



NEWSLETTER NO. 1, May 2013

Civic Trust Auckland

P O Box 74 049 Greenlane 1546

cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz

www.civictrustauckland.org.nz

This is the first newsletter for 2013 and has been rough drafted by Munroe then bulked up and made sensible by Audrey.

Auckland Conversations - Malcolm Middleton



Malcolm Middleton

A series of Auckland Conversations hosted by Auckland Council takes place each year and for the first time, CTA collaborated with Council to bring to Auckland one such speaker, Malcolm Middleton. We have much to learn administratively it seems and also in planning terms from cities such as Brisbane. The day following this well presented and attended talk, Allan, Audrey and Peter joined a discussion forum with about 40 Council officers, led by Malcolm.

Below is a summary of Malcolm's 12 March Auckland Conversation.

Malcolm began his presentation by acknowledging the good fundamental attributes of Auckland and the aspiration to be a liveable city.

He compared Auckland and Brisbane as being of very similar scale, sprawling, low density cities, both with large amalgamated principal city council structures, though two obvious differences are the Australian city's much smaller CBD and its river.

Malcolm outlined some of the changes he's seen in Brisbane over the last 30 years when he moved there to live, particularly in terms of the built form investment: the development of bikeways; more bridges over the river; a dedicated busway system running from the south to the north; the development of the ferry system and pedestrianised access to the river; the opening of the Gallery of Modern Art, the Powerhouse on the river and four football stadiums; growth of residential areas in the CBD, the expansion of the airport; the redevelopment of City Hall; the building of a rail tunnel through the middle of the city and of many roads; a new cruise ship terminal; a new botanic garden and two major city parks; five major new hospitals and five major research institutes and an exhibition centre. Expo 1988 is regarded as the event that started to change the city.

He said the attitude towards heritage began to change when the Bellevue Hotel in the city centre was demolished at midnight in 1979. The remaining heritage buildings are all now on the heritage register.

Malcolm described the demolition control overlay map for Brisbane, "one dramatic policy decision" covering the CBD, inner suburbs and some earlier settled areas on the bay, which "in one gesture made great strides in dealing with residential streetscape, character, scale, old and new development". This control has been in place for 15 years and means that character and heritage houses cannot be demolished unless a good case is made for doing so. This serves to preserve the value of the area, as potential buyer know that something inappropriate is not going to be built next to their house. It has led to enlightened and thoughtful development. *(continued on page 2)*

Winter Series begins June 9 - details next page

The CTA winter series in conjunction with the Kinder House Society is due to begin on June 9 with a talk from Brian Bartley, a former CTA president, on earthquake strengthening for heritage buildings.

The four lectures of the series will be held at Kinder House, 2 Ayr Street, Parnell, and the dates of the other talks are: July 14, August 11 and September 22.

Friends and family are welcome. Entry by koha (\$5 suggested). Refreshments to follow all talks.

Board Members 2013

Allan Matson (president)

Audrey van Ryn

(vice-president & secretary)

Margaret Barriball

Peter Carter

Helen Geary

Munroe Graham

Jim Mason

Julian Mitchell

Gary Russell

Auckland Conversations - Malcolm Middleton *(cont)*

Malcolm then presented five case studies:

- The Southbank site where in 1980 the government took control of the what was a failing project, now very successful, based around the principle of building a great street.
- City Hall, built in 1930, about to reopen after a \$300 million renovation, the champion for this project being the Brisbane premier, who just said, "We're going to do it" taking money out of a roading project and setting up a funding appeal.
- The Treasury casino, a beautiful building which had become neglected, the refurbishment of which has reinvigorated that part of the city, an asset preserved which will be returned to the city.
- The Open House project: not a heritage event although it involves many heritage buildings, which builds a culture of design interest and opens up buildings of great interest in the city for the public to visit.
- Fortitude Valley on the edge of the city, an area of alternative retail, now encouraging mixed use and a significant change of scale, yet to prove its success.

Malcolm finished with several observations:

- Heritage is an urban design issue, an integral part of the city, not a standalone concept.
- Politics and buildings are inextricable and it is necessary to find a way for the applicant to pay for the things that the city values in a way that will work for the applicant as well as for the city.
- Alternative ways of funding particular projects need to be explored, such as crowd source financing, rates relief and indirect subsidies.
- Good urban design needs champions.

DOC Shrinkage Continues

After years of steady percentage decline throughout the public service, which has fallen on all sectors regardless of whether there was waste by some or relative efficiency by others, yet another round of layoffs are decimating the ranks of the Department of Conservation in particular, to the point that many fear the core will be withered to irrelevancy, leaving a rump managing the few various profit centres.

Our natural heritage and environment appears to be more at risk from our own administrators than from any other sectors, at a time when risk has reached its highest level.

Winter Series

Sunday 9 June 3.15pm

Bryan Bartley:

Saving our Masonry Buildings

Bryan is a retired engineer and will talk about measures to strengthen unreinforced masonry heritage buildings to avert threat of demolition by non-compliance with the new earthquake strengthening requirements.

Sunday 14 July 3.15pm

Sally Hughes:

The Character Coalition

Sally is the founder of the Character Coalition, an umbrella group representing 57 heritage & historical, special interest groups and resident associations, formed on the basic principle of heritage protection of their communities.

Sunday 11 August 3.15pm

Peter Charlesworthy:

From Scalpel to Chisel

Peter was an established vascular and general surgeon. He talks about his transition from surgeon to antique furniture restorer, including his training in England.

Sunday 22 September 3.15 pm

Vivien Caughley:

Samplers: their Role in NZ Social History

Vivien is the author of a soon to be published book on samplers to be found in New Zealand. You will be taken on a journey through in the 1800's as crafted in the traditions of the social behaviours and leisure activities of the period.



LOVE DOC DAY, Aotea Square 11 April - photo - Audrey van Ryn

CTA Garden Party

Many members and guests enjoyed the last of the summer wine at a get-together on Sunday 24 March, kindly hosted by John and Katherine Strevens on the front lawn of their lovely 43 Arney Road property.

Music was a strong feature of the afternoon, with flute duets by Board member Audrey and her sister Hazel, and madrigals by a group of six led by Board member Margaret.

Councillors Sandra Coney and Wayne Walker attended the event and Wayne spoke to the gathering about the Draft Unitary Plan and the desirability of making submissions, if possible, as a group such as a neighbourhood, rather than as an individual.

All those present enjoyed the kind weather, the relaxed atmosphere and the unique "architectural" garden, and some of us were also fortunate to have a mini tour of the house.



Allan Matson & John Strevens - photo - Helen Geary



Flautists - photo - Jean Griffiths



Madrigalists - photo - Helen Geary

St Anne's house and garden - photo - Munroe Graham



Name Changes

We in Auckland were spared the angst of the contentious (on doubtful local dialectical and other grounds) decision to change the name of Wanganui to Whanganui. There seemed no groundswell of opinion in support of change, even a majority in local opposition. There seems also no groundswell of opinion for a change to Whellington, if indeed that was the original spelling of the British gumboot after which it was named. But who knows what might happen.

There is less contention over the current proposals by the Geographical Board to reinstate original Maori names for the two main islands of NZ, blandly given their current north and south by lazy settlers in Victorian times, who had tired of them being called north, middle and third (Stewarts), or (shudder) New Ulster and New Munster.

Most North Islanders know their island as being the fish of Maui, although few would know the correct expression Te Ika a Maui, just as few would give much thought to where exactly upon the body of the fish Hobson decided to place Auckland - best left unanswered. The name change seems therefore to be a no-brainer here in the north.

Not so for the South Island, where Te Waka a Maui contends against Te Waipounamu for the title, even though it seems strange to call a piece of land the waters of anything in particular (in this case greenstone or jade) and how would a foreigner, or non Maori speaking local for that matter, ever remember such a name?

And Stewart Island, known for aeons as the anchor of Maui, why leave it out, or does it already have an official alternative name Rakiura (glowing sky)? Odd again to call a piece of land after a piece of sky, but we cannot be too critical here, for do we not have Rangitoto, which effectively means the same thing (but more rationally so)?

It seems to this writer that for consistency and in respect for the greatest of all Polynesian ancestral figures, Maui, the three main islands should be called the fish, the waka and the anchor, or respectively; Te Ika, Te Waka and Te Punga (if that last is the correct term). All nice and short and likely to be better received locally and internationally than longer unwieldy alternatives. Perhaps it would be possible to drop the "Te" part which is superfluous and merely means "the".

Here in Auckland most of our local islands have retained their original Maori names but Aotea (white cloud) must surely head the list for a meaningful and historically correct, also beautiful name for reinstatement from Cook's Great Barrier, a name also given to a reef some distance west of Piha, therefore in geographical terms, internationally confusing to some.



*New Zealand Sign Language for
"Aotearoa / New Zealand"*

*New Zealand Sign Language
Week is 13 - 19 May*

RMA Changes

Audrey compiled a thorough submission on the proposed RMA Reform Bill, which appears designed to tone down heritage and environmental issues further in favour of a supposed business oriented wish for quicker and easier development processes.

This submission and other recent submissions are on the CTA website at <http://civictrustauckland.org.nz/subcommittees.php#submissions>

The Auckland Unitary Plan

With much anticipation, the Auckland Unitary Plan was launched as a draft public discussion document on 15 March.

Studies of the plan suggest already that overall it is a continuation of the past with little new input from an overstretched planning team and with two inherently serious design flaws, namely, lack of foresight in terms of transport infrastructure and a focus on heavily building up existing small, medium and large shopping and regional centres without giving much thought to how local populations will be able to get to and from work. Furthermore, a large proportion of suburbia is to have more intensive housing in units as small as 30 sqm.

Will Auckland be even as liveable as it is at present in 30 years with a proposed population then of 2.5m plus, or in 2065, with a population of 3.5m plus, or at the end of the century with a population of 4.5m to 5m (larger than either present day Sydney or Melbourne)?

The CTA Board has held two meetings in April dedicated to discussing the draft plan, Board members have attended a number of community meetings and training sessions, as well as spending time reading of selected parts of the 7,500 document in preparation for a submission on behalf of the Trust. Submissions on the plan are due on 31 May.

Further information: <http://shapeauckland.co.nz>

NZHPT Symposium

A symposium organized by the NZ Historic Places Trust will take place at AUT on 18 May, and will be attended by several CTA Board members.

This one-day community heritage symposium will have a focus on heritage and the Auckland Unitary Plan and is an opportunity for community heritage groups to discuss current planning issues and to share knowledge and experiences.



Auckland Heritage Festival

This year's festival is to be held from Saturday 28 September to Sunday 13 October.

The three key themes of the 2013 AHF are:

Auckland's waterways – land and sea:

Events that celebrate our waterways: harbours, beaches, streams, ports and infrastructure, to name a few. These events celebrate water and its many guises in the Auckland Region – as a source of travel, trade, economy, recreation and more.

Celebrating our heritage:

Events that celebrate Auckland's distinctive built, cultural and natural heritage.

Learning and encouragement:

Events that are designed to upskill and inform the local community to encourage greater understanding of our heritage, through workshops and lectures. The aim is to empower collective stewardship of our heritage.

Last year CTA held a very successful event in the festival, which would have fitted well with all the key themes of 2013: a visit to the beautiful Scott Homestead, restored by past members of the Trust over a period of 20 years.

Scott Homestead, October 2012 - photo Allan Matson



Goodbye Peter, Hello Peter

We were sad to have Peter Macky leave the Board last month. He will be in Halbe, Germany, for a good part of the year, busy with the restoration of his train station. We thank him for the part he played during more than three years as a Board member, especially as the Trust's treasurer and his pivotal role in bringing Malcolm Middleton to Auckland.

We welcome Peter Carter, who joined the Board in February. Peter is an architect and is involved in local urban design issues, having established a North Shore architects group and the Milford Village Forum. He is a member of the Milford Residents' Association and is on the Board of the Takapuna Community Facilities Trust.

The "For Sale" Columns

From time to time interesting properties come on to the market, which are little known. Two of several recent offerings come to mind.

Barrow House at 49 Church St Mangere Bridge was advertised as being built in 1841 by John (later Sir John) Logan Campbell. True, the original cottage portion is very early and most additions quite old also, but 1841? Seems unlikely. Does anyone know the history of this interesting home?

Whare Tane at 26 Clive Rd, Epsom is a unique combination of Arts and Crafts, together with American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and other 1920s influences, incorporating various Maori designs in timber sculpture work within the building and other sculptures around the grounds.

In the commercial sector it is becoming fashionable for agents to quote various earthquake proneness percentages which make interesting reading, mainly because the figures seem unlikely, for example 100% of current code for the old ex-Ponsonby Post Office building and office blocks ranging from 120% to over 140%. What on earth is going on?

Bill McKibben's DO THE MATHS Tour

One of the world's most respected speakers and activists on climate change, award winning author and journalist, leader of the Keystone XL pipeline protests in the US - Bill McKibben - is bringing his Do The Maths talk to New Zealand in June.

The tour, which sold out shows in every corner of the United States last year, is brought to NZ by 350 Aotearoa.

The Auckland lecture is on **Tuesday, 11 June** at Epsom Girls Grammar School Hall, 7-8.30pm

Definitely not your typical lecture, Bill will be laying out the simple (but startling) maths on climate change - and calling on New Zealanders to join the global movement to change them.

A climate change maths lesson that might just change the world.

The maths are simple: we can burn less than 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below 2°C of warming - anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth. The problem? Fossil fuel companies have 2,795 gigatons in their reserves, five times the safe amount. And they're planning to burn it all - unless we do the maths to change our future.

Details and tickets at maths.350.org/nz

*Bill McKibben, a well-known environmental author and activist, is the founder of 350.org, an international climate change campaign, named for the maximum safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, 350 parts per million. Bill's 1989 book *The End of Nature* was the first book to warn the general public about the threat of global warming. He is currently a Scholar in Residence at Middlebury College.*

Harcourts T&G Building Demolition Application Declined

The Wellington Civic Trust was pleased to share with CTA and the Christchurch Civic Trust in late February, news of a victory. Alan Smith, chair of WCT, wrote that *"The Lambton Quay T&G case would seem to be of national significance and reverberation. A Category 1 listing is just that – of the highest heritage value, even if in the heart of the CBD and in the heat of seismic strengthening debate."*

The WCT's submission was one of 30 submissions opposing the application by the owner of the building to demolish it because of earthquake strengthening costs. There were 18 submissions in support.

Commissioners appointed by the Wellington City Council heard submissions over four days in December. The commissioners' report concludes the building can't be destroyed because its heritage value is too great for the city and the region. It also says the building does not need to be strengthened to 100% of the National Building Standard and the owner should consider strengthening to less than that.

The decision includes the fact that, *"It may be that this is one of the first, if not the first, publicly notified resource consent applications in the post-Canterbury earthquakes 'environment' where consent is being sought under the Resource Management Act 1991 to demolish a significant heritage building, principally on the grounds of public safety, given that the Applicant has been served with and Earthquake-Prone Building Notice under the Building Act 2004."*

The building was described in the decision as *"a worthy representative of the transitional period between the Classical revival and Art Deco movements ... largely in original condition its substantial size, bold form and decoration make it a major landmark on Wellington's principal thoroughfare."*

This matter has now gone to appeal. Watch for further developments.

Air Raid Tunnels under Albert Park

A recent newspaper article by Wayne Thompson revealed that a local entrepreneur is proposing to open some of the WW2 tunnel system as a tourist attraction. At present the tunnels have no known heritage designation and structural integrity is also unknown. The network is extensive and the main tunnel extends back from the top of Victoria St under the University to an outlet near the bottom of Constitutional Hill.

What an excellent route for a tramway from the Strand Station into the heart of the city!

Munroe has conferred with the developer Bill Reid and will watch progress with interest.



*T&G Building, Lambton Quay, Wellington
photo - NZ Historic Places Trust*

CTA newsletters from 2010 onwards are available at www.civictrustauckland.org.nz

Subscriptions

If you would like to join Civic Trust Auckland, please supply the following information to:
cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Interests:

Qualifications:

Either post a cheque to:
Civic Trust Auckland, PO Box 74049 Greenlane, Auckland 1543 or transfer to the Trust's account: 389010 0336852 00, including your name in the reference field.

Membership categories are: Individual (\$30) / Family (\$45) / Student/Senior (\$15)