



HISTORIC PLACES WELLINGTON INC
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NEWSLETTER

No. 47. February 2024

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EVENTS

2pm 23 March 2024: Lower Hutt Civic Centre walk and visit to Vogel House

Welly awards – new heritage category - Richard Norman

This year for the first time, Heritage features in the Welly awards at the Embassy Theatre on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 from 5 p.m. These awards were started in the late 1980s by what is now 'The Post' to provide positive feedback for Wellingtonians who go above and beyond in fields such as Art, Community Service, Business, Education, Environment, Sport and Youth (<https://wellys.co.nz/about>). Short videos will describe the work of finalists and name winners of categories and an overall Wellingtonian of the year for 2023.

If you would like to be at the award ceremony, tickets are available at \$92 – please email Richard.norman@outlook.com for information about how to book to celebrate Wellington's diversity and heritage at a very well organised and upbeat evening. A good break from the District Plan saga!

Finalists for the Welly Awards (Heritage category)

Alastair Cattanach is an engineer and a director of Dunning Thornton who focuses on seismic strengthening and the use of timber in sustainable design. His projects include Futuna Chapel and the development of the Living Pa design at Victoria University of Wellington.

Jane Kelly is chair and principal of TEAM Architects and is currently Lead Architect and Project Manager for the restoration of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hill Street, which is expected to reopen in 2024. She is a leader in mentoring women in architecture.

John E Martin is an historian who has published about rural and labour history, science, engineering and was the Parliamentary historian in the early 2000s. In 2022 his book 'Empire City: Wellington becomes the capital of New Zealand' (Victoria University Press) provided new insights into 19th century Wellington.

Liz Mellish, MNZM; Te Ātiawa, Taranaki, Ngāti Ruanui, chairs the Wharewaka o Pōneke Charitable Trust, is Deputy Chair of the Federation of Māori Authorities, and a member of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Māori Heritage Council. She is a strong advocate for Māori heritage and history particularly the Pā sites and awa (streams) of Pōneke.

Joanna Newman is the Convenor and Treasurer of the Mt Victoria Historical Society and volunteer heritage researcher and advocate, alongside work as an archivist. She was able to draw on extensive archives about Mt Victoria for Wellington City Council's Heritage Study Report of Mt Victoria.

WCC District Plan update – Felicity Wong



The Independent Hearing Panel (IHP) has reported to Councillors with its recommendations on the Wellington District Plan. Councillors will vote on it on 14 March, and any recommendations they reject will be referred to the Minister for the Environment (Penny Simmonds) to decide.

The IHP ran a solid quasi legal process which was very thorough. They heard hundreds of submitters in person plus the evidence of experts on many aspects of the Plan. HPW's expert (Bill McKay from Auckland University) gave evidence, for example, about the heritage values of the Gordon Wilson Flats (the somewhat unsightly ex-state housing block on the Terrace). We also drew to the IHPs attention the "embodied carbon" in such a huge concrete site and it's potential to be re-used as much needed housing for students and young people. Taking it to the tip (as Te Herenga Waka/VUW prefers) would be a monumental waste of resources, especially given how similar buildings of that era have been modernised and repurposed elsewhere. HPW was pleased to support the high-quality evidence of Heritage New Zealand on various heritage rules and sites in Wellington.

In terms of the "character areas" of the heritage suburbs, HPW welcomed the IHPs recommendation, after reviewing the evidence, to retain a larger portion of the suburbs than Council had previously recommended. The careful assessment work by Boffa Miskell and by Property Economics Ltd was most welcome. However, some Councillors are committed to "zoning for more housing" (what council does) rather than "supplying more housing" (what the private market or Kainga Ora does). It's unfortunate that building costs are so high it's become unaffordable to build, especially "affordable housing". Sadly, those different themes have got muddled up in the media and in recent public debate. The matter has become highly political and the heritage aspects seem relegated to secondary importance. We'll keep you posted. (Image: recent demolitions between Home & Elizabeth Sts, Mt Victoria).

Blue Plaque for St Peter's Anglican Church, Willis Street – Sally Hasell

Blue Plaques for recognising heritage buildings are an initiative of Historic Places Aotearoa.¹ So far, we have only one in the Wellington region, at Randell Cottage in St

¹ You can read more on this website: <https://www.blueplaques.nz/>

Mary's Street Thorndon (you can see a photo of it on our [website](#)). St Peter's Anglican Church on Willis Street has agreed to have one and wording has been chosen for it. The cost is nearly \$2000. HPW is co-ordinating the fundraising and if you would like to make a donation you can do so to our account - (Westpac) 03-0584-0244032-000. Please give your name and as much of: "St Peter's blue plaque donation".

You can read some history of the church here: <https://www.stpeteronwillis.org.nz/about-us/about>



The Kāpiti US Marines Trust has launched a comprehensive new website which tells the history of the US Marines in Kāpiti and New Zealand during WWII.

Visit now:
marinesnz.com .

The website connects eight heritage sites in Queen Elizabeth Park, Whareroa Farm and Paekākāriki. Each, tells a story of the Marines'

extraordinary stay in Paekākāriki from 1942-44 – a time when only 500 Paekākāriki residents shared the community with over 15,000 young Marines. People can also find out more from a wealth of other resources on the site including: stories of the day, photographic collections, short films, oral history interviews, maps and a diverse collection of reference material.



Gordon Wilson Flats – Christina Mackay

Sixty-five years ago, our government was constructing a social housing project in Wellington. The project, on the Terrace, housed 75 two-bedroom apartments. For decades, the residents of Gordon Wilson Flats enjoyed morning and afternoon sun and fantastic harbour views. The well earthquake engineered reinforced concrete deep foundations and 200mm thick cellular construction have endured.

² Image: Gordon Wilson Flats under construction in 1957

It is the removeable balcony panels that are deemed 'earthquake prone'³. A neglected decaying unsightly façade has fuelled calls for heritage de-listing and demolition.

² National Library EP/1957/4364-1-F 14 Nov 1957

³ <https://wellingtoncityheritage.org.nz/buildings/151-300/299-gordon-wilson-flats-320-the-terrace>



Internationally, there are many examples of an alternative socially responsible and ‘green’ approach. Mid-century residential tower blocks are being valued and renovated with new facades, such as this one in Paris.⁴

Ideally, Gordon Wilson Flats could be renovated for affordable housing, acknowledging its history of use, the amenity value of its infrastructure and ongoing prudent use of natural resources. Wellingtonians could

be proud. Instead, the irony is that some advocates of higher density housing want them demolished.

Bill Alington (1929 – 2024)



The recent death of New Zealand’s last great Modernist architect Bill Alington, “represents the close of a chapter not only for architects in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, but nationally. Bill was an exceptional architect, one of Aotearoa’s greatest modernists, a hugely influential and inspiring teacher and mentor to many throughout his life,” says Judi Keith-Brown, past President of Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects.⁵

One of his buildings when he worked for the Ministry of Works was the Meteorological Office in Kelburn, pictured. Other local buildings include the Victoria University School of Music, the

Upper Hutt Civic Centre and Wellington High School. His own private residence in Karori is also regarded as a key work in his Modernist oeuvre and is a [Category 1 listed](#) historic building.

Some of you will have also known Bill’s late wife Margaret Alington (1920-2012) who did historical research on Frederick Thatcher and Old St Paul’s and on the Bolton Street Cemetery and published books on both.

Image: Meteorological Office, photographed by Duncan Winder, c. 1968. Ref: DW-3158-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. [/records/23188659](#)

Upcoming Events

⁴ <https://www.dezeen.com/2013/04/16/tour-bois-le-pretre-by-frederic-druot-anne-lacaton-and-jean-philippe-vassal/>

⁵ NZIA website: <https://www.nzia.co.nz/explore/news/2024/bill-alington-1929-2024>

Saturday 23 March 2024, 2pm: Lower Hutt. A walk around the Civic Centre of Lower Hutt looking at the various Modernist buildings, followed by a visit and afternoon tea at Vogel House.

Initially, this will be limited to members only, until we see how the numbers are going. Maximum 25.

Bookings essential - please RSVP to: wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

Lower Hutt Civic Centre (listed historic area): Dating to the 1950s the Lower Hutt Civic Centre area is a rare example of successful town planning using the garden city concept. The buildings were progressively opened between 1953 and 1959. They attracted immediate public attention, particularly St James's Church which, in 1953, was the most radical modern church design to be seen in New Zealand. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/7520/Listing>

Vogel House (listed historic area): During the early twentieth century the property changed hands a number of times, until James and Jocelyn Vogel acquired it in 1932. James Vogel was the grandson of Premier Sir Julius Vogel (1835-1899) and the great grandson of Premier James Edward Fitzgerald. Jocelyn Riddiford was the daughter of Vivian Riddiford of Woburn, Lower Hutt (1879-1934), and the great grand niece of Governor Sir George Grey. The Vogels commissioned Christchurch architect Heathcote Helmore (1894-1965) to design a house in 1933. Helmore's design included elements of the then in vogue Colonial neo-Georgian style, popular with the well-to-do of New Zealand society of the 1920s and 30s.

The Vogels gifted it to the nation and from 1966 to 1976 the property was leased for the Australian High Commissioner's residence. Prime Minister Robert Muldoon lived there from 1977 to 1984. David Lange chose not to live there and it was used for various charity functions. Various cabinet ministers then lived in it, but it has since gone back to the Vogel family. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/7757/Listing>



(Image photographed at Lower Hutt library)



Lower Hutt Library and Gardens, Peter McIntyre (sold in 2020 at Dunbar Sloane: <https://auctions.dunbarsloane.co.nz/1494/catalogue/0042>)

AGM – we have set a tentative date for our AGM of **Sunday 18 August at 2pm**. We will confirm this in the next newsletter.

Past Events



Art Deco Buildings in the CBD - Monday 22 January 2024 (Wellington Anniversary Day)

Committee member Vivienne Morrell led a walk looking at Art Deco (and other late 1920s to early 1940s) buildings from the Railway Station to Cuba Street.

Oriental Bay historic buildings walk: Saturday 17 February. Our Chairperson and Oriental Bay resident, Felicity Wong, led this

walk looking at the eclectic and representative samples of interesting New Zealand architecture in Oriental Bay. Among its many heritage-listed buildings are fine villas, modernist apartment blocks, early transport hubs, and outstanding buildings (used for swimming, boating, and spiritual renewal). The tour took in the two heritage precincts of the Clyde Quay boat sheds and the “seven sisters” villas, as well as notable apartment buildings. Three of which are newly proposed for heritage designation: Broadwater (1965); Wharenui (1958) and Olympus (1939) apartment buildings.

Several people missed out on Felicity’s walk and she has generously offered to run it again later in the year.