



NEWSLETTER NO. 1, March 2015

Civic Trust Auckland

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Patron: Hamish Keith

*This is the first newsletter for 2015 and has been created by Audrey,
with input from Munroe.*

Auckland Conversations - Donovan Rypkema

CTA brought Donovan Rypkema from Washington DC, an expert on historic preservation, to New Zealand this month, to engage in public presentations in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in collaboration with the Civic Trusts of those two cities and with Auckland Council.

Donovan presented to an Auckland Council workshop entitled "Recognising the role of heritage in place-making" on the morning of 10 March, attended by Council staff, members of the Heritage Advisory Panel, Heritage NZ and other relevant organisations, as well as architects and property developers.

The Auckland Conversation held that evening was attended by about 280 people. Roger Blakeley, Council's Chief Planning Officer, was the MC for the event, and CTA patron Hamish Keith introduced Donovan.

Donovan's key messages included:

- Heritage restoration can be more sustainable and add more to GDP than demolishing an existing building to construct a new one.
- Studies in the US show that heritage neighbourhoods perform best across a range of economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- Property values in heritage neighbourhoods rise faster in good economic times and decline less during bad times.

(continued next page)

Donovan Rypkema, President of Heritage Strategies International,
speaking at the 10 March Auckland Conversation at the Maritime Museum



photo - Helen Geary



photo - Allan Matson

Board Members 2015

Allan Matson (president)

Audrey van Ryn

(vice-president & secretary)

Julian Mitchell (treasurer)

Margaret Barriball

Helen Geary

Munroe Graham

Jim Mason

Gary Russell

Donovan Rypkema *(continued)*

A dinner followed the Auckland Conversation, attended by, amongst others, Chris Parker, Auckland Council's Chief Economist; Noel Reardon, Council's Heritage Manager; John Brown, Team Leader Built Heritage Implementation at Council, and Robin Byron of Heritage NZ.

While in Auckland Donovan paid a visit to the St James Theatre. He also met with several owners of heritage buildings and was given a guided walk around the heritage precinct of Britomart, an area which he cites internationally as an example of best practice public private partnerships.



(l-r) Noel Reardon, Donovan Rypkema, Hamish Keith & Allan Matson
photo - Freestyle Event Photography

Donovan went to Christchurch on 8 March for the day as the guest of the Christchurch Civic Trust. He was appreciative of the opportunity to see the city at the beginning of its earthquake recovery, having last been there in November 2010.

A morning walking tour with four members of the CCT, the Southern Regional Manager of Heritage NZ, the Chair of Historic Places Canterbury, and the Chair of the Christchurch Heritage Trust took in the 'Quake City' exhibition as well as the ruins and empty spaces of the CBD. The owner of one of the businesses in this area was able to show Donovan the economic problem of trying to remain in what was a heritage precinct.

Donovan viewed the display at Shop 7 and visited Cathedral Square and the Christchurch Arts Centre. In the afternoon he had a brief tour of the recently rebuilt Theatre Royal, and was driven through the Red Zone to the east of the city and on to Sumner to see the damage from rock falls on the Port Hills.

In the port of Lyttelton he was shown a recently restored wooden heritage church, and saw further restored and completed new building projects in the city.

Donovan also spent several days in Wellington engaged in a programme organised by the Wellington Civic Trust. On 11 March he gave two well-attended public presentations, one at the School of Architecture. He was given a tour of the central city, including Cuba Street, and presented at a session with Council officers and councillors.

CTA looks forward to future collaborative ventures with other Civic Trusts and with Auckland Council.

Go to www.civictrustauckland.org.nz for links to:

- the Auckland Conversations presentation
- a Nine to Noon interview with Donovan: "How important is heritage preservation in our cities?"
- a NZ Herald article about Donovan entitled "Older, smaller buildings preferred".

Long-Term Plan

All Aucklanders had a chance to comment on the Draft Long-Term Plan, Auckland Council's ten-year budget, by the closing date earlier this week. CTA wrote a five-page submission, which is available on our website.

Munroe comments on one of the budget items:

Auckland Council is proposing to close libraries on Sundays for a purported cost saving of a mere \$1m or so per annum.

That saving (and far more) could be achieved by, say, trimming a few unnecessary staff, deferring unnecessary road re-surfacing of the type which has recently been completed along Carruth Rd, Papatoetoe; Remuera Rd west of the village; Banff Ave and many other places.

Footpath repairs, rather than complete renewals should be instigated and there could be a host of other savings, rather than losing a core service and adding to the dumbing down of society, which has been such a sad trend at the national level in recent decades.

Deferment of any of a range of non-urgent big ticket items could produce savings of this order on a continuing basis. Abandonment of some of the less well conceived projects could fund Sunday library opening for decades or more.

CTA website

Those of you who have visited the website recently will have noticed the changes on the homepage. We are pleased with the refreshed look and are working through modifying the content and the way the site works. Helen has been the instigator of these changes and thanks are due also to Munroe and to Carol Sanders, who set up the original site some years ago.

St David's Church

It was with much trepidation that parishioners learned late last year that their beloved 1927 church had failed the 34% NBS test and was deemed earthquake prone at about 28%. An immediate dilemma arose within the church organization, similar to that faced by many others throughout the Auckland area and most other parts of NZ. Demolish or fix?

The immediate response was to contemplate demolition, for the site is valuable and there would be several commercial options, but this ignores the ephemeral, but important human factors, such as sense of place, heritage and history. Perhaps odd that these should have apparently been the last matters to have been taken into account by an organization dealing in spiritual affairs.

It is heartwarming to learn that a Friends of St David's group has been created which has set out to accumulate the needed donations to save the physical fabric of what has been for decades a local landmark and a place of many memories.

CTA has become a supporter and looks forward to the time when engineers will be able to submit details of what needs to be done, how intrusive needed works will be and at what cost. It is important from a heritage point of view to judge the extent to which the internal and external fabric will need to be altered to achieve structural integrity, particularly as most engineers recommend (for various very good reasons) going to 67% rather than just 34% NBS.

We hope and many pray, but in the end any final decision will involve cold hard cash and will require something do-able within a complex and evolving on-site heritage setting.



St David's Church, Khyber Pass - photo - Friends of St David's

Pohutukawa Saved

CTA members played their part in the saving of the six pohutukawa under threat of removal by Auckland Transport, whether by emailing their concern to the CEO of AT, joining in action at the site or attending the AT board meeting on February 20 where the matter was discussed. The trees remain standing, and, along with the saving of the 500-year-old kauri in Titirangi, these victories show that concerted community action can result in protecting that which we value in our city environment.



Herald photo - 21.02.15

Chamberlain Park

A reminder that submissions had been called for by Council was included in the December newsletter. Notwithstanding denials by the local board, there have been continued rumours of proposed housing development on part of the land.

Despite public misgivings about various aspects of the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, there appears to be some merit in Council's proposed planning of various precincts across the region. Such precincts include areas around parks and railways stations and other important nodal features. These areas demonstrate the merit of comprehensive overall guidance, rather than un-coordinated site by site development as a basic planning tool.

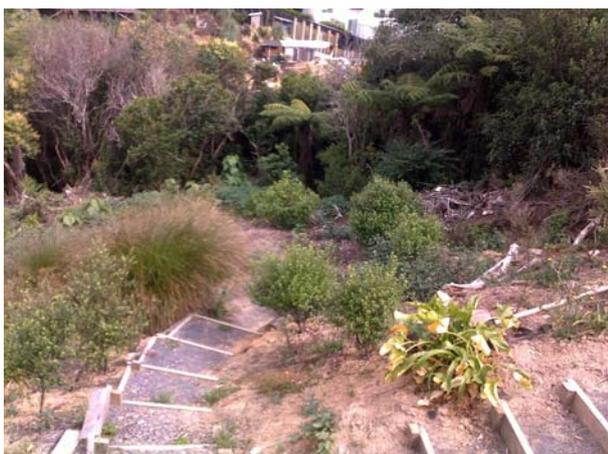
South of Chamberlain Park the PAUP housing zone maintains a long-term low density environment, which may no longer be appropriate for this strategic location. If it was high density in part (perhaps on sites adjoining the park itself) then the private sector, following appropriate site accumulation, could provide the additional units apparently deemed to be needed in the area, rather than selling off pieces of the open space heritage that the city, through its hard pressed ratepayers, has spent so long accumulating.

Selwyn Park and Bush

Roy Clements, a former president of CTA, has led two recent walks in this area of bush located behind Selwyn College. What used to be a desolate dumping ground has been planted and nurtured by hundreds of volunteers, co-ordinated by Roy, over a period of ten years.

CTA members joined the walks on 14 February and 8 March to learn more about the proposal by the board of the college to replace part of the recently planted area with a rugby field and a swimming pool.

The photos below were taken by Audrey during the walk on St Valentine's Day.



Parnell Station

It appears that a very conditional agreement has been reached by Council to approve building of the Parnell Station. The historic recycled Newmarket Station and signal box will finally have a permanent home.

However, there are reasons for disquiet. Additional Domain land may be required, but, more importantly, this is to be an interim measure and may be put in place before proper planning for the immediate area has been addressed.

The station site and its surrounds have not been given "precinct" status. There is a disconnect between the planning for the station and its immediate surrounds, proposals for adjoining land, relationship with the railway workshop complex adjoining to the south and links to the Domain and Parnell Village.

Munroe has briefly presented his vision to the CTA Board that there should be long-term planning now for an eventual tramway/cycle-way/pedestrian-way above the station (therefore linking the platforms), through the trees in the Domain to serve as access to the museum, then beyond to the hospital, across Grafton Bridge to K' Road, perhaps as far as the proposed station there on the city link line. In the other direction that link would join through to a cul-de-sac terminal on or near Parnell Road.

There is broad agreement that there should be provision for high density in the station vicinity.

Some commentators have suggested that the station is proposed for the wrong site and that it should be further north (perhaps to better serve the university) towards Parnell Rise.

Munroe's suggestion is that the Strand Station should be comprehensively re-configured and that a tramway spur be formed from there, through and beneath Albert Park along the alignment of the main WW2 tunnel to Victoria Street and perhaps beyond. This would provide an excellent high density catchment link to the universities and CBD.

This is actually an old idea recycled, for in building the then new station on Beach Road in the late 1920s, provision had been made that the line to the south of the station building should be capable of nearly that alignment (at the time a proposed heavy rail connection to Morningside).

The Strand Station and surrounds is yet another key point lacking in any "precinct" type planning. It could be an important bus, tram, train and inter-city hub. Strangely, Strand Station (at present a spur line) used to be called Auckland Railway Station and was of some importance for over 70 years. It also has potential to improve access to and from Vector Arena, which might otherwise become a white elephant earlier than presently anticipated. This is one of the most important parts of the rail network, and, notwithstanding short-term funding restraints, the money should be found to protect the route sooner rather than later.

Ports Protest



Herald online photo - 25.2.15
(l - r) Audrey van Ryn & Gloria Jenkins

CTA members have been taking part in the protest against the extension of Bledisloe Wharf. A rally was held on 25 February on Queens Wharf and the following day Auckland Councillors discussed the status of reclamation work at a meeting of the Development Committee.

Protests continue against the nearly 100m extension, which would eliminate the view of the harbour entrance as seen from Queens Wharf, a popular place for the public to experience the Auckland waterfront.

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

photos - Roy Clements



Julie Stout & Julian Mitchell



Subscriptions

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