

# DOWNFALL

HISTORIC  
PLACES

AOTEAROA

## Relocation should be last resort

### FROM THE TOP

HPA President Elizabeth Pishief

Hawke's Bay like many parts of New Zealand is still clearing up after all the floods and damage from Cyclone Gabrielle, not to mention other weather events. The effects from the disasters and the probability of further weather-related events means we all need to prepare for them and to make changes that will enable us to cope with the future. One policy change that will inevitably affect some heritage places is that of managed retreat.

Relocation of a heritage place should be a last resort. The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter <https://icomos.org.nz/charters/> which provides guidance on the care and conservation of heritage



places in New Zealand says the following about relocation:

*The on-going association of a structure or feature of cultural heritage value with its location, site, curtilage, and setting is essential to its authenticity and integrity. Therefore, a structure or feature of cultural heritage value should remain on its original site.*

*Relocation of a structure or feature of cultural heritage value, where its removal is required in order to clear its site for a different purpose or construction, or where its removal is required to enable its use on a different site, is not a desirable outcome and is not a conservation process.*

*In exceptional circumstances, a*

*Continued on p3:*

## Rainbow listing a heritage first

New Zealand's first Rainbow heritage listing is the site of blackmail, attempted murder and the hidden scandal of gay Whanganui Mayor Charles Mackay in 1920.

Duigan's Building at 23 Ridgway Street, Whanganui, was listed as a Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Category 1 historic place on 11 May, the first on its Rainbow List Project, and recognises the building's heritage values and taonga for Aotearoa's LGBTQI+ communities.

Listing nominator James Barron sees the 103-year-old story of Mackay's downfall as contemporary and too good to be lost to history.

"The Whanganui Incident is a story. Starting with Whanganui's best (but gay and deeply closeted) mayor, it journeys through the Prince of Wales visit, intrigue, blackmail attempted murder, scandal, jail and exile and ends with the police shooting of Mackay in Berlin in the Blutmai 1929 riots that helped Nazis gain power.

"It is also a current story with Mackay being not only the first self-professed homosexual in New Zealand but also a recorded victim of conversion therapy – quackery only banned in New Zealand in 2022."

Historian Paul Diamond, author of *Downfall: the Destruction of Charles*



Duigan's Building, Whanganui. James Barron

*Mackay*, shortlisted for the 2023 Ockham NZ Book Awards, says Mackay's office survived largely unaltered, making it easier to imagine the tragedy that unfolded there in May 1920.

"Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is to be commended for its Rainbow List initiative, which will help ensure sites such as this endure for future generations to learn about prejudice and resilience."

Acting Whanganui Mayor Helen Craig said the listing brought the homophobic prejudice of the time out of the shadows.

"Whanganui District Council supports our Pride community and welcomes this significant national heritage listing."

Building owner Warren Ruscoe, of Meteor Print, said the listing highlighted the exceptional vision and

*Continued on p4*

## ARCHITECTURAL TERMS *explained*

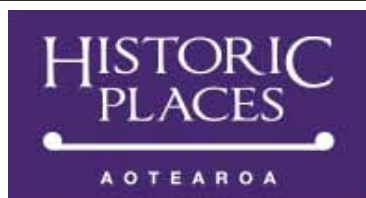


### **BUTTRESS**

A buttress is a form of structure that helps to reinforce a wall. Buttresses are built against the wall—or near the wall, and they reach across to help support the wall.

Often found on brick or stone buildings especially churches, as in this example from Toko Toru Tapu Church, Manutuke, Gisborne.

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



### **Our executive**

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

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**James Blackburne**

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**Helen Craig** hellycraig@hotmail.com

**Phillip Hartley**

Philliph@salmondreed.co.nz

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**Could this be you?????**

### **EX-OFFICIO**

**Gillian Creighton** (minutes secretary)

**Denis Pilkington** (secretary)

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# HPA Executive Mahi

by Denis Pilkington

**AGM:** Make a diary note for the weekend of 7-9 October in New Plymouth. We will be the guests of Heritage Taranaki. The meeting will take place during Taranaki Heritage Month so there will be opportunities to join some of the Heritage Month events. Following another successful AGM event last year in Auckland, we can remind members that apart from the formal, quite brief AGM, you can anticipate interesting papers, discussions and site visits that all contribute to an interesting heritage event.

### **Executive Committee Vacancy:**

We are disappointed the vacancy on our Executive Committee has still not been filled after about six months. We are due for the biennial Executive Committee election at this year's AGM, so we are encouraging all members to

seriously consider possible nominations for the Committee at the AGM or sooner. Contact the Secretary or any of the Executive Committee meetings if you need any more information.

**The Website:** Development of the new website is continuing. Please see:

<http://www.historicalplacesaotearoa.nz/>

We are still adding features. Please check to see that the information about your Member Organisation or Associate Member is up to date. Shortly, we plan to provide members with access details for posting information on the member pages and provide links to existing member websites. In the meantime, the old site is still live and old posts remain fully accessible. The plan is to transfer the historical information onto the new website.

While you are on the internet, check out the new Heritage New Zealand website also referred to in this issue.



McLean's Mansion built for Allan McLean (inset).

## Progress aplenty on new arts centre

By Christchurch Civic Trust Chair Ross Gray

The \$10M restoration of McLean's Mansion is proceeding apace thanks to a fresh injection of funding and some refocusing.

The 2100 sq m, 53-room mansion in Manchester St, Christchurch, built as a home for wealthy Scottish immigrant Allan McLean in 1899, could open to the public as an arts centre within two years.

The building was damaged in the 2011 earthquakes and was threatened with demolition before a trust was formed to purchase the building and safeguard its future. Trustees have struggled to raise the money needed for the restoration and last year the project was under threat of being mothballed when Auckland-based art philanthropist Sir James Wallace stepped in.

Now chair of the McLean's Mansion Charitable Trust, Sir James paid off a \$2.6M loan obtained by the trust to purchase the property and has underwritten the entire project.

Following the 2021 floor levelling and foundation and basement strengthening, rapid progress is now being made on remediating and consolidating spaces, including the creation of a ballroom/concert hall room on the ground floor south side to accommodate performances.

The building will function as an arts centre, with an artist-in-residence, exhibition and performance spaces, and a café. Sir James will also show some of his extensive art collection in the Category 1 listed heritage building, New Zealand's largest timber house.

To page 10:

# OCULUS Mission house moved due to past flooding

From page 1:

*structure of cultural heritage value may be relocated if its current site is in imminent danger, and if all other means of retaining the structure in its current location have been exhausted. In this event, the new location should provide a setting compatible with the cultural heritage value of the structure.*

Hawke's Bay has often endured serious floods which have affected communities and forced people to remove their homes and other buildings to safer places.

The Catholic Mission is one well-known place that has been moved. French Marist missionaries of the Society of Mary established a Marist Mission station on the left bank of the Ngaruroro River between Napier and Hastings at Pakowhai in 1851 under the protection of the chief Puhara.

Father Jean Lampila, and Brothers Basil and Florentin, taught and nursed the hapū and dug and planted their vineyard and gardens at Pakowhai.



La Grande Maison, Mission Estate, Greenmeadows, Hawke's Bay.

The missionaries brought the first vines to Hawke's Bay, which were tended by lay brothers. When Puhara was killed in an intertribal clash in 1857, the Brothers moved to Meeanee.

In 1880, a two-storeyed house costing £2020 10s was built. Known as La Grande Maison or the 'big house', it was the Meeanee home for the French Marists for three decades. Many significant future Māori chiefs were taught at a boarding school for Māori boys at Meeanee. After this closed, Māori boys were sent to St Patrick's in Wellington.

In 1897, local rivers burst their banks flooding the Meeanee plains and inundating the Mission cellars. Higher land was sought as the land

was subject to periodic flooding.

That same year, the Tiffen estate at Greenmeadows was subdivided and sold and the Society of Mary purchased a portion of the land that extended along Church Road and on the slopes of what was named Maryvale.

After further disastrous floods in 1909, Father Smythe decided to move the Mission community and La Grande Maison to the present site. In 1910, the Mission building was cut into eleven sections, rolled on logs and pulled by traction engines. The journey took two days. The new site became the centre of winemaking activities and the seminary for training Marist Priests.

A restaurant operates out of La Grande Maison, Mission Estate Winery.

## Book details Auckland's talented mill family

***The Partingtons and Their Mills*** is a well-illustrated, comprehensive record of an important part of Auckland's history.

Written by Munroe Graham, a past president of Civic Trust Auckland, and published by the trust in 2022,



the book tells the story of George Partington and two succeeding generations of the Partingtons, a talented family of engineers.

The much-loved landmark mill was demolished in 1950.

Part 1 covers the history of flour milling, the nature of flour mills, their component parts and operation.

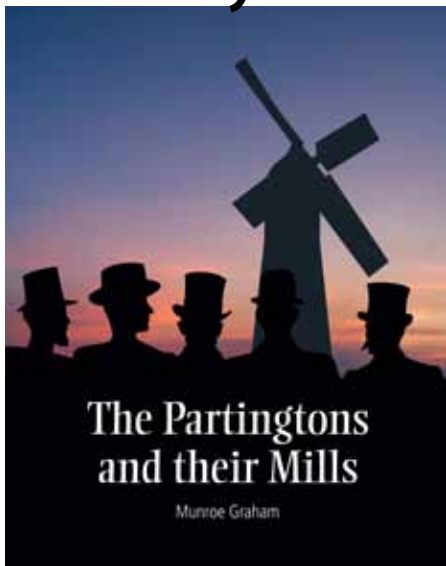
Part 2 is the main part of the book, following George Partington senior and his sons in their early moves, as well as other characters within the Partington family, especially those known as the mill family, brought up in the shadow of the windmill in Symonds Street.

There is mention of other people living near the mill, and their visitors, who had parts to play in the events taking place there.

Part 3 deals with the sale of the entire property holding to commercial interests, leading to eventual demolition and its aftermath.

The 235-page book is close to A4 size.

*The Partingtons and Their Mills* is available for sale through Civic Trust Auckland for \$50, plus postage, where



pick-up from the author (Remuera, Auckland) is not possible. Postage for single copies within New Zealand is \$10.40.

To order, please provide your name and postal address to: cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz and you will be provided with the Trust's bank account details. See <https://civictrustauckland.org.nz/publications/>

# Duigan's Building holds tragic Mackay story

From p1: growth Mackay brought to the city and region during his term.

Pride Whanganui trustee Christina Emery said it was momentous for the LGBTQIA+ history of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Whanganui.

"For so long, our queer history has been glazed over... and in this case eradicated. This listing shows not just that we are here but that we've always been here."

HNZPT area manager, Kerryn Pollock said listing a historic place specifically for its queer history was ground-breaking.

"The events that took place there, and the subsequent impact on the lives of the people involved, are emblematic of the threat of incarceration and social shame that was a reality experienced by homosexuals living in New Zealand – a reality that only began to change with the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Act in 1986.

"Criminalisation of male homosexuality and the social stigma attached to queer identity meant many homosexual lives were lived discreetly, leaving few recorded traces for their historians. Charles Mackay is a tragic exception as the scandal and court case is a record that society could bury but not erase. Duigan's Building is the place that holds the story."

Built in 1902 and located in Whanganui's historic city centre, the modest Edwardian building retains many original heritage features. The simple, timber and brick exterior belies the tragic events that took place there one Saturday morning in May 1920.

"At the time, the building was leased by lawyer and mayor Charles Mackay. He was described as having a bold, energetic mayoral style and achieved much while in office including introducing electric trams, building the Dublin Street bridge, lobbying for Whanganui to become a city and serving as a key player in the construction of the Sarjeant Gallery."

Progressive and decisive, Mackay could also be combative, and gained enemies as well as supporters.

After the outbreak of World War 1, Mackay was criticised as a shirker for

arguing that married men should not enlist in the armed forces. He was subsequently pressured to enlist – which he did in 1916, though he never trained or served, citing business and family reasons.

In the jingoistic climate of the time, this already made Mackay a marked man in some circles. He was also homosexual – which, in 1920s New Zealand, made him extremely vulnerable.

In early May 1920, a young, returned soldier named D'Arcy Cresswell arrived in Whanganui to visit relatives. He and Mackay met and struck up a friendship, dining twice that week. Mackay took Cresswell on a private tour of the

Sarjeant Gallery. One of the permanent exhibits – a marble copy of an ancient Greek statue 'The Wrestlers', depicting two naked men entwined in hand-to-hand combat – was well known and admired by homosexual men. It's likely to have been something of a conversation starter for

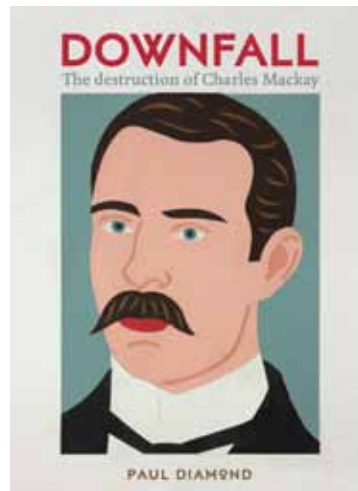
the two men, both homosexual.

Following the tour, the men went to Mackay's law office in the Duigan's Building – whereupon Cresswell proceeded to blackmail Mackay for homosexual advances and insisted he resign the mayoralty. Cresswell forced Mackay to write a letter, posted to Cresswell's cousin. The two met again at the office the next day where Mackay pleaded with Cresswell not to force his resignation and threatened suicide.

Mackay signed another letter promising to resign. As they went to leave the office, Mackay shot Cresswell in the chest and shoved the gun in his hand to make it look like suicide.

Wounded, Cresswell tossed a chair through the window onto the street below as a call for help. He staggered out of the office onto the landing, where he was met by two men coming to investigate the ruckus.

Cresswell survived, and Mackay was charged with attempted murder the



next day – despite claiming the gun had fired by accident. He subsequently pleaded guilty at his trial on 27 May.

At his sentencing, Mackay's lawyer William Treadwell disclosed that Mackay was homosexual, and six years earlier had sought medical treatment (now called conversion therapy) for his 'homosexual monomania'.

Treadwell attempted to mitigate the sentence by arguing that it was an illness which affected Mackay's mental capacity and decision-making.

Chief Justice Sir Robert Stout believed the illness argument but did not accept it as a mitigating factor. Mackay was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment with hard labour.

Mackay was initially incarcerated at New Plymouth Prison, where sexual offenders and homosexual men were imprisoned, napping stone in the quarry. He also served time in Mt Eden (Auckland), Waikeria (Waikato) and Hautu (Turangi). He was released on 6 August 1926.

Mackay moved to Berlin and worked as a journalist and advertising agent. He was shot and killed by a police sniper while reporting on May Day demonstrations on 3 May 1929.

Cresswell became influential in New Zealand's literary world, and had homosexual relationships quite openly later in life.

After the initial flurry of publicity, Charles Mackay became one of Whanganui's 'secrets'. His wife divorced him and reverted to her maiden name. Mackay's name was sanded off the Sarjeant Gallery foundation stone, and Mackay St was renamed Jellicoe St.

A generation of homosexual New Zealand writers, including Hector Bolitho, Frank Sargeson and Bill Pearson, ensured Mackay's story didn't die out. In the 1970s, Whanganui gay liberation activists placed a pink triangle wreath – the movement's symbol – at the Sarjeant Gallery foundation stone in honour of Mackay, and called for the reinstatement of his name. This took place in 1985 – a year before Homosexual Law Reform legislation was passed.

# OCULUS More Blue Plaques in Canterbury

Nigel Gilkison - Deputy Chair Historic Places Mid Canterbury; Chair, Timaru Civic Trust

The South Canterbury Historical Society and the Timaru Civic Trust (both Associate members of HPA) have teamed up to produce another eight blue heritage plaques. Previously, the two groups produced five blue plaques to go on heritage buildings in Timaru, but these latest ones are spread across the wider South Canterbury region.

The plaques were partly funded thanks to a generous bequest left to Heritage New Zealand by a local South Canterbury woman and are being installed during June. The plaques are being placed on South Canterbury buildings:

- Eleanor Tripp Memorial Library, Woodbury
- Pleasant Point Railway Station
- St Mary's Church, Esk Valley
- St David's Church, Cave
- The Vicarage, Geraldine

- St Patrick's Basilica, Waimate
  - Temuka Courthouse Museum
  - St Augustine's Church, Waimate
- Historic Places Mid Canterbury (HPMC) have also produced another two blue plaques for the St Mark's Church, Rakaia and the Mount Somers Memorial Hall. HPMC are also



Eleanor Tripp Memorial Library, Woodbury.

working with Historic Places Auckland to produce another plaque to go onto the The Northern Club in Princes St.

This latest batch of blue plaques lifts the total across the country to 40. More are planned for production in the coming months.

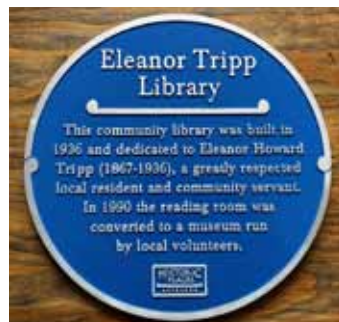
The plaques are a great way for heritage groups to connect with local heritage building owners

and to celebrate their special heritage buildings and places. The award of the plaques also engenders owners with a sense of pride in their buildings and acknowledges the hard work and dedication it often takes to keep a heritage building in use.

The new Blue Plaques website [www.blueplaques.nz](http://www.blueplaques.nz) has more information about the initiative and plaques already installed.



The Vicarage, Geraldine with building owner Michael Barker (left) and Nigel Gilkison.



# A beginner's guide to 'the List'

By NZHPT CEO Andrew Coleman

The opportunity to contribute to *Oculus* is one that Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) values and recent efforts have allowed us to explain more about who we are as people and what our functional responsibilities are.

In preparation for this edition of *Oculus*, I learned there are some things that we take for granted, such as knowledge of the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero (the List), something that I presumed was widely known and understood. It seems that this may not be so; I will elaborate.

HNZPT has a new website ([www.heritage.org.nz](http://www.heritage.org.nz)) and it has never been simpler to search 'the List', give it a go.

Our legislation, the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (Part 4), provides the legislated mandate for the recognition of places of historical, cultural and ancestral significance. Sections 65 to 84 of the Act provides the detail, and I am not going to repeat these sections, because we can all access the legislation and read and interpret the relevant sections. What I will do is outline some matters relevant to 'the List', in doing so hopefully covering off some of the questions that were brought up through the *Oculus* preparatory discussions.

Anyone can nominate a place or area for 'the List'. Nominations are made for a variety of reasons including someone seeing value in the heritage recognition and wanting a listing through to acknowledging heritage either at risk or in the face of development.

There are currently 1063 Category 1 places, 4418 Category 2 places, 130 historic areas, 107 wāhi tapu, 22 wāhi tūpuna and 78 wāhi tapu areas recorded and acknowledged on 'the List', in total 5818.

The 2014 legislation did not start 'the List', as explicitly the Act references section 22 of the Historic Places Act 1993 and states that all entries under this legislation "are deemed to be entries on 'the List'".

In summary, the purpose of 'the List' is to inform on historic places, historic areas and places of significance to Māori, to notify owners and be a source of reliable information. It is this summary that defeats the myth that 'the List' offers protection for heritage, something that is afforded through the



NZHPT chief executive Andrew Coleman.

District Plans of councils. We, along with Historic Places Aotearoa and others, have advocated recently for improvements through the Resource Management reform process.

Having two heritage lists, seeking different outcomes makes little sense, and we will have to wait and see how successful we have been in the reform process.

Of the 5818 places on 'the List', or at least our HNZPT List, around 10 percent are not recorded on councils' District Plans. This just provides another reason to have a simplified and single heritage list.

How does the HNZPT Board and Māori Heritage Council (the mandated decision makers) decide on whether a heritage listing is warranted and if it is what is the category?

There are criteria and being old or older than 1900 is not one of them – again another myth defeated. A place or area must have aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value. The more that are evidenced through research, the more likely for the decision to be category 1, as opposed to category 2. Category 1 are assessed as "special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage". A judgment is required here and this is what the Board, the Māori Heritage Council and their Rārangi Kōrero Committee do, being guided by our HNZPT team.

The Māori Heritage Council review and assess applications relating to wāhi tapu (a place sacred to Māori), wāhi tūpuna (a place important to Māori

ancestral significance) and wāhi tapu areas (more than one wāhi tapu).

Each year, HNZPT delivers to a series of performance measures. For 'the List' we must add 20 to 25 heritage listings and six Māori heritage listings. As heritage is lost through natural disaster, fire, removal or demolition, places are removed from 'the List', with 2 percent being removed over the last 10 years. Each of these additions and removals works through the research, recommendation, Rārangi Kōrero committee, the Board and the Māori Heritage Council process.

In 2014, section 81 of the Act provided for a list of places of outstanding national heritage value, in effect the 'cream of the heritage crop', and they are to be called the National Historic Landmarks/Ngā Manawhenua o Aotearoa me ōna Kōrero Tūturu

(NHL). To emphasise 'outstanding', the words 'greatest heritage value' are added as was the requirement to seek 'conservation of these places, including the protection from natural disasters'. The Waitangi Treaty Grounds have received this status and the National War Memorial in Wellington

is currently in the last phase for this recognition. Four other places across the country are in the earlier phases of this NHL process.

The importance of NHL in an international sense is the requirement that this status is the 'gateway' to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (commonly known as the 'World Heritage List') that was adopted in 1972 by the General Assembly of UNESCO.

HNZPT is of the view, as is Historic Places Aotearoa and others, that the World Heritage List has not been well-served for several years and we are working on a proposal with Te Papa Atawhai DOC to make changes to the process for the future, and for the better.

This beginners guide to 'the List' will hopefully improve our shared understanding. If each of you learns one thing from this edition, then I have achieved something.

**Having two heritage lists, seeking different outcomes makes little sense, and we will have to wait and see how successful we have been in the reform process.**

# OCULUS Introducing John Kinder House Society

Auckland's John Kinder House in Ayr Street, Parnell is one of the city's oldest buildings.

The former Church of England Grammar School Headmaster's House was opened to the public in 1982. It was named for Reverend John Kinder, its best-known and longest occupant, who lived there from 1857 to 1872.

The school resulted from the wish of Bishop George Augustus Selwyn to establish an Anglican grammar school in the new colony.

In 1854, Bishop Selwyn went to England to recruit a headmaster for his proposed school and interviewed John Kinder, then working at Alleyne's Grammar School, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire.

Kinder arrived in Auckland in October 1855, accompanied by his mother and his oldest sister. As there was no school or house available when the new headmaster arrived, the school operated from a temporary home in Karangahape Road.

The first school building, a wooden structure, was completed in 1856 between where the dairy on Ayr Street corner and the service station on Parnell Road are located. Kinder and his family moved into the new house in 1857.

Erected that year at a cost of £1405 10s 10d, the house was designed by church architect Frederick Thatcher (1814–90), a favourite architect of Bishop Selwyn who also designed several Auckland buildings, including The Deanery, corner of Brighton Road and St Stephen's Avenue, Parnell.

John Kinder shared Bishop Selwyn's enthusiasm for Gothic Revival style architecture. Appropriately, the Headmaster's House is an example of the ecclesiologically inspired English parsonage house.

Thatcher's design also heralded a return to stone construction which was not popular in Auckland at that time. Stonemason Benjamin Strange, a Parnell resident, used basalt rubble, cemented together with mortar for the walls, plus dressed stone quoins around the corners, windows and door openings.

Kinder House has several interesting architectural features. The steeply gabled two storey house is buttressed at each end by two wooden annexes, both being part of the original design.



Parnell's John Kinder House is open for visitors Wednesday to Sunday, 12pm-3pm or by appointment.

John Kinder is believed to have used the eastern section as his study.

Above the south-facing doorway is an excellent example of a corbelled chimney. The diamond-paned windows latticed with hoop iron are further attractive details, familiar features of 'Selwyn Style' buildings. Among interior features are the kauri floors, the 1780s secretaire originally owned by John's father Thomas and ground floor rooms with a stud height of 11ft 4 inches (3.45m).

John Kinder is well known for his watercolour paintings and photographs. Fortunately, he took many photographs during the 1860s including images of the building and garden, a particular interest for him. In recent years, Auckland Council has provided valuable planning input into developing the garden.

Conservation practices followed involve assistance from Auckland Botanic Gardens as a Biological Pollinator Sanctuary and support for the aims of The Tree Council in maintaining trees as part of the historic landscape and as habitats for native birds and insects.

Owned by Auckland City and administered by John Kinder House Society Inc., the house operates as a gallery presenting exhibitions dealing with a variety of topics including the works of New Zealand war artists and increasingly, exhibitions by local artists and photographers. John Kinder's

paintings and photographs, and items relating to the Kinder family and the school, are regularly featured.

The published lectures issued by Kinder House Society containing information about many Kinder-related topics are available for purchase.

John Kinder House is one of the many delights to be found in Historic Parnell, including Ewelme Cottage, The Cathedral Church of St Mary and the Nancy Steen Rose Garden.

## Member Organisations of HPA

- 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

## 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



The Whanganui Rowing Club.

## Historic rowing club gets Blue Plaque treatment

The nearly 150-year-old Whanganui Rowing Club is now adorned with a Blue Plaque.

The club came into being on 22 December 1875 following a meeting of 30 gentlemen at Anderson's Commercial Hotel.

After much discussion, the subscription was set at two guineas. Mr Anderson advised he had plans for a boat house, which he would make available

together with boats. He also guaranteed £70 of the estimated £90 required with five gentlemen each promising five guineas. Several founding members were Old Boys of the Whanganui Collegiate School.

This led to a long and strong relationship with the school, resulting in the Collegiate being the first in New Zealand to adopt rowing as a sport in 1885, and the boys using club boats to train four times a week between 6am and 8am.

The first race between Wanganui Rowing Club and Wanganui Collegiate School was held in March 1886 with the school winning by two lengths. The

crew being C J Wray, H P Swainson, W S Chubbin, J W Swainson and O Gardner (Cox).

Wanganui architect Thomas Harvey James designed the new boat shed for the club in 1898. A rowing club member and Collegiate Old Boy, James designed the building in his capacity as an honorary committee member.

The style of the building is intriguing as the Frontier style is one more usually associated with small American towns, with a number of examples in Reefton. The architect for the 1905 additions was probably T H Battle, a locally important architect of the period.

The Wanganui Rowing Club was instrumental in developing the sport of rowing in Wanganui, for which the town is still known nationally.

The building was extended and altered to accommodate the restoration of the paddle steamer, *Waimarie*, after it was recovered from the Whanganui riverbed. The *Waimarie* was relaunched on the Whanganui River on 1 January 2000. Much of the restoration work from 1992-2000 was done by community volunteers.

The building is now more currently known as the Riverboat Centre and

Museum. The building has important cultural significance with its displays on riverboats and the *Waimarie*, the only coal-powered paddle steamer in the southern hemisphere, which departs from the neighbouring wharf for regular cruises up the Whanganui River. See also <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/1010> <https://data.whanganui.govt.nz/wdc/HeritageSheets/44.pdf> <https://www.waimarie.co.nz/riverboat-museum>



Join the growing national network of heritage Blue Plaques – a project of Historic Places Aotearoa. Further information is on our website

[www.blueplaques.nz](http://www.blueplaques.nz)



# OCULUS Church restoration nearly didn't happen

By Julie Luxton  
Historic Places Mid  
Canterbury

The 100-year-old Ashburton Baring Square Methodist Church was reopened in February this year after a 12-year closure.

The parishioners and town leaders were proud as they gathered for its reopening service, and so they should be. But it nearly didn't happen...

The 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes levelled so much of our built heritage. At first the church appeared unscathed. In fact, services carried on as usual - that was until the organist one day happened to notice some masonry pieces on the floor! Suddenly the doors were locked and the building red stickered.

Little happened for a long time.

Four years later a public meeting was held to gauge support, for and against, the restoration of the church. With dwindling parishioner numbers, did they really need such a large church with high maintenance costs? Perhaps they could demolish and sell the land for car parking ...

Representing Historic Places Mid Canterbury, I was one of the few who supported strengthening and



Ashburton's Baring Square Methodist Church shares its place on the end of the block, abutted up to the extensive new \$53 million dollar council-owned Civic Centre and Library, scheduled to open later this year.

restoration, this view not all-together welcome by some.

Now Opus Consultants enter the debate on behalf of the Ashburton District Council. The council wanted to build new bigger and better council offices and include the quake-damaged public library.

They recruited Opus to nominate sites. Opus's first choice was the church block - historic church on one end and historic former County Council building on the other.

Demolish both buildings and this is our preferred site, they said. (Unfortunately, for one reason or another, both these buildings were unlisted meaning no protection.)

Because Opus had identified some

other possible secondary sites, our council decided the people of the town should have their say by voting for their preferred site.

Historic Places Mid Canterbury couldn't really believe this was happening! What the heck!!

Luckily we had a fighting fund – so we used it. We

placed large advertisements in the local papers telling people 'Don't tick the box, save the church! And, of course, newspapers love a good story and gave us lots of publicity. As it turned out many of our locals liked the church also.

The church probably didn't want to be seen as the bad ones, so they sold part of their land to the council to build their new civic centre and library on. They then used the land sale money to help fund the church restoration.

It was a \$3.3 million upgrade to meet strengthening requirements and to create a multi-purpose centre. There are now meeting rooms and kitchen facilities and a very lofty interior that can seat around 150 people. The pews and sloping floor have been replaced and the chairs can be arranged to suit different group needs.

I was delighted to attend the official opening of the church in February. It was great to see how proud the elders, parishioners and community leaders were to see it finally reopened.

Historic Places Mid Canterbury lobbied councillors to save the historic former County Council building on the other end of the block. We didn't succeed. However, we did save a quaint little brick building, loaded with social history, that is our former meeting rooms. It sits 'within' the footprint of the new and large Civic Centre and library. "Within?" you might be asking.

But that is a story for another edition, and a very exciting story at that.

Watch this spot.



The pews and sloping floor have been replaced by a level floor with movable seating to cater for different group needs.

# Milestone as people enter cathedral

By Sandra Shaw,  
Christchurch Civic  
Trust secretary

In March, 12 years after the devastating 22 February 2011 Christchurch earthquake, multiple people were again allowed inside the city's damaged cathedral for the first time.

Community leaders, project staff, councillors and Wigram MP and Minister Megan Woods gathered inside on Tuesday

21 March 2023 for the momentous occasion. Project director Keith Paterson said the cathedral's interior was looking a lot like its former self but with massive structural support in place. He noted there had been one



Minister Megan Woods, MP for Wigram Christchurch, was among church and community leaders inside the cathedral on 21 March 2023. Stuff.co.nz

year of planning and preparing before any work could begin and three years of on-site construction. Restoration now moves into the second phase – the strengthening and reinstatement of the main building and tower.

"Four years in, and four years to go," he said.

These were very encouraging words indeed. The cathedral is at the heart of our city and it will be a great day when the restoration is complete.

## Decade-long battle now reaping rewards

From page 1: It's been a long and hard restoration road for McLean's Mansion since the July 2013 revelations that Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Association (CERA) had placed an s38 demolition order on it.

From early interest by the Christchurch School of Music as a potential new home with Trevor Lord and Don Whelan driving the momentum; to Trevor Lord forming the original McLean's Mansion Charitable Trust; to the attempt by the owners to demolish thwarted by HNZPT's refusal to sign an Archaeological Authority; a resulting Environment Court case which found for HNZPT, reported on July 7, 2016 by Stuff: The court concluded the building had very high historical and cultural heritage value that justified protection and that it contributed towards Cantabrians' sense of place and identity.

A 2016 successful funding application by Trevor Lord for a \$1.9M Christchurch City Council Heritage Landmark Grant enabled restoration to begin; but financing arrangement problems with the owners led in 2018 to a new set of MM Charitable Trust Trustees drawn principally from the Christchurch Civic Trust Board: Trevor Lord continuing

plus Dr Chris Kissling as chair, architect Tim Hogan – and also Brian Cribb (of Racecourse Hill restoration).

Restoration of McLean's Mansion was finally under way.

Significant progress was made from late 2018 – initially dealing with the results of vandalism and clearing of earthquake damage, mainly fallen plasterwork and about 45,000 bricks. Successful Open Days during Labour Weekend 2019 involved CCT Fundraising Group, HPC, MM Friends – 1000 visitors in three days shepherded through by Richard Herdman, Tim Hogan and Simon Construction staff.

In early 2022, the existing MM trustees handed the reins to new trustees, with Sir James Wallace as chair and principal funder of the continuing restoration. Tremendous gratitude is owed to Trevor Lord for his vision and energy as originator and catalyst for the project and to Chris Kissling, chair of an MM Advisory Group, for his leadership through the difficult past three years.

Martin Trusttun is the Christchurch-based trustee; Simon Construction, chief contractor; Richard Herdman, Project Director.

The trustees wish to see the restoration completed within the next

two years, a result which will provide Christchurch with a 100% NBS, CCC Heritage Schedule Highly Significant, HNZPT List Category 1, fully upgraded heritage building in landscaped grounds – surely a wonderful story for the city.

See also [www.mcleansmansion.nz](http://www.mcleansmansion.nz)



Work in progress, McLean's Mansion.