NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY 15 AUGUST, AT 5.45 PM (Refreshments from 5.30 pm)

AT ST ANDREWS ON THE TERRACE, WELLINGTON CITY

The entrance ramp is to the right of the church. Take the lift or stairs to the upper floor.

Please come in time for a glass of wine before the AGM. The meeting should not take long and will be followed immediately by a talk from Bee Dawson on the Plimmer Family

Bee Dawson is the author of a number of books including A History of Gardening in New Zealand; Puketiti Station: The story of an East Cape sheep station and the 180-year-old Williams legacy; Lady Travellers: The early tourists of New Zealand; and Lady Painters: The flower painters of early New Zealand.

Bee will talk about her most recent book: The Plimmer Legacy: A family story from early Wellington to modern farming in the Rangitikei.

Bee will also be speaking at The Australian Garden History Society annual conference at the end of October (25th), which is at Te Papa (we mentioned it in our last newsletter). Her topic will be God, guns and gardens – missionary gardens in northern New Zealand.
“From Wellington’s Plimmer Steps to the green hills of Motukawa. This is the story of a family – several generations of influential people — starting with ‘the father of Wellington’, John Plimmer, whose statue stands at the bottom of Plimmer Steps on Lambton Quay. Stories of Victorian and Edwardian life in the capital city lead on to the diverging paths of later generations, with an ongoing involvement in commerce, politics and farming.”

You can read more on Bee’s website: http://beedawson.co.nz/

AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HISTORIC PLACES WELLINGTON INC, FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 2019

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Seventh Annual General Meeting 2018*
3. Committee’s Annual Report – Statement of Service Performance**
4. Treasurer’s Annual Financial Statement*
5. Election of Committee
6. Appointment of representative to Historic Places Aotearoa AGM
7. General business

* The minutes are attached separately and the financial statement will be circulated separately to members when it is available. Copies will also be available at the meeting.
** See below.

Please bring to the meeting this newsletter and any other papers that will assist you for full participation in the meeting.

Note for item 5.
Current Committee members who have indicated willingness to stand for re-election are: Deborah Cranko; Peter Dowell; Sally Hasell; Nigel Isaacs; Christina Mackay; Vivienne Morrell; Ben Schrader; Felicity Wong. Brett McKay has decided to step down from the committee. Under our Rules the AGM has to elect a minimum of six and maximum of twelve committee members. Office holders are subsequently elected by the Committee. We welcome hearing from other potential committee members who are interested in heritage issues and like working collaboratively.

Note for item 6.
The following draft resolution is proposed: Moved that either Nigel Isaacs or Felicity Wong represent HPW at the HPA meeting but if neither are able to attend, that the committee be authorised to appoint another appropriate representative.

Annual Committee Report July 2018 - June 2019

Under our rules the Committee is obligated to report to its membership annually about activities over the past financial year. We are also obligated to report annually to the Charities Services on “service performance” so this report is designed to meet both requirements.
The Committee held seven meetings during the year. Nine members were elected to the committee at the AGM held in August 2018. Office bearers appointed by the committee were: Chairman – Felicity Wong; Vice Chairman – Ben Schrader; Minutes Secretary – Sally Hasell; Treasurer and Membership Secretary – Deb Cranko.

Two committee members were on the executive of Historic Places Aotearoa and reported on the HPA deliberations throughout the year (Felicity Wong and Nigel Isaacs). Two members of Historic Places Wellington attended the AGM of HPA in Palmerston North.

Membership numbers at the end of the financial year were as follows: 77 single members, 24 family members and 10 life members (111 in total). This is a slight increase from last year’s total of 105, but back to 2017’s 111 members.

The figures for our website and Facebook page show a considerable interest in heritage issues. On the website also is an expanding photographic library of historic places in the Wellington region. From July 2018 to June 2019 we had 2,377 visitors to the website (an average of 198 per month) making 12,415 views (or an average of 5.2 views per visitor). Last year’s figures were slightly higher at 12,925 views from 2,954 visitors.

As at July 2019 we have 621 followers on Facebook (compared with 526 a year ago and 176 the previous year). It is interesting to track which issues attract the most viewers. Posts about demolitions at Erskine and the two Rugby St houses reached large numbers; but, surprisingly, the largest number reached (over 3300 people) was a brief report and photos from the Heritage Wairarapa visit to Annedale woolshed which our chair Felicity Wong attended.

Advocacy issues have dominated the committee’s work over the year. There has been good news and bad news. On the positive side the Cricket Museum Stand at the Basin Reserve is currently being restored by the City Council.

The worst of the bad news was the demolition of the main college building in the Erskine complex. This is a listed Category 1 building and thus its demolition, within the context of the Special Housing Area legislation, sets a highly unfortunate precedent. The two 1912 Rugby Street houses were other buildings that we advocated to retain, unsuccessfully, with their owner (the Chinese Embassy). Other buildings for which we have advocated include: The former Teachers’ Training College at Karori designed by architect Bill Toomath and the former GHQ building in Buckle St still surrounded by containers and owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Among other advocacy work, we submitted comments to the WCC on their Planning for Growth consultation and Priority Routes (relevant to earthquake-prone buildings). We responded to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage’s survey on measures for strengthening heritage protection in NZ. We made a submission in November 2018 to Hutt City Council supporting Plan change 52, which aimed to align their District Plan with Heritage NZ’s List. You can read all these submissions on our website’s advocacy page.

HPW hosted six events for members during the year and in addition publicised other heritage events held within the Wellington region, such as the second Heritage Week in late October 2018.

Four newsletters were issued at quarterly intervals, sent either digitally or by post to all members. These contain news stories and commentaries about HPW’s activities and about historic places in the Wellington region, illustrating these when possible by photographs. These newsletters complement other written material put out by Heritage NZ and by the Wellington Regional Promotional Council (which funds Heritage Today – a bimonthly publication).

Chairman’s Report

This was my first year as chairman. The two largest risks to the Wellington region’s built heritage are “demolition by legislation” - arising from the onerous requirements on building owners to mitigate earthquake risk; and the potential demolition of inner city buildings and those in older character suburbs to make way for population growth and “intensification”. The HPW Committee is actively
engaged with both issues. Thank you to every HPW member for attending events and supporting this important heritage advocacy. (Felicity Wong)

**Demolition of Rugby Street houses**

Despite valiant efforts of our chair Felicity Wong in trying to convince the Chinese Embassy to save the two 1912-era houses on the Basin Reserve, they were demolished in June. We have featured the buildings in past newsletters. The houses were not protected under the WCC District Plan and the Chinese Embassy gained consent to demolish them. They were a rare example in Wellington of Edwardian terraced housing.

**Toomath’s Building and Petone Magistrates Court (former)**

(Toomath’s Building, Photo by Vivienne Morrell)
This two-storey masonry building at 43-47 Ghuznee Street Wellington was designed by architect William Crichton and built for the Toomath Estate. The permit was issued in November 1900. The design incorporated three shops at ground level, with residential accommodation behind and above. In 1942 the building suffered damage in the Wairarapa earthquakes. The building was repaired and, somewhat surprisingly, the ornate parapet and decorative urns survived. This is unusual as many buildings in the central city were damaged in the earthquakes and high-level masonry features were removed either because they were damaged or as a precautionary measure. It is included in the Wellington City Council’s heritage schedule (read more by clicking the link).

As you can see from the photo above, it currently has barriers in front of it to stop people getting close. It is one of four red-stickered ‘earthquake prone’ buildings in Wellington. In late April the owner was given 20 days to supply the council with more information and the council put up the barriers in front of the building. In May, the owner Dayal Govan said the mayor’s attack on him was ‘grossly unfair’ and says he has been busy strengthening numerous other buildings, such as a large building between Vivian and College streets which houses Cafe L’affare; and the Macpac building in Petone. We have not heard of any more recent developments.

The August issue of Heritage This Month from Heritage New Zealand also discussed attempts to try to save the former Petone Magistrates Court in Elizabeth St Petone. Heritage New Zealand has been trying to find adaptive reuse solutions with the council and the owners WelTec for some time, together with options to earthquake strengthen the building. (Image from Heritage NZ newsletter).

If you want to search for earthquake-prone buildings go to the MBIE website.

The group, Inner City Wellington, is actively lobbying the government on seismic strengthening issues and currently has two petitions open for signing. If you would like to read more, please see their website.

Wellington City Library building (by Ben Schrader)

On Monday 15 July hundreds packed the National Library auditorium – dozens more watched on screens in the lobby – to hear four speakers talk about Wellington’s public library. The Council had closed it suddenly in March following an engineering report that found its hollowcore flooring was
structurally unsafe and could collapse in an earthquake. The place was used by about 3,000 people per day and the Council was unprepared to put multiple lives at risk by keeping it open. In early May Stuff reported that the building only met 15 percent of the earthquake building code (NBS) and demolition was now seen by some experts as the only option.

This alarmed those who valued the building for its architectural, cultural and social significance. The building had been designed during the 1980s by Wellington’s most celebrated architect, Sir Ian Athfield, and many admired its whimsical, post-modern style. It was also widely viewed as the city’s ‘living room’: a place to read, work, socialise or simply hang out. The prospect that it could be demolished led the New Zealand Institute of Architects to organise the public meeting. It was addressed by four speakers: architects Gordon Moller and Ken Davis; civil engineer Adam Thornton, and councillor Iona Pannett. Their talks can be viewed here.

Both Moller and Davis had been part of the team that had designed Te Ngākau Civic Square. Moller had designed the Civic Administration Building, now also closed due to seismic issues. He talked about the previous plans for the civic centre – including a comprehensive 1970s one where the Town Hall was demolished – and how he, Athfield and others created the present arrangements. He called the library a ‘fine piece of architecture’ that should be preserved. Davis showed how the library’s design changed in development and explained how the idea of the much-admired Nīkau palms came about.

Thornton argued that the library could be strengthened for nearly two-thirds the $100 million that had been previously suggested and could be done relatively quickly. A huge advantage was the basement carpark which made it much easier to base isolate the building than for the Town Hall. A new library would cost at least $120 million, he said. Iona Pannett thought the library deserved heritage protection and should be strengthened, but said any decision couldn’t be made until after the October local body election.

That so many people turned up to the meeting showed the strength of Wellingtonians’ concern for the building’s future. Following the meeting the former city councillor, Helene Ritchie, put in a proposal to Heritage New Zealand to have Te Ngākau Civic Square scheduled as an historic place. If successful, this would make it morally harder for the Council to demolish the library.

Historic Places Wellington does not yet have a formal position on the library. It’s unusual in the New Zealand context to list a building that is only 30-years old. Normally more time is needed to make a critical assessment. But sometimes it is clear that a building merits heritage protection even when it’s relatively youthful – the Beehive is an example of this. Your committee will be discussing the issue at its next meeting. If you have a view on whether HPW should support the library becoming an historic place we’d love to hear from you.

Past Events

Members and friends outside Chevening (photo by Julie Middleton)

About 25 members and friends visited the elegant 1929-built apartment block in Kelburn, designed by Llewellyn Williams for Emma Rainforth. Chevening was recently generously gifted by Susan Price to Heritage New Zealand. Susan and her mother Beverley Randall had bought period furnishings from second-hand shops in Wellington and Susan had the building
earthquake strengthened to 100% of building code in 2011. Members enjoyed seeing all four floors (one flat per floor) before Heritage New Zealand decide how to utilise it. You can read more about the building [here](#) and there are more photos from our visit on [our website](#).

**Upcoming Events**

On **Sunday 3 November at 3pm** as part of Wellington Heritage Week we have arranged an event at Futuna Chapel in Karori in collaboration with the Futuna Trust. Jamie Jacobs, Manager of Heritage New Zealand’s Central Regional Office will talk about the challenges for heritage in the suburbs. Nick Bevin from Futuna Trust will introduce the session and architect Sharon Jansen will also talk about the restoration of a Plischke house in Nelson – followed by refreshments.

Heritage Week begins on Labour Day, 28 October and runs to the following Sunday. The Heritage Week programme becomes available from about 12 August so keep an eye on [their website](#) for events as some will need to be booked.

**Otaki Rotunda**

As mentioned in our last newsletter, a trust has been formed to help preserve the Category 1 listed rotunda building at the former Otaki Children’s Health Camp. The Friends of the Otaki Rotunda are mainly local volunteers who are passionate about the importance of protecting this architecturally outstanding building. They now have a website: [https://www.otakirotunda.org.nz/](https://www.otakirotunda.org.nz/) You can read about the Rotunda and the Trustees, see some beautiful photos of the rotunda, sign up to be a member of FOR and, if you wish, make a donation. The fee for membership is only $10 per person to try to attract as many people as possible to join.

**Other future events:**

- Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council heritage month: **October** (from 1st September there will be an Online Registration Form [here](#) for events to be registered. From 20th September all events can be viewed on their website).
- Historic Places Aotearoa conference and AGM in Gisborne: **11 to 13 October**
- The Australian Garden History Society has notified us that this year’s conference will be held at Te Papa, Wellington from **25 to 27 October** ([information here](#)). Holding it in NZ is acknowledging the 250th anniversary of the voyage of James Cook’s *Endeavour* and the first European landing in Aotearoa/New Zealand in October 1769.

**Heritage New Zealand's online archaeological report library launched**

The digital library contains over 7500 reports dating from the 1950s until today, with more reports being added all the time. This is one of the most important sources of archaeological information about places in the country, and a huge repository of information that will be of interest to many people. Explore the online Archaeological Reports Digital Library for yourself – [just follow the link](#).

**Facebook** – if any members are regulars on Facebook and would like to help manage HPW’s page (with occasional posts or just to be a back-up when Vivienne is away) please [email us](mailto:).