

# NEWS

## Mark the date for Whanganui conference

### FROM THE TOP



HPA President  
James Blackburn

It has been a turbulent time for the country since March and just as we were settling back to normal we have again been locked down (at Level 2 or 3). No doubt things will remain

somewhat fluid for the foreseeable future. For many of us, the lockdown has meant a change in the way we all operate.

Many heritage organisations have not been able to connect with their members. Over the coming years, domestic tourism is likely to boom and

this will provide an opportunity for local heritage tourism as many people will be looking for things to do as they travel around. This will provide an opportunity to tell the stories of your place to the people of Aotearoa.

HPA's Executive is concerned that the Government's desire to fast-track projects around the country will place heritage at a greater risk.

We will be lobbying government about this and ask that you also contact your local MPs and advocate for our heritage to be protected in any new legislation.

Our conference date and location has been set, so please put the weekend of 16 to 18 October in your diaries and start planning a trip to Whanganui now.

## Working together the key

Making our heritage visible, valuable and protected for future generations is the theme for Historic Places Aotearoa's annual conference in October.

HPA executive member and Whanganui District Councillor Helen Craig is delighted to be hosting the conference on Saturday 17 October in her home town, one of New Zealand's most significant heritage cities.

Welcoming drinks at NZ Glassworks will set the mood on Friday 16 October when master glass artist Philip Stokes will demonstrate glass blowing. His artwork may be auctioned near the end of the event as a fundraiser.

Easy self-directed walks on Saturday morning include the Rivertraders Market, a craft and farmers market on the banks of the Whanganui River, artists' studios, boutique shopping and cafes in the the heritage town centre, and the Sarjeant Art Gallery, Quarts Ceramic Museum and Whanganui Regional Museum.

The AGM and conference gets under way from 10am at the Alexander



Helen Craig

Heritage and Research Library with talks and presentations from 1pm.

Keynote speakers include Heritage NZ board chair Marian Hobbs; Maori Heritage Council chair Sir John Clarke; Heritage NZ chief executive Andrew Coleman; and Whanganui District Council heritage

officer Scott Flutey.

The AGM will be followed by a Saturday night dinner and a Sunday morning double decker guided bus tour to heritage sites of interest.

The conference is hosted by the Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust Board in partnership with HPA.

Helen Craig says the conference is an opportunity to connect grass-roots heritage organisations with policy-makers and Heritage NZ in a relaxed setting.

"This should make for better heritage outcomes. Key discussion points will include strategies to make our heritage visible, valuable and protected.

HPA has developed a comprehensive

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## Congratulations in Order

The HPA Executive congratulates heritage campaigner and historian Dame Anna Crighton for her 2020 New Year's Honour.

Our founding president was named as a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to heritage preservation and governance. She was previously awarded a Queen's Service Order and is a JP.



## ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

*explained*

### DORIC



The Doric order, the earliest type of classical Greek architecture, has a simple yet powerful capital design.

*Wikipedia: Original source was an engraving from A. Rosengarten, A Handbook of Architectural Styles, NY, 1898*

## HPA EXECUTIVE MAHI

Over the past few months, the Executive has been:

### Lobbying

the Prime Minister in her capacity as Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage about the proposed Covid-10 Recovery (fast-track consenting) Bill. The joint letter to her from HPA and ICOMOS was followed by another to various ministers and party spokespeople.

James Blackburne appeared before the Parliamentary Committee re Covid-19 in June.

### Making submissions

to Government on The Resource Management Amendment Bill (Nov 2019) the Comprehensive Review of the RMA led by Tony Randerson QC (April 2020) National Policy Statement – Urban Development, Ministry for the Environment (April)

### Preparing applications

to the Provincial Growth Fund for Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay and Whanganui to each install 100 aluminium blue heritage plaques on historic buildings and sites as part of a nationwide heritage trail.

### Reporting

HPA treasurer Chelle Gandell has found that not all our Members Organisations are registered charities.

Of those who are, not all are up to date with their annual reporting and not all are using the correct reporting format. We will be in touch to provide a reminder and necessary support.

### Discussing

- the idea that regional heritage awards will feed into a national award
- policy development on strengthening protection for heritage with Ministry for Arts, Culture and Heritage.

### And James as HPA President

- talks every six weeks with Heritage NZ CE Andrew Coleman, and the presidents of NZIA President ICOMOS and NZ Archaeological Association
- puts his name on HPA submissions and media releases
- appears before parliamentary committees
- provides advice
- networks formally and informally.

## New plaque at Kurow and more in planning

After delivering five Blue Heritage Plaques last year, Historic Places Mid-Canterbury is looking to install five more within the region this year.

The South Canterbury Historical Society (an HPA Associate member) and the Timaru Civic Trust are progressing the Blue Plaque initiative in South Canterbury, with the first five plaques currently on order and due to be placed on five heritage buildings in Timaru in the first half of 2020. (See page 7.)

The 87-year-old grandson of Kurow's first resident doctor contacted HPMC

from the UK, where he lives, to see if we could produce a Blue Plaque to go on the original Doctor's House in this tiny, historic North Otago township. This house was later occupied by Dr D. G. McMillan who, with Rev.

A. H. Nordmeyer and headmaster A. M. Davidson (known as the 'Three Wise Men' of Kurow), met regularly here to develop what was eventually to become New Zealand's ground-breaking Social Security system, introduced when the first Labour government came to power in 1935.

An earlier plaque on the site, produced by the North Otago branch of the former NZ Historic Places Trust did not mention Kurow's first resident doctor, for whom the house was originally built. The wording on the replacement

plaque now includes reference to the original date and purpose of this modest (unlisted) 1893 Oamaru Stone bungalow.

In January 2020, the new plaque was placed on an existing plinth outside the now private residence. During research for this building, the original architectural drawings of the house were found, showing it was designed by architect John Megget Forrester, son of Thomas Forrester (of Forrester & Lemon fame) and architect of Oamaru Opera House.



Wellington councillors voted in early August to release a draft Spatial Plan showing maps of where height restrictions would be lifted and planning rules relaxed, the aim being to accommodate a much higher population in a green city.

Historic Places Wellington (HPW) wrote to Wellington City Council asking it to reconsider its draft in response to a post-COVID climate.

HPW chair Felicity Wong says several factors make it sensible to check council's projected growth figures including the likely halt on the airport extension and direct flights from Asia bringing large numbers of students, tourists and businesspeople.

"HPW now seeks a new, realistic Housing and Business Development Assessment with real data about housing needs, instead of the city's out-of-date growth model. We are deeply concerned about the draft because

it proposes to break up Wellington's designated character areas of Mt Victoria, Thorndon, Mt Cook, Newtown, Berhampore and Aro Valley.

"The suburb-wide protections inner-city areas currently have will be replaced with micro-areas of character protection for particular streets only."

The draft also enables six-storey buildings across large areas of Mt Victoria, Newtown, Mt Cook and Berhampore and two to three stories throughout Thorndon and Aro Valley.

"Inner-city heritage suburbs have housed people from all walks of life. The de-regulation will enable developers to pepper-pot buildings with a high degree of single and double storey wooden integrity throughout older suburbs.

"Newtown, the city's old commercial suburb, is set to become a mini New York. Wellington needs affordable housing and to become a green city,

but not by erasing the city's heritage and character."

### NPS-Urban Development

The Government's new National Policy Statement on Urban Development, released in July, contains the power to exclude heritage sites and other S6 matters from densification, as requested by HPA and HPW.

Felicity Wong says HPW will ask for character suburbs to be exempt from planned densification.

"The NPS-UD 2020 overtook Wellington's earlier planning for "gentle density", initiated under a previous NPS. WCC has since amended its draft Spatial Plan to comply with the new NPS-UD 2020."

Consultation began on the council's draft Spatial Plan on 10 August and will continue for eight weeks.

See [wellington.govt.nz/have-your-say/](http://wellington.govt.nz/have-your-say/) consultations

## Spatial plan 'foolish and out of date' – HPWellington

The biggest building deregulation in decades is beginning with Wellington City Council's draft Spatial Plan – which HPWellington calls foolish, flawed and out of date. Felicity Wong says:

"We want a compact resilient city - but not at the expense of heritage and character homes.

"Foreign cities have their particular character but when we think of Wellington, we think of wooden houses nestled into the hillside. They are our identity. That identity exists because we expressed our shared community value, and ensured the rule of law protects them.

"Wellington's draft Spatial Plan will break up the inner city character areas. Suburbs which have widespread protection – Mt Victoria, Thorndon, Mt Cook, Aro Valley, Newtown and Berhampore – will be replaced by micro-areas of protection. Micro-areas are determined by uniformity of condition. Google street view photos of homes and neighbourhoods were used to make determinations.

"If neighbours have 1960s windows in their old villa, the street didn't qualify and appears excluded from existing character protections like demolition.

"Sixty percent of the character areas are set for high rise development.



HPW chair Felicity Wong presented her thoughts to Wellington councillors in early August 2020.

"HPW has written to WCC noting the Housing Assessment computer model it used doesn't comply with the Government's new National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD). It is out of date in assessing housing demand, and contains no data about housing needs of Māori and elderly (as required).

"HPW acknowledges the urgency of making homes for people. Realistic housing projects can be started now. But the draft Spatial Plan grossly exaggerates the amount of zoning change required to fit folk into our city.

"We know New Zealand has a problem acknowledging its history. NZ history won't be taught in schools until 2022. Allowing demolition of Wellington's pre-1930 character areas will continue a trend of erasure and removal.

"It is not about privileging one strand of history over another. Many people have new and old heritage in Te Whanganui a Tara. The character areas have housed people from all walks of life and have stories to tell about us all. Let's work together to build connected communities that value diverse heritage experiences."

Keep Our Character at [our.actionstation.org.nz](http://our.actionstation.org.nz) & follow us @HistoricPlacesWellington



*The Voice of Heritage  
for New Zealand*

### Our executive

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

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# Is this another case of demolition by neglect?

What's happening with Wellington's Gordon Wilson Flats? Is the current stasis likely to result in demolition by neglect? Victoria University of Wellington is yet to seek a resource consent, which it must do if it plans to demolish this mid-1950s landmark. And when and if it does seek consent, this is likely to be contested. HPW vice-chairman **Dr Ben Schrader** looks into the matter.

The Gordon Wilson Flats is a high-rise block built by the state in the mid-1950s to house inner city workers in modern and spacious apartments.

The flats were a beacon for a more compact city; an alternative to the prevailing suburban sprawl.

Designed by the Government architect, Gordon Wilson, it is an early and sophisticated example of Brutalist architecture in New Zealand. That most flats were maisonettes (had two levels) increased the building's distinctiveness. The block proved very popular with tenants, who valued its central location and sunny aspect.

In the early 2010s, Housing New Zealand closed the flats on the grounds it had become structurally unsafe.

The organisation sold the building to Victoria University, which planned to demolish it and rebuild on the site.

It sought the removal of District Plan protection and won. This was challenged in 2017 by the Architectural Centre in the Environment Court, which rejected the building's removal from the plan because of its very high



Dr Ben Schrader

heritage values. But its derelict state and the wide dislike of Brutalist architecture has meant there is little public support for the building's retention.

The university has done minimal maintenance on the structure and this has led to fears of demolition by neglect.

The destruction this year of the building's Auckland 'twin' (the Upper Greys Avenue Flats) has increased the heritage values of the Gordon Wilson Flats. It is now the sole example of



The Gordon Wilson Flats.

its type in New Zealand, therefore increasing its national importance.

I can only hope that we can get a largely sceptical public to better appreciate the heritage values of the Gordon Wilson Flats and, as a result, that it will become more morally difficult for the Victoria University to demolish the building.

## Remembering the past for a collective future

How do we remember the past? What place do colonial memorials have in public spaces? How can we better represent diverse histories in the landscape?

These were some of the questions discussed at the first Public History Talk of the year at National Library.

The event is a collaboration between the National Library of New Zealand and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

In July, Victoria University Professor of Māori Education Joanna Kidman hosted a panel to discuss and offer a facilitated conversation with the public on colonial memorials, history and memory.

The panelists were writer and historian



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMMA JEAN KELLY

Morrie Love, Wellington City Council iwi relations manager Nicky Karu and historian Ewan Morris.

HPWellington's Felicity Wong joined the packed National Library auditorium, later commenting:

"Morrie Love thought the William Wakefield memorial at the Basin Reserve cricket grounds was

not particularly inappropriate. He said it is much more important to educate ourselves about local and national history. It was often more complex than could be rendered on a plaque.

Council official Nicky Karu talked about the city council's Te Reo policy to correct inaccurate place and street names (eg Waripori St to Te Wharepouri St) and to allocate mana whenua names to new buildings or streets.

She said it was a long, frustratingly bureaucratic process. Only 12 percent of some 2000 names in Wellington were in Te Reo. She said council's approach to monuments was to be community-led. People were encouraged to convey their views by, for instance, writing to the Mayor."

Ewan posed a set of important questions or criteria for decisions about monuments in Aotearoa:

- Does the memorial represent someone responsible for crimes against humanity?
- What was the purpose and context for the memorial's creation?
- Are the inscriptions or imagery offensive?
- Is the location problematic?
- Does the memorial dominate the landscape?
- Has it become a rallying point for hate?
- Does the memorial cause significant offence to a substantial number of people?

The free public history talks are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month, March to Nov.

# OCULUS Nearly 50 events planned for heritage month

The Historic Places Aotearoa AGM and conference will take place right in the middle of a month-long celebration of Whanganui Heritage.

The second Whanganui Heritage Month starts on 1 October with the Regional Heritage Awards and ends on 31 October after a massive 48 events including tours, a beer and wine festival, cultural and heritage festival and markets and much more.

Whanganui's central city area is wall-to-wall heritage buildings and has a growing reputation as a significant heritage centre for New Zealand.

The city has one of New Zealand's highest concentrations of European heritage buildings, still largely intact, and dominating the city centre.

They represent a complete and significant number of building styles dating between 1860 and 1960. There are also a large number of Māori sites of significance including the St Paul's Memorial Church, Putiki which was awarded NZ Heritage Category 1 status, and numerous marae along the Whanganui River Road to the



settlement of Jerusalem.

The 2020 Event Programme is almost completed. Some events have been posted to Facebook, but there are 48 events, so this will take some time. A printed Event Guide will be available from 1 September 2020.

While each year will see a different emphasis, see the Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust's 2019 Programme for a taste of what is to come.

[www.whanganuiheritagetrust.org.nz](http://www.whanganuiheritagetrust.org.nz)

## Heritage awards

The 2020 Whanganui Regional Heritage Awards ceremony marks the official opening of Whanganui Heritage Month.

The awards, sponsored by DIZHUR Consulting, celebrate heritage and conservation in the Whanganui, Ruapehu and Rangitikei Districts.

The aim is to promote and celebrate heritage retention, conservation and education by recognising excellence through a quality and innovative awards programme and awards ceremony.

Modelled on the Canterbury Heritage Awards, the eight award categories are:

- Domestic – Saved and restored
- Public Realm – Saved and restored
- Heritage Tourism
- Outstanding contribution to Heritage
- Future Heritage
- Seismic
- Maori Realm
- Rural and all of Rangitikei.

Award entries close on Monday 31 August.



Johnston & Co. (1914), Whanganui. The only surviving reminder of one of the most important colonial mercantile houses and of the Whanganui hub of commerce and mercantile activities.

## AGM to raise profile of heritage

From page 1: plan of initiatives that will help New Zealand's heritage become an incredible asset for future generations.

"Through projects that raise the profile of heritage, HPA is keen to work together to form an effective partnership.

"This conference is a mechanism to discuss and share ideas together. Together we can make a real difference."



Ripe for restoration – the 1922 Native Land Court in Whanganui's city centre.

## New life planned for old bones

The new Whanganui Heritage Restoration Trust, chaired by Helen Craig, has purchased its first test-case building.

The 1922 Native Land Court at 11 Rutland Street is a Category 1 building that has been empty for at least 10 years.

It is still largely intact in original condition and is in the Art Deco style.

The Whanganui Heritage Restoration Trust was set up to purchase earthquake prone heritage buildings in the city's CBD with a view to fully restoring them as part of Council's Town Centre Regeneration Plan.

Council is supporting by way of loans and funding applications to Lotteries and the like, and will support the redevelopment.

# Power to the people

## The Story of the Hastings Power Station

by Denis Pilkington

Electricity first came to Hawke's Bay in 1892 with the establishment of the Mokopeka hydro-electric power station on the Maraetotara River built by John Chambers to power his house, woolshed and water pump. This plant is still operational today. With increased interest in electricity from the early 20th century, the Hastings Borough Council along with other Hawke's Bay local authorities looked to the government to build a hydro-electric scheme at Waikaremoana. Although the government had previously taken full control of hydro-electric development, restrictive overseas borrowing policies, priority for railway development and World War 1 all conspired to delay the opening of the first major North Island power stations until the 1920s. In the meantime, local bodies wanting electricity supply had to provide their own. The Hastings Borough had gas reticulation from 1887 and an electricity supply was investigated from 1906.

The power station opened in 1912 after hydro-electric dam sites on the Tuki Tuki and Ngaruroro rivers, and a gas-powered generating plant had all been considered as alternatives. The station was powered by two Mirrlees diesel engine powered generators with a total power output of 200kW. There were 29 consumers. Under the floor of the building there was a water reservoir with two large pumps supplying the borough. Electricity was also supplied to Havelock North, but the supply proved restricted and unreliable leading the Havelock North Town Board to develop its own hydro-electric scheme on the Maraetotara Falls, which opened in 1922.

### DC to AC

Power was initially supplied via direct current. Increasing demand required extra generating plant including two alternating current generators together with extensions to the building. By 1925 there were six generating units in operation with a total output of 1,087kW, being 567 kW DC and 520 kW AC. Production cost of electricity



Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board building, Hastings, and (below) engine room after 1925 showing all six generating units in place with three cylinder engines in the foreground.

was 2.3 pence per kWh (about \$1/kWh in today's terms) with consumers paying threepence to ninepence/kWh (\$1.47 to \$4.40).

The Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board was constituted in 1924 as part of implementing central government policy to provide rural areas with

an electric power supply. In 1927 the board started supplying much cheaper electricity to Hastings from the new government-operated Mangahao hydro-electric station in the Tararua Ranges near Shannon. This supply was often overloaded requiring the power station to remain on standby during periods of electricity shortage, alleviated to some extent when the first Waikaremoana hydroelectric power station opened at Tuai in 1929.

### Service post-1931 quake

When the Hawke's Bay earthquake struck in February 1931, the Redclyffe substation near Taradale was badly damaged and unable to supply electricity. The Hastings power station had some damage but was still able to operate and was used to maintain water pressure for firefighting. Even after the water main from Havelock North was brought down with the Ngaruroro bridge collapse in an aftershock, it was still possible to supply water from the wells near the power station building.

The power station continued to supply electricity for some time after



the earthquake until the Redclyffe substation was fully repaired. Until the 1940s, and probably beyond, the Hastings power station served as a standby supply during national power shortages. The station was gradually dismantled with the last 320 kW unit finally taken out of service in 1964. The Hawke's Bay Power Board continued to operate its mechanical and electrical workshop in the building until 1988 and the electricity control room until about 1990. The building also continued to be used as part of the Hastings water supply system until the 1980s.

Commercial redevelopment of the building in 2015 has included installation of a window in the floor at the front of the building so the original water reservoir can be viewed below the floor. The Wallace Development Company was responsible for the restoration and redevelopment of this building, which had no heritage protection either nationally or locally and could easily have faced demolition without the owner's vision and awareness of the building's value.

Contact Denis for a more detailed version.



Unveiling ceremony for the Blue Plaque on the Timaru Landing Service building, erected in 1870 along the original shoreline of Timaru harbour.

## More Timaru plaques on way

The South Canterbury Historical Society (an associate member of HPA) and the Timaru Civic Trust have joined forces to roll out the Blue Plaques scheme in South Canterbury.

In a joint funding initiative, they have had the initial batch of the first five Blue Plaques made, with further funding available to do another 10 to 15 plaques in the South Canterbury region over the next couple of years.

The first of the five new plaques – erected on the Landing Service building (HNZPT Cat 1), was unveiled on 25 July by Timaru Mayor



Nigel Bowen. The building is owned by the Timaru Civic Trust, who saved it from demolition in the late 1980s and earthquake strengthened it and refurbished it into a successful commercial development, now thriving and fully tenanted. One of those tenants is Timaru Mayor Nigel Bowen who, with his partner Jane, runs two bar and restaurant facilities and a small convention centre venue.

The other four plaques, which will be unveiled in the coming months, are for:

- the former Customhouse building (HNZPT Category 1)
- Chalmers Church (HNZPT Cat 2)
- St Mary's Church (HNZPT Cat 1) and
- the magnificent Sacred Heart Basilica (HNZPT Cat 1) by Francis Petre (architect of Christchurch's Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament).



Sacred Heart Basilica, Timaru, 2017. Photo: Ulrich Lange. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sacred\\_Heart\\_Basilica,\\_Timaru\\_\(north\\_side\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sacred_Heart_Basilica,_Timaru_(north_side).jpg)



Pam Bain at one of her happy places, surrounded by water and heritage in Venice.

## INTRODUCING

**Pam Bain**  
*Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga*  
*Director Regional Services*

Pam Bain still can't believe her luck. Since 2018 – when she landed her new role as Director Regional Services with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga – Pam has been able to be innovative and creative in working with others to protect heritage and tell important heritage stories.

"The Regional Services team is all about engagement, internally and externally," she says.

"Whether it is the legal team's efforts for heritage protection, the outreach and media staff involved in celebrating heritage stories or Tohu Whenua (a joint programme with Heritage New Zealand, DOC, Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment and Ministry for Arts, Culture and Heritage) working with communities to provide great visitor experiences at heritage places, we can do this so much better with others involved."

She is excited to work with communities to support heritage protection and celebrate heritage stories.

"This offers an opportunity to introduce new people to the importance of heritage.

"For example, in 2018, Heritage New Zealand was involved in a Suffrage 125 community art project with artist Janet de Wagt and Creative New Zealand which was all about linking the suffrage story to heritage places, people and communities.

"We are increasingly focusing on working with others to make heritage accessible and interesting to a wider audience so that they also relate to the stories and places we are passionate about."