

Hawke's Bay Heritage News

Loss of an Architectural Masterpiece

We have been both disappointed and outraged at the news of the demolition of the Department of Conservation (DOC) Te Urewera Visitor Centre at Aniwanui on the shores of Waikaremoana. The Visitor Centre, designed by acclaimed local architect John Scott, was originally opened in 1976. While the road frontage was rather plain and unspectacular a better appreciation of this outstanding design was gained by entering via the Waharoa, or entranceway pavilion, at the right of the building and walking along the elevated walk way through the bush and up the stairs to the main



entrance to the building. The building was designed to be an integral part of the bushland scene. The building was recognised as a Category 1 historic place by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) on their New Zealand Heritage list. Unfortunately, as it was not listed on the Wairoa District Plan, there

was no statutory protection for the building.

The design included a conscious decision to place the building to form part of the local bushland and included a number of other features sympathetic to Māori culture and architecture. The bushland site proved challenging and there were issues with leakage and seepage etc., from the start. A number of improvements were made over the years to counter these problems, but regular maintenance was not carried out and the building steadily deteriorated. Following a structural engineering report in 2007 DOC moved the Visitor Centre to temporary premises on a more open site across the road pending a possible upgrade of the building. Members of our committee visited the site in 2013 and were horrified to see the neglected state of the building.

In 2010 DOC submitted a report to the Wairoa District Council, which subsequently deemed the building to be earthquake



prone and insanitary, without properly reviewing the report, or visiting the building. The cost to renovate the building was initially put at \$1.6 million by DOC

with much higher figures quoted more recently. This figure was considered excessive by local architects who suggested a more realistic figure of around \$400,000, which excluded other refinements or additions to the building. The high cost of renovations was the start of a downward spiral towards demolition. Various independent investigations have strongly disputed that the building was earthquake prone, or insanitary. It appears that the DOC decision to the building was politically motivated rather than based on the structural condition of the building. It has been suggested that the local Tuhoe people, who had once been happy with the design, may have come to see the building as symbolic of the enforcement of colonial values on Tuhoe and they wanted to see the building gone.

A vigorous campaign to save the building led by the New Zealand Institute of Architects has been in progress for some years with Historic Places Aotearoa joining in more recently. It is disturbing that HNZPT were notably silent during the campaign giving rise to speculation that as a Crown Entity they were somehow being restrained from mounting a campaign against another government department. With the HNZPT situation remaining unclear there is mounting concern about the future security of other heritage buildings owned by government departments. If HNZPT are not going to advocate in their favour the responsibility will be increasingly carried by independent organisations such as Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) and other local groups. In the meantime, we are left mourning the loss of an architectural masterpiece from our region.

HPA hopes that one legacy that may come out of this, is that New Zealand's heritage advocacy groups will start to work together more closely and heritage advocacy on national issues such as this are better co-ordinated.

"Each of us on our own can only do so much. Speaking together, as one, our voice will carry so much further," says HPA President James Blackburne.

Photos courtesy of David Straight



A Suburban Residence

Duart House, the outstanding heritage homestead in Havelock North was originally built for Allan (Tuki) & Hannah McLean in 1882. In spite of remaining a major landmark ever since it is not known who actually designed the house, or for that matter, who built it.

This mystery was actively taken up by Wellington Historian Geoffrey Mew last year. All the normal channels were thoroughly researched including council records and building tender invitation advertisements in local newspapers. None of these traditional lines of enquiry produced any information about the Duart architect or builder.

While conducting his research Geoffrey Mew also kept an eye on various rare books coming onto the market from time to time. One such find was a book called "Hobbs' Architecture" published in Philadelphia in 1873. This book contains 84 house plans by architect Isaac Hobbs and his son. Plan No 69 a "Suburban Residence" looked very like Duart House. A check of the dimensions showed it to be identical in all but a few minor details. While this research has identified the architect it is still not known who this particular book belonged to in New Zealand and one can still wonder if there are any other "suburban residences" around the world built to Plan No 69. It also still remains to be seen who actually built the house. Was it Robert Holt as is commonly assumed?

There is in fact another identical Duart House, albeit a

smaller version, in the form of a magnificent Lego



model built by Duart House Society committee member and Lego fanatic Richard Catley (Pictured above). It is absolutely amazing how Richard was able to match every detail of the original structure using special Lego bricks including windows and doors etc sourced from numerous Lego websites around the world. The model is on display at Duart House and is a "must see" for anyone interested in Lego or architectural modelling.

Heritage New Zealand - Where to From Here ?

The Heritage Network formed late last year recently met at Duart House to hear an address from Claire Craig, General Manager of the Central Region of Heritage New Zealand. The following is a synopsis of Claire's talk covering the changing environment for heritage promotion and preservation.

Heritage conservation and the perception of it, is changing, where once it was seen as a potentially annoying detail to be fitted in once the important stuff is understood, it is now appreciated that heritage conservation lies at the heart of effective sustainable development. By understanding how Heritage New Zealand can assist in managing change over the long term, we are able to create richer more resourceful places that are balanced and more resilient. Heritage conservation is facing considerable change, like every discipline. Such change includes things such as adapting to a post-settlement environment as iwi settle Treaty claims against the Crown and gain a variety of statutory acknowledgements. These are leading to better engagement of Māori in the resource management process and increasing awareness and appreciation of Māori heritage. There is a great deal of work to be done to properly identify, protect and promote places of heritage significance to Māori.

A further challenge is the need for many heritage buildings to be earthquake strengthened, particularly in the Central Region of the country. The public benefit/private cost issue is particularly acute in this agenda and it is hoped that the recent addition of the government's Heritage EQUIP fund will be very

positive for finding solutions to this matter.

The potential for change to the Resource Management Act could see Heritage New Zealand's consultation role in relation to heritage matters scaled back and our Board is embracing this possibility in order to strengthen our strategic leadership of the heritage sector. Like every sector, since 2008, there has been a need globally to find new means of resourcing initiatives and this is a continuous challenge for heritage conservation. However, there are many opportunities created in working to meet these challenges. Heritage New Zealand can benefit from improving overall sector strategy through greater levels of collaborative working, shaping professional pathways, improving education, enhancing planning provisions and seeking heritage led solutions to regeneration issues around the country. Community heritage groups then take up the mantle of developing local agendas, collaborating with partners, campaigning where necessary, restoring local assets and enabling community enjoyment of heritage. With so much exciting potential Heritage New Zealand sees an exciting future for Hawke's Bay's Heritage Groups and looks forward to continuing to engage with you to develop this.

Those attending the meeting were left with concerns about the likely downgrading of the powers of Heritage New Zealand and the resulting challenge for local organisations to take an increasing role in heritage advocacy and protection.

Highlights from the Chairperson's Report for 2015/16

Barbara Arnott took the chair in October 2015 succeeding Denis Pilkington who stepped down after having chaired the committee and the former branch committee of NZHPT since 2008.

A highlight for the year was the formation of a Hawke's Bay Heritage Network in November. This group initially brought together eight organisations with the aims of sharing calendars and priority projects, meeting, at least, annually, inviting Heritage New Zealand to the next meeting and reinforcing heritage awareness in Hawke's Bay including maintaining a relationship with the five local councils. Apart from the local network we are represented on the Executive of Historic Places Aotearoa and sent a representative to the AGM of HPA in Ashburton in November.

A planning meeting was held in February which included a review of previous plans, a forward programme of activities for members, the need to grow the membership, maintaining relationships with local councils, possible website upgrading and future policies on archives collection and storage in Hawke's Bay. We will also be hosting the AGM of Historic Places Aotearoa in Napier in October which will include visits to local heritage sites for delegates.

Membership activities for the year included trips to Tutira in November, and Wairoa in April, and a very well attended showing of old Hawke's Bay films at the Century Theatre in June, run in conjunction with MTG

and the NZ Archive of Film, TV and Sound. A number of members also participated in the Heritage New Zealand celebration of local heritage at Oruawharo in March.

We made a submission to the Hastings District Council in favour of strengthening the Opera House and met with Napier City planners on signposting the hospital site and other Napier issues.

We publicly applauded local building owners, Gerald Grocott and Jonathan Wallace for preservation of their heritage buildings, the Napier Post Office and the Hastings Power Station building.

We were successful in bringing together a number of local people with specialist interest to form a new group, Friends of the Mokoepoka Power Station who have taken responsibility for the maintenance of this important industrial site dating back to 1892 and still in operation.

We were shocked by the death of committee member Robert McGregor in August and we are still working with the Art Deco Trust on a suitable form of memorial to reflect Robert's passion for heritage and research.

The Chairperson thanked the committee and council representatives for their work during the year and looked forward to continuing to "spread the word of protection of New Zealand's heritage and to sow the seeds of how important our history is for all our futures among 160,000 Hawke's Bay citizens".

An Offer of Government Assistance to Private Owners of Earthquake Prone Buildings

Fleur Lincoln, Strategic Planning Lead at the Napier City Council, a role which includes City Heritage, writes:

On the 12th August 2016, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage announced the launch of the Heritage Earthquake Upgrade Incentive Programme (EQUIP). EQUIP is a new initiative to assist private owners of nationally significant heritage buildings that are earthquake prone, and is available to Category 1 historic places on the New Zealand Heritage List, and Category 2 historic places on the New Zealand Heritage List located within the medium and high risk areas such as Hawke's Bay. The total funding package is \$12 million over the next four years. Private ownership excludes council owned properties like the Hastings Opera House and buildings owned by charitable trusts, including churches, that might be eligible for Lottery funding.

A portion of the EQUIP fund will be dedicated to priority remediation projects, including simple strengthening projects that address high risk building's

features (e.g. parapets).

Funding obtained from the EQUIP fund will only cover the cost of upgrading to a minimum of 34% NBS (no longer earthquake prone) and it is expected that grants will be matched by a contribution from the owner or other sources.

A desktop review of Napier's built heritage stock has found that the actual number of buildings that meet the criteria for this funding package is relatively low. Many are either not earthquake prone (without any recent intervention) or have already been strengthened. A small number have had an IEP (initial Evaluation Process) assessment and are found to be earthquake prone, while others have not yet had their IEP or detailed assessments. The Art Deco Trust and Napier City Council will be working with building owners to identify which building can be put forward for EQUIP funding, and how to best access this funding.

Applications for EQUIP funding are not yet open.

Committee Members

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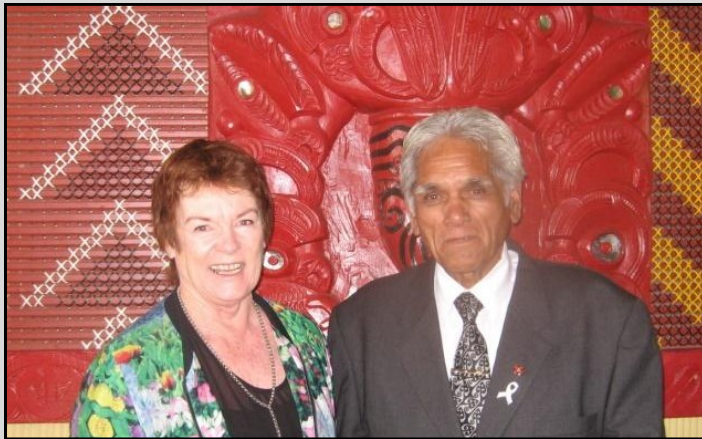
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Emma Keong	Havelock North	027 697 4010
Cr Rod Heaps	Hastings District Council	875 1123
Cr Annette Brosnan	Napier City Council	027 337 9303
Cr Sally Butler	CHB District Council	06 856 5840

Te Aute College a Popular AGM Venue

Te Aute College proved a popular venue for our AGM with a record attendance of 60 people. While Te Aute College has a long and interesting history dating back to 1854 most of the old buildings have long since disappeared. The original wooden school buildings were destroyed by fire in 1918. Brick replacements were severely damaged in the 1931 earthquake and subsequently repaired. They were finally demolished in the 1980s to make way for the current modern buildings.

We were welcomed by local Kaumatua Jerry Hapuku (pictured below with Barbara Arnott), a descendant



of one of the original donors of land for the college, who took us into Te Whare o Rangi, built 1993, where the meeting was held followed by some fine singing from the students. We later enjoyed afternoon tea in the modern dining hall with its magnificently decorated ceilings. The business of the AGM was promptly dealt with and we were then able to hear something of the history of the Williams family from Hugh McBain, a Williams descendant who lives nearby. The college was founded by Samuel Williams in 1854, closed in 1859 and re-opened in 1872. The college was endowed with a large land holding which was initially farmed by Williams who went on to establish large farming interests in the district. In 1901 he established the Henry and William Williams Memorial Trust which today has assets of \$20 million. The annual distribution is around \$700,000, some of which helps to support Te Aute and Hukarere Colleges.

Te Whare o Rangi contains many fine carvings which were originally made for the old assembly hall in the 1930s under the direction of old boy, Sir Apirana

Ngata. We had a good look at the 1906 Chapel under the guidance of the Chaplain, Di Lambert. We were also shown the "Cottage", in fact a substantial house, built in 1875 for Allen Williams who managed the farm



Afternoon Tea under the decorated ceiling

property for his uncle Samuel. This Category I listed property now stands empty and derelict. In spite of its run down appearance, the building is still largely sound and water tight and crying out for some adaptive re-use to secure its future. The "House", Samuel Williams' residence also still remains, but in reduced size following the Hawke's Bay earthquake. It is now the headmaster's residence.

As an aside to a fascinating afternoon's programme, we also learnt that the Paper Mulberry Café building, across the road, with its high pitched roof and crosses was never a church but merely a Sunday school.



Hugh McBain at the Williams Cottage.

Join our Committee

We are very sorry to lose the services of Maxine Anderson who has stepped aside after six years of active service on the committee. We are keen to fill this vacancy and if you have an interest in local history and research, we would be pleased to hear from you. Our main activities are publications, including newsletters and signboards for places of historical significance, submissions to local councils, website posting and possible development, organising events for members and general heritage advocacy. It would be great if we could find someone with skills in all or any of these areas to ease the workload on the committee.

We would like to say a huge thank you to **East Pier** in Napier and **Spicers** in Havelock North. Both businesses allow us to meet on their premises every alternate month for our meetings.

