

# HERITAGE

HE REO MO NGA TAONGA TUKU IHO

# VOICES

2025 AUTUMN  
NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC  
PLACES  
AOTEAROA

## THE SPECIAL CHARACTER AREAS OF AUCKLAND

Begins on Page 4...



Villa (left) with cottages (centre and right) in Ponsonby. Google Street View looking north from Cowan St. *Photo / Auckland's Special Character Areas Report.*



**Elizabeth Pishief**  
HPA President

Hello everyone. Welcome to our first edition of Heritage Voices/He Reo Mo Nga Taonga Tuku Iho for 2025.

### AGM and joint Conference with ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand

Our 2025 AGM will be held with ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand as a combined Conference and AGM. We have had two very successful joint conferences with ICOMOS ANZ recently, one in Gisborne, and the other in Auckland. This one will be in Napier between 9-12 October and it will be

held in the newly conserved, Category 1 Women's Rest in Clive Square. The programme will include talks and field trips as well as a conference dinner and plenty of opportunities to meet like-minded people and to savour the built heritage of Napier.

### Networking

I regularly meet with other leaders of Heritage organisations in New Zealand. Together with the President of ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand Stacy Vallis and the President of the New Zealand Archaeological Association Chris Jennings I meet every six weeks with Andrew Coleman the CE of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to discuss issues of mutual interest and to share information.

We, that is Stacy, Chris and I, also meet with people

## President's Introduction continued...

from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to hear about their work and various changes within the heritage sector. We, in return provide information about our activities and our lived experiences of how heritage is working on the ground.

A new network I belong to on behalf of HPA is a loose confederation of heritage professionals including professional historians, representatives of library, archive, and museum associations and the universities. This group has so far met twice once at the end of 2024 and recently in February.

It is intended to break down silos, share concerns and experiences and assist one another with submissions, advertise our activities (conferences webinars etcetera) and provide opportunities for networking generally.

### Submissions

We prepared a submission on Amplify: A Creative and Cultural Strategy for New Zealand 2024-2030. The main points we made were that the Strategy was more focussed on arts and culture than heritage and we felt it should be strengthened to

promote heritage more fully.

We also made some comments on the draft Statements of General Policy prepared by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). These statements are prepared every ten years and are required by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 to guide HNZPT's work. There are five Statements:

1. The statutory role of advocacy (the Advocacy Statement)
2. The administration of the archaeological provisions of the HNZPT Act 2014 (the Archaeology Statement)
3. The New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero (the List Statement)
4. The National Heritage Landmarks/Ngā Mana whenua o Aotearoa me ōna Kōrero Tūturu (the Landmarks Statement), and
5. The historic places owned, or controlled by, or vested in, HNZPT (the Properties Statement).

We were generally satisfied with the policies and made only a few minor comments.

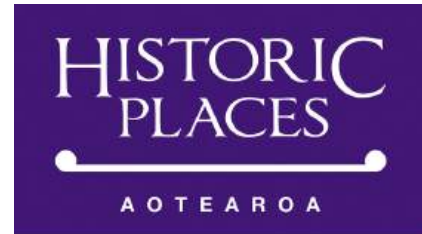
# “TELL ME A STORY” INTERPRETING OUR HERITAGE

**ICOMOS Aotearoa & Historic Places Aotearoa  
JOINT CONFERENCE 2025**

**9 - 12 October 2025  
Women's Rest building  
Clive Square, Napier**



ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND  
TE MANA O NGA POUWHENUA O TE AO



New Zealand's rich cultural heritage and history has been packaged, presented and interpreted for over 100 years.

Much has changed in this time - the audience, the purpose, the technology and method.

What has driven these changes? Have the changes been successful?

Stories can be told orally and visually, through architecture and landscapes, through signage, technology, or integrated landscapes. It is often filtered through social context and historical context. Perceptions change over time: interpretation and storytelling from 50 years ago may now feel anachronistic, or culturally insensitive, or "cringe".

We can reflect on particular ways in which our cultural heritage has been presented over time:

- Museums, from the 19th Century to now - the way in which they chose to display artefacts and objects, moving to more integrated storytelling
- The 1964 school bulletin "Washday at the Pa": the Te Papa website notes "The Washday at the Pa controversy raised a number of important points, the principal one being whether Māori people had the right to say how they were depicted".
- The Te Maori exhibition in the US in 1984
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga's digital walks and podcasts
- Movies, such as Boy, The Piano, Once Were Warriors, Utu, Whale Rider
- Current methods of interpretation of sites and places, using signboards, digital apps, and other media

However, important questions remain.

- ❖ Who gets to tell the story?
- ❖ Who's the audience?
- ❖ Who decides what the story should be?
- ❖ How does the storyteller know they've got it "right"?
- ❖ Who does the story belong to, so who has the right to tell it?

## THE PROGRAMME

Thursday 9 October	12-5pm	Field trips
Friday 10 October	12:30 - 4pm 5pm	Conference papers Welcome drinks
Saturday 11 October	9am - 5pm 7pm	Conference papers (including small walking field trips) Conference dinner
Sunday 12 October	9am - 3pm	Conference papers

# AUCKLAND SPECIAL CHARACTER AREAS CONTINUED...



## John Burns Character Coalition

*"Auckland's Special Character Areas encompass a rare gem in global urbanism, a taonga - a collection of documented and protected timber architecture from the 19th and 20th centuries unrivalled worldwide in scale and quality."*

This is the conclusion from a comprehensive world-wide survey commissioned by the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Founders Society and carried out last year by Joshua Howie, a postgraduate student at the University of Auckland (Masters in Architecture and Heritage Conservation).

His report is available at [www.charactercoalition.org.nz/aucklands-special-character-areas](http://www.charactercoalition.org.nz/aucklands-special-character-areas) and has also been summarised by Auckland Council in its 2024 publication "Auckland's Heritage Counts" at: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage/heritage/docsheritagecountssummaries/auckland-heritage-counts-2024-annual-summary.pdf>

The report reviews the literature on Auckland's Special Character Areas (SCAs), identifies their advantages and importance, and compares them with international instances of similar urban fabric.

Auckland's SCAs are a planning overlay mechanism which, together with zoning the land of properties in a SCA as single house zone, Auckland Council has used for over forty years to retain and manage areas in Auckland to preserve them for their heritage and other character values. The current Auckland Unitary Plan describes these values as being areas of "collective and cohesive values, importance relevance and interest"; identifies these areas; and provides them with both zoning and overlay protection from demolition or development that would detract from, or destroy, those values.



Contemporary Auckland is well-known for its 'old' timber architecture and urban fabric. This fabric comprises the cottage, villa, transitional villa and bungalow typologies constructed in the first layers of Auckland's urbanism beginning with initial suburban expansion in the 1870s (in the form of walking suburbs) and concluding around 1940 as the impact of World War II on New Zealand increased (these later layers enabled by the tram network and later, automobiles). These typologies feature prominently within the SCA system, contributing 71% of the total buildings within Auckland's SCAs, concentrated in SCAs in its older suburbs closer to the CBD, such as Ponsonby, Freemans Bay, Grey Lynn, Kingsland, Mt Eden, Parnell and Remuera, and Devonport and Birkenhead with their ferry access.



Villas along O'Neil St, Ponsonby - Special Character - Residential: Isthmus A. Photo / Auckland SCA Report

Auckland's has fifty SCAs which encompass not only those types of buildings but a broad variety of eras, styles, materials and building uses from the city's history. However, they cover only a small part of Auckland. In the Unitary Plan there are a total of 21,280 property parcels in the SCA overlay, covering a total land area of 14.8 km<sup>2</sup> (occupying just fewer than 2.6% of the city's urbanised area, and 0.3% of the Auckland Unitary Authority's total land area).

The report identifies the economic, social and environmental benefits of SCAs to Auckland.

In previous studies, Auckland's SCAs have been consistently found to positively impact both property values and sale prices, suggesting that special character amenity and its preservation are attractive to home buyers.

A Council study found that houses located within SCAs had a 4.3% price premium over non-SCA houses sold in Auckland over a 10-year period between 2006 and 2016 (all else being equal).

A recent example of this dynamic in action can be seen in the advertisement for the sale of a character house, a 1930s Art Deco-Spanish Mission-style property, which is in a street in the Balmoral East SCA.

The real estate agent is quoted as saying *“one of the great things about the address was the house was in a single house zone, which meant the neighbours were too. There’s a real protection from the development that’s going on in Auckland with townhouses etcetera, and also the properties either side are really beautiful character properties so you’re amongst the very best company in Mt Eden.”* (This house is featured in the below article titled: ‘Absolute Legend’: Iconic Mount Eden Garden for Sale)

*“The house can be extended out the back and renovated but it can’t be removed and will remain in keeping with the heritage area that is Marsden Avenue”,* he continued to say.

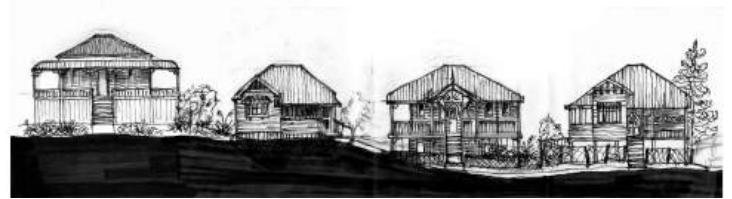
There are social benefits too. A London study found *“green and peaceful residential environments”* to be a desirable feature consistently listed by residents in every conservation area they studied, *“no matter their location, level of deprivation or property premium.”* There are some common traits associated with conservation areas overseas that apply to Auckland’s SCAs too. Streetscape, green space, and consistent character all provide a sense of calm that many people surveyed attested to.

The environmental benefits are shown in a survey by Preservation Green Lab of the US National Trust for Historic Preservation, which found that building reuse *“almost always yields fewer environmental impacts than new construction when comparing buildings of similar size and functionality.”* In the US cities of Portland, Oregon and Chicago, Illinois, they found reused single family homes had reduced climate change impacts when compared to equivalent new builds, by 7% and 10% respectively.

In preparing his report, Joshua Howie began his investigation broadly, by looking into urban settlements across the world that he knew contained areas of timber urban fabric, ornate or otherwise, from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He contacted heritage or local government representatives, as well as members of local independent historic or architecture societies, from those cities which faced similar architectural and urban selection pressures to Auckland during the late 19th and early 20th century.

In total, he contacted 27 people for 19 different urban areas, ranging from the remote colonial settlements of Jamestown, Saint Helena (United Kingdom) and Kingston, Norfolk Island (Australia), the Caribbean timber urbanism of Paramaribo, Suriname and Belize City, Belize, the urban character of San Francisco, New England and the Midwestern United States, timber vernacular in north-eastern Europe centred around the Baltic in Vilnius and Riga, as well as from cities in Australia and the United Kingdom.

In this extensive survey of urban areas with fabric of a similar age, density and materiality to Auckland’s SCAs, he found no direct equivalent anywhere in the world.



Drawn comparison of streetscapes: Brisbane (top) Auckland (middle) and Melbourne (bottom). Drawn by Joshua Howie (Report author), 2024.

The closest comparisons he found were in Australia. However, there are clear regional differences on either side of the Tasman. While local kauri timber is the dominant construction material for these buildings in New Zealand, Australia has far more material variation in its houses, favouring stone and brick masonry during this era. There are two notable exceptions which share identifiably similar design language to Auckland’s special character and timber construction: Brisbane and Melbourne. He also identified two areas of the US with timber architecture and similarities to Auckland’s special character in Chicago and New Orleans

While the character of Brisbane and Auckland share similar architectural details, materiality, and

age, Brisbane is far more varied, with lower quality of character retained. Although timber defines the special character of Auckland, and plays an undeniable role in Brisbane, it generally took a backseat to brick and stone masonry throughout greater Melbourne during this era. Across the central suburbs, what are essentially rows of brick villas can be identified, with timber buildings dotted throughout, resulting in few true comparisons to Auckland's uninterrupted timber urban character.



are in and of themselves endemic to Auckland and entirely unique globally, making Auckland's special character areas a taonga and their preservation essential.



A row of late Victorian villas along Albany Rd, in Ponsonby, Auckland. Note the overarching consistency. Google Earth. n.d. Streetview looking east from Albany Road in Ponsonby, Auckland. Photo / Auckland SCA Report



**TOP:** Queenslanders in the central Brisbane suburb of New Farm. Photo / Auckland SCA Report  
**BOTTOM:** A row of Queenslanders along Welsby St, in New Farm, Brisbane, showing the varied urban character. Photo / Auckland SCA Report

In the USA, Chicago's collection of Victorian and Edwardian timber workers' cottages is similar to Auckland's vernacular timber architecture of the same era. However, the continued existence of Chicago's timber cottages is not guaranteed. Currently there are no character or heritage overlay mechanisms that acknowledge this kind of urban character, and their numbers are in steady decline as the city is redeveloped.

Long and narrow in plan, these houses are characterised by their lack of corridors, instead comprising compact rooms placed in series.

Unfortunately this unique urban character is even less documented than Chicago's workers' cottages, and they have no special character or heritage protection either, so their survival is uncertain

The conclusion is that Auckland is unrivalled in the scale and consistency of its areas of ornate timber colonial architecture, even when compared to Brisbane and Melbourne and cities in the USA.

Furthermore, this architecture and its streetscapes

A row of late Victorian villas along Albany Rd, in Ponsonby, Auckland. Note the overarching consistency. Google Earth. n.d. Streetview looking east from Albany Road in Ponsonby, Auckland. Photo / Auckland SCA Report

Unfortunately, some of these areas are now under threat from proposed change to the Unitary Plan, forced upon Auckland Council by Central Government legislation in 2021. This proposes removing the SCA overlay protection by about two-thirds, slashing the number of properties to be included in SCAs from over 21,000 to about 14,000.

While the ostensible reason for this is to increase opportunities for urban intensification, Auckland already has enough residential capacity for the foreseeable future without destroying its SCAs. The lack of affordable housing in Auckland is of course of concern, but it is caused by a lack of houses, not a shortage of land upon which to build them. The unnecessary destruction of these SCA's would be a major loss to Auckland and regret to generations to come.

The Character Coalition is one of many individual Aucklanders and groups such as residents associations and heritage societies that have made submissions opposing the removal of SCA's.

These submissions are due to be heard by a Hearing Panel later this year, and this report will provide valuable (and it is to hoped persuasive) information to the Panel about the importance of Auckland's SCA's on a world scale and the need to ensure they are retained and protected from destruction.



# REFORMS AND HERITAGE



**Andrew Coleman**  
HNZPT Chief Executive

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Reform and the inevitable impact on heritage has been a very hot topic over the last year.

The Resource Management reforms, questions on seismic and engineering rating of buildings and the Fast Track Approvals Act are all being progressed and we at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT), along with others from the heritage sector and interests, are continuing to advocate for the best of heritage, often against the seeming intent of reform.

One of these, the Fast Track Approvals Act, is not being progressed, it has been implemented. We at HNZPT have been involved in the operating framework development and implementation and are well informed to bring to your attention an update on this legislation.

The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 establishes a one-stop shop for approvals and consents needed for infrastructure and development projects. It is intended to be a faster and more efficient way to get approvals.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. To achieve this, it covers a variety of consent types, including archaeological authorities under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and consents under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Applicants wanting to apply for an archaeological authority must also include a resource consent or notice of requirement under the Resource Management Act 1991 in their application.

Applications are broken into two key phases: the referral phase and substantive phase. The referral phase can be used by any project that has been not listed in the Act - there are 149 projects listed in Act and by being included they do not need to be referred. This is managed by the Ministry for the Environment and decisions are made by the Minister for Infrastructure. The substantive phase is managed by the Environment Protection Agency, and this is where an expert panel is set up to assess

the full application and determine whether to grant or decline the approvals applied for.

All phases are supported by several agencies and groups, including HNZPT, the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai, local authorities and tangata whenua. Agencies with functions and duties under the Act can recover the costs of carrying these out.

We (HNZPT) are an administering agency for archaeological authority applications under the Act. Our role is to provide support and expert advice to the Minister on referral applications and the expert panel for substantive applications, particularly archaeological authorities where we make recommendations to the panel on whether the application should be approved or declined, and any appropriate conditions. Applicants are required to consult us before they apply for an archaeological authority. We are required to be invited to comment on applications that include an approval for an archaeological authority and may be invited for other application types that impact heritage.

The Minister/expert panel are required to invite comments from specific parties listed in the Act and may seek comments from anyone they consider relevant. There is no opportunity for those not invited to comment on an application to do so.

Decisions by an expert panel can be appealed by certain parties and only on questions of law. They cannot be appealed by the general public. We (HNZPT) have the right to appeal where it has commented on an application. All decisions can be judicially reviewed.

**The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 does not change processes under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014**, rather it gives applicants another pathway to apply for archaeological authorities.

Applications opened 7 February 2025. For more information about the process and applications made, see the fast-track website: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/> We (HNZPT) have received notifications and been involved in pre-application discussions. The ability for the 'voice of heritage' to be heard exists and we intend to continue to deliver fully our heritage advocacy role.

# 'ABSOLUTE LEGEND': ICONIC MOUNT EDEN GARDEN FOR SALE



**Catherine Masters**

Peter Brady in his Auckland garden in 2014. He died aged 90 several years ago. *Photo / Chris Gorman*

## *Proud owner and gardener Peter Brady died aged 90*

Thousands of people from around the world have toured the lush Auckland garden that was the pride and joy of its late owner, Peter Brady.

And since the 1930s Art Deco-Spanish Mission-style property and grounds were put on the market at the end of last month, garden-lovers and neighbours have turned out for another look.

Brady's acclaimed and ever-changing garden was 40 years in the making, starting life in Japan and then morphing into Bali, said niece Lynda Powell.

Powell said her beloved uncle died a couple of years ago, aged 90, and it's taken her some time to come to terms with selling the property, which is on one of Mount Eden's protected streets.

She said her warm and generous relative had the time of day for anyone who passed by, and everyone loved him.

He lived for his garden, sharing his life with two successive parrots, both called Mr Rainbow.

"He was my absolute legend of a man. We spoke every day. He was just really kind to everybody. He never judged people."

When Brady was nearing the end, Powell said all he wanted was to die at home looking out at his garden, and he did. "He just loved that garden more than anything."

Brady and his garden appeared over and over in magazines and gardening shows - Powell has a fish bin full of magazines he has featured in.

People would come from China and America on garden tours, and they would bus to Mount Eden from cruise ships.

Brady had been a florist in Waihi for 28 years when he bought the property. It was so rundown he couldn't live in it initially but then he revamped the house, painting it pink outside and adding a yellow sunroom.

"It was stunning when he did it, my God. It was beautiful - silk wallpaper and chintz curtains. It was fabulous. He could turn something quite ordinary into something very stunning - super creative."



Brady's two-bedroom home is well-known to garden lovers. Photo / OneRoof

Brady loved foliage rather than flowers for the garden, Powell said, adding structure through trees and ornaments and working on instinct.

When he moved to the site in 1983 he first had to tackle the honeysuckle and privet, and "all that horrible stuff".

He studied Japanese garden design principles and then got to work, utilising the scoria rock and adding texture and layers.

*"It was absolutely Japanese-inspired but as he found bromeliads and he realised what he could grow it turned into a Balinese garden,"* Powell said.

There's a fish pond and he loved birds, especially his parrots, which were both characters themselves. "You'd be sitting there and you'd hear a phone ring and you'd go, 'oh', and he'd go, 'no, it's just the bird'. He loved that bird, it was such good company."

The garden was also one of the first "hero" gardens in Auckland, Powell said.

Brady was gay and once a year the gay community opened their gardens up to fundraise for people with AIDS, and later for the hospice. "They did that for years and they raised thousands and thousands. He was in it for 20 years."

People returned to his garden over and over because her uncle was always changing things up.

"He didn't build it and leave it. He shifted stuff, he replanted stuff, he got new sculptures, he ripped stuff down.

"It was probably the best part of his creativity - he kept changing it. Some very close friends, who are all gardeners, they said, 'what are we going to do now? This was our library. We'd come here to get

inspiration from Peter and he would know at all!"

Ray White agent Dean Tuffley, whose listing says to ignore the \$2.35m RV, said one of the great things about the address was the house was in a single house zone, which meant the neighbours were too.

"There's a real protection from the development that's going on in Auckland with townhouses etcetera, and also the properties either side are really beautiful character properties so you're amongst the very best company in Mt Eden."

The house can be extended out the back and renovated but it can't be removed and will remain in keeping with the heritage area that is Marsden Avenue, he said.

Tuffley said the house was a beautiful Spanish Mission/Art Deco style home, designed by architect William Henry Jaine who was prominent in the 1930s.

There's 890sqm of land, which is a good-sized plot for Mt Eden, and the garden has over 200 species of plants.



The garden was Brady's pride and joy and thrilled the thousands of visitors who visited. Photo / Chris Gorman

*"It's amazing. It's like having a nursery or a park as your backyard."*

Interest has been strong, Tuffley said. "I've had so many people come through the open home that knew him well or that had seen the property on garden tours or in home and garden magazines and just absolute garden enthusiasts who absolutely adore the property."

# COMMENT: EXTENT OF INPUT ON FAST-TRACK APPROVALS PROCESS



**Dr. Lynne Lochhead**  
**Historic Places Canterbury**

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In relation to the provision for hearings local heritage groups have no automatic right to comment or to be heard. Heritage groups do not appear in the list of people or organisations that comments must be sought from (unless they happen to own the land to which the application relates or land adjacent to it, so not a very likely scenario). There is provision in s.53 (3) for the panel to seek comments from 'any other person the panel considers appropriate' but this is purely discretionary and may not apply to groups as elsewhere there is provision for the Minister in certain situations to specify 'personnel or groups' to be invited to comment in addition to those already provided for in s.53. All in all, I think the prospect of being invited to comment is negligible and if the Minister or panel were to go to anyone it would likely be HNZPT.

It is clear that there is no requirement for the Panel to hold a hearing. If it does decide to hold a hearing it appears to have a discretion as to whether it would hear from people or groups who have provided comments.

Unless a group has been invited to comment they would have no standing to appeal a decision, which in any event can only be on questions of law.

I don't believe there is any specific protection for heritage sites, but archaeological authorities are still needed where relevant which will involve HNZPT. It seems the role of granting them will be taken over by the panel in Fast Track situations.

Heritage sites should be identified in the application process though the wording in the act does not appear to be specific about this. In the provision about making applications it refers specifically to needing to identify wahi tapu areas s.13 (4) (0) within an application area but doesn't seem to specifically refer to heritage sites. On the other hand, in provisions relating to access it does specifically mention heritage sites. The discrepancy is odd, but heritage sites should be covered by the provision for identifying adverse environmental effects.

In short, I don't think there is much in the Act to allay the concerns of local groups and I think if they do have concerns about a particular application they should bring their concerns to the attention of the local authority and HNZPT. The authority must be invited to comment under s. 53. Failing that lobbying local MP's.

# IMPORTANCE OF HERITAGE LANDSCAPES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW



**John P. Adam**  
**Landscape Historian**

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Some forty plus years ago in the early 1980s there appeared global groups of people who came together to study and maintain community spaces that contained historic buildings and gardens - the

emphasis on the landscape - such as here in New Zealand was the Fletcher House and garden in Dunedin, the Edmonds Factory Gardens in Christchurch, Nairn and Katherine Mansfield House in Wellington and Alberton, Highwic and Kinder House in Auckland to name some - each with notable gardens.

The Australian Garden History Society was formed

in 1983 with branches established statewide and yearly popular conferences (and quarterly magazine - now digitised) that attracted several New Zealanders each year. They commissioned regional garden surveys of the local public and private parks and gardens. I was associated with the formation of the short lived Auckland Garden History Society that no longer exists.

It published studies of four local gardens but there was no national support for such studies here. Charlie Challenger and Thelma Strongman published regional historic garden history books and papers. In parallel there already existed individuals who collected plants with significant cultural value such as Rene Orchiston (1919-2010) and the Te Kohinga Harakeke o Aotearoa - New Zealand flax national collection.

Societies such as Soil & Health, NZ Farm Forestry, NZ Tree Crops and Heritage Roses (Nancy Steen, Ken Knobbs and Toni Sylvester) supported individuals who collected heritage plants and wrote about the history of horticulture. Soon Kay Baxter began to gather heirloom food plants for the Kōhanga Institute in Northland from the 1990s.

The national horticultural society, RNZIH (est. 1923), already promoted the annual Banks Lecture since the 1920s that feature a number of now garden history lectures such as that presented by Professor Perrin of Massey University (1945) and Robert Cooper of Auckland War Memorial Museum (1971). Helen Leach (1984) wrote 1,000 Years of Gardening in New Zealand. Thirty years earlier journalist Barbara Matthews was publishing stories on the history of regional gardens such as Chesterhope in Hawkes Bay (NZ Gardener Nov. 1954) and at the same time Margaret Robinson from Eastbourne was writing radio scripts about notable New Zealand historic gardens in Auckland and Wellington

The RNZIH began to make annual awards for Garden History from the early 2000s and continues to do so. Both native plants and traditional Māori plants and cultivars were gathered locally as new community teaching gardens for food sovereignty became popular movements early this century. Today we also have many regional Community Forest Gardens

The Government commissioned heritage landscape conservation reports (in parallel to architectural reports that have been more popular) on many public properties such as Premier House

and Parliament Buildings, Wellington, and the Percy Gardens, Lower Hutt. Then Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland

Cities commissioned extensive regional planning heritage reports in the early 2000s. They were never promoted to their full potential as changes in conservation of urban trees for example saw long standing regional tree protection policies i.e. "blanket tree protection" scrapped by the John Key Government. Earthquakes destroyed Canterbury landscapes. Historic trees had been studied from the 1940s by botanist HH Allen whose research was used as a base to begin listing trees on planning schemes from the 1970s that included botanical experts like Dr Laurie Milliner in Auckland.

Contemporary Open Garden Schemes appeared in Australasia in the 1980s the Australian Schemes focused on raising monies to be spent on garden conservation (restoring/ educating) unlike the New Zealand schemes that focus was and remains on promoting regional tourism that included the several Taranaki gardens then transferred from the QEII Trust to local councils as gardens were not valued as "natural" heritage, that institution was founded to protect private bush landscapes by local councils. Gardens in New Zealand were not generally valued by some policy advisors as "natural heritage" i.e. "remnant bush" although the colonial bush was always imbedded in the Colonial landscape garden i.e. Riccarton Bush of the 1840's-1880s as described in Otago by historian Stevan Eldred-Grigg (1980) in his book A Southern Gentry: New Zealanders who Inherited the Earth.

The Nathan Homestead Garden in South Auckland is another example. Environmental History also appeared on the academic horizon in the 1990s as a child of Forest History born in the 1970s and led by Massey University based Dr Michael Roche that significantly strengthened the study of heritage landscapes.

Finally, there have been two popular books written on New Zealand garden history by Bee Dawson (2010) and Matthew Bradbury (Editor=1995) but neither described any community history as a force in creating policies and practices to conserve gardens. There was no historiography of garden history published in these books although this writer had drafted an essay including this topic for publication, but it was not accepted at the final edit.

# HPA WELCOMES NEW MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE AND EDITOR



**Leah Crisp**  
HPA Executive Member

Leah in her 1971 Classic Caravan named 'Edith'. She has been restoring it since the age of 14 years old. *Photo / Leah Crisp*

Welcome to this very special edition of *Heritage Voices, He Reo Mo Nga Taonga Tuku Iho!* My name is Leah Crisp, and I am the newest executive member of Historic Places Aotearoa, and also stepping into the role of Editor. This new role comes at an exciting time in my life, having recently moved to Auckland from my hometown of Palmerston North, to study a Master of Arts in Museums and Cultural Heritage, focusing on heritage buildings and conservation. I am particularly interested in the interior design and decoration of heritage buildings, completing my Diploma of Interior Design at the beginning of 2023, and hoping to one day

combine these two areas of study into one epic career! I've been involved with Historic Places Manawatū-Horowhenua since the beginning of 2024, while having been on various Trust Boards for historic places for some years, including the Caccia Birch Trust, since 2022, of which I am now the Chair, and the Hoffman Kiln Trust. I have been passionate about heritage buildings and all things history since I was very young, and have been known to have once cried seven times (yes, seven!) in the Toy and Transport Museum in Wanaka (happy tears of course!), after seeing old telephones, suitcases, prams, cars, and many other antiques! I am very excited for the year ahead!

## CHURCHILL AND NEW ZEALAND

### **Mike Groves** Churchill Dining Club NZ

Winston Churchill never visited New Zealand. Yet New Zealand was important to him, so much so

that he described New Zealand to Keith Holyoake, New Zealand's deputy Prime Minister, as "the brightest gem in the British crown" (NZ House of Representatives, 4 August 1964).

Churchill's earliest known involvement with New Zealand was in 1893, when sitting the Sandhurst

entrance exam for the third time. His class had been told that there would be a question on a particular country in the following day's exam. He put the names of all the maps in the atlas into a hat and drew out New Zealand. As he wrote in *My Early Life*: "I applied my good memory to the geography of that Dominion. Sure enough the first question in the paper was: 'Draw a map of New Zealand'.....this is what is called at Monte Carlo an en plein... I certainly got paid very high marks for my paper". He passed the exam, and so got into Sandhurst. We can only speculate on how history would have been different if that question had not been asked – but we do know that his success in that exam helped launch him on his successful military career and all that flowed from that.

He is greatly admired in New Zealand. Rarely does a week go by without a favourable reference to him in the media. The mere use of his name suggests leadership, oratory, statesmanship, courage, bulldog spirit and all the best characteristics of an Englishman. There are about a hundred streets in New Zealand bearing Churchill's name and others with related names like Chartwell. His name is a benchmark against which politicians of all nations are measured in the New Zealand media. Quite simply, to be "Churchillian" is a mark of high respect and praise. He casts a very long shadow.

An example of the long shadow is a 2011 story in Auckland's daily newspaper. The front page banner read "Churchill awed by Kiwi's bravery". The story itself was headlined "Bravery humbled Churchill". 22 year-old Sergeant Jimmy Ward, a New Zealander serving with 75(NZ) Squadron, had climbed onto the wing of a flaming Wellington bomber and doused the flames, allowing the plane to return safely home. He received the VC for this. Soon after, he was summoned to Downing St, where Churchill reportedly said to him "You must feel very humble and awkward in my presence". Ward replied "Yes, sir", to which Churchill replied: "Then you can imagine how humble and awkward I feel in yours". Kiwis love stories like this!

Churchill had high praise for New Zealand – particularly in the final volume of his "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples", where he highlighted New Zealand's political and economic development, noting that New Zealand "faced and mastered all the problems of federal government thirty years before Australia did". He saw that "the tradition and prejudices of the past weighed less

heavily than in older countries", and that when the 1906 Liberal government in Britain introduced brave innovations, they were in fact no more than had already been enacted in New Zealand years earlier. These reforms, he noted, testified "to the survival and fertility even in the remote and unfamiliar islands of the Pacific, of the British political genius".

Churchill's relationship with New Zealand was largely defined by war, and in each of these wars Churchill would have seen New Zealand as a strong, loyal, positive and uncomplaining supporter. He must have loved Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage's declaration of war immediately after Britain's in September 1939: "Both with gratitude for the past and with confidence for the future, we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes we go; where she stands we stand".

## WORLD WAR I

Churchill's most significant connection to New Zealand during WWI was through Gallipoli, a campaign he strongly promoted. Clement Attlee later called it "the only imaginative strategic idea of the war" and lamented that Churchill had lacked the "full power to carry it to success". If successful, Gallipoli may have shortened the war and saved many lives. Initially planned to be a naval operation, it would evolve into a joint naval/military operation which ended after eight months in ignominious failure, with 2721 New Zealanders killed, and 7197 casualties. Despite this, Churchill was not widely blamed in New Zealand, and instead, Gallipoli would become a defining moment in New Zealand's national identity, and the birthplace of the ANZAC relationship. Nowadays thousands of New Zealanders visit Gallipoli every year, particularly on ANZAC day.

After the war, Churchill reflected on Gallipoli, and that "A mournful splendour plays about that great operation", further going on to note the pain of the unrealised potential. His portrayal of himself as a victim of the campaign, like the Anzacs, rather than its architect, may have contributed to his success escaping criticism and resentment from New Zealand. While Churchill was widely respected, some groups disliked him, including those of Irish and working class ancestry, and those who blamed him for losses at Gallipoli, Greece, Crete and Monte Cassino. World War II would soften most opposition, and by the end admiration was widespread for him across the social and political spectrum.

Although Churchill never visited New Zealand, his wife Clementine did in 1934-5 cruising with friends on the *Rosaura*. Unfortunately the weather was unseasonably bad, and her unflattering descriptions may have discouraged Churchill from accepting the many warm invitations to visit. She toured the “Mountains and Sounds of the South Island....Wellington...Napier...the Thermal Region....Rotorua... Waitomo...Bay of Islands....Auckland...Russell”, but found the conditions “absolutely frightful”, “atrocious” and after a day and night felt the party had “exhausted the charms of Wellington”!

Between the Wars, Churchill saw Singapore as a key British stronghold to defend the interests of Australia and New Zealand. However he would underestimate Japan, famously stating in 1924 that war with Japan was unlikely in his lifetime—a grave miscalculation. By 1940, he declared that Britain would never allow a Dominion to be overrun by a “yellow race” and would defend it at all costs, even at the expense of the Mediterranean and Middle East. However, Britain’s resources were stretched thin when war came, and the fall of Singapore in 1942 would cause great alarm in New Zealand. The disaster, along with the sinking of *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales*, pushed New Zealand toward closer military ties with the United States, a shift Churchill observed with regret.

## WORLD WAR II

New Zealand troops left Wellington in January 1940 heading for Egypt, where they were to help guard the Suez Canal, but they were soon despatched to Greece and soon after that to Crete. Greece and Crete would be failures, and again cost New Zealand many casualties, with Churchill escaping blame, for having been a strong force opposing appeasement. After Crete, the New Zealand army went on to fight with great distinction in North Africa. Churchill expressed that these splendid New Zealand troops “gave me utmost confidence in the part they will play in the near future...and renewed all my feeling of gratitude to New Zealand for the high and broad strategic conception which has enabled her sons to fight in the vanguard of the victorious desert army”.

In December 1942 there was a real fear that New Zealand and Australia may be attacked by Japan with Darwin subsequently bombed. Churchill persuaded the Anzacs to leave their troops in North Africa, leading to a closer ties with the

United States. By 1944, New Zealand forces were in Italy, suffering heavy losses at Monte Cassino. Churchill was impressed by the commitment of New Zealand to opposing the Nazi domination, telling a colleague “New Zealand has never put a foot wrong from the start”. Churchill valued New Zealand’s military and economic contributions, regarding it as an English-like country, though distant and small. Despite never visiting, he held Fraser and Freyberg in high regard, and there is no doubt he would have received a rapturous welcome had he come.



### *Churchill Heights Cairn - New Plymouth*

After World War II the elevated northern section of Western Park was named 'Churchill Heights' in honour of Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain's leadership during the war. A direction indicator in black marble sits on top of the cairn, with a bronze plaque reading: “This hill is named Churchill Heights to commemorate in perpetuity the gratitude of the people of this district for the faith, courage and resolution inspired by the leadership of the Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill P.C - O.M - C.H. Prime Minister of Great Britain 1940-1945”

The exhibition of Churchill’s paintings that toured New Zealand in 1958 (a year before it was shown in London) attracted very big crowds in the four cities it visited, with then Prime Minister Walter Nash describing Churchill as “the greatest man of his age if not of all time in the English-speaking world” when opening the Wellington exhibition.

Opposition leader Keith Holyoake labelled

Churchill “the greatest commoner of our time if not of all time”. New Zealand had generously contributed to Churchill’s appeal to launch Churchill College in Cambridge for his 80th birthday, and after receiving greetings on his ninetieth birthday in 1964, Churchill responded: “I will never forget the staunch friendship and unswerving courage of our brothers and comrades in arms in New Zealand”. Following his death in 1965, the prestigious Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was set up with funds raised from government, business and the public, to allow up to 20 New Zealanders every year to travel overseas following Churchill’s belief that world peace and

greater international understanding can be promoted through ordinary people travelling to other countries and experiencing other cultures - as Churchill did so comprehensively himself. New Zealanders observed a 2-minute silence on the day of the funeral, during which trains and traffic stopped, and race meetings and a cricket test match were rescheduled to another day.

In 1964, Prime Minister Holyoake recalled: “I think we all felt during that tremendous time in history that so long as the heart of this great man continued to beat and Big Ben continued to toll the hours, the heart of Empire and the free world was still beating and the world was safe for democracy”.

## PALMERSTON NORTH’S HOFFMAN KILN CELEBRATES 120 YEARS



**Leah Crisp**  
HPA Executive Member

Palmerston North will be buzzing on the 22nd of March, as the Hoffman Kiln celebrates 120 years since the year the Kiln first began operating.

Tied in with Local Heritage Month, the day will feature a private event in the morning, with local and national dignitaries in attendance – complete with a monologue performed by Trustee and local actor Peter Mackenzie.

An early photo of the Kiln. *Photo / Supplied.*

Mackenzie’s family connection to the Kiln stretches back to his great-grandfather, who was a labourer in the neighbouring pit, and later a brickmaker.

A public open day will begin in the afternoon, from 1:30pm, of which all Historic Places Aotearoa members are encouraged to attend. This will be a chance to tour the inside of the continuous kiln, a Category 1 Historic Place, and see the important work that the Trust is doing to restore, maintain, and upgrade the site into an important historical destination.

# A SEARCH FOR THE OLD POWERSTATIONS



**Denis Pilkington**  
HPA Executive Member

The article about the Horahora Power Station in the Waikato River in our last issue raised a related query as to how many of the original local power stations built from the 1880s still remain in place today and if any of them are still working.

Like Horahora a number of the early power stations were built to service mining and other local industries but there were also many that provided municipal domestic power supply along with private supplies in rural areas.

An interesting example is the 1911 hydroelectric plant at Akaroa which has been fully restored in its original building. This ambitious project carried out by the Akaroa Hydro Generating Set Trust is fully described in their book, *All Our Volts, Electrifying Akaroa* by John Wilson and Angus Davis, 2011. This book mentions a number of other small local hydro stations that are still in place. The Akaroa plant had neighbours at Pigeon Bay and on the other side of Banks Peninsula at Orton Bradley Park in Chateris Bay.

Other remaining hydroelectric electric plants mentioned include:

Visitors to the old Palmerston North Electric Powerstation.  
*Photo / Palmerston North Electric Powerstation Inc*

- Reefton
- Waikoropupu Springs in Golden Bay now operated by the Pupu Hydro Society.
- Six Mile in the Matakaitaki Vally near Murchison – now cared for by the Murchison Historical Society and Museum Society.
- Queenstown's One Mile Power House operated by the One Mile Powerhouse Restoration Trust.
- The privately owned Mokopeka power station near Havelock North.

There must be a number of others.

Apart from hydroelectric stations there were many others powered by coal gas and diesel. Those remaining include Palmerston North, *see picture featured* above, and Napier where the power station has developed into the Faraday Centre Museum of Technology.

Once again, there must be others, and the author is keen to hear from anyone who can help to identify as many as possible.

Please contact:

[info@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz](mailto:info@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz)

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