

# VOICE of HERITAGE

HISTORIC  
PLACES  
AOTEAROA

## Conference a highlight for 2024

### FROM THE TOP

*HPA President Elizabeth Pishief*

Hello everyone. Welcome to our autumn edition of Voice of Heritage.

#### Local Heritage Matters

Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) with the considerable support of Historic Places Hawke's Bay and Awheronui Trust is running a national heritage conference on 8-10 November in Napier at the War Memorial Conference Centre on the Marine Parade. With the focus on Local Heritage Matters, the conference aims to attract and be of interest to community heritage organisations and people who value and love their local heritage in all its many manifestations.



We will call for papers and contributions this month. See our website [www.historicplacesaotearoa.nz](http://www.historicplacesaotearoa.nz) for more details.

Our aims are to:

- enable community heritage organisations to meet and network with like-minded groups and individuals.
- identify matters of interest and concern to the grass roots heritage communities across New Zealand
- provide relevant, stimulating, and educational heritage information.
- encourage groups, organisations, and individuals to join HPA because

Continued on page 2:



Ashburton's Pioneer Hall looks a little dwarfed by the new library building encompassing it.

## Old hall snug within new centre

*By Julie Luxton, Historic Places Mid Canterbury*

Pioneer Hall is a small, quaint heritage building, now housed inside Ashburton's large, modern and very busy new Library and Civic Centre, Te Whare Whakatere.

The little brick building had always oozed social history and was home to many community groups and services throughout its 108 years. It became headquarters to Historic Places Mid Canterbury in 2011 when we leased it from the owners, Ashburton District Council.

In 2018, we asked the then mayor of Ashburton to unveil a heritage Blue Plaque on it. This made it very hard for council to later decide the building needed to go to make room for the new Civic Centre and Library. Some might consider this smart lobbying.

The story of how Pioneer Hall came to be part of the new Ashburton Library and Civic Centre is described below. The building features on our local heritage schedule and with Heritage NZ.

We may not have got exactly what we wanted, but Pioneer Hall will now live on for many decades, protected against the elements and teaching our future generations about our past.

#### The Background

The 2011 Canterbury earthquakes weakened the Ashburton District Council's 1960s civic building. Its options were strengthen or move. As council had already outgrown its building, consultants looked for a new building site with the option of including a new library to replace the damaged and leaky existing one.

Continued on page 4



## Our executive

The HPA seven-member executive meets monthly via Microsoft Teams. Its members are:

**Elizabeth Pishief (president)**

president@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

**Mark Gerrard (vice president)**

canty@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

**James Blackburne**

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### EX-OFFICIO

**Gillian Creighton** (minutes secretary)

**Denis Pilkington** (secretary)

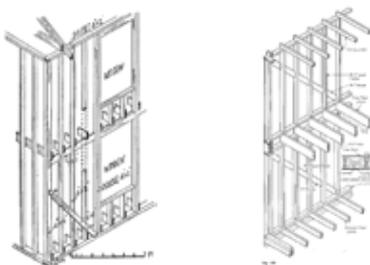
denis.pilkington@gmail.com

**Jo McLean** (treasurer)

accounting@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

**JOIN US TODAY**  
to advocate for our  
heritage, we need your  
strong voices locally,  
regionally and nationally

## ARCHITECTURAL TERMS *explained*



### BALLOON FRAMING

A system of light timber-frame construction in which the uprights or studs extend the full height of the frame and the horizontal structural members, such as the upper floors, are nailed to them.

This system of construction is rarely used now but was more common in early two-storeyed New Zealand cottages of the mid to late 1800s.

# Law will affect ability to protect

From page 1:

our heritage places need lots of passionate advocates led by a strong, independent organisation.

The government is planning to pass fast-track consenting legislation to streamline large infrastructure projects. Community involvement is deliberately excluded from the process. This legislation will seriously impact the protection of our heritage places and is likely to lead to considerable loss of our heritage landscape. HPA has provided feedback to the Ministry for the Environment and participated in a single meeting with them. We will continue to advocate for our heritage at every opportunity.

The theme for this year's World Heritage Day on 18 April is Disasters and Conflict through the lens of the Venice Charter. The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites is a set of guidelines, drawn up in 1964 by a group of conservation professionals in Venice, that provides an international framework for the

conservation and restoration of historic buildings.

I want to add a note to Jason Ingham's article on Earthquake Resistant Building Structures. The greenest buildings are those that already exist and the environment benefits considerably from protecting, conserving (including seismic strengthening) and re-using heritage buildings. Waste is reduced and resources are conserved.

Heritage buildings are sustainable and good for the planet.



## NATIONAL COMMUNITY HERITAGE CONFERENCE

NAPIER 8-10 NOVEMBER 2024

### Local Heritage Matters

A conference for historical societies, heritage groups and institutions, museums, iwi, hapū, marae committees, genealogists, and individuals from across New Zealand. Nau mai, Haere mai. Welcome everyone.

A call for papers will be on our website in March at:  
[www.historicplacesaotearoa.nz](http://www.historicplacesaotearoa.nz)

Topics will include protection, conservation, interpretation, fundraising, advocacy, risks, and solutions. Stories and experiences from local groups and people are wanted.

### Save the Date

Napier 8-10 November 2024

Napier War Memorial Conference Centre



# HPA Executive Mahi

by Denis Pilkington

## Mark dates in your diary

The major event for this year will be the National Community Heritage Conference mentioned in Elizabeth's introduction.

The conference will be held in Napier from 8 to 10 November as part of Napier's sesquicentennial celebrations.

The Hawke's Bay Heritage Award winners will also be announced on the evening of Thursday 7 November as an extension to the Conference programme.

## Please join our working party

Elizabeth also mentioned that we had made an initial submission to the Government's proposed fast-track consenting regime which is of major concern to us. The Bill is due to be introduced to the House this month so HPA will need to quickly re-convene the working party of individual members and others that compiled submissions to the previous RMA reforms last year. If you were not previously involved and would like to join the working party, we would be pleased to hear from you via [info@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz](mailto:info@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz)

# Voice of HERITAGE Managing heritage in face of uncertainty

By Andrew Coleman

It's alarming to write an article for this publication with such a concerning headline, but there are times when it's true. Last year, we along with many other heritage advocates worked through the reform of the Resource Management Act and endeavoured to ensure that what was best heritage management and what it would take to realise this were understood and included. I now repeat that exact same sentence, with only one difference as it starts with 'this year...'. We have gone from emerging certainty to uncertainty, and this poses both a challenge and an opportunity for us.

One of our jobs at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is to continue to advocate for heritage, so we will do so. I do acknowledge this is more difficult for those of you who represent HPA, because for us this is our job and for you it is using your volunteer time and goodwill. Nevertheless, it's another example of the need to continue to work together, pleasingly as we have been and will continue to do.

The current focus of the reforms appears to be on fast-track consenting, something described in a way that infers heritage interests slow this down. This is far from the truth, especially when the regulatory functions of archaeology are considered – 99% of archaeological authorities are approved within statutory timelines of 20 working days or quicker. This is a remarkable achievement and one that flies in the face of the myth that the authority process slows down development. Probably the single greatest time delay in development is the time it takes for a developer to make application for the authority. This is not because the process is cumbersome or overburdening, seemingly it is just because the developer can't be bothered. There are examples that 'hit the media' or reach a Minister's office where works are stopped, mostly because there was no archaeological authority in place when there should have been. Somehow this ends up being considered a problem for the archaeological authority process...go figure.

On fast-track consenting, we have many examples of positively contributing in an efficient and timely manner. The responses to the Canterbury earthquakes in 2010 and

2011, to Kaikoura and Seddon earthquakes, the crisis responses to cyclones Hale and Gabrielle all have initiated a fast-track consent process. They've worked efficiently and ensured heritage and other

requirements (eg health, safety, wellbeing, environmental protection) are considered and managed.

From discussions with HPA and others, we are aware of the uncertainty that exists for people confronted with seismic strengthening of their buildings and properties. This is not just a heritage issue. In Wellington city alone, there are 108 heritage buildings and over 350 non-heritage buildings classified as earthquake prone.

I once told attendees of a seismic engineers conference that when I'm told of a seismic risk assessment for a property the first thing I advise is to get a second opinion. I still stand by this. This is not only an issue for engineers. They use their knowledge and expertise to make a judgement and the next 'specialist' that comes along may have a different and justifiable opinion. I think this should be the focus of a discussion with Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) the lead government agency, and for Engineering New Zealand.

The uncertainty of reform and professional opinion has hindered heritage for years. We need an approach to contribute or counter uncertainties, something that offers a robust and possibly counter perspective. I think all of us being clear and consistent on the narrative of heritage's economic and public value could be this.

HNZPT is in a Working Group with our Commonwealth, State and Territory colleagues from Australia. We've highlighted six areas that show economic and public value of heritage.

**Economic value** - the value a person places on an economic good is based on the costs and benefits they derive from the good – often based on the person's willingness to pay for the good, typically measured in units of currency. The focus on economic value has been and will continue to be



HNZPT Chief Executive Andrew Coleman.

important but may miss the breadth and depth of value of heritage.

**Person impact and outcomes** – developing approaches that measure individual input and end user-defined outcomes is needed. Developing person models can ensure impact and

change are articulated through the many heritage roles individuals have.

**Public value** – 'value' may be a limiting concept when ascribing impact. Value associated directly with public can be described as: collective commitment to heritage maintenance; community identity creation and representation; and connection of people/s to places and futures.

**Wellbeing** – coordinated, meaningful collaboration between organisations and agencies, authentic engagement with individuals and communities, and heritage-led approaches to fostering enduring social change are key to wellbeing. Through a heritage lens, wellbeing is self-determination, sense-making, alternate spaces/languages for communication and meaning.

**Social cohesion and inclusion** – there are strong connections between wellbeing and social cohesion and inclusion created through heritage engagement. A dominant value of heritage engagement is in social bonding, bridging that allows individuals and communities to develop connectedness, self-awareness, and a sense of belonging with, or pride in, one's history, heritage, or community.

**Culture and creativity** – expanding the frame of heritage to include its places of and for creativity allows for the valuing and representation of culture and cultural practices that are place-based and inclusive of ritual, custom and storytelling that express people and place as well as what is valuable and meaningful.

Packaging this with case studies is our Working Group's focus. We will all be able to talk to the same studies and be on the same page. Others might remain uncertain on heritage, but our job is not to be so, and these value statements will hopefully go some way to allowing us to counter the uncertainty.

# Long process to saving Ashburton's heritage

From page 4:

In 2016 Opus Consultants identified a prominent area looking out on the town's Baring Square East. The proposal would involve demolition of the historic, earthquake-damaged Baring Square Methodist Church and prestigious, historic former Ashburton County Council building. Both unlisted. Pioneer Hall sat mere metres away on council-owned land – another threatened building, but listed.

Opus and council identified two other options, but they preferred the above site. They then put this out for public consultation. The fight to save the heritage buildings then began.

Historic Places Mid Canterbury used its fighting fund to publicly advertise in newspapers.

"Don't tick the box," we campaigned - retain these historic buildings instead. We also had public displays, lobbied councillors, front page newspaper articles, and addressed council members, church elders – anyone who would listen, even those that didn't want to.

Did we win? No. Did we lose? No.

Compromise won the day. The church demolished their hall but retained their church. They sold the hall land to council. Land sale money was used to restore their church – see June 23 Oculus.

Council then demolished the former County Council building but retained Pioneer Hall. Because Council did not have the church land, they bought the building on the other side of Pioneer Hall. They already owned Cavendish Chambers beside this building.

This gave council enough land for a new Civic Centre and library. But Pioneer Hall needed to be part of this.

## Public Consultation

Council consulted the public for



The view from the side looking in to the now well utilised Pioneer Hall.

feedback on the build in early 2019. It asked us to choose between four options. Council's preferred option was at a cost of \$45M. But you could vote for a bigger library option at \$53M. Or build a smaller library, cost reduced to \$41M. Or you could choose none of the above.

What did our forward-thinking community do? The majority choose the top option with all the bell and whistles coming in at \$53M.

Our council says the larger choice of civic centre meant they no longer needed the unlisted Cavendish Chambers building next to the new civic centre. Sadly, behind closed doors, councillors approved its demolition and only made this public once the demolition contract was let. See Nigel Gilkinson's article titled 'Wasteful Demolition Disappoints', Nov 2023 Voice of Heritage.

At the time of writing, the library has been open since early January, and council workers moved into the facility in February. The final cost is still an unknown. Covid caused mass

delays and, teamed with inflation, this will have forced costs up. Fortunately, Covid also created the government's Shovel Ready Fund, of which this build attracted \$20M.

## Design

Athfield Architects presented the design of Pioneer Hall, within the new Ashburton Library and Civic Centre, to our committee in mid-2019. This was "outside the box", and well beyond where any of our minds had ventured.

Personally, I didn't love it, but I certainly liked it. Overall, it got the tick from our committee. Often a façade was kept, but this was a building within a building. It had walls and roof timbers, but no roof. You could go upstairs and look down into it. The bare brick chimney was retained as a central feature. Children, our future, would be visiting this building all the time.

Now the building is finished and being used, how do I feel about this blending of new and old? I still have a bit of a fight within myself – I loved our little

Continued on page 5:



Pioneer Hall received a Blue Plaque in 2018. Home to HP Mid Canterbury 2011-20



Pioneer Hall, so named when it became Ashburton's first museum in the 1970s.



Back view of Pioneer Hall housed within the library... and the view looking down from upstairs.

## Building within library used every day now

From page 4:  
headquarters - just as it was. However, I also love the fact that our district's children and families now use this heritage building nearly every single day of the year. It begs them to ask "Why is this old building housed within the new? Why is it important? What story does this tell?"

### Pioneer Hall – the history

Pioneer Hall served the Ashburton community for more than 100 years before becoming enclosed within a new Library and Civic Centre.

It led many lives over the years and locals can associate it with Birthright, the local taxis. Many will recall it being the Women's Rest Rooms. It was also the site of Ashburton's first museum.

It was built out of necessity in 1916, but its purpose then was a far cry from being a public toilet. To understand the story we need to delve a bit further

back into the civic history of Ashburton town and county.

The Ashburton County Council was formed towards the end of 1876. An early priority was to establish a healthcare system for the residents of the scattered district it administered. Within two years, the borough council was established to administer the town area. The county council built an office building for itself in 1879 in Baring Square East. This was also the year the two councils began building a hospital.

The hospital board was formed by representatives from the two councils in 1885. This worked for 25 years until in 1910 the Government required Hospital Boards be independently elected bodies. This necessitated a separate building for the board. In 1916, a small brick building was built on County land facing Havelock Street, behind the County Clerk's house.

However, its hospital board use was

short-lived. By the mid-1920s the board had moved its headquarters to the hospital.

Meanwhile, the county office building had become cramped, despite alterations. Engineering department staff moved into the small brick building on Havelock Street, remaining there until 1939 when an imposing new county office block (now demolished) was built.

Its next phase was less glamorous but probably more appreciated by the district's women. It was converted to the Women's Rest Rooms. But it was much more than just toilets. It became a woman's hub. The lounge area had a fireplace and became a meeting room, particularly those many country farmers' wives. They met there, fed their children and babies there, sheltered there while their husbands went about their farming business in town or waiting for a ride home. It fulfilled this

role admirably until 1971 when more modern rooms were built.

The building was then leased to the Ashburton Historical Society and became Ashburton's first Museum,



Early photographs of Ashburton Hospital Charitable Aid Board staff outside Pioneer Hall.

Continued page 6:

# Celebrating World Heritage Day

By Stacy Vallis, President,  
ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand  
National Committee

The annual International Day for Monuments and Sites was established by ICOMOS and approved by the 22nd UNESCO General Conference in 1982, for communities and organisations to celebrate the world's cultural heritage.

'Disasters & Conflicts through the Lens of the Venice Charter' is the theme for World Heritage Day on 18 April 2024. This acknowledges the urgent needs of heritage practice today, and recognises the 60th anniversary of the Venice Charter (31 May 2024).

Key questions are: What is the role of the Venice Charter in these tumultuous



Stacy Vallis, ICOMOS  
Aotearoa New Zealand  
National Committee

times? Is the charter still fit for purpose?

The Venice Charter was developed in 1964 during a post-World War 2 context. Currently, heritage practitioners and communities are confronted by the climate emergency and natural disasters as well as various

global conflicts threatening cultural heritage.

ICOMOS International networks will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Venice Charter this year, starting on 18 April, and followed by the annual Scientific Symposium (Brazil, November 2024). Topics for discussion and exploration will include:

- the evolution of conservation practice since the Venice Charter
- impacts of the Venice Charter on global conservation practice
- suitability of the Venice Charter for addressing the climate emergency, conflicts, and natural disasters.

Activities might include assessing risk and vulnerability, enhancing intersectoral communications, loss and damage data collection, exploring traditional knowledge of disaster risk mitigation and preparedness, along with sharing precedents or case studies of adaptation, mitigation, and preparedness.

More information can be found at <https://www.icomos.org/en/89-english-categories/home/137481-international-day-of-monuments-and-sites-2024-disasters-conflicts-through-the-lens-of-the-venice-charter>

## Ashburton's Pioneer Hall used by many over decades

From page 6:

known as Pioneer Hall, a name that carries on today.

In 1978, the museum was relocated to more spacious premises in the Ashburton Technical School buildings (demolished in 2006).

The next 11 years saw the little building become the taxi office and then from 1990 until 2004, headquarters for Birthright.

Pioneer Hall was home to a craft shop for a year then stood empty until January 2007 when Ashburton District Council granted the local branch of NZ Historic Places Trust a five-year lease with right of renewal.

Members of the time saw a historic building deteriorating because it was empty. But by leasing it and using it, they hoped to be able to preserve it into the future.

Historic Places Mid Canterbury renewed the lease and it was their headquarters until vacating in 2020.

Pioneer Hall is listed as a Category 2 historic building with Heritage NZ. It is also a Category B building on the Ashburton District schedule of heritage places/sites.



Taking part in a panel discussion at Kinder House, Auckland were (from left) HPA president Dr Elizabeth Pishief, HNZPT Northern Region director Bev Parslow, Auckland Character Coalition Chair Sally Hughes and ICOMOS president, Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee Dr Stacy Vallis. Dale Bailey

## Consenting bill a focus for talks

Historic Places Auckland Tamaki Makaurau held a picnic day at John Kinder House in early March. Despite rather un-picnic-like weather on the day, more than 40 people enjoyed an art exhibition, guest speaker and panel discussion on heritage matters.

Speaking to a group of heritage advocates and professionals, HPA president Elizabeth Pishief announced the inaugural 2025 Auckland Heritage Awards. She talked about other regions' experiences in the awards, first started in Christchurch in 2010, and highlighted the success of the first one held in Hawke's Bay in 2022. The aim was to turn these into a national event.

In discussing the blue plaques project, she noted the first of two blue plaques in Auckland was on John Kinder House. She outlined planned activities for

the national community heritage conference to be held in Napier in November and emphasised the need for more members of HPA. She also expressed concern about the lack of community involvement with the Fast-Track Consenting Bill and the legislation once enacted. She feared heritage would likely be sidelined. Fortunately, s.6(f) of the RMA identifies heritage as a matter of national importance and must be considered.

Elizabeth, Bev Parslow, Stacy Vallis, Sally Hughes and Stacy Vallis discussed their concerns about the bill and determined to work together to make submissions to the Select Committee.

See the video compiled by Ian Qigley <https://youtu.be/0x6lQPnyrvw>

# Voice of HERITAGE Whanganui gains two more blue plaques

By Helen Craig, Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust trustee

Two Whanganui blue plaques were officially unveiled in early December by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga chief executive Andrew Coleman.

The first was unveiled in the morning to a large gathering of Bushy Park Tarapurui Forest Trust members, Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust members and MP Carl Bates.

Built in 1906 for Hereford cattle and racehorse breeder Frank Moore, Bushy Park – a Category 1 HNZPT-listed building – was designed by architect Charles Tilleard Natusch.

Upon Moore's death in 1962, the home and 220 acres of surrounding bush was gifted to Forest and Bird. In 1995 the site's management was handed to Bushy Park Homestead and Forest Trust. The homestead is leased out to Dale Pullen and provides accommodation, meals and function rooms. An environmental education centre was established in the stables. A predator-free fence has been added to protect the birdlife. Volunteers continue to provide support for the site and the forest is flourishing.

The second plaque was unveiled in the afternoon at Whanganui's first public museum, now known as Whanganui's Musicians Club, previously the Savage Club. Built in 1893, 130 years ago, Whanganui's second oldest civic building was built as the Whanganui Public Museum to house the collection developed by watchmaker and jeweller Samuel Drew, who had a keen interest



Bushy Park Tarapurui Forest Trust members, Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust members and MP Carl Bates at the unveiling of Bushy Park's blue plaque.



in natural history and had been making his collection available at his family premises.

By 1891 there was growing interest in establishing a museum in Whanganui. A museum committee was formed in 1892 and Drew's collection was bought by the borough council for £600. Drew remained as the museum's honorary curator until his



death in 1901.

The building is now well used by the Musicians Club, which is keen to restore and maintain it for another 130 years.

The plaques are a local project adopted by Whanganui Regional

Heritage Trust, as part of a national initiative by Historic Places Aotearoa.

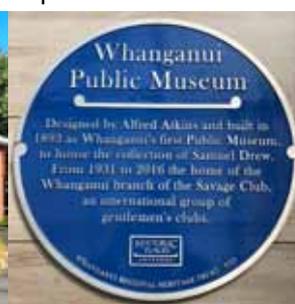
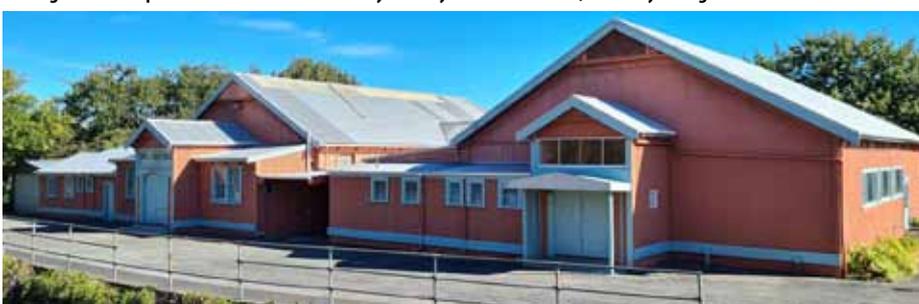
Current Whanganui Museum Director Dr Bronwyn Labrum is now on HPA's executive. Heritage trustee Helen Craig has led the local Blue Plaques project, working closely with trustee Ann McNamara to deliver the plaques. Acting Heritage Trust Chair Mary-Ann Ewing is grateful for the donors and grants supporting the trust's activities. Information can be found at <https://www.whanganuiheritagetrust.org.nz/> Whanganui now has 10 blue plaques, part of a national trail with 31 plaques

featured and more to come.

See <https://www.blueplaques.nz/>



Whanganui's first public museum is now used by the city's Musicians Club, formerly Savage Club.



# Shake, Rattle, and Hold: Earthquake-Resistant Building Structures – The 1931 Hawke’s Bay Earthquake Commemoration Lecture 2024

By Jason Ingham, Professor of Structural Engineering, University of Auckland

The invitation to present the 2024 lecture commemorating the Hawke’s Bay earthquake during Art Deco week was a useful opportunity to reflect on what has changed since I previously made a public lecture related to the structural seismic attributes of the Hawke’s Bay Art Deco building stock in 2015. It turns out that quite a lot has changed.

The National Seismic Hazard Model (Te Tauri Matapae Pūmate Rū i Aotearoa) is the output from a research programme led by GNS Science, where the location and rupture characteristics of faults are used to forecast the likely earthquake shaking that can be expected at locations across the country over different time periods.

With ever-growing knowledge of the location and attributes of faults across the country, there might have been the chance that the intensity of shaking was now forecast to be less than previously thought, but alas that is not the case. Instead, it is now thought that when measured over hundreds of years, the likely intensity of shaking at most locations in Aotearoa will be equal to or greater than previously thought.

The usual time frame used by structural engineers when designing new buildings or assessing existing buildings is 500 years (or more specifically 475 years). Next, there are different ways to describe the intensity of shaking at a specific location, including peak ground velocity and the duration of strong shaking, but the most common metric is perhaps Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA). And finally, there are relationships between the intensity of shaking and the probability of exceedance. It is effectively impossible to make general statements about how much the forecast shaking has increased without defining location, shaking metric, time period and probability.

But if you had to make a sweeping generalisation, then perhaps it would be fair to say that the shaking intensity in the Hawke’s Bay area is now thought to be about twice as high as previously thought.

**...the shaking intensity in the Hawke’s Bay area is now thought to be about twice as high as previously thought.**

Additionally, GNS Science has led a recent project investigating the attributes of the Hikurangi Subduction Zone, off the East Coast of the North Island. Further details can be obtained from the internet, but the banner

headline is that the Hikurangi fault is potentially the largest source of earthquake and tsunami hazard in Aotearoa New Zealand. This perhaps is no surprise when we remember the 1931 Hawke’s Bay earthquake, but is certainly a stark reminder of the earthquake hazard in Hawke’s Bay and the risk posed by tsunami, especially if an earthquake occurs at high tide.

With the seismic hazard now thought to be substantially greater than before, what is the risk? It turns out people have some difficulty when objectively assessing risk, and that there is a field of study devoted to the psychology of risk. It can be interesting to reflect on how risk is perceived by a general member of the public, the owner of a potentially earthquake prone building, or a risk assessment specialist.

People have habits of assigning more



attention to regularly occurring risk (perhaps being late for an appointment because you missed the bus, or being unavailable for a meeting because you might catch a cold), of giving positive or negative attention to emotive events (not swimming because you might

get eaten by a shark), or by discounting risk if it is fun (such as skiing, even though you might break your leg). Risk is defined as the product of probability times consequence, and it is particularly difficult to assess risk for low-probability, high-consequence events. It’s no surprise that some people consider the risk of damage and fatalities in a future large earthquake is low, perhaps when compared to the national road toll. But if you were to ask a specialist on earthquake risk about the risk associated with a future large Hawke’s Bay earthquake, who has focused specially on the probabilities and the consequences without the cognitive biases, then you would hear there is little doubt of significant seismic risk.

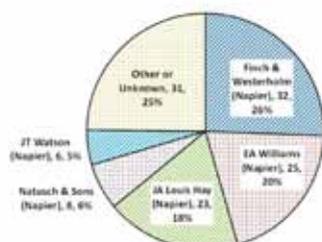
Meanwhile, following the Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 was passed. This legislation confirmed that the definition of an earthquake-prone building is one that has less than a third of the earthquake capacity of a comparable new building correctly

designed to current design standards (referred to as New Building Standard or NBS). The legislation also required a consistent methodology be developed enabling engineers to operate to a consistent set of criteria when assessing buildings.

This methodology begins with a traffic light system (red, amber, green) where the country is divided into high, medium and low seismicity.

Continued on page 9

## Architects



Walter Finch



JA Louis Hay



EA Williams



JT Watson



Rene, Aleck and Stanley Natusch

# Most Art Deco buildings 'not earthquake prone'

From page 8:

Hawke's Bay is in the red or high seismic zone. The methodology defines three profile categories for buildings that are potentially earthquake prone.

The most critical profile is Profile A, all unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings, regardless of age. But most URM buildings in Hawke's Bay were severely damaged in the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake, such that for this discussion Category A buildings can largely be overlooked. Category C is pre-1935 reinforced concrete buildings. Although some Art Deco buildings are dated from after 1935, the Art Deco building stock, as a generalisation, fall into Category C. The legislation next requires Territorial Authorities to write to owners of potentially earthquake-prone buildings, notifying them they must attend to their building in a prescribed timeframe. For the Hawke's Bay region, this timeframe is 15 years.

Napier City and Hawke's Bay District councils staff kindly provided a current snapshot: Of the roughly 140 Art Deco buildings:

- 55 buildings were identified as Category C (suggesting 85 remaining Art Deco buildings assessed or strengthened before law enforced)
- 21 buildings since been assessed as exceeding 34%NBS
- 1 building has been demolished
- 1 strengthened;
- 14 received extension with assessment due by 30 June 2024
- 2 buildings currently going through consent process to be strengthened
- remaining 16 buildings have earthquake-prone notices in force with a deadline of 2038.

In Hastings, 126 buildings Category C:

- 40 since assessed as >34%NBS
- 52 strengthened
- 34 have earthquake-prone notices in force with deadline ranging from Feb 2034 to Jan 2039.

The conclusion from this data is there has been very substantial proactive effort to assess and strengthen Art Deco buildings in Hawke's Bay.

Finally, with the extra engineering attention having been devoted to this class of building, what do we now know about their vulnerabilities? In simple

terms, three issues merit particular attention. The first is evidence of rebar [short for reinforcing bar] corrosion in some cases. This is usually attributed to the use of beach sand to make the original concrete, containing excessive amounts of sea chlorides that over time cause rebar corrosion. The other reason for corrosion to occur is when the thickness of concrete surrounding the steel reinforcement (referred to as cover) is insufficient, and air-borne chlorides from ocean spray lead to corrosion over time.

The second concern is associated with

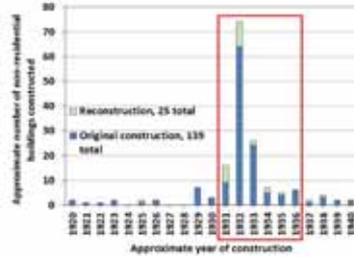
now, the current value of the future benefit is \$7,605. If the benefit occurs in 250 years, the current value is only \$5.04. And if the earthquake occurs in 350 years from now, the current value of this future benefit is 4 cents. This is called Net Present Value.

However, there are reasons to be optimistic about the future of our Art Deco buildings. Firstly, the tangible and intangible benefits arising from heritage. The intangible benefit is hard to quantify, and is enjoyed by us all even if the cost falls entirely on the building owner. But the tangible benefit is that tourists visit the region to see these buildings, and that tenants set up their businesses in these buildings specifically because people enjoy spending their money in these buildings. And as the data listed earlier shows, the majority of Art Deco buildings have already been assessed or strengthened to exceed 34%NBS, so it is a fact that most of the Hawke's Bay

Art Deco buildings are not earthquake prone.

## Today's Napier Art Deco buildings

- About 140 remain
- Note that 'Pre 1935' covers almost all



irregular or unfavourable detailing. It is difficult to characterise issues falling into this category, but in simple terms the unfavourable geometry results in loads being transferred through the structure in an unfavourable way, generating increased levels of load distress at certain locations.

The third – masonry infill in concrete frames can be a concern for both out-of-plane response (when the masonry falls out of the wall frame and onto the street) and for in-plane response when the masonry wall must deform in collaboration with the bounding concrete frame, resulting in displacement incompatibility between the two different structural systems.

Unfortunately, the economic argument for seismic retrofitting is difficult to justify. Money needs to be spent now, but the benefit of this investment arrives in the future, and the current value of a future benefit can be low. Even very low.

For example, assume interest rates stay uniformly at 5 percent. If the benefit of spending \$1M now occurs in 10 years time, the current value of that future benefit is only \$613,913. If the benefit occurs in 100 years from

## Member Organisations of HPA

- Cargill's Castle Trust, Dunedin
- Historic Places Auckland
- – Tamaki Makaurau
- Heritage Tairāwhiti
- HP Hawke's Bay
- Heritage Taranaki Inc
- Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust
- HP Manawatu-Horowhenua
- HP Wellington
- HP Canterbury
- HP Mid Canterbury
- Taonga Tū Heritage Bay of Plenty

## Associate Members

- Christchurch Civic Trust
- Civic Trust Auckland
- Remuera Heritage Inc
- Patea Historical Society
- Heritage Wairarapa
- Kinder House Society
- Point Chevalier Social Enterprise Trust
- Sth Canterbury Historical Society
- Timaru Civic Trust

# Restored Johnston & Co. a gem for river city

By Marta Giaretton

The Johnston & Co. building – the tangible witness of Whanganui’s ‘golden age’ business era in the early 1900s – is likely the only still-standing building of successful trade, insurance and shipping company Messrs. Johnston & Co. Ltd., ranking it with the most important of colonial houses.



When owners Dmytro Dizhur and Marta Giaretton bought the building, it was in much need of love. They had no documentation on the building’s history except for the name on the façade, Johnston & Company Ltd. But they had a strong passion for historic buildings and a vision to bring Johnston & Co back to its former glory and to Whanganui’s people and businesses.

After completing exterior restoration work in March 2020, Covid and nationwide material supply shortages slowed progress. Nevertheless, the structure was earthquake strengthened in 2021-22 and the interiors were restored and refurbished in 2022-23 to enable the adaptive reuse of the building. Ground and first floors are commercial spaces, while second and third floors are short term rental apartments listed in airbnb. Work was completed in September 2023: at 110-years of age, the Johnston & Co. building is magnificent again.

## Mercantile house history

John Johnston (Ayrshire, UK 1809 – Wellington, 1887) arrived in Wellington



Whanganui’s Johnston and Co. building today.

from London in 1843 and later became a member of the New Zealand Legislative Council (MLC). One of the earliest Wellington settlers, he used his enterprise and rare business ability to establish well-known Wellington firm of Johnston and Co. in the mid-1840s with some friends (Auckland Star, 18 Nov 1887). John retired in 1878 leaving the company to his sons: the Hon. Walter Woods Johnston, an ex-Minister, and the Hon. Charles John Johnston, MLC (Cyclopedia Co Ltd, 1897).

Johnston and Co. was a large mercantile house and stock and station agency trading with England, New South Wales and other colonies (Auckland Star, 18 Nov 1887), ranking with the most important of colonial

mercantile houses. It imported wines and spirits and general merchandise, and were prominent exporters of wool, flax, frozen and preserved meat, and produce. The firm also worked as shipping agents, representing several companies, and as insurance agents for the London and Lancashire Fire Office in Wellington and for the National Fire and Marine Insurance Company of New Zealand in Whanganui.

The business opened the Whanganui store in 1878 in a single storey timber building at the same site in Taupo Quay.

In 1914, they constructed the current brick building, adding a mansard roof in 1928. The Wanganui Chronicle (10 Oct 1914) reported Leopold J. Atkinson was the designer, J. W. Alderton, the builder. Mr May did the plumbing, and Messrs. Tingey had charge of the painting.

"The job is a well finished one and reflects credit on all concerned. It forms another acquisition to the fine class of business premises that have been built up during recent years, and which tend to give Wanganui such a solid arid business-like aspect."

The last bricklaying ceremony was held on 21 August 1914 (Wanganui Herald, 22 August 1914).

"An old ceremony of the building trade not often seen nowadays took place yesterday at Messrs Johnston and Co.'s new building, Taupo Quay, when the last brick was laid. The workmen invited Mr J.R. Foster to finish the building, which he did in quite a tradesman-like manner, the silver



Modern furnitures contrast with exposed original brickwork in the CityView apartment on the second floor.

Continued on page 11

# Voice of HERITAGE Restored Johnston & Co. a gem for river city

From page 10:

trowel which he used being presented to him by the men. The flag was then hoisted over the building in sign that all the bricks were laid, and all present then sang the National Anthem. Mr Foster then invited the men to his hotel, where refreshments were served, and appropriate toasts honoured."

Johnston and Co. is believed to have occupied the building until at least 1955 (Whanganui District Council Heritage Report: 396). The land was leased again to Johnston and Co. in 1964 for further 21 years and in 1967 transferred to Herbert Henderson and Luk Agnew (name to verify). In following years, the lease was transferred multiple times and occupancy was sporadic and varied.

## Heritage award winner 2023

The iconic 1914 Johnston and Co. building was in November 2023 named the winner of the Whanganui Regional Heritage Awards for its meticulous restoration. The building won the Supreme Award, the Public Realm - Saved and Restored Award, and the Seismic Award.

As described in the award citation:

Owners Dmytro Dizhur and Marta Giaretton retained the full-floor retail space on the ground level currently occupied by The Burrows emporio and wine bar.

The first floor is a sleek office/retail/gallery space with its own kitchen and restroom facilities, and commands superb views of the river and of Victoria Avenue.



The spacious penthouse apartment with exposed original timber trusses and contemporary living spaces.

The second floor is now home to two large New York-style cosy apartments, which feature exposed original brickwork contrasting beautifully with modern architectural finishes. The entire top floor level is a stunning, spacious penthouse apartment with exposed original timber trusses, contemporary living spaces and a large deck with unparalleled views of Whanganui River - the perfect place to enjoy sunsets. These three luxury apartments are available for short term rentals in airbnb. A wonderful opportunity for Whanganui visitors, heritage enthusiasts and the local community to experience living in this

renovated gem, in a perfect blend of history and contemporary comforts.

All the original construction and decorative details have been maintained as much as possible and restored to their original glory. The restoration and earthquake strengthening works were partly possible thanks to the support of the Whanganui Heritage Grant Fund and of Heritage Equip.

The enthusiasm of the Whanganui people in seeing this building's journey to being restored has been essential in finding the renewed energy to persist and complete the project and vision for the Johnston and Co. building.



The 'Johnston and Co.' penthouse deck with unparalleled views of the Whanganui river.