

# HISTORIC PLACES

HAWKE'S BAY

April

2020

## HB HERITAGE NEWS

### Now we are in Lockdown

Current lockdown restrictions mean our programme for member excursions has been cancelled and this will continue in the immediate future. Our planned visit to the Mokopeka hydro-electric power station and the Red Shed planned for March was scheduled for the first week of the Level 4 lockdown and had to be postponed. We hope to re-schedule this trip for early next summer.

Our last trip was in November where we visited three beautiful heritage homes in Clive all fronting onto the Clive River and all within easy walking distance of one another which made for a very relaxed outing. The three properties, Farndon House, Roseville and Ingleside proved



Farndon House

to be hidden gems well back from the road. The houses and their history created a lot of interest, the gardens were beautiful on a sunny afternoon and the hospitality including a sumptuous after



Roseville

noon tea was excellent. As always, we remain extremely grateful to heritage property owners who are prepared to open their homes to our members. The participation in this trip



Ingleside

was less than usual and the interest in the visit to Mokopeka and the Red Shed is lower still, possibly because of concerns about the approaching Covid 19 threat. In any case it would be interesting to get some feed back from members as to the type of activities that are likely to create the greatest interest and support. Members of our committee would be pleased to receive your suggestions, or you could e-mail the Secretary.

Other activities that we are planning include a screening of some old films on Hawke's Bay topics at the Century Theatre in partnership with MTG, and our annual general meeting, normally held in September. We are also planning a programme on the evolution of the New Zealand house from 1858 to 1958, which we are planning as a visit to look at some examples. We also propose another house tour, as we have done in the past, looking at the work of one of the prominent Hawke's Bay architects.

Another activity that has been postponed is our annual Hawke's Bay Heritage Network meeting, normally held in May in Havelock North. This is an opportunity to share experiences and discuss matters of mutual interest with various history and heritage-related groups in Hawke's Bay along with Heritage New Zealand and planners from local councils. Any members or others who might find this meeting of interest should contact the Secretary to get on the mailing list for the meeting notification.

We have for some time been working on submissions to the Napier City Council District Plan Review. This initiative received Council funding and under the leadership and guidance of Elizabeth Pishief, 47 properties and 12 precincts have been identified and recommended for heritage listing on the District Plan. Council staff are currently consulting with owners of the properties included in the report about the project. Listing on the District Plan provides statutory protection for the property and owners need time to consider the implications of this, and the opportunity to discuss and ask questions with Council staff. Members who would like to look at the report on a confidential basis can contact the newsletter editor by e-mail, [denis.pilkington@gmail.com](mailto:denis.pilkington@gmail.com). You can look at the current list of heritage items on the District plan via the following link and scroll down to Appendix 13.

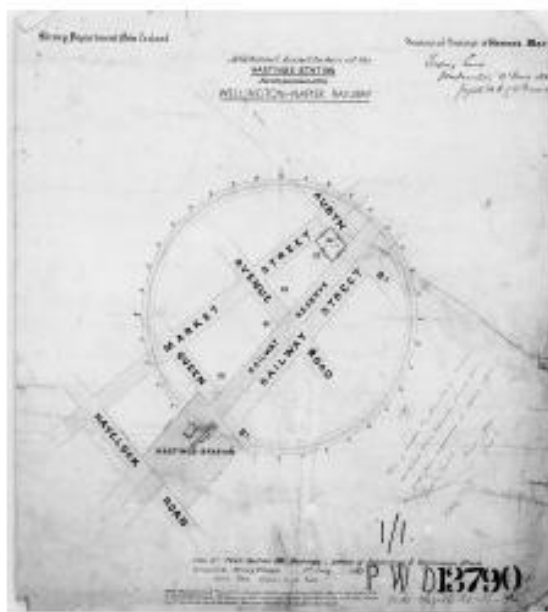
<https://www.napier.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/District-Plan/Part-10-Appendices/combined-appendices.pdf> There is also the Heritage New Zealand List at <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list> To get an overview try entering "Napier" in the address box and go from there.

## A history of the Hastings Railway Station

The building of the Hawke's Bay railway from Napier to Palmerston North resulted from Julius Vogel's Railways Act of 1870, part of his major public works policies of the 1870s. The Napier-Pakipaki section was constructed as the first stage of the proposed line. Various routes had been investigated for the railway, and the route through the settlement then known as Karamu was chosen on the grounds of cost.

A contract to build the railway was let to the Manchester-based English firm of John Brogden & Sons, who had considerable experience in railway construction in various parts of the world. The only other short lines then operating in New Zealand were from Auckland to Onehunga and Wellington to Lower Hutt, and the total length of railway lines in New Zealand was just 155 miles (eventually increasing to 3,600 miles).

The Hastings station buildings were also constructed by Brogdens, and the station was officially opened as the rail service began on 12 October 1874. There was a special train from Napier and a champagne luncheon for dignitaries. The service from Napier to Hastings proved popular, with over 73,000 passengers making the journey in the first year, the fare being one shilling and eight pence (equivalent to about \$5.43 today).



The site in 1883. Note Havelock Road now Heretaunga Street and Railway Street now Russell Street

The railway station and yards occupied the area between Heretaunga and St Aubyn Streets adjacent to Railway Street (now Russell Street). One siding extended to Eastbourne Street. The station was a "Second Class" type, as was the one built at the same time in Napier. These stations consisted of a simple shed with a wooden platform, and no verandah. The Hastings station was built facing Station Street in the block between Heretaunga Street and Queen Street East. There was also a goods shed, a water tower, and a coal station. The railway yards included a turntable used for horse wagons to ensure that horses were facing the engine while being transported by train. The later introduction of bogey horse trucks ensured that horses always faced the engine so the turntable was no longer required. It was removed in 1910. The station master's house was situated across the street from the railway line in Queen Street towards the rear of the block fronting Russell Street where the Hastings Post Office was subsequently built on the corner. A pedestrian overbridge to allow people to cross the line safely was proposed in 1913, but it was never built. It was common for passengers to walk across the tracks



to board the train, which raised concern about danger from passing freight trains.

By 1882 the station had been upgraded to what is shown on the plan as a Class 2 Station, being the second largest of the five standard station designs. The overall size of this building was 40 metres long and 5.9 metres wide plus a full verandah which extended to the edge of the platform about 4 metres from the front wall of the building. The station building initially also served as a post office with the station master handling both roles. A wooden post office was opened in 1898 and was replaced with a brick building in 1910, on the same site, on the corner of Queen Street and Railway (Russell) Streets. The post office area in the station was, in fact, the largest room in the building and included 42 private post boxes opening onto the lobby. Other rooms included a parcels office, waiting room and ladies' waiting room which included two toilets, a very forward-thinking provision of this amenity, as municipal authorities in New Zealand did not start providing public toilets for women until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Toilets for

men were situated at the other end of the building with outside access beyond the end of the verandah. There was also a lamp storage area in this end of the building. The post office, ticket office and the two waiting rooms all had fireplaces.



*The Railway station looking north from the Fire Bell Tower situated close to the Heretaunga Street crossing on the Market Street side. The station building verandah can be seen on the Russell Street frontage. The water tower is at the near right*

Apart from non-public space in the post office and the ticket office, the plan does not show any other staff offices or facilities apart from the toilets. The station building was moved north east on the Russell Street frontage to the block between Queen Street and Avenue Road within the existing railway yards in 1897.



*The Railway Yards and Fire Bell Tower looking south along Market Street towards the Heretaunga Street crossing. Part of the Williams and Kettle building is on the right with the Hastings Hotel beyond.*

The Hawke's Bay railway reached Waipukurau in September 1886, amid much local celebration, Woodville in March 1887 and finally Palmerston North in March 1891 where the line by that time connected with the government's railway to New Plymouth and the privately owned Wellington and Manawatu Railway Co line from Longburn to Wellington.

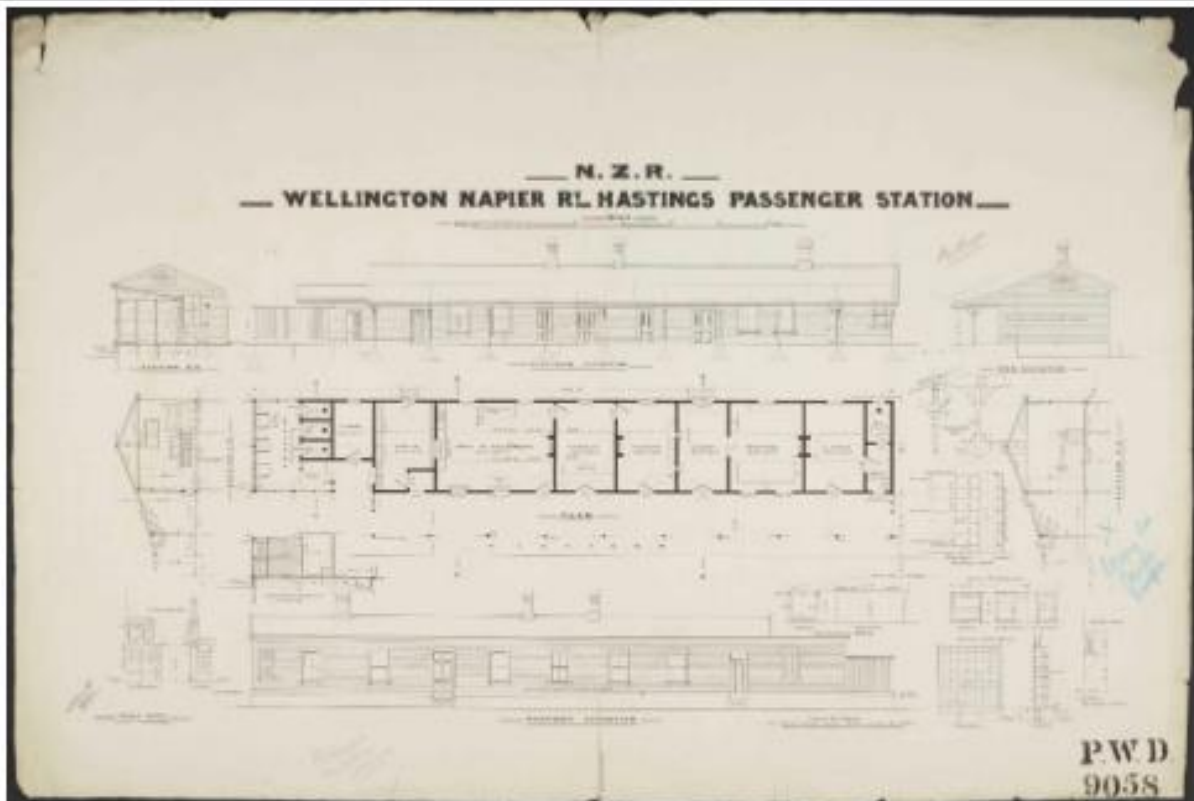
There were 40 stations on the Hawke's Bay line between the Napier port station at Ahuriri and Woodville. Stations close to Hastings included Farndon (renamed Clive in 1915) Whakatu, Tomoana (originally named Karamu), the Hastings Racecourse, Longlands, and Pakipaki. The Racecourse station operated from the opening of the racecourse in the 1870s, with special trains running on race days up until the 1950s. Initially there were stockyards at the Hastings station, but this was never popular with the town's residents, being described as unsanitary, and causing complaints about smell and noise. The yards were eventually moved to Longlands around 1912 where the wagons were initially moved by horses and later by tractor. The Pakipaki Station serviced the Thos. Borthwick and Sons meat works from 1906, until the buildings were badly damaged in the 1931 earthquake and subsequently demolished and also a lime and brick works. Lime was loaded at this station until the 1970s. The Pakipaki station building was demolished in the mid-1980s after being damaged by fire.

Travelling time on the railway from Wellington to Napier was initially just over 11 hours, which increased to over 12 hours when New Zealand Railways opened the Wairarapa line over the Rimutaka incline in 1897. Using that route allowed the NZR to bypass the privately owned WMR line from Wellington to Longburn for its Hawke's Bay service. The route reverted to the Manawatu after the government took over the Wellington & Manawatu Railway Company in 1908.

By 1939 the mail and passenger trains did the journey from Wellington to Napier via Palmerston North in about 7 ½ hours and the *Standard* railcars, which started the run in that year, transported passengers over the route in 5 hours and 12 minutes. The *Standard* railcars were replaced with the 88-seat *Articulateds* or *Twinsets* in 1955 and the *Endeavour* Buffet Car Express with its rear observation window was introduced in 1972, succeeded by the *Bay Express* in 1989.

Development of the railway north of Napier was slow. The line was completed to Eskdale in 1923, but the line through





*The Station Building in 1892. Note there are columns supporting the verandah which do not show in later photos*



*The Heretaunga Street crossing in 1932. The crossing keeper is standing in the middle of the street. Reconstruction of the Post Office building can be seen on the right in Russell Street.*



to Gisborne was not completed until early in 1943.

In Hastings, the location of the railway station in the centre of the business and retail area became increasingly unpopular, with the associated railway yard being seen as unsightly. The water tower was a prominent landmark in early photographs as was a tall fire bell tower situated nearby on the other side of the tracks. Initially the water tower at the station was situated close to the Heretaunga Street crossing, but this meant



that the crossing was blocked to road traffic when locomotives were taking on water. The tower was moved north east closer to the relocated station building to avoid this problem. However, the Heretaunga Street crossing remained subject to disruption from shunting operations, and this was also the case at the St Aubyn Street crossing. Eastbourne Street crossing was closed off by the railway authorities in 1887 but eventually reopened in 1919. The Queen Street crossing remained open during the early history but was eventually closed off.



*The Blossom Festival crowd 1957*

From early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century locals began agitating to get a new station building for Hastings. In 1908 it was noted that both Masterton and Dannevirke had new stations, the latter being rebuilt for the second time in 1903, with the Hastings building being referred to locally as a "pygmy station". In 1914 the Government promised that a number of new stations would be built, including at Hastings where a budget of £40,000 (\$6.6m. today) was proposed. This project was put on hold during World War I and, in spite of various requests by successive mayors over the years, nothing happened.

The station included a bookstall and a 1920s agreement details how the proprietor had the sole right to also sell fruit and confectionery. In accord with the agreement signed by "the Minister of Railways, Gordon Coates on behalf of His Majesty King George V" no advertising material was permitted in or around the stall, and rental for the stall was set at 10/- per year (about \$50 in today's money).

From the 1920s onwards the successive borough councils in Hastings, tried to persuade the government and NZR to shift the station northwards beyond St Aubyn Street and, when a new station building was finally opened on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1962, over

For the Citizens of Hastings . . .  
New Zealand Railways are pleased  
to present



### THE ATTRACTIVE NEW HASTINGS RAILWAY STATION

The men and women of New Zealand Railways take pride in the completion of the attractive new railway passenger station for Hastings. Designed as part of the railways' nationwide modernisation programme, the new Hastings station offers up-to-the-minute amenities for travellers and other customers of the Railways Department. It is another symbol of the Department's determination, as resources permit, to provide the best possible travel and transport facilities to meet the needs of our dynamic and vigorous communities.

For Better Travel Service!

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS

half a century after it had first been promised, it was, indeed, on the suggested new site.

In the year prior to the opening the Minister of Railways, the Hon. John McAlpine had proposed official openings for new

stations that had been completed at Napier and New Plymouth, and for "other important centres" including Feilding and Hastings. By May 1962 the Minister had decided that "no official opening was intended" (in Hastings) so the long-delayed and much-awaited event passed without any fanfare or official recognition.

been acquired by the NZR in 1912. It was the re-siting of the station that allowed the Queen Street crossing to be re-opened. The railway yards were moved to the north east side of the station with the previous yard area and the northern end of Market Street redeveloped for retail and other commercial activity with associated car parking.



The new station in 1962

At about 32 metres long the new station was a little smaller than its predecessor, although no other details of the design or layout have been located to date apart from a promotional illustration. Initially it had been proposed to site the new sta-

The passenger service to Gisborne ceased in 1988 and all other passenger services eventually ceased on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001 and the station was then closed.

From that time the station stood empty although there was some interest in redeveloping the building from time to time, including a proposal in 2013 by The Sustaining Hawke's Bay Trust to move its Environment Centre to the site. Ultimately the Trust was unable to reach a workable agreement with KiwiRail (New Zealand Railways Corporation) and the building remained empty.

The station building was destroyed in a fire in the early hours of Saturday 21 September 2019. The cause was unknown, but it was described as "suspicious" in media releases of the time. Subsequently, there were major concerns about possible health risk from asbestos from the building and the site was cleared, with remains of the building demolished and the area round it cleaned up shortly after the fire.

In October 2019 group general manager property, Stephanie Campbell, said KiwiRail had not made a decision on the future development of the station site. "Any development will con-



tion building directly behind Nelson Park but a site much closer to St Aubyn Street was eventually chosen on land that had

sider the appropriate use of the site that would also benefit the local community. In the short term KiwiRail will finish tidying and fencing the site."

According to *Hawke's Bay Today* it was understood that

timber to the value of from \$700,00 to \$900,000 in the Carters' timber yard on the other side of Sir James Wattie Place would need to be disposed of because of potential asbestos contamination.



### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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