes, which link people and/or events with places, our focus is strongly on the architectural heritage of New Zealand – buildings individually, or as part of a streetscape. Every member organisation identifies places that are important to them.

At present in the North Island there are five churches out of seventeen places altogether; in the South Island there are eight churches and a vicarage out of thirty-four buildings. This means that over 27 % of the buildings bearing Blue Plaques are churches (the vicarage is included in this percentage).

Less than 2% commemorate a woman and only one mentions Māori (Sir Apirana Ngata) in passing.

We do have two Blue Plaques remembering two early conservationists (almost 4% of the current plaques).

But such lack of diversity does not reflect the history, people or significant places that tell the stories of New Zealand. If we are to achieve our goals we need to develop a framework of themes, diversify what we mark, and acknowledge important events and significant people.

We could begin by developing a trail to the conservation movement or mark the places where the Land March led by Dame Whina Cooper stopped in 1975, or perhaps, identify and mark the places throughout New Zealand where women met to advance the cause of electoral reform in the 1890s.

We must make our Blue Plaque programme relevant, interesting and an important contribution to raising awareness of the people, places and events which have made this unique country.

We need to develop themes for our trails and diversify our list of Blue Plaques.

We would love to have suggestions from members about themes, and people and events linked to places that reflect those themes.

SHERIDAN GUNDRY HONoured FOR HERITAGE SERVICE



James Blackburne
NZIA President

Historic Places Aotearoa warmly congratulates Heritage Tairāwhiti Chairperson Sheridan Gundry of Gisborne, who was awarded the King's Service Medal in the 2026 New Year Honours for services to historical research and heritage preservation.

Sheridan's recognition is richly deserved. For many years she has been one of Tairāwhiti's most effective champions for local heritage: researching, writing, interpreting and advocating, so that the stories of people, places and landscapes are not lost. Her work reminds us that heritage is not only about buildings or monuments, but about memory, identity and connection.

A former journalist and communications specialist and the previous editor of this very same newsletter, Sheridan has written extensively on the history of Gisborne and the East Coast. Her publications include local and regional histories on electricity, freezing works, built heritage, arts, surf lifesaving and community life. She has also contributed articles and interpretation that make heritage accessible to a wider public, combining careful

Sheridan Gundry at favourite spot, Anura Bay.
Photo / James Blackburne

research with the storyteller's eye for human detail.

Through Heritage Tairāwhiti, which she currently chairs, Sheridan has helped strengthen local heritage advocacy and public engagement. The development of the Centre for Heritage in the former Plunket Building beside the Taruheru River is a practical example of that commitment: a place where exhibitions, walks, talks and shared resources connect residents and visitors with the layered history of the region. Her work along the Taruheru also shows how heritage can be woven into active transport, tourism, education and civic pride.

At a time when heritage places across Aotearoa face pressures from growth, under-investment and changing regulation, Sheridan's honour is also a welcome affirmation of the value of community-based advocacy. It celebrates the patient work of research, interpretation and persuasion that keeps local histories visible and relevant. HPA acknowledges Sheridan's outstanding contribution and joins the Tairāwhiti community in celebrating this well-earned honour.

INSPIRING ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK FOR TARANAKI AND WHANGANUI



Hamish Crimp explaining the significance of the British imperial soldiers' settlement uncovered during archaeological excavations as part of the redevelopment of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery in Pukenui Queens Park. *Photo / Supplied*



Hamish Crimp Heritage Taranaki

The tenth annual New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) New Zealand Archaeology Week took place from 2nd-10th May 2026 and included a range of great events across the motu. This year Heritage Taranaki coordinated events in the Taranaki and Whanganui regions, in collaboration with other organisations and individuals.

This is the first year that Archaeology Week events have been held in historic Whanganui and these were well supported by the local community. We want to extend a special thank you to heritage planner Scott Flutey for his involvement in these events.

Throughout Archaeology Week 2026 Puke Ariki Library in Ngāmotu New Plymouth had on display a range of archaeology and history books for those wanting to learn more about archaeology and the history of the Taranaki region. Thank you to the team for putting together this display!

On Saturday 2nd May 100+ budding archaeologists attended The Archaeology of Central Whanganui – A Walking Tour with Hamish Crimp and Scott Flutey. We were blown away by the fantastic turnout, and impressed by the depth of historical knowledge held by participants and by the many thoughtful questions.

Participants explored the rich and complex history of Pukenui Queens Park, including of the Rutland Stockade; learnt the history of the old Whanganui Museum buildings and the original site of Christ Church; explored the history and significance of Pākaitore; and wandered the riverfront reclamations and Whanganui's early commercial centre in lower Victoria Avenue. A walk anticipated to take 1.5 hours turned into almost 2.5 hours – but we enjoyed every minute of it and look forward to running further walks in the future!

On the evening of Wednesday 5th May the team at Heritage Preservation gave a series of engaging presentations at Caring for Archaeological Collections, held at their cultural materials conservation studio in Ngāmotu New Plymouth.

Thank you to Dr Susanne Rawson for explaining

undertaken by the team at Heritage Preservation, from wet organic materials excavated on archaeological sites, to artworks held in public and private collections.

Also a special thank you to Heritage Preservation intern Anne-Marie (all the way from France!), who gave a presentation on her current project researching Milton Pottery, produced at Milton, Otago, during the late-19th and early-20th centuries. The aim of the research is to explore methods to help archaeologists identify New Zealand produced Milton Pottery wares on historic archaeological sites – this is important research!

The evening of Thursday 7th May saw Scott Flutey present *Hidden in Plain Sight: Conserving an 1850s tōtara slab whare in Okains Bay*, held at the Whanganui Regional Museum.



Whanganui District Council Heritage Planner Scott Flutey presents *Hidden in Plain Sight: Conserving an 1850s tōtara slab whare in Okains Bay*. Photo / Hamish Crimp

Scott first explored the fascinating history of the Fluerty/Flutey whānau in the Canterbury and Banks Peninsula area from the early decades of the 19th century. He then explained how restoration works, led by Scott and assisted by his father and others, were progressing on the 1850s single-roomed slab whare constructed at Okains Bay to house whaler-sawyer John Joseph Fluerty/Flutey, his wife Merehana Puaha (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māmoē, Waitaha), and their large whānau. These restoration works have saved this significant whare from almost certain collapse.

On Saturday 9th May, Hamish Crimp led *The Archaeology of Pukekura Park & Brooklands – A Walking Tour*. This tour explored the archaeology of Pukekura Park (celebrating 150 years this May!) and adjoining Brooklands in Ngāmotu New

Plymouth. As with our Whanganui walk, the anticipated time of 1.5 hours blew out significantly – this time to 3 hours! A special thank you to Alan Metcalfe and Ivan Bruce for their contributions.



Crossing the historic Poets Bridge in Pukekura Park during *The Archaeology of Pukekura Park & Brooklands – A Walking Tour*. Photo / Hamish Crimp

Sites visited included those associated with the 1860s Taranaki Wars such as the site of Fort Herbert occupied by kūpapa, the site of the Carrington Road Blockhouse occupied by members of the 65th Regiment, and remnants of a rifle range that occupied the Pukekura valley between 1863 and 1868. Participants also saw a particularly well preserved ditch and bank fence, possibly constructed in 1876 and forming part of the original 'Recreation Ground' boundary.

At historic Brooklands, those in attendance visited the andesite stone chimney breast of Henry King's first residence completed in 1842-43 and burnt down in 1861, an adjoining water well, and nearby sawpit, where timber for the original house, as well as other early colonial New Plymouth buildings, was milled.

We want to offer another massive thank you to organisers and attendees for their involvement in Archaeology Week 2026 and can't wait to bring more events to Taranaki and Whanganui in the near future. Keep an eye on our website and socials (Facebook and Instagram) for future events!



Pākaitore (Moutoa Gardens) Photo / Hamish Crimp

NAPIER WOMEN'S REST ROOMS: A CIVIC LANDMARK RESTORED



James Blackburn
NZIA President

The former Napier Women's Rest Rooms in Memorial Square is one of the city's most distinctive civic buildings: modest in scale, generous in purpose, and unusually rich in social meaning. Designed in 1924 by Napier architect James Augustus "Louis" Hay, the building was conceived not simply as a public amenity, but as a utilitarian First World War memorial. It was formally opened on Anzac Day, 25 April 1926, when the adjoining reserve was renamed Memorial Square. At a time when Napier had few public facilities for women, mothers and children, the building provided shelter, privacy and dignity in the heart of town.

Architecturally, the Women's Rest occupies a special place in Napier's story. Hay, one of the city's most admired architects, was strongly influenced by the Prairie School and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The building's low roofline, carefully composed horizontal forms and domestic scale set it apart from the later commercial Art Deco streetscape for which Napier became internationally known. Yet it sits comfortably within that broader heritage

Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhoro
Tā-ū-rangi, [7866] Photo / Art Deco Trust

narrative: a reminder that Napier's architectural identity is not only about style, but about civic recovery, public service and community life.

The 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake gave the building an unexpected second chapter. Although damaged, it was repaired quickly and became a key part of "Tin Town", the temporary retail precinct that kept Napier functioning while the devastated central business district was rebuilt.



Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhoro
Tā-ū-rangi, [3278 f] Photo / Art Deco Trust

In later decades the rooms were adapted for a variety of community uses, including the Merchant Navy Club, a ballet studio and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. These changes kept the building occupied, but also obscured aspects of its original planning, finishes and public purpose.

By 2013, seismic concerns forced the building's closure. Its future became a test of Napier's willingness to protect smaller civic heritage places as carefully as its celebrated commercial landmarks.

The recent restoration, undertaken by the Art Deco Trust in partnership with Napier City Council and completed in July 2025, has returned the building to public life. The work was informed by careful research, with later alterations removed where appropriate and original details reinstated. Modern services and accessibility improvements were integrated discreetly, allowing the building to function for contemporary use without overwhelming its heritage character.



The iconic verandah of the Napier Women's Rest
Photo / Ann Galloway

That care has been recognised by Te Kāhui Whaihangā New Zealand Institute of Architects. In the 2026 Gisborne and Hawke's Bay Architecture Awards, the Restoration of the Former Napier Women's Restrooms by Ann Galloway and Gavin Cooper in association received the Heritage Award, and was also acknowledged with a Resene Colour Award.

The jury praised the depth of collaboration behind the project, the return of original details, the restrained introduction of new services and the thoughtful handling of accessibility. Of particular note was the researched colour scheme, closely matched to the original Art Deco-era palette and used to clarify the relationship between old and new work.

The relocation of the Art Deco Trust to the restored building in late July 2025 has given the former Women's Rest a fitting new role. The Trust, long associated with the preservation and interpretation of Napier's architectural heritage, now works from a place that embodies the very values it promotes: repair rather than replacement, civic memory rather than nostalgia, and active use rather than museum-like preservation. The building was officially reopened by Napier Mayor Kirsten Wise on 27 August 2025, and now includes meeting rooms available for community hire.

Nearly a century after it first opened, the Napier Women's Rest Rooms has resumed its place as a valued civic destination. Its restoration shows how heritage conservation can be practical, inclusive and forward-looking. More than a repaired building, it is a renewed public promise: that places created for care, remembrance and community still have an essential role in the life of the city.

HPA VACANCIES

Volunteers needed!

Executive Committee Vacancies: While there will be no election of officers at this year's AGM being the half way point in a two year term, we are currently seeking at least two people to fill vacancies.

In recent years it has proved very difficult to get members to serve on the HPA Executive Committee so we are now appealing to all members to make a special effort to find members who are prepared to fill vacancies on our committee.

Anyone offering to serve on the Executive Committee or become the Blue Plaques Coordinator or requiring further information should contact Denis Pilkington, HPA Secretary at info@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz or any member of the Executive Committee.

Blue Plaques Coordinator:

The current coordinator, long-serving committee member and Past President, James Blackburne, is retiring from the committee and we need someone to take his place. With generous funding now in place from the Awhero Nui Charitable Trust for a period of three years, we are now able to increase the number of plaques being placed each year. We need someone to assist the HPA Executive Committee in processing applications, arranging manufacture of the plaques and organising posting on the Blue Plaques Website.

HARE-ITAGE: HOW RABBITS BUILT EARNSCLEUGH HOMESTEAD



Alison Breese
HNZPT

Vacant for some years, Earnsclough Station Homestead suffered from rotting carpet, black mould, collapsed ceilings, and a leaking roof until the property was purchased by Ryan Sanders and Marco Creemers in 2022. The couple have undertaken extensive renovations to restore, and finally finish, the original planned homestead. The property's original character has been restored, with the owners painstakingly repairing and reusing material within the house. But what is the history of this "Castle" and what on earth does it have to do with rabbits?

Earnsclough Station Homestead is listed as a Cat 1 building with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and is situated on the west bank of the Clutha River between Clyde and Alexandra. It is an important South Island pastoral station and early

Earnsclough Castle. Photo / Earnsclough Castle Website

leaseholders A.C. Strobe and William Fraser were prominent civic leaders during a time in which Otago was New Zealand's most significant province. Fraser unfortunately is infamous for liberating the first rabbits in Otago which was a much-regretted initiative.

The station's battle against "the evil" of the rabbits shaped its early economy and rabbiting became a full-time job, with freelancers selling pelts and carcasses to offset costs. Overwhelmed by rabbits, the lessee from 1893, William Laidlaw, once wealthy, was left nearly penniless. He surrendered the lease in 1895, by which time the station could only carry 12,000 sheep, half the number it had supported in 1879. The station's pastures were decimated, a stark reminder of the environmental toll rabbits exacted on Central Otago.

The homestead, coach house and stables were built

in 1919, designed by Edmund Anscombe, for Stephen Spain who purchased the leasehold for the rabbit-infested run in 1902. Born in a tent during the 1862 gold rush, Spain was a butcher and baker from Alexandra.

Initially Spain's principal source of income came from rabbits and he used the money to stock the run with sheep. Spain contained the rabbit problem by first shooting and then canning rabbits for the export market. He made money out of the skins and opened a canning factory in Alexandra with over 90 workers processing 15,000 rabbits per day at its peak. As well as his successful canning business, Spain was actively involved in many local boards and civic affairs.

Flush with war time profits, the homestead is an imposingly fronted building of eccentric design and measured just a room and a half wide with open balconies. It consisted of 21 rooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 storerooms, and 2 sun balconies with grounds including a sweeping, tree-lined drive, which were laid out by one of the country's most influential landscape gardeners, Alfred Buxton. This display of conspicuous consumption earned the homestead the name 'Spain's Folly'.

Unfortunately, Spain became caught up in the post-

war collapse and his poor financial decisions meant he was unable to complete the building. Spain's rabbit factory closed in 1924 and the Great Depression later compounded Spain's financial woes with rabbits surging at Earnsclough once again. Spain died in 1940 and the Earnsclough Homestead was passed to his two sons and his son in law.

The building of a brick wall right through the centre led to decades of rumours of a bitter family feud. Granddaughter Bridgid Denniston dismissed the feud - the homestead was split into two to accommodate the two family's privacy, rather than any in-fighting. The homestead has passed through a string of owners since 1948 and the property was developed with orchards and agriculture and further subdivided but the homestead remained unfinished. Today the homestead or 'Castle' as its now known, and the refurbished Coach House operate as boutique luxury accommodation finally completing what was Spain's dream home.

For more information and to see the transformation of the property see HNZPT [Heritage New Zealand - Earnsclough Station Homestead](#) or [Grand Designs Series 10, Episode 1](#), TVNZ, aired Sunday 12 April 2026.

"Georgian Architecture"

Georgian architecture emerged in Britain between 1714 and 1830 and is characterised by symmetry, proportion, and classical restraint. Buildings typically feature balanced façades, evenly spaced sash windows, simple rectangular forms, and refined classical detailing derived from ancient Greek and Roman architecture.

In New Zealand, Georgian influences appeared in early colonial buildings, particularly government, residential, and mission structures, reflecting the architectural traditions brought by British settlers.

ARCHITECTURAL TERMS EXPLAINED

Notable New Zealand Examples include:

Kemp House (1822), Kerikeri - New Zealand's oldest surviving European building.

Mission House/Stone Store Precinct, Kerikeri - Early colonial architecture with strong Georgian influences.

Government House, Auckland - An important example of Georgian-inspired colonial design.

Pompallier Mission and Printery, Russell - French Catholic mission building with Georgian-era proportions and detailing.

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