



## NEWSLETTER NO. 1, March 2011

Civic Trust Auckland

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This is the first newsletter for the current calendar year and is authored by Munroe Graham, immediate past president, with contributions by Jim Mason and Audrey van Ryn.

It is pleasing to be able to introduce Julian Mitchell, Registered Architect, B.Arch ANZIA, as a new member of the board.

**Julian Mitchell** is a partner at Mitchell and Stout Architects Ltd and lives in Belmont with his partner and two young children. He is interested in making Auckland a better place by preserving the best buildings, streets and laneways, while improving the general urban fabric with well-considered new building and fine-grained planning. He would like to see more tree-lined streets and better provision for bicycles and pedestrians, along with a master plan for the central city.



### Board Members 2011

Allan Matson (president)

Audrey van Ryn

(vice-president & secretary)

Munroe Graham

Margaret Barriball

Jim Mason

Peter Macky

Gary Russell

Julian Mitchell

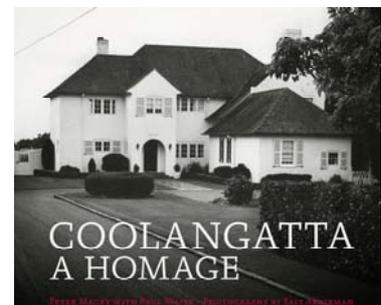
### Cherry Raymond Award

The late Cherry Raymond was a foundation member of Civic Trust Auckland and prime instigator in creating the Trust in 1968. She was a well-known personality on radio and TV and also helped to found the Zonta organisation in New Zealand. She was eventually awarded a Queen's Service Order, and, in the absence of descendents, that medal passed to Zonta. I was pleased to accept the medal into the safekeeping of Civic Trust Auckland at a ceremony last year and the future of this medal will be a matter for board discussion shortly. Her fine publicity photograph is approved for CTA use.



### Coolangatta Book Launch

Last year the magnificent book "Coolangatta" was launched at a public gathering in the Remuera Library. The book, written by our board member and new treasurer Peter Macky, together with Paul Waite (member), is more than just a history of one example of very attractive residential architecture, but tells the story of the early development of the "Arts and Crafts" style in Auckland and goes into detail on the town planning deficiencies which led to the destruction of this beautiful building. It is a "must read" for many reasons and is available through many libraries and most bookshops, but can also be ordered through the Civic Trust.



### Logan Campbell Kindergarten - *Jim Mason*

The Logan Campbell Kindergarten is now being restored by the tunnel contractors, part of the building being used for the air-conditioning plant for the tunnel. It is hoped that the rest of the building will be available as a function centre. The building is being re-roofed and renovated and thus the building is now preserved.

### Boer War Memorial - Devonport - *Jim Mason*

The Boer War Memorial Fountain in Windsor Reserve has been reconstructed on its present site and will be rededicated on Thursday 10 March with the unveiling of a new plaque to the Boer War veteran Walter Calloway, who was probably the first Maori to serve in the NZ Defence Forces overseas.



## AGM

As a result of the March 2010 Saturday afternoon workshop, three items were placed on the agenda for the 6 November AGM:

1. That the number of board members be increased from the present eight to ten.  
- Carried unanimously.
2. That a quorum of board members be reduced from the present five to four.  
- Defeated unanimously.
3. That the terms "vice president" and "president" be replaced with "chairman" and "deputy chairman". - Defeated by a substantial majority.

An unusual situation arose at the AGM. In the past it has been a tradition to vote the president into position. A study of the CTA constitution gives no guidance as to how that position should be filled. The board agreed that the matter would be discussed by the board at its next meeting and would put to this year's AGM.

For the first time in recent years there was competition for the position.

I have spent the last 18 months in an unsatisfactory work environment, finding it more and more difficult to spend the time necessary to fulfil the duties expected of me. I therefore decided not to stand and at the next following board meeting, the remaining candidate Alan Matson was voted in, with Audrey van Ryn as vice-president and secretary. Peter Macky kindly offered and was accepted to act as treasurer.

I am very happy about the new arrangements and believe that Allan and Audrey will bring the energy and commitment to their respective positions which will prove invaluable to the Trust. I will continue in the meantime to provide what contribution I am able as a board member.

## Urban Rail Projects

Auckland's new mayor Len Brown is backing the proposal to create an underground rail extension from Britomart through to Mt Eden Station via Albert St, K Road and Newton. This will actually allow Britomart to work reasonably well as a through station. It is badly compromised by various design deficiencies as a cul-de-sac station. Indeed, that was the reason its predecessor was moved out to Beach Road in the 1930s.

Similar underground line proposals have surfaced in Auckland from as far back as the 1920s, but the need for this type of infrastructure development would appear to be now getting quite urgent. Meantime, government, which will need to provide most of the funds, prefers to undertake expenditure on a northern motorway extension beyond Puhoi, notwithstanding that cost benefit analyses show the city underground as being five or more times more profitable.

With sustainability being the current and future mantra, how is it possible to get the 1950s motorway fixation of a less than enlightened government brought finally into the present century?

In the south Len Brown supports the proposal for an extension of the Onehunga line to the airport, then across to Wiri and the new link to the Manukau urban centre. Outgoing Mayor John Banks is reported to have stated that, "It would send the city broke". He was not voted back in power. In any case, this type of infrastructure would require input from government and must inevitably be constructed at some stage in the future. Fiscal common sense would suggest sooner rather than later.

## Sunday 20 March Garden Party 4pm at Kinder House 2 Ayr St Parnell

Following the successful garden party in February last year, the board has decided to run the event again, this time inviting not only the membership of the Trust but also members of kindred groups, to provide the opportunity to network and socialise with others who have similar concerns and interests. Refreshments and live music provided. Koha appreciated: \$5 - \$10.

**[RSVP for catering purposes by 17 March to cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz](mailto:cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz)**

Photos - Roy Clements



## Power Struggle: MOTAT Pulled in Two Directions

Aucklanders have been rightfully proud of the magnificent location and wonderful collection of heritage buildings and artefacts, which celebrate industrial and other elements of their heritage at MOTAT.

Over the years money has often been short and there have been personality clashes and sometimes a lack of direction. It is therefore quite amazing what has been achieved so far and therefore disturbing to learn that, once again, there is confusion over future policy. Let us hope that this, one of Auckland's greatest assets, ultimately gains from the experience.

## Rosebank Pohutukawa Saved (for now)

The Tree Council, with the support of various organizations, including CTA, and many individuals, appear to have saved the Rosebank Road Pohutukawa, although the developer may take the matter to appeal.

### Tree Scheduling - *Audrey van Ryn*

If you would like to nominate a tree, or group of trees, on private land - yours or someone else's - to be assessed for listing in the District Plan, you can fill in a form, which must be sent to your local board by 31 March.

Such protection for trees is now necessary due to the government changing the Resource Management Act last year to remove the blanket protection for all trees. Therefore after 1 Jan 2012 any tree on private land on an urban section under 4000m<sup>2</sup>, which has a building and reticulated water and sewage, can be felled with no requirement for permission or consent.

Trees will need to score highly on:

- ecological function/benefit
- form/vigour
- contribution to the immediate streetscape or wider landscape
- landmark values
- visual amenity, screening and beautification
- botanical values such as rarity or being particularly outstanding for its species.

**If you would like to be sent a form, please email [cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz](mailto:cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz)**

*Thanks to the Tree Council for this information.*

## Turua St Art Deco Houses



This story began when a number of sites were accumulated along Turua Street to make way for a large-scale, relatively low rise mixed development of shops and residential premises. This type of development had the immediate support of Council, presumably for the usual reasons, namely, that rateable value would be enormously increased, adding to annual income, to say nothing of the immediate payment of a wonderful array of Council charges and development levies. The street is, in any case, clearly due for a development upgrade.

It is unclear whether the proposed development will comply with the recently completed guidelines drawn up by the old City Council for local suburban centres such as this, including St Heliers itself, Remuera Village, Mt Eden Village and others. The search for similar guidelines has also taken place on the North Shore.

There has been heavy criticism of a nearby development which is claimed by locals to be out of scale with the nature of this pleasant seaside town. However, what upset objectors most in the case of the Turua Street proposal, was that three art deco houses were to be demolished.

Civic Trust Auckland became actively involved and is a founding member of the ongoing "Save our St Heliers Society" which, now that demolition has finally taken place, will concentrate on seeking better planning controls, more sympathetic in scale, for this and other similar village centres throughout the region. It is also hoped that more "at risk" buildings of heritage quality will be identified for planning protection.

The new mayor (who basically supports heritage protection – a stance which helped get him into office) has been embarrassed by a situation brought on by the actions of the old Council and it is hoped that planning procedures will be put in place to avoid this type of mishap occurring in the future.

We are not alone in objecting to the loss of historic heritage, or the pushing of town planning boundaries. I can recall from my short visit to Adelaide two years ago, where heritage is normally fiercely protected, that there was public outcry against the demolition of an art deco theatre in one of the suburbs.

More recently (in November) there was news of public opposition to the enormous scale of a proposed building in New York, opposite Pennsylvania Station. You might smile at the apparent absurdity of the situation, in New York of all places, where the sky might be assumed to be the limit, but planning controls appear to exist, and that building of 2.83 million square feet was to be placed on a site designed to accommodate just 1.6 million square feet (our American friends are hopelessly non-metric). Here in the Auckland CBD we have the recent example of a proposed high-rise hotel development by Cooper and Co, far above the height limit within the predominantly low-rise Britomart precinct, approved by "independent commissioners" against the wishes of the then city and regional town planners and many regional stakeholders including Civic Trust Auckland.

Are city codes and plans worth the paper they are written on? Are developers always able to set their own standards and have them approved with impunity? What therefore are development controls for? The sad end result is a minimalist "developer designed" city, lacking in human scale and character and rapidly becoming a copy of similar sized modern urban centres throughout the world. The natural beauty of the Auckland region surely deserves far more.

Due to the way in which it has been set up by Rodney Hide and co, the new Auckland Council will operate largely free from external checks and balances as it develops its new planning framework for the region. This is of great concern to Aucklanders, representing about 30% of New Zealand's voting population, and should therefore be of concern to politicians standing in Auckland and elsewhere, who might have hopes for the election later this year. Now would be a good time to commence lobbying for the introduction of more democracy into Auckland governance, a more sensible delineation of the southern boundary (so that, for example, its main water supply is included and urban growth to Pokeno planned by nearby Auckland, rather than remote Ngaruawahia). Strong lobbying should take place for removal of the worst aspects of the recent "streamlining" of the RMA, which have allowed local authorities to adopt widespread non-notifications as a matter of course, to the benefit of developers, leaving stakeholders such as CTA irrelevant.

## **Enormous Expansion Plans Approved for St Luke's and Sylvia Park**

Why is it that the big shopping mall owners are able to get approval for expansion while long-term property owners and ratepayers and their tenants suffer economic decline in localities such as old Mount Albert, Panmure and Glen Innes? Why are the country's modern retail cathedrals so lacking in architectural character that they can be mistaken for warehouses and so often have the design charm of shoe boxes?

### **John Lello (9.6.24 - 10.1.11)**

*- Audrey van Ryn*

*from a eulogy by Keith King & John LaRoche*

Five members of the Trust attended John Lello's funeral on 19 January. Bryan Bartley (a fellow life member) spoke about John's involvement in CTA.

Born in Yorkshire, John trained as an engineer. He served in the army during WWII, then worked in the UK and Canada, meeting his future wife, Elise, in Ottawa. In 1966 they and their two sons emigrated to NZ, where John joined the Ministry of Works as a district engineer. He became Chief Planning Officer at Auckland MOW.

John then worked as a private consultant, offering his services in town planning and environmental impact reporting. He was described as a formidable figure with very high standards and a deep concern for the environment. John spoke out about inadequate transport planning in Auckland. In 1993 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the NZ Planning Institute.

John and Elise travelled extensively and John became fascinated by Roman history. He built a half-scale model of Hadrian's temple in his garden, celebrated by a formal opening with appropriately dressed Roman soldiers.

## **Waiheke Land Donation and Covenant**

Over the years a number of benefactors have come forward and donated land for the benefit of the city. It is therefore heart-warming to read in early February of another such generous donation, being part of a 372 ha landholding on south eastern Waiheke Island, together with anti-development and mining covenants over other parts, made by Rob Fenwick some years ago, but publicised due to the opening in February of a new public walkway. 60 ha are to be reserved for regenerating bush and the introduction of native birds.

*On this final and positive note, the new president and his board will be looking forward to the demands of the year ahead.*

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